

THE SPIRE



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Fall 2024

WOULD YOU GO IF GOD CALLED YOU?

Pastor Joshua Lemons

I remember very vividly the time I was called into ministry. I had the opportunity to attend a youth conference called DCLA in 2000. It was the summer before my freshman year at Center Grove High School, and I was excited for the opportunities the future held. I remember attending the conference and listening to amazing music and getting to sightsee in our nation's capital, all while hearing people talk about ministry and following God's call in our lives. I, of course, at the ripe age of 13, was a little unclear about what all of this meant.

Later that evening, a speaker was on stage talking about missionaries. These people would "give it all" and "completely sell out" to follow after God's call. I can't remember what they said or where they went in their sermon from there, but I do remember them asking one question that caused me to pause and reflect in my seat: "Would you go if God called you?" At that moment, I simultaneously heard the speaker's question and another question being spoken to me. Perhaps it was my conscience, or perhaps it was God's voice (or a combination of the two), but the other question was just as loud and demanding as the speaker's: "Will you go and serve my church?"

I responded, not only with a verbal "yes," but I got up from my seat and joined others at the front of the building seeking prayer. I think the person who prayed with me was confused because I was in the throng with many people who were committing their lives to Jesus for the first time, and I had to assure them that wasn't me. I had a whole other problem — I felt God calling me to serve God's people, and I had no idea what that meant!

We are all called to serve in Christ's church. We all take part in the holy work of God, and we all co-labor with the Holy Spirit. Some of us are set aside for this task completely, and others understand their part to be more nuanced in the great work the Church has done for millennia. For those of us who are set apart, the Church instills orders upon these individuals as clergy. This process is long and arduous because of the sacred nature of our work. Furthermore, we believe that no one is called to the work of the Church in isolation; rather, we are called from a community into a community.



As many of you know and will remember, Margaret Stivers has begun to feel such a call to ministry. In the Church, we provide space for the individual to explore

this calling without the pressures and expectations of the job. It is simply a space of encouragement and holy discernment and holy listening. We, as a faith community at Greenwood UMC, recognize that God calls people from all walks of life with all types of experiences into ministry, and

we are grateful for God working in our midst. My prayer is that you will be a wellspring of encouragement for her as she discerns and listens to God's voice in this season of life.

A CALL TO MINISTRY

Margaret Stivers



As many of you remember, I accepted my call to ministry over the summer. I had the opportunity to attend this year's annual conference at St. Luke's UMC with Rev. Josh Lemons and Lay Delegate Dave

Vleck. While I was there, it was a wonderful time of worship, prayer, and celebration. On Friday evening, I attended the Celebration of Ministry service, where the UMC commissioned, anointed, and ordained new bodies of the church. One of the questions asked during the sermon was, "Who are you?" I remember thinking, "Who *am* I?" All these thoughts started racing through my mind about who I am and what I feel connected with in life. I remember having the feeling of "Well, I'm a Christian who has been following the Word and spreading it however I can." During the service, there was a time of "Anointing and Call to Ministry." During this time, I felt my body moving and getting into the line to be baptized. When I sat back down in my seat, Pastor Roy Ice from Nashville UMC was sitting next to me (Pastor Josh was part of the clergy choir). He leaned over and said, "You realize you just accepted a call to ministry, right?" I responded back with an excited "Yep!"

After the service, Pastor Josh walked up to us, and we shared the good news with him. You might be thinking, "How did she come to this decision?" Honestly, it has been an ongoing thought process for the last couple of years. I've been growing in my faith journey with being president of the United Women in Faith at GUMC, which has given me the chance to research different missions and non-profits for the Johnson County area. Along with the UWF, we helped with the Mother's Day services in 2023 and 2024. While participating in those services, I enjoyed researching the messages we shared, and hearing the responses from the congregation was amazing! I was also hired to be the Administrative Assistant for GUMC and have been seeing more of the "behind the scenes" of church business. It's not just copying and pasting items for the Sunday services every week! I've enjoyed the different projects that help spread our message not only to the congregation but to our community.

