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January 2024

CHRIST
METHODIST CHURCH
UNITED
Grace In The City

THE NEW

SPIRIT



Join us for worship every Sunday at 9am & 11am In-Person or Online

[Facebook.com/cumethodist](https://www.facebook.com/cumethodist)

[YouTube.com/ChristUnitedMethodistChurchRochesterMN](https://www.youtube.com/ChristUnitedMethodistChurchRochesterMN)

Pastor's Pen

WITH PASTOR JENNY



³¹ Jesus said to those who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teaching." ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

Will the real Jesus please stand up? With all the people claiming to speak God's truth wouldn't it be helpful if Jesus could come in and do some clarifying for us? Who really is speaking the truth? And for that matter, what is truth? And not just "truth" but Truth with a capital T. Is there even such a thing?

In our quest for truth I suspect that we often end up grasping at the edges of Truth, but settling for something less, especially when we're eager for meaning and comfort. As the author Kate Bowler describes her well-known exploration of this topic, "Everything Happens for a Reason, and Other Lies I've Loved."

So if Truth really is found in following Jesus' teaching, and the Truth will also set us free, it's probably going to be inherently uncomfortable. Jesus' teachings are powerful but they're also transformative, disruptive even. Jesus is pointing to a way of living that has not yet fully come to be in the world. We are still building God's kin-dom here on Earth. And contrary to the existence of quippy sayings and convenient "truths," Jesus doesn't provide easy answers on how we get there.

Turns out that to tell the Truth is a big ask when it comes to following Jesus. But this winter we're going to delve into just what that means by exploring some of the cliches and half-truths that are prevalent in Christianity.

You can see the full worship schedule inside this issue of the Spirit newsletter on pg. 13 and as we move through this series, we'd love to hear some of the Christian cliches and sayings that you're familiar with too. Maybe they're even sayings that you've found some glimpses of Truth in. You can email your favorite or most problematic Christian cliches to samantha@cumethodist.com.

The goal of this series isn't to dismantle or ridicule anyone's beliefs. It's to explore the fullness of what Truth means in our faith. And how rich and complicated that journey can be.

Pastor Jenny

This month we also bid farewell to Pastor Nancy and to John Varona. It has been a gift and a joy to have them as part of our CUMC staff. We are grateful for their service and all that they have shared with our congregation.

Announcements

MLK Day 2024 Community Celebrations

We encourage you to be part of Rochester's community activities commemorating Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. On Monday, January 15 the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce and NAACP Rochester Branch will hold events to promote a welcoming and inclusive community. These events include:

8:30am We Have a Dream Celebration

10:30am MLK Freedom March Rally

11:30am MLK Freedom March

12pm Community Peoples Program

1pm Commemorative Celebration and Birthday Party

Learn more and register at [<https://business.rochestermnchamber.com/events>]

CUMC By the Numbers

\$16,000 Donations raised on Saturday, Nov. 10 during Family Promise's concert and silent auction fundraiser that was held at CUMC. All proceeds help Family Promise serve families experiencing homeless.

167 guests served during the Community Eye Clinic facilitated by Zumbro Valley Medical Society on Saturday, December 2

442 families in Olmsted County attended the Christmas Anonymous "Store Day" on Saturday, December 9

1,302 children were served through Christmas Anonymous

442 grocery gift cards were also distributed through Christmas Anonymous

40+ Children and youth participated in our Christmas pageants on Sunday, December 17

5 worship services on Sunday, December 24: 9am Traditional (Fourth Sunday in Advent), 11am Contemporary Christmas Eve, 4pm Family Christmas Eve, 7pm Traditional Christmas Eve, 10pm Communion Christmas Eve

65 Christmas poinsettias delivered to homebound and bereaved CUMC members and friends

850+ in worship on Sunday, December 24th

Save the Date: Annual Meeting on Feb. 4, 2024

We invite you to our annual church conference meeting, which will be on Sunday, February 4, 2024 following our two worship services. The meeting begins with a community potluck meal and we will begin our annual meeting work at 12:30pm. During the meeting we will elect new leaders, receive reports from the leadership board and from ministry groups, and attend to church business that furthers our mission and fosters and inclusive, vibrant, healthy, ethical and sustainable church. Our annual meeting is a church conference, which means church members are able to vote on all matters. Contact Pastors Jenny or Kirkland for more information.


