



The Connexion

On the Christian Journey... with Pastor Christopher

Oh, how special the music, real candlelight, and 132 friends and family gathered for Christmas Eve were! My thanks to everyone who helped make our Advent and Christmas Eve services so special! I hope you are remembering to take deep breaths and center yourself in this season of Christmas:

Once for the one who Created you...

once for the Incarnate One who walks beside you...

and once for the Spirit whose life fills your being.

And Christmas is a season! Christmas *began* on Dec. 25th and lasts until Epiphany on January 6th (the 12 days!). In fact, at one time, the season officially extended 40 days until

Candlemas! The church has had different traditions and understandings over the years. I find it best to hold what we believe gently and loosely – holding space for other views but diving deeply into what helps us exemplify Christ in our time and place. It's not about enforcing right answers or practices but sharing lived experience that is increasingly Christlike. To help us continue to work (and play) towards that, we will start 2024 with two more special worship services. On Sunday, January 7th we will celebrate Epiphany – the festival marking the Magi's arrival as told in Matthew's Gospel. You are encouraged, and supplies will be available, to enact the ancient ritual of "Chalking the Door" at your home. We'll revisit that on both Dec. 31st and Jan. 7th services and there is more information in this newsletter. After that January 7th Epiphany service, we'll take the decorations down and return to "ordinary" time – while continuing to carry the light of Christ with us!



But ordinary time does not mean the end of special worship services! During the service on January 14th, we will celebrate the Baptism of Christ with a ceremony I call "3 Basins." We will each be invited to move between 3 stations – one is Pilate's basin, where we remember Pilate's attempt to wash his hands of responsibility for Jesus' crucifixion and will reflect on our own choices and rationalizations. Next, we will visit the Remembrance basin – remembering (or anticipating) our Baptism and the gift of God's grace that surrounds and equips us, waiting for us to respond! Finally, we will visit the Servant's basin – when we respond to the gift of grace, we grow in love and express that love in ministry. How are you called to ministry in 2024?



One step might be to formally become a member of First United Methodist Church – we have one person planning to join that day and I'd be delighted to add your name. Talk with me about where you are at in your spiritual journey! Another might be to join (or start!) a small group around a particular interest or a Sunday School class. Or you might rededicate yourself to prayer or a volunteer project. Whatever next step is yours, thanks for being a part of the community at First United Methodist!

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Chalking the Doors – an Epiphany Tradition

In Deuteronomy 6:9 God tells the people of Israel: “These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house... You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Chalking the door is a tangible way to honor God in our lives and be intentional about living into God’s blessings in the new year. The first and last numbers simply refer to the year – so we’ll use 20 and 24. The letters C M B come from the traditional names

for the Magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. Alternately, they can stand for “Christus Mansionem Benedicat” which in Latin means, “May Christ bless this dwelling!”

Join us on December 31st and January 7th for a suggested liturgy to use, then add it to your doors!



United Women in Faith

UWF will have our first meeting of 2024 on Thursday, February 8th at 1:30pm in the Parlor. Jean Tucker will

present a program and all women of the church and community are invited! Look for our full UWF 2024 schedule in the February Newsletter and mark your calendar to join us! ~

Debra Wood, President.



Save Best Choice Labels for United Women in Faith!

You can leave them in the glass jars by each entrance each week.

Thank you!

Faith Builders in January

This month we will be discussing “Twelve Women of the Bible,” a multi-media program, written and presented by women pastors and scholars, that examines the triumphs and failures of several women in the Bible. Women featured in January are Hannah, Abigail, Gomer, and Mary, Mother of Jesus.



We would be happy for you to join us and add your voice to our discussion. We meet in our classroom just off the mini-parlor near the Sanctuary at 9:30am Sundays.

~Ron Wood, Faith Builders Class leader



Continuing Our Valentine's Day Tradition – This year HOCROC will again distribute Valentines with your help. We will have all our homebound and assisted living folks on the list by default, then you can add others who would appreciate this token of our congregation’s prayers and friendship for them.

