

Methodist the messenger

Rev. Dr. Grace G. Cajiuat, Pastor

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

fumcwaoffice@fumcwa.org

414-774-5500

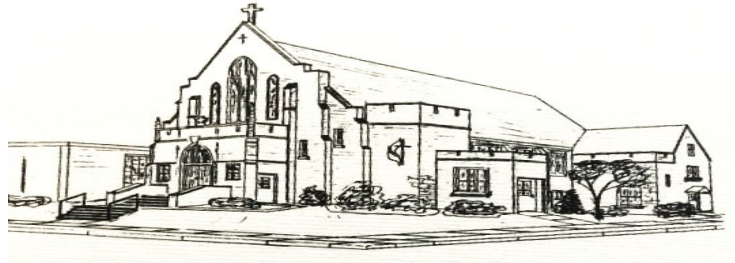
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God cares about you



and so do we

NOVEMBER 2025



Members & Friends of FUMCWA,

This morning, I was rereading a sermon manuscript I preached in 2008. I expounded on the story of Abraham and Isaac, the son he and Sarah were longing for for so long. And yet, after some years, God commanded him to sacrifice Isaac to prove his faith. I think of us now, being asked to give with utmost faith and generosity.

We know the story has a happy ending, but I wonder what would have happened if Abraham wasn't stopped and he killed Isaac? What would his faith mean after the outcome? Or, would Abraham have ignored God's command and went into hiding to save Isaac?

When God calls us to co-create and be stewards of God's creation, would we ignore God's call of offering the gifts God gave us? Would we hide from God because we fear we will not have enough for ourselves? This is a difficult question, given our reality right now of cuts to programs we rely on for our retirement, our health, our welfare.

There is always a choice—a choice to say yes to God or to manna, a choice of fear or trust. Choosing God is to choose over fear. Choosing God is never easy. The story of offering Isaac to God is not about God, but about us being open to God's call for generous giving. For Abraham, God came first. When Abraham chose God, it was not an option to save his son. For Jesus, God came first. And it wasn't easy for Jesus; it isn't easy for us now. But time and time again, God shows up and provides generously.

Stewardship is a significant part of our lives as people of God. In Genesis, God created humans to steward God's creation. As professing Jesus' followers, stewardship defines our sense of being—the gifts and graces of each of us given and shared to make the reign of God visible.

We, as a congregation, have been reflecting on stewardship and the reasons we give. We will consecrate our gifts to God through the presence and ministries of First UMC West Allis on Sunday, November 9, followed by an Ethiopian coffee ceremony performed for dignitaries and offered by Nardos.

May we choose God and heed God's call to give with bold faith and trust, so the world may know God through the people of First UMC West Allis.

Thank you for your witness!

Pastor Grace

A NOTE FROM OUR LAY LEADER

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Part of God's great design to this earth is seasons. We experience wet and dry seasons, the typical four seasons of winter, spring, summer, and fall, and there are planting seasons and harvesting seasons. We see creation moving through seasons each year, and we ourselves live through seasons, as well. In these seasons we learn to depend on and come to expect things. So, too, we find in the Bible that our lives go through seasons.

Ecclesiastes 3 affirms two important reminders:

1. The things we go through in life are not in vain.
2. Our situations will not last forever.

If you are in a certain season of life, you can be confident the season will come to an end at some point. This verse serves as a reminder that our circumstances will change and that is something we can come to expect in life. Whatever God takes us through has purpose, perhaps to deepen our faith or to help us achieve breakthrough in an area of life.

We will get over our sorrows. We will get out of the valley. We will go through hardships. And whatever season of life we find ourselves in, it will have a beginning and it will have an end. We will enter new seasons, too. Ones that bring relief, hope, or a deeper sense of faith.

It's helpful to also read other translations of this verse to get a better idea of its meaning:

- "Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses". - Good News Translation
- "Everything has its own time, and there is a specific time for every activity under heaven" - God's Word
- "There's an opportune time to do things, a right time for everything on the earth" - The Message

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens" - NIV

I love the fact that Ecclesiastes also emphasizes that there is joy in each season. I find joy in each of the seasons that we are progressing through in our Church.

I had the pleasure to attend three significant funerals this Summer and Fall.

The celebration of life for Tom Brown was amazing, as I anticipated. There are many things that struck me about it, but I want to share three things:

- There were students of Tom from many generations at his memorial; he influenced many many people in a Christ-like way, and that influence is being passed on to new generations;
- Tom Brown really did live in a Christ-like manner, and that legacy is well-remembered;
- Tom Brown planted many seeds in our Congregation and beyond, and it is God that makes them grow.

