

Wednesday, March 12th, 2025

COMBINED LENTEN SERVICE – 7:00 PM



| | | |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| March 12th | Port Edwards UMC | 7:00 PM |
| March 19 th | Nekoosa UCC | 7:00 PM |
| March 26 th | Port Edwards UMC | 7:00 PM |
| April 2 nd | Nekoosa UCC | 7:00 PM |
| April 9 th | Port Edwards UMC | 7:00 PM |
| April 17 th | – Maundy Thursday – Nekoosa UCC – 7:00 PM | |
| April 18 th | – Good Friday – services held separately | |



Musician: Sue Mitchell Media Technician: Colby Grunden

Greeter: Candy Prahl-Tell Usher: Mike Hintz Liturgist: Lynette Hilgers

Tonight's service is led by Pastor Caleb McGregor.

Pastor Wanda lives at a distance and cannot attend all weekday services. She sends her regards.

~~~

### WORDS OF WELCOME

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP:

**L:** For everyone born, a place at our Table, clean water and bread;  
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing.

**P:** For woman & man, and all in between, revising our roles,  
deciding to share; with wisdom and grace, dividing the power.

**L:** For young and the old, and all who aren't either, a voice to be heard,  
a part in the song; the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled.

**P:** For the just and unjust, a place at Christ's Table, abuser, abused,  
with need to forgive: in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy.

**L:** For everyone born, of all identities, to live without fear, and simply to be,  
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship.

**ALL: Yes, God will delight when we are creators  
of shorter fences and longer Tables! May it be so tonight! AMEN!**

*["A Place at the Table," Shirley Erena Murray, © 1996; adapted]*

**OPENING PRAYER:**

**ALL: God of Families, Biological and Chosen,  
with grateful hearts, we come before You in worship,  
seeking Your grace and mercy.**

**Just as Your Son, Jesus Christ, called Matthew,  
a tax collector, humble but hated,  
to follow and dine with Him alongside sinners,  
we recognize Your boundless love and compassion for all of us,  
no matter our broken past or our blistering flaws.**

**Thank You, Lord, for inviting us to draw near to You,  
despite our shortcomings.**

**As we join in praise, guests dining together in Your name,  
help us to open our hearts and minds to Your teachings,  
and to the beauty of each one with us here tonight,  
that we may be guided to live lives**

**of humility, inclusive kindness, and righteousness.**

**Give us the strength to seek out those excluded from most of our tables  
and to serve them, following the example of the One who came  
not to call upon the righteous but those who know they are sin-sick.**

**Bless our time together tonight,  
the service and the fellowship that follows,  
and through it all, fill us with Your Holy Spirit,  
that we may grow in faith, love, and understanding.**

**In Jesus' name, we pray: AMEN!**

**\*OPENING HYMNS:**                      *O Christ, the Healer*                      lyrics below

- 1. O Christ, the Healer, we have come / to pray for health, to plead for friends.  
How can we fail to be restored, when reached by love that never ends?**  
  
2. From ev'ry ailment flesh endures / our bodies clamor to be freed;  
yet in our hearts we would confess / that wholeness is our deepest need.
- 3. How strong, O Lord, are our desires, how weak our knowledge of ourselves!  
Release in us those healing truths / unconscious pride resists or shelves.**
- 4. In conflicts that destroy our health / we recognize the world's disease;  
our common life declares our ills: is there no cure, O Christ, for these?**
- 5. Grant that we all, made one in faith, in Your community may find /  
the wholeness that, enriching us, shall reach the whole of humankind!**

*[lyrics: Fred Pratt Green, © 1969]*

## SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Matthew 9:9-13

*L: God is still speaking!*

**ALL: Today, we shall listen! Amen!**

♪ I love You, Lord – for Your mercy never fails me!  
All my days, I've been held in Your hands!

From the moment that I wake up, until I lay my head:  
oh, I will sing – of the goodness of God!

