

# Newsletter

Arkansas City



January 2024

## 2024, The Year of Discernment and Decision

The turn of the calendar each year always puts us in a reflective mood. We look back on 2023. How did it go? Did I accomplish my goals? Did at least some of my desires come to pass? Was it a good year, all things considered? And how about 2024? What do I see coming? What excites me about the new year? What worries me?

Sometimes organizations label a year as the “Year of...” and then fill in the blank with a clever name. The Chinese may be the most famous for this practice. In Christian terms, each year is AD, *anno Domini*, the year of our Lord. It’s a good reminder. It prompts us to think about what our Lord is calling us to do in 2024. And it’s the focus of my pastoral thoughts to you in this month’s column.

I am convinced that 2024 is a year of discernment and decision. We’ve been through big changes since 2020, with COVID and the merger of the two congregations. They easily dominate our memories, but the truth is, momentous changes have been happening slowly, incrementally, for decades. Arkansas City as a community has seen several big changes since the late ‘90s, and some of them have been unhappy: the loss of jobs and the loss of population, to name only two. Our churches have been affected and, now that we are one, our church has been affected.

But we are not spectators. We are participants. We can make a difference, a big one.

So, we need to think together. I’m asking us, as a congregation, to make 2024 the year of discernment and decision. We need a good, thorough grasp on the challenges we face. We need to be realistic. We need a vision, and it needs to be, as some people occasionally say, “a God-sized vision.” It needs to match who we are in Christ and to aim at what he is calling us to do.

Let’s take a risk, therefore, and try to imagine our congregation 20 or 30 years from now. What will we look like? What will be our make-up? How big (number of people) will we be? What will we be giving to our community and beyond? What kind of facilities will we have to accommodate our work?

It’s my job as pastor to help lead the discernment process, but I emphasize the word “help.” To *help* lead. The church belongs to Jesus Christ, so he is the ultimate leader, and ACUMC has a team of leaders. And leaders lead, together. Christ empowers and guides leaders. Leaders bring their thoughts, their hearts, their faith, their persistence, their gifts, their energies, to the work Christ is calling us to do.

I’m asking you to take up the challenge of 2024 with me. God is calling for discernment and decision. Careful, realistic, hopeful discernment. And wise, Spirit-led, courageous decision. Let’s get to work.

*From Pastor Steve’s Desk*



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

News .....	2
Special Events .....	3
Ministry Reports .....	4
In Memoriam .....	4
Events Calendar .....	5
Birthdays and Anniversaries .....	6

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Cards of Thanks
- Kid’s Club and Youth Group
- Read the Bible in a year with your church family.

## IT'S UP!

[The following article is reprinted from the September 2023 Newsletter. The new Cross and Flame emblem is up!]

The sign of the Cross and Flame was accepted in 1969 as the official insignia of the United Methodist Church representing the Trinity. God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son is represented by the Cross itself, and the Flame represents the Holy Spirit.

The flame is a reminder of Pentecost when witnesses were unified by the power of the Holy Spirit and saw "tongues, as of fire," Acts 2:3.

The use of this insignia had several important beginnings. One was when the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged with The Methodist Church in 1968 to form The United Methodist

Church. Since that time, many replicas of this exact design have been used to represent The United Methodist Church.

Regarding the newly completed Cross and Flame constructed for the Edgemont location, it began in 2003 with the use of a pattern drawn to scale on Butcher paper and a vision by members of the Adult Sunday School Class. The goal continues to be to enhance the outreach and visibility of the church as a welcoming place to worship and serve our Lord, Jesus Christ. Within the last 17 years there have been many church members, community residents, and business people who have donated their talents and time to make this project a reality. Well over 50 people, from Arkansas City, Wichita, and Eudora have been instrumental in the completion and erection of this Trinity Cross and Flame.

A more detailed history, from conception to completion, will soon to be available. It includes the people who have persevered to complete this project in spite of delays and obstacles. Noted also will be some miraculous events which were experienced throughout these 17 years by many of those who have been involved.

