

SPIRE Newsletter



May 2022



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CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

May 4: women's prayer meeting at 7:30 am, parlor; all are welcome!

May 5: men's prayer breakfast at 7 am, parlor; all are welcome!

May 5: National Day of Prayer

May 6: Kids' Night Out, 6-8 pm

May 8: Mother's Day; blood pressure screening, parlor, after worship service

May 12: Reflections Book Group dinner out at Harvey's Central Grille, 6 pm

May 22: Confirmation Sunday

May 26: Meal Site desserts needed by 4 pm

May 30: Memorial Day

Aug. 1: Vacation Bible School starts

Transforming Church Update

Bringing Out the Good to Get to Great

Last month's SPIRE had an excellent summary on the steps that MUMC has completed so far and what to expect going forward as part of our three-year journey of coaching and discovery of "Transforming Church: A Visioning Roadmap" that is being funded by the Lilly Foundation and facilitated by John Holm Consulting. This month, we want to discuss the next step in our process.

John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Let's change that up slightly to be "Ask not what your

WORSHIP SERMON SPOTLIGHT

Jesus said, *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”* John 10:10 RSV

Jesus’ followers have been invited to live abundantly in Christ. During the month of May, Pastor Sue will share the Word of God that tells and encourages us to live our lives abundantly and fully.

May 1: Knowing and Acknowledging Our Needs; Mark 10:46-52

May 8: Building Others Up; James 3:3-12 and Ephesians 4:29

May 15: Aging Faithfully; Psalm 92:12-14

May 22: A Long Obedience in the Same Direction (Confirmation Sunday); Romans 12:1-2

May 29: Living Simply; 1 Timothy 6:6-10

WORSHIP MUSIC

May 1: Deanna Gibeau & Elna Hickson

May 8: Joyful Jam

May 15: Chancel Choir

church can do for you, ask what you can do for your church.” The answer to what you can do for your church, is to prayerfully consider committing to help us take the next steps in this process. You will be guided through some exercises to help the church discover our SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). You will help us to discern our “Core Values” and create our “Mission Statement”. These things will be our guide (our True North) as we move forward in the coming years.

These church visioning sessions are going to be held in the coming months after church services. Of course, being good Methodists, we will have food and fellowship as a part of the event. One of the dates will be coordinated with a Kids Night Out so parents can participate while their kids are having fun. Signup sheets will be forthcoming. Thanks so much for your help in this important work for MUMC.

Mike Debbink
Katie Nowak
Kristin Traut

From the Pastor

During the Lenten Prayer Gathering of the Holy Week, I invited participants to share their prayer requests. As they shared their prayer concerns, seven-year-old Gabby raised her hand and said, “May I share something that I am happy about?” Absolutely! I felt that God was speaking to all grown-ups in the room through her question because it is so easy for us to fill our prayers with mainly prayers of petitions as we think of things that are lacking in our lives. Her question was a wonderful encouragement to see the wonders of creation, gifts of friends, family, food and faith, and the sacrifice Christ made for us, therefore to give prayers of praise and thanksgiving to our awesome God.

It is also easy to fill our prayers with prayers for only our family and friends as we think what they lack in their lives. But the prayer gathering for the people of Ukraine in April gave us a great opportunity to dedicate our time to pray for those we don’t know personally but who need our prayers immensely. Thank you to our confirmands who initiated and led that gathering for the people of Ukraine! Some of MUMC’s family and friends sent their prayers to lift up their hearts for the Ukrainians, and I share their prayers below as I call upon your continued prayers

for the people of Ukraine:

- God, our help and our hope in every time of life, we bow before you in distress and confusion
- Our hearts ache for the loss of innocent lives and horrific devastation in Ukraine
- Give hope to those who seem to have lost all hope
- With your healing power, touch any who are injured; to all medical and rescue workers give patient endurance, wisdom, and skill
- As you give us opportunities to serve those in need, grant also generous spirit and the wise and efficient use of our abilities in offering aid
- That all hardened hearts break, to reveal softened hearts, guided only by Godly Love
- For the protection of the innocent in Russia and Ukraine
- For the continued strength and resilience of our brothers and sisters in Ukraine
- That all soldiers lay their weapons at their feet in a preference for peace
- That truth triumphs over lies and Love over fear
- That evil intentions stumble and fail
- For truth, wisdom, and insight
- For skilled leadership and grace as our world leaders work toward resolution and peace
- For open and welcoming hearts and homes for Ukrainian refugees
- Praying for leaders from all over the world to come together to work towards peace
- That there will be peace on Earth and that it will begin with me
- That my daily actions, no matter how big or small, are pleasing to God and reflect the peace that I wish for this world
- That people in all corners of the Earth will deeply know love and continually choose the Prince of Peace
- May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer (Psalm 19:14)

