

abumc.org ...... November 2023

## Celebrate Those Who Have Passed Before Vs



**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.



## From the Heart of Pastor Ellen

#### November, 2023

The Lamb on the Throne will shepherd them, will lead them to spring waters of Life. And God will wipe every last tear from their eyes."

~ Revelation 7.17 MSG

Dear Beloved ~

I find November to be a powerful month in the Christian year. In the *Earn. Save. Give.* stewardship series, we were reminded by John Wesley "to begin with the end in mind." For me, the end that I have in mind is pure love—I confess that I do not have a full vision of what that is or could be, but I trust that God does. As a believer in God's immeasurable love and grace, I trust that wherever I go, I am responding to God's call and God is with me.

November reminds me that I begin with the end in mind.

We begin the month with an All Saints Day celebration. The scripture from Revelation (above) is often used as we remember the saints that have brought us to this point in our lives. They are part of the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. We have been prayed into existence by the saints who have come before us. We are praying the next generations of disciples of Jesus Christ into existence with our prayers. We are holders of the precious stories for just a little while and have a responsibility to pass the stories on.

The same passage could apply to the last Sunday of November when we celebrate Reign of Christ/Christ the King Sunday. This Sunday's celebration marks the completion of creation and the coming reign of Christ. I like to imagine that we are free to be fully and complete as God intended us to be and that LOVE reigns. Once again, I cannot fully define what that looks like, but I believe that we are bearers of the light of Christ.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

~ Galatians 5.22-23

As a "here and not yet." people, we bear witness to this hope in Christ every time we share in the communion

liturgy:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Our journey here is a preparation for the life to come. We bear witness to that belief every time we pray the prayer that Jesus taught:

...on earth as in heaven.

We are a work in progress on a grace-filled journey.

Our journey together is still new. I hope and pray daily that grace abounds as we get to know each other and grow in understanding of God's call upon us. It is and will be an incredible ride!

Love & Peace, Pastor Ellen

## Message and Prayer from Bishop Jung



October 10, 2023



"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5:9

The conflict, war, inhuman oppression, and darkness in what should be the most holy land breaks our hearts. We hope and pray that peace will reign in the land of Jesus Christ's ministry. We hope and pray that we can stop war, stop killing, stop political strife, and become a land of reconciliation where all receive the gift of peace to the whole world. The homeland that Israel envisions must be a land of peace. The dream of the Palestinians, the people who have protected the land for a long time, is also peace. Let us pray with all our hearts that war will disappear from the land and that good news of peace will be heard to bless everyone. Bring peace to that land.

God of Wisdom and Peace, we pray for protecting the innocent, the vulnerable, government leaders, and the military. We pray for You, O God, to be their shield, rear guard, and wall around them (psalm 91). May Your Peace reign. Amen.

The World Methodist Council, Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, and the Methodist Church in Britain work in partnership to run the Methodist Liaison Office based in Jerusalem employing 3 staff members. They have released this statement after the attacks in the region:

We are witnesses to the escalation of violence in the region and we call on Methodist people all over the globe to continue to pray for peace and for an end to the violence.

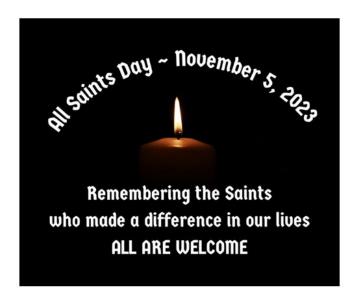
Pray for those who have lost family members and livelihoods, the injured, for those who perpetuate violence and for World Leaders that they may work for peace, the churches and all religious leaders and for those who work for peace in the region.

The situation is complicated, and we recognize the fear and sense of injustice that are felt, but we call on both sides not to resort to further violence and to engage in negotiation to establish a peaceful solution for all who live in the Holy Land.

