



Dear Friends,

At our Charge Conference on December 5th, DS Peace led us in a brainstorming exercise. The first question was “What are our desires for our churches?” Answers included: More members, finding ways to minister to the Spanish-speaking people in the area, peace, joy, and passion for serving the Lord.

The next question was “What needs do we see in our communities?” Answers included: Food insecurity, loneliness/ aging, a need for caring friends and neighbors, and services in other languages.

We then discussed the abilities of our congregations. We have musicians enhancing our worship, commitment to ministry, buildings, a mission mindset, and loving people who work together and enjoy feeding the hungry.

There you have it: Desires, Needs, Abilities. The DNA of our churches! These ideas will help us to focus and discern where God is leading us. What else would you add to the list? Let me know!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Vicky

Keep praying! January 2025

Dear Friends,

I encourage you to continue to pray daily for all our churches. God is always up to something new, and we want to join in that work! As Bishop Dan Schwerin has called us to celebrate 2025 as a Year of Grace, I want to focus on grace in our Breakthrough Prayer.

Here's a verse to remember and a new prayer:

*John 1:16 From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.*

*Loving God, open our eyes to the grace that you freely give us, and help us to share that grace with others. Break through into our lives and our churches with new possibilities.*

*In the hope Jesus offers us, Amen.*

## ***Can 2025 Be a Year of Grace?***

*“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”—  
2 Corinthians 12:9*

When I was a teenager, a United Methodist pastor explained grace to me. It changed my life. That same grace continues to change my life. How has grace shaped your life? How do you continue to struggle with grace?

Grace is the unmerited, upbuilding, unconditional love God extends to all people and to the whole creation. United Methodists have an expansive view of grace. We know that grace is always among us, working in love.

United Methodists are a Baskin-Robbins of grace. We proclaim the grace that God gives us before we even know we need it or know how to ask; this is prevenient grace. We proclaim the grace of God for us and for our healing with God; this is justifying grace. The upbuilding grace that attends to growth in love within us is sanctifying grace. Ephesians 2:8 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” Our whole lives are a response to grace. I write today to invite you to observe 2025 as a year of grace.

It is a basic truth of ministry that what you pay attention to grows. If we pay attention to mission, mission grows. Attend to Christian formation and knowledge grows. How might we be changed if we focused our lives more and more on grace? What if we used grace sightings in our devotionals and sermons? Or how might we be renewed if we sing about grace?

What if we practiced a grace that allows us to demonstrate our unity in Christ as a faith community? Currently, we live in a moment when powerful moneyed forces have divided this country. I believe this is an opportunity to make grace greater than our differences. I would want us to be clear that we are not proffering cheap grace for bullying, manipulation, or accommodating bad behavior that is harmful or abusive. Grace and repentance are sisters and should travel together, for grace without authentic repentance is abuse.

What if our personal anti-racism work featured grace-grounded reflection and honest conversations about blind spots and grace for others, and grace for deeper conversations and then action? What if grace called us all to grow in cultural competency so that we might grow in faith together?

What would happen to us if we framed mission by showing grace in our communities and world? Instead of focusing only on business at our council meetings, we might ask, where did we see grace today? How might we practice grace and extend grace to more and more in our community? Or where is grace leading our congregation now? I will be keeping a grace journal just to see what God will do.

For the days ahead, I will remind us that grace is also for the stranger and sojourner in our land. Leviticus 19:33-34 reminds us, “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

Next year we will enjoy a year of experimentation for mission as we try new forms of ministry for impact. Some 54% percent of Northern Illinois United Methodist congregations and 60% of Wisconsin United Methodist churches have a weekly worship attendance of 35 people or fewer. Next year we will need grace for experimentation as churches yield to God’s call forward in new ways.

Every day the ministry holds risk and learning from experiments. We will need to experiment with new forms of ministry and offer support to local churches for their ministry as they try to respond to their post-COVID context. We need to turn our systems toward learning and sharing so that we can support local church vitality as fully as possible. What will be the impact of having two conferences—the whole episcopal area—attend to a focus on grace? Our annual conferences will celebrate the theme “Grace is Sufficient” and continue it through the end of 2025.

