



THE GOOD NEWS

SUMMER 2026



Breathing
Under
Water

A Spiritual Path
Rooted in
Twelve Steps

F R O M P A S T O R L A U R A

Beloved, hello.



This summer (June–August), we’re entering a worship journey that I hope will feel both grounding and honest. Grounding, because we’ll be rooted again in who we are in Christ. Honest, because the call to love boldly is also a call to let God touch what still needs healing in us.

In June, we begin with *Rooted in Christ: Love Boldly*, a series shaped by Paul's Letter to the Ephesians and the vows we make in baptism. This series flows out from the Baltimore Washington Conference's time of holy conferencing this May as we ALL work to understand the new vision for our denomination: that we love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously.

Week by week, we'll remember what we have promised: to repent, to resist evil and injustice, to nurture one another in faith, and to live as people who are "rooted and grounded in love."

Ephesians doesn't offer a thin or sentimental kind of love. It offers a love that tells the truth, makes room for repair, and builds a community sturdy enough to hold real life. As the series comes to a close, it lands on a clear outward charge: to serve as Christ's representatives in the world.



And that is where we need the next part of the journey. We cannot represent Christ honestly until we face what is unhealed within us. If we try to "go out" without letting God do the deeper work "in here," our witness becomes performance, our service becomes striving, and our love becomes brittle.

In July and August, we'll continue with *Breathing Under Water: A spiritual path rooted in twelve steps*, inspired by Richard Rohr's work with the Twelve Steps as a deeply Christian path of surrender and renewal. The Steps emerged within recovery communities, but they speak to anyone who has ever tried to manage pain, control outcomes, or hold life together through sheer force of will.

As United Methodists, we trust that grace meets us before we're ready and stays with us while we're becoming. John Wesley called it prevenient grace—God already at work, already reaching, already inviting. *Breathing Under Water* will help us practice honesty, confession, surrender, and restoration as ordinary discipleship, not as a special category for “other people.”

My hope for all of this is simple: that we will love more boldly because we are more deeply rooted, and that we will represent Christ more honestly because we are more willing to be healed. If you are weary, curious, hopeful, skeptical, or somewhere in between, there is room for you here. Please join the journey.

Grace & peace,

Pastor Laura

SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRY

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK



On April 11, on a sunny spring morning, 21 volunteers gathered to reflect on our children's and youth Sunday School ministry. As we've rebuilt after COVID, we've grown to four classrooms plus the nursery—each one staffed, week after week, by volunteers who show up with steady care for our young people.

Sunday School is one of those “church traditions” that carries a holy purpose: helping children know they are seen, known, and loved in the body of Christ. At Faith, we hold

onto a simple truth—one key indicator of a child’s continued participation in a faith community is that two or more adults in their church, beyond their family of origin, know their name and can talk with them about what’s happening in their lives.



Did you know that every Sunday it takes **9 volunteers** to make Sunday School and Nursery possible?

Did you know that **30 volunteers** staff our Sunday School from September through May this past year?

During our gathering in April, Sunday School teachers celebrated the gift of teamwork, named the holy moments that happen in their classrooms each year, and recommitted themselves to the ministry in the year to come.

Looking ahead to the **2026–2027** program year, we’ll be inviting a few new volunteers to join the team. Serving with our children and youth can be an **occasional** commitment (think: substitutes) or a **monthly** rhythm—and you’ll never be doing it alone. Our classrooms and nursery are coordinated in volunteer teams, with shared lesson support and plenty of encouragement along the way.

If Faith is your church home, I invite you to prayerfully consider how your household might support this ministry in the year ahead. When we show up for our children, we help them discover that church is not just a place they attend—it’s a community that knows them by name. They belong!

Feel free to reach out to [Pastor Laura](#) or to any of our current Sunday School teachers to learn about this vital ministry.

K - 2ND GRADE

Dawn Adair Johnson, Godly Play Lead
Denise Bryant
Rev. Bonnie Campbell
Ann Coppersmith
Nancy Kuhn
Jane Rall
Karen Simpson
Sally Stolz

3RD - 5TH GRADE

Jan Spencer, Lead
Caroline Babula
Denise Bryant
Nancy Hart
Frank Johnson
Janice Jones
Susan Jones
Janelle Veazey

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Laura Basford
Jeff Bryant
David Cope
Bill Maas
Sara Romeyn
Chuck Spencer
Janelle Veazey
Barbara Wege

HIGH SCHOOL

Ryan Babula
James Hedrick
Ryan Miller
Kristen Wayne

FAITH & FINANCE 2026 FIRST QUARTER

This report provides a clear snapshot of our financial activity and progress during the first quarter, along with key highlights that support our ongoing ministry and operational goals. Questions can be directed to [Kim Webster](#), Finance Manager. Click on the button to access and review this report.



