



# THE MESSENGER

First Wausau United Methodist Church  
Downtown Wausau Wisconsin



## From the Pastor

By Pastor Rebecca Borke

Dear First Wausau Friends in Faith,

As we begin a new year, there is wisdom in reflecting on the past year. I experienced many personal highlights and challenges. From the mountain high of completing my doctorate in May to the valley of the death of my son a month later, my thoughts and feelings have been all over the map. Thanks to the opportunity to literally traverse the globe on a trip to Greece and Italy in October, I was able to grow through my grief and discover ancient applications of God's grace across time, culture, and language.

I will be sharing some of what I learned about the world of the Apostle Paul when he stepped out in faith to share the good news and hope Christ brings to all the world. Please join me on Wednesday, January 7 at 4:30 pm in the BK Smith Room as I share pictures and insights of the places I saw in Greece. I hope it will bring perspective and insight as we each process whatever challenges and joys we have each been through in the past year.

While reflecting is healthy, a new year is also a good reminder that ruminating is not good for our souls. Some doors need to be closed for new opportunities to be opened. I pray that God will guide you through your past and into a new year of hope and joy in Jesus!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Rebecca

## January 2026 Stewardship Newsletter

### More Than a Resolution: Practicing Faithful Stewardship for the Long Haul

Every January, many of us start the year with good intentions. We resolve to spend less, save more, pay down debt, or finally feel less anxious about money. Some of those resolutions stick for a while. Many don't. And it's not because we lack discipline or desire.

The truth is that healthy financial stewardship is rarely achieved through willpower alone.

Getting out of debt, learning to save, practicing contentment, growing in generosity, and cultivating gratitude are not quick fixes. They are habits – formed slowly, intentionally, and often imperfectly over time. Like prayer, worship, and service, faithful stewardship is a spiritual practice that shapes us as disciples.

Scripture reminds us that transformation is ongoing work. Paul writes, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Romans 12:2). That kind of renewal does not happen because the calendar flips from December to January. It happens when we acknowledge that our relationship with money, possessions, and generosity is deeply spiritual – and that God's work in us unfolds over a lifetime.

For some, this might mean seeking help to escape cycles of debt. For others, it may mean learning to live with enough, resisting the pressure to accumulate more. For still others, it might be discovering the joy of generosity – not just financial giving, but generosity of time, skills, hospitality, and compassion.

As individuals and as churches, the invitation at the start of a new year is not simply to make resolutions, but to recommit ourselves to practices that help us grow in trust, gratitude, and faithfulness. Stewardship is not about perfection. It's about progress – taken one faithful step at a time.

~ Rev. Jason Mahnke, WUMF



- Joan Toivanen passed on 11-30-25
- Warren Fabel passed on 9-13-25

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.



### Savvy Seniors

Savvy Seniors will be meeting on **Monday, January 5th at 11:30am** at Mandarin Restaurant.

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.

## 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, loss, or for celebrations such as: baptisms, confirmations, graduations, and marriage.

The next meeting is **Tuesday, January 20th at 10:00am** in the church parlor.

## Wednesday Night Fellowship

**Wednesday, January 21st**

The schedule will be as follows:

**5:00pm – Bible Study, BK Smith Room**

**6:00pm – Dinner, Fellowship Hall**

**7:15pm – Choir Practice**

Meal and refreshments will be provided, however we encourage you to bring and share a dessert.



Please submit any news or announcements for the February messenger to [georgia@firstwausau.org](mailto:georgia@firstwausau.org) by January 26th.

# Chancel Choir Discipleship Report

Wednesdays at 7:15pm

The Chancel Choir, led by Rob Perkins, practices on Wednesdays at 7:15pm starting again on January 14 in preparation for Sunday performances. New members are always welcome!

## Jubilate Bell Choir

Wednesdays at 6:30pm

Jessica Wenzel leads our Jubilate Bell Choir practice on Wednesdays at 7:15pm starting again on January 28 in preparation for a spring event. Contact Jessica Wenzel if interested in joining.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

- **Ushers** - Specifically for 2nd and 5th Sundays, Contact the church office to help.
- **Nursery** — Per our policy, two adults need to be present to have the nursery open during the 10am service. We are currently seeking nursery volunteers. Contact Pastor Rebecca to help.
- **Coffee Hour**—Make coffee (provided) and bring treats, including gluten-free options, to serve about 30-40 people. It is a great way to interact socially with your church family, meet new members, or celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. Signup in the Parlor.

## 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 Pivet Scholarship.

Applications open January 1, 2026 and are available at the church office. Deadline is March 1, 2026.



The WMC Shelter is located in our basement and have extended their stay here until March 31. Open seven days a week 6pm-8am, the shelter can house up to 60 people and a small meal is provided each evening.

This shelter provides separation for women and men. For more info call (715) 261-7824 .

