



Morita Truman, Pastor

## THINK ON THESE THINGS Philippians 4:8

"This is a wonderful day.  
I have never seen this one before."  
~ Maya Angelou

Welcome to the new year! As the quote above indicates it is a year filled with possibility, with days we have yet to see, days we have yet to impact and be impacted by, days that may bring sorrow, or joy, days that may call us to rise up in defiance or come together in support, days of which the history has yet to be written. We speak of making resolutions at the beginning of a new year, some of which can often be easily discarded. They can be the things we wish to change on a daily basis (cessation of a habit, better health goals), relationship goals (closer to a spouse or significant other, courage to leave a difficult partner), consideration of how time is spent, or any one of a million other things that we think about. Resolution comes from resolve—a verb. An action word. We often turn to the definition that is "to reach a firm decision about." That's what we try to do on January 1. We want to do something differently and we make a firm decision about that...until we don't. However, there are many definitions of resolve; one of my favorites is "to make something progress from dissonance to consonance." We speak of resolving chords in music (just ask Mark or Marie), but I believe this has meaning for all of us in a new year. What do we need to do to take our lives from dissonance to consonance? To bring harmony to our lives, our hearts, our minds, our souls? Those are the resolutions we should keep before us. I also appreciate that the definition reads we "progress from dissonance to consonance." Progress indicates journey, steps, moving. It is possible that not every day will progress forward, but pausing on the journey, or even taking steps back are still part of the progress because we learn from those moments as well.

I feel like I'm rambling, but all this is to say it's a new year, filled with days we have never seen before, blank pages to be written, new stories to be created. Let's create consonance together -

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, January 4  
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  
**CLOSED January 1 and January 20**

*"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

## Finding One's Way Home



Liz Emis, Minister of Education

If you've traveled for the holidays, you should be home by now. Maybe you drove across town or across the country. Maybe you took a plane and stayed for a couple days or couple weeks, sleeping and waking up to the hospitality of your loved ones. To you I say, "Welcome home."

When we traveled to family for the holidays, my mother would clean the house before she left so she'd come home to a pristine house after our trip. Needless to say, I don't work that way, but I do understand her thought process: for my mother, *home* felt like home when it was clean and tidy. Organized. Set. For her, a cluttered or messy space made her feel anxious. Knowing everything was in its place gave her a sense of safety and security. It even allowed her to practice fun. Without order, she could not experience joy.

As an adult, my home feels like home when it looks lived in: maybe some papers that need to be organized, a candle burning bright, a child's coat draped over a chair rather than hanging in the hall closet. I relax and experience joy when I see that a family lives real life in their home. I feel less under the microscope that way and more able to be myself.

That "welcome home" feeling is something we all search for, no matter the various ways we attempt to find it and hold it close. Yet we're talking about a physical space bringing us joy, a place, a structure. We are talking about, to some degree or another, being dependent on a literal shelter to bring us safety, safety enough to relax and just be.

What happens to our capacity for joy when shelter, permanent shelter, is hard to come by, or even impossible? Like my mother's need for cleanliness, lacking shelter places us in a prolonged state of anxiety, fear, and heightened cognitive response. Without that "welcome home" feeling sustaining us, our bodies operate in fight, flight, freeze, or fawn mode. This ravages our spirit, our soul, our family, our community. We learn no other way to exist than in constant emergency. Fear becomes our identity.

Think about how this must have affected Mary, Jesus, and Joseph. Humans need continual physical shelter and connection to the Divine to sustain a "welcome home" feeling. Jesus never had a permanent home. As a refugee who first lived in a foreign Bethlehem, fled as a toddler to Egypt, and moved years later to Nazareth, Jesus is Hebrew, Egyptian, and Asian (look at an ancient map!). This family had to carry home with them because nowhere, no one offered them a permanent sense of place, of welcome.

This affected Jesus' adulthood. Unlike many of us, Jesus learned that his sense of self came from God, and as such, he made everywhere he went his home by befriending communities, listening to them, dialoguing with them, and modeling that the "welcome home" feeling can, and should be offered to one another. Jesus transcended the physical while embodying the physical. He lived in homes and offered *home* to everyone he encountered.

