

May 2024

# The Current



Monthly News from Port Edwards United Methodist Church

## #Classof2024

**Lilyann Sillars & Korbin Boerner** will be graduating from John Edwards High School this year!



### Lilyann:

After graduating, I will be going to **UW-Stevens Point** to obtain my **Bachelor of Science** with a minor in **Psychology**.

I hope to work in an in-treatment psychiatric facility and eventually get my master's degree in nursing.



### Korbin:

After graduating, I will be going to **UW-Stevens Point** to major in **finance**.

*(Don't forget to wish Korbin a happy birthday, is it on May 25<sup>th</sup>!)*

## **“The heavens show us how great God is!” Psalm 19:1**

A geomagnetic storm caused the northern lights to shine brightly on the weekend of May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Pastor Caleb took these photos.



# P.E.U.M.C. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT!

## GLENNA SUNDERLAND

Did you, or do you still, have any nicknames?

**Once in a while I'm called 'Punkie'**

How long have you attended PEUMC?

**~20? Since I lived at Port Haven Manor (1<sup>st</sup> Street)**

What is your favorite memory about PEUMC? **Singing**

What is your favorite hymn or Christian song? Why?

**"The Old Rugged Cross." My folks always sang it.**

**"In the Garden." This was my dad's favorite.**

What are your hobbies? **Reading Danielle Steel, Nora Roberts, and Deborah**

**Macomber books. Listening to music at Park Place.**

What is your favorite holiday tradition?

**My trips to Disney World, Branson, Brewers games, South Dakota.**

What is your favorite food?

**Shrimp**

Share with us some fun facts about yourself?

**My trips with other people such as Lori, who was my companion at Disney World. In South Dakota, I babysat young kids a lot.**

With what religious traditions did you grow up?

**In Selby, South Dakota, I went to the Methodist Church with my parents.**

What brought you to this area? **I came to Wisconsin Rapids to take care of my brother's 4 children which included Chris, a newborn baby. My sister-in-law, Mary Ellen, was crippled.**

Share something fun about yourself that probably nobody at church knows about you.

**I enjoy music and my trips. I like to watch the Lawrence Welk show on TB.**

**I also have a boyfriend.**

What advice would you give someone curious about our faith or our church?

**It's a nice church. We eat there sometimes.**

Anything else you'd like to share?

**I like everything I do at church and especially my baptism. I like to shop.**



*(Photo of Selby United Methodist Church, Selby, S.D.)*





**On Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, our Sunday School Teachers and SPARK! volunteers were recognized during the worship service!**

*Pictured from left to right:*

**Kathy McGrath, Lindsey Hintz, Lori Hintz, Becky Taylor, and Ellen Mazurek.**

***Not pictured: Lisa Miller. (Photo by Pat McGrath)***

*Sunday School took place on the first Sundays of each month during the school year and SPARK! (~3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade) was held in conjunction with our Confirmation class on Sunday evenings.*

**PEUMC and Pastor Caleb are both eternally grateful for their dedication of their time and resources, and their ability to adapt on the fly!**

**We'd like to thank all those who volunteered to spend time with the children of our church!**

**These classes brought the kids joy and have helped them to grow in their faith!**

**For that, we are very grateful! THANK YOU!! ~The Children and Youth Ministry Team**

## **February Throw-Back:**



**These 3 photos are of the Sunday School children, Brynlee and Gracie, making a special St. Valentine's Day card for Pastor Caleb. Their smiles say all that needs to be said!**

## **May Household Prayers**

**This month the congregation is asked to pray for the following families**

***(randomly chosen on 4/21):***

- Jean Osteraas (Kathy McGrath's sister)
- Carolyn, Maisie, Melora Cumberland;
- Ava & Crystal Sadler household;
- Samantha Gustin household.





# Easter Joy!



Kali Mayek caught this great photo of the children and Pastor “releasing the Alleluias” on Easter morning!



## Searching for Eggs



PEUMC hosted its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Easter egg hunt the day before Easter. More candy and more eggs were laid by the Easter bunny this year! Almost 100 kids showed up for the event! The event lasted from 10:10-10:13a!

## Marshfield Wesley UMC's 20<sup>th</sup> Live Last Supper



On Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, PEUMC took a group to Wesley UMC in Marshfield (Pastor Doug's church) to watch their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Live Last Supper program.

*Pictured (left to right, front to back row): Diane & John Sweat, Norm & Lucy Silvester, Nancy Hansen, Sue Mitchell, [Sue] & Ken Brzezinski, Maribeth Lacasse-Salo, Midge Herschleb, Rose Wirtz, and Kathy Mills. Twelve disciples + Pastor Caleb. How appropriate for the Last Supper!*



# Facts & Myths About Hospice



Our first "Head & Heart" Event was held on Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> from 7-8p (during a storm), in the banquet room of El Café in Port Edwards. Dawn Freedlund presented information about hospice, and specifically, the ministry of House of the Dove in Marshfield. 14 people were in attendance.

## May-June Bimonthly Mission Project:

All special donations given during the months of May & June will be toward two Wisconsin Conference funds (evenly divided):

1. Summer Camp Scholarships (*helps to offset the cost of summer camp to campers who need it most*)  
AND
2. State-wide Disaster Relief Fund (*helps to fund our U.M.C.O.R.-related disaster relief efforts in WI*).

## COLLECTING SOCKS!

Do you have any old socks you need clearing out?  
Mismatched? Worn? Hole-y? Pair-less?

***We have the solution!***

The May-June collection project is to collect all those CLEAN, OLD socks! They need to be USED—but CLEAN! Don't try to \*wow\* us by purchasing NEW socks! All socks will be processed into pellets for an environmental cause. All the donations will be sent to TerraCycle, a recycling company that specializes in hard-to-recycle material. They have a special program that allows us to designate an organization to receive \$\$\$\$. The organization we're helping is the **Northcott Neighborhood House**. They will earn \$10 credit for 10 pounds of socks, *ETC*. The program is sponsored by "Golden Toe" sock company. **A BOX IN THE CHURCH FOYER IS ALREADY GETTING FILLED UP! BRING IN YOUR OLD SOCKS AND GIVE YOUR 'LITTLE PIGGIES' A FRESH START!**

*-The PEUMC Outreach/Mission Team*

# Missional Giving Report

(\*as of April 15<sup>th</sup>)

Report by Becky Taylor, church treasurer

MONTH	NAME	AMOUNT COLLECTED	DATE VOUCHERED
Jan	Focus Food Pantry – Family Feud Game Night 1/20/24	34.00	2/29/24
BI Jan/Feb	Compassion International - Relief Bundle	\$532.00	3/13/24
Feb	125 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celeb. Special Offering (+\$337 in '23)	\$1,050.00	
Feb	Lenten Offering for PESD Lunch Debt	\$161.00	4/14/24
Mar	Easter Lilies (P. McGrath Reimbursement \$200)	\$200.00	3/25/24
Mar	Admin. Assistant Retirement Gift	\$20.00	4/14/24
B2 Mar/Apr	The Family Center (+Sendoff Bags Supplies)	\$250.00	
Apr	College Care Pkgs.	\$150.00	

The College Care Packages ended up being **\$270** by the end of April!



March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for taking a step beyond sponsorship to meet the needs of children in poverty! Your gift of **\$532.00** to Compassion's *Where Most Needed Fund* is an extra measure of support that will help care for those God calls "the least of these."

Your gift will help ensure that church-based Compassion centers around the world have the resources to provide for a full range of children's needs, giving them real help, and hope for a brighter future.

We pray it brings you joy that you are making an important difference in releasing children from poverty.

In Christ,  
*Steven Marble*  
Sr. Director of Supporter Care  
Compassion International

## OUR PRIORITIZED CHURCH GOALS

#1: Provide learning opportunities for the community.

#2: Provide a compensation children/youth coordinator.





## R.S.V.P. has begun!

(use QR code above to register)

We need #s for both our worship service and the catered meal afterward.

The meal is \*free\*.

Soft deadline to R.S.V.P. is **Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Absolute deadline is **Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>.**

We are happy to announce that *all* our former pastors (who still live in WI) have accepted their invitation to attend our celebration.

This is practically unheard of!

This says a lot about the PEUMC congregation that *all* our former pastors \*want\* to return!

*We welcome back for the event:*

**The Rev. Dave Guse and Kathy**

**The Rev. Bill Beaton and Julie**

**The Rev. Rebecca Niese and Jeff**

**The Rev. Kenneth Boettcher**

**The Rev. Bruce Bartel**

**Julie (Storzer) Ulrich and Bob**

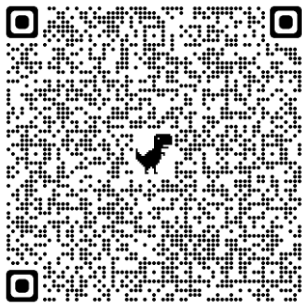
# WHAT is a QR Code?

You probably have heard of—and seen—these popping up everywhere these past few years.

QR stands for “Quick Response” and works exactly like a barcode. QR codes work specifically for smart-devices (iPhone or Androids). Wherever you see this code, you can scan it by opening the camera feature on your smart device. The phone “reads” it and takes you straight to the online webpage. PEUMC has \*many\* QR codes now for its website. Our website features so many usable pages for members and guests, and QR codes help take people where they need to go quickly! You will start seeing some QR codes printed in our weekly worship bulletin, too.

