

COMBINED NEWSLETTER

First and Woodmar United Methodist Churches

Issue 016

July 2025



Worship with Us – Sundays at 10:15

July and August - At Woodmar United Methodist, 7320 Northcote Avenue, Hammond

Merger Vote Results

The majority of members from each church voted YES at the official vote on June 29! Our churches will officially merge at the end of August.



Joint Rummage and Bake Sale: a Win-Win for Church and Community

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to everyone who donated items and contributed hours of work to produce the June 21 joint FUMC/WUMC Rummage Sale and Bake Sale. Special kudos go to Rummage Sale Chair Katy Province-Garza and Bake Sale Chair Sue Yerkes. Thanks to their efforts, and those of the teams they led, who unpacked, sorted, packaged, priced, set-up, sold, cleaned up, and boxed up merchandise and tasty baked goods, net proceeds from the sale exceeded \$2,600. Those funds will be divided evenly between First Church and Woodmar UMC.

In addition to raising funds for ministry, the event was a unique opportunity to welcome hundreds of members of the community to the church, deliver bargains large and small, provide our neighbors with information about Messy Church and the Community Preschool & Childcare, and offer a refreshing cup of cold water on a very hot day!



Staff Parish Relations Committee Update

Pastor Jim is beginning the process to become commissioned as a Provisional Elder in the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. He has been approved to start the process, which will involve a lot of work over the next few years! To better support Pastor Jim's growth and professional development, we are establishing a dedicated time for him to focus on this important work. Monday mornings have been designated as Pastor Jim's professional development time. During this period, we kindly ask that you avoid contacting him, except in the case of an emergency. The Staff-Parish Committee believes this time will allow Pastor Jim to enhance his skills and better serve our congregation, and we appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we implement this change.

Finally, we invite you to reflect on additional ways in which you can support Pastor Jim and our church family during this time of transition. Whether it's through prayer, volunteering, or simply offering a kind word, every act of support strengthens our community and helps us move forward together. Thank you for being an integral part of our church family.

The next Staff-Parish meeting is scheduled for July 17 at 5:30 pm at Woodmar.

Carrie Ward, SPRC Committee member



Thoughts from Pastor Jim

Politics!

Did the title of this article make your eyes roll? It would be understandable if it did! When we think of politics, we usually mean the government: federal, state, and local. Sometimes I have heard people criticize an organization (including churches) saying that they don't like all the internal politics. I get it. Politics, at any level, can be nasty and divisive.

I took a Political Science course in college. This was in Louisiana, and the course was taught by the living caricature of a Louisiana lawyer. He usually wore light colored seersucker suits with a big bowtie. It was kind of comical, and I admit that I remember nothing from that class except the definition of politics, which was "the process, art, and science that any group of people use to make decisions." Well, that doesn't sound so annoying or scary, does it?

But groups of people bring with them opinions, experiences, hopes, fears, agendas, character, and psychology, all in the context of relationships with each other. These are the things that make decision making (politics) difficult and frequently unpleasant. In Acts 15 we read about the politics of the Jerusalem Council with its varying factions, speakers, and decision-making process. This tells us that the church has had to use political processes from the beginning.

We have just made a big decision, and now the political process continues as we make many smaller decisions to enable us to live into being Hope United Methodist Church. I pray that we come together with one shared goal of creating the strongest, most outward focused, missional church that we can be. But contained within this broader goal are many constituent hopes and dreams. I envision a hospitable and comfortable location for The Vine Food Pantry, a thriving preschool, Messy Church reaching more of our community, more people engaging in Bible studies and discipleship building activities, hands-on mission projects, starting a campus ministry at Purdue Northwest, vibrant and meaningful worship, and much more.

Yet this excitement is tempered by the grief that comes with change. Right now, that grief may be felt most acutely by our First Church members, but our Woodmar members will have their own experiences of grief. May our bonds of love grow stronger as we weep together and comfort one another.

