



THE MESSENGER

First Wausau United Methodist Church
Downtown Wausau Wisconsin

From the Pastor

By Pastor Rebecca Borke

Dear First Wausau Family of Faith,

I echo these words of Paul to the church in Philippi (Phil. 1:3-6) to you:

“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel...I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”

We may reflect on our work in this first season of the Christian year and the final month of the calendar year. Some of it has been good, some not, and some are still unfinished. Though there may be regrets, individually and/or as a church, God can even turn those into good.

Over the past year, we have learned a lot about how to be good stewards of the space God has given us. It was disappointing that the Hmong American Center (and museum) decided not to accept our plan for them to take on responsibility for upgrading the building in exchange for free rent. However, this allows us to maintain more control as we gradually make necessary updates. We are excited to welcome New Beginnings for Refugees, which is moving upstairs over Christmas break. They will use the rooms along the north/south hallway upstairs to teach refugees English and the life skills needed to assimilate into our community. Another non-profit is also leaning toward moving here around the same time.

We continue to pray for the right organizations to come at the right time to use our available spaces. We are grateful that they will not only help with much-needed funds toward the expense of the roof but are also missionally aligned in serving others. Let's join together in thanking God for what we have learned, the new work that God is doing, and the assurance that God will complete the good work in us.

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Rebecca



WUMF Monthly Stewardship News

And Now We Call Him Santa Claus
December 2024

Help for the Stewardship Team
Five Ways to Boost Year-End Donations*

It probably doesn't surprise you that the biggest giving month in the church is December. You may not have known that the three biggest giving days of the year for all nonprofits are December 29, 30, and 31, when giving literally quintuples. How can you get the most out of the end of the year?

Step 1: Show your donors the impact of their last gift! According to author Penelope Burk, over-solicitation is the number one reason donors give for not making a repeat donation. This doesn't mean you're asking too often—it means asking again before showing their first gift had impact.

Step 2: Map out, write, test, and schedule your end-of-year fundraising emails. A critical part of your success will be segmented and personalized emails. Why? You're not just emailing some "Dear friend." You're reaching out to the individual behind the generosity. So use their first name. Segmentation enables you to tailor your donor communication so your donors feel seen and appreciated. For example, your segment of monthly donors should receive an email appeal that thanks them for being a loyal monthly donor and invites them to consider making an additional end-of-year gift that will make twice the impact.

Step 3: Test, test, then test again. Don't just test your appeal — test every link and every step of the donation processed from your homepage and donation form to your thank-you email autoresponder and donation landing page. Enlist multiple people to mystery shop your church with an online gift to ensure a stellar and frictionless donor experience.

Step 4: Send more year-end emails than you are now! You think your donors read every email you send. It's why you stress over sending more emails. Here's the reality. Your donors do not read the vast majority of your email. Don't believe me? Open up your email program. Look at the open rate for the last email you sent. If your church is like most nonprofits, your open rate is around 35%. Rather than thinking about the 35% of people who read your email, focus on the 65% who never open it. Consider sending at least three email appeals on the final days of the year.

Step 5: Simplify your year-end email strategy by reusing the same email. Follow this seven-part outline for a simple email and send three times — removing a section in each subsequent send to shorten it.

- 1) Get personal: "Dear Jason"
- 2) Start with a deadline: "I'm writing you today in hopes that you'll make a special holiday gift before midnight on December 31."
- 3) Share the outcome of the gift: This is what will happen in the world as a result of your gift. Note that this is not a description of your program. Remove this portion in the 3rd appeal.
- 4) Provide reasons to give now: It could be a match deadline or "this is the last day to get a tax deduction."
- 5) Demonstrate shared value: "Jason, I know from your previous gifts that you care about . . ." Remove this part in the third appeal.
- 6) One more time: Another ask with a deadline.
- 7) Show you're real: Signature.
- 8) Last opportunity: P.S. with another ask with a deadline



Let Us Pray



For those healing from surgeries, injuries and illness.
For safe travels and a joyous holiday season.

For the Dvorak family and friends as they gather together for Alonzo's celebration of life on December 7th. Visitation is at 10:00am, service at 11:00am, followed by a luncheon at First UMC.

A grief counseling group is available for those in need of spiritual/emotional support during difficult times of grieving. This group takes place on an as needed basis. Contact the church office or Julie Mieke to inquire.

We also offer weekly grief meditations on our website.



Zoom with District Superintendent

Monday, December 9 at 6:30pm

NE District Superintendent, Park Hunter, hosts an open Zoom once a month. Join for a short devotion, prayer time, and a chance to hear news and ask questions about events in the district.

Join online... <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5027449756>

Mute/unmute: mic icon usually in lower left corner

Join by phone... 312-626-6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 502 744 9756 (Mute/unmute: *6)



Online Giving

Online giving is available for regular offerings or other mission funds you wish to support. An account is not required.

