



# First Methodist Church

## OF CONOVER

*The Weekly Newsletter of First Methodist Church Conover*

*April 9, 2024*

It's the Super Bowl of the Skies! No ticket required. In a world of people addicted to screens, countless millions of us stopped everything to see a spectacle in the skies. A celestial switch was flipped and the lights went out. Total solar eclipses don't come around very often. When they do occur, they become major cultural events. Many people traveled hundreds of miles to be in the path of totality, so they could view the full effect of the eclipse. Many more followed the live coverage on their smartphones, eager to watch the cosmic drama unfold.

But whether on the ground or online, the sight of the moon blotting out the sun and then turning it into a celestial diamond ring created a moment of transcendent wonder. For Christians, that sense of wonder was even more acute, a vivid embodiment of the opening words of Psalm 19: ***"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork."***

It makes we wonder, in what way, exactly, does a solar eclipse declare the glory of God? Well, first it reminds us that we live in a finely tuned cosmos.

Since total solar eclipses are so rare, it's tempting to think of them as random coincidences of nature. But they're nothing of the sort. In reality, they follow a complex pattern of physical and mathematical rules that make it possible to predict them years in advance, as people have been doing since ancient times. This pattern depends on the sun, moon and earth having exactly the right size, composition, relative distance and motion with respect to each other.

If there were any variation in any of these properties, total eclipses might never occur.

These physical properties of the earth, moon and sun are part of a larger, vastly more complex pattern of cosmic variables, all of which must be precisely as they are for life on earth to exist. The odds of them all falling into place by pure chance is, in a word, astronomical. Taken together, they offer powerful evidence of what scientists call "universal fine tuning." Far from being the product of random processes, the universe is as its name implies: a created order designed by the unfathomable wisdom of a Creator God.

Second, throughout history, eclipses have been interpreted as bad omens or portents of doom. Across many cultures, they've been explained in terms of mythical beasts or demons devouring the sun. In fact, the modern term "eclipse" derives from an Ancient Greek word meaning to abandon or to forsake. The subtext is evident: the sun, the source of light and life, has failed and forsaken the world.

The Gospel writers record a similar celestial event that occurred during the Crucifixion. The Bible tells us that ***"about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'"***

The parallel is unmistakable between the light of the sun failing and the Son being forsaken by His Father. But once Jesus had finished His work and paid the full penalty for sin, the darkness ended, and the sun returned.

The darkness of an eclipse is just for a moment, but can't block the light for long, any more than the tomb could hold Jesus for long. Because of the Resurrection, mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13). Charles Spurgeon, the great 19th century preacher, expressed this truth most eloquently: *A total eclipse is one of the most terrible and grand sights that ever will be seen. But thank God, whatever eclipse happens to a Christian, it is never a total eclipse. There is always a ring of comfort left. There is always a crescent of love and mercy to shine upon God's child.*

So, let's not wait until the next eclipse to stop and pause and wonder. Look up to the heavens, and then look further up, until you find joy in the God who enjoys His handiwork.

Grace and Peace,

*Pastor John*

# \*PRAYERS, PRAISES AND NEEDS\*

## ***Let Us Pray...***



As an ongoing part of our Nurturing Ministry, we are asking all members of our church to pray for six specific families. Each week we will list a different group of six families as we work our way through our church roll. The families for this week are:

Don & Vata Shook, Jeff, Michelle, Ashley & Jacob Sierzenga, Carl, Lori, Lauren & Megan Sigmon, Danielle Sigmon, Powell & Virginia Sigmon, Alma Jo & Rachael Simmons.

## **MEMORIALS** **General Fund**

In memory of Carol Dickinson by:  
Brad & Kim Little  
Rick & Nancy Wall  
Cliff & Debbie Wike

## **Local Missions Fund**

In memory of Carol Dickinson by:  
Bob & Lois Goodson

## **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**

In memory of Carol Dickinson by:  
Jean Slate  
Mike & Jeanette Stewart



## **ATTENTION GOODTIMERS!!!**

Eddie has not been successful in planning an outing yet for the Goodtimers. Those that returned his calls, the date was not suitable.

