



HILLTOP HERALD-FEBRUARY 2021

MONONA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH & IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA EL LIBERTADOR

NO IN-PERSON GATHERINGS

We will not be meeting for worship or group activities for the time being. The church office is open 9am – 2pm. Pastor Laura and Mark Buffat are available for pastoral care by phone. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you are in need of anything. We have **cloth face masks** available in the entryway to pick up if you are in need of one.

ASH WEDNESDAY/LENT

"Lent in a Bag"

At their January meeting, the Worship committee discussed, rather than giving up something for Lent (since it already feels as if we have given up so much already) that we instead invite people to reach out to one another during Lent to build connections and relationships. As a result, our overall theme for Lent will be "Cultivating a Ministry of Presence," exploring ways that we can be fully present to God, our Self, our Church, our Neighbor, and the World.

Church families will receive a "Lent in a Bag" resource that will be hand delivered to households so that you will have in your hands everything you need to fully participate together in this Lenten journey. The "Lent in a Bag" resource will contain weekly scriptures, reflections, and activities suitable for all ages and family groups. We are super excited and look forward to your thoughts and feedback!

**Ash Wednesday Worship, February 17
and Mid-Week Reflections February 24, and March 3, 10, 17, & 24
On Zoom @ 7:00pm
Meeting ID: 819 6025 7891
Passcode: 787305**

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER FOR LENT

Renewing God, in this season of Lent, we ask that you use these 40 days to break through our lives, our church, and our community with new ideas, new hope, and the future you desire for us. Break through anything that might hold us back and use your church, gathered or scattered, for unimagined new purposes. AMEN

SEEDS OF PEACE BLOOD DRIVE

Please support our local blood drive to be held at St. Luke's Episcopal Church (4011 Major Ave, Madison) on **Tuesday, February 2** from 1-6pm. Go to redcrossblood.org to register. An appointment is needed in order to donate. If the appointments are full, please check to see if other sites are open.

PASTOR'S COLUMN

"Pandemic Thoughts"

When I talk to my mother about the pandemic, she typically just wants it to be "over" so things can "get back normal." Her words carry a mountain of grief for the loss of the familiar patterns and predictable freedoms that we all have experienced in the last year. It feels like an unraveling and that we have been left with a pile of loose threads. I share her grief and yet I also know that "over" and "get back to normal" are not ever going to happen.

Coming out of this pandemic is going to be very unlike how we all experienced going into it. A year ago, the pandemic arrived suddenly, unexpected, an invisible threat that seemed to materialize out of nowhere. Life as we knew it changed in a heartbeat – schools, businesses, and travel all seemed to shut down with the flip of a switch.

So much has happened – and not happened – in the last 11 months. We now have two vaccines that are being rolled out in our community. We celebrate with family and friends as they are approved to receive their shots – it feels a bit like winning a lottery! We can see light ahead and it is natural to want to rush to reach the end of this long dark tunnel.

I have to tell you that the light we see is not a switch. There is no "switch" that will bring us out of the pandemic with the same suddenness that we fell into it. It will take time for vaccines to be administered. It will take time for each individual's immunity to become active. It will take time to practice being together, time to build back trust, time to agree on new rules and behaviors.

I think of the year ahead as "emergent," like a seed breaking through the ground, or a butterfly breaking free of a cocoon. I see and feel an expectant energy that God is using to help us "breakthrough" and create a path forward. I see a strong resiliency in a church that has weathered other storms and a faith to step into the unknown to meet today's challenges.

We are turning a corner and we have new, important work to be done. We have much to learn about how we re-weave the threads that have come undone. We have choices ahead for how we put our lives and communities back together. We have (maybe) a differing sense of what is essential now. We have (maybe) new perspectives on how technology can – and cannot – help us connect, learn, grow, and thrive.

I am excited that at our January Ad Council meeting last night, the leadership agreed to begin conversations on who we are as a church and how we might choose to use this year of emergence. Look for more information coming soon!

In the meantime, stay safe, wear your mask, wash your hands, limit your physical "bubble," and continue to be present with one another and with the church virtually as best you are able.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Laura

BIBLE PASSAGES & THEMES 10:00AM ONLINE SERVICE

February 7 - Mark 1:29-39; "Jesus, Our Healer"

February 14 - Mark 9:2-9; "Shiny Jesus Sunday"

February 17 (Ash Wednesday @ 7:00pm) – 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10
"Ministry of Presence"

February 21 - Genesis 1:24-31, Romans 12:1-2; "Being Present to God"

February 28 - Genesis 3:21-24; Romans 12:3; "Being Present to Self"



YARD SIGNS

We received our yard signs that say Together Online. You are welcome to purchase one for \$13 to display in your yard. Please contact the church office to reserve your sign.

OUR WEBSITE

Check out our improving website: www.mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org

- Join us for virtual Worship services on Sunday mornings at 10am by clicking the link on the front page of our website.
- We have a **Giving** tab on our website to make a donation with your credit card or through your checking account.

BOOKS IN THE ENTRY

We have some books from our library and previous Adult Sunday School classes that you are welcome to take, read and return. The UMW book shelf is also available to check out a book.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUNDAYS 11:30am

The Ten Commandments by Michael Coogan

This book looks at the origin of the Ten Commandments, what they meant at the time of the Old Testament, and what the actual wording of the Ten Commandments is in the Bible. Coogan wrote the book at least in part because he felt the Ten Commandments have been misrepresented on the monuments erected by conservative Christians.

This book is available from a variety of booksellers and in a variety of formats. Contact the church office to get on the Zoom reminder list.

MISSION OF THE MONTH - *St. Stephen's Food Pantry*

About the Food Pantry

Families throughout Monona and the greater Madison area rely on the food provided by the St. Stephen's Food Pantry. The pantry provides a four-day supply of food to about two dozen households each Monday to Thursday. Clients may visit the pantry once every two weeks. St. Stephen's offers a 'choice' pantry, which means that clients do their own shopping, selecting only the items they will use. Choice honors our clients' dignity and eliminates the waste of unused items. **However, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the St. Stephen's Food Pantry is open for PICKUP by reservation only, M-TH, 11:30am-1pm.**

There are many simple ways to help the St. Stephen's Food Pantry.

- Remember the Food Pantry families when you shop for your own family. Donations of food, personal items, paper products, baby food, and diapers are gratefully received. Monetary donations are also needed to supplement donated items, and volunteers are vital to keeping the Pantry operating efficiently.
- Consider donating some of your time to shop, stock shelves, prepare perishable food items for distribution or assist clients with the pantry shopping. To be a part of this ministry call the St. Stephen's office at (608) 222-1241.
- Volunteers are needed to pick up day-old bakery and other items from area stores. It is a one-hour commitment. Contact Dick Benzine at 608-221-1241 x14 to learn more.
- Volunteers are needed to pick up produce donated at the Monona Farmers Market on Sundays. It is an approximately one-hour time commitment.
- Contact Dick Benzine at 608-221-1241 x14 to learn more.

Consider supporting St Stephen's Food Pantry during this time of great need for many families. Please mark your checks or on-line donations "St. Stephen's Food Pantry". The mission this month will replace our **Souper Bowl of Caring** that we usually do on the first Sunday in February.

Thank you for your generous support of this mission.
The Mission Team

URGENT REQUEST FOR SCHENK SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Our Seeds of Peace churches are continuing to support Schenk Elementary School through the school adoption partnership. Many of our Schenk families are facing the most difficult and devastating times of their lives. Some are having to seek community resources for the first time ever, and others are barely able to make ends meet. Another need in this time of staying safer at home and avoiding spreading germs are cleaning supplies. These can be expensive in a monthly budget that is stretched.

The School Adoption Partnership Committee would like to help Schenk families with this ongoing need, when cleaning is vitally important with COVID and flu season upon us.

From now until **February 12**, we hope that Seeds of Peace congregations will collect basic cleaning supplies like the following items to be delivered to Schenk:

hand soap	dish soap	disinfecting wipes	paper towels
sponges	wash cloths	toilet bowl cleaner	garbage bags
all-purpose spray cleaner			

Please bring your donations to the church and put them in the Schenk bin in front of the church office. Thanks you for your generosity.

