



The Blessing *of two gifts*

First Church is pleased to announce two generous gifts that have been made available for the ministries of the church. We have been blessed with a circle of love. God gives to us so we will give to others, who will then give praise and glory back to God. In the end, it's about God.



Richard G. Knapp Bequest

by Molly Williams
Secretary, Board of Trustees

With much gratitude, the Board of Trustees announces a bequest from the estate of Richard Knapp. Many of us remember Dick's simple lifestyle, quiet demeanor, and wry sense of humor.

For decades, Dick kept the attendance records for our Sunday School classes and he served on several committees—employing his meticulous manner in service to this church. His foresight to include First United Methodist Church in his estate plan now culminates in a substantial bequest of \$538,000. Because Dick designated his gift to be used “for major projects rather than regular operating budget,” the Board of Trustees is responsible for management of this gift, ensuring that Dick's wishes are honored. A process is being developed for soliciting and reviewing proposals for use of these funds. While discussion is very preliminary, we expect that proposals need not be limited to capital projects, but might also include programs of mission and service. There will likely be criteria related to leverage of funds, partnering or matching potential, and sustainability after an

(continued on p. 4)

Rohs Family Scholarship

by Marsha McKenzie,
Board of Trustees

Announcing a scholarship for youth/young adults that are members of and active in FUMC activities!

Watch for exciting news about something new that is part of the Rohs Youth Fund that is held at the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan and managed by FUMC Trustees!

More information will be made available in the October *First Word*.

WELCOME to *The First Word*, a bi-monthly 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, **September 23, 2015**. The next newsletter will be mailed **September 30, 2015**. 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 Pastor of Emerging & Youth Ministries
- *Rev. Dan Duncan Pastor of Children & Families Ministries
- *Jacqueline Stilger Minister of Music
- *Ruth LaMachia Church Business Administrator
- *Christi Landreville Administrative Assistant
- *Jennifer Stupica Communications Coordinator
- *Bernie Foulk Organist
- *Curt Flowers Bookkeeper
- *Denise Wilcox Contributions Assistant
- *Rebecca Hatley-Watkins Office Assistant
- *Robin Entenman Office Assistant/Security
- Cari Miller First Singers Director
- Connor Bailey Hospitality Intern
- Linda Winkelman JFON Legal Assistant
- Pamala Roman Custodian
- Todd Bloomfield Evening Custodian
- Ernesto Escobedo Custodian/Security
- Michael DeYoung Evening Security
- Timothy Landreville Sunday Evening Security
- Julie Meyers First Care Director
- Bishop Deborah Kieseey Bishop of the Michigan Area
- Rev. John Boley Kalamazoo District Superintendent
- Rev. Bill Haggard Grand Rapids District Superintendent

GLOBAL STAFF

- Jeff and Ellen Hoover Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Rev. Irina Margulis Russia
- Helen Sheperd Mongolia
- VIM Vickee Seals San Juan, Puerto Rico

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

Michael Holland, son of Nellie Holland, who died August 28 in San Francisco.

Sharon Evans, mother of Pam Evans (custodian) and grandmother of Michael DeYoung (evening security) who died September 6.

Please keep these friends in your prayers

Bob Baker, JL Ball, Jacqueline Barnard, Lou Bradley, Helen Bray, Doug Charnley, Carl Cooper, Skip Decker, Russ & Roberta Gabier, Sue Hardy, Elaine Havens, Nancy Jacobs, Mary Ann Jaqua, Bela Lahner, Becky Lawson, Rueith Lewis, Allen Lincoln, Terry Mishler, Mandy Morrill, Francis Morse, Al & Sue Rollier, Sandi Stupica, Mary Helen Thomas, Ed Torrance, Arlene Triestram, Nia Vos, Virginia Weller, Jennifer Wright, Chris & Claire

