



THE ARK

JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

COVENANT United Methodist Church

(920) 921-4949

www.covenantforyou.church

office@covenantforyou.church

From Pastor's Desk:

God's Amazing Grace in 2024:

I had a chance to look back on our church life in 2024 while preparing for the charge conference last month. One of the most prominent things I could not miss was how God has amazingly led our church to grow healthy and used us to do His missions. Since the last charge conference in December 2023, we have lost around ten church members by death. Most were long-standing and faithful church members who played a critical role in leading community life. This loss saddened and discouraged us. I was also depressed and lost my confidence as a pastor around this time last year. However, God has been faithful and continued leading us throughout 2024. God blessed us with around fifteen new church members. Some church members stepped up and committed to various missions and ministries to cover the loss of leadership. Sunday School and Youth Group has grown in number and spirit. Many church leaders have courageously added several new missions, and many church members have dedicated themselves to the existing and new missions, making almost all of them effective and successful. Yes, 2024 has been our faith community's recovery and growth year. I give thanks to God, sharing my joy and gratitude with all church members.



This recognition of God's grace in 2024 does not mean looking to heaven without doing anything. Instead, it leads the church leaders, staff, and me to plan the direction of the church more strategically for 2025 to make the church community a useful vessel through which God works. There is always some room to grow. We already recognized these areas and started discussing ways to make the church healthier, such as how to declutter missions and ministries to make them more effective and how to improve our discipleship and evangelism. Indeed, this is the time for the church to reflect on our past and plan for the future. However, these activities are not only for our communal lives but also our personal lives, especially our spiritual ones.

Plan for Our Spiritual Life

It requires intentional planning, extra attention, and persistent effort to excel in a certain area of life. Likewise, the relationship with God requires the same.

In this New Year, when people reflect on their past and plan for their future, how about paying attention to the most important thing in your life: your relationship with God? Please have a quiet time to think about your relationship with God in 2024 and plan how to deepen it more in 2025. For your spiritual planning, consider the following five areas of your spirit.

- 1) **Worship:** Participate in worship service weekly, in person or online, unless you are sick or out of town (Members who travel out of town are encouraged to attend services in the location they are visiting.)
- 2) **Spiritual Practice:** Have personal devotional time with prayer and the Bible at least once a week, aiming at having it daily.
- 3) **Small Group:** Connect to at least one small group aimed at helping you grow in your faith.
- 4) **Mission:** Volunteer your time in Christian service at least once each year through the church's ministry.
- 5) **Giving:** Give financially in proportion to your income with the goal of tithing.

These five things are the membership expectations. However, they are not a requirement for membership. Rather, they are more about the official guidance for church members to deepen their relationship with God. Please use them for your healthier spiritual planning and journey.

January Sermon and Worship Services

The January sermon will be beneficial for your New year's spiritual resolution. This is because I will pay attention to John the Baptist, who helped people prepare to receive Jesus as their King and Lord. In particular, his main message about repentance will invite us to examine ourselves to be freed from worldly desire and sins, and his austere life and passionate ministry encourage us to follow his exemplary way of holiness. In addition to that, we will have the Wesley's Covenant ritual on the first Sunday of the month. This traditional ritual leads us to repent our sins before God and renew our covenantal relationship with God.

On the second Sunday, when I join the Youth Winter Retreat, Rev. Mary Council-Austin will come and bring good news to us. On January 19th, the third Sunday of the month, we will have a ritual to install and introduce our church leaders for 2025. On the last Sunday, we have the time to ponder on an international mission with the sermon by the pastor and the presentation by Jeff S. With the holy expectation, please come and join the January worship services.



January Sermon and Worship

DATE	CALENDAR	SERMON	WORSHIP
1/5	New Year Epiphany	- John the Baptist 2 - Bible: Luke 3:1-14	- Communion - Wesley's Covenant Service - Nursery (No Sunday School)
1/12	The Baptism of the Lord	- Guest Preacher: Mary Council-Austin	- Choir
1/19	2 nd Sunday after Epiphany	- John the Baptist 3 - Bible: Luke 3:15-22	- Bell Choir - New Member Ceremony - Leader Installation
1/26	3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	- Stewardship Sermon about "International Mission"	- Choir - International Mission Presentation (Jeff S) - Live-Streaming / Sound Training

Church Visioning and Planning Meeting for 2025

We plan to have the Church Visioning and Planning meeting for 2025 on **Sunday, January 4th, from 9:00 AM to noon**. In this meeting, we will discuss the church's 2025 direction and vision and develop a strategic yearly plan accordingly. All church leaders from every aspect of church life are strongly encouraged to attend, and any church members interested in participating are welcome to join!



Small Group Ministry Update

- Trillium Small Group Inaugural Meeting

Ready to try something new in your spiritual life for 2025? Trillium, a small group focused on God and nature, will have its inaugural meeting **January 7 at 6:30 p.m.** The group has a theme of "by connecting with nature we connect with God and each other."

The first gathering will feature a hot chocolate bar and a short video of winter in Yellowstone National Park. Also, there will be a survey of members' interests in environmental topics, places to visit, and best meeting times and venues.

Plan to come to a new venue, the Community Room of the Fond du Lac Public Library, 32 Sheboygan Street. The Community Room is located on the lower level, which can be accessed by either stairs or elevator. Questions can be directed to Jeff Strong or Bill Dekker, co-leaders.

Submitted by Jeff Strong

Small Group Ministry Update

- Food and Fellowship

I can't think of a better way to start the new year than spending time with friends and enjoying good food. On **January 21st** we will do just that. Our menu is still not totally locked in but we will have soup, side dish and bread or rolls and of course a delicious dessert. Remember we decided to try an earlier **time of 5:00 pm.** and instead of cooking that night the food will be made before hand. This way we will have more time for conversation. We will have a brief meeting in early January to determine who is making what. There were only six women at our first night but Diane will be at the next one. Several people have expressed interest in joining us, so if you would like to claim that last spot, please let me or Debbie know.

Submitted by Shelli Dekker

Sunday School News

Thank you to the Sunday school teachers who helped with the Christmas program presented on December 15. They helped the children to learn the songs as well as the stories about Jesus's birth to prepare for the program. The Sunday school kids worked closely with the church youth. It is so wonderful to see the two groups work together for their performance!

The Sunday school families also adopted a family with 10 gifts who needed a little help to make their Christmas special. Each family chose several people from this family to purchase gifts. The gifts were wrapped and placed under the tree in the Fellowship Hall. It is important for young children to learn that they can make someone's Christmas a brighter with their gift giving. Thank you!

In January, the Sunday school classes will continue their study of the Bible as they follow "Simply Loved" curriculum. These lessons will be taken from Luke. Currently, we have 12 children attending our Sunday school classes. They are enjoying the songs, dances, stories and craft activities.

Sunday school would love more volunteers to teach or assist each week. The materials we use are well planned out, easy to follow and we have a great group of kids. Please consider volunteering as we need 2 people each week to work with the children! Contact Pastor Ho Lee, Mona or Julie if you would be willing to help. Thanks!

Submitted by Julie Tennie



January Sunday School Schedule

DATE	CALENDAR	SUNDAY SCHOOL	TEACHERS
1/5	New Year Epiphany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Sunday School - Nursery - Sunday School Teachers' Meeting 	AnnaRose A.
1/12	The Baptism of the Lord	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Theme: "Shepherds Hear About Jesus' Birth" - Bible: Luke 2:8-20 	-
1/19	2 nd Sunday after Epiphany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Theme: "Jesus Befriends Zacchaeus" - Bible: Luke 19:1-10 	-
1/26	3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Theme: "Jesus Welcomes Children" - Bible: Luke 18:15-17 	-

Youth Group News



January 10-12, the youth and their fearless leaders (Jeff and Diane), along with Shelli, and Pastor Ho Lee, will **attend the winter retreat at Camp Lucerne**. They will join other youth from around the state for fun, games, worship, and fellowship. They are still selling Kwik Trip Car Wash gift cards to raise money for their mission trip to Louisville in June of 2025. And in February we will be selling pizza coupons. In January, we will continue our study of The Journey during our Youth Group time.

Submitted by Diane Weider



- Confirmation News

Our confirmation program is currently on winter break. We will resume it on **February 9th, 2025, at 6:00 PM.** They need to purchase the book *John: The Gospel of Light and Life*, written by Rev. Adam Hamilton. This book will be the textbook for the program's second quarter.

Today, I would like to share Lily's writing to introduce her to the congregation.



Hello. My name is Lily Kutchek. I am an 8th grader at Woodworth Middle School here in Fond du Lac. I live with my Mom, Dad, and dog, Trixie. I also have a brother who is 28 and lives in Phoenix, Arizona. I am a competitive swimmer for the Oshy Dolphins in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. I play the alto saxophone and the bassoon for the Woodworth band.

I love nature, hiking, summer, and traveling; some of my favorite parts about summer are that I can experience all of that; my summer is usually packed full of activities, and some of those activities are doing a week or two at Pine Lake church camp in Westfield. My family and I have a vacation home in Weeki Wachee Springs, Florida that we go to on the Fourth of July every year. I love listening to music no matter what genre it is (except most country music). I also absolutely hate tomatoes.

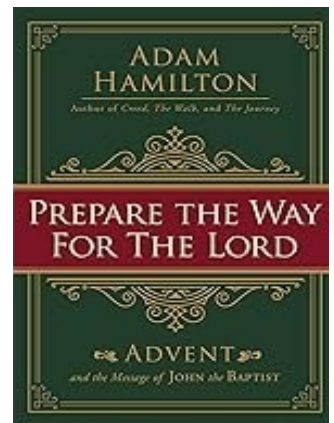
I'm not completely sure what to expect from the confirmation program, to be completely honest; I would really like to become closer to and build a stronger relationship with God and the church as well.

Bible Study

Bible Study will resume on **January 15th** with our book study "Prepare the Way for the Lord" the message of John the Baptist. For two thousand years, Christians have turned to the story and message of John the Baptist in the weeks leading up to Christmas. In *Prepare the Way for the Lord: Advent and the Message of John the Baptist*, best-selling author and pastor Adam Hamilton explores the Advent themes of John's life and ministry, and how John calls all followers of Jesus to prepare our hearts for his coming.

In each of the Gospels, the story of Jesus is intertwined with that of his cousin John, the one whom the prophets foretold would come to "prepare the way of the Lord." When we hear the message of John the Baptist, it makes us and our world ready to receive Christ. All are welcome to join us.

Submitted by Diane Weider



Church Council

Happy New Year from Church Council

Christian unity is a blessing. Our church family works together to share the word of God with a dangerous world. May we bring his hope to the hopeless and peace to the brokenhearted. We as Christian brothers and sisters with one another can share our joy as we worship the Lord in harmony. As a church family we seek unity with each other to accomplish the task the Lord sets upon us. So with God as our leader, may we be prepared to live another year under His guidance.

**Prayer: Dear Lord,
help us as a church family to find opportunities
to have a closer relationship with you,
so we can accomplish the task you set before us
in this coming New Year.
Amen.**



Submitted by Tom Retzleff, Church Council Chair

SPRC

We are happy to announce that Miyeon Kim has agreed to fill in as our administrative assistant for the next year. Miyeon is highly qualified and has done a wonderful job for us in the past. So, please welcome her when you stop in the office. We have completed our staff evaluations and Dave and Kristin both received high praise and are happy to continue working for all of us. Please extend your thanks for all they do when you see them.

Submitted by Diane Weider, SPRC Chair

Mission Committee

You, my church family, continue to amaze me. When asked to help, you always, unfailingly step up. This year we adopted 6 families (one was a large blended family) and you claimed every ornament from the tree. The Sunday school children and their families adopted an entire family this year. In addition, you donated enough money to supply each family with a laundry basket filled with cleaning supplies, and a gift card for groceries. I love the generosity of this church. While doing all of this, you donated baby wipes, hats, mittens, and socks.

In January we will have two different loose offering missions. January 5th and 12th will go to Pacto de Gracia. Pacto is the Hispanic ministry held in our church and led by Rev. Janet Martinez. Pacto de Gracia is still in the early stages of its beginning and can use our help with their finances. On January 19th and 26th our loose offering will go to the Banana Project. The U.M. Men raise funds for and deliver bananas to some of our elementary schools on Monday mornings. This is an ongoing project that needs our help with funding.

Submitted by Diane Weider

Care Committee



Care Committee members strive to keep homebound members connected to our Church family. We continue to have approximately 12 members who are unable to attend Church for a variety of reasons. Let us keep them in our prayers.

Submitted by Jan Andrews

UWF (United Women in Faith) News

- Sara Circle

Sara Circle Dec. meeting was well attended with Lori Engel as a guest. Treasurer reported our thank offering in November was \$237 sent to District. Soup supper profit was \$1300 and we distributed funds as follows: \$200 to Hope on the Block, \$300 to UM Camps, \$250 each to 5 Stones (sex trafficking organization), Pacto de Gracia, and We EmpowHer. We were informed we will receive \$1200 this year as a grant from United Methodist Foundation for the little food pantry. This will be a great help. We have begun putting out hand warmers and water bottles which are taken daily. Cookie walk plans were discussed and completed for Dec. 14 & 15th. Loaves & Fishes is Jan. 15 and we serve a warming shelter meal on Feb. 21. We packed treat bags for 14 shut ins and will deliver them. Lunch was pot luck and we played an interesting game. Next meeting is January 8 at 10 am.

Submitted by Dea Hebel

- Sugarplum COOKIE WALK



A HUGE THANK YOU to each person who made cookies or candy, worked either day, came and shopped. Our success was due to each one of you!! Our profit was \$2,946.45 after expenses. Half goes to Missions committee and half to Sara Circle which will help with little food pantry. We truly have a dedicated group in this church who make big projects successful. Blessings, and a Very Merry Christmas to all of you!

Submitted by Dea Hebel





UMM (UNITED METHODIST MEN) News

The UMM met Saturday, Dec. 14th at Rolling Meadows Restaurant with 7 men present. I shared the fact that the men allowed \$750 for socks, underwear, sweats etc. for the four schools. My sister and I only spent \$649.31, the men said to keep the extra \$100.69 available in case a school needs extra. A donor gave money again to buy gloves for kids and this is probably the 3rd on 4th time he did this. We ordered 144 pairs of gloves, and this allowed 36 pairs to each school. The secretary at Riverside said we were a Godsend as she was down to 3 pairs. I also donated to the Evans school bananas (separately). We then discussed different issues at our church and the community etc.

Our next meeting will be on **Jan. 11, 2025, at 8:00am** in Rolling Meadows Restaurant, stop by join us, more hands means we can do more good.

“It always works better when we do it together” – from The Shack.

Submitted by Darrell Jewson , Chair UMM

2024 Annual Report Pacto de Gracia UMC

We are ending the year 2024, and we can say, “The Lord has not stopped helping us.” It has been a year with enormous challenges and great blessings. The support of the United Methodist Churches of Fond du Lac County makes our work and mission possible.

Membership

After three and a half years of working with the Hispanic community, we have 21 members of different nationalities: Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, and Mexico.

Lay Servant Ministries

Five members participated in the basic course in Spanish of the Lay Servant Ministries, held on October 12 and 19, 2024.

Community Closet

In January 2023, the Community Closet began helping our community with diverse needs. In two years, we have blessed more than three hundred families with beds, clothing, shoes, household goods, furniture, etc. The community closet has also helped people who have left prison, who are homeless, and who have been in shelters. When they found a place to live, we provided them with furniture, clothing, kitchen items, bedding, etc. The donations from the community closet make possible the Church's ministries and missions. These donations help people in need with rent, water, electricity, gas bills, medicine, immigration expenses, etc. All this work is possible thanks to the coordination of Dana Knack, volunteers, and the donations received.

Partnership

- Fond Du Lac Adult Literacy Services - English Classes
- Chegwin Elementary School - Support our Hispanic Community

In this new year, 2025, we continue to be united in our mission to build the kingdom of God in Fond du Lac and its surroundings. I ask you for prayers of the Pacto de Gracia Church and the Pastor.