~ Elrea Mullen



## Cards of Thanks

*Thank you so much for the very thoughtful cards. We love seeing all the signatures.  
Don and Ann Hastings*

*Thank you so much for allowing us to use your facility for our event. We look forward to working with you in the future.*

*Sincerely,  
2nd Chance Group of  
Narcotics Anonymous*

*Dear Ark City United Methodist Church,  
Thank you so much for blessing us with the opportunity to choose from and borrow your costumes for the Live Nativity. They were put to good use.*

*We had 175 total vehicles for the weekend drive thru the Live Nativity, 75 Friday night and 100 Saturday night. You were a vital part to our success.*

*We also really appreciate the hot chocolate you donated. Thank you for your support.*

*The sets are saved to go again next year. We would love to have your help.*

*Sincerely,  
Arlene Johnson (Bible Christian Church)*

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Kid's Club and Youth Group

The fall semester for Wednesday evening Kid's Club and Youth Group ended with cookie decorating and games at the St. Paul campus. Twenty-two children, youth, and sponsors slathered on frosting, "glued" on sugary edibles, and no doubt sampled some of their creations before pitting Hungry Hippos against Hungry Hippos and each other in Jenga and other feats of skill.



## LOCAL SERVICES

### MEALS

Mondays—Northside Baptist Church; 5:30-6 p.m.  
Wednesdays—Arkansas City United Methodist Church St. Paul Campus; 5:30 p.m.  
Thursdays—Shepherd's Grace 5-6 p.m.

### OTHER FOOD

Food Pantry, First Assembly of God Church  
Manna Ministries, First Baptist Church

### BLESSING BOXES

Central Christian Church  
Arkansas City United Methodist Church, Edgemont and St. Paul campuses  
Hog Mob Ministries  
Shepherd's Grace Church  
Trinity Episcopal Church  
West Kansas Avenue Church of God

### HOUSEHOLD

Angels in the Attic Thrift Store  
Cowley County Outreach—Angel's Closet  
Community Laundry Resource Service

### CLOTHING

Rooted Women's Ministry  
AC NAZ Free Clothes Closet

### LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES

Inside City Hall  
Inside Northwest Community Center  
Pershing Park  
Ark City United Methodist Church  
St. Paul Campus  
Wilson Park

### FAMILY LIFE SERVICES

305 S. Summit

### SHELTER

Arkansas City Ministerial Alliance  
(620) 393-0060

Winfield House of Hope  
(620) 983-6464  
[cowleyhouseofhope@gmail.com](mailto:cowleyhouseofhope@gmail.com)

### TRANSPORTATION

Twin Rivers General Public Transportation (620) 442-3575 or (620) 221-6140  
General Public Transportation: (620) 221-7020

*Check flyers posted on church bulletin boards for details.*

*Let us pray for each other. Contact Pam Archer at (620) 446-2456 or at [parcher@cox.net](mailto:parcher@cox.net) to add your request to the prayer chain. Let Pam know if you'd like to receive the e-mail list as a reminder to pray.*

## IN MEMORIAM

**Gilbert Estep** died Nov. 7, 2023. Survivors include his son, Lloyd “Kent” Estep; daughter, Susan Janeen Anderson and husband, Timothy; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family.

**Victor Calcote** died Nov. 8, 2023. He is survived by his wife, Eileen; daughters Teri Jo Schultz and Tracy Jeanne Eicher; brother Ron; sisters Elrea Mullen and Katrina Tamsen; seven grandchildren; one great-grandson; and numerous nieces and nephews.

**Bonnie Fair** died Dec. 9, 2023. Survivors include her children, Cheryl Wilson and husband, Bert; Brenda Lenninger and husband, Dan; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews; and her caregiver, Patti “Tootie” Walker.

If you are unable to attend church on Sundays, search for Ark City UMC on Facebook and worship with us Sundays at 10 a.m.



## FINANCE REPORT

November 2023		2023 through November	
Income	\$ 11,586		\$240,396
Expenses	17,218		246,446

## SHARE MEALS SERVED

Monthly Totals			
Jan	318	Jul	374
Feb	334	Aug	487
Mar	407	Sep	503
Apr	326	Oct	520
May	446	Nov	478
Jun	397	Dec	348

## READING THE BIBLE TOGETHER IN 2024



Growing in knowledge and gaining confidence in reading the Bible is an emphasis for the Ark City United Methodist Church in 2024. Join your church family by committing to read daily. If you are able, install the YouVersion Bible app on your phone or tablet, and sign up for the plan called Bible in a Year: 365-Day Reading Plan. We’re starting on January 1!

## e·piph·a·ny

[e' pifənē]

NOUN

the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi (Matthew 2:1–12).

