

Our 3rd
Year
Together

July 2023

FOCUS



First United Methodist Church is a caring place in a diverse urban community for all people.

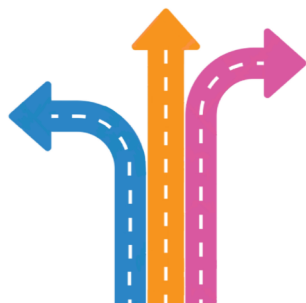
624 S Adams St., Marion IN 46953 - 765.664.5177 - info@marionumc.org

9:15 Sunday Worship, 10:30 Sunday School for all ages.

Pathways and Pitfalls to Growth

First United Methodist Church can build a new future by intentionally creating new ministries that focus on serving the needs of people who live in center city Marion, the surrounding neighborhoods, and suburbs. To do that we get to open dialogue with people who live nearby and throughout the community to learn their views on how the church can serve them.

A pathway to innovation will be involving neighbors and community influencers who are not currently engaged with First United Methodist Church in developing new practical services for all ages.



We have been discussing the need for change and growth among ourselves for two years. Now is the time to reach out and listen to people in the community for their ideas of ways to use the building to meet their real needs that aren't already being served.

By involving others, together we can envision a new robust future of effective service and meaningful growth.

A pathway to change will come from honest dialogue and brave visioning. We can build a new and different future. We have already begun.

The fundamental pathway to growth is following the radical Jesus in his example of active love for all people.

Published research supports our intuition and experience with both growth and decline. We are aware of "pitfalls" – blocks that prevent growth.

The first pitfall to growth is the comfort zone where people become comfortable doing what they are familiar with, and therefore, resist change. There is tremendous resistance to change in our society and our church.



Research indicates that eighty percent of the population finds reasons not to change even if change would be positive and beneficial. Our preference for the comfortable and the familiar keeps us stagnant, like sitting in a canoe at the bottom of a mountain, getting nowhere, solving nothing, burnt out by boredom.

The second pitfall that holds people back is learned helplessness. This is where people feel they just can't do it. The feeling isn't true, it's just emotional blockage, and it keeps people and organizations from moving forward and from innovation and growth.

The third pitfall is the path of least resistance, which is always looking for an easy way to achieve a result. But nothing worthwhile can be achieved easily, so nothing worthwhile is accomplished. Mediocrity becomes good enough.

At the August, 2021 Council Meeting, Steve Sharon presented a report on the book, "Anatomy of a Revived Church," by Thom Rainer. Steve summarized three main points; that 1) churches must change or die, 2) churches must serve outwardly rather than focus inwardly, and 3) there is no such thing as a "silver bullet," or single heroic solution. Rather, it will require all of us working together in the pathways while rejecting the pitfalls that prevent growth.

The process of change is a profound adventure and sober responsibility. Staying the same means we repeat, repeat, repeat; while watching society pass us by.

We have the moral responsibility to find people half our age and engage them in leadership so they can attract and minister to their peers.

Our new robust future depends on involving new young people and their families in casting a new vision and building new ministries.

We've already begun to change in small ways. It is time to accept the always-present-opportunity to build new. Together, we can hear the voices of young people around us and respond to their concerns which we expect to be different than ours at our stage in life.

To leave this 191-year-old congregation alive and growing for the next generations, we will accept the challenge of real change. There is no greater blessing than to steward resources to engage and support those who will follow us.

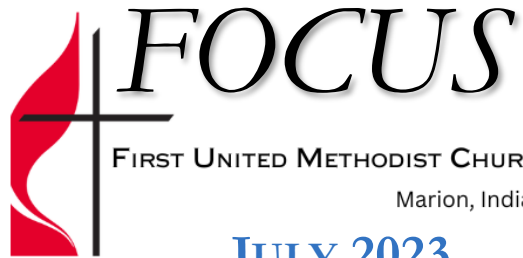
Let's avoid the pitfalls and look outward and ahead to find effective pathways to growth.

-Pastor Wes

Front Cover Photo



Pastor Rediger welcomes long-timers and newcomers at the start of Sunday morning worship. **We are in our third year together and we are transitioning from a long history to a vibrant future for all people.** You are invited! What will you build new in this vintage building?



