



FUMCWA – 7520 West Lapham Street, West Allis, WI 53214 / 414-774-5500

DECEMBER 2022

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FUMCWA PASTORAL LETTER WITH PRAYER

Dear FUMCWA Family in Christ,

Blessed Christmas to all God's People!

Years ago, I was asked during the Children's Sermon, between Jesus and Santa, who is better? While puzzled by the question and not knowing what to say, I tried with the following reply: Jesus is everywhere whereas Santa lives at the North Pole; Jesus is with us 24/7 as per His promise whereas Santa comes only during the Christmas season; Jesus comes into our hearts and finds them as His dwelling place whereas Santa lets us sit on his lap; Jesus gives us joy whereas Santa makes us chuckle and gives us laughter; Jesus' heart is compassionate and filled with love whereas Santa has a big belly like a bowl full of jelly; Jesus is our gift by giving His life on the cross whereas Santa leaves the gifts under the tree. In reality, as a Pastor, I don't intend to compare Santa with Jesus for some theological reasons. I did come up with a quick list of comparisons in order to satisfy the kids for the time being.

Jesus can't be compared as I read Luke 2:10-11: "Then the angel said to them, 'do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.' For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Jesus is good news to the entire humanity because unconditional love was born; amazing grace was born; pursuit of truth was born; forgiving mercy was born; a healthy relationship was born; overall, the fullness of life was born. That's why, this season of Christmas reminds us that Jesus is good news, not just to Christians but to the entire humanity - God sent His only Son to love the world (John 3:16).

Jesus can't be compared because He is our Savior, promising to save us from sins, sickness, troubles, difficulties, trials, and temptations. When we say, Jesus is our Messiah it means 'savior.' When we say, Jesus is a Good Shepherd, it means 'savior.' When we say, Jesus is a Prince of Peace, it means 'savior.' When we say, Jesus is a Lamb of God, it means 'savior.' When we say, Jesus is King of kings, it means 'savior.' When we say, Jesus is Emmanuel, it means He is with us to save. The synonyms of 'savior' are many - rescuer, defender, liberator, redeemer, deliverer, guardian, protector, preserver, and friend in need. Let us celebrate Christmas as a festival of good news and salvation.

PRAYER: Thank You, Jesus, for being our good news and our Savior every moment of my/our life. May we commit ourselves to be a channel of your good news and your salvation to people in need. Amen!

MONTHLY STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE by Peter Lambert

At First United Methodist Church, we have much to be thankful for, and I'd like to begin by saying that I'm grateful for all of you. It's because of your faithful prayers, presence, gifts, and service that First Church is the welcoming, life-changing congregation that it is today. Your faith and generosity make a difference in countless lives and our church wouldn't be the same without you. Growing up, I learned that stewardship is a big word that simply means the management of something that's important. And biblical stewardship involves us managing that which God has given to us. When we talk about stewardship, we're not only speaking of giving financially, but we're also talking about giving our time. God commands us to give back to him financially, however, how we use our time is just as important. We must never put anything before God. It's important to give of our time just as we give of our money. As an adult, I understand that stewardship is the faithful response to a loving God who is full of mercy and grace. We demonstrate this with the use of gifts that God has provided, fulfilling God's mission in the world. Ultimately, our response to God is out of gratitude for what God has given to us. As many of you know, I came to know Jesus as a child growing up in this church. And over the years, I've found that I'm not alone. I'm just one of the many people



