



Holy Week & Easter

a time of hope,
a season of renewal,
a reason to rejoice!

APRIL 16 EASTER WORSHIP 8:30 and 11AM

Rev. Steve Charnley preaching

Step into the dew-filled garden with Mary Magdalene, laden with spices to anoint her Lord's body and burdened with the grief of recent days. See the stone rolled away from the tomb. Feel the awestruck emotions of fear and hope mingled. Run with Mary to get Peter and John. Return breathlessly with them to the empty tomb and see the linen cloths without a body. Hear the voice of one who speaks your name. It is Jesus; he is alive! Come this Easter with all your burdens, come this holy morning with all your fears and apprehensions. Come and shout the alleluia, for Jesus has overcome death and darkness. He is alive!

We will continue to celebrate Christ's resurrection on Easter morning with the singing of hymns accompanied by brass, organ, and timpani. You are invited to join your voice with our combined choirs to sing the *Hallelujah Chorus!*

Child care will be provided on the 2nd floor from 8:30AM to noon in room 204.

APRIL 13 MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP - 7PM

**Rev. Julie Kline preaching. "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love;"
John 13: 1-35; First Singers Choir**

Maundy Thursday is the day that Christians commemorate the gathering of Jesus and his disciples for the Last Supper. Maundy comes from the Latin word *mandatum*, meaning commandment, in reference to Jesus' teachings about a new commandment. *"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13: 34-35, NRSV). On this evening with humility, we hear the call to serve one another with love. Breaking bread together, on our knees at the communion rail, we pray that the Holy Spirit will make us living remembrances of Christ's great love and life. Come and join us, nourishing your soul by celebrating with thanksgiving Christ's continuing presence in the world through the Holy Spirit. Child care available in room 204.

APRIL 14 GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP - 7PM

Rev. Dan Duncan preaching. "They Could Not Know, as We Know Now;" John 18: 28-19.18; Chancel Choir

Other major religions have as their primary symbol images of beauty, serenity, or balance: the lotus blossom for Buddhism, the Star of David for Judaism, the crescent moon for Islam, the yin/yang for Taoism. We tend to forget that Christianity's primary symbol is one of the nastiest forms of human execution ever devised: the cross. On Good Friday, we come to be reminded that despite our worst, God's best cannot be ultimately defeated, which makes such a "bad" day, good. This year we reflect on a core meaning of the cross: God's judgment on our human temptation toward scapegoating. Our title comes from a classic hymn. Child care available in room 204.

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, **April 5, 2017**. The next newsletter will be mailed **April 12, 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
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

GLOBAL STAFF

Will & Ella Faircloth	Children's Home, Costa Rica
Donna Chaat Pewo	Clinton/El Reno Church & Community Ministry of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference
Desiree Sergua-April	Children at Risk Ministries, Nicaragua

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

Edith Victor, aunt of Dan (Nina) Victor, and great aunt of Thom Victor, who died February 28.

Please keep these friends in your prayers

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

Go GREEN

Due to the very generous bequest from Dick Knapp and the approval from the Trustees, the church office was able to purchase a new printer/copier. Our new printer has many more features than our previous one, which helps to make our major printing processes easier. It also allows us to be able to print *The First Word* more professionally in color, similar to the one we send out via email. It costs \$.84 to produce a 12-page issue of *The First Word*, which includes the paper, color ink, as well as postage. As always we want to encourage those who are currently getting *The First Word* in the mail to consider receiving it via email. If interested in switching to the electronic version, please contact Jennifer Stupica at jstupica@umc-kzo.org.

Twin Girls!

Congratulations to Julie Doll and her family on the birth of twin girls, Eleanor Violet and Lucia Rose on March 13th!



EMERGING WORSHIP

DIFFERENT DATE!

APRIL 2 @ 9:30 a.m.
in Wesley Hall

"Called to be Creators of Justice and Joy"

The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything.
1 Corinthians 12: 25-27

"God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy!"

We will sing these words, break bread together and be reminded that there is a place at the table of Christ for all. Creators of justice and joy desire to be in solidarity with all people, committing ourselves to their dignity and well-being.

