

SPIRE Newsletter



March 2021

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CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

- Mar. 3 – Women's prayer group via Zoom, 7:30 am
- Mar. 4 – Men's prayer group via Zoom, 7 am
- Mar. 7: In-person worship resumes; Communion Sunday; Third Sunday of Lent
- Mar. 11 – Reflections book group via Zoom, 7 pm
- Mar. 14 – Fourth Sunday of Lent
- Mar. 21 – Fifth Sunday of Lent
- Mar. 28 – Palm Sunday service
- Apr. 1 – Maundy Thursday service, 7 pm
- Apr. 2 – Good Friday service, 7 pm
- Apr. 4 – Easter Sunday service

WORSHIP SERMON SPOTLIGHT

March Sermon Series: "Stepping Out in Faith"

- Mar. 7 – Numbers 13:28 - 14:11, To enter the promised land
- Mar. 14 – Matthew 14:22-23, If you want to walk on water
- Mar. 21 – 2 Chronicles 20:1-26, A breakthrough prayer
- Mar. 28 – Palm Sunday, Mark 11:1-11, The triumphal entry

WORSHIP MUSIC

- Mar. 7 – Marcia Schwager
- Mar. 14 – Dale & Penny Parkinson
- Mar. 21 – Kaet Sisney
- Mar. 28 – Sanctuary Choir

In-person Worship Resumes March 7!

MUMC's Health-Administration Team has determined that it is now safe to allow in-person worship in conjunction with livestreaming beginning **March 7**, with the following guidelines:

The number of people that will be allowed in the sanctuary at any one time will be limited to 25%-30% of capacity (25 people).

If you wish to attend worship in person, you'll need to reserve your space online by 5 pm on Saturday. MUMC has created a reservation system on the Sign Up Genius website, which reflects all reservations and the number of seats available, noting when reservations are closed. **Watch your email for details on using Sign Up Genius.** Individuals without internet may call the office or Pastor Sue to reserve their space, and they will be added to the Sign Up Genius reservation list.

Persons with reservations must put on a face mask before entering the church, review the standard COVID-19 health questions as they enter (questions are posted in the lobby), and have their temperature checked upon entering.

Worshippers should proceed from the lobby, without stopping to visit, and go directly to empty numbered seats closest to the front of the sanctuary, filling the sanctuary from front to back. At the end of worship, worshippers will be reminded to exit the sanctuary from the back rows first, maintaining the 6-foot distance required, and proceeding to exit the church without stopping to visit inside. You are welcome to visit outside in the fresh air!

From the Pastor

I have a few favorite movies that I have watched several times over the years. Each time, I always notice something new. I think to myself, "Wow, how could I miss that scene or line?" But I did. That is one of the reasons I watch these movies over and over again.

I think that this is also true when we read stories from the Bible. One of the most famous biblical stories is when Peter got out of the boat and later sank. So, we were told, "Fix your eyes on Jesus, not the storm. Don't fail like Peter." But actually, Peter walked on water before he sank. That part we seldom talk about, and even miss. Peter walked on water. What an exhilarating experience that must have been!

So did Peter fail? John Ortberg said in his book, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*:

"In a way he did. But I think there were eleven bigger failures sitting in the boat. They failed quietly. They failed privately. Their failure went unnoticed, unobserved, uncriticized. Only Peter knew the shame of public failure. But only Peter knew the glory of walking on water. He alone knew what it was to attempt to do what he was not capable of doing on his own, then feeling the euphoria of being empowered by God to actually do it. I think Peter carried that joyous moment with him to his grave. And only Peter knew that glory of being lifted up by Jesus in a moment of desperate need. Peter had a shared moment, a shared connection, a shared trust in Jesus that none of the others had."

The MUMC Ministry Plan (see directly below) is a tool to encourage and help us get out of the "boat" to walk on water with Jesus and reach out to those who don't know the Lord yet. As we implement those plans in our lives and our church, we may feel that we are getting out of the boat. But believers, let us step out in faith so that we, MUMC, may experience and know the glory of walking on water with Jesus. May it be our wonderful story to tell to many generations to come in our church history!

