

# FIRST WORD

J A N U A R Y

GOD LOVES ALL PEOPLE, SO DO WE

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As we step into the new year, we find ourselves filled with gratitude for the collective journey we've undertaken as a congregation. The past year has been a tapestry woven with threads of challenges, triumphs, and shared moments. It is with sincere appreciation that we reflect on the efforts and dedication of each member of our community.

Last year, our church began a discernment process to revitalize our vision and name our values to plan for the future, assess our priorities and focus our ministry efforts. The response from you, our community, was incredible, and it is with hope and trust in the Holy Spirit's guidance that we look forward to the future.

We also want to highlight the efforts of our youth group. During the summer, they volunteered their time to help our community with hands-on work through the Kalamazoo Service Project. It is inspiring to see what they do and the joy with which they do it. The Youth group will return to Appalachia on July 21st this year for the first time in years.

"Helping our Neighbors" activated their 1,500th phone since October of 2021! God has taken this program far beyond what any of us could have imagined two years ago. It is incredible to see what a ministry of this church has done and the impact this program has had on helping people.

The second floor underwent some major changes, but none of this would have been possible without the help of all the people who volunteered to get it in tip-top shape. We are excited for the future of the second floor this year.

Additionally, we express our sincere appreciation to the volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to various events and initiatives throughout the past year. Your selfless contributions have truly made a lasting impact on our community, and we are genuinely thankful for your commitment.

Thank you for making our community better and helping spread the word of God through love, justice, and community!

### *SPECIAL THANKS!*

This year promises changes within our church, some more challenging than others, but they bring the opportunity to keep building something extraordinary, and keep creating a vital community of faith.

A significant change this year is the retirement of some beloved staff members and lay leaders who, after many years of service, have decided to retire or have completed their term. Either way, they deserve to rest and deserve to be celebrated for their incredible work in shaping our community.

We would like to express our gratitude to Michael Seals and Chuck Hubbard for their dedicated service to the Security Team over the years, contributing to the safety of our community during Sunday morning services and special events.

Currently, we are in the process of reassessing our security needs, as well as reviewing our practices and procedures to enhance our overall security measures.

Additionally, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Steve Hassevoort and Tom Schaberg, who have served as our Chair of Buildings and Grounds, and to Jim Willoughby who helped keep the grounds of the church looking great through the years. They will be stepping down, leaving big shoes to fill in 2024. We appreciate their contributions and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

A special thank you to our Co-Lay leaders Tammy Eaton and Donna Dunyak who have faithfully fulfilled their term. They have played a vital role in organizing numerous events and coordinating small groups on Sunday nights, fostering deep connections within our community. We appreciate their commitment and efforts to strengthen our community bonds.



## ROBIN ENTENMAN

We want to give a huge thank you to Robin as she recently entered the world of retirement. While it is undoubtedly a challenge to imagine our church without Robin, we recognize and celebrate the well-deserved rest that retirement promises her. As she steps into this new chapter of life, we hope it is filled with joy, relaxation, book reading and the fulfillment of all her dreams and aspirations.



Robin Entenman

## RUTH LAMACHIA



Ruth LaMachia

Our Director of Business Administration, will be retiring at the end of February. A month later she will be moving to Minnesota to begin the next chapter of her life. She is looking forward to living nearer to three generations of her family, including her sister, son and daughter-in-law, and granddaughters. Her daughter plans to join her in Minnesota after she graduates from WMU. Ruth plans to ease into retirement in the Twin Cities by seeking a part-time position in the non-profit sector that utilizes her passions and skills.

During her 11+ year tenure at our church Ruth has impacted countless members, committees, and community endeavors. Ruth's knowledge, care, and oversight includes the supervision of our Lay Personnel staff and extends to administrative areas such as finance, stewardship, the church building and grounds, hospitality, communications, and Helping Our Neighbors.

We appreciate the many ways she has walked beside us in ministry.

Cards for Robin and Ruth, sent c/o the church, are ways that individuals can express their gratitude. There will also be a retirement celebrations after church (see below) on January 21 for Robin and on February 25 for Ruth.

