

DECEMBER 2023

GROW IN FAITH | SHARE IN WORSHIP | SERVE OTHERS

2123 Forest Ave.
Great Bend, KS 67530

P: (620) 792-2148

Rev. Tim Bever

(316) 841-1647

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00, 11:00 a.m.

Live-stream worship:

* 9 a.m. on YouTube
Channel GBFUMC

* 11 a.m. via
FaceBook
GBFirstUMC

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>December Worship/Blue Christmas/Pageant</i>	2
<i>Youth Group</i>	3
<i>Noah's Ark/Mission Events</i>	4
<i>Confirmation Class</i>	5
<i>Children's Ministry</i>	6-7
<i>Dream Center Meal/Cookie Plate</i>	8
<i>Calendar</i>	9
<i>Celebrations & Prayer List</i>	10
<i>Fall Activities Review</i>	11

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

As we embrace the joy and warmth of the holiday season, open our homes, and set a place at the table for family and friends, it's a good time to pause to reflect on how we can build meaningful relationships with our neighbors.

The First UMC church council has spent a good portion of this year considering our vision and mission as we plan toward the year 2050, and a recurring theme emerged - loving our actual neighbors.

Now, let's take this spirit a step further by asking ourselves: How can we invite our neighbors to have a seat at our table? How can we collaborate? Can we take a fresh look at where God resides in our community? We are excited to share a special announcement that will extend the spirit of hospitality beyond the holidays.

Starting on January 14th, First United Methodist Church will embark on a transformative journey with "The Good Neighbor Experiment" to equip us with practical tools to forge deeper connections with our literal neighbors.



During this sermon series, we will explore the meaning of being good neighbors and delve into the profound impact such connections can have on our community. The heart of this initiative lies in the understanding that as a church, we are not just a congregation that gathers within these walls; we are a family of faith with open doors, welcoming all who seek refuge and spiritual nourishment.

During the sermon series, you will hear from several First UMC members on how we can shift our mindset from...

- Inauthenticity to JOY
- Program to RELATIONSHIP
- Scarcity to ABUNDANCE

Beyond church on Sunday, we're inviting YOU to go a step further and join a Neighboring Team. These small groups will engage in discussions and practical experiments to reach out, connect, and build lasting relationships with those who live and/or work in our downtown neighborhood.

Let's make 2024 a year of intentional neighborliness, where we not only know our neighbors by name but also by heart. Join us on January 14 as we kick off The Good Neighbor Experiment, and let's embark on a journey that will not only transform our individual lives but will also have a profound and lasting impact on First UMC.

Blessings,
Andrea Bauer
Evangelism Chair

SHARE in Worship

DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

Let's come worship together:

12/3/2023	Psalm 80:1-7				“Hope”
12/10/2023	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	Children’s Program	10:00 a.m.		“Peace”
12/17/2023	Psalm 126				“Joy”
12/24/2023	Psalm 89:1-4	One morning Service	10:00 a.m.		“Love”
12/24/2023	Luke 2:1-20	Christmas Eve Candlelight Services	7 & 11 p.m.		“Go!”
12/31/2023	Various	Lessons and Carols	10:00 a.m.		

- First UMC has communion on the first Sunday of the month for the Traditional Service and every Sunday during the Revive Service.
- * Service times are 9 a.m. Traditional Service and 11 a.m. REVIVE! Service each Sunday, unless it is noted above that there is only one service (usually at 10 a.m.), such as on 5th Sundays and special-event Sundays.
- * If you can't worship with us in person, the Traditional Service may be found on our YouTube channel, **GBFUMC**, and the REVIVE! Service is available via FaceBook/**GBFirstUMC**.



Blue Christmas

Blue? Yes, blue as in the blues. As in “I am feeling blue.”

Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with

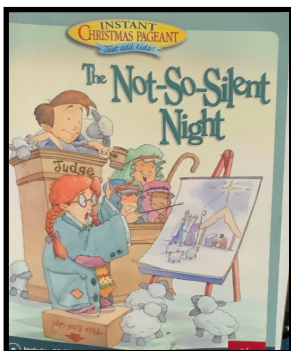
**Blue Christmas Service
December 21st
at 6:00 p.m.**

cancer or some other disease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and

joviality painful for many people.

The Blue Christmas service is a sacred space for people living through dark times.

It is a time of reflection, accepting where we really are, and holding out healing and hope.



SHOUTING GOD’S PRAISES SEND THREE SHEPHERDS TO COURT

EYG and Kids Klub will be presenting the program “The Not-So-Silent Night” during worship service at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 10th.

The play follows three young shepherds who joyfully shout God's praises after visiting the

baby Jesus. However, they were they were soon to find out they were “disturbing the peace”?

So, come join the children in a Bethlehem courtroom for a hilarious trial and a surprising verdict! There will also be songs and merriment along the way.

This will be a One-Service Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

November Attendance			
	9:00	11:00	TTL
5 —	68	32	100
12 —	54	44	98
19 —	One Service		167
26 —	39	27	66

These numbers are for those who attended worship for each of the four services in November.

GROW in Faith

YOUTH GROUP

December excitement started rather early this year! James and I were gifted a themed advent calendar. I know this might seem like a very simple thing, but I have never utilized an advent calendar before. I'm so excited to see what little treat each calendar day will bring!

December is the time of year when we get the opportunity to give and receive gifts with loved ones (but the greatest gift of all is the Messiah!).

I'm so excited to have something as simple as a little calendar to build my excitement about God fulfilling His promise to us.

I'm also reminded of the gifts that were present throughout November.

For example, students were given the opportunity to participate in Operation Christmas Child by packing their very own shoe boxes and listening to a testimony of a fellow student who had received one of these boxes and the impact it had on them.

Another gift included the opportunity to attend the Barclay play: "Two from Galilee", that told the love story between Mary and Joseph which was the relationship that God used to bring joy to the world through their Son, Jesus! It was so exciting that students got to see this beautiful



performance.

Another gift was the time and resources provided by Dilly & Doc. I have the option on Mondays to hangout with a student and create faith-related crafts. Jady and I had so much fun creating gratitude boxes and leaf art! It provided us with a common goal to hold each other accountable to.

I also enjoyed attending the middle school musical performances. It's so refreshing to see students invest in their talents!

Speaking of students



investing, Johnny had attended our church for the first time! James and I enjoyed hanging out with Johnny at Starbucks and chatting with his parents.

Lastly, I was gifted with some needed Face-Time



Youth Group
Meet on
Wednesdays
5:30-7:15 p.m.

Say hello
and help us
get to know (YOU)th!



Brittani Frazier
Youth Director

— Continued on Page 5

GROW in Faith



NOAH'S ARK PRESCHOOL (NAP)

NAP Christmas Program December 19th

This month will go by so quickly for those in Noah's Ark Preschool.

The children are practicing for their holiday program; they are talking about the reason for the season – Jesus' birth; and they are working on their parents' gifts.

NAP's Christmas program is set for Tuesday, December 19th at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Everyone is invited to attend.

After the program there will be treats in Fellowship Hall.

The children will have their Christmas party during their classes on Tuesday, December 19th. Each child will bring a wrapped book to participate in a gift exchange.



Christmas break starts on Wednesday, December 20th, and school will resume on Wednesday, January 3rd.



NAP's Thanksgiving party included playing with blocks and colors in Fellowship Hall, before they shared their "Stone Soup" and other treats.

Kaylee Keilman,
NAP Director

Angel Tree Gifts Due December 10th; Food Boxes Delivered on 16th



Angel Tree: We had 59 names for our Angel Tree this year. Many of the ornaments disappeared off the tree during our Thanksgiving dinner, and others were chosen later.



Please remember, your wrapped presents must be back by Sunday, December 10th.

A big THANK YOU to everyone who took the time to select an ornament and buy presents to make these foster children's holiday a little brighter.

