

Connect

May 2024



Morita Truman, Pastor

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

The word grace is on my mind these days. Grace is central to United Methodism, a key tenet of John Wesley's understanding of faith, that the presence of God is surrounding us even before we are aware of it, or can name it. I am writing these words on April 22, the day before General Conference 2020 is scheduled to begin in Charlotte, NC. We have a

heightened awareness of this postponed conference, it has been 5 years since the 2019 conference began the process of disaffiliations and turned the denomination to more traditional and punitive language in the Book of Discipline. I don't know what will happen in Charlotte. I am fervently praying for the delegates from around the world who have been entrusted with representing conferences, for their discernment, for courage, for stamina over the course of this 14 day event.

Grace enters when I say I am praying for all the delegates and praying for former United Methodists with whom I disagree who are traveling to Charlotte with a different set of language and intentions than I would prefer. I pray for their discernment as well, for open hearts and minds.

Grace is hard. This church has been working for full inclusion for a very long time—we pray this is the time, this is the year. It would be easy to pray for the voices of dissension toward inclusion to be quieter, kinder, absent. But that is not grace at work. Grace at First UMC is demonstrated in our ongoing commitment to be inclusive of all God's children, to hear all voices, even when we disagree.

Whatever happens in Charlotte can't and won't change that. Even if the votes don't change the language of the Book of Discipline, if we don't vote for regionalization, if we don't change the Social Principles, we will continue to engage in ministry from a place of grace.

You can get updates via the Great Plains Annual Conference website, or United Methodist News Service. We will also send updates from the church office. Above all else, pray for the Spirit of God to cover the convention center in Charlotte, pray the delegates are grace-filled, and pray for our church as we continue to minister in the world.

I am on the journey with you,

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, May 4, 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

FUMC building will be closed May 27

"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

Confirmation Classes

6th - 8th grade

Wednesday Evenings

5:30 - 7:30 pm

June 12th, 19th, 26th

July 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st

For more info contact
Chris Marshall #402-660-7932

We're asking parents
to donate snacks for
the classes.



MEMORIAL DAY

Church Building & Office Closed



MONDAY, MAY 27, 2024

Youth Sunday

Sunday May 5, 2024

Join us Sunday May 5th as our youth help lead
worship.

We'll also be taking time that Sunday to honor our
graduating high school seniors.

For more info Contact Chris Marshall 402-660-7932



Join us for fun this summer!

Many sessions available!

Camp Sessions

June 10th through August 2nd

Questions?

Contact 402-478-4296

or email Ryan

rsiver@greatplainsumc.org



MOVIE GROUP

Tuesday, May 14, 6 pm
in-person at FUMC & Zoom

The Ministry of Ungentlemanly WARFARE

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

Email **Bonnie Wallace**

bonniwallace59@gmail.com

for more info and to



Taizé Prayer

1st Saturday of the month

5:00 - 5:40 pm

Mead Chapel

In-Person (enter door 11)

Next Date May 4

This 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 TO JOIN!



Please join us in welcoming Rachel Brader and Barb Ruigh as co-directors of Rainbow Factory.



Rachel Brader



Barb Ruigh

Last day of preschool is May 15.

Camp Rainbow sessions begin May 28

A Night for IMPROVment- Family friendly

A funny-raiser for Sara Peterson with all ticket sale proceeds going to Sara to help with ongoing medical expenses related to Post-Covid diagnoses

Saturday, May 4th 7-9 p.m

Blackstone Theater

Tickets- \$10

BIG CANVAS

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/blackstonetheater/1214418>

Salt & Light Team

FUMC ADDED OUR VOICES AND IT MADE A DIFFERENCE!!!

Whether you emailed, made calls or hand wrote postcards, your voice made a difference in the outcomes of our Nebraska legislative session! We stay centered on our Christian values of human dignity for all of God's children and because of that focus, bills we advocated for and passed include: LB 840, which requires cities to develop a five-year poverty elimination plan; passed and awaiting governor's signature; LB 20, which eliminates the two-year waiting period for restoration of voting rights to felons who have completed their sentence, probation or parole; passed and awaiting governor's signature; LB 952; required Nebraska to take advantage of federal dollars for summer food for students, and because of pressure from Nebraskans Gov. Pillen applied for the funds. Bills we opposed include: LB 1170, which cuts back the number of weeks a person can draw unemployment benefits from 26 weeks to 16 weeks (failed to move), and LR 21, which replaces LR 14 from 2021 and serves as Nebraska's application for a convention of the states (failed to move); LB 575, "Sports and Spaces" discriminated against transgender students, the bill failed on a cloture vote.

