



THE MESSENGER

First Wausau United Methodist Church
Downtown Wausau Wisconsin



“The Fierce Urgency of Love”

Inspired by the Apostle Paul and MLK Jr, written by Rebecca Borke

If I speak with the eloquence of scholars and the thunder of prophets, but do not act in love, my words are noise that impress but leave the world unchanged. If I see injustice clearly, name oppression fearlessly, and analyze the roots of racism accurately, but do not stand up for my neighbor, my vision is short-sighted and my courage half-hearted.

Love is fierce. Love senses urgency and refuses complacency. Love opposes the lie that violence can heal what hatred has broken. Love resists without dehumanizing and confronts without destroying, Love is patient with people, but impatient with systems that crush dignity.

Love does not hoard privilege or confuse comfort with faithfulness. Instead, love bends the arc of the moral universe toward justice, uses access to open doors, and influence to change unjust rules. Love knows that responsibility grows wherever advantage exists.

Love practices hope when despair seems reasonable. Love perseveres when progress is slow and backlash is loud. Love grants permission to pause, breathe, and heal. Love trusts in rest that renews but never retreats.

Love does not obey in advance or accept unjust peace, but rejoices in justice, truth, and beloved community. Love bears the weight of history and believes in the worth of humanity. Love endures until freedom is not simply a promise, but a practice.

Love does not see diversity as a threat to society, but as a strength toward better unity. Love reconnects with old friends and makes room for new allies. Love builds coalitions across differences of race, culture, class, and creed.

Love practices equity, not as charity, but as repair. Love commits to inclusion, not as a slogan, but as a shared table. Love organizes and sustains the work, not in isolation, but in community. Love listens deeply, lives compassionately, and prays boldly.

So let faith give us vision, let hope keep us moving, and let love be the way we resist evil, honor diversity, practice equity, live inclusively, and dream of a world where people are not judged by the color of their skin, language on their tongue, or country of origin, but the content of their character and the fierce urgency of their love.

February 2026 Stewardship Newsletter

Eating from Trees We Did Not Plant

There’s a quiet grace in realizing that much of what sustains us comes from work we did not do.

We eat fruit from orchards we didn’t plant. We sit under shade trees someone else nurtured decades ago. We benefit from schools, churches, hospitals, and ministries that were dreamed up and funded by people who never knew our names. Their generosity was never meant to circle back to them personally – it was offered for the sake of people they would never meet.

That truth can be unsettling in a culture that often asks, “What’s in it for me?” Yet Scripture consistently points us toward a different way of living - one rooted in trust, hope, and love for the generations yet to come.

Generosity that only exists when there’s a direct benefit attached is really just a transaction. But generosity rooted in faith looks beyond immediate return. It plants seeds without demanding proof of harvest. It trusts that God will use our gifts - of time, money, energy, and love - in ways we may never see.

Many of the faithful choices we make today won’t bear fruit tomorrow. They may not even bear fruit in our lifetime. But they matter. They shape communities. They strengthen ministries. They create possibilities for people we’ll never know, just as others once did for us.

Living generously is an act of hope. It’s a declaration that God’s story is bigger than our own chapter - and that we’re willing to plant trees so others can eat, rest, and thrive long after we’re gone.

~ Rev. Jason Mahnke, Director of Programming & Campaigns, WUMF

Pledge Statements

2025 pledges statements were mailed last month. If you would like a detailed breakdown or have questions, please contact our finance director, Georgia Reynolds.

Let Us Pray



- Rev. Wil Bloy - Passed on 1/10/26

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 will be meeting on **Monday, February 2nd at 11:30am** at 2510 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, February 24th at 10:00am** in the church parlor.



The Prayer Shawl group enjoyed a wonderful Christmas brunch together at Blue Willow.

Chancel Choir February Mission

Wednesdays at 7:15pm

The Chancel Choir, led by Rob Perkins, practices on Wednesdays at 7:15pm 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 6:30pm in preparation for a spring event. Contact Jessica Wenzel if interested in joining.

