

# THE FIRST WORD



212 S. PARK STREET, KALAMAZOO, MI 49007 // (269) 381-6340 // [WWW.UMC-KZO.ORG](http://WWW.UMC-KZO.ORG)

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



photo taken by Keith Mumma

*This photo was taken on Pentecost. As modern Christians we celebrate Pentecost to remember when the Holy Spirit invaded the church, as told in the second chapter of Acts.*

## Honoring our Graduates

We want to celebrate our graduates. As they set sail on their new adventures, it is always good to reflect on the journey they've taken and the growth they have had and will continue to have.

To frame this celebration, we want to share with you a poem by our own Andrew Weare: "A bell's chiming fades to silence, but our ears remain to hear, gratitude is like this too, it came and went from here, what never fades is the amazing grace, that awakens the very soul and raises gratitude to greatest heights."

In the chime of a bell, we find a powerful metaphor for the journey of our graduates. The echo may fade into silence, but the impact remains, and similarly, our graduates will continue to carry the essence of their time at FUMC and their loved ones within them. The education they received, the relationships they've built, and the life lessons they've learned will resonate within them, guiding their future paths.

Gratitude has been a part of their journey. This gratitude is for their teachers who guided them, their families who supported them, and the invaluable life experiences that have sculpted them into the individuals they are today.

We are so proud of all of them and can't wait to see what they do next!

Join us on June 18th as we honor them. Come, celebrate their accomplishments and share in the joy of their hard earned success! Your presence will make this day even more special.

## July Mission of the Month: School Supplies for Spring Valley Elementary School

The 2022-2023 school year has ended. Students and teachers are enjoying the summer break, but it won't be too long before thinking about the next school year will begin. School is challenging enough for teachers and students without them worrying about obtaining school supplies. So once again this year, FUMC will be collecting school supplies for Spring Valley. Watch the July "Around the Corner" for the list of items the school needs. Thank you for helping this school and its children.





Tom Clark son of John and Jennifer Clark, graduated from Loy Norrix High School. He is continuing his educational journey at Kalamazoo College. While Tom is yet to decide his major, we celebrate his dedication and spirit as he plans to play Tennis at Kalamazoo College.

Tom fondly remembers playing Euchre at Pastor Julie's house, a testament to the bonds formed within our church family. May the memories he carries from our community serve as a comforting beacon.

## Tom Clark



## Kelcey Briggs



Kelcey daughter of Ken and Jennifer Briggs, has completed her basic EMT training at KVCC and graduated from Loy Norrix High School. Kelcey is poised to continue her educational journey in healthcare. She will be attending the Western Michigan University Bronson School of Nursing and Lee Honors College, having been honored with the prestigious Heyl Scholarship for Nursing. Her aspiration is to specialize in trauma and emergency care, with a long-term goal of becoming a flight nurse.

Her favorite FUMC memory is learning music through First Beats and everything that entailed; from very loudly dropping a tray backstage during her first musical to singing beautiful songs in worship. Another favorite memory is getting back into handbell playing with the adult handbell choir this school year.

May she be blessed with wisdom and strength in her endeavors and may her path be guided by divine grace.

Mariella who is Rev. Julie Kline's niece, graduated from Ludington High School and is preparing to attend the WMU Frostic School of Art and the Lee Honors College. Her journey so far has been enriched by the bonds she formed within our community, particularly the competitive, yet fun-filled Euchre games during our Appalachian Service Project the summer before her Freshman year.

We invite you to send prayers and good wishes her way. May the Lord guide her steps, fill her heart with courage, and bless her with wisdom in every endeavor. We trust that the warmth and love of our community will continue to inspire her as she embarks on this new chapter in her life.

## Mariella Faith Korendyke



## Drew H. Strand



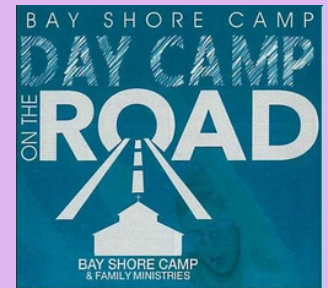
Drew, son of our own Jackie Stilger, graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Digital Design with an emphasis in animation from Kendall College of Art and Design. This accomplishment is a testament to Drew's hard work, commitment, and passion.

