

Woodmar and First UMC NEWSLETTER

Issue 001

March 2024

Worship for March

Worship will be held at Woodmar UMC, 7320 Northcote, Hammond, IN at 10:15 . Worship for April will be held at First UMC, 6635 Hohman, Hammond, IN at 10:15.

A New Thing!

Look! I am 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

Our combined newsletter is an opportunity to view the ministries and connections that enrich our souls and our community. Please extend our Communications Team some grace as we endeavor to create a new thing!

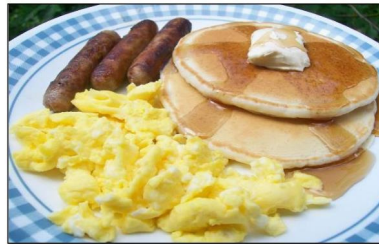
Lenten Study

Depths of Love, led by Pastor Jim. Offered two times: 11:00 am in

Room A of First UMC for In-Person study and discussion. A 7pm Zoom is also offered. Please contact either church office for the Zoom link.



Invite Family and Friends to the Trustee's
FREE Pancake Breakfast & Bake Sale!
Palm Sunday, March 24th from 8:30 - 1:30



Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs, Sausage, Milk, Juice and Coffee

Baked Goods will also be Available for Purchase

Profits from the Bake Sale will support the Choir

WOODMAR UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

7320 NORTHCOTE AVE • HAMMOND, IN 46324 • (219) 844-3030 • WOODMARUMC.ORG

Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday Worship- March 28 at 7 pm at Woodmar UMC

Good Friday Worship- March 29 at 7pm at First UMC

Easter- March 31 at 10:15 am at Woodmar UMC

Opportunities to Grow Our Faith

United Women of Faith

Come celebrate Holy Week with the joyous inspiration of our annual Agape Meal on March 26th at noon at WUMC. All are invited. We will share agape (the highest form of love) during devotions and holy communion. Our meal will consist of olives, cheese, kugel and other foods that have traditionally been reminders of the supper of Jesus.

The executive board of United Women of Faith, chaired by Yvonne Jackson, finalized our year's budget. We support many missions including Haven House, Bashor Children's Home, Community Services of Northwest Indiana and Community Preschool and Childcare. Mary's Circle continues to meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 11:00 am at WUMC and on Zoom under the direction of Donna Benirschke. United Women in Faith is open to any woman, regardless of church affiliation, who wishes to attend. Submitted by Mary Jo Shea, marjoshea@gmail.com.

Bible Study

Bible Study at First UMC meets on Wednesdays at 10:30 am in Room 1. This dynamic study and discussion is facilitated by Donna Beifuss and prayerfully led by the Holy Spirit. Currently, the class is studying a book by James Moore titled, Yes! Lord, I Have Sinned but I Have Several Excellent Excuses. All are invited!

Confirmation Class

Three young adults, Ansley, Isabella, and Van, meet every other Monday at FUMC led by Pastor Jim. In this class we have learned the importance of being confirmed, how to be a part of our church, and how to support our church. Van, Isabella, and Ansley are being confirmed on April 14, 2024, during worship at FUMC.

Evening Prayers

Evening prayers take place Monday through Thursday at 8 pm via Zoom. This group began meeting five years ago during COVID, when we could not meet in person. We felt that prayers were especially needed for those on the front lines, including hospital workers, emergency personnel and those affected by the pandemic.

A short scripture is read followed by the sharing of joys and concerns and offering our prayers of praise and thanksgiving. We pray for those in need of the Lord's healing touch, concerns for our congregation, local community, nation and our world. All are welcome to join any or all of the four evenings. A Zoom link/ call in number is emailed daily from the church office. A computer is not necessary; you can join, as do others, by telephone.

Reaching Out to Our Community

Community Garden

Our mission through the Woodmar Community Garden is to “Nourish Body, Mind, and Soul.” Our vision is to foster community relationships while nurturing the garden and each other. We are a free-pick garden that encourages community collaboration in preparation, maintenance and harvesting. The Community Garden is located on the property of Woodmar UMC, and is parallel to 173rd Street. Access to the garden is from our north parking lot, which is used daily by members of the YMCA, Community Preschool, Blessing Box and Free Library users.

Gardeners are needed! The Garden needs a team to wrap their garden gloves around this ministry. Please “Like” our Woodmar Community Garden Facebook page to generate interest to a wider community. Contact person, Cyndi Slaboski at cslaboski@gmail.com.

