

March  
2026

# The Current

Monthly News from Port Edwards United Methodist Church

*Pouring Forth the Living Water:  
Bloom by the River!*

## You Are Stardust



Worshippers on February 18<sup>th</sup> experienced a meaningful Ash Wednesday service @ PEUMC. Nekoosa United Church of Christ members were in attendance. The theme was “Jesus the Good Shepherd” from John 10, and “The Lord is My Shepherd” from Psalm 23. “Sin Cards” were burned and palm-ashes were received.

The practice of observing the opening day of Lent with ashes got started in the early medieval Church around the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, the Season of Lent was observed primarily for catechumens (candidates for baptism) and was eventually opened to the whole worshipping congregation. Lent is 40 days long (+6 Sundays) in imitation of Jesus’ 40-day fast in the desert. The imposition of ashes (from the burning of the previous year’s Palm Sunday palm branches) on the heads of Christians symbolizes mortality and penance.

Recently, churches have been mixing glitter with the ashes. The practice started in 1997 when The Rev. Elizabeth Edman of The Episcopal Church saw an opportunity to convey additional meaning with the ashes. First, it symbolizes those communities of faith that are fully inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals and, second, it reminds us of the scientific fact that humans, including every living thing on this planet, are made up of the same fundamental particles that come from “stardust,” or the elements that are created when dying stars explode throughout our universe.

In this way, the ashes continue to be signs of repentance, but also of inclusion, and of the conviction that we, who are formed by these elemental particles, are born, live, die, and return to the One who created the universe.

*“In God, we live, and move, and have our being.” -Acts 17:28.*

# Parsonage Stonework Project Begins

We are inviting the congregation into a matching-fund fundraiser to cover the cost of this project. The church will match each dollar donated up to \$5,000, so your every \$1.00 will be worth double! The fundraiser starts now, and the construction will be starting very soon. An online portal via VANCO has been created to give to this project electronically. Or you can designate donations by writing “STONEWORK PROJECT” on your envelope or check memo.



Parsonage Stonework Project

Donate now

You can give online by either going to [peumc.org/donate](https://peumc.org/donate) and finding the ‘tile’ as seen on the left,



or by scanning the QR code and going directly there by smartphone.



PEUMC’s parsonage (church-owned home of the pastor) was built in the mid-1960s. Over the past decade or so, the stone façade on the front of the house, around the garage and planter, has been showing signs of subsidence. These stones are pulling away from the house and settling, causing the elements to get behind it and affect the inner wooden wall. Attempts have been made in the past to patch spots where the mortar has cracked. A bid from Port Edwards’ Custom Concrete Carpentry has been approved by the Leadership Council at their February meeting for ~\$10,000. This bid includes removing the stone in the sections of subsidence (mainly the garage), removal of the planter, and the installation of “smart” wood-panel siding to blend in with the rest of the house. So not \*all\* the stone will be removed.

This project is also important for another reason: this must be rectified before we engage in re-landscaping efforts to the front of the parsonage. It is both the pastor’s home and, in another sense, “the people’s house,” too!

Thank you for your generous support for our past projects and thank you for considering the care and upkeep of our parsonage!



# 2026 Missional Giving Report

MONTH	NAME	AMOUNT COLLECTED	DATE VOUCHERED
Jan. Mission	Chemo Care Packages & Homeless Kits for Riverview Hospital	\$260.00	
Feb. Mission	Park Ave. UMC (Minneapolis) Immigration Care	\$625.00	(3/3)
Sp. Offering	Peace with Justice Offering – April 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2026		
Sp. Offering	United Methodist Student Day – June 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2026		
Sp. Offering	World Communion Sunday – Oct. 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2026		
<b>2026 Total Second-Mile Giving for Missions:</b>		<b>\$885.00</b>	



**MARCH 1 - 15, 2026**



**Most Needed Items:**

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

*Donations Remain in the Communities Where They are Collected!*

PLEASE BRING DONATIONS TO CHURCH – LAST DAY: **SUNDAY, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup>**.  
 This annual drive is to help our local food pantry – FOCUS – offer much needed hygiene items for their services to our community.



## Lilies for Easter

Orders for lilies begin **Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>**. Forms will be available in your bulletins. The cost for each plant remains at **\$12.00** each. Please make checks payable to 'PEUMC' and include 'Easter lilies' on the memo line.



## Thank You, from Mable J.

*You've touched my heart  
with your kindness.*

Thank you for the  
poinsettia plant ♥  
Love Mable

## Thank You, from Jef D.

Dear PEUMC:

I am still trying to get used to being on my own. All the items that were in the [holiday] tub were really wonderful! I love the dish towel, the candy (of course), the throw, and all the other goodies. One of the things I liked most was the tub itself. I took it to my quilt room, and I use it to keep an individual project in that tub until I start it. That way I don't lose things. If you could see my quilt room, you'd understand.

