

## Pastors

### **Rev. Leslie Wood**

Suffice it to say, since Council last met on March 10<sup>th</sup>, the days have run together in a blur. Much has already happened in 2025 already, and there are still many exciting opportunities and challenges ahead.

In addition to the “normal” busyness of Lent, Holy Week and Easter, there have been a number of administrative situations that require time and attention since the last Council meeting. First, after 23 years as the office manager at FUMC, Patty Gregory retired, giving a two week (really six days) notice. I commend the volunteers who have stepped up to fill in the gaps since she left. SPRC worked hard to re-tool the job description for that position, incorporating the need for facilities oversight and web administration. New hours were also established to coincide, mostly, with the preschool hours, the salary was reviewed and adjusted. The job was posted on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and we are currently receiving resumes.

Following Patty’s retirement notice on March 13<sup>th</sup>, Desiree Aragon notified us on April 14<sup>th</sup> of her intention to resign as of May 13<sup>th</sup>. That is a blow as she has been doing a phenomenal job with the children of FUMC/Union/TUMC. Following a meeting with Desiree, she has postponed her end date until the end of May. What’s more, after discussions, she is willing to consider continuing her employment conditional on a reevaluation of how this new and creative position is structured.

An FUMC 101 (new member) class was scheduled for March 30<sup>th</sup>. Only one couple signed up to attend. The class was cancelled. However, I met for coffee with Jay and Tena Britt a few days later. While they are holding off joining for a few months, they are already becoming integrated into the FUMC family. (Tena is one of our office volunteers during this transition time.)

The Britts will wait to join. Nevertheless, Colton Landon, a Confirmand, was confirmed and joined the church on May 10<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, we will have three new members joining FUMC on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Wyatt Sanderson is a high school senior and a youth in Matthew’s youth group. He has requested to join FUMC (though his family attends Mountainview Presbyterian). I met with Wyatt and Matthew for a “very mini” FUMC 101. The Aleman family, Laura and Julio, with children Bailey (youth) and Will (elementary) recently began coming to FUMC and have already asked to join. I will be meeting with them for coffee and that “mini FUMC 101” this week.

Just a note about membership...In 2024 we welcomed 9 new members. While that number may sound on the low side, in actuality, over the past year or so, we have welcomed several new families to FUMC. 19 other visitors have come to worship at FUMC and found a home here. These new friends are identified as constituents (faithful attendees who have chosen to not enter into formal membership). I would like to encourage all our leaders, actually everyone, to make a point to notice folks that they haven’t met before, and introduce yourselves. Extend welcome. FUMC’s potential for growth will be directly related to our radical hospitality.

I was blessed to be able to baptize Lilith (Lily) Farber on April 13<sup>th</sup>. Her mother, Madeline Strah-Farber, and grandparents, Gary and Cindy Strah have been attending FUMC for the past several months. I (or Lee) will be conducting another baptism soon. Erika Deumig has been attending FUMC for the past few months. Her fiancé, Aaron, has expressed an interest in being baptized. I will be meeting with them soon.

Congregational meetings to present and discuss FUMC’s financial challenges were held on April 7<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. The meetings were, overall, positive and generated thoughtful questions and ideas. In response to these meetings and our efforts to be as transparent as possible, we have been blessed with a significant donation by an anonymous doner, along with a challenge to collectively match the gift. (I would like to add that this unexpected generosity comes from someone who is a constituent...not an official...member of FUMC. Official membership looks good on paper, but connection and generosity does not depend on joining the church.)

Leaning into our vision to use our facility as a sacred space to bless and serve the community, volunteers and contractors have begun the transformation of the building. We are deeply grateful for all the hard work that has, and continues, to be done to make our facility a welcome place for many outside individuals and groups to

gather. We are already seeing the fruit of that labor. The Loveland Preschool move has generated excitement and energy...and hope...in many ways.

May 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the LPS spring fair, LPS staff, families and members of FUMC and the wider community gathered to cut the ribbon and celebrate what we know will be a long relationship between LPS and the church. At FUMC, LPS will continue its remarkable work of blessing young children with an excellent start to their education.

Matthew, Lee and I prepared for the Lenten season by writing 40 Lenten reflections/devotions, which were distributed to FUMC followers on email and Facebook. We all received a great deal of positive feedback. For me, it was a blessing to share writing duties with Lee and Matthew.

