



The Ambassador

March 2023

Est. 1805 | Published Since
1951

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

I am taking my car into the shop this Friday. I've had to have lots of work done on it recently which is understandable; it is an older car and it does lots of work for our family. Our trip to the mechanic this Friday, however, is routine maintenance work. The tires are being rotated and the alignment needs be fixed. I have joked that our car is participating in Lent this year.

Lent begins with a call to return to God and invitation to grow in our commitment to discipleship. These are things I need to hear again and again. Like my car, I need this routine maintenance work.

We participate in this realignment work by engaging in three spiritual disciplines that we are called to observe during the season of Lent: fasting, almsgiving, and prayer.

Fasting is the discipline with which we are probably most familiar. "What are you giving up for Lent" is a question frequently asked. We are invited to fast not so that we may suffer like Jesus. Who could compare giving up chocolate to dying on a cross? Instead, we fast as a way to experience the grace of knowing God provides for us. We give up a reliance on material things so that God's grace can fill that space.

Almsgiving is the discipline of giving to others out of our abundance. While we give throughout the year, during Lent we are invited to give a little more usually with a specific focus. It is a way of engaging with the needs of others while also actively

Contact Us

120 S. Broad St.
Middletown, OH 45044
513-423-4629
Spanish 513-420-7968
office@myfumc.net
www.myfumc.net

Worship With Us

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

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

Inside

Music & Worship Notes 3
A Note From Pastor Daniel 4
News From the Pews 5
Calendar & Birthdays 11



Continued on page 2

trusting in God's grace to sustain us as our generosity increases.

Prayer, like almsgiving, is a discipline we practice throughout the year but with a special concentration during the days of Lent. Prayer is connection with God and this Lenten time of realignment calls us to be more intentional with making time for our relationship with God.

This Lent, I invite you to participate in these disciplines in this specific way:

Engage in fasting – while no one likes to deny themselves anything, it is way to feast on the goodness of God. You do not have to fast from a food, you could also fast from things (social media, tv, podcasts, etc.) or from practices (eating out, sleeping in, buying anything more than the necessities, etc.). Prayerfully consider what material thing you rely upon that you could replace with God's grace.

Almsgiving is our church's sweet spot. We have a strong commitment to serving our neighbors and during this Lenten season, we are focusing on the ministries that involve feeding our neighbors. We will be lifting up these various ministries and will be taking a special offering to help supplement and sustain them. There is an article about each of the food ministries on page 5 and on page 6 you will find a list of items that are needed for the Food Pantry, Daily Bread, and Emergency Food. Would you prayerfully consider donating some of these items? You can bring your offering on Sunday morning and place them in the front of the sanctuary. In addition to donating food items, we are also collecting a special offering for our Monday morning Breakfast Club which resumed in February. Monetary donations are needed to help provide a weekly hot meal to our neighbors as it costs \$100 each week to provide this meal.

Last but not least is prayer. Our Lenten worship series is entitled *In the Wilderness* and as we journey through the wilderness of Lent, each week you will be given the resources to take a different prayer journey of your own. If you have to miss a Sunday during Lent, you can always get the prayer journey resource in the Weekly Word.

I am looking forward to observing our first Lent together. While Lent is a more somber time in the church year, I do look forward to this season's arrival. The wear and tear of daily life leaves my spirit longing for the realignment work in which Lent calls us to engage. Please know that you are in my prayers throughout this season.

Peace,
Pastor Kim
<><

Music and Worship Notes by Mary Ellen Clinard



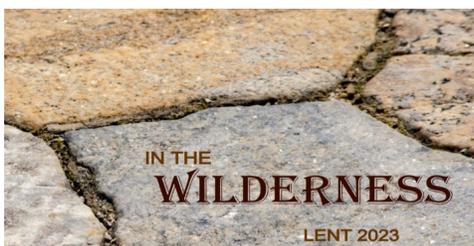
We have just entered into my favorite liturgical season. While the stores are filled with Easter basket choices (right after Christmas and sharing an aisle with the Valentine candy), stuffed bunnies, giant eggs, colorful flowers, and more chocolate; the liturgical church is doing the exact opposite—stripping down the decorations, replacing shiny brass with unvarnished wood, creating a mood of introspection, sacrifice, and simplicity.

I love the process of changing the paraments and the altarware, choosing more solemn and reflective music, and the anticipation of telling the story of the events of Christ's life from his entry to Jerusalem to the Crucifixion.

