

UMCWF B

CONNECT. GROW. SERVE.



FMSC: OVER 1 MILLION MEALS PACKED

CARPENTER'S SHOP ON THE MOVE

ART OF WORSHIP

JUNE 2026

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A Reflection From The Pastor

Church Family,

One of the great blessings of church life is discovering that faith communities are always living, growing, adapting, and becoming. Over the last several months, our congregation has navigated a great deal of change with patience, flexibility, humor, and grace. For that, I simply want to say thank you.

As I reflect on this season, I keep returning to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

“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.” — Isaiah 43:19

This summer we will experience both the blessing—and yes, the inconvenience—of improving the lower level of our church building to provide much-needed updates for our Carpenter’s Shop ministry. These renovations will strengthen our ability to care for children and families for years to come. What a gift that God continues to entrust us with opportunities to serve our community in meaningful ways.

In the meantime, the childcare ministry has temporarily moved onto the first and second floors of the church. As a result, the joyful sounds of children and the faithful work of our dedicated Carpenter’s Shop staff now fill the hallways just outside my office each day. Let me tell you: there is life in this building!

I am even considering showing my unwavering support for the children by joining them for an afternoon nap. So, if you happen to find me asleep in the corner of my office, please feel free to wake me up—just make sure you provide me with a delicious snack.

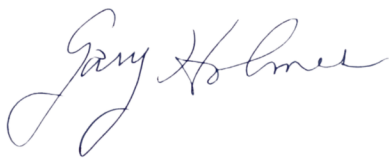
In all seriousness, these changes remind me of something important: ministry is rarely neat and tidy. The work of growing, serving, loving, and becoming Beloved Community often includes noise, movement, inconvenience, creativity, and holy disruption. Yet in the middle of all of it, God is still at work.

Sometimes the “new thing” God is doing does not arrive quietly. Sometimes it sounds like children laughing in the hallway, classrooms being rearranged, furniture being moved, schedules shifting, and people graciously adapting together for the sake of ministry and mission.

Thank you for continuing to embody flexibility, kindness, and faithfulness as we move through this season together. I truly believe the sounds of children, the movement of people, and even the temporary inconveniences are signs of a healthy and vibrant church alive with purpose.

May we continue becoming Beloved Community by connecting, growing, and serving together in the love of Christ.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Gary



Many thanks to the Gray Guys and everyone who helped make the Carpenter’s Shop move a success!



FMSC: Over 1 Million Meals Packed!



From April 30 through May 2, UMCWFB hosted its eighth Feed My Starving Children meal-packing event since beginning this mission in 2011. This year's event marked a remarkable milestone: the one-millionth meal packed through our church-sponsored meal pack events.

Over seven packing sessions, nearly 300 volunteers came together to pack 80,000 meals, enough to feed 220 children for an entire year. Additional ingredients not packed during the event will be assembled at Feed My Starving Children's permanent packing site, extending the impact of our efforts even further.

The meals packed through this ministry reach some of the world's most vulnerable communities, including refugees in Ukraine and orphans, refugees, and internally displaced people in Romania facing the hardships of war, poverty, and persecution.

This mission reflects the power of many hands working together in service to others. Through our partnership with Feed My Starving Children, thousands of children have received life-sustaining nourishment and the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive.

Thank you to every volunteer, donor, and supporter who made this event possible. Together, we continue to transform compassion into action and turn hunger into hope.



Filled with the Spirit

A Weekend of Worship, Prayer, and Renewal

Our church was blessed to host a meaningful conference centered on the work of the Holy Spirit and how we can become more open to the Spirit's movement in our lives.

We were honored to welcome a gifted team of leaders from St. Mary's London and beyond, including John Peters, Rector of St. Mary's London; Kristin Breuss, Associate Vicar at St. Mary's and daughter of Loretto and Dick Steinmetz; and Jenny Peters, Director of Children's and Family Ministries at St. Mary's. They were joined by Lynsey Berry, Rivers Sheehan, and Pat Sheehan, who traveled from out of state to share in leading the conference.

The conference focused on seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit through reflection, worship, and prayer. We were encouraged to be renewed, inspired, stretched, and empowered in their faith.

The conference began Wednesday evening with a special training attended by many members of our congregation. During this session, participants learned ways to help inspire and encourage others to listen for and recognize the leading of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives.

On Friday, church leaders had an opportunity to meet more personally with the conference team for further discussion, encouragement, and leadership development.

Then on Saturday, over 50 people gathered for an all-day conference filled with teaching, worship, testimony, reflection, and prayer. Many shared powerful stories and meaningful experiences of how God has been at work in their lives. The day created space not only for learning, but also for deep encouragement and spiritual renewal.

