

abumc.orgApril 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.



Easter Season Blessings!

FROM THE HEART OF PASTOR ELLEN

April 2024

God blessed them and said, "Bear fruit, increase your numbers, and fill the earth—and be responsible for it! Watch over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things on the earth! ~

Genesis 1.28 The Inclusive Bible

Dear Beloved ~

MINDS Open DOORS

Our modus operandi for the next six weeks centers on Creation Justice.

*John Wesley taught a holistic view of deliverance of salvation that included the deliverance of respect and ca the created world in the creation of a new here and now. heaven and a new earth.

Our worship

In the sermon "The New Creation"
Wesley speaks imaginatively about what
the new heavens and the new earth will
be like, imagining into the scriptural
promises of an end to death and suffering
(Rev. 21:1-7), and an end to present
environmental catastrophes like storms,
polluted water, and animal suffering.
This is all part of the promise of God's
"greater deliverance" from sin.

Early Methodists worked toward this hoped-for view by addressing environmental concerns, such as open sewers, impure water, unplanned cities, and smoke-filled air. In response to squalor and filth in the mines and mills, Methodists advocated for a wider knowledge of concepts of basic health. The substantial decline in the death rate

in England from 1700 to 1801 can be traced to this work.

Wesley's eschatological vision for the deliverance of all creation led him to respect and care for the created world here and now.

Our worship series, **Sacred Earth**, **Sacred Work**, asks the question, "What if we lived life truly connected to the origins of Creation and the Creator? We will engage this question and more as we learn about Creation Spirituality.

There are several special days in April that remind us of our call tocare for the earth. (Follow the links for more info.)

April 14: <u>Native American Ministries</u>

April 21: <u>Festival of God's Creation</u>

April 22: Earth Day

April 25: World Malaria Day

April 26: Arbor Day

And previewing May ~

May 4: Fox-Wolf Watershed Clean Up

May 8: United Way Day of Caring

You are encouraged to find a way to connect to one of those opportunities.

Love & Peace,
Pastor Ellen

*Caring for Creation BOR 2016 #1033

UMC Connectional System Updates

New Episcopal Area Has a Name

Conferences' Task Forces Agree by the Wisconsin and Northern Illinois Communications Directors

The name of the new episcopal area that will include the Wisconsin Conference and the Northern Illinois Conference is the Northern Illinois—Wisconsin Episcopal Area.

Meeting on Feb. 26 in Kenosha, the task forces in both conferences that are working on sharing a bishop starting Sept. 1 agreed on this name.

Under the creation of the new episcopal area—determined by the North Central Jurisdictional Conference earlier this year—one bishop will oversee both the Wisconsin Conference and the Northern Illinois Conference. (Episcopal areas are distinct from annual conferences, though often the geographical boundaries of the two have coincided.)

The two conferences are not merging. However, sharing a bishop will prompt more intentional sharing of ministries between the two conferences, which can strengthen both conferences' efforts.

To read the full article, please follow this link: <u>New Episcopal Name</u>

United Methodist General Conference April 23—May 3

The theme of this General Conference is "... and know that I am God."

The 2020 United Methodist General Conference will be held April 23 - May 3, 2024, at the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. (The originally planned 2020 GC was postponed due to the pandemic.

General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church, which meets once every four years. The conference can revise 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.

The General Conference is composed of an international body of nearly 1,000 voting delegate members. They represent all annual conferences around the world. Half of the delegates are laity (non-clergy members), half are clergy. You can view the general sessions online at the official website: Official GC Website

Prayer Guide for GC

What's Up in Worship ... Creation Justice



Spring is a time of regeneration and growth as we emerge from the season of winter and rest. Our worship series, *Sacred Earth, Sacred Work*, invites us to a time of deeper connection with creation and asks, "What if we lived life truly connected to the origins of Creation and the Creator?" In this series, we will explore six essential ideas found in Creation Spirituality—a way of living within the community of earth that deepens our reverence for life, participates in the creativity of the cosmos, and develops our passion for justice and human transformation. It compels us to lead lives of spiritual inquiry, creativity, and prophetic action as our sacred work in the world.

