



THE ARK

August 2025

NEWSLETTER

COVENANT United Methodist Church

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"Covenant United Methodist Church - Fond du Lac"

From Pastor's Desk:

August Sermon and Worship Services

August Sermon Series: "Church on Fire" (Acts 2)

The Book of Acts, chapter 2, is one of the best-known stories for many Christians. On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and followers of Jesus while they were praying in an upper room. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, came out of the house, and preached the Gospel in various languages. Many Jews from different regions were amazed and touched by their ability to speak in different tongues, as well as by the good news they shared, which led them to join this new movement. This event marks the beginning of the church. Many of you are likely familiar with this story. Pastors, including myself, repeatedly share it. The church commemorates this event at least once a year on Pentecost Sunday. This emphasis and repetition highlight how crucial this story is for followers of Jesus Christ.

However, how much do you know about this story beyond what I've explained? There are additional stories that follow, such as Peter's preaching and the life of the early church. Have you taken the time to focus on these accounts? More importantly, what is the relationship between this magnificent story about the beginning of the church and our lives today? What messages does this passage bring to you and to our congregation?

In August, I encourage our church members to explore the familiar story found in Acts chapter 2. Let's dive into its hidden messages and discover the lessons and principles that can deepen our relationship with God. These insights will also help us revitalize our church community.

August Worship Services

The worship services in August will primarily focus on our Sermon Series titled "Church on Fire." However, there are two special worship services that I would like you to take note of. The first is the Church Picnic on **August 10**. On this Sunday, we will hold the worship





service in Fellowship Hall instead of the sanctuary. Please note that the service will **begin at 10 AM**, not at 9 AM, to allow time for our **communal lunch together at 11 AM**. This worship service will have a more casual style, with everyone sitting around tables, singing to God, and discussing the Bible—focusing especially on "celebration" as a spiritual discipline. During this service, we will take time to reflect on our three-year ministry and mission as a church, giving thanks to God and celebrating His providence in our lives. Below is the invitation for this church picnic from Deb Christian, who is organizing the event.

"To Celebrate all of the wonderful things that have been accomplished this year at Covenant UMC we will be serving a catered lunch at our church picnic on Sunday August 11th. This meal will be sponsored by the Youth and Family Ministry Bequest Fund. This fund includes money left to our church in bequests that has been designated to promote and sponsor youth and family ministries. What better way to use some of this fund than to acknowledge the amazing work done by so many. So please plan on attending the church picnic and enjoy this delicious catered lunch in celebration of all of our congregation. You don't need to bring a thing, just come and enjoy the celebration and fellowship."

By Deborah Christian

We will have a special **worship service on August 24th**, featuring our beloved Lay Minister, Denise Retzleff, as the guest preacher. Denise has delivered meaningful messages from God in the past, and we are excited to have her back with us. Last year, we were surprised and saddened when Denise was appointed to serve in other churches as a lay minister, similar to a local pastor. However, her sudden move has brought incredible spiritual growth to those congregations thanks to her exceptional leadership. Even though she is now serving elsewhere, she remains our lay minister, and we believe it's important to celebrate this connection together. We invite you to join us in welcoming and encouraging Denise Retzleff during this special service. We look forward to seeing you there!

Other worship services will feature special events and rituals. On the first Sunday of the month, **August 3rd**, we will not only celebrate communion but also the marriage of David and Denise Thompson through a reaffirmation of their marriage covenant. On **August 17th**, we will hold a new member ritual to welcome our five new members: Harriet, Jim, Billie, Dorene, and Abigail. Please come and celebrate with us!



