

First Connection

First United Methodist Church of Normal
Connecting All People With Jesus Christ

PALM SUNDAY WEEKEND

March 24 & 25

Palm Processional with children at 9:30 service
11am service the cantata
Eyes of Faith: Seeing and Believing the Messiah
will be presented by our Chancel Choir

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

March 29 Noon Chapel Holy Communion
 7:00 Lounge
Celebrate Holy Communion around the tables

EASTER SERVICES

March 31 5pm
April 9:30 and 11:00

Bring flowers (real, silk, plastic) to church on Easter to transform the old rugged cross that will be outside into a beautiful symbol of Resurrection.



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

March 30 7:00 pm



OUR CONFERENCE, OUR KIDS CAMPAIGN

Trivia Night! March 7, 5:15-6:45pm

Rev. Lori Bultemeier of The Baby Fold will share what this endowment will do for the children at our 5 children's agencies (The Baby Fold, Chaddock, Cunningham Children's Home, Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House and Spero Family Services) in the Conference.

Then we will have some fun Trivia.

Come with a team of 6 or gather a group that evening.

Come – have supper, hear Lori, play!

THOUGHTS FROM THE PASTOR

Our Conference, Our Kids

Catching up with a friend, I learned that her daughter was getting married in the summer of 2017. They were excited about making plans. Her daughter and fiancé decided that they wanted an outdoor wedding, in the park near where the bride had grown up.

Instead of having it catered, they asked their family and friends to help prepare the food. Instead of throw-away or rented plates, they gathered together various place settings. Their reception would be decorated by all different colored and patterned plates.

The day of the wedding approached. An outdoor wedding in June? It could be cold and rainy, hot and muggy, or simply beautiful. Thankfully, it was the third.

In this outdoor space, with lovingly-made decorations and accented by the mixture of place settings, it was a beautiful place for this holy event. Add to that the community of people who gathered, and it made the space even more beautiful. And last, but not least, the bride and groom beamed with joy.

After the wedding, they made their home in the beautiful mountains of Colorado. They had bought a fixer-upper and were lovingly making it their home. All of their wedding gifts made the home even more special, a symbol and reminder to them of their community of support.

And then a month ago, 6 months after their wedding, they were awakened in the middle of the night. The house was on fire and all they had time to do was get out. The flames engulfed their home and they lost everything, including 2 beloved puppies.

In the days that followed, something happened that in some ways paralleled their wedding. Family came to be with them. Friends contacted them on social media. People gathered to help. The community gathered once again, in various ways, to offer support. One friend set up a Go-Fund-Me Account which in just a few days raised over \$25,000 to help them through this time.

When I talked with my high school friend after she returned from Colorado, she said they were doing OK. "There's a lot to do, but they're going to get through this."

In both of these significant events, I was struck by the common theme of *community*. Whether it was gathering in the beautiful wooded park for the wedding or coming together after the fire, their community of friends and families were there with them.

My friend and I are thankful that *our kids* have such a strong community of love and support. But sadly, not all kids are surrounded by such a strong community of support.

So for decades now, the UMC has been that community of support for so many kids. We see it regularly here at church as children and youth are welcomed. And we offer this support through our 5 UM Children's Agencies. For many children, this is their one and only community who is there with them through the good and bad times. For a lot of kids, their lives are filled with "fires" daily.

The Baby Fold, Cunningham Children's Home, Chaddock, Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House, and Spero Family Services provide physical, emotional, and spiritual support to 1000's of kids every year. We won't know these kids, but we count them as *Our Kids* as they are part of *Our Conference*.

These agencies are funded by many venues including the State of Illinois and local churches. With state budget uncertainties, our Conference voted to create a \$2.5 million endowment for the Spiritual Life programs at these agencies. This way we can ensure that these ministries continue for *Our Kids*.

Our church has been asked to raise at least \$25,000 for *Our Conference, Our Kids*. In some ways, we'll be like that community who gathered around that young couple for celebration *and* support. Just like the community showed this couple, we can show *Our Kids* that there's a way through the "fires" that threaten to harm them. Together let's Go-Fund-Them . . . for *Our Conference, Our Kids*.

Pastor Kathy

CONGREGATIONAL CARE NEWS

FIT Wed @ 9am

The sum total of our FIT class is good friends, good exercise, and good food. Join the group on Wednesdays 9:15 am in Room 53.

SSO

Second Sunday Out will be on March 11th at 5:30 pm. Meet at Panera's in Normal. All are welcome to join for this Dutch-treat, order-off-the-menu fellowship time.