CARING COORDINATOR COLUMN

The subtle (and at times not so subtle) malaise of COVID-19 stress, fear, anxiety, fatigue, and isolation continue to affect so many of us. Are you or someone you know experiencing feelings of mental or emotional exhaustion? Other life stressors? During these challenging times, we all are facing stress in new and varied ways. Please know you do not have to go through it alone! If you or someone you know would like to have a compassionate, listening ear to talk about it and think together about coping mechanisms, please contact me. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide care for you or anyone in our church or community who may benefit from someone caring for them and listening to their concerns, anxiety, or stressors. Telephone care and video connecting are available. If you have any questions or think this might be a good idea for you or someone you know, please contact me at (608)335-5063 or markbmumc@gmail.com.

Our Casserole Ministry continues to be a blessing to many within our church family. There is nothing quite like a hot homemade casserole to warm the home and soul during these cold winter days. Please reach out to me if you know of a need within our church family or community. Also, it is time once again to restock our freezer with casseroles. Please consider making an extra meal or two. Place them in nonreturnable containers (tin or plasticware) and mark each container "Casserole Ministry" along with a note describing the meal, date made, and any special cooking instruction. You can drop them off at church during office hours, placing them in the kitchen freezer.

Never hesitate to contact me with caring needs that you know of within our church family or nearby neighborhoods and communities.

Peace and Blessings,
Caring & Coordinating, Mark Buffat

IN SYMPATHY

Our sympathy goes to Elgin Waugh and his family upon the death of his sister in Arizona.

ALTAR FLOWERS

We welcome donations of flower for our altar on Sundays. If you would like to give flowers on a particular Sunday, please contact the church office. They may be dropped off on Fridays during office hours, 9am-2pm. Thanks for brightening up our worship space.

MADISON JAIL MINISTRY UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who has donated winter coats for the Madison Jail Ministry. There is no longer a need for coats but there is a need for men's clothing. There is a bin located by the office for your donation. Thank you for your help in supporting this mission.

Marilyn Hearden

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR DONATIONS

Thank you for providing 14 boxes of food for River Food Pantry from our Reverse Advent Calendar program in December. Thanks also to Tim Eberle for delivering the boxes. It was a fun and creative way to help replenish the supplies at the food pantry.

THANK YOU

Thanks, so much, to all who sent cards, messages, and made telephone calls, for my fantastic "90th" birthday celebration. I was overwhelmed and it has had me smiling ever since. I have been very blessed indeed.

Love to all, Milly Pearson

THANKS FOR MISSION OFFERINGS DURING 2020

SPECIAL UNITED METHODIST OFFERINGS:

Human Relations Day	\$	265
UMCOR Sunday		100
Golden Cross Sunday		300
Peace with Justice		30

MUMC MISSION GIVING:

Dane County Immigrant Assistance		197
St. Stephen's Food Pantry		831
Goodman Community Center		288
Human Welfare Fund		1,625
River Food Pantry		1,150
Atwood Pantry		275
Northcott Neighborhood House		320
Backpack Meals		270
Road Home		330
Giving Tree		1,025
Additional Food Pantry		1,425
School Supplies		310
UMCOR		365
UMCOR Tornado Relief		20
Additional Human Welfare Fund		1,675
Project Home		100

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Czerepinski Scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior of a local high school who is a member of Monona UMC. The Price scholarship gives preference to graduating seniors and members of Monona UMC, although others continuing their education may be considered. All applicants will be evaluated on the basis of academics (40%), community service (20%), service to the church (20%) and moral character (20%). The awards are to help with tuition, books and supplies.

The Czerepinski fund was established by the estate of Henry Czerepinski, a member of this congregation. The Price endowed scholarship was established by long-time members, Alton and Roma Price.

Applications, with instructions, can be picked up at the church office or emailed to you. The applications are due back in the church office by **Wednesday, March 31.**

JAVA JIVE - STATS FOR 2020 CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU

1- We are starting our 17th year of this UMW Authentic Fair Trade (AFT) Mission. This past COVID year, we sold \$9,000 of Equal Exchange (EEx) AFT products, that s \$2,000 MORE than last year (rounded numbers). You are Amazing!! I just received this quote in an e-mail from Bethany at EEx in their Interdenominational department: “In 2020 Monona UMC was the top Methodist Church (of 295 churches) participating in the UMCOR Coffee Project. In 2019 there were 850 U.M. churches participating. Of about 6,500 interdenominational congregations, MUMC was ranked #6 based on purchases, which, especially during a pandemic year, is a huge accomplishment and we sincerely THANK each of you for your support.”

