United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay May 01, 2025



"Too Busy Not to Enjoy This Season!"

Dear friends, May is here—bursting with beauty, color, and life! The earth is waking up again, flowers are blooming, and the sun stays with us a little longer each day. It's the kind of season that calls us to pause, breathe deeply, and take it all in. In the midst of the busyness of life, it's a gentle reminder: we are too busy NOT to enjoy this season!











This is also a season of exciting change and forward movement in the life of our church. In May, construction begins on much-needed updates to our narthex. These changes will make our beautiful facility even more welcoming—a space ready to support the building of Beloved Community. During the renovation, you'll notice signs guiding you to open entrances and directions inside to help everyone move safely. While we may face a few weeks of inconvenience, the result will be a refreshed and more hospitable space for worship, fellowship, and connection.

At the same time, we are entering a very important worship series called "A Way Forward." This series is designed to support and empower our congregation to live into the gifts and graces God has given each of us—to be the light and love of Christ in our church and out into the world. It's an opportunity to reconnect with your calling and imagine how you might grow in faith and service during this season of renewal.





We're also preparing for exciting updates in our ministries. All ministry leaders and their teams are invited to a gathering of the Council on Ministries on **Thursday**, **May 15, from 12:30 to 2:30 PM** in the Fellowship Hall. A lunch will be provided. If you're not sure whether you "should" attend but are curious about the direction of our church's mission and ministry— come join the conversation!

To RSVP, please email <u>Pastor Gary</u> by May 11.



Let's embrace this beautiful season of growth and possibility—with joy, courage, and a readiness to follow where God is leading.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Gary Holmes





Updates

Wed. Night Faith, Food and Friendship Concludes for the Season

A BIG Thank You to all of our volunteers and leaders who worked so hard to make our weekly Wednesday Night Faith, Food, and Friendship a huge success over the past 8 months. Our weekly attendance averaged between 80-100 people per week. Our community meal, adult faith classes, youth group and youth choir participation was strong throughout the whole season.

Faith, Food and Friendship has concluded for the spring season and will resume in the Fall on September 10th with new faith classes, delicious meals, youth choirs and kids programming. We need more volunteers to make FFF sustainable, so please consider if you can serve to support that program in the Fall. If you have feedback about FFF, please contact Jenny Fisher.



Narthex Constrution

Begins Monday, May 12th finishes on Friday, August 1st.







Lydia's Treasure

Everything 50% off! (except cards) Come shop some sweet deals!

Men's Ministry



Mark your Calendars:



Saturday, May 10 8:15 am - 3:00 pm

Contact Don Lybeck for more information.

mdonlybeck@sbcglobal.net







Missions Update

Midwest Mission

The Mission of the Month is "Midwest Mission." Midwest Mission is one of seven agencies in the UMCOR relief supply network. Their main function is the packing of various supply kits, sent to domestic and foreign recipients in need due to poor living conditions or to assist with disaster relief. For example, during the week of 2/9, Midwest Mission sent almost \$130,000 in supplies to Mexico and Guatemala. For more detailed information, visit midwestmission.org





Join us on Sunday, May 11! The Mission Committee is sponsoring an off-site kit packing event on Sunday, May 11. We will pack 50 Student Kits consisting of notebooks, colored pencils, crayons, scissors, sharpener, erasers and pencils and 50 Personal Dignity Kits consisting of toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant and other items. Packing starts at 10:00 am in the Narthex.

Sign up <u>HERE!</u>



Please reach out to <u>John Wierschem</u> or <u>Steffen Cave</u> with any questions.

Mark your Calendars





Women's Ministry

upcoming...

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



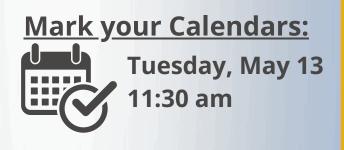
Spring Luncheon!

United Women in Faith gather **Tuesday, May 13**, "For the Beauty of the Earth" with fun, fellowship and food. Lunch will be followed by a presentation on "Responding to Climate Change" by Dr. Tim Tharp, Associate Professor in the Physics department, Marquette University.

The event begins at 11:30am, with lunch served at noon. Cost is \$10. Reserve your spot by signing up at the office or calling (414) 964-2424. Childcare is available if requested by May 6.

For the Beauty of the Earth

Special thanks to Dr.Tim
Tharp for the presentation
on Climate Change!



