



FUMC Loveland

March 2025

Senior Newsletter

Creative Expression: Building Our Children's Self-Worth and Confidence

By Desiree Aragon

Desiree Aragon is the Family Programming Coordinator for FUMC, TUMC, and Union. She splits her time among all three entities. In addition to these roles, she is in private practice as a certified life coach for kids and has worked with children for over 20 years. Here are Desiree's words for how the adults in children's lives can support their growth during formative years.

Supporting our children during this critical stage of their lives is essential. Between the ages of 6 and 11, children begin to fully grasp the difference between fantasy and reality while also developing skills such as planning and organizing. This is the ideal time to offer them increased responsibility.

Here are some tips for cultivating your child's personal development and self-confidence through imagination, responsibility, and play:

- ◆ **Engage in Collaborative Activities:** Involve your child in cooking dinner together. This not only fosters creativity but also teaches them valuable planning and teamwork skills.
- ◆ **Explore Discovery Opportunities:** Take a trip to an aquarium or science museum. Make sure the experience is guided by your child's curiosity, allowing them to ask questions and express their interests.
- ◆ **Encourage Skill Showcasing:** Set up a "stage" at home where your child can perform their latest skills. Whether it's dancing, discussing, or teaching you about their favorite subjects such as trains, sign language, or Spanish phrases, this helps boost their confidence and creativity.

These ideas are inspired by some of my favorite mentors, including Dr. Venessa Laport and the Reggio Emilia approach.

I hope you find these suggestions helpful! Let's start nurturing the creators of tomorrow, today.

With light and inspiration,
Desiree Aragon

FUMC Leadership Considers Church Vitality

By Rev. Leslie Wood



“Four teams of intrepid “architects” gathered on February 1, 2025 to imagine where the church (FUMC and universal) is headed, then build a physical representation of what the church is *becoming*. Tasked to think outside the box *and* outside the building, the teams were challenged to think about the metamorphosis of the church, which is in the midst of a season of drastic change, and where they see God in the midst of that transformation.

After the building project was complete, the four teams merged back into one, as members of FUMC’s Church Council, along with a few staff, continued on with the purpose of the annual leadership retreat: to discern God’s leading, dream and plan how to help ensure the future vitality of our church.

It was acknowledged during the meeting how God is constantly teaching God’s people how to manage change. Looking back over the history of the church, a pattern emerges. Every 500 years the church undergoes

a period of reformation. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the door of the church in Wittenburg and launched the Protestant Reformation...just over 500 years ago. We are currently in the liminal space between what church *was* and what it *is becoming*. Sometimes, that space is uncomfortable; but it is also a time ripe with opportunity to shake off complacency and recommit to following where God leads.

The facilitator of the leadership retreat was Rev. Megan Burg, Congregational Resource Minister for the CO Front Range District and pastor of Westminster UMC. Rev. Burg began by asking a question: “What continues to excite you about FUMC?” The group enthusiastically responded with answers such as:

- We are a welcoming church. Not just on Sunday mornings, but throughout the week, individuals, groups and schools find FUMC a safe place to gather for fellowship and business.
- Mission continues to be a core value. We generously respond to needs in the community and beyond.
- This church believes in caring for the youngest in our community, supporting the chance for children to thrive. Our support of Truscott Elementary and offering a new home to Loveland Preschool are exciting examples of this ethos.
- FUMC’s support of the Union Spiritual Community recognizes the importance of being the presence of Christ to this largely non-churched “nones, dones and deconstructor”¹ demographic. For many Millennials and GenXers who would never step foot in a church, FUMC has become a safe space of spiritual connection.
- FUMC has staff and lay leadership that are dedicated to discernment and faithfulness that leads to the ongoing, future vitality of FUMC.

Nones = those with no or eclectic spiritual beliefs; Dones = those who have had bad experiences that caused them to leave religion; Deconstructors = those from a traditional Christian background who are questioning their faith and seeking more spiritual vitality.

