

APRIL

# NEWSLETTER

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF WHITEFISH BAY

APRIL 1, 2025

## A NEW SEASON OF LIFE AND GROWTH

Dear friends, as we step into April, we are greeted by the beauty of spring — a season of new life and resurrection hope. This sense of renewal is not only visible in nature but also vibrant within our church community. After Easter, we look forward to updating our Narthex space and enhancing our Sanctuary sound system to create a more welcoming and community-building environment. These changes reflect our commitment to becoming a Beloved Community — a place where all are welcomed, supported, and loved.

Part of this vision includes our journey to become a Reconciling Church, openly affirming and celebrating the diversity of God's people. We are deeply grateful to Kathy Schluter for her dedicated efforts in sharing information and highlighting this meaningful opportunity. We invite you to learn more at our All-Church Meeting on Sunday, April 6th, following the second service.



As we continue to embrace this season of growth, we also encourage you to explore ways to deepen your faith through our Spiritual Journey Pathway. With our new staff alignment, there are wonderful opportunities to connect with our directors, who are eager to walk alongside you in your spiritual growth:

- **Connecting (Worship and Fellowship)**

Neil Bubke, Director of Connections and Worship Arts

- **Growing (Small Groups and Outreach)**

Jenny Fisher, Director of Growth and Outreach

- **Serving (Ministry and Mission)**

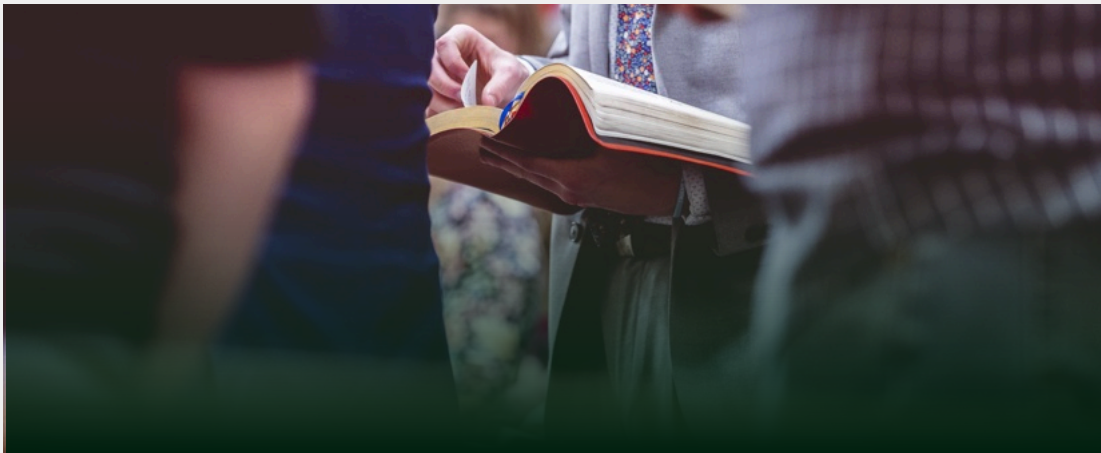
Steffen Cave, Director of Service and Communications

- **Family Ministries (Children, Youth, and Families)**

Kristal Melbye, Director of Family Ministries



We hope you'll join us at the All-Church Meeting on Sunday, April 6th, following the second service. This will be a wonderful opportunity to meet our dedicated staff, hear their stories, learn about their call to ministry, and discover how you can get involved.



As we journey through this season of renewal, may we continue to live out our call to be a welcoming and supportive community of faith for all people. Let us also advocate for the love of Christ to be extended to the most vulnerable, as our nation navigates complex issues such as immigration policies. No child of God should be beyond the reach of wellness and love.

Blessings,  
Pastor Gary



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary". The signature is stylized with a large, looping 'G' and a trailing flourish.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

# JOIN US FOR HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

April 13, **Palm Sunday** | 9:00am & 10:30am

April 17, **Maundy Thursday** | 6:00pm

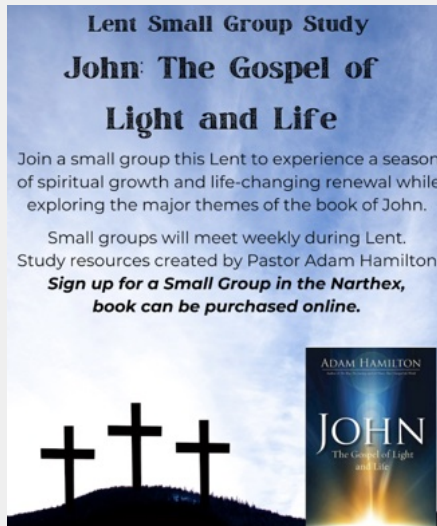
April 18, **Good Friday** | 12:00pm

April 20, **Easter Sunday** | 6:00am (Klode Park)

