



THE WITNESS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1610 PRINCE ST., CONWAY, ARKANSAS, 72034

Ash Wednesday and the Start of Lent

Before we know it, the liturgical season of Lent will arrive, and with it a plethora of religious practices to help us prepare for the celebration of Easter. Among these practices are feasting, fasting, joy, worship, contemplation, prayer and hope.

Lent is a period of 40 days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "lencten," which means "spring."

In 2026, Lent runs from Wednesday, Feb. 18, through Saturday, April 4. Easter Day is Sunday, April 5.

Join us on Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 5:30 p.m. in the Great Hall for a delicious pancake and sausage dinner as we prepare our hearts for this meaningful season. The pancake dinner is a fun and symbolic tradition, marking the start of Lent by using up rich ingredients before the season of fasting and reflection. This year, the Wesley Foundation will be hosting the dinner as a fundraiser for their missions! The cost of the meal is a suggested donation of \$7 per person or \$28 max per family.

After dinner (at about 6:30 p.m.), we will make our way to the Sanctuary, where ashes will be imposed, reminding us of our mortality and dependence on God's grace. Come for the pancakes, stay for the sacred moment, and begin your Lenten journey with us. All are welcome! The Imposition of Ashes is a powerful nonverbal way of participating in the call to repent.

During Lent, we will focus on what God has done for us through



Christ's death and prepare for the good news of life through Christ's resurrection. Through this season, we share in Christ's sacrifice and rejoice in the life that comes through Christ.

Catherine Gatlin Resigns as Children's Director

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We regret to inform you that Catherine Gatlin, our Director of Children's Ministry, has decided to resign from her position and take another job with the University of Central Arkansas on Feb. 2, 2026.

Over the course of the past many years, Catherine has dedicated herself to ministry with children and their families. She first started her ministry while Pam Lentz was director of Children's ministry and has continued to serve the church faithfully.

We will deeply miss Catherine, but we rejoice in the new opportunity she has with UCA. We pray for her in this next chapter. We ask that you pray for her as she transitions into her new role. Moreover, we recognize



this is not a goodbye, as she and her family will continue to be part of our congregation.

Regarding her position, the Staff Parish Committee will be reviewing the Children's Ministry needs and begin immediately searching for a new director of Children's Ministry.

Please be in prayer for the new director and for the congregation during this time of transition.

With gratitude,

Rev. Nathan Kilbourne, Senior Pastor
Chris West, Chair of Staff Parish Relations



Heart and Home Valentine List

It will be Valentine's Day very soon and we want to share God's love with our church family that cannot attend on a regular basis through our Valentine's Day Card ministry.

Create your own cards or buy some at the store, it does not matter. What matters is that we reach out to others and connect.

Drop your cards in the Valentine Boxes found in the hospitality areas of the church by Sunday, Feb. 8.

If you have any questions, please contact Pat Crowder at joysandconcerns@conwayfumc.org.

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|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Polly Bakker | Patsy Barnes | Dan & Kaye Clanton |
| Peggy Collins | Margaret & David Crouse | Penny Gant |
| Johnnye Hartje | Joyce & Joe Heird | Charlene James |
| Kish (George Ann) Jones | Janet Lane | Betty Nixon |
| Ken Parsons | Meredith Prince | Iva Purtee |
| Linda Roberts | Carol Schedler | Louise Skiles |
| John Stirtz | Sam & Carole Teague | Lulu Thompson |
| Jon Vammen | Meredith Wilbourn | |
| Larry & Marilyn Williams | Tom Goodwin | Paula Inman |
| Larry Graddy | Donald Hay | Nancy McGowan |
| Grady Williams | Martha Ballinger | |



Nametag Holders Installed

We now have new nametag holders outside both worship areas for you to leave your nametag during the week and pick up on Sundays to wear during worship. There is also a QR code you can use to order a new nametag. All new members can receive a nametag at no charge – ask Pastor Miranda for a free nametag code! When they arrive at the church, the new nametags will be placed on the board in the worship area of your choice. Thank you to our hospitality committee for arranging for the holders and for Libby Conder for creating the holders.



