

February
2026

The Current



Monthly News from Port Edwards United Methodist Church

Pouring Forth the Living Water: Bloom by the River!

“Spud-tacular Fellowship!”

Following the un-Hanging of the Greens on January 11th, members of PEUMC enjoyed their **PACKERS-N-POTATOES**, a baked potato bar. At PEUMC, everyone's a winner!



Members brought dessert and toppings. The spud-meister was Leo T. Photo credit: Diane S.

An Altar Warmly Wrapped in Love!

For our short 4-week “Season After Epiphany,”

PEUMC once again asked members to lend to the church some quilts to decorate our main altar. Candy P-T's quilt, left, was displayed on January 18th & 25th. “*This 'Ragtime Quilt' was the second quilt I designed but the first one I cut and sewed. It was started in 2005, and the patches were cut from my husband's and my old jeans and shirts.*”

Karen V.'s quilt, right, will be displayed on February 1st and 8th. “*This Dresden Plate quilt was sewn by Charles Bruce in the 1980s. The design was popular in the 1920s and 30s and was inspired by ornate porcelain from Dresden, Germany. Charles was the father of Karen V.*”



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

Candy [Candace] Prah-Tell



1. Do you have any nicknames? **Candy. That's the name that I prefer to be called by.**

2. How long have you attended PEUMC? **I started in November 2023.**

3. What is your favorite memory at PEUMC?

Being greeted at the door of the Holiday Bazaar by Kathy Mc.

4. What is your favorite hymn? ***Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore.*** The hymn invites every person, no matter what their status is in life, to follow Jesus.

5. What is your favorite Bible verse or story? **The John 4. Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman by Jacob's Well. The story legitimizes the role of women in Christianity.**

6. What are your hobbies? **My hobbies are drawing, quilting, jewelry-making, knitting, pyrography, flower gardening, walking . . . too many to list!** 😊

7. What is your favorite holiday tradition? **Attending church on Christmas Eve.**

8. What is your favorite food or recipe? **I have many favorites, but one simple and healthy recipe that I have been making quite frequently is for Salmon Loaf:** One large can of salmon, one egg, one cup crushed saltine crackers, one tablespoon chopped onion, parsley flakes, dash pepper, one half cup of milk, one teaspoon of lemon juice. Mix all together and pat into a greased 9"x5" loaf pan. Bake for one hour in a 350o oven. I like to serve it with Dill Sauce; combine ½ cup of mayonnaise, one fourth cup of sour cream, one tablespoon of lemon juice, one tablespoon of milk, one teaspoon of dill weed, ½ teaspoon of salt, ½ teaspoon of sugar, 1/8 teaspoon of pepper. Mix the ingredients together until smooth and refrigerate (it keeps well!).

9. Share some fun facts about yourself. **For three summers following my graduation from UWSP, in 1975, I took classes at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, a branch of The University of Tennessee-Knoxville. It wasn't until later that I discovered that Gatlinburg is considered the 'Wisconsin Dells of TN.'** Fast forward to January 19th, 2026, a day so cold that the schools were closed but Kirby vacuum cleaner salesmen were successfully hawking their wares. A young U.S. Navy Veteran was attempting to sell enough vacuum cleaners by the end of January to win a trip to Gatlinburg, TN. I told him about Arrowmont then suggested that he probably wasn't interested in that type of entertainment. I had to eat my words after he shared with me that he had worked with an Amish furniture maker and had built a piece of furniture using hand tools. He showed me a photo of a frame for a mirror that he had made. The experience reminded me not to make assumptions about people!

10. What church, or faith tradition, did you grow up with? **I have always been a member of the United Church of Christ (UCC) until becoming a member here.**

11. What brought you to this area?

I was hired to teach Middle School Art, at Alexander Middle School, in Nekoosa, WI, in 1977.

12. What advice would you give something curious about our religion (Christianity) or denomination (United Methodist) or our local church? "

"If you are brave enough to walk through the door, you won't be disappointed!"

13. If you could choose your own superpower, what would it be and why?
Speed-reading, so I can find time for all of my hobbies!

14. If you had to play a character in the Bible, which character would you most like to play?
Mary. In the story about Mary and Martha.

15. What are some of the jobs/roles you've held in your life?
I was an art teacher (K-12), a clerk in a drugstore and in a clothing store, a caregiver for my son, my mother, my mother-in-law, my aunt, and my husband, and did cleaning, laundry, maintenance, and nutrition in a nursing home.

16. Favorite season: **Fall.**

Favorite vacation spot: **The Clearing Folk School, Ellison Bay, Door County, WI.**

17. Other information: **I have one son, Trent, who is an air ambulance pilot. He is married to Kristina (Tia) and they live in Iron Mountain, MI.**

2026 Missional Giving Report

MONTH	NAME	AMOUNT COLLECTED	DATE VOUCHERED
Jan. Mission	Chemo Care Packages & Homeless Kits for Riverview Hospital	\$260.00	
Sp. Offering	Peace with Justice Offering – April 19 th , 2026		
Sp. Offering	United Methodist Student Day – June 14 th , 2026		
Sp. Offering	World Communion Sunday – Oct. 4 th , 2026		
2026 Total Second-Mile Giving for Missions:		\$260.00	

THREE SPECIAL OFFERINGS SCHEDULED FOR 2026

There are 6 annual denominational-wide special offerings.