Again, thank you very much for the gifts. It was very thoughtful.

Jef.

## Thank You, from Wisconsin Council of Churches

Dear Friends and Members of Port Edwards UMC:

Thank you for your financial support of the Wisconsin Council of Churches in 2025. The year was marked by our commitment to presence with, and for, communities especially vulnerable to violence. We facilitated responses to natural and human-made disasters. Our staff tended to daily requests for information about how to care for vulnerable people in traumatized communities, and how to organize for that purpose. Staff members spoke on topics such as immigration, indigenous justice, food justice, white Christian nationalism, and neighboring each other well. Your support helped strengthen ecumenical ministry in Wisconsin and serve as a witness to people far beyond. Thank you for your donation of **\$150.00** received on **April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025**.

May God's peace be yours,  
*Rev. Dr. Kerri Parker*  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



WISCONSIN COUNCIL  
OF CHURCHES  
COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

Card located in the lobby  
bulletin board.



Letter located in the lobby  
bulletin board.

# Community Read-Along

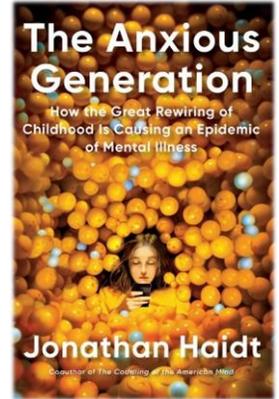
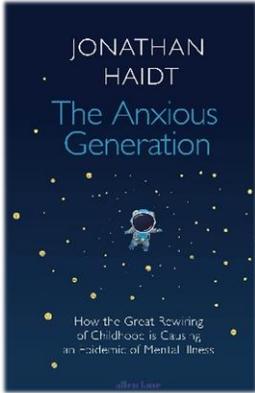
sponsored by McMillan Library  
based on the book

**'THE ANXIOUS GENERATION:  
How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing  
an Epidemic of Mental Illness'**  
by Jonathan Haidt.

**In-Person Discussion Events:  
6:00 – 7:00 PM in the All Purpose Room.  
No childcare provided.**

**3/11: Intro & Part 1 / 5/20: Part 2 / 9/15: Part 3 / 11/10: Part 4  
(Discussion also available online.)**

**Borrow book from library or purchase from \$10.00  
from United Way (715) 421-0390 or WRPS (715) 424-6700**



## We Come to You Tired

a poem by Tanner Olson, author, poet, and speaker / provided by Leo T.



**God, we come to You tired,  
not from loving, but from watching love be trampled.**

**Tired of funerals that never needed planning,  
of headlines preaching despair,  
of neighbors treated like enemies / when power forgets its purpose.**

**We have seen strength confused with domination  
and authority mistaken for violence.**

**Grief, fear, and frustration crowd our streets, shadowing love, goodness, and joy.**

**We try to keep up, but the world keeps groaning.**

**Meet us here. In the exhaustion. In the questions. In the silence between tragedies.**

**Plant something beautiful in our sorrow. Forge resolve from our anger.**

**Teach our broken hearts / to love with courage instead of retreat.**

**Do not let us grow numb. Do not let us grow cruel.**

**Keep us faithful to goodness, committed to our neighbors, anchored in Your peace.**

**And when the hurt weighs us down, let hope lift us up.**

**Lord, in Your mercy.**



### **A Modern 'Golden Girls' Performance**

On Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, a group from PEUMC attended the opening day performance of 'Four Old Broads' at the Community Theater. Ken P. played the "scandalizing" part of *hunka-hunka burnin' love*, Sam Smith.



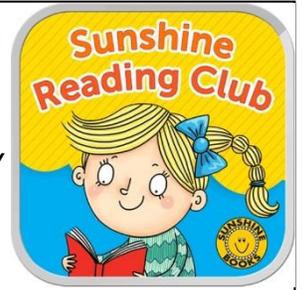
# Events in March



Each woman is invited to join in reading the next book that we will be discussing:

“Word of Love: A Healing Journey with the Ten Commandments” by Eugenia Anne Gambles.

Our next gathering will be **Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> @ 11:00 am @ El Café.**



+sausage, eggs, coffee, juice, and milk! / Adults: \$10 / Kids (4-10): \$5  
 Port Edwards High School cafeteria + PEBA will also be holding a bake sale!

**AFTER-SERVICE THIRD SUNDAY REFRESHMENTS**  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>**  
*(due to Lions Club pancake brunch on the 8<sup>th</sup>)*



**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. are 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. PEUMC is hosting their own weekly Wednesday service, but with a different pastor presiding.

