



# JOY Newsletter

March 2025

United Methodist Church  
of Whitefish Bay

## Anticipation and Renewal

March is a month of anticipation. The days grow longer, the snow begins to melt, and signs of spring start to emerge. There's something deeply hopeful about this time of year—a reminder that new life is just around the corner. In many ways, this mirrors our spiritual journey as we move through Lent, preparing our hearts for the joy of Easter.

At church, this sense of renewal is not just spiritual—it's tangible! Exciting updates are happening within our facility that will enhance our worship and fellowship together.

### A Narthex Refresh

The Narthex is more than just an entryway—it's the first space where we welcome one another, catch up with friends, and greet visitors. Plans are underway to refresh this space, making it even more inviting and functional for our growing congregation. Stay tuned for updates as we enhance this area to better serve our community.

### Sound System Enhancements

In our Sanctuary, we are making critical updates to the sound system to improve clarity and accessibility. Worship is at the heart of our community, and ensuring that everyone can fully engage—whether in person or online—is a top priority. These updates will help create a more enriching worship experience for all.

### Lenten Study: *John: The Gospel of Light and Life*

As we journey through Lent, I invite you to take a deeper dive into the Gospel of John with our church-wide study, *John: The Gospel of Light and Life* by Adam Hamilton. This study will guide us through the themes of light, life, and faith as we explore Jesus' ministry and message. Small groups are forming now, and I encourage you to join one as a way to grow in faith and community. Sign-ups are available in the Narthex—come and see how God might speak to you this season!

As we step into this season of transition—from winter to spring, from Lent to Easter, from past to future—let's embrace the opportunities God is placing before us. Change is often a sign of growth, and I am grateful to be on this journey with you.

Blessings,  
Pastor Gary

# Missions

## March Mission of the Month

Mujila Falls Agricultural Center is our March mission of the month (MM).

The Center, a United Methodist mission, is located in Zambia.  
The missionary, Temba Nkomozepe, visited UMCWFB October 2023.

The Center supports the local community with the following programs: day care for early childhood education, a primary school, vocational/trade school, and farm management teaching agricultural best practices.

In a recent newsletter, Temba stated, “the work we, you and I, are doing reminds me of something I recently read on mission; In essence, mission work is a tangible expression of Christian love, compassion, and the transformative power of faith in action.”  
Please support this important mission.

Update on Jan MM. \$790 was received for ASP Hurricane Relief.

In addition, \$1,840 was donated to support California wildfire relief (UMCOR).  
Thank you from the Mission Team.



# Missions

## Socks Make a Difference for Northcott

In 2024, thanks to UMC churches around the state collecting old socks, Northcott Neighborhood House received \$2000. That is an actual ton of socks kept out of landfill!

Thanks to everyone who donated old socks to the collection at our church. Keep the socks coming!

Bring clean old socks to church and put them in the marked bin near the elevator. All kinds of socks are acceptable: threadbare, with holes, unmatched, any fiber (wool, cotton, synthetic, blends), and any size or brand.

The socks get sent to TerraCycle, with shipping paid by partner Gildan (GOLDTOE Socks). They are separated by material type and recycled into raw formats that manufacturers use to make new products.

Every shipment earns reward points based on weight for a chosen non-profit (One pound = \$1). The Milton UWF started this project in 2024 to benefit Northcott. Our church is partnering with the Brown Deer UWF for shipping the collected socks.



# Missions

## The May Mission of the Month is “Midwest Missions”

Midwest Missions is one of seven agencies in the UMCOR relief supply network. Their main function is packing of various kits of needed supplies that are sent to domestic and foreign people who in need of them because of they live in poor conditions or suffered a disaster. For example, during the week of February 9th, they sent out \$98,841 worth of supplies to Mexico and \$29,392 of supplies to Guatemala. Their website is [midwestmission.org](http://midwestmission.org) to get more detailed information about them.

**The Mission Committee has decided to have our church get involved by sponsoring an off-site kit packing event on Sunday, May 4.** We are planning on packing 50 Student Kits consisting of notebooks, colored pencils, crayons, one scissors, sharpener, erasers and pencils and 50 Personal Dignity Kits consisting of toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant and various other items. The packing will start about 10:00 a.m. in the Narthex.

You soon will be able to sign up to participate on our “Signup Genius” website. More information will follow on future e-Joys and in the April Joy.