I also love that the season of Lent is not one that the retailers have figured out how to commercialize (aside from the annoying chocolate crosses that appear on the shelves this time of year...whoever thought THAT was a good idea?) Unlike Christmas, it's the church's own personal season—while the secular world is preparing for Easter after Valentine's Day, the church steps away for a while from the hype. It creates some open space to slow down and regroup from the intensity of the back to back holidays we have just experienced—Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day all in less than 90 days. That can be a lot of stress and chaos.

So for this Lent, take time to create a special time to pray for others, to reflect, to teach your mind and body to be at peace, and to grow closer to God. Take a break from social media, send handwritten letters to friends, notice the lonely and isolated and reach out to them, commit to at least one meal a week where your family sits down together and eats, detox your body, instead of watching another show on television, do a devotional instead. Whatever works for you---it's 40 days to reset and rethink. What a gift in this season of Lent!

Lenten Sermon Series: In the Wilderness



- February 26: In the Wilderness of Confusion
- March 5: In the Wilderness of Longing
- March 12: In the Wilderness of the Unfamiliar
- March 19: In the Wilderness of Pain & Grief
- March 26: In the Wilderness of Despair
- April 2: In the Wilderness of Uncertainty

A Note from Rev. Daniel Cardenas, Associate Pastor

The sun will shine again.



We are so thankful for this past winter season. For me and my wife, the winter season is so special and magical. We come from a part of Mexico where the weather is warm and sunny most of the year, so living here, where the snow falls and where most of the winter is cloudy, it is such a big blessing.

Even when we have heard from Hispanic folks that sometimes the wintertime is boring and depressing, we have enjoyed it like kids; we were so happy to walk on ways covered by snow and we are so glad to experience our first white Christmas.

I can tell you that even when I scraped ice or snow from my car's windshield, it was the most amazing feeling ever. We can tell you this, we enjoy every season, and we have been happy even in the winter season.

Likewise, our Christian path is the same in comparison to our experience of the winter here in Ohio. Sometimes it could be dark, cloudy, and cold, without green trees or fields covered with flowers. Maybe we are facing bad things or some problems that cloud our days and blind our eyes, but everything depends on our point of view. Do not be discouraged, embrace God's promises and repeat them to your mind and heart every day; let the light of the Lord shine upon you and light your path. Try to find unending joy even in the wintertimes of our life.

The winter is passing by and it is almost over now; springtime is coming soon and it will bring its challenges and we will face them later. Spring comes but until then let's enjoy wintertime and let us see how beautiful the winter could be, enjoying all the small things no matter how bad they are. Remember this, once again, the sun will shine radiantly and we will see our path clearly one more time.

Keep going, keep dreaming, and keep walking, *the best of all is that God is with us.*

In Christ.
Daniel Cardenas

*The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn,
which shines ever brighter until the full light of day.
Proverbs 4:18*

Our FUMC Food Ministry

There are 4 food ministries that are funded through our church budget, as well as donations from our church members: The Howard and Pauline Stalker Food Pantry, now in its 52nd year; the Emergency Food ministry, the Daily Bread ministry, and the Breakfast Club ministry.

Food Pantry Ministry

This is a food ministry that caters mostly to the neighborhood residents, which started through the efforts of the Stalkers in 1971. The shoppers pay a small percentage of the value of the food. They are required to register and pay \$3.00 to shop. Some of the shoppers are regulars and have developed a wonderful relationship with our volunteers. The number of shoppers has increased recently, most likely due to the economy and rising grocery prices. Terry Stephens is the director, and there are several dedicated volunteers who help every Tuesday or shop for the pantry items, or do both.

Emergency Food Ministry

This program provides a family with an emergency bag of food meant to last them for 3-4 days, including soup, vegetables, peanut butter, jelly, saltines, tuna spaghetti noodles and sauce, evaporated milk, instant oatmeal, mac and cheese, tuna helper and toilet paper.

Daily Bread Ministry

A few years ago, we realized there was a need for "finger food" as people were approaching our office door and asking for something to eat. We developed the Daily Bread program to meet this need, so we keep protein bars, bottles water, cheese crackers, fruit cups, tuna packs, crackers, spoons and napkins in the office ready to hand out.

Breakfast Club Ministry

Again, a need was recognized for this type of program to minister to our church's neighborhood, so more than 20 years ago, this ministry was started. Even though this program had to be suspended due to the pandemic, we are hoping to get it back up and running next month. This ministry is also maintained by dedicated volunteers who arrive by 7:00 am, cook the breakfast, serve it from 8—9 am, then cleanup, every Monday of the year. They use a rotating menu of 4 different meals. It also includes a time of worship and fellowship.

