



The Messenger

February 2024

First United Methodist Church
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PASTOR'S PEN



"What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

This is the verse that popped into my head when I began thinking about February. I could have thought about love, since Valentine's Day is coming up. Or I could have thought about the sacrificial spiritual practices of Lent, since that begins with Ash Wednesday (on February 14 also). But, for some reason instead, Groundhog's Day is what immediately came to mind. I thought about that movie in which the weathercaster is stuck in a never-ending loop of the same day of futility over and over again.

Ecclesiastes is considered "Wisdom Literature." It's full of proverbs about what a wise person should think and do. Some of that wisdom is quite useful. But some of its "wisdom" is rather dark and sarcastic. If pessimism is depressing to you rather than motivational, you might prefer to read other passages of scripture.

What comes to my mind next are the scriptures associated with Ash Wednesday. On that very day in which we confess our sinfulness and place ashes on our foreheads as signs of our bodily and spiritual weakness, we also often read 2 Corinthians 5:17—"So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

Like the self-centered weatherman who finally discovered that the way out of futility was to be kind and loving to other people, so we who follow Christ can find our way out of the repetition of darkness and sin. Repentance, forgiveness, and a fresh start are always available to those who live in Christ. As 2 Corinthians 6:2 tells us, "See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!"

I invite you to come on February 14. Bring your date with you. It's a great way to express your Valentine's Day love. Confess your sins and receive God's mercy. Make a hopeful and fresh start through the salvation we receive in Jesus Christ.

Blessings for a Holy Lent,
Rev. Kim

FEBRUARY MISSION EMPHASIS IS THE PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

The Mission Emphasis for February is the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. This is a designated fund that Rev. Kim uses to assist needy individuals and families who call or come to the church seeking assistance. Sometimes it's with a utility bill, a tank of gas, a hotel room for the night, a prescription refill, a car repair, or partial payment of their rent. Those who receive this assistance are members of our congregation, residents of our community, or persons traveling to another destination.



A recent example of this is when, on January 11, Rev. Kim paid for \$50 of gas for Anthony and Victoria, who were traveling from Eugene, OR, to Phoenix, AZ, in a beat up, rusty, mechanically challenged van so they could assist their family in a time of health crisis. They showed signs of significant poverty.

When our church cares for those who are suffering from financial hardship, we express the love of God and the healing compassion of Christ. All loose change and designated Mission Emphasis gifts during February will go to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Thank you!

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE, FEB 14



On February 14, the Chancel Choir and Rev. Kim will lead a 7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday worship service. We hope you will come! Ash Wednesday is a time of repentance from sin. Ashes are a sign of grief and regret. As in the saying, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," they are symbolic of our bodily and spiritual frailty. Ash Wednesday is the first day of the season of Lent, which commemorates the 40 days Jesus fasted in the wilderness. Lent is a time when Christians have traditionally fasted from food (or some particular type of food) or other pleasures. This spiritual practice helps us align ourselves with the sacrifice of Jesus. Sometimes Christians choose to add a spiritual discipline, like Bible reading or more prayer. Using this season intentionally is a way to jumpstart better spiritual habits. It is a way to thoughtfully and prayerfully prepare ourselves for Jesus' death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter.

ADULT STUDY – GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Adult Sunday School Class meets every Sunday at 8:45-9:45 a.m. in the Wesley Room. The class is taught by Austin Barron. In January, the class has been studying Genesis. Next up, in February, will be the Gospel of John. Newcomers are welcome! Large print Bibles are available in the classroom.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

You are invited to a "Fat Sunday" Pancake Breakfast on February 11, 2024 sponsored by our



United Methodist Men.

There will be plenty of pancakes, eggs, sausage & bacon for you to enjoy. Coffee, juice and milk will also be provided.

Grills will be hot and ready at 8:30 AM! We will stop serving at 9:30 AM to give everyone a chance to get seated in the sanctuary for our 10:00 AM service.

A free will offering will be requested to help support our UMM and their many local mission projects.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR

Fellowship time host sign-ups for February and March are now available on the clipboard table in the narthex.



Thank you, January hosts – David Barbara Keyt, Pam & Bob Westfall and the United Women in Faith. The coffee and treats after worship services are much appreciated!

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

United Women in Faith invite all women of the church to attend a fellowship lunch together at Olive Garden Restaurant on Riverdale Rd. on **Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 11:30 AM**. There will not be a regular business meeting during February.



