

**First United  
Methodist Church  
of Fort Lupton  
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**Staying  
in Touch**

→  
First United  
Methodist Church  
of Fort Lupton



**3.5.26**

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**Website - [www.fumc-fortlupton.org](http://www.fumc-fortlupton.org)**

**Message**

**"The Third Sunday of Lent"  
Pastor Anna**

**Scripture: John 3:1-17**

**1 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person."**

**3 Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."**

**4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"**

**5 Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' 8 The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."**

**9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"**

**10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 11 Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 17 Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him."**



**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



Endowments

**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**

- 2.25 – 3.25.26 6:00 pm Lenten Diiner
- 6:30 pm Lenten Activity
- 3.16.26 5:30 pm Many Blessing Meeting
- 3.24.26 7:00 pm Ad Board Meeting
- 3.29.26 9:00 am Palm Sunday
- Easter Cantata, "You Thought of Us".
- 4.3.26 11-12:30 pm Time of Reflection & Communion in sanctuary

**Wednesdays**

- 9:30 am Wednesday Bible Study
- 7:00 pm Choir

**Fridays**

- 5:00 pm MYF/Youth

Jan. 1 - January 31, 2026 Financial Update	
Income	\$ 21,150.91
Expenses	\$ 15,620.60
Revenue/(Loss)	\$ 5,530.31



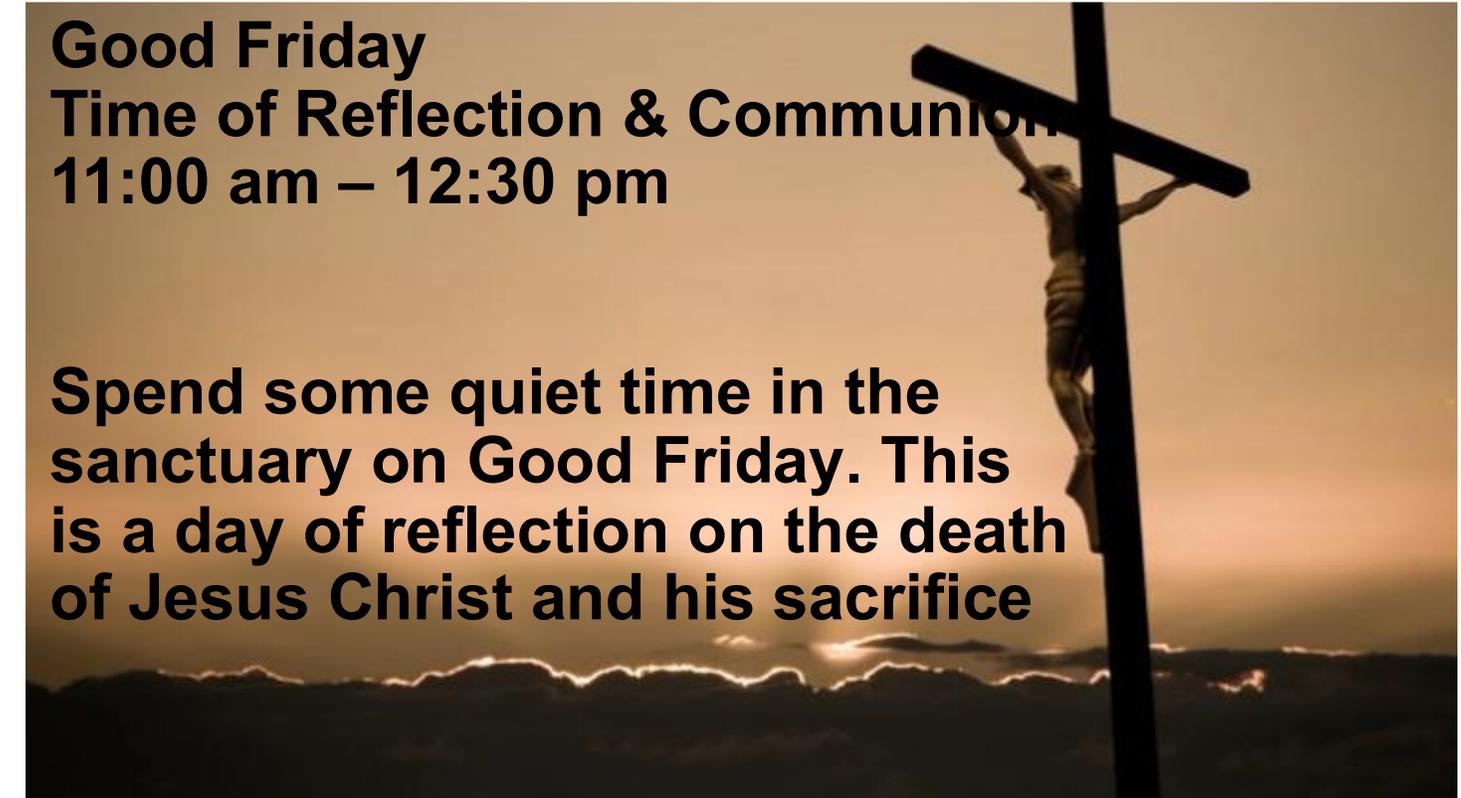
**Easter Cantata**  
**"You Thought of Us"**  
**Palm Sunday – March 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**9:00 am In Sanctuary**  
**Presented by the**  
**First United Methodist Sanctuary Choir**  
**Directed by: Marilyn Bangert**  
**Visual: Neena Hagans**  
**Audio: Cheryl Marti**