Continue to save the date of **Thursday, April 18th**. Eddie will send out an "All Call" if he can get a trip together.



## **IN/OUT OF HOSPITAL**

None

## **A NOTE OF SYMPATHY**

Gene Kent of Roaring Gap, NC, passed away on Monday, April 1, 2024. He was 82 years old and the brother-in-law of Elizabeth Pullen. He was a Major in the Army and was active in the VBW during his retirement.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Elizabeth, her sister, Sandy Kent and the family during this sad time.

## **THANK YOU**

Thank you so much for remembering me with all the beautiful cards and especially the meaningful messages. I have also enjoyed the delicious goodies!

I miss you all very much.  
God bless you,  
Love, Mary Ann Simpson

## **CHURCH MEETINGS**

**Sunday, April 28th**

**4:00pm Finance Committee Meeting**  
**(Conference room)**

**5:00pm Church Council Meeting**  
**(Sanctuary)**

## **THE CORNER TABLE** **NEEDS OUR HELP!**

The Corner Table in Newton has asked local churches to support their Feed The Flock Gala by providing the following:

**Gift Cards** (valued \$20+) for a Gift Card Roulette Wheel

**Silent Auction Gift Baskets** – FMCC is providing a **Mother's Day Gift Basket** with items to pamper mom and an **Advent Book Basket** with children's Christmas books. (They can be found on Amazon this time of year.)

There is a clear plastic tote in the Narthex where you can place donations. Gift cards can be placed in the mailbox for "The Nest" or given to Jenny Harris.

If you have any questions or want to learn more about the wonderful things The Corner Table does for our community, please call Jenny Harris at (828) 358-5900. Thank you!

# NEWS TO USE



## Time to Register! A Few Spots Still Open! Noah's Ark/Creation Museum Trip

We will be taking a bus trip to visit the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky, and the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. Finley Cloninger will be our driver, with Harold Roberson serving as "Assistant Trip Director!"

We still have several slots open for more passengers. So, if you've been thinking about going or if you know anyone (doesn't have to be a church member) interested in this trip, please have them contact Beth Woods at 336-480-4551 or [woods777@aol.com](mailto:woods777@aol.com). Information and Registration sheets are on Beth's door. The information is also on our website, [www.fmconover.org](http://www.fmconover.org), accessible by the QR code below.

May 20-23, 2024 -- Price Per Person: Double room \$699; Triple room \$639; Quad room \$609; Single room \$889. You can choose who to room with.

If you want to join the trip, please fill out a registration form and return it to Burke Christian Tours or to Beth, with a \$200 deposit. (Checks made out to Christian Tours. There is also a credit card option if you call the tour office at (800-476-3900).



## NEWS

The Ashure Ministry red bins for food and bag donations are located in the hallway between the CFLC and Beth's office.

The food **request for April** is **canned or dry beans**. Any other food is greatly appreciated also.

Thursday, May 9, is Ashure Ministry's annual golf tournament. Last year, FMC CONOVER team won the church division!! Way to go, Charlie, Bruce, Finley, and Michael!

This event at Glen Oaks in Maiden is a fundraiser for Ashure. If interested in being a sponsor or playing, please go on line to Ashure Ministry or see Anita Deal.

Once again, our Men's group from FMC CONOVER is providing and cooking the food for the tournament.

Thank You!!



## PASTOR'S QUIZ

In the account by Luke, compared with those by Matthew & Mark, Pilate's attitude toward Jesus is appreciably more

- a. sympathetic
- b. callous
- c. ambivalent
- d. indifferent

(The correct answer is on the back of the newsletter.)

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT By Our Presence April 7, 2024

Sunday School:  
103

Worship:  
8:45am Service 153  
11:00am Service 127  
280

### God's Tithe & Our Gifts

General Fund \$ 26,771.00  
(Needed weekly for budget: \$12,804)

Children's Bank	41.75
Disaffiliation Fund	100.00
Local Missions Fund	100.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	<u>525.00</u>

Total \$ 27,537.75



## CONNOR SCHOLARSHIP Applications Available

Applications are now being accepted for anyone wanting to apply for a Connor Scholarship. Application forms can be obtained from the church office by calling (828) 464-4635 or via email at [office@fmconover.org](mailto:office@fmconover.org).

