

Hello September!



United Messenger

September 2024

Ponderings from the Pastor's Pen

"Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" -2 Corinthians 5:17

This verse from 2 Corinthians was one that I first memorized when I went through confirmation classes as a teenager. Confirmation was an opportunity to publicly proclaim our faith and claim for ourselves our identity as Christians. That first decision of claiming our faith in Christ was a new beginning for me and my fellow students in that confirmation class decades ago—a new beginning that would continue to transform and guide my life beautifully to this day.

As I write this message today, I have just dropped off my kids for their first day of a new school year, so new beginnings are on my mind. Lucas's teacher took photos of each student holding a festive frame celebrating the first day, and showed us that the back side of the frame is decorated to celebrate the last day of the school year when they will take another photo to show how much each student has changed through the year. In terms of physical growth and educational achievements, our kids seem to become "new creations" each year, stretching taller and maturing in so many ways.

I think too of some of the wonderful neighbors I had a chance to speak with at our Corn Fest recently. Some of our neighbors were familiar names and faces I remembered from the conversations we had at our community outreach events last year. Some were neighbors I was just meeting for the first time. All of them were wonderful people with rich life stories. Some were very open in sharing the new beginnings they've worked hard to build in their lives recently. One was newly sober and determined to spend the rest of his life doing good in this world after the mistakes he regrets from his past. Another was eagerly antici-

pating her wedding this fall now that she has worked hard to heal from an abusive relationship in her past. Beautiful new beginnings abound!

As I reflected back on the conversations I had and the people I met, I love that our church has become a place of peace, a sanctuary, a refuge where all can feel just how loved and welcome they are—even when we're just sitting outside, dining together around tables in the parking lot. There are a lot of new beginnings that can happen in a community like this where people experience and freely share God's love for the world! I suspect we're just barely seeing the first glimpse of the new beginnings of what God is about to do here at the Menomonie United Methodist Church. May God continue to create us anew as we follow God, one conversation at a time!

I look forward to seeing you soon and I can't wait to hear about any new beginnings that may be bubbling up in your life these days!

In God's love,
Pastor Wendy



Volunteers Needed: Can You Help?

On Thursday, October 10th, volunteers from various service organizations all across Dunn and Pepin Counties will be working together to serve our communities, and you can get involved with your family and friends if you're interested! They write:

Are you seeking a meaningful volunteer experience for yourself, your family, or your organization? A Day of Caring is the perfect way to get involved in the community! Volunteers will be assigned to a service project and location leading up to the event, based on preferences indicated at registration. Register today for the 2024 Day of Caring! For more information, contact us at givehope@uwvalleys.org.

At UW Valleys Day of Caring, 200+ volunteers from across Dunn and Pepin Counties will come together in service to our community. The day will begin with a celebration and recognition of volunteers and sponsors. Afterwards, volunteers will travel to their assigned partner agency, school, or other community partner to complete a 4 hour service project.

Together, we can amplify impact while lending a hand towards our communities' current needs.

- 7:30am - Check in at Bill's Distributing
- 8:00am - Welcome Breakfast, Volunteer and Sponsor Recognition
- 8:30am - Dismissal to Service Project Location
- 1:00pm - Projects Completed

Organ to Be Donated

Our church organ has served this congregation for over 50 years but there are several keys that no longer work and parts can no longer be sourced for it. Neither our repairman nor the nearest dealers of Rodgers organs were interested in taking it even for parts. If you or someone you know is interested in a Rodgers 220 Console Organ from 1972, please contact Pastor Wendy or Jim Lake to let us know. At this point, we will give it away at no cost but the recipient will need to arrange to haul it away. It is very heavy.

A SWEET Way to Contribute

First, on behalf of the youth group, we want to extend a huge THANK YOU to everyone who donated supplies for the "birthday bags" to be distributed through the Stepping Stones food pantry. Thanks to your generosity, our youth group members were able to assemble FORTY-TWO birthday bags so that individuals or families in our community will have a happier birthday. Each bag contains everything needed for a birthday party—cake pan, cake mix, frosting, napkins, plates, decorations, etc. Thanks for helping our youth group complete this meaningful mission to bring joy to our community!

Another way you can help this fall is by contributing candy for the Fall Spooktacular Trunk or Treat event on October 13. We like to have some extra candy on hand to help replenish candy buckets as needed at each vehicle participating in the trunk or treat festivities. If you find some good deals on candy when you're preparing for trick-or-treaters this fall, consider picking up an extra bag or two to donate for our Fall Spooktacular event too. Thanks in advance for your generosity!

Ephesians Bible Study

Morning Prayer of Bible Study
Study Ephesians, study of faith and practice

Starting
Tuesdays, September 17, 24,
October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

12:30-1:30 pm in the Fireside Room

Leaders start time is 12:30 - bring a bag lunch
if you want to eat around Noon-12:15

Contact Sarah Zarbock for information zarbocks@gmail.com

Free! Everyone Invited! No Registration Required



September

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Glenn & Jan Gehring 61st Anniversary Blood Pressure Checks	2 Labor Day Monday Meal 5-6 pm	3 Joyful Noise 6-7 pm	4	5	6	7
8	9 Monday Meal 5-6 pm Mom's Group 6-7 pm	10 Joyful Noise 6-7 pm	11 Youth Bonfire/Potluck 6-7:30	12 Joyful Journeys 6:30-8 pm	13	14
15	16 Monday Meal 5-6 pm	17 Bible Study 12:30-1:30 Joyful Noise 6-7 pm	18 Touch A Truck 5-7:30	19	20	21
22	23 Monday Meal 5-6 pm	24 Bible Study 12:30-1:30 Joyful Noise 6-7 pm	25 Youth Wed. Table 4:45-6:30	26	27	28
29 Care Bucket for Stepping Stones Usher Training after Service	30 Monday Meal 5-6 pm	Joyful Journeys 6:30-8 pm				

 *Happy Anniversary*

Glenn & Jan Gehring
61st Wedding Anniversary!
September 1st



Youth Ministry Schedule

September 11th, Bonfire/Potluck
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
September 18th, Touch a Truck
5:00 pm - 7:30 pm
September 25th, Wednesday Table
4:45 pm - 6:30 pm
At Christ Lutheran Church
Wear closed toed shoes, baseball hat.

Usher Training

With Sarah Zarbock and Howard Hintzman
after church on
Sunday, September 29th and October 6th
in the Fireside Room

UPCOMING EVENTS



2703 Bongey Dr. Menomonie, WI

These events are free and open to the general public!



Wednesday

September 18th

Touch-A-Truck



Sunday

October 13th

Fall Spooktacular

Starting in November!

2nd Sunday of every month
November-May from 4:00-5:45 pm

**More information will be on our website at the end of September*



2024 WI Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church Report By Kurt and Sarah Zarbock

Sarah and I attended The 2024 Wisconsin United Methodist Church Annual Conference, held in Green Bay, back in early June. It brought together clergy and lay members under the theme “Abundant God, Beloved Community.” The conference focused on themes of spiritual renewal, community, and navigating the challenges and opportunities facing the church in a post-General Conference era. For a quick read, we’ve condensed the 12 hours of plenary sessions and the 14-page report on the Conference website (which you can read in its entirety at www.wisconsinumc.org).

Each morning we had an opening session including worship and Bible study, followed by plenary where we considered and voted on several action items and heard reports from various committees. The morning Bible study was led by Dr. Roger Nam from Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. The study was titled “An Abundant Promise to Abraham” based on Genesis 17:6-8. To hear more from the Bible study, please visit the conference website: www.wisconsinumc.org.

1. General Conference Context:

• Bishop Jung underscored the significance of this being the first annual conference after the postponed General Conference of 2020, signaling a new chapter for the church in Wisconsin. He talked about the centrality of Jesus in our life, saying, “It’s all about Jesus. It’s not you; it’s not me; it’s not us; it’s all about Jesus...Are we listening?”

2. Statistical Report and Financial Overview:

• Our Conference Statistician presented a report indicating a continuing decline in membership but a slight increase in average weekly worship attendance as well as an increase in Vacation Bible School participation.

• The proposed 2025 budget was discussed, highlighting challenges such as an anticipated change in church insurance coverage, decreased general-church giving, potential leadership changes, and the financial implications of sharing a bishop with Northern Illinois. Yes, you read that right...the WI Conference will share a bishop with Northern Illinois. This is not a merger. Rather, each Conference will keep its Conference office (so ours stays in Sun Prairie and Northern IL keeps theirs) and a new office will be set up for WI and Northern IL in Glenview IL. This decision is part of a broader trend within the United Methodist Church, reflecting decreasing membership (the WI Conference membership is about 25% of what it was in 1968 when we became United Methodists) and decreasing financial resources across conferences. Related to this...we passed an action item changing the number of districts in our conference from five to four. It was called Four Districts for a Revived! Church.

3. New Ministries and Leadership Development:

• Currently, the Conference supports 23 new ministries, and has a system in place for beginning new min-

istries and developing new leaders. Also, as we are well aware of right here in our own Church, congregational renewal is occurring in the form of MCCI.

• The Revive! Community Development Planning Team presented a significant proposal to reallocate funds from closed churches to support new ministry initiatives. It will provide consulting for local churches such as ours looking to “right-size” our building, engage in church and community assessment, and offer our church leaders information on how to maintain and expand opportunities to be of service to our local community. This move is seen as essential for the church's future growth.