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 <sup>th</sup>	March 4 <sup>th</sup>	March 11 <sup>th</sup>	March 18 <sup>th</sup>	March 25 <sup>th</sup>
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"
	Liturgist: Lucy S. Greeter: Bill & Jody Usher: _____	Liturgist: Diane S. Greeter: Rose W. Usher: _____	Liturgist: Candy P-T Greeter: Kathy Mc. Usher: _____	Liturgist: Jef D. Greeter: Rose W. Usher: _____

## Church Town Hall Meeting

**Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> – after the service**

We **highly recommend** that all PEUMC members attend this meeting, as your leadership will be updating you on our church's financial vitality.

# Sundays & Wednesdays in March

- Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>** – Second Sunday in Lent / Communion Sunday  
*Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> – G.R.A.C.E. series, Week 2 – 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM*
- Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>** – Third Sunday in Lent / Sunday School / Women’s History Sunday  
*Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> – G.R.A.C.E. series, Week 3 – 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM*
- Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>** – Fourth Sunday in Lent / Third Sunday Refreshments  
*Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> – G.R.A.C.E. series, Week 4 – 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM*
- Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Fifth Sunday in Lent / Town Hall Meeting  
*Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> – G.R.A.C.E. series, Week 5 – 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM*
- Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>** – Palm-Passion Sunday

## Holy Week Events

### **Live Last Supper Service – Marshfield Wesley UMC**

(211 S. Maple Street, Marshfield, WI)

Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> – 7:00 – 8:00 PM

No admission or tickets necessary.



### **Maundy Thursday Service – Nekoosa U.C.C. (combined service)**

Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> – 7:00 – 8:00 PM

### **Good Friday Service – PEUMC sanctuary**

Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2:45 – 3:00 PM

## Dates in February - March

### **GATHERINGS**

#### **MemoryShare:**

Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 10:30a – *El Café*  
Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> @ 10:30a – *El Café*

#### **Men’s Breakfast:**

Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> Sat.) @ 8:00a – *El Café*  
Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> Sat.) @ 8:00a – *El Café*

**U.W.I.F. Friends:** “A Mission Trip from Home” – Wed., March 11<sup>th</sup> – 12:15p – bag lunch  
Kitchen Cleaning & Snack Potluck – April 8<sup>th</sup> – 1:00 pm (snack potluck)

**Sunshine Reading:** Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026 @ 11:00 am – *El Café*

**Leadership Council:** Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026 – after worship  
Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 – after worship

### **Community Easter Egg Hunt**

(Holy) Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> – 10:15 AM

Volunteers are needed to help guide the kiddos. The event will be over in 3 minutes 13 seconds. Until then, bags of Easter egg candy are needed. We have well over 1,000 eggs to stuff!

# MEN'S BREAKFAST

**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

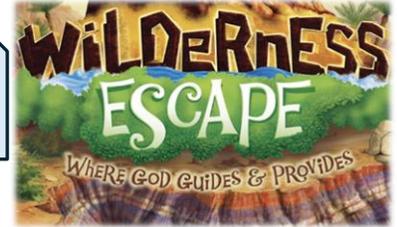
**First Tuesday of each month.**

10:30a – El Café

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

**2026 Summer VBS in the works: Week of July 12<sup>th</sup>**

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](mailto:prayer@peumc.org)  
(email goes to pastor's private email).

OR you can use the online form available at [peumc.org/prayer](http://peumc.org/prayer) or this QR Code:



## Scripture & Sermon Series

March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Second Sunday in Lent Communion Sunday	<b>SERIES:</b> <i>FROM</i> <i>SHADOWS</i> <i>TO</i> <i>SHALOM</i>	<b>John 9</b> <i>Spiritual Blindness</i>
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday in Lent <i>Women's History Sun. / Sunday School</i>		<b>John 11</b> <i>Jesus Raises Lazarus</i>
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Fourth Sunday in Lent <i>(Third Sunday Refreshments)</i>		<b>John 12</b> <i>Mary Anoints Jesus w Oil</i>
March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Fifth Sunday in Lent <i>(Town Hall Meeting)</i>		<b>John 13</b> <i>Jesus Serves</i>
March 29 <sup>th</sup>	Palm-Passion Sunday		<b>John 12 &amp; 19</b> <i>Jesus Hailed &amp; Crucified</i>

## Worship Leaders

Communion: Candles:	Greeter(s)	Usher	Liturgist	Guest Relations	Refreshments
Jean Jean					
Sun., March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Randy/Marge	Sue T.	Leo T.	Kathy Mc.	
Sun., March 8 <sup>th</sup>				Kathy Mc.	<i>on the 15<sup>th</sup> :</i>
Sun., March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Bill/Jody			Diane S.	1. _____ 2. _____
Sun., March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Karen/Mike			Sue T.	
Sun., March 29 <sup>th</sup>			Candy P.T.		