My life was changed by grace and it continues to be changed. I believe people are looking for grace and bearers of a God working in love. I pray that a year of grace will deepen and strengthen us. Let’s try it!

Know that I am praying for you.

Thank you.  
Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan Schwerin".

Dan Schwerin, Bishop

## **Charge Conference for the Peace (Wheeler), Faith (Prairie Farm) and Boyceville United Methodist Churches.**

Thursday December 5, 2024 at Peace United Methodist Church in Wheeler.

We gathered early for a small fellowship meal.

Attendance: D.S. PyungAhn Peace Kim, Pastor Vicky Strupp Boyceville: Earl Blodgett, Marguerite Blodgett, Carol Cherney, Sheila Hegeman Peace (Wheeler): Lori Koehler Faith (Prairie Farm): Bill Wiseman, Margie Wiseman, Roxanne White, Kathy Neck, Jerry Neck, Leslie Frisle

Peace introduced himself and related his story. He reminded us that in the United Methodist Church, ALL baptized members are ministers.

Roxanne nominated Earl as secretary, Sheila seconded.

Vicky led us in prayer, as her 5:17 reminder alarm for Breakthrough Prayer went off.

We read the Mission Statement in unison, and then watched the video message from Bishop Dan Schwerin.

Superintendent's Reflection: consider expansive grace in the coming year! Think about what it means to be a church of God's grace. Over 60% of congregations in Wisconsin have fewer than 35 people in worship, what does that mean to us? Perhaps we need to be "small but mighty"? We definitely do not need to hold on to the "scrapbook of memories" of what once was. We can learn from the past to get courage and hope to move forward knowing that God has been there, God is with us now, and God will be with us in the future. Be open to new ideas, be open to curiosity and wonder to see what God is doing in our communities.

We discussed our connectional church and how many different ways our apportionments impact people around the world. For example, there are over 360 missionaries in 65 countries. UMCOR is continually impacting people around the world. We have three graduates of Africa University serving as clergy in Wisconsin! We have good stories to tell!

Insurance: Church Mutual dropped coverage of about 10% of our congregations. Many congregations were hit with big increases. By going to a new system, we do not know if costs will go down, but we are hopeful that individual congregations can find savings by being more flexible that was possible with Church Mutual.

The impact of General Conference hit Boyceville particularly hard, but now we can turn the corner was and look forward to what the future may bring.

Please be sure to rely on the official news source for the United Methodist Church, [UMNews.org](http://UMNews.org), be wary of other sources that rely on speculation, rumor or misinformation.

## Ministry Reviews and Reports

Actions Requiring a Vote: we will make one motion for each item, covering all three congregations.

Lay Leadership Report: Pastor Vicky made a motion to approve the slate of nominations, seconded by Roxanne. Peace noted that Boyceville and Prairie Farm are close to being able to switch to a more simplified board model, but it is new to us. He suggested we look online for a video by Kay Cotton – Simplified Leadership Structure and perhaps we can revisit this for next year. The Lay Leadership Report was approved.

Pastoral Support Package – Carol (as SPRC Chair) related how we developed the package. She moved that we accept the Pastoral Support Package, the Accountable Reimbursement and Parsonage Furnishing Allowance on behalf of SPRC. MOTION APPROVED.

### Membership

The membership report for all three churches was received. There was no action required since no one was listed on the second-year list. Prairie Farm added Bridget Kahl on the first time list, no action required this year.

### Budget

Wheeler presented a simplified budget developed by Lori and Vicky, they forgot to include apportionments but noted that they paid 2023 and 2024 in full. Leslie discussed the Prairie Farm budget, it was approved by the Church Council with no major changes from previous years. Marguerite related that the budget is based on the previous year along with some projections on how we can improve our financial standing. It was approved by the Church Council pending the pastoral support portion to be approved at charge council. Motion to approve the budgets made by Leslie, seconded by Marguerite. APPROVED.

