



# The Connexion

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

This year's VBS theme is "Ready, Set, MOVE! Follow Jesus here, there and everywhere!" It seems a fitting theme for my upcoming month. So, this month I am putting most of my column, with information about my upcoming travels, later in the newsletter. Here I'd like to focus on two things that I'd like **you** to consider as you "move" through June. **1)** how can you help VBS be successful? – everything from leading groups of kids, to prayer, to donations of food and snacks can help. See more on page 2 in this newsletter

– and **2)** What are your personally Spiritual Gifts? We've talked about them in abstract for several weeks. While I'm travelling, our summer "field experience" worker, Linda McGee will be leading the congregation in discovering more about our individual gifts. See the article about upcoming gatherings to learn more on Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup> or Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>.

I'm excited for all that is happening here at First United Methodist Church and for all those who make the activities and events possible. Together, we are the body of Christ! Blessings on your journey!

### Labyrinth Dedication a Success!

Thanks to everyone who joined me at the labyrinth dedication last Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. As we celebrated Pentecost we also formally blessed the space that I and several volunteers have created on the former Whiteside's grocery lot, now owned by 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian. Walking labyrinths is my favorite spiritual activity and I am delighted to find so many others benefiting from the experience. I was also pleased at coverage provided by FortScott.Biz and the Great Plains Conferences "GP Connect" online newsletter.  
*Photo credit David Burke*



## Good Ol' Days Parade 6pm Friday 6/2



## POTLUCK LUNCHEON June 4<sup>th</sup>

Join us for food and fellowship after worship. Bring your favorites entrée, side dish or dessert to share!



### What's Inside This Edition?

- Page 2 •Spiritual Gifts workshops
- Page 3 •Resource Available:
  - Grief Work with Linda McGee*
  - Mark Your Calendar Updates
- Page 4 •Faith Builders, Radio Dates
  - \*UWF Requests Toy Donations
- Page 5 •KMF Class – Putting Your House in Order
  - Birthdays and Anniversaries
- Page 6 • Special Offerings
  - Wahzhazhe Ballet
- Page 7 •Pastor Darryl Burton June 11
- Page 8 •VBS Volunteers / Donations
- Page 9 •Scholarships for Undergrads
  - Pastor's Journey... *continued*

## Exploring Your Gifts of the Spirit

On Pentecost Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit and claimed our gifts and call as the body of Christ, the church! Now we enter the season after Pentecost.

Historically this is a time of the to support new disciples and the entire congregation, in living out the gifts we have been given in the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Did you complete a spiritual gifts assessment online with the link from last month's newsletter to identify your gifts? Or have you at least been thinking about your spiritual gifts? Great!

Now let's do one together as a church to learn how we can better support our work as a congregation. While I am travelling this month, I have asked our "field experience" summer volunteer Linda McGee to lead some sessions in June to guide us through a booklet called "Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts". We will have two sessions, please choose to join one:

**Monday June 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am in the Library**, a smaller group, 1 hour

OR

**Saturday June 24<sup>th</sup> 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall with Pancakes**, 1 1/2 hours

These will be lively and uplifting sessions, and friends and extended families are welcome to join. Bring your neighbors or grandkids (teens and up) as we learn more about ourselves, our gifts and our purpose, and how we can best work together to help each other, our church and our community!

### Spiritual Gifts – Why Bother? A Personal Reflection from Linda McGee

When I was in my early thirties and living in Greensboro, North Carolina, my pastor at Rehobeth United Methodist Church administered a "Gifts of the Spirit Inventory" for our entire congregation. Although I was baptized and grew up in the church, this was my first experience learning about spiritual gifts and whether I might have one. Had you asked me prior to the survey, I likely would have told you that gifts of the spirit had passed me by. I thought I had a few worldly skills and talents (for example, I'm really good at math), but no gifts that might minister to building up the body of Christ. But going through the inventory surprised me with unexpected results.



