

The Clarion

December 2024

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

Friends in Christ,

In the ebbs and flows of each year in the church, we have a lot of beginnings and endings that we celebrate. We celebrate the kickoff of the ministry year in the fall and celebrate our graduates in the end of Spring when many of our groups pause for the summer. We celebrate the new year in January as the start of a new year, and the beginning of our budget for 2025. Yet, we prepare for the fresh year of ministry in October with stewardship. We mark the celebrations of saints in November, remembering all those members who have passed on to glory in the year before. In every part of the year, we are finding ways to celebrate. This fall we are celebrating putting a roof on our sanctuary, a step we were able to take after paying off our mortgage and celebrating last year. Our church has many things to celebrate in many ways. Each time we are closing out and beginning new chapters in our church.

In our church we also follow the Christian liturgical calendar. If you were to ask any of our children who have been to children's church under Rev. Alicea's care, they can probably tell you that the start of the Christian year is Advent. Advent is the time in the church where we anticipate the coming Christ child, and start again in hearing the stories of Christ, anew! Advent is the start of the new liturgical year. Before we start the year again, we close the Christian year with Christ the King Sunday, which happens the last Sunday in November. This is a Sunday when we recognize that Christ is the Lord of our hearts, and we are called to the hope of Christ's love come to fruition. I am reminded of some of my favorite hymn lyrics, written by Robert Lowery, in the hymn "My Life Flows On." He writes, "Since love is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?" We celebrate our faith in Christ, and then begin again to learn and grow through the stories of Advent.

It is appropriate as a church that we celebrate wonderful beginnings and endings all throughout the year. As we do so I want to name some of the hopes for the future that our church shared in our stewardship celebration Sunday. People shared hope for growth, hope to continue and grow as an inclusive church, for us to continue to grow our youth and children's programs, for continued work on accessibility of our church, for our church to reflect our community better, and a desire for our church to continue to be a beacon of hope and light for all. As we anticipate all that is ahead for our church, thankful to God for all that has come before, we know that Jesus is still at work in our church. What is ahead is so full of possibility and hope. May the Triune God continue to bless us and call us to be a blessing to others.

In Christ,
Pastor Dan



Our Thoughts and Prayers are with...

Our Church Family

Darcie West, Lois Hill, Helen Walter, Marilyn Nielsen, Maurine Deprez, Ray Buchanan,
Caroline Hart

Grieving

Kay Sommers, JoAnn Brush, Frank Yohe, Vanessa Bolden, Fredrick Paul Cooley

Our Friends and Family

Camille Johnson, Brenda Bowers

Our Homebound

Josephine Beaudette, Marilyn Jean Borow, Shirley French, Barbara Knuth, Suzan Littlejohn,
Karen Loos, Carolyn Merlo, Marilyn Nielsen, Linda Tinkham

Those Serving in the Armed Forces

Scott Bean, Cory Berg, Hannah Dion, Matthew Juras, Tami Morgan, Brendan Price

College Students

Brianna Akers, Madelyn Benson, Aniella Bowman, Deanna Buchanan, Nathan Buchanan,
Nicholas Buchanan, Kobe Champion, Maria Chesnutt, Katie Crossman, Tessa Donohue, Drew Donovan,
Jessica Evans, Alison Haskell, Danny Haskell, Cassandra Kee, Jackson Kelly, Gabrielle Olszewski,
Bailey Price, Sarah Salisbury, Kyle Sieben, Alex Zdravkovski, Jenna Zdravkovski

Contact Information

2024-2025 First UMC Leadership Team

Chair: Warren Minarik
Vice-Chair: Terri Brown
Finance Chair: Tim Howlett, Co-Chair: Dan McLatcher
Lay Leader: Sydney Sieben
Secretary: Keith Rosso
Staff Parish Relations Chair: Lois Hill,
Co-Chair: Kim Rueger-West
Trustees Chair: Bill Wiza, Co-Chair: Mike Miller
Trustees Secretary: Barb Clay
Member at Large: Sheila Strunk
Clergy: Rev. Alicea Williams, Rev. Dan Hart



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