

The Insight

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

Bird's Eye View, by Pastor Don Bird

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you." —Philippians 1:3–4

As Mandy and I begin this new chapter with you, I find myself returning again and again to a simple word: gratitude. From the very beginning, you have received us with such warmth and kindness. In conversations, worship, gatherings, and those brief moments in the hallway or parking lot, we have experienced a genuine welcome. We are grateful—not simply for the hospitality you have shown us, but for the spirit behind it.

We are discovering a congregation that is open to what God may be doing next. There is a willingness here to embrace the future as it unfolds, rather than needing to know exactly what that future will look like. There is something wonderfully life-giving about that. Perhaps it is because a willingness to take risks, experiment, and try something new requires a deep kind of faith. It requires us to trust that God is not finished with us yet. It allows us to approach the future not with fear about what we might lose, but with curiosity about what we might discover.

That spirit is a breath of fresh air.

I am especially grateful for the joy I sense among you—the desire to see God's love become real not only within these walls, but in the lives of our neighbors and throughout our community. That is the kind of faith that excites me. It is a faith that does not simply look backward with gratitude for what has been, but also looks forward with hope for what might be.

Over the coming weeks and months, I look forward to getting to know you more deeply. Our Meet the Pastor gatherings will give us some wonderful opportunities to sit together, share a little about ourselves, and listen to one another. I want to hear your stories—the experiences that have shaped you and your faith. I want to hear your worries, your questions, your hopes, and your dreams for this church.

Because before we can imagine where we are going, we need to know one another.

Paul's words to the Philippians feel especially appropriate for this moment: "*I thank my God every time I remember you.*" I hope that, in the years ahead, we will be able to look back on these early days with the same sense of gratitude—not because everything went exactly according to plan, but because we were willing to walk faithfully into an unfolding future together.

Thank you for welcoming Mandy and me so generously. We are grateful to be here, grateful to be among you, and excited to discover what God is preparing to do in and through this community of faith.

A Deeper Rhythm, by Pastor Lee Anderson-Harris

I just completed a sermon series at FUMC Fort Lupton that I called A Season for Everything. I preached about the meaning and importance of Sabbath, about griefwork, pausing to take stock from time to time, and about prayer and play. The congregation has had a tough year, and whenever we have gone through a lot, we often need reminders to slow down, receive God's care, and nurture ourselves and those we love. There truly is a season for everything. A time to grieve and a time to let the sunshine in. A time to roll up your sleeves and get things done, and a time to rest and celebrate accomplishments. And, there is no one way to define a season. A season can be a handful of days to a handful of years. I recently went through a relatively short period of time that required stamina and focus because there was a lot to do in a variety of areas. And then one day, I woke up and felt empty. Not tired so much as...hollow. I wondered why I felt this way, because I had time off, I stayed connected to God as best I could...further, there were a lot of little triumphs! Then I realized that it was the task-driven rhythm that had run its course, and it was time to let that season come to an end.

I think this time of year, whether or not one has children or grandchildren in school, the rhythm of going back to school is still a part of life for many. After all, that rhythm has been ingrained in us since childhood! I am reminded of all the excitement I felt at this time during my childhood. September was full of hope and promise. New clothes, new subjects, fresh school supplies! I loved to learn (still do), but at some point, the other aspects of school that I didn't enjoy so much started to take their toll. Oh, why couldn't I just study and learn without all the other stuff? But, such is life. Regardless of what season you are in, there is a point where something runs its course, and it is worthwhile to pay attention to ourselves and get to know our own cues for when this occurs. But is it always that simple? Often, no. Maybe you are not ready for a season to come to an end, but there is something that doesn't quite fit the way it used to, or an itch you can't scratch. Could it be that God is softly, quietly calling you into a new season, or a new rhythm? Or conversely, maybe you are ready for the season to be over, but there is something within you telling you to hang on and keep going. Perhaps God is still using you where you are. If you have ever wished for God to speak louder, you know that the cues are not necessarily easy to pick up on.

One of the many things I wish I could emulate is Jesus' depth of connection to the God-created rhythms of everything. Wayne Muller, in his book *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* (1999), captured this well by writing, "Jesus obeyed a deeper rhythm. When the moment for rest had come, the time for healing was over. He would simply stop, retire to a quiet place, and pray" (p. 25). I respect this deeper rhythm, and seek to obey it, but often fall short. That doesn't stop me from trying, however, or from teaching about it. This is one of God's invitations to us. Opening one's self to God's ways and rhythms and not relying solely on our own inner drivers is a way to accept God's offer of abundant life.

