

THE FIRST WORD



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

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



photo taken by Keith Mumma

Administrative Support Team

Our Administrative Support Team has redefined its role within the church. This united team, previously known as the office staff, is re-energized under a new name and a fresh purpose statement: "The Administrative Support Team serves as an information hub focusing on hospitality and communication."

This isn't just a renaming, it's a re-imagining of their role as the hub of our church, fostering an atmosphere of warmth and openness. With a firm focus on hospitality, they are committed to ensuring a welcoming environment for all. As an information hub, they are responsible for facilitating effective and transparent communication across our church community.



Julie Kline, Jose Celorio, Walt Whitfield, Ruth LaMachia, Christiane Stakely, Christine Landrevile

Kalamazoo FUMC Visioning Workshop

Saturday Oct 21, 9am-4pm

We are delighted to announce that this fall we will be spending some time working on our Vision/Mission as we seek to define who we are as First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo in 2023. This church-led work will include some weeks of pre-work culminating in a Visioning Workshop on Saturday, October 21. We hope that you will reserve Saturday, October 21st on your calendar and join us in this important work!



2023 Kalamazoo Service Project

This year for the 2023 KSP our theme was Joy. We built fences, tore down walls, installed lights, and grew in our community and faith. With participants from Kalamazoo First and Chapel Hill, we had a team of 35 people working day to day on these projects. All planned by the brilliant minds of Jess Davenport, Cara Weiler, Mandakini Brophy, and Matt Weiler.

We also were blessed with Donna Dunyak and her amazing crew for dinner each night. Our days started at 8:30AM with worship and a daily morning devotion. We worked until about 4pm each day and then headed to Kalamazoo First for our evening programming/dinner. This included team building, yard games, exploding watermelons, and a Thursday night lock-in.

We were successful in finishing all of our projects. There will be more celebration to come September 17th in worship, but for now, we will be sleeping and reflecting on what a JOY it was to be in service with each other and with God.



Confirmation Class

Confirmation is now a two-year program at FUMC open to all youth who are entering 7th grade or older. Any student who begins confirmation this fall, whether they are a 7th grade student or an older student will participate for two full years. Our current 2nd year students will be confirmed on Sunday May 19.

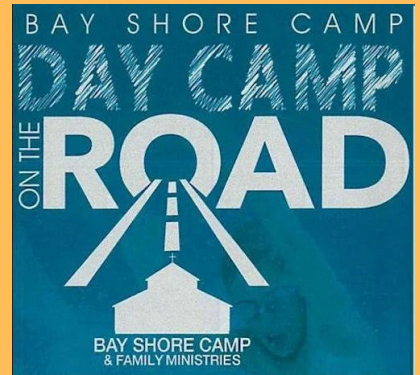
Confirmation class will take place this year on the third Sunday of the month beginning September 17th and will meet for 1 to 1 1/2 hours immediately after worship (there will be some longer sessions later in the spring reserved for second year students).

We also have a retreat at Wesley Woods scheduled for November 3-5 as well as some fun opportunities in the works for Winter and Spring.

Contact Pastor Matt Weiler at: mweiler@umc-kzo.org for the registration link or look at the "Around the Corner" where you can also find the registration link. Make sure you register before August 25th.

Bay shore Camp

Bay Shore Day Camp joined us for a week of Camp On The Road, August 14-17 for kindergarteners to 5th graders! The church was very busy that week as 50 campers signed up! The children had fun learning the stories of David and about God and God's love. Thank you so much for your support and prayers!



Family Fun Night

All are welcome to join us from 6 to 8pm on Tuesday, August 22, 2023 at the Splash Pad in River Oaks County Park – 9202 E. Michigan Ave. Galesburg, MI 49053. \$5 daily parking fee or Annual Kalamazoo County Vehicle Permit is needed for entry. Join us in the pavilion next to the splash pad for some pizza! Please rsvp to Julia Librizzi at jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org so we are sure to pick up enough pizza and bring a drink, towels, and a dish to pass!



Member Highlight: James A. Cupper

This month, we're proud to spotlight one of our Staff Parish Relations Committee member, Jim Cupper, who will be recognized as a distinguished alumni by Western Michigan University this fall. In honor of this accolade, we felt it fitting to also celebrate his invaluable contributions to our church, from driving the church bus to helping out around the church and being an important part of our community.



Jim Cupper was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His family moved to Connecticut in 1960, where he attended Ridgefield High School. After graduation, Jim joined the U.S. Air Force, where he served four years as an air traffic controller. He was stationed at Hurlburt Air Force Base in Florida and later, at King Salmon Air Force Station in Alaska.

After an honorable discharge from the USAF, Jim studied advertising at Western Michigan University. He then worked for Burroughs Corporation, the FAA, and several advertising agencies, ultimately becoming a senior brand strategist for McCrosky Marketing Communications.

After retiring, Cupper led Habitat For Humanity's ReStore® "deconstruction" team, repurposing items from homes for resale. He tutors second-graders in Kalamazoo and has served on various boards. He began with the Gull Lake Area Rotary Club in the 1980s and rejoined the Kalamazoo Rotary in 2009. By 2015, he was its president, launching initiatives like Career Connections and the Christmas Adopt-A-Family program as well as hosting the club's centennial Gala and raising significant funds for Polio Plus.

Being a Methodist is deeply rooted in service, compassion, and living out one's faith actively in the world. It's about creating meaningful connections with others and making a positive difference in the community. Jim Cupper, alongside many at Kalamazoo FUMC, stands as a shining example, truly capturing the heart and spirit of what it means to be a Methodist. Through their actions and commitment, they illuminate the core principles that define Methodism.

August Mission of the Month

The August Mission-of-the-Month will benefit our own Helping Our Neighbors ministry (HON). This offering is limited to three types of support: we seek your prayers, your time, and/or your donations. Individuals facing eviction procedures or threats of a Consumers Energy shut-off require assistance to prevent dire outcomes. They reach out to the church either by referral from social workers or through the emergency information hotline, 211, at 269-243-2500. These calls result in a voicemail, and one of our volunteers typically responds within 24 hours. Rapid response is crucial. After a brief conversation, we usually determine whether we can assist them. Additionally, we guide our callers towards other agencies that can help. Typically, HON pledges \$100 to these individuals. Once they have raised the necessary funds to prevent shut-off or eviction, we forward our check to the landlord or Consumers Energy.

The funds HON distributes come from donations. It's not uncommon for us to give over \$750 a week. Collaborating with other agencies, we've even managed to raise as much as \$2500 for someone facing eviction or \$1000 for those at risk of power loss. Please support this initiative. In your prayers, consider if you might play the role of an angel for individuals confronting life-altering challenges. The people we assist are generally self-sufficient, with most having not sought our help since 2019.

Please know, the gift with the most profound impact would be your service as a volunteer. Thanks to your consistent generosity, we have yet to exhaust our funds.

Volunteers Wanted for Church Landscaping

Our crew of landscaping volunteers has grown very slim and all are at an age where they must retire. Jim Willoughby has led this small group for the past 11 years, and is ready to pass the baton to those who have the strength and desire to help keep up the various plantings around the parking lot and the church building. The more people willing to volunteer, the less work that will fall on one person's shoulders. For more information, please message Ruth LaMachia at: rlamachia@umc-kzo.org



The First Word for September

Articles for the next issue are due no later than **August 28, 2023**. The next newsletter will be mailed the first week in September. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be sent to jcelorio@umc-kzo.org. Articles may be edited for space and content.



Rev. Julie Kline photo taken by Keith Mumma

Grief Group

It often feels like we've been walking through a season of grief over the last couple of years. At times, it feels necessary to push through the feelings and move on, when perhaps, we may prefer to create sacred space to remember, honor, grieve, and bear witness to our losses. You are invited to join with others in creating that sacred space for losses – recently or in the past. Beginning Sunday, September 17 from 6-7:30 p.m., a short-term group, led by Jan Schoenherr, LPC, and Deb Search Willoughby, LMS, will meet in the chapel every 2 weeks until November 26th. If you're interested in participating, contact Jan schoenherrjan@gmail.com, Deb dsearchwillo@gmail.com, or any of our pastors.

Second Floor Team

Early in 2023 the Trustees requested of the Church Council to create a team that could provide a recommendation regarding ideas for the use of the second floor following the closing of First Care. Church Council provided input and blessings and the Trustees ultimately had the determination about building use and the decision regarding how to reconfigure the space and how it will be utilized.

The team considered answering the following 2 questions.

Essential Question Number 1 for the second-floor team: Would the church want to consider partnering with an outside organization to use and occupy the east side of the second-floor space after the reconfiguration of the west side for church use?

- Those in attendance answered "yes."
- Reasons for answering yes are that there is a desire to use our church building more fully.

Essential Question Number 2 for the 2nd floor team: If so, what kind of use would we want the church to have for the East side space? There are implications to be considered if the organization were non-profit or for profit.

- Those in attendance answered, "children, or something for children, like a day care, preschool, or after school care."
- There is a need for more childcare for families in Kalamazoo, as there are so many on waiting lists. The second floor is set up for children, including the plumbing. We have several tiny potties for very little children and short sinks.
- Those in attendance decided nonprofit is best and began a list of non-profit childcare and preschools in the area and Julia Librizzi, Director of Children and Families Ministries, began to contact these potential partners.

Children and Families Ministries and the Trustees worked out a plan to reconfigure the second-floor space and consolidate their ministries to the West side of the second floor, around a special place we call "The Arches," and have the East side of the second floor be available for the potential partner.

As potential partners became interested Julia Librizzi (Director of Children and Families ministry), Chris Bovid (Chair of the Trustees) and Lori Owen-Rogers (Co-Leader of Church Council) helped give tours. Chris Bovid (Chair of the Trustees) then talked further with potential partners as they became more serious about partnering with us. We hope to have a potential partner soon and look forward to sharing the good news with you soon!



Julia Librizzi photo taken by Keith Mumma



Rev. Julie Kline photo taken by Keith Mumma

Our Sympathy and Prayers to the Family and Friends of:

David Houseman who passed away on June 29th

Liza Wolfe who passed away on June 29th

Jerry Toshalis who passed away on July 11th

Roger Williams who passed away on July 30th

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 Holms
- 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

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/, 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.