



Introducing Our Quadrennial Theme:

Pouring Out the Living Water: Bloom by the River!

What is a “quadrennial theme?” A “quadrennium” is a specified period of four years. The United Methodist Church works on a quadrennial schedule: General Conference meets once every four years, the *Book of Discipline* is printed once every four years, etc. etc. Both the denomination and the annual conference set themes to provide a journey for the next four years.

We decided it would be good to have our own theme for PEUMC, to give us direction for the next four years (which coincidentally aligns with the UMC’s quadrennium).

The question was asked of our church leaders: *What season do you feel our church is in right now?* A few interpreted “season” to mean which of the *four seasons of nature*. The image that was immediately brought forth was of springtime and its connection with **rebirth, renewal, and resurrection**. Perhaps, this is a way to understand where we are post-pandemic.

Then we reflected on our Breakthrough Prayer, which states, “*As the waters of the Wisconsin River flow past our church, may Your Spirit flow through our congregation.*”

I (Pastor Caleb) then remembered the title of one of my favorite books: COME TO THE WATERS. But I wanted to destress the idea that people should “come to us.”

So, putting it all together, we came up with:

“POURING OUT THE LIVING WATER: BLOOM BY THE RIVER.”

We are to “pour out” or “share” the Living Water, in an active way. Jesus Christ told the Samaritan woman by the well that He was the Living Water, “*Those who drink of the Water that I give them will never be thirsty again; the Water will become in them a Spring of Water gushing up to eternal life.*” (John 4:14). We have something that we want to give away, abundantly and freely: ***pour forth the Living Water!***

Water also reminds us of the biblical demand for justice: “*Let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing river*” (Amos 5:24). And in Psalm 1:3, “[*The righteous*] are like trees planted by rivers, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither; in all that they do, they prosper.”

We want people to have their springtime “bloom” with us “by the river.”

“Living Water” is the Bible’s profound illustration of God’s desire to provide for God’s people, both in a physical and spiritual way. It is about God’s live-giving presence and the abundant grace that is in the Good News of Jesus Christ. ***I hope you will join us in pouring forth Living Water this quadrennium!***

Our Strategic Plan

If everyone's in charge, then nobody's in charge.

If everything's the Lord's work, then nothing's the Lord's work.

Churches really need to have an intentional strategic plan, or else we are spinning our wheels doing that "insane" action: *doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.*

I think we have a really good plan for our congregation.

We had a good plan before, but we didn't have the means to execute it properly (our goals and dreams were not broken down into manageable, practical steps).

Now, we have worked to correct that error.

Our **Strategic Plan** is "fractionated" like this (from largest to smallest):

- Our **Core Values** (the DNA of the PEUMC congregation)
- Our **Foundational Statements**: Our Purpose, Our Mission, Our Vision, Our Vow to Be Reconciling.
- Our 4 **Initiatives** (4-years-out)
- Our 4 Corresponding **Goals** (2-years-out)
- Our Corresponding **Ministry Objectives** (for this year, per ministry area)
- Our Corresponding **Ministry Tactics** (how the ministry leaders plan out their year).

Our Core Values:

We have discerned that our three congregational core values are:

- (1) **community/fellowship**
- (2) **spiritual growth/learning, and**
- (3) **mission work/justice.**



Our Purpose (summarized): To enjoy God's presence fully and to offer ourselves in service to help others enjoy God, too.

Our Mission (summarized): To be, and to make, NEW disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our Vision (summarized): To be a fellowship of love where we experience abundance in our lives, both physically and spiritually.

Our 4 Initiatives (4 years out)

#1: By the end of 2028, we will have improved the health of our community.

#2: By the end of 2028, we will have improved self-confidence & social awareness in our community.

#3: By the end of 2028, we will have established a discipleship culture in our congregation.

#4: By the end of 2028, we will have established a nurturing fellowship culture in our congregation.

Our Corresponding Goals: (2 years out)

(These are how we break down our Initiatives.)



- #1: By the end of 2026, we will have established a ministry with the disenfranchised.
- #2: By the end of 2026, we will have established a community learning ministry.
- #3: By the end of 2026, we will have established a ‘How can we bless you?’ culture in our congrega.
- #4: By the end of 2026, we will have active home groups in our congregation.

Before we move on, I want to point out that

the first two initiatives/goals are community-oriented:

“How can we make a difference in the wider community?”

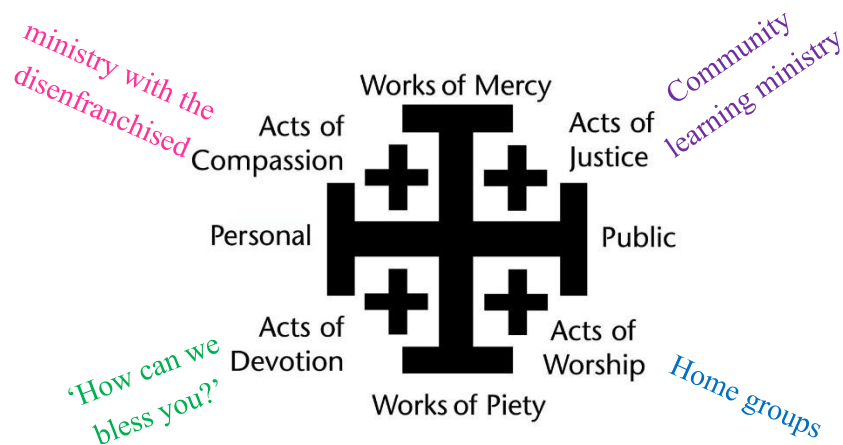
the second two are church-oriented:

“How can we effect a change in our church culture?”

