

Connect

June 2023



Morita Truman, Pastor

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

I received an email last week notifying me that the Annual Conference workbook was ready for download. It came with a "warning" that it was a large document — 210 total pages. I've seen some that were 100 pages or so, but this was a first. I printed it out and was shocked by the size and the weight of it. It seemed appropriate because the weight of the decisions being made is indeed, heavy. On May 31, in a special session, we will vote on the requests of 154 churches to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church. 94 in Kansas, 60 in Nebraska.* Yes, I made a list and I counted. I read each name. I considered each place I knew and didn't know. And I mourned loss even as I thought about what the future holds for all of us. I am weary of the argument. I am weary of the words that do not include all in the invitation to be part of the church, God's church. I can honestly say I am ready for that vote. I don't know the amount of time we will spend in special session on May 31, but it feels like both an ending and a beginning.

On June 5 we begin Annual Conference in earnest. Clergy session on June 5. Transition into Ministry retreat with Maddi beginning June 6. Opening worship on June 7. Business, worship, fellowship with colleagues. Your lay representatives are Mary Bahney and Mark Ellis. This will be Mark's first year!

On Friday, June 9, the Ordination and Commissioning service will begin at 6:45 p.m. in the LaVista Conference Center. This is both an invitation and a challenge. At that service, Maddi will be commissioned as a provisional elder. That language is uniquely United Methodist and we'll continue to talk about what that means on her journey. I invite all of you to be present that evening - to fill the Windsor Ballroom in support of Maddi and the other persons who will be ordained or commissioned. And by the way, the reason for the 6:45 start is that ***we have a record number of people who will be ordained or commissioned.***

That's why I say the vote on May 31 is both an ending and a beginning. In Isaiah 43 we read these words, "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." We are on the cusp of a 'new thing' and God is at the center of it. I'm excited to be there with all of you.

On the journey,

* In the time since I wrote this, we have received word of two more churches disaffiliating, one in KS, one in NE.



Worship Schedule

Sundays

8:30 & 10:50 am In-Person
(10:50 am service streamed)

www.fumcomaha.org/live

www.facebook.com/fumcomaha

Taizé Worship

Saturday, June 3

5:00 pm, Mead Chapel

Pastor

Rev. Morita Truman

Associate Pastor

Maddi Baugous

Receive "Connect"

E-mail Lorraine in the church office,
Lorraine.Dalziel@fumcomaha.org with
your address and you will begin receiving
the newsletter by e-mail or snail mail.
If you know of someone who would like
to receive our newsletter, let us know.

Church Office Hours

8:30 am - 4:00 pm Monday - Thursday

Closed Friday - Sunday

*"We are a United Methodist
congregation of all sexual
orientations and gender identities
making disciples of Jesus Christ for
the transformation of the world. We
stand in solidarity with all who work
against injustice and discrimination
through peace and justice."*



Welcoming



**Maddi Baugous,
Associate Pastor**

New Things Are Happening

I am currently in Minneapolis at the Festival of Homiletics, or a large preaching festival. Morita and I both attended and heard awe-inspiring and impactful lectures and sermons. The theme was preaching hope in a weary world. And I can say my heart has felt weary the last few weeks, but as a pastor it was so wonderful to just listen and have my soul refreshed by someone's words. The ideas from this festival I will be processing for many days, weeks, and years to come. As I prepare to come home from this highlight, I am also reminded and grateful for the timing of this conference. Mainly, because I am about to embark on many changes in my life.

In June I will be commissioned as a Provisional Elder in the Great Plains Annual Conference. As a Provisional Elder I will then begin the residency program, which is designed to support people in the ordination process. It will really mean a few trips

to Kansas each year. Now, these changes are not ones you might physically see. I will continue to be your Associate Pastor at First UMC. At this time, I still will not wear stoles or be called Reverend. However, for me there is an internal, spiritual change I'm embarking on. Becoming a Provisional Elder, means I am one step closer to fully living out my call to serve the United Methodist Church. It is also an affirmation of the time, talent, and gifts I have put into the Church for many years. It is the reminder that God calls all us to do this work, and we will be imperfect at it, but we are all needed in the body of Christ. This change is one of trusting I am moving in the right direction of what God has called me to. It is a change of heart and spirit. It marks the start of fully committing to the Order of Elders and serving the United Methodist Church to the fullness of my gifts and abilities. It is affirmation of the work I have done and will continue to do. There is no physical change, but the spiritual and emotional change I feel in my heart is calling me to continue on this work. So you might not see a physical change, but you might see it in how I pastor, preach, and teach. And as I start this change, I extend the invitation to you all who have supported me to come to the Ordination Service on Friday, June 9th at the LaVista Conference Center. The service will start at 6:45pm and there will be 50 of us who will be ordained or commissioned. For me, it will be a wonderful celebration of the work God is doing in the world. And so, my heart is ready for all the new things that are about to happen, and I will be holding on to hope, even when the world is weary and tired.