Our deadline for submitting names will be Sunday, January 28. We ask that those adding a name either make or find a volunteer to make a bag or box for that person, (just like our old school classroom parties) to collect their Valentines.

We'll again set up tables in the back of the sanctuary and have materials out for you to make cards on January 28th, February 4th and our final deadline for completed Valentines will be February 11th. Then HOCROC members and volunteers can

distribute the bags before the 14th. Use the sheet in the back of the sanctuary or email the office at info@firstumcfortscott.org to add a name to our list. Thanks

January Birthdays: 2-Ethan Tatro, 3-Iona Pryor, 6-Logan Fancher, 8-Bonnie Milburn, 9-Eleanor Harry, Joey Beerbower, 11-Gayla Croan, Maurine Dunshee, 12-Jacki Allen, 13-Susan Karleskint, 14-Brent Smith, Aaron Swaim, 17-Doug Barlet, 19- Pat Harry, Karen Rienbolt, 21- Ryker Felt, 23- Emma Davis, 24- Margaret Friend, 27-Dave Wood, Kelly Tucker, 29- Tim Culbertson, 30-Larry Swaim.

January Anniversaries: 28-Mike & Susan Carnes, 30-Randy & Kelley Sprague



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:

Jan. 14th and 28th

Feb. 11th and 25th

Mar. 10th and 24th

Apr. 7th and 21st

May 5th and 19th

June 2nd, 16th, and 30th

Tell a Friend!

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

It's amazing how quickly our contact information becomes outdated! Please help us keep in touch by updating your records frequently – we are missing lots of cell phone numbers, for example.



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, including links to Pastor's written sermon summaries and our YouTube recordings, but would like to - email Kristin in the office at info@firstumcfortscott.org and ask to be added to our distribution list. **Thank you!**



FELLOWSHIP SOUP LUNCHEONS 11 – 1:30pm

Friday, Jan. 26th – Don Tucker is coordinating the meal as a fundraiser for Missions.

Friday, Feb. 23rd – Wilma Hibdon is coordinating the meal as a fundraiser for ASP.

Friday, March 15th - Baked Potato Bar fundraiser for United Women in Faith

Mark Your Calendar! Kiwanis Pancake feed will return on Tuesday, February 13th! And our Shepherd's Center / Adventures in Learning events will be the last Friday in **April, May, June, July, and September**. We are finalizing speakers details now and registration will open in March! This is a great way for local seniors to engage in lifelong learning and build friendships! Tell a friend!

Pastor Christopher's Weather Policy

When school is in session, the office generally closes if USD 234 cancels. Groups using the building can make their own call, but we encourage this as an easy to communicate standard.

Sundays are more complicated. Worship will

rarely be canceled for snow, unless Pastor just cannot make it safely from the parsonage (in which case few others would try anyway). Ice, rather than snow, would likely drive a Sunday cancellation decision. If a cancellation is made, notice will be posted to Facebook and emailed to our MailChimp Updates list. (*Sundays and any cancellations that do NOT match USD 234 will also be called into KOMB 103.5 Radio*).

As always, you are encouraged to use your own best judgment when weather affects our gathering. Remember you can tune in on Facebook live if it's not safe for you to venture out.



A First UMC SOAPBOX DERBY ENTRY?

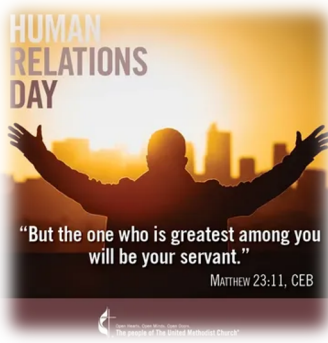
Seth Needham and BSA Troop 114 are working to bring a new event to Good Old Days!

On June 1, 2024, there will be a Soapbox Derby held here in Fort Scott. It will be known as the **Marmaton Classic Downhill Derby**. Pastor would like to see First United Methodist sponsor at least one, and perhaps more, entries.

