



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
108 West Doty Avenue
Neenah, WI 54956

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First United Methodist Church
Neenah - Menasha

108 West Doty Avenue, Neenah, WI 54956
(920)725-0166 - Email - firstumc@fumcnm.org - www.fumcnm.org



March 2025

Come - Share - Grow - Serve



Daylight Saving begins
March 9th! Set your
clocks ahead before you
go to bed on March 8th!



OUR SUNDAY
MORNING SCHEDULE

- 9:00 am In-Person Worship
- 10:00 am Fellowship Time*
- 10:15 am Sunday School and
Sonshine Singers and
Ringers Rehearsals
(except March 30th)
- 10:15 am Adult Bible Study
(except March 9th and 30th)

*will only be offered on Sundays
when we have a volunteer to host

Childcare is provided every
Sunday morning beginning at 8:45 am

For those who are not able to attend
in-person worship, simply go to our
Facebook page to join us on Sundays
at 9:00 am for worship that is being
livestreamed. The recorded services will
continue to be available both on our
Facebook page (facebook.com/fumcnm)
and at our website (www.fumcnm.org).

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(920)725-0166

Important March Dates at First Church!

- March 1 FUMC Men's Breakfast at Four Seasons at 8:30 am
- March 1 Lithuania Bible Study via Zoom at 9:00 am
- March 2 Holy Communion; Special Music by: Voices of Praise; UWF Bake Sale
- March 2 Adult Bible Study in Room 106 at 10:15 am
- March 5 Ash Wednesday Worship at 6:00 pm
- March 6 Dora Hansen Meeting at 6:00 pm
- March 7 World Day of Prayer
- March 8 Daylight Saving Time Begins Tomorrow: Set your clocks AHEAD tonight!
- March 9 First Sunday in Lent; Special Music by: Chapel Ringers
- March 9 Green Team Meeting in Room 106 at 10:15 am
- March 9 Asbury Club in Fellowship Hall at 5:00 pm
- March 10 Signup Deadline for Supper and Service
- March 11 Christian Education Meeting via Zoom at 7:00 pm
- March 12 April Newsletter Articles and Calendar Events Due
- March 12 After School Program in the Youth Room at 4:00 pm
- March 12 Supper and Service Begins with 5:30 pm Dinner
Followed by Service Project of Making Soup Jars for Community Table Guests
- March 15 FUMC Men's Breakfast at Four Seasons at 8:30 am
- March 15 FUMC Serves Fox Valley Community Table Noon Meal
- March 16 Second Sunday in Lent; Special Music by: Voices of Praise
- March 16 Adult Bible Study in Room 106 at 10:15 am
- March 17 Happy St. Patrick's Day! 🍀
- March 17 Sign Up Deadline for Family Movie Night
- March 17 Trustees Meeting via Zoom at 6:00 pm
- March 18 Church Council via Zoom at 6:00 pm
- March 20 Happy First Day of Spring! 🌸
- March 20 April Newsletter Assembly in the Corner Lounge at 9:30 am
- March 21 UWF - Miriam Circle in Room 106 and via Zoom at 1:00 pm
- March 21 Family Movie Night: Migration at FUMC at 5:30 pm
- March 23 Third Sunday in Lent; Special Music by: Sonshine Singers and Ringers
- March 23 Adult Bible Study in Room 106 at 10:15 am
- March 26 After School Program in the Youth Room at 4:00 pm
- March 26 Youth Group in the Youth Room at 6:00 pm
- March 30 Fourth Sunday in Lent; Special Offering Sunday: UMCOR Sunday
- March 30 Spring Break! No Sunday School or Adult Bible Study
- April 1 Wills, Trusts, & Memorials' Applications Due



**Summer Mission
Trip Fundraiser**

Looking for a quick dinner idea, or perhaps a chance to try
a new pizza or two? We invite you to consider this
opportunity to help support the youth attending this summer's
YouthWorks Mission Trip to Louisville, KY, June 15th-20th.
Starting March 2nd, through March 23rd, 20% of any
purchase at Papa Murphy's will go towards First United
Methodist Church Youth Group and their 2025 Summer
Mission Trip. (Available at three different locations, in
Neenah and Appleton!) **Orders must be placed online and
then enter the code DONATE at checkout.** Thank you for
your support! We hope you enjoy your pizza!

A New Giving Opportunity



We are excited to provide our
congregation with another safe and
secure opportunity to support First
UMC Neenah-Menasha programming,
general offering, and monthly missions.
Through this QR Code, you are able to
connect to our online giving platform
and choose an option that may work
best for you! Simply scan and select
where and how you would like to offer
your financial support. These giving
cards will be available in each pew on Sunday mornings and
we invite you to prayerfully consider how you may wish
to contribute to the hope-filled future of our church!

