

BEYOND THE PEWS AT FRANKLIN FIRST UMC

MEGAN DUFF

RADICAL LOVE DREW MEGAN HOME



If you've spent any time around the music ministries of Franklin First UMC, chances are you've seen the bright smile, warm presence, and quick empathy of Megan Duff. While many know her as the accompanist for the Chancel Choir, her story—woven through generations, shaped by compassion, and grounded in a deep commitment to justice—reveals why her presence is such a gift to our church family.

Megan's roots stretch from Hazard, Kentucky to Springboro, Ohio, but her heart was shaped in the home of her father, Gregory, a history and theology scholar whose passion for civil rights and contextual understanding of the world left a lasting imprint. His graduation as the first in the Duff lineage to earn a college degree lit a path that Megan proudly followed years later. Her Mamaw and Papaw—Prudy and Hiram—watched her cross the stage at Miami University, fulfilling the dream her Papaw had when he left the coal mines of Kentucky for a safer life for his family.

On her mother's side, Megan learned spirituality in a much different classroom: her Nana's kitchen. From narrated "ballets" starring household pets to classical music on the way to church, to cleaning up flour explosions from a too-spirited KitchenAid mixer, Nana taught Megan the kind of love Jesus describes—gentle, patient, steady, and fun.

A LIFE LED BY EMPATHY

Guided by her favorite scriptures—Matthew 25:31-40 and Matthew 22:37-40—Megan strives to live out Christ's calling to serve "the least of these" and to "love your neighbor as yourself." Her ministry extends well beyond the walls of the church into her role as Vice President of the Middletown Musical Arts Club, where she quietly feeds hungry families, advocates for students, and ensures that every child who wants to make music has access to the opportunities they deserve.

Her Nana's reminder echoes in her work: "Food always tastes better when you share."

Megan's passion for inclusion and understanding youth culture gives her hope for the future of the church. She dreams of Franklin First becoming an even more vibrant home for young people—bridging generations, uplifting emerging leaders, and living out a faith that welcomes all.

FINDING A CHURCH THAT HEALS

Megan joined Franklin First's music staff in 2013 but hesitated to fully commit due to past church trauma. Everything changed on a Sunday she will never forget. A visitor, overwhelmed and emotional, interrupted the sermon. Megan braced for the rejection she would have expected in her childhood congregation—but instead, the entire sanctuary rose as one. Pastor Bryan and the congregation surrounded the woman with prayer, comfort, and unconditional love. "That moment healed something in me," Megan reflects. "It was radical, agape love in action—and that's the sermon I needed."

FAITH THAT WELCOMES EVERYONE

Megan delights in the United Methodist Church's renewed commitment to acceptance following the 2024 General Conference decisions. For her, "God's love was never meant to live inside 4 walls, it is supposed to travel with us in everything we do and everyone we meet."

Her belief is simple but profound: Christ's love should meet people where they are—and love them as they are.

COMMUNITY THAT FEELS LIKE HOME

Outside of meetings, music, and ministry, Megan is most often found cheering on her son Elliot and the next generation of Middletown performers. And on Sunday mornings, she'll never turn down one of the Fellowship Team's lemon bars.

Through the years, FUMC has become more than a place to worship—it's become her family.

"I have gained a community to grieve with, share joys with, and grow with. The love in this church inspires me."



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