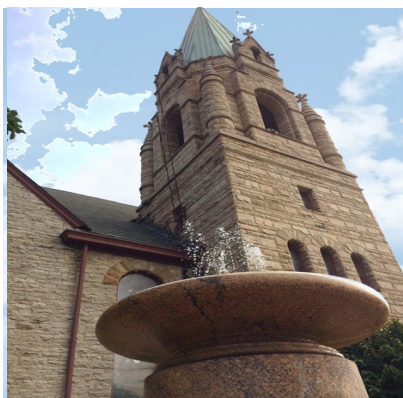




The Ambassador

August 2026

Est. 1805 | Published Since
1951

"I pray that you may have the power to comprehend,
with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height
and depth, and to know the love of Christ, that surpasses
knowledge,

so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to ac-
complish abundantly far more than all we ask or imagine, to
him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all genera-
tions, forever and ever. Amen."

Ephesians 3:18-20

Dear Friends,

Over the past several years, as students have headed back to school in August, I have developed the discipline of taking a few weeks to do worship planning for the upcoming year. As a part of that time, I pull a book off my shelf from the preaching section of my office library, and I read it during my planning time. Some years I am reading a preaching book that is a newer release, sometimes I will pick up a classic, and other times it will be a reread of one from my seminary textbooks. I like this part of the planning process. It exposes me to new teachings, it reminds me of theories that I have learned, and it also reminds of the why of preaching – why preaching and worship are important. It is good to be reminded of this.

As I prepare to enter worship planning time this year, I wanted to take a moment to remind you that what you do is important too. The ways that you participate in and support the ministry of First UMC are critical to making us the amazing church that we are. We would not be the church we are without your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness.

While I am doing worship planning, I am not only thinking about our worship life together – I am also praying for you. As Paul prayed for the church in Ephesians, I pray for you – that you may have the power to comprehend the immeasurable love of God in

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

News 2, 4-6
Pastor Daniel 3
Calendar & Birthdays 7



Continued on page 2

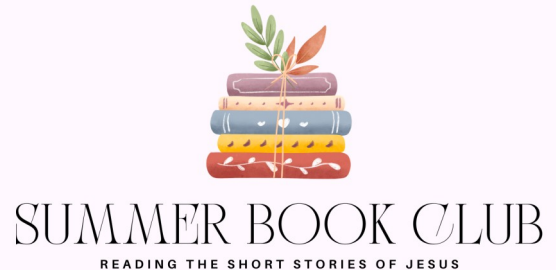
Christ Jesus our Lord. I pray that you may be filled with the fullness of God. I pray that we all may know the power of God that is at work within each of us. And I pray that we never forget that God is able to do abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.

You are important! The ministry we share is important! And I give thanks to God for the privilege and the honor of serving God with you here at First United Methodist Church! What a blessing!

Peace,
Pastor Kim
<><

Summer Book Club – reading the short stories of Jesus.

The month of August has us finishing up our Summer Book Club series on the parables of Jesus as well as bringing a few guest preachers to our sanctuary. Here is the worship schedule for August:



Date Preacher	Sermon Title	Scripture	
August 2	Parables of Treasures and Pearls	Matt. 13:44-46	Pastor Kim
August 9	Parable of the Dragnet	Matt. 13:47-52	Pastor Kim
August 16	Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard	Matt. 20:1-16	Pastor Kim
August 23			Rev. David Meredith
August 30			Rev. Deb Stevens

WORSHIP PLANNING TIME

Pastor Kim will be taking almost two weeks to plan worship series for the upcoming year. Beginning August 17th she will be praying, working creatively with Mary Ellen, and planning to create engaging worship for First UMC. During these two weeks Pastor Kim will be leading us in worship, but we will have guest preachers filling in the pulpit. On Sunday, August 23rd we will be having Rev. David Meredith sharing the message and on Sunday, August 30th, Rev. Deborah Stevens will be preaching.

If you have any questions about this time or about worship planning in general, please do not hesitate to ask Pastor Kim or contact the church office. Please keep Pastor Kim in your prayers during this time of reflection and planning. Thank you!

A Note from Rev. Daniel Cardenas, Associate Pastor

The Faithfulness of God.

Since becoming parents, my wife and I have intentionally looked for moments throughout the day when we can simply be together. One of our favorite times is in the evening, after the children have gone to bed. We use those quiet hours to prepare for the next day, load the dishwasher, and put away the toys and storybooks that have filled our home throughout the day. But beyond the chores, that time has become a cherished opportunity to talk, catch up on each other's day, and, every now and then, enjoy a movie or a television series together.

One evening, however, our plans took an unexpected turn. As we were searching for a few things on our family computer, a photograph of Eliette caught our attention on the laptop's desktop. We clicked on it, and suddenly an entire photo album opened before us, beginning with Eliette's birth and continuing through Pablo's baby shower.

There is a saying that "to remember is to relive," and that evening we certainly did. We revisited so many precious memories—from the day we learned that Eliette was on her way to the moment we first held Pablo in our arms. As we reflected on those memories, one thought became unmistakably clear: throughout every season, God has been abundantly merciful to our family during our time in the United States.

From the very beginning, we experienced God's kindness through the love and care of the church. Even though we were far from our homeland and our extended families, we quickly discovered that the bonds of Christian fellowship and community reached all the way to this wonderful place. Through your prayers, encouragement, friendship, and generosity, you became family to us.

Now, as a family, we are preparing for another journey—not only the road trip back to Mexico, but also a new season of life and ministry. Although we are returning to our home country, we know that we will once again need to adjust to a different pace of life, a different ministry context, and the new rhythms of raising our two little ones, Eliette and Pablo.

Even so, while the road ahead may bring new challenges, our confidence remains in the Lord. The God who faithfully guided us when we arrived in March 2022 is the same God who will lead us as we begin this new chapter in November 2026. As Scripture reminds us, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Trusting in His unchanging faithfulness, we step forward with gratitude for all He has done and with hope for all that He has yet to do.

*O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever! Psalm 118:1*

Con cariño y afecto.
Pastor Daniel Cardenas.

MUSIC AND WORSHIP NOTES

If you've attended worship services regularly in the last year or so, you may have noticed that we are singing a lot of hymns/choruses that are unfamiliar to you. Well, you are CORRECT! We have greatly expanded our exposure to all kinds of new texts and tunes.

When Pastor Kim and I get together to plan the elements of worship for each sermon series or Sunday, we do a deep dive into several sources of music-The United Methodist Hymnal (1989), "Faith We Sing" (2000) supplemental hymnal and the "Worship and Song" supplement hymnal that is the newest (2011) in this trio of resources. Lately, we have been adding the "Upper Room Worship book" that was created by the United Methodist Church. Published in 1985 and updated in 2007, this collection includes many alternate texts to familiar tunes, new liturgies, prayers, and world music.

I commend and am proud of this congregation for being willing to learn new words to old tunes, and to "draw the circle wider" when it comes to discovering new ways to praise God and order our lives through words and music.

We still love the old favorites, and we are aware that when we plan worship, we need to have a good mix of new songs and old hymns. If a new song has an unfamiliar tune, I will often replace the tune with a familiar tune so we can concentrate on the text and its meaning and not try and struggle learning new words and new music at the same time.

We are part of a living faith and I love it when the Order of Worship includes a 15th century hymn, an 18th century prelude, a 20th century prayer response and a 21st century anthem or new hymn. How good it is to know we stand on the shoulders of so many great hymn writers of the faith and that new songs are being created every day so we can praise God with freshness and joy!

Mary Ellen Clinard



COMMUNITY MINISTRIES COUNCIL (CMC)

Below are ministries that come under the umbrella of the CMC. Vickie Frazer is the chairperson. The rest of the committee is made up of those who lead/organize these individual ministries.

Monday Morning Breakfast Club: Serves breakfast from 8:00 – 8:45 am on Monday mornings in Epworth Hall. Brenda Byrd is the leader. This ministry is funded as a budget item.

Food Pantry: This ministry was highlighted in the March Ambassador. Terry Stephens is the leader.

Emergency Food: Two bags of groceries designed to provide food for 2-3 days. Recipients must have a way to prepare food and can only receive this 1x every 90 days. This ministry is funded as a budget item but also receives monetary and goods donations, especially from our *Harvest of the Heart* campaigns. The office staff oversees this ministry.

Utility Assistance: We offer assistance in the form of \$50 for either a Duke bill or water bill. We assist 6 persons per month. Recipients can only receive this 1x every 6 months. The office staff oversees this ministry and it is funded as a budget item.

Steve Swank is our church liaison with **SHALOM**, a community-wide program to house homeless guests during winter months.

Community Christmas Dinner—The Frazers organize volunteers to help prepare, serve, and clean up afterwards. This ministry is funded as a budget item.

JULY BOOK CLUB

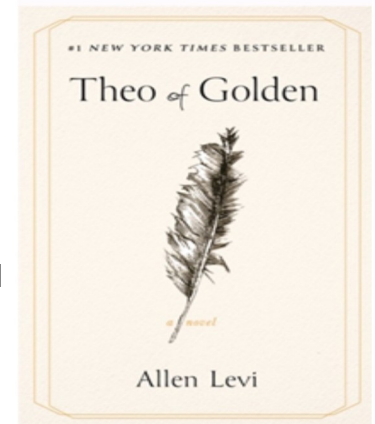
Make Up Discussion

Since Pastor Kim had a family emergency come up, we had to cancel our original discussion time. Our new book club meeting time for This Tender Land will be on Tuesday, **August 4th at 4pm**. Due to scheduling, there will only be 1 meeting.

SUMMER BOOK CLUB – Let's read together!

**August Book Pick: Theo of Golden
by Allen Levi**

Our August book club pick is Theo of Golden by Allen Levi. When I was reading this book in March I knew without a doubt that I wanted to bring it into our church life. It is the only book of our books this summer that I read thinking, "I must discuss this with my church!"



Here is what the book blurb says:

One spring morning, a stranger named Theo arrives in the small Southern city of Golden. He doesn't explain much about where he came from or why he's there—but when he visits the local coffeehouse, where pencil portraits of the people of Golden hang on the walls, he begins purchasing them, one at a time, and giving each portrait to the person depicted. In exchange, he asks only for the person's story. And so portrait by portrait, person by person, secrets are revealed, regrets are shared, and ordinary lives are profoundly altered.

A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, Theo of Golden is an unforgettable novel about the power of generosity, the importance of connection, and the quiet miracles that happen when we choose kindness and wonder.

This is going to be a great book to discuss! There are so many biblical themes that run through it. I am looking forward to re-reading it and talking about it with you!

Our book club discussion will be on Tuesday, 25th at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. If you need a copy and can't get one at the library (the wait list is long!) call the church office and let us know. We have an extra copy we can lend out!

Looking forward to our time together! – Pastor Kim <><

MESSY CHURCH

In the fall we are launching a new ministry called Messy Church. On the third Thursday of each month, from 5:30-7:00 you are invited to come to an all-ages time of worship and spiritual formation that explores God's love in an accessible way. At each Messy Church we will have a time of gathering, welcoming one another and getting to know one another better. We will share a simple meal together. And we will have lots of fun as we learn a Bible story through activities, crafts, and worship.



You will be hearing more and more about Messy Church in the upcoming weeks and months but if you have questions now, want to be a part of the ministry team, or even help with the planning – please call the church office and let us know. And please keep this ministry in your prayers even now, praying that it will be a way for people to come and experience the love of God in powerful ways.



BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

Calling all students! We will be blessing backpacks and bookbags in worship on Sunday, August 9th just in time for school to begin. All students and teachers and anyone who would like a back-to-school blessing will be

invited to come forward in worship for a special blessing, a book bag tag, and some stickers. If you are taking advantage of one of the last summer weekends and will not be in worship that day, please let the church office know and we will make sure we get you your tag and stickers!



CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY FOR PASTOR DANIEL

Pastor Daniel will preach his last sermon with First UMC on Sunday, October 11, 2026. Following the worship service that Sunday, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) will host a celebration luncheon to honor his ministry with us.

In November, Daniel and his family will be moving back to Mexico. He has secured partial financial assistance for the move from the West Ohio Conference and the Great Miami River District. To further assist them and send them off with our gratitude and well wishes for a safe journey, SPRC is inviting the congregation to contribute to a love gift that will help support their transition. Please have your gift to the church during August and early September.

We have many milestones to celebrate in Pastor Daniel's life, including his graduation with a Master's of Divinity from United Seminary and his ordination as a provisional elder of the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. Additionally, both Daniel and Anahi celebrate their birthdays just prior to our celebration luncheon.

Please keep Pastor Daniel and his family in your prayers, and make plans to join us for this special celebration.

If you have any questions, please talk to a member of the SPRC Committee (Barb Balsmeyer, Melanie Alderton, Ken Krummrich, Marilyn Clark, Rick Lyke, J.C.Shew, Sally Jo Inwood, Sue Faulkner, Mike Snyder, Lynda Goecke)

02	Imogene Orts
04	Debbie Hazelbaker
05	Karen Cooper
12	Linda Snyder
13	Bev Urso
15	Ted Wilson
19	Charles Orth
21	Bob Mucha
21	Joyce Parella
23	Nick Murphy
25	Rachel Hurley
26	Kathleen Darling
26	Cheryl Irwin
28	Bill Schaefer
29	Linda Fillnow

Happy Birthday!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 COMMUNION 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	3 8:00 Breakfast Club	4 10:00 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry 2:00 Congregational Care 4 July Book Club	5 6:00 Hispanic Study NO Choir	6	7 10:00 UWIF Board 12:00 First Friday Concert	1 8 9:00 Hope Circle @ Bob Evans
9 BLESSING OF BACKPACKS 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	10 8:00 Breakfast Club	11 10:00 Staff Mtg 1:00 SPRC 2:00 Pantry	12 6:00 Hispanic Study 3:00 & 7:00 Choir	13 9:30 Vworship & Design	14	15
16 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	17 8:00 Breakfast Club	18 10:00 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry NO Finance Mtg NO Council Mtg	19 6:00 Hispanic Study NO Choir	20	21 AMBASSADOR ARTICLES DUE	22
23 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	24 8:00 Breakfast Club	25 10:00 Staff Mtg 2:00 Pantry 4:00 CMC 6:30 Trustees 2 & 7 pm Book Club	26 6:00 Hispanic Study NO Choir	27	28	29
30 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship NO Jr. Church	31 8:00 Breakfast Club				September Reminders: 4 First Friday Concert 7 Labor Day	Early Sept. Birthdays: Imogene Orts 2nd Debbie Hazelbaker 4th Karen Cooper 5th



2026 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

August 7, 2026

NATIVE AMERICAN FLUTE

Discover the tranquil beauty of the Native American flute as Janice T. (Sunflower) plays, displays, and tells the histories of her collection of Plains-style Native Flutes.

First UMC - Middletown

@noon

Free Admission

first
church
MIDDLETOWN
a united methodist community
120 South Broad Street
Middletown, OH 45044