The team also led both worship services on Sunday. The messages, testimonies, and worship throughout the weekend left a lasting impact on many in our congregation.

We are deeply grateful to all who traveled to be with us and to everyone who participated in this special weekend together. May we continue to remain open to the Spirit's guidance and work in our lives and in our church community.





United Women in Faith

Rachel Circle - French Horn Presentation

Approximately 45 people attended a wonderful program in the sanctuary on May 20th, presented by our own Matt Annin, principal French horn player with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

Sponsored by Rachel Circle of United Women in Faith, the evening featured a fascinating look at the history and development of the French horn, along with several musical selections that showcased Matt's remarkable talent and artistry.



Spring Luncheon

Members of United Women in Faith, along with guests, gathered in May for the annual Spring Luncheon, enjoying an afternoon of food, fellowship, and fun centered around the theme "Symbols of God's Love." During the program, outgoing UWF President Lori Aeschbacher welcomed attendees and introduced Vice President Jodi Houge, who will serve as president in the coming year, with Lynn Bennett stepping into the role of vice president.

Guest speaker Carol Kuxhause shared insights from her 28 years of service with the church's Altar Guild, offering a fascinating look at the research, artistry, and craftsmanship involved in creating the paraments that adorn our worship spaces throughout the liturgical year.

The luncheon also included the presentation of United Women in Faith special recognition pins, awarded annually to individuals whose service has enriched both the church and the broader community. This year's honorees were Patty Vanden Plas, presented by Loretta Steinmetz, and Carol Kuxhause, presented by Lori Aeschbacher.



Flower Sale Blooms with Success

Thank you to everyone who supported the United Women in Faith Flower Sale this spring! Thanks to your generosity, 61 flower baskets and 31 gift vouchers were sold, raising more than \$700 for United Women in Faith mission projects.

Your support helps fund ministries and outreach efforts that make a difference in our community and beyond. We are grateful for all who participated and hope you enjoy the beauty of your blooms throughout the season.

Women Offering Worship



For 28 years, Thursday mornings have brought women of all ages together on a shared faith journey. Some have been part of Women Offering Worship since its earliest days, while others have discovered this vibrant ministry more recently.

Each gathering offers space for laughter and tears, caring and prayer, questions and insights. Friendships are formed, nurtured, and strengthened as women support one another through every season of life and faith. This warm, welcoming, and accepting community continues to draw women wherever they may be on their spiritual journey.

During its current year, Women Offering Worship welcomed 43 participants who completed 13 different studies, reading a combined 3,142 pages. The group also provided groceries, gifts, and support for a family of four children and their devoted aunt and guardian. In addition, WOW raised \$2,000 for Just One More Ministry, a local food rescue mission that creates opportunities for those who are hungry, struggling with addiction, formerly incarcerated, or often overlooked to gather, be nourished, serve others, and experience the love of God.

Women Offering Worship returns in September, and all are welcome. If you'd like to learn more, Pastor Claudia would be happy to connect you with one of this year's participants. Consider making your Thursday a WOW kind of day!

SLB May Meeting: Key Takeways & Actions

Devotion: Pastor Gary led a devotional discussion centered around the understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. As leaders in the church, we are often focused on meetings, plans, budgets, decisions and responsibilities. Yet underneath all of those things is a deeper calling: to become people through whom the Holy Spirit brings healing, encouragement and hope to others.

Women's Ministry / Small Groups: Jenny explained that women's ministry comprises United Woman in Faith and Women Offering Worship (WOW). UWIF has approximately 80 woman and is led by Jodi Hogue as President and Lynn Bennett as VP. They hold luncheons, fundraisers for missions and meet monthly around eight circles. WOW, focusing on bible and small group book studies, has 30 women in attendance on Thursday mornings and is led by Pastor Claudia, Mary Paull, Sue Daugherty, Nell Nash, Kathy Conole and Lynne Kern. Many Small Groups active in the church and various events for all ages.

Family Ministry: Kristal provided highlights across Carpenter's Shop, Tree of Life, Children's and Youth Ministries. CS – Kari Nau was named Director bringing effective leadership, communication skills and staff training. Based on church needs, the Choir Room cabinets have been moved upstairs to the second floor allowing the prior space to be converted into a much-needed classroom. Children's ministry is led by Kirsten Uphaus with a strong Sunday school focus supported by parent volunteering. Youth Ministry comprises ASP annual trip, fundraisers, service projects and the annual confirmation class.

Finance Update: Erin presented that the church's financial operating position is in good shape to meet our annual budget after 4 months. Below is an abbreviated financial position:

	Target=33%		
	YTD Apr-26	% Budget	Comments
Contributions	388,218	36%	received full year pledges
Spending	343,987	32%	on target
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$44,231	4%	

Misc: Stacy Knab's application was approved for membership.