August Sermon and Worship

DATE	CALENDAR	SERMON	WORSHIP
8/3	8 th Sunday after Pentecost	Bible: Acts 2:1-13 Sermon: Church on Fire 1	- Communion - The Reaffirmation of the Marriage Covenant - Special Music : David & Denise Thompson
8/10	Church Picnic	Bible: John 2:1-11 John 16:20-24 Group Bible Study about Celebration	- Worship Service at 10:00 am at Fellowship Hall - Celebration of the Church Ministry - Church Lunch - Special Music: Tom Retzleff
8/17	10 th Sunday after Pentecost	Bible: Acts 2:1-13 Sermon: Church on Fire 2	- New Member Ceremony - Special Music: Peniel Quartet
8/24	11 th Sunday after Pentecost	Guest Preacher : Lay Minister Denise Retzleff	- Special Music: Denise T. / Penny W. / Patti S.
8/31	12 th Sunday after Pentecost	Bible: Acts 2:14-47 Sermon: Church on Fire 3	

Report on Annual Conference

We voted on four **constitutional amendments**, but the results are not shared with us until after all of the Annual Conferences vote on them. **Ballot 1:** Worldwide Regionalization allows United Methodists to best serve their unique communities. Regionalization creates equity across the Church without privileging one region as the center and others as peripheries. **Ballot 2:** Ratification at the postponed 2020 General Conference, the legislative gathering voted to add the words "gender" and "ability" to Paragraph 4, Article IV of The United Methodist Church's Constitution. This amendment affirms that no one should be excluded from membership in the Church for any reason. **Ballot 3:** Racial Justice Proposed changes to The UMC Constitution will strengthen our commitment by explicitly recognizing the church's role in combating racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy. **Ballot 4:** Paragraph 35 of the UM Constitution It standardizes and clarifies who is eligible to vote for clergy delegates to General Conference. While it does not change eligibility requirements from what is already detailed in other places in the Book of Discipline, it ensures that:

- A Master of Divinity (M. Div.) must be from a University Senate-approved theological school (or equivalent in Central Conferences),
- The language used is more precise and consistent with the rest of the Book of Discipline.
- It creates uniform educational standards for voting clergy across the global church, avoiding confusion or unequal application of qualifications.

Budget Highlights

♦ 2024 Results:

- * 210 local churches paid 100% of their 2024 apportionments
- * All past Conference audits are now complete and are available on the Conference web site
- * 2024 budget: gross apportionments \$6,920,500; net apportionments \$5,674,810 (82.0%)
- * We received donations to more than 100 programs totaling over \$1.1 million (e.g. UMCOR, World Hunger and Poverty, US Disaster Response, Bread for the World, Rooted and Rising, Annual Conference Ingathering)

♦ 2026 budget proposal:

- * About 25% of our budget is pre-determined by GCFA.
- * Budget detail on Pages 26-38 of Pre-Conference Workbook.
- * Apportionments anticipated at 81%
- * Use \$951,000 from Foundation designated/restricted accounts as allowed
- * Renting some space in Conference Center as source of income
- * DS/staff salaries increase at 2%
- * Medical insurance assumed to increase at 9.0%

Bishop Schwerin's State of The Church Address

In his State of the Church Address, Bishop Schwerin reflected on the feeling of rootlessness many experience today, contrasting it with the rootedness the Church once represented. Drawing on the story from Acts 27, where Paul and the centurion Julius faced a storm at sea, he asked, “What good is Eucharist in a storm?” and reminded us: we are the body of Christ *in* the storm. Leaders are called to name the moment we’re in, listen for the Spirit, and point toward the shore ahead. He emphasized the importance of a renewed focus—the annual conference’s mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world—through efforts like leadership cohorts, MCCI, ICD, Fresh Expressions, and partnerships with Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. He encouraged experimentation, innovation, and reading *How to Lead When You Don’t Know Where You’re Going* by Susan Beaumont.

The new UMC vision statement—forming disciples who “love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously”—calls us beyond our buildings and into our communities. Bishop Schwerin noted financial pressures like rising insurance costs and the loss of full-time appointments, especially in smaller congregations, challenging us to creatively adapt. Reminding us that early Methodists loved people, not institutions, he affirmed that faith is “the courage that allows grace to do its work.” Finally, he spoke to our moral calling: the Gospel compels us to care for the vulnerable, affirm the sacred worth of all people, and stand against racism and exclusion. “This is a sanctuary moment,” he said, calling for clarity and conviction in our resistance through love, and urging us to listen deeply to our vocations.

Submitted by Diane Weider

Small Group Report

Trillium Small Group Update

Trillium is a small group focused on God and Nature. It’s outside event in June morphed from “Sunset on the Water” to “Raindrops from the Porch” when Mother Nature was not cooperative. Instead attendees enjoyed strawberry shortcake around the kitchen table. July’s outside event was a visit to the Roessler property along the Ledge near Oakfield. It included viewing the small lake and Purple Martin colony , as well as touring the prairie field and pine forest via a UTV ride.