These are wonderful programs made possible by the generosity and dedication of our church members, and greatly appreciated by the people we serve. Our church is known city wide for providing these services to our community. These ministries are funded in part by an endowment, as well as the monetary and food donations made by you. These ministries are a prime example of our church mission: Christ our Life, Service our Lifestyle. Thank you and bless you for making them possible.

Items Used in Pantry/Emergency Food/Daily Bread

Pantry:

Toilet tissue (4 pack)	Evaporated Milk	Vienna Sausages
Paper Towels (single roll)	Vinegar (Cider & White)	Tuna in water
Kleenex	Ketchup	Luncheon Loaf/Meat
Laundry Detergent	Mustard	Saltines
Bleach	Mayonnaise	Fruit/Fruit Cocktail
Dish Soap	Salad Dressing	Sliced Potatoes (can)
Comet Cleanser	White Rice (bag)	Corn/Gr. Beans (no salt)
Garbage bags (13 ct)	Noodles (bag)	Tomato Paste/Sauce (can)
Shampoo/Conditioner	Pinto Beans (bag)	Ramen Noodles
Body Wash	Black Beans (bag)	Instant Lunch
Bar Soap	Shells & Cheese (box)	Chicken/Beef Broth
Toothpaste	Instant Mashed Pot.	Apple Juice
Toothbrushes (Adult/Kid)	Pancake Mix/Syrup	Brownie Mix (box)
Vegetable/Canola Oil	Toaster Tarts	*Pudding/Jello Snack
Flour	Boxed Cereal	*Tuna box w/crackers
Sugar	Fruit & Grain Bars*	*Chicken in pouch
Salt & Pepper	Bottled Water*	* Plastic spoons/forks

**Items used Pantry and/or Daily Bread*

Emergency Food Bags:

Assorted Oatmeal Packs	Corn/Gr Beans (can)	Saltines
Jelly	Peanut butter	Evaporated Milk
Mac-N-Cheese	Spaghetti/Spag. Sauce	Toilet paper
Tuna/Tuna Helper	Soup (Tomato/Ch. Noodle)	

Our Immigration Legal Clinic is off to a great start!

We launched our Immigration Legal Clinic on Monday, February 13th and we had an excellent first night! We served seven different clients with a variety of immigration needs. Our clients were:

1. A Ghanian family seeking asylum from religious persecution.
2. An Ecuadoran seeking asylum from domestic abuse.
3. A Peruvian whose father is dying of cancer and wants to try to bring her brother to see him.
4. An Afghan family who came in the chaos after the U.S. pulled out and who need Temporary Protected Status, Asylum, and a Special Immigrant Visa.
5. A Guatemalan who has a 20 year old US citizen.
6. A U.S. Citizen couple originally from Congo who are trying to bring their family over.
7. A Guatemalan couple who have been in the US since 2000 and has 3 US citizen children

It is an honor and a joy to be able to host this ministry of the Ohio River Valley District. If you want to know more about the Immigration Legal Clinic or are interested in helping serve, please call the church office or see Pastor Daniel or Pastor Kim.

A Word About Memorials

First Methodist Church is grateful to be the recipient of gifts to the Memorial Fund which is a Designated Fund in the church budget. They are considered a special donation and not used for the ongoing expenses of operating the church.

Memorial funds typically come to us in small donations after a death where families have asked that gifts be given to the church in memory of their loved ones. Gifts may also be given to honor a loved one. (Larger gifts are usually given through donations, wills, or trusts that may be set up through The Legacy Fund.)

The Memorials Committee meets quarterly to review and approve requests for monies from this fund for purchases that fall within the guidelines as approved by the Administrative Council of First United Methodist Church as to how the fund may be used. The guidelines tend to favor artwork, beautification projects, or music ministry, but sometimes we step out of that to do other things. Primarily, it should be for projects that have no funding sources from other budgets. Recent expenditures have funded some of the equipment for live-streaming the services and decorations for the chapel for Coriazones Ardente. The bulk of the donations go into the general Memorials Fund but a donor may also designate the memorial go to a specific purpose as long as it fits the Memorial Fund Policy and Guidelines. They may also be given directly to the Trustees or Music Fund.

If you have any questions may direct them to Pastor Kim or Imogene Orts, Chairperson.



2023 Easter Flower Order Form



Order Deadline: Monday, March 6, 2023

Lilies: \$16 x _____ = _____

Mums: \$16 x _____ = _____

Tulips: \$16 x _____ = _____

Hyacinths: \$16 x _____ = _____

Daffodils: \$16 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.

