

**First United
Methodist Church
of Fort Lupton
306 Park Ave., Fort
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Staying in Touch

→
First United
Methodist Church
of Fort Lupton



"The Transfiguration"

2.12.26

Email - office@fumc-fortlupton.org

Website - www.fumc-fortlupton.org

**Message
"The Transfiguration"
Pastor Anna**

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-9

1 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. 3 Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."

8 And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."



WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH

NO HASSLE GIVING

Have your donations automatically come out of your bank account.

Contact Church Office or Church Treasurer for information



Safeway cards -available downstairs after worship



DONATE TO THE CHURCH ONLINE.

<https://fumc-fortlupton.org/donations/donate-to-the-church/>

King Soopers Community Rewards Program:
Visit <http://www.kingsoopers.com>
search for First United Methodist Church of Fort Lupton either by name or VY166.
Need assistance call church office.

What's Happening

- 2.16.26 Office Closed – President’s Day
- 5:30 pm Many Blessings Meeting
- 2.18.26 6:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service
- 2.24.26 7:00 pm Ad Board Meeting
- 2.25 – 3.25.26 6:00 pm Lenten Diiner
- 6:30 pm Lenten Activity

Wednesdays

9:30 am Wednesday Bible Study

7:00 pm Choir

Fridays

5:00 pm MYF/Youth

Jan. 1 - December 31, 2025 Financial Update	
Income	\$ 202,986.19
Expenses	\$ 212,004.40
Revenue/(Loss)	\$ (9,018.21)

*Interest received from CD's \$12,735.47 and, Money Market Closed \$5262.99 due to budget shortage.

Tailtwisters 4-H Club
Spread the Love
Peanut Butter Drive
Donate Now - February 14th
For Drop-off Locations, Call: (720) 353-1649

Want to help financially, instead?
DID YOU KNOW?
Peanut butter is a great source of protein and can be used as meals and snacks. It's also a food item that can be safely prepared by children when parents and caregivers are unavailable.

BENEFITTING FORT LUPTON FOOD & CLOTHING BANK

There is a box in the Cry Room to drop off your donations.



**Wednesday, February
18, 2026 @ 6:00 pm**

*Ash
Wednesday
Service*

**Lenten Dinner Schedule
(These groups will provide
dinner and activity)**

February 25	Adult Sunday
School	
March 4	UMW
March 11	Youth
March 18	Bible Study
Class	
March 25	Worship Group

Lenten Dinner & Activity

**Wednesdays starting
2.25.26
Ending on 3.25.26**

**6:00 pm – Lenten Dinner
6:30 pm – Lenten Activity**



First United Methodist Church of Fort Lupton

Ad Board Meeting

**Tuesday, 2.24.26
7:00 pm**

All are welcome.

meet in the dining hall



Pastor Anna Viehland
“ Just a Pinch ” 2.8.26

Something you might not know about me is that I double majored in undergrad: my Bachelor's degree is in both English and religious studies. This was a secular, public university so I got a very well rounded education on the many faiths of our world. My focus was on South Asian traditions like Hinduism and Sikhism but I still took classes in the Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. I not only learned what these groups believe, but what they do NOT believe. For instance, our Jewish neighbors do not recognize Jesus as the messiah, like we Christians do. Muslims believe Jesus was a great prophet but don't recognize him as the Son of God. Protestants don't recognize the Pope as the head of the Church, like the Catholics do. And Baptists don't recognize each other in the liquor store.

That joke is a favorite of mine because, like all the best jokes, it's based on a kernel of truth. Some Christian groups do abstain from alcohol as a rule of faith--and they're quite adamant about it. Baptists in particular are known for their teetotaling but fun fact (or not-so-fun fact, depending on your sensibilities) Methodists were historically at the forefront of the Temperance Movement. Our United Methodist Social Principles still encourage abstinence from alcohol. John Wesley's list of General Rules to his followers included the requirement that they avoid "spirituous liquors" and getting publicly drunk (luckily, a pint of beer or a glass of wine were seemingly fine). Methodist pastors are, in *theory*, supposed to "uphold the doctrine of the Church"...which means following these rules. In practice, however, it is not uncommon to see Methodist pastors enjoying the odd glass of bourbon or--horror of unspeakable horrors--a nice, frozen margarita.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to rules that make you go "say WHAT now?" Did you know that Methodists are technically not allowed to gamble, the definition of which includes games of chance of any kind? Thank God we are protected from the horrors of church bingo nights and raffles! Back in the day, Wesley prohibited his followers from wearing gold jewelry and prohibited his female society members from wearing pearls and adornments in their hair as well. My husband Daniel, who is also a United Methodist pastor, still follows Wesley's prohibition on gold jewelry. Me? (points to hair ribbon and gold necklace) Not so much!

