



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

THE MESSENGER

First Wausau United Methodist Church

Downtown Wausau Wisconsin

From the Pastor

By Pastor Rebecca Borke

Dear First Wausau Family of Faith,

I hope you have all enjoyed the first half of summer. Whether it is gardening, hiking, camping, paddling, or working on an outdoor project, it feels great to get outside and be renewed. Then the thought strikes us – it is already the middle of summer! It might feel a bit like a mid-life crisis when we hit mid-summer and think of the plans, projects, and play we have yet to enjoy.

Studies show that churches can also hit a “mid-life” crisis, though chronology and age are not the defining characteristics. Instead, symptoms of a congregational midlife crisis include questioning beliefs and roles, weariness with church politics, reduced participation in worship and ministry, feelings of having “outgrown” the church, and dissatisfaction or restlessness. If any of these symptoms describe you when you think about your connection to our church, it is not unusual. In fact, they are normal and actually part of our spiritual growth.

As a “doctor of the church,” I am here to listen to whatever symptoms you may be experiencing. As individuals and as a congregation, we can discover new (or rediscover old) ways of connecting with Christ and with one another. We can find renewed meaning and purpose. We can learn how to listen to and lean on each other and God during times of crisis and uncertainty, instead of being isolated and divided. We can consider the changing needs of our community and expectations of our congregation and rethink traditional approaches to church life and ministry.

Christ reminds us that we, both individually and as his church, are called to be transformed. Whether you are having a mid-summer or mid-life spiritual crisis, we can see these challenges as an opportunity to grow in our faith and emerge stronger and more vibrant as a congregation. As summer begins to wind down, I look forward to seeing how the Holy Spirit breathes new vision and life into us.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Rebecca



WUMF Monthly Stewardship News

Witness
July 2025

The Ministry of Presence
August 2025

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”

These final words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew have long inspired the church to share the message of faith with the world.

Over the years, I’ve heard many suggestions on how we might do this—some advocate for door-to-door outreach, like Mormon missionaries; others prefer modern marketing methods such as social media campaigns. Still others say, “We should focus on our own before reaching out.” Each of these approaches has merit, but they also raise a deeper question: How does God truly touch people’s lives today?

Henri Nouwen offers a helpful perspective: “Often we think that to witness means to speak up in defense of God. This idea can make us very self-conscious. We wonder where and how we can make God the topic of our conversations and how to convince our families, friends, neighbors, and colleagues of God’s presence in their lives . . . (But) the way God’s Spirit manifests itself most convincingly is through its fruits: ‘love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control.’ These fruit speak for themselves. It is therefore, always better to raise the question, ‘How can I grow in the Spirit?’ than the question ‘How can I make others believe in the Spirit?’”

In other words, the most powerful witness we offer is not through strategies or persuasion, but through the lives we live. When we become a community that reflects God’s love, forgiveness, and service, people notice. In a world marked by division and loneliness, being a faithful, Spirit-filled church may be the clearest way we share Christ with the world.

~ Rev. Jason Mahnke, WUMF

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”
— Matthew 18:20

In a world of crowded calendars, overflowing inboxes, and endless notifications, there is one gift that remains powerful, rare, and deeply spiritual: presence.

Not presence as in “attendance,” but presence as in attention. As in showing up — wholeheartedly — for God, for one another, and for the sacred work to which we are called. When we talk about stewardship, we often speak of time, talent, and treasure. But we don’t always name how transformational it is simply to be present.

Presence is what turns a worship service into a community. It’s what transforms a hospital visit into holy ground. It’s what makes a church meeting more than a checklist — when someone takes time to listen, pray, or ask, “How are you really doing?”

Think of Jesus. He didn’t publish books or host podcasts. He sat at tables, walked dusty roads, and looked people in the eye. His power was not just in what He said, but in how fully He showed up.

This month, as many of us squeeze in final vacations, youth trips, or back-to-school prep, let’s remember that presence is a form of generosity. And one that doesn’t require a budget line or a campaign. Your willingness to show up — for worship, service, conversation, prayer — may be one of the most meaningful offerings you give this season.

When we are present to each other, we bear witness to the presence of God. Let’s not underestimate the holy work of showing up.

~Rev. Jason Mahnke, WUMF



Report by Lay Member Betsy Duginski –

For the second year in a row, I had the privilege of being one of First Wausau UMC's lay members at the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church. The Annual Conference is the decision-making body of The United Methodist Church, where both clergy and lay members come together for worship, fellowship, and to conduct conference business presided over by the bishop. Some key elements are voting on new legislation, commissioning and ordaining new pastors, learning about new resources for ministry and missions, recognizing retiring clergy, honoring those who have passed, and announcing new pastoral appointments.

