



In this current holy season of Lent, let us examine what we need in our lives to maintain a steadfast, trustworthy bond to God's love. We will name our anchor-holds—embracing the qualities of memory, truth, community, suffering, and solidarity that will be so needed in the days ahead.

Memory

SUNDAY, March 5 - Genesis 2: 15-17, 3: 1-7

This is a celebration of remembrance. As one writer has said, "memory is more than just a psychological exercise of data retrieval," but the "faculty that tells us who we are." It's through memory that our personal story becomes attached to God's story and we claim our defining narrative.

Truth

SUNDAY, March 12 - John 3: 1-17

The "truth" about any social order is seen through the eyes of the poor and the marginalized. The Bible has that bias, and it was embraced by Jesus. He interpreted the truth about his society by focusing on the outcasts and those pushed to the margins.

Emerging Worship @ 9:30 a.m. - "Born of the Spirit: shining the light." In troubled times, we are to be the light of the world, the "illuminati." Let us stretch our light into the world, showing mercy and hope.

Community

SUNDAY, March 19 - John 4: 5-42

We must learn how to "come out" as Christians, and this can only happen in community. The habits of thinking, practices of living, disciplines of praying, celebrations of worship, and clarity of calling can only happen with one another.

Suffering

SUNDAY, March 26 - John 9: 1-41

Feelings of desolation offer us the opportunity for connecting more deeply to the reality of God's love. Experiences of loss, feeling like death, can open ourselves to a taste of the resurrection. All growth, all transformation happens in this way. It comes through suffering—the loss of control—which then can make us "usable instruments" for God's power.

Solidarity

SUNDAY, April 2 - John 11: 1-45

Solidarity is the means by which we live out the truth of Ephesians 4:25, declaring that we are all "members one of another." It is this mutual belonging to a common humanity that lies at the foundation of Christian social ethics, affirming each one's dignity, and building common political and social structures which uphold and protect this commitment.

Emerging Worship @ 9:30 a.m. - "Called to be Creators of Justice & Joy." As we break bread together, we will break open our lives and pour out our love for the sake of a better world. Creators of justice and joy desire to be in solidarity with all people, committing themselves to the preservation of dignity of all people. (See p. 7 for more info.)

WELCOME to *The First Word*, a bimonthly publication, except during the months of June, July, August and December when *The First Word* is published monthly. Articles for the next issue are due no later than Wednesday, **March 8, 2017**
The next newsletter will be mailed **March 15, 2017**. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be sent electronically by email to Jennifer Stupica at jstupica@umc-kzo.org.

FIRST CHURCH STAFF

The staff is here to empower and equip the congregation for ministry and mission. Email *staff by entering the first letter of their first name and the entire last name, and then: @umc-kzo.org. (i.e., scharnley@umc-kzo.org).

*Rev. Steve Charnley	Senior Pastor
*Rev. Julie Kline	Associate Pastor
*Rev. Dan Duncan	Pastor of Children & Families Ministries
*Rev. Keith Treman	Pastor of Congregational Care
*Jacqueline Stilger	Minister of Music
*Ruth LaMachia	Church Business Administrator
*Christi Landreville	Administrative Partner in Ministry
*Jennifer Stupica	Communications Coordinator
*Bernie Foulk	Organist
Rich Peavler	First Singers Director
*Curt Flowers	Bookkeeper
*Thom Victor	Office Assistant
*Denise Wilcox	Contributions Assistant
*Robin Entenman	Office Assistant/Security
Pamala Roman	Custodian
Todd Bloomfield	Evening Custodian
Ernesto Escobedo	Custodian/Security
Linda Winkelman	JFON Legal Assistant (kzoo_assist@jfonwestmichigan.org)
Sharon Bunker	Lead Sunday Pre-School Teacher
Julie Meyers	First Care Director (msjulie55@yahoo.com)
Bishop David A. Bard	Bishop of the Michigan Area
Rev. Dwayne Bagley	Kalamazoo District Superintendent
Rev. Cora Glass	Dir. of Discipleship and Resident Director of Wesley Intentional Living Community

PRAYER CHAIN. Did you know that it is as easy as picking up the phone or e-mailing the office to have your prayers multiplied by many caring members of your church family? Please contact the church office, 381-6340, if you would like to be included in our weekly email prayer chain. If you would like to be added to our phone prayer chain, please contact Mary Beth Garman at (269) 321-9332.



