



Volume 27, Issue #2  
**March 2023**

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

***Knowing, Growing, Serving, Sharing***

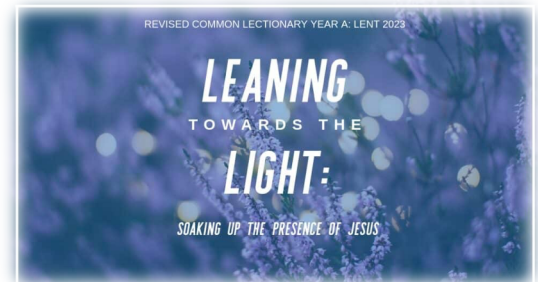
We are off to a wonderful start in 2023. As I write, registrations for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Shepherd's Center "Adventures in Learning" event are coming in. We will again host a chance for retired adults from our congregation and the larger community to engage in lifelong learning and fellowship. It's a great new program for Fort Scott that we are growing with the help of our Healthy Congregations grants, which are made possible by the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church. Like the mural pictured above, this is one of several initiatives I've helped us start to engage with the community – seeking ways to "lower the threshold" for visitors to connect with our congregation! Ways of inviting people to join us – but that aren't completely focused on us and our wants and needs, but on them and their journey, while sharing who we are, and more importantly who Christ is. This is how we "exemplify" Christ in community.



Along with Bonnie Milburn, Robert Wilson, and our work crew, I have also spent a lot of time this last couple of months working out details to enable us to purchase and install a new 3-door freezer. This was needed better equip our Feeding Families in His Name ministry to store the commodities needed to sustain our service levels on Wednesdays. As was announced Feb. 26th, we secured a pair of grants totaling \$6450 from the Local Health Equity Action Team and their partner United Healthcare! We are deeply appreciative of our volunteers and this community support! I especially want to thank

Rachael Carpenter, HBCAT Director, and Lisa Robertson of CHC/SEK for helping us to identify and secure these generous grants and our Trustees and work crew for reconfiguring the walls to let the freezer fit in!

These opportunities came about through prayer, through dreaming of what could be, and from conversations about those prayers and dreams. That, for me, is what "Leaning Towards the Light" is about. We are intentional about knowing, growing in, serving, and sharing Christ. Connections are made, we are equipped, and our witness grows! God makes a way!



I am utterly convinced that even if "all you can do" is pray, you can contribute greatly to stories like the two above. I encourage you to set a daily alarm – I've suggested 3:01pm as a play on our church address – but it can be any time of day (or multiple times a day) when you intentionally stop and pray for our congregation and community. These prayers shape our experience of and response to God's abundant grace. Through our ministries, bodies are fed, minds are nourished, and spirits are encouraged. I'll share another story of connections made and prayers answered – and a vision for another way to build fellowship and community while bearing witness - on the next page.

I am thankful to be here in Fort Scott and on this journey with you! ~Pastor Christopher

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## A “New to Us” Nativity – and a Vision...

I want to share another story of connection and answered prayer – an “upgrade” made at little financial cost to us.

Through our United Methodist connection, I was put in touch with a church in Milford, NE that had a large outdoor nativity set that they no longer wanted. I had been considering proposing buying or building one almost from the moment I was appointed here and learned we didn’t have one - but kept deciding that it wasn’t the highest priority.

Yet, I kept having this vision of figures on our lawn all along National Ave. When I saw the notice that Milford’s outdoor set was looking for a new home and they wanted to give it to a fellow United Methodist congregation for free (with pickup), it all came together. Thanks to Ron Sharp for making the drive to pick it up and splitting the gas cost with me (Ron and Mille also happened to have family nearby, so they combined a visit with the pickup). All told, our new outdoor Nativity set cost us about \$98 from my mileage account! The vision I kept having – and the prayers offered around it – was fulfilled in a way I never expected, but I was ready, and the help I needed was offered, when the opportunity arose!



## Now the vision is expanding.... What if?

Do you have a nativity set at home? I have several. Some I’ve bought, some have been gifts, and some were my grandmother’s. Whether a simple Madonna and Child or elaborate Creches with all the characters – they all have a story. They all tell “the” story. They are cherished – and they’re boxed up most of the time. Honestly, some years I don’t even make the effort to put them out around Christmas....

Do you have some like that? Or maybe you get them out every year and remember – laughing and shedding a tear or two at the memories – but not too many others get to hear the stories anymore.