This all might seem arbitrary, even a bit absurd, but the Bible is full of rules. This is especially true of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. These first five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, are called the Torah, which means "The Law." In Jesus' day, every good Jew knew the Torah well. There are the laws concerning ritual purity, rules about what Jews could eat, wear, or touch. There are the laws of kashrut, or kosher laws, which govern diet and how food is prepared. There are rules against wearing clothing of mixed fibers. There are hundreds of commandments, not just the Big Ten we all know. If the prophets are any indication, it seems that the people of God were pretty good at ignoring those commandments from the moment God handed them down.

Christians have a complex relationship with these rules. Obviously, we don't keep kosher anymore. We wear clothing with mixed fabrics. We don't typically perform rituals of purification when we come in contact with things once considered "impure," like blood. Jesus seems to relax quite a few of the former rules in the New Testament. When he faces opposition when healing the sick on the Sabbath (a time when observant Jews are forbidden to do any type of work), he chides the religious leaders for caring more about the Law than the wellbeing of their neighbors. He contradicts the rule of "eye for an eye" in favor of turning the other cheek and loving for one's enemies. Yet, in today's passage, Jesus says that he has no intention of abolishing the law. How are we meant to take this statement in light of the many, many Biblical commands we no longer follow?

Jesus begins his teaching the way he often does--with metaphors. He compares his followers to salt. Salt was vital in the ancient world, so much so that it was often used as payment for goods and services-- we even get the modern word "salary" from "sal", the Latin word for salt. Salt allowed people to preserve food before the advent of refrigeration. For Jesus' audience, salt was also a symbol of God's covenant with the Jewish people and was used in religious rituals. Modern audiences also understand the importance of salt. As any foodie will tell you, salt is THE essential seasoning, making relatively bland foods taste good and good food

taste great. Salt is powerful; more than just a pinch can render an entire dish inedible. In telling his followers to be “salt of the earth,” Jesus is calling them to remember God’s covenant and God’s Law. He speaks not of the letter of the law, but the Spirit of loving God and neighbor. Just as salt makes everyday foods sublime, Christ instructs his followers to “season” the communities they live in with love. Like salt in a dish, just a pinch might be enough to change things for the better.

Then, Jesus calls his followers “the light of the world.” What does light do? It illuminates dark places. It reveals hidden things. In a pre-modern civilization, where wild beasts and roving criminals worked under the cover of night, light was a symbol of safety and hope. Those lost in the darkness would look for the glow of a far off campfire or a city on a hill sparking with light to find their way. Jesus instructs the disciples to embody that same hope, to let the light of God shine through them always in a way that draws people toward God.

Yes, we Christians are released from following certain Biblical commandments. Still, the Law and the Prophets are not irrelevant to the lives of Christians. Contrary to popular belief, Judaism itself is not rigid or legalistic; rather, it has a strong tradition of understanding these laws not as an end to themselves, but means to an end. Jesus did too. When he came, he reminded us why God’s people were given those laws in the first place--to better love God and to better love one another. To remind them of the covenant God made with humanity, to remind us of how deeply God loves us, and to show the world what it means to be God’s people. The way in which we do so has changed. We no longer avoid pork and shellfish, we don’t ritually purify ourselves after touching something “unclean,” and we wear polyester blends without a second thought. But in order for us to be salt and light in the world, we must remember the spirit of that covenant and live into it. And while following these commandments does not save us, loving God and cooperating with God’s grace will allow us to keep that covenant.

