

SPIRE Newsletter



September 2022

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CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Sep. 1: Men's Prayer Breakfast, 7 am, Parlor

Sep. 5: Labor Day; church office closed

Sep. 7: Women's Prayer Meeting, 7:30 am, Parlor

Sep. 7: Summer Growth Group, 11 am, Youth Room; 6 pm, via Zoom

Sep. 8: Reflections Book Group, 7 pm, Parlor

Sep. 11: Back-to-Church Sunday, 9:30 am, Sanctuary

Sep. 11: Rally Back to Sunday School (and Kids' Night Out), 10:30 am, church's front lawn

Sep. 13: Lunch Bunch resumes, 11 am

Sep. 22: First day of autumn

Sep. 25: 2023 Stewardship Campaign begins

Oct. 3-7: Family Promise host week

Oct. 7: Kids' Night Out, 6 pm

Oct. 9: 2023 Stewardship Campaign ends

Oct. 11, 18, and 25: All church growth group study, Stewardship of God's Creation, 11 am, MUMC

Oct. 13, 20, and 27: All church growth group study, Stewardship of God's Creation, 7 pm, via Zoom

All Church Growth Group Study Coming This Fall "Stewardship for God's Creation"

"People are seeing the impact of climate change around them in extraordinary patterns of floods and droughts, wildfires, heatwaves, and powerful storms," says John Holdren, Director of Woodwell Climate Research Center. Yet, opinions on climate change still run the gamut from "the planet is on fire" to "there is no such thing as climate change." Mequon United Methodist Church (MUMC) will host a 3-week discussion series based on science and faith in October 2022. The series is open to all people who are interested in exploring the impact of current atmospheric conditions and what the impact means for our lives now as well as for the future of our children's children.

In the Great Lakes Midwest region, huge increases in precipitation have already been recorded. How are those increases impacting our cities and rural areas now? People of faith respond to the needs of people whenever bad things happen and when need is evident. Is there anything people of faith can

WORSHIP SERMON SPOTLIGHT

Sep. 4: Identity, Matthew 3:13-17

Sep. 11: Belonging: Church, Isaiah 43:1-3a

Sep. 18: Purpose, Ephesians 2:10

Sep. 25: Stewardship 1:

Stewardship for God's creation:

Genesis 1:26 and 3:1-13

WORSHIP MUSIC

Sep. 4: Dale and Penny Parkinson

Sep. 11: Sunday School children

or should do to offset conditions that cause bad things to happen? Our discussion will begin with what we can all agree on – how climate change is affecting us – and generate positive viable solutions.

This study and discussion will be based on research by Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, an atmospheric climate scientist who believes in God, and her latest book *Saving Us: A*

Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World. She is a remarkable communicator who was named as one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People, Foreign Policy's 100 Leading Thinkers, and Fortune Magazine's World's Greatest Leaders, and in 2019 was awarded the United Nations Champions of the Earth in Science and Innovation. She received a Bachelor of Science in Physics from the University of Toronto and a Master of Science and Ph.D. in Atmospheric Science from the University of Illinois.

The series will be offered at two different times each week. The in-person sessions will be at MUMC on Tuesdays from 11 am to 12 noon, on October 11, October 18, and October 25. The Zoom sessions will be offered on Thursdays from 7 to 8 pm, on October 13, October 20, and October 27. Please join us for this learning experience and guided discussion.

Sign-up sheets will be posted outside the sanctuary. You can also call the church office to register. Please provide your email address so that we can send you some reading materials of preliminary information regarding the discussion series. If you do not have email let a member of the Education Committee know so that we can get you the information. If you are going to participate via Zoom, Pastor Sue will send you an email invitation.

Announcements

Lunch Bunch will resume its weekly meetings on Tuesday, September 13 at 11 am. As has been tradition for many years, a soup lunch will follow. The new Lunch Bunch study will be *Moses: In the Footsteps of the Reluctant Prophet* by Adam Hamilton. The study's book is available on Amazon. Lunch Bunch is open to all. Join us!

