

The Circuit Rider

The newsletter of First United Methodist Church, Lancaster, Ohio

March 2024

Loving God and Loving People Making Disciples of Christ for the Transformation of the World.

Worship Happenings

Holy Week will bring many opportunities for us to worship and journey together through the powerful experiences that surround Easter as we continue our Wandering Heart theme. Consider being a part of that important week in as many ways as you can! We will make livestream options available whenever possible.



Sunday, March 24th offers Palm Sunday worship at 9:00 or 10:30 a.m. in our sanctuary. Our children will be part of a procession with palm branches as we celebrate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

Tuesday, March 26th at Crossroads at 6:30 p.m. invites you to be part of Crossroads Community, a time of worshipful, interactive, and relevant Bible study to help us live out our faith in our world.





Maundy Thursday worship, March 28th at 7:00 p.m. will happen at <u>CROSSROADS</u>. We will move worship to our Crossroads building so that we can experience the Holy Meal around tables as we commune together.



March 29th Good Friday worship at 7:00 p.m. will be back in our main building sanctuary. We will experience a Service of Shadows as our worship includes a telling of the passion story, our Chancel Choir will share an anthem, and we will sing powerful hymns to mark our journey to the cross.



The joyous Easter Sunday celebration will happen on March 31st at 9:00 and 10:30 a.m.

How is God calling you to be a part of Holy Week this year? Who is God calling you to invite to experience worship with you? Let's journey together!

Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you.

James 4:8

Dear Friends.

This past Wednesday, many of us gathered to pause for beautiful Taize-style worship in which we remembered our mortality and our need to surrender ourselves to God's grace. We received ashen crosses on our foreheads to remind us to pause in our striving and recognize our need for God's grace. It is in this pause that we notice that in all the noise of our living, we have worked ourselves out of tune with the song God has placed within our hearts.

So, I invite you to observe a Holy Lent with me over these next forty days. Together, let us surrender ourselves to God's ministrations of love. Let us take intentional, set-apart time with God so that God may transform our hearts and minds. Join me in making time and space to search the Scriptures, meditating upon them, and letting God's message sink into our bones. Let us take time to search ourselves to locate the perfect pitch that brings us into harmony with God.

Just as musicians practice to play a piece well, let us spend these forty



days in focused practice tuning ourselves to God's song of grace. Engage in the means of grace, both individually and with others. Explore new ways to be devoted to God. Be attentive and present, engaging and participating in new ways in worship. Sing hymns as you work. (We'll be focusing on "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" in worship.) Be intentional in reaching out to others in compassion and expend new efforts to become involved in seeking justice for people who are struggling.

Our church leadership has provided you with Lenten Devotional booklets to help you with the daily practice of devotion. You can find them in the welcome area. Also, you can pick up a rubber-banded stack of daily devotional cards and prayers before or after church on Sunday or you can find the guiding questions from those same cards on our group Facebook page, daily.

In January, I challenged everyone to take the opportunity to serve at First Community Kitchen at least once, so let's each commit to act in compassion to those in the Lancaster Community who everyone else fears or rejects. We serve breakfast and lunch on Mondays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm at Maple Street UMC. Simply show up or contact Judy Kraft, our Director of Outreach at judykraft@love-first.org. If you can't get away during the week, come and join us at our Crossroads Ministry Center on Saturday, March 9, at 8:30 am for our Second Saturday Outreach Event. We'll be making lip balm for those we serve at First Community Kitchen, and we'll be delivering sweet treats to those who are unable to join us for in-person worship due to health or mobility issues, or who are in nursing facilities.

We look forward to observing a holy Lent with you. If you are looking to dig deeper, let us know how we can resource you! Sit down at the piano bench, take a breath, and open yourself to be tuned to God's grace.

In Christ,

Pastor Nikki

Connect with the Pastors

Sunday, February 25, 2024 11:45am - 1pm

Open to all who have been attending or those new to First Church who are considering membership

Sign up in the Parlor or call the church at 740-653-3330.

Connect with the Pastors

Have you ever wondered how United Methodists are connected in our conference, our nation and globally? Perhaps you want to serve but are unsure of where you fit into the ministries of this church? Maybe you are interested in exploring membership at First UMC. During each quarter of 2024, an opportunity will be offered to meet with our pastors to discuss any of these items or others that are on your mind. These informal opportunities replace the previous practice of New Member Classes and are open to all who have been attending or those new to First Church who are considering membership. The winter quarter opportunity is scheduled for Sunday, February 25, 11:45am – 1pm. Light snacks will be

provided, as will childcare with advance notice. Please contact the church office to register or sign up in the Parlor.