If creating an account, PLEASE USE THE EMAIL YOU PROVIDED IN THE CHURCH DIRECTORY, if one was provided. Allow 24-48 hours after account creation for office staff to confirm your account.

www.onrealm.org/FirstUnitedMeth91919/give/now

*Check box at checkout to help cover online processing fees. Thank you!



New Bible Study

The Message of Jesus:

Words That Changed the World

Wednesday night bible study will be put on hold (except at WNL) for the month of December.

A new study will begin on Wednesday, January 8th at 5:15pm. In this study we will be reading and discussing The Message of Jesus by Adam Hamilton. This will be a 6-7 week study that will be completed in time for Lent.



Sunday, December 15th at 10:00am

Join us for our annual Festival of Lessons & Carols during our 10:00am worship time on December 15th. We will have musical pieces provided by our organist (Rob Perkins), Jubilate Bell Choir, Chancel Choir, Swahili Choir, Strings, and more.

The dress rehearsal will take place Saturday, December 14th from 9:00-12:00pm on the following schedule:

9:00am - Strings

10:00am - Choir

10:30am - Handbells

A huge thank you to Jessica Wenzel for directing our Handbell and Chancel Choirs this year, and all those who helped with organizing music.

First Wausau



Savvy Seniors

Savvy Seniors will meet on **Monday, December 2nd at 11:30am** at Jalapeños in Wausau. This is a social group open to singles & couples over 55. We would love to have you join us! Questions? Call Vicki 715-571-3009.



United Women in Faith

The Cookie Walk Returns!

Following the Lessons & Carols Service on December 15th, take a stroll through Fellowship Hall once again and fill your own containers with your favorite cookies. Pre-orders will be available for anyone who would still like their cookies prepackaged. See the order form included in this messenger. Cookies are sold by the pound.

New officers were elected at the November meeting:

President: Margaret Getzin

Vice-President: Julie Mieke

Secretary: Sara Koss

Treasurer: Bonnie Goertz

Program Resources: Georgia Reynolds

There will be no December meeting. All women are invited to our January 8th meeting. It's a soup luncheon, beginning at noon.

We are serving women, children, and youth around the world, thanks to your support.

Sorry WE'RE CLOSED

The church office will be closed from Dec. 24 - Jan. 1

Inquiries can still be made via phone or email during this time.

Scholarship Opportunity

Are you thinking of going back to school or just graduating and looking for scholarship funds? If you are part of the FUMC family you are eligible to apply for the Pivot Scholarship.

Applications open January 1, 2025 and are available at the church office. Deadline is March 1, 2025.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer shawls are available to the congregation both in the narthex and parlor of the church. Please avail yourselves of this ministry for comfort in cases of illness, grief or loss. Also kindly remember to present them for celebrations such as: baptisms, confirmations, graduations, and marriage.

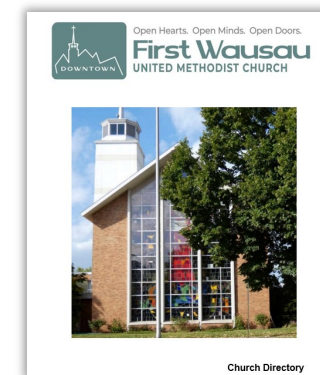
The Prayer Shawl Group will hold a lunch for the group on **December 3rd at 11:00am** at the Filling Station.

The prayer shawl group is always in need of more yarn for their beautiful creations. Please give any donations to Julie Mieke at the church office.



The Messenger

Please submit any articles or news for the January Messenger to georgia@firstwausau.org by Dec 20th.



We have updated the church directory with your changes.

You can pickup copies in the Narthex, Parlor, or church office.

Wednesday Night Live!

December 18th - Christmas Dinner

The schedule is as follows:

5:15pm - Adult Bible Study/Youth Program

(led by Pastor Rebecca) (led by Dennis Reynolds)

6:00pm - Dinner

6:30pm - Bells Practice

7:15pm - Choir Practice

Meal and refreshments will be catered for this meal, however we encourage you to bring and share a dessert, or give monetary donations to help with costs.