We also believe they align with our core values, our purpose, our mission, and our vision. They involve community & fellowship, growth & learning, mission & justice.

Additionally, we believe our goals are well-rounded:

- Initiative/Goal #1** is our work of Compassion (one-on-one works of mercy).
- #2** is our work of Justice (communal/public works of mercy).
- #3** is our work of Devotion (one-on-one works of piety).
- #4** is our work of Worship (communal/public works of piety).



Our Ministry Objectives

(for this year)

(These are how we break down our Initiatives/Goals)

Nurture Ministries:

“By the end of this year,
we will have established a network of 3 home groups in our congregation.”

Outreach/Mission Ministries:

“By the end of this year,
we will have identified who the disenfranchised are in our community.”

Witness Ministries:

“By the end of this year,
we will have provided 4 community ‘HEAD & HEART EVENTS’ based on relevant topics.”

Worship Ministries:

“By the end of this year,
we will have increased laity involvement in the worship service.”

Family Ministries:

“By the end of this year,
we will have asked our families and young people, ‘how can we fill your cup?’”

Discipleship Team (formerly the Nomination Committee):

“By the end of this year,
we will have reached out to all our inactive members.”

Leadership Council:

“By the end of this year,
we will have learned what a discipleship system would look like at PEUMC.”

Pastor:

“By the end of this year,
the pastor will have developed a discipleship system in our church.”



NOTE: One might think that needing “more people in the pews” or “more money in the plates” should be our goals. But we believe that more people/more money is the **result** of focusing on *quality* over *quantity*. In fact, focusing on “more people/more money” will not reap the kind of rewards one might think – a church with that kind of focus is not attractive to any new person.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL Starts THEIR WORK!

On Friday, February 7th, at the Environmental Learning Center in Port Edwards, the new Leadership Council of PEUMC met for four and a half hours to learn and discuss their work for the year.

Our new council members were nominated by the Nominations Committee, approved by Charge Conference, and commissioned by the congregation. They are:

Helmuth W. / Joy R. / Nina P. / Chuck L. / Lindsey H. / Sue M.

Leo T. is the Leadership Council Chair. He is also our new lay leader.

We discussed what ministry and discipleship look like in our post-pandemic, 21st century world. These are some highlights of our discussion:

- 1. We should try to bless people by relieving them of their stress and workload rather than adding things to their plate.*
- 2. Focus on the people themselves rather than events.*
- 3. We need to “go to them” (proactive, but not like evangelists who proselyte) rather than passively waiting for them to come to us.*
- 4. Focus less on programming and have more organic conversations, like, “How can I help you? How can we fill your cup today?”*
- 5. We want to get the whole congregation to meet in smaller groups regularly, however that may look like. Combine systematic & organic congregational care.*
- 6. Instead of jumping straight to “we need more young people/children,” we need to take a long-view approach: if we are a congregation of mostly retired individuals, we should first be reaching out to those just younger than the average: people who are about to retire. Then we slowly walk the average age of the congregation down, without skipping a generation.*

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETS & MAKES THEIR FIRST DECISIONS

On Saturday, February 8th, the Leadership Council met in a hybrid (in-person/ZOOM) meeting in the Memorial Lounge of the church. This constitutes the inaugural meeting of the Leadership Council.

The Leadership Council agreed to participate in a monthly book study based on the UMC’s Discipleship Ministry’s #SeeAllThePeople resources. Using a series of booklets, we will learn about what having an intentional discipleship system will look like for us. This book study will take up a portion of our monthly meetings. These are the decisions made this month:

- 1. The Leadership Council approved to file for incorporation with the state for the first time. This creates a corporation in the name of the church, protecting its leaders and members from personal liability. It will be an annual fee of \$35.*
- 2. The Leadership Council approved a bid from Nick Michels & Son to repair the two flat roofs that cover the “music room” and “flower room” on either side of the sanctuary chancel. These flat roofs are showing signs of wear and the insulation has shown to be wet. The current roof is about 30 years old. The cost will be \$8,550 to repair both roofs.*
- 3. The Leadership Council approved to become a Congregational Member of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, pledging to raise at least \$120 annually for our support of the W.C.C.’s advocacy work in Madison, WI. This will result in a bimonthly mission assigned for the W.C.C. (see page 8).*
- 4. The Leadership Council decided to continue the old Church Council’s schedule of meeting monthly on the third Sunday after the worship service. They want the congregation to know that the meetings are open, and members of the congregation are welcome to attend. We will meet in the Memorial Lounge. Meetings are scheduled to be about 90 minutes long.*

Happy Retirement, Mike H.!

It always amazes me that days can last a long time, but then years can fly by.... Mike has worked hard, provided well for his family, met a lot of great friends along the way, and worked his entire career for the same respected employer. Now it's time for more fishing, hunting, travel, and relaxation. HAPPY RETIREMENT, MIKE!! 🍷❤️🍷❤️🍷



Mike retires after many years from Potter & Son Cranberries.

In Proportion to Our Love

Compiled and edited by
The Rev. Caleb R. McGregor

Pastor Caleb has completed a long-awaited project of creating a resource for those who have lost close loved ones. There are several editions of this little booklet titled *"IN PROPORTION TO OUR LOVE."* One edition is for the loss of a spouse, and another is for the loss of a parent or grandparent. A forthcoming edition will be for those who have lost a child. The booklet is full of home rituals and prayers oriented around the major dates of the year. Each page helps to both process our grief and to bring something of our loved ones back into our lives during special days of the year. The booklets are free, and copies are available to anyone who wants one. Memorial candles, tagged with the name of the deceased loved one, are also available and can be used in conjunction with the booklet. See Pastor Caleb.

2024 MISSIONAL GIVING REPORT

PREPARED BY BECKY TAYLOR.

