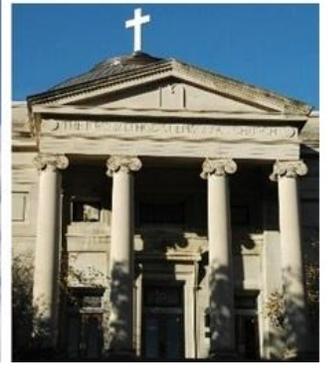




first CHURCH



the
LIGHT
newsletter



July 2022

Volume 69, Issue 7

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Worship Sundays at 10:30 AM Mabaan at 12:30 PM

Council Corner

*I want to express my appreciation to all First Church volunteers who work in the background to keep our important ministries active and effective! I am highlighting a couple of committee activities this month, but first I want to especially thank **Angie Sadler**, who has worked tirelessly for our church in a variety of capacities, including SPRC, gardening, the Visioning Task Force, AND technical support of our livestream worship. She is a marvel! I know you will also want to thank her for her outstanding contributions.*

Speaking of achievements, here are examples of other hard-working teams:

- 1. Worship Committee members, Arnie Brown, Eloise Cranke, Will Sadler and Deanna Snyder. They meet monthly in consultations with the pastor and other worship leaders for planning of the Sunday service as well as other special services, such as Christmas Eve and Ash Wednesday.*
- 2. Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) members are Sally Hosfelt, Ben Jung, Ned Johnson, Angie Sadler, and Deanna Snyder. They have been meeting an average of once a week over the last year to update staff job descriptions, give evaluations, and develop a new position for a Technical and Creative Director. If you know someone who may be interested in this position, please refer to the church website. Deliberations are also ongoing to develop a new description for the position created by Christine's retirement.*

Watch for future Council Corner articles to learn about other ministry groups making a difference for our church, our community, and the world beyond.

Jacque Coulson



Farewell to DM First UMC

Dear my beloved friends in the First UMC, Des Moines,

You are one of the most generous people in my ministry. I am so grateful that you have offered me a space for district meetings and various activities for the district connectional ministries. I also give my special thanks to Rev. Edgar Solis and Christine Anders for their heartfelt welcome. Most of all, your generosity has made possible the Mabaan ministry in our district and the conference as well. I have also noted that the multicultural ministry has been morphed into a new way of doing ministries in our context. So, even though I am moving back to a local church, I am looking forward to seeing more thriving ministries that are happening through your leadership and discipleship.

Again, thank you so much for your partnership, and may God abundantly bless your ministry.

Heecheon Jeon
RVP District Superintendent



Dorothy Strayer Memorial Scholarship

Again this year First United Methodist Church is offering college scholarships to church members and their families. If you are interested in applying for one of these scholarships for the 2022-23 year, please contact Ned Johnson at 515-771-8875 for information and application forms. The deadline to apply is August 1st.



Invitation to Prayer Team

If you have an active prayer life, we invite you to join the First Church **Prayer Team**. We currently have a team of 15 persons praying for others as requests are received, but we would love to include you! The prayer requests come from our connectional church family for themselves, loved ones, family, friends, those in our community, and elsewhere. An email or text is sent (according to preference) to notify team members. ***Prayer warriors have a heart for God, a heart for prayer, a heart for people, and a heart for Christ's church. Therefore, we pray continually and trust that God answers each prayer according to His perfect will and in His perfect timing.***

If you would like to be part of this vital ministry, or if you would like to make a prayer request, please contact Jacque Coulson (cell 515-279-2473 or jcoulson2835@gmail.com) for more information.

The caring committee's goal is to make sure that our congregation knows that FUMC cares about them. Whether you attend church or cannot, the caring committee will reach out to you.

"My Coming Out." Submitted by Dave Wolz

I had had odd sensations from the time I was maybe eight years old whenever I saw a man or boy with no shirt, or naked. I had no idea at the time what these feelings were, but later realized that they were the beginnings of attraction.

Late in my twelfth year, I was visiting a friend and the feelings manifested themselves. After that, I started looking for others who might share a similar attraction. I found a few, at the expense of being ridiculed in school.

In high school, I found some people for fun, but nothing romantic developed from it. In my senior year, I "came out" to all, both at school and church. Since this was the "live and let live" era, I experienced no repercussions from this action. Almost everyone in school knew I was gay, which is how I defined myself at the time, and only a very few had a problem with it. In that year, I also found a fellow student who I was immensely attracted to, and infatuated with, but he did not share this feeling. I found this distressing. I should add that I likely was the first "out" gay student in the Des Moines school system. After I graduated high school, the aforementioned friend went with my father and me on a camping and fishing trip.

Dad noticed I seemed to get a little closer to this guy than what most would find comfortable, and so asked me why I did that. I really had no answer, so he asked me directly if I were homosexual. I said I wasn't sure. That was probably untrue, but it was the best I could come up with on the spur of the moment.

Dad scheduled an appointment with a psychologist for me to try to figure out what I was. When the shrink asked me, I said yes. A

few days later, my dad went with me, and I told both that I thought I was gay, but that I was not completely certain because I had had no experience with women, though I never had felt attraction to any at that point.

The problem then was what to do about my mother. She had had very high hopes for me, both academically and family-wise. Dad and I talked it over. Finally, one day she asked, and I said "yes." She burst into tears. "Where did we go wrong?" she kept asking.

This was before the days of a strong gay organization, and of course there was no PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) or a similar group where my parents could discuss their situation with others who were going through the same crisis.

I kept telling Mother that neither she nor Dad had "gone wrong" at all. It was simply the way I turned out. I should add that the psychologist Dad sent me to tried the scare tactic of saying I was "one per cent of one per cent". Later, of course, I found that to be a lie, though I don't know if he was just saying it or actually had been taught this. The American Psychological Association still considered homosexuality a disease back then.

Mother was seriously considering not allowing me to go to Iowa State University and be away from home. As she put it, "you'll just be butterflying around there." (Don't you just love these antiquated terms?) Later, she substituted "fairying" for "butterflying".

I did go to Iowa State anyway, and was faced with a problem: college students like to rib one another about gay stuff. I was unsure of how to handle this. It is one thing for someone who has been in the closet his or her whole life to remain so, but trying to "go back in" after "coming out" is really difficult.

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At least it was for me. I compared it to trying to cover an ever-expanding balloon with a blanket. Finally, I couldn't stand the lying and just admitted it. Surprisingly, my fellow students respected me more for that.

Sure, I was the butt of pranks, but they slowed down when I didn't get upset. (One of these was to pour water under my room door. I counteracted this by keeping everything off the floor and building a dam out of plastic bags around the door so the water couldn't go far.)

I left ISU after three years due to poor performance in the classroom. I had too many distractions to be able to do well. In the summer that I left, I got my first jobs. Again, I had a difficult time because I knew that some employers would fire people for being gay, though they might give a different reason. Eventually I decided to "come out" in my workplace, too, and for the most part it went well.

That same summer, I attended my first Gay Pride parade. It was in Chicago. It was interesting in two ways: the sheer number of participants, and the fact that I hitchhiked there and back. What a rush!

During spring of my first year at ISU, I met a man at one of the gay group meetings who was considerably older than I – a professor – and we fell in love. Alas, he was married, which made it difficult to get together. We managed though.

A year and a half later, I met another man through the call-in line where people could call to talk with one of the members of the group. He was handicapped. As a result of this, combined with his sexual orientation along with reading unhelpful and inaccurate material, he was miserable. We got together and I assured him that he had no reason to feel depressed. I put it metaphorically as him

drowning in a sea of self-pity and I was the lifeguard who pulled him out.

A year after that, he got a car and learned how to drive it with only hand controls, and that ended the self-pity. Just as one can fall in love, one can also fall out of love, which is what happened in this case. We did, however, remain friends.

Most of the time after that, in work environments, I adopted a "don't ask, don't tell" philosophy. Most coworkers figured it out and asked, and I told. During this time frame, I was about as "out" as one can be in Des Moines. That is, I would announce my orientation to any and all within range. I wore buttons proclaiming it, and also made sure all those in my circle of chess-playing friends knew it.