Join the Men's Prayer Breakfast!



Do you like good food, great fellowship and the opportunity to discuss topics of varied interest? Then it's time to join our Men's Prayer Breakfast! This group has been meeting each week for about 50 years at the church, and invite men of all ages to join. They meet at 7 a.m. each Wednesday in the Fellowship Hall. For more information, contact Carol Means or the group's staff liaison, Libby Conder.



Conway FUMC Food Pantry 2025



Pounds of Food
102,830



Assisted
4,198



2025
Food Pantry



Families Served
652



Cost
\$48,656





Painting Hearts for the Basement Mural

Some of our youngest church family members took time Wednesday night during MidWeek activities to paint some beautiful, decorated hearts. These will be added soon to the large mural that is featured in the hallway of the Sanctuary building basement. If you haven't been downstairs in the basement recently, you need to see the mural!



Photos courtesy of Rev. Miranda Hornsby





Latest from The Wesley

Wesley After Worship Desserts Needed!

Support The Wesley by providing desserts for 40 students for our after worship fellowship time

Sign up using QR Code!



Wesley Foundation Sunday Set Feb. 8

Welcome Our Guest Preacher for Wesley Sunday!

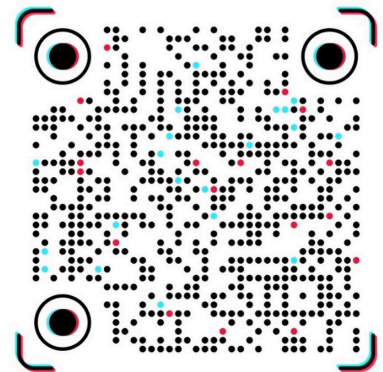
Destiny Elms is in her senior year at the University of Central Arkansas. She is in the candidacy process and pursuing a dual degree in Religious Studies and Psychology. This year, she is serving as the Wesley worship intern and is excited for another year in the internship program. She is a daughter of Randy and Jema Elms.



Worship will also include music from the Wesley Praise Band at the 9:05 a.m. worship service in the Great Hall. College-aged students will also help lead us in worship at all three services by serving as liturgists, ushers, etc.

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Check out the new TikTok page for The Wesley at Conway

@the.wesley.at.con



Wesley Tuesday Dinners Needed!

Support The Wesley by providing dinner for 25 students for our Bible Study meal.

Sign up using QR Code!



Visions of Christmas Eve 2025

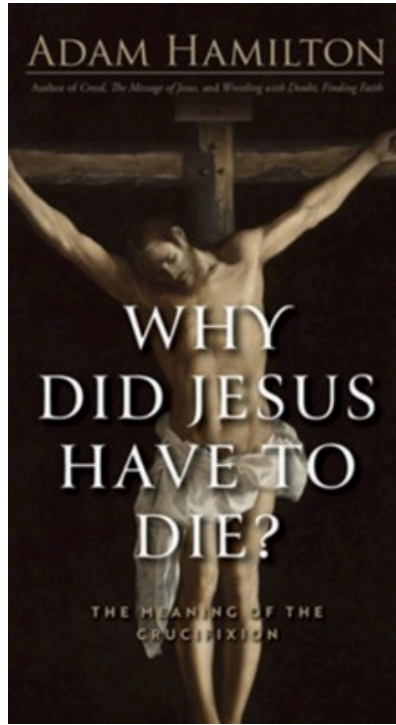


Crochet & Play

1st & 3rd Wednesdays 5-6pm



Depending on weather, join us in the Library or on the playground!



Wednesday Morning Bible Study

February 18 - March 25th
Wednesday mornings from 10:00-11:00 am in the Youth Big Room

Looking for a deeper dive into Scripture this Lent? Join us for study, conversation, and reflection using Adam Hamilton's book *Why Did Jesus Have to Die?* Order your book today! If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Pastor Miranda at mhornsby@conwayfumc.org.

