



First United Methodist Church

of

Leavenworth



422 Chestnut, Leavenworth, KS 66048

913-682-5374 FUMCLVKS.ORG

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Office Hours—M-Th 9a-3p, Friday—9a-noon  
 Or visit us at [FUMCLVKS.ORG](https://www.fumclvks.org)  
Sunday services stream at either site.

## February 2026

<b>1</b> 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary 12:00 pm Fusion 56 4:30 pm Wesley Ringers	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 9am Prayer Group  1 pm Book Club	<b>4</b> 1 pm H&S 3:45pm WW 5:30 pm Young Adults 6:30pm Choir	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 
<b>8</b> 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary 4:30 pm Wesley Ringers 5:00 pm Youth Super Bowl Party	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 9 am Prayer Group	<b>11</b> 8:30am MMO 1 pm H&S 3:45pm WW 6:30 pm Choir	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 5:30 pm Wingtips	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary <b>12 pm Chili Cook-Off</b> 12:00pm Fusion 56 4:30 pm Wesley Ringers 6:00 pm Youth	<b>16 President's Day</b> <b>Church office closed</b>  5 pm Virtual Grief Share	<b>17</b> 9 am Prayer Group 12 pm Let's Do Lunch - Ten Penny 1 pm Spouse Grief Share	<b>18 Ash Wednesday</b> 7-11:30 am Ashes 1 pm H&S 3:45pm WW <b>5:30 pm Soup &amp; Bread Potluck</b> <b>7 pm Service</b>	<b>19</b> 1:30 pm Itchin' to Stitch	<b>20</b>	<b>21 8 am Men's Prayer Breakfast</b>
<b>22</b> 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary 4:30 pm Wesley Ringers 6:00 pm Youth	<b>23</b> 5 pm Virtual Grief Share	<b>24</b> 9 am Prayer Group 10 am Ladies Bible Study	<b>25</b> 1 pm H&S 3:45 pm WW 5:30 Lent Potluck 6:30 pm Choir	<b>26</b> 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 

LIFE @

First United Methodist church

February 2026



"I have decided to stick to love... Hate is too great a burden to bear."

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Think  
on these  
things...



After our recent MLK Day celebration, I was speaking with a community member who was so complimentary of FUMC. She said, “The church is so engaged in our community. It’s really good to see. What is your mission statement?” People notice and it gives them hope. I smiled and tried to make things simple for her. Our mission statement is thousands of years old. Here are all variations on a theme of our mission to “form disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our community and world.”

Other ways to say it include:

- Love God and loving our neighbors as ourselves. (Luke 10:27)
- Make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:16-20)
- Treating others the way you want to be treated. (Mt. 7:12)
- Go and Tell; Come and See (Luke 2 and John 1)
- Care for the poor, widow, orphan and stranger. (too numerous to list)
- Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:8)
- Care for the least of these members of my family – hungry, thirsty, naked, stranger, sick & prisoner. (Mt. 25:31-40)
- Pray for the prosperity of the community to which you are sent. (Jeremiah 29)
- Go and produce fruit. (John 15:16)
- Let your light shine before people so they see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Mt. 5:16)

The Scriptures are clear about what we are to do. The difference is – HOW ARE WE DOING IT? If the Church is only about loving ourselves and not engaging within the community and world, can we really say we are living out faithful obedience to the Lord? We can’t do all things or be all things to everyone. God-given limits exist so that we work together with the gifts that we have been given to serve God in our community. Our resources of time, energy, passion, money, and talent are not unlimited, but they are renewable. So, let’s ask ourselves . . .

- What portion of the mission has God assigned to us?
- Who in our community is God already calling to meet a local need?
- How can we recruit more “laborers in the field” to join them in mission?

When we’re engaged in the foundational ministry of Jesus Christ – starting with prayer and worship and being sent out to love others on his behalf, we’ll be the visible light of the world and the difference will be like salt in a recipe. The work is never done!

*“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” Matt.18:5*

As a church family, we have decided to love our neighbors through our local schools. We have especially focused on building relationships with Anthony and David Brewer Elementary schools. Many of you have donated food, thank you cards and Christmas gifts as a part of this effort. We have two more ways for you to help our neighbors at the schools.

The first way involves making your voice heard, and can be done by anyone with a computer from the comfort of your home. USD 453 faces a \$1.5 million shortfall in the upcoming budget. While the Board of Education has difficult decisions ahead, our voices make a difference. One of the options is to close either David Brewer or Anthony Elementary School. That would put many children in the situation of walking to school to either Henry Leavenworth or the opposite school. Closure is a permanent loss for USD 453. If you would like comment to the BOE, contact the individual members at their district email. You can find each one at [usd453.org/board-of-education](http://usd453.org/board-of-education). Then, find the specific person to write under Board Members. The first decision date is February 9.

The second way is to volunteer at one of the schools. Both Anthony and David Brewer are short staffed and need help in the classroom with one on one tutoring or in the lunch room as a monitor. Even as little as one hour a week would be helpful. If you’re willing to help, click on this QR code to apply to be a volunteer at David Brewer. There is a background check to assure the safety of the kids. Loving our neighbors must be more than words. We must back up our words with action.



FEBRUARY Birthdays

2nd	Jamie Brettmann	12th	Annabelle Estep	21st	Logan Kobe
	John Hersey		Junia Howell		Robert McKinley
3rd	Mary Eleanor McCluskey	13th	Carl Langley	23rd	Hannah Banker
7th	Emily Wecas	15th	Anne-Marie Short	23rd	Sara LaMoe
8th	Kyle Sanders	17th	Ernest Wicke	27th	John Short
10th	Claudia McAllaster	18th	Steve Coats		
11th	Cathy Landis	20th	Joyce Goss		



FEBRUARY Anniversaries

15th Michael & Karen Piper 38 years



Did we miss your birthday or anniversary? Please help us update our records. Send an email with your current address, phone number and birthday to Sandy at [swood@fumclvks.org](mailto:swood@fumclvks.org).