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

[office@peumc.org](mailto:office@peumc.org) / 715-887-3011 /



## Coffee Pot Available

Does the large coffee percolator in the church kitchen scare you? Don't worry. We've all made a watery mess trying to follow the instructions with that menacing machine at one time or another. The Nurture Team would like you to know that there is a regular coffee pot available in the kitchen that can be used when preparing coffee for refreshment time. It might not look like a "Mr. Coffee," but it is prepared just like the one you would have at home. We hope that the availability of this coffee pot will encourage you to sign up for refreshments in the future.



## *Sunday School Dates:*

**March 8<sup>th</sup> – Sara T.**

**April 12<sup>th</sup> – Lori H**

**May 10<sup>th</sup> – Ellen M.**



## Easter Choir Anthem Practices

PEUMC does not have a standing choir; it is open to all who can, and most importantly, *want* to sing! So even if you haven't sung with the group before, it is always open for new singers who just want to "make a joyful noise!"

The choir anthem for Easter Sunday will be "*You Are Holy (Prince of Peace)*" by Michael W. Smith. It is an easy contemporary song with no harmonies, just split between male and female voices. You search for the song online and listen to hundreds of versions of it. Music will be made available at our first practice. Even if you cannot make it to all the practices, please come to as many as you can!

**Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> – 9:10 AM / Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> – 9:10 AM**

**Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> – 9:10 AM / Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup> – 9:10 AM (EASTER SUNDAY)**

## Bill L. Named PEUMC's Lay Member to Annual Conference

The Lay Member to Annual Conference (not to be confused with the local church's Lay Leader) is a link between the [Wisconsin] Conference and congregation. The Annual Conference is a voting body made up of equal-part clergy and laity. This person attends the annual conference sessions representing the local church (this year, in Middleton). The person has voice & vote in legislative sessions and interprets the actions of the A.C. to the congregation. Bill L. has been Lay Member before and volunteered himself to do it again for us.

Thank you, Bill!



## March Lenten Sermon Series (Unit #6)

### *From Shadows to Shalom*

#### WALKING THROUGH LIFE WITH JESUS AND INTO THE KINGDOM 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 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Lent.1 – “STONES IN OUR HANDS” (The God Who Refuses to Condemn)
- Week 2 – March 1<sup>st</sup>** – 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 8<sup>th</sup>** – 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 15<sup>th</sup>** – Lent.4 – “THE FRAGRANCE OF LOVE” (The cost of love)  
Judas represents the temptation to critique generosity rather than practice it.
- Week 5 – March 22<sup>nd</sup>** – 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 29<sup>th</sup>** – 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.



## Church Mailboxes

Please note if you have a designated box in our mailboxes. Such leaders should be checking their mailboxes regularly.  
(Our mailboxes are located in the lower level hallway)

	<b>Bill Lindroth</b> “Financial Manager”	“VOUCHERS” (to be approved)	<b>*Tiara Grunden</b> “Treasurer”	
<b>Connie Cross</b> “Church Office”	<b>Bill Parks</b> “Financial Secretary”	(Ellen Mazurek) <b>*Judy Miller</b> (Sue Mitchell) “Musicians”	(Leo Thomasgard) “United Methodist Men” (UMM)	<b>*Leo Thomasgard</b> “Building Manager”
<b>Jean Mansavage</b> (Leo Thomasgard) “Advocacy/(Reconciling)”	<b>Bob Berg</b> “Gallery Fund”	<b>Diane Sweat</b> Sara Tyne / Jef DeMeuse “Nurture (Ministries)”	<b>LuAnn Slattery</b> “United Women in Faith” (UWIF)	
<b>Nina Pelo</b> “Leadership” Council Chair”	(Bill Lindroth) “Lay Members to A.C.”	(Judy Miller) <b>Lucy Silvester</b> “Outreach/(Missions)”	<b>Lisa Miller</b> “Wills & Memorials”	
<b>Kari LaBarge</b> “Custodial”	<b>Jeff Taylor</b> “Maintenance Tech.”	<b>Mary Heuer / Maribeth LaCas-Salo</b> “Prayer Chain”	(Tiara Grunden) Julie Berg / Nikki Heitman “Witness (Ministries)”	
<b>Bill Lindroth</b> “Endowment”	<b>Ethan Boerner</b> “Media Tech.”	<b>*Sue Mitchell</b> “Stewardship”	<b>Becky Taylor</b> Lori Hintz / Skip Mazurek “Worship”	
<b>*Ellen Mazurek</b> Rose Wirtz / Patsy Shuck “Family (Ministries)”				
	* - denotes main mailbox for (names listed multiple times).			<b>Packages / Large Items</b>

## March Mission Projects

There will be no designated March Mission Project, since we have several other projects going on at this time:

1. **FOCUS Hygiene Drive**
2. **Parsonage Stonework Project**
3. **Wednesday Lenten Offerings – G.R.A.C.E.**

Any donations given during our weekly Wednesday services will go toward G.R.A.C.E.'s efforts to continue **to eliminate student debt** from all graduating classes in the Rapids area. Any missional money given online in the month of March will go toward the **Parsonage Stonework Project** UNLESS you call Bill P. and tell him the specific designation of your gift.