*First*, I learned that even though I have never had the gifts of evangelism or prophecy or speaking in tongues, or many other gifts, that was OK! I was no less of a Christian disciple without these gifts. Learning this helped me feel less pressure to be someone I wasn't, and to be more accepting of who I am with my own, different gifts. I am grateful for my fellow Christians who have these gifts, but they are not in my inventory, and I no longer judge myself as inadequate not having them. What a relief! Learning of the gifts of others also helped me to feel more comfortable receiving those type of gifts from them.

*Second*, I found an appreciation for a few gifts that were completely new concepts to me, and yet were in my personal inventory results, such as discernment and the "encouragement" part of exhortation. Spiritual gifts give each of us self-worth, as each gift is an important part of the church. This opened my mind and spirit to possibilities.

*Third*, knowing my spiritual gifts eventually helped me to choose my career path more wisely. I did not listen right away, but 15 years later when it was time to make a change, knowing my spiritual gifts helped guide me professionally in what types of vocations would be most (or least) fulfilling for me.

The gifts gave me a context for making those career decisions. And an interesting benefit, when we use our gifts in our work, we are more comfortable and can experience great joy, contributing in our own way to the building-up of the body of Christ.

Each of us has a unique combination of spiritual gifts, and yours may surprise you! Begin the journey and have some fun discovering your gifts. I hope you will join us for one of the June sessions. ~Linda McGee





## **Resource Available in June and July: Grief Work**

One of Linda's focuses in her private counseling practice and with her PhD work is grief counseling. As a widow herself, she personally understands the challenges of healing from deep grief. As she and Pastor Christopher have discussed, grief can come into our lives from many different sources: the passing of a loved one, the loss of a job or the loss of life purpose during retirement, the loss of health, the breakup of a marriage or other relationship, even the death of a beloved pet.



I wonder, how well do we, as a church and congregation, support our members who are grieving various losses? In July, Linda will present a workshop/seminar on helping our loved ones and ourselves as we navigate through various grief journeys. Look for details in the next newsletter.

In the meantime, I have asked Linda to reach out to some of our members who have experienced losses over the past few years. What have we done well to minister to you, with you? Where have we fallen short? Do you have any ideas about what we could do better? I hope you will respond and have a brief conversation with Linda. Your responses will be anonymous and confidential and will help us to better serve those who are suffering with grief. ~ Pastor Christopher

### ***Absolute Country, Definitely Gospel***

### ***Faith's Journey! In concert at First UMC***

Branson's 2021 Gospel Show and  
Group of the Year  
*will be here at*  
**Friday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at 6pm!**

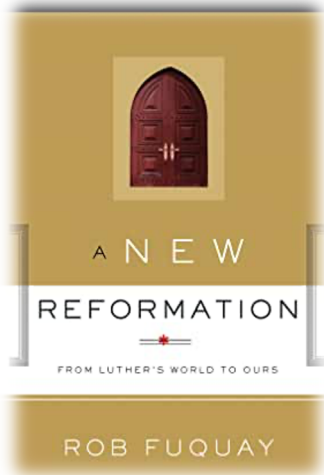
*A Freewill offering will be  
collected for the band.*



## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

August 4<sup>th</sup> 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 we are working to again have a gardening expert and to introduce chair yoga as an activity. Your input of topics you'd like to see at this and future sessions is requested.



In June, we will be continuing our study and discussion of “A New Reformation,” a six-part multimedia program by Rob Fuqua. This is a refreshing look at Martin Luther and the Reformation as a focus on the importance of our stories as part of God’s bigger story.

We have welcomed some new persons to the class and we enjoy fellowship and discussion. We will not meet on Sunday, June 11, but will resume June 18. We invite you to become part of our group as we continue our walk with Christ. Please join us in study and discussion.

~Ron Wood

**United Women in Faith (UWF) News**

On June 15, 1:30 p.m., United Women in Faith will host Sarah Poteat, Care Portal Regional Director, as a guest speaker. She will share with us the “bridge ministry” of Care Portal. It is our purpose to not only be women of faith, but also women of action.



