

**APRIL 2024**

# FIRST CONNECTION

**Normal First United Methodist Church**



## Civil Rights Trip April 11-19, 2024

Memphis, Birmingham,  
Montgomery, Selma & Tuskegee

Follow us each evening on  
Normal First's Facebook Page  
(more information page 2)

<https://www.facebook.com/normalfirst>

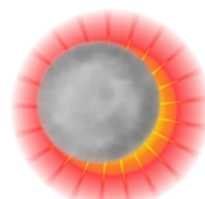
FUMC Facebook



## Solar Eclipse Trip

April 8

Twenty-eight church members and friends are traveling to Southern Illinois to view the Total Solar Eclipse. We'll be staying at Little Grassy Camp, one of our United Methodist Camps.



## Ignite Kick-Off Party!

**Sunday April 7 @ 5:30pm to 7:00pm**

Sunday April 7 @ 5:30pm to 7:00pm will be the official Ignite Kick-off Party to celebrate its new beginning! If you would like to learn more about Ignite and receive our emails, please contact Rev. Kim: [kburke@normalfirst.org](mailto:kburke@normalfirst.org)



*wonderful*

**WEDNESDAY**

**Wednesday April 3rd & April 17th**

5:15pm to 6:00pm: Dinner

6:00pm to 7:00pm: Young Families (Room 301)  
Kids' Craft

**Wrestling With Doubt: Book Study  
Wednesdays @ 6pm-7pm**

April 3: *When prayers go unanswered.*

April 17: *Why do the innocent suffer?*

**Every Wednesday**

**6:00pm - 7:00pm**

Men's Ministry: All Men Welcome (Room 303)

**7:00pm - 8:00pm**

Chancel Choir (Sanctuary)

## April Worship

**April 6/7**

**Peter's Wandering Heart: Here's My Heart**

**April 13/14**

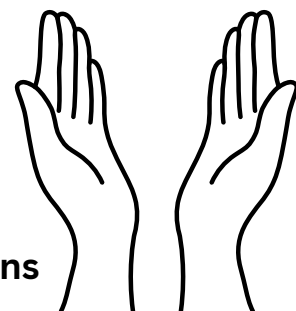
**Rev. Vaughn Hoffman preaching**

**April 20/21**

**Creation Worship**

**April 27/28**

**Civil Rights Trip Reflections**



# Pastor's Article

Soon, 45 people will be embarking on our 2nd Civil Rights trip (April 11-19). Our group is made up of travelers from our community as well as a few joining us from out-of-town (as far away as Los Angeles). We're members of mainline Christian denominations, Moses Montefiore Temple, Mennonite, and Unitarian Universalists. The various denominations represented include United Methodists (Normal 1st, Calvary, Wesley, & Peoria 1st), Presbyterians, Lutheran, Catholic, and Episcopal.

We have been meeting regularly since last October to get to know one another, to study the book *The 1619 Project*, and to learn more about the places we'll be visiting. Our preparation has helped us understand better the complexities of the work for freedom and justice. It has reminded us of the countless extraordinary people who dedicated their lives to the cause of Civil Rights and freedom.

And our learning has given us a more-informed lens to look at our communities, state, and country today. What are the policies and practices that are being reversed in terms of Civil Rights? Where are the places that have never been inclusive and just and still need our attention?

One of the books I read recently is titled *Shaking the Gates of Hell* by John Archibald. "Archibald had seen his father, the Rev. Robert L. Archibald, Jr., the son and grandson of Methodist preachers, as a moral authority, a moderating force during the racial turbulence of the '60s, a loving and dependable parent, a forgiving and attentive minister, a man many Alabamians came to see as a saint. But was that enough? Even though [John] Archibald grew up in Alabama in the heart of the Civil Rights movement, he could recall few words

about racial rights or wrongs from his father's pulpit at a time the South seethed, and this began to haunt him." We could look back over history and ask why others didn't do more. But more importantly, we can look at ourselves today and ask, "how are we doing what we can to help others who are not seen, not recognized, not respected or given the same rights as we are?"

That question has been lingering with me and I hope it will linger with you as well. As the group is traveling, we invite you to "travel" with us in learning about history while wrestling with what is our role today to help ensure and protect people's Civil Rights.

I've listed our itinerary below. You can "join" our trip each evening as I'll post updates and pictures on FB and Instagram.

*Pastor Kathy*

## Civil Rights Trip Itinerary

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
April 11	Civil Rights Museum & Loraine Motel "I Am a Man" Plaza, Meet with Jewish Rabbi	Memphis, TN
April 12	Civil Rights Institute	Birmingham, AL
April 13	16th St Baptist & Bethel Baptist Churches, Kelly Ingram Park	Birmingham, AL
April 14	Worship at 16th St Baptist Church	Birmingham, AL
April 15	Selma, Edmund Pettus Bridge, Alabama State Capitol	Selma, AL
April 16	Rosa Parks Museum, Freedom Ride Museum, Dexter Ave King Memorial Baptist Church	Montgomery, AL
April 17	Legacy Museum and Memorial	Montgomery, AL
April 18	Airmen National Historic Site	Tuskegee, AL
April 19	Home	Home

## ***Our Church, Your Legacy***

The word legacy has been mentioned several times in the Our Church, Your Legacy monthly articles. However, what does the Bible tell us?

Proverbs 13:22 shares that “A good person leaves an inheritance for their children’s children.” This seems to say we should leave something for the future generations and help make the world better than it was.

When we leave a legacy to our faith community, we ensure it will continue long after we are gone and will be there for our children’s children. You can be a powerful legacy when you leave a gift that will be used to continue God’s work on earth.

Reach out to Amy Fuller, Director of Finance and Facilities or Leta Buhrmann, Endowment Committee Chairperson to discuss how you can leave a legacy for your “children’s children.”

## ***Congregation News***

### ***In Memoriam***



**Ernestine Lawler  
1933-2024**



**Art Runyon  
1928-2024**



**Trudy Wayland  
1948-2024**

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## ***April Congregational Care News***

•In March, Congregational Care delivered Easter cards to those that are homebound & in the nursing homes.

•A small booklet, “McLean County Community Services”, is available with the Care Notes, across the hall from the Library. This listing of many resources available to McLean County residents offers support to individuals and families in life’s challenging situations.

•Blood Pressure screenings will be held in the library on Sunday April 21st between the end of the 9:30am and beginning of the 11am services.

•Members of our Prayer Shawl ministry continue to work on new items to be blessed and shared with others. New members are always welcome. If you know someone who would benefit from a prayer shawl, lap robe, or baby afghan, contact Judy Poultney (452- 7665), Lois Young (963-5517) or Erika Cheeseman (452-2096).



# Kid's Ministry @ Normal First

April 2024!

Hello Kids @ Normal First friends and families!  
**THROWBACK: A 4-Week Series from the Gospels on Jesus' Teachings.**



## SERIES OVERVIEW:

From retro toys to fashion trends, we all love a good throwback. (Especially for grown-ups because it reminds us of being young again.) There are things that remind us of a moment in time, but other things feel timeless and like they're always in style. In this four-week series, kids will travel through the decades and see that the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels are always trending. As we hear from Jesus, we'll see it's always good to be humble, we can always forgive, Jesus is always fair, and love always needs action.

In April we will observe Earth Day on the 21st with a guest speaker sharing a story with us during the Children's Moment and we will gather together at 10:30am to plant a tree here on the grounds of Normal First.

We have Wonderful Wednesday on the schedule for 4/3 and 4/17. The final session of our Trauma Informed workshop will take place on 4/28 at 10:45 in room 300.