If you have any questions, please contact John Wierschem at [jjwiers@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jjwiers@sbcglobal.net)



## Souper Bowl 2025 was a Super Success!

Members of United Women in Faith (UWF) send a heartfelt thank-you to our church family for your remarkable support of this year’s Souper Bowl fundraiser. We sold 284 quarts of soup and 50 mini-loaves of bread -- after deducting expenses, we raised over \$2,200 which will all go to missions supported by UWF. Many thanks also go to our dedicated teams of soup-makers and bread-bakers along with all who helped with planning, publicity, selling, and distribution of soups.

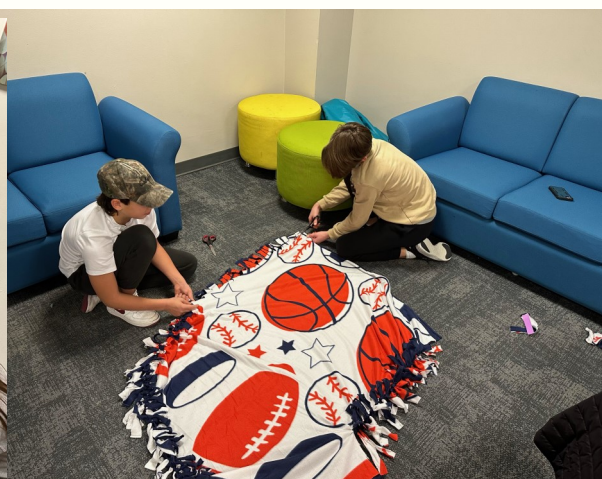




# Youth

**Last month our Youth Group** had the opportunity to have someone visit from MacCanon Brown to tell them more about the mission after they packed lunches for those in need.

Our youth also made tie blankets for the children at the Joy House of Milwaukee Rescue Mission and made personalized Valentines for some of the homebound members of our church.



**Our Confirmation Class** had the opportunity to have an interfaith experience at Congregation Shalom. We got to experience their special Shabbat service, share food and fellowship with their congregation, and get a special tour and lesson. The highlight for many of the youth was when Rabbi Noah unrolled a 125 year old Torah that had been rescued from Poland during the Holocaust.





# Youth

## ASP

It's time to sign up for this summer's ASP trip from July 12-20 if you haven't already done so. Reach out to Kristal Melbye at [kmelbye@umcwfb.org](mailto:kmelbye@umcwfb.org) if you have any questions. We're still looking for more chaperones, especially women.

We have two ASP fundraisers coming up. A pancake breakfast after "Oh, Jonah" on Sunday, March 16 and our first annual Chili Cookoff!



**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)



## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES YOUTH GROUP

WINTER/SPRING 2025



**Youth group is a time of connection and service  
for 6th grade to 12th grade students.  
Join us Wednesdays from 6:15-7:00  
in the Youth Room upstairs.  
All are welcome!**

February 5: Make Valentines for Homebound

Feb 12: Kindness Activity for School Friends

Feb 19: Musical Rehearsal

Feb 26: Musical Rehearsal

March 5: Musical Rehearsal

March 12: Musical Rehearsal

March 19: Make Sandwiches for McCanon Brown

March 26: No FFF - Spring Break

April 2: Silly Pet Video Night



# NSS4S Classes

## North Shore School for Seniors spring classes begin in March

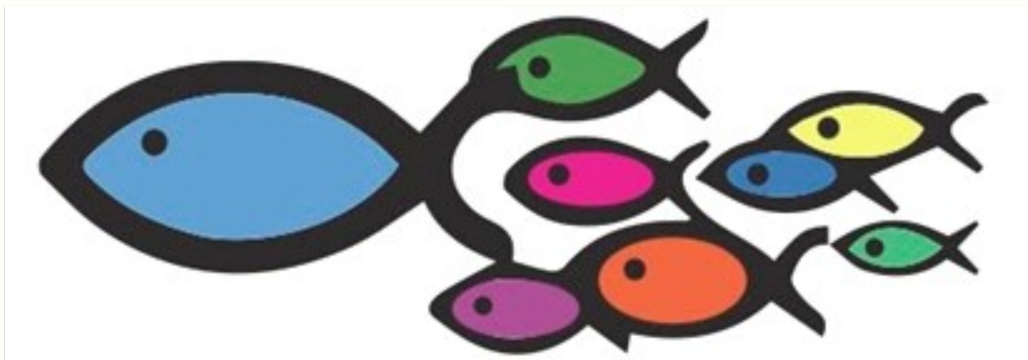
North Shore School for Seniors (NSSS) registration is ongoing for spring, with some classes starting March 10. Classes meet Monday or Tuesday at church.

