

# COMBINED NEWSLETTER

First and Woodmar United Methodist Churches

Issue 016

June 2025



## Worship with Us – Sundays at 10:15

June - At First United Methodist Church, 6635 Hohman, Hammond

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

*"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 4:19*



## OFFICIAL MERGER VOTE! Sunday, June 29, after worship

**See Pastor Jim's article on page 2  
for more information.**

### Sign Up for Rummage Sale - June 21

June has arrived, and the combined FUMC/WUMC Rummage and Bake Sale is just a few weeks away! The sale will take place on Saturday, June 21, from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Everyone is encouraged to participate by contributing your donations, energy, and prayers for this (likely final!) major missional opportunity to serve our community at the 6635 Hohman Ave. location.

Sign up in the narthex at First Church to work the week of the sale (June 16-21) and a few days following (to pack up leftover merchandise). Lots of volunteers are needed to make the sale happen, and there are many tasks, large and small to accomplish. Please contact Kay Province-Garza (FUMC Missions co-chair), (708) 707-6119 with questions or if you need assistance transporting boxes of donations to the church.

See Page 9 for information about what and how to donate!

### Worship Committee Update

The Worship Committee met on Sunday, June 1, to focus on planning for the next six weeks of worship. Pastor Jim will be away on June 8, 15, and 22. During his absence, we are grateful to have Pastor Pete, Pat Mosley, and Donna Beifuss stepping in to lead worship. We deeply appreciate their willingness to serve and guide us during this time.

Looking ahead, the committee is exploring ways to enhance the worship experience for all and encourages the congregation to stay tuned for opportunities to get involved and support worship in meaningful ways.

With the choir on summer break, we are 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

# Thoughts from Pastor Jim



## Road Signs and Milestones—Mark Your Calendar!

Every summer growing up my family drove to Mississippi to visit family. I always looked forward to spending time with my cousins, but I didn't look forward to the long drive. My dad was never in a hurry to get there and we, frustratingly, would stop for a full sit-down breakfast along the way and then another long sit-down lunch. There were many breaks at rest areas and usually we would also take a side trip to see some "attraction" or state park that Dad had not seen.

To make the trip more bearable, I broke the trip down into smaller, more attainable chunks. Instead of thinking "ugh, we still have 600 miles to go," I would look forward to the next exit. I knew every town named on the exit signs between our home and my grandparents' house 750 miles away. As we passed each exit, I would name the next one and how many minutes until we reach it.

The journey toward merger that our congregations have been on for more than two years has seemed a lot like that long drive to Mississippi. "Will we ever get there?!" and "not another detour!" are apt complaints for both journeys, and we are tired. But now, we are almost there--phew! It has been a long and, at times, difficult journey, but there are only a few more road signs left to pass before we reach the journey's end.

This month, the merger proposal will be mailed or distributed by hand to every professing member of each church for your prayerful review and study. The Merger Exploration Team—consisting of Pastors Jim and Pete, Niki Avina, Bob Brown, Nancy Craig, Jane Harper-Alport, Cyndi Slaboski, Fran Vukovich, and Mary Zaikis—will be happy to answer any questions you have about the details of the proposal.

On June 29, following worship, each church will hold its own church conference to vote on the proposal led by our Associate District Superintendent, Rev. Paul Arnold. At the conferences, professing members will receive a ballot. There may be a time to ask clarifying questions, but there will be no debate on the question. The vote will be a simple yes or no to accept the proposal.

If the proposal passes both church conferences, the proposal will then be sent to the Bishop and Cabinet of the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church for their approval. The Cabinet meeting to approve the merger proposal will take place in August. If the Cabinet approves the merger, we will officially become Hope United Methodist Church on August 28. There will also be some additional legal work to be completed during this time.