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## School Street Food Pantry News

School Street Food Pantry will be hosting a food packaging event on Wednesday, April 3rd. We will be portioning out 1500 lbs. of rice into smaller packages for distribution through the pantry. The pantry is looking for volunteers who are willing to participate in the event. There will be a SignUp Genius where you can sign up for a shift:

Shift 1 - 4pm to 5pm - 10 volunteers - set up for packing event

Shift 2 - 5pm to 6pm - 20 volunteers - rice packing

Shift 3 - 6pm to 7pm - 20 volunteers - rice packing/cleanup

Dinner will be available for volunteers from 5:15pm to 6:15pm. Please let us know if you will be joining us for dinner.

For questions and SignUp Genius link please contact:

Elaine Capek: [ssfpmgr1@gmail.com](mailto:ssfpmgr1@gmail.com)

## The Green Team

Green Team will be seeking donations for TreeCorp for Earth Day/Month. \$5 buys a seedling or a portion of a larger tree to be planted in west Bloomington to address the air quality there, provide shade, and capture carbon in response to climate change. Let's make McLean County greener! Cards to signify a tree purchased in someones honor will be available.

**2024 UMW ATTIC SALE**  
**FRIDAY, JULY 26**  
**8:00am-3:00pm**



Clean out the clutter in your attic, basement, closets, etc., for the Attic Sale.

Drop off donations starting Sunday, July 14th, after 2pm. No furniture can be accepted.



On April 20 and 21 we will celebrate Creation and emphasize stewardship of creation in all of our worship services.

Starting on April 7, there will be a wall in the Narthex (in front of the lounge area) that will be titled, "In Praise of Creation." You are invited to bring inspiring or meaningful pictures of nature to hang on that wall. These can be from photos you have taken or found, drawings, poems, writing, etc.

Help us celebrate God's truly marvelous creation.

## Finance Corner: General Fund

February	Monthly	Year To Date
Income	\$72,162.87	\$141,994.90
Expenses	\$83,805.43	\$168,868.79

# Music Ministries

## April Harmonies: Blooming with Music at Normal First United Methodist Church

As the soft whispers of spring welcome us into the embrace of renewal, we are thrilled to share the news of our musical celebrations blooming within the walls of Normal First United Methodist Church. In this season of Easter, our Music Ministries continue to flourish, inviting you to join us in one of our ensembles. Consider becoming an integral part of our musical family through one of these opportunities:

- 1. Adult Chancel Choir (Mixed Voices):** If you have the call to serve as a chorister, come and unite your voice with a chorus of faithful singers. While no formal auditions are required, we encourage participants to have the ability to listen and sing in parts.
- 2. Intergenerational Hand Bell Choir:** Discover the enchantment of hand bells, where generations blend to create some unique and soul-stirring music.
- 3. Contemporary Music Ensemble (Praise Team):** Join our intergenerational ensemble as an instrumentalist or vocalist and infuse a modern rhythm into our collective worship experience.
- 4. Occasional Instrumental Ensembles:** Elevate our worship experiences with the sounds of instruments, adding a touch of splendor to both our regular services and special celebrations such as Easter, Advent, and Christmas.

This April, let the music be your guide as we journey together in the sacred path of Eastertide. We extend a warm invitation to all, whether seasoned musicians or those just beginning their musical journey, to lend your voice or instrument in our diverse, welcoming, and Christ-centered ensembles.

If the being part of our Music Ministries here at Normal First resonate with your spirit, we invite you to connect with us! For more information or to express your interest in joining one of our ensembles, please feel free to reach out to me.

Nander Novaes, Normal First UMC's Director of Music Ministries  
[nnovaes@normalfirst.org](mailto:nnovaes@normalfirst.org)

### **Vesper Circle**

Tuesday, April 16

@ 1:30pm

Church Lounge

Program: Kara & Kaylee's Closet

Presenter: Roxanne Miller Hartrich

Hostess: Char Hicks

Devotions: Lois Young

### **Sonrise Circle**

Wednesday April 3 & April 17

@6:30am

Denny's Restaurant

1615 N. Main Street

Normal, IL

### **Mercy Circle**

Wednesday, April 17

@9:30am

Church Lounge

Program: Life and Work of

Clara Louise Kessler

Speaker: Candace Summers

Hostesses: Jan Crowley

Rose Pascal



**EAST BAY**  
CAMP & RETREAT CENTER

### **Spring Work Day**

Saturday April 20

@ 9:00am-4:00pm

- Projects for all skill levels
- Inside and outside
- Lunch provided

### **Open House**

Saturday May 4

@ 10:00am-2:00pm

Join us for: Hot Dogs, Tours,  
Archery & Games

Questions? Email:

