

The First United Methodist Church of Lowell

Tele-Christian February 2023 Edition

The mission of the United Methodist Church is to
make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Mark's Remarks...



A friend sent me the following story a few years ago. Reflect on it.

The carrot, the egg, and the coffee bean

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed that, as one problem was solved, a new one arose. Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans.

She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. In about twenty minutes, she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the young woman replied. The mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity - boiling water - but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened! The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" the mother asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong but, with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit but, after a death, a breakup, or a financial hardship, does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and a hardened heart? Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate to another level?

How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?



February Sermon and Scripture Schedule

February 5 ~ Scripture: Philippians 4:4-9

Sermon Title: 'Light in the Darkness'

February 12 ~ Scripture: 1 Peter 2:13-18

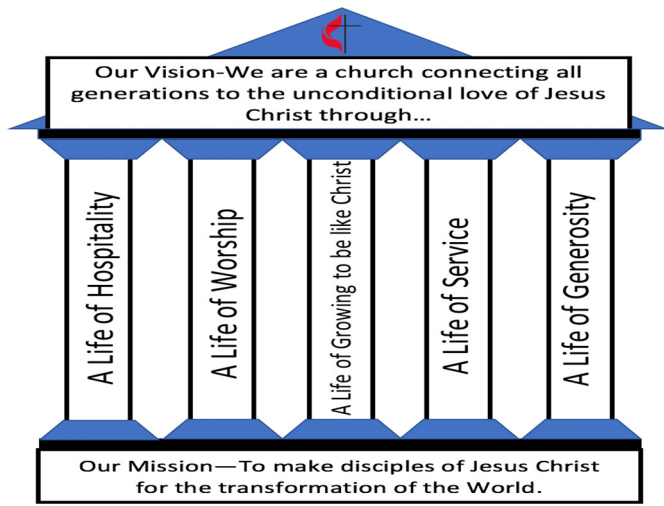
Sermon Title: 'The Case of Slavery'


February 19 ~ Scripture: Luke 7:1-10

Sermon Title: 'A Cynic at Heart'

February 26 ~ Scripture: Romans 12:1-2

Sermon Title: 'The Rules of Music'




 This small pillar image that can be found throughout our newsletter designates articles related to our "Five Pillars of Discipleship." The Five Pillars are goals we strive to uphold to accomplish our mission of making disciples. The various articles give insight into the ongoing process of shifting and moving our church forward in an ever-changing world.



Worship News

We hope you have enjoyed Pastor Mark’s sermon series on Resolutions during the month of January. The first 3 weeks of February he will be preaching on requests made by members of the congregation. On February 5 we’ll talk about depression. On February 12 we’ll discuss biblical slavery. On February 19 we’ll cover cynicism. After this we’ll talk about Music and Singing through Lent.

 **Wednesday, February 22 is Ash Wednesday.** We will have our Ash Wednesday Service in the sanctuary at 7 pm. The focus of the service is repentance and remembering our mortality. The service ends with burning the palms from the previous Palm Sunday and applying them to the forehead in the shape of a cross. This service is designed to prepare our hearts for the journey to Easter. It’s hard to truly celebrate Jesus’ Resurrection without journeying through Lent and preparing ourselves spiritually.

Also this Lenten season, there will be a **Soup Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday following the 10:30 service beginning February 26.** A simple meal of soup and bread will be a way to fast, to remind us to clear away distractions and focus on Christ. Gathering together for a soup luncheon will allow us additional time for reflection and preparation leading to a great EASTER celebration. There is no charge for this simple lunch; your presence and fellowship with our church family is all that we ask.

Watch for additional Lenten plans including Holy Week and Easter celebrations in the March Tele Christian.



LYFT (Live Your Faith Today) is our Thursday evening worship service. We start at 5:30 pm with dinner and go right into worship at 6 pm. Worship includes music, a lay speaker or Pastor Mark speaking, prayer and ends with communion. LYFT is a casual worship service where we look forward each week to food, fellowship and fun! Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend!



*Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

Our blessing board, which is set up in the narthex, offers a visual reminder of God’s grace. It is a place for us to express gratitude. Pastor Mark prayed over our full blessing board during the 10:30 service on Jan. 8. The board has been cleared to receive our winter 2023 blessings. When we consider the joy, hope, love, and goodness God showers upon us, it should not surprise us to find the board overflowing with post-its before Easter. Be sure to share your blessings! No blessing is ‘too small’ to post!

