

Connect

February 2024



Morita Truman, Pastor

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

At a recent staff meeting we were talking about all that has already taken place in this calendar year. We celebrated friends who transitioned to new life. We made difficult decisions about closures due to the weather—and we may not be done with that. We took down the Christmas/

Advent décor and set the building for a new year. And I'm writing this on just the 17th day of the year. It brought to mind a phrase I've heard a lot lately, "the days are long but the years are short." It's a better consideration than simply saying 'time flies.'

I'm not sure if I completely buy into any of that because time is time and it doesn't change, but it can certainly feel that way. With that in mind I can hardly believe that I'm going to remind us the season of Lent begins on Wednesday, February 14, with our Ash Wednesday service. Yes, on Valentine's Day. If you've ever wondered, the Easter date is set by a formula. Easter occurs on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. According to the Gregorian (Western church) calendar, the earliest date that can occur is March 31 and this is the year! In this month of February we are going to quickly move into the 40 day period of Lent that leads to Easter.

All of which means, we are doing rapid planning. This year's Sunday morning worship services are focused on Passion. That's a word that perhaps brings to mind love and relationships, but people who are angry can be passionate. People who work for social justice are passionate. St. Patrick's Day falls in the midst of Lent and Patrick was passionate about his missionary work, sharing the word of God. All the Sunday PASSION topics are listed in another article in this edition of the *Connect*.

In addition we continue to advertise and seek the best person to fill the position of Director of Christian Education. Please keep this need in your daily prayers as we continue to move forward in ministry together.



Worship Schedule

Sundays

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

www.fumcomaha.org/live
www.facebook.com/fumcomaha

Taizé Prayer

Saturday, February 3
5:00 pm, Mead Chapel

Pastor

Rev. Morita Truman

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."*

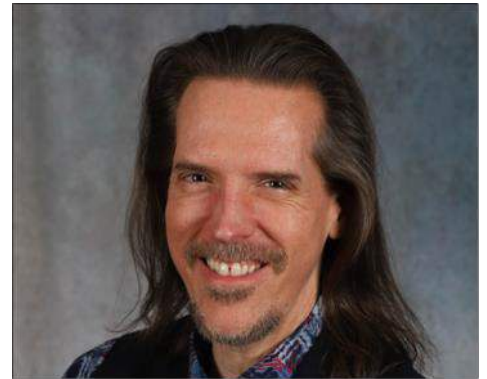


Welcoming

Record-Setting Holiday Piano Soiree

December's Holiday Piano Soiree was a big success! We had the largest attendance in recent memory and raised more funds for the music program than any previous soiree (almost \$3,000)! These gifts will allow us to continue to do exciting music and to include both volunteer and professional musicians in our services. My gratitude goes out to all who attended, donated, and helped with the event, with a few special shout-outs: To the choir, for donating the treats, to Fred Wilson, our host at the Bloomfield Forum, and to Marj Phillips, who did the sign-ups. Thanks to all!

Mark Kurtz



Mark Kurtz,
Director of Music Ministries



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center Bergan Mercy Volunteer Services is in need of volunteers to fill positions of Eucharistic Ministers, Patient Companions, Welcome Desks, Mailroom, NICU Cuddlers, Teen/University Volunteers, and much more.

If you are interested, please call the
Volunteer Office at (402) 398-6199,
email tammy.rivera@commonspirit.org,
or apply at

<https://www.chihealth.com/en/patients-visitors/volunteer-services.html>

MOVIE GROUP

Tuesday, February 13, 6 pm
in-person at FUMC & Zoom

THE COLOR PURPLE

Optional dinner after
meeting at local
restaurant, email for info.

Email **Bonnie Wallace**
bonniewallace59@gmail.com
for more info and to
receive ZOOM link!



Taizé Prayer

1st Saturday of the month

5:00 - 5:40 pm

Mead Chapel

In-Person (enter door 11)

Next Service February 3

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!



30th Annual BENEFIT

BARN DANCE

Saturday, February 24, 2024

7:00- 10:00 pm

Enter through door #4 on the East side

Suggested Donation \$10

18 and under

Free Squares, Rounds, Contras,

Polkas, Waltzes & More

Great Family Fun!

No Experience Necessary!



