



The Ambassador

March 2024

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From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

This time of year I am always excited to see the changing of seasons. I've noticed birds are singing in the morning when I finish my devotional time. On Saturday mornings when I get to sleep in, I wake up to sky that is lighter. The weather is warmer although I am not changing out wardrobes yet!

March is full of changes. We begin the month roughly one third of the way into Lent and by the end of March we will be celebrating Easter. It will be here before we know it, but let us not rush it. No matter how great our excitement about the coming of spring may be, let it not hurry us to start celebrating Easter too soon. There is still important work for us to do in Lent.

The season of Lent was set aside by the church to last forty days – forty days of spiritual preparation with disciplines such as reading and studying God's Word, self-examination, repentance, prayer, fasting, and giving to those who are in need. Christians were invited to spend not just a day or two trying these disciplines, but forty days committed to these disciplines.

We get the number forty from the number of years that the Hebrew people spent in the wilderness after their exodus from slavery in Egypt. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy recall their journey. Geographically, it is only around 250 miles and one could get there in far less time than what it took them. It took forty years because it was a journey not only of geography but of spirituality. It would not have taken them forty years to get there, but it did take them forty years to arrive.

Staff

Senior Pastor Kim Armentrout
Assoc. Pastor Daniel Cardenas
Worship Mary Ellen Clinard
Building Supt. Greg Cooper
Office Mgr. Pam Fugett
Treasurer Betsy Koval
Financial Secy. Susan Beagle

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

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We are called to the wilderness of Lent not for forty years but forty days. Discipleship takes time – while our hearts may want to get to Easter sooner rather than later, our spirit needs the time to form. I encourage you to continue to practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, study, fasting, and giving to those in need – information about our Lenten/Easter offering is on page 6. Each week the bulletin contains prayers for the week and scripture for each day and if those resources are not enough, see Pastor Daniel or myself for devotional material.

Let us continue in our observance of Lent!

Peace,

Pastor Kim

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Forgiveness on the Screen

On Sunday, March 17th at 3:00 p.m. we will be showing the 1995 film *Dead Man Walking*. It tells the true story of a death row inmate convicted of murder and the nun who walks with him during the last stages of his appeal process. We've been exploring forgiveness in worship and this movie will provide us the opportunity for reflection and discussion about forgiveness in real life. This is not recommended for families with children. This film is rated R for racist language, profane language, and violence including depictions of rape and murder.

Holy Week Worship Services

Holy Week is the week before Easter, beginning on Palm Sunday. There are sharp contrasts in our worship life as we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, gather around the table to remember the Last Supper, and then come to the cross of our Lord. It is an emotionally challenging week but a week that we are called to observe with devotion and it is a week that we will observe together. Here is our Holy Week worship schedule:

Palm Sunday, March 24th at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday morning worship with palms and special music from our choir.

Maundy Thursday, March 28th at 7:00 p.m.

Worship with Holy Communion, special music from our choir

Good Friday, March 29th at noon

A quiet and reflective service with prayer, scripture, and singing.

Good Friday Community Worship –

More details to come.

Spiritual Formation Retreat

Saturday March 2nd 9:30 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The Spiritual Formation Retreat, led by Pastor Kim, will be happening on Sat. March 3, at the church. The deadline to sign up for this retreat has passed but Pastor Kim will offer the retreat again in another year or so.



Music and Worship Notes *by Mary Ellen Clinard*

Most organists and musicians who serve churches love the Lenten Season. It's a time where we can pull out our music in a minor key, those slow, beautiful pieces that we often hear or play only once a year. One organist friend isn't playing a Prelude or Postlude during the service to help lend a somber and simpler mood to worship. Some churches prefer just the piano or another solo instrument during this Season. Some churches choose to have no instruments at all until the celebration of Easter. All this is meant to emphasize that Lent is a time set apart; to let our ears as well as our minds know that we have entered a contemplative season.

I am excited about our Temple Choir selections for Lent. I believe that they magnify the scriptures for each Sunday and will enhance Pastor Kim's series on Forgiveness. We're not eliminating the organ or instruments, and will, in fact, have guest musicians playing in worship in the coming weeks. We have a rousing anthem planned for Palm Sunday and a solemn, moving piece for the end of that service to bring us into Holy Week. On Easter we will sing a new anthem and close the service with the glorious "Hallelujah, Amen" by Handel. It is the prayer of all our musicians that God uses our gifts to bring you closer to the heart of God during Lent.

