

The First United Methodist Church of Lowell

Tele-Christian January 2026 Edition

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

Mark's Remarks...



I heard a story about a simple coffee purchase a business traveler, Ryan Estis, made in the Minneapolis airport on Christmas Eve.

As he made his way through the terminal before his flight, Estis stopped for coffee. Rather than receiving a terse greeting from someone understandably disappointed to be working on Christmas Eve, Estis was met with a warm hello.

"Hi, my name's Lily. What's your name?" the barista, Lily Olsen, asked. Olsen immediately established a kind, gregarious rapport with Estis. She asked him where he was going, if he was spending the holidays with his family and what holiday traditions his family followed each year. Then, when Olsen finished making Estis' pumpkin spice latte, she said, "Ryan, have a safe trip to Cleveland, go create some extraordinary memories with your family, and when you come back through the Minneapolis Airport, I want you to stop here and tell me all about it."

What Olsen did not know was Estis was flying to Cleveland to spend a final Christmas with his father who had recently been diagnosed with a terminal illness. Though Olsen could never have known, Estis was not in a good place at all, and needed a pick-me-up.

Olsen probably served hundreds of customers per day, and none of us expect this type of kind, intentional connection from the average barista. But Olsen saw every cup of coffee she served as an opportunity to brighten someone else's day. As she put it, she was "pouring happiness into other people's lives." It's a great example of the impact we make when we commit to doing even the smallest things at world-class level.

Years later, Estis tells his story of meeting Olsen to audiences around the world. Their short interaction had a permanent impact on him—and made him realize the power each of us has to make others' lives better, in the same amount of time it takes to send an angry email or a bitter social media post.

In hard times, it's crucial to think beyond ourselves and consider what others are facing. We might be having a bad day, but the same is probably also true for the person on the other side of the counter, phone or Zoom call. Connecting on a personal level, extending compassion and assuming positive intent from others may make all the difference for someone who is really hurting, either visibly or below the surface.

These small interactions can make a massive impact on others. Estis still talks about his encounter with Olsen many years later. A small act of kindness done in faith can make a lasting impact on someone's life. Happy New Year.



January Sermons

In January we will talk about Epiphany. Epiphany means revealing.
Specifically, how Jesus is revealed to the world as the messiah and the Son of God.

January 4:	Scripture: John 1:10-18	Sermon Title: 'God Revealed'
January 11:	Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17	Sermon Title: 'Why Does He Need Baptized?'
January 18:	Scripture: John 1:29-34	Sermon Title: 'Jesus Revealed'
January 25:	Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17-18	Sermon Title: 'Revealed in Unity'



LYFT is our Thursday evening worship service held in Fellowship Hall. We start at 5:30 pm with dinner and go right into worship at 6 pm. Worship includes music, a lay person or Pastor Mark speaking, prayer and communion. LYFT is a casual worship service where each week we enjoy food, fellowship and fun! Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend!

Remember...if you can't arrive in time for dinner, you can still come for worship!



Children's Coins Mission

The children collect coins each Sunday. In October, November and December the coins have gone to the Bishop's Christmas Offering. This offering gives money to children's missions. One third goes to international projects, one third to national, and one third to Indiana mission projects. During those three months the children collected \$534 for the offering!



Confirmation

We will be starting a Confirmation Class for all youth who would like to become members of the church. The class will meet on Sunday mornings after worship for an hour. We'll begin January 11 and end on March 15.

Confirmation Sunday, the day to join the church, is tentatively scheduled for April 12, the Sunday after Easter. During the ten weeks we'll talk about various aspects of faith as well as the United Methodist Church. Youth from 6th grade and up are welcome. Talk to Pastor Mark to be a part.



1st & 3rd Wednesday Country/Gospel Music Jam

On the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month from 1-3 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall, local musicians from around the area gather to play and sing your favorite country gold, gospel greats, bluegrass, old rock 'n roll, folk, and more. You may bring an instrument and play along, or just come to listen.

The United Women in Faith will be on hand with refreshments for purchase. As with all of their projects, the proceeds will go to help others through missions. We really hope to see you there. January dates are the 7th and the 21st.

Just remember 1st & 3rd, 1 to 3.

PRAYER BLANKET MINISTRY



Do you know our church has a Prayer Blanket Ministry? Do you know our church wants everyone to be a part of this ministry? Yes, each of you can have an important role in the Prayer Blanket Ministry.

