

The Chimes

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

JULY 2017

A warm hello

Hello Wesley! I am your new pastor, Jeremiah Thompson. My family and I are very excited to have moved here to Sterling, and we look forward to being in ministry with you and living with you in the years to come. I've been asked to share a bit about myself, and so I'd like you to know more about me and our family.

Megan and I married Jan. 4, 2008. We met while attending seminary together at Boston University. Megan is, like me, an elder ordained in the United Methodist Church, and she will be the new pastor at Creston and Steward United Methodist churches. Since she also is a full-time pastor, you might not see her very often, but we hope through pulpit exchanges and other church events to give you an opportunity to meet and get to know her. It is a profound blessing to be a clergy couple, and she and I with God's guidance help each other grow as pastors.

We have two children, Abiella, 6, who will be starting first grade, and

Owen, 2. Abiella was born Dec. 23, 2010. She's very active, creative, and talkative. She hopes to get involved in soccer and tumbling here in Sterling. You will see her with me many Sundays. Owen is curious and busy, always learning and exploring. He will be with me almost every Sunday, too. We are excited and thankful for all the opportunities Sterling offers for our kids, in terms of activities and the cultural diversity of the schools. Thank you for all the love you've shown our kids already; it means a great deal to us!

I have been in full-time ministry for 10 years. I am a preacher kid: My father served in full-time ministry for many years in central Illinois; he and my mom live in Kankakee. We lived in a few communities growing up, but I graduated from Kankakee High School, so I consider that my hometown. I graduated from the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in history and religion, and I have a master's degree in social science history from the University of Chicago. I grew up in

Church Events

- **July 6 - Greeting card ministry - 9:30 a.m.**
- **July 12 - Women's breakfast (Benny's) - 8:30 a.m.**
- **July 21 - Ladies' luncheon (Krumpet's, Fulton) - 11 a.m.**
- **July 22 - Parents' Night Out - 5:30-8:30 p.m.**
- **July 25 - Prayer shawl ministry - 1 p.m.**
- **July 25 - Administrative Council meeting - 6:30 p.m.**
- **July 26 - Missions Team meeting - 5 p.m.**
- **Saturdays - Men's Bible study - 8 a.m.**

Upcoming worship

- July 2: Grace! Romans 8:31-32, 35, 37-39
Theme: God gives loves and grace to all through Jesus, no matter what
- July 9: Compassion! Matthew 25:31-46
Theme: God loves us, and God expects us to do likewise
- July 16: Peace! Luke 10:25-37
Theme: God's love breaks down barriers between people
- July 23: Justice! Micah 6:6-8, Amos 5:21-24

Theme: God seeks to change our world, and we as Christians are called to not just consider our personal salvation, but the remaking of creation

- July 30: Evangelism! Matthew 28:18-20
Theme: If you are changed by your relationship with God through Jesus, share the good news with others looking for change as well

So long, farewell

Strong and courageous, whatever we face. Believe and take a leap of faith!

--"Leap of Faith", Hero Central! Vacation Bible School

My daughters, Anna and Elise, have been singing these words for two weeks now. They are fitting, not only for teaching children about faith and the strength we receive from God and with which we can face the ordinary or even the extraordinary; but also for reminding adults that God is with us in times of change and uncertainty.

I wept as I stood in the middle aisle of the sanctuary on the final day of Vacation Bible School and listened to my children -- and the dozens of others around them -- sing these words with such exuberance and conviction. I was moved by so much in that moment, but above all, I cried because God was telling me that we are strong and brave and supported and loved as we take this leap of faith.

As many of you know, my husband, Christopher, took a job as news editor at the Daily Chronicle in DeKalb in April; he has been commuting for 12 long weeks -- at first, as we felt out whether the job was a good fit for him and for our life as a family, and since, as we have worked to relocate our family to a new city.

I hesitated to tell Pastor Wesley or anyone else, for that matter, that I would be resigning my position as administrative assistant, because I simply did not know for sure that we would be relocating to DeKalb; there were so many question marks, and we had several weeks to figure it all out.

And then everything snapped into place. And so, I finally had to set the date -- my last day at this church that has so lovingly wrapped its arms around me and my husband and my sweet little girls.

