

# Connect

October 2024



Morita Truman, Pastor

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

### Philippians 4:8

As I sit down at a keyboard to write these words, I am watching two systems in the Atlantic continue to move westward. I am in an area now under a coastal flooding watch. In the last 12 hours two storm systems have been named. I don't think I'm in Nebraska any longer!

While away visiting family, I remember things that require me to consider the vocabulary I use, my preparedness during storms, and

awareness of ways to get away from the coast. Those are things I take for granted when I am at home, well maybe not the coastal part.

Learning a new way — as we enter into our annual stewardship campaign that is focused on Generosity and Gratitude, we consider the meaning of those words and how we live them out in our faith lives. The first phase is already in your hands, the Time and Talent cards. The simple thing to do would be to check the boxes of things you are already doing, thinking to oneself, "I know I can do that." But I invite you this year to stop and consider what more you might do. I want to give you some examples...

- ◆ With the renewal of the children's area that has been happening, we have had lots of people helping to prepare rooms, or who have said "I could help on Sunday morning." They're checking new boxes.
- ◆ With the ongoing activity of our Salt and Light team leading the way with petitions and the Ripples of Hope program, we have had more people coming to the church to pray for our nation, our leaders, our church. They're checking new boxes.
- ◆ With our United Women in Faith group recently traveling to the Midwest Mission in Iowa to work and learn about how we can be in mission together, they came back with new ideas of what we can offer, what we can do right where we are in Omaha. They're checking new boxes.
- ◆ With the removal of harmful language in the Book of Discipline at General Conference and the openness that continues to be a part of the ministry at First UMC, we are considering all the ways we can be more inclusive with more communities in our city. There are new boxes we can still check.

The Time and Talent card goes beyond what we're doing and asks each of us "What more can I do on behalf of God in this place?"

I'm excited to see where our faith takes us.

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, October 5

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."*



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# Welcoming

## RESOURCE-ful Empowerment



Liz Emis, Minister of Education

Last month, we kicked off our children's discussion on Identity: who are we? Are we just the sum of our parts? I love to bake, so am I a baker? Can I be a mother and a friend at the same time? Where is God in this?

These are difficult discussions for any human, and necessary to begin to realize the importance of connection. United Methodism is a spiritual movement built upon the foundation found in our Book of Discipline reminding us that "all religion is social religion; all holiness is social holiness." We are not alone, not made to be alone, and are surrounded by helpers, guiding us in our journey of discovery about ourselves and God!



Well, how do we do that? How can we feel empowered and become people empowering one another through their exploration? This is where resources become critical, and depending on one's theology(ies), we gravitate toward different resources.

There was a time in my spiritual journey where I wanted to be told who I am. I wanted to be told, "You are a Christian," or "You are a Jesus follower." I also wanted to be told exactly what that meant I should do. I wanted people to define my identity for me because the question was so daunting. It provided me great comfort when someone said, "As a Christian, you are to pray the Lord's Prayer" or "You are to read scripture daily." My shoulders relaxed when someone told me the Bible translation I "should" be using. I felt empowered, like I was living into my identity. I was comforted in the comfortable.

I was not a child, nor a youth, nor a college student. I was 28-years-old. My first marriage had ended, and I was getting to know the man who would become my husband and with whom I would create a home and nourish our two children.

At 28, I needed stability. We all crave it. Eventually though, my faith understanding no longer held up to the rigidity of the "supposed to's" I'd lovingly received. I needed to uncover my own identity with God. I discovered God had been inviting me for ages! When I gave myself the space to explore my own faith, I found a God so vibrant and in motion that no prayer, scriptural story or routine can describe fully. God cannot be boxed in, and my attempts to do so were more about my needs than God's desires for me. My resources shifted from answers-based to process-based. I permitted myself to be uncomfortable lacking easy answers. I learned that is the essence of faith. How comforting to know discomfort is a sign of faithfulness, and God was with me – in my community – in the wondering. Talk about empowering!

