

Methodist the messenger

Rev. Dr. Grace G. Cajuat, Pastor

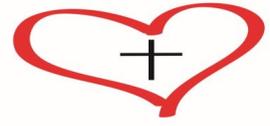
First United Methodist Church 7520 W. Lapham Street, West Allis, WI 53214

fumcwaoffice@fumcwa.org

414-774-5500

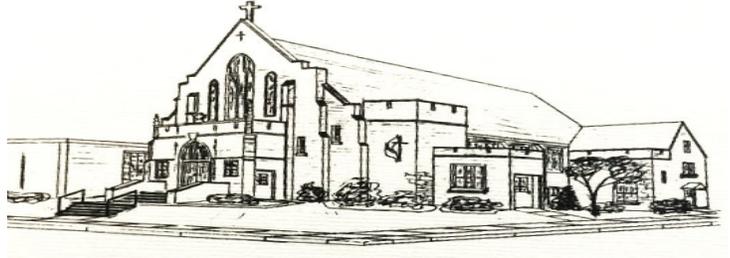
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God cares about you



and so do we

JANUARY 2025



Happy New Year First Church!

As I continue my first year with you, I am so grateful for all of you—for giving of yourself, caring for one another, and generously sharing your gifts and resources with our neighbors and the world. I look forward to serving with you and discovering what God has in store for us as commissioned disciples to share the good news of Jesus Christ!

As a new year comes, we commonly have New Year's resolutions, with do's and don'ts—do eat healthier/don't have sugar as much as possible; do exercise/don't waste time scrolling Facebook; do be kind/don't road rage, and so on.

For John Wesley, the new year brings an opportunity to start anew and covenant with God. We held a Covenant Service on December 29th to come before God reflecting on the year past and confessing how we have missed the mark and offer once more our lives as loved and redeemed children of God. We end the year with confession and begin the new year with redemption, acknowledging God's prevenient grace.

The new year brings a contract *and* a covenant. There is a difference we need to understand as disciples and stewards of God's gifts and creation.

Our New Year's Resolutions make up our contract with ourselves to be better. If we do something, we expect to receive our desired outcome. That is how life on earth has taught us to get what we put into it—a merit-based and performance-based transaction way of life.

The Covenant Service makes for a time to reflect on our covenant with God—a renewal of our relationship with God by living the way Christ Jesus showed us. As God loved us and gifted us with grace even *before* we knew and asked for them, we then covenant with God that we live in love and grace towards God and gift ourselves and others with love and grace. Gifts we never worked for but gifts that shape our actions and behaviors towards ourselves and others. A lifestyle that counters our earthly merits and performance-based expectations. Our life with God is a relational way of life.

As God created each one of us in God's image, we are called to love all—people who are not like us in color, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, age, marital status, and all the ways we have been divided by hate and fear.

Here's to a year of love and grace, mercy and compassion, piety and justice.

With the love of God,

Pastor Grace

A NOTE FROM OUR LAY LEADER

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" --1 Peter 2:9

We are each chosen to be part of the royal priesthood--every one of us who are followers of Jesus Christ, not just the elders.

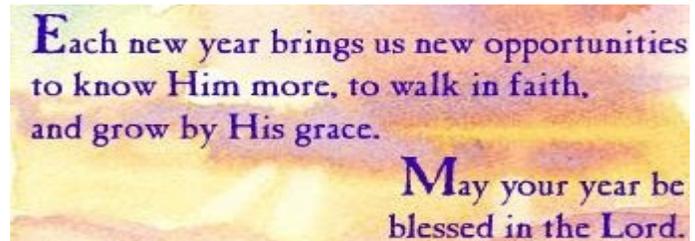
As we embark on a new year--2025--I invite you to keep this foremost on your mind. We are each called and chosen. We need to live our lives this way. We need to each be involved in sharing our stories and our faith with others. We need to be in daily missions. We need to be learning and praying daily.

I wish you each a fabulous 2025, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Tom Bolton, Lay Leader, 414-704-5478

God loves you and so do we.

Discipleship Never Ends.



The Church's Financial Statement of Activities for the period ending November 30, 2024, was unavailable this month because the accountant could not complete the report in time for inclusion in this newsletter.

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.