Children's Ministry

&


Youth Ministry

January Children and Youth News

Christmas Programs

What a fabulous day of JOY in our church! We had over 40 children/youth/preschoolers share the story of the birth of Jesus in unique ways. Thank you to Jody Peterson and Lauren Girard for organizing the Children's program and Amanda Larsen, Deb Jensen, Nicole Nfonoyim-Hara, Pamela Reynolds, Sarah Scussel and Deb Smid for helping with the youth program.

Summer Programming

We are excited to announce our Vacation Bible School dates and theme for 2024. Mark your calendars for August 5-9, 2024 for "Digging In and Growing Deep!" We are also planning a week at Northern Pines, ASP, the all church camp out weekend and time at Camp Kowakan on the edge of the Boundary Waters. As soon as these dates are finalized, we will let you know.



The Event is coming!

January 20, 11:30am-8:00pm

The day will include a couple of great talks by Catie Levenick that encourage us to always be "on the lookout" for all the opportunities God puts before us to love and serve others. You'll have some time for church group discussion, a real-life game of Clue offered by Tony Ducklow of Youth Ministry Land, a service project, and music! Pizza dinner provided to wrap up our time together.



CU Wednesday Needs You!

Our CU Wednesday ministry continues to flourish as we serve between 40-60 people a warm meal each week (and an additional 20+ who participate in our programs but do not eat.) We need a few more groups to sign up for an evening of providing the food and cleaning up. Please contact Amanda Larsen if this is something your small group would like to do.

ASP Updates

Thank you for your enthusiastic support of our Lefse sale on December 19. We sold out within 10 minutes of the benediction for the 9am service. Next year we will make more! We look forward to seeing you at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner on February 13 for another opportunity to eat flat foods, brought to you by ASP!

January and February Children and Youth Schedule

3: CU Wednesday (see schedule at cumethodist.com/cuwednesday)

7: 9:00am and 11:00am Worship and Sunday School

4:30pm-6:00pm Youth Group

10: CU Wednesday

14: 9:00am and 11:00am Worship and Sunday School

4:30pm-6:00pm Youth Group

17: CU Wednesday

18: DJ Trivia at the WorkShop for High Schoolers (meet at 6:45pm; usually done around 8:00pm.)

20: The Event for Middle Schoolers

21: 9:00am and 11:00am Worship and Sunday School

4:30pm-6:00pm NO Youth Group

24: CU Wednesday

28: 9:00am and 11:00am Worship and Sunday School

4:30pm-6:00pm Youth Group

31: CU Wednesday

February

4: 9:00am and 11:00am Worship and Sunday School

4:30pm-6:00pm Youth Group

7: CU Wednesday

11: 9:00am and 11:00am Worship and Sunday School

4:30pm-6:00pm Youth Group

13: Shrove Tuesday (Fat Tuesday) ASP Pancake Supper!

14: Ash Wednesday Worship at 7pm. All CU Wednesday activities are cancelled.

18: 9:00am and 11:00am Worship and Sunday School

4:30pm-6:00pm Youth Group

21: CU Wednesday

25: 9:00am and 11:00am Worship and Sunday School

4:30pm-6:00pm Youth Group

28: CU Wednesday





United Women in Faith want to thank all of our church friends and family for the support you have given us during 2023, from our **Tea at the Palace** to the **Rummage Sale** & the **Christmas Cookie Sale**. Thank you so much.

United Women in Faith provide scholarships, grants and funding all over the world from MN, TX, Japan, the Philippines, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Ecuador to name a few. Our funds help women, youth and children make better lives for themselves.

Please mark January 28th as United Women in Faith Sunday. More information will become available.

Notice

The United Women in Faith (UWF) invite you to stop by the display window in the Commons to see the new display about John and Charles Wesley and their ministry. Step inside the Wesley home to learn about how their mother's methodical teaching inspired them and influenced their teaching faith practices that led to the birth of "Methodism." See stories of the great fire that almost claimed young John's life, their journey to America, and their opening of a medical clinic for the poor. The home has been decorated with candles and greens in preparation for the holiday season. The teapot is on the table waiting for your arrival. Stay a while, enjoy the pictures on the wall and the stories of their lives, as you visit with the Wesley family.

You are invited to celebrate Pastor Nancy's retirement on Sunday, January 7, 2024. Starting with the 9am service, we will celebrate with Pastor Nancy and Chuck in worship and during a reception and open house from 10am-12:30pm.

We also invite you to share tributes and words of appreciation for Pastor Nancy, which we will present to her as part of a retirement gift. Please share your affirmations through this web link: <https://tinyurl.com/pastornancyaffirmations>.

