

SPIRE Newsletter



April 2022

alleluia!
Christ has Risen!

[View MUMC Online Calendar](#)

[View Printable Calendar \(PDF\)](#)

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Apr. 1: Kids' Night Out & Joyful Jam
Apr. 5: Lunch Bunch
Apr. 6: women's prayer meeting
Apr. 7: men's prayer breakfast
Apr. 7: Reflections Book Group
Apr. 10: Palm Sunday
Apr. 10: Children's Ministries Drive-in Movie Night
Apr. 12: Lunch Bunch
Apr. 14: Maundy Thursday
Apr. 15: Good Friday
Apr. 17: Easter Sunday
Apr. 17: Children's Ministries Easter Egg Hunt
Apr. 18-23: Family Promise host week
Apr. 22: Earth Day

WORSHIP SERMON SPOTLIGHT

Apr. 3: John 15:1-17, "I am the vine; you are the branches."
Apr. 10, Palm Sunday: Luke 19:28-40, Jesus is our King

Transforming Church Update

Last fall MUMC began a program titled "Transforming Church: A Visioning Roadmap," a three-year journey of discovery, visioning, and coaching, to design a custom roadmap that will guide us into the next phase of a vibrant ministry. This is a program for churches of various denominations designed by Leighton Ford Ministries (LFM), funded by the Lilly Foundation, and facilitated by John Holm Consulting, who is our consultant and coach throughout this process. The overarching goal is to create an alignment of our mission, resources, and passions with what LFM calls our "True North"—our clear and distinctive values that define who we are and what matters most. By doing so, we will increase the focus and clarity of our vision; create a higher level of engagement within our membership and with the community; and invigorate the ministries that reflect

Apr. 14, Maundy Thursday: John 13:1-17, Who is the somebody?
Apr. 15, Good Friday: Psalm 22:1-8 and John 19:28-30: "It is finished."
Apr. 17, Easter Sunday: John 20:1-18, He is risen!
Apr. 24: John 20:19-31 "My Lord and my God!"

WORSHIP MUSIC

Apr. 3: Praise Ensemble
Apr. 10: Penny & Dale Parkinson
Apr. 14: Lori Ludwig
Apr. 15: Chancel Choir, Moraine Chorus, and Elna Hickson
Apr. 17: Chancel Choir

our unique mission. These are characteristics of a healthy church.

MUMC's Administrative Council thinks it is important to update you on where we are in that process, what we have learned so far, and what is next. This is so important because this journey is for all of us together.

We are in Year One of the process, dedicated to Discovery and Visioning. It started with last fall's congregational survey and several internal focus groups, to get your

input about MUMC. Also, to better inform opportunities for our ministries and talents, the process is outwardly focused toward understanding local community needs. LFM and John Holm provided multiple studies that gave us insight into evolving demographic trends in our immediate area and attitudes toward organized religion. External focus groups with various Mequon community organizations were conducted to hear how others view MUMC as well as what needs they see in our community. Our survey results were distributed last fall, while the Discovery Report was made available in February. For anyone wishing to review those, please contact the office or look for hard copies in the narthex.

Year One also includes two retreats. The first was held on February 25 and 26 with John Holm and our three cohort churches (congregations with compatible denominational backgrounds going through the same process) at Christ Church United Methodist in Racine. Sixteen of us from MUMC discussed our Discovery Report, shared our thoughts on our culture, our core values, and ideas regarding our mission statement. We also walked through a MUMC "SWOT" analysis (our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). The focus of this retreat was to better understand who we are as a congregation and our community, so we can preserve our core values and mission as we make decisions in the future.

The next step is to expand the discussion from the retreat to include more members of our congregation. Mike Debbink, Katie Nowak, and Kristin Traut have volunteered to coordinate those discussions to get your input on key topics around MUMC's core values and mission. Please look for more communication on those opportunities in the near future.

After we get your input, we will attend a second retreat in September, where we will focus on Vision and Strategy. We will also have a congregational debrief on what we have learned.

Years Two and Three of the three-year process are the implementation phase as we refine and implement our roadmap, so there is much more to come. We promise to keep all informed and involved.

