

**First United  
Methodist  
Church  
of Fort Lupton  
306 Park Ave.,  
Fort Lupton, CO  
80621  
303-857-2257**



**7.16.26**

**Email - [office@fumc-fortlupton.org](mailto:office@fumc-fortlupton.org)**

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



### **Message**

**"Listening to the Present"**

**Rev. Lee Anderson-Harris**

### **Scripture**

**Philippians 4:4-9 (NRSV)**

**4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5 Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

**8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about[c] these things. 9 As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.**



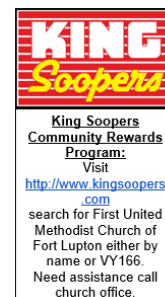
## WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH



Safeway cards -available downstairs after worship



[DONATE TO THE CHURCH ONLINE.](#)



## What's Happening

7.27.26 Monday 4:00 pm Many Blessings Meeting  
6:00 pm Mission/Congregational Meeting  
7:00 pm Ad Board Meeting

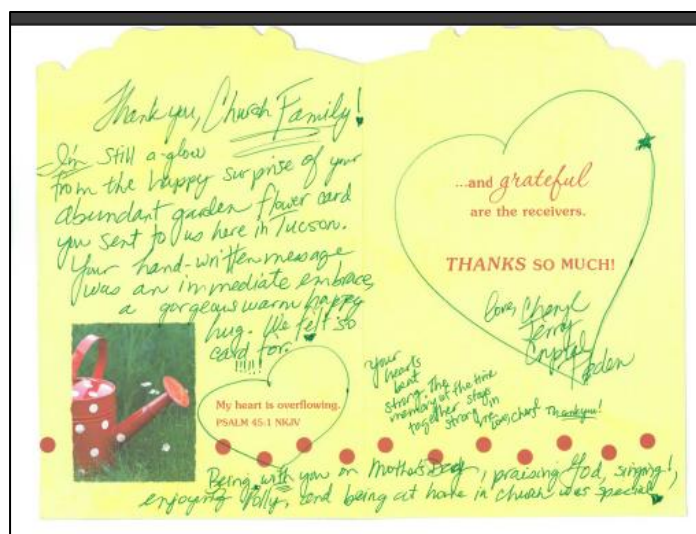
### Wednesdays

9:30 am Wednesday Bible Study

| Jan. 1 - June 30, 2026 Financial Update |               |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------|
| Income                                  | \$ 97,556.64  |
| Expenses                                | \$ 102,719.33 |
| Revenue/(Loss)                          | \$ (5,162.69) |

\*Income includes \$9000 interest from Endowment

Thank you from Cheryl Peden



## Pastor's Page

Rev. Lee Anderson-Harris



### July 12: Listening to the Past

Before I get to today's scripture, I want to set the scene for worship the remainder of July. Over the next several months at least, I will be doing a lot of listening. Listening to get to know all of you, and to get to know this church and community. Listening to learn what we can celebrate, and in what direction God is calling us next. Listening to hear where the pain and grief is, and how God can heal the wounds. When I sat with people as a counselor, I learned to practice the kind of listening that looks like you are not doing anything. I know it frustrated some clients. Listening means you're not doing much talking. But there is a lot going on that is unseen, mentally and emotionally. As a pastor, I have taken those listening skills but I have added something else that is unseen. Prayer. I will sometimes mentally ask God to help me see what I need to see, say what God will have me say, guide me. But a lot of the time, my prayers are my breath. As I take a deep breath, I remember my connection to God's Spirit. And this opens up space within me for God to work. We are in the season of Pentecost, the weeks following Pentecost Sunday, and Pentecost reminds us of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church, and in each of us. The Hebrew word for the Spirit is ruach, and means breath, life, and spirit. With each breath we take, we can remember the source of life, and that God is in each breath and in life.

