



# Fall 2025

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
29 EAST WALNUT STREET  
LANCASTER, PA 17602  
ENGAGEGODFIRST.ORG  
717.394.7231

## Rediscovering our Why?

by Pastor Jason Ríos

Friends,

What a blessing it has been to worship with you for the past weeks! My family and I are grateful for all you have done to make us feel welcomed, and we are excited for what God is doing in and through the church's life.

As we begin this journey together, I invite you to reflect on your why. Simon Sinek, a best-selling author and motivational speaker, talks about the importance of being aware of our what, how, and why. In organizations and our personal lives, understanding the reasons behind our actions is crucial, as it brings us fulfillment.

Knowing our *why* helps us be grounded in the mission and the purpose of the church, and it can also help us build trust and authenticity.

Comedian Michael Jr. has a viral video about an important lesson in embracing the why we do things. In this video, he articulates that "*When you know your why, your what has more impact because you are walking toward your purpose.*"

How often do we go through the motions while forgetting the 'why' behind what we do? In the life of the church, we become so busy with our work that we can lose sight of what initially drew us into this relationship with God and our faith community. Remembering the why provides us with focus, and it also helps us envision the future. When you recall your why, it transforms the impact of your actions.

We have begun building on a foundation that will be essential for developing fruitful ministries capable of advancing the church's mission in Lancaster and beyond. As we reflected in the worship series "Living Faith," our lives mirror who Jesus is to us and demonstrate what faith can achieve in people's lives. Throughout August, we explored the significance of sharing our faith and the various ways to invite others to live out their faith—acknowledging that God is with them and how their faith can positively influence their personal lives. It can also extend to others, making a broader

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## Fall Bible Study

### Context:

#### Putting Scripture in Its Place

by Josh Scott

Led by Pastor Jason and Pastor Laura  
October 16-November 20, 6-7:30PM

This fall, join us for **Context: Putting Scripture in Its Place** by Josh Scott—a six-week Bible study featuring video teaching and group discussion. We'll take a closer look at familiar Bible verses we may know by heart, but not always in their original setting. Josh Scott explores the people, places, and times behind these passages, uncovering fresh and eye-opening insights often missed when verses are read out of context. It's a great opportunity to connect with our pastors, meet new friends, and deepen your faith. Childcare will be provided.



impact on those around them. All of this will lead into the fall series, which emphasizes the importance of community and how we are created for connection. We believe that God designed us to connect with Him, with one another, and with our community. In the fall, there will be many opportunities for connection, including cottage meetings, Back to Church Sunday, and a church picnic, to mention a few.

Friends, I encourage you to be attentive to the nudges of God's Holy Spirit. God's Spirit will guide us to rediscover our purpose so we can be the church Lancaster needs. Take time to remember your why. Why did you decide to follow Jesus? Why did First Church become your faith community?

As we journey together through the upcoming months, I invite you to focus on the purpose of our faith community and discover what motivates us to be the church our community needs. Keep in mind that purpose is what God is calling you to do in your current context. In her book "You on Purpose", Stephanie Shackelford defines purpose as "*All the special activities that God created you to perform in the world—a fulfillment of God's intention and design for you—which will naturally result in service and benefit of others.*"

All the opportunities God created you to fulfill, which lead you to worship God and serve God, but also lead you to serve and bless others.

Purpose then becomes all the ways we love God and our neighbor. Purpose is dynamic.

How can we keep that in mind as we journey daily through this world and our faith?

Frederick Buechner wrote: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." That is our calling. To be the intersection where faith and mission come together.

Let us be a church that recognizes how actively the Spirit of God works among us as we serve and pursue new mission opportunities, living out the mission of connecting people to Jesus so they can become Christian disciples who serve and change the world. Let us do so by loving boldly, serving joyfully, and leading courageously.

In faith,

Pastor Jason

Sign up for the study [here](#)



# BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY

September 7 – Fall Sermon Series



## Created for Connection September 7 – October 12

Observing the widespread and severe effects of social disconnection on Americans' health, Dr. Vivek Murthy (21st Surgeon General of the United States) says that "loneliness and isolation represent profound threats to our health and well-being." This reality reflects what our faith already teaches us: God created us for connection and community. Drawing on the experiences of the early church in Scripture, let us relearn how God leads us into lives of meaningful relationships with God and one another.

## Five Practices of a Fruitful Church October 26 – November 16

How do we live a purposeful, deep, and fruitful life? In *Five Practices of Fruitful Living*, Robert Schnase shows how radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith, risk-taking service, and extravagant generosity open us to God's grace. By practicing these habits, we grow in Christ, serve others, and become instruments of God's love in the world.



## World Communion October 5

On World Communion Sunday we join Christians from every corner of the globe at the Lord's Table, celebrating the unity we share in Christ, a unity that transcends nations, cultures and traditions.



## Youth Sunday October 19

Join us for Youth Sunday as our young people lead us in every part of worship—music, preaching, and more—sharing their gifts and passion for Christ.

## All Saints Day November 2

On All Saint's Day, we remember and honor members of our church family who have gone to be with the Lord over the past year, celebrating their lives, their witness and the lasting impact of their faith.

