



# FIRST UNITED

## METHODIST CHURCH

September 2024  
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### Pastor's Pause September, 2024



**“He himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph. 2:14).**

Loving people who have neat and tidy lives is easy.

However, if we are going to live out justice and compassion, this means loving those who are not like us, and who do not have orderly lives. This above text challenges us to love those are not just the same as we are.

Loving people who are difficult to love or simply hard to understand, requires a source outside of ourselves. Our human love has clear limitations. We may be able to pull off loving the unlovable for a while, but that well dries up pretty quickly.

This following text speaks of a love that, lived out daily, comes from the heart of God and it is frequently used for weddings. However, Paul meant it as a unifier for the people of Corinth. Agape love vs romantic love.

First Corinthians 13:4-7 4 Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice in wrong-doing but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

What does this look like? Going to places where we are not comfortable: back alleys, housing projects, places where people are lonely and are calling out for help. Do we meet them on our turf or theirs? Do we call them to come to us or do as Christ said by going to them? Indeed, our churches generally have wonderful in-house programs; maybe some would come, but many will not.

When I lived in south Minneapolis, Marshall was a man who spent his time in our back alley. He never caused any trouble. But he felt unworthy of coming out onto main streets. He was a struggling alcoholic, yet he had a heart that revered God. He and I had some very deep conversations. But my job was not to change him, just to listen. One day as I was headed to my car, there he was.

We said hello and then he announced that the next day was his birthday, and stated it was a day to make a new beginning with God. Sadly, I learned that Marshall had died two days later, trusting God, completely. Sometimes more than I ever did.

## Pastor's Pause September, October 2024 (continued)

Church, it is what we do OUTSIDE the building that matters most. The connections we make. The stories we share. The "church" we experience outside of church. That is where we are stretched and perhaps allow ourselves to be like Christ; to see the goodness and grace in people.

*PRAYER: O God, we are a nation desperately in need of healing. May we as a nation humble ourselves and repent of the many sins that foster vitriol and violence. May we be reminded we have more in common than we do differences. And even in those differences, may we find a bridge built of hope, compassion and equity for ALL God's children. May we find a way back to each other with You at the core. Rejoicing in the differences as we move to a common goal of BEING the Gospel. Amen and amen!*

### RECONCILING TASK FORCE Cynthia Frederick, Chair

We have placed the Intersex Pride Flag, in sticker form, on our corner sign. By Kick off Sunday, we should have the Intersex Pride flag hung up on the outside of the church, facing Greeley. A big shout out to Bonnie Haines for her help in getting the flag raised!

**In October, we will begin some educational meetings put together by Matt Lewellyn-Otten from Out Front Minnesota. The first, titled "Your Faith Community" will be Sunday, October 13 right after church.**

Please feel free to bring your thoughts and questions to the Reconciling Committee, made up of: Cynthia Frederick, Patsy Bellman, Sharry Swann, Lizzie Bellman, Mike Ptacek, and Pastor Jenny Lind Larsen. Also, consider joining the committee, as we seek to live into God's plan for us.



### GENTLE REMINDER...

If you turn it ON, turn it OFF (lights, water fountain, fans)

If you turn it UP, Turn it Down, (thermostat)

If you UNLOCK it, LOCK it. (doors)

Or make sure you ask someone who will do it for you or will remind you.



## WEDNESDAY SUPPERS RETURN BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 11

Suppers begin at 5:30 each Wednesday. Adam Frederick, Mary Harcey and Patsy Bellman will continue being head cook once a month, and Bonnie Haines will be the head cook in October and April when there is an extra Wednesday. The last Wednesday of each month will continue to be a potluck supper. We are in need of helpers in the kitchen. Some of the regulars from the past are no longer available to work in the kitchen. You can help out one or two Wednesdays during the year or once each month. Talk to one of the head cooks - we all love the extra help. The suggested donation remains at \$7.00. This amount allows us to serve a quality meal and also keep the kitchen stocked with the many items that continually need replacing—paper towels, dish soap, foil, plastic wrap, paper napkins, plates and cups etc. On the Potluck Nights (September 25 and October 30) bring a dish to share - main dish, salad, fruit, veggies, or dessert.

