

The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

**MATTOON
FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

Worship opportunities:

9 a.m. Traditional

Sunday School offerings
follow Traditional worship

10:30 a.m. Contemporary

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THE CIRCUIT WRITER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 7

FALL 2024

A Note from Pastor Todd

Welcome to this Fall edition of the Circuit Writer!

One of the highlights of my role as a pastor is the opportunity to travel to parts of the world where important events from our faith tradition occurred.

Of course, Israel comes straight to mind; the place where Jesus walked, healed, performed miracles, died, and rose after three days. Unfortunately, my pilgrimage there was cancelled due to the war. For as much as I was looking forward to it, I found myself grieving as much when the plans fell through.

However, my joyful anticipation has returned as I am leading another pilgrimage in November of next year. This time, it's to England to explore the roots of our Methodist heritage; the hometown where the founders were raised, the college where its small group ministry started, our first purpose-built church and outreach center, and the resting places of our most revered leaders - John, Charles, and Susanna Wesley.

Please consider joining me and Christina to learn about how an entire nation was "strangely warmed" by experiencing God's love and grace in new ways through small groups, field preaching, and life-changing mission work. You'll visit the beautiful English countryside, historic buildings from the Roman era and World War II, and the amazing city of London. See the section within for more details on how to sign up.

Otherwise, I hope that you enjoy yet another Circuit Writer that shares the good news of how Jesus is alive and working through Mattoon First UMC's fellowship, worship, and service.

Be good. Have fun. Stay in love with God.

Pastor Todd Krost

Mattoon FUMC Staff

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Contact any FUMC staff at 217-235-5676

Sanctuary Organist/Classical Pianist:

Dr. Jiafeng Yan

Contemporary Leaders: Nate Huddleston
& Devan Shobe

Contemporary Drummer: Jayden Currie

Choir Accompanist: Melissa Ferguson

Choir Director: Marilyn Fessel

Bell Choir Director: Phyllis Dickinson

Janitor: Brittany Aitken

Send a card to our church members who can't worship with us today!



Let folks know they are loved! Send a card or brief note to some or all listed below.

Here is a list of church family members who

reside in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Those with a * denotes his or her birthday.

If corrections or additions are needed to this list or if we don't have their birthday, contact the church office at mattoonfumc@gmail.com.

Brookstone North: 1920 Brookstone Ln. Mattoon, IL 61938

◆ Merle Lowry, Room 17 *7/10

◆ Butch Ratz *4/12

Brookstone South: 2008 S. 9th St. Mattoon, IL 61938

◆ Phyllis Fuqua, Room 39 *4/26

◆ Ann Lang, Room 41 *5/13

Mattoon Healthcare: 2121 S. 9th Street, Mattoon, IL 61938

◆ John Zachow, Room 202 *4/1

Odd Fellow-Rebekah Home: 201 Lafayette Ave. East, Mattoon, IL 61938

◆ Barb McLain

◆ Phyllis Strong *6/22

◆ Carol Gallner

Copper Creek: 920 Country Club Road, Mattoon, IL 61938

◆ Dodie VanGundy

Charleston Rehab 716 18th St.

Charleston, IL 61920

◆ Illa Paul *9/11

Green Gardens: 601 N. West St. Sullivan, IL 61951

◆ David Champion *12/1

Willowbrook: 100 E. Bohm Ave. Effingham, IL 62401

◆ Donna Warrem *8/3

Home Bound

◆ Lavauhgn Skaggs *6/16

◆ Marilyn McBride

◆ Anita Jones *6/18





- ♦ **If you would like to add a prayer request**, call the church office at 217-235-5676 or e-mail: mattoonfumc@gmail.com
- ♦ **Keep up with the latest events** in the denomination with United Methodist News (umnews.org). To keep up with the latest news and events from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, visit www.igrc.org/current.
- ♦ **The 9 a.m. Traditional Worship** will be audio recorded and available to listen to on the church website for those worshipping at home at: <https://mattoonumc.com/sermons/>
- ♦ **Office hours** are: Thursdays 9-12 & Fridays 9-2.
- ♦ **Pastor Todd's Tuesday morning Bible Study** meets at 10 a.m. in the downstairs worship center. Please join us as we grow together in our hearts and minds!
- ♦ **Thursday Morning Bible Study** is continuing the discussion of The Women of Christmas from now through December 19. Please join us anytime as we learn more about Mary, Elizabeth and Anna, and especially as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus. We meet at 8 A.M. in Room 102 downstairs weekly.
- ♦ **Cross Training Prayer Group** meets weekly for prayer and sharing Wednesdays at 7:00 a.m. at 2620 Western Avenue.
- ♦ **Men's Bible Study** meets 2nd and 4th Saturday at Denny's, 8:30 a.m.
- ♦ **Monthly worship services** are held at Brookstone Estates North on the first Wednesday, Copper Creek Cottages on the second Wednesday, and Brookstone Estates South on the third Wednesday at 10 a.m.
- ♦ **Choir rehearses** every Wednesday at 5:30. Join us!
- **The Youth Group** meets weekly at the church from 5:30-7 every Sunday. Bring a friend!

Upcoming Events

Blue Christmas with Charleston Wesley UMC -

Sunday, December 22 at 6pm at Charleston Wesley UMC

Parsonage Open House - Cookies & Cocoa

Join the Krost family for some holiday cheer
on Saturday, December 14 from 2-4 at the parsonage
3 Western Heights

Christmas Eve Service - @ 7pm





November & December Birthdays

11/3 Joanne Downs	12/1 Peggy Ropiequet
11/6 Beverly Dennis	12/4 Kerry Minor
11/6 Harper Krost	12/7 Michael Lefever
11/6 Ann Livesay	12/8 Scott Mcdevitt
11/19 Muriel Curtis	12/14 Bailee Budde
11/20 Ella Viertel	12/15 Joyce Zachow
11/22 Tim Wheeler	12/18 Mark Richardson
11/28 Randall Ross	12/27 Todd Krost
12/1 David Champion	



Bible studies on the calendar

Men's Bible Study, meets second and fourth Saturdays at 8:30 a.m. at Mattoon Denny's

Pastor's Morning Bible Study, 10 a.m. Tuesday in the Worship Center (except for 3rd Tuesday)

Ladies' Thursday Bible Study, 8 a.m. Room 102, led by Linda Hance.

Sunday School classes offered

Check with your teacher to be certain of time and location your class meets.

Champion Asbury, Room 308, following 9 a.m. worship

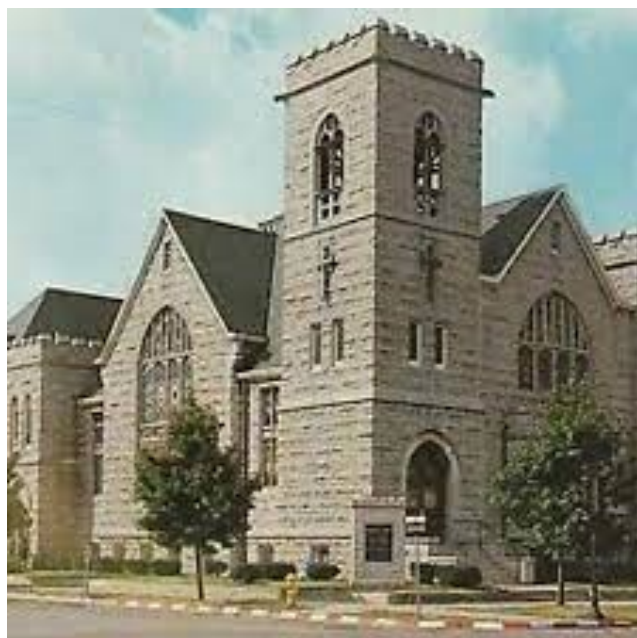
Choice Living, Room 102, following first service

November & December Anniversaries

David & Marilyn Fessel 11/15

Larry & Beverly Dennis 11/26

Bob & Sue Montgomery 11/28



Green Tips

As winter comes, your plants look dead; but **don't deadhead them** or cut them down. Instead allow the seed heads to remain so that birds will have a source of food for the cold months. With spring the perennials will come back, providing a festival of beauty and sustenance for you and for pollinators.

Plug up those sneaky leaky places to stay warm, save money, and cut down emissions. Put your hand near exterior wall outlets, around window frames and doors, next to your chimney. If you feel cold air, repair, caulk, or weather strip. Your response can fix the troubles, cut down your utility bills, and reduce your climate footprint.

According to Science Guy, Bill Nye, "The best way to save the planet isn't necessarily recycling—it's stepping into a voting booth." Recycling is important to do, but greater impact comes from changing laws and policies. **Vote for the planet.** Vote for people who care about God's Creation.

Don't throw away that pumpkin! Cut it into smaller pieces for deer, rabbits, mice, squirrels, and chipmunks to munch on—non-painted pumpkins only. You can harvest the seeds, dry them, and put them in a bird feeder. Or find a local "pumpkin smash" event to have some fun and create healthy soil, too.

