



# The Ambassador

May 2023

Est. 1805 | Published Since  
1951

## From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

*"Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, Rejoice."*

*Philippians 4:4*

I have loved reading the joy that folks have been sharing each Sunday on the butcher paper by the butterfly door. People have been experiencing joy by:

listening to a new piece of music, having lunch with high school friends, listening to my teacher more, seeing old friends who needed cheering up, looking for squirrels and birds with a grandson, listening to my grandchild say, "You're the best Nana ever!" (after cleaning her room for her), playing UNO with granddaughter and great grandkids, talking with a childhood friend, and so many more!

Joy is everywhere! It is above us in the beauty of birds and trees and skies, it is around us in friends and family, and it is below us, too! Mary Ellen Clinard and I went out collecting rocks for a project and I kept noticing how beautiful the rocks were – earthy colors, intriguing shapes, and rich textures. Delightful joy lying at my feet!

These words I shared at the beginning of this letter are from the Apostle Paul to the church in Philippi. The verse may be familiar to you but did you know that together, the words joy and rejoice appear over 15 times in this short four-chapter book. Joy not only permeates the book of Philippians but the whole of scripture:

Leviticus says "You shall rejoice before the Lord your God." (23:40)

*Continued on page 2*

## 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 7



"Rejoice with joy and singing" Isaiah proclaims. (35:2)

The prophet Joel prompts God's people with these words: Be glad and rejoice in the Lord. (2:23)

And one of the shortest verses in the Bible is about rejoicing. "Rejoice always" (I Thessalonians 5:16)

From Genesis to Revelation, joy is everywhere and sometimes the concentration of joy is so abundant that you cannot miss it. In Luke 15, every time something lost gets found, there is a celebration. It matters not if it is a sheep, a coin, or a son, each parable ends with a party— people rejoicing over what was found. These words from Jesus accompany the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin, "Just so, I tell you, there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents." We are invited to be people of joy!

The joy that the Bible speaks of may be different than how we usually think of it. We tend to categorize joy as an emotion that we are either feeling or not feeling and there are certainly passages of the Bible that record this expression of joy. But more times than not, joy is a response to not only God's work in the world and God's work in us but our response to who God is. Living lives of joy is how we respond to God's mercy, grace, love and care.

I encourage you to continue to observe the great fifty days of Easter by embracing joy as you notice and respond to God's presence in the world. To help you along, I invite you to join the following:

1. We have been sharing joy bookmarks each Sunday of the Easter season. Follow the prompts for ways to experience joy through listening, connecting, noticing, encouraging, blessing, and sharing. If you are not able to be in worship, call the church office and we will get you your joy bookmarks!
2. Read the Psalms. They are full of joy! It just so happens that the Reading-of-the-Bible-in-a-year readings have us beginning the Psalms in the month of May. If you want to following along with the Psalms, the schedule I on page 6 of the newsletter.

As I opened in scripture, so I close, with words from Psalm 16:11, "In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore." I pray that you experience this truth.

Peace,  
Pastor Kim  
<><

### **Staff Appreciation Month**

Please join us in celebrating our amazing staff during the month of May! We are blessed to serve with Mary Ellen Clinard, Greg Cooper, Pam Fugett, Linda Schmitt, and our newest staff members: Betsy Koval and Susan Beagle. We encourage you to write a note of thanks and share your appreciation to these amazing people that serve our church so faithfully.

Pastor Kim & Pastor Daniel

# Music and Worship Notes *by Mary Ellen Clinard*



## Easter Isn't Over!

I am sure that many of us have experienced times when we thought “I don't want this moment to end!” Easter Worship was one of those times with the vibrant flowers, the glorious telling of the Easter story and the pronouncement of HE IS RISEN! And let's not forget the enthusiastic singing (some with choreography!), and the excitement of the Easter Egg Hunt.

Fortunately, that Easter moment doesn't need to end. Easter is not just a Sunday, but a SEASON in the liturgical year. Easter Sunday isn't just a once a year experience, but marks the beginning of 50 days of Easter joy!

Each Sunday throughout the season, until Pentecost on May 28<sup>th</sup>, we will be taking time to think about ways to continue to keep that “Easter feeling” in our hearts and our lives. Each Sunday you will find a little something added to the sanctuary that reflects Easter joy. Did you notice the banners with the words “Christ is Risen” or “Alleluia”? Did seeing the sanctuary filled with colorful butterflies lift your spirit? Did writing on the paper in the north foyer about the ways you experienced joy that week help you keep the feeling alive?

About 1979, a term was created in the entertainment industry to describe little surprises, hidden details, or related references that game players or audience members might discover while watching or playing games. They are called “easter eggs”.

