



FIRST NEWS

First United
Methodist
Church
April 2026



Last month members from First UMC served dinner to Dustin's Place and made a craft with members of the Miller's Assisted Living Community.



SMALL ACTS.

BIG IMPACT.



from the
PASTOR 

Dear Church Family,

As I write this message during Holy Week, my heart is filled with the meaning of Easter and the promise of new life it brings. The Scriptures we have read and those we will reflect upon in the days ahead continue to remind us of God's steadfast love and the hope that Easter Sunday proclaims.

Throughout Lent, I have participated in administrative meetings and prayed for guidance. These gatherings have encouraged me to think deeply about our church's future vision – how we might encounter our community in loving and encouraging ways, following Christ's example of compassion and outreach.

As we move forward, I invite us all to dream together about what it means to share God's love with our neighbors. Let's not only focus on raising funds for practical needs, such as our goal to build a full-sized elevator for accessibility, but also imagine creative ways to fill our church building with people. Because we have limited resources, this may mean exploring new traditions and partnering with community organizations to address the needs around us.

May this Easter renew our spirit and inspire us to be a welcoming church – one that truly reflects the resurrection hope by serving, loving, and encouraging others. Together, let us commit to building a vibrant and inclusive community that honors Christ's message and joyfully anticipates the future.

Wishing you a blessed Easter,

Pastor Lauren



BLONDENA V. KAISER MEMORIAL

March 1, 2026



Today we are proud to present the 36th Annual Blondena Kaiser Award. After his wife's death in 1986, Mr. B. D. Kaiser established a trust fund, to honor her memory and to fund this award that is presented annually on the Sunday closest to her birthday.

The recipient chosen for this award must be a woman with high moral standards who has a strong love for children and a background of caring for fellow citizens and her church. She will receive an honor certificate, the altar flowers, and a monetary award based on the interest from this memorial fund.

This year's honoree was born and raised in our church and officially became a member in April of 1966. As a child she learned the importance of volunteering in her community - participating in the CROP walk at age five!; the importance of hard work - helping her mom raise and sell eggs to over 200 customers; and the importance of serving - assisting her mother as she taught Sunday school to elementary-age children.

Our recipient graduated from La Ville High School where she played saxophone in the band and was a 4-H member raising sheep and sewing and cooking (as all girls did in those days). She then attended Ball State University. She worked for the prosecutor's office for 20 years where she met her husband. Together they raised one wonderful child. She has held various office jobs including working as an aide at Jefferson Elementary School and as the "Church Secretary" at the UCC. She held several positions at the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ at Ancilla, including organizing and setting-up for retreats; development; and marketing. All of these experiences honed her talents which she continues using for the Lord.

Throughout those years, our special lady served as a volunteer in our church nursery; taught Sunday school; served on various church committees; performed in the handbell choir; and co-chaired an all-church fish fry fundraiser. She continues to serve as a liturgist, announcer, and as a substitute for our church office administrator when there is a need. She is always looking for new ways our church can reach out to share the Love of God with more people. As Hebrews 13:16 says, "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." Most recently, she and her husband have been attending monthly, community meetings striving to integrate the local Hispanic population into our community.

Our recipient is the coordinator for the Good Samaritan Sunday School class which involves keeping financial records and keeping everyone informed about class and church activities by sending out email updates and notices. This was especially important during the Covid shutdown. At Christmas Time, she coordinates the class's "Adopt-A-Family" project, providing gifts to several families through the Neighborhood Center.

She is a living example of Matthew 25:40 which says, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." One way she does this is through food. She has helped organize fundraising benefits involving meals for at least 3 individuals from our congregation with exorbitant medical expenses. In 2018 when Plymouth experienced city-wide flooding, she co-chaired a meal for volunteers doing clean-up. She is on the funeral committee, making numerous phone calls to get donations of salads and desserts, plus she participates in serv-

ing and cleaning up these meals for our families in mourning. She donates cookies for Cookie Sunday and has provided food for Meals for Methodists.

Our recipient follows her heart to worthy causes to which she devotes time and energy. In 2017, our Pastor Toni Carmer suggested that our “beautiful downtown church” begin hosting a monthly Community Meal FREE to anyone in need. She has taken on that cause and has co-chaired our church’s Community Meal for 10 years! In addition to cooking, serving, and clean-up, her leadership includes meal planning, scheduling volunteers, monthly reports, and completing paperwork for 3 grants which we have received! Additionally, it has been such an opportunity to meet new people and embrace them as “our neighbors”. What a tribute to our church, living out our logo....” Open Hearts, Open Doors, Praise God!”

Her kindness and concern for others has touched many of our lives. Through the years, she has consistently helped others whenever there was a need. This year’s honoree has a way of making people feel welcome, not only in our church but around our community. Today we say, “Well done, good and faithful servant” as we present the 36th Annual Blondena Kaiser award to....

Ruth VanVector!



Past Recipients

1991 - Helen Crocker
1992 - Lillian Kenney
1993 – Betty Stewart
1994 - Mildred Fetherolf
1995 - Donna Lamb
1996 - Patricia Bates
1997 - Dorothy Huff
1998 - Joanne Boys
1999 - Irene Butler

2000 - Debbie Dunning
2001 - Jeanne Middleton
2002 – Pamela Michel
2003 – Karen Carmen
2004 - Marjorie Houghton
2005 - Sandy Thoden
2006 - Betty Lou Laramore
2007 - Bonnie Yeazel
2008 – Velma Butler

2009 - Deb Jung
2010 - Jean Schrickler
2011 - Sharon Anderson (Westfall)
2012 - Diane Laudeman
2013 - Marilyn Rans
2014 - Sue Stinson
2015 - Carol Beiter
2016 - Becky Rettig
2017 - Irma Slack
2018 - Diane Hogsett

2019 – Lynn Gee
2020 – Sharon Balka
2022 - Susan Wautelet
2022 - Jane Woolfington
2023 – Beth Pinkerton
2024 – Betty Kay Eley
2025 – Barbie Pickut



Here we are in April already, how can that be? We are preparing another community meal for you and your friends to join us. The April menu is Sloppy Joe Sandwich, Corn, Potato Chips, Fruit and Brownies. The meal is Wednesday, April 29 and served from 5:00-6:30. We'll look forward to seeing you on April 29.

The community outreach meal committee

Mother's Club

LOOKING AHEAD:

Tuesday, April 21 Mother's Club will meet at 6:30 in the Fellowship Hall. The program will be "*Karen in the Kitchen*". Karen Capper will lead us in a hands-on food activity and will have devotions.

Wednesday, May 20 Mother's Club will meet at 6:30 in the Fellowship Hall for the Murder Mystery.

Thursday, June 18 Mother's Club will meet at 6:30 for ice cream.



LOOKING BACK:

In March we created Bunny Hangings and filled Easter Goodie Bags that we handed out at the Community Meal.



HAPPY APRIL FROM THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE



SMALL GROUPS

Bad Girls Bible Study is studying “Good Enough” as suggested by Pastor Lauren. This group of Girls meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 11:00, followed by lunch out. Beginning in June we will be studying “Lies Women Believe” by Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth. Sound interesting? All are welcome! Please join us...we really aren’t all bad!

The Lunch Bunch gathers on the 3rd Friday of the month. Plan to join this thriving group as we dine in restaurants in and around Northern Indiana. On Friday, April 17 we will venture to South Bend and dine at Ho Ping House. Meet at the church at 11:00 and RSVP to Carol Beiter if you plan to attend.

Blessed Bookies gather on the 4th Monday of the month at 5:30 pm in the 2nd floor conference room of the Education Building. On April 27 we will discuss “The Devil in the White City” by Erik Larson.

Knit Two Pray Three: This group of talented knitters gathers on the first Tuesday of the month, 10:00 am-12:00 pm in the 2nd floor conference room of the Education Building. These knitters are part of the Shawl Ministry designed to support our church and community family. See Carol Beiter or Lynn Gee for further details. In the narthex are beautiful prayer shawls for those requiring TLC or just a beautiful wrap. Thanks to Lynn and the knitters!

Columbus Building Breakfast: This breakfast usually occurs on the third Sunday of the month, but check the Columbus Club website for any cancellations. Plan to eat breakfast around 8:30 and be back for worship at 9:30!!!



Thank you to all who assisted with the events at the Boys and Girls Club during the months of February and March. It was a wonderful experience interacting with the kids, sharing yogurt snacks, playing Jeopardy, creating clay art works, and just having fun! Thanks again, and we will keep you posted on future events.

Outreach and Support Committee: Susan Wautelet, Carol Beiter, Grace Blanding, Mary Ecker, Betty Kay Eley, Lynn Gee, Sarah Smith, Mary Stewart, Genie Tobias, and Pastor Lauren Hall

Youth and Education Committee: Barbie Pickut and Laura Blackford

The Outreach & Worship Committees invite you to.....