## February Mission Project – Review

### **Support United Methodist Post-ICE Work in MN**

**\$625.00** will be remitted directly to Park Avenue United Methodist Church in downtown Minneapolis for their local community immigration care services.

## **March Households**



Throughout March,  
our congregation is asked  
to pray for the following people:  
*(randomly chosen on 2/26)*

**Jean O. / Lisa M. / Mary H. / Marissa H. /  
Guy & JoAnn D. / Jim & Midge H. /  
Chuck & Rachel L. / Page C. /  
Pastors Caleb & Doug**

## **Beautiful Creations**

Phil O. is a Friend of PEUMC and spouse of the late Ginnie O. Phil has always been interested in geology and mineralogy. Even in his new place at Arborwood, he continues to make creations out of gems and rocks, like decorated nightlights and other displays.

The photo to the right is of one of his many beautiful creations that he has made from real pieces of gems wired together.



# transforming

## The Bible & the Lives of Transgender Christians – A REVIEW

Here are just *\*some\** of the facts participants learned during our 3-part book study on Transgender Christians at PEUMC in February:

- Experts are warning that the U.S. is in the early stages of genocide against trans Americans (this analysis began as far back as 2014).
- 41% of transgender adults have attempted suicide (NTDS 2014 study)
- 90% of trans people have experienced harassment or discrimination at work
- 57% have experienced significant family rejection.
- 26% have been fired for who they are.
- 19% have experienced homelessness because of their gender identity.
  - Christianity has often been at the center of anti-trans legislation, especially through organizations like Alliance Defending Freedom, Family Research Council, and Focus on the Family. Focus on the Family helped to implement House Bill 2 in North Carolina in 2016, which specifically required transgender people to use the bathroom or other gendered facility that corresponded with the gender marker on their birth certificate. Thus, one would have to choose between getting arrested for entering one bathroom or harassed/attacked by entering another? (NOTE: There are no reported cases of harassment **from** a trans person in a restroom, whereas there is a disproportionately high rate of harassment **to** trans individuals within gendered facilities.) Because of this, many trans individuals can have a low opinion about religion, while still having very spiritual needs and experiences.
- Two rules for language: (1) always use the definition or terms given by the person standing in front of you (don't assume labels), and (2) give yourself some grace, language is always changing, but also don't say "but that's what we called 'them' back in my day."



### Sexuality vs. Gender

<b>Sexuality (orientation)</b>	sexual/romantic/emotional attraction to others
<b>Gender (identity)</b>	a person's deeply felt sense of their gender – <i>man woman, both, neither, or another</i> – which may or may not align with the sex assigned at birth

### Gender is 3-part biological, psychological, and sociological

#### 1. Biological: biological "sex" also breaks down into 3 parts

<b>Genitalia</b> (external; visible)	There are two "options." These are what doctors/nurses look at when assigning sex at birth. This is "phenotypic sex" or the outward expression of internal developmental processes.
<b>Chromosomes</b> (internal; "invisible")	The genetic blueprint that influences sex development (usually XX or XY) But natural variations exist (XXY, XO, mosaic patterns). These guide early development but do not alone determine all sex characteristics.
<b>Hormonal levels</b> (internal; "invisible")	Mainly testosterone & estrogen, and others. Help direct the development of internal and external sex organs and "secondary" sex characteristics. Puberty! Variations in hormone production or response can lead to diverse sex traits.

