



December 2025

# Monthly Newsletter

From the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay



*The United Women in Faith had a very successful Holiday Fair. See page 5*

## CONTENTS

- 1 - All Church Conference
- 2 - Pastor Gary's Letter
- 3 - Opportunities to Serve
- 4 - Causes for Celebration
- 5 - Community Reflection
- 8 - Advent Events
- 11 - December Birthdays

## All Church Conference - Everyone is Welcome!

Join us for our annual Church Conference on **Tuesday, December 9 at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary**. This important gathering includes celebrating ministry highlights, sharing reports, and approving plans for the coming year. All are invited to attend and take part as we give thanks for God's work among us and look ahead to the future with hope.

Our quarterly All Church Meeting will follow this meeting with a Foundation & Memorials Committee update from Craig Walker and final touches on Narthex from the Advisory Committee.

The events will also be available via livestream so all can watch even if they are unable to attend in person

# Dear Beloved Community,

As we enter the sacred season of Advent, our hearts turn again toward the promise at the center of our faith: **Emmanuel—God with us**. This is more than a phrase we sing or a story we remember. It is the profound truth that God steps into the world—not from a distance, not in theory, but in the flesh, in the mess, in the beauty, and in the longing of human life.

This year's Advent series invites us to pay attention to all the ways God is *still* with us—in our waiting,  
in our wondering,  
in our celebrations,  
and even in our challenges.

As Matthew reminds us, “*Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,*” which means, “*God with us*” (Matthew 1:23). Jesus enters the world not to stand apart from humanity, but to walk alongside us. My hope is that throughout this season, each of us will find moments to breathe deeply, to be present, and to notice signs of Emmanuel in our homes, our relationships, and in the life of our church.

As we prepare our hearts for Christ's coming, I also want to offer a heartfelt **thank you**. Your faithful giving throughout 2025 has made it possible for our congregation to worship boldly, serve generously, grow spiritually, and continue building the Beloved Community God calls us to be. Your commitment has strengthened our ministry, supported our staff, sustained mission partners, and allowed us to welcome people with warmth and hope.

Thank you for the ways you give—your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness. Each act of generosity reflects the very heart of Emmanuel, God with us.

As Christmas approaches, I hope you will join us for our **Christmas Eve services**, (4 PM Contemporary, 8 PM Traditional) where we will gather in candlelight and song to celebrate the birth of Christ and the light that no darkness can overcome. It is always a sacred and joy filled time in the life of our church, and I look forward to sharing it with you. May this Advent season draw us nearer to the presence of Christ, and may the light of God's love shine brightly through each of you.

With gratitude and hope,  
**Pastor Gary**



# — Opportunities to Serve —

## Christmas with a Conscience 2025 and December Mission Focus

On December 14th from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., you will have the opportunity to purchase meaningful and lasting gifts in the form of donations to support missions in Milwaukee and around the world. Tables with representatives from the participating organizations will be in the Narthex where you can browse, learn and make donations. If you'd like to mail in your donation, please send a check to church with the organization(s) of your choice in the memo.

Participating organizations are:

- Meal Programs supported by UMCWFB
- UMCOR
- Habitat for Humanity
- Courage +
- Hanan Refugee Relief Group
- Feed My Starving Children – Future Meal Packing Event

Christmas with a Conscience is also our Mission Focus for December. Donations made toward the Mission Focus during December will be divided among the participating organizations.

## Ongoing Food Collection



Many families struggle without adequate food all year. Please continue to bring food to our collection area by the elevator. This food will be divided between the food pantries at MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary and Rooted and Rising. Cash donations marked “Food Pantry” will also be accepted and greatly appreciated.

Finally, contact Don if you are willing to help deliver food to the pantries.  
Thank you for your great support.





# — Causes For Celebration —

## New Member Welcome



We were thrilled to welcome five families as New Members during our Thanksgiving Worship on November 23. We welcome Devri and Chris Lybeck (Addie and Alta), Scott and Amber Kind Keppel Longden (Ira and Ephrim), Sina and Ryan Teskey (Elena, Luisa and Milo), Kirsten and Joe Uphaus (Huge, Vera and Mavis), John and Gwen Strassburger. We are grateful they found a home in our faith community! Please make sure to make them feel welcome and get connected with others.