A poster for the Easter Cantata "You Thought of Us". It features a golden background with a central image of hands being held. The text "Serving...", "Suffering...", and "Saving..." is written in a cursive font around the hands. At the bottom, it says "AN EASTER MUSICAL Arranged and Orchestrated by Camp Kirkland".

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

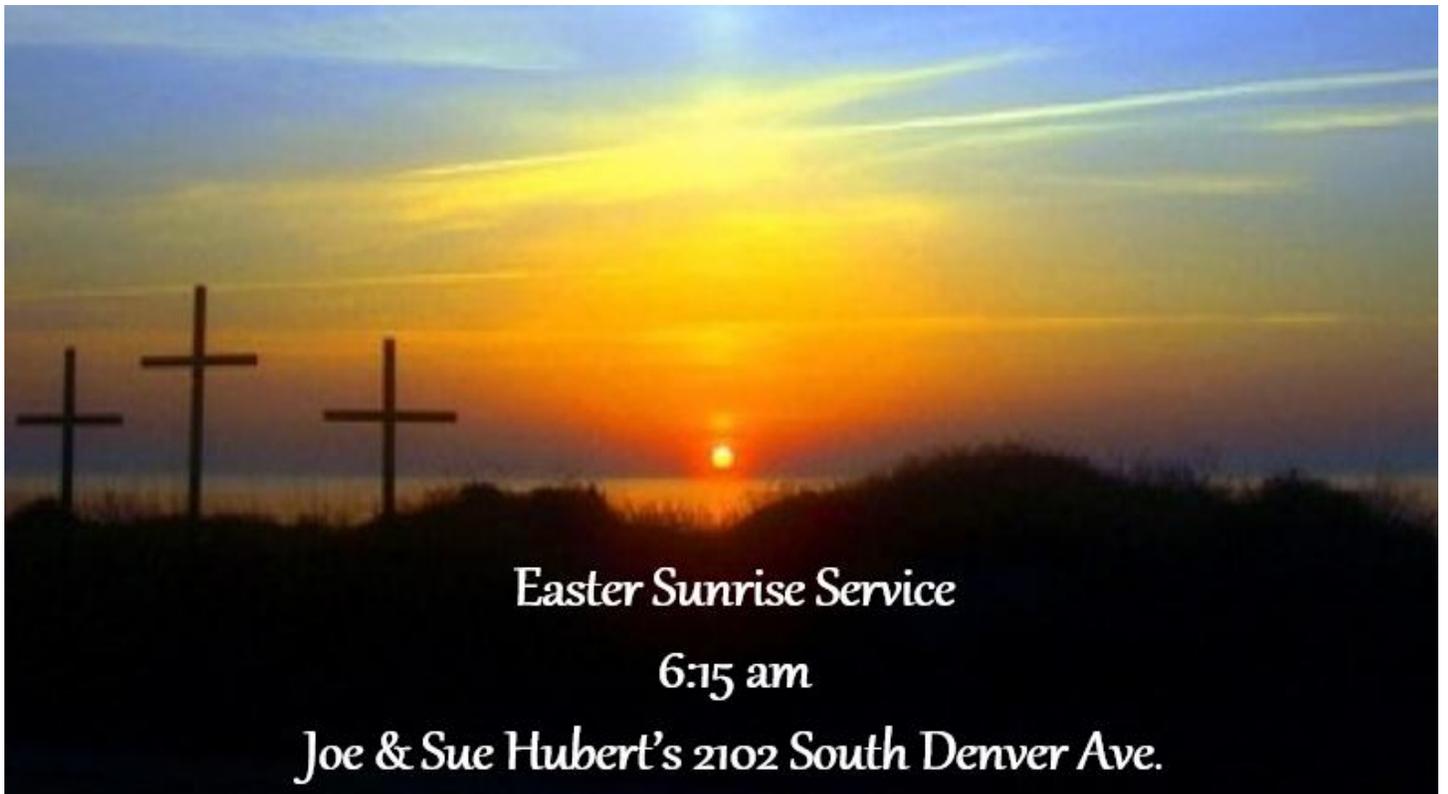
**March 11** Youth  
**March 18** Bible Study Class  
**March 25** Worship Group

