

# A PERFECT SPACE

## FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

*a special prevue edition*

### Hello First Church Family,

What an extraordinary season this has been! Over the past several weeks, our return to the renovated sanctuary has filled us with gratitude and awe. Each Sunday has revealed something new about the promise and possibility this sacred space holds. The fresh colors and textures, the warmth of the lighting, and the clarity of sound and sight have all reminded us that beauty and purpose go hand in hand. Together, these enhancements have created a space that draws us closer to God and to one another.

Our Celebration Sundays have truly been a time of joy. We've welcomed the incredible Heart and Soul Choir from Purdue, whose energy and faith inspired us to lift our voices higher. We've been blessed by the preaching of Rev. David Meredith and Rev. Kristina Sinks, who helped us reflect on how the Spirit continues to shape our shared life of faith. Through it all, we have seen how this renewed space mirrors the renewal happening within our congregation—a reminder that our physical transformation points toward spiritual growth and a deeper commitment to ministry in the world.



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Now, as we approach Consecration Sunday, we come to a moment of both reflection and anticipation. This weekend, we will celebrate all that God has already done among us—and all that God will continue to do through us. Pastor Duane and Pastor Kory will lead us in worship as we dedicate ourselves once again to the ministry and mission of this congregation. We'll celebrate the generosity that made our renovation possible, the abundance that continues to flow through our community, and the faith that binds us together as changemakers in Christ's name.



We are especially joyful that this Sunday will also include a baptism, a sign of new life and God's enduring promise among us. What better way to mark this milestone than by welcoming new life into the body of Christ—right here in a space made new for generations yet to come.



As we give thanks for this remarkable season, may we continue to grow as the Body of Christ, rooted in love and flourishing in generosity. May this new chapter deepen our resolve to follow Jesus faithfully, to welcome all, and to nurture a community of belonging. For as our welcome statement reminds us: "It is by joining hands that we support one another on our faith journey. Whoever you are, and wherever you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here."

**With gratitude and joy,**  
**Rev. Duane Carlisle (he/him), Senior Pastor**  
**Rev. Kory Pritchett (he/him), Associate Pastor**



# Meet Symone McDonald: Finding Home and Hope at First Church

By Virginia Black, First Church Congregant and Editor at Journal & Courier

Symone McDonald has wanted to be a businesswoman since she was in fourth or fifth grade.

Now, at 32, the Chicago native is closer to realizing that childhood dream.



She was struggling as a single mother of two girls, working two jobs and still not able to afford necessities like rent while in Chicago, she says now. In 2020, a friend in Lafayette told her she'd find more opportunities here.

She has still struggled, but she and her girls are also thriving.

Symone has just started studying cosmetology on scholarship at Silky Sources School three days a week, and she's taking accelerated business classes at MatchBOX Coworking Studio.

Ultimately, she wants to open a mobile hair, nails and skin care business.

"There are very limited resources, especially being in the African-American community, when it comes to hair, skin and nails," she said. She hopes she can be not only more accessible, but also more affordable.

She, 6-year-old Shiloh and 13-year-old Sariah found First United Methodist Church this summer through Freedom School.

Shiloh and Sariah heard about Freedom School at Paramount, the charter school they attend within walking distance of their apartment.

"They loved it," Symone says of the girls and Freedom School. Their reading and math skills improved over those weeks.

"I saw a change with my oldest, especially. She's not much of a singer or dancer," Symone says. "But at the end when they were doing a performance, she was actually performing and enjoying herself."

Her small family feels comfortable here.

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"You can tell when people are not fond of you or anything," Symone says, "versus people who don't care what color you are."

Anything else she'd like you to know about her?

"I'm very shy and quiet, but once you talk to me, I'm more than willing to talk or share any information I have."

## Welcoming Jorge Perez de Jesus to the First Church Team

We are excited to welcome Jorge Perez de Jesus as our new Bridge Builder for Family and Community Ministries at First Church!

In his role, Jorge will serve within our Family Ministries team, working closely with Talitha Huber and Pastor Duane Carlisle to connect our congregation with the wider community. Many will remember Jorge from his outstanding leadership as our site supervisor for the First Church/Purdue Freedom School.



His experience as a PhD candidate in education and his current work with the Cancer Research Foundation as a recruiter and community development connector make him uniquely equipped to help us build bridges — between generations, across cultures, and into our neighborhoods.

Jorge joined our team in mid-August and is already stepping into Sunday School leadership, youth mentoring, and community ministries like Klondike Kids Club, while also helping us imagine new ways to engage and serve our neighbors.

Join us in giving Jorge a warm First Church welcome!



# Hearing Loop Now Available at First Church

First Church is excited to announce that hearing loops are now available for use in the Sanctuary and Activities Center. With this technology, church members with a t-coil in their hearing aid can listen to the sound systems in both of these rooms directly through their hearing aids. Please check with your health care professional to see if your hearing aid is equipped with a t-coil and properly adjusted. Non-hearing aid users can pick up a look receiver from First Church staff and listen through a headset.

If you have questions about the new hearing loop system at First Church, please contact our office at [rkroeschen@fumcwl.org](mailto:rkroeschen@fumcwl.org) or (765) 743-1285, or speak with a staff member prior to Sunday service.

## LUM Hunger Hike 2025: Walking Together, Giving Together

Once again this year, First Church joined the annual Hunger Hike hosted by Lafayette Urban Ministries (LUM) on Sunday, September 21. This important event is a key part of our mission to serve and uplift our community by raising awareness and funds to combat hunger.



The First Church team was organized by Talitha Huber (she/her), Family Ministry Instructional Coordinator, who shared, "It was a high-energy and joyous scene with all kinds of community members there to share hotdogs, dance to lively tunes, and walk together in support of food security resources. We heard from LUM leadership and other community partners while there and learned about the great work they are doing in our community and beyond! We capped off the walk with some refreshing scoops from Silver Dipper and enjoyed the chance to fellowship, get to know each other better, and even play on the Tapawingo park playground."

Thanks to the combined efforts of those who walked and those who gave, First Church reached its team goal of raising \$1,000! We are deeply grateful to everyone who donated and supported this ministry effort. Your generosity makes a real difference in the lives of our neighbors experiencing food insecurity.

Talitha added, "We were so glad to see the generous support of the church in helping us reach our fundraising goal. Thank you. I look forward to next year!"

# Fall Family Picnic – October 12



Thank you to all who came out to Exploration Acres for our First Church Fall Picnic! We enjoyed a great meal together, fall activities, and of course tractor rides.



# Save the Date for We're Out 2025

Mark your calendars for We're Out on Saturday, November 22, from 1:00-5:00 PM! We're thrilled to bring back We're Out for its fifth year. All are invited to join us at First Church for a celebration of LGBTQIA+ joy and belonging. Come connect, learn, and celebrate with us! Stay tuned for more details.



Be part of something special at the 5th annual

# WE'RE OUT:

A celebration of LGBTQIA+  
joy and belonging

**NOVEMBER 22 , 2025** **1-5 PM**

*First United Methodist Church, West Lafayette IN*

 **First Church**



## 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.

