



First United Methodist Church

of

Leavenworth

422 Chestnut, Leavenworth, KS 66048

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 Or visit us at [FUMCLVKS.ORG](https://www.FUMCLVKS.ORG)
Sunday services stream at either site.

July 2026

28 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	29	30 6:30 pm Pastor Dave's Bible Study	1 1:00 pm Heart and Soul 6:30 pm Choir	2	3 Church Office Closed	4 
5 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Thom Kirby Retirement Party	6	7 1:00 pm Book Club	8 5:00 pm Grief Share 6:30 pm Choir	9 8:30am Staff	10	11
12 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Shade 40 Anniversary	13	14	15 1:00 pm Heart and Soul 6:30 pm Choir	15 1:30 pm Itchin' to Stitch	17	18 8 am Men's Prayer Breakfast
19 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am VBS Decoration	20 VBS	21 VBS	22 VBS 5:00 pm Grief Share 6:30 Choir Practice	23 VBS	24 VBS	25 
26 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am First Family Fellowship	27	28 2 pm Grief Group	29 1:00 pm Heart and Soul 6:30 pm Choir	30	1	2 

LIFE @

First United Methodist Church

July 2026



Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21



With the advent of our 250th national anniversary, I remember the Bicentennial celebration in 1976. I was ten years old. It was important. Parades, flags, special quarters, and fireworks. Lots of fireworks are good stuff when you are ten years old. My Dad always put the flag out for national holidays. He saved newly minted two dollars bills. His twenty-two years of service in the Air Force shaped his patriotism. Some of it has rubbed off on me.

Maturity should allow us to reflect on the past. We examine it with truth because honesty is critical for growth. I fear we are lacking the search for reality in today's America. I believe our search for justice, trust and faith is far more important in celebrating our nation than fireworks and flags. It's human nature to forget God's place in our lives whether as a nation, a community, or a family. We think prosperity came to us as birthright instead of by God's grace and mercy. The proper response to God's grace is always gratitude. Humility comes in the realization of who we are compared to God.

When God brought our spiritual ancestors, Israel, out of Egypt, they spent forty years in the wilderness. According to Deuteronomy 8, this was done to humble and test the people. Would they trust in the Lord and be obedient to his commands? Would they remember the Lord when they reached the promised land with good land, fine houses and increasing wealth? God's warning to them (and to us) as well is "When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you" (Deut. 8:10). "Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, so you do not say 'my power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.'" (Deuteronomy 8:16-17). It is not our righteousness or goodness that has done us well but the providence of the Lord. When I see a nation filled with greed, violence, and hatred, I fear we have forgotten the source of our affluence.

On July 4, I will fly the flag and watch the fireworks. I'll remember my Dad and his patriotism that was shown more than explained. I will serve who I am called to love. I will enjoy the weekend with food and entertainment. Most of all, I will be grateful for all that God has done for us through our nation and those who have come before us. What are you doing to keep God at the center of America's celebration?

It's hard to think about going back to school in July, but it will be here sooner than we think. We'll be hosting a breakfast for Lansing Elementary teacher on August 10 as they go back to prepare their classrooms for the year. In the past breakfast breads and biscuits and gravy have been very popular. Fruit is also popular, but they have a teacher with a severe allergy to blueberries, so if you want to bring fruit, please leave out the blueberries. There will be a sign up in the church foyer. You can ask Sandy for details at swood@fumclvks.org.

TUTORING UNITED TO SERVE
CARDS MEALS
 Change the future by caring today.
August 10
Lansing Elementary School

JULY Birthdays

2nd Karen Piper
 George Short
 6th Jean Wick
 9th Carla Wiegiers
 10th Ron Roggentien
 Rodney Yates
 13th Wyatt Brown
 Lynn Goss
 14th Jeff Eyerly
 Judy Wolfe

18th Corliss Fox
 20th Jackson Heim
 Jaimie Kirby
 22nd Andy Hall
 23rd Rodney Edington
 Ryan Johnson
 Rocky Hladky
 24th Gary Russell
 25th Michelle Briggs

25th Rachel Sanders
 Elizabeth Sanders
 28th Galen Hooser
 Jamie Walley
 31st Sarah Smith



JULY Anniversaries

2nd	David & Lois Kastner	43 years
6th	Steve & Margaret Songer	52 years
12th	Bill & Nancy Shade	40 years
20th	Steve & Anne-Marie Short	24 years
21st	Randy & Linda Herrman	53 years
23rd	LeRoy & Teresa Hicks	49 years
	Dave & Rhonda York	38 years
25th	Wayne & Helen Parks	45 years
29th	Kevin & June Bond	48 years
30th	Tony & Nina McNeill	43 years
	Andi & Tom Pawlowski	32 years

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the office so we can update our records.
swood@fumclvks.org



We believe in the power of prayer. Our Vacation Bible School is July 20-24 at 9 am. So, starting July 1 we are asking you to pray for VBS everyday at 9 am. Your prayers are important. Thank you.

UPCOMING Events



WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 11:30 am
Metropolitan Steak House
1501 Metropolitan Ave.