EASTER MORNING BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2026

8:30 (before church)

Fellowship Hall

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST & BEVERAGES PROVIDED

FRUIT/CHEESE/MEAT SIGN UP IN NARTHEX

Questions? Contact Susan Wautelet, Pam Michel or Church Office



*Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.*

This quote, often attributed to John Wesley, is a fitting theme for this committee. Through the generosity of this congregation, we seek to live out this challenge. This past month, we received \$1247.58 in contributions. In light of this, we were able to give more to the community: \$800 for Link to Hope Assistance, \$100 to Link to Hope Salary, \$200 to the Poor Hand Maids of Jesus Christ Food project, \$150 to Bread of Life, \$150 to David's Courage, \$150 to the Neighborhood Center, \$200 to the Community Meal, and \$150 to St. Thomas Non-food pantry.

Additionally, despite unexpected March snow, members of the committee braved the elements to take a meal to Serenity Place. After the meal, there was time to interact with the residents and play BINGO with them, with abundant prizes. Our hope was that sharing dinner and time with the residents, they will know they are not forgotten in the margins.

TO MIKE'S CHURCH FAMILY

~~ YOU ARE INVITED ~~

Mike Boys will turn 90 on April 2nd and his family is thrilled to invite you, his church family, to a party in his honor at the First United Methodist Church's Fellowship Hall. The party is from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Saturday April 4, 2026.

There will be **entertainment STARTING AT 3:00 p.m.** You can also share stories, enjoy the fellowship and eat finger food, cake and ice cream as long as the fingers, um, I mean food lasts to celebrate Mike's 90th birthday. Oh, there will also be coffee, iced tea and water to drink.

PLEASE: **NO GIFTS** AS YOUR PRESENCE WILL MAKE THIS DAY EVEN MORE SPECIAL AND MEMORABLE. THANK YOU AND MAY YOU HAVE A HAPPY EASTER and GOD BLESS MIKE'S CHURCH FAMILY!



How are we doing?

QUARTERLY
FINANCIAL
UPDATE

1st Quarter 2026 we received donations of

\$81,477.19 for the General Fund.

To meet our Annual Budget of **\$315,721** we need to average **\$78,930.25** per quarter.

Thank you for your generosity!



Children & Youth

News

Plymouth Youth Fellowship

will meet here at

Plymouth First UMC

on Sundays

April 12 and April 26.

4:30-6:30 pm

All ages K-12 grade are invited.

Free meal included!

UNITED METHODIST MEN

The United Methodist Men will be meeting Saturday, April 11, at 8:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Troy Spencer, will be talking about his 30 day trip to Uganda, Africa. The Mission Committee will be in charge of the breakfast. There will be a sign-up sheet at the Welcome Center on April 5. You can also sign-up by contacting Dave Hogsett at either davidh15503@embarqmail.com or 574-936-6927.



Troy spent his first week touring agriculture programs, visiting FAIO UN headquarters, and learning about Ugandan culture. The next two weeks he spent teaching agriculture and starting a school pig farm at Lira secondary school, located in Lira city. Troy spent his final week between seeing Ugandan wildlife at Muchison Falls National Park and touring Iowa State University's Ugandan campus.

Katelyn McGrift from First Source Bank will talking about fraud and scams for the May meeting.

This summer there will be a road trip to the P.J. Gilsinger & Company Museum in Winamac, Indiana. This very likely will be on a Sunday afternoon.

Missions

LOOKING AHEAD:

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Cultivate Food Rescue: Future dates scheduled to volunteer

- Monday, April 20
- Monday, May 4



We leave from the church parking lot at 5:15 p.m. and carpool to South Bend where we work from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. We return to the church parking lot about 8:45 p.m. Lauren Rich and Diane Hogsett are our coordinators. Sign-up sheets will be at the Welcome Center.

This a fun, easy way to serve others! No experience or skill is necessary; sit-down jobs are available.



Midwest Mission: May 3 – 8, 2026

You can join in the fun! Just ask Carol B! Jobs are assigned based on abilities and skills. Sit-down jobs are available. This year we are inviting other area churches to join us.

2025 – Packing Rice Meals

LOOKING BACK:

Members of Missions Commission furnished and served dinner for about 65 people at **Dustin's Place** on March 9th. Food and paper products were furnished by Lauren Rich, Donna, Pam, Diane, and Carol. *Plymouth Youth Fellowship: Be-long* baked cookies. David Seo helped serve along with members of Missions. We introduced ourselves and invited them to our Community Meal.