These cover local and global ministries that are specifically not funded by apportionments.

Last year, we observed 3 of them. This year, we will observe the other 3:

Peace with Justice Sunday (4/19/26) – this funds grants that any annual conference or local congregation can apply for. These grants are available to churches working on initiatives that promote peace, challenge injustice, and empower underrepresented communities – especially Ethnic and Minority Local Churches. 50% is retained in our annual conference, 50% is used throughout the U.S. and beyond.

United Methodist Student Day (6/14/26) – this supports scholarships for United Methodist students; this is not just for those preparing for seminary, but a diverse of students who are pursuing professions that serve their communities. Any student who remains active in their local church in high school (or campus ministry in college) can apply for these scholarships.

World Communion Sunday (10/4/26) – 50% collected goes toward scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students of color in the U.S. who are pursuing ordained ministry; 35% supports diversity, equity, and access training – helping churches recruit and retain leaders of color across all areas of ministry; 15% supports our ecumenical work with partner churches in Africa, Asia/Pacific, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and communities of color in the U.S.

Let us review our winter-weather protocol:

WHAT KIND OF CONDITIONS CAN CANCEL CHURCH SERVICES?

As per our winter weather policy, services can be canceled due to foggy, snowy, icy conditions, or dangerously low temperatures.

HOW COLD DOES IT HAVE TO GET TO CANCEL CHURCH?

Predicted windchills reaching -40 and below at any time between one hour before and one hour after any given service or event shall necessitate cancellation. The pastor, council chair, and maintenance technician shall jointly make the call to cancel services in a timely manner to give adequate notice.

PLEASE EXERCISE GOOD JUDGMENT WHEN COMING TO WORSHIP DURING BAD WEATHER.



Thank You, from Jeanne B.

Dear Friends at the United Methodist Church,

Thank you so much for the care basket, kindness, and prayers you shared with me during the loss of Bob.

To receive such thoughtful care from the church that has been part of my life for as long as I can remember, and that helped shape my faith means more to me than words can express. Please know how deeply grateful I am for your support.

Thank you,

Jeanne B.

Card located in the lobby bulletin board.

Thank You, from Jeff T.

Church Friends,

Thank you for the generous gift basket of certificates, a blanket, treats, and goodies in comfort of the loss of my mother. It was especially thoughtful, as the anniversary of her passing was a difficult time.

Thank you,

Jeff T.

Card located in the lobby bulletin board.

Thank You, from Wisconsin Rapids Family Center

January 12, 2026

Dear United Methodist Church,

On behalf of Wisconsin Rapids Family Center, I would like to thank you for your generous donation of \$293.00 received on 1/5/2026 [50% of Christmas Eve offering]. Your contribution makes it possible for us to continue to serve people victimized by abuse.

Since its inception in 1983, WRFC has worked to eliminate violence and provide support and safety for individuals and families impacted by domestic abuse and sexual assault, in all its form.

Sincerely,

Tricia Fancher

Executive Director

Card located in the lobby bulletin board.





Greater Rapids Area Churches for Ecumenism

Events in February



DINE FOR DOUGH

A G.R.A.C.E. Fundraiser Through Rocky Rococo

Sunday, February 8th – 11:00 AM – 9:00 PM

Rocky Rococo will donate 20% of your purchase to G.R.A.C.E.'s student debt relief fund. Go to peumc.org/grace to download the meal voucher (*optional to print; must show to cashier*) BRING YOUR VOUCHER TO ROCKY ROCOCO'S IN RAPIDS BETWEEN 11:00A and 9:00P on 2/8. (*Dine-in or carry-out. Voucher may be printed or digital.*)

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, February 18th

**6:00 – 6:50p fellowship in Hall / 7:00 – 7:45P service
@ PEUMC sanctuary with Nekoosa United Church of Christ**

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, marking our 40-day (excluding Sundays) season of reflection, repentance, and preparation for Easter. The ashes placed on our foreheads (or hands) symbolize our need for repentance (that is, a will to lead a changed life). While the service can be solemn, it's not about guilt or shame, but empowerment. The ashes we use are made from Palm Sunday's palm branches in years past.

What is the connection between human mortality and repentance?

The connection lies in the recognition of life's brevity and the call to live with an eternal perspective today. While this **may** look like thinking about the afterlife, that's just a small part of it. "Eternal perspective" also has real-life, social ramifications: *how do we need to live today to benefit future generations?* Therefore, the ashes we impose upon ourselves connect us to ecological concerns, pursuits of justice, and lives lived with a radical, unconditional love that pave the way for the betterment of our species and planet.

So, yes, Ash Wednesday **IS** sobering and empowering!

THE GIFTS OF LENT

A G.R.A.C.E. Lenten Round Robin Series

Every Wednesday in Lent @ 6:30p @ PEUMC

The pastors of G.R.A.C.E. will be participating in a round-robin series during the Lenten season. Instead of the *congregations* going from church-to-church, the people will stay in their own building each week, as the *pastors* rotate. That means PEUMC will host their own weekly Wednesday service, but with a different pastor presiding. (*This also means we need musicians, liturgists, ushers, and greeters for each Wednesday in Lent!*)

Our theme is *The Gifts of Lent*. Each week, a Bible character will give a monologue about something they gave to Jesus during Holy Week.