Pursuing justice and joy is intricately linked to the sustainability of creation and helping to protect the most vulnerable among us. Climate justice is a commitment to the common good and recognizes the truth found in 1 Corinthians 12: 27, declaring that we are "Together the body of Christ, and each one is a part of that body." Come, and celebrate a Spirit-filled soul feast!

Palm/Passion Sunday Brunch Volunteers Needed Sunday, April 9

Brunch will be available in Wesley Hall from 9:30-11:00 a.m. on Palm Sunday (free will offering). We will need volunteers to help with set up from 8:00-9:30 a.m., serving from 9:15-11:00 a.m., and clean up from 10:30-11:30 a.m. If you would like to help, please sign up on the clipboard located at the Welcome Center. Questions? Please contact Pastor Dan Duncan, dduncan@umc-kzo.org.

Building Maintenance Position Open

Do you enjoy serving others behind the scenes by maintaining a facility with excellence? Do you have two or more years of experience in building maintenance and repair? Do you have mechanical skills? The church has a part-time opening on our Building Maintenance team. Responsibilities include performing repairs and regularly scheduled maintenance of building equipment. Perform basic carpentry, electrical, plumbing repairs, and painting. If interested please send resume with cover letter to rlamachia@umc-kzo.org.

No Pub Theology in April

There will be no Pub Theology at Olde Peninsula Brewpub in April due to area schools on spring break. Join us on Thursday, May 4 at 7 p.m. for a time of fellowship over good refreshments.

Name Tags

It has come to our attention that the magnets on our magnetic name tags can effect the functionality of a pacemaker. We recommend those in our congregation with pacemakers switch to a pin name tag. We will be putting in a bulk order for new name tags soon (magnetic and pin). Please stop at the Welcome Center to put in your order by April 9th. New name tags are free. Replacements cost \$5.

Feeling Useful: A Lifelong Quest

Guest Speaker Patti Stratton

Wed., April 12 @ 9:30 a.m.

by Laura VanVlack-Ailes, Caring Committee Co-Chair

Everyone wants to feel useful—to feel they are making a difference. But as we age, our reduced energy or abilities may make it harder. Patti Stratton from Area Council on Aging will address this issue at the April Caring Committee Meeting. She will be speaking at 9:30 a.m., Wednesday April 12 in the parlor. The congregation is invited.

Card Ministry

by Michel Pierce

Thinking of... who?

It's a win-win! you pick up a card(s) from the card box located in the Jesus Lounge (at no cost) and send it/them

TO:

- friends of all ages
- neighbors
- relatives
- strangers
- the prayer list

OCCASION:

- illness
- missing you
- loneliness
- sympathy
- congratulations
- thinking of you



You will receive the joy of doing a thoughtful, kind thing; and, will know that you have made a difference in someone's day. Yep! a win-win!

Parking



We have new neighbors on Sunday mornings. Firm Foundations Church has begun using the former Christ Scientist Church and parking lot for their services on Sunday morning—which means that area will not be available for us to use (KIA parking lot). Please take the time to look for an alternative place to park in the area.

ORGAN RECITALS 2017

Featuring professional organists from Michigan and Indiana, the Organ Recital Series provides the community an opportunity to hear some of the greatest sacred and secular works for pipe organ, performed on our own Letourneau Opus 51, a three-manual, fifty-five rank organ built and installed in 2000

Thursday, 30th March @ noon

DAVID HEINZE

Edwards Organ Scholar
St. John's Episcopal Church,
Detroit, Michigan

Thursday, 6th April @ noon

KEVIN VAUGHN

Director of Music & Organist
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church,
South Bend, Indiana

*Concerts are open to the public
Free will offering*



15th Annual Keep Making Peace

"Confronting Michigan's Climate Change"

University UMC, East Lansing | Saturday, April 1



Pastor Steve will be taking the church van to this event on Saturday, April 1, from 9am-4pm at University UMC in East Lansing. Please let Steve know if you would like to carpool with him. With global warming rapidly accelerating toward a key tipping point, we all have to deal with climate change. Find out the environmental impacts on Michigan and the peace and justice issues they engender. You will discover next steps you can take to care for God's creation. If you have not registered online, you can pay at the door (cash or check only). \$30 per person includes vegetarian lasagna lunch.

