

Our Champions!

On Saturday, January 20th, in our Fellowship Hall, three teams faced off to guess “*what the survey says . . .*”

Our game night featured the board game based on the classic TV game show: “FAMILY FEUD.” Some were original questions from the 1970s, and others were from the 2000s. We collected money (\$34) and canned/paper goods for FOCUS Food Pantry.

We had the Grinches, the Token Y’s, and the Champion Families with us that evening.

But it was the aptly-named Champion Family who won the night! This “family” included **Kathy Mills, Midge Herschleb, Tiara Grunden, and Alex and Aiden** (guests).

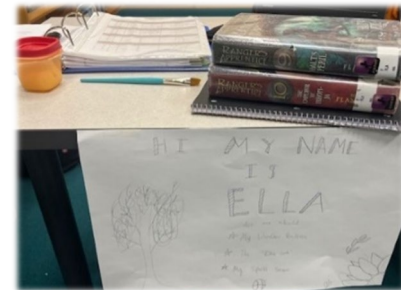
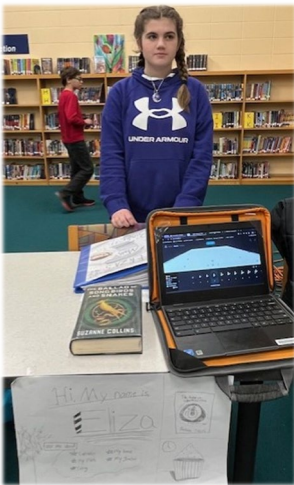


All 5 received a \$ 10 gift certificate courtesy of El Café! Congratulations Champions!

Eliza & Ella: STEM Academy

On Thursday, January 18th, Ella Huser and Eliza Hintz had their STEM Academy projects on display at the Alexander Middle School in Nekoosa. The Central Wisconsin STEM Academy is an above average school located in Nekoosa. Eliza (6th Grade) had a sign at her table that read: “*Hi, my name is Eliza. Ask me about *cupcakes, *my book (The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes by Suzanne Collins), *my math, *my journal, *cooking.*” Her laptop was displaying an algorithmic computer project she developed.

Ella (8th Grade) also had a table featuring her Ranger’s Apprentice books. Ella’s table sign read: “*Hi, my name is Ella. Ask me about *my weather balloon, *the ‘Ella Code’, *my sports season.*” She was not pictured as she also had a girls’ game to play elsewhere in the school that evening.



Our January-February Mission Project

Fund one 'Hunger Relief Bundle'
through
Releasing children from poverty
Compassion[®]
in Jesus' name
(Compassion International)

Goal: raise \$500

Hunger is one of the greatest challenges we face, and children in poverty are the hardest hit. Our gift will provide critical food security relief for families, mothers, and babies. With a gift of \$500 toward a Bundle, PEUMC will help provide:

- 5 *Emergency Food Packs (\$50 each) (\$250 total)
- \$160 toward the Global Food Crisis Fund
- \$90 for food for a baby and the mother

*The Emergency Food Packs will provide a family of 5 with a 1-month food supply of essentials like rice, eggs, meat, milk, and corn for less than the cost of a family dinner out at a typical restaurant in the U.S.

CORRECTION FROM JANUARY ARTICLE: 82% of proceeds go to project, NOT overhead.

****UPDATE: As of the end of January, we have raised \$310 toward our goal!**

Colby Grunden Hired



On January 28th, Colby Grunden, son of Tiara and Scott Grunden, was hired as our “full-time” Media Technician. In our 2024 church budget, we set aside money for \$25 a week to set up the sound system, microphones, camera, computer, and TV for live-streaming our worship services on YouTube.

He started on 1/21 with great success! Welcome, Colby!

BUDGET DISCUSSION, PART 3 OF 3

“Being, and making, disciples of Christ to transform our community and the world!”

In our third and final installment, we will be reviewing our STAFF/ADMINISTRATIVE OPPORTUNITIES in our 2024 church budget. In December, we reviewed our MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES for 2024 (~17% of budget).

In January, we reviewed our UTILITIES EXPENSES (property, church utilities, parsonage utilities) (26.6% of budget).

Now, we are examining staff and administration expenses.

(My annotations are in red.)

STAFF/ADMINISTRATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS – STAFF EXPENSES

Administrative Assistant’s Salary (Amy) \$18,070.00

(\$18.07 an hour for 20 hours a week; 50 weeks)

Amy, our Administrative Assistant, is the heartbeat of our administration. There are many things that Amy does that we see each week: bulletins (regular, large print, children’s), weekly email reminders and PhoneVite announcements. She organizes our mail and sorts through our bills. She keeps track of our membership record and all our archival legal papers. She produces our yearly directories and any other print-requests. She also keeps our website updated regularly. And there are a lot of things she is tasked to do that most people don’t see. Her list goes on and on. We would be lost with this heartbeat!

Custodial Salary (Kari) *(\$26.57 an hour for 5 hours a week; 50 weeks)* \$ 6,642.50

Kari LaBarge, our custodian, has her cleaning lists for the week, month, and year. Her job is to keep our facilities both clean and healthy. Just the other day, she was sanitizing door handles and common-touch surfaces because it was “flu season.”