STEPHEN MINISTRY is a confidential care giving ministry of our church. If you would like a Stephen Minister to walk with you during a difficult time in your life, you are welcome to contact Wendy Arnold at 323-3244.

Our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of

Edward Campbell, who died February 1.

Please keep these friends in your prayers

Bob Baker, Doris Ball, John Boekhout, Skip Decker, Dude, Hyesuk DeRoo, Sharon Dougan, Emerson Eidson, Russ Gabier, Derek Geerlings, Bob Goodwin, Brenda Haan, Paula Hall, Marge Hastings, Carl Hausermann, Mildred Hedrick, Dolores Heidanus, Nell Holland, Barbara Hughey, Rueith Lewis, Art Mann, Jim Martin, Dave Martin, Marsha McKenzie, Mandy Morrill, Collin Palmer, Joan Rohs, Ham Scharf, Mary Helen Thomas, Arlene Triestram, Thom Victor, Lucy Welch, Lois West, Anne Wolfe, Don Zuidweg

Baptised in Worship on Feb. 19

Olivia Ann Austin, daughter of Brian & Brenna (Frew) Austin.
Konnor Richard Penninger, son of Joseph & Kristy (Kasper) Penninger.
Kayson Robert Wayne Huff, son of Joseph & Kristy (Kasper) Penninger
Riley Marie Huff, daughter of Joseph & Kristy (Kasper) Penninger

Twin Boys!

Congratulations to Katie (Kneas) and Kevin Blair on the birth of their twin sons, Ethan and Charlie. They were born on February 6. Proud grandparents are John and Ann Kneas.

Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 12. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour the night before. This is an Emerging Worship Sunday, too!





Join us for an Ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1 7 P.M.

First Congregational United Church of Christ 45 West Michigan Avenue Kalamazoo, MI 49007

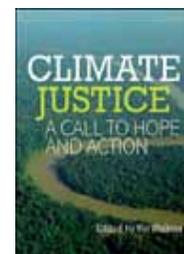
Inquirer's Class beginning Sunday, March 5

A new Inquirer's Class will begin on Sunday, March 5. Anyone interested in membership in the church is invited to attend. The class will meet for six Sundays at 9:30 a.m. New members will be received into the church on Sunday, April 9 (Palm Sunday) at the 11:00 service. Rev. Steve Charnley will lead this class in the chapel. If you are considering joining the class, please let Pastor Steve know. Also contact him if you have any questions about membership or the class at 381-6340, scharnley@umc-kzo.org.

The Costa Rica Mission Team will be selling Costa Rican Classico Coffee and jewelry on Sunday, February 26. Stop by their table to support this ministry and hear about their recent trip.

2017 Lenten Book Study

CLIMATE justice



"Climate Justice: A Call to Hope and Action"

Edited by Pat Watkins. Published by United Methodist Women, 2016.

During Lent this year we will study the book "Climate Justice," and learn about the biblical theology of caring for creation, explore the biblical model of climate justice, and discuss why it is a religious issue. As we discover the effects of climate injustice, we will ask, "how did we get here, and what are the consequences for both the earth and all life upon it?" Most importantly, we will learn what needs to happen now, and how we can become engaged in practical ways to care for creation.

There are three opportunities for you to join in the study/discussion!

- 1) Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor, co-led by retired UM pastor Jerry Toshalis and Dr. Kay Gross, Director of the Kellogg Biological Station. Begins March 5.
2) Wednesday mornings at 11 a.m. in room 304, led by Rev. Steve Charnley. Begins March 8.
3) Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. in room 304, co-led by Revs. Julie Kline and Dan Duncan. Begins March 8.

We also invite you to host a class in your home and gather friends and neighbors to share in the study. If you are interested in hosting a book study, please let the office know so that we can publicize this additional location. Books can be purchased the first day of class or at the Welcome Center for \$10.

Family Foundations is the name for our Sunday School class for parents of young children. They meet on Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on the third floor in room 304 (across the hall from the library). They welcome anyone raising young children to join them for fellowship, learning, laughing, and mutual support in this wonderful and challenging time of life!

Rest is one of the greatest gifts God gives us. Be thankful for God's goodness by going to bed an hour early. If you can't sleep, lie in bed and read the scriptures or pray for the needs of others.

