

# The JOURNEY

April 2026

 **North Liberty First**  
A United Methodist Community of Faith



*Easter people raise your voices, sounds of heaven in earth should ring.  
Christ has brought us Heaven's choices; Heavenly music let it ring.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Easter people let it sing!*

Like the flowers in our gardens pushing their way out of the earth, the season of Lent is giving way to Easter! As the hymn *Easter People, Raise Your Voices* reminds us, the resurrection of Christ is a triumph over sin and death. No longer does death have the final word—for as surely as Jesus was raised from the grave, by virtue of our baptism into Christ, we too have this promise of eternal life.

So, how are we to live? What are we to do in this in-between time? Do we get a 'pass' because of our baptism? Nope... it's not that easy—nor should it be.

As we celebrate Easter, we are released from the fear of sin and death so that we may live as active disciples of Jesus. Just as Jesus was a healer, a compassionate friend, and a speaker of truth, we are guided by the Holy Spirit and commissioned to do likewise. This month, I invite you to grow in your own discipleship—jump in, get your hands dirty, and let's find ways to love our neighbors together.

As the hymn writer John Bell beautifully reminds us, this is the transforming work of the risen Christ:

*Christ has risen while earth slumbers, Christ has risen where hope died,  
as he said and as he promised, as we doubted and denied.  
Let the moon embrace the blessing;  
let the sun sustain the cheer; let the world confirm the rumor.  
Christ is risen, God is here!*

*Christ has risen and forever lives to challenge and to change  
all whose lives are messed or mangled, all who find religion strange.  
Christ is risen. Christ is present making us what he has been –  
evidence of transformation in which God is known and seen.*

My prayer for each of us this Easter Season is that the joy of the resurrection breathes new life into whatever feels dormant or heavy right now. Just as the earth wakes up each spring, may our hearts wake up to the endless possibilities of God's grace.

I invite you to bring your whole self—doubts, hopes, and all—as we learn to follow the risen Christ together this month.

Have a joyous and blessed Easter!

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Deborah



## Service Times

Traditional at 8am  
—Live Streamed  
—In person

Contemporary at 10am  
—Live Streamed  
—In person

## Church Mission Statement

To follow and  
Invite others to follow  
Jesus Christ.

## Join us on Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service at  
6:45am in the garden

8am Traditional

10am Contemporary



April Calendar:

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Youth Group 7-8pm
- 5<sup>th</sup>: NO Sunday School, Happy Easter! Worship at 6:45am, 8am, & 10am
- 8<sup>th</sup>: Youth Group 7-8pm
- 12<sup>th</sup>: Youth Lead Worship 8am & 10am, Sunday School 9-9:50am, Children sing in worship 10-11am
- 15<sup>th</sup>: Peacemakers 6-8pm, Youth Group 7-8pm
- 19<sup>th</sup>: Sunday School 9-9:50am
- 22<sup>nd</sup>: Youth Group 7-8pm
- 26<sup>th</sup>: Sunday School 9-9:50am
- 29<sup>th</sup>: Youth Group 7-8pm



March was certainly fun around Children and Youth Ministry! We had Sunday School, Peacemakers, and Youth Group as normal, plus singing in worship, and an Easter Egg Hunt! Here are some photos of our month:



Coming up in April we have our normal routine, plus the youth lead worship on April 12<sup>th</sup> and the kids will sing during the 10am service that day. We hope that you will join us!

Save the date for VBS and get registered now! VBS is June 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> and you can register at <https://vbspro.events/p/nlfirstwildlife> or find the event on our Facebook page for the registration link. This registration works for kids Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and for our volunteers!

If you have questions about how to get involved in Children and Youth Ministry, let Alison know! [youth@nlfirstumchurch.org](mailto:youth@nlfirstumchurch.org)



## Ministry Coordinator News

### **Table of Grace**

Many thanks to the Table of Grace team who made food (Sloppy Joes, Green Beans, Fruit Salad and Brownies) to serve about 40 homeless in person, 50 homeless "to-go" containers, and some extra food to the IC Shelter on Sunday, March 29.

Serving food were Daniel Arroyo, son Dennis, and co-worker Ali, Pastor Deborah, and Dave & Lynn Jansen. Cooking food were Regina Erickson, Suzette Betts, Elaine Hernandez, Karen Housel, Marion Gibbons, Lynn Jansen, Lisa Lambi, Katherine Mohr, Betty Mitchell, Connie Steinbach & Judy Westlake.

Table of Grace is an ecumenical program, based out of the Wesley House, providing a meal on the last Sunday of each month.

### **Thank You!**

Shout out of thanks for helping with the potluck:

Youth - moving tables

Judy Westlake and Marion Gibbons -kitchen cleanup!!

Alison Hansen - pancake supplies

Church - GREAT FOOD!

### **Let's Do It Again!**

We had so much fun playing cribbage in March that we want to try again in April! If you want to learn to play cribbage or just come and play cribbage with others, you are invited to Dave and Lynn's house on Saturday, April 18, from 1:30-4:30! Let Lynn know if you can make it, so we have plenty of snacks! See you soon!





**For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.**

*Matthew 18:20*

Stephen Ministry began as a way to equip lay people to walk with others in their community. At First United Methodist Church in North Liberty, our program has and still is walking beside people, through their pain, whether it would be a loss of a loved one, job, relationship, or health concerns.

We have been trained in how to quietly listen and prayerfully meet the person where they are on their journey. We cannot fix things, but we can show up as the hands and feet of Jesus to journey with you as long as you need.

This group has also offered quarterly speakers for the congregation about Hospice, Mental Health, Aging, Bullying for young people, as well as providing the Grief Share program.

This fall we will be planning training for anyone interested in being a part of the Stephen Ministry team. If you have any questions please contact the church at:  
319-626-2762 or speak with Darlene Smith or Kathy Frees directly.

**If you are struggling with something going on in your life, you could benefit from having a Stephen Minister walk with you.**

**Please contact Pastor Deborah at the church 319-626-2762.**

**Darlene Smith and Kathy Frees  
Stephen Ministry Leaders**



# Come join us in the Garden

**Help plant, Care for & enjoy the harvest from  
our community garden**

April Schedule starting April 8th-Wed 5-7 & Sat 9:00-? *Weather permitting*

NL 1st UMC - 85 N. Jones Blvd North side of parking lot

Everyone from expert gardeners to first timers are welcome to join in,  
Kids of all ages with supervision, **Drop in & join the fun**

**Want to learn more about the garden or help with planning?**

Ask Mike or Lucy Hershberger or Bob Housel

Call or text Lucy 319-430-9488 Mike 319-631-1840

Email [Lucyhersh2@gmail.com](mailto:Lucyhersh2@gmail.com)

**Working alongside our friends and neighbors sharing  
knowledge, stories and growing great food**





### Important dates in April

- 2—Garden Meeting
- 3—Prayer Walk
- 4—Health & Wellness
- 5—Easter
- 7—Stephen Ministry
- 8—Gardening Time
- 9—LGBTQ+ Meeting
- 13—Finance Meeting
- 14—SPRC Meeting
- 15—Peacemakers
- 18—Cribbage
- 28—Ministry Council
- 29—Book Club

- |                     |                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Nancee Waterbury—2  | Ben Houselog—16            |
| Trace Robertson—3   | Amanda Fangman—16          |
| Lana Ingle—4        | Amy Enke—17                |
| Ella Snow—4         | Jessica Smith—20           |
| Riley Sertterh—5    | Kinley Jones—20            |
| Edward Lavelly—6    | Cohen Colbert—21           |
| Dumoluhle Dube—7    | Crystal Crandall-Danger—21 |
| Maddox Cooper—8     | Layla Langseth—22          |
| Richard Frees—8     | Kathryn Smart—23           |
| Sarah Tillman—8     | Craig Jones—24             |
| Billie Feagins—9    | Jackson Steburg—24         |
| Rachael Gaffey—9    | Gianna Alger—26            |
| Cathy Grugin—10     | John Demory—26             |
| Kennedy Morrow—10   | Lucy Hershberger—27        |
| Bella               | Ken Wall—27                |
| Khamphilanouvong—11 | Ella Lambi—28              |
| JoDee Roof—11       | Michele Langseth—28        |
| Heather Sexton—12   | Kay Mohling—28             |
| Dani Gryp—13        | Orville West—28            |
| Jeanne Patten—13    | Willow Bockenstedt—30      |
| Johnny Bibby—14     |                            |
| Karsten Triggs—14   |                            |
| Calvin Nace—15      |                            |

#### How to worship with us:

#### Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstUnitedMethodistChurchNorthLiberty>

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@NLFirstUMChurch>

**First United Methodist Church**  
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- Scott & Brenda Gordley—8
- Ryan & Nancee Waterbury—12
- David & Laura Bibby—25

*Happy Anniversary*