Meet our Choral Scholars



HOLLI SLAMKA

Holli is a sophomore at Western Michigan University majoring in choral/general music education. She is a member of University Chorale, Gold Company, and Songbird. After graduation, Holli hopes to find a job teaching high school choir and

possibly performing on the side. In her spare time, she loves singing barbershop, spending time with friends, and being with her family. Holli is very happy to be singing in the choir here at the First United Methodist Church!

ISAAC JAMES



Isaac James is a junior vocal performance major at Western Michigan University. He has studied with Dr. David Little, a full-time WMU voice faculty member, since 2015. A member of University Chorale, James is anticipating a spring tour of the Baltic States in Europe with WMU's select vocal ensemble, which will give him the opportunity to take in aspects of a different culture while performing repertoire including Erik Esenvalds' *Only in Sleep* and Josquin des Prez's *Mille regretz*. After graduation, he aspires to take up graduate work in pursuit of a Master's in either vocal performance or choral conducting; or a young artist program which would grant him a gateway to travel the country and audition, audition! As a choral scholar at First United Methodist Church, Isaac is grateful for the congregation's generosity and inclusion; thrilled that the church is always eager to stand up and carry out meaningful text with a passionate ring. It is his absolute pleasure to sing with a progressive and reconciling congregation!

Helping Our Neighbors Ministry

by Nora Hauk

(Presented at Emerging Worship on March 12, with an additional experience added and edited slightly for space)

"Helping Our Neighbors" is a ministry at our church to help people in our Kalamazoo community with emergency needs, especially when they are facing eviction or utility shut offs. Through this ministry, our church pledges up to \$50 to help pay a person's bill. On Monday and Thursday mornings, the pew in front of the Welcome Center fills with people as church volunteers meet one-on-one with these neighbors to talk and pray.

A majority of people coming into Helping Our Neighbors have experienced a true emergency: they have lost a job, held a funeral for a loved one, gotten injured, had a partner go to jail, lost their means of transportation, or are experiencing poor health. These emergency needs have a cascade effect. The \$50 we give often does not fully meet their need, but it can help. I also think it's important to be a witness to the experiences of people in our community who face difficulties. These experiences linger in my memory and become my prayers as I go about my day.

One very elderly woman came in with an eviction notice. Her doctor told her she needed to be on oxygen 24 hours a day, and this made her utility bills go way up, so she was unable to pay rent. She was only one month behind, but she had a court summons from her landlord. I realized that it's easy to assume that people gain security as they get older. I have learned this often isn't the case. She shared that her life feels harder now that she is too old to work. I pray she and other elderly people living in poverty may experience more stability and comfort.

The people who stay in my heart most are sometimes those who say they don't want to pray together at the end of our meeting. One woman about my mom's age came in with an eviction notice. I told her we could definitely give a pledge toward her bill, and after we filled out the paperwork, she started to hurry off. As she was getting up to leave, she noticed I was pregnant. I asked her if she had any kids. She told me one of her sons had recently been killed. She got behind on her rent payment because she had to pay for the funeral. She also shared that lately, she hadn't been able to sleep. Sometimes now, when I'm awake at night with my own tiny son, I think of her, only a few miles from where I live, and wonder if she feels more peace these days. I pray that the families of victims of violence can find rest.

cont. on p. 9



Children & Families Ministries

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

Palm Sunday. We will once again join with the other Bronson Park churches for a Palm Sunday celebration during the Sunday School hour. We'll gather in our church's lobby at 9:45 to process together to Bronson Park, joining our neighboring congregations for a blessing of the Palms. Then, we will return to our church where we will share in a brunch, in Wesley Hall. A wide variety of tasty and/or nutritious treats will be featured, including fruit, hot and cold drinks, sausages, mini-quiches, and assorted Sweetwater donut holes (free will offering).

