

# WELCOME

## CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH & WILDWOOD CHAPEL



### CUMC Worship Services

Sunday at 10:30am

Sunday School 9:00am

### Wildwood Worship Services

Sunday at 9:00am



AUGUST 2020

Good News Gazette

## FINANCIAL NEWS FOR 2020

	<u>Current Month</u>
Income	\$7,689.50
Month Expenses Paid	\$10,500.00
Difference	<b>\$-2,810.50</b>

During this period of COVID-19, when places are slowly opening for in-person business again, *Christ United Methodist Church and Wildwood Chapel are holding in-person worship services.* We understand that not everyone will be comfortable attending in-person services yet, so the services are being recorded from Christ UMC and made available to view online by the Monday following the service. You can find videos of our worship services at the following locations.

- our website                                    **MerrillChristUMC.org.**
- You Tube                                      Channel; Christ UMC Merrill
- Our Face Book page                        **Merrill Christ United Methodist Church – Merrill WI**

### Wesley Small Group

Wesley Small Group is going online! We will be meeting via Zoom on the first Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Anyone is welcome to participate, so please join us in discussion and Fellowship! Our first meeting will be on Monday, August 3. The meeting ID is **4301611974** and the password is **5YadZc**. Please contact Sandy or Debbie if you have any questions about connecting online! We look forward to seeing you!

### SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

We have been very busy in Sunday School this summer! Our younger class has been meeting every Sunday afternoon via Zoom. We have been learning about the stories of Moses and Joshua in the Old Testament, as well as creating interesting art projects relating to our lessons! Our older youth group has been connecting every other Sunday and we have enjoyed discussing Biblical truths and how they relate to us today.

We have a special opportunity to participate in a Virtual VBS organized by several Methodist churches located throughout the US. All children are welcome to participate at anytime. We are including the link below, so feel free to access this unique VBS opportunity.

We will be continuing Sunday School throughout the summer, so if you know of any children who would like to participate in a safe, online environment, please contact me! It has been an amazing experience connecting with the children during this difficult situation. What a blessing it has been to have the appropriate technology available to us, as we continue with our Sunday School Ministry!



Here is the link to the VBS virtual program. You will need to set up your own login information. The program is free.

[Video Stream | Where in the World is God?](#)

God Bless!  
Debbie

# Wildwood Chapel News

## AUGUST MISSION PROJECT

In years past, Wildwood Chapel has designated the Fill the Gazebo project as the mission for July and August. Because of the issues surrounding COVID-19, the Fill the Gazebo project will not be happening this year. But that does not mean that the Food Pantry does not need help. Now, more than ever, people are in need of food and other supplies that the Community Food Pantries can provide. As a result, rather than collecting supplies for the Gazebo during the months of July and August, Wildwood Chapel will collect monetary donations for the Merrill Community Food Pantry. They will be able to use these funds to purchase the supplies necessary to meet their needs. Thank you all for your participation in the mission work of the church.

## Wildwood Chapel All Church Meeting

Wildwood Chapel held an All-Church meeting on Sunday, July 26 after the regular worship service. Brian Jaeger led the meeting. We reviewed the status of the various financial accounts and discussed how to fix and protect the insulation around the outside of the foundation so that the turkeys do not cause more damage. The Trustees were given permission to move forward with finding someone to install some type of vinyl siding to the foundation.

The group also discussed selecting mission projects for the last four months of the year. In September and October we will collect money for UMCOR-COVID-19. In November and December we will collect funds to support St. Jude's. There was no further business to discuss and the meeting was adjourned.



After a very heavy rain in the overnight hours of July 25 the water began to rise. Check out this photo taken by Connie Stein on Sunday, July 26th. We haven't had water this high in quite some time!

Fortunately the water receded later in the day and the basement was only a little bit damp.

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Pastor Laverne

08/26

## REMINDER

**Wildwood Chapel has begun holding in-person worship services. There are a number of safety measures in place to help keep all in attendance healthy. These measures include removal of some pews and spacing of the rest to allow for social distancing, a supply of hand sanitizer and the option of wearing face masks while you are in the church building. If you prefer to stay away from worshipping in person at this time but wish to stay current with your offerings, you can mail them to Sandy Huxtable at N2913 County Line Rd., Gleason WI, 54435. If you need anything, please call the church office at (715)536-4676. Stay well and God Bless!**

## 2020 Missions

Jan/Feb	Blankets and Tools \$265.00
March/April	Seeds / money for Jackson Area Ministry \$80 plus seeds
May/June	Flood Buckets
July/August	Gazebo/ Food Pantry
Sept/Oct	UMCOR-COVID-19
Nov/Dec	St. Jude's

## Food Pantry Schedule

Jan/Feb	Antigo
Mar/Apr	Merrill
May/June	Antigo
July/Aug	Merrill
Sep/Oct	Antigo
Nov/Dec	Merrill



## - -Christ Church Birthdays- -

Paulette Doering	08/04
Dustin Harder	08/06
Connor Howard	08/06
Mylee Hebert	08/10
Gail Luedtke	08/12
Nancy Gartmann	08/17
Barb Middlestead	08/19

★HAPPY★  
BIRTHDAY!



