

High Street UMC

Tower Topics



Inside Tower Topics June 2026

From Pastor Teri	2-6
Pastor Colin	7
Happenings	8
Staff/Worship	9
Youth/Family/Fellowship	11,12,13
Thank you	14
Angels on High	12

Our Vision

High Street United Methodist Church nurtures disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, **love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously** in our local communities and in worldwide connections.

Office Hours

Mon-Thurs: 9am - 3pm

Closed Friday

You will need to be buzzed in the door

765-747-8500

High Street United Methodist Church
219 S. High St., Muncie, IN 47305

Join Us For Sunday Worship

10am Traditional Worship Service

And livestream on Facebook and YouTube

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

Muncie High Street UMC

YouTube: <http://bit.ly/4tS7Ehu>

From Pastor Teri

Pastor's Life Behind the Curtain – pt. 3 (Administration)

I wish I could write next about something a little more exciting, but administration is a huge part of a pastor's life. And it's the one that no one tells – or teaches – you about in seminary. That's why it tends to overwhelm younger pastors, especially those who go straight through school without having worked elsewhere before becoming a pastor.

First, it's important to understand that under UM polity, clergy and laity have equal voice in the leadership of the church. That may seem obvious to us – especially if you've been part of the Methodist tradition for most or all of your life – but in many faith traditions, laity have little say in the governance of the church, and clergy “run the show” (so to speak). While there are a few areas in which a UM pastor has final say (e.g., worship, nominations), for the most part, clergy and laity lead together. However, UM churches are set up under a representational model; we are not “congregational.” In other words, the congregation elects its leaders to make decisions on their behalf. Decisions do not come before the entire membership of the congregation.

All of that said, someone has to take care of the day-to-day running of the church. That's usually the pastor (and staff, if there is one). Methodists (and most denominations) have a lot of processes and paperwork, and the pastor and staff manage all that. We deal with the financial matters – as decided by the Finance Committee and other committees that have input on the church's money; and we serve as the interface between the congregation and the Conference, the community, and other entities with which the church does business (e.g., the utility companies, our vendors, the fire marshal, and so many others).

Pastors also serve a “chief of staff” function, supervising any additional staff that may be employed by the church. We make certain not only that they're doing their jobs, but that they have what they need to do them.

In the UM world, there are two “orders” (or categories) of ordained clergy: elders and deacons. Pastors Teri and Colin are both Elders, ordained to Word, Service, Sacrament, and Order. Most of High Street's appointed pastors and associate pastors have been Elders or provisional Elders (clergy on the path toward ordination). Those who remember Pastor Chiyona may recall that she was a Deacon, ordained to Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. Deacons serve as the bridge between the church and the world, and often serve in appointments outside the church.

Why is this relevant or important? Because it is part of an Elder's call and ordination vows to “order” the church – and a big part of “order” is administration. Each of us has greater gifts (as well as areas of growth) in the various parts of our call and responsibilities. Self-awareness of our strengths and weaknesses is important for everyone. I've mentioned before that I have gifts in administration (and “order”), and it was one of the reasons I was appointed to High Street. Trust me when I tell you that I'm quite aware of my weaker areas as well. The key is to surround oneself as much as possible with others who can fill in the gaps. We've had some

associate pastors, staff, and wonderful laity who are strong where I am not. And I'm grateful for that.

I'm also humbled and grateful to be able to use my gifts in administration here at High Street, in ways that were greatly needed when I first arrived, and continue to be put to good use.

Administration has never been considered a particularly glamorous or exciting part of ministry, but it's definitely vital to the well-being of any healthy congregation.

April 2026 Financial Update

As previously announced, the Church Council approved a 2026 budget of \$544,554, which again was a "meet-the-needs as is" budget. We've received \$330,134 in pledges for 2026. We'll report our monthly income, which will include any one-time gifts, as well as money provided by the trustees from their accounts to cover some of our building expenses and some of the money from the 2024/25 Foundation grant, against both numbers.

