



The Insight

Giving insight into the life of FUMC Loveland and keeping our mission in sight.

PASTOR'S PONDERING, REV. LESLIE WOOD

I flew back to Texas for a couple of nights last weekend in order to attend the Celebration of Life for Fred Head, the father of one of my dearest lifelong friends. I went to show my support and love to my friend, Cindy, and to her family. But I also went to say goodbye to Fred. He was one of those bigger-than-life characters. He was a loving family man, a fierce attorney who stood up for the rights of his clients...even those who couldn't pay...and he served as our state representative in the Texas legislature for 14 years. You couldn't say he was the most popular man in the House of Representatives, but he got things done. People who knew him either loved him or, well, didn't.

I loved Fred because he loved me. In a family of five children...I was their sixth. I was always welcomed and cared for and respected. As my brother said so well, "Fred could tick a lot of people off, but he was always gentle and kind to me."

I'll confess something that, perhaps, I shouldn't. When we were growing up, the Heads attended FUMC in our hometown. Over the past 20 years or so, Fred and Marsha attended First Baptist (an SBC church). Here's my confession. I was a little anxious about the message that the Baptist pastor would deliver. I was, at least, half expecting him to use the captured audience at the service as an opportunity to proselytize. To tell attendees how they should believe and what would happen to them if they don't and end with an altar call...all the while using Fred's life as the fulcrum of his message. (I've heard more than one funeral/memorial service message like that.) So, I had just about convinced myself that is what would happen, and I was dreading it.

(continued on page 6)

May Mission Meal



*Meadow Williams
turned 7!*



COLTON LANDON CONFIRMATION

This year our church only had one young youth interested in confirmation, Colton Landon. However, he did not walk this journey alone. Colton and Matthew joined the FUMC Fort Collins confirmation class so that Colton may experience UM confirmation with a community of his peers.

In January of this year Colton joined classes with FUMC Fort Collins each Sunday evening to learn about the United Methodist Church and faith. During the first weekend of May, the confirmation class experienced a weekend retreat at Camp Buckhorn where the class wrapped up their learning while experiencing God's creation in community.

By request of Janesa Landon, Colton was then confirmed at FUMC Loveland and officially became a member of our church on Mother's Day.

Lots of youth news! Let's celebrate our young people!



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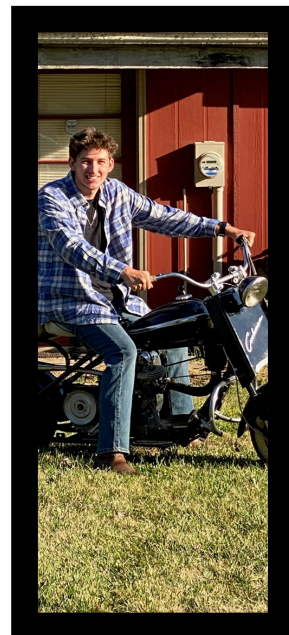
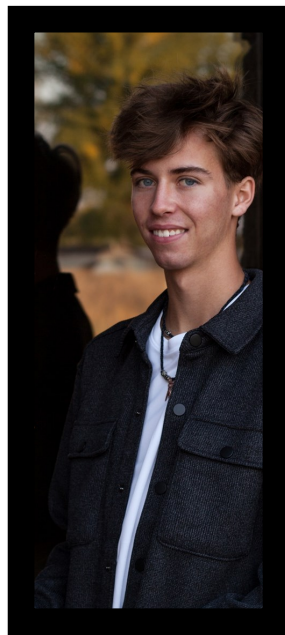
www.buckhorncamp.org/support-us

GET INVOLVED WITH CAMP BUCKHORN

Camp Buckhorn is a UMC camp located not too far from us in Bellvue Colorado. While you probably know them best for their summer camp programming for kids (of which many of our children are registered for) they serve as a retreat center that benefits many people of different denominations and ages.

Along with camp registrations, Buckhorn relies on kind and generous donations from the people who believe in its mission. If you are interested in donating to support the operations of Buckhorn follow the link to the left. On this page you can also find an Amazon wishlist where you can directly purchase a variety of items to help support the camp.

You can also support Buckhorn in other ways. Right now, Buckhorn is requesting personal stories/testimonies of summer camp experiences for them to use in a marketing/fundraising campaign. These camp stories/testimonies can be about any summer camp - not just Buckhorn. If you would like to share your summer camp story/testimony please send it to Matthew Utley (youth@fumcloveland.com).



From left to right: Wyatt Sanderson, Cailyn Landon, Gregor Goody, Noah Heusinkveld

CELEBRATING FUMC YOUTH HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

This year we had four youth from our church community graduate high school, three of whom were recognized during church May 18th. As is tradition, each youth was presented with a hand-tied blanket to keep them warm wherever they go and to remind them of their time as youth in our church community.

Here is some more information about our graduates:

Wyatt Sanderson: Graduating from Loveland High School, Wyatt plans to study aerospace engineering at Iowa State University with the Air Force ROTC in hopes of eventually joining the Air Force.