New Office Assistant

by Ruth LaMachia, Church Business Administrator

Thom Victor has joined the church office staff as our Office Assistant. He started in December, taking over the duties that had been performed by Sara Miller before she relocated to Pittsburgh, PA with her husband Mike.

Thom is a member, and has been attending our church for about two years. He is a member of the Chancel Choir, and has co-taught an Academy Class on disability and theology with Rev. Charnley. Thom has been working on his Masters of Divinity degree through Emory University in Atlanta, and would describe himself as a musician and a computer “nerd.”

Thom’s job as administrative support includes keeping track of new visitors to the church, sending out CD’s to our shut-in members, maintaining the prayer list, and working with our Emerging Worship Team to produce the PowerPoint presentations and bulletins. Please take a minute to welcome him to the staff!



Thom Victor
Office Assistant

Camp Sunday

February 26 special offering

The United Methodist Church has a great commitment to camping. This year’s Camp Sunday offering will be given to the scholarship fund of two special camps: Camp New Day, for children of incarcerated parents (our own Chuck Wilson was instrumental in founding this conference camp), and Camp Beloved, for LGBTQ youth, providing a safe and understanding environment for them to grow in the Christian faith in a beautiful camp setting.

HRI Walk to End Homelessness

Saturday, March 25

Would you like to get some exercise and help to address the homeless situation at the same time, consider joining the **HRI Walk to End Homelessness**. This is a 5K walk (3.1 miles) and will be held on **Saturday, March 25, 2017**. The walk will take you from Homer Stryker Field along the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, through downtown Kalamazoo to the

Eleanor Family Shelter, and then back to Homer Stryker Field. This year HRI is partnering with the Kalamazoo Growlers for their Fling into Spring event which will include both youth bounce houses, games, children's activities, special guests, and a visit from Growlers mascot Porter. To download a pledge sheet and additional information, please visit HRI's website, <http://www.housingresourcesinc.org/>



Below is a list of our 2017 Church Council members as well as committee chairs and trustees

- Chairperson** - Matt Newman
- Secretary** - Diane Owen-Rogers
- Lay Leader** - Karen Hassevoort
- Lay Member of Annual Conf.** - John Clark
- Reserve Lay Member to Annual Conference** - Diane Owen-Rogers
- Board of Trustees Chair** - Larry Lueth
- Finance Chair** - Molly Williams
- Staff/Parish Relations Chair** - Dan Adams
- Lay Leadership Chair** - Rev. Steve Charnley
- Treasurer** - Terry O’Connor
- UMW Rep** - Nancy Hilliard
- Young Adult Rep** - Amber Walker
- First Care Board President** - Matt Morgan

MINISTRY TEAMS

- Children & Families (CFM)** - Jocelyn Newman, Jessica Grant
- Communications** - Dan Bunker
- Congregational Care** - Robin Entenman, Laura Van Vlack-Ailes,
- Hospitality** - Bruce Binns
- Justice** - Ray & Ann Sweany
- JFON** (*rep on West MI JFON Board*) - David Lundquist
- Lifelong Learning** - John Clark
- Memorial Committee** - Cheryl Anderson
- Music & The Arts** - Liz Moon, Carol Hodges
- Outreach** - Mark Oudersluys
- Reconciling Ministries** - Lori Owen-Rogers, Diane Owen-Rogers
- Rekindle the Flame** (*reaching inactive members*) - Dick Shilts
- Relational Ministries** - Andy Vorbrich
- Security** - Michael Seals
- Stewardship** - Jerry Bultema
- St. Andrew’s Group** (*worship overview*) - Carol Hodges

TRUSTEES

- Chair** - Larry Lueth
- Vice Chair** - Chris Bovid
- Treasurer** - Carol Hodges
- Secretary** - Thom Victor

Listening in Lent: acts of reconciliation

Based on a suggestion from a United Methodist pastor in North Carolina, we are encouraging members of our congregation to participate in a listening project. Find individuals outside our congregation who have a different point of view about current issues than you do. Ask each individual if he/she would be willing to tell you about their point of view and how they arrived at it. Then simply listen. When the individual is done talking, try to summarize what was said to make sure you heard correctly. Then offer your thanks for their willingness to explain.