What if... this coming Advent, to celebrate the new addition on our lawn and tell the story of the birth of Christ - not just 2000 years ago but in our hearts here and now - we hosted a “Nativity Festival” here at the church in late November / early December? We’d set up and decorate tables - perhaps in the parlor or Fellowship Hall and we all brought our home nativity sets, wrote up some stories about how we got them, and then had a party – to share them with the community over a weekend or even a week or two? What kinds of events and fellowship opportunities might we pair with that?

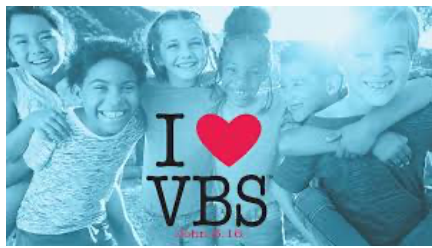
*And what visions for our congregation and community has God been laying on your heart and mind? Let’s share them, pray about them, recognize how we are being equipped to do them, and being made ready when the time is right to pursue them!*

## SCOUT SUNDAY – MARCH 12

We will have a day of celebration for Scouting! This came about because Charlie – one of our scouts who has been attending worship here with his mom recently – asked if we could! I said yes! And then we started figuring out what to do!

I’m working with Seth Needham and other Scout leaders to have scouts assist with our gathering and share some of the achievements and projects they’ve worked on. Charlie will be presented with one of the religious emblems that he has achieved, and we hope to have some of the Girl Scouts here to give us an opportunity to stock up on cookies too!





## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

We have again been invited to participate in a community Vacation Bible School with our friends at First Presbyterian. We are looking for a few organizers to help meet with their children's ministry folks soon to pick our theme, decide where and when to host it, etc. Please sign up at the table in the back of the sanctuary if you are willing to help plan!

## UMCOR Sunday – March 19, 2023

A special offering for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) is collected on 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.



**Preparing for Palm Sunday.** How we purchase and how we worship matters, so we have again ordered our Palm leaves from ECO Palms. They are a Lutheran World Service project that is endorsed by UMCOR and other United Methodist entities. ECO Palms works with growers to provide sustainable income and ensure ecologically friendly practices. See [www.ecopalms.org](http://www.ecopalms.org) for more information on their program!

## Giving Generously & Leaving a Legacy – Special Presentation

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, the Sunday after Easter, Pastor Christopher will join in leading worship here with Rev. Dr. Dustin Petz, and then that afternoon there will be a lunch and special program with our Network partners and other local congregations. Exact timing and other details of that program are being worked out – but mark your calendars to attend!



In his presentation, Giving Generously & Leaving a Legacy, he will focus on giving now and estate planning. Petz will share ways to maximize your giving during life (via IRA and other means), and provide considerations for charitable giving through estate planning to support the church and leave a lasting legacy.

Rev. Petz is the current President and CEO of the Kansas Methodist Foundation and has been appointed there as his ministry setting for the Great Plains Conference since 2018. He is passionate about helping individuals and families be good stewards of the resources God entrusted them. Dustin also has a desire to see churches, agencies, and institutions invest their resources in socially responsible ways. In his role, Dustin helps individuals, churches, and related organizations activate their ministry potential in their community. *He serves on the General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church as Chair of the Fiduciary, Foundation, and Property Matters Committee and the Investment Committee. Dustin is a graduate of Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science, Agribusiness. He received a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from Saint Paul School of Theology, a Master of Theology (Th.M.) from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) from Wesley Theological Seminary.*



**Remember to Save Best Choice Labels for United Women in Faith!**  
 you can leave them in the glass jars by each entrance each week.  
 Thank you!

**March Birthdays:** 7-Ryan Hunziker, 10-Cirtoc Shankel, 14- Morgan Regan, 15-Chris Allen, Reece Stapleton, 17-Chrost Chaplin-Vaughn, Amber Hunziker, 18-Jill Fritter, 20-Shannon Fletcher, Noah Wolf, 22-Don Tucker, 23-Charlotte Swaim, 25-Stevee Denton, 26- Pat Galan, 28-Janet Braun, Susan ‘foster, 29-Ron Sharp, Charlie Springer, 30- Lisa ward, 31- Keith Gibson

