



Pouring Forth the Living Water: Bloom by the River!



ANGELS AMONG US

On the left is PEUMC's new "Angel Tree." On it are the first of what will be *many* angel ornaments. Members of the congregation are invited to purchase or donate one of their own angel ornaments to hang on this tree. (*You have 1 more week to bring in an angel before the tree is packed up for the year.*) Each ornament will have a dedication tag in memory or honor of a loved one. The tree stands in the lobby window.



On the right are angels of another kind! PEUMC put out a request on Facebook this year for a new Christmas tree. Within 4 minutes, Betsy M. of Port Edwards, responded. Her family donated an unused tree, which is now our new Congregational Tree! We needed a much bigger tree this year to fit our many ornaments for our growing congregation! Members of the congregation were invited to hang their own named ornament during the Advent Season. For those who have not yet seen it, there is an ornament hanging for every friend and member of PEUMC!



The Christ Child greets all who make the highway turn in Port Edwards. It may look like the Holy Family is a bit chilly out there, but wherever the Savior lives, warmth of a greater kind saturates all the hearts around!



Worshippers sing *Silent Night* by candlelight during the 7:00p traditional service on Christmas Eve (*photo lightened to show detail*).

GOD'S WORK IN 2025 – A CELEBRATION!

The following list was shared at this year's Charge Conference as our **MINISTRY CELEBRATIONS**:
This year, we . . .

- (1) . . . successfully implemented the **Simplified, Accountable Leadership** structure.
- (2) . . . composed & approved an extensive document called the "**Principles, Policies, and Procedures**" that directs the day-to-day business of the church, helping to streamline the Council's work; this policy book includes provisions for legal, financial, building & grounds, and personnel, matters, among many others.
- (3) . . . fleshed out our **4-year Initiatives** and corresponding **2-Year Goals**.
- (4) . . . **5 of our 8 Ministry Objectives are in-progress** with good results:
 - a. *Establishing a network of 3 home groups in our congregation.*
 - b. *Increased laity involvement in the worship service.*
 - c. *Reached out to all our inactive members by card.*
 - d. *Learned what a discipleship system would look like at PEUMC.*
 - e. *Developed a discipleship system in our church.*
- (5) . . . established a system of "**Connection Lists**" that help supplement the work of the Council by having members indicating specific tasks or topics in which they are interested in helping.
- (6) . . . completed our third **annual Stewardship Campaign**, third year with positive results.
- (7) . . . added quality **vendors to our annual bazaar** with good results.
- (8) . . . became a **member congregation of the Wisconsin Council of Churches**.
- (9) . . . **incorporated our church with the State of Wisconsin and Wood County**.
- (10) . . . streamlined our **internal financial processes** for 2026.
- (11) . . . engaged in **continuous discipleship conversations** in our Council meetings – gaining a better understanding of our congregational strengths and the challenges of ministry today. Two major takeaways from our conversation this year:
 - a. *Provide more opportunities for "intimate" interactions so that members of the congregation can get to know one another in a deeper way;*
 - b. *How to maximize the quality of our time together without feeling like we're keeping busy people even busier: "Everyday Disciples."*
- (12) . . . established 2 of our 3 **Home Groups**, with the 3 on its way.
- (13) . . . rolled out a series of "**pathways**" to help seekers move into deeper discipleship.
- (14) . . . included our first "**friends of the church**," a newly-defined non-member status for those who consider us "their church" and who wish to be "in the care of PEUMC."
- (15) . . . completed our newest **pictorial directory** and mailed it out to every household so that every member – active or not – can feel connected to the congregation.
- (16) . . . the **Discipleship Team** has established a list of members they wish to re-activate, or, at the least, check up on. This year, the Team has been sending out "non-confrontational" greeting messages to our inactive members to help them feel connected in small unobtrusive ways.
- (17) . . . welcomed **4 new members** into the congregation & restored a former member's membership.
- (18) . . . **welcomed many guests**, a handful of whom have invested themselves quickly with our church and our Reconcile mission.
- (19) . . . we have at least one individual interested in **adult confirmation**.
- (20) . . . we have **completely filled our leadership roster for 2026**, duplicates only a few names; we have honored the term limits established in 2025; setting the standard for healthy leadership model.
- (21) . . . included **new members into our leadership** for 2025 and even more in 2026.
- (22) . . . participated in a very thought-provoking small group study about **immigrant justice**; paving the way for more **studies on current topics** with a Christian perspective.
- (23) . . . planning to host an **appreciation dinner** for the local fire and police departments in 2026.
- (24) . . . established a hearty plan to do more **witness ministries** in 2026:
 - a. *Have a stand at both the Rapids & Rom Farmers' Markets.*
 - b. *Establish welcome bags for new neighbors.*
 - c. *Establish LGBTQ-friendly welcome bags.*
 - d. *Host the Monday food trucks in our parking lot and providing an eating space.*
 - e. *Promoting our "Head-and-Heart" events – sponsoring community educational events at a neutral space, about 4x a year; ideas to address:*
 - i. *School vouchers* / ii. *Parents and digital safety* / iii. *Leaving a legacy (wills and estates)*