## QR codes that may be helpful for you:

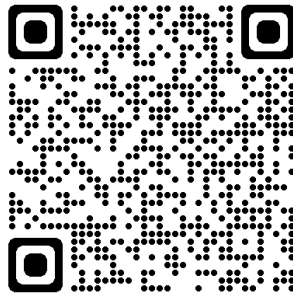
Scan this if you want to go to the **VANCO online giving page** on our website:



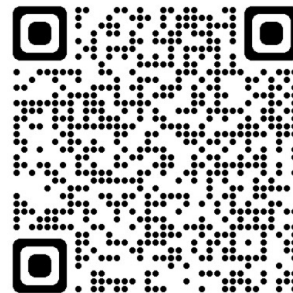
Scan this if you want to **register your online attendance**:



Scan this if you want to **view our service bulletins**:



Scan this code if you want to **register for our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (6/23/24)**:



Scan this code if you want to sign-up for a time to get your **picture taken for the church directory**:



## SPECIAL 125<sup>TH</sup> CHURCH PICTORIAL DIRECTORY!

We are beginning to take family/individual photos for our special directory this year! We are having our photos done “in-house” by Patrick McGrath.

He has 6 blocks of time for picture taking:

**Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> – 9-10a & 11:15-noon**

**Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup> – 9-10a & 11:15-noon**

**Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup> – 9-10a & 11:15-noon**

Call the church office, or Pat, sign up in the church foyer, or use the QR code (above) to register online. There \*may\* be an opportunity on 6/23/24 to have your picture taken, but we want to get as many done before then!



# Worship Servants (so far) for May

Communion: Skip Candles: Skip	Greeter(s)	Usher	Liturgist	Pew Ambassador	Musician
May 5 <sup>th</sup>	Sara T.	Mike H.	Becky T.	Kathy McG.	Sue M.
May 12 <sup>th</sup>	Sharon S.	Skip M.	Kathy Mills	Sue T.	Ellen M.
May 19 <sup>th</sup>		Skip M.	Leo T.	Sue T.	Ellen M.
May 26 <sup>th</sup>	Ken & Sue B.			Diane S.	Judy M.

## SUNDAYS IN MAY

May 5 <sup>th</sup>	Hymn-Sing Acts 27-28		Easter.6 Communion Sunday
May 12 <sup>th</sup>	"Living With Jesus" 2 Timothy 1:1-7		Easter.7 / Ascension Sunday / Mother's Day
May 19 <sup>th</sup>	Series – I of IV Topic: "Worship" Acts 2	Summer Series: Our Wesleyan Discipleships: The Way of Grace	Easter.8 / Day of Pentecost Graduation Sunday
May 26 <sup>th</sup>	Series – II of IV "Devotion" Mark 6:30-44		Pentecost.1 / Trinity Sunday

### Summer Sermon Series #1:

## Our Wesleyan Discipleship: The Way of Grace

The Rev. John Wesley prescribed some ways we can put ourselves in positions to receive God's grace. These ways were called the "means of grace," and are things we do to grow toward a "holiness of heart and life," or what Wesley called a 'mature faith.' John Wesley strived to keep a balanced faith—joining the heart and the brain—the inward and outward—the personal and social—the grace of God and our good works. This sermon series will journey through the four basic categories of the "means of grace": acts of worship (5/19), devotion (6/26), compassion (6/2), and justice (6/9). By participating in the means of grace, we put ourselves in spaces—physically, mentally, and spiritually—that open us up to allow God to fill us. 'The Way of Grace' is how we make room for the Holy Spirit to work on our hearts and lives!

**Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024** – Day of Pentecost – "Worship" – Acts 2

**Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024** – Trinity Sunday – "Devotion" – Mark 6:30-44

**Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024** – "Compassion" (Communion) – 1 John 3:11-18

**Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024** – "Justice" – Isaiah 1:11-20

## Looking Ahead:

### July Sermon Series:

#### WRESTLING WITH DOUBT: A QUESTIONING HEART

Everyone has doubts. Where is God when bad things happen? Does God hear our prayers? Is there really a heaven? How can we know? Whether you're a longtime Christian or someone brand new to faith, this sermon series will lead you to trust in God that is unafraid of hard questions. Together, we will wrestle with doubt while finding faith—honoring trust over certainty, and embracing mystery over simple answers. This series is based on The Rev. Adam Hamilton's newest book of the same name.

\*The Rev. Adam Hamilton is the founding pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood (Kansas City), Kansas, one of the fastest growing, most highly visible churches in the country. *The Church Report* named Hamilton's congregation the most influential mainline church in America.

### August Sermon Series:

#### HOPE FOR HARD TIMES: THE END OF OUR ROPE

We've all been there: Rock bottom. At the end of our rope. The last straw. During such times, it often seems like the only option is to throw in the towel. Based on the book by The Rev. Magrey R. deVega, we will examine the lives of the two great Old Testament prophets, Elijah and Elisha, to reveal their consistent message to us: Don't give up! Don't lose hope! Trust that God will help you find a way. There is hope for you in hard times. Your story of hurt, heartache, and hopelessness has been heard, and God has a message for you. We will also be touching upon such significant life experiences like: Grieving the Loss of Your Spouse; Living with Dementia; Empty Nesters and Loneliness; Depression.

