

SPIRE Newsletter



May 2021



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CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

May 5: Women's prayer meeting via Zoom
May 6: Men's prayer meeting via Zoom
May 6: National Day of Prayer
May 13: Bel Canto Senior Singers recordings (parlor)
May 13: Reflections Book Group
May 31: Memorial Day, church office closed
Jun. 2: Women's prayer meeting via Zoom
Jun. 3: Men's prayer meeting via Zoom

WORSHIP SERMON SPOTLIGHT

May 2: Youth Sunday
May 9: Matthew 15:21-28, Woman, You Have Great Faith!
Mother's Day
May 16: Philippians 4:4-9, Put it Into Practice

Family Promise Wins Grant to Build Emergency Shelter

One of MUMC's Outreach Ministries, Family Promise of Ozaukee County, will be transitioning to a new model over the next year. Not long ago Family Promise was asked to submit a grant proposal to secure funding to develop an emergency shelter that would house families in need. The grant for \$1,830,500 has been awarded. Family Promise in partnership with Ozaukee County is now moving forward full steam to put the dream of a permanent shelter into reality.

The role of MUMC and other support churches will be changing but we will definitely still be needed. One of the things many of our previous guests have commented

May 23: Acts 2:1-21, The Movement for God; Pentecost
May 30: Acts 3:1-10, Expect Great Things from God

WORSHIP MUSIC

May 2: Enjoy our Youth Service
May 9: Children and Moms, and the Traut Family
May 16: Women's Choir
May 23: Children
May 30: Ellen Shuler and Rick and Michelle Hynson

that they miss is the interaction between Family Promise guests and volunteers. Knowing that people cared enough to prepare a warm meal has been a real boost to many. But, actually, being able to sit down and chat and receive encouragement from church volunteers has been the missing component. We will be doing that, but in the new shelter as opposed to Fellowship Hall. And no more sleeping on cots!

The new shelter will serve households of all types: single women, single men, couples, and families. The building will have eight shelter units offering private baths, living, and sleeping space. It will be open and staffed 24/7 serving no more than 20 individuals per day. The task force is working to secure a location that they have already identified and is starting to work on actual building plans. The location is near the Justice Center so it is anticipated there will not be any objections from neighbors.

The need for shelter has never been greater in Ozaukee County, and this grant is a true blessing for the community. With the guidance of the Emergency Shelter Taskforce, Family Promise looks forward to opening the new shelter in 2022.

From the Pastor

Comfort, strength, and hope are some things we all need from God, especially as we are facing many challenges today. As followers of Jesus Christ, we're not immune to grief, depression, or despair. In fact, at times life can be even more challenging for a Christian because of the intense trials and brokenness we encounter on the path of following Jesus.

During my ministry, I have walked through difficult times with many people of the congregations that I served. Sometimes, I have wondered whether they would be able to make it through those times that were more than they could handle. But time and time again, I have witnessed that by the grace of God, people find strength to survive the worst times as they experience God and His presence with them in the midst of the darkest valley. I have seen that they come out of the darkest valley with a radiant faith and an unshakable trust and hope in God by the help from God and from the people God brought into their lives.

So when we walk through difficulty and adversity, may we turn to God who is the source of comfort, strength, and hope. May the Lord open our eyes to see those around us who need His comfort, strength, and hope, and may we become instruments to deliver God's gift to them in Jesus' name.

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging. (Psalm 46:1-3)

Audio Video Tech Wanted

MUMC is looking for an individual to lead our tech team (volunteers) in preparing and presenting audio and visual content for church services that are conducted in-person and livestreamed. Approximate total hours per week is 12 to 16 hours. This role is non-exempt, paid hourly.

The individual will be responsible for preparing content for the presentation of church services for in-person and virtual services, for operating the audio and visual equipment during services, and managing the livestream event. Creating announcement/presentation video loops to be displayed on church monitors and preparing content and videos for the MUMC website would also be part of the job description.

The individual should have experience with vMix software (or equivalent), the platform for the church's livestreaming broadcasts, and experience with editing and presentation software used in our current creation process (for example: PowerPoint, Photoshop, Adobe Premiere, or Final Cut Pro). The AV tech needs to have the ability to troubleshoot technical issues on the fly. This person needs great interpersonal skills to enable collaboration with church members and volunteers in preparing for services, as well as a high level of attention to detail and consistency in process and content.

