



Lent 2025

March 9 - April 13

It is possible that we will all have moments in our lives that we might call Holy Shifts. These are moments like Moses's encounter with a burning bush. Something happens. We may or may not even know it at the time, but there is some kind of encounter with God or perhaps God was at work in the midst of an event. Then there is a shift. We see ourselves differently, perhaps more clearly as if looking in a mirror for the first time. God has called us to holy ground and a shift within has occurred. We interact with the world and ourselves differently, in a more intentional manner.

During Lent, our worship will challenge us to deepen our awareness of self—to pivot from looking through a lens into a mirror. Each week aligned with the scripture reading of the day, storytellers will tell of their own moments of Holy Shift that they've encountered. There will be words to listen for each time. As a community, we will hear stories of holy shifts and hopefully individually, we will identify within ourselves, holy shifts. We will all have a chance to wander more deeply into these stories after worship in Sunday School.

*From Lens
to Mirror*

Transformation

Conflict

Love

Identity

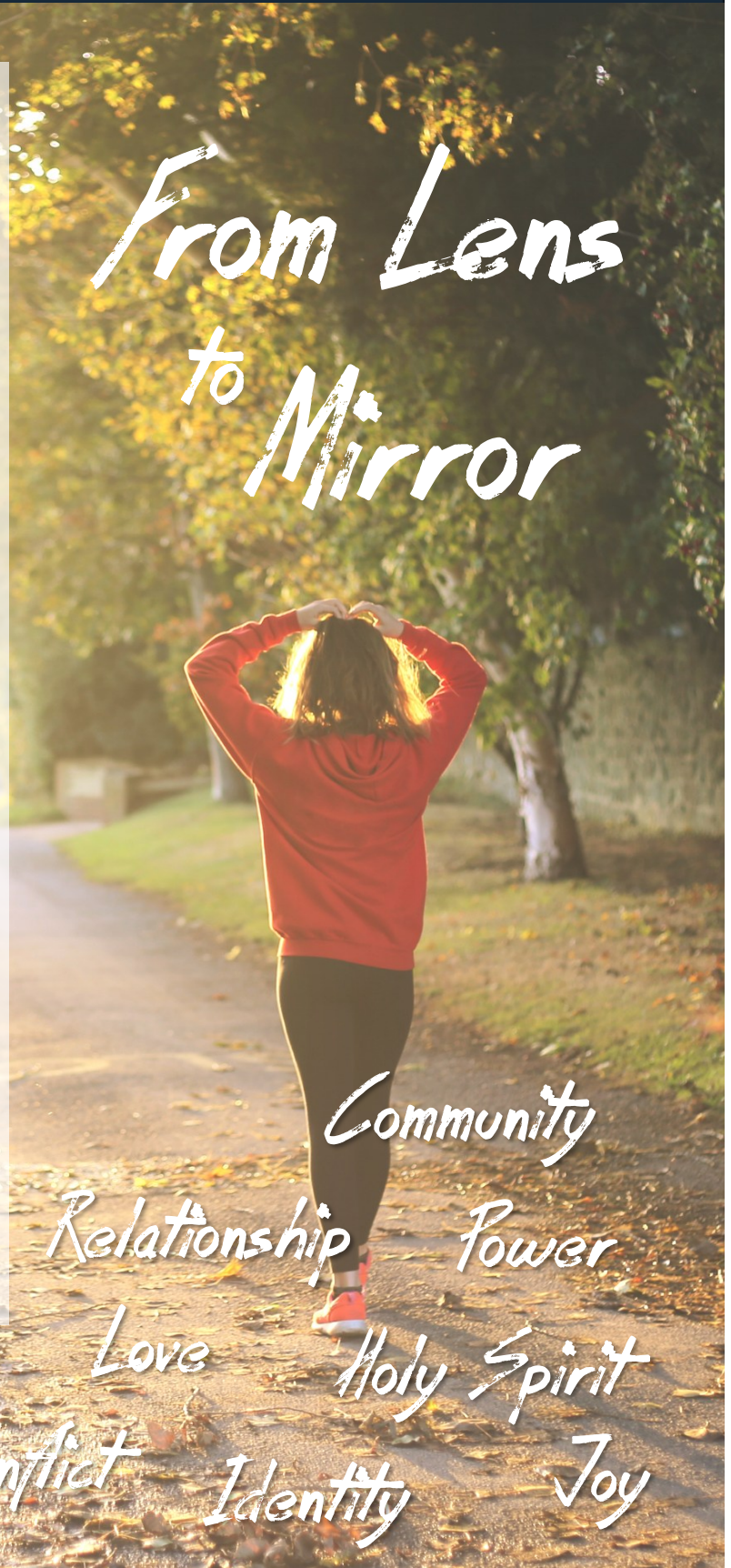
Community

Relationship

Power

Holy Spirit

Joy



CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRIES *by Julia Librizzi*

Save These Dates for Our Upcoming Family Fun Events

Friday, Mar. 14 – Bowling at Airway Lanes, 6 - 7:30pm
 Friday, May 9 – Oshtemo Park/Potluck, 6 - 7:30pm
 Fri-Sun, July 11-13 – Family Camp in Pentwater, MI
 Sunday, August 24 – River Oaks Splash Pad/Potluck, 1 - 3pm

Faith Milestones (Grades 3-5) Events

Sunday, Feb. 23 from 6 - 7:30pm – Back Stage Tour of Church
 Sunday, Mar. 16 from 6 - 7:30pm – Baptism and Confirmation
 Sunday, April 13 from 6 - 7:30pm – Lent
 Friday, May 16 from 6 - 8pm – Scavenger Hunt Downtown Kalamazoo

Bay Shore Day Camp on the Road is coming back this summer August 11-14 (Mon. - Thurs.). Sign-ups and more details about this incredibly fun day camp experience located at our church for children entering kindergarten through 5th grade will be coming soon!

Mom's Retreat in Ludington Beach. We still have openings for this fun weekend planned for April 25-27 at Ludington Beach House that includes yoga, prayer, devotional time, free time, and meals (dinner at restaurant, cost on your own). Cost is \$200. Please contact Julia Librizzi at jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org if you have questions or need the registration and payment links sent to you. The can also access the two links directly from our Around the Corner E-news.

YOUTH MINISTRIES *by Rev. Matt Weiler*

Sundays, February 16 and 23***

6 - 7:30pm Youth Group in the Youth Lounge

****if the weather and snow are just right, we may go sledding at Hillside Middle School on one of these dates. In that case, we would meet at Hillside from 3-4pm. Watch your email for updates!****

Sunday, March 2

6 - 7:30pm Youth Group in the Youth Lounge. Dress warmly for an outdoor bonfire, when we will burn last year's palm branches to create this year's ashes for Ash Wednesday.

Sunday, March 9

6-7:30pm Youth Group in the Youth Lounge. Small Groups to begin Lent .

Sunday, March 16

6-7:30pm It's a-Mario - the return of the St. Patrick's Day Shamrock Shake and Mario Cart tournament!

PLEASE KEEP THESE FRIENDS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Nancy Douglas
 Lenora Holiday
 Judy McClelland
 Wayne Conner
 Ellie Miller
 Mumma Family
 Susan Noble
 Hank Rohs
 Mary Lou Sanderson
 Michael Seals
 Barb Skuza
 Sally Stevens
 Gerry & Tom Schaberg
 Dick Shilts
 Judy Sims
 Tom and Marcia Stobie
 Lori Valkema
 Britnee & Brandon Warzybok Family

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you would like to share a prayer request with our clergy and prayer ministry team, please visit www.umc-kzo.org/contact-us/prayer-request/ or call the church at (269) 381-6340 and leave a message.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE REMINDER

Oftentimes when you need a will, it is too late to have one drawn up. Don't wait. And, don't forget your church and other charities that you want to include in your bequests.

E-MAIL LIST

We also have a weekly E-Newsletter called "Around the Corner." If you would like to be on the church's email list to receive important church news electronically, please contact Jennifer Stupica, jstupica@umc-kzo.org.

FIRST WORD FOR MARCH

Articles for the next issue of the newsletter are due on Friday, March 7, 2025. Submissions should be emailed to Jennifer Stupica, at jstupica@umc-kzo.org. Articles may be edited for space and content.