\*The Rev. Magrey R. deVega is the Senior Pastor at Hyde Park United Methodist Church in Tampa, Florida.

## New Anniversary Communion Set

For many years now, we have been using a very old pewter Communion Set (plate and chalice). It is so old, that it is stamped with the letter "M.E.C." for "Methodist Episcopal Church," which hasn't been around since 1939!

On Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, during our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Worship Service, we will present our new stoneware set (see photo to the left). This set was purchased using money in memory of Dorothy Boger. On the bottom of the plate is inscribed the words:

*"IN MEMORY OF DOROTHY BOGER (1928-2015). FIRST USED AT P.E.U.M.C.'s 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION 6/23/2024."*

The set is glazed porcelain handmade by Holbrook Stoneware.



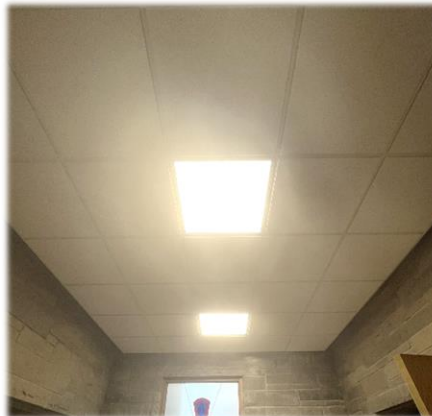


# Trustees Project

- **COMPLETED:** Al Crider has repainted the interior corners of the Lounge and Fellowship Hall. These corners receive the worst moisture issue. Now that the outside has been sealed, the insides were ready to be painted, and he did a wonderful job!
- Fix front lawn damaged by elevator equipment. Ben Martinson of the Village Public Works crew has graciously offered to fix the sidewalk himself. But the lawn, including sections of the sprinkler system, will need to be fixed as spring approaches.
- Six problematic spots on the roof will be addressed in a more permanent way.
- **COMPLETED:** The ceiling of the vestibule (outside the sanctuary) and the tower room (old main entry) have now been replaced.
- The foyer floor will be replaced with carpet squares. This will be our congregational fundraiser. Prices are still TBD.
- **COMPLETED:** Portraits of our past ministers will return to the Memorial Lounge.
- **COMPLETED:** Apple tree in parsonage back yard has been removed; it was starting to rot. ☹️
- **PARTIALLY COMPLETED:** Sinks in the Lower-Level rooms. The A.A. room (former storage/classroom) is completed. The nursery and Sunday School room will be receiving sinks and cabinetry soon.

## New Ceilings Installed.

New ceilings were installed in the old main entry ("tower room") and outside the sanctuary ("vestibule"). With new LED lighting, each space is now lit with brighter, livelier light.



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

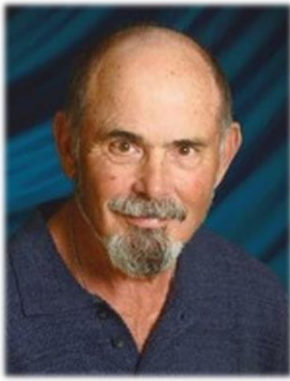


A program of Aspirus Riverview Hospital  
made possible by United Way of  
South Wood & Adams Counties

### Home Delivered Meals Drivers

Pat & Kathy McGrath  
Sue Mitchell  
Nina Pelo  
Becky Taylor  
Leo & Sue Thomasgard

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!**



Glen (Bob) Robert Dunahee of Port Edwards, Wisconsin passed away on April 13, 2024, in Tucson, Arizona.

Bob was born on February 20, 1945, to Harold and Shirley (Griffin) and grew up in Briggsville, Wisconsin graduating from Wisconsin Dells. He received his BS in Math from UWSP.

He had two children Robyn Dunahee and Robert Dunahee with his former wife Nancy (Miller). In 1995 he married Lynn (Buchberger) and added stepchildren Carrie Brownell and Jordan Jelinski. Bob took every opportunity he could to attend and support all his kids' and grandkids' sporting events, concerts, Pinewood Derbies, and many other activities.

He spent 8 years in the Navy followed by 20+ years with Sentry Insurance and finished up his career with Omni Resources.

Bob enjoyed hunting, fishing, bowling, golfing and spending as much time with family and friends as he could. He was very involved in events with the Port Edwards Lions Club and enjoyed working with youth by volunteering with Little League, Boy Scouts, and Leo club.

Bob spent much of his life helping others in any way he was able to contribute.

