

Connect

December 2025



Morita Truman, Pastor

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

On November 30 we begin the season of Advent. The four Sundays prior to Christmas, this is considered the first season of the church year. Previously the liturgical color of the season was purple, which was also the color for Lent, but several years ago a transition was made to use blue to delineate the two. Advent is a season of expectation and hope, Lent a season of

repentance and introspection. Our sanctuary and church building have been adorned for the season. Right now we need this time of expectation and hope.

For our journey through this season we turn to the ancient words of Isaiah, written to a people who were living in a time of uncertainty. Words that might be familiar to us in 2025 were at the time unexpected, hope-filled, promising. People who were away from the familiar, in a foreign land, perhaps separated from loved ones, heard that they were not abandoned, there was still reason to hope for what God had planned for the people.

To that end, this time together at First UMC is being acknowledged as Hope in the Midst of Chaos. The words we associate with Advent - peace, hope, joy, and love - will be considered with the very human needs we see in our world... light, housing, water, security. Ancient words that brought hope to exiles, neither shall they learn war any more, he shall decide with equity for the meek of the earth, for waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert, and every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low will be heard with modern ears and hearts and we will be asked to open ourselves to what Isaiah's words mean today to those who feel exiled. No definition for who that is - each one of us determines where and who we are.

It is holy time, it is joyful time. I encourage you to take full advantage of the many opportunities that are offered in celebration of the season. Volunteer at the Heartland Food Bank on December 9. Visit the Alternative Christmas Mall (December 7, 14, 21) or the Mitten tree (November 23 and 30). Make a donation of coats or to a matching fund. Face that this time of year isn't always easy and come to the Blue Christmas service on December 20. Make a date to enjoy fellowship with church friends. Come to worship and immerse yourself in the music, the sounds, the scriptures, the joy of the season.

It is the end of the year but it is the beginning of something new. The word advent literally means a *coming into place or being; arrival*. Let's come together with intention and share holy space and time.

On the Advent 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, December 6

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

"The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections."

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Welcoming

Hello FUMC Families and Friends!

Rainbow Factory Preschool is so happy to be sharing a space with you and the church and would like to include preschool updates now and then in the newsletter. The preschool has been busy these last few weeks with our Trick or Treat Parade, Parent/Teacher Sharing, Book Fair as well as our clothing swap. Please know that any activity that has flyers out for the preschool, members of FUMC are more than welcome to take part of (unless specified for RF families only). These upcoming weeks we will be winding down 2025 with special activities and projects to celebrate the season. Our Winter Music Program will be on December 19, at 11:30 am, in the Sanctuary. All are welcome!

We have very few openings for students but have some. These include 1 opening in our 2s classroom, 1 possible in our 3s classroom, and 2 in our multi-age preschool room (must be 3 and potty trained for this classroom). These spots will open (if available) when we return from our winter break on January 8, 2026.

Again, thank you for all the support your congregation gives our preschool.

We appreciate it more than you know.



RAINBOW FACTORY UPDATE

First United Methodist Church has been home to the Rainbow Factory Preschool since 1965, a dream of church member Norma Lyle who opened 2 days a week for children.

The program has grown and in action taken by the Preschool Board has applied for and been granted 501c3 status. Some things will change, some things won't.

The Preschool Board sought this autonomy in order to be eligible for grants that were affected by the church's available funds. And while there is autonomy there will still be a connection between the two entities.

The members of the Board are working toward a December 31 date to be autonomous. The work continues between our two groups. Members of the church serving on the board are Carol Beaty, Alan Dappen, Marie Meyers, and Nancy Rosenow.

STAFF CHANGE and AN INVITATION

As you know by now, in the month of November we received the resignation of our Minister of Education, Elizabeth Emis. We are grateful for the ways Liz shared her creativity and passion for ministry with the children, youth, and families of our congregation and beyond. We wish her well in her future endeavors and pray for her and her family, spouse John, and sons Jackson and Will.

There have been questions about her departure, and that requires some education about United Methodist deacons and elders. Elders are ordained to word, order, sacrament, and service. They are appointed by a bishop to their ministry settings. Deacons are ordained to word and service. They are responsible to find employment and a bishop approves that as a ministry appointment. Deacons serve in churches, in ministries beyond the local church, some teach, some are administrators, musicians, some preach. Their appointment year may not echo the schedule of elders who are appointed July 1 - June 30.

At Annual Conference this year Liz was commissioned as a provisional deacon, a designation that she retains. She continues in the process toward ordination and we will pray for her in that journey as well.

