

First United Methodist Church of Bartow

March 2026

Newsletter

VOLUME 31, ISSUE 3



Jesus saw them [us] following and asked, "What are you looking for?" -John 1:38

What are we looking for? Who do we follow? Why? As we continue on our Lenten journey talking about our understanding of who Jesus is, we will be looking at Jesus as our friend, teacher, healer, source of forgiveness and Messiah. On Easter, we will celebrate who Jesus is as resurrection and new life. These are some of the most beautiful ways that we understand who Jesus is.

At Homeland, as we remember the past and create new memories into the future, we will be talking about how Jesus is our friend using two scriptures from the gospel of John. The first story is from John 15 when Jesus calls the disciples his friends. He is sharing with them some of the hard truths of discipleship and letting them know that they have the right to understand what they have gotten into. The second reading is from John 21 and it is when Jesus is talking to Peter after his resurrection and asking Peter if he loves him. Jesus uses the word *agape* which means do you love me unconditionally and Peter responds by saying that he loves Jesus with *philia* which is brotherly love. Finally, Jesus meets Peter where he is and asks him if he loves him with brotherly love. Jesus does this because that's what Jesus does: he meets us where we are. And just like with Peter, Jesus does not leave us where he meets us, but helps us to move into a deeper relationship with God and each other.

We find this happening again and again as we talk about what we are looking for in our relationship with Christ. We have talked about seeing Jesus as the Lamb of God, one who delivers us and is a victorious protector. We have looked at our expectations of Jesus as king, prophet, fulfillment of the law, high priest, and light. These days are a journey of discovery where our expectations of Jesus and the reality of having a relationship with the living Christ meet. Often we find that we start in one place and grow into another.

Before the cross... Before Jesus' death... Before Easter morning... Before the world was changed, resurrection meant being brought back to physical life. This is what happens when Jesus resurrects Jairus's daughter and Lazarus. But when Jesus rises, there is a new understanding of resurrection. It is what Jesus tries to talk to Nicodemus about in John 3 when they discuss being born again by the Holy Spirit. This new life and resurrection is eternal and more than what a single lifetime can comprehend.

It is a new and abundant life that starts now. It is also a life lived more and more fully into God's perfecting love that changes us. It is a life, to quote Charles Wesley, that changes us "from glory into glory until in heaven we take our place."

As we continue on this journey, let us pray that we will all be changed. May we learn from the friendship of Jesus to love more than just "as a friend", but unconditionally, in all circumstances. May our teacher help us to have eyes to see, ears to hear, and minds to be learn, so that our hands and feet will reflect our hearts that love in ways that we may have never imagined. May we experience such healing of mind, body, and spirit that we are inspired to practice healing in the world around us. May this lead to a spirit of forgiveness that echoes Christ, who on the cross forgave us even as we, as part of humanity, were crucifying him.

Where we have been less than a loving friend, hardheaded, hard hearted, wounded and wounding, wanting forgiveness with unmerciful hearts, may this time and these days help us to acknowledge that, but not be resigned to it. So that by being open to the love of Christ and the empowering of the Holy Spirit we continue be changed into something new and glorious.

with Love in Christ,  -Pastor Missy

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CHOIR NOTES *by Sylvia Spencer, Choir Director*



🎵 "Choir Notes"

My life is full and a very large part of it is my Church. God has blessed me with a Church that I can serve my Lord and I am so ever grateful.



Because of Him
...Sylvia



The choir has been diligently at work this season! We are practicing hard for all the beautiful services each Sunday and during Holy Week!



Mark your calendars for these Special Events!

Join us at...

Homeland Heritage Park

249 Church Ave. Homeland, FL 33847

March 1, at 10:30 am

for Worship at the Church with a Covered Dish Lunch to follow in the Pavilion!



Spring forward 1 hour March 8

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead 1 hour when you go to bed on Saturday, March 7!



Lent and Easter Events

Wednesday Night Dinners

Wednesday Night Dinners are Soups and Sandwiches throughout Lent. Sign-ups are in the Sanctuary, at WND, and through the Church Office.

