

THE DISCIPLE

Abilene First United Methodist Church 601 N. Cedar Abilene, KS 67410

(785) 263-2623

ABILENEFIRSTUMC.ORG

Prayer Requests

Members:

Luke Hunter
Al Jones
Jim Leyerzapf
Pam Jackson
Sue Murry
Carl Hansen
Barb & Carl Funston

Friends & Family:

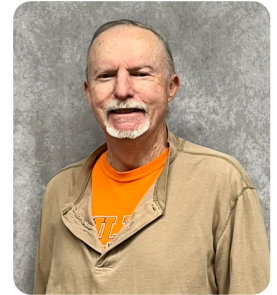
Alexis Dutt
Sean Zernickow
Steve Leyerzapf
Dr. Ben Smith
Bob Dishman
Rachel Prichard
Tom Litke
Kathy Ducker
Nathan Robbins
Deb Daniel
Scot Budden
Kim Decker
Mike Jantz
Jacque Havice
Macie Heller

Armed Forces:

We pray for those
who are serving in
the armed forces
and for their families.

Get to Know

Clark Williamson
Director of Music Ministries



Clark Williamson is originally from Little River, Kansas, the son of Dean & Noreen Williamson. He came from three generations of retail furniture merchants. There were three churches in Little River back then, Methodist, Catholic, and Congregational. Little River is also where Clark's musical experiences started with piano lessons in 3rd grade and church choirs. He also began playing the violin in 5th grade and continued performing with orchestras throughout his college years. His mother was a soprano soloist at church.

The family of six moved to Warrensburg, Missouri in 1964. Clark attended middle school, high school, and received a Bachelor of Music Education degree in town, on the campus of Central Missouri State University, now called U. of Central Missouri. He taught public school vocal music in Lexington & Grant City, Missouri for five years.

Clark felt the call to pursue church music full time and so he received his Masters of Sacred Music from Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Upon graduation at SMU, Clark worked at large UM churches in Decatur, AL and Crystal Lake, IL, in the Chicago area, and Sandy, UT before coming to Abilene FUMC in 2003. Clark was attracted to the idea of coming back to Kansas because it was closer to where his parents and brother were living at the time, before they passed.

Some of his many job responsibilities include: directing Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, scheduling the 3 pianists, the liturgists, and balcony tech volunteers each week, proofreading the bulletin, piano and instruments maintenance, keeping track of music budget & music memorials, and for the last 3 years he's been creating the slideshow for our worship services.

What is something people would be surprised to know? Clark's been an avid fan of "Jeopardy" since Art Fleming was host and when waiting for a train to pass or stopped at a red light, Clark thinks of words and names using the 3 consonants on the cars license plate in front of him.

A Word From Pastor Libby



Friends,

I want to thank you for the many cards and gifts I received from so many of you over the Christmas holidays, none more valuable than your presence at my open house and throughout the season of Advent and Christmas worship.

As we stepped into Epiphany, the season of revelation, you were invited to pick a star word to help guide you in how God might be revealing something new to you throughout the coming year. I heard from many of you that you received words that seemed meaningful for your situation. My word is mindfulness, meaning being actively open to the present. I pray you find meaning in the coming months as you explore, listen, and watch for your word.

The season of Lent begins in just a few weeks, on Ash Wednesday, February 18. For many people, the season of Lent is a time for reflection, sacrifice, and spiritual renewal. Speaking from experience and years of giving up something for Lent, I have come to realize that Lent is much more than giving up a favorite treat or attending extra church services or classes, though these are important. I see Lent as an opportunity to put our gifts to work and to grow by reaching out to others through acts of service.

Each year as Lent approaches, I find myself asking how I can become a better disciple of Jesus Christ and deepen my relationship with God. The answer seems to come in simple, everyday moments of service. Whether it is doing more to support food pantries, doing work to refresh something at church, checking on a neighbor, or simply offering a listening ear to a friend in need, these acts have a way of drawing me out of myself as I see the face of Christ in those around me.