Facts About Our Budget, Giving, & Grants

1. A multi-year study has shown that PEUMC's offering has increased by **\$923.82 monthly (or about \$11,000 annually) between 2022 and 2025!**
This is an increase of 12.26%! AMAZING!
2. Our expenses in 2025 were the same as in 2024, almost to the dollar; no changes expected in 2026.
3. Our 2026 budget is **\$13,000 less** than in 2025; this is mainly due to budgeting only ¼ of our apportionment obligations rather than its full as well as adjusting numbers to fit reality.
4. We are expecting to execute a ~\$7,200 fundraising project for the parsonage soon, and we plan to engage all other capital projects through grants.
5. The building remains in excellent condition.

Final 2025 Missional Giving Report

MONTH	NAME	AMOUNT COLLECTED	DATE VOUCHERED
Jan	Human Relations Day – Special Offering	\$143.00	1/29/25
Jan/Feb	Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN)	\$510.00	3/4/25
March	Wisconsin Council of Churches	\$150.00	4/9/25
March	Families Helping Families (PESD Benevolence Fund)	\$210.00	4/9/25
March/April	Easter Lilies (21 lilies ordered)	\$277.00	N/A
April	FOCUS Food Pantry – Wis. Rapids	\$99.00	4/15/25
April	Wood County Jail Ministry	\$100.00	5/6/25
April	College Care Packages	\$230.00	N/A
Private Donat.	Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN)	\$500.00	5/6/25
May	Annual Conference In-Gathering	\$120.00	6/3/25
June	G.R.A.C.E. local student debt	\$407.49	8/6/25
Sp. Offering	Habitat for Humanity	\$220.00	10/6/25
July/Aug	Habitat for Humanity	\$480.00	10/6/25
Sp. Offering	Stuff-the-Bus School Supplies	\$20.00	10/6/25
Sept/Oct	Recycling Bins & Trash Cans	\$285.00	Not yet
Nov	Christmas Cheer (PESD)	\$365.00	N/A
Nov	Native American Ministries – Special Offering	\$255.00	12/30/25
Nov	Neighborhood Table Dessert	\$40.00	Not yet
Private Donat.	United Methodist Committee on Relief	\$100.00	12/30/25
Dec	Holiday Baskets (for 5 members)	\$220.00	12/22/25
Christmas Eve	½ of Christmas Eve offering goes to The Family Center. Offering total: \$785	\$393 (includes \$100 gift card)	12/30/25
2025 Total Second-Mile Giving for Missions:		\$5,124.49	

TOP CHARITIES FOR 2025:

- #1 – **Habitat for Humanity** – South Wood County - \$700
- #2 – **Reconciling Ministries Net.** (LGBTQ-affirming arm of The UMC) - \$510 + \$500 private don.
- #3 – **The Family Center** of Wisconsin Rapids (Christmas Eve) - \$393
- #4 – Port Edwards Schools' **Christmas Cheer** Program - \$365

Top UMC Special Offering:

- #1 – **Native American Ministries** - \$255

Thank you for your generosity in supporting these live-giving, godly ministries beyond the walls of our church!



TWO QUILTS REQUESTED!



We are looking for 2 quilts that we can borrow to adorn the high altar during the "Season After Epiphany":

Quilt #1 – Sundays January 18th & 25th (bring to church by January 11th)

Quilt #2 – Sundays February 1st and 8th (bring to church by January 25th)

WINTER WEATHER

Let us review our winter-weather protocol:

- our parking lot and sidewalks will be plowed and salted for every Sunday morning services.
- the drop-off area nearest the main entry will be de-iced, salted, and sanded as best we can.
- greeters are asked to look out for those arriving and who may be having difficult approaching the entry.

SERVICE CANCELLATION:

An official call to cancel services will be made by 8:30 AM on Sunday morning. We will use these means to notify you: MailChimp (email), PhoneVite (phone), and on the main page of our church website. PLEASE make sure you sign-up for one of these services.

PLEASE EXERCISE GOOD JUDGMENT WHEN COMING TO WORSHIP DURING

Remembering Carol Ann (Bade) Harvestine

(May 31st, 1941 – December 26th, 2025)



Carol Ann (Bade) Harvestine, cherished wife, devoted mother, beloved grandmother, and great-grandmother, passed away peacefully surrounded by loved ones. Carol's life reflected deep devotion to family, steadfast love, and enduring faith, leaving a legacy of warmth and care.

Carol's journey began as a high school sweetheart, marrying her lifelong love, Arthur Harvestine. Together, they shared 66 years of marriage, building a family rooted in commitment, tradition, and shared memories.

Carol found happiness in reading, card games, and puzzles, and was lovingly known as a "card shark" among family and friends. She expressed her love through cooking, especially her well-known lasagna, a favorite of her husband Art.