We are also collecting a love offering dedicated to Pastor Nancy that will support the CUMC Foundation. You may note "Love Offering" with your gift or choose "Love Offering" from the giving options at cumethodist.com/give.









Saturday Noon Meals

SNMs appreciates the support of this ministry program over the past years.

In November of 2022 we moved back into Wesley Hall to serve in-person meals after several years serving in the community secondary to the Covid pandemic. We served fewer than 25 guests that first Saturday in November of 2022. We now are averaging 75 guests each Saturday with a maximum of 95 guests on a Saturday this fall. Our guests come from backgrounds of homelessness and food/financial insecurity.

We are thankful for all of our community partners that donated or provided food and support in 2023: Channel One, Community Food Response, Salvation Army, People's Food Co-op, Red Lobster, Thrive Child Care and Family Resource Center, 125 Live, Hy-Vee, Sargent's, Christmas Anonymous, Jim Whiting Nursery and Zumbro Valley Medical Society.

Thank you to all of our volunteers for their tireless effort each and every Saturday and the support we receive from donations and financial support from Christ United Methodist Church.

2024 will be our 30th year of the Saturday Noon Meal program at Christ United Methodist Church - providing a warm and healthy meal to those within our community. We appreciate your ongoing support as we celebrate this powerful ministry program that has been present in our church community for three decades.

Please contact Kathy Lombardo if you are interested in learning more about this ministry program or how you can serve or support SNMs. (kathryn.lombardo@gmail.com or 507-398-2686).

MNCare Public Option Tour: Healthcare Listening Session

Thursday, January 18 | 6:30-8pm

People of Hope Church
3703 Country Club Rd SW, Rochester



Could a public option for
health insurance benefit
you and your family?

Scan
to RSVP:



In 2023, the MN legislature passed a **MinnesotaCare Public Option** creating access to high quality healthcare for owners of small businesses, independent contractors, farmers, young people rolling off their parents' insurance, and anyone who can't access employer-based health insurance.

But as this bill moves into implementation, the insurance industry is seeking to make the Public Option profit-centered, instead of people-centered. Come learn about the Public Option and join a conversation with **Rep. Tina Liebling** and **Sen. Liz Boldon** on how it needs to be designed to ensure every Minnesotan gets the healthcare they need.



Caring Ministries

Christ United Methodist Church

In December our 100 homebound members and our bereaved members were called to find out if they would like to receive a poinsettia from the sanctuary on December 26. The homebound members who live out of town received a Christmas card. Bereaved members received a card and invitation to the Longest Night Service. The Longest Night Service was held on December 17. This is a special service for those who find the holidays difficult. Care notes for Christmas time have been placed in the Commons for guests and members. Twenty some volunteers will deliver the Christmas plants. New lay visitors have been assigned to persons for visiting. We say goodbye to longtime visitor Jeff Ward and welcome Ann Loth as a new Care Visitor. It's been a good month for ministry.



Thank you to all who have served in Care Ministries over the time I have been appointed to Christ UMC.

When I started as Minister of Care, we had two Lay Visitor Groups: the Lay Visitors who visited the homebound and the Widowed Persons Calling Group who served those who had experienced the death of a spouse.

- The prayer chain was active with members from UMW.
- The head administrative assistant would call St Mary's to find out who was in the hospital from our church. I visited the hospitals several times a week.
- There were two hospice programs: Mayo and Seasons.
- I also served on the Memorials and Living Gifts team.
- My initial appointment was for ten hours a week.

Over my 25 years at Christ UMC, I officiated 20 baptisms, 10 weddings and over 300 funerals & memorials. Serving with you has been a blessing and a privilege for me and for my family. Thank you.

Warmly,

Pastor Nancy Wheeler Handlon

Faith → Life: Learn from Christ's Teachings



Third Sunday Forum

January 21, 2024, 10:15am, Wesley Hall

Recognizing and Avoiding Online Scams, Joel Ott

Our connected world has many benefits, but it also provides a lot of opportunities for scammers who want to take advantage of you. This presentation will help you learn how to spot scam emails, text messages and phone calls, and how to handle each of these situations. Presented by Joel Ott, who has been teaching adults how to use technology in the workplace and at home for more than 25 years. Joel is a CUMC member and works as a Sr. Information Security Analyst for a large healthcare provider.

Previous forums are archived at: <https://youtube.com/christunitedmethodistchurchrochestermn>

Click on our playlists tab, then, "Faith to Life."