Service during Lent is not about big acts or perfection; it is about small, consistent efforts to be more like Christ with our head, heart, hands, and spirit as we love and support others. I find that the depth of my growth is proportional to how willing I am to step outside my comfort zone and give of myself, even if it is inconvenient or requires some sacrifice on my part. When I focus on serving and using my God-given spiritual gifts, I am often overcome with humility and gratitude, knowing that I am serving others as the hands and feet of Christ. Transforming my Lenten journey from one of only self-denial to one of self-giving has not only impacted those I serve, but it has also been revelatory and transformative for me.

As I continue to embrace service as a central part of Lent, along with spiritual practices of prayer, fasting, and study, my heart is more open, my faith grows deeper and stronger, and my sense of connection to community expands. Lent is more than a season of preparing for the resurrection on Easter, but also a time to become more like the person God calls me to be – through simple acts of serving others with my hands, head, heart, and Spirit.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Libby



Wendy Robinson, Director of Children & Youth Ministries

The Youth will be sponsoring the Souper-Bowl again this year. Bring a canned good (soup, chili, tuna, vegetables, fruit) to support your team. Each can will count as 1 point For that team. But... If you want the other team to lose, bring a paper product (napkins, toilet paper, facial tissues). Each package will count as 1 point AGAINST that team. There will be baskets representing the teams playing in the Narthex beginning Wednesday January 28th. All of the donations will be given to the Little Free Pantry! We hope you support your team and the Little Free Pantry.

Thank you youth for all of the help moving all of the Christmas decorations upstairs. A big thanks to the youth for undecorating the sanctuary and Narthex and returning all of the decorations back downstairs for next year!

A big thank you to everyone who has been praying for me during my knee surgery! All the prayers really worked and I'm feeling great!

Also a big Thank you for all of the treats and wonderful gifts the congregation presented to us this Christmas! Your kindness and thoughtfulness is so appreciated.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

2-2	Eyler Holt
2-3	Ellen Jones Barbara Emig
2-5	Jacoby Robinson
2-6	Barb Leckron
2-7	Andy Holt
2-8	Keith Emig
2-11	Rick Williamson
2-16	Phyllis Welton Pam Jackson
2-20	Cameron Vinduska
2-22	Jackson Green Tyler Green
2-26	Linda Bankes Larry Divel
2-27	David Cook
2-28	Debbie Lytle

DECEMBER 2025 GIVING

\$39,952.18

Invested Funds

\$31,945.00

Expenses \$ 23,574.83

YTD Giving

\$ 306,885.75

YTD Expenses \$ 301,284.99

**For a list of ways to give, visit our
website**

www.abilenefirstumc.org

Click on the GIVING tab at the top.

MUSICALLY SPEAKING

Clark Williamson, Director of Music Ministries

Hymns, Anthems, & Special Music in February

2-1 Choral Anthem *In Christ Alone*

Contemporary Vocal Solo (8:15) *Through All Of It*

Hymns: *Here I Am, Lord*

We've a Story to Tell the Nations

Be Thou My Vision

2-8 Choral Anthem *Blessed Be Your Name*

Hymns: *Freely, Freely*

As We Gather at Your Table

Blessed Be the Tie that Binds

2-15 Choral Anthem *Children Bound for Heaven*

Jazzy selections played on trumpet by

Chuck Brussow & Chuck Zernickow

Hymns: *Every Time I Feel the Spirit*

I Stand Amazed in the Presence

He Is Exalted

2-22 Bell Choir

Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley

Contemporary Vocal Solo (10:30)

Through All Of It

No anthem by the Chancel Choir this morning.

I am very happy to report that more members are joining different music ensembles at our church. Chancel Choir has added another alto. The Bell Choir has added 2 more ringers. Our balcony tech team has added 2 more volunteers recently. The dates for Balcony Tech Training will be Feb 1st and 8th from 11:30 to 12:15. All current and new volunteers are invited to learn more about Slides, Sound, & Live Streaming.