April 20, **Easter Sunday** | 9:00am & 10:30am

### LENT SMALL GROUPS: THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Thank you to all of our Small Group leaders and participants who have studied the **Gospel of John** through our Lent Small Group Study! It has been a blessing to grow in faith together during this important spiritual season of renewal, focus and reflection. Small groups meet for six weeks and conclude during Holy Week.



### WEDNESDAY NIGHT FAITH, FOOD, AND FRIENDSHIP

Wednesday Night Faith, Food and Friendship continues on April 2, 9 and concludes for the season on April 16. FFF will start back up for the Fall season in September. Thank you so much to all of our meal volunteers, Chef Frankie and Chef Tracy, our program leaders and everyone who attends on a weekly basis to make FFF such a success!



### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We were so grateful to welcome several new members to our faith community in March!

Our new members are:

**Kate & Alexis  
Halliburton,**  
Whitefish Bay

**Guy, Anne & Clara  
Temple,**  
Milwaukee

**Mark & Shirley Westphal,**  
Cedarburg

Please introduce yourself and  
make them feel welcome!





## SOJOURNER



### **APRIL MISSION OF THE MONTH:** **SOJOURNER FAMILY PEACE CENTER**

The mission of the month for April is Sojourner Family Peace Center. Sojourner provides an array of support to nearly 10,000 clients each year aimed at helping families affected by domestic violence achieve safety, justice and well-being.

Sojourner connects with schools, businesses, places of worship and other groups to increase awareness about family violence and how Sojourner can help.

Speakers discuss a range of topics related to domestic abuse including:

- Abusive relationships – warning signs
- Teen dating abuse
- Effects of domestic violence on children
- Helping victims
- Educating abusers
- Identifying abusive behaviors
- How domestic violence affects the workplace

Join us for worship this coming Sunday as Liz Marquardt, Sr. Director at Sojourner, provides us with a quick overview and offers ways we can connect!



**Sunday, April 6 at both  
worship services**



# THE ROAD TO RECONCILIATION

## BUILDING A BELOVED COMMUNITY - Next Step: Becoming a Reconciling Church

Please join us the April 6 All Church Meeting following the 10:30 service to discuss becoming a Reconciling Church that more intentionally supports the LGBTQ+ community.



### BACKGROUND

In May 2024, we adopted our church identity within our Vision Statement to “Build a Beloved Community.” We defined Beloved Community as a place where all are welcomed and valued. Among other things, we committed to learn about the challenges facing marginalized communities and how we can support their ministries and advocate for their justice. In

particular, we decided to explore the possibility of becoming a Reconciling Church, which seeks to include, support and advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. As a Reconciling Church, we would join the nationwide United Methodist Reconciling Network similar to networks at other denominations.

### WHY BECOME A RECONCILING CHURCH?

Several years ago, we adopted a Welcoming Statement centering on our commitment to be an inviting, caring, and inclusive church actively living Jesus’s commandment to love God and others. Our Welcoming Statement extends to all “regardless of age, gender, marital status, race, sexual orientation, social or economic status, gender identity and physical or mental ability.” Becoming a Reconciling Church aligns with our Welcoming Statement.



## WHY BECOME A RECONCILING CHURCH? (CONTINUED)

Over the past year to prepare for the possibility of becoming a Reconciling Church, we have offered educational classes and sermon series, provided forums, published articles, and displayed banners and window signs promoting Beloved Community. We also adopted Zao MKE UMC as a sister church, formed an LGBTQ+ ally group and brought in Courage MKE and Pastor Colby Martin to talk about the societal, personal and religious challenges faced by LGBTQ+ persons.

