



The Ambassador

August 2023

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From the Pastor

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” - Jeremiah 29:11

Dear Friends,

I like to plan. Do you? I like to plan my months, weeks, and days. I like to plan my reading life. I like to plan worship. Usually for family trips, Darryl takes the planning lead, but for everyday living, I am the planner in the family. For me, planning does not eliminate spontaneity from life as I enjoy surprises and taking advantage of unexpected offers to connect with friends. Instead, planning allows me to look at the big picture, make sure priorities are being tended, and not worry as much about the future.

I think God is a planner, too. Yes, God responds to us and whatever spontaneous decisions we make. But the passage that is quoted above from Jeremiah leads me to believe that God has an ultimate plan for us – that we may have an abundant, grace filled life, growing in love and grace, as we follow our Lord Jesus Christ. We all take different paths but God desires good things for each of us. Thanks be to God!

Right now, planning is on my mind because each August I set aside two weeks to plan worship for the upcoming year. To do this, I do not isolate myself – no retreating to an upper room for me. Instead, I use a variety of resources to guide this prayer-

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Worship With Us

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

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filled two weeks. I examine where we have been in our worship series for the last twelve months. Pastor Daniel, Mary Ellen, and I meet to share creative ideas. I reflect on my prayer journal which contains our prayer lists for the past year. I invite a handful of folks to fill out a worship planning survey that asks them to prayerfully answer some worship related questions. I also prayerfully examine the lectionary (a three year cycle list of Bible passages), looking for themes for possible worship series.

There is one more resource that I would love to have – your prayers! Would you please pray for First UMC and me during this time? My worship planning time officially begins on August 21st and will conclude on September 4th. Here are some things that you could pray for me specifically: to be open to God's leading, for the Holy Spirit to give me wisdom and creativity, for fruitful meetings of the worship planning team (Mary Ellen, Pastor Daniel, and myself), for inspiration to flow, and for God to use this planning time and our worship time to strengthen First UMC and its ministries.

During these two weeks, I will still be available. I will continue to meet with the staff and be connected to what is happening in our church. I will be with you in worship, leading but not preaching. And although Pastor Daniel will be providing pastoral care, I will respond to pastoral emergencies. If you have any questions about this time or about worship planning in general, please do not hesitate to ask me – I welcome all questions.

Thank you in advance for your prayers and for your support. It is a blessing to serve God with you!

Peace,

Pastor Kim <><



Blessing of the Backpacks – August 13th

Believe it or not, school is starting soon! First UMC is honoring this occasion with a Blessing of the Backpacks. Students are invited to bring their backpacks to worship on Sunday, August 13th for a special blessing. Backpack tags will be given to each student and some back-to-school prayer resources for families. If students forget their backpack or do not use one – no need to worry as blessings, tags, and resources still abound! Let's send our students and their families back to school knowing that we are praying for them and our schools.



Music and Worship Notes *by Mary Ellen Clinard*



Be sure to take note of our newest art acquisitions that reflect stories from Genesis!

The first is “Perfictor” by Joel Schoon-Tanis. Once you read the texts within the art, the title will make sense to you. Joel Schoon-Tanis is a Michigan painter and illustrator that has shown his paintings all over the world. They are located in galleries, homes, schools, churches, hospitals, and more. He creates a contrasted blending of kid-like drawings with realistic images while adding in a few written lines of “kid-thought”. In the artwork, we both read the story of God’s creation and see the images. Look closely and you can see everything from the rushing waters to ladybugs, fish, birds, lions, tigers, and bears—Oh My!

Take some time to discover the myriad of surprises in this work of art.

The second of our new additions is “Jacob’s Ladder” by Edie Harper. The late Edie Harper was the widow of well-known artist Charley Harper and an artist in her own right. The two young artists met their freshman year at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and married shortly after they both graduated in 1947.

As they both evolved their respective styles, Edie branched into photography, pottery, textiles and more. Both enjoyed depicting wildlife with stylized simplicity.

In the late 1960’s, Edie began to experiment using stories from the Bible as her subject.