Please state whether you need a high school application or a college application. **Deadline is April 19th.**

**Scholarships will be awarded on Sunday, June 2, 2024 at both services.**

First Methodist Church  
410 First Avenue North  
Conover, NC 28613  
*Return Service Requested*

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Conover, NC

## **“DON'T FLY SOLO” WITH THE NEST**

Ladies of the church, please “fly by” The Nest on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> from 10am until noon in the Connor Family Life Center for our next get together. We will have a fun, Bible-based program and refreshments.

You can “fly solo” but we would love for you to bring a friend! If you haven't been to one of the events in the past, it is a fun way to get to know other ladies in the church and community. There is no need to bring anything with you. This is your time to be surrounded and encouraged by other women of faith!

RSVP to Jenny Harris at 828-358-5900 (text or call)



Answer to this week's Pastor's Quiz:

a. sympathetic  
(Luke 23:1-25; Matthew 27:11-26; Mark 15:1-15)

## **CHURCH STAFF**

Pastor	Rev. John Woods <b><a href="mailto:pastor@fmconover.org">pastor@fmconover.org</a></b> (828) 464-4635 (336) 480-4550 - cell 208 2nd St NE, Conover
Office Administrator / Financial Secretary	Robin Mays <b><a href="mailto:office@fmconover.org">office@fmconover.org</a></b>
Coordinator of Lay Ministries	Beth Woods <a href="mailto:woods777@aol.com">woods777@aol.com</a> (336) 480-4551 - cell
Music Director/Choir	Jon Rogers <a href="mailto:jsrogers99@gmail.com">jsrogers99@gmail.com</a> (828) 244-7019
Music Director/Praise Team/ Pianist	Shannon Rogers <a href="mailto:srog101@gmail.com">srog101@gmail.com</a> (828) 244-6124
Organist	Kevin Haney <a href="mailto:khaney01@gmail.com">khaney01@gmail.com</a> (704) 914-6510
Preschool Director	Julie Robinson (828) 466-3158 <b><a href="mailto:preschool@fmconover.org">preschool@fmconover.org</a></b>
Lead Nursery Worker	Pilar Tobar
Custodian	Luisa Toro Bryan
Church Office	(828) 464-4635
Website:	<a href="http://www.fmconover.org">www.fmconover.org</a>



## MORE NEWS TO USE



SCAN ME

### GMC Missions Workshop

Saturday, April 20 – 9 am – Noon

Many people have asked about how the Global Methodist Church will be structuring their missions programs. In keeping with the emphasis on local churches, the NC GMC is supporting congregations in NC by providing workshops all across the state. The purpose of these workshops is to help each church develop an intentional missions plan. Some churches choose to focus on local needs, while others are more interested in international missions. That's okay! This One Mission Society workshop will help each church have the best impact on their neighborhood, their city, or the world!

First Methodist Church of Conover will host one of these events on April 20 (Saturday) from 9-12. It will be open to churches all around us. We want anyone interested in missions of any type to plan to attend this workshop. We will have time together to cast vision and make plans for the mission work of First Methodist Church.

The QR code here will take you to the registration link OR you can find the registration link on our website: [www.fmconover.org](http://www.fmconover.org), on our Facebook page, on the NC GMC site at [www.gmcncpac.org/missions](http://www.gmcncpac.org/missions), OR you can email Beth Woods at [woods777@aol.com](mailto:woods777@aol.com) and the link will be emailed to you. Options!

We also need a few people who will help with setting up tables and preparing coffee, water, and light refreshments.

### Very Important Meeting for VBS!

April 21 – 6:30

If you have any interest at all in Children's Ministry in general, and VBS in particular, PLEASE plan to attend this planning meeting on Sunday, April 21 at 6:30 in the Conference Room. We need to set a date for VBS, choose a theme, and establish a volunteer base. We also need to briefly discuss other children's events for the rest of this year, and at least get them on the calendar. For questions, contact Beth Woods (336) 480-4551 or [woods777@aol.com](mailto:woods777@aol.com). Use this QR code to send an RSVP by text.