Community Preschool

Community Preschool and Childcare, is a registered childcare ministry of Woodmar UMC. There are currently 55 children ages 3-5 years enrolled. CP&CC is a nationally accredited early childhood education program that continues year round from 7 am until 5 pm. CP&CC is planning a Family Bingo Night to get to know our families better and provide opportunities for families to connect. We hope to include our WUMC and FUMC families and members to come and build relationships. Mark your calendar for April 11, at 5:30 pm.

We are happy to welcome Pastor Jim Denton. He will join Pastor Pete this month for Chapel Time. During Chapel Time, the pastor helps the kiddos form a relationship with God through engaging songs and stories from the Bible.

Mini UP

MiniUP™ began at Kokomo Urban Outreach with a mission to uplift and empower young children by reinforcing the importance of education and the development of life skills. MiniUP™ is for kindergarten, first and second grade students along with sixth grade Buddies. We meet on most Tuesdays, 3:00 – 4:30 pm. Nine consistent adults lead one of the rotations. Rotations include math, handwriting and phonics which are separated by grades. Sixth grade Buddies act as guides to move children through the rotations as positive role models. We currently have 60 children enrolled in MiniUP™.

Would you like to experience MiniUP by shadowing our team? We would love to have more adults to love and encourage children. A Family Pizza Supper and Resources will be held on April 16, 5:00 pm at Woodmar UMC Community Center. Extra hands and hearts are needed as we reach out to the MiniUP™ families. Contact Cyndi Slaboski at cslaboski@gmail.com.

Building Relationships

WUMC Knit and Crochet

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 to donate 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.

FUMC Knit and Crochet

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 at 708-224-6744 for questions.

Quilters

The Quilters of First UMC meet on Wednesday mornings at 10:00am in Rooms 4,5,6 If you or someone you know is interested in quilting, contact Lora Ward.

Book Club

You are invited to join the Woodmar Book Club. They meet via Zoom on the 3rd Monday of each month at 1:00 p.m. The selected title for the March discussion is *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. This Pulitzer Prize winning novel is set in the mountains of southern Appalachia. "It's the story of a boy, *Demon Copperhead*, born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival." The club provides social time and a chance to talk and listen to others with the chosen book as the conversation starter.

Paws for Peace

The Paws for Peace group visits Hartsfield Village with their cute pups to spread love and cheer to the residents. Everyone is invited to bring their gentle, furry pet. A current immunization record is needed the first time. For more info, contact Suzanne Wasmund via phone 219-718-4667 or email: wazzysport@att.net. Upcoming dates to visit Hartsfield Village are March 20 and May 15.

Missions

Missions

FUMC Missions

The financial contributions for Second Mile Giving for March will go towards UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). As the humanitarian relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church, the United Methodist Committee on Relief – UMCOR – assists United Methodists and churches to become involved globally in direct ministry to persons in need. UMCOR comes alongside those who suffer from natural or human-caused disasters – famine, hurricane, war, flood, fire or other events—to alleviate suffering and serve as a source of help and hope for the vulnerable. If you are unable to donate financially, you can also pray for the victims of the disasters and those helping the victims. The mission team would also like to thank everyone who donated financially to the February Second Mile Giving Sojourner Truth House. The mission team would also like to thank everyone for the financial contributions that was collected in November 2023 for Veterans Life-Changing services and the Indiana Veteran's Home. The total amount was \$845.00 We also like to thank you for the donation of the amount of \$1,489.28 for the Bishop's Christmas Offering for December of 2023 and the amount collected for Love Inc. in January of 2024 which was \$360.00.

WUMC's Missions

Heifer International was started in 1944 by founder Dan West, an Indiana farmer serving as a relief worker during the Spanish Civil War. He was ladling out milk to hungry refugee children and later he wrote "These children don't need a cup of milk, they need a cow." The charity sent its first shipment of 17 heifers to Puerto Rico. The first cows were named "Faith," "Hope" and "Charity." The recipient families had to promise they would donate the first female calf to another poor family. Heifer International would eventually broaden its scope to distribute fish, chickens, pigs, goats, sheep, cattle, oxen, water buffaloes, bees, llamas, alpacas, camels, frogs and rabbits to rural communities around the world. It is now a global nonprofit working to eradicate poverty and hunger through sustainable values-based holistic community development. Heifer International distributes animals, along with agricultural and value-based training, to families in need around the world as a means of providing self-sufficiency. Submitted by Nancy Jarmula, njarmula@sbcglobal.net.