As shared in *The Heart of Pastor Ellen (page 2)*, John Wesley believed there was a connection between our own salvation and the care of creation. The UMC has continued that passion for creation spirituality. In 2016, the UMC passed a resolution, **Caring for Creation: A Call to Stewardship and Justice**

(follow the link to read). The UMC celebrates the Festival of God's Creation on the Sunday closest to Earth Day; has been instrumental in reducing malaria around the world (*Imagine No Malaria/Nothing But Nets campaigns*); and is a partner of Creation Justice Ministries ~ Together, we're protecting, restoring, and rightly sharing God's creation. Come. Learn. Love. Let's transform the world together.









Communion Sunday 04.07.2024

The Universe, and all life within it, is fundamentally a blessing, fundamentally good, and created to flourish—including us. This doesn't prevent hardship and difficulties, but it does strengthen us as we go through tough times. How might moving through our days with an eye for recognizing goodness and blessing transform our experience of life.

Native American Ministries Sunday 04.14.2024

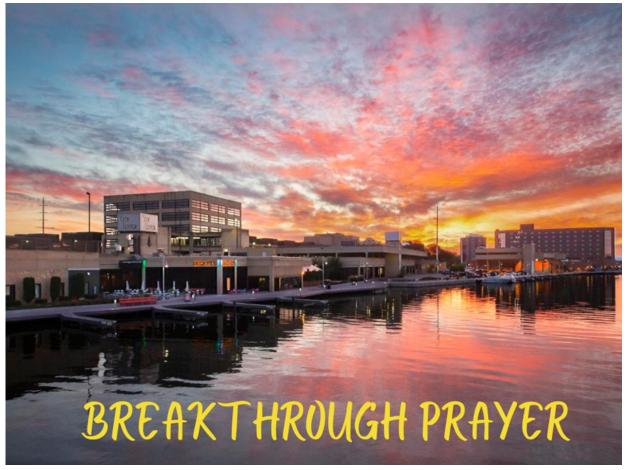
It is through the work of spiritual practice that we move beyond fear into compassion and discover our deep and true selves.
Engaging in spiritual *practices*—whether that looks typically religious (like praying) or not (like walking) have *intentionality* in common. They draw us closer to the Creation and who we were created to be—free and compassionate beings.

Festival of God's Creation Sunday 04.21.2024

The spiritual journey can be understood as a dance moving in and out of four mystical paths, each with their own gifts: awe and wonder; letting go; creativity; and compassion and justice. These "cycles of life" are born out of the season of the planet and remind us that there is a time for everything and that fluctuations of the spirit are part of being human. Can we accept the Holy invitation to move fully into *all* the rhythms of life?

04.28.2024

Made in the image of the Creator, every one of us carries within us the capacity to be a mystic, to be creative, to be visionary, and to be an agent for positive change. It is our Responsibility to say "here I am, send me" and to cultivate our capacity to benefit the earth and all its creatures. What are we creating in this world that will cause positive ripples into the future?



[Photo courtesy of Discover Oshkosh and used with permission.]

Breakthrough Prayer

Let us continue this for April. I invite you to set aside five minutes each day to quiet your heart and pray this breakthrough prayer. Choose a time that is easy to remember, such as 12 noon. This is also a familiar hymn, so the melody also may help you as you pray. Feel yourself wrapped in God's love. Listen for God in this time.

— Sheri Graeber, Lay Leader

Here I am, Lord.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.



The Masih Family



I had an unexpected visit from the Masih family in early March. They are Pakistani Christians who fled from Lahore, Pakistan after radical Muslims burned several blocks of their Christian community. They arrived in March 2017 and began attending ABUMC because the Methodist church had befriended them in Sri Lanka. The family moved to Greendale in late 2020 to be nearer their Pakistani friends.

They are doing well. Fiaz drives an Amazon semi-trailer five days a week cross country. Iffat is an American citizen with a US passport. She is a full-time mom, but still does not drive. Ayan is in second grade, Jason in kindergarten, and Megan starts school in September. They live in Greendale, WI in a townhome. Iffat and Fiaz like Oshkosh and say hello to all their church friends.

By Kathy Propp

Who is Graduating?



Please let us know if you have a high school, college or grad school student who is graduating this year (including anyone who received their diploma this past December).

We would like to acknowledge and congratulate our ABUMC graduates! Please contact Lisa-Marie, connections@abumc.org, with the student's name, the school they are graduating from, if and where they plan to continue their education, and degree earned, if applicable. A picture is also appreciated. Thank you!





