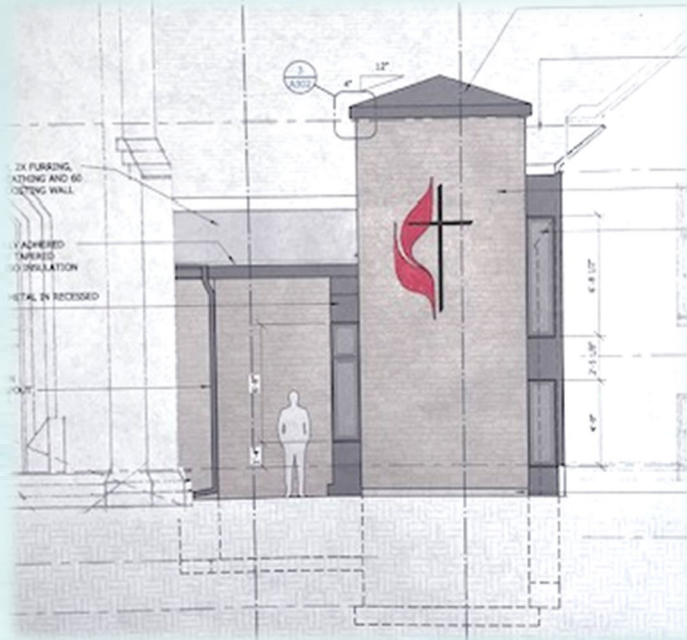




The Current

MAY 2023

Monthly News for our Port Edwards United Methodist Church Members



UP-‘LIFTING’ ELEVATOR NEWS

The elevator project is moving ahead. We now have a contract with OTIS Elevator. The elevator components have a 12-week delivery after which an OTIS team will assemble the elevator on site. Construction drawings have been submitted to the state for approval. Construction is expected to start late May or early June. At times during construction, some areas around the construction zone will not be accessible. The passageway between the old entry and the education wing may be blocked. Preparation work in the lower level has been completed. The area is dark but safe; the Please be careful when entering this area. Access to the upper level will be open except around the construction area. Project completion is targeted for October 2023.

-John Sweat, Elevator Committee Chair

Hans C. Hansen

Visitation – Thursday, May 4th (4-7 PM – at Herman-Taylor Funeral Home)

Service – Friday, May 5th (11:00 AM – PEUMC)

Gravesite service to follow; catered lunch at PEUMC

Looking Ahead

SUNDAYS IN MAY

JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ROMANS

May 7 th	*Fifth Sunday of Easter	Romans Chapters 1-4 (<i>condensed</i>) <i>Matthew 9:12-13 ('I desire mercy, not sacrifice')</i>
May 14 th	Sixth Sunday of Easter <i>Mother's Day</i>	Romans Chapters 5-8 (<i>condensed</i>) Matt. 11:28-31 (<i>'Come to me, all who are weary'</i>)
May 21 st	Seventh Sunday of Easter Ascension Sunday <i>Graduation Sunday</i> <i>(refreshments after church)</i>	Romans Chapters 9-12 (<i>condensed</i>) Matthew 6:24 (<i>'You cannot serve God & money'</i>)
May 28 th	Day of Pentecost <i>Memorial Sunday</i>	Romans Chapters 13-16 (<i>condensed</i>) Acts 2:1-4 (The Holy Spirit descends) ~~THE END OF OUR YEAR-LONG JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE~~

*No Holy Communion on May 7th, since we had Communion with WRUMC on April 30th.



The Wisconsin Rapids Area Community Choir

proudly presents:

Songs of Inspiration
and Hope

SUNDAY, MAY 7th @ 4:00 PM

First Congregational Church

311 2nd Street South, Wisconsin Rapids

FREE ADMISSION

SANCTUARY MEDIA

IMPROVEMENTS:

Thanks to the input of online viewers and our volunteers, each week we are making improvements to our live-streaming capabilities. Issues involving the PowerPoint slides, audio and visual “hiccups” in the live-stream are currently be addressed; we assure you our service (in-person & online) will continue to run smoother and more pleasant for you! Thank you for your patience and for the dedication of our 5 media “wizards.”

A METHODIST HERITAGE DAY EVENT!

Come watch a *Methodist Classic* on the big screen!



When: Wednesday, May 24th

6:00 – 7:48 PM (108 min.)