- Testosterone and estrogen are produced *both* by men *and* women. Thus, the question becomes: ***what happens when the three parts of the biological sex do not align?*** The outward does not always match what is on the inside.
- We determined that it is a mistake to ask, “*Does God make mistakes?*” when referring to abnormalities at birth. We are conceived and carried through purely human means – replete with all the mishaps and mutations that nobody can help. We are not guaranteed perfect births. Biological sex is susceptible to misalignments and variations.
- *Gender dysphoria* is the experience of misalignment or incongruence between one’s inner and outer biological sex. This can begin very early in life.
- *Intersex* refers to when the three parts of biological sex do not align and, thus, variations appear in reproductive organs, chromosomes, or the ability to produce/receive gender-related hormones.
- The other parts of gender include: (2) **Psychological**: (one’s internal sense of being male, female, both, or neither). We don’t choose our gender identity; rather, it’s something that has innate seeds within us and develops as we grow. Gender identity cannot be changed by other people. (3) **Sociological** (the way we act out gender through things like clothing, hair, voice, and mannerisms). *Gender roles* are the ways we’re expected to be, and act, depending on our gender.
- *Transgender* describes the experience of one’s (internal) gender identity (psychological and sociological) misaligning with the biological sex they were assigned at birth.
- Many trans individuals transition, but it’s not required for this identity. Many cannot or will not transition (we may think of ‘sex change’ surgeries) due to issues of money, health, or safety concerns. Thus, some can look very *female* on the outside while identifying as *male*.
- *Nonbinary* is someone who identifies as *neither* male nor female.
- Many cultures around the world already recognize more than two genders: the Navaho and Lakota nations; tribes in Samoa, India, Madagascar, and Mexico; and others.
- History is also full of examples of people who did not fit neatly into later gender categories, all the back to the ancient world.
- There are many examples of gender diversity in the natural world: plants and animals that transition genders midway through the life cycle or whenever gender diversity is needed.
- Thus, we can safely conclude that both sexuality AND gender are both represented as spectrums rather than binary (this OR that).
- We examined the Creation Story of Genesis 1, acknowledging that while God made light/dark, water/land, day/night, birds/fish, male/female, each of these categories acknowledges that these binaries still exist in a continuum (like hot and cold).
- The word (and reality of) ***transgender*** does not appear anywhere in the Bible; but the closest connection would be the ***eunuch***, someone whose testicles were damaged or removed (willingly or not), causing them to fall between the strict male/female categories. While earlier passages of the Bible may have banned eunuchs from congregational life, later, in Isaiah 56:3-8, God’s own self overturns such restrictions by announcing: ***“to the eunuchs . . . I will give . . . a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.”***
- In Matthew 19:11-12, Jesus saw eunuchs as people with something important to teach the world about God’s kin’dom; Jesus saw them as models to follow.

- In Acts 8:26-39, the Spirit of God told Philip to go and baptize a eunuch from Ethiopia; this individual, without repenting, converting, or changing their identity/lifestyle in any way, was welcomed into the household of God by an act of God.
- We concluded with this passage: *“There is no longer Jew or Greek; no longer slave or free; no longer male and female, for all of us are one in Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 3:28).

## Regionalizing the United Methodist Church

### February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026 / COPENHAGEN, Denmark (United Methodist News)

Meeting in Denmark, United Methodists found themselves pondering a variation on a question made famous by a fictional Dane: *“To be or not to be.”*

Specifically, the leaders were considering what parts of the denomination’s organization and administration are to be — or not to be — essential across The United Methodist Church.

The Feb. 6-9 meeting in Copenhagen brought together more than 80 United Methodist leaders from four continents to press forward with a years-long effort to revamp the *Book of Discipline*, the denomination’s main policy book. The leaders want to make clear what parts of the *Discipline* bind all United Methodists together and what parts can be adjusted by the church’s different geographic regions.

That work has only grown more urgent now that United Methodist voters have ratified regionalization, the process where all the newly-created “regional conferences,” now including the U.S., will have the authority to develop their own supplemental *Discipline*.

The restructuring adopted at the 2024 General Conference creates nine regional conferences with equal authority to adapt the *Discipline* — the eight former central conferences in Africa, Europe and the Philippines and a newly created regional conference that encompasses the entire United States. Having been ratified by each annual conference around the globe in 2025, there are now four regional conferences in Africa, three in Europe, one in the Philippines and soon-to-be one in the U.S.

Ultimately, the leaders hope their work will make the idea of regionalization into a practical reality for how United Methodists carry out ministry worldwide.

“Basically, we are tasked to try to help our church move into the future where we grant each other in our connection more freedom to do mission in a way that really addresses the needs of our context,” said Harald Rückert, chair of the gathering and the bishop over Germany.

He added that the goal is “to grant us this freedom and at the same time stay together united as one United Methodist Church.”

Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi tells international United Methodist leaders about the early progress in establishing the new U.S. Regional Conference. Moore-Koikoi, who leads the Eastern Pennsylvania and Greater New Jersey conferences, is the convener of the interim committee that will organize the regional conference’s first meeting. She asked for the church leaders’ prayers and patience in this transitional time.

The work in Copenhagen eventually will result in legislation that will be up for approval by the next General Conference, which is scheduled to meet in 2028.

