

# THE FIRST WORD

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JOIN US FOR WORSHIP IN PERSON OR ONLINE ON SUNDAYS AT 10AM.



First United  
Methodist  
Church of Kalamazoo



## Reconciling Ministry Team

### *Celebrating The Big Deal Weekend and What's Next*

On March 18-19, 2022, over ninety participants engaged in the question, "Where does your Christian faith and anti-bias/anti-racism (ABAR) intersect?" Through Friday night storytelling and reflection, six workshops on Saturday, and a question and response panel with workshop facilitators, participants of the BDW have begun to develop shared language and understanding of anti-bias/anti-racism work in our congregation. The weekend culminated in worship with Bishop David Bard on Sunday in a celebration and call to action for ongoing engagement in the intersection of faith and ABAR work.

Throughout the planning of the weekend, led by two young adults, Mandakini Brophy and Kathryn Sappington, people of color and LGBTQIA+ persons were centered, including event facilitators, BDW leadership and local businesses.

What's next you might ask? The Reconciling Ministry Team is using the assessment forms filled out by BDW participants to determine next steps and offerings. These will include ongoing classes, small groups, events (like Kalamazoo Pride, June 3-4, 2022), policy work and movement offerings accessible to all bodies.

If you would like to join the movement of anti-bias/anti-racism work in our church, please contact RMT co-chairs, Mary Duncan and Lisa Batten.



## Updated Mask Policy effective April 18

Dr. William Nettleton, Medical Director of Kalamazoo County Health Department released a very helpful statement on March 31, 2022, addressing the question, "Is the pandemic over?" He reviews the three phases of the COVID-19 pandemic cycle: readiness (pre-surge), response (surge), and recovery (post surge).

World-wide the pandemic is not over, however, our Kalamazoo community is within the recovery cycle. As COVID-19 evolves we can expect that this phase will be longer lasting. It is a time of monitoring conditions, encouraging vaccinations, strengthening community support, and encouraging people to make best choices for their individual situations.

In this recovery phase FUMC will now have a "mask optional" policy and practice.

- Masks will not be required within the church as a general practice.
- They may be required by select groups or activities based upon the needs of those who gather. This will be designated by the leader of the group or activity.
- All persons should feel comfortable continuing to wear masks anywhere and anytime if they prefer to do so. Loving our neighbors means accepting, respecting, and understanding that we have a range of comfort levels and individual circumstances.
- Masks will continue to be available at the doors off the parking lot.
- If you are feeling unwell, please join us online.
- We expect that all persons who are able, will be vaccinated.

Please be aware that this policy and practice has the potential to change should community circumstances change or as we potentially move into a readiness (pre-surge) phase of the COVID-19 cycle.

Throughout this pandemic we have valued most highly the practice of loving our neighbor. Let us continue this in thought, word, and action as we continue to navigate the challenges of the pandemic.

Shalom,  
Pastor Julie Kline and the FUMC Leadership Team



## EPS Recycling Event: Saturday, April 30 from 10-11am at FUMC Kalamazoo

Earth Day is on April 22 this year, but it is urgent that we make every day Earth Day. A local group, Hope for Creation, has worked with the City of Kalamazoo to offer quarterly EPS (best known to many of us as Styrofoam) recycling dates. We want to offer this opportunity for you to get involved.

On Saturday, April 30, from 10-11am, please bring the following items to church:

- EPS foam labeled with a 6 symbol
- Food containers that are rinsed, wiped and cleaned. You can test it by bending it and if it breaks, it is the right material.

*Note: Packing peanuts are not accepted.*



Members of the Outreach team will be at church to collect your items and transport them to Mayor's Riverfront Park. Depending on your response, more frequent dates may be offered in collaboration with First Congregational Church.

-The Outreach Team



## Updates from the Children and Families Ministries Team

The Children and Families Ministries Team (CFM) hopes you will join us for a **Family Fun Night of Bowling on Friday, May 6, 2022 at Airway Lanes from 5:45-7:30pm**. The cost is \$10 per bowler or \$40 per family. Please RSVP to Julia Librizzi by Sunday, May 1, 2022 at [jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org](mailto:jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org) if you plan to come so we can be sure to reserve enough lanes.

