

The Messenger

OCTOBER 2026

“DO GOOD, DO NO HARM, & STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD”



CHURCH STAFF

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SUNDAY SERVICES

8:30 Grace Life
11:00 Traditional

CHURCH OFFICE

(318) 443-5696
Mon-Thur 9:00-3:00
Friday- 9:00-12:00

GENEROUS INVITATION OVERFLOWING WITH GRACEFUL LIVING

October will be a month of “Overflow: Living Gracefully,” and our particular theme will be Generous Invitation.

I am challenging each of us to become more intentional about inviting people into the life of our church—our friends, neighbors, family members, coworkers, classmates, and even the people we meet while running errands or attending community events.

Invitation is one of the simplest and most powerful ways a congregation grows. More importantly, invitation is one way we participate in God’s mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Jesus said, “Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23). Jesus was not calling his followers to pressure people or manipulate them. He was calling them to make room, extend welcome, and ensure that no one is left outside the circle of God’s love.

Our church has good news to share.

We are becoming a place where people can belong like family. We are creating healing spaces for people who are hurting, afraid, lonely, or searching for hope.

We are committed to giving voice to all people and offering the grace of Christ in ways that are inclusive, practical, and deeply personal.

Together, we are working to make this church and our community a masterpiece of God’s grace.

Still, invitation can be difficult. Sometimes it feels awkward or intrusive. We may worry that someone will say no. We may assume that people are not interested. We may forget to talk about what is good and meaningful about our church because it has become familiar to us. Sometimes we are waiting for the church to create the perfect program or event before we invite someone. But most people do not come because of a program alone. They come because someone they trust cared enough to ask.

Here are a few simple ways to practice generous invitation:

- Pray for one person. Ask God to place someone on your heart and to open the right opportunity.
- Share your own story. Tell someone what you value about this church: the welcome, the worship, the music, the friendships, the opportunities to serve, or the ways this community has helped you encounter God.
- Make the invitation simple. You might say, “I would love for you to come to church with me sometime,” or, “We are doing something meaningful this Sunday. Would you join me?”

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- Offer to go with them. Sit together, meet them at the door, introduce them to others, and help them feel at home.
- Do not take a 'no' personally. An invitation is an act of love, not a demand. We can extend welcome without controlling the response.

Invite people into more than worship. Invite them to a meal, a small group, a concert, a service opportunity, or another ministry where they can experience belonging naturally.

And remember, invitation is not only something we offer to strangers. We invite one another to deeper participation in the life of Christ. We invite people to pray, serve, sing, learn, give, heal, and discover the gifts God has placed within them.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Romans 15:7). Christ has welcomed us. Now we welcome others.

This October, let us live with open hands, open hearts, and open doors. Let us be generous with our invitation and faithful in our witness. We never know what God may do through one simple invitation - a new friendship, a step toward healing, a renewed faith, or the beginning of a life transformed by grace.

Grace received. Grace shared. Lives transformed.

With the Creator's Love,

Rev Kennon



Rev. Kennon Pickett | Senior Pastor

UPCOMING SERMON SERIES



Grace is never meant to stop with us. In this series, we will discover what it means to receive God's grace, live from a place of abundance, and allow grace to flow through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

Together, we will explore how a life surrendered to God becomes a vessel of welcome, generosity, belonging, healing, and transformation. We will also embrace the challenge of generous invitation: intentionally inviting the people with whom we share life—our family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and community—to experience the love of Christ through the life of the church.

Come and discover the joy of living with open hands, open hearts, and open doors. Grace received becomes grace shared, and grace shared changes lives.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 04 World Communion Sunday
- 05 AcceptDANCE begins | 6:00p | Fellowship Lounge
- 10 Urban Sketching | 10:00a | Alex. Museum of Art
- 15 Young at Heart | 10:00a | 50/50 Room
- 16 Art Walk | 5:00p | Downtown Cultural Arts Dist.
- 17 Fall Art & Prayer Retreat | 9:00a | Art Studio
- 18 Volunteer Appreciation Sunday (NO Youth Meeting)
- 20 United Women in Faith Meeting | 10:00a | 50/50 Room
- 21 The Gathering & Pumpkin Delivery
- 22-26 Pumpkin Patch | 11:00a | Across from Church
- 25 Trunk-or-Treat | 5:00p | Parking Lot (NO Youth Meeting)
- 26 Leadership Meeting | 5:30p | Transitions Room
- 31 Youth Halloween Lock-in | 6:00p | Johnson Center

YOUTH & CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

With the changing seasons come new lessons for our children and youth. Children focus once again on our Sacred Stories in Godly Play each Sunday. "The Ten Best Ways" teaches the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments. "The Ark and the Tent" and "The Ark and the Temple" remind children of the holiness of God's presence.

