

# Connect

June 2024



Morita Truman, Pastor

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*Philippians 4:8*

Lately I keep returning to the theme of time. So much has happened since January 1, with our building, new members, ministries that take us into the community, upcoming outreach events, I could go on and on, and we are just now coming to the midway point of the

year!

However, for today I am especially thinking about the 5 years that have passed since the special session of General Conference held in 2019. I remember my feeling of desperation that our denomination could make the decisions that extended hurtful language, becoming even more restrictive in some of its rulings. I remember being with a congregation I had worked with to be accepting of the One Church Plan, then trying to maintain a sense of calm when on the inside I was wondering how I could stay United Methodist. And then Covid descended, delaying the General Conference that was scheduled for 2020 that I hoped would “fix things.”

As difficult as these years have been, with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight I’ve come to see the value of using that time to work on education and next steps. The additional time provided opportunity to partner, and be in conversation, with people in places that were being misrepresented. Our friends at Mainstream UMC and Reconciling Ministries Network, along with individuals and churches, have used the time since 2019 to work together for change. And here we are in 2024 with those changes now voted and acted upon, a new day in the United Methodist Church. While the time was difficult and did not pass quickly, something amazing has happened that opens even more doors and opportunities for us to be the church.

I don’t like waiting. This time in particular was difficult. But I see now the fruition of the work that was done while we waited, while time was passing by and I am reminded of the ancient words ‘for everything there is a season.’ I like this new season we have waited and worked for — let us continue to work together, listen to one another, and work for the inclusion of all God’s children in this church,

On the journey with you,

## Worship Schedule

### Sundays

8:30 & 10:50 am In-Person  
(10:50 am service streamed)  
[www.fumcomaha.org/live](http://www.fumcomaha.org/live)  
[www.facebook.com/fumcomaha](https://www.facebook.com/fumcomaha)

### Taizé Prayer

Saturday, June 1, 5:00 pm  
Mead Chapel

### Pastor

Rev. Morita Truman

### Receive “Connect”

E-mail Lorraine in the church office,  
[Lorraine.Dalziel@fumcomaha.org](mailto: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.”*

First  
United  
Methodist  
Church



# 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.

A blue background featuring various sewing-related icons: a button, a needle, a pair of scissors, and a sewing machine. The text is centered on the right side.

## Stitchin' Sisters

WILL MEET JUNE 11TH  
INSTEAD OF JUNE 4TH.  
WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Our preschool hosted a picnic for children and families on Wednesday, May 15, to mark the end of this school year (the church supplied popsicles!). It was a beautiful day and there were children running on the front lawn enjoying each other's company. This was a year unlike no other for our classes and the kids and staff were resilient!



During the summer our preschool offers weekly "Camp Rainbow" sessions. Each week is a separate group of kiddos enrolled for fun in the Nature Center as well as indoor activities that will enhance learning. Enrollment is full!

For more information, contact Rachel Brader at [Rainbowfactorybrader@gmail.com](mailto:Rainbowfactorybrader@gmail.com)



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](mailto:rsiver@greatplainsumc.org)

## MOVIE GROUP

Tuesday, June 11, 6 pm  
in-person at FUMC & Zoom



### Ezra

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

Email **Bonnie Wallace**

[bonniewallace59@gmail.com](mailto: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 Date June 1**

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!**

## Voting is important but it's not enough this time!

Our FUMC faith community has a very high rate of people voting in every election! Pat yourself on the back if you take this responsibility seriously and show up in all election cycles!! We are in a time when the consequences of an election have never been greater. For many the decisions to be made are between democracy and facism.

The *Salt and Light* team urges every adult member of our congregation to find ways in which you can encourage others to register to vote and to vote in November! You may be shy, you may not

be comfortable knocking on doors, phone banking may not be at the top of your list for entertainment BUT these next five months are the windows of time that we have to make a difference for the future of our children and grandchildren!

Among the many critical issues on the ballot is reproductive health. *Salt and Light* member, Kate Fiandt, shares why this issue is so important! *I would have never believed in the last 5 decades that we (women) would LOSE the hard earned right to choose when to have children, but that has happened. As a young woman, prior to Roe vs Wade, I saw women forced into unwanted marriages due to unplanned pregnancy and I saw ways the social system worked for women lucky to be born to the right family. During my time in the military I saw women with unplanned pregnancies getting "D and C" and women in college with me getting a weekend in Puerto Rico for an abortion. And then the women who made the tragic choice to have backroom abortions who bled to death or had life threatening infections.*

*We do not want to go back to those days, or worse, if we are denied access to contraception.*

So, many of us are committed to vote! Now we need to help others use their voices for democracy, reproductive health, the climate, public education and more. There are a myriad of ways in which each person can impact others. Please consider stepping out of your comfort zone and becoming more involved!