UPCOMING Events

**RESCHEDULED!**  
February 15 at noon  
We have prizes for best chili and best dessert  
Plan to stay and play a game  
With your family afterward

**Great Bowls of Fire CHILI Cook-off**  
February 15 Noon

**MEN’S PRAYER & STUDY BREAKFAST**  
**FEBRUARY 21**  
**8:00 AM**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
MIKE MIX [HAIRYMULE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:HAIRYMULE@GMAIL.COM)  
OR DAVE LANDIS [DLANDIS@HUGHES.NET](mailto:DLANDIS@HUGHES.NET)

If you need to schedule use of any of the church buildings, please send a detailed request email with dates and times to [egarven@fumclvks.org](mailto:egarven@fumclvks.org) and [swood@fumclvks.org](mailto:swood@fumclvks.org). You’ll receive a confirmation email after the event has been added to the church calendar.



Kids First Worship is for kids ages 3 years through 6th grade and meets during the 11 am service each Sunday on the lower floor of the Sanctuary building. In February we will be in the New Testament, finding out about how Jesus chose his disciples and the beginning of his earthly ministry.

February 1 – Jesus and Nicodemus  
February 8 – Fishers of Men  
February 15 – Jesus Chooses Matthew  
February 22 – The Sermon on the Mount

**Sunday School** meets on Sunday mornings 9:45 am in room 202 of the Education building. With the Bible as our foundation, we use science, art and activity to not just tell God's story, but learn what it means for us. We'll study the same lessons as Kids First Worship, taking time to go a little deeper.



**Wonderful Wednesday** is a fantastic way to remind children that God is not just for Sunday, he is for EVERY day. Designed for kids ages 3 years through 6th grade, we meet in the Education Building from 3:45 – 5:30 pm during the school year. Our theme this year is EXODUS: From Moses to Me." This month we're focusing on some of the people that God gave to Moses to help him with the enormous task of leading the Israelites .

Feb 4 – Miriam (sister of Moses) Feb 11 – Aaron (brother of Moses)  
Feb 18 – Jethro (Moses' father-in-law) Feb 25 – Joshua (Moses' right hand man)

**Fusion 56** (our special group for 5th and 6th graders), meets from 12:00 – 1:30 pm every other week (unless otherwise noted). Each meeting we will have lunch, a Bible lesson and FUN! Contact Nancy for more information. Friends are always welcome!



**Mother's Morning Out: Feb. 11, 8:30 – 11:30am**  
Our theme for February is God's Love. Each month, on the second Wednesday, we provide care for children ages birth through school age. There are three groups: Nursery, Toddlers and Preschool. Space is limited, so register now by going to: [FUMCLVKS.ORG/MMO](http://FUMCLVKS.ORG/MMO)

**If you have questions about Children's Ministry, please contact Nancy at [nshade@fumclvks.org](mailto:nshade@fumclvks.org).**

So many times, we jump directly from Palm Sunday to Easter. While there's nothing wrong with both of those celebrations, we miss so much of the power, compassion, and love God and Jesus exude during the time in between. During the day we will discover how Jesus spent his last week on earth, culminating in the events of Good Friday. We'll answer questions like, "What is salvation? What is redemption? What's so good about Good Friday?" The day will be filled with stories, art, science, and games. We'll have lunch, and a morning and afternoon snack. Don't forget the Egg Hunt! Space is limited, so be sure to register early! Participant and Volunteer Registration can be found at: [FUMCLVKS.ORG/TGIGF](http://FUMCLVKS.ORG/TGIGF).



**Congratulations!**  
Taylor York is the new director for the Cody Choraliers, a Barbershop Ensemble here in Leavenworth. The Cody Choraliers hold two concerts a year and they raise money for the music departments in the Leavenworth school district. Taylor was recently awarded "Barbershopper of the Year" by Bill Bay, the former director of the group. Both Bill and Taylor regularly use their musical talents here at the church. Congratulations Taylor!



We always have a fun group at our monthly lunch. Join us this month on Tues., Feb. 17 at Ten Penny, 529 Cherokee. Contact Sandy if you need a ride, 913-547-6916

## Children Church Camp Scholarships



- Why?** Camp is an opportunity to explore the world and their personal faith in a safe setting. Many people look at their camp experiences as foundational to their faith.
- What?** There are different options for camp depending on the child's interest. There are camps that focus on horses or sports or STEM or the arts. Each camp has a faith basis for their activities.
- Where?** There are many choices for church camps in our area. The United Methodist church sponsors Camp Chippewa near Ottawa. Institute is at Baker University in Baldwin City.
- Who?** Camp Chippewa has programs for third through eighth grade students. Institute is for ninth through twelfth graders.
- How?** Every child wanting to go to camp can have their full admission paid for by the church. Simply submit the scholarship form to the church office. Contact Ed for the form, [egraven@fumclvks.org](mailto:egraven@fumclvks.org).

Last year the Heim, Moore, and Hladky families went to camp. They loved it so much, they plan to go back this year! Lucy said, "My favorite thing about camp was making new friends." Natalie said, "I really enjoyed nature because we were outside a lot."

Camp sessions are offered weekly throughout the summer. Sessions are on the Camp Chippewa website. Go to [campchippewa.org](http://campchippewa.org) for more information.





The grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with each of you. The month of February is upon us and we have work to do. We have some very ambitious opportunities ahead of us this year and we must all come together to manifest His will for our church, our community, and ourselves – one body in Christ.

Financially, we met our forecasted goals for 2025. Through gracious giving, our financial position is strong and our pledges for 2026 are rising as is your love. One of our focused priorities for 2026 is where we will be in five years, in ten years, and beyond. We have a long range, vision focused conversation on how we can prepare ourselves for the next generations of Kingdom Builders at Leavenworth First United Methodist Church.

All planning starts with dedicated intentional prayer – not our will but His. Please continue to pray for the leadership of the church as we embark on this worthiest endeavor. Their photos are below.