Shortly before I left ISU, I met a man in a bar who decided to take me home with him. He and I kept in touch, and late the following year, I moved in with him. It was stormy at times, but we got along. One of the high points of that arrangement was that he introduced me to a female friend, and I then realized I was bisexual. That relationship was shattered when he was murdered.

At that point, I moved back with my parents. They got me enrolled at Drake, but I had to remain at home. Living in a dorm when one's home is only two miles away seems illogical. I graduated from Drake the following year, though I didn't perform all that well, again, due to too many distractions. Most of the students knew what way(s) I swung and had no problem with it.

For the most part now, I still follow the "don't ask, don't tell" idea though sometimes let "slip" a reference to "my boyfriend" despite the fact we are not "one and only" for each other.

I think that wraps up my "coming out".



FUMC
Anti-racism
Task Force

Article information was received from the following:

YouTube video: The Arc of Justice: Reparations for African Americans

Article: Why we need reparations for Black Americans by Rashawn Ray & Andre M. Perry

Federal Reserve's 2019 survey on consumer finances

H.R. 40 Bill

Some Blacks did receive land but it was later taken away.

African-Americans have suffered from the following:

- 250 years of slavery – during the Atlantic Slave Trade many slaves died on the ships from disease and malnutrition. Slaves were treated as personal property and were whipped, branded and raped. Marriages were broken up and families were torn apart.
- 90 years of Jim Crow – an oppressive system enforced by laws, customs, and violence.
- 60 years of “separate but equal”. Black people weren’t able to go to the same churches, schools, restaurants or use the same restroom facilities as white people.
- 35 years of racist housing policies – from redlining to the denial of loans.

Why Reparations are needed for the Descendants of African American Slaves

By Lesley Gesaman

Estimates from the Federal Reserve’s 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances indicates that Black families’ median and mean wealth is less than 15 percent that of white families. Black American descendants of people enslaved in the United States constitute 12 percent of the nation’s population but possess less than 2 percent of the nation’s wealth.

In 1860, over \$3 billion was the value assigned to the physical bodies of enslaved Black Americans being used as free labor and production. This was more money than was invested in factories and railroads combined. In 1861, the value placed on cotton produced by enslaved Blacks was \$250 million. Slavery enriched white slave owners and their descendants, and it fueled the country’s economy while suppressing wealth building for the enslaved.

When Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 ending slavery, those newly freed were left with nothing. The federal government promised those formerly enslaved 40 acres and a mule.

Reparations is a program of compensation to individuals or communities who have been subjected to grievous injustices. Reparations could come in the form of cash payments that would help close the Black-white racial wealth divide. Additionally, reparations should come in the form of wealth-building opportunities that address racial disparities in education, housing, and business ownership.

Reparations are not foreign to the United States. Native Americans have received land and billions of dollars for various benefits and programs for being forcibly exiled from their native lands. For Japanese Americans, \$1.5 billion was paid to those who were interned during World War II. Additionally, the United States, via the Marshall Plan, helped to ensure that Jews received reparations for the Holocaust, including making various investments over time. In 1952, West Germany agreed to pay 3.45 billion Deutsche Marks to Holocaust survivors.

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Black Americans are the most significant group that has not received reparations for state-sanctioned racial discrimination, while slavery afforded white Americans the ability to accrue tremendous wealth. The case for reparations can be made on economic, social, and moral grounds. The United States had multiple opportunities to atone for slavery, each a missed chance to make the American Dream a reality, but has yet to undertake significant action.

The first major opportunity that the United States had and where it should have atoned for slavery was right after the Civil War. Union leaders including General William Sherman concluded that each Black family should receive 40 acres. Sherman signed Field Order 15 and allocated 400,000 acres of confiscated Confederate land to Black families. Additionally, some families were to receive mules left over from the war, hence 40 acres and a mule.