All my life You have been faithful! All my life You have been so, so good!  
With ev'ry breath that I am able, oh, I will sing –of the goodness of God! ♪

*“Are you too well to need Jesus today?”*

**'MEETING JESUS AT THE TABLE**

**THE FAMILY TABLE**

Pastor Caleb

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**ALL: Merciful God, we confess that we have fallen short of Your expectations.**

**We have sinned in our thoughts, in our words, and our actions.**

**We have not always loved You with our whole hearts,  
nor have we loved our neighbors as much as we love ourselves  
(and many of us struggle even to love ourselves).**

**We often choose paths of selfishness, pride, and indifference**

**over the paths You lay out for us: compassion and unconditional love.**

**Just as Your Son chose the outcast as friends and sinners as table-mates,  
we recognize that we, too, are in need of Him to sit with us as our Table Host.**

**We are sorely in need to build ourselves a longer Table  
and invite more people of “ill-repute” to dine with us.**

**We are truly sorry. Forgive us & cleanse us. In Jesus' name we pray: AMEN.**

***[MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION & CONFESSION]***

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

*L: Hear the Good News of Jesus Christ:*

Jesus chooses to dine with us, *even us*; no one is beyond saving grace!

**ALL: In His name, we are all a forgiven people! Glory to God! AMEN!**

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*(each time):* L: Loving God, reveal Your compassion,

**ALL: and bring wholeness to us all!**

**\*CLOSING HYMN:**            *Come, Sinner, to the Gospel Feast*            lyrics below

**Vs. 1: Come, sinners, to the gospel feast; let ev'ry soul be Jesus' guest.  
You need not one be left behind, for God has called all humankind.**

**Vs. 2: Send by my Lord, on You I call: the invitation is to all!  
Come, all the world! Come, sinner, thou! All things in Christ are ready now.**

**Vs. 3: Come, all you souls by sin oppressed, you restless wanderers after rest;  
you poor, and maimed, and deaf, and blind, in Christ a hearty welcome find.**

**Vs. 4: My message as from God I give: you all may come to Christ and live;  
O let His love your hearts constrain, nor suffer Him to die in vain.**

**Vs. 5: This is the time! No more delay! This is the Lord's accepted day!  
Come now, this moment, at His call, and live for Him who died for all!**

*[Words: Charles Wesley, 1747]*

**\*BENEDICTION**

## REFRESHMENTS IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL

TONIGHT'S TABLE QUESTIONS BASED ON "THE FAMILY TABLE: MATTHEW 9"

1. Why is a "great banquet" the Bible's go-to image for God's work in the world, the end of death, and when all people are gathered in true relationship with one another (heaven on earth)?
2. What groups of people today tend to be viewed like "tax collectors and sinners"?
3. Have you ever been shamed for who you eat with or hang out with?
4. Are there still "segregated lunch counters" today in some form? How can we "heal" these?

### OFFERING

*(place any donations in the wooden box as you leave the service tonight)*

When at Nekoosa:            Nekoosa School District School Benevolence Fund

When at Port Edwards:            Port School District Benevolence Fund

WEDNESDAY LUNCH THROUGHOUT LENT:

#### **Community Lenten Service**

WHAT: Short services over the lunch hour.    Theme: "ARTISANS OF THE CRUCIFIXION."

WHO: provided by the pastors of G.R.A.C.E.

(Greater Rapids Area Churches for Ecumenism); open to everyone!

WHEN: Wednesdays (March 12<sup>th</sup>/ 19<sup>th</sup> / 26<sup>th</sup> / April 2<sup>nd</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup>) **12:15 – 12:45P**

WHERE: Lois Cantin Studio Theatre (Centralia Center, downtown Rapids)

FOOD: Bring your own lunch; it is allowed inside the space.

HOLY WEEK:

#### **Live Last Supper Service**

Marshfield Wesley United Methodist Church (211 S. Maple Avenue, Marshfield, WI)

Mon., April 14<sup>th</sup> – 7-8 PM / Wed., April 16<sup>th</sup> – 7-8 PP (we'd like to take a group on Mon.)

No admission or tickets needed.

**Maundy Thursday** – 7-8 PM @ Nekoosa UCC / **Good Friday** – held at both churches separately