

UMCWFB

CONNECT. GROW. SERVE.



FAITH IN ACTION

TUTORING MINISTRY
APPALACHIAN SERVICE PROJECT

AUGUST 2026

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A Reflection From The Pastor

Church Family,

One of the greatest blessings of my summer was serving alongside our youth and adult leaders on this year's Appalachian Service Project mission trip. I returned home tired, grateful, and deeply inspired. We went to repair homes, but as always, God was also at work repairing hearts, strengthening faith, and reminding us what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ.

Throughout the week, I watched our students step outside their comfort zones, work hard, solve problems, laugh together, pray together, and build relationships with the families we served. They discovered that serving isn't simply about completing a project—it's about recognizing the dignity and worth of every person we meet. I couldn't be more proud of the way they represented Christ and our church.

The experience reminded me that discipleship is never something we simply believe; it is something we practice. Faith grows when we worship together, learn together, and serve together. I am so grateful to Kristal Melbye, our Director of Family and Children's Ministries, for her dedicated leadership to this vital ministry.

As August unfolds, summer begins to wind down. School supplies appear on store shelves, calendars start filling up, and many of us begin looking ahead to fall. Yet there is still a month of summer left—a wonderful opportunity to continue growing along your Spiritual Journey Pathway.

Our church's Spiritual Journey Pathway reminds us that following Jesus is a lifelong adventure:

- Connect by gathering for worship, sharing meals, and building relationships.
- Grow by joining a Bible study, reading Scripture, praying daily, or trying something new that deepens your faith.
- Serve by offering your gifts in ministry, participating in a mission opportunity, and extending Christ's compassion to those who are vulnerable. Jesus consistently welcomed the stranger and cared for those on the margins. As his followers, we are called to offer humanitarian support to all people—including immigrants in our community—with kindness, dignity, and practical care. Whether through acts of service, generous giving, advocacy, or simply offering friendship, we bear witness to Christ's love and help build the Beloved Community God desires.

No matter where you find yourself on the pathway, God is inviting you to take one more step. Spiritual growth rarely happens all at once. It happens through faithful, everyday decisions to say "yes" to God's invitation.

Being on the ASP trip reminded me that when we serve others, we are often the ones who are transformed. My prayer is that the witness of our youth encourages each of us to ask, What is my next faithful step? Let's make the most of these remaining weeks of summer. Whether you're connecting in worship, growing in faith, or serving your neighbors in Christ's name, every step draws us closer to God and strengthens the Beloved Community we are building together.

Grace and peace,

Grace and Peace,
Senior Pastor Gary Holmes



A Look Ahead This Fall:

Online church directory is coming with ShelbyNext and MinistryOne app!



Online Church Directory
Coming This Fall!

We are excited to announce that a new online church member directory will be available this fall!

The directory will provide a convenient and secure way to connect with other members, update your contact information, and access church information from your computer or phone.

More details will be available soon

We're hitting pause:

An update on the new UMCWFB identity project

Embarking on the journey to navigate cultural change and stay relevant as a spiritual community is important. It requires prayer, discernment for God's plan and communicating to each other. We're in the communicating phase right now. That means listening to you. Every voice should be heard, and we want everyone to embrace our vision: To build a Beloved Community that is caring, authentic and welcoming to all. A place where people can Connect with God and others. Where they can Grow in grace and community. Where they can Serve in ministry and mission.

All Church Fall Welcome Picnic Sunday Sept 13th



United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay

FALL WELCOME PICNIC

Sunday, September 13
11:30am - 1pm
Church Lawn
819 E. Silver Spring Dr.

Food, games, music, fun!

No matter what name we're known by in the future we'll continue to be a United Methodist Church, strategically aligning ourselves with our denomination's vision to "form disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously."

Over the next few months, we will be seeking opportunities to talk with the people about reasons for or against a name change. Where will this process lead? With God's help, we want to be a better Church with an identity that reflects our vision to Build a Beloved Community.

-Jeff McClellan

Meet the Norris Family



Hello from the Norris'! My name is Erin and I'm blessed to be a member of the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay since 2019. I currently serve as the Director of Operations at UMCWFB. My husband, Luke and I celebrated our 28th wedding anniversary in June and have two adult children, BJ and Lucy. I was raised Episcopalian and took a bit of a 'faith break' as a young adult. I returned in 2010 to UMCWFB with Lucy when we were invited by the Kotecki family.