As the new year starts both the Sunday morning adult Sunday School and the Wednesday evening Bible study are beginning new studies that are Biblical devotion studies. The Sunday morning class will begin the book "Steadfast 365 Days of Devotion". With each daily reading there is a question asked. We will discuss the question of one or more of the readings each week. On January 7th the Wednesday evening Bible study is hosting Pastor Rebecca and she will share the pictures and stories of her trip to Greece and Italy this past fall. You may join us regardless, if you want to join the study to follow the following week. We will be moving our start time back to 5 PM as the gap between study and bells and choir is too long for those participating in more than one of these events. We will be studying the lectionary that is being used in our Sunday morning worship. The Revised Common Lectionary is a three-year cycle of reading from the Bible used in Christian worship, aligning with the Sundays, festivals and seasons of the liturgical year. It is used by most of the Christian churches in the United States, Canada and many in Europe and Africa. So, Christians around the world are reading the same scripture or studying the same scripture each week. The youth have also been studying from the lectionary on a weekly basis from materials prepared by the United Methodist Board of Discipleship. All of the studies are the kind that if you miss a week or two you can join back without being lost. It offers some flexibility for those who cannot come every week. The depth of getting to know one another in these studies is heart and eye opening. We are blessed to have these opportunities.

I am still looking forward to seeing if we have any people who would like communion delivered to their home. We are down to only 5 members receiving it in their home or nursing home. If you have a family member or would like to have communion please reach out to the church or myself and let me know. We are currently delivering quarterly and the next time will be in March. May we begin the new year practicing hope.

- Director of Discipleship, Julie Mieke

## Pledge Statements

2025 pledges statements will be sent via mail by the end of January 2026. If you have any questions, please contact our finance director, Georgia Reynolds.

# January Mission



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

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 January, donate loose change, put cash in the small brown envelopes, memo a check, or donate online (Fund: Community Meal).

### January Host Groups:

- Jan. 4 - Good Shepherd Lutheran
- Jan. 11 - Rotary Club
- Jan. 18 - St. John Lutheran, Maine
- Jan. 25 - First Presbyterian

### 2026 Open Dates:

March 1st, May 24th, July 5th, August 9th

Contact Georgia Reynolds at the church office for more information or to sign up your group to host.

### Connect Online!

Website:  
[firstwausau.org](http://firstwausau.org)

Facebook:  
[facebook.com/WausauFUMC](https://facebook.com/WausauFUMC)

YouTube:  
[youtube.com@FirstWausauUMC](https://youtube.com@FirstWausauUMC)

WiFi Network:  
FUMC Guest  
password: fumcpublic

Phone: 715.842.2201



United  
Women  
in Faith

For our December meeting program, we did a show and tell of our favorite Christmas items or memories. The group will continue providing breakfast items for Open Door on Wednesday mornings. Items can be dropped off in the labeled boxes in the kitchen to be delivered each week.



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> Registration forms for events can be found in the parlor.

Monthly meetings are in the church parlor at 1:00 pm, unless otherwise noted.

- **Jan. 14** - Monthly Meeting, Parlor

### WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

Join us in the Parlor on **Thursday, January 22 at 4:00pm** for our discussion on the first half (thru chapter 21) of *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict & Victoria Christopher Murray from the Nurturing for Community category. If you would like to be a part of the book club, please be sure to pickup a copy from Georgia or Julie at the church office.

## Online Giving

Online giving is available for regular offerings or other missions you wish to support. Account is not required.

[www.onrealm.org/FirstUnitedMeth91919/give/now](http://www.onrealm.org/FirstUnitedMeth91919/give/now)