Name Tags

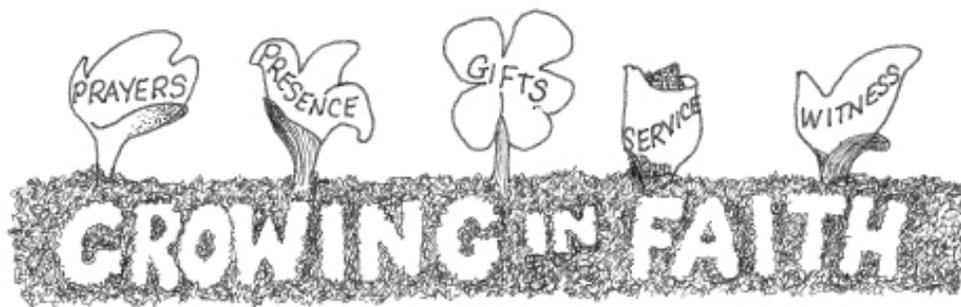
Won't you please consider wearing your name tag on Sunday morning? Since we are a growing church with several worship services, name tags are helpful so that each of us can learn names and connect with others. If you do not have a name tag, please stop at the Welcome Center to order one.

Therefore search and see if there is not some place where you may invest your humanity.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER



Invite someone to come to church with you!



Artwork by Mary Ann Jaqua

Prayer: Connecting to the Vine

John 15.1, 5-8

The Gospel of John tells us that the only way to live a faithful life is to stay close to Jesus, like a branch attached to the vine. We have found strength in our faith journey through our prayer life. We have been blessed to spend our morning time in prayer, Bible study, and reading the Upper Room. In prayer, combined with these resources, we have found our quiet time gently leading, talking and listening to God's will for our lives.

Our devotional and prayer life heightened when we experienced a medical crisis. We began praying together daily for decisions on treatment options and for healing. Since then, our daily prayers together have continued to build our faith and strengthen our relationship with God and to each other.

Prayer life can also include thanksgiving, as well as concerns for others, our church, our community, and the world. We also find "ARROW" prayers (short prayers sent straight to God at any time and any place using only a few words) very helpful throughout the day. Praying does not change God, but it can and does change us! It is our belief that we need to be regularly connected to the vine if we are going to see fruit develop in our lives.

Let's pray... ~Bob Hunt and Jan Kline-Hunt, Stewardship Committee

***When we become members of the United Methodist Church, we vow to uphold it by
"our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness."***

Our Worship is Enriched!

by Deb Search Willoughby

During Pentecost this year we were greeted with the beauty of new red banners and paraments. Again on Rejoice and Reconnect Sunday, we were greeted with new banners and paraments, this time in green. (See page 4 for photos!) The artistic and spiritual beauty of these new pieces are the product of the gifts shared graciously by Carol Grant, who has dreamed of doing this for some time. She saved fabrics, designed patterns, and sewed each one. Please express your gratitude to Carol for her beautiful creations as they are added to the many others lovingly created by our members (some with Carol's help) that are available for our visual enrichment at First Church. Thank you Carol! There are not enough words to express thanksgiving for your time, talent, and gifts.

Speaking of Worship Enrichment...

by Deb Search Willoughby

It has been said by many that "worship is the work of the people," not something we attend that is the work of others. Singing in choir may not be your thing, preaching or speaking in front of a group may not be your talent, and decorating the sanctuary may seem impossible, but consider the ways that you may be able to participate or ideas you may have that could enrich our worship. The possibilities abound (developing drama, writing prayers, introducing movement and dance, serving communion, participating in worship planning, and much more). If you would like to dabble in something (one time or more), please be in touch with Deb Search Willoughby (269) 762-3259 or Carol Grant (269) 569-1438 or one of our pastors to explore the possibilities. Remember, the more participation in the work of worship, the more depth we will have in all of our experiences.

Welcome Connor!

Connor Bailey is our Wesley Foundation intern who will be serving in the area of hospitality. On Sunday mornings you will find Connor in the Perks and Welcome Center areas. Please take a moment to welcome him to our church!