In the risen Christ,
Sue Lee

Announcements

Mother's Day is May 8: Let's Share Photos of our mothers—As we approach 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—grandmothers, aunts, sisters, dear friends. To honor our mothers (and the mother figures in our lives) on Mother's Day, we will feature favorite photos of them in a slide show during church service.

In 2020 and 2021, as the Covid-19 pandemic was raging, we collected photos of moms which we used for Mother's Day slide shows. We have these photos on file, and can use them again this year. If you would prefer that we use a new photo of your mother, or if you have not submitted a photo before, please send them to Carol Bayne at office@mequonumc.org or text them to her cell phone at 414-491-1430. **The deadline for submitting new photos is Thursday, May 5.** Please include your mother's name and your name as well.

At worship on Mother's Day, we will also create a "memory bouquet" on the altar, with members adding a flower to the bouquet in honor of beloved mothers in our lives.

May Prayer Meetings—The women's monthly prayer meeting is Wednesday, May 4 at 7:30 am and the men's monthly prayer breakfast is Thursday, May 5 at 7 am. Both are held in the parlor. All are welcome!

Meal Site is May 26—MUMC supports the North Side St. Vincent de Paul meal site in the Harambee neighborhood. Serving on site ceased during the pandemic but is expected to resume soon. Until then, we are asked to provide desserts only for inclusion in carry-out dinners. Leave three cookies or two bars/brownies per Ziploc bag on the bench in the lobby prior to 4 pm on May 26.

New Coffee Host Schedule—As we are coming out of the pandemic, we are returning to the many traditions that we have enjoyed as a church family. One of these traditions is Coffee Hour and Fellowship following Sunday Worship. We will plan on having a Coffee Hour and Fellowship each Sunday starting in May. On their assigned Sunday morning, coffee hosts provide sweets and set them out on serving platters and make coffee for Fellowship.

The MUMC Ministry Team has sent out a Coffee Host schedule for May 1-December 31, 2022. If you are unable to serve on your assigned Sunday, please trade with another member. Thank you from the MUMC Ministry team!

Reflections Book Group

MAY REFLECTIONS

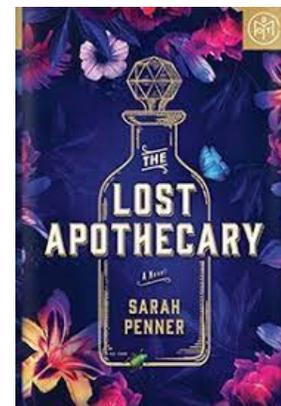
The Reflections book group will be dining out on Thursday, May 12. We have a 6 pm reservation at Harvey's Central Grille. Please RSVP to Barb Henneck at bhenneck@gmail.com by May 10 if you are able to join us.

Our May discussion book is *The Lost Apothecary* by Sarah Penner. Amazon.com offers this summary:

Hidden in the depths of eighteenth-century London, a secret apothecary shop caters to an unusual kind of clientele. Women across the city whisper of a mysterious figure named Nella who sells well-disguised poisons to use against the oppressive men in their lives. But the apothecary's fate is jeopardized when her newest patron, a precocious twelve-year-old, makes a fatal mistake, sparking a string of consequences that echo through the centuries.

Meanwhile in present-day London, aspiring historian Caroline Parcellwell spends her tenth wedding anniversary alone, running from her own demons. When she stumbles upon a clue to the unsolved apothecary murders that haunted London two hundred years ago, her life collides with the apothecary's life in a stunning twist of fate—and not everyone will survive.

With crackling suspense, unforgettable characters, and searing insight, *The Lost Apothecary* is a subversive and intoxicating debut novel of secrets, vengeance, and the remarkable ways women can save each other despite the barrier of time.



