

# The First United Methodist Church of Lowell

## Tele-Christian February 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've made it a habit of using my January article to express gratitude for my circumstances. As I write this we're still in January so I'm still going to tell you what I am grateful for in the New Year.

First, I am grateful for the Lowell First Church family. You may not realize it, but you are a remarkable group of people. In almost every church I've heard about there is an individual or group and often many of each that cause problems and dissension in the church. There is fighting and backstabbing and malicious gossip, all things which work to destroy the effectiveness of the church. I don't see it in Lowell. We are certainly not a perfect group, but I appreciate that we are a loving group and are trying to do what we feel God calling us to do.

I am grateful that you continue to call me to serve you. I am glad that I have a job. In United Methodism having a church as a pastor relies on the Bishop's discernment, the pastor's desire and the church's choice. I try to keep off the Bishop's radar. I desire to serve the folks at First Church. So thank you for your decision to continue to ask that I be reappointed here. I very much see ministry as service. I am not here to be the head honcho. I am here to be your servant. That service does involve quite a bit of leadership, but I try to keep the servant role in how I minister.

I am very appreciative for the home you provide your pastoral family. Again there are many churches that do the least they have to for their pastoral family. You go above and beyond what you need to do. The Trustees are always quick to fix any problems with the house. Several of you ask if things are ok at the parsonage. We feel very much at home in the house, the neighborhood and in the whole community.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the salary that you provide. It is more than adequate and is greatly appreciated. We are not looking to get rich in ministry, but you allow us to have all that we need and quite a bit of what we want.

I pray that God blesses us all in this coming year. You are a great bunch of people. I am proud to call you my family.

*Pastor Mark*

### February Sermons

In February we will continue to talk about Epiphany. Epiphany means revealing. Specifically, how Jesus is revealed to the world as the messiah and the Son of God. The last Sunday of February we will begin a 6 week Lenten sermon series exploring the reasons that Jesus had to die.

February 1:	Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12
February 8:	Scripture: Matthew 5:17-20
February 15:	Scripture: II Peter 1:16-21
February 22:	Scripture: TBA

Sermon Title: 'Revealed in Preaching'
Sermon Title: 'Revealed in Difficult Teachings'
Sermon Title: 'Revealed in Glory'
Sermon Title: 'Temptations and How to Overcome Them'



### New Member Class

If you are interested in joining the church, please talk to Pastor Mark. He will be offering a membership class this Winter and is planning for a new member service in mid March.



Join us as our church begins a significant Lenten journey on **Ash Wednesday, February 18, at 7pm** with worship, the choir singing, the burning of palms, and receiving ashes.

On Sunday, February 22, we will begin a sermon series and an adult study based on the book "Why Did Jesus Have to Die". This book will be our focus throughout the six-week Lenten journey. In addition, each week throughout Lent, we will be collecting designated non perishable food items to be donated to our local food pantries. More details will come thru emails and the weekly Sunday bulletin telling us what item is being requested each week based on food pantry needs.

Finally, we will conclude our Lenten journey with Holy Week celebrating Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter morning!

More details and service information will be in the March Tele Christian.

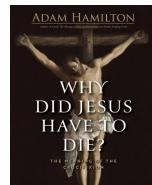
We pray you will experience a meaningful Lenten journey this season.



*Live  
Your Faith  
TODAY!*

**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!



### **Book Study for Lent *Why did Jesus Have to Die?: The Meaning of the Crucifixion***

For the six Sundays of Lent, beginning **February 22** and ending **March 29**, Pastor Mark's sermons will go along with the latest study written by Methodist pastor and best-selling author Adam Hamilton.

Here is an introduction to the study:

#### ***Why did Jesus Have to Die?: The Meaning of the Crucifixion***

***"Despite the crucifixion's central place in Christian faith, the New Testament offers few clear answers about how Jesus' death saves, or why, exactly, he had to die. The New Testament writers use a host of metaphors—ransom, sacrifice, reconciliation, victory—but never explain exactly how it works or why it had to happen this way. What if that's because we've been asking the wrong question? What if the cross isn't a transaction to be explained, but a living Word from God meant to transform who we are and how we live?"***

In addition to Pastor Mark's sermons, the two Sunday morning adult discussion groups will be joining together for a six session journey viewing a weekly video and sharing discussion on The Meaning of the Crucifixion.

