



**On the Christian Journey...  
with Pastor Christopher**

As you read this, I'll be taking some vacation time. Time with Robin. Time with both my boys. Time watching them both pursue their passion coaching baseball teams. Hopefully a bit of time watching the waves roll in from a beach. Definitely some time breathing deeply. Hopefully more of that on the beach and less of that stressing about air travel. Then after a quick trip to Florida, I'll travel to a meditative clergy retreat entitled "Abide with the Vine" with silence and contemplative activities. I'll have the opportunity over the next few days to step out of routine and to be intentional about noticing, observing, and experiencing the wonder of creation, of relationships, of life. In doing so, I'll be practicing what I preach. God is near! As close as our next breath. As close as the living water than enables all life. God is present – not absent. What is often absent is our awareness.

While I'm away, two friends will share their wisdom and insights with our congregation. On March 2, Rev. Emily Stirewalt will preach on the Transfiguration story from Luke 9 and some insights from her work with Silverlink ministries at Resurrection in Kansas City. Nancy Richwine, our Southeast Kansas district Lay Leader, will share on the disarming importance of considering the question "What Would Jesus Do?"



Then, beginning on March 16<sup>th</sup>, I'll be sharing a new series. This Lenten season, we will seek greater awareness of God's presence and growing spiritual depth through a series of sermons entitled "Purveyors of Awe." Marcia McFee sees a need for Christians to be people who "*promote the idea and experience of awe to the wider community.*" We are called to repent from the systems of control, condemnation, and commodification of the world and turn towards delight in creation. Towards wonder and awe. We are called to remember the light of Christmas candles; to brave the dark of the tomb. To proclaim God's grace and love revealed in the

lilies of the field and the birds of the air, the majesty of mount peaks, the waves on the beach, and the flowing rivers of lush valleys – as well as the innate beauty of each person created in the image of God! We will journey through Lent seeking to become deeply devoted disciples of Christ who point others to the wonder of our creator, redeemer, and sustainer.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. One of the blessings of my time away is that several of our members have stepped up to offer a laity led Ash Wednesday service drawn from our upcoming series. I deeply appreciate Suziee Barlet, Peggy Stark, Joyce Allen, Debra Wood, Linda Leachner, and Bonnie Milburn coming together to lead our special Ash Wednesday service and a focus on the beauty of life found in acknowledging our finitude. The service will be 7pm Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> – you won't want to miss it!

~ Pastor Christopher

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**Upcoming  
KOMB Radio  
Schedule:**



A recording of our services will run every other week at 1pm on 103.9 (or occasionally 98.3 if there's a Chiefs or Royals game conflict).

Our upcoming dates are:

- March 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>
- April 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>
- May 11<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>
- June 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>
- July 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>
- August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>
- September 14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>
- October 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>
- November 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>
- December 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>

**Tell a Friend!**

**ARTICLES NEEDED FOR APRIL/MAY NEWSLETTERS!**

What is your Sunday School class, activity group, or community organizations you are a part of planning for these months? Our church newsletter is a way to let other church members know! Both to invite them, and perhaps more importantly, **to equip all of us to help engage our visitors and neighbors.** Please have an article to [pastor@firstumcfortscott.org](mailto:pastor@firstumcfortscott.org) by about the 21<sup>st</sup> of each month. Thank you!

**New Members on March 30<sup>th</sup> – interested in joining First UMC? – contact the office and Pastor Christopher will visit with you when he gets back in town!**



**SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT – DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MARCH 15**

Graduating High School seniors and current college students (undergraduates only) who are active at First UMC and interested in completing a Memorials Scholarship application should contact the office to receive an application.

The deadline for completing and returning these applications to the church office has been extended until March 15<sup>th</sup> – so one more chance for any qualifying students you know. Memorials committee will then consider applications soon and award in time for Fall.

Barbara Gibson was the most recent among several who wrote in to offer a thank you to the contributors for the thoughtful valentine's bags. We shared bags with 25 friends of our congregation this year, each of whom were blessed by your cards and well wishes!



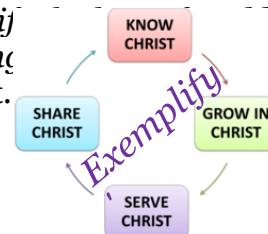
March Birthdays: Xaylee Altic- 2, Charles Marsh-6, Curtis Shankel -10, Chris Allen- 15, Noah Wolf-20, Shannon Fletcher- 20, Don Tucker-22, Charlotte Swaim-23, Chuck Russell-25, Steve Denton-25, Pat Galan-26, Janet Braun- 28, Susan Foster-28, Ron Sharp-29, Charlie Springer- 29, Lisa Ward-30.

