

# Methodist the messenger

Rev. Ron Kral, Interim Pastor

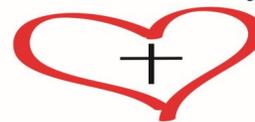
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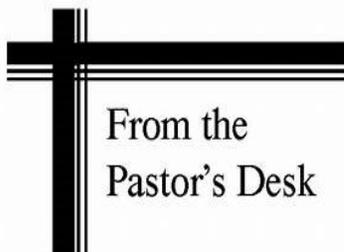
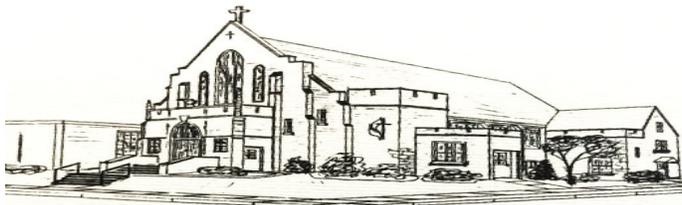
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*God cares about you*



*and so do we*

**FEBRUARY 2024**



Grace & Peace,

As we begin our time together, let me start by saying that I am excited to be present with you during this interim period. This is time for you to say goodbye to Pastor Sam and wish him a happy retirement. It's a time to have good thoughts of his ministry with FUMCWA, both for the joy and fun as well as the learning and growth which comes from tension and differences.

This also will be a time of anticipation as we wait again to learn who will be appointed to begin here in July. And, while speculation is a very human tendency, allow me to suggest that it's often more productive and comfortable to live in the "what is" instead of the "what might be." In that light, I'd like to share something I learned in a worship class many years ago which has served me well both in the sanctuary and in life in general.

In every worship service, there are two types of activities which are labeled as "ordinaries" and "probers". An "ordinary" is something that remains essentially the same from week to week or service to service. A "proper" is an element of worship that changes weekly or with the seasons. For example, in almost every United Methodist service I ever attended, or have been part of, the Lord's Prayer is recited. It is an ordinary, it is a constant.

On the other hand, the scripture reading changes every time - sometimes coming from the Old Testament, sometimes selected from the New Testament and occasionally even a Psalm may be the focus of the worship experience. Something constant and something changing. Something conserved each time and something liberated - open to be different.

Both are essential for the worship service. Too much "ordinary" and the service becomes stale and predictable, lacking in energy and life. Too much "proper" and people feel unsettled, even confused as they miss the stability of ritual by an overdose of novelty. You get the idea. We like our routines, but we also appreciate a surprise now and then. Too much of either one and something feels off. We need a bit of balance for each.

What I am planning is to take up one of our "ordinaries" and treat it more like a "proper" in the sense that we might look at it differently. That's just a fancy way of letting you know that during Lent I will be preaching a sermon series on The Lord's Prayer. My intent is to offer a new perspective on this traditional prayer, which, while central to our Christian life, may have become rote and stale.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, when we will examine the Wesleyan General Rules which call us to the "Ordinances" (the "ordinaries") of the Church, we will progress each Sunday before Easter through the Lord's Prayer seeking deeper understanding and applied meaning. I look forward to sharing this journey with you.

In the meantime, I hope to meet as many of you as possible (please be patient with me by repeating your name as often as possible) and I invite your calls and visits. I plan to be in the office on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 9:00 am - 12:30 pm (though the staff meets on Tuesdays from 9-10:00 am). I can be reached by phone at 414-774-5500 (office) or my cell phone at 262-894-3748 (if I don't answer, PLEASE leave a message, and I will call you back); texting is fine. And my email is [rkral@fumcwa.org](mailto:rkral@fumcwa.org).

May the Holy Spirit fill our time together with joy, peace, love, and a faithful response to God's call. Pastor Ron

## A NOTE FROM OUR LAY LEADER:

God cares about you and so do we. And we all want to fix the world.

**Zechariah 14:9 says:**

“The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.”