### Church Hosts Colby Martin in “Rethinking Homosexuality and the Bible”

Almost 80 members of the church and community gathered in Fellowship Hall on Saturday, March 29 to listen to Pastor Colby Martin discuss what the Bible has to say about homosexuality. Colby is a leading voice on progressive Christianity and the inclusion of LGBTQ persons. Colby discussed the Bible’s preference for diversity and inclusion and the way scriptures in the Old and New Testament have been misinterpreted to condemn homosexuality. Rather than speak to consensual gay relationships, these scriptures address gang rape, the sanctity of marriage, divisions within the early church and sexual exploitation common in that day. Colby then posed thought-provoking questions for group discussion and answered questions. Colby’s comments were based on his book, *UNClobber: Rethinking Our Misuse of the Bible on Homosexuality*. Colby spoke at Zao MKE UMC the next day on the topic, ‘Standing Firm: Being Christian in an anti-LGBTQ World’. Our church co-sponsored that event and several church members attended. Both programs were part of our effort to promote greater understanding and dialogue on the topic of homosexuality as our church considers becoming a Reconciling Church.

## ▶▶ WHAT’S NEXT?



Joining the United Methodist Reconciling Network as a Reconciling Church is our proposed next step toward building our church identity as a Beloved Community. This action would demonstrate our support for LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities and further our commitment toward healing, reconciliation and on-going ministry. The Servant Leadership Board and Pastor Gary invite you to attend the All Church Meeting on April 6 to discuss Building a Beloved Community by becoming a Reconciling Church.



# YOUTH

HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR FIN-TASTIC VOLUNTEERS AND PARTICIPANTS FOR OUR “OH, JONAH” CHILDREN’S MUSICAL PRODUCTION!



## THANK YOU!

We're hooked on gratitude! Our church children's choir musical, "Oh Jonah!", made a big splash in the community, thanks to your tireless efforts. Thank you for being part of our school of volunteers. You're the catch of the day, and we're so lucky to have you on board!!





# UPCOMING EVENTS

WED  
APRIL  
2  
5:45-7:00

## Children (ages 3-10) PARENT SUMMIT

We want to hear from you!  
How can we best serve your family  
and help our church be a place  
for your children to  
connect, grow, and serve?



### Questions?

Contact Kristal Melbye,  
Director of Family Ministries  
[kmelbye@umcwfb.org](mailto:kmelbye@umcwfb.org)  
414-331-7611

They'll be held during  
Faith, Food, and  
Fellowship  
after the meal  
in Fellowship Hall.

If you have a child  
between the ages of 3-18,  
please join us for one  
(or both)  
of these two upcoming  
parent summits!

WED  
APRIL  
9  
5:45-7:00

## Youth (ages 10-18) PARENT SUMMIT

We want to hear from you!  
How can we best serve your family  
and help our church be a place  
for your children to  
connect, grow, and serve?



### Questions?

Contact Kristal Melbye,  
Director of Family Ministries  
[kmelbye@umcwfb.org](mailto:kmelbye@umcwfb.org)  
414-331-7611



# UPCOMING EVENTS



*First Annual*

# Chili COOK OFF

*to benefit the  
ASP Mission Trip*

WEDNESDAY,  
APRIL 16, 2025

5:00 IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

• Make the best  
chili to win  
prizes

Sign up here to enter:

**OR** let Kristal know  
to expect your entry.



FREE TO ENTER  
\$10 TO EAT & VOTE

For more information contact:  
[kmelbye@umcwfb.org](mailto:kmelbye@umcwfb.org)



## MEN'S MINISTRY BREAKFAST MEETING

Saturday, April 12



Saturday, April 12, Men's Ministry hosts a hot breakfast as well as a program featuring Paul Trebian, president and CEO of the International Institute of Wisconsin and Marina Croft, director of legal affairs for the Institute.



For more than a century, the International Institute of Wisconsin has been promoting a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural perspective through education, arts exchanges, language services, and social activities as well as refugee resettlement, immigration services and naturalization. Today, the Institute faces new challenges.



All are invited to attend this important meeting to learn about how we can work with the International Institute to help meet the needs of immigrants during these difficult times.

After the program, John Krezoski will take a few minutes to discuss use of the church defibrillator. The defibrillator (which John maintains) is located in the Narthex Hallway.

**Fellowship is at 7am, breakfast at 7:30am and the program from 8-9am in Fellowship Hall.** Please let Dick Steinmetz ([rsteinmetz@wi.rr.com](mailto:rsteinmetz@wi.rr.com)) know if you are planning to attend. Thank you!



# YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



## MARCH'S GAME NIGHT!

The "Young Professionals" enjoyed a fun "Game Night" in March with a delicious charcuterie board and lively company. Even Rachel's new puppy, "Latte" got in on the action! Thanks to Sarah for hosting.