The resources we offer children and families are invitations to humans gifted with questions to which there are not lasting, quick answers. Theology is a process that creates space to uncover our identity. We use books, music, games, craft materials, and play to reveal our identity from within. It's amazing to watch how confident children become when they are encouraged to focus on process rather than outcomes.

*Education* comes from the Latin word *educō*. It means "to draw out." I invite you to attend our WONDER-ful Wednesday reading sessions at 6 pm. Watch how theological resources, coupled with space to ask questions, are helping WONDER-families understand themselves as unique images of God and shaping their identities in and for the kin-dom.

Peace, Salam, and Shalom, Liz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Emis".



# Ripples of Hope

2024 Elections

# VOTE!

Bring your photo ID!

### KEY DATES

**OCT 18** | deadline for online voter registration  
**OCT 25** | deadline for vote-by-mail requests and in-person registration  
**NOV 5** | **General Election Day**

### ELECTION DAY

- Polls open 8 am to 8 pm CT // 7 am to 7 pm MT.
- Deliver absentee ballots to your county's official ballot dropbox before 8 pm CT // 7 pm MT. Absentee ballots CANNOT be returned to polling places.
- If you have any questions, contact your county's election office or our Help Line at 402-890-5291.

### KEY RESOURCES

**Election Central**  
[www.civicnebraska.org/2024-election](http://www.civicnebraska.org/2024-election)

**Voter Information Check**  
[bit.ly/readytovotene](http://bit.ly/readytovotene)

**Get My Vote Back (after a felony conviction)**  
[www.getmyvoteback.org](http://www.getmyvoteback.org)

**Election Protection Help Line**  
402-890-5291

### WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT?

Look up your Ballot at [www.Vote411.org](http://www.Vote411.org)

The ballot will include races, from the president to state and local officials, and also several ballot initiative issues. Your ballot will be specific to the districts in which you reside. Consider learning more about the ballot issues and local races because you may gain more inspiration and motivation to get out and vote!



CivicNebraska.org

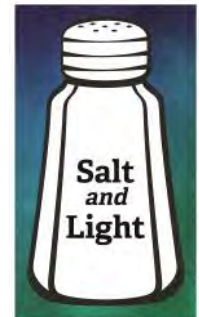
Thanks to volunteers from First UMC, recipients at 14 food pantries across the city received this critical voting information in September!

Join us at our upcoming Celebrations of Hope party, October 5, 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the parlor (enter door #11). Our guest musician will be Fran Sillau.

To stay up to date on more opportunities to be involved, go to [bit.ly/RipplesofHope2024](http://bit.ly/RipplesofHope2024) or email us at [ripplesofhope24@gmail.com](mailto:ripplesofhope24@gmail.com).



[bit.ly/RipplesofHope2024](http://bit.ly/RipplesofHope2024)



## Volunteer opportunities:

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)

On Tuesday, September 10th, FUMC members; Bruce and Dottie Deines, Sherry and Barry Houston, and Lynne Elwood volunteered at the FoodBank. They filled bags for school backpacks with members from St. Wenceslas.

156 boxes were packed with 1,248 food bags! A great chance to help children who are food insecure!

Thank you to all!



# Acting

## **Please remember in prayer these members of our Church Family:**

Miriam Chapman, Juanita Edwards, Nev Fredrickson, Kym Kurth, Tim Ivins, Marvin & Suzanne Morgan, Marj Phillips, Laura Pierce, Millie Plumb, Terry Joseph White

**Sympathies** to the families of Dave England and Barb Winfield, both members of FUMC who transitioned to new life.

**Submit your prayer requests to:** Lynne Elwood at [lelwood2@gmail.com](mailto:lelwood2@gmail.com) or call the church office at 402-556-6262.

*Please follow these 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.

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## **FUMC 2025 Commitment Campaign**



October is commitment month at FUMC. We work to get financial commitments to fund our many important ministries. FUMC has a Commitment Campaign Team that is working hard to fill our fall campaign with opportunities for spiritual growth, gratitude, and success.