7020 Cass Street
Omaha, NE 68132
402.556.6262

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Lent starts with

Ash Wednesday services

February 14, 2024

Noon in Mead Chapel
and 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary

What's at stake for our democracy and reproductive rights in Nebraska?

***Learn from the experts at an all church forum
on Sunday, February 4th, 9:35 a.m. in the Commons.***

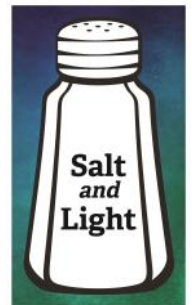
Dr. Erin Feichtinger from the Women's Fund of Omaha and Ms Rachel Gibson, from the League of Women Voters, will be sharing about what's happening in the legislature and beyond and giving us specific ways each of us can use our voices for the common good! We will also have updates on Support our Schools, Criminal Justice, and LGBTQ rights.



Ms. Rachel Gibson



Dr. Erin Feichtinger



Acting

Please remember in prayer these members of Our Church Family:

Joan Clark, Juanita Edwards, Dave England, Nev Fredrickson, Claudia Hesselgesser, Jodie Johns, Marvin & Suzanne Morgan, Millie Plumb, Deborah Mabry-Strong, Coyner Smith, Barb Winfield, Terry Joseph White,

Sympathies to the families of Doris Peterson, Rose Hill Door, Larry Jensen, and Jim Eisenhardt, and to Cass Opal on the death of her grandmother Marlys Richardson. Our prayers are with 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.

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Love children? We would love to have you join us in the FUMC nursery. We will pay for your Safe Gatherings certification.

If you can assist with child care on Sunday mornings for a time, please call the office at 402-556-6262.

Clair Cares Food Pantry

Volunteers Needed!

Next Opportunity
for Volunteering
February 15th & 16th

Clair Memorial UMC | 5544 Ames Ave.

For Information on Volunteering,
Contact Dale Seyl at daleseyl@gmail.com

The Boomers class is inviting you to join them on **Sunday, February 11th, 9:35 am, in room 112**, to learn from Heather Engdahl, the Director of Voting Rights for Civic Nebraska, about more issues that affect our city and state.

This is a follow-up from the All Church Forum on Sunday, February 4th. *The more we know, the more we can act as engaged citizens!!*



FOODBANK
FOR THE HEARTLAND

Our next volunteer opportunities at the Food Bank in 2024 are:

Saturday, March 23rd	9-11:30 am
Tuesday June 11th	1-3:30 pm
Tuesday September 10th	1-3:30 pm
Tuesday December 10th	1-3:30 pm

foodbankheartland.org or contact

Bruce Deines brucedeines@gmail.com

or Mike Rosenthal Mike.Rosenthal577@icloud.com



VIM Volunteers at Foodbank for the Heartland, December 2023



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

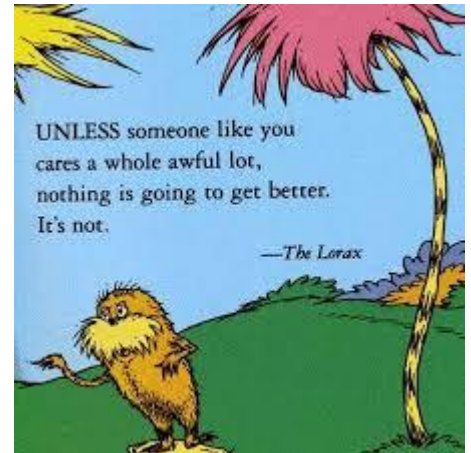
You can also email Lynne Elwood
lelwood2@gmail.com to be added to our prayer chain.

We are here for you!

Inspiring

ECO TEAM

During Lent and leading up to Earth Day, April 22nd, be looking for ideas from our FUMC Eco team to help us all care more deeply for God's good creation! Lent is a time that invites us to cultivate more intentional spiritual practices and those can include actions as well as meditations and prayer. You'll notice ideas in the Sunday bulletins, weekly emails and on social media. Check out more resources on our website, <https://sites.google.com/view/lenten-garden-at-fumcomaha>.



SALT & LIGHT



A sign of faithful discipleship is working for God's beloved community in the public square and our congregation has been doing just that over many years! Never has it been more important to show up, stand up and speak up! To that end, the *Salt and Light* team is inviting members to participate in a variety of educational happenings in February and March.