In his next steps, Drew is heading to Portland, Oregon, ready to take on new challenges and opportunities. We trust that his path will be lit with wisdom, his efforts blessed with success, and his journey marked by joy, peace, and divine guidance. We kindly invite you to share your good wishes and prayers for Drew's future endeavors.

## Bay Shore Camp

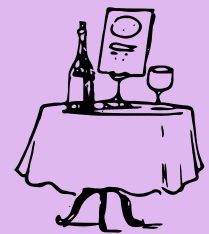
Attention families of K-5th graders! Please join us Monday August 14 - August 17, 2023 for a day camp from 8:30am to 4:30pm. The camp will be located in our church and we are collaborating with our neighbors at Kalamazoo First Presbyterian.

Contact Julia Librizzi for more information at: [jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org](mailto:jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org)



## Moms Night Out

For all the moms!! Please join us on a night out for dinner, drinks and conversation on July 12th at 6pm we will meet at Martini's Kalamazoo on 832 S Westnedge Ave RSVP to Katy McGinnis via text at (269) 267-3999



## First Beats

We want to say thank you to every single one of you who attended the play and showed your support. Your presence not only reinforced the bond we share but also showed our young ones the powerful love of their church family.



Kameran graduated from Loy Norrix High School and is preparing to continue her education at Hope College this fall, with plans to major in Global Studies and Marketing. She recalls her experiences of Sunday school with Mrs. Sherfield and her Grandma, as well as participating in the musical 'Jonah and the Whale', and performing duets with Kendyl Kirchman for Emerging Worship.

As Kameran steps onto this new path, we ask you to join us in extending prayers and good wishes.

## Kameran Long



## Jonathan Boxford

Jonathan Boxford, the grandson of Alan and Sally Enderle, graduated from Avon Old Farms School in Avon, CT, on May 28, 2023. Jonathan is ready to broaden his horizons by attending Boston College this fall.

As Jonathan ventures into this exciting new chapter of his life, we invite everyone in our community to extend their prayers and good wishes. May God's guidance be with him in every step he takes, providing him wisdom, strength, and resilience.



## Andrew J. Skuza

Andrew is the Grandson of Barbara Skuza and the late Charles Skuza. He is set to embark on a new academic journey after graduating from Mattawan High School. He has been accepted to Ferris State University, where he will be studying Automotive Engineering. His favorite memory from our church is the ASP trip to West Virginia, reflecting the meaningful bonds he formed here.

As Andrew steps into this exciting new phase, we ask for your prayers and well wishes. May he be blessed with wisdom, perseverance, and creativity



## Reconciling ministry

### Pride

Pride Month is celebrated every year in June, in honor of the Stonewall riots, a series of protests that began in June 1969 in New York City, which marked the turning point in the movement for LGBTQ+ rights.

The importance of celebrating Pride lies in the principle of accepting and honoring everyone's individuality and understanding that everyone deserves to love and be loved openly, without fear. It's essential to remember that Pride is about humanity and equality. It's about recognizing the diverse experiences of people around us and showing respect and empathy towards everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

At its heart, Pride promotes a message that extends beyond the LGBTQ+ community: a message of love, acceptance, and respect for all people. It's a reminder that each individual's rights and freedoms should be respected and protected, regardless of who they are or whom they love.

Our reconciling team has suggested some events you can attend to show your support and learn more about this movement.

**June 17th** "Queer the Block" at the State Theater

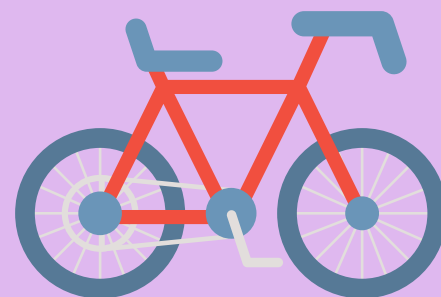
Chalk The Block: 3:00 PM Help us decorate the dance floor and enjoy free activities provided by local downtown businesses Patio live entertainment Opens: 5:00 PM | Music: 5:30 PM



## Biking Small Group

Our biking small group continues this summer, with a small twist! We will be meeting every Thursday at 6:30 at the 10th street Kal Haven trailhead (the Caboose!). We will ride the trail each week, increasing our roundtrip mileage each time. The plan is to build up our stamina and end the summer with a September ride to South Haven (one way), a beach picnic and a caravan to bring us all back to Kalamazoo! Everyone is welcome to join, just meet up at the trail head by 6:30 any Thursday you can! Questions?