Possible current issues to ask about:

- the recent presidential election
- gay marriage
- abortion
- gun ownership
- another issue of your choosing



Every good conversation starts with listening

That's it. Don't give your point of view or try to correct misconceptions. Would you be willing to try this with one person? With five? In the context of Lent, this is an exercise in reconciliation and humility, a way to reconnect with others during a time of national division. Praying both before and after a listening session will help ground you. At the end of March, there will be an evening session in which people can discuss what they experienced. Questions? Talk to Carol Hodges or email her at chodges.kalamazoo@charter.net.

Ramp Up ministry needs new leader. First UMC has partnered with the Disability Network of SW Michigan to build over 60 ramps since 2004. In order to keep this important program viable, a new leader is needed. The current Leader, Brian Grant, has taken a new job out of state. We hope to be able to continue this ministry this summer by building two ramps. The leader's responsibilities include designing the ramp, interacting with the customer, ordering materials, scheduling, and organizing the work crew. Two people could potentially share this leadership. For more info, please contact Tom Schaberg at 352-5234. New crew members are also needed!

Meet Donna Chaat Pewo, one of our new missionaries

by Mark Oudersluys, Outreach Team Chair

This is the second of three bios of the missionaries our church will begin supporting in 2017



Donna Pewo
Missionary serving at the Clinton and El Reno Church of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

Donna Chaat Pewo is missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, serving as a Church and Community Worker at the Clinton and El Reno Church and Community Ministry of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC).

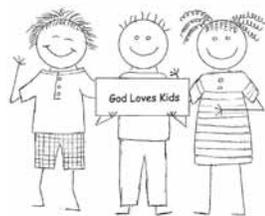
The Clinton/El Reno ministry, a priority of the OIMC, primarily serves children of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes

with a very small group and had increased to 35 in 2011.

The ministry strives to win the trust of the Cheyenne and Arapaho, who have a skeptical view of Methodists. The Cheyenne and Arapaho remember that some 180 of their people, including many children, were massacred at Sand Creek, Colorado in 1864 by a territorial militia led by a Methodist preacher, an action for which the contemporary church has apologized.

Donna Pewo is a licensed local pastor of the OIMC. Her home church is the Billy Hooton Memorial United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City. Donna is the mother of two adult children. She has five grandchildren. She is a member of Comanche Tribe of Oklahoma.

Additional information related to Donna and Clinton Indian Church and Community Center is available on the United Methodist Global Ministries website under Advance numbers 3021377 and 302075.



Children & Families Ministries

by Rev. Dan Duncan
dduncan@umc-kzo.org

Turbocharge your Summer! United Methodist summer camps are coming. Now is a great time to plan for a fun and faith-building experience at one of our many UM camp locations throughout the state. For generations, Christian camping has turbo-charged the faith formation of people of all ages. I invite you to explore the incredibly variety of options at this website: <https://umcamping.org/events/>. Our church provides “camperships” of 50% of the camp cost, making this an even sweeter deal for a life-changing experience! You might know that I’ve been leading youth adventure camps for years. In recent years it has been kayaking at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and camping on Grand Island. This year I will also lead a United Methodist church camp for **adults** to that incredible area. We are based out of Camp Kinawind near Boyne Fall where we will meet and end. Dates are Monday, Aug. 21 to Friday Aug. 25. Kinawind has sea kayaks and related gear if you don’t already have that, along with camping equipment. You can see the brief description of the camp, and register through the above website. Contact Pastor Dan with any questions!

Sunday School from 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Pre-K through 4th grades (beginning in the Arches on the 2nd floor). Upcoming Bible lessons using our United Methodist “Deep Blue” curriculum will be:

- Feb. 26: The Forgiving Father
- March 5: The Ten Lepers
- March 12: Zacchaeus

Fifth and Sixth Graders “submerge” themselves in issues of Christian faith and life with the “Submerge” curriculum from Cokesbury:

- Feb. 26: Giving Generously (The Widow’s Offering)
- March 5: Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
- March 12: Elisha helps the Widow

Godly Play stories coming up (11:15 to noon)

4 -5 year olds—Room 203

Feb. 26: Jesus & Bartimaeus	Storyteller: Pastor Dan	Guide: Pat
March 5: The Meaning of Lent	Storyteller: Tim	Guide: Ashley
March 12: The Mustard Seed	Storyteller: Pastor Dan	Guide: Margie

6-8 year olds—Room 200

Feb. 26: Jesus & Zacchaeus	Storyteller Jocelyn	Guide: Shondo
March 5: The Meaning of Lent	Storyteller: Pastor Dan	Guide: Carol
March 12: Mary & Martha	Storyteller: Shelly	Guide: JoAnne

First Bells will rehearse during the Gathering Time in the Arches on March 5.