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 May meeting.

Looking ahead . . . our September book will be *The Women's March* by Jennifer Chiaverini.

Music Ministry News

For the lovely month of May our MUMC musical offerings will include Elna and Deanna dueting, the children sharing their Joyful Jam songs (and Pastor Sue, once again, on the ukelele!), our traditional Mother's Day song with parents and children singing Michelle Hynson's sweet arrangement of Jesus Loves Me together, the Chancel Choir singing both Contemporary and Classical anthems, Marcia Schwager playing her clarinet, and the beautiful flute serenades from Lori Ludwig. You won't want to miss it!

Ukulele Club Beginning Next Month! Bring a ukulele to next month's (June 3) Kids Night Out and we will spend our Joyful Jam time learning a song with ukulele! If you don't have a ukelele, perhaps church members have instruments at home that could be borrowed? Otherwise, not to worry! We will ALL learn a song together and how to play one chord on my little red uke (even if you do not bring a ukulele). So come one, come all, to Ukulele Club on June 3.

News From Children's Ministries

Kids Night Out: Join us the first Friday of each month from 6–8 pm for Kids' Night Out (Adults too)! In addition, we will be celebrating the children's birthdays that fall in that month. We will have dinner, music, and games. If you would like to bring a dish, and to RSVP, please email Gayle at childrensmin@mequonumc.org.

Last Sunday of School Year Sunday School is Sunday, May 22.

Summer Sunday School: We will be offering Summer Sunday School for the first time this year. It will be held the first and third Sunday of each month from 9:45-10:30 am. First Summer Sunday School will be Sunday, June 5.

Adventures in God's Great Outdoors: Learn how God's love keeps us flying high while we fly kites on Sunday, June 12 from 1-3 at Virmond Park. Bring a kite and join the fun.

Vacation Bible School: Mark your calendars for a "Pandamania" Vacation Bible School. Dates are Monday August 1 – Friday, August 5 from 9 –12 noon. Our theme this year is Pandamania, Where God is Wild About You. For more information email Gayle at childrensmin@mequonumc.org

Support Children's Ministry with Mother's Day Note Cards—Our children are amazing artists and we have turned their art into notecards just in time for Mother's Day! Each card features a drawing by one of our Sunday School children and confirmands and are blank inside for your personal message. They will be on sale in the Narthex on May 1 and May 8, for \$5 each or 5 cards for \$20. Your donations will help support our Children's Ministry and Vacation Bible School. Buy a card today and send it with your own message to your mother or friend! (Sponsored by

Mission Outreach Ministries

Midwest Mission Distribution Center Collection for Disaster Relief

The Wisconsin Conference Disaster Response Team and Mission Motivation Committee have been working with the Midwest Mission Distribution Center (MMDC) to make God's Love Real. The Mequon United Methodist Church (MUMC) is proud to be a permanent collection site for the MMDC, one of eight cooperating depots in the UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) network in the United States, providing disaster relief supplies, education, health, and micro-business assistance which meet basic human needs around the world and around the corner. We stand ready to assist with collections for emergency and humanitarian relief.

In conjunction with the Wisconsin Annual Conference 2022 Ingathering on June 10-13 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, MUMC has begun collecting items for Home Care and Personal Dignity Kits. Please feel free to drop off **individual items or completed kits** at the Mequon United Methodist Church, 11011 N. Oriole Lane, Mequon, during the month of May. We are open Monday – Thursday, 9 am – 1 pm, and by appointment. Call Carol Bayne in the office at 262-242-4770 or Karen Huffman at 262-957-6273 for assistance.

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. Monetary donations may be made to MUMC with "MMDC Annual Collection" noted on the memo line.

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.

The Parish Nurse Team

Blood Pressure screenings on May 8 in the parlor after worship service.

New for 2022: Lets Go for a Walk!! Walking provides many personal health benefits. A few of the positive outcomes of walking include improves heart health, burns calories, strengthens bones/muscles, reduces anxiety, and improves mood. The ability to walk is a gift and allows independence.

The Parish Nurse Team is trying something new this year. We are planning to host a walk one Sunday afternoon a month from May to August. We will experience different seasons and venues. Our walks are a leisurely opportunity to join the company of our MUMC friends and family and share nature's beauty together. We will walk about one hour in Ozaukee County on Sunday afternoons.



