



The Ambassador

April 2024

Est. 1805 | Published Since
1951

From the Pastor

"But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb." John 20:11

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus, our Risen Savior! The excitement has been building in me as I have been preparing for our Easter celebrations. This excitement starts as I study the Easter scriptures and prepare my morning message, and then it swells as I think through worship and what hymns we will sing together on Easter morning. I love Easter morning!

My excitement has caused me to focus on Mary's weeping that first Easter morning. She wept outside the tomb and as she bent over to look in the tomb. She wept while talking to the angels and she wept as she began talking to the gardener who turns out to be Jesus. But when she recognizes the gardener as Jesus, the scriptures do not record her weeping any more. Her weeping stops, her tears dry. Resurrection transforms her tears into praise.

There is healing power in resurrection! God brings newness out of destruction. God brings hope where there is no hope. God makes a way where there is no way. Tears come when people experience destruction, hopelessness and dead ends. But in resurrection, God transforms tears into praise. This is where our true journey begins.

Easter marks the beginning of a journey. While we may think of Easter as a day, the tradition of the church understands Easter to be a season lasting fifty days. Last year we had this as our focus and this year will be the same as we embark on our Easter

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

Inside

Music & Worship Notes 3
Note from Pastor Daniel 4
Mission Moments 6
Calendar & Birthdays 7

 **first
church**
M I D D L E T O W N
a united methodist community

worship series – Behold! (more information on page 3)

As we prepare to celebrate Easter this year, let us not only think of our celebrating as Sunday morning worship but as our actions as well. Let us offer words and gifts of healing and hope. Let us not only proclaim Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! But may we also let the resurrection transform us and change how live and act in the world. May it be so!

Peace,
Pastor Kim
<><

Confirmation Update

Our confirmation class travelled to Ohio Wesleyan in March for Bishop Palmer's Confirmation event. We joined over 200 confirmands and over 100 adults as we explored the history of John and Charles Wesley, got to ask questions of Bishop Palmer and hear his call to ministry, and just simply enjoy seeing all the other churches who are going through confirmation at the same time we are. These pictures are from the West Ohio Conference's Facebook page. The picture below, on the right, is our confirmation class. From left to right, front row: Pastor Kim, Anahí, Danica, Maya, Raquel, and Bishop Palmer. Middle row: Ryan, Robert, and Liz. Back row: Pastor Daniel, and Rev. Jenn Lucas, District Superintendent for the Great Miami River District.



Music and Worship Notes by Mary Ellen Clinard

The transition from the darkness of Lent into the bright joy of Easter is probably my favorite moment in the church year. Like the coming of Spring every year we know that the Resurrection story will also come.



On the Saturday before Easter Sunday, the fresh, live, flowers arrive that provide that riot of color (and smell!) on Easter Sunday. Members of the Worship Committee meet at church early that morning to receive the flowers and arrange them in front of the sanctuary. We do this because we KNOW that Easter is the next day. I often think, during this task and on this day, of the disciples and the women closest to Jesus who experienced Jesus' crucifixion just the day before. They had no idea of the upcoming events! We have the advantage of knowing "the rest of the story"!

Let's not take this knowledge for granted. In our Easter anthem, "Season of Promise" there was a line that said "the seed that died now gives new life". As we move past Easter day into the season of Eastertide, take note of all the flowers blooming. Gardeners are planting seeds that will become plants that offer us healthy nourishment and young sprouts become beautiful flowers. Christ is the seed that died so that we may have new life. Enjoy the new plants and flowers all around us this Spring Season and give thanks to God for the sacrifice of Jesus that we may also have new life.

Behold!

50 Days of Seeing Easter

We come to church on Easter Sunday to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, yet a true celebration of Easter takes us on a much longer journey as we explore what it means to be a people who not only celebrate the resurrection but embody it. In this series we will see how the story of Easter changes our everyday life because it changes us. We will study the scriptures that focus first on what we have seen and known and then will shift to what we live and do. The word behold means an invitation to see or observe something or someone that is impressive. We are called not just to behold an empty tomb, not just to behold a resurrected Christ, but to embody new life as individuals and as a community. When we allow the resurrection to work in us in this way, then we, too, become something to behold.

3.31.24	Begin – From Seeing to Experiencing	John 20:1-18
4.07.24	Believe – Seeing God Everywhere	John 20:19-31 & I John 1:1-2:2
4.14.24	Beloved – Seeing God's Love for Us	Luke 24:36b-48 & I John 3:1-7
4.21.24	Because – Love that Knows no Bounds	Psalm 23, I John 3:16-24 & John 10:11-18
4.28.24	Belong – Connected to God and Others	John 15:1-8 & I John 4:7-21
5.05.24	Behave – Loving Like God	John 15:9-17 & I John 5:1-6
5.12.24	Become – Being the Body of Christ	John 17:6-19 & I John 5:9-13

A Note from Rev. Daniel Cardenas, Associate Pastor



A mustard seed.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field...” (Matthew 13:31-32)

We live in a society that always longs for the biggest and the best. We want the biggest hamburger with fries combo at the restaurant. We are looking for the biggest patio set for this coming summer. We are always looking for the biggest because we think *“the bigger the better.”*

The mall stores and the big box stores are lying to us making us believe that if we buy the biggest we are buying the best and we will be the happiest person in the world; but the truth is that we won't because the next year we will long for something even bigger than the thing we already bought.

