



Join us for upcoming

Praise and **WORSHIP**

Sunday, May 18 @ 10AM | Confirmation Sunday

Our youth will confirm their baptism and claim their faith as their own

Led by Rev. Matt Weiler

Acts 11: 1-18

Sunday, May 25 @ 10AM | Memorial Day Weekend

Exploring Process Theology through a travelogue with slides

Led by Rev. John Boley

Psalms 67, Acts 16: 9-15

Sunday, June 1 @ 10AM | Ascension Sunday

Observing the Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven on the 40th day after Easter

Led by Rev. Dan Duncan with First Beats

Psalms 97, Acts 16: 16-34

Sunday, June 8 @ 10AM | Pentecost Sunday

Commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles

Led by Rev. Matt Weiler

Psalms 104:24-34, 35b, John 14:1-17, Acts 2:1-21

Sunday, June 15 @ 10AM | Peace with Justice Sunday | Father's Day

Gifts of the Spirit and Salvation Stained Glass Windows Worship Series

Led by Rev. Matt Weiler

Psalms 8, John 16:12-15

Sunday, June 22 @ 10AM | Laity Sunday

Celebrating the tradition of lay leadership in the UMC

Led by Carol Hodges

Psalms 64, Luke 17:11-19



CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRIES *by Julia Librizzi*

Thank you so much to our children's Sunday School leaders! Jane Barnes, Lisa Coe, Anne Sherfield, and Joyce Moore have given so much of their time and creativity to the children in Sunday School this year. Some of our 4-year-olds gleefully tell me each week that going to Sunday School for the stories, crafts, snacks and activities is their favorite part of coming to church! Thank you, teachers, for bringing joy and fun while teaching bible stories and sharing God's love.

Upcoming Family Fun Events - Mark Your Calendars!

Fri-Sun, July 11-13 – Family Camp in Pentwater, MI

Please join us for family camping at Lake Michigan Family Campground in Pentwater, MI from July 11-13, 2025. We have a group of sites blocked off for our group under "First UMC of Kalamazoo Katy McGinnis." Full hook up sites, electric and water sites, and platform tent sites available. Call 231-869-5627 to reserve your family's site.

Sunday, August 24 – River Oaks Splash Pad/Potluck, 1 - 3pm

Bay Shore Day Camp on the Road

Attention families of K-5th graders! Please join us Monday, August 11 - Thursday, August 14, 2025 for a day camp from 8:30am to 4:30pm. The camp will be located in our church and we are collaborating with our neighbors at Kalamazoo First Presbyterian. Lunch and two snacks will be included! Activities will include arts and crafts, archery, bible study, wall climbing, games, and water activities. The cost is free, but the spaces are limited, so please register your child/children today! Registration information is in a brochure located at the welcome desk. For help registering or questions, email Ms. Julia at jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org.



Cards of sympathy and condolences for Bernie's wife Jacqueline Stilger can be mailed to:

916 W. Kalamazoo Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007



IN SYMPATHY

Bernie Clayton Foulk, Organist

JUNE 29, 1974 - MAY 8, 2025

Bernie was a true renaissance man who heartily embraced beauty wherever he could find it and never let it go. He brought passion and vigor to everything he did. As a musician, homeowner, chef, husband and friend, Bernie pulled out all the stops.

Music struck a cord with him. With its blend of sensual beauty and mathematical complexity, music was his mind's lifelong playmate.

He is survived by his wife, Jacqueline Stilger, and her children Carsten, Drew, and Avery Strand; his parents, Lon and Ollie Foulk; his siblings, Jon and Donna Foulk; nephews Hans and Roch; and his beloved cat, Teaberry.

A service of remembrance will be held at a later date. *(Excerpts from Bernie's obituary)*

OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF

Dorothy Walker, who died on April 26.

Bernie Foulk, who died May 8.

Tom Stobie, who died May 11.

PLEASE KEEP THESE FRIENDS IN YOUR PRAYERS

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

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.

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.

JUNE ISSUE OF THE FIRST WORD

Articles for the next issue of the newsletter are due on Friday, June 6. Submissions should be emailed to Jennifer Stupica at jstupica@umc-kzo.org. Articles may be edited for space and content.

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC LEAVE OF ABSENCE

by Rev. Matt Weiler

The Staff Parish Relations Committee has, in conversation with Pastor Matt Weiler, granted Director of Music Jacqueline Stilger a leave of absence after the recent death of her spouse, Bernie Foulk. We trust that the care and the prayers Jackie has received from the congregation in the past weeks will continue in her days ahead. In her absence, Pastor Matt will be working with a number of musicians from the congregation to assist the worship team in planning and providing meaningful worship. The staff is also working diligently to identify other ministry areas that will be left void in Jackie's temporary absence.

In gratitude for the congregation's care and understanding during this difficult time.

~ Rich Karnemaat and Kerry Castor - SPRC Co-Chairs

APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT

This summer the youth of First United Methodist and Portage Chapel Hill are traveling to Johnson County, Tennessee the week of June 19-27 for an Appalachian Service Project. Between the two congregations we have 51 traveling together! Within this group are 21 First UMC Youth and 15 First UMC Adults. Our ASP team will be working to repair homes in a mountainous area of the Blue Ridge Mountains. More information about how you can be involved in prayer for our adults and young people during this exciting week will be available in June. Please join us in worship on July 13 to bless and commission our team.

THANK YOU!