Please keep an eye on the Weekly Blast for dates, times, and venues. If you have any ideas for us, please share your thoughts. Email susanbasket@icloud.com or text 414-559-4699.

Susan Solverson on behalf of the Parish Nurse Team

From the Wisconsin UM Foundation

"Good"— May 2022

"Life is good." You may disagree, but "Life is Good" is a registered and trademarked expression by the "Life is Good" people for whom, life is good. The "Life is Good" logo is a stick figure named Jake who wears a black beret, beatnik sunglasses, and flashes a giant grin. Jake is often posed in any number of activities that bring simple pleasures to life — hiking, surfing, flying a kite, walking the dog. "Life is Good" started inauspiciously as brothers Bert and John Jacobs hawked homemade novelty T-shirts in the Boston streets and door-to-door through the college dorms. They were literally living in their van down by the river. They found their key to success when they printed 48 shirts of Jake over the saying, "Life is Good" for a 1994 street fair in Cambridge. The shirts sold out by noon. People were crazy for the simple and sunny philosophy. So much so, that the sincere and optimistic slogan has grown into an \$80 million-a-year merchandise line sold by 5,000 distributors in 14 countries.

One key to the success of "Life is Good" merchandise lies in the interpretation of those who own the products. Someone wearing the kayaking Jake shirt announces both his hobby and the simple pleasure that makes his life good. But cancer sufferers and survivors have also flocked to the merchandise line due to its simple, clear worldview. "Life is Good" is the hopeful battle cry of the cancer afflicted and the celebration song of cancer survivors. There's an implicit sense of truthfulness to the slogan which preserves its widespread appeal. The Jacobses are quick to note the humility of the assertion — life isn't perfect or great, but it's good. They know there's plenty of bad in the world but find it better to focus on what's good. John claims that the slogan is an affirmation of the here and now. "Don't determine that you're going to be happy when you get the new car or the big promotion or when you meet that special person. You can decide that you're going to be happy today."

In the church, we have a similar saying, but I don't think that it's trademarked. "God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good." This is more than an observation,

however. Among other things, it's a promise that our good God is with us and is active in our lives when we are struggling and in the valleys of life and when our hearts are full of the many blessings we have received and we are filled with joy. Yes, life may be good, but if it is, it's because "God is good . . . all the time."

Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

From the Wisconsin Conference

Weekly Devotion for April 11, 2022, by Forrest Wells

I was glad when they said unto me, let us go in person to the house of the Lord.
Psalm 122:1 FPV (Forrest's paraphrased version)

I have been so excited the last few weeks to go to numerous in-person worship services. It was a delight at the end of March for the Bishop and cabinet to hold our twice monthly gatherings in person after two years of meeting almost exclusively on Zoom. The clergy of the district reconnected for the first time in two years with a Bishop's Day Apart retreat! It was exciting to launch Holy Week on Palm Sunday with the in-person gathered community of faith.

Throughout the pandemic I have hungered for human personal interaction. The virtual and computer life has sure been convenient and made work, school, and basic life participation more possible for many and imperative for some; but life hasn't been the same. Now with in-person attendance numbers languishing behind pre-pandemic numbers, the not so rhetorical questions are, "Where are the people?" and "Will they ever come back?"

Those questions likely have multiple answers, but two responses stick out to me. First, rather than waiting for people to return to the way things used to be, let us assess the needs of people in this nearly post Covid-19 reality that includes economic distress, the specter of war, and the persistent cultural and denominational differences that threaten to divide us. In the Church of Jesus Christ, we too often lament the "fightings within and fears without." In focusing on what is wrong with the world and wrong with our own institution we send signals that subtly turn people away.

On the other hand, if we come together and exhibit the characteristics of people who trust in God and love one another; if we are reflective of a healthy community of faith, and seek to engage our community, people connect and people come. The human heart hungers for belonging and that hunger cannot be filled from online worship, casino gambling, sleeping in on Sunday or a cup of coffee while reading the New York Times. We hunger for unconditional love, for acceptance, for purpose, for hope, for community.