I wasn't going to write anything for The Chimes upon my departure. I didn't want to draw attention to myself, and honestly, I didn't want to put salt in the wound. I've been somewhat in denial that we really are leaving Sterling, this small town, where we have made a home, where we raised our daughters and sent them off to preschool, where we have made a mark on the community, where we have built a network of friends, who are more like family. I'm sobbing now; I'm sure it will progress to ugly crying when we pull away in the moving truck Saturday.

But I had to say *something*. I had to say thank you.

Thank you, Wesley United Methodist Church, for bringing me and my family into your homes and your hearts. Thank you for feeding us, physically and spiritually. Thank you for caring for us--especially for our daughters. Thank you for your love and support and prayers as we have made this transition to our new life, away from here.

A special note of thanks to Pastor Wes, the leaders of the church, and all of you whom I had the pleasure of serving: Thank you for

Thank You!

Thank you so much for your utmost support of Vacation Bible School this year. We had a total of 113 students and about 60 volunteers, not to mention all of you who donated items for the week. With your help we raised \$1,142.41 for the Sterling Buddy Bags program, which helps provide food for children over the weekend when they might not otherwise have enough to eat.

Our main Bible verse was "Do good! Seek peace and go after it!" (Psalms 34:14b) Through this verse and Bible stories, the students learned how to have heart, courage, wisdom, hope, and power. The point of Hero Central was to teach students to discover their strength in God, explore God's mission for their lives, encounter epic adventures alongside biblical heroes, and realize qualities that make them true heroes of God.

We could not have pulled off this fabulous week without your help. Thank you again to everyone who helped, donated, and prayed for us. It was a fabulous week where God showered us and others with his blessings!

In Christ,
Wendy Fitzanko

Thank you to all who helped with Feed the Children. With your donations, we were able to give children a choice of peanut butter and jelly or bologna and cheese sandwiches. We also had watermelon or grapes each day. We averaged 101 lunches a day. We had a good time doing it. See you next year!

Beth Mathew

your love and appreciation of me and my role in the church. I have never in my life had a job where my work was so deeply and honestly appreciated.

It has been a true privilege and one of my greatest joys to serve you for the last 2 ½ years. May God bless you. And may he richly bless this church.

Strong and courageous, whatever we face. Believe and take a leap of faith!

With sincerest love and appreciation,

Kayla

Nice to meet you

the church and felt a call to ministry in my teens, but didn't answer the call until my early 20s, while I was serving as a US-2 Missionary with the United Methodist Church. As a missionary, I was in ministries of social justice and community building, and that was a very formative time in my life. From those years, I developed a deep commitment to seeking to improve our world and communities and helping those who are on the margins of society.

I attended Boston University School of Theology from 2004 to 2007. While there, I got to serve a cross-cultural student ministry appointment with Union United Methodist Church. That really helped me grow in my worship leadership, and to more deeply understand joy and celebration as part of worship. I also learned much from being in a congregation where my cultural background wasn't that of the majority of the congregation.

I served as an associate pastor in Mahomet from 2007 to 2013, and as the pastor in Farmer City and Weedman from 2013 until last month. My ministry and gifts have focused on preaching, teaching, encouraging spiritual development, working with people of all ages, youth ministry, and social justice.

Megan is from Wisconsin, and as I mentioned earlier, my parents live in Kankakee. We had for several years hoped to be appointed to the Northern Illinois Conference, as it would allow us to be relatively close to both of our families. We were excited that Bishop Sally Dyck asked us to serve in this conference, and that Bishop Frank Beard allowed us to take the appointments.

I don't want you to think I am all work and no play. I am an avid board gamer and enjoy podcasts and video games. I am a sometime runner; I love walking and enjoy bird identification. I enjoy trivia competitions. Megan and I are avid travelers, and we love food. I enjoy music of many styles, and I am a big sports fan of the Bears, Cubs, Bulls, and the University of Illinois.