Our April Mission of the month helped to support the Seita Scholars Program. This program supports students who have aged out of the foster care system and attend WMU. The Seita Scholars staff were incredibly grateful for our church's generosity, and the gifts came at just the right time as students' funds ran out at the end of the school year. Items donated were:

4 \$25 gift cards
5 \$10 gift cards
10 bottles of body soap
10 bottles of combo shampoo/body wash
6 bottles of shampoo
6 bottles of conditioner
2 bottles of hairspray
4 bottles of lotion
5 deodorants
1 pkg men's razors
4 pkg women's razors
8 pkg tampons
2 pkg feminine pads
6 pkg (small) toilet paper
2 pkg (large) toilet paper
2 large laundry detergents
2 bags laundry pods
2 pkg dryer sheets

May Mission of the Month: Growing Community Garden

The mission of the Growing Community Garden located at Sunnyside UMC is to provide a foraging garden where people cooperate in growing food. During the 2024 growing season over 2,800 pounds of organic fruits and vegetables were harvested or distributed to at least 250 households, impacting more than 500 people. The garden is just over two acres, so the cost (as well as the needs) to run and maintain it are great. Please consider a donation of money or garden supplies to help support this very important ministry in our community. Ways to help:

1. Checks can be made out to the church with "Community Garden" in the memo
2. Donate online by going to our website: <https://www.umc-kzo.org/generosity/>
3. View list of items that the garden needs by clicking the link available in the Mission of the Month article included in our weekly Around the Corner E-News. (If you need to be added to our Around the Corner E-News mailing list, contact Jennifer at jstupica@umc-kzo.org)



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF KALAMAZOO FINANCIAL UPDATE						
	2023	2024	Month Ending 3/31/25	Year to Date 3/31/25	2025 Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget
TOTAL INCOME	1,155,208	1,053,747	87,449	463,601	1,152,334	40.23%
TOTAL EXPENSE	1,118,942	1,166,950	85,142	260,586	1,202,200	21.68%
EXCESS / (DEFICIT)	36,266	(113,203)	2,307	203,015	(49,866)	

CROP WALK UPDATE

~130 individuals participated in the walk with an additional 50 volunteers providing support. As of early May, the walk generated \$18,788 dollars in donations. Of that amount, First UMC donated a total of \$4,690.

EXPLORING THE “SIMPLIFIED ACCOUNTABLE STRUCTURE” CHURCH GOVERNANCE

At the end of 2024, Church Council recommended that our congregation study and discuss a new form of governance for our church known as Simplified Accountable Structure (SAS). Throughout 2025, church leadership and the congregation will explore SAS and ultimately will decide if it is a good fit for Kalamazoo First UMC. Quite simply, SAS would move us to one leadership board rather than four separate administrative committees.

Prior to her renewal leave, Pastor Julie wrote the follow article for this month’s First Word to begin teaching the congregation about SAS. This article is the first of several sharing some of the basics of this governance model. While Pastor Julie is away, Pastor Matt will be working with our Church Council co-chairs, Deb Search-Willoughby and Christine Charles, along with the Church Council members, to learn about and to discern a movement towards the SAS model. if you have any questions, you can contact Pastor Matt, Christine, or Deb.

In the United Methodist Church, our polity has historically called for four administrative committees to care for the business of the church. Those 4 committees are the Trustees Committee, Finance Committee, Pastor Parish Relations Committee (or SPRC), and the Church Council. These committees usually consist of 6 to 12 people serving three-year rotating terms. In addition to these generalities, each committee has its particular nuances and requirements as outlined in the UMC Book of Discipline (book that constitutes the law, polity, and doctrine of the United Methodist Church). While the structure and numbers vary from church to church, the average congregation has somewhere between 25 to 75 members tied up in serving on these 4 administrative committees.

To simplify church structure, the four administrative committees (Trustees, Finance, SPRC, and Church Council) cease to exist as we know them, and they are replaced by one new leadership board of nine

people with three-year terms. This new board is nominated by the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development and voted on by either the church or charge conference. Rather than holding four separate meetings of the four previous administrative committees, there is now one board meeting where the leaders are able to practice healthier and more holistic approach with missional focus and direction. Technically, and in fulfillment with the requirements of the Discipline, all four committees still exist, but they exist as a single unified leadership board, with all of their responsibilities, qualifications, and authority of each administrative committee located in the simplified board. The new leadership board is the Church Council, and it is also the Trustees, which is the Finance Committee, and is the Staff Parish Relations Committee (or SPRC).

Excerpt from “Mission Possible: A Simple Structure for Missional Effectiveness,” pp. 11 and 12, Kay Kotan & Blake Bradford

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF POPE FRANCIS

May 18 & 25 following worship

Led by John Clark in the Parlor

Please join us on May 18 and May 25 after worship for the class, The Life and Ministry of Pope Francis. When Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio became Pope Francis in 2013, few people knew who he was. Even fewer knew the impact he would have on the Catholic Church and the entire world during his papacy. To honor the Pope's recent death, we will reflect on the life and ministry of the first pope from Latin America. What can his teachings tell us as United Methodists about the power of Jesus' message in today's society? We will also view a PBS documentary on Pope Francis.

CONNECTING THROUGH GRATITUDE

June 1, June 8, June 15 following worship

Led by Jennifer Clark in the Parlor

PIVOT 2: Connections. Expressing gratitude is good for our spiritual, emotional, and physical health. Through the lives and words of some intriguing writers and poets, we'll see what wisdom we can reap from their gratitude journeys. We'll reflect on the relationship between gratitude and transformational growth, and between gratitude and joy in the face of difficulties. By diving into and embracing gratitude, we may discover ways to deepen our **connection** to each other and to our community.