The political process to bring our big, shared dream and all of our smaller dreams to reality will at times be messy. Yet, if our political process is centered in grace with open and listening minds and hearts, rooted in faith in and love for Jesus, with deep trust that God's Spirit is at work in us, then I am confident that the church we create today will bear much fruit in the years to come and be a place known for joy. The way that we approach this work now, the political process we embody, will set the precedent for how Hope UMC will be years and decades from now. We set the tone. I believe in you, your love, your faith, and the gifts that you have to share.

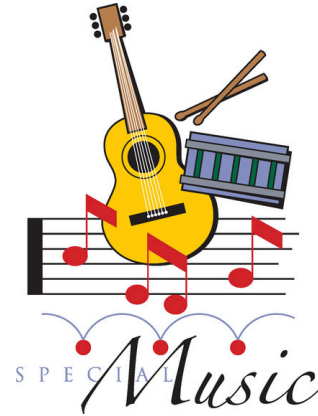
Thank you all,
Jim

Opportunities to Grow Our Faith

Discipleship
and Spiritual
Vitality

Mission U Express Summer Events

United Women in Faith is sponsoring Mission U Express events in July and August. These one-day events, studying the curriculum "Practicing Hope Together," will be held in three locations: Plymouth, Bloomington, and Indianapolis. The closest event for us will be in Plymouth on July 19 at Plymouth UMC, 425 South Michigan Street. No study books are required, but some books will be available to purchase. Lora Ward will attend and hopes to have some riders. Please contact her at 708-650-6417 for more information. Cost is \$20 per attendee, which includes lunch. Childcare will be available, but each parent must provide lunch and other needs for their children. Deadline to register is July 5.



Summer Worship: Volunteers Sought for Special Music

With the choir on summer break, the Worship Committee is seeking volunteers to provide special music throughout the summer. If you are interested in sharing your musical gifts, please reach out to Sarah Ward. Thank you for your continued support and participation in our worship life!

Sarah Ward, Worship Committee chair



First Church and Woodmar continue to experience severe financial distress that prevents us from having paid staff to do some of the various tasks needed. Woodmar has been without a maintenance person and a custodian for many months.

Until the financial situation improves, we continue to seek volunteers willing to assist at both buildings. Please call either church office: Woodmar (219) 844-3030; First Church (219) 932-5915) to add your name to a "call-sheet" of volunteers to help with tasks such as clearing walks of leaves, simple repairs, restocking paper towel dispensers, or office projects. We deeply appreciate your help.

Pastor Jim Denton



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith has suspended regular meetings for the summer. However, we will gather on Monday, August 25, at 11:00 a.m. at Woodmar for our annual potluck. All women are invited to attend. Please bring a dish to share and join the fellowship.

We will resume our regular meetings in September. We will then select times and dates for future meetings that are convenient for the majority of members.

Reaching Out to Our Community

Evangelism
and Outreach

Community
Impact and
Missions



The Mission focus for July and August for both First Church and Woodmar UMC is Brianna's Hope, a non-profit organization providing help for individuals recovering from drug addiction. If you are unable to donate financially, please pray for the volunteers supporting it and those who are recovering from addiction.

Thanks to all those who donated in May and June to support Messy Church and also to everyone who prayed for and helped with the June 21 joint Rummage Sale and Bake Sale.

Brown bag Sunday is the first Sunday of every month. Pick up an empty brown bag at either church and return it filled with non-perishable food items the following Sunday. Richard Miller will deliver the bags to The Vine Food Pantry at First Church on the first Monday of the month. As First Church and Woodmar UMC move toward merging officially, The Vine (which will continue as a congregational ministry of Hope United Methodist Church when the new church is launched), will continue to be located at First Church until a new location is established.

Richard Miller, FUMC Missions Team co-chair



Paws for Peace Going to Hartsfield

Paws for Peace will take our dogs to Hartsfield Village in Munster on July 23 at 2:00 pm. We will meet at the Assisted Living wing. We would like to have more dogs join us for a fun time with the residents. They are so happy to see and interact with our dogs. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Suzanne Wasmund at 219-865-6453.