Full job description and list of duties can be found on the MUMC website.

Mother's Day Slide Show

Mother's Day is May 9. Let's share photos of and wisdom from our mothers. As we approach the month of May, our thoughts turn towards Mother's Day. But you don't have to be a mother or have a child to have given or received motherly love. There are many women in our lives who have given us the love of a mother—sisters, aunts, grandmothers, dear friends. We've also said it many times in our lives: "My mother always used to say..." To honor our mothers—and the mother figures in our lives—on Mother's Day, we will be featuring their pearls of wisdom along with favorite photos of them in a slide show during our service.

Please send your wise quote and photo of your mother or mother figure to Carol Bayne at office@mequonumc.org or text them to her cell phone at 414-491-1430. The deadline for submitting quotes/photos is **Thursday, May 6**. Please include your mother's name and your name as well.

Reflections Book Group

MAY REFLECTIONS

In lieu of the usual May Dinner Out, the Reflections Book Group will be meeting on the Henneck patio, 4103 W. Le Grande Blvd., Mequon, for its first in-person get-together since the start of the pandemic. It will be exciting to see each other in person, and we will be following social distancing guidelines to ensure everyone's safety will be followed. We have also scheduled a Zoom meeting as back-up in the

event of inclement weather, or for those who may prefer to attend virtually.

We will meet on Thursday, May 13 at 7 pm. Our discussion book will be *Meet Me at the Museum* by Anne Youngson. Here is a brief summary of the book from Amazon: In Denmark, Professor Anders Larsen, an urbane man of facts, has lost his wife and his hopes for the future. On an isolated English farm, Tina Hopgood is trapped in a life she doesn't remember choosing. Both believe their love stories are over.

Brought together by a shared fascination with the Tollund Man, subject of Seamus Heaney's famous poem, they begin writing letters to one another. And from their vastly different worlds, they find they have more in common than they could have imagined. As they open up to one another about their lives, an unexpected friendship blooms. But then Tina's letters stop coming, and Anders is thrown into despair. How far are they willing to go to write a new story for themselves?

Reflections is a women's book group that meets monthly from September through May for discussion and fellowship. New women are always welcome.

Contact Barb Henneck at bhenneck@wi.rr.com to RSVP for the May meeting, to request a Zoom invitation, or for more information about the women's book group.

Looking ahead . . . For a special meeting in July, the discussion book will be *The Vanishing Act* by Brit Bennett.

The Children's Ministry is Treasured and Growing

Treasured!

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is Coming in August! Hop into the best week of the summer! Vacation Bible School is set for Monday, August 2 – Friday, August 6. We will start each day at 9 am and end at noon. We have an exciting Aztec theme, titled "Treasured." We will be exploring how we are all priceless to God. Each day will be filled with songs, games, Bible lessons, and crafts. We are planning on in-person VBS, while keeping our eyes on the protocol for COVID-19 and being ready to flex as needed.

If you want to have an uplifting day or days spreading the joy, the excitement, and the love of God to young children, please join us—there are many opportunities to help! Invite your neighbors, relatives, and anyone interested in learning that they are priceless to God. For more information, please email Gayle Meyer at childrensmin@mequonumc.org or call/text 414-840-2141.

Growing!

On Saturday, April 10 the MUMC children joined, via Zoom, the Town and Country Garden Club thanks to the invitation from Katie Jackson. We learned what makes up soil and how to make a beautiful flower arrangement. We also learned how to plant, grow, and nurture seeds whether garden seeds or our seeds of faith. A great time was had by all!

The Children's Ministry continues learning about planting seeds of faith and seeds of vegetables. We will have a small plot this year in the Community Garden dedicated to the children. We will begin planting seeds indoors the first week of

May. If anyone has a small greenhouse or planting items that we could borrow, it would be greatly appreciated. Contact Gayle Meyer per above.

Announcements

The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Outreach Giving Fund in lieu of the in-person auction. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the committee raised \$13,000! MUMC Mission Outreach supports several internal ministries, from Family Promise to Youth Mission Trips, as well as thoughtfully chosen external non-profit groups that provide basic needs such as shelter, food, and clothing. This financial support complements the time and talent offered by many MUMC volunteers. In the months to come, we will share a little bit about each charity and the reasons why we chose them. Thank you!

