



# First United Methodist Church

## Continuing in the face of a pandemic

Since 1872, First United Methodist Church of Laurinburg has been sharing the gospel despite all 2020 threw its way.

While many churches have closed their doors due to the pandemic, FUMC has continued to meet since May 31 in a limited capacity.

“We are still having both services,” said Senior Pastor Bobby Tyson. “We have them in different areas of the church, the first one is held in the fellowship hall while the other is held in the sanctuary. For those wanting to attend we ask that you wear masks and social distance.



We are offering the traditional services via Livestream.”

So, for those who cannot make it to the church, the church comes to them via social media. The 11 a.m. service can be found on YouTube at First United Methodist Church Laurinburg or on the church’s Facebook page at FUMC Laurinburg for those not comfortable going out or who are unable to.

Born in Laurinburg, Tyson, a third-generation Methodist preacher with about 14 in his family, came back to serve as senior pastor in May.

“It’s been strange and it’s made me a little bit anxious since I had heart transplant surgery just two years ago so I’m immunocompromised,” Tyson said. “But we are pushing through and I’m excited to be back doing ministry after my medical leave, so I have a little bit more excitement than most people probably would. I’m glad to be alive and serving the Lord even in a pandemic.”

He added it’s been different, as there is no nursery for the younger children and there was no Vacation Bible School this summer to help spread the word of God to the younger generation but he hopes there will be again soon.

For those who walk into the church are walking into history as the sanctuary was completed in 1918 and celebrated its Centennial Celebration of the sanctuary in December of 2018 and are welcomed with a small church feel. There is a sense of connectedness between members of the congregation who typically come together in everything from bible study to the children’s choir, though this year has put limits on how they can meet.

One thing the pandemic did not change was the Mission budget, said Tyson. The church works with Church Community Services of Scotland County to help those in need in the community through the food bank and those on the committee have continued to meet throughout the pandemic.

“Our number one emphasis is mission-oriented,” Tyson said. “Our first call is to make disciples from all socio-economic backgrounds and beliefs. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, emphasized Scriptural holiness of heart and life, and he practiced a theology of grace.”

The church holds two types of Sunday morning services: contemporary and traditional. The contemporary service begins at 8:30 a.m. accompanied by the praise team and the traditional service begins at 11 a.m. typically accompanied by a choir and pipe organ music. Due to COVID-19, the adult choir is reduced to small ensembles.

“We’ve been blessed despite everything that has happened this year,” Tyson said. “In the face of a pandemic we are continuing to meet and we will continue to make disciples ... know that at First Church, we listen and care for the flock; mind, body and soul. May the peace of Christ be with you and your family.”