Currently, Pastor Josh and I are working on my next steps. I am excited for this next chapter in my life and am ready to accept any challenges that may come with it.

MEET OUR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

Miss Tish, Miss Brittany, and Miss Cassie

Miss Tish

I am Miss Tish, and I have taught at GUMC for 29 years. During my summer break, I have worked at Indianapolis Motor Speedway as safety patrol during the Grand Prix, Indianapolis 500, and Brickyard 400. My favorite was this year's 500, when we welcomed 146,000 people thru gate 1 and, after a 4-hour rain delay, rewelcomed 140,000 back!

I look forward to watching students' personalities and talents develop over the course of the school year. The children are always amazing to work with!



Miss Brittany

I am Brittany Ryan, entering my 13th year of teaching preschool here at GUMC. A mother of 5, I enjoy spending time with my family, teaching, being outdoors, baseball, gummy bears, and anything cheetah! Summer is my favorite season. This summer was a bit different, but I enjoyed watching my kids play baseball/softball, spending days at the lake, and settling into our new home.

I am looking forward to meeting all of our new students and welcoming back our returning students! My favorite part of every year is getting to know them and watching how much they learn and grow. It's going to be a great year!

Congratulations to Brittany, serving as our Interim Preschool Director.

Miss Cassie

My name is Cassie Davis, and this is my second year as a preschool teacher at GUMC. My husband, Brandon, and I have three beautiful girls: Bella, 15, Aubree, 12, and Emsley, 6. We have lived in Greenwood for 10 years and love the small-town feel of the community! My husband and I also own a small construction company called Brass Construction, primarily based in Carmel, IN. Weekends for my household consist of hiking, gardening, and of course shopping when you have a house full of girls! This summer was quite the adventure! My favorite part of summer was traveling to Orlando for my two oldest daughters to compete in AAU nationals volleyball tournament. We enjoyed the many cookouts, swimming, and camping!

With this being my second year at the preschool, I'm pretty excited to get started! I really enjoyed building relationships with all the students and getting to know their unique personalities. I look forward to seeing all the new students this year and can't wait to be a part of their early childhood education!



KNOCKING DOWN WALLS


Mark Mutson

Exciting news! As GUMC continues to look for ways to better fill the needs of our community, we have stepped forward and committed to updating the church's Preschool/Sunday School wing and expanding our Preschool services. In the next several months, we will be focused on improving this wing. Security is one of our first priorities, not just for the Preschool/Sunday school wing, but also for the overall church facility. As many are aware, a recent act of vandalism resulted in a stain glass panel being damaged. As part of the security improvements, we have plans to replace the south end exterior doors. Additionally, access control functionality will be added to the interior doors at the entrance of the Preschool/Sunday school wing. Furthermore, interior and exterior cameras will be installed throughout the facility.

Securing Building Access


Although the church currently has adequate security for the Preschool/Sunday School wing with the use of locked perimeter doors. The security enhancements would improve and control access to the preschool wings, by adding interior doors and cameras (interior and exterior). The purpose will not only aid in security but also in keeping kids safe and protecting the church/staff.

- Replace the exterior doors on the south end of the Sunday school wing.
- Add interior control access doors (door code or badge entry) to the Sunday school wing providing more security for the kids.
- Adding cameras throughout the facility



Adding Cameras around the facility

Replacing exterior doors



Adding new interior doors

Security is only the first of several initiatives planned for the Preschool/Sunday school wing. Renovation of our current Sunday School room to keep up with the growth of the church is another initiative for this project.

Lastly, preparation of the Preschool director office is another large initiative we'll be focused on in the near future. As part of that initiative, we plan to identify ideas to better utilize the Preschool/Sunday school wing space to serve not only our community, but also our congregation. The Leadership Team is working hard on this major project and will continue to keep the congregation updated on the development of the plans.

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM IN ACTION

Beth Hicks

The GUMC Leadership Team (LT) has been meeting monthly to work on the activities listed below. If you have questions regarding these projects – or want to volunteer to help in the future on a project – please reach out to your team members: Dave Vleck, Bob Harold, Bob Whitson, Tom Anthony, Mark Mutson, Betsy Loper, Barb Richards, Jeannie Jackson, Beth Hicks, and Pastor Joshua Lemons.