Michael Bergmann	08/22
Dawn Schroder-Silvela	08/26
Duane Yorde	08/26
Clayton Opper	08/26
Pastor Laverne	08/26
Isaac Lersch	08/28

### Church Library News - Book Review



Because of the Coronavirus and the church having limited access, there will not be a library book of the month for August.

During these trying and chaotic times we recommend that you read your Bible or daily devotions to help find encouragement, peace and acceptance.

Pastor has been leading a Bible Study on the book of Genesis. If you are looking for somewhere to start, that is a good place to begin.  
Stay safe.



## MISSION NEWS

### Free Summer Lunch for Kids and Teens

One of the big summer mission projects that we participate in is the Free Summer Lunch for Kids and Teens. This is the program in which we partner with St. Stephens UCC, Our Saviour's Lutheran, Trinity Lutheran and St. John's Lutheran churches to provide a lunch to kids in the community who do not have access to lunch when school is on summer break. Because of restrictions brought on by COVID-19, we are handling this program differently this year.



The program will run through **August 28**. We do not serve the meals in the park as in the past. Instead, Christ Church is the central location for all of the meals to be picked up by the child or a parent. No meals are eaten on site. The child is expected to eat at home. Meal pick up is available from 11:30am—12:30pm Monday thru Friday. Each of the five churches still provide the meals on their assigned day of the week. They just operate from CUMC.



We have been serving a fewer number of meals each week. Christ Church is averaging approximately 35 meals each Wednesday. This is a lower amount compared to other years, but we are still able to provide a much needed service to the community.

We are very grateful to our volunteers who help make this mission possible. If you are interested in helping this summer and have some time available on Wednesdays, please let Norma Schroder or Sandy Huxtable know. Any assistance is greatly appreciated.



## Transitions

Transitions doesn't seem to be the right word for what we have been going through during these last 5 months. On one hand, the pandemic has touched every one of us. Our lives have been radically changed because of COVID-19. On the other hand, we have had very few positive cases here in Lincoln County. The same could be said for the protests and riots. We see and read a lot about the violence happening in big cities like Seattle, WA and Portland, OR, but we (gratefully) have very little in our area. It is hard to reconcile this

paradox, but why should we. Can we not just say "Thank you, God" for our blessings.

No one wants to hear of those who are sick with COVID-19, nor do we want to join in the violence affecting others. But in both cases, our collective hearts ache for the pain we see going on around us. We want the pain to end. "We want to get back to 'normal.'" And so we do what we can to protect ourselves from COVID-19 and we pray. We pray for healing and for a vaccine. We pray for justice and for peace. We pray for the family members we can't touch, especially the children and elderly in care facilities. We pray for the healing of our nation. We pray for the people responsible for taking care of the citizens of this nation, and we pray for all those living in the USA to be kind to their neighbors.

Many people wait until they can do nothing themselves before they resort to prayer. I say, why wait? Why not begin with prayer? If we did, we might not be in the situations we find ourselves in. What prayer does is reorient your thinking. First, because it orients you to God. I mean, who else would you be praying to?

A life oriented to God means you know him and are in a relationship with him. You know what God expects of you and that God knows you. Because you love one another, you seek to bless one another, treat one another with kindness and goodness. You share love and joy, you have peace with one another. You are patient with one another. The desire is to be faithful to each another. I mean, how you can depend on someone if they can't be trusted to be there for you when you need them. The old saying is still true, "You want a friend, be a friend." Which means, you need to be faithful to God if you expect God to be faithful to you. Relationships also mean we are gentle with one another, we strive for self-control, so that we do not injure one another with our words or our actions. A relationship with God is the model for relationships with everyone else.

Prayer is talking with God. Why wait until disaster strikes before asking God for help? Would you help someone who has ignored you or done things to hurt you? Why should we expect God to help us if we ignore or hurt him? Why? Because **God said that we can seek him ANYTIME!** *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD.* (Jeremiah 29:11-14)

COVID-19 and the violence are not the only transitions we are going through right now. Loved ones like Carol Donner, have died. Children have been born, children we want to hold and play with but may not be able to because of physical distancing. Many of us are dealing with illnesses and medical care that is being limited by the COVID-19 restrictions. Jobs have moved into our homes or disappeared. Vacations, weddings, and reunions have been canceled. I have had 3 friends retire since May 1. I have had 3 family members move, with 3 more planning to move.