September Prayer Meetings

The men's monthly prayer breakfast is Thursday, September 1 at 7 am, and the women's monthly prayer meeting is Wednesday, September 7 at 7:30 am, both in the Parlor.

One usher is needed each week for Sunday worship. Since we are not collecting the offering during worship and are using pre-packaged communion elements, an usher has two responsibilities: before worship, to distribute the bulletin as people enter the sanctuary and, after worship, to collect the offering from the offering plate, put it in the envelope provided, and drop the envelope in the office safe.

If you are available to serve as an usher, sign up at: www.signupgenius.com or let Office Manager Carol Bayne know and she will add you to the list. Thank you in advance for your service to MUMC!

Remembering Joan Buschman

Joan Buschman passed away on Wednesday, August 17. A Celebration of Life will be held in Joan's memory at Mequon United Methodist Church on Saturday, September 24. Visitation will begin at 11 am with the service to follow at 12 noon. The family invites those attending to join them afterward in Fellowship Hall for refreshments and further sharing.

Prayers for Busch and the entire Buschman family would be appreciated during this time of grieving.

Reflections Book Group

SEPTEMBER REFLECTIONS

The Reflections Book Group resumes its monthly meetings on Thursday, September 8. We begin at 7 pm in the Parlor. Our September discussion book is *The Women's March* by Jennifer Chiaverini.

Amazon.com offers this summary:

Twenty-five-year-old Alice Paul returns to her native New Jersey after several years on the front lines of the suffrage movement in Great Britain. Nine states have already granted voting rights to women, but only a constitutional amendment will secure the vote for all. To inspire support for the campaign, Alice organizes a magnificent procession down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC, the day before the inauguration of President-elect Woodrow Wilson, a firm anti-suffragist. Joining the march is thirty-nine-year-old New Yorker Maud Malone, librarian and advocate for women's and workers' rights. Civil rights activist and journalist Ida B. Wells-Barnett resolves that women of color must also be included in the march—and the proposed amendment. On March 3, 1913, the glorious march commences, but negligent police allow vast crowds of belligerent men to block the parade route—jeering, shouting threats, assaulting the marchers—endangering not only the success of the demonstration but the women's very lives. Inspired by actual events, *The Women's March* offers a fascinating account of a crucial but little-remembered moment in American history, a turning point in the struggle for women's rights.



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 September meeting.

Looking ahead . . . our October book will be *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray.

Children's Ministries

Sunday School:

September 11 starts our school year of Sunday School. We will meet each Sunday from 9:45-10:30 am in the Youth Room to continue our faith journey through Bible stories, crafts, music, games, and more.

Get ready for a great year!

Sunday School Teachers:

We are looking for more who want to share the joy of being part of our children's growing faith by being a Sunday School teacher. It's easy. It would take one Sunday a month from 9:45-10:30 am. There is little planning. The material and supplies are provided. Join our team and make an impact on our youngest members.



Back to Church Rally:

We invite all to join us on Sunday, September 11 at 10:30 am, immediately following the church service, for our Back to Church Rally Day. There will be food, games, and more. You don't want to miss it. In order to plan, please RSVP to childrensmin@mequonumc.org.

Kids' Night Out:

Due to the start of the school year and our fabulous Sunday Rally Day, our Friday Kids Night Out will be held in September on Sunday, September 11 during our Back to Church Rally Day. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Kids' Night Out will resume on Fridays beginning Friday, October 7 from 6-8 pm.

The Finance Committee Reports

Mequon United Methodist Church 2023 Stewardship Campaign

As the apostle Paul planted churches around the world, he spoke on the subject of giving. His encouragements on giving were based on three pieces to New Testament giving: giving generously, consistently, and joyfully.

Giving Generously

As Paul encouraged the church in the city of Corinth, he shared how generously the Macedonian churches were giving. He said, "For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability" (2 Corinthians 8:3). He then followed up his encouragement by saying, "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Corinthians 9:6).