Our Staff Parish Relations Committee is working to hone a job description. In the meantime our dedicated Sunday School teachers, our choir directors, and our Wednesday night volunteers are still working with our children. *If you'd like to know more about the program or volunteer to help, please reach out to Morita Truman at Morita.truman@fumcomaha.org.*

WE LOVE TO WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Donald Callen Freed
by restoration on November 2

Please call Morita or email her at
morita.truman@fumcomaha.org

if you'd like to
talk about
membership.

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JOIN US FOR OUR 2025



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH | 12PM
THE COMMONS

51st Annual Nebraska Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day

2026

Sat. Feb. 14th
8 am - 1 pm

Hosted by
Christ United Methodist Church
45th & A Street
Lincoln NE



♥ Nebraska Community Blood Bank

Our Nebraska Community Blood Drive was a SUCCESS!

A big **THANK YOU** to those who donated blood at the blood drive we had on November 9. We were able to collect 24 units which in turn helped save 72 lives!

We were so excited to partner this year with the **Nebraska Community Blood Bank** that provides blood to over 23 healthcare facilities throughout eastern Nebraska and western Iowa. As the local supplier to the Omaha metropolitan area, their blood donors help ensure nearby hospitals are stocked and ready to serve patients in need.

The need is constant. There is no substitute for blood. Blood components cannot be synthetically made and can only come from volunteer donors. It's the blood on the shelves today that saves lives which is why donors are needed to give regularly so that there is enough blood when a disaster or crisis occurs.

Some interesting facts about donating:

- Every **2 seconds** someone needs blood
- 62% of the U.S. is eligible to donate blood, yet only about **3% do so**.
- More than **25% of the blood supply** is used by cancer patients.
- More than **15 million units** of blood products are transfused in the U.S. every year.
- **1 out of 3** people will need blood in their lifetime.
- The #1 reason people don't donate is **they were never asked!**

So, take this as your personal invitation to donate when we have our next drive in the spring!!

Denise Rogondino,
Health and Healing Ministries Team

Acting

Please remember in prayer these members of our Church Family:

Joan Clark, Nev Fredrickson, Claudia & Dean Hesselgesser, Kym Kurth, Daryl and Diane Mackender, Suzanne Morgan, Jim Rassmussen, Nancy Simpson, Pam Smith, Lucy Wood, Jane Young

Sympathies - the family and friends of John Wallace Breckenridge who transitioned to new life on November 8th

Congratulations - Daryl & Diane Mackender on their 64th wedding anniversary celebrated November 17

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 DISCUSSION GROUP

WICKED
FOR GOOD

DECEMBER 9

in-person at FUMC, the Parlor & Zoom

*Optional dinner after meeting
at local restaurant.*

Contact: **Bonnie Wallace**
bonniewallace59@gmail.com
for more info or Zoom link



Taizé Prayer

1st Saturday of the month

5:00 - 5:40 pm

Mead Chapel

In Person (enter door 11)



DECEMBER 6

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!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY WITH AARP

The **AARP TaxAide program** is a free service that helps people file their income tax returns and is operated by the AARP Foundation in cooperation with the IRS.

TaxAide started in 1968 with just four volunteers and in 2024 there were over 3500 sites and 28,000 volunteers that served 1.7 million taxpayers nationwide. In 2025 in Nebraska, 215 volunteers in 4 districts encompassing 28 sites were able to file over 6000 tax returns including returns prepared in person and returns prepared and filed virtually. In Omaha, there are nine in-person sites including Clair Memorial United Methodist Church.

Accomplishing all this work requires a variety of roles in addition to the Counselors who prepare returns at a face-to-face site or using a virtual system. These roles include: Client Facilitators; Technology Coordinators; Communications Coordinators; and Leadership and Administrative volunteers. Bilingual speakers are in great demand to assist volunteers in all roles. Training for Counselors is available online for volunteers after being registered through the portal (see below). In-person training for all new volunteers will be held at First United Methodist beginning in December. Additional classes will be held in January in preparation for sites to open in February.

More information is available at aarpfoundation.org/TaxaideVolunteer
or call 1-888-227-7669 (1-888-AARP-NOW).

Registration as a prospective volunteer for any of the roles indicates your interest so a local volunteer can contact you to answer your questions and help you with additional steps.

AARP

Inspiring

Salt and Light



In the midst of so much turmoil, division and uncertainty in our nation, for the 25 days of Advent, the Salt and Light team offers you music to help you center on the season. This playlist includes "Light of the World," "Let My Love Be Heard," "This Joy," and "Light of a Clear Blue Morning" ...oh yes, and "Here Comes the Sun" by the Beatles!. Give yourself the gift of musical messages reminding us of love, light, joy and hope! Enjoy!