-Christina Krost

United Methodist
**Creation
Justice**
tips



Youth Group Great Pumpkin Patch



The youth group took their annual fall outing to the Great Pumpkin Patch in Arthur. They had a blast enjoying pumpkin cider slushes, picking out pumpkins, feeding goats and llamas, and exploring the corn maze.

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)

Youth in Chicago



The youth group had a blast exploring our state's biggest city - Chicago! They rode the METRA commuter train, explored the Shedd Aquarium, Museum of Contemporary Art, walked Michigan Avenue, rode the Navy Pier ferris wheel, cruised the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, and ate Chicago style pizza. What a fun bunch of kids who are always up for an adventure together!



Youth Sunday

The youth group blessed the congregation on Sunday, September 29th by leading the worship service. Natalie Kuhl started the service with an opening prayer. Elliott Burrell led the call to worship. Layla Flack sang with the praise band. Adam Burrell prayed for the offering. Ava Krost read the scripture lesson. Ella Viertel preached an amazing sermon. Lincoln Wheeler delivered the benediction. Way to go, youth group! We love to watch your faith in Christ grow!



Youth Camp

Two youth, Ella Viertel and her friend Amanda, and Pastor Todd attended AIR youth camp at Little Grassy United Methodist Camp south of Carbondale in June.

AIR camp is a powerful week away to explore your faith and explore nature. The campers participated in daily Bible study and devotionals, worship, rest, fellowship, and fun activities like a cardboard boat race, outside hide and go seek at night, a creek stomp, and a banana eating contest.



Raise the Roof Fundraiser

The Youth Group hosted a lasagna lunch fundraiser on Sunday, June 30th to raise money for Negatavah UMC in the Southern Nigeria Annual Conference led by Rev. Ande Emmanuel. The growing congregation is worshipping in a temporary shed that needs repairs as the rainy season approaches. Pastor Todd and Christina met Rev. Ande at General Conference and were impressed with his leadership style and powerful call to serve Jesus in Nigeria. In a show of mutual unity and support through the connection of Jesus Christ, the youth group raised \$1,565!



Vacation Bible School/



Summer vacation Bible school at Charleston Wesley UMC was held in late June with a “Start the Party” theme to celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ. Thank you to everyone at Mattoon First UMC who participated to make this year’s VBS a success. In addition to children who attend with youth and adults who volunteer, our church also provides t-shirts as a memento of an amazing week growing in our faith journey.

Prayer Group



Cross Training Prayer Group, led by Phyllis Dickinson, has resumed meeting for prayer and sharing every Wednesday at 7:00 a.m. at 2620 Western Avenue.

Do you or someone you know need prayer?

Susan Watson and Ardis Larvick also participate in the group, but were not available the day that photos were taken.

**GOD
HEARS
YOUR
PRAYERS**

Meet Bishops Bard and Bigham-Tsai

PAGE 14

The following press release has just been issued by Sara Isbell and Anish Hermon, members of the North Central Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy and Nicole Cox, chair of the IGRC Committee on Episcopacy.

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Great Rivers Committee on the Episcopacy (IGRCOE) is delighted to announce the assignment of TWO new bishops to the IGRC.

Bishop David Bard and Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai will begin their joint episcopacy on September 1, 2024.

Bishop Bard is also assigned to the Michigan Annual Conference (where he has served for the past eight years), and Bishop Bigham-Tsai is also assigned to Iowa (where she has served for the past two). Both bishops are tremendously gifted leaders, deeply spiritual, and bring contagious joy and energy to their ministries.

The assignments were announced on Saturday, July 13, at the North Central Jurisdictional Conference in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, by Rev. Sara Isbell (Bloomington Wesley UMC).

“While we know and trust that Bishop Bigham-Tsai and Bishop Bard will be able to discern the balance of their ministry in Illinois Great Rivers over the quadrennium, we anticipate that Bishop Bard will have primary responsibility for our conference over the first two years, and Bishop Bigham-Tsai will have primary responsibility during the last two years,” she informed the Conference.

It should be noted that both bishops will actively serve for the next four years; the balance of duties may shift, but not the shared assignment. Bishop Bard’s focus will likely include finishing up the gracious exit process for congregations wishing to depart the UMC, while Bishop Bigham-Tsai will have the opportunity to pave the way for a shared episcopal area with Iowa.