Giving Consistently

One goal of giving is to reorient the giver's heart to the things of God over the things of this world. It's a declaration that God is first in our lives, before anything else. For this declaration to be effective, one should give consistently. In Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth, he wrote, "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income" (1 Corinthians 16:2). The people of the church were encouraged to set aside an amount of money to give each week. The goal is not for this to be a new rule every church goer must follow, but a general principle to encourage consistent giving. But the manner in which we give also matters.

Giving Joyfully

If God desires a person's heart, then the heart with which a person gives matters.

Paul again wrote, "Each one must give as they have decided in their heart, not reluctantly or grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). The joyful giver understands that this earth is not everything. This is why Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Givers understand the value of investing in the kingdom of God and the work of the local church.

As you prayerfully consider your pledge to MUMC for 2023, I hope you will give generously, consistently, and, above all, joyfully! Our 2023 Stewardship Campaign will run three consecutive Sundays, starting September 25 and ending October 9. Thank you in advance for your generous, consistent, and joyful giving to MUMC.

Mike Debbink
Finance Chair

From the Wisconsin UM Foundation

A Note in the Offering—September 2022

A young child wrote this note to his pastor. "Dear minister, I'm sorry I don't give more money to the church on Sundays, but my father didn't give me a raise in my allowance. Could you give a sermon about a raise in my allowance? It would help the church get more money."

As funny as this is, many of us approach giving in this way, whether it's to the church or to any other organization that helps those in need. We'd give more if only we had a little more to give. We just need that raise and everything will be so much easier. There's only so much to go around and there's just not enough right now.

Unfortunately, this paints a false picture of God. Our world tells us over and over those resources are scarce. There's only so much to go around. And so, we can only give so much because otherwise there won't be enough left for us. We spend so much time and energy acquiring and worrying about what we don't have and often are so measured and cautious with what give, because we believe there isn't going to be enough. This is the myth of scarcity. That God hasn't given his children enough to go around. This is not the God we worship.

The truth is, we believe that the God we worship has given to us abundantly! Not only is there enough to go around, but there's also more than enough. And therefore, we give in response to the abundance with which God continually provides us.

I have heard people say that the more they have given the more God has given them. From my experience, I don't think God gives more to the generous and less to misers. I have found that the more I give the more I recognize how much God has already blessed me. It's not that God has given me more in a "quid pro quo" arrangement. In giving, I am transformed. I can see the gifts I have more clearly. I can give thanks more fully. I can give more joyously.

Thank God for the many abundances he has given to us!

Rev. Jason Mahnke
Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

From the Wisconsin Conference

South East District

Beloved Churches in the South East District,

Grace and peace to you all, as you strive to be the church of Christ in making disciples for the transformation of the world. Through our Wesleyan heritage of "The World is my Parish," we reflect this contextually in our localities through the wonderful opportunities we have been blessed with: the grace and gifts of our membership to fulfill God's purpose. Through the years, whether on special occasions such as church anniversaries, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, professions of faith, mission ventures, and more, we have lived to testify and witness God's mighty, miraculous, and mysterious acts in our ministries to his glory.

We have, in many ways, lived the experiences of our biblical heritage, whether hurriedly leaving Egypt, as commanded, to escape the angel of death into the Red Sea with the enemy behind, or miraculously making it into the desert and living on nothing but manna reluctantly with complaints. The journey to the promised land was long and challenging, as seen in trials, temptation, tribulation, tests, trauma, etc. We can relate to the Hebrews of ancient times with our own experiences in the form of joys and challenges we have encountered in our lives. But we have been strengthened at such times by these words of assurance from Paul, who questions, "What can separate us from the love of God?" Is it sickness, persecution, troubles, hardships, or even death? He also stresses the inevitability of these things but affirms that we are more than conquerors because of Christ! Then he calls on us to rejoice, and stresses rejoice again, giving thanks to God in all things, with prayer and supplication, making our request known to God.

