



Alice Wall Bequest

Our congregation is blessed with members who support our ministries in so many ways. We recently learned that one of our members who passed away last year, Alice Wall, left our church a substantial bequest. Alice participated in our worship and prayer life through Friendship Village, where she resided since 2007. She had been regularly cared for by our pastors and lay visitors, and she valued her connections to our congregation and its community outreach.

Alice was born in Grand Rapids, graduating from Ottawa Hills High School, and then went to the University of Arizona, Tucson where she earned her BA, majoring in Spanish. She worked at Dow Chemical Company as a secretary for 19 years before moving to Washington, D.C. where she worked at The Bureau of National Affairs as an Index Editor/Information Specialist for 17 years. After retiring in 1990, Alice returned to Michigan to be closer to her family, and she became very interested in the Kalamazoo County services for persons with developmental disabilities. She met President Barack Obama when he officiated at Kalamazoo Central High School's graduation in 2010.

Alice has left our church an exceptionally generous bequest of \$3.8 million. This gift has been given to First UMC without restrictions, allowing our church leaders maximum flexibility to determine the best ways to use these funds to support our church and its ministries. Our Endowment Policies stipulate that 25% of the bequest goes to our Permanent Endowment Fund. With this gift, the Endowment Fund balance will increase from its current value of \$1.8 million to approximately \$2.7 million. Earnings from the Endow-

ment Fund provide important support to our operations. In 2025, the Endowment Fund will disburse \$63,000 to the operating budget. This bequest will increase the annual disbursement to approximately \$135,000 over the next few years.

The balance of this bequest (about \$2.8 million) will go to the Board of Trustees' discretionary fund. The Trustees are responsible for the repairs and capital improvements to our beautiful facility. This is a huge and increasingly expensive task, as we have an old and historically significant church building. The Board of Trustees has no independent source of income, nor any direct allocation from the church's annual financial campaign, so the Board relies on gifts, grants, and bequests like this to keep our church building safe, accessible, and supportive of our ministries.

There have been many times in the past when the Trustees have had to defer needed capital repairs due to lack of funding. We have been fortunate that major gifts in the past five years have allowed us to address needed repairs to the church—including roof replacements, tuckpointing the entire limestone exterior, HVAC repairs, upgrades to our technology infrastructure, repairs to the organ, and replacing protective covers on some of our stained-glass windows. Over the last decade, such projects have cost an average of \$150,000 per year. There are major projects on the horizon that are still needed and will be expensive, such as upgrading elevator controls and determining ways to make our sanctuary fully accessible.

This unexpected gift from Alice Wall allows the Trustees to address these needs (cont. on p. 4)

COMMISSIONING OF THE 2025 ASP TEAM

"Be the Light, let your light shine before others"

On Sunday, July 13 we commissioned our 2025 ASP Team during worship. This summer the youth of First United Methodist and Portage Chapel Hill are in **Johnson County, Tennessee from July 19-26** for an Appalachian Service Project. Between the two congregations we have 51 youth and adults that will help to make homes warmer, safer, and drier in a mountainous area of the Blue Ridge Mountains.



Kalamazoo First UMC 2025 ASP TEAM

Rev. Matt Weiler, Trevor Anderson, Aria Antias, Jason Brophy, Syd Eger, Ben Cramer-Erbes, Brad Cramer-Erbes, Charlie Cramer-Erbes, Erin Cramer-Erbes, Olivia Cramer-Erbes, Megan Gillish, Lilly Harthorn, Grace Johson, Annika Leep, Arya McGinnis, Katy McGinnis, Lucas McGinnis, Aidan Miller, Josiah Miller, Alex Moon, Brian Moon, Evelyn Moon, Isaac Naylor, Emily Norwood, Phil VanOrman, Cadence Vernola, Joe Vernola, Alec Watkins, Bixler Weiler, Cara Weiler, Coulter Weiler



Photos courtesy Keith Mumma

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR POSITION

The church is hiring a skilled and detail-oriented Communications Coordinator to join our team! This role is 32 hours per week, in-person or hybrid. The ideal candidate will be able to work independently, develop communications strategy, create engaging and appealing content, prepare items for worship, and support our church's mission, vision, and core values. If you or someone you know is interested, please email resumes@umc-kzo.org. For a complete job description, visit our website: umc-kzo.org, click the "CONTACT US" tab, and scroll down the page to "JOB OPENINGS."

Have a classified ad or community flyer you want to share with the congregation?