**Nursery** is available each Sunday for the 10am worship service and the Sunday School hour following church for infants through 3-year-olds. **Godly Play** is available each Sunday during the 10am worship service in person for children 4+. Godly Play is both a worship and educational experience, based on a multi-sensory telling of a Bible story, a time for "wondering" about how the story connects God with our own lives. We invite you to join Ms. Julia in room 200 on the 2nd floor following the children's blessing in worship for a Godly Play story each week.

**Children's Sunday School:** Sunday School for 4-year-olds through 6th graders is offered in room 203 on the 2nd floor for an hour after church (approx. 11:15am-12:15pm). We are using a new curriculum called, "Celebrate Wonder" that engages children's natural sense of curiosity to help them understand God's love. It creates a safe environment for kids to ask big questions—helping them explore the Bible in ways that feed their imagination and encourage creativity. Sunday School for children will meet April 24 and every week in May, except for May 15 when we will take the week off for a Ladies CFM Retreat and May 29 when we break for Memorial Day.

**Family Foundations:** Please join us for a Sunday School class for parents. All are welcome after worship in room 304 on the 3rd floor! This group was created to support parents through the challenges of raising children. This class is led by Magen Lindstrom and Katy McGinnis and right now they are doing a book study on *The Burnout Cure* by Chase Mickle. Although written for teachers, this book is very applicable to parenting—especially after surviving two years of pandemic life. Please email Magen Lindstrom with any questions at [jeffmagenlindstrom@gmail.com](mailto:jeffmagenlindstrom@gmail.com). Childcare will be available for the Sunday School hour in the nursery. This class will meet April 24 and every week in May except, May 15 when we will take the week off for a Ladies CFM Retreat and May 29 when we break for Memorial Day.

**Tween Group:** The Tween Group is for 4th-6th graders and we meet once a month for conversation, prayer and fun with Ms. Julia and Ms. Jocelyn. The goal is to have this maturing group of children become a close-knit group that can pray together, support each other and connect to our church and God in a fun way. Please join Tween Group on:

- April 24 during the Sunday School hour (11:15am-12:15pm) in the Youth Lounge to work on a service project for Ministry with Community
- May 22 during the Sunday School hour (11:15am-12:15pm) for a picnic and scavenger hunt downtown

## Peace Pole Dedication

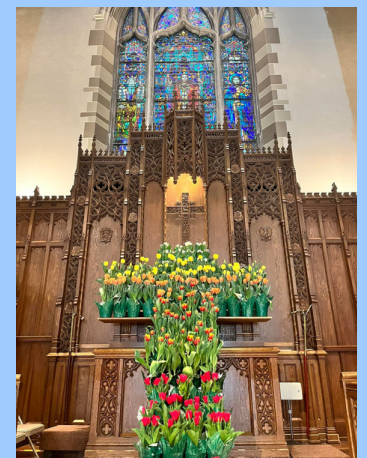
Please join us on Sunday, May 8 for the dedication of a new Peace Pole in memory of Emerson and Zola Eidson. We will also rededicate a former Peace Pole that was built by the late Rudy Hansen. It will have a new location on our church grounds. These dedications will be done after our 10am worship. Please join the families as we meet in the portico.



## Special offerings as of March 2022

### FUMC Special Offerings

Human Relations Sunday	\$1621.44
UMCOR Sunday	\$ 275.69
Easter Offering	\$ 351.38
Native American Sunday	\$ 0.00
Peace With Justice Sunday	\$ 200.00
Justice Team Michigan United/ISAAC	\$ 0.00
ASP Sunday Youth Missions	\$ 0.00
World Communion Sunday	\$ 100.00
Christmas Offering	\$ 702.75
UMW Sunday	\$ 0.00
Christian Education Sunday	\$ 50.00
UM Student Day	\$ 50.00
YANA	\$ 0.00
Phase 2 HON Phone Project	\$ 8833.00