DECEMBER 2024

Birthdays and anniversaries can be found on calendar below.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 1st DAY OF ADVENT Joseph Schretter (B) 8am - Worship w/Holy Communion (Chapel) 9am - "We Make the Road by Walking" Bible Study 9am - Sunday School 10am - Worship w/Holy Communion (Sanctuary)	11:30am - Savvy Seniors (Lalaperenos)	11am - Prayer Shawl Group Lunch (Filling Station)	6:30pm - Bells Practice 7:15pm - Choir Rehearsal	Jan Cloues (B) 8am - AA (Room 101) 10:30am - Worship Design (Vicki N's House)	OFFICE CLOSED	Lynne Sydora (B) Betsy Dughnaki (B) 10am - Alonzo Dvorak Visitation 11am - Alonzo Dvorak Service 12pm - Alonzo Dvorak Celebration of Life Luncheon
8 8am - Worship (Chapel) 9am - "We Make the Road by Walking" Bible Study 9am - Sunday School 10am - Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am - African Worship	Yvonne Eickox (B) Carrie Hoeblerman (B) 6:30pm - Monthly DS Zoom, Devotion and Q&A	1pm - PNC/CCC 7pm - Trustees (BK Smith Rom)	Arthur Chang (B) Cyrus Adams (B) 6:30pm - Bells Practice 7:15pm - Choir Rehearsal	12 8am - AA (Room 101)	13 Charlie Strong (B) OFFICE CLOSED 7:10pm - Men's Off Property Group (Cyclones Game)	14 Sharon Gieselman (B) Stan Schacht (B) 9a-12p - Lessons & Carols Dress Rehearsal 1:00pm - UWF Cooking Walk Prep
15 9am - "We Make the Road by Walking" Bible Study 10am - Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am - African Worship 11am - Coffee Hour	Robert Bauer (B)	6pm - SPRC 7pm - Finance Committee	Dean Marguardt (B) 5:15pm - WNL 6:30pm - Bells Practice 7:15pm - Choir Rehearsal	19 Dare Carlson (B) C. Merrill McMahon (B) Andy White (B) 8am - AA (Room 101)	20 OFFICE CLOSED	21 9am - African Worship & Choir
22 8am - Worship (Chapel) 9am - "We Make the Road by Walking" Bible Study 10am - Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am - African Worship	Ann Johnson (B) C. Merrill & McMahon (A)	24 CHRISTMAS EVE Vicki Nowaczyk (B) 2pm - Worship (Chapel) 4pm - Worship (Sanctuary) 8pm - Worship (Sanctuary)	25 CHRISTMAS DAY Office Closed	26 Office Closed 8am - AA (Room 101)	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28 Dennis Carey (B) John & Carole Magelke (A)
29 Anita Gerber (B) 9am - "We Make the Road by Walking" Bible Study 10am - Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am - African Worship 11am - Coffee Hour	30 Office Closed	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE Office Closed				

First Wausau DECEMBER 2024

December Mission United Under One Roof

Roof Repair Campaign

This month's offering will be for the **Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa**. This mission serves the residents of the reservation and deepens the relationship with the native community there. The donations will provide supplies for the early childhood programs and clothing for the children.

Throughout the month of December, donate loose change, put cash in the small brown envelopes, memo a check, or donate online under fund name: *Red Cliff*



In August, we were graciously awarded a Mustard Seed Migration Grant of \$2,000 to continue our church's support of the refugees in the Wausau area.

The Mustard Seed Migration Grant program is designed to encourage United Methodist churches to engage in ministry to migrants in their midst.

In our application we asked for and were awarded funds for the following:

- Rental Assistance - \$1,200
- Water Bills - \$300
- Electric/Gas Bills - \$500

Our deadline to spend the funds is February 21, 2025.

Please contact the church office if you know of a refugee family in our community that may be in need of financial assistance this winter season. Thank you!

End-of-Year Giving

Please submit all remaining pledges and end of year giving to the church office by Monday, December 30 to be included in this year's giving statements.

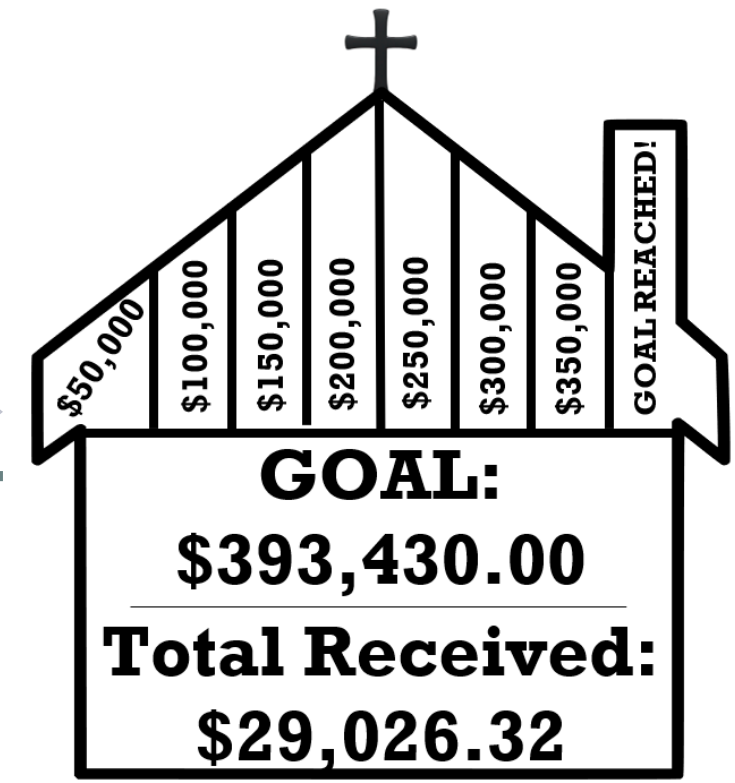
To inquire about your giving, please contact our finance director, Georgia Reynolds.