## Wednesday Night Faith, Food, and Friendship

Faith, Food, and Friendship started the school year off with robust attendance seeing an average of 80-100 attendees each week. **On November 19, we had our largest attendance so far this season, with 108 people attending the meal (66 adults and 42 kids), and our largest ever attendance at youth praise team of 22 middle and high schoolers.**

Delicious dinners, adult faith-focused classes, youth choirs and KICKStart will continue until the week before Christmas. Choirs will be rehearsing for our Dec. 14 Festival Worship and Christmas Eve Services (4pm & 8pm). We will take a break from FFF on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, and will resume on Jan. 7, 2026 with our Spring Children's Musical Reveal! For questions about Faith, Food, and Friendship, please contact Jenny Fisher ([jfisher@umcwfb.org](mailto:jfisher@umcwfb.org)).

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of Whitefish Bay**

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT FAITH, FOOD, AND FRIENDSHIP LATE FALL SCHEDULE**

**5-6pm Dinner** (\$10/Adults, Kids/First-Time Guests eat Free)

**5:45-7:00pm Youth Choirs and Children's Activities**

**Infants/Toddlers - Nursery on 2nd Floor - 5:45-7:00 pm**

**5:45-6:15pm K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade: Choir** (Choir Room)  
**3rd-5<sup>th</sup> grade: KICKStart** (Room 221)  
**(5:30pm) 6th-12<sup>th</sup> grade: Youth Praise Team** (Sanctuary)

**6:20-6:55pm K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: KICKStart** (Room 221)  
**3rd-5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Choir** (Sanctuary)  
**6th-12<sup>th</sup> Grade: Youth Group** (Youth Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)

**6:00-7:00 pm Adult Faith Classes for Nov./Dec.**

**"Living Faithfully in Today's World: United Methodist Social Principles"** (Chapel)

**Parent Workshop: "Building a Values-Driven Life"** led by Kim Garman (Walnut Room)

**7:00-8:30 pm Adult Chancel Choir** (Sanctuary)



## — Community Reflection —

### Thanks to All for a Great 2025 Holiday Fair!

The United Women in Faith salutes everyone who helped make this year's Holiday Fair a tremendous success. Many worked together to make the handcrafted treasures and delectables that delighted shoppers on November 8. Thanks to the jar mix assemblers, crafters, jam-makers, cookie bakers, pickle flippers, seamstresses, weavers and quilters. Kudos also to the set-up and take-down team, as well as the cashiers. It was a day of fun, fellowship and community that raised funds for UWF supported programs both within and outside our church. See you next year!



### Men's Ministry Gray Guys

Gray Guys had 3 gatherings in November - clearing the Narthex and helping the Women's Ministry set up the Holiday Fair, taking down Holiday Fair and returning the Narthex plus a regular day of painting the conference room and renewing the first floor halls.





# Family Advent Event

We had a wonderful turnout for our Advent Event on Sunday, November 16. Families gathered to share a delicious meal together, generously catered by Luke Norris, who donated his time and talent.

After dinner, the children headed upstairs for hands-on Advent activities. Many of the kids created a special take-home Advent kindness chain to use throughout the season. Meanwhile, Kirsten and Kristal met with the parents to share many options for simple, meaningful ways to slow down and prepare their hearts and homes during Advent. Each family received a packet full of ideas and activities to continue the experience at home.

To finish the evening, children rejoined their parents and everyone worked together to craft beautiful Advent wreaths—treasured pieces they can use throughout this Advent season and for years to come.

It was a joyful night of connection, creativity, and preparing for Christ's coming.





# Youth Group Serves God's Creatures with MADACC Project

In November, our youth group focused on a hands-on service project that brought creativity, compassion, and joy. The students learned how to make sturdy fleece dog toys and each created at least one to donate to MADACC, where they will be given to dogs waiting for their forever homes.