JULY 2023

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*Contact the church office to obtain more copies and be added to the current mailing list.
765-664-5177 or info@marionumc.org*

Prayer Concerns

Please call the office at
(765) 664-5177

Jack Stace's grandson, Brandon
Barbara Piper hospitalized, but is now home
Betty Fletcher awaiting tests in Indy
Tom Holloway Sr. recovery from a fall
Brandon Stace in ICU at MGH
Bob Salveter
Carolyn James
Jane Hiatt Weesner
Linda Simpson's granddaughter, Lucia Tomlinson
Diane Fry, back injury
Jim Fletcher
Willard and Ruth Ann Rust
Friends living in Health Care Facilities
Government: national, state, and local elected officials and employees
Victims of disasters and relief workers
Unspoken concerns of relatives and friends
Other churches in Marion/Grant County

July & August Birthdays

Ron Piper	07/01
Grace Stanley	07/01
Jane Hiatt Weesner	07/02
Hubert Tucker	07/06
Andy Varner	07/06
Barbara Pack	07/09
Drew Morrow	07/10
Kacie Devine	07/13
Bob Beams	07/17
Asa Harshman	07/17
Ameliah Stanley	08/01
Carroll DeVries	08/06
Dick Gongwer	08/10
Ed McIlwain	08/11
Donna Worthy	08/11
Heidi Harshman	08/12
Cheryl Philbert	08/12
Viola Curtis	08/16
Jim Fletcher	08/16
Betty Fletcher	08/18
Jason Stanley	08/29
Cecilia Stanley	08/31

Anniversaries

Scott & Wanda Overman	07/01	7 yrs.
Rob & Donna Wiley	07/14	39 yrs.
Terry & Debbie Ivey	07/15	45 yrs.
Wesley & Joann Rediger	07/22	51 yrs.
Glenn & Sarah Evans	07/27	20 yrs.
Leland & Bonnie Gamson	08/24	38 yrs.
Charles & Johnny Herriman	08/31	60 yrs.

Harnessing The Collective Power

On Sunday, July 9th we will have a special morning of thinking about the possibilities. Pastor Wes will get us started in the sermon, thinking positively about the future of First Church. We will follow the service with a brunch and a time to reflect on our individual gifts and the rich assets and abundance that are ours as a congregation. Please plan on being a part of sharing in the possibilities for our church.

Worship In The Park

Plan on attending worship on Sunday, August 13th, at Matter Park in the Meadow Pavilion. There will

be more details soon, but get this on your calendar now. We will follow worship that morning with a picnic.

Summer Hymn Requests

We all have those favorite hymns – music that moves our soul, words that say just what we need to hear. So now is your chance to request the hymns that lift your heart, reminds you of your grandmother, or brings you to tears. Watch for the hymn request slip in the bulletin, fill in the information and drop your suggestion in the offering bucket.



Worship Can Happen Anywhere

On Sunday, June 4th, worship got moved to the Fellowship Hall because there was no air-conditioning in the sanctuary. But worship happened – people shared in



fellowship, communion was served, people sang, the Word was proclaimed – and the donuts were near at hand! It was Susan Seacott's first Sunday back playing for us in several months – but she adjusted from the organ to the piano (it's not

as easy as you might think, folks). As Jesus said, "where two or three are gathered". It was a wonderful morning, full of love and the spirit, followed by the reception honoring Donna Wiley's time as pre-school director.



Missions & Outreach

On June 11th, we were blessed to enjoy the wonderful musical talents of Laura Whittenberger, concert soprano. She sang during worship and then later that day at a free concert supported by the Presnall fund.

Laura is a New York City based theater and concert performer, her roles include Maria in *The Sound of Music*, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Johanna in *Sweeney Todd* to name just a few.

At her concert at FUMC, she sang selections from many of these musicals and other spiritual selections including; "The Sound of Music", "If I Loved You" from *Carousel*, "I Could Have Danced All Night" from *My Fair Lady*, "Part of Your World" from *The Little Mermaid*,



"I Dreamed a Dream" from *Les Misérables*, "Over The Rainbow" from *The Wizard of Oz*, "Jimmy" from *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and others.

She was accompanied by her mother, Ellie Whittenberger on the piano.

We look forward to upcoming Presnall Concerts in the future. Don't miss these special events!



July Themes & Scriptures

July 2, 2023
 "Meditate Deeper to Share More"
 Psalm 105:4
 Philippians 2:4

July 9, 2023
 "Hope For A Vibrant Future"
 Malachi 3:10
 Jeremiah 29:11
 Proverbs 16:3

July 16, 2023
 "The Call To Engage"
 Act 17:26-27
 Luke 10:25-29

July 23, 2023
 "Overcome The Barriers"
 Luke 10:38-42

July 30, 2023
 "Moving On"
 Luke 5:27-32



Who We Are:

Our predecessor, First Methodist Episcopal Church, was founded in Marion in 1832 and by the 1920s had become The Methodist Church. In 1969, the Methodist denomination merged with the Evangelical United Brethren denomination and became the United Methodist Church. "First Methodist Church" is carved in stone over the Adams Street entrance above the canopy. Today, First United Methodist Church of Marion is an affiliate of the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.