Recent LT projects and accomplishments

- **Budget** – Working with Heather Rhoda on finalizing an accurate and fully disclosed GUMC budget. This will help us all better understand giving to the church, cash flow and expenses. We're grateful we have Heather's help and expertise here!
- **Preschool** – Assisting with enrollment and cash flow concerns. Brittany Ryan has been named interim director of the Preschool and will be working to help GUMC move this ministry forward and help make it an asset for our community.
- **LT Guiding Principles** – The team has created principles to follow as we work together to help lead GUMC now and into the future.
- **Sanctuary Lighting** – This was completed recently. Hopefully, you're enjoying the new, brighter lighting in the sanctuary space!
- **Eli Lilly Stock** – The portion of the stock was sold, and we've moved these monies into the areas already approved by the congregation. We're celebrating the success of getting this accomplished so we can move forward with programming and repairs or maintenance on our space!

Coming Up:

- **Sanctuary Doors** – There will be some changes and improvements made so watch for the new entrance to the sanctuary in the coming months.
- **Budget** – We're continuing this work with Heather's help to reconcile the books and get all items online for better reporting.
- **Preschool** – Watch for more news and developments with this important ministry for GUMC as we determine the best path forward to help our community and students.
- **Church Growth** – We're discussing ways to connect more with new people joining our Sunday services and thinking through ways to help them connect with GUMC.
- **Flat Roofing Repair** – This project is out for bid and we're gathering details for the best way to approach this work.

GROWTH OF GREENWOOD

Pastor Joshua Lemons

I grew up on the southside. My family is from Greenwood, having moved down from Marion by way of West Lafayette in the early '80's. I remember, as many of you do, when there were more cornfields than there are now.



I don't bereave this loss of crop, but I do see the pace and change of the times. When I graduated Center Grove High School and went off to undergraduate studies at Indiana Wesleyan University, Greenwood was around 30,000 in population. Fast-forward 13 years later when I was appointed to Greenwood UMC, the

city was around 60,000 in 2020. What is that old Dylan song? "The times they are a-changin'." Johnson County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state and certainly more ethnically diverse than it was 5, 10, or 15 years ago. All of this leads to a dilemma we experience in our lives. How do we adapt to change?

Greenwood UMC is not exempt from these changes as well. For those of you who are a bit more, shall we say, seasoned, in Greenwood's community than I, you will remember that Rev. Peebles was here for over 10 years (that's a long time in Methodist circles). Before her tenure was Rev. Hoopes (another long-tenured stay), and with each new pastor comes change. You have to get used to the way they look, the cadence of their talk, the way they conduct themselves in service, how they do (or don't do) pastoral care, how their handwriting looks, the number of phone calls they make, the number of emails they write, the publications they put out, etc. The list is never-ending and dizzying.



As your pastor, I deeply appreciate the grace, patience, and love that you have shown me in my first three years at Greenwood UMC. It has been a wild ride. When I first walked through the doors on the tail end of COVID, we were a faithful gathering of 50 or so folks on Sunday morning. To sit back and think about where we were then to where we are now is something truly remarkable. We have undergone pastoral transition (which is hard, let's

not forget that), we have almost tripled (pause for effect) in worship attendance in three years; restructured our committee model into a single Leadership Team that functions as Trustees, Finance, SPRC (Staff Parish Relations Committee), Ad Council, and more; liquidated old stock assets that were gifted in the late '90's (selling church property is hard work); hired two new members of staff; begun transitioning our Preschool into a fuller offering of ministry and services to our community; launched a mid-week Bible study with an average attendance of 20 or more; launched a children's Sunday School class; Kids Craft Camp; and so much more. The growth has been phenomenal to witness and, at the same time, can feel like a lot. It leads me to reflect on those cornfields that I grew up in, and I look around now and say, "That is a lot of change."

