



THE ARK

April 2026

NEWSLETTER

COVENANT United Methodist Church

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From Pastor's Desk:

Holy Week



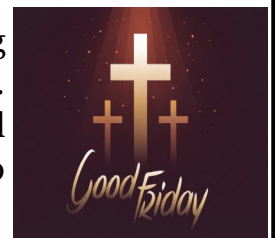
We are approaching the final week of Lent, known as Holy Week. This is **the most sacred time** in the Christian calendar, as we remember Jesus' last week on earth—a journey that leads to the cross and reveals the depth of his love and ministry. Just as our spiritual ancestors used this time to reorient their lives toward Christ, I invite all of us to give special attention to Jesus this week and deepen our relationship with God.

To support your spiritual journey in the midst of busy lives, the church has prepared several opportunities to help you turn your attention to Christ. These include Relay Prayer, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter worship. I strongly encourage everyone to participate in at least one of these meaningful gatherings.

Relay Prayer will take place on **Monday (3/30) and Tuesday (3/31) from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM** in the sanctuary. While personal devotion can certainly happen at home, setting aside time to come to the sanctuary offers a unique opportunity to encounter God in a deeper way. Jesus said, "My house shall be a house of prayer" (Luke 19:46), and during this Holy Week, we seek to live into that calling. The church will provide Scripture passages, reflection questions, and prayer prompts to guide your time with God.

Maundy Thursday (4/2 at 6:30 PM) is a traditional service commemorating the **Last Supper**. Through Holy Communion, the washing of hands, and the stripping of the sanctuary, we reflect on Jesus' love, his teachings at the table, and his humble journey toward the cross.

Good Friday (4/3 at 6:30 PM) is another deeply meaningful service, inviting us to meditate on the crucifixion through Scripture, hymns, and sacred reflection. This year, our **youth group** will present a **shadow play** portraying the final moments of Jesus based on the Gospel of Luke. Denise T. and Nancy J. will also enrich the service through their musical gifts.



Easter Sunday is the most joyful and central celebration of our faith, as we proclaim **the resurrection of Jesus Christ**. The resurrection is God's ultimate victory, giving us hope and new life as we follow the way of the cross. In this special service, we will celebrate with the lighting of the Christ candle, hymns, special music, and Holy Communion. High school band members will add to

the joy with brass music, and an Easter egg hunt for children will follow the service.

Easter is also a wonderful opportunity to invite family members, friends, or neighbors who may be seeking a church home. I encourage you to invite them and join together in this celebration of new life.

April Worship and Sermon

There is often a tendency for many Christians to relax spiritually after the intensity of Lent and the celebration of Easter. However, we should remember that **Easter is not the end of our journey—it is the beginning.** While Easter marks the completion of Jesus' earthly ministry, it also marks the beginning of the church's mission, as Jesus ascended and the disciples were sent out into the world.

With this in mind, the church leaders and I have prepared several meaningful worship services and special events following Easter to help us continue growing in faith.

On April 12, the Second Sunday of Easter, our retired local pastor and beloved church member, **Mary Balson**, will bring the message. I will still be present and leading the service. I believe it is a blessing for our congregation to hear God's Word from a different voice and perspective. Personally, it will also be a meaningful opportunity for me to worship without the responsibility of preaching fully.

On April 19, we will celebrate **United Methodist Men (UMM) Sunday**. Over the past few years, our men's group has grown and become more actively engaged in the life and ministry of the church. This Sunday will be a time to celebrate their commitment and service. Our guest preacher will be **Richard Averbeck**, Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and also Bill Averbeck's brother. The men will also share about their ministry and offer special music. In addition, we will celebrate the baptism of **Elara Sook** (daughter of Devin and Brittany, and Jan's great-granddaughter).



On the last Sunday of the month, April 26, we will have **Bible Trivia Sunday**. During Lent, I encouraged everyone to read *the Gospel of Luke*, and it has been encouraging to see so many actively participate. To celebrate this shared journey in Scripture, we will hold a special worship service featuring Bible trivia based on Luke. This time, I will not provide sample questions—you have all proven to be more than ready! Simply read Luke carefully and come prepared.



Following the service, we will enjoy a **community lunch** together.

Note: On April 26, the worship service will begin at 10:00 AM (instead of 9:00 AM) and will be held in the **Fellowship Hall**.