Where: PEUMC Sanctuary
on the big blow-up screen

ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN is a witty 1941 American biographical film about a traveling Methodist minister and his family as they move from one parish to another in the early part of the 20th century. Along with *Citizen Kane*, it was nominated for Best Picture in 1941.

May 24th is a special day for the People Called Methodists. We call this **Aldersgate Day** or Heritage Day. On this day in 1738, John Wesley attended a Moravian group meeting in Aldersgate, London, where he received a religious experience—a pivotal moment in his life that ultimately led to the development of the Methodist movement in Britain and America:

*“In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society meeting on Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, **I felt my heart strangely warmed.** I felt I did trust in Christ—Christ alone—for salvation; and an assurance was given to me that He had taken away **my sins—even mine**—and saved me from sin and death.”*

—from the *Journals of Rev. John Wesley*, dated May 24th, 1738.



Light “movie” refreshments will be provided—without cinema prices!



HARBOR HOUSE Mission Trip

Thursday, July 13th Saturday, July 15th

Get out your traveling shoes! It's a 3-day trip to Harbor House ministries in Superior, WI. The dates are Thur. July 13-Sat., July 15th.

Here's a bit more information:

Harbor House Crisis Shelters mission is to provide hospitable shelter, transitional living and services for homeless women and families. Harbor House Crisis Shelters is committed to ending homelessness by providing direct services for homeless single women and families, by conducting public education, analysis of model programs and practices that create permanent housing opportunities, and by shaping policies to prevent future homelessness. This is a ministry of our Wisconsin United Methodist Conference.

What kind of work will we be doing, you ask? Exact tasks will be determined a bit later but could include sorting of donated items, painting of apartments, assisting with a potential rummage sale or doing minor building maintenance work. This will depend on the skills and interests of our participants.

Contact Lucy Silvester to indicate your interest in going.

Groups of any size are welcome and appreciated.

RSVP by June 15th. Pay your way—scholarships available.

FOUR-MONTH MISSION PROJECT MAY-AUGUST

Mary's Place – Wisconsin Rapids, WI (corner of Chase Street & 8th Ave. S)

*****Mary's Place is a transitional shelter. Their first program opened in Marshfield in 2005. It is a housing program for helping homeless, no-income, low-income individuals. Their new facility in Wisconsin Rapids is set to open in June 2023. We will collect \$\$\$ for this new ministry, as well as participate in one of their workdays. On June 11th, DaNita Carlson will be speaking to us on Sunday morning concerning this new local ministry.***

Harbor House – Superior, WI.

We hope to take our collection with us on our mission trip in mid-July.

These two ministries have been combined for a total of 4 months because they are very similar in their mission.

Mary's Place Workdays

Letter from DaNita Carlson to Lucy and Pastor Caleb:

Mary's Place is nearing completion . . . which is super exciting!!

Our biggest need is help from volunteers for a cleaning day and move-in day. The following are the dates and times we need help, but anyone is welcome to come for any portion of the time and whatever fits their schedule the best.

CLEANING DAY: Wednesday, May 31st – 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

@ Mary's Place (520 8th Ave S., Wisconsin Rapids)

Duties would include: overall cleaning of the building from the construction: wiping down walls, counters, washing windows, floors, etc.

MOVE-IN DAY: Saturday, June 3rd – 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

@ Mary's Place

Duties would include: helping unload all furniture from trailers on site to each unit, heavy-lifting would be done. This would also include helping to set up each space, items in the kitchen, items in the bathrooms, etc.

I have included Sarah from our team in this email.

Anyone that is able to help can reach out directly to Sarah to let her know their availability:

ssalewski.r@gmail.com

Thanks again for everything!!



Anniversary Committee

Sue & Leo Thomasgard, Ellen Mazurek, Diane Sweat, and Pastor Caleb

Our first meeting: Thursday, April 27th

Our big 125th Church Anniversary Celebration is no longer scheduled for Sunday, July 9th, 2023 but Sunday, June 23rd, 2024.

It was determined that this would be a better date because the elevator project will be done and gives us more time to plan the event.

We will also dedicate and bless the elevator on this date.

June 23rd of next year will be our BIG celebration. It will certainly involve some kind of catered meal and possibly a musical group. Former parishioners and pastors will be invited to attend. Maybe the bishop will be asked to preside.

We will still celebrate our 125th this year, too. We will have "in-house" celebrations starting in July. A 5-week sermon series will lead up to Sunday, July 30th – when we will have a celebratory potluck after school. On this date, we will pick up a special offering to help fund our 2024 event (catering, music, etc.)