There are also additional resources for those who would like to learn more. Please reach out. Pastor Sue or any Administrative Council member welcome your questions or comments. You are so important as we move forward! As 1

Corinthians 12:14 says, "For the body does not consist of one member but of many." We thank each of you for participating in this transformative process and for being part of the MUMC community.

May God bless us all and give us wisdom,

The Administrative Council
Mequon United Methodist Church
March 25, 2022

From the Pastor

The late, great Maya Angelou once said, "I'm always amazed when people walk up to me and say, 'I'm a Christian.' I think, 'Already? You already got it?' I'm working at it, which means that I try to be as kind and fair and generous and respectful and courteous to every human being."

It is so true that being a Christian is always a work in progress. It is also a journey that never ends until we join the Lord in glory. One of great hymns says beautifully about this journey: Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart; I want to be more loving in my heart; I want to be more holy in my heart; I want to be like Jesus in my heart. (UM Hymnal #402)

We often sing this song during a special service of the Holy Week. Yet, we may have a season of life when our desire to be a Christian is weak, fickle, or even absent. The disciples were not strangers to this lack of desire to follow Jesus on the night before Jesus was crucified. The story of the Holy Week is a poignant and powerful reminder of God's steadfast love and faithfulness for the disciples then and for us today despite their/our lack of desire to be a follower of Christ. So I thank God for God's never-failing love and faithfulness despite our fickleness. May we have a steady and strong desire to be a Christian throughout all seasons of our lives!

In Christ,
Sue

Announcements

April Prayer Meetings

The women's monthly prayer meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, April 6 at 7:30 am, and the men's monthly prayer breakfast, scheduled for Thursday, April 7 at 7 am, will be held in person, in the parlor. All are welcome!

Pastor Sue's email is pastor@mequonumc.org. Any other email that purports to come from her is not from her and is spam. Please do not click on or open a fake email address.

Since March 1, wearing a mask indoors at MUMC has become a personal decision. Masking is fully supported and is now your personal choice. Consider your personal health situation as you come for worship, gatherings, or meetings. We will maintain spacing inside the sanctuary for now. In certain situations, such as small spaces or choirs, you may be asked to wear a mask to protect those around you, as needed.

Blood Pressure Checks Back on Schedule

The parish nurses have resumed their schedule of monthly blood pressure checks on the second Sunday of the month, in the parlor after worship.

If you love catching up with your MUMC family after Sunday worship, over a sweet treat, you'll be happy to know that Coffee Hour has returned. That also means that volunteers are needed to host Coffee Hour. You can volunteer on Signup Genius, or contact the church office, and we'll happily put you on the schedule!



Pam and Jim Layton and family want to thank everyone for the support they received following the passing of Pam's mom. Your prayers, cards, calls, emails, remembrances, attendance at her service, and most of all your hugs were all much appreciated.

The Commission on the General Conference announced on March 3, 2022, that the 2020 General Conference cannot be held in 2022 due to COVID-related and governmental policies/constraints. The General Conference is tentatively scheduled for 2024.

News From Children's Ministries

We have fun things planned all throughout the spring season. Mark your calendars!

Join us Friday, April 1, from 6–8 pm for a fun Kids' Night Out (Adults too)! In addition, we will be celebrating James Nowak's and Simon Traut's March birthdays, and Elysia Anderson's April birthday. We will have a dinner, music, games, and CAKE! If you would like to bring a dish, or RSVP, please email Gayle at childrensmin@mequonumc.org.

Joyful Jam will also return Friday, April 1—and going forward, it will be held monthly on Fridays along with the Children's Ministries Kids' Night Out events.

Drive-in Movie Night: Sunday, April 10 from 5–8 pm

Children's Ministry invites you to join us for our Drive-in Movie Night Sunday. What could be more fun than an indoor drive-in movie? Not much! Join us on Sunday, April 10, from 5 – 8 pm. We will be watching the movie *Ratatouille*. Whiskers requested it. He will be joining us as well. Enjoy a drive-in style dinner while watching it from one of our 'cars'. RSVP to childrensmin@mequonumc.org.

Easter Egg Hunt: Sunday, April 17 from 10:30–11:30 am

He is RISEN. Children's Ministries will be holding an Outdoor Easter Egg hunt immediately following Easter Sunday's church service. All are welcome. Invite your friends and family. Please RSVP to childrensmin@mequonumc.org.



