

Volume 27, Issue #7
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The Connexion

On the Christian Journey... with Pastor Christopher

How do we walk together in faith? How do we follow Christ? How do we understand the Will of God? Why do bad things happen if God is love? Last week we celebrated the work the Great Plains and Oklahoma Indian Mission conferences do together. We deeply appreciate Courtney Freeman Fowler's (*Muskoke-Creek*) time sharing with us. The week before Pastor Christopher shared some of the insights he has gained from time he has been privileged to spend with the Santa Clara Pueblo people and at their sacred Puye Mesa. One of the beautiful aspects of contemporary Native American theologies (*note the plural*) is how they have found ways of walking together with the pain and joy of both past and present. I find it humbling and inspiring and helpful in thinking deeply about my own faith.

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Beginning July 30th and continuing through August, I will be sharing a series of sermons that builds on what we've been hearing and wrestles with how we discern, know, and do the will of God in this life. We will draw on the insights of Rev. Leslie Weatherhead. He was trained in the Wesleyan tradition, then served as a Methodist minister, overseas in India, then back in England with congregations in Manchester and Leeds. In 1936, he became the minister of City Temple, a Congregational church in London, serving there until his retirement in 1960. During the London Blitz of World War Two, he preached a series of sermons that became the book "The Will of God." In trying to make sense of the horror and destruction of war, Hitler's rise to power, and the nightly bombings, he understood God to have an "intentional, circumstantial, and ultimate will." Over the next few weeks, we will unpack his helpful insights and

continue to hear Scripture that is both comforting and challenging – and I will pair his insights on the Will of God with my understanding of the Way of Jesus. We hold that Jesus is the Word become flesh, the self-revelation of God. We are called to follow him – not merely worship him. How does our faith in Jesus shape our path? I look forward to sharing these sermons with you!



NEW WEB DOMAIN AND CHURCH EMAIL ADDRESSES



Effective July 18th, we have changed our website – out is the hard to convey “fsks” domain, and in is a much simpler www.firstumcfortscott.org. The main church office email account is now info@firstumcfortscott.org.

Please make sure you add this as a known address so you get all the church updates! Pastor Christopher also has a new email – you can reach him directly using pastor@firstumcfortscott.org

The old addresses *will still work* and be monitored until at least January, but please begin using, sharing and looking for information sent from the new ones!

CHURCH STAFF RESTRUCTURING –

We have been reevaluating our staffing needs and are developing a new role, which replaces our former secretary position. Due to this change, Zandra Hood is no longer on staff as of July 18th. Our Treasurer, Marlene Braker, also plans to retire and the new “Administrative Executive” role will encompass the treasurer duties, active development of church communication including social media, newsletter, web, email, and sign; increased direct involvement with committees, and membership, as well as proactive management of the church office, space usage, and staff /volunteers. As we make this change, we do need to set up some new policies and procedures to further clarify how expenditures are approved and all our staff and systems given proper oversight and accountability. As part of that process, Administrative Board will be meeting on **Wednesday, August 2nd at 7pm** to finalize our job description. As always, the Admin Board meeting is open to all members. We hope to have a new staff member hired in August, but we will also take the necessary time to find the right person and give them the training they need.



For a few weeks, while we develop this new role, Mille Sharp, Landia Antonetti, Charlene Sipe and Bonnie Milburn have volunteered to help answer phones and greet visitors, 9am to Noon - Monday – Thursdays, with a couple other folks serving as backup. Robert continues to be in mornings, Monday – Friday.

If you have questions or concerns, please talk with Pastor Christopher, he will be in the office daily the next couple weeks with flexible hours - email him at pastor@firstumcfortscott.org or call the church (620) 223-1950 or his cell phone (316) 833-4974 to make an appointment.

We appreciate your patience and support during this time of transition to a new staffing model.

SHEPHERD’S CENTER / ADVENTURES IN LEARNING

JOIN US FRIDAY, AUGUST 4TH 1-4pm



The first Friday in August will be our next Shepherd’s Center event! Focused on retired adults, we are growing a recurring program to counteract the negative effects of loneliness and isolation by connecting older adults to empowering programs that foster friendships.

