



THE MESSENGER

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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February

2023



Dear FUMC,

January was a busy month for me! I am grateful to the Mutual Ministry Team for giving me a little extra support this month to allow me the time I needed to get through the first half of my Local Pastor Licensing School.

The first part of Licensing School was held as an intensive week of classes at Rolling Ridge Retreat Center in North Andover, MA. I arrived there at 5pm on Sunday, January 8th and spent my days in class from 7am until 8pm each day until Friday, January 13th. There was a lot to cover and not a lot of time to cover it, and while I expected to be completely exhausted and burnt out by the end of it, I left feeling refreshed and renewed.

I felt renewed because I could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit moving in the Church. It seems that the patterns of life can always be boiled down into three simple words: **Order**, **Disorder**, and **Reorder**. Repeatedly, we see this pattern emerge. We see it in the natural world as we move through the seasons. We see it in our own personal, psychological development. We see it in the day to day tasks that we do around the house or in the garden. Inevitably, the order, the routine, what we've come to know of life is deconstructed, disordered, thrown into turmoil, or dies. And whether we're aware, or around to witness it or not, a restructuring, a reordering, or a resurrection, if you will, takes place.

I think it's been easy for me to focus on the deconstruction, the splintering, and disorder in our denomination over the past few years as we've heard of declining membership and an impending split in the church over the inclusion of our LGBTQ+ siblings. Focusing on the disorder can lead to a lot of anxiety, immobility, and fear. But our faith teaches us to look toward the resurrection. "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer," Paul tells us (Romans 12:12). And I felt like my time at Licensing School helped to open my eyes to many of the ways God is resurrecting our church, reordering our church, and making all things new.

I hope that you will join me this Lent in search of the spiritual renewal that comes from being joyful in hope, patient in our afflictions, and faithful in prayer. In this newsletter, you'll read about some of the ways we can be on that journey together. Please always reach out if you would like to meet and talk about where the Spirit of God is moving in your own life.

In prayer and hope,

Pastor Ben

YOU are the CHURCH!

And your unique gifts are needed!

We are currently in need of people to fill the following roles:

USHERS and GREETERS

Ushers and Greeters stand at the entryways to welcome church members and guests to worship, hand out church bulletins, and direct people to where they need to be. Additional responsibilities could include helping pass the offertory plate during worship or aiding in other logistical procedures during worship.

SUNDAY OPENERS and CLOSERS

Sunday **Openers** are responsible for arrive at the church early (by 8:30am) to turn on the lights, unlock the doors, make sure the heating/AC is on, sound system is on, microphone batteries are charged, and the space is ready for worship.

Closers (could be the same person) go through this checklist in reverse.

COUNTERS (Sunday Offering)

The counters count the money from the Sunday offering, create a report for the Financial Secretary, and make the deposit at Westfield Bank. This is ideally done on Sundays after church.

TREASURER

Our current Treasurer, Sally J. Templeton, will be retiring from her position at the end of March. We are looking for someone to take her place. The job involves about 2-3 hours per week, for which a stipend is given. Weekly duties involve book-keeping and check writing. Monthly duties include payroll and taxes, bank reconciliations, and creating a finance report for the One Committee. The treasurer serves on the One Committee. A full job description and training is available.

If you would like more information about any of these roles, please contact Pastor Ben at bdurfeewestfield@gmail.com. Thank you!



ALL CHURCH CLEAN UP February 19th after Church

We will be having a Cleaning Day after church on Sunday, February 19th. We'll break into teams and be sorting through old furniture and items that need to be discarded, sprucing up various corners and crevices, and making the church look polished and ready for Easter. Wear your cleaning clothes to church.

We'll be providing pizza for everyone who stays to help out!

Wall for Missions

The United Methodist Church identifies itself as a connectional church. This means that our ministry doesn't stop in our local community, but rather we are part of a global network of churches doing ministry across the world. This is possible through the United Methodist Church's giving structure. You may have heard the term "Apportionment" or "Mission Shares" before. This term refers to the amount of money our local church is responsible to pay toward our global missions. This money pays for things like the Black College Fund and Africa University, supporting our Conference's campus, youth, and retreat ministries, and the salary of our District Superintendent, the health benefits for retired pastors, and funding for the Board of Ordained Ministry.