Block Party!

We will be hosting a Block Party on July 22, 2023 from 5:30 to 9 pm in the church parking lot.

There will be food trucks, a live band, face painting, snow-cones, a car show and some kids activities.

All are welcome and bring your friends and have a great time.

This event is being held in conjunction with the Downtown Marion event on July 21st.

Our neighborhood association, Historic Marion, will also be hosting events that day. Bingo and Euchre tournaments will be held at the Senior Center on Gallatin Street, along with kids activities taking place outside on the lawn at the Senior Center.

Please plan to attend some or all of these fun activities.

Thanks, Cathy





Members of First United Methodist C

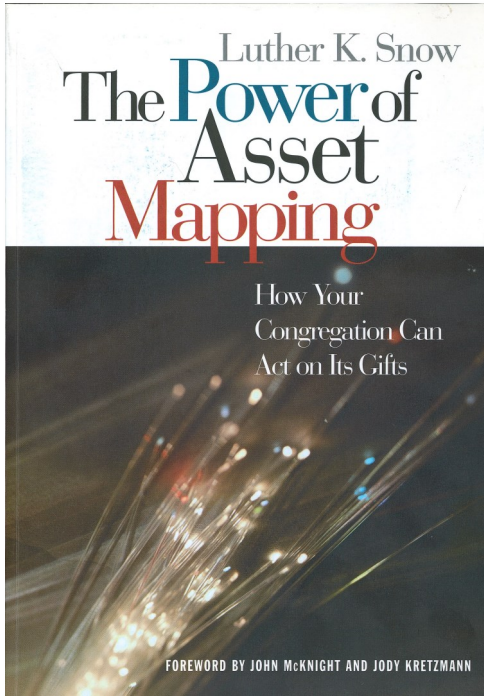
May 17th was our spring outside work day. Flower beds were weeded, planted and mulched. Many conta
When you stop by, you'll also notice we have brand new flags! Thank you to all the hard workers, in



Church Work to Beautify the Grounds

Planters were filled with lovely flowers. Trash was picked up around the building, and the sign was repaired. Volunteers including; Jack and Sidenia Stace, Rex and Cathy Lane, Terry Ivey, Glenn Evans, Denise Harshman.

Do You Know Your ABCDs?



On Saturday, June 3rd, Debbie Ivey, Kraig Piper, Wes Rediger, and Sarah Evans attended a Sacred Places training in South Bend at Olivet AME Church. This program was centered on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). As we continue the process of thinking about how to best use our building for ministry and mission, it's important that we

focus on the assets – the strengths and resources that we have at hand or that we can develop.

We began with a simple exercise, asking us as individuals to identify our “Gifts of the Head, the Hands, the Heart”.

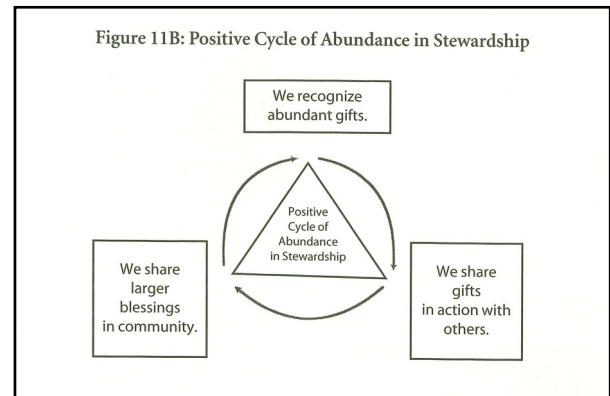
- Gifts of the Head are things we know, something we could teach to others.
- Gifts of the Hands are things we can do, things we can make or create.
- A Gift of the Heart is something we care deeply about, a passion that motivates us.

As we looked at each others’ “gifts,” we began to see overlaps and similarities – things that we all found in ourselves and now, in each other.

Next, we were asked to do a similar exercise, not looking at ourselves, but instead looking at our congregation. We were

asked to consider the types of “assets” our church has. We were asked to consider associations, institutions, the economy, stories, and the physical resources that we have available to us. When we laid those next to the individual gifts that we had already posted, it was exciting to see what were possibilities for ministry in our building and in our neighborhood. And that was only with four of our congregation sharing their ideas! Imagine what we might come up with if all of us at First Church started considering our assets.