For many years, Carol and Art welcomed family and friends into their Wisconsin Rapids home for treasured Memorial Day and Labor Day gatherings filled with good food, laughter, and lasting connection. They also shared a love of travel, spending winters as snowbirds in Gulf Shores, enjoying cruises, and participating in missionary work in Hawaii, Montana, and other communities.

Carol was deeply connected to her [United] Methodist church family in Wisconsin Rapids [and Port Edwards] and maintained close friendships through the Waukesha County Sheriff Department community, relationships that brought her strength, faith and companionship throughout her life.

An intimate family gathering will be held in Arizona this January to celebrate Carol's life, honoring her memory with those she loved most.

Carol will be remembered for her love of family, her devotion as a wife and mother, and the many ways she nurtured those around her. Her memory lives on in the hearts of all who were blessed to know her.

[Carol Ann & Art joined PEUMC on Sunday, May 31st, 1998 (her birthday) and have been active members for these 28 years. Carol Ann and Art moved to Sun City West, Arizona at the end of September.]

CONTACT ART: 12812 W. Junipero Drive, Sun City West, AZ 85375 – 715-213-0107 (cell)

Events in January

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIANITY UNITY

Sunday, January 18th through Sunday, January 25th

This observance began in 1908, designed to promote prayer for church unity. Today, it includes a wide range of Christian traditions, including Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestant communities. The dates are significant as it begins on the Feast Day of Saint Peter's Confession (1/18) and ends on the Feast Day of Saint Paul's Conversion (1/25). This week "links" our two New Testament saints: Peter and Paul. They infamously did not get along well; one was a Jewish-Christ-follower and the other a Greek-Christ-follower (among many other personality differences): *"I confronted Peter to his face, for what he did was very wrong,"* wrote Paul in Galatians 2:11. Still, both these men are part of the fabric of our heritage and **did** work together, in their own way, to lead the early Church. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity continues that "set-our-differences-aside-for-Christ's-sake" attitude.

The pastors of G.R.A.C.E. have chosen to observe this week with a pulpit swap. Unfortunately, due to scheduling complications the swap between PEUMC and Grace Lutheran will have to be done at a later time.

Below is a set a of prayers that can be recited & meditated upon throughout the week:

- Day 1 – 1/18 – UNITY IN CHRIST ALONE: "Holy One, draw us again to Christ, our Center. Strip away every lesser allegiance, that we may find our unity not in sameness, but in the One who calls us beloved: AMEN!"
- Day 2 – 1/19 – UNITY THROUGH REPENTENCE: "God of mercy, teach us to confess the ways we have wounded the Body of Christ. Heal our pride, soften our divisions, and lead us into the humility that makes reconciliation possible: AMEN!"
- Day 3 – 1/20 – UNITY IN DIVERSITY: "Creator of many peoples and many gifts, open our eyes to the beauty of traditions not our own. Let differences become delight, and diversity become a doorway to deeper communion: AMEN!"
- Day 4 – 1/21 – UNITY IN SHARED MISSION: "God of justice and compassion, unite Your Church in service to the world You love. Make our witness stronger than our disagreements, and our love louder than our doctrines: AMEN!"
- Day 5 – 1/22 – UNITY THROUGH LISTENING: "Spirit of Truth, teach us to listen with grace. Silence our defensiveness, widen our curiosity, and help us hear Your voice in the stories of others: AMEN!"
- Day 6 – 1/23 – UNITY IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD: "Christ who feeds us, gather Your people at every Table with reverence and longing. Let our shared hunger for You draw us closer to one another: AMEN!"
- Day 7 – 1/24 – UNITY AS WITNESS: "God of light, make our unity a sign of hope in a fractured and weary world. Let our love reveal Your kin'dom, and our cooperation proclaim Your peace: AMEN!"
- Day 8 – 1/25 – UNITY FOR THE HEALING OF THE CHURCH: "Holy Trinity, bind us together in Your life. Heal what is broken, restore what is lost, and send us out as one people – many members, one Body, one hope: AMEN!"

**"In Christ now meets both East and West.
In Christ now meets both South and North.
One joyous, true community
Throughout the whole wide earth."
-In Christ There is no East or West, UMH 548**

Sundays in January

- Sunday, January 4th** – Communion Sunday + Baptism of the Lord Sunday.
Signing the Annual Church Covenant / Epiphany House Blessing /
Epiphany Star Words
- Sunday, January 11th** – Wesley's Covenant Service
Packing of the Greens / Packers -n- Potatoes Baked Potato Bar
- Sunday, January 18th** – Just a regular Sunday
- Sunday, January 25th** – Just a regular Sunday

Wesley's Covenant Service

Sunday, January 11th

Wesley's Covenant Service was introduced by The Rev. John Wesley himself, the core founder of the Methodist Movement in England, in 1755. It remains today a significant practice in the various Methodist traditions aimed at renewing one's commitment to God and serving as a time for self-examination, reflection, and rededication of one's life. This service, based on the original liturgy constructed by Wesley, reflects his holistic spirituality and the importance of a personal relationship with God.