MONTH	CAUSE	AMOUNT
Jan.	FOCUS Food Pantry	\$34.00
Jan./Feb.	Compassion International – Relief Bundle	\$532.00
Feb.	125 th Anniversary Celebration Special Offering (+ \$337.00 in 2023)	\$1,050.00
Feb.	Lenten Offering: PESD Lunch Debt	\$161.00
Mar.	Easter Lilies	\$200.00
Mar.	Admin. Assistant (Amy) Retirement Gift	\$20.00
Mar./Apr.	The Family Center (+Sendoff Bags Supplies)	\$250.00
Apr.	College Care Packages	\$270.00
May/June.	Wis. Conference Camp Scholarships + Disaster Relief	\$480.00
July-Dec.	Carpet Squares for Lobby	\$6,000.00
July/Aug.	Jeremiah's Crossing	\$440.00
Aug.	The Family Center (Trivia Night)	\$362.00
Sept./Oct.	New Beginnings for Refugees	\$580.00
Oct.	UMCOR – Hurricane Disaster Relief	\$615.00
Oct.	Student Lunch Debt (for G.R.A.C.E.) trans. To Hardship Checking Account	\$500.00
Nov.	Christmas Gifts for Students	\$609.67
Dec.	Holiday Gift Baskets for Members	\$100.00
Dec.	Pastor Caleb's Christmas Gift	\$635.00
Dec.	Christmas Eve Special Offering – for G.R.A.C.E. Student Debt Relief	\$411.16
	2024 Total:	\$13,249.83

Thank you for your continued support of our mission projects both locally, regionally, and internationally! This is part of the essence of being the Body of Christ!

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

It took two and a half days for Freedom Carpet's sole carpetter to remove our old lobby carpet and put down the new carpet squares.

In the process, the church's structural history came to light for a couple of days. The mosaic tiles of the old bathrooms and the checkered floor of the rear hallway, for a short while, saw the light of day:



The carpet squares, as you know, allow portions to be replaced in case of stains or damage without replacing the whole room.

The carpet design was chosen by a congregational survey back in December.

Thank you, again, to our carpet donors (listed in last month's newsletter), both known and unknown!

Port Edwards Lions Club will have their annual pancake breakfast in the cafeteria of the Jr./Sr. High School, from 8:00 AM to noon on **Sunday, March 9th**. Our refreshment time has been moved to avoid this annual conflict.



Church Directory Spring/Summer 2025

Our Church directory is now ready.

Hard copies can be picked up in the church lobby.

Digital copies may be emailed upon request.

Our next spiral-bound directory will be done in September 2025.



Hygiene Drive
for Wis. Rapids FOCUS Food
Pantry
February 23rd through March 16th

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!

February Mission Project

(Concludes at the End of February)

COLLECT MONEY TO SUPPORT RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

***As a Reconciling Congregation, we are a member of RMN and are encouraged to give annually to support their budget. We have yet to establish our commitment in this way; HOWEVER, we hope to help them through this project.*

March-April Mission Projects

(For the Month of March only)

#1: COLLECT MONEY TO SUPPORT WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The W.C.C. is a network of people and organizations working together faithfully across difference to address critical issues with creativity and courage. We are rooted in our Christian identity and open to partners of any faith and none. We are inspired by a vision of a world filled with Courage, Justice, and Holy Imagination. To this end, the W.C.C. is committed to educate and inform Wisconsin voters, protect democracy, and promote nonviolent action against voter suppression. The W.C.C. continues to bring together people of faith to make a difference in their own communities and systemic difference in the state.

The Wisconsin Council of Churches recently moved their offices into the First United Methodist Church in Madison, WI. Our goal is a minimum of \$120 *(for more info., see article at bottom of page)*

(For the Month of April only)

#2: COLLECT MONEY TO PROVIDE BIBLES FOR THE LOCAL WOOD COUNTY JAIL

With the new jail next to the Wood County courthouse about to be opened, their “spiritual life” programming will have room to expand. Pastor Lonnie Selje oversees the jail ministry as their Jail Inmate Chaplain. She says they are always in need of Bibles for the inmates. We can get NRSV Bibles from Cokesbury for just under \$10 each. Our goal is to get 20 of them!

PEUMC to become Congregational Members of Wisconsin Council of Churches

Previously, most members of the W.C.C. were on the judicatory level (meaning, the Wisconsin Annual Conference, etc.). As a way to help promote themselves and fundraise, they have recently created a membership status for local congregations. \$120 gets us a year of membership. Now, I understand that this is a fundraising plan. It is not our expectation to receiving anything from them as a member (we are already members through the Conference). It’s not simply “membership dues,” it’s a way to support their ministry in Madison. The executive director, Kerri Parker, said that she would post our church name on their Facebook announcing us, and other churches, as new Congregational partners. She says she hopes that the local churches can engage a little more in their work. While their financial support largely comes from the denominational partners in Wisconsin, their hands-on support comes from the people in the pews. PEUMC’s intention is to raise the funds as part of our next bimonthly mission to cover the minimum donation to become a basic member.



**WISCONSIN COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES**
COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

“PASTOR CALEB MCGREGOR” IS A SCAMMER!

This is what we call “**click bait**”: Headlines designed to get your attention and encourage you to click and read further.

My phone number has an area code of 618 (Southern Illinois). Some people say their Caller ID says “Caleb McGregor” or “Mount Carmel, Illinois.” The last two scams that several church members have received from “me” had a Wisconsin number, the first being from the Duluth area.

