

PREVUE

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



From the Pastor's Desk

A Journey Through Easter Season

Dear Beloved Community,

Easter morning has come and gone, but the good news still echoes: Christ is risen—risen indeed! What a joy it was to gather in worship on Easter Sunday, surrounded by blooming lilies, bright hallelujahs, and the warmth of your presence. Together, we stood in that sacred space “between grief and hope,” the title of our Easter sermon, and the tender truth we shared—that hope so often grows from the compost of grief. Just as decaying matter feeds new life in a garden, our sorrow can become the soil from which new possibilities take root.



This theme of “Everything in Between,” which guided us through Lent, continues to speak into our lives. We’ve spent these weeks exploring the liminal spaces—between despair and joy, wilderness and home, endings and beginnings. And now, in this season of Easter—a full seven weeks of celebration leading us toward Pentecost—we begin to lean into a new question: What does freedom look like?



Our Easter Season series is called “The Cup of Freedom.” Inspired by the overflowing cup of salvation in Psalm 116 and the liberation embodied in the risen Christ, we are invited to consider the many ways God is calling us—and our neighbors—into freedom. Freedom from fear, from shame, from systems that limit or oppress.

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Freedom to be fully and wholly who God created us to be. As Easter People, we don't just believe in resurrection; we live it out by dismantling what is death-dealing and cultivating what brings life.

And yet, even in this season of life, we carry the weight of recent loss. We are grieving the deaths of Pastor Denny and Rich Frank, Max Hoke, and others in our community who have left us too soon. These saints leave behind legacies of love, service, and presence that have helped prepare the ground for what is emerging. We mourn their absence even as we give thanks that their lives continue to bear fruit among us.

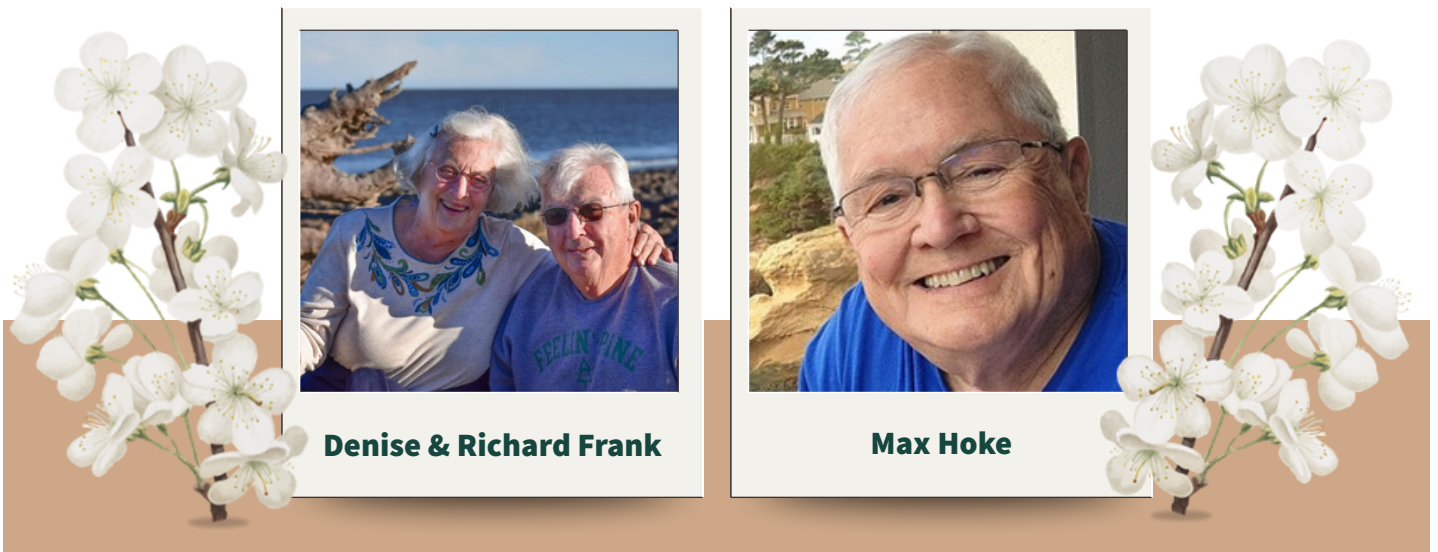


Signs of new life are all around. The church remodeling is moving forward—each layer of dust cleared away is revealing the beauty and possibility of what's to come. We're welcoming new faces into our congregation and witnessing fresh expressions of ministry beginning to grow. God is, indeed, preparing the way for new life.

In this Easter season, let us be open to what is blossoming. Let us drink deeply from the cup of freedom, trusting that God is still at work—transforming, liberating, resurrecting. We thank God for new chapters, new seasons, new growth, and resurrection.

**With deep hope and Easter joy,
Rev. Duane Carlisle
First United Methodist Church of West Lafayette**

Honoring Pastor Denny & Rich Frank and Max Hoke



With gratitude and deep respect, we remember our dear retired Pastor, Denise (Denny) Frank, her husband Richard (Rich) Frank, and our friend Max Hoke—three faithful members of the First Church family whose lives were shaped by service, compassion, and a steadfast commitment to caring for others, especially children and those in need.

Denny and Rich Frank were a team in every sense of the word. Together, they gave their time, energy, and hearts to ministries that met tangible needs in the West Lafayette community. Denny led the Feed the Kids Backpack Program with quiet determination, coordinating food orders through Food Finders and organizing volunteers to ensure children had meals for the weekend. Rich supported her every step of the way, managing logistics, delivering backpacks to Edgelea Elementary, and making sure the process ran smoothly and reliably.

Their care didn't stop there. Denny also directed the Klondike Kids Club, creating a nurturing space for after-school learning, snacks, and encouragement. Rich served as her steady assistant, helping with daily operations and offering a dependable presence to the children and volunteers alike. Together, they planned field trips, hosted joyful year-end cookouts, and cultivated a community of support and love.



Rich also quietly took care of the church itself—fueling the bus for Sunday services, maintaining equipment, and organizing the mowing crew. His behind-the-scenes work reflected the same heart of service he and Denny brought to everything they did.

Outside of their ministry work, Denny and Rich were devoted parents and grandparents. They raised four children and cherished the joys of being grandparents to seven. Their family life was marked by the same spirit of care and presence that shaped their service in the church—steadfast, thoughtful, and rooted in love.

Like Denny and Rich, Max Hoke lived a life anchored in compassion and community service. A lifelong educator, Max taught speech and English, coached speech teams, and served as a principal and school administrator across central Indiana. He inspired both students and colleagues with his passion for learning and his gift for communication. Even after retirement, he continued to share his knowledge as an adjunct instructor and found joy working at Barnes & Noble, helping others discover the same love of reading that had shaped his own life.

At First Church, Max was a member of the Klondike Kids Club Board helping Pastor Denny with educational guidance for the program. He also devoted himself to the backpack food program, working quietly behind the scenes to help ensure that local children had what they needed to thrive. His commitment reflected his deeply held belief in education, equity, and the importance of small acts of kindness.

Beyond his professional life, Max was a loving husband, father, and grandfather. He and his wife Diana explored the world together, always finding a new bookstore to visit. He delighted in the company of his grandsons, Alex and James, and created a home filled with humor, curiosity, and care.



Though we mourn their absence, we celebrate the lives of Denny, Rich, and Max—three souls whose humble service and open-hearted love enriched our church and community. Their legacy continues in the backpacks packed, the children supported, the books shared, and the countless lives they touched with kindness and grace. We give thanks for them and the light they brought into the world.



Reflections on the Spring 2025 GBCS Board Meeting in Los Angeles

By Rev. Duane Carlisle, Board Member

From March 16-19, the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) gathered in Los Angeles, CA, for our spring board meeting. As we engaged in our work of advancing peace, justice, and human rights, we were welcomed with deep hospitality by Faith United Methodist Church in Torrance, CA, and its pastor, Rev. Allison Mark, who also serves as our Board Chairperson. I am profoundly grateful to Rev. Mark and the entire Faith UMC community for their generosity and care during our time together.

We began our time in Los Angeles by honoring the indigenous peoples on whose land we stood, offering this statement:

“We give homage to the Tongva people, the traditional caretakers of this land, Tovaangar (the Los Angeles Basin and southern Channel Islands). We mourn the violent displacement and disenfranchisement of those who inhabited and stewarded this land for generations. We pay our respect to the Tongva people, past and present, and their connection to this place. May our work continue to resist colonialism through acts of repentance, reconciliation, and justice.”

Our meeting was a time to reaffirm the commitments of The United Methodist Church to social justice, as articulated in the 2020/2024 Social Principles and Book of Resolutions. We discussed ways to equip and mobilize the Church to lead on justice issues and to ensure that our advocacy remains deeply rooted in our faith. Over four days, we worshiped together, strengthened relationships, gathered in subcommittees, and engaged in visioning sessions. But beyond our internal discussions, we stepped outside the meeting room to witness the challenges facing communities in Los Angeles and the ways United Methodists and their partners are responding with justice and compassion.

One of the most impactful moments of our time together was a panel discussion with residents of Altadena, one of the communities most devastated by the January wildfires. We heard firsthand accounts of loss—not just of homes, businesses, and church buildings but of the community itself. Many families, unable to afford rebuilding, have been permanently displaced. Altadena UMC, one of two United Methodist churches lost to the fires, was more than a place of worship—it was a center of connection for a diverse, working-class community. The heartbreak of these losses was palpable as we later visited the neighborhood and saw the extent of the destruction.

