



THE MESSENGER



Vacation Bible School True North

Vacation Bible School of 2025 was learning to Trust Jesus in this Wild World! Our theme this year was “True North”, where we learned about Jesus and our wild world. Each Day we learned a new Bible Point, Bible Buddy, Bible Verse and Bible Story.

This year we had 60+ campers and youth attend Vacation Bible School! A lot of familiar faces, but also a lot of new faces!

Our phrase for the week:

Trust Jesus!





Glacier Games Station



Tundra Treats Station

Sticky Scriptures Station



Opening & Closing Station



Bible Adventures Station



Imagination Station



Who Are Your Stretcher-Bearers?

Why you need to be part of a small group.

The Gospel of Mark (2:1-12) tells the story of a paralyzed man who sought healing from Jesus in Capernaum. But one big problem got in the way: The crowd that had gathered to listen to Jesus was so big no more people could fit into the house where he was teaching.

Fortunately for this disabled man, he had friends! Four of them carried the man to the house. Seeing there was no way in through the crowd, but determined to get their friend to Jesus, the men found a creative, alternative route. They carried the man up to the roof of the house and made an opening in the roof and lowered him down in front of Jesus where he found healing for both his body and spirit. Those were some good friends!

God gave us the gift of church community so that we can have friends like that. We are meant to be each other's stretcher-bearers, bringing each other to Jesus when we are struggling or need healing. While Sunday worship can be

inspiring and encouraging, it doesn't usually give us an opportunity to ask questions or to share what's going on in our hearts and lives. That kind of give and take happens in small groups of church friends.

This Fall, as part of our Vision priority



for the year, we are seeking to expand the number of small group options and the number of members and church attenders who participate in a group of some kind. We need your help to prepare groups that will interest you and where you can find spiritual support and encouragement and provide the same for others in our community of faith.

Please complete the online Small Group Interest Survey (QR code below) or pick up a paper copy from the Church Office before August 15 so we can get everyone connected to their "stretcher-bearers."



Do You Find Joy in Worshiping the Lord With Music?

Chancel Choir

Get ready to warm up those vocal cords and join the Chancel Choir as they resume rehearsals on Wednesday, August 27. All singers are invited to join in the harmony. Join in the musical fun Wednesday evenings at 6:45 pm. Chancel Choir sings during most Sunday services at 10:00 am.

Handbells

Handbell rehearsals will resume on Sunday, September 7, at 11:20 a.m. We are always eager to welcome new ringers to join us!

The Celebration Chorale

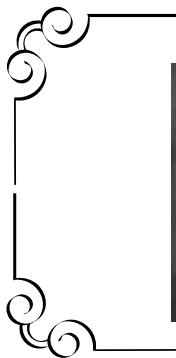
Get ready to jingle all the way because Christmas music is on its way! Can't wait to belt out those festive tunes? Join The Celebration Chorale as they celebrate the birth of Jesus by participating in the Christmas Cantata!

Kickoff Event - Meet and Greet: Sept 3 at 8:00 pm

Rehearsals: Wednesdays at 8:00 pm

Cantata performances: Saturday, December 6 at 7 pm
Sunday, December 7 at 3 pm.

Our choir is a delightful mix of singers from various local churches, and guess what? All shower singers and car singers are welcome!

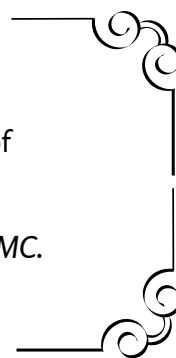


Our Sympathies

Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of Anne Keutzer who passed on July 21, 2025.

Services will be held on Friday, September 5, 11:00 am at First UMC.

Visitation will begin at 10:00 am.



Membership Concerns and Updates



Please keep the following members and loved ones who are in adult care facilities in your thoughts and prayers.

DeKalb County Area:

Mary Eakle, Carol Lindeberg, Louise Lowe, Jim McCann, Terry O'Brien, and Joe Pasteris

Facilities outside DeKalb County:

Agnes Barbatti, Barb Churchill, Chrissy Cowan, Carolyn Elliott, Jill Klecka, Bruce Rebhorn, Doray Sietsema, and Bennetta Stearnes

Please keep John Kafka in your thoughts and prayers while he is at bootcamp with the Army National Guard.