Bishop David Alan Bard was elected a bishop in 2016 at the North Central Jurisdictional Conference in Peoria, Illinois and has served since as bishop of the Michigan Area. He also served as interim bishop of the Minnesota Conference in 2021-2022. Bishop Bard explains that among the most important roles for a bishop, and one he attends to thoughtfully, prayerfully, relationally and carefully is helping create a culture for an annual conference. As a group of Jesus followers in the Wesleyan tradition, our annual conferences should be places where the love of God in Jesus is evident, where we are deeply hopeful, trusting that the Spirit of God continues to work in us and through us, where we long to work together for personal and social transformation, where there is graciousness and spaciousness, and where there his joy for the journey. “Bishops,” he says, “help shape the culture of a conference through the relationships they develop, particularly with leaders, through the appointments they make, through their preaching and presiding.”

(continued on next page)...



"This new episcopal arrangement, which creatively extends itineracy," Bishop Bard adds, "provides us with a unique opportunity to experiment with new ways of providing leadership. This is an adventure in the Holy Spirit, and just as circuit riders went out into new areas, not always certain what they might find, so we are venturing forth into new territory, where we will draw the map as we travel. We go remembering the final words of John Wesley, 'the best of all is God is with us.' We travel together in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference trusting that among all our great rivers we will also discover in new ways the healing and renewing river, the streams of which make glad the city of God."

Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai was elected on the first ballot at the North Central Jurisdictional Conference of 2022, and has served in Iowa since that time. She has worked within annual conferences, our jurisdiction and throughout the whole church on justice and equity issues, including with groups such as Black Clergywomen of the United Methodist Church, Black Methodists for Church Renewal, and the Methodist Federation for Social Action.

"I bring a strategic mind, a deep passion for equity and justice for all people, and a commitment to building what the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King called the Beloved Community," said Bishop Bigham-Tsai. She also has a passion for leading change to help local churches grow in their vitality and impact, and is particularly skilled at 'adaptive leadership', a style of leadership that looks at the systemic and emotional barriers to change.

"I am very excited to bring my gifts to the IGRC," she says, "and to work with my colleague Bishop David Bard to help the IGRC live into its mission and vision. Bishop Bard and I will build upon the good work already done by Bishop Frank Beard and the clergy and laity of the IGRC. I am excited to see what God will do through all of us."

Bishop Frank Beard, who has shepherded the Illinois Great Rivers Conference faithfully since 2016, begins a Long-Term Disability Leave on August 1, 2024. The gap between his departure August 1 and the arrival of Bishops Bard and Bigham-Tsai September 1 will be covered by the NCJ College of Bishops, including retired Bishop John Hopkins, who will be on-call for the first two weeks of August.

Any inquiries or requests of the Episcopal Office in IGRC may be made through the Bishops' Executive Assistant, Rev. Dr. Charliam Renner (crenner@igrc.org).

The North Central Jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy is composed of one lay, and one clergy member from each Annual Conference in the Jurisdiction (Dakotas, Illinois Great Rivers, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Northern Illinois, East Ohio, West Ohio, and Wisconsin). The Committee meets at least twice a year to support, assess, evaluate, and make episcopal assignments for the Jurisdiction. IGRC's representatives to the NCJCOE are Rev. Sara Isbell (sisbell@wesley-umc.com) and Anish Hermon (ahermon@gmail.com). Rev. Nicole Cox (Willow Hill UMC) chairs the IGRC Episcopacy Committee (jonicolecox@gmail.com). Please feel free to contact any of the three about our new assignment.

Anish Hermon shared his enthusiasm for the arrival of our two new bishops. "I was excited by the possibilities when we made this creative assignment," he said. "As we move further from the conclusion of NCJCOE's work, my excitement continues to grow. The gifts and graces of our two new dynamic leaders complement each other and will drive us forward with strength and vision."



Pollinator Pocket



The youth group pollinator pocket is coming to life! It serves as a comfortable home for many native plants and insects - especially Monarch butterflies. The youth group has been tending its pollinator pocket and has counted over thirty monarch caterpillars this season.

Annual Conference



The annual conference session of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference was held in June in downtown Peoria with a theme *Our Time to Dance*. The purpose of the annual conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church. The annual conference consists of clergy and lay members. Clergy membership consists of deacons and elders in full connection, probationary members, associate members, affiliate members and local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment to a pastoral charge. This year delegation from Mattoon First UMC was David Viertel, Julie Viertel, Ella Viertel, Christina Krost, and Pastor Todd.