Just know that I would not ask for money over a text. Both times, the texts had the same content: “*get me some gift cards.*” And if you pursue it further, they will say: “*I don’t have time to get them from you, please take a photo of the numbers on the back.*” Why? You can’t deliver them, and they cannot pick them up, because the scammers are 100’s of miles away! So, they get you to buy gift cards and give them the number to scam you.

You and I have a lot of feelings about people who prey on good-hearted people like yourselves; tricking people through their Christian sensibilities and pretending to be your pastor. We can only pray for them to find other ways to be a respectable, contribution member of society that earns their living honestly.

For all who responded to “my” request, willing to help “me,” I thank you. You were willing to help “me” by doing what you could.

Just know: (1) I refer to myself as “Pastor Caleb,” not “Pastor Caleb McGregor,” (2) I would not text a request like this, (3) I have a 618 number and wouldn’t use someone else’s number for something like this, (4) I will never be in a meeting so important that I couldn’t call or wait, and (5) I will use my own money or the church’s discretionary funds for such a request.

To you, I say, **THANK YOU!**

To the scammer(s), I say (Southernly), **BLESS YOUR HEART! I’LL BE PRAYING FOR YOU!**

Children’s Church Dates:

(Sunday School)

Sunday, March 9th – Lori, with Judy Sunday, April 13th – Kathy M.
Sunday, May 11th - Ellen

GATHERINGS FOR MARCH

MemoryShare:

Tuesday, March 4th @ 10:30a – *El Café*
Tuesday, April 1st @ 10:30a – *El Café*

Men’s Breakfast:

Saturday, March 1st – 8:00a – *El Café*
Saturday, April 5th – 8:00a – *El Café*

U.W.I.F.: Thursday, March 6th – 12:15 p

(“A Mission Trip from Home . . . hands-on work for Midwest Missions”)

Circle of Friends: Wednesday, April 9th – *(“Cleaning Day”)*

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS – 2/14 – 3/30

Below are daily scripture readings that are based on Sunday morning's lectionary passages. While these passages will jump around within the Bible, just remember that they have been chosen to align *thematically* with either the previous Sunday's or upcoming Sunday's Bible story.

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

St. Valen.	Deut. 24:17-22	Treating Those in Need	3/8	Luke 10:21-24	Jesus Rejoices
2/15	Luke 8:26-39	Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac	Lent.1	Luke 10:25-42	The G. Samaritan / Mary & Martha
Sun. 2/16	Luke 7:18-35	"Is Christ the One?"	3/10	Levit. 19:13-18	Loving Your Neighbor
2/17	Proverbs 8:32-36	God's Instructions for Life	3/11	Romans 13:8-10	Love for One Another
2/18	Luke 8:4-10	The Parable of the Sower	3/12	Luke 11:1-13	Power of Prayer
2/19	Luke 8:11-15	The Parable Explained	3/13	Matthew 6:5-13	Concerning Prayer
2/20	Luke 8:16-18	A Lamp Under a Jar	3/14	Luke 12:22-34	Do Not Worry
2/21	Luke 8:19-21	The True Family of Jesus	3/15	Philipp. 4:4-9	Peace, Not Worry
2/22	Luke 8:22-25	Jesus Calms the Storm	Lent.2	Lk. 13:1-9, 31-35	Jesus Preaches Repentance
Sun. 2/23	Luke 7:36-50	A Woman Forgiven	3/17	Luke 13:10-17	Jesus Heals a Woman
2/24	Luke 8:1-3	Women Follow Jesus	3/18	Luke 13:18-30	Jesus Teaches
2/25	Psalm 100	A Joyful Noise to the Lord	3/19	Luke 14:1-6	Jesus Heals a Man Who is Sick
2/26	Proverbs 9:1-6	Wisdom's Feast	3/20	Luke 14:7-14	Humility & Hospitality
2/27	Luke 9:1-9	The Mission of the Twelve	3/21	Luke 14:15-24	The Parable of the Great Dinner
2/28	Luke 9:10-17	Jesus Feeds Thousands	3/22	Luke 14:25-33	The Cost of Discipleship
3/1	Luke 9:18-27	Following Jesus	Lent.3	Luke 15:1-32	Kin'dom Parables: "The Lost is Found"
Trans-figuration	Luke 9:28-45	The Transfiguration of Jesus	3/24	Psalm 119:169-176	A Lost Sheep
3/3	Isaiah 55:1-3	An Invitation to Abundant Life	3/25	1 Samuel 16:6-13	A Keeper of Sheep
3/4	Luke 9:46-50	True Greatness	3/26	Genesis 45:1-9	Joseph and His Brothers
Ash Wed.	Luke 9:51-62	Jesus Sets His Face Toward Jerusalem	3/27	Genesis 45:21-28	Joseph Returned to His Father
3/6	Luke 10:1-12	The Mission of the Seventy	3/28	Exodus 2:1-10	Moses Returned to His Mother
3/7	Luke 10:17-20	The Return of the Seventy	3/29	John 4:46-54	A Man's Son is Returned
			Lent.4	Luke 16:19-31	The Rich Man & Lazarus

February Household

Throughout this month, the congregation is asked to pray
for the following families:

(randomly chosen on 1/26):

Harnisch Family
265 Buehler Ave.
N., WI '57

Bill & Marna L.
1380 Rain Dance Trail
N., WI '57

Lisa M.
341 Tyler Ave.
P.E., WI '69

Linda & Curtis F.
1451 4th Street
P.E., WI '69

March Household

Throughout March, the congregation is asked to pray
for the following families:

(randomly chosen on 2/12):

Mykisens

3164 Swanson Rd.
W.R., WI '95

Sue & Ken B.

8311 St. Hwy 13 S, Unit 3
W.R., WI '94

Marge & Randy B.

