



ALGOMA BLVD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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.*

Christmas Cheer!

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. And we did just that! Close to 40 people showed up to spread some Christmas cheer and sing carols on the church lawn Dec. 19. Many of our church neighbors joined in, including a couple new to the neighborhood who dressed in early 20th century garb. Several more strolled over and listened from across the street. Accompanied by our beautiful organ, with the songs pre-recorded by Ginny, we filled the night air with traditional Christmas carols along with a few fun favorites, like *Frosty the Snowman* and *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. Thank you to all who joined in! Who knows? Perhaps this will become a tradition (*without masks!*)...



KIDS AND YOUTHS

The First Christmas Christmas Pageant

We weren't about to let the pandemic dampen our Christmas spirit. The Christmas pageant must go on! Our Faith Factory families each came to church in late November and early December, along with Lisa-Marie and Ginny, to have kids recite their lines and sing their solos so they could be recorded for the final video. Parts of the Christmas story were recorded piecemeal and none of it made much sense while it was being done bit by bit. But with Katie's assistance, all of the parts were edited into one adorable telling of the wonderful story of the Christ child's birth. If you didn't get a chance to see it, you may find it on our church YouTube page Thanks to all for helping make our pageant happen! **Super job, kids!!**



Missions Update

In November, our church participated in Operation Christmas Child, a program through Samaritan's Purse. We collected toys, school supplies, hygiene products, etc., to fill shoeboxes to be shipped to children in faraway places who would otherwise receive very little for Christmas. With the Faith Factory and middle school kids unable to help pack the boxes, the Numrich family took on the task. Through your generosity, they packed 85 boxes that will generate 85 big smiles on Christmas morning!



ABUMC also took part in the annual Angel Tree mission, a program of Prison Fellowship. Children from 19 local families

received gifts from an incarcerated parent through the generosity of our givers. There were a total of 44 gifts donated! What a blessing to these kids during this difficult time, when they will spend Christmas without their mom or dad.



RTFV Team

Rebuilding Together Fox Valley is a nonprofit organization that provides home repairs and updates to low-income, senior, disabled and veteran homeowners at no cost to them. They partner with businesses, volunteer groups and individual volunteers to make homes safe and healthy. From the RTFV website:

At Rebuilding Together Fox Valley, our volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Together, we accomplish more than home repairs; we preserve affordable homeownership, reduce substandard housing in the community, and improve not just the homes themselves, but the families and surrounding neighborhood as well. When you volunteer, you make a lasting impression on both the people you serve and the people you serve with.

Depending on your interest and skill level, we will place you in a position where you can be most effective.

We are excited to be assembling an ABUMC team to be a part of this necessary ministry in our community and hope to regularly engage in projects that will enhance the lives of our neighbors and allow them to live more safely and securely. If you would like to join our team, contact Lisa-Marie. No specific skills are necessary, just a willingness to put in some time and a bit of elbow grease.



Loving Our Church Home - *Virtually*

We have been recording a prayer tour of our building. It has been so long since we gathered together at ABUMC. We miss it and we miss one another. If you haven't seen the videos, check them out and pray for our building as we ask God how we can use our space to grow in faith and seek new ways to love God and love all of our neighbors. Go to the link below to watch and pray: <https://bit.ly/3IS43MI>.



Love to read?

Jan Nash will present "Books Worth Reading," a review of some of the best books on the United

Methodist Women's Reading List. Jan will tell us how we can participate in the Reading Program this year. There also will be an opportunity to ask Jan questions.

We will gather around our computers on Monday, Jan. 18, for our first Zoom meeting of the new year. Please let Kate know if you would like to receive an invitation to the meeting at katey1812@gmail.com

We will have a brief business meeting after the program.

You can have coffee and cookies, just like you would if we could be together in the Fireside Room. However, you will have to get treats yourself.

In February, we will again make valentines for those who would love a paper "hug." Judy Burton will provide supplies and a pattern for you to follow. If you have your own supplies, you can follow the pattern or design your own card. If you want to volunteer to make one or more cards, you must contact Judy at jjburton2@hotmail.com or 920-420-7208 so she can get your supplies to you. Be sure to mail your cards by Feb. 10 to the name and address provided for you.

Happy New Year!



With the help of our Lay Leadership Development Team, we have several new people serving on committees and teams in the coming year. We still have some vacancies to fill, but we are grateful for those who have already agreed to serve.

Thanks to all of those who serve and lead in the life of the congregation as well as for those who have finished their terms. We are grateful for the prayerful leadership, time, and expertise that has been shared.

This is a working list. Please contact Pastor Cathy if you see any mistakes.

Lay Leaders

Sheri Graeber
Anne Fields

Ad Council

Ryan Ames, *Chair*
UMW representative,
Rachel Benton
Don Nelson
Scott Ceman

Also lay leaders & all committee chairs

Nancy Irvine
Andy Irving
Nancy Levesque
Sheri Graeber
Anne Fields

Mission

Anne Fields
Vickie Savinski
Chuck Davis
Richard Graeber
Sharon Kardoskee

Finance

Andy Irvine
Claudia Montee
Carolyn Barthel

Newsletter

Jaye Alderson
Cindy Overton

Stewardship

Nancy Levesque
Anne Fields
Kelsey Nelson
Christy Grund
Deb Nelson
Lesa Zehner

Audit

Barby Ames
Scott Ceman
Mugs Mains
Erne Mains

Staff Parish Relations

Nancy Irvine
Sheri Graeber
Anne Fields
Karen Destruede
Diane Rasper
Craig Blumer
Sara Dobish
Barby Ames

Trustees

Steve Zehner
Jim Chitwood
Rob Reinders
Wayne Wegner
Cindy Brun



Happy New Year!