Your financial pledge allows FUMCWA to prepare a financial plan for 2025. We want to thank all the FUMCWA members and friends who returned their pledge cards demonstrating their commitment to the church's ministries and mission. If you have not yet returned your pledge card and wish to contribute, please mail it to the church office. If you are an online giver and wish to increase your 2025 pledge, please log in to your Vanco account to make any desired changes. If you need assistance, please contact Michelle Fuller at mfuller@fumcwa.org.

2025 Giving Envelopes Are Now Available: To help reduce postage costs, please pick up your giving envelopes for the new year. The envelopes are organized alphabetically in a box located in the narthex. If cannot find your envelopes and would like to request them, please contact Michelle.

Worship TOGETHER

SCRIPTURE READINGS & Themes January 2025

January 5, 2025, Epiphany Sunday

Texts: Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

January 12, 2025, Baptism of the Lord

Texts: Acts 8: 14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 19, 2025, Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

January 26, 2025, Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21



Many Thanks! Thank you to everyone who donated new socks for men, women, and children by placing them in the large red Christmas stocking in The Gathering Room. Your generosity is truly making a difference for our homeless neighbors in the community.

We will be collecting new mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves for children and adults for our Food Pantry and local shelters to distribute to those in need. Please hang them on the tree in the narthex. This project will continue through mid-January. Your donations are greatly appreciated. Thank you for your participation and generosity!

2024 Angel Tree Report: I am happy to share that this Christmas season, our church family was able to share the love of Christ with 30 children by purchasing, wrapping, and delivering 60 gifts to their homes in time for Christmas. Through these actions, we let them know they have not been forgotten by their parent or grandparent in prison. The love that our church members pour into this ministry means the world to the prisoners, children, and families we served. Thanks to everyone who generously bought/wrapped gifts and to those who took time out to deliver them to the children's homes. This project could not have happened without you. And a big shout-out to Bonnie Chesky, Deb Semrad, and Judy Affeldt for their help with this project. Judy's guidance and support were particularly appreciated as I took over the reins from her this year. I look forward to our church family participating in the Angel Tree project in 2025 and impacting more lives next Christmas.

Sincerely, Pam Chesky Johnson, Angel Tree Project Coordinator



FUMCWA MINISTRIES

Church Library Ministry (The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library): You are invited to visit your Church Library and the Resource Cart (located in the Gathering Room) to browse, choose, and read from the collections for children, youth, and adults. During the months of January and February, the Resource Cart will feature books on friendship and love. We hope you will take some time in this new year to contemplate and read. Happy New Year from your Library Committee.



Food Pantry Ministry: Our food pantry team would like to thank our congregation for all the support through food donations and monetary contributions you have given us throughout the year. We hope we will see that same support as we enter 2025. The need for food that will help our families during the colder months will be important. We are asking for chunky soups, stews, chili, canned pasta, and other foods that will sustain them. Crackers, oatmeal, cereals, and pasta sides are also good during winter months. We are also grateful for donations of socks (for men and women), hats, mittens, or gloves. Personal care products like laundry detergent, shampoo, disinfectant

cleaners, liquid hand soap, and dish detergent are also welcome. We accept any non-perishable foods. Please note expiration dates. We have a wonderful, dedicated team for our food pantry, and the love and care they provide for our families is amazing. God has been truly guiding us as we not only provide food but encouragement, prayers, and listening ears. The food item we are asking for this month is chunky soups or small jars of pickles (Yes, pickles! They go right away!), and the personal care item is shampoo. Thank you for your love and support!

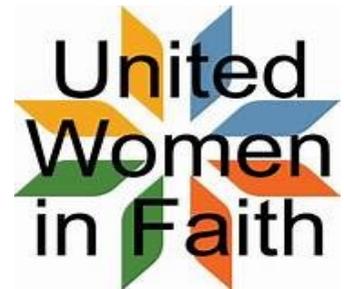
The December Good Samaritan Offering: \$660.70

PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED FOR JANUARY:

CHUNKY SOUPS, SMALL JARS OF PICKLES, AND SHAMPOO

UWF "CHRISTMAS BAKE SHOP" THANK YOU!!!

