

Farmington UMC Family,

What a joy and gift it is to serve as your pastor! I am deeply honored to be a part of this church that wholeheartedly desires to love God and love neighbor. Since joining you in July, I have had the amazing privilege of getting to know this wonderful congregation and community as we discern the first steps of our ministry together.

In the last year, Farmington UMC has experienced many changes. Though change is never easy, this congregation remained faithful to its mission and commitment to share the love of God with Farmington and beyond. I would specifically like to thank Rev. Biff Averitt for leading this congregation for an interim period following the unexpected resignation of the former pastor. It is clear that his compassionate and healing presence and intentional, thoughtful guidance was a great comfort to this church in a difficult season. For his service and witness here in Farmington and throughout the Arkansas conference, we are eternally grateful.

In these months without a full time pastor, several church members worked together to apply for a Lowes Hometown grant to upgrade our kitchen to commercial standards in order to expand our feeding ministries. Farmington UMC was awarded \$80,000 to make these upgrades, and construction is expected to be completed in early November. These upgrades will be a tremendous blessing to our neighbors experiencing food insecurity. In addition to this amazing work, the church continued to offer all regular programming including Theology on Tap, Wednesday Night Live, United Women in Faith, United Methodist Men, and formed a congregational care team to provide support to members in need. This good and faithful work took place simultaneously with extensive parsonage repairs that were accomplished entirely by church members. All of these things are a real testament to the dedication of this incredible community of disciples! To celebrate these amazing accomplishments, Drew and I hosted a "Thank You Barbeque" at the parsonage where we blessed the home and filled the evening with food, fellowship, and new friends.

Upon joining you all in July, the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee organized 3 cottage meetings to allow for more intimate gatherings and conversation regarding the future of our congregation. All three were very well attended, and this opportunity allowed for me to hear about the strengths of our church as well as opportunities for growth. From these meetings, the following three priorities emerged:

1. A desire to continue our service and witness to the community through mission and evangelism through our weekly food pantry, Back to School Bonanza, and community Thanksgiving meal.
2. A hope to strengthen, expand, and grow our ministries for children, youth, and young adults so that we will be a faith community where families thrive.

3. A dream of paying off our remaining building debt in order to free up those funds for other ministry needs.

In accordance with these priorities, we will be working to form ministry teams to support our missions and family ministries, identifying, recruiting, and training additional volunteers to serve with our children and youth, and will launch a 2025 Stewardship Campaign in October. It is our sincere hope that in working towards these goals and priorities we will be taking the next faithful steps to be the church and people God is calling us to be in this moment.

In conclusion, I simply wish to express my deep gratitude for the warm welcome, support, and care Drew and I have received since our arrival. It is a true honor to serve with Farmington United Methodist Church and each of you in this beloved community. I look forward to the remainder of our first year in ministry together and witnessing all of the ways this church will continue to love God and love neighbor!

In Christ,

Rev. Alyssa Kuebler
Senior Pastor