Hi everyone! My name is Connor Bailey and I'm currently a senior at Western Michigan University studying nutrition. I will be serving all of you this year as a hospitality intern. Some things that I enjoy doing are playing Frisbee, listening to music,

learning about theology and food, and writing poetry. I ultimately want to help other people with my life and I plan on being a dietician for a while then becoming a United Methodist pastor later on in life. I'm looking forward to being a part of your congregation, learning from all of you and from God. Please stop and introduce yourself.

Fall Inquirers' Class

Rev. Steve Charnley will lead a new member class beginning October 25. The class will meet for five Sundays during the Sunday School hour. We will be receiving this new class of members into membership during the 11 a.m. worship service on November 22. If you would like to reserve a spot in the class, please contact Christi in the church office, clandreville@umc-kzo.org or 381-6340.



Our Rejoice and Reconnect Sunday banners created by Carol Grant

Richard Knapp Bequest

(continued from p. 1)

evaluation process will be developed over the coming months.

The church's trustees are responsible for the church's assets, including both its physical facilities and invested funds. Yet, except for bequests, there is no regular source of income. Trustees' accounts, most of which carry some restrictions, cover major repairs and upgrades to our facilities, and they provide some income to the operating budget. Bequests and other planned gifts provide the infrastructure that supports the many programs this church provides. We are exceptionally appreciative that the Richard Knapp bequest permits the exploration of new ways to extend our church's ministries.

There are many kinds of planned gifts—through wills or trusts and via beneficiary designations of annuities, insurance policies, and retirement accounts. The trustees are committed to responsible management of bequests in any amount to support the ministries of this church in concert with the donor's wishes.

Additional information on how to make such gifts can be obtained from Dan Adams, Chair of the Wills and Bequests (Endowment) Committee. You can contact Dan at 269.207.9167 or by emailing him at jkfuneralhome@tds.net

Mission of the Month

by Donna Dunyak, Outreach Team Co-chair



Although the month of September is half over, it is not too late to provide much needed items to CentraCare, a non-profit all-inclusive program for the elderly that allows them to remain in their homes and stay a part of the community in which they are most familiar. Highest need items that we can provide to them include full-sized toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, soap/shower gel, toothpaste, etc.), cleaning products, and stuffed animals. Please place your contributions in the basket below the mailboxes in the office



and members of the Outreach Team will ensure that the items will be delivered. Many thanks for your support of our monthly 'Mission of the Month' ministries. For more information about this program, visit their website, www.mycentricare.com.



Children & Families Ministries

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

Sunday School has begun, and it is “Deep” this year!

Our new curriculum for the four children’s classes is from our United Methodist publishing house (Cokesbury), and is called “Deep Blue.” Using a water motif, Deep Blue reminds us at several levels of the Christian journey, beginning with the waters of baptism, the redemption of the Israelites through the waters of the Red Sea during the Exodus, and the ancient depiction of the church as a sailboat traveling across the sea—a place of refuge. Our children are going to love the multiple learning styles that it uses, and we have a wonderful teaching team—as usual!

Here is the breakdown of our four classes this year:

- 1) 4 yr. old to Kindergarten: Room 203. Teachers are Anne Sherfield, Katy McGinnis, and Brian & Jennifer Moon
- 2) 1st and 2nd Grades: Room 210. Teachers are Jennifer Wright and Matt & Jocelyn Newman
- 3) 3rd and 4th Grades: Room 209. Teachers are Dan & Kylee Adams, Carol Grant, and Pastor Dan
- 4) 5th and 6th Grades: Room 305 Teachers are Andrea Murphy and Penny Russel. This curriculum is called “Submerge” and is geared toward older elementary children transitioning into adolescence.

For the month of September, the Bible lessons will be:

September 20: In God’s Image

September 27: Adam and Eve

Family Fun Night coming!

Our next Family Fun Night will be Friday, September 18, from 6-8 p.m. and will be a potluck meal and movie night! The evening will begin in Wesley Hall. Bring a dish to pass. Tableware and beverages will be provided. We will then enjoy a kid-friendly movie after dinner.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendar!