Holy Week for Families. I encourage you to bring your children to at least one of our Holy Week worship experiences (Maundy Thursday or Good Friday—see the front page of this First Word for details!) All too often too many children go straight from the Palm Sunday parade to the Easter alleluias and totally miss what happened in between. So, they miss exploring the key stories of the faith on the nights when those stories have the most power. Elementary school age children are ready to hear these stories and to participate in worship around them.

Sunday School (9:30-10:30 a.m.,)

Pre-K through 4th graders, beginning in the Arches on the second floor. Upcoming Bible lessons using our United Methodist "Deep Blue" curriculum will be:

- April 2: Cock-a-doodle-doo!
- April 9: No Sunday School—Palm Sunday gathering and brunch
- April 16: Easter—no Sunday School

5th and 6th graders "submerge" themselves in issues of Christian faith and life with the "Submerge" curriculum from Cokesbury:

- April 2: The Parable of the Good Samaritan
- April 9: No Sunday School—Palm Sunday gathering and brunch
- April 16: Easter—no Sunday School

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

4 -5 year olds—Room 203

April 2: Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet	ST: Pastor Dan	Guide: Tim
April 9: Jesus Cleanses the Temple	ST: Pastor Dan	Guide: Carol
April 16: Jesus is Risen!	ST: Julia	Guide: Carol

6-8 year olds—Room 200

April 2: Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet	ST: Pastor Dan	Guide: Tim
April 9: Jesus the King	ST: Tim	Guide: Mary Lee
April 16: Jesus is Risen!	ST: Pastor Dan	Guide: Donna

First Bells. Our youngest ringers will rehearse at 9:30 a.m. on April 2 (they will not play during April due to holidays).

Save the Dates of June 26-30! Vacation Bible School is coming, June 26-30, and this year will be hosted by First Congregational. We will join forces with them and St. Luke's Episcopal to share a week learning about "God's Garden/God's City." We will need adult leaders and volunteers in a number of roles!

Baptisms. Our next date for baptisms is April 30. If you are interested in baptism for yourself or a child, please contact me to make arrangements.

Family Fun Night coming! Our next Family Fun event will be on Friday, April 21, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Roller World on Stadium Dr.! Cost is only \$5/person, which includes rental if needed (or you can bring your own wheels).





Youth Tribe

SUNDAY MORNING AND EVENING YOUTH EVENTS

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

Sunday, April 2

Emerging Worship @ 9:30am!! (First Sunday!!). Because of Palm Sunday, the youth will attend Emerging Worship the FIRST Sunday during the Sunday School hour.

Youth Tribe @ 6-8pm – Movie Madness

In honor of Lent we are going to watch a Jesus movie. Do you remember as part of our closing devotion time after playing the game "Clue," I spoke about the crucifixion of Jesus being a murder mystery? This movie, "Risen," follows the epic biblical story of the Resurrection, as told through the eyes of a non-believer. Clavius, a powerful Roman Military Tribune, and his aide Lucius, are tasked with solving the mystery of what happened to Yahshua in the weeks following the crucifixion, in order to disprove the rumors of a risen Messiah and prevent an uprising in Jerusalem. Let's learn about our faith through a movie, eat some popcorn and enjoy our friendships! Come and join us.

Sunday, April 9 – PALM SUNDAY!

Crop Walk Table @ 9:15am & noon in the Marketplace

Crop Walk helps worldwide but also gives to some of our favorite local missions: Gospel Missions, YWCA, Loaves and Fishes, Open Doors and the Ecumenical Senior Center. Let's stop hunger in our own community!

Cocoa & Class & Blessing of the Palms in Bronson Park @ 9:30am

We will gather in the Youth Center to remember what Palm Sunday is all about by watching a few videos. Then we'll get our coats on and go join all the Bronson Park churches in the park to bless our palms.

Youth Tribe @ 6-8pm – Digging Deep: Unpacking Your Backpack

During our #StayWoke Advent campaign we collectively named that racism is a social issue that impacts our daily common life. We are going to spend some engaging time together talking, working through some activities and coming to some realizations about our relationships with one another, the privileges we carry and how we can travel with them with grace. This session will be led by Diane Owen-Rogers. Come, dig deep to learn and love.

Sunday, April 16 – EASTER!