Feb. 25 th	March 4 th	March 11 th	March 18 th	March 25 th
Rev. Beth (Moravian)	Rev. Kate (First Congregational)	Rev. Caleb (PEUMC)	Rev. Margo (Woodland Luther'n)	Rev. Michelle (Grace Lutheran)
"A family gives their home"	"Mary gives her perfume."	"Simon gives his strength."	"Joseph gives his tomb."	"A man gives his donkey"

Sundays in February

Sunday, February 1st – Communion Sunday
Sunday, February 8th – Black History Month + Time for Healing (*Second Sunday Refreshments*)
Sunday, February 15th – Transfiguration Sunday (*a day of music!*)
Ash Wednesday Service – Wednesday, February 18th – 6:00 PM – 7:45 PM
Sunday, February 22nd – First Sunday in Lent

Dates in February - March

GATHERINGS

MemoryShare:

Tuesday, February 3rd @ 10:30a – *El Café*
Tuesday, March 3rd @ 10:30a – *El Café*

Men's Breakfast:

Saturday, February 7th @ 8:00a – *El Café*
Saturday, March 7th @ 8:00a – *El Café*

U.W.I.F. Friends: Pledge Service & Lunch – Wed., Feb. 11th – 11a: *El Café* / noon: mtg.
Mary H. & Gloria W. will lead program. Lucy S. will be president.
All women of the congregation are invited to join!
“A Mission Trip from Home” – Wed., March 11th – 12:15p – brown bag lunch

Sunshine Reading: _____

Leadership Council: Sunday, February 15th, 2026 – after worship
Sunday, March 15th, 2026 – after worship



First Saturdays of each month.

8:00a – *El Café*

Open to all the men of the church (*no girls allowed!!!!*)
Socialize with some devotions



MemoryShare

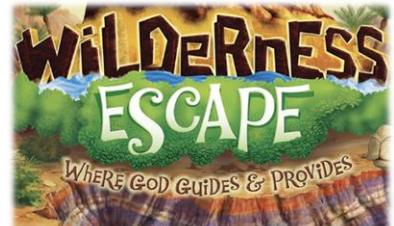
First Tuesday of each month.

10:30a – *El Café*

A support group
for all who have lost a loved one.

2026 Summer VBS in the works: Week of July 12th

Sponsored by G.R.A.C.E. – hosted @ First Congregational



Prayer Requests

SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST ELECTRONICALLY

Send your prayer requests (joys or concerns) to prayer@peumc.org
(email goes to pastor's private email).

OR you can use the online form available at peumc.org/prayer or this QR Code:



Scripture & Sermon Series

Feb. 1 st	Communion Sunday	<i>LIVING IT LARGE WITH JESUS</i>	John 4 <i>Jesus & the Samaritan Woman at the Well</i>
Feb. 8 th	Black History Sunday <i>(Second Sunday Refreshments)</i>		John 4-5 <i>Jesus Heals Many People</i>
Feb. 15 th	Transfiguration Sunday <i>(a day of music!)</i>		John 6 <i>Feeding the Multitude</i>
Feb. 18th Ash Wed. 6:00–6:50P FLWSP 7:00 – 7:45P SRVC		John 10: <i>The Good Shepherd</i>	
Feb. 22 nd	First Sunday in Lent	John 8 <i>Woman Caught in Adultery</i>	

Worship Leaders

Communion: Candles:	Greeter(s)	Usher	Liturgist	Guest Relations	Refreshments
Sun., February 1st			Candy P-T.	Kathy Mc.	
Sun., February 8th	Candy P-T.	Sue T.	Leo T.	Kathy Mc.	1. _____ 2. _____
Sun., February 15th				Diane S.	
Sun., February 22nd				Sue T.	

Please notify the church office if you would like your name down for a certain position and date.

office@peumc.org / 715-887-3011 / 



Two Refreshment “Baristas” Needed for **February 8th**

The Nurture Team would like to emphasize that having **two** individuals sign up for Second Sunday Refreshments helps to spread the love and provide a variety of refreshments.

However, if you are willing to provide the *whole* spread, please put your name down *twice*. We have a spot for “sweets” and a spot “non-sweets” for those with dietary restrictions.

The sign-up for **February 8th** is currently blank. Looking ahead, Refreshments will take place on **March 15th**, because the Port Edwards Lions Club has their pancake brunch that morning.

Sunday School Dates:

February 8th – Becky T.

March 8th – Sara T.

April 12th – Lori H

May 10th – Ellen M.

February Epiphany-tide Sermon Series (Unit #5)

LIVING IT LARGE WITH JESUS

Jesus is at the beginning of His earthly ministry in the opening chapters of the Gospel of John. In these earliest moments, Christ is already demonstrating His purpose: calling those around Him into new life. He wants all to know and experience abundant life.

Week 3 – February 1st

– “THE WOMAN AT THE WELL” (Living Water)

Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman at a well. The ensuing conversation breaks several taboos and brings the woman and her village to believe in Jesus.

Week 4 – February 8th

– “HEALING MIRACLES”

A royal official asks Jesus to travel with Him to heal His son. The man finds out that His son was already healed when Jesus spoke the words. Later, Jesus heals another man on the Sabbath, causing disagreements with religious officials.

Week 5 – February 15th

– “BREAD FOR ALL” (Feeding the 5,000)

After Jesus feeds 5,000 men plus women and children with only 5 loaves and 2 fish, He describes Himself as the True Bread.

