

JANUARY
2021



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF WAUSAU

THE MESSENGER

Dear First Family of Faith,



We've made it! As my navigation app says in a polite British accent, "You have arrived". We come to 2021 with more than a few scrapes and scars. Between the knock-out punches of the pandemic and politics and the epic loss of life and livelihoods, we probably feel more like collapsing than celebrating at the beginning of this New Year. How do we rise again, especially when our faith has been so deeply tested and our souls are still troubled?

Romans 8:26-28 (MSG) gives me help and hope: *"Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good."*

We often look up to people who can pray with eloquence and boldness. But I think God listens especially closely to people who come to Christ with "wordless sighs" and "aching groans". There are times when being able to verbalize exactly what our souls are trying to express is important, but it's more for our benefit than it is for God's ability to understand and answer us.

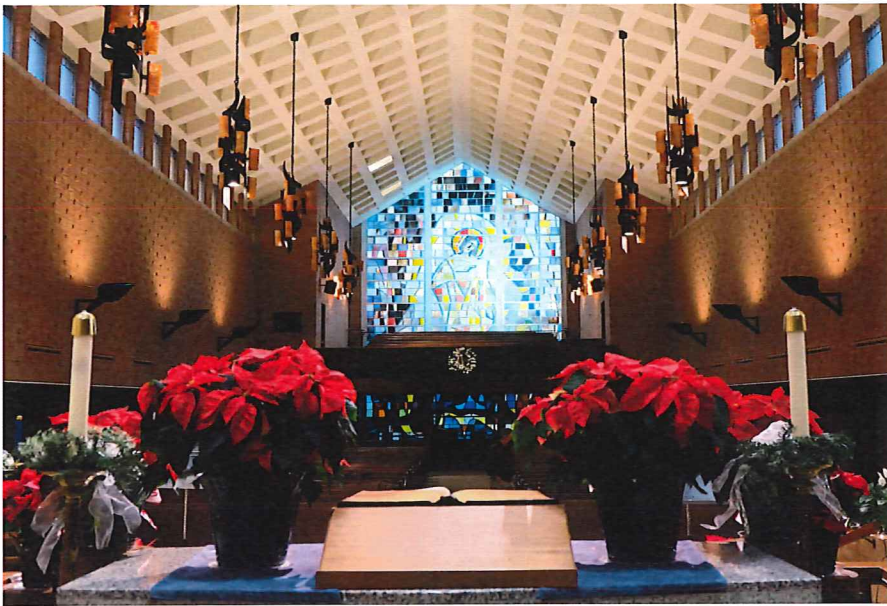
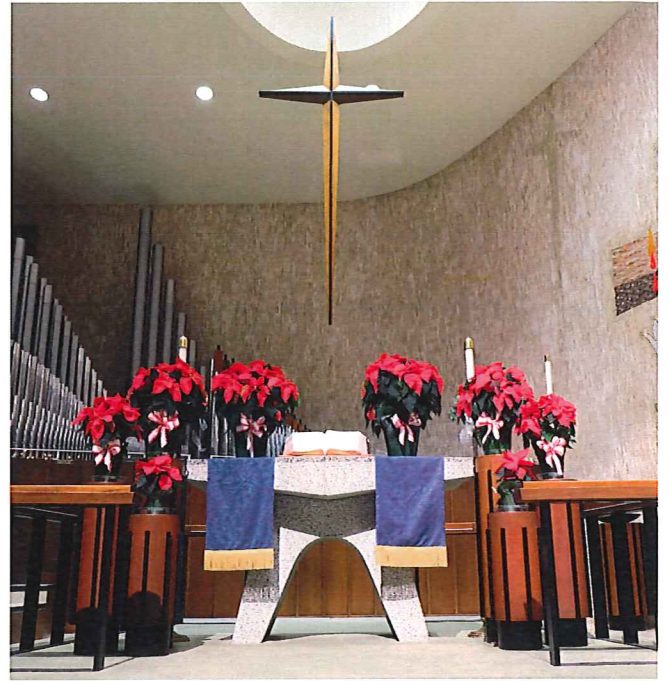
One of my goals for 2021 is to help our congregation find more meaningful ways of connecting to God through prayer. Though prayer is certainly personal, it isn't only meant to be private. Though prayer can be deeply spiritual, it isn't a magical incantation. Prayer is, first of all, a belief and an action of humility and trust in God. If we start there, then the words of prayer that reach God's heart in spirit and truth will come. Prayer is practicing patience as we ask God to show us both the plan and priorities of Christ in our lives and church. Prayer is preparing ourselves to respond with praise and action as we see God's plan unfold.