The next outside event, scheduled for **August 13 at 1 pm**, is a visit to view the flower garden at the Tennie household followed by an optional hike to nearby Hobbs Woods Nature Area.

Submitted by Jeff Strong

Food and Fellowship

I don't write articles for the Ark often because our group is full. We have enjoyed several meals together. Our next meal is a tailgate party because we have a few Brewer fans. What is this group about? We enjoy a meal together at church that each of us contributes to. During that time, we share whatever is on our minds: joys, concerns, challenges, etc. This is a special group of women, but if you are interested in starting another group like ours, I would love to help you get started. It does not have to be just women. I know many men who cook. Small groups are a great way to connect with other people in our congregation and God.

Submitted by Shelli Dekker

New Member Introduction

Meet Mike Shaver. Mike grew up in Fond du Lac and attended Faith Lutheran School and Winnebago Lutheran Academy. Mike has had several work experiences. He worked at Schreiner's for 35 ½ years. (That's a long time!) He also worked at Fat Joe's and Piggly Wiggly. He enjoys music, movies, and took piano lessons at one time.



Mike also told me a little bit about his family. His younger sister, Laurie, works in the cafeteria at the high school. His grandfather, Jacob Schuppe, worked at International Paper for 40 years, and Mike's mom, Pat Shaver, worked at Maple Manor as a CNA for 20 years and also at All About Life. When I asked him what brought him to Covenant, he said his mom lived by Myrtle Roloff, and Myrtle invited her to come to Covenant, and he came too. Mike likes to help at our various fundraisers - Mother/Other Banquet, chili suppers, etc. Mike is a great addition to our Covenant family.

Submitted by Donna Miller

Sunday School News

New School Year Prep!

We will hold a **Sunday School Teachers' Meeting** on **Sunday, August 24, at 10:30 AM**. As we prepare for the upcoming school year, it is important for *all Sunday School teachers to gather and organize for the 2025 school year*. During this meeting, we will *discuss the curriculum, teacher assignments, Fun Sunday, and upcoming events*. If you are a Sunday School teacher, please mark your calendar and make sure to attend the meeting. If you are interested in becoming a new teacher, we encourage you to join us and see how it goes. For those considering becoming involved in Sunday School, please note that teachers are only required to dedicate their time and effort to this ministry once a month, thanks to our rotation system. **We always welcome passionate new teachers!**



Submitted by Pastor Ho Lee

Rally Sunday– A fresh Start!

As summer is flying by, we are now gearing up for the return of our Sunday School, Youth, and Confirmation Classes program for 2025-26. This year, we want to have an exciting **RALLY DAY, Sunday, September 7th**. Initial plans are to have food, beverages, games, a bounce house, possibly a dunk tank, along with live music. We hope to inspire our kids and youth to bigger and better things this coming school year. (PS—if there are concerns about the cost, there is money in our Bequest/Family Ministries account to provide for this). We look forward to an exciting KICK-OFF to this year's school programs. This is an open invitation to our congregation and friends. Save the date and see you all there!!



Submitted by Mona Averbeck

Church Council

Stewardship

Stewardship programs help congregations be financially sound. A quality financial stewardship program frequently informs church members about stewardship and is a part of every worship service. When giving to the church, we should remember that our time, job, money, and resources are blessings from God. As a faithful member of the Covenant Church, you have to look no further than to fund the opportunities, programs, and missions within the church to make a big difference. What may seem to be a small amount of money can help support the church programs that help our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Please consider and pray how you, as an individual congregant, may contribute spiritually and financially to meet our church's needs throughout the year.

