



**FIRST**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# A NEW *Focus*

September, 2022 | Issue 9

## IMPROV AND THE GOSPEL

If you know anything about improv the thing you're likely to know is its first rule: Yes, and... When you're teamed with performers on a stage trying to improvise a scene, nothing kills it quicker than a member of the troupe who tries to bend the story their direction. Good improv involves thinking the best of your fellow performers and being willing to enter into the reality they are in. Then you add your unique gift. In essence, it's saying "Yes, I agree with that and here's what I have to share." Master that and you're off to comedy gold.



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CHARLOTTESVILLE

What if the ministry of the church is like improv? We refuse to stay cooped up behind the walls, we become curious about the lives of our neighbors, believing that God wants the best for them, and we enter into the reality of their lives bringing our own gifts to bear. We say "yes" to the world. "And..."

It reminds me of the way God operates. God says a resounding "Yes, this is good" over creation. And God comes to be in the world, redeeming it from all that hinders life.

Les Carpenter in his recent book, *The Gospel According to Improv: A Radical Way of Creative and Spontaneous Living*, [Morehouse, 2022], says, "The choice to share the reality of those who are suffering is the logic of the Incarnation itself. 'Meeting people where they are' isn't just a good strategy. It is salvation's root."



**Hinton Avenue**  
United Methodist Church  
Charlottesville, Virginia

It's tempting, when we are in seasons of great change and dislocation, to turn inward and to try to create realities where we have a little more control. The invitation of the gospel is to turn outward, let go, and trust that God is already present on the scene waiting for us to add what we have to offer.

This will be an exciting season for First UMC and Hinton Ave. UMC as our leadership groups hear from the Transition Team and take new steps in ministry. Will we be taken beyond our comfort zones? Yes. And...there are wonders for us yet to behold.

I'm glad we're on this journey together.

*- Alex Joyner*

## MÈSI ANPIL FROM HAITI MISSION FOUNDATION

Alex Pettigrew

Mèsi anpil means "thank you very much!" – and comes to us from The Haiti Mission Foundation and our brothers and sisters in Haiti. All are so very grateful for the donation of so many tubes of various medications for their recent July trip to the medical clinic. During that trip they saw 2520 total patients, 1348 of them were children and 1172 adults. They look forward to receiving the t-shirt totes we will collect and create for our September ONE THING MINISTRY! These bags are given out to the clients to carry the supplies they are given at the clinic.



## THE ONE THING MINISTRY

The **September** ONE THING MINISTRY will ask everyone to bring in old t-shirts! Yes, you read that correctly! These shirts will then be crafted easily into tote bags to send to the Tovar Clinic in Grison-Garde, Haiti through the Haiti Mission Foundation and be given to the clients to carry their medicines and supplies home. This is a local non-profit that sends volunteer medical teams to Haiti four times a year. Several FUMC members have served on these teams. You will have an opportunity to help make these bags in the very near future! The shirts can be left in the red tubs found throughout the church. Thanks in advance!

**October:** adult coloring books, word search books, crossword puzzle books, and sudoku books for the local hospitals to give to patients.

**November:** donations will go toward UVA Hospital's "Stuff the Stockings" project. More info will come about what is needed later. If you are interested in helping to actually create the handmade stockings ahead of time, the directions and pattern will be in the Welcome Center. Please consider this very worthy cause!

**December:** Cville SOCKLOVE will be the beneficiary! Start looking for those sock sales now!



## NAMETAGS

As we get to know each other, please remember to wear your name tag! They can be found at the Welcome Center Door and at the Front Entrance (whichever is most convenient for you) If you don't have a nametag or have misplaced yours, simply request one on a prayer card found in the pews or contact carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org Try to remember every Sunday to talk to someone you have not met yet. With the coming together of two close knit congregations, it is SO important that we get to know each other. What a joy to have this opportunity!