Maintenance Technician Salary (Jeff) \$ 6,378.00

(\$31.89 an hour for 4 hours a week; 50 weeks)

Jeff Taylor has more facetime in and around the church than, perhaps, the pastor and secretary combined! He knows every single crook and cranny, every feature and peculiarity of our building, both inside and out. In the wintertime, he can be seen snow-blowing the entire block of the church. Port Edwards ordinance requires all the sidewalks to be cleared within 24 hours of the last snowfall. He not only takes care of the industrial-size boiler system (turning the heat on for events), and all things church-building-related, but he also does a lot of timely repairs at the parsonage, too. As I write this, the garage door sensors are not working properly, and he is over there trying to fix them. His list also goes on and on. This could be a full-time job! Thank you, Jeff!

FICA Payroll Taxes \$ 1,760.00

This represents the employer’s portion of FICA. Amy, Jeff, Kari, and Colby are employees; Pastor Caleb, as clergy, is self-employed for Social Security purposes.

Accompanist – Service Music \$ 1,500.00

While not every service musician turns in their time sheets, the recommendation is out there for all our musicians/accompanists to get paid **\$50** a service.

Choir Director \$ 750.00

While, we do not have a regular choir, and our line item for a choir director reflects that.

Pulpit Supply (*when pastor is on vacation*) (\$150 x 4) \$ 600.00

The UMC *Book of Discipline* expects all pastors to have upwards to 4 Sundays a year off. \$150 is budgeted for each of those 4 Sundays for guest speakers; this is the current industry standard and includes mileage.

Total Staff Expenses: \$35,700.050

STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS – PASTORAL EXPENSES

Pastor's Salary \$ 51,600.00

This amount represents a 3.1% increase from last year, reflecting the current Cost of Living Increase for 2024. The minimum salary for a full-time ordained elder (pastor) is \$48,679 for 2024.

Health Benefits (*Health: \$20,268 + Dental: \$636 + Vision: \$168*) \$ 21,072.00

Clergy health insurance continues to increase like everyone else's, but dental and vision have remained stable for several years now. UMC clergy do not get to choose insurance providers. It is all handled through Wespath, the benefits and investment arm of the denomination (Glenview, IL). Clergy insurance changed from United Healthcare in 2023 to Blue Cross, Blue Shield in 2024. Churches are required to pay, at least, a portion of this.

Pension CRSP \$ 8,353.80

CPP \$ 1,044.23

CRSP stands for "Clergy Retirement Security Program" and is a 403(b) retirement plan for eligible clergy of The United Methodist Church, designed to provide financial security with lifetime retirement income and flexibility through an account balance. CPP is the "Comprehensive Protection Plan," and is self-insured and funded by plan sponsor contributions, and includes death benefits, long-term disability income replacement and other survivor benefits. Both these portions of clergy pension are required and are figured through a formula based on salary.

Accountable Reimbursement

Travel Expenses \$ 1,000.00

Continuing Education \$ 1,000.00

Professional Expenses \$ 1,500.00

Annual Conference & School for Ministry Expenses \$ 800.00

Accountable Reimbursement line items allow the church to reimburse the pastor for expenses accrued while doing the work of a minister. These amounts must be declared before the year for IRS purposes, and in actuality, they are 1 lump sum that are subdivided for Annual Conference purposes. There are strict guidelines for what is included in each category, especially "Professional Expenses." All clergy are required to engage in continuing education.

Medical Reimbursement \$ 1,900.00

Every line item listed above is required by *Book of Discipline*. But this line item is a Port Edwards specialty. This church has (years ago) decided to go above and beyond and fund the first \$1,900 of a pastor's out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Total Pastoral Expenses: \$88,270.00

Total Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations (*staff + pastor*) Expenses: \$123,970.53

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Office Supplies	\$ 2,250.00
Postage	\$ 900.00
Accountant Fees	\$ 3,700.00

Sandy is our accountant from MoneyManagers. She takes care of all our outgoing expenses, including payroll taxes. She sets the amount we owe her for her services.

Website Maintenance Fee	\$ 500.00
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Our website peumc.org is through Solarus. Hosting, updating, security, plug-ins, and maintenance are not free.

Software (all computers)	\$ 900.00
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All of our church computers (sanctuary, ZOOM laptop, pastor's office, and Amy's office) all need software updates for them to function and communicate between them.

Total Church Administration Expenses: \$8,250.00

STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE

<i>Consecration Sunday</i> Program (Guest Speaker + Catered Meal)	\$ 1,200.00
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Having gone through our first official *Consecration Sunday* program in November 2023, Church Council has agreed to continue the program, with some tweaks. This line item is based on our 2023 expenses, which includes mileage for a guest speaker and the cost of the catered Celebration Luncheon.

<i>VANCO Fees (Electronic Giving)</i>	\$ 400.00
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VANCO is our electronic online giving portal. VANCO has processing fees that must be covered.