Sunday, March 10th

3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

at Crossroads Ministry Center

2095 W. Fair Ave., Lancaster

Please join us & bring a friend!



Glow Party!

Wear White or Neon!

Activities

- DJ Dance Party (3:30-5:30)
- Games
- * Snack
- * Crafts

Celebration! Let Your Light Shine! 5:00 Pizza!



Firm Deadline is February 25, 2024

For more information, go to www.love-first/messy-churc

Easter Flower Order Form

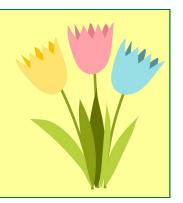
Please fill out one form for each flower purchased. Payment must accompany your order. Make checks payable for FUMC Altar Guild earmarked "Easter Flowers." Note: There are two blanks to use for keeping the "In Memory of" and "In Honor of" separate. Look for more forms in the Parlor.

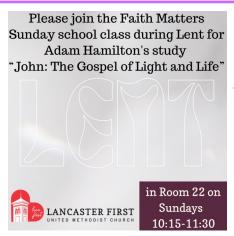
Honor or Sept	arate. Look		no in the ranor.		
\$5.00 each	Daffodil	Hyacinth	Tulip		
\$8.00 each	Lily				
I'm spo	nsoring but	I don't plan to	take my flower home		
I plan to take my flower home					
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In Memory of:					
Ву:				_	
In Honor of:					
By:				_	

Thank You

Dear FUMC: This is a note of appreciation for the care and use of the lovely Crossroads facility. We really were so well taken care of during my husband's funeral service. Thank you so much. Ed would have really been smiling that day.

Sincerely, Cheryl Payne





The Faith Matters
Sunday school class
will be doing

will be doing
Adam Hamilton's study
John: The Gospel of
Light and Life
during Lent.

We meet at 10:15am in Room 22. All adults and youth are welcome. Books can be purchased online or contact Renee Benham. Ark Builders Lenten Study
begins on Feb. 25:
"Remember, God's
Covenants and the Cross"
by Susan Robb.

Please join us!
Sundays at 9am



Throughout the Bible, God's relationship to humanity is enunciated in a series of ongoing covenants—with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus. What exactly does God promise? How does God expect us to respond? Robb artfully interweaves biblical history with moving personal stories. Study books are available in the Parlor, and a video will be shown at each session. Feel free to attend each Sunday's class or any one of the six sessions. If you have questions, please call the discussion leader, Joe Clark at 740-654-8766.

Caring Ministries:

Visitation Ministries:

One of the spiritual disciplines we are called to practice as Christians is to serve. If you want to respond to your call for visiting others, or would like to explore the gift of visitation with members in their homes/nursing facilities or in the hospital, please contact Judy Hug. When visitation occurs, both the person being visited and the visitor experience joy and God's love in mighty ways! Consider joining one or more of our Visitation Teams!



March 18, 2024 1:30 – 6:30 pm Red Cross Blood Drive Crossroads Ministry Center 2095 W. Fair Ave.

Register at www.redcrossblood.org, or contact Judy Hug, 740-653-3330 ext. 1003 or Judyhug@love-first.org to help save a life!



Are you interested in learning more about United Methodist missionaries? Do you wonder what day-to-day life is like in mission? **#STILLINMISSION** is a monthly Zoom event where you can hear first-hand experience from missionaries about their call to mission and the communities they serve. Join us to see how missionaries share God's love in partnership with communities around the world.



--Featuring--

Y. Cho

Church Developer & Partnership Support Coordinator with the Central Asia Mission Initiative for Central Asia

Minkyu Lee

Professor of Biblical Studies with Wesley Divinity School, Fiji

P. Santos

Assistant for Christian Education with the United Methodist Mission for Southeast Asia

D. Yang

Congregational Development Specialist with the Methodist Mission for Southeast Asia

Please register at: https://umcmission.org/sim-2/



REAL people looking for a way to have REAL conversations and live a REAL faith in Jesus Christ in the REAL world

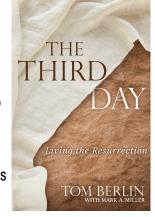
We would love to have you join us!