**WE OFFER OUR CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS JANET REUSING, GEORGE TAYLOR, HK SANDRIDGE, AND CAROLYN JANICZEK AS WE MOURN THEIR PASSING. OUR PRAYERS GO TO ROBBIE AND PATRICIA HOTT IN THE PASSING OF ROBBIE'S MOTHER.**

## 1ST ANNUAL CHARLOTTESVILLE COOPERATIVE PARISH ARTS & CULINARY FESTIVAL!

**Saturday, November 19, 2022, 9am – 4pm**

Christmas gift shopping to include arts and crafts and much more. Lunch, snacks, and drinks available for purchase. Come enjoy great fellowship!

Would you consider donating a baked good or dessert to the Festival? Interested in being a vendor? \$25 per table rental. Proceeds to benefit First United Methodist Preschool.

For more info, to register as a vendor, or to donate baked goods contact carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org.



## PIZZA, CRAFT, AND GAME NIGHT! SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 5:00PM

All ages are invited to join in fun and fellowship as we eat pizza, play a variety of board games, and craft our t-shirt totes for Haiti. If you don't like to play games, just come eat and fellowship! If you don't like pizza or games, come anyway and help make these very simple totes...no sewing involved, just cutting and tying! Have a favorite game? Bring it! Questions? carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org.



## HYMNS AND PINTS TO RETURN ON SEPTEMBER 29!

We raised our voices and pints in song and celebration at this recent event and it was so much fun!

Let's do it again on Sept.29 at 7:00pm at Random Row on Preston Ave.!



## HINTON AVENUE UMC FINANCIAL BOX SCORE

	July 2022 YTD Actual	July 2022 YTD Budget	Amt Over (Under) Budget	July 2021 YTD Actual	\$ Change
<b>Total Income</b>	\$109,933	---	---	\$97,853	\$12,080
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	\$107,203	\$130,840	(\$23,637)	\$107,773	(\$570)
<b>Net Income (Deficit)</b>	\$2,730	---	---	(\$9,920)	\$12,650

## FUMC FINANCIAL BOX SCORE

	July 2022 YTD Actual	July 2022 YTD Budget	Amt Over (Under) Budget	July 2021 YTD Actual	\$ Change
<b>Total Income</b>	\$327,930	\$373,975	(\$46,045)	\$337,353	(\$9,423)
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	\$363,056	\$364,971	(\$1,915)	\$325,257	\$37,799
<b>Net Income (Deficit)</b>	(\$35,126)	\$9,004	(\$44,130)	\$12,096	(\$47,222)

## HINTON AVENUE'S LIBERIAN CONNECTION

Fred Schneider

Some six years ago, a Liberian family came to Hinton Avenue at the suggestion of a Liberian friend of theirs, Tommy George, who was the church's custodian. David and Cecelia Dorbor were here in Charlottesville with their daughters, 7-year-old Grace and 1-year-old Lomei, to obtain medical care for Grace from the University Medical Center. Grace had been born in rural Liberia in 2009 with a condition known as omphalocele, where her intestines and part of her liver developed outside her abdomen. Not only was medical expertise to treat Grace's condition lacking in Liberia—even in the capital city of Monrovia—but the local tribal leaders who practiced voodoo saw Grace's birth as a bad omen and demanded that her parents give her over to be killed. When David and Cecelia refused to do so, they were ostracized, beaten, and threatened with death themselves.

What made this situation so highly charged was that David was a Christian pastor, and his defiance challenged not only the authority of the tribal leaders themselves but their system of beliefs. David had started five congregations in his rural community of Grand Bassa, and his ministry was seen as drawing support away from the practice of voodoo.

Working through various Christian mission aid groups, David and Cecelia were able to bring one-year-old Grace to this country in 2010, where she received the medical attention she needed, and then again four years later, both times at Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville. In between, they returned to Liberia and their five other children ranging in age from 3 to 20. Unfortunately, Grace's successful treatment in the U.S. did not stop the threats to David, Cecelia, and their family. Before returning to Vanderbilt in 2014, they placed the remaining children with various family members in and around Monrovia for their safety.

Following Grace's second round of treatments in Nashville, the family moved to Chicago, Philadelphia and finally to Charlottesville (where David had a cousin) because of the presence of the University of Virginia Medical Center. Their decision to make a home in this country meant extended separation from their son and four other daughters. However, with their safety in jeopardy should they return to Liberia, they focused their efforts on obtaining asylum in America. It was during this time that their seventh child and sixth daughter, Lomei, was born.