Food Boxes: Volunteers will be needing the third weekend in December.

At 5 p.m. on Friday December 15th anyone wishing to help should gather in Fellowship Hall to

put together the non-perishable food bags and divide them according to area of town.

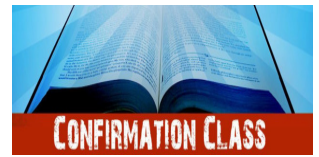
Then at 9 a.m. on Saturday December 16th, a few volunteers will be needed to help bag up the cold and frozen items.

At 10 a.m. on the 16th, delivery of the Christmas Food Boxes starts and a few more volunteers will be needed.



GROW in Faith

2024 CONFIRMATION CLASS STARTING SOON



Teaching Confirmation Class is one of my very favorite things. It gives me a chance to get to know the youth even better and more importantly, it gives the youth a chance to know God better and more.

Confirmation class teaches our youth about the United Methodist Church and our beliefs on things like God, the Bible, Church, worship, John Wesley, the growth of Methodism, Grace, free will, prayer, salvation, baptism and membership, and my favorite, the Quadrilateral. (ask them in a few months. HA)

Confirmation class is open to all youth who want to attend that are between 12 and 18 years old. Classes will start on January 14th and will run for either 8 or 9 Sundays from 4:00-5:30 p.m. The number of weeks depends on how many questions they have and how it flows.

Either way, confirmation Sunday will be March 17th. That Sunday the youth will plan the service(s), with

help from me, and will give their statements of faith on what THEY believe at that point. Then they will be confirmed, becoming full professing members of the United Methodist Church and Great Bend First UMC.

There are a couple of rules about confirmation that you need to know.

- 1) All Confirmands must attend worship each week of confirmation classes. They will be helping most weeks.
- 2) All Confirmands must be at every class. There will be a lot of material covered and there will not be time to go back over anything that is missed.
- 3) All Confirmands must do all the work. It isn't fair to the others if people are not prepared.
- 4) These rules will be explained again in detail to the confirmands and parents.

We are going to have a lot of fun in confirmation because I believe that's how God wants us to live. And

confirmation is a very important part of our faith journey in the United Methodist Church so these rules are very important and will be adhered to "strictly". I do realize that spring break is the March 8th through the 16th so we will adjust March 10th and 17th accordingly. Just be flexible with me and I'll do my best to make this an unforgettable time for your kids.

If you have questions, please ask up front so there are no surprises later on.

There is a signup sheet in the back of the sanctuary or you can just email me. I'll need the name of your youth, their age & grade, and your contact info (cell phone preferred). If you've already done this, you're all set. We have youth and a helper signed up already.

I'm know most of your kids pretty well and I'm super excited to go on this journey with them! I hope the date and time works out for them all. — *Pastor Tim*

Confirmation Class
Starts
January 14th
for 8 - 9 weeks
4-5:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER STUDIES FOCUSED ON THANKFULNESS

— Continued from Page 3
with a parent. We had the opportunity to share ideas, concerns, and feedback.

Thankful for all that November included. "Thankful" was also the

series we tackled in November.

This series focused on helping students cultivate a habit of thankfulness.

Thankfulness is committing to a deeper trust in God.

Trust in God is worth it, because He is faithful! Isn't that why we are so joyous in December?

Stay tuned to see what gifts will present themselves in December!



GROW in Faith — Children’s Ministry



EYG WORKS HARD ON THEIR CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

EYG just finished Mission Possible, everything is possible with God.

Starting in November, EYG have worked hard on the Children’s Christmas program, which will be presented during the 10 a.m. Worship Service on December 10th.

EYG will not meet Wednesday, December 20th and 27th, while they are out of school for Christmas break.

After the New Year, Elementary Youth Group will start meeting again on January 3rd.



In November, the Elementary Youth Group (EYG) filled Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes, and tried to get through “laser beams”.