The theme of our FUMC 2025 Commitment Campaign is once again Gratitude & Generosity. We hope to focus on all we are grateful for at FUMC in this campaign (our staff, vision, inclusion, missions, worship, education, children and youth, outreach, music, and hospitality). Our focus is also on how we can respond generously to support all those ministries.

The kickoff for our Commitment Campaign takes place at *a forum on Sunday, September 29 at 9:30 a.m.* in the Commons. You will have the opportunity to learn more details about the campaign, our church finances, and our budget process.

We will have lay speakers in worship who will share stories about the importance of giving. These will begin on September 29 and conclude on October 20.

You should already have received a Time and Talent card in the mail. Please look at the many opportunities to share your time and skills to advance the ministries of our church. Bring your card to worship on Sunday September 29. Or drop it off at the church office.

We have set two goals for our Financial Commitment Campaign:

Increase the total amount pledged by 10% (\$70,000)

Increase the number of pledgers by 10% (15 new pledgers)

You will receive a financial commitment card in the mail in mid-October. Consider your financial situation and determine what you can give to the church. Return your card on Sunday, October 27. You can also mail your card or drop it off in the church office.

I am grateful for being a member of this astonishing congregation, for more than 30 years. I cannot imagine worshipping anywhere else. I am connected to so many of you in worship and in mission to others. I know that God has called me to be here and to be generous with my talents and my financial support to ensure that FUMC continues to thrive and share God's love in the world.

Carol Beaty

# Inspiring

## ECO TEAM



Let's have FUN this Halloween AND BE LESS SCARY FOR THE PLANET!

As we anticipate a great spooky celebration at the end of the month, everyone is encouraged to consider being more intentional about integrating our values with our actions. It may take more thought ahead of time, but being eco friendly this Halloween can be just as FUN while being KIND TO THE EARTH! You can get a lot of information about Halloween and waste online. The following is from <https://hummingbirdinternational.net/facts-about-halloween-waste/>.

We are not formally promoting any one organization or business, but this information can get us thinking about approaching the holiday in a greener way.

- 83% of Halloween costumes use non-recyclable plastic, equivalent to around 2000 tons of plastic waste.
- 63% of Halloween costumes can take up to 20-200 years to decompose.
- 35 million Halloween costumes are thrown away in the U.S. each year.
- Each year, the U.S. produces approximately 5.4M Kgs of textile waste from Halloween costumes.
- Halloween candy contributes to the plastic packaging waste, up to 30%.
- U.S. Americans spend around \$2.36B on plastic decorations each year that end up in landfills.

### 5 TIPS TO REDUCE THE WASTE:

1. Reuse costumes, have costume swaps, Create costumes from thrift store finds.
2. Eco friendly packaging and Fair Trade treats. \*
3. Consume pumpkin: Eat your pumpkin. Make recipes to use it. Compost it. Or feed it to the animals.
4. Make your own decorations with repurposed materials and use again.

\* Our United Methodist Committee on Relief has had a partnership with *Equal Exchange* for many years. *Equal Exchange's* mission is to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound, to foster mutually beneficial relationships between farmers and consumers and to demonstrate, through our success, the contribution of worker co-operatives and Fair Trade to a more equitable, democratic and sustainable world. Mini fair trade chocolates are a fun and earth-friendly treat!

To order, <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/collections/chocolate-minis>.

### Saturday, October 5, 10 am at the Durham!

Join members of the Eco team at the Durham Museum, 801 South 10th Street, for the *Becoming Jane* exhibit on Saturday, October 5, at 10 am. Dr. Jane Goodall, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace, braved the unknown to give the world a remarkable window into humankind's closest living relatives: chimpanzees. For admission prices, go to [durhammuseum.org](http://durhammuseum.org).

*After seeing the exhibit, all are invited to debrief at Urban Abbey.*



# Supporting



## 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**

[lilwood2@gmail.com](mailto:lilwood2@gmail.com) to be added to our prayer chain.

**We are here for you!**

On September 9, we welcomed three youth as the newest members of the congregation of First United Methodist Church. After a summer of conversation, learning, sharing, food, and storms, these three made the decision to continue their walks in faith at First. Please welcome Devin Klug, son of Dennis and Emily Klug, Arthur Marshall-Redwing, son of Chris Marshall and Carol Redwing, and Corinne Strum, daughter of Susan Davis. We indeed give thanks for all that God has already shown us through their lives and look forward to their continued participation and leadership.