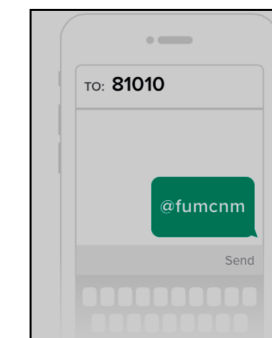
Thank you for your generosity!

FUMC Neenah-Menasha has achieved the Rainbow
Covenant every year since its inception in 2014.
We have been recognized at the Wisconsin Annual
Conference annually for our successful participation in the
Rainbow Covenant. Be sure to see for yourselves the
incredible generosity of our congregation by reading
Part One of our Rainbow Covenant report on page 5.



Ever wonder whether an event at First Church is still being
held despite bad weather? Or looking for reminders about
All Church meetings? We have a solution for you! Remind is
a service that allows reminders, updates, or cancellations to be
sent to anyone who has signed up. To begin, simply send
a text to Remind or use the link below to sign up, and you'll
automatically receive updates! You can cancel at any time.

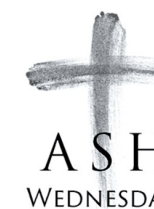
To get started, just text @fumcnm to 81010 or go to
<https://www.remind.com/join/fumcnm> to get signed up.
That's all! You'll get a welcome message from Remind
to confirm your sign up.



**Sign up today and keep updated
about what's happening at church!**

**Ash Wednesday Service
Wednesday, March 5th
6:00 pm**

(Live-streamed for those unable to attend in person)



Join us as we begin our Lenten season with
a service of song, scripture, prayer, and
imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday,
March 5th. May this be a time of recognizing
how we have strayed from God's presence
and accepting the invitation of the cross to
claim a life with Jesus as our Redeemer.



From March 2nd - March 23rd: Summer Mission Trip Fundraiser at Papa Murphy's



Final Words. There is a lot of weight or significance to these two words- final words. That is clear in the invitation sometimes extended, "You get to have the final words." In a debate or with a paper, the final words are a writer's last opportunity to make an

argument. As a pastor I have certainly felt the importance of what I wanted to communicate with a community through my final sermon with them. A coach offers final words before a team breaks its huddle to inspire them to play their best. Recently there was a lot of attention anticipating and then reflecting on what final words President Biden would deliver before finishing his career of public service. Unfortunately, too many school shootings have taken place that I often find myself being mindful of what I want my final words to be to my children as they head off to school. As a pastor I have listened to many reflect on the final words they heard their loved one say before dying. Final words matter. They not only leave a lasting impression, but they often have the power to influence others.

That was certainly true for Jesus. His final words spoken from the cross were so important that the gospel writers recorded them for all to know. It is at the cross, and through these words, that many, including ourselves, truly come to know who Jesus is. They are words that have changed lives for thousands of years, but not only because of what they reveal about Jesus. They also have the power to change how we live. It is for this reason that we will be spending the season of Lent reflecting on what Jesus was determined to speak from the cross.

Afterall, Lent is a season for us to reflect on our lives - what we want in life and what impact we want to have on others. Ash Wednesday is a good place to start, remembering that we are made from dust and to dust we will return, remembering there will be a final day for us to speak our final words. What will we want our final words to be? What do we want our final witness to be? Only Lent invites us to begin preparing for that day now, to start living the life we want now.

Jesus' words from the cross can help us claim that life we desire. I don't imagine it will be easy to stay and keep vigil at the cross, to examine our lives with honesty. However, what we also know as Christians is that it is through the death of Jesus, through these final words, that we do indeed find life.

In hope and trust,
Pastor Rebecca

Share!



Read, Wonder, Listen Sunday Bible Study Room 106 at 10:15 am

Author Laura Alary writes, "every person who tells stories from the Bible does it in a slightly different way. And every person who reads these stories hears something a bit different. So even though these stories are very old, they are also very new."

Come!

Worship at First Church Sundays at 9:00 am (In Person and Online)

Sunday, March 2: Holy Communion
Get Up and Don't Be Afraid
Matthew 17:1-9

Final Words from the Cross

In life and in death, Jesus' words were powerful and meaningful. Despite the serious effort and increased pain required for Jesus to speak as he hung on the cross, Jesus spoke seven "final words"—statements that have much to teach us about Jesus, his Father, and ourselves. During the season of Lent, we will spend time reflecting on these powerful words and what they mean for us today.