PROGRESS TO CELEBRATE

Back in March 2024, Faith UMC shared the results of a Deep Data Mining project designed to identify the areas where our congregation hoped to see growth—both in the near term and over the longer horizon. Just a few short years later, we are delighted to report the *remarkable* progress made toward the vision that emerged from that process. The momentum, commitment, and faithfulness of this congregation have brought many of those hopes to life.

- complete feasibility study of church building, property, and programs to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities
- reconfigure pews to make space for strollers and wheelchairs
- replace white bands of tape on the chancel stairs

FAMILY MINISTRY

- begin youth group for middle schoolers
- engage and support mission opportunities such as the Appalachia Service Project for Senior High Youth

ONBOARDING AND INTEGRATION

- develop process to better connect online congregation to in-person events and other mission activities
- provide opportunities to meet people like me and not like me – to include more non-Sunday fellowship opportunities
- offer activities for newcomers to incorporate them into the life of Faith Church's so that they may build relationships

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION & SERVICE

- use community garden to provide food to others – offer community sign-ups to help water, weed, harvest, and deliver product to local shelters
- coordinate and support specific charity events: clothing drives, food drives, etc. that support the local community
- facilitate family retreats or camping opportunities

WORSHIP SERVICES

- engage more laypeople in creating and leading worship
- offer hymn sing in the community

Where are we going from here?

The vision cast in 2023-2024 continues to generate momentum with both established voices and newer faces bringing passion and energy to make Faith UMC the amazing place we call home. A recent Vision Workshop in January shone a light on where there is continued energy and momentum for change. There is much excitement around expanding the missional use of our property, intergenerational fellowship, opportunities for meaningful investment in children and youth discipleship, elevating ways for young people to participate in church life, and increasing ways in which we serve those in our community. This summer, look forward to seeing these dreams on the bulletin board

and continue to pray about where God may be calling you to invest your time to grow the Kin-dom of God here at Faith UMC and the larger community. How exciting that God uniquely equips us to serve where we are called and needed to show God's love to others!

To learn more about the specific ideas generated during the workshop to carry our vision forward, click the button. These ideas are organized according to Faith's core tenets: **Belong, Become, Believe, and Be Love.**



as shared by the

Leadership and Development Nominations Committee

MUSIC MINISTRY FROM DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Thank you to all our friends and members who make music ministries at Faith a large, vital, and talented part of the worship life of our congregation. Our Young Singers of Faith concluded their singing May 10; Bells of Faith, May 17. Our Chancel Choir sings through June 14.

Special thanks to Ann Bartlow, who not only serves as our organist, but was a Collaborative Pianist at Strathmore Youth Chorus for four years (ending May 23). She is a full-time special education teacher at Garrett Park Elementary, and she teaches music theory and serves as an accompanist for the Children's Chorus of Washington. We are grateful for her love of organ, and for her recital May 16.

What you see in lists and boxes that note so many among us who contribute not only to the church and its community, but additionally through music, is that we are blessed with so many good people who are demonstrating a statistic I have seen in a Chorus America survey that happens every ten years. The survey shows that choral music specifically, but music generally teaches people that their voice matters, whether literally for a choral ensemble or metaphorically in community and engaged citizenship. It shows in the quality of music our volunteers bring week in and week out; it shows in their contributions to our Faith garden, Sunday School, Youth, social justice conversations, community service initiatives, and more. That I am blessed to be part of this group of people for nearly 19 years at Faith is the most incredible part.