Short-Term Class

How Civil Wars Start and How to Stop Them – Five Week Study

Sundays, January 7, 14, 21, 28 and February 4, 4:30 – 6:00 pm;

In-person in Room 145 and on Zoom

Led by Reverend Gary Lueck

Join Reverend Gary Lueck in searching for answers on "how to stop civil wars." Questions to be explored: What is the possibility of having another civil war in the USA? How is the US different or like other nations facing civil war? How does our history inform our thinking and discourse? What events and guidance does the Bible offer? The study book, ***How Civil Wars Start: And How to Stop Them*** by Barbara F. Walter, can be purchased, used or new, at AbeBooks.com, Thriftbooks.com and/or Barnes & Noble. A second reference book will be ***Democracy Awakening*** by Heather Cox Richardson.

**Please RSVP and contact Rev. Lueck at GaryLueck@yahoo.com*

*if you plan to attend or have questions.**

Sunday Classes

Contemporary Issues

Host: Joel Charlson

Time: Sundays at 10:10am

Place: In-Person (Room 146) and Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/832924941?pwd=VXFEEK3I6UVRWeFR0bzRjeGR5VUlmQT09>

If you are interested, email Joel at joel.charlson@gmail.com to receive the weekly *Wired Word* or join us on Zoom or drop into room 146!

Faith → Life: Cont.

**Inquiring Spirits****Hosts:** Ed Shafer**Time:** Sundays at 10:15am**Place:** In-Person (Room 145) and Zoom

Discussion varies on books, videos, and other sources to investigate and challenge theological boundaries. This class is currently reading *Why Christian* by Douglas John Hall. For further Discussion varies on books, videos, and other sources to investigate and challenge theological boundaries. This class is currently reading *Welcoming the Unwelcome* by Pema Chodron. For further information contact Ed at shaferchurch@hotmail.com

Connect Groups

View a complete listing of groups and classes with more information at:
cumethodist.com/faith-life

Knit One, Pray Too**Host:** Marjie Blaisdell**Time:** Wednesdays 10:30am-12:00pm**Place:** Skype, 3rd Wednesdays are in-person in the Fireside Room. Contact Marjie at mablaisdell@gmail.com if interested in joining on Skype or just come on the 3rd Wednesday!**Breakfast Fellowship****Hosts:** Amy Humphrey and Dean Swanson**Time:** January 10th at 8:30am**Place:** Charlie's Restaurant at Hillcrest Shopping Center**Men's Coffee Group****Host:** Dick Estry**Time:** Thursdays at 8:00am**Place:** In person (Room 145) and on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89503377386?pwd=czVQNzIxTTE1eHdvdmgzZlBXdmsxZz09>**Hand & Foot Card Group****Hosts:** Brian and Millie Webb**Time:** Sunday, January 21, 4:00 – 6:30pm**Place:** Member's Home

Singles and couples are welcome. We chat, play cards (no experience necessary) and share light snacks. Questions or interest contact Brian at bkwebbus@gmail.com or text Millie at 608-212-9706.

CU Wednesdays: BeADisciple Bible Study**Hosts:** Pastor Kirkland**Time:** Wednesdays, January 3, 10, 17, and 24 at 6:30pm (after CU Wednesday dinner)**Place:** Room 145

Faith → Life: Cont.

Dinner/Lunch Club

Groups of 5-8 people share a meal and conversation 2 or 3 times in each other's homes or restaurants. A great way to build friendships within our CUMC family. Contact Marjie Blaisdell at mablaisdell@gmail.com or Mary Schmidt at oronocomb@yahoo.com if interested.

Tea and Tacos

Host: Armanda Vanderheiden

Time: Saturdays, January 6, 13, and 20 at 10:00am- 12:00 noon; Girls Night out January 27

Place: Room 145

For more info about this awesome group, contact Armanda at 507-261-2123 or email at Justgot2havejesus@gmail.com.

Theology on Brew

Hosts: Pastors Jenny and Kirkland

Time: Thursday, January 11th, at 6:30pm

Place: 507 (Public) House, 304 1st Ave. SW

Young and young-at-heart adults are welcome. Join others to connect and discuss life, theology and everything! Contact Pastors Jenny and Kirkland with any questions.

Lent Read

Lent begins on February 14th. We'll be using the book *Forgiveness: A Lenten Study* by Marjorie J. Thompson as our guide for the season this year. Small group opportunities for discussion & reflection will begin in February. Stay tuned for opportunities to purchase the book & to sign up for a Lenten small group.