Through these scriptures, Paul reminds us of God's faithfulness manifested through Christ who has become our hope of eternity. That has been the anchor of our faith through all these years. God's faithfulness has never ceased, nor have his mercies come to an end. Every morning we have awakened with hope for the day as the sun rises and sets in the evening. God has manifested his love for us through these mighty acts, promising providence, protection, and preservation. What a mighty God we serve!

These acts have been the hope to which we have clung to in times like this bringing us thus far by faith. Through the centuries, we have lived the faith in a wounded world filled with pain, suffering, and what have you. That is our discipleship calling to respond to a world that is crying for help. As we have responded to these, the harvest has been plenty with few labors. So, what can we do? Pray without ceasing for more labors to be sent by the master. Such has been our challenge as depicted by circumstances of COVID-19, with infections and death which have left us frustrated, fearful, and frightened. But we are reminded not to fear, for God is with us as always.

As I step into the role of the District Superintendent for the South East District, it is my fervent prayer and hope that God guides, strengthens, and sustains us to carry on his mission through the life of our churches to his glory. We are a unique district in all sense, given our attributes. Therefore, I thank you all for your ministries over the centuries, from the older churches to the newly emerging churches. To God be the glory.

My prayer and hope are for us to become a beloved community that connects, cooperates, collaborates, and contributes to the church's mission through the priority of the Conference in making disciples with Racial Justice and Radical Inclusion.

Blessings,
Rev. Ebenezer K. Insor
South East District Superintendent

Soul Food by Bishop Jung

“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.” Ephesians 4:29

Summer is for building up. Apples and pumpkins and middle school kids grow in the sun. A little rain makes bamboo look like a teenager. We are God’s partners in receiving the fruit of being built up by grace, God’s Spirit, and the people of God who grace our lives. Our mission is to build people, build leaders, build love, and build networks that depend on each other no matter where we stand, or however we may differ.

The work of Jesus was salvific. Jesus saves. The word we render, ‘salvation,’ in scripture means deliverance, rescue, wholeness, healing that is present and eternal, and all of it arrives as a gift. Ephesians 2:8 says this is not of our own doing but a gift from God. In the psalms our healing is not complete until it is lived in community or evidenced *‘in the congregation’* (Psalm 111:1).

We are here to receive wholeness and live God’s Shalom. We are sent as followers of Jesus with healing on our lips and with the Shalom that is the work of our hands.

Again, Ephesians holds up a mirror in 4:29: *“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.”*

There is need not to destroy. There is need not to criticize. There is need to build up. There is need to respect. There is need to listen and offer people the sacrament of being heard. There is need to heal with our words. There is need to comfort the wounded and grieving.

Jesus says we are a city on a hill. Isaiah calls us a light to the nations. People see how close our behavior matches our words.

The noble way of speaking kindness to one another, exalting one another in the Lord, and putting first one another's callings should be our priority and daily practice.

We are a children of light, belonging to the light of the world. One cannot follow darkness very far. I pray God will help us practice the light again in our wishes, prayers, praise, and worship.

I pray we put aside the voices of separation and the practice of erecting walls in the name of Jesus and come home to being people of Jesus who love one another, build up together, and exalt the glory of God. Difference teaches us of the diversity

of God. May we pray:

Lord, give us a heart as vast as your universe. Because the church is yours, make us all humble and passionate servants who love you first. Make us your healing ark capable of saving the world, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Peace,
Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, PhD.

Christian Symbol of the Month

River—In the Bible, rivers (and other bodies of water) often represent deliverance, salvation, freedom, and cleansing. The Jordan River is especially prominent. The Israelites crossed it to enter the Promised Land after God delivered them from slavery, and John baptized Jesus (and many other people) there. The image of crossing the Jordan River has long been a metaphor for death, crossing from earthly to heavenly life, from worldly struggles to the bliss of God's kingdom, from physical ailments to the wholeness of a resurrection body.



One Last Thing . . .

CH__CH
What's missing?
UR (you are)

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.

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9:30am Worship Service
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