

# COMBINED NEWSLETTER

First and Woodmar United Methodist Churches

Issue 008

October 2024



## Worship with Us – Sundays at 10:15!

October - At First United Methodist Church, 6635 Hohman, Hammond

November - At Woodmar United Methodist Church, 7320 Northcote, Hammond



## Trunk-or-Treat

Both Churches “Treating” Their Neighborhoods!

### Woodmar UMC

Wednesday, October 30

Woodmar’s Trunk-or-Treat will be on Wednesday, October 30, 5:30-7:00 pm in their Community Center. Preschool staff will organize this community event with collaboration from First and Woodmar families. Each teaching team will organize a theme-based table. Messy Church will have a table along with anyone else that would like to participate. Hot dogs will be served.

Candy donations are very much appreciated! A box for donations will be available at both churches. Donation letters have been given to community businesses for candy donations. Thank you to Pete and Fran Vukovich for bottles of water. Thank you to the Woodmar Foundation for funds to help with this festive community outreach.

### First UMC

Thursday, October 31

Join us for our 2024 Trunk-Or-Treat for the kids (and young at heart!) in the First Church north parking lot. It will be on Halloween, Thursday, October 31, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Candy donations are welcome and can be left in the marked tub in the donations corner at First Church. Questions? See Kathy Smith or text to 708-935-9807.



## Dinosaurs and Birds

65 million years ago the dinosaurs faced a radical change when an asteroid crashed into the Earth. We have been told that this cataclysmic event wiped the dinosaurs out—that they all went extinct. We know that there are no dinosaurs today, so that narrative seems to be true.

Most dinosaurs were very large, and they required a lot of resources to survive. When the asteroid hit the earth, the large, hungry dinosaurs that survived the initial impact starved because the resources to keep them alive were not available. But smaller dinosaurs were able to scrounge enough food to survive, and many did survive. In fact, the dinosaurs are with us to this day as scientists tell us that birds evolved from these small dinosaurs, and the evidence for this is the amazing similarity between bird skeletons and dinosaur fossils.

The cataclysm of the asteroid impact did wipe out many of the dinosaurs, but those that could adapt are still going strong. I'm sure that the survivors struggled greatly for eons, but their ability to change and adapt allowed them to survive and become teeming flocks.

Our struggles are not quite as dire as an asteroid's impact, but they are real, nonetheless. Over recent years, our culture has changed dramatically. The church's role in society has diminished substantially. Many churches have already succumbed to this cultural asteroid impact and are already extinct. Attendance has been steadily declining at First Church since 2015 and at Woodmar since 2008. Covid did not help, but the data shows that the impact of the pandemic is not the key factor contributing to the declining attendance of mainline denominations that many may assume. No, our asteroid is a changing culture. We are as powerless to escape from the changes around us as the dinosaurs were to avoid the asteroid that killed most of them. But we are not powerless over our ability to adapt to a new reality. We are starving from the lack of resources needed to sustain our churches as they were 50—or even 20—years ago. The world is not going to revert to the “good old days” as we recall them, and unless we adapt, we too will find ourselves extinct.

Birds and dinosaurs seem vastly different, and one definitely does not look like the other. But one derived from the other. What we will become is hard to say, but if we are willing to adapt, then we too may learn to soar like birds. Trust God and embrace the change. It will be hard, and there will be a sense of grief and loss. We can do more than endure: we can live, grow, and prosper. The changes to come may seem as unrecognizable on the outside as robins appear to be unrelated to velociraptors, but the bones on the inside are the same.

Jesus is our hope, Jesus is our life--and if we let Jesus and his mission be the bones within, I am certain that we can adapt into what our environment requires and not only survive but thrive.

Blessings,  
Jim

# Opportunities to Grow Our Faith

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## Messy Church Gaining Momentum!

The September Messy Church was another successful event! Thank you to everyone who helped, attended, donated items, or even prayed for the enthusiastic gathering in the Woodmar Community Center on September 24. We welcomed several new families, and Cyndi Slaboski gave a wonderful message during the celebration segment of the evening. We were able to appreciate nature with some fun activities, and one of the highlights was dancing to the songs. Next month's event will be held on Tuesday, October 22, at 6:00 pm —with a spiritual theme appropriate for Halloween! We hope you will consider joining us!  
Carrie Ward, Messy Church Team member



The Vine Food Pantry is always in need of non-perishable food donations. Below is the Vine's ongoing wish list:

- Soups -- 15oz
- Pancake mix – 32 oz. or less
- Pancake syrup – 24 oz. or less
- Peanut butter – 16 oz.
- Jelly -- 20 oz. or smaller
- Hamburger Helper
- Tuna Helper
- Tuna
- Manwich
- Macaroni & cheese, boxed
- Cereal
- Chili -- 15oz
- Canned baked beans -- 28 oz. or smaller
- Chef Boyardee canned products
- Pasta
- Rice
- Instant Potatoes
- Clean Plastic and Paper Bags with Handles

Donations can be dropped off at any time at the Mission Corner across from the First Church office. Or pick up a bag on Brown Bag Sunday, the last Sunday of each month, to fill with your selected items and deposit it in the Mission Corner on the following Sunday.



