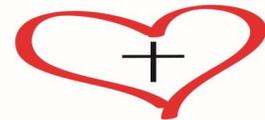


Methodist the messenger

Celebrating 70 Years of The Methodist Messenger (1953-2023)

God cares about you



and so do we

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



Centenary Celebration of the Church Building (1923-2023)

FEBRUARY 2023

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Dear FUMCWA Family in Christ,

2023 Lenten Greetings!

We begin the season of Lent the last week of February from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Historically and traditionally, the season of Lent is a time of spiritual preparation for renewal both individually as a Christian and collectively as a Faith Community. On the one hand, 'spiritual renewal' is about engaging oneself in spiritual disciplines such as prayer, the study of God's word, journaling, reflections, fasting, almsgiving, and daily worship. On the other hand, 'spiritual renewal' also means capturing glimpses of God in everyday acts such as acts of kindness known as (in the Wesleyan language) 'acts of mercy' - thanking trash collectors and postal workers, appreciating first responders, offering one or two dollars to someone at the stop lights, sharing the good news 'God bless you' to a stranger, a simple conversation expressing support and encouragement, and other such moments of Christian joy. These are the simple and small glimmers of God's grace in the everyday tasks of life.

There is absolutely a sense of blessedness in greeting strangers and sharing a cup of water when someone is thirsty and sharing a meal when someone is hungry. Jesus left the wilderness, after spending forty days and nights, to move into the communities feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and preaching to the needy. Jesus wanted to be a 'Jesus' of everyday life, showing the presence and grace of God. Jesus wanted ordinary people to meet God in the mundane and to wonder about the amazing power of God through simple acts of mercy or kindness. Eventually, people received a life-giving hope by faith. One of the simple ways to grow a local church is to shift our focus on others who are in need of a smile, a handshake, a word of grace, a grateful attitude, a text with a blessing, an email with a prayer, a song of praise, and many other simple gestures.

In the season of Lent this year, I invite all of us to act on these graceful measures. Let us lay a foundation with acts of kindness or means of mercy that we together build a strong Kingdom of God through FUMCWA. We belong to each other; we affect each other; we need each other. "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me/us all the days of my/our life and I/we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:6

PRAYER: Lord of Lent, help us to be a blessing to people in need. Thank You for all the blessings of life and faith. Amen.

MONTHLY STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

By Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

Sasha's Generosity

Scott tells a story about when his church group visited Russia and he met a ten-year-old Russian orphan named Sasha who, for some reason, latched on to him. Sasha took Scott by the arm and led him through the orphanage, showing off his room and the place where he ate meals. All the while Sasha's eyes were filled with joy and laughter. In spite of the fact that Scott spoke little Russian, and Sasha spoke no English, they connected. As the church group prepared to depart, Sasha sat beside Scott, pulled a silver ring from his finger, and held it out for Scott to take. His eyes filled with tears and Scott spoke the only Russian word he knew - "Nyet, nyet." (No, no.) This child, who had nothing in the world to call his own except this ring, desperately wanted to give this ring to him. When asked why Sasha wanted to give his only possession away, Sasha responded through an interpreter, "Because I am so thankful Scott came." For Sasha, abundant joy, extreme poverty, and a heart filled with gratitude overflowed with a wealth of generosity. For many of us who have so much, we want more. We are not thankful for what we have and always look for "something more." And truth be told, it's never enough. What would happen if, by God's grace, our desire to gain more and have more could be transformed by gratitude into a heartfelt desire to give more? What would happen if, in a spirit of gratitude, we spent as much time figuring out ways to give as we spend figuring out how to earn, have, and keep? Can you recall a time when you were truly thankful despite negative circumstances? Can you recall a time when someone who could least afford it gave you a generous gift? What was it like? How did you respond?



