

# COMBINED NEWSLETTER

First and Woodmar United Methodist Churches

Issue 007

September 2024



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

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

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



## Your Community Preschool and Childcare

The fall program has begun! Our 2024-25 school year by the numbers: 45 children, ages 3-5, are currently enrolled. 36 children attend full-time which can be from 7 am to 5 pm. Nine children attend preschool-only which is from 8:30-12:00 on four or five days per week. Thirteen staff members are currently serving as teachers, assistant teachers, administrators and support staff. We also have 2 practicum students from Purdue Northwest, 1 practicum student from Ivy Tech and 1 intern from Hammond Area Career Center. A cleaning crew of 5 comes daily to make sure our education wing is ready for a new day.

Throughout our classrooms, children are engaged in purposeful play and small group activities with their teachers. At the beginning of a new school year, routines and class meetings establish a sense of safety and connection as children learn to thrive in a group. Many classes have taken time to learn, "All About Me" as we celebrate the uniqueness and value of each child. Each class explores the "Big Feelings" that children express and discuss many ways to address those feelings.

Paws for Peace visited our children with two sweet dogs and a variety of stuffed pups. Even the reluctant children warmed up to Milo and Lily for snuggles. Scooby snacks and lemonade were also a big hit. Thank you to Suzanne, Sherrill and Jackie for creating experiences for our children. We look forward to future opportunities to create connections between our church families and our preschool families.

Congratulations to Karianne, our Director! Karianne and Roy Padilla welcomed a beautiful baby boy on July 27. Karianne and baby Lincoln are enjoying time together. We look forward to Karianne's return when she is ready.

## High Places

*Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places. 1 Kings 3:14*

This passage from 1 Kings is from the lectionary text we read on August 18. There is a lot of fascinating history about the “high places” (called bahmot in Hebrew) that can be useful for us in our time.

There were 3 “denominations” of priests in ancient Israel: the Mushites who followed Moses, the Aaronides who followed Aaron, and the Zadokites who were followers of Zadok. Like all denominations, they had their similarities and differences, which led to quite a few disagreements.

The Aaronides and the Zadokites were centered in Jerusalem and insisted that the only proper place to worship was at the Temple in Jerusalem. The Mushites, however, were wandering priests who traveled from village to village. They would set up a local altar (a high place or bahmot) so the people could make their sacrifices locally.

In Exodus 20:24-25, God instructs Moses saying, “ (24) You need make for me only an altar of earth and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your offerings of well-being, your sheep and your oxen; **in every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.** (25) But if you make for me an altar of stone, do not build it of hewn stones, for if you use a chisel upon it you profane it.”

Solomon’s Temple and altar were built of hewn (cut) stone and the Aaronides and Zadokites believed that God would only bless those who sacrificed in that one place. They had their reasons. One is that once an altar (bahmot) was constructed and the Mushite priests had moved on, a sacrifice to any god could be made there. Frequently, Canaanite gods were worshiped in these sites along with the God of Israel, which encouraged idolatry.

Additionally, monetary offerings were made along with the sacrifices, and this money would not come to Jerusalem if it was given in the towns and villages. The incentive for this practice wasn’t mere greed on the part of the Aaronides and Zadokites, but was motivated by fear that invading armies could raid that gold for their own use.

In Josiah’s reforms (2 Kings 22-23) the Mushites lost the argument, and the bahmot were torn down and worship became centered on the Temple in Jerusalem. When the Babylonians invaded, the Temple itself was destroyed and the people (and the gold) were carried into exile to Babylon. The argument between the Mushites and the Aaronides and Zadokites no longer mattered. Worship had to occur where the people were. Perhaps the Mushites won the argument after all?

For us, the questions are “Will God come to us and bless us?” wherever we worship or only if we worship in the “correct” place, and “Will we be the kind of priesthood that stays inside our own walls, or will we be the kind that takes our worship out into the wider world?”

Biblically, the Aaronides and Zadokites seemingly won the argument, and the Bible mostly reflects their vision. But the exile shows that God wants to be worshiped everywhere.

Had I been a priest in ancient Israel, and based my vision, I clearly would have been a Mushite! Every time we love a neighbor, we are making a sacrifice and an offering to God. May that happen everywhere we go and with everyone we meet as we build bahmot in every heart we encounter. I pray that perspective grows to be more important to us than a focus on which building our potential new church occupies.

Blessings, Jim

# Opportunities to Grow Our Faith

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## Messy Church on September 24 Don't Miss It!