The world we live in says that this is the rule, always lying to us by saying: the bigger the better.

However, the Kingdom of God does not work that way, the Kingdom of God does not obey the system's logic but obeys its own.

Probably it was hard for the people that surrounded Jesus when he shared the story of the mustard seed. They were expecting a strong messiah that would deliver them from the Roman Empire and beat it. They expected the bigger the better so when Jesus explained that he was not that kind of messiah, the people were disappointed in him. Maybe they expected a parable that explained the Kingdom of God as a big tree that grows even bigger than others-- but no, Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a little mustard seed that grows and turns into a little mustard bush. Why? Because the Kingdom of God does not work as we do, it obeys different rules.

In the Kingdom of God, the biggest is not always the best. Sometimes, the best happens in the smallest way. Jesus told his disciples to look at the small things because the best parts are hidden behind the smallest ones.

Therefore, let's look at the smallest things because probably, looking and longing for the biggest, we are losing the chance to see God's Kingdom in the smallness.

This Easter season, let's command ourselves to look at the smallest things, pray, and ask God where to look, maybe the most amazing things are hidden behind our neighbor, a sunset, or the landscape.

Don't miss the chance to see God's Kingdom by looking for the biggest.

Con cariño y aprecio
Rev. Daniel Cardenas

Introducing:
MAD Camp (Music, Art, & Drama Camp)
July 29th – August 2nd
9:00 a.m. - Noon

Calling all young people to a fun week of creative expression with music, art, and drama! By the end of the week, kids will have lots to share so there will be an art gallery and performance that will be open to all.



MAD Camp is for young people, grades K-6 and no prior musical or art experience is necessary. There is a cost of \$25 to cover supplies. If you are interested in signing up, please call the church office to get a registration form. If you are interested in sponsoring a MAD Camper, please let Pastor Kim know! More information to come!

***** New Email for Church Staff *****

We have updated our email system. Please start using the following emails:

Pam Fugett, Church/Office	office@myfumc.net
Pastor Kim	pastorkim@myfumc.net
Pastor Daniel	pastordaniel@myfumc.net
Mary Ellen Clinard, Worship	music@myfumc.net
Betsy Koval, Treasurer (expenses, bills)	treasurer@myfumc.net
Susan Beagle, Financial Secretary (giving/offering)	financialsecretary@myfumc.net
Greg Cooper, Building Supervisor	building@myfumc.net

Staff Appreciation

First United Methodist Church has an amazing staff! One of the blessings of being on the Staff-Parrish Relations Committee is that we are tasked with the responsibility of helping our congregation show its appreciation. That time is upon us!

During the month of April we will be collecting monetary donations for our staff. Rather than asking you to give each staff person a gift, we will be pooling all the donations and then dividing the total amongst our staff. If you would like to give, please mark your gift as 'staff appreciation' and put it with your offering or drop it off by the church office. All donations need to be in by May 5th.

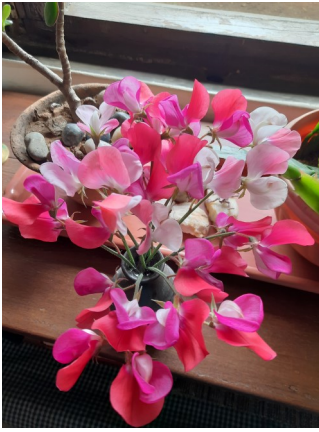
On Sunday, May 12th we will recognize our staff in worship and present them with our collected gift. There will also be a basket to collect cards and/or notes of appreciation if you would like to show your appreciation in that way, too. And on Tuesday, May 14th the Staff-Parrish Committee will be providing the staff with an appreciation luncheon.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask any member of the committee. We are: John Hoffman, Tom Buchert, Sally Jo Inwood, Rick Lyke, Lynda Goecke, Barb Balsmeyer, JC Shew, Sue Faulkner, and Melanie Alderton. Please join us in saying 'Thank You!' to the amazing people who help our church be in ministry!

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!

Mission Moment



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

Every spring we are quite surprised at how quickly the weather changes. Just a week ago, we were wearing hats and jackets in the house - and now we are in short sleeves and packing away our winter sweaters and heavy socks. We hear that spring in Ohio has been playing games! My favorite spring flowers are blooming here and I love the sweet smell and bright colors.