MEN'S PRAYER & STUDY
BREAKFAST
JULY 18
8:00 AM
 FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
 MIKE MIX HAIRYMULE@GMAIL.COM
 OR DAVE LANDIS DLANDIS@HUGHES.NET



**Congrats
Karl!**

On June 6, Karl Burland competed in the Special Olympics State Track Meet in Wichita and won two medals: he placed first for his age group in the Long Jump and third in the 50m race. In the photo that shows Karl on the podium after the 50m race, you can see that the guys who won first and second place were in the process of giving fist bumps to everyone else who competed. Nobody told them to congratulate everyone else on the podium, they just did it automatically because that's the culture of good sportsmanship in Special Olympics. Although about half of the events in the state meet were rained out on Saturday afternoon and Sunday, Karl still enjoyed making the trip with the rest of the team from Leavenworth County and attending a dance on Saturday night with Special Olympics athletes from all across Kansas. Before leaving for the track meet on Friday, June 5, Karl also participated in the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run with other athletes from his team and officers from the Lansing Police, Leavenworth Police, and Leavenworth County Sheriff's office. Karl ran with the group all the way from the Lansing City Hall to Eisenhower Road, and then got a ride to the Justice Center to cheer for the officers as they arrived there after running the entire way from Lansing along 4th street (with a police car escorting them, of course). The Kiwanis Club served a pancake breakfast to the Special Olympics athletes at the Carousel Museum and then they got on the bus there to make the trip to Wichita.

All these events capped off a wonderful first year for Karl as a member of the Leavenworth County Special Olympics team, which is made up of athletes of all ages and with many types of disabilities. Some of the athletes are longtime participants who have been involved in the team for decades, and most of the coaches are their family members. Each year the county team competes at the Kansas City Metro and State level in three sports: bowling in the summer, basketball in the winter, and track and field in the spring. Karl first joined the team in summer 2025 because of his interest in bowling, which he was starting to miss after graduating from high school in 2024. During his time at Lansing High School, he had competed on the regular school bowling team and on the Special Olympics Unified bowling team for Lansing, made up of an even number of athletes with and without disabilities. After joining the Leavenworth County Special Olympics team, Karl discovered that there were plenty of people on the team with bowling skills as strong as his, and some with many more years of experience. The friendly but fierce competition on the team has helped Karl to continue improving and occasionally to win games against his older teammates at their weekly practices, held year-round at Crown Lanes.

During his first basketball season this year, Karl's Leavenworth County team performed well at the Kansas City metro tournament in February, and then beat three other teams to win their division at the State tournament in Manhattan in March. Based on the way he ran up and down the court during basketball season, his teammates encouraged Karl to stay for Track and Field season and compete in the sprinting events. At the Kansas City Metro track meet, held on April 25 (Karl's 21st birthday), Karl won first place in the 100m run and second place in the 50m run for his age group. Now that track and field has ended, it is bowling season again, and Karl will compete in two bowling tournaments with the Leavenworth County team at the end of July. Because of his growing interest in watching football over the last few years, Karl has also been looking for a way to get involved in playing football himself, so he just started practicing with the Flag Football team for Special Olympics in Johnson County. Even though all these tournaments sometimes interfere with his weekend work hours at Price Chopper, Special Olympics sports have been an ideal hobby for Karl because they keep him exercising and having fun with groups of people all through the year in a welcoming and joyful environment.



Greetings to all who read and love this magazine. July is upon us which means things are heating up externally and internally in the body of the Church.

Internally we are planning, preparing and executing vacation bible school at the end of July. Volunteers and participants are all welcome. Register at FUMCLVKS.ORG/VBS. Please join us and leap into the fire with the Holy Spirit.

The Leavenworth Guidance Center summer camp will utilize the Education Building for two weeks again this year, the last week of July and first week of August, let's make these fifty children and ten adults feel welcome. They will occupy the entire building from 8am - 3pm, Monday – Friday.

Externally, we are participating in three back to school activities. First, in cooperation with Faith Walkers, we will collect school supplies. Second, in cooperation with Stronghold Food Pantry, we will collect after school snacks such as goldfish crackers, pretzels, peanut butter or cheese crackers and much more. Third, in cooperation with our new friends at TRIO, we will help with their summer bash (see below) by collecting school supplies. TRIO offers free assistance to individuals and families to overcome barriers to education and financial success. All three of these events will take place in August, however we want to give you ample time to prepare.

Trustee projects will continue in July, weather permitting, including but not limited to: redoing the surface of the office ramp, sealing the parking concrete and replacing broken things as needed. We are still receiving bids to redo the drains in the main church kitchen and we had a new HVAC unit installed to cool the stage of the sanctuary.

Financially the church is doing well. To date we have injected over \$40,000 and thousands of serving hours in outreach mission support to our local community. We have delivered over three tons of supplies to our food pantry partners and served thousands of meals to the hungry. This is what we do! We are a both/and church – we hear and obey, we have and give, we have and serve, we live and love, not for individual nor collective acknowledge, we do it to glorify the Lord.

In Christ Jesus, Love gives life to Kingdom building!

Ed 816-805-4771(my cell)

On a personal note: Kathi and Jeff LaMoe are moving to Montana in July – thank you both!



On the morning of Saturday June 13, 2026 the Wilder family experienced a devastating car accident that forever changed their lives. Five of the Wilder children were involved in the crash. Three of the older sisters sustained critical injuries and are currently fighting through a long and difficult recovery. Since the accident, the girls have endured multiple surgeries, including treatment for broken bones, extensive injuries, and skin graft procedures.

Please pray for this family. If you want to donate to the family, mark your donation, "Wilder family" and we will send one check.