As we've previously noted, our giving trends are unusual, because so many give through RMDs, QCDs, and other annual tax-minimizing means – usually at the beginning or end of the year. Such beginning of the year giving has tapered off. Our income for April was \$36,940. This means our April income was \$8440 less than the \$45,380 that's 1/12 of our \$544,554 budget. Our expenses were \$42,682. This meant our monthly expenses were \$5742 more than our income.

Our YTD income (including the one-time extravagant gift in February) is \$209,822, which is \$28,302 more than the \$181,520 we have budgeted YTD. Expenses YTD are \$185,049, which is \$24,773 less than our YTD income, but \$3529 more than we had budgeted for YTD. There were no extraordinary or unusual expenses during April.

We encourage you to keep up your support as 2026 continues. You may give online at www.highstreetumc.breezechms.com/give/online . You may also text your offering to 765/222-5007, or mail your checks into the church at 219 S. High Street, Muncie, IN 47305. As always, you may bring your offering or pledge form into the church in person; we'd love to see and talk with you. If you're able to give extra, please prayerfully consider doing so. Your support means everything.

April 2026 Financial Snapshot:

Budgeted: \$45,380 (1/12 of \$544,554)

Pledged for 2026: \$27,511 (1/12 of \$330,134)

Actual income: \$36,940

Expenses: \$42,682

Net Income (April): -\$5742

YTD 2026 Financial Snapshot:

Budgeted YTD: \$181,520 (4/12 of \$544,554)

Pledged YTD: \$110,044 (4/12 of \$330,134)

Income YTD: \$209,822

Expenses YTD: \$185,049

Net Income YTD: \$28,302 (Budget v. Income)

Foundation Lawsuit Update

We've provided you with several updates on the petition and subsequent lawsuit filed by the Foundation to divide the Rowles scholarship fund: half to continue under the original terms of the gift, and half to become the Rowles unrestricted fund. We are pleased to report that Judge Calhoun issued her decision on May 5, agreeing with the Foundation's position and authorizing the modification of the trust as requested. At the strong recommendation of our attorneys, we have not widely disseminated the decision until now, waiting until the time for appeal by the Attorney General had expired. However, key members of church leadership were informed at the time of the decision, as was Conference leadership. This story (and the timeline for the appeal) is the reason we delayed the publication of *Tower Topics* this month.

We are providing you with this extensive update in addition to the trial results because we became aware of a great deal of misinformation and untruths being circulated about the petition, the trial, and the evidence presented. As always, we are committed to transparency about our finances and financial situation.

As a reminder from our first informational article on this action and lawsuit: the High Street UMC Foundation ("Foundation") is a separate entity from the High Street UMC. It oversees and manages – through its Board – certain trusts and monetary assets left to it by members, usually after their deaths through their wills or other means, for the benefit of High Street UMC. Some of the trust accounts are unrestricted, and some are quite restrictive. A few are somewhere in-between.

The Foundation Board members take their responsibility very seriously. Any member of the church can apply for a grant from the Foundation for a purpose related to church work, mission, or ministries; or specific to one of the various trust funds. As you've read in our financial updates every month for over a year, the Foundation provided a generous grant to the church at the end of 2024 to make up the rather substantial shortfall between the amount needed to meet the 2025 budget and the amount pledged through our 2025 Stewardship campaign. This grant was conditioned on the church continuing to maintain its current level of connectional giving to the district and conference (which is a United Methodist obligation). Our connectional giving level has yet to reach the level of a full tithe.

At the same time the Board awarded this grant, they re-engaged in a serious discussion of the likely future needs of the church, including upcoming scholarships. This was a discussion the

Board began several years ago with their legal and financial advisors. Approximately 4/5 of the total assets which the Foundation oversees is attributable to the Rowls Scholarship fund – an extremely restrictive trust. The corpus of the Rowls trust has more than doubled from the original gift from Garth and Beulah Rowls, while the number of persons eligible for scholarship grants from the trust has decreased dramatically over the same number of years.