Palm Sunday Service: March 29, 10:30 am
in the Sanctuary



Stations of the Cross: March 30-April 2,
9:30 am—2 pm at **Mulberry UMC** in their Sanctuary

You are invited to walk through an interactive experience remembering the final hours of Jesus' life.



Maundy Thursday Love Feast: April 2, 6 pm
Join us in the Fellowship Hall as we remember Jesus' last meal.

Good Friday Crosswalk: April 3

Meet at Access Church at 11:45 am to begin walking to meet at NOON in Fort Blount Park.



Good Friday Tenebrae Service:
April 3, 6 pm
in the Sanctuary



Easter, April 5

Community Easter Sunrise Service at 7 am
in Mosaic Park



Traditional Easter Service & Communion
in our Sanctuary at 10:30 am

*Don't forget your flowers
for the Flower Cross!*



Through **NURTURE AND DISCIPLESHIP** we grow in our relationship with God in *Jerusalem*, our own church, and beyond through study, prayer, & service.



Adult Sunday School



9 am in the
Annex Sunday School Room



Women's Bible Study

March 2, 12:30 pm

(notice new start time!)

870 Lila Street in Bartow

Questions? Contact Jenny at 863-205-6129
or the Church Office at 862-533-0904

*We welcome new members!
Bring a salad or sandwich!*



Tuesday Breakfast & Devotions



At Broadway Diner
8:30 am

Questions? Call Walt at 215-237-7985

Grief Support

Has been postponed.



Keep an eye out for updates in the Bulletin, Website, and Social Media.

If you are interested in participating when our next group begins, or you would like a book to read on your own, you can contact Faye at 863-537-0312 or the Church Office at 862-533-0904 or firstumcbartow@aol.com

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER

6pm in the Fellowship Hall

*We will be doing soups &
sandwiches for Lent \$2*

MAR 4 ~ MAR 11 ~ MAR 18 ~ MAR 25



*Don't forget to RSVP to the Church
Office the Monday before!*

Congregational Care Team

This group oversees nurture within the life of the church. If you enjoy caring for others through cooking, cards, calls, crafting, driving, helping, or listening, there is something in this group for YOU!

We Care Visitation

Part of Congregational Care, this group reaches out through calls, cards, texts and even little gifts they create! **Interested?** Contact the Church Office to know more.



ACROSS THE COURTYARD

by Nadine Waters Robbins, Church Historian



Nadine's gift for connecting the present to the past and future of our church is one we continue to learn from and will share for a bit longer. Below is another archive edition of "Across the Courtyard" from March 2023.

At last month's FUMC Planning Retreat, "Going to Homeland" was brought up. A twice yearly Sunday at Home land , followed by "dinner on the grounds" with fresh corn on the cob has been a long– standing tradition among our congregation. One of the "casualties" of the Pandemic was the cessation of this gathering.

"Post– Pandemic Parishioners" were not quite clear as to the "attraction" of Homeland Sundays. Why Homeland? In an ATC article around 15 years ago, I related our Methodist connection to Homeland.

"The first Methodist building in Polk County, located about half a mile west of the present Homeland Methodist Church was a small church named Bethel. But long before this Bethel Church was built there was a Methodist organization established in 1859 which worshipped at the old Peas Creek Campground, a mile or so southeast of the present church. Before the Bethel church was built Methodists held services in the Schoolhouse on the first and third Sundays of each month and at the campground on alternate Sundays. In 1894 nineteen years after Bethel Church was built, a permanent campground of 40 acres was donated to the church by James B. Crum, however no deed was made and the land was later sold to various parties. Also around this time the name "Bethel" was changed to Homeland. A young Irish peddler named McCormick came to the area from Georgia. The beauty of the place so reminded him of his native Ireland that he called it "Homeland" and the name

was immediately adopted. The construction of the present church building was begun in September of 1887. An item about Homeland in an old Bartow newspaper dated September 14, 1887 read, "Arrangements have been made to begin the erection of a Methodist church at once. The building will be similar to the Presbyterian Church in Bartow, only considerably larger and will cost around \$2,000. This will be the finest church in the county." The church was not completed until 1889.