Finance Committee Shares Your Generosity

“Gratitude is the memory of the heart.” We are so blessed to have faithful giving to many ministries and missions of our First Church. As our Finance Committee meticulously examined and carefully reviewed the final financial giving for 2022 we became comforted by the support we witnessed through our final 2022 financial reports. Our congregational pledgers completed their pledge commitment for 2022 at a final giving total of 101%! The figure is reflected in the giving towards the General Budget as well as the Capital Projects Fund. Those who did not pledge, but faithfully and generously gave, provided their gifts so that the final figures reflected a positive year end budget.



One caveat is important to note. We would have fallen into the red had it not been for the ERC (Employee Retention Credit). The ERC gave eligible employers payroll tax credits for wages and health insurance paid to retained employees during the Covid restrictions/shutdowns. We want to thank a member of our congregation who brought this program to our attention.

As we move into 2023 embrace this thought from nineteenth-century preacher Charles Spurgeon, “Carve your name on hearts and not on marble.” Our ministries add value to others and your commitment supports those ministries.



Education Opportunity



The FRIENDS Sunday School Class will begin a new video study on February 19 called, “Don’t Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table,” led by Louie Giglio. There are six sessions, but you are welcome to attend whenever you can. Louie believes, “We’ve all been in circumstances that cause our minds to spin with thoughts that are unproductive, destructive, and harmful. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed and wonder why we keep falling into the same thought patterns.” Louie offers biblical guidance on how to restore peace and rest in your life by taking authority over your thoughts and embracing the true purpose behind your journey through challenging circumstances.

The FRIENDS class meets on Sunday mornings at 9:15 am upstairs in Room 304. *All are welcome!*



Trustee News

The Trustees have been busy maintaining our building and grounds. Our latest project has been to reupholster a pew in the balcony. We will tackle two more pews in the future. Another project that we are investigating is replacing carpet in the Narthex. This aging carpet is split in several spots and beginning to unravel. We are getting quotes and will make a decision in the near future.



Annual Conference Equalization Members

The Annual Conference of the Indiana United Methodist Church connects United Methodists - both clergy and lay - across the state every summer in the work of the church. The intent and design of this gathering is to have both clergy and church members equally represented in the life, leadership, and work of the connected church. To do this, lay persons are needed to serve! In addition to church members representing their local congregation, lay persons are needed to ‘equalize’ the number of clergy and laity. ***In the North District we have 54 spots available.*** Applications are being accepted now from Indiana United Methodist lay persons to serve at Annual Conference, June 8-10, 2023. The Form can be found online at: [District Equalization Willingness to Serve Form](#)



Outreach News



YOUNG AT HEART BINGO: Our first Bingo of the year brought 23 people out to play! It was so nice to see people from our Lowell community here enjoying themselves. Fun, food, and fellowship is what this event is all about! We meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month. Join us February 28 at 1:00 pm. Bring a friend or two! We look forward to seeing you!

Everyone is invited to our first Outreach meeting of the year. We would love to have your ideas! We will discuss ways to make them happen at this meeting. We will meet **Tuesday, Feb. 7 at 10:00am in the library.** Hope to see you there!





The Nurse Is In!

Have your blood pressure checked by the nurse Sunday, February 5. She will be available in the church office conference room after the 8:00am service and before the 10:30 service.

Helping to keep you healthy,
Your church nurses



PRAYER BLANKET MINISTRY Congregational Care



The Prayer Blanket Ministry provides blankets to those who are experiencing physical, emotional or spiritual needs. There are several opportunities for YOU to be a part of this ministry and *your church needs your help!*

Pray for this ministry, the blankets, and the recipient.

Deliver a blanket to someone who needs to feel the loving arms of Jesus wrapped around them during their difficulty. The recipient does not have to be a member of our church family. The blankets that are ready for delivery are located in the library. There is a sign out sheet and easy to follow directions posted by the blankets.

Knit, crochet or tie a fleece blanket. Once completed, place the prayer blanket in the red bin located in the Narthex outside the office door.

The Prayer Blanket Ministry is in desperate need of blankets. Do you know how to knit or crochet? Would you consider making a lap blanket? Maybe you don't knit or crochet -- would you be able to tie a fleece blanket? For those who are interested in making a tie fleece blanket, but unsure how or what size, follow these instructions including supplies needed.

