



ALGOMA BOULEVARD UNITED • METHODIST • CHURCH

abumc.org *January 2024*

MISSION STATEMENT: *As the Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church family of faith, we will help people experience God through...transformational worship, lifelong learning, inspiring music, life-changing service, and passionate witness.*



Happy New Year!



From the Heart of Pastor Ellen

January 2024

*Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD
has risen upon you~ Isaiah 60.1*

Dear Beloved,

It is a joy to be with you this holiday season. We've journeyed through our first Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, and just around the corner is Epiphany on January 6. I didn't grow up with celebrating Epiphany. I knew about the three wise men (it was really a much larger group) from the song, but it wasn't anything that my family got involved with.



*Epiphany, or
Manifestation of
the Lord, is an even
more ancient
celebration among
Christians than
Christmas. It*

originally focused on the nativity, incarnation, and baptism of Christ. The

Latino culture has preserved and developed this ancient celebration in a way that is a great gift to the whole Church. It is celebrated as *Dia de Los Reyes* and includes special plays and songs in the church. In the home, children are told to place boxes filled with hay under their beds so that the

camels will eat the hay and the kinds leave presents for the children.

I just love how the presence of outsiders is embraced. The arrival of these visitors/guests/travelers indicates that the incarnation of God in Christ is known and is a gift for all. Isaiah (60.1-6) and Matthew (2.1-12) tell of the Epiphany story. My heart overflows with joy and gratitude for the gift of the Epiphany. It reminds me every year that I am included in the story---an outsider who once denied the very existence of God. I am so very grateful for this knowledge.

This place, our community, and this world need our lights to shine and spread the Good News of Jesus and his love. Let your light shine boldly for all to see.

God, we stand in awe that you would come in the vulnerability of an infant among us. Give us the desire to seek you in unexpected places and give us the eyes to be amazed at the awesomeness of your presence. May we learn to worship you and faithfully follow you in all we do. Amen.

Love & Peace, Pastor Ellen



The birth of Jesus
We are reborn deep
within our hearts and spirits.
Come to us with light
Come to us with life
Come to this shabby place with peace
Come to the eternal now, right within us...

The coming of Jesus
Let there be hope for the world,
Let even a small smile express happiness.
To a lonely person, come as a friend,
Come to Bethlehem
Yes come....
Come to the heart of the broken world.

The coming of the Savior
It brings joy to us,
so everyone rejoices together.
The Savior has come,
let us sing, and let the world sing
Christ light,
Dawning within us the divine presence.

May we bless one another today
It's not a slow heart.
With a bright face, bless each other
Let me bless my friends
who have gone down different paths,
With a loving heart, we wish them to bless.
May we all be blessed because of Jesus

What's Up in Worship ~ January 2024

Why do you put your faith in God? Why do you trust that God exists?

God can't be touched or proven and rarely gives straight answers, and yet, as disciples, we devote our lives to believing that God does exist and is the best thing ever.

So let me ask again: Why? Why do you believe? How did you come to believe?

The Season of Epiphany is the journey of coming to put our faith in the belief that God not only exists but is embodied in Jesus of Nazareth.

Coming to faith is never one and done, of course, because too much life gets in the way. Our experiences raise too many uncomfortable questions about whether God is real.