United
Women
in Faith

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

The next fund-raiser for United Women in Faith is planned for after worship on **Sunday, April. 7th**, the ever popular **Potato Bar**. There are two options-- eat at church or take out for another time. Watch for further details.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School
10:00 a.m. In-person Worship and via Facebook Live
10:00 a.m. Children's Sunday School
9:30-11:30 a.m. Nursery for children ages 0-5

BOOK TALK

The Book Talk book of the month is *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt. Join us on **Monday, February 12 at 6:00 p.m.** at the home of Cheryl Thompson for our book discussion. Contact Cheryl at [801-389-9864](tel:801-389-9864) for further information.



We were just notified that during the fourth quarter of 2023 we earned

\$81.77 in donations from Smith's grocery and pharmacy. Thank you to the 24 households who have linked your loyalty cards to FUMC!

Smith's Food & Drug donates .5% of every eligible purchase made by participants to the organization their rewards card is linked to. If you haven't yet done this, please stop by the customer service counter the next time you are at Smith's and ask them to help you make these easy donations to our church.





First UMC Ogden,

Thank you for your generous \$759.37 donation to our Un-sponsored Students Fund. This helps us cover the costs of sending newly selected scholarship students to school before they are picked up by sponsors. These types of donations make a BIG difference, so we really appreciate it!

Ken Fong
Pura Vida Board Member

Dear FUMC family,

We sincerely appreciate all of your prayers, cards and meals that came our way after our daughter Tami's bilateral stroke at the end of August. She is no longer living with us but we are very involved as she slowly enters this "new normal" phase of life.

Short term memory and very limited eyesight are major concerns. Please continue to pray with us that recovery continues. Again, thank you and may God continue to bless you abundantly,

Lucki and Sandy Latimer

Dear First United Methodist Church,

Thank you for joining us in support of children and teens in foster care with your donation of \$690.00. Utah Foster Care works to develop innovative strategies to find, educate and support foster families to help meet the needs of children in foster care throughout the state. Your support helps in our important mission.

Your gift helps provide critical funds to benefit children ages 0-18. It provides opportunities for these young people to feel a sense of belonging and hope for the future.

Thanks to you, children in foster care have one more friend on their side. Your support of children in foster care and their host families reduces stress, encourages friendships, fosters mentoring, builds self-esteem, and prepares them for a bright future. We are building bridges between the children and the community because we believe every child deserves a safe home with a loving family.

Thank you for supporting children through Utah Foster Care and joining our village!

With gratitude,
Nikki MacKay
CEO

Crystal Ashton
Development Manager

Thank you, church family, for your prayers, cards, and emails while I was recovering from my broken leg. I definitely felt your love.

Peggy Carr

CUBAN MINISTRY UPDATE

Here's the latest on our Cuban Ministry at Ogden FUMC:

As of November 2023, Yainier and Yusimi have both applied for their immigration status to be adjusted per the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966. That Act and some successive amendments indicate that, after they've been in the U.S. for one year, Cubans are able to apply to become permanent residents and get a permit to work legally (green card). However, the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) is very backed up, and the processing of their applications could take months. Fortunately, Yainier & Yusimi have been able to get their food (SNAP) and Medicaid benefits restored (after losing them for several months in 2023, due to bureaucratic confusion). Unfortunately, neither of those benefits pays their rent. Thus, they are relying on under-the-table work, and our church continues to assist them, as needed. (Thank you for your donations to the Cuban Fund!)

Yusimi's son Maikel (24) migrated to Tapachula, Mexico (southern border city) in September. On January 22, he finally received his visa (permission) to travel through Mexico. So, on January 25, he traveled north by bus to Mexico City and found a place to rent. From there, Maikel will use the CBPOne app (Customs & Border Patrol One) on his cell phone to seek an appointment and permission to travel into the United States. That process has been taking other Cubans approximately one month, but it could take longer since immigration is so backed up.

Yusimi's younger son Cristian (17) must wait in Cuba until he is 18 years old and can travel independently as an adult. In the meantime, he lives with his maternal grandmother. They struggle to have sufficient food and clothing for a growing teenager.

Yainier's sister Yisel (32) and her daughter Alisson (6) are waiting for the USCIS sponsorship process to work, so they can emigrate directly from Cuba to Utah in a safer manner. Rev. Kim applied to be their sponsor, but, due to the enormous volume of applications, Rev. Kim's March 2023 application has not yet been approved. In the meantime, Alisson has started school, and Yisel uses an app on her cell phone to learn English. Rev. Kim and Yisel communicate regularly through What's App.