Bishop Schwerin called on us as United Methodists to make worldwide connections, pray for our nation, and adjust to the new political realities of our nation and world with his beautiful conference theme: Grace is sufficient. Bishop Schwerin really did inspire me to live out my calling as a United Methodist with boldness and humility. The entire Annual Conference experience called us to embody grace in all that we do, especially as we face the world's struggles with courage and compassion.

To learn more, check out the videos on the Wisconsin Conference webpage: <https://www.wisconsinumc.org/conference-materials>



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

- **Church Office** - Mondays and Tuesdays approx. 9:00am-1:00pm.
- **AV/PowerPoint** - During Sanctuary services
- **Nursery**— Sunday Mornings

Please contact Margaret Anderson, Bonnie Goertz, or Pastor Rebecca Borke to help. Thank you!

Let Us Pray 

For the families of those recently passed:

- Joshua Rutter: 12/22/1998-6/11/2025
- Calista Marie Wendt: 2/24/1948-6/1/2025

A grief counseling group is available for those in need of support during difficult times of grieving. Contact the church office or Julie Mieke to inquire.

Weekly grief meditations are available on our website.

Discipleship Report

Our most recent Bible study concluded on July 9. We plan to resume our Wednesday evening studies beginning September 10.

Sunday School will begin on the first Sunday after Labor Day (Sept. 7). At this time, we will offer an adult class and a combined youth class, as nearly all our children are now in junior or senior high school.

The adult class will be studying a book by Josh Scott, the author of our most recent Bible study. The youth will follow the lectionary series provided by the Board of Discipleship.

I'm looking forward to another season of meaningful learning. Won't you join us?

-Julie Mieke Director of Discipleship



Sunday, May 25 — Sunday, Aug. 31
9:00 am

Summer worship will be combined to one service on Sundays at 9:00am with coffee hour following the service in the Parlor.

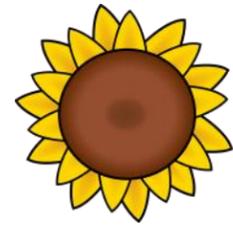
Services will also be available online live on Sundays and recorded for later viewing.



JULY 2025

Birthdays and anniversaries can be found on calendar below.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6 9am Worship w/Holy Communion (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 10am Coffee Hour 4pm Community Meal	7 Dan Daubert (B) Jacqueline Chang (B) Gwyneth Chang (B) Hannah Marquardt (B) 11:30am Savvy Seniors (Log Cabin)	8 1-3pm PNC/CCC 5:30pm Trustees	9 Monica Dvorak (B) 4pm Bible Study	10 Courtney Rohland (B) 8am AA (Room 101)	11 Office Closed	12 9am Mission U 2025 Overview Day
13 9am Outdoor Worship (Courtyard) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 10am Coffee Hour 4pm Community Meal	14 6:30pm Monthly DS Zoom, Devotional and Q&A	15 Karl & Carol Pachmayer (A) Kurt & Kirsten Hornby (A) 7pm Finance Committee	16	17 8am AA (Room 101)	18 Office Closed	19 Zoe Martin (B) Dwight & Pam Steinke (A)
20 9am Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 10am Coffee Hour 4pm Community Meal	21 Dick Rayborn (B) Mark Johnson (B) 10am Prayer Team	22	23 Samuel Cowen (B) 1pm - UWF Book Club	24 Thomas Krueger (B) Bev LaCrosse (B) 8am AA (Room 101)	25 Office Closed Gregory & Laura Cowan (A)	26 Michael Marzu (B) 9-11am PNC/CCC
27 9am Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 10am Coffee Hour 4pm Community Meal	28 7pm Ministries Council	29 Blake Grogan (B)	30	31 Gloria Rybarczyk (B) 8am AA (Room 101)		