## SNEAK PEAK FOR ADVENT—A REQUEST

You will hear more about this in the next newsletter, but in thinking about Advent and Christmas we are requesting that church members share their Nativity scenes (creches) with us during Advent. We will be decorating the Saturday after Thanksgiving this year and would love to have many to display. If you could write a small history, or interesting facts about your Nativity we will type it up put it with the display. You can leave them in the church office anytime the week before Advent begins. Thanks so much. Martha Group

## SCRIP IS AVAILABLE!

The Scrip Order Schedule is posted on the church website homepage under Announcements and on the church Information Center. Orders will be placed on September 8 and October 6. Orders can be placed after Sunday worship services or anytime by email to the church office [fumcstillwater@gmail.com](mailto:fumcstillwater@gmail.com). Order blanks are available at the church Information Center. Payment for email orders can be dropped off at the church during office hours.



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## HIGHWAY PICKUP

The next Highway Pickup will be held on September 28 with a backup date of October 5. We will meet in the Fellowship hall @ 9:30 AM.



## BRIDGE GROUP

The Bridge Group will meet September 6 and October 4 at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Beginners are welcome! Contact the church office at [fumcstillwater@gmail.com](mailto:fumcstillwater@gmail.com) to join the Bridge Group mailing list.



## UNITED METHODIST MEN (UMM)

Join the United Methodist Men for a monthly devotion, breakfast, free range discussion, and fellowship. The meetings on September 14 and October 12 will be at the Lowell Inn at 8 a.m. Contact the church office at [fumcstillwater@gmail.com](mailto:fumcstillwater@gmail.com) to join the UMM mailing list.



# ACT OF KINDNESS AND THOUGHTFULNESS AWARD

Announcing our **SEPTEMBER** Winner...

## VICKI ECKERT

The Staff Parish Relations Committee has awarded the September/October Positivity Award to Vicki Eckert. Vicki joined First United in March of 2024 after visiting our church for several months. Vicki has given to our church family through her time & talents by joining the church choir and becoming a member of the FIRST UNITED Technology Team. Vicki has been an invaluable addition to the Technology Team! She brought a strong skill set to the team & has been extremely helpful when Bruce Clark and Bonnie Haines have been gone. Bruce and Bonnie have been able to take some well deserved Sundays away from their technology duties thanks to Vicki.



## GARDEN FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR

Just a reminder that we always appreciate fresh flowers on the altar. If you have flowers to donate any Sunday, please let Mary Harcey or the office know. Thanks so much.

## THE COLORS OF THE CHURCH SEASON

The **Martha Group** is working to bring more awareness and to understand about the colors of the church year and how those can be incorporated into our altar area of the church. We, in coordination with Worship, have ordered altar paraments that include an altar covering, a pulpit scarf, and a Bible bookmark that we will be using throughout our church year. These come in two reversible sets of purple/green and red/white. Here is the calendar we hope to follow.

Advent: **Purple**

Christmas Day to Epiphany: **White**

Epiphany to 6th Sunday After: **Green**

Transfiguration Sunday: **White**

Lent: **Purple**

Easter to Pentecost: **White**

Pentecost: **Red**

All 26 weeks after Pentecost: **Green**

Christ the King Sunday (Just before Advent) **White** (Then back to Advent)

# HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS - BY PATSY

**1994 - 30 Years Ago:** Rev. Walt Flessner took a 3 month Study Leave August- October to visit other churches and study worship. Our Diaconal Minister, Janet Boots Larson, worked full time during those months to help fill in. The UMM (United Methodist Men) hosted the Rally Day Brunch. Ted Gilbert made the nametag carousel that still holds our nametags today. On World Wide Communion Sunday, Anita Carter, Worship Chair, decorated the communion table with flags from around the world.