1129 Bridgewater Dr.
W.R., WI '94

Mayeks

1930 County Rd W.
Bancroft, WI 54921

Haddows

6621 Cama Dr.
W.R., WI '94

**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

Circle of Friends

News:

The group will sell
brownies, cookies,
rice crispy treats
for the May 17th
Village Rummage
Sale
outside Maribeth's
home.

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!**

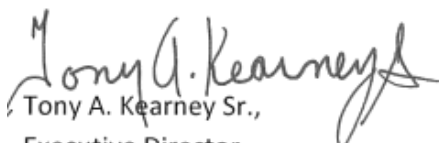
Dear Ms. Eyster,

Old Socks Makes Big \$\$\$

As the Executive Director of Northcott Neighborhood House I would like to thank you for the \$1,888.90 donation through the TerraCycle recycling socks for reward points. Your donation has already made an impact; when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world. Your kindness supports our true mission of serving the community.

Northcott Neighborhood House has served the Milwaukee community for 65 years. Thank you for your donation and support of our mission, "Building A Better Future & Honoring Our Legacies".

Sincerely,


 Tony A. Kearney Sr.,
 Executive Director

Our collection of used socks last year was added to the collection from UWIF units across the state. Together, it raised \$1,888.90 for Northcott. Ms. Eyster must have been the UWIF representative for the project. Sometimes, a simple collection can 'bless our socks right off!'

Worship Servants for February/March

COMMUNION: CANDLES:	GREETER(S)	USHER	LITURGIST	PEW AMBASSADOR	REFRESHMENTS
FEBRUARY 23RD	Sharon S.	Pat M.	Kathy Mc.		X
MARCH 2ND					X
ASH WEDN. (2/6)					X
SUN., MARCH 9TH					X
LENT WED. (2/12)			X	X	
SUN., MARCH 16TH					
LENT WED. (2/19)	X	X			X
SUN., MARCH 23RD					X
LENT WED. (2/26)			X	X	
SUN., MARCH 30TH					X

Sundays in February/March

Febru'y 16 th	Black History Sunday	SERIES: <i>JESUS HEALS</i>	<i>"Is Jesus the One?"</i>
Febru'y 23 rd			Jesus forgives a woman
March 2 nd	Transfiguration Sunday <i>Communion Sunday</i>		Jesus is transfigured.
March 9 th	First Sunday in Lent	SERIES: <i>JOURNEY TO THE CROSS AND BEYOND</i>	The Good Samaritan / Mary & Martha
March 16 th	Lent.2		Jesus Preaches Repentance
March 23 rd	Lent.3 / Women's History		Kin'dom Parables: "The Lost is Found"
March 30 th	Lent.4		The Rich Man & Lazarus



Ash Wednesday Service



Wednesday, March 5th, 2025
7:00 PM – PEUMC sanctuary

Life lived without the reality of death is lived cheaply, shallowly, in a half-sleep always pushing away and denying reality.

On Ash Wednesday, we revel in the knowledge that we are stardust and to the “stars” we shall return.

An atheist may conclude:

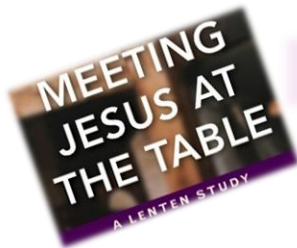
“We, indeed, return to dust – so indulge now!”

A Christian should conclude:

“You are right, we return to (star)dust – so bring about abundance in life today!”

Our overwhelming fear of the unknown causes so many of us to settle for less, something smaller, something manageable, within the confines of safety.

THEME: “Dining Alfresco: The Feeding of the Multitude” – Mark 6:30-44



Wednesday Evening Lenten Services

Weekly at 7:00 PM

“MEETING JESUS AT THE TABLE”



Weaving art, Scripture, reflection, and a guide for leaders, this Lenten series is a gift. We all hunger. We all eat. Jesus meets us in the sacred ordinary acts of breaking bread together. In a world of power struggle and food insecurity, we remember and celebrate that at God’s Table all are welcome and there is always enough.

Date	Theme	Scripture	Church
Wed., March 12 th	The Welcome Table: <i>“He Eats with Tax Collectors & Sinners!”</i>	Matthew 9:9-13	PEUMC
Wed., March 19 th	Surprised by Grace: Dinner Interrupted	Luke 7:36-50	Nekoosa UCC
Wed., March 26 th	Relationships & Reciprocity: Making Room at the Table	Luke 14:7-14	PEUMC
Wed., April 2 nd	Excuses & Invitations: Empty Chairs at the Table	Luke 14:15-24	Nekoosa UCC
Wed., April 9 th	Hospitality & Discipleship: A Meal with Chosen Family	John 12:1-8	PEUMC
Thurs., April 17 th	A Meal of Memories: Not the Last Supper (Maundy Thursday)	Matthew 26:17-30	Nekoosa UCC

NUCC will provide the liturgists for when PEUMC host.

We need to have liturgists ready for the three times we are NUCC.

We have decided to have refreshments after *each* service.

NOTE: The final combined service is our Maundy Thursday service.

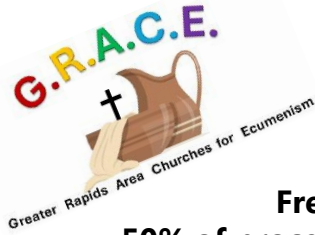
Ash Wednesday and Good Friday will be held at our separate churches.