Wednesday Night Fellowship

If you are looking for a night out involving good food, great conversation, and a casual time to connect with people in our church, then please consider joining us on the third Wednesday of most months, at 6:00 pm. **SPECIAL NOTE: DUE TO ASH WEDNESDAY FALLING ON THIS DATE IN FEBRUARY OF 2026, OUR FELLOWSHIP MEAL AND GATHERING WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, AT 5:00 PM.** The menu for the February meal will be: spaghetti, garlic bread, salad and fixings, as well as delicious desserts. This evening coincides with Mardi Gras time, so that will be the theme for the night. Even though this night doesn't follow the usual schedule, we are hoping for a strong attendance!

There is a wonderful group of people working together to make these evenings happen in 2026. The group includes Sheila Carlson, Lori Mariani, Carrie Hockerman, Bonnie Goertz, Bill Owen, and Dennis Carey. If you are interested in helping out in any way, please speak with one of these people listed, and we will make sure we find a place for you at any given time! And once again, please consider coming out on these Fellowship nights...all are welcome!



The WMC Shelter is located in our basement 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 .

February Mission



Hagar House is a Christian-based ministry that provides safe shelter, stability, and hope for single mothers and their children. They offer housing and resources that help families move toward long-term independence. Recently, they have expanded their facilities to include transitional housing and secure parking to better serve families as they work toward stability. Donate loose change, put cash in the small brown envelopes, memo a check, or donate online under the fund name: *Hagar House*

Discipleship Report

As Lent approaches the Wednesday evening Bible study will begin a Lenten study by Adam Hamilton beginning the Wednesday evening after Ash Wednesday (February 25). The book is titled "Why Did Jesus Have to Die? The Meaning of the Crucifixion". Because the Ash Wednesday service on February 18th is not happening in our church, we will not meet that evening. The study is for 6 weeks. You may get a copy of the book from me or in the church office. We then will return to our study of the Disciplines-Daily Devotions based on the Revised Common Lectionary. The Revised Common Lectionary is a schedule over 3 years of an Old Testament, Psalms, Epistle and New Testament reading of the Bible used by many pastors to develop sermons and discussion. Pastor Rebecca and I currently use this plan to prepare sermons. It includes us in a large group of Christians studying the Bible for faith development around the world.

On Sunday mornings Jen Johnson or another attendee have been leading a study of the "Steadfast 365 Days of Devotion" Discussion and participation is always welcome. This does not need to be read ahead of time but can be beneficial in our attempts to read the Bible every day as John Wesley led by example. Won't you please join us?

- Director of Discipleship, Julie Mieke



Join us for Ash Wednesday worship at Grace United Church of Christ in Wausau. **February 18th at 7:00pm**

BISHOP'S CONVOCATION OF LAITY 2026

MARCH 7TH, 2026
Portage UMC

Save the date for the 2026 Bishop's Convocation of Laity! This year's gathering will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2026, from 9:00am to 2:00pm at Portage UMC. A watch party will also be held at our church in the BK Smith Room. A light lunch will be provided and communion will be given by Pastor Rebecca at the conclusion of the day.



Our church will be hosting one of this year's Bishop Clergy Day Apart on February 9th with 150+ attendees expected. While the WI Conference will be running the event, our church will be in charge of hospitality and breakfast/lunch. We are looking for volunteers to help in either of these areas. Please contact Pastor Rebecca if you are available to help.



United Women in Faith

For our January meeting program, we mapped our 2026 pathways both for personal and group goals which included:

- Inviting women to meetings/events
- Educating about immigration issues
- Increasing unit pledge to district UWFaith
- Patience with health issues
- Letting go of little annoyances

The group will continue providing protein 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.

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

- **Feb. 11** - Monthly Meeting, Parlor

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

Join us in the Parlor on **Thursday, February 26 at 4:00pm** for our discussion of *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict & Victoria Christopher Murray from the Nurturing for Community category. If you'd like to be a part of the book club, you can pickup a copy of the book from Georgia or Julie at the church office.