The Vine Food Pantry of First UMC

The mission team would also like to report that as of 2020 the numbers for the food pantry are as follows. The pounds of food distribute annually is 114,828. The pounds of food distributed monthly is 13,298. The number of households served monthly is 538. The food pantry also needs volunteers to help out at the food pantry. Please consider volunteering and helping out. The food pantry is open Monday to Thursday 10 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.. Please see Pastor Jim for more details.

The FUMC mission team would also like to remind everyone that we are once again having a rummage sale this year. It will be on Saturday, June 22, 2024. Stay tuned for more details to come.

Birthdays

WUMC BIRTHDAYS

March 1: Robert Solon, Sue Fusner
March 4: Carol Wagner
March 8: Mary Jo Shea
March 16: Bong Yohl Kim
March 18: Debbie Austin, Shirley Lopatkiewicz
March 20: Andrea Fukuyama
March 24: Donna Wilkinson
March 29: Vincent Romero

FUMC BIRTHDAYS

3/3 Ken Baker
3/3 Mary Cook-Baker
3/5 Phyllis Widstrand
3/6 Shana Chelich
3/6 Kaitlyn Encinas
3/7 Jerry Kolanowski
3/10 John Adkinson
3/13 Dean Seehausen
3/14 Bellamy Avina
3/14 Logan Malloy
3/17 Tim Petty
3/18 Jan Yehnert
3/18 Jack Yerkes
3/19 Amy Rummel
3/20 Peggy Link
3/21 Esther Bunger
3/22 Paolo Mejia
3/23 Ansley Avina
3/24 Alyson Hawkins
3/25 Isaiah Herrera
3/25 Pam Longhi
3/29 Blake Cook
3/30 Karen Mulcahy-Smith
3/31 Paulette Tapper

Children's Ministry

Hi kids!

Your memory verse for March is John 15:11, "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

Children's Ministry will be holding events outside of church this Spring through Fall. Watch for outings like nature hikes and trip to an Oilmen baseball game in Whiting. All are invited to these events, not just our young friends. If you have ideas for field trips, let Mr. Mike know.

Mr. Mike

Congregational Care

Congregational Care Corp, or CCC, of Woodmar UMC, is a group of men and women who plan events throughout the year. Events include the annual Thanksgiving Dinner, annual church picnic, chili cook-off, and special celebrations. If no one has signed up for fellowship refreshments, we will make contacts to provide the Sunday morning refreshments, especially on holidays. Each month, we send cards for birthdays, thinking of you, holiday cards and sympathy cards to members of our congregation. We meet on the 3rd Sunday of the month and are always open to new people joining us with any new ideas. Nancy Craig at ncraig1660@yahoo.com.

Congregational Care of First UMC

Caring for members of the congregation with encouragement and support is the focus of 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. Pauline Luthi leads CC.

A Little Something From Pastor Jim

March has arrived. It is spring-ish and our thoughts turn toward the change of seasons and the green and flowering things springing up from the cold ground. Personally, I struggle through winters. I don't like the cold, but I really struggle with the grayness. The sky is frequently gray, the trees are gray without their leaves, and even the snow turns gray with dirt and soot after just a day or two. My mood suffers and my hope for new life grows weak and weary.

For many of us, this is how we feel about this season of decline that our churches have been experiencing. We remember the days when our sanctuaries were filled, when children were everywhere, and when we had great participation in our events and ministries. Some of us long for a Springtime in the church. We want to have things the way that they were. We want to relive those memories; we want to again experience the vitality that feels like it has slipped away from us. Since that time of vitality, the world has changed, our communities have changed, and we have changed. These are all shifts in the various cultures that we inhabit and there is no going back to the good old days because those cultures have passed away. But that does not mean that there is no reason to hope, and it does not mean that there won't be a new Spring.

The Church is nothing if not a "communion" of people. It is people bound together by one faith and one baptism, not by having the same opinions and preferences. It is Jesus Christ who binds us together, but the process involves change which produces anxiety and a desire to maintain the status quo. But the status quo is exactly the thing that has led to our "gray winter" in the church. We must find the Spring and let something new burst forth.

This will be hard work and it will be chaotic and challenging. We will each have to evaluate what we value and let go of those things of lesser value in order to grab hold of something of higher value. Church consultant Gil Rendle says that "real community is created by working through disagreements." In that process, we have the opportunity to build trust, give and receive grace, and grow in love as we show love to others.

There is hard work ahead, but Christ will be with us each step of the way, springing forth with new life and bringing great joy to us and to our community. In the meantime, we have to prepare ourselves and our "garden" for the new growth. Rip out the dead stalks from the past, turn the soil over, and be ready to plant new seeds for a new harvest.

