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**From the Pastor's Desk**

Greetings to all in the name of Jesus, our Fortress, our Rock, our Redeemer,

Back when I was a little squirt, I caught some kind of bug and soon found myself with mom in the office of Dr. Huffington, whose office was located in Waterville, next to the Rainbow Hotel. I was still a little tyke so mom had to help me hop up on the exam table as we waited for the Doctor to come. I was so scared because I didn't know what the Doctor was going to do. Mom kept on reassuring me that I was going to be all right, and that the Doctor was going to help me get well, he was not going to hurt me. Soon there was a gentile knock on the door and Dr. Huffington let himself in. The Doctor was a distinguished looking man with coal black hair and those thick black rimmed glasses from days gone by. He wore the white smock with the pockets in front and his stethoscope draped around his neck. He looked the part. In a deep and powerful voice he asks me, "and how are you feeling today young man?" Overwhelmed, I quietly reply, "I feel OK". "Well" he blasts back, "then what are you doing here?" In an instant, my eyes welled up with tears and overflowed. Mother was quick to comfort and dry my tears and Doctor Huffington seemed to become much more gentile and personable. After a few moments of encouraging love, the Doctor was able to give me a thorough examination and quickly sent us on our way to the drug store for a prescription to help me get over whatever it was that was ailing me. The last little bit that I can remember about this episode in my life is that on the way home in the car, I tried to apologize to mom for crying in the doctor's office, she gently replied by saying "that's OK, you were just scared". It is amazing how powerful fear can be.

*"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and He will give you everything you need. So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom."* The words of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke 12:31-32 *The New Living Translation*

The time for fear is over, now we look forward into the future with determination and hope! Our future is filled with endless opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus Christ! Because Jesus lives, so do we!

Praise be to God who has removed our fears and blessed us with a year of new beginnings.

Pastor Jon

Special Points of Interest:

- January Monthly Meetings, Back Page
- January Birthdays and Anniversaries included with Calendar

Administrative Assistant  
Office Hours:  
**Monday, Wednesday & Thursday:**  
**9:30 am - 12:30 pm**

## Prayer Requests

**Remember our church members & friends who are less mobile and are unable to join us as often as they would like, including:**

**Colony Court:** Shirley Burdick, Gloria Rollag

**Janesville Nursing Home:** Nina Youngberg

**Traditions Assisted Living Owatonna:** Ardella Draheim

**Latham Place:** Joe Tollefson

**Prayer Requests from Sunday Worship:** Sue Baldini, Tim Dahnert, Ron Dahnert, Gail Sauer, Beverly Peppenger, Deene Peppenger, Gloria Rollag, Bob Stephan, family and friends of Margaret Hasslen, family and friends of Edy Barber, the Middle East, health care workers, first responders, those who battle cancer, chronic illness and pain.



## Administrative Assistant Hours

Stacy's hours are typically Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9:30 am to 1:00 pm. Days or hours are subject to change at times. It is best to call ahead if you need to visit the office. Hours will be posted in the weekly bulletins.

## Leadership Team

Members of the Faith United Methodist Church Leadership Team:

Rev. Jon Schultz, Pastor

Dave Baldini, Chair

Clair Voshell, Trustees

Neil Fruechte, Finances

Duane Griffin, Lay Leader

Jarod True, Trustee Treasurer & SPRC

Stacy True, Recording Secretary

Karen Ferch

Mark LaMont

Michelle Hyatt

Mike Morrissey

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the members.

\*\*Copies of approved Leadership Team minutes can be found on the shelf by the bulletin board in the narthex.

\*\*Copies of church financial statements can be reviewed by church members in the office upon request.

## Report from the Finance Chair

2023 is drawing to a close. By the time you read this, it might have already happened. Thanks again for all who responded to the SPECIAL ASK. Because of that we were able to pay all our operating expenses for 2023 including 100% of our apportionments. Our greatly reduced pastoral and janitorial expenses during the last six months were also major contributing factors.

This is a reminder to turn in your 2024 pledge. This is tremendously helpful as we prepare our 2024 financial budget. We ask that you turn them in by January 10. Be sure to include your plans for the Trustee's budget. Those budget needs are significant especially when considering the upcoming need to replace the west half of the roof, upper floor windows, parking lot repairs, and the assessment expected for the repairs to Eighth Street. None of this will happen all at once but we will need to face these costs over the next few years.

This is also a reminder that copies of the minutes of the Leadership Group meetings are available on the counter under the bulletin boards. Copy of the monthly financials is available in the office. Any questions about the Leadership Group meetings should be directed to Dave Baldini, Chair. Questions about the financials should be directed to Neil Fruechte, Finance Chair.

## United Women in Faith Outreach Bake Sale

On Sunday, January 28, we will have a bake sale at the VFW. The proceeds will go to Waseca Area Caregiver Services, whom we have donated to in the past. Volunteers from WACS will be serving breakfast from 8:00 - 11:30. Items can be dropped off at the WACS office on the prior Friday morning or brought in early on the 28th.

Thanks in advance for your support of this worthwhile project.

P.S.: Also come for breakfast before or after church.

## Thank You

Greetings and blessings,

Nicki and I would like to extend a big thank you to all who have blessed us with the wonderful cards and gifts this Christmas season. Your love and support are so appreciated and welcomed. It is our hope and prayer that your Christmas was full of blessings and joy, and that 2024 will be a year of peace and possibilities.

Thank you and peace, Pastor Jon and Nicki

## Session 3 of "Conversations at the Crossroads"

Our third session of the "Conversations at the Crossroads" process will be held on **Thursday, January 11 at 6:30 pm**. At this session our consultant, Marilyn Loken, will share the report of options and recommendations for our church. Our district superintendent, Woojae Im will also be in attendance. Please plan to attend. This is meant to be a positive path forward for our church.

## Appointment Announcement

Brothers and sisters,

As you may recall, my appointment to Faith was intended to be a time for the church to find it's footings in a time of change and uncertainty, to "Stand in the breach" as they say. I commend you and am so proud of all for being open about your thoughts, feelings, fears and most importantly your bond of love for one another. So, it is with mixed feelings I announce that I have been in conversation with our District Superintendent, Woojae Im, and I have asked that my appointment be drawn to a close. The reasons are personal and are a reflection of Nicki's increasing need for care and other family members care needs as well. Please understand that this is a strictly personal decision and I initiated the conversation with Woojae. I want you all to know that you have been absolutely wonderful and a blessing. I firmly believe that something wonderful is going to happen in this faithful worshipping community. Woojae and the cabinet will be prayerfully discerning who your next pastor will be. I am confident that the Lord will bless you with a pastor who has the gifts and graces to lead you into a vibrant and Spirit filled tomorrow.

On the evening of January 11<sup>th</sup>, directly after the Crossroads meeting, Woojae will be meeting with the leadership team to have a conversation about the gifts and graces, and the level at which your next Pastor will be employed. This message is to make you aware of the coming Pastoral change. I do not have a date or time table for when this will happen. Until such time, I commit myself to serving you faithfully and fully until the sunset of my Pastoral leadership.

Blessing and peace, Pastor Jon

## Soap Closet

Faith UMC is participating with Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) as a drop off site for their "Soap Closet". It is a program to help those in need with hygiene supplies in our county. The drop off box is located in the narthex. Items they are looking for include the following:

- New men's, women's and children's underwear and socks
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Body Wash or bar soap
- Q Tips
- Hand soap/hand sanitizer
- Toilet paper
- Feminine products
- Baby wipes/diapers/powder/soap
- Laundry detergent
- Dish soap
- Deodorant

Please consider donating items to help with this cause.

# Epiphany

Z L I Y Z N R T W W Y M Z C I R Q  
 Q S V V B E T H L E H E M A T D M  
 V T V Z F G M A G I C F A M P N J  
 N A G I F T S F B H T H R E E F T  
 H R Y G A S P A R N D C X L J T N  
 H J E P I P H A N Y R N S S V K B  
 O F R B A L T H A S A R Y G K I J  
 M E T W E L F T H L I G H T I N C  
 A A M A N G E R Q E H N A N K G L  
 G S T G M U R U G H B H M I I K W  
 E T O F F E R I N G U Y J G N Y W  
 Y W C P G K K G O L D E E H G X I  
 E O X R A M Y R R H V I S T H M S  
 F R A N K I N C E N S E U S E M E  
 K N K O D C H I L D D I S F R A M  
 Z Z E J Z O M E L C H I O R O R E  
 K I T R E A S U R E B Q Z O D Y N

