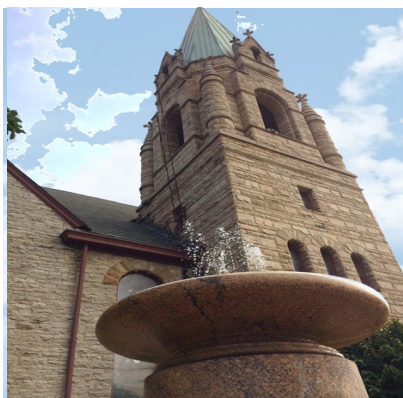




The Ambassador

June 2026

Est. 1805 | Published Since
1951

Dear Friends,

I love to read; I always have. Fiction is my go-to genre because I love a good story. A good story can make me think, laugh, or cry – and a really good story can make me do all three! I like stories with a likeable protagonist but last month I read a book with an unlikeable one and I devoured that book in less than a week. What can I say? I like to read! And I know that I'm not alone. My guess is that there are lots of us at church that love to read.

It was my love of reading and Amy Jill-Levine's book Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi that inspired our worship series this summer. You can read about the worship series, Summer Book Club, on page 2 and all of the fun ways to engage with that series on page 5. In addition, I thought this would be a wonderful time to have an actual summer book club that met at the church. You can read more about that and our book selections on page 6.

I'm looking forward to our time together this summer. Summer invites us to experience a different pace of living. Longer days can lead to more opportunities to connect with others. Our Congregational Care team is providing an opportunity to do just that, check out their article on page 5. Summer time is also a great opportunity to celebrate – our Staff Parish Relations Committee is preparing a celebration for staff appreciation (see page 2 for more information) and our neighbor, St. Paul's UCC is celebrating 150 years of ministry (see page 5 for more information). And of course we will be celebrating the men in our life on Father's Day with 'Pop for Pops' (see page 5 for the details).

Whether I am discussing a book with you or seeing you in worship – in the sanctuary or online – blessings to you this summer, dear friends!

Peace,
Pastor Kim

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Staff

Senior Pastor Kim Armentrout
Assoc. Pastor Daniel Cardenas
Worship Mary Ellen Clinard
Building Supt. Greg Cooper
Office Mgr. Pam Fugett
Treasurer Betsy Koval
Financial Secy. Susan Beagle

Contact Us

120 S. Broad St.
Middletown, OH 45044
513.423.4629
office@myfumc.net
www.myfumc.net

Worship With Us

Online & In Person
Worship @10:30 am
Sunday School @ 9

Inside

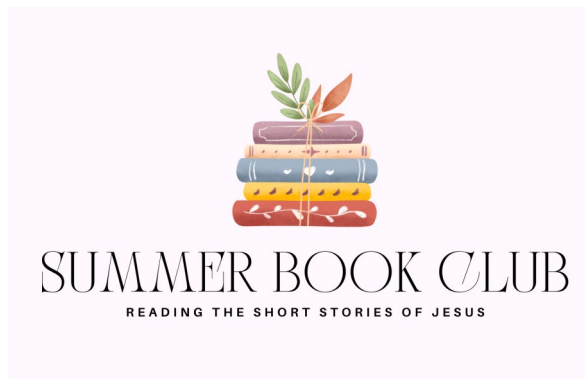
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SUMMER BOOK CLUB:

READING THE SHORT STORIES OF JESUS.

There are lots of people who love to get lost in a good book and summer is the perfect time to do so! For evidence of this, you can look at libraries all throughout the United States that will host summer reading challenges. Our own library is no different. Its summer reading program is entitled "Unearth a Story" and it is designed to encourage people of all ages to read.