"The Exile and Return" teaches of the Hebrews as they wandered from and sought God. "The Prophets" lesson touches on the others God called into ministry throughout the Bible. All these Godly Play lessons connect children with God through their 5 senses, through their play, and through their collaboration. Thank you to our Godly Play leaders who help make each Sunday a new learning moment for each child!



Our youth have been focusing on the Advent season in our Sunday School lessons as we help repair our Chrismons for our church's Christmas tree. Chrismons are special ornaments that represent the names of Christ as well as other important tenets of Christian belief during Advent.

You may see some new shapes on our Chrismon tree in the Sanctuary this year, and that is due in part to our youth's hard work during Sunday School! Thank you again to all our Sunday School volunteers!

Carly Bratcher | Program Director

FROM THE PRESCHOOL



An invitation is a chance to begin a new relationship, join a conversation, or have a shared experience. Every day First United Methodist Preschool invites our students with an opportunity to explore, transform, organize & design, build & construct, pretend play, create art, read, count, and pray- we pray every day. We would love to invite more people to observe all these wonderful happenings in our school. State laws and regulations prevent us from allowing just anyone to walk through the school without an escort and volunteers must have background checks and training, which makes an invitation more complicated than it used to be.



FUMP classes visit the church sanctuary on Wednesday mornings for "Chapel," where they receive education in Biblical stories and lessons.

Teaching and caring for children is a rewarding, but also, at times, a stressful job. All joking aside, moms and dads who drop off children would much rather be with their parents than away from them. And we all know children would much rather be with parents and their siblings even though they can quickly remember what they love about school 5 minutes after they have been dropped off. While FUMP is unable to invite you inside during school hours to see us dancing or singing, or learning to build towers and laughing when we knock them down, or reciting letter sounds we would like to invite you to pray with us. Please pray for our teachers, our parents, and most of all, for our children.

Catherine Lytle | FUMP Director

MUSIC MINISTRY

I love invitations! Being invited is always a good feeling and feeling welcome is even better. Jesus gives a bold invitation in Matthew 4:19. In the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus says to the fishermen, "Follow Me." It was kind of crazy what He was asking them to do, but after witnessing a miracle on the Sea of Galilee, the fishermen left their boats and nets on the shore and followed Jesus right away.

Our church is filled with people like those fishermen; they have seen and experienced Jesus long ago and because of Him, they serve His people with gladness. They are the people who love justice and practice mercy. Because of them, our church has a beautiful, genuine welcome to it that I get to witness every day.

In John 21:19, near the end of His ministry, Jesus went to that same sea to find His disciples fishing once more. They recognized Him by the overflowing fish in their nets and proclaimed, "It's the Lord!" as they jumped into the water. Can you imagine the joy in Peter's heart when the resurrected Jesus looked him in the eyes and said to him, "Follow Me," once more!

Some of you can relate to this deeply. Peter was hurting and had returned to the life he knew. So, Jesus went after him. In a world where so many people are hurting, sometimes even hurt by the church itself, our behavior as Christians and our invitation being genuine is more important than ever. Jesus will use regular people like you and I who follow Him, to heal wounds and restore what seems far gone.

Studies show that one in six adults today are lonely. That's not even considering the loneliness that technology is creating for younger people. Let's get REAL with one another: real connections, real acceptance of those who are different than us, and real honest about how similar and special we all are.

Christ refers to those who follow Him as "the light of the world." Our willingness to share our presence can both bless us and illuminate darkness for others.

Elizabeth Nix | Director of Worship and Music



Last month's Gospel Brunch was a great success with over 100 people filling the Fellowship Hall to enjoy food and praise!

This event was made possible through the Wally-White Fund.

DO YOU WANT
AN AD IN THE
**2026
ADVENT
BOOK?**

Or if you want to
help sell ads...

CONTAINS
OUR CHRISTMAS
PROGRAMING
FROM ADVENT TO EPIPHANY!

Email gpickering@fumca.org
for more information.

Scan QR for Rate Sheet.



October Mission

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Help us collect essential supplies for survivors.