Church and Society

(A PLACE TO SHARE IN SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES)

Social Justice issues are everywhere—in the news, in blogs, social media, conversations, sermons, you name it. This space will be bringing you these issues along with questions about how it relates to our Christian beliefs. The goal is to add depth to our understanding of an issue, appreciate each other's opinions and possible actions to support.

I have been asked by Pastor Caleb to subscribe to the ENEWS of both the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) and The United Methodist Church's General Board of Church and Society (GBCS). My sources for these columns will be from these two reputable organizations.

Our first topic is a very controversial issue that has many sides and nuances to it: **GUN VIOLENCE**. Opinion writer Tish Harrison Warren, in a recent article in the *New York Times*, "What Should Christians Do About Guns?" proposed that along with legal changes, there needs to be social changes, and that this will be a long process. She equates this issue with the social stigma that grew around smoking in public spaces along with laws enacted to prohibit smoking in restaurants, bars, etc.

With more guns than people in the U.S. (434 million according to some estimates), there are some of the legal actions Warren proposes:

- restricting types of guns to be bought, such as AR-15
- requiring a gun license and insurance
- requiring safety courses to own a gun
- universal background checks
- red flag laws (permits a state court to order a temporary removal of firearms

from someone they believe may present a danger to others or themselves)

- storage requirements
- stricter age limits

In the present political climate, *what legal proposals could you support and why? What is your opinion about gun violence? How might gun violence be reduced? Is social stigma around gun violence possible and can it grow to be influential? How do your Christian beliefs affect your views of this issue?*

These are not just hypothetical questions. I invite you to send your responses to my email: mitchell5@charter.net. Comments (without names) will be compiled and summarized to be included in the next column in June.

Sue Mitchell, PEUMC Church and Society Coordinator

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES

Our three 2023 graduates are:

Melanie Sillars / Nathan Haddow / Michaela Warpinski

COLLEGE STUDENTS:

Our five college students are:

Nathan Swensen / Brandon Swensen /
Danial Harnisch / Marissa Harnish / Carson Parks

**Gabriel Hintz
will receive his
3rd Grade Bible
on
Mother's Day.**

A RECENT EXPERIENCE: *GENDER DYSPHORIA*

by Pastor Caleb

I wish to tell you about a conversation I had recently. It is very relevant for today; but it is also personal and confidential. I want to respect this person's anonymity. (I use this story with permission.)

A young person (not connected to this church or our community—nor even this state) called me to share something that has been weighing on them. They called me not because I'm a pastor but because I am a friend/family. They told me, "I'm tired of being a girl." Without skipping a beat, I asked, "How long have you felt this way?" They responded, "Going on three years now."

I was blessed to be able to utilize the knowledge I gained from Dr. Jake Diestlemann when he spoke to our church about "gender dysphoria" last year. So, I shared with this person as much as I could remember from his presentation.

In some ways, conversations like this one are like a parent's/grandparent's worst nightmare: *How do you respond to such a statement from a young teenager? We're not equipped to handle this!*

This young person told only two other adults before coming to me. One adult said, "Go talk to Caleb. He's a pastor." Unfortunately, this young person said, "I'm tired of people telling me I have to get myself to church or be more Godly or go talk to a pastor to 'overcome' this." It was quite a surprise for them when, by the end of our conversation, they told me, "You understand me more than any other person I've told so far. It's like you see me. I didn't expect that from an adult."

I responded, "Yes—and to think—I'm a PASTOR!"

"Gender dysphoria" is the professional term for when someone feels they are the wrong gender (male/female). Some may express it like this: "I feel I was born into the wrong body" or maybe "I'm tired of being a xx/yx—I hate everything about being me!"

This is what I told this person: (1) Above all else, you need to go to a professional counselor—even better, a psychologist. A psychologist who specializes in adolescent gender dysphoria. This doesn't imply that you are broken—or that you need someone to FIX you. It just means you need a professional ear to hear your experience, to ask reflective questions, and to provide you with age-appropriate, healthy ways to deal with it, experiment with it, and express it. (2) According to the best of science, the majority of adolescents who experience gender dysphoria actually "grow out of it" by their adult years. The kind of "gender dysphoria" that "sticks" is more often the kind that older teenagers and adults may experience. Maybe this is because hormones during puberty can do some really weird things to our minds and bodies, making us second-guess a lot of things about life and who we are. I told this person to hold these two ideas in tension:

(a) what you are feeling is legitimate—it is real to you *and*

(b) statistically, you *may* grow out this experience.

I am one of those individuals who steps back in caution when I hear about "corrective surgery" performed on adolescence. I suppose this could be acceptable if it was discerned by all the parties involved—including professional, medical advice.

In our denomination's *Social Principles* we say, "Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel." I think this statement concerning Abortion should also be applied as our guiding principle for anyone who is possibly dealing with gender dysphoria.

The important thing is this: go to a professional psychologist who specializes in adolescent gender dysphoria. I informed this person that—as a minor and dependent—there is not much you can do on your own, especially without written permission from a

doctor and/or a parent. But there *are* some safe and health age-appropriate things you can do. But what those are is not for me to say.

What I learned from this conversation is that, more and more, our young people are having to create alternative egos with their friend groups. They are living secret lives right beneath our adult noses. But this is much more serious than imaginary playtime or “kids will be kids.” So many of our young people are living secret lives because they are afraid to tell adults about their real-life experiences. Experiences that strike at the core of who they are. Such secretiveness, of course, is not healthy.

What *real* evidence have we adults offered to young people that we can be trusted and be safe resources?

Maybe it's true: we do **not** know how to deal with this wisely. It's hard to have empathy when it's not our own personal experience. It's hard to wrap our minds around it—and so we find it hard to reach out with our hearts. We fear what we don't understand. This could be because resources still haven't caught up yet with reality. Schools are still severely under-resourced. This young person wanted to first come out to a school counselor. My apologies to school counselors, but I feel like a middle-school school counselor in an under-funded Southern Illinois school district (think Bible-Belt) is not going to have the training or resources to handle gender dysphoria correctly or maturely. I feel awful that my immediate thought was: “I hope this counselor is not Christian”?

This young friend of mine admitted to having asked classmates to call them by another name other than their given name. A purely masculine name. This makes me really sad inside. To know that children today must keep up these “secrets”—that their friends have learned, without question, to call one of their friends by a boy's name around trusted friends, and use their given girl's name in front of untrusted adults and family. These are not innocent secrets. These are secrets about the core of who a person is. This is a downright dangerous problem. I asked this young person what it was like to be called by this boy's name (which they picked out themselves), they responded, “*When I'm called that, it feels like I'm being seen. It feels more comfortable to me. Like it's the real me.*” I myself had to ask a mentor: “*What should I do? Call this young person by their given girl name or their new chosen boy name? Such a decision could put me at odds with my friends and family.*” The answer I received: “*Use the name they want you to use.*” It will not be an easy journey for any one of us—but especially for that young person.

I want to conclude with these thoughts for you: Despite sensational news stories that report the contrary, nobody can “teach” or “manipulate” a child to feel this way. This is a deeply personal experience. Are some young people more likely to jump on the bandwagon and do things just to stand out and be noticed—yes. But a professional psychologist will knock it out of them in a healthy way. If this person doesn't become what they truly feel is the “real” them—they are going to be a dark and miserable person the rest of their life. No amount of “suck-it-up buttercup” will help such an individual. I told this young person, “*You have one choice in life—you've *got* to be what you feel is true to yourself. It's a journey of becoming—because you really cannot walk it alone. You need help with it—a personal experience that needs an outside ear to help you discern it.*”

To be thanked as the only adult in this person's life who seems to “see” them as they are is one of the greatest blessings I have received in a long time—even if it's a sad reality that it must be this way.

Please note: when referring to those exploring gender dysphoria and transgenderism, as I did in this article, use the pronouns “they/them.”

These are our official neutral pronouns even when referring to a single person.

Please note: as a Reconciling Congregation, we recognize the importance of sensitivity involved in sex/gender issues. They are deeply personal to so many people. We are dealing with a constituency in our society with much higher suicide rates. At the bare minimum, we simply want our LGBTQ+ siblings to be alive and safe!



Pastoral and Hospital Visits (a regular reminder)

**“Let your ‘yes’ be a ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ be a ‘no.’ If you say more than that, it is from the Evil One”
(Matthew 5:37).**

Yesterday, I had a rather rare opportunity to visit a parishioner in the hospital. I say rare, because more and more people go in and out of the hospital and the news never reaches me or reaches me late—and more and more people like their privacy and do not wish for others to know.

