



Dear Friend,

This will be an unusual way to frame the Advent season but let me offer this suggestion. Think of the month of December as an opportunity to practice good boundaries. Give yourself permission to say “yes” or “no” to the many expectations without any added guilt.

Advent is a busy season. There are decorations to put up, cookies to bake, parties to host and attend, cards to mail, gifts to purchase, etc. And if that isn’t enough, we often put pressure on ourselves to do these things with perfection. We even describe it that way. We want to find the perfect gift. We want the cookies to turn out perfectly golden-brown. So much pressure.

And I fear that the church may not always help. In this newsletter you are going to find a multitude of things happening. I hope you will sample the things that will make your Advent a holy and meaningful season. But don’t feel like you must do everything. Perhaps one of the greatest forms of idolatry is the presumption that everything depends upon us. It doesn’t. Give yourself permission to participate where it is helpful, but don’t feel like you have to do everything.

Here are a few bits of advice regarding setting boundaries. Don’t be motivated by guilt. If you bake fewer cookies this year, it will still be ok. If all the decorations don’t make it up, Christmas will still come. If the cards are not on time, it won’t be the end of the world. Do what you can.

When faced with the many demands upon your time, leave room for surprises and serendipity. It was not on the agenda of the shepherds to leave their flocks late that evening. But they heard a message from angels and went to investigate. Their curiosity was rewarded. Leave some room in your busy schedule to experience wonder, surprise and maybe a bit of unexpected joy.

Be good to yourself in this season. Chase those stars in the night sky and listen for angels nudging you in unexpected directions. Give yourself permission to sit quietly and listen to your favorite carols. Make room for a bit of wonder and beauty.

Pace bene (peace and all good things),

Howard

A St. Germaine Christmas Entertainment
Mark Schweizer



The Christmas
Cantata

SJMPhoto

December Book Club

The selection for the December book club is a short read, "The Christmas Cantata" by Mark Schweizer. This book described as a liturgical mystery, set in a church, with a wonderful Christmas mystery waiting to be solved. Do yourself a favor and pick up a copy of this playful novel. And **join us on Sunday December 17th at 6:00 p.m. in the church library** to share your insights. Also, we are looking for recommendations for the coming year, so if you would like to make a suggestion for upcoming books, please contact Rev. Boles.

Christmas Cookies & Photos

Merry Christmas
What: A variety of Christmas cookies, candies, and family photo

When: Sunday December 17th 11:00 am

Where: Fellowship Hall after worship service

Photo Opportunity: Christmas family or single photo taken in front of the fireplace. Bring your camera or phone or let Chris Wessel and his daughter Elizabeth take the photo for you using their equipment. Photo to be e-mailed to you.

Downtown Holiday Church Tour

The Bartholomew County Historical Society is hosting a tour of downtown churches on December 1st. First UMC will be one of those churches, displaying our Advent and Christmas decorations. This is a ticketed event, \$15 per person. Tickets can be purchased at the Historical Society, Viewpoint Books or the Columbus Area Visitors Center. The open house will run from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.



Pledge Drive

We are currently involved in our pledge drive for the 2024 budget. If you have not yet made a pledge, it's not too late! You can mail your pledge card to the church or call the Business Administrator, Daron Thayer, to provide this information. Your pledge is essential for the important ministries at First UMC!



Everyone is Connected



Adult Sunday School

Did you know that Rev. Boles is leading an adult Sunday School class in the Multi-Purpose Room every Sunday morning? The class explores difficult Bible stories to understand some puzzling readings. Each class is a stand-alone, so if you can't make it every Sunday, that is no problem. The class begins at **9:00 a.m. each Sunday.**

Christmas Cards

Thursday, December 7, 2023, come join the Care Ministry Team to write Christmas greetings in cards that will be delivered to local assisted living facilities.

We will be meeting in the multi-purpose room. All supplies will be provided.



Christmas Eve Family Service

If you have family visiting with children or youth, they are invited to be part of our retelling of the Christmas Story. Everyone is invited to this service. We will have coloring booklets that you can pick up, and of course we offer our kids quiet corner located in the Narthex.

We still have a few reading parts left and few prayers available for any Child or Youth interested, just let Shana know.



Once again this year we will offer three distinct worship opportunities for **Christmas Eve**. The evening begins with the **Family service at 6:00 p.m.** Come and join us for a family friendly service sharing the story of Jesus' birth. **At 8:30 p.m. we celebrate Christmas Eve with a bit of swing in the Jazz Service.** This service features the hymns and carols of the season, performed by a jazz trio. **Then at 11:00 p.m. we conclude the evening with the traditional Lessons and Carols.** We will hear the familiar readings with hymns and special music by our chancel choir, leading up to the lighting of candles and singing of "Silent Night" at midnight. Be sure to share these service opportunities with your family and friends and invite them to share in these inspiring services.

On Sunday December 31, we invite you to wear your favorite ugly sweater (or other holiday attire) to church. Maybe you received a Christmas gift and asked yourself, "Where am I every going to wear that!" Wear it to church! Come and share a festive and playful Sunday to close out 2023.



On Wednesday, Dec 13, 2023 at 7 pm, we will be hosting the Longest Night Service in the Sanctuary. The Longest Night Service will be a time to reflect and remember grief and loss. Throughout Advent, we proclaim hope, love, joy and peace. Marcia McFee writes, It "is the church's gift to the world-that our faith story is grounded in the presence of God that came and dwelt among us in the midst of hardship." As a church, the Body of Christ, we come together to mourn with those who mourn, to give comfort to those who have experienced loss of work and/ or housing. Come and join us for this special service and be embraced with hope, love, joy and peace as you grieve, as you walk through the wilderness of loss.



The Festival of Lights parade returns this year! Once again, we will be on the corner of 8th and Lafayette to hand out hot chocolate to those making their way to the parade. If you would like to help in making or serving the hot chocolate, please let Rev. Boles know. And if you are heading to the parade, don't forget to stop by the church to get free hot chocolate!

During the month of December, we will have several opportunities to help those in need. On December 3rd and 10th, the Learning Tree Preschool will be selling gift cards after worship. You can support their scholarship fund by purchasing cards. You can also purchase gift cards to donate to Hot Meals, Just Friends and Turning Point. We will deliver these cards to the respective groups as designated.



Indiana United Methodist
Children's Home Foundation, Inc.
Hope Has A Home

We are collecting games, toys, and sporting items for the Indiana United Methodist Lebanon Children's Home. You can bring your donations to the church.

Red Cross Blood Drive

Donating blood at the Red Cross Blood Drive is a simple yet impactful way to make a difference. Join us **December 14 from 12:00-5:00p.m.** in Fellowship Hall. Your act of kindness can truly be the gift of life for someone in need. Sign up to register at redcrossblood.org.



Offering Envelopes Available

Pick up your weekly offering envelopes today in the Narthex. Find the booklet that has your name and cross your name off the list when you pick it up. Booklets will also be available in the church office throughout the week.

If you don't have a booklet of offering envelopes but would like one, let Daron know at dthayer@fumccolumbus.org.

Youth Group Christmas Party

December 10th at 5pm in the youth room!

All 6th grade and up are invited! If your youth is looking for a great time to jump in or you have been wanting to invite a friend, this is a great time to do it. If you are able, each youth should bring a small wrapped gift (\$10) and sign up to bring something to share! It's an entertaining night of games, food, and fun! Sign up here to bring something

<https://signup.com/go/FBCjUZD>.



FUMC's annual Santa's Workshop



Join us for a morning of Christmas crafts and visiting with Santa!

December 2nd 10:30-1PM*

FUMC Fellowship Hall

This is a free event, but we will be accepting a free will donation to support Lincoln Central Neighborhood Family Center's Angels of Love Christmas Gift programs for families in need.

No registration required, but parents must accompany children while at the event.

***Sensory friendly time**

9:00-10:00AM

**Kids Night Out
Friday
December 8th 5:30-8:30**



Looking for a little time to yourself, Christmas shopping, or maybe that long overdue date night?!

We are here to help.

\$20 per child; includes 3 hours of fun, games, a movie, and food.

Currently we are able to host 3-year-olds up to and including 5th grade.

Dinner includes: Turkey sandwich, cheese cubes, pretzels, and carrot sticks.

Please fill out the following and bring it back by December 4th.

Name of child _____ Age ____ Current grade: _____ Male or Female _____

Name of child _____ Age ____ Current grade: _____ Male or Female _____

Name of child _____ Age ____ Current grade: _____ Male or Female _____

Parent/Guardian's name: _____ Cell number: _____

Parent/Guardian's name: _____ Cell number: _____

In case of emergency, contact: 1.) _____ Phone #: _____

Special concerns (allergies, medications, medical conditions, etc.)

For additional space to list any and all allergies, medications, and medical conditions, please use the back of this form. Thank you.

I, the undersigned parent, guardian, do hereby grant permission for my child/children, names above to be a part of the Kids Night Out that First United Methodist Church of Columbus is hosting on Friday, December 8th from 5:30-8:30pm. In order that my child may receive the proper medical treatment in the event that he/she may sustain injury or illness during KNO, I hereby authorize staff to obtain or provide medical treatment for my child for such injury or illness during the camp, and I hereby hold the event staff, as well as its representatives, harmless in the exercise of this authority.