While the surprises you might experience during the 50 Days of Joy aren't hidden, we hope that you enjoy finding them as you enter the sanctuary, and keep the joy of Easter in the forefront of your heart throughout the weeks to come.



## **Guest Preacher, Rev. Darryl Fairchild on Pentecost Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>**



Several of you have been asking if and when we would be able to hear Pastor Kim's husband preach. We are excited to announce that he will bring the message on Pentecost, the last Sunday in May. Darryl is a thoughtful and provoking preacher who, led by the Spirit, always has a fresh perspective on the Bible. We are looking forward to hearing his message about the beloved Pentecost passages.

“Shining brightly for Christ” Philippians 2: 12-14



This year we decided as a church to join First Baptist Church into a great adventure. Together we planned to start an English as a Second Language (ESL) program and host it here at First United Methodist Church in Middletown.

We are very joyful because together we are working as a team, every member of these two churches has given all that they have for this program.

Every two weeks we offer these classes with an average number of ten students per lesson. At the same time, we have an awesome team of teachers that give the best in each class. They are very patient and kind with the students, and they teach in many different ways, trying to make a wonderful experience for the students. We also have a wonderful crew who volunteer with love and care; every time when we offer these classes, they show their passion in every meal and drink that they fix, giving in every bite a piece of their servant's heart.

We also celebrate the joy of sharing a little bit of hope with our neighbors by giving legal assistance in immigration issues through our district's Legal Clinic located at First UMC. During these last months we have given legal help to many families from different nations. We offered services to Hispanics, Africans, and Middle East families looking for a better life and future. The Legal Clinic relies on all of these excellent and great volunteers and attorneys, they open their hearts in love to cover all these families and welcome every person that asks for legal assistance and guidance.

All of these efforts and ministries make me think just one thing: the church of Christ is being a light in the middle of the darkness of despair, confusion, and, hopelessness. Thank you for all the hard work that every one of you have done for these ministries, thank you for obeying God's word of loving your neighbor as your own, thank you for working with a humble heart full of reverence to God and passion for your brothers and sisters, and thank you for shining brightly in the world.

Keep running this race because your work is not useless, keep loving each other and serving with all your soul to our community, and also keep shining like bright lights.

*“But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy.” Philippians 2:17*

With a joyful and thankful heart  
Pastor Daniel Cardenas



I am overwhelmed by the outpouring of thanks, love and gifts I have received for my impending retirement as your Financial Secretary. I truly appreciated the reception and enjoyed seeing all of you who attended. It has been a pleasure to serve you all these many years. I look forward to continuing to serve First Church in many other ways and am grateful for the opportunity to serve as part of your FUMC staff. Thank you and I'll be seeing you.

Love to All,  
Linda

## **Celebration of Easter and Lenten offering**

Let's take a moment to celebrate our Lenten and Easter offering. You generously brought in over 100 bags of groceries and gave over \$2400 to the food ministries of our church! Well done, First United Methodist Church! Keep loving God and loving neighbor!

## **Welcome to Our New Staff Members**

We have two new staff members. They are Susan Beagle and Betsy Koval. Susan is our new Financial Secretary. She is a longtime church member, actively involved with United Women in Faith, and her musical talent continues to be a great gift to the church. She and her husband John have two children and a grandchild, Ellie. Betsy is our new Treasurer. She recently resigned from her current employment at Access Counseling Services in Middletown to accept our offer. Betsy is a choir member (alto) and is married to Marty.

Susan and Betsy replace Linda Schmitt who is stepping down as Financial Secretary. The duties she carried out are being separated into the new positions listed above. This is to align the financial functions of the church per The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. Susan, as Financial Secretary, will be responsible for our income, and Betsy, as Treasurer, will be responsible for disbursements and reports, as well as being a member of the Finance Committee.

We welcome both Susan and Betsy to their new positions and wish them success and great joy as they serve FUMC. They would appreciate well-wishes from all of you.

## **From The Dornons**

Dear Church family,

Some of you have probably heard, but we wanted to share that we are in the process of getting ready to return to Nepal. This has been a hard decision, and especially because we have loved being a part of the Middletown church again for these past months. We will still be around through the summer - Les works until the end of August. We plan to travel probably at the end of September.

Thank you SO much for the way you have always taken care of us and made us feel so welcomed and loved. We are excited that you have renewed your covenant relationship with us as we couldn't do this without your prayers and support.

Thank you for continued prayers for Tansen hospital! God Bless you all.  
In Him, Les & Debbie Dornon

## Read the Bible in a Year - Reading Schedule for May

Let's take a moment to celebrate: If you have been following our schedule, you have read one third of the Bible! Congratulations! There have been long passages that can often become tedious but you have persevered! Great job!

It feels as though encountering the Book of Psalms is a little reward for us; not only are the chapters shorter but many of the words and phrases may be familiar. It will probably be easier reading but I encourage you to slow down your pace and savor the words of this book. So many have found strength and solace in the Psalms, I pray that you do as well.

If you happen to be a Bible nerd like me, you may enjoy these facts: the Book of Psalms is the only book of the Bible that will take us more than one month to read and Psalm 119 is the only chapter in the Bible that will take us more than one day to read!

Remember that, as always, I am available if you have any questions or want additional resources or need encouragement. You are in my prayers and I am grateful that I am not carrying out this endeavor on my own!

Peace,  
Pastor Kim  
<><

May 1	Psalm 1-4	May 17	Psalm 64-68
May 2	Psalm 5-8	May 18	Psalm 69-72
May 3	Psalm 9-12	May 19	Psalm 73-75
May 4	Psalm 13-16	May 20	Psalm 76-78
May 5	Psalm 17-20	May 21	Psalm 79-84
May 6	Psalm 21-24	May 22	Psalm 85-89
May 7	Psalm 25-28	May 23	Psalm 90-95
May 8	Psalm 29-32	May 24	Psalm 96-101
May 9	Psalm 33-36	May 25	Psalm 102-104
May 10	Psalm 37-41	May 26	Psalm 105-107
May 11	Psalm 42-45	May 27	Psalm 108-112
May 12	Psalm 46-49	May 28	Psalm 113-118
May 13	Psalm 50-53	May 29	Psalm 119:1-88
May 14	Psalm 54-56	May 30	Psalm 119:89-176
May 15	Psalm 57-59	May 31	Psalm 120-126
May 16	Psalm 60-63		

### Do you have a good road trip story?

The worship planning team is so excited about our summer worship series: Summer Road Trip – A Journey Thru Genesis and we would love to hear your stories! We want to hear your stories of making plans, plans getting derailed, unexpected finds, getting lost, people who you meet along the way, the kindness of strangers, cars breaking down, fights in the backseat, and how relationships are changed and strengthened by the journey. If you have a story you are willing to share, please call the church office and let us know! Thank you!

### Adopt-A-Spot Service Project

We have been blessed for many years by the volunteer efforts of several of our church members that have kept our landscaped areas weed free. While some still keep our planters beautiful with flowers, there are areas where weeding is needed. Our idea of "Adopt-A-Spot" is to establish small areas that one person or a group can adopt and maintain. This doesn't involve planting flowers or landscaping, just good old fashioned clean-up gardening! Keep an eye out for a poster showing the areas you can adopt and sign up to help!

# May 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 7 9:00 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Worship	1 8:00 Breakfast Club  8 8:00 Breakfast Club 6:00 Immigration Clinic	2 2:00 Pantry  9 1:00 SPRC Mtg 2:00 Pantry	3 10:00 Son Reflections Bible Study 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir  10 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir	4 <b>NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER</b>  6:00 Sonshine Bible Study  11 5:30 ESL Classes 6:00 Sonshine Bible Study	5 12:00 First Friday Concert  12 10:00 UMW Mtg  19 <b>AMBASSADOR ARTICLE DEAD-LINE</b>	6  13  20 9:00 Hope Circle @ Bob Evans
14 <b>MOTHER'S DAY</b> 9:00 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Worship	15 8:00 Breakfast Club 5:30 UWIF Carry-in	16 2:00 Pantry 5:30 Finance Mtg 6:00 Council Mtg	17 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir	18 6:00 Sonshine Bible Study	23 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir	26 6:00 Sonshine Bible Study
21 <b>7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER</b> 9:00 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Worship	22 8:00 Breakfast Club	23 2:00 Pantry 6:30 Trustees Mtg	24 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir Rhrl	25 5:30 ESL Classes 6:00 Sonshine Bible Study	27	29 Marian McGuire 30 Tucker Smarzinski
28 <b>PENTECOST SUNDAY</b> 9:00 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Worship <b>WEAR RED TO WORSHIP</b>	29 <b>MEMORIAL DAY/CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b> 8:00 Breakfast Club	30 2:00 Pantry	31 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir Rhrl	<b>Dates to Remember in June:</b> June 1-3: WOC Annual Conference @ Dayton Convention Center June 2: First Friday Concert @ Noon June 4: Trinity Sunday/Peace with Justice offering June 18: Father's Day		

*Happy Birthdays!*



# 2023 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

**May 5, 2023**

**Appalachian Grass**

**"bluegrass - it's what we know, it's what we like, it's what we do"**

**First UMC - Middletown**

**@noon**

**Free Admission**