Tuesdays, <u>6:30-7:30 p.m.</u> at Crossroads Ministry Center

We'd love to have you join us for a time of fellowship and worshipful, interactive, and relevant Bible study (with small group discussions and sharing) to help us live out our faith in our world today. Children are welcome to stay with their parents or play in the nursery. We invite you to ioin us any or every week—and bring a friend!

In *The Third Day: Living the Resurrection*, Tom Berlin uses his gifts of storytelling and understanding the Scriptures to connect us to the experiences of several individuals around Jesus in His final days, focusing on new life and redemption rather than loss.

Join Peter, Mary Magdalene, and Thomas as they feel the despair of losing Jesus and the surprise and joy that awaits them in the resurrection. This study traces events around these characters, along with Paul and the disciples at Emmaus, and how the resurrection transformed their lives and impacts ours. Join us throughout Lent on Tuesdays at 6:30 at Crossroads for community, conversation, and growth (Feb. 20-March 26).



The Higher Education Outreach Committee will be collecting items for care packages to send to our

college students as they pursue their studies. We will collect items in the parlor **thru March 3**. Please consider donating some of the following items to remind our college students that their church family is thinking of them even as they are away. All items must fit in a small box for mailing.

Snacks: Individual-sized packages only

Snack-size crackers, cookies, chips, pretzels, etc.

Granola & other snack bars

Packaged fruit snacks

Jolly Ranchers, Starburst, packs of gum/mints, etc.

No Chocolate, please (it could melt)

Microwave popcorn

Microwave mac & cheese or other single serving meals

Ramen Noodles

Flavoring packets for bottled water

Gun

Yo-yo's or other fidget items, gift cards

Note cards or personal notes of inspiration are encouraged to be included with the packages. The due date for these items is March 3. The packages will be made up on Sat., March 9.

Please let us know if your college student has a new address or is studying from home so we can be sure to have the right address for college care packages:

College Caring Ministry				
Student's name:	College/University:			
Mailing Address:				
Student's Email:	Cell			

Highlighters Post-it Notes

Bath and Beauty:

Travel-sized toiletries ONLY
Shampoo & Conditioner
Body Wash/Soap/ & Hand/Body Lotion
Hand Sanitizer
Tissues, Q-Tips
Chapsticks & Lip Balms



We express our sincere sympathy to the families of those who have lost loved ones:

Linda Hahn Mary Lou Creed Phyllis Richards Dianne Mitchell





Creative Ministries News

Virtuous Reality Blacklight Theater performed on February 18th at Hopewell U.M.C. They will be making puppets for their upcoming shows on March 3rd at Crossroads. We could use people with sewing skills to help us that afternoon if anyone is available. We will begin at Noon, but would not be sewing until probably 2pm. Anyone is welcome to attend to see how puppets are made and to get some hands on experience!

Virtuous Reality will also be **traveling to Athens First U.M.C. on March 24th** to perform for an event there.

The Magic of Believe will be performing at Eggstravaganza this month. Some members will attend the Ohio Fellowship of Christian Magicians conference in Columbus this month, as well.

Eggstravaganza happens March 23rd. We still need lots of plastic eggs and non-chocolate candy to place in the eggs. Last year, we had around 14,000 eggs, so expectation is high! We also need people to staff the event which has an egg hunt, carnival games, cottontail candy and inflatables. Please sign up in the church parlor to help make this a great time.

Our **Egg Stuffing Event** is another vital part of Eggstravaganza. **We need to fill the 14,000 eggs** before we can hide them! **This event will take place on March 16th from 9-1pm.** You are not required to attend the event full time, just show up when you can and help as long as you can! <u>We need plastic grocery bags to place the eggs into after they are filled so if you have any of those, bring them along.</u>

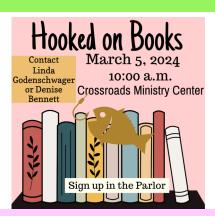
The more helpers we have the faster it goes!



First UMC's Scholarship Application period is

Application period is
here. Applications are
posted on our
website, www.love-first.org,
and are also available in the
Parlor at
church. Applications must
be turned into the Business
Office or postmarked by

March 31, 2024.



Book to read: "The Forgiving Kind" Author: Donna Everhart

A note from the Business Office

Easter Mission Offering

As we prepare for our Easter celebration, our Global Missions Team has announced the following projects that we will be supporting.