On February 17th, 2024, the United Women in Faith held the second annual "Soul Care Saturday" in Paine Hall. Even though the temperature outside was one of the coldest days of this year, the temperature inside was warm! For those of us that braved the cold, I think we would agree it was worth it. We began and ended our time together with food and fellowship.

During the time between the food, we talked about the importance of key women in our lives. We learned more about the mother of Methodism, Susanna Wesley. For example, did you know that she was the 25th child out of 25 children born to Samuel and Mary Annesley? Or that Susanna kept a regular Bible study and time of prayer for over 50 years?

We learned about Constance
Applebee who was born in 1873 and in the
1920's founded the Sportswoman, the first
magazine devoted entirely to women's
athletics. She took a stand when "musical
chairs" and "drop the handkerchief" were
the main sports offered for female
students at American colleges in 1901.

You may have recently heard of Caitlin Clark, the basketball record breaker. But do you remember Lisa Leslie? Born in 1972, Lisa became the very first high school girl to slam-dunk. In one basketball game at the end of her senior year, Lisa alone scored 102 points . . . in the first half! She would have beaten the game total record of 106 points, but the other team refused to come out of the locker room after halftime!

We also spent time talking about the women that had an impact on our lives. Whether our mom, or some other women that meant something significant to us, we shared with each other how our life was influenced by them.

Thanks to all the wonderful women that participated in making this day so successful. It was a great day, and I would invite you to consider joining us for our next time together.

March is the month to remember Clementine Butler and Lois Parker, wives of missionaries to India who in 1869 made a plea to a group of eight women in Boston about the spiritual and physical needs of poor women in India. They could not be treated by male doctors. Schooling for girls was almost non-existent. Our 154year history of United Women in Faith began with a few bold women determined to change the world for women, children, and youth for the better.

Our March 20th, 2024 unit meeting is the kick-off for collecting items for the Midwest Mission
Distribution Center during Annual
Conference. This year, the unit has decided to collect items for Personal
Dignity Kits, or Bed Pack Kits until our
May 15th meeting. All items and monetary donations will be given to
Pastor Ellen to take to Annual
Conference in June.

On Saturday, April 13th, 2024, the Wisconsin United Women in Faith will be hosting Social Action Day via zoom. The theme is "Ending Mass Incarceration and Improving Treatment of Incarceration Impacted Women". Honorable/Reverend Everett Mitchell will be the Keynote Speaker. Peggy West-Schroder will also speak. We will gather at church at 8:45 a.m. to watch the zoom sessions. Please look for additional registration information about this important event.

—-Sandy Butcher



PERSONAL DIGNITY KIT SHOPPING LIST

1 har	id towel	- no ki	itch	en towe	S
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- ☐ 1 washcloth no dishcloths
- ☐ 1 toothbrush (no multipacks)
- ☐ 1 bar soap 3-4 oz.
- ☐ 1 shampoo -12-19 oz.
- 1 deodorant 2-3 oz.(stick, roll-on, or pump)
- ☐ 1 lotion 8-10 oz.
- ☐ 11-gallon resealable plastic bag





BEDDING KIT SHOPPING LIST

- 1 Twin-size Fitted Sheet
- 1 Twin-size Flat Sheet
- 1 Bed Pillow
- 1 Pillow Case
 - Unscented trash bag

Connections Ministries & Opportunities



Keep Oshkosh's Waterways Clean!

ABUMC is participating in the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance's annual Fox RiverWatershed Cleanup Day Saturday, May 4.

Organizers call this northeast Wisconsin's largest volunteer trash cleanup and anticipate than more than 1,600 volunteers will help clean up more than 65 public sites in the Fox-Wolf watershed.

"A watershed is the entire area – land and waterways – that drain to a common source," the organization states. "The Fox-Wolf Watershed includes the geography that drains into the Wolf River, the Upper Fox River, the Winnebago pool lakes, and the Lower Fox River. This water all ends up in the bay of Green Bay, which flows into Lake Michigan and eventually out the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean.

"Our watershed stretches from Crandon to Fond du Lac and from Portage to Green Bay. We can't cover every park in our region, but working together, we can do a lot! Our annual cleanup aims to build a sense of community and increase understanding of the environmental stewardship necessary to improve water quality in our region."