Friday, Sept. 18

6:00 p.m. Family Fun Night potluck in Wesley Hall and then a movie in our movie lounge

Sunday, Sept. 27

11:00 a.m. First Bells plays during worship

Third Graders

Congratulations to these third graders who received their Bibles on Sunday, September 13!

Holly Wolfe
Alex Moon
Max Johnson
Layla Eaton
Cameron Coy
Ella Adams

And thanks to the congregation for providing them!

Fabulous First Church Fun and Frivolity Fest Coming!

This is an all-church variety show, featuring a spaghetti dinner, and a wide variety of our members and friends presenting acts ranging from belly dancing to a bottle band, from serious singing to seriously silly shenanigans! We still have room for your act! Please let us know what you will share with us by signing up online at <http://www.umc-kzo.org/register/16> or contact Minister of Music Jacqueline Stilger or Pastor Dan.

DATE: Saturday, October 17, 2015

TIME: 6 p.m.

LOCATION: Wesley Hall

PRICE: Free will offering for the meal



YOUTH TRIBE

SUNDAY MORNING AND EVENING YOUTH EVENTS

FRIENDS WELCOME!!

by Rev. Julie Kline, jkline@umc-kzo.org

If you would like to be on the email distribution list for a weekly update on the Youth Tribe, please contact Pastor Julie at jkline@umc-kzo.org

Sunday, September 20

Cocoa & Class @ 9:30am

"Who Am I?" Are you daughter, son, brother, sister, student, geek, athlete, or God's Beloved? "Who Am I?" seems like an easy question to answer and yet we spend years forming and re-forming our identity. This three week class will consider who and what we let define us and how we can become stronger in our identity found in belonging to God and grounding ourselves in that definition. Come join us for some warm cocoa, friendship, and study.

Youth Tribe @ 6-8pm

Ichthus Party @ the Kline Boltions (1724 Nichols Road)

This is kickball at a whole different level. Slip and slide into each base that is actually a kiddie pool. The slide into home base is the best as it is slightly downhill! Come for the fun of kickball, badminton, basketball, corn hole, a big bonfire and roasted hot dogs! Bring a change of clothes because you will get wet!

Sunday, September 27

Cocoa & Class @ 9:30am

"Who Am I?" The focus for this week is "Beyond Religion." What is church to you? Is it something that you do because your parents make you? Do you come to Tribe because it's fun and there are good looking boys/girls? All those reasons are fine but at some point you have to ask yourself "how is this a part of me?" Or "why does it matter to me?" "Does God really matter to me?" Come and join us this week as we wrestle with our religion and if it belongs to us or is something that we do just because.

Youth Tribe @ 6-8ish pm Movie Madness

Join us in the Movie Lounge for popcorn and the movie "Holes." This is a classic movie that can be watched time and again. "It never rains at Camp Green Lake, it hasn't for one hundred years. The secretive and mysterious Warden has each inmate spend every day digging one hole to "build character." But when an artifact from the famous "Kissin' Kate" Barlow is found in a hole, the Warden forces the boys to work double time leading Stanley to deduce they're digging because the Warden is looking for something. But what? And how is the mystery of Camp Green Lake connected to Stanley's family curse? This is a movie about determination, perseverance, friendship, understanding self and others. This will be a fun way to wrap up our series of "Who Am I?"

"Falling in holes once shouldn't hurt; I can't surely say the same for more than once." Anonymous

Future Tribe Events

October 4 – Bike trip @ 12:30 p.m. After worship, we'll ride out to South Haven on the KalHaven Trail. Have a beach grill out, and watch the sun begin to set. **Parents, I need drivers to pick us up in South Haven, Can you help?**

October 11 – Emerging Worship and corn maze

October 17 (Saturday) – Variety Show

October 18 – Make delicious apple pies!!