Over the past several years, FUMC has not been able to pay our full mission shares, though we try to pay the minimum, which is required and accumulates a balance if not paid. For 2023, our total mission shares are \$17,521.00. The One Committee included the minimum amount of \$9,401.00 in the approved budget, but even with that, we are facing a budget deficit this year of -\$14,409.15.

I believe that paying our mission shares, and participating in the connectional ministry of the United Methodist Church is an important part of our spiritual life as a church. Because of that, I'm challenging FUMC to raise approximately \$10,000 this year to put toward our mission shares. To accomplish this, I've asked Melanie and Kelsey Collis to help me create a Wall for Missions. Here's how it will work:

The wall will display 144 envelopes, each marked \$1 through \$144. Over the course of the next 11 months, you are encouraged to take an envelope off the wall, fill it with the amount shown, and return it in the offering. If we can fill all 144 envelopes, we'll have paid our minimum Mission Share amount AND almost completely close our deficit!

Maybe you have an extra couple of dollars in your wallet one week and want to fill the \$2 envelope – Awesome! Or maybe you have a little extra to give and can fill the \$125 envelope one month – that's great! Or perhaps you and your kids would like to do a fundraiser, set up a lemonade stand, or do a bake sale and all of the proceeds can go toward filling as many envelopes as you can – amazing things can happen when we're creative!

I know it's not always fun to hear about money, budget deficits, and fundraising, but I encourage you to view this not as an ask for money, but a call to ministry and a revival of our Wesleyan, Methodist, Connectional roots. An opportunity to see that we can really make an impact in the world.

On the next page, I've provided the full outline of how our FUMC's mission shares are put into action. The first \$9,401.00 from our Wall for Missions will go toward Fund III: Ministry Support. That is the fund that holds its balance to the next year if not paid, and which is included in our budget. Fund II and Fund I are the next levels of giving, which reach out even further. Maybe we won't be able to reach those goals this year, and that's okay, but I thought it would be important for you to see how the United Methodist Church is working in New England and abroad. Please feel free to reach out with any questions!

In mission and love,
Pastor Ben

FUMC'S FULL MISSION SHARE BREAKDOWN

FUND I. WORLD MISSIONS	\$4,079.00	23.3%
General church apportionment that supports work around the world:		
11.0% World Service Fund supporting ministries, programs and mission work in this country and around the world. Also many conference mission projects apply for and receive grants through the World Service Fund.		
1.4% Black College Fund supports 8 historically black colleges throughout the United States		
0.3% Africa University Fund provides support to United Methodist related Africa University in Zimbabwe		
3.2% Episcopal Fund supports Episcopal offices throughout the connection, retired bishops, and work of College of Bishops		
3.3% Ministerial Education Fund supports clergy education both locally and nationally		
0.3% Interdenominational Cooperation Fund supports our work with other Christian bodies and interfaith activities		
1.3% General Administration Fund support general administrative work of church including General Conference		
2.2% for the Connectional Mission share (anticipated unpaid apportionments)		
FUND II. NEW ENGLAND MISSIONS	\$4,041.00	23.1%
8.0% Spiritual Life: Campus Ministries, Youth ministries, camping/retreat ministries		
2.9% Vital Faith Communities: Regional and rural ministries, Urban Ministries, Congregational development, new church starts, urban committee, Parish Consultants		
2.6% Diversity/Inclusivity: Six state Councils of Churches, Asian and Hispanic Commissions and Native American Ministries		
1.9% Leadership Developments: Board of Laity, Leadership Committee		
2.4% Stewardship and other: Print electronic communications, including the E-Clergy Catalyst and the NEC Web Page, Video and print resources available for loan to local churches for educational and mission programs		
5.2% for the Connectional Mission Share (anticipated unpaid apportionments)		
FUND III. MINISTRY SUPPORT	\$9,401.00	53.6%
1.4% health benefits for retired pastors, spouses and survivors and disabled clergy pension coverage.		
3.3% funds Conference's share of the Episcopal operations expenses		
22.9% provided salaries, housing and office expenses for 7 district superintendents and their ministries		
6.2% deploys clergy; including education, continuing education, provides grants for pastoral needs, funding for the Board of Ordained Ministry, and provides equitable salary support for churches where there are critical needs.		
12.8% ministry of the administrative boards, agencies and staff, Conference financial management, insurance, legal services, and our Conference Offices, and other services		
7.4% for the Connectional Mission Share (anticipated unpaid apportionments)		
TOTAL	\$17,521.00	100%