Music Ministry News

Joyful Jam will return Friday, April 1, from 6–8 pm, and going forward, it will be held monthly on Fridays along with the Children's Ministries Kids' Night Out events.

Music at MUMC during Holy Week through Easter Sunday includes our own Penny and Dale Parkinson on Palm Sunday; Lori Ludwig's lovely flute on Maundy Thursday; Chancel Choir joined by Moraine Chorus with Elna Hickson featured on organ solo in Brahms' glorious choral work, "Let Nothing Ever Grieve Thee," on Good Friday; and joyous music, both traditional and contemporary, on Easter Sunday with the Chancel Choir.

Reflections Book Group

APRIL REFLECTIONS

The Reflections book group will meet on Thursday, April 7 at 7 pm in the parlor. Please note this is the *first* Thursday of the month. Our April discussion book is *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig.

Amazon.com offers this summary:

Somewhere out beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better?

In *The Midnight Library*, Matt Haig's enchanting blockbuster novel, Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place.

Reflections is a women's book group that meets monthly for discussion and fellowship. New women are always welcome. Contact Barb Henneck at bhenneck@gmail.com for more information about the group or our April meeting.

Looking ahead . . . our May book will be *The Lost Apothecary* by Sarah Penner.

Mission Outreach Ministries

Family Promise

MUMC's next host week for Family Promise is coming up soon. We provide meals to those families who are sheltering at the Chalet Motel until they can find housing. We will be hosting April 18–23.

You can help by providing either a portion of a meal or the whole meal. If you don't feel like cooking that's ok. Last month one of our members picked up chicken from a new Mequon restaurant, The Cluckery. Maybe you want to solicit a donation of meals from restaurants. Or purchase pans of prepared food from Costco (or one of the other supermarkets).

Please give some thought to how you might support this important ministry and then contact either Pam Layton or Connie Pukaite.

Midwest Mission Distribution Center

From the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church: The Wisconsin Conference Disaster Response Team and Mission Motivation Committee has been working with the Midwest Mission Distribution Center (MMDC) to make God's Love Real. The Midwest Mission Distribution Center is one of eight cooperating depots in the UMCOR network, providing disaster relief supplies, education, health, and micro-business assistance which meet basic human needs around the world and around the corner.

In conjunction with the Wisconsin Annual Conference 2022 Ingathering on June 10-13 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, United Methodist Churches will be providing financial support and collecting items for disaster relief. There will be multiple collection sites throughout Wisconsin which will be consolidated for the conference. The two permanent collection sites, Bethany United Methodist Church in Green Bay and **Mequon United Methodist Church** in Mequon will be activated.

Please find **immediately below** a list of items we will be collecting for the assembly of Home Care Kits and Personal Dignity Kits. Please note that some of the items for the kits have changed and each must conform to the description provided. Baskets will be provided for collections in May and early June. Monetary donations may be made to MUMC with "MMDC Annual Collection" noted on the memo line. Stay tuned for more information!

Home Care Kit (\$20 value)

- Two bottles of liquid household cleaner, each 16-40 ounces; no sprays
- One scrub brush, with or without a handle
- Two bottles of liquid dish soap, each 16-34 ounces
- Two bottles of liquid laundry detergent, each 32-64 ounces
- One 5-gallon round plastic bucket with resealable lid

All items must be NEW and placed in the 5-gallon bucket.

Personal Dignity Kit (\$15 value)

- One bath hand towel; no kitchen towels
- One Bath washcloth; no dishcloths
- One adult toothbrush; no multi-packs
- One bar of soap, 3-4 ounces
- One bottle of shampoo, 15-18 ounces
- One deodorant, 2-3 ounces, stick, roll on, or pump
- One 1-gallon resealable plastic bag

All items must be NEW and placed in the 1-gallon resealable bag.

From the Wisconsin UM Foundation

"Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened." Matthew 7:7

In his book *Creating Generous Congregations*, David Heetland tells a story about an 8-year-old girl who often gave more than a tithe from her nickel and dime allowance. She once gave her grandmother 38 cents in small coins "for missions."

