



Dear Friend,

John Pavlovitz has written a book with a very intriguing title. It is "If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk." That is sure to capture the reader's attention. The gist of the book is to encourage the church to be less about an attitude of judgment and more about empathy and compassion toward others.

One story, in particular, really captured my attention. He tells the story of a congregation in Missouri that experienced a lot of division. He doesn't go into depth about the division, only saying that there were some who were uncomfortable with talking about these issues.

That is frequently the case. Even in Jesus' time, he was often chastised for seeking to identify with those who were in need. In his time, it was the widows, the poor and the orphans. His actions made people uncomfortable. That was what this church in Missouri was experiencing. And some members were choosing to leave rather than try to understand what it meant to be people of faith amid injustice.

The pastor of this church must have been a very wise woman. To those who were afraid of losing these members and wondering whether it was better to remain silent on current events, the pastor said, "Maybe we have to go there first and realize that not everyone will come with us. Maybe we have to be willing to lose some people in order to become the community we're supposed to become for those who aren't here yet."

That is indeed a wise statement. But I have to acknowledge that it makes me uncomfortable. I want to be a big tent church, where everyone learns and grows and journeys together.

In the margins of the book, where Pavlovitz shares the story, I wrote, "the UMC." This feels very much like what is happening in the United Methodist Church. As we seek to be more loving and accepting of all God's people, there are some who are choosing not to do this. Roughly 20% of the United Methodist churches have chosen to leave the denomination. I hate to see this.

But the story of the church in Missouri does not end with the departure of members. Over time what they experienced was the arrival of "an entirely new group of gifted, passionate human beings who'd have never found a spiritual home in its former iteration." It was a revival, a new birth, an opportunity to become something more through the grace of God. Amid my sorrow at what is happening in the denomination, I have to trust that this will be true of our church and our denomination. To paraphrase the promise given to Abram and Sarai, God is inviting us to journey to a new place. We take that journey together, with faith and fear, with grief and grace, looking forward to where God will lead.

Pace bene (peace and all good things),
Howard

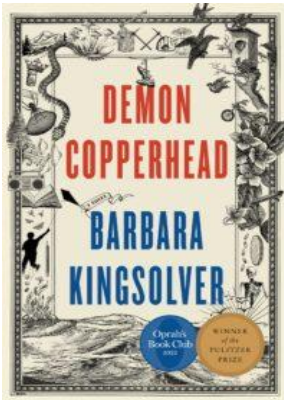
Staffing Updates

First UMC has had many staffing changes this summer. We want to update you on some of those new faces you will see around the office. We were pleased to welcome the appointment of Rev. Harriet Wilkin as our new Associate Pastor on July 1. Shana Dublan joined our staff in July as the new Director of Children and Family Ministries. And Lucy Hiatt expanded her hours to become our full-time custodian.

Some more recent additions include Daron Thayer accepting the position to become our Business Administrator. He is taking the role formerly held by Tammy Fields. Daron was previously our Administrative Assistant and we are presently working to fill this vacancy.

Following the graduation of Laura Bottei, our organist, we are pleased to announce the hiring of Destin Wernicke to begin that role. Like Laura, Destin is a graduate student at the Jacobs School of Music, working on his master's degree.

Amid these transitions and new beginnings, we are grateful for the gifts and talents these new staff members bring and look forward to working together!



September Book Club

During the month of September, the Book Club will be continuing our discussion on the Pulitzer Prize winning book, "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver. Set in small towns in Appalachia, Kingsolver addresses important topics like the opioid crisis, foster care, athletic success, grief and loss. We will meet in the church library on **Sunday, September 17th at 6:00 p.m.** All are welcome to attend.



Saturday, September 30th is the 5th annual Columbus Pride Festival. The event takes place at Mill Race Park from 1-7 p.m. First UMC will once again have a booth at this festival. To prepare for the event, we will have a conversation on Sunday, September 24th to talk about the festival, what it means and why it is important for our church to be present. This conversation will happen in the Fellowship Hall after our morning worship and is open to all. We hope you will join us for this conversation, consider volunteering at the Festival and attend this important community event.