Below is a letter to the congregation from Volunteer in Mission (VIM) Vickee Seals. If you would like to support Vickee, donations may be made to FUMC with "VIM Vickee Seals" in the memo. She welcomes your letters of encouragement from home! Her address is: 5 Nairm Street, San Juan PR 00907. A first class stamp is all that is needed, since Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States. Vickee is keeping a blog of her experience. You can also leave her a comment on her blog. Visit: <https://Vickeeonthego.Wordpress.com>.

Dear First United Methodist Church,

I hope all is well. I have truly missed each of you. There are no services on Sundays because of my job and not knowing where there are English-speaking churches. I am hoping to join the chaplain on Tuesday evening. I had a really tough few weeks. Starting in the boarding house was not what I expected at all. I made my mark by being the enforcer! The snitch!! The youth did not even have a chance to get to know my heart before they challenged me. But they did come to understand that I will enforce the rules and my expectations are for them to follow the rules. They have also come to realize that it is because I truly care and am looking out for their best interest always. This has made life much easier for all of us and we are now beginning to have fun. They are sharing, caring, respecting and gifting me! My weekends are much brighter now.

I also work with pre-kindergarten during the week. Three year olds! They are amazing. Alexander,

Bruno, Matteo, Elizabeth, Stella, and Valentina. Valentina is so full of herself and reminds me a lot of myself. Alexander is a born leader and always has to be first in line. Bruno only speaks Italian, Stella only speaks Spanish—but never out loud to me or Christine (the teacher)—Elizabeth speaks Chinese and English, Matteo is my little sweetheart and loves for me to sing to him at nap time. Even though we do not speak the same language, we do manage to communicate. I really look forward to my days with them.

TO YOUTH TRIBE... Hello my friends. Please know that you are always in my thoughts and my prayers. I hope that the beginning of your school year is going well and that God has provided you with all that you need (such as good friends and teachers). You are very lucky to have good public schools. Here they are kind of scary. Only the underprivileged go to public school. Most live in public housing and rely only on the government, which is broke from supplying them housing and food.

There are many downtrodden people here. There is a public housing community that covers over five square miles and has around ten apartments in each building. I've been warned not to go there because I am a stranger and strangers are either cops or drug dealers trying to take away their business. But many children live there. So every day when you go to school, be grateful that you have a safe environment to learn in.

Thank you so much for the bike. I have enjoyed riding! I rode to see the manatees the other day. It is so nice to have transportation. I was starting to feel trapped without a car or bike.

On a more serious note I would like to thank all of you who have contributed to my journey of changing the world one heart at a time. I am still in need of approximately \$1000 for airline tickets back to Puerto Rico from Kalamazoo at Christmas, and my return to Kalamazoo in May. Any help with this, I would be very grateful.

*May God's grace shine upon you!!
Much love, Vickee Seals*



Survey

As we grow in our faith, we commit our prayers, presence, service and witness. We want to celebrate all of the ways we are serving the church as well as our community. We also want to let you know about other opportunities to get involved in the life and ministry of this church by having you complete our "Growing In Faith" Survey sponsored by the Stewardship Team. If you haven't had a chance to pick one up, they will be in the office at the Welcome Center desk. Once complete, please put it in the basket on the desk. Thank you for your participation!



Artwork by Mary Ann Jaqua

JFON immigrant ministry volunteers needed

by Ann Sweany

We are making progress toward holding our first clinic sessions! We have heard from Melissa Bowe, who will travel here from National JFON headquarters for our volunteer training in late October. It looks like this will take place the evening of Monday, October 26. The training will last about three hours, and is for anyone who plans to volunteer with our clinic. We hope to have as many volunteers attend this session as possible. This will allow us to be ready to hold our first clinic soon after.

These intake clinics will occur once a month, except for December and one of the summer months, and will each last about three hours. For each clinic, we will need in addition to the various coordinators,

- 4 intake workers
- 3 or 4 hospitality workers
- 2 to 3 interpreters (depending on need)
- 1 or 2 child care workers.

We are hoping to enlist a large group of volunteers, so there will be enough to cover the inevitable times when some are unable to attend. If you think you could help, please let Ann Sweany know. Remember, you don't need to know a language other than English—unless you are an interpreter.

