



Financial Update and a Sneak Peek at 2024

A little country church I served was unable to pay their denominational support, then called apportionments, for many years. These are the funds that support the broader ministries of our denomination like hospitals, universities, orphanages and more. The church set up a plan to try to achieve this payment, a little at a time. Within two years, we were fulfilling the request. By December we were still on track. At Christmas, the Lay Leader said he wanted to drive the final check to the District office and hand it to the Superintendent personally.

I did not anticipate the level of emotions that would accompany this moment. The Lay Leader cried as he handed the check to the Superintendent. They were tears of joy. He was proud of what they had accomplished. The next Sunday he shared with the congregation what he had done and there was applause.

Recalling that day makes me proud to say that First UMC was able to pay our denominational support in full in 2023. It is something for which we should be very proud. Those financial gifts support a lot of great ministries.

As we go into 2024, it remains our goal to pay our apportionments (now called the Tithe) in full. But every year around this time, we are anxious. Every year, we build a budget that has a significant shortfall between income and expenses. We call it our faith gap. Every year, this gap is covered, but it makes us (me) anxious. Sometimes this shortage is met by unexpected gifts. Sometimes through unexpected shortfalls in expenses.

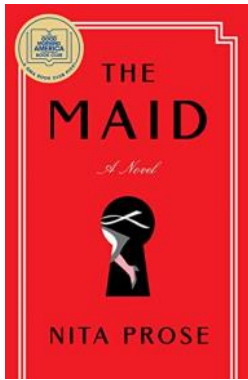
Entering this new year, I want to begin with the congratulations for the many ways we were able to work together to fund the ministries of First UMC and beyond. There are many items not reflected in the budget like Love a Child, UMCOR and other mission appeals that were filled with generosity. For that, I am deeply grateful and proud. As we look at the faith gap for 2024, if you haven't yet made a pledge, doing so will help our planning (and ease the anxiety.) And finally, I have had several folks ask about resuming Smorgasbord. I think it is time, but I have had a difficult time finding volunteers to lead it. We need to act soon. If you would be willing to do this, please let me know. Along with having an impact upon our budgeted income, it is an important part of our service and connection to one another.

Thank you for all you have done in 2023 and blessings for all that awaits in 2024.

Pace bene (peace and all good things),

Howard

Book Club



Do you enjoy talking about good books? Join us for the monthly book club. All the books are selected by the members and reflect the diversity of our group. Mystery, fiction, biography, it's all here! The selection for **January is "The Maid" by Nita Prose**. This novel was chosen by readers as the best mystery and thriller novel of 2022 by Goodreads. **The book club meets in the church library on Sunday, January 21st at 6:00pm**. A single copy of each month's book is available in the church library or you can purchase them at Viewpoint Books. Tell them the purchase is for our book club for an additional discount. Future selections are:



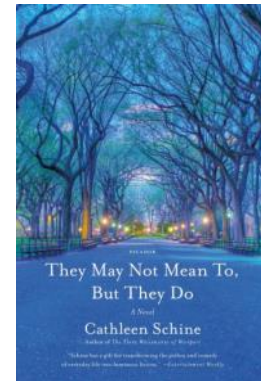
February 18

"A Fever in the Heartland"



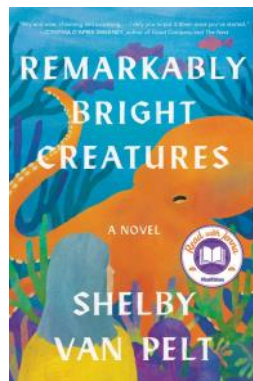
March 17

"The First Ladies"



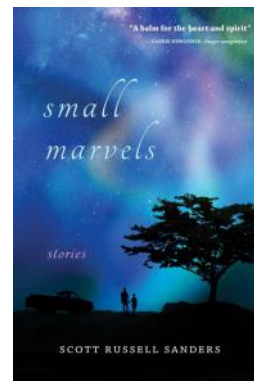
April 21

"They May Not Mean To, But They Do"



May 19

"Remarkably Bright Creatures"



June 16

"Small Marvels"



Our Church Family

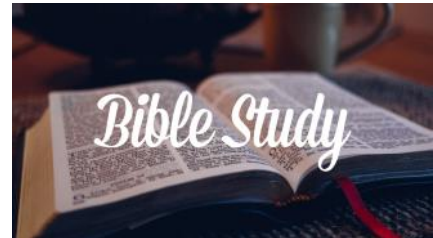
The church mourns the loss of Shirley Carter.