The Church Financial results for FUMCWA for December 2022 are as follows:

| | Year To Date Actual | Year To date Budget | Difference |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Giving & Other Income | \$339,298.27 | \$243,712.00 | \$95,586.27 |
| Expenses | \$422,006.05 | \$495,679.68 | (\$73,673.63) |
| Operating Income/ (Deficit) | (\$82707.78) | (\$251,196.68) | |

Our hope with prayers is that members will continue to give generously as we envision a better and brighter future with goals and strategies to keep FUMCWA healthy, growing, and vital. God cares about you and so do we! Thank you for your financial support to the life and the mission of FUMCWA!

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



HIGHLIGHTS OF FUMCWA

Worship TOGETHER

FEBRUARY SERMON THEMES/SCRIPTURES

2/5 - Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, Matthew 5:13-20, "You are the Salt and the Light of the World"

2/12 - Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, Matthew 5:12-21-37, "But Jesus Says"

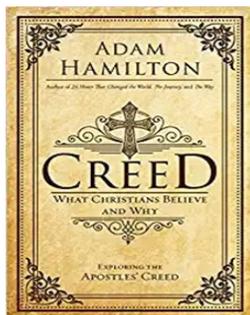
2/19 - Transfiguration Sunday, Matthew 17:1-9, "Get Up and Don't be Afraid"

2/22 - Ash Wednesday, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21, "A New and Right Spirit"

2/26 - First Sunday of Lent, Matthew 4:1-11, "Not by Bread Alone"

*March 12 & 26 Sundays will be *Taizé Worship* - both services

The **Sunday School Lenten Mission project** will be collecting coins during Lent to purchase **Baskets of Hope**. The money will be sent to Heifer International whose mission is to work with communities to end world hunger and poverty and to care for the Earth. The cost for one Basket of Hope is \$50. The Basket of Hope includes a gift of rabbits and a starter flock of chickens. We hope that each church family will take a Coins for Giving Calendar. Look for the Easter Basket in the Narthex on February 19. Items on the daily guide will remind us of all we have and how little others may have. Each Sunday, take time to pray as a family for this mission project and for the people who will benefit from your gifts. Our giving begins on Ash Wednesday (February 22) and concludes with Holy Saturday (April 8). Please bring your gift of coins to church on Easter Sunday.



2023 Lenten Book Study: This year's Congregational Lenten Book Study will focus on **Adam Hamilton's book: CREED**. This book explores what Christians believe, why they believe, and why it matters. We're all searching. Sometimes the search is easy. But sometimes our questions are complicated, and the answers are difficult to see and harder to articulate. How do we discover and examine the truths that give meaning and purpose to life? Adam Hamilton believes that some powerful answers are contained in **the Apostles' Creed** which is a bold statement of our core Christian beliefs. But do you fully understand and believe all of the statements? Hamilton considers important questions of life, reality, and truth in this six-week Lenten study. Chapters include God, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit, The Church and the Communion of Saints, The Forgiveness of Sins, and The Resurrection of the Body. The Children's and Youth Sunday School classes will also study **the Apostles' Creed** which will follow the same study as adults (using age-appropriate lessons). Parents of Sunday School children are encouraged to join a class to enhance their children's studies and grow their faith.

Adult Class Opportunities:

Sunday School Class: Sunday (February 26 - April 2) 9:30-10:30 AM Leaders: Laura Grabowski and Val Holzman (Lighthouse Room)

Zoom Class: Tuesday (2/28, 3/7, 3/14, 3/21, 3/28, 4/4) 7:00-8:00 PM Leader: Bonnie Chesky

Please contact the church office to register for the Zoom class. Ten copies of the book are available for sale in the church office. If possible, please read the first chapter before the classes begin.

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

Christmas Special Offering: \$6720.00

December Coins of Love: God's Parking Lot Hot Dog Ministry \$254.40

January Coins of Love: Divine Intervention Sleep Shelter \$307.40

Easter Special Offering: \$70.00

FAITH COMMUNITY UPCOMING EVENTS

CHURCH LENTEN RETREAT: Pastor Sam and Julie Bryson will lead a Lenten Retreat March 3-4, 2023, from Friday 5:00 pm to Saturday 5:00 pm at The Siena Retreat Center, Racine, WI. The theme is: "Staying Spiritually Strong." The Retreat features include Worship, Silent Time, Study, Prayer Time, and Fellowship. The registration fee is \$75 per person, including overnight stay and three meals at the center. If interested, please call the church office to register by February 20, 2023. Please see the website for the retreat schedule.