You could call our summer worship series an unearthing - we are opening our Bibles to look at some of Jesus' short stories. Also known as parables, these stories of Jesus let us know that he loved a good story, harnessing its power to provoke, challenge, and teach not only his disciples but us, too. Join us in worship for Summer Book Club: reading the short stories of Jesus.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Sermon Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
5.31.2026	A Good Story	Matthew 13:10-1
6.7.2026	The Parable of the Yeast	Matthew 13:33-35
6.14.2026	Parables of Lost Things	Luke 15:1-10
6.21.2026	The Parable of the Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
6.28.2025	The Parable of the Widow and the Judge	Luke 18:1-8



PASTOR STAFF APPRECIATION

Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) has designated **Sunday, June 28, 2026 as Pastor/Staff Appreciation Sunday**. As we did in 2025, we are combining both pastors and staff in this event. We are asking the congregation to contribute monetary gifts that will be presented to the pastor and staff at the beginning of worship on Sunday, June 28. Please have your donations into the church office by Thursday, June 25 and mark them with "Pastor/Staff Appreciation." Following worship, SPRC will host a reception in Fellowship Hall for refreshments and fellowship.

A Note from Rev. Daniel Cardenas, Associate Pastor

God will fully satisfy every need.

When I was given the opportunity to come and serve in ministry in the United States, I felt a deep desire to pursue a master's degree. For a couple of months, I spoke with my wife about what I was feeling in my heart, and together we decided to pray and seek God's direction so that this might become possible, knowing that such an opportunity would open greater and better possibilities.

However, one of the main concerns that weighed heavily on our minds was our financial situation. There were many seminaries and institutions to choose from, but the cost and tuition payments deeply concerned us.

Yet we did not account for how good and merciful God is. While we were praying one night, the conversation naturally turned to how God had provided everything I needed during my time in seminary down in Mexico. I shared with my wife how, even at the beginning of my studies, I experienced the same fear; nevertheless, God always provided and sustained me with His blessing, supplying everything I lacked according to His riches in glory.

Therefore, just as He did in that season, we were convinced that if this was His will, He would provide everything we needed. And so He did. In one way or another, God moved hearts and raised up people to support me throughout this process of pursuing my master's education. You, as the local church, contributed generously and abundantly to make this goal a reality; without a doubt, God used your open hands to fulfill His purpose.

With all of this, both my wife and I are fully convinced that God never abandons us, and that no matter the stress or anxiety, He is greater than every worry and difficulty. Without a doubt, He is in control and always provides everything that is needed according to His riches.

Therefore, today we invite you to remember that situation in which God intervened in a marvelous way. Bring it once again to your heart and mind, and ask the Lord that, just as He was with you in that moment, He may also grant you today the assurance of His sweet and peaceful presence. We can confidently affirm that God will supply everything that is needed.

*"And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours
according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19 NRSV.*

Con Cariño.
Pastor Daniel Cardenas =)

SUMMER CHOIR BEGINS JUNE 3RD

I find it a wonderful testament to the commitment of our choir, as they are one of the few choirs I have known that continue to sing in worship during the summer months. They have an understanding that the choir's role in worship is two-fold: To provide special music that will enhance and illuminate Sunday's scripture and create an environment of praise to God, and also to help lead the congregation in singing the hymns and responses of the day.



But while we will be singing each Sunday, we will take little "mini-vacations" during the week during rehearsals. We will meet every other week for rehearsals, still keeping our 3 & 7 rehearsal times. Our "summer choir schedule" begins on June 3rd and will end on August 30. If you've thought about joining the choir, put Sept. 3rd on your calendar—we'll start our regular schedule on that Wednesday and we would love to have you join us!

Mary Ellen Clinard, Worship Director

"POP FOR POPS" IS SUNDAY, JUNE 21ST



We honor the men in our lives by offering them a cool drink after worship on Father's Day. We appreciate the love and support that so many of them give to their families and to our church family as well. A bit of history—we used to offer "Dad's Root Beer" to everyone, but over time, that brand got harder to find in large quantities, and some of the men were not fans of root beer, so now we offer a large variety of soft drinks to choose from! All men in the congregation—fathers or not—are welcome to enjoy this small gift from your congregation on Father's Day. We appreciate you!!