SUPPLIES NEEDED TO MAKE A LAP SIZE FLEECE TIE PRAYER BLANKET

1. **NON-PILL FLEECE.** You will need 2 pieces of fleece to make one blanket. Finished lap blanket will measure 36" x 60". Most fleece is 72" wide. If you purchase fleece that measures 72" x 60", cut it in half for 2 pieces and the finished lap blanket will measure 36" x 60". OR You could choose to purchase a fleece tie blanket kit.
2. **FABRIC SCISSORS**
3. **TAPE MEASURE and/or RULER**

DIRECTIONS TO MAKE A LAP SIZE FLEECE TIE PRAYER BLANKET

1. Lay the non-pill fleece out flat and using fabric scissors cut the fleece to 36"X 60" if purchased from a bolt of fleece. If using a kit, fleece will already be cut.
2. Lay out one piece of the fleece flat and place the second piece of fleece directly on top of the first with wrong sides together. Make sure both pieces of fleece are flat.
3. Using fabric scissors, cut strips around all 4 outside edges. Each strip will be 1" wide and 2 1/2" long. Cut both pieces of fleece at the same time. There will be a square cut out of each corner measuring 2 1/2" x 2 1/2". Use a ruler or tape measure when cutting strips that will be used to tie.
4. Leave both pieces of fleece together and do not separate the top and bottom. Begin at a corner and tie a double knot with the one inch wide strips that have been cut.
5. Once all the ties have been double knotted, your fleece blanket is complete!

Look for the Prayer blanket display and INSTRUCTIONS to make fleece tie prayer blankets in the Narthex in February. Any questions, please contact Trudy Corning or the church office. Please prayerfully consider how you can be a part of this ministry.

BUDDY BAGS for Tri Creek Students



“Buddy Bags” are coming to FUMC as part of our Lenten Mission project. “Buddy Bags” is a program of the Community Help Network, Inc. that fights food insecurity for students living in South Lake County. Come to the worship service on Sunday, February 19 to hear more about this mission and what you can do to support the kids in the Tri Creek Schools. Each bag will have a list of the items to include, such as a can of soup, a salty snack, or mac ‘n cheese cups. On the 19th you can grab a bag or two (or three) to help meet our goal of 100 bags for the “Buddy Bags” mission.



Children’s News

The Totally Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant was so much fun! The kids did a great job with their impromptu roles and multiple costume changes. Thank you to Pastor Mark for writing the entertaining script.

Upcoming Events – Valentine’s Party



The Education Committee will be hosting a Valentine Party for children of the church through grade 5. We are inviting the children from Leaps and Bounds Preschool. The party will be on Saturday, February 11, from 6:00 -7:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. We will be watching the movie ‘A Charlie Brown Valentine,’ eating popcorn, and playing games. Children are welcome to wear their pajamas. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



Casserole Ministry Reboot

An opportunity to be the hands & feet of Jesus.



In recent years we have not had leadership for our Casserole Ministry. We are excited to now have 2 ladies - Elaine DeVine and Kim Westerfield – who are willing to restart this ministry of delivering meals to church family when they are ill, or for other reasons need help with a meal or two.

As in the past, our new Casserole Ministry will offer home-cooked meals, which could be made by one or two volunteers. But home-cooking is not the only option of our revised ministry. A volunteer might deliver the recipient’s favorite meal from a local restaurant, OR pick up a rotisserie chicken from Strack’s along with a couple sides, OR deliver a pizza with a bag salad & a dessert. Elaine & Kim will be informed of a person needing meals through the office or the prayer chain. They will also appreciate hearing from the church family, as not everyone notifies the office of their surgery or illness. Kim or Elaine will make the first contact with the person needing a meal and then make calls to find a volunteer available to provide a meal.

We are in need of a new list of volunteers to get this ministry back in action. We thank those of you who have already given us your names and hope the list of volunteers will grow. Please check the narthex for a sign-up sheet and add your name, or call one of the new leaders. Thank You!

Elaine DeVine 219-696-0668

Kim Westerfield 219-333-8188

Christmas Caroling

In December the Youth Group blessed the residents of Cedar Creek Health Campus with Christmas carols. Then we traveled to Meadowbrook and walked through the neighborhood finding church members to sing to. Prior to singing we signed Christmas Cards to be sent to the shut-in's of our congregation. It was a joy spending time together spreading Christmas cheer to others.



1924 Cookbook Competition

Music of the Roaring 20's was heard in the Fellowship Hall during an evening of fellowship, food and more food on Jan. 21. Church members had selected 10 recipes from the 1924 cookbook to enter into the competition. Samples of each entry were put into small tasting cups. Each person filled a tray with the 10 samples and set to work tasting them. They then voted for their favorite main dish, salad and dessert. Winning recipes were Ellen Nichol's Hungarian Goulash prepared by Pastor Mark, Millican Galesburg's Brides Salad prepared by Carolyn Rodriguez, and Fern Vandercar's Raisin Pie prepared by Paula Tilton. The evening continued with more eating as the contemporary carry-in dishes were enjoyed. No one went home hungry!