In Christ,
Sue Lee

MUMC Ministry Plan

Part One: MUMC Members strive to practice the five areas: The MUMC Membership Covenant, "As members of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness?" (Baptismal Covenant, UMH page 38, paragraph 15). The MUMC Membership Covenant states goals that we strive to practice each area, and following concrete plans will help MUMC members to grow in faith as a part of the discipleship process.

Area: Prayers

Team to lead: Breakthrough Prayer Team

Action plans: a) Providing prayers with specific prayer themes; b) Providing daily devotion programs (for e.g.: 40-day Upper Room Devotion during Lent)

Goals: Daily Devotion

Area: Presence

Team to lead: Education Team

Action plans: a) Offering growth group studies; b) Training and equipping growth group leaders

Goals: a) Weekly Worship; b) Becoming a Church of Growth Groups

Area: Gifts

Team to lead: Stewardship Team

Action plans: a) Annual Stewardship Campaign; b) Providing programs sponsored by the WI Foundation

Goals: Monthly Service

Area: Service

Team to lead: Outreach Team

Action plans: Service opportunities the team provides

Goals: Honoring God with Tithes

Area: Witness

Team to lead: Marketing Team: Website, Facebook & Others; Witness system (to be formed)

Action plans: Providing programs to equip MUMC members to share their personal witness and invite those who need to know Jesus Christ

Goals: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."
(1 Peter 3:15)

Part Two: MUMC provides contemporary worship: A contemporary worship task force will be formed. The team will establish a plan to offer contemporary worship that would attract 40s and younger, church shoppers, seekers, and new believers, and re-reach out to current members.

Children's Ministries

Children's Ministry needs your help. We are going to work on "growing our faith" by growing plants. We are looking for clean containers that a rotisserie chicken comes in. We need quite a few. If you have any, please drop them off in the Children's Ministries office or email Gayle at childrensmin@mequonumc.org and she can pick them up.

The MUMC children are in the process of marking the 40 days until Easter with a daily Bible reading and a Lamb countdown activity. They would like to share that fun with other children. If you know any child who would have fun counting down the days of Lent in their home please contact Gayle by email or phone her at 414-840-2141. The activity can be dropped off or mailed.

Hallelujah Jesus Lives! Celebrate
Easter Sunday with an at-home

Easter egg hunt kit compliments of MUMC. Each kit will have 12 stuffed eggs. Don't be surprised if one is empty. (Jesus wasn't in the tomb.) The hunt kit comes complete with eggs and a note that says "You have been egged!" to put on the door. What a great way to surprise a friend or neighbor's child with the gift of the Easter message from our church. To get a kit, please email Gayle or phone her at 414-840-2141. The kits can be dropped off, picked up, or mailed to children out of the area. Let Gayle know at the time you place your order.



MUMC Hosts COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

Last month, the Mequon United Methodist Church hosted two COVID-19 vaccination clinics at the church with our partners from Welltopia Pharmacy in Thiensville. One hundred fifty people received their first shot of the Pfizer vaccine in February and are scheduled to receive their second dose in March. Marie Widder and Connie Pukaite first explored the possibility of hosting a clinic with the pharmacist at Welltopia and, with the assistance of other members of the team, were able to make their vision a reality—in record time.

Our goal is to serve as many of the most vulnerable members of our community as possible and, by vaccinating members of our church as soon as they are eligible, to safely return to in-person church services. We continue to schedule those in the 1A category: healthcare workers, policemen and women, firemen and women, and ages 65 and older, while simultaneously preparing to vaccinate those in the 1B category who become eligible March 1, such as food production employees and teachers. Remaining members of the population at large will likely be eligible a few months from now, so we are updating our lists daily. We feel truly blessed to serve in this time of need and will continue to partner with Welltopia as long as they are willing.

The vaccination clinics are open to MUMC members and also those in the wider community. MUMC is following CDC guidelines regarding eligibility for the vaccine. If you or your neighbors and friends in Ozaukee County would like to register to be vaccinated at an upcoming clinic, email us with your name, and which age group you are in (55-59, 60-64, 65 and above). Also, note if you are an emergency worker, healthcare worker, food production worker, or teacher. Once on the list, you will be notified of the date of the next vaccination clinic.