Services continued to be held in the sanctuary throughout the years. In the Bartow paper published in September 1930, we find an account of a "Joyful Occasion" at Homeland. This was a homecoming of the families who in some cases represented the three generations who helped to build this church and community."

Although an FUMC revival of this "Joyful Occasion" is "off the table" for now (due to new park regulations, etc.) perhaps we may be able to "gather round the table" at Homeland sometime in the "not– so– distant" future.

By the time some of you read this, we will have worshipped, picnicked and enjoyed some wonderful corn at Homeland once again. Even as old memories are shared, new memories will be shaped. The ties that bind us in Christian love, the love and unity we experience in Christ, continue to grow and strengthen us to this day!

Speaking of Growth...

Our church is offering two part-time positions within our Children and Youth Ministries:

Sunday Nursery Worker

(2 hours a week 10 am - 12 pm on Sundays)

and also a

Coordinator for Children & Youth Ministries

(10 hours a week total to include Sunday mornings with other days/times to be negotiated)

If you know of someone interested, please have them contact the Church Office for more details.



Who loves Jesus? WE DO!

Who loves Children WE DO!



And we help children learn about the love of Jesus and share that love with others!

We know that "We love because God first loved us"



We know that "Jesus is our friend" and that it is a joy to have "the love of Jesus down in our hearts."



And we know that "love is something if you give it away because you end up having more" to share!

If you want to be a part of helping our children, not just know about, but live out these truths, talk to the Pastor about volunteering with the children or youth!

VBS will be June 15-19
Watch for Registration & Volunteer Sign-Ups coming soon!

We really want to do dramas this year! If you would like to act in a short drama for one or more days, watch for sign-ups or contact the Church Office.

Ways we are the body of Christ as Jerusalem and Judea with Children and Youth!

Children



Our children don't just participate in Worship on Children's Sunday



Children's Moments are an exciting part of worship!



...and soon we will have pictures of Children's Church to add!

Youth Thursdays 3-5 pm

Our Youth were busy in early February (as well as the rest of the month!). Some of them came to help bake Brownies and Blondies for the Argentina Mission Luncheon Brownie Bar on Feb 8.



As a group we helped out the children by decorating hearts for the kids to hand out on Children's Sunday, Feb 8.



It's not all cooking, crafts, and lessons. Sometimes we take a break to play Up Jenkins, Sleeper, or Whomp It.



And if all else fails, a snack will never go to waste!



Fellowship Events

NEXT LUNCH BUNCH at *Charm City*

March 8 at 12 pm

RSVP to the Church Office by Mon, March 2, noon



Pictures from our February Lunch Bunch at The Social Plate! We had a fun time trying a new place!

Silver Saints is looking for a coordinator! If you are interested, please contact the Church Office at 863-533-0904 or firstumcbartow@aol.com

Easter Lilies \$10 each

Orders due by **Wednesday, March 18, 12 pm**



These lilies will be Florist Quality, 6-inch pots with a decorative cover. To purchase, fill out this form and enclose it with cash or a check made out to **FUMC Bartow (Write "Easter Lily" on the memo line)** in an envelope and place it in the offering plate or drop it off at the Church Office.

If you are using **Zelle**, please include "**Easter Lily**" in the notes and **email** the information below to us! THANK YOU!

Please be sure to **print your name and designate** if the lily is to be purchased "to the glory of God" or "in memory of" or "in honor of" someone.

All who purchase lilies may take them home to enjoy after our Easter service.

_____ **TO THE GLORY OF GOD**

_____ **IN MEMORY OF** _____

_____ **IN HONOR OF** _____

_____ **TOTAL NUMBER OF LILIES TO BE PRESENTED AND TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: \$** _____

DONOR'S NAME: _____

First Methodist School



Andrea and Nate are having fun as their classes prepare for Valentine's Day!

The older students are getting ready in their own way.



It's time to check out what is in the Valentine mailbags!



The Music Program held their Valentine's Program on February 19th. The older students MC'd, recited scripture, and sang with the other participating classes.



Kindergarten is hard at work with Mrs. Fort... and the Third grade with Mr. Wright!