With refugees and migrants in Europe so much in the news, it is gratifying to know there is something we can do to help people with similar problems right here. All it takes is a smile and a willing spirit. Won't you join us?

We welcome you to visit the National Justice For Our Neighbors website, <http://njfon.org/> as a source of information on this ministry that cares about improving our nation's immigration policies and our communities' relationship with immigrants.

Prayer for a New Vision

Rev. Jack Amick, head of International Disaster Response for UMCOR, offers this prayer of action and solidarity for those fleeing conflict and migrating to Europe and other parts of the world

*God of Shalom,
Grant us hearts that cry like yours
At the sight of dead boys on beaches,
Packed train cars,
And long lines of families on the move.
We confess that we have seen these images
for centuries.
Grant us, this time, the wisdom to act in a
way that turns history upside down.
And brings your shalom on earth as it is in
heaven.
Grant us arms that welcome the stranger;
Grant us hands that feed the hungry;
Grant us feet that walk with those whose feet
search
For a new home, a new job, a new life.
Help us understand how bad things must
have been,
And how much vision these survivors must
have had
To make this terrible trek.
Grant us the vision to see what they see:
Your shalom where there is no more violence,
Where life is full and abundant for all,
Where no one is hungry,
And everyone is welcome at the feast.
Amen.*

August 2015 General Fund Financial Picture

Note: Building Fund numbers are not included

	August 2015	2015 YTD	2014 YTD	2015 Budget	% of Budget
Total Income	\$ 51,601	\$ 627,828	\$ 655,358	\$ 900,506	69.7%
Total Expense	\$ 65,587	\$ 581,397	\$ 583,173	\$ 900,506	64.6%
Net Income/(Loss)	\$ (13,987)	\$ 46,431	\$ 72,185		

* Income includes 2015 pre-paid pledges of \$152,002 and \$144,776 received in 2014.

Fall ramp build

by Brian Grant



Brian Grant
Ramp Up Leader

Plans are being made for a ramp build on September 25-26! We are still looking for volunteers for both days. Work hours will be noon - 5 p.m. on Friday, 9/25 and 8 a.m - 4 p.m. on Saturday, 9/26. We are looking forward to having new volunteers participating on this project. Workers of all experience levels are welcome! If you are interested in working one or both days, please contact Brian Grant at grant.brianm@gmail.com or (616) 821-5656.

First Church offering a flu clinic Sunday, September 27

9:30 - 11 a.m. in Wesley Hall

The flu season is rapidly approaching. Fortunately you don't have to let the flu virus make you miserable. You can fight off the flu with a fast and safe vaccination administered by a licensed Borgess nurse

2015 Community Flu Clinic Price List

Trivalent standard flu vaccine - \$29
(ages 6 mos. - 65+)

Quadrivalent flu mist (nasal spray) - \$38
(ages 2-49)

Quadrivalent flu vaccine - \$38
(ages 3 years-65+)

Fluzone high dose vaccine - \$58
(ages 65+)

Pneumonia vaccine - \$90
(ages 19 and up)

Payment accepted: cash, check, Mastercard, Visa, Discover. (Patients with Medicaid or Medicaid HMO coverage should call their primary care physician and schedule an appointment to have their flu immunization.)

Rhythms of the Soul

We will once again have a winter Rhythms of the Soul worship series in 2016. The pastors would like your input in selecting songs that move your soul. Send them your ideas and suggestions by emailing Pastor Steve (scharnley@umc-kzo.org) or Minister of Music Jacqueline Stilger (jstilger@umc-kzo.org).

Spring Valley Elementary donations and tutors needed

by Joyce Treece

Many thanks to our generous congregation for the donations of school supplies for Spring Valley Elementary School. Teachers have sent a thank you note to say they appreciate the help, very, very much!

We contributed:

- 8 backpacks
- 12 hard cover note books
- 7 pkgs of filler paper
- 114 spiral note books
- 224 pocket folders
- 222 glue sticks
- 4 Elmer's glue
- 49 pkgs of pencils
- 6 erasers
- 13 pencil sharpeners
- 1 pkg of foam pencil grips
- 53 ball point pens
- 3 pkgs of Sharpies
- 125 boxes of crayons
- 75 boxes of colored pencils
- 69 boxes of washable markers
- 29 boxes of dry erase markers
- 3 pencil/crayon boxes
- 40 scissors
- 12 rulers
- 21 pkgs of index cards
- 4 boxes of paper clips
- 8 staplers and staples
- 3 rolls of scotch tape
- 30 boxes of Kleenex
- 1 calculator
- 4 coloring books
- 20 reading books
- 1 insulated lunch box
- 1 storage tote

The Spring Valley volunteers will begin working with kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders the first week of October. Call Joyce Treece at 269-375-8814 if you're interested in volunteering as a classroom assistant/reading tutor.



Sunday Morning Partners in Ministry

	Sept. 20 8:30 and 11 a.m.	Sept. 27 8:30 and 11 a.m.	Oct. 4 8:30 and 11 a.m.	Oct. 11 8:30 and 11 a.m.	Oct. 18 8:30 and 11 a.m.	Oct. 25 8:30 and 11 a.m.
8:30 Lay Reader	ASP SUNDAY	Sue Paul	Dennis Moon	Jan Schoenherr	Andy Vorbrich	Molly Williams
8:30 Office/ Welcome Center	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone
8:30 Greeters	ASP SUNDAY	need someone	Bill & Mary Dee Dimond	need someone	Sue Paul	Janet & Mike Cooper
8:30 Sound/Lighting	Jim Willoughby	Bob Lane	Jonah Bolton	Greg Anderson	Jim Willoughby	Greg Anderson
11:00 Lay Reader	ASP SUNDAY	Jeanne Grubb	Laura Van Vlack- Ailes	Tim Mullikin	Lynne Corbus	Nancy Hyde
11:00 Office/ Welcome Center	Harriet Chalker	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone
11:00 Greeters	ASP SUNDAY	Tim Mullikin	Tom & Gerry Schaberg	need someone	need someone	need someone
11:00 Greeters	ASP SUNDAY	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone
11:00 Acolytes	Tom Clark Kameran Long	Drew Eaton Emma Hampton	Dimitre Harmon Ryan Ernest	Kelcey Briggs Ella Hawthorne	Killian Czerniak Alex Dolislager	Sean Willoughby Denis Harmon
11:00 Sound/Lighting	Jim Willoughby	Bob Lane	Jonah Bolton	Robyn Lane	Jonah Bolton	Bob Lane



Join us the first Thursday of every month at 7pm for Pub Theology. From October to April we will be convening at Old Peninsula Brew Pub in downtown Kalamazoo.

Meet us on October 1 @ 7pm as we explore how our faith applies to current events and life's mysteries. Feel free to bring your questions, invite your friends, and be ready to pull up a chair to a great night of fun and fellowship. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Different views



Different brews

PUB THEOLOGY

Are you 20-something?

30-something?

by Amber Walker

Curious about what First Church has to offer someone of your approximate age? Have some ideas you'd like to share? Perfect!

The FUMC "Young People" will be meeting on Sunday, September 20 following the 11 a.m. worship service to catch up from the summer, get reacquainted, and plan our calendar for the year. If you've never come but are curious, this is a great way to get started. Some light breakfast foods will be provided, so please join us. Childcare can be made available as well.

Just let Amber Walker (269-998-3509 or amber.wlkr@gmail.com) know ahead of time and we will get that set up for you. Hope to see you there!



Staff Sharing

Ruth LaMachia
Church Business Administrator



This week marks my third anniversary at First Church. As you may remember, my family and I came here from West Virginia. I was somewhat familiar with Kalamazoo, however, as my father grew up in Port Huron, which meant that we passed through this area on I-94 many times going to grandma's house while I was growing up. So as with many anniversaries, I spent some time reflecting on the years gone by and remembering the joys. In addition, I also spent some time envisioning the future. I'd like to share with you these reflections.