The Early Church faced a hostile world, but it grew and grew despite intense persecution at the hands of the Roman empire. Why? Because they were salt and light. They cared for the sick. They shared everything in common so no one went without. They took in disabled and unwanted children left to die from the elements. They didn’t SAY they were more morally upright than everyone else, they proved it through their actions. And people took notice. We in the modern church have much to learn from those first disciples. In this day and age, far too many people walk away from the Church because of our failure to be salt and light. They do not see Christians living any differently from their non-Christian neighbors. In fact, they may even experience those non-Christian neighbors as more accepting, more loving, and more devoted to the greater good than the Christians they encounter. If the earliest disciples were salt, adding flavor to the world they lived in, the modern church leaves the world bland with indifference at best, and turns it sour with judgement at worst. If the early Church drew people to Christ by shining God’s light, we hide that light under bushels of self-righteousness and games of Us vs. Them.

The good news is that it does not have to be this way. Jesus opened God’s covenant to all who hunger and thirst for righteousness. When we choose to enter into that covenant, God promises to give us the love and grace we need to be salt and light. There’s more good news. We’re approaching the season of Lent (if you know anything about Lent, you’re likely thinking “that doesn’t sound like good news,” but stay with me here). Lent is a great time to reflect on the ways we’ve fallen short and what habits hide our light under a bushel. We can pray about concrete commitments that will help us grow in love and mercy. We can consider how we can grow as a congregation to let our light shine and season our broader community with the goodness and love of God.

So you see, the rules of the Torah, through the Prophets, through Jesus, and through the Epistles of the New Testament are not insignificant or irrelevant. Taken with the right spirit, they can help us be holier, kinder, more forgiving, and, more generous. They can help us to be salt and light. So be salt and light. It won’t be easy but remember this; it only takes a pinch of salt to make a meal better. And just like it only takes a little salt to add a whole burst of flavor, it only takes a simple “yes” to God’s grace to change the world. Amen.

Carol's Corner
Carol McDermott

What a beautiful day it was today. I know it probably won't last forever and I know we need moisture badly, but I am enjoying it for now. We had a wonderful service today and a good time singing and praising God in worship. We sang a great song called, "Victory Chant" that always seems appropriate on Super Bowl Sunday. Barb Irsik had the Children's sermon and talked to the children about focusing on God during our day, but she kept getting "interrupted by phone calls" – actually she was demonstrating how easy it is to be distracted when we are trying to pray or spend time in God's word. Boy, that is so true! I have come to believe that the devil will use any means to keep me from really focusing on God's word when I do my morning devotions. It was a great reminder about concentrating on God when we are trying to pray or read a devotion. I played "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" for offering and I could hear several singing along with it – love it!

Pastor Anna's sermon was titled "Just a Pinch", and the scripture for the day was from Matthew 5:13-20, about "salt and light". She talked about the importance of salt as a seasoning for food as well as a preservative. It was once considered like currency and is the root for the word "salary". Throughout the history of the church there have been different opinions in denominations of what is acceptable or not acceptable behavior among people of faith. Some are very strict and some are not, and your own experience when you grew up may have a bearing on your current feelings about alcohol etc. Many of my own memories centered more around what I was "Not" supposed to do as a Christian girl vs. what I should do. It almost became a challenge to see how close to the line I could get and still be "ok" in God's sight. As I matured in my faith, I began to see that what God wanted was my heart, and my behavior would follow. Pastor said that the Jews were bound by rules – some given by God, but many added by the religious leaders of the day. He spoke not of the letter of the law, but the Spirit of loving God and neighbor. He said we should "season" our surroundings and communities with love. "Like salt in a dish, just a pinch may be enough to change things for the better. He also talked about us being light in a dark world." Having our speech be sprinkled with kindness and love, so love can help us guide someone who has lost their way. There is a reason why so many hospitals and medical establishments are named after "Saints", because they were established to cure diseases and bring healing of body, mind, and spirit. God's new covenant is to all who hunger and thirst for righteousness. As we enter into that covenant, God promises to give us the love and grace we need to be salt and light. That is good news that needs to be shared!

Pics to Enjoy!



**Sunday school
with Dr. McDermott**



Sunday Worship

Carol sharing special music.



Pastor Anna, “So be salt and light. It won’t be easy but remember this; it only takes a pinch of salt to make a meal better. And just like it only takes a little salt to add a whole burst of flavor, it only takes a simple “yes” to God’s grace to change the world. Amen.”



Children's Time with Barb.



Praise Team.