Whispers of Grace:

Listening to God and Each Other



Are you looking for something deeper? Deeper than quick greetings at church? Deeper in your faith than simply knowing you're going to heaven? Together we will explore Prayer, Virtue, and Word, which are three of the six great traditions of the Christian faith. Open to the Prairie South District, sessions will be held **Thursdays, September 4 - November 20, 2025, 7:00-8:30pm at First UMC** and facilitated by Karen Bonnell, an active leader in the conference and district. Come and experience a deeper journey in faith with us.

Register by August 15th. More information available in the Narthex and Church Office.

Worship with New Hope

Mark Your Calendars!

On September 21, we will be welcoming New Hope Missionary Baptist Church to our parking lot for a collaborative worship service. Stay tuned for more details!





It Takes a Village: Lunch Bunch Bible Buddies

The original thought that Cynthia Terwilliger and Mike Velez had was to introduce folks to the Bible and share thoughts and questions about it. Just for example, most folks think the Bible is one book. In actuality, the translations we are most familiar with are comprised of 66 books written at different times and different circumstances covering 1700 years of history. But all reveal God's relationship with us and our relationship with him.

We use Wesley's four tenants: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience to guide us. We count on the Holy Spirit to lead us on our journey as we gather together to read and study His

word.

We are currently meeting on Tuesdays at 11:30 am to 12:30 pm every week, however we are very flexible with that timeframe. We find that we all may not be able to make it every week due to appointments, vacations, and seasonal leaves out of state, but we keep each other updated on our readings.

All are welcome to join in, members and non-members. You need not concern yourself with how much or how little you know about the Bible when you join us. We share, learn and grow together. We don't always see the Scripture the same way. But, we all leave with more understanding of how we can live out the Scriptures in our daily life. We all take something from the Word of God. We've been meeting for about a year or so now. We are currently in the Book of Luke (we started with the book of Matthew) We are not fast readers! We have no leaders, we are all disciples. Our discussions are lively and we are all growing in our Christian faith and fellowship.

In a nutshell when all is said and done,

it's about building a relationship with Christ, and with each other and Glorifying God. Come join our happy band of followers. We are all in this together.

Lunch Bunch Bible Buddies

- Each Tuesday 11:30-12:30
- Red Sea (room 4)
- Bring your lunch.
- Bring a Bible (doesn't matter the translation). We have some if you don't have one.
- Bring a friend.
- Whether you have studied the Bible since Sunday school or are new to it - there's room for you at our table.
- Whether you were raised Methodist, a different denomination or none at all - there's room for you at our table.
- Come join us for faith and fellowship.

Sunday School Happenings

Blessing of the Backpacks

Calling all students, from the sprightly young ones to the wise owls! Bring your trusty backpack to service on Sunday, August 10. Pastor Jon will bless both you and your gear as you kick off the school year!



Rally Sunday

The Sunday School classes will restart in September. Rally Sunday promises to be a fantastic event. Stay tuned for more updates about this incredible day!



Congratulations Danielle!

We celebrated Danielle's more than 20 years of working for First UMC and her work with Vacation Bible School children, during the VBS picnic on the final day. We eagerly anticipate the next 20 years together.

Youth Events

Youth Group Family Tubing

Mark your calendars for the epic Family & Youth Tubing Day on Saturday, August 9! We are trying a new place this year: Fox Hollow Tubing in Sheridan. We will leave the church at 8:30 am. This is open to all family members.

The church will cover youth ages 12-18 as a Youth Group event. Everyone else it is \$25 a person and cash only!!! Reserve your tubes by August 1 by letting Sherry know how many people in your family are joining us. This is always a fun family day! Contact Sherry at suhrich@firstumc.net.

Corn Fest Parking Fundraiser

Mission Possible will once again be fundraising during Corn Fest, scheduled for August 22 - 24, by selling parking spaces. The location of the lot is yet to be confirmed, so stay tuned for updates from Sherry.