So, this is your regular reminder of how I have come to handle home and hospital visit:

be clear; concise; make your intentions known explicitly.

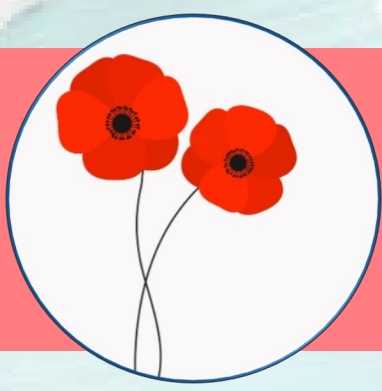
I realize that many people feel like they may be an inconvenience if they ask directly, but it is really helpful to me. This is especially true in an area where people may be taken to Marshfield, Wausau, or some other long-distance location. I am very willing and prepared to go to any location for you. I want to visit you. Just make your intentions clear. Even if you are not able to contact me or the church yourself, have a friend or family do so. Ask a chaplain.

CASE-IN-POINT: A family of mine was in the hospital a few years ago, and the pastor visited without be solicited; later, she acknowledged that she appreciated it; at the time, she was in no mood to be visited and turned the pastor away, even though he traveled over an hour to see her. This proves that unexpected visit **can be appreciated later even if not at the time . . . but not always.**

NOTE:

- (1) *“Letting the church know” or “calling the prayer chain” does not always mean the pastor gets the message (or gets it on time), and it’s not enough information yet to guarantee a visit. It’s enough for a prayer, certainly.*
- (2) *Sharing your hospital room number is the #1 subtle clue that you want to be visited, even if it’s a family member asking on your behalf. If you do wish to say, “I want to be visited,” giving your room number is the perfect subtle clue for me and is close enough to your “yes.”*
- (3) *If you ask someone else to pass on your information, make sure they call or text me directly; I would like a one-degree separation from the hospitalized or homebound person.*
- (4) *Very few hospitals call churches anymore. Don’t assume, even if there’s a place to include your church name on a form. Most hospitals do not have the staffing anymore to notify that a parishioner is in the hospital. Chaplains usually do not call churches either . . . but you can ask.*

By sharing this information with you, I want to make sure all your intentions are respected and fulfilled!



May

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
April 30	1	2	3	4	5	6
10:00 AM Service COMBINED SERVICE WITH W.R.U.M.C.				12:15 PM UWIF Salad Potluck		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10:00 AM Service			1:00 PM Circle of Friends			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10:00 AM Service Mother's Day						Village Rummage Sale
21 Ascension Sun.	22	23	24	25	26	27
10:00 AM Service Graduation Sun. (reception) Church Council Meeting (11:30 AM)			In Honor of Methodist Heritage Day! Movie Night – 6:00 PM "One Foot in Heaven" Sanctuary			
28 Pentecost	29	30	31	June 1	June 2	June 3
10:00 AM Service Memorial Sunday	Memorial Day 10 am Veterans Ceremony @ PE Cemetery Office Closed					

Noteworthy

FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES

\$95 was left off the total we collected for Families Helping Families. We ended up collecting **\$421.25**. This represents the offerings we collected throughout our five-week Wednesday Lenten series and the Noisy Offering the children collected in March.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEKOOSA

600 South Section Street Nekoosa, WI 54457

Terry Whitmore, District Administrator
terry_whitmore@nekoosa.k12.wi.us

Telephone: (715) 886-8000
Fax: (715) 886-8012

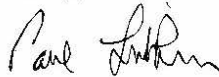
April 19, 2023

Greetings!

On behalf of the School District of Nekoosa, thank you for your generous gift for our "Families Helping Families" fund. Occasionally our student services staff receive requests for support from families that fall outside of usual community resources. These needs have included things like purchasing eye glasses, helping with household items, assisting fire victims with short-term housing, etc. Our "Families Helping Families" fund was established to help meet those unique and critical needs. The fund exists solely because of generous donations from community businesses, individuals, and churches.

We are grateful for your support! Please pass our gratitude on to your congregation!

Sincerely,



Paul Liebherr
Family-School-Community Outreach
School District of Nekoosa



From Pastor Caleb:

I survived my "Jesus Year" (33)! I wish to thank you all for all the cards, gifts, and best wishes shown to me for my 34th! I want to recognize Jim and Midge Herschleb for giving me a wonderful birthday dinner. I want to reiterate what a lovely and superb congregation I have!