April Worship and Sermon

DATE	CALENDAR	SERMON	WORSHIP
4/2	Maundy Thursday	Sermon: about Last Supper	- Communion - Washing Hands - Stripping of the Church - Offering: Apportionment - Choir
4/3	Good Friday	Shadow Play Reflections on Crucifixion	- Special Music (Denise T. / Nancy J.) - Offering: Apportionment
4/5	Easter	Sermon: about Resurrection	- Christ Candle - Communion - Choir - Brass Music - Egg Hunting - Offering: Youth for Christ
4/12	2nd Sunday of Easter	Guest Preacher: Retired Local Pastor Mary Balson	- Choir - Offering: Youth Mission Trip
4/19	UMM Sunday	Guest Preacher: Rev. Dr. Richard Averbeck	- UMM Presentation - UMM Special Music - Infant Baptism (Elara Sook) - Bell Choir - Offering: Youth Mission Trip
4/26	Bible Trivia Native American Sunday	Bible Trivia: Luke Worship Service at 10:00 AM at Fellowship Hall	- Bible Trivia - Native American Children's Time: Shelli D. - Lunch at 11:00 AM

Pastor's April Schedule

In April, I will be out of the office more than usual. I would like to share my schedule with you for your information:

- **April 6th – 7th:** Annual Conference Worship Committee
(Pastor Ho Lee will be out of town)
- **April 17th – 18th:** Bible Seminar at First UMC – Madison
(Pastor Ho Lee will be out of town)
- **April 20th – 25th:** Pastor's Vacation

Small Group Ministry Update:

Trillium to View Sturgeon Spectacle

At its most recent meeting, Trillium, a small group with a theme of God and Nature, reviewed the many references to rocks, stones and gems in the Bible. This was in preparation for a **March 20** outing to two museums in the Neenah area that display the **beauty of earth in minerals, gems, and glass**. The group visited the Harder Gallery of Gems and Minerals located at Jeweler's Mutual Insurance Company grounds, with a group photo outside in front of a giant diamond ring statue.

The second site was the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass, located on Lake Winnebago, with the featured items beautiful paperweights and vintage European drinking glasses.

The next outing, planned for late April/early May, is to view the **spectacle** of huge sturgeon **gathering** at spawning grounds on the Wolf River. This will be arranged on short notice at a time the DNR reports the arrival of the sturgeon, probably near Shiocton, WI., 47 miles from Fond du Lac. Let **Jeff Strong** or **Bill Dekker** know if you are **interested** in receiving an email or text notifying you of this pop-up event.

Submitted by Jeff Strong



Food and Fellowship

We finally got all of us together for dinner. Even Jennifer and her newly repaired knee made it. Dinner was "Breakfast for Dinner." So, of course, we all ate way too much. Healing both physically and spiritually was a topic of conversation. I think we all felt a little lighter by the end of the evening, which went a little longer than it should have. **Our next get-together is Tuesday, April 21st**, and the menu is "*Make your own Pizza.*"

This is a great way to get to know people in our congregation. Pastor Ho Lee talked about how important the family table is, and this is a great way to extend your table to new friends. I would love to help start a new food and fellowship group. We meet one night a month, but you can meet as often as you'd like. The hardest part for us is the menu. Please let me know if anyone is interested, and we will make it happen.

Bon Appétit!

Submitted by Shelli Dekker

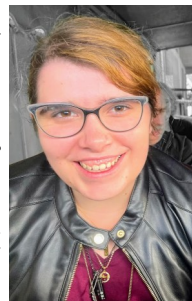


Welcomed Into the Covenant Family

Gary, Laurel, and Erin McKee recently joined our church. They previously attended Memorial Baptist Church here in Fond du Lac. **Gary** immigrated from Northern Ireland in 2003, married Laurel in Florida in 2004, and moved to Wisconsin. Erin was born in 2005.



Gary is an over-the-road truck driver, driving west to California, and as far south as Florida and Arizona. He enjoys walking and hiking. **Laurel** is a former English teacher who now works with youth who age out of foster care in Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, and three other counties. **Erin** graduated from Fond du Lac High School in 2023 and loves working with animals. She works at Affordable Family Pet Care and attends college to become a veterinary assistant.



They all love to travel and hope to go to Ireland this summer to visit Gary's father and family.

Submitted by Donna Miller

Sunday School News

The older Sunday school students were invited to help with the Youth Pancake Breakfast on Palm Sunday. It is good practice for these students to be involved in a mission fundraising event like this, as they will soon be the next Youth Group at Covenant! A big thank you to our Sunday School families for providing some of the food necessary to make the breakfast a success!

