

# COMBINED NEWSLETTER

First and Woodmar United Methodist Churches

Issue 002

April 2024

## Worship with Us – Sundays at 10:15!

April - At First United Methodist Church, 6635 Hohman, Hammond

May - At Woodmar United Methodist Church, 7320 Northcote, Hammond

Look! I am doing a new thing; now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it? I am making a way in the desert, paths in the wilderness. Isaiah 43:19



Woodmar United Methodist

# TOWN HALL MEETING

WITH PASTOR JIM

Sunday, April 14, 2024

Noon in the First United Methodist Sanctuary

Topics of Discussion

- New pastor and admin
- Merger discussion

### Woodmar UMC Town Hall

As he moves forward in his new role of pastor of Woodmar UMC, Pastor Jim will lead a Town Hall meeting especially for the Woodmar congregation. It will be on **April 14**, following the worship service. This will be a valuable opportunity for Woodmar members to share their thoughts and ideas with Pastor Jim. He is now officially serving in a dual appointment as 100% pastor of Woodmar UMC and 100% pastor of Hammond First UMC.



First & Woodmar UMC

## Merger Information & Listening Sessions

Presentation	Listening Sessions
12:00-12:30	12:45-1:30

### April 28, 2024

Discuss Merger Team Progress  
Share Perception of Merger  
Envision the Future  
Brainstorm & Ask Questions

Need more Info?

### Town Hall with Listening Groups

Members of the Merger Exploration Team will join Pastor Jim in leading a Combined Town Hall meeting on Sunday, **April 28**, following the worship service. All attendees will have the opportunity to participate in small groups for “listening sessions” during which congregants will be invited to express their ideas and dreams for future ministry, preferences, concerns, and questions. Merger team members will facilitate the listening sessions, and a scribe for each small group will record items discussed and questions raised.

# A Little Something From Pastor Jim

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## The In-Between Time

Why do you look for the living among the dead? (Luke 24:5)

What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. (1 Corinthians 15:36)

Lent, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday are behind us now and, as I look ahead to Pentecost, I am reflecting on the in-between times in life. In between Jesus' resurrection and his ascension, he was no longer in a fully human body, yet he was physically here on earth. I don't really know what that was like. It is a mysterious in-between state.

In our own way, we are living in an in-between state that is also a mystery. Our life as a congregation, for both Woodmar and First, is not the same as it was, but is still not what it will be. Like all uncertain times, this is an uncomfortable situation: familiar patterns are disrupted, routines are changing, every other month we are in unfamiliar surroundings. It is both exciting and unsettling. It is also painful. As both churches contemplate the possibility that their beloved church building may not be the one where a new church would be located, there is anxiety and grief.

When a baby is soon to be born there is much hope and excitement, yet there is also great pain. I am confident that we are in the process of giving birth to something beautiful, wonderful, and powerful. A new church, birthed out of First and Woodmar, brings with it much hope, even though the process of giving birth to that new church will be painful and messy.

Jesus' crucifixion was painful and messy. The disciples were befuddled as they hid in the Upper Room, not knowing what the future would bring. They did not know what to do until the Holy Spirit came upon them powerfully at Pentecost. Only then did they find clarity. Only then did they experience the birth of new life. Only then did they find assurance and power.

In our current uncertainty and discomfort, we may long for the certainty of the congregational life we knew before. But the only thing certain about the past is that it is gone. We won't find new life there, so why do we look for the living among the dead? Perhaps it is because that is the only place that we know to look.

Paul tells us, "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies." Of course, he is speaking of people's physical death, but this applies to the church as well. We can honor the past and learn from it, but we must also let it go. Jesus told Mary at the tomb on the first Easter, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended." (John 20:17 NIV) If we want to rise as a new church, full of life, then perhaps we need to risk letting go so we can ascend to a new life as the church.

The in-between times are truly difficult. I believe that the church that is born from this in-between time will be one filled with power from God's Spirit. The church that rises from the tomb of uncertainty will be filled with new life! The church that we become will be the best of Woodmar, the best of First, and—whatever we become—it will be worth the birth pains, it will be worth the uncertainty, and it will be a place of life.

# Opportunities to Grow Our Faith

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## United Women of Faith

United Women of Faith, formerly known as United Methodist Women, celebrated Holy Week during our annual Agape Meal. Everyone was invited to share agape (the highest form of love) during devotions, holy communion and a traditional meal. Jane Harper-Alport inspired us with beautiful pictures and stories of her travels in the Holy Land.