The next church council meeting is scheduled for April, so I will be able to report where we are going and how we are allocating our assets to accomplish our collective goals and missions. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any member of the staff.

The Trustees are embarking on a significant sustainment and renovation project for the next three years; next month I will share their vision and focus on how and when to accomplish these goals – one body in Christ.

We will continue to support our mission partners both monetarily and physically thanks to your continued support of our Nurture, Outreach and Witness ministries. These unique ministries bring His love to our neighbors on an almost daily basis - one body in Christ.

Lastly, we have numerous small groups and Sunday school classes where you can join fellow children of God, in learning exactly what the Lord has planned for you. Proverbs 30:5 "Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him." - One body in Christ. Our collective 2026 mission of bringing Kingdom continues, in Christ....Ed



Carla Wieggers  
Council Chair



Michelle Briggs  
Lay Leader



Bill Kidder  
Nurture Chair



Kathi LaMoe  
Witness Chair



Marti Crow  
Finance Chair



Maggie Myers  
SPRC Chair



Steve Songer  
Head of Trustees



Dave York  
Pastor

Her parents were elated with the decision and thought she would get a better education. They had no idea that she was invisible in the new school, and her life was miserable. Teachers only spoke to you to give directions, and the other kids followed the teachers' behaviors. Joana quickly learned that she was tolerated only because the law required integration. The teachers rarely graded her papers, never answered her questions, or let her participate in class. It was the same for the other African American students: they were invisible. Her parents could not "hear" her pain because to them, she had to be getting a better education than they received in the Jim Crow South.

Joana said, "Before sixth grade, I loved school, but the way we were treated made me feel overwhelming anguish. The best part of my day was getting on the bus to go home. Sixth grade taught me what racism was and what it felt like: powerless. Fortunately, Dr. King and the civil rights movement were a frequent topic of conversation in our home. We watched the news as a family, and I grew in resolve to stay strong. I figured out that I didn't need the teacher to like me or treat me like the other students, but she still had to show up every day and teach, and every day that I was in class, she couldn't stop me from learning. I committed to becoming a teacher because I knew no child should have to be invisible."

Joana feels that the most significant impact in society has been in teacher education and preparation. The majority of teachers she has met and worked with do not engage in hegemonic practices that make children feel inferior or invisible. She said, "I see and observe teachers born in the 70's and later who are less focused on students' skin color and seem more committed to helping students reach their full intellectual potential. Many of these teachers are more willing to move to new locations to teach and bring new experiences to their students. Now, schools tend to be more representative of their multicultural neighborhood, and kids are not isolated and separated from their friends.

"My dream for the future is for education to be the driving force in our communities. While teacher education continues to advance ways to help students learn faster, I would like to see intellectual advances taught alongside the values of kindness, love, and respect: civility! I think our community needs to focus more on encouraging our best and brightest to return to teach after they finish school, having first gained some teaching experience in a different community. We need young teachers to return to our community with new, fresh ideas, strong character, and high moral values. We can improve our schools by ensuring that parents and teachers live in the same communities and share daily living experiences that create respect and trust for the well-being of all students, regardless of race or economic status. School must be the driving force in creating a safe community where all children feel valued.

*Joana Scholtz*

If these stories have inspired you and you would like more information, there are two excellent museums nearby. The Richard Allen Cultural Center and Museum is located at 412 Kiowa Street. It's open 11 am to 4 pm. They have engaging exhibits about local, national and military history. For info, call (913) 682-8772.

You can also visit The Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park at 1515 SE Monroe St., in Topeka. The museum features self-guided, in-depth galleries, a short film, and a bookstore. It is open Tuesday through Saturday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. Both museums are free.



## “The Time Is Always Ripe To Do What Is Right” *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

For many years Edna Wagner was the director for the Richard Allen Cultural Center and Museum. She also ran the tutoring center that met on the first floor of the museum. For Black History month, we asked her to share her experiences growing up.

Edna Wagner was born 1955 in a small town in Louisiana. When she was 5 years old her mother and father divorced. Her grandparents and her mother’s youngest sister decided to step in and help her mom who was a single parent with four girls to raise by herself. She moved to her grandparents’ home 45 minutes away to a two room house, where she slept on a cot in front of the stove. Her aunt slept across the back door and her first cousin slept in front of a small kitchen table.

She was in walking distance of high school, but in the late 60s she was bussed 4 miles from her homes to attend high school. Her prom was held in a separate room from white students. If an African American student wanted to take a photo with a white student, they had to go to the bathroom. It took 30 years to have a class reunion with both races.

She said, “I’m very grateful for the way I was brought up. My grandmother set her ten grandkids down and told us that last thing we needed to do was to judge a person by the color of their skin. Look at what’s within their heart and know what’s in your heart. She told us to put God in our lives and he will help us get through some of our hardest times and I truly believe that.”

After marrying her husband in the late 70s, she still experienced some racism in the military as a spouse. But she always remembered what her grandmother shared with her at a young age, and that was to treat people the way she wanted to be treated.

Edna said, “Within my 70 years here on earth I have seen many changes through my own children and other young people that have shown me it doesn’t matter the color of your skin. My dream for our country and our community is that young people be more involved in what is happening in the world. To turn the negative into a positive, whether they agree or disagree, and always respect each other’s values. I have always worked with our youth in community to show them that there is a place for everyone if we just find a way to work together. We still have a long way to go, but I will never give up. I will always believe in a better future, for all.” *Edna Wagner*



## “Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.” *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Joana Scholtz is a community activist and was the president of the Leavenworth NAACP for many years. She was also asked to share her story.