We also talked about why caring for animals matters to our faith. John Wesley said that compassion isn't meant only for people but for all living creatures. Wesley believed that showing kindness to animals is a reflection of God's love—an act of stewardship and mercy that honors the One who created them.

To wrap up our month's theme, the group shared videos of their own pets, celebrating the joy animals bring into our lives. You can see the video [here](#). We enjoyed pie together as an "end of project" celebration and a nod to the Thanksgiving season—grateful for the chance to serve, to learn, and to care for God's creatures in a meaningful way.



The video can also be viewed by going to <https://tinyurl.com/umcwfbpets>

## Monday Night Football Party

25 Men of the Church gathered to Connect with each other and to watch the Packers battle the Eagles! We gathered at Three Lions Pub in Shorewood and shared food, drinks and stories with each other. Our next event will be March Madness in the early Spring!



Not Pictured: Matt Fisher and Tim Tharp





# Advent Event Timeline

NOV 30

9:00AM and  
10:30AM

## The Candle of Hope

For the first week of advent, we will light the hope candle at the November 30 services and discuss God being with us in our waiting.



## Prayer Vigil

As we enter the sacred season of Advent, we invite you to a time of stillness, reflection, and prayer in the sanctuary.

NOV 30

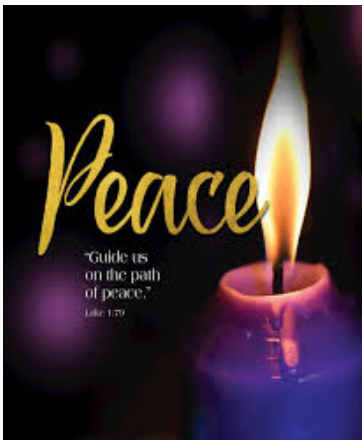
4:00PM –  
6:00PM

DEC 7

9:00AM and  
10:30AM

## The Candle of Peace

For the second week of advent, we will light the peace candle at the December 7 services and discuss God calling us to prepare.





## UWF Christmas Luncheon

DEC 9

11:30AM

Join the United Women in Faith for a delicious meal and discussion about Christmas traditions around the world! The cost is \$10, sign up in the church office.



## Festival Worship and Brunch

DEC 14

10:00AM

Join us for a single service as we celebrate with a festival worship and light the joy candle.



## The Candle of Love

DEC 21

9:00AM and 10:30AM

For the fourth week of advent, we will light the love candle at the December 21 services and discuss how God's love became flesh and moved into our neighborhood.



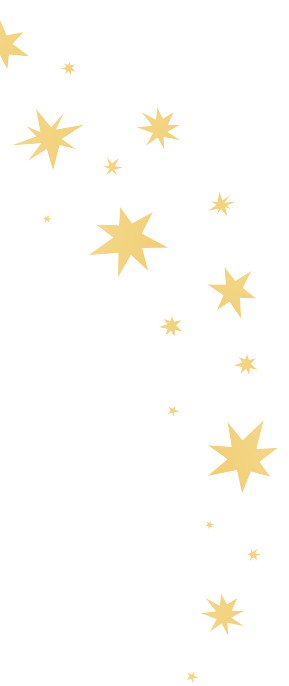
DEC 21

4:30PM

## Service of the Longest Night

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This service offers an opportunity to celebrate the birth of our Savior in a more contemplative style where we are able to find joy despite our sorrow.



## Christmas Eve Services

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Join us for a candlelight service as we celebrate that God is with us, always and light the Christ Candle.