Cailyn Landon: Graduating from Windsor High School, Cailyn plans to study animal science and pre-veterinary at Colorado State University.

Gregor Goody: Graduating from Mountain View High School, Gregor is planning to attend Colorado State University in the fall to study music.

Noah Heusinkveld: Although the Heusinkveld family moved away last year, Noah has still been a part of our youth program attending missions trips (including this year's upcoming trip) and ski trips. Noah plans to continue in the Johnson County Community College Automotive program that he started as a high school senior and then he will move on to Pittsburgh State to complete his bachelor's degree in diesel automotive.



SUMMER SPANISH CLASSES

Carolyn will be starting Summer Spanish Classes on June 17th. The classes will meet every week from 5:30-7:30 until July 30th. She uses a variety of teaching strategies such as examples, active learning, stories, and select videos. Come, watch the fun, and speak when you are ready!



UNION UPDATE

We're so glad to have this space in the new newsletter to share what's going on with Union Spiritual Community. For those who might not know us yet, Union is a ministry designed for people exploring faith in a fresh way. That includes folks who consider themselves spiritual but not religious, as well as those rebuilding their faith after stepping away from traditional church. We focus on open conversation, real connection, and shared spiritual growth.

This summer, Union is sticking with our regular rhythm of small group gatherings. We'll be meeting twice a month on Monday evenings, diving into meaningful conversations, supporting one another, and enjoying the gift of community. If you're curious or want to join us sometime, you're more than welcome.

We're also partnering with Trinity UMC and First UMC for Vacation Bible School, coming up July 9–11, and we could definitely use some extra help. If you're available to assist with snacks, crafts, games, or just being a friendly presence, check out the main article in this newsletter for more details. Please reach out to Desiree Aragon if you'd like to volunteer.

We've got a few more events and gatherings in the works too, but to be honest, we're just now getting the breathing room to start dreaming ahead. As those plans come together, we'll be sure to share updates. Keep an eye out for what's next.

Thanks for your prayers, encouragement, and support. We're grateful to be part of the FUMC family and excited for all that's ahead.

—The Union Team

CHILDREN & FAMILY CORNER, BY DESIREE ARAGON

To parents it is very important that children learn from their fathers and mothers how to love one another.

Not in school, not from the teacher, but from you, it is very important that you share with your children the joy of loving others. There will be misunderstandings. Every family has its cross, its suffering, but always be the first to forgive with a smile.

Be cheerful, be happy.

~ Mother Teresa

MISSION MEMO, BY MARK ELLIOTT

Your giving to the Easter Offering has raised \$5,729.00. The Missions Committee selected the Loveland Community Kitchen and UMCOR Disaster Relief to receive the proceeds. One third will go to the Community Kitchen and the remainder to UMCOR to be split between national and international relief efforts. Thank you for your generosity.

After some discussion during the May 6th Missions Committee meeting, it was decided to hold back all of the \$620 raised at last April's Fellowship Dinner. These funds will be available to assist with any local emergency that may arise. There was also discussion surrounding inviting Trinity UMC to participate in the Fellowship Dinners. Carl was open to expanding the dinners to monthly events and alternating locations between the two churches, so stay tuned.

Can't make it to one of the FUMC community service days? There are plenty of opportunities to serve in the community beyond these monthly projects. Who knows, it may evolve into a lifetime habit. For example, the Food Bank for Larimer County has plenty of openings for volunteers:

- Their **Loveland No Cost Market** has been very low on volunteers for Saturday afternoons, specifically for the 2 to 4pm shift and could greatly use your help there!
- Their **Fort Collins No Cost Market** is looking for more volunteers to help with **Intake!** If you are bilingual or are interested in volunteering in a more client facing capacity, this is a great opportunity to work directly with their clients.
- New Summer **Cooking Matters** volunteer opportunities have been posted, including multiple opportunities at the Loveland and Fort Collins Farmers Market.
- **Nappie Diaper Wrapping** shifts! Until the end of June they have volunteer shifts to help with their Nappie Diaper Wrapping sessions every Monday from 10-11:30am at their Fort Collins No Cost Market.

Their **Community Kitchen** is in need of extra volunteers all summer long to help prep and make hundreds of precooked meals, daily.

These are just a few of the opportunities available at the Food Bank. In fact, you may have inadvertently helped the Food Bank by donating nonperishable food to the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger ® Food Drive on Saturday May 10th. The food collected by the postal workers is donated to the Food Bank. Food Bank staff and volunteers were at the post offices accepting, assessing, and loading the bags of food onto trucks to be transferred to the main Food Bank warehouse. Over the next couple months, expiration dates on food items will be checked, barcodes will be scanned to screen for recalls, items will be sorted and boxed, and those boxes will be distributed to agencies that get the food out to the people in need.

*Food Bank of
Larimer County*



I was wrong. Go figure. The message that the pastor delivered was excellent. No proselytizing. No shaming. No altar call. It captured Fred's character so very well. I was engaged from his first few words when he said, "Fred was rather like a porcupine...all prickly on the outside with a soft underbelly." He painted a picture of the goodness of Fred that overlapped and merged with his shadow side. He showed how God created a man of hard angles and edges, a man of soft heart and a passion for justice for the vulnerable, and a man of deep, deep faith.