**1999 - 25 Years Ago:** Vicki Anderson started a new Jr./Sr. High choir called Kool Krosses. We celebrated the retirement of the debt on the church addition. On September 26, 1999, Bishop John Hopkins gave a special sermon at the dedication worship service and Rev. Mary Ellen Neilson burned the mortgage. Orwin Carter, building committee chair, told of the project history. On World Wide Communion Sunday, Randi Torgerson decorated the communion table with breads from around the world.



Start planning now to participate in our church's **Trunk or Treat** event to be held on **Sunday, October 27.**

1. Donate a bag of wrapped candy.
2. Decorate your car trunk and/or
3. Dress in a costume to pass out treats.

## CARING MINISTRIES TEAM

The Caring Ministries Team is focused on the care and support of members of our congregation . This is done in the form of:

- Grief Ministry for those that have lost loved-ones
- Card Ministry for those that are ill, grieving, or are alone
- Soup Ministry for those that are ill, homebound or otherwise in need of food
- Meal Train for those that are ill, homebound, or unable to purchase or cook their own food
- Home Communion for those that are homebound and desire to share in monthly Communion
- Conversation Partners for those that are homebound, ill, depressed, or otherwise in need of a friend.



**New team members are welcome.** We would love you to join our team if you would like to participate either:

- As a member of the team who meet every 4-6 weeks to plan, review, and determine steps necessary to fulfill our multiple ministries OR
- Participate in one or more of the above ministries and have NO MEETINGS

Please contact the church office. **Next meeting is planned for October 3 at 10:30am.** All are welcome.

## MISSIONS

We had great success gathering school supplies for our Stuff the Bus campaign in August. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

This Fall, Women of Faith and United Circle are currently gathering items for Hygiene Kits for UMCOR to be distributed to women in need. In the box in the narthex titled HYGIENE KITS you can donate \$3.00/ check to FUMC (envelope is in the office marked Donations) or supply one of these items:

- \*2 oz. bottles of hand sanitizer
- \*4 gallon bathroom trash bags
- \*Travel pack Wet ones
- \*Pre-wrapped soap 3oz or larger - NO Ivory or Jergens
- \*42 Count pack of flushable wipes
- \*Laundry detergent sheets
- \*10 count unscented tampons regular and super
- \*10 count sanitary napkins long super and ultra thin



## YOUTH

Come this Fall we plan to continue our IxI programming where we do one service event a month and one fun activity. Let us know if you need help with yard work or the like. These young people have servant hearts AND do a great job. (\*\*Picture of youth helping with yard clean up this past summer for the Gilberts)



## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee has been meeting during the summer to prepare for the fall KICK-OFF this Sunday, September 8. The service will be held at 10:00 am in the lower level parking area, weather permitting. The celebration should be a great time for everyone attending! The Kitchen Crew will be preparing coffee, tea, fruit juice and breakfast type items for attendees prior to the service. So, come early and grab a coffee and a muffin and greet friends and family before the service begins. The familiar gospel ensemble, Jumpin' Jehosafats, will be providing music and accompanying the hymns. Following the service there will be games galore for all participants, and a bouncy house for the young ones – so bring the grand-kids!

## MUSIC



The Music Team is gearing up for the fall with Chancel Choir rehearsals which began September 4 Wednesdays at 7:00 pm). Our Praise and Worship group – Open Circle – will be back in business with their first rehearsal at 11:15 am on September 29. The bell choir – River Town Ringers – will be rehearsing again by October (Wednesdays at 6:00 pm). We'll keep you posted about the date. Anyone who would like to try out one of the ensembles please contact Leesa at [musicdirector.fumcstillwater@gmail.com](mailto:musicdirector.fumcstillwater@gmail.com). The ensembles will be looking ahead to the Christmas Cantata, so musicians who would like to be involved with it, should also contact Leesa at the email above. We will be in need of singers, brass, woodwind, and string players.