As she wraps up her time with us, Linda McGee will be our keynote and the afternoon will feature breakout sessions with Officer Michael Trim on avoiding scams, Austin Bolinger from Tri-Valley with fall gardening tips, Jill Jaworski from the Fort Scott NHS and Peggy Cummings from Old Fort Genealogical Society with information about those local resources. No charge to attend and

snacks provided! **Invite a friend to come for learning and fellowship!**

Good Grief!

We have been busy this summer exploring how we can better support each other through the loss of a loved one. ***Many thanks*** to our members who have offered insights from their own experiences, and to those who participated in our Grief Workshop. Here are some findings from our research about grief.



Widowhood -- the club none of us wants to join! Losing a spouse can cause a host of difficult emotions and experiences, including isolation. As one woman expressed, “I stay home when I’m depressed. I don’t want to be seen as someone who complains.” Others are challenged to attend church, sitting alone in the pew they used share with their husband or wife. In addition, they are often no longer invited to activities (*such as cards or dinner parties*) which they used to enjoy with other couples. Sometimes a surviving partner feels the presence of the spouse who has passed, which can be a comfort, or can feel disturbing. Often the home, which used to be filled with everyday chatter, is eerily and uncomfortably silent. Each person’s experience is unique, but there is ***one common yearning: to be included***. And it is especially helpful for the bereaved to share time with someone who is also widowed.

Loss of a Child – the greatest pain. Whether one loses a baby in utero, as an adult child, or anywhere in between, the loss of a child (or grandchild!) is one of the most painful human experiences. As we learned in the Grief Workshop, many different factors contribute to the magnitude of this grief experience. We also learned that men and women experience grief differently, express their grief differently, and heal from grief differently. This creates many dimensions to healing grief within a marriage, with potential misunderstandings. And, similar to the loss of a spouse or another loved-one, anniversaries, birthdays, holidays and “Angelversaries” can re-trigger the pain and loss, taking us by surprise and sending us backwards through the stages of grief.

How Can We Support Each Other?

If you have experienced a similar loss, reach out to a member who is experiencing grief, whether they are a friend or a stranger. Call. Let them know you are available if they would like to talk or spend time. Invite them to lunch or dinner. Invite varying small groups to meals, movies, an afternoon coffee, a presentation, or pancakes at Lucci’s after church. Invite people to sit with you at Sunday church service.

If you are so inclined, start a support group. One of our faithful constituents, Cindy Valdez, is organizing an in-person small group, “Support for Grieving Mothers” for the Fort Scott area that will begin in September. Here mothers will find kindred spirits, support, hope and encouragement as they navigate their loss. Cindy already manages two similar Facebook support groups with several thousand members. We are amazed at her drive and dedication towards helping other mothers find relief from suffering.

Finally, don’t be shy about speaking the name of the loved one who has passed. Speaking their name is honoring and affirming for the survivors and helps us know that they are not forgotten.

~Linda McGee and Pastor Christopher

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



Chuck Crain

In concert at First United Methodist!

Featured at Presley’s Branson and RFD TV
Chuck will bring his music ministry here on
Sunday, October 8th at 6pm

A Freewill offering will be collected for the artist.
For more information about Chuck, visit his website at
<https://www.chuckcrain.net> **Invite a friend!**

August Birthdays: 2-Austin Stapleton, 4-Karen Reinbolt, 5-Star Blanz, 6-Shana Albright, 9-Haley Denton, 12-Karen Nichols, 13- Zac Engle, 14-Darrell Burt, 15-Jamie Christuski, 16-Tori Post, 17- Bruce Majors, 18- Matt Chaplin, Clayton Tatro, 19-Erica Potter, 21-Becky Allen, 22-Paul Antonetti, 26-Randy Nichols, 27-Kacie Brown, Roger Sipe, 31-Rick Comstock

August Anniversaries: 1-Tom & Shauneen Wolf, 4-Ron & Mille Sharp, 9-Scott & Rose Stoughton, 15- Doug & Suziee Barlet, 19-Ken & Karen Rienbolt, 21-Bruce & Carol Majors, 30-Darren & Kelley Tucker.