Total Stewardship/Finance Expenses: \$1,600.00

The Staff/Administrative Portion of our budget (\$133,820.53) represents 58.5% of our total church budget for 2024.

In most organizations, staffing and administration are **the** most expensive pieces of doing business and should come to no surprise that this represents 58.5% of our annual budget. While the church may be a non-profit religious organization, in the eyes of the state and federal governments, we are a business and are often treated as such. While the church continues to engage in ministry and Kin'dom work, it must also fulfill its legal duties and company expectations. Churches must balance the free volunteer work of its members with paying staff; providing safe spaces for exploration and growth while also minimizing liabilities.

The church will always rely heavily on volunteers to do many of its missional duties, but whenever a church invests in its staff, it is investing in quality, continuity, and professionalism in an increasingly bureaucratic world.

One last note about staff:

In 2021, we set a four-year goal for our church: *"By the end of 2025, we will have established a compensated children and youth coordinator."* This will only be possible through an investment from the membership. This goal was set as an investment for the future generation who will become the next wave of members at PEUMC. Children's ministry is becoming highly specialized, and with increasing policies regarding safe practices, investing in a paid position for our children's ministries is an invaluable, and in some ways inescapable, ministry investment.

Starting in 2024, we are paying regular compensation for our newly-created Media Technician. We have budgeted **\$1,600** for the year for this vital evangelistic ministry.

All our current staff positions are made possible by the continued generosity of the members and friends of Port Edwards United Methodist Church. **Thank *you* for your support!**

BI-MONTHLY MISSIONS & SPECIAL OFFERINGS REPORT YEAR 2023

submitted by Becky Taylor, Treasurer

MONTH	NAME	AMOUNT COLLECTED	DATE VOUCHERED
Jan/Feb	Heifer Project International - Advance #982532	\$650.00	4/11/23
Jan	Human Relations Day SSO 1/15/23 - Fund #1005	\$145.00	2/22/23
Feb	UMCOR – Syria/Turkey 2/12/23 - Advance #982450	\$391.00	2/22/23
Mar/Apr	AC Ingathering Personal Dignity Kits – Fund #7685	\$230.00	5/24/23
Mar	UMCOR Sunday SSO 3/19/23 – Fund #1015	\$155.00	4/11/23
Mar	Lenten Offerings: Nekoosa S.D. Fam. Help Families Noisy Collection: Nekoosa S.D. Fam. Help Families	\$374.00 \$47.25	4/11/23
Mar/Apr	Easter Lilies (P. McGrath Reimbursement \$220)	\$240.00	4/3/23
Apr	College Care Pkgs. 10 Gift Cards x \$25 each (Diane Sweat – Reimbursement)	250.00	4/28/23
Apr	UMC Student Day SSO 4/23/23 -Fund #1055	\$83.00	5/9/23
May	Alex C. Dove House Donation 5/21/23	\$25.00	9/19/23
May/Aug	Mary’s Place Transitional Housing (May,June,July 9 th) Harbor House in Superior (July 16 th -Aug. 27 th)	\$450.00 \$190.00	7/12/23 1/17/24
June	Vacation Bible School - Check to United Way in June VBS Late Donation – July 2, 2023	\$97.00 \$20.00	6/28/23
June	Peace with Justice Day SSO 6/25/23 – Fund #1035	\$105.00	7/8/23
July	Stuff the Bus – Check made out to United Way	\$60.00	8/2/23
July/Aug	125 th Anniversary Celebration Special Offering	\$337.00	
Aug	UMCOR – Hawaii/Maui Fires 8/20/23 Advance #901670	\$227.00	9/20/23
Sept/Oct	Christmas Gifts for Kids: Walmart Community Card Nekoosa S.D. Families Helping Families Fund	\$530.00	(\$306.02 12/27/23) (\$224.00 1/10/24)
Oct	World Communion Sunday 10/1/23 – Fund #1045	\$132.00	10/11/23
Nov	Native Amer. Ministries Sun. 11/19/23 – Fund #1025	\$97.00	12/5/23
Nov/Dec	Focus Neighborhood Meals	\$570.00	(\$300.00 12/7/23) (\$270.00 1/10/24)
Dec	Mary’s Place – Christmas Eve Services 12/24/23	\$172.00	12/27/23
	TOTAL 2023 MISSIONAL GIVING FROM P.E.U.M.C.	\$5,577.25	

AFRICAN DELEGATES COMMIT TO UNITY, REGIONALIZATION



by **Eveline Chikwanah** Jan. 19, 2024 | HARARE, Zimbabwe (UM News)

Nearly 200 African delegates to the forthcoming General Conference say they are committed to staying in The United Methodist Church and expressed their support for regionalization. The group gathered Jan. 4-7 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for an orientation organized by the advocacy group **United Methodist Africa Forum** to prepare for the upcoming legislative assembly, scheduled for April 23 – May 3 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

“The delegates unequivocally reject all disaffiliation proposals within the UMC in Africa, reaffirming their commitment to remain faithful members and work towards the church’s continued unity and growth,” the group said in a statement released after the meeting.