After significant prayerful consideration, the Board voted unanimously to file the necessary petition with the state Attorney General's office to alter the terms of the Rowls trust to split it in half: with half subject to the terms as originally set forth by Garth and Beulah Rowls, and half to be unrestricted – both trusts still to be administered by the Foundation. If this were done, each half would still contain more than the original gift from the Rowls. There would be plenty from the proceeds of the scholarship trust corpus to award scholarships to those applying for them; and the Foundation also would have a trust with more flexibility to use for the benefit of other church needs.

While we are a people of faith and prayer, we also recognize the realities of our context and our congregation. We received slightly more than \$330,000 in pledges for 2026, with a bare bones budget of \$544,554. That's a gap of more than \$200,000. The Board believed it was sinful to have over \$4 million dollars in a trust, when most of it could not be used – even for the purpose the original gift was given – due to declining membership and the aging of the congregation. And neither High Street nor the Foundation has received a significant posthumous gift since the death of Greg Huffman in April 2022 (those funds also have restrictions on their use).

The Board and its Scholarship Committee will continue to award scholarships from the Rowls scholarship trust, and will have plenty of funds to do so. The Foundation Board will now also have a new trust of unrestricted funds with which to provide grants for the benefit of the church. This does not solve our financial difficulties, but it may provide us with some breathing space as we move forward.

If you have any questions, please ask Brian Wolfe, chair of the Foundation, or Pastor Teri directly.

Church Utilities

The sanctuary is set at 72° year-round. This is at the recommendation of Reynolds & Co., the organization that services our organ. Clearly, we all appreciate the organ, and it's worth a lot of money. So, we want to care for it properly.

We know that in winter, some find this temperature too warm; and in summer, some think it's too cold. Our best suggestion is to dress in layers. Additionally, PLEASE do not prop any of the doors to the outside open (either the front "High Street" doors or the glass atrium doors). That disrupts the temperature equilibrium set in the church and sanctuary, and our heat pumps have

to work harder and longer to re-establish the set temperatures – which also raises our utility costs.

We appreciate your good stewardship of the facility and everything we continue to cherish here at High Street.

SCAMS – Again

Yes, they're at it again. Scammers are getting more and more sophisticated in the ways they target us – through email and texts. They prey on trusted relationships (like the one with your pastors), and that grieves the hearts of both me and Pastor Colin.

As a reminder, if you receive a strange message (by text or email) that looks like it might be from either me or Pastor Colin or anyone on staff here, double check the return email address. Our email domain is "munciehighstreet[dot]com." Is the wording of the message stilted or strange (like it was written by someone for whom English is not their first language, or by Artificial Intelligence)? Does it ask for you to do something "because we can't call right now" or are "in a meeting and can't be interrupted"? These are all red flags for a SCAM.

As always, we want you to know we will NEVER ask you to buy gift cards, or otherwise spend money, by text or email. We also don't want you to click any links in those SCAMMY messages, just in case they contain viruses. Never be afraid to contact us directly – by phone, email, or text – let me stress DIRECTLY, not through the message you've received, to double-check if it's a legitimate message. We don't mind you being cautious at all.

Custodian Needed

As we reported previously, Joel Dale is planning to retire soon. We wish him well, and we will certainly miss him when he does. However, this leaves a critical role soon to be empty. Our best source for referrals is YOU. If you know of anyone who might be interested in a part-time custodial position with the church, please have them contact either Diana Smiley or Pastor Teri directly.

From Pastor Colin

Folks, you may not believe it, but this is already my last newsletter article. It's far more difficult to write than I expected. Time certainly flies when you're having fun. And this year at High Street seems to have flown by. Thank you all for making my term at High Street fun, meaningful, and faithful. I've had a front row seat here to a lot of great things. Thanks for all you have done and are doing - and keep up the good work!