## Support Pastor Jim with Communication

As we move through a continuing period of transition, let's pledge to give Pastor Jim an extra measure of support during the temporary absence of key staff (Administrative Assistant Brenda Petty) and lay leadership (Children's Ministry Director Mike Kizman). One important way to help is to be sure that Pastor Jim is informed about the plans/work/meeting dates of every ministry area/church event. Please be sure that you reach out to clear your desired activity/date/event location with him before finalizing your plans, and also ensure that each event and meeting your group is planning is recorded on our respective church's calendars so as not to conflict with other scheduled activities.

# Reaching Out to Our Community

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## First Church's Mission Giving Supports Briana's Hope

Continuing for a second month, Brianna's Hope is the Second Mile Giving recipient for October. Brianna's Hope is a faith-based addiction recovery ministry that began in 2014 following the overdose death of 24-year-old Brianna DiBattiste. After her death, Brianna's parents found a prayer she had written expressing her hope that Jesus would help her out of her addiction. With their support, her United Methodist pastor, Randy Davis, established Brianna's Hope as a ministry to put her prayer into action by providing faith-based recovery assistance through support groups for persons struggling with addiction.

Today, 42 Brianna's Hope chapters (including the Woodmar chapter that meets on Wednesday evenings in the church's library) serve more than 900 active members. Thanks to donations, Brianna's Hope has been able to provide treatment at no cost to more than 1,750 persons to date, many of whom lack insurance and could not otherwise afford addiction recovery treatment. As well, more than 800 addicts have committed or recommitted their lives to Jesus Christ through the supportive Christian embrace of Briana's Hope ministry.

For more information, visit A Better Life—Brianna's Hope on Facebook, go to [www.ablbh.org](http://www.ablbh.org), or contact Pastor Jim Denton.

## Learn to Crochet or Knit with Phil's Friends

Crochet and Knit for Phil's Friends meets each Monday at 10:00 am in the lounge at Woodmar. We are making lap blankets and hats to be included in the Phil's Friends care packages delivered to those affected by cancer. Our members will help anyone interested in learning to crochet or knit. We can also suggest and provide patterns for those who are ready to begin a project. Please join us!



## UMCOR is Woodmar's Mission for October and November

Hurricane season is upon our country. UMCOR will be the emphasis for Woodmar's mission giving. The United Methodist Committee on Relief U.S. Disaster Response (UMCOR USDR) seeks to alleviate suffering caused by disasters that strike within the United States and its territories.

With a "communities own their recoveries" philosophy, UMCOR supports local efforts to accomplish immediate relief and long-term recovery while providing for volunteers to offer compassionate ministry in the aftermath of disasters.

In partnership with disaster response ministries and coordinators in U.S. annual conferences, UMCOR journeys with affected communities throughout a disaster's cycle, including disaster preparedness, relief, response, recovery and mitigation.

# Building Relationships

## UWF to Learn about Indigenous People

United Women of Faith will meet on Wednesday, October 16, in person at Woodmar and on Zoom. The board will meet at 10:00 am and Mary's circle will gather at 11:00 am. The program will be on Listening to Indigenous Voices. Mary Jo Shea will summarize the history and views of indigenous people in our area. We will examine our own preconceptions about Native Americans and discuss how we can learn from and support this culture.

UWF formerly was the United Methodist Women. Our organization is open to all women of faith, no matter whether they are Methodists or not. Please invite any women you know who might want to share our faith journey to join us at our meeting.

## Book Club

The Woodmar book discussion group will read *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride for their October selection. McBride's new novel takes place before and during the Depression, in a ramshackle Pennsylvania neighborhood called Chicken Hill, where Jewish immigrants and African Americans live. As these Chicken Hill residents' stories coincide, it becomes clear how much the people who live on the outside of white, Christian America struggle and what they must do to survive. The story shows us that even in dark times, it is love and community--heaven and earth--that sustain us. To join us for an informal and relaxed discussion on October 21 at 1:00 pm, please call the church office for a Zoom invitation.



## Thanksgiving Dinner is November 24

Woodmar's annual Thanksgiving Dinner is just around the corner. Be sure to save the date, Sunday, November 24, time to be determined. We will be asking for turkey bakers and for each family to bring a dish to share. Be watching for more information to come your way.

## Paws For Peace Going to Hartsfield

Paws for Peace will be going to Hartsfield for their Halloween visit. Dress your dog up if you wish and enjoy meeting the residents. We are going to Hartsfield on October 23 at 2:00 pm. If you have any questions, please call Suzanne Wasmund at 219-865-6453.