CFM Team's next meeting is Wed., March 8, in the Arches at 7 p.m.

Baptisms are scheduled for April 30. If you are interested in baptism for yourself or a child, please contact Pastor Dan.

Family Fun Night coming! Our next Family Fun Night will be bowling, on Friday, March 17. We have to pay for the lanes we reserve, so this event is by necessity “pay in advance.” Cost is \$10 per person, which includes shoes. We’ll have the alleys from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Airway Lanes (5626 Portage Road), but plan to arrive by 5:45 to rent shoes and find that perfect ball so we’re ready to roll at 6 p.m.! RSVP with your \$10/person to Pastor Dan, or the church office, by Sunday March 12.



2017 Chili & Soup Cook-Off was spicy and superb!

Golden Ladle winner: Jared Russel with 3-Bean Chili
Silver Ladle winner: Hannah Koshar with Minestrone Romagnola

We had over 20 crockpots of deliciousness! Many were contenders for the coveted golden and silver ladles. Thank you everyone who came and supported our efforts and helped to make serving in our own community and in the mountains of West Virginia possible. We are deeply grateful for your consistent love, support, and prayers. We are looking forward to being "Love in Action" this summer and always!

In gratitude,
Pastor Julie and the Youth Tribe



JFON immigration ministry update

Angels Across the Globe

by Ann Sweany, Justice Team Co-Chair

Last September, JFON attorney Katrina Pradelski shared with us the story of a client with whom she has been working for some months. "Louise" was brought to this country at the age of 12 by her then 55 year-old husband. She was abused and neglected on her arrival. The trauma she endured had a significant impact on her cognitive abilities; she was stuck at age 12 and had to survive on her own.

Vulnerable to suggestion and longing for family, she ended up being caught unwittingly violating border security laws, and on her way to deportation. It was at this stage that she became a JFON client.

At a critical point in her case, Louise needed a particular document. This bore more than the usual cost, because it was a replacement. Here in Kalamazoo, we were about to avail ourselves of funds from the generous bequest of Dick Knapp to pay the fee. Just days before the check would have had to be written and sent off, a package arrived in our JFON office, bearing the very document Louise needed! It was completely unexpected. The document had been paid for by the church of Louise's mother in her home country, received, and sent to our office. It is hard to imagine the logistics required to pull off such a miracle, without anyone here even knowing of its being done.

We are very grateful to the angels in a far corner of the world who collaborated to help Louise.



EMERGING WORSHIP

March 12 @ 9:30 a.m. in Wesley Hall

Lenten theme

Our Anchor-Hold: God's Love

Led by Rev. Julie Kline

"Born of the Spirit: shining the light"

Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.'" John 3: 1-17

Early Christians were called "Illuminati" at their baptism because they now were to live with the light of Christ emanating from their lives. Jesus tells Nicodemus in the dark of the night, "Very truly, I tell you... you must be born of the Spirit." Later as the Pharisees attempted to shadow Jesus with darkness he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." We are called, to shine with the joy and love of God. Into the darkness, into troubled times we are to be the light of the world. We are "Illuminati!" As the days become longer once again, let us rise and stretch our light into the world, showing mercy and being hope for God's sake! Come, and celebrate a Spirit-filled soul feast.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to Palm Sunday falling on the second Sunday of April, Emerging Worship will be the FIRST Sunday of the month. Please mark your calendars to be with us for an Emerging Worship experience at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 2!