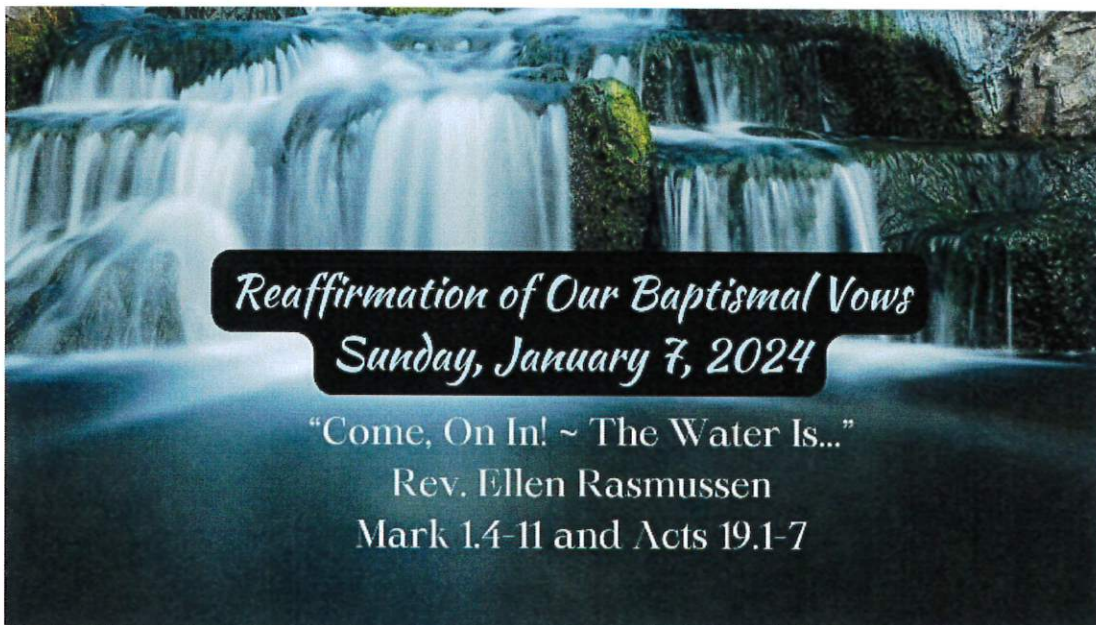
As Wesleyan theologians, we have tools at our disposal that can help us navigate the trials and tribulations of life as we grow in our reflection of Christ and our relationship with God. These tools can help us to open ourselves to a much broader view of the world and God ~ a God of infinite possibilities.

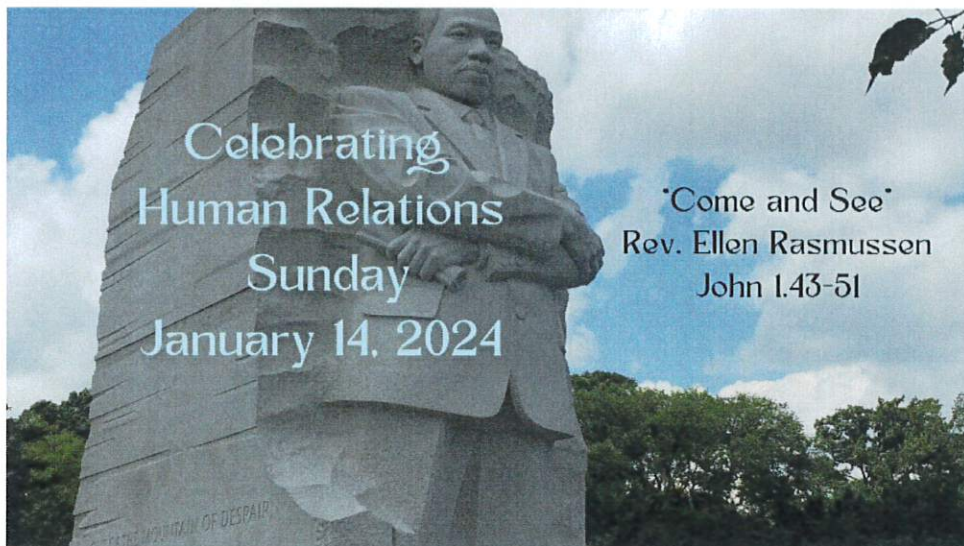
How does the gift of baptism help guide us?

How do relationships impact our worldview?

Come and meet Susanna Wesley, a woman of courage and conviction, who can show us how to live and move and have our being, even in the most challenging of times.

The decisions that we make, even the most seemingly insignificant ones, can have a big impact on our lives. How can faith and doubt serve together to influence the decisions that we make?