In this new year, we will witness attempts to remove that "welcome home" feeling from fellow humans, fellow life, fellow creatures of God. We will hear from members of our community and from leaders that home is what you carry with you, as we watch people carrying so very little be forced to leave their safe spaces. Now is when we are called to live out that sense of "welcome home" by standing with those living in fear and fighting for their sense of a safe, warm home. Just as Jesus embodied a physical and spiritual home, so must we. It's much more joyful to feel at home within when you have shelter you can rely upon. Maybe this is what Jesus meant by living in God's House. There are many rooms. Make space.

No matter what gives you that "welcome home" feeling,

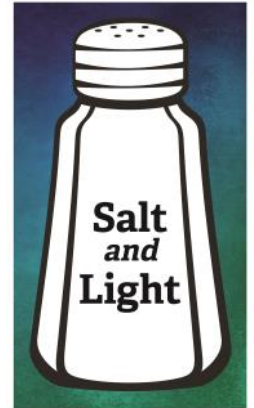
Peace, Salam, and Shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized letters that appear to be 'J', 'E', and 'S'.

## Options for prayers, community, and a day of service on January 20th

Consider joining others this day to make our community a better place!

- 1) 2025 Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Luncheon at the Hilton Omaha. More information will be available this month.
- 2) 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. (weather permitting) neighborhood clean up near the Malcolm X Memorial, contact Gene Williams at [gjmwilliams@cox.net](mailto:gjmwilliams@cox.net)
- 3) Prep a meal for vulnerable youth at Youth Emergency Services, contact Sara Peterson at [ripplesofhope24@gmail.com](mailto:ripplesofhope24@gmail.com)
- 4) MLK, Jr Luncheon (free to the first 125 to register) and community service opportunities: <https://unitedwaymidlands.org/events/dr-martin-luther-king-jr-celebration/>
- 5) 10:30 a.m. to 11:05 a.m. Prayers in the Chapel for our nation during the Inauguration service in Washington, D.C. Enter door #11



## Salt & Light Forums, 9:30 - 10:30 am, the Commons

Sunday, January 26th - So, how's everybody doing?

Listen in on a conversation with a few of our *Salt and Light* team members as they respond to these questions in light of the change in national leadership. (This would be three or four with a moderator.)

- 1) What is motivating me to be active in strengthening democracy?
- 2) There will be moments of seeming defeat. What will help me cope with that reality? What will keep me actively engaged?
- 3) What will be the most helpful way for me to keep updated on current events without being overwhelmed?
- 4) How can I support others when they are feeling impotent or hopeless?

This will be a safe place to share what is on your heart and mind as well. We will conclude by offering actions each of us can take to strengthen our democracy.



Sunday, February 2

**We're better TOGETHER!**

Powers and principalities want us to feel isolated, powerless and hopeless! Learn about what's happening in our state legislature and on the national scene **AND** be reminded of your own power to make a difference! Everyone has gifts to offer: writing, testifying, marching, connections to influencers, bakers, sewers, artists, musicians, teachers, counselors, prayers and more! We will identify our gifts to help build God's beloved community!

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Tuesday, January 7  
6:00 pm, Room 112

All church members are welcome to attend and participate.



Rainbow Factory  
Preschool will resume  
on January 9, 2025.

Welcome back,  
teachers and students!



# Acting

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

Juanita Edwards, Nev Fredrickson, Kym Kurth, Tim Ivins, Marvin & Suzanne Morgan, Laura Pierce, Terry Joseph White, Lucy Wood.

**Sympathies** - to the friends and families of John Bruce Waterman, and Grace Kuhl who transitioned to new life.

*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.

## MOVIE GROUP

**Tuesday, January 8, 6 pm**

in-person at FUMC Ada Mead Hall & Zoom

### A COMPLETE UNKNOWN

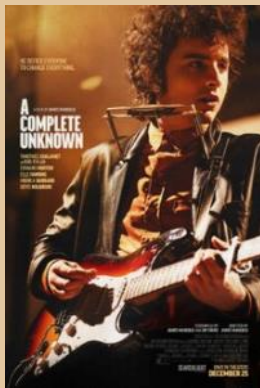
*Optional dinner after meeting at local restaurant, email for info.*

Contact

**Bonnie Wallace**

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

for more info or to receive ZOOM link!