Her grandmother then asked her, "Do you want this to go for homeless people, hospitals in Africa, or buying fish to stock ponds to feed the hungry?" Her granddaughter replied, "Just a minute," and returned shortly with 29 cents more, making a total of 67 cents to be divided three ways. She found each mission so important that her initial gift was instantly almost doubled so she could support all three. Too often, we worry that when we ask someone to support a ministry with either their time or their money, the request will be taken as pushy (at best) or offensive (at worst). And there are certainly people who would take it that way. On the other hand, I believe that not inviting people to support a ministry I'm excited about excludes them from being a part of something that may be transformational for them, and the people touched by the ministry. Finally, there are many people who are just waiting to be asked to be a part of something bigger than them. They may not be the first to raise their hands when a general invitation goes out but would love to be personally invited to be a part of what God is doing through the church.

Rev. Jason Mahnke
Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

From the Wisconsin Conference

Editor's Note: Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Cabinet of the Wisconsin Conference posted a daily, then a weekly, devotion, called a Reflection, to their website. Each Reflection is well written and thought-provoking; below are two recent postings.

Weekly Devotion for February 28, 2022, by Scott Carlson

Ash Wednesday and our Lenten Journey

Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:20-21

A man was once bothered with continual ringing in his ears, bulging eyes, and a flushed face. Over a period of three years, he went from doctor to doctor to find out what was wrong. One took out his tonsils, one his appendix, and another pulled all his teeth. He even tried the goat gland treatment in Switzerland, all to no avail. Finally, one doctor told him there was no hope. He had six months to live.

The poor fellow quit his job, sold all his belongings, and decided to live it up in the time he had left. He went to his tailor and ordered several suits and shirts. The tailor measured his neck and wrote down 16. The man corrected him. The tailor measured again: 16. But the man insisted that he'd always worn a size 15. "Well, all right," said the tailor, "but don't come back here complaining to me if you have ringing ears, bulging eyes, and a flushed face!"

The poor man in the story wandered down many roads trying to solve his medical problem. Unfortunately, his issue wasn't medical. It was from the clothes he was wearing.

This story prompted me to start thinking about the journey of faith we make. How many avenues do we travel, looking for hope, peace, and fulfillment? Yet all along Jesus is inviting us to experience a love from God that can make us whole.

I don't know about you, but I have attempted to walk down several avenues. Some of those avenues have been named "the search for success", "concern about my

reputation," "wanting to be liked", "overeating". I am sure I could think of others as well. But the bottom line is that none of these avenues has brought peace to my life. Yet what has brought peace and what is bringing a sense of wholeness is knowing that I am loved by God.

My hope and prayer is that as you look at your life and the avenues you have traveled down, that you will come to the conclusion that the road you really want to be on is the one that brings you closer to God and God's love. This week we begin the church season called Lent. Ash Wednesday is what starts this Lenten journey. It is an invitation and a beginning. The invitation is that we take time (intentional time) over these next 40 days to walk closer with God. The beginning is simply to make the commitment to take steps to help you experience God's grace in your life.

Loving God, thank you for giving us new opportunities to commit and recommit to you. Help us live into deeper relationship with you, so you can live through us to touch our world. Give us courage. Give us hope. Help our Church to be a faithful witness of your love and grace. Lead us on this Lenten journey. In the hope that Jesus offers us, Amen.

Weekly Devotion for March 21, 2022, by Barb Certa-Werner

But let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God. 1 Peter 3:4

This year I was accepted into the One Year On-line Spiritual Formation Academy sponsored by the Upper Room. My first gathering on Zoom was February 24–26, 2022. The days were filled with learning, reading, journaling, praying (communally and individually), worshiping, and being. We began and ended each day in silence.

When I first read the agenda and then listened to the invitation to enter holy silence at 9 p.m. and not breaking this until after we began worship at 9 a.m. I was intimidated and a little worried about shutting off my emails and phone; not engaging in conversation with others and using this time to intentionally quiet myself.

For those who know me, I am always thinking/doing/listening/speaking/engaging, I have 10,000 thoughts with 10,000 words. I was challenged to embrace this time as connecting to God; to slow down; to enter a quietness of surroundings and soul.