## NOTES FROM THE AUGUST 22 AD COUNCIL MEETING

1. Kickoff Sunday September 8 – An outdoor service in the south parking lot is planned. The Jumping Jehosafats will provide music for the service. Finger foods will be provided prior to the service. Attendees will be asked to bring lawn chairs, and some chairs from the Fellowship Hall will be available.
2. Finance - The church Checking Account balance is \$45,355 as of July 31, 2024. The average end of month balance (EOMB) for the first seven months of 2024 is \$50,542, and the average EOMB for all 12 months of 2023 was \$62,300. The EOMB is trending downward and is a result of monthly income being less than monthly expenses. General Fund Pledged Income is at 60% of the total pledged as of July 31, with a target for that date of 58.3%, so 1) General Fund Pledges received are on track and 2) the Checking EOMB decrease is not due to late payment of General Fund pledges. Capital Fund Pledges are at 35% of the total pledged as of July 31 versus the 58.3% target which indicates that Capital Fund Pledge receipts are not on track with the monthly projection for 2024. Late payment of Capital Fund Pledges does reduce the EOMB and funds designated for Capital. All funds received by the church are deposited in the Checking Account, and designated funds (Capital, flowers, music, memorials, Heifer Project, etc.) are recorded and “earmarked” for the designated purpose.
3. School Partnership - The Pastor has met with Principal Tom Kearney of New Heights School (located at Mulberry and Everett Streets) regarding volunteer opportunities for this Fall. Pastor is very excited at the prospects of how we can joyfully be the hands and feet of God in a place where there is great need. Pastor Jenny will keep you posted as things unfold.
4. New office hours - 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday with Friday off - will start Labor Day week.
5. Welcoming Visitors - The welcoming effort for obtaining visitor contact information should be concentrated at the Welcome Table in the Gathering Space. Visitors who wish to share their contact information should be encouraged to do so at the Welcome Table and by Pastor announcement to sign a form at the Welcome Table. Use of the attendance forms in the sanctuary will be discontinued.

## RIVERTOWN RINGERS BELL CHOIR

Our Rivertown Ringers Handbell choir participated in the Area Bell Festival June 21-23 at the La Crosse Convention Center. Here are a few pictures from that event...



# WOMEN OF FAITH UNITED - NEWS FOR SEPTEMBER

Our Circle will kick off the year on Thursday, September 12th at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall at church. We welcome all to our meetings and look forward to greeting you after a summer break. The program for September will encourage our group to become more knowledgeable regarding the greater Global organization United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) of the United Methodist Church. The program will share learning and putting into action some of the important mission needs the group shares with their membership in different congregations across our conference. The discussion and project meeting will be led by Ann Haraldson. Developing a focus on Mission in action will be shared. We may need to extend our goal into October to complete this project but hopefully we can be successful in creating the kits for this mission. Please plan on bringing at least \$3.00 worth of coins or bills as the project will require some funds. If you would be willing to donate any of the following as well, it would be appreciated.

## Project List:

- Two 2 oz bottles of hand sanitizer
- Three 4 gallon bathroom trash bags
- One travel pack of wet ones, wrapped in original packaging
- One bath size soap (3 oz bar or larger, NOT Ivory or Jergen's soap)
- One pack of flushable unscented wipes (42 count)
- Six laundry detergent sheets
- One package of 10 unscented Tampons both regular and super absorbency
- One package of 10 sanitary napkins long super and ultra -thin



Come enjoy friendship and fellowship while we do all the good we can by turning faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

We look forward to seeing you!



## SEPTEMBER

**Sept. 1 Laurie Bauer; Sept. 2 Barb Cobb; Sept. 3 Mason Schwerzler; Sept. 5 Debbie Krinke; Sept. 9 Lillian Wright, Sept. 11 Chris Nelson; Sept. 12 Sarah Anderson; Sept. 13 Diana Miller; Sept. 15 Shawn Helwig; Sept. 16 Reece Bastyr; Sept. 18 John Auer; Sept. 21 Bridget Haugen; Sept. 23 Everett Bye; Sharon Dockstader Sept. 24 Bonnie Haines, Megan Keller; Sept. 25 Kathy Jones; Sept. 26 Nathan Agard.**