The denomination’s top lawmaking assembly, in the *Discipline*’s Paragraph 101, authorized the leaders to propose what’s being called the *General Book of Discipline* that truly applies worldwide. Paragraph 101 lists the parts of the *Discipline* that are not up for adaptation. These essentials include the denomination’s constitution, doctrinal standards, and Social Principles. What is under discussion is the *Discipline*’s *Part VI* — the policy book’s biggest section — which deals with matters of church organization and administration.

The hope is that the work will result in a slimmer, more universal *Discipline* that doesn't set up U.S. church policies as the default around which United Methodist regions in Africa, Asia and Europe must adapt.

At present, the bishops are forming an interim committee that will organize the first-ever U.S. regional conference that's set to convene after the 2028 General Conference.

*"It's not only about equality and reorganizing and all that mess we're right into right now,"* said the Rev. Hilde Marie Movafagh, a member of the Committee on Faith and Order in Norway, *"But it's the idea that for American Methodists to be an American region is a good thing — where you get to talk about how you can be the church in America in the best American way possible. That's a good conversation to have."*

*"All this is challenging work,"* the Rev. Joseph Estadilla, a standing committee member from the Philippines, told United Methodist News. *"But I look positively on the future of what our church will be, especially being much more inclusive, because the basic foundation of our church, which is the Book of Discipline, is now being written with that heart in mind of people within the different regions."*

Rückert, the chair, said that what touched his heart most about the gathering wasn't the work being accomplished but the way United Methodists from very different regional contexts did the work together. Even as the denomination allows more autonomy in its different regions, he sees signs that leaders worldwide are drawing closer together in their sense of mission.

*"It's not all about legislation only,"* he told United Methodist News. *"It's the atmosphere in this room where people around the globe really display the worldwide nature of the church. It can be smelled. It can be breathed. It can be experienced how it feels to be a worldwide connection that is now becoming truly connectional on equal footing."*

## UMCOR'S RESPONSES IN 2025



Those who attended worship on Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> had the chance to “set the table” for Jesus in response to the story of the unnamed family who gave the upper room of their home to Jesus and His disciples. Pastor Beth Rohn-Habegger of the Rapids Moravian Church was the guest preacher, as Pastor Caleb did the Lenten service at Grace Lutheran Church.



## Letters to our Representatives

Earlier this month, eight letters were sent to our various state and federal representatives with an urgent message. This message was on behalf of the congregations of G.R.A.C.E. and was eventually signed by 100 people. The letter was prepared by Pastor Caleb.

After quoting several in-house governmental reports that acknowledge, from its 2001 beginnings, the Department of Homeland Security has been “poorly managed” and “missionally dysfunctional,” and the concerns over the ballooning budget of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), evidence of the lack of training for its agents, actions of such agents that have been

unlawful or improper/excessive, Border Patrol agents deployed outside their designated area, the 32 people who have died in ICE custody in 2025, the evidence of mistreatment of everyday people and their family, including children, the letter than describes the Biblical mandate to love our neighbor without concern for their legal status.

The letter concluded with these paragraphs:

“We, the undersigned, send this letter urging you to advocate wholeheartedly and continuously for **the radical reform, or preferably, the total replacement, of the entire U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), especially the agencies contained therein, including the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). These need to be replaced by an entity, or entities, with more transparency, accountability, congressional control, and missional direction. Furthermore, we urge you to advocate for the immediate cessation of large, troop-like ICE and Border Patrol deployment in our U.S. cities.**

We understand that our national borders need a level of protection, as does the very people of the United States. We know that there are many immigrants living here wrongly, as our laws declare. But we, people of good conscience, refuse to classify human beings *solely* in the heartless terms of “lawful/unlawful” or “legal/illegal,” and we denounce the inhumane treatment of human beings on U.S. soil that naturally derives by such callous categories. We believe every human being is a beloved soul, created beautifully and wonderfully in the Image of God, and whose legal status should leave no cause for treatment of lesser dignity or compassion. Therefore, we hold issue with not only the current *use* of DHS agencies but also of the current *organization* of such agencies.”



## Hymn Notes Now Available



Whenever we sing a hymn or chorus and the music notes are not readily available, the office will make attempts to make scans of these songs available for those who would prefer to have the music notes as they sing. This cannot be done with every song, but for many of them this is possible. Instead of having copies in *each* bulletin, these copies will be in a brochure holder near the bulletins.

# DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS - 3/2 - 4/6

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.*

3/2	John 10:1-21	Jesus the Good Shepherd	3/20	John 12:44-50	Summary of Teachings
3/3	John 10:22-42	Jesus is Rejected by Jews	3/21	Luke 21:20-38	Exhortation to Watch
3/4	Luke 19:1-10	Jesus & Zacchaeus	3/22	John 13:1-17, 21-30, 34	Washing Feet
3/5	Luke 19:11-27	Parable of the Ten Pounds	3/23	John 13:36-38	Peter's Denial Foretold
3/6	Luke 19:41-48	Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem	3/24	John 14:1-14	The Way to God
3/7	Luke 20:1-8	Authority of Jesus Questioned	3/25	John 14:15-31	Promise of the Spirit
3/8	John 11:1-44, 53-54	Jesus Raises Lazarus	3/26	John 15:1-17	Jesus the True Vine
3/9	John 11:45-53	The Plot to Kill Jesus	3/27	John 15:18-16:4a	The World's Hatred
3/10	Luke 20:9-19	Parable of the Wicked Tenants	3/28	John 16:4b-15	The Work of the Spirit
3/11	Luke 20:20-26	Question of Paying Taxes	3/29	John 12:12-19, 28-29 & John 19:1-30	Palm - Passion Sunday
3/12	Luke 20:27-40	Questions: the Resurrection	3/30	John 16:16-24	Sorrow Into Joy
3/13	Luke 20:41-47	Scribes Are Denounced	3/31	John 16:25-33	Peace for the Disciples
3/14	Luke 21:1-19	Widow's Offering	4/1	John 17	Jesus Prays for Disciples
3/15	John 12:1-8	Mary Anoints Jesus with Oil	4/2	John 18	Jesus Sentenced to Death
3/16	John 12:9-11	The Plot to Kill Lazarus	4/3	John 19:1-30	The Death of Jesus
3/17	John 12:20-26	Greeks Wish to See Jesus	4/4	John 19:31-42	The Burial of Jesus
3/18	John 12:27-36a	Jesus Speaks of His Death	4/5	John 20:1-18	The Resurrection of Jesus
3/19	John 12:36b-43	Unbelief of the People	4/6	John 20:19-23	Jesus Appears: Disciples

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



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

## Home Delivered Meals Drivers

Pat & Kathy McGrath / Sue Mitchell

Nina Pelo / Becky Taylor

Leo & Sue Thomasgard

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

**THANK YOU!**

# MARCH

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Service 10:00 AM</b> COMMUNION		10:30a MemoryShare – El Café Noon Nurture - El Cafe	G.R.A.C.E. Lenten Service: 6:30 – 7:30 PM (Pastor Kate)		Pastor's day off	8:00a Men's Breakfast at El Café
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<b>Service 10:00 AM</b> 8:00a-Noon – P.E. Lions Pancake Brunch and Bake Sale PEHS Women's History Sun. Daylight Savings Time Begins – lose hour!	Easter Lily orders begin. ← Sunday School.		12:15P UWIF Brown Bag Lunch  G.R.A.C.E. Lenten Service: 6:30 – 7:30 PM (Pastor Caleb)		Pastor's day off	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
<b>Service 10:00 AM</b> • Choir Practice: 9:10A • 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday Refreshments • Leadership Council	FOCUS Hygiene Drive ends ←		G.R.A.C.E. Lenten Service: 6:30 – 7:30 PM (Pastor Margo)		Pastor's day off	
22	23	24	Wednesday	26	27	28
<b>Service 10:00 AM</b> • Choir Practice: 9:10A • Town Hall Meeting (Financial Discussion)		11:00A Sunshine Reading Circle – El Café	G.R.A.C.E. Lenten Service: 6:30 – 7:30 PM (Pastor Michelle)		Pastor's day off	
29	30	31	April 1	April 2	April 3	April 4
<b>Service 10:00 AM</b> PALM-PASSION Sunday • Choir Practice: 9:10A	Live Last Supper @ Marshfield Wesley UMC 7-8 PM		Live Last Supper @ Marshfield Wesley UMC 7-8 PM	Maundy Thurs. Service – 7:00 PM @ Nekoosa UCC	Good Friday Service – 2:45 – 3:00 PM	(Men's Breakfast on April 11 <sup>th</sup> ) Community Easter Egg Hunt @ PEUMC @ 10:15A
<b>Birthdays:</b> Curtis F. 3/5, Page C. 3/11, Becky T. 3/13, Jean O. 3/15, Bill L. 3/19, Pstr. Doug 3/21, Kari L. 3/22, Nathan H. 3/23, Travis H. 3/24, Samantha G. 3/25, Kali M. 3/27, Rose W. 3/29 <b>Anniversary:</b> LuAnn & Dennis S. 3/27		<b>March Mission Projects:</b> (no designated mission for March) 1. FOCUS Hygiene Drive 2. Parsonage Stonework Proj. 3. Wednesday spec. offerings for student debt relief		<b>Church Office Hours:</b>  <b>Connie:</b> Monday – Friday : 8:00a – 12:00p <b>Pastor:</b> Monday – Thursday : 9:00a – 12:00p		