- All Church Forum: **February 4th**, 9:35 a.m. in the Commons. *What You Need to Know: Protecting Reproductive Rights and the Need to Get Out the Vote* with Dr. Erin Feichtinger from the Women's Fund and Ms. Rachel Gibson from the League of Women Voters.
- Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day, Saturday, **February 10** at Christ UMC in Lincoln.

Register at: <https://nelegisbrief.org/registration>

- Boomers class is open to all on Sunday, **February 11th**, 9:35 a.m. in room 112 with Heather Engdahl from *Civic Nebraska* offering more options for using your voice to strengthen our democracy.

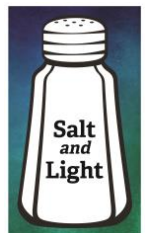
- **Four For Democracy!** (Four Sundays: February 11, 25, March 10, 24)

Even if you have never made a call, sent an email or showed up for a legislative hearing, you can make a difference by adding your voice to others to strengthen the common good! The *Salt and Light* team will make this as easy and straightforward as possible!

Team members will be in the Gathering Place between services and after the last service on February 11 and 25, and March 10 and 24. They will have concise information about issues that are important to our faith community (such as reproductive health, LGBTQ, public schools, and more). And they will have contact information for state senators, for writing postcards, making calls or sending emails.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words remind us that raising our voices is crucial: *Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.*

Join others from our church family and **BE A VOICE FOR GOD'S BELOVED COMMUNITY!**



Supporting

Legislative Briefing Day

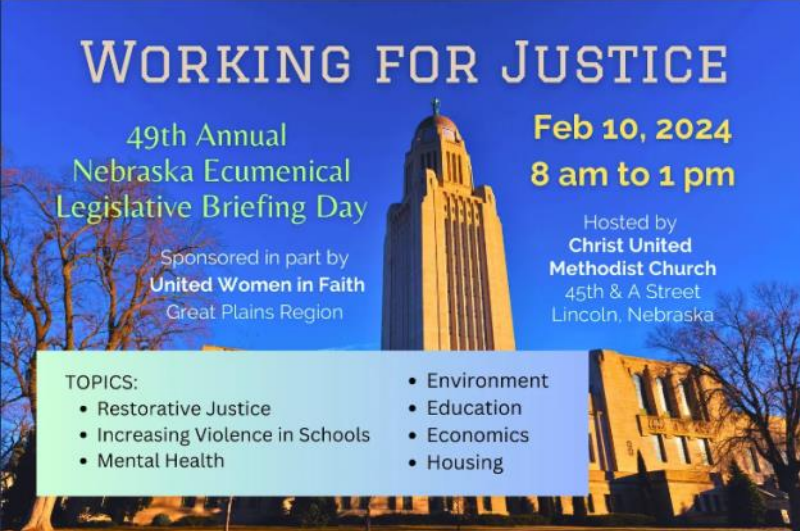
Christmas has morphed into Epiphany and our thoughts turn to... well, Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day! First Church is the leading supporter of this vital briefing of the concerns of the Nebraska Unicameral State government. First Church believes we live out our faith every day, and many times the concerns need our leadership.

On February 10, from 9:00 to 1:00 we will offer six workshops, of which the participant can choose two. There are bonuses. We will begin with the usual morning refreshments at 8:30. Then comes

worship and a panel presentation on Restorative Justice. Following the six workshops we will again enjoy

the meatloaf dinner that Christ Church provides, fellowship at table, and a whole house presentation on both advocacy and breaking news, before we wrap up by 1:00.

The event will be held at Christ United Methodist Church in Lincoln. The six workshops this year will focus on mental health, safety in our schools, housing, environment, education, and economics. A registration form will be sent to those who have previously attended and be posted on the ELBD website. Questions can be directed to First Church committee members Tim Fickenscher - tafickenscher@gmail.com, Bob Meyers - rlmeyers@gmail.com, or Ron Roemmich - roemmichrb@cox.net.

A poster for the "WORKING FOR JUSTICE" event. The background is a blue sky with a building. The text is in white and yellow. It says "49th Annual Nebraska Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day" and "Feb 10, 2024 8 am to 1 pm". It also mentions "Sponsored in part by United Women in Faith Great Plains Region" and "Hosted by Christ United Methodist Church 45th & A Street Lincoln, Nebraska". There is a list of topics: Restorative Justice, Increasing Violence in Schools, Mental Health, Environment, Education, Economics, and Housing.