WINTER WEATHER POLICY

The church will always be open for worship on Sunday. Please use discretion in deciding when to venture out. When week day meetings are canceled, team and committee chairs are asked to contact the church and their team/committee. Please check WWMT Channel 3 news, the church's Facebook page, and email for church closing notices.

Youth Sunday - February 23



We will celebrate Youth Sunday on February 23! "Faith in an Exhausted World" will reflect the story of creation from Genesis 1 and Psalm 8. The youth will serve as song leaders and liturgists, and give testimony to the importance of youth ministry in their lives. We'll also take up a special collection for youth summer Christian camping. We hope you will join us in celebrating our wonderful and gifted youth!

Notice of Church Conference

Sunday, March 2 (following worship)

Members of First Church are invited to attend our upcoming Church Conference, a gathering where all members are welcome to participate in discussion and decision regarding a new Amended and Restated Endowment Policy. Please check upcoming bulletin announcements and Around the Corner E-News for more information.



PRESERVING OUR SACRED SPACE

BY MITCH WILSON, BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Over the past five years our Trustees and Buildings & Grounds committees have committed to ensuring the exterior of our building remains safe and intact. We just completed a multi-phase project to repair mortar joints (tuck pointing), soffits and trceries, and overall cleaning. Our efforts now turn to our beautiful stained glass windows. Although the windows themselves are in good condition, the polycarbonate external covering has exceeded its life expectancy, has become "cloudy," and the venting necessary for the stained glass is failing. It has become time to replace the polycarbonate with a solution which will provide protection for decades to come.

We have selected Glass Traditions (based out of Sturgis) to remove the polycarbonate, perform any necessary repair work, and install a properly vented glass covering to protect the stained glass. Glass Traditions came highly recommended by our exterior vendor partner, Building Restoration, and recently completed similar work at First Congregational. We will phase the project, with the first phase costing \$250,000. Work will start in March with the "Gifts of the Spirit Windows," the six full windows and the one half window on the south side of the church. This phase is funded through a combination of our building reserve fund and bequest gifts left to the church.

If you would like to learn more about our stained glass windows, please visit the Michigan Stained Glass Census website at MichiganStainedGlass.org. In the search, type in "Kalamazoo" under "City." A list of churches in Kalamazoo will appear, and you will be able to click on "First United Methodist Church." Thanks to Ray Eden who registered our windows with the Census back in 1992!

FINANCIAL PICTURE

BY TOM LUNDQUIST AND DANA STUART, FINANCE CO-CHAIRS

Greetings from the Finance Team! 2024 is in the "books" and we have provided the below chart with our key figures for the year. Our total income was right on track coming in at \$1,054,000, compared to the budget of \$1,045,000. Total expenses were just slightly below our \$1,174,000 budget at \$1,167,000.

As many may recall, we began 2024 with a budgeted deficit of \$129,000, with the hopes of finding ways to close the gap throughout the year. We certainly made some headway, but did end the year with a \$113,000 shortfall. We started 2024 with a \$178,000 surplus in our General Fund account, however, which is effectively our beginning checkbook balance." With the \$113,000 actual deficit and some reclassification of dollars to some designated funds from our 2024 account reconciliation project, we are starting 2025 with a General Fund balance of \$47,000.

The Finance Team is working hard on the 2025 budget development, alongside Church Council, ministry teams, staff, and an ad-hoc budget committee. For 2025, we have received 150 pledges toward the budget totaling \$795,000, which compares to 159 pledges for \$820,000 last year. While that is a slight decrease, we have seen increasing trends in areas like unpledged giving, endowment earnings from the Trustees and building usage fees, which resulted in \$250,000 in income last year over known pledges. However, in referring back to the chart, you can see that it now takes a minimum of close to \$1.2 million to support our worship, many important ministries, our wonderful staff, and the beautiful building.

The ad-hoc committee is wrapping up some important, creative work to address the ever changing dynamics of funding our church and should have more to report in the coming weeks. If you have any questions, please reach out to either one of us.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF KALAMAZOO FINANCIAL UPDATE

	2022	2023	Month Ending 12/31/24	Year to Date 12/31/24	2024 Budget	% of Annual Budget
TOTAL INCOME	1,009,594	1,155,208	103,348	1,053,747	1,044,876	100.85%
TOTAL EXPENSE	1,049,297	1,118,942	113,591	1,166,950	1,173,906	99.41%
EXCESS/(DEFICIT)	(39,703)	36,266	(10,243)	(113,203)	(129,030)	

12/31/24 FUND BALANCE **\$47,179**
(after December income and expenses)

2025 Church Council Members

Church Council are a group of leaders who guide and further the ministry of the congregation. The church council exists to create and supervise the strategic plan to envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate our congregation's ministry and mission to be an effective congregation. Church Council meets monthly on the last Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm in the Parlor with a Zoom option. A Zoom link can be obtained by contacting the church office staff.