Transitions, other than those we see on our TVs or media services, are weaving through our lives. Let us be in a continual state of prayer, of talking with God, that he might guide us through all of these transitions. Let us also be listening to God so that we might follow his direction. Let us never forget the power of prayer to change the circumstances of our situations or **change us** so that we might have the strength to endure, or the wisdom to understand or intervene.

Our world is not the same as it was last year, or 5 months ago, a month ago, or even yesterday. Life is a series of transitions. It is my hope that you will pray for God's will to be done "on earth as it is in heaven." I also hope that as you seek first God's kingdom and God's righteousness, you will follow God's will for your life. In this way, we have nothing to worry about as we continue to go through many different transitions in the months ahead.

God bless you,  
Pastor Laverne

## Parsonage update

If you've driven by church lately you've probably seen a lot of activity. We're in the process of doing some painting and cleaning up of the parsonage. I don't think it will come as a surprise that the Trustees along with the Church Board will be recommending to the congregation to sell the property. As we made the recommendation to downsize to a part time pastor this is one more step to put us on the path of financial stability. It's a hard realization that we must part ways with a piece of our church's history. Our present church building was dedicated on December 11, 1891 and the adjacent parsonage was built around 1904. You will be receiving a complete accounting and resolution to sell the property in early September. Normally this would require a formal Charge Conference, but due to the Covid-19 restrictions we will be conducting a virtual Q & A session to answer any questions that any of you would have and that will be followed by a paper mail in ballot. If you have any questions in the meantime please don't hesitate to call Little Jo Hernandez, 715-573-3218, Trustee Chair or Tom Fox, 715-536-8480 Board Chair.



### Prayer Walk

In the midst of the civil unrest in our country, the Merrill Ministerium wanted to offer our voices of concern. What has resulted from our online discussions is that some of the clergy are writing articles to be published in the FotoNews. My article is scheduled to be out the week of July 19.

We are also hosting a "prayer walk" where several clergy will meet in front of Merrill City Hall on Wednesdays from 5 - 6 PM until Wed. August 12, to pray for our community, our country and the world. We are inviting church members and other Christians to join us in silent prayer. We chose City Hall because it represents our immediate community. We are using

signs so that those who drive by can physically see the Church in action. With so many of our church buildings closed because of COVID-19, we wanted to make the Church visible to the community. If you would like to join us for this time of prayer, you can meet us at City Hall, or in Christ UMC's parking lot which is the gathering point for all who want to park and walk over. Physical distancing will be observed.

### Bible Study

While we have already begun our study of Genesis, you can still join the group. We meet Thursday nights at 6:30PM via ZOOM, an online communications app. Please let Pastor know if you want to attend so she can send you an invitation.

### Prayer Team

Our Prayer Team has also gone online via ZOOM. If you would like to be part of the Prayer Team, please let Pastor know so you can receive an invitation.

### Worship

We are so glad for the people that have come to worship with us in person on Sunday mornings. We know that not everyone is comfortable with attending in person, which is why we are happy that our services continue to be upload to our website, on YouTube and our Facebook page. Thank you, Dave Huxtable and Rhonda Bengtson, for making these recordings possible!

## **Joys and Concerns**

On July 27, family and friends of Carol Donner gathered at Christ UMC to celebrate Carol's life and our shared faith in Jesus Christ as Carol was received into the arms of her Savior on July 22. We continue to pray for her beloved husband of 68 years, David, as well as the rest of her family, particularly her children, Alan, Keith, Mary Waid, Mark, and Ruth Hujik as they continue to grieve her absence in their daily lives.

We also pray for Denise & Mark Maurisak, as they mourn the death of Denise's father, Dennis Wolf.

With great concern over the economic effects of the COVID-19 restrictions, there have been many stimulus and grant programs. The Christ UMC & Wildwood UMC Charge applied for and received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan of \$9,800. Once the banks are able to process fulfillment reports, our Charge is on track to have the loan turned into a grant. Until then, the money remains set aside. What a blessing to have these funds available to us to help us with payroll expenses! Thank you, God!

Christ UMC also applied for a "New Way" grant from the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation. The grant was to be used for video or recording equipment for online worship, online video services (such as ZOOM), online digital giving service, or equipment and supplies for reopening church buildings. We applied for, and received, a grant of \$557.15 to pay for a CCLI music streaming license and a one-year subscription to ZOOM. Considering our prayer group and Bible study meet through ZOOM, as do some Church Council members, this subscription was very helpful to the finances! Thank you, God!