Please submit any news or announcements for the March messenger to georgia@firstwausau.org by February 23rd.

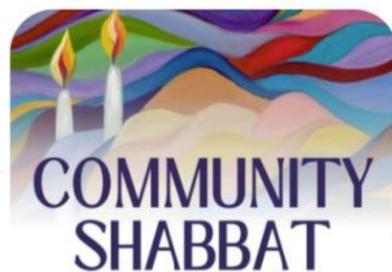


February Host Groups:

- Feb. 1 - First UU
- Feb. 8 - Wesley UMC
- Feb. 15 - First English Lutheran

Friday,
February 20, 2026

7:00 pm



MT SINAI CONGREGATION

is excited to invite our friends and neighbors to tour the synagogue and join an evening of prayer and welcoming the Sabbath

910 W Randolph Street, Wausau

Located behind Wausau West High School



Following the service, please stay for refreshments and the opportunity for questions and discussion with Rabbi Nemiroff and our leadership

For more information, please reach out to Mary at: office@mtsinaiwisconsin.org / 715-675-2560 (office)

New Members Class

Have you been growing in your faith at First Wausau? If our congregation is starting to feel like your spiritual home, we invite you to explore how United Methodism works and why we might be a good fit for your journey of faith. Please contact Pastor Rebecca if you are interested in learning more, and she will coordinate schedules for a 3-session class to deepen your connection and help you understand what it means to be a member.

A Thank You for Our Recent Space Transitions

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped build and move the Personal Needs Closet and Claire's Critter Closet into the former handbell room. Special thanks to Mike & Liz Fischer who secured the United Way grant, and volunteers, Sue Marquardt, Jan Clowes, Bonnie Goertz, Karen Petersen, Andy White, and Sheila Carlson who gave their time in planning and setting up the space. We also could not have completed this project without the help of Erik Anderson who purchased materials and built the new shelves.



We also extend our sincere thanks to the volunteers (Erik & Margaret Anderson, Ray & Vicki Nowaczyk, Tom & Nancy Bogumill, Bonnie & Jon Goertz) who helped design, build, and move the handbell room into its new home in the nursery. This was no small task, and your time, effort, and teamwork ensured a smooth transition.



Now we are working on moving the church offices to the old PNC/CCC rooms by the BK Smith Room. Stay tuned for more updates!

QUICK GUIDANCE FOR OBSERVERS

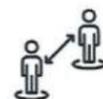
GUIDELINES FOR BYSTANDERS & OBSERVERS

In the U.S everyone has certain constitutional rights and protections regardless of their immigration status or who is president. You have the legal right to film the police and/or immigration officers if they are in a public place and if the filming does not impede the performance of their duties.

DOCUMENTING ICE ACTIVITY

STAY AT A SAFE DISTANCE

If you are asked to step back, take a step back while repeating: "I am exercising my right to record and document."



IF THE OFFICERS GET TOO CLOSE

Say, "I am stepping back and have the right to record." Speak in a calm, audible voice.



PROTECT VIDEO CONTENT ON YOUR PHONE

Make sure your phone is passcode protected. Not thumbprint or face recognition protected.



FOCUS YOUR RECORDING ON ICE OFFICERS

Record all the way through the incident. Narrate what you're seeing. Say the date + time.



DO NOT GO LIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

for the privacy and safety of people being detained.

Additional Tips:

- Remain peaceful and carry a government-issued ID.
- Do not carry non-prescription drugs, weapons, or anything that may be misconstrued as a weapon.
- If agents are masked and they refuse to identify as law enforcement or fail to provide their names and badge numbers, call 911 to report a kidnapping. Bounty hunting is illegal in Wisconsin.
- Be aware that law enforcement may confiscate cell phones and attempt to access personal information.
- Be aware that there may be undercover, plain clothes officers monitoring the raid and activities of peaceful protestors.
- If possible, write down the names, addresses, and phone numbers of any witnesses.