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## MOVIE GROUP

**Tuesday, October 8, 6 pm**

in-person at FUMC Ada Mead Hall & Zoom

### THE WILD ROBOT

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

Contact

**Bonnie Wallace**

[bonniwallace59@gmail.com](mailto:bonniwallace59@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)

**October 5**

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 use our recycling bins located throughout the building. Thank you!

### Benefits of Recycling:

- **Conserves resources:** Reduces the need to extract new raw materials.
- **Saves energy:** Recycling uses less energy than producing new products.
- **Reduces pollution:** Less waste in landfills and fewer harmful emissions.
- **Protects the environment:** Helps preserve ecosystems and wildlife.
- **Creates jobs:** Supports the recycling industry and related sectors.

## Clair Cares Food Pantry

**Volunteers Needed!**

Next Opportunity for Volunteering

**October 17 & 18**

Clair Memorial UMC | 5544 Ames Ave.

Contact [Prenzler@cox.net](mailto:Prenzler@cox.net) for info



## Please Join us for a Trunk or Treat

Fellowship Potato Bar  
provided by the Coziahr family

**October 13**

after the 10:50 am service



# Challenging

## Building a Culture of Generosity

*"The practice of transformative, biblical generosity is nurtured within a robust culture of generosity reflected in every aspect of congregational life."* Ann A. Michel and Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

Here is a fact: Over the course of this year, from a cold night in January to this moment, we have had to spend some money on our facilities. That's an understatement. Four broken pipes in January caused a need for repairs, new flooring, paint, restoration of rooms, and an ongoing consideration of heating and cooling in the preschool area. The benefit is beautiful rooms, a renewed bridge of relationship between the church and the preschool, and a reminder of the need for long-term planning for the needs of a 75 year-old building. New windows have been ordered, new ceilings are being installed in areas, and carpet is being stretched or replaced in high-traffic areas. That's just some of it.

The repairs and the restoration that have taken place have been accomplished through the generosity of those who have invested in our church's Foundation. Overseen by a Board of Directors that works hand in hand with the Board of Trustees, the Foundation monies are invested and work for us, allowing us to continue to do the work of maintaining our facility without increasing budget requests for the Trustees or dipping into our budgeted funds. It is a blessing bestowed upon us by generations who have gone before, who believed in the work of First UMC, who practiced transformative, biblical generosity. If you'd like to know more about how to invest in First UMC, please contact the office for a Foundation contact.

**Donate Here**

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



[bit.ly/FUMCOmahaGiving](https://bit.ly/FUMCOmahaGiving)

## FUMC Finance Report

Carol Beaty, FUMC Finance Chair

FUMC Finance Report - Carol Beaty FUMC Finance Chair

Here is the FUMC monthly report to the congregation written on Sept 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.

Average monthly pledges needed to meet our budget of \$700,000 in pledge income = \$39,364

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.  
May 2024 pledges - \$39,713 (some members paid entire year) 56.98% of annual budgeted pledges received.  
June 2024 pledges - \$51,810 (some members paid entire year) 64.38% of annual budgeted pledges received.  
July 2024 pledges - \$60,711 (some members paid entire year) 73.05% of annual budgeted pledges received.  
Aug 2024 pledges - \$36,629 77.50% of annual budgeted pledges received.

As of Aug 31, 2024, our total income is 76.64% of what we budgeted. Our expenses are 63.69% of what we budgeted. We would expect income and expenses to be at 66.67% 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 copy.

**We give thanks for the generosity of our members and friends.**

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Return Service Requested

7020 Cass Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68132-2601

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OMAHA  
INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR**

**TRUNK OR TREAT**

**Sunday, October 27, 2024  
from 3-6pm**

**SAVE THE DATE**

Please drop off candy (no nuts) or toy donations to FUMC  
during office hours, Mon - Thurs, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm.