



THE ARK

APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER

COVENANT United Methodist Church

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"Covenant United Methodist Church" on Facebook

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Quest for Renewing a Local Church

What is the Church? A church is not a building or institution. The Church is the body of Christ. A church is a community of believers. Church is an alternative and exemplary society for the current world. Church is the light of the world. However, all these understandings of the Church above are idealistic. The real, local churches are messy because the Church is not only the gathering of saints but also the gathering of sinners. The local churches exist in the middle of society, so they are unwittingly negatively influenced by the world's darkness. Between the ideal Church in heaven and the messy churches on earth, Christians have confused and struggled, yearning for an authentic and genuine community of believers. In these struggles, many sincere and practical Christians wonder how to transform the messy local churches into more mature and actual Body of Christ. As a local pastor who believes in the value of local Churches for the Kingdom of God and has dedicated himself to pastoral ministry, changing local churches into more of God's Church has been the central question that I have pursued for more than a decade. I still do not know the correct answer. However, I found a few essential conditions while searching for the answer. One of them is this: intimate and loving relationship within the church community.



At the Last Supper, right before his death on the cross, Jesus gave the disciples the new commandment: love one another. This new commandment was not for everyone in the world but for the disciples. When we apply this commandment to today, we can see that this new commandment is not for all human beings but for followers of Jesus Christ, that is Church. Then, Jesus confirmed how this new commandment is crucial for the community of believers by saying:

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

- John 13:35

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, the disciples became apostles by receiving the Holy Spirit and began church community. Relationships with other believers in this community were deep and intimate to the point that they could confess their deepest secrets and sins to each other. They laughed together and cried together as one body. They became a family bound by the water of baptism, which seemed thicker than blood. It was not surprising that these churches found, grew, and spread continually despite more than 200 years of persecution by the Roman Empire for Christianity.

Let's think about today's local churches, which have this critical condition for authentic gathering of saints. What kind of relationships do we have with other church members? How much do we know and love each other? One thing I discovered and was shocked from the very beginning of my pastoral ministry was the prevalent superficial relationships in churches. Despite being in the same church community for a long time, many church members did not know each other very well, even each other's last name. For many of them, church members were not more than those who joined a religious ritual together occasionally. Indeed, this superficiality is one of the characteristics of our society nowadays. The advances in technology have made the world a small village, led people to move all around the world, and forced them to live with strangers. This fast-paced and complicated society has caused human relationships to be superficial, which has insidiously spread in other local churches, but the relationships we enjoy at Covenant UMC are not shallow.

Compared to other churches, I have witnessed a lot of loving and caring relationships with one another. I am proud of our church community, however, we still have room to grow in our relationships. We need to deepen our relationship to the point that we can share our pain and suffering with an open heart and mind, laugh together, and cry together. We need to develop spiritual companionship in which we can openly talk about our spiritual journey. How can we develop loving and caring relationships in our Church to that depth? I have found that this can be done through small group ministry.

Small Group Ministry



Small Group ministry is when around 12 or fewer believers intentionally gather and practice Christian life deeply together. This is a somewhat vague definition but; even so, I agree with it. This vague definition is because doing Christian life together has been changed according to context. This means the actual form and the way to do small groups varies.

You can form a small group according to stages of life, place of residence, interests, etc. The place of gathering depends on the group. It could be a church building, a member's house, a restaurant, or a café. How a group develops their relationships depends on the group's characteristics.

I have witnessed some groups living Christian life together by reading the Bible or reading spiritual books. Others did it by having a meal, tea, or coffee. Doing missions together would be another way. Whatever form they take, the primary purpose of small groups is to deepen our relationship with God and each other.

Invitation to Small Group Planning Team!

I explained the small group ministry in this lengthy way to invite all church members to engage in this ministry. I truly believe that this small group ministry is essential to deepen the relationship between church members and revitalize our church community.

I know a few important principles for building up small group ministry in the Church, however, I do not know what way or form would be most appropriate and effective in our Church. Therefore, I want to form a small group ministry planning team during April and start preparing this critical ministry together by reading books and discussing the future of the Church. While reading this long article, if you have an urge to get involved in this ministry in whatever way, do not hesitate to contact me. I plan to have this meeting in the middle or at the end of April.

April Sermon Series: How to Pray

I will continue to talk about how to pray during April. Originally, I planned to deal with this topic during Lent. However, while studying this theme and preaching about it, I realized there are many more things I would like to share about prayer. I hope this sermon series will guide all our church members to a deeper conversation with God, creating prayer movement among them.

April Sermon and Worship

DATE	CALENDAR	SERMON	WORSHIP
4/7	2nd Sunday of Easter	- How to Pray 7: "Pray Persistently" - Bible: Luke 18:1-8	- Communion - Nursery
4/14	Native American Ministries Sunday	Guest Preacher: Mary Balson	- Choir
4/21	4th Sunday of Easter	- How to Pray 8: "What Do We Need to Pray? 1" - Bible: Luke 11:1-13	- Bell Choir - Mark Trivia
4/28	5th Sunday of Easter	- How to Pray 9: "What Do We Need to Pray? 2" - Bible: Luke 11:1-13	- Choir - Infant Baptism (Arya)

Vacation for Pastor & Administrative Assistant

After Easter, Pastor Ho Lee will have a two-week vacation from April 1st to 6th and April 9th to 15th. He plans to have a family trip and take some rest. Other than emergency situations, such as hospitalization or funeral, please let him be refreshed and recharged to serve you and the church community better.

Our Administrative Assistant, Janet, will also have a two-week vacation from April 22nd to May 2nd. Miyeon Kim will cover her position during her absence.



Sunday School News & Schedule

Covenant UMC Sunday School is growing, and its program is improving thanks to many teachers' dedication and commitment. Please invite children around you to this great program.

DATE	CALENDAR	SUNDAY SCHOOL	TEACHERS
4/7	1st Sunday	- No Sunday School - Fun Sunday— Roller Skating - Nursery	~ ~ AnnaRose A.
4/14	2nd Sunday	-Theme: "Emmaus" - Bible: Luke 24: 13-35	Donna D. / Ashley B.
4/21	3rd Sunday	-Theme: "Thomas" - Bible: John 20: 19-31	Julie T. / Kelly T.
4/28	4th Sunday	-Theme: "The Great Commission" - Bible: Matthew 28: 16-20	Mona A. / Miyeon K.



FUN SUNDAY

APRIL 7TH

11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Roller Skating at Korneli's on the Avenue

Just \$5!!

3 Hours of Skating, Pizza & Soda

👉 **FOR ALL AGES!!** 👈



👉 **BRING A FRIEND!!** 👈

Parents are welcome to join us!

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

On **April 7th** the Youth Group will join in the Fun Sunday Roller Skating. On **April 21st** Youth Group will meet to determine where our 2025 Mission will take us as well as plan another Youth Service Day.

CHURCH COUNCIL

During our February church council meeting we discussed the definition of "Building Fund". On your offering envelopes you will notice a category labeled "Maintenance/Building." There have been different interpretations of how the contributions to this category are to be recorded and used. Pastor commented that most churches manage routine maintenance (utilities, snow removal, etc.) from their general fund. Mary commented that it would be helpful to continue a separate fund for unexpected building related expense or major projects. The church council has decided to change the name on next set of envelopes from "Maintenance/Building" to "Building" alone. Routine maintenance is to be paid from General Fund.

Dear Lord, we come to you today asking for guidance. We sometimes feel lost and overwhelmed, and we need your help in finding our way. Please open our eyes and heart to the direction you want us to take. Help us to make wise decisions that will lead us closer to your path for our lives. Give us the strength and courage to persevere when times are difficult. Lead us with your truth and love, so that we may live a life that brings glory to your name. Thank you for your guidance and protection. Amen

Submitted by Tom Retzlaff



UWF REPORT

It's the 154th anniversary of our organization and we voted to send \$154 to our Legacy Fund, which was established to assure UWF will continue into the future. We also are sending \$500 to the Senegal school where ladies are taught sewing so they can have a skill to earn money, thereby supporting family and being able to send children to school. This is a project we have supported for many years.

Easter dates were highlighted as well as our spring district retreat at Kaukauna April 27th. We will donate two baskets to the fundraiser for Vicki Goldapski April 20th. Easter bags for shut-ins were packed and ready for distribution.

The Mother-Other banquet is May 9 so we continued plans for that. Menu was chosen and other details. We will have music by Winnebagoland Barbershop group. We signed up for some tasks.

Tickets for the banquet will be sold on Sunday, April 28th and Sunday, May 5th. Submitted by Dea Hebel

Banish the Boredom: Game Day

Please join us , 1:30—3:30 p.m. for a FREE afternoon of fun games for all ages!

Play a new game or your favorites while making new friends.

Door prizes & refreshments!



Join in a fun afternoon with board and card games. Mingle with friends and make new ones. Enjoy light refreshments and maybe even win a door prize. We'll be playing various card and board games. Enjoy your favorite game or learn a new one. This is for all ages. We'll gather on the second Tuesday of April (the 9th) and May (the 14th) from 1:30-3:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Mark your calendar. Bring a friend and banish the boredom with others.

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Questions? Ask the planning team:

Jan Andrews, Mary Balson, Dea Hebel, Jeff Strong, Shelli Dekker, Tom and Denise Retzleff

Submitted by Denise R.

Care Committee

The initial meeting of the Care Committee was held March 4th with Pastor Ho Lee, Jan Andrews, Dea Hebel, and Mona Averbeck were present.

Pastor Ho Lee discussed his role to include visits to hospitals, those who have had a death in the family, the homebound, and those who have not been in church in a while. We plan to have volunteers also visit those in need in groups of two.

The Care Committee members roles includes the Greeting Card Ministry (Jan & Mona (co-chair)), funeral planning (Dea & Mona (co-chair)), and coordinating meals for people in need, and create a plan to seek volunteers to help (Jan & Dea). Communication will be very important in this ministry. **The next meeting will be held April 16th at 10:00 a.m.**



Wrestling With Doubt

Finding Faith Study Group

Wednesdays from 9:30 to 10:30 am

Doubt is not the enemy of faith. Everyone has doubts. Where is God when bad things happen? Does God hear our prayers? Is heaven real? Why do the innocent suffer? God is unafraid of hard questions. Wrestle with doubt and find faith-belief and trust, not certainty; mystery rather than simple answers.

Join this small group study and conversation on Wednesdays from 9:30 to 10:30 am in the choir room. This new series starts April 3, 2024. There is no registration, no fee, and no work between sessions. Come as you are, eager to ask questions, learn from each other and discuss. For more information contact Denise Retzleff at 920- 539-0336. We will use bestselling author Adam Hamilton's book and video series

"Wrestling With Doubt – Finding Faith".

Submitted by Denise Retzlaff

New Member Welcome



We welcomed Ashley Bird as a new member on February 4, 2024. She grew up in Fond du Lac, played volleyball and ran track at Sabish Middle School, and graduated from Fondy High.

She says her friends would describe her as loving, and always there for others. Her compassion is witnessed through her career. Ashley has been a CNA with SSM Health Hospice Care for two years.

Ashley has three children ages 8, 4 and 10 months. She is engaged to Marshall with a wedding date set for Sept 2026. The couple met in high school but then drifted apart. Marshall's mom and Ashley worked together, which is how they were brought back together.

Wedding planning, her family and work keep her really busy, but one new thing she'd like to try is to sky dive. An activity she'd like to see happen through Covenant is a mom's group for mothers and their children. Introduce yourself and share information about your families, a favorite topic of hers.

Submitted by Denise Retzleff

Join the Trivia Fun

Sunday, April 21 at 10:15 in the Fellowship Hall

Come one! Come all! Children, youth and adults.

Let's enjoy a trivia challenge (that's not toooo challenging.) Pastor Ho Lee will draft multiple choice, short answer, and fill in the blank questions about the Book of Mark. It's the book we've been encouraged to read during Lent. Our host will welcome you to a friendly and fun event. You'll randomly gather in teams, and decide answers as a team. If you're not sure of an answer, someone else on your team might have it on the tip of their tongue. Small prizes will be awarded. All are invited to a pizza lunch afterwards. If you absolutely don't want to be on a team, we hope you'll be part of the audience that cheers everyone on.

Example questions

1. Who was the messenger sent ahead of Jesus to prepare the way?
2. Jesus healed the paralyzed man after the man
Was pulled into the Jordan River on a skiff
Was lowered through an opening in a roof
Worshiped at the temple
Rode a donkey into Jerusalem
3. True or False – Peter had tents built on a mountain for Jesus, Moses and Elijah during the transfiguration.



Submitted by Denise Retzleff



Worship Volunteer Training

There are many hands at work to create a meaningful worship experience that runs seamlessly. In order to increase the number of people we are involved and that feel at ease with these tasks we will offer brief trainings each month to those who are already volunteering and those who might be curious. Responsibilities will be outlined and questions answered.

Sound and PowerPoint training will be held in the sanctuary after the worship service on Sunday, Apr. 28th at 10:15 a.m. All are welcome! Attending training

does not mean you are committed to participating every week. Please pray about your involvement for these roles that are carried out during worship services.

Submitted by Denise Retzlaff

Missions Committee

Loom Mission Project Join us to work on our Loom Mission **every Tuesday morning** from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. You don't have to join for the full two hours, just come as you can. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Our first Happy Hour Weaving will be Tuesday, **April 16th** from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. In addition, we will meet one Tuesday night each month for Happy Hour Weaving! We will have snacks, beverages, and music along with working on the loom.

April Missions Loose Offering on **April 7th** will go to Apportionments. **April 14th** will go to Native American Sunday. **April 21st and 28th** will go to the Banana Ministry.

Submitted by Diane Weider

United Methodist Men



The U.M.M. met Saturday, March 9th at Rolling Meadows Restaurant with 6 men and 3 guests attending. New Officers were placed; Tom Retzlaff as Secretary and Bill Averbek for Treasurer, thanks men!

Our guests were Amy Jahn, Principal at Parkside School and 4th grade Teacher Megan Castro. They thanked the men for the weekly bananas and the influx of food (cereals, etc.) that was much needed. There are 300 students of which 85-90% qualify for reduced or free lunches of which 35-40% are bilingual.

The school is planning a field trip for the 4th grad to the Milwaukee Museum & the Plant Domes May 10th. The U.M.M. voted to send \$450.00 to Parkside to help cover the cost. We can do this for OUR KIDS because of Covenant, thank you!

Principal Jahn asked for special prayers for the students for very important state testing later this month. Please include them in your prayers.

We discussed the June 30th church picnic, please mark your calendars and plan to attend this special event.

Next meeting will be held the 2nd Saturday in April, April 13th at 8:00 a.m. at Rolling Meadows Restaurant.

"Suffer not the little children, let them come onto me"

Jesus (Matthew 19:14)

Submitted by Darrell L. Jewson
Chair U.M.M.

Pacto de Gracia UMC

Tamales Fundraiser

Order Forms Available in the Narthex / Due By April 28th



Only God's help, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and your prayers make it possible for the Pacto de Gracia United Methodist Church to continue its mission of making disciples of Christ to transform the world in Fond du Lac and its surroundings. Every Sunday, the average number of people attending the fellowship is between 25 and 30, including children and young people. 6-8 children receive Sunday school. 9 people receive English classes. 82 people attended the community closet on Saturday, March 10th.

For the second year, we will have a Tamales Fundraiser on Friday, May 3rd with drive-thru pickup at Salem Church. The money will support our budget for ministries and missions this year. I invite you to collaborate again this year to buy tamales, and together, let's continue

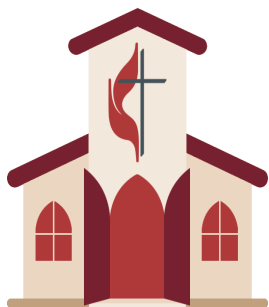
Care Committee Report

We continue to have our church family facing difficult challenges. What a difference it can make by a simple phone call, card, visit or preparing a meal for them.

If interested in joining this committee please contact Jan Andrews or Dea Hebel.

Thank You To All Of Our Volunteers!

Submitted by Jan Andrews



Trustees

As our Covenant family has moved into 2024, as always, a number of projects are being addressed. Signage on the entry doors needs to be redone and along with this, a new parking lot sign for the north parking lot will be completed also. An upgrade for our sound system and additional sanctuary microphones will be completed when back orders arrive. This will improve our worshiping experience. We are also in the process of writing policies, facility use and facility fees. Maintenance and repairs will be addressed as they occur. We have been blest with a light winter which has lightened the load of our budget. Thank you Lord! Any questions, concerns, please don't hesitate to contact myself or any of your Trustees. With our witness and God's guidance we will continue to move forward in 2024.

Submitted by Bill Averbeck, Trustee Chair

Covenant Cares About People

The last week of June and early in February the CCAP bought 200 boxes of cereal and oatmeal for our 4 schools. At the recent U.M.M. meeting we were told how much this was appreciated and needed. I will continue to do my best, as funds allow, to provide for as many kids as I can.

You may ask who I report to for these purchases. Each month I inform the U.M.M. what funds are available in CCAP. Whenever I find something on sale at a good price I order and pay for it from CCAP funds. Sometimes, I may need a little help buying and distributing to the schools. I guess I am a committee of one, but there are checks and balances, and always receipts.

I often shop at Pick n' Save using coupons so if you have any of this store's coupons you are willing to donate it would be very much appreciated.

"Let he without sin cast the first stone." John 8:7-11

Submitted by Darrell L. Jewson

Little Food Pantry



A big thank you for continued support for our food pantry which is serving many this winter. Several local businesses have cooperated to give us special savings on widely used items like peanut butter, bread and hot cereal. We would prefer to have donations be in cans or plastic rather than glass containers to prevent possible breakage and spills. Your help is so greatly appreciated!

Submitted by Dea Hebel

Taxi service to Church



Covenant Church has an agreement with Quality Cab (920-929-8888) to provide a taxi service for anyone needing a ride to a church service or activity. You must call the cab company on Tuesday or Wednesday to schedule your ride. Be sure to tell them to charge it to the Covenant account.

Wheelchair cab service may be available on weekdays but not on Sunday mornings.

Mission Offerings for April

- 1st Sunday (4/7) Apportionments
 2nd Sunday (4/14) Native American Mission
 3rd Sunday (4/21) Banana Ministry
 4th Sunday (4/28) Banana Ministry



APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

April 1st - Ron & Vickie Goldapske

April 26th—Adam & Tami Averbeck



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 4-4 Kathy Bargaquast
 4-5 Bill Kelley
 4-11 Ted Chipman
 4-14 Jesse Patt
 4-17 Robert Lewis
 4-20 Catherine Morris
 4-20 Ha-el Lee
 4-26 Dave Miller
 4-28 Mona Averbeck
 4-29 Eleanor King

April Worship Volunteers

DATE	Liturgist	Children's Time	Ushers	Acolyte	Live-Streaming	PPT/Sound
4/7	Gary M.	Pastor Ho Lee	Jan A.	Charlize A.	Mona A.	Sloan A.
4/14		Shelli D.	Bill D.	Ivy T.		Diane W.
4/21	Darrell Jewson	Diane W.	Sandy T.	Kyle A.		Sloan A.
4/28	Donna M.	Denise R.	Harold S.	Jin L.		



APRIL 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Pastor's Vacation Apr 1st—Apr 4th	2 9 am Loom Mission 6:30 pm	3 9:30-10:30 am Bible Study 10:45 Sara Circle	4 Visitations	5	6
7 10:15-11:15 am Choir Practice 11am - 2pm Fun Sunday Roller Skating 2pm Funeral Ruth Bierne	8 10 am Community Worship Lake House 6-7 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm Pacto de Gracia	9 9 am Loom Mission 1:30-3:30 pm Game Day	10 9:30 am Bible Study 4:00 pm Loaves and Fishes	11 Visitations	12	13 8-9 am Men's Breakfast 9am-3pm Rummage Sale Pacto de Gracia
14 10:15-11:15 am Choir Practice	15 6-7 pm Bell Choir	16 9 am Loom Mission 10 am Care Committee 6 pm Happy Hour	17 9:30 am Bible Study 5:30-8:00 pm Champions Bingo	18 Visitations	19 Admin Asst. Vacation Apr 19th-May 3rd	20
21 10:15-11:15 am Choir Practice 10:15-11:15 am Mark Bible Trivia	22 10:15 am Worship Committee 4:30pm Finance Committee 6-7 pm	23 9 am Loom Mission	24 8 am Women's Breakfast 9:30 am Bible Study	25 Visitations	26	27
28 9am Infant Baptism Arya 10:15-11:15 am Choir Practice 10:15-11:15 am	29 6-7 pm Bell Choir 6:30 Church Council	30 9 am Loom Mission				

Tamales

Fundraiser



To Benefit: Ministries and Missions of Pacto de Gracia UMC

Sponsored by: Covenant, Community and Salem UMC

ORDER NOW!

Payment & Order Due By April 28

\$30 per DOZEN

\$15 per ½ DOZEN

\$3 EACH

Drive thru Pick up at Salem Church Friday, May 3
 120 Sheboygan St, Fond du Lac, WI 54935

2:00 – 6:00 pm



Tamales Order Form,

Name: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____ What time will you pick up? _____ @Salem UMC

Make Checks Payable to: Pacto de Gracia UMC

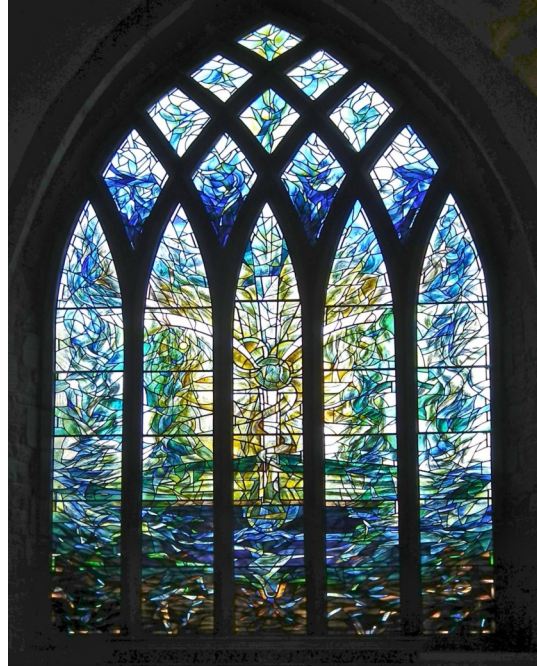
Meat/Filling	How many tamales?	Totals
Pork		
Chicken		
Cheese & Jalapeño		
TOTALS		\$

Please circle one of UMC church affiliation: Covenant Salem Community Pacto de Gracia Other



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Covenant United Methodist Church

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THE ARK *Covenant UMC*

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- Text "give" to 920-267-4801
- Visit our website: covenantforyou.church/give

Main Office Hours

Mon-Thurs
9:00AM-1:00PM

Pastor Office Hours:

Mon– Thurs
9:00am-3:00pm

Submissions deadline is no later than the 15th of each month at noon.

Please get your content to the office by this date for the next month's issue.