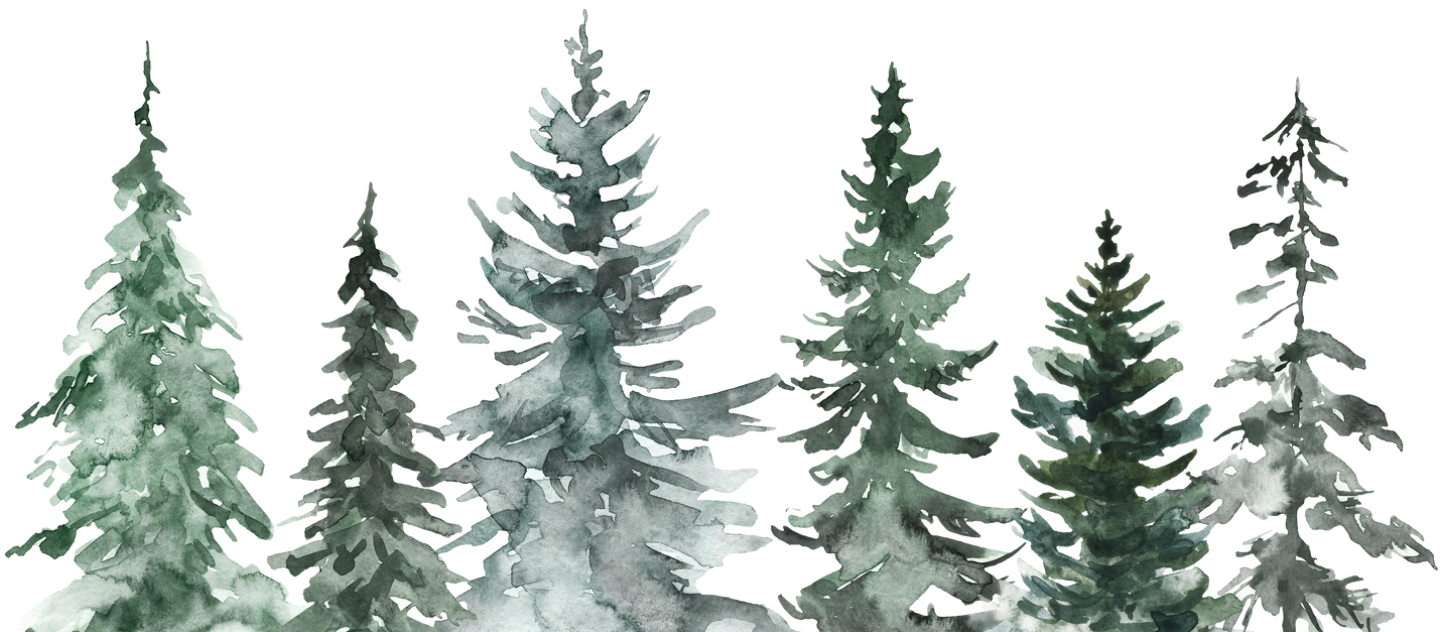
DEC 24

4:00PM

Contemporary

8:00PM

Traditional

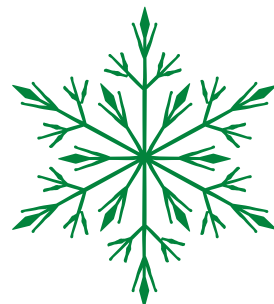






## Happy birthday to...

1	Betsy Hoylman	11	Jon Welstead Lauren Trimble Rachel Richter	22	Kristen Rymer Zack Kremer Za'Marionna Moore
2	Kaitlyn Annin James Jeffery Mary Lynn Han	14	Don Behrens Susan Scheutt	24	Oliver Hatch
3	Jeri Wind	15	Larry Dean	25	Rick Houge Chris Peterson
5	Douglas Blegen Za'Marion Moore	16	Gwen Strassburger	26	J. Marshall Peterson
6	Carolyn Curran Monica Bessette	17	Joelyn Wunderlich	27	Kevin Scheu Mark Dietz
8	Kate Melbye	18	Nancy Rice Jim Greenlee Miles Abel	28	John Boor Rosalind Henderson
9	Jane Heidemann Dan Abel	19	Nora Kaiser	29	Bob Sander
10	John Abram Tim Van Volkenburg	20	Sue Ebersohl	31	Carol Walker
		21	Rob Balmer		





# FESTIVAL WORSHIP

FEATURING ADULT & YOUTH CHOIRS,  
HANDBELLS, AND ORCHESTRA

Sunday, Dec. 14 @ 10am

Brunch to follow sponsored by  
Foundation & Memorials

[WWW.UMCWFB.ORG](http://WWW.UMCWFB.ORG)