



Volume 28, Issue #8
August 2024

The **First** Connexion



On the Christian Journey... with Pastor Christopher

What is the purpose of this newsletter?
I'd like it to equip you to be a good witness, messenger, and disciple. To do that, I need your help. We need to get better at communicating who we are and what we do – both internally and especially beyond the church walls!

This newsletter ought to be a place where everything we are involved in, in the community and inside our walls, is highlighted and celebrated. It ought to help **connect** us and equip us to tell others! So – if you are a part of a group that meets here OR you are a part of cool things in the community – I'm urging you to regularly write up a short blurb – even just 3 or 4 sentences, letting the congregation know about it! Could be a local museum or civic group. Could be a one-off opportunity or a regular event. Could be something special in your neighborhood/retirement community – anything you'd like to invite the members of First UMC to be a part of or just know about. And, of course, things that meet here in our building – your Sunday School class, your interest group, your committee. Each month, this newsletter should be a snapshot of *everything* we are a part of. Because being a person of faith isn't just about Sunday morning and ministry isn't just what the pastor does. It is the community – gathered and sent!

So, our next submission deadline is Thursday, August 22nd for the September newsletter. We'll be looking at things happening in Sept/Oct especially, but also farther out. Please be thinking about what you'd like the congregation to know about and help make this newsletter a valuable resource for all of us. Thanks to those who responded with articles for this month!

GOOD NEWS! HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS GRANT RENEWED!

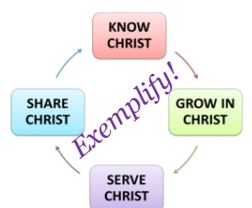


Thanks in part to Peggy Stark and Suzie Barlett attending the Healthy Congregations retreat last spring as well the guiding work of our HOCROC committee and Shepherd's Center (now Aging Forward) steering team of Bonnie Milburn, Wilma Hibdon and Janet Braun **we have again been awarded a \$1000 grant to "enhance the spiritual, physical, social, and emotional health of our congregation and community"** during the 2024-2025 grant cycle. In past years, this grant has helped build the labyrinth at 3rd and Crawford as a place of prayer and meditation and launch our Aging Forward program to encourage fellowship and lifelong learning for retired adults. This Great Plains Conference program gives us resources to do the next thing! Our next full community needs assessment is due in June of 2026, so over the next two years we will be looking for additional ways we can make an impact and developing work plans for future grants. Have an idea about what these funds could accomplish? – share it!

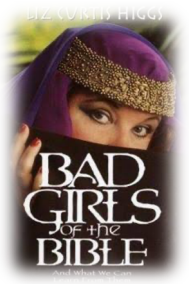
What's Inside This Edition?

- Page 2 • Faith Builders, Aging Forward
 - Aug. Birthdays & Anniversaries
 - Revelation Small Groups
 - New SEK District Celebration
- Page 3 • Reading Group, Sewing Group,
 - Upcoming Committee Meetings
- Page 4 • Beacon Challenge in Sept/Oct
 - Worship Music event in Wichita
- Page 5: • Mark Your Calendar for Oct!
 - Pastor Continuing Ed. Plans
- Page 6 • Radio Schedule
 - A Note on Giving

Our Mission is: to share the good 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.



FAITH BUILDERS IN AUGUST



A few months ago, we studied “Twelve Women of the Bible.” Now we will be discussing “Bad Girls of the Bible,” a multimedia production by Liz Curtis Higgs. In August, we will focus on Potiphar’s wife, Lot’s wife, Delilah and Sapphira. Come join us in our discussion and fellowship. We meet

in the Faith Builders classroom near the mini-parlor, just east of the Sanctuary. ~Ron Wood

(Hint: I’d really like to see something similar from each of our classes and groups – let’s invite each other AND equip each other to answer visitors’ questions about what group they might be interested in connecting with! – Pastor Christopher)

REVELATION SMALL GROUP STUDY

Along with the sermon series, we will begin unpacking this book with small group sessions – I’m planning 1pm on Wednesday afternoons and 6pm on Thursday evenings. There is no cost and we will start this week, August 14/15.

The sessions will offer time for questions, discussion of the prior sermon and extra insights, sources and materials as well as an opportunity to listen deeply to a professional reading of the texts.

If another time is better- chat with me and we’ll see if we can find a group. ~Pastor Christopher



AGING FORWARD! Encouraging fellowship and lifelong learning for retired adults (and friends)!

Our next program, on Friday, August 23rd features a field trip!

We will gather at 1pm at the Lowen Milken Center for Unsung Heroes (1 S. Main) for a presentation from their staff, then we will move back to the First UMCs Fellowship Hall (3rd Street Entrance) at 2pm to hear from local author Tanya Glessner, who recently released “The Light You Bring.” and new staff member Jeniffer Gum-Fowler from the Fort Scott Library at 3pm.

**No cost to attend. Refreshments provided.
Open to anyone interested. Bring a friend!**



NEW SOUTHEAST KANSAS DISTRICT!

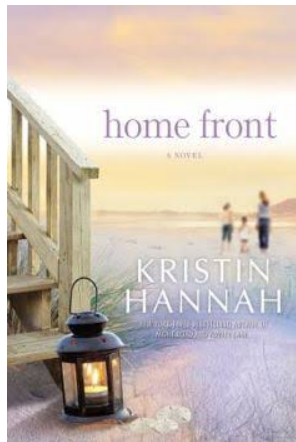
Celebrate the new SEK District (merging most of the old Five Rivers and Parsons districts) on **Saturday, August 24th 10am to 2pm** at Chanute First – Lunch provided. There will be a Q&A with our District Superintendent Rev. Micki McCorkle, and sessions on Youth Ministry, Small Church Worship, and Congregational Caring Ministries, as well as a chance to network with other United Methodist Clergy and Laity in our region!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS Karen Rienbolt- 4, Shanna Albright- 6, Haley Denton- 9, Karen Nichols-12, Zac Engle-13, Darrel Burt- 14, Tori Post- 16, Bruce Majors- 17, Matt Chaplin- 18, Erica Potter-19, Becky Allen- 21, Paul Antonetti – 22, Randy Nichols- 26, Roger Sipe- 27, Kacie Brown- 27, Rick Comstock- 31

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES: Shauneen and Tom Wolf-1, Ron and Mille Sharp-4, Chuck and Delene Russell-8, Doug and Suziee Barlet-15, Ken and Karen Rienbolt-19, Bruce and Carol Majors- 21, Darren and Kelley Tucker-30

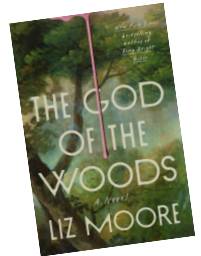


WOMEN'S READING GROUP RESUMES IN SEPTEMBER!



The Reading Group is a women's reading/discussion group that meets September through November. After the holidays, the group resumes in January through May. The objectives are to let women of the church become more acquainted with each other while stimulating their minds and learning some insights into reading literature. While not a bible study, many of the books address social or moral issues.

The Group meets on Wednesdays at 1:30 in the church library for about one hour. THE FIRST SESSION WILL BE SEPTEMBER 11, 2024. Dorothy Kivett is usually the moderator, but others in the group also moderate the discussions. Those attending are asked to provide their own copy of the book being discussed. If you cannot order online yourself, Hedgehog, Ink. can order for you.



On September 11, 2024, the group will discuss *Home Front* by Kristin Hannah. (We usually read about 100 pages each session.) The novel explores the difficulties of a woman helicopter pilot in a National Guard Unit who is called to duty in Iraq. The author addresses the emotions and mental stresses of separation from family, war, and a severe injury. Other books that will be used soon are *God of the Woods* by Liz Moore and *Sandwich* by Catherine Newman. They may not immediately follow the first book as a member of the group may have one to discuss. Join us! ~Dorothy Kivett



Upcoming Church Meetings in library unless noted

Admin Board: Wednesday, August 21st - 7pm

HOCROC Monday, September 9th -6pm

Trustees – Thursday, September 12th 4:30pm

Memorials to be rescheduled due to Pastor travel plans, **SPRC** and **Finance** will meet together in October – date TBD.

WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE? Maybe it's a ministry you'd like to start or lead, maybe it's just an idea you'd like to share to see if maybe God is calling another person who just needs the encouragement. We are considering all sorts of ideas to help our community know, grow, serve and share! The sewing and reading groups on this page started because somebody had an idea, and others joined in. One way we grow our church is to grow our community engagement – what should we do next?

TUESDAY MORNING SEWING GROUP AND 1ST THURSDAY STITCHERS ~ by Nancy Swanwick



Our stitching group began as a bi-monthly evening stitching group, as a Fiber Fellowship. We worked on our own projects and enjoyed each other's company. As we began to age out of careers, we started meeting on Tuesday mornings, but also gathering on the first Thursday of each month from 4-9 pm to make sure we could include those who still worked during the day. When we started our daytime sessions, we also decided to make small Quilts To Comfort once a month, somewhat in response to the Joplin tornado, but centered around

local people in need of comfort. For ten years, we produced and gave out personal sized quilts to the Red Cross, the Ronald McDonald House, the local first responders, nursing homes, local hospice, and one year every child in CASA was given a quilt. Covid paused our production, and when we finally felt comfortable meeting again, our mission changed back to fellowship after creating about 300 quilts for community members in need. We meet in the parlor on Tuesday mornings from 9-noon-ish, and in Fellowship Hall for First Thursday Stitchers nearly every month. Most of the Tuesday group bring hand work which includes patchwork, quilting, needlepoint, cross-stitch, knitting, embroidery, with lots of advice sought and given. Thursday nights often include sewing machines along with hand work, and also includes snacks to nourish our bodies. Occasionally we hold an all-day sew on Saturdays. Our groups are ecumenical and open to all. Occasionally there will be times when we do not meet, but the church office will be aware of this. We have formed great bonds between us and are always interested in seeing each other's projects. We appreciate having such a wonderful space in our church to meet and be creative.



This week we received the following information from the Presbyterian Deacons and Pastor Christopher has formally accepted the challenge.

The Beacon Food Drive 2024 is ON!

This year they are calling it

“A-CAN-ABILITY”

A-CAN-ABILITY, this year’s Beacon Food Challenge, will continue to compete based on total weight donated rather than counting item by item. Each week we will focus our contributions with only specific items

purchased, and the winner each week will be based on total package weight of target items donated.

This year’s contest will run from Sunday, September 15th through Sunday, October 6th.

Celebration will occur on Sunday, October 13th, with a Potluck at First Presbyterian following worship.

Non-winners will wash dishes following the celebration!!!! Each church should prepare a skit to share!!!!

Count 1, Sunday, Sept. 15th - Peanut butter and Jelly (or similar)

Count 2, Sunday, Sept. 22nd - Pasta and sauces, Mac n Cheese

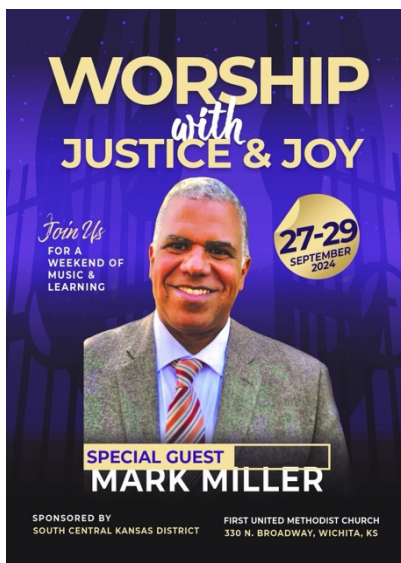
Count 3, Sunday, Sept. 29th - Boxed or bagged cereal, Powdered Milk

Count 4, Sunday, Oct. 6th - Canned fruits, veggies, soups, Spam, tuna, salmon, stew, chili, etc.

Weekly cash donations received on each Sunday will be counted as (1) pound per \$1.00.

RULES

- Each weekly “Sunday” count is due Monday by noon and reported to the other church’s office.
- Weight used is from item packaging. Weekly winner is the church that brings the most weight of each item designated for that week.
- Items may be “saved up” to be counted during the assigned week if brought in early.
- Once that week’s designated item passes, that item becomes “other items donated” and are ONLY counted in a tiebreaker.
- If weeks are split 2 to 2 on designated counts, “other items and cash donated” tiebreakers are used
- NOTE: churches may choose to use donated weekly cash to purchase items for a given week to try and win that week, BUT cash used cannot then also be counted for the tiebreaker later.
- The **OVERALL GOAL**, of course, is to continue the trend of each church donating more food (and cash) than last year so that **“The Beacon Wins”** through our **“A-CAN-ABILITY Food Drive.”**



SPECIAL WORSHIP MUSIC EVENT IN WICHITA

It will be a weekend of music and learning with worship leader and composer Mark Miller. Sep 27-29 at Wichita First UMC.

Miller is a lecturer in sacred music at Yale’s Institute of Sacred Music and Divinity School and is professor of church music, director of chapel, and composer in residence at Drew University. His hymns and anthems are sung by communities of faith throughout the world. Here in Fort Scott the choir has used his hymns “Welcome” and “Draw the Circle Wide.”