Submitted by Rev. Janet Martinez

January Birthdays

1/3 Casey Averbeck
 1/10 Betty Beardsley
 1/13 Nicklas Averbeck
 1/13 Joyce Kurtz
 1-18 Kevin Sherman
 1-20 Karla Kahlhamer
 1-21 Jan Andrews
 1-22 Jackson Goldapske
 1-23 Blake Taillefer
 1-29 Liona Brockway

January ANNIVERSARIES


12th William and Shelli Dekker
 23rd Doug and Judie Duitman

2025 January Worship Volunteers

2025	Liturgist	Children's Time	Acolyte	Live-Streaming	PowerPoint/ Sound	Ushers
1/5	Darrell J.	Pastor Ho L.	Memphis A.	Mona A.	Diane W.	Bill D. (Head)
1/12	Bill A.	Denise S.	Ivy T.	Lily K.	Tom R.	Bill D. (Head)
1/19	Mary B.	Diane W.	Echo W.	Ava A.	Diane W.	Bill D. (Head)
1/26	Julie T.	Shelli D.	Jin L/H-a L.	AJ. A.	Diane W.	Bill D. (Head)

THANK YOU
 Volunteers

JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Happy New Year <u>Church Office closed</u>	2 Pastoral Visitations	3 Pastor Sabbath	4 Pastor Day Off 9:00 am—noon Visioning & Plan- ning Meeting
5 9:00 - 10:00 am Worship Service 10:15 - 11:15 am Choir Practice	6 10:00—11:00 am Care Meeting 11:45 am - 12:45pm Staff Meeting 6:15 - 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice	7 10:00—11:00 am Trustee Meeting 6:30 pm Trillium small Group meeting	8 10:00—11:00 am SaraCircle 1:00 - 3:00 pm Loom Mission	9 Pastoral Visitations	10 Youth Winter Retreat (Day1/3)	11 8:00 - 9:00 am Men's Breakfast 9 am - 3 pm Rummage Sale Pacto de Gracia Youth Winter Retreat(Day2/3)
12 9:00 - 10:00 am Worship Service 10:15 - 11:15 am Choir Practice Youth Winter Retreat(Day3/3)	13 10:00 - 11:00 am Community Worship At Lake House 11:45 am—12:45pm Staff Meeting 4:45—5:45 pm Finance Cmte. 6:15 - 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice	14 1:30—3:30 pm Game Day 6:00—8:00 pm Happy Hour Weaving	15 9:30 - 10:30 am Bible Study 10:45—11:45 am Mission Cmte. 4:00 - 6:00 pm Loaves & Fishes 5:30-8:00 pm Champions Bingo	16 Pastoral Visitations	17 Pastor Sabbath	18 Pastor Day Off
19 9:00 - 10:00 am Worship Service 10:15 - 11:15 am Choir Practice	20 6:15 - 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice Pastor's Vacation (Day 1/2)	21 5:00—7:00 pm Food & Fellowship Pastor's Vacation (Day 2/2)	22 8:00—9:00 am Women's Breakfast 9:30 - 10:30 am Bible Study 1:00 - 3:00 pm Loom Mission 10:30 - 11:30 am Worship Cmte.	23 Pastoral Visitations	24 Pastor Sabbath	25 Pastor Day Off
26 9:00 - 10:00 am Worship Service 10:15 - 11:45 am Youth Group 10:15 - 11:15 am Choir Practice	27 11:45 am - 12:45pm Staff Meeting 6:15 - 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice 6:30—7:30 pm Church Council	28 6:00 - 8:00 pm Happy Hour Weaving	29 9:30 - 10:30 am Bible Study	30 Pastoral Visitations	31 Pastor Sabbath	



20 N Marr St.
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

Phone: 920-921-4949



Covenant United Methodist Church

DECEMBER 2024 Newsletter Published monthly by Covenant United Methodist Church-FDL, WI



THE ARK *Covenant UMC*

Ways to Give with Tithe.ly

- Tithe.ly app
- Text "give" to 920-267-4801
- <https://covenantforyou.church/give-copy/>

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.