Our April Sunday school lessons include learning Bible stories: "Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life", "God Provides for Ruth", and "God's Answer to Hannah's Prayer". As your child attends Sunday school each week, please take time to review what they remember, ask them about the craft, and how it relates to the story. This would be a great time to see if your child can locate these people and their stories in a children's Bible. Ask Julie Tennie or Miyeon if you do not have a children's Bible and you would like to borrow one from the church.

Our next **Family Fun Sunday** is being planned for **May 3rd** with an outing to Appleton to a **Trampoline Park**. Hope more can join us that day! Look for a sign-up on the narthex table at the end of March through April. At the time of this writing, final decisions have yet to be made on which Appleton location we will go to, but the plan is to leave church by **10:30 AM** and arrive in Appleton about 11:30 AM. Church will pay for fees, snack, and/or pizza, and for all children/youth who join us. Adults who jump with the kids will need to pay their own fees. There is no fee for just watching.



While the kids jump, the Sunday school teachers and Youth leaders will meet to discuss plans for **Graduation Sunday on May 31**.

We are also making plans for a **1-day Vacation Bible School (VBS)** on **August 1** from **9:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

Submitted by Julie Tennie

APRIL Sunday School Schedule

DATE	CALENDAR	SUNDAY SCHOOL	TEACHERS
4/5	Easter	- No Sunday School - Nursery - Egg Hunting	AnnaRose A.
4/12	2 nd Sunday of Easter	- Theme: "Jesus Dies and Comes Back to Life" - Bible: Mark 15:16-16:8	Julie / Kelly
4/19	UMM Sunday	-Theme: "God Provides for Ruth" - Bible: Ruth 1-4	Donna / Kayla
4/26	Bible Trivia Native American Sunday	-Theme: "God Answers Hannah's Prayer" - Bible: 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11	Laurel / Mona

Youth Group News

The youth have been working really hard on their shadow play that they will perform on **Good Friday at 6:30 PM**. It has been a pleasure having Sloan back working with the youth. They hope you will all be there to see it. We are still working on fundraisers for our mission trips, including the Pancake Breakfast on Palm Sunday. I believe that we will be doing interior car detailing in May, so watch for announcements regarding that fundraiser.

Submitted by Diane Weider

APRIL Youth Group & Confirmation Schedule

DATE	CALENDAR	YOUTH GROUP	CONFIRMATION
4/05	Easter	- No Class	- No Class
4/12	2 nd Sunday of Easter	- Youth Group Meeting: YM 360	- Confirmation Class 10: Luke 5
4/19	UMM Sunday	- No Class	- Confirmation Class 11: Luke 6
4/26	Bible Trivia Native American Sunday	- Youth Group Meeting: YM 360	Confirmation Class 12: Bible Quiz / Interview

Church Council

On February 26 at 6:30 p.m., the Church Council held its monthly meeting. During this meeting, the Council discussed and approved the **recertification** of Denise Retzleff as a Certified Lay Minister serving the Campbellsport and Mayville churches.

The second item of discussion was **Computer Replacement**. We currently have three quotes for new computers and laptops, and operating system updates will also be required. These proposals were presented to the Trustees on March 3. It was also suggested that we transition our livestreaming software to OBS Studio, which would allow streaming to both Facebook and YouTube.

The next Church Council meeting is scheduled for **Monday, April 27, at 6:30 PM**. This is an open-door meeting, and anyone interested in attending is welcome.

Prayer: *“Gracious God, guide our congregation with wisdom and unity. 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.”*



Thomas Retzleff, Church Council Chair

Missions

Our loose offering on **Maundy Thursday** and **Good Friday** will go to support our **apportionments**. Each dollar given to fund the apportionments of The United Methodist Church undergoes the miracle of the loaves and fishes — they multiply to serve and satisfy those who hunger and are in need around the world. Apportionments are an investment in building the realm of God and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. Lives are changed, faith is shared, and hope is raised. By our giving, we participate in the saving of lives as well as souls,

April 5th, Easter Sunday envelopes and **loose offerings** will go to **Youth for Christ**. YFC is a movement that reaches young people everywhere with the hope of Christ. They work with local churches and other like-minded partners to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus who lead by their godliness in lifestyle, devotion to the Word of God and prayer, passion for sharing the love of Christ, and commitment to social involvement. Since 1944, they’ve had an unwavering commitment to meet 11-19 year olds in pivotal moments, and to introduce them to the hope of Christ. From holding rallies with Billy Graham in the 40’s, to entering campuses to reach students in the 60’s, to now empowering community leaders to build meaningful relationships with young people everywhere—it’s their aim to walk with young people through their story, and to be the friend and mentor that we’ve longed for ourselves.