The link to register is below, cost is \$12 for lunch to \$20 for sheet music and \$32 for both.

<https://gp-reg.brtapp.com/MarkMillerEvent2024>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OCTOBER EVENTS!-----



We will again be a part of the **Pioneer Harvest Fiesta Parade** which will be Thursday, October 3rd at 6pm! Plan to ride our float and wave or walk along and hand out treats!

Invite your friends to our annual **FISH FRY**, It will be Sunday, October 15th at 6pm in Fellowship Hall!



4th Friday FELLOWSHIP SOUP LUNCHES resume October 25th 11:30-1pm



We have openings for your group to use it as a fundraiser in November and February.

Contact the office!



Trunk or Treat Thursday, Oct. 31st 5:30pm - plan to decorate your car and/or set up a game for the kids to play! *We'll also need donations of candy!*



GOSPEL CONCERT SATURDAY OCTOBER 26TH

HOCROC will host Ernie Couch and Revival for a Gospel concert at 6pm.

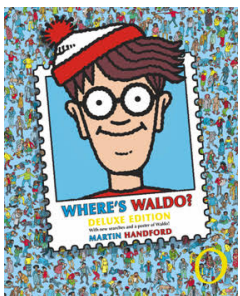
"From its inception, EC&R has produced high energy, emotionally colorful music reflective of the diverse musical heritage that has made Music City home of Nashville internationally famous. The groups unique blend of traditional, country, and contemporary gospel music speaks to people of all ages and all walks of life."

This is a freewill offering show!

Mark your calendars & invite friends!

PASTOR'S UPCOMING CONTINUING EDUCATION AND VACATION DAYS PLANS

One of the requirements for clergy in the Great Plains Conference is continuing education. This life-long learning is twofold: spiritual formation and professional development. **Spiritual formation** is the intentional pursuit of the nourishment and renewal of one's relationship with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and the use of spiritual disciplines. **Professional development** is the intentional growth of professional identity, and the skills utilized in ministry that will enhance the effectiveness and excellence of the clergyperson. Over the next 18 months, I will be addressing both of these aspects through participation in Track 1 of the *Center for Pastoral Effectiveness of the Rockies* with an ecumenical group of fellow clergy.



This is a series of 6 in-person retreats and various other check-ins that will incorporate elements of both Spiritual Formation and Professional Development over 140 contact hours. My first retreat is **September 17-20th** in Denver and as long as air travel goes smoothly, I should be back before Sunday the 22nd. The rest of the retreat dates will be set once the group forms. These retreats are not vacation time, although I do expect them to be times of renewal (and I may, in the future, take a day or so in conjunction with them.)

Bishop Wilson has also called our annual Orders and Fellowship clergy gathering for **October 28th – 30th**, so I will be travelling to Kansas City for that.

I will take some more vacation days soon – once again attending soccer games in Kansas City – I'll see the KC Current NWSL team playing in an international cup with matches on Wednesday August 14th and Saturday, August 17th (but will be back for Sunday) and plan to attend the US Men's National Team vs Canada on Sept 7th. I am tentatively planning to take Sunday, Sept 8th off but details are pending.

**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 11th and 25th

September 8th and 22nd

October 6th and 20th

November 3rd and 17th

December 1st, 15th & 29th

Tell a Friend!



A Word on Giving

We ask for a lot - many Sundays
there are 2 or 3 different special
giving opportunities, in addition to
our regular pleas for the church
budget itself - and I know it can
become a bit overwhelming.

One reason is that there are such needs - but another is that we
are the body of Christ - and we are created in diversity. Different
giving opportunities speak to different people.

Pastor Christopher encourages you to prayerfully consider all
your giving (within the church and beyond) and listen for what
causes and opportunities speak most deeply to you.

Individually, few, if any of us, can contribute to everything that comes
up - but each of us can make a difference with specific things and,
together, our little becomes a lot!

God can do abundantly far more than we ask or imagine

(Ephesians 3:20) – especially if we faithfully and joyfully respond by
giving to those opportunities where we feel the Spirit moving - and
trust that others do as well. Thank you!

**BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE ARTICLE ON FEEDING FAMILIES IN HIS NAME IN THE AUGUST 10TH
FORT SCOTT TRIBUNE! Thanks to everyone who supports this wonderful ministry.**

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

Return Service Requested

*Here is your AUGUST 2024
Newsletter from:*



Visit us online:

www.firstumcfsks.org

Links to Facebook,
YouTube, Instagram