Further, following a yes vote from both congregations, on July 6 we will immediately move to worshipping only at the Northcote location except for the last Sunday in August. On August 31 we will hold a final service at the Hohman Ave. location where we will celebrate the history and ministry of First United Methodist Church of Hammond and de-consecrate the building. Likewise, on August 24, we will hold a final service in the Northcote building that celebrates the history and ministry of Woodmar United Methodist Church. On September 7, we will gather as one consolidated congregation in the Northcote building for an opening celebration of Hope United Methodist Church. Finally, in late October or early November, we will have a Service of Dedication for the newly united congregation with a more robust celebration and fellowship meal.

The end of this journey is near. The last few miles over the coming weeks are a time for tears of sorrow and tears of joy. There is sadness at the very real loss that both congregations are experiencing, and it is important that we make space for that grief and embrace it. At the same time, assuming we choose to merge to become a new church, there is much cause for joy and celebration. This is an opportunity to reverse the decline our churches have been experiencing and an opportunity to live into the future God is calling us to journey toward. I am convinced that this is not happening because of declining finances and attendance, but because God has a new thing in store for us. God is faithful, God is loving, and God has a plan for us! In the midst of our change, Christ is our solid rock. Look for the road signs pointing the way forward and enjoy the journey.

Blessings, Jim

# Opportunities to Grow Our Faith



## Staff Parish Relations Committee Update

We had a wonderful time celebrating the retirement of Terry Watson, FUMC building maintenance manager, following the April 27 worship service. It was a truly lovely occasion, marked by laughter, fond memories, and well-wishes for Terry's next chapter. We are so grateful for Terry's years of dedicated service and the positive impact he has made and continues to make on our church community.

As we look ahead, we're pleased to share that Nancy Craig will be the point person to report back to the Woodmar Council on behalf of the combined FUMC/WUMC Staff-Parish Relations Committee. She will help keep everyone informed and ensure smooth communication between the committee and the council.

SPRC invites you to reflect on how you can continue to 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 combined SPRC meeting is scheduled for June 16 at 5:30pm.  
Carrie Ward, Staff-Parish Relations Committee member

## Next Messy Church is June 24

In May, we explored God's generosity and ways that we can grow generosity. Please bring your spare change to church each Sunday and to Messy Church to contribute to the Change for Change jar. Children will give fun reminders of the collection. Messy Church friends decided that half of the Change for Change will be used for Messy Church operations and half of the Change for Change will be used to support the Blessing Box.

June 24 is the date of our next Messy Church. Come and experience the joy!



## 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. The cost is \$20 per attendee, which includes lunch. Child care will be available, but each parent must provide lunch and other needs for their children. The deadline to register is July 5.



# Reaching Out to Our Community

Evangelism  
and Outreach

Community  
Impact and  
Missions



## Community Garden

Thank you to Thomas Blejski for planting and tending the Community Garden. Can you show the garden some love? Weeds are popping up and watering will soon be needed. Contact the church office if interested or just stop by the garden. The garden is located next to the north parking lot of Woodmar UMC along 173<sup>rd</sup> Street.

## Mission News

The Mission focus for June for both First Church and Woodmar UMC will be Messy Church. If you are unable to donate financially, please pray for the Messy Church team and participants from our church and community. Thanks to all those who donated in May to support Messy church.

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. During the months when we worship at Woodmar, Richard Miller will deliver the bags to First Church on the first Monday of the month.

Mark your calendars for June 21, when First Church and Woodmar will conduct a joint rummage sale and bake sale at First Church, the proceeds of which will be divided evenly to support both churches (see Rummage Sale article for details). Richard Miller, FUMC Missions Team co-chair

## 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.



New Clients.....	60
Return Clients.....	428
Total Clients Served.....	488

New Households.....	20
Return Households.....	214
Total Households Served.....	234

Total Pounds Distributed: 8,520

# Building Relationships

Relational  
Vitality

## Help Needed

First Church and Woodmar continue to experience severe financial distress that prevents us from having paid staff to do some of the 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 met at Les Cafe in Highland for our last get-together before our summer break. We enjoyed fellowship, sharing funny stories of the past, and good food. We will gather next on Monday, August 25 at 11:00 am at Woodmar for our annual potluck.

