

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

→
First United
Methodist Church
of Fort Lupton

**“WITH ALL
MY HEART,
I GLORIFY
THE LORD”**

LUKE 1:46



7.8.26

Email - office@fumc-fortlupton.org

Website - www.fumc-fortlupton.org

Rev. Lee Anderson-Harris
Scripture
Luke 1:46-55 (CEB)

- 46 Mary said,
“With all my heart I glorify the Lord!
- 47 In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.
- 48 He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.
Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored
- 49 because the mighty one has done great things for me.
Holy is his name.
- 50 He shows mercy to everyone,
from one generation to the next,
who honors him as God.
- 51 He has shown strength with his arm.
He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.
- 52 He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.
- 53 He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty-handed.
- 54 He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy,
- 55 just as he promised to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to Abraham’s descendants forever.”

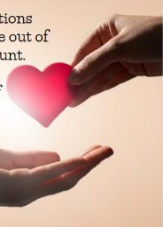


WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH

NO HASSLE GIVING

Have your donations automatically come out of your bank account.

Contact Church Office or Church Treasurer for information



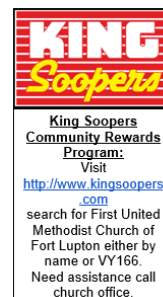
Safeway cards -available downstairs after worship



Endowments

SAFEWAY

[DONATE TO THE CHURCH ONLINE.](#)



What's Happening

Sunday – 7.12.26 Welcome Potluck for Pastor Lee - Following Worship Service

7.27.26 Monday 6:00 pm Mission/Congregational Meeting

7:00 pm Ad Board Meeting

Wednesdays

9:30 am Wednesday Bible Study



New Address and phone number
Doris Robley, 900 Worthington Circle # 125,
Fort Collins, CO 80526
Phone number – 970-221-0115

Jan. 1 - May 31, 2026 Financial Update	
Income	\$ 81,959.10
Expenses	\$ 82,775.99
Revenue/(Loss)	\$ (816.89)

*Income includes \$9000 interest from Endowment

THANK YOU

Dear ones, thank you for the warm welcome I received and for the gift basket full of goodies! Your generosity and the time you took to add a gift means a lot to me, and it was a very nice surprise. I look forward to spending more time chatting and (hopefully) remembering names, but it is good to already be surrounded by familiar and friendly faces.

With gratitude!
Pastor Lee



Pastor's Page

Rev. Lee Anderson-Harris

When I first heard this Psalm...I mean truly heard it...I was at a women's retreat at Snow Mountain Ranch. I had recently re-connected with the Church and I needed to hear these words. As I let them sink in, and spent time in quiet reflection, I felt touched by God's presence in a way that was both familiar and new to me. These words said to me that God knows everything about me...everything...and loves me anyway. They assured me that God was always present with me, even in the darkest times, even in the times I did not *feel* connected to God. It has remained a meaningful scripture to me, and one that I share with people often, particularly if they are in a difficult season of life.

This will be sermon-ish today because I want to tell you a little about myself as a way to help you get to know me and what I'm about. I grew up in the Gulf Coast region of Texas, in the Houston metro area. Bayous, bays, sprawling oak trees and palms, and oil refineries were part of my landscape. As a child, I went to the Southern Baptist church that my mom grew up in, and her parents were still an active part of this church. It was a big part of my life, full of Bible study, youth group, and other activities. I was baptized at age 8; in the Baptist church, you are not baptized as an infant but wait until you feel God calling you and can respond. I felt this nudge as a child and said yes. But then as a teenager, I began to question some things. There was a lot of focus on sin and avoiding sin in what I was hearing as a teen, as well as an emphasis on evangelizing to other teens and saving their souls. And while I couldn't have articulated it then, what I would say now is that I was not being nurtured; I was not hearing about God's love for me in a way that gave me strength as I navigated those tough years, and the teenage years are tough, I don't care who you are. I was hearing about God's judgment and feeling a lot of pressure, and it was giving me the opposite of strength. When I turned 18, I asked my parents if it would be okay to explore other denominations. And I ended up joining a United Methodist Church.