## What's Up In Worship

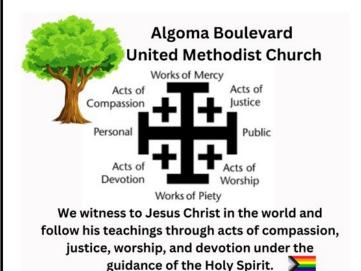
#### Sunday, November 5, 9 & 10:30 am

All Saints Day
Pastors Ellen & Keith Presiding
Revelation 7.9, 14-17
1 John 3.2-3
Communion



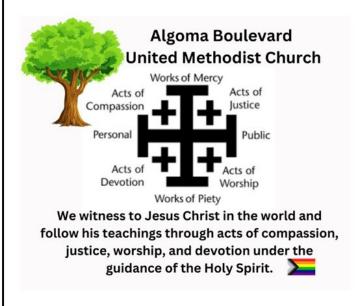
#### Sunday, November 12, 9 & 10:30 am

Quadrants of Our Faith: Exploring the General Rule of Discipleship ~ P &P Means of Grace



#### Sunday, November 19, 9 & 10:30 am

Quadrants of Our Faith: Exploring the General Rule of Discipleship ~ Wholeness



#### Sunday, November 26, 9 & 10:30 am

Thanksgiving Weekend Pastor Keith Wolf Gratitude



# LOOKING AHEAD

The Christmas season is right around the corner and your help is needed to spread the word about the exciting events happening in December at ABUMC. With the support of the Church Council and Committee on Finance, we have purchased 500 Advent Devotional books to be shared among the congregation and with our neighbors. We've got all of the worship opportunities on a label—so the information is all in one place. It's an easy tool to use to invite people to come to worship. Pick up a copy for yourself and at least one for your neighbor, co-worker, family member—whoever you'd like to invite to our December festivities. We've got something for everyone—The Heart That Grew Three Sizes at 9 am; Themes from The Nutcracker at 10:30 am; and A Winter's Grace choir cantata on December 17. (Rumor has it the madrigal singers will be here between services on December 10.)





## Growing Our Faith

#### Growing Our Faith ~ Children and Youth Opportunities

#### For our children:

- Time for Children, Sunday mornings in the 9 am worship service
- Fun Plus One sessions for the children of Read School and our neighborhood
- Upcoming Advent series, The Heart That Grew Three Sizes





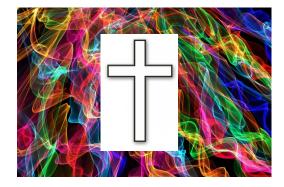
#### For our Youth:



Confirmation meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 7 pm. Using the *Confirm* confirmation materials approved by The United Methodist Church and resources from Pastor Ellen,. The students and their mentors will explore tools to use and topic to discuss in their discipleship journey. Faith development is not contained by walls and each confirmand will have options to participate in Winter or Summer Camp, the 2024 Mission Trip, and the 2024 Wisconsin Annual Conference.



Confirmation 2024 will be celebrated on **World Communion Sunday, October 6, 2024** Please hold Caden, Lilli, and Anna, along with their mentors Mike, Lisa-Marie, Anne, and Papa, and Pastor Ellen in your prayers through this adventure.



Crossfire Youth Group 2nd & 4th Wednesdays 7 pm

Facilitated by Lisa-Marie All Youth Are Welcome!

#### Growing Our Faith ~ Adult Opportunities

#### "First Light: Jesus and the Kingdom of God" Adult Discussion Group

Why were the titles of Caesar Augustus — Divine, Song of God, God from God, Lord, Redeemer, Liberator, and Savior of the World — taken from a Roman emperor on the Palatine hill and given to a Jewish peasant on the Palestine plain? Was it a low lampoon or high treason?

Either way, the Romans were not laughing. What were the priorities of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom? How was the status quo of Roman Imperial theology subverted by the obscure Galilean whose message continues to indict empire today?