Class info and online registration is at [nss4s.org](http://nss4s.org) and catalogs are available for pickup. The Spring Session is (Term 1) Monday, March 10 -Tuesday, April 1 and (Term 2) Monday, April 14 -Tuesday, May 6. There are no classes April 7 and 8.

New classes for the spring include “Senior Fitness,” “Bob Dylan,” “History of the New Deal,” “From Egg to Silk in Milwaukee,” “Spring Garden Wake-up,” “The Civil War: Why It Matters” and “Wide World of Sports: Mavericks, Pioneers & Trailblazers.”

Among returning favorites are “Downsizing,” “Apple iPhone Photography,” “Knitting,” “Write Your Own Obituary” and “Meditation.”

Email questions to [nssbxt@gmail.com](mailto:nssbxt@gmail.com) or phone 414-292-0960. Classes are open to all. NSSS is an adult outreach program of our church.





# Men's Ministry

## Men's Ministry Events for March and April - Women And Youth Invited

**Saturday, March 8** -Construction of frames for Habitat houses at the Habitat warehouse in 2 sessions: 8 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and Noon - 3 p.m.

Let Don Lybeck ([mdonlybeck@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mdonlybeck@sbcglobal.net)) or Tom Groble ([tomgroble@gmail.com](mailto:tomgroble@gmail.com)) know you can be there.



## **Saturday, March 22, Tour and Mission Trip to Rooted and Rising**

(Formerly United Methodist Children's Services) 9:30 a.m.- Noon. Located At 39th St. and W. Lisbon in Milwaukee. Plan to learn about or become better acquainted with this organization in order to return it to be a regular mission of our church.

R&R provides affordable housing with an apartment building and houses in the Washington Park Neighborhood where over 50% of the people live under the poverty level. Support includes a Food Center, Neighborhood Engagement Area, and Childcare.



We're looking forward to you joining us for a tour of the facilities plus a chance to provide mission time. Let John Frunceck ([jfrunceck@gmail.com](mailto:jfrunceck@gmail.com)) know you can be there. Carpooling will be arranged. Women and youth are invited.

**Saturday, April 12 - A Hot Breakfast** at our church plus a special opportunity to learn about settling immigrants here in Milwaukee with Paul Trebian, President and CEO of the International Institute of Wisconsin and Marina Croft, Director Legal Affairs.

For more than a century, the International Institute of Wisconsin has been promoting a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural perspective through education, arts exchange, communication, social activities as well as immigration and naturalization services . But today the Institution is facing new challenges. We're fortunate that Institution CEO Paul Trebian and Marina Croft can join us. All members of the church are invited to attend this important meeting, which promises to detail ways they can work with this International Institute in these difficult days with immigrants.



Additoanlly, John Krezoski will take a few minutes to go over the use of the church defibrillator for everyone's benefit. Remember, the defibrillator, which John maintains, is located in the Narthex Hallway.

**Fellowship will be at 7 a.m., breakfast at 7:30 a.m., and the program from 8 - 9 a.m. - all in Fellowship Hall.** Please let Dick Steinmetz ([rsteinmetz@wi.rr.com](mailto:rsteinmetz@wi.rr.com)) know you will be there. Women and youth are invited.

# Church & Society

## Vote Joyfully!

April 1st (really) is a general election in Wisconsin. While the offices of Supreme Court and State Superintendent of Public Instruction may not be as high profile as some other positions, they are both extremely important to our state and therefore, it's critical that you vote.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction oversees all public schools and libraries in Wisconsin, evaluates their performance and promotes ways to improve them. It is a nonpartisan office with a four year term and there are no limits on how long someone can serve. The incumbent is Dr. Jill Underly and she has held that role since 2021. The primary that was held in February decided who would be her opponent.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court is the state's highest court, is made up of seven justices and is responsible for determining if laws violate the WI Constitution. Justices are chosen in nonpartisan elections for a ten year term and there are also no limits on how many terms can be served. This year the court is expected to rule on abortion restrictions and a challenge to Act 10 which in 2011, eliminated union collective bargaining rights for public teachers and other public employees. Two candidates are running to fill one seat. Susan Crawford is currently a Circuit Court judge in Dane County and is generally considered to be a liberal. Brad Schimel is a Waukesha Circuit Court judge and is considered to be a conservative. Liberal justices now have a 4-3 majority so this election will be key to determine the balance of power on the court.