I started volunteering with the morning worship tech team in 2019 and if you attend the 9:00am service, you'll typically find me in the tech booth. During the 10:30am service, I enjoy serving by helping out with youth Sunday school. Over the years, I have participated in and led small groups, worked with our youth on service projects, and volunteered in a variety of ways. These days, BJ and I are the ones you will see most often in worship and around church activities.

Lucy and I began attending UMCWFB when she was in 2nd grade (it's hard to believe that she is now 23 years old!) She was very involved in UMC when she was younger, participating in Camp Lucerne, singing on the Praise Team, and being confirmed here as well. When Lucy was in high school we both participated in the Appalachian Service Project (ASP) trip, and I look forward to serving alongside our youth again this year.

BJ began attending UMCWFB two years ago. He enjoys helping out in youth Sunday school, singing in service, baking banana bread to share in the narthex, and shopping in Lydia's Treasures. If you see him around, he will probably share with you information about his favorite animated movies and/or voice actors!

Luke, a chef by trade, just 'retired' from the Muskego School District after 13 years and is looking forward to stepping in as our new Wednesday night chef here at UMCWFB in the fall, as Chef Gretchen is unable to continue. Luke was raised with a strong Catholic faith and attends UMC on occasion.

Over the years, UMCWFB has been an important part of our family's faith journey. We are thankful for the friendships, support, and opportunities to serve (and now work) that we have found here. UMCWFB has truly become an extension of our family, and we feel blessed to be part of such a beloved community.



Grey Guys

The Preschool's Return Has Begun!



The journey of welcoming our preschool back home has officially begun, and we're so grateful to everyone who pitched in to help.

Volunteers spent the morning preparing classrooms, securing furniture and bulletin boards, replacing outlet and light switch covers, and moving supplies from Fellowship Hall back where they belong. Every helping hand made a difference.

Guided by our Preschool Leadership Team, the work was filled with teamwork, laughter, and a few memorable moments along the way. Thank you to everyone who shared their time and talents to help make this exciting new chapter possible!

Deborah Circle



Calling all readers! Deborah Circle, the reading “small group” of our church’s United Women in Faith chapter, meets on the first Tuesday of each month to discuss a book suggested and selected by members.

Meetings include a devotion, discussion guided by a member, and a delicious dessert. “Newcomers always are drawn into our spirited discussions,” says Sally Jipson, the group’s leader. “Even those who haven’t read that month’s book enjoy attending for fun and fellowship!”

For more information and to get on the email list, contact Sally Jipson at swjip@hotmail.com

September 1st: The Bird Hotel by Joyce Maynard

October 6th: Code Name: Helene by Ariel Lawhon

November 3rd: The Correspondent by Virginia Evans

December 1st: How the Penguins Saved Veronica by Hazel Prior

January 5th: Code Girls: The Untold Story of American Women by Liza Mundy

February 2nd: The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd

March 1st: Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism by Barry M. Prizant with Tom Fields-Meyer

April 6th: While You Were Out by Meg Kissinger

May 4th: Blood to Rubies by Deborah Hufford

June 1st: Ordinary Grace by William Kent Kruger

Outdoor Community Yoga Outreach

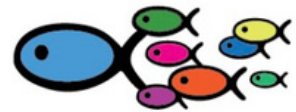
We are thrilled our Outdoor Summer Yoga at Klode Park has been a success in bringing together members from our faith community, as well as new people from the neighborhood. We have had more than a dozen people join us for yoga on a weekly basis.



Yoga is a wonderful way to center your mind, connect with your heart & soul, and move your body. We are so grateful to Kristal and Lisa for teaming up to lead our outdoor yoga sessions this summer! Outdoor Yoga continues at Klode Park overlooking the lake at 9:00am on August 4th, 11th, and 18th. Our weekly community Barre and Yoga classes will start up again after Labor Day.

North Shore School for Seniors

Registration starts Aug. 1



Beginning Aug. 1, all are welcome to check out and register for Fall 2026 North Shore School for Seniors (NSSS) classes. There is no age requirement!

Classes meet at our church on the first floor, from one to eight times and start at various times throughout the session. NSSS volunteer instructors have earned high marks from seniors for their enthusiasm as well as knowledge of their subject matter.