February-March Lenten Sermon Series (Unit #6)

From Shadows to Shalom

WALKING THROUGH LIFE WITH JESUS AND INTO THE KIN'DOM OF GOD

Our journey through Lent takes us from the Shadows to *Shalom*. *Shalom* is a Hebrew word meaning “peace and wholeness.” We move from the shadows of accusation to the radiant humility of Jesus kneeling with a basin.

Week 1 – February 22nd

Lent.1 – “STONES IN OUR HANDS” (The God Who Refuses to Condemn)
Jesus interrupts cycles of violence and exposes the hypocrisy of those who weaponize righteousness.

Week 2 – March 1st

Lent.2 – “SEEING AGAINST FOR THE FIRST TIME” (The Courage to See Truth)
The man born blind becomes the only one who truly sees Jesus, whereas the religious authorities choose blindness.

Week 3 – March 8th

Lent.3 – “COME OUT, BELOVED” (God Who Calls Us Into Life)
Name what is bound, buried, or decaying in our lives & communities.

Week 4 – March 15th

Lent.4 – “THE FRAGRANCE OF LOVE” (The cost of love)
Judas represents the temptation to critique generosity rather than practice it.

Week 5 – March 22nd

Lent.5 – “LOVE THAT KNEELS” (The commandment that changes everything)
Judas’ betrayal is acknowledged without hatred; Jesus maintains love to the very end.

Week 6 – March 29th

Palm-Passion Sunday – Jesus has confronted judgment, healed blindness, raised the dead, received devotion, and washed feet. Now he walks toward the cross, knowing and experiencing the human condition, with eyes wide open and ready, as far as He can, to die.

January Mission Project - REVIEW

Chemo-care packages & Homeless Kit for Aspirus Riverview Hospital

After talking with the Riverview Hospital Volunteer Coordinator, Marieann Ott, we have agreed on an alternative mission project for our church. We will participate in their current chemo-care ministry that provides bags/baskets of care items for those receiving chemotherapy treatments at the hospital. We will be putting these care packages together ourselves in an after-service party in the upcoming weeks.

The hospital would also like to start a program that provides basic hygiene items to those who are homeless, or unhoused, who come to the hospital. We will help jumpstart this program. We raised **\$260.00** for this project in January.

February Mission Project

Support United Methodist Post-ICE Work in MN

Park Avenue United Methodist Church, near downtown Minneapolis, has created a fund designated for Immigration Community Crisis Response. This fund gives their local church the tools and resources needed to keep serving their neighbors. This fund was created following the killing of Renee Nicole Good on 1/7/26 and will continue until immediate and post-traumatic needs are met.

We will give PAUMC a check at the end of February.

Still make checks out to PEUMC.

transforming

a 3-week small group study @ PEUMC



When: Monday, January 26th

Monday, February 2nd

Monday, February 9th

11:00 – noon



Where: Memorial Lounge & by ZOOM

Topic: The Bible & the Lives of Transgender Christians

Even if you missed the first session, you are still invited to sit in on the second and third!

February Households



Throughout January,
our congregation is asked
to pray for the following people:
(randomly chosen on 1/25)

**Patsy S. / Adam H. / Joann L. / Tiffany H. /
Nathan H. / the Grundens / Lori & Mike /
Connie C. / Corey P. /
Pastors Caleb & Doug**

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
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.



By Merging Strengths of SWEPS, Rapids Family Backpacks & The Neighborhood Table

FOCUS Food Pantry Helpers

Candy Prahl-Tell / Lucy Silvester / Diane Sweat / Becky Taylor

Your efforts to help put food on the table for our neighbors is so appreciated! Anyone interested in helping with these programs may contact Becky Taylor (715-887-2163) for more information. **THANK YOU!**

UMC Bishops Condemn Violence in Minnesota

1/26/2026 - Bishop News

January 26, 2026

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

In recent days, events in Minnesota and beyond have caused deep grief, concern, and alarm across our connection. The use of lethal force in public spaces, the detention of naturalized citizens, members of our indigenous communities, children, documented and undocumented immigrants, and the treatment of other vulnerable persons have weighed heavily on the hearts of many in our church. These actions have unsettled communities, strained trust, and intensified fear among those already living at the margins.

Scripture reminds us that “*when one part of the body suffers, we all suffer with them*” (I Corinthians 12:26). As a Connectional church, we are reminded that we are one body that cares for and needs each other. The whole body is suffering, right now, today! The violence being perpetrated on our streets, the loss of safety, and the inhumane treatment of God’s children, are hurting us all. We cannot stay silent in the face of the evils of our day.

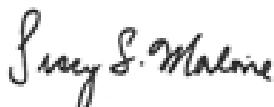
The United Methodist Church deplores the use of violence, fear, separation, and intimidation as a means of creating social order. Such means do not build beloved community. We reaffirm our longstanding commitment to the sacred worth of every person and to the way of peace taught and embodied by Jesus. We stand against the separation of children from their families. We detest the inhumane, evil actions that are perpetuated by governmental authorities.

Our Social Principles are clear: “*We reject governmental use of threats, extortion, unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killings, and other forms of coercion to silence political opponents and those objecting to unlawful or immoral government policies and practices.*” They further affirm that the church has both the right and the responsibility to educate and equip its members to be advocates for justice in the wider world (¶163D).