We want to remind everyone to contribute items for Phil's Friends. This worthwhile organization provides toiletries and other items to local cancer patients. The collection box is in the Narthex at Woodmar. Items that are needed for these care packages are: lotion (fragrance-free 5 oz or smaller), hats, fuzzy socks (women's only), Biotene mouthwash (6 oz or smaller), decks of playing cards, gift cards, lip balm, journals (5x7, not spiral bound), puzzle books, single toothbrushes and toothpaste (5 oz or less), tissue packs and blankets (rolled throw blankets crocheted or fleece tied). The Woodmar crochet group can show you how to make the blankets.

WEAR RED FOR  
**Pentecost**  
Sunday, June 8



## Woodmar Yard Work Day

Saturday, June 14

9:00 am to noon

Come help us spruce up  
the church property!



## Read On

The book club has chosen *We Solve Murders* by Richard Osman, best-selling author of the Thursday Murder Mystery Club series, as their June read. Osman introduces fans to a new detective duo in *We Solve Murders*, the first book in a new mystery series. Amy Wheeler works in private security. She's currently on a private island off the coast of South Carolina guarding bestselling author Rosie D'Antonio. In the nearby waters, a dead body and a bag of money are found on a yacht. Amy calls her father-in-law, Steve Wheeler, for help. As a thrilling race around the world begins, can Amy and Steve outrun and outsmart a killer? Join us for an informal discussion of this club selection on Monday, June 16 at 1:00 pm. For a Zoom link, please call the church office.

# Children's Ministries

Birthdays  
Children  
Miscellaneous



## Woodmar UMC

June 3 Anna Baker  
June 9 Mary Lou Hughes  
June 13 Alan Geurts  
June 13 Ramah McCabe  
June 16 Sue Craig  
June 18 Deidra Meeker  
June 26 Valorie White

## First UMC

June 4 Heather Hoffman  
June 8 Selena Camacho  
June 10 Mitchell Atkinson  
June 11 Caraleya Castro  
June 12 Phyllis Preda  
June 13 Nick Tompulis  
June 15 Joshua Tapper  
June 18 Pauline Luthi  
June 18 Lora Ward  
June 20 Heather Mejia  
June 21 Jenna Province  
June 26 Laila Mosley  
June 27 Robin Kosarko  
June 28 Estelle Vasek  
June 30 Jacob Kosarko

## Children's Ministry Update

We're excited to let you know that our weekly Children's Sermon will continue to be a special part of our Sunday worship services throughout the summer! However, our Sunday School classes will be taking 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, we'll have special activity sheets prepared 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! Thank you for your understanding and for being such an important part of our church family. Have a wonderful summer!

Carrie Ward, Children's Ministry Team member

## Community Preschool and Childcare

We will be at Live In The Ville, a street festival on Kennedy Ave in Hessville, on June 6 from 5 to 8 and June 7 from 12 to 5. Our booth will be advertising the church, preschool, and Messy Church! We will rent a photo booth to help get our info out there! Messy Church activities will be available for children. We will also be participating in the town of Highland's Twilight Parade on July 3. If you are interested in participating, contact Karianne (219)844-3030 ext 305.

We have a "new" teacher! We welcome Ms. Karyme as an official part of our staff. Ms. Karyme was a Hammond Area Career Center intern during the fall. She will be working in the pre-k room for the summer with Ms. Nicole.

## WE ARE HIRING

**ASSISTANT & LEAD TEACHERS**

We seek qualified early childhood educators who support children's learning through hands-on experiences that foster social-emotional development, cognitive skills, and fine and gross motor development. We need someone to create a warm, nurturing, and professional environment so young children will develop creativity, problem-solving, and social skills. We are looking for someone to be part of our team that shows a positive attitude, is passionate and committed to our families. Our program's vision is that early childhood is the foundation of learning.

Work experience in childcare is preferred.

Please email your resume to:  
[director@communitypreschoolandchildcare.org](mailto:director@communitypreschoolandchildcare.org)

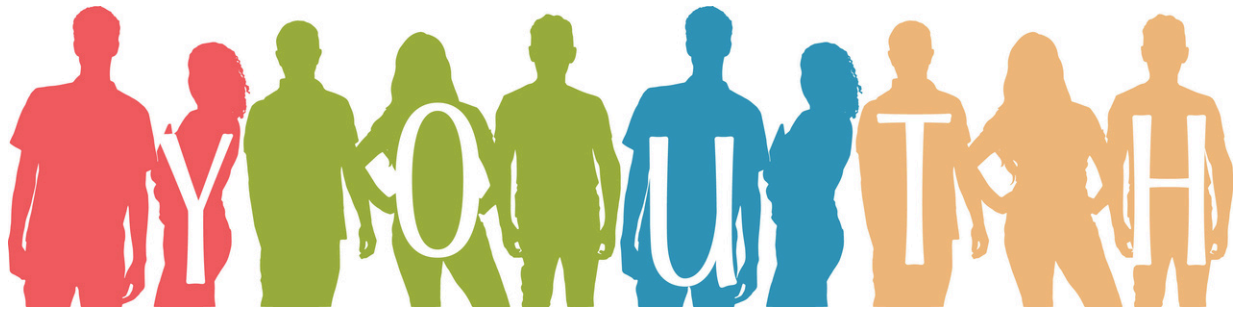


**COMMUNITY**  
Preschool & Childcare

7320 Northcote Ave., Hammond, IL  
219.844.3030 ext. 305

[www.communitypreschoolandchildcare.org](http://www.communitypreschoolandchildcare.org)





## **“All Together” Senior High Camp 2025 plus Youth Ministry Grant**

Everyone who has experienced a summer week at Epworth Forest for INUMC Senior High Camp will tell you it's one of the most memorable faith-inspiring and FUN experiences a young person (or adult counselor!) could ever have. Share with a young person in your life some of the special features planned for **Senior High Camp 2025, June 29 to noon on July 4**, which is open to all graduates of 8th through 12th grade:

- Bishop Malone will preach at one of the worship services!
- EVERY youth will receive their very own FREE Student Bible to take home with them (thank you Heartland Methodist Foundation!)
- Two young people who have served as UMC Missioners will join campers for the whole week.
- All 3 United Methodist-related universities in the state will be present on one of the days to share the great features of their institutions.
- Engaging seminars are designed to practically equip our youth with Biblically based principles around a variety of topics.
- Co-directors for Senior High Camp will be Conference Superintendent Rev. Dr. Marti Lundy and Rev. Dr. Kent Lundy, who both have great hearts for youth!
- PLUS, Camp will include a variety of awesome worship experiences with relevant messages grounded in Jesus Christ, with outstanding praise music.

Talk with prospective campers in your life and invite them to register at <https://www.inumc.org/2024/07/31/all-together-senior-high-camp/>

Jane Harper-Alport, FUMC Church Council chair

Adapted from North District email message from Rev. Dr. Kent Lundy

## **Better Way Youth Trip to Washington D.C.**

Calling all youth, graduates of 8th—12th grade: Mark your calendar and make plans to sign up for the North District's Better Way Youth Trip, July 12-17, 2025, which this year will be an exciting excursion to Washington, D.C. This interreligious, cross-cultural immersion experience, led by Rev. Dr. Kent Lundy, will offer an exploration of our nation's capital including a visit to the General Board of Church & Society (located close to the U.S. Capitol), deepen participants' commitment to live the “better way” of Jesus Christ, and allow each youth to create new connections throughout the district and conference. Watch your email and the newsletter and worship bulletins for details and directions to register.

Jane Harper-Alport, FUMC Church Council chair

Adapted from North District events postcard



# Finance and Administrative

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## Woodmar UMC Finance News

April ended with expenses over income of \$7,179. The offerings for the month were only \$5,700, which is down substantially from previous months. Our cash in the bank at the end of April was \$32,916. Expenses were up a little due to having 3 payroll periods in April. Our year-to-date bottom line is a positive \$2,665.