Church Council Meeting Highlights on June 30, 2025

- The church council was informed by Bill Averbeck, chair of the trustees, that **the repaving of the church parking lot will begin the week of July 21**. Bill said the church parking lot will be closed for that entire week, and **will be re-opened on August 10th**. It was also reported that a combination of contributions and gifts of \$22,900.00 has been donated for the parking lot project. **Thank you to all who have contributed to the project.**
- Another item discussed was the church's financial budget is down \$4000.00 from last year's income at this time. We needed to transfer \$5,000.00 from the bequest funds to the general funds to cover current and future expenses.
- Church council has approved the purchase of five (5) tablets for homebound members to watch our Sunday Church Service from home.
- Church council has approved the **catering of our church picnic on August 10th**.
- Church council approved the purchase of 11 storage shelves and totes to organize the church classrooms on the 1st and 3rd floor, and four (4) shelves and totes for organizing the Heritage room.
- Church council would like to **thank Jan Andrews** for her many years of being a money counter and we would like to also **thank Bill Dekker** for volunteering to take Jan's place.
- We set the date for our next Church Council meeting for **August 25 at 6:30 pm**. Anyone wanting to attend these meetings is more than welcome.

Take care and God Bless.

Submitted by Tom Retzleff, Church Council Chair

Missions

The In Gathering at Annual Conference outdid last year with 1,340 Personal Dignity Kits, Home Care Buckets 591 and \$7,904.29 received in the 2 days at Annual Conference! Covenant donated 30 kits and over \$200.

In August we will once again be collecting baby wipes. These are then given to parents in need in conjunction with Jake's diapers. We will be physically **collecting the wipes August 3-17.**

Our loose offering on August 3rd and 10th will go to **UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief)**. UMCOR shows up after disasters strike. Whether it is hurricanes, wildfires, flooding, etc. UMCOR comes in to aid with relief efforts. **August 17, 24, and 31** will go to **Camp Scholarships**. We had three students take advantage of camp scholarships this year. Lily Kutchek, Jin Lee, and Ha-el Lee all attended camp at Pine Lake this summer. We would love to see many more students get involved. Wisconsin has two camps that offer programs all summer long and retreats in the winter as well. Feel free to ask Lily, Jin, and Ha-el about their camp experiences. They all had a great time.

Submitted by Diane Weider



LOAVES and FISHES



Covenant provided a **159 meals on Wednesday, July 16th at Church of Peace**. Nancy Johnston and I would like to **thank all** who helped that evening to serve, provided donations, and or baked cookies. We also had 2 new people help that evening, Dennis Giese and Brayden Haffman. May you all be blest for taking the time for this important ministry.

Submitted by Mona Averbeck and Nancy Johnston

Care Committee



A typical visit with Sandy starts with her welcoming Dea and me with her walker and D.O.G. (the dog). As Sandy, being the "Perfect hostess," has cookies and beverages available for us. This isn't necessary, but we enjoy sharing these goodies. We visit in the living room and talk about the happenings in our lives, as well as what's going on in the church. Hopefully, this helps her stay connected to her church family. I think she would benefit from watching the Sunday Worship Service on a tablet.

After Sandy's husband passed away, her son and daughter-in-law came to live with her. This allowed her to stay in her own home. They are very helpful with the maintenance of the home and the yard. They have a beautiful yard with many flowers. They also help with meals and provide great companionship. After her last fall and hospitalization, and rehab, she was discharged home but unable to be alone. Judy, her daughter, would come every day to be with her. How fortunate for Sandy to have such a caring and loving family! Sandy loves getting books from the church library. She is an avid reader, which helps pass the time away. I hope these little visits make a difference in her life. I know it makes a difference in mine. Sandy continues to maintain a positive attitude, even being homebound for nearly 2 years.

Let these visits continue.

Submitted by Jan Andrew

United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith will meet **Sept. 3 at 10 am** in the fellowship hall. We invite any interested ladies to join us if interested in mission work and fellowship with other women in the church. We need a co-hostess to work with Mona for this meeting. Please let Dea know if you can help in this way.



United
Women
in Faith

UWF Sunday is Sept 21 and our speaker will be Anita Lang and she will tell us about the Bolivia mission work. Remember our **church picnic Sunday Aug. 10th**. It is designed to be a "thank you" to all who contribute in many ways throughout the year. Plan to be there!

Submitted by Dea Hebel

Attention Women of Sara Circle!!