United Women in Faith

As part of that presentation, we are gathering items for one of the agencies, TFI. TFI is the local agency that serves kids & families disrupted by foster care. They have a visiting room where parents, who are working their reintegration plan, can meet with their children. They are in need of age-appropriate toys, games and puzzles for the waiting area.

**United Women in Faith are asking for donations of toys for TFI.** The tools can be new or nearly new. You can bring them to the June 15 meeting or leave them at the church office. Possible items include: large legos, blocks, cars, trucks, dolls, board games, puzzles, coloring books, crayons, art paper, DVD player. No riding toys. Check with Jan Hedges or Debra Wood with questions. ~Jan Hedges

**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 [secretary@firstumcfsks.org](mailto:secretary@firstumcfsks.org) and ask to be added to our distribution list.

**Thank you!**

**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:

- June 4<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>
- July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>
- August 23<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>
- September 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>
- October 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>
- November 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>
- December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>

**Tell a Friend!**





JOIN US FOR

# Putting Your House in Order

A three-part series covering:

1. Estate Planning
2. Legacy Giving
3. Memorial Planning

Each hour-long session provides useful information and needed resources to guide you in putting your plans in place.

**Provide** for your spouse and children. **Create** a legacy. **Give** direction to your successors. **Deliver** peace of mind to you and your loved ones.

**BONUS!** People who complete the program will have **\$500** deposited into their legacy fund at the KMF!

Sessions will be held via Zoom monthly in May, June & July.

Register online at [www.kansasmethodistfoundation.org](http://www.kansasmethodistfoundation.org).



For questions, please contact Tyler Curtis at [tyler@kansasmethodistfoundation.org](mailto:tyler@kansasmethodistfoundation.org).

*Building Community – send a card or make a phone call!*



**June Birthdays:** 1-Charity Davis, Keith Tucker, 3-Bryan Foxx, Beverley McBride, 4-Linda Hessong, 9-Steve Harry, 11-Allen Davis, 13-Shirley Culbertson, 14-Ainslee Magee, 15-Estalee Simpson, 16-Koyle Link, Megan Vincent, Millie Lipscomb, 17-Dee Ann Davis 18-Ron Rains, Robert Wilson, 19-Debra Franklin, 20-Aubree Altic, Elisa Denning, 21-Monte Hall 22-Joan Cox, 25-Delbert Barr, 28-Evan Heiser, 30-Gabby Majors

**June Anniversaries:** 2-Gary & Pam Brown, 4-Rndy & Karen Nichols, Dean & Carolyn West, 5-Megan & Cameron Vincent, 6-Patricia & Richard Magee, 9-Ron & Kathy Snyder, 11-Morgan & Carson Felt, 14-Steve & Pat Harry, 18-Mike & Linda Leachner, Clayton & Melissa Tatro, 20-Becky & Joe Tourtillott, 22- Dacia & Travis Clark, Curtis & Gloria Shankel, 23- Zach & Leslie Reynolds, 28-Carlyle & Maurine Dunshee, 29-Eric & Danette Popp



**Peace with Justice Sunday – June 4, 2023**

*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 our annual conference to develop local peace with justice ministries and support a peace with justice coordinator.*

**Native American Ministries Sunday – July 23rd**

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.



***Pastor Christopher moved our celebration of Native American Ministries to July to connect it with a special event here in Fort Scott and we will have a special guest speaker, Courtney Fowler, former Great Plains Conference Lay Leader, who will share some of her story and information about our Conference work with Native American Congregations and the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.***

***A Community Event You Won't Want to Miss!***

The Friends of Fort Scott National Historic Site in partnership with the National Park Service invite you to a special performance of Wahzhazhe: An Osage Ballet. There are three performances: July 21 @ 7:30 pm, and July 22 at 3 pm and 7:30 pm at the Danny and Willa Ellis Family Arts Center at FSCC. For tickets, scan the QR code or visit: <https://friendsoffsnhs.ticketspice.com/wahzhazhe>.