At Dustin's Place



At their twice monthly gatherings, Dustin's Place provides grief support for families. They have a beautiful new facility at LifePlex. They also provide counseling and grief support at other times and in other settings, including the South Bend Schools.



Invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors to join us for our services during Holy Week!

MAUNDY THURSDAY – Thursday, April 2

7:00 p.m. Worship Service

GOOD FRIDAY – Friday, April 3

7:00 p.m. Combined Worship Service at **Trinity United Methodist**
Combined Choir will sing

EASTER SUNDAY – Sunday, April 5

8:30 a.m. Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall (Baked Goods & Fruit)
9:30 a.m. Morning Worship

*All Services at First United Methodist Church, 400 North Michigan Street, unless otherwise noted. Trinity United Methodist Church is located at 425 South Michigan Street.

Spring Learning Event - Northern Lakes District



“Not Just Sundays”

The world, and the church, has changed. Not Just Sundays invites pastors and ministry leaders to reimagine what effective ministry looks like in this new landscape.

Participants will leave inspired and equipped with practical tools to help their congregations move from attendance to engagement, from events to transformation, and from Sunday to everyday.

The event will take place at: Plymouth Trinity UMC, April 25, 9-12:00 pm



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Stacy Kaufman	2 Keith Stewart Mike Boys	3	4
5 Ronald Smith	6 Angie Kelso	7 Mark & Leanne Senter (A)	8	9 Connie Kendall	10	11 John Finlay Anthony & Amanda Witt (A)
12	13	14 Anne Benner	15 Bob & Debbie Wise (A)	16	17	18 Lily Jackson Dick Tobias
19 Sarah Smith	20 Ruth Van Vactor	21	22 Paul Patrick	23 Juli Macey	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

APRIL SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

	04/05	04/12	04/19	04/26
LITURGISTS	Lauren Rich	Susie Kreighbaum	John Finlay	Sarah Smith
NURSERY	Carol Beiter	Laura Blackford	Jane Woolfington	TBD
USHERS	Pam Michel, David Seo, Cathy Clough	Pam Michel, Mike & Jane Woolfington	Pam Michel, Bill & Donna Hemmig	Pam Michel, Linda Hagan



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:00 pm Mission Commission Meeting	2 6:00 am Early Birds (ZOOM) 12:00 pm Joy Breaks 12:30 pm Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm Maunday Thursday Service	3 7:00 pm Good Friday Service at Trinity UMC	4 2:00-5:00 pm Mike Boys 90th Birthday Party
5 Easter Sunday 8:30 am Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall 9:30 am Worship 10:45 am Easter Egg Hunt	6 12:00 pm W.O.W. At Mimi's Café 6:00 pm Trustees Committee Meeting 6:00 pm P.E.O.	7 10:00 am-12:00 pm Knit 2, Pray 3	8	9 6:00 am Early Birds (ZOOM) 12:00 pm Joy Breaks 12:30 pm Women's Bible Study	10	11 8:00 am Men's Breakfast
12 9:30 am Worship Service 10:45 am Sunday School 4:30-6:30 pm Plymouth Youth Fellowship	13 6:00 pm Finance Committee Meeting 6:30 pm Social Concerns Committee Meeting	14 11:00 am Bad Girls Bible Study	15	16 6:00 am Early Birds (ZOOM) 12:00 pm Joy Breaks 12:30 pm Women's Bible Study	17 11:00 am Lunch Bunch to Ho Ping House. Meet in the North Parking lot.	18
19 8:30 am Breakfast at the Columbus Club 9:30 am Worship Service 10:45 am Sunday School	20 5:15 pm Team to Cultivate Food Rescue 6:00 pm Outreach Committee Meeting	21 6:30 pm Mother's Club	22	23 6:00 am Early Birds (ZOOM) 12:00 pm Joy Breaks 12:30 pm Women's Bible Study	24	25 9:00 am -12:00 pm Spring Learning Event at Trinity UMC
26 9:30 am Worship 10:45 am Sunday School 4:30-6:30 pm Plymouth Youth Fellowship	27 5:30 pm Blessed Bookies 7:00 pm Youth and Ed Committee	28	29 5-6:30 pm Community Meal	30 6:00 am Early Birds (ZOOM) 12:00 pm Joy Breaks 12:30 pm Women's Bible Study		