Crop Walk Table @ 9:15am & noon in the Marketplace

For every walker who raises \$100, an additional \$10 will be given to the total of CROP Walk donations. Let's gather those donations from our church for all of our walkers! This is all about sharing the Easter message of new life for those who are hungry.

No Cocoa & Class or Youth Tribe



Stop at the table in the Marketplace on Sundays beginning April 9 through the day of the walk and sponsor a youth walker! A gift of \$10 will be shared with the Walk for every walker who raises at least \$100. Come walk with us on Sunday, April 30. Walk begins at 2pm in Bronson Park.



Easter Offering

As we approach Easter, it is appropriate that we look forward to new beginnings of resurrected life, spring, and new relationships. With that thought, this year's Easter offering will be directed to three areas. First it will be used to fulfill this year's financial commitments to our three new missionaries: Desiree Segura-April, Will and Ella Faircloth, and Donna Pewo. Second, after these commitments have been satisfied, \$1,000 will be utilized to complete the church's commitment to the Wesley Foundation's "Widen the Welcome" capital campaign. Any monies received above and beyond this will be allocated to two of our missionaries' Children at Risk programs. For Desiree Segura-April, these funds will provide food and christian education opportunities for the children of Nicaragua. For Donna Pewo, the funds will allow her to furnish needed school supplies for those students who cannot afford them. Please consider giving generously to support both our missionaries and the children that they minister.

Dick Knapp Major Projects Fund: Round 3 Request for Proposals

by Karen Hassevoort, Knapp Bequest Committee Chair



When lifelong FUMC member Richard G. (Dick) Knapp died in 2015, he left a generous gift in his estate to benefit the church he cared so much about. The direction in his bequest was that we should spend his gift to support "major projects" of the church. The assets of the Richard G. Knapp Major Projects Fund are invested with the United Methodist Foundation. As of February 2017, the balance of the Fund was about \$331,200. Proposals for "major projects" will be accepted twice each year (spring and fall) until the fund is depleted.

Application forms may be obtained at the FUMC office or on the church website. **Deadlines for the spring submission are April 17, 2017 (Project Synopsis) and May 14, 2017 (Final Project Proposal).** Proposals should be directed to:

**First United Methodist Church
212 S. Park Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Attn: Ruth La Machia**

Questions regarding the Richard G. Knapp Major Projects Fund may be directed to Pastor Steve Charnley at 269.381.6340 or Karen Hassevoort at 269.569.5160. A committee made up of FUMC members will review project proposals and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for their final approval.



Summer Perks

Pastor Dan Duncan will be coordinating the Summer Perks schedule this summer. We want to give individuals and families the opportunity to host one of these, which could be an occasion to celebrate a special anniversary or other event in your life (graduation, promotion, retirement, birthday, and so forth). Hosting means that you provide some kind of simple treat or snack for 150 people (cookies, bars, crackers/cheese, veggies, etc.). If you'd like another beverage besides coffee and water, you could provide that as well. Please contact Pastor Dan at dduncan@umc-kzo if you're interested. Perks is scheduled each Sunday during the summer after the 10 a.m.



February 2017 General Fund financial picture

Note: Building Fund and special offerings are not included.

	Month of February	Year to Date	2017 Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget
Total Income	\$ 73,751	*\$282,890	\$956,638	29.6%
Total Expense	<u>76,373</u>	<u>152,550</u>	956,638	15.9%
Net Income/Loss	(\$ 2,622)	\$130,340		

*YTD income includes \$120,310 paid in 2016 toward the 2017 budget.