This is a moment that calls for prayerful courage to speak against actions that are bringing harm to our neighbors. This is our time to have an effectual faith that stands with those who are suffering. This is our faithful response to our baptismal vow that summons us into what is required of us “to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). We must continue to work for justice to help heal the brokenness in our communities and in the world.

May we be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, who empowered by the Holy Spirit, do our part to bring comfort, just practices, and healing for all God’s suffering people.

In Christ’s peace,



Bishop Tracy S. Malone
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church



Are you (or someone you know) discerning a call to pastoral ministry, chaplaincy, mission, or faithful leadership in the world? Is God tugging on your heart to serve in a new way in the Kin'dom of God? **IGNITE** is a space to listen, wonder, ask questions, and discover how God might be calling you.

Registration Deadline: February 15th
March 13-15, 2026 – Glenview, IL – Reg. fee \$99 / Hotel \$149 a night.



Open Letter on Immigration Enforcement from Wisconsin Council of Churches

We are living in challenging and chaotic times. As we bear witness to the unprecedented assault on our immigrant neighbors and friends in the streets of the Twin Cities, Chicago, and elsewhere, we recognize the need to be prepared in the event such action comes to Wisconsin. We, the undersigned leaders of faith communities in Wisconsin, call upon all elected officials, all people of faith and goodwill, and all who care about the future of our democracy to engage in concrete acts of advocacy, solidarity, and compassion. The constitutional rights and freedoms we hold dear are under assault, and the time for action is now.

We are seeing countless individuals arrested and detained, including citizens, Indigenous people, and those with legal resident status, simply because an agent believes they look like an immigrant. The vast majority of those detained have no criminal convictions. We recognize the responsibility of law enforcement officers to serve and protect includes a range of actions, including investigating and apprehending those who commit violent crimes. Counter to the stated position of the federal administration, we do not believe that what we are witnessing is a focus on dangerous criminals, nor does it foster community safety. We call upon our elected leaders to coordinate with law enforcement officials to make sure that federal agents, including those from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), respect the constitutional rights of all residents of Wisconsin.

All of the major faith traditions recognize the inherent dignity of all people and call upon their communities to love and serve our neighbors. We are seeing that immigrants and other people of color are afraid to leave their homes to work, shop, or even attend school, for fear that they will be swept up indiscriminately, even though they may be citizens or have legal resident status.

Together, we can create a Wisconsin that we are proud of, in which all our neighbors can work, study, play, and love, living in peace and unafraid. Posted on January 22, 2026 - Facebook

Words of Advice from Bishop Dan Sherwin

Be aware that immigrant clergy under appointment [in United Methodist itineracy] are with us by means of a legal immigration status. Despite the [previous] protections of U.S. law, our immigrant clergy families are facing immigrant safety concerns. Unfortunately, persons with non-European sounding names, and all immigrants, should carry all documents that establish their legal right to be in the United States. Have a plan for immigrant children, a number to alert legal caregivers, and if possible, let someone know where you are in the event that you are taken into custody. Network to minimize risk around travel to, and interacting with, medical treatment, school, employment, and the faith community. Know that profiling of license plates is occurring in some areas. While judicial warrants have been required as a fourth amendment protection, in the current environment, ICE [may enter] homes or a sanctuary without a warrant. If ICE officers come to the door of your church, have someone designated to ask for badges or identification or to ask for a judicial warrant. Remember that opening the door, even a little bit, can be interpreted as a non-verbal invitation to enter. Never open the door for an ICE officer under any circumstances. There are reports of forced entry without warrants, especially if the door is opened for them. Have an attorney present or ask the officers to wait for your legal counsel to arrive. You have the right to remain silent. Do not provide information without legal counsel present. Do not lie or provide false information. Document with your cell phone, if possible. Contact your district superintendent for support. Be aware, also, that food pantries and schools are targets for ICE arrests of persons with a legal status.

U.S. Pastors Stand Against Federal Crackdown

by Heather Hahn | January 26th, 2026 | United Methodist News

After some 50,000 people from across the U.S. took to Minneapolis' icy streets to peacefully call for ICE to clear out, the Rev. Mariah Furness Tollgaard expected Jan. 23 would prove historic in the fight for justice.

"Friday felt holy — like Resurrection morning, like Pentecost fire on the prairie wind — the unity, the singing, the prayers," she preached Jan. 25 at Hamline Church, a United Methodist congregation in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Tollgaard, the church's senior pastor, was among 100 Minnesota clergy arrested while trying to block Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from using the airport that day in an act of nonviolent civil disobedience. She then helped lead a prayer vigil at her church that evening.

But then came Saturday morning when federal agents fatally shot Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old intensive care unit nurse at the local veterans' hospital. He died while trying to help a woman who was also documenting immigrant enforcement activity. His last words, according to bystanders, were: *"Are you OK?"*

Tollgaard led her congregation on Sunday morning in a time of grief after federal agents gunned down another Minnesotan who — like Renee Good, the mother and poet killed Jan. 7 — was trying to help his immigrant neighbors. But the pastor and others at the church also spoke with resolve.

Hundreds of clergy convene at Westminster Presbyterian Church on Jan. 22 in downtown Minneapolis. Many United Methodist pastors were among the 700 faith leaders who came from across the U.S. to join in a peaceful protest on Jan. 23.

