

# Methodist the messenger

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God cares about you



and so do we

## MARCH 2025



### A Time to Be Vile

As we enter the Lenten season, we enter the time in our faith story where we encounter the story, teachings, and experiences of Jesus that brought him to the cross, death, and resurrection.

I am reminded and have been sharing John Wesley's acts of faith that he termed "vile" for him but necessary to do if he were to follow his understanding of God's grace and call of leading people to God through Christ. For a proper Anglican priest, he followed the liturgy and protocol of worship according to traditions. But he realized he needed to go beyond his comfort zone of limiting his preaching inside the church walls to preaching in the fields where the people were who needed the love of God.

Our challenge this Lenten season is to dig deep into our faith and heart on what God is requiring each of us to do for the people who need to experience the love of God. If we say we are the heart, hands, and feet of God on earth, we are to share holiness in our social environments. That means in our workplace, in our neighborhood, in our community.

Martin Niemöller's life comes into mind in these uncertain times. Information from Diana Butler Bass's writings tells me of his story:

"Niemöller was a German nationalist who, in the 1920s and early 1930s, supported Hitler and the Nazis. He hated Communism and socialism and workers — he believed that they had betrayed Germany in the aftermath of WWI. He worked against the Weimar Republic, thinking it to be politically weak and corrupt. Indeed, Niemöller voted for the Nazis, even in the 1933 elections which handed Germany over to Hitler.

...He actively worked for a political movement to go after Communists, socialists, workers, and Jews ... anyone whom he believed undermined the honor of the German nation.

But Niemöller began to change his mind when Hitler interfered with church policies and applied racial tests to both clergy and laity, even insisting that German churches refrain from teaching or reading from the Old Testament.

Niemöller's resistance started when the Nazis applied their brutal and racist agenda to the church — Niemöller's church, the community he most cared about, was vowed to serve and led.

Then, he realized that they were coming for him, too. It took him a while. It was a process. But he spoke out. He preached against Hitler and Nazism. He was one of the founders of the Confessing Church. He was detained several times between 1934 and 1937. Then, in 1937, he was arrested for treason and spent the next seven years in various prisons and concentration camps, including Dachau."

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*"First they came for the Communists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Communist  
Then they came for the Socialists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Socialist  
Then they came for the trade unionists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a trade unionist  
Then they came for the Jews  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Jew  
Then they came for me  
And there was no one left  
To speak out for me."*



Pastor Niemöller, in the end, did "vile" things as he evolved. In following Jesus today, we are called to reflect on where God is leading us to share the good news of hope, love, mercy, and compassion. What "vile" things do we have to do?

Thank you for journeying together as God's people.

## *Pastor Grace*



Before the season of Lent begins, join us for the annual **Shrove Sunday Pancake Breakfast**. On Sunday, March 2nd, the UMM will host a Shrove Pancake Breakfast from 9:00 to 10:00 am in the Small Dining Room. Shrove Tuesday, also known as "Fat Tuesday," is the day before Ash Wednesday, marking the start of Lent. Traditionally, fats are not used in cooking during Lent, so thrifty housewives would use up any leftover fats on the day before Ash Wednesday. Making pancakes is a common way to use fat, and thus, this tradition was born. Plan to come, enjoy delicious pancakes, and have fellowship with church friends.

**Ash Wednesday** falls on March 5th this year, marking the beginning of the Lenten season. During this time, we are encouraged to embrace simplicity, repentance, and reflection to strengthen our connection with God. Lent is not a season to rush through in anticipation of Easter; rather, it is a time to slow down and reflect on our faith to draw us closer to God. The Ash Wednesday Service will be held at 7:00 pm on March 5th. Please join us for scripture, song, and the imposition of ashes (Sanctuary/ YouTube).



**2025 Lenten Book Study:** This year's study will focus on Adam Hamilton's book, *24 Hours That Changed the World*. Hamilton guides us through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life, exploring the significance of His suffering and death. This seven-week study features a video component.

