

The Insight

Giving *insight* into the life of FUMC Loveland and keeping our mission *in sight*.

Pastor's Pondering, by Rev. Lee Anderson-Harris

Epiphany is observed each year as a time of realization of who Jesus is. It is a season as well as a day, as we recognize that he is not fully revealed to us all at once. I appreciate that it comes every year because when I engage with a new Advent study, read from a familiar or new devotion book, and spend time in personal reflection, new revelations come to me about what the birth of Jesus means for the world, and what his teachings mean for me. Reading the daily devotions written by people of this church gives me new perspectives too, as I get a glimpse into how God is speaking to some of you and what you have learned from your faith journey.

I have an image of a mosaic when I think of this. When I look back at how my beliefs have developed over time, there are some places I can see pieces that no longer fit in my overall theology, or in my relationship with God. But often, those pieces remain as simply a piece of the whole picture. My understanding keeps broadening to include past experiences, not erase them. What I learned previously still fits as part of the bigger picture, even if I see now that it wasn't the whole truth, just a part of it. And I imagine that I will keep adding pieces to the mosaic my whole life, until I get to the other side and see fully and clearly, as Paul wrote (1 Cor 13:12).



The Church of the Multiplication at Tabgha is a pilgrimage site in Israel marking what is thought to be where Jesus performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes, among other miracles. At the foot of the altar, which was built over some limestone venerated as the “exact location” is a 5th century mosaic, shown in detail here.

In this past Advent's study, using the book *The First Advent in Palestine* by Kelley Nikondeha, we discussed the courtyard of the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth that the author described. I remember walking through this courtyard, which was lined with international depictions of Mary, artistic renderings that reflected the culture and homeland of the artist (below are a few photos I took). Pieces of the landscape of the country, cultural symbols, and colors put Mary into that homeland. What would similar art reflecting Jesus from around the world look like, I wonder?



The magi were foreigners. It's harder for us to really grasp this because from the vantage point of many people in the U.S....people who aren't as knowledgeable about the land and people of the Middle East as those who grow up there or have spent a lot of time there...ancient Persia isn't all that different than ancient Palestine. But the magi spoke a different language, lived in a different culture, and practiced a different religion than the holy family. In what ways did these factors influence their own experience of encountering the Christ child? What did their piece of the mosaic look like?

In the TV show Northern Exposure, season 3, episode 10, the character Chris described his own personal epiphany one year, then stated "...Christmas reveals itself to us each in a personal way, be it secular or sacred. Whatever Christmas is, and it's many things to many people, we all own a piece of it." Christ is everywhere, so what would an artistic rendering of Jesus in your hometown look like? What symbols and colors would be represented? What would Jesus in other cities, states, nations look like? All of these pictures can be combined into one whole, like pieces in the mosaic.

We must be careful with this, of course. People have a tendency to make God, and therefore Jesus, into our own image. While it is true that Jesus is in our world, our context, in our day-to-day lives, he is still who HE is. Jesus stands in solidarity with us, while standing apart from, or even in opposition to, the things of this world that get in the way of reconciliation with God. There are images of Jesus that are in direct contrast to his teachings, ways that Jesus is used to justify actions that don't fit with his life and teachings.

Aside from this caution however, bringing to the mosaic of faith our own piece creates a fuller picture of what Christ has meant to the world. With each Epiphany, perhaps our own mosaics expand to a fuller picture, and the world-wide, all-time mosaic keeps growing too. What a beautiful picture!

Holiday Giving Recap

The FUMC Missions/Social Concerns Committee was busy throughout 2025, and especially so during the end of the year with many opportunities to give, serve, and support our local community. And the congregation was generous in response! Here is how FUMC made an impact during the 2025 holiday season:

Christmas Offering: As of December 31, the Christmas offering totals \$7,135.75!

Salvation Army kettle bell ringing: Members of our congregation covered all five of the Saturdays at Sam's Club in Loveland. We hope to get a total of the money received on those days from the Salvation Army.

Christmas "baskets": 150 goodie bags with \$40 King Soopers gift cards (\$6,000) were donated to Salvation Army to provide to people in need of their services.

Winter supply drive: During this one-week drive in December, you filled 5 bins and then some with quality clothing and items to help our unhoused neighbors through the winter. These items were taken to Loveland Resource Center on December 15, 2025

Truscott food pantry: You donated quality, shelf-stable foods to Truscott Elementary for their food pantry to support their families. 2.5 car loads of donations were delivered (I mean, can Pastor Lee's Honda Civic really be considered a whole car?).