Social Justice Support for African American Girls

UWIF District President Lora Ward has secured the rights to the documentary film "Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools," which is a United Women in Faith emphasis for 2022-2026. Lora is seeking people to help her organize a screening of the movie sometime this fall. Please contact her at 708-650-6417. "I am hoping we can get some of the Hammond administration and teachers involved also," Lora says. "If you are a Hammond teacher, please let me know of your contacts in the schools. I would love to have you on the committee."

Below is a short description of the movie. "PUSHOUT: THE CRIMINALIZATION OF BLACK GIRLS IN SCHOOLS" is a feature length documentary that takes a close look at the educational, judicial and societal disparities facing African American girls. The documentary is based on Dr. Monique W. Morris' groundbreaking book of the same name and confronts the ways in which the misunderstanding of Black girlhood has led to excessive punitive discipline which in turn disrupts one of the most important factors in their lives: education.

THE VINE FOOD PANTRY AT-A-GLANCE June 2025

New Clients.....	54
Return Clients.....	412
Total Clients Served.....	466
New Households.....	19
Return Households.....	207
Total Households Served.....	226

Total Pounds Distributed: 6,261

Building Relationships

Relational
Vitality

Someone You Should Know

Although not a professing member of either of our churches, Dwayne Godbolt has been attending services at Woodmar Church for many years. Dwayne retired from The City of Hammond and is active in several local charities. He is a member of the Hammond Optimist Club, which is known as one of the top youth service clubs in Northwest Indiana. Partnering with his friend Fred Behrens, a retired Hammond police officer, Dwayne also works with Caash Charity of NW Indiana (caashcharity.org). Caash Charity was formed in 2017 by a group of former Clark High School football coaches whose goal is to give to those in need, which includes individuals, families and organizations. Since 2017 this organization has surpassed the \$133,800 mark in donations to people in NW Indiana and beyond, helping over 2500 families or organizations.

In 2024, with Dwayne's help, Caash Charity donated Thanksgiving turkeys to several Woodmar families. In April 2025, during the Easter season, and again with Dwayne as our contact, they donated hams and turkeys to 11 families in need between First Church, Woodmar Church and The Vine Food Pantry. Of note, The Hammond Optimist Club also made a cash donation to The Vine Food Pantry. More recently, in May, through a grant from the City of Hammond, we received over \$250 in cleaning supplies from Caash Charity. Recently, Dwayne, partnering again with Fred Behrens, recycled all of the old fluorescent light bulbs that needed to be disposed of from both Woodmar and First Church. Dwayne Godbolt has been the major reason that we are receiving consideration for all of these donations and we owe him a HUGE thank you, for all that he has and continues to do.

We now have an opportunity, working with Dwayne and Caash Charity, to sell souvenir Pierogi Fest Cups as a fundraiser. These cups are refillable with water, free of cost, at the Caash Charity booth during fest, which runs from July 25-27 in Whiting. We are now helping to sell these cups for \$3.00 each. The church will receive \$1.50 for each cup we sell and \$1.50 will go to the Caash Charity to support their efforts. If you would like to purchase, or better yet take some cups with you to sell to family and friends, please see or contact Fran or Pete Vukovich.



Thank You for Yardwork

A big thank you goes to those who helped at Woodmar's recent yard workday. Thank you to Chuck and Judy Anderson, Pete and Fran Vukovich, Cyndi Slaboski, Pete and Lora Ward, Sarah Ward, Carrie Ward, Ralph Smith, and Jose Jimenez for all their hard work. Woodmar's yard is looking much better!



Keep Reading

For July, the book club's selection is *The Only Woman in the Room* by Marie Benedict. It is the fictionalized account of famous Hollywood screen star Hedy Lamarr. She was known for her beauty but not recognized until recently for her outstanding contribution to science. It is a recommended read for those who like inspirational women. Please join us by Zoom on Monday, July 21 for an informal discussion of this book. You may call the church office for a Zoom link.