YouTube Playlist- bit.ly/RipplesofHopeAdventPlaylist2025

Appreciation goes to Sara Peterson for putting this list together!!



The IRAT committee is once again supporting families at Jefferson Elementary by sponsoring the Mitten Tree Project. As we have done for the past two years, there will be a Christmas Tree in the Gathering Place with mittens that have a child's name and an item they would like for Christmas. The tree will be in the Gathering Place November 30. If you have chosen a mitten, don't forget that gifts will need to be returned to church on either December 7 or 14.

Thank you for helping to spread some holiday joy during a difficult time for so many families



Alternative Christmas Mall

We have the opportunity to make thoughtful purchases at our Alternative Christmas Mall at FUMC on December 7th, 14th, and 21st. Plan to shop in the Gathering Place for donations to charitable organizations as well as fair trade items from Urban Abbey, the Palestinian Rights Task Force and peanut brittle from Trinity United Methodist Church.

Please fill out the order form included in this newsletter and bring it to the Alternative Mall. Cash and checks will be accepted for donations and purchases from most vendors. Credit cards can be used for Urban Abbey purchases.



UWF Book Fair & Christmas Tea

Saturday, December 6th from 10:00 am -2:00 pm, UWF will hold our annual Holiday Fair.

We will have a used book sale, homemade cookies (\$10.00/box), crafts, and a silent auction. You name your price for the books you purchase. We would love to see you there. At 2:00 we will close the Fair for our annual Christmas Tea. Individual tea tickets are \$15.00 and should be purchased in advance of the tea. A full table is \$90.00. The tea capacity is 48, we will stop selling tickets once capacity is reached.

Sunday, December 7th, we will continue with the Holiday Fair starting at 9:00 am and continuing through the youth Chili cookoff. We will sell remaining cookie boxes, crafts, and books.

This past year UWF contributed \$7355 to missions through our district pledge, conference missions and local nonprofits.

Thank you for your support.



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

or call 402.556.6262 x1002

You can also email **Lynne Elwood**

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
December 18, 10 am | December 19, 1 pm

Clair Memorial UMC | 5544 Ames Ave.

Contact Judy Prenzler

Prenzler@cox.net for info



ECO Team

Eco Santas at the Alternative Mall!



Look for our Eco Christmas tree at the Alternative Mall and receive a gift from the FUMC Eco team! It's not bamboo toilet paper or orange bags or reusable "paper towels" as in the past...something a bit smaller! We think you might be able to guess!!!

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the _____ that you plant. ~Robert Louis Stevenson

Each day of my life I am sowing _____ that one day I will harvest. ~Gautama Buddha

Inside every _____ is the potential for an incredible harvest. ~Farrah Gray

Thought is the _____ of action. ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

The whole fruit is present in the _____. ~Tertillian



From December 15 to January 15, the ECO Team is again offering a chance to recycle that white foamy stuff that lots of big appliances, TVs and some Christmas gifts are packed in to protect them. It's white, not bendable, and called EPS and there will be a big green bag near door 4 on the East side of the building.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A *Blue Christmas*
WORSHIP SERVICE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20TH, 5:00 PM MEAD CHAPEL

A time to name the grief & loss we feel in the midst of this festive time and open ourselves to God's healing grace. Loss means many things to different people. Taking time to hold space for that loss is an important aspect of healing.

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Challenging

Building a Culture of Generosity - and a Challenge

Beginning November 2, members and friends of First UMC were invited to return commitment cards regarding stewardship and giving in the coming year. This is our next step in the consideration and maintenance of our spiritual and stewardship health. Each household is invited to make a prayerful consideration of how they will participate in the financial health of our church body. As Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, every part of the body needs every other part of the body. Your financial gift will make an impact on this church body and the work in which we engage.

A special thanks to all who have already returned cards. If you are still considering what you will be able to give, please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. It is an important time and for many, there is uncertainty surrounding finances. Rising costs have impacted families. The church's budget will be impacted as well.

You are invited to return your card in the offering plate, in the church office, or to reach out to our Finance manager, Bob.dalziel@fumcomaha.org

At the same time, thank you for your ongoing faithfulness in this fiscal year. Your generosity has allowed us to engage in ministry in both unique and traditional ways. We look forward to continuing to create and birth new opportunities.

In this month of December there will be many reminders of the importance of giving. Thank you for your faithful consideration.

Donate Here

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



bit.ly/FUMCOmahaGiving

SCAN ME

FUMC Finance Report

Kate Fiandt, Finance Chair 2025

Dear Friends, the Finance Committee has been working hard on the 2026 budget and the Stewardship Campaign (thank you Kevin and Paige Wycoff for your leadership). We are doing well financially but we really need your help, so please get your pledges in soon. And if you can, please increase your pledge by 10% this year. You have a chance to review and approve the 2026 budget at the Church Council meeting on January 6, 2026. Please plan to attend if you can.