Wahzhazhe brings to life the rich history of the Osage Nation in a stunningly beautiful stage performance using traditional drumming, costumes, and contemporary dance.

This professional dance performance has been performed at the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. and during Pope Francis' visit to the Philadelphia Festival of Families in 2015.

Pastor Christopher and Robin have their tickets for this eagerly awaited performance. Be sure to join us!



## Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup> - Special Combined Worship AT 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian – 3<sup>rd</sup> and Crawford - 10:30am

While Pastor Christopher is away with the Appalachian Service Project mission trip, Diana Endicott from 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian has arranged for a special guest speaker. 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian will host, and we will join them at their 10:30am service. Pastor Darryl Burton graduated from Saint Paul School of Theology in 2016 and serves on the staff of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, one of the largest United Methodist Churches in the US. Prior to that, Pastor Burton served 24 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. He now leads the “Miracle of Innocence” program, supporting others who have experienced injustice. Here is more of his story:

*In 1984, a drug dealer was shot to death at a gas station in St. Louis, Missouri. The man who shot him was a lightskinned African American male, 5’5” in height. Police looked for suspects and even though Darryl Burton was dark skinned and 5’10” in height, he was summoned to a police lineup. Two men came forward identifying Darryl as the murderer. Both were awaiting trial but were given a lighter sentence if they testified that Burton was guilty. Burton was assigned a public defender who spent only one hour with him before his trial and the jury convicted him in less than an hour. Darryl found himself being sentenced to life in prison without parole. He was assigned to the Missouri State Penitentiary, one of the most violent prisons in the U.S.*



Darryl remembers, “When I heard the jurors say guilty, I felt shock and disbelief. I just didn’t think, in America, an innocent man could be sent to prison, especially capital murder” explained Burton. He clearly remembers a huge banner that hung at the entrance of the penitentiary that said “Welcome to the Missouri State Pen. Leave all your hopes, family, and dreams behind.” “When I saw that banner, it deeply affected me and I lost all hope. I hated the place, the system, and anyone that had anything to do with it. It was hell on earth – filled with violence, evil, and hate.”

Darryl remained in prison from 1984-2009 and spent many of those days in the prison law library, dedicated to proving his innocence. He wrote over 600 letters to members of the government, nonprofit organizations, even Oprah Winfrey to plead his case. However, it was not until he allowed Christ into his life that he began to experience a change. Darryl discovered that anger and hate can be another prison, and that Jesus said we must love our enemies, pray for them, and forgive them. “Until I read that truth in Luke 23:34, I didn’t think that was possible,” he said. Ten years prior to Darryl’s exoneration, he felt emotionally and spiritually freed. “God had to work something out of me (*bitterness and hatred*), in order to work something into me (*love and grace*), in order to do His work through me.”



After learning of a confession from a witness who admitted in 1985, “You have the wrong man, he’s too dark,” Darryl worked with Centurion Ministries to have his wrongful conviction overturned. Darryl often recalls a letter that he wrote to Jesus while imprisoned. It said “Jesus, if you’re real and help me get out of this place, not only will I serve you, but I’ll tell the world about you.” Darryl now shares his nightmare story of adversity to help others and bring glory to the name of Jesus Christ. Since 2009, he has spoken about forgiveness, redemption, and hope at churches and conferences around the globe. Seven years after his exoneration, he never takes one day for granted. “I’m doing things today that can only be by the grace and mercy of God,” Burton says. “I have come to embrace my walk of faith. I pray to be a humble servant in my ministry.” First United Methodist and 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian are delighted to welcome Darryl to Fort Scott!