Once introduced to the Hinton Avenue congregation, the four Dorbors were not only warmly received but supported by numerous members of the church in their various immigration efforts: receiving Temporary Protected Status, obtaining work authorization cards, and applying for asylum. Persevering through changes in government administrations, work overloads and processing slowdowns at USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services), and disruptions from the COVID pandemic has been a challenge. However, in 2018 Grace was the first to be granted asylum—on medical grounds—followed this year by her permanent resident status (green card).

David, Cecelia and the girls left Charlottesville for Columbus, Ohio, last summer, drawn by better employment opportunities, lower housing costs, and other family connections. Since that time, both parents have received their green cards and now, a year later, have been approved for citizenship. By the time you read this, Cecelia will have been sworn in as a new citizen, and David hopes to follow suit shortly thereafter. They continue to have strong emotional ties, however, to Charlottesville and their Hinton Avenue church family. They hope to pay a return visit to town in the near future to give thanks with us for all that God has done to make their American journey possible. Please stay tuned and plan to join in this celebration when the time comes!

*PS: While Irene, my wife and I were away on vacation last month, we had an opportunity to visit the Dorbors in Columbus. Here are a few photos to introduce them (and us) to you. In a future newsletter, I hope to bring you up to date on the status of the other five Dorbor children.*



## FRIENDS OF THE PORTICO CAFÉ

Lisa Hanrahan

You can help keep the Portico Cafe a vital part of our after worship experience by joining 'Friends of the Portico Cafe'. Contact Lisa Hanrahan (ligrhanrah@aol.com or 434-245-1764) for more details if you would like to be an FOPC and can contribute in one or more of the following ways: set up, serve, clean up, or provide refreshments.



## LTL IS BACK! (WHAT'S THAT, YOU ASK?)

### Last Thursday's Lunch on September 29th!

The Nurture Committee is happy to announce the return of Last Thursday's Lunch. With some new twists to encourage all women, of all ages to come.

**WHAT:** On the very last Thursday of each month, FUMC and HAUMC women will gather for fellowship over their "brown bag" lunch, brought from home or their favorite deli.

**WHEN:** Thursday, September 29th, 11:30 (usually held on the last Thursday of every month, holidays excluded)

**WHERE:** At First UMC in either the Gathering Space or Fellowship Hall

**WHY:** To meet with women we know and some we don't know; to share a time of fellowship, laughter, conversation and new friendships; to savor time to listen to each other. There will be no formal program.

**RSVP:** Since we are meeting at church, no formal RSVP is needed.

*If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Joan Ashley ashletj@aol.com 540-832-6168*



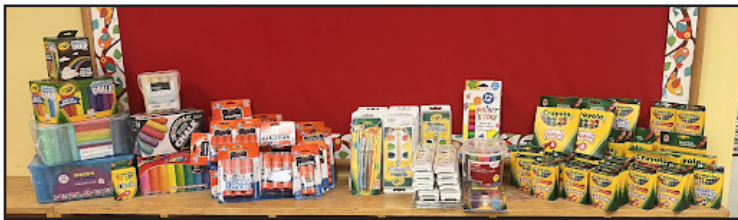
## FIRST UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL (FUMP) IS READY TO START ANOTHER YEAR!

Kristen Breslin, Director



As if FUMP isn't wonderful already, now they are growing and adding a **Transitional Kindergarten Class** beginning this school year. The class is taught by a former FUMC preschooler, Erica (Newberry) Reistma. This is being offered for those children that need more time before starting a full day Kindergarten, those that miss the

birth date cut off by a just a little, or for parents that just want to have the option of a half day program. Erica will be using Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies and the children will be able to go to full day Kindergarten or First grade after this Transitional Kindergarten year. Tell your friends, co-workers, and neighbors!