## UPCOMING...

## POOL & JACUZZI PARTY

We hope you'll join us for our next outing: "Pool and Jacuzzi Party." Look for the date and details of our upcoming event in your weekly email.

**Interested in joining us for FUN and FELLOWSHIP?** Aged 20 and up are welcome!



## QUESTIONS?

E-mail Beth Groble at

 [bgroble@gmail.com](mailto:bgroble@gmail.com)

# Join Us!



# MORE IMPORTANT STUFF...



## LYDIA'S TREASURE

Hop on into Lydia's Treasure for all sorts of Easter fun. We have colorful fair-trade eggs, plushy lambs, bunnies and ducks, baskets to fill and wonderful things to fill them with! Catch the fresh Hughes' Chocolate bunnies before they all hop away. Grab some luscious, Milwaukee-made Franciscan Peacemaker soaps, lotions and candles. As always, there's gently read books, thoughtful greeting cards and lots of fun finds! Come see what's NEW Mondays and Tuesdays 10-3, Wednesday evenings 5-7:30 and Sunday mornings before and after 10:30 worship. Every purchase, every day, supports mission in at least one way.



## NO JOKE- VOTE ON APRIL FOOL'S

Pastor Gary has encouraged us all to take action with our faith and voting is a great way to do that. As citizens, we have the duty to vote to keep our democracy strong. As Christians, we hope and pray that our votes lead us toward a more peaceful, just, and safe nation and community.

On April 1st- TODAY!- voters in Wisconsin will select a candidate to fill a seat on the Supreme Court and will elect the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Supreme Court election will be of particular importance since major issues will likely come before them in the next term, including reproductive rights, collective bargaining rights (Act 10), voting rights, and fairness. There is also another constitutional amendment question on the ballot regarding voter ID laws. In addition, most communities also have races for city government, school board, or judges. You can preview your particular ballot now by going to [MyVote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov) where you can also check your registration, and find your polling place location.

Our Church & Society team's goal is that 100% of eligible voters from our congregation vote in every election. We promise to provide education regarding the offices, the candidates, and the issues in an unbiased manner so that everyone can make informed decisions when they vote. Thank you for doing your part!





# NSS4S CLASSES



## QUESTIONS?



*nssbxt@gmail.com*



**(414) 292-0960**

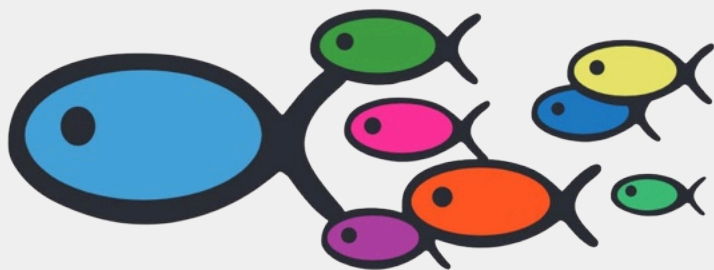
## NORTH SHORE SCHOOL FOR SENIORS TERM 2

After a class break on April 7 and April 8, classes at North Shore School for Seniors (NSSS) resume. Term 2 begins on Monday, April 14, with registration ongoing. Term 2 will run through Tuesday, May 6. Classes meet Monday or Tuesday at our church.

Class info and online registration is at [nss4s.org](http://nss4s.org) and catalogs are available for pickup at the church.

Term 2 classes include "Entertainers with Wisconsin Ties"; "Senior Fitness"; "Bob Dylan"; "Classical Music's Great Romantic Composers"; "Dances through the Ages"; "In Search of Rare and Unusual Animals"; "Invasive Species in Wisconsin"; and "History of the New Deal".

Our church's own Ross and Sandy Workman are sharing stories, photos and more about their amazing three-week trip to India in "Our Adventure to India".



**CLASSES  
ARE OPEN  
TO ALL!**

**NSSS IS AN ADULT OUTREACH  
PROGRAM OF THE UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH OF WHITEFISH BAY.**

# DO SOMETHING!



**"DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN, BY ALL THE MEANS YOU CAN, IN ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN, IN ALL THE PLACES YOU CAN, AT ALL THE TIMES YOU CAN, TO ALL THE PEOPLE YOU CAN, AS LONG AS YOU CAN."**

**-JOHN WESLEY (FOUNDER OF METHODISM)**

In one of Pastor Gary's sermon series, he taught us that one important value that guides our faith is ACTION. With so much going on in our world it's easy to feel overwhelmed, frustrated or powerless. We are here to help!