FAMILY MINISTRIES UPDATE

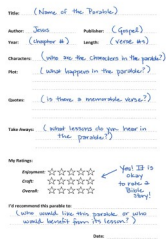
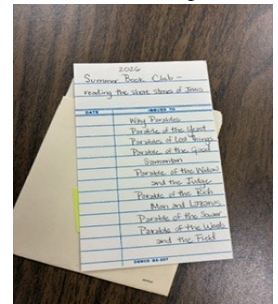
For the last 2 years, we offered a fun and exciting chance for the kids in our community to learn Biblical truths through music, art, and drama through our MAD Camp. This year we are putting our focus on a new ministry that will begin in the fall called Messy Church. It is a monthly evening event for all ages. Because of the amount of planning involved in both MAD Camp and Messy Church, we will not offer MAD Camp this summer. Messy Church will be something ongoing throughout the school year and will involve all family members and not just children. Several church members and staff attended "Messy Church" events at 2 other United Methodist Churches this Spring and we loved what we experienced!! We loved our experiences with MAD Camp, too, and perhaps we will bring it back in the future, but for now, if you would be interested in learning more about Messy Church, let Pastor Kim know.



Summer Book Club:

Worship Series Extras!

Starting on May 31st, be sure you pick up your Summer Book Club **worship tracker**. Our design this year is an old library pocket and check out card taken from our very own First UMC former library. Each card comes with all the parables in this worship series printed on them. Bring your card to worship each week to get it stamped, old school style!



We will also have for available for everyone a **book journal** for you to engage in each parable at a deeper level. This resource is designed to help you take the next step in experiencing the parable personally, letting it provoke, challenge, or inspire you. The book journals will be in the bulletin on Sunday, June 7th and extras will be available if you are not in worship that day. As always, if you want to church office to send you the book journal and/or worship tracker, just reach out to us and let us know!

Last but not least, you will find lots of books in the sanctuary this summer. Each of the windowsills in the sanctuary have a **shelf of favorite books** of our church members. Take some time to browse the window shelves and see what our fellow church members have loved reading. We would love to have your favorites featured on a shelf. If you are interested in participating, please let Mary Ellen Clinard know!

CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM/KEEPING IN TOUCH



The chairperson of the Congregational Care Team is Nancy Heberling. There are 12 other members of the committee. Their goal is to be in touch with the members of our church who aren't able to worship with us in person. Twice a year they ask for the congregation's help in sending greetings to those persons. A list of recipients will be available on Sun. June 7th. Please sign your cards and return them by Sun. June 21st. They will be delivered to them in person by one of the team. The

work of this team is a very important outreach from our church and this team does a great job of it! If you are interested in being a part of this team please contact Nancy Heberling.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Our neighbor, St. Paul's UCC is celebrating their 150th anniversary! On Sunday June 14th they will hold a special celebration during worship followed by a luncheon. If you would like to attend the luncheon, you can make a reservation by calling Darlene Adams at 937-790-0558.



COMMUNITY DAY 2026

Feed The Hungry Project is hosting a Community Day on Sat. June 6 from 11 am—7 pm at 834 Yankee Rd. Middletown OH 45044. There will be live music and entertainment, free food, giveaways, health screenings, a bouncy house and activities for kids, and agency resources. If you would like to volunteer with them, you can call 513-423-0433.

Summer Book Club – Let's Read Together!

An actual book club meeting this summer

Do you love to read but are never sure what to read? You are not alone! I have always had the problem of knowing what to read. Picking a book out of all the books in the library or a bookstore seemed overwhelming. Where to begin? What should I choose? Several years ago, I decided to become more intentional about my reading life and tackle this problem of what I should read next. To this end, I joined several book clubs. Three to be exact. One is an online book club that always has me reading books I love. I am also a part of a book club in my neighborhood where I am older than most of the members by a decade or two – these neighbors always have me reading outside of what I would typically choose. And lastly, I am a part of a book club that picks a new release each month, so I am always reading something recent.