The FUMP staff wants to say a big **THANK YOU** for all the school supplies that were donated through the **ONE THING MINISTRY!** We are blown away by the generosity of our church family! Teacher work week starts on August 29th and the sweet children start arriving on September 6th. There is a lot to be done to get ready. If you would like to come and help in any way, please contact Director, Kristen Breslin at [fump@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:fump@cvillefirstumc.org) or 770-744-6873. We can't wait to tell you all about what we do this year in preschool!



## NOTES FROM THE MUSIC MINISTRY

Kevin White, Minister of Music

Choir, praise band, hand bells, small ensembles, guest soloists/instrumentalists.....there are many ways to get involved with the music ministry here at Charlottesville Cooperative Parish! Being a part of this ministry is like having a job that you love because we have fun, share joys & concerns, and become a close-knit group who truly cares for one another, as we work hard to learn and rehearse music to be used for worship!

Watch the bulletin for startup dates and times for Hand Bells and other various opportunities like this.....

**FUMC Women's Choir** - Calling all women interested in singing but cannot commit to rehearsals on a long term basis. Come on Tuesdays at 7:30pm for 3 weeks to rehearse an anthem offering for the near future! Questions? [carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org).

**As always.....our motto is "Expect the Unexpected!"**  
Questions? [kevinwhite@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:kevinwhite@cvillefirstumc.org)



## GENTLE FLOW YOGA STARTING SEPTEMBER 7



Gentle Flow Yoga will be offered at FUMC in the gathering space on Wednesday afternoons at 2:30 pm for \$10 per session starting on September 7. All are welcome!

Gentle Flow Yoga helps the body release tension and restores an overall sense of balance to the body, the mind, and the soul. These yoga sessions are suitable for anyone new to yoga or with years of practice.

Together, we will practice yoga together for 60 minutes using simple flowing sequences to warm up the body. These yoga sessions will focus on alignment, strength, balance, and flexibility. Modifications (such as chairs) and props (blocks, bolsters, pillows) will be suggested and can be used to make this yoga accessible to all ages.

If you are interested in practicing yoga together in person or online with your FUMC/HAUMC family and friends, please email Lara Upton at [silverfeatheryoga@gmail.com](mailto:silverfeatheryoga@gmail.com) to reserve your space.

Lara was first introduced to yoga over 20 years ago. She currently has her 200 hour certification and is working towards her 500 hour certification.



## HOMEBOUND COMMUNION MINISTRY

World Communion Sunday is celebrated the first Sunday every October. The tradition was begun in 1933 by Hugh Thomson Kerr, a minister at Shadyside Presbyterian Church. It soon spread to other denominations, and in 1940 the Federal Council of Churches (now the National Council of Churches) endorsed World Communion Sunday and began to promote it to Christian Churches worldwide.

Like Baptism, Holy Communion is regarded as a sacrament. That is, it is an act of worship ordained by Christ and is a means of grace. This does not mean that we become anymore worthy of God's grace by taking part in Communion. Rather, we open ourselves to the Divine love that's already there; we become more ready to receive that love and to respond to it. In Communion we celebrate the final victory of Christ. We anticipate God's coming reign, God's future for this world and all creation. We are partners with God in creating this future and it is in Communion that we find the nourishment we need for the tasks ahead.

However, there are many who are unable to receive the grace of the sacrament at the table in church. Through the Homebound Communion Ministry, they can receive the Eucharist in their home or nursing community and join in Christian fellowship at the Lord's table. If you know of anyone who would like to be served, please notify Rev. Alex Joyner [alexjoyner@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:alexjoyner@cvillefirstumc.org) or Carolyn McGee [carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org). If you would like to be a server, please contact DeAnn Posey at 757-208-6998 or email [jwposey@me.com](mailto:jwposey@me.com)



## NEW FRIEND INTRODUCTION MEET BOB BRADEN

Meet Bob Braden. You might recognize him as that new guy standing up front with Carolyn McGee talking about Next Steps every Sunday morning or



as the awesome new bass in the choir! He grew up in Damascus, Maryland and was a PK (for those of you who don't know what that is, it's a preacher's kid!) - his father was a Methodist minister! Bob met his

wife Lisa in high school and they have been blessed with three awesome children, Bobby, Rachel, and Chris. Lisa is a PA and works at Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital in the orthopedics department.