Bob is survived by his wife Lynn, children: Robyn Dunahee and Robert (Lisa) Dunahee, stepchildren: Carrie (Mike) Brownell and Jordan (Laura) Jelinski, grandchildren: Nick Siskoff, Kaila Dunahee (Brandon Seefeld), Evan Bridgewater, Amanuel Dunahee, Nya Dunahee, Ashlyn Brownell, Zach Brownell, Katelyn Jelinski, and Logan Jelinski, great grandchildren Daisy and Reed Seefeld, brothers: Dick Dunahee, Jim (Bernice) Dunahee, Jerry (Melanie) Dunahee, and Mike (Kathy) Dunahee, brother-in-law Steve (Cathie) Buchberger, and sisters-in-law: Cathy Buchberger and Michelle (Jim) Cveykus.

He is preceded in death by his parents Harold and Shirley Dunahee, brothers: Bill (Mary) and Jack (Lauralee) Dunahee, sister Celia Dunahee, and sister-in-law April Dunahee.

Expressions on sympathy can be sent to Lynn Dunahee:

**1117 6th Street, Port Edwards, WI 54469**

# FIRST WEDNESDAY

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, we had a hymn-sing during the worship service. We certainly enjoyed the hymns—but it just didn't seem like enough! Admittedly, stuffing it during the sermon time on a Communion Sunday probably isn't the most satisfying way to do a hymn-sing.

*Then I had this idea:*

On the first Wednesday of each month, we will have a music-filled service simply called "First Wednesday." It will be 1-hour and held in the Fellowship Hall at the altar area; It will feature all the old-time favorite hymns from the hymnal. It will be mostly singing, and the only devotional will be based on the hymns that we sing. We will conclude with prayer time.

**Our first "First Wednesday" service will take place on Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-8:00p. It \*may\* be live-streamed to FB.**



# A Pastoral Letter from the E.L.C.A. to the U.M.C.

5/8/2024

Dear Church,

In 1 Corinthians 12:26 the apostle Paul reminds us that *"if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."* For 15 years, we have accompanied our \*\*Full-Communion siblings in the United Methodist Church (UMC) through joyous and challenging times. We know firsthand the pain of debate, disaffiliation, and division that they have experienced. Yet we also know the hope-filled renewal of Christ's Church.

Last week the UMC General Conference, postponed since 2020, concluded in Charlotte, N.C. With each day's news we witnessed our partner church emerging strengthened, revitalized, and united. Several actions will shape the future of the UMC. These include the adoption of a plan for worldwide regionalization to restructure the UMC as a truly equitable, diverse, and global church, which now goes to annual conferences for ratification. Regionalization will allow for unity within the worldwide UMC structure, even as members hold diverse opinions on the following actions:

- *Lifting a 40-year ban on the ordination of practicing homosexual clergy.*
- *Lifting restrictions on clergy to officiate at, and on congregations to host, weddings between adults of the same gender.*
- *Eliminating from the UMC's Social Principles the assertion that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.*
- *Broadening the definition of marriage to be between either a man and a woman or two consenting adults.*

The UMC welcomed over 70 ecumenical guests, who were present when the conference adopted a proposal for Full Communion with The Episcopal Church (TEC); this now awaits action by the TEC General Convention. Worship included a postponed celebration of Full Communion with the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern provinces), ratified in 2018, and a sermon titled "CHRISTIAN UNITY MATTERS," preached by the Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay, general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

These significant actions and the UMC's witness to the ecumenical vocation we share come as we celebrate 15 years of Full Communion. The ELCA rejoices and gives thanks to God for the opportunity to proclaim together, from this point forward, that Christian teaching is for all people and that the gifts of all are welcome and needed to serve Christ's church.

In unity,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**\*\*Full Communion** is not a merge, but when two denominations develop a relationship based on shared profession of the Christian faith, mutual recognition of baptism, and sharing of the Lord's Supper. These denominations may worship together, exchange clergy, and share a commitment to evangelism, witness, and service in the world. Each entity agrees that even with differences, there is nothing that is church-dividing.

## Elevator Lights

Some have pointed out that it appears that someone keeps forgetting to turn off the lights around the elevator. You can see them on through the windows when walking/driving by the front of the church. Actually, by state law, each entry to an elevator must have 24/7 lighting. Thus, you will see a light turned on on each of our three levels. In fact, don't try to turn them off, because they are hard-wired in without a switch.

# Historic Day in the Life of The United Methodist Church

A Combination of two articles: "May 3 wrap up" AND "May 2 wrap-up" both by Joey Butler– United Methodist News

On the final day of a General Conference eight years in the making — the Rev. Gary Graves, General Conference secretary, referred to it as "the multipurpose 2020 *and* 2024" meeting — delegates set the budget that will fund the ministries of the denomination for the next four years, a budget significantly lower than the one it set in 2016.

It could be argued that this was the most consequential General Conference since the 1968 assembly that created The United Methodist Church. The church going forward from here is different than it was just a few weeks ago. Not all agree with the more inclusive stance the delegates took, but the passage of worldwide regionalization ensures all may continue ministry in their own context while remaining part of the connection.

