

# COMBINED NEWSLETTER

First and Woodmar United Methodist Churches

Issue 015

May 2025



## Worship with Us – Sundays at 10:15!

May - At Woodmar United Methodist Church, 7320 Northcote, Hammond

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



### Sign Up for Rummage Sale - June 21

Have you begun to clean out your cupboards, closets, basement, and garage? We're just six weeks away from the Annual Rummage Sale! Plans are underway for a combined FUMC/WUMC Rummage and Bake Sale scheduled for Saturday, June 21, at FUMC 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 location.

Sign up to work the week of the sale and the days following (to pack-up leftover merchandise) on the large sheet posted on an easel in the narthex (Woodmar in May; First Church in June). Indicate when you can help set up, work on sale day, and assist following the sale—lots of volunteers are needed to make this happen!

See the next page for information about what and how to donate!



Pictured: Pam Wendell, Yvonne Jackson, Judy Anderson

### Phil's Friends Making Fleece Blankets

Crochet and Knitting for Phil's Friends has added a new item to include in the boxes given as support for cancer patients. We recently completed three tied fleece blankets. If you are interested in joining us for crochet, knit, or fleece blanket making, we can provide instructions. Each Monday, we work in the library at Woodmar from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Please join in!



Mark your calendar for Sunday, June 29. This is the probable date for the official vote for merging First and Woodmar into our new church: Hope United Methodist! Details will be forthcoming.



## 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"

# Thoughts from Pastor Jim

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## 2025 Stewardship Campaign

### Sharing the Gospel: A Cornerstone of Stewardship

Stewardship is often associated with careful management of resources—time, talent, and treasure. Yet, its essence extends far beyond tangible assets; at its heart lies a profound spiritual calling: sharing the gospel. In the context of a stewardship campaign, sharing the gospel is not merely an obligation but a privilege, a mission that strengthens faith communities and inspires believers to live generously and purposefully.

#### The Gospel and Stewardship: An Inseparable Bond

The gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, is the foundation of Christian life. To embrace stewardship means to recognize that every gift, including our salvation, comes from God. Sharing the gospel is an act of gratitude and obedience, reflecting a commitment to use our spiritual blessings to glorify God and bless others.

Stewardship campaigns often emphasize financial giving, but stewardship is much broader. It is about fostering a generous spirit. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ (the gospel) is being generous with the grace that we have received. Grace is God's free gift given abundantly to all of us. Being a strong Christian and a vibrant church starts with being generous with all of our resources, beginning with the gospel.

#### The Impact of Sharing the Gospel

When we share the good news of Jesus Christ we will find that its impact is profound and far-reaching:

- It strengthens community bonds: Sharing the gospel fosters unity and reinforces a shared purpose within the faith community. Members feel connected by their shared mission to spread God's word.
- It deepens our own faith: Both the sharers and the recipients of the gospel experience spiritual growth. By stepping out in faith to share the good news, we deepen our own understanding of God's grace and strengthen our walk with Christ.
- It encourages generosity: The gospel inspires a spirit of generosity. When individuals grasp the magnitude of God's gift of salvation, they are moved to give freely and joyfully in response.
- It builds the Kingdom of God: by sharing the message of Christ we enrich our community spiritually and draw people into faith and into our church community.

#### Overcoming Challenges in Gospel Sharing

While sharing the gospel is a joyful responsibility, it can also present challenges. Fear of rejection, feelings of inadequacy, or uncertainty about how to begin are common obstacles. Here are some ways to overcome them:

- Pray Continuously: Seek God's guidance and courage through prayer. Trust that He will provide the words and wisdom needed to share His message effectively.
- Start with Relationships: Building relationships based on trust and kindness opens doors for meaningful conversations about faith.
- Focus on Love: Remember that sharing the gospel is an act of love. Approach others with compassion, patience, and a genuine desire for their well-being.
- Practice and Learn: Like any skill, sharing the gospel becomes easier with practice. Remember, you only have to share your own story!

#### A Call to Action

As we embark on this stewardship campaign, let us remember that sharing the gospel is not just an activity but a way of life. It is a reflection of our gratitude for God's immeasurable gifts and a testament to our trust in His promises. By making the gospel the cornerstone of our stewardship efforts, we honor God, strengthen our communities, and invite others into the transformative power of His love.

May we be faithful stewards, not only of our resources, but also of the message of salvation entrusted to us. Together, let us commit to sharing the gospel boldly, joyfully, and generously as we journey toward a deeper understanding of true stewardship.