After college Bob worked for IBM for several years, but today works for SHINE Management as the VP of Business Development and their sister company SHINE Systems as VP for Product Company Services. He loves his job but he REALLY, REALLY loves football! He started playing football when he was 7 years old and played up through college. He stated officiating in 1989 and just started his 34th year of officiating this year! Not only does he love officiating, but also "holding the chains" at UVA football games. He has been on the chain gang for 32 years!

Bob and Lisa were fortunate enough to be introduced to Hinton Avenue UMC by a co-worker of Lisa's. They have been long standing members of HAUMC since June of 1996 and he has been Lay Leader since 1997. Bob loves to sing and can sing with a coach's voice – loud and exuberant!

Bob says he has been blessed with the upbringing that he had, his special marriage with Lisa, and the awesome children they have raised. He is looking forward to being part of this new collaborative church and meeting new friends while he continues relationships with his "longer term – not old" friends! Be like Bob and love Jesus out loud!



## LOVE THE WHOLE CITY, LOVE THE CITY WHOLE STARTING RIGHT HERE WITH TIE DYE!



Fun was had by all as we gathered to tie dye our Love the Whole City Shirts! Don't have one yet? Let us know (\$12) [carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org) If your size is not available, put in a request and more will be ordered!



## NEW FRIEND INTRODUCTION MEET THE TASSELL FAMILY



Paul, (Dad) graduated from Va Tech and is an architect for the Gaines Group. Linde (Mom) is the fourth in the generation of women in her family to earn a degree from UVA. She teaches middle school girls math at Village School. We are blessed to see /hear Linde singing with the Praise Band and soloing in worship quite often!

Ainsley (9) likes to play with Daisy, read, have play dates with friends, watch movies, write, draw and paint, and do science experiments with her friends! Mabyn (6) likes to play games with her family, watch movies, sing, dance, and she also likes to do science experiments! Daisy (the dog!) is a pandemic shepherd-mix, rescue dog and very loved by the whole family!



Linde was a Girl Scout for eleven years as a young girl and Scouts mean a lot to her. Paul, was an Eagle Scout and they both knew they wanted their girls to have the opportunity to enjoy their own scouting experience. Linde co-leads a troop of a mixed level troop of 32 girls, K-4th grade. They meet at FUMC!

Be sure you get the opportunity to meet the Tassell Family. They are an important part of the future of the church!



## WELCOME TO THE NEW CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR LARA UPTON!

Lara Upton certainly is not new to FUMC as she has been an active and creative participant for years! She grew up Mennonite, in Maryland on a farm and REALLY enjoys hymn sings. She remembers fondly loving church camp in Pennsylvania and the songs she learned there still stay close to her heart. She can be seen at all of our Hymns and Pints events!



Lara has always enjoyed teaching Sunday school and volunteering in the nursery at the Mennonite Church. She has volunteered as Nurture Team Leader for several terms in both the Mennonite Church and FUMC. She has previously volunteered for and chaperoned youth retreats and planned our recent churchwide retreat at Penn Park (pre-COVID.)

As you get to know Lara, you will find that she loves the beach, camping, and generally just spending time outdoors! She will be happy to play a board game with you or suggest a good book for reading. Many of us have been the lucky recipient of one of her handcrafted note cards. She feels that is one way God calls on her to be an encourager of kindness. She is a certified YOGA instructor and hopefully you will be able to participate in her new GENTLE FLOW YOGA class starting on Wednesday afternoons at 2:30pm!

Lara wants us all to know that she is open for ideas of ways to connect with children and to support the parents of our youngest church members. [children@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:children@cvillefirstumc.org)

Let's extend a warm welcome to Lara Upton!



## CHURCH COUNCIL APPROVES SOLAR PANEL PLAN

Cindy Remington

The mail just arrived and there it is: the electric bill from all those summer days when it is just so beastly hot you need to turn the temperature in the house just a few degrees cooler. Or the bill from those cold spells in winter that forced you to wear an extra sweater and maybe bump up the thermostat just a teenie tiny bit. Maybe you are even wearing those battery-powered electric socks so you DON'T have to turn up the heat. (I hear they are a thing...not that I know from personal experience.)

