

First Connection

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

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY KICKOFF-SEPT. 5

Dinner starting at 5:15pm

Following dinner, the program is for all ages.

**Hear from Rebecca Kinsey, Community Liaison at Fairview School.

**Hear from church members who volunteer at Fairview.

**Play some games with our church family!

CHURCH FACILITIES MANAGER- AMY FULLER

Our Staff-parish Relations Committee is pleased to announce that we have hired Amy Fuller to be our new Facilities Manager. Amy began work on August 1. Amy's husband Jeff is a farmer. Their two children Bryan and Sara, daughter-in-law, Morgan, mother Judy Barling and some cousins are also part of our church family. Amy and family usually attend the Saturday worship service. Please welcome Amy and give her your support as she joins the staff team.



UPCOMING SERMON SERIES



Renew (August 25/26)

Energize (Sept 1/2)

Sabbath (Sept 8/9)

Time (Sept 15/16)

How do we "Sabbath" in the 21st Century? It can be a real struggle in today's busy world. This upcoming Sermon Series on REST will focus on what it really means to have an abundant life. We will hear what scripture has to tell us about how to set our priorities; how to be more disciplined to rest, which is such an important aspect of our faith; and be assured that the struggle to truly REST is not ours alone. You will leave this series with a great understanding of Sabbath in the 21st century.

Come, all who are weary, and I will give you REST. Matthew 11:28

UMW SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Bishop Sally Dyck of Northern IL Conference will deliver the message as we celebrate the work of United Methodist Women. There will be only 1 service that morning at 9:30. Following the service, Bishop Dyck is making herself available for a questions and answer session in the Fellowship Hall.



HOLY COMMUNION FOR SEPTEMBER

We will observe Communion on September 1 & 2.



SEPTEMBER 23

NO 11:00
WORSHIP
SERVICE

THOUGHTS FROM THE PASTOR

Our summer vacation this year was to the beautiful Shenandoah Mountains of Virginia. Before the trip, once I realized we would be close to the Appalachian Trail, I became fascinated with the thought of walking on it, even for just a bit. So I picked up a book for thru-hikers (*which wasn't going to be me*) that talked about every step of the trail – the elevation, the mile markers, the shelters, etc. I also found a couple of books written by thru-hikers sharing their experiences.

Adrienne Hall, in *A Journey North*, not only writes about her experience of hiking the trail from Georgia to Maine, but also approaches this journey through the eyes of an environmentalist & biologist. How has the trail been impacted by climate change? What is the impact of humans on this trail for the many plants and animals that call it home? What is the place and importance of the natural world for our souls?

Relating biological principles from the trail to life lessons, Adrienne writes, “From a biological standpoint, an ecosystem that supports the greatest number of different species is considered more balanced, stable, and healthy than an ecosystem with many of the same kinds of things. We ought to extend this concept to our own culture. We should insist that diversity within human culture be allowed to flourish. Diversity of philosophies, perceptions, and lifestyles makes our own lives that much more significant” (p. 95).

Her words made me think about what it means to be a healthy, vibrant, faith community. Like an ecosystem, diversity is not something to be feared, but rather welcomed as it creates “a more balanced, stable, and healthy” community.

One of the goals of your First UMC staff these past few years has been to create opportunities for community and connection for the church family.

A ministry like Habitat for Humanity has given our church family an opportunity to meet new people and work together side-by-

side for a common goal.

A ministry like the Attic Sale draws in many, many church members for both work and fellowship.

Ministries like small groups create spaces for people to get to know each other, call each other by name, and hear one another's stories. A list of our fall 2018 small groups is included in this newsletter and a Small Group Fair will be happening in the lounge on September 8 & 9.

One new twist for our small groups this fall will be an opportunity to participate in a HOPE Group. HOPE stands for *Honoring Other People's Experiences*. In this group, participants will share their own experiences and listen to the experiences of others.

I suspect participants will discover some connections they didn't realize they had with others in the group. And I hope that participants will discover some “diversity of philosophies, perceptions, and lifestyles ... that make our own lives that much more significant.”

As our church staff continues to create opportunities for community and connection, we're excited about a new purchase that we've just started using here at the church.

Round Tables! Doesn't sound very exciting or noteworthy, but even *round tables* are part of our strategic plan to create opportunities for community and connection. In the Fellowship Hall, as we gather for meals, we now have the opportunity to gather *around* a table.

