



The Ambassador

May 2025

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From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

I have been thinking about the story of the healing of the paralyzed man in Mark 2. This is the story where, because of the crowds, the friends who were carrying the paralyzed man ended up digging a hole in the roof and lowering their friend before Jesus. I used this story in celebrating the life of Doc Burley but it has continued to swirl through my mind. And I know why.

Throughout my ministry, I have consistently identified with the friends tearing off the roof but now as I face knee replacement surgery, I have suddenly become the man on the mat – needing the support of others for my healing to happen. A close friend is coming to stay with me for a few days, my husband and daughter are taking over responsibilities that have been mostly mine to shoulder, our amazing staff is stepping forward to fill in the gap during my recovery. All of these people giving of themselves is humbling.

It is one thing to preach a worship series on One Another and teach about how we need each other, but it is much harder to live out that truth primarily as the receiver of support rather than the giver of support. But this humbling experience reminds me of truths that I know from the Bible: we are the body of Christ. Each one of us has a part and each of us work together to live the ministry of Jesus here at First UMC in Middletown, OH. Each one of us has a part and no part is any more important or less important than any other. It does not matter if we are on the mat or carrying the mat. We work together or we do not work at all.

I will miss you while I am gone but please know that I am keeping you in my prayers. I'm so grateful that we are on this journey together. Blessings!

Peace,
Pastor Kim
<><

Staff

Senior Pastor Kim Armentrout
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Worship With Us

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

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A New Worship Series

Easter: An Opportunity to Bloom

Throughout our Christian journey, we will face distress and challenges. Those situations will make us wonder if we are walking in the right way. We can feel discouraged and disturbed, but even in the times when everything seems to be getting darker, God always opens a way out, giving us a new beginning and a new chance to bloom.



On Easter morning, everything seemed lost for the disciples, then a new opportunity bloomed when Jesus defeated and conquered death. In this series we will remember that God is taking control of everything. Through the book of Ruth as well as the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation, we are going to recall God's victory over all.

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Sermon Title</u> | <u>Scriptures</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5.11.2025 | This Isn't the End | Ruth 1:14-22 and John 10:22-30 |
| 5.18.2025 | A New Beginning | Ruth 2:1, 8-16 and Revelation 21:1-6 |
| 5.25.2025 | Don't Be Afraid | Ruth 3:1-11 and John 14:23-29 |

A Note from Pastor Kim

On Sunday May 4th, I will be travelling to Adrian, MI to celebrate the college graduation of my niece, Emily. I'm grateful for Rev. Larry Kreps who will be preaching that day. When I return home, I am having knee replacement surgery on Tuesday, May 6th. If all goes well, I will be back in worship to celebrate Pentecost with you on June 8th. While I am gone, Pastor Daniel will be preaching and covering pastoral care. Thank you all for your prayers!

Food Pantry Item for May

We are spotlighting a different pantry item each month. The pantry item for May is evaporated milk. This is a 12 oz. can. If you could donate 1 or 2 cans it would help to insure that we have enough in stock to meet the demand. As a side note, if you have an extra hand held can opener taking up space in the utensil drawer, we would gladly accept it also. It will be used for our Emergency Food program. Thanks for all you do!

It is our pleasure to invite you, our dear brothers and sisters, to join us in celebration of a baby shower in honor of our son Pablo. We will be gathered here in the Fellowship Hall on May 17th, 2025 from 10 am to 12 pm.

Pastor Daniel & Anahí



Easter Thanks!

One of my favorite times of the year is preparing for Holy Week and Easter Sunday. As we move through the narrative of the events of Jesus' last week on earth, so many changes take place in the sanctuary. On Good Friday, we drape the large cross with black, the communion table is bare with the exception of candles. The music is somber and quiet.

Then on Saturday, excitement starts to build, the Worship Committee arrives early in the morning and the flowers are delivered. For the last few years, Roger Conner, owner of Flowers by Roger, and the business where we order our Easter flowers, pays us a visit along with the arrival of the flower delivery. He suffered a debilitating stroke, and other health issues a few years ago, and his presence is always appreciated and anticipated. The flowers are arranged, there are flowers in the windows, the black cloth is removed and white netting now drapes the cross. Brass altarware---cross, candlesticks and vases, are returned, bright white cloths adorn the table and podium, and the offering plates are switched from wood to brass. The banners are prepared for the processional. Each year, I think about the people in Jesus' life in that day between his death and resurrection. They didn't know what to expect, or what was about to happen. How blessed we are to be able to anticipate the joy of resurrection even before Easter. We believe it happened and will CONTINUE to happen! Thanks to all the congregation members who help make this visual transformation possible each year!