You are pretty sure you have well-insulated the house but maybe you missed something. The ads for solar panels taunt you, tempting you to make the investment. It would be good for the climate, you tell yourself. It would be caring for God's creation.

Wait a minute. Isn't that the slogan of First Church's Creation Justice Team? There are people walking around the church wearing those round white buttons with those words on them, aren't there? Hmm. What to do...

We are all called to be Caretakers of God's Creation, just as those little round buttons claim. An important part of that in these days of global warming is to minimize our contributions of greenhouse gasses to the atmosphere. Our Trustees have been working on this problem for several years, resealing our ancient windows, transitioning to higher efficiency air conditioning and heating systems, and LED lighting.

Well, we received some very exciting news from the Trustees: They are investigating an even larger reduction in our carbon footprint by installing solar panels on the church roof!! At its August meeting the Church Council affirmed the plan and committed to pursuing it, aided by a pledge from a generous donor.

### I MEAN, YOU THINK YOUR HOUSE MIGHT BE LEAKING ENERGY? HOW ABOUT A BUILDING THAT IS AS OLD AS FIRST CHURCH??

There are some hurdles to jump to make it happen. Two issues to be addressed are securing approval from the Charlottesville Architectural Review Board and modifying the church wiring to accommodate solar power. The Green Team from Trustees is confident that both can be overcome. But don't expect to see solar panels on the roof any time soon: it could be a year before the installation begins.

We can Love the Whole City and Love the City Whole by helping make this project happen. We can be Caretakers of God's Creation by supporting this initiative and spreading the word. WE CAN SAVE NEARLY \$20,000 A YEAR ON OUR ELECTRICAL BILLS.

Did you get that? Twenty thousand dollars A YEAR. This investment is going to pay for itself in just a few years!

Now, maybe you can't get solar panels on your house yet. But what about helping get them on God's House?

Questions? Contact Cindy Poots Remington (mspoots@gmail.com) or Guy Moffat (rgmhvacconsulting@gmail.com). And watch this space for future announcements!



September 8, marks the first day of the return of The Women at the Well! This Thursday morning (9:30-11:00am) small group meets in the Fellowship Hall to study, share, and show God's love in servanthood projects. This semester the study will be "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World." by Joanna Weaver. ZOOM will be offered for anyone interested. Questions and ZOOM link, contact: carolynmcgee@cvillefirstumc.org



## YOUTH MINISTRY HAS BUSY SUMMER, LOOKS AHEAD TO A GREAT FALL

Dave Breslin, Youth Director

The Youth program (grades 6-12) kept rolling over the summer with numerous activities and events. We started off on a high note with our 2022 confirmation class ceremony in early June. Bi-Monthly ZOOM Bible studies on the book of Philippians gave youth group members the opportunity to meet together and discuss the Word of God.



Youth Group meetings continued throughout the summer during 10:00 services, and the youth did a terrific job serving at our church's soup kitchen on August 15th. This will become a regular event for our teens, as we will be serving our neighbors throughout the year when school calendars allow for us to do so.

Heading into the fall, the youth group looks to expand our programming as well as expand our group. We will continue to meet several Sunday mornings per month, and will also have numerous activities throughout the fall. We will kick off the year together at our annual Family Pool Party on Sunday, September 4th at the Dubendorfer home. In addition, plans are underway for the continuation of Pen Park Activity evenings, youth tailgates, and our annual King's Dominion trip in October. Also, we plan to bring back the Watermarks Fall retreat in October as well as run Trunk or Treat on Halloween Weekend. Our Fall Zoom study will kick off on September 14th. Keep up with the youth via weekly announcements and the church's website.

Leaders Dave, Patricia, and Robbie are excited for a tremendous year of growth and fun! Interested in helping with our youth? Contact Dave (davebreslin@cvillefirstumc.org) for information on how to get involved!



**HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY  
TO GEORGE HALE  
ON OCTOBER 15TH!**