A poster for Lenten Dinner &amp; Activity. The title "Lenten Dinner &amp; Activity" is written in a white, cursive font at the top. Below the title, the text "Wednesdays starting 2.25.26" and "Ending on 3.25.26" is written in white. At the bottom, the times "6:00 pm – Lenten Dinner" and "6:30 pm – Lenten Activity" are listed in white. The background is a dark green, textured surface with a bowl of soil and a small wooden cross in the center.



**Good Friday**  
**Time of Reflection & Communion**  
**11:00 am – 12:30 pm**

**Spend some quiet time in the sanctuary on Good Friday. This is a day of reflection on the death of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice**



## **"The Second Sunday of Lent"**

### **3.1.26      Pastor Anna Viehland**

I went to Florida State University; go Seminoles! Like many if not most state universities, we had a fierce football rivalry with another state school--the University of Florida, or the Florida Gators. So it was puzzling to me when I started my freshman year, kitted out in Seminoles merch, and found that a gaggle of girls in my campus ministry were hardcore crushing on the Gator's star player...Tim Tebow.

I mean, yeah, he was cute, but not cute enough to justify fraternizing with the enemy in my opinion. But it wasn't just his good looks that had the church girls swooning. Tebow became famous for his many public displays of his Christian faith on the field. He took to dropping to his knees in prayer during games to thank God for successful plays--he did this so frequently that "Tebowing" (dropping to one's knees in prayer while everyone else continues on with whatever it is their doing) became a viral meme. His most memorable display happened in 2009, during the National Championship, when he wore the words "John 3:16" on his eye black.

Tebow is not the first or last public figure to bring that Bible verse into the public sphere. John 3:16 is one of the most well known pieces of scripture. It's launched a million signs at sporting events, and probably a few thousand ankle tattoos. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life." It comes to us from the story of Nicodemus. Nicodemus is a Pharisee, a member of a 1st Century Jewish sect known for their strict observance of religious law. The Pharisees and Jesus frequently butt heads in the Gospels but Nicodemus is curious about this rebel rabbi. One night, he decides to seek Jesus out for himself and see what all the fuss is about.

Jesus tells him that in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, he must be "born again." Nicodemus is bewildered. How, he asks, can someone be born again after growing old? Jesus replies, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit." He closes with that now famous statement: God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Love is a funny word, isn't it? In the English language we somehow use the word "love" to describe how we feel about our favorite foods or hobbies or football teams and how we feel about our families and friends, even though we know that those feelings are actually very different. I can say that I love Diet Coke. I can say that I love my husband, Pastor Daniel. I can say that I love my son, Desmond. But each of these types of love are different from the other.

The limits of this one word can also affect how we think about God. Too often we read Scripture verses about God's "love" and think it means having a comfortable faith, a warm and fuzzy blanket that assures us that we are good people and avoids messy demands. But that's not how God loves us. The Greek word for *love* in John 3:16 is "*agape*." It is *not* the love I have for Diet Coke. It isn't even the love I have for my husband or son. It's an expansive, universal love. It's not love that is given in exchange for something. It's a love that may be extended to those who have nothing to give in return. It's not a love reserved for those who treat us well, that we get on well with--it's a love that extends even to those who would sooner throw us off a cliff than give us the time of day.

Love in this context is not just a noun, a tangible object we can wrap our arms around; it's a verb. It demands to be shown and acted out. God shows that love by giving us the most precious thing God can: God's Son. God gives of Godself. God becomes human, joining us in our suffering. God does this knowing the cost, knowing the path to Jerusalem is a path to an agonizing death. But Jesus knows that

this agonizing death, wherein he will take on the sins of the whole world, will free that world from sin and death once and for all.

God so loved the world that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. All we have is a puny four letter word to describe a love THAT big--it's no wonder that we get it so very wrong so much of the time. And we get the "believe in him" part wrong too. Even the demons believe in Jesus as a statement of intellectual fact. True belief means allowing that fact to do something in your life and in your heart, the same way agape love led Jesus to give his life for us.

What does this look like? I think the answer lies in the verse we so often overlook. We like to zero in on John 3:16 and forget what Jesus says in John 3:17: "God did not send the Son to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Let's be honest—we don't need God's help in condemning ourselves. We do that quite well already. Every day, our choices, our thoughts, our words, and our failures heap judgment upon our own shoulders. The sin that lives within us already whispers words of condemnation. Guilt has a voice of its own, and shame can be one of the harshest judges we'll ever face.

When we squirm under the weight of that guilt for too long, we're often tempted to take that guilt and place it on someone else. One of the most common and insidious ways we condemn ourselves is by thinking we have the right to condemn each other. We may profess a loving God with our lips but our behavior suggests the opposite. Let me ask you this: if God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn it, then what makes us think that's our job? If the sinless One refused to cast the first stone, what gives us sinners permission to hurl ours? This passage doesn't say "for God so loved holy people" or "for God so loved good church folks." It's

"God so loved the world." God loves Ted Kaczynski and Charles Manson and Osama Bin Laden. God loves Kim Jong Un, Vladimir Putin, and Donald Trump. God loves everyone in this room, everyone we love, and everyone we fail to love.

To be born again means that we are no longer condemned and we no longer have the right to condemn anyone else. It isn't a one and done deal, where you pray a scripted prayer and continue on with business as usual. God's love for us meant God had to die. Being reborn into eternal life means we must die too. We must die to our egos, to old beliefs, to our dedication to this broken social order. We must die to the idolatry of "me, myself, and I." We must die to our misguided efforts to save ourselves. We must die to the illusion that the blessings we have are truly ours instead of blessings given to us in trust by God. We must die to the idea that we are any better or worse than anyone else. We must die to believing that we are gatekeepers of God's love rather than agents of God's mercy. We must die to the heinous lie that some lives are less valuable, that some people are loved less by God.

This Lent, I invite you to look at your life and see the attitudes, beliefs, and habits that you need to die to. If you're stuck, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. What are you holding onto that isn't serving you, God, or others? Where is there still condemnation, for yourself or for others? What choices can you make and what actions can you take to live as though you truly believe that God loves the world--the WHOLE world and everyone in it--enough to give God's only son?

Like Nicodemus, we may find ourselves bewildered by the idea that God loved the world enough to give God's only son, but we CAN be born again. We can be a people who don't just wear John 3:16, but live it, so the world might know that God's love does not come to condemn, but to set free every heart humble enough to receive it.

**Carol's Corner**  
**Carol McDermott**

I've seen more buds on the trees this past week and I'm hoping they know what they're doing! It sounds like we may finally get some moisture in the next week or so – we surely do need it! Today Jennifer Norby had the Children's sermon and had a poster that had written on it: 'GOLDEN RULE' and the word "SALT" with "S" for Serve, "A" for Appreciate, "L" for Love, and "T" for Treasure. She told about a time when she was preparing for an extended family gathering during COVID and prepared a list of "dos" and "don't's" to let her guests know her expectations for the family gathering. She had researched and prepared for this and then wrote a long e-mail letter to go out to her family. She asked Troy to proof-read her letter and he very thoughtfully read it. He then said, "It's very well written with correct grammar, but what is more important: for you to be right or for you to be loving and kind?" GULP! My mind immediately went to examples in my own life when I was right, or maybe "righteous" would be a better word, but not kind or loving. She went on to say that she rewrote the letter and had a wonderful family time. Wow! That was a powerful story and the children were nodding their heads as she finished. Thank you, Jennifer. The choir sang a beautiful song before Communion from our Easter Cantata, "One at Your Table".

Pastor Anna's was based on John 3:1-17. She talked about Tim Tebow and his outspoken and visible testimony with even painting the words "John 3:16" on his cheekbones. We've all seen this scripture displayed in many ways and places: sporting events, on the sides of buildings, or other public places. Pastor explained the setting during which Jesus said these words. He was talking to one of the Jewish leaders, Nicodemus who, at the time was a closet follower of Jesus. Jesus explained that God's love gave His only son to die for the sins of the whole world. Love is a word that is tossed around easily, but there was a special word for the love that Jesus was talking about to Nicodemus. It is called Agape Love. God showed His 'Agape Love' to the world, so that Jesus would take the sins of the world on Himself and He would pay the price that God's perfect righteousness required. "God so loved the world that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life". Pastor said we condemn ourselves and heap judgment on our own shoulders, judgment that only Jesus can carry and bear. She reminded us that the passage says "God loved the whole world", not just good church folks or holy people. When we accept this, we no longer have the right to condemn anyone else. We can live in newness of life and find God's love for ALL the world. The notion that certain murderers or cruel world leaders are beyond saving is not how God loves the whole world. What He loves, we should also. All it takes is a humble heart and mind that will receive His love. Powerful sermon in a time of such unrest and stress. Much to think about. Thank you, Pastor.

# Pics to Enjoy!

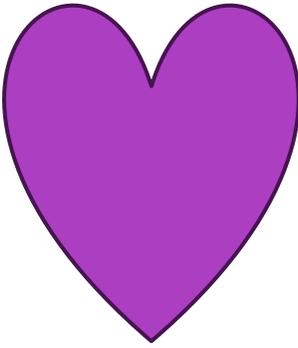
## Friday Youth Group

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Pass it on!





# Sunday Worship



Sprinkle Kindness everywhere

**SERVE:** Bless others with your Gifts & Talents. Serve without expecting anything in return.

**APPRECIATE:** Show Appreciation. Applaud others for their Accomplishments.

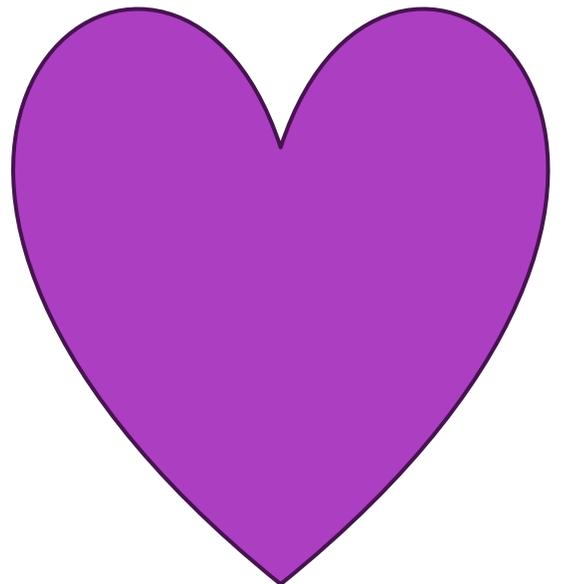
**LOVE:** Love the way Jesus loves, without conditions.

**TREASURE:** Value others. Show kindness & treat people with respect & dignity.

"Have salt in yourselves, and have peace & love with one another."

Mark 9:50

**Jennifer sharing Children's Time.  
Be the SALT.**





We can be a people who don't just wear John 3:16, but live it, so the world might know that God's love does not come to condemn, but to set free every heart humble enough to receive it.

Choir blessing is with, "One at Your Table".



# Lenten Dinner & Activity

## Thank You UMW