## Ministry Fair and Stewardship Sunday November 16

Join us for a time to explore the many ways you can serve and celebrate the gifts God has given you. You will also have an opportunity to make a financial pledge for 2026—remembering that stewardship is more than money; it's offering our time, talents, and resources back to God.



# YOUR NEXT STEP STARTS HERE!

By Pastor Laura Sambrick

Adult Sunday School kicks off with an Open House on Sunday, September 7 at 9:30 AM—come connect with others and get a sneak peek at the topics planned from September through Christmas! We offer three different classes, each with its own style and focus, so you can choose the one that's right for you. Sunday School is more than a lesson—it's a small group experience with teaching, discussion, and prayer, where faith grows and friendships form. Many say it's their favorite part of church—come see why!

## **Christian Journey Class**

**9:30 a.m. Sundays, Room 232/234**

**September 14** — Pastor Jason will be meeting with us. It will be an excellent time to get to know each other, especially as it relates to how our lives are enriched and supported by the disciplines of study, conversation, and prayer.

**September 21 - November 2** — “The Lord’s Prayer, The meaning and power of the prayer Jesus taught.” We will be using a series of videos by Adam Hamilton to ‘open up’ our discussion and our experiences with the Lord’s Prayer.

## **Koinonia Class**

**9:30 a.m. Sundays, Room 201**

**September 21** — Bible Trivia

**September 28** - Hymns of Praise and the Stories Behind them with Jeff Guy

**October 12 & 19** - Heroes of the Faith with Mark Campbell

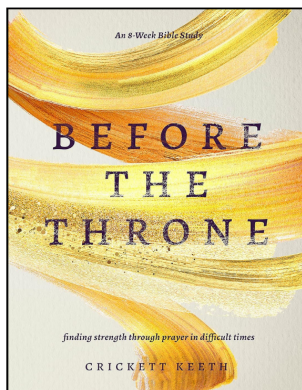
## **Wesleyan Class**

**9:30 a.m. Sundays, Room 214/215**

**Before the Throne” by Cricket Keeth**

**September 14 - October 5**

Join us for an inspiring Bible study on Before the Throne by Cricket Keeth, an four-week journey through the prayers of biblical men and women who sought God in times of challenge, doubt, and need. Together, we’ll discover how to bring our struggles, questions, and worship before God with confidence, learning from examples like Moses, David, Paul, and others. This study will encourage you to draw near to God, deepen your prayer life, and find strength in His presence no matter what you face.



## **Adult Sunday School**

**Open House September 7,  
9:30 AM**

**Christian Journey**

Room 232/234

**Koinonia**

Room 201

**Wesleyan Class**

Room 214/215

For the complete list of  
Sunday School topics and to  
sign up, [please click here.](#)



### Meet the Pastor

August–October  
Various times and places

**You're Invited!** Pastor Jason wants to meet you! This fall, we're holding a series of small gatherings in homes and at the church so that Pastor Jason can get to know our church family. These gatherings are casual and meaningful—an opportunity to connect, share stories, and dream together. Go to [EngageGodFirst.org/events](https://EngageGodFirst.org/events) to learn more and sign up.



### Taizé Prayer Service

September 27, 6 PM (4th Saturday of the month)

**REFRESH YOUR SPIRIT.** FUMC invites you to embrace simplicity in a chaotic world with the return of Taizé worship—an ecumenical evening prayer service modeled after an interdenominational service developed in the French community of Taizé. These sacred candlelit services incorporate meditative readings from Scripture, prayers of praise, times of silence, and contemporary Scripture-based chants. Join us on the fourth Saturday of every month at 6PM in the sanctuary to experience contemplative worship integrated with music, prayer, and silence. For more information, contact one of the planning team members: Judy Williams, Iris and Brian Lehman, or Kathy Seaber.



### Homes for All: A Conversation with Amos Stoltzfus

Sunday, October 5, 9:30 AM

Fellowship Hall

Join us Sunday, October 5 at 9:30 AM to hear from Amos Stoltzfus, born and raised in Lancaster County and deeply committed to the people of Lancaster City. As the SoWe Director for Tenfold and a Planning Commissioner for the City of Lancaster, Amos works to help neighbors maintain housing, advocate for effective policies, and build a community where everyone belongs. With a master's degree in community and regional planning and over a decade of experience collaborating with local governments, Amos brings insight into the challenges and solutions for creating affordable housing for all.



### Friends Living On the Word (FLOW) Young Adult Small Group

Tuesdays, 7:30–9PM with Christian Faux  
FLOW is a network of young adults (ages 18–39) who are growing in Christ together through fellowship. We meet for both Bible studies & social events.