Joana was born in DeKalb, Mississippi, in January of 1957, and her family moved to Chicago as part of the second African American Migration to find better jobs, education, and escape the Jim Crow South. They lived on the south side of Chicago on South Park Ave, which is now Martin Luther King Dr. She lived in an African American community and attended neighborhood schools with African American teachers and administrators, and educators that were revered. Joana said, “My community was filled with role models

across all professions, and admired and respected by members of our community. Although I lived in the big city, I always felt safe walking to school, the store, and playing outside in my neighborhood. We knew our neighbors, and our neighbors knew my family. If parents had to work, a neighbor would keep an eye on the kids, and kids were taught to respect and obey their elders. As a child living in a community where most people shared the same background, I was never exposed to racism or made to feel inferior.”

Eventually, her parents built a home in the predominantly African American south suburb of Markham, IL, when she was in the fifth grade, and life continued without much upheaval. Before school was to start for the sixth grade, her parents received a letter from the school district stating that they were to enroll in school in a neighboring all-white school district. When the bus arrived on the first day, there were six African American students going to the new school for integration.



## Scouts Prepare for the Pinewood Derby



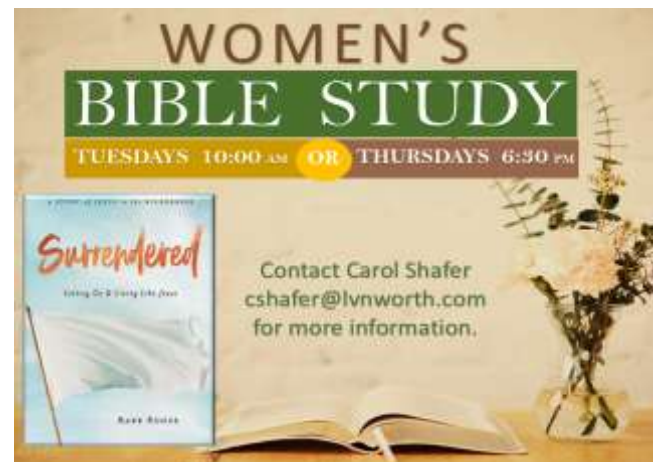
Baby, it is COLD outside. So cold that area schools and our church closed to keep people safe. Can you imagine walking to school in the snow at -4 and there are NO clean sidewalks for students to walk on? Or for you to climb out of your car and trudge to the church. It really is nice that FUMC can share the word via electrons into your warm house.

So, between two school closings and one federal holiday, the Scouting ministry is a bit lethargic this January. Things are happening, just slower. Scout meeting will also be canceled for Presidents’ Day, Monday, Feb 16.

The Troop Scouts were supposed to go to Scout Day at the WWI museum, but that, too, was rescheduled for August. At least it will be warmer!

Probably the most active is the Cub Scout Pack 3109, which meets on Tuesday evenings, and have been designing and cutting out their Pinewood Derby Cars. The trophies are on display already.

Scout Sunday will be Feb. 8. Scouts will be greeting during the second service. There will be a short talk with some super cool graphics. The annual Pinewood Derby race will be Saturday, Feb. 21 from 9 am - 2 pm.



The Women’s Bible Study will start a new study on Feb. 24 & 26. Carol Shafer leads this study that meets either Tuesdays at 10 am or Thursdays at 6:30 pm. They’re both studying *Surrendered; Letting Go and Living Like Jesus* by Barb Roose.

This study discusses facing problems in life that you just can’t fix, no matter what you do. Perhaps you’ve heard the phrase “Let go and let God.” But it’s easier said than done. Is it possible that giving up on what you can’t change is God’s path to peace for your life? In this six-week Bible study of Jesus in the wilderness, Barb Roose explores Jesus’ time of testing and contrasts it with the Israelites’ failures in the wilderness.

As you learn from Jesus’ example, you’ll discover six principles that will equip you to let God lead you to victory despite your circumstances.

1. Recognize You Can’t Handle It
2. Stop Following Your Feelings
3. Give Up Control and Reach for God
4. Embrace God’s Better Blessing
5. Let Go of Fear
6. Experience the Blessings of a Surrendered Life

If you’re tired of following your feelings or being disappointed by unchanging circumstances, learn how to surrender like Jesus and experience God’s power and peace in your life as never before. For more information, contact Carol at [cshafer@lvnworth.com](mailto:cshafer@lvnworth.com).

# Itchin' to Stitch

January 15th Itchin' to Stitch visited Inclusion Connections in Olathe. This is a school for older youth and young adults with intellectual and development disabilities. They are given guidance and training for job skills, community involvement, and independent living.

Sara Mulford recently started teaching a life skills class to adults there. She noticed that they were in need of microwaveable bowl cozies to use during their lunch time. We provided 40 plus cozies!!

Upon our arrival, we had lunch with the students, presented our gift and then assisted in making and packaging products for their "PawsAbilities" retail shop. Paws students learn job skills baking dog treats, sewing dog bandanas, and crafting other products. Additional skills learned include operating commercial kitchen equipment, operating a cash register, cleaning and janitorial tasks, sewing, baking, packaging, inventory, and customer service. Students get job experience running the Paws retail store and mobile pop-up store which visits local businesses and events. We toured their facility which included a classroom, storage of items for sale, a small bakery for dog biscuits, and a packaging area for the pup goodies!

Itchin' to Stitch creates all kinds of handmade items for charities in our community. If you love to sew, you can join them on Feb. 19 at 1:30 pm. For more information, contact Teresa at [hickst@kc.rr.com](mailto:hickst@kc.rr.com)



**A New Year of Giving**

January is the time to reevaluate your church giving. Some of you have cost of living increases (COLA). Some of you will readjust your budget because of changes to your finances. Some are considering "Required Minimum Distribution". This is an ideal time to also review your giving to the church. Your giving to the church pays for utilities, keeps our staff employed, and provides many "invisible" things for the church and community. Your giving feeds the hungry and supports our school kids. We help support the worldwide church to share our love for God.

Please take a few minutes to prayerfully review what you're giving to the church. If you have a retirement account that requires a distribution, giving it directly to the church is a venue for those funds. If you have an online account with our church, please check to make sure it is set up with the amount you feel you should give. Programming it to automatically give weekly or monthly is just like a grocery or utility payment.

