

The Ambassador

October 2025

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From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

I love making connections in worship. I do this by using a phrase from the closing hymn in a call to worship, using the same hymn or prayer during a worship series, or using a phrase throughout a season to emphasize a theme. Sometimes though, I am surprised when an unintentional connection is discovered. It has happened during this worship series where we are encouraged to Take Another Look at beloved Bible stories. We started this series with Moses and then re-visited the story of Noah. The Hebrew word translated ark is used in both stories. For Moses, ark was the word used for the basket his mother put him in. For Noah, it is the ship he makes. From Noah we went to Jonah and there is a connection between those two stories. Jonah's name in Hebrew means 'dove', which is the bird that Noah used to discover the land was drying. I love connections!

There are lots of opportunities for us to make connections in our life together. We are asking for folks to write holiday cards to our church members who cannot be physically present in worship (see article on pg. 3). Stewardship Sunday is coming up on the last Sunday of October and part of our commitment is connecting to ministries (see article on pg. 4).

Even more connection opportunities are available to us. You can join others in daily devotions in 2026 (see article on pg. 2). You can connect with others in worship. World Communion Sunday is October 5th and we begin a new worship series on October 12th (see article on pg. 2). And at the end of October we are going to be having an outdoor service in the afternoon where folks are invited to bring their pets for a Blessing of the Animals (see article on pg. 5). Even if you don't have a pet, you are welcome to come and join in an outdoor service.

I hope to connect with you in one or more of these ways this fall!

Blessings,
Pastor Kim

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



Great Is Thy Faithfulness

We begin a new worship series in October that will take us all the way through our observance of All Saints Day. Based on the hymn by the same title, this series will challenge our “If only I had more...” thoughts. Do you have those? If only I had more time.... If only I had more money.... If only I was more organized.... Are any of these familiar to you? Do you have some you could add to the list?

Although they may seem harmless, there is a danger to these little “If only” statements. They can begin to sow seeds of discontent and cause us to focus more on what we lack rather than the abundance of what we have. Great Is Thy Faithfulness, the beloved hymn, provides the framework for this series. Whenever we sing it, we sing so strong that the conviction of our faith rises clearly. To sing, “All I have needed, thy hand hath provided” is a statement that challenges whatever “If only” thoughts we may carry and encourages us to see the blessings that abound!

Join us in worship – either in person or online – as we celebrate the goodness of God whose hand has supplied all we have needed!

<u>Date</u>	<u>Sermon Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
10.12.2025	More Faith	Luke 17:5-10
10.19.2025	More Gratitude	Luke 17:11-19
10.25.2025	More Humility	Luke 18:9-14
11.2.2025	More Love & More Blessing	Luke 6:20-31

2026 Disciplines Devotional

We had such a great response to our Disciplines Daily Devotional that we are offering it again for 2026! Join other church members in a daily devotional time that will help you deepen your relationship with Christ. Each week the devotional offers a theme, a weekly overview, and questions that guide the daily devotions. Then each day a scripture reading, prayer, and reflection is offered. While the devotional is designed for individual use, other members of your church family will be using the same devotional resource so we will be sharing in the same journey. Both large print and regular print samples are available in the Commons as well as an order sheet. Cost is \$18 for regular and \$20 for large print.

Church Conference

Tuesday, October 21st

Our annual Church Conference will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 21st starting at 6 pm. It is open to all in the church. This meeting is where you can get an update on church business as well as elect new officers, set goals, and set Pastoral salaries. It usually only takes 45 min to an hour. Everyone has a voice and a place at the table. However, only members are allowed to vote.



While planning the upcoming sermon series "Great Is Thy Faithfulness", I couldn't help but keep in mind the text to the hymn of the same name. My favorite part of the hymn is how, in the refrain, the melody rises with the words "all I have needed" then returns down the scale with "thy hand hath provided". When I play it for hymn singing, you will notice I separate those notes a little for emphasis as we sing "all I have needed". It's something that I need to constantly remember. It's all I have NEEDED, not all I have WANTED. It is a humbling thought and yet one filled with gratefulness.

Each Sunday, during this series, the tune will appear somewhere in the service. Often, with a familiar and beloved hymn, we listen or sing through our memories of what this hymn means to us—hearing our parents sing it as we sat next to them in church, a recording of a favorite vocalist, or as a part of a Memorial service of a loved one. During the series, I urge you to read through the text as you hear it being played. Read the text with fresh eyes, as if you are discovering it for the first time and maybe even write out the verses so you can see it as poetry. And while all of Pastor Kim's messages are not directly tied to the text of this hymn, you will find that it magnifies the message. It's #140 in our United Methodist Hymnal. I look forward to sharing this wonderful series in music and song with you in October!

Mary Ellen Clinard
Worship Director

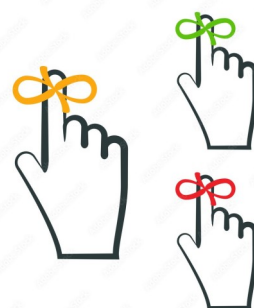
Congregational Care

Reminder that the Congregational Care committee will be asking for your help to provide Christmas Cards for our church family who are unable to be with us physically. This is a wonderful way to remind them that they are missed and in our prayers. More information to come!

