

Methodist the messenger

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

God cares about you



and so do we

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Centenary Celebration of the Church Building (1923-2023)

DECEMBER 2023 / JANUARY 2024

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Dear FUMCWA Family in Christ,

Blessed and cheerful season of Christmas!

We begin the month of December with the Centenary Celebration of the Church Building, then move into the season of Advent Sundays, and celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior on Christmas Eve. We plan to prepare for the New Year the last week of December. We delight ourselves in festivities, celebrations, special worship services, and above all, focusing on the Journey to Bethlehem.

When we open Christmas gifts, we open our hearts to the love of Jesus. When we exchange Christmas gifts, we express our gratitude for the love of Jesus. When we sing Christmas carols, we are filled with joy. When we share special meals together, we remember the mission moments of reaching out to people in need. When we decorate Christmas trees, we remind ourselves of God's call to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Christmas is a time of sharing our miracle moments and wonder stories - the miracle of Jesus being born into our lives and the wonder of making Jesus' love known to all people. That's why we sing, "Joy to the World, the Lord is come." Christian joy is always in the midst of and in spite of challenges, complications, and chaos. Mary and Joseph were no exceptions; neither were the shepherds nor the wise men. Romans 6:23 reads: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit." When Jesus was born of the Spirit, hope, joy, and peace were born so that our lives can be filled with them. That's the real message of Christmas. May it be so!

PRAYER: May the Holy Spirit fill us with hope, joy, and peace in the seasons of Advent and Christmas and let the same Spirit lead us into a blessed new year 2024! To God be the glory! Amen!

Our Centennial Anniversary Special Service will take place on **December 3, 2023, at 10:00 am** in the sanctuary. Following the service, there will be a lunch in the Fellowship Hall. Bishop Hee-Soo Jung will be the preacher for the special 10:00 am service, and he will be delivering a sermon titled "Beloved Community" based on John 1:43-51. We invite you to join us to commemorate God's faithfulness.



“So, faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17)

My Sunday School cohorts have heard me say many times that when we study the Bible, we learn new things each time we read the Scripture. We learn by studying the Word, and I believe that it strengthens our faith and our witness when we study scripture each day. Sometimes it is just a matter of reading silently each day and listening. Read, and ask, "What does this passage tell me about God?" Read and ask, "What does this passage tell me about man?" Listen. Ask. "What does this passage tell me about the relationship between God and man?" Look at the culture of the time. Now look at today, and ask how this passage teaches us today. I encourage each adult over 18 to be in a Bible study class.

We have a great Advent study in December. You can join the class at 9:30 am on Sunday mornings with Val Holzman or join the class on Zoom Tuesday nights at 7:00 pm with Bonnie Chesky. This is a great class for all ages.

Advent allows us to reclaim the Christmas season. To reclaim the hope and the beauty and the power that is in the birth of Jesus Christ. And to remember that that same faithful God who fulfilled that promise is also going to fulfill every promise He's made to you and to me.

Don't let this Christmas season pass you by without experiencing the true beauty and significance of Advent. Slow down. Seek Him. And when you seek Him, you'll find Him waiting right here for YOU. Being in a class with other seekers will fill your life with Hope and Joy. Thomas Bolton (414-704-5478)



The Church Financial results for FUMCWA for 2023 are as follows:

	Year To Date Actual	Year To date Budget	Difference
Giving & Other Income	\$298,474.63	\$205,559.30	\$92,915.33
Expenses	\$345,329.45	\$407,233.70	\$61,904.25
Operating Income/ (Deficit)	\$(46,854.82)	\$(201,674.40)	

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 next year. Please return your estimate of giving cards for 2024. If you are an online giver and wish to increase your 2024 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.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FUMCWA

Worship TOGETHER

LECTIONARY READINGS & SERMON THEMES - December 2023 & January 2024

12/3 First Sunday of Advent, John 1:43-51, "Beloved Community"
Centenary Celebration Service

12/10 Second Sunday of Advent, Mark 1:1-8, "Our Spirit Waits: Our Just Peace"

12/17 Third Sunday of Advent, John 1:6-8, 19-28, "Our Spirit Waits: Our Fierce Joy"

12/24 Fourth Sunday of Advent, Luke 1:26-28, "Our Spirit Waits: Love Transforms Us"

12/24 Christmas Eve Services, Isaiah 9:2-7 & Luke 2:11-20, "Our Wondrous"

12/31 Wesley Covenant Service

01/07 First Sunday of Epiphany, Mark 1:4-11

01/14 Second Sunday of Epiphany, John 1:43-51

01/21 Third Sunday of Epiphany, Mark 1:14-20

FAITH COMMUNITY UPCOMING EVENTS: ADVENT



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.

