

Monthly Newsletter

From the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay



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MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary is the Mission Focus for January and February

MBHS Mission:

MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary (MBHS), located in 53206, is a daytime sanctuary and multi-resource center for homeless and at-risk individuals with core values of healing, spirituality, recovery, peer empowerment, dignity...and mutual transformation. MBHS is unique, in having 21 racially and economically diverse part-time employees. They serve 200+ households on a weekly basis. Five ongoing outreach events are: food access, tutoring, lead testing, healthcare access, and general resources to help hopeless individuals find a pathway forward.

Focus of the Designated Offering:

Phase three of the 5-story building development, the addition of a commercial kitchen, will provide a daily meal program for one of the most food-scarce communities in the country. MBHS has most of the money to start building and equipping the commercial kitchen. In recent years, UMCWFB has designated funds to be used for purchasing kitchen equipment. The Mission Team's current goal is to help raise funds so construction may start soon.

Collection Drive:

A second part of our mission focus is to collect long underwear, socks and blankets for both children and adults. Please leave items in the mission collection area near the elevator.

Service Opportunities:

Many volunteer opportunities are available: tutors, nurses, and drivers to pick up food or furniture, among others. Contact Don at mdonlybeck@sbcglobal.net for details.



Celebrating God's Faithfulness - Stepping into a New Year of Blessings

A letter from Pastor Gary Holmes

Dear Beloved Community,

As we step into a new year together, I am filled with deep gratitude and hope as I reflect on all that God has been doing among us. The closing weeks of the past year were marked by moments of joy, beauty, and genuine connection that reminded us who we are—and whose we are. Our expanded Narthex has already become a wonderful space for connection, offering a warm and welcoming place to greet one another and build relationships.

Other meaningful moments included our Thanksgiving Service and Festival Celebration Worship. At each service, more than 300 people gathered to worship God with full hearts and lifted voices, surrounded by the rich sounds of handbells, choirs, and orchestra. It was worship at its best—vibrant, prayerful, and rooted in thanksgiving. Each service then flowed naturally into fellowship as we gathered in the Fellowship Hall for brunch, sharing food, laughter, and meaningful conversation.

I am especially grateful for the Legacy Gifts Fund (Foundation and Memorials), whose generous sponsorship of the brunch made this expression of hospitality possible. Because of the faithful giving of this fund, our commitment to building Beloved Community was not just spoken—it was

lived. Around tables, stories were shared, relationships were strengthened, and strangers became neighbors. This kind of hospitality is not an “extra” in the life of the church; it is central to who we are.

Jesus understood this deeply. Again and again in the Gospels, we find Jesus at the table—eating with friends, welcoming the outsider, breaking bread with those longing for connection. In these shared meals, lives were changed and community was formed. As Scripture reminds us, “They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people” (Acts 2:46–47). The early church knew what we are rediscovering: faith grows stronger when it is shared, celebrated, and lived together.





As we move into this new year, we do so with a spirit of celebration and a renewed sense of purpose. The United Methodist bishops have offered a compelling vision for the church—to form disciples who **love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously**. This vision beautifully complements our call to make disciples and to transform the world. To love boldly means extending Christ's inclusive, passionate love to all. To serve joyfully means offering compassionate care grounded in prayer and gratitude. To lead courageously means standing against injustice and working faithfully for peace.

This is the work before us—and it is life-giving work. Rooted in worship, nourished by fellowship, and sent into the world by the Spirit, we step forward together, blessed to be a blessing.

I am excited for the year ahead and grateful to walk this journey with you. May God continue to shape us into a community that celebrates well, loves deeply, and serves faithfully—for the sake of Christ and the world God so loves.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Gary

— Causes for Celebration —

Lydia's Treasure 10th Anniversary

Lydia's Treasure celebrated its TENTH anniversary and finished out 2025 with a \$3000 contribution to our mobile pack event for Feed My Starving Children to be held this spring. This matches the \$3000 donations made in June to Next Door Foundation; a literacy and early education group, Just One More Ministry; food rescue and mobile food pantry, and UMCWFB operating budget and Chapel renovation. This brings our ten-year giving-to-missions total to more than \$83,000! Team Lydia thanks YOU for all your support and donations. With your continued support, we will be able to do even MORE this coming year! Stop by Lydia's Treasure to learn about our NEW missions for 2026.



2,000 Pounds of Food and \$3,000 Collected for Northcott

Northcott Neighborhood House was the November mission focus. Our Thanksgiving Express food pantry collection filled two pick up trucks with food, over 2,000 pounds.



