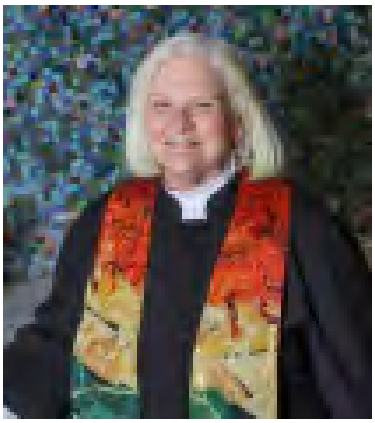
Connect

December 2026



Morita Truman, Pastor

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

We can look at this two different ways.

Ah December, the end of the year!

Ah December, the beginning of the year!

On a yearly calendar we are at the end. It is the twelfth month, which is so busy we don't always stop to enjoy the beauty that is all around us. The lights, the crisp air, trees twinkling all around us. We tell ourselves there is so much that has to be done that we forget to stop and enjoy the moments with family, with friends, with church.

On a church calendar we are at the beginning. The first season of the church year, Advent, is upon us. It began on November 29 and will continue until Christmas Day. There is beauty all around us. The lights, the trees twinkling all around us. We tell ourselves...well you know the rest of the story. The same words from the above paragraph are just as true here as well.

For this season of Advent, we are considering the strangers in a story that is often so familiar we don't stop to hear it anew. On these Sundays we will consider Joachim and Anna, Mary's parents, and the part they played in raising their daughter to say yes to God. We'll consider the owner of the sheep who is never mentioned, the one whose employees left the work place in the middle of the night. Isaiah, the prophet, who wrote over 700 years before the events we describe, who was he and who was the one of authority he described. And what about the pesky innkeeper we have created in our minds - anyone who would dare turn away a young couple in need? Some of this is tradition, some created by imagination. As we hear and imagine together, we will be reminded of the teaching that we are to love God and neighbor. We're also going to enhance the idea that we are to love strangers. Not for what they can do for us, but what we learn from them. How we are challenged. How our world grows larger when we listen to one another. We are also invited to a family challenge - read Erin's article on the next page.

I love this time of year. We have the ability to begin giving gifts long before December 25, We can give the gift of time, of presence, of patience, of kindness, of attention, and especially love. Beautifullly wrapped packages are lovely to receive, but please never forget that you yourself are a beautiful gift from God to the world - you have gifts and graces that no one else can offer in quite the way you do.

On the Advent journey with you,

Morita

Worship Schedule

Sundays

8:30 & 10:50 am (In-Person

(10:50 am service streamed
www.fumcomaha.org/live
www.facebook.com/fumcomaha

Taize Prayer

December 5, 5:00 pm

Please join us in the 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

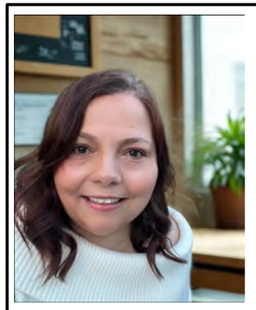
8:30 am - 4:00 pm Monday - Thursday
Office closed Friday - Sunday

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

First United Methodist Church

7020 Cass Street • Omaha, Nebraska 68132 • 402.556.6262

Welcoming



Erin Lee, Children's Director

Family Devotional: The One Who Came Back

Read Luke 17:11–19 together

Family Devotional
First United Methodist Church of Omaha

For younger children, tell the story in these simple words:
One day, Jesus met ten people who were very sick. Because of their sickness, they couldn't spend time with their families or friends the way everyone else could.

They called out to Jesus, asking for help.
Jesus saw them. He listened to them. And he helped them.
As they went on their way, all ten were healed!

Can you imagine how excited they must have been?
But something interesting happened.
Only ONE of the ten came back to thank Jesus.

Jesus asked, "Weren't there ten who were healed? Where are the other nine?"
The one who returned understood something important: when someone shows us love, it's worth stopping to recognize it.

Talk About It Together

- Why do you think only one person came back to thank Jesus?
- Have you ever been so excited about something good that you forgot to thank someone?
- Jesus helped all ten people, even though only one returned. What does that tell us about how we should love and help others?

Live It. Love It. Share It! Jesus didn't make people earn his compassion. He saw people who were hurting and responded with love. We are called to do the same, extending kindness, dignity, and care to everyone, regardless of their circumstances or differences.

