



Messenger

Uniondale United Methodist Church March - April 2022

5867 N. Main St.
P. O. Box 115

Uniondale, IN 46791

Pastor Karen Ottjes
260-228-3634

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E-mail: kottjes@gmail.com

 [UniondaleUnitedMethodistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/UniondaleUnitedMethodistChurch)

Sunday Worship Service – 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School – 10:15 a.m.

Upcoming Events



March and April

Birthdays and Anniversaries

March

- 1 – Kim Chaney
- 17 – Martha Hix
- 19 – Troy Drayer
- 31 – Jan & Michael Roberson

April

- 10 – Jim & Karen Ottjes
- 16 – Steve & Martha Hix

- Saturday, March 5 – Faith Circle - 9 AM
- Sunday, March 6 – First Sunday in Lent, Communion Sunday
- Sunday, March 13 – Daylight Savings Time starts-2 AM
- Sunday, March 20 – Food Bank Sunday-bring your food items
- Sunday, March 27 – Kids Changing the World-bring your change
UMCOR Sunday Offering
- Sunday, April 3 – Communion
- Sunday, April 10 – Palm/Passion Sunday
Food Bank Sunday-bring your food items
- Thursday, April 14 – Maundy Thursday
- Friday, April 15 – Good Friday
- Sunday, April 17 – Easter Fellowship Breakfast-8:15 AM
Easter Service/Communion-9 AM
No Sunday School
- Sunday, April 24 – Kids Changing the World-bring your change
- Saturday, May 7 – Faith Circle Breakfast out-9 AM



****Don't forget****

- * Save your pop tabs and can tabs for Riley's Children's Hospital. Collection can at the back of the church.
- * Save your change for Children Changing the World on the last Sunday of each month.
- * To sign up for CHURCH DUTIES on sheets at back table.

A Word from Our Pastor

Jim and I are glad to see some warmer weather and know that if more cold days and snow come, it won't last for long. Spring arrives on March 20th. The days are getting longer and early on Sunday, March 13th, we'll turn our clocks ahead so we can have an additional hour of sunlight in the evening.

Most of you know of the physical problems that Jim has been having since early January: balance issues which caused several falls and memory problems which caused confusion and repetition of what he said. The diagnosis was excess fluid in his skull causing extra pressure on the brain leading to the issues noted. The cure was surgery (February 16) to put in a shunt to drain the excess fluid into the abdomen where it would naturally be absorbed. He's showing good improvement already, but maximum recovery may take weeks or months. Thank you for your cards and prayers for us during this difficult time in our lives. If you haven't heard our story of how God worked in this situation to show his perfect timing, ask us about it.

My Lenten sermon series is "Wounded for Us: Scriptural Cures for Our Wounds." We are living in a time when many people are hurting. Nothing is the same as what we previously considered to be normal, and many are experiencing emotional, mental, physical, relational or spiritual wounds in their lives. Each sermon looks at one of the five wounds of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and John and concludes with a scriptural "cure," an action we can apply to our lives for healing from that wound. It is my hope that you will find these messages helpful in your own lives.

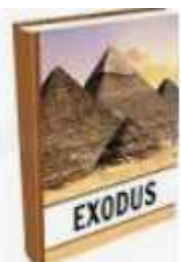
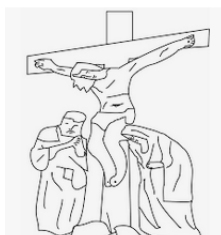
Last year during Lent I preached a series of sermons and led Sunday school lessons about *The Story of Jesus* using a book titled, *The Story*, which includes portions of Scripture in chronological order. For Sunday school this year I will be using the first 6 chapters of *The Story* which covers 4 of the first 5 books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). It starts with the creation of the world, moves through God forming a chosen people (the Hebrews), moving them to Egypt for a long time, and then forcing them to leave and wander in the wilderness. This is the beginnings of how God related to the humans he created and how he expected of them to live.

Here's a new song with words that go along with the Lenten sermon series. Meditate on them throughout Lent.

1. Heal me, hands of Jesus, and search out all my pain;
restore my hope, remove my fear, and bring me peace again.
2. Cleanse me, blood of Jesus, take bitterness away;
let me forgive as one forgiven and bring me peace today.
3. Know me, mind of Jesus, and show me all my sin;
dispel the memories of guilt and bring me peace within.
4. Fill me, joy of Jesus; anxiety shall cease,
And heaven's serenity be mine, for Jesus brings me peace!

By Michael Perry, "Heal Me, Hands of Jesus" # 262 UM Hymnal

Shalom, Pastor Karen <><



Committee News

Faith Circle

Our UUMC women gathered for Faith Circle on March 5 at the church. Martha Hix hosted our morning, serving a delicious array of breakfast treats. She lead us in a delightful activity of painting rocks to be shared with others or hidden to bring a smile to someone's face when they are found. As always, everyone enjoyed the time together. Our men's group met at the same time and enjoyed fellowship and breakfast out. Our next meeting will be May 7, at 9 a.m. We will go out for breakfast. Location to be determined.

Trustees

We who are active participants in this congregation owe a debt of gratitude to Bill and Steve Hix for their work repairing our building. They rebuilt the stairs on the north side going to the basement by the men's restroom and pushed them back into place. As many of you have noticed the steps were dropping down from the place where they were before. They also fixed the trim along the steps that had deteriorated over the years from water getting into the wood. This was not a simple project as the water heater located behind the men's room sink had to be moved so they could get to the steps to boost them up into place and put concrete pads under the supports that wouldn't rot out from future flooding episodes.

We also discovered that the sump pump by the boiler had failed and needed to be replaced. The repairs we made to the boiler last fall seemed to have stopped the boiler from leaking. Since that was done there has been no water on the floor in the boiler room.

The elevator is working well and some of us are using it each Sunday. It is inspected each year so we can renew our state permit. Don't be afraid to use it at any time if you need assistance to get up or down stairs. Jim Ottjes.



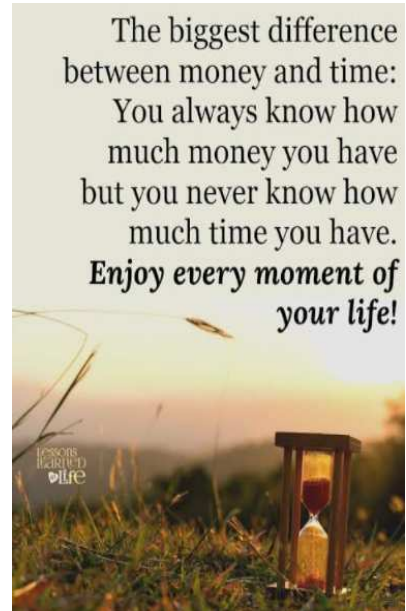
Please remember

Barb Cook
100 Caylor Blvd. Apt. #100
Bluffton, IN 46714

Gary Cook
Markle Health & Rehabilitation
170 N. Tracy Street
Markle, IN 46770

Jeanette Gilbert
Golden Apple Unit
Christian Care
720 East Dustman Rd.
Bluffton, IN 46714
Or Mail to: c/o Jill Martin
2172 E US 224
Ossian, IN 46777

Margaret Hasler
37446 Carson
Farmington Hills, MI 48331



February 2022 Budget Summary	February Actual	February Budget	February Variance	Year to date Actual	Year to date Budget	Year to date Variance
TOTAL INCOME	7,578.67	4,667.58	2,911.09	11,506.01	9,335.16	2,170.85
TOTAL BUDGET EXPENSES	6,002.49	4,667.54	(1,334.95)	9,597.65	8,501.75	(1,095.90)
INCOME LESS EXPENSES	1,576.18	0.04		1,908.36	833.41	

Setting the record straight on church disaffiliations

Commentary by Bishop Robert D. Farr

Feb. 8, 2022 | COLUMBIA, Mo. (UM News)

Commentaries

UM News publishes various commentaries about issues in the denomination. The opinion pieces reflect a variety of viewpoints and are the opinions of the writers, not the UM News staff.

Editor's note: This commentary originally appeared as a statement sent by the bishop's office to the Missouri Conference.

At the Missouri Annual Conference last summer, we celebrated the ministry and good work of several churches that chose to disaffiliate from the denomination. We also named our grief at the loss of connection with these congregations.

Over the last few months, you have probably learned of other churches that are in the process of disaffiliating. As we did last year, we celebrate and mourn with each of these congregations, all while working through the disaffiliation process spelled out in The Book of Discipline.

Although the Missouri Conference has consistently worked with congregations that have explored the disaffiliation process, I have become increasingly concerned about statements made to these congregations. Some statements have been made by attorneys hired by disaffiliating churches; others by clergy or church leaders. The conference has been relatively silent out of respect for the difficult decisions these congregations are making.

In a recent blog post, I commented on the idea of dichotomy: "For every side, there is a counter side. For every opinion, there is a counter opinion. For every action, there is a counteraction." With this in mind, I believe it is important to set the record straight on some of the statements that have been shared with these congregations and have traveled throughout the conference.

First, some attorneys representing disaffiliating churches have pressured congregations to act with speed and secrecy, warning that congregations considering disaffiliation would be "led out of the building," that the conference would change the church's governing documents or that the conference would lock the doors, close the church and sell the building.

Friends, the conference has never taken these steps. We have worked with over a dozen congregations that have disaffiliated or are in the process of disaffiliation. The bishop's cabinet has never closed a single church because it sought to disaffiliate. I have never pulled clergy from an appointment for this reason. The board of trustees has never sold a building because of congregation's desire to disaffiliate. These statements are simply untrue.

We have worked with many congregations that have disaffiliated, that have explored disaffiliation and that have told me they may take that step in the future. None of these congregations has been the target of any type of retribution. If you have been told otherwise, I would invite you to contact your district superintendent so we can set the record straight.

Unfortunately, these rumors have led to numerous situations of clergy making false statements to their congregations, their district superintendents and conference leadership. Although learning that a congregation has made the choice to disaffiliate is always difficult, it is especially disappointing when that announcement is surrounded by deceptive or inflammatory statements.

Second, some clergy and attorneys hired by disaffiliating churches have asked congregations to take a vote on disaffiliation with little notice, often after a small group of church leaders has already amended the church's governing documents. Congregations are confronted with a false narrative that if they vote against disaffiliation, their pastors will leave and they will lose their building. In many cases, the financial cost of disaffiliation is not shared with members of the congregation. This creates a difficult situation when members are surprised by the financial requirements of disaffiliation after voting to approve these actions.

The disaffiliation payment accepted at the last General Conference session is intended to support both our congregations as well as current and retired clergy and their spouses. When a church exits the denomination, it impacts every other church in the connection. The conference requires a standard disaffiliation payment consisting of a church's share of the unfunded pension liability, three years of apportionments and the return of grant funds received in the last five years.

Continued on page 5

The Book of Discipline requires an absolute minimum payment of a church's share of any unfunded pension liability, plus two years of apportionments. These payments are intended to safeguard our promises to clergy and their spouses, as well as to provide support to the conference and other congregations, including those that see an influx of members from a disaffiliating congregation.

Please know that the conference is willing to share these numbers with you and has done so without question in the past. You should contact the Rev. Nate Berneking for these calculations. Our district superintendents have received numerous messages from families that voted to disaffiliate, only to regret their vote when they became aware of information not shared with them. In no event should a congregation be put in a position to vote on disaffiliation without understanding the impact it will have on the financial health of the congregation going forward. Although this is a difficult and emotional process, it should not be one shrouded in secrecy.

Third, a few clergy — and the attorneys representing them — have told their congregations that they have never received any financial support from the conference. In some of these cases, the churches have received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the conference and other United Methodist entities. In others, clergy made these statements even though they accepted conference grant money while in the process of disaffiliation. Again, it is my hope that congregations choosing to move forward with disaffiliation do so as openly and honestly as possible. False statements should play no role in this process.

If you are a United Methodist clergyperson who plans to leave the denomination, I encourage you to please explore the consequences of that action. Under the Discipline, there is no way to retain your clerical credentials in that process: You are either a United Methodist clergyperson or you are not. If you make the difficult choice to leave the denomination, you must surrender your credentials or they will be removed at the conclusion of the disaffiliation process. That action has implications on your health insurance and pension benefits.

Finally, it is important to note that we have worked with churches represented by attorneys and churches that chose not to hire counsel. The decision to disaffiliate is a significant one, and we do not intend to suggest churches should not consult with counsel. I would encourage churches that are considering the disaffiliation process to reach out to other congregations that have gone through this process to learn about their experiences.

It is important to note, however, that some attorneys have engaged in disappointing practices: They have refused to share the calculation of disaffiliation payments until after a congregation votes on disaffiliation, taken actions in violation of the Missouri Nonprofit Corporations Law and made statements they knew to be false. In many cases, small churches have paid tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees on top of the same payment a similar church that worked directly with the conference paid. If your attorney is not providing you with the cost of disaffiliation or is hurrying you to take actions without communicating key pieces of information to your congregation, I hope you will reconsider whom you have hired.

I have been proud that our conference has engaged in good-faith negotiations and agreed to a disaffiliation payment and process with nearly every church pursuing that path. Although the conference has largely avoided litigation related to this issue in the past, we were recently served with a lawsuit filed by Sarcoxie United Methodist Church. That congregation opted to disaffiliate and chose to file suit against the conference without engaging in good-faith negotiations.

In addition, we have spent months negotiating the disaffiliation process with two of our larger churches. Those churches have refused to follow the disaffiliation process spelled out in The Book of Discipline, and one has offered a payment that is several hundred thousand dollars less than the minimum required by The Book of Discipline to support our congregations and clergy. Although we always attempt to avoid litigation, we intend to take whatever actions are necessary to make sure a church's decision to disaffiliate does not have an adverse impact on the financial health of other congregations, clergy or clergy spouses.

I invite your prayers for The United Methodist Church and the Missouri Conference. I want you to know that I am committed to remaining with The United Methodist Church. I've always loved the diversity of our church. I believe Christ commanded us to gather around the table, to make space for one another, and look for Christ in each other. I think that means that we should be wary of making space only for those who think, act, look and perceive the world like we do.

In Missouri, we are committed to strengthening every local church, where the word is preached and Christ is offered, and where the table is set for all who hunger and thirst for righteousness, confident in the prayer: Make us one with Christ, one with each other and one in ministry to all the world.

Bishop Farr leads the Missouri Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church. He is a member of the United Methodist Commission on Communication, which oversees United Methodist Communications, the parent agency of UM News.

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SPRING

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BUDS	GREEN	MELT	SPRING
BUGS	GROW	MUD	TREE
BIRDS	KITE	NEST	WARM
DROP	LEAF	RAIN	WIND
FROG	MAY	SEEDS	WORM

Tree Valley Academy

Oh sing
to the Lord
a new
song