Amidst the loss, we also witnessed the strength of the Methodist connection. Surrounding

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United Methodist congregations have come together to support Altadena UMC, offering their worship spaces so the congregation can continue gathering as they wait to rebuild. This outpouring of hospitality and solidarity is a testament to the resilience of the Church and the power of community. It was deeply moving to see how the body of Christ is making a way forward in the face of devastation.

Our journey continued with a visit to Baldwin Park UMC, one of several Welcome Centers for migrants in the California-Pacific Annual Conference. Pastors Toña and Rafael Rios shared powerful stories of hospitality and accompaniment, reminding us that the call to welcome the stranger is at the heart of the gospel.

We then traveled to Altadena UMC, where we were greeted by Rev. Andre Wilson and Heather Wilson. This church, along with Pacific Palisades UMC, lost its entire building to the fires, along with the homes of both pastors and many congregants. Yet even in their loss, they remain committed to rebuilding their ministry and their community.

Our final stop took us to Old Los Angeles Plaza and La Plaza UMC, home of the Museum of Social Justice. Located in the church's lower level, the museum tells the often-overlooked stories of the diverse people who have shaped Los Angeles. As we gathered for dinner at the historic Pico House, we heard from faith leaders at Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Los Angeles (CLUE L.A.). Domenica Castillo, Rev. Frank Wulf, and Rev. Jennifer Gutierrez spoke passionately about their work to support low-wage workers and advocate for economic justice.

My visit to Los Angeles came full circle on the following Sunday as I worshiped at Hollywood UMC. Near the end of an inspiring worship hour, Rev. Hannah Bonner, senior pastor of Hollywood UMC, called up the lay leaders of Hollywood UMC and Altadena UMC. Aviana Springs of Altadena and Ruth Williamson of Hollywood joined hands as they walked up the aisle to the chancel. Then Aviana called a row of young people forward and she introduced Altadena's confirmation class which would be meeting in Hollywood for their confirmation journey. It was such a beautiful example of our Methodist connection at work and God's grace in the midst of challenges.

Throughout our time in Los Angeles, I was reminded that justice work is not abstract—it is lived out in communities, among people striving for dignity and hope. This board meeting was not just about policies or resolutions; it was about seeing where God is at work in the world and discerning how we, as the Church, can join in. As we left, we carried with us the stories of those we met, the challenges they face, and the sacred call to act in love and justice.

May we continue to be faithful to this work, knowing that God's grace is ever calling us forward—for the transformation of the world.

LUM We've Got Talent 2025

What a night! We were thrilled to be part of LUM's We've Got Talent on Friday, April 11, a joyful evening filled with incredible performances, community spirit, and generosity. Together, we helped raise nearly \$19,000 for the LUM Good Samaritan Fund, which directly supports families in our county facing urgent financial crises.



We're especially grateful for the talented individuals who represented First Church: Pastor Kory Pritchett, Ella Robyne, Katie Schneider, and Cade Quinn. Thank you for sharing your gifts with such heart.

To our First Church family—thank you. Whether you cheered from the audience, gave generously, or lifted the event in prayer, your support made a real impact. We're grateful to LUM for hosting such a meaningful event, and we look forward to We've Got Talent 2026!

The Cup of Freedom: Supporting Our Ministries

As we move through the Easter season, we're reminded of the God who calls us to rise again into love, healing, and freedom. The Cup of Freedom: Supporting Our Ministries is a spring campaign running from April through June that invites us to give generously in the spirit of resurrection and renewal.

Throughout the campaign, we're celebrating the ways First Church ministries embody this calling and how your gifts help us move forward with courage, faith, and hope. Together, let's take up the cup of freedom and pour it out in service to others.



Stay in the loop: Scan QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/FUMCWeekly> to sign up for our weekly newsletter to learn more.



Make a difference: Scan QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/FUMCGive> to make a gift to one of our ministry funds.



Welcoming Statement

We, the people of First United Methodist Church West Lafayette, welcome everyone, through all life's stages, with arms that are open, respectful, and loving. And by everyone, we mean regardless of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, race, ability, bank balance, or background. As a Reconciling Congregation, we welcome you into our church family, for it is by joining hands that we support one another and share our faith journey together. Whoever you are, and wherever you are in your spiritual journey, you are welcome here.



Mission, Vision & Core Values

MISSION: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

VISION:

1. Adopt & Embrace the Families of the Klondike School District in partnership with Klondike Elementary School & Teachers
2. Embrace the Purdue Community in partnership with Wesley Foundation;
3. Ensure our First United Methodist Church Community is connected & growing in their walk with Christ.

CORE VALUES: We are a loving & joyful church committed to celebrating God's love in all that we do. Welcome, Acceptance, & Support; Christ-centered Worship; Spiritual Growth Towards Discipleship; Active Christian Service.