NEW SSO

Second Saturday Out will meet March 10 following the 5 pm worship service at Denny's in Normal. If you have questions, please contact Jane Whitman (whitman1707@gmail.com, 454-8770)

The Prayer Shawl Ministry

Members will meet at the church on March 13 & 27, at 1:30pm in the Youth Lounge. Bring what you have started or a new item to begin. There will be another blessing at the end of May. New members are always welcome. Contact Judy Poultney (452-7665) or Lois Young (963-5517) if you want to recommend someone to receive a shawl, lap robe, or baby afghan.

HEART TO HEART

On Tuesday, March 13, at 10 am, Heart to Heart will be hosting a special program in the Lounge. The McLean County Health Dept. is visiting faith-based organizations to raise awareness about breast health and the importance of women 40 and over getting mammograms. All are welcome and are encouraged to bring guests with them! Those willing to share their stories of breast cancer asked to contact Barb Todd (btodd@normalfirst.org).

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

Saturday, Mar. 3, 4:30pm
and Sunday, Mar. 4, 9 & 10:30am:
Library



SPECIAL PROGRAM-MARCH 21, 6-6:45PM

Dr. Andy Rummel, professor of Tuba and Euphonium at ISU and former tuba player for the Heritage of American Band of the United States Air Force, will share his experiences as a member of a military band in the Sanctuary. Invite your friends to join you!



Beloved Community House Build

We and other area Methodist Churches have joined in this year's Habitat for Humanity house build. The Beloved Community House Build is grounded on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision for a society based on justice, equal opportunity, and love of one's fellow human beings. For more information, please contact Rev. Kim Burke, (309) 452-2096 ext. 306 or email kburke@normalfirst.org.

Condolences to the families of:

Edwin Wooley
(April 21, 1931-January 20, 2018)

Gary Westen
(March 23, 1946-January 25, 2018)

Robert Cheek
(February 18, 1924-January 25, 2018)

Lorene Sorey
(September 12, 1926-January 26, 2018)

Gustaf Ziebarth
(November 14, 1916-February 7, 2018)

WORSHIP THEMES DURING LENT—RECONCILIATION

On many levels, we can feel disconnected, separated, torn apart from one another and from God. Throughout Lent, our focus will be on Reconciliation with God and others. Without a doubt, our relationship with God and others are inextricably connected. As we grow closer to God, our path towards reconciliation will emerge. As we grow closer to others, we'll discover a greater connection with God.

March 3 & 4	Church
March 10 & 11	Communication
March 17 & 18	Global
March 24 & 25	Palm Sunday
March 31 & April 1	Easter

Music Ministries—Together We Can...Include Others



Celebrate Palm Sunday, with your Chancel Choir. The cantata, **Eyes of Faith: Seeing and Believing the Messiah** will be presented in 11am worship on Sunday, March 25. This multimedia worship service may open up different perspectives regarding Holy Week “players”. All are welcome; this is a great time to invite friends, and family to church!

Contact Janna Peterson (jpeterson@normalfirst.org) for further information about Music Ministries at Normal First

Several members of our handbell ensembles will be attending a **Handbell Festival**, March 10, sponsored by the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts. Thank you for the opportunity to sharpen our skills and bring back ideas to share!

YOUTH AT NORMAL FIRST

Youth during Night in a Car, Super Bowl party and trying out their own Olympic skills. Fellowship with the Youth is fun!!!



New Titles in Your Church Library

This month we are focusing on our 2018 UMW Reading Program, which runs from January to December. There is something for everyone to read on the books chosen for this year's list. Some of the topics that will we focused on include looking at the history between the United Methodist Church, the United States and Native people; Alzheimer's disease and the importance of wellness in mind, body and spirit. There are also books on the topics of the environment, leadership and spiritual growth. These books are not just for the women, they will also be of interest to the men of the Church. There are also teen and children's books available that were chosen for the list. There are five Mission Emphases: Education for

Mission, Leadership Development, Nurturing Community, Social Action and Spiritual Growth.

A few of the titles available are *Without You*, *There Is No Us* by Suki Kim, *Hollow Faith* by Stephen Ingram, *Detained and Deported* by Margaret Regan, *Good Health, Good Life* by Joyce Meyer, *Hospitable Planet* by Stephen A. Jurovics and *The Pilgrim Messiah* by Richard C. Cheatham. Children's titles include *Growing Peace* by Richard Sobol, *I Am A Bear* by Jean-Francois Dumont and *One Well* by Rochelle Strauss.

The basic reading plan is 5 books each year, reading one from each category but there are also other plans in which you can read more selections if you choose. Stop by the library and check out what we have available.

FROM MISSIONS

...a monthly emphasis on a particular project is underway. Check out the new area just inside the lounge for more specifics and donate as desired.