Church leaders are already looking at how members can remain united despite having different views, and delegates created a path for churches that have left the denomination to return in the future.

The votes that changed the church's stance on sexuality may have garnered the most attention, but they were not the only actions taken in Charlotte.

During the 10 days, delegates considered 2,000 petitions. Among other actions, they approved a new retirement plan for clergy, granted deacons authority to offer Holy Communion and conduct baptisms in their ministry setting, celebrated church milestones, agreed to a full communion relationship with the Episcopal Church, and approved the departure of four Eurasian (Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan) annual conferences that plan to become the autonomous Christian Methodist Church, while retaining the remaining two annual conferences of that region (Ukraine and Moldova).

Drawing the assembly to a close with a centering moment after presiding over the final plenary session, Bishop Tracy S. Malone told everyone gathered:

*"As you go forward from this General Conference, tell the world about Jesus. As you go, tell them about His love. As you go, be love. ... Let's walk together, beloved, and let us never grow weary of doing the work of the kin-dom."*

## **GC delegates pass budget, reduce number of US bishops**

Delegates on May 3 approved a denominational budget with a bottom line that will vary by about \$20 million, depending on giving collection rates over the next two years.

By a vote of 647 to 31 (a 95% majority), this year's delegates approved a 2025-28 denominational budget of \$373.4 million. That total is contingent on collection rates being at 90% or more for the next two years. If giving is below that percentage, the budget bottom line will be \$353.6 million.

Reflecting the effect of the loss of a quarter of U.S. churches to disaffiliation, the budget will be between 38% and 41% lower than the one set by the 2016 General Conference.

Delegates also approved a plan for distributing 32 bishops across the U.S. — which represents a reduction from the 39 active bishops currently serving.





## Bans removed on same-sex clergy, same-gender weddings, and LGBTQ+ funding

United Methodist pastors no longer face potential penalties for being in a same-sex relationship or officiating at same-sex weddings, nor can they be compelled to officiate one.

With the day's actions, the delegates removed decades of additions to the Book of Discipline, the denomination's policy book, creating restrictions aimed specifically at LGBTQ people. General Conference removed a longtime ban on "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy, eliminated a half-century-old statement against homosexuality, with a definition of marriage that now read: *"We affirm marriage as a sacred lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith into union with one another."* By a vote of 447 to 233, delegates struck down a ban, added by the 1996 General Conference, that prohibited clergy from officiating and churches from hosting "homosexual unions."

On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the church's top legislative body on May 2, by a vote of 523 to 161, removed the denominational stance that declares homosexuality to be "incompatible with Christian teaching." That language has been in place since 1972. A similar policy that banned the Church from funding the advocacy and acceptance of homosexuality was overturned and replaced by a policy that encourages the church to support advocacy of the LGBTQ community.

During the afternoon session of General Conference's final day, delegates approved four changes to church law that together end remaining bans related to homosexuality and protect the rights of pastors to choose which weddings to perform or not to perform.

This marks the beginning of what many see as a new day for The United Methodist Church after decades of rancor over the place of LGBTQ people in the church. The United Methodist Church's condemnation of homosexuality—which sparked a half-century of conflict—is now no more.

### Panelists look beyond General Conference

The decisions made at this General Conference are a "testimony" to The United Methodist Church, said Bishop Tracy S. Malone, president of the Council of Bishops. *"We are a church where everyone can belong,"* she said.

Removing condemning language on homosexuality opens the church to be in a worldwide conversation, said Greater Northwest Area Bishop Cedric D. Bridgeforth, adding that he hopes that local churches "will not grow weary in well-doing" because these decisions made at General Conference will call for a cultural shift and hard conversations.

### 'Get out of God's way,' bishop urges

Council of Bishops President and Resident Bishop of the East Ohio Conference, Tracy S. Malone, asked delegates to imagine a United Methodist Church where hope is reborn, and where people are reconciled to one another and committed to build God's beloved community.



*"Let us imagine a church where no one, nobody, is marginalized,"* Malone said. *"Let us imagine a church that transcends geography and cultures and languages and borders and barriers and differences. I'm talking about a beautiful mosaic that reflects the kin-dom, the kingdom of God."*

## Votes of note

- General Conference on April 30 approved via consent calendar a resolution asking that United Methodist institutions not buy government bonds from Israel, Turkey, and Morocco, given that those nations have engaged in long-term military occupations. The resolution comes amid pro-Palestinian protests on U.S. college campuses and after a demonstration at General Conference, decrying Israel's military operations in Gaza. Wespeth, the church's pensions and investment agency, said it will carefully consider the non-binding measure.
- The majority of legislation supported by climate justice activists within The United Methodist Church was passed by General Conference on the consent calendar in the early part of its second week. Some of the petitions passed would direct churches to conduct annual audits of the carbon footprint of their buildings, grounds or facilities, encourage annual conference sessions to reduce energy waste and consumption, and update or readopt existing church resolutions on creation care.