Our Lenten Worship Series on Forgiveness continues in March

| | | |
|----------|----------------------------|--------------|
| 3 March | Everything Is Not Okay | John 2:13-21 |
| 10 March | Being About God's Business | John 3:14-21 |
| 17 March | Experiencing God's Grace | Psalms 51 |
| 24 March | Unconditional Forgiveness | Palm Sunday |

Lenten Lunches

Here is the schedule for the remaining Lenten Lunches. You are invited to join with other Christians in our community for a time of prayer and reflection during the season of Lent.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| March 6 th | St. Paul's UCC with Rev. Jeff Wilder |
| March 13 th | First Christian Church with Rev. Rich Luh |
| March 20 th | First Baptist Church with Rev. Daniel Cardenas |

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

Information Sessions

Pastor Kim led three information sessions about the United Methodist Church this winter. The two in January were about how we are structured at the local level and how the United Methodist Church is structured and connected at the district, annual conference, jurisdictional conference, and general conference levels. The information session in February was about the upcoming 2024 General Conference. While the sessions were not recorded, we do have the information sheets that Pastor Kim shared at each gathering. If you would like copies, please let the church office know.

A Note from Rev. Daniel Cardenas, Associate Pastor

Lent: A journey of justice.

Leviticus 19:15



Lent is a journey of meditation. We go through a lot of thoughts. God calls us to think and meditate about our lives: how they are, how we live them. During Lent, we are encouraged to keep going on our Christian path walking with peace, faith, love, and justice.

In the book of Leviticus God called his people to do justice. They were slaves in Egypt and they tasted the bitter taste of slavery and injustice there, so now they are being formed like God's people and they must show justice and love to themselves and the rest of the nations around them.

In a world where the glory of God often seems shadowed by injustice, following God means correcting mistakes and ensuring justice for all, even the "undeserving." As followers of Jesus, invited by the Spirit to do justice, we must untangle the knots of injustice.

*When something is crooked, we must actively commit to untangling it. To unravel a culture that favors the rich and discipleship that elevates celebrity and power, we must work to value, empower, and defend the forgotten. This is not just a trendy call to action; It is a divine command, a privilege in which we come together to see the kingdom and vision of God, "so in Earth as in Heaven."**

Therefore, in this Lent journey, let's commit ourselves to love others, do justice, clothe the naked, and feed the hunger. Let's break the injustice and indifference one step at a time.

Let's pray:

God of freedom and justice, we confess that many times we look after our things; we follow our desires, and we cherish our possessions. We do not love others, and we do not take care of the orphans and the widows, forgive us, we pray. Open our eyes this Lent to see others, to love them as I love myself, to take care of them as I take care of myself. In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN.

Con cariño y amor
Rev. Daniel Cardenas

**Taken from the 2024 Lent Devotional of the Racial Justice and Leadership Initiative.*

Title: Twisted Threads of Justice.

Author: Benji Spruce

Associate Pastor at City Church in New London, Connecticut.

Save The Date

You are cordially invited to a Baby Shower for Eliette and her parents, Anahi and Daniel! Saturday, April 27th 2-4 pm. More details soon.



Confirmation Class Update

In February our confirmation class had an overnight on President's Day Weekend and they made and served breakfast for the Monday Morning Breakfast Club. This month they are going to Ohio Wesleyan for a West Ohio Conference wide event that Bishop Palmer is hosting for confirmands. They are learning and growing! Please keep them in your prayers: Robert, Ryan, Danica, Liz, Maya, and Raquel.

If you haven't already done so – make sure to mark your calendars for Sunday, May 19th. We will be celebrating Pentecost that day and receiving our confirmation class. Pastor Daniel, Mary Ellen, and Pastor Kim are planning a bilingual worship service that day. You won't want to miss it!



Biblical Storytelling Workshop

You are invited to join Pastor Kim for a class on Biblical storytelling. More than just memorizing a Bible passage, Biblical storytelling is learning how to internalize a story in the Bible so that it is relatable and meaningful to you. On Sunday, April 7th Pastor Kim will share the gospel lesson by way of Biblical storytelling. If you are curious about learning more about it, check out the workshops scheduled for April 14th and April 28th following worship. Please see Pastor Kim if you have any questions or want more information! (These are the workshops that were originally scheduled for February and March.)

Mission Moment

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

Sometimes it seems as if one family has more than their fair share of troubles! Recently, such a family brought their 8 year old daughter into the hospital to be treated for a broken femur. When it was found that they had no money to pay, they were directed to our Pastoral Care department for a financial assessment and for counseling.

The father in the family cannot work much as he is suffering from Tuberculosis. The mother does some daily wage work, but she is unable to see or speak properly. Both the children (SK, the 8 year old daughter, and a 12 year old son) were born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a congenital disease which causes weak and deformed bones. In a country where walking is often the only means to get from your house to school or anywhere else, this is a major difficulty!

SK was able to have surgery and a rod was put into her leg. She and her brother both need crutches to help them get around, but both love to study and are doing well in school. Interestingly, they both have blue eyes - which is very rare in Nepal!