For information on  
FLOW, contact  
[Christian Faux](#)

To sign up, [click here](#)



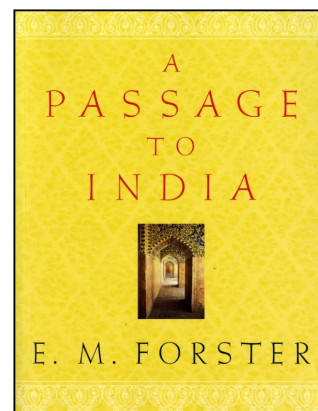
### BOOK CLUB:

#### **A PASSAGE TO INDIA** by E M Forster

Friday, September 19 at 9:30

First United Methodist Church (Room240)

Hailed as one of the finest novels of the twentieth century and transformed into an Academy Award–winning film, *A Passage to India* hauntingly evokes India at the peak of the British colonial era, complete with the racial tension that underscores every aspect of daily life. Into this setting, Forster introduces Adela Quested and Mrs. Moor, British visitors to Chandrapore who are eager for a more authentic taste of India. But when their fates tangle with those of Cecil Fielding and his local friend, Dr. Aziz, at the nearby Marabar Caves, the community of Chandrapore is split wide open and everyone's life—British and Indian alike—is inexorably altered.



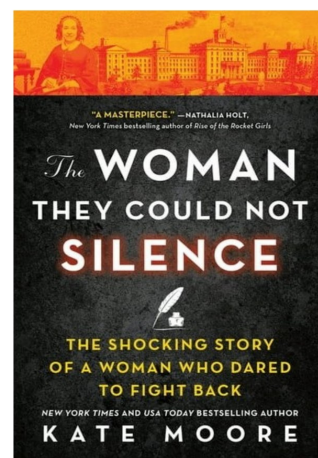
#### **THE WOMAN THEY COULD NOT SILENCE** by Kate Moore

Friday, October 17 at 9:30

First United Methodist Church (Room240)

In the mid-19th century, Elizabeth Packard found herself trapped in an unjust world, silenced by a society that deemed her opinions and intellect unworthy. Braving the confines of an oppressive mental asylum, Elizabeth defied all odds as she fought for her freedom and the rights of countless other women confined against their will. With relentless determination, she became a voice that resonated across the nation, igniting a movement for change.

*The Woman They Could Not Silence*, a true story, is a triumphant tale of resilience, challenging the status quo, and the enduring power of the human spirit. Moore's meticulous research and rich historical detail bring Elizabeth Packard's story to life, painting a vivid portrait of a woman who defied society's expectations and paved the way for future generations.



#### **BEARTOWN: A Novel** by Fredrik Backman

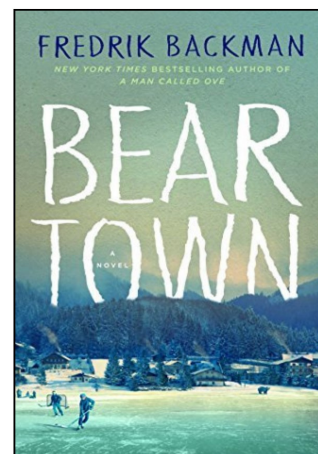
Friday, November 21 at 9:30

First United Methodist Church (Room240)

By the lake in Beartown is an old ice rink, and in that ice rink Kevin, Amat, Benji, and the rest of the town's junior ice hockey team are about to compete in the national semi-finals—and they actually have a shot at winning. All the hopes and dreams of this place now rest on the shoulders of a handful of teenage boys.

Under that heavy burden, the match becomes the catalyst for a violent act that will leave a young girl traumatized and a town in turmoil. Accusations are made and, like ripples on a pond, they travel through all of Beartown.

This is a story about a town and a game, but even more about loyalty, commitment, and the responsibilities of friendship; the people we disappoint even though we love them; and the decisions we make every day that come to define us. In this story of a small forest town, Fredrik Backman has found the entire world.





# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

## Celebrating VBS – True North 2025!

*What a week! True North VBS was packed with fun, faith, and unforgettable memories as we helped kids find their way in a world gone wild! Each night, we welcomed 35 amazing kids who explored Bible truths, made new friends, sang their hearts out, and learned to Trust Jesus in every part of life. We're especially grateful for our 30 dedicated volunteers who made everything possible—from snacks to storytelling, games to guiding, and every moment in between. Thank you to everyone who prayed, served, and participated. Because of you, lives were impacted for eternity. Until next year—Trust Jesus!*



### POCONO PLATEAU – WHAT AN AMAZING WEEK!

We had an unforgettable week at *Pocono Plateau Camp and Retreat!* Campers dove into Bible Adventures centered on the *Fruits of the Spirit*, with each day bringing new lessons, fun, and growth. From crafts, Nerf archery, and boulder wall climbing to waterfront fun, pedal cars, and pond studies, there was never a dull moment. Thank you to everyone who made this week so special — we can't wait to see you again. Join us next year for another incredible Pocono Plateau summer camp experience!



### WHAT'S COMING UP?

#### Next Big Events:

##### **Fall Fest Free Family Event**

*(Saturday, October 25 | 12 – 2 PM):*

Join us for an afternoon of fall-themed fun, including games, costume contest, pumpkin decorating and more located in the Celebration Center.

##### **Gingerbread House Event**

*(Saturday December 6 | 12 - 2pm):*

Come have fun decorating your Gingerbread House while listening to Christmas music, fellowship and more!