We are nearing the end of **this year's Reading Program**. You only need to read one book from each of the topics: Education for Mission, Leadership Development, Nurturing Community, Social Action, and Spiritual Growth. There is a simple form to fill out containing the books you have read. Don't worry, there are no questions or book reports. I will **need your forms by the end of August** so I can submit to the conference. Last year, we had 6 readers and they read 60 books. Let's see if we can do a little better this year. If you have any questions, please contact me and I will do my best to get you answers. Now get reading!

Submitted by Shelli Dekker

United Methodist Men

United Methodist Men met Saturday, July 12th, at Rolling Meadow Restaurant. Seven men presented, and we had a long discussion on United Methodist Men's missions and funding. I reported on the 2024-2025 school year banana project. Looking ahead to future fundraising, we are exploring a dunk tank, maybe Rally day, Spaghetti dinners, or, in all, the church Men's breakfast, more to follow. **The next meeting** will be on the **second Saturday of August 9TH at 8 AM**, at the Rolling Meadow restaurant. All men, young or old, are needed. *"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better."* - The quote from *The Lorax*, by Dr. Seuss



Submitted by Darrell Jewson, the chair of the United Methodist Men

Banana project article

For the Ark banana project, you're in. The banana project for the 2024-2025 school year. Totals are as follows. 392 cases, including the 2 cases a week I provided to the Evans School. It comes to a total of 1 of 15,280 pounds at 39 cents a pound. And that came to \$5,959.20. This includes 4 cases a week for 3 weeks to summer school and almost 2000 boxes of cereal whenever the store had a good sale. United Methodist Men in November spent \$760 on socks and undies, etc. For at least 4 schools, Riverside, Chegwin, Pier, and Parkside schools. \$480 for 188 pairs a winter gloves from an anonymous donor. \$600 to Parkside for the fourth-grade field trip to the Milwaukee Public Museum. \$500 to our youth mission trip to Kentucky, plus \$184 from the candy bar sale and \$664 from the Pizza sale. Our men's group is involved wherever needed, plus to make donations our



coupons to the banana project for the 2025-2026 school year. This is needed in our community. Please earmark donations for the bananas to the banana project.

Submitted by Darrell Jewson of the banana project.

Trustees

August brings us to the final month of summer. At this point, our driveway/parking lot repavement project is delayed due to complications of **soft spot** areas in the driveway portion on the west side of the Church. Sorry for the inconvenience and completion should take place the week of August 4th .

Another area of upgrade being considered are the Sanctuary lights. Some of the lights are out, some are dimming, so at this time, we are evaluating the replacement cost for more energy efficient bulbs. The Trustees also completed yard clean up at the Pastor's home. Our crew clipped hedges, weed eaten, and sprayed for weeds. THANKS to those who helped to beautify our parsonage. If there are any concerns, issues, please feel free to contact any one of our Trustees.



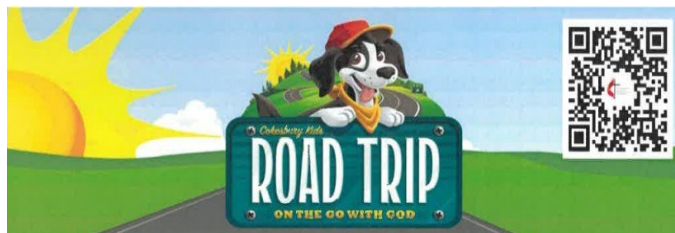
May the Good Lord keep you in his care!

Submitted by Bill Averbeck, Trustee Chair

VBS: Road Trip – An Adventure with God!

Looking for a fun and faith-filled summer activity for kids Community, Salem, and Pacto de Gracia UMC are hosting Road Trip, an exciting Vacation Bible School adventure **at Community UMC** (701 Minnesota Ave. North, Fond du Lac) from **August 6–8, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM**. It's open to the public and includes fun activities and free meals!

You can register online at <http://www.myvbs.org/UMCFondulacounty/> or stop in for registration forms at Community or Salem UMC



Needed: Candles, Used-up crayons



Candles that are old and no longer burn, or you just don't want. Used-up crayons are welcome, too. Wax is used to make fire starters in the cold winter months. Any color, any size. Recycled & reused, they send prayers into the heavens while fires warm our home all winter. Please contact Denise S for donations or drop-off details.
Thank you!