*In early March our students participate in standardized testing. Please keep our children in prayer during this time.
THANK YOU*

REACHING OUT... To minister with friends we know

Ways we are the body of Christ in the world through Mission Outreach Evangelism!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Some of our friends have exciting events coming up!

March 8, 2:30 pm:

Lakeland Concert Band Concert
4450 Harden Blvd, Lakeland, 33813

4 pm:

Heartland Pops Spring Concert
33631 Grand Prix Dr, Sebring 33872

May 5, 7:30 pm:

Hollingsworth Winds Concert
1100 Johnson Ave, Lakeland 33803

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! - Psalm 95:1

Help Set Up or Bring Food for the LOVE FEAST

Thur, April 2 at 6 pm

Help with Set up starting at 5 pm...or bring...

- Bread** (any variety),
- Cheese** (cut in cubes or planks)
- Grapes** (washed in small bunches or single)
- Olives** (Green, Greek, or Black),
- Dried Fruit** (figs, dates, or apricots),
- and **Nuts** (walnuts, almonds, pecans).
- and
- Apples** (sliced in preserving juice),

Please sign up in the back of the Sanctuary or contact the Church Office.

Please bring all FOOD **except apples (please bring them Thursday)** to Worship Sun, Mar. 29 or to the Church Office (9 am– 2pm) by Wed, Apr 1.

Classifieds



Will Alderman, our very own AV Person, has a Photography business!

Capture the beauty in everyday life.



✦ Whether it's your pet's personality, a quiet family moment, or a creative portrait just because your memories deserve to be seen.

📷 I specialize in finding the perfect composition to make your photos pop – and I can even enhance or restore old or damaged images.

✍️ I also offer custom menus, signage, and graphic design for your home, events, or business.

☎️ (904) 263-2296 ✉️ Willderman@gmail.com
Let's create something meaningful.



Did you notice the lovely new short sidewalk between the Frost law office parking lot and the sidewalk in front of the Sanctuary?

That work was carried out by Jordan Reynolds:



A great guy and Certified Handyman!
(872) 344-7585
jlrcustomworks@gmail.com

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS

Connectional Giving (Apportionments)

Helps fund ministries like...

Episcopal Fund

Pays for the expenses of all active bishops and for the support of retired bishops and spouses, both in the USA and also for the missionary bishops around the world.



Bishop Berlin

Bishops' Salaries and Benefits – The episcopal Fund provides salaries, moving expenses, pension, disability coverage, medical insurance and professional travel expenses for bishops.

Episcopal Office and Residence – This fund helps support the cost of the Episcopal residences, as well as, operating expenses for the Episcopal Office.

Want to give online? It's easy and free!

Talk to your bank about how to **ZELLE** your tithes, offerings, and other gifts directly from your bank account to the church's bank account.

Use the email address firstumcbartow@aol.com to give!

THANK YOU!

Grace Notes



Thank You to everyone who helped with the Mission Luncheon for Argentina! We

had all ages helping and the great food and beautiful decorations were proof of the hard work you all put in! Thank you!

Thank you to those who participated in our Blood Drive on Feb 22! We are so thankful for all of your time and efforts!

Thank You to David B and Mike E for helping with my house and garden!

- Dorothy T



Have a "Thank you" Grace Note you want to share? Email the church office at firstumcbartow@aol.com

Witnessing to Christ in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria



Winner for SOUP-er BOWL SUNDAY!

It was a close match, but the winner of our 2026 SOUP-er Bowl Sunday, with **53** cans, was....

Team B with the **BLUE** bucket!

We also collected **49** cans from Team A with the red bucket,
AND **39** cans from the back of the Sanctuary!
That makes **141** cans collected in total! **GO TEAM!!**

*We also collected **7** jackets, **4** blankets,
2 pairs of socks, **21** hygiene items,
and **two bags** of clothing!*

*All donations have been taken to the
Bartow Community Service Center.*



51 Children's Way, Enterprise, FL 32725

Day of Hope

Thursday, March 19

We're planning a visit to Residing Hope for their **Day of Hope**. There will be a tour, breakout sessions, activities, and lunch provided!