Faith of Our Founding Fathers

If you've been watching television or reading online you've likely noticed the focus on the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. There is no shortage of books and patriotic merchandise to commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776; for us, the Semi quincentennial. As students, we understand the role of the Continental Congress in our formation and the military lessons of the eight long years of battle prior to the surrender of the British forces at Yorktown, Virginia. But what about the role of the church and how God-fearing people shaped our founding?

Churches were ubiquitous in the colonies and in the new republic; they served many purposes during the American Revolution, including that of hospitals and operations centers as noted in the article on St. Paul's Church in New York, National Park Service - The Main Body at the Church. The varied uses of the physical structure of the church reinforces a point Pastor Dave makes – it's a building – the people are the church.

Some argue that the founders, including the signers of the Declaration of Independence (DOI), did not have strong faith because references to God or to Jesus are lacking in the founding document. Nature's God, Creator and Divine Providence are terms used in the DOI. Most of the signer's own correspondence and speeches contain their personal beliefs. Restraint in declaring a particular religion sovereign in our founding document stemmed from 150 years of migration from the United Kingdom and France due to religious persecution. The absence of Jesus should not be taken as a sign that the early citizens weren't believers, and like us, sinners. In Federalist 51, widely believed to have been authored by James Madison, we read "If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary."

The average citizen likely had the same beliefs of the notable class. Based upon their prominent roles we can easily find words from the highly published founders.

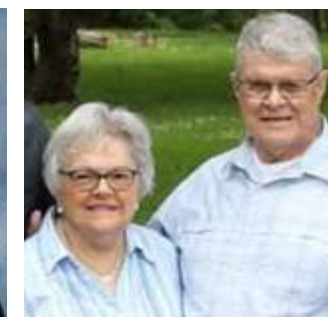
Samuel Adams, a signer, encouraged the residents of Massachusetts at the March 10, 1793, Proclamation for a Day of Fasting and Prayer, with these words: "we may with one heart and voice humbly implore His gracious and free pardon through Jesus Christ, supplicating His Divine aid... [and] above all to cause the religion of Jesus Christ, in its true spirit, to spread far and wide till the whole earth shall be filled with his glory."

George Washington's most quoted verse was from Micah 4:4, "Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken." In his communication to the troops, Washington asserted his faith and expectation for others as noted in his General Orders of May 2, 1778: "to the distinguished character of a patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian." While not compelling prayer, George Washington was known to encourage it.¹

Not all founders had the view that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but there was consensus that the teaching of Christ should be followed. Thomas Jefferson described himself as a Christian in this manner: "I am a Christian in the only sense in which he wished anyone to be: sincerely attached to His doctrines in preference to all others."²

Benjamin Franklin asserted to Erza Stiles: "As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the systems of morals and His religion as He left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is likely to see,"³

The President of the Congress, John Jay, wrote this prayer, "Condescend, merciful Father! To grant as far as proper these imperfect petitions, to accept these inadequate thanksgivings, and to pardon whatever of sin hath mingled in them for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior; unto Whom, with Thee, and the blessed Spirit, ever one God, be rendered all honor and glory, now and forever."⁴



The Caring Congregation Continued

Throughout their years at FUMC Roy and Donna have served in just about every capacity available. Both were members, at different times, of Staff Parish Relations Committee, Roy was Council chair and chair of the Memorial Committee. This committee was responsible for all the tracking and spending of memorial contributions, making sure that each person who contributed got a hand-written thank you note. Donna served as delegate to Annual Conference for several years and she served in the music ministries.

When approached about being interviewed for this article, Donna modestly said that people wouldn't know who they are. But 2026 marks their 40th anniversary of attending here. So many have been positively impacted by the Ramseys and their service to the Lord and this congregation. When Don and I joined, the Ramseys were our sponsors. Looking at class rosters, I see scores of people who were students of her Disciple classes and Sunday school classes. Their legacy will continue with these people. And their advice? When you arrive in a new community find a church, join it and especially join small groups. These people will become your church family.

Blessings, *Marsha Gaffin*



August 5, 1 pm

In July the book club is reading *And Every Morning the Way Home Gets Longer and Longer* by Fredrik Backman. It is an exquisitely moving portrait of an elderly man's struggle to hold on to his most precious memories, and his family's efforts to care for him even as they must find a way to let go. Grandpa and Noah are sitting on a bench in a round square that keeps getting smaller every day. Noah isn't sure how they got there or how to get home. The square is strange but also familiar, full of the stuff that has made up their lives—Grandpa's work desk, the stuffed dragon that Grandpa once gave to Noah, the sweet-smelling hyacinths that Grandma loved to grow in her garden. As they wait together on the bench, they tell jokes and discuss their shared love of mathematics. Grandpa recalls what it was like to fall in love with his wife, what it was like to lose her. She's as real to him now as the first day he met her, but he dreads the day when he won't remember her at all, much less the extraordinarily ordinary life they lived. (Or was it ordinarily extraordinary?) Sometimes Grandpa finds himself sitting on the bench next to Ted, Noah's father. Ted, who never liked math, prefers writing and playing guitar, and has waited his entire life for his father to have time for him, to accept him. But in their love of Noah, they have found a common bond. Grandpa, Grandma, Ted, and Noah all meet here, in this peculiar space that is growing dim and getting more confusing all the time. And here is where they will learn to say goodbye, the scent of hyacinths in the air, nothing to fear.

We will meet at 1 pm on August 4 in Wesley Hall to discuss this book. Please join us, even if it is only for the summer. If you need a ride, or have questions, please contact Sandy at swood@fumclvks.org.