Change, I suppose, is inevitable, and the Church is called to minister to the people. Jesus, at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, says: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." Jesus never said, "Hunker down and avoid changing at all costs!" But that is precisely what a lot of churches end up doing, and then they are surprised when they have to shutter. Adaptive change is a challenging piece of what it means to be the church in today's world. As I look around and witness the changes I've seen in my life (I know you've seen some changes in your lives), I feel that we are called to ask, "How do we take the timeless message of the Gospel and connect it with the people around us?" I feel that we, at Greenwood UMC, are being faithful to this challenge. My prayer is that we will keep asking the question and responding to the need we see.



MISSIONS

Mary Kay Anthony

During the month of July and until mid-August, our Missions Committee partnered with the Greenwood Education Foundation to provide school supplies to students at all six Greenwood schools. We asked you to begin bringing in those supplies.

Although we know our church is always generous whenever we ask for your help, this time we were overwhelmed and so was Tiffany Woods, the president of the Education Foundation. We filled their school bus to the brim with approximately 1400 school supplies children need.

Our thanks to Julie Stivers for spending many hours counting and recording all those donations, and to Bob Whitson and Tom Anthony for loading the bus.

And thanks to all of you who either brought in school supplies or donated money to the cause. We are so proud to be a part of this very generous congregation!!! Thank you, thank you, thank you!



SHEPHERD'S TABLE

Julie Penoff

I have been Kitchen Manager since 2009. In 2011, Jane Stillely and I founded The Shepherd's Table, a once-a-week, free lunch program for those in our community. With the support of the Missions Committee, previous pastors and Pastor Lemons, the Shepherd's Table provides not only a meal but also a friendly atmosphere of fellowship, care and support. The first meal was served during Thanksgiving Week: Tuesday, November 22, 2011. This year will mark our 13th year of service. We serve 80 – 100 meals a week and have 8 – 10 volunteers each week. We were one of the first in the community and are part of a network of 10 churches serving meals each week in Greenwood and Franklin.

We have had the opportunity to share food and fellowship with:

- People sent to us from the area food pantries
- Persons seeing our church signage
- Families from our GUMC Preschool
- GUMC members and staff

We also provide delivery to shut-in members.

So far in 2024, we have served 2,919 meals, with 1,264 volunteer hours. Since 2011, we have served 51,157 meals, with 27,470 volunteer hours.

THE VOICE OF GOD: MUSIC AT GREENWOOD

Drew Worthen

For as long as man has existed, we have attempted to capture the attributes of the Divine within our own works. From the immense and beautifully adorned churches of the world — which serve as an allusion to the beauty and complexity of God’s universe — to Fannie J. Crosby’s simply timeless American hymns, mankind has always used its greatest artistic abilities to bring to life, at least in human terms, what it must be like to experience the presence of God on Earth. From radiant beams of light through stained glass windows, reminiscent of the Holy Spirit, to an unexplained sense of humility as we kneel at the altar rail, everywhere we go we should attempt to experience God’s presence. It’s our nature. It’s our desire, and our longing, to hear the Voice of God.

Though it may be strong or weak, soft or loud, the remarkable quality of God’s voice always comes to us invisibly — perhaps from a passage of scripture, a breeze, or a song. A sound proceeding from some invisible, unknown source has, throughout the Bible, been considered a heavenly voice ever since the revelation on Sinai was given in that way in Deuteronomy 4:12: "Then the Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice." In this account, God reveals himself to man not through sight, but sound. Even the prophet Ezekiel, who sees many visions, "heard a voice of one that space" (Ezekiel 1:28); similarly, Elijah recognized God by a "still, small voice." Sometimes God's voice rang out from on high from Jerusalem and from Zion, and sometimes God's voice was heard in the thunder and in the roar of the sea.



