

# The Clarion

September 2025

*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

Dear Church Family,

I find it hard to believe that summer has ended and our fall kickoff starts soon. This summer has been one of transition, and I want to thank everyone who has made our family feel so welcomed into the church.

This past Sunday, during my message, I shared about Jesus healing the woman who was suffering on the Sabbath. Jesus did the right thing to alleviate the woman's suffering, even if it meant breaking the rules. This moment in scripture illustrated the heart of God and the importance of helping others through their challenges. We see so many of these stories in the Gospels of Jesus showing compassion upon people by healing someone's physical or spiritual afflictions. We also see this in the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand in Luke's Gospel. Yet in these moments, we also see where boundaries are an essential part of Christ's ministry.

We see examples of this boundary setting in Matthew's and Mark's accounts of the feeding of the five thousand. Immediately after this grand moment, Jesus ascends a mountain by Himself to pray. Also, in Luke 6, we see Jesus spend the night in prayer after healing a man's withered hand and before choosing the twelve disciples.

These examples illustrate the importance of finding moments of prayer and rest, enabling us to recharge and reconnect with God. Having these moments allows us to avoid burnout that takes away our ability to serve. The dictionary defines burnout as "exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually because of prolonged stress or frustration." As we seek to serve our neighbors, finding times of rest and Sabbath are of great importance to avoid burnout, ensuring we maintain our ability to serve over time.

As we ponder this vital topic of rest and Sabbath, how are we finding time to reconnect and recharge with God? What does our mountaintop look like? Is it a place in our house, a favorite coffee shop, or somewhere quiet outside in nature? Let us find these places of peace in our lives so that we avoid burnout. Let us embrace Sabbath and establish healthy boundaries, enabling us to serve the Kingdom of God with all that we have.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Tom



## Children and Youth Ministries



### Children's Worship

Children's Worship begins on **Sunday, September 14**, after Young Christians Moment in the Children's Worship Center. Children ages 3 through 1st grade are invited to join Children's Worship as we learn about worship and hear the stories of faith through Godly Play.

*Children's Worship is in need of 2 authorized adults to lead Children's Worship once a month. If you would like to learn more and go through training to be a leader, contact Rev. Alicea.*

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### Explore Faith Sunday School

Explore Faith Sunday School is for 2nd-5th graders. This class begins on **Sunday, September 14th**, and will meet in the Youth Room after Young Christians Moment. Through Cokesbury's Big Faith curriculum, they will learn the stories of faith and how to apply them to their lives as they follow Christ.

*Explore Faith is in need of 1 authorized adult to teach one Sunday a month. If you would like to know more, please see Rev. Alicea.*

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### Pathfinders

Pathfinders in our 3rd -5th grade youth group. This group will begin meeting on **Sunday, September 28, from 1:30 – 3:30**. Pathfinders meet to have fun, engage in service/missions, and talk about God along the way. This group meets twice a month, except in December and January, from September to May. Pathfinders are always encouraged to invite their friends to come along. *Pathfinders is in need of 1 authorized adult to help lead this group. There will be a meeting of all adult leaders to plan and organize this group. If you are interested, please see Rev. Alicea.*

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### Confirmation

Confirmation is the time in the life of a youth to explore their faith as a Christ follower specifically a United Methodist Christian. This class will explore what it means to follow Christ for themselves as they learn about membership in the United Methodist Church and prepare to renew the vows taken at their baptism by their parents. Youth in 6th-8th grades are invited to join Confirmation this year. Confirmation will be taught by Pastor Tom and Rev. Alicea and will begin **September 28 from 1:30-3:30**. This class will meet twice a month, except December and January, culminating in a Service of Confirmation on **Sunday, May 17**. If you are interested in joining Confirmation please talk with Pastor Tom or Rev. Alicea.

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### Family Gathering Events Save the Dates

**October 4** – Corn Fun Family Farm Casco, MI

**4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

**November 22** – Apple Pie OR Pumpkin Pie Making Day

**9:30 AM**

**December 20** – Breakfast with Santa **9:30 AM**

**January 23-25, 2026** – ALL Church Winter Retreat  
at Lake Louise



Women With Faith will meet **September 18th at noon.**  
We will open with a potluck lunch for fellowship and planning. For those unable to bring a dish to pass - please come anyway there is always plenty of food!!



For the first quarter of 2025 the Endowment Fund generated dividends of \$1,986.56 for the Trustees to use for building maintenance and improvements. Total value of the Fund as of March 31st was \$430,417.86. The Foundation invests these funds 70% in stocks and 30% in bonds for us. Ken Fowler



**Fall Kickoff All-Church Picnic**  
**On Sunday, September 7th,** we will be  
having an all-church picnic in  
Lloyd Job's backyard!  
We will gather from **11:30-4:00pm**  
Please call the church office  
for more details.  
**586-468-6464**

### AUGUST FINANCIAL REPORT

This will provide a report of our finances through July, 2025.

Our actual pledged envelope giving was \$142,821.00, which was \$11,097 below budget. Last year at this time, we were \$3,012 above budget. Our non-pledged envelope giving was \$26,285, which was \$2,561 below budget. Last year at this time we were \$5,096 below budget. When all budgeted offerings are considered, total offerings to date are \$11,895 below budget. Last year at this time our total offerings were \$2,558 above budget.

We are at budget, paying 100% of our apportionment and missions. We are essentially at budget on total salaries, benefits, services. We are currently about \$8,382 above budget on total occupancy and support expenses because of some unexpected expenses at the church and the parsonage.

We still have a surplus of \$28,743, but we are depleting it more than we had hoped, primarily because of the revenue shortfalls.

Thank you, again, for your generosity.



# Our Thoughts and Prayers are with...

## Our Church Family

Walt Sugierski, Darrell Miller, Caleb Adams, Cheryl French

## Grieving

Brent Lawrence

## Our Friends and Family

Nolwen Kelly, Clifford Steggell

## Our Homebound

Josephine Beaudette, Marilyn Jean Borow, Ray Buchanan, Bonnie Kaster, Barbara Knuth, Marilyn Nielsen, Linda Tinkham, Dee Jay Whittam

## 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

### **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: Mike Miller

Member at Large: Jessica Dumas

Member at Large: Sheila Strunk

Clergy: Rev. Alicea Williams, Rev. Tom Hoffmeyer



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Deacon, Reverend Alicea Williams

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