**Jazz @ 9 am
Gospel Music
@ 10:30 am**

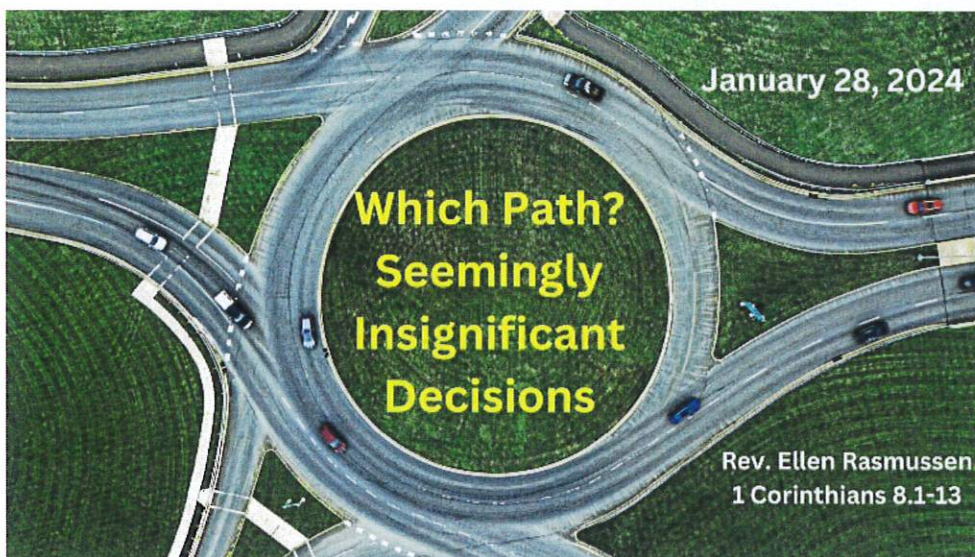
**Week of
Prayer for
Christian
Unity is
Jan. 18 – 25**



**“Turning Things Upside Down”
Celebrating the Leadership of
Susanna Wesley ~
The Mother of Methodism**



**Sunday, January 21, 2024
Rev. Ellen Rasmussen
Mark 1.14-20, 1 Corinthians 7.29-31**



**Mark your
calendars:
Ash Wednesday
2.14.2024
@ 7 pm**

Come. Learn. Love. Be Transformed.

GROWING OUR FAITH



United
Women
in Faith

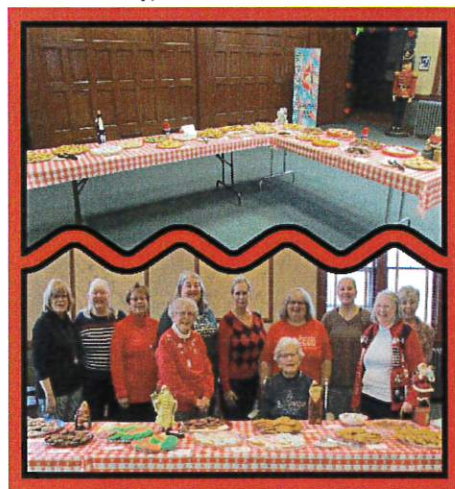
HAPPY NEW
YEAR TO
EVERYONE!

In 2024, United Women in Faith will hold our first meeting Jan. 17 at 1 p.m. Our program will be given by Kay Kuenzl-Stenerson, director of The Teacher's Closet. We will learn about their new location in Oshkosh and their services, and school supplies will be collected for donation.

Also at the January meeting, we will hold our officer installation ceremony.

Anyone can attend to learn more about The Teacher's Closet, welcome our new slate of officers, and hear about our plans for the coming year.

However, before we turn the calendar for 2024, we would like to look back on



our Cookie Walk that was held Dec. 9, 2023. We had a very successful sale again this year that raised about

\$1,300. Thank you to everyone who baked in advance of the sale and helped to staff the sale. Also, a big thank you for

purchasing. We cannot do this without the support of all of you. We hope that you enjoyed the sale's offerings and shared them with family and friends during the Christmas season.