G.R.A.C.E. Trivia Night Fundraiser

Sunday, February 23rd, 2025

2:00 – 4:00 PM

Two Doors Down / B's Taphouse
(140 E. Grand Ave. – downtown Rapids)



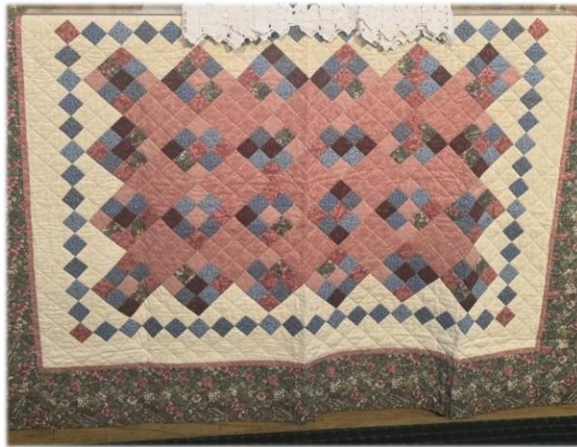
Free trivia / silent auction items / freewill offering

50% of proceeds from food & drinks purchased also support our cause.

All proceeds will benefit the student meal debt in South Wood County schools.

Looking Far Ahead:

PEUMC is scheduled to host the FOCUS NEIGHBORHOOD MEALS again on **Thursday, November 20th**. (Due to a change of staff, we are accidentally left off last year, though we were waiting for our assignment.) We told them that we enjoy the Thursday before Thanksgiving.



A Stitch in Time

Judy M. and Jef D. have both loaned the church their handmade quilts to be used as altar cloths during this short "green" season of the church year. The first photo is of Judy's quilt. She said it was one of her first practice quilts meant to be used as a wall hanging; she really loves the diagonal block look. The second photo is of Jef's (Jennifer) quilt. The name of the quilt is "Spirit of the Northwoods," featuring beautiful scenes of wildlife. A label on the back says: "To Tom, the love of my life. From Jef, your wife. Pieced & quilted by Jef D____. Mercer, WI. March 2010."

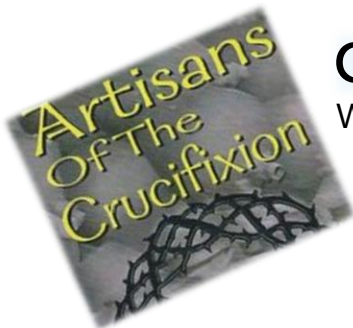
U.W.I.F. – Special Mission Recognition

Each year, the United Women in Faith (UWIF) present special mission recognitions to those who demonstrate our purpose – mission, fellowship, community ministries, and more. This year our recipients are **Pat Mc.**, and **Sue and Ken B.**

Pat is such a loyal supporter, especially at bazaar time. He does so many things for our church and is not even a member.

Sue & Ken work as a team to provide beautiful things and we honor them for their time, talent, and dedication to the bazaar.

Thank you, **Pat, Sue, and Ken** for your support, encouragement, and faithful service to our church and UWIF unit. We done, all three of you! You are a wonderful example to all of us!



Community Lenten Services

Wednesdays: March 12th, 19th, 26th, April 2nd & 9th
12:15-12:45 PM

Centralia Center Community Theater
220 3rd Ave S., Suite 6, Wisconsin Rapids

Theme: "Artisans of the Crucifixion"



Find unique perspectives on Jesus' crucifixion through the eyes of a blacksmith, carpenter, stonemason, tanner, and basket-maker.

The G.R.A.C.E. clergy will be rotating through this 5-part series. This mini study/service takes only 30 minutes, helpful to those who wish to take part during their lunch hour.



Q: When are the main entry doors locked at PEUMC?

A: About 10-15 minutes after the service/event begins.

Q: What if I'm running late to a service or event and the front door is already locked?

A: Look for this sign and doorbell on the front door. Firmly press it in the center with your thumb.

Q: Won't I disturb the service?

A: No. The photo on the right is of the receiver located in the sanctuary. It is not visible to anyone but from the "usher's pew." It does NOT make a noise or tone; it lights up for about 6 seconds (it's designed for the hearing impaired). This will alert the ushers that someone is at the door.

Q: What if the event is in another part of the building?

A: There are two other receivers located in the kitchen and near the offices. These DO make a soft tone (the melody of "Fur Elise"). This alerts anyone in these spaces that someone is at the front door. This is particularly helpful during office hours when people are the front doors instead of the office doors.

Pope Francis Responses to Recent U.S. Justification for Mass Deportations

The leader of the Catholic Church addressed the controversial program [immigration crackdown] in a letter Tuesday to U.S. bishops, warning that mass deportation "will end badly" if based on force. Pope Francis responded to V_____, a Catholic, who posted on social media in January referencing the medieval Catholic concept of "ordo amoris," or "order of love," to suggest that Catholics must give priority to nonimmigrants: "You love your family, and then you love your neighbor, and then you love your community, and then you love your fellow citizens in your own country. And then, after that, you can focus and prioritize the rest of the world."

Francis rejected that interpretation and suggested the ethos of "ordo amoris" can be found in the story of the Good Samaritan, a teaching about helping strangers in need. "The act of deporting people who, in many cases, have left their own land for reasons of extreme poverty, insecurity, exploitation, persecution, or serious deterioration of the environment, damages the dignity of many men and women, and of entire families, and places them in a state of particular vulnerability and defenselessness," the pope wrote. "Christian love is not a concentric expansion of interests that little by little extend to other persons and groups." (This is abridged from Wisconsin NPR).

Over the Stormy Depths

*Sermon preached by Pastor Caleb at the Wisconsin Rapids Moravian Church
Sunday, February 9th, 2025 – 10:15 AM / G.R.A.C.E. Pulpit Exchange*

On December 10th, 1735, General James Oglethorpe's flagship, *Simmonds*, left the shores of England with settlers bound for his colony known as Georgia. Aboard the *Simmonds*, was 32-year-old John Wesley and his younger brother, Charles. They had agreed to go as Ministers to Savannah and Missionaries to the Indians.