There is also another (the 6th in the last year) constitutional amendment question on the ballot. This amendment seeks to add Wisconsin's voter ID law into the Constitution. Wisconsin has had a strict photo ID law in place for many years and because of that, many feel this amendment is unnecessary. When this amendment passed the legislature, all Republicans voted for it and all Democrats voted against it. A YES vote would change the Constitution and a NO vote would oppose changing the Constitution and rely on current laws.

Some municipalities may have local elections such as school board or city trustees—you will need to check what is on your ballot before going to the polls. The very best way to find out if you are registered, where you vote, who your elected officials are and who is on your ballot is by going to: [MyVote.wi.gov](http://MyVote.wi.gov)

The WFB United Methodist Church and Society team will once again be having a Voter Information table in the Narthex after the single service at 10 a.m. on March 16th. We will have plenty of nonpartisan info for you to take to prepare for the April 1st election and will be happy to answer your questions.



Remember, **A Vote is a prayer about the kind of world we want to live in.**"

Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock

- Church & Society Team

# Events

## March 2025 JOY newsletter Wednesday Night Faith, Food, and Friendship

Thank you to all of the people in our faith community who join us weekly for our Wednesday night Faith, Food, and Friendship program. Our Winter Wednesday night adult faith classes have included “**How to be an Ally**”, led by local non-profit “Courage MKE”, “**Spiritual Journey Pathway**”, led by Pastor Gary Holmes, **Bible Study on Sermon on the Mount**, and a discussion on “**5 Love Languages**” book by Gary Chapman led by Chelsea and Dan Montague. Thank you so much to all of our class leaders and participants! Wednesday night adult faith classes during Lent will focus on small group study of the Gospel of John through materials written by Pastor Adam Hamilton.

Our youth choirs have been hard at work rehearsing for our Spring Children’s Musical, “**Oh, Jonah!**”, which is based on the Bible story *Jonah and the Whale*. Rehearsals continue on Wednesday nights from 5:45-7pm. Performances are on **Sat. March 15th at 5pm and Sun. March 16 at 10am**. We will have one combined worship service on **March 16**. For questions about Faith, Food, and Friendship, please contact Jenny Fisher ([jfisher@umcwfb.org](mailto:jfisher@umcwfb.org)).

### Make sure to join a small group this Lent as we study the Gospel of John

“**John: The Gospel of Light and Life**”, written by Pastor Adam Hamilton. The book can be purchased here: <https://www.cokesbury.com/John-6>.

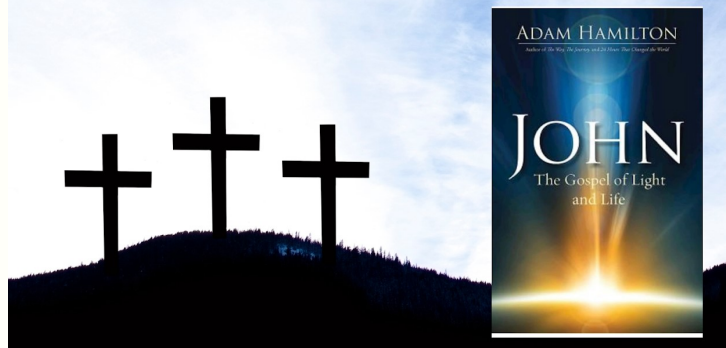
Small Groups will meet at various times and days on a weekly basis. For small group times, dates and leaders, please visit the sign-up board in the Narthex.

### Lent Small Group Study John: The Gospel of Light and Life

Join a small group this Lent to experience a season of spiritual growth and life-changing renewal while exploring the major themes of the book of John.

Small groups will meet weekly during Lent. Study resources created by Pastor Adam Hamilton.

**Sign up for a Small Group in the Narthex, book can be purchased online.**







United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay  
Youth Choirs Present

## “OH, JONAH!”

A CHILDREN’S MUSICAL ABOUT THE BIBLE  
STORY OF JONAH AND THE WHALE

ADMISSION IS FREE, ALL ARE WELCOME!

SAT. MARCH 15 @ 5PM  
FOLLOWING SHOW - SPAGHETTI DINNER  
\$10/ADULTS, \$5/KIDS TO BENEFIT CAMP LUCERNE

SUN. MARCH 16 @ 10AM  
FOLLOWING SHOW - PANCAKE BREAKFAST  
\$10/ADULTS, \$5/KIDS TO BENEFIT ASP MISSION TRIP

819 E. SILVER SPRING DR



## Meet Zao MKE Church

When we talk about building Beloved Community, we are talking about more than our congregation (although we are doing that too!). We also mean the broader community. For example, we have joined MICAHA (Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope) and partnered with other churches and organizations, like Rooted and Rising and MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary, on several events and missions.