The participants of both the WINGS class and the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. class **invite and encourage** you to join them on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor at 8:15AM each Sunday **for their combined class in the Wings room (300)** during Lent for this study. Let's deepen our understanding of the Crucifixion together as a church family!

#### **P.S.**

Not an 'early morning' person? Consider purchasing the book to read at home during the week before hearing the sermons each Sunday during Lent. You can purchase the hardback book through the church for \$20, just call the office to get one ordered. You can also find it on Amazon and purchase for yourself.



Many of our church members and leaders met on Sat., January 10, to review our church accomplishments in 2025. They also began visioning for this year and our church's future. Lists of the achievements of various teams will be shared in this newsletter. This will take several months! You will be impressed by the length of some lists, as each list represents hours and weeks of planning and service by members of your church family.

### **Worship Team Accomplishments**

1. Changed the paraments and filled the candles as needed.
2. Flowers on the altar were changed with the season and themes of worship.
3. Banners were changed according to the season.
4. Flower orders taken and flowers purchased for Easter and Christmas.
5. 3 Baptisms celebrated.
6. Ushers and Greeters were coordinated for each Sunday.
7. Children's messages were offered as needed and money collected by the children.
8. 50 Flood Buckets were put together during Lent in cooperation with Missions.
9. LYFT worship provided on Thursday evening with a meal. Average attendance of 22.
10. Started a Tuesday worship service at Lowell Healthcare with average attendance of 20.
11. Purchased new linens for the altar rails to cover Communion elements.
12. Provided Mother's Day flowers and Father's Day cookies and candy.
13. Acolytes carried God's light in and out of the sanctuary during worship.
14. Coordinated the Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, Praise Team and special music.
15. Coordinated our organist and pianist to provide accompaniment at worship.
16. Provided training for ushers, greeters, liturgists and acolytes.
17. Decorated inside the church and out for Christmas and Easter.
18. Draped the cross inside and out for Lent and Easter.
19. Provided a song leader each Sunday.
20. Had special services at Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and two services on Christmas Eve.
21. Changed the time of the 11 pm Christmas Eve service to 4 pm.
22. Decorated the altar for Thanksgiving, Pentecost and other visuals for sermon topics.
23. Had special meals at LYFT for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Maundy Thursday.
24. Provided Global prayer concerns each week with a board posted in front.
25. Recognized individuals transferring membership and new member services.
26. On Palm Sunday had children carry palms in and congregation waved palms.
27. Helped with carol sing at Winterfest.
28. Planned Homecoming service, send out letters and buy gifts to give out.
29. Had nursery available as needed.
30. Had services live-streamed and posted to YouTube. Provide tech support for sound and computer for service.
31. Encouraged a cantata by our Chancel Choir.
32. Provided Tele-Christian articles monthly.
33. Provided bulletins weekly.
34. Had Communion monthly and provide it three different ways.
35. Used special instruments, horns, violins etc. to enhance music.

The worship committee meets every other month and would welcome new members.

Worship Leaders: Linda Hayden, Trudy Corning

Worship Team Members: Patrice Martin, Beth Bales, Craig Wilson, Sam Conley, Amy Nichols, Candy Johnson, Lynn Bochart, Elaine DeVine, Amy Manier, Judy Williams, Bobbie Sue McDaniel, Brenda Roberts, Michelle Mishlove.



### **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.

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



### Mission of the Month

In January we supported Kokomo Urban Outreach. In February we are supporting Kafakumba Training Center in Zambia, Africa. This mission was started by John Enright and Ken Vance. The mission has done some ground-breaking work that is being looked at across Africa. They have a pastor's school to train Africans to serve their people. They are doing agricultural work and teaching farmers techniques to increase yield in the area. They give farmers banana trees and guava plants with the expectation that the farmer will then give plants to other farmers. They are teaching women skills to earn money on their own. John and Ken began with a flight mission in Zaire, but felt called to do more. On February 8 there will be envelopes in the bulletins that we will accept all month to help this mission.