Year-end statements have been mailed. If you did not receive one or feel like the one you did get isn't correct, please contact Libby in the office.



The winter youth trip (generally between Christmas and New Years-ish) is our final huzzah for the calendar year before starting the second semester in January. This year, 13 students and 4 adults traveled to San Antonio from December 29 to January 2 for service and fun. We spent time serving at the Texas Diaper Bank to help repackage diapers, menstrual, and incontinence products for those who cannot afford them. As someone who has been in the thick of buying diapers and pull-ups for littles for almost 6 years, I know first-hand how expensive they can be. At one point, my family was paying for diapers/pull-ups for two kids, as well as formula for one, and daycare expenses. That is pricey. The Texas Diaper Bank is such a blessing to young families and elderly individuals on fixed-incomes; if you haven't been in the market for diapers, you'll be surprised at how much it costs.

Our job with the diaper bank was to repackage menstrual hygiene products into bags of 18 for distribution. I've observed over the years that humans just really enjoy a project where you can get in the rhythm of doing the same thing over and over and it was for a great cause. All together, we packaged 320k pads for distribution.

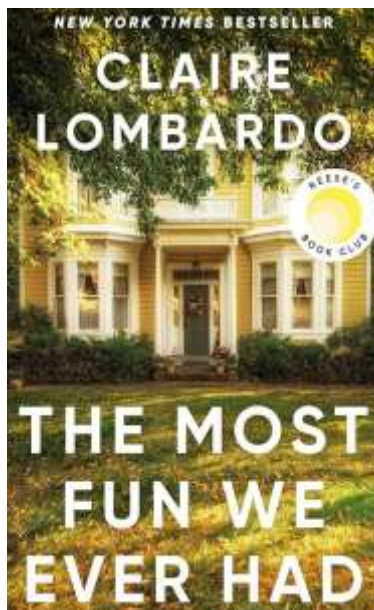
The rest of the trip was play time. We visited Hopscotch, an immersive art gallery that included a giant adult-sized ball pit and various interactive art displays. We spent New Year's Eve at Six Flags and enjoyed a special firework display. We walked at the River Walk, went to the Mexican Market, ate some delicious food, and swam in the pool at the hotel. We were so grateful to have Bill and Nancy Shade join us to haul our luggage because at 13 kids plus Steven and me, that was a 100% full 15-passenger van.

The trip went really well, students got to invest in friendships in the group and we adults were able to better get to know some of the students who are new to the group. As always, thanks to the church and to the Tinkler Trustees for helping us get out of the church and encounter the world around us! Kristen Howell



Young Adults are holding strong in our 1st and 3rd Wednesday pattern. We meet for dinner, socializing, and games. Occasionally we go out and do something extra fun in the community. On Saturday, Feb. 10, we are planning on going to the Titanic exhibit at Union Station and then going to lunch. Young Adults is a group for people 18-35 (post-high school). Please contact Kristen at 913-742-3557 if you'd like to join us. We would love to have you!





## BOOK CLUB MARCH 3, 1 PM

Winter is a great time to curl up with a good book. The Book Club is reading *The Most Fun We Ever Had* by Claire Lombardo. We love new members! We meet on the first Tuesday of every month at 1 pm in Wesley Hall.

The story revolves around Marilyn Connolly and David Sorenson who fall in love and marry in the 1970s. They have four radically different daughters who are each in a state of unrest: Wendy, widowed young, soothes herself with booze and younger men; Violet, a litigator-turned-stay-at-home-mom, battles anxiety and self-doubt when the darkest part of her past resurfaces; Liza, a neurotic and newly tenured professor, finds herself pregnant with a baby she's not sure she wants by a man she's not sure she loves; and Grace, the dawdling youngest daughter, begins living a lie that no one in her family even suspects. Above it all, the daughters share the lingering fear that they will never find a love quite like their parents'.



Now, more than ever, Trinity House needs your help. The Leavenworth Mission is closing. The food pantry is relocating. Because of this, our business has tripled. We are fast exhausting our food supplies, and are in critical need of children's and teen winter clothes (any size), boots, coats, blankets,

gloves, hats, and shoes. The unusually cold temps have put many families at risk. Anything we can do helps.

Consider volunteering just three hours per month. Our hours are 10 am to 1 pm, Tues., Wed., and Thurs.

Do a quick scan of your pantry, donate staples that you don't plan to use.

Add an extra \$5 or \$10 to your grocery bill for staples. Bring them to Trinity House or the church office.

Do an inventory of your coat closet; donate anything you haven't worn in a while or no longer fits.

Donate cleaning supplies, detergents, personal hygiene items and dental supplies.

Kids clothes are a must! Anything will be taken and used.

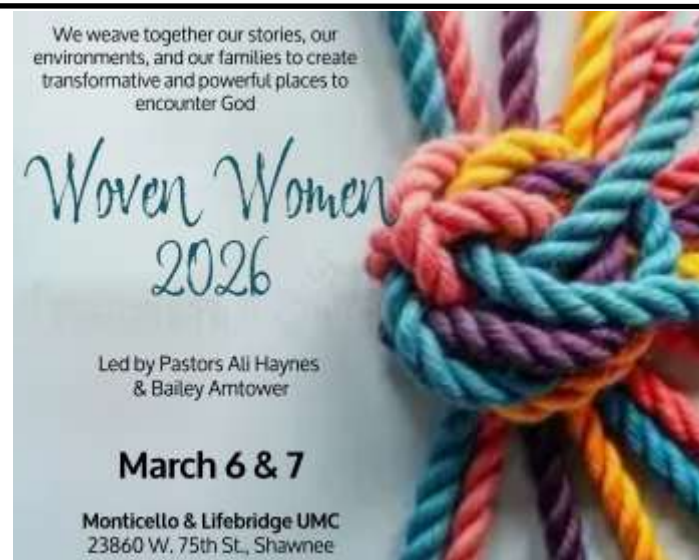
Everything at Trinity is given at no cost to our clients. The money they save can then be freed up to pay for utilities and other necessities. We are called by Christ to love one another and serve. Questions? Feel free to contact one of our FUMC volunteers: Sherry Lauber, Cheryl Rader, Lea Ann Weilbacher, Linda Herrman, or Marsha Gaffin.