Blessings, Jim

# Opportunities to Grow Our Faith

Discipleship  
and Spiritual  
Vitality

## United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith met with church members and friends at Woodmar UMC for their annual Agape meal on April 15. Jackie Lewis summarized the history of this meal and the meaning of Agape, the highest form of love. Pastor Jim administered communion to all, and a traditional Lenten meal of kugel was served. While Lora Ward played the piano, the group enthusiastically sang favorite traditional hymns.

We will meet for our last get-together before summer at Les Cafe in Highland on Wednesday, May 21, at 11:00 am. If you wish to attend, please call Yvonne Jackson at 219-844-7815 or Donna Benirschke at 219-844-2640 by May 19.

We want to thank the women who have crocheted blankets and made quilts for Phil's Friends, an organization that supports cancer patients. These talented crafters include Judy Anderson, Yvonne Jackson, Phyllis Sovola, Lynn Underwood, and Pam Wendell.



The tables were filled with families and the Messy Church community in April. Easter Surprise was the theme as we continued the message of our resurrected Lord. Our next Messy Church is May 27. We will discuss and experience Growing Generosity. Our generosity is a way to show our thanks to God and plant seeds of hope in our community. Join in the joy of Messy Church on May 27, 6:00 – 7:30 pm, in Woodmar's Community Center.

## Mission U Retreat hosted by UWIF

Mission U is a retreat that United Women in Faith sponsor every year. This year the theme is Practicing Hope Together. The retreat will be held at Manchester College from Friday night June 20 to the afternoon of Sunday June 22. Programs will be provided for children ages 4 to 17, as well as for adults. Invite your friends, neighbors, kids, and grandkids for this special weekend. Prices have been reduced this year: \$25 for the kids and \$90 for the adults. Scholarships are available for first-time attendees (application due May 15) and for those with financial hardship needs. Please contact Lora Ward for more information: 708-650-6417 or email at [lward4203@aol.com](mailto:lward4203@aol.com).



# Reaching Out to Our Community

Evangelism  
and Outreach

Community  
Impact and  
Missions



## Monthly Mission is Messy Church

Messy Church is the mission emphasis for May and June for both First and Woodmar UMC. Messy Church meets once each month to share our love, our joy, and our hope in Jesus Christ with the communities of Woodmar and First UMC. Currently, Messy Church consists of families from Community Preschool, Brianna's Hope, extended family members of congregants, and congregants. With your support, we will widen our reach to the neighborhoods and surrounding communities.

Messy Church began with a \$500 grant from our conference and from the generosity of team leaders who purchase supplies. Donations are needed to provide light meals, craft activities, and marketing.

If you are unable to donate financially, please pray for the Messy Church team and participants from our church and community, volunteers, and those who receive assistance from Heifer International. Thanks to all those who donated in April to support Heifer International.

## Photo Booth at Hessville Event

On June 6-7, Messy Church will partner with Community Preschool at a booth at Live in the Ville, a street festival on Kennedy Avenue in Hessville. A digital photo booth will be operated by JES Events, a preschool and Messy Church family. Digital photos will include our information. Messy Church activities will be available along with print materials for Community Preschool and Messy Church.

## Change for Change

Growing Generosity is the focus of Messy Church this month. A jar titled **Change for Change** will be available at Messy Church and on Sunday mornings to collect loose change. Donations will be divided between Messy Church operations and a designated ministry. Your Second Mile Giving, in addition to the Change for Change is greatly appreciated.

## Other Mission News

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 collaborate to conduct a big rummage sale and bake sale at First Church, the proceeds of which will be divided evenly to support both churches as we move toward the vote to consolidate and become one new church (see Rummage Sale article for details).

Richard Miller, FUMC Missions Team co-chair



### THE VINE FOOD PANTRY AT-A-GLANCE April 2025

New Clients.....	53
Return Clients.....	392
Total Clients Served.....	445

New Households.....	19
Return Households.....	196
Total Households Served.....	215

Total Pounds Distributed: 7,662

# Building Relationships



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 are seeking a list of people willing to assist here and there as needed on a volunteer basis. 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 (or snow!), simple repairs, restocking paper towel dispensers, or office tasks. We deeply appreciate your help.