Bishop's Address and Final Remarks:

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung delivered a heartfelt state-of-the-church address, reflecting on his 12 years of service. I can still remember him appearing at our church as part of his initiative to visit all the churches in our Conference. He emphasized the importance of love, justice, and community in the church's mission. The conference concluded with expressions of gratitude and a renewed commitment to the future. Sadly, Bishop Jung leaves us as he is moving on to a new Annual Conference after September. He concluded his address with, “Wisconsin, you are the best state. You raised me; you raised my family. You are beautiful people. Thank you and thank you and thank you. Amen.”

Retirements and Recognitions: A service was held to honor 18 retirees. This service was marked by a moving “Passing of the Mantle” ceremony where retiring clergy passed their stoles to new ordinands (numbering about 8), symbolizing the continuity of ministry. Just as Bishop Jung is retiring from the WI Conference of the United Methodist Church, we are retiring from our role as lay members after 10 Annual Conferences. It's been our privilege and a blessing to serve in this role. We would like to “pass the mantle” to two of you giving you an opportunity to serve in this role when the location changes back to Middleton at the Marriott Madison West next year.

The 2024 Annual Conference was a time of reflection, decision-making, and spiritual renewal. It addressed the pressing issues facing the church while celebrating the community and preparing for the future. The conference's decisions will shape the direction of the Wisconsin United Methodist Church in the years to come, as it seeks to grow and adapt in a changing world.

Finally, we'll leave you with this quote and a comment: “Life is risky. It's so risky, you don't get out of it alive.” –Jim Rohn We are born from God's eternity, and we die to God's eternity. And in between, we are here in this risky life, which brings us more challenges than we would ever want to happen to us. And it has more beauty and blessing in it than we could ever imagine, in fact, than we are aware of. Thank you!

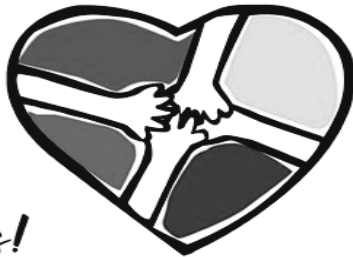
Joyful Journeys

**September 12
6:30-8:00**

Menomonie United Methodist Church
2703 Bongey Drive

Program focused on building healthy lifestyles for those with special needs. Involvement in community activities while learning about stewardship and the environment.

For
information
contact
Linda Bark at
715-308-6883



Join Us!

REMINDER

PLEASE USE THE EVENT FORM

in the church office for your events.

This will help with errors.

Also please put your name and number on the church calendar when scheduling events.

Thank you!

Grief Group Gathering

Tuesdays, Oct. 22, Jan 28

6:00-7:00 pm

Fireside Room

Menomonie United Methodist Church
2703 Bongey Drive

The book "Grieving with Your Whole Heart", intro by Thomas Moore and edited by the editors of Skylight Paths, can be purchased through Sarah or on your own.

Contact Sarah Zarbock
at 715-308-1698 or zarbocks@gmail.com



Find us at:
www.menomonieumc.org



Joyful Noise Practice Begins!

**Tuesdays, August 13, 20, 27,
September 3, 10, 17, 24,
October 1, 8, 15**

Practice 6:30-8:00 pm

Concert Tuesday, October 22

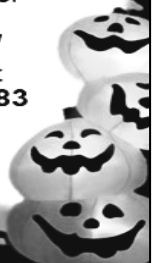
Menomonie United Methodist Church
2703 Bongey Drive

Open to those 8 years or older
with or without challenges.

Halloween Theme!

For information contact
Linda Bark at 715-308-6883

Free to Join!



Community Meals

Free Meals in Menomonie
Monday, Tues., Wed. and Thurs.

Monday's Meal 5-6 pm

Menomonie United Methodist Church,
2703 Bongey Dr. Drive Thru To Go

Tuesday's Table 5-6 pm

St. Joseph's Church, 10th St. & Wilson Ave.
(lower level) In Person Dining

Wednesday's Table 5-6 pm

Christ Lutheran Church, 1306 Wilcox St.
In Person Dining & To Go

Thursday's Table 5-6 pm

First Congregational United Church of Christ,
420 Wilson Ave. To Go

This is the day
THE LORD
has made.
— WE WILL —
REJOICE
AND BE
GLAD IN IT.

-PSALM 118:24





American Red Cross

Together, we can save a life

Blood Drive

Monday, October 7, 2024

12:00-6:00 pm

Menomonie

United Methodist Church

2703 Bongey Drive

Menomonie, Wisconsin

To donate go to redcrossblood.org,
enter 54751 or call 1-800-733-2767.

Rapid Pass is available.