Sunday Morning Partners in Ministry

	April 2 8:30 and 11 a.m	April 9 8:30 and 11 a.m Palm Sunday	April 16 8:30 and 11 a.m Easter	April 23 8:30 and 11 a.m	April 30 8:30 and 11 a.m	May 7 8:30 and 11 a.m
8:30 Lay Reader	Laurie Nelson	Carol Hodges	Deb Search Willoughby	Molly Williams	Jan Schoenherr	Carol Hodges
8:30 Office/ Welcome Center	Robin Entenman	Lois Richmond	Lois Richmond	need someone	need someone	need someone
8:30 Greeters	Marsha McKenzie	Ron Moore	Bill & Mary Lee Dimond	Louella Bradley	Millie Karnemaat	Andrew Peavler Matthew Peavler
8:30 Sound/Lights	Greg Anderson	Jim Willoughby	Greg Anderson	Jim Willoughby	Greg Anderson	Jim Willoughby
11:00 Lay Reader	Judy Aardema	Carol Holms	Derek Wheaton	Janice Brown	Nancy Hyde	Christina Stamper
11:00 Office/ Welcome Center	Robin Entenman	need someone	need someone	need someone	Shirley Palmer	need someone
11:00 Greeters	Mary Duncan	Marjorie Burns	Jill & Dan Christian	Don & Harriet Chalker	Don & Harriet Chalker	Betty Glen
11:00 Acolytes	Ella Adams Andrew Wright	Collin Bland Sean Willoughby	Emma Hampton Alex Moon	Layla Eaton Sam Ledlow	Andrew Hampton Ella Adams	Ryan Ernest Andrew Wright
11:00 Sound/Lights	Bob Lane	Jonah Bolton	Lukas Bolton	Bob Lane	Jonah Bolton	Lukas Bolton
Van Driver	Jake Lisak	Dave Russel	Mike Cooper	Jay Gross	Dave Russel	Fred Corbus

Helping Our Neighbors Ministry (continued from p. 5)

Just this past Monday, I filled out a pledge for a man who had been homeless for 6 years, and finally had gotten into Section 8 housing. He needed the money to pay a security deposit for an apartment. He had such beaming hope. I pray that homeless people in our city may find such hope. I pray that his hope does not diminish as he continues his life in Kalamazoo.

There are three ways you can participate in this ministry:

1. Give to Helping Our Neighbors. I promise you, the money is much needed and truly used to help people stay warm, have running water, and feel more secure in their homes.
2. Volunteer for Helping Our Neighbors. We need volunteers who can listen, pray, and give hope to our neighbors who come in. Could you dedicate a Monday or Thursday morning once or twice a month? It would

help our church continue to serve community members who are facing emergencies. 3. Pray for this ministry. When I meet people at Helping Our Neighbors who have had genuine needs,

I pray: ***Thank you God for the courage of these neighbors who come in to our church. Even though they face unjust hardship, be with them.***

I pray: ***God, be with us, even though Kalamazoo is an unequal and unjust community. Transform our city.***

I pray: ***Be with us, even though \$50 is not enough. Transform the money into a message of your hope.***

I pray: ***God, thank you for giving our church the opportunity to sit with our neighbors. Help these encounters transform this church.***

I invite you to support this ministry in any or all three ways mentioned above. The well-worn pew in front of the Welcome Center is a testament that "church" is happening every day.

UMCOR SUNDAY special offering

(formerly One Great Hour of Sharing)

Thank you First Church for your gifts totaling **\$1405.20** on March 26 for UMCOR Sunday! For more than 50 years, United Methodist congregations have been taking part in a special UMCOR Sunday offering, laying the foundation for UMCOR's ministry of disaster relief. UMCOR does not receive United Methodist World Service or apportionment funds, so without your offerings, UMCOR would not exist!