United Women in Faith is planning for the next United Methodist General Conference that is scheduled to meet April 23 to May 3, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina. As the official women's organization of the United Methodist Church, we bring petitions to the General Conference that prioritize women, children, and youths.

We will be bringing four new pieces of legislation to be included in the church's Book of Resolutions: on observing Children's Sabbath, protecting the girl child, protecting voting rights, and the status of women and realizing full human rights.

We also will be seeking re-adoption of 11 resolutions set to expire in 2024. These are Resolutions 1025: Environmental Racism in the U.S., 1028: Law of the Sea, 1029: Protection of Water, 1032: Principles for Just and Sustainable Extraction and Production, 1034: Environmental Health, 3371: A Charter for Racial Justice in an Interdependent Global Community, 3379: Stop Criminalizing Communities of Color in the United States, 3422: Speaking Out for Compassion: Transforming the Context of Hate in the US, 4056: Greed, 4058: Privatization, and 8011: Biblical Language.

More information about these important issues will be shared in future newsletter articles. — Sandy Butcher



As reported in the Oshkosh

Northwestern in November, the Oshkosh Area Community Pantry saw an astounding **93% increase** in families registered in 2023 and has been serving an average 2,275 families each month. The pantry's resources have been stretched to the limit.

Each year ABUMC takes part in the Souper Bowl of Caring on Super Bowl Sunday in February and collects food and monetary donations for the pantry. This year, we are going to be **collecting non-perishable food items throughout the entire month of January** and hope to be able to deliver a generous donation of products to the pantry. Please check out the Oshkosh Area Community Pantry's lists of requested items that can be found in the missions area. Monetary donations will also be accepted on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb.11.

Huge Shoutout

Our Open Table free meal ministry is in its third year and we are eternally grateful to Nancy Levesque for her commitment to this outreach. Nancy is the driving force behind the Open Table, choosing the menu, shopping for food, and cooking the meals. We are so



blessed to have this example of how we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, are called to minister to His

people.

But Nancy isn't a one-person show! Many people have contributed their time and talents to the Open Table, by providing desserts, cooking, serving, and cleaning up. Thank you all! And thanks to the many friends from ABUMC who have come out to enjoy the meals!

Join us Monday, January 11th and 25th at 5:00 p.m.



LOOKING AHEAD

Spaghetti Dinner & Auction



Mark your
calendar
for
Saturday,
January 27!

That's the date of the spaghetti dinner and auction fundraiser for the youth mission trip. The evening will include a wonderful meal of spaghetti, salad, bread, and delectable desserts, along with a silent and live auction. Auction items will be provided by the trip students as well as local establishments and ABUMC donors. Always a lot of fun and a great way to support our youths, so you won't want to miss it!

Tickets Go On Sale

January 7th

Purchased in Paine Hall
between worship services
the 7th, 14th and 21st
or by contacting Lisa-Marie.

\$10 adults

\$5 youths 5-17

kids 4 and younger free

Thank You

FOR HELPING OUT! COOKIE WALK HELPERS



Newsletter Deadline
10th of each month

Lay Leadership & Nominations Report for 2024

Algoma Blvd UMC

Terms: * until 12/2024; ** until 12/2025; ***until 12/2026

LAY LEADERS & LAY MEMBERS TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Sheri Graeber
Anne Fields

AD COUNCIL

Nancy Irvine**, Chair
Sandy Butcher, UWF
Jim Barthel **
Rick Last **
Ex officio Members - committee chairs
Craig Blumer, SPRC chair
Andy Irvine, Finance Chair
Sheri Graeber/Anne Fields

FINANCE

Andy Irvine, Chair*
Karen Stuve*
Jack Stubs*
Kathy Propp**
Herb Numrich**
Linda Sanders**
Ryan Ames***

****^

Stewardship

_____ Chair^

Anne Fields
Christy Grund*
Lesia Zehner*
Paula Condor **
Steve Barney***

Audit

Barby Ames
Scott Ceman
Steve Lorge

NOMINATIONS/LAY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Rev. Ellen Rasmussen, Chair
Anne Fields
Sheri Graeber