The Africa Forum was created last year to foster unity and offer a space for United Methodists to engage in conversations and collaboration. Another advocacy group on the continent, the **Africa Initiative**, is aligned with traditionalist groups including the Wesleyan Covenant Association and the breakaway Global Methodist Church, which launched in 2022 amid the denomination’s longtime debate around homosexuality.

The Rev. Lloyd Nyarota, general coordinator of United Methodist Africa Forum, said the group is where people with different ideas gather to discuss openly without fear or being manipulated.

“UMAF provided an opportunity for African delegates to review information and dispel all the misinformation going around. There are people, especially in the USA, who have a tendency of speaking on behalf of Africa, and this gathering was to let African delegates speak for themselves on what they will support and the church they want to build.

“The gathering was to discuss and agree on a way forward and (how) we build a greater future for The United Methodist Church in Africa,” Nyarota said.



The coming General Conference is planning to have 862 voting delegates overall — 55.9% from the U.S., 32% from Africa, 6% from the Philippines, 4.6% from Europe and the remainder from concordat churches that have close ties to The United Methodist Church.

The 190 delegates who attended the orientation represented a majority of 278 delegates from Africa expected to attend General Conference.

The delegates, along with key leaders, bishops and representatives of general agencies, discussed issues of concern to the church in Africa. Conversations focused on regionalization, higher education on the continent, addressing misinformation, and the church’s proposed Revised Social Principles.

The regionalization legislation headed to General Conference takes several steps toward a goal of building connectional unity while making room for customization in each region of the world.

Nyarota said the group of delegates reaffirmed the Africa Forum’s slogan: **“We were, we are, and we will always be United Methodists.”** They also embraced the denomination’s **#BeUMC** campaign as a way to talk about remaining United Methodist.

Keynote speaker, Bishop Israel M. Painit of the Philippines Central Conference, said the legislation would celebrate regional diversity as each area would bring its cultures and perspectives, thereby enriching the collective worship experience. It would also empower local leadership to respond more effectively to the unique needs and challenges of their regions.

“In a regionalized structure, worship becomes a dynamic expression of local cultures and traditions. The UMC in Africa and Asia can cultivate contextual worship that resonates deeply with congregants, fostering a more intimate connection with God and promoting a sense of belonging within diverse communities,” he said.

FINAL REPORT OUTLINES LATEST IN ONGOING SPLIT

Liam AdamsThao Nguyen / USA TODAY NETWORK

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The United Methodist Church, the largest mainline Protestant denomination in the U.S., lost about a quarter of its total U.S. churches between 2019 and 2023 due to disaffiliations, according to a new Lewis Center report released this month.

More than 7,600 congregations have received permission to leave the denomination since 2019, according to the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, a research center out of the UMC-affiliated Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C. The center's third and final report highlights the disproportionate number and demographics among disaffiliated churches, including how a majority of disaffiliations were in southern jurisdictions.

"It is remarkable how the characteristics of disaffiliating churches compared to all United Methodist U.S. churches changed little as more churches disaffiliated," the report states. *"Patterns seen in the earliest disaffiliations tended to continue almost identically throughout the process."*

The exodus marks a historic shift in mainline Protestantism in the United States, which has seen a sharp decline in membership since the late 2000s — a trend driven partly by generational change, according to a Pew Research Center study. Until recently, the United Methodist Church was the third largest denomination in the country, dominating America's religious culture and landscape.

The Lewis Center's ongoing disaffiliation study has been a credible resource for disaffiliation data, while it's also cut through competing narratives about the drivers and consequences of disaffiliation. Below are some highlights from the latest report.

The sizes of churches remained similar at the beginning of the disaffiliation process, according to the report.

The median worship attendance for disaffiliating churches and all United Methodist churches was 38, the report states. Congregation size at 63% of disaffiliating churches was 50 members or fewer and was 62% for churches before disaffiliation.

A minority of all disaffiliating churches are led by full-time pastors, called active ordained elders, or women pastors, according to the report. Only 37% of disaffiliating churches were led by an active elder compared to 43% for all United Methodist churches and 19% of disaffiliating churches had a woman as lead pastor compared to 29% of United Methodist congregations.

Disaffiliation also had a "far greater appeal" for churches with majority white memberships, according to the report. Over 97% of the disaffiliating churches are predominantly white.

The quarter of churches (7,631) that disaffiliated between 2019 and 2023 represented 24% of the denomination's membership across the United States, according to the report. Disaffiliations in the church's southern jurisdictions accounted for 71% of all disaffiliations.

The report found that the geographic landscape of disaffiliation paralleled the last split of a similar scale when the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, formed in 1844 due to a division over slavery.

"From the earliest, churches in the Southeastern Jurisdiction showed the most interest in disaffiliating," the report states. According to the report, the following regional conferences (known as "annual conferences") lost the greatest proportion of churches:

- Northwest Texas (81%)
- North Carolina (41%)
- West Ohio (35%)
- North Alabama (52%)
- North Georgia (41%)
- Florida (34%)
- Texas (50%)
- Mississippi (38%)
- Western North Carolina (33%)
- South Georgia (50%)
- Western Pennsylvania (38%)
- Holston (32%)
- Kentucky (49%)
- Tennessee-West. Kentucky (38%)
- New Mexico (31%)
- Central Texas (44%)
- East Ohio (36%)
- Indiana (30%)
- Alabama-West Florida (43%)
- Louisiana (36%)

Currently, many disaffiliated churches are choosing to remain independent instead of joining new groups that emerged out of exodus, according to the report.

“One stark difference seen between disaffiliating churches and similar departures from other mainline denominations is the decision of disaffiliating churches to remain independent of any denomination, at least for now,” the report states. “Most of those departing other mainline denominations joined another denomination immediately . . . It appears that only about half of disaffiliating churches are joining another denomination, but no one knows for sure.”

The vast majority of disaffiliated churches are conservative-leaning and departed in response to what they see as the United Methodists’ failure to enforce bans on same-sex marriage and the ordination of gay clergy.

Some departing congregations have joined the more conservative Global Methodist Church, which has admitted 4,605 churches as of January 1st, according to Global Methodist Church chief executive Rev. Keith Boyette.

Contributing: Marc Ramirez and Kayla Jimenez, USA TODAY; The Associated Press

Bears and Packers: become one team; bygones be bygones



January 23rd, 2024



GLENVIEW, IL — It’s official: Wisconsin and Northern Illinois Conferences of The United Methodist Church will start sharing a bishop starting September 1st, 2024.

The North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ), meeting online in a special session on Jan. 23, passed two motions: to form a new episcopal area composed of Northern Illinois and Wisconsin Conferences and to form another composed of East Ohio and West Ohio Conferences.

“The vote by members of the Jurisdictional Conference means the rapport we have already developed with our comparable colleagues in Wisconsin will propel our ongoing work and that of responsible annual conference committees in making decisions to have things in place for Sept 1st,” said Rev. Myron McCoy, pastor of Chicago Temple First United Methodist Church and chair of the Northern Illinois Shared Bishop Task Force.

“There is much to be gained as we live into being yoked as parts of a single Episcopal Area,” stated Rev. Steve Zekoff, chair of Wisconsin’s Shared Ministry Task Force. *“We will continue to have our unique individual conference identities, yet under the leadership of a shared bishop opportunities for future cooperation will become more evident over time. Both conferences have strengths that can benefit the other.”*

As two annual conferences in one “episcopal area,” Northern Illinois and Wisconsin will continue to govern themselves separately and retain their staff. However, the same bishop will oversee both conferences.

Although in most cases the geographical bounds of a United Methodist episcopal area coincide with those of an annual conference (each conference gets one bishop), they are not the same entity. Episcopal areas comprising more than one annual conference already exist around the Connexion.

Methodists in Wisconsin, Northern Illinois, and Iowa were once in the same annual conference, called Rock River, established in 1840. The establishment of The United Methodist Church in 1968 formed the separate Wisconsin and Northern Illinois areas.

100 Years of Methodism on Capitol Hill

What is the only non-governmental building located on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.?

The United Methodist Building!



The United Methodist Building's life began on January 10th, 1924. The remarkable construction of this building and 100 years of faith-based witness demonstrates what engagement of Methodist people can accomplish. The promotion of justice and the pursuit of peace are cornerstones of this historic building and the mission of the United Methodist Church.

Today, the U.M. Building is a center of activity for United Methodists to gather often with faith partners to host meetings, organize conferences, offer seminars, plan rallies, and advocate for policy and legislative justice. The actions, responses, and advocacy of this vital social justice ministry continue to move at a rapid pace on

Capitol Hill and at the United Nations.

The **General Board of Church and Society** is the proprietor of this building. The structure is immediately adjacent to the U.S. Capitol and the Supreme Court. As a public witness to justice and peace, the U.M. Building offers an ecumenical and interfaith setting for rich dialogue and social action. Inside this building are offices for the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, Lutheran Services of America, Church World service, Islamic Society of North America, and a host of others. It also houses the offices of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, United Methodist Women, and the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race. Today, it is a Heritage Landmark of United Methodism. Church and Society also maintains an office at the Church Center inside the United Nations in New York City.



The history: In 1917, The Rev. Dr. Clarence True Wilson spotted a muddy, billboard-cluttered corner lot, across the street from the United States Capitol. Immediately, Dr. Wilson, executive director of the Board of Temperance and Public Morals, envisioned this site as the perfect location to establish Methodism's social reform presence in Washington, D.C. Construction began in 1922. A five-story edifice, designed in Italian

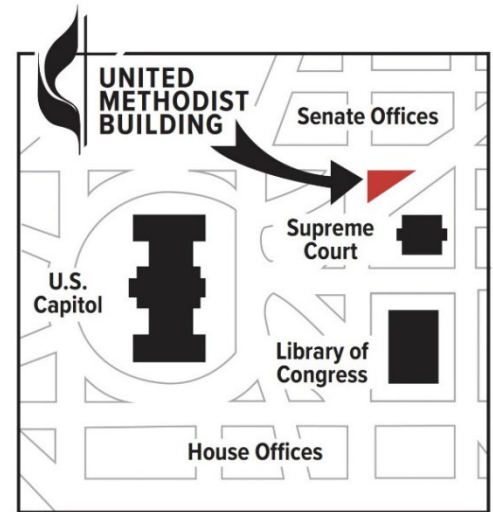
Renaissance style and constructed of Indiana limestone, was completed in 1923 at a cost of \$650,000. Most of the pledges came from Methodist women concerned about the health of families and the harms of alcohol abuse.