**Sunday School Class:** Sunday (March 2-April 13) 9:00-10:00 am Leaders: Rev. Deacon Nancy Lanman and Sue Klescewski (Lighthouse Room)

**Zoom Class:** Tuesday (3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 4/8, 4/15) 7:00-8:00 pm Leader: Tom Bolton

Please contact the church office to register for the Zoom class. Books are available in the church office.

## ***Living Into Lent As Methodists: A Message From Our Lay Leader, Tom Bolton***

In 1790, just one year before his death, John Wesley compiled what he titled *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*. While the poetry included in the hymnal is nothing short of a grandiose combination of beauty and rich theology, Wesley saw the collection as having a distinct purpose. He writes in the preface:

The [hymn-book] is large enough to contain all the important truths of our most holy religion, whether speculative or practical; yea, to illustrate them all, and to prove them both by Scripture and reason. ... So that this book is, in effect, a little body of experimental and practical divinity.

In other words, for Wesley, the hymnal was a theology textbook! That is why hymns are so important to us and particularly at First Church. But unlike Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion or Luther's Small Catechism, Wesley saw theology as not something meant to be kept in the likes of an ivory tower. Rather, *the faith of the Church is meant to be lived out, both in corporate worship and in the everyday life of the believer*. Perhaps this conviction is why William Willimon writes in his book, *United Methodist Beliefs: A Brief Introduction*, "John Wesley praised theology that was "practical," that is, belief put into practice, belief in motion. Doctrine ought to be performed as a sign of our faith in a Lord who invited and commanded, "Follow me."

Wesleyan theology in all its various expressions yet in its truest form holds in careful balance its inward and the outward—the internal and the external—components. It holds tremendous value in both the warmed heart and the strong social witness. Yet Wesley consistently feared the fires of the Methodist revival would eventually become cooled. Thus, Methodism would lose its fervor and join the ranks of any and every other institutional religious expression. The flame God's Spirit ignited was in danger of being extinguished by complacent religiosity. Such sentiments are identified in Wesley's Sermon 116, "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity." The sermon was delivered in Dublin in 1789. In it, Wesley asks:

Why, then, are not these altogether Christians, who have both Christian doctrine and Christian discipline, why is not the spiritual health of the people called Methodists recovered? Why is not all that "mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus?" Why have we not learned of him our very first lesson, to be meek and lowly of heart, to say with him, in all circumstances of life, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt. I come not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me?" Why are we not "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us," – dead to the "desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life?" Why do not all of us live "the life that is hid with Christ in God?"

Undoubtedly, Wesley's words are timeless. The dangers over which he fretted still loom over those who would call themselves Methodist today. He was consistent to distinguish between "real" and "formal" religion, or as he was wont to put it, "the power of God" versus the "form of godliness."

The season of Lent is a wonderful liturgical season to reverse these trends both in our individual lives and in our shared lives together. It is a season for Methodists to flex their practical divinity muscles. Lent is, in short, forty days of practical divinity, of putting our beliefs into motion! The practices of fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and study are the traditional Lenten disciplines. But Wesley **required** these disciplines always for those who would call themselves Methodists.

So why, then, do we engage in these disciplines? The austerity of the season aside, Lent is not merely a season of deprivation. No, Lent is also a season of reception. We fast and pray so that we may receive what God desires to give us. We study so that we may learn from Jesus as we follow him from the wilderness temptation to the cross to the Resurrection. We give of ourselves to others because what we receive during Lent is not meant for us to keep. Indeed, the words of Jesus are true, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

I encourage you all to participate in our Lenten Study, *24 Hours That Changed the World* by Adam Hamilton--on Sundays at church and Tuesday nights on Zoom. Also, please do serious morning devotions and fast in some thoughtful way.