Lisa-Marie Wesenberg, says volunteers must register ahead of time individually at <u>fwwa.org/what-we-do/</u> <u>trash-free-waters/cleanup/</u> There are several sites to choose from, with limited availability at each. She has registered for Oshkosh-WIOWASH Trail behind Riverside Cemetery because it is not far from our church. Another site which has more openings at this time is Oshkosh-Menominee Park. Registration ends Tuesday, 04/23/2024 1:00pm CDT

"Biblically, we are called to care for God's creation," she says. "We live in what used to be called Water City. We are lucky enough to have two lakes and a river in our city. People use them for drinking water, recreation, and to enjoy the beauty of these resources in our city.

"It's important to take care of them and to keep them clean."



Adopt-A-Hwy Crew Needed

ABUMC is responsible for keeping a 2-mile section of Hwy 91 litter-free. Our first highway clean-up of 2024 is scheduled for Thursday, April 18th. We'll meet at church at 8:30 a.m. where we'll receive our safety vests, garbage bags, and instructions. Then we'll carpool out to our site and get busy picking up trash. Please let Lisa-Marie know if you are willing and able to be part of our crew. We should be finished by 11:00. Please dress appropriately; wear sturdy shoes, long pants, & work gloves and bring water. :0)



Be Part of the Day of Caring

Each year in May, the Oshkosh Area United Way hosts Day of Caring, and this year it falls on Wednesday, May 8th from 8-noon. Day of Caring is a community-wide service day with hundreds of volunteers working on projects hosted by local organizations throughout Oshkosh. Participating in Day of Caring is a great way for anyone of any age to lend a helping hand to amazing organizations that are strengthening the community we live and work in. Residents are asked to consider volunteering at the Day of Caring event to give back to the organizations that are doing so much to better the lives of our friends and neighbors. A few examples of volunteer projects include:

- Basic gardening, landscaping, yard or grounds clean-up
- Cleaning and organizing
- Paint prep and painting
- Assisting seniors with various tasks like moving furniture to vacuum, cleaning ceiling fans and light fixtures, etc.
- Assembling 5K participant packets
- Various skilled-based tasks (assisting with proofreading, social media strategy, reviewing HR handbooks, etc.)

The morning kicks off with a delicious free breakfast buffet at 8 a.m. and a few opening remarks from community leaders before volunteers head out to their assigned project sites from 9 a.m to noon. All volunteers will receive a free United Way T-Shirt.

See Lisa-Marie to learn how to sign up.

Deadline to register is 4/19/2024

Join us on April 21, 2024







The 12:34 Concert Series returns!!! Join us for another musical adventure when the Old Oaks Duo performs at ABUMC Sunday, April 21, beginning—you guessed it—12:34! But come before that because we have a potluck following the 10:30 am service. So, come one and come all! Bring your favorite dish or just your appetite!

Old Oaks encompasses the acoustic music of Mount Horeb singer-songwriter, Frank Laufenberg. The music ranges from 12-string renditions of classic tunes like Purple Haze and Heart of Gold to melodious folk-jazz originals. Frank is also passionate about caring for the earth and food. So he fits right in with our worship theme this month.

He frequently is joined by saxophonist Daniel Haschke and upright bassist/vocalist Claire Kannapell. Laufenberg and Haschke also play with the Madison Funk Fusion band Wurk.

We will get a taste of Old Oaks during the worship experiences as they will be the special music guests at 9 and 10:30 am.

To learn more, check out their website at www.oldoaksmusic.com

Check out their audition for NPR Tiny Desk concert series



Sand Volleyball April 14, 2:30—4:30 pm The Bar of Oshkosh 825 N. Washburn Street

Do you know what time it is? It's time for the annual sand volleyball event!

Come out and join us for a few games. Anyone can play, kids (grades 6 & up), and adults. It makes no difference whether you have experience or not. Lots of laughs are had by all. We always appreciate folks coming just to cheer us on, too! Some of us stay afterward to socialize and order some food as well.

Invite your family, friends, and co-workers.





Game Night Saturday, April 27 at 6:30 pm ABUMC—Paine Hall

Everyone is invited!

Join us for game night on 4/27!