Church & Society

GOD'S CREATION IN THE BALANCE



On May 18th, from 11:45-1:00 PM, we are fortunate to have David Petering give a presentation to our church members entitled "Creation in the Balance-Climate Change and What We Must Do about it Now." The talk will be held in the Chapel and is sponsored by the Church & Society team.

Dr. David Petering is a UWM Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry emeritus. He taught interdisciplinary courses on the environment and health, and his course "Sustainable Earth, Environment and Societal Development in the 21st Century" provides information and research about the origin, impacts and solutions to climate change. He has also led the Science Education Partnership program which has provided thousands of middle and high school students with authentic research experiences in their classrooms.

"All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings."

-UNITED METHODIST SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

The Church & Society team is committed to educating our congregation about the perils of climate change. More importantly, we want to discuss with Dr. Petering the ACTIONS that we can take to make a difference in our community and our world. Please join us on May 18th after the second service in the Chapel for this important talk.

From the Board

April 15th Meeting

On April 15th, 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, Chris Kitchens and Tom Groble. Also in attendance were Gary Holmes, Erin Norris, Laurie Jeffery, Kathy Schluter, and Jean Erickson.



- Devotion and Pastor's Report: Tom VC led a devotional discussion focusing on differences of Jesus's life in the Synoptic Gospels that emphasized Jesus's humanity (teacher, preacher, healer, suffering) while John's Gospel emphasizes Jesus's divinity (oneness to God, Messiah King).
- **Simple Church** Next Step: Tom VC walked through the roll out of foundational elements over the last year that included the launch of our Spiritual Journey Pathway around Connect, Grow and Serve; our church identity of Building a Beloved Community as our vision statement and recently, Pastor Gary's staff alignment. With those foundational elements in place, we are now contemplating using the simple church framework to achieve our objectives of maximizing member engagement, streamlining programs, appealing to different life stages and schedules, and identifying which programs to promote. The next Council of Ministries meeting is May 15th at 1pm.
- May Charge Conference: The annual meeting is scheduled for Tuesday May 27th at 7:00pm that will include a 75% vote on joining the United Methodist Reconciling Network is needed for those in attendance both in person and on-line.

• **Financials:** Erin Norris presented the financial position for nine months highlighting that income and expenses are on track although their monthly timing may not be level.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 20th at 7:00pm. A Zoom option will be provided. All welcome! **Mark your Calendars:**

Tuesday, May 20th | 7:00 pm

Meet Our Lay Leaders!

Jenny Fisher, Beth Groble, and Jeff McClellan have been serving as Lay Leaders at UMCWFB for the past two years. They were appointed under Pastor Don Francis's leadership, and continue in their capacity of service under Pastor Gary. The role of Lay Leaders is to serve as primary representatives and role models of Christian Discipleship and faith lived out in the church and in daily life. Lay Leaders work with the pastor to fulfill the mission and vision of the congregation. Please read more below!

Please Meet...



Jenny Fisher

I have been attending UMCWFB for more than 10 years with my family. My husband, Matt, and our daughters Addy (13), Olivia (11) and Madeline (8) love the Youth and Family Ministry program, the children's choirs, Youth Group, Sunday School, Wednesday Night Faith, Food and Friendship and Camp Lucerne. We started attending UMCWFB when our oldest child was enrolled in Tree of Life Preschool, and we attended one of the Spring children's musicals (Noah's Ark). We were blown away by the engagement of so many young families, and the

talented and devoted church staff. We have attended Camp Lucerne for the past 4 years, we are always involved in Vacation Bible School, the Christmas outreach productions and the Spring children's musicals. We regularly participate in worship. In my leadership capacity at church, I have served on the Servant Leadership Board, the United Women in Faith Board, the Staff Parish Relations Team, and as a Lay Leader. I co-lead a small group, "Esther Circle", which is devoted to supporting mothers of young children. In July 2023, I was hired as staff serving as the Director of Congregational Growth and Community Engagement. I coordinate Faith, Food and Friendship, co-direct the youth choirs, and lead and organize small groups. My life purpose and mission is to support families in their faith life, create quality, relevant adult faith education, build faith community and support the youth and children's music and ministry programs. It's a blessing to have this calling, and be a part of the life of this church!

Lay Leaders- Beth Groble

Originally from Fargo, ND I grew up in Illinois, met and married my husband, Tom, from Chicago. Shortly before our daughter Katherine was born, we moved to Dallas, TX. Our second child, Matthew was born right before we headed off to Seoul, S. Korea, again with Abbott Labs. We returned to Chicago where we had our third child, Andrew. Eventually settling in Whitefish Bay in 1996.



After falling away from my Catholic upbringing, I was invited in 2004 to join Women Offering Worship at the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay. There, I met several women who supported and mentored me through the challenging teenage years. Unbeknownst to me they were walking alongside me on my Spiritual Journey Pathway as we studied the Bible thru the Discipleship series, first studying the Old Testament, then the New and finally the Gospels. Later, we read and discussed other books by Joyce Rupp, Marjorie Thompson, Beth Moore and other theologians. Along with the testimonials offered by others at the weekly Women Offering Worship service, I learned from others how they grew in their spiritual journey.

Enhancing my Spiritual Journey I became involved in United Women of Faith where I was encouraged to start a new "Reading Circle." There we discussed books of nonfiction, injustice, spirituality, historical fiction among others leading to further spiritual growth. I was invited to join Ruth's (now Hannah's) crafting circle where we shared life's joys as well as sorrows. Along the way, with the encouragement of Pastor Tshishinen, we formed Ruth's Circle offering clothing and toiletries at United Methodist Children's. We also offered a monthly meal and fellowship. With growing awareness of a lack of equity for those who were marginalized due to color I became more involved in our Church & Society team and later in MICAH where we work towards justice for ALL, carrying out God's commandment to "love one another as he loved us."

But throughout my years at UMCWFB I realize I'm usually offering food or some form of hospitality whether to those who are sick, hungry, have a special need or simply find joy in breaking bread together. When Pastor Don Francis invited me to attend a series of Lay Leader classes and then a year-long ICD (Institute of Congregational Development) training, I signed up. Through the training, we were equipped with the tools for enhancing various ministries such as Hospitality. Through my service as Chair of the Hospitality Team, I strive to make sure every guest and member who walks through the doors of UMCWFB feel welcomed and known. I strive to connect them with others and to reflect the love that God offers each one of us.

Lay Leaders-Jeff McClellan



Originally from the Cleveland, Ohio area, Terry and I have been members since 1990, after we moved to Whitefish Bay from a 15-year stint in North Carolina. We have two sons, Adam and Ian, who both live on the west coast with families of their own. I believe they still carry with them life-changing experiences because of this church. As this faith community has evolved over the years, so has my spiritual journey. Personally, I've been able to connect to a spirituality that's matured because of

my involvement here, from participating in the Men's Wednesday morning Bible study, to volunteering on many ASP trips, to leading mission trips to Honduras, to helping out in the kitchen. Each experience beyond worship has been another step along my spiritual journey pathway. To me, this is a Christ-centered hub that enables each of us to live according to Christ's commandment to love one another.

I'm blessed to work with Pastor Gary and to act as your representative to help fulfill the vision and mission of this Beloved Community. In addition to serving as a Lay Leader, I'm currently serving on the Servant Leadership Board and the Staff Parish Relations Team. Terry sings in the choir and coordinates the St. Vincent Meal program. I also serve on the board of directors for Prevent Blindness Wisconsin and Danceworks Milwaukee.

After working for 40 years in advertising as a copywriter and agency owner, and teaching as an adjunct professor in strategic communications at Marquette University, I'm currently living my next adventure as a writer, sailor and traveler, exploring the world with Terry.

BOOKS NEEDED FOR MARVIN PRATT!

New or gently used books are needed for the K-4 thru 2nd grade children at Marvin Pratt. We like to give a book to each child for the summer, and we have enough books for the 3rd thru 5th grade children. There will be a box in the Narthex next to Lydia's until May 11th. Once the construction starts in the Narthex May 12th, there will be a notice where the box will be found. Please email Loretto Steinmetz with questions, or call 414-550-2957!



Beloved Community, May 27

Building a Beloved Community – Next Step: Building a Reconciling Church! At our annual Charge Conference on Tuesday, May 27, our church will vote on joining the United Methodist Reconciling Network as a Reconciling Church – the next step toward building our church identity as a Beloved Community. A vote of 75% of members present at the Charge Conference is required to join the Network. This action received overwhelming support at the All-Church Meeting on April 6.

Our Current Welcoming Statement:

"God's grace is available to all, and all persons are individuals of sacred worth. The congregants of the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay seek to live in Christian community, welcoming all Christian seekers and believers regardless of age, gender, marital status, race, sexual orientation, social or economic status, gender identity, and physical or mental ability."

What would it mean to become a Reconciling Church?

The Reconciling Network is an organization of Reconciling United Methodist churches that seeks to include, support and advocate for the LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities. We would join other United Methodist churches across the country that have made the same commitment, including the Mequon and Brown Deer United Methodist churches, and churches in other denominations that have similar networks. The Reconciling Network provides training, resources and support that make us all more effective in affirming and advocating for the LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities.

As a Reconciling Church, we would commit to the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ and other marginalized persons into the life and ministry of our church through:

- a) Outreach, affirmation and intersectional ministry
- b) Creating opportunities to engage in dialogue, build relationships & advocate for justice.

We would actively support LGBTQ+ and marginalized communities with events, outreach and allyship. In particular, we would partner with Zao MKE United Methodist Church to support and participate in their ministry. In this way, we would more fully live into our vision of building a Beloved Community and Jesus' call to love and serve the marginalized.

Finally, we would look to adopt a Foundational Statement that we "welcome and affirm people of every gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation" and commit to "the pursuit of justice [for] all who are marginalized and oppressed." This Statement could supplement or replace our current Welcoming Statement.

We encourage you to attend the annual Charge Conference on May 27 at 7:00 pm and support this important step for our church in building a Beloved Community. As always, if you have questions, please contact Pastor Gary or Kathy Schluter!

Upcoming Events





All are invited to join us for a morning of fellowship while sprucing up our church grounds. We'll be trimming bushes, raking and edging the lawn and cleaning out the garden beds in time for Mother's Day!

Refreshments and coffee will be served. Please bring garden gloves. We'll supply the garden tools but feel free to bring along your favorites. We look forward to working alongside you.

SAT. MAY 3 9:00 AM-NOON

819 E SILVER SPRING DR., WFB

PLEASE RSVP TO:

Susan Stoehr at sstoehr@gmail.com or Beth Groble at bgroble@gmail.com





Indoor Pool & Jacuzzi Party

Sunday, May 4
12:30pm (come over after church)
Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.



At Sarah Laszewski's home in Mequon Text Sarah to sign up: (414) 795-4462



Car Wash Fundraiser

An event to benefit

Appalachian Service Project



May 31, 2025 | 10:00am - 1:00pm | UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF WHITEFISH BAY

We encourage our youth and ASP attendees to help us wash.

RSVP HERE

The rest of you, please get your car washed while supporting a great cause!

Confirmation and Graduates!

Confirmation & Graduation SUNDAY

MAY

SUNDAY

18

AT 10:30

We are so excited about our upcoming confirmands and graduating seniors. We'll be celebrating them on Sunday, May 18.

We invite you to write messages to these wonderful young people who have been involved in our congregation in many ways.

There will be a basket outside the sanctuary doors.

Please write them a note or card, label the outside of the envelope with their name, and put it into the basket.

Confirmands

Delphine Afdahl
Viola Afdahl
Nathan Berg
Amita Bubb
Addy Fisher
Elle Garvey
Patrick Grimm
Cooper Gundrum
Brielle Heller
Bryce Heller

Confirmands (cont.)

Soren Mannion
Lyle Potter
Miguel Potter
Clara Temple
Jubilee Vance

Graduating Seniors

Riley Murphy Jayanth (Jay) Suthan



May Birthdays!

Happy Birthday

- Av						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	28	29	30	Jean Bauman Darren Miller Samira Peterson Kent Lowry	2 Roy Wagner Frank Kotecki Fiona Sook Hayes Montague Ally Bubb	3 Jim Greer Meggan Veierstahler Annika Vondra
4 Alexander Miller	5 Neffretiti Moore	6 Calvin Curran	7 William Aeschbacher	8 Brendon Gorham	9 Vicki Abad Erin J. Boehm Katrina Wawrzyn	10 Elisabeth Henley Ryan Miller Kathryn Zhang
James Schacht Angela Huber	12 Tracy Goudreau	Sherry Lundell Sandy Swartzberg Davis King	14 David Keen John Ross Greta Eve Kurtz Miles Toll Ben Milia	15 Ella Curran Ann Joys	John Curran Danny Donovan Harvey Montague	17
18	19	20 Valerie Jablonka Linda Hentzen	21	22 Dennis Han Paul Schluter Richard Griepentrog	23 Brent Erickson William Knab	24 Guy Temple
25	26 James Dodge	Zaniyah Freeman	28 Nicholas Hatch	29	30 Thomas Daugherty Janet Hartzell Owen Collins Ben Knab	31 Wendy Spinelli Josephine Feix