The Monthly Youth Yodel is back! The Youth Ministry is welcoming all high school age and college age youth to attend the mission trip this year! If you are interested or know someone who is, reach out to Patrick and Jenna at mequonumcyouth@gmail.com. The trip is to Chattanooga, Tennessee. The youth group will leave July 3 and return home July 10. Let Patrick and Jenna know if you have any questions!!

Karen Huffman reports that Wednesday, April 28 was MUMC's tenth and last COVID-19 vaccination clinic unless and until demand resumes. We have facilitated the delivery of 843 shots. The remaining 27 shots from our April clinics and first and second shots for the 40 high school students from University School of Milwaukee will be delivered at the Welltopia pharmacy.

Join New Lunch Bunch Study on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. We long to belong. We crave unity. We want to be loved and accepted by others. Paul's letter to the Ephesians is about uniting all things in Christ. Here we learn how to break down what separates us from God, one ethnic group from another, husband from wife, parent from child, employer from employee. These studies provide a vision of the new society God has planned in his church. Join the Lunch Bunch, on Zoom, Tuesdays at 11 am, beginning April 27, to explore this engaging work by John Stott. The book, *Ephesians: Building a Community in Christ*, is available on Amazon. Just let Pastor Sue know you're interested in the study, and she'll send you a Zoom invitation.

Michelle Hynson reminds us that singing in choirs is so good for the soul! When she put out the call for women to sing in the Women's Choir recordings for May, she had a record number of "yesses" so there will be 24 singers enhancing our worship service on May 16! Thank you singers!

Sign Up Now to Provide Altar Flowers! As we return to in-person worship in the sanctuary, we welcome the beauty of fresh flowers to adorn the altar each week. If you would like to commemorate a special occasion or remember a loved one, please consider providing the altar flowers for any Sunday of your choosing. A new 2021 Flower Calendar is available outside the church office (across from the elevator) for members to sign up. You are also welcome to call the church office to reserve a date.

Community Garden Update

Jim Layton, our Community Garden coordinator, is still accepting applications if you are interested in gardening in MUMC's community garden this year. Please submit a registration form which is available on the community garden link on the MUMC website, or you can obtain one in the church office. The cost is \$20 per plot for the season.

Jim also reports that May is a tough month for us gardeners. We want to get going but if we plant too early and the weather does not cooperate we get to start all over in June! That's why it's called gardening. Currently the average temperature of our garden soil is 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Here's a guide from the University of Wisconsin Extension for gardening in May in our area:

Weeks 1-2: Start seeds indoors for vine plants. Sow them in individual peat pots as they do not do well if their roots are disturbed in transplanting. Plant beets, carrots, chard, lettuce, turnips, radishes, spinach, leeks, onion sets and plants, peas, and potatoes outdoors.

Weeks 3-4: If soil temperatures are warm enough (65-70 degrees Fahrenheit), plant beans, cucumbers, and melons. The warm soil is needed for proper germination. If the soil is too cold, the seeds will rot. To determine the temperature of the soil, use a thermometer specifically made for soil, or something like a meat or food thermometer.

Ten Simple Ways to Keep Your Relationship Strong and Healthy with Jesus

Marcia Schwager preached on "Low Sunday," April 11, the Sunday after Easter. The following is the list she presented during her sermon:

1. Greet one another when you get home. Sometime during your day, say "hello" to Jesus. The first step to any relationship is simply acknowledging that it does indeed exist.
2. Schedule a weekly check-in. Go to church every Sunday.
3. Don't forget to set aside time just for you and Jesus.
4. Spend time together without technology. Maybe this is a time of prayer each night before bed, or maybe it's during your daily walks when you choose to get closer to Jesus. Set aside time where you're giving your undivided attention to Jesus. No distractions.
5. Share your daily highs and lows. If you can't share your joys and concerns with Jesus, who can you share them with?
6. Find something you appreciate about Jesus every day. Maybe it's the way Jesus was able to forgive, maybe it was the power of his convictions.
7. Look each other in the eyes. This is all about trust. Can you honestly look Jesus in the eyes and say "I trust what you are telling me Lord Jesus?"
8. Tell Jesus often that you love him. We often think of the unconditional love that Jesus pours onto us, but in a true relationship, that love should flow both ways.
9. Small acts of kindness go a long way. If you show an act of kindness to your neighbor, it's also a demonstration of your love for Jesus and his teachings. It's living out the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
10. Surprise Jesus. This is more about YOU stepping outside of your comfort zone and growing as a Christian than truly trying to surprise Jesus. Do something that

surprises YOU, something you never thought you would do. You'll surprise yourself, even if you don't really surprise Jesus.