February Mission Moment: Second Saturday Servants will be serving hot casseroles on February 11. Please bring the hot casseroles to the church kitchen by 7:45 am. The Missions Committee was excited to deliver the hundreds of socks that were collected in December by the Children's Sunday School Fill the Stocking Advent Mission Project. Socks were given to our food pantry, The Good Samaritan Resource Center in West Allis, Divine Intervention, and our two Morning Glory breakfast sites. The Mitten Tree contributions continue arriving and are distributed monthly. Thanks for your continuing generosity.

February's Coins of Love will support the Morning Glory Ministries on the south side of Milwaukee. The need for personal hygiene products, men's clothing, and coats for men, women, and children continue.



Mission Trip News: We are excited to announce the Midwest Mission Distribution Center Mission Trip dates. We will depart from the church parking lot on Monday, July 31, and return on Friday, August 4. Eight people have expressed interest so far. We have room for many more. We will be sorting donated items to share with needy people. We encourage you to let Pastor Sam or Val Holzman know by June 1 of your interest. Your cost will be minimal. Your sweat equity will be a blessing to others. We will stay in an air-conditioned dormitory with a central activity room. Please consider joining the fun this summer!

Book Discussion Group: On Monday, February 20, at 1:30 pm the group will discuss Kim Michele Richardson's book **The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek**. Inspired by the true blue-skinned people of Kentucky and the dedicated Kentucky Pack Horse library service of the 1930s, this best-selling historical novel follows packhorse librarian Cussy Mary Carter and her quest to bring books to Troublesome Creek. The last of her kind, her skin a shade of blue unlike most anyone else, Cussy has to confront prejudice as old as the Appalachians and suspicion as deep as the holler to bring the joy of books to the hill folks. This is a story of raw courage, fierce strength, and one woman's belief that books can carry us anywhere—even back home. The group meets in The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library. All are welcome.

2023 CHURCH NOW GOALS:

NURTURE: Invite new young families; Connect with nonparticipating members

OUTREACH: Establish discipleship and church events team; Create a missional leadership directory

WITNESS: Faith-based inspirational messaging; Effective use of Servant Keeper as a communication tool



Before the season of Lent begins, join us for the annual **Shrove Sunday Pancake Breakfast**. On **Sunday, February 19**, the UMM will be hosting a Shrove Pancake Breakfast between services in Fellowship Hall. Shrove Tuesday, also known as "fat" Tuesday, is the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday which is the beginning of the season of Lent. Since fat is traditionally not used in cooking during Lent, thrifty housewives would use up any leftover fats on the day before Ash Wednesday. The making of pancakes is a standard way of using fat and a tradition was born. Plan to come, enjoy some delicious pancakes, and fellowship with church friends.

United Women in Faith (UWIF): Unity Circle will be meeting on Monday, February 13, at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room. We will be holding our belated Christmas Party. Please remember to bring a dish to share. We also ask that you bring unwrapped donations of toys, puzzles, books, and gift cards for the Ronald McDonald House. We are looking forward to seeing you. We meet on the second Monday in most months except for July, August, and January. If you would like to join us and want some information, please contact Annette Intravaia at 414-257-4166.



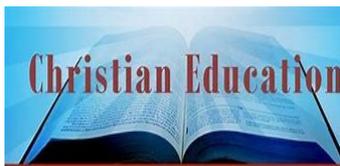
FAITH COMMUNITY UPDATES, NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS



From the Wesleyan Congregational Care Team: People of faith are not immune from life's challenges, whether they be in the form of illness, loss, or other stressors. Sometimes, having a confidante who can listen and offer support can help one feel understood, heard, and less alone. This is the mission of the Wesleyan Congregational Care Team. If this is a ministry that you might find helpful, please feel free to contact one of us through the church office or by contacting Julie Bryson. Please know that all contacts

and information shared are kept confidential. Additional information will be shared during the February 11 worship services.