WORKING FOR JUSTICE

49th Annual
Nebraska Ecumenical
Legislative Briefing Day

Sponsored in part by
United Women in Faith
Great Plains Region

Feb 10, 2024
8 am to 1 pm

Hosted by
**Christ United
Methodist Church**
45th & A Street
Lincoln, Nebraska

TOPICS:

- Restorative Justice
- Increasing Violence in Schools
- Mental Health
- Environment
- Education
- Economics
- Housing

THANK YOU!

As our associate pastor, Maddi, leaves us for a new ministry, I would like to thank the Transition in Ministry team for their faithful and regular support of Maddi.

Mark Schulze, Harlan Sayles, Jessica Niemann, Jim Eisenhardt, Hannah Castillo, Maddi, and I met monthly to have lunch and discuss issues relevant to Maddi's ministry. Each member brought different skills and ideas to this group. We had some lively discussions. Thank you dear friends.

Sue Rood

COMPOST AT FUMC

We **don't** accept any bags (plastic or compostable), animal products (except eggshells), or plastics. We **do** accept plant matter, coffee grounds, limited paper (like coffee filters, or napkins.)

Bring your food waste in a small bucket, like an ice cream container, and dump it into one of the orange buckets by the dumpster on the northeast corner of the FUMC building. Add your compost to a bucket that is not yet full and be sure to put the lid on to keep out the varmints.

**What an easy way to
lessen the carbon impact
we have on the
environment!**



Challenging

Building a Culture of Generosity

*"People who practice extravagant generosity change lives.
Their giving knows no bounds. They are rich toward God."
~ Bishop Robert Schnase*

The dawning of 2024 brings to us the opportunity to consider our membership vows and how we support the church with our prayers, presence, gifts, and service. This month in the bulletin and online we are inviting persons to share their time and talent for ministry teams centered on education, mission, evangelism, and worship. These are areas where the work of the laity can make a significant impact in the new year. Sign up sheets are located in the Gathering Place!

Church Council meetings will include follow up with more information. Make plans to be present!

Donate Here

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



SCAN ME

FUMC Finance Report

Carol Beaty, FUMC Finance Chair

Here is the FUMC monthly report to the congregation written on Jan 15, 2024.

Although we have not yet closed the books on 2023, we made great progress in December 2023. We had income of over \$81,000. Some of this was income for our 2023 budget. Some was for pre-paid pledges for 2024. Some was for special projects including the Alternative Mall, music program, youth, Immigration, memorials and our Christmas collection. We are grateful for every one of you who contributed to the church in all of 2023.

The Church Council approved the budget for 2024 at the meeting on January 9. We were able to give church staff an increase. Please note that once again, the budget approved includes more expenses than income. The finance team and church council felt comfortable doing this as we have a healthy reserve.

The budget 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 in these challenging times.



The Health Equipment Loan Program (H.E.L.P.) is available to all.

If you would like to check out or donate any equipment, please check with the front desk or call 402-556-6262.

If you have any questions regarding the HELP program, please contact Ranita at rl3frog@gmail.com.

We are in need of wheelchairs and walkers with seats.

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7020 Cass Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68132-2601

Return Service Requested

LENT 2024

There are certain words that bring to mind images and ideas. For the season of Lent we focus on the word PASSION. On a church calendar the Sunday before Easter is designated as Palm/Passion Sunday. A movie entitled “The Passion of the Christ” stirred up people. The readings on Good Friday are referred to as the passion.

What is passion in faith? Is it only about the events of Holy Week? Passion can be defined as emotions distinguished from reason – but are passions always within reason? Passion can be defined as an intense driving, or overmastering feeling or conviction. The word intense can draw certain connotations. As we walk through the 40 day journey of Lent we will explore *passion* – the passion of care, of social justice, of inclusion, as well as the passion that can drive conspiracy and anger.

We begin with the passion of repentance on Ash Wednesday, February 14, with services at noon (chapel) and 7:00 p.m. (sanctuary). *A schedule of all services and themes will be published in the bulletin and online.*

We pray you will join us passionately on this Lenten journey.

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