— Jurisdiction Boundaries
— Conference Boundaries
— State Boundaries

Wilson's wife, Maude Akin Wilson, drew up the original plans and submitted them to the architect.

The United Methodist Building has played a significant role at critical points in United States' history. Planning for the 1963 March on Washington led by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. took place here, as well as organizing efforts for the 1968 Poor People's March, the farmworkers' boycott, years of protest against the Vietnam War, Equal Rights Amendment marches, the 1978 Long Walk of Native Americans, the 1978 and 79 Farmer's Tractorcade, and the 1989 Housing NOW! March, and the 1996 Stand for Children March that included almost every bishop in the denomination. Church and Society partnered to mobilize support for Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in July 1990.



In 2002-2003 Church and Society served as host to a coalition of groups working to prevent the U.S. invasion of Iraq. And during the Obama administration, Church and Society was heavily involved in a faith coalition supporting the Affordable Care Act.

Sources: umcjustice.org/who-we-are and umcjustice.org/news-and-stories

GRACE



The Greater Rapids Area Churches for Ecumenism

Notes from January meeting: In attendance: Pastors Caleb, Margo, and Michelle

1. Spring Fund Raiser
 - a. Lincoln High School has significant issues with both food service debt and class fees.
 - i. They are interested in any support and fundraising we can offer to help offset
 1. Waiting on more details from LHS
 2. Check with LHS: best dates and if possible to use parking lot and start/end there
 - ii. Do advertising w/ and through LHS as well as larger community and in our churches
 - b. Idea – could we work with Culver's or similar for a fundraising event that donates a % of the proceeds toward this
 - i. Michelle will talk to Culver's about what's involved
 - ii. Plan for March?
 - c. Walk in Rapids
 - i. Where? On 16th St from LHS to Griffith Street and back?
 - ii. T-shirts?
 1. Check w/ Michelle S.; pricing?
 - iii. Sponsors – ideas
 1. Herman-Taylor F.H. 2. Ritchay's F.H. 3. Kwik Trip – bottled water?
 - iv. Thrivent Action Teams?
 - d. Woodlands Lutheran – breakfast fundraiser?
 - e. Grace Lutheran – donations requested – or Easter breakfast?
 - i. Check w/ CIS: timing – donations during Easter season?
2. Anything Else?
 - a. Balance between business-type meetings and relationship-building between colleagues
 - b. Update on non-profit 501c3 status and creating bank account?
 - c. Informal coffee shop gatherings occasionally for all area clergy?
3. Set next meeting date, time and location
 - a. Thursday, February 22nd at 9 AM at Grace Lutheran Church

Ash Wednesday Service

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH

7:00-8:00 PM @ Port Edwards United Methodist Church (sanctuary)

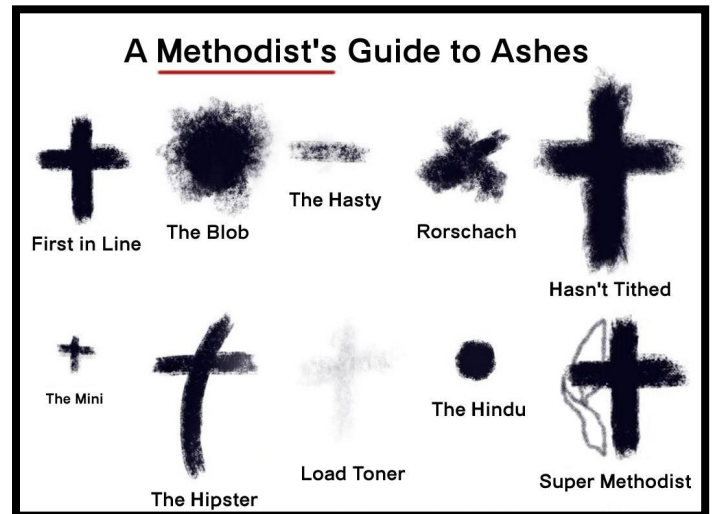
In-person / live-streamed (this *NOT* a combined service with NUCC)

Being the 40th weekday before Easter, this date marks the first day of the Lenten season. The ashes used on Ash Wednesday come from the palm leaves that have been used in previous years' Palm-Passion Sunday celebrations. Ash Wednesday sets the tone of the season as we focus on our awareness of our human brokenness: *"Remember, O mortal, that you are dust; and to dust you shall return"* (Genesis 3:19). Ash Wednesday is a bold confrontation with death. This is a painful dose of reality. We would prefer to ignore death. And yet, here comes the Church and declares boldly once a year: *"Face it! You will die. You will decay. You are powerless to prevent it. Denying it gets you nowhere. No medical technology can change that. Stop kidding yourself, O mortal!"*

This is harsh medicine, meant to set in motion a reconsideration of the meaning of life and death. Ashes, a sign of death, are put on the forehead in the shape of a cross.