In contrast to Schoon-Tanis’ detailed “Perfictor”, Harper’s print uses only three elements—Jacob sleeping, a ladder, and stars. It reflects a sense of peace and calmness as we recall a portion of the scripture in Genesis of Jacob’s ladder and the promise God makes to be with us and keep us safe until God’s promises are fulfilled.

Thank you to the Memorials Committee of First United Methodist Church for investing in these prints for our congregation to enjoy.

Summer Road Trip Road Rally—August 13 @ 2 pm

Clear off all your Sunday afternoon commitments on August 13 and plan to join us in our first ever **Road Rally!** This fun “scavenger hunt in your car” will take you to several locations within Middletown. You will answer the question on your Road Rally Map and move on to the next clue. Your last stop will be ice cream at The Jug! The entire experience should only take about 30-45 minutes and it will be lots of fun sharing experiences and ice cream at the end! This event will be the last for our Summer Road Trip Series. It’s been great! Come to the church parking lot at 2 pm for your instructions and a treat!

A Note from Rev. Daniel Cardenas, Associate Pastor

Words of encouragement.

We are so thankful to God because of the amazing things that are happening around our church this month. We are so blessed to host two community ministries here at First UMC and also we had the chance to meet Jorge Martínez, a pastor from Mexico that came to do ministry among us the last week of July. Thanks be to God and all of you, we really appreciate all the effort and the support given to us.

This month we had the opportunity to host the legal clinic. It was a great time helping others. There was a guy from Nicaragua asking for asylum. He came in June to start his process, so this past clinic, the lawyer team helped him put all his case together and encouraged him to continue going for asylum. I have to say that we have a great team working in this legal clinic, they are doing such a great job.

Secondly, we started the English as a Second Language (ESL) summer program. This program aims to keep in touch with the students and improve their English language skills during the summer. In May, we had our last ESL class before the summer began, so we decide to keep doing this over the summer to continue making a stronger relationship with the ESL students. In July we had our first ESL summer program class and it was so exciting to see friends there in the classroom having a good time learning English as a second language.

Last but not least, in July we had the blessing to host Jorge Martinez, a pastor from Mexico that came to the US to know how the ministry goes here. He was among us the last week of July helping at the Latino Ministry here at First UMC, playing some music in the Sunday worship service, and knowing the different community ministries that we run here in the church. It was a great time sharing and getting along with him.

I just want to say thank you for your wonderful and supportive attitude toward all these ministries, we are blessed to belong to a heart servant community of faith. Thanks be to God.

Training for Scripture Readers

On Sundays August 20th and August 27th, following worship, Pastor Kim is offering a training for all who are interested in being a scripture reader during worship. New voices are encouraged! All ages, all levels of physical ability, and all levels of reading abilities are welcome! The training will be the same on both Sundays so you only need to attend one. The training will be offered in the sanctuary and include how to prepare for worship, what to do during the worship service when you are serving, and how to tackle those hard words (you are not alone if you find them intimidating!). If you want to be involved but cannot attend the training, or if you have any questions, please see Pastor Kim or Mary Ellen, or call the church office.

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

Bishop Palmer is going to the Holy Land and you can join him

On February 12, 2024, Bishop Gregory and Cynthia Palmer are leading a trip to the Holy Land. Pastor Kim, who has never been to the Holy Land, is planning to join them. The trip extends from February 12th- 21st and includes visits to Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, Jericho, the Dead Sea, Bethlehem, Jerusalem and more! The cost for the trip which includes airfare, overnight accommodations, breakfasts and dinners, and all tour guide fees and entrance fees is \$3,898 flying from Dayton or Columbus, \$3,998 flying from Cincinnati. If you would like to attend or have any questions about attending, please see Pastor Kim or call the church office.



FUMC Adopt-A-Spot still needs Volunteers!

We only have ONE spot left that needs an individual or group to "sponsor" it. The location is the green area along the ramp leading to the back parking lot. It's a small but very visible space and all that is needed is to pick up any trash that collects there and do some weeding. At our big "Fall Clean-Up" we will do the trimming and such. If you (or several of you) would like to take care of this spot, call the church office and our list will be complete!