I further understand that there is always a possibility that my child may sustain physical illness or injury while attending a church function. If this occurs, I hereby authorize the staff representatives to refer my child to a medical treatment center (hospital, etc.). I further acknowledge and understand that I will be responsible for any medical bills that may be incurred on behalf of my child/children for physical illness or injury that he/she may sustain during the event.

Understanding that there is always a possibility that my child may sustain physical illness or injury, I release First United Methodist Church of Columbus, and its representatives, from any claims for personal illness or injury that my child may sustain during the event.

_____ I give permission that pictures of my child can be taken for promotional purposes to be used on the church website and on social media – like, but not limited to Facebook.

Name of Parent or Guardian: _____

Date: _____ Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____



United
Women
in Faith

**Naomi Circle Minutes
November 13, 2023**

Members Present: Jeri Ahlbrand, Stephanie Taylor, Cynthia Stephenson Cathy Custer, Connie Wilson, Joyce Willis, Susan Gobert, Jane Lyle, Sue Romine, Anne Johnson, Judy Townsend, Kari Kerns, Lora Ayers, Mary Lu Fouts, Donna Crim, Jennie Lutes, Susan French, Georgianna Waldrop

- We all enjoyed the delicious Thanksgiving dinner hosted by Connie Wilson.
- Jeri opened the meeting with a poem by Helen Steiner Rice.
- Minutes of the October meeting were approved.
- Treasurer reported no more pledges have been received.
- Cheer fund has total of \$432.75 after the collection tonight.
- Motion by Cathy Custer and seconded by Cynthia Stephenson to send \$375 to the Lucille Raines Home was carried.
- Jeri shared photos of all the items donated for the Rainesfest Celebration. She also described her experience at the silent retreat.
- Prayer Calendar-1 Samuel 3:8-21 and Mark 12:1-12 were the verses.
- Mission blessing was for the Israelis of Palestine, the 4 homes of mercy.
- 2 staff members and 1 missionary had birthdays.
- Cynthia ordered a new copy of the Prayer Calendar, which is now called the Prayer Guide.
- Howard had a request for a funeral dinner which was unusual because it came from the family of Edith Miller who had been a member 60 years ago.

New Business

- Sue Romine reported the youth director, Shana would like volunteers to help decorate Christmas cookies with the youth at Santa's Workshop on Dec. 2.
- Cookie Walk update-Stephanie Taylor reported 255 dozen cookies are promised but is needing more. 5 dozen are gluten free and at least 17 pounds of candy are donated. Peanut brittle was accidentally included in the pre-orders, so the committee needs to find someone who is willing to make it once again.

Worship

- Joyce Willis read the poem "The Golden Chain" and talked about how it relates to friendship.



United
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in Faith

**Naomi Circle Minutes
November 13, 2023**

Program

- Lora Ayers read an essay about the history of aprons and shared the aprons she has. She asked members to share any special Thanksgiving memories.
- **Next month the meeting will be on December 11 at Jane Lyle's house.** It was decided to do a white elephant gift exchange. Stephanie Taylor has the program.
- New officers list will be sent to the district. Stephanie leader, Jeri Assistant leader, Jane treasurer, Mary Lu cheer fund and Georgianna secretary.
- Jeri closed the meeting with the poem, "Thoughts of Thanks".

Georgianna Waldrop , Secretary



First United Methodist Church

618 Eighth Street,
Columbus, IN 47201
Phone: 812.372.2851

The Spire

Church Staff

Pastor, Howard E. Boles
Associate Pastor, Harriet Wilkin
Director of Youth and Family Ministries, Shana Dublan
Music Director, Caio Lopes
Organist, Destin Wernicke
Handbell Choir Director, Joyce Crowder
Co-Director of Learning Tree Preschool, Gayle Kelley
Co-Director of Learning Tree Preschool, Teresa Nickerson
Business Administrator, Daron Thayer
Administrative Assistant, Vivien Teo
Maintenance Supervisor, Steve Heyerdahl
Custodian, Lucy Hiatt

Do we have your email address?

If not, please send to fumc@fumccolumbus.org.

The Spire is a monthly publication of
First United Methodist Church.

www.fumccolumbus.org

Worship Services:

Sunday Mornings

9:00 a.m. Sunday School for kids up to 8th
grade (multiple classrooms; **won't meet during
Summer Break**)

10:00 a.m. In the Sanctuary

Will also be livestreamed via our Facebook or
YouTube pages:

www.facebook.com/columbusfumc

https://www.youtube.com/@FUMC_Columbus

Church Office hours:

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

Articles for *The Spire* should be submitted to
Vivien Teo at vteo@fumccolumbus.org by the
20th of each month.