Another blessing was bestowed on all the churches in the Wisconsin Annual Conference. The Joint Board of Pensions, Insurance and Equitable Compensation recently approved two means of providing financial relief for all churches/charges in the WAC, one for churches with full-time pastors and one for part-time pastors. Since our Charge has a part-time pastor, we received a 6 month premium holiday for the church's contribution toward pastor's pension through UMPIP, from July – December 2020. This comes to a total of \$545. We thank God for the support of our UM connection.

## **The Stranger**

A few years after I was born, my Dad met a stranger who was new to our small town.

From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around from then on.

As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind, he had a special niche. My parents were complementary instructors: Mom taught me good from evil, and Dad taught me to obey. But the stranger... he was our storyteller. He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies.

If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present and even seemed able to predict the future! He took my family to the first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry. The stranger never stopped talking, but Dad didn't seem to mind.

Sometimes, Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say, and she would go to the kitchen for peace and quiet. (I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave.)

Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home - not from us, our friends or any visitors. Our long time visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears and made my dad squirm and my mother blush.

My Dad didn't permit the liberal use of alcohol but the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished.

He talked freely (much too freely!) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing.

I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked... And NEVER asked to leave.

More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family.

He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you could walk into my parents' den today, you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures.

His name ....

We just call him 'TV.'

He has a wife now....we call her 'Computer.'

Their first child is "Cell Phone".

Second child "I Pod"

Third child "Tablet"



## Reflecting the Sunflower as a Christian

### Sunflowers Track the Sun

The flowering head of the sunflower actually tracks the sun following its path and moving toward where it is in the sky all during the day. As Christians, we are called to track the Son of God and follow Him all day long no matter what is going on in our lives and throughout our day, we should strive not to take our eyes off of the "Son".

### Sunflowers Need to be Stabilized

The sunflower needs to be firmly planted in the soil in order to grow. Sunflowers grow so tall and their stems become so heavy that they will topple over if they aren't stabilized in the ground. As a Christian it's very easy to topple over if we are not grounded in the Word of God. We need to know what and why we believe what we do so our feet are firmly planted and we won't falter in our Christian walk.

### Sunflowers Produce Seeds

A single sunflower can hold up to 2,000 seeds. We are called as Christians to sow seeds of God's Word as we go through each day and interact with others. In doing so, think of the reach that each of us can have to spread the Gospel. Your potential to impact lives is incredible.

### Sunflowers Produce Oil

The oil that the sunflower produces is considered a good oil with healthy benefits. As Christians we should be producing the Fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness & self-control). All of those have some healthy benefits on us as Christians and on others that we meet.

### Sunflowers Resemble the Sun

Sunflowers not only follow the sun but when you look at them, they resemble the sun too. Resembling the Son should be one of those things we do as a Christian. Being Christ-like is a foundational part of being a Christian.



## Grief

There is another form of grief that many of us in the church have been dealing with besides the loss of worshipping together, and that is not doing ministry together. We are ever so grateful that the Summer Lunch Program started by Christ UMC is continuing to offer lunches to children and families in need. We are also glad that our prayer group, Wesley Group, Sunday School and Bible studies can continue to meet via Zoom. But we miss meeting with people face-to-face to talk with them about their struggles. So many impromptu conversations can lead to sharing problems and support. We miss getting together to sew dresses for the little girls in Africa. We miss filling the gazebo with food for the food pantry. We miss having all the children come to our amazing Vacation Bible School. We miss hosting children for the New Adventures Program.

But we have started a new ministry that wouldn't have existed without the COVID crisis, and that is our "prayer walk" outside City Hall on Wednesdays. I am finding this to be powerful, if silent, witness to the community that Christians exist in Merrill and we are busy praying. Many people may not even know what a Christian is, or what prayer is, and so our presence might trigger conversations and questions. Still others may reflect on their own faith and renew their commitment to prayer and Christ. I hope we can continue this ministry beyond August so that people will know Jesus Christ is alive and he loves and cares for all people. Even if you do not join us in person, we thank you for your prayers.

If you have any ideas for other forms of ministry, please contact Tom Fox or me. We do not want our members to miss out on the support of our church family, or of the love of Jesus Christ.

God bless you,  
*Pastor Laverne*



# ~ AUGUST 2020 ~



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Communion	3	4	5 Serving Summer Lunch for Kids	6	7	8
9	10	11 Committee meetings 5:30p Church Board 6:30pm	12 Serving Summer Lunch for Kids	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Serving Summer Lunch for Kids	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Serving Summer Lunch for Kids	27	28 Summer Lunch ends	29
30	31				C = Christ Church W = Wildwood	Sunday Worship: W = 9:00am C = 10:30am