Judy Affeldt	Nancy Bialek	Karen Connell	Liz Friday
Gert Hartwig	Jane Henderson	Annette Intravaia	Nancy Karr
Eileen Kostalek	Liz Moody	Pat Nelson	Nancy Nikolaus
Barb Pier	Anne Reuther	Sue Stachelski	Dorothy Thoms
Carol Ward	Ruth Ann Werner	Donna Wood	Linda Zeman



Linda Zeman had 98 orders for Gingerbread Men

~Thanks to Michelle Fuller, who organized the gingerbread men orders, made signs, smiled, giggled a lot, and hoped out loud that there would be cookies to purchase by the time she got to church.

~Thanks to Eric Kempka, who set up, tore down and hauled out for us.

~Thank you to all the folks who strolled through the Fireside Room for a chatty visit. We enjoyed seeing everyone.

Each devoted woman listed above shared their talents and time for this first "Christmas Bake Shop." We were not sure how this smaller sweet treat sale would go. Con't next page

We were happily surprised. Every woman who walked through the doors to help rolled up their sleeves, wore comfortable shoes, and had twinkly halos on their heads. These women are crucial to the story of UWF, our church, and this community. On the morning of the sale, Pastor Grace proclaimed, "You are all rock stars." These women are "Star Bearers," shining brightly and lighting up the lives of so many of us.

I give thanks! Joanna Schachtely, UWF

The next Unity Circle meeting will be Monday, February 10th, at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room.

Laurie Halvorsen, Senior Ministries Coordinator: The Senior League enjoyed the annual Christmas Luncheon in early December; we had 73 people attend. I thank Chef Cheryl Spaude and her husband, Dave, for preparing the luncheon; it was excellent. We were entertained by the delightful sounds of the Milwaukee High of the School Arts Choir, Raymond Roberts, Director. There is so much joy in those students; they will be back next year!

We traveled to the Fireside on December 11th to see "Miracle on 34th Street." It was a very cold, blustery day, but the story warmed our hearts. All 44 of us enjoyed the story and were thankful we saw the play.

Meeting in January 2025:

January 15

Noon Lunch: Chili, Cornbread, Veggie Tray, and Cookies

Program: Andrew Singer; Guitarist

Devotions: Installation of the 2025 Officers



Senior League Chef Needed: At the end of December 2025, we will bid farewell to Cheryl and Serena, our Senior League Chefs, after many years of providing delicious lunches. Cheryl will be relocating to Rome, Wisconsin. We are now looking to hire a new Senior League Chef. The responsibilities of this position include planning menus, shopping for food, preparing and serving meals, and handling cleanup. Cheryl has kindly offered to train the new Chef. Senior League meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from noon to 2 pm. If you have culinary skills or know someone who does and would like to take on this role, please contact Laurie at the First United Methodist Church of West Allis, located at 7520 West Lapham St., at 414-774-5500. You will enjoy serving lunch to 50-60 lovely and lively seniors.

FUMCWA LOCAL MISSIONS



As winter approaches, the demand for hot meals has increased, and we need your help for Second Saturday Servants on January 11th. Please bring hot casseroles to the church kitchen by 7:45 am. You can also drop them off during office hours, Monday through Thursday, from 9 am to 2 pm, the week of the event. In December, we served 100 hot meals, and the donated clothing was greatly appreciated. Thank you all for your generosity and support!

January Coins of Love will support Repairers of the Breach, the only daytime refuge for homeless adults in Greater Milwaukee, open six days a week. They provide essential life-saving, life-sustaining, and life-restoring programs to foster self-reliance. This sanctuary offers resources like food, clothing, and education to help at-risk individuals get back on track. Additionally, they collaborate with various programs to ensure everyone has access to the tools needed for improvement.



November's Coins of Love - The Stars and Stripes Honor Flight of Wisconsin \$642.02

December's Coins of Love - Homeless of West Allis \$82.73



Wesleyan Congregational Care Team (WCCT) From Laura Molleson: Greetings for the New Year from your Wesleyan Congregational Care Team. As I mentioned in December, we have been in prayerful discussions with Pastor Grace about combining the WCCT and the Visitation Ministry. Because our team members and our missions are so intertwined, it made sense to become one group effective January 1st. All activities of the Visitation Ministry will continue under the umbrella of the WCCT.

