



December 29, 2023

**Glorify God  
By  
Connecting People  
With  
Jesus Christ  
Through  
Spiritual Nourishment  
And  
Dynamic Outreach**



**FIRST UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH OF FRANKFORT**

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# CAPITAL CITY METHODIST

## The Church as Guest (or, “What should the church do...?”)

Dear First Friends,

Preacher, speaker, teacher, writer, and activist the Rev. Jacqui Lewis said (in a presentation I heard live in Kansas City this past fall), “**Outside on the way home from church are our people.**” That was worth writing down in my little book where I write things down. Which is how it ended up in this article.

In their book *Leading Faithful Innovation: Following God into a Hopeful Future* (2023, Fortress Press), Dwight Zscheile, Michael Binder, and Tessa Pinkstaff tell us that “increasing numbers of people are pursuing their spiritual journeys outside the walls of churches, synagogues, mosques, or other religious institutions. The vast majority of these people are not atheists (in the United States, for instance, only 4 percent of the population identifies as atheists and 5 percent as agnostics). Yet the religiously unaffiliated—the so-called nones—are now almost a third of the American population. This vast category is largely composed of people who are detached from religion but who are not actively opposed to faith. Their longings and losses could be addressed by what faith in Jesus offers.” (p. 21)

Further, they state, “many people who consider themselves Christian (and identify as such on religious affiliation surveys) find themselves outside of the institutional church too. Many can’t find a congregation to join where they feel they belong or can engage meaningfully. Of those who attend church only a few times each year, nearly 40 percent say they don’t go more often because they practice their faith in other ways. **Religious faith is increasingly moving outside the walls of the church.**” (p. 21)

Michael Adam Beck, who preaches and also does a whole lot of other things that I don’t do (yes, I heard him in Kansas City as well!) offers four possible answers to the question: What should the church do (in the face of the current reality)?

Option 1: Pray and Wait (hint: not the best idea)

Option 2: Attractional Model

(try every trick in the book to get people to come to us)

Option 3: Engaged Model (get “out there” to try to get people “in here”)

Option 4: Incarnational Model (go out to where people are—“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.”—John 1:14, *The Message*)

We’ll be talking about all of this some more on Sundays in January. For the time being, let me simply say that when we begin to embrace Option 4, **the church becomes the guest rather than the host.** (For kicks, read the book of Acts for a hint of what that looks like.) In other words, rather than expecting people to come into our building and do the things we do the way we do them, we humbly move outside the walls of “church” to where people are, listen to them, and try something new based on God’s leading. (Spoiler alert: God’s leading is where we’ll start on January 7!).

There are a lot of ways to do this, but I’m running out of space, and I don’t really know what they are yet anyway. That’s where y’all will come in.

In the meantime, Zscheile, Binder, and Pinkstaff assert, “Following the Holy Spirit means we might not know where we’re going, but we must make a move to discover the next step. We must trust our ability to sense God’s leading. We might be surprised what God has in store for us.” (p. 6)

(By the way, **Jesus was virtually always a guest rather than a host.** In other words, he knows how to do this!)

Faithfully yours,  
*Pastor Tom*



## A BIG Thank You from The GAP Team!

As winter approaches, the *God Answers Prayer (GAP) Through Compassionate People* ministry has been blessed by the generosity of our congregation.

The Upper Room Sunday School class sponsored a Kroger card drive and we are grateful beyond words for the out-pouring of assistance to our homeless neighbors. These Kroger cards, in \$20 increments, provide both food and gas to individuals who are desperate. They compliment other resources available within our community and allow those who struggle to survive.

We've received generous donations of knitted hats, underwear, socks, toilet paper, winter gloves, and essential supplies that we offer to our homeless neighbors. Every donation helps to stock our GAP Gift Room in the Todd House. Homeless friends who come in needing help are given an opportunity to "shop" for things they need.

Many of you have dropped off individual shelf-stable foods that we package into brown paper lunch bags. Each bag contains enough calories to keep body and soul together for a single day – a breakfast bar or pop tart, a pouch of protein like chicken, SPAM, or Vienna sausage with a small stack of crackers, cheese or peanut butter crackers, applesauce, and a sweet treat along with condiments, napkins, wet ones and plastic utensils. Once a month when we meet with our homeless neighbors, they receive a brown paper lunch bag. Now that cold weather is here, we also include Hot Hands pocket warmers.

Thank you to everyone who donated Kroger cards, essential supplies or food items. Every item reached someone in need. Because those who are homeless struggle mightily and our GAP team uses every resource available, we currently need the following items:

### **Brown Paper Bag Supplies:**

- Single servings of protein (chicken, peanut butter, Vienna sausages, SPAM, etc.)
- Applesauce or other shelf stable fruits
- Breakfast bars or pop tarts
- Small stack crackers
- Peanut butter or cheese crackers
- Individual desserts
- Hot Hands pocket warmers

### **Essential Supplies:**

- Band-Aids (we'll repackage into baggies)
- Small bottles of pain medicines
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Chap Stick
- Tampons
- Dog Food (we'll repackage in gallon bags)
- Hair brushes & hair ties
- Winter gloves
- Blankets and towels (clean, used are fine)



3 Greg Ramey  
Mark Alexander

5 Ryder Alvis

6 Richard Smith  
Andrew Deaton

7 Roger McCann  
Melissa Steward

8 Brenda Rice  
Kristie Rudmann  
Alex Bruser

10 Cleland White  
Karen Nance  
Tonya Kenner  
Bradley Kays  
Molly Hanson

11 Mark Hughes

12 Liz Ramey

13 Wanda Lippert  
Emily Vence

14 Betty Ratliff

15 Mike Sebastian  
Jeff Hancock  
John Welch

16 George Geoghegan  
Janetta VanderMeer  
Andrew Howard  
Rickey Lewis, Jr.

17 Marilyn Davis  
Holly Brunson

18 Diana Kelley  
Mike Gill  
Liam Strafford

19 John Howard  
Lee Troutwine

20 Lynn Baker  
Amanda Jones  
Leanne Scott

21 Ava Goins  
James Hale  
Madeline Powell  
Noah Strunk

22 Leah Hughes  
Robin Lawhorn  
Judie Miller

24 Tina Bailey  
Matthew Doerting  
Saundra Epley  
Mary Powell  
Caroline Rhodes  
Charlotte Rhodes

25 Rachel Hughes  
Paula Miller

27 Norman Honaker  
Scott Vitatoe

28 Jackson Nance

29 Phillip Sturgill

30 Brady Sturm

31 Jordan Allen  
Danny Maggard  
Lois Powell



**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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**Tonya Kenner**

- *Minister of Christian Education*

**Josh Golden**

- *Director of Music and Worship*

**Chris Powell**

- *Director of Contemporary Worship*

**Roy Nance**

- *Organist*

**Cameron Kenner**

- *Youth Director*

**Jessica Tillett**

- *Administrative Assistant*

**Diana Gregory**

- *Newsletter Editor*

Reminder: One worship service on Sunday, January 1, 2024.  
10:00 a.m. Asbury Hall—Wesley Center

Sunday, January 6  
5:00-8:00 pm  
Gym

Children are invited to celebrate Epiphany, the visitation of the wise people to Jesus. Bring a lunch and join the fun of crafts, games and snacks. Contact the church office or Rev. Tonya to register. Donations will be accepted for our children’s ministry.



**Financial Report**

Giving through 12/17/2023	\$848,605
Expenses through 10/12/2023	\$812,676
Needed to meet Budget	\$976,498
Mortgage Balance	\$1,226,466