On **April 12th** and **19th** our loose offerings will go to support the **Youth Mission Trip**. This year the Youth decided to do an abbreviated trip in Wisconsin in conjunction with the youth from Oconomowoc UMC. We will do missions in Fond du Lac, Oconomowoc, and Milwaukee. Then next year we will do a week-long out of state trip. Mission trips are costly and your offerings are appreciated.



Finally, **April 26th** is **Native American Sunday**. The United Methodist Church recognizes the importance of deepening our understanding of Native American life and culture while honoring the sacredness of Indigenous peoples—their languages, identities, and contributions to both the church and the world, faith and in society. Gifts support Native ministries, create new programs. This Special Sunday celebrates and affirms the vital role Native Americans play in supporting seminary scholarships, with half staying in the local conference to strengthen community ministries. Our generosity supports Native ministries, honors Native voices, and strengthens the whole church. United, we make a greater impact

Submitted by Diane Weider

Loaves and Fishes

Well, here we are at that time when we will be serving carry-out meals to those in need at Church of Peace, Military Rd, FDL, on **Wednesday, April 8, 4:00 - 6:00 PM**. Presently, we are planning on 145 meals consisting of chicken, scalloped potatoes, corn, bread, cookies, bananas, and milk. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex. We know that this is on the heels of a very busy time, Pancake Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter, but your help will be greatly appreciated. God Bless!!



Submitted by Mona Averbeck and Nancy Johnston

UWF: United Women in Faith:

LADIES - YOU ARE INVITED to our annual **Mother-Other Banquet** on **Thursday, May 7th**. Mark your calendar and plan to join us for a relaxing evening. We have some special music for entertainment! The V-Jam choral musicians from high school are coming. They are the Junior Varsity members who will become Cardinal singers.

The meal will be a **hot beef sandwich with many salad choices and a great dessert**. Prices are the same as the last few years: **\$10 adults, children aged 4-10 \$5, 3 and under free**.

Our delicious bake sale will have many goodies for sale, along with some flowers and bazaar items. **Punch** in the narthex begins **at 5:30 PM**, and **dinner is at 6 PM**.

Please plan to join us and invite your friends or neighbors to come along.

Submitted by Dea Hebel

The Little Food Pantry

The Little Food Pantry continues to serve many of our neighbors and is empty nearly every day. Your support is *SO appreciated*, and we can now think about the seasonal change coming. We are always in need of **fruit items**, and **all types of canned fruits** are always taken. **Microwave mac & cheese** and **ramen** noodles are very popular, as are **any instant potato or rice products** that only need water to cook and microwave. **Chef Boyardee products** and **pasta** and **sauce**, as well as **soups**, are welcome.

At the present time, we have cereal and peanut butter on hand. We are always thankful for the stores that allow us to buy quantities when they have items on sale.

Special thanks to church members who have stepped up to help us keep this project going successfully! You are each greatly appreciated.

Submitted by Dea Hebel

United Methodist Men (UMM)

The Men's group is working on 3 things going forward. We will be having a Serogy's candy bar sale this spring. The candy bars will be sold before and after the Sunday morning service and at other events. The cost is \$2 per bar with proceeds going to fund the men's projects. We will also help at the Youth Pancake Sunday, March 29th. Also, keep your Sunday April 19th open as that will be the **FIRST MEN'S SUNDAY!** Service. The service will be conducted by your Covenant men along with a guest speaker, Reverend Dr. Richard Averbeck who will give the sermon. The Covenant Men would appreciate your support on this occasion.

God's Love, **Bill Averbeck, President**

Trustees



Covenant's Trustees are in the process of receiving 3 proposals for the upgrade of our office **computer system** to Windows 11, livestream, and sound system. Our 5-person subcommittee is working diligently so this upgrade can take place as soon as possible. We have been having issues, which in turn impact your worship experience and office productivity. Another issue we are pursuing is to reduce our loss of warm air in winter and cooling air in summer through the openings in **the altar area ceiling**. At this point, there is nothing to report, but we will keep you informed. As always, any suggestions/input is appreciated.

With God's Love, **Bill Averbeck, Chair**

Game Night

We just had our St. Patrick's Day Game Day. We played a mean game of Yahtzee, and Sue Strong was the big winner!! We enjoyed Tom's delicious Pistachio Torte and had a little mint chocolate chip ice cream on the side. Our next Game Night will be on **April 28th from 6:00 - 8:00 PM.**

I hope everyone has a fabulous Easter.

