

The Clarion

September 2021

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

love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Romans 12: 10-12 (NRSV)

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Please pray with me for our children, parents, educators, and our community:

Eternal God, we pray for our children who are returning to school. We pray for them as they enter, again, into an unsure situation, ever evolving and yet with great expectation. God, be with them as they anticipate new beginnings. Help ease any anxiety for the first day's return and help them embrace the opportunity to learn again. May their moments of joy and engagement outweigh the moments of challenge. Holy God, there are enough trials and tribulations for many students, be it social, economic, academic, or situational. Care for our children that they might have the chance to just be kids.

Good Shepherd, we pray for your guidance with our parents. Our parents are also making difficult decisions, trying to weigh the health of their children and their healthiest social and educational development. We pray for discernment with grace, knowing that parents are doing their very best to care for their children, often putting their own needs and goals aside. Holy God, we pray for our parents and their stress. We pray for the fewest bumps possible and better outcomes than we can even imagine that bring peace that surpasses our understanding.

Enduring Creator, we pray as well for our educators. We pray for our teachers, our staff, our administrators, and our school volunteers. We pray for their health in moments where their choice is not able to be followed. We pray for their strength when they become the enforcers of rules, with which they may or may not agree. We pray for their patience when they encounter the stress of others who express their frustration. Holy God, more than anything, we pray for the endurance of our educators to continue after a very long season of constant change. Help them to find moments of breakthrough, connection, and appreciation.

God of all, in this season of trial we pray especially for our local schools and members of our community. We pray for students who are brilliantly creative and courageously strong. We pray for students who are athletic, artistic, academically gifted, and servants to their community. We pray as well for our students who carry undue weight in their lives. Some of our students have the same challenges with Covid-19, but also carry the struggle of food insecurity, lack of stable housing, unsteady situations at home, limits in educational support, and even lack of access to clothing and school supplies. Holy God, help us to understand the differing circumstances of our children both in abundance and want, and to not only pray for their well-being, but to continue to partner with and support our schools and the children within. Help us to be your hands and feet to care for your beloved creation and all who are responsible for their education and growth.

Holy God, for all our children, parents, and educators we pray. Amen.

In Christ,
Pastor Dan

Children's Ministry & Youth Group Updates



Discovery on Adventure Island!

A group of 14 Explorers, their parents/grandparents, volunteers, as well as 14 Virtual Explorers gathered Tuesday August 17-Thursday August 19 for Discovery on Adventure Island VBS! Daring Dan, the Lighthouse Keeper, and Beacon, the Puffin, led our Explorers in finding the guiding lights of Love, Faith, and Joy. Each day Explorers created crafts led by Miss Sydney and Miss Gabi, performed science experiments led by Miss Karen, listened to Bible Stories by Miss Bonnie, and enjoyed time with Daring Dan and Beacon (Pastor Dan and Rev. Alicea) as they discovered the Lanterns of Love, Faith, and Joy along the path. Their guiding verse for the week came from Isaiah 60:1, "Arise! Shine! Your light has come: the Lord's glory has shone upon you!" A fun three days on Adventure Island was had by all!

VBS Volunteers

A big thank you to all who purchased VBS supplies including the Quilters who purchased the last of all the materials your donations were greatly appreciated! A big thanks also to those who came to prepare and pack backpacks, delivered backpacks, and stayed after church to help turn Wesley Hall into our Tropical Adventure Island! A huge shout out to Tom Williams our Adventure Island Explorer Photographer. He took pictures each day and didn't even charge the explorers, which is the best!

Driveway Visits

Driveway visits have finished up for the summer and it was a good beginning to this ministry. Rev. Alicea enjoyed playing with all the children in their driveways. We read stories, played with dinosaurs, drew on with sidewalk chalk, learned how to play Hopscotch, had snacks, played in the dirt with Tonka trucks, and enjoyed chasing bubbles! Driveway Visits will return next summer!



Youth Group NOAH Service Project

On Wednesday, August 11, Rev. Alicea and Sean Brown traveled to Central United Methodist church to serve lunch to anyone who showed up! It was a wonderful morning topped off with lunch at Panera Bread! Watch for other youth group service projects throughout the year!



Confirmation Information Meeting

The Confirmation Information Meeting was rescheduled to **Thursday, September 23, at 7:15pm.** Parents/Grandparents and Confirmands in 6th-8th grades are invited to attend this informational meeting to find out more about our Confirmation Class. This meeting will be offered both in-person and on Zoom. Please contact Rev. Alicea to let her know your interest in attending.

WELCOME BACK TO YOUTH GROUP!

Mark your calendars for our Welcome Back to Youth Group Bash! **Sunday, September 12, beginning at 3:00pm** meet Rev. Alicea and Sydney at Lake St. Clair Metro Park for some fun and games at the park! What does your favorite sandwich say about you? Bring your sandwich and find out. Chips, Cookies, and Drinks will be provided! Want to bring a friend? NO PROBLEM! Let Rev. Alicea know who you are bringing. All students in 6th-12th grades are invited for our afternoon on the beach!

VBS 2021



Ministry Updates



Men's bible study will be on the 1st & 3rd Monday of the month beginning **September 20 at 7pm**. We will begin this year's study with "*The Walk*" by Adam Hamilton. Any questions, please contact Rick Eldridge at 586.465.3998.

Quilts, Quilts and More Quilts

Even in a pandemic, quilters just can't stop cutting up already pretty fabric and sewing it back together in a completely different and, we hope, an even more beautiful way. We have so many new examples to show you. With the holidays looming, a quilt could be a perfect gift for someone you love. On **Sunday, September 19th**, we will be decorating the sanctuary with lots of beautiful quilts and will be showing even more in Wesley Hall. All will be available for purchase. If you are unable to attend that Sunday, we invite you to come to church on any Tuesday between 10am and 3pm to look over the quilts. An added bonus....we would get to see each other face to face or at least mask to mask.

It would be such fun to share our work with you!



Nursery Reopening

Plans are being made to re-open our Nursery! Stay tuned for updates including a date for a workday to clean out the nursery before the carpet removal!



The book club will meet in the nursery on **Tuesday, September 14th, at 10:00am**. Participants may read one or both of these books:

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet, by Jamie Ford
Snow Falling on Cedars, by David Guterson



Mount Clemens First UMC Memorial Garden

In September of 2017, after much consideration, planning, and a dedication to honoring our families, our church went through a process of creating a holy space for families to lay the ashes of their loved ones. Since then, our Memorial Garden has been lovingly cared for and stands ready to receive the saints of our church. We have now inhumed ashes in the garden and have people who have made their intentions for themselves or their loved ones to eventually be in the garden. If you would like more information on our Memorial Garden for you or your loved one, please let the office or Pastor Dan know.



Financial Report

This will provide a summary of our finances through July.

2021 BUDGET

Our pledged giving is \$5,400 (\$143,519 to \$138,123) over budget, although part of that is attributable to some pre-payments. Our non-pledged giving is a little more than \$2,000 (\$28,043 to \$25,962) over budget. We will not have \$2,500 budgeted revenue from a garage sale. Overall, our revenues have been solid.

We have been paying our apportionments (\$19,140 to date) at 70% as budgeted, which is the highest rate we have paid in several years. We are about \$6,000 below budget in total salaries and benefits (\$86,987 to \$93,130) and about \$2,000 below budget in total occupancy and support (\$83,635 to \$85,918). These are our two biggest overall expenses. In short, our performance against budget has been strong to date.

MINISTRY IN THE MAKING

This is a critical area for our church and will be a focus moving forward.

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. As of now, our mortgage balance is approximately \$190,014, a reduction of \$508,423. Our monthly interest payments have gone from about \$1,950 to about \$700. If we pay only the mortgage payment and no additional payments, the mortgage will be paid by September 2024, at the latest, more than a five-year reduction in the payment period. We also have outstanding pledges totaling approximately \$42,000, and we hope that a significant portion of those will be paid. The annual cost of our mortgage is \$63,060, which is 18.5% of our 2021 budget. It will be a significant event to have that paid and to be able to utilize that money to do the things that truly make a church a church.

Thank you again for your extreme generosity.

Tim Howlett
Finance Chair

Joys to Share



September Birthdays

Truman Guard	09/02
Colin McCallister	09/02
Timothy Wilden	09/02
Karen Clary	09/04
Keith Philo	09/04
Connor Ellis	09/05
Lyle Weldon	09/05
Christopher Williams	09/05
Lillyana Haxer	09/06
Terry Jones	09/08
Gabrielle Olszewski	09/10
Deborah Tchakerian	09/13
Paul Schutt-Pointer	09/16
Carol Cusic	09/18
Jenna Zdravkovski	09/20
Cheryl French	09/21
Ashley Gawthrop	09/21
Michael Bridson	09/22
Mary Jo Greenslade	09/22
Jeri Wiza	09/22
Dan Zdravkovski	09/23
Shirley A. Champion	09/24
Martin Lynch	09/24
Beverly Pressley	09/24
Tami Morgan	09/25
Annica Brocker	09/26
Rebecca Card	09/26
Hannah Palmer	09/26
Bob Brown	09/28
Harry Kosmala	09/28
Ruth Swistock	09/28



September Anniversaries

Scott & Danielle Reece	09/05
Donald & Barbara Clay	09/06
Michael & Heather McCallister	09/08
Rick & JJ Eldridge	09/09
Rick & Nancy Lyon	09/14
Roger & Carolyn Merlo	09/15
Darrin & Trisha Deeter	09/17
Tony & Lisa Lucido	09/18
Frank & Mary Ellen Presley	09/20
Ken & Jo Fowler	09/28



*Thank you so much for all of the donations to to our Church Scholarship Fund! In June, we were able to award 3 students with college scholarships through your generosity.
First UMC Scholarship Committee*



*Chair Yoga is back with our friend, Jasmine!! Sessions will be on Mondays at 10:00am, beginning **September 27th** in Wesley Hall. No reservations are necessary. These are "beginner" classes, however, Jasmine offers different levels of intensity throughout her sessions. All ages are welcome!!*

Back To School!

Pencils, glue, paper, and books,
My backpack is filled to the top!
I grab my lunch and gym shoes,
And make my way to the bus stop.

I get to school and walk in,
Walls are decorated, it's cool!
I find my desk with my name,
I am ready for back to school!



back2school prayer

"Dear Lord, use my eyes to **see** new friends.
Open my ears to **hear** my teacher.
Open my mind to **learn** new things.
Let my heart **remember** YOU are near when I'm afraid.
Help me to **love** others like you do.
I want to **shine** your light so bright in my school."
Amen.
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Our Thoughts and Prayers are with...

Our Church Family

Jan Hudock, Marge Knapp, Nancy Donahue, Roger and Carolyn Merlo, Tom Hill, Jamie Brownlee

Grieving

Joyce Wells

Our Friends and Family

Richard Brandon, Maryon Young, Tim Crawford, Etta May, Landon Morrison, Norma Kosmala, Beverly Anglin, Joan R. Parnagian, Rev. Donna Minarik

Our Homebound

Jo & Joe Beaudette, Marilyn Jean Borow, Shirley Champion, Irene Cloud, Karen Loos, Marilyn Nielsen, Gerald & Barbara Pagett, Fred Thielk, Rosalie Tinkham, Patsy Weagel, Gladys Wiggins

Those Serving in the Armed Forces

Scott Bean, Adam Donahue, Brian Hill, Steven C. Kelly, Tami Morgan, Rande Phan

College Students

Brianna Akers, Emily Beebe, Hannah Berg, Nathan Buchanan, Nicholas Buchanan, Nathan Clifton, Joshua Collins, Hannah Dion, Jessica Evans, Alison Haskell, Kyle Hill, Nina Hill, Jackson Kelly, Justin Keppler, Ashley Krynski, Claire Manning, Jack Nielsen, Nick Nielsen, Jordan Olszewski, Sydney Olszewski, Mitchell Salisbury, Kyle Sieben, Amy Beth Simon, Jake Williams

Contact Information

2021 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
Tom Baber: Chair of Trustees
Justine Olszewski: Co-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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