I love my book clubs and since our summer worship series is inspired by stories, I thought it would be a great time to try a book club at church! I will be hosting a book club in June, in July, and in August. Our June book will be How to Read a Book by Monica Wood. Here is the blurb from the dustjacket:

Violet Powell, a twenty-two-year-old from rural Abbott Falls, Maine, is being released from prison after serving twenty-two months for a drunk-driving crash that killed a local kindergarten teacher.

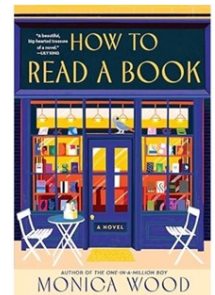
Harriet Larson, a retired English teacher who runs the prison book club, is facing the unsettling prospect of an empty nest.

Frank Daigle, a retired machinist, hasn't yet come to grips with the complications of his marriage to the woman Violet killed.

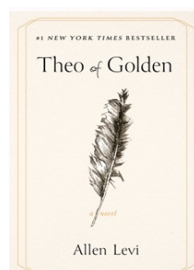
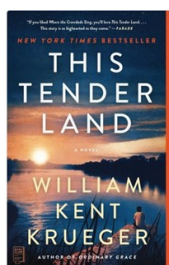
When the three encounter each other one morning in a bookstore in Portland—Violet to buy the novel she was reading in the prison book club before her release, Harriet to choose the next title for the women who remain, and Frank to dispatch his duties as the store handyman—their lives begin to intersect in transformative ways.

How to Read a Book is an unsparingly honest and profoundly hopeful story about letting go of guilt, seizing second chances, and the power of books to change our lives. With the heart, wit, grace, and depth of understanding that has characterized her work, Monica Wood illuminates the decisions that define a life and the kindnesses that make life worth living.

When I first read this book, I was recommending it to almost every reader I knew! I cannot wait to discuss it with you! We will have our club meeting on Sat. June 30th at 2 pm or 7 pm. Pick which ever time works best for you. Looking forward to reading with you this Summer!



July's book



Pastor Kim

August's book

June 2026

Birthdays

- Erin Edgren 01
- Eliette Cardenas 07
- Hernandez
- Larry Fillnow 08
- Joni Turner 10
- Mike Freeman 18
- Norm Harsh 27
- Tom Hazelbaker 29

Happy Birthdays!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 8:00 Breakfast Club 1:00 Safe Sanctuary	2 10 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry	3 3 & 7:00 Choir 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study	4	5 12:00 First Friday Concert	6
7 COMMUNION 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	8 8:00 Breakfast Club	9 10 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry	10 NO Choir 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study	11	12	13 9:00 Hope Circle @ Bob Evans
14 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	15 8:00 Breakfast Club	16 10:00 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry 4:00 CMC 5:30 Finance Mtg 6:00 Council Mtg	17 3 & 7:00 Choir 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study	18	19 AMBASSADOR ARTICLES DUE	20
21 Father's Day 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	22 8:00 Breakfast Club	23 10:00 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry 6:30 Trustees	24 NO Choir 6:00 Hispanic Bible Study	25	26	27
28 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Pastor & Staff Appreciation	29 8:00 Breakfast Club	30 10:00 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry 2:00 Book Club 7:00 Book Club	Dates to remember in July: 4 250th Anniversary of USA Independence 5 Healing Service following worship 8 No Choir 22 No Choir			



2026 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

**June 5, 2026
Michael Rondstadt &
Serenity Fisher**

Michael paints pictures with his cello and guitar and Serenity's vocals and piano tell the stories. A wistful and creative experience for everyone who hears them.

**First UMC - Middletown
@noon
Free Admission**