### Annual Chili Cook-Off & Dessert Auction is Back!

Our beloved community tradition will return on Sunday, March 29! Join us for an afternoon of great food, friendly competition, and fellowship.

**Chili Cook-Off** Calling all chili chefs! Whether you're a seasoned pro or trying your hand for the first time, we invite you to enter your best recipe and compete for bragging rights. Word has it we'll have a celebrity panel of judges this year!

**Dessert Auction** Not a chili master? We need your legendary desserts! Bake your specialty to be auctioned off, or come prepared to bid on delicious homemade treats.

**How to Participate** Sign-up sheets for both the cook-off and dessert auction will be posted at the end of February. Everyone is welcome to attend and enjoy the festivities.



Save the date! Volunteers needed!  
**Easter Egg-Stravaganza**  
Saturday, March 28 at 11:30 am - 1:00 pm  
Mark your calendar to come volunteer  
at this community event offered  
by our church.



**Northern Lakes District Spring 2026**  
**Lay Servant Academy**  
**SUNDAY 2/22, 3/1, 3/8 and 3/15/2026**  
**2:00 pm (CT) - 5:00 pm (CT)**  
**Hebron United Methodist Church**  
**202 West Church Street, Hebron, Indiana**

You are invited to join us for the Lay Servant Ministries Academy to begin or continue training for living out the call to make disciples for the transformation of our churches, communities, and world. This is an in-person LSA and you must attend all four sessions to receive credit.

**Cost: \$10.00**

**Payment Information:** Visa and MasterCard accepted. Please print a copy of your confirmation for your receipt.

**Registration deadline:** Prior to start of class on February 22, 2026.

**Cancellation policy:** cancellations must be received via email to [susan.burris@inumc.org](mailto:susan.burris@inumc.org) by 11:59 pm on Thursday, February 19, 2026 to be eligible for a refund less processing fee. No refunds after this date.

**Classes:**

**Introduction to Lay Ministry:** the BASIC Course - led by Pastor Sheri LoCascio - Discover and employ your personal spiritual gifts, learn the worth of servant leadership, and be rooted in good spiritual practices. Course text is Lay Servant Ministries: Basic Course Participant's Book by Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson. Available through Amazon and Cokesbury.

**Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition** - led by Pastor Jim Denton - Structured around Wesley's "means of grace," this study covers, among other topics, prayer, scripture, the Lord's Supper, and fasting - important aspects in John Wesley's devotional life. Learn how to apply Wesley's practices to your own life. Course text - Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition by Steve Harper. Available through Amazon.

**Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century** - led by Pastor Wayne Williams - The church is in the hands of its elders, and the church needs to tap their wisdom, energy, experience, and talents. Learn what practical steps your church can take for building ministry for older adults. Course text - Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century: An Inquiry Approach by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr. Available through Amazon and Cokesbury.

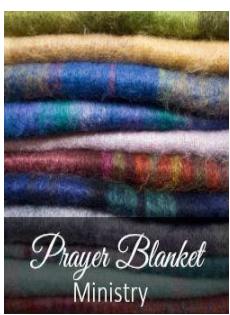
**Lay Servants as Christian Transformational Leaders (Advanced)** - led by CLS Karen Williams - This course will guide lay servants seeking to be more empowered to lead their congregations toward vitality. Course text - Lay Servants as Christian Transformation Leaders by Marc Brown, Kathy Merry, and John Briggs. Available through Amazon.

**Living Our United Methodist Beliefs** - led by Pastor Tom Clark - Explore the special gifts of theology, witness, and organization that the UMC brings to the church universal, how we got where we are today, and how our distinctive emphases are still needed in the 21st century church. Course text - Living Our Beliefs: The United Methodist Way by Kenneth L. Carder. Available through Amazon and Cokesbury.