- "Our Lithuania Partner Church
- "Jane Wise, West OH Conference Missionary in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- "Good Works Outreach, Athens, Ohio
- "West Ohio Conference Apportionments

Special Easter Mission Envelopes will be available for your convenience, or you can use one of the following ways to support this mission and our church through your monetary gifts. Thank you for your generosity to our church.

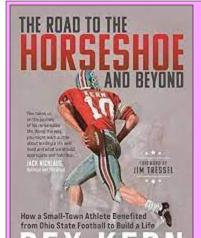
- On-line giving on our website, www.love-first.org
- E-Offering (ACH) is a safe way to have your giving directly deducted from your checking or savings account contact the Business Office for an authorization form.
- Direct bill payment through your own bank
- Mail in gifts to 163 E. Wheeling St., Lancaster, OH 43130
- Placing your gift in the offering plate on Sunday morning.

We are here to help! If you have any questions on any of the ways to give to our church, please call Sarah or Jill in the Business Office at 740-653-3330.



Online Giving is available! Please visit our website, love-first.org, and we also have our Giving QR code!





Stop by the library and check something out!

We have lots of Easter books and videos and much more! Here's a peek at some things inside!

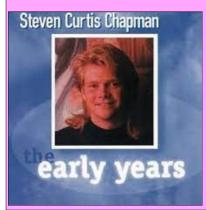
Book- The Road to the Horseshoe and Beyond

by Rex Kern The inspirational story of how a small-town athlete benefited from Ohio State football to build a life.

DVD- The Jesus Music

The soundtrack of a movement.

This fascinating documentary reveals the untold story of Jesus' music's humble beginnings in the 1960's to become a worldwide phenomenon.



CD- Steven Curtis Chapman

"The Early Years" Relive the songs that made Steven one of Christian music's favorite singer songwriters.



Sick Child Policy: With cold and flu season still in full swing, we would like to take this opportunity to remind parents of our sick child policy. If your child has experienced: runny nose, cough, fever, diarrhea, scratchy throat, or anything else that may be contagious, please do not bring your child to class until they have been SYMPTOM FREE for 24 hours. Thank you for helping to keep our children and volunteers healthy! If you have any questions, please see Judy Kraft.



The Donuts Called; They Need You to Introduce Them to

Coffee! Are you a master at making

coffee? Do you have a knack with tablescapes? Do your friends say you are the host with the most and you just don't serve toast?? Then you have what it takes to be the most popular person on Sunday mornings - a Fellowship Hour Host! Openings are available on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of the month. Serve as a family or serve individually! Training is included, but hey, who are we kidding? You're the pro! Perks include primo parking and first dibbs on your choice of donut! For more information speak to Judy Kraft or email her at judykraft@love-first.org

Children's Ministry Weather Emergency Plan.

This Winter Weather Emergency Plan is what to expect when Fairfield County is under a Winter Driving Emergency. Please consider your neighborhood's road conditions when deciding whether to be on the road or not. We want our families safe!

LEVEL 1: NORMAL Sunday Morning Programming. No children's programming modification.

LEVEL 2: Family Worship. NO CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING.

LEVEL 3: CHURCH SERVICES CANCELLED. Worship at home with your family.

SECOND THE SECOND SATURDAY HERBER H

Second Saturday March 9th One Saturday a month you can make a difference in the life of others! There are projects for every age and ability! Projects we are working on in March are:

Pillowcase Ministry Santa Rich needs our help making pillowcases to hand out at Christmas! Will you be on the "Nice List" this year? This project is for those who can sew and non-sewers alike! We need folks to iron, fold, and place completed pillowcases in a bag with a printed prayer. If you can sew or would like to learn how to sew pillowcases, we need you too!

Sweet Treats Delivery Brighten the day of someone who doesn't get out as much as they used to; help deliver home-baked treats, fruit, and a smile! We begin packing the treat bags at 8:30 then head out to deliver them. If you are able to help us round out the treat bags by donating fresh fruit, fruit cups, or cookies, they can be dropped off at church no later than Friday, March 8th at 1:00 p.m.

Items for the Homeless This month we are making no-sew scarves and lip balm to hand out during our First Community Kitchen ministry. These are easy projects for anyone including the little ones!

Small Notes of Encouragement Everyone needs an encouraging note occasionally. Help us create notecards that will spread joy and love to whomever receives it!

If you would like to be a part of Second Saturday projects, make plans to join us on Saturday, March 9th at 8:30 AM at Crossroads. No experience is necessary, just a heart to help others in our community. If you have any questions concerning any of the Second Saturday projects, please contact Judy Kraft at 740-653-3330 or at judykraft@love-first.org.



THE BEST WEEK of SUMMER! Vacation Bible School is scheduled for July 8-12 and the theme is: SCUBA: Diving into friendship with God. At SCUBA kids will go deep into an amazing undersea adventure where they'll experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. Sign me up! Watch for details on VBS leader meetings and be in prayer on how you will be involved this year. Please contact Judy Kraft for more information or questions about SCUBA!





SHIELD

Serving Him In Every Little Deed



Come Be Seen, Heard, And Supported In Your Faith!

March

Classes at Church:

17th, 24th: 9:00am Combined class Jr & Sr. High, room 26 upstairs.

No 9am classes on the 3rd or 10th because on the 3rd I will be helping the Acolytes. As well as the Confirmands with their mentors serving communion. Please come and join us on this special day. The 10th I'm away on the Confirmation retreat.

3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th: 10:30am Jr. High, room 26 upstairs.

Confirmation Class:

17th: 10:30am Chapel room upstairs.

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Give Back Days:

3rd : Acolyte, one youth for each service. 9am \$ 10:30am $6^{th},\,20^{th}$: Drive thru dinners 3:30-5:30pm at Crossroads

10th: Messy Church 3:30-5:30pm at Crossroads.

23rd: Eggstravaganza!! Contact me if you want to help.

31st: Host donuts and coffee in the parlor with me if you want. Both services.

S.H.I.E.L.D. Youth Group Nights, at Crossroads

3rd: No Youth night, I'm on a trip with the Confirmation class.

10th : 5:30-7pm **17**th : 5-7pm

24th: 5-7pm, since we couldn't get together on the 3rd I'll not do high-school only.

31st: No Youth night, Easter Holiday.

Mission Trip:

Please look at all our info on the youth web page at our church web site. I will always have each month updated news about the youth ministry on there as well. If you missed the mission trip meeting, please look over the information and contact me if you have any questions. I would like to know if you plan on coming with us by March 6th.

Love-First.org/youth

Elizabeth Circle will meet on March 21, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., in Room 22. The speaker will be Cody Tatum, Director of Harcum House, Child Advocacy Center. All are welcome!





Contact Janie Burdsal 740-653-3330, ext. 1101 janieburdsal@love-first.org

UPCOMING DATES:

Tuesdays: Crossroads Community, 6:30pm; Wednesdays: Pastor's Bible Study, 4pm

Feb. 25: Connect with Pastors

March 2: Men's Breakfast at Crossroads Ministry Center

March 3: College Care Package items are due
March 5 Hooked on Books-Crossroads

March 6 & 20 Drive-Thru Dinners
March 7: Still in Mission Zoom Event

March 9: Second Saturday
March 10: Messy Church

March 16: Egg Stuffing Party - Crossroads; March 18: Red Cross Blood Drive

March 23: Eggstravaganza!

March 28: Maundy Thursday - 7pm at Crossroads March 29: Good Friday - 7pm in Main Sanctuary

March 31: Easter!

March 31: Scholarship Applications Due

It's easier than ever before to find out, and see, all the **great things happening at Lancaster First**. In addition to our Facebook page, we have a Twitter account as well as an Instagram account. Not only will you be kept up-to-date with our ministries, but we'll include devotions, thoughts for the day, pictures, music, and a few

surprises along the way. Follow us at: Facebook: Lancaster First United Methodist Church; Twitter: LoveFirstUMC; Instagram: Lancasterfirstumchurch



Articles for the April issue of the CIRCUIT RIDER are due by March 11 to Lisa Schenck at lisaschenck@love-first.org

The Circuit Rider

is the monthly newsletter of First United Methodist Church 163 E. Wheeling St. Lancaster, OH 43130

Sunday:

9:00 a.m. – Worship Celebration 10:30 a.m. – Praise Worship

Tuesday:

6:30 p.m. Crossroads Community Crossroads Family Ministry Center 2095 W. Fair Ave.

We welcome you to worship with us and to experience the joy of having fellowship with other people who believe in the love of God and the teachings of Christ.

Lead Pastor – Rev. Nikki Baker Associate Pastor – Rev. Amy Wood Telephone – 740-653-3330 Email – receptionist@love-first.org Website – www.love-first.org

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