I read an article this week by NADYA WILLIAMS. She asks, “Can people repair the world?” She goes on to say, “Modern secular and religious visions of justice alike presume that the answer is yes, even as those relentless dreamers who devote themselves to this mission often despair at the seeming futility of their efforts. But then, this is the story of the human race since its expulsion from Eden. Perhaps the one thing on which we can agree after centuries of concerted efforts is that the world looks more broken, not less. But we moderns are not so special in wrestling with this question of who can fix the world. In late antiquity, Jewish theologians first coined the term *tikkun olam* – literally “repair of the world,” based on Zechariah 14:9.”

As we approach Lent, I am feeling Christ in me as I contemplate the cross. What ought we, the church, do to fix this world? What do we attempt, with the help of Christ, to approach the kingdom? For Lent, let's focus on loving others. That seems to be our best path toward fixing the world.

I am also thinking about how we can strengthen the church. Tom Rainer wrote about these ACTS principles and rhythms of life last year, and I am hoping we can embrace these individually and collectively:

Grounded in Acts 2, the 7 rhythms are foundational to Rooted Network discipleship resources. When churches commit to practicing these disciplines together, they see growth and transformation in both individuals and their communities.

- Daily Devotion (Acts 2:42, 46)
- Prayer (Acts 2:42)
- Repentance (Acts 2:37-39)
- Sacrificial Generosity (Acts 2:44-45)
- Serve the Community (Acts 2:44-45)
- Share Your Story (Acts 2:14-36)
- Worship (Acts 2:26-28, 46-47)

Be well dear brothers and sisters! Thomas Bolton (414-704-5478)



The Church Financial Statement of Activities ending December 31, 2023:

	Year To Date Actual	Year To date Budget	Difference
Giving & Other Income	\$383,303.28	\$246,671.20	\$136,632.08
Expenses	\$402,287.47	\$488,680.53	\$86,393.06
Operating Income/ (Deficit)	\$(18,984.19)	\$(242,009.33)	

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.

# Worship TOGETHER

## LECTIONARY READINGS & SERMON THEMES - FEBRUARY 2024

### February 4, 2024 - 5th Sunday after Epiphany

1 Corinthians 9:16-23 "*The Power of the Presence*"

Instead of dwelling on prophecy, it's time to move forward and consider "prophets". What is a prophet? Might YOU be a prophet?

### February 11, 2024-Transfiguration Sunday

Mark 9: 2-9 "*Both/And*"

The Transfiguration challenges us with images of Jesus' "earthy" (e.g., *Just a Closer Walk with Thee*) as well as his "otherworldly" / divine side (e.g., *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High*) side by side on that hilltop. The disciples were confused, but we don't need to be.

### February 14, 2024 - Ash Wednesday

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 "*Go to Your Room*"

Prayer is not a spectator sport. As we enter the season of Lent, it's time to return to the core of our Wesleyan heritage - the Methodist "General Rules".

### February 18, 2024-1st Sunday of Lent

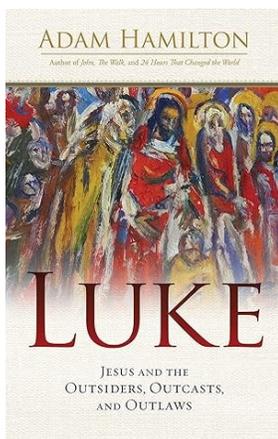
The Lord's Prayer Series: Matthew 6: 5-9 *Our Father*

While "popular" in the sense of being well-known and almost universally prayed, the Lord's Prayer is a strange prayer. It doesn't mention most of what Christians believe, and yet it addresses all that's necessary in our relationship with God.

### February 25, 2024-2nd Sunday of Lent

The Lord's Prayer Series: Luke 11: 1-4 *Thy Kingdom Come...*

Just like the hymn, *I am the church; you are the church...* God's kingdom is not a place. The kingdom of God is expressed **when** God's will is done.



**2024 Lenten Book Study:** This year's Congregational Lenten Book Study will focus on Adam Hamilton's book **Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws**. Jesus came to lift up the lowly. Throughout his ministry to his final days on the road to the cross, we find stories of his relationships with ordinary, flawed, and unexpected people. He met, dined, and traveled with people who were not perfect. Many of them were struggling, some were outsiders or even outlaws. Whoever they were, from those he healed to the outlaws with him at his crucifixion, Jesus brought the good news of God's kingdom to those who most needed to hear it. Pastor and bestselling author Adam Hamilton explores the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus as told in the Gospel of Luke. Through Luke's stories, we find Jesus' care and compassion for all as he welcomes sinners and outcasts. As we study Luke and see Jesus' concern for those who were considered unimportant, we hear a hopeful and inspiring word for our lives today. This six-week Lenten study includes video teaching sessions that enhance learning and discussion.

## **Adult Class Opportunities:**

**Sunday School Class:** Sunday (February 18 - March 24) 9:00-10:00 AM Leaders: Laura Grabowski and Val Holzman (Lighthouse Room)

**Zoom Class:** Tuesday (2/20, 2/27, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26) 7:00-8:00 PM Leaders: Bonnie Chesky and Tom Bolton

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

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 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 11. 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 14) and concludes with Holy Saturday (March 30). Please bring your gift of coins to church on Easter Sunday.



### FAITH COMMUNITY UPCOMING EVENTS



**February Mission Moment:** Second Saturday Servants will be serving hot casseroles on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Please bring the hot casseroles to the church kitchen by 7:45 am. The Missions Committee was excited to deliver the many 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 will be distributed to those in need. Thanks for your continuing generosity.

**February's Coins of Love** will support Divine Intervention. This is a ministry that helps those experiencing homelessness.

November Coins of Love - West Allis Displaced Community \$760.00

December Coins of Love - AWANA \$321.57

January Coins of Love - Repairers of the Breach \$95.00

Thanksgiving Special Offering \$3135.25

Christmas Special Offering \$5363.00



**Book Discussion Group:** On Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 pm the group will discuss **Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World** by Katharine Hayhoe (Social Action). In **Saving Us**, Canadian climate scientist Hayhoe argues that when it comes to changing hearts and minds, facts are only one part of the equation. We need to find shared values in order to connect our unique identities to collective action. This is not another doomsday narrative about a planet on fire. It is a multi-layered look at science, faith, and human psychology from an icon in her field, recently named chief scientist at The Nature Conservancy. Drawing on interdisciplinary research and personal stories, Hayhoe shows that small conversations can have astonishing results. The group meets in The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library. All are welcome.

**Ash Wednesday** is on February 14<sup>th</sup> this year, and it marks the start of the Lenten season. During this time, we are encouraged to embrace simplicity, repentance, and reflection to deepen our connection with God. Lent is not a season to hurry through in anticipation of Easter; instead, it is a time to slow down and contemplate our faith in order to bring us closer to God. Ash Wednesday Service is at 7:00 pm on February 14. Please join us for scripture, song, and imposition of ashes.



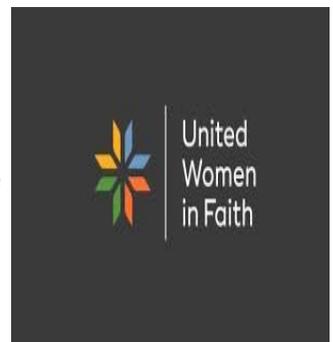


**Food Pantry:** Thank you to all who have been bringing food items for the food pantry. The need is really great, and we are seeing more of an influx of those needing assistance. Some items that are needed are cereal, oatmeal, stews, canned meat, chili, chunky soups, crackers of all kinds, pasta sides, cake mixes, jams, and peanut butter. We are also in need of personal care items such as men's shavers, body wash (especially for men), shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, and lotions. Household items needed are laundry detergent, dish detergent, liquid hand soap, kitchen sprays, foil, plastic wrap, disinfectant wipes, tissues, and paper towels. Thank you also for the red Sendik's bags, both large and small. We are also in need of large grocery bags with handles. We go through about 160 bags each food pantry because we have to

double bag. Any help with the items listed above would be greatly appreciated. We have a great food pantry crew that buys many of the items in the bags, sets up and organizes the food, serves the people, takes down and puts things away, and puts in many hours of volunteer work, but does it with a smile. They are dedicated and love the work they do. Thank you to all the congregation for your donations and monetary giving. You are a blessing to us and our mission!