The money collected to support Northcott totaled over, \$3,000. These funds were used to support their catered sit down Thanksgiving meal, to purchase Christmas gifts for children., and the Christmas meal.

A few of us helped wrap presents, and at least one person volunteered to help serve the Christmas meal.

Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Joyous Festival Worship

We are thrilled more than 300 people attended our Festival Worship in December. The pews and balcony were packed with members, guests, families, friends and neighbors. We were blessed with the most beautiful songs of the season led by our youth choirs, Chancel Choir, Praise Team, Handbells and orchestra. After worship, everyone was invited downstairs for a delicious brunch and chance to socialize. Extra special thanks to Music Director, Neil Bubke, for all of his tireless work ensuring the music was so beautiful, Chef Gretchen Kniffin for preparing the delicious food, and for the Foundation Legacy Fund for sponsoring the event. It was the perfect way to celebrate the Advent season as a faith community.



Christmas Packs for Marvin Pratt School

In December, our youth put together 200 Christmas packets for the K-4 thru 2nd grade children at Marvin Pratt School, where our church has had a tutoring ministry for 34 years. The teachers were very excited to receive these for their children, and many thanks goes to our church member who donated these gifts.



UMCOR Flood Relief

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church are working in the Milwaukee area to mitigate flood damage to homes for families without other resources.

Members of Gray Guys and the Habitat work crews have worked three days to remove damaged drywall and debris from homes. Work will resume in mid January. A few homes still need clean out work. But soon we will be installing drywall and rebuilding damaged areas. In February there will be a need to manage the warehouse inventory supplies. This should not require lifting. Please contact Don at mdonlybeck@sbcglobal.net if you are willing to help.



— Community Reflection —

Wednesday Night Faith Food and Friendship

We had a successful Fall season of Wednesday Night Faith, Food, and Friendship! **On average, we had between 80-100 attendees each week from September through December** for our community meal, youth choirs, youth group, children's activities, and adult faith-focused classes. We ended FFF for 2025 with an all-church Christmas Caroling event that was wildly successful! We had our biggest group of carolers in history! After caroling, we gathered in the narthex for treats and hot cocoa. It was a fun and festive event!

FFF will start up for the 2026 winter season on January 7th with new adult faith classes, children's choirs and activities, youth group, and our Spring Children's Musical Reveal! Musical rehearsals will be on Wednesday nights and the performances will be on March 21 & 22.



WEDNESDAY NIGHT

- FAITH •
- FOOD •
- FRIENDSHIP •



ALL ARE
WELCOME

EVENING SCHEDULE

5-6pm • Community Dinner (Fellowship Hall)
(\$10 for adults, kids & first-time guests eat free)

5:30pm Youth Praise Team (Gr. 6-12)

5:45-7pm • Children's Choir Rehearsals, KICKStart, Youth Group

6-7pm • Faith-Focused Adult Classes

7-8:30pm • Chancel Choir Rehearsal

WINTER ADULT FAITH CLASSES STARTING JAN. 7

"Let Them Theory" Mel Robbins Book Discussion
led by Pastor Gary & Pastor Claudia (Walnut Room)

Love and Logic Parenting Class: focus grades 1-12
led by Kristal Melby (Chapel)

Bible Study: Gospel of Matthew
led by Pastor Mel Vance (Wesley Room)

CONTACT US: www.umcwfb.org, jfisher@umcwfb.org



A Busy Month for the Youth

Our youth group has been busy growing, connecting, serving, and celebrating together. We participated in two meaningful service projects. We packed Christmas goody bags for students at a local MPS school, and we decorated lunch bags that were filled and shared with neighbors experiencing homelessness. Both projects gave our students a hands-on way to show kindness and spread joy in our community.

Alongside serving, we made plenty of time for fun and connection. Our group bonded through festive “reindeer games” that helped everyone laugh, relax, and build relationships. We also had a joyful Christmas party complete with a gingerbread-house-making contest and “baby ornament” (boba) tea. It was a wonderful month of living out our faith together through service, friendship, and celebration.



Christmas Luncheon Highlights

Holiday cheer filled Fellowship Hall on Dec. 9 for the UWF Christmas Luncheon, as “Christmas Around the World” was celebrated.

Volunteers included a fabulous kitchen crew. Hard-working hostesses put together beautiful table settings, served their guests, and shared traditions from their chosen country. (Jane Heidemann, who celebrated her 96th birthday that day, posed with “Queen Elizabeth,” and three generations of Annette Thomas’s family delighted attendees with their authentic Swedish outfits.) Also recognized were those who had completed books for the UWF Reading Program.