who decided to follow Jesus at a young age, and one of the many people who came to know Christ because of the children's ministries. In fact, around 80% of people in churches today decided to follow Jesus before the age of 18. Almost half of them made this decision before age 12. However, it becomes significantly rarer for a person to decide to follow Christ after the age of 18. And this shouldn't really surprise us. After all, it was Jesus that said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14). We need children's ministries because children matter to God. Jesus made it quite clear that all children matter to God. He values them not only for what they will become in the future but for who they are today. We are shaping the future of our church in the children's ministries of today. We are so blessed as a congregation to have such an array of youth ministries: AWANA, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation, and Children's Choirs, just to name a few. As a parent, this is especially meaningful because we get to see our children's spiritual growth firsthand. How many adult problems would be solved if every preschooler who entered our churches left knowing they have a Heavenly Father who loves them? Or what if every elementary school child left knowing they can place their trust in Jesus for every area of their lives? Or what if every High School student left knowing their place in God's story and made a lifetime commitment to serving Christ? We want children to visit our church, find a place where they feel loved and accepted, come to know Christ, and continue to grow through fun, engaging, and life-changing experiences. We want parents to find a place where their lives are impacted by what they see happening in the lives of their children and to feel encouraged and supported as they nurture their child's spiritual development. Because of your generous and faithful gifts, our church can continue to provide children's ministries in a loving and caring environment where children can be drawn to Jesus Christ and learn to seek Him earnestly, serve Him faithfully, and share Him boldly with others.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FUMCWA

OFFERING UPDATE:

SUNDAY	ENVELOPES	ELECTRONIC	TOTAL
October 23	\$2434.00	\$1335.00	\$3769.00
October 30	\$4176.00	\$1053.00	\$5229.00
November 6	\$4147.00	\$3958.00	\$8105.00
November 13	\$2136.25	\$960.00	\$3096.25
November 20	\$4191.00	\$1531.00	\$5722.00

*In the spirit of giving,
we thank you for
your generosity!*

October Coins of Love: Philip and Timothy Stains Memorial Home \$385.70

November Coins of Love: Joy House (Milwaukee Rescue Mission) \$299.00

Thanksgiving Special Offering: \$1925.00

GIVE ONLINE (Easy, Fast, Secure) Scan the QR Code. The QR Code will take you directly to the FUMCWA Online Giving page.



DECEMBER SERMON THEMES/SCRIPTURES

12/4 Second Sunday of Advent, Matthew 3:1-12, "Standing as a Signal"

12/11 Third Sunday of Advent, Matthew 11:2-11, "The Lord's Highway"

12/18 Fourth Sunday of Advent, Matthew 1:18-25, "Give You a Sign"

12/24 Christmas Eve Services, Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96, Luke 2:1-20, " God of the Light"

12/25 Christmas Sunday, *Singing and Witnessing Sunday*

BRUNCH IN BETHLEHEM SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 (Following Second Service)

Come and share in this Holiday tradition as we usher in the Christmas Season. Enjoy a wonderful brunch, fellowship, and the retelling of the Nativity Story by our church youth. This is a great opportunity to invite family, friends, and neighbors to experience the love and fellowship of FUMCWA.





FUMCWA FUTURE GOALS - An Update: Ministry Goals and Plans for the next 2-3 years for our church have been formally adopted by the Annual Church Conference on November 20, 2022. This means they are now owned by the entire church. In other words, these plans and goals are the property of the entire congregation. Every church member is a stakeholder in these goals and plans. Every church member has a responsibility to pray, participate, and promote them in every way possible. The Church Council is committed to strategically and systematically continuing the journey including a process of accountability in place. As they say, it takes an entire village, meaning the entire congregation, to make it

happen for the sake of being a living witness among and for the communities here and everywhere. With God Almighty and people's faithful efforts, we can do it together because we are all in this together. Let us claim together God's Presence, God's Power, and God's Promises. A Future with HOPE!

2022 ANNUAL CHURCH/CHARGE CONFERENCE: Our church's Annual Church Conference was held on Sunday, November 20, 2022, with the presiding leadership of District Superintendent Ebenezer Insor. A total of 34 members were present at the Church Conference. The Lay Leadership report also known as "Nominations" for the year 2023, the Budget for 2023, and the Membership Care report were unanimously approved by the members. Three Lay Preachers' certificates were renewed and they are Tom Bolton, Julie Bryson, and Don Gilpin. The Finance Committee report for 2022, the Audit report for 2021, the report of Trustees for 2022 were presented for information. More importantly, the goals/plans for the next 2-3 years were unanimously adopted by the Church Conference.