In this vein, man has used every resource at his disposal to create the sound of God’s voice to share with others. From the trumpets and cymbals of the Old Testament, to the thunderous roaring of a grand pipe organ, to a child singing “Jesus Loves Me,” the church has always been alive with sounds of heavenly splendor in an attempt to experience even the slightest understanding of what it means to hear God’s voice. The choral tradition has been at the heart of the Christian church since its inception — indeed, the Bible even records the book of Psalms: a collection of poems that were chanted millennia before the church formally adopted choral music in worship in the 4th Century. It is in this tradition that what we have come to know as “Western Music,” from Bach to Beyoncé, emerged. Our musical notation, formalized scales and modes, harmony, and counterpoint were

developed within the Catholic church for the sole purpose of finding deeper meaning and expression in worshipping God. In this tradition, then, it is important to me as the Director of Music to ensure a degree of sanctity in the music at Greenwood UMC, whilst still being inspiring. Although traditional hymnody might be considered “old fashioned” by some, I find not only the depth of its doctrine, but also its intellectual merits to be sound enough to stand the test of time and also to resonate with us still today. For most of us, being able to create something that could still have real human intellectual and moral value hundreds, if not thousands, of years after our death is truly remarkable. Imagine creating true substance in a world of Walmarts and McDonald’s.



It is in this view that we attempt to approach music at Greenwood UMC. The word “genre” need not apply. From grand organ voluntaries, to deeply soul-stirring acapella choral music of Lent, to toe-tapping swinging jazz on All Saints Day, to the joyous ringing of handbells in the Christmas season — we are the music most nigh unto heaven, and there is always room for more. I would like to encourage you to join us in bells or choir, but also from the pews! What is a congregation if not a choir of its own? I invite you to join in the music, from wherever you are, whoever you are, with all your heart, soul, and might.



Fall Festival

Greenwood United Methodist Church
525 N. Madison Ave

STONES CROSSING Band LIVE

BBQ
Yard Games
and more!

Saturday
September 28
3:00 - 6:00pm
FREE Admission



GREENWOOD UNITED METHODIST
WOMEN IN FAITH

COOKIE WALK & PRESENTS WITH PURPOSE

SATURDAY, Nov. 16
10am to 2pm

Homemade Cookies by the pound
Breads, Fudge and more.

Visit the **MISSION MARKET** to do some Christmas shopping. Spend your dollars in support of **MISSIONS**. Our vendors focus on empowering **WOMEN**, supporting **FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES** and encouraging **FAIR TRADE**.

Our Café will be open to purchase a Soup & Sandwich Lunch.

525 N. Madison Avenue
1/2 mile south of the Mall

www.greenwoodumc.org
Office 317-881-1653



Greenwood United Methodist Church
19th Annual "Holy Cow"

Spaghetti Dinner
and Silent Auction
Friday, October 25, 2024
4:30pm - 7:30pm



Spaghetti, breadsticks, salad, dessert, and a beverage

Adults: \$10 Children: \$5 (5 and under free)

Profits to benefit
Greenwood's elementary schools
(Silent Auction proceeds will benefit Shepherd's Table)
 525 N. Madison Ave,
 1/2 mile south of Greenwood Park Mall
 317-881-1653
 www.greenwoodumc.org



SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00 am ~ Sunday School for all ages
 10:15 am ~ Worship Service
 1:30 pm ~ Mizo/Burmese Service
All are welcome here! Please join us!

WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

Monday
 6:30 pm ~ Cub Scouts
 7:30 pm ~ Boy Scouts

Tuesday
 11:00 am ~ The Shepherd's Table

Wednesday
 11:30 am ~ Bring It All AA
 6:00 pm ~ AA Groups
 6:30pm ~ Bible Study

Thursday
 11:30am ~ AA Group
 6:00 pm ~ Bell Practice
 7:00 pm ~ Choir Practice

Friday
 11:30 am~ GNBB AA Group

September
 28 Fall Festival

October
 25 Holy Cow Dinner
 26 Cross Roads Brass Band Concert

November
 9 Ryan Kennedy Organ Concert
 16 Cookie Walk
 28 **THANKSGIVING- OFFICE CLOSED**
 29 **OFFICE CLOSED**

December
 4 Crossroads Brass Band
 24 Christmas Eve Service
 25 **CHRISTMAS DAY- OFFICE CLOSED**
 26 **OFFICE CLOSED**

The Spire is published by Greenwood UMC

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