Vivian Harbaugh
EYG

KIDS KLUB JOINS WITH EYG TO PRESENT PAGEANT

Kids Klub will only meet on the first two Wednesdays in December.

On December 6th, they will join the EYG class for play practice on the sanctuary

stage. The play will include musical numbers featuring the Kids Klub members.

December 13th: they will have a Christmas Party, which might include

“decorating” edible Christmas trees.

Kids Klub won’t meet on Wednesday, December 20th or 27th. They will resume on January 3rd.



Larissa Graham,
Director of
Children’s Ministries

Parade Float Never Got to Float Due to Snowstorm



GROW in Faith — Children’s Ministry

CHILDREN’S SUNDAY MORNINGS FILLED WITH JESUS

Children have two opportunities to gather on Sundays: at 10 a.m. for the Discovery Hour (Sunday School) and at 11 a.m. for Children’s Church. Activities this month will focus on:



Jesus himself – the Son of God who came to bring us light and life.

December 3rd: Shining Bright – From the start, the light of Jesus shone so bright. Elizabeth’s baby leapt for joy when Elizabeth met with Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus. Even then, some were able to recognize that Jesus was the light of the world. Luke 1:39-48, Mary Visits Elizabeth

December 10th: no Children’s Church (only one service)

December 17th: Beautiful Light – A star in the sky drew the Wise Men to the tiny town of Bethlehem where they found baby Jesus. Today, the Holy Spirit draws us to the light of Jesus. Matthew 2:1-12, The Wise Men Visit Jesus

December 24th and 31st: No Children’s Church (only one service)



No meetings on November 19th due to Thanksgiving Dinner/Worship at 11:00 a.m.

Larissa Graham,
Director of
Children’s Ministries

10 a.m. Sunday School

We are starting a new curriculum. 5G’s People are scrambling to get 5G, the latest and greatest that technology has to offer. In this series, kids will be challenged to embrace the 5Gs of Christmas and accept the greatest that God has to offer – his son Jesus.

Objective: Kids will learn the 5Gs of Christmas.

December 3: Grace.

Objective: Kids will say, “I will show grace to others as God has shown me grace.”

December 10th: Get ready for the Christmas Play. Snack, bathroom, singing!!

December 17th: Glory. **Objective:** Kids will say, “I can praise God for how glorious he is.”

December 24th: no Sunday school

December 31st (9:00 a.m.): Giving-Getting. **Objective:** Kids will say, “I get to give to others because God has given me all I need.”

11 a.m Children’s Church

New series. **Tagline:** This Christmas, Follow the Star

Idea: The Wise Men followed a star to find the baby Jesus, little did they know , the true star was

Join In On the Caroling and Chili Cook-Off Merriment

Christmas Caroling - December 10th at 4:00 p.m.

Let’s join together to spread Christmas cheer on Sunday, December 10th for Christmas Caroling! We’ll meet at 4:00 p.m. to distribute routes, songbooks, and festive flair! We plan to share Christmas Carols to several nursing

homes and home-bound members. Following caroling, we’ll return to the church to enjoy fellowship and the Chili Cook-off!

Chili Cook-Off - December 10th at 6 p.m. The Golden Ladle is up for grabs at our Annual Chili Cook-off! Prepare a pot of

your favorite recipe of chili or soup to enter, or just come to taste test and enjoy! A winner will be crowned in two categories: Chili and Soup!

Side items and desserts are also welcome. Whether you go caroling or not, everyone is welcome to join in for chili, soup and fellowship.



SERVE Others



SHOEBOXES START JOURNEY TO THEIR CHILDREN

A **HUGE THANK YOU** to all who participated in the Operation Christmas Child shoebox project!

We delivered 124 shoeboxes to the local drop-off site in mid-November. There were also 5 shoeboxes filled online (maybe more of you would like to use that option next year if you do not choose to shop).

We were so thankful to the EYG for filling 17 boxes this year, the Youth Group who filled 8 boxes (this was



their first time), the MOPS group (they meet in our church) for filling 21 boxes, and the volunteers who packed 26 boxes at the church one evening with donated items. And thank

you so much to those of you who filled your own boxes.

Last but certainly not least, we are so thankful to those of you who helped by contributing to the shipping fund! We were able to send funds to cover shipping on all of our boxes.

Regardless of how you helped, we hope you were blessed by participating in this wonderful project and that you can picture the delight on a child's face as they open a box and feel the love of Jesus!

Questions:

Jann Sherman
620-792-2627



S.O.S.

(Soup on Sunday, December 17th, at Dream Center)

It will be a soup supper at the Dream Center at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 17th.

Here's what's needed;

- 3 Crockpots of soup – your choice

- 1 Box of crackers
- 2 Desserts, each enough for 18
- At least 4 servers from 4:45 – 6:00 p.m.

If you are interested in

helping with this community outreach project, please call or text Judy Turner at 620-617-6082 or call the church office.

*Bless ya!
Judy*

Questions:

Judy Turner
620-617-6082



COOKIE PLATES; AWARDS; CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

The UWF will need lots of home-made cookies to make their annual Christmas Cookie Plates.

Cookies may be brought to the church either on Sunday, December 10th, or by 9 a.m. on Monday, December 11th. The UWF

ladies will fill the cookie bags and distribute them to our shut-ins and those who have suffered a bereavement this last year.

Having completed the required activities in Social Action, Spiritual Growth,

Giving, Membership and Education activities, the UWF will be awarded a 7 Star Award for 2023.

The Walter-Evers UWF Circle will meet at 11 a.m. December 13th at Perkins for a Christmas luncheon.

LaVonne Gerritzen
UWF President

First United Methodist Church — December 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
3 9 am and 11 am – Services in Sanctuary 9 am on YouTube & 11 am on Facebook 10 am Discovery Hour 5-8 pm Vintage Wheels	4 10 am Cookies Due/start bagging 11 am Distribution 6 pm Girl Scouts	5 5:30 pm TOPS 6 pm Girl Scout 7 pm Train Club	6 5 pm Chancel Singers 5:30 Kids Klub/EYG/YG 5:30 pm MOPs	7 5:30 pm CORE Community 7 pm NA 7 pm Praise Band	1 8 9	2 9
10 9 am Discovery Hour 10 am Worship w/Children's Pageant 4 pm Bell Choir 4 pm Caroling 6 pm Chili Cook-off	11 10 am Cookies Due/start bagging 11 am Distribution 6 pm Girl Scouts	12 5:30 pm TOPS	13 11 am UWF Circle @ Perkins 5 pm Chancel Singers 5:30 Kids Klub/EYG/YG	14 5:30 pm CORE Community 7 pm NA 7 pm Praise Band	15 9-3 Quilt Guild 5 pm Food Box Bagging non- perishable items	16 9 am Bagging perishables 10-12— Delivery of Food Boxes
17 9 am and 11 am – Services in Sanctuary 9 am on YouTube & 11 am on Facebook 10 am Discovery Hour 5 pm Dream Center Meal 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	18	19 5:30 pm TOPS	20	21 5:30 pm CORE Community 6 pm BLUE CHRISTMAS Worship Service 7 pm NA	22	23
24 Christmas Eve ONE MORNING SERVICE 10 am TWO CANDLELIGHT EVENING SERVICES — 7 pm AND 11 pm	25 Christmas Church Office Closed No NAP Classes	26 Church Office Closed No NAP Classes	27 No NAP Classes	28 No NAP Classes 7 pm NA	29 No NAP Classes	30
31 New Year's Eve 9 am Discovery Hour 10 am Service in Sanctuary on YouTube & Facebook					Find our Calendar Online:	

SHARE in Worship — CELEBRATIONS & PRAYER CONCERNS



December Birthdays

- 1 Samuel Unruh
- 3 Karole Erikson
- 3 Taylor Calcara
- 4 Kaitlyn Albers
- 5 Molly Sager
- 7 Frances Fanshier
- 7 Michael Yarmer
- 7 Sonya Rein
- 9 Brittani Frazier
- 11 Frank Deines III
- 11 Mike Harbaugh
- 14 Steve Beaumont
- 15 Robert Luthi
- 16 Tim Bever