For the month of March, we will be collecting new clothes for "Compassion Closet" affiliated with the chaplaincy office at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center. Clothes can be lost or damaged in routine ER procedures. Rather than having patients leave the hospital in paper "scrubs", they can be outfitted with sweatshirts, sweatpants, t-shirts, shorts, underwear and socks. These items must be new and can be brought to the church and placed at the new Missions display mentioned above. The need right now for the Compassion Closet is for sizes medium, large, and extra large. Thanks for your help on this and all our mission programs!

By the way, the Easter offering this year has been designated for the Community Health Clinic and for our missionaries, Helen Roberts-Evans (Liberia) and Connie Wieck (China).

Mission Fundraiser at Pizza Ranch

Thursday, April 12, 5:00 - 8:00pm

10% of ALL sales will be donated—including delivery and takeout

Baby Fold is the designated recipient

So INVITE family and friends to come enjoy and support the Baby Fold

NEXT NOISY OFFERING

March 24 & 25

We are very excited about our Noisy Offering theme.

We are supporting Habitat for Humanity. We and other local United Methodist Churches are uniting to build a home for a deserving family. We have collected \$3,100 or our pledge of \$5,000.

NIGHT IN A CAR

Thanks for all the support. Together with your generosity we raised over \$3700 for Home Sweet Home Ministries.

Pastors Kim, Kathy, Kent and our Youth

CELEBRATING OUR CAMPING MINISTRIES

April 7 & 8

Learn about our UM Camps and how they impact lives. Sign-up for summer camps (for all ages) by April 15. Remember the church helps with the cost. Speak with Jill (jmcniff@normalfirst.org) for more information.

MARCH POTLUCK

March 18, 12pm, Lounge

Join us as you can. Take some time to meet someone new. Bring a dish if you can. All are welcome.

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY

April 4, 5:15-6:45pm

Dinner & Program
Wesley Foundation Spring Break Trip speaking on Habitat for Humanity Build

DID YOU KNOW???

There are several ways that you can contribute to Normal First?

- We have online giving. Just go the church website, www.normalfirst.org, and click on Give.
- You can complete a form and have your contribution debited from your bank account.
- You can complete a form and have your contribution debited from your bank account.
- You can have your banking institution directly mail the church a check.
- And, of course, you can always put a check or cash in the offering plate.

If you have any questions, please contact Leta Buhrmann, Finance Manager, at 452-2096 or business@normalfirst.org.

Financial Report

General Fund

January	Monthly	YTD
Income	\$79,020.70	\$79,020.70
Expenses	\$63,385.08	\$63,385.08

Attendance

Date	Attendance
1/6 & 7	226
1/13 & 14	269
1/20 & 21	286
1/27 & 28	288

CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Experience the Story of Creation through Art

When: Saturday, March 3rd from 10-12

Where: Normal First UMC Fellowship Hall

Who: Kids and Youth (preschool-18). Kids 6 and under must have a parent present. Parents of all ages are encouraged to attend alongside their child(ren).

Cost: This workshop is free. Donations will be taken to offset art supplies and materials.

Kids are invited to this hands-on art workshop, led by ISU Art Education Graduate student Jill Kuanfung, where they will explore several art mediums and have the opportunity to create a masterpiece for our **Kids and Youth Art Auction** to be held the weekend of April 21st and 22nd. Our auction theme coincides with our Spring Musical: ***In the Image***. Kids will leave knowing more about creativity, faithfulness, responsibility, and community. What a wonderful way to celebrate Earth Day and the story of creation. Jill Kuanfung is an art education graduate student at Illinois State University. She travels back to Chicago regularly to teach and do art with senior citizens at Heiwa Terrace in Uptown, and she has taught workshops to kids about illustration and storytelling through the bookstore, Women & Children First in Andersonville. Jill makes artwork about memory, cultural erasure, mixed race and queer identity, and her family. She currently lives in Normal, IL with her husband and two cats.

RSVP to Jill at jmcniff@normalfirst.org

Kids and Youth Silent Art Auction

When: April 21st and 22nd (before and after the Children's Spring Musical: ***In the Image***)

Where: Normal First UMC Lounge

Who: Children and Youth ages 3 to 18 can submit a masterpiece to auction.

Why: The Illinois Great Rivers Conference took up the challenge to raise \$2.5 million to endow the spiritual life programs at The Baby Fold, Chaddock, Cunningham Children' home, Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House and Spero Family Services.

This campaign is named ***Our Conference, Our Kids***. The proceeds of this auction will go towards financing this vital ministry that transforms the lives of children and youth. The art auction theme is Earth Day/Creation. Attending the Art Workshop on March 3rd will give kids the tools they need. This workshop is not required in order to submit. If your child is interested in submitting a masterpiece but cannot attend the workshop, contact Jill McNiff (jmcniff@normalfirst.org) for guidelines, instructions or more info.