**Questions?**

Call us at (717) 394-7231 or email [fkickery@engagegodfirst.org](mailto:fkickery@engagegodfirst.org)



# YOUTH MINISTRY

## YOUTH

### Preparing for Youth Sunday:

We will be dedicating the next few months to get ready for Youth Sunday, which takes place on October 19th. For those unfamiliar with this event, Youth Sunday is when the church's youth take charge of the entire service. They are responsible for writing and delivering the prayers as well as the sermon. This occasion is always meaningful for our young members, and we are thrilled to prepare for it this fall!

### Volunteer Opportunities:

Additionally, we are considering dividing middle and high school students into separate groups. However, this initiative will require more volunteers. While this will involve additional planning, if anyone is interested in helping lead the youth or simply being present during events, please contact Christian Faux at [youth@engagegodfirst.org](mailto:youth@engagegodfirst.org)



## EVENTS

- **OCTOBER 19<sup>TH</sup> - YOUTH SUNDAY**
- **NOVEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> - ESCAPE ROOM  
RIGHT AFTER CHURCH**
- **NOVEMBER 16 - GRETN A GLEN  
YOUTH EVENT**
- **DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> - CHRISTMAS PARTY  
AND DECORATING OUR PART OF  
THE CHURCH FOR THE HOLIDAYS!**

## YOUNG ADULTS (FLOW)

Once we finish our series studying the book of Galatians we'll be doing a brief study where we **share our testimonies** with each other! Further ahead than that we're not sure what our next study will be.

We are looking at possibly taking a day trip to **Washington DC** to visit the Bible Museum, though we haven't organized the time or date yet. As soon as we do I'll pass that along.

## Discovery Corner Academy

*Ashley Richter, Director*

We kicked off the summer with our annual DCA Camp, and what a wonderful week it was! This year's theme was camping, and our 20 little campers had a blast exploring nature, hunting for "grizzly bears," enjoying fun camp-themed snacks, and making the most of our amazing courtyard space. It was a joyful time of discovery, adventure, and connection with God's beautiful creation.

As we look ahead, we're excited to welcome five students into our kindergarten program starting August 21, and preschool begins on September 3 with 38 eager preschoolers ready to learn and grow. We're looking forward to a fun & faith-filled fall as we help our students settle into routine and deepen their love for Jesus.



This summer, we were also thrilled to purchase a brand-new Bible curriculum that we can't wait to dive into with our

students. Our courtyard continues to transform into a vibrant outdoor classroom, and we're excited to see how this space enhances our learning experiences throughout the year.

We're grateful to have five dedicated teachers returning this school year, and we're looking forward to all the growth, learning, and blessings the new year will bring. Here's to another amazing year at Discovery Corner Academy!

Email Ashley at: [dca.director@engagegodfirst.org](mailto:dca.director@engagegodfirst.org)  
or visit [www.discoverycorner.org](http://www.discoverycorner.org)





# Anchor Lancaster

## FALL UPDATES

### *Soul Story: Carolyn*

“For the love I’ve given you is no charge”

At a quiet breakfast table, Carolyn poured milk over a bowl of Cocoa Puffs, each piece carefully tended, even the ones that spilled. “I haven’t had anything to eat since yesterday,” she said softly. There was no bitterness in her voice, only honesty. In that simple moment, something sacred passed between us like a reminder that hunger isn’t just about food, and dignity doesn’t need to be loud to be powerful. Carolyn is in her seventies, living on a fixed income and estranged from family. She’s endured heartbreaks that most of us can’t imagine, yet she shows up each morning with grace, humor, and handmade cards.

What she receives at Anchor Lancaster isn’t just a meal—it’s community, compassion, and the kind of steady care that says, “You matter.” Her story will stay with you. It echoes the Gospel message we strive to live every day at Anchor: to serve without judgment, to love without condition, and to see each guest as a soul worth knowing. Read Carolyn’s full story on our blog; see how your support helps us offer love—at no charge. [Blog link](#)



### *Laundry with Love*

Anchor Lancaster, is known for its dedication to serving the unhoused and vulnerable community, offering laundry services for our guests—an act that has rippled with deeply human impact. For many guests, the simple act of having clean clothes isn't just about hygiene; it's about dignity, self-worth, and a return to normalcy. One guest, deeply touched by the experience, shared, "It smelled so good, and I appreciate everything you do for all the guests!" Their words echo the gratitude felt by many who come through Anchor's doors.

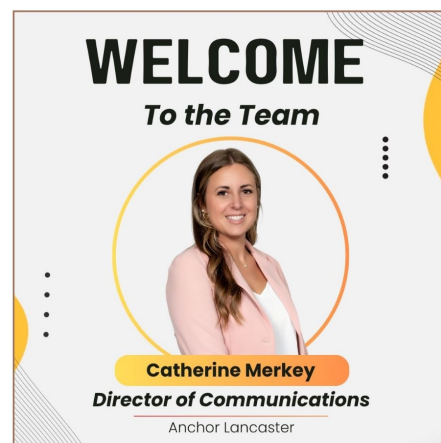
Clean laundry can be life changing. It can mean feeling confident enough to go to a job interview, reconnect with family, or just face the day with renewed pride. For those living without stable housing, laundry is often a luxury. We hope Anchor's commitment to meeting this basic need sends a powerful message: you are seen, you are valued, and you deserve care. This service, while practical, is rooted in compassion—furthering Anchor Lancaster's mission not just to serve meals or provide shelter, but to restore hope and humanity in every small, intentional act.