**Invite your friends to experience Darryl’s witness firsthand during this special combined worship service AT 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian – 3<sup>rd</sup> and Crawford. 10:30am, Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup>**



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS / DONATIONS NEEDED!** 8

We have again been invited to participate in a community Vacation Bible School with our friends at First Presbyterian. It will be in the evenings, 5:30-8pm Monday, June 26<sup>th</sup> through Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**June 26 – 30<sup>th</sup> 5:30 – 8pm. AT 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Crawford.**

We are planning to again do a joint VBS celebration Sunday, which would (tentatively) be held here at First UMC on Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>!

We will need lots of volunteers, food donations and other help to make this a successful week. You can help by donating food for dinner or snacks (*final list of requested items will be out in June*), helping to lead a group, staffing stations for the groups to visit (music, skits, experiments, reading stories, etc.), helping to decorate, serving the meal or snacks. Denise Needham from 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian is the coordinator this year and can answer any specific questions you have.

Please sign up to volunteer so we can work on finalizing details and serve as many children as possible this summer! You can return this form to either church office or email Zandra at [secretary@firstumcfsks.org](mailto:secretary@firstumcfsks.org) and we'll pass the info along. If you know a child who would like to attend, you can get a VBS participant registration form from either church office (or back table in our sanctuary and near entrances).

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN VBS VOLUNTEER INTEREST FORM**  
**PLEASE RETURN BY JUNE 18, 2023**  
 Dates June 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm to 8:00pm

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H/C) \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate any areas of interest:

\_\_\_\_\_ Group Leader

**Station Leader / Helper**

\_\_\_\_\_ Meals

\_\_\_\_\_ Crafts

\_\_\_\_\_ Decorating

\_\_\_\_\_ Music

\_\_\_\_\_ Snack

\_\_\_\_\_ Storytime

\_\_\_\_\_ Games

\_\_\_\_\_ I plan to donate food or snacks once the list is published

Other: \_\_\_\_\_





## Scholarships for 2023-2024 Undergrads!

Memorials and Gifts and our Endowment committee are pleased to again offer the opportunity for a small scholarship to participating college or trade school undergraduates who meet criteria laid out on the application form, which can be found on our web site or in the church office. Applicants need to have been actively involved with the ministries of First United Methodist Church.

### On the Christian Journey... with Pastor Christopher (*continued*)

June will be a month of travel for me. From June 7-10<sup>th</sup> I will be at La Vista, Nebraska with our Lay Leader Jan Hedges for Annual Conference. The now 750 churches of the Great Plains Conference will be looking forward. We will be listening for and responding to God's call. We will be active participants in what God is doing among us and among the places we serve. We will allow ourselves to be molded, shaped and remade. We are "clay in the hands of the potter" being shaped for mission in each of the places where we are gathered and sent.