Food Pantry: Thank you for helping with our food pantry. We would like to ask you to help us by bringing large grocery bags with handles. We are starting to run short as we double-bag our food. Our guests often ask for plain oatmeal, crackers of all kinds, chunky soups, mashed potatoes, canned fruit, cereals, pickles, and jellies. Also needed are personal care items like razors, deodorants, body wash, shampoo, and conditioner. We appreciate any of these donations or any others that you care to make. We are very grateful for the variety we are able to offer our guests. We have a dedicated crew who work very hard. We all thank you for helping with this great mission.



Adult Christian Education Invitation From Bonnie Chesky: It's January and I'm thinking about the New Year and the opportunities for our ACE Committee to awaken a desire in each person of our congregation to grow in knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. On January 1, 2023, Pastor Sam used the Wesleyan Covenant Service in worship and we, the congregation, dedicated ourselves to Christ promising to set aside time each day to the Lord, to be faithful, and to trust God's Holy Spirit to give us grace and to strengthen us as we grow into faithful disciples. We are all on a Spiritual Journey. I encourage you to try one of our classes and let's help one another grow and find the "abundant life" that Jesus came to give us (John 10:10). You will find the "fruit of the Spirit" blossoming in your heart (Gal 5:22).

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

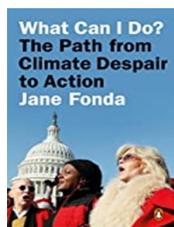


The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library

We invite you to check out these titles recently added to The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library:

Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World by Katharine Hayhoe

What Can I Do?: The Path from Climate Despair to Action by Jane Fonda



With Sincere Thanks: I would like to thank the staff and congregation for all of the prayers, cards, and calls during my illness and for the other members of my family who have passed or had serious medical issues during the last couple of months. To have such a loving community means the world to me. Knowing that your prayers have helped in so many ways is a real blessing and I am so grateful for all of you. May the blessings be returned to you! Annette Intravaia

Thrive Team Update: Since March 2022 the following church members have participated in The Examen(ed) Church (a two-year fully funded program promoting congregational vitality based at Marquette University): Pastor Sam, Karen and Tom Bolton, Bonnie Chesky, Laura Molleson, Barb Sorenson, and Deb Semrad. This team is called a "Thrive Team." The team has learned a spiritual practice for reflection called the Examen. The Examen is a prayer practice that helps us process our day by guiding us in reflecting on key moments when we may have been moving toward or away from God's best for us. The team then began applying that same reflective approach to thinking about their personal experience of church and the early difficult days of the pandemic. The team meets regularly to share their experience of practicing this prayerful reflection. The team has been trained to move from personal reflection to group reflection. In 2023, the team will continue to apply this practice of reflection as they dig deeper into the questions of the church's mission and values, how the church understands and ministers in its context, and what Christian practices are central to the church's embodiment of its mission. The team is supported in this process through workshops at Marquette in addition to regular monthly resources to guide their reflections. Later in 2023, the team will share the practice of the Examen with the congregation in order to incorporate this into the church's life going forward. The team and the church leadership and the congregation will then discern some concrete action to take based on the reflection and discernment process. The team has learned a great deal and is very grateful to be part of this journey as they work together and continue to live out the mission of the People of God.