### *Director of Communications*

This summer marked a new chapter with a heartfelt thanks to Aftan, our former Director of Communications, for her creativity and dedication, which strengthened Anchor Lancaster. We are deeply grateful for her lasting impact.

In the same spirit, we welcome Catherine Merkey as our new Director of Communications. With a diverse background in social work, healthcare, marketing, and real estate, she brings a strong dedication to service. She holds a bachelor's in social work and an MBA. Her work focuses on compassion and meaningful connections.

“I’ve followed Anchor Lancaster’s work for a while and have always admired the way they truly care for people—with a servant’s heart,” Catherine shares. “I’m so excited to be part of a team that’s making a real difference in the community, and I can’t wait to help share those stories.”

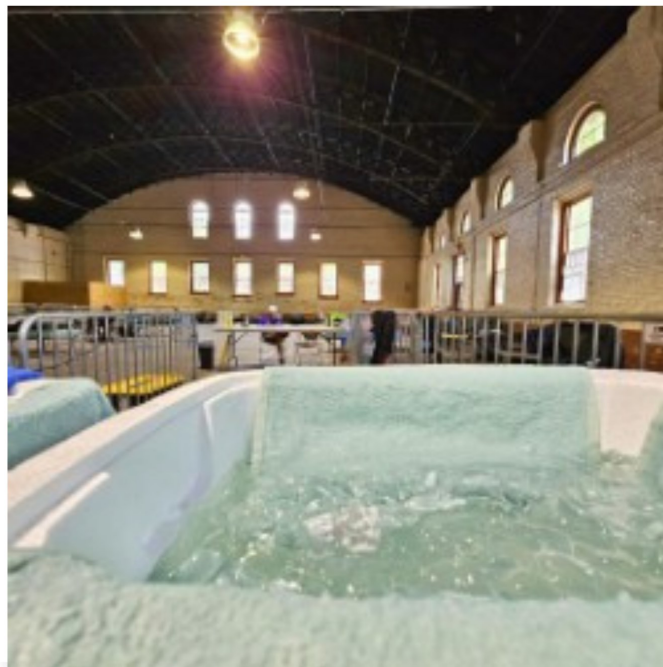




## *Day Center: Caring Beyond the Clock*

This past quarter, Anchor Lancaster had the opportunity to respond to urgent community needs, this time in the form of extreme summer heat. On a Sunday in late June, Lancaster County issued a Code Red Heat Alert as temperatures climbed into dangerous territory. Though our Day Center typically operates Monday through Friday, we opened our doors outside of normal hours to provide shelter, water, and relief for neighbors without access to air conditioning or shade.

Thanks to recently purchased industrial fans and well-stocked supplies like bottled water and ice, we were able to respond quickly and responsibly. But even more impactful than the resources were the people: our staff and volunteers who showed up with compassion, offering not only physical comfort but the dignity of presence and care. This response was made possible by your generosity, our partnership with Tenfold, and a team that lives out Anchor Lancaster's mission of hospitality, even when it's hard, and even when it's hot. In a world that doesn't always pause for those in need, we're grateful to be able to say: Anchor Lancaster does.



## *Retirement with a Gift*

Some legacies don't end with a farewell, they echo in the quiet kindness left behind, in the way someone chooses to turn their goodbye into a blessing. Earlier this year, First UMC did something extraordinary. The church launched a capital campaign, not for building projects or internal needs, but to honor Pastor Joe's retirement and his commitment to mission. He was asked to pick three missions to benefit from the funds and one recipient was Anchor Lancaster. Pastor Joe was the initial voice asking to bring "Anchorage Breakfast" to First Church 10 years ago when it needed a new location in the city. The congregation rallied behind this initiative and has continued to support Anchor Lancaster, as it is now known. Over time, Anchor has expanded its mission of a hot buffet breakfast to include shower and laundry services, and a day center. Two caseworkers are part of the team, providing life changing support to our guests. First Church has contributed over \$150,000 to Anchor Lancaster, and this incredible gift will help us continue to provide meals, showers, care, and dignity to our neighbors in need right here in Lancaster. We are immensely grateful. Thank you, Pastor Joe and First United Methodist Church!



# THE WESLEY SINGERS

The Wesley Singers started at FUMC in 1987 as a quartet singing at the bedside of FUMC members in hospitals. From that humble beginning, it has grown to one of the most respected and appreciated forty-plus all-male choruses in Lancaster County. In May and November, we sing at retirement communities throughout the county for two seasons each year! Rehearsals are conducted on the last two Mondays in April and October and we sing the first two Mondays in May and November.



Anyone who can carry a tune is welcome. There are no auditions and anyone of any age and religious affiliation is welcome. Our musical offerings are primarily religious, but we also include some secular and patriotic songs. Audiences are encouraged to sing along with us on familiar tunes and they thoroughly enjoy the experience. For information regarding this great group of men who share the message of God's love, grace and mercy through voice and music, contact Ted Maurer at (717) 299-4650.



The choirs of First Church are set to begin and you're invited to join! All are welcome to be part of a supportive community of musicians who love to present great music to the Glory of God!

