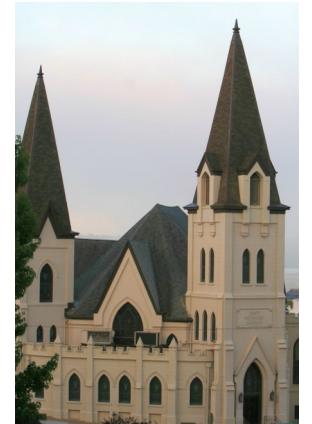
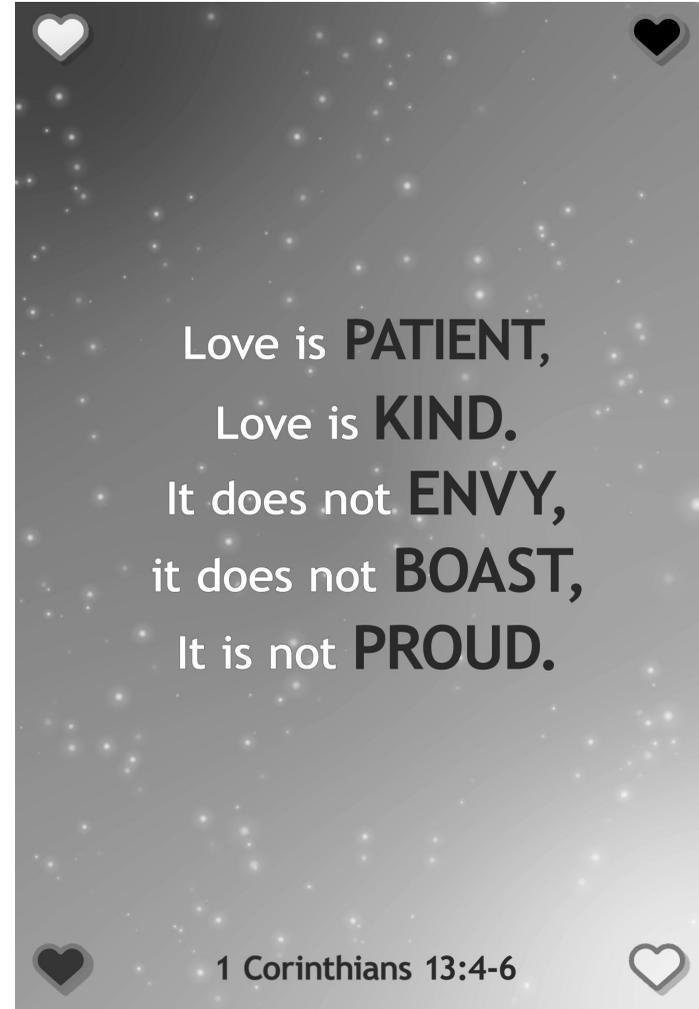


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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First United Methodist  
Church  
202 E. Fourth St.  
Ottumwa, IA 52501



Church Staff:

- Jon Disburg  
Pastor
- Julie Vose  
Office & Finance
- Michael Philipsen  
Director of Music
- Anthony Navarro  
Custodian

Staff may be contacted at the church or through the church's email.

First United Methodist Church  
202 E. Fourth St.  
Ottumwa, IA 52501  
Office: (641) 684-5451 or 684-5452  
FAX: (641) 684-8052

E-mail: [fumcott@gmail.com](mailto:fumcott@gmail.com)  
Pastor's Cell Phone: (641) 680-7464

Julie's office hours vary. Please call ahead if you need to see her.



See All the People

A few weeks ago someone asked me, "What do you think the keys are to the success of our merger and new church start?" I confess I didn't have a very well thought-out answer right away. But after some prayer and reflection, I got back to the person and gave them this answer (you get the condensed version!).

There are 2 keys. The first key is our total commitment to discipleship. Having the majority of our membership become not just familiar with, but proficient in, what Wesley called the "means of grace" (prayer, worship, scripture, stewardship, faith and service) is essential. The likelihood of any congregation being healthy and growing is directly related to its commitment to discipleship. Much of the past 2 years of our ministry together has been aimed at our discipleship pathway.

