



THE ARK

February 2026

NEWSLETTER

COVENANT United Methodist Church

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From Pastor's Desk:

Lent: 40 Days for Spiritual Renewal

In 2026, the season of Lent begins in mid-February, on Ash Wednesday, February 18, and continues through Holy Saturday, April 4, just before Easter. Lent is a 40-day Christian season that prepares us for Easter—the celebration of Jesus' resurrection.



Throughout Christian history, Lent has been regarded as one of the most meaningful and reflective seasons of the church year. It has been a time for believers to examine their lives before God, repent of sin, let go of harmful habits, and take on life-giving spiritual practices. Through prayer, Scripture, and reflection on Jesus' teachings, ministry, and life, Christians have sought to renew and deepen their relationship with God.

Honoring this Lenten tradition, I warmly invite our church members to use this season as an opportunity to reflect on their spiritual health, engage more deeply with the life of Jesus, and grow closer to God by trying new or renewed spiritual practices. Below are a few suggestions you may wish to consider during this holy season.

1) Lenten Bible Reading: The Gospel of Luke

As many of you may have noticed, I often encourage our church members to read one of the Gospels during the season of Lent. I emphasize Bible reading because Scripture is the most foundational guide for our spiritual journey. There is an important difference between hearing Bible stories from others and reading the Bible for yourself. Both are necessary, and together they help us discover deeper meaning in God's Word—but personal reading is essential.

If you are new to reading the Bible, this Lenten Gospel reading is a wonderful place to begin. The four Gospels focus on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, which is the foundation of our relationship with God. Many people also find the Gospels easier to read than other parts of the Bible because the stories are familiar and centered on Jesus' actions and teachings.

Among the four Gospels, the Gospel of Luke is especially approachable because of its clear and well-organized storytelling. Luke highlights Jesus' care for the poor, the outcast, and sinners, and his message has inspired countless Christians throughout history to follow the way of Jesus. You can even continue the story into the book of Acts, which was written by the same author and tells the story of the early church.

As you read this invitation, I encourage you to make a simple but bold decision: pick up the Bible and begin.

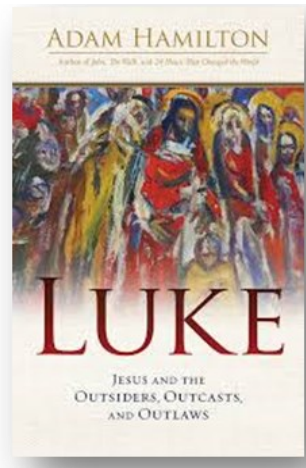
The Lenten Bible Reading Chart below will guide you in how much to read each day during Lent. Choose a quiet time when you can be alone—early in the morning or later in the evening often works best. Read the assigned passage, reflect on it, and pray as you begin or end your day. This practice will take about 10–15 minutes, and no more than 20 minutes at most. Though brief, this daily time with Scripture can transform your day and, over time, your spiritual life.

LUKE READING CHART FOR LENT

Day	Date	Scripture	Day	Date	Scripture
Day 1	2/18	Matthew 6:1-21	Day 21	3/13	Luke 15:1-32
Day 2	2/19	Luke 1:1-38	Day 22	3/14	Luke 16:1-31
Day 3	2/20	Luke 1:39-80	Sunday	3/15	Luke 17:1-37
Day 4	2/21	Luke 2:1-21	Day 23	3/16	Luke 18:1-43
Sunday	2/22	Luke 2:22-52	Day 24	3/17	Luke 19:1-48
Day 5	2/23	Luke 3:1-38	Day 25	3/18	Luke 20:1-47
Day 6	2/24	Luke 4:1-44	Day 26	3/19	Luke 21:1-38
Day 7	2/25	Luke 5:1-39	Day 27	3/20	Luke 22:1-38
Day 8	2/26	Luke 6:1-26	Day 28	3/21	Luke 22:39-71
Day 9	2/27	Luke 6:27-49	Sunday	3/22	Luke 23:1-25
Day 10	2/28	Luke 7:1-17	Day 29	3/23	Luke 23:26-56
Sunday	3/1	Luke 7:18-50	Day 30	3/24	Luke 24:1-35
Day 11	3/2	Luke 8:1-25	Day 31	3/25	Luke 24:36-53
Day 12	3/3	Luke 8:26-56	Day 32	3/26	Luke 1 - 3 (2 nd)
Day 13	3/4	Luke 9:1-36	Day 33	3/27	Luke 4 - 6 (2 nd)
Day 14	3/5	Luke 9:37-62	Day 34	3/28	Luke 7 - 9 (2 nd)
Day 15	3/6	Luke 10:1-42	Sunday	3/29	Luke 10 - 12 (2nd)
Day 16	3/7	Luke 11:1-32	Day 35	3/30	Luke 13 - 15 (2 nd)
Sunday	3/8	Luke 11:33-54	Day 36	3/31	Luke 16 - 18 (2 nd)
Day 17	3/9	Luke 12:1-34	Day 37	4/1	Luke 19 - 21 (2 nd)
Day 18	3/10	Luke 12:35-59	Day 38	4/3	John 13:1-35
Day 19	3/11	Luke 13:1-35	Day 39	4/3	John 18:1 – 19:42
Day 20	3/12	Luke 14:1-35	Day 40	4/4	Luke 22 – 24 (2 nd)

