

# The First United Methodist Church of Lowell

## Tele-Christian May 2024 Edition

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

### *Mark's Remarks...*



Have you noticed how often the number “forty” is used in the Bible? It begins with Noah. God caused it to rain for 40 days and 40 nights. Isaac and his son Esau were both 40 when they married. Moses life was divided into 40s; first 40 years lived as an Egyptian prince, second forty as a shepherd, and last 40 as the deliverer of Israel from Egypt. The spies Moses sent to check out the Promised Land were gone for 40 days. The Israelites wandered 40 years in the wilderness when they sinned against God. Moses was on Mt. Sinai for 40 days getting the 10 commandments.

That’s just the first 5 books of the Bible. In fact 40 is used in scripture 156 times. Many of these instances it is part of a larger number, (i.e.) forty and nine thousand. We can ignore these instances. Also there are multiple descriptions of the same event such as 40 days and nights of rain for Noah.

Even taking all of this into account, it is amazing how many times 40 is used in the scripture. King David reigned for 40 years. Jonah preached that Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days. Jesus was in the wilderness fasting and praying for 40 days and nights. Plus several more instances.

The number 40 in the Bible typically indicates a time of trial, testing or probation. There is one more instance of 40 in scripture. After the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples and others for 40 days. He then Ascended into heaven. It must have been difficult for His closest followers. I’m sure they wanted Jesus to be with them continuously. They would have wanted things to get back to normal; to follow Jesus around the countryside listening to Him teach. Instead weeks went by between appearances. Jesus would appear and disappear at will.

That 40 days after the Resurrection was a time of testing and trial. It was the final period of time that Jesus had with His followers to get them ready to become the church. They had to live out their faith without the benefit of the Master with them. Thankfully, Jesus was also preparing them for the coming of the Holy Spirit. If Jesus didn’t take this time of preparation, I have to wonder if the disciples could have kept things together to form the church. Spend these 40 days after Easter praising the Risen Lord. Spend time reading the stories of His appearances. Let this be a time of testing and trial for you. We are continually called to be the church. May Jesus use this time to strengthen our faith, refresh us and call us anew into areas of service!



### **May Sermon Title and Scripture Schedule**

<b>May 5</b> ~ Scripture: Acts 10:44-48	Sermon Title: <i>‘Growing the Church’</i>
<b>May 12</b> ~ Scripture: Mark 16:14-20	Sermon Title: <i>‘The Ascension’</i>
<b>May 19</b> ~ Scripture: Acts 2:1-13	Sermon Title: <i>‘Pentecost’</i>
<b>May 26</b> ~ Scripture: John 3:7-18	Sermon Title: <i>‘The Trinity’</i>

## Worship News

Linda Hayden and Trudy Corning, Co-Chairs

### Christ is Risen!

We had a wonderful and meaningful Easter morning celebration of our risen Lord! There were 50 fragrant spring flowers in the sanctuary! Thank you to all who purchased Easter flowers. Thank you also to those who participated in the service and to all who worshipped with us.

Come and celebrate Mother's Day with us! Each lady of the church will receive a special gift!

The sermons in May will follow the themes of the year... Jesus' Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday. We will see what new insights we can gain into our own faith journey through these grand and amazing truths.

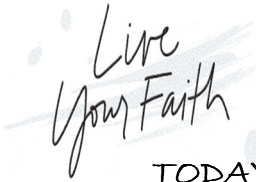
### Summer Worship

Our summer worship will include 2 worship services beginning June 2 and continuing through August 25.

We will continue to worship in the sanctuary each Sunday at 9:30 AM.

In addition, we will have an outdoor worship service at 8:00 AM in Olde Towne Square, located immediately west of our church. Dress is casual, wear comfortable footwear and bring a lawn chair. During inclement weather, 8 AM worship will be held in the sanctuary.

### Plan to join us this summer for worship!



**LYFT** 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 followed by communion. LYFT is a casual worship service where we look forward each week to food, fellowship and fun! Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend!

**TODAY!** LYFT gets transformed into Messy Church on the fourth Thursday of each month. Do you know what 'Messy Church' is? We really don't get dirty or messy, it is just another way to say that we are doing church a little differently than normal. We start out as usual with dinner. After dinner, Pastor Mark divides us into 4 groups. The size of the groups depends on how many people are at LYFT that night, but it is usually around 6 per group. There is no communion or speaker on 'Messy Church' night. Try it you might like it!

The four stations that we have at 'Messy Church' are:

1. Dessert station
2. Craft or Mission station
3. Discussion station (with Pastor Mark)
4. Game station



### Mission of the Month

Our Mission of the Month for May is our own Good Samaritan Fund. The Good Samaritan Fund provides for the needy in our own community. People needing gas cards, help with their utilities, rent, or basically any necessity can call and receive help. We typically do not help a person more than once in a month. The Good Samaritan Fund started during the pastorate of Jeff Newton. Your contributions have helped countless people in need over the years. We will collect for this mission this month through the Generosity Tree, but can give anytime throughout the year as well.