*Human nature leads us to search out those who are like us.*

But, there is another key. Failure to take this key element seriously will mean our discipleship efforts will never impact our community. We must see all the people of Ottumwa. Human nature leads us to search out those who are like us. The life changed by Christ recognizes the sacred worth of all persons. Can we see all the people in Ottumwa? Can we identify with their lives and needs? Can we speak of Christ to them in ways that meet them where they are?

Beginning February 10, we will be starting a 4-part worship series called "See All the People." The goal is to help us recognize the mission field that exists literally in our own back yard. I pray you make these services a priority. For more information on how we can "see all the people," check out the information at [www.seeallthepeople.org](http://www.seeallthepeople.org).

MISSIONS UPDATE

A big THANK YOU to our United Methodist Women for their very generous donations to FUMC at the end of the year! Their donations are designated for:

- Elder Fund
- Whatsoever You Do Shelter
- Good Samaritan Fund
- UMCOR



Also, proceeds from our 2018 Fall Festival have been designated for:

- Elementary School Book Fairs
- Justice for our Neighbors
- Women at the Well Re-entry Fund
- 2018 Vacation Bible School
- Missions Fund

Richard and Crystal James will be returning to Haiti February 11-25 with Team Iowa Haitian Christian Missions. Crystal will teach in orphanages and Sunday School, plus other outreach, and Richard will be rebuilding and outreach.

Richard and Crystal have appreciated FUMC's support and prayers for past trips! If you are interested in supporting them for this upcoming trip, a suitcase has been placed on the Missions table in Fellowship Hall for any donated items, such as first aid, black shoes, and small toys. Any items that you donate that they can transport to the Haitian people are much appreciated! If you wish to give monetarily, please make your check to FUMC and note "Haiti Trip" and it will be passed on to them.

2019 Special Session of the General Conference

February 23-26, St. Louis, MO

The 2016 General Conference of the United Methodist Church authorized the Council of Bishops to create a way forward with respect to the issues of human sexuality, same-sex marriage and ordination of homosexuals. The request was made because the United Methodist Church has been dealing with these issues for 47 years and the last three General Conference Sessions (2008, 2012, and 2016) were at near gridlock because of these issues. The result was a report by the Commission on a Way Forward who presented three plans for the denomination to move forward on these issues.

A Special Session of the General Conference has been scheduled for February 23 through 26 in St. Louis, MO to deal with this report and the three plans. The General Conference itself is made up of nearly 1,000 United Methodists (50% laity, 50% clergy) and they may adopt or adapt one of the three plans or come up with another plan entirely on their own. They may also choose to do nothing.



Join our Monday morning Bible Study for a series called *Half Truths* by Adam Hamilton. The study is exploring “simple phrases that sound ‘Christian,’ yet miss the point in important ways.” All are invited to come! If you have questions, please see Margaret Trucano.

PLEASE NOTE: In case of inclement weather on Sundays, please check our website, Facebook, Channel 8, or Channel 13 for church cancellation information.

UPDATE

Since the first of the year, there has been a lot of progress as we move forward toward the merger and the new church start on July 1. Here is what is happening:

1. The Lead Team has been established and had its first meeting on January 17.

The following persons are on the Lead Team.

- Eldon Hunsicker, chair
- Ray Ryon, vice-chair
- Brooke Fischels, secretary
- Sharon Bowman
- Melissa Gardner
- Paul Hope
- Abby Leonard
- Jim Parrish
- Traci Proctor

The Lead Team will meet weekly for the next several weeks. Written summaries and updates of their meetings will be available.

2. Nearly 2 dozen members of First UMC have been busy cleaning out storage areas in the church. An inventory of all items in the building has begun, as well as a list of memorials and families to contact concerning memorial items. If you would like to help, please contact Julie at 684-5451 or fumcott@gmail.com.

3. Superintendent Smith, Bishop Haller, and the Cabinet have identified candidates to pastor the new church and the appointment of that person will be announced as soon as possible. The new Pastor will be working with the Lead Team once the appointment is finalized.

4. Please mark these important dates on your calendar:

- March 6—Ash Wednesday Service—6 pm in the Sanctuary
- April 18—Holy Thursday Service—joint service of all 3 churches; 6:30 pm at First UMC
- April 19—Good Friday Service—joint service of all 3 churches; 7 pm at Willard St UMC
- April 21—Easter Sunday—10:30 am; details on breakfast to be announced later
- April 28—First UMC Celebration of Life—joint worship service at 10 am celebrating the life and heritage of First UMC