Dates in January - February

GATHERINGS

MemoryShare:

Tuesday, January 6th @ 10:30a – El Café
Tuesday, February 3rd @ 10:30a – El Café

Men's Breakfast:

Saturday, January 3rd @ 8:00a – El Café
Saturday, February 7th @ 8:00a – El Café

U.W.I.F. Friends: Sara's Soup Luncheon – Wed., January 14th – 12:15p
Pledge Service & Lunch – Wed., February 11th – 11a: El Café / noon: meeting

Sunshine Reading: _____



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.

NEW NAME! As the U.W.I.F and the Circle of Friends groups join leagues for 2026, their new name has become: U.W.I.F. Friends

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

Jan. 4 th	Communion Sunday Baptism of the Lord Sunday	JOURNEY THRU THE BIBLE: JOHN!	John 1:19-34 "The Lamb of God"
Jan. 11 th	Wesley's Covenant Service Packing the Greens / Potato Bar		John 1:35-51 Jesus & His Disciples
Jan. 18 th		LIVING IT LARGE WITH JESUS	John 2:1-11, 13-25 Jesus Saves a Wedding & Crashes the Temple
Jan. 25 th			John 3:1-21 Jesus & Nicodemus

Worship Leaders

Communion: Jean Candles: Jean	Greeter(s)	Usher	Liturgist	Guest Relations	Refreshments
Sun., January 4 th		Pat Mc.	Kathy Mc.	Kathy Mc.	
Sun., January 11 th	Candy P-T.	Sue T.	Leo T.	Kathy Mc.	~Packers -n- Potatoes~
Sun., January 18 th			Candy P-T	Diane S.	
Sun., January 25 th				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 /



A Note to the Congregation from Mary H.

"Dear Congregation Friends,

When Becky said, "Pastor Caleb is here," I was delighted to see him and the lovely gift basket he carried. I took out every item, enjoying each one as I unpacked. You know so many ways to be nice. Thank you for all them. Thank you, too, for the pretty poinsettia delivered by Diane & Sara.

Happy New Year.

Mary H.

January-February 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. From overflowing wine and overturning money tables, to the invitation to be “born again,” to promises of living water, to moments of physical healing, and the miraculous multiplication of bread to feed all, these close encounters of an abundant kind with Jesus change lives and brings life to all.

Week 1 – January 18th – “THE WEDDING AT CANA” (Water into Wine)

Jesus’ public ministry begins with a miracle at a wedding in Cana. When the wine runs out, Jesus transforms water into wine, providing more than enough for the needs of the feast.

“CLEANSING THE TEMPLE” (Jesus Flips tables)

Jesus travels to Jerusalem, where He chases moneychangers and merchants out of the temple worship area and has His first confrontation with religious authorities.

Week 2 – January 24th – “NICODEMUS VISITS JESUS” (Being Born Again)

A Pharisee comes to Jesus under cover of darkness, asking questions and seeking understanding. As Jesus explains His ministry, the Pharisee becomes more confused.

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.



The Christmas Cheer Program would like to thank you for your support this year. Our district families are so grateful for the beautiful gifts you so generously provide.

Thank you for making their season bright!

*The Christmas
Cheer Team
Port Edwards School District*

SUPPORTING OUR TEACHERS & STAFF AT PORT EDWARDS SCHOOLS

A grassroots group of community volunteers has formed a Staff Appreciation Committee to offer support and to reaffirm the community's esteem for the efforts that the school staff extends every day. As a result, "**SupPORT Our Staff**" was born!

Volunteers make monthly deliveries to over eighty staff members at both school buildings, including teachers, aides, custodians, kitchen workers, and administrative/clerical staff. Volunteers load two carts with individually wrapped food/treats, beverages, and other items that are donated by members of the community to be distributed. As they say, it takes a village. And, the reception has been overwhelmingly positive!

All funds collected at PEUMC beyond what was needed **to provide Christmas gifts to Port Edwards students** were utilized to purchase treats for the staff carts.



What a wonderful way to let staff know that we, at PEUMC are thinking of them, praying for them, and supporting them in educating the children of Port Edwards!

Members of our church, **Candy Prahl-Tell and Kathy McGrath**, belong to this Staff Appreciation Committee. The committee is recruiting volunteers to deliver the treats on the carts, which takes about one hour of your time. Volunteers work with a partner, which adds to the fun! Kathy and Becky Taylor, pictured, delivered treats in November at the elementary school. Please let Kathy or Candy know if you are interested in helping with this rewarding program.

Staff Appreciation Committee Members

Candy Prahl-Tell Joyce Durrant Kate McCarthy Kerry Ames Kathy McGrath



Dear Port Edwards United Methodist Church,

The Wisconsin Rapids Area Habitat for Humanity thanks you for your support of **\$700**. With the help of your contribution, we have been able to provide housing to twenty area families who were in need. We are putting the finishing touches on our 21st home.