AUGUST 2025

Birthdays and anniversaries can be found on calendar below.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 Dick Ostwald (B) 9am Worship w/Holy Communion (Sanctuary) 10am Coffee Hour 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 4pm Community Meal	4 Don Kissinger (B) 11:30am Savvy Seniors (El Tequila Salsa)	5 6pm Mission Team	6 Pastor Rebecca Borke (B)	7 8am AA (BK Smith)	8 Office Closed Logan Rohland (B) Jon & Bonnie Goertz (A)	9 Robert Frame (B)
10 9am Worship (Sanctuary) 10am Coffee Hour 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 4pm Community Meal	11 Terry Flath (B) 1-3pm PNC/CCC 1:30pm Worship Design 5:30pm Trustees	12 Sifa Misuu (B) Lawrence & Marilyn Muelver (A) 6pm SPRC 7pm Finance Committee	13 1pm UWF Chapter Mtg (Parlor)	14 Julie Mieke (B) 8am AA (BK Smith)	15 Office Closed	16
17 Wil Bloy (B) Nancy Flath (B) Dennis & Gwen Carey (A) 9am Worship (Sanctuary) 10am Coffee Hour 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 4pm Community Meal	18 10am Prayer Team (Parlor)	19	20 Mark & Jen Johnson (A)	21 8am AA (BK Smith)	22 Office Closed Pamela Zietlow (B)	23 9-11am PNC/CCC
24/31 9am Worship (Courtyard) 10:30am Pie & Ice Cream Social (Parlor) 4pm Community Meal ----- 9am Worship (Sanctuary) 10am Coffee Hour 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 4pm Community Meal—First Wausau	25 Lynn Reichelt (B) Eileen Denfeld (B)	26	27 David Mariani (B) Sheryl Del Conte (B) Liesel Seiser (B)	28 Clare Ostwald (B)	29	30 Mackenzie Marquardt (B)

First Wausau

JULY/AUGUST 2025



First Wausau UMC is hosting Lay Servant Ministry (LSM) classes for laity in central and northern Wisconsin on **October 4 and 11, from 8:30am - 3:45pm**. We encourage our congregation to sign up for a class and be spiritually strengthened as we learn, connect, and grow together with other United Methodists.

The BASIC class (taught by Julie Mieke) is foundational.

If you have completed the BASIC class, you can then take any of the advanced classes. On October 4 and 11, we are offering:

PREACHING class (taught by Pastor Rebecca Borke)

ACCOUNTABLE DISCIPLESHIP class (taught by Pastor Tim Gurlea)

Registration information is coming soon, but please reserve October 4 and 11 on your calendar to attend these inspiring and important classes. More information about Lay Servant Ministries can be found at <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/lay-servant-ministries-catalog>. Talk to Julie Mieke or Pastor Rebecca if you have questions.



2025
Lay Servant Ministries
Course Descriptions and Equipping Resources



Transform Your Church with the

Coming to Wisconsin!

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations REVISITED



Join Us for an Engaging In-Person Ecumenical Training Experience Led by Bishop Robert Schnase



Robert Schnase, United Methodist pastor, Bishop and best-selling author of the original *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, *Five Practices of Fruitful Living* and *Just Say Yes! Unleashing People for Ministry*.

What You'll Gain:

- Practical insights on **Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity**
- Actionable tools to address the challenging realities churches face today; tailored to today's evolving ministry landscape
- Meaningful discussions and hands-on activities to strengthen your congregation's ministry
- A supportive network of like-minded church leaders

Why This Training:

- Grounded in **proven principles** that have transformed churches worldwide
- **Interactive sessions** that move beyond theory to real-world application
- Opportunities to **connect and collaborate** with fellow church leaders
- **Exclusive opportunity to learn from Bishop Schnase** in person

REGISTER TODAY!

Saturday, Sept. 20, & Sunday Afternoon, Sept. 21, 2025

First Congregational UCC, Plymouth, WI

To Register: <https://wisconsin-reg.brapp.com/FivePracticesofFruitfulCongregations>

EARLY-BIRD AND GROUP DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

Co - Sponsored by:



Empower your congregation to grow in faith, service, and generosity!



Savvy Seniors will be meeting on **Monday, August 4th at 11:30am** at El Tequila Salsa in Rib Mountain.

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.

Mustard Seed Grant Approved!

We have graciously been awarded another \$2,000 Mustard Seed Migration Grant to continue our church's support of the refugees in the Wausau area. This money is designated to pay for five (5) Green Card applications.

The Mustard Seed Migration Grant program is designed to encourage United Methodist churches to engage in ministry to migrants in their midst. UMCOR awards these grants to UMC churches in the U.S. to engage in new, one-time community-based service projects and ministries focused on migrants and refugees.

Roof Repair Complete

We are so very grateful to the generous donors of this church for helping to pay off the new roof expense! Our goal has been met and the work completed.



If you have an outstanding pledge for the roof project and still plan to honor it, your funds will stay in our facilities project fund for similar projects. Currently, trustees are upgrading plumbing/bathrooms due to the increased use.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer shawls are available to the congregation both in the narthex and parlor of the church.

The next meeting is **Tuesday, September 23rd at 10:00am** in the church parlor.

Please avail yourselves of this ministry for comfort in cases of illness, grief, loss, or for celebrations such as: baptisms, confirmations, graduations, and marriage.



The ladies of our Prayer Shawl Ministry; Alice Schacht, Nancy Flath, Nancy Bogumill, Julie Mieke & Marian Attoe donated 12 shawls to Haven Women's Shelter.