## How Does the General Conference “Work?”

by Pastor Caleb

Many of you have watched my Facebook videos while at General Conference in Charlotte, N.C. I learned a lot, too, and I wanted to share that knowledge with you. It's my opinion that people are more engaged when they have a grasp on how something as complex as the G.C. of our denomination works.

The General Conference is the official name of our “global gathering” which convenes once every four years to determine the denomination's future direction. Each annual conference elected their slate of delegates. 861 delegates were at this global gathering in Charlotte, N.C., representing each part of our world-wide denomination. (Someone described it as a mini-United Nations.) Half are clergy and half are laity—representing churches of every size and context. These delegates gather from all over the world to consider revisions to church law and the official ritual of the church, adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues, and elect officers for a number of churchwide positions. The G.C. also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs for the next four years.

The pieces of legislation (or “petitions”) were gathered over this past year. But who can submit these petitions? The answer: **Any Profession Member of Any United Methodist Church!** This makes our denomination a “true” democracy—as opposed to the United States with is a “representative democracy,” because most of the laws come from the lawmakers, not the people.

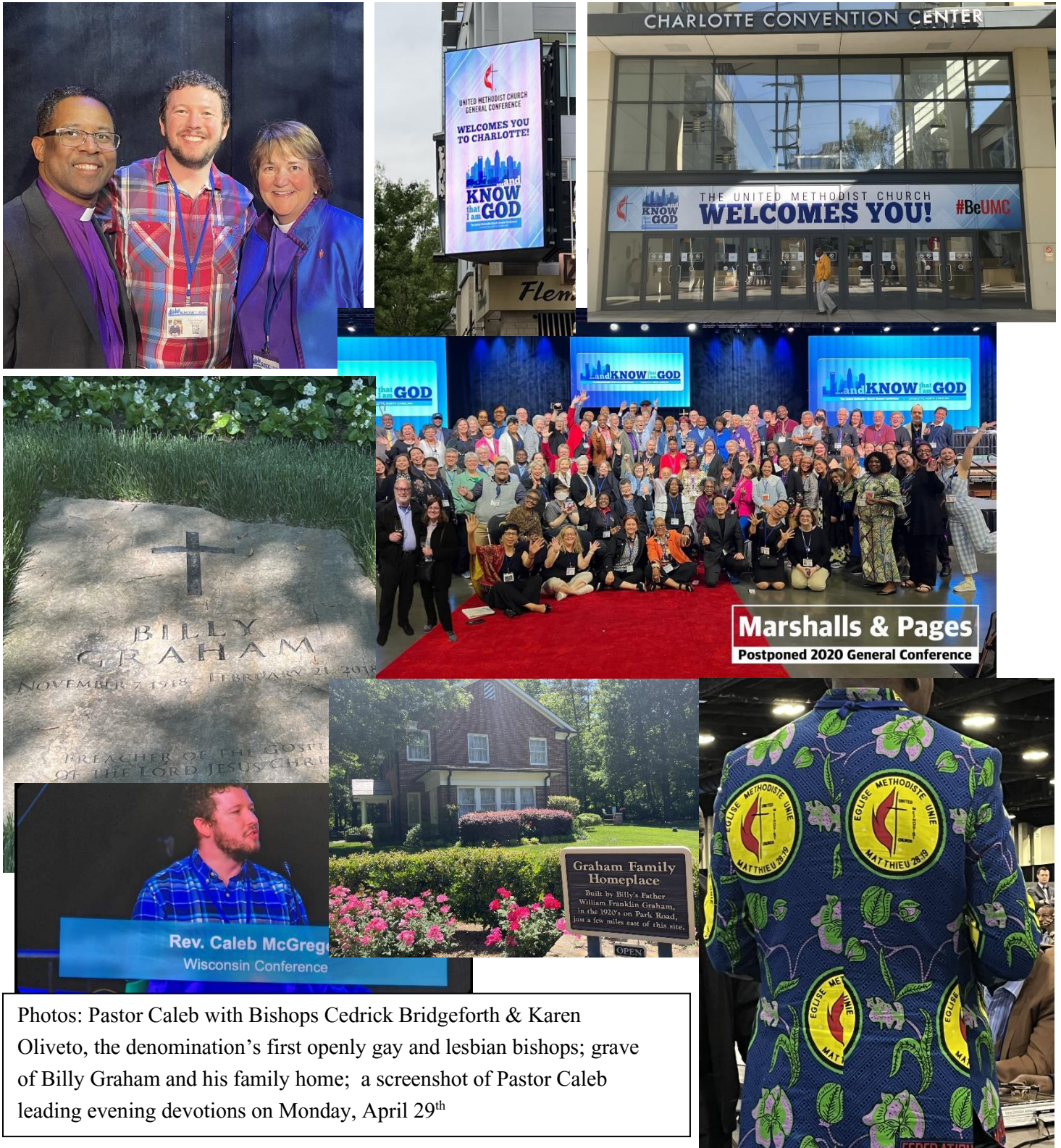
The delegates are the “Legislative Branch.” The bishops are the “Executive Branch” and their only power is to lead the sessions of General Conference; they have voice but no vote. The Judicial Council—made up of clergy and laity—is, of course, the “Judicial Branch,” and was on site to make rulings on the constitutionality of our legislative changes.