March Anniversaries: Christopher and Robin Eshelman- 7, Steve and Stephanie Denton- 9, Doug and Tracy Altic- 13, Perry and Peggy Bloesser- 27

**Upcoming Church Meetings  
in library unless noted**

- HOCROC** Monday, March 10th -6pm
- Trustees** – Thursday, March 20th – 4:30pm
- Finance** – Thursday, March 27th, 6pm
- Administrative Board** April 6th after worship.
- Memorials** will next meet in April – *date TBD*
- SPRC** – *TBD in April/May or as needed.*

**Our Mission is:** to share the good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and to *exemplify* Christ, *growing* sharing Christ. *by knowing* Christ and



## UW Faith UPDATES



United  
Women  
in Faith

Friday March 14th is our baked potato lunch at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Once again it will be a free will offering and serves as our annual fundraising event. Celebrate St. Patrick's Day early and enjoy food and fellowship.

On March 29th, the Spring district meeting will be held. The theme is "New Beginnings." **Registration is \$5 and is due by March 7<sup>th</sup>.** District officers of United Women in Faith oversee the meeting with approximately fifty women in attendance. We have refreshments start at 9:00am. The meeting will be held in the Sanctuary, and it will start at 9:30. Pastor Christopher plans to attend and preside at communion for the gathering. Items will be collected for the children of incarcerated women.

**All women in the community are invited to come to United Women in Faith meetings.** We are an ecumenical group. The mission of UW Faith is to connect and nurture women through Christian Spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.

Thank you and if any questions, please call, text or email. Debra Wood, President (620) 215-3407 email: [dollywood.2019@gmail.com](mailto:dollywood.2019@gmail.com)

**Save Best Choice Labels for  
United Women in Faith!**

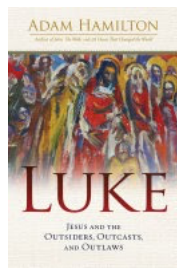
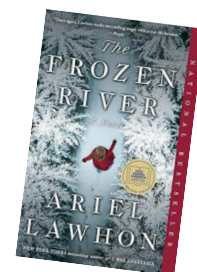
You can leave them in the  
glass jars by the entrances  
each week.  
**Thank you!**



Linda Lechner reports that our  
most recent check was for \$60  
earned through this program!

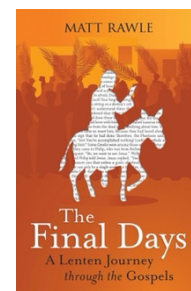
### Wednesday Reading Group ~Dorothy Kivett

In March, the book selection will be [The Frozen River](#) by Ariel Lawhon. The novel is based on a real 18th century midwife. Lawhon explores the effects of the suspicious death of a man found in the frozen river. The mid-wife is called to examine the body and finds that she and her family are deeply affected. Lawhon examines family relationships and 18th century morals in this complicated novel. The ladies Reading/Discussion Group meetings Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. in the library.



### Faith Builders in March

In March we will finish our study of Luke, by Adam Hamilton. Then, we begin our Lenten discussion with a multimedia study, "The Final Days: A Lenten Journey Through the Gospels," by Matt Rawle. The four New Testament Gospels aren't the same story, but they offer the same Resurrection hope. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John devote most of their story detailing Jesus' last week in Jerusalem, all highlighting Jesus' triumphant entry into the city, the suffering and humiliation of the cross, and the empty tomb come Sunday morning, but the stories they tell aren't quite the same. Each Gospel offers a different lens through which we understand Jesus's Passion. Come join us as we ponder the themes of justice, poverty, freedom, and love. ~Ron Wood



If you have an idea for a local speaker for our Aging Forward series fostering fellowship and lifelong learning for retired adults, please contact Kristin in the office to pass it along. We will meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month from April to September and our speakers generally have 45 minutes to an hour to share. Thank you!





## **AWE Practice.**

In conjunction with our Lenten series, there will be a guided journal available for pickup at the church beginning Ash Wednesday or by contacting the church office. This resource, designed by Dr. Marcia McFee, is designed to help us learn, reflect, and practice elements for curating a life of spiritual depth. Here is one example of an activity.

Set aside time about 15 minutes before going to bed to think about nine beautiful things that happened during the day, write down three in each of the following categories. Write down 3 beautiful things on human behavior (morally, positively valued behavior or “good deeds.”

Write down 3 things you experienced as beautiful in nature and/or the environment.

Write down 3 beautiful things in general that you notice during the day (referring to aesthetics, like art, music, architecture, etc.

Then think about and note why you found these things beautiful.

When we naturally notice and appreciate the beauty around us, it can lead to all kinds of different benefits including being more satisfied in life, having a stronger sense of meaning, and acting with more kindness toward others and the environment. See the journal handout for citations and more exercises or scan this QR code with your phone to access the full journal document.



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Return Service Requested

*Here is your MARCH 2025  
Newsletter from:*



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