New courses include “Legends of the Wild West,” “MKE’s Original Socialists vs. the New Socialists,” “Political Implications of the U.S. Census,” “Tango: From Scandal to Sensation,” “Blind Obedience to Authority,” “History of Christian Thought,” “On My Hippie Trail,” “The Mysterious Mr. Shakespeare,” and “Will Administration Conduct and Court Decisions Affect the Midterms?”

Mark your calendars! The fall session FIRST TERM is Monday & Tuesday, Sept. 14 & 15 – Monday & Tuesday, Oct. 5 & 6. SECOND TERM is Monday & Tuesday, Oct. 19 & 20 – Monday & Tuesday, Nov. 9 & 10. There are no classes Oct. 12 & 13.



Class information and registration are available at nss4s.org on Aug. 1.

Catalogs also will be available at that time for pick-up at church.

NSSS is an interfaith outreach program of UMCWFB.

Appalachian Service Project

Nineteen youth and adult leaders from UMCWFB traveled to Buchanan County, Virginia, to serve with Appalachia Service Project (ASP). Throughout the week, our teams repaired homes, built relationships with homeowners, and discovered what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Each day, our crews spread out across Buchanan County to tackle a variety of projects. We installed siding and gutters, replaced rotting flooring, built a ramp and railings, and did many other repairs. The work was often physically demanding. The summer heat was intense, the days were long, and there wasn't much downtime. Yet our youth approached every challenge with enthusiasm, perseverance, and servant hearts.

One of the greatest blessings of the week was watching our students grow. Whether they had attended ASP for years or were experiencing their very first mission trip, they all eagerly learned new skills, encouraged one another, and stepped outside their comfort zones. Time and again, after finishing a task, they asked, "What else can I do?" Their willingness to serve without complaint for the whole week was inspiring. We are incredibly proud of our youth, who interacted with each other and everyone else with kindness, humility, hard work, and joyful hearts.

ASP is about more than home repairs. While we certainly make homes warmer, safer, and drier, we also build relationships. Our youth spent time listening to homeowners' stories, sharing meals and conversations, laughing together, and reminding families that they are seen, valued, and deeply loved by God. We strive to serve alongside people—not as saviors, but as fellow humans.

Our evenings were filled with opportunities to grow together as well. We spent time connecting with each other, shared devotions, explored the local community, and enjoyed some fun along the way—including a few visits to Dairy Queen. These moments strengthened friendships and created memories that will last a lifetime.

Thank you to our outstanding adult leaders who gave more than a week of their summer to serve alongside our youth. They worked tirelessly in the heat, sacrificed sleep, exercised endless patience when faced with construction challenges, and cared deeply for every student. What an incredible gift these amazing adults gave to our youth.

This trip would not have been possible without the incredible support of our church family. Thank you to everyone who prayed for us, donated financially, wrote encouraging letters, or cheered us on from home. Because of your support, homes were repaired, and lives were touched—not only the lives of the homeowners we served, but also in the hearts of every student and leader who made the journey.

We are already looking forward to next year's trip and to seeing how God continues to use our youth and adult leaders to share His love.





Youth Summer Programming

OUR SUMMER SCHEDULE INCLUDES:

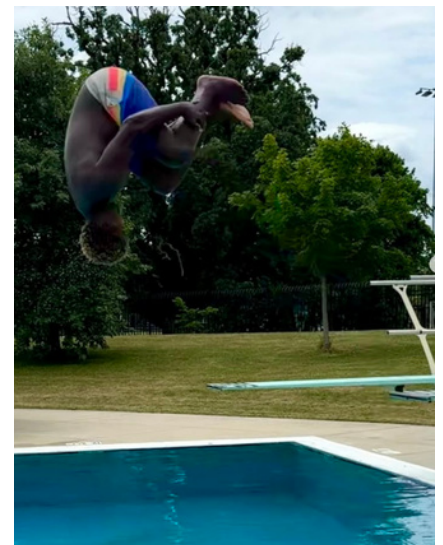
- August 6th – Chinooks Game at 6:35pm
- August 9th – Serve With Us: Azura Assisted Living 2:00–3:00pm
- August 20th – Klode Beach Party 3:00–5:00pm
- August 25th – Serve With Us: Hunger Task Force 1:00pm

All events are open to students entering 6th grade through college.



Summer Pool Party

Thanks to everyone who came out to our church family pool party at Schultz Aquatic Center on July 9! The weather was perfect, and summer fun was had by all! We love this annual summer gathering!