**United Women in Faith (UWIF):** We welcome you back for the year 2024! Our next Unity Circle meeting will take place on Monday, February 12th at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room. Nurse Pat will be our speaker and will answer our questions on a variety of subjects. If you would like a question answered on health or safety, coping with medical issues, or any other related issue, please write your question down and submit it to Annette Intravaia before February 7th. Pat will have a chance to look at the questions and provide the answers on February 12th.

We look forward to having anyone interested, to come and join us at our Unity Circle meetings. We meet on the second Monday of each month at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room, with the exception of June, July, and January when there are no meetings. Please join us for interesting topics, fellowship, and refreshments. If you have any questions about our group, please call Annette Intravaia at 414-257-4166. We would love to have you join us!



## **FAITH COMMUNITY—UPDATES, NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS**



The Wesleyan Congregation Care Team is here to help. As we move into 2024, we want to remind you that we're available on Sundays for anyone who needs someone to talk to. We all have a badge like the one in the picture that identifies us as WCCT members. If you have any concerns about your own well-being or that of someone you care about, please feel free to approach any of us. If you prefer to be more discreet, you can slip us a note or let Pastor Ron or Laura Molleson know that you'd like us to contact you. We are here for you. God cares about you, and so do we.

### **JOIN US:**

**8:45 am Coffee Fellowship**

**8:45 am 3K-Gr 12 Sunday School & Choirs**

**9:00 am Adult Christian Education**

**10:15-11:45 am Nursery Care**

**10:30-11:30 am Worship (Hybrid)**

**11:30-11:50 am Church Library**



**Laurie Halvorsen, Senior Ministries Coordinator:** Our Happy New Year's potluck was very successful with 45 seniors attending on January 3rd. Everyone attending had a festive day playing the New Year's Bingo and receiving a prize or two. We held a short installation of officers for our Senior League for 2024, and we celebrated the fact that we are in our 49th year! Senior League meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday at noon for a lunch for \$10.00 and a program that follows at 1:00 pm. We end our day at 2:00 pm with the singing of Shalom. Come join us and bring a friend.



**Join us for Fun, Food, and Fellowship in 2024 in our 49th Year with Senior League!**

### Meetings in February 2024:

**February 7 12 Noon** Baked Ziti, Salad, Cheesy Garlic Bread, and Spumoni  
Program: Safety in the Community; Mike Scasny; Retired Co. Sheriff  
Devotions: Richard Lierman

**February 21 12 Noon** Subs, Chips, and Cookies  
Program: Sights of Norway Travelogue  
Devotions: Bonnie Chesky

**Thursday, March 21st: Coach Trip: Fireside "Fiddler on the Roof"** Leave Franklin at 9:00 am, please arrive by 8:50 am, and FUMC passengers leave at 9:30 am. \$106.00 includes show, transportation, and gratuity. Reservations are due by February 21st!

### Lance Lambert / Events Coordinator:



**Shrove Sunday Breakfast - February 11th - 9-10 am - Small Dining Room:** Please join your church family before worship as the Men's Group continues its traditional Shrove Breakfast. Feast on pancakes, bacon, sausage, coffee, milk, and orange juice while enjoying the fellowship of friends and family. Fill your stomach and gladden your heart at the same time. *You won't want to miss it!!!*

**Souper Bowl of Caring - February 18th - 11:30 to 12:30 - Small Dining Room**  
Support this annual Youth-driven mission event! Come downstairs to sample some homemade soups, vote for your favorite, and have some fun. Bring some cans of soup to donate if you are so moved.  
For over 10 years, 1st Church has been a part of this movement, which, over its 30-year history, has raised over \$193 MILLION nationally, **all for local food programs.** This year we will be giving our cash donations to support St. Ben's Feeding Program in the Milwaukee area and donations of canned soup to our own Food Pantry. Drop off cans of soup in the pots in the Narthex any time before the event and please join us for some soup on the 18th!



*PS: If you can make a big pot of soup for the tasting, please contact Lance Lambert at [lambert@fumcwa.org](mailto:lambert@fumcwa.org) or leave a phone message at the church office. Thanks!*