With great appreciation,

Michael



CHANCEL CHOIR

Grace Ann Bartlow

Howard Bartlow

Chloe Bartlow

Denise Bryant

Jeff Bryant

Bonnie Campbell

John Campbell

Andre Coleman

Marie Day

Joey Dowd

Bonnie Dunn

Tim Evans

Andrew Hemmings-Burk

Seren Hemmings-Burk

Jim Johnston

Susan Keller

Nancy Kuhn

Lauretta Mosteller

Jane Rall

Sara Romeyn

Benjamin Smedberg

Maddie Smedberg

Suzanne Smedberg

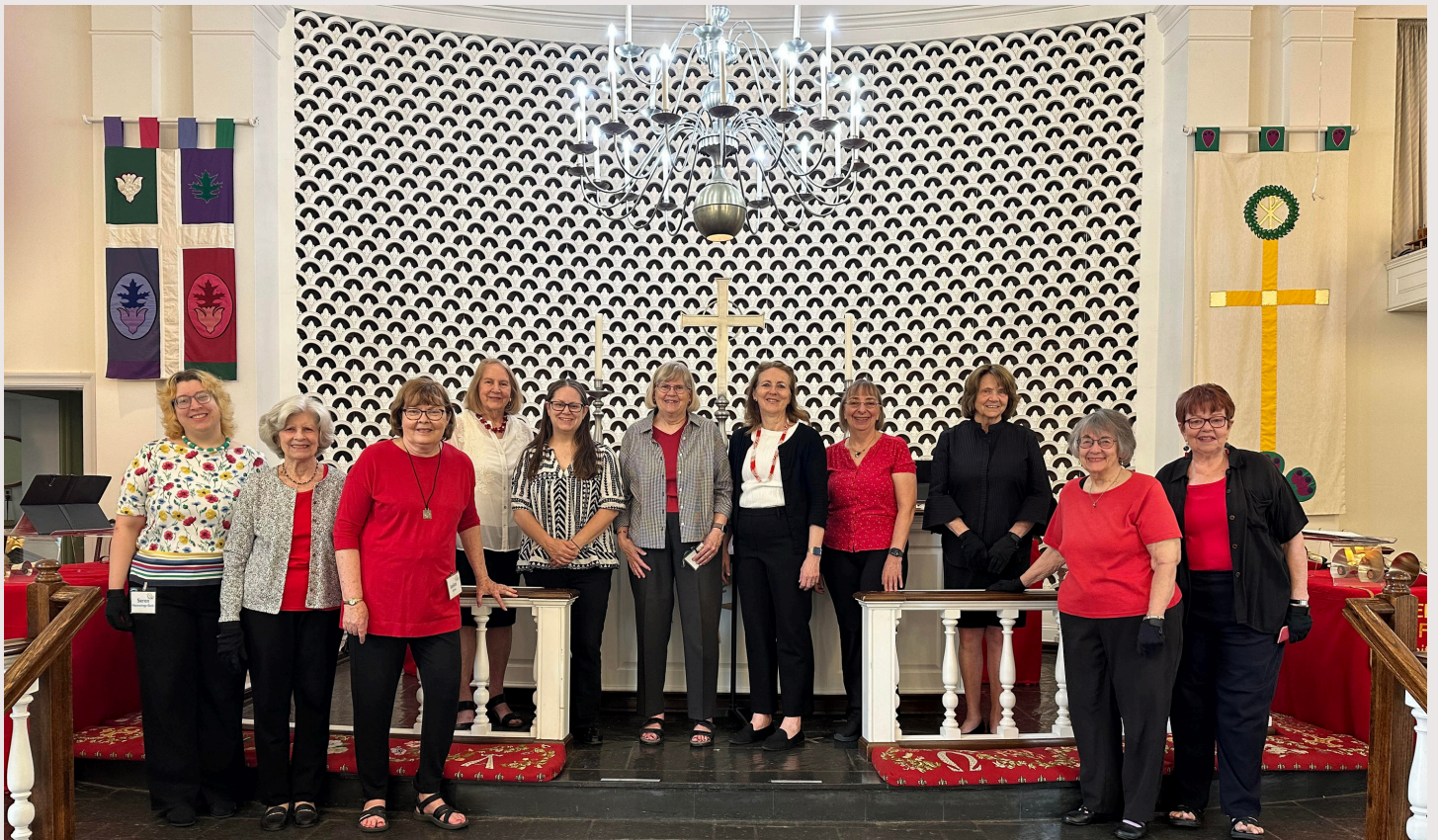
Ellen Stanley

LeRoy Walters

Sue Walters

June Watts

Jennifer Young



BELLS OF FAITH

Nancy Kuhn, Volunteer Director
 Carol Benson
 Seren Hemmings-Burk
 Carol Henley
 Janice Jones
 Susan Keller
 Pamela Kessler

Laurel Kitzman
 Nancy Kuhn
 Kay McCarty
 Virginia McDowell
 Jane Rall
 Jennifer Young