## From the Superintendent

There are some churches that believe that God's last word to humanity is Revelation 22:21, the last verse of the Bible. The United Methodist Church is not one of them. We believe that the Holy Spirit is on the move amongst people of good will just like when the Bible was written down. This is the "Sanctifying" part of our Wesleyan understanding of God's Grace in Christ Jesus. There is more to reveal. There is more to experience. There is more to the story now that the pen is in our hands.

You can see this understanding in how we are structured as a Church. Every four years (when there isn't COVID!), elected delegates from every corner of our denomination gather at General Conference to (among other things) discern how God is revealing Godself in the work that is before us. Every four years we have the opportunity to boldly say in faith: there is more! There is more refining of the Church needed. There is more to our witness that is needed. There is more to our understanding of God that we didn't have before.

I am honored to serve as one of your delegates. I am encouraged that our Church believes in a God of more! I am humbled to be an instrument of the revealing of the Holy Spirit's work in what comes next for us.

AND...we get to confidently face whatever comes next because the power of the Resurrection goes with us. Easter is God's way of saying there is always more life ahead. We have confidence that whatever General Conference may, or may not, decide on a variety of issues, the presence of Easter energizes us for more.

There are many ways you can stay up to date with all the "more" of what God is doing in our Church. Here are some specific ways I highly recommend:

General Conference Resources about how to talk with your congregation before, during, and after can be found on the North District webpage.

<https://www.inumc.org/2024/03/25/general-conference-2024-resources/>

You can watch General Conference live and read legislation at:

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/general-conference-2020>

Like the North District page on Facebook as I will be posting information live from General Conference.

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthDistrictINUMC>

The North District will be hosting some informational meetings after General Conference. Information will be emailed to all clergy soon with times and dates.

Let us pray to the Lord that we are found faithful in living into the "more" that is ahead of us!

Blessings,

*Marti*



**United Women of Faith News**  
Rachelle Ruge-Bernard, Chairperson



High Tea will be served Saturday, June 1 at 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All women are invited. United Women of Faith will be providing the lunch. Since it is a High Tea, finger foods will be served. We will be entertained by the High Country String Band. Some ladies will wear hats and gloves. No one is required to dress up. It is just a suggestion.

## Community Ministry in Our Church

From the Finance Committee

We are called to be generous and willing to share, to give ourselves away in service to God and others. Members of the church family have generously provided time, talents, and resources that have positively impacted the church budget. The Finance Committee is sharing a couple precious "bits" of news. Let us tell you "The story"...

We all love smiles! Sunday mornings our children are smiling, the adults are smiling. Why? The children are collecting coins for our children's programs and in a little over a year and a half, almost \$3,000 has been collected! All resources are directed to the children's programs.

You can expect to see the Memorial Brick Garden installed sometime before the end of May. We are working with the installers to make sure the weather cooperates so the installation is built on solid ground. When the garden is complete, an announcement will be made so that everyone can visit the garden on the northwest side of the church. Thank you for your patience.

***Generosity and self-giving are at the heart of what happened on the cross.***

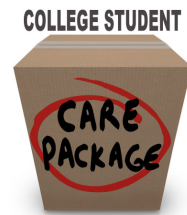


### **The end of the semester brings... final exams!**

Thank you, church family, for supporting the Congregational Care College Box ministry! April 28 was the designated day to pack the boxes with a variety of snacks and some school supplies you have provided, along with notes of encouragement from many of you. The boxes were prayed over prior before being shipped off. Please continue to pray for the college students receiving these boxes as they prepare for finals week.

Those students receiving these spring semester boxes include:

Hailey Adcock, Evansville, IN (niece of Jenny Nichols)  
Kersten Anderson, Lowell, IN (granddaughter of Denise Piskoty)  
Caleb Bernard, Cedar Lake, IN (son of Rachelle Ruge Bernard)  
Keeley Bernard, Tuskegee, AL (daughter of Rachelle Ruge Bernard)  
Adam Fucela, Lowell, IN (nephew of Jenny Nichols)  
Lauren Riordan, Muncie, IN (granddaughter of Terry & Julie Donovan)  
Kelle Riordan, Honolulu, HI (granddaughter of Terry & Julie Donovan)  
Kyle Simmons, Lowell, IN (grandson of Pam Nelson)  
Toby Taylor, Bloomington, IN (grandson of Ethel Devine)  
Chesney Wilson, St. Mary of the Woods, IN (daughter of Craig and Jen Wilson)



### **Adult Study Opportunities**

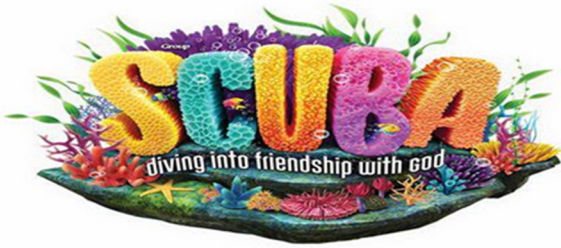
The FRIENDS class is beginning a new study called, "God Never Gives Up on You." It is a DVD study by Max Lucado. Max describes the content of this study:

*"God enacts his perfect plan through imperfect people – Including you and me! You will see how God used Jacob – the misbehaving patriarch who was strong on savvy but weak on conscience – simply because God chose to use Jacob. His story invites us to believe in a God who sticks with the unworthy until we are safely at home. God turns brokenness into blessings through his grace, mercy, and relentless love. Not just for Bible characters, but for you. GOD NEVER GIVES UP ON YOU."*

The FRIENDS class meets on Sundays at 8:15 am in room 304. All are welcome to join us for any of the sessions.