GPconnect
News & Information



Editor's note: An incorrect location has been listed for the April 18 workshop. Below is the corrected information -- for certain this time.

Workshops across conference to focus on Christian nationalism

Free workshops focusing on resisting Christian nationalism in our church pews and in our communities have been scheduled for throughout the first half of the year throughout the Great Plains Conference.



In 2025, the conference passed the resolution "Christian Nationalism: Mercy and Justice" both rejecting the tenets of Christian nationalism and committing to sponsor workshops "to provide education on understanding, recognizing, and eliminating the tenets of Christian Nationalism from worship and ministry in their congregation."

The Great Plains Mercy & Justice team will be hosting six practical workshops across the conference. All are from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays:

- Feb. 21: North Central and Western Kansas districts, at Salina Trinity UMC.
- Feb. 28: Southeast Kansas District, at Chanute.
- March 28: East Central and Northeast Kansas districts, at Lawrence First West Campus.
- April 11: Western and Central Nebraska districts at Kearney First UMC.
- **April 18: South Central Kansas District at Wichita Woodland UMC.**
- May 2: Eastern and Southeast Nebraska districts at Waverly.

[Register at this link.](#)

Each workshop will be led by the Mercy & Justice team, as well as our speaker, Rev. Neil Christie, executive director of The Religious Nationalism Project. These workshops are open to all clergy (active and retired), lay leaders, worship leaders, youth ministers, and other church program staff. Lunch will be provided for all attendees. If you have any questions, please reach out to Justice Collaborative Contractor, Rev. Maddie Johnson, mmjohnson@greatplainsumc.org.

Great Plains clergy learned more about the subject during Orders & Fellowship in October. You can watch the presentations by Rev. Brian Kaylor on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@GreatPlainsUMC>.

Bad Weather Policy

In case of bad weather, check KABI 1650 AM or 95.9 FM, our Facebook page, local TV stations or call Pastor Libby (785-564-1977) to see if services have been canceled. The sidewalks on the west will not be cleaned immediately of ice or snow. Please use the main parking lot.

THE LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Remember we shop for TLFP locally every week. But we are going to make it simpler for people who want to support TLFP by offering the following service. So...Do you want to help out the little pantry? Too busy to go shopping? Too cold to get out and about? Do you have family or friends that live out of town and want to help? Click on the link below and you will be directed to where it will be easy peezy for you to support this great ministry. Delivered to the church and you can shop from the comfort of your own home from wherever you are. Again, as always, everyone has been so generous and giving to TLFP. We are so thankful.

-Lisa

Amazon links for TLFP.



The little free pantry | Amazon Gift List

 [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/13UXSMKR36FAB)

<https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/13UXSMKR36FAB>

The 2025 Giving Statements are ready. Feel free to stop by during regular office business hours or they will be available Sunday, February 1 in the Narthex. All remaining statements will be mailed on Monday, February 2, 2026.



Ash Wednesday

Services

February 18, 2026

at 12 pm and 7 pm

Abilene First UMC

601 N Cedar

Lenten Lunch + Learn

Thursdays, February 26—April 2

Noon to 1 pm

We focus use the "Questions to God" small group resources that follow our Lenten worship series.

Bring your lunch and learn together.



Join us Sunday February 15

Mardi Gras Potluck

Wright Hall



We are so very thankful for the continued support of the congregation, which makes it possible to keep our Little Food Pantry going and support the community meals. The Shepherd's Run on Christmas Eve was a great success, as we had more than enough goodies provided to meet all the needs. Bread Ministries are connecting our new members to our hearts and lives. None of this work would be possible without you!



Musical Opportunity

Opportunities abound! Want to work your arms and your brain at the same time, have fun and make a joyful noise? Come join Lisa Divel for an exploration into the wonderful world of hand bells. For more info talk to Lisa at church or text her at 785-280-3965

New Worship Series Coming in February

Questions to God Worship Series

Who is God? Why do bad things happen to good people? How can I face the future? Asking questions is a normal part of human life. Having doubts is part of the human experience. We do not have to be ashamed of our doubts or hide our questions before God. In fact, God fully welcomes them and welcomes us. This Lent, we will practice bringing some of our biggest questions and doubts to God. We will practice embracing this deeply human part of ourselves as we move together toward the great and joyous mystery of Easter resurrection.



February 18 Living with Questions and Doubts—Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 6:1-6 (Ash Wednesday)

February 22 Who is God - 1 John 4:7-19

March 1 Is the Bible Reliable - Hebrews 4:12-14

March 8 Why Should I Go to Church? - Psalm 100

March 15 Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People? - Psalm 137; John 11:23-35

March 22 How and Why Do I Forgive? - Matthew 6:9-15

March 29 Why is Jesus Special? - Mark 11:1-11 (Palm Sunday)

April 2 Are You Scared of the Future? - John 13:1-7, 31b-35 (Maundy Thursday)

April 3 Why Did Jesus Have to Die? - Colossians 2:13-14 (Good Friday)

April 5 Why Be a Christian? - Mark 16:1-8 (Easter Sunday)

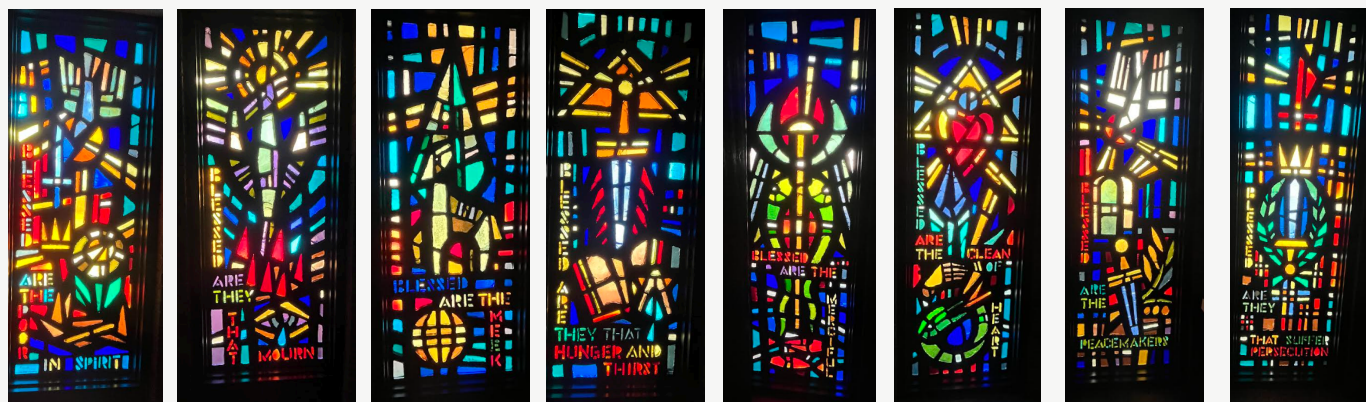
FROM THE ARCHIVES

Kevin Bailey, David & Pam Haight

The Eight beautiful windows within the NAVE of our Church represent the Eight Beatitudes of Our Lord from the "Sermon On The Mount" found in Matthew Chapter 5 of the New Testament portion of the Bible. These lovely windows were designed by the artist Heinz Reuters and fabricated and installed by the Reinarts Art Glass Studios of Winona, MN.

Beginning at the front of the east side, from north to south, then on the west side, from south to north, in that order:

1. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT Sunflower rising out of the thorns towards the crown and Chi Rho, symbolizing the soul rising from earthly difficulties toward Christ and Heavenly reward. The dove in the upper part represents the Holy Spirit lending strength and grace.
2. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN The weeping eye is a symbol for those who mourn; but the phoenix above, rising from the ashes, emphasizes that there is eternal life after death. The rising movement toward the sun is also a symbol of hope.
3. BLESSED ARE THE MEEK The lamb is a symbol of meekness the tree and globe depict the land.
4. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS The flaming sword recalls that hunger and thirst for justice often was accompanied by martyrdom and pain. Fortitude was built with the help of God, as indicated by the triangle, The Holy Trinity. Bible and shell in the lower part represent the Word of God and the sacraments by which they shall be filled.
5. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL The classical caduceus is the universal symbol of aid and mercy.
6. BLESSED ARE THE CLEAN OF HEART Flash hitting head of serpent, symbolizing victory over sin. Hand holding the lily represents purity. The heart under the triangle stands for those "who are clean of heart and shall see God".
7. BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS The sword, partly inserted into the earth, symbolizes truce. The fruits of peace are represented by the olive branch
8. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT SUFFER PERSECUTION The small crosses under the sword and palms represent the many who encountered suffering and martyrdom for justice' sake. Their reward lies in Jesus Christ, who is symbolized by the crown.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Kevin Bailey, David & Pam Haight

Music Theme: North end of west hall, back of choir loft.

The musical window has three trumpets in the upper section of the window, a harp in the center and an organ in the lower left corner. All of these instruments are used to sing the praises of the Lord.

Entry Hall Windows: From south to north tying old and new buildings together.

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD In the background is the shepherd's staff, and in the lower half is the sheep, symbolizing the flock that is the church, with Christ the shepherd and protector of the flock.

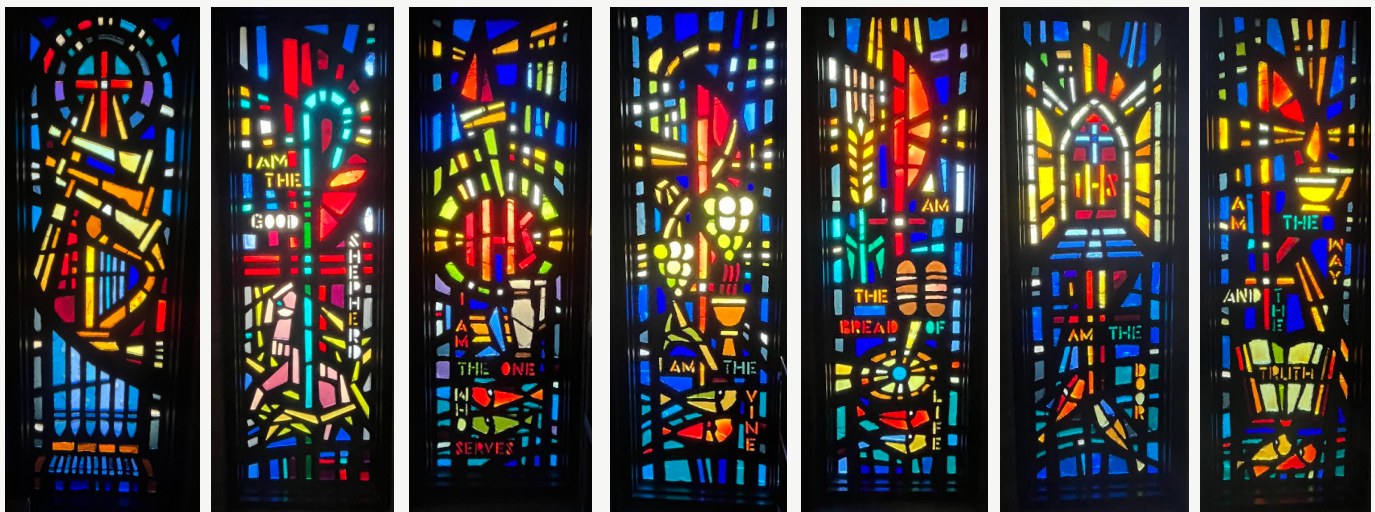
I AM THE ONE WHO SERVES Burning torch symbol of serving others. In lower area the pitcher, towel and bowl symbolic of one who serves others by acts of mercy.

I AM THE VINE Symbolic vine and branches entwined around Christ symbol. "I am the vine, and you are the branches."

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE At the top the Chi Rho symbol of Christ underneath the wheat - bread and plate with Host, the fish the symbol of the early Christian, coming to God through Communion.

I AM THE DOOR The Chi Rho at the top of the window, with the door below with another symbol for Christ IHS. Symbolic of "I am the door, and no one comes to the Father except through me."

I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH Chi Rho and lamp symbol of lighting the way, and the Bible symbol of truth.



FEBRUARY AT ABILENE FUMC

Sunday, Feb. 1 8:15 Worship Service
 9:20 Small Groups
 10:30 Worship Service
 11:30 Balcony Tech Training

Monday, Feb. 2 10:00 Card Ministry Group
 5:30 Core Meeting
 5:30 Worship Design Meeting
 6:30 Women's AA/NA Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 3 10:00 Exercise Group

Wed, Feb. 4 10:00 Staff Meeting
 3:30 Power & Light
 5:00 Missions & Outreach
 5:15 Bell Choir Practice
 6:00 Youth Group
 6:15 Chancel Choir Practice

Thursday, Feb. 5 9:30 EOTT Quilters Group

Friday, Feb. 6 Office Closed

Saturday, Feb. 7

Sunday, Feb. 8 8:15 Worship Service
 9:20 Small Groups
 10:30 Worship Service.
 11:30 Balcony Tech Training

Monday, Feb. 9 10:00 Card Ministry Group
 5:30 Core Meeting
 6:30 Women's AA/NA Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 10 10:00 Exercise Group

Wed, Feb. 11 9:30 Cancer Support Group
 3:30 Power & Light
 5:15 Bell Choir Practice
 6:00 Youth Group
 6:15 Chancel Choir Practice

Thursday, Feb. 12

Friday, Feb. 13 Office Closed

Saturday, Feb. 14 Valentine's Day

Sunday, Feb. 15 8:15 Worship Service
 9:20 Small Groups
 10:30 Worship Service
 11:30 Marti Gras Potluck
 3:00 Pam Jackson Open House

Monday, Feb. 16 Presidents' Day
 10:00 Card Ministry Group
 5:30 Core Meeting
 6:30 Women's AA/NA Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 17 10:00 Exercise Group

Wed, Feb. 18 10:00 Staff Meeting
 12:00 Ash Wednesday Service
 12:45 United Women in Faith
 3:30 Power & Light
 6:00 Youth Group
 7:00 Ash Wednesday Service
 7:40 Chancel Choir Practice

Thursday, Feb. 19

Friday, Feb. 20 Office Closed

Saturday, Feb. 21

Sunday, Feb. 22 8:15 Worship Service
 9:20 Small Groups
 10:30 Worship Service

Monday, Feb. 23 10:00 Card Ministry Group
 5:30 Core Meeting
 6:30 Women's AA/NA Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 24 10:00 Exercise Group
 7:00 EOTT Quilt Guild

Wed, Feb. 25 3:30 Power & Light
 5:15 Bell Choir Practice
 6:00 Youth Group
 6:15 Chancel Choir Practice

Thursday, Feb. 26 12:00 Lenten Lunch & Learn

Friday, Feb. 27 Office Closed

Saturday, Feb. 28



Abilene First United Methodist Church
601 N. Cedar
Abilene, KS 67410

First UMC

In-Person Sunday Worship 8:15 a.m.

In-Person, Radio, Facebook Worship 10:30 a.m.

KABI 1560AM or 95.9FM

Church Staff

The Rev. Libby Themis, Pastor

Libbythemis@gmail.com 785-564-1977

Church office hours:

Monday – Thursday 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Chris Seets, Administrative Assistant

office@abilenefirstumc.org 785-263-2623