WHAT TO DOCUMENT



ICE OFFICER IDENTIFICATION

Name, badge, uniforms, vests



DATE, TIME, LOCATION

Location with specific address



LANGUAGE USED BY OFFICERS

Hate speech and identity speech (racist, sexist, homophobic), incorrect or unproven statements



ENFORCEMENT AGENCY VEHICLES

If they are marked or license plate states Police, Sheriff, Homeland Security (DHS), Immigration Enforcement (ICE). Unmarked but possible government vehicles.



VIOLENCE OR PHYSICAL FORCE

Pushing, shoving, grabbing, violence during arrests, damaging of property.

Connect Online!

Website:
firstwausau.org

Facebook:
facebook.com/WausauFUMC

YouTube:
youtube.com/@FirstWausauUMC

WiFi Network:
FUMC Guest
password: fumcpublic

Phone: 715.842.2201

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.

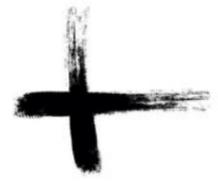
Applications open January 1, 2026 and are available at the church office. Deadline is **March 1, 2026**.

Online Giving

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

www.onrealm.org/FirstUnitedMeth91919/give/nov





FEBRUARY 2026

Birthdays and anniversaries can be found on calendar below.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Scouting Sunday Bill Owen (B) 8am Worship w/Communion (Chapel) 9am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10am Worship w/Communion (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 11am Coffee Hour 11:15am Confirmation Class 4pm Community Meal	2 Thomas Schmoldt (B) 11:30am Savvy Seniors, 2510 Restaurant	3 Kubwa Misuu (B) 6:00pm - Missions Team	4 5:00pm Bible Study (BK Smith Room) 6:30pm Handbell Practice 7:15pm Choir Practice	5 8am AA 7pm Scouts	6 Office Closed	7 Gregory Chang (B) Sue Huang Chang (B) Geraldine Stock (B)
8 8am Worship (Chapel) 9am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10am Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 11am Coffee Hour 11:15am Confirmation Class 4pm Community Meal	9 9am-3pm Bishops Day Apart (First Wausau)	10 1-3pm PNC/CCC 5:30pm Trustees	11 1pm UWF Meeting 5:00pm Bible Study (BK Smith Room) 6:30pm Handbell Practice 7:15pm Choir Practice	12 Josie Rybarczyk (B) 8am AA 7pm Scouts	13 Office Closed	14 Valentine's Day
15 8am Worship (Chapel) 9am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10am Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 11am Coffee Hour 4pm Community Meal	16 Erik Anderson (B) Anjali Dvorak (B) 10am Prayer Team (Parlor)	17 Shrove Tuesday 5pm Mardi Gras Dinner, Fellowship Hall 6pm Finance Committee	18 Ash Wednesday Allen & Peggy Stamp (A) 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service (Grace UCC)	19 Anna Catherine Schreiber (B) 8am AA 7pm Scouts	20 Office Closed	21 Jaden Love (B)
22 8am Worship (Chapel) 9am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10am Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30am African Worship (Chapel) 11am Coffee Hour 11:15am Confirmation Class 4pm Community Meal	23	24 10am Prayer Shawl Group (Parlor)	25 Sue Marquardt (B) Danielle Del Conte (B) 5:00pm Lenton Bible Study (BK Smith Room) 6:30pm Handbell Practice 7:15pm Choir Practice	26 8am AA 4pm UWF Book Club (Parlor) 7pm Scouts	27 Office Closed Bernice Kohlman (B) Wes Ebert (B)	28 9-11am PNC/CCC

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.

FEBRUARY WORSHIP

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

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1
HOLY COMMUNION
SCOUTING SUNDAY
What Is Good?
Psalm 15; Micah 6:1-8; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15
Glory Revealed
Psalm 2; Exodus 24:12-18; Matthew 17:1-9

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18
Join us for Ash Wednesday Worship at Grace UCC

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8
Call to Action
Psalm 112:1-10; Isaiah 58:1-9a; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22
Mercy on the Wilderness
Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

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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