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The apostle Paul writes to the Corinthian Church, "Because we have [Christ's] promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear (love) God. (2 Corinthians 7:1, NLT)" The invitation Paul gives to the Corinthians is our invitation to the Lenten season. We, too, are called to allow the Holy Spirit to perform the cleansing work, removing all outward and inward sin. Such cleansing frees us to go on to complete holiness.

Let us work diligently in this month also to pursue the goals of our congregation.

Tom Bolton, Lay Leader

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God loves you and so do we.

Discipleship Never Ends.



The Church Financial Statement of Activities ending January 31, 2025:

	Year To Date Actual
Giving & Other Income	\$24,495.72
Expenses	\$38,240.96
Operating Income/ (Deficit)	\$(13,745.24)

Our hope with prayers is that members will continue to give generously as we envision a better and brighter future with goals and strategies to keep FUMCWA healthy, growing, and vital. God cares about you and so do we. Thank you for your financial support to the life and the mission of FUMCWA.

**The 2025 Sunday School Lenten Mission Project:**

**WASH AND WELLNESS** will raise funds to support mobile showers and supplies for the homeless. Every day, over half a million people in America experience homelessness and often lack access to essential hygiene services. All funds raised will remain in our community and will be donated to the Street Angels Mobile Shower/Supply Fund. To help, we invite every church family to take a "Coins for Giving" Calendar, available in the Easter Basket in the Narthex starting March 2nd. The collection runs from Ash Wednesday (March 5th) to Holy Saturday (April 19th). Please pray as a family for this mission and bring your coins to church on Easter Sunday to support those in need.



# Worship TOGETHER

## SCRIPTURE READINGS & THEMES MARCH 2025

**March 2, 2025**, Transfiguration Sunday/Communion

Texts: 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9: 28-36, 37-43; Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99

**March 9, 2025**, First Sunday in Lent

Texts: Romans 10: 8b-13; Luke 4: 1-13; Deuteronomy 26: 1-11; Psalm 91: 1-2, 9-16

**March 16, 2025**, Second Sunday in Lent

Texts: Philippians 3: 17- 4:1; Luke 13: 31-35; Genesis 15: 1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27

**March 23, 2025**, Third Sunday in Lent

Texts: 1 Corinthians 10: 1-13; Luke 13:1-9; Isaiah 55: 1-9; Psalm 63: 1-8

**March 30, 2025**, Fourth Sunday in Lent

Texts: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15: 1-3,11b-32; Joshua 5: 9-12; Psalm 32

## FUMCWA MINISTRIES

**Church Library Ministry (The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library):** During Lent, we focus on deepening our understanding and reflecting on what it means to follow Jesus. To support this journey, the Church Library will have a cart of books available in the Gathering Room throughout March and April. We invite you to check out a book and grow closer to God as we approach Easter. You are welcome to visit the Church Library on Sunday mornings from 11:30 to 11:50 am to browse and select a book from our collections for children, youth, and adults.



**Food Pantry Ministry:** We are very grateful for the soup and monetary gifts from Souper Bowl Sunday. Thank you to Lance, the youth, all who made the delicious soups, and those who donated the cans of soup and contributed money to help support the food pantry. It is a real blessing to provide food and personal care items to the many people who use our food pantry. They are most grateful!!

Thank you to all who continue to bring large paper grocery bags with handles and the red Sendik's bags. Any non-perishable food items are welcome, but please note expiration dates. One of the items we have noticed that is appreciated by many is the nonrefrigerated milk that comes in cartons. This can be found at the dollar store. We are most grateful for all your help with food, personal care items, and household cleaning aids. Your monetary gifts are used to purchase food and other much-needed items that have not been donated. Without your help, we would not be able to continue this wonderful mission. Thank you for your support!!