Eugene Peterson's Bible translation known as *The Message* speaks to this offer through Jesus's words in Matthew 11:29-20: "Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." I don't know about you, but to this offer I say "Yes, please!" And while Jesus begins this invitation by calling to all those who are weary, I don't think you need to be weary to be drawn to this invitation. However, forcing your own rhythms is a good way to get to weariness. That is why this spiritual way of living *is* so *inviting*.

The changing of seasons presents a beautiful way of reminding us that there is a deeper rhythm. This year, with the warmth of the winter and the drought conditions, the changing of seasons has been unusual. But this can also serve as a reminder that things don't always unfold the way we expect them to, or in the order in which we are accustomed, and that is part of learning to listen to this deeper rhythm. So may God bless you with the gift of heeding the deeper rhythm. May you accept this rhythm gently, and let it carry you like the first autumn leaf drifting in the breeze.

Reference:

Muller, W. (1999). *Sabbath: Finding rest, renewal, and delight in our busy lives*. Bantam Books.

A Word from Union and Trinity, by Rev. Bryson Lillie

Dear FUMC Friends,

One of the great things about being a United Methodist clergyperson is the connection we have with our colleagues. Whenever we pastors get together, it's always good to see familiar faces, catch up, and check in with one another.

I also find it oddly comforting when we talk about what's happening in the life of our churches. So many congregations are facing the same kinds of things that FUMC, TUMC, and Union are facing. There is just so much transition happening in our churches and in our communities!

I find these conversations reassuring because, all too often, I feel like Trinity and I are navigating these changes on our own. But talking with colleagues reminds me that we are not alone. We are all trying to figure out how to faithfully lead our congregations through seasons of unexpected change.

I hope you all feel some of that same connection through the relationship our three churches have built. First Church isn't alone when it looks toward the horizon and wonders what God might be dreaming. Union and TUMC are right there with you! There is something comforting about knowing that we are part of a larger community, all trying to listen for God and figure out together what faithfulness looks like in the midst of change.

Now that Pastor Don is with you, I look forward to the conversations about what our connection might look like in the future. God definitely has a dream for the Loveland Methodist Community, and together, we'll see what it is!

Lastly, I have a quick invitation for you. TUMC's first JOY Fellowship lunch of the fall is coming up on September 2, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. in our Fellowship Hall. JOY Fellowship is a gathering especially for people 55 and older. It's a chance to enjoy good food, good people, and learn from our presenters!

This month, we welcome Thompson Valley EMS to join us. They will give a presentation on how EMS works and what you can expect if you ever have to call for help in an emergency. We'd love to have you join us!

News from Trustees, by Joanne Scheihing

Trustees want to thank you all for your patience during our main elevator renovation. There have been a number of setbacks, many requiring TKE's engineering department to do a lot of reprogramming. Our hope is that the elevator will be ready for use in the next week or so.

The west elevator is also down at the time of this writing due to a power outage that affected the whole church and damaged the elevator circuit board. We are waiting for a replacement at this time.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Exploring What's Possible

A Cooperative Parish Conversation Between First UMC & Trinity UMC

First United Methodist Church and Trinity United Methodist Church are beginning a conversation about what it might look like for our two congregations to explore a cooperative parish. Over the summer, we have already had the opportunity to share meals, get to know one another, and begin building relationships. Now, we invite you to take the next step together.

Tuesday, October 6 | 6:30 p.m.

Trinity United Methodist Church

Hybrid participation will be available via the following Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86728103413?pwd=Mng2WZ85v9FkgZk7Sid92c6JrqG0fv.1>

This gathering is an opportunity to listen, ask questions, and explore together. It is not a decision-making meeting. There will be no votes, and no final decisions will be made. Instead, we want to create space for honest conversation and curiosity as we learn more about what a cooperative parish could mean for both congregations.

Do you already have questions about cooperative parishes? We would love to hear them. You may send your questions in advance to: Pastor Bryson (pastor@tumc-loveland.org) or Pastor Don (don@fumcloveland.org). We will gather those questions and use them to help shape our conversation.

To make the evening a little sweeter, we invite everyone to bring a dessert to share for a dessert potluck!

For some quick resources on cooperative parishes, check out these links:

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/a-fresh-approach-to-cooperative-parishes>

<https://www.nyac.com/cooperative-parishes-roles-and-responsibilities>

Come with your questions. Come with your hopes. Come ready to listen. Most of all, come ready to discover what God might be doing among us as we explore this possibility together.