2- Thankful for the General Conference of the UMC. In 2004 they voted to partner with EEx in their interfaith division. In this partnership with UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) EEx sends 15 cents of every pound sold by UMC to UMCOR Small Farmer Mission. There are multiple interdenominational congregations that participate in this Social Justice Mission. Together we help these small farmers stay on their land and farm with sustainable methods that do not increase climate change, but are affected by it.

3- EEx co-op demonstrates an equitable democratic model for business. The ratio of EEx top to bottom pay is 5 to 1. A top employee said if they make more than 6% profit they feel they aren't paying the farmers enough for their product. The ratio of CEO pay in about 300 large corporations is 300 to 1.

4- Our protocol that is set up for purchasing products has worked safely for you folks to come and purchase your products at your convenience. We are thankful that the Church chose to be open from 9am-2pm, Monday-Friday. Many churches are not open at all.

5- Thanks to Team Members Deb Munroe and Polly Brandes who unpack the big shipments of products and stock and price items.

Thanks to following team members who were helpful in keeping the Mission running prior to Covid shutdown: Jackie Hull, Linda Jackson, Karelyn Hopkins, Jean Van Dreel, Jan Wanek, Marilyn Hearden, Barb Helsel, Sally Buffet, Sally Weidemann and Peggy Traver. And Joy Newman our excellent treasurer, for “Keeping the Books”. And Kay DeBaal for super administrative help.

THANKS again for your faithful participation. Our Faith Purchasing Power brings good to many and we are connected to a greater good. Thanks be to God we here at MUMC may be a part of this mission to help God's People and Wonderful Creation.

Kay Mackie- a UMW Authentic Fair Trade Team coordinator - this is not a fundraiser, EEX sells to us at wholesale prices and we pass it on to you folks.

RIVER FOOD PANTRY

The River is currently accepting 18-count egg cartons until further notice. Also, The River is NOT accepting clothing or household items. If you have items to donate, please check with either Agrace or Boomerang. You are welcome to drop off egg cartons, paper bags, non-perishable food, or personal hygiene items at church daily from 9am until 2pm.

IN 2021 "LET'S TALK ABOUT RACISM"

February is "Black History Month." Although its origins date back to the early 20th century, President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Not simply an opportunity to lift up the lives of a handful of black heroes and heroines, it is a prophetic call to more fully understand the racial history of our nation and how it impacts the lives of ALL people today.

Following on the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many other Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and the rise of white supremacy and attack on our nation's capital, we have chosen this year to explore the topic of "racism," researching and learning about racial justice issues and sharing our new understandings in honest discussions with one another. As we engage in these intentional "courageous conversations," we hope not only to learn how to change our ingrained cultural behaviors toward people of color and become less fearful and more welcoming and inclusive, but also to advocate for justice for all people in our community.

We continue our overview of systemic racism in our country, using a five-week discussion of the book *Stamped: Racism, Anti-Racism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi which began on January 28th.

Whether or not you were able to attend Session 1, we invite you join us on Thursday nights at 7:00pm on Zoom.

- January 28 – Section 1: 1415-1728, Chapters 1-4
- February 4 – Section 2: 1743-1826, Chapters 5-10
- February 11 – Section 3: 1826-1879, Chapters 11-14
- February 18 – Section 4: 1868-1963, Chapters 15-20
- February 25 – Section 5: 1963-Today, Chapters 21-28

Of the many books on this topic that are currently available, this is one of the most accessible in explaining the history of racism and of how the continuing oppression of black people has been perpetuated in our country in spite of the fact that slavery was legally abolished in 1865.

If you want a deeper dive, Pastor Laura has begun creating a Virtual Classroom with a variety of additional books, movies, talks, and interviews that lift up black voices and expand our understanding of our shared history. The Virtual Classroom will be available from the church website and Facebook page beginning February 1.

We are all on a journey of creating the kind of beloved community that we find in Jesus' teachings. The Committee on Church & Society hopes these discussions and resources help us all explore, learn, and grow together.