I saw many kids from our past at church--now fully grown and amazing!

I was also delighted to visit with Bishop Don Ott at the service. He was a product of First Church, and preceded my time here. But as I had many opportunities to hear him speak in recent years, he has been a great influence on me. He is another reminder to me about the value of different seasons in our lives. God speaks through us in each season.

I also attended the funeral for my dear friend Bonnie Bartelt's father...Ron Bartelt lived a good, righteous life. He was a perfectionist, a man who loved people and loved to praise Jesus in his words and music. What a legacy he left through his children and many generations of friends!

A NOTE FROM OUR LAY LEADER Cont.

Memorial endings bring us beautiful new beginnings, it seems to me.

I am thinking too about the generations and seasons of our local churches.

A dozen of us shared **visions at a Retreat last summer**. One of the cool things to me was that there were very active contributions from some of the more quiet members, and that added a lot to the product. We shared our main activity visions at a Church Council meeting on October 20th. We concluded the retreat with five main visions to pursue. Work committees have already started working on some of these:

--Revitalize our building for more community use. We are having a study done to help us plan this. Many of you will be involved in helping to define and develop this in the next few months. The consultants were onsite two weeks ago, and they met with Trustees and Pastor Grace. Pastor Grace will be updating this project in more detail.

--Develop a music academy at First Church to serve the greater community with Church music programming and teaching. This will take advantage of our background, contacts, reputation and talented resources.

--Strengthen our Food Pantry and maximize safety and loving care for our clients and servants. This is such a great mission for us.

--Provide ongoing education and training on Christian Social Ethics, building on what we have started in recent years.

--Engage our whole congregation in being a welcoming, inclusive community, that is a place of comfort and community for many cultural and diverse backgrounds. We will make use of training that we have received in the past, and partner with other congregations and communities and share our invitation with many others. There are many ideas raised to help with this. We will **discuss and engage** more and more as a full community of Christ.

As I noted a year ago and recently, many of us are getting more mature, and we still have lots to share yet. Our roles as Disciples don't end; there is no mandatory retirement date for discipleship. This is a great season for First Church--a time to plant new crops and a time to harvest. I love seeing new seedlings.

Tom Bolton, 414-704-5478

God loves you and so do we. Discipleship Never Ends.

The Church Financial Statement of Activities
ending September 30, 2025:

	Year To Date Actual
Giving & Other Income	\$274,127.93
Expenses	\$307,359.34
Operating Income/ (Deficit)	\$(33,231.41)



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.



SCRIPTURE READINGS & Themes NOVEMBER 2025

November 2, 2025, All Saints Sunday/Communion

Texts: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Psalm 119:137-144; 2 Thessalonians: 1:1-4, 11-12; Luke 19:1-10

November 9, 2025, Consecration Sunday

Texts: Habakkuk 1: 15b-2:9; Psalm 145: 1-5, 17-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17; Luke 20: 27-38

November 16, 2025, Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 118; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-19

November 24, 2025, Christ the King Sunday

Texts: Jeremiah 23:1-6; Luke 1:68-69; Colossians 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43

November 30, 2025, First Sunday of Advent

Texts: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44

Stewardship Message: As we take a moment to reflect on our journey together, we, the staff of First United Methodist Church of West Allis, want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering stewardship and support. Your generosity and commitment to our mission have made a remarkable difference in our faith community. Thanks to your faithful contributions—both financial and in spirit—we have been able to keep a full time pastor, continue the Senior League, have very talented and knowledgeable music directors who continue our children's and adult choirs, along with our amazing worship music, enjoy many special events and gatherings, maintain the building, keep our children safe and loved while their parents worship, and keep someone in the office for many other needs and wants of our church family. These accomplishments reflect not only the resources you've shared but also the love and dedication that you bring to our ministries.

Your stewardship embodies the values we hold dear and serves as an inspiring reminder of the power of community. We are continually uplifted by your willingness to lend a hand, share your talents, and support one another. Together, we are creating a vibrant environment where everyone can grow in faith and service. As we move forward, we are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and look forward to continuing this journey together. Your support fuels our mission and encourages us all to strive for greater impact in our faith community. Thank you for your steadfast stewardship. We are truly grateful to have you as part of our ministry family.

With gratitude and blessings,

FUMCWA Staff



FUMCWA MINISTRIES

Church Library Ministry (The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library): Advent begins November 30th. To assist you in your Advent preparation and reading, the library cart for November and December will feature books on Advent and Christmas. The cart is located in the Gathering Room. You are invited to check out these resources.