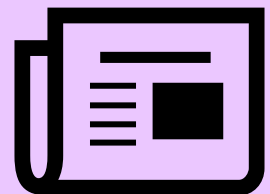
## RETIREMENT PARTIES FOR ROBIN AND RUTH

Please join us after church in the PERKS area on January 21 for a Retirement Reception honoring our long-time security staff member, Robin Entemann. Additionally, mark your calendars for February 25 to join us in celebrating Ruth's retirement with a special party. Feel free to contribute your well-wishes in the designated card and note basket, and indulge in some delightful treats as we come together in community to express our gratitude and celebrate the many years of dedicated service from both Robin and Ruth.

## First Word for February

Articles for the next issue are due no later than February 1, 2024. The next newsletter will be mailed the second week in February.

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.



## January Mission of the Month

While it seems that Winter has been delayed, many individuals in Kalamazoo are without a home and living outside in tents and many others are living in shelters. Others cannot afford warm winter clothing. We are hoping to help keep them warm by collecting the following items for Ministry with Community and the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission. Please consider helping our neighbors in need.

### Ministry with community:

- Men's underwear (all sizes)
- Women's underwear (sizes small, medium and large NOT ex-large and above)
- Hand Warmers

### Kalamazoo Gospel Mission Men's Shelter

- Socks
- Men's underwear all sizes
- Undershirts
- Winter gloves

### Women's Shelter

- Socks Adult and Children
- Underwear Adult and Children
- Diapers size 3,4,5,6

The Mission of the Month collection point is near the entrance to the food pantry.

# A Bequest

When my husband, Roger, died this past summer, the charitable gifts he had planned became effective – to support the universities that enabled his professional career as a chemist, and to this church that has nurtured us for more than 50 years.

Years ago, when these gifts were arranged, we could not have predicted what needs would be most pressing when the funds would be provided to the beneficiaries. Instead, we trust this institution and its leadership to make good use of these resources. Rather than designation toward any specific ministry, this bequest supports ongoing needs to be determined by our church community.

A gift of \$500,000 to the Permanent Endowment Fund, added to the bequests and gifts from many others, will provide earnings to support the annual operating budget or other ministries as determined by Church Council.

A gift of that same amount for the discretionary use of the Board of Trustees will support major building maintenance projects, replacements, and upgrades to keep our facilities safe and accessible for the many activities that take place in our building. My family is privileged to braid our story with many others and those yet to come, so that this church can continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Thanks be to God.  
Molly Williams

## Please keep these friends in your prayers:

- Chalker Family
- Christine
- Miriam Downey
- Ashton and Mary Ellen Fredenburg
- Lenora Holliday
- Houseman Family
- Nancy Hyde
- LaMachia Family
- Elaine Martin & John St. Laurent
- Judy McClelland
- Durrell McKenzie
- Mumma Family
- Susan Noble
- Rawsy Family
- Anna Rassmussen
- Mary Lou Sanderson
- Barb Skuza
- Ben S.
- Nelson & Mary Stapleton
- Tom and Marcia Stobie
- Jim Treece
- Toshalis Family
- Lori Valkema
- Nina Victor
- Warnicke Family
- Williams Family
- Willoughby Family
- Carolyn Murphy
- Doug and Jane Vernon

## TAKING ROOT

January 21st from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm



In October of last year a group of young adults from First United Methodist Church (FUMC), First Presbyterian, and First Congregational began gathering to create a new project, that project now has a name “Taking Root”. The event aims to connect people with time and passion with local groups doing good work.

Local non-profits are coming together, just like a job fair but way more fun. You get to connect and network with these fantastic organizations, hopefully sparking some excitement to get involved.

There will be food and live music available throughout the event. Whether your intention is to casually attend, connect with others, or simply enjoy the atmosphere, this presents the ideal opportunity to make it all come together!

The venue for the event is KNAC, located at 315 W Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI, 49007.

Everyone is welcome!

## 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).



Christmas Pageant photo taken by Keith Mumma



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