## YOU ARE INVITED

to attend the

**50th anniversary session of the Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day.**

It convenes on February 8, 2025 at Christ United Methodist Church in Lincoln. Fellowship time with coffee and goodies is 8:30 with the day to officially begin at 9:00. You can learn more and REGISTER on line at the Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day website. You can also make history if First Church people can break the "30" ceiling as we are always the highest number of registrants at just below 30. Ride sharing will be available.

Hope you will join us.

<https://nelegisbrief.org/>

Ron Roemmich



**There will be several Volunteer opportunities in 2025!**

Dates will be provided when available.

[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

## Taizé Prayer

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



January 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!**

Thank you to those who attended and supported the annual Piano Soirée with Mark Kurtz. There were adjustments made to the dates and times due to inclement weather, but in spite of that, it was a big success!



## United Women in Faith

### January General Membership Meeting

The first general membership meeting for UWF is Thursday, January 9, 2025, 10:00 am in room 112. Light refreshments will be served. The program is our participation in Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) "house" meeting. The purpose is to help OTOC determine what issues are impacting the citizens of Omaha. We will hold a short business meeting to approve the budget for 2025. Please attend and participate.



### Thank You to FUMC

The United Women in Faith extends a thank you to the congregation for helping us to have a very successful Holiday Fair and Christmas Tea. To everyone who donated cookies and helped to make 101 boxes of cookies---Thank you! To everyone who donated a silent auction item and bid on an item---Thank you! To those who donated, organized and purchased books---Thank you! To the organizers of the tea and tea ticket purchasers---Thank you! To the crafters who donated crafts---Thank you! To everyone who made a donation---Thank you!

You all helped to make this the most successful Holiday Fair we have had for several years. Your contributions will help us to support local non-profits, the Sienna Francis House, the Rainbow Factory, Epworth Family Services in York, NE, Della Lamb in Kansas City, and The Big Garden in Omaha. We help to support over 200 international and national missions as well. We couldn't do this without your participation and support. We are very grateful.

### UWF 2025 Officers

UWF officers for 2025 are Ranita Lilyhorn - President, Miriam Chapman - Vice-President, Carol LaCroix - Secretary, Lynne Elwood - Treasurer, and Nancy Coziahr - Secretary for Program Resources. Our Mission Coordinators are Shirley Carpenter - Education and interpretation, Terri Mahoney - Social Action, and Lola Mullins - Spiritual Growth. We have an opening for Coordinator for Membership, Nurture and Outreach. If you want to be involved with UWF any of the women listed would be happy to visit with you.

# 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

[lalwood2@gmail.com](mailto:lalwood2@gmail.com) to be added to our prayer chain.

**We are here for you!**

## Clair Cares Food Pantry

*Volunteers Needed!*

Next Opportunity for Volunteering

January 16 & 17

Clair Memorial UMC | 5544 Ames Ave.

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



## ECO Team



Many of us have adopted more eco-friendly habits over the past 10 to 20 years! Our church has developed a culture of sustainability in many areas. A few weeks ago our Eco team gave out orange bags to encourage new recycling habits for 2025!! We've installed more LED lights in the building and on the property, planted more trees, more airtight windows are replacing old, a rain garden is on its way, kitchen protocols call for reusing and avoiding single use dishes, and we have incorporated environmental education into our children's classes.

All of these efforts are guided by our Sustainability Master Plan!

<https://bit.ly/FUMCOMahaSMP>

And what is our motivation? *Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, but since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels (like coal, oil, and gas)*

*which produces heat-trapping gases. (Source: United Nations)*

We will continue to build on our successes into 2025 and beyond! All interested members are invited to join the team for our 2025 planning retreat, Saturday, January 11, 9 to noon in room 111. Your concerns and ideas are welcome!!



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

In November we welcomed new members, Bill & Sue Kabourek. Bill is a civil engineer at Offutt AFB, Sue works at the Henry Doorly Zoo in a post retirement career. Bill and Sue attend the 8:30 worship service—get to know them!

Please call Morita or email her at [morita.truman@fumcomaha.org](mailto:morita.truman@fumcomaha.org) if you'd like to talk about membership.