Tutor program celebrates 35 years of ministry

The Learn to Succeed Tutoring Program has been helping MPS students improve reading or math skills since it started in 1991. Pastor Dick Jones remembers how two recently retired teachers, Margaret Berg and Elinore Lean, came to him wanting to launch a tutor program and recruit volunteers from the church. Pastor Jones asked, "What do you need from the church and the staff?" They said, "Nothing, just permission to speak to the congregation." Then they proceeded to start the lay ministry that has continued for 35 years. It began with a committee of 5 people and 35 tutors. The program operated at both Silver Spring (renamed Marvin Pratt in 2016) and Carleton Elementary Schools (until Carleton closed in 2009). It now continues at Marvin Pratt Elementary School with twenty tutors serving last year.

Volunteer tutors from our congregation and the community spend one to two hours weekly tutoring students one-to-one in grades K4 to 5th. Each tutor is assigned to one teacher and works with 3 to 4 students that need additional help in reading or math. The program has a huge impact according to Ms. Cobb, Parent Involvement Coordinator at Marvin Pratt. "Tutors are sharing love, compassion, and conversation. They motivate the kids and help them open up and want to learn. The extra attention makes a difference."



The program would not be possible without all the volunteers willing to share their time. We hope to grow the Tutoring Program to serve even more students. Please contact Mary Mueller at mjmueller.uef@gmail.com for more information about becoming a tutor.

During the month of August, school supplies are also being collected for Marvin Pratt. See the weekly Connection for details.

Tutor Spotlight *Loretto Steinmetz*

For the past 25 years, the Tutor Program has been led by Loretto Steinmetz. After 2 years as a tutor, she took over the leadership from Elinore Lean, working closely with the schools to operate the program. She formed a close relationship with Ms. Cobb, who has high praise for her dedication. "Loretto is a jewel. She's a very kind and genuine person, who goes out of her way to get the kids supplies and truly cares about the children, staff, and tutors." Continuing on as a tutor, Steinmetz will be turning over the coordinator role to Mary Mueller for the 2026/2027 school year. "We can't thank Loretto enough for her many years of enthusiastic leadership," said Mueller.



UMCWFB Missions Team: August Focus



Our church's commitment to becoming a "Mosaic Covenant" church includes working with a local non-profit organization. This is symbolized by the red band within the mosaic. Mission Committee has scheduled a stock box packing/food sorting event with the Hunger Task Force on August 25 from 1-3 PM. It will take place at their main facility at 5000 W. Electric Ave. in West Allis.

Hunger Task Force (HTF) is one of the two food banks which supply, no charge, food to many food pantries and meal programs throughout the Milwaukee metropolitan area. The food they give out is supplied by donations from individuals, purchased from the government and from their farm in Franklin.

This is a fun event where we will be working alongside a conveyor either packing stock boxes with specific food items which will then go to seniors and other low income families or we will be sorting and boxing donated food into various categories which then goes to food pantries. Our own Rooted and Rising has been used HTF as their main supplier of stock boxes and sorted food for many years. Our church has a history of participating in food sorts a number of years ago. This is a great family event for youth and adults 16 or older. Sign ups for this event will start in early August using the link provided in the Weekly Connection. We are looking to get between 20 and 40 participants.



AUGUST BIRTHDAY WISHES

1st - Shirley Westphal

2nd - Diane Dettinger, Finley Hill

4th - Payton Goudreau

5th - Linda Laatsch-Lybeck, Anne Temple

6th - Carol Kuxhause, Joe VandenPlas

7th - Dave Paull

8th - Cody Kaiser

9th - Abbie Kaiser

10th - Loretto Steinmetz, Michelle Markuson

12th - Damina Freeman

13th - Nicole Kitchen

14th - Lara Perry

15th - John Potter, Kathleen Schluter,
Linda Korducki, Dina Bunke

17th - David Sook, Kristal Melbye

18th - Lora Miller

20th - Emily Stolz Ruenger, Tracy Ebert, Eric Milia

21st - Emily Yunk

22nd - Jeff Schaetzke, Kate Hermes

24th - Chris Dadaian, Mark Mitchell

25th - Sandy Broehm, Lori Henley

26th - David Haecker

27th - Holly Jefferson, Barbara Curran

29th - Caryn Blegen, Julie Whitney, Carol Rymer

30th - Jayanth Suthan

31st - Robin Mosleth, Erin Norris





UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
of Whitefish Bay

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

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