**The Church's Need to Receive
or the Giver's Need to Give?**

When I was first learning about stewardship early in my ministry, I heard someone say, "Good stewardship practices focus on the giver's need to give, rather than the church's need for money." At the time, I didn't buy it. To my cynical ears, it sounded like a line. Today (many years later), I can say that I was wrong.

We love our churches. We want them to thrive and succeed. They are near and dear to our hearts. So when the churches faces financial challenges, we want to plead with people how important it is to keep the ministries of our beloved church going. We need to pay the bills. Throw in the anxiety that surrounds any financial topic, we may want to push the point. The truth is the church's mission isn't to keep existing. In fact, we love our churches because of the ways God has touched our lives through them -ceremonies and rituals, helping us grow in faith and connection. Likewise, a church's teaching about faithful stewardship should be centered on helping people learn about the place of money in a Christian's walk of faith. It's about discipleship and partnering with God to make a positive difference in the world - whether people do that by being generous with the church or other organizations. (Note: I do believe people who are generous as a part of their faith include the church in their generosity if the church is faithfully living out its mission.)

Tithing benefits the giver as much as it strengthens the mission and ministry of the church - especially in the midst of our materialistic and consumerist society. We are immersed in a culture that feeds

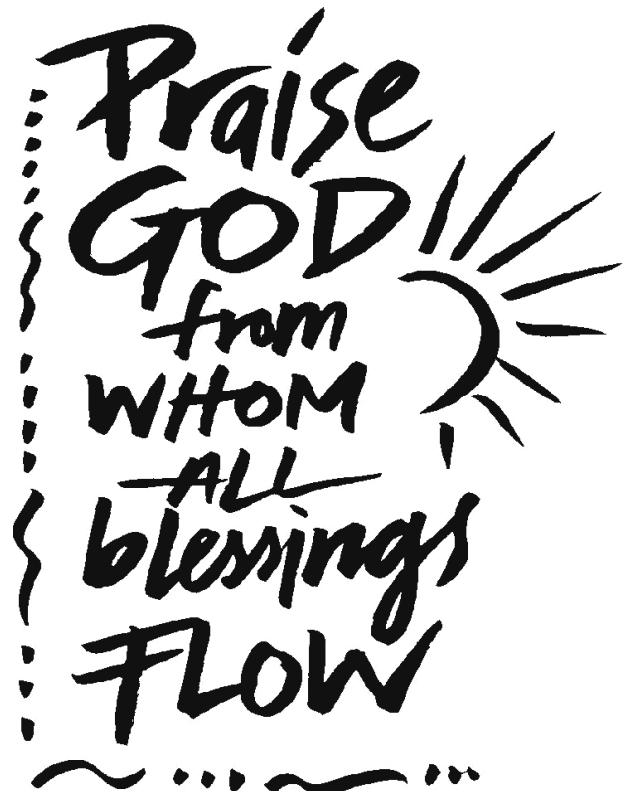
the appetite for more and bigger and that fosters that self-worth is found in material wealth and happiness comes by possession. As one person once said, "We buy things we don't even need with money we don't even have to impress people we don't even know!"

At the root, these are spiritual problems, leading to continued discontent, discouragement, and unhappiness. We can never earn enough to be happy. In fact, studies have shown that people believe all they need is more money to be happy, when in reality, an academic study concluded that money can only boost happiness up to a certain point (at about \$75,000 in annual income).

Practices like embracing gratitude do lead to more contentment. For instance, consider making a list of the things in your life for which you are grateful. It doesn't have to be long or take much time. Taking time to focus on what you have rather than concentrating on what you don't can be transformative. Beyond embracing gratitude, consider the following questions:

- How does living generously help you see the world through God's eyes?
- How is your own perspective shaped by materialism, acquisition, and the desire to possess? How is it shaped by the wisdom of God? How do you resolve tensions?

*~ Rev. Jason Mahnke,
Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation
Submitted by Lynn Klatt*



3rd Annual Park for a Purpose Car Show and Concert



Play it Forward

E7115 1058th Ave
Wheeler, WI (Otter Creek)

Fundraising for
good causes @



SATURDAY, SEPT 7TH, 2024

Gates Open @ Noon

**CRAFT SHOW-SILENT AUCTION- LIVE MUSIC
FOOD- HIKING- YARD GAMES- BONFIRE**

Benefitting:



Grass parking

CAR GATES OPEN 12:00 pm

SHOW 12-4 pm

1st 50 Cars: DASH PLAQUES

Prizes drawn throughout the day

FREE

Musical Guests The Cutaways

Music/Craft Show/Games 12-4 pm

Silent Auction 12-3 pm

Gourmet hot dogs, nachos, desserts
soft drinks/beer/wine for purchase

**LOOKING FOR GOOD CONTRIBUTIONS
FOR THE SILENT AUCTION!**