Note: If you would like the full SLB meeting minutes, please contact Tom Van Cleve.

A Light for Peace, Hope, and Justice



For the past ten months, the lighting of the Candle of Peace, Hope and Justice has been part of our Sunday services. Members of the Church and Society Team and the Progressive Christianity class constructed the candle and have written each week's dedication prayer. The use of this candle in various United Methodist Churches in the U.S. echoes what occurred weekly in many South African Churches during apartheid.

Volunteers to read prayers at the service or to light the candle can sign up through the Weekly Connection e-newsletter at the Hospitality link. Each time the candle is lit, congregations proclaim that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never overcome the light.

John Strassburger, a member of the team and former pastor, cites the Bible, Micah 6:8 – ***"He has shown you, O mortal what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."***

May 3rd

We light the candle of peace, hope, and reconciliation for 700 Afghan allies of America and their 400 children. May the conscience of our citizens and the political leaders burn so deeply that our promise to welcome them will be kept.

May 10th

We light the candle of peace, hope and reconciliation for those citizens whose right to vote, participate in and be represented by government is being threatened or suppressed. We pray that all citizens, regardless of their race, gender, age or income, be equally valued and regarded as voices that should be heard.

May 17th

We light the candle of peace, hope and reconciliation for the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Iranian Gulf. May a diplomatic solution to the conflict be found and may the ships and sailors be allowed to safely return to their home ports.

May 31st

We light the candle of peace, hope, and reconciliation for those suffering and dying in the Ebola outbreak in the Republic of the Congo and Uganda. May compassion for the ill and needy move those with resources into acts of service.

Nurturing Healthy Hearts & Minds



This year, our Family Ministries Director, Kristal Melbye, brought a special opportunity to many of our childcare and preschool children through children's yoga classes with the Carpenter's Shop kids and two Tree of Life classes throughout the school year. Kristal, who is trained in children's yoga, taught students simple yoga poses, breathing techniques, and social-emotional skills designed to help children calm their bodies and minds, build self-awareness, and develop healthy ways to manage emotions and stress.

The classes quickly became a highlight for many students, offering moments of movement, mindfulness, relaxation, and fun. It was wonderful to watch the children grow in confidence while learning tools they can use both at school and at home.

As the school year wraps up, the yoga classes will pause for the summer, but we are excited to resume again in the fall. We are so grateful for the ways these programs continue to support the emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of our children.

Carpenter's Shop on the Move

As many of you have noticed, exciting things are happening around our church and childcare spaces! With the incredible help of the Gray Guys, Carpenter's Shop staff, and several dedicated volunteers, we successfully moved all of the daycare classrooms to the first and second floors so that work can begin on our remodel project.

This transition has required a great deal of flexibility from everyone involved. Classrooms, meetings, and activities are happening in different spaces than usual, and we are so grateful to our congregation and staff for their patience, adaptability, and positive attitudes throughout the process.

Most importantly, the children are happy and adjusting wonderfully to their temporary spaces. It has been exciting to watch everything come together and to begin imagining what these newly remodeled areas will look like when completed later this summer. We cannot wait to welcome everyone into our beautiful new spaces in late August!

Growing Hearts

Youth School Year Wrap Up



As we wrap up another wonderful year of Youth Sunday School, we are so grateful for all of the students, families, volunteers, and leaders who made this year so meaningful. It has been a joy to watch our youth grow in faith, friendships, and confidence as they learned, served, laughed, and worshiped together throughout the school year.

Even though Sunday School is taking a summer break, youth ministry activities will continue throughout the summer! We've got a great mix of fellowship, service, and fun planned, and we'd love for students to join us whenever they can. All events are open to students entering 6th grade through college.

Our summer schedule includes:

- July 9th – Lincoln Park Pool Meet Up 10:00am
- August 6th – Chinooks Game at 6:35pm
- August 9th – Serve With Us: Azura Assisted Living 2:00–3:00pm
- August 20th – Klode Beach Party 3:00–5:00pm
- August 25th – Serve With Us: Hunger Task Force 1:00pm



Youth Ministries Update

One of the biggest highlights of the summer will be our ASP Mission Trip, July 18–25. Our youth and adult leaders will spend the week serving others through home repair ministry, building relationships, and sharing Christ's love in practical ways. We appreciate your prayers for safe travels, meaningful experiences, and hearts ready to serve.

Looking towards fall, we are excited to restart Youth Sunday School, Wednesday Night Youth Group, and Praise Team in September. We are also preparing for a new year of Confirmation classes.