How we think about our future as a church will lead to our success or failure to be disciples of Jesus. If we think all of the time about scarcity (Fig 11A), it will lead to more scarcity and finally to failure to be faithful to the Gospel.



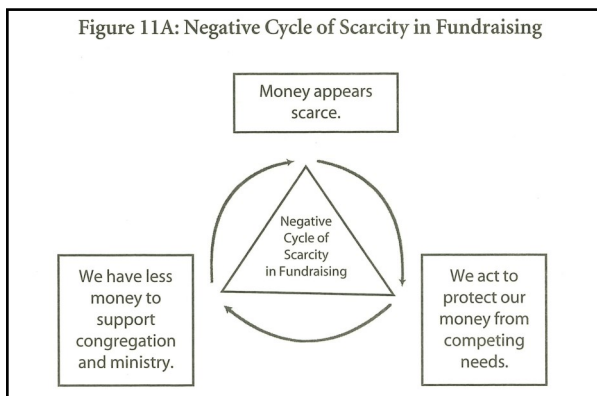
If we think about abundance (Fig 11B)– if we focus instead on our assets and work at cultivating the strengths we have, we have a much greater opportunity to reach out to people who need us and who want to be a part of something that matters.

The leader on June 3rd said throughout the session that we have to PRACTICE thinking about possibilities, we have to PRACTICE being positive, we have to PRACTICE believing that we can be a force for change here in Marion, Indiana, we have to PRACTICE looking for our assets. We have to harness the collective power of our congregation.

To begin this process, we will ask everyone to join us on Sunday, July 9th for worship and a brunch following to begin our journey in discovering our assets – to discover our passion, what motivates us – as individuals and as the body of Christ.

Please plan on joining us as we listen to one another and think about what could be!

-Sarah Evans



Finance and Stewardship—Plant, Grow, Harvest



implemented events such as Loads of Love, a Block Party in July, and Church in the Park in August. These events are designed to bless and engage our neighbors, with the hope that they will see our love and be drawn into our fellowship.



This week, a group of us weeded, cultivated and planted two plots in the Marion Community Garden (west of Marion Public Library on Boots Street). We are excited to watch it grow and produce both food and beauty for our downtown neighbors.

In addition, we are collaborating with the Quilters Hall of Fame, Lyric Club, Purdue Extension, Mississinewa Valley Band, and Historic Neighborhood Association to provide space for events that will enrich and entertain the Marion/Grant County community.

Please prayerfully consider where your time, talents and resources can be used to further these very worthwhile events.

Everyone has something to offer, and we welcome all! Go bless and be blessed!

*-Denise Pearson-Harshman
Finance Chair*



This “plant, grow, harvest” analogy really applies to our mission here at Marion First.

Our leadership has planted some wonderful “seeds”— ideas and plans to grow our congregation and serve our community.

Now we need some “fertilizer.” That’s where YOU come in! We need your time commitment and your financial support for these “seeds” to grow.

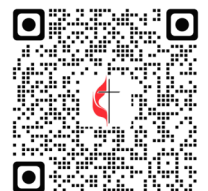
Missions and outreach committee has planned and



Online Giving Option

We are pleased to announce that FUMC now provides online giving as an option – a convenient and secure way to make a one-time or recurring donation. When you choose to give online, your donation will transfer directly to our bank account. It also helps us as recurring donations provide consistency and efficiency, easing the work for our back office administration. You can use your debit or credit card or create an account and use your bank account’s routing number and account number.

This online giving is handled through SubSplash, who complies with Payment Card Industry (PCI DSS) standards. Scan the QR code to get started.



July Special Offerings

1st Sunday Coin Collection, July 2nd, will go to **The Hands of Hope**, whose mission is to uniquely and deeply love orphans at home and around the world. “We place a high value on going deep to change the trajectory of a child’s life.”

5th Sunday Special Offering, July 30th, will go toward our Annual Shoe Drive! Dig deep and let’s bless our neighborhood children with the gift of good shoes.



GRANT CO. MEALS ON WHEELS VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Monday through Friday
1 to 1 1/2 hours a day
Deliver meals to your
homebound neighbors.
Call or text Joe Haynes
765-660-3280

Dear First Church Family,

Thank you very much for the wonderful party. It was great to visit with everyone. Thank you all for the cards and notes. I loved sitting and reading them after the reception. Thank you for the support you have given us through the years. I can’t thank you enough for allowing me to serve the church in the best way ever, teaching! I will miss the kids, but look forward to new adventures.