Perhaps it can also remind us of how many people every minute of every day die unnecessarily at the hands of disease and violence, and our moral duty to protect that fragile thing we call "life."

Our service on 2/14 will start with the first theme of our Lenten series (dust) but is *not* a combined service with Nekoosa UCC. Our first combined service will be the following Wednesday (2/21).



HOLY WEEK SERVICES (end of March)

Maundy Thursday Service – 7:00-8:00 PM @ PEUMC – 3/28

A "Last Supper" service in the Fellowship Hall. (Details TBS)

Good Friday Service – 3:00-4:00 PM @ PEUMC – 3/29

A "Stations of the Cross" service in the church sanctuary. (Details TBD)

WEEKDAY LENTEN SERVICES



We are continuing our tried-and-true tradition of pairing up with Nekoosa United Church of Christ for our Lenten services.

Our 2024 theme is “**Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion Through Ten Objects**” by Jill J. Duffield. God is often at work through the ordinary: ordinary people, ordinary objects, ordinary grace. Through these “ordinaries,” God communicates epiphanies, salvation, revelation, and reconciliation. It is through the mundane that we hear God’s quiet voice.

In this devotion for the season of Lent, Jill Duffield draws our attention to ten ordinary objects that Jesus would have encountered on His way to Jerusalem: **dust, bread, the cross, coins, shoes, oil, coats, towels, thorns, and stones**. In each object, we will find meaning in the biblical account of Jesus’ final days. Each week, we will encounter a new object to consider through Scripture, prayer, and reflection.

Jill Duffield is editor of *The Presbyterian Outlook*. She holds a MDiv from Union Presbyterian Seminary and a DMin from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary with a concentration in preaching. She lives in Charlottesville, Virginia.

(Wednesday, February 14th – Ash Wednesday – 7:00-8:00 PM @ PEUMC – separate from NUCC)

1. **Wednesday, February 21st – (1 of 5) – service @ Nekoosa United Church of Christ – 7-8 PM**
2. **Wednesday, February 28th – (2 of 5) – service @ Port Ed. United Methodist Church – 7-8 PM**
3. **Wednesday, March 6th – (3 of 5) – service @ Nekoosa United Church of Christ – 7-8 PM**
4. **Wednesday, March 13th – (4 of 5) – service @ Port Ed. United Methodist Church – 7-8 PM**
5. **Wednesday, March 20th – (5 of 5) – service @ Nekoosa United Church of Christ – 7-8 PM**

SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 4th	BLACK HISTORY SUNDAY <i>Psalm 122 /</i> <i>Mark 6:1-6, 14-29</i> <i>Jesus is rejected in His hometown;</i> <i>John is beheaded.</i>	Holy Communion Celebrating the contributions of people of color to our Christian faith.
Sunday, February 11th	TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY <i>Psalm 27 /</i> <i>Mark 8:27-9:8</i> <i>Jesus is transfigured on the mountaintop.</i>	Burying the 'Alleluias' and preparing for the Season of Lent
Sunday, February 18th	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT <i>Psalm 19:7-10 / Mark 10:17-31</i> <i>Jesus and the Rich Man</i>	
Sunday, February 25th	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT <i>Psalm 34:11-14 / Mark 10:32-52</i> <i>Jesus Came to Serve</i>	

Sunday School will be the first Sunday of each month (January – May)

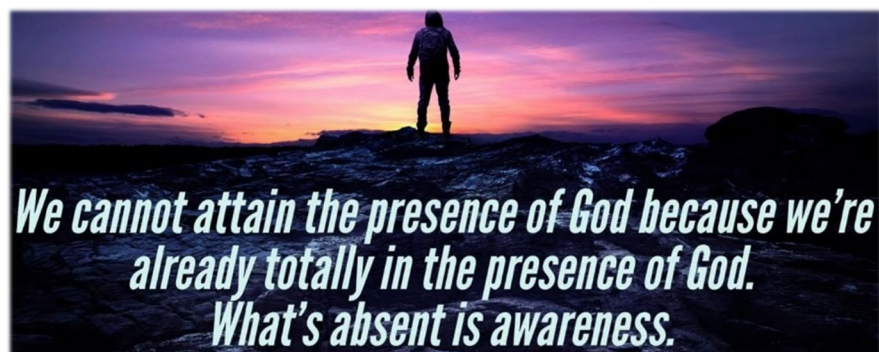
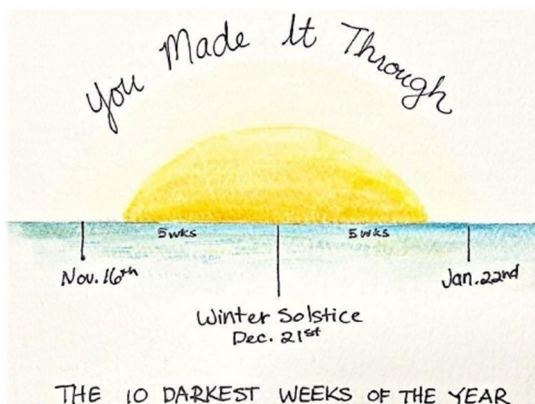