- the festival commemorating the Epiphany on January 6:  
"many submerge themselves in ice water to celebrate Epiphany"
- a manifestation of a divine or supernatural being:  
"many believe this scene to represent an epiphany of the goddess"
- a moment of sudden revelation or insight:  
"a few years ago, I had an epiphany"

JANUARY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	F/S
	1 <i>Happy New Year!</i>  7:00 pm Small Group	2  10:30 am Seeking Sisters	3 5:00 pm Church Un-Decorating 5:00 pm Prayer + 5:30 pm SHARE Meal @ St. Paul; 5:30 Handbells 6:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Scouts	4  5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	5/6   Epiphany
7 8:30 am Adult Sunday School; Disciple 8:30 am MS Bible Study 9:30 am Fellowship Coffee 10:00 am Worship, Communion Sunday 11:15 am Communion Delivered to shut-ins 6:00 pm Faithbuilders	8  6:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Small Group	9	10 5:00 pm Prayer + 5:30 pm SHARE Meal @ St. Paul; 5:30 Handbells 6:00 pm Kid's Club/Youth Group 6:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Scouts	11  5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	12/13
14  8:30 am Adult Sunday School; Disciple 8:30 am MS Bible Study 9:30 am Fellowship Coffee 10:00 am Worship; Bucket Sunday 11:15 am Safety Meeting 6:00 pm Faithbuilders	15  6:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Small Group	16  10:30 am Seeking Sisters	17 1:30 UWF 5:00 pm Prayer + 5:30 pm SHARE Meal @ St. Paul; 5:30 Handbells 6:00 pm Kid's Club/Youth Group 6:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Scouts	18  5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	19/20  Boy Scouts Pinewood Derby
21 8:30 am Adult Sunday School; Disciple 8:30 am MS Bible Study 9:30 am Fellowship Coffee 10:00 am Worship 11:15 am Fellowship Meal 12:15 Finance Trustees 6:00 pm Faithbuilders	22  6:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Small Group	23	24 5:00 pm Prayer + 5:30 pm SHARE Meal @ St. Paul; 5:30 Handbells 6:00 pm Kid's Club/Youth Group 6:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Scouts	25  5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Boy Scouts 7:00 SMP Live	26/27
28 8:30 am Adult Sunday School; Disciple 8:30 am MS Bible Study 9:30 am Fellowship Coffee 10:00 am Worship 11:15 Administrative Council 6:00 pm Faithbuilders	29  6:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Small Group	30	31 5:00 pm Prayer + 5:30 pm SHARE Meal @ St. Paul; 5:30 Handbells 6:00 pm Kid's Club/Youth Group 6:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Scouts		

**ARKANSAS CITY  
UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH**

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

Our vision is to help people become deeply committed Christians who live authentic lives modeled after Jesus Christ to make a difference in our community and the world.

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**

Jan. 2	Kieren Sullivan	Jan. 16	Debbie Collingsworth
Jan. 3	Sylvia McAlister	Jan. 16	Jeri Crumbliss
Jan. 4	Halle Bucher	Jan. 17	James Sherman
Jan. 5	Marcia Musson	Jan. 17	Deuane Wells
Jan. 5	Nicholas and Alyce Anzelmo	Jan. 18	Jack Crumbliss
Jan. 6	Rosemary Simmons	Jan. 18	Lisa Kerbo
Jan. 7	Penny Harrill	Jan. 19	Betty Rhodes
Jan. 8	Max Utt	Jan. 21	JO Brown
Jan. 8	Steve and Lynda Arnett	Jan. 21	Valerie Call
Jan. 9	Pamela Archer	Jan. 25	Monte Evinger
Jan. 9	Trevor Drake	Jan. 25	Linda Neal
Jan. 10	Billie Vining	Jan. 26	Lucy Daniel
Jan. 10	Mandi Monroe	Jan. 27	Steve Arnett
Jan. 10	Axel Young	Jan. 28	Josh Phillips
Jan. 11	Kirby Neal	Jan. 28	Justin Phillips
Jan. 13	Everett Green	Jan. 28	Hadley Smyer
Jan. 13	Shirley Griffin	Jan. 29	Joni Rankin
Jan. 13	Dawn Metzinger	Jan. 29	Ray and Merylene Wentworth
Jan. 15	Madison Oak	Jan. 31	Stacy Pike
Jan. 15	Melody Drake		

**CONTACT US**

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PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE