



The Ambassador

March 2022

Est. 1805 | Published Since
1951

From the Pastor

“What is the church supposed to be?”

This question was posed by a pastor I considered an important mentor. His name was Gordon Cosby, and he founded the church I attended in Washington DC back in the late seventies. Gordon believed in a church where people could be fundamentally transformed, where they would find salvation and meaning, and also find ways to effectively serve the world. The questions he used to build it up included these: “How is a church supposed to operate?” “Who should be in leadership?” “What tasks should it be undertaking, both out there in society and within its own walls?” “What is the role of prayer” These and other questions were discussed constantly and seriously, and the church became a powerful model for many Christians around the world.

Gordon Cosby played a key role in my decision to go into ministry. Like I say, he was a mentor. But I also found I couldn’t be like him in every respect, particularly when it came to engaging an existing congregation. Gordon started from scratch; every church I’ve pastored already had its own history. People who had been in the church all their lives had their own ideas of what the church was supposed to be. My job included respecting that historical perspective.

But taking the time to ask ourselves those deep theoretical questions—what we are doing here in this church, what we might need to change, what we might need to retain, basically what can make us more authentic followers of Christ – this still makes sense. The season of the church year we set aside for this kind of serious reflection is called Lent. It’s the 40 days before Easter. Why 40? Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness fasting

Continued on page 2

Contact Us

120 S. Broad St.
Middletown, OH 45044
513-423-4629
office@myfumc.net
www.myfumc.net

Worship With Us

Online & In Person
Worship @10:30 am
Sunday School @ 9

In Person & Online
Bible Studies
@ 10 am Wednesdays and
@ 6 pm Thursdays

Inside

Music & Worship Notes 3
News From the Pews 5
Mission Moment 6
Calendar & Birthdays 7



Continued from page 1

and reflecting on what God had called on him to do, and ever since Christians have heard the call to do something similar.

The first 4 Sundays of Lent I will be teaching a course simply entitled “The Church.” I’m not using a study guide. Rather, I’ll use biblical passages, personal reflections and personal stories to share what I believe are the most important aspects of church life – basically what I feel I’ve learned over the last 40 years. Here is the plan:

Sunday, March 6: “IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF IT”

Sunday, March 13: “VARIETIES OF GIFTS, VARIETIES OF PEOPLE”

Sunday, March 20: “CHURCH LEADERSHIP”

Sunday, March 27: “THE TRUE HEAD OF THE CHURCH”

I’m inviting all of you, but especially inviting the newer attenders. This will serve as our new membership class for 2022. They will learn from the longtime members, but I know we will also learn from them. Each class will include teaching and bible study, and also group discussion. Johnny Schmitt, our leader for the Adult Sunday School, has graciously allowed me this time from 9 to 10 AM on Sunday mornings. And since we have the capability, the class will be broadcast to anyone who wants to tune in via the internet, and will also be recorded so those who miss it can still see and hear the class later.

Friends, this will be among my last contributions to First United Methodist Church of Middletown. It is something I offer from my heart. I hope you will find a way to attend. We will meet in the Chapel.

Peace,

John Wagner

March 2, 2022

Service at 7:00



Christ Our Life — Service Our Lifestyle

Music and Worship Notes *by Mary Ellen Clinard*



The Traditions of Lent

By the time you read this, Lent will be just about ready to begin. In our denomination, it depends on the minister and congregation as to the level of “tradition” Lent is practiced. I thought it would be interesting to take a look at some of those traditions. In our own congregation, we have done some of these every year and some not at all, but you may find them insightful and meaningful.

Imposition of Ashes-On Ash Wednesday a cross is made on our forehead with ashes. These ashes are traditionally made by burning the palm branches from Palm Sunday the year before. We tried burning our own branches but it created a LOT of smoke and a terrible smell, not to mention little bits of stems and leaves in the mix, so now we order our Ash Wednesday ashes to use. A little oil is added to the ashes to make them less “dusty” and adhere to our skin better. Ash Wednesday is March 2. We will have a service at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary.

Burying the Alleluia-Because Lent is about confession, sacrifice, and reflection, no hymns or responses are used that include the word “Alleluia”. Some churches go as far as to have an open box on the altar, sing a song with “Alleluia” in it and then close the box and remove it from the sanctuary as part of the worship service. In our own worship service, this visual component hasn’t been a part of our tradition. However, there is a change to our usual Doxology which uses the word “Alleluia” to one that does not include the word “Alleluia”. The hymns we sing do not include those with the word “Alleluia”.

Brass altarware is changed to wooden-While this is not changed out ceremoniously, you will notice that the cross and candlesticks on the altar are no longer the brass ones, but wooden ones instead. Traditionally, this is to remind us of Jesus’ sacrifice for us on a tree. And the plainness of the wood helps create an atmosphere of simplicity and focus. Some churches put a purple veil over the cross and then change it to black during Holy Week. Some churches completely remove all items on the altar and also have no altar flowers during the period of Lent.

Paraments are purple-Purple, in the liturgical calendar, represents the Royal Priesthood of Jesus. Advent is also purple, tying the two seasons together, Christ’s birth and his death.

Lack of instruments or singing-Some churches refrain from using the organ, piano, or electronic instruments during Lent. Some just use acoustic guitar. Some sing strictly a Capella. Again, this helps “separate” this season from the others and helps us focus on Christ’s sacrifice for us. Here at FUMC, you will notice that our music may be more somber, reflective, or in a minor key more often.