Advent Blessings From Tom Bolton, Lay Leader: I love Advent. I started early this year with my Pandora Advent station, which I enjoy very much and listen to in July also. It is not secular Christmas music but lots of instrumental Advent hymns. I have also started to plan my Advent studies; this year I will participate in our Tuesday night Zoom class at 7:00 pm, and an online class with Lifeway, and I will be reading personally about the anticipated return of Jesus. I'm also going to enjoy the anticipation of Christmas with our little ones. I hope you will enjoy this season at First Church too.

I have been thinking about relationships lately. We have such great networks in our church. Jesus strategically built his network of twelve disciples carefully, prayerfully, and thoughtfully.

Did he select the most knowledgeable and religious men (the Pharisees)?

No.

Did he work with those who focused on wealth and power (the Sadducees)?

No.

He picked the poor and humble fishermen to help save the world. He was after their hearts, not their minds.

His strategy was to connect people by sending a powerful message that only a network of humble servants with loving hearts and spiritual meekness could do.

Are you networking strategically? We have here a network of loving servants, living our vision that God loves you and so do we.



FAITH COMMUNITY UPDATES, NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Year's Eve Wesleyan Watchnight Service at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary Followed by Food, Fun, Friends, and Family in Fellowship Hall: On New Year's Eve (Sunday, December 31, 2023) at 7:00 pm, we will have a condensed Wesleyan Covenant Service in the Sanctuary, led by Lay Servants. This service will last about 60 minutes and involves much reading and covenanting by the group. We will have a little music from the hymnal and will not be using PowerPoint. Participants will have a handout that they may take home and sign for the New Year. Downstairs, we will have a night of board games, snacks, Holiday Nog, and sparkling juices, starting at 8:15 pm. We will have some games and board games available for groups of all ages--teens, families, and friends. We invite you to bring your favorite card games and board games that you want to play--Scrabble, Phase 10, UNO, Yahtzee, and any games you like to play. We also ask you to bring some snack foods that you would share on New Year's Eve. Beverages will be provided. Fun and sharing for people of all ages, and families and friends.



The Church Council has approved a change to our worship schedule. Starting January 7, 2024, we will be having one service on Sundays at 10:30 am. This change has been made after careful consideration of all opinions and feedback we have received.

Effective January 7, 2024:

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



2023 CHARGE CONFERENCE: West Allis: First UMC Charge Conference for 2023 was held on November 12, 2023, at 9:15 am and presided over by Rev. Tom Garnhart, a Retired Elder. Charge Conference is an annual feature of the United Methodist System that connects the members locally, nationally, and globally. The following were approved by the members present at the Charge Conference: 2024 Budget, 2024 Pastoral Compensation, 2024 Report of the Nominations Committee, Renewal of Lay Speakers' Certifications, and the Updated Church Membership. In addition, the 2022 Fund Balance Report, also known as the Audit Report, The Report of Trustees, and the Report of Financial Statements, was received. Dave Affeldt, chair of Church Council, presented the ministry highlights of the church for the year 2023. Tom Bolton, Lay Leader, briefly shared the outcome of the Worship Survey Results related to one worship service from January 7, 2024, as approved by the Church Council. A Future with Hope!

ANGEL TREE: On November 19th, 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 can select one or more angels from the tree, purchase the gift listed, wrap it, and return it to our church by Sunday morning, December 10th. The gifts will be distributed to the children that day by volunteers. This year our church will serve more than 37 children and their parents through the Angel Tree. It can be our way of introducing to them the greatest gift of all, the love of Jesus Christ. On Sunday, December 10th, many volunteers will be needed to help deliver the Angel Tree gifts. Please call Judy Affeldt at 414-690-4560 with any questions or to volunteer for this wonderful project.



The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year From Your Library Committee. As this joyous Christmas season begins, visit The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library for Advent and Christmas titles such as these:

Behold! Cultivating Attentiveness in the Season of Advent by Pamela C. Hawkins
Christmas Stories for the Heart compiled by Alice Gray
Faces at the Manger by J. Barrie Shepherd

Second Saturday Servants: We would like to extend our warmest Christmas greetings to all of the casserole makers and mission servants for your tremendous support throughout the year. As the winter months set in, the need for hot dishes has increased, and we need to count on your help for the Second Saturday Breakfast Program on December 9th and January 13th. Please bring hot casseroles to the church kitchen by 7:45 am. We need more than 14 dishes to fulfill the growing hunger needs of our community. We hope that new cooks will step forward to help us also. Thank you all for your support.



Our AWANA Clubs will receive Coins of Love in December. In January, we will support Repairers of the Breach Homeless Recovery. Many appreciate your generous support.

October Coins of Love: United Methodist Children's Services \$205.20

November Coins of Love: The Displaced Community of West Allis \$203.38

Thanksgiving Special Offering: \$2980.25



Food Pantry: Please continue to bring your large paper bags with handles. Also, we can use the red Sendik's bags, both small and large. Thank you for your generosity in providing food items. All nonperishable food items are accepted. Please note the expiration dates! Any cereals, stews, chunky soups, chili, pickles, pasta sides, crackers, etc. are needed. Also needed are personal care items such as razors (especially for men), body wash, shampoo, and unscented lotions. Household items such as Kleenex, laundry detergent, liquid hand soap, dish detergent, and disinfectants. We have been having over 40 families each food pantry day. Again, thank you for your support! Anything you give us is appreciated so much!