Please accept our sincere THANK YOU . . . for helping us provide affordable housing for families in our community.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary J. Wright".

Mary J. Wright, *financial secretary*



November 19, 2025

Dear Friends,

Our initiatives reach over 2,500 individuals annually, and we are constantly exploring new ways to offer greater assistance to those who need it most.

Rooted & Rising – Washington Park, remains dedicated to helping families thrive by providing affordable housing and wraparound services, choice-based food access, safe and reliable childcare, and opportunities for community engagement. We are deeply committed to honoring the worth, dignity, and potential of every individual, fostering a nurturing environment where families can truly flourish, having their needs met with fewer barriers.

We are grateful for your in-kind donation of 14 lbs. of winter clothing and 5 lbs. of hygiene items on November 18, 2025. Your contribution serves as a meaningful investment in the families residing in the Washington Park community, helping them navigate unexpected challenges by providing essential resources such as clothing, household items, and food when needed.

With gratitude,

William Schmitt
Executive Director

*Thank you so much,
it was wonderful to meet
your group earlier this
month. Happy Thanksgiving
to all!*

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



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
Leo Thomasgard
Becky Taylor

**Sunday School
Dates:**

(January – no class)

February 8th – Becky T.

March 8th – Sara T.

April 12th – Lori H

May 10th – Ellen M.

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!**

January Mission Project

Collecting funds for **Prayers items (crosses & hearts) to fill baskets in the waiting rooms at Riverview Hospital**

You have certainly been to hospitals that have provided baskets of knitted prayer squares or other care items meant to be taken by friends and family who are waiting in a hospital. It is our hope that we can provide some baskets in the various waiting rooms at Riverview Hospital in Rapids with an assortment of things, but mainly crosses and hearts, which with a tag that offers words of comfort as well as the name of our congregation.

Sandy Retires; PEUMC Obtains new Accountant

Sandy Pawelski has been our church's accountant for many years. She represented Accurate Tax & Accounting, located in the Lake Wazeecha neighborhood. She has retired as of January 1st.

This prompted PEUMC to search for a new accountant. On December 29th, PEUMC entered into a contract with Ramona Mathews, who owns her own accounting business on Baker Drive in Rapids, and received positive reviews from leaders of our congregation who already work with her.

We thank Sandy for her years of dedication to paying our bills, handling our payroll and taxes, and submitting her timely reports. Her role has given us security and peace of mind. She has not only helped us out as a church but also our members, too, who sought her services. We wish her all the best in her retirement. We look forward to our partnership with Ramona in this new year.

MY GIFT TO BABY JESUS

Gifts found in the manger of Jesus Christ:

My gift is to spread joy and kindness in the world.
Merry Christmas!

We are all god's child.
(I'm a kid, too)

My gift is to be a better and more forgiving person.
Love you!

My gift is love for all the world.

I will strive to be and live as my Heavenly and earthly father have showed me how to live . . .

I give you my love and devotion, my heart and my life to worship and serve you.

I give you my peace and love.

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

In 2014, *Time* magazine suggested that transgender issues are becoming the next civil rights frontier. Years later, many people – even many LGBTQIA+ allies – still lack understanding of gender identity and the transgender experience. Into this void, trans biblical scholar Austen Hartke brings a biblically-based, educational, and affirming resource to shed light and wisdom on gender expansiveness and Christian theology. Our small group study will be based on Austen's updated and expanded 2023 edition of the book **transforming**. **transforming** skillfully weaves ancient and modern stories that will change the way readers think about gender, the Bible, and the faith to which Jesus calls us. Hartke helps readers visualize a more inclusive Christianity, equipping them with the language, understanding, confidence, and tools to change both the church and the world.

There is no need to buy the book for the study, but here is the info. anyway:

"Transforming, Updated and Expanded Edition with Study Guide"
by Austen Hartke (March 21, 2023) (\$16.74)

January Households



Throughout January,
our congregation is asked
to pray for the following people:
(randomly chosen on 12/28)

Jennifer & Dave M. / Carlyn C. / Sharon S. /
Mable J. / Evelyn L. / Rose W. /
Leo & Sue T. / Pat M. /
Pastors Caleb & Doug

The Amazing Work of U.M.C.O.R.

Christie R. House / December 5, 2025



Ecumenical demonstration outside the Whitehouse on World Refugee Day 2025. (Photo: CWS)

In 1940, the **Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief** (MCOR) was founded to mobilize Methodists to care for the growing number of refugees and displaced populations in Asia during World War II (MCOR would become the **United Methodist Committee on Relief**, or UMCOR, in 1968). After the war, the agency joined with other faith communities and global partners to provide humanitarian aid for Europe's displaced and suffering war survivors.

The need to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and other displaced migrants has not abated since UMCOR's founding. Today, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reports **117.3 million people are forcibly displaced** from their homes globally, more people than at any time since World War II.