**The February Good Samaritan Offering: \$877.45**

**PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED FOR MARCH:**

**STEWES OR CHILI AND DISH DETERGENT**

**United Women in Faith:** United Women in Faith contributed many baby items to Channel 4's Community Baby Shower in January. All of the items donated during this time were divided up and sent to the following: Robin's Nest, Gerald Ignace Indian Health Center, Penfield Children's Center, Sojourner Peace Center, Women's Center of Waukesha, and LaCausa Crisis Nursery. We were very happy to help provide some of these much-needed baby items.



We are looking forward to a very good year of programming. The Executive Board met and discussed programs, which were then presented to the group. They expressed which programs they wanted the most, and volunteers will contact these speakers and secure the dates. Some of the programs that will be scheduled are Scams, Hearing and Hearing Aids, Bone Health, and our special Treasure Swap.

The Agape meal, often referred to as the "Love Feast," has a rich history rooted in early Christian traditions. This meal is shared among believers to symbolize unity, love, and fellowship. Join us for our March UWF meeting as Val Holzman explores its history and significance during Lent, a season of reflection and preparation.

We are growing in our membership and invite all women who are looking for fellowship, community, support, and spiritual growth to attend. Join us on Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room. Oh, and we do have refreshments!! Hope to see you then! Any questions, please call Annette Intravaia at 414-257-4166.



**Laurie Halvorsen, Senior Ministries Coordinator:** Senior League will have a liturgy program on Ash Wednesday, March 5th, presented by Pastor Grace following our lunch. It will include the imposition of the ashes. All denominations are welcome; come and bring a friend. Come join Senior League in our 50th Year for Fun, Food & Fellowship in 2025!

### Meetings in March

**March 5 12 Noon-** "Ash Wednesday" Mac & Cheese, 7 Layer Salad, Carrot Cake

Program: Liturgy, Imposition & Ashes; Presentation by Pastor Grace

**March 19 12 Noon-** Salisbury Steak, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Mint Chocolate Chip Ice Cream

Program: Wehr Nature Center; Presentation Maple Syrup

Devotions: Jean Molitor

**Fireside Coach Trip: Friday, March 21st "West Side Story."** Leave Franklin at 9:00 am, please arrive by 8:50 am, leave FUMC at 9:30 am, please arrive by 9:15 am. This trip is currently closed; if you are interested, please call the church office to be placed on a waiting list.

**Senior League Chef Needed:** Our current Senior League chefs step down at the end of December 2025. Responsibilities include menu planning, shopping, meal preparation, and clean-up. Training will be provided. Senior League meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from noon to 2:00 pm. If you have culinary skills or know someone who does and would like to take on this role, please contact Laurie at First United Methodist Church, 7520 West Lapham St., at 414-774-5500.

## FUMCWA LOCAL MISSIONS



On March 8th, we will serve hot casseroles at the Morning Glory Mission. Please remember to bring your hot casseroles to the church kitchen by 7:45 am. The 26 casseroles donated last month were greatly appreciated. Pastor Don has been informed of a significant reduction in the food they have been receiving. Thank you all for your continued donations.

**March Coins of Love** will support the Sunday School Lenten Mission Project. The 2025 Sunday School Lenten Mission Project, WASH AND WELLNESS, will focus on collecting coins during Lent to fund mobile showers and shower supplies. All funds raised will remain in our community and be donated to the Street Angels Mobile Shower/Supply Fund.



**January's Coins of Love** - Repairers of the Breach \$589.29

**February's Coins of Love** - Street Angels Showers of Hope \$204.73

**Wesleyan Congregational Care Team (WCCT)** Caregivers have been enjoying a wonderful educational experience with the book Coffee Cup Counseling over the past few months. We continue to educate ourselves so we can be there for you. Our team of caregivers is ready to walk alongside anyone who is going through an unexpected life event or someone who just needs a listening ear or shoulder to lean on. No matter how small or big your concern may seem, please know it matters to us, and so do you. You can reach out to Pastor Grace or Laura Molleson or call the church office (414-774-5500). Our team of caregivers can also be identified by the badge below on Sundays.