In loving-kindness, *Maddi*

Taizé Worship

1st Saturday of the month
5:00 - 5:40 pm | Mead Chapel
In-Person (enter door 11)

June 3

ALL
ARE
WELCOME

Inspired by the Taizé ecumenical community in France, the Taizé Prayer Service has spread around the world because of its unique style inviting people into a deeper experience of God's love. The service includes song, short readings, spoken prayers and silence. The beautiful chapel and the use of candles add to the meditative nature of the service.

The service is an opportunity to open our hearts and minds, to listen and to rest in Divine Presence. It is a spiritual practice. **YOU ARE WELCOME!**

ARCHIVE FRIENDS, FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP

June 4: Friends, food and fellowship! Archives is looking for a few members interested in helping in numbering some of our records. We will be meeting after church in room 112 for a light lunch and group work.

Contact Mark Schulze
schulze.nasc@gmail.com

if interested and
for more information.

First
United
Methodist
Church



Thoughts and prayers are not enough!



120 people are shot and killed, and hundreds more are wounded by guns, every day in our country!

On Mother's Day, speakers from *Moms Demand Action: For Gun Sense in America* shared myths and facts about gun violence in the U.S. with the Boomers Sunday School class. The *Salt and Light* team also had a large thank you card in the Gathering Place inviting members to sign as an expression of appreciation to the Omaha chapter of *Moms Demand Action*. Advocates of sensible gun laws urged the rest of us to get more informed and use our voices to impact public policy on the federal and state levels. We were also encouraged to pay attention to future political candidates and their positions on gun control. Learn more and ACT at momsdemandaction.org.



CHILDREN'S SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

It's going to be a fun summer as we go back to 'the basics' with our children's learning hour on Sunday mornings. Morita and the Eco-Team are leading the lessons in June on the four elements that make up our life together. Fire, Earth, Water, and Wind - they're all necessary!

Each Sunday we'll meet in the Gathering Place, then move out to the front lawn for lessons under the trees. There will be fire pits and wind socks, water play and just good old playing in the dirt. We'll have snacks, fight fire, learn about gardens, and try to measure and duplicate the sound of wind.

More detailed information will be shared with the parents - we'll need to make sure about any allergies and let you know when kids should wear clothes that 'might' get damp!



Fran Sillau, Director of
Children's Ministries

Please reserve these dates on your calendar

Saturday June 24, 9-11:30 am

Tuesday September 19, 1-3:30

Tuesday December 12, 1-3:30

If you have a foodbank account, register online

foodbankheartland.org

or contact Bruce Deines (brucedeines@gmail.com) or

Mike Rosenthal (Mike.Rosenthal577@icloud.com)



10525 J. St., Omaha

Roam'n Methodists

June 25 (Sunday) Brownville, lunch and Brownville Village Theater at 2:00 pm. Possible church service at Brownville UMC. The play "It Came From Mars" is \$12.50.

Comedic chaos ensues when a New York radio station drama troupe attempts to rehearse their play the same night their rival station (The Mercury Theatre on the Air) releases their War of the Worlds broadcast. Believing the broadcast to be real, the inharmonious band of actors attempt to barricade themselves from the impending alien attack. The "end of the world" brings about its own share of laugh out loud problems and surprising resolutions.

email Mark Schulze schulze.nasc@gmail.com
to register or to request more information.

Acting

Please remember in prayer these members of Our Church Family

For Continued Healing: Jim Eisenhardt, Juanita Edwards, Dave England, Marvin & Suzanne Morgan, Millie Plumb, Marlys Richardson, Deborah Mabry-Strong, Barb Winfield, Terry Joseph White

Congratulations to Gerardo and Hannah Castillo who were married May 20 at First UMC in Hastings, NE

Sympathies to the families of Kay Bain, beloved member; Vernon Ingram, father-in law of Jim Eisenhardt; and Rev. Dr. Roger Bourland, former pastor of FUMC. Our prayers are with all these families in a time when their loved ones have transitioned to new life.

Submit your prayer requests to: Lynne Elwood at lelwood2@gmail.com or call the church office at 402-556-6262.

Please follow these brief guidelines when submitting a request for the Prayer Chain:

- For yourself: Give a brief statement of the need - illness, grief, crisis.
- For others: Use names without describing the need. Give the first or full name and relationship - friend, brother/sister, spouse/partner, parent, child, etc.
- Get permission from the person to be listed before contacting Lynne or the church.

Clair Cares Food Pantry Volunteers Needed!