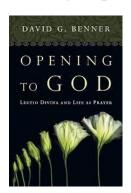
First Light is a 12-session study (with hand-out reading materials and a video presentation) of the historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God with two of the world's leading Jesus scholars on location throughout Galilee and Jerusalem. The reading materials were written by Dominic Crossan who says, "It is all I have to say about Jesus after half a century of study in succinct summary."

The study is held at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays in the Fireside Room. On days the choir sings, the study will begin after the choir members can get to the Fireside Room.

Attendance is limited to 12 participants to encourage good discussion. Please sign up for the discussion group on the lobby table or with Don Nelson, discussion leader, and obtain the reading materials for the first lesson.

## "Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer"

Book discussion group continuing



Prayer is not merely something we do; prayer is what God does in us. Prayer is not just communication with God; it is communion with God. As we open ourselves to God, God does the spiritual work of transformation in us. All of life can be prayer when offered to God in faith and with openness.

Using the four movements of lectio divina, spiritual director David Benner explores prayer as attending, pondering, responding and being. Along the way, he opens us to a world of possibilities for communion with God: praying with our senses, with imagination, with music and creativity, in contemplation, in service and much more.

Learn how prayer can be a way of living your life. Move beyond words to become not merely someone who prays, but someone whose entire life is prayer in union with God.

The group is meeting at 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Nov. 28 in the Fireside Room. The discussion is led by retired pastor Keith Wolf.

Please email Pastor Keith (pastorkeithwolf@gmail.com) if you want to participate.

## ALL SAINTS' DAY

At press time, we are preparing to honor these beloved saints at the worship experiences on Sunday, November 5, 2023. There will be opportunities to share additional names at the time of service. Our prayers are with those who are mourning and miss their loved ones. Thank you, Jaye Alderson for the thoughtful All Saints Day article.

Joe Pease, August 10, 2023 ~ Husband of Dorene Pease Eric Pease, August 10, 2023 ~ Son of Dorene Pease David Amonette, June 12, 2023 ~ Brother of Gail Sullivan Craig Challoner, May 12, 2023 ~ Son of Sandi Challoner Sarah Niebergall, April 16, 2023 ~ Wife of Jeff Green,

Friend of Valois Brothers

Lynne Slat, March 31, 2023 ~ Wife of Chris Slat

Jean Steinbrecher, February 23, 2023 ~ Mother of Deb Madel

Glenn Steinbrecher, May 17, 2022 ~ Father of Deb Madel

Nancy Steinbrecher Severn, June 2021 ~ Sister of Deb Madel

Judy Steinbrecher Thoma, November 2020 ~ Sister of Deb Madel

Jack Propp, October 26, 2020 ~ Husband of Kathy Propp

Jim Savinski, August 28, 2019 ~ Husband of Vickie Savinski,

Father of Sara Dobish,

Grandfather of Alex & Hannah Dobish

Elwyn Long, April 9, 2016 ~ Husband of Shirley Long Ronald Stinnett, February 17, 2004 ~ Father of Deb Nelson Betty Gauger, April 9, 1988 ~ Mother of Lisa-Marie Wesenberg Austin Gauger, March 9, 1980 ~ Father of Lisa-Marie Wesenberg Randi Elizabeth Rasmussen, November 1, 1961 ~ Sister of Ellen Rasmussen



## **All Saints Day**

Celebrating Those Who Have Passed Before Us

All Saints' Day — also known as All Hallows' Day, the Feast of All Saints, the Feast of All Hallows, the Solemnity of All Saints, and Hallowmas — is celebrated in Western Christianity on Nov. 1 by many Protestant churches, such as the Methodist, Lutheran and Anglican traditions, and the Roman Catholic Church. The night before All Saints' Day is known as All Hallows' Eve or Halloween (Hallow is the German word for the Latin sanctus).

In the United Methodist Church, All Saints' Day is celebrated not only to remember all the saints but all Christians, living and deceased, particularly members of the local church congregation who have died during the past year.

