



# Faith in Action

*“Grounded in Christ, open to make a difference – together”*

February /  
March 2024

## *Greetings,*

I had a very weird (for me) sensation the other day. After spending a significant portion of the day in a building, I stepped outside to experience one of the near-record-breaking temperatures we have had in the last few weeks. The first thought that came to my mind was “I know I hate winter, but gosh this weather feels wrong”. I have lived in the state of Minnesota longer than I have lived in any other state in my life (more than three times over, in fact), so while I know weather can be different from year to year, I have come to expect that January will be one of those months where I will constantly feel cold and not once even be tempted to get out my hammock. This year has not lived up to that expectation. In fact, Zoe asked me just yesterday why I hadn’t gotten out the hammock since the weather was so sunny and warm.

Expectations are a funny thing, I think. One of the things I know about myself is that I do better in new situations when I know what to expect. Will this place I am going have a parking lot? Will there be people I know? Will I be expected to do or say anything? In this way, expectations can be very helpful for me. They help me to prepare for unknown situations and lower my anxiety about new or different experiences. At the same time, I know that focusing too much on my expectations can get in the way of experiencing the situation in the moment and adapting to changing circumstances. It can be hard to change our mind once we decide how we expect something to occur, and that can

affect how we experience the situation. Think, for example, of a time when a meal you ordered at a restaurant came out different than how you had pictured it in your mind. Was that a good thing? Did you wish you had picked something else?

In the past several months, we at Faith UMC have been challenging our expectations a lot. We have looked at our financial expectations and determined that they need to change. We have looked at our building, and the expectation that we will stay here, and realized that, too, needs to change. Changing expectations is hard work. Yet, I believe we are doing so with grace. Thank you so much for being willing to walk together on this ever-changing journey of faith!

Much like our warmer-than-expected January weather, I think that as we continue to adapt and change our expectations for how we steward our finances and where we gather as a community to worship, we will find times of joy. As we move forward into the future, I have hope that we are following God’s call for our congregation. We may not know what to expect, but we will continue to be the spiritual community that seeks to live the love of God through exploring, teaching, and supporting one another as we serve (and feed) our neighbors. What could be better than that?

I hope that you will join us.

Grace and Peace,

*Pastor Marianne*

FOR YOUR TIMES OF DEVOTION: Remember to pick up the latest issue of The Upper Room devotional booklet (daily readings available in regular or large print). This booklet is found on the table by the parking lot door.

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**Mission Well Offering** – The Mission Well welcomes your donations to help support the offering of the month.

• Our **February** Mission Well offering is going to **Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge**, a Minnesota organization that seeks to assist men and women in gaining freedom from chemical addictions and other life-controlling problems by addressing their physical, emotional & spiritual needs.

• During **March**, Mission Offering donations will go to the **Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign**. GMCC's Minnesota FoodShare began its work in 1982 as a campaign advanced by congregations to restock food shelves in the 7-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The effort was so successful, and the need so evident, March Campaign became a statewide initiative just one year later and is now in its 43rd year. The March Campaign, the largest grassroots food and fund drive in the state, brings together organizations, businesses, faith communities, and individuals to help stock & support the capacity of nearly 300 food shelves.



(The money & food Faith collects in March will go to our Neighbors, Inc. food shelf).



In addition to giving to the Mission Well in the church building, you can also donate to the mission cause through our online giving platform and selecting “Mission Well” in the “To” drop-down menu.

[https://tithe.ly/give\\_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/5354400](https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/5354400)

—All coffee fellowship donations will be given to the Mission Well organization of the month—

- **Thank you** to the following “awesome” team that decorated and undecorated the church building for the Advent/Christmas season: Sheri Lucas, Bill Short, Bruce Opp, Lynn & Fred Mens, Sharon & Christina Yekaldo, Dan Miller, Gil Kinnunen, Pat Williams, Taffy Storck. If we missed anyone, please know that you are appreciated. —*Judy Turk*
- “Faith United Methodist, **thank you** so very much for the monetary donation toward our Aspen House youth! We are grateful to have community supports like yourself who are in our corner...” —*Adam A., Aspen House*
- “Dear Friends, we want to express our heartfelt **gratitude** for your generous donation to Every Meal. Your support is critical as we work tirelessly to eliminate child hunger through community and school partnerships. In January you donated \$600 to Every Meal, and it is making an impact...Again, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you! —*Rob W.*
- **Thank you**, Faith friends, for your appreciation shared with me this Christmas. I’m sorry I was not able to accept the lovely card and gift card in person on Christmas Eve. Please know that I appreciate YOU! — *Susan Filter* ♥



**The Prayer Chain is active.** If you have a prayer concern, please contact the church office. If unable to reach Susan or Pastor Marianne in the church office, please contact Sharon Yekaldo at **612-450-3277**. Please make sure the pastor knows so she can respond to pastoral care needs, and knows what is going out over the telephone prayer chain so it can be sent to the e-mail prayer chain as well. ► If you would like to be on the prayer chain, or if your phone number has changed, please let Sharon Yekaldo know.

**Hospital Calls:** If you learn someone is hospitalized, please contact the church office or Pastor Marianne. Because of HIPPA laws, hospitals no longer call when a member is admitted. We would rather have several calls telling us of someone’s hospitalization than not to know. Thank you.

## Location Update

As a congregation, we have been praying for wisdom and discernment for the past three months. During that time the administrative council has worked to find tangible answers to our questions so that we might understand our direction as a congregation. We have held cottage meetings, met with members of the Twin Cities District Strategy Team to receive approval to list the church property for sale, and had an appraisal of the property completed. We have also been working to find a new location that suits our needs.

While we do not yet have answers to all of the questions, we do have more information. Mt. Bethel UMC in Inver Grove Heights voted as a congregation to become a legacy ministry in 2022. Since then, they have worked to prepare to give their building to a new United Methodist ministry to reach their community. As was announced in worship on February 4, Mt. Bethel is offering to serve as a donor church and give Faith UMC their property on the corner of 70th and Carmen so that we may transplant our ministries to Inver Grove Heights and take up the mantle of being the United Methodist presence in Inver Grove Heights.

We do not know when this transition will happen, but we are excited about the possibilities that moving to Mt. Bethel's location brings. We will need to update the kitchen, but otherwise the church is both smaller and better maintained. It is easily accessible, and located in a neighborhood near Hilltop Elementary School, which will allow us to connect with a new community. Please continue to pray for our congregation, as well as the Mt. Bethel church in this time.

If you have any questions, feel free to talk to members of the Administrative Council or Pastor Marianne.

## Finance Update

The Administrative Council continues to pay close attention to the finances of the church, doing our best to faithfully steward our gifts. We ended 2023 with our total income just barely exceeding our total expenses. This state is thanks in large part to income that exceeded our expectations, particularly in legacy giving. We did not need to pull money out of our reserves in order to meet these expenses.

As we begin to challenge some of our financial expectations and work towards a balanced budget, the Ad Council made decision in December to draw funds out of the Heinemann fund in order to pay our apportionments in full for 2023. We are seeking to form a new habit, whereby we pay our full apportionments each year. In 2023, our apportioned total came to \$20,507, some of which was paid through envelope giving.

Now that we have moved into 2024, our building costs are increasing due to regular furnace payments, and so we began the year by withdrawing money from the Legacy Fund to make sure we have enough money in the checking account to pay for our obligations. We will continue to closely monitor those funds as we move forward.

If you have questions about the overall financial health of the church, see Bill Short, the church treasurer.

## Online Giving Available through Tithely!

To give online, you can go to <https://tithely.com/give?c=5354400> and fill out the form. There are options to give once or set up regular gifts, to cover the processing fees for your donations, and which fund you would like to donate to (options include general operating expenses, Mission Well, Loaves and Fishes, and apportionments). If you have any questions about online giving, see Pastor Marianne.

# February / March Birthdays

2/4 – Brian Sielski	2/10 – Jill Vanderhoff	3/1 – Barbara Schroeder	3/17 – Carrie Akemann
2/7 – Roxanne Napier	2/11 – Jeffrey Boelter	3/3 – Kaitlyn Cox	3/20 – Mike Hovey
2/8 – Alana Sielski	2/14 – Sheryl Watchorn	3/3 – Jeff Ozanne	3/22 – Ellen Hiniker
2/10 – Marianne Ozanne	2/23 – William Bonkowske	3/4 – Gil Kinnunen	3/26 – Ruth Campion

• *If your birthday is missing or listed incorrectly, contact the church office for additions/changes. Happy Birthday, everyone!* •

## Loaves and Fishes Update

Our Loaves and Fishes meal continues to connect with the community. We see guests who come for the first time, as well as regular participants each month. In January, we served 100 meals with the help of 14 volunteers, including 3 who do not otherwise connect with our congregation. If you would like to help with Loaves and Fishes, here are a few options:

- The easiest way to help is tell others about the meal. Spread the word by making sure your friends and family know that we serve a FREE homemade meal to everyone the third Wednesday of every month from 5:30–6:30. You can even stop by and get some food for your family and neighbors. If you follow the church’s Facebook page, an easy way to help spread the word is to share our Loaves and Fishes posts so that others will see them.
- We always need more help in the kitchen! If you would like to volunteer to help prepare and serve our meal, the sign up link is always active. To sign up to work a shift, go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/index.cfm?go=s.signup&urlid=10c0d44a5ab2fa1fa7-faith2>
- We are always accepting donations. All financial donations given to Loaves and Fishes help us to buy food, which we get at a reduced rate from the warehouse, and supplies like take out boxes and plastic utensils.

If you have any questions about our Loaves and Fishes meal, see Pastor Marianne or Dana Scopatz.

## Spicy Lent

As a follow up to last year’s *Soul Food* discussions around food and faith, this year we will have **Spicy Lent**, looking at the herbs and spices found in the Bible. Each week we will look at a different herb or spice, how to cook with it on your own, and how those flavors can remind us of God.

We kick off with Ash Wednesday on February 14 with dinner at 5:30 and a traditional Ash Wednesday service at 6:30. **Each week following, we will meet on Thursday, with dinner at 5:30 and the discussion and learning beginning at 6:15.** The series will conclude with Dinner Church on Holy Thursday, March 28.

Here’s the full Spicy Lent Calendar:

- Wednesday, February 14, 6:30pm: Ashes
- Thursday, February 22, 6:15pm: Cumin and Fennel as found in Isaiah 28:23-29
- Thursday, February 29, 6:15pm: Mustard, as found in Matthew 13:31-32
- Thursday, March 7, 6:15pm: Mint and Dill, as found in Matthew 23:23
- Thursday, March 14, 6:15pm: Saffron, as found in Song of Solomon 4
- Thursday, March 21, 6:15pm: Cinnamon, as found in Exodus 30:22-31
- Thursday, March 28, 5:30pm: putting it all together for Holy Week Dinner Church.

# February–March Worship Update / Calendar

## Worship Update

Worship is one of the most recognizable ways that we demonstrate our life of faith. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14. This year during Sunday morning worship we will be looking at the Israelites in the wilderness as they traveled with God to the Promised Land. Sunday mornings we gather at 9:30 in the sanctuary and on Zoom for worship.

Here is some more detailed information on worship in February and March:

**February 11** Pastor Marianne will be away. Gail Johnson, a member of Richfield UMC will be using 1 John 3:18-21 to tell her story of *How Did I End Up Here?*

**February 18** begins our Lenten series: *Through the Wilderness*. We will look at the story of God leading the Hebrew people out of Egypt in a pillar of cloud and of fire as found in Exodus 13:17-22

**February 25** continues our wilderness journey by looking at the gifts of manna and quail in Exodus 16:1-21 and 31.

**March 3** we will look at Exodus 17:1-7 and the story of God helping Moses to get water out of stone. We will also celebrate communion, so plan ahead if you are worshipping from home.

**March 10** Rev. Dr. Dana Scopatz will be leading worship as we look at the Hebrew people receiving the ten commandments.

**March 17** concludes our journey through the wilderness with the story of the Hebrew spies being sent to scout the land of Canaan as found in Numbers 13.

**March 24** we will remember the events of Holy Week through the story of Palm Sunday.

**March 31** is Easter Sunday! Bring your friends and family as we celebrate the resurrection with hymns and rejoicing.

## Regular weekly activities:

- **SUNDAYS:** 9:30 am Worship (and Zoom)  
10:30 am Fellowship Time  
10 am Children's Sunday School  
11 am Adult Sunday School  
(sign-in begins at 9:15 for Sunday Worship Zoom meetings)
- **MONDAYS:** 10 am Craft group (Fellowship Hall)
- **THURS.:** 9:30 am Every Meal food distribution at Garlough school. **Next Dates:** 2/22, 2/29, 3/7, 3/14, 3/21

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Sat. 2/3	8 am	Men's Breakfast
Tue. 2/6	6 pm	Council on Ministries
Wed. 2/14	5:30 pm	Dinner ( <i>Lent Begins</i> )
	6:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Service
Sat. 2/17	8 am	Men's Breakfast
Tue. 2/20	6 pm	Administrative Council
Wed. 2/21		Loaves & Fishes meal
Thur. 2/22	5:30 pm	Midweek Dinner
	6:15 pm	Spicy Lent
Thur. 2/29	5:30 pm	Midweek Dinner
	6:15 pm	Spicy Lent
Sat. 3/2	8 am	Men's Breakfast
Tue. 3/5	6 pm	Council on Ministries
Thur. 3/7	5:30 pm	Midweek Dinner
	6:15 pm	Spicy Lent
Thur. 3/14	5:30 pm	Midweek Dinner
	6:15 pm	Spicy Lent
Sat. 3/16	8 am	Men's Breakfast
Tue. 3/19	6 pm	Administrative Council
Wed. 3/20		Loaves & Fishes meal
Thur. 3/21	5:30 pm	Midweek Dinner
	6:15 pm	Spicy Lent
Thur. 3/28	5:30 pm	Holy Week Dinner Church
Sat. 3/30	8 am	Men's Breakfast
Sun. 3/31	9:30 am	Easter Sunday Worship



Faith United Methodist Church  
1530 Oakdale Ave.  
West St. Paul MN 55118

February / March 2024



## *Sunday Worship Options*

Sunday worship time is 9:30 a.m. Join us in the sanctuary, or worship with us via Zoom link and/or the materials you receive by mail or email, or by visiting our website at [www.faithumcmn.com](http://www.faithumcmn.com)

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **Facebook Page**

Remember to like the Faith Facebook page at:  
<http://tinyurl.com/FaithUMCmn>

## *Spicy Lent*

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**Each coming week during Lent, we will meet on Thursday, with dinner at 5:30 and the discussion and learning beginning at 6:15.**

The series will conclude with Dinner Church on Holy Thursday, March 28.

*(See Page 4 for details)*

## **Do you need a day brightener or thought provoker?**

Dial up *Ideas for Positive Living!*

Every Thursday Gil Kinnunen provides an uplifting phone message.

So call 651-602-2176 each Thursday for a weekly picker-upper!

**Men's Breakfast Group** meets on Saturdays: **2/17, 3/2, 3/16 & 3/30.**

All men are invited to join us! For more info., contact Bill Short at 651-552-0736 or [bill.short26@gmail.com](mailto:bill.short26@gmail.com).