Community Preschool ended April with expenses over income of \$14,071. This was also due to having 3 pay periods for the month and a lag in reimbursement for Child Care Development Fund assistance. They have \$73,970 cash in bank and their year-to-date (August 2025 through April 2025) bottom line is a negative \$40,186. Their fiscal year will end in July.

## First Church Finance News

### April Finances vs May Finances

The church had monthly income of \$13,026.44 and monthly expenses of \$28,135.57, resulting in a net loss of \$10,601.13. Our May income was \$9,870.11 in offerings and e-giving and total income of \$11,418.11 with total monthly expenses of \$16,002.13, resulting in a net loss of \$4,584.02. Our checking account had a balance of over \$361,092.51. This money is made up of funds from the sale of the parsonage as well as other funds that are restricted to their use. However due to our financial situation, we continue to use restricted funds to pay our monthly obligations including salaries, utilities, insurance, pensions, etc.

The Finance committee continues to work with Heartland United Methodist Foundation, formerly the United Methodist Foundation of Indiana, to develop a plan on how to be the best stewards of the money we presently have in our checking account. At the present time, the amount of money in our checking account exceeds the maximum amount insured by FDIC. Our goal is to maintain enough money in the checking account to meet our financial obligations over the next several months and invest the rest in a short term investment portfolio in order to earn some interest.

I will continue to meet with our Treasurer, Larry Alport, and Pastor Denton to monitor our finances and will keep the congregation informed as how we are addressing our financial shortfall.

We will also begin the process of evaluating where Hope United Methodist Church will bank, a new financial policy manual, and a credit card policy.

Pastor Pete Ward

Finance Chair, First United Methodist Church, Inc.

### **First United Methodist Church**

6635 Hohman Ave, Hammond, IN 46324

Phone (219) 932-5915

[www.hammondfumc.org](http://www.hammondfumc.org)

email – [admin@hammondfumc.org](mailto: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](http://www.woodmarumc.org)

email – [office@woodmarumc.org](mailto: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.





## Donate to First/Woodmar Rummage Sale through June 18

### The following **WILL** be accepted for the sale:

- Household items: kitchen, dining, bedroom, bathroom, garage, garden, etc.
- Dishes, cups, glasses, serving ware, silverware and utensils, pots and pans, bakeware
- Giftware, jewelry, collectibles, home decorations, candles
- Dining accessories: tablecloths, placemats, napkins, party goods
- Curtains, decorative pillows
- Bed linens, blankets, quilts, Afghans
- Bath towels and accessories (scales, vanity items, standing towel rack)
- Fabric, notions, yarn, craft supplies
- Artwork, wall hangings, baskets, photo frames, vases, pots for plants
- Office, desk, and school supplies and accessories (but NO computers)
- Small electronics: coffee makers, blenders, clocks, radios, DVD players, adding machines, etc.
- Home and garden tools
- Christmas ornaments, decorations
- Toys and games, dolls, stuffed animals, puzzles
- Infants' clothing
- Accessories: purses, shoes, boots, belts, scarves, hats, gloves, mittens, etc.
- Books, CDs, DVDs, vinyl records
- Small furnishings that can be moved by ONE person, e.g., dining and desk chairs, children's desks, end tables, lamps, small bookcases, card tables, etc.
- Bicycles and sports equipment (basketballs, tennis racquets, skis, etc.)
- Paper bags and newspapers to wrap and package sale items

### The following **WILL NOT** be accepted for the sale:

- Ø Items that are soiled, damaged, torn, or otherwise not in working condition
- Ø Adult clothing
- Ø Children's clothing
- Ø Large furniture or household items too large to be moved by one person
- Ø Exercise equipment (too large to be moved by one person)
- Ø Computers or computer equipment
- Ø Mobile phones or tablets
- Ø Bed pillows and mattresses
- Ø Perishable goods
- Ø Liquids

Plan to begin depositing contributions for the sale in the northwest corner of First UMC Fellowship Hall beginning the first week of June through Wednesday, June 18.

All donations must be

- clean
- in working condition
- boxed or bagged
- clearly marked "Rummage Sale"