Now we are forming a relationship with Zao MKE Church. Zao is a United Methodist church located in the former Kenwood United Methodist Church on Kenwood Ave. across from the UW-Milwaukee Student Union. It describes its mission as Jesus Rooted, Justice Centered and Radically Inclusive. The Zao congregation is young, racially diverse and mostly LGBTQ+. Most have not attended a church before. Its pastor, Rev. Jonah Overton, is trans and uses the pronouns 'they, their'. Pastor Jonah began their career as an organizer in Chicago but felt a call to ministry and moved to Milwaukee a few years ago to plant the Zao church. Pastor Jonah preached at our church in January and is passionate about their faith and the LGBTQ+ community.

As part of this new relationship, our church will hold a community event called **“Rethinking Homosexuality and the Bible”** on **Saturday, March 29. Colby Martin**, a nationally known pastor, author and speaker, will help us explore the importance of an inclusive and caring community and the proper interpretation of the New Testament scriptures that are often cited to condemn homosexuality. Pastor Martin has authored the books, “Unclobber: Rethinking Our Misuse of the Bible on Homosexuality” and “Shift”.

Another part of this relationship will be our decision this May to become a Reconciling Church. The Reconciling Network that we would join is a United Methodist movement to support LGBTQ+ persons within and outside our church. It was originally focused on changing the denomination’s policy against gay pastors and gay marriage. With the recent reversal of that policy, the goals of the Network have broadened to support and empower LGBTQ+ communities. The Mequon UMC has previously voted to become a Reconciling Church.

We are also developing a team of allies who will be intentional about knowing and supporting the Zao community. They will attend some services and events at Zao and support events on LGBTQ+ issues at our church. Allies are people who see LGBTQ+ persons as children of God who are equally loved by God. Allies do not expect or need LGBTQ+ people to defend their sexuality.

We recognize that the Zao congregation is vulnerable. Efforts to discredit their sexual preferences and eliminate their rights jeopardize their access to employment and health care, their ability to obtain federal IDs and passports and their equal protection under the law. They need straight and cisgender allies to stand with them. Our church can do that.

By forming a relationship with Zao MKE UMC, we are expanding our Beloved Community and acknowledging the enormity of God’s love for all of humanity. We urge you to join us or, if you have questions, to learn more. When we enter Beloved Community, we find good people who, through their differences, expand our understanding of God’s love and His vision for our church. Some of those good people just happen to be LGBTQ+.

Kathy Schluter, Chair of the Reconciling Ministry Team

# Rethinking Homosexuality and the Bible

with  
Pastor  
and  
Author  
Colby  
Martin



**Saturday, March 29 at 6 pm**

United Methodist Church  
of Whitefish Bay  
819 E. Silver Spring Drive

**Register at [bit.ly/ColbyMartin](https://bit.ly/ColbyMartin)**

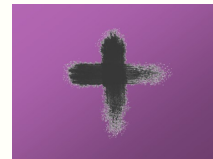
# Women's Ministry

**There are TWO Lent Studies to choose from on Thursday mornings.**

Multigenerational women gather at 9:30 to worship in the Chapel, followed by classes from 10:15 – 11:30.

Adam Hamilton's *John – the Gospel of Light and Life* in the Walnut Room and Kate Bowler's *The Hardest Part* in the Chapel or viz Zoom.

Contact Nell Nash [nnash@umcwf.org](mailto:nnash@umcwf.org) for more details.



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**Saturday, February 15, was a day filled with 39 women at the Siena Retreat Center for a day on connection with God and others.**

In the beauty of fresh snow and the stillness of winter, we connected with nature, stretched our spirits and muscles, found our creative sides, were treated to calming massage, fed in mind and body, and came away renewed.



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**Lydia's Treasure is bursting with Easter fun!**

With a little St Patty's on the side. Fresh hours now that NSS4S is back – Monday & Tuesday 10-3, Wednesday 5-7:30, Sunday before and after worship. As always, gently-read books, puzzles, amazing greeting cards, fabulous fair trade from around the world and fun finds everywhere. Help us help Just One More Ministry as they rescue food to feed the underserved and Next Door Foundation as they support families and foster the love of learning and books.