2) Lenten Bible Study: Luke

In alignment with our Lenten Gospel reading, I will be offering two Lenten Bible study classes on the Gospel of Luke—one on Wednesday morning and one on Wednesday evening. The primary resource for both classes will be **Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws** by Adam Hamilton.



This book is written in clear, accessible language and helps readers understand the Gospel of Luke more deeply by highlighting its key themes and distinctive features. The class itself will be discussion-centered and interactive, focusing on conversation, sharing, and activities. No required reading is necessary to participate. Each session will include a short video that provides the essential background and guidance for that week's topic.

That said, reading the textbook is highly encouraged, as it will enrich your understanding of the Gospel of Luke and make the class experience even more meaningful. The book will be available for purchase through the church office for \$14, or you may obtain a copy on your own.

More detailed information about the class is provided below.

Wednesday Morning Lenten Book Study

- **Date:** Every Wednesday from February 11th through March 25th
(No class on **March 4th** due to Sara Circle Meeting)
- **Time and Place:** From 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM in the Choir Room
- **Book:** “Luke: Jesus and the outsiders, outcasts, and outlaws” (By Adam Hamilton)

Wednesday Evening Lenten Book Study

- **Date:** Every Wednesday from February 26th through April 16th
(No class on **February 18th** due to Ash Wednesday Worship)
- **Time and Place:** From 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM in the Choir Room
- **Book:** “Luke: Jesus and the outsiders, outcasts, and outlaws” (By Adam Hamilton)

3) Lenten Sermon Series: Luke

During the season of Lent, I plan to focus our sermon series on the Gospel of Luke. Rather than centering each sermon on a single passage and exploring it in isolation, this series will offer broader insights and perspectives that help us understand the Gospel of Luke as a whole.

This does not mean the sermons will become lectures or simply provide biblical information. Each message will remain deeply connected to our faith and daily lives. In fact, you may be surprised by how

relevant Luke's portrayal of Jesus is for today's world—a world where social gaps continue to widen, individuals and nations often prioritize economic gain, and many institutions, including churches, are tempted to pursue power and control rather than compassion and service.

This sermon series will be informed by the Lenten Bible study and the textbook we are using, as well as by the rich conversations that emerge from our shared learning. However, the goal is not to repeat the same points from the class, but to guide the congregation toward a deeper and more meaningful understanding of Luke's Gospel.

With holy expectation, I invite you to join us in worship throughout the Lenten season as we encounter Jesus anew through the Gospel of Luke.

4) Ash Wednesday Worship Service: 2/18 at 6:30 PM

The church will offer three special worship services during the Lenten season: Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. We especially encourage you to attend the Ash Wednesday service on **February 18 at 6:30 PM**, as it is a meaningful way to begin the journey of Lent.

Ash Wednesday invites us to remember our human frailty, repent of our sins, and recommit our lives to God. The central and ancient ritual of the imposition of ashes reminds us of our limitations, clarifies what truly matters in life, and points us back to where we ultimately belong—with God.

Take a small step by joining this worship service. God can use that step to bring about a deeper renewal of faith during this holy season.