United Women of Faith is continuing to support worthwhile organizations, including the Lucille Raines Residence in Indianapolis, which houses people recovering from alcohol and drug addiction, and Phil's Friends, which aids local cancer patients. Mary's Circle meets on the third Thursday of each month at 11:00 a.m. for a time of inspiration, socializing and devotion. The meetings are on Zoom and at Woodmar UMC. United Women in Faith is open to any woman, regardless of church affiliation, who wishes to attend. Submitted by Mary Jo Shea

## Weeknight Prayers by Zoom

Evening Prayers continues to meet Monday through Thursday at 8:00 pm via Zoom. A short scripture is read followed by the sharing of joys and concerns and offering our prayers. A Zoom link/call-in number is emailed each day.

## Confirmands to Join Church on April 14

Three youth from First Church have completed their journey toward confirmation and will be welcomed into full UMC membership during worship on April 14. Please join us in supporting Ansley Avina, Isabella Castro, and Van Mulcahey as they are confirmed that Sunday and honored during fellowship following the service. Ansley is the daughter of Niki and Ben Avina. Isabella is the daughter of Amanda Serna, granddaughter of Nicole and Rudy Serna, and great-granddaughter of Roseanne and Terry Watson. Van is the son of John and Ginny Mulcahy, grandson of Karen Mulcahy-Smith, and great-grandson of the late Bill and Pat McCoy.



## Join Us in Bible Study

During April, a Bible Study group facilitated by Donna Beifuss is sharing insights and lots of thoughtful discernment—often sparked with loving laughter—as they continue to study scriptures and questions posed by author James W. Moore in “Yes! Lord, I Have Sinned. But I Have Several Excellent Excuses.” Each chapter stands alone, so please consider joining the group in FUMC Room 1 on Wednesdays at 10:30 am. Topics to be addressed in the remaining chapters for April include hostility, presumptuousness, and the sin of losing our balance. All are welcome!

# Reaching Out to Our Community

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## **Brianna's Hope Offers Faith-Based Recovery**

Brianna's Hope meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 pm at Woodmar UMC. Each meeting starts with a light meal and fellowship. Participants then move to a closed meeting for faith-based recovery support. Various churches, groups and individuals prepare the meals. If you would like to help out with meals, please contact Yvonne Jackson at 219-844-7817.

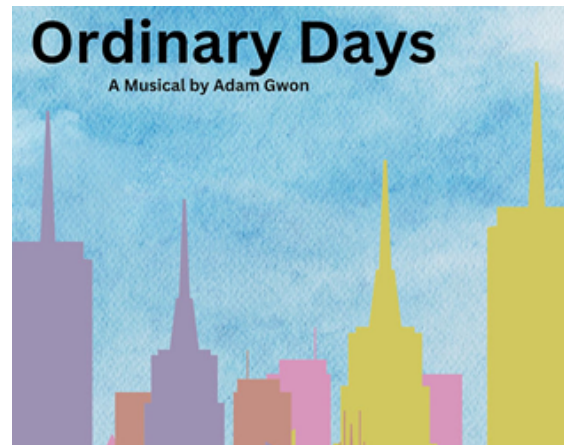


## **Woodmar Community Garden**

The garden is tilled and ready for warm weather planting. Raised beds are being constructed and top soil donations for them would be appreciated. Bags of soil may be left by the shed close to Door G, preschool entry.

Milk Jug Greenhouses were prepared with the help of each class of Community Preschool and Childcare. Seeds were planted in the "greenhouses" so that children can watch the plants grow before they are transplanted into the garden.

Be sure to "Like" the Woodmar Community Garden Facebook page to keep up with the garden, to participate, and to generate interest to our community.



## **Genesisius to Perform "Ordinary Days"**

The Genesisius Guild is an acclaimed Northwest Indiana community theatre group that has been a ministry of First Church for over 40 years, producing musical and dramatic stage plays performed in the church's Fellowship Hall.

The Guild's spring production, "Ordinary Days," opened on the first weekend of April and continues through the coming weekend, with performances on Friday and Saturday, April 12 and 13, at 8:00 pm, and a matinee on Sunday, April 14, at 3:00 pm. For detailed information and to order tickets (adults \$19, students/seniors \$17), visit the Genesisius Guild website at [genesisiusguild.net](http://genesisiusguild.net) or call (219) 501-8228.