God has been in our past, is here with us in the present, and is already in our future. And these are the themes I want to explore this month as we reflect on listening to the Holy Spirit. We listen to the past to understand and cherish its lessons...and this means accepting even the mistakes and the hurts of the past. And we listen and look for where God has been in our past. We listen to the present moment; we listen for where the Spirit is now, for how God is using our present time to shape and mold us, and for what we can learn from the present. And because we all need help with this from time to time, we listen and look for the beauty, the good, the God moments that are all around. And finally, we listen to learn where God is leading us into the future. This builds from a healthy relationship with the past and the present.

So today, let us look at the past....

**Luke 1:46-55** (CEB)

<sup>46</sup> Mary said,

"With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

<sup>47</sup> In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.

<sup>48</sup> He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored

<sup>49</sup> because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> He shows mercy to everyone,  
from one generation to the next,  
who honors him as God.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

<sup>52</sup> He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly.

<sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty-handed.

<sup>54</sup> He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,  
remembering his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> just as he promised to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

First of all, you might be wondering why I am using an Advent text today. No, it is not Christmas in July! I wanted to pull out this prayer or song of Mary's because of the language and what it tells us *about God*. Notice that Mary uses past-tense language. But she has not yet given birth. Jesus is still in her womb. But she praises God for what God has already done through Christ. So let's look deeper into the context of this passage. The land is occupied by the Roman empire; the Jews were a minority who were given certain privileges, but still lived a tenuous existence. Mary is a young Jewish woman in a rural town, far away from the center of power and wealth, Jerusalem. All of this means she was overlooked. Unimportant. She sees that in what God is doing, there is a reversal of the current dynamics. And her words foreshadow what Jesus said later in Luke: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And these words point to the past too. These words were first spoken by the prophet Isaiah, and it's important to note that they were well known to those who would hear Jesus say them. The words of Jesus when he read this scripture were about the present and future, but they were a connection to the past as well.

The use of the past tense in Mary's song represents what is timelessly true, eternally true: the past, present, and future without distinction. What God has done, God will do again. This can give *us* confidence. What God is doing or will do may look different from time to time, age to age. But it is still God doing God's thing. The rich, the poor; the powerful and the oppressed; ...they take on different faces and names and situations and locations throughout history. But God's favor still rests on the poor and lowly, and seeks a reversal of fortunes, and Jesus has come to liberate them and bring good news to them.

Throughout the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, we hear words that point to the past and tell us to remember. Remember what God has done. And at the same time, Jesus tells us that the kingdom is near, at hand. Listening to the past to learn and to see and hear where God has been gives us strength to navigate a world that changes faster than many of us can keep up with. It gives us strength when there have been wounds and losses to heal from. Remember the good things God has done for you. God has been there before and will be there again, even in those times in your life when things are harder than they ever were before. Psalm 121:1 says I will *lift* my eyes to the hills...I will look up...because I *know* this is where my help *will* come from. Remembering when God has been there for you encourages you to look up because you know God will show up again.

In addition to listening for God's enduring presence in our lives to help us lean on God for strength, we also look to the past to help us see the present more clearly. I mentioned last week that I love to study history. Various time periods in our nation's and world's histories are fascinating. This is where re-enacting comes in for me. I like to immerse myself in the period. Here is a picture of me making a pie crust in the kitchen at the historic Fort Lupton, Lancaster's Fort. I think this was during Heritage Fair one year, not sure. While I never got to meet my father-in-law, it is wonderful to be able to share in this part of his legacy with others. Now, during the time the Fort was an active trade fort, the early wave of westward migration was happening, so for this impression I imagined a woman of European descent who was headed west and maybe they decided to homestead nearby or just stop a while, and she needed to earn a little income or supplies by cooking at the fort. I enjoy old recipes and historic cooking, but it was also thrilling to talk to the kids who came in about the kitchen and what I was making, like I remember when I would tour living history sites like this as a kid. By the way, I remember I was making a potato pie from an 18<sup>th</sup> century cookbook I have, and it actually came out just right!