Yet, after President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, President Andrew Johnson reversed Field Order 15 and returned land back to former slave owners. Instead of giving Blacks the means to support themselves, the federal government empowered former enslavers. For example, in Washington D.C., slave owners were actually paid reparations for lost property - the formally enslaved. This practice was also common in nearby states. Many Black Americans with limited work options returned as sharecroppers to till the same land for the very slave owners to whom they were once enslaved. Slave owners not only made money off the chattel enslavement of Black Americans, but they then made money multiple times over off the land that the formerly enslaved had no choice but to work.

A bill called H.R. 40 (named after 40 acres and a mule) was first introduced by congressman John Conyers in 1989. The bill was reintroduced in the House on 1/3/2019. This

bill establishes the commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African-Americans. "The commission shall examine slavery and discrimination in the colonies and the United States from 1619 to the present and recommend appropriate remedies. Among other requirements, the commission shall identify (1) the role of the federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery. (2) forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants, and (3) lingering negative effects of slavery on living African Americans and society."

The purpose of the bill is to address the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865 and to establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent *de jure* and *de facto* racial and economic discrimination against African-Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African-Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies, and for other purposes.

The house committee approved legislation that would approve the study, but the bill has yet to be brought forth for a full vote in the chamber.

Reparations wouldn't be a handout but rather a form of justice, a debt paid. African Americans deserve reparations as America wouldn't be where it is today if it weren't for slavery.

No amount of reparations can make up for the years of racial, social, economic, environmental & political injustices against Black people but would be a way to acknowledge the wrong that has been done.

Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. Jeremiah 22:3



News from CCYC!

Teacher Appreciation week at CCYC

May 23-27 was a very special week at CCYC- we celebrated our wonderful teachers! CCYC parents came together to show their support and appreciation of our teachers through breakfast, snacks with encouraging messages, catered lunch and a gift card for each teacher. The students even made a surprise video sharing their favorite things about their teachers.

Items needed

We have the best artists around which means we go through LOTS of paper and supplies. If you have any of the following bring them to CCYC or the church office labeled for CCYC and we will turn them into art!

- **Paper**- old notepads, letter head, computer paper (printing on one side is fine- just make sure it isn't confidential) or envelopes
- **Craft items**- popsicle sticks, yarn, stickers etc
- Other items always appreciated:
- **Toys**- gently used toys
- **Clothing**- Shorts, Pants, Underwear, Shoes - for children ages 2 - 11 yrs. (mostly need items for 2 - 7 yrs, but sometimes we have a spill accident that occurs with the older children and they need a change of clothes)
- **Prizes**—Miscellaneous prizes for Fall Festival contests in October. Keep families and young children in mind- think Happy Meal toys, Target Dollar bin, etc.



Pastor
Rev. Edgar F. Solís

Director of Music & Composer-in-Residence
Ben Allaway

Associate Organist
Lonnie Liggitt

Finance Manager
Michelle Mathews

Office Manager
Lisa Karen Determann

Director at Creative Center for Young Children
Connie McFarlin

Custodian
Lino Ordonez

(515) 244-6209
DMFirstChurch.org
info@dmfirstchurch.org



First United Methodist Church
1001 Pleasant Street
Des Moines, IA 50309
(515) 244-6209
DMFirstChurch.org

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Mission Statement

To connect people with God, to build a welcoming and inclusive community that serves our neighbors through actions of justice and love, and to develop disciples of Jesus Christ.

Vision Statement

To be a Church that demonstrates justice, love and inclusion for all. All means all.

First Church - A Reconciling Congregation:

First United Methodist Church, at the top of 10th Street in downtown Des Moines, strives to love others as Christ loves us and, in doing so, to be the Body of Christ in word and deed.

As the Body of Christ, we welcome and affirm all of God's children, knowing that each is created in the image of God. We welcome and affirm people of all gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, races, ethnicities, family configurations, and physical and mental capabilities to join us in full participation as we come together to worship God and then go out to share God's love in the world around us.

***Cross Notes & Bulletin articles/announcements are due by Tuesday weekly.
LIGHT Articles are due by the 20th of each month.***