SCAN ME



### HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2024

Parents, if you have a **High School senior** who will be graduating this year, we are requesting that you notify Robin at 828-464-4635 or email her at [office@fmconover.org](mailto:office@fmconover.org).

We would like to know the following information:

Name

Address

High School of graduation

Thank you.



### Fellowship Meals at the Woods' Home

We have a few openings for the April Fellowship meals. You can check availability and

sign up on Signup Genius. Go to [www.signupgenius.com](http://www.signupgenius.com) and search by Beth's email address ([woods777@aol.com](mailto:woods777@aol.com)). A clickable link will also be posted on our Facebook page. We will set another round of dates for May and June soon. We will continue these as long as there is interest!

**Pastor John and Beth**

## EVEN MORE NEWS TO USE

### LIFE LINE SCREENING COMING MAY 16th

Life Line Screening, the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings, will offer affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings at First Methodist Church of Conover on Thursday, May 16, 2024. A package of four screenings to identify risk for stroke, heart disease and other chronic conditions will be offered:

#### **Carotid Artery Screening (Plaque)**

An ultrasound is performed to screen the carotid arteries (a pair of blood vessels in the neck that deliver blood to your brain) for buildup of fatty plaque. This buildup, called atherosclerosis, is one of the leading causes of stroke.

#### **Peripheral Arterial Disease Screening**

An Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) test is performed using blood pressure cuffs on the arms and legs. It is important to screen for PAD because it increases the risk of coronary artery disease, heart attack, or stroke.

#### **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)**

An ultrasound is performed to screen the abdominal aorta for the presence of an enlargement or aneurysm. AAA can lead to a ruptured aortic artery, which is a serious medical emergency.

#### **Atrial Fibrillation**

A 6-lead electrocardiogram (EKG) is performed by placing sensors on the arms and legs to screen for Atrial Fibrillation. AFib can lead to blood clots, stroke, and heart failure, and other heart-related complications.

These 4 vital screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete.

Register by calling toll free 1-844-591-7160, text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607 or online at <https://llsa.social/Hc>

Please see insert in last week's Newsletter.



## DON'T FORGET OUR MEMBERS IN NURSING FACILITIES AND OUR HOMEBOUND

**Rev. Dixon Adams - TerraBella Newton (Room B7)**

1088 Radio Station Road, Newton, NC 28658

**James Davis - Abernethy Laurels (Memory Care Center)**

255 Geitner Avenue, Newton, NC 28658



**Nell Johnson Kingston Residence**  
904 2nd Street NE, Apt. 109, Hickory, NC 28601  
(828) 328-9962 - landline (828) 228-7396 - cell

**Margaret Kilpatrick, Abernethy Laurels (Memory Care) (Room 2010)**

102 Leonard Avenue, Newton, NC 28658

**Rick Parker - Catawba Valley Living at Rock Barn (Room 107)**

**PO Box 1599, Conover, NC 28613**

(828) 381-4988 - Rick's cell (828) 381-7328 - Linda's cell

**Mary Ann Simpson - Abernethy Laurels (Room 138)**

102 Leonard Avenue, Newton, NC 28658

**Sybil Windsor - TerraBella Newton (Room C13)**

1088 Radio Station Road, Newton, NC 28658

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**Dottie Aycock-Harris - 1449 Brookstone Drive, Hickory, NC 28602**

(704) 460-4919 - Ron's cell phone  
noghost@bellsouth.net - email address

**John & Betsy Hemmings, 2537 Birdie Lane, Conover, NC 28613**

(828) 459-9444



**Lee Moritz, Sr., 103 County Home Road, Conover, NC 28613**

(828) 464-3383

**Dolores Setzer PO Box 1237, Conover, NC 28613**

(828) 256-1421

If you know of any members that should be added to our list, please contact the church office at (828) 464-4635.