There were 1,099 pieces of legislation. These pieces of legislation were broken up into 14 legislative committees by subject matter: Ordained Ministry, Church and Society, Local Church, Conferences, Discipleship, etc. Each committee further subdivided themselves into sub-committees to handle all the petitions. The sub-committees sent back their recommendations to the committee.

Each committee voted to accept, accept with amendments, reject, or refer the various petitions. This was the work of the first week of G.C. These committees made it possible to review and provide recommendations on hundreds of petitions.



Petitions approved by the legislative committee move on for consideration by the full body of delegates (“plenary”). Delegates make decisions on the matters before them based on their own conscience as moved by the Holy Spirit. They do not represent anyone but themselves. Consent calendar items are voted on as a bundle without further debate to conserve precious floor time. The delegates used secure electronic voting devices to cast their secret ballots and to request recognition to address the assembly. Only the vote totals are recorded and reported. A simply majority passes most motions. Constitutional changes require a two-thirds majority of the delegates present and voting and subsequent approval by two-thirds of those voting at annual conferences the following year. The legislation, budget, and other items approved by the G.C. take effect at the beginning of the following year, unless specified to take effect at the close of G.C.



Photos: Pastor Caleb with Bishops Cedrick Bridgeforth & Karen Oliveto, the denomination’s first openly gay and lesbian bishops; grave of Billy Graham and his family home; a screenshot of Pastor Caleb leading evening devotions on Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>





# MAY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
April 28	April 29	April 30	1	2	3	4
<b>MAY-JUNE MISSION:</b> \$\$\$ FOR CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS & DISASTER RELIEF  (+CLEAN, USED SOCKS)		<b>Worship Team</b> 9:00 AM  <b>Sharing Memories</b> 10:30 Discussion 11:00 Lunch @ El-Café		12:15 UWIF – Fellowship Hall  <b>Birthday</b> Michaela Warpinski	<i>Pastor's day off</i>	<b>Birthday</b> Jerry Friday
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter</b> 10:00 AM <b>HYMN-SING</b> Directory Photos 1 of 3 <i>(before after the service)</i>	<b>Birthday</b> Ginnie Oliver	<b>Sharing</b> <b>Memories Group</b> El Café' 10:30a  <b>Birthday</b> Corey Parks	<b>Circle of Friends</b> 1:00 PM Nekoosa Courts  <b>Birthday</b>	<b>DAY OF</b> <b>ASCENSION</b> <i>(40<sup>th</sup> Day After</i> <i>Easter)</i>	<b>Birthday</b> Jody Parks <i>Pastor's day off</i>	<b>Birthday</b> Collin & Ethan Boerner
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>Ascension Sunday /</b> <b>Mother's Day</b> 10:00 AM <b>2nd Sunday</b> <b>Refreshments</b> Directory Photos 2 of 3 <i>(before after the service)</i>	<b>Public Open</b> <b>House</b> <i>(provide feedback</i> <i>on redevelop. of</i> <i>P.E. mill site)</i> <b>6-7p – Edwards-</b> <b>Alexander Park</b> <b>Shelter</b>	<b>N.urture Team</b> Lounge 10:00 AM	<b>S-PRC</b> Lounge 10:30 AM		<i>Pastor's day off</i>	<b>Port Ed.</b> <b>Village-wide</b> <b>garage sale</b> <b>8a-2p</b> <b>Birthday</b> Marilynn Robinson
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
<b>Day of Pentecost</b> <b>Graduation Sunday</b> 10:00 AM <b>Grad. cake reception</b> <b>Church Council</b> 11:15 AM Directory Photos 3 of 3 <i>(before after the service)</i>					<b>Birthday</b> Addisyn Mayek <i>Pastor's day off</i>	<b>Birthday</b> Korbin Boerner / Lindsey Hintz
26	27	28	29	30	31	June 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Trinity Sunday</b> <b>(Pentecost.I)</b>  <b>Birthday</b> Ashley Miller		<b>Worship Team</b>  <b>Birthday</b> Carson Parks		<b>Witness Team</b> Lounge 10:00 AM  <b>Birthday</b> Maisie Cumberland / Carol Ann Harvestine <i>Pastor's day off</i>		

## Church Office Hours:

Connie: Monday through Friday : 8:00a – noon

Pastor: Monday through Thursday : 9:00a – 1:00p