Early Risers Discussion Group **PROPHETIC WORDS**

February 7, 14, 21 at 7:30am via GoogleMeets



The Tuesday morning discussion group will be looking at three famous works by The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and discussing them alongside the scriptures that he references.

We will be reading:
"Letter from a Birmingham Jail" along with King's "I Have a Dream" and "Mountaintop" speeches.



Ash
Wednesday

Wednesday
February 22nd
7:00pm

The service will take place in fellowship hall around the fireplace.

Ash Wednesday begins our journey through the season of Lent; a time of preparation for the great Mystery of Easter.

FIVE MEANS OF GRACE

During the season of Lent, Pastor Ben will be preaching a sermon series on Grace. To help us dig deeper into the topic, the Mutual Ministry Team is organizing several small groups (meeting virtually and in-person in different locations) to read and discuss Elaine Heath's *Five Means of Grace: Experience God's Love the Wesleyan Way*. Each chapter of the book will correspond to each week of Pastor Ben's series. Sign-ups and scheduling of small groups will happen in the next few weeks. You are highly encouraged to join a group and journey with us through this Spiritually transformative season. Please purchase the book as soon as you can. If the cost is prohibitive for you, please contact Pastor Ben and he will make sure you get a copy.

LENT 2023

Together this Lenten season, let's explore Wesley's Five Means of Grace and consider how they can help us pray more deeply and live more missionally as followers of Jesus Christ.

1

Prayer

2

The Lord's Supper

3

Searching the Scriptures

4

Fasting

5

Christian Conferencing

MUTUAL MINISTRY TEAM (MMT) Meeting

The next MMT & via ZOOM meeting will be

February 8, 2023 at (6pm bring your own dinner) & 6:30 PM meeting.

If you would like to join us please call the church office or email Pastor Ben and a link to the meeting will be sent to you.

STEWARDSHIP THROUGH December 31, 2021

FUMC FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S STEWARDSHIP REPORT AS OF December 31, 2022

Here's how we did on Stewardship in 2022

Number of givers: 45
Amount pledged: \$63,446.00 for January-December, 2022
Amount given: \$62,523.25 for January-December, 2022
Amount under: \$ 922.75 through December, 2022

25 Pledgers met & exceeded their pledge through December 2022

Amount Pledged: \$41,515.00

Amount Given: \$46,672.25

Amount Over: \$ 5,157.25

20 Pledgers paid less than their pledge through December 2022

Amount Pledged: \$21,931.00

Amount Given: \$15,851.00

Amount under: \$ 6,080.00

Non-Pledge giving through December 31, 2022: \$15,997.36

Thank you for all of your gifts to FUMC! Have a Happy 2023!

TOTAL INCOME FOR 2022 = \$116,272.36
TOTAL EXPENSES FOR 2022 = \$131,629.90
2022 DEFICIT = \$ 15,357.54



Movie After Church

February 12th, we will be having movie time again,
after service, with a light lunch.

The movie will be **"Hidden Figures"**

Our gathering will begin around 11:15, and will be once a month.

ALL ARE WELCOME- PLEASE JOIN US!

Our condolences go out to the
Family of **The Rev. Dr. Frederick Harling, Jr.**
The Rev. Dr. Frederick F. Harling, Jr. Professor Emeritus of
History at Westfield State University died on January 13, 2023 at
the age of 93 years. Rick was ordained as a Methodist Minister and
served as Pastor in Essex, Peabody, Somerville, and West Springfield, MA



Dear FUMC FAMILY:

I would like to thank the church members who were involved in preparing the lovely basket I received at Christmas time. It was a perfect treat to enjoy on some of the rainy days we've had!