"We are living in a time of unprecedented displacement, and the call to respond cannot wait," said Roland Fernandes, general secretary of UMCOR, Global Ministries and Higher Education and Ministry. *"Our ability to make a meaningful impact depends on strong partnerships – with local congregations, global agencies and ecumenical allies – working together to ensure that migrants are met with dignity, safety and hope."*

Increased support for migration ministries in 2025

Most years, UMCOR, the humanitarian arm of The United Methodist Church, has a budget for global migration grants of about **\$1 million** that generally support agencies, church ministries and other nonprofits around the world that respond to different aspects of migrant care: receiving, caring for, resettling, training, sheltering, feeding, finding jobs for and reuniting migrants with family members.

But 2025 has not been like most years. In total, almost **\$6.3 million**, in 226 grants, will be dispersed this year. More than **\$3.2 million** has been dedicated to providing bridge funding for partners that suddenly lost funding provided by the U.S. government, internationally from the defunding of USAID but also from the loss of U.S. Refugee Admission Program funding for refugee resettlement and from most programs previously funded by the Bureau of Population, Migration and Refugees under the U.S. State Department.

"We actively seek to engage with the United Nations and ecumenical bodies as, together, we strive to promote policies that care for the safety, dignity and voice of migrants," notes the Rev. Jack Amick, director of UMCOR's Global Migration unit. *"We are also trying to be very intentional about being supportive and present when other entities of the UMC come together to work on migration issues."*

From Ukraine and Gaza to the U.S., relief extended to migrants globally

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began in 2022, Global Ministries and UMCOR have continued to support both internally displaced people and refugees. The United Methodist Church in **Ukraine** has received support to care for displaced groups inside Ukraine. Grants have also been provided to various United Methodist churches and conference agencies surrounding Ukraine that have created and sustained resources to care for refugees, granting close to \$1 million this year. In Moldova, a grant has supported the refugee work of Church World Service at a center that helps many Ukrainians who fled Russian occupation of territories in eastern and southern Ukraine.

Since the war in **Gaza** began in October 2023, Global Ministries and UMCOR have supported the relief efforts of several different partners that have projects up and running inside Gaza. In the past two years, grants to International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) have provided food, livelihood projects and counseling to displaced people – concentrating on women, children and other vulnerable residents in the displacement camps of central Gaza.

In the **U.S.**, UMCOR helps local United Methodist congregations fulfill their calling to welcome migrants into their churches and provide for the needs of immigrant communities. This year, UMCOR planned to offer 100 Mustard Seed Migration Grants (MSMG) for up to \$2,000 each to congregations for new or extended ministries.

As 2025 unfolded and people across the United States saw and heard of migrants being detained and transported to unknown detention facilities for deportation, congregations decided to do more for immigrants who needed assistance but did not know where to turn. Additional funding has meant that 153 Mustard Seed grants have been distributed, and the program will continue in 2026.

In addition to food ministries, other UMC congregations offered apartment furnishings and cookware for resettling refugee families and events that provided opportunities for migrants to tell their stories. Some churches have developed backpack ministries for new students, refurbished instruments for migrant youth seeking to join a high school band and provided diapers and other newborn supplies for new moms. ESL classes and Know Your Rights seminars have been the focus for other Mustard Seed grant projects.

Mustard Seed Migration Grants supply congregations with the tools they need to engage directly in the spiritual practice of welcoming migrants of all kinds into the church community and their wider community. Sometimes the practice leads to partnership with other faith traditions that also value the spiritual practice of welcome and hospitality, connecting the global reality to the local community in real and tangible ways.

You can partner with Global Ministries and UMCOR by increasing our ability to support, welcome and care for migrants.

Patriotism vs. Nationalism **An Episcopal Priest Beautifully Explains**

09.22.25 / Annie Reneau / upworthy.com

*What is the difference between **patriotism** and **nationalism**?*

Patriotism can feel like a loaded term sometimes, as the meaning can range in people's minds from a basic love of country to a fierce loyalty one is willing to die for. But what constitutes "country" can also impact how we perceive patriotism, as there's a difference between the **land**, the **people**, the **ideals**, and the **current government**.

And then there's **nationalism**, which may sound like the same thing but isn't. So, *what's the difference?* Episcopal priest Joseph Yoo shared his thoughts on what separates the two, and people are appreciating having the key differences laid out so clearly.

"Patriotism is love," Yoo begins. *"It's gratitude. It's saying, 'I care about my country enough to tell the truth about it, to celebrate what's good and work to fix what's broken.'"*

"Nationalism is idolatry," he continues, *"It says my nation is the nation above critique, above others, God's favorite. And once you slap God's seal of approval on your own flag, congratulations, you've just made your country a 'golden calf.'"*

He explained the patriotism results in activism like that of John Lewis crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge to demand that the country live up to its professed ideals. Nationalism results in tragedies like the January 6th invasion of the Capitol, where Confederate flags and crosses were seen in the same mob.