I realized that I have allowed the demands of life, including ministry, family responsibilities, and world events, to disconnect me from the peace that Jesus offers me. This can happen so gradually and easily that sometimes we do not even notice it until we have a nervous stomach often, we are quick to anger, we feel disconnected, and we may even express resentment.

As we move through this time of Lent, I extend this invitation to each of you to enter into purposeful silence, allowing God to enter the space and fill your thoughts and mind with the love of God. May we inhale God's abundant peace and exhale all that disturbs our peace of mind.

My hope is that this quote will be a springboard for prayer and silence:

"We need to find God and God cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature – trees, flowers, grass – grows in silence; see

the stars, the moon, and the sun, they move in silence...we need silence to be able to touch our souls." Mother Teresa. Amen.

Soul Food by Bishop Jung

I have been prayerful about James 1:27 and our siblings in Ukraine: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world." I know first-hand the ravages of war and the impact they have on children.

The stories of Ukrainian refugees bring the biblical story to mind. The Book of Lamentations begins with a lament for the city. "All her people groan as they search for bread" (Lamentations 1:11). The Chief Rabbi of Ukraine has asked Christian siblings to read Psalm 31 aloud. Thinking of the countless people who are fleeing the dangers of war and fleeing to safety, I struggle with the question, "how can I help them?" Justice for refugees is a central concern for biblical justice. Throughout scripture God is affirmed as a refuge for the powerless.

War should not exist on the earth, and the war that is being waged must be stopped through dialogue and diplomacy, and by every means possible through the nonviolent action of world leaders. This war launched by Russia cannot be morally justified. We are opposed to wars that kill humans and harm our collective global habitat. War is born of fear. At its root, fear makes us attack our neighbor. Violence always ripples more violence.

Christians are called to make peace and live in peace. It is God's calling to realize that peace not only within us, but also in the present world reality. The heart of God is torn as well. Russians and Ukrainians and their neighbors, too, have been put in harm's way.

As a General Board of Global Ministries partner and an episcopal colleague, I worked with Bishop Edward Khegay, bishop of the Eurasian Conference, on several occasions. We've brought in a partnership to help the Methodist Church established there in many ways. He was with us in Wisconsin. Of course, the Eurasian region is a parish that includes Ukraine and Russia, now enemies of each other, at one table. The pain and turmoil of the bishop's span of care there is beyond comprehension.

I want to be in solidarity with the many world leaders and faith leaders who oppose war. We are earnestly praying that this war will be stopped by the Prince of Peace as soon as possible. Please join me and others across the world who are praying daily for peace and our humanitarian response. May our efforts of solidarity include the welcome of refugees that is inevitable. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the humanitarian relief arm of Global Ministries, is in communication with partners in the region and actively exploring the coordination of humanitarian response in Ukraine. Please prayerfully consider supporting UMCOR's International Disaster Response efforts.

Thank you for your faithful witness.

Peace,
Hee-Soo Jung, PhD
Bishop, Wisconsin Conference

Christian Symbol of the Month

Nails—Nails symbolize Jesus' passion and suffering because they were used at his Crucifixion. They are often depicted in groups of three because two nails were used to secure Jesus' hands, and a third was used to secure his feet. Three nails are also used to identify Jesus as a member of the Holy Trinity.



One Last Thing . . .

Earth Day is April 22

"We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

—Native American proverb

Deadline for SPIRE copy: the 25th of the month prior to publication's edition. Send copy to news@mequonumc.org to be included in the monthly SPIRE or the weekly Sunday bulletins.

Disclaimer: Editor reserves the right to edit content.

SPIRE Editor: [Marilyn Meyer](#)

Calendar: [Carol Bayne](#)

Pastor: [Sue Lee](#)

Office Manager: [Carol Bayne](#)

Finance Manager: [Laurie Rausch](#)

Minister of Music: Deanna Gibeau

Organist: [Elna Hickson](#)

Director of Children's Ministries: [Gayle Meyer](#)

Sonlight YMCA Early Childhood Education Center

Director: [Sue Lyon](#)

Webmaster: [Marcia Schwager](#)

MUMC Office 262-242-4770

MUMC Office Email:

office@mequonumc.org

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 9am-1pm

/ Closed Fridays

Sunday Schedule

9:30am Worship Service

10:30am Fellowship

www.mequonumc.org