Thank
you

Thank you to everyone that helped make the Christmas Eve morning and evening services a success. From everyone that played a part in making the services happen to the people attending the services and everything in between and behind the scenes. It takes a lot of work and a lot of people to make it happen, and we couldn't have done it without everyone's help. So thank you, and Happy New Year!

Bible Study

The weeknight Bible study resumes on Tuesday, January 9th at 6:30pm. We will be studying Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth and how it relates to the present day issues facing the church. We will be in the Blue Room for this six-week study.



First UMC is welcoming to all people and shows that hospitality and support at the annual Pride Festival. We offered blessings, support, and visible expressions of God's love for all! A big thank you to the volunteers for helping FUMC express that love and support.



pride!





TRUNK OR TREAT & CHOCOLATE SUNDAY



A special thank you to everyone who helped make Trunk or Treat a great success! And a big shout out to our Trunk or Treat winners: Ora & Julia Pemberton!

It is always a wonderful time of good fellowship when we gather for Chocolate Sunday. And you can't beat the sweet treats!



New Brown Bag Lunch and Conversation

Beginning in 2024, we are going to offer a monthly Brown Bag lunch and conversation. This will be an opportunity to share lunch and conversation. Along with the time for fellowship, we will be inviting speakers to come and talk about various topics. The first luncheon will be on **Wednesday, January 17th at noon in the Fellowship Hall**. Rev. Boles will be speaking about the importance of friendships. All are welcome to attend!



Cookie Walk

The 2023 Annual Cookie Walk was the best ever raising over \$4,000 to support the Women in Faith Missions.

As I sat down to write this thank you, I thought of a football team. There is a quarterback, the leader, but where would he be with no team? Nowhere. So, as chairman of the Cookie Walk, I would like to thank my team. First, the organizers, second, the generous bakers, third, the buyers, and lastly, the community in which we live that comes out to support our cause.

Hope to see you again next year—the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Thank you everyone to a most successful year.

Sue Romine, Chairman



Day of Service



Jesus said that true greatness is found in the willingness to serve others. On the Day of Service, First UMC shows a quiet greatness offering comfort and care throughout the community.

Learning Tree Preschool



Thank you to everyone that purchased Amazon and Wal-Mart gift cards for Hot Meals, Just Friends and Turning Point. Learning Tree Preschool received a portion of the proceeds from these sales and our Love-A-Child Scholarship will benefit.

On Monday, December 4th Lisa McHone donated Mr. Paul's Christmas tree. Each class made decorations for the tree and decorated it beautifully.

We would like to thank the Tech Team for helping make our Christmas Program a success. Their hard work does not go unnoticed within our Preschool.



Our pets are a blessing to us with love and kindness. What a joy it is to get to return that blessing as a church!

SUNDAY
SCHOOL



Sunday School

Rev. Boles will lead a six-week Sunday School class on the book of 1 Corinthians. We will be using Jamie Clark-Soles' book, "1 Corinthians: Searching the Depths of God." The class begins on January 7th at 9:00am in the Multi-Purpose Room.

Care Ministry

Care Ministry meetings will be at 11am in the church library. Dates for meetings are:

Monday, January 8th
Monday, February 12th
Monday, March 11th
Monday, April 8th
Monday, May, 13th
Monday, June 10th

We will be using the Bible Study—**Creating Sacred Space**, written by Pastor Harriet Wilkin in our monthly meetings.

If you would like a copy of the Bible Study, please contact Pastor Harriet for a copy.

Monthly Crafting Extravaganza

Meetings will be at 10am in the Church Fellowship Hall. Beginning Thursday, January 25th we will have Iris Folding.

Join us to create cards using the paper technique called Iris Folding for Valentine's Day.