FOCUS will be hosting 'EMPTY BOWLS' again this year on Saturday, February 17th from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

This will be the 10th anniversary in Wood County. Last year, we served 350 guests a bowl of soup, a homemade roll, a homemade dessert, a beverage, and they got to pick out a handmade bowl to take home. We also had over 85 raffle baskets for people to try to win. We are looking for volunteers to wait tables, serve soup/beverages/desserts, take tickets & orders, sell raffles & meal tickets, bus tables, and more. This brought in over \$6,000 to FOCUS last year!

MORE INFORMATION TO COME!

--Mary Schultz



	<p>FOCUS FOOD PANTRY</p>
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February 11 - March 3

Donate Personal Care and Cleaning Supplies
for LOCAL crisis programs!

Help ease the financial strain on your local crisis programs and those they serve!



Most Needed Items:

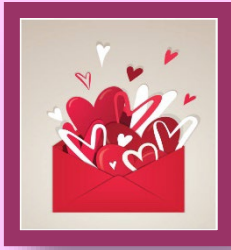
• Cleaning Supplies	• Hair Care	• Laundry Soap
• Feminine Needs	• Deodorant	• Kitchen Trash Bags
• Bathroom Tissue	• Dental Care	• Paper Towels
• Diapers/Baby Care	• Body Lotion	• Face/Bath Soap

Donations Remain in the Communities Where They are Collected!






PLEASE BRING ITEMS TO PORT EDWARDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH. A COLLECTION BOX WILL BE LOCATED INSIDE THE CHURCH ENTRY.

DURING OFFICE HOURS, **TUESDAY – FRIDAY 9:00am-1:00pm**, RING THE DOORBELL TO BE LET IN TO PLACE YOUR ITEMS IN THE BOX. THANK YOU, IN ADVANCE, FOR YOUR GENEROSITY IN HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS!

The Family Radio Network’s Help for the Homeless Hygiene Drive helps 110+ crisis programs in Wisconsin Communities.



February

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Jan 28	Jan 29	Jan 30	Jan 31	1	2	3
Wesley's Covenant Service 10 AM - Worship					Pastor's day off  Birthday LEO THOMASGARD	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Black History Sunday 10 AM - Worship Sunday School with Noisy Collection 5-7 - SPARK	Pastor Office: by appointment only  Birthday MARK SILLARS	Ministry Team - 10 AM Sharing Memories Group 11 am		 Birthday JIM HERSCHLEB	Pastor's day off	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Transfiguration Sunday 10 AM - Worship	Pastor Office: by appointment only		Circle of Friends - 1 PM Ash Wednesday 7 PM - Service @ PEUMC		Pastor's day off  Birthday LARRY MILLER	EMPTY BOWLS at FOCUS Food Pantry - 11-2
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
First Sunday in Lent 10 AM - Worship Church Council	Pastor Office: by appointment only		SPRC - 10:30 AM Lent in Plain Sight (1 of 5) 7 PM @ Nekoosa UCC		Pastor's day off	
25	26	27	28	29	Mar 1	Mar 2
Second Sunday in Lent 10 AM - Worship	Pastor Office: by appointment only	Worship Team - 9:00 AM  Birthday CHUCK LAMB	Lent in Plain Sight (2 of 5) 7 PM @ PEUMC			

Amy's office hours are: Tuesday - Friday (8:00 - 1:00 PM)

Pastor's office hours are: Monday - Thursday (9:00 - 1:00 PM)

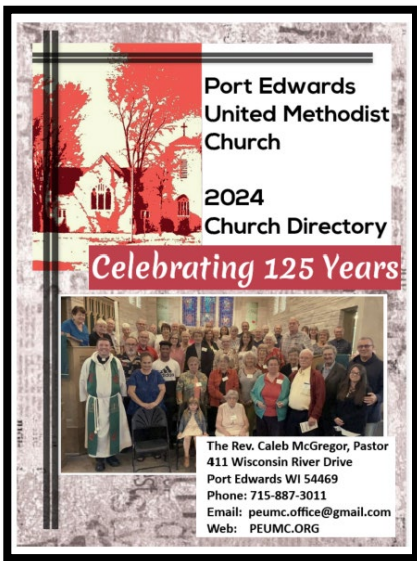


Fellowship



Each month in 2024, we will be randomly choosing 4 to 5 households to be included in our congregational prayers. For February, please send prayers for:

- Lindsey Hintz
- Denise Pelo-DeMeyer
- Ginnie Oliver
- Carol Ann & Art Harvestine household



2024 CHURCH DIRECTORY

The 2024 church directory is now available. Copies will be available in the entryway. If you can't pick up your new copy, please contact the church office and one can be mailed to you!

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



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

Home Delivered Meals Drivers

Pat & Kathy McGrath
Sue Mitchell
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!**