Ash Wednesday, March 5 at 6:00 pm

Sunday, March 9:
Final Words From the Cross:
"Father, Forgive Them..."
Luke 23:26-34

Sunday, March 16:
Final Words From the Cross:
"Today You Will Be With Me in Paradise"
Luke 23:32-43

Sunday, March 23:
Final Words From the Cross:
"Behold Your Son...Behold Your Mother"
John 19:25-27

Sunday, March 30:
Final Words From the Cross:
"My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?"
Mark 15:29-36a

Sunday, April 6:
Final Words From the Cross:
"I Thirst"
John 19:28-29

Sunday, April 13:
Final Words From the Cross:
"It is Finished"...
"Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit"
John 19:30a and Luke 23:44-47

Join Pastor Rebecca for a time of hearing familiar Bible stories told in a fresh way with historical research, awareness around language, and inclusive theology. As we listen and reflect together, we will undoubtedly be blessed with new insights into the ageless questions of "Who are we? Where is God? How does God want us to live?" The class will gather each Sunday morning at 10:15 am in Room 106, with the exception of March 9th and 30th. All are welcome!

for eating...shopping...or filling your tank
Order Scrip Gift Cards!

Purchase Scrip Today!
Using Scrip to Pay For All Your Needs is a Great Way to Earn Money to Support FUMC's Wonderful Ministries! It's So Easy!

It is so simple and doesn't cost you a penny! Just purchase Scrip cards for all the places you already do your shopping and dining out: the grocery store, gas station, stores at the Fox River Mall, many area restaurants, and the movie theater. A Scrip card works just like a gift card, but this card gives back a percentage to FUMC. Percentages vary by retailer, but every little bit helps! Even if you don't attend in-person worship, there are many ways you can purchase Scrip cards. Please call Al Kahl at (920)725-6474 or email him at aakmtk@tds.net to decide what is the easiest method for you to get scrip cards. You will be helping to keep our ministries happening! Thank you to our dedicated buyers for raising \$1,000 in 2025 for FUMC through their Scrip purchases and \$231,000 since the program began in 2007.

Scrip is great and helps make our ministries happen!

If you give gift cards as presents,
we can get almost any card you need.

Make a difference!
Purchase scrip today!



Packers Concessions

The NFL Draft and the World are coming to Lambeau on April 24 - 26, 2025! Take the Lambeau Leap and become a volunteer today! We don't know the details yet, but we do know the FUMC Team will be there. Reserve your space(s) now and be on the ground floor for all the excitement. This is a great opportunity to add to the \$18,000 we have earned so far this Packers season for FUMC ministries! See Al at the Scrip Table for more details.

Special Dates in March:



World Day of Prayer 2025
Friday, March 7th



UMCOR Sunday
Sunday, March 30th



Monday - Thursday
9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Friday
Closed

SNOW POLICY



During this time of year there is always the possibility that activities at the church might be canceled due to inclement weather. During weekdays, we follow the guidance of the school system; if Neenah School District has canceled activities, then church activities are also

canceled for that day. However, sometimes storms come through on the weekends. In the event of a blizzard or other extremely hazardous weather, church activities and worship may be canceled as we want people to stay safe. If this happens, we will communicate closures in a variety of ways. We will have it listed with Channel 2-WBAY, posted on our website, posted on Facebook, and through our Remind messaging service. If you have not yet signed up for messages from our church, you can easily do so by texting @fumcnm to 81010 or go to <https://www.remind.com/join/fumcnm> to sign up online. You'll get a welcome message from Remind to confirm your signup. We hope that all of these different ways will help us get the word out. If you have any questions, please contact the church office at (920)725-0166.

Remember & Rejoice

Saturday, April 5, 2025
12:30 - 2:30 PM

A service honoring all donors (organ, tissue, eye) and their families who selflessly chose to save lives through donation. We also celebrate those who have received these special gifts.

Stacy Didier RN
Living Donor/sister of deceased donor

Erica Barlament
Daughter of Tissue Donor

Sue Broeren ICU RN
Organ, Tissue, Eye Donation Liason



Music



Social



Candle Ceremony

RSVP



Questions: Amy Hopfensperger (920) 419-4008

St. Gabriel Parish, 900 Geiger St., Neenah, WI

APRIL IS NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH
Donors are Super Stars





Wills, Trusts, & Memorials (WT&M) Accepting Applications for Project Funds through April 1st

What types of funds are available?

Memorial monies are donated for either a specific purpose or for discretionary use.