Woven Women was created as a space where women from across our wider Christian community can gather in the name of Christ—to build relationships rooted in friendship, care, and reassurance, and to support one another as we live out our faith. Over the years, this retreat has grown into a meaningful community where women practice accountability, vulnerability, and encouragement, trusting that the Holy Spirit is weaving us together as children of God for the sake of the kingdom.

This year's theme, Holy Chaos, will explore how God builds beloved community in the midst of busy lives, uncertainty, and change—and how grace is often found right in the middle of the mess. The retreat is open to all women of any church affiliation.

To register, contact Rev. Bailey Amtower at

[bamtower@greatplainsumc.org](mailto:bamtower@greatplainsumc.org)



Dear FUMC,  
Thank you so much for supporting Anthony's Holiday Assistance program. Your continued partnership throughout the school year is so appreciated. Thanks for all you do for Anthony families, students and staff.  
Anthony Elementary Staff



## The Caring Congregation



Spoiler Alert. This article contains anti-Valentine's Day sentiment. Not that I'm against Valentine's Day per se, I mean, who doesn't like getting flowers, cards, chocolates, and candlelit dinners? But, that's the problem. I'll bet that for every person who has a sweetheart, there are three others who don't. With all the associated commercialism, following hard on the heels of Christmas, Valentine's Day has the possibility of creating feelings of loneliness, isolation, sadness and poor self image. And if you've had a loved one, but that loved one is no longer with you, the grief and loneliness increases palpably.

Don't get me wrong. I don't begrudge anyone who is fortunate enough to be in a good headspace. Life is meant to be savored and enjoyed. But life has a way of creating highs and lows. For those in the valley, holidays can be a cruel reminder of how life once was. The long, cold nights of February can bring on sunlight deprivation depression as well. If you are aware of someone who might be in this category, why not get out of your comfort zone and do something nice, like:

- ♥ Take someone to lunch or for coffee.
- ♥ Buy a surprise small gift and deliver it in person.
- ♥ Who doesn't like chocolates? Take them a box. (Not heart shaped, though)
- ♥ Take them out for a movie.
- ♥ Go get your nails done together.
- ♥ Write them a note about how special they are and why.
- ♥ Invite them over for lunch or dinner.
- ♥ Host a Palentine's day party and bless several of your friends.
- ♥ You can't go wrong with pizza!

God created us for community. Use Valentine's Day to bless someone who lives alone, and you will be blessed in return. And, kudos to Elaine Belardo, the founder of WINGTIPS who recognized that widows need community and support. They meet every other month at our church for a delicious meal and fellowship. The next meeting is February 13 at 5:30 pm. Any widow is welcome to attend.

Blessings, Marsha



Virtual Grief will start a new session on February 16 at 5 pm and run every Monday until May 4. All the sessions are conducted on Zoom. Anyone grieving, anywhere in the United States can participate. You can register online at [GriefShare.org/](http://GriefShare.org/)

Location Leavenworth, KS, First United Methodist Church. There is no registration fee. Workbooks are \$20 and can be ordered online.

An open Grief Share group will start March 11 and will meet every second and fourth Wednesday night at 5 pm. We also have a Spouse Grief Share group that meets on the third and fifth Tuesday at 1 pm. Workbooks are available at both of those meetings. The meeting consists of watching a 30 minute video and discussing the latest chapter in the workbook. Please invite someone you know who is grieving to join any of these groups. Questions? Contact [marshagaffin@gmail.com](mailto:marshagaffin@gmail.com).

L♥VING THE LEAST OF THESE

On Jan. 25, Ryan & Myranda Agnew shared their testimony about being foster parents. You can find their video on our YouTube channel if you missed it. Here is more in depth info about the Agnews and foster parenting. Ryan is a Leavenworth native and a KU graduate with a Music Therapy degree. He was a Music Therapist in the Leavenworth school district before becoming the Worship Minister at Westside Family Church. Myranda has lived most of her life in Leavenworth. She has a master's degree in Administration from Webster University and was the Director of the Interfaith Community of Hope for five years before becoming the Regional coordinator at the Kansas Statewide Homeless coalition.

**How great is the need for foster care?** Numbers fluctuate, but in late 2025 there were between 5,500 to 6,000 children in the Kansas foster care system on any given day. Kansas has around 2,000 licensed foster homes. Shortages often result in children being placed outside their home communities.

The average age of a child in care is 9, with over 54% of children in care being age 10 or older. The greatest need for foster parents in Kansas is homes willing to take teenagers. Only 2% of homes are interested in taking teens but 40% of placements are teenagers. Of the children in foster care, 63% of children are white, 21% are African American, 14% are Hispanic. The majority of removals are due to neglect, substance abuse by caregivers, and, in some cases, the inability of parents to manage severe emotional or behavioral needs. Roughly half of the children are safely reunited with their families, while about one-quarter are adopted. The average length of time in placement for children who have exited care this year is 24.7 months.

**What does a foster family do?** They provide temporary care, love, and nurturance to children while serving as a mentor to their parents. This could include actively helping the parent improve on their parenting abilities. The foster parent assists in helping the children transition home, to a legal guardianship, or adoption by another family, while keeping the child in contact with their kin, culture and community. They serve as the legal guardian for children. To be a foster parent, you must have the ability to love, understand, care for and accept a child to whom they did not give birth.

**What first interested you (Agnews) in becoming foster parents? Why did you decide to take the training?** Looking back, we can see that God had been stirring this in us for a long time. While serving at the Community of Hope, we met so many children whose parents were facing incredibly hard circumstances and struggling to provide a safe and stable environment. That is when it really became personal. We realized we could be part of the solution by stepping in during a family's crisis, giving parents the space and support they need to work toward stability, with the hope of reunification. Taking the training felt like a natural next step of obedience and trust, believing this was one of the ways we were being called to love and serve families in a practical way.