Each week, in addition to our hospital work, we are part of various Bible studies and small groups. We enjoy the chance to get to know our fellow believers better and to share prayer requests and encourage each other. Les used to preach in the church regularly, but a few years ago it was suggested that foreigners not be "up in front" in the church services. It is not a problem for us to practice our Christian faith here - because we are considered to have been born as Christians. If you are born into a Hindu family in Nepal - that is considered to be your religion. If you try to change from Hinduism to something else - that is the difficulty! So - if we appear to be trying to help or teach anyone to change their religion, that is when the problems start.

Lately, several people have asked Les if he could start preaching again. We were just about to ask the head of the mission about doing that when a message came through, that a Nepali pastor, along with several foreigners, had been arrested when Christian tracts were found in their car. Once again, we have been asked to just "lay low" when it comes to any kind of leadership in the church. We are still able to share our faith and beliefs with people if asked, and we can gather with other believers to worship and pray, so we are thankful for that.

However, along with India and many other countries, Nepal is becoming less tolerant of believers. Please keep our Nepali brothers and sisters in your prayers as they face persecution from family members, from work, neighbors, and sometimes from the government. We continue to be humbled by the faithful witness of Nepali Christians. And pray that the believers who were arrested are released soon. He is risen!

Thanks for your love, prayers and support. Blessings! Debbie & Les



Anahi and Daniel are registered on Amazon:

www.amazon.com/baby-reg

Type in Anahi Hernandez and Daniel Cardenas

April 2024

April Birthdays

- 2 Sharyn Edelen
- 6 Dave Balsmeyer,
- 12 J.C. Shew
- 13 Betty Risner
- 15 Anita Shew
- 16 Sandy Yaple
- 20 Elois Duff
- 21 Maya Fairchild
- 25 Sue Moore
- Debbie Taylor
- 26 Don Beasley
- 27 Terry Stephens
- 29 Bob Duffey

Happy Birthday!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED ALL DAY</p> <p>8 am Breakfast Club</p> <p>6 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2 pm Pantry</p>	<p>3</p> <p>6 pm Hispanic Bible Study</p> <p>3 & 7 pm Choir Rhrl</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>12 pm First Friday Concert</p>	<p>6</p>	
<p>7 COMMUNION</p> <p>9:00 Sunday School</p> <p>10:30 Worship</p>	<p>8</p> <p>8 am Breakfast Club</p> <p>2 pm Pantry</p> <p>6 pm Bible Study</p> <p>6 pm Legal Clinic</p>	<p>9</p> <p>1 pm SPRC</p> <p>2 pm Pantry</p>	<p>10</p> <p>6 pm Hispanic Bible Study</p> <p>3 & 7 pm Choir</p>	<p>11</p> <p>ESL Classes @ Rosa Parks</p>	<p>12</p> <p>10 am UWIF Board</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14</p> <p>9:00 Sunday School</p> <p>10:30 Worship Service</p> <p>Biblical Storytelling</p> <p>2-4 Confirmation Class</p>	<p>15</p> <p>8 am Breakfast Club</p> <p>6 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>16</p> <p>2 pm Pantry</p> <p>5:30 pm Finance Mtg</p> <p>6 pm Council Mtg</p>	<p>17</p> <p>6 pm Hispanic Bible Study</p> <p>3 & 7 pm Choir Rhrl</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>AMBASSADOR ARTICLES DUE</p>	<p>20</p> <p>9 am Hope Circle @ Bob Evans</p> <p>10 am Elizabeth Cir.</p>
<p>21</p> <p>9:00 Sunday School</p> <p>10:30 Worship Service</p>	<p>22</p> <p>8 am Breakfast Club</p> <p>6 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>23</p> <p>2 pm Pantry</p> <p>6:30 pm Trustees Mtg</p>	<p>24</p> <p>6 pm Hispanic Bible Study</p> <p>3 & 7 pm Choir Rhrl</p>	<p>25</p> <p>ESL Classes @ Rosa Parks</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>2 pm Anahi Hernandez Baby Shower</p>
<p>28</p> <p>9:00 Sunday School</p> <p>10:30 Worship</p> <p>Biblical Storytelling</p>	<p>29</p> <p>8 am Breakfast Club</p> <p>6 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>30</p> <p>1 pm Congreg. Care</p> <p>2 pm Pantry</p>	<p>Dates to Remember in May:</p> <p>May 3: First Friday Concert at Noon</p> <p>May 12: Mother's Day</p> <p>May 19: Day of Pentecost</p> <p>May 27: Memorial Day - Church Office CLOSED</p>			





2024 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

April 5, 2024

Randell McGee

**Randell will bring his rich baritone voice
and a wealth of beautiful music from his
repertoire - spirituals, showtunes, and
more!**

**First UMC - Middletown
@ noon
Free Admission**