February Worship and Sermon

DATE	CALENDAR	SERMON	WORSHIP
2/01	4 th Sunday after the Epiphany	Sermon: Lord's Prayer 4	- Communion - Offering: UMCOR
2/08	5 th Sunday after the Epiphany	Sermon: Lord's Prayer 5	- Offering: UMCOR - Choir
2/15	6 th Sunday after the Epiphany	Sermon: Lord's Prayer 6	- Offering: Help for the Homeless - Bell Choir
2/18	Ash Wednesday	Sermon: Ash Wednesday	- Imposition of Ashes - Offering: Help for the Homeless - Special Music
2/22	1 st Sunday in Lent	Sermon: Luke 1	- Offering: Help for the Homeless - Choir - Homeless Hygiene Drive

Small Group Ministry Update:

Trillium to Visit Ice Age Center

Learn more about Wisconsin's Ice Age with Trillium on a visit to the Ice Age Visitor Center and Kettle Moraine State Forest **January 30**. The Visitor Center includes an exhibit area, auditorium, and gift shop. The exhibits explain the area's glacial history and unique land forms. See a video featuring the 1,200 mile Ice Age National Scenic Trail, located entirely in Wisconsin and passing through the area. Lunch will follow at the nearby Zillmer Trailhead, where there is a heated shelter. Bring a sack lunch; warm beverages and dessert will be provided. After lunch, take in an optional guided forest hike or snowshoe.



Meet at church at 10:30 a.m., then drive or carpool the 19 miles to the Visitor Center at N2875 WIS-67, Campbellsport (near Dundee). Cost is free. Everyone is welcome.

Trillium is a small group with a focus on God and Nature. It meets once per month inside, with **the next gathering February 11 at 1-2 p.m.** in the fellowship hall at church.

Submitted by Jeff Strong

Food and Fellowship

The ladies in this group are having so much fun getting to know each other and exploring our faith. Because December was such a busy month, we took a break but we met on **Wednesday, January 7th**, and enjoyed an Asian-inspired menu. Some of the fortunes from the cookies were good. Because Diane is recovering from her surgery, we will be praying that she is back with us soon and moving without pain. **Our next dinner will be a baked potato bar.** This will include large potatoes and lots of toppings. To keep things a little healthier, Dea is bringing a salad. We look forward to a wonderful year of fellowship in the new year.

Submitted by Shelli Dekker

New Member Introduction

Kayla Depies is one of our great Sunday school teachers. She grew up in Wautoma and went to Fox Valley Technical College. In 2011, she met her husband, Randall, at Country USA in Oshkosh. They have three children – Ryan, 18, Ava, 5, and Emily, 2. Currently, she is an insurance agent with Nolan Insurance in Brandon.

Kayla has special memories of spending time and making goodies with her grandparents on the farm. She enjoys going to concerts such as Mercy Me and Zach Williams (country/Christian singers). She loves the activities with children at church and Sunday Fun Days. Kayla recommends listening to radio station 91.7 - KLOVE – a Christian radio station. We encourage you to try that station. Even though you have been with us for a few months, we welcome you and your family to our Covenant Church family.



Submitted by Donna Miller

Young Couples' Night Out

Thanks to **Blake's** (Kelly's husband) arrangements, we are excited to host another Young Couples' Night Out on **Friday, February 13, at 5:30 PM**. This time, we will be heading to **Jake's Bowling Alley in Brownsville** for a fun evening of bowling, food, and fellowship—an opportunity to get to know one another better.

Childcare will be provided by several generous church volunteers. Please bring your children to the church **by 5:30 PM**, after which we will travel together to our destination.

Young singles are also warmly invited to join us!



Sunday School News

At our January Sunday school teacher's meeting, we were able to fill in which teaching partners will teach lessons through the month of May. We are lucky to have Denise Shaffer willing to be a substitute as needed. On January 11, following the church service, many of the Sunday school teachers were able to socialize and get to know each other over lunch at a local restaurant.



On **February 1**, there is a **Family Fun Sunday** planned for **snow tubing** at Sunburst in Kewaskum following the church service. This event is open to both Sunday school families and our Youth Group. The church will cover the \$30 cost for all children and 1/2 the price for the adults who do tubing (\$15). There is a **sign-up sheet in the Narthex and fees are due Saturday, January 31**. The church will provide snacks while other food is available for purchase at Sunburst.

We would like to remind families that Sunday school does **collect an offering** to be used for our various church missions. We encourage families to have a way for their children to earn money to share with the church. The habit of giving, no matter how small, is an important lesson for children to learn so they realize they are a part of something bigger than themselves. Thank you for your support with this!

Future plans include another Family Fun Sunday on **May 3** to a **Trampoline Park** in Appleton. **Graduation Sunday service** on **May 31** will include the children and youth. We will also have a **1-day Vacation Bible School (VBS) on August 1 from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM** for our Sunday school aged children who may invite their friends or cousins. More information will be announced as the dates near.