Youth Mission Trip June 2026

We are excited to announce a youth mission trip to either Tennessee or Kentucky in late June 2026! This opportunity is open to youth in sixth grade and older, and we are also in need of adult leaders to join us on this meaningful journey.

To provide more details and answer any questions, we will be holding a Parent and Youth Information Meeting on September 18 at 6 PM. **It is important that a parent attends with their youth.** We look forward to seeing you there and embarking on this incredible mission together!

United Men's Ministry Monthly Breakfast

Saturday, August 9, 8:00 am
Faranda's (302 Grove St., DeKalb)

All men are invited each month for the UMM Gathering. We meet for fellowship, food (you may purchase your own breakfast off the menu or not as you choose), and to discuss how we can be of service to FUMC. All men of the church are invited.



Fellowship Hosts

Thank you to everyone who has helped to host fellowship. The schedule is below. 2-3 people are recommended.

August 3 - Women's Friendship Circle
August 10 - (hosts needed)
August 17 - Sew in Awe
August 24 - (hosts needed)
August 31 - (hosts needed)

September 7 - (hosts needed)
September 14 - (hosts needed)
September 21 - Worship w/ New Hope
September 28 - Finance Committee



June 27 - July 24, 2025

General Fund Income
\$26,388

Mission Ministries Income
\$3,307

(including Spare Change, REAL Meal,
Summer Lunch, UMCOR,
Adult Mission Trip Scholarships)

Church Family Game Day



August 16, 3 - 5 pm

Join us for an afternoon of board games and bags (if the weather plays nice), and a whole lot of fun! This event is open to our fabulous church family and your awesome pals, so feel free to invite a friend or neighbor! And don't forget a snack to share (finger foods, please—no forks, just fingers!).

It's the perfect recipe for connection and laughter!

WLBK Broadcast of Sunday Sermon

First UMC's weekly message has been broadcast on WLBK (1360AM, 98.5FM) radio since 1947 when the station was just two weeks old. We continue this tradition each Sunday morning with a 15 minute program at 9:00 a.m. It can also be streamed at wlbkradio.com.

You can dedicate one (or more) of these messages by contacting the church office, 815-756-6301 or office@firstumc.net. A full dedication is \$84 per week. Half dedications are also available.

Dedications available for

August 3	September 7
August 10	September 14
August 17	September 21
August 23	September 28
August 31	



Back-To-School Prayer

Loving God,
Watch over our children as
they begin their new school
year. Bless them with joy at
seeing friends, excitement at
new experiences, and a love
of learning.

Guide and protect all who
learn, replacing fear with joy,
anxiety with peace, and
tiredness with energy.
Give wisdom, patience, and joy
to teachers as they serve
their students.

In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.



BUT THE LORD
STOOD WITH ME
AND GAVE ME
strength

2 TIMOTHY 4:17



Thank you for this opportunity to tell you how I came to be a joyful and active member of First United Methodist Church of DeKalb. I'd like to tell you why I give, and how I give, to the church.

As most of you probably know, I was born and **raised in the Catholic church**. As an adult, my husband and I raised our children in the faith, and we went to mass every Sunday and every holy day of obligation.

I probably would have been a cradle to grave Catholic except for difficult circumstances. In 2017, my husband of almost 40 years had an unexpected heart attack, and after a few weeks in the hospital, he passed away. This was an unbelievably difficult and lonely time for me. I was bereft. I would still go to mass and recite the prayers, but it felt very mechanical.

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can . . .”

After about six months or so of hard grieving, I decided I didn't like where I was in my life. So I decided to get out of the house and do something different. I was **looking for meaningful ways of connecting**. A friend of mine suggested volunteering for Summer Lunch and More. I hadn't planned on attending services here, but Vicki Boone invited me. She was connecting the **WHAT** we were doing to the **WHY** we were doing it.

I was amazed by the warmth and the **kindness of the people** I met before and after the worship service. And I started making some real connections. I liked the message I was hearing during the service. I heard words of inclusion, social justice and growth in personal faith. I remember an early message where Pastor Jon was quoting John Wesley, who said:

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

Stewardship Testimonial *by Mary McGinn*

And I thought, **THAT'S** the kind of Christian I want to be!