- |           |              |        |           |          |
|-----------|--------------|--------|-----------|----------|
| Balthasar | Bethlehem    | Camels | Child     | Epiphany |
| Feast     | Frankincense | Gaspar | Gifts     | Gold     |
| Homage    | Jesus        | King   | KingHerod | Light    |
| Magi      | Manger       | Mary   | Melchior  | Myrrh    |
| Night     | Offering     | Star   | Three     | Treasure |
| Twelfth   | Wisemen      |        |           |          |

**Reflection**

*By Cooper Wigger*

Dear God,

Guide me into another year.

I am so grateful for your gift of life, even my life.

I am so grateful for your gift of love, especially as you reach me (and all the world!) through Jesus Christ.

I am often astonished by your presence within the order as well as disorder of things. Goodness, oh God, so mystically, magically, and miraculously Your reach is to us-

In children and music and story and pictures and movies and games and work and prayers and comedies and tragedies and in so many trees and the star-laden skies and snow frosted earth and wild wayfaring winds, You love us.

Your creating of us and with us-

Though our senses and sexuality and imagination and reasoning and listening and making and learning and grieving and comforting and celebrating and believing and hoping and willing and always, always loving, thank you, Great and Ancient One, Mother Father of us all, thank you.

Guide us into another year.

For a moment now, with Your help, we look back and see many joys but also a morass of disasters. We grieve the sad losses we share and the awful violences of our year: Ukraine, Israel, Gaza, the Border, poverty's deprecations, and pervasive Earth pollutions Help us to face the realities of evil. Help us deepen and share our faith. We pray for Your healing and wisdom. We pray for Your reassurances. We seek your inspiration. Help us to embrace the present and be liberated into the future. In Christ we offer our allegiance. Empower us in your Way of Love, Guide us into another year.

Thank You, God, Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Great Spirit.

Guide us into another year.

Amen

**One Minute Devotion****God Does Not Lie**

Numbers 23:19; Jeremiah 31:1

We've got half-truths, white lies, and fibs, but whatever you call them, they're all lies. God does not lie. He loves you with an everlasting love. No strings, no half-truths, no kidding.

*Taken from 100 Minutes with God, 1 Minute Daily Devotions of Timeless Inspiration.*

### A Prayer for our Church

Come Holy Spirit, fill our voices with praise, so that all we speak will glorify you.

Come Holy Spirit, give us such faith that we will go wherever you ask us to go.

Come Holy Spirit, help us to be a friend like Jesus.

Come Holy Spirit, warm our hearts, so that as we love our community, they see you.

In the name of Jesus, our Redeemer, we pray. Amen.

### Faith UMC Mission Statement

Faith United Methodist Church Serves God through  
Worship, Faith, Friendship, Outreach

Upcoming Fundraiser Event

**All You Can Eat Breakfast!**

**BISCUITS and Gravy**

**& BAKE SALE**

DJ KOZY From 10:00am-12:00

VFW POST 1642  
113 EAST ELM AVE,  
WASECA MN.

**Sunday**  
January 28  
8:00am-12:00  
**or until gone.**

Supporting our Veterans  
& Rural and Underserved Communities



Faith United Methodist Church

*"Engage, Equip, and Empower"*

**801 Fourth Ave. NE  
Waseca, MN 56093**

Phone: 507-835-3167

Fax: 507-835-5400

E-mail: [faithwaseca@gmail.com](mailto:faithwaseca@gmail.com)

[www.faithwasecaumc.com](http://www.faithwasecaumc.com)

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56093

## Change Service Requested

**Come Worship with Us**  
We have room.

### MONTHLY MEET-UPS:

#### **Elizabeth Circle**

Elizabeth Circle will meet on **Wednesday, January 17** at **2:30 pm** in the Lakeview Room. Guests and visitors are welcome!

#### **Ruth Circle**

Ruth Circle will be meeting on **Tuesday, January 9** at **1:00 pm** in the Gathering Room. The program will be "Harvest".

#### **Conversation, Bible & Friends**

After New Year's Day, Conversation, Bible and Friends will meet each Monday in January from 3:00 - 4:30 pm in the Lakeview Room.