But while I enjoy living history, I know enough to acknowledge that I wouldn't actually want to go back in time for more than a visit. We all have a tendency to idealize the past, but the truth is, there have always been good parts, and bad parts. And what was good for some was awful for others. So we don't want to merely rewind. Rather than romanticizing the past, the other reason I study history is to glean understanding of where we are today. How did we get to where we are now? What were the forces that shaped culture as we know it? What were the human behaviors and ways of thinking that laid the ground on which we stand? Looking at the past to understand it gives more meaning for today. It is like the passage I read: When we understand what life was like for people at the time this was written, we grasp even more meaning from Jesus's entry into this world and what it means for the world we live in.

Looking at the past with honesty is crucial if we are going to learn from it. This is where Christianity can provide a good example, because it is a confessional faith. Jesus called people to repent; literally, turn a different direction. We are called to look deeply and honestly at ourselves, with God's help, and name where we have gone wrong. We do this so that we are freed up to move forward...not to just go and do it again, but to move forward in healing, to grow, and become more Christ-like. To move forward in healing the relationships with people that have been hurt. When we take an honest look at the past, we get a better sense of what we want to bring with us into the future, and what is good to leave behind.

For instance, one thing I am obviously glad we have left behind in the United Methodist Church and similar denominations is the treatment of women in the Church. While some Christians still say that ordaining women is "bending to the culture" and being dismissive of God's word, the decision to allow women to be ordained or to lead in the church as lay leaders came from faithful examination of the scriptures and prayerful listening to where God was calling the Church to change practices. God had been speaking through women and using women in God's work already, it was not something that developed just in the 20th century.

And so, we have to sift through the past. Where has God been? Where has God led people? Where did people not live in alignment with God? What are the traditions and values that are good to hold onto because they still provide meaning, and are still faithful to God? What are the traditions and values that we have come to realize are not faithful to God, but were born of something else? Sifting takes time and intention. It takes prayer. It takes God's help. It is hard to look truthfully at ourselves, especially when we are certain we have had good intentions. It's uncomfortable, sometimes downright painful. But it is important to a people who are called to be in relationship with God and one another, and who are called to continuously *become* more Christ-like.

And of course, when we listen to the past for where God has been, we get to celebrate too! While there are painful and disappointing parts of the Christian Church's history, there are so many ways the Church has made a positive impact on society, changed and saved people's lives, brought people closer to Christ, and fulfilled the mission Jesus called the Church into. And this church in particular has a history of doing good things in the community and beyond, and you are continuing to do good things.

I recently read an article from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership's blog titled "Our Traditions are a Sacred Inheritance to be Used." It was written by a millennial pastor who was appointed to a historic church who, like many churches, hoped he would be able to bring in more young people because of his age. I want to read some of the insights he shared. He wrote, "Sacred inheritance is the stewardship of the spiritual, communal, moral and historic contributions passed down from one generation to another. These contributions are entrusted but are not enshrined. They serve not as success frozen in time, but as a living tradition requiring stewardship as well as discernment and prophetic imagination....where we were headed was directly tied to who we had always been. Part of our vision involves taking the best of the traditional church and the best of the contemporary church..." He also echoes my thoughts about taking honest inventory of the past, and wrote that it is important "to remember the darker parts of our past and traditions. Inheriting legacy requires handling our history with care, even when our stories are not able to be neatly packaged."

I hope that together we can be faithful stewards of the sacred inheritance in the way this author describes. We can celebrate the past without glorifying or enshrining it. We can bring the best parts of our traditions forward, and leave behind what no longer serves us or serves God.

As we look to the future to where God is leading us, we can remain rooted in the sacred tradition. The work of Jesus has not changed. Jesus connected the past into what he was about to do when he read the words of Isaiah; in fact, he himself said he did not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill it. Mary birthed something new into the world, but He was not entirely new. Our mission should always be rooted in Jesus's directive to go into the world and share the good news, welcome all people into the fold. Our mission should reflect the work Jesus himself did. Like the words in the *Hymn of Promise*, "from the past will come the future." Let us give thanks to God for being so faithful, for being there throughout the past, and for still being with us now.