Angel Tree: You purchased Christmas gifts for 43 children of incarcerated parents, which were delivered on December 6.

Food Bank of Larimer County: \$414 was donated in November during Friendsgiving. One-third of the Christmas Offering will also go to FBLC.

Guatemala House Build: Our team will travel to Guatemala for this project in early 2026. \$2,700 has been given by "virtual" team members toward the cost of the house.

Year-End Trustee's Recap, by Joanne Scheihing

The Trustees had many exciting changes in our Church building this year. Some of our accomplishments this year include:

- The Preschool Remodel on the 2nd floor of the Education Wing
- Completed over 23,000 sq. ft of new flooring throughout the church
- New windows in the doors on the west side of the Heart Hub
- Switched internet companies from Comcast to Pulse for significant savings
- New Paint throughout the building
- New television/ AV system installed in Heart Hub – Abiding Memorial funds given
- New windows installed in Comfort Canopy (Balcony Room) – Abiding Memorial funds given
- New décor for Pause Place – Abiding Memorial and King Soopers funds given
- New handrail on north side of Sanctuary ramp

- New AED units purchased
- Parking lot re-striped
- New security cameras installed in the Sunday School room and Fellowship Hall
- Dead tree removed and others trimmed and treated for Emerald Ash Borer
- Air Handling Unit completely overhauled
- Elevator overhaul contract has been signed with deposit placed – still waiting for parts

Little Hands, Big Hearts: Our Children Serve with Joy!, by Desiree Aragon

Prepare for some heartwarming news! Beyond our Bible stories, the third Sunday of each month brings a burst of *service power* from our youngest members! Our children are actively transforming our church and community with their enthusiasm and dedication.

Our children and their families lovingly delivered thoughtful gift bags to our cherished homebound church members, making them feel so special. You can find thank you cards on the Sunday School bulletin in Lobby Court. Our children's kindness continues to pour out! They also skillfully crafted charming hot cocoa jars, brimming with warmth, to support our wonderful 5 M's ministry.

We can't wait to share more of their ministry and the joy it brings to our congregation.



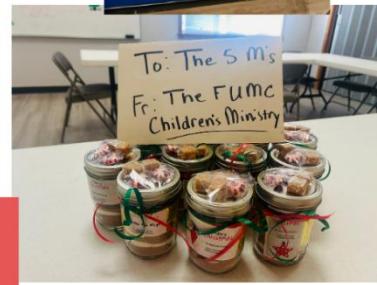
Halloween Gift
Bags For Our
Homebound
Church members



Christmas Gift
Bags For Our
Homebound
Church Members



Hot Chocolate
Jars For Our
5'M's Ministry



United Methodist Corner

In each issue, you will find a reprinted article or post connecting you to what's going on in the greater UMC. This month's article is a letter from the Council of Bishops that was shared after the December issue of The Insight was published. However, this statement is still poignant, and the UMC's new Vision Statement is just beginning to lead the way.

As we enter the sacred season of Advent, the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, urges all United Methodists to embrace our new **Vision** as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, who brings hope to a world full of despair.

The Holy Scriptures tells us that even in these times of despair, "***The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light***"(Isaiah 9:2) and it encourages us not to live in fear, for God proclaims, "***Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.*** (Luke 2:10-11)

Our Vision Statement serves as our guide reminding us that "***The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.***"

Advent is a time of expectation and renewal—a season when we prepare for Christ's coming as we live into our shared **Vision** in tangible ways as disciples of Jesus Christ.

- Love Boldly: As Christ's love breaks into the world, we are called to extend grace and compassion to neighbors near and far.
- Serve Joyfully: Advent reminds us that service is a gift. Every act of kindness becomes a sign of God's kingdom breaking into our communities.
- Lead Courageously: In times of fear and despair, we lead with faith—proclaiming the good news that Christ comes to dwell among us.

So, as we light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, let us embody these gifts in our homes, churches, and communities. Advent is not passive waiting; it is active preparation. It is living our vision so that the world may know Emmanuel—God with us.

May God empower us through the Holy Spirit to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously as we await Christ's coming.

In grace and love,
Bishop Tracy S. Malone
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church