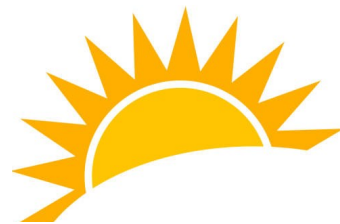
- **Specific purpose** funds are just that - a specific purpose indicated by the person or family donating the money.
- **Discretionary funds** are monies donated by people who want the funds used for something that will benefit the church or its members that general church funds don't cover.

If you have a request for funds that will benefit the church, please pick up a form at the church office, fill it out, and return it to the office by April 1st. The requests will be reviewed by the WT&M Committee, with decisions made by mid-April. If you have questions or need an electronic request form, please contact Curt Langacker at (414)795-7293 or c.langacker@gmail.com.



FUMC Men's Breakfast First and Third Saturdays 8:30 am

Come join us for a social breakfast at Four Seasons Restaurant, 1104 S. Commercial St., Neenah, on the first and third Saturday of each month. Men of all ages are invited to be a part of this group so come join us for a meal and social discussions. The food is always delicious and the vast topics of our discussions are relevant and most interesting. Watch for reminders on the church calendar. Our next social will be on Saturday, March 1st.



Our Sunday Morning Winter Schedule

Our Sunday morning schedule for winter will be:

- 9:00 am In-Person Worship in the Sanctuary
- 10:00 am Fellowship Time*
- 10:15 am Sunday School and Sunshine Singers and Ringers Rehearsals
- 10:15 am Adult Bible Study (except on March 9th)

We invite you to be here as we come together to learn, to worship, to fellowship!

*Fellowship Time will only be offered if we have a volunteer to host. Sign up on Sundays in the Commons.

First UMC News - Page 10

FUMC Fieldtrip!

The Green Team has received several requests for a tour of the Tri-County Recycling facility in Appleton on County OO as a follow up to the recycling presentation held last fall at our church.



A tour for our members is scheduled for Wednesday, April 2nd at 10:00 am. The tour is free and will last approximately one hour. Participants must be 14 years old to go into the working part of the facility. No open toed shoes are allowed and being able to go up and down stairs is required. We scheduled this tour during the week that Neenah Schools have spring break, hoping that some of our youth will be able to participate. A sign up sheet will be on the table in the Commons. If it's more convenient, participants can meet at church and go together.

The Tri-County facility tour is very informative. Come and learn how important recycling is, what happens at the facility, what happens when items leave the facility, and how everyone can participate to help our environment!




Paid Nursery Position Available

Do you love spending time with our younger friends at church? We are hiring nursery attendants to work Wednesday evenings during the school year and at other church events where childcare is needed. This is a paid position. If you are interested or know someone who would be a great fit working with our kids, see Denise Tribbey or Pastor Rebecca.

Volunteers Needed for Newsletter Assembly!

We are always looking for volunteers to help assemble our monthly newsletter. We meet once a month on a Thursday at 9:30 am in the Corner Lounge. If you are interested in helping out and would like to be added to our newsletter volunteer list, please email Amy at firstumc@fumcnm.org. Any and all help is appreciated!





April Newsletter articles are due on Wednesday, March 12th. Please send your articles and calendar events to Amy at firstumc@fumcnm.org. Thank you!

April Newsletter assembly is Thursday, March 20th at 9:30 am in the Corner Lounge! Any and all help is welcome!



Youth & Family Ministry Events this March



Family Movie Night this Spring Friday, March 21st 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Join the adventure with a small family of ducks, as they decide to travel on a long, unexpected journey. Along the way, they discover that there are multiple dangers out there and that they will all need to work together if they want to make it to the other side of the world! Pizza, fruit, vegetables, and water will be provided. **Please RSVP by Monday, March 17th** to Jessica with the number attending at fumcnm.christianed@gmail.com, or on the sign-up sheet in the Commons, to ensure there is enough pizza for all!



Save the Date! Breakfast with the Bunny Sunday, April 13th Following Worship

Save the Date! All are invited to Breakfast with the Bunny following worship on Sunday, April 13th. Enjoy fellowship with all ages over a delicious pancake breakfast. For those interested in more fun, we will have our two annual Easter egg hunts, activities, and of course...a visit from our Easter Bunny! Sign up by Monday, April 7th on the sheet in the Commons or use the link that will be available in your weekly email. We can't wait to see everyone!



Bible Study with Friends in Lithuania

Join us on Saturday, March 1st at 9:00 am for a Bible study via Zoom with our friends in Lithuania. Find the Zoom link in our weekly email on Thursday, February 27th. We hope you will join us!

Grow!

Youth Group Programming for Grades 6-12!