Weekly discussion on Zoom at the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88600931200?pwd=ZmlHRWYrU3Jpb2JndDdHbWg3WIRFdz09>

Meeting ID: 886 0093 1200

Passcode: 479075

WISCONSIN UM CAMPS HIRING SUMMER STAFF

Wisconsin United Methodist Camps are currently hiring summer staff. Positions include Camp Counselors, Support Staff, and Healthcare Coordinators. If you know of people who may be suited for these roles, please encourage them to apply at <https://wiumcamps.org/about-us/employment/>

JUST BAKERY

We can still enjoy the wonderful goodies from Just Bakery. Search for “Just Bakery” online to view their many products. You may call 608-598-0420 to place your order. Due to COVID-19 their store front is no longer open but their products are available for delivery in Dane County for a \$5.00 charge or you may pick up your order curbside on Saturdays (9:00 - 2:00) at 1708 Thierer Rd. Madison.

AGRACE OFFERS FREE VIRTUAL GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

From January to May, Agrace will host free, bi-weekly online family grief support groups. For details or to register, visit agrace.org/supportgroup or call (608) 327-7135.

EASTER FLOWERS

Flowers on the altar Easter Sunday add to the beauty of the day. We have a variety of flowers available for you to purchase. You may take your plant home during the week of April 5.

Please return this form with a check for your total flowers ordered to the church office by **Sunday, February 11. Due to the short time frame, please email the office with your purchase information so we can be watching for your form.** If you have questions call the church office (222-1633).

___ **Lilies** \$16.00ea

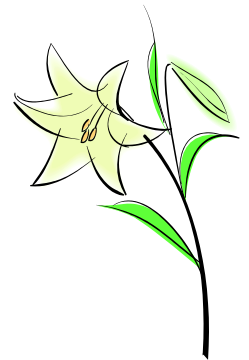
___ **Azaleas** \$34.00ea
___pink, ___purple, ___white

___ **Mums/Daisy** \$17.00ea
___yellow, ___white, ___lavender

___ **Hydrangeas** \$38.00ea
___pink, ___blue

___ **Tulips** \$16.00ea
___red, ___yellow, ___pink, ___white

___ **Daffodils** \$16.00ea



Donor _____

In Honor of _____

OR

In Memory of _____

\$ Financial Report \$

Cash Flow December 31, 2020

<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Income	\$ 31,856	\$ 321,208
General Operating Expenses	30,420	274,182
Net Surplus (Shortfall)	\$ 1,436	\$ 47,026

A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE GIVING IS LOVE AND LOVE IS GIVING

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

“God loves a cheerful giver.” Why do you give? Why do you put money in the plate? Why did you sign up for EFT? Is it to keep the lights on? Is it out of obligation? Is it because “it is just the thing you do”?

In this month of February, when consumer products turn red, chocolate, and velvety, society asks us to think about love. We give gifts to others because we love them. Could it be that we give in church (online) because of **Love**?

We are called to give to God because God **loves** us. We are called to give to God because we **love** God. We are called to give, not begrudgingly, but cheerfully! When we give, we are saying, “I love you God!” We are not saying, “Fine, here you go God.”

Why do you give? Look inside of yourself right now. Be honest. Why do you give? When the plate passes you, what goes through your mind? In this time of online giving, has your giving changed? Have you been giving more or less? More or less often? Why? Always remember, you cannot out give God!

God loves us and has, does, and will do so much for us. So, in response, we give back to the Lord. We give out of LOVE.

Rev. Krystal Goodger,
Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, 888-903-9863 or wumf@wumf.org

MONONA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

606 NICHOLS ROAD
MONONA, WI 53716

The HILLTOP HERALD is produced monthly for distribution to the members and friends of Monona United Methodist Church & Iglesia Metodista Unida El Libertador.

Monona UMC Church office 222-1633 (Fax 222-2395); Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Homepage www.mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org

Pastor Laura Crow 608-616-2325 pastorlauramumc@gmail.com

Kay – secretarymumc@sbcglobal.net

Mark – markbmumc@gmail.com

Virtual Worship 10:00am

Iglesia Metodista Unida El Libertador 514-9470

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esbe2013.eb@gmail.com