While the planned for Lenten study of the book In the Name of Jesus by Nenni Nouwen, didn't materialize due to lack of interest, the FUMC/TUMC collaborative study, *Immigration and the Bible, through a Wesleyan Lens*, welcomed about a dozen participants. Roughly half were from each church. It was a positive experience. This was one example of meaningful connection and collaboration. During Holy week, FUMC collaborated with four other Loveland congregations at TUMC for an ecumenical Maundy Thursday service. Our Chancel Choir participated this year, offering a beautiful anthem as special music. It was breathtaking. On Good Friday, FUMC and five other congregations gathered for an ecumenical service at First Christian. Both services were full and deeply meaningful. Easter Sunday dawned quite cold, as FUMC, TUMC and 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian led a special, though small, Easter Sunrise service next to the very sandy lake bottom of Lake Loveland (or cow pond, as it seemed to be this year). The single 10:00am traditional service filled the sanctuary (almost 300), joined by many online worshipers.

#### **Rev. Lee Anderson Harris**

I have a few updates below. Two factors have impacted how I spend my time at FUMC. First, the retirement of Patty Gregory has meant that I spend more time on administrative/office tasks than I typically do. Second, the uncertainty of my position in the future means that I have shifted gears *somewhat*. I am still going on with my tasks as usual. But I am also thinking about legacy, and what I can do now through the rest of my time here to prepare the church for having one less pastor. There are obvious roles to turn over to the congregation, such as congregational care and the coordination of fellowship. Other things will become clearer with time. I am trying to think in terms of leaving the job so that I document and prepare over time. And, some of the tasks I do might be picked up by the new office manager, such as creating slides and updating the website for some of the church events and special worship services we have.

Braver Angels/Aspen Club update: The Braver Angels workshops held March 15 and April 12 were well attended. They achieved their goal of establishing a Northern Colorado group that will hopefully continue to use FUMC space for their gatherings, but so far no new workshops have been scheduled. Aspen Club had to cancel a seminar series due to low registration.

FUMC Serves, which is my effort to get FUMC folks out of the building and into the community on a regular basis, is not off to a strong start. The April event was cancelled due to lack of registrations, although I did not advertise it as well as I normally do. I rescheduled that event to June in case the low registration was due to publicity. The May event has generated only one volunteer. While there is an event scheduled monthly for the remainder of the year (except for August) I will reassess this project if participation continues to be this low.

Andrea Ortega and I are coordinating Loveland Community Night Out on June 25. I welcome anyone else who wants to help us plan, and more information will come out about signing up to help set up and be ambassadors. This was a fun event with good turnout from the neighborhood last year, and this time we have more time to get the word out!

As a reminder, I will be taking renewal leave July 1-August 10. This time frame should have the least impact on the church. Plans for supporting Leslie with pastoral care are being made.

The first monthly newsletter, called 'The Insight,' has been received with positive feedback!

Yours in Christ, Lee

## **Staff**

Financial Secretary ~ Cindy Utley

Church Treasurer ~ Karen Lumpkin

Music Coordinator ~ Kathryn Peiffer

Choir Director ~ Nicole Ceciliani

## **Youth Ministries Coordinator ~ Matthew Utley**

### **Youth Report:**

It is an exciting time for many of our youth! Here are some highlights of what has been happening / will happen soon in our youth ministry.

- Colton Landon has completed confirmation and was confirmed during church on Mother's Day.
- Wyatt Sanderson, Cailyn Landon, and Gregor Goody are all graduating high school this month! They will be recognized on May 18th.
- Also on the 18th, I will be offering safe sanctuary training from noon - 1 pm.
- Wyatt Sanderson plans on officially joining the church on June 8th.
- Also on June 8th, the mission team for the youth mission trip will be commissioned during service.
- The youth mission trip to Nashville TN will be from June 21st - 29th.

I have announced before that I have been selected to represent Iliff School of Theology on the Young Adult Pilgrimage of Peace in South Korea. I am honored and extremely excited for this once in a lifetime opportunity. However, it did conflict with the mission trip. I spoke with Leslie about this back in February to find a solution. To remedy this problem, I have been still coordinating the youth mission trip, but I will, sadly, not be attending. Neal Anderson, Judy Graff, Bart Utley, and Abbi Flaming are the adults going.

### **Internship Report:**

Since my last report to the Church Council, I have been making significant progress on a website redesign. I, in conversation with Leslie and Lee, have made a "What we Believe" page for the new website along with a new graphic. Since this is stating our beliefs as a church, the Church Council needs to provide input and approve it. The letter from Leslie that is also on this page, but since that is coming from the personal beliefs of the pastor and is already on our public website, that does not need to be discussed by the Church Council. What does is the graphic and the three sections below it.