Confirmation is open to students entering 7th grade and older. Because confirmation is offered every other year, participants often include a mix ages, including students who are beginning the process. Through worship, service, discussion, and shared experiences, students are encouraged to explore their faith, build meaningful relationships, and begin taking ownership of their spiritual journey. Classes will meet Sundays during second service from 10:30–11:30 a.m., with additional monthly activities focused on connecting, growing, and serving together.

We are also seeking adult mentors to walk alongside our confirmation students throughout the year. Mentors provide encouragement, friendship, and guidance as students grow in faith. If you are interested in learning more about Confirmation or becoming a mentor, please contact Kristal Melbye.

The Art of Worship

Carol Kuxhause & the Altar Ministry

Week after week, the altar at UMCWFB tells a story.

Sometimes that story is expressed through vibrant flowers celebrating Easter morning. Sometimes it appears in the form of model houses recalling the neighborhood of Mister Rogers, or hands lifting the globe on World Communion Sunday. Through every season of the church year- from the anticipation of Advent to the remembrance of All Saints Day- the altar becomes a visual expression of worship, inviting the congregation to see God's story in a new way.

For many years, that creative vision has been guided by Carol Kuxhause.

As leader of the Altar Guild, Carol has designed nearly all of the paraments used in worship and thoughtfully prepares the altar each week. Her designs are rooted in scripture, prayers, music, and the themes of each service, creating meaningful connections between what is heard and what is seen.

The work requires both creativity and dedication. Behind every beautifully arranged altar are hours of planning, preparation, and often some heavy lifting. Carol's ministry is made possible in part through the friendship and support of Laurie Jeffrey, whose partnership has grown into a lasting bond through years of serving together.

Beyond creating beautiful worship spaces, Carol also helps the congregation connect more deeply with the symbols of the Christian faith. Through bulletin notes and educational materials, she shares the meaning behind many of the images that appear in worship, helping others understand the rich traditions and stories they represent.

Yet those who know Carol understand that her ministry extends far beyond the altar. Whether helping with children's musical sets, responding to an unexpected building issue, supporting a church event, or caring for someone in need, Carol approaches each opportunity with flexibility, generosity, and a servant's heart.

Much of what Carol does happens quietly, often behind the scenes. But her impact is visible throughout the life of our church- in the beauty of our worship, the strength of our ministries, and the countless ways she shares her gifts in service to God and others.

We are deeply grateful for Carol's creativity, dedication, and faithful ministry at UMCWFB.



Blessings from Above

Supporting Families Welcoming New Life

One of life's greatest joys is welcoming a new baby into the world. It is also a season filled with new routines, sleepless nights, and the many adjustments that come with caring for a growing family. As a church community, we have an opportunity to surround families with encouragement, practical support, and reminders of God's love during this special time.

We are excited to launch a new ministry called Blessings from Above, created to support families in our congregation and community as they welcome a new child. Through this ministry, we hope to offer both practical help and heartfelt encouragement during the early months of parenthood.

Support may take many forms, including meals, baked goods, gifts for the family, children's Bibles, babysitting assistance, and other acts of care. Whether it is providing a warm meal, offering a helping hand, or sharing a thoughtful gift, each gesture reminds families that they are not walking this journey alone. As we begin this ministry, we invite the congregation to become part of this effort. There are several ways to participate: volunteer to provide support, contribute financially to help fund the ministry, or nominate families who may benefit from receiving a Blessing from Above.

If you would like to learn more, volunteer, donate, or nominate a family, please contact Jenny Fisher at jfisher@umcwfb.org.

JUNE BIRTHDAY WISHES

1st - Michael Stolz

2nd - Olivia Fisher, Grady Montague

3rd - Ann Homstad

4th - Eric Bunke

5th - Nishanth (Juju) Suthan, Zay'Vion Freeman

6th - Sheila Schaetzke, Cooper Gundrum, John Strassburger

8th - Matt Annin, Stacy Knab

9th - Russell Case, Debbie Siebert, Alex Chou

12th - Zacchaeus Freeman

13th - Cassi Carey, Sina Teskey

14th - Theresa Scheu, Reagan Freewalt, Tracy Miller

15th - Georgia Lindfors, Nell Nash

16th - Carolyn Bolton

18th - Jamie Henley, Suzanne Van Cleave

19th - Larry Root, Debra Weich, Christopher Perry, Ryan Teskey

20th - James Daugherty

21st - Steven C. Brook

22nd - Madeline LaFrombois, Lucia M. Speed, Gianina Milia

23rd - Ira KindKeppel-Longden

24th - Karen Greer

25th - Carolyn Landwher

26th - Jane Crise

27th - Graham C. Dadaian

28th - Ron Jordan

29th - Linda Groose, Dave Boehm

30th - Larry O'Toole



 UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
of Whitefish Bay

*Becoming a Beloved Community by
Connecting, Growing, and Serving*

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