We allow our congregation to place their personal classified ads on the COMMUNITY side of the bulletin board located in the hall outside the sanctuary for items like "For Sale," "Wanted," "Employment (needed or offered)," "Housing (needed or offered)," and "Services (needed or offered)." If info is incomplete, the ad will be removed. This service is for our church family only. Community flyers are also acceptable if they reflect the mission and values of the church.

OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF

Rev. James W. Boehm, retired Kalamazoo District Superintendent (1989-1996), who died June 15.

Kay Groulx, sister of Carol Hurley, who died July 7.

Ann Douglas, who died July 9.

Wendie Richards, mother of Chris (Rich) Peavler, who died July 9.

PLEASE KEEP THESE FRIENDS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Judy Aardema
Wayne Conner
Nancy Douglas
Robin Entenman
Carol Hurley & family
Jan & Tom Kayser
Rev. Gene & Marilyn Lewis
Judy McClelland
Ellie Miller
Mumma Family
Susan Noble
Peavler Family
Anna Rasmussen
Lois & Jim Richmond
Hank Rohs
Mary Lou Sanderson
Gerry & Tom Schaberg
Michael Seals
Carol Shilts
Barb Skuza
Sally Stevens
Jacqueline Stilger and family
Marcia Stobie and family
Lori Valkema
Christine VanOstran

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.

AUGUST ISSUE OF THE FIRST WORD

Articles for the next issue of *The First Word* are due on Friday, August 15. Submissions should be emailed to Jennifer Stupica, jstupica@umc-kzo.org. Articles may be edited for space and content.

FREE STORE!

Join us for our annual Free Store event

Wednesday, August 20 | 9am to 3pm

We need your help to make this event a success. Please start sorting and saving your gently-used clothing, shoes, toys, books, small appliances, and more. Children and teen clothing will be especially in demand as we help families get ready for a new school year. Please note that we cannot accept car seats, cribs, large furniture, or damaged items.

We will need many volunteers August 17, 18, 19, 20 & 21 to make this event a great success! Sign-up to volunteer at the Welcome Center desk after worship on Sundays August 3, 10 and 17. Please check your calendars and see when you might help!!

Questions? Contact Vickie Winfield at vandcwinfield@aol.com

FOOD PANTRY

BY DAWN WHEATON

Many of our food pantry clients travel by bike or on foot and the thin plastic bags we have do not hold up well. We are hoping to have a supply of reusable cloth canvas bags available. If you have any of these stronger bags that you could donate, please place them in the "food pantry" box located outside the pantry. In addition, the food pantry is always in need of the following items: toilet paper, tooth brushes, toothpaste, deodorant, and can openers. Thank you for your support!

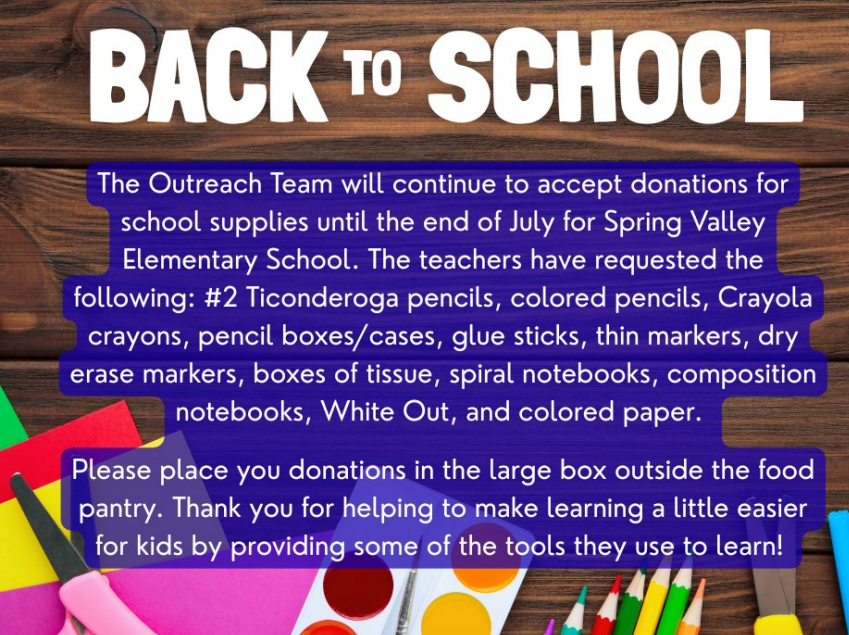


Blessing of the BACKPACKS

Attention anyone of any age returning to school this fall!

Please join us Sunday, August 24 in worship at 10am with your backpack for a back-to-school blessing!