— Looking Ahead to 2026 —

Camp Lucerne Save the Date

Even though it's cold outside, we are heating up our planning for Camp Lucerne 2026! The theme this year is **"Light in the Darkness". The dates are Sunday, June 14-Wednesday, June 17 at Camp Lucerne Retreat Center in Neshkoro, WI.**

The camp experience is planned, organized and led by trusted adults from our church. **Kids grades 3-12 are invited to participate.** Activities at camp include swimming, boating, hiking, crafts, games, campfires, worship and much more! The cost per camper is \$325, and registration will be available in January.

Please email Jenny Fisher (JFisher@UMCWFB.org) if you have questions about Camp, or if you would like to volunteer as a leader! Looking forward to a fun summer camp adventure and a chance to grow in our faith together!



Register Feb. 1 for North Shore School for Seniors spring session

North Shore School for Seniors (NSSS) organizers are planning exciting classes for the spring 2026 session. Registration begins Feb. 1. Classes meet Monday or Tuesday at our church.

Class info and online registration are at nss4s.org and catalogs are available for pickup at the church on Feb. 1. The spring session is Term 1 – Monday, March 16 & Tuesday, March 17 to Monday, April 6 & Tuesday, April 7. Term 2 is Monday, April 20 & Tuesday, April 21 to Monday, May 11 & Tuesday, May 12. There are no classes April 13 & Tuesday, April 14.

Classes already being lined up for spring include Cultural Diversity Around the World, History of World War I, History of the USO.

Email questions to nssbxt@gmail.com or phone (414) 292-0960. Classes are open to all. NSSS is an adult outreach program of UMCWFB.

February Means Souper Bowl VII

We've got you covered again for the Big Game! In 2026, UWF offers six delicious homemade soups for the Big Game, available for pick up at the church on Sunday, Feb. 8, along with home baked mini bread loaves.

The lineup features Southwest Chicken, Cheesy Winter Chowder, French Onion, Curried Red Lentil, and Instant Creamy Potato mix. Added for 2026 is the amazing first round draft choice, Pastor Claudia's Sweet Potato Soup with Peanuts and Ginger.

Orders for soups will be accepted at church on Sunday during the three weeks before delivery – Jan. 18, 25 and Feb. 1. To order online, contact suekdaugherty@gmail.com.

The cost of soup quarts is \$12. Mini bread loaves are \$3. Cash, check and Venmo are accepted.

Proceeds go to missions designated by UWF.



FREE COMMUNITY BARRE & YOGA CLASSES

WHAT IS BARRE?

Barre combines ballet-inspired movements, pilates, yoga, and strength training. It's a low-impact workout that tones and sculpts muscles.

No prior experience is needed.

We offer adaptations for most fitness levels.

- BARRE - MON 9AM
- YOGA - TUE 9 AM
- BARRE - THURS 9AM

IN FELLOWSHIP HALL
(DOWNSTAIRS)

ALL ARE
WELCOME

NO REGISTRATION
NECESSARY
JUST COME!

QUESTIONS?
KMELBYE@UMCWFB.ORG

Community Barre and Yoga

Meet all your New Year Resolution fitness goals and get connected with others from the community through our weekly Barre and Yoga classes. Barre combines ballet-inspired movements, pilates, yoga and strength training. It is a low-impact workout that tones and sculpts muscles. No experience is required and we offer adaptations for most fitness levels.

Schedule:

Barre: 9am Monday and Thursday in Fellowship Hall

Yoga: 9am Tuesday in Fellowship Hall

All classes are free and open to the public. Classes are taught by Kristal Melbye, professional fitness instructor and Director of Youth and Family Ministries.

Women's Ministry Retreat

All women are invited to participate in the Women's Ministry Retreat on Saturday, February 28th from 9am-3pm at Lynden Sculpture Garden in River Hills. Enjoy soul-filled worship and devotion, different types of meditations, crafts, chair massages, delicious food and wonderful fellowship. The cost of the retreat is \$30 per person. Payment can be made via check, cash or venmo (@UMCWFB).

Women Offering Worship

Women Offering Worship continues its 28th year with three great studies beginning Thursday, January 8th. United Women in Faith (UWF) reading program book Sacred Self Care by Dr Chanequa Walker-Barnes, Love is the Way by Bishop Michael Curry and Mother Teresa's Secret Fire by J. Langford. All three classes begin at 10:15am following 9:30am lay-led WOW worship in the Chapel and will have zoom/Google meet availability.