We invite you to join us on Sunday, January 14 to celebrate John Varona's ministry with us.

On his final Sunday, John will participate in our 9am traditional service and we will hold a reception for him from 10am-11am.

Though John will soon conclude his service as our principal organist, we give thanks that he will serve as a guest musician at CUMC from time to time.

Join us for our Winter Sermon Series

**ToTELLThe
TRUTH**
Christian Cliches &
What the Bible
Doesn't Say

Jan 7: Epiphany Sunday

Pastor Nancy's Retirement

Jan 14: John Varona's Final Sunday

"God Helps Those Who Help Themselves"

Jan 28: UWF Sunday

"Everything Happens for a Reason"

Presenter: Rev. Pamela Ngunjiri-

The Minnesota Council of Churches

Feb 4: CUMC Annual Meeting

"Love the Sinner, Hate the Sin"



In Memoriam



Lynn Frederic Behnke

July 19, 1944-November 26, 2023

John G. Tuseth

March 5, 1939-December 16, 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>7 Communion Sunday 9am Traditions Worship 9:15am Children's Sunday School 10am Thrift on Fifth Open 10am Nancy's Retirement party 10am Contemporary Issues 10:15am Inquiring Spirits 11am Arise Worship 11:15am Children's Sunday School 4:30pm Youth Group</p>	<p>8 7pm Thrive Board Meeting</p>	<p>9 10:30am Staff Meeting 11:30am Brothers in Christ 1pm Covenant Group</p>	<p>10 10am Knit One Pray, Too 1:30pm Women's Study 5pm CU Wednesday 6:00pm Celebration Bells Rehearsal 7pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>11 8am Thursday Men's Group 8:30am Covenant Group 1pm Women's Book Group 4pm Arise Band rehearsal 6:30pm Theology on Brew 7pm UWF Circle 4</p>	<p>12 10am Women & the Sacred 10am Rug Hooking Group</p>	<p>13 7:30am Saturday Noon Meals 10am Tea & Tacos</p>
<p>14 9am Traditions Worship 9:15am Children's Sunday School 10am Contemporary Issues 10am John Varona's Reception 10:15am Inquiring Spirits 11am Arise Worship 11:15am Children's Sunday School 4:30pm Youth Group</p>	<p>15 MLK Day Church Office Closed</p>	<p>16 11:30am Brothers in Christ 1pm Covenant Group 1pm UWF Quilters (Wesley Hall)</p>	<p>17 8:30am Breakfast Fellowship 10am Knit One Pray, Too 1:30pm Women's Study 4pm Thrift on Fifth Open (till 7pm) 5pm CU Wednesday 6:00pm Celebration Bells Rehearsal 7pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>18 8am Thursday Men's Group 8:30am Covenant Group 8:30am UWF Circle 2 (Fireside) 10:30am UWF Circle 8 1pm Women's Book Group 4pm Arise Band rehearsal 7pm UWF Circle 4</p>	<p>19 9:30am UWF Book Group 11am RIMG Listen & Learn Concert</p>	<p>20 7:30am Saturday Noon Meals (Serve @ 11am) 9am Thrift on Fifth Open 10am Tea & Tacos</p>
<p>21 9am Traditions Worship 10am Thrift on Fifth Open 10am Third Sunday Forum 11am Arise Worship 11:15am Children's Sunday School 4:30pm Youth Group</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23 10:30am Staff Meeting 11:30am Brothers in Christ 1pm UWF Quilters (Wesley Hall)</p>	<p>24 10am Knit One Pray, Too 4pm Thrift on Fifth Open (till 7pm) 5pm CU Wednesday 6:00pm Celebration Bells Rehearsal 7pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>25 8am Thursday Men's Group 8:30am Covenant Group 1pm Women's Book Group 6pm Leadership Board Meeting 4pm Arise Band rehearsal 7pm UWF Circle 4</p>	<p>26 10am Women & the Sacred 10am Rug Hooking Group</p>	<p>27 7:30am Saturday Noon Meals (Serve @ 11am) 9am Thrift on Fifth Open</p>
<p>28 9am Traditions Worship 10am Thrift on Fifth Open 11am Arise Worship 11:15am Children's Sunday School 4:30pm Youth Group</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 11:30am Brothers in Christ 1pm Covenant Group 1pm UWF Quilters</p>	<p>31 10am Knit One Pray, Too 1:30pm Women's Study 5pm CU Wednesday 6:00pm Celebration Bells Rehearsal 7pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>			

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