After church at 1pm, please join us at River Oak's County Park splash pad for a potluck lunch and water fun!



BACK TO SCHOOL

The Outreach Team will continue to accept donations for school supplies until the end of July for Spring Valley Elementary School. The teachers have requested the following: #2 Ticonderoga pencils, colored pencils, Crayola crayons, pencil boxes/cases, glue sticks, thin markers, dry erase markers, boxes of tissue, spiral notebooks, composition notebooks, White Out, and colored paper.

Please place your donations in the large box outside the food pantry. Thank you for helping to make learning a little easier for kids by providing some of the tools they use to learn!

KLUMP Softball

Join us for a family-friendly game of softball! We play at Pathfinder Church, 8740 S. Westnedge, Portage.

THURS, July 24 @ 6:15 vs. Cherry Creek

THURS, July 31 @ 6:15 vs. Westwood

THURS, Aug 7 @ 7:45 vs. Pathfinder

THURS, Aug 14 @ 6:15 vs. Cherry Creek

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF KALAMAZOO FINANCIAL UPDATE						
	2023	2024	Month Ending 5/31/25	Year to Date 5/31/25	2025 Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget
TOTAL INCOME	1,155,208	1,053,747	55,020	586,950	1,152,334	50.94%
TOTAL EXPENSE	1,118,942	1,166,950	76,683	415,930	1,202,200	34.60%
EXCESS / (DEFICIT)	36,266	(113,203)	(21,663)	171,020	(49,866)	

ALICE WALL BEQUEST

(cont. from pg. 1)

and to ensure continued maintenance of our facilities. The Board of Trustees have invested these funds with the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan, a century-old institution committed to serving Michigan United Methodist churches with socially responsible, faith-driven investments and charitable-giving services.

Even with this gift, there remains the need for our congregation to continue its generous support of the annual operating budget, which this year is over \$1.1 million. These funds cover staff salaries, routine building costs, office expenses, Christian education, and our obligation to the United Methodist Church. We hope and expect that our members will continue their support for the people and programs that are funded by the operating budget, as well as support for emerging ministries and special outreach projects.

Our congregation's long history of supporting community ministries is important both to our Wesleyan tradition and to the spiritual growth of our church. The Trustees will be working with other church leaders regarding the use of this gift to continue our faith tradition of outreach to the community. Updates on the use of this bequest will be regularly published in future issues of *The First Word*.

- Molly Williams, Trustees

2025-26 CONFIRMATION CLASS

BY REV. MATT WEILER



Confirmation is a time for young people to discover and to discern who they are in Jesus Christ, and if/how they would like to commit themselves to the local church through the Covenant of Baptism. Because these faith and identity questions are significant and arise during such a formative time in the lives of young people, confirmation is a two-year process. All students in 7th grade or older are encouraged to participate. Our next confirmation class is set to begin on Sunday, September 14 following worship until 1pm. Parents are asked to attend this first session. Classes will then meet **every third Sunday of the month from 11:30am -1pm**, and there will be a retreat at Wesley Woods Camp on October 24-26.

If you would like your child to participate in confirmation this coming year please register at the link provided in the Youth email or in Around the Corner, or by emailing Pastor Matt at mweiler@umc-kzo.org.



Trevor Anderson

Son of Kristin Zimmerman
Portage Northern High School

Olivia Cramer-Erbes

Daughter of Erin & Brad Cramer-Erbes
Kalamazoo Central High School

Alec Hornish

Grandson of Rex & Karen Hornish
Maine West High School, Des Plaines, IL

Grace Johnson

Daughter of Danette & Steven Johnson
Gull Lake High School

Max Johnson

Son of Jim & Jodi Johnson
Kalamazoo Central High School & KAMSC

Alexander Isaac Moon

Son of Brian & Jennifer Moon
Portage Central High School

Prayer for all our graduates: *God of truth and knowledge, by your wisdom we are taught the way and the truth. Bless our graduates as they move forward in life. Take away their anxiety and confusion of purpose, and strengthen their many talents and skills. Instill in them a confidence where energies may be gathered up and used for the good of all people. Amen.*

YOUNG ADULTS KAYAKING



Our young adult ministry is a vibrant community where *young people ages 22-39* can grow in their faith, connect with others, and serve our community together. We invite new people to join us!

They are planning a **kayak outing on Saturday, August 2**. [Sign up for the trip through this spreadsheet](#). The group needs to decide on a location, so add any thoughts you have to the spreadsheet. Please email Ruth Butters, Young Adult Resident, if you cannot access the spreadsheet or have questions. You do not need to have a kayak to join them on this outing.