Rev. Burg then went on to facilitate a frank discussion about the challenges facing the universal church today. She said recent studies show a notable decline, nationally, in church membership. For the first time in 80-plus years membership has dropped below 50% of the U.S. population. Studies estimate that as many as four to five churches (protestant, evangelical and Catholic) are closing every day across the U.S. Matthew Utley gave further data that highlights both the challenges and opportunities unique to FUMC specifically. His information was based on a demographic research study he conducted through MissionInsight, a demographic mapping resource provided by the UMC.

Some of the highlights of Matthew's report included:

- Loveland is growing in population, especially young adults.
- The largest demographic segment in Loveland, within a five-mile radius of FUMC, is the category called "singles and starters/digitally savvy". These are the first-time independent young adults.
 - ⇒ Nothing we could change about Sunday worship would persuade individuals in this category to attend church.
 - ⇒ This demographic isn't church shopping.
 - ⇒ For this demographic, the best style of worship is through missional connection.
- The next three demographic segments are those in retirement age.

Brainstorming new ways of being the church for the young adult demographic doesn't mean we must give up all the ways that we are the church for those of us who find meaning and grow spiritually by gathering to worship as a faith community in more traditional ways. It does mean that, to continue to thrive and be the presence of Christ into the future, we must change our thought process. Rather than asking "How can we convince them to come to (i.e. join) our church on Sunday?" we must begin to ask "How can we meet people where they are (spiritually and, sometimes, physically) with no agenda other than to be the presence of Christ to them?"

These are challenging times of discernment. Yet, as the FUMC leadership can attest, journeying in such a deep place of discernment and openness to God is sacred ground. In order to focus our plans and decisions, Council is pleased to introduce a new mission statement for FUMC.

Loveland FUMC strives to bless and serve our local and world communities while living the teachings of Jesus Christ. We accept people as they are and strive to live in harmony with God and all of divine creation.

This statement will guide our steps moving forward. For now, we feel called to continue being a church that values and supports our FUMC faith community. Concurrently, we will tend to God's leading us as a church that blesses and serves this community (and beyond). Watch for news of opportunities and see how God is at work. And remember, we are better together. If you can spare some time to pray for the future work and blessings of FUMC, or if you can pray AND get involved in some of the new opportunities in person, please reach out to Pastors Leslie or Lee to inquire about ways you can support FUMC.

March/Early April Birthdays

March 1

Judy Deal
Rusty Mathena

March 3

Julie Monroe

March 5

Lois Beers
Jerry Yoder

March 9

Jeannine Gosso

March 10

Toni Perry

March 12

Marcia Yoder

March 14

Janeen Anderson

March 16

Sue Cox
Phyllis Geis
Judy Siettman

March 19

Paul Williamson

March 20

Kurt Adams
Lynn Hammond
Jane Wright

March 22

Rick Tessean

March 23

Betsy Elliott
Jacci Mullison

March 28

Marjie Tessean

March 29

Cees Morgan
Terry Ogilvie

March 31

Susan Williamson

April 1

Barb Franke

April 2

Jackie Gruber

April 5

Suzy Garcia



For Your Calendar

FUMC Women's Fellowship will meet

Thursday, **March 27th at noon** in West Coy Hall.

Martha Johnson and Kelly Torrez will provide a snack. Jan Krening will give a presentation on "Barn Quilts Across America", which is a way to honor quilters and farmers. Our project this month is to help with food items for the KidsPak program. All women are invited to attend our meeting. Please RSVP to Darlene Lowe at aldarlowe@gmail.com.

Trinity UMC's **JOY Fellowship** meets on Wednesday, **April 2 at 11:00**. JOY Fellowship is a monthly luncheon and program for adults age 55+. FUMC adults are warmly welcomed to join them each month. There is no cost to attend, but donations are welcome. Look for a sign-up sheet at the Ask Me Desk or contact Rev. Lee to RSVP.

[Contact Us]

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