

# THE FIRST WORD



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## Easter Sunday Celebration!

It was such a joy to come together as a community and enjoy a moment of peace and faith. We celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ and took some time to reflect with our loved ones. The cover image for this month's edition of The First Word perfectly captures what our church is all about: experiencing, celebrating, and sharing God's love. We just wanted to take a moment to say thanks for joining us on this journey - we truly appreciate you!

We are thrilled to say that this year's service saw the highest attendance in the last two years! It was marvelous to see our community come together with both familiar and new faces joining in the festivities. We sang, we laughed, and we embraced the spirit of Easter with open hearts.

The service was an incredible blend of hope, inspiration, and unity. Rev. Julie captivated us with her message and encouraged us to contemplate our own spiritual journeys. We were reminded of the significance of seeking Jesus in our lives and cherishing the hope and love. The uplifting hymns and music, featuring the choir, organ and brass ensemble, made the celebration of Christ's resurrection a very joyful experience. A huge thank you goes to our Director of Music Jacqueline Stilger, and our organist Bernie Foulk.

We also want to shine the spotlight on everyone who played a part in making this year's Easter service a joyous and memorable one! From those who prepared the sanctuary to those who led us in song and all of the staff at FUMC, your hard work and dedication did not go unnoticed. You brought smiles to our faces and warmth to our hearts.

Although we reveled in our best attendance in the last 2 years, our thoughts were also with those who couldn't be there with us. You were missed, and we hope that the joy and hope of Easter reached you in your own unique way.

Once again a heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended this year's Easter Sunday Service. It was a joyful, uplifting, and meaningful experience that we'll cherish for years to come!



# Children and Families Ministries News



## Bay shore Camp

Attention families of K-5th graders! Please join us Monday August 14 - August 17, 2023 for a day camp from 8:30am to 4:30pm. The camp will be located in our church and we are collaborating with our neighbors at Kalamazoo First Presbyterian.

Lunch and two snacks will be included! The theme is "GOD IS". Through the Old Testament stories about David kids will learn that God is Loving! Activities will include arts and crafts, archery, bible study, climbing wall, games, and water activities. The cost is free but the spaces are limited so please register your child/children today. Contact Julia Librizzi for more information at: [jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org](mailto:jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org)

## Faith Milestones

The Faith Milestones program for 3rd - 5th graders comes to a conclusion on May 7th with a fun and engaging event. This final gathering is an opportunity to celebrate the growth and connections our young ones have made during the previous Faith Milestones. The evening will feature a scavenger hunt through downtown allowing participants to explore their surroundings and strengthen their bonds with one another and with their faith.

After the scavenger hunt we'll gather for dinner downtown, where everyone can share stories and memories, while discussing the adventures they've experienced throughout the program. This fun-filled evening not only wraps up our Faith Milestones journey but also inspires our young participants to keep growing and exploring their faith. As a vibrant community, we cherish these special moments that nurture the spiritual growth of our children and celebrate the friendships and memories created during this fantastic experience.

For more information please contact Julia Librizzi our Director of Children and Families Ministries at: [jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org](mailto:jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org)

## Butterflies on Easter

On Easter Sunday the children of the church released butterflies as they celebrated the process of metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly. This powerful analogy reflects the transformative nature of the Lenten season where we are called to grow and change through our faith.

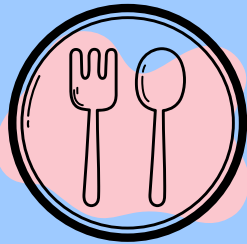


## Four score and more

We're thrilled to invite all of our 80+ years old community members to the Four Score and More Luncheon, a celebration of life and wisdom! Join us on May 11th at 12:00pm in Wesley Hall to enjoy a delightful lunch, share stories, laughter, and cherished memories.

This special event provides a unique opportunity to build connections, forge friendships, and engage in enriching conversations with your peers. We're excited to honor your incredible journey and the wisdom you bring to our community.

Don't miss this wonderful celebration! Mark your calendars and join us for the Four Score and More Luncheon. Please RSVP by May 4th to do so please contact Robin Entenman at 269-910-3963



## Connection Campaign

The church is seeking to better connect with our church community. Beginning April 23 we will have a table or two set up in the church lobby manned by our "connection ambassadors" to gather and verify contact information and demographics. This helps us better connect with you and comply with our demographic reporting responsibilities.

There will also be an opportunity to order a magnetic name tag if you are interested. Please take a minute to stop and chat or use the online fillable form located on our website. We are so looking forward to seeing you



## Sunnyside UMC Community Garden Day of Service

In the Spirit of Experiencing, Celebrating, and Sharing God's love through service the Outreach Team invites all to a Kalamazoo Service Project Weekend with the Sunnyside UMC Community Garden. There are gardening projects for people of all ages and abilities to help prepare this nearly 2 ½ acre urban garden for the summer's production. The main projects for the day include:

1. Building a new fence around the perimeter of the garden.
2. Weeding, laying ground cover, and mulching the fruit trees and blueberry bushes.
3. Building a "Front Porch" on the garden shed. The Outreach Team is funding this specific project and is looking for a small crew of skilled workers for the day.