Lowell Church Mouse

I'm the church mouse. I see all that goes on in the church and I love to gossip about it. Of course being a Christian mouse, I only say positive things.

We had a fun time recently. The basement seemed like it went back to the 1920s. There were recipes from the 1920s, music from the '20s and a few even dressed like the '20s. I heard Pastor Mark announce the winners of the 1924 Cookbook Competition. The cooks who prepared the winning dishes were Pastor Mark, Carolyn Rodriguez and Paula Tilton. Congratulations to all of the winners!



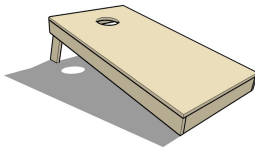
The Trustees have been busy as usual. They reupholstered a ripped pew in the balcony. It took a lot of time, banging, and staples to remove but it now looks amazing. Dennis Olson, Dave Bauman, Charlie Haberlin, Kathy Taylor and Kirk McQuiston did all the work.

Be careful when you do good work for the church. I'm watching and just waiting to share that gossip.



YOUTH GAME NIGHT!!! January 29, 5-7:00 PM

Youth Group meets monthly on Sunday from 5:00 – 7:00 pm in the Youth Room (303) at the church. All youth grades 6 - 12 and their friends are welcome to join us each month for food, fellowship, and fun. Come as you are, whenever you can! Watch for the date of our February gathering!



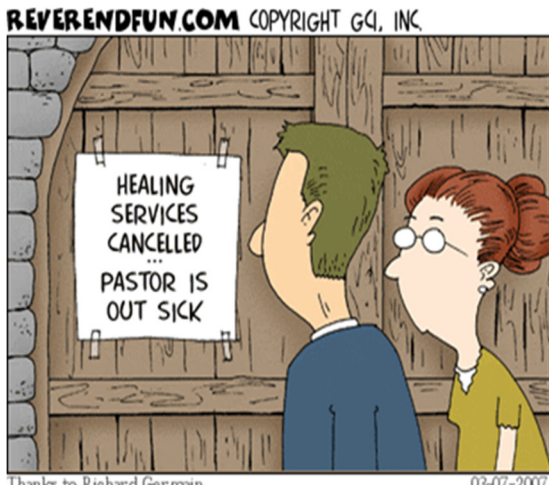
Cornhole Tournament

We're continuing our Cornhole Tournament. Our next event is Saturday, February 11. We'll meet from 10-12 in Fellowship Hall. We'll have men and women compete however they wish. Who will be the best?



Pastor's Comic Corner

In case you haven't noticed, I love humor. Below are comics that I've come across. Enjoy and smile! Pastor Mark



Thanks to Richard Germain

03-07-2007



"If God wanted me to eat carrots, He wouldn't hide them underground!"

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday - Worship ~ 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. (in Sanctuary), *Sunday School 9:15*: WINGS (300), F.O.M. (301), Youth (303), FRIENDS (304) Children (basement) **Monday/Tuesday** - A/A 12 p.m. (303) **Wednesday** - A/A - 8 p.m. (Fellowship Hall), AI/Anon - 8 p.m. (library) **Thursday** - Dulcimers 10 am (303), Godsbells 4:30 pm, *LYFT* Dinner 5:30 p.m./Worship 6:00 p.m. (Fellowship Hall) Chancel Choir 7pm (sanct.) **Saturday** - A/A 11 a.m. (303)

February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Trustees 6 pm (conf. room)	2 Missions Meeting 10 am (library)	3 Working Together Circle 1 pm (library)	4 Birthday Party 1pm (FH)
5 Nurse Is In	6 Tri-Kappa 6pm (FH)	7 Outreach Meeting 10 am (library)	8	9	10	11 Cornhole 10am (FH) Children's Valentine Party 6 pm (FH)
12	13 Susanna Wesley 1pm	14	15	16	17	18
19 **Buddy Bag Mission Starts	20	21 **Tele- Christian Articles are due!	22 Ash Wednesday Service 7pm (Sanct.)	23	24	25 Baby Shower (FH)
26 First Sunday in Lent Lenten Soup Lunch 12 pm (FH)	27 Ad-Council 6pm (FH)	28 Senior Bingo 1pm (FH)				