Children's Ministries

Birthdays
Children
Miscellaneous



Woodmar UMC

- 9 Lynn Underwood
- 10 Nancy Jarmula
- 12 Pete Vukovich
- 14 Sean Dennehe
- 14 Yvonne Jackson
- 20 Nina Christiansen
- 21 Eva Arce
- 21 James Lopatkiewicz
- 26 Linda Trinkle

First UMC

- 4 Malane Young
- 5 Dave Metzger
- 7 James Tapper
- 10 Marty Hawkins
- 11 Charlotte Moore
- 15 Pam Stahl
- 22 Mary Hinshaw
- 24 Anthony Bell, Sr.
- 24 Sherry Nowakowski
- 24 Brittany Wicklund
- 25 Sandy Koester
- 26 Laila Mosley
- 27 Fran Miklos
- 28 Andres Castro
- 30 L.E. Mosley



Children's Ministry Update

Our weekly Children's Message continues to be a special part of our Sunday worship services while Sunday School classes take a break for the summer months. We hope this gives families time to enjoy vacations, activities, and special moments together.

If you are in church and looking for children's activities, be sure to grab a bag before heading into the sanctuary. Each week, specially prepared activity sheets are available to help keep children engaged and happy during worship.

Sunday School will resume in September. When the summer draws to a close, we'll be anxious to welcome everyone back for a new year of learning, faith-building, and fun! Each of you is an important part of our church family. Our prayers are with you for a wonderful summer!

Carrie Ward, Children's Ministry Team member

Community Preschool/Childcare Update

Live In The Ville was a hit! We connected with many families! Check out the pictures on our Facebook page. We will be participating in the town of Highland's July 3rd Twilight Parade. If you plan to walk with us, please contact Karianne (219) 844-3030 ext. 305.

Our 2-year-old classroom is opening in August, and we can't wait to welcome the little ones back to the education wing again! If you have, or know of anyone who has, toys or puzzles for 2-year-olds that they would like to donate, please send them to the preschool office.

The pre-k room had a visitor this month. Mrs. Uribe came and led a cooking project with the class. They enjoyed her family's recipe for strawberry upside-down cake. Thank you to Ms. Cyndi and Mr. Tom for power washing our playground equipment. With the fresh equipment and some extra mulch, it is ready for summer fun!



This is a photo from our booth at Live in the Ville.

Finance and Administrative



First Church Finance News

While the actual numbers are not yet complete, First Church is on target to have a negative loss for the month of June. The actual loss may be \$10,000 or higher. The Finance Committee will let you know once the actual numbers are calculated.

As previously reported, First Church is carrying more money in our checking account than what is covered by FDIC insurance. The current balance in our checking account is approximately \$365,000. That amount is composed of money from the sale of the parsonage and funds donated for restricted accounts such as The Vine Food Pantry, Memorials, Second Mile Giving, etc. The Finance Committee voted to move \$200,000 from the checking account and open a new account with Heartland Methodist Foundation, which will be invested to yield a higher rate of return than can be earned in a simple checking account. We will continue to keep a balance in First Church's checking account that will allow us to pay our monthly operating expenses, including salaries, benefits, and insurance. All of these dollars are considered money from restricted accounts, and we will have to account for every dollar and how it is spent.

On Sunday, June 29, The congregation of First United Methodist Church voted to formally merge with the Woodmar United Methodist Church and form a new church to be called Hope United Methodist Church. As we move forward with that process, let me assure you that the Finance Committee will work closely with Pastor Jim and the Trustees to make sure that all necessary repairs will continue to be made at First United Methodist Church to protect the building.

Pastor Pete Ward (ret.), First Church Finance Committee chair

Woodmar UMC Finance News

May shows a total income of \$17,151 with \$8,937 coming from current expense giving and \$133 loose offering. Expenses were \$24,044, resulting in a net loss of just under \$8,000. Our quarterly insurance bill was \$6,836. Otherwise our expenses are pretty much in line with the last few months.

The Community Preschool and Childcare shows a \$4,441 profit for the month, but the year-to-date loss is \$35,745. Their bank balance is \$78,226. They plan to start a two-year-old class this fall and expect this to help their financial situation.

