

Farmington UMC Family,

As I reflect over our first full year together, I am overwhelmed with joy and gratitude for all of the amazing ministry we have accomplished together. I give thanks for each of you and your witness to the gospel message through your words and deeds as disciples of Jesus. What a gift it is to be in ministry alongside you!

In faithfulness to our new conference mission statement, *working together to build vital faith communities by following Jesus, loving People, and sharing grace*, we have accomplished remarkable ministry within our church and community. Some of the highlights include installing a commercial kitchen thanks to the generosity of a Lowe's Hometown Grant. This coming year we will begin offering community meals made possible by our upgraded kitchen space. Another exciting ministry is our LifeLink small group. Launched by young adults in our church, LifeLink has grown into a vibrant weekly gathering for adults in their 20s and 30s. We have also hosted a Lay Servant Ministry Training in which nine leaders of our church participated. We also welcomed the Northwest District Committee on Ordained Ministry for their annual check in with Licensed Local Pastors.

In addition to all of these amazing ways we have sought to follow Jesus, love people, and share grace, we have also continued to focus our ministry efforts towards our strategic priorities that emerged from our 2024 cottage meetings. These priorities are aimed at increasing the vitality of our church while remaining a strong fixture of faith within our local community.

1. *Continue our service and witness to the community through mission and evangelism.*
  - a. This August we continued our legacy of service and witness by hosting our Back to School Bonanza in which students received shoes, backpacks, school supplies, physicals and eye exams, and haircuts to prepare for their return to school. Families also received support in registering for SNAP as well as a box of food from the NWA Food Bank and pizzas for dinner.
  - b. In November we hosted our annual Thanksgiving Feast to Go, which served over 130 of our neighbors a hot meal on Thanksgiving Day.
  - c. This year we continued to be the only weekly food pantry in Farmington, where we serve over 100 of our neighbors each week. This ministry received several grants from partners like the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas, the NWA Food Bank, and Starbucks. Additionally, we launched a new partnership with Dollar General, in which they provide weekly donations to be shared with our neighbors.
2. *Strengthen, expand, and grow our ministries for children, youth, and young adults so that we will be a faith community where families thrive.*
  - a. This year we welcomed 5 new youth volunteers and 6 new children's volunteers.

- b. Our youth group partnered with Prairie Grove UMC to attend Ozark Mission Project for the first time, and partnered with Central UMC to attend the Veritas worship conference.
  - c. We hosted two successful bridge events for families, our annual Trunk or Treat and thanks to a grant from the Arkansas Conference Youth Service Fund, our first 4th of July Block Party.
  - d. Our annual Pie Auction raised \$3,000 for our family ministries.
3. *Stabilize our finances and work to pay off our remaining building debt in order to free up those funds for other ministry needs.*
- a. This year we hosted a successful giving campaign in which 39 households pledged over \$200,000 towards our operating budget.
  - b. Our Administrative Council worked to reduce our budget by nearly 14% in order to best steward our resources. Following this budget has been more than manageable and has called our congregation towards creativity, simplicity, and improved stewardship.
  - c. Our cash position continues to improve, which has allowed us to begin making additional payments to the principal of our mortgage.

As a congregation we will continue working towards these priorities as we seek to follow Jesus, love people, and share grace. It is our sincere hope that in working towards these goals we will be taking the next faithful steps to be the vital church and people God is calling us to be in this moment.

In closing, I want to give thanks for the opportunity to be your pastor and to serve in ministry alongside this Spirit-led congregation. As Drew and I prepare to welcome our first child this fall, we are overwhelmed by your love and support. We could not imagine a more caring congregation to be a part of, and look forward to introducing our son to this wonderful church family. I cannot wait for another year of loving God and loving our neighbors together!

In Christ,

Rev. Alyssa Kuebler  
Senior Pastor