Sunday Morning Partners in Ministry

	Feb. 26 8:30 and 11 a.m	March 5 8:30 and 11 a.m	March 12 8:30 and 11 a.m	March 19 8:30 and 11 a.m	March 26 8:30 and 11 a.m	April 2 8:30 and 11 a.m
8:30 Lay Reader	Andrew Vorbrich	Deb Search Willoughby	Tim Mullikin	Molly Williams	Jan Schoenherr	Laurie Nelson
8:30 Office/Welcome Center	need someone	need someone	Robin Entenman	need someone	need someone	need someone
8:30 Greeters	Ron Moore	Jennifer Stupica	need someone	need someone	Ron Moore	need someone
8:30 Sound/Lights	Jim Willoughby	Greg Anderson	Jim Willoughby	Greg Anderson	Jim Willoughby	Greg Anderson
11:00 Lay Reader	Nancy Hyde	David Kingsley	Linda Winkelman	Mark Stucky	Dawn Wheaton	Judy Aardema
11:00 Office/Welcome Center	need someone	need someone	Robin Enenman	need someone	need someone	need someone
11:00 Greeters	Joyce Treece	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone
11:00 Acolytes	Ella Adams Andrew Hampton	Andrew Wright Sean Willoughby	Emma Hampton Layla Eaton	Sam Ledlow Ryan Ernest	Collin Bland Andrew Hampton	Ella Aams Andrew Wright
11:00 Sound/Lights	Jonah Bolton	Lucas Bolton	Bob Lane	Jonah Bolton	Lucas Bolton	Bob Lane
Van Driver	Jake Lisak	Dave Russel	Mike Cooper	Fred Corbus	Jay Gross	Jake Lisak



March 1, General Meeting, Church Parlor

9:30 am. Business Meeting
 10:30 a.m. Break
 10:45 a.m. Devotions
 11:00 a.m. Program, "Come Walk with Jesus, the Way of the Cross," by Rev. Keith Treman
 12:00 noon, luncheon. Cost of luncheon \$7, reservations due to Fay Woolrich, 382-4303, by noon, Friday, Feb. 24.

Wednesday, March 15

Anna Circle, 9:30 a.m., B-1 Lounge, Friendship Village
 Program: "Orphan Train book review," by Carol Hodges

Lydia Circle, 1:00 p.m., A-1 Lounge, Friendship Village
 Program: "Substance Abuse Success," by Teresa Lewis

Miriam Circle, 1:00 p.m., Church Parlor
 Program: "The Story of a Pioneer," by Rev. Steve Charnley

Tuesday, March 21

Ruth Circle, 7:00 p.m., Church Parlor
 Program: "Peace House"

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission summer internships

Youth and young adults! If you have a heart for missions and could see yourself as a candidate for a Summer Internship Program, please visit the UMVIM website below for the requirements and download the application. All applications must be returned to Paulette West no later than **February 28, 2017**; interviews will be held via Skype in March.

<http://umvim.org/go/youth-young-adults>

Opportunities are available in the U.S. as well as international sites, including the Bahamas, Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Panama.

Spring Valley Elementary School Tutors. Research shows that students who can't read well by the end of the 3rd grade are more likely to leave school and have fewer job options. Yet literacy experts say nearly four out of ten 4th graders fail to achieve even partial mastery of the reading skills needed for school success, and only three in ten read at the proficient level or higher. Joyce Treece, our church's liaison with Spring Valley Elementary School, is looking for more volunteers to help kids learn to read better. Contact Joyce at 375-8814 if this is a ministry that interests you.

Worship Technology Vision Team (WTVT) update

by Derek Wheaton, Chairperson



The Worship Technology Vison Team (better known as WTVT) would like to update you on where we have been and where we are headed! Almost two years ago, we embarked on a mission to uncover the possibilities of infusing technology in all areas of our church. Our guiding principles focused on:

- Sensitivity to God-weighting technology experience with Spirituality.
- Purpose-not implementing technology just for the sake of implementing technology.
- Not reinventing the wheel. Making sure we utilized resources and reviewed best practices of others.

Last spring, we delivered a report to the Church Council that provided some areas that needed to be considered to bring us up to speed in regards to the implementation of technology at our church. Specifically, the report outlined improvements in:

- Sanctuary-Live streaming, visual enhancements, hearing loop system.
- Education spaces-Visual enhancements, virtual streaming capabilities in the Parlor and Wesley Hall.
- Enhanced communication and security for childcare on the second floor.
- Communication portals for Perks area.
- Security-all call speaker system, enhanced door security on second floor and main church doors.
- Office- Phone computer systems, financial systems
- Registration, mobile apps for payment, financial, etc.