After a period of regular attending, I was asked if I'd like to formally join the church. I was unsure of exactly what that meant. During the new member class, I was told that the church asks members to **participate through prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness**. This sounded reasonable.

Presence and **service** were easy for me. I like coming to church every week and I like being helpful.

Witnessing, I thought, was going to be a problem. I've always thought of myself as an introvert, and I hate getting up and talking in front of people. But witnessing can be as simple as living your life proudly and publicly as a Christian. I found that being in an environment that encourages spiritual growth really helps me become more confident in my own faith. And being more confident makes it easier for me to share.

I thought **prayer** would be easy. I memorized so many prayers growing up. The Our Father and the Hail Mary and the Meal Blessing and the Magnificat and the Nicene Creed, and so on. But the first time I was asked to say a prayer, out loud, in front of people, spontaneously, I panicked. Reciting a prayer is not the same as feeling a prayer. I didn't know how to have a conversation with God. And a relationship with God is like any other relationship: it requires time and commitment and effort. I have been working on this, and I now often volunteer to say prayers. They're not smooth, but they are heart-felt.

“ . . . the church asks members to participate through prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.”

Gifting, I thought, is easy, too. I tend to be cautious with money, and I want to be a

good steward, or manager, of my resources, so I spent some time observing what was going on around me in the church before making my pledge. I really liked the transparency of the building committee. I started attending this church just as the building campaign was going into full swing, and I was very impressed with the goal to build the church without a mortgage. I liked, too, that the Pastor's salary is made public to all members, and that the missions are largely self-funded. I've been on the Finance committee for several years now, and I see the budgeting process. I believe the church is fiscally responsible.

So far, I've talked about the **WHY** of giving. But I'd like to switch gears and tell you **HOW** I give, or how I put my faith into action.

“I use the automatic withdrawal for this [my pledge], so if I'm ever sick or out of town, my pledge is still met. ”

I divide my giving into three areas. The first I call **Basic Giving**. This is the amount I pledge every year in the late fall using the pledge cards. Pledging allows the Finance committee to make a long-range, well-planned annual budget. I use the **automatic withdrawal** for this, so if I'm ever sick or out of town, my pledge is still met. In terms of a household budget, this is like the money you would set aside for the mortgage or groceries. This pays the salaries, utilities and other day-to-day expenses. I give this as an **unrestricted** gift to the general fund, trusting that the Finance committee will be good stewards on my behalf.

The second area I call **Special Giving**. These are the planned events that I know will happen throughout the year. I set

continued on page 9

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aside money for 4 times: UMCOR Sunday, because we are a United Methodist church, connected to other churches around the world; **Give Day DeKalb**, because this funds the REAL Meal and Summer Lunch programs which are so dear to my heart; the **Christmas** offering, which we have traditionally gifted to a

mission outside of our local church; and the **Easter** offering, because we are an Easter people. These are smaller gifts than the basic giving, but still important.

The third area I call **Holy Spirit Giving**. These are the little things that come up from time to time, like pizzas for the youth or the 50's Diner pies or the prayer room or the spare change for missions. I help out

when I can.

This is the plan that works for me, and of course, everyone's situation is a little different. But I think that the combination of prayer and thoughtful planning helps me be a good steward of my resources. I give my time, talents and material treasures as an outward sign of my faith and my love for God.

Adult Mission Trip

Adult mission trip to Alaska from July 26 to July 31, 2026, in collaboration with Praying Pelicans Ministry.

This trip promises to be a transformative experience, allowing us to serve and connect with the local communities in Alaska.

Learn about the Alaskan culture
Meet new people

Make a lasting impact through hands-on projects

Step out of your comfort zone, grow in your faith, and make a difference in the lives of others.

The cost for the trip will be around \$1800, which will cover travel, accommodations, meals, and project materials.

20 slots available (8 filled as of 7/1/2025, more can be reserved.)

Deadline for signing up is Oct 1st, 2025. A \$200 deposit will secure your spot on the mission team.