United Women in Faith (UWIF): Unity Circle will meet on December 11th at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room for our annual Christmas Party and Installation of our 2024 Officers. Please note the change in time! Remember to bring a dish to pass and an unwrapped gift or gift card for Ronald McDonald House. There will be no meeting in January! Our next meeting will be on Monday, February 12th, at 1:30 pm in the Fireside Room. Nurse Pat will be answering our questions that will be submitted to her. We hope you will join us and become a part of our group. If you have any questions, please call Annette Intravaia at 414-257-4166.



Book Discussion Group: On Monday, January 15 at 1:30 pm, the group will discuss Angela Hunt's book, **Daughter of Cana**. The story follows twin siblings hired to oversee a wedding feast in Cana. The discussion group is open to all. The group meets in The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library.



This year the **Scholarship and Endowment** committee was pleased to continue our mission of helping students who are continuing their education as well as helping to care for our church. We were excited to award five \$2,000 scholarships to our members who are continuing their education, as well as seven \$1,000 scholarships to deserving students in need at the local West Allis schools. Once again, we were happy to support our church's Vacation Bible School with \$500. Lastly, taking care of our church is important and something that we all benefit from. This year, we supported maintenance that was provided for

the pipe organ \$1,400, the elevator \$3,000, and the doors \$8,000. The Scholarship and Endowment Committee is blessed to have an exceptional group of ladies who will be continuing on in 2024! A special thank you to all of our members: Carole Schumm, Linda Sather, Joanna Schachtely, Jane Henderson, Michelle Fuller, Becky Barrington, and Karen Pitterle.

Laurie Halvorsen, Senior Ministries Coordinator: Our final gathering of Senior League 2023 is our wonderful Christmas luncheon on Wednesday, December 6th. We have had a delightful past year with different programs and wonderful meals, and we have increased our membership. I look forward to 2024. I wish everyone a blessed Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. **Join us for Fun, Food, and Fellowship in 2024 in our 49th Year with Senior League!**



Special Events in December:

December 6 11:30 am Punch

12 Noon Luncheon: Bacon Wrapped Pork Tenderloin or Turkey Tetrazzini, Vegetable Blend, Potatoes, French Roll, Molton Lava Cakes

1:00 pm Milwaukee High School of the Arts Choir, Raymond Roberts; Director

December 13 Fireside Coach Trip "Scrooge, The Musical" Leave Franklin at 9:00 am, please arrive at 8:50 am, and FUMC passengers leave at 9:30 am, please arrive by 9:15 am.

Meetings in January 2024:

January 3 12 Noon New Year's Potluck 2024
Program: New Year's BINGO with Prizes!
Devotions: Installation of Officers

January 17 12 Noon Salisbury Steak, Mashed Potatoes, Carrots and Sherbet Cups
Program: "Do You Remember?" Presentation by Tom Rowe
Devotions: Laura Grabowski

Lance Lambert / Events Coordinator:

Centenary Service & Celebration - December 3rd

We hope you are planning to attend this special service and celebration. There will be special guests and a celebratory meal in Fellowship Hall following our service (special time at 10:00 am).

Brunch in Bethlehem - December 10th

Following 2nd service, please join us in Fellowship Hall as our young people present the Nativity story (as only they can) and enjoy a lovely brunch with your church family and friends. This First Church tradition is always a fun way to start the Christmas season - please come and bring a friend!

New Year's Eve Wesleyan Watchnight Service & Fellowship - December 31st at 7:00 pm.

Please consider joining us for this special service in the sanctuary, followed by games and shared snacks in Fellowship Hall. See Tom Bolton's article for more details.

Methodist Movie Matinee/Discussion - January 14th following worship

Our film is TBD- the title will be posted soon, but please save the date and join us for a FREE movie with popcorn and beverages. Stay for a brief discussion and pizza. A free-will offering will be taken to help defray the cost of the pizzas. No Packer game, so come and Bring a Friend!

"Frozen Tundra" Ice Cream Social - January 21st following worship: Come down to the Small Dining Room after church to build your own sundae, banana split, or root beer float. This is a super opportunity to lower your internal body temperature to match the icy January cold and enjoy a sweet treat with the fellowship of your church family. Please come and plan on having FUN!

Concluding Words: *Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let Christmas be a time of sharing, caring, and giving so that we reflect the birth of Jesus with humility like shepherds, with generosity like wisemen, and with spiritual formation like Simeon and Anna. We hope and pray that the New Year 2024 might bring God's blessings, abundant blessings, so that a great renewal would occur in the life and mission of FUMCWA. Let our unity with diversity continue with God's grace and power. May our one worship on Sundays, beginning in January, be a conduit and a seed for a future with hope! Luke 2:40 reads: "And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on Him."*