Almost two years ago our church was introduced to something called "Breakthrough Prayer". At 9:03 AM and/or PM (based on our street address, 903 N 3rd St), you prayed a simple one or two sentence prayer wherever you were every day. We've seen God answer some of those prayers! We've also had a lot of change and new opportunities that give us a fresh start to look and pray for God to "breakthrough". While a new year is nice, we really need a renewed call and commitment to simple but powerful prayer together.

The MCCI Implementation Team is in the process of putting the passion of our church into a simple "Breakthrough Prayer" for our church to pray together. In addition to the understandable sighs and groans you pray, are there any words or phrases that keep stirring in your spirit? Please email or call to let me know so we can see how they may be part of a collective cry from our hearts to God's ears. We hope to introduce a new Breakthrough Prayer within a few weeks. I am confident that God's mercies will lead us to find and fulfill our calling as a church. One day, we will all hear Jesus' voice say, "You have arrived! Well done, my good and faithful servant!"

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Rebecca





Thank you! The 2020 UMW cookie sale was a success. A big thank you to those who baked, packed, and bought cookies. And a shout out to Nancy Bogomil who sewed the masks that were included as a surprise with each order. We raised almost \$1,000 that will benefit Methodist missions. (All of this would not have been possible without the help of the staff.)

If you are able to help with the Warming Center meal by providing a salad (perhaps Jell-O or fruit), a dessert (perhaps cupcakes or cookies), or are willing to prepare a hotdish or contribute towards the cost of the meal, contact Barbara Ritchie, 715-205-4622, barbjack57@msn.com. Thanks to Maggie, Mary Ann and Linda for helping with the first 2 meals.



Celebrating Andy's 30 year work anniversary at First UMC. Congratulations!

STAFF

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Monday – Thursday

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The Messenger
First United Methodist Church of Wausau
903 Third Street
Wausau, WI 54403

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Our Mission:

Living as a community where
God is forming deeply committed
followers of Christ.

WORSHIP IN JANUARY

Instead of preaching a thematic series, we're going to join with our Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, UCC, and many other cousins on our Christian family tree and follow together something called the Revised Common Lectionary. It is a 3-year cycle of Scripture reading each Sunday that covers a Psalm, an Old Testament reading, a New Testament letter reading, and a Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) reading. We are using this through Pentecost, May 23, 2021.

Sunday, January 3

Epiphany Sunday

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12

Sunday, January 10

First Sunday after Epiphany

Psalm 29, Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11

Sunday, January 17 *Second Sunday after Epiphany*

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20,

John 1:43-51

Sunday, January 24 *Third Sunday after Epiphany*

Psalm 62:5-12, Jonah 3:1-5, 10, Mark 1:14-20

Sunday, January 31 *Fourth Sunday after Epiphany*

Psalm 111, Deuteronomy 18:15-20, Mark 1:21-28



We lift up Barb Hunger who was hospitalized, in rehab, and is in the process of moving to Primrose. God's healing grace be with you, Barb.

We grieve this month with the loss of: Jona Freeman, sister-in-law of Jennifer Marzu, who died on December 10th.

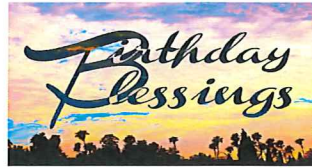
Steven Kell, son of Derald and Darlene Kell, who died December 22nd.



Our Journey:
**To live and share
God's love
in service, joy &
hope.**



Due to the restrictions for the COVID -19 outbreak, we will not meet for the month of January. We will resume our fellowship as soon as the restrictions are lifted. Hope to see you soon!



January

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1 Alice Schacht
Jennifer Johnson | 8 Michael Sydow
LaRae Horton
Presley Wyrick | 20 Alan Hauber
Lila Rouse |
| 2 Sandra Salzman
Amelia Higgins | 11 Emalee Melville | 21 Mary Ann Dykes
Arlene Gundelfinger* |
| 3 Susan Rye | 12 Michael Turner
Alonzo Dvorak | 26 Don Misoni
Sandi Schmoltd |
| 5 David Erickson | 13 Debra Martin
John Stange | 27 Sophie Marschall |
| 6 Mitch Goertz | 16 Duane LaCrosse
Gideon Adams | 31 Jeffery Koss |
| 7 Gail Cain
Scott Denfeld
Mary Towle
Christine Melville | 17 Wynter Tesch | |

* Signifies a member who for health reasons cannot be at church regularly. We invite you this month to remember these members in your prayers.

When God Mixes



A while back I read a story of a visiting pastor who attended a men's breakfast in the middle of a rural farming area of the country.