It is our wish that 2025 brings all much happiness, good health, and protection. We know that unexpected events happen, and sometimes, having someone to talk to is helpful. That is why our team exists. No matter how small or how big your concern may be, please know it matters to us and so do you. Reach out to Pastor Grace, Laura Molleson, or the church office to be connected with a WCCT Caregiver. We are also available on Sundays, just look for anyone wearing this badge.



FUMCWA CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Adult Christian Education Invitation From Tom Bolton: A great New Year's Resolution—This would be a great time to start a Christian Education Class. We offer many of them here at First Church; see the insert for many ideas. In late January, we will also add an online class on Tuesday night about Radicle Methodism exploring our roots. There will be video, Zoom, and a social media group sponsored by the Conference, it will be for three weeks. We grow in our Christian faith by regularly studying and sharing our ideas and questions with each other. There are lots of great book studies during the week, too!

Thomas Bolton
414-704-5478

God cares about you and so do we.

Book Discussion Group: The first Book Discussion of 2025 is on Monday, **January 20th**, at 1:30 pm, when we will discuss *Land of Silence* by Tessa Afshar (Spiritual Growth). Before she stole healing by touching the hem of his garment, Elianna was a young girl crushed by guilt. After her only brother is killed in her care, Elianna tries to earn forgiveness by working for her father's textile trade and caring for her family. When another tragedy places Elianna in sole charge of the business, her design talent brings enormous success but never absolution. Then illness strikes, isolating Elianna from everyone and stripping everything she has left. No physician can cure her—until she hears whispers of a man whose mere touch can heal. This daytime group reads and discusses books recommended by the UWF. The 2025 Book Discussion titles will be posted in the library and described in the monthly Methodist Messenger. The group is open to everyone who enjoys reading!



FUMCWA EVENTS

Lance Lambert / Events Coordinator:

Family Film Matinee - Sunday, January 19th: *Attention all kids & adults...* Following worship, we will screen Disney Pixar's "Inside Out 2" in the sanctuary. We return to the mind of newly minted teenager Riley, just as headquarters is undergoing a sudden demolition to make room for something entirely unexpected: new emotions! Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust, who's been running a successful operation, aren't sure how to feel when Anxiety shows up - and she is not alone.



Like all our Movie Matinees, we will have FREE popcorn and beverages. After the film, you're invited to stay for a brief discussion and pizza! A free-will offering will be taken to defray the cost of the pizzas. *This movie is PERFECT for kids and adults alike and a great way to approach kids' processing of emotions. PLEASE join us & bring friends!!!*

Towels for Dogs - a new (ongoing) outreach: We all accumulate older bath and dish towels - you know, the slightly torn or ragged ones. Instead of just tossing them, bring them to church, and we will donate them to animal shelters in the area. These shelters always need towels to help with the cleaning of dogs and cats coming into their care. There will be a basket in the Mission Corner in the Narthex for your donations. When a few accumulate, I'll deliver them to a shelter. Matthew 10 tells us God cares for even the little sparrows - shouldn't we then care for disadvantaged cats and dogs?

Souper Bowl of Caring - thinking ahead to February 9th: Start saving cans of soup and get ready to make and taste some great homemade soups as we continue this youth-led mission. Details to follow.

FUMCWA FAITH COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prayer Request: While Michael and Janet do appreciate prayers for their health, what they want much more is prayers for their faith in Jesus to be always strong and grow deeper and that they will grow in knowing and living by God's word. They want prayers that they will be filled with love for God with their whole hearts, minds, souls, and strength, and love for their neighbors as themselves.

Thank you. In Christ's service, Michael Odle & Janet Perkins

Our Prayer Chain Team connects us through prayer. To join this ministry, contact the church office. You'll receive prayer requests via email and be asked to pray for them daily. **Submit prayer requests** by contacting the church office. Updates on prayer requests are also welcomed.



Recycle Socks and Raise Funds for Northcott Neighborhood House: We will continue collecting holey socks for a spring shipment. Please help us spread the word to your neighbors and co-workers, encouraging them to clean their sock drawers and upcycle their old socks. The funds raised will support local employment training programs at the Methodist Church. Thank you!