

The Clarion

February 2022

First UMC is a welcoming, accepting, caring and diverse Christian community committed to teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people through faith-based worship, exciting programs and outreach ministry.

Ponderings from your Pastor

*2 Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge;
3 but anyone who loves God is known by him. 1st Corinthians 8: 2-3*

Throughout January and February, we are looking at the letters of Paul to the early Christian community and churches. These letters are the earliest writings after the time of Christ, and they speak well to the hope in Christ, the early struggles of a faithful church, and the way Paul encourages care for one another in community to grow in Christ. As we read these letters today, Paul's words continue to inspire us, give us comfort, and encourage us to follow Jesus in the best way we can. These letters of Paul to the early churches, known as the epistles, also give us a great insight into how the early church grew and changed over time. It is easy to read certain verses of what Paul has written and hold them up above the rest, but to be really engaged to learn and grow in faith, we have to do the necessary work to understand who Paul was writing for and why.

In fact, when we read any part of the Bible, we must read it in context. Before we ask what it means for us, we first have to ask what it meant for those who it was originally spoken to, written for, and to whom it was shared. Why are there so many images in Revelation? Why does Paul seem so harsh against some churches' practices? Why does Jesus speak in parables? Why are parts of the Levitical codes not mentioned elsewhere? What is the purpose of long genealogies that nobody knows how to pronounce anyway? Why couldn't God put a tall fence around the tree in the Garden of Eden? These questions, for the most part, can be answered by understanding the context of what was written.

Is it wrong to have questions about the Bible? No! Even more, sometimes reading the context of many of the scriptures gives us answers we might not find elsewhere and break down assumptions we make about the text. We must approach scripture with humility and openness, curiosity, and the understanding that it is a living, breathing, word that was written both for a specific time and place, and for all of time.

When you encounter any scripture and have time to dive into the Word, I would encourage you to read it 3 times. Read it once with complete sincerity, trying not to bring in assumptions of what the words are supposed to teach you. Hear the words as they are written, taking them in with fresh ears. Try not to gloss over the familiar parts or skip over the unfamiliar. Then take a moment to reflect on the words, asking yourself what makes sense or doesn't.

Read the words a second time. If you can, try to find a study Bible. I would suggest the Harper Collins Study Bible or the New Oxford Annotated Bible. Read the contextual notes about the passage you are reading. Read the beginning of the chapter to find more of the context of the specific chapter or passage. Read the informational sections at the beginning of the book or letter to get even more context. This will help you understand the scene in which the words are being shared. Bounce back and forth between the verses and notes to fully grasp what and why things are shared. I find it fascinating all the ties throughout scripture we often miss, that are an essential word the audience would be absorbing.

Lastly, now having encountered the text openly, and having worked on building the context, read the scripture passage once again. Ask how the passage breathes life into your daily faith journey. Contemplate the words, knowing that God's intentionality in Christ begins in creation and exists in every moment until the end of time. What can we glean from this reading? What is contextual and what infuses this moment of time with hope, love, and grace? What is the Good News of the Word, and even more, how can this Biblical text help me to be a reflection of Jesus Christ in the world? Who does this text call me to be as a part of God's beloved creation?

We are so privileged to read and seek understanding from the Bible. Often times we have to put in the extra work to really understand what God is speaking into our lives, and to fully understand the liberating promises that God in Christ makes to the world. When we read closely, God is also calling us to live in a way that sees a way out of no way, finds peace in the impossible, and hangs onto hope in the face of insurmountable odds. That was the word for those who faithfully followed all across time, and that is the hopeful word for us now. Let us truly take the time to really find the message.

With Honor and Thanks to God,
Pastor Dan



Children's Ministry & Youth Group Updates



Youth Christmas Party Recap

On December 18 our youth group and leaders gathered for a fun Christmas Party. We had pizza, a White Elephant Gift exchange and then made hot chocolate and walked over to the Mt. Clemens Christmas Light Parade to enjoy the lights in downtown Mt. Clemens.