Most of all, I've been glad to see what we do for our neighbors. Tuesdays are great days to be here, when folks know that we are people who can help when they need food or material support. Before the phones even start ringing on Tuesday morning - and do they ever ring! - a lot of work has gone into preparing to distribute substantial bags of food. And when folks need a little help with bills, we've got great people here coordinating those connections. We don't do any of this for recognition or appreciation; we do it because it's the faithful thing to do. But the work is appreciated, and it makes a difference. Thank you all for supporting our neighbors every week.

When other particular needs arise, High Street steps up then, too. Our calendar year starts with huge support for the Muncie Mission's Walk-a-Mile. Through the school year, we're present with elementary students through Kids Hope. We end the year with Angel Tree, helping kids and families celebrate Christmas well. High Street is always ready to help. Thank you so much for showing your faith through good works all year round. There are a lot of things that High Street does well, and I've been so glad to be with you in your good work.

Going to Richmond will require some changes in my habits, like my grocery trips. I won't have Thursday lunch anymore! Daggone it! It seems like we're often gathered around food here... And while I know the people at Central UMC are wonderful, faithful folks, I'll miss the conversations and connections I've had with you all. One upside to this change is that I'll still be a Muncie resident, and I'll be able to see, from close by, all the good things High Street has ahead.

I've always tried to abide by the campsite rule - leave things in as good a shape as you found them. Whether I have or haven't succeeded at that, I am always assured that there is grace. The One who begins any good work in us is faithful to complete it. So be assured, High Street, that even through changes, there is One who is staying with you, and who will continue to bless you, equip you, and empower you to do what is good and right and faithful. Peace to you all.

Men's Breakfast

Spring's Showers are Gone!

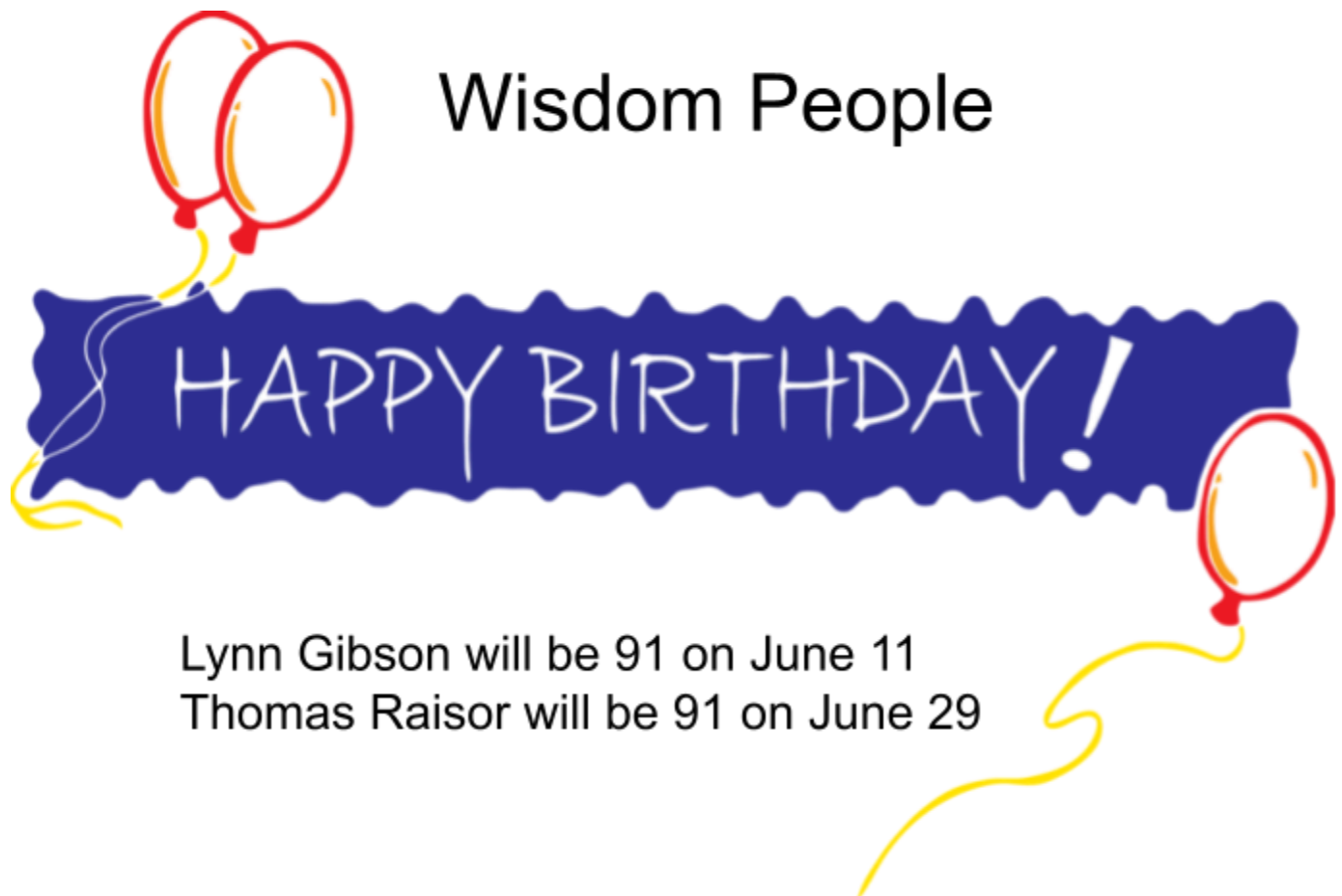
Summer's Flowers are Blooming!