Submitted by Julie Tennie

February Sunday School Schedule

DATE	CALENDAR	SUNDAY SCHOOL	TEACHERS
2/01	4 th Sunday after the Epiphany	- No Sunday School - Nursery - Fun Sunday: Tubing	AnnaRose A.
2/08	5 th Sunday after the Epiphany	- Theme: "God Talks to Gideon" - Bible: Judges 6	Julie / Kelly
2/15	6 th Sunday after the Epiphany	-Theme: "Gideon Leads God's People" - Bible: Judges 7	Laurel / Miyeon
2/22	1 st Sunday in Lent	-Theme: "Jesus Is Tempted" - Bible: Matthew 4:1-11	Miyeon / Mona

Youth Group News

Seven youth attended the **Winter Retreat** at Camp Lucerne on **January 23-25th**, along with **Shelli, Jeff, and Pastor**. They played, sang, worshiped, and met new friends. (However, as I write this article, they haven't yet gone so I will update you in the March newsletter.)



I believe some of the youth still have **car wash gift cards** for sale, so let Jeff or Diane know if you would like one. They are a \$50 value for just \$36.

The youth are excited to **go tubing** on **February 1st** with the children and brave adults from Covenant.

We are in the process of working out the details for our **2026 mini mission trip** that we will be doing in conjunction with the youth from Good Shepherd UMC in Oconomowoc. We are looking at four days in three communities. We will keep you updated as details are worked out.

Submitted by Diane Weider

February Youth Group & Confirmation Schedule

DATE	CALENDAR	YOUTH GROUP	CONFIRMATION
2/01	4 th Sunday after the Epiphany	- Fun Sunday: Tubing	
2/08	5 th Sunday after the Epiphany	- Youth Group Meeting: YM 360	- Confirmation Class 3: Alpha: Telling Others
2/15	6 th Sunday after the Epiphany	- No Class	- Confirmation Class 4: Alpha: Healing
2/22	1 st Sunday in Lent	- Youth Group Meeting: YM 360	- Confirmation Class 5: Alpha: Church

Church Council Brief

The Church Council met on December 8, 2025. Key updates included **roof and boiler assessments**, each with several years of life remaining but significant future costs anticipated. The council discussed the possibility of a **new photo directory** in fall 2026. We affirmed the Care Committee's plan to offer **blood pressure checks** in February for American Heart Month. Plans are underway for the **Visioning and Planning Meeting** on January 17, with **leader installation** scheduled for January 18. **Habitat for Humanity** may share a mission moment during worship in 2026. **Apportionments** are fully paid, and **insurance updates** are expected mid-summer.



Gracious God, guide our congregation with wisdom and unity as we move into a new year of ministry. Strengthen our leaders, inspire our planning, and keep our hearts centered on Your mission.

Bless the work of our hands and the hopes we carry for this church and community. Amen.

Submitted by Thomas Retzleff, Church Council Chair

Missions

On **February 1st and 8th**, our loose offering will go to the **United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)**. UMCOR strengthens the United Methodist response to humanitarian crises around the world through disaster relief and recovery, migrant and refugee support, environmental sustainability, agriculture, and food security. UMCOR gives hope and healing to those impacted by disaster and crisis in all communities by distributing cleaning kits, hygiene kits, and menstrual hygiene kits. UMCOR is present wherever disasters occur. Our support is greatly needed.

On **February 15th - March 1st**, we will **collect hygiene supplies** for Advocap's Help for the Homeless. Items needed include: Shampoo & Conditioner, Body Wash, Anti-Perspirant/Deodorant, Baby Wipes, Laundry Detergent, Dish Soap, Trash Bags (13 & 30-gallon), Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Facial Tissues, All-Purpose Cleaners, Disinfectant Wipes, Disposable Razors & Shaving Cream, Menstrual Products, Baby Shampoo/Wash.



On **February 15th and 22nd**, our loose offering will go to **Advocap**. Founded in 1966, ADVOCAP is a nonprofit Community Action Agency (CAA) serving Fond du Lac, Green Lake, and Winnebago Counties in Wisconsin. ADVOCAP helps individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency through programs in housing stability, homeless assistance, food security, education, and business and workforce development. By partnering with local organizations and engaging volunteers, ADVOCAP strengthens communities while supporting our neighbors in building stable, independent lives.

Submitted by Diane Weider

Loaves and Fishes

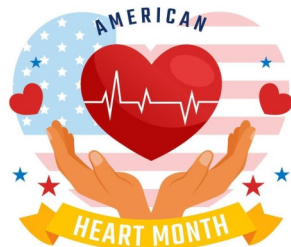


On January 14th, we **served 157 carry out meals** at Church of Peace on Military Rd. Nancy Johnston and I want to thank all of you who helped out either serving, cooking, or donating product and their time in making this meal for the benefit of those in need. God Bless,

Submitted by Mona Averbeck & Nancy Johnston

Care Committee sponsors Blood Pressure Check

It's been called "**The Silent Killer**." Controlling it helps prevent heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease. The culprit: high blood pressure.