*Sign-up sheet is in the back of the Sanctuary.
Please specify if you are able to be a driver for carpool or if you are planning on driving yourself. **Thank you!***

The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."


—Matthew 25:40

AND REACHING FURTHER OUT...


Ways we are the body of Christ in Judea and to the ends of the earth!



The Easter bunny is coming and he needs our help!
There will be a basket in the back of the Sanctuary for candy donations (NO CHOCOLATE). All donations will be donated for the Community Easter Egg Hunt on Apr 4.



Watch for a date to help prepare Easter Egg Baskets at the Episcopal Church in late March




We are close to finalizing the details of our Relationship Building Mission to Argentina.

If you are still in discernment about going, please talk to the Pastor immediately.

Our estimated dates are **June 28-July 10**

First Quarter Mission Luncheon for ARGENTINA

We were so busy, this is the only picture we took!



We had a great time with our Salad, Baked Potato, and Brownie Bars!

With YOUR help, we raised \$243 for the Argentina Mission!



We had **4** donors at our last Blood Drive on Feb 22!
 We were able to impact a total of **12 lives** here in our local Community! Watch the Newsletter, Bulletins, Website, & Social Media for information on our next Blood Drive!



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BARTOW

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1—Greg W
7—Lynn S
10—Ina O
16—Troy W
17—Joanne C
18—Chad J
20—Elizabeth R

24—Brandon P
Cadence V
27—Amanda B
Marvin H

Happy Birthday!

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

11—Ken & Bonnie A
18—Gene & Marsha W

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching.” ~ Hebrews 10:24-25

Large print bulletins can easily be made!
Contact the church office if you would prefer a
LARGE PRINT BULLETIN!

PLEASE NOTE

Information OR PICTURES for the April Newsletter should be submitted by **Monday, March 16th**. Thank You for helping us send out the Newsletter in a timely manner!

The Newsletter is published monthly by FUMC-Bartow 455 S Broadway Ave, Bartow, FL 33830.

Please remember these in your prayers, visits, and other expressions of Christian love.

The Chronically Ill and Homebound

Alice
Diane A
Ken A
Brian—*safety*
Laura & John B
Amanda B
Susan B
Shirley & Jonathon B
Diane B—*healing & discernment*
Maggie C—*healing*
Daphne—*healing*
Shawn F
Lyda F—*Pat H's grandniece*
Cathy G
Karel H
Brandon H
Melody H
Pat H—*healing*
Jasmine—*4 yr old, doing well!*
John M
Allye M
Dorrance M—*health*
Kathy M—*healing*
Becky O

Carolyn P
Mary Beth P—*health*
Heath P—*healing*
Brenda R—*Missy's mom*
Sadie
BJ S
Gary T—*Kelly Z's friend, healing*
Jean & Dick T
Laura W—*health & comfort*
Greg W
John Z

-All leaders to do God's will
-Everyone affected by sickness, hunger around the world, repressive governments, gun violence, and natural & human caused disasters

Also on our hearts:
Our Nation, Cuba, Haiti, Israel, Palestine, Sudan, Ukraine, & Venezuela

Serving in the Military:

Brandon A, Oscar A, Jeremy B, Victor O, Joseph S, Bryson T

Missionaries and Others:

Sister Church: Iglesia Metodista de Santa Cruz del Sur, Cuba; **Missionaries in Angola:** Leo & Cleivy Garcia, Kutela Katembo, Serguey and Graciela Espinosa; **Iglesia Evangelica Metodista Argentina:** UMC Missionary Doug Williams & First IEM Mendoza Pastor Alejandro; Our Pastor, Church, & School Staff; District Supt. Emily Hotho, & Bishop Tom Berlin

Don't Forget! The **Newsletter** is available in a variety of ways! Printed copies are on the table in the back of the Sanctuary and in the **Church Office** in the Education Building.

It can be found in digital format in the **EMAIL** the church sends out with it attached each month AND the **website:** firstumcbartow.com.

If you wish to receive a newsletter by mail, please contact the church office at firstumcbartow@aol.com or 863-533-0904.

Thank you!