This is our 50-day Eastertide program of "10 Simple Ways to Keep Your Relationship Strong and Healthy with Jesus."

From the Wisconsin UM Foundation

Change: Nothing Stays the Same May 2021

"In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see." "In the Bulb there is a Flower," Natalie Sleeth, UMH # 707

There is nothing like a crisis to help us to reset priorities. With COVID-19 we have witnessed job layoffs, deaths, social and economic upheavals, and health emergencies. Despite our natural resistance to change, we are learning new ways to live. On account of COVID-19, what personal priorities have you reset? Toilet paper. Seriously. Will we ever take lowly "TP" for granted again? Toilet paper is just one of the countless everyday blessings that the pain of COVID-19 has taught us to savor – along with worshiping beside loved ones, going to work, getting paid, shopping, going to the movies, and on and on. (What's on your list?) We are not just individuals; we are brothers and sisters in Christ. As a follower of Jesus, what priorities have you rearranged? How will the Holy Spirit guide us to a "new normal" of holy living as both disciples and community that will be different—and better—than what we have known? May the "new normal" find us better stewards of our lives -- less greedy, less self-focused, less preoccupied with silly things, and more centered in Christ, more loving to our neighbor, more generous, more hopeful, and more tolerant.

Rev. Krystal Goodger
Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

From the Wisconsin Conference

Editor's note: Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Cabinet in our Wisconsin Conference has posted daily devotions, called Reflections, that are worthwhile reading. Each one is well written; many, like the two below, are exceptionally so.

Reflection for April 25, 2021 by Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. (1 John 4:13-16)

Christian disciples unite! It is time for those of us who follow Jesus to proclaim loud and clear, "God is love." In the face of violent protest and acts of oppression, we need to witness to the reality that God is love. For those on the margins, lacking access to adequate food, clean water, warm clothing, decent housing, and basic healthcare, it is time to demonstrate that God is love. For the differently abled and

physically limited, for those suffering mental and cognitive deficiencies, for those who have lost hope and a will to live, it is time for us to make real that God is love. Love is much more than a passive feeling of affection but a deep motivation and call to action. Active love serves the needs of others. Active love makes sacrifices. Active love creates and builds and strengthens. Active love sweats and strains and stretches. Active love gets up and moves where the opportunity is greatest. Love is a verb, not just a noun.

Love is our witness. Where we encounter hatred, we offer love. Where we view violence, we demand love. Where we see injustice, racism, sexism, classism, and any other divisive -ism, we stand for love. We do not allow the spirit of destruction to prevail over God's grand gift of love.

We struggle with the burden of thirteen months of pandemic. We are stunned and heartbroken by multiple incidents of racist violence and tragic murder. We see human rights violations at home and around the world, abuse of immigrant people, government coups and attacks on democracy. We watch helplessly as floods, fires, earthquakes, and ice storms do great harm. There is much that we cannot do in the face of such overwhelming situations, but there is one thing we can ALWAYS do – love.

My hope and prayer is that we – knit together as the incarnate body of Christ – will be motivated by love in all things, in all ways. There is no greater force at our disposal that the world needs more. It is imperative that we take the power and authority we have been given to love unconditionally, for when we love freely, abundantly, and well, we are offering God to the world.

Prayer: God, you are love. We are your children, the children of love. Love is in our DNA; love is our identity. We are yours, Lord, so we are love. Help us never forget that we are love in the world, and let us never ignore or disregard the opportunity we have to share your love with others. Amen.

Reflection from April 26, 2021 by Forrest Wells

The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Jesus. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4:17-21

I came across a letter from my dad who encouraged me with these words, "I pray you will rejoice in the Lord this day, 'there is not enough darkness in all the world to put out the light of one candle.'" In this season after Easter, I give thanks for the light of Jesus that could not be snuffed out even by religious and political rejection, torture, and death. The resurrection and the distribution of the Holy Spirit are testimony that God is still fulfilling the Isaiah prophecy through the followers of Christ. We are called to reflect Christ's presence and light as we live out a proclamation of God's Good News.