We'll have several board games, card games, dice games, and silly games to choose from. It could be a great chance to get to know someone new and have some fun. There are sure to be lots of laughs.

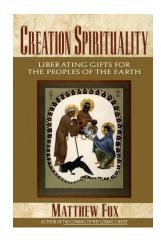
Feel free to bring a snack or treat to share, along with a friend or two!

The more the merrier!

Rumor has it that game connoisseurs, Craig and Barb Blumer, are leading the way!



New Small Group Learning Opportunities



spring group book study led by Pastor Keith Wolf CREATION SPIRITUALITY: Liberating Gifts for The Peoples of The Earth Six Tuesdays at 6:30 PM in the Fireside Room Beginning April 9, 2024

Please inform the church office (920-231-2800) that you plan to participate and provide an email or phone number. Order the book through your favorite bookseller.

For the first session, read the Preface, page ix through page 16. This is a 6-week churchwide study to accompany our spring sermon series. You are invited to go deeper this spring as we uncover the ancient tradition of a creation-centered spirituality that melds Christian mysticism with the contemporary struggle for social justice, feminism, and environmentalism.

Let us honor the earth and the people who inhabit it as the gift of a good and just Creator.



Saving Grace Personal Finance Class

You and anyone you know are invited to join in our next Saving Grace series on managing personal finances. Classes are open to all, and participants need not be associated with ABUMC.

One of the most common causes of stress in life and in relationships is money. Worries, anxiety, confusion, disagreement and control over money! Saving Grace is designed to help you get your life and relationships back on track regarding money. The classes are based on John Wesley's approach to money: Earning, Saving, and Giving.

Feedback from previous participants has been extremely positive--debt paid off early, not waking up in the middle of the night worried about finances, teenagers becoming involved in family spending decisions.

Saving Grace is seven 90-minute sessions, usually once per week but scheduled upon availability. We will start soon after Easter, assuming at least a half-dozen participants have signed up. Classes include videos, workbooks and discussion. Concepts are basic (no math formulas), and no confidential info is shared--just concepts, tools, and approaches.

Please contact the <u>church office</u>, <u>Pastor Ellen</u>, or Andy Irvine soon to sign up!

Resources for Growing Disciples Introducing Amplify Media ~

An online digital library for individuals, small groups and families!

We are pleased to announce the addition of Amplify Media as a tool for discipleship growth at ABUMC! Amplify is a multi-media platform that delivers high quality, searchable content with an emphasis on Wesleyan perspectives for church-wide, group, or individual use on any device at any time. We pay a small monthly fee that gives us access to an amazing online library from the United Methodist Publishing House. It is FREE for individuals, families, and small groups to use.

In order to take advantage of this amazing resource, users need to create an account. And it is as easy as 1-2-3!

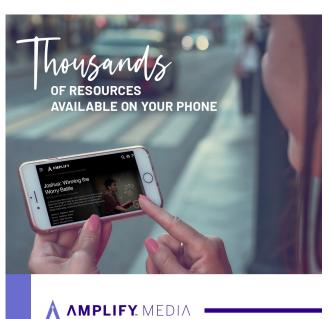
- 1. Go to https://my.amplifymedia.com/
 amplify
- Find the person icon in the upper righthand corner and enter this access code:
 VLMNWJ
- 3. Create your account and explore the site! There's something for everyone.

Once your account is created, you can Browse by topics, speakers, or writers. You can use the Discover tab and explore Recently Added, Most Watched, Featured Studies, and Studies & More. Both of these tabs are located in the upper right corner of the screen.

On the upper left corner of the screen, you can explore what's available in the Channels—just use the drop down menu and select from Amplify Media, Cokesbury Kids, Fresh Expressions, or Everyday Faith.

Got Questions—Talk with Pastor Ellen

SIGN UP FOR YOUR FREE AC-COUNT TODAY!



Living Our Faith & Connecting to Community

DID YOU KNOW...

The United Methodist Church affirms the right to vote for all adult citizens as a basic human right.