## FUMCWA CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

### **UMC Social Principles Study: Second Sundays**

**Sunday, March 9, 12:00 pm (following worship-bring a small lunch)**

**Facilitator: Rev. Deacon Nancy Lanman**

Are you feeling overwhelmed by moral issues currently facing you and our society? The March session will address the challenges of applying ethical guidelines learned in the study of the UMC's Social Principles to everyday life. Participants who have attended one of the previous introductory classes on the Social Principles have enjoyed reading and discussing articles that explore situations and issues that are disrupting the well-being of our lives, both personally and as a nation.

The group has studied, so far, the disheartening rise in the number of mass shootings in our society and the challenges of enacting both just and effective immigration reforms. A third introductory class will be taught in the fall for those who would like to join these enlightening discussions.

Our March session will continue to explore immigration policies and the context within which very different moral understandings are affecting what is happening to very vulnerable people, as well as the wider economic, social, and political context within which we all live and work.

**Book Discussion Group:** This month's book discussion will take place on Monday, March 17th, at 1:30 pm. We will discuss *The Bookwoman's Daughter*, a novel by Kim Michele Richardson (Education for Mission). Serving as a standalone story and a sequel to the bestselling novel *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek*, *The Bookwoman's Daughter* follows Honey Lovett, the daughter of the renowned blue-skinned packhorse librarian from Troublesome Creek. Honey and her Kentucky family have been evading the law her entire life. However, when her parents are imprisoned, Honey realizes she must fight to maintain her freedom. Taking on her mother's library route, Honey begins delivering books to the remote hollers of Appalachia. The route, however, can be perilous, and Honey must battle for her place. The group meets in the church library and welcomes anyone who loves reading!

## **FUMCWA EVENTS**

### **Lance Lambert / Events Coordinator:**

**Shrove (Fat) Tuesday (Sunday) Breakfast - Sunday, March 2nd:** The Men's Group will serve their annual pancake breakfast in the Small Dining Room from 9:00-10:00 am. See page 2 for more details.



**Methodist Movie Matinee / Discussion - Sunday, March 23rd:** After worship, we will show the 2016 Christian-based film *"What if..."* in the sanctuary. In this sometimes-humorous PG-rated drama, Ben (Kevin Sorbo) is a successful business tycoon who, years before, threw away his opportunity to go into the ministry with his girlfriend, Wendy. When Ben's new Mercedes breaks down, a tow truck driver (John Ratzenberger) who claims to be an angel, proceeds to show him (ala "It's a Wonderful Life") what his life could have been like had he made different choices. Does he change? The usual drill: movie, popcorn & beverages are FREE! Stay for a brief discussion and pizzas. A free-will offering will be taken to help defray the cost of the pizzas. *Friends are Welcome!!*

**Cookies and (Ice) Cream - Sunday, March 30th, following worship: Join us in the Small Dining Room to build your own Banana Split, Sundae, or Root Beer Float - with a new twist...COOKIES! What better way to usher in Spring than with Ice Cream and FELLOWSHIP? Stop by for a sweet treat and good conversation!**

**Thank You, 1st Church, for making our Souper Bowl of Caring mission outreach successful!** Through your generosity, we donated \$330 and 79 cans of soup to our food pantry. Special thanks to Raymond, Michelle, Patty, Kathy, Pastor Grace, and JoAnn (my Sous Chef) for making some wonderful soups to sample.

## **FUMCWA FAITH COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee** would like to share a staffing update with you. As of February 20th, Custodian Eric Kempka is no longer employed as Custodian with the church. We are grateful for the time and contributions he dedicated to our ministry and wish him the best in his future endeavors. Please join us in keeping him in your prayers during this transition.

In the interim, Samson and Nardos will be assisting on a limited and temporary basis. They are not considered employees, but their help will support our needs until a new hire is made or an outside service is contracted.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Jenny Harper, SPRC Chair