Mary Ellen Clinard



I SCREAM, YOU SCREAM.....

Can you finish this phrase? Or course! "We all scream for ice cream!" Put Sunday, June 8th at 2 pm on your calendar now for ice cream, singing, and fellowship at St. Paul's UCC Church (the church to the north of us toward downtown). Since that day is Pentecost, we are calling it a "Celebration of The Spirit".

The church groups that got together for the Lenten Lunches this year have planned this event that includes our choir singing a couple of songs, great conversation, and of course, a variety of ice cream! Bring friends and family and enjoy this opportunity to get to know our larger community of faith in our area.



Worship on the Go with Kathy Wright

Worship on the Go!

On Thursday, April 24th members of our choir joined Pastor Kim and Pastor Daniel to visit a few members of our church family who are no longer able to join us on Sunday mornings. We shared prayers, scripture, songs, and communion. It was a day filled with smiles, laughter, and a few tears.

What a blessing this time is! If you would like to participate in the next Worship on the Go, please call the church office and let us know. We'd love to have you!

"Jesus has conquered the world!"

John 16:33

Along our Christian path, we will face distress. Sometimes, when we come to the Lord for the first time, we think everything wrong will disappear, but the truth is that sometimes, everything turns worse.

When Jesus went into Jerusalem, the disciples thought he would fight back against the Roman Empire, and finally, they would be restored as a nation. Still, the truth was, Jesus went into Jerusalem to die on a cross like a criminal. That thought never crossed their minds.

After having dinner, when Jesus was saying his last teachings, the disciples were confused and overwhelmed with questions and doubts about what Jesus was talking about. Jesus wasn't talking about revolution or fighting, he was saying goodbye to them and talking about death. Jesus could see their troubled hearts and confused minds, so he decided to calm their souls with words of hope and faith.

Dear brothers and sisters, even when things get rough and our hearts are in distress, the Lord is in control of everything, reminding us that there is an opportunity to bloom, even in the storm.

That's the heart of the coming worship series. There is nothing to be worried about when the Lord is making all things new.

Through the book of Ruth, we will see how God changes our sorrow and whipping into joy and happiness. We will learn how, even in the times of darkness, the Lord is giving us the chance to bloom and grow in faith, hope, and joy.

As Ruth and Nahomi couldn't see how God was working for their sake, as the disciples couldn't see how Jesus was working for their joy, we are going to learn, even when we don't see it, how God works for our good.

Let's see together how God will bring hope to us through his word. Let's take courage knowing that Jesus has conquered the world.

Con cariño y amor
Rev. Daniel Cardenas

2nd Mile Giving Campaign A Huge Success

We all share in the gratitude and are humbled by the huge financial support our congregation and friends have given to our church. Our campaign closed with a total of \$81,484.56. Adding the \$10,000 grant received from our conference, we have surpassed our goal of \$87,000. These funds will allow us to continue to focus on our commitment to serve our church and community.





MAD Camp July 28th – August 1st 9:00 a.m. - Noon



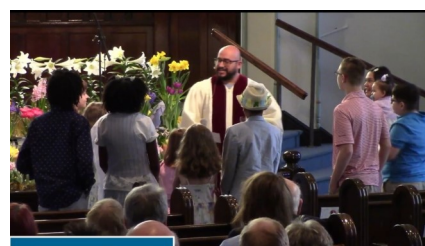
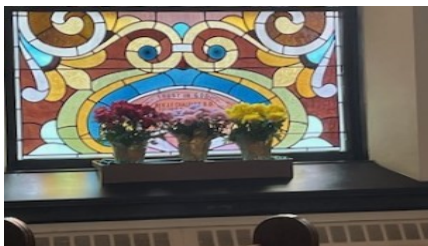
We are looking forward to our second year of hosting MAD Camp. Our Music, Art, and Drama (MAD) Camp will be exploring the parable of the sower and what it means to grow. Children will be doing crafts that will be a part of our garden drama, learning music about growing and bearing fruit. Pastor Kim is writing the drama and Mary Ellen Clinard is writing the songs. It is going to be a lot of fun!