Forty-four community members, congregants, and pastors—including at least seven happy kids—enjoyed a delightful evening experiencing the love of Jesus in a new and fun way as Messy Church launched on August 20 in the Woodmar Community Center. From supper and creative activities to worshipful celebration with a message and music, everyone's mood was joyful, and the presence of the Holy Spirit was felt by all! Spread the word to relatives, friends, and neighbors, and plan to participate in this month's Messy Church beginning at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, September 24.



## Wednesday Bible Study Will Explore God's Questions

The Wednesday Bible Study class will return to its regular weekly schedule on September 11 at 10:30 am in Room A at First Church. Everyone is welcome to participate as the group, led by Pastor Donna Beifuss, begins a study of *Questions God Asks Us* by Trevor Hudson. Books will be provided when class meets.

Each of the book's 10 chapters covers a question God asked a character in the Bible—and asks each of us today. Those questions include: Where are you? Where is your brother? What are you looking for? Join the group for fellowship, study, lots of stimulating discussion, and a casual restaurant or brown bag lunch each week.



## UWIF Soul Care Retreat

Save the Date! The United Women in Faith of the North District will host "Soul Care Retreat—Route to Renewal" on Saturday, September 21, from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm CDT at Celebration UMC, 1289 S. 250 E., Winona Lake, IN. Speaker for the event will be Rev. Cindy Gackenheimer, a retired pastor who served the Celebration UMC congregation. Please contact Lora Ward for details.



# FALL '24 LAY SERVANT ACADEMY

@ Hebron United Methodist Church  
202 W. Church Street, Hebron, IN 46341

## IN-PERSON COURSES

### Introduction to Lay Ministry - Led by Karen Williams, CLS

This basic course is required for first-time attendees. Discover and employ your personal spiritual gifts, learn the worth of servant leadership, and be rooted in good spiritual practices. Course Text - *Lay Servant Ministries Participant Book - Basic Course* by Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson. Participant's Book ISBN DR626 · 978-0-88177-626-3 (\$12)

### Discover Your Spiritual Gifts - Led by Pastor Tom Clark

This course helps participants understand spiritual gifts and how the church can use them to fulfill its mission and ministry. Participants will also learn what it means to be a spiritual leader. Course Text - *Each One a Minister* by William J. Carter. Participant's Book DR375 · 978-0-88177-375-0 (\$14)

### Lay Servants Lead in Conflict Resolution - Led by Pastor Wayne Williams

Every church deals with conflict, both healthy and unhealthy, and lay servants can be equipped and empowered to help lead through those times of conflict. Course Text - *The Spirit and Art of Conflict Transformation* by Thomas Porter. Participant's Book 1026 · 978-0-8358-1026-5 (\$25)

### Accountable Discipleship - Led by Pastor Jim Denton

This course focuses on the concept of the household of God, Scripture as divine revelation, Wesleyan understandings of grace, and the importance of the class leader in the development of the Methodist movement. Course text - *Accountable Discipleship* by Steven W. Maskar. Participant's Book DR339 · 978-0-88177-339-2 (\$15)

### Ministry with the Forgotten: Dementia through a Spiritual Lens - Led by Pastor Cathy Allison

This course is designed to help laity and clergy deepen their understanding of persons living with dementia and help all maintain their identity and worth as beloved children of God. Course Text - *Ministry with the Forgotten: Dementia through a Spiritual Lens* by Kenneth L. Carder. Participant's Book · 978-150188-024-7 (\$17)

**SUNDAYS: SEPT. 29, OCT. 6, 13, 20**

**2-5 PM CENTRAL**

**\$10 PER PARTICIPANT + COST OF TEXT**

Registration link:

<https://inumc.swoogo.com/lisahebfall24>

Questions: Karen Williams (219) 869-2324

# Reaching Out to Our Community

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## First Church Extends Period for Second Mile Giving

We all know that money doesn't stretch as far as it used to. In fact, money doesn't actually stretch at all: go ahead and try it with a dollar bill! So, we are moving toward doing each Second Mile giving for a period of two months instead of one. Please continue to give monthly. After all, the idea is to be able to give each worthy organization more money to do God's work.

For September and October, Brianna's Hope will be our Second Mile giving recipient. Brianna's Hope is a faith-based addiction recovery ministry. This compassionate ministry began in 2014 after the death of 24-year-old Biranna DiBattiste, who was missing for weeks until her body was found--having died from a heroin overdose. While searching Brianna's room, her worried parents found a prayer she had written that expressed her hope that Jesus would help her out of her addiction. Brianna's United Methodist pastor, Randy Davis, with her parent's support, started Brianna's Hope to put Brianna's prayer into action by providing help for people struggling with addiction through faith-based recovery support groups.