APRIL 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			29 MARCH 7:30 AM Dawn Patrol 11:00 AM Lenten Book Study 12:00 PM First Word Collating 6:00 PM Emerging Worship Band Rehearsal 6:30 PM Security Team 7:00 PM Lenten Listening Project	30 9:30 AM First Stitches 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 12:00 PM Lenten Organ Concert Series 6:00 PM Handbell Ensemble 6:30 PM NA 7:15 PM Chancel Choir	31 10:30 AM OLLI Lecture Series 6:00 PM Wedding Rehearsal	1 APRIL 3:30 PM Wedding
2 Blood Pressure Clinic Holy Communion 8:30 AM Worship 9:30 AM Emerging Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School for All Ages 11:00 AM Worship 5:30 PM You Are Not Alone 6:00 PM First Singers 6:00 PM Youth Tribe	3 7:00 AM Sunrise Patrol 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 1:00 PM Memorial Service 1:30 PM Engaging Spirituality 6:30 PM Basketball	4 9:00 AM JFON Advisory Team 10:30 AM JFON Task Force 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Emmaus Group 4:15 PM First Beats 7:00 PM NA 7:00 PM SPRC	5 7:30 AM Dawn Patrol 11:00 AM Lenten Book Study 5:00 PM Food Prep for Hospitality House	6 9:30 AM First Stitches 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 10:30 AM Endowment & Bequests 12:00 PM Lenten Organ Concert Series 3:00 PM JFON Task Force 6:00 PM Handbell Ensemble 6:30 PM NA 7:15 PM Chancel Choir	7 10:30 AM OLLI Lecture Series 6:00 PM Wedding Rehearsal	8 5:00 PM Wedding
9 8:30 AM Worship 9:30 AM Palm Sunday Brunch 9:30 AM Sunday School for All Ages 10:00 AM Blessing of the Palms 11:00 AM Worship 5:30 PM You Are Not Alone 6:00 PM First Singers 6:00 PM Youth Tribe	10 7:00 AM Sunrise Patrol 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 1:30 PM Engaging Spirituality 6:30 PM Basketball	11 10:00 AM Northside Ministerial Alliance 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Emmaus Group 4:15 PM First Beats 7:00 PM NA	12 7:30 AM Dawn Patrol 9:30 AM Caring Committee 9:30 AM MOM's Demand Action 9:30 AM OLLI Curriculum Committee 11:00 AM Lenten Book Study 12:00 PM First Word Collating 1:00 PM Stephen Ministry 5:30 PM First Care Board Meeting 6:30 PM Perinatal Mood Disorders Support 7:00 PM CFM	13 9:30 AM First Stitches 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 10:30 AM Building & Grounds 1:30 PM Advocates for Senior Issues 6:00 PM Handbell Ensemble 6:30 PM NA 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Worship	14 10:30 AM OLLI Lecture Series 10:45 AM Communities in Schools 7:00 PM Good Friday Worship	15
16 Blood Pressure Clinic Easter Sunday 8:30 AM Worship 11:00 AM Worship 5:30 PM You Are Not Alone	17 7:00 AM Sunrise Patrol 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 1:30 PM Engaging Spirituality 6:30 PM Basketball	18 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Emmaus Group 4:15 PM First Beats 5:00 PM Center for Transformation 5:15 PM Finance 5:30 PM WTVT 7:00 PM NA 7:00 PM Ruth Circle	19 7:30 AM Dawn Patrol 9:30 AM Anna Circle 1:00 PM Lydia Circle 1:00 PM Miriam Circle 6:00 PM Wild Ones Board Meeting	20 9:30 AM First Stitches 9:30 AM Trustees 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 5:30 PM Outreach Team 6:00 PM Handbell Ensemble 6:30 PM NA 7:15 PM Chancel Choir	21 10:30 AM OLLI Lecture Series 6:00 PM Family Fellowship Fun Night 6:00 PM Wedding Rehearsal	22 4:00 PM Wedding
23 8:30 AM Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School for All Ages 11:00 AM Worship 4:00 PM Interfaith Coalition 5:30 PM You Are Not Alone 6:00 PM First Singers 6:00 PM Youth Tribe	24 7:00 AM Sunrise Patrol 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 1:30 PM Engaging Spirituality 6:30 PM Basketball 7:00 PM Justice Team	25 10:00 AM Northside Ministerial Alliance 10:00 AM Tuesday Book Club 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Emmaus Group 4:15 PM First Beats 7:00 PM Church Council 7:00 PM NA	26 7:30 AM Dawn Patrol 9:30 AM UMW Executive Committee 12:00 PM First Word Collating 6:00 PM Wild Ones Membership Meeting 6:30 PM Perinatal Mood Disorders Support 6:30 PM Stephen Ministry 7:00 PM MOM's Demand Action	27 9:30 AM First Stitches 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 5:30 PM ALS Support Group 6:00 PM Handbell Ensemble 6:30 PM NA 7:15 PM Chancel Choir	28	29