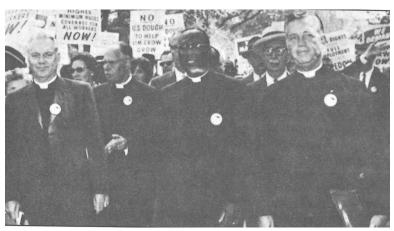
We understand as a general principle that every person is created in the image of God and is therefore of equal standing in society. Recognizing the inherent dignity of every person, United Methodists are committed to upholding human rights for all, including their social and political rights.

Free and fair elections are a pillar of democracy. They are determined in part through a commitment to the following principles:

- \Rightarrow One person, one vote
- ⇒ Fair political representation of all residents
- ⇒ Fair and transparent paths to citizenship
- ⇒ Transparent and secure electoral process

What the United Methodist Church Says:

The United Methodist Church affirms the right to vote for all adult citizens as a basic human right. According to our Social Principles:



National Council of Churches delegation to the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Included in the photo are: Methodist Bishop John Wesley Lord, Presbyterian W.G. Harper McKnight, Methodist Bishop Charles F. Golden, Dr. Ralph Sockman, and Methodist Bishop James K. Matthews.



"We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to free and fair elections...The form and the leaders of all governments should be determined by exercise of the right to vote guaranteed to all adult citizens." (2016 Book of Discipline, Paragraph 164a "Basic Freedoms and Human Rights.")

For more information, check out the General Board of Church & Society at <u>umcjustice.org</u>

April 26 is Arbor Day, celebrating God's creation of trees



Arbor Day is a secular day of observance in which individuals and groups are encouraged to plant trees.

The Arbor Day Foundation says, "We're a global nonprofit inspiring people to plant, nurture and celebrate trees. In the face of a changing world, we're scaling our efforts to plant 500 million trees by 2027 in areas

where they're needed most.

"With a strong network of global partners, a science-based approach, and more than 50 years of planting trees all over the world, we know what it takes to make it happen."

The foundation says adding more trees can help addresses the growing challenges the world faces because of climate change and a warming planet.

"As an efficient, inexpensive source of carbon capture, trees can be a major part of the solution to mitigate the effects of climate change," it says. "Inequality and anxiety wreak havoc on our most vulnerable neighborhoods. As calming canopies, trees can be defenders that provide a sense of inclusivity and well-being. ... Deforestation contributes to hundreds of species becoming endangered. As a keystone element in any ecosystem, trees can be the catalyst that nurtures biodiversity in every new forest."

More information can be found on the website at arborday.org/

Observance April 25 will draw attention to malaria efforts worldwide

World Malaria Day will be observed Thursday, April 25, by all member states of the World Health Organization.

The international observance is commemorated every year recognizes global efforts to control malaria. Globally, 3.3 billion people in 106 countries are at risk of malaria. In 2012, malaria caused an estimated 627,000 deaths, mostly among African children. The day is supported by Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. Read more

about our efforts to help control malaria worldwide at

umcmission.org/topic/imagine-no-malaria/

Ways to Give at ABUMC

April Coins ~ Our Intentional Missional Giving

Founded in 1921, **Red Bird Mission** serves the people of southeastern Kentucky by building healthy, sustainable communities. The need remains critical in this isolated, rural distressed area. Chronic poverty, lack of jobs, poor housing, and rugged mountainous terrain provide obstacles to a fuller life for the residents of this area. Red Bird Mission and Clinic strives to meet these needs through five program areas: education, health, housing improvement, outreach, and economic opportunity.

Local church giving to **Red Bird Mission** is down 40% in the past ten years, which represents \$600,000 less annual revenue to reach the more than 10,000 people living in poverty served by Red Bird.

The coins (and checks and cash) that we contribute during worship in the month of April will benefit **Red Bird Mission**. Additional donations may be made via online giving (abumc.org) in the offering envelopes, or by sending a check to the church office. Please be sure to note that your donation is for **Red Bird**. Thank you.



Don't Forget Those Brushes

We all brush our teeth, right? When we're done with our toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, and floss containers do we throw them in the trash? NO! We bring them to church so that they can be RECYCLED! The TerraCycle recycling bin for oral care waste is outside the smaller door facing the parking lot. Please help us fill it up and keep those items out of the landfill.



Ways to Give at ABUMC



Native American
Ministries Sunday is
April 14, 2024
Thank you for your generous support of this Special Sunday offering.

How To Give At ABUMC

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

To Give In-Person: Envelopes are 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 or 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.**