This family lives in a small mud brick house with a tin roof. They have a water buffalo with a baby and some chickens, but only have enough land to grow 2 months worth of food. They are very dependent on daily wage earnings.

Thanks to the hospital Medical assistance fund, we were able to pay for the operation, and also for nutritious, high protein meals both for SK and for her brother. One of the doctors took an interest in the case, and went on his own to purchase a special type of medicine not available in the hospital. We so appreciate your prayers and support for us. Because of your prayers and giving, this family was able to return home without more crippling debt, and with medicine and hope for their children's futures.

Love, Debbie & Les
(The photo is of some village houses)



Lenten & Easter Offering

This Lent we are focusing on the ministries of the church that involve feeding our neighbors. We have a weekly **food pantry** that is open every Tuesday afternoon. Anytime someone who is hungry comes to the office, we share with them **daily bread**, an offering of cereal bars, a cup of canned fruit, crackers, a canned meat, and some snacks. We also offer pantry items in the form of **emergency food**, which is a grocery bag full of canned goods, peanut butter, crackers, etc. Lastly, but definitely not least, we provide a hot meal to the community each Monday morning through a ministry called Breakfast Club. These are all wonderful ministries that our church offers. Here is a list of the most needed items:

Toilet tissue (4 pack)
Laundry detergent
Bleach
Dish soap
Vegetable/Canola Oil
Flour

Sugar
Salt
Vienna Sausages
White Rice (3 lb bag)
Jiffy Corn Bread Mix
Shampoo (V05)

Tuna/Chicken/Ham Salad Snack Pack
(includes crackers)
Fruit Bars
Fruit Cups
Pudding Cups
Bottled Water
Spoons
Napkins

March 2024

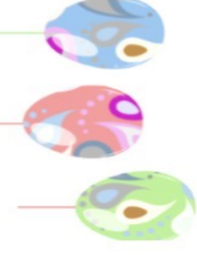


| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| 3 COMMUNION 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship | 4 8:00 Breakfast Club 6:00 Bible Study | 5 2:00 Pantry | 6 Noon Lenten Lunch St. Paul's UCC | 7 6:00 ESL Classes at Rosa Parks Elementary | 1 12:00 First Friday Concert | 2 9:30 - 2 Spiritual Formation Retreat |
| Confirmation Class Trip to Columbus | 6:00 Bible Study | | 3 & 7:00 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Hisp. Bible Study | | 8 UWIF Board 10:00 | |
| 10 UMCOR SUNDAY/ DAYLIGHT SAVING BEGINS 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship | 11 8:00 Breakfast Club 6:00 Bible Study 6:00 Legal Clinic | 12 1:00 SPRC 2:00 Pantry | 13 Noon Lenten Lunch First Christian 3 & 7:00 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Hisp. Bible Study | 14 | 15 AMBASSADOR ARTICLE DEADLINE | 16 9:00 Hope Circle @ Bob Evans 10:00 Elizabeth Circle |
| 17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship | 18 8:00 Breakfast Club | 19 2:00 Pantry | 20 Noon Lenten Lunch First Baptist | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 3:00 Movie—Dead Man Walking | 6:00 Bible Study | 5:30 Finance Mtg 6:00 Council Mtg | 3 & 7:00 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Hisp. Bible Study | 6:00 ESL Classes at Rosa Parks Elementary | | |
| 24 PALM SUNDAY 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship | 25 8:00 Breakfast Club 6:00 Bible Study | 26 2:00 Pantry | 27 3 & 7:00 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Hisp. Bible Study | 28 MAUNDAY THUR. Service 7:00 | 29 GOOD FRIDAY Service Noon | 30 |
| 2-4 Confirmation Class | | NO Trustees Mtg. | | | | |



Dates to Remember in April:

- April 1 Office Closed
- April 5 First Friday Randall McGee
- April 14 Native American Ministries Sunday
- April 14 Biblical Storytelling
- April 28 Biblical Storytelling



- Angela Murphy 2
- Barbara Dillion 4
- Keeghan Wills 4
- Dave McGraw 8
- Neal Walke 8
- Phil Yaple 8
- Marilyn Housh 12
- Mary Maurer 13
- Judy Smith 13
- Patty McGraw 14
- Scott Tucker 16
- Jennie Webb 16
- Greg Cooper 18
- Alma Taulbee 19
- Tom Atkinson 23
- Barb Orth 27
- Shelley McDaniel 28
- Linda Schmitt 29
- Lon Fairchild 31

Happy Birthday!



2024 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

March 1, 2024

Chad “The Crooner” Brown

**Come be be swept away by the cool tunes
of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Englebert
Humperdink, as well as the hits of Neil
Diamond and Barry Manilow**

First UMC - Middletown

@noon

Free Admission