**March Anniversaries:** 7-Christopher & Robin Eshelman, 9-Steve & Stephanie Denton, 13-Doug & Trace Altic, 27-Peggy & Perry Blosser



**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:

- Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>
- Apr. 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>
- May 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>
- June 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>
- July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>

**Tell a Friend!**

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

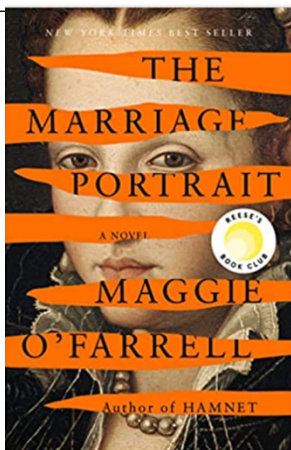
It’s amazing how quickly our contact information becomes outdated! Please help us keep in touch by updating your records frequently – we are missing lots of cell phone numbers, for example.



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 Pastor’s written sermon summaries 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!**



**The Reading and Discussion Group** meets at 1:30pm on Wednesdays in the Church Library. The next book will be “*The Marriage Portrait*” by Maggie O’Farrell.

"[A] poetically written, multilayered novel . . . O’Farrell creates another mesmerizing portrait of a Renaissance-era woman whose life is shrouded in mystery . . . Historical-fiction readers will love the cultural details, while Lucrezia’s plight speaks to modern themes of gaslighting and women’s agency . . . O’Farrell shines at instilling elegantly described scenes with human feeling, such as Lucrezia’s wedding preparations and her sense of inner strength while viewing the sunrise transform the sky at Alfonso’s country villa. The author proves equally skilled at evoking suspense." —**Booklist**

Her characters are captivating and believable, and the landscape of Renaissance Italy is a veritable gift to the senses, so powerfully does O’Farrell evoke the sights, sounds and smells of forest, castle, and barnyard." —**BookPage**



# shepherd's center

OF FORT SCOTT

Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup> – Fellowship Hall

11:30am lunch, Noon Programs start.

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> event will again offer a lunch at no charge for those who pre-register. ***Last day to pre-register and reserve a lunch will be Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>.*** This time we will have potato soup, garlic bread and cookies catered by Suzanne Griffin. We will take walk-ins (no lunch) the day of the event.

Our speakers will feature Austin Bolinger, who is the Horticultural Therapist at Tri-Valley Gardening, who will bring plants, and share about growing our gardens and their work at Tri-Valley. The other track is being organized by Wilma Hibdon, a retired Health Facility surveyor, and will be full of insight and tips to get the most out of home health care, make good decisions about assisted living, and end-of-life planning. Speakers from No Limit Rehabilitation, Presbyterian Village, Integrity Home Health, Fort Scott Medicalodge, Southwest Extension, and Cheney Witt Funeral Home will lend their expertise and answer questions.

As always, fellowship and building community will be at the forefront. Shepherd's Center is focused on lifelong learning for retired adults but everyone interested is welcome.

***You can register online at [www.firstumcfsks.org/ShepherdsCenterOfFortScott](http://www.firstumcfsks.org/ShepherdsCenterOfFortScott)  
or call Zandra at (620) 223-1950  
Or turn in the form below today!***

Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want to reserve a lunch (Potato Soup, Garlic Bread and Cookies by Susanne Griffon)

Yes

No Lunch (after March 6<sup>th</sup>)

Which afternoon session do you plan to attend?

\_\_\_\_\_ Gardening

\_\_\_\_\_ Quality of Life for Seniors (Home Health Care / Assisted Living / Planning)

\_\_\_\_\_ *To Be Determined*

## Reminder: Pastor's Weather Policy



When school is in session, the office generally closes if USD 234 cancels. Groups can make their own call, but we encourage this as a standard.

Worship will rarely be canceled unless Pastor cannot make it safely from the parsonage. Ice, rather than snow, would likely drive such decisions.

As always, you are encouraged to use your own best judgment when weather is a factor. Updates will be posted to Facebook and emailed to this address list (*Sundays and any cancellations that do NOT match USD 234 will also be called into KOMB 103.5 Radio*)



United  
Women  
in Faith

# Baked Potato Bar and Pie

March 17, 2023

11:30 - 1:30

Free Will donation



**First United  
Methodist Church  
301 S. National  
Fellowship Hall**

Sponsored by United Women in Faith

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

Return Service Requested

*Here is your March 202  
Newsletter from:*



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