MEN GATHER

- Toothpaste
- Body Wash

WOMEN GATHER

- Shampoo or Conditioner
- Feminine Products

Donation Deadline: October 20

Bring donations to FUMCA.

Supplies will be delivered to the Family Justice Center
during their *Open Doors, Open Hearts* event
on October 21st.



Scan QR Code
for Event Information
All are welcome!

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

FUMCA Art Ministry presents FALL ART & PRAYER RETREAT OCTOBER 17, 2026

LED BY REV. JEAN SANDERS
PASTOR & ARTIST IN RESIDENCE.

STEP AWAY
FROM DAILY DEMANDS
TO REST, PRAY, AND RECONNECT
WITH THE CREATOR
THROUGH A QUIET DAY OF
VISUAL ART, REFLECTION,
& COMMUNITY

REGISTER

BY SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, AT 3P.M.
WITH A SUGGESTED DONATION
OF \$30 PER PERSON
(SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE).



or at fumca.org/art

SUPPORT OUR
PRESCHOOL
WITH YOUR
PUMPKIN PURCHASES!

OUR 28TH ANNUAL

PUMPKIN PATCH

OPENS THURSDAY,
OCTOBER 22.



TRUNK
OR TREAT!
SUNDAY
OCTOBER 25
5-6:30PM.

PASTOR APPRECIATION FROM LEADERSHIP

October is Pastor Appreciation Month, and I want to take a moment to recognize two people who give so much of themselves to our church family—Rev. Kennon and Rev. Jean.

When you are part of a church for any length of time, you begin to realize that some of the most important work of a pastor happens in the moments most people never see. It happens in quiet conversations, phone calls at just the right time, prayers offered when someone is struggling, visits during difficult days, and simply being present when people need you.

Rev. Kennon and Rev. Jean each bring their own gifts, personalities, and hearts for ministry to our church, and I am grateful for the ways they care for our congregation and encourage us to grow in our faith. Pastoring a church isn't always easy, and I know we don't say thank you nearly enough.



Reverends Kennon Pickett, Senior Pastor, and Jean Sanders, Art Pastor

So this month, I hope we will be intentional about doing just that. Thank you both for your commitment to our church, for caring about its people, and for choosing to walk alongside us through both the joyful and difficult seasons of life. You are appreciated, and I am personally grateful for both of you.

Allyson Marlowe | Leadership Board Chair

ART MINISTRY

In the old days, we waited for an invitation to come in the mail... to a wedding or graduation, or a party. When it was delivered, then you had all the information... the 'who, what, when, where, & why' of the event. You could hold it and place it on the desk where you won't forget. You looked for the R.S.V.P. or the "Regrets only". You responded accordingly. These days so many invitations are way more informal.

Regardless, don't you like to get an invitation? I do! I don't care how it comes...a text, an in-person casual, an email, a hand-written one, or one engraved on linen from the printers ... it still means someone wants to be with me – wants to share a moment and/or an event with me. I don't care if it's for coffee, just to hang out, or to a concert. Is it to a fancy-dancy restaurant, or to a home, or a 'let's meet in the park'? Don't care... I love an invitation! So here are few invitations for you (don't wait for the engraved one to arrive in the mail). I'm inviting you because I want to spend time with you, share a special moment with you, and grow together...

Centering Prayer: 9:30 a.m. every Tuesday • Crowell Chapel.

Weekly Art Class: 10:30 a.m. every Tuesday • The Studio.

Urban Sketching (One-Year Anniversary): Saturday, October 10 at 10:00 a.m. We are meeting at the Alexandria Museum of Art with their "[Block n Roll](#)" [steamroller printing event](#). Have you ever sketched a real-life steamroller? Meet at AMoA at 10:00 a.m., art 'throw-down' at 11:15 a.m.

Plus, mark your calendars because we've been invited for a "Pop Up" Urban Sketching during the [Alexandria Artwalk](#) on Friday, October 16! More details are forthcoming.

Fall Art & Prayer Retreat: Saturday, October 17, 9:00-3:00 at the church. This retreat offers adults a quiet, creative day apart to rest, pray, and reconnect with the Creator through visual art, reflection, and community. Participants will be guided through simple art-based prayer activities, with time for silence, sharing, and fellowship.

This is the only event this month in which you must register ahead. (This allows me to provide accordingly for art supplies and lunch.) Please register online at fumca.org/art (\$30).

Rev. Jean Sanders | Pastor/Artist in Residence