

July 2025

Rev. Jeff Bandy

937-372-7601 office@fcum.org www.fcum.org

9:00am- Sunday School

10:00am-Hospitality Time-Narthex

10:30am-Worship-Sanctuary

We are a Stephen Ministry Congregation

Attendance

Date	Worship	Sunday School
May 25	86	28
June 1	85	13
June 8	79	14
June 15	75	15

Rise Up: A Call to Pray and Respond

By Suzanne Bandy

At the end of May, I had the privilege of attending the West Ohio Conference's annual gathering. The theme this year was **"Rise Up,"** inspired by the story in *Mark 5:35-43*, where Jesus raises a young girl from the dead. Throughout the week, we heard powerful messages and testimonies that reminded me of a prayer I was inspired to write back in 2019 while serving in Fayette, OH. It was a prayer for revival—asking God to breathe new life into our dry bones. I often walked around the town praying this prayer, longing to see God awaken the community and the church. Since moving to Xenia, that prayer had faded into the background—until the conference reignited it in my heart.

Not long after, while browsing a book fair hosted at our church's community center, I noticed a book titled *Dry Bones*. The title immediately caught my attention. I shared my story with the author, D.L. Augustine, about the prayer I had once prayed. She encouraged me to take the book and read it. So, I did. The story was about ordinary people of faith, deeply attuned to the Holy Spirit. Though they didn't all know each

other, they each responded to God's call in their own way. As they prayed and obeyed, their paths converged in powerful and unexpected ways. They didn't have a roadmap or full understanding of what God was doing—but they said yes. And God moved mightily through their obedience. It made me reflect: **How often do we respond when God invites us to do something?** Are we spiritually awake enough to even recognize the invitation? Do we assume it's someone else's role—maybe the pastor's or a church leader's to respond?

Sometimes, I think the state of the Church today reflects a deeper issue: we've forgotten that **we are** the Church. We are God's children, empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring His kingdom to earth. Maybe, just maybe, we are the dry bones spoken of in Scripture. And maybe God is calling us—**all of us**—to rise up.

So, I extend this invitation to you: Join me in praying the prayer God placed on my heart years ago and has now stirred in me again. What might happen if we all prayed together? What might God do in us—and through us—if we simply respond? Let's rise up. Let's pray.

Lord, Abba father, cleanse us and give us a new heart. Put a new spirit within us, a renewed call to serve your kingdom. Remove this stone heart from our community and replace it with a heart that is God-willed, not self-willed., so that we are led by your Holy Spirit to do the things you lead us to do. Breathe new life into our dry bones so that we know You alone are God! In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. (Based on Ezekiel 36:25-27; 37:5-6).

Meet Joyce Smith

Joyce is a native of Xenia. In fact, both sides of her ancestral families came to the country many generations ago in covered wagons. With the exception of the years her husband Rick was in the military, they have lived in Xenia. She has fond memories of growing up in Xenia, including stopping after school to visit the soda fountain at Donges Drug Store for a chocolate coke.

She is a retired educator, having taught school for 35 years. In addition, she was a school psychiatrist for an additional 10 years.

Joyce has taught nearly every grade level – elementary, junior high, and high school, as well as summer school, which was a major challenge. The kids did not particularly want to be in school in the summer, and she found that she didn't either, but they had a good learning experience when they all "made the best of it." She has taught Sunday school for many years as well. When asked about Vacation Bible School at Faith Community UMC, her eyes lit up. She says we can expect to have between 80 and 100 children for the week. One of the many pleasures comes on the second day when the older students return. In the beginning, some of them are not terribly enthusiastic about coming, but when they find that there is a lot to do and learn, they are excited to come the rest of the week. Many helpers are needed to teach the various levels required and crafts are always a special part of the day, along with refreshments, of course. The kids learn about Jesus and His teachings, and other Bible stories. A majority who attend have attended in previous years and look forward to coming back. It is always hoped that some of the families may become regular attendees of Faith Community, but all are welcome and learn a lot during the week. The entire building is used during the week, and the goal is for children to learn about faith and have a safe and caring place to be. All materials are provided at no cost to the participants. Rick is always there to help and maintain security in the parking lot to be sure all children are safe at all times.

Joyce and Rick are active the year 'round. Rick is an usher and part of the United Methodist Men. Joyce belongs to Dorcas Circle and one of their projects is to provide carnations for Father's Day. Additionally, the circle prepares funeral meals as requested at the church and contributes funding to a variety of missionary projects. She volunteers in the church office and takes on a number of other activities if possible. The church is blessed to have these dedicated volunteers.