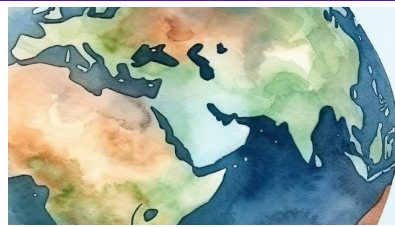


Submitted by Shelli Dekker



April Birthday

- 4-4 Kathy Bargaquast
- 4-5 Bill Kelley
- 4-11 Ted Chipman
- 4-16 Joyce Kindschuh
- 4-20 Ha-el Lee
- 4-20 Catherine Morris
- 4/25 Kyle Allickson
- 4/26 Dave Miller
- 4/28 Mona Averbeck
- 4/28 Ken Depies



Missions MOMENT

4/2 & 3	Apportionments
4/5	Youth For Christ
4/12	Youth Mission Trip
4/19	Youth Mission Trip
4/26	Native American Sunday




- 4-26 Adam & Tami Averbeck
- 4-28 Jim & Billie Mindt

2026 April Worship Volunteers

2026	Liturgist	Children's Time	Acolyte	Live-Streaming	PPT/Sound	Ushers
4/2	Mary B.	N/A	Jin L.	Mona A.	Tom R.	Bill A. (Head) Dennis G.
4/3	N/A	N/A	Tay L.	Mona A.	Tom R.	Bill A. (Head) Jan A.
4/5	Laurel M.	Pastor Ho L.	Memphis A.	AJ A.	Diane W.	Bill A. (Head) Sandy T.
4/12	Denise S.	Diane W.	Ivy T.	Ava A.	Diane W.	Bill A. (Head) Dennis G.
4/19	Diane W.	Diane W.	Abigail G.	Lily K.	Tom R.	Bill A. (Head) Dennis G.
4/26	Bill D.	Shelli D.	Ha-el L.	Mona A.	Diane W.	Bill A. (Head) Sandy T.

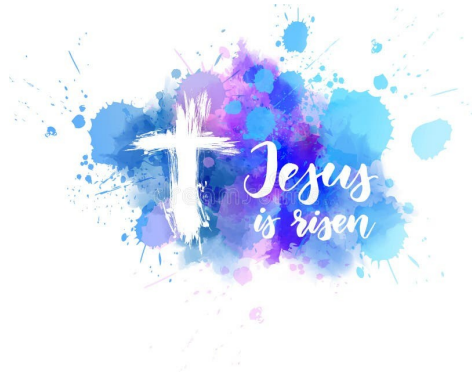
APRIL 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 5 Easter 9am Worship Service <i>Communion Sunday</i> 10:15am Choir Practice 10:30pm Egg Hunt	6 11:45am Staff mtg.	7 10am Trustee Mtg.	1 9am-1pm Holy Week Relay Prayer 10am Sara Circle	2 9am-1pm Holy Week Relay Prayer 6:30 pm Maundy Thursday Worship	3 6:30 pm Good Friday Worship	4 Pastor's Day Off
12 9am Worship Service 10:15am Choir Practice 10:30am Youth G. mtg. 6pm Confirmation class	13 10am Community Worship Service at Lake House 11:45am Staff mtg. 4:45 pm Finance mtg.	14 4:45 pm SPRC mtg.	8 9:30am Bible Study 1 pm—2 pm Trillium indoor Mtg. 4 pm—6 pm Loaves & Fishes	9 Pastoral Visitations	10 Pastor Sabbath	11 Pastor's Day Off 8am Men's Breakfast 9:00 am - 3:00 pm Rummage Sale Pacto de Gracia
19 9am Worship Service (led by Men's G.) 10:15am Choir Practice 6pm Confirmation class	20 11:45am Staff mtg. Pastor's Vacation (1/4)	21 Food & Fellowship gathering day Pastor's Vacation (2/4)	15 9:30am Bible Study 5:30-8pm Champions Bingo	16 Pastoral Visitations	17 Pastor Sabbath	18 Pastor's Day Off
26 9am Worship Service 10:15am Choir Practice 10:30am Youth G. mtg. 6pm Confirmation class	27 11:45am Staff mtg. 6:30-7:30 pm Church Council Mtg.	28 10am Care Cmte. mtg 6 pm—8 pm Game Night	22 8am Women's Breakfast 9:30am Bible Study Pastor's Vacation (3/4)	23 Pastoral Visitations Pastor's Vacation (4/4)	24 Pastor Sabbath	25 Pastor's Day Off



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Main Office Hours
 Mon-Thurs
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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.