Next Opportunity for Volunteering:

June 15 & 16

Clair Memorial UMC | 5544 Ames Ave.



For Information on Volunteering,
Contact Judy Prenzler at prenzler@cox.net



PASTORAL CARE

In these times, if you are in need of additional support, pastoral care, or there is an emergency, please reach out to:

Morita Truman

Morita.Truman@fumcomaha.org

or call 402.556.6262 x1002

Maddi Baugous

Maddi.Baugous@fumcomaha.org

or call 402.556.6262 x1006

You can also email

Lynne Elwood

lelwood2@gmail.com

to be added to
our prayer chain.

We are here for you!

Donate to Omaha Food Pantries

During the summer months, food pantries run into shortages of staple food items. With kids home for the summer, the need for food pantries rises. Both Living Hope Pantry and Clair Memorial Pantry are in need of donations.

You can help by either bringing food items to the church or by making a monetary contribution. Be sure to notate your donation is for Living Hope or Clair.



Please join us for our service day to help get the site ready to welcome campers and staff for the 2023 summer season. Come when you can, leave when you must!

Service Day, Saturday June 3, 9 am

Lunch is Provided

Please visit our website for more information on how you can help and for camp info!

Inspiring

ECO TEAM



Unless you have your own vegetable garden (and hooray if you do!) we hope that you are supporting... and ENJOYING!... local produce from area farmers markets this summer!! According to the USDA more than 85 percent of vendors at farmer' markets come from within 50 miles of their location. Much of what we buy in supermarkets has been transported 1,200 miles on average. That means more fuel intensive transport and less nutrition. Produce at farmers markets is often picked ripe and sold within a day. Our daily consumer habits make a difference on the climate. Check out area farmers' markets at:

<https://thereader.com/2023/05/12/omaha-farmers-market-guide/>.



IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN OUR INDIVIDUAL DAILY HABITS TO TURN THINGS AROUND FOR THE CLIMATE!

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), made up of the world's leading climate scientists, set out the sixth assessment report March 20, 2023.

The comprehensive review of the climate crisis took hundreds of scientists eight years to compile and includes thousands of pages, but comes down to one critical takeaway: **act now, or it will be too late**. Scientists have delivered a "final warning" on the climate crisis, as rising greenhouse gas emissions push the world to the brink of irrevocable damage that only swift and drastic action can avert.

To learn more from the report, go to: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>

It will only take a few minutes to make three calls!! Call the Capitol switchboard 202-224-3121 and they will connect you to the offices of Senators Fischer and Ricketts and Representative Don Bacon. Reference this latest IPCC report and urge them to support more renewable energy and low-carbon technology. Silence is not an option. Your voice matters!

FUMC Pride Night Out with the Omaha Storm Chasers - Thursday, June 1, 7:05 pm at Werner Park. We will have a table set up at the event, don't forget to wear your FUMC shirts! Reach out to Cass.Opal@fumcomaha.org
Movie Group: June 13, 6:00 pm, "A Man Called Otto", email Bonnie at bonniwallace59@gmail.com for info or Zoom link. Optional dinner before meeting at local restaurant, email for info.



BLACK VOTES MATTER TOUR

June 25 - July 2, 2023 | Youth and Adult Tour | Seven Days, Eight Cities

Tulsa, OK (new this year), Memphis, TN, Jackson, MS, Birmingham, AL, Selma, AL, Montgomery and Tuskegee, AL, Atlanta, GA

- There is no cost for youth participants. Staff and chaperones are fully vetted and a registered nurse is on board the bus and with the group at all times.
- For adults the cost is \$1800 for a double occupancy room, \$2300 for a single. This fee includes transportation, hotel w/breakfast, fees paid to all venues and tour stops. It does not include lunch and dinner.

In the words of Preston Love, Jr., tour founder and director, "The focus is to teach inspire, and educate African American history and experience, to transform participants through the experience to engage in community, and to learn history, respect history, and go make history."

Clear your schedule, make the time to take part in one of the most important trips you will ever make. To sign up: <https://4urban.org/4pillars/youth-learning-tour>

Supporting

The Asylum Story

Moises Fernandez and Jacqueline Villegas and their four children were living in Acapulco, Mexico, in 2017 where Moises worked in a family food business. When it became a city ruled by gangs affiliated with drug cartels, the family business became a target. Both Moises' brother and an aunt were murdered, and he received death threats. They left Acapulco in January of 2018 and arrived at the San Diego, California, port of entry to request asylum. Moises was sent to a detention center in Georgia and Jacqueline and the children were allowed to travel to Omaha to live with her sister.