This Christian celebration stems from a belief that there is a powerful spiritual bond between those in heaven, the living, and the faithful departed.

In Methodist theology, All Saints Day revolves around "giving God solemn thanks for the lives and deaths of his saints," including those who are "famous or obscure." From the 4th century, a feast day to commemorate all Christian martyrs was held in various places and at various times. By 800, there is evidence that churches in Ireland, Northumbria (England and Scotland), and Bavaria (Germany) held a feast commemorating all saints on November 1, possibly to coincide with a Celtic festival of the dead.

By the 9th century, this date was confirmed by Pope Gregory IV for the entire Frankish Empire, which then developed into the Holy Roman Empire.

### **OBSERVING ALL SAINTS DAY**

#### **AROUND THE WORLD**

**Austria and Bavaria:** Godparents give their godchildren Allerheiligenstriezel, a braided yeast pastry.

**Belgium:** *Tousaint* or *Allerheiligen* is a public holiday. Belgians visit the cemeteries to place chrysanthemums on the graves of deceased relatives.

**France:** It is a public holiday, and flowers — especially chrysanthemums or wreaths — are placed at each tomb or grave.

**Germany:** *Allerheiligen* is a public holiday in five federal states and is categorized as a silent day (stiller Tag) when public entertainment events are only permitted if the serious character of the day is preserved.

Hungary: On this national holiday, people take candles and flowers (especially chrysanthemums) to the tombs or graves of all their loved ones and relatives thus many people travel around the country to distant cemeteries. People who cannot travel may lay their flowers or candles at the main Calvary cross of a nearby cemetery.

**Poland:** On this public holiday and bank holiday, families gather to tend to family graves and the surrounding graveyards, lighting candles and leaving flowers.

**Portugal:** *Dia de Todos os Santos* is a national holiday. Families remember their dead with religious observances and visits to the cemetery. Portuguese children going door-to-door, where they receive cakes, nuts, pomegranates, sweets and candies.

**Spain:** *Día de Todos los Santos* is a national holiday. People from all over the country return to their town or village to lay flowers on the graves of deceased relatives. he play "Don Juan Tenorio" is traditionally performed.

Guatemala: All Saints' Day is a national holiday. Guatemalans make a special meal called *fiambre* made of cold meats and vegetables; it is customary to visit cemeteries and to leave *fiambre* for their dead. It is also customary to fly kites to help unite the dead with the living.

**Mexico:** All Saints' Day coincides with the first day of the Day of the Dead (*Día de Muertos*) celebration, commemorating first children who have died, and the second day all deceased adults.

**Philippines:** Filipinos visit their families' graves to clean and repair the tombs, prayers for the dead are recited, while offerings are made, the most common being flowers, candles, food. Many also spend the day and ensuing night holding reunions at the graves with feasting and merriment.



Hello! We have been busy!! First, United Women in Faith (UWF) hosted a potluck meal on Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2023. You did the cooking, and it was outstanding! The fellowship is always a bonus, too. After the meal, our speaker, Katie Olson from ESTHER-Fox Valley, presented information about some of the things that this group is doing.

ESTHER stands for Empowerment Solidarity Truth Hope Equity Reform. Their mission statement is: "Develop leaders, engage people, and build collective power in the Fox Valley to address economic and social injustices and work for more equitable communities that embrace diversity."

ESTHER aims to bring together people of faith and communities of faith to build community and to identify and act on issues of injustice. ESTHER is an affiliate of WISDOM, the Wisconsin affiliate of GAMALIEL.

This group is responsible for starting the Day by Day Warming Shelter and for advocating for free public bus transportation for Oshkosh students back and forth to school. For more information, I would suggest that you check out their website and their Facebook page.

[<u>esther-foxvalley.org</u> or <u>www.facebook.com/esther.foxvalley</u>]

After the program, we had our business meeting. Thank you to everyone who participated in this event and helped to make it a success.

(Mark your calendars for Tuesday, September 17, 2024, for our next potluck with speaker opportunity.)



On September 23, seven of us traveled to First United Methodist Church in Neenah for the NE District Annual Celebration. It is an opportunity to meet other United Women in Faith, worship together, hear a motivational speaker, and share some excellent food.

It did not disappoint! Martha Boyer was our featured speaker, and she shared with us how one woman made a huge difference in her community bringing children and families to the Methodist Church.

(BTW, our own Pastor Ellen was the featured speaker at the SE District Annual Celebration on September 23.)

ABUMC UWF unit has been asked to host this celebration next year. It will be held **Saturday**, **September 21**, **2024**, and we plan to feature our amazing nativity collection, as well as our pastor. Pastor Ellen was asked by the NE District UWF Leader to be the keynote speaker and she will be speaking on the power of the UMC General Rule of Discipleship: The Quadrants of Our Faith. More details will follow but make sure to save the date on your calendars!

Wisconsin UWF held their Annual Celebration Oct. 13 and 14 in Eau Claire. Lake Street United Methodist Church hosted the event.

On November 21, we will hold our unit meeting at 1 p.m. Barbara Diener-Blumer will lead our Pledge Service for 2024. This is our opportunity to fund our unit and the pledges we make to support the United Women in Faith programs and missions. All support in this important work is appreciated.

We also will hear about the 2024 Reading Program from Jan Nash. Jan has been busy reading many of the new additions to the Reading Program so she can tell us about these books. It's easy to participate by reading one book from each of the five categories over the course of one year. Join us November 21 at 1 p.m. for more information, or speak to Jan Nash.

- Sandy Butcher













#### SEPTEMBER PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

#### Top Row:

- ⇒ Morning food table at First United Methodist Church, Neenah
- ⇒ Group picture with Rev. Rebecca Henry, pastor at Neenah First UMC

#### Middle Row:

- ⇒ Martha Boyer, the featured speaker on the left, and Rose Bohlman on the right
- ⇒ Verna Funcke, Rose Bohlman, Phyll Hill, Ellie Buckley, and Jan Nash at the NE District Annual Celebration.

#### **Bottom Row:**

- ⇒ Grab bags we put together for several charities
- ⇒ We feast!

## Connections @ ABUMC

#### Pizza Pie Success!



A big thank-you to all who ordered pizzas and contributed to our Connections Team fundraiser. We made more than \$1,100 to fund our outreach ministries!

And thank you to our top-notch pizza creators: Nancy and Bill Levesque, Deb Madel, Karen Dustrude, Kellyn Zehner, Dean and Lisa-Marie Wesenberg, and Paula Condor. We all hope you enjoy your pizzas!



#### Day By Day Meal

We will be treating the guests of the Day By Day Shelter with a delicious hot meal on Tuesday, November 28, and we need several volunteers to make it happen. We need folks preparing the meal during the afternoon and we need people to help serve the meal in the evening. We especially invite those who've never experienced the Day By Day Shelter yet. The new facility is really nice and the guests are so appreciative. Please consider joining us in this awesome outreach.



#### What Fits?

Most of us have a few extra hours a week or month that we could fill with rewarding volunteer projects. But what fits? What would be fulfilling for me? What would I be good at? What is God nudging me to do? Following are examples of just a few of the volunteer needs currently available in the Oshkosh community, and there are so many, many more. Do any of these speak to your heart? Are they a good fit? Maybe not. But it is almost guaranteed that there is something out there that's just right for you — you just need to find it.

#### Volunteer Oshkosh

(volunteeroshkosh.org) is a fantastic resource for a vast variety of volunteer opportunities. Or ask Lisa-Marie for assistance.

