

SEPTEMBER

2021



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE MESSENGER



Dear First UMC Family of Faith,

We've all faced a lot of uncertainties together in the year I've been here. We thought we were close to the "Covid Clear", only to have the Delta variant take us several steps back. We've tried to understand the risks and respond accordingly with better and balanced safety precautions. On a personal level, I'm deeply grateful for your prayers and support as I navigated a couple of weeks recently not knowing whether a mass was cancerous or not. It is a great relief to have the softball-sized cyst now gone and know there is no cancer!

As I've recovered and begun to prepare our church for a full return to ministry this fall, we find ourselves wrestling with uncertainties again. Will it be safe to start choir and bell rehearsals and share these ministries in Sunday worship? Can we safely share meals on Wednesday evenings? Is it wise to begin Sunday School for our children and youth? I'm so proud of our 12+ year-olds who have all been vaccinated, but also protective of our younger children who are unable to be vaccinated.

In consulting with the Marathon County Health Department and our leaders and volunteers, we've decided to postpone our Wednesday night meals until COVID cases drop to a safer level. In the meantime, it has been deemed relatively safe to have Bell Choir rehearsals and Confirmation Class at 6pm, and Adult Choir rehearsals at 7pm in the Sanctuary. In addition, we will have Sunday School for all ages at 9 am; children, youth, and adult.

Uncertainties like these are vexing for personalities like mine who love to make and stick to plans. Then I feel a nudge by the Holy Spirit, who reminds me that these are "First World Problems". We have the blessings of safe vaccines, masks, food and supply pick-up and delivery services, and online options for nearly everything in life and faith. It's not what we're used to, and it's not always easy or convenient or comfortable, but that's exactly how we grow in faith. Our comfort, assumptions, and conveniences are challenged, and we're offered grace from God to find spiritual strength and growth.

Let's praise God for the ways we can meet and worship together. Continue to encourage one another as we persevere through frustrations, and trust that God is using this to deepen our faith, hope, and love.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Rebecca

715 842-2201

[www.fumcwausau.org](http://www.fumcwausau.org)





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Please join us at Pine Lake next summer, July 15-17, 2022

## Refugee Resettlement Update

It has been heartwrenching for all of us to watch the evacuations of thousands of Afghan refugees along with Americans. No matter what our opinions are regarding the time and money the US spent over there the past 20 years, we can agree that God is calling us to honor our commitment to provide safe refuge for Afghans who risked their lives to help our troops and country as translators, guards, guides, educators, etc.

Just two weeks before Kabul fell and mass evacuations began, the US Dept. of State told the Immigration Directors of every state that all new refugee resettlement sites (like Wausau) would have a 6 month period starting in October 2021 to build infrastructure in our community to ensure long-term success in welcoming and retaining refugees. That means we'd need to wait **until April 2022** before our first refugees would come. I certainly understand and support the rationale, but also wrestle with the need for humanitarian urgency.

Then on Aug. 25, I got an urgent call to join an emergency zoom meeting with 50 leaders and site directors from across the country who work for the ECDC resettlement agency. The US State Dept. needed urgent input as to how many of our Afghan allies could be resettled by all nine national resettlement agencies within the next 3-6 weeks. They didn't know if Wausau (and another new site in VT) would be needed to step up quickly, but the Immigration Director in WI said that I should move forward with finding out how many households (with an average of 5 people) Wausau could sponsor on short notice. The Zoom meeting ended at 4:30 pm, and the US Dept. of State needed to get a commitment from each city by 1 pm the next day.

I quickly emailed this update and urgent request to the growing list of city and faith leaders I've gotten to know. By 8 am, there were already 12 sponsorship groups committing to raise \$1500-3500 (depending on family size), find and furnish an apartment/home, and work to help refugee families get assimilated in all aspects of work, school, health, language, and culture. However, I also got an email early that morning explaining that the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (a division of the US State Dept.) decided they did NOT need new sites like Wausau to be part of the Afghan Ally program after all. Apparently, all the existing agencies and sites had committed to enough capacity to resettle our Afghan Allies, so that is reassuring.

After emailing leaders once again with this news, someone wisely replied, "That was a successful fire drill!". It certainly was, as it showed everyone the ability our churches and city have to quickly respond with compassion and commitment. It also brought forward many individuals with a variety of talents and time who are eager to help build our infrastructure. I've been the de facto coordinator and have been eager to pass on these responsibilities to a new Site Director once they're hired. One person I met through this "fire drill" is Gwen Paul, who was raised in Wausau and moved away for college and a career working in ministry with refugees in Burundi, the Congo, and most recently Lancaster, PA. She and her husband moved back to Wausau this spring, knowing they still had a call to work with refugees and not understanding why God was calling them back to a city where there were no refugees to resettle. After sharing the story of how and when this all got started (at the same time they moved here), she offered to become the interim coordinator until the new Site Director is hired and trained. Her gifts and experience are a great blessing and relief to me as I pass her the baton, and will really help prepare Wausau in a way that I didn't have the time or knowledge to do.