As the pastor here, I want to help you grow in your relationship with Christ. I love the metaphor of the Christian life as a journey. I believe we all have much to teach each other as God's Holy Spirit works through each of us. We are called to be a community, but also to go out and transform our world for the better in Jesus' name and with the Holy Spirit's guidance. I hope to help people see how God has gifted them to serve Jesus, and to help people find ways to use those gifts to help others.

I have been in prayer for our congregation; I ask you to also pray for our church in this time of transition. May the Holy Spirit guide us to a time of continued growth, and show us how we can bless this community in Jesus' name.

Sincerely,
Pastor Jeremiah

Parents' Night Out

Save the date for our next Parents' Night Out: Saturday, July 22.

You are invited to take a night out, while your church family takes care of your children from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Children from infants through fifth-graders are invited to eat supper, then participate in indoor and outdoor games, snack-making, and storytelling.

Sign up on the poster in the fellowship hall by July 16.

Vacation Bible School

Hero Central! Vacation Bible School was a rousing success! We saw 113 students over the course of the five days, with an average daily attendance of 88 students, and together with the congregation, we raised \$1,142.41 for the Sterling Buddy Bags program.



Servers for July - 8 a.m.

Greeters

July 2 Bill and Peg Burke



July 9

July 16 Randy and Debby Smith



July 23

July 30

Ushers

Renee Duncan,
Amy Poci



Liturgist

Seth Faber

Jan Glover

Jean Moe

Rory Smith

Rory Smith

Coffee Hosts

July 2 Frank Rausa, Janne Severson

July 9 Marc and Cindy Melton

July 16 Kevin Gabrielse family

July 23 Beth Jacobs, Andy and Nancy Pitsch

July 30 Dave and Roberta Fredericks

Servers for July - 10 a.m.

Greeters

July 2 Andy and Nancy Pitsch



July 9

July 16 Bruce and Debbie Kramer

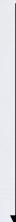
July 23 Katie Spangler and Michael Henrekin



July 30

Ushers

Bob Allen family



Liturgist

Nancy Pitsch

Elisa Gatz

Bruce Kramer

Mary Spitzer

Mary Spitzer

Acolytes

July 2 James Morris

July 9 Logan Ayala, Lenna Drew

July 16 James Morris

July 23 Logan Ayala, Lenna Drew

July 30 James Morris

Birthdays

July 3 - Haley Ceruzzi, Jeff Davey, Sharon Siex

July 5 - Sue Hondley, Virginia Schoenhaar, Stacey Wendelken

July 6 - Vinnie Poci

July 9 - Sydney Graves

June 10 - Rose Jacobs

July 11 - Sandi Cox, JoAnn Lyon

July 13 - Andrea Mallhi

July 14 - Nathan Blackburn

July 15 - Roger Jacobs, Jack Osborn

July 16 - Sharon Prichard

July 19 - Pam Clodfelter, Steve Downes

July 23 - Tim Schwingle

July 24 - Sadie Wendelken

July 25 - Gretchen Brown, Meghan Clodfelter

July 26 - Beth Jacobs, Darla

Stigall

July 27 - Allison Valenzuela

July 31 - Dayton Hayes

Anniversaries

July 7 - Denver and Sharon Wasson

July 12 - James and Wendy Fitzranko

July 14 - Ed and Jan Andersen

July 22 - Fred and Renee Duncan

July 23 - Darroll and Jeanette Erickson

Deaths

June 10 - Gwendolyn "Tommie" Powers

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Open Heart, Open Minds, Open Doors

You are invited to join us for worship Sundays at 8 and 10 a.m. with Sunday School and fellowship at 9 a.m.

Mission Corner

Wesley has always been a mission-minded church. The purpose of this space is to keep the congregation informed of our various mission efforts.

We currently are receiving:

- Donations of bedding, small appliances, and other **household items** to support Trinity UMC and the VA Clinic/Valor Program, as they work to find homes for local veterans. A list of needed items is on the table in the fellowship hall.
- **Laundry detergent** for the Trinity Pantry, Rock Falls UMC Personal Care Pantry, and the FISH Food Pantry.

- **Travel-sized toiletries** for the Trinity and FISH pantries.
- **Loose coins** to benefit the Martin Keagy Fund, through the Northern Illinois Conference, which supports small-town and rural churches