YOUNG SINGERS OF

Leila Adams
 Celia Basford
 Grace Basford
 Benjamin Berndt
 Audrey Buckley

FAITH

Elizabeth Buckley
 Laura Hahs
 Brynna Kitzman
 Zachary Vedder

YOUTH MINISTRY

Our youth fellowship year came to a close on May 17th. In church, we celebrated our graduates, and in the afternoon, we had our annual picnic at Cabin John Park. During the year, we met weekly for fun, food and fellowship on Sunday evenings. We went bowling and ice skating, played a ton of games, and spent time together. We will kick

off the next year at Cabin John Park with a family picnic on Sunday, August 30th. We will see you in the fall!

Mission Trip 2026

The youth will again this summer head south to work with Appalachia Service Project to make homes warmer, safer and drier. From July 12-18, we will be in Gate City, VA, working with the community of Scott County to complete home improvements for individuals in need.



Scott County is on the border of Virginia and North Carolina, nearly to Tennessee, and has a mostly rural population. One in five residents live below the poverty line, and the area is still recovering from Hurricane Helene in 2024. We have a team of youth and adults who have committed to the project, but we need you! You can help - with financial support, with snacks for the youth, but most of all with your prayers. To make a financial donation today, please visit the [Faith website/Give](#) and choose from the drop down menu "Donation to ASP Mission Trip". We are excited to go on this adventure and so grateful to have your support! If you would like more information, please contact Suzanne Smedberg, Youth Coordinator, at ssmedberg@faithworkshere.com.

F A I T H F O U N D A T I O N

The Faith Foundation is a powerful resource that strengthens the Church's mission today and for generations to come. The Foundation is seeking applications for grants to be awarded to charitable organizations within the Maryland/DC/Virginia area. Faith UMC members are welcome to contact not-for-profit organizations in the area to apply for grants from the Foundation.

Applications for grants up to \$2,500 are being accepted through May 31, 2026. To apply, please click the GRANTS image located to the right.



FAITH UMC SHOWS UP FOR PRIDE

TWO WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

Our congregation will have two opportunities in June to support Pride events in our area and invite members of the community to get connected and worship at Faith.

Sunday, June 7 from 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Rockville Pride will take place at Rockville Town Center on Sunday, June 7. Faith will be represented at a table alongside other United Methodist Churches. We would love to have individuals and/or families represent our congregation for a 1-hour shift, from 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm. If you would like to participate, please email Jeff and Denise Bryant at jdsabryant@comcast.net.



Saturday, June 20 afternoon

We also have reserved spaces to participate with the Capital Area United Methodist float and viewing area. The DC Pride parade will be on Saturday, June 20. There are two ways individuals and families can participate on Saturday afternoon:



FIRST WAY: Walk in the parade with the Capital Area UMC float and Methodists from around the area.



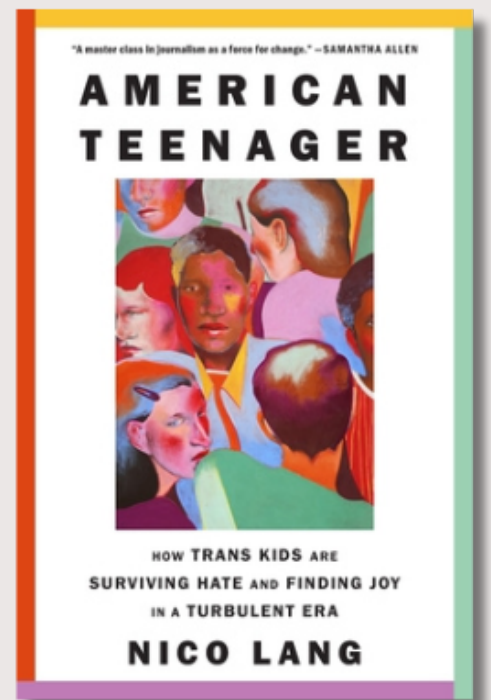
SECOND WAY: Watch the parade with other United Methodists at a specific meet up location. This may be National City Church again, but the venue will be confirmed closer to June 20.

Everyone at both sites will have the opportunity to hand out candy, and everyone who participates will receive a T-shirt that matches the capital area UMC group. If you would like to participate, please email Jeff and Denise Bryant at jdsabryant@comcast.net, and indicate whether you would like to walk in the parade or watch from the UMC meetup area.