Bible Reading Schedule for August

For those who are wanting a sense of accomplishment the August reading schedule is for you! We will read thirteen books in their entirety! On six different days we will read a whole book! And this is the month where we complete our reading of the Old Testament - August 31st has us beginning the Gospel of Matthew! You have done a great job so take some time to celebrate.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out and ask. I love talking about the Bible!

Peace,
Pastor Kim <><

August 1	Ezekiel 12-16	August 17	Obadiah
August 2	Ezekiel 17-21	August 18	Jonah 1-2
August 3	Ezekiel 22-26	August 19	Jonah 3-4
August 4	Ezekiel 27-32	August 20	Micah 1-4
August 5	Ezekiel 33-37	August 21	Micah 5-7
August 6	Ezekiel 38-42	August 22	Nahum
August 7	Ezekiel 43-48	August 23	Habakkuk
August 8	Daniel 1-3	August 24	Zephaniah
August 9	Daniel 4-6	August 25	Haggai
August 10	Daniel 7-12	August 26	Zechariah 1-4
August 11	Hosea 1-5	August 27	Zechariah 5-9
August 12	Hosea 6-10	August 28	Zechariah 10-14
August 13	Hosea 11-14	August 29	Malachi 1-2
August 14	Joel	August 30	Malachi 3-4
August 15	Amos 1-4	August 31	Matthew 1-2
August 16	Amos 5-9		

National Night Out - Tuesday, Aug. 1 5-9 pm

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to be a First UMC ambassador! We will be at Smith Park handing out Frisbees, plastic cups, and information on our various community ministries. If it is rainy, the event will be held on Tues. Aug 8. Come out and meet others in our community!

August 2013



- 1 John Tack
- 2 Stuart Wilson
- 4 Imogene Orts
- 5 Debbie Hazelbaker
- 9 Karen Cooper
- 12 Steve Urso
- 13 Linda Snyder
- 14 Bev Urso
- 15 Edna Palmer
- 19 Ted Wilson
- 20 Charles Orth
- 21 Karol King
- 23 Ben David Morgan
- 25 Robert Mucha
- 26 Joyce Parrrella
- 28 Nick Murphy
- 29 Rachel Hurley
- 30 Kathleen Darling
- 31 Cheryl Irwin
- 32 Bill Schaefer
- 33 Susan Wittman
- 34 Linda Fillnow

Happy Birthdays!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Dates to Remember in September: September 1: First Friday Concert @ Noon September 4: Labor Day/Church Office Closed</p>						
<p>6 COMMUNION 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship</p>	<p>7 8:00 Breakfast Club</p>	<p>8 1:00 SPRC 2:00 Pantry 4:00 CMC</p>	<p>9 6 pm Hispanic Bible Study NO Choir Rhrls</p>	<p>10 NO UMW Meeting</p>	<p>11 NO UMW Meeting</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>13 BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Baptisms 2:00 pm Road Rally</p>	<p>14 8:00 Breakfast Club 6:00 Immigration Clinic</p>	<p>15 2:00 Pantry 5:30 Finance Mtg 6:00 Council Mtg</p>	<p>16 3 & 7:00 Choir Rhrls 6 pm Hispanic Bible Study</p>	<p>17 ESL Classes 6:00</p>	<p>18 AMBASSADOR ARTICLE DEADLINE</p>	<p>19 9:00 Hope Circle @ Bob Evans</p>
<p>20 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship</p>	<p>21 8:00 Breakfast Club</p>	<p>22 2:00 Pantry</p>	<p>23 6 pm Hispanic Bible Study NO Choir Rhrls</p>	<p>24 ESL Classes 6:00</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship</p>	<p>28 8:00 Breakfast Club</p>	<p>29 2:00 Pantry</p>	<p>30 6 pm Hispanic Bible Study NO Choir Rhrls</p>	<p>31 ESL Classes 6:00</p>		

2023 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

August 7, 2023

Chad "The Crooner" Brown

If you love Sinatra and the "Rat Pack",
you are going to love "The Crooner"!

First UMC - Middletown

@noon

Free Admission