For more information contact Karen Williams at 219-869-2324 or [mrs.karen.wms@gmail.com](mailto:mrs.karen.wms@gmail.com)



**Prayer Blankets**



Sunday, February 8, during our worship service, we will pray over our prayer blankets and prayer shawls. There is still time to knit, crochet, tie and sew prayer blankets and shawls. They will be given to those who are physically or spiritually in need of prayer. They will be given to those who need to feel the loving arms of Jesus around them. Please have all donations to the church by Friday, February 6.

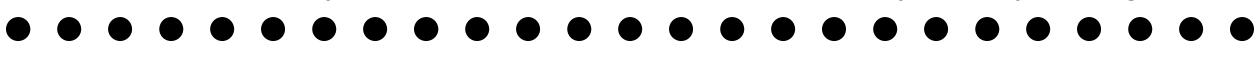
Who can donate blankets, shawls and supplies? Everyone!

Who can deliver blankets to those in need? Everyone!

Who can pray for this ministry? Everyone!

Who can be a part of this ministry? Everyone!

Any questions, call the church office, Bev Kussy or Trudy Corning.



I would like to thank our team of ushers and greeters who do such a tremendous job taking care of all who enter our doors for service. I am grateful and feel blessed to work with such a great group.

Blessings, Judy Williams

**THANK YOU!**



## Stewardship Message

Stewardship in the church is more than a seasonal conversation or an annual budget drive—it is an ongoing story of faith, gratitude, and shared responsibility. Throughout the year, we are invited to reflect on how God's generosity shapes our lives and how our response supports the ministry and mission of our church.

As we move through the year, may this stewardship story remind us that we are partners in God's work—called to give, serve, and grow together in faith.

As we move in the months ahead we will share with you the “Five Pockets” of Stewardship.

## **Pocket One, “The Outreach and Care Pocket” – reaching out in love to the community and loving our church family.**

## Why You Should Remember Your Church in Your Will or Trust

For many people, the church is more than a place of worship—it is a spiritual home. It is where faith is nurtured, lives are celebrated, burdens are shared, and hope is renewed. Remembering your church in your will or trust is a meaningful way to ensure that this sacred work continues for generations to come.

A planned gift is an expression of gratitude for the role the church has played in your life. Whether through worship, pastoral care, education, or outreach, your church has invested in your spiritual journey. Including the church in your estate plan allows you to give thanks in a lasting and thoughtful way.

Such gifts also help secure the future of ministry. Bequests can support church ministries and building improvements responding to opportunities God places before the congregation. Even a modest gift, when combined with others, can have a powerful impact.

Remembering your church in your will or trust does not require sacrificing your family's needs. It simply reflects your values and priorities, ensuring that what mattered to you in life continues to matter after it. It is a final act of faith—one that bears fruit long beyond our lifetime.

By planning today, you leave a legacy of generosity, hope, and faith for tomorrow.



## 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



Young at Heart Sr. Bingo meets on the fourth Tuesday. We'll be meeting on February 24 at 1 pm. Bring friends and come play free Bingo, eat wonderful snacks and win great prizes.

## 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)

# February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion Sunday	2 Tri-Kappa 1-8pm (FH)	3	4	5 Women's Book Study 3 pm	6 Working Together Circle 1:30 pm (library)	7
Confirmation Class 10:30am (303)						
8 Mission Sunday	9 Susanna Wesley Circle 1 pm (library)	10 Outreach Meeting 9 am (library)	11	12 Women's Book Study 3 pm	13 No Pre-School Children's Valentine Party 6 pm (FH)	14
Confirmation Class 10:30am (303)		Congregational Care Meeting 1pm (library)				
15 Confirmation Class 10:30am (303)	16 President's Day No Pre-School	17	18 Finance Meeting 4 pm (FH)	19 Women's Book Study 3 pm	20	21
			Ash Wednesday Service 7 pm (sanctuary)			
22 Confirmation Class 10:30am (303)	23	24	25 Trustee's Meeting 6 pm	26 Women's Book Study 3 pm	27	28