Moises was faced with deportation, but could be released on parole if he had a sponsor. The Omaha Area Sanctuary Network (OASN) agreed to sponsor him. The detention center released him on May 13 and dropped him off at a Jacksonville, Florida, bus station. OASN purchased a ticket to Omaha, and he set out on a bus with no money or food. Attempts to give him food at a bus stop en route were not successful, but finally contacts were made in St. Louis 30 hours later where he was given food and money.

Upon his arrival in Omaha he was reunited with his family. Just a few weeks later, immigration officials called with word that he was to be in Atlanta in five days for a hearing. Larry and Diane Jensen drove him to Atlanta rather than fly because his identification would probably not have been accepted by the airline or TSA. The hearing went well and the request for future hearings to be held in Omaha was accepted.

A week after returning from Atlanta an apartment was found, FUMC members furnished it, and food was purchased. A few days later, Moises received notice of still another hearing on June 22. The attorney needed to make a case for permanence; otherwise the family would be deported. This hearing was successful, with another one to be scheduled later. But how much later?

In April of 2019 Moises and Jacqueline were married at FUMC. Julie Pospishil translated and church members hosted a reception in their honor. They were establishing a home in Omaha, but their asylum status was still not settled.



Moises and Jacqueline's Wedding



Front row: Camila, Matias, Zoe;
Back row: Ron Alexander, Jacqueline, Moises, Suri

Four more years passed before they received notice that their asylum hearing was scheduled for March 21, 2023. Their immigration lawyer was prepared to present their case for asylum, and FUMC members attended to serve as character witnesses if needed. Larry Jensen even flew from his current home in Washington in order to attend, but the hearing was very brief and concluded with a postponement until March 6, 2026.

Today, both Moises and Jacqueline have jobs and their four children are enrolled in school. Ron Alexander has "adopted" the family and continues to involve them in many activities in the Omaha area, as well as tutor the children during the school year. Larry and Diane Jensen continue to monitor their situation and provide assistance as needed. However, their asylum status is on hold for three more years.

Challenging

Building a Culture of Generosity

We talked about it for a long time, debated on the best moment to start, then finally began this spring. WHAT are we talking about? Passing the offering plates in worship! It was one of the activities that stopped during Covid - how could we when everything was online - and when we came back together, we were still on pause. Well, after picking up the practice again this spring, we have discovered a new life in this act that has been taken for granted. Our 'plate offerings' have exceeded our expectations and we are being blessed by the generosity of those who worship with us in person. Thank you for enabling the ministries we undertake at every level!



In June you'll have an opportunity to participate in the Peace with Justice offering that is one of the six United Methodist special offerings through the year. There will be a fellowship meal on June 11, the proceeds of which will be used to help fund our efforts on Pride weekend in July. This summer we are hosting youth groups overnight who are traveling and engaging in mission trips - your gifts will keep the air and lights on for them!

Donate Here

Scan the QR code for
one-time or recurring
donation options



SCAN ME

Just a reminder, in addition to plate offerings other ways to give include: mail a check to the church, direct deposit through your bank or financial Institution or you can give on our website: www.fumcomaha.org/giving, or on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/FUMComaha.
Every gift matters!

FUMC Finance News

FUMC Finance Report

Carol Beaty, FUMC Finance Chair

Here is the FUMC monthly report to the congregation written on May 15, 2023.

Average monthly pledges needed to meet our budget of \$650,000 in pledge income = \$45,727

Jan 2023 pledges - \$156,519.17 (some members paid entire year) 24.0% of annual budgeted pledges received.

Feb 2023 pledges - \$55,835 (some members paid entire year) 31.98% of annual budgeted pledges received.

Mar 2023 pledges - \$39,070.17 (some members paid entire year) 38.68% of annual budgeted pledges received.

Apr 2023 pledges - \$32,751.17 (some members paid entire year) 43.92% of annual budgeted pledges received.

As of April 30, 2023, our total income is 41.86% of what we budgeted. Our expenses are 33.56% of what we budgeted. We would expect income and expenses to be at 33.33% at this time of the year. Our income is higher because of prepaid pledges. Our expenses are close to expectations.

A copy of the church budget revised by the Church Council in April is available upon request. Please notify Carol Beaty or the church office if you would like a copy.

We give thanks for the generosity of our members.

First
United
Methodist
Church



7020 Cass Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68132-2601

Return Service Requested

Summer Salads for Pride

Join us Sunday,
June 11th,
after the 10:50 am
service in
The Commons

All proceeds from the
feast will go toward our
participation in Pride
this year!!

ALL ARE WELCOME!



Our Own Kind of Music

Our Own Kind of Music

June 10, 7:05 pm

Holland Performing Arts Center
1200 Douglas St

Tickets: <https://rcmc.org/concerts/>

Post-Concert Disco and Costume Party Included in Ticket Price!