Although our legislative session has concluded, there are still opportunities for you to make a difference for reproductive health! If you would like to join FUMC friends to help with a *Protect our Rights* petition signing drive- thru at our church Thursday, May 4, 5 to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 6, 2 to 4:45 p.m., please contact the office and we will connect you to members of the *Salt and Light* team.



Deb Ratzlaff and Lynne Elwood of the Salt and Light Team

The *Protect Our Rights* Campaign is a ballot initiative to protect abortion rights in the Nebraska State Constitution. Beyond the drive-thrus, you are encouraged to give an hour or donate to *Protect Our Rights* putting patient health and safety above political games and give Nebraskans the power to control their own bodies, health and future. *Protect our Rights* is a coalition of Nebraskans and local reproductive health, rights, and justice organizations working to return the right to make important decisions around abortion care to patients and their health care providers, not the government.

To learn more, go to: protectourrights.com.



Acting

Please remember in prayer these members of Our Church Family:

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

Sympathies to the families of Brian Houston, brother of Barry Houston; Dr. M. Chad McBride, husband of Allen Saunders McBride and dad to Jackson; Janet Butts, grandmother of Sara Peterson; Mary Wright, sister of David Dow; Joanne Burns; who transitioned to new life. Our prayers are with these families.

Baptism - William Mitchell David Payne, son of Jason & Megan Payne

Submit your prayer requests to: Lynne Elwood at lwood2@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
May 16 & 17

Clair Memorial UMC | 5544 Ames Ave.

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



Welcome to our Newest Member!

Opal Shaw

We continue to invite new friends to join First United Methodist by profession of faith, transfer of membership from a UM or other denomination/congregation. Please call Morita or email her at morita.truman@fumcomaha.org if you'd like to talk about membership.



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
lwood2@gmail.com to be added to our prayer chain.

We are here for you!



FOODBANK FOR THE HEARTLAND

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

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

Inspiring

ECO TEAM

Happy, hopeful summer reading!!!

Words of wisdom from Jane Goodall, *It's no good denying that there are problems. It is no shame if you think about the harm we've inflicted on the world. But if you concentrate on doing the things you **can** do, and doing them well, it will make all the difference.*



FUMC has one of the best church libraries around and one more book has recently been added. Jane Goodall's *The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times* has been donated and is ready to be checked out! The sections include: **What is Hope?**, **Jane's Four Reasons for Hope**, **The Resilience of Nature**, **The Power of Young People**, **The Indomitable Human Spirit**, and **Becoming a Messenger of Hope**.

From the back cover of the book, "Probably the question I am asked more often than any other is: Do you honestly believe there is hope for our world? For the future of our children and grandchildren? And I am able to answer truthfully, yes."

Wherever you might find yourself this summer, grab this book for some happy, hopeful summer reading!!!

CALLED CHURCH CONFERENCE

DS Stephanie Ahlschwede presiding

Tuesday, May 7, 7:00 pm

the Commons

There are two business items for this called session.

1. The election of committee members to the Finance and Staff Parish committees, and
2. The request for initial approval of the Church Conference for certification as a candidate for Cass Opal

All members of the church may attend, join in the conversation, and participate in this important vote.

GENERAL CONFERENCE REPORT

Immediately following the called church conference session, our District Superintendent Stephanie Ahlschwede, who serves as an alternate delegate to General Conference, will give us a post conference wrap-up of all that took place in Charlotte, including votes on regionalization, removal of language from the Book of Discipline, and revision of the Social Principles. There is also the reality of what the denomination budget will look like after the season of disaffiliations.

All church members and friends are invited to attend and ask questions.

We will meet in the Commons.



Supporting

FROM THE STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE:

It is with joy and great anticipation that we announce to you we have offered Elizabeth Emis, "Liz" the position as our new minister of Education for First United Methodist Church. Liz sent her resume to us in late February, the Staff Parish Committee interviewed her via zoom, and this decision was made following a time of prayer and discernment. As of late Thursday night (April 25) she has accepted the position.

Liz and her family, husband John and sons Jackson and William, were present with us at First in April. They attended worship, participated in the Forum about General Conference, and shared a brunch with the SPRC and church leaders. It is a good match and SPRC believes Liz will be an excellent addition to our church staff.