The Caring Congregation



Talking to Donna and Roy Ramsey is a bit like looking in a mirror. The trajectory of their lives as a military family is eerily similar to the path that Don and I took, and I suspect, most of our church's retired military families would feel the same way.

Growing up in Oklahoma, meeting each other at Oklahoma State University, marrying in 1967, and embarking on their lives together in whatever assignment Uncle Sam chose for them is a scenario many of us military folks can relate to. Their particular journey crossed continents (Asia and Europe), traversed the entire United States from Washington state to Washington D.C. with stops in Oklahoma, Arizona, Texas, Indiana and Maryland. They were blessed with two children, Wade in 1969 and Robyn in 1971. Finally in 1986 they were assigned to Leavenworth and there they made their permanent home.

Before retiring in 1990, Roy was assigned to CACDA, where he oversaw the testing of early drone prototypes and remotely piloted vehicles. Meanwhile, Donna divided her time between their children and teaching school at various assignments. In Leavenworth, she worked at Muncie School, now repurposed as Xavier Catholic School, but one of their first priorities when they first arrived in Leavenworth was to find a United Methodist Church.

They chose FUMC because it had everything they were looking for: youth programs for their high schoolers, choirs and Sunday school classes. They joined FUMC and immediately set about finding small groups that would make them feel like they were a part of their church family. They joined Ron White's Sunday school class and Donna joined Kathy Campbell's bell choir and Cindy White's vocal choir.

One of the first small groups Donna and Roy joined was the evangelism committee. For several years, the Ramseys went on "two-by-two" visits. On Monday nights they would go to the homes of people who had visited FUMC for the first time on the preceding Sunday, armed with a coffee mug and a brochure to welcome the newcomers. I still have the mug we received when we first visited FUMC.

In the early 1990s the decision was made to experiment with having Vacation Bible School in the evening for all ages, including an adult VBS class. Donna volunteered to facilitate the adult group and the book they used was called New Life Seekers. Some of the attendees were Sy and Shirley Nyhart, Barb and Dick Peiper and Kay Kours. The class was such a success that they decided to continue on as a Sunday school class, thus the New Life Seekers was born, and continues today with over 30 members.

Along the way another couple, Leonard and Arlene Meyer, noted that there were no programs for the elderly members of the congregation. Leonard had a lovely rose garden and he and Arlene made it their mission to visit each older member of the congregation and bring them roses. After Arlene died, Leonard was concerned that no one would continue his and Arlene's visits. Donna promised Leonard that she would push for a committee to care for the elderly in our congregation. Leonard gave seed money for the committee and his first act was to buy large print Bibles for all the over 80s in our church. This was the origin of the Nurture and Care Committee which is still going strong. Bea Yenney became the first chair of that committee.

One of Donna's most fulfilling ministries was leading the Disciple Bible Study classes. She, along with Karen Kidder and Rita Wood, attended a UMC teaching seminar in Dallas to learn how to facilitate Disciple 1 - 4. Donna ended up teaching all four Disciple classes and Jesus in the Gospels class for the next 20 years. In 2002 the authors of the Disciple studies, Bishop Richard Wilke and his wife Julia Wilke, visited our church and our Disciple classes. It was a special treat to have them visit.

Meanwhile, Pastor Bruce Emmertt approached Roy about becoming a member of the District Committee for Ordained Ministry. Churches in our district would nominate people who wanted to go into the ministry. The committee would interview each candidate and recommend whether they should go forward in the process which usually took 8-10 years. Roy served faithfully on this committee for many years.

Faith of Our Founding Fathers continued



One of only six men who signed both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, Roger Sherman had this to say, "I believe that there is only one living and true God, existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are a revelation from God, and a complete rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him."⁵

It is clear, God-fearing people were the foundation of this new republic. *"And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor. We know that God is the sovereign ruler who blesses nations – if a nation obeys God's commandment, then blessings will come upon them."*

Deuteronomy 28:1-2: if you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God.

And so it was, and so it is. May it always be so. **Kathryn West**

1 Washington, G. (2023) 'The Political Writings of George Washington', in C. Holloway and B.P. Wilson (eds.) The Political Writings of George Washington: Volume I: 1754–1788. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (The Political Writings of American Statesmen and Women), pp. i–ii

2 Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, April 21, 1803, Memoir, Correspondence, and Miscellanies from, the Papers of Thomas Jefferson, ed. Thomas Jefferson Randolph (Boston: Grey & Bowen, 1803), III:

3 Benjamin Franklin to Ezra Stiles, March 9, 1790, Works of Benjamin Franklin, ed. John Bigelow (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 185.

4 William Jay, The Life of John Jay (New York: J & J Harper, 1833), I:518, Appendix V, from a prayer found among John Jay's papers and in his handwriting

5 Lewis Henry Boutell, The Life of Roger Sherman (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1896), 271-273

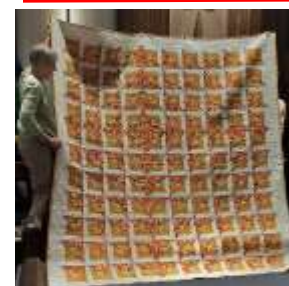
Congratulations Thom!



You're invited to Thom Kirby's Retirement July 5 at 2 pm. There'll be food, fun and swimming. The Kirby's house is 20 miles from the church. Take Highway 7 North. Turn left at Thomas Rd and follow the curve. Take a left at Rawlins Rd and follow it to 206th Rd. Finally take a right on Pawnee Rd. If you use Google Maps, use Dusty Roads Entertainment as the address.