Brianna's Hope has expanded to 42 chapters (including the Woodmar chapter) with over 900 active members. Because many people struggling with addiction lack insurance, an important part of the ministry of Brianna's Hope is to fund treatment for those who otherwise could not afford it. To date, more than 1,750 addicts have received treatment funded by donations to Brianna's Hope!

Within the embrace of a Christian-based ministry, more than 800 addicts have committed or recommitted their life to Jesus Christ through the ministry of Brianna's Hope.

## Woodmar Chooses Brianna's Hope for Monthly Mission

Woodmar Missions, during September and October, will be for Brianna's Hope. A Better Life - Brianna's Hope is a participant-driven, faith-based and compassion-filled addiction support group that meets each Wednesday evening at Woodmar. A meal is served during a time of fellowship and then the group moves to the library for their meeting. For more information, please contact Pastor Jim, Maureen Tedesco or Pete Ward. You may also go to A Better Life – Brianna's Hope on Facebook or [www.ablbh.org](http://www.ablbh.org).



Left: work in progress by the group  
Right: finished blanket and hats

## Group Knits for Cancer Care Packages

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!

# Building Relationships

## Knitters and Crocheters Resume

The Knitting and Crocheting group is returning to First Church, beginning September 19 in the church parlor and meeting every Thursday from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm. We enjoy lots of fellowship, exchange ideas, share stories, help each other with all kinds of problems, and are even able to do some knitting and crocheting! Everyone is welcome, no matter your skill level. An questions, call Sonia Vincent at (708)946-6489



## Book Club

Woodmar’s Book Club will be meeting via Zoom on Monday, September 16 at 1:00 pm. Our selection this month is *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese. It is an “epic story of love, faith, and medicine, set in Kerala, South India, following three generations of a family seeking the answers to a strange secret.” If you would like to join, please call the church office so you will receive a Zoom invitation.

## Woodmar United Women in Faith

United Women of Faith and guests gathered at Woodmar for a potluck luncheon on August 26. We enjoyed catching up with each other after a summer break and were especially happy to visit with many women from First Church.

We will resume our regular meetings on Wednesday, September 18, in person and on Zoom. The board will meet at 10:00 am, and Mary’s circle will gather at 11:00 am. We will discuss topics for our monthly programs and ways that we can encourage more women to attend.

UWF formerly was the United Methodist Women. Our organization is open to all women of faith, no matter whether they are Methodist or not. Please invite any women you know who might want to share our faith journey, and have fun doing so!

| <b>THE VINE FOOD PANTRY<br/>AT-A-GLANCE</b> |     |
|---|-----|
| July 2024                                   |     |
| New Clients.....                            | 41  |
| Return Clients.....                         | 414 |
| Total Client served.....                    | 455 |
| <br>  |     |
| New Households.....                         | 17  |
| Return Households.....                      | 207 |
| Total Households Served.....                | 224 |
| <br>  |     |
| Total Pounds Distributed: 7,296             |     |

# Children's Ministries

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Birthdays  
Children



## Woodmar UMC BIRTHDAYS

9/1 Debbie Pirtle  
9/1 Jay Garrett  
9/1 Pamela Wendell  
9/20 Cheryl Echlin  
9/28 Wanda Stevenson

## First UMC BIRTHDAYS

9/2 Chandra Ware  
9/4 Bob Heady  
9/5 Nancy Kolanowski  
9/6 Brian Goodrich  
9/6 Berto Valdez IV  
9/10 Larry Alport  
9/10 Georgia Heady  
9/10 Janet Voorheis  
9/11 Kurt Kosarko  
9/11 David Mendoza  
9/13 Carrie Ward  
9/16 Ellena Maini  
9/17 Angela Hawkins  
9/17 David Tapper  
9/20 Star Vestal  
9/20 Kate Malloy  
9/21 Mary Seljan  
9/22 Jane Harper-Alport  
9/22 Ken Vincent  
9/23 David Dean  
9/25 Richard Miller  
9/26 Don Nelson, Jr.  
9/30 Luis Del Rio



Hi, kids! Your memory verse for September is Psalms 46:1: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

We will have our annual field trip to Scheeringa Farms in October, as well as our pumpkin carving party. Dates will be announced soon!

Sunday School starts September 22. We will start off with one class for all, then evaluate our needs for expansion. We will begin each class asking you the following three questions, so think about these as you prepare to join us when our kick-off date arrives:

- 1: What is something good that happened this week?
- 2: How did God use you this week?
- 3: How did you see God at work in your life this week?