## Led by Jan Betty

### **Cherub Choir**

(age 3 - grade 2)

Saturday mornings 10:30-11:30 AM

Rehearsal begins October 4

Sings at the 9:30 AM & 10:45 AM services about 6 times each year

### **Carol Choir**

(grades 3 - 6)

Wednesday evening 7:00-8:00 PM

Rehearsals begin Sept 3 (Rm 209)

Sings at the 9:30 AM & 10:45 AM services once each month

Contact Jan Betty at [jan@mycyberlink.net](mailto:jan@mycyberlink.net)

## Led by Peter Omundsen

### **Chapel Choir**

(grades 7 - 12)

Wednesday evening 7:00-8:00 PM

Rehearsal begins Sept 3 (Rm 209)

### **Youth Handbells**

(grades 7-12)

Wednesday evening 6:00-7:00 PM

Rehearsals begin Sept 3 (Rm 209)

### **Wesley Handbell Choir**

(adults)

Thursday evenings 6:30-7:30 PM

Rehearsals begin September 4

Contact Peter Omundsen at [peterthetuner@gmail.com](mailto:peterthetuner@gmail.com)

## Led by Brian Norcross

### **Chancel Choir**

(high school & adults)

Two rehearsal options:

Thursday night 7:45-9:15 PM, and/or

Sunday morning 9:30-10:30 AM, singing for 10:45 services.

Rehearsals begin September 4th

Contact Brian Norcross

[brian.norcross@fandm.edu](mailto:brian.norcross@fandm.edu)



# MUSIC

## 1ST FRIDAY WITH STONE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL & ALLEGRO

Friday, October 3, 6 PM

Our church is joining the downtown First Friday celebration with an open-house style event! Enjoy live performances and a student art display from Stone Independent School, offering a wonderful opportunity to welcome visitors, share our story, and strengthen our presence in the community. As a special treat, Allegro Orchestra will hold an open rehearsal in the sanctuary—your chance to get a behind-the-scenes preview of their Music in the Round: Brass and Organ concert, to be presented the next day, October 4, at 3:00 PM & 7:30 PM.



## ALLEGRO ORCHESTRA PRESENTS MUSIC IN THE ROUND: BRASS & ORGAN

Saturday, October 4th, 2025 | 3:00 PM & 7:30 PM

Buy tickets at [allegrolancaster.org/upcoming-events](https://allegrolancaster.org/upcoming-events)

Use promotion code FUMC to receive a \$5 discount

*Children 5-18 attend free with a paying adult.*

### Repertoire:

Giovanni Gabrieli - Canzona

Carlyle Sharpe - Confitemini Domino. (1998)

Zequinha de Abreu - Tico Tico (1917)

Scott Hiltzik - Spirals (2005)

Charles-Marie Widor - Toccata from Symphony No. 5 (1879) and more!

## F&M ORCHESTRA ORGAN SYMPHONY

Sunday, 11/9 (2 PM)

Sanctuary, Free admission

F&M orchestra, Brian Norcross conducting

Peter Omundsen, organ

### Repertoire:

Saint-Saens, Symphony No. 3, "The Organ"

Glinka - Ruslan and Lyudmila Overture

Norcross - Dogwood

## LOOKING AHEAD

### Christmas Cantata

"Lead Me Back to Bethlehem" by Pepper Choplin

Sunday, December 7, 8:15 and 10:45 AM

### A City in Song: Christmas with Allegro

Saturday, December 20th, 2025 | 3:00 PM & 7:30 PM

### Contemporary Christmas Service

Tuesday, December 23, 7 pm

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Wednesday, December 24, 4, 7 and 10 pm



# FALL ART CLASS

EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY, 6-7:30 PM

SEPTEMBER 24 - NOVEMBER 19

LEARNING TO DRAW / LEARNING TO SEE

A Free First UMC Art Class

## Discovering Mark Making: A Visual Expression Journey

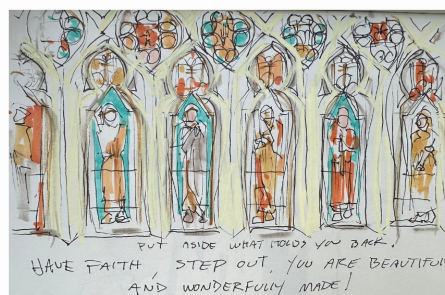
Mark making is a fundamental human activity that allows us to communicate and express ourselves visually. This learning experience will delve into effective mindsets and practical strategies to cultivate your own independent preferences and methods for leaving personal marks.

As an art educator, I am passionate about working with individuals who believe they lack artistic ability, as I am confident I can help you realize your potential! Equally exhilarating is collaborating with skilled practitioners, who may also be pleasantly surprised by their growth through the exploration of new pathways and techniques.

### Class Details:

- Open to all ability levels, in any medium or format
- **Schedule:** Every other Wednesday, from 6 to 7 PM
- **Dates:** September 24th through November 19th
- **Location:** Church art studio
- Extended studio hours until 8 PM, as needed
- All ages welcome (**participants under 12 must be accompanied by an adult**)
- Supplies will be provided, unless you opt for a unique medium
- Sketchbooks available for purchase

Class is currently full, but if you would like more information reach out to Brian Lehman.