Pastor Sam's Renewal Leave: Pastor Sam will be on Renewal Leave from April 10-28, 2023. Shanti, Selwyn, and Pastor Sam plan to visit India during the renewal leave to attend Pastor Sam's mother's (Mary Royappa who died in April 2020) Memorial Service and the Dedication of her gravesite. This will be an opportunity also to visit siblings and family. In Pastor Sam's absence, please call or email the church office for pastoral needs: 414-774-5500 or fumcwaoffice@fumcwa.org

2023 Church Master Calendar For Monthly Meetings & Church Events: For all the Committee/Council Meetings and all major Church Events, two Master Calendars have been developed and posted on the church website and other social media platforms. This will help all church members and leaders with the coordination and communication regarding meetings and church events. Those in need of a hard copy, please contact the church office. You are invited to PRAY, PARTICIPATE, and PROMOTE all the church events.



Laurie Halvorsen, Senior Ministries Coordinator: Our January New Year's Potluck and BINGO was very successful with 39 people attending and a huge variety of delicious food! Thank you to all who came to the start of our 48th year of Senior League! The lunch cost is \$10.00, come and bring a friend! **Join us for Fun, Food, and Fellowship in 2023 in our 48th Year with Senior League!!**

Meetings in February:

February 1 12 Noon- Oven Baked Breaded Chicken, Smiley Potatoes, Broccoli Salad & Carrot Cake
Program: Officer Scott Poklasny, West Allis; Senior Safety Talk
Devotions: Richard Lierman

February 15 12 Noon- Chili, Cornbread, Vegetable Tray, and Sundae Cups
Program: Renee's Valentine Cookie Demonstration (Cookies with be for Sale too!)
Devotions: Charlene Buncich



Thursday, March 23rd: Fireside Trip: "The Music Man" \$102.00. The Ticket price includes dinner, show, Lamers transportation, and gratuity. Leave Franklin at 9:00 am and FUMCWA at 9:30 am. Reservations required. This trip is OPEN TO ALL. Right now, I have 17 passengers going on this trip, unfortunately, if I do not have enough people by February 15, I will have to CANCEL this wonderful day trip. Please consider this. If interested, contact the church office or see Laurie.

Friday, April 28: Fireside Trip: "Grumpy Old Men, The Musical" \$100.00. The Ticket price includes dinner, show, Lamers transportation, and gratuity. Leave Franklin at 9:00 am and FUMCWA at 9:30 am. Reservations required. This trip is OPEN TO ALL. Please contact the church office or see Laurie.



From Lance Lambert - Events Coordinator: "Souper Bowl of Caring" Sunday, February 12, 9:00 - 11:00 am - Small Dining Room. The Soup Tasting is back!! Drop by the Small Dining Room to sample some homemade soups. Vote for your favorite and donate to this Youth-Driven Mission. Since 1990, when this ministry was founded by a South Carolina Youth Group, \$175 MILLION has been raised to fight community hunger. Our church's youth have decided to send your donations to World Central Kitchen Ukraine Relief which is feeding thousands in Ukraine and neighboring countries and is part of our "World Community." If you can make a large pot of soup for the event, please contact Lance Lambert by February 7. Four or Five Soups are needed.

"Methodist Movie Matinee" Sunday, February, 12:00 - 3:00 pm - Sanctuary Screen. Join us in watching "**Soul**" the Pixar animated film that won the Best Animated Feature Oscar & Golden Globe and the Best Original Music Oscar & Golden Globe as well. *A middle school band teacher has a mishap after landing his dream gig at the best jazz club in town and goes to "The Great Before" where new souls get their personalities. He desperately tries to show his soul what's great about living.* The movie, popcorn, and beverages are FREE! Stay for pizza and a brief discussion after the film. A free-will offering will be taken to help cover the cost of the pizzas. Come and bring your family and friends. Hope to see you there!!

CONCLUDING WORDS: Brothers and sisters in Christ, we thank you all for your continued support with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness in the areas of Nurture, Outreach, and Witness (NOW). We offer thanks and praises to God for His leadership blessing and meeting all our church's needs. Let us make a commitment to be a source of inspiration, inspiring the present and future generations by building our worship experience, fellowship, and friendships. Let us engage in many more acts of kindness and mercy, the fruits of our service to God and people. To God be the glory!

David Affeldt
Chair, Church Council

Sam Royappa
Lead Pastor