Stephen Ministry

Self Care—How to Be Intentional About it

When it comes to taking care of ourselves, most of us have probably heard some version of “You can’t pour from an empty cup.” Yet we’re programmed to think that we can and somehow should be able to do it all. Articles abound offering advice about how to feel better with less sleep, how to multi-task, how to be more efficient and get more done in less time. As Christians, we try to become more loving, more giving, more helpful, and more faithful, but we often forget how important it is to take care of ourselves too. **Why does it matter?** When we give someone a gift, we select something special, not something that is broken or used. When Jesus calls us to love God with all our soul, mind, and strength, He’s calling us to give our whole self—the greatest gift we can give. In order to offer our best, we need to take care of ourselves. When we regularly nourish our body, mind, and spirit, we have more to share.

What does it look like? The answer is different for each of us. Begin by asking the Lord, “How do I most need to care for myself right now? For some, it’s taking care of our bodies—maybe making time for exercise, eating healthier, getting more sleep or reducing stress. For others, it may mean being more intentional about prioritizing spending time with Jesus, journaling, reading a book, or watching something like *The Chosen*, that will inspire us in a new way. Regardless of that, our intent is deciding to pause for some selfcare can be challenging. We are so used to the demands of our lives that slowing down feels wrong. We may feel guilty, anxious, or concerned that others will think we are lazy or selfish.

How do we start? Set some healthy boundaries. Jesus had them and we need them too. He was often surrounded by people in need, and gave all that He had to help them, but He also withdrew to places where He was alone and prayed. He knew that in order to say “yes” to what God was asking him to do He had to say “no” or “wait” to what was happening at any given moment. Was He being selfish or acting as if He didn’t

care? Of course not. He understood what He needed to do to be refreshed—to connect with His Father and prepare for what was ahead.

Finding rest in the midst of busy lives can seem elusive, if not downright impossible. We have to be intentional about choosing peace and stillness and time with God over yielding to the demands we all face. By planning for rest and quiet time, we are more likely to ensure that our cup is full and that we will be able to pour into others. First, make time for what is important- **FIRST**, block out time on the calendar that is needed for renewal and the Lord. Next, when there is an overly full calendar and to-do-list and a sense of feeling overwhelmed, prioritize. Determine what is going to matter long term and what is just temporary. Strive to make the time we have count and use it for what is going to fill up our hearts and souls. Life will get busy and seem overwhelming at times. But when we are intentional, thoughtful, seek the Lord's direction, and submit our plans to Him rather than trying to do it all ourselves, we are more likely to find that our cup is overflowing.

Mary & Martha Gathering

Please join us Monday July 14 from 6:00-8:00 pm in FCC for our next Mary & Martha gathering-to include all members of the church and more! The United Methodist Men will be grilling, so please bring a side to complement the burgers! If you don't have time to make something, please don't let this stop you from coming. We will have activities for all to enjoy! Questions, you may call Laurie Krawowiak at 937-694-8114 or the church office at 937-372-7601.

Educational Assistance Update

Thanks to the generosity of those who donated funds for scholarships over the years, our Educational Assistance Committee was able to award \$22,000 to those who are continuing beyond high school. First-time recipients are Sara Gard-

ner and Kelan Cramer. Sara hopes to become a dental hygienist. Kelan is interested in computer science and engineering. Continuing recipients include Megan Ackenhausen, Moira Ackenhausen, Ciara Horney, Molly Mossing, and Grace Smith.

Megan is pursuing athletic training, Moira, pharmacy, and Cia, exercise science. Molly is planning to major in marketing and sports management. Grace will continue working toward her nursing degree.

We are proud of all of these individuals and wish them all the best as they pursue dreams.

Membership Care

Sometimes when we read the bulletin announcements or Faith Links, it's easy to skim an article that doesn't seem to apply to us at the time. Later, when circumstances change, we wish we had read more carefully. We have individuals who may not be in church on a Sunday when information is shared. We also have visitors and persons who are new to our church who may not be aware of the resources that are available: a hospital visitation team, prayer shawls, casserole care-A-van, prayer chain, and Stephen Ministry, just to name a few. So, we will periodically highlight each of these groups. If you are familiar with what is being featured, know that someone else may not be. We are a family and want all associated with FCUMC to feel seen, appreciated, supported, and cared for.

In today's world, most of us don't spend as much time in the hospital as we used to. HIPPA Laws prohibit hospitals from notifying that a member is hospitalized. Each of these factors make it harder for us as a church to provide care. If you or a loved one is facing a procedure, whether it's "same day" or "in-patient", it will help us a great deal if you notify the church office, 937-372-7601. Options then might be a visit before or after the procedure or hospitalization and prayer in person or over the phone. No one needs to face these challenges alone.