Sign up on our google form by scanning the QR code or if you are on your mobile device click the Kalamazoo Service project image. Dennis Pence will be at the welcome desk following worship on Sundays if you wish to learn more about the day and to sign up in-person.



## Kalamazoo Community Chorale



Join us on Sunday, April 23rd, at 3:00 PM in the sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo for this unique and delightful concert. Experience the powerful vocals of the Kalamazoo Community Chorale combined with the enchanting sounds of the Kalamazoo Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra, as they come together to present a diverse and engaging program that promises to captivate audiences of all ages.

Don't miss this rare opportunity to witness the unity of these two remarkable ensembles as they share their love for music and community. Bring your family and friends, and enjoy an afternoon filled with inspiring performances that showcase the incredible talent and passion of our local musicians.

## Celebrating our graduates

Calling all High School and College students or anyone who might be graduating this Spring! We want to celebrate you and bless you in worship this Summer. Our Graduate Sunday Celebration will take place in worship on Sunday, June 18th, at 10am.

Please email Jose at: [jcelorio@umc-kzo.org](mailto:jcelorio@umc-kzo.org) with the following information:

- Graduate's name
- School they're graduating from
- Future plans
- Favorite church memory
- A photo of the graduate



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

*Barbara Smith who passed away March 12th*

*James Hildbolt who passed away March 21st*

*Marsha Kay McKenzie who passed away March 12th*

*Christopher K. Mumma who passed away on March 31st*

*Harriet Chalker who passed away on April 8th*

## Please keep these friends in your prayers:

The Chalker family  
Christine  
Miriam Downey  
Ashton Fredenburg  
Lenora Holliday  
Nancy Hyde  
Bill and Ruth LaMachia  
Judy McClelland  
The McKenzie family  
The Mumma family  
Susan Noble  
Anna Rassmussen  
Mary Lou Sanderson  
Barb Skuza  
Nelson & Mary Stapleton  
Tom and Marcia Stobie  
Jim Treece  
The Uggen family  
Lori Valkema  
Nina Victor  
The Walker family  
Roger Williams  
The Wolfe family  
Janet Wyndorf

## 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/), or, 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.

## After Worship Coffee Service Volunteers

Sunday coffee service has resumed at Kalamazoo FUMC. Join us after worship in the Perks area on the first level of the church. We look forward to once again sharing coffee and fellowship with you! If you have questions or would like to assist, please contact Ruth LaMachia at [rlamachia@umc-kzo.org](mailto:rlamachia@umc-kzo.org).



## Kalamazoo Service Project July 17-20. Register Now!

Registration for Kalamazoo Service Project is live now. Scan the Qr code on this page to access the sign up sheet. The deadline for signing up is May 31st, though the sooner you sign up the better! KSP is open to all youth entering 7th grade in the fall through Seniors graduating this spring.

We are also in need of a minimum of 12 adults who will volunteer their time the entire week, guiding youth through their projects and maintaining a safe and loving and fun experience. Adult volunteers can email pastor Matt directly with your interest at: [mweiler@umc-kzo.org](mailto:mweiler@umc-kzo.org) We hope to have all adult leaders secured by May 31st.

The cost for participation in Kalamazoo Service Project this year is \$100.00 If \$100.00 is not feasible for your family please contact Pastor Matt as scholarships are available.

Looking forward to another great year of KSP with some new twists to the week....



## The First Word for May

Articles for the next issue are due no later than **May 6, 2023**. The next newsletter will be mailed the week of **May 12**. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be sent to [jcelorio@umc-kzo.org](mailto:jcelorio@umc-kzo.org). Articles may be edited for space and content.



Easter Sunday choir, Photo taken by Keith Mumma



## Building Blocks of Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo Building Blocks is starting their spring project campaigns and have released the sponsors for their shirt. First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo is proudly one of them.

We are proud to be a part of this amazing community! Building Blocks' amazing work has us all cheering and we can't wait to see what they will do next!

## Can You Lend an Ear to Helping Our Neighbors?

Ears wanted! Our Helping Our Neighbors ministry (HON) is in need of volunteers to help those who need assistance with utilities or avoiding eviction. Since the pandemic, this ministry has been operating by phone, answering calls daily. If you have a compassionate heart and are comfortable talking on the phone and using email you can be a HON volunteer!

HON is hoping to staff this rewarding and much needed ministry with enough volunteers for each day of the week to be shared by two volunteers. Will you lend your ear? For information, contact Ann at [rasweany@charter.net](mailto:rasweany@charter.net), or Ruth at [rlamachia@umc-kzo.org](mailto:rlamachia@umc-kzo.org).



Easter Sunday choir, Photo taken by Keith Mumma