"Patriotism says, 'I love my family enough to admit when we've messed up, and I will help us grow,'" Yoo says. *"Nationalism says, 'My family is perfect, everyone else is trash, and if you disagree you are out.'"*

"One is honest love. The other is toxic possession," he says. *"One builds. One bullies."*

Yoo concluded with a biblical point: *"Jesus never called us to worship a flag, only to love our neighbor. Patriotism is loving our neighbor whomever they are."*

Britannica also has a whole page about the two words, with this basic synopsis of the differences:

"Patriotism is a feeling of attachment and commitment to a country, nation, or political community, and its conception has roots tracing back to Greek and Roman antiquity. It is associated with the love of law and common liberty, the search for the common good, and the duty to behave justly toward one's country. **Nationalism**, on the other hand, is a more modern ideology that emerged in the 18th century, focusing on the individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state, often surpassing other individual or group interests."

And then there are some famous takes on patriotism:

"I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually." — James Baldwin

"Patriotism is supporting your country all the time and your government only when it deserves it." — Mark Twain

"Patriotism means to stand by the country. It does not mean to stand by the president or any other public official, save exactly to the degree in which he himself stands by the country. It is patriotic to support him insofar as he efficiently serves the country. It is unpatriotic not to oppose him to the exact extent that by inefficiency or otherwise he fails in his duty to stand by the country. In either event, it is unpatriotic not to tell the truth, whether about the president or anyone else." — Theodore Roosevelt

There's nothing wrong with loving your country, but anything taken to excess and exclusion isn't healthy. Nationalism is excessive and exclusive in its very nature, and while patriotism can be weaponized, when kept in check it's what keeps people striving to make their homelands the best that they can be for everyone who lives there.

‘Remarkable Convergence’ Taking Place Between Methodists & Catholics

caticannews.va / by Devin Watkins / December 12, 2025

“We Believe in One God: Sixty Years of Methodists and Catholics Walking Together.”

That’s the title of a new book released on Friday, December 12, produced by the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church (MERCIC).

Printed by the Vatican Publishing House, the document examines the theological progress made over the past six decades between the Catholic and Methodist Churches.

In a press release, MERCIC recalls that there is no history of formal separation between the Catholic and Methodist Churches, since Methodism finds its origins as a revival movement within the Church of England in the mid-18th century.

The two MERCIC chairmen said the Commission has examined all elements of the Nicene Creed (which celebrates its 1700th anniversary in 2026) over the past 60 years, revealing a *“clear convergence in understanding the faith we profess together in the Nicene Creed.”*

“Our Commission has confirmed that the consensus between Methodists and Catholics about the foundation of faith and the source of our salvation far outweighs our remaining differences on matters related to the means of saving grace in the life and practice of our respective communions – although here, too, we have made great advances toward mutual understanding and agreement,” they write.

Methodists, notes the book, increasingly recognize *“that the Lord’s Table belongs to the fullness of Christian worship, while Catholics are appreciating the fundamental importance of preaching the Word.”*

As the two historic Churches continue to journey toward full Christian unity, *“We Believe in One God”* hopes to help Catholics and Methodists recognize in their various professions *“the one Christian faith that we proclaim.”*

THINGS QUEER PEOPLE WOULD LIKE THE CHURCH TO KNOW

by Mike Ferguson / November 20, 2025 / Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE – Results from a recent Presbyterian survey with more than 300 responses was disseminated and discussed during the National Queer Presbyterian Gathering this week. 271 of the 305 respondents identified as queer [used as a non-derogatory umbrella term for LGBTQIA+.] 23% were transgender or nonbinary. More than 60% held some form of church leadership role.

Seven main themes were revealed from the survey:

- (1) **Inclusion is more than acceptance; it’s belonging** – There is a difference between being allowed in the room and feeling at home there. True belonging, they say, comes when identities are celebrated as integral to life, leadership, and witness of the church and not tolerated as differences to be managed.

- (2) **Our safety depends on your courage** – Quiet sympathy or private affirmation does not create safety. Not knowing whether a congregation is completely safe or not is a real threat to their lives, respondents said. *“When queer folks are feeling trampled on by government and corporations and feeling particularly vulnerable,”* said one respondent. *“The church can (and should) stand in the gap.”*
- (3) **We long for connection and community** – Queer Presbyterians are hungry for connection – real, ongoing, embodied community that extends beyond individual congregations. Many described feeling scattered and isolated, even within an affirming denomination. It’s not just about social connection but spiritual kinship: places to share faith, grief, and joy with others who understand both queerness and [religious] identity.
- (4) **Policy is not the same as practice** – Policy alone is not enough; the heart of the church must change, too. They long for a theological foundation that affirms LGBTQIA+ people not as exceptions to the faith but as expressions of God’s Image within it.
- (5) **Queer leadership is already here: support and amplify it** – Queer pastors, ruling elders, musicians, educators, and lay leaders are already faithfully guiding congregations, teaching Scripture and building community, and they’re doing this while often carrying the added work of helping others understand what true inclusion looks like.
- (6) **A faithful church speaks aloud** – Public witness is both testimony and protection. It’s how the church makes its love visible in a world where silence often signals abandonment. What matters the most is vocal, visible solidarity in public spaces such as Pride events, statements, advocacy, and the presence of national leaders who speak clearly when harm is being done.
- (7) **Joy means resilience; faith means thriving: nurture them** – Queer people of faith are already creating life-giving communities, joyful worship, and deep spiritual resilience. Joy itself is resistance and faith itself is endurance. Many respondents described joy as sacred defiance, the celebration of life in a world that has often denied it.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS – 1/4 – 2/2