Brian Lehman

✉ brianslehman@gmail.com

## Discover Your Place to Serve—Ministry Fair

November 16 | Following the 8:15, 9:30 and 10:45am worship services

On Sunday, November 16, our church will come alive with opportunities to connect, serve, and make a difference. Following each worship service, our Ministry Fair will fill the space with tables, displays, and friendly faces from every ministry team in our church. You'll be able to explore the many ways God is at work here — and how you might be part of it.

Whether your gifts are in teaching, hospitality, music, prayer, outreach, care, or something else entirely, there's a place where your talents and passions can make a difference. Representatives from each team will be there to answer your questions and help you imagine how you might share your time, skills, and heart.

As Scripture reminds us, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:4, 7). This is a chance to discover, or rediscover, your place in the body of Christ.

Come, browse, connect — and see where God might be calling you next!





# MISSIONS & OUTREACH

## MISSIONS TEAM

Missions has much to report! We have had our longest serving member, Steve Franz step down from his Financial spot and Barb Hill generously offer to join us. If you see either please thank them for their efforts.

We have been able to contribute to amazing causes and spread love from Duke Street!

- Dispersed \$3300 to the McDowell Water Project ([www.mcbrtapp.com/page/donate/mcdowell-water-project](http://www.mcbrtapp.com/page/donate/mcdowell-water-project)) to assist access to clean, drinkable water in West Virginia
- Updated the text on the website for many of our missions/ministries & are dedicated to keeping it as up to date as possible!
- Purchased \$500 worth of books for those in Lancaster County Prison via its Chaplain
- Dispersed \$2000 to LUMINA for summer camp scholarships & food for the day camp at New Creation
- Assisting Ramish Bakshi & Kaluta Family as they navigate the process & costs of a change in status with USCIS
- Planning a Fall Item Drive with Outreach to assist the unhoused in Lancaster (more details to come in September!)

## GREEN TEAM

### FUMC SNEAKER RECYCLING DRIVE A SUCCESS

Submitted by Steve Franz

The FUMC Green Team worked with our Youth to recycle your donated sneakers at the Lancaster Nike Outlet. This was an opportunity to clean out our closets and lessen waste in Lancaster County. Nike has a sorting process to donate usable sneakers at various non-profits that make donated shoes available. If the sneakers truly have no life left in them, they are transported to a contractor that grinds them into raw material for the manufacture of playground surfaces and athletic fields.

With the proliferation of athletic shoes, every year millions of these shoes get tossed out. You made a difference by donating **191 pairs!**







# LUMINA SUMMER DAY CAMP

Fun, Faith, & Fellowship

August 4-8, 2025

This year's LUMINA Summer Day Camp was a wonderful week of sunshine, learning, and laughter. **Twenty-eight children** (ages 5-12) were joined by 21 adults from six United Methodist churches and 14 youth helpers—including several from First UMC: Sue Kepner, Natalie Reed, Rachel Ridgeway, JoAnne Foss, Marc Russo, Ben & Dan Denisewicz, and Christian Faux.

Campers built birdhouses, painted T-shirts, made beaded bracelets and cross necklaces, and shaped clay creatures. They explored how to live out their faith in Christ—loving one another, showing kindness, praying for others, and offering forgiveness. Each day, children received 1-2 books to take home and enjoyed classic camp games like Gaga, Tenzies, and sack races.

A highlight was the **trip to Camp Conquest**, where campers stomped in the creek, caught crayfish and minnows, swam, zipped down a water slide, and roasted hotdogs and marshmallows over a campfire.

Thanks to a **First UMC grant**, all meals were covered for the week—featuring favorites like chicken nuggets, pasta with meat sauce, beef BBQ, and homemade pizza. Another grant from First UMC also helped fund scholarships for Gretna Glen Camp in July, enabling LUMINA to send 19 children and youth.

We are grateful to God for perfect weather, to all the volunteers who made the week possible, and to First UMC for the support that made a lasting difference in the lives of our campers.

LUMINA is a **Lancaster City outreach** offering food, clothing, educational opportunities, encouragement, and friendship to those experiencing the darkness of poverty, hardship, and loneliness. Learn more at [luminaoutreach.org](http://luminaoutreach.org). LUMINA's director, Correen Russo, serves as the Deacon appointed to First United Methodist Church.





# GENEROSITY UNLEASHED MAKES IMPACTS FOR CHRIST

On June 8, 2025, First UMC celebrated surpassing our goals of **\$300,000 for 3 great mission projects** in honor of Pastor Joe's 40 years in ministry and retirement. Our capital campaign, unlike the many we have already had, was directed not at our own facilities but at others doing God's work. **Our total exceeds \$480,000**, meaning that our gift to each project should be in excess of \$160,000, far greater than the original goal of \$100,000!

**Anchor Lancaster** has created an endowment fund to undergird operating expenses. In addition, Anchor Lancaster may use their funds for a capital mission if one is determined in the future.