Our Church Family

The church mourns the loss of Jon Guckenberger and Loren "Chic" Evans.



Youth Group

If you are in 6th – 12th grade you are invited to join us September 10th & 24th from 5pm – 7pm for fun, food, and fellowship! Open to all youth so invite a friend if you like! Contact Shana Dublan for more information sdublan@fumccolumbus.org.



PARENTS' NIGHT OUT

Are you looking for a little extra money or just really enjoy hanging out with kids? We would love to bring back Parents Night Out on the first Friday of the month from 5:30-8:30 p.m. It will be a themed evening with crafts, a movie, and dinner. Please contact Shana at sdublan@fumccolumbus.org for more information or to sign up to help.

COLUMBUS
Pride
FESTIVAL

Pride

Would you like to help with our booth at Pride this year? Contact Shana at sdublan@fumccolumbus.org to let her know you will be there. **September 30th 1:00-7:00 p.m. at Mill Race Park.** We will be passing out stickers, have a button maker people can use to make buttons and have a face painting area.



United
Women
in Faith

**Naomi Circle Minutes
August 14, 2023**

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

- Jeri opened the meeting with the poem “Giving is the Key to Living”
- Minutes approved from May 8 meeting.
- Treasurer Report -two more pledges turned in, pledges need to be paid by the October meeting.
- Cheer Fund-Mary Lu gave each member a card for turning in their Name, address, birthday and phone number to update her files. Cards were passed to be signed for Jewell Arthur and Mary Dyrstad. Connie gave out cards with her new address and cell phone number.

New Business

- Cookie walk will have jars of hot cocoa mix to sell and two stuffed bears will be raffled for a fund raiser. Each ticket is \$1 or 7 for \$5. Jane and Lora will cover the raffle sales. Many posters will need to be made for the community as the newspaper is changing to mostly non-print form.
- October 17 is Raines Fest. Board members replace the staff for activities. Many items are needed for the country store. Jeri distributed a list of requested items that members should bring to the September meeting. The Raines home was able to reach the goal of \$775,000 to replace the elevator but now they need to replace the boiler. Funds are lower because many churches have lost members or disaffiliated.
- Prayer Calendar- Bible verse was John 4:1-26 and Kings 2:1-11. Prayers for the Haiti Integrated Health Unit. Birthdays were for a Home Missionary and a Staff member.
- Worship was assigned to Susan Gobert, but since she was unable to attend Jeri read Mathew 23:9 and talked about the similarities between Martin Luther King and Jesus.
- Program- The sign-up sheet was passed for meetings for hostesses, worship and programs. Most were completed. New Leadership was accepted with Stephanie as Leader, Jeri as assisted leader, Mary Lu as cheer, Jane as treasurer, and Georgianna as secretary.
- Treats were served by Hostesses Cathy Custer and Lora Ayers. Jeri closed with “The Blessing of Sharing”.
- **The next meeting will be on September 11 at 7:00 p.m.**

Georgianna Waldrop, secretary

American Red Cross

Blood Drive



September 29, 2023

Held at FUMC Columbus
Fellowship Hall

12PM - 5PM



FIRST
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

Go to www.redcrossblood.org to register to donate

First United Methodist Church is hosting a blood drive on **Friday, September 29 from noon-5:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.** Go to www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time to register to donate.

33rd Annual

Cookie Walk

Saturday, November 18

9:00 a.m.-noon



Save the Date!

Planning has begun for the United Methodist Women's 33rd Annual Cookie Walk to be held on Saturday, November 18, 2023.

The **next meeting for the planning team will be Thursday, September 14 at 1 p.m. in the Conference Room** at church. If you are interested in learning how to help, please come and join us!

For more information, please contact Sue Romine, Cookie Walk Chair.

DANCE & DONATE

Beginner Line Dance Instruction
Fellowship Hall (MPR is backup location)
Thursdays 1:30-3:00pm

Cost: \$3 (all money will go to FUMC's Children's Programs)

No experience necessary. Call Jane Lyle for more information 812-764-2114





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
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
Daron Thayer at dthayer@fumccolumbus.org
by the 20th of each month.