Contact Dawn Wheaton - [dawheaton53@gmail.com](mailto:dawheaton53@gmail.com).



## The First Word for July

Articles for the next issue are due no later than **July 6, 2023**. The next newsletter will be mailed the week of **July 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.



Pastor Matt Weiler Photo taken by Keith Mumma



Photo taken by Keith Mumma



## Juneteenth

Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day, is a unique holiday commemorating the end of slavery on June 19, 1865. It's a day for reflection, education, and unity, underscoring the importance of freedom, equality, and human rights in our society. This celebration is not about division, but about inclusivity and unity. It's an opportunity to come together, learn from one another, and commit ourselves to ensure that the principles of freedom, equality, and justice are upheld for everyone.

Juneteenth is all about dialogue and understanding across cultural and racial lines. It's a day that invites us to engage in thoughtful discussions, learn more about each other's experiences, and work towards a more understanding society.

Education is a significant component of Juneteenth, as it aims to increase awareness and understanding of the African American experience, and the systemic issues they have faced, and continue to face. This is not designed to create guilt or animosity, but instead it aims to encourage empathy, to spark conversations about equity, and to inspire action towards a more just society.

Our reconciling ministry has recommended a book titled "On Juneteenth" by Anette Gordon-Reed. This book is an eye-opening read for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of this pivotal moment in American history, its echoes in our present, and its implications for our future.

### NEW in the PEWS!

#### Attendance Registers return to the sanctuary.

You may have noticed that at the end of May, new blue folders appeared at the end of each pew; you know, those notepads to write your name in and pass along to neighboring worshippers. In these months since the global pandemic, we've experimented with ways to best capture accurate attendance, and after the last Sunday in May, it is confirmed that pencil and paper works best for us! However, as we experimented, some questions arose I'd like to address.

1. Why does the church want me to "sign in" to worship?
2. What does the church do with that information?
3. Why does the church care about who is in church or when?

Good questions. The church seeks to gather accurate information about attendance to better serve the needs of the church community. The attendance registers are an easy way to communicate changes in contact information to the office staff. The information gathered is stored in a database for later reference. I could go into much more detail about that, and if any of you are data geeks, give me a call and we can talk about data.

Why does the church care? The truth is, this church — your church, does care. This church has a Director of Congregational Care, an active Caring Team, and Stephen Ministers. All are evidence this church considers caring for one another a top tier priority.

How does recording attendance correspond to the church's ability to care though? Well, one way the staff uses specific attendance information is to verify our memories, which can sometimes be mistaken. For instance, a pastor may notice an absence of someone who had previously been in worship all the time. The pastor could check with support staff to verify before follow-up. Another example could be if the clergy or caring team are aware of a circumstance that would keep a church member away from worship and when they return, a caring visit could acknowledge and celebrate the ability to be together again. Sometimes attendance information can be helpful in naming people in general. We're a church with hundreds of participating people that may not be recognized by a worship leader from the front of the church, but with a quick check of attendance sheets, we can help make those connections of names and faces.

The response to the new-in-the-pews attendance pads was fantastic! We thank you and encourage everyone to use those blue attendance registers each week as we seek to maintain and strengthen our connections to one another.

-Christi Landreville & Christiane Stakely

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

*Harriet Chalker who passed away on April 8th*

*Jacquelyn Knowlton who passed away on April 18th*

*Janet Wyndendorf who passed away April 22nd*

*Mary Jane Kreidler who passed away May 31st*

## Please keep these friends in your prayers:

- Lana Allen & family
- The Chalker Family
- Christine
- Destiney & Jasmine
- Miriam Downey
- Ashton and Mary Ellen Fredenburg
- Lenora Holliday
- John & Carol Holmes
- Nancy Hyde
- Bill and Ruth LaMachia
- Elaine Martin & John St. Laurent
- Judy McClelland
- Durrell McKenzie
- Mumma Family
- Susan Noble
- The Rawsy Family
- Anna Rassmussen
- Charles, Micah, Garret, & Emery Rose
- Rudy
- Mary Lou Sanderson
- Barb Skuza
- Ben S.
- Nelson & Mary Stapleton
- Tom and Marcia Stobie
- Jim Treece
- Lori Valkema
- Nina Victor
- Liza and the Wolfe Family

## 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).