UPDATE FROM FEEDING FAMILIES In HIS NAME

As we finish up this grant cycle, we want to again thank the Fort Scott Area Community Foundation for their support of Feeding Families in His Name. One of the things their recent \$2500 grant allowed us to do was purchase a new warming tower. This enables our volunteers and the other churches and community groups that help with meals to keep lots of food ready and at service temperature easily, greatly enhancing our ability to quickly and efficiently serve the 450-550 meals a week we have been averaging!

Hosting and guiding this ministry is one of the most important things we do here at First United Methodist each week. We help meet the communities' needs, not just for a meal, but for human contact and connection.

It is a team effort to make this happen and the support of groups like the Community Foundation is truly appreciated!

If you would like to volunteer or donate, contact our coordinator, Bonnie Milburn. Thank you for your support!



JOIN US at 6pm SUNDAY, AUGUST 20TH

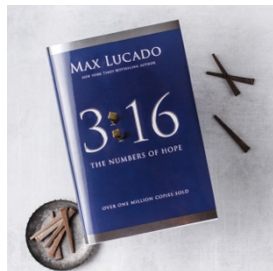


Homemade or store bought - bring your favorite to share or just come to enjoy other's offerings! Join us for a cool treat and great fellowship as the summer winds down.

Sponsored by HOCROC

Faith Builders in August

We will continue our study of, "John 3:16," with Max Lucado. Max takes us on a journey to study this one sentence, softly spoken nearly two-thousand years ago, and is as relevant today as when it was first uttered. We hope you will join us in discussion and fellowship.



You are invited! 9:30am Sundays ~Ron Wood

If you change phone numbers, addresses or email – please notify the Church Office!

Please help us keep in touch by updating your records frequently – we are still missing lots of cell phone numbers, for example. Do we have yours?



If you are getting emails from us at an address you don't want them – please reply with "Remove from List" and we will do so immediately.

If you aren't getting weekly updates, but would like to - email Zandra in the office at info@firstumcfortscott.org and ask to be added to our distribution list.

Thank you!



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith (UWF) News

We will next meet on August 10th, 1:30 in the Parlor with a program presented by our own Pastor Christopher Eshelman. devotions by Pat Hartford and Charlene Sipe, hostess. All women of the church community are invited to attend.

As we begin year 3 of his appointment here, he will share a bit more about his own journey and practices like labyrinth walking and iconography that help him along his path as an invitation to go deeper into practices of worship and service that assist each of us. Invite a friend!

Upcoming in September

The United Women in Faith Fall Tea will be held at Presbyterian Village on Thursday, September 4th at 1:30pm. All women of the community are invited.



Our special guest speaker for this even will be Marti Wells-Smith, author of the book "Lamentations of the Heart."

See you there!

~Jan Hedges,
UWF President



Who Reads the Newsletter?

We had fun with this in July, so we are doing it again! The first three (3) people who contact Pastor Christopher with the code words "New Web Domain" will get to pick a hymn for an August worship service.

Share the code word in person, by emailing pastor@firstumcfortscott.org or by calling (316) 833-4974 to pick your favorite hymn! The only limitation on what hymn you pick is that Pat has or can find sheet music for it.

Are you interested in becoming a member of First United Methodist Church?

We have been blessed by many new friends in worship recently and we have several people who are thinking about formally joining our congregation. Pastor Christopher would like to schedule a time to meet so newer folks can meet and get to know each other and clarify our vows of membership then set a time to join.



Please contact Pastor Christopher to let him know where you are at on your journey of faith!

Upcoming KMDO 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:

August 13th & 27th

September 10th & 24th

October 8th & 22nd

November 5th & 19th

December 3rd, 17th & 31st

Tell a Friend!

First United Methodist Church
301 S National
Fort Scott, KS 66701-1397

Return Service Requested

*Here is your August 2023
Newsletter from:*



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