Questions? Reach out to Sherry.

suhrich@firstumc.net or 815-901-2872.

ALASKA JULY 2026



July-August-September

Mission Focus

Mission and Spare Change - connecting with neighbors

celebrate neighboring

Jesus taught us WHAT:

to “love our neighbors as ourselves” and he showed us WHO. It is up to us to figure out HOW.

As you read this, another Summer Lunch at the Park will be wrapped for the year, coolers and supplies put away, and time for reflection and follow-up beginning. While it is an utterly exhausting undertaking, it also is one of the most fulfilling missions of which I have ever been a part. **It is such a precious opportunity to build relationships with people I would have been totally unlikely to meet.** It is such a blessed opportunity to learn about people, about myself, and especially about how the Holy Spirit works when we are tuned in and available...

R stopped in recently. I was busy with some children and happened to look up and see a Huskie bus parked along the street. R called to me and said, “I was just driving by and had to stop to see if you were still here.” R visited frequently for lunch with her children a few years back, but they are older and she is now working full-time so it was a happy reconnect for her to know that lunch is a constant in the neighborhood.

K came with her girls nearly every day. She works part-time for the school district as a playground and lunch aide but that means there are no paychecks in the summer. Our conversation led us to exploring what she needs to apply for FT paraprofessional work now that her girls will all be in school. She has met almost all of the requirements so let's all pray that door will open for her this year.

An elderly woman who has faced significant health issues in the past year comes almost daily. She never stays long but if I don't greet her first, she makes sure to wave or say “hey” as she picks up lunches for herself and her husband- a tiny but important connection.

J brings his daughter to lunch each day. This is their 3rd year with us. For 2 years he would barely speak, often wearing headphones to block the noise of the children. This year he sent his daughter to say goodbye each day, he shared news tidbits, and talked with a volunteer about leads on renting a house or flat with a yard for his daughter.

The most uplifting moment of this season was midway through the summer when A, a single young man in his 30s who has hit a number of rough patches in life, walked up. I've prayed about him so many times and there he was, fresh out of rehab and looking for connection. He picked up lunch but that isn't what he came for; he came because he knew it was safe, he'd be welcomed, and would find encouragement. We were able to share AA resources with him as he was looking to get connected into meetings and, rest assured, prayers will continue for his faith, his ongoing recovery, and a job when he is ready.

There are questions on the fly, hugs from moms and kids, information about job opportunities, training, books and library programs, and always, always, always, a spirit of welcome for all as we learn to share and receive love with and from our neighbors of all faiths, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Thanks for the opportunity to love & serve. Vicki



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
AS YOURSELF.

MATTHEW 22:39

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2025 attendance is up about 13%...we expect to serve over 2600 meals by season end.



Thank you for
another great year
at the park!



PREP VOLUNTEERS

Peggy Marchini - Prep Lead & Food Bank Delivery
Rebecca & Brad Smith
Pat Kafka
Linda Buhr
Diana Skillman
Chere Mascal
Beverly Smith
Zanette Plume
Julie Weber
Rhodalyne Crail
Marilyn Rausch
Pam Coppel
Tom McCrea
Jan & Mike Marquardt
Jack Goodrich
Lori Harmon
Kathy Manderfield
Kendra Moore
Ron Barshinger
Janet Irving

OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Dave Royalty - Park Delivery Driver
Gale & Jim Horn - Lunch Bag packers
Kathi West - GFS orders
Vince Boone - Whatever asked
Pastor Jonathan Crail
My apologies if I missed anyone - Vicki Boone, Coordinator

PARK VOLUNTEERS

Dave Smith - Monday Lead
Cheryl Nelson - Tuesday Lead
Monica Paquette - Wednesday Lead
Donna & Eric Eggleston - Thursday Leads
Mike Velez
Linda Chapman
Anna White
Jill Roodhouse
Cynthia Terwilliger
Erin, Kate, and Teddy Grych
Lynn Braddock
Lisa Smith
Ruth Hart
Angela Cambier
Bridget Klein
Janet Irving
Mary Beth Zopp
Ben Lam
Barb Andreson
Rachel Polly
Monica Gibbons
Sara Kimball
Xena Bennett
Jeremy Koranda
Pam Coppel
Jessica Sundland
Jake Moses
Kay Harned
Michelle Lysien
Terri Powers