It's important that we stay flexible yet prepared throughout this process. We don't know for sure which country we'll be getting refugees from, but we can pray and trust God to send us people from a culture that will help strengthen everyone in various ways. We don't know for sure when they'll come, but we can pray and trust God to provide us with the right housing, furnishings, and resources needed to help a family feel welcomed and loved. Please join with me in praying for refugees awaiting safe placement, for our government to make wise decisions for the timing and placement of refugees, for ECDC to establish Wausau as a strong resettlement site, for Gwen Paul and all the gifted and committed leaders who have emerged, and for our community to truly understand and welcome refugees with compassion and connection.

Pastor Rebecca



## The Messenger

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

### Church Purpose:

Live and Share God's Love

# WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

### Sermon Series:

An old joke asks, "Why was Six afraid of Seven? Because Seven Eight (*ate*) Nine!" For September we will focus on chapters 7, 8, and 9 of the Gospel of Mark, as suggested by our common lectionary. The stories and words we will explore are ones that cause us to clutch our chests with concern. They evoke fears we all share when we or those we love are ill, afflicted, or challenged to our core. Join us in person or online as we find meaning in Jesus' words in Mark 8:35 – *"Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to saving yourself, your true self."* (MSG)

### Sunday Worship Times

8:00 a.m. Morning Chapel

10:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

### Sunday, September 5 - Communion

Mark 7:24-37

### Sunday, September 19

Mark 9:30-37

### Sunday, September 12

Mark 8:27-38

### Sunday, September 26 - UMW Sunday

Margaret Getzin Preaching "Rejoice, Renew, Reconnect"

## Random Thoughts by Mike Zahn

### The King's Dessert

Many centuries ago, in a land far, far away, at a time when the rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer, there lived a great and wise King. One day, during a terrible famine, the King commanded the Royal Chef and the Royal Baker to create a special dessert for him, one that would be so wonderful, and make him so happy, that everyone, even the poorest peasant, would forget all about the gnawing hunger that gripped the land.

The decree went out to the four corners of the kingdom. The King shall have a dessert created, the likes of which no one has ever seen! It will be the most exquisite and elaborate dessert ever—no expense will be spared! This dessert shall be created and presented to him by the Royal Chef and the Royal Baker at the appointed hour. After getting their instructions from the King, the Royal Chef and Royal Baker went off to work, very quietly, on the lavish dessert.

Meanwhile, the royal decree had everyone in the kingdom buzzing, from the richest to the poorest. During dinner at the palace that night, two members of the King's court speculated on what the dessert might be—"I heard that the King has ordered it to be Savarin with Chantilly Cream," one courtier whispered. The other retorted, "I'm sure it will not. It will most certainly be Apricot Frangipane Tart. The King loves apricots." The first replied, "Well, be that as it may, I can hardly wait to be at the table when the King unveils his sumptuous surprise and we members of the court get our share!" The second gentleman agreed, "I feel so blessed I am not, you know. . . out there."

At the same time, in a remote village, two peasant women did their own speculating—"Wouldn't it be grand if the King ordered Salted Caramel Apple Pie with Toasted Walnuts? I love apples." "You haven't had apples in over a year," the other peasant shot back. "I wouldn't be surprised if it turns out to be Dampfnudel." The first woman then guessed, "Perhaps it will be Dark Chocolate Chiffon Cake with a Toasted Hazelnut Glaze. I love chocolate." The second one snorted, "It will probably be Persimmon Pomegranate Tarts, with Maple Mascarpone." "The King's the only one who could afford that." Back and forth they went, until the first woman, undaunted, said, "I wouldn't care what it is. I would give anything to eat just the tiniest crumb from the King's grand dessert. I'd be in heaven!" "Well, you're not going to be invited, so you better save your pennies for whatever grain you can afford for next week's bread."

And so the waiting went on for what seemed like an eternity. The anticipation mounted to fever pitch as people all over the kingdom dreamed about what wonderful, delicious dessert the King would have for himself.

Finally, the appointed hour arrived. As the Royal Trumpeters played a majestic fanfare, the Royal Guard, along with the Royal Chef and Royal Baker, paraded the long-anticipated dessert down the red carpet on a spectacularly ornate sterling silver serving tray. They arrived at the throne and kneeled before the great King.

Then, as it seemed like the whole world stood still, the Royal Chef and the Royal Baker lifted the gilded cover, and there was--nothing. . . nothing but a loaf of bread. A loaf of ordinary bread. An audible gasp went up from the palace insiders who were in attendance. Then a hush fell over the crowd. Then the murmuring and the whispers started.

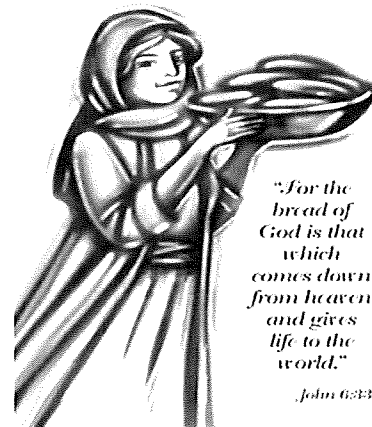
"What is that?" "It looks like a loaf of bread." "They had all this time and that's the best they could do?! "Unacceptable." "I am horrified." "I am outraged." "It's an insult." "This is not a dessert fit for the King!" "The Royal Chef and the Royal Baker. . ." "Off with their heads!"

Finally the King roared, "Silence!" And there was silence. He took the loaf of bread and lifted it to the sky, and declared, "This is my dessert. I have spared no expense to make this bread for everyone. For every man, woman, and child in the kingdom, and beyond." With that, the great and wise King broke the bread and laid it down.

And so with the King's declaration, the bread was distributed freely to all four corners of the kingdom, and beyond. And everyone could have the bread whenever they wanted.

John 6:35 NIV

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. . .



*"For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*

*John 6:33*

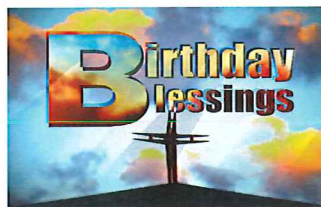


We grieve this month at the loss of our long time church members:

Jack Zei, died July 19th.

Barbara Hunger, died August 20th.

Mary Jo Bauer, died August 23rd.



# September

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Janet Wyrick                       | 18 Ann Harmon                                    |
| 2 Chloe Larson                       | 19 MaDonna McMahan<br>Curt Day<br>Jessica Wenzel |
| 3 Morgan Stamp                       | 21 Mary Borchardt<br>Martie Pahriss              |
| 4 Dawn Decker<br>Jerome Volkman      | 22 Catherine Koss                                |
| 6 Will Wyrick                        | 23 Lawrence Muelver                              |
| 7 Ray Nowaczyk                       | 26 Betsy Larson                                  |
| 8 Rob Rybarczyk                      | 27 Nick Harvey<br>Dennis Sauer*                  |
| 12 Barbara Day                       | 29 Kay Harmon                                    |
| 14 Julia Ebert                       |  |
| 16 Ginny Grothe                      |  |
| 17 Bruce Brandenburg<br>Steve Loftus |  |

\* Signifies a member who cannot attend church regularly. We invite you this month to remember these members in your prayers.

**Live and Share  
God's Love ...**

*with  
peace, joy & hope*

## Faith Formation

We will be starting up Sunday School for Children and Youth on Sunday, September 12 at 9:00 AM! The children will meet in Room 212 and be led by Bonnie Goertz and Karen Petersen. Middle School will meet in Room 215 and be led by Betsy Duginski, and High School will meet in Room 217 and be led by Margaret Getzin. Adults will continue to meet in the B.K. Smith Room and are led by Roger Mittenzwei. Plan now to be here on September 12th! Masks are required to be worn when inside the church building.



## Chancel Choir

The choir will start rehearsing on Wednesday, September 8th at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary. We will be wearing masks and spread out as much as possible in the sanctuary. If you would like to sing, then please join us on September 8th.



## Handbell Choir

Handbells will start rehearsing on Wednesday, September 15th at 6:00 PM in the bell room. We will be wearing masks and gloves. If you have an interest in ringing, please contact Martie at the church office, 715.842.2201.



Since Labor Day falls on the first Monday in September, Savvy Seniors will be moved to Monday, Sept 13 and will take place at 2510 restaurant at 11:30am. Members of the group said they are ready to venture out so we will give it a try. As always, if there are any questions you can call Vicki at 715-571-3009 or e-mail me at vicki.nowaczyk@gmail.com





Our September donation will support the Personal Needs Closet which provides cleaning supplies, paper products and toiletries to individuals in need. These are available on the 2nd Tuesday 1-3pm and the 4th Saturday 9-11am. Financial donations and items including shampoo/conditioner, toothpaste/brushes, feminine products, diapers/wipes, adult disposable underwear, body wash/soap, deodorant/lotion, liquid hand soap, dishwashing soap, disinfectant cleaners, laundry soap, paper products, and shaving products are accepted.

## Learn More About Refugees

Our focus now is on community education. Here are two ways to learn more:

1. On **Wednesday, Sept. 8**, there will be an online learning opportunity called "**The Refugee Journey**" from noon-1pm. You can go online directly from your home by registering at these links:

Part 1: <https://zoom.us/j/9251234567>

Part 2: <https://zoom.us/j/9251234567>

If you prefer to meet at church, we're also having a "lunch and learn." Bring friends and sack lunches to eat together at 11:30, and at noon we'll gather in the Chapel to watch the online experience of what it's like to be a refugee and how it works to welcome them to our community.

2. On **Thursday evening, October 7**, we're planning a **Community Forum on Welcoming Refugees to Wausau**. It will be facilitated by WIPPS (Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service). Because of COVID, we will likely present this online, record it, and air it on public-access TV. Local panelists from various sectors will discuss refugee resettlement in Wausau and answer questions that are submitted either in advance or online. More information and links will be provided on our website and Facebook page as it is available.



United  
Methodist  
Women

## September Events

Sept. 3rd Registration deadline for District Annual Gathering  
(see Jubilate or contact Margaret Getzin)

Sept. 8th 9:30 am Mary Faith Circle

Sept. 9th 3:00 pm Love Hope Circle

Sept. 18th North Central District Annual Gathering in Port Edwards.

Sept. 26th UMW Sunday

(see sign up sheet in the Parlor if you want to help with the service)

UMW Members:

Please consider signing up for a date for our on-going project of providing Thursday sack lunches for Open Door. There have been monetary donations to help offset the cost of purchasing lunch supplies, if that is a concern in volunteering to make lunches. Check with Barb Ritchie for details and dates still needed.

### STAFF

Pastor Rebecca Voss

[rebecca@fumcwausau.org](mailto:rebecca@fumcwausau.org)

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Building Engineer Andy White

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Monday – Thursday

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**First UMC Journey to the Holy Land** will be **January 18-27, 2022**. Join Pastor Rebecca and James, Martie, and others from our church and community on this inspiring and transforming trip to Jordan, Israel, and Palestine. The cost is \$3200 (double occupancy). Contact Pastor Rebecca for more details.



| Our Financial Picture for July 2021 |                     |                       |                      |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| July Revenue                        |                     | July Expenses         |                      |
| Pledged Offering                    | \$ 12,384.00        | Staffing              | \$ 17,432.02         |
| Non-Pledged Offering                | \$ 2,765.00         | Programming           | \$ 849.72            |
| Other Revenue                       | \$ 4,041.00         | Apportionments        | \$ 4,017.00          |
| From Endowment                      | \$ 1,636.91         | Building Operations   | \$ 1,612.62          |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>                | <b>\$ 20,826.91</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b> | <b>\$ 23,911.36</b>  |
|                                     |                     | <b>Net YTD</b>        | <b>\$ (3,084.45)</b> |

## Stewardship-Connecting Vision and Generosity September 2021

*Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Matthew 7:7-8*

After serving my first local church part-time as a college student for two years, I had just finished leading my last worship service and was greeting folks at the door. One gentleman shook my hand and said, “Jason, thank you for being our pastor. I think one of the things I liked about you the most is that you never talked about money.”

I’ve thought about his statement many times over the years. I’ve also heard the same sentiment repeated by both laity and clergy in many ways. We tend to see financial stewardship and money as a “necessary evil.” It’s something we must deal with to get to real ministry.

In his short book, *A Spirituality of Fundraising*, Henri Nouwen challenges this view of money and stewardship (which he calls fundraising). He writes: *Fundraising is, first and foremost, a form of ministry. It is a way of announcing our vision and inviting other people into our mission. Fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission. We are declaring, ‘We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources that God has given you – your energy, your prayers, and your money – in this work to which God has called us.*

I wonder what vision God has entrusted to you and your congregation that you can invite others to be a part of through their prayers, their presence, their service, their witness, and their gifts.

Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

## Supplies to Help Refugees at Fort McCoy

To help our Afghan Allies as they go through processing at Fort McCoy, they need these items:

- **Yoga mats (for sleeping)**
- **Rain Ponchos (all sizes)**
- **Underwear (new, all sizes/ages)**
- **Socks (new, all sizes/ages)**
- **Baby Onesies**
- **Sweat pants (all sizes/ages)**

Doris Fountain will be receiving and storing donations at her house, then delivering them to Fort McCoy on Saturday, September 11 with help from her daughter, Sheryl Del Conte. Please call Doris with any questions at 715-551-5733. **Drop off donations by Sept. 10 at: 1516 Burek Ave., Wausau, WI 54401**

## FUMC Online

**Website:** [fumcwausau.org](http://fumcwausau.org)  
with links to the weekly sermon  
in text and podcast

[facebook.com/WausauFUMC](https://www.facebook.com/WausauFUMC)

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

**Phone:** 715.842.2201