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

We have been stuck in very hot weather for the past week. Some nice rains would be so welcome – no hail, please! Today, Carol McDermott (that's me) had the Children's sermon and I pulled a story from "Sermons for Kids" about soccer. There were two young girls who couldn't play soccer very well at all, but one of them did not seem to understand her limitations, yet told everyone she was wonderful. The other girl knew she could not play well, so she did everything she could to become better. Believe it or not, this story was based on a Bible story about two men who went to the temple to pray, one a proud Pharisee and the other, a humble and repentant tax collector. They both came to pray, one to boast about how good he was at following God and the other acknowledging how much he needed God's forgiveness and help. In the story of the two girls, the first girl never really learned to play soccer, because she was unteachable. The second girl learned to play and to love the game, and become an important member of her team. God doesn't care about how much you say you love Him and want to serve Him as much as He cares about how much you show love to others and try to help them learn to love God too. Rebecca and Richard De La Vega sang a beautiful song: "Home Away From Home." It is about contemplating our life here on earth while preparing for our future forever home in heaven.

Pastor Lee's shared some of the lessons she learned in her experience as a counselor which involved listening with intention to better understand where a person was coming from, and often did not involve a lot of her talking, but just listening. Her sermon was based on Luke 1:46-55, often called "The Magnificat", or the prayer of praise of Mary, the mother of Jesus. She said God has been in our past, is with us in this present moment, and we look forward to where God is going to lead us in the future. She said "What God has done He will do again". It may look a little different, but we are called to remember. Yes, remember the good things God has done for us and know that He will be with us even in tough times. Psalms 121:1 says "I will lift my eyes to the hills because I know where my help will come from". Our mission has not changed. We remember the past including the good and bad, the present which honors and serves God, and plan for the future with the Holy Spirit guiding us. It is rooted in Jesus' directive to go into the world and share the Good News and welcome all people to a loving relationship with Jesus. What a heritage we have in this local church, and what a challenge we have to continue to serve and bring those who need a Savior into a loving relationship with Him. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God's blessings to us all as we carry on the mission set before us.

Dear Church Family,

First, I want to offer my deepest thanks for the support of our Mission Team and the Wilderness on Wheels mission. Your kindness has already blessed this project in ways that will ripple far beyond the work itself.

I wanted to share an update from the heart. This year, 28 dedicated volunteers, ages 10 through 74, traveled to Grant County on June 15th. Each person is giving their time, their energy, and their own resources to make this mission possible. Our team covers all personal expenses: tents, huts, cabins, hotel rooms, meals, and gas. They do it joyfully, because they believe in serving others.

Our mission team is not part of our church's annual budget, so we rely on fundraisers and the generosity of our church family and community and grants. Your support has been steady and full of love. Thank you for being a part of that generous family.

This annual mission trip has become a cherished part of who we are as a congregation—an expression of faith lived out in service.

Our church is struggling financial right now, and we want to speak that truth with both honesty and hope. It takes financial resources to keep the lights on, heat and cool the building, support ministries, care for our community, and pay the staff who serve not just because it is a job, but because it is a calling. Every act of generosity — every gift, every prayer, every offering of time — helps us continue being the hands and feet of Christ in Fort Lupton and beyond.

As a Mission Team, we voted to give \$1,500 to our church's operational fund as an expression of love, gratitude, and connection. We are part of a connectional church, and when one part of the body is hurting, the rest of the body steps in to help. This gift is our way of saying, "We see the need, and we want to be part of the solution."

We give this gift with joy, trusting that God multiplies every act of faithfulness. Thank you, church family, for all the ways you support. Together, we will continue to love God, love people, and serve our community with courage and compassion.

Thank you again, from the bottom of my heart, for believing in this work and for helping us carry it forward.

With gratitude and grace,

Gwen Ceretto &

FUMC 2026 Mission Team

## Pics to Enjoy!

**Bringing in the light of Christ.**



**Special Music by the De La Vega's**



**Carol sharing Children's Message**





**Pastor Lee,**

**“In addition to listening for God’s enduring presence in our lives to help us lean on God for strength, we also look to the past to help us see the present more clearly.”**



**Praise Team blessings us with song!**