Love, Donna Wiley



Thumbs Up! Award

Denise Harshman passed the Thumbs Up! award to Debbie Ivey at the June Council Meeting, for her hard work on the FUMC financial team.

Do you know someone who needs an encouraging Thumbs Up? Let Barb Pack know or send a note to the office. We will make sure this person is recognized.



History Above Us

Since the fifth century, many Christian churches have been ringing bells for spiritual and practical purposes such as to call the faithful to worship, to highlight a particular part of the worship church service, to remind the faithful of God’s presence in their daily lives, and to announce important occurrences to the local community.

Recently, Wes and Rex took a tour to the bell tower. It is an impressive structure albeit covered in layers of dust.

Phillip Worthy and Pastor Wes ring the bell every Sunday morning to call our neighbors to worship with us. Join us on Sunday and invite a friend.

Words to Live By

By Jeanette Renbarger, who lived life to the fullest until she passed into the arms of Jesus at the age of 105!

Believing that God is love and that it pleases Him when we share that love with family and friends:

1. Try to give at least two people each day a true compliment, a simple thing like “thank you for letting me go ahead” at the checkout or just how nice they look.
2. Be as happy as you can.
3. Watch your tongue.
4. Enjoy this beautiful creation God gave you.
5. Take care of your body.
6. Exercise those joints and muscles.
7. You are what you eat! Stay with the basics: milk, eggs, meat, veggies—a portion is the size of your palm.
8. Avoid those “little white lies” they cause you way too much trouble.
9. Do not hang onto grudges; apologize, hold your tongue, forget it.
10. Times change, try to keep up, change is usually for the best.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>First Church is participating in a ministry with Gilead Ministries to build wheelchair ramps for people in their homes who have mobility issues. If you would like to donate money or time to help with this program, please contact Pastor Wes.</p>						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Worship Svc. 9:15 am 1st Sun Coin Offering Hands of Hope AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor			Sacred Places 4 pm Parlor AA 6pm FH Al-Anon & Alateen 6pm 3rd Floor			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Worship Svc. 9:15 am AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor	Mary Vacation Administrative Council Mtg 6pm Parlor	Mary Vacation	Mary Vacation Sacred Places 4 pm Parlor AA 6pm FH Al-Anon & Alateen 6pm 3rd Floor	Mary Vacation		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Worship Svc. 9:15 am AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor		July FOCUS Submissions Deadline	QHoF Set up Sacred Places 4 pm Library AA 6pm FH Al-Anon & Alateen 6pm 3rd Floor	QHoF Quilt Show & Vendor Mall	QHoF Quilt Show & Vendor Mall	QHoF Quilt Show & Vendor Mall Block Party 5:30 – 9 pm FUMC
						
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Worship Svc. 9:15 am AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor			Committee Chairs Noon Parlor Sacred Places 4 pm Parlor Finance 6 pm Parlor AA 6pm FH Al-Anon & Alateen 6pm, 3rd Floor			
30	31					
5th Sunday Offering Shoe Drive Worship Svc. 9:15 am AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor	<p align="center">OFFICE HOURS CHANGE</p> <p align="center">Since the Preschool is no longer meeting, Mary will change her office hours. She'll be here in the office Monday-Thursdays from 9 am to 2 pm. Please plan your trips accordingly.</p>					

Future Events!

July 22nd, Block Party @ 5:30 to 9 pm, This is in conjunction with “Discover Marion Downtown” Event
August 13th, Church in the Park @ Matter Park
September (Date TBD,) Mississinewa Valley Band
Save the dates, more info coming!

An Independence Day Prayer

by Margaret Cagle

Lord, on July fourth we'll celebrate
Independence Day in our nation.
You gave us the truth to set us free.
You sent Jesus to die for our salvation.

We thank you for the precious freedom
That we have in our nation today.
We know this country's not perfect,
But we honor our nation, the USA.

We thank you for the Founding Fathers,
Who for freedom took a brave stand.
Many placed their very lives in peril
To start a free country in a new land.

I thank you for the brave soldiers,
Who gave their lives to keep us free.
They gave their ultimate sacrifice
For freedom for Americans like me.

As we shoot fireworks and celebrate
With patriotic concerts and parades,
We thank you for all your blessings
And your great love that never fades.

As we gather with our loved ones
For picnics and barbecues and fun,
We want to thank you for everything,
Especially for sending your only Son!