The list of possibilities is long and we realized that we would have to prioritize and chip away at the list. Our main focus as a team was to look for ways that technology could improve the worship experience and accessibility for visual and hearing disabled persons.

We wrote a grant for the Dick Knapp Bequest Fund and received approval for \$100,000 for enhancement of technology in our sanctuary, parlor, and educational wing. The Bequest Committee stipulated that any and all enhancements would need to be reviewed and approved by the Church Council, Trustees, Building and Grounds Committee, and SPRC (budget needs to hire personnel to run new technology.)

It is a pleasure for me to report that many of the things that the team dreamed about as possibilities have come to fruition! Our church has new phones and service through VOIP (Voice Over Internet Provider). Parishioners can now generously give for planned giving and special giving opportunities via credit and debit cards. Our new church pictorial directory has been uploaded to a mobile app for instant access wherever you may be located!

We sent out an RFP (Request for Proposal) to ten separate vendors to get good, better, best prices and feasibility studies of upgrading the sanctuary with cameras, visual enhancements, sound enhancements, upgrade of sound booth equipment, etc. to ensure our parishioners can adequately see and hear all activities during the worship service. Our worship planning team

and pastors have many ideas of how to utilize technology to enhance our worship service experience.

The ability to “livestream” our service by recording it visually allows us to share it with others in real time anywhere, anytime, and anyplace! We have a vision of being able to show our service in the Kiva at Friendship Village, for example, where over 42 of our devoted church members reside, allowing them to have a being there experience together with one another instead of just listening to it either off of our website or via a CD brought to them. Our church has had a ministry of auditorily sharing our services for many years, first via radio broadcast on WKZO and then via tapes and CDs. In today's visual world, we want to upgrade the ministry that we have provided in the past and allow for the visual opportunity to participate in our service.

Our team is currently reviewing proposals, determining a process for evaluating proposals, and reviewing/changing or making new determinations with information provided by vendors. Our hope is to get a plan approved by Church Council and determine next steps regarding decision-making this spring, choose a vendor and implement an installation plan over the summer with a debut of all equipment at our Reconnect and Rejoice Sunday in September. We welcome your suggestions, comments, and affirmation for our work. Contact Derek at derekwheaton@gmail.com or 269.998.7829, or stop him on Sunday at the 11 a.m. service and have a face- to-face conversation.



Lenten

ORGAN RECITALS

*Concerts are
50 minutes
and start at noon*

Freewill offering

*Join us for
refreshments
after each recital*

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF KALAMAZOO

212 S. Park Street, Kalamazoo MI
269.381.6340

www.umc-kzo.org

www.facebook.com/FirstUnitedMethodistChurchofKalamazoo



Thursday 9th March

BERNIE FOULK

Organist

First United Methodist Church,
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Thursday 16th March

KORY HEITZIG

Organist and Children's Choir Director

DAVID ACTON

Organ Intern and Scholar
First Congregational Church,
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Thursday 23rd March

STEPHEN WARNER

Organist

Jefferson Ave. Presbyterian Church,
Detroit, Michigan

Thursday 30th March

DAVID HEINZE

Edwards Organ Scholar

St. John's Episcopal Church,
Detroit, Michigan

Thursday 6th April

KEVIN VAUGHN

Director of Music & Organist

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church,
South Bend, Indiana

We are a Reconciling Congregation



Staff Sharing

Rev. Dan Duncan
Pastor of Children & Families Ministries

Openness vs. Settledness

I first have to admit to looking in the dictionary for “settledness” after typing it to verify that it is a word. This polarity-meaning term came to mind after coming across a wonderful national promotional campaign sponsored by our denomination exploring what it means to live into our denomination’s motto: **“Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.”** Please check out the ads here: <http://news.michiganumc.org/2017/02/childlike-faith-focus-umc-ads/>

There is hardly a better age group to advocate for openness of heart-mind-lives than children—who generally speaking, have not had the time to develop the habits of stereotyping and pre-judging that can happen as we get “less young.” But first let me reflect on the concept of “polarity” mentioned above.

Some years ago colleague Jerry Toshalis pointed me to a book by Barry Johnson entitled “Polarity Management.” The subtitle is “Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems.” I have found Johnson’s insights to be especially helpful in the most important dimensions of life; because in these deeper waters, there are often not simple “either-or” kinds of solutions. Case in point: whether it is better in life to be “open” or “settled.” We need to be open in order to grow into the ever-widening horizon of God’s movement within and among us. We also need to make decisions, commitments, become “settled” about some things. Holding two apparently contradictory elements together is called “paradox.” Someone quipped regarding openness: “A window stuck open is no more useful than a window stuck shut.”