Contact our *Salt and Light* team ([cawindrum@gmail.com](mailto:cawindrum@gmail.com)) and we will connect you with others who want to:

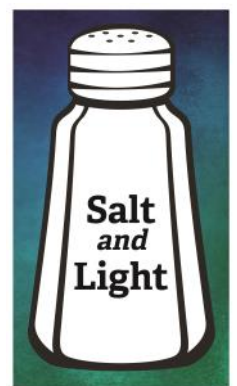
- write postcards to potential voters
- do literature drops in North or South Omaha (not for candidates, but nonpartisan voting information)
- stuff pantry food bags with voting information
- distribute VOTE bumper stickers
- host meet and greet house parties for candidates
- phone banking or texting
- drive people to the polls on election day
- be a poll observer and more.....

We are so fortunate to have these nonpartisan groups who can train us and connect us with GOTV (Get Out The Vote) activities:

League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha [wvgo.org](http://wvgo.org)

Civic Nebraska [civicnebraska.org](http://civicnebraska.org)

Heartland Worker Center [heartlandworkercenter.org](http://heartlandworkercenter.org)



## Join us for PRIDE! Save the Dates

**Pride Night with Union Omaha Soccer, Werner Park ~ June 13, 6:30 pm**  
**Pride Night with Omaha Storm Chasers, Werner Park ~ June 21, 6:35 pm**  
**Youth Pride Festival ~ July 12th, 5:00 pm**  
**Parade and Festival ~ July 13th, 10am (Parade), 12:30 pm (Festival)**

# 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 family of Emogene Whitten, to Paul Gadzikowski whose mother Claire transitioned to new life. Our prayers are with these families.

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

**Congratulations** to Jean & Jim Keeney on the birth of their grandson, Ezra Arthur Wall Whinney on April 19 in the UK. Amy & Ben Whinney are his parents.

**Submit your prayer requests to:** Lynne Elwood at [lclwood2@gmail.com](mailto:lclwood2@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 13 & 14

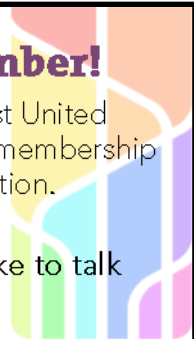
Clair Memorial UMC | 5544 Ames Ave.



## Become our Newest Member!

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](mailto: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](mailto:Morita.Truman@fumcomaha.org)  
or call 402.556.6262 x1002

You can also email Lynne Elwood  
[lclwood2@gmail.com](mailto:lclwood2@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](http://foodbankheartland.org) or contact

Bruce Deines [brucedeines@gmail.com](mailto:brucedeines@gmail.com)

or Mike Rosenthal [mike.rosenthal577@icloud.com](mailto:mike.rosenthal577@icloud.com)

# Inspiring

## ECO TEAM

Did you know that FUMC has a beautiful pollinator garden? It surrounds the gazebo and is filled with plants that bloom and benefit our little pollinator friends. You should go take a look. Try to find some of the insects that surround the gazebo, too (and it is a lot more than just bees.)

According to the USDA, "about 35 percent of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce" (insects are in the animal kingdom, as are bats who pollinate, too). **That means about one out of every three bites of food you eat is pollinated food.** Dandelions are about the first pollinator plant out in the spring and they are edible.



The diversity of plants in the pollinator garden means that there are early bloomers, mid summer bloomers and late bloomers, giving pollinators a continuous supply of nectar. And because most of them are Nebraska native plants, they are resistant to pests and disease.

You, too, can enable pollinators by planting native bloomers, like goldenrod, coneflowers, milkweed or more around your property or an apartment deck. Nurseries and Benson Plant Rescue have more Nebraska native pollinator plants.



## SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

It is our tradition that our children's Sunday School teachers take the summer off, getting a break from the fantastic work they do throughout the school year, getting rested and refreshed to start in September.

Beginning Sunday, June 2, we are asking volunteers to help with our children's learning opportunities on Sunday mornings from 9:35-10:30. Lesson plans are suggested but we are open to you sharing your own special gifts. A kite flying day while talking about the Spirit moving among us. Bike riding in the parking lot while talking about the trees that are planted. An Olympics themed day in July to coincide with the summer games in Paris.

A sign up sheet is located in the Gathering Place. Grab a friend and come enjoy a morning with the kids of First!

## OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Our Outreach team has plans to be present and visible at many events over the summer. Note this schedule and contact Cass in the church office, [Cass.opal@fumcomaha.org](mailto:Cass.opal@fumcomaha.org) to get more information:

Thursday, June 13

Pride Night at Omaha Union (soccer)

Friday, June 21

Pride Night at Omaha Storm Chasers (baseball)

We are also making plans for this year's Pride Parade, scheduled for Saturday, July 13. Youth pride festival is Friday, July 12, adult Pride festival is Saturday, July 13, both at the CHI Center.