SPRC

Craig Blumer***, Chair
Sheri Graeber
Anne Fields
Keith Wolf**
Steve Lorge**
Verna Funke**

TRUSTEES

Steve Zehner, Chair***
Erik Reischl*
Cindy Brun*
Richard Graeber**
Deb Madel**
Scott Ceman**
Wayne Wegner***
Gail Sullivan - Nativity Collection Liaison

In addition to a Stewardship chair who will also report to the Committee on Finance, please pray for the Nominations/Lay Leadership Team as we discern two additional reps for SPRC (invitations have been extended), and a female rep for the Board of Trustees in order to meet the requirements for the Book of Discipline. Thank you.

Active Discipleship

January 2024

A University chaplain had an interesting conversation with a student that came to see him one day. He writes: “I was wondering what I ought to do about the exam,” she said, “then I looked at this bracelet” (here she gestured to the “What Would Jesus Do?” bracelet on her wrist), “and I said to myself, ‘I am going to just say a little prayer, relax, and look after myself.’” And I thought to myself, “I can think of at least a couple of other things Jesus might tell you to do — like get over to the library and get busy studying for this exam.” Devoid of specific content, insubstantial, vague “spirituality” may be our contemporary Christian undoing. We have rendered Jesus into someone so vague, amorphous, and flimsy that he makes little claim upon us. Jesus has become a fashion accessory, something tied to our wrist, a comfort, never a challenge. What would Jesus do? Whatever we do, it appears. This short story reminds me of what a challenge Christian Discipleship. It is easy for us to become a member of a church, attend several times a year, give a little money, and to sit back and relax because we all know that God’s grace is free. And yet, we forget that while God’s love is given to us

freely, if we allow it to grab ahold of us, it changes our lives. Our priorities are no longer our own, but God’s. We pray that “God’s will be done,” not only in a general sense, but particularly in and through our own lives. This means becoming an active part of our community of faith. Giving our energy to worship, instead of being a passive observer. Actively loving and serving our neighbor, instead of just praying for them and hoping for a miracle. Spending time with God in prayer and study. Letting generosity be the top priority in our finances, not just giving what’s left over after we’ve gotten ours. Christian Discipleship is a difficult enterprise. Thank God we have grace to support us and strengthen us. And thank God we have a community of faith to help us along and to hold us accountable.

Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin
United Methodist Foundation

ABUMC

ALGOMA BOULEVARD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

building • connecting • growing



How To Give At ABUMC

We honor our baptismal and membership vows to God by our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. As a contributors to a connectional system, our gifts have a global impact. Thank you for generous support of the ministries at work in and through the people of ABUMC.

To Give In Person: There are envelopes available at each worship experience and you can designate how you would like your gift distributed. Cash and checks payable to ABUMC are accepted.

To Give Electronically:

Online at <https://www.abumc.org/giving>—Select “How To Give” and follow the online giving link.

Through your bank: Work with your online banking system to set up recurring on one –time payments through options like ZELLE or electronic funds transfer.

To Mail Gifts:

Please make your check payable to ABUMC and send your gift to

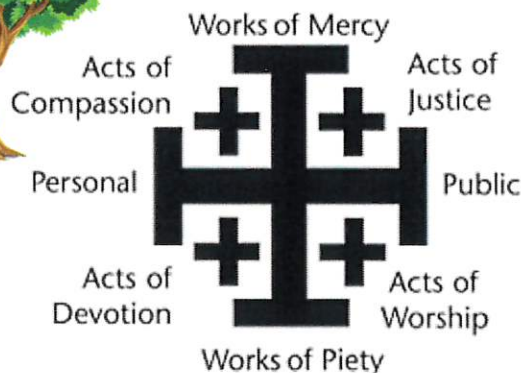
ABUMC
1174 Algoma Boulevard
Oshkosh, WI 54901

For assistance with any of these options, please contact our staff at 920.231-2800.

Thank you for your gifts.



Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church



We witness to Jesus Christ in the world and follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. 