I think about Fred, his life and the pastor's message as we begin the new month on Sunday. Our Scripture for June 1st seems appropriate for this day and time. It includes Jesus' words: "*I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you...I'm in them and you are in me so...they will be made perfectly one. Then the world will know that you sent me and that you have loved them just as you loved me.*" (from John 17:20-26)

This prayer that Jesus prayed on our behalf, that we will be one, is a unity prayer. It's a prayer that we *can* be diverse people with different opinions and priorities, different angles and edges, different hearts and (com)passions, yet grounded in one hope, one love, one Grace-Giver.

Annual Conference is coming up this month. Clergy and laity in the Mountain Sky Conference will gather in Highlands Ranch, CO to deliberate and vote on the business of the Conference. There will be important business. One of the most important pieces of legislation will be a vote on Regionalization. Without going into detail, if it passes (all Annual Conferences of the UMC vote), then the UMC "operating structure" will change. This strategic plan for Regionalization was overwhelmingly endorsed by delegates from around the world at the 2024 General Conference.

After a long 50 plus years of dis-unity in the UMC, Regionalization, in a large sense, is about unity. If it passes, all parts of the denomination will be equal, which will help us all to build our trust in each other as we continue to work and minister together in the world.

Jesus, I believe, came to show us how to live. He didn't come to say we need to all be one homogenous blob. He came to show us that, though we are all different, still we are all equally and totally loved by God. In Jesus, we know the presence of God in ourselves and in others, even our "others".

I pre-judged, and I mis-judged, that Baptist preacher. I should not have done that. His message reminded me of something vitally important about God. In describing Fred's contradictory character, that Southern Baptist pastor described all of us. We all have our prickly sides. We all have our soft underbellies. God uses all of it...all of us.

That is something to celebrate. That is something to bring us together, not drive us apart. That is the truth that, with Jesus in us, we *can be* perfectly one.

Shalom,

Leslie

PS: Let's also celebrate and thank Matthew Utley and Ben Clegern, who will be FUMC's lay members at Annual Conference this year. How wonderful it is that we'll have two young adults, two young men who grew up at FUMC, representing FUMC and bringing their insights and hopes for the future of this church to the business of the Mountain Sky Conference.

UNITED METHODIST BISHOPS ISSUE FOUR LETTERS ON JUSTICE AND PEACE

To the Beloved People of the United Methodist Church,

We write to you at a moment when our world is confronted by profound suffering, deep division, and urgent calls for justice and compassion. We do so with humility, aware of the fragility of some of our communities and the diversity of perspectives within our beloved connection.

We also write with a relentless hope grounded in Christ's resurrection. As Easter people, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, to love boldly, to serve joyfully, and to lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.

The United Methodist Church stands unwavering in its commitment to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We affirm, as our Book of Discipline and Social Principles declare, that every person is of sacred worth, deserving of justice, dignity, and protection, regardless of nationality, race, gender, or identity. Our calling as United Methodists is to love as Christ loved, to serve as Christ served, and to lead as Christ led-resisting evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.

During our recent meeting, the Council of Bishops engaged in reflective conversations and offers four pastoral letters for your prayerful dialogue, discernment and witness:

- A Call for Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo: We grieve the violence and humanitarian crisis in Congo, standing with our siblings in their plea for peace and restoration.
- A Plea for Ceasefire and Justice in Palestine and Israel: We lament the suffering of Palestinians and Israelis, urging an immediate ceasefire, the protection of all civilians, and a just peace rooted in dignity for all.
- A Call to Reject Violence Against Transgender Persons: We denounce all forms of violence and discrimination against transgender people, affirming their sacred worth and calling the church to deeper compassion and understanding.
- A Stand Against the Dismantling of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies: We reject efforts to erase the progress made toward justice and inclusion, affirming that every person's story and history are valuable and matter to God and to us all.

Each letter is rooted in our Wesleyan tradition, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and inviting us to live out our baptismal vows: to resist evil, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

We know that statements alone do not change hearts-stories do. We encourage you to listen, to share, and to bear witness to the stories of those most affected by violence, injustice, and exclusion.

We acknowledge that these letters may challenge, comfort, or unsettle you. Yet, as a worldwide church, we are called to holy conversation - to wrestle together, to learn from one another, and to seek the Spirit's guidance in community. The common thread through all these letters is God's unwavering love for humanity and the sacred dignity of every person.

Let us journey together as disciples-loving boldly, serving joyfully, and leading courageously. May we be a church that listens deeply, acts justly, and grows in grace....moving towards God's vision for Beloved Community.

With gratitude and hope,

Bishop Tracy S. Malone
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

Reposted from The Council of Bishops webpage. Original posted May 7, 2025. To read the article, with links to the letters, go to:

<https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/newsdetail/umc-bishops-issue-four-letters-on-justice-and-peace-19062039>