Parents, do us a favor and start asking these questions to your kids once a week to help them better understand the questions and consider their responses.

Mr. Mike

# Stewardship & Finance

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## FUMC Finance News

First Church's net income balance, as of July 31, was \$320,847, which includes proceeds from the sale of the Fran-Lin parsonage. A total of \$58,750 from that amount was reimbursed in August to First Church's Foundation for funds used to repair and renovate the parsonage for sale. This will be reflected in the September finance report. Additionally, \$50,000 from the parsonage sale will be placed in a restricted account to cover a housing allowance for a future pastor, if such an allowance is needed in the years ahead. The remainder of the sale proceeds will be held in a separate restricted account for uses to be designated by the Finance Committee in conjunction with the Trustees and pastor. This may include support for building/property expenses and expanded ministries connected with the creation of a new church, following the merger exploration now under way.

A current expense fund deficit continues to challenge First Church (-\$32,345 as of July 31). The Finance Committee has requested \$72,000 from the Foundation to offset the church's ongoing decline in giving as projected through year's end. As of July 31, the giving total for the year to date was \$89,646, which is \$32,172 behind contributions for the first seven months of 2023.

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

## Woodmar UMC Finance News

July ended with expenses over income of \$8,230. We received \$6,326 in offerings for the month. Year to Date we show expenses over income of \$9,666. Our cash in the bank now sits at \$29,798. If these losses continue, monies will deplete soon. There were no unusual expenses for the month. On a brighter note, Community Preschool ended July with income over expenses of \$13,437! Their fiscal year also ended in July; their Year to Date is a positive \$20,548. Excited to see what the new year brings.

### **First United Methodist Church**

6635 Hohman Ave, Hammond, IN 46324  
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.





## New Bishop Appointed to Indiana Conference

At the North Central Jurisdictional Conference in July, Bishop Tracy S. Malone was assigned as the resident bishop for the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church, effective September 1. A service celebrating Bishop Malone's assignment will take place on Sunday, September 15, at 3:00 pm EDT at St Luke's UMC, 100 W 86th St, Indianapolis. Bishop Malone was elected to the episcopacy at the 2016 North Central Jurisdictional Conference and has served as the resident bishop of the East Ohio Conference for the past eight years.

She also is currently the president of the UMC Council of Bishops, president of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Africa University. She pastored several churches in the Northern Illinois Conference, represented that Conference at four General and Jurisdictional Conferences, served as a district superintendent, and was dean of the Cabinet of the Northern Illinois Conference.

Bishop Malone received a bachelor's degree from the North Central College in Naperville, Illinois; a master of divinity degree from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois (where she was a classmate of our Conference Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Marti Lundy); and a doctorate of ministry from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Bishop Malone and her husband, Derrick, have two daughters.

The North Central Jurisdiction's Episcopacy Committee is responsible for assigning bishops. The committee includes two people from each annual conference. Rev. Dr. Aleze Fulbright and Chris Hancock represented the Indiana Conference on the committee.

If you are interested in attending the service to welcome Bishop Malone to the Indiana Conference, please contact Pastor Jim or Jane Harper-Alport if you would like to make arrangements for shared transportation.

## North District Learning Event

Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 14, when Rev. Chris Danielson will lead a workshop for the North District titled "Reclaim, Revive, Renew." This spiritual enrichment opportunity will take place from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm CDT at Church of the Four Seasons UMC, 9100 E. 109th Avenue in Crown Point.

Participants will have an opportunity to restore their soul and learn practices for the journey ahead. We hope a team from Woodmar and First Church will attend together, prepared to reclaim, revive, and renew. Let Pastor Jim know if you are interested in attending; carpools can be arranged. For more information, please visit [www.inumc.org/districts/north-district](http://www.inumc.org/districts/north-district).

**FALL LEARNING EVENT**

**"RECLAIM, REVIVE, RENEW"**  
with Rev. Chris Danielson

**SEPT 14**

Participants will have opportunity to restore their soul and learn practices for the journey ahead. Bring a team and be prepared to reclaim, revive and renew. Both sessions at the two sites are identical.

**SOUTH BEND CLAY UMC, FIREHOUSE CAMPUS**  
17646 Cleveland Road  
South Bend, 46635  
9 AM-12 PM (ET)

**CHURCH OF THE FOUR SEASONS UMC**  
9100 E 109th Avenue  
Crown Point, 46307  
2 PM-5 PM (CT)

SCAN QR CODE  
HERE TO REGISTER

**FREE!**

**MORE INFO:** [inumc.org/districts/north-district](http://inumc.org/districts/north-district)