A giant thanks to:

Kailee Kuropas - SLAP Facebook page
Jan Lam - Printing, Traffic cop, & oh so many things!
Stormy from DeKalb Public Library
Jennifer Yochem, DeKalb Community Services Coordinator

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R.E.A.L. meal
sharing food & friendship

R.E.A.L. community meal

August REAL meal is on August 24, Corn Fest weekend

August 2024 was one of our biggest meals serving over 250 meals.

Please consider volunteering if you are able.

Prep volunteers needed 3-5 pm

MANY serving & cleanup volunteers needed 5-7 pm

Join us for a south of the border theme with bean burrito casserole, Mexican cole slaw, fruit, & dessert.

If you haven't been lately, invite a neighbor to come to the meal with you...to dine or to serve. REAL meal is served the 4th Sunday of each month, except December, 5:15-6:30 pm.

MISSION TEAM will not meet in August. We will be out visiting neighbors, exploring ways to connect with new people or to cultivate next step relationships with others.

How about you? What will you be doing to show love for your neighbors and begin new relationships this month? We'd love to hear your stories.

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Taking a break . . .

after 20+ years of continuously juggling multiple leadership roles in the church, I will be taking a brief break in the fall. I am taking a temporary leave from all but the Friend Me women's study group for a few months to catch my breath, get some personal matters in order, and most importantly listen for what God has in store for me next.

I am so grateful for how these opportunities have deepened my faith. I love the people I meet through serving, both in and out of the church,



and will miss the interaction, but it became clear this summer, a time for rest, prayer, & refueling is needed. Will you consider picking up a task or two during this time?

Can you send texts? fill in names or attendance on a spreadsheet? pick up the monthly donation from Schnucks? Chat with me in August about how you might help with one or two of these REAL meal or Mission responsibilities. I look forward to talking with you soon! Vicki Boone 815-751-3397



2501 N. Annie Glidden Rd.
DeKalb, IL 60115

815-756-6301
office@firstumc.net
firstumc.net

Church Office Hours
Monday - Wednesday 8 am - 1 pm
Friday 8 am - 1 pm

Bookkeeper Hours
Mon., Wed., Fri. 9 am - 12 pm

Ministry Staff

Senior Pastor
Rev. Jonathan Crail
jcrail@firstumc.net

Director of Family Ministries
Kelsey Lynch
klynch@firstumc.net

Director of Missions
Sherry Uhrich
suhrich@firstumc.net

Nursery Coordinator
Danielle Rogowski
nursery@firstumc.net

Director of Music Ministries
Eric Johnson
ejohnson@firstumc.net

Custodian
Levan Mitchell

Organist
Ron Barshinger

Video Technician
Matt Rogowski

Social Media Coordinator &
Bookkeeper
Kailee Kuropas
accountant@firstumc.net

Church Administrator
Jan Lam
office@firstumc.net

Worship & Christian Education Opportunities

Sundays

10:00 am Worship Service - in-person & livestreaming on YouTube and Facebook
10:00 am Sunday School (2 years to 12th Grade, Sept. thru May)
5:15 pm REAL Meal Dine-in/Drive-thru - (4th week of every month)
5:00 pm Confirmation (8th Grade and up, Sept. thru May)
7:00 pm Search & Service (Adults, meets offsite 1st & 3rd weeks, Sept. thru May)

Tuesdays

11:30 am Lunch Bunch Bible Study (Adults)
1:00 pm Sew in Awe - craft group
1:00 pm Afternoon Book Club (Adults, meets 3rd week each month)

Thursdays

1:00 pm Women's Friendship Circle (meets 3rd week each month)
6:30 pm Friend Me Women's Group (meets in person & via Zoom, Sept. thru May)

Quarterly

11:15 am Oak Crest Communion Service - Ash Wednesday, June, September, December - watch for dates

Child care is available Sunday mornings.