### **Woman's Devotion Group**

We will have a *spin-off* from this winter's women's Bible study starting on May 6. We will meet the first Monday of the month at 12:00 pm upstairs in room 300. Bring a sack lunch and we will have devotion time together. If the weather is nice we might go outside to Olde Towne Square (the park next to the church). The devotion time will go until 1:00 pm. Call the office with any questions. 219-696-9219.



Coming This Summer!

2024 Vacation Bible School  
June 17 - 20  
6:00 – 8:00 pm

We are excited to begin planning Vacation Bible School for this summer. This year the 'Scuba' theme will help the kids 'Dive into Friendship with God.' We look forward to sharing more about this year's theme with all of you in the coming weeks, but in the meantime please start spreading the word about Vacation Bible School.

This year we are excited to try a new 4-day VBS schedule and we will have a new station to share with the kids called 'Sticky Scripture.' These will be great additions to an already amazing week.

We are so grateful that our congregation has always supported Vacation Bible School through prayer, donations, and lots of volunteers. Be on the lookout for volunteer sign-up sheets and donation opportunities in the church Narthex. If you have any questions, please call Amy Manier, 219-712-6157, or the church office.

More information will be coming soon!



Attention Sunday School Children and Families!

During the Children's Time on **Sunday, May 19** we will be recognizing all the kids who have been joining us in children's Sunday School. *We hope you all can be here!*



Calling All Graduates!

We will be celebrating **all** graduates during worship on **Sunday, May 19**. Please let us know if you have a graduate in your family ... from high school, college, med school, trade school, apprenticeship, etc.... who you would like to have recognized. We want to celebrate this accomplishment with the graduate and your family. Call the church office to add your graduate's name to the list.



We invite all able bodied attenders on Sunday morning to **not** park in the church parking lot. Please save those spots for our elderly, folks with mobility issues, those with young children and visitors. You can park at Sheets Funeral Home, Chase Bank or behind the church. Thank you for your consideration of those who have trouble.



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.

Did you all see the solar eclipse? It didn't get as dark as I thought, but with the glasses it was very cool to see it. Of course the church had to have a group of partiers in the midst of it. I always have to watch my tail around this place. It is so busy.

LYFT continues as a worship experience on Thursday night. There have been some different speakers recently. All of them do a fantastic job. I have thought it's been extra interesting here lately. And as always, the food is great!

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



### YOUNG AT HEART SENIOR BINGO



Young at Heart Sr. Bingo will meet May 28. We'll meet at 1 pm. There will be snacks, prizes for the winners and many games of Bingo all for no charge to you. Invite friends. We don't card folks, so anyone of any age can come. See you in May.



- Sunday, May 19 ~ Graduation Sunday/Sunday School Recognition
- Saturday, June 1 ~ United Women of Faith 'High Tea'
- June 17-20 ~ Vacation Bible School
- Friday, July 19 ~ Kidz Karnival
- Friday, August 23 ~ Music in the Park



### 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



## WEEKLY EVENTS

**Sunday - Worship** ~ 9:30 a.m. (in Sanctuary), **Monday/Tuesday** - A/A 12 p.m. (303) **Wednesday** - A/A - 8 p.m. (Fellowship Hall), Al/Anon - 8 p.m. (library) **Thursday** - Dulcimers 10 am (303), Godsbells practice 4:30 pm (balcony), *LYFT* Dinner 5:30 pm  
Worship 6:00 pm (Fellowship Hall), Chancel Choir 7 p.m. (Sanctuary) **Saturday** - A/A 11 a.m. (303)

# May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 UWF Exec. Meeting 5pm (library)	2 Funeral Dinner Team Meeting 2pm (library)	3 Working Together Circle 1:30 pm (lib)  Italian Nt. Set Up 12 pm (FH)	4 'Oodles of Noodles' Italian Supper 5-7 pm (FH)
5	6 Women's Devotion Group 12 pm (FH)  Staff/Parish 4 pm (conf. room)  Tri-Kappa 6pm (FH)	7 Election Day (FH)  Pre-School Graduation 6 pm (Sanct. and FH)	8	9	10  Congregational Care 1pm (lib)	11
12 Mother's Day  Mission Of the Month 'Good Samaritan Fund'	13	14	15 Finance 5:30 pm (FH)	16	17  Pre-School luncheon 12pm (library)	18 Birthday Party 12 pm (FH)
19 Sunday School Recognition  Graduation Sunday	20 Ad-Council 6pm (FH)	21 Last Day of Pre-School Classes	22	23	24	25
26 Trinity Sunday	27 Memorial Day/ Office Closed	28 Senior Bingo 1pm (FH)	29	30	31	