*You're invited to celebrate the 40th Anniversary
of Bill & Nancy Shade
July 12 Ceremony at 4:30 pm food & fun following
FUMC Fellowship Hall*



Itchin' to Stitch

Itchin' to Stitch is a group of talented women who use their sewing and crocheting skills to make useful items for local charities. They will meet on July 16, at 1:30 pm. For more info, ask Teresa at hickst@kc.rr.com.

Merrick Completes the Girl Scout Silver Award



Thirteen-year-old Merrick Moore believes people should be able to feel all of their emotions, including the hard ones. Don't let her age fool you. She may be young in years, but with her dad's military service she has been exposed to a variety of experiences through living around the world. She has lived in California, India, Texas, Hawaii, Bangladesh and Washington, D.C. She currently calls Leavenworth home, although she hopes to return to Hawaii at some point.

She has been involved in Girl Scouts since kindergarten, only missing a couple of years. For her Girl Scout Silver Award project, Merrick created a kindness and connection campaign focused on four simple but important topics: how to be kind, how to talk to others, how to make friends, and healthy sleep habits. She created and designed four posters that offer practical reminders for kids and teens, from showing empathy and being a good listener to keeping in touch with friends and unplugging before bed.

But Merrick's project doesn't stop with posters. As an avid reader, her real passion is books. She is also creating a book recommendation box filled with titles that explore friendship, grief, resilience, loneliness, identity, and belonging. Many of her current favorite books feature characters facing difficult experiences. Somehow, the characters manage to overcome their challenges with courage, honesty, and connection. Some of Merrick's favorite parts of the stories are where meaningful friendships and connections are forged through hardships.

"I don't think some people understand that bad emotions can be good for you, too," Merrick said. "Anger can be good for you, as long as you express it the right way. And so can sadness and grief."

Her message resonates not only with her generation, but also with people of any age: big emotions are part of being human, and connection helps us move through them. As we talked, I began researching her book recommendations and noticed a theme. Many of these books include a tragedy, or the characters have to overcome something really tough. From *Mockingbird* to *Dear Edward*, many of Merrick's favorite books don't shy away from hard topics.

"You're supposed to feel grief. If you bottle it up, it just stays," she said. For Merrick, these stories matter because they show that even the hardest emotions have a place and a purpose. In a fast-moving, digital world, her message is a simple one. Connection still matters, and it can start with something small. A conversation. A kind gesture. Or a good book. Merrick's book recommendations and posters (next page) will be featured in the Leavenworth Public Library from mid-May to mid-June.

Merrick's Kindness & Connection Posters



Youth Take A Mission Trip to Chicago

July 15-20, our youth group journeyed to Chicago for a week filled with service, learning, community, and faith-exploration. We began our trip with a train ride from Union Station in Kansas City. We arrived in Chicago that afternoon, got our transit passes for the week, and took a bus to our hotel in the magnificent mile. That evening we made our way to Willis (Sears) Tower for dinner and to enjoy their Skydeck experience looking out over the city.

Day 2 We began our morning with a visit to Millennium Park to see "The Bean" (Cloudgate). See our photo on the cover. Then we took a walk in nature at the adjacent Maggie Daley Park. That afternoon, we kicked off our service work at Cradles to Crayons. We sorted donations to be distributed to the parts of the warehouse that get them clean and ready to give to recipients or to ship to mission partners that recycle items that don't meet the standard into useful products. We finished our day at a beach on Lake Michigan where the water was definitely pleasant and not at all cold (it was about 60 degrees). The youth had a great time. The adults that participated endured the lung paralyzing temperatures. We stayed there to watch a beautiful sundown behind the city to finish our day.

Day 3 We began with more service at the Cradles to Crayons where we sorted shoes to be recycled or the cleaned shoes so they were ready for distribution. This day also included our only brush with anything other than immaculate weather when we walked from our service to lunch in what can only be described as a squall. Those who packed and wore rain jackets as recommended were very thankful for them. In the afternoon we went to the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry and went through their coal mine tour. We had deep dish pizza that night and returned to our hotel to recover from the amount of food.

Day 4 After receiving short notice that our other mission partner would not be available, we pivoted to focusing on a concept that was primary at Cradles to Crayons, dignity. We went to the National Public housing museum, located in the last of the Jane Addams Homes. We learned the stories of many people whose lives were changed, saved, and dignified by the availability of a safe place to live, how the Jane Addams Homes were built, and how these places are built and run in our current times. In the afternoon we went to the Art Institute of Chicago and saw their incredible exhibits. Many of our participants were interested in the ones from Ferris Bueller as well as the arms and armor. That evening we went to Harry Potter world for butterbeers and led the youth on various shopping excursions.

Day 5 We started with a trip to the Lincoln Park Zoo, an incredible zoo that is open free of charge. We continued with a nature theme at the Shedd Aquarium where the dolphins and beluga whales swim up to the glass like they enjoy the attention. That afternoon, we took a riverboat architecture tour and learned about the history and design philosophies of Chicago. We spent the rest of the evening at Navy Pier and enjoyed ice cream from Rainbow cones.

Day 6 We spent the entire day on our train ride back to Kansas City, where we were able to have our own car after St. Louis. We arrived home safe and ready for rest about 9 pm.