Join your church friends twice a month for an after-school program and youth group opportunity. We are so excited to offer this programming for our students, with a schedule that will include dinner and monthly youth group activities to follow!

Meet at First Church after school to talk with friends, have a snack, work on homework, and check in about the week. Stay for dinner and Youth Group activities, service projects, lots of laughter, and so much fun! Let's navigate the busy balance of school and life, as we stay connected and keep each other in prayer.

Wednesday, March 12th:

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm - After-School Program in the Youth Room upstairs

5:00 pm - 5:30 pm - Youth Group Music (listen to, talk about, and learn Praise & Worship Music to carry with you through the week!)

5:30 pm - 6:00 pm - Dinner in Fellowship Hall

6:00 pm - 7:15 pm - Service Activity in Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, March 26th:

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm - After-School Program in the Youth Room upstairs

5:00 pm - 5:30 pm - Youth Group Music

5:30 pm - 6:00 pm - Dinner in Fellowship Hall

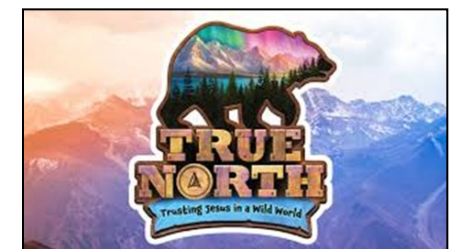
6:00 pm - 6:30 pm - Whole Group activity time (Grades 6-12)

6:30 pm - 7:15 pm - Small Group meeting time (Grades 6-8 & Grades 9-12 will meet as smaller groups)

Family Programming

Don't forget to mark your calendars for these activities!

Friday, March 21 @ 5:30 pm: Family Movie Night
Sunday, April 13 @ 10:15 am: Breakfast with the Bunny



Save the Date! VBS 2025

Sunday, July 27th - Thursday, July 31st

Mark your calendars now for the ultimate Alaskan adventure this summer ~ True North! While we know that it can be easy to lose sight of what's true in the wild world today, we also know that Jesus is our true north and our steadfast and faithful friend forever!



There will be no Sunday School programming on Sunday, March 30th, for Spring Break!

Serve!

Fox Valley Community Table Noon Meal - March 15th Volunteers and Donations Needed



FUMC is responsible for the noon meal at the Fox Valley Community Table located at St. Paul Lutheran Church (across from the Y) on Saturday, March 15th. The average number of hungry folks coming to the Community Table for a noon meal on Saturdays is currently over 80. Volunteers are needed to help prepare, serve, and clean up after the meal. In addition, food donations are needed. If you would like to volunteer either your time and/or food items, please contact Helen Kurka at 920-836-2451 or hlkurka@aol.com. Monetary donations are also appreciated to help purchase food for our meals.



Fox Valley Community Table March Collection: Cereal

During the month of March we will be collecting cereal to be given to the folks who come to the Fox Valley Community Table. Any nutritious cereal will be appreciated by the folks who receive it. Cereal donations can be placed on the mission table in the gathering area. Thank you to all FUMC members who faithfully support this local mission project.



Supper and Service Wednesday, March 12th 5:30 pm

Join us for dinner at 5:30 pm and then together we can join in the work of God's Kingdom. This month, we will be working together to share some love as we make jars of dry soup ingredients for Community Table guests. Dinner is \$3/person or \$10 max for families. To help with our planning of dinner, we ask that you sign up on the clipboard by either door into the building or by filling out the form on our website by Monday, March 10th.

Dear FVCT Partners,

Look at what we have done. In 2024, we worked together to serve 7,286 meals. That's 7,286 times someone had a good nourishing meal prepared by people who care about them. 7,286 times someone had relief from their struggles and were reminded of their importance. That is a lot of care and cooking!

In 2024, we served 102 days and averaged 71 guest meals each time. The year before we averaged 56. That's quite an increase. We have new guests every time we serve, and many of them return and become regulars, thanks to all you talented cooks! Good job! It's unfortunate that more folks need our meals, and it's so good that they're finding us.

The community part is as important as the meal. Your welcoming kindness puts people at ease. They have a break from their burdens and can enjoy conversation while enjoying the meal. Through this comes sharing ideas and helping each other. People learn ways to improve their situations and find friendships. We share flyers and resources, but the true gift is people caring for each other.

Thank you for your smiling service, to the meal planners and cooks, everyone who provided part of a meal, funding, food donations, gas cards, and bus passes. We can do so much together, your partnership is important and very much appreciated!

On behalf of our Board of Directors, and myself, thank you for caring for our neighbors through Fox Valley Community Table!

Chrissy Goethel, FVCT Site Director

United Women in Faith Miriam Circle



United Women in Faith meets the 3rd Friday of the month. Our next meeting will be Friday, March 21st at 1:00 pm in Room 106.



UWF Bake Sale!

United Women in Faith will be holding a bake sale on Sunday, March 2nd during Fellowship Time. Funds raised will go to support Hope Center in Latvia - a home for unwed women and children that provides a safe, nurturing environment that provides support while teaching life skills and God's love. They are in need of a vehicle to transport women to doctor and other appointments. Come enjoy some sweet treats as we support this mission.



Camp Scholarships

UWF is offering \$200 scholarships for children to attend summer camp at one of our United Methodist camps. Our camps at Pine Lake and Lake Lucerne provide wonderful opportunities for children and youth to grow in friendships and faith. Please contact Melissa Borth (melissaborth26@gmail.com) or the church office for more information.



Green Team Update

Green Team met on Sunday, February 9th. The mission of the Green Team of First United Methodist Church of Neenah/Menasha is to learn, educate, and act to establish sustainable practices that help restore and protect God's creation in our church and beyond.

As a new group, we are evolving and learning, trying to start small and see what is doable, and what is important, while making sure we communicate well with the congregation and church leadership.

We have planned an April 2nd field trip to the recycling center (see article on page 10) and discussed other ideas such as doing litter pickup (one time or possibly adopting a highway), researching rechargeable battery recycling, having a collection box for white Styrofoam at church and possibly having collection days for Community Clothes Closet, (both of these require volunteers to regularly deliver collected items), looking into an energy audit of the church structure, getting a prepaid recycling collection box for hard to recycle items, making and selling reusable shopping bags, and having a field trip to a state natural area led by Joe Henry. We want to find ways to involve our children and youth and maybe sponsor an Earth Day activity. Lots of possibilities!

Our next meeting is Sunday, March 9th at 10:15 am in Room 106. We welcome newcomers. Meetings are open to all!

March Green Team Tip: Stuff!



Spring cleaning is around the corner, so it is a good time to consider all that "stuff" we must take care of. We are good at buying, but everything we purchase has a cost well beyond what we spend on an item. What is the item made of, where did the raw materials come from, how much energy was used to produce it? How were the workers that produced it treated? What will happen to it when I no longer want it? Is it reusable or recyclable? How much of my paycheck was required to buy it? Do I need it?

There are many contributors to climate change and pollution, and manufacturing and transporting "stuff" plays a role, meaning so do we as consumers. Thinking twice before we purchase that new cell phone, or flashy appliance or clothing, we do not need can reduce greenhouse gases from mining, cutting down trees, factory production, transportation, and eventually disposal of that item. Many are finding, if they need some "retail therapy," that thrifting is a fun substitute. And others find having less stuff, not only is good for the environment, but means they have less to take care of (more time) and more cash in their wallets. And that can be spent on a fun experience or even shared with someone less fortunate. Good planets are hard to find! Let's treat this one kindly by simply buying less stuff.

March Monthly Mission: World Relief Wisconsin

Our March monthly mission will be World Relief, a non-profit, non-partisan, Christian organization that, in partnership with churches, aids in settling refugees, arriving here due to violence, wars, famine, starvation. World Relief was founded over 80 years to respond to humanitarian needs after WW2. For over 40 years they have worked with the US Department of State to serve refugees through assistance with housing, language classes, employment services, transportation, health and mental health services, financial guidance, immigration legal services and school, youth and parenting groups to help these new arrivals integrate into the community.

World Relief provides a stable landing place for those arriving here as refugees. Each year branches of WR assess their own resources (including both funds and volunteers) and set a goal with the federal government for the number of refugees their branch can assist. With the help of church teams and individual volunteers the needs of these refugee families are met, for a short time (generally three months) till they get their footing. For its part, the federal government has for decades committed to providing essential funding for the first 90 days, to cover rent, food and transportation. These formal and informal supports are short term as the new arrivals become independent members of our community and work toward citizenship.

On January 20 President Trump signed an executive order suspending the US Refugee Resettlement Program meaning all refugees in the pipeline to come to the US will be denied entry. AND on January 24 World Relief was notified by the State Department that all federally funded activities supporting nearly 4000 refugees already on US soil must stop immediately. World Relief, which has offices in 11 states, is facing a huge financial crisis trying to do the humanitarian work they committed to without the funds promised by our government. They are reaching out to churches to "stand in the gap," to help these desperate refugee families.