Bishops Installation



Bishops David Alan Bard and Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai were installed as presiding bishops of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference on Saturday, Sept. 28, 2:30 p.m. at Normal Calvary UMC. Both bishops will begin serving the Illinois Area on Sept. 1. The Installation Service was a worship experience with both bishops preaching.

Our own Harper Krost, and her friend Sofia Baldyga (daughter of Pana UMC pastor, Jessica Baldyga) participated in the ceremony by giving each bishop a Bible.

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins".

1 Peter 4:8

Thank you Brock, Chad, Mike, and Vicki Budde for serving a hot breakfast at The Haven in August.

On the third Saturday of each month, volunteers from our church serve a warm breakfast to Haven residents as an outreach ministry. This growing mission project is becoming a vital part of our congregation's regular walk with Christ.



Haven Breakfasts

United Women in Faith Garden Walk



Fruitland UMC's experiment with free preschool pays off

09/16/2024

Between 2017 and 2020 public school teachers became aware that demographics in Fruitland, Idaho, were changing. There were an increasing number of low-income families.

The parents tended to be younger, were often poorly educated, and unemployed or working at low wage jobs. Many were single parents, just trying to get by. They did not have books, or print of any kind in their homes, and thus they didn't read to their kids. Plus, they were of the generation so attuned to social media and gaming that there were few family conversations.

The kindergarten teachers were noticing especially low vocabulary and language skills, in addition to poor motor skills and struggles with attentiveness and with learning school routines and behavior. Test scores were low and the same kids were behind the rest of the class as they went through the grades year after year. This slowed the pace of every class in the primary grades.

Private preschools charged \$150 per month, which was way beyond many budgets. With no Head Start program in town and no preschool in the public school, low-income families in Fruitland were left without an affordable preschool for their children.

Holly Hutchinson, a retired kindergarten teacher and member of the Fruitland United Methodist Church, was well aware of the challenges low-income children faced when coming to school. She led the congregation in learning about the needs, and in dreaming about filling that gap with a free preschool that could be held in the unused church basement. Hutchinson wrote grants, but they weren't enough. In November, 2020, when the church was not able to hold in-person worship due to Covid, a member of the Fruitland congregation gave a large, undesignated offering. Wanting the money to have an impact in the community, the church council authorized using half of it to underwrite two years of a zero-cost preschool to open in the fall of 2021 for low-income families.

Hutchinson recruited another recently retired public school teacher as a partner, ordered a sign and began advertising for students. The Circle of Friends was formed. Using the grant money combined with the church's contribution and contributions from private donors, the two teachers were able to extend the two-year preschool to a full three years.

"We teachers see that students who attended the Circle of Friends are at an economic disadvantage, but in most cases they are right on target academically. They recognize each other, which helps with their social skills on day one," said Wren Garcia, another kindergarten teacher in the congregation. "I have a student this year who came from the Circle of Friends. He had quite a speech articulation delay, but because of early identification by Holly, he's already been identified on an IEP getting speech therapy that began the first week of school."

When the Circle of Friends Preschool closed in May 2024, it had served 62 children and their families in the Fruitland area.



Oregon-Idaho Conference of the United Methodist Church

Greater Northwest Area


Praise Band




The contemporary praise band is an important part of the 10:30 contemporary worship service. It is led by Nate Huddleston who plays the guitar and piano. Jayden Currie plays the drums. Adam Flack plays bass guitar. Devan Shobe sings. What blessing it is that our church offers such a diverse range of music on Sunday mornings.



www.EO.travel/efrip Tour = HE25 Date = 110525 Code = A ID = 58232








Join Rev. Todd & Christina Krost


WESLEY HERITAGE TOUR


November 5 - 13, 2025















Rev. Todd & Christina Krost


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Join Pastor Todd and Christina for the trip of a lifetime to England in November 2025! Experience the best culture and history that this country has to offer in its beautiful countryside and magnificent cities. Most importantly, visit and learn first-hand about where the Methodist movement started in the eighteenth century led by brothers John and Charles Wesley. You'll tour Epworth, the Wesley's home town; Oxford, where the young Wesley brothers began their ministries; the New Room and Charles Wesley's grave in Bristol; Aldersgate, where their hearts were "strangely warmed"; and central London, where John and his mother, Susanna, are laid to rest. Bring a companion for a journey you will never forget!

Fireworks 2024

Melissa and Steve Ferguson hosted church members at their home for the Independence Day fireworks display at the airport. This intergenerational event is always a special time of celebrating our freedoms and joining together for a time of excellent food and fellowship.