With Friday's peaceful protests, Americans from varied walks of life — including clergy — braved temperatures as low as -20 Fahrenheit (-29 Celsius) to bear witness to what is happening in and around the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. They also learned lessons they could take back home to their communities to support neighbors targeted by federal Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

U.S. United Methodists, including multiple bishops, are increasingly speaking out against the tactics of the federal government.

"The Church has long taught that human dignity is not granted by governments," wrote Missouri Conference Bishop Robert Farr in a letter calling for courageous Christian witness. *"It is given by God. Jesus tells us that whatever we do to the least of these, we do to him. Again and again, Scripture reveals that God's heart is found among those pushed to the margins. The Church must stand with immigrants, refugees and all who seek safety, dignity and due process."*

The United Methodist Council of Bishops also issued a statement condemning the violence in Minnesota:

"The United Methodist Church deplores the use of violence, fear, separation, and intimidation as a means of creating social order," Council of Bishops President Tracy S. Malone wrote on behalf of the council. *"Such means do not build beloved community. We reaffirm our longstanding commitment to the sacred worth of every person and to the way of peace taught and embodied by Jesus. We stand against the separation of children from their families. We detest the inhumane, evil actions that are perpetuated by governmental authorities."*

United Methodist ministries also are stepping up to ensure people receive the care they need. The Minnesota Conference has now set up an emergency fund to help congregations in caring for their neighbors.

HOW TO HELP

The Minnesota Conference has set up an emergency fund for churches trying to help their neighbors, especially those fearful of leaving their homes. People can donate straight from the homepage of Minnesota's Annual Conference website: <https://www.minnesotaumc.org/>

"We are in a moment in a time," she said, *"when our church, our faith, our belief, is needed now more than ever to create a government that values all of us — that is not creating laws that are pitting us one against the other."*

"We are not powerless. We have never been," Tollgaard preached. *"Many have said it plainly: This occupation isn't about enforcing immigration law — though clearly immigrants and BIPOC people of Minnesota have borne the brunt of this moment. This occupation is about controlling a people, subjugating a free state. Minnesota has become a testing ground because if Minnesota falls, then they continue on the path to consolidated control."*

She spoke during a month that has seen more than 3,000 heavily armed and masked federal immigration agents put the Twin Cities under siege.

An agent shot Good through her car window. Agents dragged Chongly Scott Thao — an elderly U.S. citizen — out of his home into the freezing cold dressed only in Crocs and his underwear. One of the men ICE was targeting is already serving a sentence in a Minnesota prison with plans for the federal agency to detain him upon his release. Agents also detained a 5-year-old Minnesotan boy coming home from preschool carrying a Spider-Man backpack and sent him and his father to detention outside San Antonio.

Last week, The Associated Press reported on a memo that shows ICE asserting sweeping powers to enter people's homes without a judicial warrant — a development many legal experts decry as a violation of U.S. constitutional rights.

Days later, agents killed Pretti. As with Good, eyewitness videos contradicted Trump officials' description of the U.S. citizen as "a domestic terrorist" intent on killing federal agents.

Video showed Pretti directing traffic away from the agents and then running over to help a woman that agents had shoved to the ground. He was standing in front of the woman when agents pepper sprayed them both and then proceeded to pin him down on the ground, pummel him and surround him in a scrum. After one agent removed a gun that Pretti evidently had holstered at his side, the other agents shot him 10 times.

According to bystander videos and witness statements, Pretti never pointed or brandished his weapon, which he had a legal permit to carry. *"He wasn't a protester. He was a protector,"* Tollgaard said. *"He did what any of us would pray to have the courage to do. He loved his neighbor as himself."*

The Rev. Ingrid McIntyre, pastor of Glencliff United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, joined in the Jan. 23 protest and stayed the night just three blocks away from where Pretti was killed the next day. For the first time, McIntyre said she experienced the blindingly acrid presence of tear gas nearby.

"They are in the street. That is where Jesus was," she said. *"Jesus wasn't sitting safely behind a desk somewhere, right? Jesus wasn't sitting safely in an apartment complex on the 10th floor. No, Jesus was present, and he didn't do it in a week or two after he had some committee meetings. He did it right now."*

Like Tollgaard, the Rev. Becca Girrell, a United Methodist pastor in Vermont, sees Minnesota as a testing ground for more widespread repression nationwide.

However, Tollgaard also expressed hope that Minnesotans' experience with ice of the freezing kind can help them freeze out ICE's tactics from going further.

The federal agents "underestimate the people of this land," Tollgaard said.

"They forget that under all of this cold, there is a beating heart of love that no federal agency can kill," she preached. *"Friends, the thing about ice — whether it's on our lakes or in our laws — is that it never lasts forever. The deep freeze can feel endless, but every year the warmth returns."*

ELVIS PRESLEY'S METHODIST MOMENT

A United Methodist Church News Feature
by Heather Hahn | NASHVILLE, Tenn.

By the start of 1956, Elvis Presley and his recording career had found a new place to dwell. It wasn't at the end of Lonely Street, but in a building bustling with Methodists. Presley at that point had only regional hits to his name. The giant RCA Records had gambled on the young singer and bought his contract from the small Sun Records.

However, RCA did not yet have a studio of its own in the burgeoning "Music City" of Nashville. Instead, the record company leased studio space in a building it shared with the Methodist Church's *Television, Radio and Film Commission* — one of the predecessors of today's *United Methodist Communications*. These facilities were shared by the Methodists and RCA from 1955 to 1957.