Many Americans feel torn about immigrants and refugees arriving on our shores. These issues have been hot potatoes for decades, even centuries, and elected officials have a history of passing along the problem from one election cycle to the next because fear of "the other" can be used to gain votes. But as Christians, we have only to remember that Jesus and his family were once refugees themselves, and Jesus preached a gospel of love, for our brothers, and "others". And, unless we are native Americans, our ancestors too were immigrants or refugees, fleeing famine, discrimination, social and political unrest endangering their very lives.

Please prayerfully consider supporting this worthy cause. Gifts can be given online at www.fumcnm.org, through brown mission envelopes found in the pews, or marking your offering envelopes with "March Monthly Mission" or "World Relief Wisconsin." And for anyone wishing to volunteer with World Relief, their website is: worldrelief.org/wisconsin/about-us-fox-valley/ or call 920-231-3600. Thank you for your support!



OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

IN OUR PRAYERS

- ♥ United Methodist Church
- ♥ Our partner church in Pilviškiai, Lithuania
- ♥ Methodism in Lithuania
- ♥ Our enemies
- ♥ Government leaders worldwide
- ♥ The jobless, underemployed, and working poor
- ♥ Military personnel & families
- ♥ Racial, religious, and ethnic tensions
- ♥ Continuous gun violence
- ♥ The refugees of war
- ♥ Compassion for people of all faiths and races
- ♥ Repentance for those who stoke hatred and divisions
- ♥ All the trouble spots around the world
- ♥ Refugees displaced by conflict and violence all around the world
- ♥ Children living in poverty
- ♥ Hate crimes
- ♥ Migrants seeking asylum at Mexican/U.S. border
- ♥ Persons struggling with mental illness and their families
- ♥ Human trafficking
- ♥ War in Ukraine
- ♥ War in Gaza
- ♥ Genocide in Sudan



- February 16**
- ♥ Comfort for Sky who lost another pet this week, Nemi
 - ♥ Guidance for leaders and change of heart that they might see the people being affected by the chaos in our country and that they might extend compassion
 - ♥ Prayers of celebration and thanksgiving for Tara Schipferling's mom, Verla Jones, who turned 103 on February 15th and is still in good health
- February 9**
- ♥ Continued prayers for healing for Carrie Walter's dad after his hip surgery
 - ♥ Prayers of gratitude that Jayden Walters and his friends in the ski club had a fun and safe trip to the UP for skiing
 - ♥ Prayers for Sky as her pet, Scabbers, passed away this week
 - ♥ Prayers for Dustin Sander as he undergoes hip surgery on Friday. Prayers that this surgery goes as well as his last hip surgery and for a speedy recovery.
 - ♥ Prayers for Marlene and Cynthia with the passing of Marlene's sister this week
 - ♥ Prayers for Tibbey's brother-in-law, Harold, who has been going through treatments and surgeries for appendiceal cancer for ten years and has been hospitalized twice in the last two weeks due to complications. Prayers that he will be released today on palliative and hospice care.

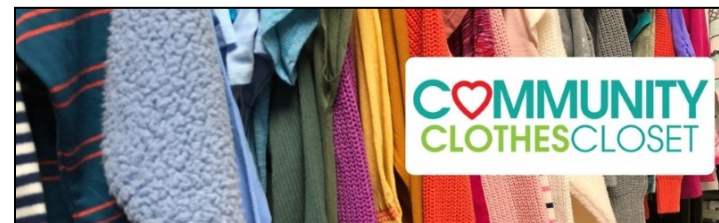
February 2

- ♥ Gratitude for a successful shoulder surgery for Bonnie DeBraal and continued prayers for healing
 - ♥ Prayers for wisdom and clarity of thought for Vitalija as she writes an important paper for her studies
- January 26**
- ♥ Prayers of gratitude for a successful surgery as Bob Reinke received a pacemaker this week and continued healing
 - ♥ Prayers for a family member who was scammed and struggling with the consequences
 - ♥ Prayers of comfort for family and friends of Donita Gross who joined the saints triumphant this week
 - ♥ Prayers of comfort and strength for Jenna Derby and her family as an aunt and uncle entered hospice this week
 - ♥ Prayers for Patsy's friend, Sandy, who is grieving the loss of an identical twin
 - ♥ Prayers for healing in our country that we may turn from persecuting to advocating for the most vulnerable

We Remember With Love



We give thanks for the life and friendship of Donita Gross who joined the saints triumphant on Thursday, January 23, 2025. Even while living in Arizona, Donita continued to be a strong supporter of First UMC Neenah-Menasha and maintained many friendships here. She will be missed.