Easter 2022 at FUMC Kalamazoo

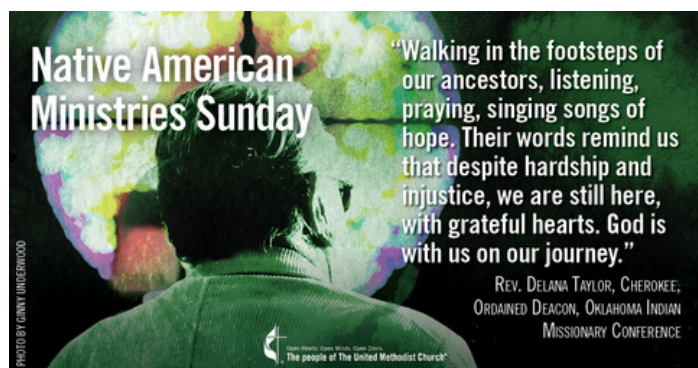
## Native American Ministries Sunday is May 1, 2022

Native American Ministries Sunday serves to remind United Methodists of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society and in our communities. With more than 20,000 Native Americans within the denomination, this Special Sunday helps to ensure that Native American United Methodist leaders are recognized and to celebrate their special voice in The United Methodist Church.

This Special Sunday was officially recognized in 1988 and has been celebrated on the Third Sunday of Easter since 1989. An offering is taken on this day and is used to develop and strengthen Native American ministries in the annual conferences, and Native American rural, urban, reservation ministries and communities. It also provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology.

Donations support vital ministries and churches in the Native American communities and allow The UMC to partner with existing native ministries to develop new programs on behalf of Native Americans. Half of the donations collected remain within the Annual Conference to provide hope to children and youth, hope for a brighter future in impoverished communities and a voice to those who have felt voiceless for years. This fund is distributed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

You will be able to make a Native American Ministries Sunday donation online through our website or by including Native American Ministries in your check memo line.



When you give generously on Native American Ministries Sunday, you equip seminary students who honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries. You empower congregations to find fresh and culturally appropriate ways to minister to their communities with Christ's love.

## April Mission of the Month: Pretty Lake Camp

Once again, we will be supporting Pretty Lake Camp for the Mission of the Month. "Since 1916, Pretty Lake Camp has provided a totally free summer camp for more than 50,000 youth in the Kalamazoo County area who could benefit the most from the experience. No family pays to attend this nonprofit camp and everything is provided for them - from toothbrushes to clothing to transportation."

The items which we will be collecting this year to support their mission are:

- Laundry Soap
- Hair Brushes and Combs
- Hair Ties
- Boy's Underwear, sizes 8-14
- Girl's Underwear, sizes 10-16
- Athletic Socks

Any item that you wish to donate can be placed in the Mission of the Month box located near the security desk. Thank you for your support of this community activity, which is reopening this year.



## Early Bird Savings Through April 30 for Wesley Woods Camp



Interested in summer camp at Wesley Woods Camp & Retreat Center, located in Dowling, Michigan? Save money by registering by Saturday, April 30. First time campers and the friend (or sibling) who invites them are eligible for a \$50 rebate (or a \$25 rebate for mini camps). Learn more at [umcamping.org/rebate](http://umcamping.org/rebate) and you can also reach the Wesley Woods summer camp registrar at (989) 534-6587 or [registrar@umcamping.org](mailto:registrar@umcamping.org) with any questions. You can also learn more about upcoming promotions and events by following: [facebook.com/WesleyWoodsMI](https://facebook.com/WesleyWoodsMI)

## Our Sympathy and Prayers to the Family and Friends of:

Miriam Finch, who died on April 10.  
Samantha Knight, who died on April 9.