MAD Camp is for ages four through elementary school. While it runs in the daytime, there will be a Friday evening art show and performance that is open to all! The art gallery opens at 6:30, the performance at 7. Registration is \$25 per child and includes a t-shirt and art supplies to take home. Space is limited to 50 participants and 10 spots are already filled. To register, go to the church's website and click on MAD Camp or call the church office!



Easter celebration

We had glorious worship on Easter Sunday. The sanctuary was full of people eager to celebrate and flowers that were in full bloom. Here are some pictures that friends shared. If you missed worship that day or want to revisit it – you can always find past worship services on our website



MISSION MOMENT

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

Greetings from another part of the world! We are writing this while enjoying a visit with our precious, new granddaughter in England. Not only are we loving the snuggles with baby girl, but we are also having fun catching up with Hannah and Nathan. They are happy we brought along a string of sunny days so we have been trying out the fancy new pram (stroller!).

Life in Tansen continues on and we have had a series of farewells recently. Comings and goings are quite common among the missionary community, but recently, we said good-bye to a wonderful Nepali Christian family who had been 10 years in Tansen. They were leaders not only in the hospital but also in the church and community. They will be very missed, but we know they will be greatly used in their new home (still in Nepal!) We also just had an all-too-common tragedy – a man who works at the lab in the hospital was up in a tree (picking fruit) when he fell. He broke his back and 3 ribs and was helicoptered into Kathmandu for treatment. It seems likely that if he survives, he will be a paraplegic, which is difficult anywhere, but especially in a country like Nepal. Ironically, UMN (United Mission to Nepal) is having a campaign to raise funds to help disabled people in our area. If you are interested, here is a link with information about that.

<https://www.umn.org.np/sunshine/>

As always, we are thankful for your prayers and support. They mean more to us than we can say.

Love, Debbie & Les



Annual Conference

The 56th session of the West Ohio Conference will be held May 28 through May 31 at Capital University in Bexley. This will be the first Ohio Episcopal Area annual conference in which Bishop Hee-Soo Jung presides. The theme for this year's session is *Rise Up, Beloved: Trust in God's Promises* based on the scripture from Mark 5:35-43.

Annual Conference is the decision making body of our geographical area. At Annual Conference, the Bishop's mission focus is established, there's teaching by guest bishops and leaders, and worship is offered. Retirees are honored and new clergy are commissioned or ordained, and business sessions where recommendations that have been sent to the conference in advance are taken up for consideration.




If you have any questions about Annual Conference, please check out the resources that are on our conference website <https://www.westohioumc.org/> or the website for The United Methodist Church www.umc.org

Thanks!

MAY 2025



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----------------|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| |  | Dates to Remember in June: 6 First Friday Concert 8 Music & Ice Cream 2pm St. Paul's UCC 29 Pastor Appreciation Reception | | 1 1:00 Worship Team | 2 10:00 UMW Board 12:00 First Friday Concert | 3 |
| 4 Communion | 5 8:00 Breakfast Club | 6 2:00 Pantry | 7 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir | 8 9:00 Elizabeth Circle (Scrambler) | 9 | 10 9:00 Hope Circle (Bob Evans) |
| 11 Mother's Day | 12 8:00 Breakfast Club | 13 1:00 SPRC 2:00 Pantry | 14 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 8:00 Breakfast Club | 20 2:00 Pantry | 21 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 Memorial Day 8:00 Breakfast Club CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED | 27 No Pantry 6:30 Trustees | 28 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir WOC Annual Conf. | 29 WOC Annual Conf. | 30 WOC Annual Conf. | 31 WOC Annual Conf. |

1 John Regensburg
 4 Becky Rogers
 6 Ron Davis
 6 Shirley Fields
 7 Judy Thorn
 17 Susan Beagle
 17 Tom Piper
 19 Brenda Byrd,
 19 Jim Gayhart
 20 Mary Nichols
 22 Vickie Frazer
 23 Pam Fugett
 25 Dee Young
 26 Tammy White
 29 Marian McGuire
 30 Tucker Smarzinski

Happy Birthday!



2025 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

**May 2, 2025
Berachah Valley**

**If traditional gospel and Bluegrass
is your thing, come and join us for
an hour of the best music you've
heard in a long time!**

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

first
church
MIDDLETOWN
a united methodist community
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