Years later, the Wesleys would be known as the founders of the Methodist movement.

So in their Methodical ways, the brother spent their days aboard the *Simmonds* sticking to their self-imposed schedule: They rose at four each morning, prayed privately for an hour, then read from the Bible for two hours with friends who were sailing with them. At seven, they ate breakfast, after which they conducted public prayers. The rest of the day, until nine each night, was meticulously segmented, with duties and rules, all related in some way to soul-saving: bible study with the other passengers, catechism for the children onboard, and a public worship service each night at seven.

Soon, complaints came about – *“these preachers are driving us insane!”* Passengers were getting annoyed that so much of the public space was taken over for religious services so much of the time. One servant woman complained that John read to her for nearly two hours from books she did not understand and that John refused to believe that she did not really enjoy it deep down. Charles, too, was all too certain he knew what was good for everybody. John wrote in his diary, *“All the people are angry at my expounding so often”*; then he added, *“I shall continue until all are convinced.”* One passenger was so angry at the Wesleys that he took matters into his own hands: he danced on the deck above their cabin between midnight and 1 AM for several nights straight, just to keep them awake.

Toward the end of their journey across the Atlantic, the Wesley brothers had an experience they would never forget. A storm at sea arose. Wesley wrote in his journal,

*“About nine in the evening, the sea broke over us
from stem to stern; burst through the windows of the state
cabin, and covered us all over . . .
About eleven I tried laying down in the cabin,
uncertain whether I should wake up alive
and much ashamed of my unwillingness to die.”*

A few days later, he wrote,

*“At noon another storm began. At four it was more
violent than before. At seven, I went to the Germans. I had
long before observed their level-headedness. I attended their
worship service. In the midst of it, the sea broke over, split
the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in
between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed
us up. The English began to scream terribly. But the
Germans calmly sang on.
I asked one of them afterward, “Were you not afraid?”
He answered, “I thank God, no.”
I asked, “But what about your women and children?
Were they not afraid?” He replied, mildly,
“No; our women and children are not afraid to die.”*

Later, John would ask one of the German pastors why they remained calm and sang their hymns during a deadly Atlantic storm, an experience that shook Wesley mentally and questioned him spiritually, while he and so many others were so afraid, so afraid of dying. The German pastor said, *“Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?”* Wesley answered, *“I do.”*

But added in his journal, *“But I fear I did not really believe it.”*

This was the experience the Wesleys had of **Moravians**, though I don't think he knew the name at the time.

John would eventually befriend a Peter Bohler, a Moravian, and learned so much from him about Moravian spirituality, which was about an assurance of faith experienced in our lives as love, peace, and joy. But these emotions were in short supply for both the anxious Wesley brothers all the time.

Two years later, a disheartened Wesley left to return to England, his mission to convert the Indians and minister to the colonists had failed. Soon, friends prevailed upon him to attend a Moravian society meeting on Aldersgate Street in London.

He wrote a very famous entry in his journal, known and beloved by most Methodists even today, a passage that is immortalized on a giant commemorative plaque in the shape of a flame that stands near the location of this occurrence – which is now on the property of the Museum of London:

“In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a Moravian society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Martin Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me.”

Years later, John would spend a summer at Herrnhut, Germany, the so-called Moravian headquarters. He would learn about the classes and bands that organized the people there. And this became the model that John used to create his own societies of practicing Methodists, many of whom were Moravians.

Wesley and Nicolaus Zinzendorf also corresponded regularly. While Zinzendorf focused on the Germans within the Lutheran Church, Wesley focused on the English in the Church of England.

Moravians and Methodists are joined at the hip (acknowledging that Moravians preceded the Methodists by many centuries). Both of us have shared so much in common from the very beginning: beliefs and practices. Greater freedom for women. A stress upon equality before God.

There had been talks between Wesley and Zinzendorf to merge their two movements into one. But they did have a falling out; and talks of merging had ceased. On the second floor of the Moravian church in Herrnhut is a small museum. There, the busts of Zinzendorf & Wesley stand side by side. And any average scholar of the Wesleys will tell you very quickly that the Moravians were the single greatest influence in the spirituality and practice of the Wesleys and the People Called Methodists.

Today, United Methodists are proud of our United Methodist Committee on Relief (or UMCOR). And the Moravians have their Board of World Mission’s Disaster Response program. The internet reminded me of something I already knew:

“The collaborative disaster relief efforts between the Moravian Church and the United Methodist Church is often abbreviated as M&M. These two denominations have a long history of working together to provide aid and support in times of crisis.”

The United Methodist Church is known by its cross-and-flames emblem. Two flames representing the merging of the Methodists and German Evangelical United Brethren in 1968. But the flames themselves were chosen to remember, in part, John Wesley’s heart-warming experience – the experience he claims sparked his faith that caused the Methodist movement to break forth throughout England and the States – an event that took place at a Moravian gathering.

Our Scripture story today is the call of the first disciples. When Jesus tells those fishermen, to go back out and let their nets down again, it reminds me of the famous moment when Wesley first experienced the Moravians on his journey to America.

“They caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.”

It occurred to me that sinking boats in the ancient times was probably very scary. They didn’t have life jackets & other safety equipment like we have today. You had to swim or sink. That must have been scary.

I'm also reminded that on this same Sea, Jesus and His disciples would experience a storm that threatens the lives of everyone on board. I'd like to think that Jesus would be a good Methodist, running around, anxious and screaming the whole time. But, as it turns out, Jesus was more like a Moravian – fast asleep in the back of the boat.