In the book of Hebrews, we are asked to "not abandon the meeting together as is the habit of some but encourage one another..." (Hebrews 10:25). We are called to worship and study and serve and fellowship together as an expression of our trust in God in order that we might be an encouragement to others as we walk this journey of life. The faith of Jesus Christ is a participation event! We need one another!

During this Holy Week I look forward to multiple opportunities to worship as we walk with Jesus through betrayal, beatings, the cross, death and grief even as we

hold hope in resurrection. Though I know that God is with me, I don't want to walk alone. Will you come with me? See you in church! And invite a friend!

Gracious God, thank you for placing us in a wondrous world filled with people. Help us to not isolate ourselves but gather us together so that we might encourage each other in this complex journey of life. Thank you for Jesus who lived our life and sought to bring us together in one Church united through his sacrificial love. Amen.

Weekly Devotion for April 18, 2022, by Jorge Luis Mayorga

The Power of the Resurrection

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen." Luke 24: 1-5 NRSV

On the first Easter morning the sorrowful women come to anoint the body of Jesus and are greeted with these astonishing words of the angel: "He is not here. He has been raised up!" What wonderful, good news! The obedience and confidence of Jesus in His Father is rewarded with the gift of the Resurrection. Easter is a time of great joy. This year from Easter Sunday on April 17th. until May 29th we'll celebrate the Season of Easter. I write to you with joy in my heart because Christ is risen, as we sang on Easter Sunday, "He Lives!", our hope, is risen! Imagine the joy that his disciples experienced, and that of Mary, His mother, all of them ready to go around the world singing His glory and announcing His message of redemption and salvation.

I remember the Easter Celebrations in El Salvador, my country of origin, when I was a child. I used to go with my father to the Roman Catholic Church in our hometown, in which he was the organist, sit next to him and listen to the responses of joy in the singing at the early Easter mass. It was then, in my early years, that I learned the joy of Easter, and this joy continues in my heart, to this very day. As children of God, the resurrection of Christ is a victory that we need to embrace with joy. In the Risen Jesus, God comes into our lives. He shapes our destiny. He cares for us, loves us, heals us, strengthens us, and walks with each of us on our life's journey.

We need this celebration now more than ever, especially during this time of the Pandemic, because many of us have experienced the death of loved ones and friend by the Covid-19. Others are experiencing war and conflict that bring death. We need to concentrate on the values, the faith and the truth that Easter reveals to us. We need to know them, be convinced of them, and live by them. We should not allow the trials and challenges of this life to destroy our hope in the life guaranteed to us by the Easter Good News. We know that we live in a broken world, yet, I am also reminded of the following message which Mother Teresa of Calcutta delivered to her audience in Toronto many years ago: "I want to tell the citizens of Toronto and the whole world, no matter how much evil seems to conquer, never lose hope. Never give way to despair, for Easter and the risen Christ reassure us with the promise of new life beyond despair."

In this message, Mother Teresa reminds us that Easter is about life overcoming the

power of death and destruction. It is about hope springing up from ashes of despair. It is about joy emerging from the darkness of sorrow and grief. It is about justice overpowering hate and evil. Indeed, to believe in the Good News of Easter is to believe in the struggle to a better world. I invite you to experience with me the joy, hope and blessings of this season.

Prayer: Gracious and Loving God, in this day we give you thanks for your abundant love. The love that resurrected Jesus from the dead. Give us the courage to live as people of the resurrection that we can bring hope to others in these difficult times. In the name of your Son Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

Christian Symbol of the Month

Violet—The violet, a symbol of humility, is used most often to refer to the Virgin Mary, whom St. Bernard (1090-1153) described as "the violet of humility." The purple flower also is sometimes used to express Christ's humility in assuming human form.



One Last Thing . . .

Confirmation Sunday is May 22

Confirmation, a rite many churches celebrate each spring, has biblical roots. In Acts 8, Peter and John are sent to lay their hands on new believers and pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. In the early church, new Christians (usually adult converts), received baptism and confirmation as one ceremony. As more children were brought for baptism, pastors and priests would baptize, but only bishops would "confirm" a baptism, or make it official. Thus, the baptized were granted full membership in the church through confirmation.

Now confirmation allows young people, often after intensive Christian education, to profess for themselves the faith into which they were baptized. Confirmation serves as an important faith milestone, as young adults purposefully embrace a life of discipleship.

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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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