The group had asked an older farmer, decked out in bib overalls, to say grace for the morning breakfast.

"Lord, I hate buttermilk", the farmer began.

The visiting pastor opened one eye to glance at the farmer and wonder where this was going.

The farmer loudly proclaimed, "Lord, I hate lard."

Now the pastor was growing concerned.

Without missing a beat, the farmer continues, "And Lord, you know I don't much care for raw white flour."

The pastor once again opened an eye to glance around the room and saw that he wasn't the only one beginning to feel uncomfortable.

Then the farmer added, "But Lord, when you mix them all together and bake them, I do love warm fresh biscuits. So, Lord, when things come up that we don't like, when life gets hard, when we don't understand what you're saying to us, help us to just relax and wait until you are done mixing. It will probably be even better than biscuits. AMEN."



Random Thoughts by Mike Zahn North Central District Lay Leader

"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but they that keepeth the law, happy are they." Proverbs 28:19

The Wisconsin UMC is divided into five districts, and I have been asked by our District Superintendent, Rev. Tsuker Yang, to be the District Lay Leader for the UMC's North Central District, which comprises 19 counties from La Crosse to Vilas (including Marathon County) and I have accepted the challenge.

Do you know what the North Central District's vision for our region is? (Did you even know there is a North Central District?) It is Rev. Yang's passion to make sure the vision becomes known, and implemented within our district. The vision is to work together on a regional basis to strengthen our churches.

Strengthen our churches to help current members grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our churches to reach out to new people through our ministries. Strengthen the pastors of our churches to equip, train and lead the people in their congregations. Strengthen our churches by providing growth opportunities through Lay Servant Ministries Classes and other means. God is depending on us to do His work. I will be trying to do my part by participating in the work of our district, and by encouraging you to learn new ways to know God and make God truly known in our communities. May God's spirit lead us all!

Aging & Disability Resource Center

Call or share with someone you know! The ADRC of Central Wisconsin is hosting another Powerful Tools for Caregivers class virtually in January. This is a six-week class to help family caregivers take care of themselves. In this weekly interactive class, caregivers will learn to reduce stress, improve confidence, improve communication, and locate helpful resources. Individual technology is required as this is a virtual offering. The cost is free, though donations for the "Caregiver Helpbook" are welcome. Call Scott Seeger for more info: 715-261-6066

January Mission Offering

One of the ministries of our church and one of the ways that we minister in partnership with others, is by serving a free meal open to all in the Wausau community on the 5th Sunday of the month at the First Presbyterian Church. This month it will be January 31, 2021.

Ray Nowaczyk

Community Dinner

This is a meaningful ministry where we are able to offer meals to the community. With Covid-19 we are offering boxed meals and handing them out in the parking lot of the First Presbyterian Church. If you want to get involved, we will be needing baked goods to add to the meal. Please contact Jen Johnson at 715-470-2527 and she will arrange a time to pick up any baked goods. Please also keep our dinner guests in your prayers.

Thank you, Jen Johnson

FUMC Wired

Website: fumcwausau.org
with links to the weekly sermon
in text and podcast

facebook.com/WausauFUMC

WiFi Network: FUMC Guest
(password: *fumcpublic*)

Phone: 715.842.2201

A Beginner's Bible Reading Plan – Month 5

Name: _____ Month: _____

Daily (5 or 6 days a week):

1. **Pray**—Ask God to help you understand and believe what you are about to read.
2. **Read and mark**—Read one passage from the list below. Then put a mark in the box beside the reading.
3. **Think**—For example: What new thing did I learn? What puzzles me? How does this passage fit into the big story of the Bible? What does it teach about God and his plans? Is there a reason to praise God? A promise to claim? An example to follow? A sin to avoid? A command to obey? An idea for loving God or my neighbor? A prayer to pray?
4. **Pray**—Talk to God about what you read.
5. **Share**—Tell a friend (or your parents) one thing that you learned. Or ask them one question about what you read.

Extra (once a month if needed):

Read 5 passages in a row, all at once! Remember to put a mark beside all five readings.