I would have to say hands down the number one joy for working here has been the people. You have welcomed me into your church family. You have made me feel at home and connected, and you have told me that you are glad that I am here. You have shown love and compassion to me not just in my role as Church Administrator, but as a person. You frequently ask me how things are going with my family, especially when we have gone through some health issues with my husband and daughter; and supported us when I lost my mother-in-law to cancer.

You have not only shown love and compassion to me but to the community that God has placed you in. You genuinely care about the people in our neighborhood; and more importantly, genuinely desire to share the Love of Christ to them not just through your words but with your actions. I have had the privilege to see and help you establish at least three new ministries specifically geared to helping the Kalamazoo community in these past three years.

First, there is You Are Not Alone (YANA), which started out as a youth activity feeding hot dogs to our neighbors in the park to being a part of our Emerging Worship service to feed our neighbors. Then when Martha's Table at the Congregational Church stopped serving meals every Sunday evening, key people like Ann and Ray Sweany stepped up to the plate to keep it going in our church. It has been truly amazing to watch this unfold and to see that hand of God working in its midst. I am excited to see where He may take this ministry in the future and to hear stories of how those who came for a simple meal felt the presence of God and their lives were transformed.

Second, there is Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON), which is in its beginning stages—at least for the public to see. But I have been a part of seeing it start as an idea from the Justice Team to help those who have come to our state from foreign countries who desire to be

legal U.S. citizens, but need legal help to make that a reality. I have seen many of you start with nothing but an idea to creating a welcoming area, an office, hiring staff, and raising the funds needed. It again has been amazing to watch this church community rally together to make this more than just an idea, but a reality. I look forward to celebrating how God has used this opportunity for those in need of justice.

Finally, there is Helping Our Neighbors (HON), which started out as part of my job responsibilities as Church Business Administrator to work with our pastors in assessing the needs of those needing financial help and to contribute usually on a small scale to pay part of their bill. Back in January I shared with you in my *First Word* article some of the statistics from 2014. I was conservatively seeing 10-15 people per week. They came looking for assistance primarily to help pay for their electricity, gas, or water shut-off notices. Or because they were being evicted or needing a fresh start for a place to live because they were homeless. This was just a small fraction of what I did each day and it became increasingly obvious that I needed help. So, Helping Our Neighbors was born with the help of Kim Taylor, Cheryl Anderson, and Joyce Treece (Carrie Hybels will also soon be assisting) to help the neighbors in our community with their financial needs. I have seen this group of volunteers not only listen to our neighbors' situations and give them a pledge for financial assistance, but pray with them, give them hope, and many times a much needed hug. Most importantly I have seen them be "Christ with skin on" to those who so desperately need Him. I have to honestly say I am most excited to see where this ministry will go in the future, as it has been birthed from my job responsibilities and I am personally overseeing its operation.

A month or so ago we received a thank you note from one of the people that had been assisted with Helping Our Neighbors. It was a simple note, but it made me realize that we had made a positive impact on this family, because they took the time to write and say "thank you." So today, as I start my fourth year with you, I want to say "thank you" to all of YOU, because you have really made an impact on my life.



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 IN KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN



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.



2015 First Word Schedule

Article Deadline	Mailing Date
September 23	September 30
October 7	October 14
October 21	October 28
November 4	November 11
November 18	November 25
December 2	December 9

**Articles are due on the deadline!
 Late submissions will only be published if space permits.
 Articles may be edited for space and content.**

*In every community,
 there is work to be done.*

*In every nation,
 there are wounds to heal.*

*In every heart,
 there is the power to do it.*

-Mariane Williamson
 from *peace be with you*



BAKE SALE

SUNDAY
 OCTOBER 11
 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM
 MARKETPLACE

PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT UMW'S MISSIONS
 FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

United Methodist Women will be having a bake sale on October 11. Please stop at their table in the Marketplace and pick up some delicious goodies and show your support of their ministries that support women and children around the world.