In recognition of **American Heart Month**, the Care Committee is sponsoring free blood pressure determinations at the church. Even if you are already being treated for high blood pressure, this is an opportunity to see how you are doing outside the clinic or home setting. On two Sundays, **February 8 and 15**, healthcare professionals will be available in the rear section of the sanctuary immediately after the morning worship service to check your blood pressure. For the best readings, avoid caffeine beforehand and come with a top/shirt where arm can be bared. Put this culprit in its place; your heart will thank you!

Submitted by Jan Andrews

UWF: United Women in Faith

The January meeting with 14 members present was our annual pledge service led by Donna Miller. We distributed some of the cookie walk profit to youth group trips this year, Habitat, warming shelter, Loaves & Fishes, and for our computer repairs at church.



We will **serve a meal at the warming shelter on the 27th**, so those plans were completed. We furnished dessert for the men's spaghetti supper on the 22nd and helped as needed.

The next meeting is on **February 4th**.

Submitted by Dea Hebel

United Methodist Men (UMM)

The men of the UMM group would like to thank those who helped out with our Spaghetti Supper held January 22nd which included the youth and women's group. It is collaborations such as this that make Covenant a "Family Church".

In His name, **Bill Averbeck**, President

Trustees

Your Covenant Trustees are looking at **2 smaller energy saving projects** for 2026. It has been suggested that **ceiling fans** should be installed in the Sanctuary. There is significant heat loss with the high ceiling and installation of fans would direct the heat down to the congregation to conserve heating costs and in summer would also help with the air conditioning cost. Presently, heat is flowing up to the bell tower. **The ceiling openings above the altar** have never been enclosed which allows a lot of air to escape into the bell tower area. We will be looking at closing those openings also. In addition, **3 windows in the sound booth/live stream area** have been enclosed with foam insulation. These windows were allowing a fair amount of cold air into that area and one of our Trustees has solved that problem. As we move into 2026, we hope to enhance your worship experience with energy efficiency as our focus. **God is Great.**

Submitted by **Bill Averbeck**, Trustee Chair

Game Day/Night

Our first Game Day of the new year will be on **Tuesday, January 27** from **1:30 – 3:30 PM**. I hope some of you got new games for Christmas and are willing to share them with us. Learning new games is more fun than you think when you are doing it in the safety of friends.

Remember these events are open to anyone. You don't have to be a member of Covenant all are welcome. Watch for information in the bulletin, online and posters. I would love to hear from those who have attended or would like to attend as to how we could improve.

We look forward to having lots of fun in the new year.



Submitted by **Shelli Dekker**



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY

2-1 Jayne Pickart
 2-6 Denise Shaffer
 2-9 Billie Mindt
 2-11 Sharon Olson
 2-11 Lauren Miller
 2-12 Susan Bird-Schaefer
 2-15 Gerald Burns

2-15 John Hammons
 2-17 Diane Weider
 2-24 Iris Taillefer
 2-26 Jean Giese
 2-27 Gary McKee
 2-27 Wilma Hamilton
 2-29 Janice Klaske

MISSION moments

2/1	UMCOR
2/8	
2/15	Help for the Homeless (Advocap)
2/18	
2/22	



February Anniversary

2-4 Robert and Jayne Pickart

2026 February Worship Volunteers

2026	Liturgist	Children's Time	Acolyte	Live-Streaming	PPT/Sound	Ushers
2/1	Deb. C	Pastor Ho L.	Memphis A.	Mona A.	Diane W.	(Head) Jan A. /
2/8	Diane W.	Shelli D.	Ivy T.	Mona A.	Tom R.	Jeff S. (Head) / Sandy T.
2/15	Jennifer C.	Laurel M.	Agigail G.	Ava A.	Diane W.	Jeff S. (Head) Art A. / Sandy T.
2/18	Pastor Lee	Not Needed	Jin or Ha-el	Mona A.	Tom R.	Jeff S. (Head) Donna M. /
2/22	Donna M.	Julie T.	Tay L.	AJ A.	Diane W.	Jeff S. (Head) / Sandy T.

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9:00AM-1:00PM

Pastor Office Hours:

Mon- Thurs
9:00am-3:00pm

The 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.