Our hope is that even this little change will make it easier and more natural for all of us to connect with one another. I trust that we'll discover some connections that we share with one another. And I trust that we'll be enriched by learning about the “diversity of philosophies, perceptions, and lifestyles ... that make our own lives that much more significant.”

Look forward to dining with you *around* the table!

Pastor Kathy

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

Saturday, Sept. 1,
4:30pm
and Sunday, Sept. 2,
9 & 10:30am: Library



PASTORS RECEPTIONS

Pastors Kathy and Kent will be meeting with members of the congregation.

Blair House

Monday, September 24, 2pm

Activity Kitchen, lower level All are welcome to attend these casual, conversation receptions.

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'S ALERTS:

Yes, both SSO's start this month!
No reservations are needed!
Everyone pays for their meal.
Everyone is welcome!

SATURDAY SUPPER OUT:

September 8, after church service at Denny's in north Normal.

SUNDAY SUPPER OUT:

September 9, 5:30pm at Panera Bread in Normal.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Tuesday, September 25th at 1:30 P.M. in the Youth Lounge. In October, we will meet on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday. Members knit and crochet. However, we also welcome members who are willing to hand stitch on cloth labels, tie on tags, make calls to offer an item or make deliveries to recipients.

New members are always welcome. For more information or to suggest a recipient for one of our handmade items contact Judy Poultney at 452-7665 or Lois Young at 963-5517.

FALL DINERS CLUB

The Diners Club groups last year were very well received! Let's get even more people involved this year. Who doesn't enjoy a great meal and wonderful fellowship?

Participating is easy. If you are interested let me know by September 16. Small groups of around eight people will be randomly put together for monthly social gatherings throughout the fall. Each group will decide on the details of their gatherings – dates, times, locations, etc. A group leader will help with organization.

All ages are welcome – families, couples and singles! To be included, please email btodd@normalfirst.org with your name(s), phone number and email address, preference of time (breakfast, lunch or dinner), and whether or not you are interested in serving as the leader(s) of a group.



NEW TO THE CONGREGATION?

September 19 & 26, 5:45-6:45pm, Lounge

We know that becoming acquainted with others in the congregation and learning more about the church and its many ministries is important and can be difficult to someone new to the church. Pastors Kathy and Kent are offering two one-hour sessions. Those who wish to attend are encouraged to come for the meal at 5:15; you can eat in the Fellowship Hall or take your plate to the Lounge. Dessert will be provided in the Lounge. Each session will focus on different topics. Please call the church office if you wish to attend.

Condolences to the families of:

Noleen Jacobs

March 29, 1926-July 6, 2018

Becky Ansher

March 10, 1960-July 9, 2018

Guy Fritz

August 5, 1938-July 22, 2018

Wally Mead

May 25, 1934-August 8, 2018

CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

**Elementary Sunday School and Wonderful Wednesday Curriculum
Our Kindergarten through 5th graders
will be discovering all about**

For Nehemiah, it was something really big. He heard about the broken-down walls and gates in Jerusalem, and it wasn't enough for him to just be sad about it. He prayed to God and asked God to help him take on the massive challenge of rebuilding the city. For kids, it might be helping fold laundry, picking up that wet towel off the floor, clearing the dishes after dinner, or rolling the trash can down to the curb. Maybe when someone complains or needs help—they can stop and think of ways they could assist them. They can also pray, like Nehemiah did, and ask God to give them what they need to take on the challenge. Look and listen. Keep an eye out for the things that need to be done. Don't wait for someone to have to tell us to do those things. Take initiative! Don't just do things because you're supposed to. Do them with all your heart. It's like what Paul wrote in our memory verse for this month: Colossians 3:23. Memory Verse: "Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord (Colossians 3:23a, NIRV).



That's where real initiative comes from! Work like you're working for God.

BLESSING BOX-DEDICATION SEPTEMBER 1 & 2

Family Ministries will be serving our community through our own Blessing Box, located at the west end of the garage. We are encouraging our youth and kids to keep it stocked but would like help from our congregation, also. Anyone can help themselves to or leave the following:

- Non-perishable boxed or canned food items
- Toiletries
- Personal care items
- Paper goods
- School supplies

All donations can be brought to the church office or given to Pastor Kim or Jill McNiff.



“Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can change the world.” - Howard Zinn

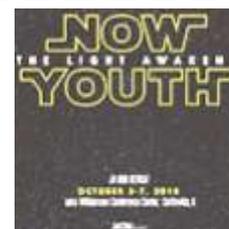
YOUTH AT NORMAL FIRST

JUNIOR HIGH NOW INITIATIVE:

Lake Williamson, Oct. 5-7

REGISTRATION DUE SEPT. 16!

Cost for families is \$80. Please make check payable to Normal First, register online at: <https://www.igrc.org/jrhighinitiative>



CONFIRMATION:

We've just kicked off confirmation for this year. The members of our class are: Carson, Joe, Zach, Makayla, Carrie, Carson, Austin, Audrey, Drew, Keaton, Natalie, Corey, Graham, Samantha, Gavin, Geoffrey, Abby, Logan, and Paige. We will be meeting for class and worship most Sundays from 9:30-12. Please pray for our students, teachers, parents, and mentors as we begin this journey exploring our faith. This is the beginning of a conversation about what it means to be a Christian, to live out your faith, your commitment, and God's call. (We also enjoy snacks/treats during our class time together, if you're looking for a practical way to encourage us!)



MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Mission Focus for September is Safe Harbor/Salvation Army. Safe Harbor began offering shelter to the homeless in 1999. It offers meals, showers and laundry services. It operates 24 hours for residents who work second and third shift jobs.

The Mission committee is asking for donations of personal hygiene products such as razors, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, foot powder, lotion, etc.

Donations may be dropped into the collection bags in the church lounge.

The committee members will prepare and serve the evening meal at Safe Harbor on Friday, September 28.

NEXT NOISY OFFERING

September 29 & 30

Our church has pledged \$6500 to Baby Fold this year. Through Pizza Ranch's sharing profits program, the noisy offering, and Vacation Bible School offering, \$3,167 has been raised with another \$1500 expected in upcoming Noisy Offerings.

Would you help us reach our goal (the remaining \$2000) by the end of October by making a special gift to Baby Fold through our church offering or the office? Help us help our neighbor. Thank you.



Normal First Mission Committee

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

September 25, 4-5:30pm, Lounge

A church is a building without its people – people who serve each other, the church, the community and the world. Each day, we look around us and see the faces of this church – along with the hands, bodies, minds, and feet of the many who share their time. Maybe you serve on a committee, sing in the choir, help with worship, educate our children and youth, drive the bus, or share your time and talents in any one of the other many ways our congregation serve. No matter what you do, how often you do it, or how insignificant you feel it is – your actions are appreciated. Without you, we are just a building.

We invite all who serve this church in any way to stop by for refreshments and appreciation.

Thank you, FUMC Staff

SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 9 AT 7:00PM EBOO PATEL AT ISU

What will bring our divided communities back together? What are we to make of other religions in our midst? Eboo Patel will be addressing these and other issues with the Bloomington/ Normal communities. His address is titled, "Better Together: Bridging Interfaith Barriers." The event will be held at ISU in the Center for the Performing Arts, Concert Hall. This is co-sponsored by our church and the Margaret Parret Endowment for Religion, Culture and the Arts.



Financial Report

General Fund

July	Monthly	YTD
Income	\$70,329.86	\$490,284.20
Expenses	\$56,251.38	\$467,640.75

Attendance

Date	Attendance
July 7 & 8	329
July 14 & 15	273
July 21 & 22	251
July 28 & 29	271

I am so grateful for Pastor Kent and Pastor Kathy's visits, concerns and calls at the time of my hospitalization. I did not expect to be on the receiving end of such kind and caring phone calls and cards from friends, but I appreciate each one.

Thank you all and may God bless.

Phyllis Kingdon

FINANCE CORNER

FUMC "ripples" continue to grow within the church, the community and beyond. Your financial support and volunteer time help in so many ways - the growth in faith of our youth and the impact of those served on the work trips - the family who will receive our Habitat home - the kids who are supported by our many UM agencies and more.

Thanks for being a part of the "ripple effect"!

Chancel Choir needs you! Youth through adults are welcome to join this musical family. You can belong here. Weekly rehearsals are Wednesdays, 7-8pm; childcare provided. This group is so much more than "just" a musical ensemble – we care deeply for one another, celebrating together, praying together, going through the hard stuff of life together. Come and belong in Chancel Choir.



New Handbell Ensemble!!! We welcome Anthony Morrison to music leadership here at Normal First. Anthony brings a broad musical background, including extensive knowledge in handbell ringing. Details to follow!



Making disciples
Understanding each other's stories
Searching for opportunities to be of service
Including everyone
Calling people to be God's hands and feet

Calling all Youth! Join our awesome handbell ensemble Shalom Bells Plus! Even if you do not have previous handbell experience or do not know how to read music, this is still the place for you! We teach very simple, approachable technique and mark your music in a way that everyone can understand. Connect with an awesome group of people! Rehearsals this month: Sept. 9, 16, 23, and 30 from 4:45-5:30pm.

Also in the Youth Music works is a short-term instrumental ensemble. If you haven't done so already, connect with Tyler DeVault (tyler.devault.clarinet@gmail.com) to let him know what instrument/s you play.

Wonderful Wednesday activities resume with a big All-church Kick-off on Sept. 5. Plan on food, laughter, and time together. Our individual activities resume Sept. 12: Meal for all, 5:15-5:45; Cherub Choir (K-2) & Wesley Fellowship (3-5), 5:45-6:15; Cherub Fellowship & Wesley Choir, 6:15-6:45. Whee! Contact Janna Peterson (jpeterson@normalfirst.org) for further Music Ministries information!

SMALL GROUP FAIR

September 8 & 9

Stop by the lounge before or after worship to learn more about the many small group opportunities here at Normal First. Some are on-going groups while others are launching for the first time this fall.

Fall 2018 Small Group Opportunities flyer in this newsletter

To sign-up, stop by the Small Group Fair or go online at:

<https://goo.gl/suUU2r>

MUSIC WORSHIP DIRECTOR NEEDED

First United Methodist Church is looking for a Music Worship Director for the 11:00 service. Director would be responsible for directing and organizing all aspects of the 11:00 service. For more information or to submit your application, contact Pastor Kathy (pastorkathy@normalfirst.org)

SCHOOL STREET FOOD PANTRY

Open on Fridays from 4:00-6:00pm,
starting September 21

Room 208 at the Church

To learn more or volunteer, go to: goo.gl/mw8XiK
or contact Pastor Kathy
(pastorkathy@normalfirst.org)



United Methodist Women

UMW Circles

Sonrise Circle

1st & 3rd Wednesday
6:30am Denny's, Normal

Ruth Circle

Monthly, 7pm

Check Facebook page

Vesper Circle

3rd Tuesday of month
1:30pm Church lounge

Mercy Circle

3rd Wednesday of month
9:30am Church lounge

New Hope Circle

4th Monday
7pm Church lounge



Since early in 2013, individual women who are members of UMW in Normal First have been making donations to the new school at Cunningham Children's Home. The many women have reached a total of at least \$60,635 and have thus been given the right to name an area of the school. In our meeting, we chose The Title 1 Office. We are so proud of our generous women and glad to help Cunningham Children's Home in this way.

NEW HOPE CIRCLE

Tuesday, September 11, 6:30-8pm,
Lounge

Please join **New Hope UMW Circle** for an evening with missionaries Les & Debbie Dornan. Come meet them, or get reacquainted, and learn about their work in Nepal. Refreshments will be served.

VESPER CIRCLE

Tuesday, September 18, - 12:30pm, Lounge
Salad Luncheon

Bring salad to share and own table service
Drinks and dessert provided

Hostesses: Carol Morgan, Judy Poultney,
Stormy Helton, Patsy Wieland

Devotions: Sharon Shoopman

MERCY CIRCLE

Wednesday, September 19, 9:30am

Social Time with members:
"Getting to Know You"

Devotions: Rose Pascal

Hostesses: Rose Pascal and Jan Crowley

Green Team TerraCycle Recycling to begin in September

We will begin recycling two different items at the church that are not eligible for recycling in your city program. You can bring these items to church and deposit them in the special recycle containers near the back door. At this time, we will plan to have bins out on the weekends only. We will start this program on September 23.

Cereal Bag Recycling: Any brand of heavy plastic cereal bags and any plastic cereal bag liners from inside of cereal boxes. The cardboard cereal boxes will go in regular city recycling.

Chip and Snacking Bag Recycling: Any size chip or snacking bags, such as potato or corn chips, pretzels, foil lined snack crackers packages, etc.; and the heavy plastic outer bags from multi-packs. Any questions? Contact Kathy Gossard - skgossard@aol.com



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All submissions subject to editing.

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Publication Date: 3rd Sunday of each month.

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

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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.