And then I went off to college. I went to Texas A&M University. And I did what many young adults who grow up in the church do...started drifting away. It wasn't a conscious decision, attending worship or joining the campus ministry just didn't hold as much sway as it once did. In addition to that, I took an elective course that sounded interesting to me called History of Near Eastern Religions. I learned some about how Christianity developed, along with Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and more. And as a result, I didn't know what to believe anymore. Now, having your faith deconstructed is not a bad thing. It is often feared, and I understand that fear. This is why so many Christians avoid learning new ideas for themselves, or avoid teaching their children about different ideas. But I can tell you that if you take the time to reconstruct, your faith will move out of what you learned as a child and become deeper, richer. This is what happened for me, and what I have seen happen in many other people's faith journeys.

But before I got to that reconstruction phase, I just dropped out of religion. I didn't know who to talk to about my questions and doubts, so I didn't talk to anyone. That's a key factor in anyone's faith journey...having people they can be honest with, and being in an environment that does not discourage questions. For the next 10 years, I identified as agnostic. I was not an atheist, I still believed in God and still felt close to God at times, but I didn't know what to believe anymore. Looking back, I see that God was with me the whole time. God

knew what I was going through, and kept guiding me to where I needed to be next in my journey. God did not condemn me. God in Jesus knows what it truly means to be human, in all of our complexities, doubts, questions, temptations, trials, fears, and so on. But God loved me too much to leave me where I was. This is a message that I really want to get out, and it drives me in my ministry: God meets you just where you are, accepts and embraces you just as you are, and loves you too much to leave you there.

In 2000, I moved to Colorado. In my late twenties, my Grandpa died of lung cancer. This was my mother's dad; he and Grandma were the ones who were so active in the Baptist church in which I was raised. At his funeral I heard people speak about him in ways that I did not know him. They spoke of his spiritual side. About the ways he lived humbly and generously, and served the church and the people around him with love. Not obligation, not a sense of duty. But out of a love for God. I was moved...so moved, that not long after that, I started attending worship again. I wanted to know more about *this* God, and *this* way of being. And you know, when I sat quietly in the back pews on my own, not knowing anyone around me, I felt Grandpa's presence beside me until I became courageous enough to start making connections with people at the church. I began the reconstruction of my faith at this time, joining Bible and book studies with other young adults, and learning about Jesus and his teachings in a new way, ways that connected with me on a much more meaningful level and that made more sense to me. And I fell in love with Jesus, God, and scripture all over again, and that love has just grown since. My faith was renewed, and at a good time, too. As I would discover, the next several years were not easy for me, and my relationship with God is what got me through. I grew a lot during this time, and I know that God will be with me, helping me, shaping me, whatever life brings in the future.

These were all key spiritual moments that have shaped who I am in my ministry. I imagine that when you reflect on where God has been in your life, and those key moments in your faith, you can name those influences too, and I would love to hear these stories.

At about this same time as I returned to church, I made a shift in my career too. I had been working for a group of funeral homes and cemeteries, and I realized that I was being nudged to support people who are grieving. So I enrolled at UC-Denver to get a Master's degree in counseling, thinking I would become a grief counselor. It was in this program that I learned so much more about the world, about psychology and human behavior, about family systems, than I ever dreamed. Grief work was just the tip of the iceberg. I joined the staff of the church I was attending part-time in the area of congregational care, I got my degree, and started doing some counseling. And then, after just a couple of years, I had a lightning-bolt kind of a moment where I heard my calling. I wanted to become ordained as a deacon and serve in a church where I could support people spiritually and emotionally, and engage in acts of service to others while working toward just systems in the community through a Christian lens. So, I enrolled at Iliff School of Theology, and I was fully ordained as a deacon in 2018. I have served three churches in this role in specialized ministry. And in the past 2-3 years, I have felt my calling shift away from being focused on pastoral care, and more toward a role where I can lead people in a church to deepen their relationship with Christ, and put their faith into action in the world in ways that they feel God is calling them. John Wesley talked about both personal and social holiness; your personal relationship with God, and the ways you live out that faith in the world around you.