Advent Recap

The Advent Season was filled with wonder and joy! Families received their Advent-in-a-Box activity and report the sticker advent calendar was a complete hit. On Saturday December 11, several families gathered at church to enjoy an afternoon of fun, crafts, music, and a visit with Santa! Bedtime Stories continued with the weekly reading of sections of "Twas the Season of Advent" by Glenys Nellist and other books related to the season. Finally, on Christmas Eve, families gathered for both services to celebrate Christmas as a church family. Thank you to the volunteers who helped make the Advent season meaningful and joyful for all our families.



Confirmation Class

Confirmation 2022

The journey has begun! Three confirmands: Sean Brown and Camden and Caleb Parker, three mentors; Dan McLatcher and Bill and Jeri Wiza, 4 parents: Jim and Terri Brown and Jason and Melissa Parker, and 2 leaders: Rev. Alicea and Sydney Olszewski are exploring what it means to be confirmed while learning about John Wesley, the history of Methodism, and our relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Please continue to keep all participants in your prayers throughout the month of February. Confirmation Sunday is **February 27**.

Children's Books available for check-out

There are many books in our Children's Library available for families to check out and enjoy at home. A list of titles and authors is available. Books may be checked out for 2 weeks and you may check out 2 books at a time. Books will be either placed in your child's Worship Bag for you to collect on Sunday at church or placed in a bag for you to pick up at the church office. If you would like to receive the list of books and check out a book, please contact Rev. Alicea.



Fish Fries Are Coming Back!

Beginning Friday, March 4th through Friday, April 8th ~

Take Out Only

*Pre-Paid Tickets with your time slot are available
through February 27th for
Church Members/Friends/Family
(Not Being Announced to the Public)*

****Volunteers Are Needed,**

Please Contact Sue Tregembo at 586-864-0022**

Dinner Includes: Fried or Baked Fish,
Roll, Cole Slaw, Vegetable,
Fries, Mac & Cheese, Tartar Sauce, Brownie

2 Piece Fish Dinner \$10.00

3 Piece Fish Dinner \$11.00

4 Piece Fish Dinner \$12.00

**Children 5 and Under are Free ~
Meal Includes 1 Piece of Fish,
Fries, Mac & Cheese, Brownie*



Tech Trainee Needed

We are looking for a person or persons to learn our audio/camera system. You don't need to be tech-savvy...just tech-interested. Once trained, you can work with one of our experienced tech people once per month and....have the best seat in church, upstairs in the tech perch! Please consider this opportunity and see Pastor Dan or Dan McLatcher, Terri Brown or Sydney Olszewski for more information.

NOTES FROM YOUR LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Leadership Committee met on January 18, 2022 in person at the church.

Discussion Topics:

- The Committee has agreed to start meeting on a monthly basis. This will allow us to address issues/topics in a more timely manner.
- The Committee received and reviewed the December 31, 2021 Treasurers Report and Balance Sheet.
- Staff Evaluations were conducted. Those staff members who were evaluated were determined to be performing at satisfactory levels.
- The 2022 Budget was presented and approved. Please see the Financial Report as submitted by the Finance Committee.
- Next meeting is scheduled for **February 15th**.

Respectfully submitted,

Your Leadership Committee



New Member Class

On **Sunday, March 13th, from 11:45-1:45**, we will be holding a new member class. We will have lunch available, safe seating, and an opportunity to connect. This class is usually a two-hour class that covers information about our church and how we serve our community, information about the structure and theology of the broader United Methodist Church, and also includes time to share with one another. Following the class there will be an invitation for you to join the church. If you are interested in learning more about the church, or becoming a new member of our church, please let Pastor Dan know. You can call the office, or email Pastor Dan at pastordan@mountclemensumc.org.



For the 4th quarter of 2021 the Endowment Fund generated \$945.32 for the Trustees to use for building maintenance and improvements. For the entire 2021 year the total was \$8992.13. The value of the Endowment Fund as of 12/31/2021 is \$490,087.63.

Ken Fowler

FINANCIAL REPORT

This will provide a report of our finances at year-end for 2021 and discuss our 2022 budget. Again, thank you for all of your incredible generosity.