- 19 Leah Graham
- 20 Diana Webster
- 25 Kolten Cory
- 26 Marilyn Batman
- 26 EmmaLynn Zecha
- 27 Brock Bauer
- 28 Rick Garrett
- 28 Konner Ireland
- 28 Keely Ireland

December Anniversaries

- 6 Rod & Danae Cory
- 13 Cory and Molly Sager
- 16 Alan & Janet Schremmer
- 17 Randall & Angela Fanshier
- 29 Roger & Gayle Fanshier
- 29 Harlen & Linda Jerke
- 30 Scott & Dawn Sisson



WE REMEMBER THESE IN OUR PRAYERS:

All Those Who are Involved in Cancer treatment and recovery:

Earl Schmidt, Amnee Brown (April Harbaugh's sister), **Dick Lytle, Linda Essmiller, Leonard Bunselmeyer, Lisa Baum, Kathy Rogers, Dana Cheney, Gary Cheney, Suzie Evans, Terry Sauerwein, Carol Bird, Roberta Bartlett**

All Those Who Reside in Nursing Homes/Care Facilities or are home-bound: (*Aster Estates*)

Jackie Curtis, Claire Stephenson, Pat Stonebraker and Ivy Webster; (*Brookdale*) **Leonard French, Eugene Hoelscher, Harriet Herzberg, Eileen Ingersoll, and Mary Joiner, ;** (*River Bend*) **Carol Thier, Earl &**

Janice Schmidt; (*other facilities*) **Roberta Bartlett, Larned; Chuck Parmer, Larned; and Betty Erickson, Kansas City.**

All Those Serving Our Country in the Military:

All our men & women in the armed forces including Bryan Farthing.

GROW in Faith



GIVE THANKS FOR ALL — Fall was busy for the church, from making over 100 jump ropes for the OCC shoeboxes; to decorating the church for Christmas; to filling more than 150 snack bags for area youth; to helping 30 families do 121 loads of laundry; to peeling 70 pounds of potatoes, cooking 12 turkeys, and preparing all the other items to serve 167 people at our annual Thanksgiving meal.



First United Methodist Church

2123 Forest

Great Bend, KS 67530



P: (620) 792-2148

www.GBFUMC.org

[FaceBook.com/GBFirstUMC](https://www.facebook.com/GBFirstUMC)

Contact the office to receive this newsletter by email or find it on the website, www.GBFUMC.org.

WORSHIP @ FUMC!

SUNDAY

- 9:00 a.m. Worship Service
- 10:00 a.m. Discovery Hour
- 11:00 a.m. REVIVE

Virtual Worship Services:

- 9:00 a.m. on YouTube channel GBFUMC
- 11:00 a.m. on FaceBook/GBFirstUMC

SPECIAL SUNDAYS & 5TH SUNDAYS

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

COMMUNITY GROUPS that meet each week, bi-weekly or monthly at FUMC are CORE Community, Girl Scouts, NA, TOPS, MOPS, Central Kansas Thread Benders Quilt Guild, Vintage Wheels of Great Bend, and Golden Belt Model Railroad Club.

Contact us:

Pastor, Tim Bever

tim@gbfumc.org

Youth Director, Brittani Frazier

youth@gbfumc.org

Children's Director, Larissa Graham

grahaml@bartonccc.edu

Treasurer, Sarah Schwartz

finance@gbfumc.org

Secretary, Rebecca Peak

secretary@gbfumc.org

Coordinator of Worship Arts, Marc Webster

kmsband@yahoo.com

Revive Worship Leader, James Frazier

revive@gbfumc.org

Noah's Ark Preschool Director, Kaylee Keilman

NAPdirector@gbfumc.org

Custodian, Marc Webster

custodian@gbfumc.org