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

PLACED BY _____ **PHONE (_____)** _____

United Methodist Women / United Women of Faith

Have you ever wondered why the UMW is always selling things? Where does all the money go? Glad you asked! At the end of the year all fundraising profits are donated to FUMC ministries and other programs. Here are the 2022 disbursement amounts:

- \$700 to FUMC Neighborhood (pantry / emergency food)
- \$600 to MANY (Midd Area Neediest Youth)
- \$600 each to Hope House, Shalom, & Dove House (women's shelter)
- \$500 pledge to our district for wider outreach
- \$200 each to the Pregnancy Center and Art Central Foundation

This disbursement would not be possible without your help in purchasing our Bern's gift cards, pies, nuts, porch pots, & cookies.

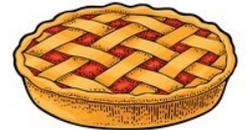
We also made hygiene kits and helped with Smile Closet; a program that provides clothing to school children (in coordination with Christ UMC through a grant from the Middletown Community Foundation).

These efforts surely help others, but we find that the fellowship, friendship, and support we receive from each other make us the biggest beneficiaries of this organization...there's always room for you. If you are interested in becoming involved or simply want more information, please contact Karen Cooper (513-423-4094), Susan Beagle (513-539-8001), or Pam Fugett (513-267-8126)

UMW Pie Peddler Order Form

Order Deadline: *Wed. March 22, 2023*

Pies Available for pick up April 8th and 9th.



Pies are made from scratch, fresh baked, never frozen, and ready to eat!

Pies are 9" in diameter. Pick up will be here at the church.

\$11.00 Fruit /Cream Pies

Apple _____ Dutch Apple # _____ Cherry # _____ Blueberry # _____

Chocolate Cream # _____ Coconut Cream # _____ Lemon Meringue # _____

Total Fruit/Cream Pies _____ x \$11.00 \$ _____

\$12.00 Pecan Pie # _____

Total Pecan Pies _____ x \$12.00 \$ _____

TOTAL DUE: \$ _____

Payment must accompany order. If you are mailing your order, please make sure it will be received before the deadline above. Please make checks payable to **United Methodist Women—FUMC**

Name _____

Phone# _____

THANK YOU!

Help Wanted

Linda Schmitt, who is our Financial Secretary has elected to step down. Linda has served admirably and faithfully for several years, and we are very grateful for all her work. She is indeed a blessing to First Church.

We are realigning the position, to more closely follow the Book of Discipline guidelines. There will be a division of the current job into to components. The current title of Financial Secretary will be the person responsible for the income aspect of FUMC finances, and the Treasurer will be the person responsible for fund disbursements and reporting. Also included in the Treasurer's responsibilities will be attending Finance Committee meetings and other related events. It is the new Treasurer's position that is to be filled.

The Treasurer's position is a paid position, and average working hours are 8-12 per week. We will accept applications and resumes from through March 31, 2023. Application forms are available in the church office.

If you or someone you know has accounting or bookkeeping experience (desirable but not mandatory), enjoy working in a small group environment, and are looking to serve the church in a very meaningful way, please consider applying. For more information see Linda, Pastor Kim, or John Hoffman,

Update for our English as a Second Language program

Our church has been known for being a light in our town. First UMC has ran many wonderful ministries to provide hope, love and care in our society. One of these ministries is the ESL program for people who want to learn or improve English language.

Few months ago, we planned to start an ESL program in our church to help our community to learn English as a second language. Many volunteers rose their hands to say, "here I am."

Now, like one body, we are offering an ESL program here at First UMC. During the first week we had a great team of volunteers helping in many different areas (teaching, serving meals, A/V team), and we had a total attendance of 10 students from different Spanish speaker countries (Mexico, Honduras, Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic).

It was such a blessing! We know that God is doing a great thing in our community and we believe that God's blessings flow throughout this amazing program.

We want to thank our ministry partner, First Baptist Church, and our congregation. You help in many ways, and we are thankful because these two churches are doing a wonderful job. Thanks be to God who provides grace, strength and love to share his word over this ESL program.

Read the entire Bible in 2023!

March schedule

This is hard work but take comfort in the fact that you are not doing it alone! While we won't get to the New Testament until August 31, we get some more familiar passages in March like Ruth, the call of Samuel, stories of King David, and stories of Elijah and Elisha. Keep up the good work – you are doing great!