Community Clothes Closet

Have you heard of Community Clothes Closet in Menasha? Did you know they allow six clothing items free of charge to needy individuals in our community on a bi-weekly basis? As a church, we can support the Community Clothes Closet by donating our new and lightly used items from our closets as we prepare for the changing seasons. Let's remember this is a great resource for those struggling in our community. Donation hours at the Community Clothes Closet (1465B Opportunity Way, Menasha) are Monday - Friday from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm and Monday evenings from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm. If going to the Clothes Closet is a challenge for you or you would like more information, please talk with Patsy Vegter or call the church office at (920)725-0166 to be part of this great ministry!

Asbury Club

Sunday, March 9th at 5:00 pm



The FUMC Asbury Club will meet at 5:00 pm on Sunday, March 9th. The evening will start with a potluck meal followed by a game night. This event is open to all adults. If you've had a busy week, don't worry about bringing something to pass at the meal. Please bring your plate and silverware. Ice water is available. Playing cards are available or bring one of your favorite games to share. Come and join the fellowship and fun!

Close Knit Friends

Wednesdays at 1:00 pm



Close Knit Friends meets Wednesdays at 1:00 pm in the Commons. All are welcome! Bring projects to work on. We continue donating warm knitted goods to Pillars. Contact Melissa Borth (920-915-4384) or Joann Meagher (920-740-6874) with any questions.

2024 Rainbow Covenant

Rainbow Covenant

The Mission Committee would like to thank the congregation for your faithful support of missions in 2024! A total of \$42,837.78 was given to local, conference, national, and international mission projects! This is truly outstanding and we are grateful that our church exemplifies what Jesus taught us in Matthew 25:40, "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sister, you did it to me." Thank you for your generosity!

The Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church initiated a mission-giving model several years ago called the Rainbow Covenant. This covenant was designed to help churches move beyond their walls and listen for ways God invites us to be in mission. The Rainbow Covenant takes eight colors of the rainbow representing different areas of mission and encourages churches to support each of these categories. The eight categories are: Local Missions, Conference Projects, National Advance Projects, International Advance Projects, UMCOR, Special Sundays, "In Mission Together" Partnerships, and Missionary Support. In addition, we must meet our annual apportionment. **The Mission Committee is excited to report that we will meet the conference criteria to be a Rainbow Covenant Church for the 10th year in a row!**

The Mission Committee meets several times per year to discuss the areas we will support through our mission giving which will include all areas of the Rainbow Covenant. In 2024, our church contributed to the missions listed below. You will see them listed by category and the total amount given. (For a breakdown of what was given to each organization, please see the Rainbow Covenant chart posted on the committee bulletin board.)

These financial gifts given were collected through the Monthly Mission Giving (loose coin offering), funding from the mission budget (which is approx. 3% of the church overall budget) and individual congregation giving.

Local Missions - \$23,863.44

- Leaven
- Supper & Service
- Affordable Housing
- ESTHER
- St. Joe's Food Pantry
- Snack Pack
- Uniting Faiths to Feed His Flock
- World Relief Refugees
- Samaritan Counseling
- Pillars
- REACH Counseling
- Fox City Housing Coalition
- Pastor's Help Fund
- Shadrach Muhima Family

Special Sundays - \$703.00

- Native American Sunday
- Human Relations Sunday
- Golden Cross Sunday
- Peace with Justice Sunday
- UMC Student Day Sunday
- World Communion Sunday

Conference Projects - \$1,252.00

- Wisconsin UMC Camps
- Northcott & Children's Services

National Advance Projects - \$1,997.24

- Midwest Distribution Center
- Lahaina United Methodist Church

International Advance Projects - \$5,094.71

- Princess Basma Center
- Senegal Partnership with Circuit
- Senegal Partnership
- John Wesley Medical Boat
- Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary
- Goshen Blessings

In Mission Together - \$4,125.00

- Lithuania Partnership Covenant
- Latvia Hope Center

UMCOR - \$ 5,302.39

- UMCOR Holy Land
- UMCOR General
- UMCOR Hurricane Relief

Missionary Support - \$500

- Lithuania Missionary

Apportionment

Must pay 100% of apportionment to qualify for Rainbow Covenant - \$41,808.00



The Faces of First Church in February!



February Supper & Service - Snack Pack assembly



Audrey enjoys a sundae at Supper & Service



Making valentines at our Sharing God's Love event



Emma and Jonah getting out on the ice



Lithuania Zoom Bible study



Girl Scout Cookies during Fellowship Time



Emma and Sam loading up Chloe's Snack Pack bag



Making pictures of peace



All smiles at The Globe with Bob photo bombing :)



Wonderful helpers assembling Snack Packs



Praying over the Snack Packs