### THE VINE FOOD PANTRY

#### AT-A-GLANCE

August 2024

New Clients.....	61
Return Clients.....	420
Total Clients Served.....	481
New Households.....	25
Return Households.....	211
Total Households Served.....	236

Total Pounds Distributed: 7,848

# Children's Ministries



## Woodmar UMC BIRTHDAYS

10/2	Lori Jones
10/22	Cathleen Gonzalez
10/25	JoAnn Wilkinson
10/25	Christian Calkins

## First UMC BIRTHDAYS

10/01	Scarlet Holycross
10/02	Kathleen Stricker
10/03	Mary LeVan
10/07	Beth Moll
10/08	Donna Beifuss
10/08	Mollie Bodie
10/08	Isabella Castro
10/08	Jason Hawkins
10/10	Analicia Valdez
10/12	Lisa Dodd
10/12	Barney Stahl
10/13	Terry Dodd
10/13	Penny Zeiler
10/21	Gary Williams
10/24	Dave Watson
10/25	Sofia Smith
10/25	Roseanne Watson

## Children's Ministry

As Pastor Jim communicated to our combined congregations recently via email, Mike Kizman will be on "sabbatical" for the next few months, so the previously announced Scheeringa Farms outing in October for kids and youth has been cancelled.

The Children's Messages during worship and Sunday School, as launched on September 22, will continue during Mr. Mike's time away. If you would be willing to join the rotation with Pastor Jim and First Church Lay Leader Pat Mosley to deliver a Children's Message one Sunday a month, please contact Pastor Jim (who encourages volunteers that the Sermons4Kids resource is available for those who would like to use it).

As Mr. Mike steps away for a few months, Pastor Jim would like to reassemble a Children's Ministry committee to help guide, coordinate, and plan ministry for our children. If you have served in this capacity, or would like to, please contact Pastor Jim or Administrative Assistant Brenda Petty.



# Finance and North District

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## FUMC Finance News

As of August 31, First Church's giving total for the year to date was \$105,497, which is \$31,213 behind contributions for the first eight months of 2023. This is reflected in the church's current expense fund deficit of -\$28,508. The Finance Committee awaits a decision from the First Church Foundation on its request for \$72,000 to offset the church's decline in giving as projected through year's end. (Note that, as reported in previous newsletters, \$264,722 in net proceeds from the sale of the Fran-Lin parsonage are restricted and cannot be used to fund the church's operating budget.)

Jane Harper-Alport, Finance Committee member, 219-718-8328 [jharperalport@gmail.com](mailto:jharperalport@gmail.com)

## Woodmar UMC Finance News

Woodmar ended August with expenses over income of \$6,790. We received \$7,800 in offerings for the month (total income was \$12,469). Our expenses were \$19,497, which is normal for the month. Nothing unusual for August. Year to Date we are down \$16,457. Community Preschool started their new year with expenses over income of \$2,939, which is typical for their new school year. I am sure things will pick up as we settle into the new school year!

## Bishop Tracy Malone Coming to North District

Bishop Tracy Smith Malone, newly appointed episcopal leader of the Indiana Area of the United Methodist Church, will pay her first visit to the North District on Sunday, October 13. Bishop Malone will speak at 6:00 pm at Valparaiso First United Methodist Church.

During the celebration of her appointment at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Indianapolis on September 15, Bishop Malone told the assembled clergy and laity from across the state that she is ALL IN! In late September, she began a three-month tour across the conference to listen, connect, and cast vision as she meets and greets United Methodists in each of our state's 10 districts.

If you would like to carpool to Valparaiso on October 13, contact Pastor Jim or Jane Harper-Alport. Let's make a positive first impression for Bishop Malone with a strong showing from First Church and Woodmar!

### **First United Methodist Church**

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Phone (219) 932-5915

[www.hammondfumc.org](http://www.hammondfumc.org)

email - [admin@hammondfumc.org](mailto:admin@hammondfumc.org)

#### Office Hours

Brenda: Tuesday & Thursday, 8:30-2:30

Jim: Tuesday & Thursday, 10:00-3:00

### **Woodmar United Methodist Church**

7320 Northcote Ave, Hammond, IN 46324

Phone (219) 844-3030

[www.woodmarumc.org](http://www.woodmarumc.org)

email - [office@woodmarumc.org](mailto:office@woodmarumc.org)

#### Office Hours

Brenda: Monday & Wednesday, 10:00-1:00

Jim: Monday, 10:00-3:00 & Wed., 1:00-4:00

Please keep in mind that pastoral care needs may mean that Pastor Jim will be in and out of the office during these times. It is always advisable to call to schedule a time to meet with him. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Pastor Jim or Brenda.