Church Council Co-Chair - Christine Charles
 Church Council Co-Chair - Deb Search Willoughby
 SPRC Co-Chair - Kerry Castor
 SPRC Co-Chair - Rich Karnemaat
 Trustees Chair - Chris Bovid
 Trustees Vice-Chair - John Boley
 Trustees Treasurer - Molly Williams
 Trustees Secretary - Kay Gross
 Lay Member-Annual Conference - Molly Williams
 Lay Member-Annual Conference - John Clark
 Lay Member-Annual Conference - Deb Search Willoughby
 Finance Co-Chair - Tom Lundquist
 Finance Co-Chair - Dana Stuart
 Treasurer - Terry O'Connor
 Building and Grounds - Donna Dunyak
 Lay Co-Leader - Mary Duncan
 Lay Co-Leader - Vickee Seals
 Generosity Team - Steve Johnson
 Memorials Committee - Linda Lueth
 Caring Committee - Kay Gross
 GRIT - Phil VanOrman
 GRIT - Mandakini Brophy
 Outreach Co-Chair - Dan Duncan
 Outreach Co-Chair - Jay Gross
 Academy Classes - John Clark
 Children and Families Ministries - Katy McGinnis
 Hospitality Team Co-Chair - Vickie Winfield
 Hospitality Team Co-Chair - Karla Evans
 Communications - Jennifer Stupica
 Music & The Arts - Carol Hodges
 Deacon - Cara Weiler
 Youth Council Co-Chair - Grace Johnson
 Youth Council Co-Chair - Bixler Weiler

Staff on Church Council

Lead Pastor - Rev. Julie Kline
 Pastor of Community Foundation - Rev. Matt Weiler
 Director of Children & Families Ministries - Julia Librizzi
 Director of Music - Jacqueline Stilger
 Office Manager - Christi Landreville

A special THANK YOU! to outgoing Church Council Co-Chairs Derek Wheaton and Lori Owen-Rogers, outgoing Generosity Co-Chair Carol Hodges, and outgoing SPRC Co-Chairs Lisa Stucky and the late David Lundquist.

FEBRUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH

One of our Dream Team Partners, the Kalamazoo YWCA, provides shelter and assistance to women and children in a crisis situation, victimized by domestic assault and trafficking. Please consider donating items listed below. Donations can be placed in the box by the food pantry. Thank you!

- new towels (bath, hand, washcloths)
- toothpaste (kids, adult)
- kids waterproof gloves/mittens
- soap/bath gel
- sanitary products
- lotion
- deodorant
- women's socks

THANK YOU!

The Outreach Team would like to thank the congregation for their support of the January Mission of the Month collection. The following items were delivered to the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission and Ministry with Community:

- Men and women's underwear - 109
- Hand warmers - 120 pairs
- Socks (adult and children's sizes) - 38 pairs
- Diapers - 626
- Neck warmers/scarves - 2
- Hats - 19
- Winter gloves - 3 pairs

Our United Methodist camping program, now called "Grace Outside," offers a variety of opportunities for children and youth as well as for adults. Dan Duncan will be leading an adult kayak camp to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore near Munising, MI in the Upper Peninsula for the last time this summer. There is no better way to experience the grandeur of this area. No previous kayaking experience needed—just a spirit of adventure and desire to be immersed in God's creation. **Kayaks and camp gear are provided! Dates are Aug. 18-23.** Dan is happy to answer any questions at danduncan56@gmail.com or 616-502-5092.

Thursday Lenten Organ Recitals

The Music & Arts Committee invite you to five recitals of very talented organists! These one-hour organ recitals are at noon on Thursday during Lent **beginning March 13**. Open to the public and refreshments will be served. Donations are gladly accepted to help support our Music & Arts ministry.