Who might drive? Who has experience with this kind of build and race? Who is interested in helping out? Details will be forthcoming, and we will share as they are published. Let's be a big part of a fun new event here in Fort Scott!

2024 UMC CONNECTIONAL SPECIAL OFFERINGS for First UMC Fort Scott

The Special Sundays of The United Methodist Church, celebrated annually, illustrate the nature and calling of the Church. These special Sundays approved by General Conference are the only Sundays of churchwide emphasis. Funds are collected by local congregations and sent on to our Annual Conference for distribution to conference and denominational entities. Note the Special Offering on the Memo Line. Dates are set by General Conference but can be adjusted by local congregations should conflicts arise. In 2024, Pastor Christopher plans to adjust one of the dates to avoid conflicting themes and give each of these special offerings the attention and focus they deserve. You are invited to learn about each of the six and see where you might be called to share your generosity with the larger church for the transformation of the world.



Human Relations Day – January 14, 2024

Human Relations Day is the Sunday before the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday and supports outreach to underserved communities, ministries that respond to non-violent youth offenders, community advocacy, and faith-based volunteer programs for community developers, and other programs that work with at-risk teens. It also supports at-risk youth through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program administered by the General Board of Church and Society. The offering also supports community developers and community advocacy through the United Methodist Voluntary Service administered through the General Board of Global Ministries. One hundred percent of the offering goes to the General Council on Finance and Administration.

UMCOR Sunday – March 10, 2024

UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) is the fourth Sunday of Lent. This offering supports disaster and emergency relief administered by the United Methodist Committee on Relief. It enables emergency grants and supplies immediately after a disaster, provides for sustainable sources of food, water, and shelter, and allows UMCOR workers and volunteers to be among the earliest to arrive and the last to leave when people are in need. This offering helps strengthen communities through both disaster preparedness and long-term recovery. The special Sunday offering underwrites UMCOR's costs of doing business, allowing UMCOR to keep the promise that 100% of any gift to a specific UMCOR project will go toward that project (through Advances), rather than administrative costs. The offering is also used to create grants for partners around the world under UMCOR's different programmatic areas.



Native American Ministries Sunday – April 14th, 2024

This offering supports the development and strengthening of Native American ministries in the annual conferences, Native American rural, urban, reservation ministries, and communities relating to the General Board of Global Ministries. This offering provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology and it is distributed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministries and The General Board of Global Ministries with 50% remaining in the annual conference for the Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) to administer.

United Methodist Student Day – We will pick a date in August as School Starts

The United Methodist Student Day offering provides for over 70 scholarships available for United Methodist students to further their education and enrich the life of the Church. The Gift of Hope Scholarship is administered by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. One hundred percent of the offering received goes to this scholarship fund.



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Peace with Justice Sunday – May 26th, 2024

Peace with Justice Sunday is the first Sunday after Pentecost. The General Board of Church and Society has a vision to promote justice, by advocating public policies that protect the rights of all people. This offering supports the fostering of a better world by educating leaders and change-makers to become grassroots activists and global advocates who challenge systems of inequality. It also supports the connection of networks with ecumenical communities to advance peace and justice. Fifty percent provides grants to local churches, districts, conferences, and other affiliated organizations that advocate for peace with justice while the other 50% remains in your annual conference to develop local peace with justice ministries and support a peace with justice coordinator.

World Communion Sunday – October 6th, 2024

The offering supports a diverse mix of national and international ethnic young adults to make a global impact for Christ. The offering supports the Ethnic Scholarship Program and the Ethnic In-Service Training Program through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry which provides ethnic scholarships for graduate students from the U.S. and other countries. It also supports the World Communion Scholarship Leadership Development Program administered by the General Board of Global Ministries. This offering provides ethnic scholarships for U.S. and international undergraduate students studying in the U.S. and funds In-Service Training Programs for racial and ethnic persons.