Food Pantry Ministry: We want to thank the Warden Family Foundation, Inc., for the generous donation to our food pantry. It is through donations like this that we can continue this great mission of helping those in need with food and personal care products. We also appreciate the food and items of the month that the congregation helps with. Monetary donations are also important. Please check the expiration dates on food donated from your pantry. Items must be given before expiration. Canned meats, chunky soups, crackers, stews, pickles, muffins (add water), and cereals go fast. Personal care products such as deodorant, toothpaste, body wash, shampoo, and conditioner are needed. Laundry detergent, dish detergent, liquid hand soap, lotions, and aluminum foil are also appreciated. We thank you for your support. This is a very generous congregation. During the cold weather, we also like to give socks, mittens, and hats (mostly for adults). If you can help with that, we would appreciate it very much.

The October Good Samaritan Offering: \$5190.00

PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED FOR NOVEMBER:

~KETCHUP~ FACIAL TISSUE OR PAPER TOWELS~



United Women in Faith: There is a change regarding our November meeting. Laura Molleson was scheduled to present a program on Reiki. However, her husband will have surgery that day, so she will present her program in the spring. On November 10th at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room, Pastor Grace will talk about her life growing up and the decisions she made for her life. We look forward to learning more about her as she shares these stories. We want to thank our speaker, Capt. Brian Saftig from the West Allis Police Dept. for presenting our program on Scams and Frauds in October. It was very interesting, and we learned a lot about what to be aware of so that we don't become

victims of one of these scams.

Our Holiday Bake Sale will be held on Sunday, December 14th. It will be similar to last year; however, Linda Zeman will not be offering the pre-ordered large gingerbread cookies this year due to her health issues. More information will be provided on flyers posted around the church and in the December Messenger.

Please join us! We are growing and finding support from one another. If you have any questions, please call Annette Intravaia at 414-257-4166.

This QR Code will take you directly to our church website. The website has up-to-date information about events and schedules, and links to online Sunday worship services.



Laurie Halvorsen, Senior Ministries Coordinator: Now is the time to purchase your Senior League tickets for the annual Christmas luncheon on Wednesday, December 3rd. The festive day begins at 11:30 am with punch, followed by luncheon at 12 noon. Our program will take place at 1:00 pm in the church sanctuary with the Milwaukee High School of the Arts Choir, directed by Raymond Roberts. Our menu offers three main entree choices—be sure to make your selection: Stuffed Pork Chop, Steak Tenderloin, or Chicken Cordon Bleu. The sides include salad with tomatoes and cucumbers, seasoned diced red potatoes, Venetian vegetable blend, and a French roll. Dessert will be a Triple Mousse Mini Layer Cake. Tickets can be purchased at Senior League meetings or in the church office for \$22.00. The deadline to buy tickets is Sunday, November 23rd. Everyone is welcome!



Meetings in November

- November 5:** 12 Noon: Pansit (Rice w/Pork & Veggies), Egg Rolls, Ice Cream
 Program: Milwaukee Festival City Chorus; Director John Plazek
 Devotions: Charlene Buncich
- November 19:** 12 Noon: Pick'n Save Baked/Fried Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Cookies
 Program: West Allis Art Utility Box Program
 Devotions: Karen Johnson

Coach Trip: "Christmas Stars" Saturday, December 6th, show at the Xavier Fine Arts Theatre in Appleton, with lunch included at Fox River Brewing Co. in Oshkosh before the show. Four meal choices available. Departure from FUMC at 9:00 am. Everyone is welcome; you do not need to be a Senior League member to attend. This is a beautiful 2-hour Christmas show with over 250 performers. Cost: \$130.00. We need more people for this trip; please call if you're interested. Ticket sales end on November 19th.

Come join Senior League in our 50th Year for Fun, Food & Fellowship in 2025!

FUMCWA LOCAL MISSIONS



Second Saturday Servants November Blessings and Giving Thanks: As we enter the season of Thanksgiving, it's a beautiful reminder of how blessed and abundant our lives truly are. On **November 8th**, your delicious hot casseroles will bring warmth and comfort to our neighbors in need—what a meaningful gift of love and care. Please bring them to the church kitchen by 7:45 am for packaging. Our speedy and dedicated volunteers—**Ruth Ann, Judy, Dave, Carole, Pat, Salud, Tom, Karen, Carol, and Val**—are deeply appreciated for their time and energy. A heartfelt **Happy Thanksgiving** to all our bakers and packers who make this outreach possible. **Winter Coat Drive:** Warm winter coats in all sizes are urgently needed. Kindly place your donations in the **mission collection box located in the narthex**. Thank you for being part of this season of generosity and grace.