Save the Date! Vacation Bible School: Rolling River Rampage: Experience the Ride of a lifetime with God. June 10-13 in the evening.



ISU WESLEY FOUNDATION

As many of you are aware, ISU Wesley has gone through some major changes in the last few months. As we move into the new semester, it came time for us to select a new Leadership Team. Our new structure has the Executive team, then we have two additional areas where students can lead, either as a Merge worship leader, or as a Discipleship leader. Merge leaders are both people who are in the band and help lead worship and students who are excited and passionate about designing worship in a new way each week.

Discipleship leaders are those who are passionate about serving as a Small Group leader, as a leader in Outreach, a leader in Missions and many other areas of the ministry. The last area of leadership is called the Belong Challenge+. This is an area of leadership where students commit to attending worship, joining a small group, and attending Leadership Academy meetings. Students in this area have committed to growing as leaders, and as people of faith. We are all very excited to see how this year with the new Leadership Team goes, and are also excited to see how students grow in their faith and as leaders over the next year!



UMW Circles

Sonrise Circle

1st & 3rd
Wednesday
6:30 am

Denny's Restaurant
1615 N. Main St.
Normal

Ruth Circle

Quarterly
7 pm Church lounge

Vesper Circle

3rd Tuesday of month
1:30 pm Church lounge

Mercy Circle

3rd Wednesday of month
9:30 am Church lounge

New Hope Circle

4th Monday of month
7 pm Church lounge



United Methodist Women

2018 UMW Save the Dates

Wednesday, April 11, 5:45pm

Dee Frautschi, Our Natural World

Tuesday, May 15, 5:30 pm

Daughters-All Banquet

Friday, July 20

Attic Sale

Wednesday, September 5, 5:15 pm

Wonderful Wednesday

Supporting Fairview School Students

Sunday, September 23

UMW Sunday

Bishop Sally Dyck

Wednesday, November 7, 1:30pm

At Westminster Village

VESPER CIRCLE

March 20, 1:30pm, Lounge

Program: Faith in Action,

Mary Foster

Hostesses: Kathy Gossard,

Janet Auer, Olga Young

Devotions: Mary Foster

MERCY CIRCLE

March 21, 9:30am, Lounge

Program: "Youth Ministries at FUMC, Plans, Hopes, Goals" with Jill McNiff

Hostesses: Ruth Bair, Carol Kletz

Devotions: Jenny McIntosh

PROPOSED UMW GIVING SUMMARY

United Methodist Women generously work, give to UMW as individuals and then send the money where it will do the mission work of UMW. This past year, the UMW in Normal First had an income of \$29,333.15 and dispersed \$31,079.86. The dispersals included \$12,921.10 through UMW channels to the National office in New York City. These funds are then dispersed to over 90 UMW agencies in the US and over 100 more agencies and projects around the rest of the world. \$400 was sent to UMCOR. The UMW also dispersed \$10,800 to specific agencies we care about; \$4100 went to the Education and Recreation Center at Cunningham Children's Home.

Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House received \$4000 and \$1000 went to The Baby Fold. A few small gifts complete this generosity.

An update on the campaign held among members of UMW at Normal First in 2013... The effort was led to raise money from the women, outside the UMW treasury, for the Education and Recreation Center at Cunningham. Some have given only that spring while others have made a pledge they are still fulfilling. Some have continued to add something each year. So far, a total of 58 people raised a total of \$49,390 in cash gifts (\$14,230) and pledges (\$35,160). Ground for the building was broken this past fall and there is a continuing need for capital campaign contributions.



In the Image features our children who have just experienced the story of the Creation. And now they're starting to wonder what it really means to be created in the image of God. Through humorous, earnest exploration, they discover that being created *in the image* of God isn't about physical appearance. It's about creativity, faithfulness, responsibility, community, and finding the good in things.

APRIL MISSION'S EMPHASIS

Bags of Blessings
to support Center
for Hope Food
Pantry

More information
coming soon.



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All submissions subject to editing.

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Worship Times

Saturdays:

5:00 pm Worship-casual

Sundays:

9:30 am Worship-traditional

9:30 am Sunday School

11:00 am Worship-blended

11:00 am Sunday School for adults

First United Methodist Church of Normal Staff & Information

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1-4 pm

Monday-Friday

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Wi-Fi Network: FUMC-Guest

Password: normal1st



We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

(Social Principles of The United Methodist Church)

First United Methodist Church in Normal has committed itself to provide a Christian community and ministry without reference to any boundaries including age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, economic condition, physical or mental ability. We strive to be an open and accepting community in line with our understanding of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ expects of us.