Choose a Family Challenge:

- Reach out to someone who may be lonely or grieving.
- Donate food or help provide a meal for someone in need.
- Write a thank-you note to someone who makes a difference.
- Invite someone to join a family activity or holiday gathering.
- Do an anonymous act of kindness for someone.

ALIVE AT 175

John Wesley believed in the importance of small groups in the church. While we have had a number of large groups through the decades: two different singles groups, the Anchor Class, the Galilean Class, Neo-Wesleyans and currently the Boomers. We have also had a number of small groups: Volunteers in Mission, Dine-Out Group, Wesley Pub, Siena/Francis House Servers to name a few.

The women have been organized since the founding and we have even had two women serve as chair of the world wide leadership from this church.

Currently we have several small groups active as well: Movie Group that watches and then discusses a current movie; Salt and Light that deals with current issues in a non political way, Immigration Team that assists families to adapt to Omaha, Clair Pantry that prepares food boxes for the monthly distribution, ECO Team that works on projects around the church, Dungeons and Dragons who gather to play the game, to name a few.

Small Groups can be those that deal with a specific church project - Mercy and Justice, Children's services, etc. It can be a weekly meeting or a monthly group get together: Saturday Night Worship or just a get together for a social event. It could be a group with members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Stroke Survivors, or those in similar professions. It could be after church brunch or other activity. It could be a coffee group or a group of UNO students or those at the Med Center that meet some time during the week. It could be short studies of several weeks during Sunday School Time. What is an interest or activity you would be interested in doing with a small group of fellow church members? It could be a weekend camping group; Bible Study; Reading Group, Crafts group, Etc. Let Cass know and she can put something in the weekly news to get things started. The New Year would be a good time to start.

Be a part of the long history of groups; it is historic, and fun.

Mark Howard Schulze - FUMC-Omaha Archivist

United Women in Faith



Chili, Cookies and Crafts

Sunday, December 6th, is the youth chili cook-off. Please consider entering your best chili and supporting our youth.

UWF will be selling homemade cookies, $10.00 per box, and Stitchin' Sisters crafts in the Commons before and during the Chili Cook-off. The money made will go to our pledge to missions.

Please attend and support both our FUMC Youth and UWF Missions.

We ask our members and other congregants to donate a few dozen tea-sized cookies to help us support our work.

Please bring your cookies to the church, room 111 no later than 4:00 pm on Thursday, December 4th. We will meet Friday, December 5th in room 111 to box the cookies for Sunday's sales.

Please contact Liz Boyer by texting (402)-676-5222 with questions or to volunteer to box cookies.

Thank you for your support.

Help Epworth Family Resources

Epworth Family Resources is fundraising to purchase a reliable vehicle that will help them to transport children, youth and families throughout Nebraska.

The goal is to raise $50,000. To help them, you can purchase a "share" for $50.00. If they get 1000 shares, they reach their goal. To donate go to epworthfamilyresources.org Find the vehicle donation section and click on donate.
You can also send a check to: Epworth Family Resources, PO Box 503, York, NE 68467

ECO Team

Peace on Earth!! A great Christmas gift you can give the environment!



From December 11 to January 11, 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, not Styrofoam. EPS is Expanded Polystyrene. Because it doesn't compact well, it fills landfills. Beaches and waterways are filled with the little white particles as the bigger blocks come apart. Here's your chance to keep that from happening.

Plastilite is an Omaha company that produces EPS coolers (like the ones for Omaha Steaks). They will use your recycled packing materials to make more coolers, which can be recycled to make more coolers.

What IS accepted is the hard white packaging material. What IS NOT accepted are food containers (including Styrofoam cups) or packing peanuts (Those go into the orange bags.) Learn more from Pam, at Plastilite by watching the video at https://www.plastilite.com/recycle

Bring your Expanded Polystyrene packing materials to the big bag outside of Door #4.

Thanks. And have a very merry ecologically friendly Christmas!

Acting

Please remember in prayer these members of our Church Family:
Joan Clark, Nev Fredrickson, Tony Gaeta, Ardelle Halverson, Paul Halverson, Ray Hansen, Milbert Kurtz, Harriet Major, Allan Male, Bob Meyers, Marie Meyers, Julia (Winn) Nodskov, Ken Peters, John Rosenow, Pam Smith, Jr. Schmitzer, Jane Young

Sympathies: to those whose family members have transitioned to new life. Our prayers are with these families in a time when their loved one has transitioned to new life.

Baptism: Roman Richard Kazmierczak, son of Max and Savanna Kazmierczak; Charlotte Alice Sassen & Samuel Jacob Sassen, twin children of Will & Kate Sass

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 withour 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 Elwood or the church.



Tied Up with Strings

RCMC Tickets https://tinyurl.com/RCMCTiedUpWithStrings

FOODBANK FOR THE HEARTLAND 4645 S 84th St.

Tuesday, December 8,
1:00 - 3:30 pm

foodbankheartland.org or contact:
Bruce Deines
brucedens@gmail.com or
Mike Rosenthatl
mike.rosenthal577@icloud.com



FUMC members, Jeff Carston and Laura Seyl, canvas with Heartland Workers Center in North Omaha

Cookies, doorbells, and bus rides, oh my!!

More leaders of color, women, gay and transgender persons have been elected to office than ever before! In Douglas County, we have our first Hispanic sheriff and first Black woman as County Attorney. A Latina will represent Congressional District 2 in the House of Representatives. And the list goes on!

The church is not partisan, but it does have a voice in how our society organizes itself—that is the essence of politics. The Salt and Light team wants to acknowledge how First UMC members showed up to support God's diverse community in the last election season! From knocking on doors with the Heartland Workers Center in South and North Omaha*, to cookie bakers reminding our front line workers that we appreciate their civic leadership, to hopping on the bus to show up at No Kings rallies, to writing postcards to underrepresented folks in Georgia, and praying daily or during the 24 hour vigil, we have not been spectators, we have put our faith into action!

Our witness continues as we look to the Nebraska legislature which will convene January 6th. Thanks to allies such as the League of Women Voters and Nebraska Appleseed, the Salt and Light team will continue to share how we can use our voices for all God's children, especially those on the margins.

*NOTE: Numbers tell the story!!! North Omaha experienced a significant voter turnout increase of 25.2%, while South Omaha saw a rise of 22.8%. This didn't "just happen"... it took sustained voter registration drives and many volunteers knocking on doors!

Ripples of Hope

Salt and Light

Inspiring



CLAIR CARES FOOD PANTRY

Next Opportunity for Volunteering:

Thursday, Dec. 17, 10 am
Friday, Dec. 18 - 1pm
Clair Memorial UMC,
5544 Ames Ave,
Contact Judy at
prenzler@cox.net for info

MOVIE WATCH GROUP

POPCORN INCLUDED!

BEING HEUMANN

WED, DECEMBER 2, 2 PM
in-person at FUMC Mead Hall

Contact: **Lorraine Dalziel**
for more info
lorraine.dalziel@fumcomaha.org

MOVIE DISCUSSION GROUP

WILD HORSE NINE

TUES, DECEMBER 8, 6 PM
in-person at FUMC
Mead Hall & Teams
Optional dinner after meeting at local restaurant.
Contact: **Bonnie Wallace**
for more info
bonniewallace59@gmail.com for





Supporting





WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Chris Graham, Joseph Broom, Kadeyn Johnson, Karen Dunavan, Blase Sands, Jan Sanders

Please contact Morita at Morita.Truman@fumcomaha.org or Cass at Cass.Opal@fumcomaha.org if you'd like to talk about membership

First United Methodist Church

FROM THE COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

We have inroads for people to find ways to connect here at FUMC. Our Communication Director, Cass Opal, has chosen to highlight two of the groups that have created opportunities for fellowship and community.

Wild Worship community has continued to grow. We've welcomed new members who bring years of experience, fresh perspectives, and a shared passion for helping shape the future of this gathering. There will be information in the spring about parks to explore, opportunities to connect with the community, and more chances for our intergenerational community members to take the lead. This is a way to continue creating welcoming spaces and to connect with nature, one another, and the sacred.

The Care Collective experience has grown exponentially, creating something special along the way. Beyond the art we make together, this event offers an entry into our church community for people who may not feel comfortable walking through the doors for worship. It gives people a chance to spend time with us, build relationships, and experience a community where warmth, creativity, and belonging create new experiences. It is a reminder that sometimes connection begins with a paintbrush, a little resin, and a table full of people who are happy to welcome you. The plan now is for the 2027 care collective events to include expanded co-leadership and more opportunities to bring in outside artists and experience. Our resin workshops will remain quarterly, but we'll be adding rotating lead artists and a variety of lower-lift creative experiences, including watercolor, pour painting, and more. We want to make room for more people to share their gifts, lead, learn, and create together.

I'm so grateful to everyone who has helped make these opportunities what they are today. Thank you to everyone who has participated, volunteered, shared their talents, and helped make our small groups such a wonderful success in 2026. These communities remind us that belonging can begin in so many different ways, and that some of the most meaningful ministry happens when we simply make room for people to come as they are.

I can't wait to see how these, and all, our communities continue to grow in 2027!

With love, Cass Opal

Nebraska Community Blood Bank

Sunday, December 20, 9 am - 1 pm
Held on the Bloodmobile on east side of FUMC

Sign up at ncbb.org/searchdrives
Use Sponsor Code: FUMCO
or scan QR code

Challenging

Building a Culture of Generosity

Our culture of generosity is on full display at First United Methodist, especially during the Advent season! Here are ways you can engage in the spirit of giving beyond, or simply make the season more memorable for you, your family, for a friend...

The Alternative Gift Mall - Do you have someone on your list who says "I don't need anything" yet you still want to offer them something? Well, we have a way! See the enclosed insert with ways to honor loved ones with a gift to one of our partner organziations. It's easy to wrap and makes a difference in the lives of many.

Fair Trade shopping - gifts and books from Urban Abbey, Palestinian olive oil from the Palestinian Rights Task Force, or peanut brittle made by our friends at Trinity United Methodist Church

The First United Methodist Church Foundation - you can make a one time or ongoing gift to our church foundation in memory or honor of someone, to help insure the work of this church continues.

Youth chili cook-off - bring a pot of chili for the competition or just bring your appetite. Youth fundraising goes to support participation at Youth 2027 in Dallas, TX next summer.

Piano Celebration - buy your own ticket and another so you can bring a friend for a wonderful concert with our own Mark Kurtz and friends. Tickets available in the Gathering Place. These funds support our music ministry.

When we give to the budget or to one of these special opportunities, our generosity is on full display. Thank you!

Donate Here

Scan the QR code for one-time or recurring donation options
bit.ly/FUMCOmahaGiving

FUMC Finance Report Kate Fiandt, Finance Chair

As we come to the end of November we are starting to have a fuller picture of the fiscal state of the church. Due to the newsletter deadline being ahead of the end of month accounting, we are able to report on the final numbers as of the end of October. To date (10/31) our income for 2026 has been $885,970. Expenses for that same period have been $773,923. Income receipts are at 97% of what we expected, expenses are at 80% of what was budgeted. It is good to see the numbers that reflect the faithfulness of our members and friends. The year began with an uneasy feeling as we anticipated deficit, but the opposite has proven true and we are hopeful as we consider the ongoing generosity of all.

The Finance committee met on November 16 to continue work on the 2027 proposed budget. When presented, it will reflect the mission statement and the values of this church, both within our walls and in the world.

The return of pledges and commitments for 2027 have also reflected that faithfulness. If you have not yet returned your pledge card indicating your intentions for 2027, you may do so in the offering plate on Sunday morning, in the church office, or by contacting Ed Pearce in the finance office.

Thank you all for making that mission and ministry possible by your faithfulness and stewardship.

First United Methodist Church

Return Service Requested

7020 Cass St, Omaha, NE 68132

Holiday Piano Celebration

with Mark Kurtz & Friends



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 Omaha's music program.

One Production Only!!

Sunday, December 13 | 2:00pm

New Location!!!

First UMC Omaha - In the Sanctuary

7020 Cass Street

Enter Doors 1 or 7

Alternative Christmas Mall 2026

Gifts That Make A Difference

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.

December 6, 13 & 20– *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

One Stop Cancer Stop

_____ $25.00 to help train nursing students _____ $35.00 to provide information about cancer prevention
_____ $50.00 to provide community cancer screening event $_____ Other

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 s 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

_____ $ $25.00 for food _____ $50.00 for shelter _____ $75.00 for legal help $ _____ Other

Rainbow Factory Preschool

_____ $30.00 for snacks _____ $40.00 for classroom supplies _____ $50.00 for art supplies $ _____ 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
$ _____ 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!