Liz is currently a certified candidate who will be transferring her process from the Arkansas Conference. She will complete seminary at Garrett next summer and hopes to be commissioned as a provisional deacon at the Great Plains Annual Conference in 2025.

Due to summer commitments in her current position, Liz will join our staff on August 1. Please be in prayer for this time of transition, for the team building of our staff here, and for the ongoing growth and opportunity we see before us. We will properly welcome the Emis family in August!

PROTECT OUR RIGHTS
THURSDAY, MAY 2ND | 5-7:30 PM
SATURDAY, MAY 4TH | 2-4:45 PM
**PROTECT WOMEN'S HEALTH
DRIVE THRU & SIGN**
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OMAHA
(7020 CASS ST.)

PROTECT OUR RIGHTS
PETITION SIGNING SUNDAYS
May 5th, 12th, and 19th
Salt and Light members will be collecting signatures for the "Protect Our Rights" campaign. You can find us with petitions on the above dates between services and after the late service in the Commons and Gathering Place.

First You Dream
A Retrospective
With Peggy Holloway, Family & Friends
Sunday, May 5th, 2024
at 3:00 PM
First United Methodist Church ~ Omaha
7020 Cass Street | Omaha, NE 68132

A musical retrospective of a life in music featuring art songs and musical theatre selections on the theme of "Dreams." Guest artists are Marie Meyers, piano, along with Donald Callen Freed, Kenneth Peters, Craig Bond, David Horrocks, and Meganne Horrocks.

**FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**

Challenging

Building a Culture of Generosity

In January of this year we had 4 separate pipe breaks in our heating system. The specific area of the building that had the most damage was the East hallway, rooms 101-109, which houses our preschool and other meeting spaces. We have been able to replace flooring that needed to be replaced, paint walls, and take out a wall that will allow for one larger room in the preschool.

Although the boilers have been replaced in the last 70 years, we discovered the pipes that deliver the hot (and cold) water for heating throughout the building are in locations that make it difficult to find and repair (under the floors and encased in plaster walls). We are currently working with a company to replace the HVAC in that portion of the building. Yes, it will be expensive. Yes, it is necessary—we can't have a preschool without working heat.

We are able to explore this option because of the faithfulness of those who have gone before us, who entrusted funds to the First UMC Foundation in their estates and others who make contributions to the Foundation as part of their regular giving. Thanks to their vision and understanding of what needs might come, we can move ahead in confidence with this important maintenance work. What a beautiful reminder of what generosity can make happen. If you would like to consider making a donation now or through your estate to the FUMC Foundation, please contact Rachel Lewis, chair, Bruce Deines, treasurer, or the pastor.

Donate Here

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



FUMC Finance Report

Carol Beaty, FUMC Finance Chair

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

The Budget approved by the Church Council for 2024 included \$905,310 in income and \$930,919 in expenses. You can see if we have all the expenses that were budgeted, we will have to use church reserves to make up the difference. The budget for pledges is \$700,000, an increase of \$50,000 over 2023. **Thanks to all our generous pledgers.**

Average monthly pledges needed to meet our budget of \$700,000 in pledge income = \$43,218

Jan 2024 pledges - \$223,757 (some members paid entire year) 32.0% of annual budgeted pledges received.

Feb 2024 pledges - \$34,467 (some members paid entire year) 36.89% of annual budgeted pledges received.

March 2024 pledges - \$52,812 (some members paid entire year) 44.43% of annual budgeted pledges received.

As of March 31, 2024, our total income is 40.84% of what we budgeted. Our expenses are 23.69% of what we budgeted. We would expect income and expenses to be at 25% 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 approved by the Church Council in January 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. Thank you to those who made a donation for the special Easter offering.

First
United
Methodist
Church



7020 Cass Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68132-2601

Return Service Requested



Mark Kurtz, Director of Music Ministries

News about Summer Choir from Mark Kurtz

Summer is often a time for vacations, and our Chancel Choir has certainly earned some time away, having sung in many services over the past season. So, we are continuing our annual tradition of Summer Choir!

**Beginning Sunday, June 2, and going
through Sunday, August 25**

Summer Choir will rehearse at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays and sing at the 10:50 service. It is a chance for anyone, whether or not they have sung with the choir before, to participate. We rehearse only the music for that Sunday, so there is no need to come every week or to feel that you will have "gotten behind" if you miss several weeks in a row. Simply come on the Sundays that you would like to, take some vacation when you need to, and join in with the Summer Choir to experience and share the joy of music!

For more information, contact Mark.Kurtz@fumcomaha.org