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



# Challenging

## Building a Culture of Generosity

This month marks a full year since we experienced pipes breaking in the preschool area that resulted in a 6-8 month long renovation of spaces, as well as a consideration of how heat and air are delivered to that part of the building. Generosity was exhibited by the volunteers who cleaned, painted, met state deadlines, and put rooms back together. That event started a conversation about spaces, equipment, the building and grounds, that is ongoing and in 2025 we will see significant conversation and planning towards the next steps in several areas.

In January, new windows will be installed in the preschool, in the youth room, and in the choir room. There are major issues with the wood around the old windows and we see leakage of heat and air, along with leaking during rainstorms. The preschool rooms will be done first, before the kids return on January 9. This will be a two week project.

Generosity is demonstrated in many ways at First UMC as is evidenced by our volunteers. Your generous gifts to both the church and to the Foundation make it possible for us to consider all the needs that are before us. Next steps are being planned, watch for details in the coming months.

**Donate Here**

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



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

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## FUMC Finance Report

Carol Beaty, FUMC Finance Chair

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.**

Our stewardship theme this year is Building a Culture of Generosity. Thanks to so many of you who have already made a pledge for 2025. Our church expenses are increasing as inflation affects all of us. As of December 15, 2024 we have received pledges of \$720,536. We have not yet reached our goal of \$770,000 for pledges for 2025 that we think are needed to meet our expenses. It is not too late to submit a pledge if you would like to join those who have already pledged. Just call the church office or email Bob – [bob.dalziel@fumcomaha.org](mailto:bob.dalziel@fumcomaha.org)

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

We are still short of our 2024 Budget Goal for Pledged Donations (\$700,000). As of November 30, 2024 we have received \$664,632 in pledges and we know that a few more donations will be made in December.

**Thanks to everyone who has paid or exceeded their pledges.** It is greatly appreciated.

As of November 30, 2024, our total income is 97% of what we budgeted. Our expenses are 90% of what we budgeted. It is expected we would be at 92% at this time of year. Any expenses above our income received will be covered by the Church Reserve account. Any income received above our expenses will be moved to our reserves.

The budget for 2025 is being developed and has preliminary approval of the Finance Team. It will be presented at the Church Council on January 7, 2025 for final approval. Mark your calendars. Copies of the budget will be available after final approval.

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Return Service Requested

7020 Cass Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68132-2601

## Barron Breland Guest Conducting in January

Have you heard the news? (Or read about it in the Washington Post?) Mark Kurtz and Fran Sillau have adapted the #1 New York Times Bestselling children's book "Just Ask" into a musical! The show, which lifts up individuals with disabilities and differences, will premiere at the Coterie Theater in Kansas City on January 31st.

Because Mark will be in Kansas City preparing the show for much of the month of January, the Handbell Choir will be taking a break, and the Chancel Choir will not be rehearsing on Wednesday nights in January. However, Barron Breland (Director of the River City Mixed Chorus) will be guest conducting at FUMC for four weeks, January 12 through February 2, on Sunday mornings, leading a choir rehearsal at 10:00 am each of those Sundays for anyone who would

like to sing in the choir for that Sunday morning. Whether or not you are a member of the Chancel Choir, you are invited to attend any or all of those opportunities to sing with Dr. Breland. If you haven't worked with him before, you are in for a treat!

Handbells and Chancel Choir will resume their regular rehearsals with Mark Kurtz the first week in February. Until then, consider using the Sundays in January as opportunities for singing!



Dr. Barron Breland





Music at Nebraska Wesleyan *presents*



*My Heart*  
**BE BRAVE**  
2025 CHOIR TOUR

*The Nebraska Wesleyan University Choir and Jazz Choir bring a message of love, courage, resilience, and hope, offering an expansive and expressive program of music by Rosephanye Powell, Jan Pieterswoon Sweelinck, Abbie Betinis, Pavel Chesnokov, Marques Garrett, Moses Hogan, and Robert Ray.*

*featuring the Nebraska Wesleyan University Choir and Gold Standard Singers*  
Tom Trenney, conductor

**Sunday, January 12 at 3 p.m.**

First United Methodist Church  
7020 Cass Street, Omaha

*featuring the Omaha Burke High School Choir*



[music.nebrwesleyan.edu](https://music.nebrwesleyan.edu)