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.*

<u>1/4</u>	<u>John 1:35-51</u>	<u>Come & See</u>	<u>1/19</u>	<u>Jeremiah 7:1-11</u>	<u>Temple Prophecy</u>
<u>1/5</u>	<u>Matthew 4:18-20</u>	<u>Simon & Andrew</u>	<u>1/20</u>	<u>Zechariah 6:9-15</u>	<u>Future Temple Foretold</u>
<u>1/6</u>	<u>Matthew 4:21-22</u>	<u>James & John</u>	<u>1/21</u>	<u>Zechariah 14:20-21</u>	<u>The Future Temple</u>
<u>1/7</u>	<u>Matthew 9:9-13</u>	<u>Matthew’s Call</u>	<u>1/22</u>	<u>Revelation 21:22-26</u>	<u>God and the Lamb</u>
<u>1/8</u>	<u>Matthew 9:35-38</u>	<u>Harvest Is Great</u>	<u>1/23</u>	<u>Isaiah 56:1-7</u>	<u>House of Prayer</u>
<u>1/9</u>	<u>Matthew 10:1-4</u>	<u>The 12 Disciples</u>	<u>1/24</u>	<u>Psalms 69:9</u>	<u>Zeal for the Lord</u>
<u>1/10</u>	<u>Matthew 10:5-12</u>	<u>The Mission of the 12</u>	<u>1/25</u>	<u>John 3:1-21</u>	<u>Nicodemus & Jesus</u>
<u>1/11</u>	<u>John 2:1-11</u>	<u>The Wedding at Cana</u>	<u>1/26</u>	<u>John 3:22-30</u>	<u>John Preaches</u>
<u>1/12</u>	<u>Luke 14:7-11</u>	<u>Wedding Parable</u>	<u>1/27</u>	<u>John 3:31-36</u>	<u>John’s Continued Teachings</u>
<u>1/13</u>	<u>Luke 14:15-24</u>	<u>Great Dinner Parable</u>	<u>1/28</u>	<u>Luke 3:19-20</u>	<u>John Put in Prison</u>
<u>1/14</u>	<u>Psalms 104:10-16</u>	<u>Food & Drink for All</u>	<u>1/29</u>	<u>Matthew 11:2-6</u>	<u>John Messages Jesus</u>
<u>1/15</u>	<u>Revelation 19:1-10</u>	<u>Eternal Wedding Feast</u>	<u>1/30</u>	<u>Matthew 11:7-15</u>	<u>John Is Elijah?</u>
<u>1/16</u>	<u>Isaiah 25:6-9</u>	<u>The Feast of the Lord</u>	<u>1/31</u>	<u>Matthew 11:16-19</u>	<u>Jesus or John?</u>
<u>1/17</u>	<u>Psalms 23:1-6</u>	<u>Overflowing Wine</u>	<u>2/1</u>	<u>John 4:1-26</u>	<u>The Woman at the Well</u>
<u>1/18</u>	<u>John 2:13-25</u>	<u>Cleansing the Temple</u>	<u>2/2</u>	<u>John 4:27-42</u>	<u>Many Come to Believe</u>

JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
Worship @ 10:00am Newborn Saints Sunday	Electronic Funds given this week are attributed to Jan. 4 th .		New Years Eve Office closed	New Years Day Office closed	Pastor's day off	Men's Breakfast - 8a @ El Café
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<u>Worship @</u> <u>10:00am</u> Baptism of the Lord Communion @ Vikings	Twelfth Night	Epiphany Day MemoryShare Group El Café 10:30a Nurture 12:00p El Café			Pastor's day off	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<u>Worship @ 10:00am</u> Sunday No Sunday School Wesley's Covenant Service			12:15pm - Sara's Soup Luncheon		Pastor's day off	
PASTOR ON VACATION						
Packing of greens Packers & Potatoes (Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Vows)						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<u>Worship @</u> <u>10:00am</u>	The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day				Pastor's day off	
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - January 18 th - 25 th						
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<u>Worship @</u> <u>10:00am</u>	"transforming" Small Group Study - 1 of 3 11 - noon Memorial L.				Pastor's day off	
Birthdays: Sharon S. 1/1, Marge B. 1/14, Skip M. 1/15, Danial H. 1/22, Jeanne B. 1/28 Anniversaries: Nina & Ken P. 1/29				Church Office Hours: Connie: Mon - Fri. : 8a - noon Pastor: Mon. - Thurs. : 9a - noon		