Blessings,
Jim

Discipleship

Power For Living Class The members of First United and Woodmar United Methodist Churches are invited to join the Power for Living Sunday School class. The group meets via Zoom on Sunday mornings at 9am. This month, the Power for Living class will begin studying "Meeting Jesus at the Table " by Cynthia M. Campbell and Catherine Coy Fohr.

In the last days of Jesus' life, He sat at the Passover meal with his closest friends. Following the resurrection, Jesus' disciples began to gather regularly to break bread in His memory and to experience Him in their midst. But the upper room was not the only time Jesus was at a table or told stories about tables. This study invites you to consider some of these table stories. At this table, there is always room for whoever shows up and there is an open invitation for you.

If you are interested, please contact the church office and a zoom link will be shared with you via email or messenger. Patricia Mosley, Lay Leader

To Set the Example

Jesus taught that the call to love all people is the means through which we express our love to God. Dr. Sathi Clarke of Wesley Theological Seminary shares this message, "you cannot have only God alone and you cannot have only brother and sister alone. Becoming whole for the purpose of God involves both loving God and loving others." While Jesus took time with His disciples to teach them what it truly meant to be in relationship with God, He knew that before they would ever complete their journey, He would have to take a journey alone. Jesus knew that His journey to the cross would be a path He would have to travel all by Himself in total solitude.

The disciples were with Jesus for three years and Jesus provides both enlightenment as well as inspiration. As the time of His crucifixion and death draw closer, Jesus gives His disciples final marching orders: to love one another as He has loved them with humility and servanthood. To set the example, what does Jesus do? Scripture tells us in John 13: 1-5 that "Jesus knew the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."

Two words come to mind: shock and awe. The disciples could not believe their eyes- their Lord and Savior in a total submission. They probably thought that there was no way for Jesus to surpass this extraordinary act of love and selflessness, but then, we fast-forward to Calvary.

As demonstrated by Jesus, John Wesley encourages early Methodists to understand that it is through service to others that we demonstrate our love and service to God. "There is no love of God without patience, and no patience without lowliness and sweetness of spirit. "Humility and patience are the surest proof of the increase of love..." In short.....you cannot have only God alone and you cannot have only brother and sister alone. Becoming whole for the purpose of God involves both loving God and loving others."

Patricia Mosley, Lay Leader First UMC

Stewardship

Merger Exploration

We will soon begin having regular Listening Sessions as the next phase of our Town Hall meetings. In these sessions, we will have breakout groups where you can ask questions and offer comments and opinions to the people involved in specific areas of the exploration. There will be multiple offerings over at least a couple of months.

Currently, teams are meeting to study the property, finances, and staffing of both churches. The Finance team is completing a side-by-side comparisons of the income and expenses for each church which will give us a clearer picture of the financial implications of merging. The Staff Team is aligning job descriptions between the two churches and will soon determine overall staffing needs for a merged church.

An Unusual Situation

Ordinarily, when there is a pastoral change, the outgoing pastor must leave the church

completely for at least two years. This is because people have formed the habit of going to that pastor for guidance and direction and that is no longer their role.

Additionally, that impedes the new pastor's ability to become the new leader.

However, we are in the unusual situation of Pastor Pete being able to remain with us, and we are grateful for that blessing. Please respect Pastor Pete's retirement by not bringing pastoral issues to him. That puts him in an awkward position that is unfair to him and to Pastor Jim. If you have a question, issue, or suggestion, please take them to the person involved (as per Matthew 18) and/or to Pastor Jim.

Staff Parish Relations

Pastor James Denton, who has been the pastor of First United Methodist Church was appointed, as of March 1, to a dual appointment to Woodmar and First United Methodist Churches. He will have office hours at both churches and will be available to members of both churches. As we alternate the location of worship services from month to month, he will lead worship at both churches. At the same time, First Church office manager Brenda Petty will become the office manager for both churches. Brenda will be in the offices at both churches; tentatively at approximately the same time as Pastor Jim. Please welcome Pastor Jim and Brenda to Woodmar!

We also congratulate Woodmar Church office manager Nancy Tatum on her retirement and thank her for nine years of wonderful service to Woodmar!

Contact Information

Office hours for Pastor Jim and for Brenda

First UMC on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30-2:30
Woodmar UMC on Monday and Wednesday from 10:00 – 1:00

First United Methodist Church
6635 Hohman Ave
Hammond, IN 46324

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Woodmar United Methodist Church
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Hammond, IN 46324

Phone (219) 8444-3030
www.woodmarumc.org
email – office@woodmarumc.org

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.