Charles Tindley reframed this gospel gift from God as offering "hope to the hopeless, forgiveness to the guilty, help for the weak, friendship for the friendless,

peace for the troubled soul and home for the homeless.” I certainly yearn for all these gifts and promises of God, don’t you?

We are certainly in the midst of a time of upheaval and unrest in our world. We can name intense personal suffering, grief, disappointment and struggle of our family, congregation members, friends and even ourselves. We can list the societal and denominational unrest that envelops us that can easily lead to our despair. Yet, may we remember even more that “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” I love Corrie Ten Boom whose family helped many Jews escape from the Nazis during World War II. Reflecting Christ during that horrific time took courageous faith. The Ten Booms affirm, “There is no darkness that Satan can create that can shut the love of God out for you and me. No pit is so deep that God is not deeper still.”

It is reported that the final words before John Wesley’s death were, “The best of all, God is with us.” My friends, God is with us! Let us receive that Good News! Then, may we ponder how we can reflect God’s grace to others as we live our lives this day.

Let us pray in these words of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Amen.

Soul Food by Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

The Anti- and the Pro-

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed, revealed with him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4, with an invitation to read Colossians 3:1-17, NRSV.

I note a trend in our culture that is troubling to me. It troubles me because it feels to me incomplete and negative. This trend is to be “against” things. We are fighting against prejudice. We are fighting against corruptions. We are anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-immigrant, anti-establishment, anti-virus, anti-imperialist, and dozens, if not hundreds, of other antis-. Republicans are against Democrats; liberals are against conservatives. We too often define ourselves by what we oppose. Now I am not saying that it is not important to take a stand against evil or vices, but “being against” is not the same thing as “being for.”

The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church launched a “Dismantling Racism” priority initiative. I am in full support of this work and am part of the Task Force on the Council of Bishops that is leading this initiative. It is very easy to define the work of this group—we oppose the thoughts, actions, speech, systems, and institutions that preference one people over others, especially people of color. We want to tear down the policies and programs that have privileged one group over others. We want to destroy the prejudicial mindsets that lead to violence, aggression, condescension, segregation, and colonialization. We wish to remove the influences and attitudes that undermine the self-esteem, pride of identity, and deride the precious benefits of cultural diversity. All of this is important work. But to what end?

As racism is destroyed, what rises to take its place? As we tear down, what do we build? As we deconstruct, what do we create? Our vision cannot simply be the elimination of the negative (do no harm), but must cast an image of something new and better and beautiful (do all the good we can). For me, this vision and image is shaped by the theological framing of Beloved Community. I capitalize the words on purpose because I believe they are a discernment of the divine intention of God. As Christian disciples I believe that our energy and effort should be aligned toward a return to Eden – a place for all people to live in peace and harmony, dignity and respect.

I am anti-racist, but more importantly I am pro-Asian and pro-black and pro-African and pro-Hmong and pro-Mexican and pro-Korean and pro-Central American and... You can expand my list to include any and all people – all the children of God in God's creation. I am anti-racism because I am pro-inclusion, pro-compassion, pro-peace, pro-mercy, and pro-justice. I am anti-oppression because I am pro-freedom, pro-possibility, pro-opportunity, pro-abundance, and pro-kindness. I am anti-evil because I am pro-good, and pro-wonderful, and pro-love.

Essentially, I am trying to “set my mind on the things above.” It is all too easy to focus on what is wrong, dissatisfying, problematic, and destructive. I need reminders and inspiration to shift my thinking from problems to solutions, from illness to healing, from broken to fixed, from harm to good. But our God is always calling us to a Promised Land, not merely out of Egypt. It is both/and, never either/or.

Of course, we must begin somewhere, and there is a lot of work to do to clear the ground of rubble and debris and devastation to make room for creation and building and restoration. But let us always remember we are moving toward a positive–Beloved Community–and away from a negative–an unjust, often hateful, and broken world. We are a people who reflect the glory of the Lord. Let us shine brightly with the world God longs to create in us, and not just the world we wish to leave behind. Praises be to God!

Christian Symbol of the Month

Butterfly

The butterfly symbolizes resurrection, Easter, and the new life we have in Christ Jesus. As a caterpillar disappears into a chrysalis, so Jesus' dead body was hidden in a tomb. The emergence of the butterfly, rising into the sky in its beautiful new body, reminds us of Christ's resurrection—and ours.



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