So, altogether I have been serving in a church more than 20 years. During that time I have questioned my call, I have explored various paths of ministry. As the pastoral care pastor of churches, I have done many memorial services, and I have wondered if just doing those is my calling. Ultimately, my heart is in the local church; with a congregation...walking beside folks on their faith journeys, sharing what I understand to be Jesus's teachings and how to follow him, being with people in the ups and downs of their lives, and sharing the love of God in the midst of all that. And yes, I will push a little...I take discipleship seriously. Not in a way that sucks all the fun out of life, don't get me wrong! I don't believe that's what Jesus intended for us. But I know that the gate is narrow, the cross is heavy, and if we truly want to follow Jesus, it takes practice and devotion. However, God's grace is the key. I don't believe that we can fully be the people we long to be or the people God longs for us to be on our own. We need God's help. And we do not need to be perfect. God's grace is sufficient for us.

In my own relationship with Christ, which I always strive to grow in, there are other verses in Psalm 139 that have meaning for me. The last two verses, 23 & 24, say: "Examine me, God! Look at my heart! Put me to the test! Know my anxious thoughts! Look to see if there is any idolatrous way^[f] in me, then lead me on the eternal path!" My knowledge of psychology and human behavior has helped me understand my faith, and the Christian faith in general, even better. And the reason these verses speak to me is because I know that, to quote the apostle Paul "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." We are all imperfect, and while John Wesley taught that it is crucial that we strive to go onto perfection, he didn't mean become perfect. He was talking more about God's love for us, Christ working within us, in a way that smooths the rough edges and shapes us into being more like Christ. We all have those rough edges, we all fall short. Sometimes we are aware of those things within us that lead us astray from God, or keep us from being very Christ-like in our thoughts, words, and deeds. But we are also blind to a lot of those things. In my personal devotional life, I ask God to reveal these things to me, to shine the light of Christ into the shadows of my heart, and to keep molding me into who God calls me to be.

Today being July 5th in the 250th year as the great American experiment, I would be remiss not to say a few words on the topic. First, you should know I love to study history, and the founding of this nation is especially fascinating to me. Right now, in this particular time in our nation, Christians of all stripes are being challenged. We have to ask what it means to be a *follower* of Jesus, not just a *believer in* Jesus, in this particular time. And it's not easy. It means examining ourselves and our motives, personally and as a society...where are we in alignment with God, and where are we out of alignment? It is a challenging time whether you consider yourself a conservative Christian or a progressive or liberal Christian, or a moderate Christian or don't have a label at all. It is challenging for clergy, and for laity. I don't have all of the answers. And you are not expected to either. And so, as we celebrate this big milestone in our nation's history, I hope we can show love and acceptance toward one another. Some are filled with joy and gratitude, some with grief and worry, some with a combination of all of the above...and it doesn't matter what political party you belong to or don't belong to, people are all over the place in how they feel right now. I also know there are a lot of people who are choosing to resist the divisiveness we see and find the common ground and the things we can celebrate in this country. There are many ways to love our nation, to be patriotic, to be good citizens. My prayer is that as Christians, in all of the ways we express our love and hopes for this nation, may we seek Christ first. My hope for you and for me is that we stay in love with God, do all the good we can, and do our best to avoid doing harm. Those are the 3 simple rules of John Wesley. And how we see one another, especially people who do not think or act like us, matters.

The stole that Deacons wear is a cross body stole. It is diagonal, which sounds like diaconal. Diakonia is a Greek word that essentially means service. In the UMC, Deacons are called to Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. The minister I think God has called me to be in this world is well represented by the cross body stole *because* it is diagonal. It connects both sides. I strive to be a connector of various sides, and sometimes to do this, you have to stand in the middle and take a 360 view. I emphasize strive to...like I said, we all have blind spots. When you get down to it, we are all complex creatures. As humans, we tend to gravitate toward labels and categories. It is our instinct to do so. But have you ever had the feeling you don't fit neatly into a certain category? Have you ever had the experience where you had put someone else in a certain category only to be surprised? The God of Psalm 139 who sees each of us so fully knows that each of us is bigger than any category. Just like God is bigger than any categories we put God into. If we can practice looking at one another through the eyes of Christ, we might be able to see the human, the child of God, behind the things we don't like or understand.