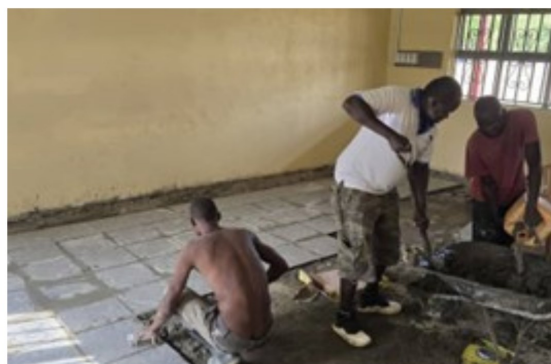
## *Sierra Leone*

**Serving Sierra Leone's Maternity Center** is under construction in Kabala, Sierra Leone. Rev. Dorcas Kamanda, a part of First Church, has informed us that progress has been temporarily halted due to the rainy season. Tragically, Dorcas shared that a recent mother passed away from Post Partum Hemorrhage at their clinic, which lacks sufficient resources. The mother was only 28 years old and this was her second child. Additionally, a two-year-old child also lost their life recently. Dorcas expressed, "These incidents have brought me immense sadness. Both could have been prevented." Once completed, the Maternity Center is expected to significantly reduce maternal and newborn mortality rates in their region of Sierra Leone. The total cost for the center may exceed \$500,000, and our contributions will aid the community in facing the future with hope.



## *Africa Sunrise Communities*

**Rising Hope Christian Center** is beginning to take form in Bor Town, South Sudan. Jacob Guot, a part of First Church, shares that his mission, Africa Sunrise Communities, has secured a five-year lease for their building. They have completed renovations on the floors and ceilings and developed a layout that includes a pharmacy, waiting room, examination areas, and facilities for digital x-rays and ultrasound machines, among other features. Excitingly, potential patients have already heard about the Rising Hope Medical Center and are coming forward seeking treatment! Given that electricity is available for only 6 hours a day, Jacob's team is investigating the possibility of implementing a solar system with battery storage. Thanks to our gift, they have the confidence to pursue these advancements that once seemed unattainable.



Your pledges to the Generosity Unleashed campaign have exceeded the goals, and your giving is on a

great schedule. By the close of August, we expect our receipts to exceed \$255,000 (53% of the total)! Our June distribution was \$35,000 each; our July distribution was \$25,000 each; and we expect our August distribution to be \$20-25,000.

Together we are reaching into the future with faith and action. Together, God is using us to make an impact for Jesus in three places in our needy world. While many worry about scarcity, our Generosity Unleashed campaign demonstrates abundance – and hope. Praise the Lord!



# FALL'S WILD BEAUTIES & BOUNTIES

BY CLYDE MCMILLAN-GAMBER

Like all seasons, autumn is a time of God-created beauties and bounties that sustain people, plants and animal life. In Lancaster County, fall is a culmination of summer's wild plant and animal growth, and the time of wild beings' using that bounty to prepare for winter.

Orange pumpkins decorate fields, yellow goldenrod and sunflower blossoms wave beautifully in the wind along rural roads, and south-bound swallows sweep swiftly over farmland after flying insects. Foliage of certain deciduous trees turns to striking red or yellow as trees prepare for winter by with-drawing water from their leaves, allowing them to die.

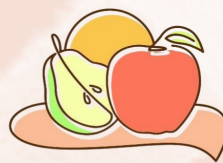
Fall is the time of the greatest bounty of food for people and wildlife. Pretty red or orange berries help see rodents and berry-eating birds through winter.

Attractive acorns and other nuts are consumed by deer, squirrels, chipmunks and jays. Squirrels, chipmunks and jays stash nuts to devour through winter. Wood chucks fatten on greens to winter in dens, and many handsome birds migrate south, some in noticeable, inspiring flocks.

God provides for people, wild plants and animals and we all benefit from His wonderful creations, love and caring.



Terry & Zoa Kile



LANCASTER COUNTY  
FOOD EXCHANGE

MAKING FRESH FOOD  
MORE ACCESSIBLE

[lanastercountyfoodexchange.org](http://lanastercountyfoodexchange.org)

Lancaster County Food Exchange is a **mobile web app** that enables procurement volunteers at food pantries and community kitchens to share their excess items ("Haves") and requests ("Needs"). Posts are communicated to participants via email or text twice daily, if desired.

**The mission** is to enhance communication among volunteers to help provide quality food to families facing food insecurity in Lancaster County, a fertile area where fresh food is still needed. The app simplifies the sharing of available produce, protein, and bakery items to minimize waste. For more information, please visit their website listed above.

*"After volunteering for my local food pantry, I decided to create an app that would allow food volunteers at the 100+ food pantries and community kitchens in our county to share inventory info and make sure no food is wasted. Today my 501c3 status came through. We are on the way!" - Terry Kile*



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Methodist Church of Lancaster

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email list & get all the news  
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First United Methodist Church Annual

# Church Picnic

**SUNDAY**  
**SEP. 28, 1-4 PM**

**Longs Park, Pavilion #3**

*With Hess's BBQ! Suggested donation \$5/person*

Come enjoy an afternoon of food, friends, and fun games  
—and a perfect chance to invite someone new!

**\*Picnic moved to Fellowship Hall if it rains**

**Sign up [here](#)  
to join the  
fun!**