End of year giving statements will be mailed in January.

Our deposit of \$105,000 has been made to Kulp's Roofing. Construction will begin in Spring 2025. So far our congregation has raised a total of \$29,026.32 towards this expense. Thanks to generous donors we were able to take \$25,000 off the loan amount requested.

The roof will cost at least \$317,000. A 10-year loan for \$292,000 has been taken for a total cost of more than \$393,430 including interest, with monthly payments of about \$3,280. We are asking for your help to meet this financial obligation for the church. The more money we can provide upfront the less interest we will incur. Assistance will be needed to meet our monthly payment once the loan is taken.

You can make special donations for this expense by memoing your check or cash envelope, or donating online (*facilities project fund*). Pledges can also be made for this campaign on the 2025 pledge cards or online.





We rely on volunteers for many aspects of our church functions.

If you are seeking to get more involved in our church, please consider volunteering in the following areas in 2025:

Ushers, Counters, Personal Needs Closet/Claire's Critter Closet, Community Meals (stewardship/meal hosting), Wednesday Night Live, Nursery, Sunday School, etc.

Please contact Pastor Rebecca for information.

Memory Cafe ADRC Donation

As organizers of the Memory Café program that used to be held at our church, Maggie Schoenfeld and Nancy Turner decided to donate the remaining funds to an account at ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Centers) to help fund other Memory Cafes still running in our area.

A total of \$2,286.65 was donated and received in memory of Charles Schoenfeld (DMC founder) and Allison Turner (daughter of Nancy Turner, DMC Co-Leader).

Connect Online!

Website:
firstwausau.org

Facebook:
facebook.com/WausauFUMC

YouTube:
youtube.com@FirstWausauUMC

WiFi Network:
FUMC Guest
password: fumcpublic

Phone: 715.842.2201



First Wausau
United Methodist Church
**SUNDAY
COMMUNITY
DINNER**

Our final hosting of the Sunday Community Dinner at First Presbyterian will be **Sunday, December 29th from 4:00-5:00pm**. Please contact Mark and Jen Johnson if you would like to volunteer. Meals will move to First UMC starting Sunday, January 6th. Our current hosting group will continue serving meals on every 5th Sunday of any month at our location.

Thank you to all those who volunteered to be a steward for the Community Meals starting at our church in 2025. If you are interested in being a steward but missed the meeting, please contact Georgia Reynolds or Jen Johnson.

We are still working to fill a few Sundays on the 2025 schedule. If you know of any organizations looking to do some volunteer work and team building, please have them contact our church office.

Buckets & Bags

Empty gallon sized ice cream buckets, or similar style buckets are needed for cleaning product containers and other storage. Please place in the church kitchen during business hours or on Sundays.

The Personal Needs Closet and Claire's Critter Closet are always in need of paper bags with handles and plastic grocery bags. Please place outside the PNC/CCC doors.

Giving Trees

During the Advent Season, be sure to visit the giving trees in our Parlor. Each tree will be setup for gifts to be given to the Personal Needs Closet, Claire's Critter Closets, or New Beginnings for Refugees. Each mission has different needs like toiletries, clothing and animal supplies. Please consider giving a little extra to one of these community missions. Thank you!

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

DECEMBER WORSHIP

Sunday Worship Times: 8:00am Chapel & 10:00am Sanctuary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1 HOLY COMMUNION

Passion
Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8 Presence

Isaiah 12:2-6; Zephaniah 3:14-20

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 LESSONS & CAROLS

(NO 8:00AM SERVICE OR SUNDAY SCHOOL)
Peace

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22 Promise

Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE (2:00, 4:00 & 8:00 PM) Joy

Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-14

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29 (NO 8:00AM SERVICE OR SUNDAY SCHOOL) Home

Ps 148:9-14; 1 Samuel 2:18-20,26; Luke 2:41-52



STAFF

Pastor	Rebecca Borke	rebecca@firstwausau.org
Director of Comm./Finance	Georgia Reynolds	georgia@firstwausau.org
Director of Discipleship	Julie Mieke	julie@firstwausau.org
Building Engineer	Andy White	

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