First United Methodist Church

6635 Hohman Ave, Hammond, IN 46324

Phone (219) 932-5915

www.hammondfumc.org

email – admin@hammondfumc.org

Office Hours

Brenda: Tuesday & Thursday, 8:30-2:30

Jim: Tuesday & Thursday, 10:00-3:00

Woodmar United Methodist Church

7320 Northcote Ave, Hammond, IN 46324

Phone (219) 844-3030

www.woodmarumc.org

email – office@woodmarumc.org

Office Hours

Brenda: Monday & Wednesday, 10:00-1:00

Jim: Monday, 10:00-3:00 & Wed., 1:00-4:00

Please keep in mind that pastoral care needs may mean that Pastor Jim will be in and out of the office during these times. It is always advisable to call to schedule a time to meet with him. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Pastor Jim or Brenda.

Lay Servant Ministries



Summer '25 Lay Servant Academy

Introduction to Ministry: Basic Course

Led by Pastor Sheri LoCascio (Spouse of Pastor Jim Denton!)

Five Tuesdays: July 29, August 5, 12, 19, 26, in person

6:00 pm - 8:15 pm (CT)

Hobart Trinity UMC, 3561 Randolph Street, Hobart, Indiana

All United Methodists in our (newly named and expanded) Northern Lakes District are invited to participate in the in-person Introduction to Lay Ministry class, also known as the BASIC course. This Lay Servant Academy class is designed to come alongside participants to help them grow as confident, informed disciples of Jesus Christ who can become active in their mission field/community in ways that transform the world. Attendance is required at every class to receive course credit.

Cost: \$10.00 + cost of text

All participants MUST register online by July 22 at this link:

<https://inumc.swoogo.com/NorthLSABasic>

Payment Information: Visa and MasterCard accepted. Following registration, please print a copy of your confirmation as your receipt.

Check payments must be mailed within 7 days of registration. Please include a copy of your invoice with your check. Make checks payable to INUMC Mail to:

INUMC, Attn: Susan Burris, 301 Pennsylvania Parkway #300, Carmel, IN 46280

Cancellation policy: Cancellations must be received via email to susan.burris@inumc.org by 11:59 pm (CT) on July 22 to be eligible for a refund less processing fee. No refunds after this date.

Class: 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. This basic course is required for first-time attendees. Text - Lay Servant Ministries Participant Book-Basic Course by Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson. Available on [Amazon](#) and [Cokesbury](#).

Questions? Contact Registrar Karen Williams, 219/869-2324 or mrs.karen.wms@gmail.com



Fall '25 Lay Servant Academy via Zoom

Living Our United Methodist Beliefs

Led by (former First Church Senior Pastor) Mary van Wijk

Zoom Class through Hebron UMC

Saturdays, September 6, 13, 20, 27

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Are you looking for an online Zoom option to learn more about the United Methodist Church and its founder, John Wesley? Are you looking for a course to complete the “heritage class” requirement to become a Certified Lay Speaker? You are invited to participate in this Lay Servant Ministries class to begin or continue training for living out the call to make disciples for the transformation of our churches, communities, and world. You must attend all four sessions to receive credit.

Cost: \$10.00 + cost of text

All participants MUST register online by September 1 at this link: <https://inumc.swoogo.com/NDLsaFall25>

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

Check payments must be mailed within 7 days of registration. Please include a copy of your invoice with your check. Make checks payable to INUMC Mail to:

INUMC, Attn: Susan Burris, 301 Pennsylvania Parkway #300, Carmel, IN 46280.

Cancellation policy: Cancellations must be received via email to susan.burris@inumc.org by 11:59 pm (CT) on September 1 to be eligible for a refund less processing fee. No refunds after this date.

Class: Living Our United Methodist Beliefs led by Pastor Mary van Wijk - This course will 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. This class is required for Certified Lay Speakers. The required course text is *Living Our Beliefs: The United Methodist Way* by Kenneth L. Carder. ISBN *DR571*978-0-88177-571-6. The text is available on [Amazon](#) and [Cokesbury](#).

For additional information, contact Registrar Karen Williams, 219/869-2324 or mrs.karen.wms@gmail.com



North District In-Person Fall 2025 Lay Servant Academy

Sundays, September 7, 14, 21, 28

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm (CT)

Hebron United Methodist Church, 202 West Church Street, Hebron, Indiana

All United Methodists in our (newly named and expanded) Northern Lakes District are invited to participate in the Lay Servant Ministries Academy, which is designed to come alongside participants in a step-by-step approach to grow confident, informed disciples of Jesus Christ who can become active in their mission field/community in ways that transform the world.