2021

For 2021, our actual pledged envelope giving was \$243,714, which was about \$10,000 above budget. Our non-pledged envelope giving was about \$57,000, which was \$12,000 over budget. Christmas giving, Easter/Lent giving and loose plate giving were collectively slightly above budget. Our fundraising revenues were significantly below our revenues in 2018 and 2019, but we did achieve our reduced budget of \$5,000. Our one-time gifts were \$20,729, which was \$10,729 over budget. Overall, our revenues were \$17,300 above budget.

The Trustees' expenses were approximately \$4,000 below budget. Our salary and benefit costs were about \$8,000 below budget. Our total expenses were about \$18,000 below budget. We also paid our apportionment at 70%, the highest rate in several years.

We budgeted a shortfall of \$41,434 in 2021 knowing we had surplus from 2020 to cover any shortfall. Our actual shortfall in 2021, between expenses and revenues, was \$6,242. Overall, we ended 2021 with a surplus of approximately \$57,000.

2022

In 2022, we have pledges of \$224,228. We are budgeting, based on our past experience, \$70,000 for non-pledged envelope giving. We are also budgeting \$12,000 for fundraisers from pasty bakes and a garage sale.

We are budgeting a total income of \$340,278 for 2022, compared with a budgeted income of \$322,579 in 2021 and an actual 2021 income of \$339,879. In 2021, we budgeted expenses of \$364,013 and had actual expenses of \$346,121. In 2022, we are budgeting total expenses of \$372,719. We will have a budgeted shortfall of \$32,441 in 2022, compared with a budgeted shortfall of \$41,434 in 2021. We adopted a budget with a shortfall in 2020 and 2021 because we had sufficient surplus to cover the budget, if necessary, and because we had so much momentum that we believed that there was a significant possibility that our giving would be more than budgeted, which did happen in both years. Similarly, in 2022 we are adopting a budget with a shortfall with more than enough surplus to cover it, if necessary, and with optimism that we will be able to generate additional revenue as Covid conditions improve.

MINISTRY IN THE MAKING

In December 2014, we entered into a 15 year mortgage for \$698,437 with the United Methodist Union after several years of rollover mortgages where we paid only interest. In December 2015, the mortgage balance was \$647,521. In June 2016, we conducted the Ministry in the Making campaign with a goal of raising \$320,000 and paying off the mortgage by 2021. We have made lump-sum payments of \$208,384.40, with some pledges still outstanding. Our monthly interest payments have gone from about \$1,950 to less than \$600 per month. As of now, our mortgage balance is approximately \$160,331, a reduction of \$538,106 or about 77% in a little over seven years. If we pay only the mortgage payment and no additional payments, the mortgage will be paid by August 2024, at the latest, more than a five-year reduction in the payment period. The balance as of December 31, 2021 was \$160,331. We will continue to monitor and address the mortgage. The annual cost is \$63,060, which is 17% of our 2022 budget.

ENDOWMENT FUND

We have an Endowment Fund that was created for the purpose of capital improvements to and the maintenance of the Church properties. The Endowment Fund provides interest revenue annually to the Trustees for their expenses. It is also used for maintenance and repairs. In 2021, we used \$8,100 from the Endowment Fund for a new server, gas line repair and water heater, and repairs for a second floor leak. The balance as of December 31, 2021 was \$490,087.63, compared to \$445,314.26 as of December 31, 2020.

In short, despite the pandemic, our overall financial situation improved in 2021, and we are optimistic that it will continue to do so.

Thank you, again for your extreme generosity.

Tim Howlett
Finance Chair

Joys to Share



February Birthdays

Janet Wilden	02/01
Jo Beaudette	02/02
Morgan Wiza	02/04
Hunter Berg	02/05
Jocelyn Prevost	02/05
Stella Wilden	02/06
Ben Oakley	02/07
Kim Rueger-West	02/09
Sandy Baber	02/10
Karen Harris	02/10
William-Cliff Tinkham	02/11
Jamie Brownlee	02/12
Julie Strayer	02/15
Jo Fowler	02/18
Carolyn Merlo	02/18
Jean Lakin	02/19
Kitty Kinic	02/22
Paul Tregembo	02/22
Caleb Parker	02/24
Rosalie Tinkham	02/27
Suzan Littlejohn	02/28