# Supporting

## — WALKING TO FIX — OUR DEMOCRACY

June 6th at 3:00 PM

NW corner of 72nd & Dodge Street

Democracy Supporters!! Join us June 6, 3 PM as we gather at the NW corner of 72nd & Dodge street (Target parking lot) to welcome Rick Hubbard who is Walking To Fix Our Democracy. Hubbard and his team will be greeted in Lincoln late May, and then will start the walk to Omaha. The democracy walk was sparked by Hubbard, an 82 year-old retired attorney from Vermont who with support from volunteers began his cross-country walk in Los Angeles (see route). The message is simple: Fixing our democracy first is the quickest and most effective way to avoid autocracy and unlock progress on every other issue important to us all.

Sponsored by:

represent Us

BETTER  
BALLOTS  
NEBRASKA

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF NEBRASKA  
Empowering Voters. Redefining Democracy.

Rick Hubbard



June 6 - 3 PM - Meet at the NW corner of 72nd & Dodge (Target parking lot) and join Rick on his last Omaha mile walk to University of NE at Omaha (UNO) Civic Engagement Center where a forum on Democracy will be held at 4 pm. Rick has several banners and American flags for participants to carry as we walk to the UNO Civic Engagement Center.

4 PM - Gather at the UNO Civic Engagement Center (CEC) 6400 Dodge for a nonpartisan forum on Democracy. Park free in Lot E, tell attendant about the forum

See website:

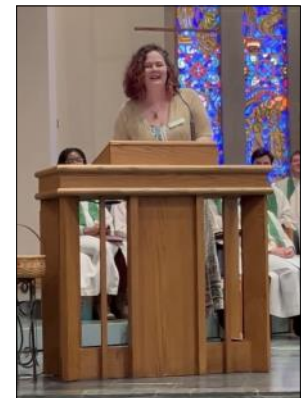
Walking to Fix our Democracy:  
[www.fixourdemocracy.us/](http://www.fixourdemocracy.us/)

### Cass' Candidacy Corner

The path to ordained ministry is a long, but necessary, one with many steps along the journey. The Candidacy Summit in January was a jumping off point to mentorship and group discernment. I've had to complete psychological evaluations, peer evaluations, and background checks as well as write several papers explaining my call and discernment process. Next, I interviewed with our SPRC (Staff Parish Relations Committee) on April 25<sup>th</sup>, and when I passed my interview, the congregation took a vote during a special Church Conference on May 7<sup>th</sup>. It was a unanimous "YES."

All my testing and checks came back so my final step to become a certified candidate is to interview with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOOM). That interview will take place in the fall around the time I begin school at UNO to complete my bachelor's in religious studies.

My deepest gratitude to all in this space who have nurtured my healing and growth since I became a member in 2015. You showed me what it looked like to walk the path of Christ in action. You took my family in your hearts and have shown us safety and love. You gave my calling a space to be heard, and for that I am forever grateful. ~ Cass Opal



# Challenging

## Building a Culture of Generosity

Every Sunday there are multiple ways of giving that take place in our worship services and beyond. The offering plates are passed during each service. There are offering envelopes used and other people drop in checks or cash. Others offer a card stating "I give electronically." Some scan the QR code to make donations to the church budget, to special offerings like tornado relief or Peace with Justice Sunday. There are people who have automatic withdrawals set up with their banks, others who make instructions for IRA contributions at a roll-over season. Children and youth share from their own allowance funds. AND don't forget...

Choir members sing. Ushers and communion stewards aid in worship. Musicians help us sing and feel God's presence. Teachers lead classes. Members of finance come and count the offering. Those who desire a time of fellowship share conversation over coffee and donuts (that someone picked up on their way to the building). The Mow Crew comes and takes care of the grounds. Volunteers are at the front desk answering the phone, opening doors, proof-reading publications. The craft group is making cards, Stitchin' Sisters gather to work on projects. Our archivist works in the basement. Committee members work together on projects and ideas. Volunteers serve at drive through petition signings. Meals are cooked and shared. Prayers are prayed.

A culture of generosity is not only about our financial gifts—it is a sharing of all that we have received.

**Donate Here**

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



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## FUMC Finance Report

Carol Beaty, FUMC Finance Chair

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

The Budget approved by the Church Council for 2024 included \$905,310 in income and \$930,919 in expenses. As 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, to all who give

Average monthly pledges needed to meet our budget of \$700,000 in pledge income = \$42,610

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.

April 2024 pledges - \$48,084 (some members paid entire year) 51.30% of annual budgeted pledges received.

As of April 30, 2024, our total income is 48.66% of what we budgeted. Our expenses are 32.49% 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 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 and friends.**

First  
United  
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Church



Return Service Requested

7020 Cass Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68132-2601

# PRIDE Fellowship Meal



**June 30th, 2024**

**Directly following  
10:50 AM service  
in The Commons**



**Donate Here**