Join us for our monthly Men's Breakfast on Wednesday, June 17th, at 8:00 am for good food, good friends, and good thoughts from Jim Needham. See you there.

Ruth Circle

Lunch at Ivanhoe's June 9, 2026.

Hope to see you there!



High Street Church Staff

Lead Pastor: Rev. Teri Crouse
tcrouse@munciehighstreet.com

Associate Pastor: Rev. Colin Cress
ccress@munciehighstreet.com

Church Administrator and Finance Director: Diana Smiley
dsmiley@munciehighstreet.com

Children's, Youth & Family Ministries Director: Joy Bricker
jbricker@munciehighstreet.com

Angels on High Preschool Director: Elisha Lynn
aohpreschool@munciehighstreet.com

Director of Music: Dr. Andrew Crow
andrew.crow.dma@gmail.com

Organist: Dr. Sally Kang
Soyeon.Kang@bsu.edu

Handbell Director: Dr. Ann Hicks
amhicks2@bsu.edu

Worship Schedule

June Worship

June 7:	Holy Communion
Sermon:	One Thing After Another
Scripture:	Matthew 9:9-13, 18-20
June 14:	Blessing of Campers
Sermon:	See All the People
Scripture:	Matthew 9:35-10, 8:9-23
June 21:	Pastor's Colin's last Sunday
Sermon:	Staying Connected
Scripture:	John 15:1-8
June 28:	
Sermon:	Hear All the People
Scripture:	Matthew 10:24-39



Pray for our CAMPERS!!

We have 4 campers that will be attending one of our Indiana United Methodist Camps in June and July!

Please add them to your prayers ~
that they will have a safe week, make new friends,
and learn a ton about JESUS!