**Tell us more about the training that you had to become foster parents.** We are licensed with DCCCA, and we have been incredibly grateful for the way they approach both training and ongoing support. Most trainings last around 10 weeks, meeting once a week often online, which was convenient for our busy schedules. DCCCA provides comprehensive pre-service training that really helps families understand what foster care truly involves. They provide this at no charge. A major focus is trauma informed care, which helps you see behaviors through the lens of what a child has experienced rather than how they are acting. That shift in perspective is huge when you are parenting kids who have experienced abuse, neglect, or significant loss. The training also covers how the child welfare system works, what different types of placements look like, child development, and practical behavior management strategies you can use in your home. It is designed to prepare families for a range of situations, whether that is traditional foster care, kinship, emergency, or respite. You get a clearer picture of both the challenges and the purpose of foster care. We appreciate that DCCCA does more than training. They pair families with a dedicated specialist, 24 hour support



Every Person Deserves Grace

Every Easter we take up a special offering to help others in our community. This year we have chosen three charities that meet people on their darkest days and help them start a new life. The Alliance Against Family Violence, The Community of Hope and Prison Fellowship. All of the money donated will be split in three ways for these charities. You will receive an offering envelope in the mail, or you can give online at [fumclvks.org/product/give](https://fumclvks.org/product/give).

Next month we will have a more in depth look at how each charity meets a specific need.

Easter OFFERING

New BEGINNINGS

Every person deserves grace.  
This Easter, you can help someone start a new life.

**The Unusual Suspects**

Lenten Sermon Series

Examine the lives of the people Jesus encountered before his death.

**Sundays**

8:45 & 11:00 am

Starting February 22

Pastor Dave's sermon series for Lent will examine the people in Jesus' life right before his death. Based on Matthew 26, some of the titles include; A Woman, Some Perfume, and the Poor; A Garden, A Cup, and A Nap; and A Kiss, A Sword, and Fleeing Disciples. It will be a revealing look at those who were closest to Jesus but still didn't understand what was about to happen to him.

If you're looking for a way to dive deeper into your relationship with Jesus this Lenten season, here is a daily guide to reading through the four Gospels. Usually there are only two chapters a day which is an average of 10-15 minutes a day. There are also audio Bibles where you could listen to the Bible on your way to work.

Lent Gospel Reading Plan 2026					
February 18	Matt 1-2	March 5	Mark 6-7	March 22	Matt 26
February 19	Matt 3-4	March 7	Matt 8-9	March 23	Luke 20-21
February 20	Matt 5-7	March 8	Matt 26	March 24	Luke 22-24
February 21	Matt 8-9	March 9	Matt 11-13	March 25	John 1-2
February 22	Matt 26	March 10	Matt 14-16	March 26	John 3-4
February 23	Matt 10-12	March 11	Luke 1-2	March 27	John 5-6
February 24	Matt 13-14	March 12	Luke 3-4	March 28	John 7-8
February 25	Matt 15-16	March 13	Luke 5-6	March 29	Matt 21
February 26	Matt 17-18	March 14	Luke 7-8	March 30	John 9-11
February 27	Matt 19-21	March 15	Matt 26	March 31	John 12-14
February 28	Matt 22-23	March 16	Luke 9-10	April 1	John 15-16
March 1	Matt 26	March 17	Luke 11-12	April 2	John 17
March 2	Matt 24-25	March 18	Luke 13-14	April 3	John 18-19
March 3	Matt 26-28	March 19	Luke 15	April 4	John 20-21
March 4	Mark 1-3	March 20	Luke 16-17	April 5	Matt 28
March 5	Mark 4-5	March 21	Luke 18-19	Red is the text for the Sunday sermons	

# Lent is a Season of Celebration for the Whole Family

Lent is a sacred time of 40 days for the preparation of Easter to intentionally set aside time to contemplate Jesus' life, ministry and sacrifice on the cross. But it also a time to gather together with our church family to build friendships. We have several opportunities for you to strengthen your relationship with God and with your church family.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 18. Pastor Dave will be available in the sanctuary from 7 am to 11:30 am. Ashes are traditionally placed on the forehead or hand and represent a public acknowledgment of sin and a desire to repent. The ashes symbolize the biblical phrase,



"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." We will have a special service that evening to reflect on repentance. Nursery will be provided.

Before the service we will have a Soup and Bread potluck at 5:30 pm. Please bring soup or bread or dessert or any combination of those to share. This is usually a well attended potluck with lots of delicious food. It also kicks off our Lenten Wednesday potlucks. We will get together each Wednesday through March for a potluck meal.

This year we will be doing something a little different. We will be watching

a short video from the Bible Project. They cover a variety of topics such as *The Human Condition You Can't Escape*, *Three Ways to Choose to Live in Babylon*, and *This is the Hope For Ending Evil That Affects Your Life*. Each lesson stands alone and will be very informative. There will be a time of

discussion after the video. You can learn an important biblical perspective and there is no homework. Each lesson stands alone, so if you have to miss a week, you won't be lost. The kids will have their own activities while the adults watch the videos and discuss.

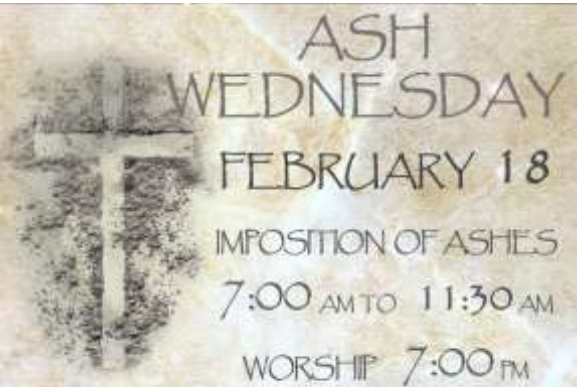
One of our favorite Lenten traditions is Maundy Thursday. We won't have a Wednesday potluck that week, but we will have a catered meal on Thurs., April 3. Then there will be a special service to help us reflect on the final days of Jesus life.

We have two special opportunities for Good Friday. First, the kids will have

TGIF (Thank Goodness It's Good Friday). Preschool children will attend from 8:30 am to noon. Kindergarten through sixth grade students will stay until 3:30 pm. Kids will learn about the last week of Jesus' life with crafts, games, and science experiments. They will also have an Easter egg hunt. Visitors are welcome. Please register at [fumclvks.org/tgigf](http://fumclvks.org/tgigf).

We will not have a community Good Friday service this year. Instead we will have a special service here at the church that focuses on Jesus death and burial at 6:30 pm on April 3.

On Easter Sunday, April 5, we will celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The service will be identical at 8:30 and 11:00 am. Please think about who you can invite to Easter or any of these events.



and provide ongoing training opportunities and support groups. This investment in foster parents makes a big difference. It helps families feel equipped, connected, and not alone, which ultimately leads to more stability for the children in their care. For more info, [dcca.org/program/foster/](http://dcca.org/program/foster/).

**Please give us more details about Joy Meadows. What services do they offer?** Joy Meadows is an incredible nonprofit located in Leavenworth County. They provide families with community support, housing, and resources so children impacted by foster care can find stability, healing, and joy. We believe children who have experienced abuse, neglect, and loss deserve more than survival. They deserve safe families, consistent relationships, and environments that help restore hope. The Joy Meadows model addresses the interconnected needs of foster and adoptive families through a trauma informed, community based approach. Families have access to a therapy center, Care Community support through local churches, animal assisted programs, monthly Second Saturday gatherings, a clothing closet for children entering care, and an Outdoor Adventure Camp. By surrounding families with practical help, emotional support, and Christ centered community, Joy Meadows strengthens homes so children can remain in stable family placements and experience long term healing. To learn more visit [joymeadows.org/](http://joymeadows.org/). If anyone wants to tour Joy Meadows, contact Myranda at (913) 306-5264.

**Do you have any touching stories you would like to share?** One of the sweetest memories for us involves our current foster kiddo's brother. We've been praying for over a year that he'll be able to join his brother in our home. Currently he visits us one weekend a month. When visiting us, he'd come to Second Saturday at Joy Meadows, especially around Christmas. Second Saturdays are monthly gatherings for foster, adoptive, and kinship families. There is dinner, animals in the barnyard, nature activities, crafts in the art studio, and all kinds of play like the bouncing pillow and playground. The clothing closet is open, so families can quietly grab what they need. What I love is that no one feels singled out. Every child there is part of a foster or adoptive story. They belong. This summer after we moved, he came for to visit to our new house. We went for a walk to check the chicken eggs, something families on property can do. As we walked up the path he suddenly stopped and said, "Hey, I have been here before." Then it started clicking. "I pet animals here. I saw Santa here. I played on this playground." Then he looked up, wide eyed, and said, "Wait... do we live at Joy Meadows?" His whole face lit up. That moment was so touching because Joy Meadows was already stored in his heart as a safe, fun, and joyful place. Second Saturdays helped build that. It was not just an event to him. It was a place where he felt normal, included, and happy. Getting to tell him that this place he loved was now part of his everyday life was something I'll never forget.

**How can our church help foster families and kids?** Churches truly can change the experience of foster care for both families and kids. Joy Meadows accepts gently used children's clothing donations for their foster clothing closet, especially in season. New underwear and socks are always a huge need. Because space is limited they don't take toys. In July they collect school supplies. At the August Second Saturday every foster child receives school supplies. In December they collect coats and Christmas gifts that allow kids to "shop" for someone special in their life, which might be a sibling, foster parent, biological parent, teacher, or mentor. That experience gives children dignity and the joy of giving, not just receiving. Financial gifts are also incredibly helpful. Donations support things like the therapy center, animal and equine therapy sessions, housing for foster families on property, camps, events, and everyday needs through the clothing closet and garden. Every dollar goes toward creating stability, healing, and joy for children impacted by foster care. Churches can also support in relational ways, not just material ones. One powerful model is Care Communities, where a small team from the church wraps around a foster or adoptive family with meals, prayer encouragement, and practical help. Churches can also volunteer at Second Saturdays by helping run activity stations or serving meals. It's a hands on way to see the impact and to help create a space where kids don't feel different or alone, but part of a community that sees and celebrates them. When a church offers time, people, and resources, it sends a strong message to foster families and kids that they do not have to walk this journey by themselves.

**If someone is interested in becoming a foster parent, what is the first step?** The first step is simply to reach out and start a conversation. You can contact [Myranda at \(913\) 306-5264](http://Myranda at (913) 306-5264). You don't have to have it all figured out before you call. Foster parenting doesn't look just one way. For some families it means having children in their home longer term. For others it may mean providing respite care for a weekend, a night, or while the family goes on vacation to give the foster family a break. It could mean being open to emergency placements or supporting family preservation efforts by caring for children while parents work through a short term crisis. There are many ways to say yes, and they can fit different seasons of life. The best first step is learning more.

# LIFE @ FUMC

We had a wonderful celebration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with the NAACP and several area churches. Below is Penny Black, The Motown Review, and the Bethel AME choir, just a few of the many performers. Our choir also sang. (They are on the cover.) It was a moment of unity and joy.



The Wonderful Wednesday kids have been studying the book of Exodus, Journey of Faith; From Moses to Me. They have followed Moses from a baby in a basket, to an exile, to being used by God to bring plagues to Egypt. Now they are learning about the week of Passover. They had a relay to simulate some of what the Israelites were experiencing. First, they still had to make bricks and build. Then they learn about matzo, the bread of affliction. They simulated marking the doorposts with lamb's blood. Then they had to hurry and pack their possessions for the journey to the Promised Land. They will keep learning about Moses and the Israelites for the rest of the school year.