Submitted by Denise Shaffer



8/1 Abigail Gellings
 8/4 Estelle Allickson
 8/6 David Thompson
 8/8 Sandy Kilmer
 8/12 AJ Averbek
 8/12 Sandy Thern
 8/15 Judie Duitman
 8/18 Patti Stuebs
 8/20 Adam Gellings
 8/23 Ashley Bird
 8/27 Sandra Randall
 8/28 Randall Depies



August Anniversary

8/2 Tom & Denise Retzleff
 8/5 Gary & Donna Miller
 8/17 Dick & Julie Tennie



8/3	UMCOR
8/10	UMCOR
8/17	Camps & Retreats
8/24	Camps & Retreats
8/31	Camps & Retreats

2025 August Worship Volunteers

2025	Liturgist	Children's Time	Acolyte	Live-Streaming	PowerPoint/Sound	Ushers
8/3	Mary B.	Pastor Ho L.	Memphis A.	Ava A.	Tom R.	Harold S. (Head) Jan A./ Art A.
8/10 Church Picnic	Dick T.	Diane W.	No needed	No needed	No needed	Jeff S. (Head) Jan A.
8/17	Denise S.	Shelli D.	Abigail G.		Tom R.	Bill A. (Head) Jan A./ Sandy T.
8/24	Shelli D.	Diane W.	Jin L.	AJ A.	Tom R.	(Head) Jan A. / Sandy T.
8/31	Darrell J.	Shelli D.	Tay L.	Mona A.	Diane W.	Jeff S. (Head) Jan A. / Sandy T

THANK YOU
volunteers



AUGUST

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8/31 9:00—10:00 am Worship Service	 10:00 - 11:00 am Community Worship At Lake House 11:45 am—12:45pm staff meeting	5 10:00am-11:00am Trustee Meeting	6 9:30 - 10:30 am Bible Study 10:30 am—11:30 am Care Cmte. Meeting 6:30 pm—8:00pm Disciple Course 4	7 Pastoral Visitations	1 Pastor Sabbath	2 Pastor Day Off
3 9:00—10:00 am Worship Service — Communion — Renew Vows — New Member Ceremony	4 10:00 - 11:00 am Community Worship At Lake House 11:45 am—12:45pm staff meeting	5 10:00am-11:00am Trustee Meeting	6 9:30 - 10:30 am Bible Study 10:30 am—11:30 am Care Cmte. Meeting 6:30 pm—8:00pm Disciple Course 4	7 Pastoral Visitations	8 Pastor Sabbath	9 Pastor Day Off 8:00 - 9:00 am Men's Breakfast 9:00 am - 3:00 pm Rummage Sale Pacto de Gracia
10 10:00 am—12:00pm Worship Service at fellowship hall Church Picnic	11 11:45 am—12:45pm Staff Meeting	12 10:00am-12:00pm Circuit Meeting at Ripon	13 9:30 - 10:30 am Bible Study 1:00pm Trillium Outing 3:00pm—4:00 pm Visitation	14 Pastoral Visitations	15 Pastor Sabbath	16 Pastor Day Off
17 9:00 - 10:00 am Worship Service - New members Ceremony 10:30am-11:30am Rally Sunday Mtg.	18 11:45 am—12:45pm Staff Meeting 1:00pm-2:00pm Youth G. Planning Mtg. 6:30pm—7:30 pm Church Council Mtg.	19 10:00am-12:00pm Circuit Meeting at Ripon	20 9:30 - 10:30 am Bible Study 5:30—8:00 pm Champions Bingo	21 Pastor's Vacation (4/4)	22 Pastor Sabbath	23 Pastor Day Off
24 9:00 - 10:00 am Worship Service 10:30am-11:30am Sunday School Mtg.	25 11:45 am—12:45pm Staff Meeting 1:00pm-2:00pm Youth G. Planning Mtg. 6:30pm—7:30 pm Church Council Mtg.	26 4:45pm-5:45pm Finance Meeting	27 8:00—9:00 am Women's Breakfast 9:30-10:30am Bible Study 6:30 pm—8:00 pm Disciple Course 5	28 Pastoral Visitations	29 Pastor Sabbath	30 Pastor Day Off



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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.