As you may or may not have noticed on the front of our weekly bulletin, Pastor Jeff's contact information is available. Office hours M,T,TH 9:am-3:00pm & by appt. Office phone: 937-372-7601, ext 13 Email:pastorjeff@fcum.org. In addition to hospital visits, he is also available to visit in homes, nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Please help us provide the care we want to share.

United Methodist Women

Women United Circle will meet on Monday, July 21 at 1:00 P.M. in the parlor. All women are invited to attend.

Dorcas Circle will meet on Tuesday, July 15 at 1:00 P.M. in FH-15 A-B

United Methodist Men of Faith

***Help is needed for Men of Faith Garage Sale, Friday, September 5 & Saturday, September 6.** The men of Faith are selling items year round for the garage sale on Facebook Marketplace. Bob Whipp is searching for help to put items on Marketplace and field calls from potential buyers. For more information please contact Bob at (937) 956-6002 or Robert.Whipp@yahoo.com.

A Voice for Environmental Stewardship

July 2025 – The Endangered Species Act

Climate change and global warming are massive changes that have effected changes in many of Earth's ecosystems. They have caused the rapid decline of hundreds of species within families of animals and plants on Earth. Another way to describe this loss is to say that these animals and plants are being threatened with extinction because of environmental changes in their habits. Habitats are also lost because of the expansion of housing and businesses, including agriculture. As the Earth's human population continues to grow, now at 8.2 billion, more and more natural habitats will disappear.

Our government, with great bipartisan support, has wisely passed The Endangered Species Act in 1973. It seeks to protect our endangered species. In the U.S. many notable animals have

been saved from extinction, including the California condor, the bald eagle, the grizzly bear, the humpback whale, and many species of birds have been saved from extinction. In fact, some 46 species of endangered animals have recovered under the Endangered Species Act.

Many countries that have unique animals within their borders also have conservation laws that are protecting their unique animals. Gorillas, amazing African elephants and various species of the rhinoceros are also endangered. Poachers kill rhinos for their horns which are sold and used in traditional Chinese medicine.

God has given us this amazing planet teeming with life of all kinds. **IN FACT, ALL ANIMALS AND PLANTS WERE THRIVING ON EARTH LONG BEFORE HOMO SAPIENS CAME ON THE SCENE.** The least that we can do is to **CHERISH** and **PROTECT** THE CREATURES THAT SHARE OUR PLANET WITH US.

Rev. Alan Barone, B.A. in science education, M.Div.,
Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist

VBS REMINDER: Have you put **July 14-18** on your calendar? Helping the children of Xenia find their way to Jesus is the goal of VBS25. There are many opportunities for **YOU** to be a part of this exciting adventure. We still need teachers, assistant teachers, bakers, decorators, and pray warriors. Please help us at Faith Community to provide the children of Xenia with a meaningful and memorable VBS. Call Betsy (937) 373-8376 or Joyce (937) 372-6576 or the church office.



July 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 10-11:30am- Bible Study-Parlor 6:30-8:30pm-Trustees-Parlor	2 6:00-7:30pm-Girls Volleyball Practice-FCC	3 11am-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY 9am-3pm-Office Closed	5
6 9-10am-Sunday School-CC 16A, Rm. 8, 11, Parlor 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship-Sanctuary	7 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C 7-8:45pm-Stephen Ministry-Parlor	8 10-11:30am- Bible Study-Parlor	9 6-7:30pm-Girls Volleyball Practice-FCC	10 11-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor 3-7pm-Scioto District Welcome-FCC, Sanctuary, FH 6:30-8:30-Scouting America Sycamore District, Tecumseh Council-FH, 15A-B	11	12
13 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am- Worship Services-Sanctuary	14 VBS- 8:30am-12:30pm 6-8pm-Mary & Martha Gathering-FCC/Kitchen	15 VBS-8:30am-12:30pm 1-3pm- Dorcas Circle-15- A-B	16 VBS-8:30am-12:30pm	17 VBS-8:30am-12:30pm 6:30-8:30pm-Ad Board Council Meeting-Chapel-FH 15C	18 VBS-8:30am-12:30pm 7-8:45pm-Stephen Ministry-Library	19
20 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Worship Services-Sanc.	21 1pm-3pm-Women United-Parlor 6-8:30pm-Men of Faith-16AB 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C	22 10-11:30 Bible Study-Parlor	23	24 11-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor	25	26 6-8pm-Double I-15A& Kitchen
27 9-10am-Sunday School 10-10:30am-Hospitality Time-Narthex 10:30-11:30am-Sanctuary	28 7-8:30pm-Boy Scouts-15C 7-8:30pm-SPRC Meeting-library	29 10-11:30 Bible Study-Parlor	30	31 11-12pm-Prayer Shawl-Parlor		