## Please keep these friends in your prayers:

Fred and Lana Allen  
Wanda Boekhout  
Bovid Family  
Don & Harriet Chalker  
Miriam Finch  
Graham Family  
Ashton & Mary Ellen Fredenburg  
Nell Holland  
Lenora Holliday  
David Houseman  
Bob Hunt  
Hurley Family  
Hyde Family  
Knight Family  
Doris Lee  
Bob & Judy McClelland  
Ellen McDonald  
Durrell & Marsha McKenzie  
Myrta Messikommer  
Gautam Parthasarathy & Family  
Peavler Family  
Jeanne Plott  
Anna Rassmussen  
Richards Family  
Mary Lou Sanderson  
Jan Search  
Skuzza Family  
Chris Uggen & Family  
Vindedahl Family  
Kathy Winchell  
Keene & Liza Wolfe  
Janet Wyndendorf

## Prayer requests

If you would like to share a prayer request with our clergy and prayer ministry team, please visit [www.umc-kzo.org/contact-us/prayer-request/](http://www.umc-kzo.org/contact-us/prayer-request/). If you do not have internet access, please call the church at (269) 381-6340 and leave a message. Prayer requests need to be received each **THURSDAY by noon** for inclusion in our weekly list for the prayer ministry team.



## On the Move with FUMC Kalamazoo Youth Tribe



First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo Youth Tribe recently took part in a downtown Kalamazoo scavenger hunt where they reflected on the seven last words of Jesus from the Cross and found images that may have represented them. This was followed by a meditative labyrinth walk back at the church. We love seeing our youth at work and at play!

Youth Tribe continues to meet most Sunday nights from 6-8pm in the Youth Lounge at FUMC Kalamazoo. If you'd like to learn more about Youth Tribe and upcoming events, please contact Pastor Matt Weiler at [mweiler@umc-kzo.org](mailto:mweiler@umc-kzo.org).

## April is National Volunteer Month



April is National Volunteer Month and we are ever grateful for the vital role our volunteers play at FUMC Kalamazoo. Every ministry of the church is supported by dedicated volunteers who not only aid day-to-day operations, but who enable us to provide assistance to those in need in our community. In addition, many of our volunteers also donate their time to support community partners including Justice for Our Neighbors, YWCA Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity, Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, Ministry with Community, Building Blocks of Kalamazoo, OutFront Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Coalition for the Homeless and many other local organizations. Thank you for everything you do to support our church and our community.

## May Mission of the Month: WMU Seita Scholars

Nationwide, less than 5% of youth who have been in the foster care system successfully complete college. The Seita Scholars Program at WMU is part of an initiative helping to create transitions for students age 18-25 who have aged out of the foster system.

Seita Scholars are supported in developing a community with other individuals who have faced similar obstacles, are provided financial support and, with the help of a Campus Coach, create a network that enhances their skill sets. The program is also working to assist former foster care students on campus who are not Seita Scholar recipients.

The program relies significantly on individuals and organizations throughout the community to provide for the personal needs of the students. Join us in helping to meet the needs by purchasing any of the following items and placing them in the Mission of the Month box in the entryway of our church: **Laundry detergent, dryer sheets, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, full size shampoo, body wash or lotion and deodorant.** To make a monetary donation, you will be able to donate online through our website or write Seita Scholars in your check memo line.

## Dream Team Prayer Corner



As mothers and children transition into the housing the Dream has helped the YWCA to purchase, pray that the families will flourish since they now have a safe place to call "home." Ask God to continue to bless the work of Sparrow and Nest as they continue to furnish these housing units for the YWCA.

Pray for the Dream Team as they discern how to best move forward in these final months of the campaign and please pray that we as a congregation will continue to respond to the Dream with generosity.

-The Dream Team

## Watch War Room with the Prayer Team on May 14

The Prayer Team would like to invite you to a viewing of **War Room**. This is a movie about the practice of prayer. We will meet in the movie lounge here at FUMC Kalamazoo on Saturday, May 14 at 1pm. We will have a short discussion after. Hope to see you there!



## The First Word for May

Articles for the next issue are due no later than **May 9, 2022**. The next newsletter will be mailed the week of **May 16**. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be sent to Bethany Gauthier at [bgauthier@umc-kzo.org](mailto:bgauthier@umc-kzo.org). Articles may be edited for space and content.