A M E R I C A N T E E N A G E R

Sunday, July 26 at noon

Join Faith UMC for a special event featuring the author of the national bestseller *American Teenager: How Trans Kids Are Surviving Hate and Finding Joy in a Turbulent Era*. Nico Lang is an award-winning journalist and the book is a vivid and moving portrait of eight trans and nonbinary teenagers across the country. They follow their daily triumphs, struggles, and all that encompasses growing up trans in America today.



Media coverage tends to sensationalize the fight over how trans kids should be allowed to live, but what is incredibly rare are the voices of the people at the heart of this debate: transgender and gender nonconforming kids themselves.

For their groundbreaking new book, journalist Nico Lang spent a year traveling the country to document the lives of transgender, nonbinary, and genderfluid teens and

their families. Drawing on hundreds of hours of on-the-ground interviews with them and the people in their communities, *American Teenager* paints a vivid portrait of what it's actually like to grow up trans today.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nico Lang (they/them) is a nonbinary award-winning journalist with over a decade of experience covering the transgender community's fight for equality. Their work has appeared in major publications, including *Rolling Stone*, *Esquire*, the *New York Times*, *Vox*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Salon*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Time*, *The Washington Post*, and the *L.A. Times*.



Lang is the creator of *Queer News Daily* and previously served as the deputy editor for *Out* magazine, the news editor for *Them*, the LGBTQ+ correspondent for *VICE*, and the editor and cofounder of the literary journal *In Our Words*. Their industry-leading contributions to queer media have resulted in a GLAAD Media Award and 10 awards from the National Association of LGBTQ Journalists (NLGJA).

AIM: ACCESSIBILITY & INTEGRITY MINISTRY

Faith celebrated Disability Awareness Sunday on April 26th with Jennifer Young, Faith's Accessibility Coordinator and the leader of the Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM), delivering the message with contributions from Seren Hemmings-Burk, who offered insights on disability-inclusive literature and an opportunity to purchase books for the church or you own family geared toward children and young adults.

AIM has been working on making Faith's physical facilities and programs more accessible to individuals with disabilities, including sidewalk improvements with tactile pads, more prominent signage directing people to accessible entrances, restrooms and the elevator, and offering accommodations, such as large-print hymnals, FM wireless receivers, and sensory devices for the children's table and Sunday School.

We continue looking for ways to improve accessibility and make the church more welcoming for individuals with disabilities. You can find a training [here](#) on how you can

help with that effort. We welcome any additional ideas and volunteers who would like to participate in AIM. If that is you, please contact Jennifer Young young.jennifer@gmail.com.



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

SAVE THE DATE! MISSION U 2026

JULY 31-AUGUST 2, 2026

Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula Delaware Conferences



Join us at Mission u as we explore the theme, *Experiencing Emmanuel*. Mission u participants will study the times in the Bible when people experienced Emmanuel, or “God with us.” How do we discern God’s presence and call on our lives in times of joy and times of sadness, fear or anxiety? What can we learn from these Emmanuel encounters in the Bible to help inform our discernment of faith, hope and love in action?

Mission u is for you! All are welcome to engage!

Sheraton Baltimore North Hotel



United
Women
in Faith

FAITH BY THE FIRE

BRINGS FELLOWSHIP, ADVENTURE AND WORSHIP TO THE WOODS



On the weekend of May 2–3, members and friends of Faith United Methodist Church gathered at Little Bennett Campground for our inaugural **Faith by the Fire** campout. Under trees resplendent in brilliant spring green, forty-two participants came together for a memorable weekend of fellowship, fun, outdoor adventure, and worship. Of those attending, 27 hardy campers stayed overnight—braving temperatures that dipped into the 30s before dawn. Warm leggings and thick sleeping bags proved to be wise choices.

The weekend featured several group activities. Campers enjoyed **nature hikes**, exploring the beauty of the forest trails and being reminded of God’s handiwork all around them. During the **scavenger hunt**, several especially determined young campers disappeared into the woods for what felt like an unusually long time—causing a few curious glances from the adults—but they eventually emerged victorious, just in time for a campfire dinner and s’mores. Competition also ran high during the **cornhole tournament**, though the outcome surprised absolutely no one. Tournament organizers Andy “Swish” Fish and Tamara James claimed the championship, proving once again that organizing the tournament may come with certain... advantages. Congratulations to Andy and Tamara, who were, incidentally, also celebrating their wedding anniversary!