Here is a link to the What we Believe Page.

<https://darkturquoise-dunlin-561477.hostingersite.com/index.php/what-we-believe/>

Unless there are major concerns, I do hope that this can be approved at this meeting as this will be my last CC meeting as an intern and I hope to be done/mostly done with the new website by the end of the month.



Family Outreach Chair ~ Desiree Aragon

Bell Choir Director ~ Susan Harding

## **Committees**

### **Staff Parish ~ John Morgan**

We have two items from SPRC. First the Office Manager position is now being advertised in several locations on the web. Also, we are very happy to report that Desire Aragon has withdrawn her resignation from the Family Ministries Coordinator position.

### **Finance ~ Charlie Bouchard**

Things have been busy in the land of finance. We have conducted two all church meetings to make members aware of the church finances. Slides were shown to illustrate the different buckets of money and the 2025 deficit. Questions were answered and a follow up report is going out in the mail. After the second meeting we received news from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous that they would be funding approximately 1/2 of our deficit for the next two years - a total of about \$120,000! This is a huge God wink. If church members can come up with the other half of the deficit (\$120k), we should be able to preserve our reserve funds. This takes care of short-term finances, but we need to continue to work on getting our budget balanced by fall of 2026. We continue to look at all avenues for reduction in costs and ways to increase revenues. The Building Use Committee continues to assess our useable space and the potential to use that space to serve our community and generate revenue so we can continue to serve for many years to come.

### **Trustees ~ Debbie Tikka**

My apologies for not being able to attend the Church Council meeting this month. But I would like everyone to know what the Trustees have been getting done these past couple of months:

1. Restriped the parking lot. Hopefully everyone has noticed that, they did a great job.
2. Elevator – this has been a touchy subject for many. I am in the process of dealing with the account manager from TKE and getting a better quote to modernize at least the elevator by the sanctuary. As of right now, the technician who was last at the church to work on the elevator appears to have solved the issues and from my understanding from members that use the elevator, there have not been any problems. A little patience while we get the best for the church.
3. There will be new AEDs. There are two in the church, one in the foyer and one down by fellowship hall. The batteries are expired and unfortunately our AEDs are outdated and the company that we deal with is having a hard time getting replacement items.
4. I have been working with Decoration and Décor committee to get the North wall fixed in Coy Hall. Hopefully this will happen sooner than later.
5. The flooring throughout the church is an ongoing project and will be complete hopefully this summer.
6. The new facility use packet is moving along. I will apologize for not having any updates on this one. The Trustees have approved the new one asking for a few minor changes in the packet. I will get with the person that has been working on this to see where the progress is.
7. There have been leaking issues with the skylight that is just North of the sanctuary. I did have a contractor come look at it and they are saying it is more of the flashing on the roof and not really the glass. But they are working on getting a quote for a new skylight and what can be done to repair the flashing. They added caulking around the flashing on the roof while they were there (free of charge, very kind of them) and it seems to have helped. More to come with this project.

**If there is something that you are concerned about that I have not mentioned in this report, do not hesitate to contact me. The Trustees have been working diligently to fix items around the church to make this building a safe and inviting place for all to worship.**

### **Abiding Memorials ~ Betty Hill**

The Abiding Memorials Committee met May 7th to discuss a request for Memorial Funds which I received from Kathryn Peiffer, chair of the Worship Committee. The request was for 50 additional green Worship & Song hymnals for the church. The Abiding Memorials committee unanimously approved the request.

Stewardship ~ John Kindred

Missions and Social Concerns ~ Barry Wehrle

**Marketing & Outreach ~ Andrea Ortega**

FUMC will be hosting a table at Loveland Pride this year in lieu of the Pride event normally held at the church. Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup> @ Mehaffey Park from 4:00-8:00 there will be love, community, and celebration! Expect booths, art and entertainment.

FUMC will be meeting the community where they are to hand out water and popcorn and provide information on all that FUMC has to offer.

Davis is coordinating the vendors and replied that he is a lifelong United Methodist and is super excited to meet us all.

There will be a volunteer sign-up sheet/form and we are hopeful to have council members involved in this event.

Membership Secretary ~ Janeen Anderson

Safety and Security ~ Keith Flaming

UM Foundation ~ Mike Westbrook