Liturgists Needed!

An important part of each Sunday is the participation of liturgists in helping lead worship. Normally the liturgist leads the Call to Worship and reads two scriptures. Liturgist are given a full script of their parts a few days in advance. This practice helps honor the ministry of the laity and bring different voices to the liturgy. In recent months health concerns and other conflicts have limited the participation of many of our regulars. Pastor would very much appreciate some new folks helping out. Please consider serving in this way! Let Pastor know if you have questions. Thanks.



UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS - in Library unless noted.

Administrative Board sets policy for the church usually meets the 3rd Wednesday at 7pm about every other month. All church members are welcome to attend. **The January meeting has been delayed until Wednesday, January 24th to allow more time for end of year financial and statistical reports to be generated accurately. Still 7pm in the Library. Future meeting dates will be confirmed at that gathering.**

Finance reviews the budget and transactions and advises Admin Board on financial matters. Carol Majors is Chairperson. Finance will meet on the 3rd Wednesday at 7pm in months when Administrative Board does not meet – so their first 2024 meetings will be Wednesday, February 21st and April 17th.

Trustees oversees maintenance of the building and grounds. Robert Wilson is current chair, but this committee elects their own chair in January. They will now meet on the 2nd Thursday of every other month at 4:30pm with Thursday, January 11th as the first 2024 meeting. Unless projects that need to be discussed come up, they will likely skip the March 14th meeting date and gather again May 9th.

Memorials oversees gifts left to the church from our great cloud of witnesses. This group will meet in the Parlor at 3pm on the 3rd **Tuesday** – so **January 16th and March 19th** are their first meetings of 2024. Pastor Christopher chairs this committee with Linda Hessong as Treasurer. **(corrected from first printing)**

HOCROC – Hospitality, Outreach, and Community Relations Committee. This group plans and or oversees special events, fellowship opportunities and initiated our Healthy Congregations grants. They meet as needed with January 15th, March 18th and May 20th currently on the calendar.

SPRC – Staff Parish Relations is only required to meet 4 times a year unless there are particular needs or issues. They will gather in late March or April with a May 15th deadline for this year's pastoral evaluation. Randy Nichols is now the chairperson.

Gordon Parks Museum
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Day of Service:

“Canned & Non-Perishable Food Drive”

Monday, Jan. 15th, 2024
Gordon Parks Museum
2108 S. Horton St.
Fort Scott, KS



*“The time is always right to do what is right.”
- Martin Luther King Jr.*

SUPPORTING GORDON PARKS MUSEUM MLK DAY OF SERVICE CANNED FOOD DRIVE

Monday, January 15th, the Gordon Parks Museum at FSCC is encouraging residents to bring canned food to the museum between 9am and 2pm to support the Beacon and honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life with a day of service.

If you would like to bring canned goods to the church on Sunday, Jan. 14th, Pastor Christopher will take them to the museum Monday to add to the museum’s total.

You can also make a cash donation through the church on Sunday the 14th that we will be designated for the Gordon Parks’ effort. Mark your check or envelope memo line with Gordon Park’s MLK drive. *Then, our next focused drive for the Beacon here at First UMC is in March – watch for a “March Madness” contest theme to be announced in the February Newsletter!*

At First United Methodist Church of Fort Scott

news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and to *exemplify* the love of God by *knowing* Christ, *growing* in Christ, *serving* Christ and *sharing* Christ.



The Reading Group will resume meetings on Wednesday, January 10, 2024.

January selection: West with Giraffes
by Lynda Rutledge
Jan. 10 Chapters 1 through 6 (pp. 1-112)
Jan. 17 Chapters 7 - 11 (pp. 113-145)
Jan. 24 Chapters 12-end (pp. 146-end)

January 31 State of Terror by Louise Penny and Hillary Rodham Clinton

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

Return Service Requested

Here is your January 2024
Newsletter from:



Visit us online:
www.firstumcfsks.org
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YouTube, Instagram