October marks 83.3% of the calendar year. Our revenues were \$920,557, or 94.5% of our budget. Expenses were \$830,804, or 85.3% of budget. We have also collected 97.5% of our total pledges for the year.

Thanks for your stewardship! Kate Fiandt, Finance Committee Chair



FOODBANK
FOR THE HEARTLAND

10525 J St., Omaha, NE

or contact

Bruce Deines (brucedeines@gmail.com) or

Mike Rosenthal (Mike.Rosenthal577@icloud.com)

*Please reserve this date
on your calendar*

Tuesday December 9, 1-3:30

If you have a foodbank account,
register online foodbankheartland.org

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Return Service Requested

Holiday Piano Soirée with Mark Kurtz



Reservations are \$25 per person and can be made in the Gathering Place on Sunday mornings, or by calling the church office at 402.556.6262

All proceeds support the
First UMC music program.

Friday, December 12, 7:30 pm

Saturday, December 13, 10:30 am

Sunday, December 14, 3:30 pm

The Bloomfield Forum, 9804 Nicholas St.

Christmas Eve Worship Services

5:30 PM | 9:00 PM
DECEMBER 24, 2025



7020 CASS STREET
OMAHA, NE 68132

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Alternative Christmas Mall 2025

We will once again have the opportunity to make thoughtful purchases at the FUMC Alternative Christmas Mall. Please consider making donations to these social justice organizations as gifts. Stop by our table in the Gathering Place on the first 3 Sundays in December. Fill out this form, total the amounts and make one check to the church. FUMC will distribute the donations on your behalf. We will have information on each of the options as well as cards you can give to your loved ones.

The Urban Abbey will be bringing their fair-trade items and books, and the Nebraskans for Peace: Palestinian Rights Task Force will be there with olive oil and other items from the holy land. We will have peanut brittle from Trinity United Methodist church.

Gifts That
Make A
Difference

December 7, 14 & 21 — Please mark your selections from the following list:

Together Omaha

_____ \$30.00 for one visit to the food pantry, plus nutrition and wellness consultation

_____ \$80.00 to support one year of street outreach care and supplies for a family \$ _____ Other

The Big Garden

_____ \$20.00 to help buy seeds and seedlings for community gardens in low-income neighborhoods \$ _____ Other

_____ \$35.00 to build one raised bed _____ \$50.00 to pay for one day of garden programming

Clair Cares Food Pantry

_____ \$15.00 to help stock the pantry _____ \$30.00 to help stock pantry _____ \$50.00 to help stock pantry \$ _____ Other

Living Hope Pantry/Outreach

_____ \$15.00 to help stock the pantry _____ \$30.00 to help stock pantry _____ \$50.00 to help stock pantry \$ _____ Other

League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha

_____ \$30.00 _____ \$50.00 _____ \$75.00 \$ _____ Other

Center for Immigration and Refugee Advancement (CIRA)

_____ \$35.00 covers one legal consultation _____ \$50.00 to help an immigrant take a step closer to U.S. citizenship

_____ \$70.00 will provide 2 hours of prep for an Attorney to represent infants and children in Immigration Court \$ _____ Other

Restoring Dignity (Serving the needs of refugees)

_____ \$25.00 _____ \$50.00 _____ \$75.00 \$ _____ Other

MORE (Movement in Omaha for Racial Equity)

_____ \$25.00 _____ \$50.00 _____ \$75.00 \$ _____ Other

Omaha Welcomes the Stranger

_____ \$50.00 for food _____ \$100.00 for shelter _____ \$200.00 for legal help \$ _____ Other

Rainbow Factory Preschool

_____ \$20.00 for classroom supplies _____ \$40.00 for art supplies _____ \$60.00 for field trip expenses \$ _____ Other

The Union for Contemporary Art

_____ \$25.00 to purchase art supplies for free creative experiences for North Omaha Youth

_____ \$40.00 to support and foster the work of artists that promote positive social change

_____ \$60.00 to help support quality theater performances in our space in North Omaha \$ _____ Other

NOAH (North Omaha Area Health)

_____ \$25.00 _____ \$50.00 \$ _____ Other

Omaha For Us – LGBTQ+ Center

_____ \$25.00 _____ \$50.00 \$ _____ Other

TOTAL ALTERNATIVE MALL SHOPPING BILL \$ _____

Name: _____

Please write one check to FUMC for the total amount and bring to the table in the Gathering Place or mail to the church by December 24.

Thank you for keeping the true meaning of Christmas in your heart this season!