To ensure that Pastor Harriet has plenty of supplies, please sign up by emailing or calling Pastor Harriet at hwilkin@fumccolumbus.org or call/text at (909) 575-8303.

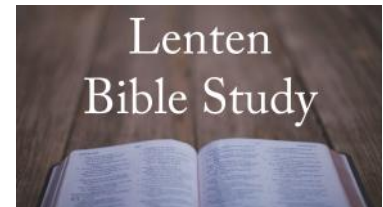
Walk-ins are always welcome!!!



Lenten Bible Study

Pastor Harriet will be offering a Lenten Bible Study on Tuesdays starting February 13 until Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 11:00 am in the Church Multipurpose room.

We will be using the Lenten Bible Study that Pastor Harriet has written, **From Passion to Promise**. The Bible Study includes opportunities for journaling and being creative. If you are unable to attend in person and would like a copy of the Bible Study booklet to do on your own, please email Pastor Harriet (hwilkin@fumccolumbus.org).



Youth group will be on January 14th & 28th. All 6th grade and up are invited to join us from 5-7 for dinner, games, and bible study.

For the next few months, we will be talking about Jesus's early ministry. On the 14th we will also be looking at planning the upcoming semester, so don't miss this one!



If your child is interested in or you are currently thinking about our 2024 Mission trip to Florida, plan on attending our mission meeting on January 21st at 11:30 in the education wing. We will

discuss the mission we will be involved with, funds to get us there as well as forms and deadlines. This opportunity is available for current 6th graders and up. If you can't make the meeting but want information, please reach out to Shana Dublan for details.



A BIG thank you goes out to everyone who made Santa's workshop a wonderful success. So many memories were made with families and volunteers. This is an event that simply couldn't happen without our fantastic volunteers, and I am looking forward to making so many more! Thank you again!



United
Women
in Faith

United Methodist Women in Faith Luncheon

December 6, 2023

Members Present: 11 members and 3 guests.

- Jeri gave the blessing and the meal was served.
- Jeri opened the meeting with a poem, "The Comfort of His Love."
- Georgianna introduced the speaker, Pastor Harriet Wilkin.
- Harriet's program was a lesson with scripture readings, reflections, and Christmas carols.
- Nancy Rumsey accompanied the singing on the piano.
- Memorial was done for the 4 members who passed this year: Nancy Engelbert, Sue Henderson, Amy Kutch, and Lena Powell.
- Special Mission Recognition pins were awarded to Marcia Hornbeck and Jennie Lutes. Jennie accepted but Marica was unable to attend.
- Treasurer reported a balance of \$4034.51.
- Cookie Walk made over \$4000 this year.
- Booklets for the new year were distributed. Members were encouraged to check information for any errors.
- Naomi Circle will meet at Jane Lyle's home on December 11 at 6. Members are to bring a white elephant gift.
- Jeri closed with "The Spirit of Giving" by Kay Hoffman.

Respectfully submitted,
Georgianna Waldrop, Secretary



United
Women
in Faith

Naomi Circle Minutes

December 11, 2023

Members Present: 16 members were present and 2 guests.

- There was no cheer fund report.
- Minutes of the November meeting were shared.
- One question about the amount of money donated to Lucille Raines—needs to be clarified.
- Treasurer has submitted a total of \$1125 in pledges this year.
- Cathy Custer gave a recap of the unit luncheon.
- Memorial was done for the 4 deceased members.
- Missions recognition pins were given.
 - * Jennie Lutes received hers and Marcia Hornback will be given to her later
- Cathy asked if members would prefer a text message about meetings and only Donna Crim and Jennie Lutes preferred a phone call.

Worship

- Susan Gobert read about angels from the book “Quick Little Devotions.”

Program

- Stephanie gave out new program books and went over corrections.
- Stephanie shared the starfish story about every little action making a difference and challenged the members to do something that makes a little difference themselves. Then she gave each person a small stocking with a sand dollar inside and shared the information about how the designs on the sand dollar relate to Christ with 5 tiny doves inside each.

White elephant gives were shared, and Cathy closed the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
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.