To contact the COVID-19 vaccination team, email mumcmatters@gmail.com.

Reflections Book Group

The Reflections book group will meet on Thursday, March 11 at 7 pm on Zoom. Our discussion book for March is *An Unwanted Guest*, by Shari Lapena.

Amazon offers this summary: It's winter in the Catskills and Mitchell's Inn, nestled deep in the woods, is the perfect setting for a relaxing—maybe even romantic—weekend away. It boasts spacious old rooms with huge wood-burning fireplaces, a well-stocked wine cellar, and

opportunities for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, or just curling up with a good murder mystery. So when the weather takes a turn for the worse, and a blizzard cuts off the electricity—and all contact with the outside world—the guests settle in and try to make the best of it. Soon, though, one of the guests turns up dead—it *looks* like an accident. But when a second guest dies, they start to panic. Within the snowed-in paradise, something—or someone—is picking off the guests one by one. And there's nothing they can do but hunker down and hope they can survive the storm—and one another.



Reflections is a women's book group that meets monthly for discussion and fellowship. Our meetings are currently being held on Zoom. New women are always welcome. Contact Barb Henneck at bhenneck@wi.rr.com for more information about the group or to request an invitation to the March Zoom meeting.

Looking ahead . . . our April discussion book will be *Florence Adler Swims Forever*, by Rachel Beanland.

Announcements

The 33-Day Upper Room Morning Devotion for Lent continues. During your journey to Easter this year, if you are interested in starting your day with a devotion from the Upper Room Devotional Guide, reflecting on it, and praying with fellow Christians, please join Pastor Sue and your MUMC Family via Zoom each weekday morning from 7-7:30 am; the journey began on Ash Wednesday (February 17) and continues through Good Friday (April 2). Contact Pastor Sue for a Zoom invitation.

Jim Layton, Community Gardens director, reports that our ten community garden plots for the 2021 gardening season are spoken for. Last fall, we started two more garden beds which could be available to someone willing to help get them ready. Jim will let the gardeners know the garden soil temperatures during April and May.

If COVID-19 allows us this spring, we hope to add the two new family gardens mentioned above, create a youth ministry garden, and a YMCA summer camp gardening program.

Thank you for helping make God's love real.

Thank you from Shirley Campbell—Dear MUMC family: Just a note to thank you for our conversations, your cards, and your offers of assistance during my recent "disability". No words can tell you how grateful I am for all your concerns. Thank you all!! You're an awesome family!!

Thanks to all of the participants in our various masked choirs! Although singing in masks is not ideal, singing together is WHAT WE DO! We have worked hard (and as joyfully as Lenten music allows!) to prepare music for Lent, so stay tuned! **April 1, Maundy Thursday music will be Rick and Michelle** and **April 2, Good Friday will be a very special presentation of A Service of Shadows**, which was scheduled for March 15, 2020 (the first Sunday in-person services were

canceled last year due to COVID-19).

Wisconsin United Methodist Camps are now hiring summer staff. Positions include: healthcare coordinator, camp counselor, and support staff. Apply today at: wiumcamps.org/about-us/employment. Questions? Contact: jcoenen@wisconsinumc.org or jshaker@wisconsinumc.org.

Education Team News

All-Church Lenten Growth Group

The Education Team is offering a great Lenten study, *"If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat"*, authored by John Ortberg. Even though the study has started, there is still time to join and all MUMC members are invited to participate.

In this DVD study, John Ortberg invites you to consider the incredible potential that awaits you outside your comfort zone. Out on the risky water of faith, Jesus is waiting to meet you in ways that will change you forever, deepening your character and your trust in God. The experience is terrifying. It's thrilling beyond belief. It's everything you'd expect of someone worthy to be called Lord. The choice is yours to know him as only a water-walker can and, in the process, aligning yourself with God's purpose for your life. There is just one requirement: *If you want to walk on water you've got to get out of the boat.*

This is a six-week study, and each session is offered twice: Thursday mornings at 11 am and Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. The first sessions were Thursday, February 18 (11 am) and Tuesday, February 23 (7 pm). Each session lasts one hour. No reading preparation is required to participate in this study. Just come as you are and enjoy the DVD presentation, discussion, and fellowship! We will be doing the study via Zoom. Please contact Pastor Sue to receive a Zoom invitation.