March 1	Judges 13:1-16:31	March 17	II Samuel 11:1-14:39
March 2	Judges 17:1-21:25	March 18	II Samuel 15:1-19:43
March 3	Ruth 1:1-2:23	March 19	II Samuel 20:1-24:25
March 4	Ruth 3:1-4:22	March 20	I Kings 1:1-4:34
March 5	I Samuel 1:1-3:21	March 21	I Kings 5:1-8:66
March 6	I Samuel 4:1-7:17	March 22	I Kings 9:1-11:43
March 7	I Samuel 8:1-12:25	March 23	I Kings 12:1-16:34
March 8	I Samuel 13:1-15:35	March 24	I Kings 17:1-19:21
March 9	I Samuel 16:1-17:58	March 25	I Kings 20:1-22:53
March 10	I Samuel 18:1-20:42	March 26	II Kings 1:1-8:15
March 11	I Samuel 21:1-24:22	March 27	II Kings 8:16-10:36
March 12	I Samuel 25:1-28:25	March 28	II Kings 11:1-13:25
March 13	I Samuel 29:1-31:13	March 29	II Kings 14:1-17:42
March 14	II Samuel 1:1-4:12	March 30	II Kings 18:1-21:26
March 15	II Samuel 5:1-7:29	March 31	II Kings 22:1-25:30
March 16	II Samuel 8:1-10:19		



Wednesdays during Lent:

At noon, beginning March 1st, a few of the churches in our community will be offering a weekly luncheon with prayers and reflection. Hosting churches are:

March 1st – First Baptist Church, with Rev. Scotty Robertson

Focus: Marks of the Cross

March 8th – First Christian Church, with Rev. Jeff Wilder

Focus: Gifts of the Cross

March 15th – First United Methodist Church, with Pastor Kim

Focus: Blessings of the Cross

March 22nd – St. Paul's United Church of Christ, with Rev. Rich Luh

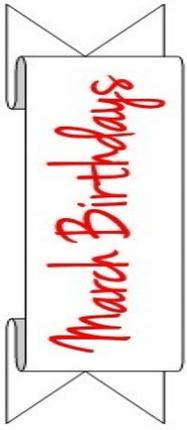
Focus: Lessons of the Cross

March 29th – First Baptist Church, with Rev. Scotty Robertson

Focus: Glory of the Cross

Simply come to the hosting church at noon for a simple meal of soup and sandwiches, and a time of reflection and prayer based on the focus of the week. Please call the church office or see Pastor Kim if you have any questions.

March 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 5 COMMUNION 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	April 2: Palm Sunday 10:30 a.m. Worship Service April 6: Maundy Thursday Service 7 pm April 7 Good Friday Noon Service April 9: Easter 10:30 a.m. Worship Service April 30: \$5 on the 5th	6 8:00 Breakfast Club Easter Flower Order Due 7 2:00 Pantry	1 10:00 Bible Study Noon Lent Lunch @ First Baptist 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Spanish Bible Study	2 2:00 Congregational Care 6:00 Bible Study	3 12:00 First Friday Concert	4
12 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	13 8:00 Breakfast Club 6:00 Immigration Clinic	14 1:00 SPRC 2:00 Pantry	15 10:00 Bible Study Noon Lent Lunch @ First Methodist 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Spanish Bible Study	16 6:00 Bible Study	17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY/ AMBASSADOR ARTICLE DEADLINE	18 9:00 Hope Circle @ Bob Evans 10:00 Elizabeth Circle
19 UMCOR Sunday 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	20 8:00 Breakfast Club	21 2:00 Pantry 5:30 Finance Mtg 6:00 Council Mtg	22 10:00 Bible Study Noon Lent Lunch @ St. Paul's UCC 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Spanish Bible Study Pie Peddler Orders due	23 5:30 ESL 6:00 Bible Study	24	25
26 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	27 8:00 Breakfast Club	28 2:00 Pantry 6:30 Trustees Mtg	29 10:00 Bible Study Noon Lent Lunch @First Baptist 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Spanish Bible Study	30 6:00 Bible Study	31	

- 2 Beth Miller , Angela Murphy,
- Yvette Rios
- 3 Scott Wills
- 4 Barbara Dillon, Keeghan Wills
- 6 Michael Alderton
- Laura Griffin
- 8 David McGraw, Neal Walke,
- Phil Yaple
- 9 Brandi Daniels
- Meredith Mae Irwin
- 11 Mark Yeakle
- 12 Marilyn Housh
- 13 Linda Heflin, Mary Maurer
- Judy Smith
- 14 Patty McGraw, Rhonda Taylor
- 16 Scott Tucker , Jennie Web
- 18 Greg Cooper
- 19 Alma Tailbee
- 23 Tom Atkinson, Misty Clark
- 27 Barb Orth
- 28 Shelley McDaniel
- 29 Linda Schmitt
- 31 Lon Fairchild



2023 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

March 3, 2023

Kraineva & Krasnow

This unique musical duo of violin and reed organ bring the wonderful music

First UMC - Middletown

@ noon

Free Admission

masks encouraged, not required