Gratefully yours,

Doris Clark



Dear FUMC FAMILY:

Thank you very much for the delicious fruit & cookie bag. We really enjoyed them!

Love & Peace,

Marvin & Shirley Rasmussen



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
OVER 80!**

FEBRUARY 9TH: **DORIS CLARK - 95**

22ND: **CURTIS TUTTLE - 82**



SOUP KITCHEN MINISTRY

The Westfield Soup Kitchen is located on the corner of
101 Meadow Street & White Street in Westfield.

Entrance is through White Street.

A small but dedicated staff with the help of many volunteers, local churches, businesses and civic agencies provide a nutritious evening meal to approximately 70 needy people in our community 6 days a week.

Our church provides that meal on the 3rd Friday of each month.

Our next meal will be on **Friday, February 17th.**

See Mary Eileen Casey for more information!



♥ BOOK SALE ♥

**YOU MAY BRING IN YOUR BOOKS.
WE ARE LOOKING FOR NOVELS AND
BIOGRAPHIES....NO TEXT BOOKS PLEASE**

FEBRUARY DONATIONS TO THE WESTFIELD FOOD PANTRY

The Westfield Food Pantry has suggested that coffee, tea, hot chocolate, filters, and creamers would be **most welcome during the month of February**. As always, we will collect and deliver any food items brought in, as the need continues to be great. Thank you for your continued support of this important ministry!



*Coffee, Tea, to warm them up,
Hot Chocolate too, to fill a cup,
Filters, creamers, all will do,
We'll fill some bags, thanks to you!*



If you need a 2023 pledge form
please contact the church office at:
Fumc01085@gmail.com
or **Call** 413-568-5818



"FIRST WARNING WEATHER STORM CLOSING SYSTEM"

In the event our Church services and/or any Church related activities are canceled due to adverse weather conditions, we will notify westernmassnews.com.

WGGB ABC 40, WSHM CBS 3, and EGGB FOX 6-Springfield
will broadcast that closing information during their regularly scheduled programming

February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Groundhog Day 	3	4
5 Super Bowl 10AM WORSHIP & Facebook live 10AM CHURCH SCHOOL 11am-Coffee Hour	6	7	8 MUTUAL MINISTRY TEAM MEETING- SMROOM 6pm (bring your own dinner) 6:30pm meeting	9	10	11
12 9am Choir 10AM WORSHIP & Facebook live 10AM CHURCH SCHOOL 11am-Coffee Hour 11:15am MOVIE TIME - SMROOM	13	14 Valentine's Day 	15	16	17 FUMC AT SOUP KITCHEN	18
19 10AM WORSHIP & Facebook live 10AM CHURCH SCHOOL 11am-Coffee Hour 11:30am CHURCH CLEAN-UP AFTER WORSHIP SERVICE	20 Presidents Day OFFICE CLOSED 	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22 7PM Ash Wednesday Service – Fellowship Hall	23	24	25
26 10AM WORSHIP & Facebook live 10AM CHURCH SCHOOL 11am-Coffee Hour	27	28	<div> <div> LAY SUPPLY PASTOR OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR MUSIC DIRECTOR CHURCH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT SEXTON MESSENGER EDITOR TREASURER FINANCIAL SECRETARY </div> <div> BENJIMAN DURFEE JOYCE M. SCANLON BENJIMAN DURFEE HEATHER WHITE LEE ST.ONGE JOYCE M. SCANLON SALLY J. TEMPLETON JOYCE M. SCANLON </div> </div>			

First United Methodist Church

“OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS”

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These Doors Are Open to All

*First United Methodist Church Westfield is committed to welcoming and affirming all people into the life of our church community. We celebrate people of all races, ethnicities, places of origin, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, relationship statuses, abilities, and socioeconomic situations. All people are welcome to participate fully in the life of our faith community. We are blessed and strengthened by the rich diversity of our life experiences and celebrate and affirm this diversity that our differences bring. At **First United Methodist Church** all children of God are safe, welcome, and affirmed, including people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.*

FUMC Welcome Statement