MARCH 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 *10:30 am: Worship at Homeland & Communion (see pg. 2)	2 Chapels 12:30 pm: Women's Bible Study (see pg. 4)	3 8:30 am: Breakfast & Devo, Broadway Diner 5:30 pm: Choir	4 6 pm: WND	5 3 pm-5 pm: Youth	6	7
8 9 am: Adult Sunday School *10:30 am: Worship 12 pm: Lunch Bunch at Charm City (see pg. 8)	9 Chapels	10 8:30 am: Breakfast & Devo, Broadway Diner 5:30 pm: Choir	11 6 pm: WND	12 3 pm-5 pm: Youth	13 11:30 am: FMS Early Release	14
15 9 am: Adult Sunday School *10:30 am: Worship	16	17 Happy St. Patrick's Day!  8:30 am: Breakfast & Devo, Broadway Diner 5:30 pm: Choir	18 6 pm: WND	19 3 pm-5 pm: Youth	20	21
FMS CLOSED for Spring Break ~ Day Care OPEN						
22 9 am: Adult Sunday School *10:30 am: Worship	23 Chapels	24 8:30 am: Breakfast & Devo, Broadway Diner 5:30 pm: Choir	25 6 pm: WND	26 3-5 pm: Youth	27	28
29 Palm Sunday 9 am: Adult Sunday School *10:30 am: Worship	30 Chapels	31 8:30 am: Breakfast & Devo, Broadway Diner 5:30 pm: Choir	1	2 3 pm: Youth 6 pm: Love Feast (see pg. 3)	3 FMS, Preschool, & Day Care CLOSED 12 pm: Crosswalk (see pg. 3) 6 pm: Tenebrae Service	4 Community Easter Egg Hunt (time TBA)
Stations of the Cross at Mulberry UMC 9:30 am—2 pm						
Holy Week						

* in the Sanctuary, on Facebook, and by Monday on YouTube



**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BARTOW, FLORIDA**

455 S Broadway Ave.
Bartow, FL 33830

MARCH, 2026

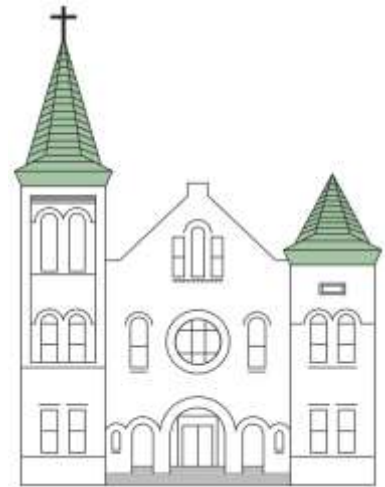
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<https://www.facebook.com/fumcbartow>
YouTube: First Methodist Bartow
Instagram: fumcbartow

www.firstumcbartow.com

Witnessing to Christ empowered by the Spirit in Bartow & beyond

IMPORTANT DATES IN THE FUTURE:

MAR 30-APR 2: STATIONS OF THE CROSS AT MULBERRY UMC
MAUNDY THURSDAY, APR 2, 6 PM: LOVEFEAST IN FELLOWSHIP HALL
GOOD FRIDAY, APR 3, 6 PM: TENEBRAE SERVICE IN SANCTUARY
APR 4, TIME TBA: COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT
EASTER SUNDAY, APR 5:
7 AM: COMMUNITY EASTER SUNRISE AT MOSAIC PARK
10:30 AM: WORSHIP & COMMUNION
JUNE 15-19, 9 AM-12 PM: VBS



Missy Turbeville Pastor
Aidan Reed Administrative Assistant
Sylvia Spencer Pianist/Accompanist &
Choir Director
Will Alderman Audio/Visual Technician
Ernesto Fonseca Sanctuary/Annex Custodian

BE IN PRAYER FOR...

Those living in conflict & separated from loved ones

Did you know we have **Facebook** and **YouTube** pages as well as an **Instagram** feed?
Share with your friends as you “Follow” us and watch services at First United Methodist Church Bartow, Fl on Facebook and First Methodist Bartow on YouTube, and follow us on Instagram at firstumcbartow.