**Esther Furlong •
Lakewood Elementary Camp**

**Joseph Bricker •
Camp Adventure Junior High Camp**

**Josiah Bricker •
Epworth Forest High School Camp**

**Audrey Crow •
Indicoso High School Camp**

**Would you like to send one of our campers an encouraging
EMAIL or a snail mail letter? Plan ahead! See Ms. Joy for Addresses!**

Children • Youth • Family

• June 2026 High Street United Methodist Church

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SUNDAY MORNING

- **June 7:** No Sunday School
- **June 17:** God Wants Us to Know Him & Jesus Gave His Followers a Mission
- **June 14:** The Disciples Replaced Judas
- **June 21:** The Holy Spirit Came
- **June 28:** Peter Preached in Jerusalem

Sunday School @ 9am
Children's Church @ 10am

DON'T FORGET!!

June 7-11 • 6-8:30pm
VBS for All Youth!
Sign up with Ms. Joy



UPCOMING FUN:

Dates to be Announced:

- **Rescheduled Putt-Putt for End of the Year Youth Party!**
Send Ms. Joy your vacation dates so I can try to plan accordingly!

Also (hopefully) coming:

- Trip to Water Park
- Trip to State Park

jbricker@munciehighstreet.com

Angels on High Preschool & PDO

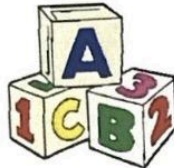
A special ministry of High Street UMC

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Director, Elisha Lynn
aohpreschool@munciehighstreet.com
or 765-216-7919.



June 2026



**Summer PDO
begins on
Tuesday, May 26
Preschool will
resume on August
24.**

Donations

- Sidewalk Chalk
- Spray Sunscreen
- Paper Plates
- Plastic Forks/Spoons



We are so excited for warmer weather and the summer months at Angels on High!
Our Preschool Teachers will be hosting Summer Camps throughout June and July, and our PDO students will be enjoying field trips around downtown Muncie. We are especially thankful to be so close to the Muncie Children's Museum and Made in Muncie Pottery - a special place to us, as the owner's sons attended AOH!
We are looking forward to a fun-filled summer at AOH!

Thank You to Larry Crabtree for the monetary donation toward cookies for our preschool graduation reception. We had a wonderful turn out and loved celebrating together! Congrats to the Class of 2026!!!

THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE HSUMC MEMBERS WHO HAVE PLANTED FLOWERS AND HELPED CARE FOR THE LANDSCAPING AT ANGELS ON HIGH! WE APPRECIATE ALL YOU DO TO HELP KEEP OUR SCHOOL LOOKING BEAUTIFUL!

Recipients of Garth Rowls Scholarship:

- Hayley Arnett: Ball State University
- Hayden Arnett: Ball State University
- Joshua Bricker: Taylor University
- Charlie Crabtree: Purdue University
- Abby Crow: Ball State University
- Jenny Donnelly: Ball State University
- Clayton Garrison: Ball State University
- Evie Gehring: University of Cincinnati
- Colleen Tiernan: Ball State University

Congratulations to all of our
very deserving scholars!

Thank You from Jason Bricker

Dear High Street Family,

As I graduated from Purdue and closed this academic chapter of my life, I have been reflecting on the past eight years. God has been with me and my family in so many ways along my journey. My return to school was possible only through the scholarship fund kindly established by Garth and Beulah Rowls, as administered by the High Street Foundation.

The Rowls Scholarship Trust has meant a great deal to me and my family. As a non-traditional student, it assisted greatly with our financial burden. The scholarships allowed me to focus on my studies while continuing to pursue the education I felt God had placed on my heart. Because of these scholarships, I have been able to grow not only academically, but also personally and spiritually throughout this journey.

One of the things I have felt especially called to do is pay it forward by using the skills and knowledge I have gained to help educate young technicians and develop future engineers. Passing along what I have learned throughout my career and education has become one of my greatest joys.

Your support, prayers, and encouragement have carried me through many long days, challenges, and victories along the way. I am deeply grateful to belong to a church family that believes in investing in future generations and helping students achieve their goals.

As I prepare to begin this next season of life, I do so with sincere gratitude and appreciation. Thank you for being part of this journey, and for the support of students like me by the Foundation through the Rowls trust.

With gratitude,

Jason Bricker