We are in need of small handmade blankets to cover a person's lap wrap around a person's shoulders. These blankets & shawls can physically warm a person, emotionally help them feel covered in caring & love, and spiritually feel God's presence with them.

These cold winter months offer a time to knit, crochet or tie knots around fleece blankets. Or donate the yarn or fleece for others to make LAP size blankets. You may bring supplies to the church.

All of us can pray for the Blanket Ministry. In addition to individual prayers, we are going to pray over the blankets as the church body during a worship service in February.

Do you know someone who is in need of prayers? This ministry is not just for our church members. Maybe a neighbor is physically ill, lonely or spiritually hurting. Give them a prayer blanket. Let them feel the love and prayers wrapping around them.

Knitting, crocheting, tying fleece knots, supplying yarn or fleece, praying, delivering: There are many opportunities to be a part of this ministry. We are excited to have our church participate in this ministry. We are grateful to be able to show others we care about them.

Watch for more information in the narthex about the Prayer Blanket Ministry. Shawls and lap size blankets that have been donated will be prayed over in February.



Mission of the Month

In January we are supporting Kokomo Urban Outreach. This is the mission that Rev. Jeff Newton started. Pastor Jeff served at Lowell from 2000-2005. The goal of Kokomo Urban Outreach is running the UP program. UP helps youths 10-18 grow into self-reliant adults. The aim is to break the cycle of inter-generational poverty. There are specific expectations participants must meet and they are given specific skills that help them on that journey to adulthood. On January 11 there will be envelopes in the bulletin. We will accept donations all month to help this mission.



Leadership Summit

On January 10, First UMC will be holding a Leadership Summit. This is not to solve the wars happening around the world or any economic problems internationally. It is a chance for our church to get together and talk about what we've accomplished in 2025 and what we would like to continue, or change, or start new in 2026. We want to be intentional about where we head as a church. First and foremost, we want to do God's will for the church.

Who should attend the Summit? All members of all committees and all in the church. If you have any suggestions or observations about what we are doing well and what we could be doing, we want you to attend and share your opinion.

We'll begin at **9 am on Saturday, January 10**. At noon we'll have pizza together. Feel free to bring a snack or dessert to share. We'll be done shortly after 1 pm.



Young at Heart Sr. Bingo meets on the fourth Tuesday. We'll be meeting on January 27 at 1 pm. Bring friends and come play free Bingo, eat wonderful snacks and win great prizes.



Are you over 70 ½?

and

Do you have a tax deferred IRA?

Are you concerned about 2026 tax planning?

*You can do non-taxable distributions from your IRA, save federal and state income taxes and contribute to your church...**ALL** at the same time!!!*

There are specific guidelines to follow, so talk to your tax preparer/accountant and/or your investment counselor.

Ask these questions:

What is my RMD (Required Minimum Distribution)?

How can I gift my RMD and/or more to my church?

How can I send monthly tax-free withdrawals to my church?

How does it save federal and state income taxes?

How can I prepare for my 2026 taxes?

Have a blessed year while planning for 2026!



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 ~ 9:30am (in Sanctuary), **Sunday School** ~ Adult: 8:15 am WINGS, FRIENDS Children: 9:30 am
Monday - A/A 12pm (303) **Wednesday** - A/A - 8pm (Fellowship Hall), Al/Anon - 8pm (lib) **Thursday** - Dulcimers 10am (303),
 Godsbells 4:30 pm, *LYFT* Dinner 5:30pm/Worship 6:00pm (F.H.) Chancel Choir 7 pm **Saturday** - A/A 11 a.m. (303)

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Happy New Year! Office closed	2 Office Closed	3 Basement Rented 2 pm
4 Communion Sunday	5	6	7 Country/ Gospel Jam 1 pm (FH)	8	9	10 Leadership Summit 9am (FH)
11 Confirmation Class 10:30 am (303)	12	13 Leaps and Bounds Open House 12-2pm (FH)	14	15	16	17
18 Confirmation Class 10:30 am (303)	19	20 Household Pantry 9-12 & 5-6 (curbside)	21 Country/ Gospel Jam 1 pm (FH)	22	23	24 Basement Rented 12 pm
25 Confirmation Class 10:30 am (303)	26 Ad-Council 6pm (FH)	27 Senior Bingo 1 pm (FH)	28	29	30	31