There are probably other things you might want to know about me. First, I have been asked what to call me, this is always a fair question! In printed material and formal situations, I will refer to myself as Reverend. But that's too formal for me on a regular basis, so I like Pastor Lee, or even just Lee. Second, I want to let you know that I don't use social media very much. So if you message me, or put something on Facebook that you want me to see, I may not see it. It's not a good way to communicate with me. Also, I have run into unfortunate instances in the past when someone either posted on Facebook about a loss or other life

challenge they were having, or they shared about this with someone else in the church, and assumed that information would get to me. And when I didn't call because I didn't know about it, that was salt on the wound. I want to be here for you when something is going on in your life where you need support. So please don't leave it to chance. If you could use my support, please reach out to me. Or ask someone to contact me on your behalf. And if you don't need me, if you feel like you have enough support, that's wonderful and I will not be offended!

I am routinely in the office Mondays and Wednesdays, unless I need to take comp time or something. But you can get my cell phone number from Gwen if you don't have it already. I am happy to share this with the congregation, but I don't want it posted on social media, the website, or on the office phone greeting.

And now for the fun stuff! I am happily married to a wonderful man, Jeremiah Harris. He is also UM clergy, we met while we were both in the process of being ordained. He is the pastor of Longs Peak UMC in Longmont, where we live. So, you won't see him much. We even talked about him joining the potluck next week and it doesn't work with his worship schedule. This is our life. But Jeremiah grew up in Fort Lupton, and some of you already know him, or at least knew him when he was younger. Jeremiah's parents are Earl and Laurie Harris, and some of you knew Earl certainly, and also many know Laurie. Jeremiah and I do not have children, but we have a dog Brodie that I will tell you about and show you pictures of if you let me. The way he came into our lives is another Spirit-led moment, I believe. We love spending time in the outdoors, camping, fishing, hiking, kayaking, archery, snowshoeing. Well, Jeremiah and I do. Brodie likes hiking but that's about it. We try to get to the mountains on our days off. And we both enjoy history...learning it, re-enacting it. You'll hear more about that next week!

I recognize that I am in a place of privilege, getting to stand up here and talk about me. I hope to get to know all of you over the coming weeks, months, years. This is important to me, because I think that to be seen and known is something that many people, deep down, long for. This is a gift we can give to one another in a faith community and our personal relationships. And this is why I cherish Psalm 139, because I want everyone to know that God sees you in your fullness...not just the parts you like to show the world, but the parts that you try to hide as well. And God loves you immensely, all the time.

Prayer

Carol's Corner
By Carol McDermott

This week has brought more hot temps to our area, but it is summer, after all. What should we expect?! Mary Ann Johnston had the Children's sermon and introduced the scripture for today from Psalm 139, one of my favorite passages in the Bible. She had each of the children tell Pastor Lee their name and something about themselves. Sweet! Sue Hubert and her daughter Julie Gerhardt sang "God Bless America" and it was a blessing to hear their voices blend together on this beloved song.

Pastor Lee's sermon was a walk through her life, where her faith journey began and where it got derailed a bit as she moved into her teens and college years. It was at her grandfather's funeral, hearing about the God he loved and served faithfully for years, that she was moved to reconnect with God. She said "God meets you where you are, accepts and embraces you just as you are, and loves you too much to leave you there". She used Psalm 139 as her text today. Please read it this week and allow the verses about God's Omniscience (all knowing), Omnipresence (being present everywhere at the same time), and Omnipotence (having unlimited power and authority) to sink in. It helps us understand how awesome our God is, who knows us so well, still loves us and wants to have a relationship with us. I am in awe when I think of that – how does He tolerate all I do, say, or act, and yet loves me anyway? We are in for a wonderful time of ministry together – and I mean "together". Get your seat belt fastened! It's going to be great journey!

Pics to Enjoy!

Bringing in the light of Christ.



Sue & Julie singing, “God Bless America”.



Mariann sharing Children’s Time



Welcome Pastor Lee



Communion Time



**Praise Team
closing the
service.**