**I wish you
a very happy
birthday!**



February Anniversaries

Thomas & Judy Northrop	02/03
Derald & Patricia Van Camp	02/07
Deborah & Jacques Tchakerian	02/10
Paul & Suzanne Tregembo	02/19
Brandon & Ashley Gawthrop	02/23



Thank you to my FUMC family for the flower arrangement sent for my mom's funeral. The beautiful basket brought light into our lives at a very difficult time. Our whole family deeply appreciated the prayers, love and support through everything.
Darcie West

Thank you for you kind expression of sympathy. Hope you know how much your thoughtfulness is appreciated.
Thank you so much,
from the family of Robert Hill



Thank you from the Staff

On behalf of the staff, I want to express our deep gratitude for the support we receive from this congregation. The staff appreciation and Christmas gifts that we have received make a substantial difference for us. It is a blessing to serve in ministry with a church full of wonderful people who care for the community within and beyond the church, support our staff and clergy, and live out the love of God. Thank you for being a blessing!
-Pastor Dan and Staff

Dear FUMC Family,
My sincere "Thank You" for your many expressions of sympathy, your support and your prayers during Tom's hospitalization and passing. I truly felt surrounded by your love and prayers during that very long week. Thank you to all of those involved in making Tom's memorial service so special and comforting. The music, flowers, scriptures and most of all, the wonderful stories and memories of Tom gathered by Pastor Dan couldn't have been a more perfect tribute to the kind, funny man I was blessed to be with for 33 years. I want to share a couple of comments I remember: First, my nieces who said "That was the best funeral they had ever been to". And a friend who said, "If I ever left the Catholic Church, I would come to your church. Everyone is so warm and welcoming". Amen to that!
With love and gratitude,
Sandy Baber

Our Thoughts and Prayers are with...

Our Church Family

Shirley Champion, Nancy Donahue, Carol Dorsey, Dee Jay Whittam, Jan Hudock, Linda Clor, Jean Borow, Gus Querio, Linda Tinkham

Our Friends and Family

Joe Keppler, Maryon Young, Georgia Holguin, Fred Bobzin, Brian Clor, Kathy Crossman, David Silcox

Grieving

Tom Baber, Marlis Jean Cain, Bob Hill, Vivian Powell, Lilian Willneff, Shirley McCollom

Our Homebound

Jo & Joe Beaudette, Herb & JoAnn Brush, Marilyn Jean Borow, Shirley Champion, Irene Cloud, Nancy Donahue, Shirley French, Suzan Littlejohn, Karen Loos, Roger & Carolyn Merlo, Marilyn Nielsen, Gerald & Barbara Pagett, Gus Querio, Kay Sommers, Ruth Swistock, Fred Thielk, Del Thomas, Linda Tinkham, Rosalie Tinkham, Patsy Weagel, Gladys Wiggins

Those Serving in the Armed Forces

Scott Bean, Cory Berg, Adam Donahue, Matthew Juras, Steven C. Kelly, Tami Morgan, Rande Phan, Brendan Price

College Students

Brianna Akers, Emily Beebe, Hannah Berg, Hunter Berg, Nathan Buchanan, Nicholas Buchanan, Nathan Clifton, Joshua Collins, Hannah Dion, Jessica Evans, Alison Haskell, Kyle Hill, Aaron Hudock, Jackson Kelly, Justin Keppler, Andrew Kosmala, Megan Kosmala, Ashley Krynski, Megan McCallister, Claire Manning, Jack Nielsen, Gabrielle Olszewski, Jordan Olszewski, Sydney Olszewski, Mitchell Salisbury, Kyle Sieben, Jake Williams, Alex Zdravkovski

Contact Information

2022 **First UMC** **Leadership Team**

Linda McLatcher: Chair
Tim Howlett: Finance Chair
Harry Kosmala: Business Manager
Lois Hill: Pastor Parish Chair
Bethany Gimm: Pastor Parish Co-Chair
Justine Olszewski: Chair of Trustees
Linda L. Johnston: Lay Leader
Lois Hill: Lay Member to Annual Conference
Linda Strait: Secretary
Rev. Dan Hart: Pastor
Rev. Alicea Williams: Children and Youth Ministry



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