Pastor Jim Denton



In Memory  
of Janet

## Buddy Bench in Memory of Janet Benson

Janet Benson passionately served children through the ministries of Woodmar UMC and as a teacher at Community Preschool. Janet died on July 27, 2024. To honor her memory, the Community Preschool Board will dedicate a buddy bench for the playground on Sunday, May 18. A buddy bench is more than just a place to sit. If a child feels lonely, they can sit on the bench. This signals to other children that they want a friend or some company. A bench to help children feel valued is a fitting way to remember Ms. Janet.

**South Holland Master Chorale**  
Directed by Philip J. Bauman  
**A Concert for All Souls**

**Duruflé - Requiem**  
**Mozart - Misericordias Domini**

Join the Chorale in an afternoon of beautiful music that resonates with forgiveness, consolation, and eternal light.

*Join us for a  
free concert*  
**May 18 or June 1**

**May 18, 2025 - 4pm**  
Thorn Creek Reformed Church  
1875 E 170th St South Holland, IL 60473

**June 1, 2025 - 4pm**  
St. John the Evangelist  
10701 Olcott Ave, St. John, IN 46373

Accompanied by organist Mark Sudeith and chamber orchestra.  
SouthHollandMasterChorale.org

## Book Club Chooses Fantastical Book

The book club has chosen Kevin Wilson's best-selling third novel, *Nothing to See Here*, for its May selection. It's the story of 28-year-old Lillian Breaker, who accepts a job at a Tennessee mansion to look after and hide from public view two ten-year-old twins who burst into flames when they get agitated. Despite its fantastical premise, the novel delves into profound themes of identity, belonging, and the transformative power of love. In the end, *Nothing to See Here* is a heartwarming and unconventional tale of family, love, and acceptance. Please join us on May 19 at 1:00 pm via Zoom for an informal discussion. To receive the link for joining, please call the church office.

# Children's Ministries

Birthdays  
Children  
Miscellaneous



## Woodmar UMC

5/01 Brian Lewis  
5/05 Jane Duncanson  
5/05 Nancy Tatum  
5/06 Robert Fukuda  
5/11 Robert Underwood  
5/12 Shirlee Craig  
5/13 Antonio Rosario  
5/14 Sharon Matthews  
5/19 Irene Maurer  
5/21 Mary Zaikis

## First UMC

5/01 Josiah Allen Hoffman  
5/02 Mario Bravo  
5/05 Bev Hornak  
5/08 Irma Mora  
5/08 Jim Wind  
5/10 Judy Viehweg  
5/11 Heidi Wickland  
5/19 DJ Williams, Jr.  
5/19 Katie Kosarko  
5/20 Noah Hernandez

## Community Preschool and Childcare

Summer is just around the corner, and we are excited to enjoy the summer festivities. This year, we plan to participate in Highland's July 3<sup>rd</sup> twilight parade. If you would like to walk with us dressed in your holiday best, please call Karianne in the preschool office (219) 844-3030 ext 305.

In August, we will be opening a two-year-old class! Ms Andii will be the lead teacher of this class. We can't wait to have littles in our program again!

We will be hiring for the new school year! We are looking for one lead teacher and two assistant teachers. If you know anyone great with kids, send them our way! We partner with TEACH scholarship, and 90% of educational costs will be covered!


## 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, IN  
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, infused 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/>

As Rev. Dr. Kent Lundy encourages, let's do all we can in all the places we can to get as many youth as we can to attend Senior High Camp this summer!

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



## Woodmar UMC Finance News

Woodmar ended March with income over expenses of \$16,336. Our March offering was \$24,288, including \$11,800 in yearly tithes from 2 members. At the end of March, we had \$37,371 cash in bank. Expenses were normal. Our year-to-date bottom line is a positive \$9,844.

Community Preschool showed income over expenses of \$1,815 and had \$88,042 cash in bank at the end of March. Their year-to-date bottom line is a negative \$26,114. They have recently enrolled an additional five children, which will positively impact the financial outcome.

## First Church Finance News

In April, First 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 net income is down approximately \$25,000 year to date, 2025 versus the same period in 2024. We are working to try and identify what may be the reason for this significant decline in income.

At the end of April, our checking account had a balance of over \$361,817. 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, pastor's pension, etc.

The Finance Committee is working 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, our checking account balance 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 to earn 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.

Pastor Pete Ward, Finance Chair, First United Methodist Church, Inc.



## SCRIP: Every Purchase Supports Our Churches!

SCRIP gift cards are offered in the narthex at FUMC following the Sunday worship service. Orders can also be placed and picked up the following Sunday at First Church or Woodmar, depending on where our congregations are worshipping together. Please contact Kathy Smith at (708) 935-9807 for more information.

### 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.