A couple of clergy colleagues of mine celebrate Epiphany by sharing “star words” with their congregation.

Epiphany is the celebration of the Magi bringing gifts to the Christ Child. This year it is on January 6th. The magi were inspired to follow the star so that they might witness something beyond their experience, beyond their imagination. They brought gifts to the child, but they also received gifts. Their lives were changed.

As we enter a new year, we are reminded to follow the star and let our lives be changed by the one who came to bring hope, peace, love and joy to all people.

The list of star words is vast. They are generally uplifting, aspirational, inspirational words like - kindness, caring, sharing, giving, compassion, gentleness, acceptance, self-control, restraint. They can also be challenging in ways that push us to action. Words like: justice, action, zeal, determination, responsiveness, resilience.

Each person gets the gift of a word for the year. It is intended to focus our spiritual lives and help us move toward the Christ Child and living out our faith in new ways.

We have spent much of the year praying Mark 12:30-31 -

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”



Our focus and our prayers have changed how we think about how we love and serve God, and how we reach out with love to our neighbors. Especially in an unusual year, we have had the gift of prayer directing our actions.

As we enter 2021, it is my prayer that our focus on loving God and loving our neighbors continues to guide us as individuals and as a congregation. As I consider and give thanks for the many gifts of our congregation, I also pray that each one of us can push ourselves to receive a gift from the star, the magi, the Christ Child. As we continue to live and grow in faith, I pray we find new ways to be challenged, new ways to serve, new ways to change the world with God's love.

A clergy friend assigned me the word “Joy” for 2021.

So I send you my joy, my prayers, and my hope for you in the New Year.

With God's Grace and Peace,

Pastor Cathy





Inside the Open Door

Anyone interested in borrowing materials can call Rachel Benton at 920-420-3121; or Jan Nash at XXX. They will arrange to meet you at the church for pickup or can deliver materials to local homes.

Adults:

Threading My Prayer Rug: One Woman's Journey from Pakistani Muslim to American Muslim, by Sabeeha Rehman (REH EM) is a helpful understanding about the religious experiences of Rehman. The book is on the shelf in the Open Door Library featuring books from the United Methodist Women's reading program. This book may help use to understand the strife currently occurring in France.

The book begins when Sabeeha is enrolled in a master's program in a college in Pakistan. One day when she returns from college, she is told that she is engaged to be married to a Pakistani man doing his residency in the United States. It is interesting to discover how complex this arrangement is.

As a young bride in the United States, she realizes how much difference there is between the two cultures — the USA is not like it is shown in the movies.

The Pakistani people, changes made and eventually the leadership Sabeeha takes in her Muslim and American communities are described. Enjoy!

Children:

January is the month for lots of snow. And when it comes, you will want to read

Snowflake Bentley, by Jacqueline Martin (J 551 Mar). This is the true story of Wilson Bentley, a scientist living in Vermont. He was fascinated with snowflakes, but they melted before he could study them. Finally he had a camera with a microscope, allowing him to eventually photograph snowflakes and other items in nature. Three of his pictures are included on the back page.

God in Between, by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (J 211 Sas), is an unusual folktale-like story where people live a closed-in, barren life and wonder how to make it better. They heard about God and sent two wise people out to search for Him. They could not find Him anywhere in the world. He was closer than they ever imagined.

Cookies; Bite-Size Life Lessons, by Amy Krouse Rosenthal (J FIC Ros), is a delightful book full of examples of good behavior for children to learn. Each page uses cookies to show how to be patient, fair, modest, trustworthy, compassionate, polite etc. The characters are animals and children from different cultures. The book makes it easy for children to understand the concepts.

— Rachel Benton and Jan Nash

Keep In Ccontact!

Katie will now be in office from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. She can be reached at 920-231-2800 or at admin@abumc.org.

The previous emergency phone number has been discontinued.



Rachel Benton

Lends Helping Hand to ABUMC

Rachel Benton turned 90 on Dec. 14, a birthday she lovingly shares with her sister, Jan., who is four years younger.

But it's still full steam ahead for Rachel in contributing her time and energy to ABUMC.

Rachel was born in Iowa and was actively involved in Christian education there. Her husband, Bob, was state superintendent of public instruction.

They came to Oshkosh in the fall of 1987 when Bob became dean of the College of Education and Human Services at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. In searching for a new church home, they visited all three United Methodist churches in Oshkosh.

The overwhelming friendliness at ABUMC tipped the scales, Rachel says. When they first visited, they were greeted at the door by "dear Elmer" Harvey, the standard greeter at the door at the time. He introduced them around and invited them to attend a scheduled presentation. "There was no way we could say 'no' to Elmer," Rachel says. Within a week, they were visited at home by a church member to formally

welcome them to the church as well as by Pastor Gordon Lind.

Lind soon had Rachel training with him to lead Disciple Bible Study.

Over the years, Rachel has been involved with Chancel Choir; Administrative Council; the Red Cross blood drive; and United Methodist Women where she has served as district officer, conference officer and for the past six years as president.

She helped turn the Open Door Library from a small book corner in Paine Hall to the dedicated space where it is today. She and Jan Nash select new materials for adults and children of all ages, and they offer reviews and reading suggestions.

"It gives children and adults opportunities to read about their faith," Rachel says. "It's a resource to help people grow in their faith."



Next Drive-In Worship: January 10th 9am

Weather permitting.

ABUMC.ORG

or church facebook page for cancellations.

CIRCUIT RIDER

Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church
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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 15th of the month), comments and suggestions are welcome and appreciated.

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