Pastor Kim,
I had SOO much
fun at MADcamp!!!
I can't wait for next year!



A couple of weeks ago, Pastor Kim received this card in the mail. It's from one of our campers from this year's MAD Camp. It's a beautiful reminder of the unknown but prayed for impact that this outreach program can have. Thanks again for your support!



UWF Soup Luncheon

Sunday, October 19th

The UWF invites you join us in the Fellowship Hall, following worship, for some hot soup! Can't stay? Take out is also available. We have 12 different types to offer. Try one or three. Saltine crackers and bread will be on the tables. Coffee, unsweetened ice tea, water, and brownies are also available. Since this is a fundraising event, we are asking for a donation, in the amount of your choosing, for your meal. All money raised goes to support local and global missions.



Preparing for Commitment

John Hoffman, Finance Committee Chairman, has been working very hard to streamline our church finances and prepare for our needed funds for 2026. This chart reflects our projected income and expenses for next year without including our tithes and offerings. You can see that we anticipate a need of \$392,350.00 in pledges for the coming year. There will be brief, after-worship meetings on Sunday, October 5th and Sunday, October 12th. These meetings will give everyone the opportunity to review our numbers, ask questions and voice any concerns you may have. If you are unable to attend one of these meetings, please feel free to reach out to John Hoffman or to Betsy Koval for additional information.

First United Methodist Church - Middletown
Projected 2026 Income (excluding Tithes & Offerings)

Loose	\$2,800.00		
Housing Allowance	\$28,000.00		
Transfer from Rockwell (Pantry)	\$5,200.00		
Pantry Sales	\$6,600.00		
Pantry (Kroger)	\$300.00		
Pantry Donations	\$1,000.00		
Breakfast Club Donations	\$200.00		
Christmas Offering	\$3,000.00		
Easter Offering	\$800.00		
District Grant	\$10,000.00		
MAD Camp Donations	\$1,400.00		
Interest on Operating Reserves	\$6,000.00		
total	\$65,300.00		

2026 Proposed Budget

	Proposed	2025 Current Budget	Change
Operating Expenses	\$33,650.00	\$32,900.00	\$750
Social Concerns	\$25,600.00	\$25,100.00	\$500
Staff Salaries	\$287,000.00	\$310,300.00	-\$23,300
Worship/Music Expense	\$4,000.00	\$2,150.00	\$1,850
Apportionments/Mission Expense	\$49,700.00	\$52,200.00	-\$2,500
Care & Maintenance	\$57,700.00	\$51,900.00	\$5,800
	\$457,650.00	\$474,550.00	-\$16,950
Projected Income	-\$65,300.00		
2026 Pledges Needed	\$392,350.00		

Commitment to Ministry

A stewardship letter along with a commitment card has been mailed. Also included is list of descriptions for the various ministry opportunities. The commitment card has a space for you to commit to ministries that help us live out our mission: Christ Our Life, Service Our Lifestyle. In addition to ministry commitments there is space for you to make a financial commitment as well. Stewardship Sunday is October 26th. We will be making our commitments during the worship service.

Pastor Daniel Serving Pleasant Ridge UMC

Pastor Daniel has begun preaching at Pleasant Ridge UMC on Sunday mornings. This is only a quarter time commitment, and he will still be involved in the weekly ministries of First UMC, but we will be missing his presence on Sunday mornings.

Part of our United Methodist practice is itineracy. Our pastors serve us for a time until they are called to serve elsewhere. When these transitions happen it is always a bittersweet time, giving thanks for ministry that has been and looking forward to where the journey will lead us next.

Please join us in keeping Pastor Daniel and his family in your prayers. And you are always welcome to stop by the office during the week to visit with him or just say hello. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us.

Blessings,
Pastor Kim & Barb Balsmeyer

A Note from Rev. Daniel Cardenas, Associate Pastor

...And we all belong to each other.

Grace and peace to you, my beloved brothers and sisters.

I give thanks to God for the life of our son, Pablo. I am deeply grateful for the tremendous blessing of being able to enjoy his first months of life at home. It was truly comforting to spend paternity leave watching my children grow and enjoying the company of my family.

I am also very thankful to the Lord for giving me the opportunity to complete my Master of Divinity degree. Though it was a season of great sacrifice and effort, I treasure God's grace upon me, for it allowed me to reach the culmination of such an important step in my ministry and vocation as a clergy.

I am infinitely grateful for all your prayers, counsel, and kind thoughts toward us. Without a doubt, we have felt the strong support of our family in the faith.

At the same time, I thank God for the chance to preach on several Sundays at Pleasant Ridge Church. Although I dearly miss worshipping God alongside each one of you, I am both joyful and humbled that the Lord has allowed me to live out this experience in my pastoral journey. I am confident that very soon we will once again lift our praises together to our God.

Up to now, I deeply value all the expressions of love and kindness shown to me and my family. I am especially grateful for the support you have given to the members of the Hispanic ministry as well. Thank you so much for your prayers and word of encouragement.