The weekend concluded Sunday morning with an outdoor worship service led by Reverend John Campbell. Reflecting on **Acts 17:22–31**, he reminded us that God is not confined to buildings made by human hands, but is present everywhere—especially in the beauty, stillness, and wonder of nature.



After the message, Rev. Campbell invited us to communion at Christ’s table, reminding us that grace is offered freely to everyone, and all are welcome. Sara Romeyn and Amanda Bradley led the singing, our collective voices joining the birds in praise to God under the spreading light of the crisp morning sky.

Faith by the Fire was a weekend of friendship, adventure, worship, and more than a few marshmallows. Thank you to Chuck & Jan Spencer & Sara Romeyn and everyone who helped make it such a special gathering. We’re already looking forward to next year!

Enjoy more moments from the camping weekend by clicking on the tent.



E N H A N C I N G S A F E T Y

We are pleased to share that over the past several weeks, significant security upgrades were made to our building as part of our ongoing commitment to being faithful stewards of our facilities and ensuring the safety of all who gather here for worship, fellowship, ministry, and community activities. These improvements were made possible through funding awarded to Faith through the Governor’s Prevention of Hate Crimes Grant.

One of the upgrades included enhancing access control on several frequently used exterior doors, which has strengthened our ability to manage entry and exit to the building and ensure that access is more secure and intentionally monitored. As part of this upgrade, the keypad outside the main office door has been removed and is no longer available for entry. Beginning May 4, those needing access to the church during

the week are asked to stop by during office hours, when a staff member will be happy to assist. **On Sunday mornings, the Main Entrance and Sanctuary door will remain unlocked for members and guests arriving for worship from 9:00 a.m. until 10:10 a.m. and will automatically lock thereafter. Welcome Hosts will be available at the Sanctuary doors to assist anyone arriving after that time.**

Another upgrade was the installation of a new alarm system with a panic alarm feature allowing for a rapid response from local law enforcement in the event of an emergency. The installation of the new high-security Sanctuary doors with exterior visibility is still to come and is expected to be completed by the end of June.

Throughout this process, our goal has been to balance safety with hospitality. While these security upgrades allow us to better monitor and manage entry into the building, we remain committed to preserving the open, welcoming spirit that defines our church family. Thank you for your patience, understanding, and continued support as we take these important steps to care for one another and for the property entrusted to us.

GYTTE: GIVE YE THEM TO EAT

INTRODUCING “EL TORO AZUL”

FROM OUR MISSIONARIES, PASTOR PAT AND KIM LEWIS: Meet our newest helper on the ranch: El Toro Azul — the “Blue Bull.” Thanks to the generous support of the Lloyd family, GYTTE was able to purchase its very first tractor after 35 years of caring for the land by hand. ‘With this tractor, we will be able to better tend the earth, support restoration projects, and improve the entrance road to the property!



But perhaps the greatest impact goes beyond the land itself. El Toro Azul creates an opportunity to train our ranch employees in a valuable new skill, expanding both confidence and vocational experience.

In addition, the tractor will be rented out for revenue-generating work, helping support future ministry and sustainability efforts.

We are hoping to purchase essential implements (used) such as disc, harrow, and tiller. **If you would like to contribute toward this exciting project, use the GBGM website Advance # 07629A and indicate your desire to support our tractor ministry.**

Click on the photo of *El Toro Azul* to read GYTTE’s full newsletter!

FAITH UMC STAFF

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell, Pastor
Ann Bartlow, Organist
André Coleman, Tenor Section Leader
Keshika Diaz, Facilities Manager
Valerie Kunsman, Office Administrator
Tessa Ricketts, Nursery Staff
Suzanne Smedberg, Youth Coordinator
Kim Webster, Finance Manager
Dr. Michael Wu, Music Director

LEADERSHIP BOARD

Bill Maas, Chair
Mike Coppersmith
Rachel Hedrick
Brian Jones
Tamara James-Fish
Kathy King
Pastor Laura Norvell
Janelle Veazey
Jennifer Young



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Faith United Methodist Church is a member of the Reconciling Ministries Network.



We seek to welcome and include all people in the life of this congregation. Our building and gathering spaces are accessible to people who use wheelchairs and walkers. Large-print hymnals and Bibles, FM wireless assistive listening devices, sensory friendly items for children, and gluten-free communion elements are available during worship.