Our trip brought unique opportunities and challenges. Herding 19 people around Chicago on public transit was certainly an adventure (though I shudder to imagine driving the church van through those streets). The trip was a wonderful example of what the Tinklers wanted when they set up the fund. These kids wouldn't have been able to go on a trip like this any other way. I'm eternally grateful that our church has the means to bring youth the wealth of experience that we do. God is doing something great here, in Chicago, and to the ends of the earth. - Steven Shade



Christy Wiley is going to Africa this October with Helping Children Worldwide. She'll be working in Bo, Sierra Leone alongside The Child Reintegration Center and Mercy Hospital. Sierra Leone is one of the least developed countries in the world, where 1 in 6 children will die before their fifth birthday and most of the population lives on less than \$2 a day. Helping Children Worldwide's mission is to strengthen and empower families and communities, giving them the tools to overcome the obstacles of extreme poverty, illiteracy, and endemic disease. You can see more about them overall on their website: <https://www.helpingchildrenworldwide.org/>

You can give a tax-deductible donation here: <https://app.giveeffect.com/particip.../571776-christina-wiley>. You can find a link on her Facebook page.



A Handful of Merrick's Book Recommendations

***Mockingbird* by Kathryn Erskine.** A moving story about grief, loss and learning how to understand emotions after tragedy.

***Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz.** A story about friendship, identity and figuring out who you are.

***How to Stay Invisible* by Maggie C. Rudd.** A survival story about a boy learning who he can trust when he is forced to live on his own.

***The Unteachables* by Gordon Korman.** A funny, heartfelt story about students who have been underestimated, and the teacher who helps them believe in themselves.

The 39 Clues series. A fast-paced adventure series full of mystery, travel, family secrets and teamwork.

***The Raft* by S.A. Bodeen.** A survival story about courage, fear and resilience after a plane crash.

***The Agathas* by Kathleen Glasgow and Liz Lawson.** A mystery inspired by Agatha Christie, featuring friendship, investigation and unexpected twists.

***Dear Edward* by Ann Napolitano.** A powerful novel about grief, healing and what it means to keep living after unimaginable loss.

***Harry Potter series* by J.K. Rowling.** A fantasy series about friendship, courage, belonging and facing difficult things together.

***The Angel Experiment* by James Patterson.** An action-packed story about kids with extraordinary abilities trying to survive and protect each other.

***Don't Let Me Be Lonely* by Claudia Rankine.** A thought-provoking book about loneliness, grief and what it means to be human.



*Cradles to Crayons
service project*



Pastor Dave and several other church members used their baking skills to support the 9th Annual Sweet Exchange to raise money for The Deeper Window Association and Alzheimer's research. They raised over \$45,000 this year. Elaine Belardo said, "Goodness does not happen in a vacuum. It has taken hours of volunteer time and commitment to reach this milestone at year nine, and every effort has mattered and is appreciated. Morgan Belardo started this effort to help her dad, Jose' Belardo, founder of The Deeper Window Association and others in the battle. Thank you for your continued support."

WINGTIPS, Widows Igniting New Growth Through Inspirational Peer Support meets bimonthly. In June they had a Caribbean dinner. For info on Wingtips, ask Sandy at swood@fumclvks.org.



Sara LaMoe was promoted to Captain in the US Air Force on May 20. She is a cyber operations officer and is currently stationed at Barksdale AFB in Shreveport, LA. She is a Section Chief of Special Mobile Activities. She will be working with special communications equipment tied to the Air Force Global Strike mission. Her first assignment out of KState ROTC was to Aviano Italy where she spent the last 3 years.



Kids First Worship is for kids ages 3 years through 4th grade. During July we will be meeting during the 10 am service each Sunday on the lower floor of the Sanctuary building. We will continue studying individuals from the Old Testament. Who are they? What did they do? Why are they important?

July 5 – NO Kids First Worship

July 12 – Nebuchadnezzar

July 19 – Job

July 26 – Jonah

Sunday School is for kids ages 3 years through 6th grade and meets at 9 am in room 202 of the Education building. We will be studying the same lessons as Kids First Worship, taking time to go a little deeper.



Day 1 The Pillar of Fire - God will guide you!

Donation: Bread

Bible Verse: You lead humble people to do what is right and to stay on your path. Psalm 25:9

Day 2 Elijah & the Prophets of Baal - God will answer your prayers!

Donation: Peanut Butter

Bible Verse: Our LORD is great and powerful! He understands everything. Psalm 147:5

Day 3 Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego - God Will Protect You!

Donation: Jelly

Bible Verse: You will show the right path to all who worship you. Psalm 25:12

Day 4 Isaiah is Called - God Will Prepare You!

Donation: Canned Fruit (pop top is preferred)

Bible Verse: People who now disobey God will begin to think as they ought. Luke 1:17c

Day 5 Pentecost - God Will Live with You!

Donation: Fresh Fruit

Bible Verse: Christ is building you into a place where God lives through the Spirit. Ephesians 2:22

We will need LOTS of volunteers for VBS. For more information on Children's ministry, contact Nancy Shade at nshade@fumclvks.org.



The Annual Conference Continued

For the business section of GPAC, we passed 18 resolutions. 1) Supporting Migrants, Immigrants and Refugees - this resolution states that the Great Plains Conference (GPC) supports migrants, immigrants and refugees in the face of the current climate and treatment of these people. 2) Answering the Call of Kairos Palestine II - this resolution encourages study and discussion of the Kairos Palestine II document. This document from Palestinian Christians condemns apartheid, settler colonialism, and ethnic cleansing occurring in Palestine. 3) Support for the Transgender Community - this resolution affirms the sacred worth, dignity, and full humanity of transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming persons and rejects and condemns violence against these communities. 4-16) Resolutions for the closing of 13 churches. 17) Adoption of the GPC Strategic Priorities, 2026-2030 - this resolution sets forth the strategic plan for the Great Plains Conference through 2030. 18) Great Plains Disaster Response Sunday - this resolution establishes the 3rd Sunday in September as Disaster Response Sunday when a special offering will be taken and designated for the Great Plains Conference Disaster Response Fund.

Quotable Quotes from the 2026 GPAC:

"My religion is not a weapon."

"Faith is a lifelong process, there will be days of joy and days of not joy."

"Transformation is usually a little uncomfortable." "Stir what you got."

"When I heard the Lord saves from oppressors, I thought 'great, finally!' So I waited and nothing happened. Then I realized I wasn't oppressed. Then I looked at how was I oppressing."

"When God made me He grinned and said, 'this'll be fun'."

"Loving Boldly - in collaboration, Serving Joyfully - with cake, and Leading Courageously - going into difficult conversations"

For questions or further information about these stories and more, feel free to stop and chat with me. See you in the pew - Michelle Briggs, Lay Leader ammkm@yahoo.com (913) 485-5375

- All quotes taken from material provided by the Great Plains Conference for the purposes of the Great Plains Annual Conference - GPAC 2026 Workbook, taken from press releases about GPAC located on the Great Plains Conference website, or heard at Great Plains Annual Conference 2026. For more information visit the Great Plains website and view the Annual Conference page at greatplainsumc.org/annualconference.

Update on 4 Constitutional Amendments approved by the 2024 General Conference of the United Methodist Church: The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church complete canvassing the votes of annual conferences on the four constitutional amendments that were approved by the 2024 General Conference (the world-wide meeting of the UMC). All amendments passed with more than the two thirds needed for ratification and became effective November 2025. In the structure of the UMC, every vote from every annual conference is counted and the amendment must pass by a 2/3 majority of affirmative (yes) votes of all those votes cast from all conferences in order to be ratified. The 1st amendment concerned Regionalization, the establishment of Regional Conferences, all geographic in nature and all equal. The 2nd amendment concerned adding the words "gender" and "ability" to the statement in the Book of Discipline (Paragraph 4) so that it would say "the UMC acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status, or economic condition shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection". The 3rd amendment concerned Racial Justice and committing to anti-racism. It would change the language in the Book of Discipline (Paragraph 5) to reflect "an explicit acknowledgment of racism, show commitment to activism toward anti-racism, admit the historical context of racism, and would emphasize unity and healing while also pushing for moral leadership on the topic". The 4th amendment concerned Clergy Elections and would change the language in the Book of Discipline (Paragraph 35, Article IV) "regarding educational requirements for eligibility to vote for clergy delegates to General Conference". This would allow for clergy with varying educational requirements, as per their geographical conferences, to be able to be involved as representatives to conferences. The results of the voting to ratify these 4 amendments was announced in November 2025 after the votes from all of the annual conferences were collected, reported to the General Conference Secretary, & tabulated.



Annual Conference LAY LEADER REPORT

I attended the Great Plains Annual Conference on May 27-30, 2026, in Kearney, Nebraska. The United Methodist Church (UMC) is a connectional church, meaning that all UMC churches are connected in an organizational system that seeks to unify and strengthen the church and its ministries. I like to think of the United Methodist organization being structured like homes, cities, counties, states, regions, and countries. Our Leavenworth 1st UMC is our home church which is located in the Northeast Kansas District, which is part of the Great Plains Conference, which is part of the South Central Jurisdictional Conference of the United States, and which is then part of the General Conference (the whole world-wide UMC). The Great Plains Annual Conference (GPAC) is the business meeting of all the local UMC churches in Kansas and Nebraska. The conference attendees include clergy and laity (non-clergy) from those local churches, as well as clergy and laity from the district levels and the conference level. The conference includes worship services, a business session, workshops, speakers, and special services, including a commemoration service, retiree recognition, baptism, and an ordination and appointment setting service. This year our own beloved Bob Atwell was remembered. There was also a United Methodist trivia night where you could match wits with clergy and laity across the conference on your United Methodist and Wesley knowledge.

The theme for GPAC 2026 was Serve Joyfully. It was the 2nd theme taken from the UMC's vision statement which was introduced last year (2025) from the UMC Council of Bishops. The vision statement says: "The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections." The shortened version is "Love Boldly, Serve Joyfully, Lead Courageously". I like the new vision statement as it speaks to me of the 3 parts of our triune God; Loving Boldly as God does, Serving Joyfully as Jesus did, and Leading Courageously with the Holy Spirit. Next year's theme promises to be taken from the third part of the vision statement - Lead Courageously.

The 2026-2030 Great Plains Conference Strategic Plan was presented and voted on during the conference. It focuses on 3 directions or priorities.

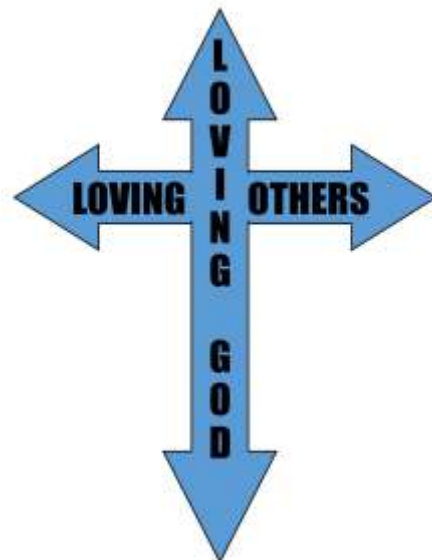
Priority 1: Trust and Relational Connection focuses on "prioritizing clergy supply, staffing and appointment models; equity in appointments and compensation; leadership development & retention; & relationships across the conference".

Priority 2: Mission Identity and Organizational Focus focuses on "prioritizing connection development and living into a hopeful future".

Priority 3: Resource Stewardship and Ministry Accountability focuses on "prioritizing noticing and sharing what's already working; connecting need with expertise and passion; learning from what works and what doesn't; and aligning staff, district and conference structures to a new way of working". The Strategic Plan was approved as presented.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Rev. Dr. Ashley Boggan, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History. She addressed the conference theme of Serve Joyfully by relating it to John Wesley's (the founder of Methodism) search for joy through serving. She stated that we should have a symbiotic relationship between Personal Holiness (Love of God) and Social Holiness (Love of Neighbors).

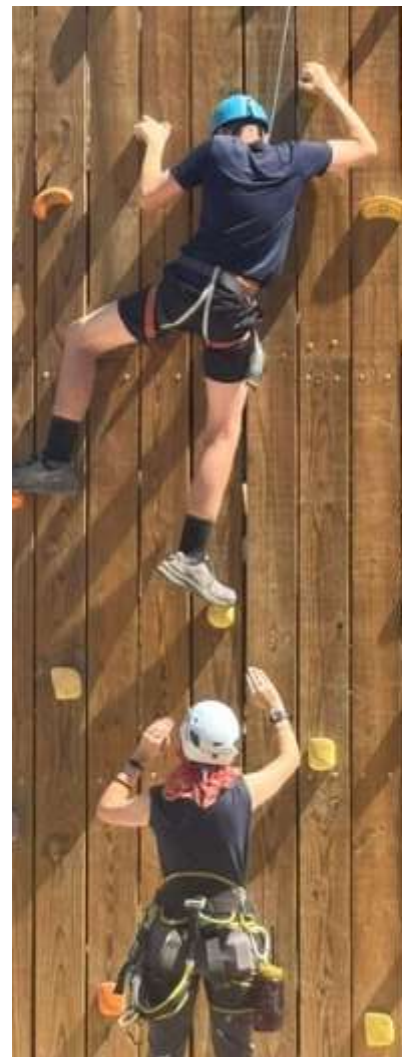
As United Methodists in the Wesleyan way, our love for God should overflow to others. But if we are solely focused on only one area it won't work. If we only focus on Personal Holiness, we become self-focused and if we solely focus on Social Holiness, we spin out and become activists without love or a purpose. Pastor Dave preaches a similar concept using the cross has an illustration with the up/down as our relationship to God and the side to side as our relationship to each other. Without both, it isn't a cross.



Scouts Go to Camp in Colorado

The Scouting Ministry enjoyed the gifts from the Tinkler Trust, used the church van and drove 1,444 miles round trip to Summer Camp at Dobbins/McNeil Scout Ranch in Colorado. Enjoy the collage of pictures that tells the story of our "Adventures 2026" better than words. God Bless

Bill Koble



FUMC; A Foundation of Faith for 172 Years

As we celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary, let's reflect on our church history and give a prayer of thanks for the faithfulness of those who came before us.

The first Methodist church service in Leavenworth was held under a cottonwood tree near the Missouri river on Oct. 8, 1854. There's a plaque commemorating the service on the river walk near the Riverfront Center. By Feb. 1855 they were holding regular service and by Oct. that year, they had built a building large enough for 200 people. On May 30, 1859, the cornerstone was laid for a permanent church at the corner of Fifth and Choctaw. Unfortunately, the church was only feet away from the railroad tracks and the noise, dust and cinders seriously interrupted worship services. So in Sept. 1912, they built our current building for \$34,272. Our church has had over 70 pastors who preached God's Word.

Our church has been involved in many missional activities. In 1915, Rev. Culpepper started a wrestling program for boys. In 1917, the Epworth League was a very active foreign missionary society. These types of United Methodist Women's Missionary Societies continued to support foreign missions for decades. In 1967, The Wesley Weds Sunday School class started Neighborhood House that was a community center for 5th-7th graders. In Oct. 1999 the Tinkler Trust Fund was created to provide youth opportunities. In 2014, our church cooperated with other area churches to provide hot meals for our community. Many of our church members were also active in establishing the Community of Hope.



The mortgage was paid in 1986.



To the right is Norm & Nancy Dawson with Genevieve & Vernon Tinkler.

Don't forget the Noodle Lunches and the potlucks!



Along with Biblical preaching and teaching, our church has a long history of excellent music. In August 1883, Mrs. DeForest Fairchild donated the largest and finest organ in the city to the church. It cost \$3,000. Our current organ was purchased in 1949. There have been many wonderful musicians and directors over the years that have led us in worship. Teaching future generations about Jesus has also been a priority for our church. Countless Sunday School teachers, VBS leaders, Youth Ministers and Children's Music directors have planted seeds of faith. There's not enough room to show everyone who made a difference, but enjoy these memories from the past. God's church continues through generations. FUMC has served God 172 years. We pray for another 172 years.



*Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.
One generation shall extol your works to another
and shall declare your mighty acts.
They recount the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works I will meditate.
Psalm 145:3-5*