Today, in the world, in our nation, in our own communities, and even inside our churches, it can feel like a tempest – a tempest in a teapot. In a storm out a sea, it's hard to know what's up or down – the horizon is blocked, and the waves are rocking and rolling the boat: The water pours in – breaks the mainsail – drenches us – and threatens our lives! Life is outside our control! All we can do is scream!

These past few weeks, we have been given a lot in our news that we can scream about. Sometimes, it feels like our voices are hoarse and strained from reacting every moment of every day. Our eyes red from crying so much. Our hearts discouraged. We run around anxious and restless. We see fear tactics and agitations taking place in people in positions over us. A giant restless sea. That's what we are experiencing together – a storm.

But Jesus slept through it! And the Moravians sang through it!

I don't think the lesson is about being indifferent. Uncaring. Oblivious. That wasn't Wesley's take away from the Moravians. Their heads weren't in the clouds.

Some believe that what is happening in our nation, and even around the world, right now is an intentional plan to overwhelm us and, perhaps, even distract us from real issues. Not just from one person, but from many. An *artificial* storm. A *man-made* tempest.

A few people last week told me, *"I feel so helpless and powerless."*

When I shared that with someone else, they corrected me, *"We can't say that. They *want* us to feel helpless and powerless. We must stay level-headed and keep on keeping on. Tackling each issue at a time. We cannot say we've 'lost faith in humanity' or that we've given up. That only plays into their hands."*
(You can define 'they' however you want!)

We cannot wear ourselves out, friends, spreading our agitations in life by agitating others (like the young Wesleys did, needing to save every soul onboard before the end of the trip. _

We need to be like the Moravians who calmly sang their psalms in the midst of the storm. Because that is the only way we will survive: As a nation. As humans.

It's a conserving of energy, to be put to better uses. Not to burn out like a flashfire. But to protect the flame in our faith. To sing the Lord's praises even over the din of the storm and the tumult of shouts happening throughout our society.

Oh ye of little faith! All you need to do to calm the storm, is to speak softly, (carry a big stick), and tell the storm, like Jesus, *"Enough with you!"* And that calm confidence, of not backing down, of standing on our promises, always scares the daylight out of the storms that rage over us. Because storms are just a pile of insecurities that don't amount to a hill of beans; a house of cards ready to fall down with the slightest breath.

Simon Peter saw all the fish, the nets breaking, the boats sinking, and he got afraid. *"It is finished. I'm done for! I've been a sinful man!"* He was ready to give up! But Jesus reminded him: *"Your fear and your angst are overlooking the miracles of abundance taking place in front of your very eyes right now!"*

As long as we are screaming and yelling – trolling the internet to get a rise out of anyone – we will never see the blessings of life. Not until we are able to sing praises to God, not as an escape from the world, but as our means to prepare ourselves to embrace it and confront it. To speak truth to power.

This is your Good News: Today, Jesus offers us that calm assurance of faith. A faith that levels the mind and regulates the heart. A faith that gives us balance when the boat we are in rocks violently. A faith that can endure.

A Moravian once challenged Wesley, when he asked, *"Do you know that you are a child of God?"*

I believe the people of Port Edwards United Methodist Church and the people of Wisconsin Rapids Moravian Church are united in the same mission to share with those, crying out in their distress, in our calm and level-headed voice, *"Remember that you are a child of God."*

Only then, when we know who we are and to Whom we belong; only then, do we become be the true victors over the stormy depths.

"Our Lamb has conquered." And like the disciples did today, *"Let us follow Him."* [Moravian slogan]
AMEN!



March



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Feb 23	Feb 24	Feb 25	Feb 26	Feb 27	Feb 28	1
G.R.A.C.E Trivia Fundraiser 2:00-4:00 PM B' Taphouse					Pastor's day off	8:00 AM - Men's Breakfast @ El Café
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Transfiguration Sunday (Communion Sunday)		MemoryShare 10:30 @ El-Café	Ash Wednesday Service (PEUMC) 7:00 pm	12:15 PM – UWIF A Mission Trip from Home . . . hands-on work for Midwest Distribution Center Fellowship Hall	Pastor's day off	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
First Sunday in Lent Lion's Pancake Breakfast 8:00-Noon			Community Lenten Service 12:15-12:45 - Centralia Center (1 of 5) 7:00 pm Lenten Service PEUMC (1 of 5)		Pastor's day off	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Second Sunday in Lent 3rd Sunday Refreshments (end of hygiene drive) Leadership Council after church			Community Lenten Service 12:15-12:45 - Centralia Center (2 of 5) 7:00 pm Lenten Service Nekoosa UCC (2 of 5)		Pastor's day off	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Third Sunday in Lent Women's History Sunday			Community Lenten Service 12:15-12:45 - Centralia Center (3 of 5) 7:00 pm Lenten Service PEUMC (3 of 5)		Pastor's day off	
30	31	April 1	April 2	April 3	April 4	April 5
Fourth Sunday in Lent		(MemoryShare 10:30 @ El-Café)	(Community Lenten Service 12:15-12:45 – Centralia Center) (7:00 pm – Lenten Service NUCC)		Pastor's day off	(8:00 AM - Men's Breakfast @ El Café)

Birthdays: Curtis F. – 3/5, Page C. – 3/11, Becky T. – 3/13,
Jean O. – 3/19, Doug C. – 3/21, Kari L. – 3/22,
Nathan H. – 3/23, Travis H. – 3/24, Kali M. – 3/27,
Rose W. 3/29, Samantha G. – 3/31
Anniversaries: LuAnn & Dennis S. – 3/7

Church Office Hours:
Connie: Mon. , Wed. -Fri. : 8:00a – 1:00p
Pastor: Mon. thru Thurs.: 9a – 1:00p
Office Closed Tuesdays