Staff Sharing

Rev. Julie Kline
Associate Pastor



***Where have the 40 days of Lent gone?
We've had forty days to remember who Jesus is,
Forty days to find out who Jesus is,
Forty days to look and to listen to this man from Nazareth,
this man who walked into the hearts of the people,
this man who "stirred their imagination,"
this man who is still walking into the hearts of his people,
still stirring the imagination of the people,***

***Holy Week is upon us.
We will raise our palms in joyful recognition!
We do know him.
Surely we do know him...***

~Anne Weems

Who are you Jesus? It is the imperative question of Lent. We begin this 40-day quest with the question upon our lips, "who are you Jesus and what do you mean to my life?" We begin the season of Lent by smudging ashes upon our forehead, reminding ourselves that we are ash; our lives are ash if we do not have the hope, the redemption, the beauty and grace of Christ within our lives. Traveling the way of Lent we may find ourselves giving up things or behaviors that stand in our way of fully knowing Jesus. We may also find ourselves taking up habits, rituals, and practices that center us and draw us closer to understanding and answering the question, "who are you Jesus?"

As the days of Lent draw to a close and we begin to prepare for Holy Week that leads us to the celebration of new life, the earth is awakening around us from its slumber of winter. The passing from the season of winter into the unfolding of spring is always a good metaphor for the coming out of Lent into the resurrection. Nature is beginning its hum around us. New life is bursting forth from all around us. It is a time to feel vitally alive, ready for new adventures, warmed by the increasing sunlight and cleansed by fresh rainfalls. The season of spring is

a time to be reawakened and revitalized by the creative movement and subtle glories of God's nurturing hands. It is an emerging into a newness of life. Do you hear its call?

As an Easter people, it is easy to jump ahead of ourselves and forget that we first must walk through some dark times and days with Jesus. On Maundy Thursday we must come to the table and hear the command of Jesus to "Love one another." This command is not a superficial love, but a command to love those that are difficult to love. Just as Jesus loved those and forgave those from the cross with his last breaths, he still loved even when it didn't make any sense at all.

On Good Friday we come to be reminded that despite our worst, God's best cannot be ultimately defeated, which makes such a "bad" day good. This year we reflect on a core meaning of the cross: God's judgment on our human temptation toward scapegoating.

It is through these remembrances of Holy Week that our faith is given its depth and grounding. Our walk with Christ is not always tulips and a "Hallelujah Chorus." Following the Way with Christ means that there will be doubts, betrayals, loneliness, grief, and despair and yet we are not alone. Arising from the tomb is a sweet, sweet Spirit that moves through all of creation. Alive, creating and restoring.

Holy Week is almost upon us. Let us celebrate with palms, drink from the cup, eat of the bread, sit at the cross, and wait in the darkness. Only then can we with true confidence and a wide understanding of the glory of it all sing "Hallelujah, Christ is Risen" on Easter morning.

Pastor Kline



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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
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.

There's a wonderful mythical law of nature that the three things we crave most — happiness, freedom, and peace of mind — are always attained by giving them to someone else.

UNKNOWN

MINISTRY WITH
 COMMUNITY
Rebuilding lives



April Mission of the Month

The Outreach Team is collecting **travel-size toiletries** during April for Ministry with Community. Please put your donations of soaps, shampoos, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, and combs, in the basket in the office. **Thank you!**



TUES., April 18, 2017

Ruth Circle @ 7 p.m., church parlor
 Program: "Mothers Against Gun Violence"

WED., April 19, 2017

Anna Circle @ 9:30 a.m., Friendship Village, B-1 Lounge
 Program: "Literacy Council of Kalamazoo," by Michael Evans

Lydia Circle @ 1 p.m., Friendship Village, B-1 Lounge
 Program: "Tilers International," by Ryan Deramus

Miriam Circle @ 1 p.m., church parlor
 Program: "Helping Our Neighbors," by Kim Taylor

Friday and Saturday, April 28 & 29
UMW DISTRICT SPIRITUAL GROWTH
 Crystal Spring UM Camp, 33774 Crystal Springs St., Dowagiac, Michigan