Our Church Family



Welcome

To Dorothy Alice McArthur, who joined this community of faith on Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026, by baptism and profession of faith.

Sympathy

To Ida and Tenny Howell on the death of Ida's brother, Dr. William Marvin Wells, on Jan. 7, 2026.

To the family and friends of Marianne Berry, who died Dec. 6, 2025.

If you have prayer requests or joys to share, email them to joysandconcerns@conwayfumc.org or call the church at 501-329-3801.

MIDWEEK

Schedule for February 2026

Wednesday, Feb. 4 - Regular MidWeek Schedule.

Wednesday, Feb. 11 - No MidWeek activities due to Winter Break in the Conway Schools.

Wednesday, Feb. 18 - No MidWeek activities. Join us instead for Ash Wednesday pancakes at 5:30 p.m. in the Great Hall and worship and imposition of ashes at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Wednesday, Feb. 25 - Regular MidWeek Schedule.

Dinner at 6 p.m. Bible studies and activities for all ages following dinner.



Confirmation Sunday

All three worship services

Please pray for our confirmands as they study together, travel on retreat, and discern their membership commitment.

Feb. 22

Linktree*

Check out our Link Tree list of sign up forms and volunteer opportunities by scanning the QR Code, or visit the Resources section on our church website.



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In Honor & Memory

In memory of Richard Schlater by: Rock & Melissa Jones
In memory of Fred Tate by: Dimitri & Teresa Papadimitriou
In memory of Paul Taber by: Dimitri & Teresa Papadimitriou
In memory of Tom Higgs by: Dimitri & Teresa Papadimitriou
In memory of James Curtis by: Rick & Becky Rasnick
In memory of JoNell Plafcan by: Jeremy & Moriah Bruner
In memory of Doug & Ann Poindexter by: Cecille Boyd & Terri Boyd Shotts
In memory of Joe & Patricia Price by: Elizabeth Skinner
In memory of Doyle Parker by: Michael & Donna Harris
In memory of Gene Wilbourn by: Tami Herndon

In honor of The Weatherly & Geier Families by: Jack Carrithers
In honor of Brenda Porter by: Pam Wren
In honor of Nancy Thessing by: Claudia Ryan
In honor of Nancy Williams by: Traci Williams

Early Childhood Center Registration Opens Soon

Registration begins soon for the FUMC Early Childhood Center. ECC is a weekday program for children ages 2 years to 5 years. Our goal is to provide a consistent, caring, and respectful environment for children.

We encourage creativity, individuality, and self-expression for every child. We actively promote the values and skills needed for social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual development. ECC has been an active part of the community for more than

* Currently enrolled, church members and alumni registration: Monday, Feb. 9, starting at 7:30 a.m.

* Registration opens to the community: Tuesday, Feb. 17, starting at 7:30 a.m.

For more information, you may email director Angie Hogue at ahogue.ecc@conwayfumc.org.

First United Methodist Church Staff Directory

Senior Pastor -- Nathan Kilbourne
Associate Pastor -- Miranda Hornsby
Director, Children's Ministries -- Catherine Gatlin
Director, Youth Ministries -- Zach Schrick
Director, MidYouth Ministries -- Christy Lemmer
Campus Dir., Wesley Foundation -- Amy Shores
Dir., Music/Worship Ministries -- Jason Saughey
Assoc. Dir., Music (Praise Band) -- Stuart Holt

Assoc. Dir., Music (Children) -- Linda Ball
Nursery Coordinator -- Cara Rucker
Bookkeeper -- Libby Conder
Supervisor, Hospitality Ministries -- Ed Spears
Custodian -- Tim Tarpley
Financial Assistant -- Laura Bounds
Communications Assistant -- Colleen Holt

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES:
8:30 & 11 A.M. - SANCTUARY
9:05 A.M. - GREAT HALL
LIVE-STREAMING AT 9:05 & 11 A.M.:
WWW.CONWAYFUMC.ORG
FACEBOOK.COM/CONWAYFIRSTUMC
OR YOUTUBE: @CONWAYFUMC