[cleitzen@igrc.org](mailto:cleitzen@igrc.org)



## Church Library News

The UWF Reading Program shelf in the Church Library has a variety of books—biographies, fiction, devotions, poetry—and even a graphic novel--They Called Us Enemy, written by George Takei. In 1942, when he was only 4, Takei's Japanese-American family was forcibly removed from their west coast home and relocated to an internment camp in the Midwest. In black and white illustrated panels and dramatic text, the book shows both a small child's view of life in the camps and an adult's awareness of the injustice and cruelty of this shameful chapter of U.S. history. Stop by your Church Library and check out a book this week!



## Upcoming Events

Cunningham Children's Home  
Festival of Quilts  
Urbana, Illinois  
Friday April 12th  
Saturday April 13th  
Information on back hallway  
bulletin board.

UWF North District Meeting  
Saturday April 27  
@ 12:00pm-3:30pm FUMC

*Daughters All*  
*"A Year of Memories"*  
Tuesday May 7 @ 5:30pm

## Coming in May

Sunday May 5: Confirmation (9:30am)  
Sunday May 19: Senior Celebration



**FAITH IN ACTION SEEKS VOLUNTEERS**  
*An hour or two of your time can have great impact on the lives of senior neighbors in need of transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, and more. Faith in Action (FIA) allows you to choose when you want to help. If driving is not your thing, helping with events, friendly visiting, and grocery shopping are also needed. To learn more or to get started, please contact 309.827.7780 or go to [bnfia.org](http://bnfia.org) to complete our volunteer interest form. Volunteers love FIA's flexible scheduling and interacting with senior neighbors! Upcoming orientations: Tuesdays, April 2 & May 7, at 1 pm. If you are unable to attend a group orientation, please call for other options.*



## United Methodist General Conference

### News

April 23-May 3, 2024  
Charlotte, NC

We recommend following the news of General Conference through these sources:

- \*UM Communications
- \*UM Daily Digest – sign-up to receive daily emails.

The first week of General Conference is legislative committee work, so you can expect very little news from General Conference. The 2nd week of General Conference is when legislative items are voted on and the results of those votes will be communicated through the above sites.





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1-4:30 pm  
Monday-Friday

Website: <http://normalfumc.org>

 [facebook.com/NormalFirst](https://www.facebook.com/NormalFirst)

 @normalfirst

**Co-Pastor**

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[pastorkent@normalfirst.org](mailto:pastorkent@normalfirst.org)

**Co-Pastor**

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[pastorkathy@normalfirst.org](mailto:pastorkathy@normalfirst.org)

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[afuller@normalfirst.org](mailto:afuller@normalfirst.org)

**Director of Music Ministries**

Nander Novaes  
[nnovaes@normalfirst.org](mailto:nnovaes@normalfirst.org)

**11:00am Worship Music**  
Tiffany Ogdon Smith

**Organist**

Kari Kaps

**Wonderful Wednesday Cook**

Sandy Schaller

**Director of Children &  
Family Ministries**

Pam Shepard  
[childrensministry@normalfirst.org](mailto:childrensministry@normalfirst.org)

**School Street Food Pantry  
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**Communications Coordinator**

Tracy Koch  
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**Worship Technology Coordinator**

Dale Hoerner  
[tech@normalfirst.org](mailto:tech@normalfirst.org)

We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

(Social Principles of The United Methodist Church)

First United Methodist Church in Normal has committed itself to provide a Christian community and ministry without reference to any boundaries including age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, economic condition, physical or mental ability. We strive to be an open and accepting community in line with our understanding of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ expects of us.