Adult Education Study

We just completed our study on *Anxious for Nothing* by Max Lucado. It answered the question how to find calm in a chaotic world. To quote the author, "Life gives lemons to good people, bad people, old people, and all people. Life comes with lemons but we do not have to suck them."

Jean Paulus, Education Team Chairperson, shares a few comments from people who participated in the study:

"I really enjoyed this book. It was perfect timing, I thought, for what's going on in the world right now. The videos have been good and not a rehash of what we read but additional information. The author presents in a very down to earth way. I'm really glad I did this study."

"This is a class for all who have a life. We all spend useless time worrying instead of asking for God's intervention and provision. The Holy Spirit is a gift from God for all of us."

"I really enjoyed the *Anxious for Nothing* study. During the added stress of COVID-19, it was a great relief to be reminded that God is in control. Give your worries to Him first. It is a book I will reread over and over again. There are great Bible passages that are so comforting. I really loved the chapter on C.A.L.M. We should begin with God, rejoice in the Lord always, and meditate on the positive things."

Please consider participating in future studies.

News From the Wisconsin Conference

The General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church. The assembly meets at the beginning of each quadrennium (every four years) to consider revisions to church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy, and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs for the next four years.

The Wisconsin Conference recently emailed personnel the following:

Commission on the General Conference
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 25, 2021

Meeting on February 20, 2021, the Commission on the General Conference made a decision to further postpone the 2020 General Conference until August 29 – September 6, 2022 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the safety of mass gatherings and travel:

It is the Commission's responsibility to select the site and set the dates of General Conference. Further, the Book of Discipline requires the Commission on the General Conference to "take necessary measures to assure full participation of all General Conference delegates." The Commission concluded that mandate was not achievable by means of either an in-person meeting in 2021 or a virtual meeting. In making the decision, the Commission determined that it was not feasible to safely hold an in-person meeting involving all delegates as currently scheduled for August 29 – September 7, 2021 due to a number of barriers:

- The number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise, with nearly 2.49 million confirmed cases the week of February 15, 2021.
- Vaccine is not expected to be widely available this year in many countries, and new variants of the virus which may be resistant to vaccines are emerging globally.
- International travelers to the United States must show proof of negative COVID-19 test results no more than three days prior to travel, but in many places, testing is not readily available or provided free of charge.
- Visa services remain limited in some areas. There also remains the possibility that a temporary six-month visa bond services which requires bonds of \$5,000 - \$15,000 per person for residents of some countries could cost up to \$2.5 million in bonds for affected delegates if the program should be extended beyond June 2021.

The Commission's decision was informed by the report of the Technology Study Team appointed to explore the implications of options for accommodating full participation at General Conference, including but not limited to the possibility of utilizing technology and online voting, in considering whether the meeting should be held virtually.

According to their report, "The study team considered a number of challenges and implications, including how to keep participants safe, providing for global participation, safeguarding the integrity of the voting and credentialing process, and

meeting legal requirements ...”

The Technology Study Team analyzed a variety of options, including an entirely electronic General Conference with participation from individual locations; an entirely electronic General Conference with delegates gathering at regional satellite hubs; and two sessions, with the first part being electronic and the second part in-person when it is safe to convene. None of these options were determined by the study team to be viable.

The study team did find that a more traditional method—utilizing mail ballots to vote on emergency actions—could help The United Methodist Church to address important, urgent matters through the General Conference. Their report recommended utilizing mail ballots for making a limited number of “Emergency Interim Actions” on which the General Conference delegates would indicate a yes or no vote for each item.

“The Commission shared the study team’s findings and recommendations with the officers of the Council of Bishops in a collaborative effort to jointly explore how this alternative might be utilized to address critical matters until an in-person gathering of delegates can be safely convened next year,” said commission chair Kim Simpson.