The Church & Society team at our church has been meeting for many years and is a positive and constructive way for members to learn, support each other and whenever possible, take action. We discuss societal issues that have an impact on our community, nation or world and seek ways that we might promote fairness, justice or peace through our advocacy or action. Over the last few years, some of the issues we have dealt with include hunger, voting rights, climate change, and LGBTQ equality. We have worked to provide information and options for the congregation through book studies, voter education tables/articles, letter writing campaigns and classes—with more to come.





# CHURCH & SOCIETY (CONTINUED)

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## CURRENT MEMBERS:

- Cynthia Boock
- Vee Jefferson
- Rachel Richter
- Beth Groble
- Beth Stafford
- Mel Vance
- Mike Martin
- Roger Stafford
- Karen Swartzberg
- Mary Mueller
- Dick Steinmetz
- Ross Workman



### Monthly Meetings



- Thursday, April 3 | 7 pm
- Thursday, May 8 | 7 pm
- Thursday, June 5 | 7 pm

### Questions?

Contact Ross Workman at  
[rworkman1953@gmail.com](mailto:rworkman1953@gmail.com)

We would love to have new members or drop-in visitors to our meetings which are the first Thursday of every month (except July & December) from 7-8 PM in the Wesley Room. We also generally have a Zoom option for those who can't make it in person.

# MUSIC & FINE ARTS



## JAN JAHNKE

### “A PAINTERLY APPROACH”

Jan Jahnke is both spontaneous and calculated in her approach to screen printing. Nest-like twigs and grasses occupy a generous portion of her landscapes, causing the eye to linger as they seemingly transform into a peaceful, subtle arrangement of texture and color. The concentration is on detailed mark-making, line and shape as she applies multiple layer of both transparent and opaque ink, editing and reapplying until she reflects the natural world with a rich surface quality of texture and depth. Jan Jahnke earned a BFA in Printmaking from the Milwaukee

Institute of Art and Design. After teaching screen printing there for 10 years, she now woks full time as an artist in her Wisconsin studio. Her work is in numerous residential and corporate collections.

## MUSIC

We have a variety of ways for all ages and talents to express our love of God through music and fine arts. Weekly rehearsal schedule below:

### Handbell Choir

Mondays, 6:00 - 7:00pm

### Praise Team

Mondays, 7:15-8:30pm

### K4/K5/1/2 Choir

Wednesdays, 5:45-6:15pm

### 3/4/5 Choir

Wednesdays, 6:15-7:00pm

### Chancel Choir

Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30pm



### Upcoming Events:

#### Robin Jette Recital

Thursday, April 10 | 7:30pm

#### Marc Davis Studio Recital

Sunday, May 04 | 2:30pm

## Join the Easter Choir! Only 3 Rehearsals!



# NOTES FROM THE BOARD

From March 18th's meeting



On March 18, the Servant Leadership Board (formerly Accountable Leadership Board) met for the regular monthly meeting. In attendance were SLB members: Tom Van Cleave, Hui Zhang, Sam Swartzberg, Jeff McClellan, Craig Walker and Tom Groble. Also in attendance were Erin Norris, Laurie Jeffery, Jenny Fisher, Dick Steinmetz, Laurie Jeffery and Jean Erickson.

**Opening Prayer and Consent Agenda:** Tom Van Cleave opened the meeting in prayer reflecting on how the current six-week sermon series John: The Gospel of Light and Life helps us understand the meaning of Jesus's life and our own faith journey to align with our Vision Statement of Building a Beloved Community. The minutes from the February meeting were approved.

**Devotion and Pastor's Report:** There was no devotion as Pastor Gary Holmes was sick.

## KEY OBJECTIVES

**Vision Statement:** Fulfill the church's Vision Statement of "Building a Beloved Community by *Connecting, Growing* and *Serving*."

**Promote Inclusivity:** Support marginalized communities, advocate for justice, and consider joining the United Methodist Reconciling Network.

**Improve Infrastructure:** Approve and facilitate construction projects, such as the Narthex renovation.

**Review and Update Policies:** Periodically review and update policies, resolutions, and statements under SLB stewardship.

## Upcoming Events:

**All-Church Meeting:** Sunday, April 6th, after 10:30 am worship.

**SLB Meeting:** Tuesday, April 15th, with a closed session at 6:30 pm and a general session at 7:00 pm.

# NOTES FROM THE BOARD (CONTINUED)



## Vision Statement and Storyline

**Action – Beloved Community:** Tom Van Cleave gave introductory comments on our Vision Statement of “Building a Beloved Community by Connecting, Growing and Serving” and our first Storyline action that centers on our commitment to be an inviting, caring, and inclusive church actively living Jesus’s commandment to love God and each other. In addition, to learn about the challenges facing marginalized communities and how we can support their ministries and advocate for their justice.

**Beloved Community (continued):** Kathy showed that over the past year we have offered educational classes and sermon series, provided forums, published articles, displayed banners / window signs and formed an advocacy group on challenges facing marginalized communities that include LGBTQ+. A proposed next step in fulfilling our church identity as a Beloved Community is to join the United Methodist Reconciling Network and become a Reconciling Church. It was decided to add this subject to the upcoming All Church Meeting on April 6th in a Q&A discussion.



**Financials:** Erin Norris presented the financial position for eight months highlighting that income and expenses are on track.



# NOTES FROM THE BOARD (CONTINUED)

**Misc:** The church calendar will be changed from our current fiscal year ending in June to a calendar year ending in December that coincides with our Conference. That change should have little impact on the congregation and ministries. The Board will present that change at the March All Church Meeting.

Tom Groble presented a proposal for a capital bridge loan with Wisconsin UM Foundation up to \$600,000 to cover our upcoming Narthex construction costs. It was approved. Tom VC presented 10 policies, resolutions and statements that are specifically under the stewardship of the SLB and have been approved in past years that require a review. Our All-Church Meeting is scheduled for Sunday April 6th after 10:30 am worship.

**Closing Prayer:** Jeff closed the meeting with prayer.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 15th, with the closed session beginning at 6:30 pm in the Wesley Room. General session will begin around 7:00pm. A Zoom option will be provided. All are welcome.



## QUARTERLY ALL CHURCH MEETING – SUNDAY APRIL 6TH FOLLOWING 10:30 AM WORSHIP

Pastor Gary will introduce his new organizational staff. Hear from the Directors on how they will help us move forward with our vision statement of “Building a Beloved Community” along with nurturing a spiritual maturity through our Spiritual Journey Pathway. Kathy Schluter will discuss our proposed next step in Building a Beloved Community that demonstrates our commitment and support for marginalized communities towards healing, reconciliation, and on-going ministry. In addition, hear from our Finance Committee Chair (Tom Groble) on the change in our church year from a fiscal year ending in June to a calendar year ending in December and how you can support that change. Finally, Tom Van Cleave will give an update on the Narthex project construction schedule and our Sanctuary Sound upgrade timeframe.

# BIRTHDAYS FOR APRIL

Happy Birthday  
APRIL



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1 Joan Modrinski	2 Steffen Cave Christine Gaffney	3 Susan Abram Josh Guarisco	4 Marjorie Hogan Karen Swartzberg	5 Abigail Bins Nancy Lizdas Kathryn Voelz
6 Jennifer Patrick Charles Tharp	7	8	9 Anne Ehle Beth Groble	10 Junise Clark Mark Westphal	11 David Dettinger Jennifer Provancher Jack Bryan Schultz	12 Judy Linsley Rega Plaster
13	14 Tom Groble Gregory Schimanski	15 Rosemary Schroeder	16 Ayike Asiki Annemarie Case Jackie Stackhouse	17 Chelsea Montague Amelia Zentner	18 JaVon Willis	19 Luke Norris
20 A'diye Asiki John Sook	21 Fredric Ehle Mandy Kliber	22 Nolan Feix Mike Lindfors	23	24 Adelaide Schaetzke	25 Jim Armstrong Kathryn Conole Amelia Hicks Devri Lybeck	26 Johnny Hobey Bell Kenning Andrew Knab Bruce Markuso Marie Sander Martha Spankus
27 James Thomson	28 Deborah Ridley Kern Ann Markuson Linda Stolz Gary Summers Tom Van Cleave	29 Bill Jesselun Jason Kliber	30 Eileen Dean Isabelle Haecker Chris Lybeck Dan Murphy Bryan Schultz Kathy Widdifield			





**UMCWFB**

April 2025



### **THANK YOU, UMCWFB!**

I am incredibly grateful for the warm and thoughtful cards and conversations that have supported me during this difficult time of my mom's passing. I cannot express how much it means to me to feel the love and support of the congregation that I am honored to serve.

Blessings,

**Thank you for reading our monthly newsletter. We're grateful for your presence in our church community.**