Stripping the Sanctuary-Typically done during a Maundy Thursday or Good Friday service, all the altar ware is removed from the sanctuary during the service. This symbolizes Christ’s death and his body in the tomb.

Continued on page 4



2022 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

MARCH 4 | Ron Esposito and Friends

Let the soothing sounds of the unique Tibetan Singing Bowls sweep over you as Ron and his friends weave table, saxophone and acoustic bass. You may have heard Ron's music on such programs as NPR's Echoes and television. To hear it in person takes it to another level! A one-of-a-kind concert for 2022.



Flip Flop Into Summer!!



We are showing our love and support to the WOMEN of Hope House by providing them with flip flops for use in the communal showers for hygiene purposes. We are asking for sizes 6-12 for women ONLY at this time! (Most importantly on the larger sizes as we never seem to have enough)! Thank you for helping us show love to the community by donating to the "Flip Flop Into Summer" program!!

Mission Moment

An update from Dr. Les and Debbie Dornon, missionaries to Nepal working in the Tansen Hospital

Recently, we took a short trip to Chitwan National Park to meet up with old friends. Short means length of stay (2 nights), and distance (about 100 miles) – but not time to travel those 100 miles! (That took about 6 ½ hours). We traveled by jeep – and the driver needed to stop along the way to eat his morning meal. So, we all joined him.

We stopped at a roadside restaurant, and ordered “veg khana” which means a vegetarian rice meal. Here is the picture of our plate when it arrived.



Here are some questions for you! See how many you can get right...

- 1 – What is in the bowl?
- 2 – What are the 2 raw veggie sticks above the bowl?
- 3 – In the middle of the plate is?
- 4 – The green food at the bottom is?
- 5 – Can you guess any of the 4 other foods?
- 6 – What utensils are used to eat this meal?
- 7 – Do you get refills?
- 8 – How much do you think this costs?

We did really enjoy our meal – and next month, we will give you the answers to our questions! (Or you can send us an email if you can't wait, and we will send you the answers...) 😊

We enjoyed our stay in Chitwan. We saw many elephants, some rhinos (including one just walking down the main street of the village – nibbling on the flowers in front of the shops), deer, a peacock, alligators, monkeys, and many beautiful birds. It was a short respite away from work – we both actually left our computers behind! It was great.

We are thankful that covid numbers are going back down. We are starting to think about our future plans – we currently are set to leave here in early May and will do some church visiting (as allowed). It will be wonderful to see you all again soon. Thanks for your prayers!

Want more stories and photos? Check out our blog at
dornonnepalmission.wordpress.com.



March 2022

March Birthdays

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 2:00 Pantry	2 ASH WEDNESDAY Service 7:00 pm 10:00 Son Reflections & Women's Bible Study	3 6:00 Sonshine Bible Study	4 12:00 First Friday Concert World Day of Prayer	5 2 Beth Miller Angela Murphy Yvette Rios 3 Scot Wills 4 Barbara Dillon Keeghan Wills 6 Michael Alderton Laura Griffin 8 David McGraw Neal Walke Phil Yaple 9 Brandi Daniels 11 Mark Yeakle 12 Marilyn Housh 13 Linda Heflin Mary Maurer Judy Smith 14 Patty McGraw Rhonda Scholl 16 Scott Tucker Jennie Webb 18 Greg Cooper 19 Alma Taulbee 23 Tom Atkinson 27 Bob Housh Barb Orth 28 Shelley McDaniel 29 Linda Schmitt 31 Lon Fairchild
6 COMMUNION 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Recital 2:30	7 8:30 Breakfast Club	8 11 Memorial s Mtg 1:00 SPRC 2:00 Pantry	9 10:00 Son Reflections & Women's Bible Study 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl	10 6:00 Sonshine Bible Study	11 10:00 UMW Meeting	12
13 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS	14 8:30 Breakfast Club	15 2:00 Pantry 5:30 Finance Mtg 6:00 Council Mtg	16 10:00 Son Reflections & Women's Bible Study 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl	17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY 6:00 Sonshine Bible Study	18 AMBASSADOR ARTICLES DUE	19 9:00 Hope Circle @ Bob Evans 10:00 Elizabeth Circle
20 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	21 8:30 Breakfast Club Community Blood Drive	22 2:00 Pantry 6:30 Trustees Mtg	23 10:00 Son Reflections & Women's Bible Study 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl	24 6:00 Sonshine Bible Study	25	26
27 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship UMCOR Sunday	28 8:30 Breakfast Club				Dates to Remember in April: 14—Maundy Thursday 15—Good Friday 17—Easter Sunday 24—Native American Sunday	

2022 Easter Flower Order Form

Order Deadline: Monday, March 14, 2022

Lilies: \$16 x _____ = _____

Mums: \$16 x _____ = _____

Tulips: \$16 x _____ = _____

Hyacinths: \$16 x _____ = _____

Daffodils: \$16 x _____ = _____

Hydrangeas are larger plants and cost more:

Hydrangeas: \$21 x _____ = _____

TOTAL DUE: \$ _____

All flowers will come in assorted colors, a foil-wrapped pot, and have a bow. **Payment must accompany order.** If you are mailing your order, please make sure it will be received before the deadline above. When picking up flowers please be sure to take the pot with your name tag on it in order to ensure that everyone receives their exact order. **Please pick up your flowers after services on Easter Sunday or by noon on the following Wednesday.** (NOTE: the office is closed on the Monday after Easter). Call the church office with any questions (513-423-4629).

Please print neatly and be sure to complete your name and phone number.

MIDDLETOWN
first church
a united methodist community
120 South Broad Street
Middletown, OH 45044