Cost: \$10.00

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

Check payments must be mailed within 7 days of registration. Please include a copy of your invoice with your check. Make checks payable to INUMC Mail to: INUMC, Attn: Susan Burris, 301 Pennsylvania Parkway #300, Carmel, IN 46280.

Registration deadline: September 7, 2025 2:30 pm (CT)

Cancellation policy: cancellations must be received via email to susan.burris@inumc.org by 11:59 pm (CT) on August 31 to be eligible for a refund less processing fee. No refunds after this date.

Fall 2025 Lay Servant Academy Classes

Introduction to Lay Ministry (for adults) - 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. This basic course is required for first-time attendees. Course Text: Lay Servant Ministries Participant Book - Basic Course by Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson. Available from [Amazon](#) and [Cokesbury](#).

Introduction to Lay Ministry (for YOUTH grades 8-12) - led by Karen Williams. Discover and employ your personal spiritual gifts, learn the worth of servant leadership, and be rooted in good spiritual practices. This basic course is required for first-time attendees. Course Text: Lay Servant Ministries Participant Book - Basic Course by Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson. Available from [Amazon](#) and [Cokesbury](#).

Exploring a Culture of Care for a Caring Congregation - Led by Pastor Tom Clark. Become equipped with tools for deep listening and grow your capacity to care in difficult situations of loss—all within healthy boundaries and a thoughtful awareness of the varying cultural contexts of caring ministry. Course Text: The Caring Congregation Ministry: Implementation Guide by Karen Lampe and Melissa Gepford. Available from [Amazon](#) and [Cokesbury](#).

Called to Preach (Preaching 1) - Led by Pastor Wayne Williams. Designed for those who have not completed formal preaching training or for those who are called upon to preach in a pastor's absence. This class is the required preaching course to become a certified lay speaker. Course Text: From Pew to Pulpit: A Beginner's Guide to Preaching by Clifton F. Guthrie. Available from [Amazon](#) and [Cokesbury](#).

Leading Public Prayer - Led by Pastor Jim Denton. Prayer is something we learn; it is something that can be taught. For many, however, the only teaching about prayer they ever receive is modeled in Sunday worship. This class will present you with an opportunity to gain experience in the discipline of leading public prayer. This class is required for individuals who desire to become a certified lay speaker. Course Text: Shaping the Prayers of the People: The Art of Intercession by Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher. Available from [Amazon](#) and [Cokesbury](#).

Soul Reset - Led by Pastor Cathy Allison. Discover the power of rest through practices that create spiritual wholeness. Beyond toxic culture and "idols" of busyness, distraction, and consumption at the root of so much of our anxiety and dis-ease, participants are invited to find their rest in the healing nearness of Jesus Christ. Course Text: Soul Reset: Breakdown, Breakthrough, and the Journey of Wholeness by Junius B. Dotson. Available from [Amazon](#) and [Cokesbury](#).

All participants MUST register online by September 7 at this link: <https://inumc.swoogo.com/NDFall2025>

Questions? Contact Registrar Karen Williams, 219/869-2324 or mrs.karen.wms@gmail.com

Jane Harper-Alport, FUMC Church Council chair
Adapted from North District News and inumc.org.



You're invited to a Life Line Screening event!

Where: Woodmar UMC
When: July 16, 2025



Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in **Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screenings**.

Trusted by over 11 million customers.

Screenings are simple and painless. Get peace of mind or early detection.

Who should attend: Anyone **age of 40+**

Special Pricing for \$129

- Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening

4 ways to book your appointment...

Scan here:



Call 800-324-9458
and use promo
code: HABC001

Visit
LLSA.SOCIAL/HABC

Text the word
"circle" to
216-279-1607

These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease.

Those with abnormal results should discuss possible next steps with their family healthcare provider and ensure they understand the risk and benefits of any additional testing or procedures.