Now that I’m spending more of my ministry time with children, I think about the faith formation we offer this age group. What we find with children is... paradox. On the one hand, Jesus consistently pointed to the openness and curiosity and innocence of children as requirements to

entering God’s life (the “kingdom of God”). On the other hand, we know that children have a lot to learn in all areas of life; so we strive to do the best we can to help them do so. We want to give them “roots and wings.” “Roots” even while knowing that no one tradition can claim all the perfect truth about God, and “wings” even while knowing that they may fly in different directions than we would wish for them. Perhaps mixing the metaphors helps us realize that we need both kinds of experiences: groundedness in a particular tradition (T.S. Eliot observed that no one advances very far in the spiritual life outside of a particular tradition), and also the ability to transcend one’s particular tree (“wings”) to see the bigger forest of other life-giving traditions.

One thing I have liked quoting to the Disciple Bible-study groups I’ve led, is the humble goal by the end of our many months of wrestling with complex biblical texts, is that we will be “confused on a higher plane.” Similarly, the Godly Play developer, Jerome Berryman, talks about a similar dynamic with the stories that the children hear, year after year, as they get older. Since we ask open-ended “wondering” questions after each story, the “wondering” can become deeper and also higher, as the increased maturity and experience in the children opens them to new understandings and insights. He calls this the “spiral” curriculum.

So, I wonder what your spirit needs right now for you to experience more of God? Do you need to open your heart a bit more? Your mind? Your door? I wonder if the need is to make a commitment of some type? Lent, which begins March 1, is a good season to wrestle with such questions. As you do, remember that, as one of my mentors said, “Surely the art of living involves dying young as late as possible.”

Pastor Dan



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WE ARE A RECONCILING CONGREGATION. First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo invites all persons to join us on our journey of faith. Jesus Christ calls us to be an inclusive church that exemplifies the kingdom of God. We strive to move toward reconciling relationships with all, affirming those who are marginalized for any reason, including sexual orientation or gender identity. We welcome all with open hearts, open minds, open doors.



2017 First Word Schedule

Article Deadline	Mailing Date
March 8	March 15
March 22	March 29
April 5	April 12
April 19	April 26
May 3	May 10
May 17	May 24
June 14	June 21
July 12	July 19
August 16	August 23
September 6	September 13
September 20	September 27
October 4	October 11
October 18	October 25
November 8	November 15
November 22	November 29
December 6	December 13

Articles are due on the deadline! Late submissions will only be published if space permits. Please submit articles typed exactly as you want them to appear in the newsletter. Articles may be edited for space and content.

Person to person, moment to moment, as we love, we change the world.

SAMAHRIA LYTE KAUFMAN

Puppeteers Needed

If you can hold your dominant hand up at a consistent height for one minute and speak from a script at the same time, you qualify to be a puppeteer! Email Liza Wolfe at yammy74evr@gmail.com if interested in this ministry.

Wedding Hostesses Needed

No experience needed except a desire to be an assistant for wedding parties on their special day. New hostesses will work with an experienced hostess until he/she is comfortable working on their own. Rehearsals require 1 hour and the wedding usually requires 2 1/2 hours. Contact Liza Wolfe if interested.

Meal Ministry Update

The Caring Committee is pleased to report that Dawn Wheaton has agreed to coordinate our proposed Meal Ministry. When the pastors identify a family in need of this ministry, Dawn will coordinate our pool of meal providers. We currently have three people who are willing to occasionally provide a meal or part of a meal. If you would consider being added to this list, please call Dawn at 330-5152. Thank you Dawn and thank you pool members

Pub Theology invites you to join them at Olde Peninsula on Thursday, March 2

Is the March Madness getting to you? Pub Theology this month will meet Thursday, March 2nd from 7-9pm at Old Peninsula Brew Pub. We will compare brackets, talk team strategy and discuss our beliefs about several questions including, "How does your faith help you to dig deep in the fourth quarter of life?" So bring a teammate, grab a refreshing beverage, and join the bench for a halftime pep talk!