SUNDAY WORSHIP ACCESS

In-Person: Sundays at 9:00am

YouTube Watch online on Sundays:
[Youtube.com/@FirstWausauUMC](https://www.youtube.com/@FirstWausauUMC)

Access via our website:
firstwausau.org



United Women in Faith

Monthly meetings resume on **Wednesday, August 13th at 1:00pm** in the church parlor.

You're invited to the "no business" UWF book club!

We are having a book review get-together on Wednesday, July 23 at 1:00 pm in the church parlor. Join us for a nice glass of iced tea and bring a book that you have read, are reading or would like to read and share a bit about it. We have several books from the UWF Reading List available in the parlor if you'd like to see what's current. The discussion should last about an hour or a bit longer, depending on the conversations.



The Assembly, themed "Dream it! Believe it! Do it!" will take place in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 15-17, 2026. Registration for the event will open on Sept. 1, 2025.

Visit <http://uwfaith.org/assembly>

Online Giving

Online giving is available for regular offerings or other missions you wish to support. 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!



The Wausau/Marathon County Shelter is located in our church basement through the end of this year.

This program runs seven days a week 6pm-8am. The shelter can house up to 60 individuals and a small dinner is provided each evening around 7:00pm. This shelter provides separation for women and men.

The shelter is looking for volunteers and donations. You can get more information or stay in touch through the following:

wmcshelter@wausauwi.gov
(715) 261-7824

[WMC Shelter Facebook Page](#)

Important The Messenger

For our September Messenger, please submit any news or announcements to georgia@firstwausau.org by Aug. 25th.

Connect Online!

Website:
firstwausau.org

Facebook:
facebook.com/WausauFUMC

YouTube:
youtube.com/@FirstWausauUMC

WiFi Network:
FUMC Guest
password: fumcpublic

Phone: 715.842.2201

Outdoor Worship July Mission

Sunday, August 24th at 9:00am – Courtyard Worship

This will be a regular outdoor service. Following the service we will be hosting a Pie & Ice Cream Social

This service will not be live-streamed or recorded.

Please bring a lawn chair and dress accordingly. In the case of rain, services will be moved inside.



Pie & Ice Cream Social



Sunday, August 24th

following 9am church service

After a brief hiatus, the Pie & Ice Cream social is back this August! Join us in the Parlor, following our courtyard service, to enjoy homemade pies with ice cream. The ice cream will be provided but feel free to bring a pie to share! Volunteers are also needed for setup and cleanup. Contact the church for questions.



The church is always collecting plastic bags, paper bags and milk jugs for our missions—Personal Needs Closet, Claire’s Critters Closet, and Sunday Community Meals. Please drop them by the church office.



Claire’s Critter Closet has provided 100 households, representing 180 cats and 61 dogs, this year with food and supplies (litter, leashes, treats, etc.) for their furry friends while they are dealing with financial difficulties. It helps keep people and their pets together and fed during hard times.

Throughout the month of July, donate loose change, put cash in the small brown envelopes, memo a check, or donate online under fund name: *Claire’s Critter Closet*



August Mission



This drive-thru meal takes place every Sunday from 4-5pm on the east side of the building. Our church’s host group led by Jen and Mark Johnson hosts the meal for every 5th Sunday of any month. All other meals are filled by various churches and organizations in the community.

Throughout the month of August, donate loose change, put cash in the small brown envelopes, memo a check, or donate online.

We still have one Sunday (Aug. 17th) open for 2025. Please contact the church if interested.

Upcoming Host Groups:

- July 20 - St. Andrew Lutheran
- July 27 - First Presbyterian
- Aug. 3 - Grace UCC
- Aug. 10 - Good Shepard Lutheran
- **Aug. 17 - OPEN**
- Aug. 24—First Presbyterian
- Aug. 31 - FUMC

THE MESSENGER

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTSED

Our Mission:

Living as a community where
God is forming deeply committed
followers of Christ

JULY/AUGUST WORSHIP

Sunday Summer Worship Times: 9:00AM Sanctuary

SUNDAY, JULY 20

Image of the Invisible

Psalm 82; Colossians 1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42

SUNDAY, JULY 27

Made You Alive

Psalm 85; Colossians 2:6-15; Luke 11:1-13

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3 HOLY COMMUNION

Set Your Mind

Psalm 107:1-9; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10

Desire a Better Country

Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23; Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17

For the Sake of Joy

Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 11:29-38; 39-12:2

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24 - OUTDOOR WORSHIP

Cannot Be Shaken

Psalm 71:1-6; Hebrews 12:14-24, 25-29

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31

Let Mutual Love Continue

Psalm 81:1-10; Hebrews 13:1-8; Luke 14:1, 7-11

STAFF

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

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