# LESSONS & CAROLS



# HONORING THE PAST, STILL DREAMING FOR THE FUTURE

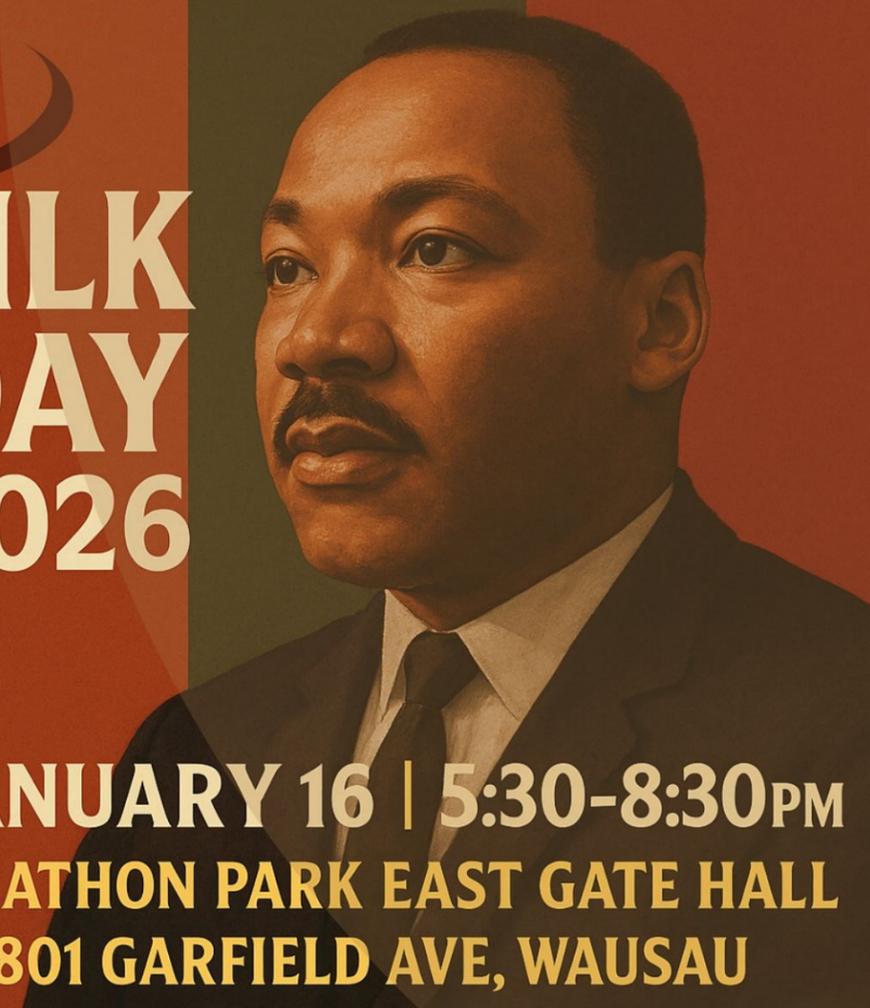


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Behavioral Health Clinic

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# MLK DAY 2026



JANUARY 16 | 5:30-8:30PM  
MARATHON PARK EAST GATE HALL  
801 GARFIELD AVE, WAUSAU

# FREE FAMILY EVENT

Registration Required at <https://bit.ly/3K1WYv6>



# JANUARY 2026



Birthdays and anniversaries can be found on calendar below.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 8am Worship w/ Communion (Chapel) 9am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10am Worship w/ Communion (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 11am Coffee Hour 4pm Community Meal	5 11:30am Savvy Seniors (Mandarin Restaurant)	6 <b>Abonde Msenwa (B)</b> 6:00pm - Missions Team	7 <b>Gail Cain (B)</b> <b>Scott Denfeld (B)</b> 4:30pm Pastor's Greece Trip Presentation (BK Smith)	8 <b>Alice Schacht (B)</b> <b>Jen Johnson (B)</b> <b>Riziki Mwamba (B)</b> <b>Marie Zawadi (B)</b> <b>Marie Kichochi (B)</b> <b>Rusia Mwamba (B)</b> <b>Bikyeombe Mfaume (B)</b> <b>Uwezo Mfaume (B)</b> <b>Rashidi M'Munga (B)</b> <b>Don &amp; Diann Misoni (A)</b>	9 Office Closed	10 Office Closed
11 <b>Vaida Love (B)</b> 8am Worship (Chapel) 9am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10am Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 11am Coffee Hour 4pm Community Meal	12 <b>Michael Turner (B)</b>	13 <b>Debra Martin (B)</b> 1-3pm PNC/CCC 5:30pm Trustees	14 1pm UWF Meeting 5:00pm Bible Study (BK Smith Room) 7:15pm Choir Practice	15 8am AA 7pm Scouts	16 Office Closed <b>Gideon Adams (B)</b>	17
18 8am Worship (Chapel) 9am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10am Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 11am Coffee Hour 4pm Community Meal	19 10am Prayer Team (Parlor)	20 <b>Alan Hauber (B)</b> 10am Prayer Shawl Group (Parlor) 6pm SPRC 7pm Finance Committee	21 <b>Mary Ann Dykes (B)</b> WNF: 5:00pm Bible Study (BK Smith Room) 6:00pm Dinner 7:15pm Choir Practice	22 8am AA 4pm UWF Book Club (Parlor) 7pm Scouts	23 Office Closed	24 9-11am PNC/CCC
25 8am Worship (Chapel) 9am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10am Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 11am Coffee Hour 4pm Community Meal	26 <b>Don Misoni (B)</b> <b>Sandi Schmoldt (B)</b> 7pm Ministries Council (BK Smith Rm)	27	28 <b>John Meredith (B)</b> 5:00pm Bible Study (BK Smith Room) 6:30pm Bells Practice 7:15pm Choir Practice	29 8am AA 7pm Scouts	30 <b>Asher Adams (B)</b> <b>Mike Fischer (B)</b>	31 <b>Jeffrey Koss (B)</b>

**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

**Our Vision:**  
To be led by God to change lives and transform the world.

## JANUARY WORSHIP

**Sunday Worship Times: 8:00AM Chapel | 10:00AM Sanctuary**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 4**  
**HOLY COMMUNION**  
*Seeing the Light*  
Psalm 147:12-20; Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 18**  
*Give You as a Light*  
Psalm 40:1-11; Isaiah 49:1-7; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 11**  
*Power of Presence*  
Psalm 29; Isaiah 42:1-9; Matthew 3:13-17

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 25**  
*Carrying the Light*  
Psalm 27:1-6; Isaiah 9:1-4, 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

**STAFF**

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

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