God gives his nation a king (continued)

- 2 Samuel 5:1-12.....David is anointed King over all Israel
- 2 Samuel 6:1-19, 23.....The ark of the covenant is brought into Jerusalem
- 1 Chronicles 16:1-22.....David's song of thanks after the ark arrives (1)
- 1 Chronicles 16:23-36.....David's song of thanks after the ark arrives (2)
- 2 Samuel 7:1-17.....God's covenant with David
- Psalm 19:1-14.....David celebrates God's creation and God's law

God punishes and delivers his sinful king

- 2 Samuel 11:1-5, 14-15, 26-27.....David's sins with Bathsheba and Uriah
- 2 Samuel 12:1-13, 24-25.....Nathan rebukes David and Solomon is born
- Psalm 32:1-11.....David celebrates God's forgiveness
- 2 Samuel 15:1-6, 13-16, 30.....Absalom conspires against David
- 2 Samuel 18:1, 5-16, 19-21, 31-33.....Absalom is killed and David mourns
- 2 Samuel 22:1-16.....David's psalm of deliverance (1)
- 2 Samuel 22:17-31.....David's psalm of deliverance (2)
- 2 Samuel 22:32-51.....David's psalm of deliverance (3)
- 1 Chronicles 21:1-8, 14-17, 28-30; 22:1-5 David sins with the census but God answers him
- Psalm 103:1-22.....David blesses the LORD for his steadfast love
- Psalm 139:1-24.....David ponders how God searches and knows him

God blesses his nation as he promised in his covenant

- 1 Kings 1:28-40; 2:10-12.....Solomon is crowned king and David dies
- 1 Kings 3:3-15.....God gives Solomon great wisdom
- 1 Kings 3:16-28.....Solomon shows his great wisdom
- 1 Kings 6:1, 7, 11-14, 19-22.....Solomon builds the temple
- 2 Chronicles 5:2-14.....Solomon brings the ark of the covenant into the temple
- 2 Chronicles 6:12-23, 34-42; 7:1-6..Solomon prays and the LORD's glory fills the temple

God give his nation wisdom and psalms

- Proverbs 3:1-24.....“Trust in the LORD” and “Blessed is the one who finds wisdom”
- Proverbs 6:6-11, 16-22.....“Go to the ant” and “Six things that the LORD hates”

This plan has 25 readings per month, with about 15 verses per reading. Month 5 has 409 verses—an average of 16.4 verses per reading.

January & February “World Religions” Study

The Wednesday evening study group will be offering a “World Religions” study for the month of January and continuing through mid-February. Meeting dates are below. All meetings will take place via Zoom from 6:00-7:00 p.m. Anyone is welcomed to join. Please contact Daniel Flesch at daniel.flesch@outlook.com if you would like to get the Zoom link or have any questions.

Zoom Meeting I.D. 747 916 3398

Wednesday, January 6th – [Introduction to Christianity & World Religions](#)

Wednesday, January 13th – [Islam](#)

Wednesday, January 20th – [Hinduism](#)

Wednesday, January 27th – [Taoism](#)

Wednesday, February 3rd – [Confucianism](#)

Wednesday, February 10th – [Buddhism](#)

Wednesday, February 17th – [Judaism](#)



Our Financial Picture for November 2020			
November Revenue		November Expenses	
Pledged Offering	\$ 15,379.00	Staffing	\$ 16,989.81
Non-Pledged Offering	\$ 6,077.00	Programming	\$ 688.86
Other Revenue	\$ 25.00	Apportionments	\$ 4,227.00
From Endowment	\$ 1,546.34	Building Operations	\$ 3,177.09
Total Revenue	\$ 23,027.34	Total Expenses	\$ 25,082.76
		Net YTD	\$ (2,055.42)

GIVING

Stewardship as Discipleship

January 2021

“You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.” (2 Corinthians 9:10-12) God established a design for worshipping when God revealed to Moses the plan for the Tent of Meeting (aka Tabernacle). Central to that worship was sacrificial giving. God required gifts of animals and grain be brought to the Tabernacle to be sacrificed and offered to God because it was pleasing to God. These gifts were the first fruits of the agricultural work of the people representing a tithe (10%) of their production.

God knew that an institution like Temple worship would require resources to be sustained. We read in the Old Testament that the people’s gifts of meat and bread, cooked in a way pleasing to God, directly provided food for the priests, guards, and caretakers of the temple and the spiritual leaders of the tribes. Sharing the fruits of the harvest became the large feasts we read about in Jesus’ time.

In the modern Christian church, we maintain this pattern of giving designed by God. Now, people are called to give in a way pleasing to God: first fruits representing 10% of each family’s productivity. Though, in modern times, it is money rather than agricultural produce.

These gifts to God, offered and dedicated in our worship services, are used to maintain the institution of the church by supporting its ministry and mission. This includes worship, congregational care, spiritual development, hospitality & outreach, and missions by way of support for clergy and staff, building maintenance and other budgetary items.

What we can conclude from this is that we give first because it is a gift pleasing to God. As a result of our giving to God in worship, we also support all aspects of the important work of the church.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation