



— November 2025 —

# Monthly Newsletter

*From the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay*



## CONTENTS

October Mission  
Focus - 1

Causes for  
Celebration - 2

Community  
Reflection - 4

Notes From the  
Board - 6

Looking Ahead - 7

Letter from Nell  
Nash - 8

November  
Birthdays - 9



## November Mission Focus

November is a special time to be thankful for all that we have. Here at The United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay, we have two opportunities to share our bounty with our friends at Northcott Neighborhood House. Northcott is our November Mission of the Month where monetary and other donations will go to support their purpose of providing education, employment opportunities, and basic necessities to youth, families, and senior citizens in the Milwaukee area.

In addition, the Mission Team will immediately resume ongoing food collection. Please bring non-perishable food to the collection area near the elevator. We understand that this is a big ask, but our neighbors are in need. The ongoing collection will support food pantries at MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary and at Rooted and Rising. This is especially important while federal food programs like SNAP are shut down. Items most needed are peanut butter, tuna, canned chicken, beef and salmon, Dinty Moore beef stew, mac and cheese, and Ensure.

On Sunday November 23rd we will be holding our annual Thanksgiving Express. This is our major food collection for the food pantry at Northcott Neighborhood House. Empty grocery bags will be distributed starting Sunday, November 9th. Please return them with your donated food on or before November 23rd. Thank you for any groceries you are willing to share!

## Mission on Ninth Street

Three years ago, the owners of a duplex on South 9th Street were inspired by an article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel about the difficulty of finding rental housing for refugees. After some reflection, they decided to provide their duplex to refugee families in need of a safe, yet affordable, place to call home. However, they learned the families needed to move out of their subsidized housing in just one month, which was daunting since the repairs, improvements, and cleaning were projected to take several months.

After learning of the tight timeline, a friend pulled together a group of friends and members of UMCWFB and the Mission on 9th Street was born. The volunteers donated their time and considerable energy one Saturday in December 2022 to quickly ready the duplex. They cheerfully built, installed, painted, and scrubbed, enabling the two families, including three children, to move into pristine quarters just two weeks later.

Today, the school-age children have thrived while three new American citizen babies have been born. The families have adapted to their surroundings, learned English, befriended their neighbors, and worked hard to build their future in America.

Last summer, the owners decided to sell the property and joyfully, one of the Afghan families was able to buy the duplex with the other family remaining as tenants.

In gratitude, the original property owners made a generous donation to UMCWFB. One-half of the gift went to the International Institute of Wisconsin for refugee settlement. The other half was spent on purchasing tools to equip the UMCOR flood disaster trailer working in Milwaukee.

Thank you to all who helped at the duplex and made this possible







## Tools Purchased for Flood Relief Trailer

Mission Focus donations plus a special gift were used to purchase over \$1,300 worth of tools to be used on flood damaged properties in the Milwaukee area. With rebates and the remaining balance we will be able to purchase a few more tools or supplies.

We have completed three work dates and hope to schedule one more in November.

Please contact Don at [mdonlybeck@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mdonlybeck@sbcglobal.net) if you wish to help.

## All Church Fall Clean Up Day

Members of our community gathered on Saturday, October 26th to help prepare the church grounds for the changing of the seasons. Thank you to those who participated!

### Ecclesiastes 3:1

*"To everything - turn, turn, turn.  
There is a season turn, turn, turn  
And a time to every purpose under heaven."*



Not Pictured: Neil Bubke, Suzie Van Cleave, and Mary Mueller

## 500 Student Kits Assembled

Sunday, October 26th we assembled 500 student kits for Midwest Mission. These kits may end up anywhere in the world where there is need. The October Midwest Mission newsletter listed three shipments which were recently made to Ukraine, Guatemala and Guyana. Items included:

- 5,040 Personal Dignity Kits
- 16,800 Rice and Soy Blessing Bags that will feed 100,800 people in Ukraine!
- 2,800 Student Kits
- 4,600 Hospital gowns
- Miscellaneous hygiene supplies
- Sewing machines
- Wheelchairs
- Medical supplies

The total value of the three shipments was over \$370,000. Thank you for your help assembling the kits and your support of this UMCOR connected agency.





# — Community Reflection —

## Youth Activities

October was full of energy, generosity, and connection for our youth!

The youth created “Giving Jars” to collect money to sponsor a child through World Vision. We’ve discussed how much we already have and the youth want to share a bit of their extra—or maybe give up a treat like a Starbucks drink—to help a child who doesn’t have enough food.

We also took time to simply enjoy being together. One Wednesday night, we carved pumpkins together—just for fun and to strengthen friendships.

Our Youth Outdoor Movie Night turned into an *Indoor* Movie Night, because there was too much wind for the screen! To keep the cozy fall vibe, we brought in pumpkins, spread blankets across the floor, and enjoyed a delicious caramel apple bar, popcorn, and hot apple cider. We watched *Jesus Revolution*, which sparked some great reflection. Despite the change in plans, we had a fantastic turnout and a wonderful evening together!





# Successful October Gray Guys Projects and Three Upcoming Work Days

October was another busy month for the Gray Guys starting with outside projects including closing the gap along the south side of the building and painting Pastor Gary's garage. The month ended with a number of inside projects including painting Jenny Fisher's new office, organizing the hardware and tools in the basement to open our own hardware store, fixing doors and ceilings, changing/cleaning a light in the Buxton Garden, and moving desks and shelf units.

The Gray Guys have been asked to help with the set up and tear down of the Narthex for the United Methodist Women's Holiday Fair on Saturday, November 8. We need set up help on Thursday, November 6 starting at 9am (come early for treats and fellowship at 8:30am). The Fair ends on Saturday, Nov 8 at 1:30pm, and the Gray Guys will start taking down the fair at 2pm to return the Narthex to normal for Sunday.

The regular Gray Guys date will be Tuesday, November 18 because of Thanksgiving. Please let Dick Steinmetz know you can help by contacting him at [rsheinmetz@wi.rr.com](mailto:rsheinmetz@wi.rr.com).



## Bible Day for the Kids

Our 3rd through 5th graders learned about the Bible with our Children's Leader, Kirsten, during Sunday School in October. Then they received Bibles during the 10:30 service on October 26.

# Notes From the Board

## *A Summary of the October 21 Meeting*

On Oct 21st, the Servant Leadership Board (formerly Accountable Leadership Board) met for the regular monthly meeting. In attendance were SLB members: Tom Van Cleave, Hui Zhang, Chris Kitchens, Vee Jefferson and Tom Groble. Also in attendance were Gary Holmes, Erin Norris, Laurie Jeffery, Dick Steinmetz, Jean Erickson, Beth Groble, Claudia Deede and Beth Stafford. The following is a summary of key discussions and actions:

- **Devotion and Pastor's Report:** Pastor Gary Holmes led a devotional discussion focusing on celebrating and encouraging faithful leaders. Scripture reminds us that encouragement and celebration are essential for sustaining faithful service. As leaders within UMCWFB, consider ways to celebrate and sustain the servants of the church – staff and volunteers – through words, prayer, or tangible support.
- **Narthex Advisory Committee:** Tom VC provided an update on the formation of this committee that will provide guidelines and recommendations on the final touches of our Narthex and building footprint that aligns to our identity as a welcoming, caring and inviting church. The areas of focus include: How we communicate through various media print versus digital display; our church identity through art, photos, banners; areas of dedication for displays, events and service; collections for missions; and signage & amp touchscreens for guidance.

- **Stewardship Campaign:** Gary shared the stewardship campaign theme of building a Beloved Community in the 4 “C”-able future centered around 4 “cs” (Celebrate – what God has done; Connect – with God and one another; Commit – to the journey of discipleship; Contribute – with joy and purpose). A letter from the pastor introducing our stewardship period will be sent on Oct 28th culminating in our Sunday, Nov 23rd Celebration of Gratitude with one worship service followed by lunch and festive music in Fellowship Hall.
- **Misc:** The Annual Church Conference will be held on Tuesday, Dec 9th at 7:00pm.





## HOPE FOR CREATION CLASSES

JOIN MIDWEST CONGREGATIONS  
FOR SPIRITUAL REFLECTION AND ECOLOGICAL ACTION

- Focused on cultivating spiritual leadership for a climate-changed world
- Learn to become catalysts for social and ecological healing and justice.
- Experience small group empowerment and develop broader networks of shared interests.

ATTEND WHEN YOU ARE ABLE

LEARN MORE HERE



To learn more, contact Vee Jefferson at [vernetta.jefferson@gmail.com](mailto:vernetta.jefferson@gmail.com)

## Hope For Creation Classes

For the next 15 months, we will be joining UMC congregations across the Midwest for a guided journey of theological reflection, spiritual formation, and ecological action through a series of classes entitled Hope for Creation. The classes will include weekly sessions, videos, theological readings, spiritual practices, and more.

Hope for Creation is open to all with the goal of nurturing hope in a climate-changed world. It aims to help us root ourselves in the wisdom of tradition, the goodness of the earth, and the power of working with others. For more information and to register, scan the QR code on the flyer or go [here](https://tinyurl.com/4ycacehu) (<https://tinyurl.com/4ycacehu>). For questions contact Vee Jefferson at [vernetta.jefferson@gmail.com](mailto:vernetta.jefferson@gmail.com).

## Holiday Fair

Don't miss the Holiday Fair; it's just a week away! Gather your pals for the Holiday Fair at our church, Saturday, Nov. 8, from 9:30am–1:30pm. Find the perfect gifts for those on your list and treat yourself to something special. Shoppers can browse handmade treasures, from delicate tree ornaments to colorful woven and knitted accessories. Delectables include jams and jellies, pickles and a cookie walk. New this year is the Bread of Life cafe, staged in the Walnut Room by our youth and serving fabulous pasta salads, sandwiches and beverages starting at 11:00am. The cafe is a fundraiser for our youth programs.

Cash, checks and Venmo are accepted. Holiday Fair proceeds benefit the projects and missions of United Women in Faith.



## HOLIDAY FAIR

Saturday, Nov. 8, 9:30am–1:30pm

United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay

819 East Silver Spring Drive

One-of-a-kind handmade gifts  
and delectables

Start your holiday shopping!

Jams and Jellies • Pickles • Cookie Walk • Handcrafted Items • NEW! Cafe

Cash • Checks • Venmo



BREAD OF LIFE CAFE  
11am–1:30pm • Walnut Room  
Pasta Salads • Sandwiches • Beverages  
Profits go to Youth Programs

It has come to our attention that the communication below from Nell Nash was not sent to our congregation in a timely manner. It was also noted that her original letter was not included in the September newsletter that opened in the September 2 email link as intended. We are therefore publishing Nell's original letter that she wrote in June with the additions she submitted since then to ensure our entire church family receives it. We deeply apologize for the oversights and delays in sharing Nell's letter.

The following letter was written at the end of June, 2025.

"Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

I'm sitting outside on my back porch on a beautiful Saturday afternoon. The tinkling of wind chimes, the sounds of nearby traffic and voices in the distance give me a sense of peace and calm. I am still.

My mother-in-law is dying. She's been fighting cancer for the last 6 months and she's worn out and ready to let go. She wants to go on her terms, which isn't necessarily easy for the family to accept, but at the age of 93 I believe that is her right. I pray that when my time comes I can have the grace to do the same.

Leaving the staff of this church after nearly 27 years is like a little death for me. Through the ups and downs and all arounds I have made this place my second home. I have watched people come and go, laughed and cried on a daily basis, and tried to be a faithful servant.

But as Christians we believe in life after death - in fact a more glorious life, where there is no more pain, no more suffering. While I don't know yet what God might be calling me to do in this next chapter of my life I feel certain that I will be led in the path in which I should go.

It has been my honor and privilege to work alongside you. I am grateful for the relationships - whether they were years in the making or simply a blink in time. I will always remember Pastor Dick Jones handing me a written job description for a Volunteer Coordinator position back in 1998 and saying "just think about it." (You can blame him.)

Finally, on a lighter note, some of you oldies like me may remember the hit movie Dirty Dancing from 1987 and the song that topped the charts for weeks and won the Academy award for best original song. I leave you with these words.. I've had...the time of my life....and I owe it all to You.

Thank you friends,  
Nell Nash

It's now 4 months since my mother-in-law passed and our family is trying to get used to a new normal- as am I with regard to my life in retirement. I am so very thankful for the cards and notes and financial gifts and I want you to know that I have given your generous gift back to the church for use in updating the chapel and helping to create a space that is not only for worship but for other gatherings as well. Be sure to stop in and see the transformation for yourself.

Blessings to you all.





# November

*happy birthday to...*

|      |                                                                   |       |                                                                                               |       |                                                  |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 11/1 | David Kuczynski<br>Bill Read<br>Bernice Kissinger<br>John Serrano | 11/10 | Lindsay VandenPlas<br>Karen Rinehart<br>Allianna Balmer<br>Leni Siker                         | 11/18 | Nancy Behrens                                    |
|      |                                                                   |       |                                                                                               | 11/19 | Annette Thomas<br>Michael Rinehart<br>Andy Carey |
| 11/2 | Nathan Berg<br>Roxanne Plapp<br>Alec Lindfors                     | 11/11 | Dick Steinmetz<br>Dorothy Koch<br>Sharon Garrett<br>Lizzie Lybeck-<br>Smoak<br>Christie Wrenn | 11/20 | Judy Pelton<br>Jack Korducki                     |
| 11/3 | Debbie Woods                                                      |       | Ansel Bubbs<br>Riley Murphy                                                                   | 11/21 | Vee Jefferson                                    |
| 11/4 | Sheila Hendrix                                                    |       |                                                                                               | 11/23 | Sean Gaffney<br>David Seery                      |
| 11/5 | Scott Siebert                                                     | 11/12 | Dan Linsley<br>Isaac Ashun<br>Scott Wunderlich<br>Phoebe Kotecki<br>Colin Kucsynski           | 11/24 | Savannah Potter<br>Bonnie Henderson              |
| 11/6 | C.J. Neville<br>Madeline Collins                                  |       |                                                                                               | 11/25 | Harper Bayer                                     |
| 11/7 | Ariel Geiger                                                      |       |                                                                                               | 11/28 | David Hahn                                       |
| 11/8 | Anna Bins                                                         | 11/14 | Ann Rowoldt<br>Becca Clark                                                                    | 11/29 | Jan Hahn                                         |
| 11/9 | Pat Kissinger<br>Don Lybeck<br>Shavez Hicks<br>Trent Huber        | 11/16 | Todd Stuebe<br>Nari Haig                                                                      |       |                                                  |
|      |                                                                   | 11/17 | Julie McMahon<br>Hannah Lybeck-<br>Smoak                                                      |       |                                                  |





Please Join Us To Celebrate

# *Thanksgiving*

## Worship & Brunch

**Sunday, Nov. 23**

**10am**

Join us for Thanksgiving-  
themed worship.  
We will welcome new members  
and celebrate our  
**Fall Stewardship Drive**

*Complimentary brunch  
following worship sponsored by  
the Foundation & Memorials  
Committee*







# FESTIVAL WORSHIP

FEATURING ADULT & YOUTH CHOIRS,  
HANDBELLS, AND ORCHESTRA

Sunday, Dec. 14 @ 10am  
Brunch to follow

819 E. Silver Spring Dr.

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





## 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)*