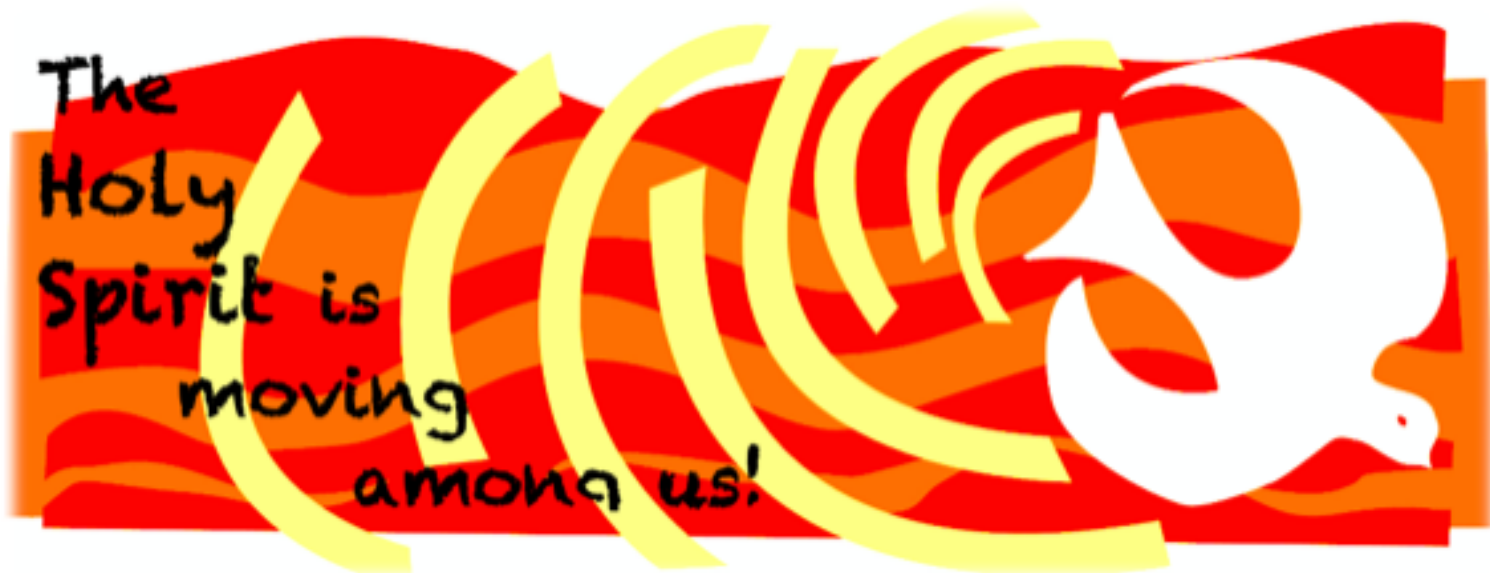
Then on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup>, Jan will drop me off at the airport in Kansas City so I can fly to Louisville and meet up with the Appalachian Service Project team in Kentucky. We'll serve to make homes in Breathitt County, KY "warmer, safer, and drier" and help in ongoing recovery efforts from last summer's flooding. While I'm on the mission trip, on Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, I strongly encourage you to travel to 3<sup>rd</sup> and Crawford for 10:30am worship at 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian. We will have no service here that day as you have the opportunity to hear from Pastor Darryl Burton who serves on the staff of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection and leads the

Miracle of Innocence project, helping others who, like him, were wrongly convicted of crimes they did not commit. Read more in the enclosed article and invite friends and neighbors to hear his powerful story! Then on Sunday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, we'll be back to worship in our sanctuary here at 3<sup>rd</sup> and National with a celebration of the ASP trip, hearing from the team about their week of service that has been made possible by this congregations outstanding generosity, prayers, and support.

Immediately after that worship service, Robin and I will continue our travel by heading to New Mexico for vacation. We'll start at a watercolor painting retreat in Taos with friends from Pretty Prairie, KS – a gathering that was delayed from 2020 when covid shut things down and has finally been rescheduled. Then the rest of the week we'll spent time ourselves in and around Santa Fe visiting historic churches, mesa's, musuems and other points of interest. That area of the country is among my favorites and I look forward to relaxing and exploring. To let us not hurry back, our pulpit here will be filled by Lay Speaker Margaret Barnes. Margaret has just recently become a lay speaker and I've asked her to share a bit about how she has felt called to use her gifts. Robin and I will be back in Fort Scott on Monday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, just in time to help with Vacation Bible School at 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterians that evening.



So, June will be a month of moving – but happily also staying put. While at Annual Conference, Bishop Wilson will formally "fix" my appointment to serve in the mission field known at Fort Scott, Kansas as the pastor of the people of First United Methodist Church in Fort Scott. As I am blessed to begin my third year of appointment here, I am each day more certain that together, we are the body of Christ and we have been equipped for the challenges and opportunities that this time and place presents. Let us continue knowing, growing in, serving and sharing Christ and seeking to exemplify Christ in all that we do! Blessings on your journey!



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

Return Service Requested

*Here is your June 2023  
Newsletter from:*



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