1



2



3



4

We had about 100 kids show up to our Easter Egg Hunt!
We "hid" over 700 eggs!
(Photos 1 & 2)
Next year: go BIG or go home!
On Easter Sunday, we prepared our Easter cross and enjoyed a nice Easter breakfast!
(Photos 3 & 4)



5



7



6

Our second by-request Bunco Party was preceded by a hearty baked potato bar!
Lots of prizes were won!
(Photos 5-7)



8



9



10

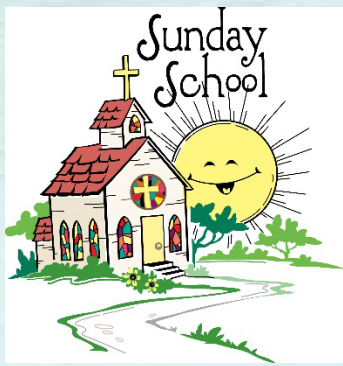


11



12

On Sunday, April 30th, the Wisconsin Rapids UMC congregation joined us for worship! Becky Dove from "The Dove's Nest" presented, with a potluck that followed!
(Photos 8-12)



SUNDAY SCHOOL WRAP UP

IT'S BEEN A FUN SUNDAY SCHOOL YEAR, AND WE'RE BLESSED TO HAVE SUCH A SWEET GROUP OF KIDS. APRIL 23RD CONCLUDED OUR CURRENT SUNDAY SCHOOL SESSION. AT OUR NEXT MEETING IN MAY, WE WILL DISCUSS AND PLAN MATERIALS AND DATES TO RESUME CLASSES IN THE FALL.

AS FAMILIES ATTEND IN THE SUMMER MONTHS, THERE ARE A LOT OF ART MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AREA, WHICH IS IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL. ALL ARE WELCOME TO COMPLETE PROJECTS AS THEY DESIRE. ANY PROJECTS CAN BE HUNG NEAR THE SERVING WINDOW, SO THAT THEY CAN BE ENJOYED BY EVERYONE IN THE CONGREGATION.

ENJOY YOUR SPRING AND SUMMER!

LORI HINTZ



A huge thank you to Lori Hintz & Ellen Mazurek for everything they did for the children this year. Thank you to Kathy McGrath & Becky Taylor as well! We may be small in numbers, but our church has big hearts and we are very blessed!

Community



May 5

Ray & Gloria Wunrow

May 2

Bob & Jeanne Bruener

May 27

Skip & Ellen Mazurek

May 28

Jeff & Becky Taylor

May 30

Ken & Maribeth Lacasse-Salo



May 2

Michaela Warpinski

May 4

Jerry Friday

May 5

Mark Sillars

May 6

Ginnie Oliver

May 7

Corey Parks

May 8

Adam Hintz

May 10

Jody Parks

May 12

Brandon Swensen

Nathan Swensen

May 18

Marilyn Robinson

May 24

Addisyn Mayek

May 25

Korbin Boerner

Lindsey Hintz

May 26

Ashley Miller

May 28

Carson Parks

Tom Wirtz

May 31

Maisie Cumberland

Carol Ann Harvestine

**THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS, FOR HELPING
OUR NEIGHBORS IN APRIL!**



A program of Aspirus Riverview Hospital
made possible by United Way of
South Wood & Adams Counties

Home Delivered Meals Drivers

Julie Berg
Skip & Ellen Mazurek
Pat & Kathy McGrath
Leo & Sue Thomasgard
Becky Taylor

Every four weeks, PEUMC volunteers deliver a hot and nutritious noon meal to homes of Wisconsin Rapids area residents who are unable to prepare their own meals. Anyone interested in helping with this program may contact Becky Taylor (715-887-2163) for more information. **THANK YOU!**

An advertisement for "Scentral Bark Community Park". The title "Scentral Bark" is in a large, stylized font, with "COMMUNITY PARK" in a smaller font below it. In the center, there is a row of five dogs of various breeds. Below the dogs is a large, white, bone-shaped graphic containing the text "NOW OPEN!!". At the bottom, it says "6 A.M. TO 11 P.M. DAILY" and "RIPPLE CREEK PARK IN PORT EDWARDS".

Scentral Bark
COMMUNITY PARK

NOW OPEN!!

6 A.M. TO 11 P.M. DAILY
RIPPLE CREEK PARK IN PORT EDWARDS