Truly, we are surrounded by a beautiful community of believers

"Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."

Romans 12:4-5

Con aprecio y cariño.
Pastor Daniel Cardenas ☺

Blessing of the Animals **October 26th at 3 p.m.**

Join us as we gather to give thanks for our furry (or scaled, or feathered) friends by having a Blessing of the Animals service. All animals are welcome, just be sure your pet is safely contained, leashed, or controlled. Please come prepared to clean up after your pet if need be. We will be having this service outdoors, in the courtyard between the offices and the sanctuary. We are excited to celebrate and bless our pets – important members of our families! Our animals bless us in so many ways – let us return the gift and bless them too!

November Surgery

Having recovered from her right knee replacement, Pastor Kim will have her left knee replaced on Tuesday, November 11th. If all goes well, she will be back in worship on Sunday, December 14th. While Pastor Kim is recovering, Pastor Daniel will be covering pastoral care and a variety of guest preachers will be filling the pulpit. If you have any questions or concerns, please see Pastor Kim or the chair of Staff Parish, Barb Balsmeyer.

MISSION MOMENT

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

We are in our final 3 weeks in Tansen - the days are passing quickly with lots of farewell gatherings as well as time spent trying to sort out things at work and at home. Packing will be last minute as we are using things up until the end.

We will miss many things in Tansen. (See photos!) The beauty and variety of flowers and the different types of seasons (rainy and dry!). The amazing view from our bedroom window of the majestic Himalayas. And of course the friends and colleagues who have become like family to us.

At the farewell this evening with the Hospital Christian Fellowship, someone quoted C.S. Lewis, "Christians never say goodbye". We are so thankful for the promise of seeing friends and loved ones again in Heaven someday. And we pray even more fervently for those who are not following Jesus - the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

And - we look forward to seeing you in less than 2 months!

Love, Debbie & Les



All Saints Sunday

On Sunday, November 2nd we will be observing All Saints Day. In addition to receiving Holy Communion and lifting up the names of those from our church family who have passed away since last All Saints Day, we would like to observe this holy day surrounded by pictures of the saints in our lives. We invite you to bring in framed photos of loved ones who have passed away and it does not matter how long ago they passed. We will be placing these photos around the sanctuary for worship on November 2nd so that when we celebrate communion, we can physically see part of 'the great cloud of witnesses' that come to the communion table with us. To accommodate as many pictures as possible, we would prefer 5x7 photos or smaller, but if you only have a larger photo, we will make it work! If you have any questions, please contact Mary Ellen or call the church office (513-423-4629).

October 2025



4 Virginia Jenkins
Bob Rogers
Jen Tucker
6 Betsy Koval
9 Tom Heberling
11 Bob Wieneke
23 Karen Walke
26 Becky Rutledge
27 Sue Diefenbach
Deena L. Langworthy
Charlene Mackall
30 Kay Fraley
Rick Fugett
Larry Kreps
31 Michelle Ward

Happy Birthday!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Dates to remember in November: 2nd All Saints Sunday 11th Pastor Kim's surgery 3rd thru 23rd Harvest of the Heart 27th & 28th OFFICE CLOSED 30th UM Student Sunday special offering			1 7:00 Choir Rhrl	2 2:00 Elizabeth Circle Mt. Pleasant	3 10:00 UWF Board 12:00 First Friday Concert	4 10:00 UWF Board 12:00 First Friday Concert
5 COMMUNION 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Church financial info meeting after worship	6 8:00 Breakfast Club	7 10 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry	8 10:00 Advent Worship 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl	9 2:00 Elizabeth Circle Mt. Pleasant	10 10:00 UWF Board 12:00 First Friday Concert	11 10:00 UWF Board 12:00 First Friday Concert
12 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Church financial info meeting after worship	13 8:00 Breakfast Club 6:00 Legal Clinic	14 10 Staff Mtg 1:00 SPRC 2:00 Pantry	15 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl	16 2:00 Elizabeth Circle Mt. Pleasant	17 AMBASSADOR ARTICLES DUE	18 9:00 Hope Circle Bob Evans
19 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship UWF Soup Luncheon	20 8:00 Breakfast Club	21 10:00 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry 4:00 CMC 5:30 Finance Mtg 6:00 Church Conference	22 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl	23 2:00 Elizabeth Circle Mt. Pleasant	24 10:00 UWF Board 12:00 First Friday Concert	25 10:00 UWF Board 12:00 First Friday Concert
26 Stewardship Sunday 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 3:00 Blessing of the Animals	27 8:00 Breakfast Club	28 10 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry 6:30 Trustees	29 3 & 7 Choir Rhrl	30 2:00 Elizabeth Circle Mt. Pleasant	31 10:00 UWF Board 12:00 First Friday Concert	31 10:00 UWF Board 12:00 First Friday Concert



**2025 First Friday
Concert & Artist Series
October 3, 2025
Queen City Cabaret**

**This dynamic duo will entrance
us with songs from the “Great
American Songbook”, vintage
jazz standards and more**

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