This is the perfect year for a faith-lift in Women's Ministry on Thursday mornings. We can't wait to greet you and welcome you in! Invite friends, there's room for all. For more information about WOW, contact Pastor Claudia at cdeede@umcwfb.org or Mary Paull mpaull53223@gmail.com



Winter Retreat
RECHARGE & REFLECT



Center Your Body, Mind & Soul

- Worship & Devotion
- Forest Bath Meditation
- Crafting & Chair Massages
- Sound Bath Music Meditation

Sat., Feb. 28
9am-3pm
\$30 per person

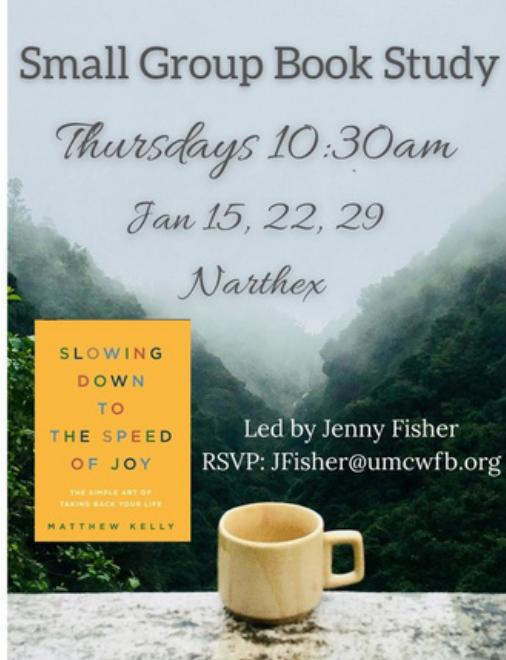
Lynden Sculpture Garden
River Hills, WI
RSVP by Feb. 21: JFisher@umcwfb.org



Looking Ahead to 2026

MacCanon Brown Transforming Lives Gala Save the Date

The Transforming Lives Gala benefiting the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary will take place at 5:00pm on Saturday, March 21 at the the Hilton City Center. UMCWFB has supported the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary for years in many ways, and a group from our church has attended this Gala for the last several years. More information regarding the gala to come!



January Book Study

Join Jenny Fisher and others for a book study discussion on Matthew Kelly's "Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy", a book about the simple art of taking back your life from the overwhelm of busyness. The discussion group will meet three Thursdays in January (15, 22 & 29) at 10:30am in the Narthex. Please RSVP to Jenny (JFisher@umcwfb.org). All are welcome!

Looking Ahead to 2026

Welcome Emily Ware

We are delighted to welcome Emily Ware as the new Communications Manager for the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay. We are so grateful to have her as a new member of our church family and look forward to her insight on all things communication and publicity!

Going forward, please direct all content for the Weekly Connection and Monthly Newsletter to her at eware@umcwfb.org.

january

happy birthday to...

1 Jacob Donovan
Vera Wines
Steve Jefferson

3 Sue Mortellaro
Dan Pagel
Jean Hidde

4 Dan Montague
Karin Welstead

5 John Daugherty

6 George Donovan
Peter McMahon
Steve Scheil
Keralyn Bolliger

7 Jenna Kunde
Peggy Mulligan
Kathy Thomson
Zacchaeus Moore-
Freeman

9 Amita Bubb
Connor Trimble
Steve Mortonson

10 Aaron Gorham
Roger Stafford
Liz Casciato
Guarisco

11 Tink Thomson

12 Dick Jones
Charlie King
Danielle King
Craig Walker

13 Terry McClellan

14 Miles Teskey

15 John Krezoski
Jacquelyn Oliveira

16 Crystal Stinemates

17 Alex Boehm

19 Norva McCutcheon
Judy Pier Lybeck

20 Peter Van Volkinburg
Erik Haglund
Cynthia Boock

21 Linda Mazumdar
Dave Melbye
Joann Cochran

22 Annette Buor
Susan Patrick

23 Christine Martin
Paul Jacobson
Mary LaFrombois

24 Sadie Sauter
Lois Kailhofer

25 Dan Morse

26 Taylor Kucsynski
Marti Kriefall
Beth Freuck

27 Chris Kitchen
Joan Robertson

28 Jackson Speed

29 Claire Starling
Lori Aeschbacher

30 Mary Myers Read
Jenny Fisher