"Ordinary Days" is a funny, fresh, and modern story about two women and two men who navigate relationships against the backdrop of vibrant New York City. When Deb loses her most precious possession—the notes to her graduate thesis—she unwittingly starts a chain of events that turns the ordinary days of four New Yorkers into something extraordinary. Told through intricately connected songs and vignettes, "Ordinary Days" is an original musical about growing up and enjoying the view.

# Reaching Out to Children

Evangelism  
and Outreach

Community  
Impact and  
Missions



## Community Preschool and Childcare

As a preschool and childcare ministry of Woodmar UMC, we aim to create unity within our community. CP&CC strives to support each individual and help them connect with necessary resources. One of our missions is to help connect families and individuals with Jesus' teachings! We ask that if anyone has any talents or resources they would like to share with our children, do not hesitate to get in touch with Ms. Karianne @ 219-844-3030 ext.305. We recently connected with an individual coming in to read stories with the kids in our program, and in the past, Paws for Peace visited our families. No experience is too little!

A big thanks to the congregation for the generous donations of Script cards for Papa Johns. We appreciate your support for Bingo Night on April 11 from 5:30-6:30 in the Community Center! All are welcome. Pick-up tickets in the preschool office.

Welcome to Ms. Stacy, our new staff member to CP&CC family!

## Hello, kids!

Your memory verse for April is Psalms 119:11, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Children's Ministry will hold events beyond our church walls throughout the spring, summer, and fall. Watch for information about activities such as a nature walk at a local forest preserve, a field trip to a Northwest Indiana Oilmen baseball game in Whiting, and a fall outing to Scheeringa Farms and Produce in Highland.

If you have ideas for events and field trips you'd like us to consider, please let Mr. Mike know.

Mike Kizman, 219-292-3912,  
[mkizman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkizman@sbcglobal.net)

## MiniUP™ Ending Year with Pizza Party

MiniUP™ draws to a close for this school year on April 16. Families are invited to Woodmar UMC's community center for a pizza supper at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, April 16. The Hammond Public Library will have a table to highlight programs at the library. They will also have information about the library kiosk that is going up on Woodmar's property. Partnering with the library helps us to share the MiniUP™ mission, which is to uplift and empower young children by reinforcing the importance of education and the development of life skills.

# Building Relationships

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## Quilting and Knitting Groups

**First UMC's Knit and Crochet** group meets in the parlor each Thursday from 12:30 to 2:30 pm. Everyone is welcome to join us, whether you are an expert or a beginner. Bring what you are working on or what you need help with. There is always lots of fellowship and needles flying. Contact Sonia Vincent at (708) 224-6744 for more information.

**The Quilters of First Church** meet on Wednesdays at 10:00 am in Rooms 4, 5, and 6 of the south wing of the church.. Bring along your projects, and a bag lunch. If you or someone you know is interested in quilting, contact Lora Ward, (708) 650-6417, lward4203@aol.com.

**Woodmar's Crochet & Knit** group meets on Mondays at 10:00 a.m. in the lounge. If you crochet or knit, please consider joining the group to help make lap blankets or hats We donate them to Phil's Friends, a cancer support and encouragement group. If you would like to learn to crochet or knit, there's always someone who can teach you the craft.

### Caregivers Group Offers Support

Caregivers group is a support group for people in a caregiving situation. Caregiving comes in a variety of ways, whether it be a parent, sibling, spouse, child or even a friend. They meet to share, listen and support one another.

Caregivers of Woodmar UMC meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month for lunch and supporting conversation. They meet at noon at The Wheel Restaurant, 7430 Indianapolis Blvd in Hammond. All are welcome to join in. Please contact Sue Craig with any questions, 219-923-2915.

### Staff-Parish Relations Committees Meeting Together

The First Church SPRC and Woodmar SPRC have met in combined meetings since January. As the two churches now share key staff members (since March 1), including pastor, office manager, and music director, combined meetings bring efficiency to the process. Together, members from both churches are working to support staff during this change, as well as plan for the future. The combined SPRC will meet next on Monday, April 15, at 5:30pm in the Woodmar library.

Niki Avina, First Church SPRC chair, (219) 796-7107, nikiav04@sbcglobal.net

# Missions

Missions

## Hannah's Hope is April Mission Emphasis for First and Woodmar

Both First Church's Second Mile Giving and Woodmar's Monthly Mission will be going to Hannah's Hope in April, doubling our impact!

This non-profit organization provides developmental equipment to kids with special needs and connects families by making life and communities more accessible. Hannah's Hope serves children with special needs from birth to age 18 who live in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. For information about Hannah's Hope, visit [hannahshope.org](http://hannahshope.org). If you are unable to donate, you can pray for those involved with Hannah's Hope and the children they help and tell others about this ministry.

First's mission team would also like to thank everyone who donated to UMCOR, the recipient of Second Mile Giving for March.

Woodmar thanks all for their donations to Heifer International in March.

Richard Miller, Mission Team co-chair,  
(219) 588-4232,  
[richardmiller800@yahoo.com](mailto:richardmiller800@yahoo.com)



## Food Pantry Distributed Over 3 Tons of Food in March!

THE VINE FOOD PANTRY  
AT-A-GLANCE  
March 2024

New Clients.....	26
Return Clients.....	380
Total Clients Served.....	406
New Households.....	12
Return Households.....	190
Total Households Served.....	202
Total Pounds Distributed: 6,324	

## Messy Church Planning

Pastor Jim will lead a Messy Church planning meeting on Sunday, April 21, following the worship service. Everyone interested in learning more about and/or participating in a collaborative Messy Church ministry conducted by First Church and Woodmar UMC is encouraged to attend.

# Congregational Care

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## Happy Birthday to You!

### WUMC BIRTHDAYS

April 1	David Wilkinson
April 3	Edwin Echlin
April 5	Phyllis Sovola
April 5	Ivan Lewis
April 10	Tracie Geurts
April 22	SueLynn Thomas
April 24	Charles Anderson
April 24	James Brill
April 25	Suzanne Wasmund

### FUMC BIRTHDAYS

4/01	Brianna Kalk
4/01	Kaylee Kalk
4/02	Pat Mosley
4/02	Peter Wicklund
4/03	Susan Bravo
4/06	Jackson Dean
4/06	Jonah Hawkins
4/07	June Jordan-Hall
4/08	Payton Kalk
4/08	Janice Wilson
4/13	Don Harris
4/15	Dorothy Kornafel
4/15	Betty Merrick
4/17	Wayne Barnes
4/20	John Schu
4/26	Kobe Shelton

## Congregational Care of First UMC

Caring for members of the congregation with encouragement and support is the focus of First Church's Congregational Care. Staying connected through cards, text messages, home visits, and calls--especially through times of transition or illness--allows for our thoughts and prayers to be acted upon. Are there individuals you would like added to the Congregational Care list? Please contact Pauline Luthi, (219) 689-6505, [pluthi@peoplepc.com](mailto:pluthi@peoplepc.com).

## Congregational Care Corp of Woodmar UMC

March was an exciting month! We look forward to planning more events to keep the excitement going. Join us on April 21, after worship, in Room A at First UMC. Please contact Nancy Craig @ 219-688-2705, with any questions or ideas.



## Thank You Note from Nancy Tatum

*To my Woodmar Family and Friends,  
Ecclesiastes 3 says "There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven. And it's time for a new chapter in my life. I look forward to what new things God has in mind for me.*

*I thank you all for the beautiful send-off. The yummy cake and goodies and the many gifts, cards, and hugs. I will miss you dearly as you will always be in my heart. May God be with us all in this called life.*

*Nancy Tatum*



# Discipleship

## North District Discipleship Training Event

Learning to Lead like Jesus is a free training event on Saturday, April 20 from 2:00-5:00 at Church of the Four Seasons ( 9100 E. 109th Ave., Crown Point). The North District is hosting this event for all laity. Everyone is encouraged to attend. Carpools are being arranged; please contact the church office if you are interested.

Our Conference Superintendent Rev. Dr. Marti Lundy writes that she has “not yet come across any church without room to grow in how they identify, recruit, train, and encourage leaders. Our FREE spring learning event is here to help!” “Leading Like Jesus to Transform Your Church,” will be led by Rev. Dr. Kent A. Lundy.

This event will offer insights on the following:

- Timeless leadership lessons from Jesus that apply today
- Recruit leaders who are congruent with your church’s strategic vision for ministry
- Fire ineffective volunteers (and keep the effective ones)
- Be equipped with coaching techniques that will increase meeting effectiveness
- Take home a game plan for the next steps to transform your church
- Learn from others and make new connections from across our district

## UMC General Conference, April 23—May 3

There are many ways you can stay up to date with news from the upcoming United Methodist General Conference that will take place in Charlotte, North Carolina, from April 23—May 3. The following are highly recommended by Conference Superintendent Rev. Dr. Marti Lundy:

- General Conference resources about how we can talk about Conference issues before, during, and after can be found on the North District webpage. <https://www.inumc.org/2024/03/25/general-conference-2024-resources/>
- Watch General Conference live and read legislation at: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/general-conference-2020>
- Like the North District page on Facebook. CS Marti Lundy, a member of the Indiana UMC delegation to General Conference, will be posting information live from General Conference. <https://www.facebook.com/NorthDistrictINUMC>
- The North District will host some informational meetings after General Conference. Information will be emailed to all clergy soon with times and dates.



# Stewardship

## Woodmar Finance News

February ended with expenses over income of \$7,225. We received \$7,638 in offerings for the month. The parsonage is being rented for \$1,250/month with \$625 of that being put in Special Funds for the maintenance of the parsonage. Expenses were normal; nothing unusual for February. Community Preschool had a nice month - \$6,360 income over expenses! We'll see what March brings.

## FUMC Finance News

As Sunday morning worship shifts monthly between First Church and Woodmar UMC, the FUMC Finance Committee encourages members to remember that the church's need for financial support remains a constant. First Church has incurred above-normal expenses over the past several months as repairs at the Fran-Lin parsonage were completed to return the parsonage to the market for sale. Invoices were paid to cover several significant repairs at the church.

## First Church Request

First Church has approached the Foundation for support to help offset a deficit of over \$30,000 in our Current Expense Fund. Your contributions of tithes and offerings on a regular basis will be greatly appreciated as we work to achieve the healthiest cash position possible in our quest to determine how we can fulfill God's call for ministry going forward.

If you have questions or would like a copy of the latest FUMC Finance report, please contact Finance Chair Ralph Smith, (219) 941-8219, [rsmith41@gmail.com](mailto:rsmith41@gmail.com); Finance Task Force Member Jane Harper-Alport, (219) 718-8328, [jharperalport@gmail.com](mailto:jharperalport@gmail.com); or Treasurer Larry Alport, (219) 730-1798, [lawrence.alport@gmail.com](mailto:lawrence.alport@gmail.com).

## Planning Begins for FUMC Rummage Sale

First Church will once again conduct a rummage sale, scheduled for Saturday, June 22, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, led by the Missions Team with the help of many volunteers, including members of United Women in Faith. Proceeds will be distributed equally to First Church mission projects, United Women in Faith, and the church's operating expense fund. Items for the rummage sale can be brought to the church (Room 9) from June 2 through June 19. Please join us for a Rummage Sale planning meeting on Sunday, April 14, around 11:45 am in Room A. Everyone is welcome to join us. Katy Province-Garza, Mission Team co-chair, (708) 707-6119, [kprovi1@hotmail.com](mailto:kprovi1@hotmail.com)



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### **Pastor Jim's April Vacation**

Pastor Jim will take some well-deserved time for vacation from April 8 through 13. While he is out of town, please contact Pastor Jared Kendall, (219) 838-4770, of Ridge United Methodist Church, with any pastoral needs that require immediate assistance.

## **Contact Information**

### **First United Methodist Church**

6635 Hohman Ave, Hammond, IN 46324

Phone (219) 932-5915

[www.hammondfumc.org](http://www.hammondfumc.org)

email - [admin@hammondfumc.org](mailto:admin@hammondfumc.org)

### **Woodmar United Methodist Church**

7320 Northcote Ave, Hammond, IN 46324

Phone (219) 844-3030

[www.woodmarumc.org](http://www.woodmarumc.org)

email - [office@woodmarumc.org](mailto:office@woodmarumc.org)

### **Brenda's Office Hours**

First UMC on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30-2:30

Woodmar UMC on Monday and Wednesday from 10:00 - 1:00

Brenda is available during business hours by phone, text, and email at either location.

### **Pastor Jim's Office Hours**

First Church: 10:00 am - 3:00 pm on Tuesday & Thursday

Woodmar: 10:00 am - 3:00 pm on Monday and 1:00 - 4:00 pm on Wednesday

Please keep in mind that pastoral care needs may mean that he will be in and out of the office during these times. It is always advisable to call to schedule a time to meet with him. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Pastor Jim or Brenda.

### **Breakthrough Prayer**

*Look! I'm doing a new thing; now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it? I'm making a way in the desert, paths in the wilderness. Isaiah 43:19*

*O holy and mighty redeemer, you act powerfully on behalf of your people. Our old ways no longer serve us, and we feel stuck. Breakthrough our complacency and reluctance as you reveal to us the new thing that you are doing with us. Help us to trust you. Equip us as we make our way down unfamiliar paths into the future that you are calling us to journey toward. Relieve our anxieties about our own future so that we may freely bring your loving grace to others.*