FUMCWA's DECISION ON AFFILIATION WITH UMC: After hosting three Listening Sessions (August, October, and November 2022) and hearing members' voices with opinions, choices, and preferences, the Church Council that met on November 11, 2022, has unanimously decided to continue their affiliation with the *United Methodist Church* through the leadership of Wisconsin Annual Conference. Furthermore, the Church Council continues to pray for discernment of the 2024 General Conference and the Council of Bishops for the future of the United Methodist Church. God cares about you and so do we!
A Future with HOPE!

SCHOLARSHIP AND ENDOWMENT: The "first and special meeting" of FUMCWA Scholarship and Endowment Fund Inc. "was called to order at 7:30 pm on October 11, 1966, by Arthur R. Ott" with seven other people in attendance for the purpose of passing the first By-Laws. The Fund was created in 1966 as a separate corporation for the benefit of and to provide scholarships for individuals entering into ministry. At that first meeting, Arthur Ott was elected President, Reginald Hislop, Jr., Vice President, Jeanette Lean Secretary, and Elsie Ott, Treasurer. Additional directors included: Loraine Harsh, Irene Witte, Wesley Mueller, and Betty Anderson. We want to celebrate and thank the original directors for their wisdom and foresight in establishing the Scholarship and Endowment Corporation. We started out our 56th year with total assets of \$991,688.85 and as of October 31, 2022, we had \$756,901.15. Most of the decrease was in market-related losses from our investments. We provided \$111,000.00 in funding for the benefit of the church and in scholarships. These included \$500.00 for Vacation Bible School, five \$1,000.00 High School Scholarships to the WA/WM High Schools, and six \$2,000.00 Scholarships to Members of FUMCWA. The Trustees requested and received \$93,500.00 for three major improvements to the church building. This included \$45,400.00 for tuckpointing, \$25,000.00 for the repair of the front and back steps, and \$23,000.00 for the replacement of four outside doors. Like any organization older members are moving on and new younger members are volunteering to take their place. We want to thank and celebrate Becky Barrington, Michelle Fuller, and Karen Pitterle as our youngest members and Jane Henderson, Joanna Schachtely, Carole Schumm, and Linda Sather for continuing to serve. Next year, they will make history as the first all-female Board of Directors of the Scholarship and Endowment Corporation.



THANKSGIVING THANKS: We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all who helped with the Thanksgiving Food Basket Ministry. Thank you for your monetary donations to the Coins of Love in September or for taking an envelope from the lollipop tree to fund a basket. We are so grateful for your prayers and continued support as we again helped our neighbors in need. Together we made a difference for 156 families. Many thanks to all who helped with food pickup, unloading, box opening, packing bags, distributing food, and traffic control. A lot of people working together make this ministry happen. By the time the baskets reach their destination, they are not only filled with food but with a big helping of kindness and care. We are rewarded by thoughtful handwritten cards of thanks and by seeing the joy and gratitude on the people's faces as they received their Thanksgiving Baskets. Thanks be to God!

FILL THE STOCKING ADVENT Mission Project: The Children's Sunday School classes will be collecting socks for the homeless during Advent again this year. Did you know that socks are the most frequently requested – but least frequently donated – clothing items at homeless shelters? That's why every Advent Season FUMCWA collects new socks to benefit homeless people in our community. Please bring new socks for men, women, and children and put them in the large red Christmas Stocking in The Gathering Room. Thanks for helping our homeless neighbors right here in our community.



HOLIDAY BAZAAR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH invites all to support this mission-supporting holiday event.

Join us for sweet treats, hot drinks, gift buying, fun, and fellowship. There's something for everyone! Come shop for some amazing gifts: Christmas Home Décor and Ornaments, Teacher Gifts, Specialty Cookies, Homemade Candy, Quick Breads, Handcrafted Jewelry, Crocheted Gifts.

Invite your friends and neighbors!

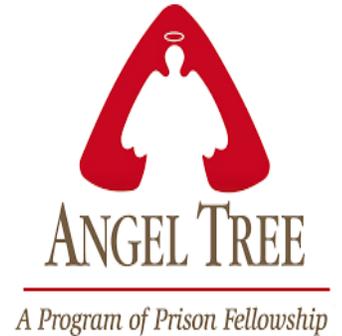
FAITH COMMUNITY—UPCOMING EVENTS

December Mission Moment: Second Saturday Servants will be serving hot casseroles on December 10. Please bring the hot casseroles to the church kitchen by 7:45 am. The guests enjoy and appreciate our food. Winter is near and so is the need for warm hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves for our less blessed neighbors. Please bring these items to our Mission Corner in the Narthex. Many thanks to our many talented crafters. We will take the knit items to the Morning Glory meal sites and to the West Allis Good Samaritan Resource Center. Socks and grooming products are also needed. Thank you for serving our neighbors in need.



December's "Coins of Love" will support God's Parking Lot Hot Dog Ministry. This ministry serves our neighbors and friends hot dog lunches each Saturday afternoon throughout the summer months.

FAMILY TIES ARE STRONGER THAN PRISON BARS: Many prisoners' children live in the FUMCWA neighborhood. We can help them through the Prison Fellowship Angel Tree. On Sunday, November 20, a Christmas tree was set up in the Narthex decorated with paper angels that bear the names and gift wishes of children whose parents are incarcerated. You are invited to select one or more angels from the tree, purchase the gift listed, wrap and return it to our church by the morning of Sunday, December 11. The gifts will be distributed to the children that day by volunteers. This year our church will serve more than 35 children and their parents. It can be our way of introducing to them the greatest gift of all, the love of Jesus Christ. On Sunday, December 11, we will need many volunteers to help deliver the Angel Tree gifts. Please call Judy Affeldt (414-690-4560) with any questions or to volunteer for this wonderful project.



United Methodist Women (UWIF): Our Holiday Bazaar is Saturday, December 10, from 9:00 am-2:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. Please plan to join us for some delicious sweet treats, specialty cookies, pumpkin bread, gingerbread cookies by Linda Zeman, jewelry by Sue Stachelski, gift items, beautiful Christmas decor and ornaments, crocheted items, and much more. You will not be disappointed!

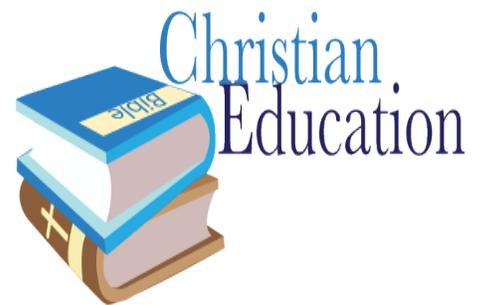


Our Unity Circle Christmas Party will be held on Monday, December 12, at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room. Please bring a food item to share. We also will have the installation of our officers. Please remember to bring an unwrapped toy, book, puzzle, gift card, or anything else for the Ronald McDonald House. We will not have a Circle Meeting in January but will resume again on Monday, February 13, at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room. The Executive Committee will meet on Monday, January 23, at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room.

FAITH COMMUNITY—UPDATES, NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION INVITATION from Bonnie Chesky: As your Adult Christian Education Committee, we strive to offer a variety of classes to the congregation to grow in faith and knowledge of Jesus, the Bible, and our United Methodist heritage. I pray you will read over what we are offering beginning in January and choose to join one of the classes. You will be blessed! A friend who is in the class *What's So Amazing About Grace* said she is amazed at how the book is speaking to her and challenging her faith. She has been in Sunday morning classes for years but still finds God has new things to tell her! I want to offer a suggestion for a 5-minute Morning Reflection with Pastor Glenn McDonald on your phone. I have been following him for a few years and am blessed every day. He even offers it as a podcast so you can be shaving or putting on makeup and still listen and be inspired!

Go to: glennsreflections.com and add your name to receive the daily reflection. As we enter the season of Advent, I know he will have some special messages in explaining the Bible and Christ's birth and sharing other scientific and historical facts too.