Some of the concerns mentioned in the report regarding having a virtual session include:

- Lack of infrastructure in some areas, including Internet access, Internet speed, and electricity
- Lack of technology for equitable Holy Conferencing
- Complexity of the legislative committee process
- Concerns about accurate credentialing and verification of identity
- Difficulties in seating reserve delegates properly
- Security of voting
- Safety concerns about regional satellite gatherings

Simpson said the August-September dates in 2022 will mean that General Conference will be one day shorter than planned for 2021; however, these dates were the only option available. Simpson said that the Commission regrets the fact that these dates once again conflict with the start of the academic year in the United States which a group of young adults had asked the Commission to avoid, but there were no other dates available.

...and Related News From the Council of Bishops

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In response to the further postponement of the 2020 General Conference, the Council of Bishops (COB) is calling a Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church (UMC) to be convened online on May 8, 2021.

According to the call letter signed by COB President Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, the Special Session will be held in accordance with Division Two - Section II - Article II of The Constitution of The United Methodist Church as recorded in Paragraph ¶14 of The Book of Discipline (2016).

The purpose of the 2021 Special Session of the General Conference will be limited

to gaining a quorum in order to suspend the rules for the sole purpose of allowing the use of paper ballots to act upon 12 pieces of legislation that would enable the church to effectively continue its work until the postponed 2020 General Conference is held in 2022. While other potential amendments were considered, it was agreed that these 12 pieces of legislation would enable the church to continue its administrative functions appropriately.

All decisions will be limited to paper ballots and confined to the designated twelve (12) amendments to the Book of Discipline in order to fulfill the mandate of ¶511.4.d., which calls for the Commission on the General Conference “to assure full participation of all General Conference delegates,…”

Bishop Harvey stated, “The exclusive use of paper ballots will allow for the fullest participation of delegates from across the denomination. Full participation on the part of all elected delegates is a justice issue that must not be ignored or sacrificed. This is why the convened session online must be confined solely to gaining permission for the mailed in paper ballots.” The decision to call the Special Session came in conjunction with the Commission on the General Conference’s announcement of a further postponement of the 2020 General Conference to August 2022. The General Conference had been previously postponed to August 2021 due the COVID-19 pandemic. It is now scheduled to take place August 29 to September 6, 2022, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

“Our current Book of Discipline was never written with a worldwide pandemic in mind. When we became aware of the need for a further postponement, we knew that some action needed to be taken in order to free the church to operate and continue to fulfill its current mission until we could gather in person,” Bishop Harvey stated, noting that substantive issues related to separation and regionalization should be reserved to an in-person forum where debate, amendment, and discernment could be conducted with integrity and full participation.

The Council of Bishops and the Commission on the General Conference have been working collaboratively to determine the best way for the General Conference to meet and maintain the Church’s current commitment to mission and ministry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Constitution of the Church, the Special Session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates elected to the postponed 2020 General Conference or their lawful successors.

The Secretary of the General Conference will communicate with annual conference secretaries regarding the logistics of the Special Session. In addition, The Council of Bishops and the Commission on the General Conference have agreed on a timeline of events that will create a pathway for the church in this liminal time. This timeline includes Special Sessions of the Jurisdictional Conferences to be held virtually in July 2021 (for the purpose of retiring bishops, announcing coverage of areas, and determining if or how many bishops will be elected in each Jurisdiction) and regular in-person Sessions of the Jurisdictional Conferences following the postponed 2020 General Conference in the Fall of 2022 (for the purpose of electing bishops, making assignments for the new quadrennium, electing members to General Boards/Agencies, etc.).

Under this timeline, General Boards & Agencies would maintain their current memberships until after the postponed General Conference in 2022.

Christian Symbol of the Month

Ewer and Basin

The ewer (a vase-shaped pitcher) and basin, which symbolize cleansing, are related to two biblical events from Holy Week: when Jesus washed his disciples' feet (John 13:1-17), and when Pilate "washed his hands of" Jesus' blood before the crucifixion (Matthew 27:24). Because of the foot-washing, the ewer and basin have become a symbol of service ministry.



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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Sunday Schedule

9:30am Worship Service

10:30am Fellowship

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