The **November Coins of Love** will support the Divine Intervention Sleep/Warming Shelter. The Divine Intervention Warming Shelter provides a safe haven for 20 guests every evening from December 1 through March 31, offering shelter, safety, and sustenance to those experiencing homelessness.



September's Coins of Love - Thanksgiving Food Basket Ministry \$550.06

October's Coins of Love - Rooted and Rising-Washington Park \$71.00

SHARE THE GIFT OF PRESENCE THROUGH PRESENTS: Once again, we are excited and looking ahead to this year's Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Program! I have received the names of approximately 35 children who live in the FUMCWA neighborhood with an incarcerated parent. Like in years past, we will be providing each child with two gifts on behalf of their incarcerated parent to show the love of Jesus Christ to the child. By providing these gifts, we will also help provide a connection between the parent in prison and their child/children. **On Sunday, November 23rd, look for the Angel Tree in the narthex** where you will be able to choose an angel tag bearing the name and gift wish of a child. There will also be an instruction sheet for you to take as a reminder of the details of this year's ministry. **The gifts need to be purchased, wrapped, and returned to church no later than 10:30 am on Sunday, December 14th.** Also, after the church service concludes on December 14th, please head over to the church library to help with the delivering of gifts to the children's homes. We always need delivery volunteers, and many hands make light work! It could be as simple as dropping off one or two packages on your way home from church. If you have any questions, please call or text me at 703-888-7090.

Grace and peace, Pam Chesky Johnson



FUMCWA CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MESSAGE FROM DEACON NANCY LANMAN & SUE KLESCEWSKI:

Sue and I have always considered all members of our classes to be teachers, along with those assigned to lead. We all have lifetimes of learning and experiencing our faith to share, both spiritually and missionally. What surprised and delighted participants this time, however, was being treated to a learning experience that drew on and originated in the rich curiosity and exuberance of our church youth, who followed our study along with us, using a companion curriculum that leaders developed together!

This fall, a dozen or more adults enjoyed a lively and thought-provoking five-week study of the deeply concerning moral issues raised by the crisis of global climate change. During our last class, our youth joined us to share posters they had created expressing their concerns for the environment's repair and well-being. Probably not many of us adults realize that we are a part of the geological epoch that has created this crisis (Holocene), but it is our youth who will inherit the consequences and be held most responsible for creating policies and scientific and other responses to meet the effects being experienced in the next epoch (Anthropocene).

Sunday School is a sacred time for everyone attending to learn and be inspired by those around us, past and present, and for the future that is yet to come. If we do not learn to study and to focus more deeply and steadily upon weaving our faith and actions together, we may not be able to enjoy the benefits of life, the fruits of well-being much longer. Rev. Dr. Larry Rasmussen, well-known and respected environmental ethicist and Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics, Emeritus, at Union Theological Seminary, has written an outstanding book to his grandchildren who, to paraphrase, will "inherit" a planet at a time when "uncertainty is a sure thing." Written in the form of letters lovingly addressed to his and our grandchildren who will inherit a fundamentally different earth, this is a must-read for us all, whether you have had an opportunity to take a class yet or not! (The Planet You Inherit: Letters to My Grandchildren when Uncertainty's a Sure Thing, Broadleaf Books, 2022)

Fortunate to be people of faith, as well as of love and goodwill, we have God's eternally reliable accompaniment and our divinely ordained marching orders as God's people to carry on the good of Creation divinely called into being. Therefore, we have hope, and we have work we must and can do before our time is complete. It is then that we can turn this ministry over to the next generation...

Advent Study 2025: As we approach Christmas, the Advent season offers us a chance to rejoice in the promises we celebrate: the HOPE that Jesus will come back and bring about a new beginning, the JOY that comes from worshipping Him today and always, the PEACE we experience with God now and hope for our world to experience, and the LOVE of a God who gave up His own Son. **Prepare to receive Christ this Advent with the message of John the Baptist and best-selling author and pastor Adam Hamilton in *Prepare the Way for the Lord*.**

For two thousand years, Christians have turned to the story and message of John the Baptist in the weeks leading up to Christmas. In *Prepare the Way for the Lord: Advent and the Message of John the Baptist*, Hamilton explores the Advent themes of John's life and ministry, and how John calls all followers of Jesus to prepare our hearts for his coming. In each of the Gospels, the story of Jesus is intertwined with that of his cousin John, the one whom the prophets foretold would come to "prepare the way of the Lord." When we hear the message of John the Baptist, it makes us and our world ready to receive Christ. This study features a video component to enhance the experience. The Youth Sunday School Class will also participate in this Advent journey, making it meaningful for all ages.

Adult Study Begins Sunday, November 30th

9:00-10:00 am Lighthouse Room

Leader: Val Holzman

The class runs from **November 30-December 21**.