So it was that on Jan. 10th, 1956 — two days after his 21st birthday — Presley arrived at the Nashville studio at 1525 McGavock Street for his first recording session with his new label. The session would prove one of the most momentous in Presley's career. It was also a highlight in a little-known chapter of Methodist Church history — when the denomination's communications agency shared its office and studio space with a major record label.

Elvis Presley was not the only famous musician to record at this studio.

Among the popular songs recorded there:

"Yonder Comes a Sucker" and "Four Walls" - Jim Reeves

"Mr. Sandman" - Chet Atkins

"I Want to be Loved" - Johnnie (Wright) & Jack (Anglin)

In that studio, Presley and his band cut five songs over two days — a cover of Ray Charles' "I've Got a Woman," "I Was the One," "Money Honey," "I'm Counting on You" and, most famously, "Heartbreak Hotel."

A few months later, Presley and his band — now with a gold record to their names — returned to the Methodist building on April 14 for another Nashville recording session. Presley recorded another song, a ballad titled "I Want You, I Need You, I Love You."

During one of his recording sessions at the building, Presley left a package at the receptionist's desk but departed without ever retrieving his package. When the receptionist finally opened the package, she found a pair of pants. The receptionist eventually wrote to the popular television game show "I've Got a Secret" with the secret that Presley had given her his pants. But the production company wrote back and said, "Your secret is not acceptable." "It was too risqué for that time period," the receptionist, a Methodist, recalled.

However, the Kingswood Production department at *United Methodist Communications* still produces videos and music today. Clients include other United Methodist agencies, conferences and congregations as well as secular organizations and musicians. The main requirement is that any production must be in keeping with the denomination's social teachings. Non-United Methodists who have used Kingswood services at UMC include the Southern Baptist Convention's LifeWay Christian Resources as well as Nashville musicians Alabama, Jim Ed Brown, Amy Grant, Loretta Lynn, Reba McEntire and Marty Stuart.

The Methodist Church never took an official position on Presley, in particular, or rock 'n' roll, in general. Like United Methodists' views on pop culture today, individual Methodists had varied reactions to the Elvis Fever. Though Presley was never himself Methodist, he had deep Christian roots. His parents met at an Assemblies of God church, and he grew up in the Pentecostal movement. The rock star took inspiration throughout his career from the music and practices of the church.

Elvis may have been imperfect. But 'the King' was certainly a believer.

TAKE PART IN SHAPING THE CHURCH'S FUTURE

by Heather Hahn / January 20, 2026 / United Methodist News

The Council of Bishops hopes to give every United Methodist a voice in the future-shaping work of this year's Leadership Gathering.

The bishops plan for 300 participants from four continents to attend the gathering, set for October 20-24 at Knox United Church in Calgary, Canada. The event — with the theme *"Emboldened by the Spirit: Imagining a Church Yet to Be"* — aims to help United Methodists prayerfully discern their next chapter together after a painful season of disaffiliations.

Horizon Texas Conference Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr. — co-convener of the event's design team — stressed that this gathering is to be shaped by the whole Church.

To that end, Saenz and his fellow bishops have released an **online survey** asking for United Methodists to share their hopes and wisdom for what the gathering should achieve. The 15-question survey — available in English, French, German, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish and Tagalog — asks United Methodists what they hope the denomination will prioritize, what they envision for the church 50 years into the future, and what message they want leadership gathering participants to carry forward.

TAKE THE SURVEY USING THIS QR CODE OR TYPING IN THIS URL IN YOUR INTERNET BROWSER:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UMCLG2026>

(that's: `http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UMCLG2026`)



Ultimately, the bishops and design team members hope the gathering — and the activities leading up to it — will help The United Methodist Church build on that vision to follow where the Holy Spirit is leading.

"This engagement initiative reflects who God is calling us to be as a connectional Church — grounded in prayerful discernment, shaped by voices from across the global connection and attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit," Council of Bishops President Tracy S. Malone said in a statement.

Stephanie Henry, the design team's co-convener, expects her team to fully integrate the survey's findings and webinar conversations into the Leadership Gathering's agenda. Henry, who previously served as chair of General Conference's Rules Committee, is excited about the opportunity for lay people like her to help influence the church without legislation or mastering Robert's Rules of Order.

Saenz said he ultimately expects the webinars and Leadership Gathering to help with evangelism. "I think the way that we do theology, missiology and ecclesiology [as a group effort] is good news for people who are de-churched, unchurched, post church and everything else, because they say, 'Wow, there is space for me here,'" he said. "And so, I do envision that this work will be kind of the foundation of imagining a church where people can believe and belong and be a faithful disciple of Christ."

"I'm hoping that the support for the vision statement of the church — to love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously — has some muscle and ligaments," he said, "so that we can say, 'Yeah, this is who we are. This is what we do. This is why we do it.'"

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS - 2/1 - 3/2

Below are daily scripture readings that are based on Sunday morning's lectionary passages.

These weekday readings help to connect one Sunday's readings to the next one.

*These will be printed weekly in our bulletins as well.

2/1	John 4:1-42	The Woman at the Well	2/16	John 6:52-59	True Food / True Drink
2/2	Luke 14:15-24	Parable of the Great Dinner	2/17	John 6:60-71	Words of Eternal Life
2/3	Luke 15:1-7	Parable of the Lost Sheep	2/18	John 7:1-9	Unbelief of Jesus' Brothers
2/4	Luke 15:8-10	Parable of the Lost Coin	2/19	John 7:1-24	Jesus: Festival of Booths
2/5	Luke 15:11-32	Parable of the Lost Son	2/20	John 7:25-36, 45-52	Failed Arrest of Jesus
2/6	Luke 16:1-13	Parable of Shrewd Manager	2/21	John 7:37-44	Rivers of Living Water
2/7	John 4:43-45	Jesus Returns to Galilee	2/22	John 8:1-12, 48-59	Caught in Adultery
2/8	John 4:46-54; 5:1-18	Healing Miracles	2/23	John 8:12-20	Jesus: Light of the World
2/9	John 5:19-29	Jesus' Autho. Comes from God	2/24	John 8:21-30	Jesus Foretells His Death
2/10	John 5:30-47	Testimonies about Jesus	2/25	John 8:31-38	True Disciples
2/11	John 5:30-47	Testimonies about Jesus	2/26	John 8:39-59	Jesus & Abraham
2/12	Luke 16:19-31	Rich Man & Lazarus	2/27	Luke 18:18-30	The Rich Ruler
2/13	Luke 17:11-19	Jesus Cleanses 10 Men	2/28	Luke 18:31-43	Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar
2/14	Luke 18:1-14	Widow & Judge / Phar. & Tax Coll.	3/1	John 9:1-41	Spiritual Blindness
2/15	John 6:1-26, 47-51	Feeding Many/Walk on Water	3/2	John 10:22-42	Jesus Rejected

Reviewing PEUMCS Political Engagement Policy

These are terribly tricky times right now. There are a lot of high emotions being exhibited, rightly so. But many of our emotions & opinions are diametrically opposed. Recent events in our federal government and on our local streets have empowered some people to speak up (or act out) and others to disengage from all the added social stress and anxiety. *Both are legitimate reactions.*

World & national happenings are requiring the church to engage in its historical & necessary, if difficult, mission to speak "truth to power." From the Old Testament prophets, to the New Testament apostles, **to follow God's will meant getting "political."** The word itself just means "pertaining to public affairs." *Political* does not automatically mean "partisan" (relating to just one party) nor does it mean, generically, all things controversial and uncomfortable.

Most people agree that the church needs to speak into the lives of everyday people today. To be relevant. *But what if the most important issues in our lives right now are blatant "political" issues (whether they ought to be or not)?* After all, most issues in our society have been politicized.

Last year, our PEUMC Leadership Council, approved a policy to help guide our congregation into safe, prophetic witness, based on the guidance of the IRS and our denomination.

In summary:

Our church **may** speak on political issues, as long as it does not support or deny the *character* of a party or person, or their *legitimacy* to be in office; we must neither support, oppose, or contribute to any candidate or campaign, whether in writing or speech. This means the church may speak on certain *actions, events, or specific legislation or rulings*, even offer letters of petition to these ends. Only the pastor and lay leader, when authorized by the Council, may speak on behalf of the congregation or represent the congregation in the media. Conversations about specific political topics should be after worship services. Members are encouraged to protest for issues near & dear to them, in nonviolent ways, but shall not use the name of the church or display the name on clothing or signs.

February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Jan 25	Jan 26	Jan 27	Jan 28	Jan 29	Jan 30	Jan 31
<u>Service 10:00 AM</u>	transforming Grp Study - 1 of 3				<i>Pastor's day off</i>	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>Service 10:00 AM</u> <i>(Communion)</i>	transforming Group Study - 2 of 3 11A – noon Memorial L.	10:30A MemoryShare - @ El Café Noon: Nurture @ El Café			<i>Pastor's day off</i>	8:00A Men's Breakfast @ El Café
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<u>Service 10:00 AM</u> 2 nd Sundy Refreshments Black History Sunday G.R.A.C.E Fundraiser: Rocky Rococo: 11A – 8P	transforming Group Study - 3 of 3 11A – noon Memorial L.		UWIF Friends 11a: Lunch @ El Café 12p: Pledge Service		<i>Pastor's day off</i>	11:00 am - FOCUS South Wood County Empty Bowls
Sunday School						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
<u>Service 10:00 AM</u> <u>11A - COUNCIL MEETING</u> Transfiguration Sunday			Ash Wednesday 6:00 – 6:50P Fellowship 7:00 – 7:45P service		<i>Pastor's day off</i>	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
<u>Service 10:00 AM</u> First Sunday in Lent			The Gift of Lent 1 of 5 6:30P @ PEUMC Rev. Beth to lead		<i>Pastor's day off</i>	
Mar 1	Mar 2	Mar 3	Mar 4	Mar 5	Mar 6	Mar 7
<u>Service 10:00 AM</u> Second Sunday in Lent		10:30A MemoryShare - El Café	The Gift of Lent 2 of 5 6:30P @ PEUMC Rev. Kate to lead		<i>Pastor's day off</i>	8:00A Men's Breakfast @ El Café
Birthdays: Leo T. 2/2, Mark S. 2/5, Jim H. 2/8, Larry M. 2/16, Chuck L. 2/27		February Mission Project: Support Park Avenue UMC (Minneapolis) with immigration care			Church Office Hours: Connie: Mon. – Fri. : 8:00a – 12:00p Pastor: Mon. – Thurs.: 9:00a – 12:00p	
Anniversaries: None						