With Heartfelt Thanks: We are so grateful for the thoughtful cards, prayers, and kind words after the death of our Mother/Grandmother. We are very blessed to have such a wonderful church family to support us during this difficult time. We are comforted knowing that Lynne is no longer in pain and that she can live in peace with God in heaven. Sue & Grace Nailen and Family



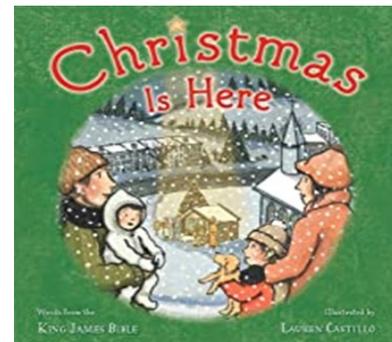
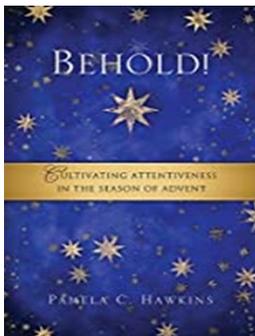
Our food pantry has seen more people in need of food the past few times, and the need will even be greater in the coming months. Some food items that we give on a normal basis are being limited when buying in large quantities so we are asking help from the congregation in supplying some of these items: Macaroni and Cheese, pasta in 1 lb. packages, graham crackers, instant mashed potatoes, chicken noodle soup, cream soups, and chunky soups. Any help we can get is greatly appreciated. Personal care items are also a great need. Thank you to all who have continued to help with supplying large-handled paper bags and small red Sendik's bags.

The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library: Hope, peace, love, and joy – these are the wishes that your Library Committee has for you this Advent and Christmas season. Please visit the Bernice Nailen Memorial Library to find these and other seasonal titles:

Behold: Cultivating Attentiveness in the Season of Advent by Pamela Hawkins

Blue Christmas: Devotions of Light in a Season of Darkness by Todd Outcalt

Christmas is Here! Adapted from The King James Bible and Lauren Castillo



From Lance Lambert / Events Coordinator:

Methodist Movie Matinee & Discussion - Sunday, December 18, (Noon – 3 pm): I'm heeding your wishes and adding a December film! Join us after 2nd service in the sanctuary to watch the 1944 holiday classic, ***Going My Way***, starring Bing Crosby and Barry Fitzgerald. Like our November film, this is a lighter, "feel good" movie that was nominated for 10 and received 7 Academy Awards. A new, young priest is taking over a parish from an established older veteran. One of the biggest conflicts in style is the handling of the church youth. Along with dealing with the young people, there is also financial stress at the church - issues with which the modern church still struggles. Please come and enjoy this musical comedy, popcorn, and beverages **Free of Charge!** Stay after the movie for pizza and a brief discussion. A free-will offering will be taken to help pay for the pizzas. ***Friends and family are welcome!!!***



This QR Code will take you directly to the church website.



Laurie Halvorsen, Senior Ministries Coordinator: The month of December hosts two special events for Senior League: a special coach trip is planned and our annual Senior League Christmas Luncheon. I hope you are planning to attend one of these.

Senior League Coach Trip Christmas Stars Saturday December 3

One day coach trip, attractions Nativities at FUMC in Oshkosh, Lunch included at the Fox River Brewery and the Christmas Star Production in Appleton. All tickets have been purchased. **We leave Franklin 7:15 am, West Allis 7:30 am.**

Senior League Christmas Luncheon Wednesday, December 7 (Ticket Sale ended 11/30)

Punch 11:30 am; Luncheon 12 Noon

Menu: Breaded Pork Loin or Chicken Parmesan Crusted or Chicken Pecan Crusted
Garlic Butter Baby Bakers, Stir Fry Blend, French Rolls w/Butter
Salted Caramel Turtle Cheesecake with Coffee

Program at 1:00 pm: The Milwaukee High School of the Arts, Raymond Roberts, Director

Join us for Fun, Food and Fellowship in 2023 when we celebrate our 48th Year with Senior League!!



Concluding Words: Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Christmas is a joyous occasion all across the world and let us celebrate with joy, peace, and love! Jesus is the reason for the season and let Jesus be the center of our celebrations as He is the Celebrity of Christmas. Wishing a Joy-filled Christmas to all God's people!

David Affeldt
Chair, Church Council

Sam Royappa
Lead Pastor