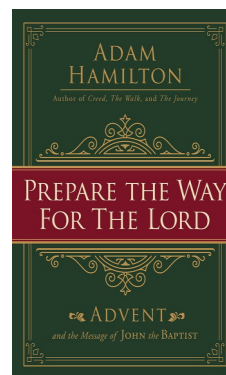
Wednesday Morning Study Begins November 26th

9:30-10:30 am Fireside Room

Leader: Pastor Grace

The class runs from **November 26-December 17**.

Books will be available for sale in the church office.



Book Discussion Group: Join us on Monday, November 17, at 1:30 pm to discuss **Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future** by Patty Krawec. Krawec shares her personal story and explores themes of creation, replacement, and disappearance, inviting us to reflect on settler colonialism and our connections to the land and each other. The group meets in the Bernice Nailen Memorial Library. All are welcome.

FUMCWA EVENTS

Lance Lambert / Events Coordinator: November is the start of busy times for most families. We've just had Halloween, Thanksgiving dinners (and football) to plan and looking forward to the mad rush to Christmas. On top of all this, JoAnn and I are going on vacation for several days. So... here's what's happening for November:



November 2nd: All Saints (Memorial Sunday) Worship Service. *This is also the end of Daylight Saving Time - so "Fall Back".*

November 9th: Consecration Sunday - At regular worship time.

November 23rd: Cookies & Coffee - Join your church family in the Gathering Room after worship for cookies, coffee, and fellowship. YUM!

November 30th: Brunch in Bethlehem - Following worship come down to Fellowship Hall to enjoy this FUMCWA tradition on the 1st day of the Advent season. We will enjoy a delicious brunch, sing Christmas carols, and hear the story of the Nativity with our children. This is a GREAT kickoff to the blessed season of Advent and Christmas, and *you'll want to be there! Why not bring a friend or neighbor as well!!!* Remember: Jesus is the reason for the Season!

FUMCWA FAITH COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thanksgiving Basket Distribution - Saturday, November 22nd: Join us in spreading warmth and gratitude this holiday season! First Church will be distributing Thanksgiving baskets filled with all the essentials for a festive meal to neighbors in need. This cherished tradition has been a cornerstone of our outreach for many years. Distribution is from 1:00 to 3:00 pm in our parking lot. We especially encourage our older youth to volunteer — it's a meaningful way to give back, and we promise you'll leave with a full heart. Please dress warmly and be prepared to be outside. Reach out to Annette Intravaia if you would like to help. Let's come together to make this Thanksgiving a little brighter for our community!



It's that time of the year again when you can place your order for **Poinsettias for Christmas Eve Services**. All orders and payments must be submitted by Sunday, November 23rd. Please check the order insert in the Sunday bulletin for details. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Church Office at 414-774-5500.



The First United Methodist Church of West Allis (FUMCWA) will hold its **2025 Annual Church Conference** on **Sunday, November 16, after worship in the sanctuary**. Rev. Heidi Loomis from Oak Creek Community UMC will be the presiding elder. The agenda for the Charge Conference includes the Approval of the Membership Audit, the 2026 Church Budget (including Pastoral Compensation), the Nominations Report for 2026, Lay Preachers' Certifications, and Audit Reports. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.



Stewardship Celebration Sunday, November 9, 2025: This year's Stewardship Appeal theme, "**The Joy of Giving**," celebrates the vibrant and transformative ministries of **First Church, West Allis**. It invites us to embrace generosity as a spiritual practice—giving to God first, trusting in God's provision, and rejoicing in the blessings that flow from a giving heart. As a congregation, we've been prayerfully reflecting on what stewardship means and why we give. Our gifts support a wide range of life-giving ministries that touch lives within our church and beyond. Together, we affirm that giving is a joy. We will **consecrate our gifts to God** during worship on **Sunday, November 9**, honoring the sacred work of First UMC West Allis. Following the service, we invite you to a special celebration: an **Ethiopian coffee ceremony**, a gesture of hospitality traditionally reserved for dignitaries, graciously offered by **Nardos**.

Let us gather in gratitude, celebrate our shared mission, and experience the joy of giving—together.

Sunday Morning Coffee Fellowship: We're so grateful for the joy and connection our Coffee Fellowship brings each week. As we continue to offer coffee and treats, we're currently running low on funds to cover the cost of coffee. If you enjoy this time together, we kindly ask you to consider contributing using the envelope provided. Special thanks to Carol Ward for delivering baked goods! Please note that the gluten-free cookies and coffee are provided at our own expense. Your support helps keep this tradition going. Thank you for your generosity and understanding!