# Notes from the Board

## Notes from the Board...

On February 18, the Servant Leadership Board (formerly Accountable Leadership Board) met for the regular monthly meeting. In attendance were SLB members: Tom Van Cleave, Don Behrens, Hui Zhang, Chelsea Montague, Sam Swartzberg and Chris Kitchen. Also in attendance were Pastor Gary Holmes, Erin Norris, Laurie Jeffery and Jean Erickson.

## Opening Prayer and Consent Agenda

Tom Van Cleave opened the meeting in prayer reflecting our Vision Statement of “Building a Beloved Community”.

The January meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Devotion and Pastor’s Report:** Rev Gary Holmes presented a devotional exercise and readings from Isaiah 43:19 “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

Through questions, he asked us to reflect as leaders in the context of change on our spirit of renewal, trusting in God’s guiding hand. May we be faithful stewards of this moment of renewal, leading with wisdom, grace and hope.

**Vision Statement and Storyline Actions:** Tom VC showed a document, and we read out loud our Vision Statement and the four actions that are key components as follows:

**Vision Statement:** Building a Beloved Community by Connecting, Growing and Serving.

In the next three to five years, our dream is to build a Beloved Community, committed to be an inviting, caring, and inclusive church actively living Jesus’s commandment to love God and each other.

The Spiritual Journey Pathway, along with programming and experiences for a variety of needs and life stages, will nurture our spiritual transformation as a faith-based community as we commit to courageously:

*Connecting with faith seekers within and beyond our church in meaningful, caring and accepting relationships that welcome all.*

*Growing our faith and developing a strong personal relationship with God through empowering worship and faith studies that grow our understanding and love for God.*

*Serving in the world to make a difference with multi-generational services that reaches into our area community and beyond as the hands and feet of Jesus.*



## **.Vision Statement key components and our four actions:**

Church Identity: Nurturing a “Beloved Community” with a sense of place that is caring, authentic, feeling of acceptance, recognition, respect, seen, wellness, supported, safe place; meeting people where they are; healing; compassionate.

Spiritual Journey Pathway: the compass or process for personal spiritual growth & relationship with God; we are invited to Connect, Grow, and Serve in our relationship with God and others; Faith building; ministry engagement.

Programming: Provide engagement and programs to all ages and stages of life; attracts young families with children.

Outreach: Meet the needs of the community; wholeness; complete; “Truly” alive

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

**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. The Board will present that change at the March All Church Meeting.

The SLB recognized Don Behrens faithful service on the SLB as he has fulfilled his 3-year commitment. Also, we welcome Chris Kitchen as a new SLB member.

**Closing Prayer**: Rev. Gary Holmes closed the meeting with prayer.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 18th, with the closed session beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Wesley Room. General session will begin around 7:00 p.m. A Zoom option will be provided. All are welcome.



## *Birthdays for March*

Will	Bublitz	3/01	Suzan	Daugherty	3/20
Stephanie	Kliber	3/01	Karen Helms	Ward	3/20
Beth	Stafford	3/01	Bonnie	Barr	3/21
Amanda	Speed	3/01	Dale	Snider	3/21
Raylene	Greenlee	3/02	Judith Ann	Baltzley	3/21
Cynthia	Stuckey	3/02	Kay	Nye	3/23
Jennifer	Sanders	3/03	Richard	Lundell	3/23
Russell	LaFrombois	3/04	Sandra	Workman	3/24
John	Widdifield	3/04	Thomas	Weber	3/26
Barbara	Abraham	3/05	Claire	Wunderlich	3/26
Randy	Nash	3/05	Timothy	Tharp	3/26
Lynette	Mortonson	3/05	Gail	Koenke	3/27
Nancy	Schacht	3/07	Cindi	Criss	3/27
Tanner	Toll	3/07	Virginia	Wagner	3/28
Timothy	Andeen	3/07	Hui	Zhang	3/28
Del	Szewczuga	3/10	Marcia	Olen	3/29
Rena	Szewczuga	3/10	Nelda	Mngoja	3/29
Dorothy	Case	3/12	John	Waeltz	3/30
Kate	Strelow	3/13	Charles	Abram	3/30
Katie	Daniels	3/15	Darlene	Vranek	3/31
Karen	Seward	3/15	Andrea	Seidler	3/31
Michel Mpoyo	Mwanza	3/16			
Nancy	Trimble	3/17			
Kathleen	Weber	3/18			