#### **Volunteer Opportunity Sampling:**

- Hospice Companionship Volunteers
- Christmas in the Air at EAA Museum (lots of tasks)
- Children's Program at Christine Ann Center
- Side Walkers for Horseback Riding Program at BEAMING
- Assembling Marketing Materials, Girls Scouts



## United **Methodist Student Day Sunday**

United Methodist Student Day was the original Special Sunday founded by **United Methodist Church Sunday** Schools who collected offerings to help advance education for their children. The fund originally was established in 1872 as the Children's Fund. Today, United Methodist Student Day Sunday has the same purpose, calling upon the denomination to support their students as they prepare for life by adding knowledge to their faith.

Every year, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry awards an average of \$5.5 million in financial aid to United Methodist students. The offering taken on United Methodist Student Day is one opportunity to support these scholarships. Every dollar received goes toward supporting and educating a new generation of principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.

Sunday, November 26, is United Methodist Student Day Sunday. Please consider an additional offering toward this ministry. Indicate Student Day Sunday on your offering envelope. Thank you!

### **November Offering Coins**

We support Prison Fellowship every year with our Angel Tree program, providing gifts to children of incarcerated parents in our area. This Christian organization also began a program in 2016 called Prison Fellowship Academy.

Located in select prisons across the country, the Prison Fellowship Academy (prisonfellowship.org) takes men and women through a holistic life transformation. They are guided by Prison Fellowship staff and volunteers to lead lives of purpose and productivity inside and outside of prison. Prison Fellowship Academy uses targeted curriculum, compassionate coaches, and restorative community to replace participants' criminal thinking and behaviors with renewed purpose and biblically based life principles.

Graduates complete the yearlong program as change agents and good citizens inside and outside of prison. There are now 101 academies across the United States.

Our offering coins during the month of November will benefit this worthwhile ministry. Thank you for your generosity.



#### **Report from the Trustees**

The Trustees have been very active in 2023 with normal day-to-day operations of the church as well as Phase I of the Capital Campaign Projects.

**Capital Campaign Projects** 

- \* City of Oshkosh bill for Algoma Boulevard road and sidewalks was paid in full in October.
- \* Two boilers in the basement were replaced: one for Paine Hall and the other for the sanctuary. Gartman has been working on this project since August and completed it in late October. There are new piping and valves, two new boilers and a water softener unit; and asbestos had to be removed.
- \* New security system with Per Mar, including new locks in the door and key fob entry.
- \* Lightbulbs in the sanctuary were replaced for temporary improvement of lighting. Full replacement of light fixtures is still on the list for Phase II or Phase III.

#### **Projects**

- \* Cut down two trees by the driveway and Read School. Two more may have to be cut down in the spring of 2024.
  - \* Replaced cracked window on main entrance.
  - \* New hot water heater for the school area.
- \* (6) new round tables with cart added to increase the number of tables we have for events. Also replaced legs on some tables.
- \* Upon fire inspection, upgraded lighting in the basement and replaced exit signs throughout the church to be code-based.
  - \* New AC unit for Paine Hall installed.

Other projects remain for the end of 2023, and the Trustees will start 2024 with discussion of Phase II projects under the Capital Campaign. — Steve Zehner







### **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 <a href="https://www.abumc.org/giving">https://www.abumc.org/giving</a>—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.** 



## 2024 Commitment Cards

On October 29, members and friends of ABUMC were asked to make a financial commitment to support the ministries in and at work through the people of ABUMC. This card is also known as an Estimate of Giving Card. We ask that you return your completed card to the office by **November 12**, **2023**. Cards can be picked up in the office or in the sanctuary or mailed to you. Please let us know. Thank you for your prayerful discernment and generosity.

#### CIRCUIT RIDER

Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church 1174 Algoma Boulevard Oshkosh, WI 54901

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Circuit Rider is published monthly for the members and constituents of Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church, 1174 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh, WI 54901-3596. Your contributions (due by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month), comments and suggestions are welcome and appreciated.

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