Peace asked for our most recent fund balance reports. Vicky noted that those reports for the past two years were submitted with the recent grant proposal, and Marguerite noted that those are all submitted in statistical portal.

Lay Servant Certification: Carol Cherney completed and submitted the online renewal form. Pastor Vicky approves. Carol can provide a copy of these minutes to Barbara Hill for recertification. We approved Carol enthusiastically!

Peace led us in an exercise in thinking about what our congregations can work on, then lead us in prayer.

Carol made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Roxanne. APPROVED!

## Bishop's Convocation of Laity Leadership 2025

Registration fee: \$10 per person.  
Soup & Salad lunch included

Registration deadline is January 21, 2025  
at noon. No refunds for this event.

### Date & Time:

February 1, 2025

Registration opens at 8:30 a.m.

Program 9 a.m.—3 p.m.

### Location:

Black River Falls United Methodist  
Church

100 N. 4th St.

Black River Falls, WI 54615

Phone: (715)284-4114

Contact Ben Brancel for more info

[brancelangus@gmail.com](mailto:brancelangus@gmail.com)

## Sermon by Phone

The Boyceville church is offering a Sermon by Phone service. Each week you can call into our Sermon by Phone telephone number and listen to the scripture reading and sermon. The phone number is 715-309-5114. This is a Menomonie number, and it is a local phone number for Boyceville and Wheeler. There is no charge to listen to the sermon. The sermon will be available to call Sunday after 4 pm. Each service will be available till the following Saturday afternoon. If you have any questions call Marguerite at 715-651-7880.

Sermon by Phone - call 715-309-5114. The message will change each week, but the phone number stays the same.

The sermon is also available on the United Methodist Church of Boyceville facebook page: and their website: [boycevilleumc.org](http://boycevilleumc.org).



Amanda Roper  
Carol Cherney  
Sherri Williams  
Sister Confianza  
Nancy Smith  
Joy Wyss

Sister Alegria  
Julie Babbit  
Lionel Kegen  
Ray Wreford  
Harry Christian

Victims of natural disasters  
Our shut-ins & those in nursing homes

A reminder: Please remember our  
shut-ins with calls and cards.

# JANUARY

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 — James Harvey
- 4 — Kevin & Sonya Zebro (anniv)
- 7 — Charlie Hall
- 9 — Jessica Blodgett
- 9 — Melissa Blodgett
- 9 — Haiden Salsbury
- 10 Sonya Zebro
- 13 Matthew Blodgett
- 22 – Roger & Anita Smith (anniv)
- 24 – Sherry Smith
- 26 – Jim Salsbury
- 31 – Chris Burke

NewsLetter  
**DEADLINE**

Gleaner news is due by noon on Tuesday, January 21st. Please contact Tammy Nelson at 715-505-2657 or [rtsmnelson@hotmail.com](mailto:rtsmnelson@hotmail.com) with your news. Thanks.

Peace  
United Methodist Church  
Wheeler  
Worship Service at 11 a.m.



# United Methodist Church of Boyceville

**Worship Time: 9:45 a.m.**

## Scripture Readers for Boyceville

	Reader
January 5	Earl Blodgett
January 12	Carol Cherney
January 19	Marguerite Blodgett
January 26	Jim Strupp

## Coffee Time

Jan. 19 Coffee Time. Marguerite Blodgett is serving. She would love to have someone join her in serving.



Thank you to everyone who supported the Angel Tree. Thanks to some generous donations we had enough funds to finish filling all the tags. Sheila Hegeman and Marguerite Blodgett did the shopping. There was enough money left over to buy an additional 2 dozen games for Westcap to hand out to families.



## Food Harvest Ministry

Food Harvest Ministry has closed. They sent over donations of toilet paper, aluminum foil, canned goods, and dry packaged food. Thank you to the folks at Food Harvest for thinking of our Blessing Box. This will help our donated dollars go further.



## Honduras Mission

The Honduras mission is helping to build a lab and office at the clinic. The project is estimated to cost \$4,000. The team looked at the mission finances and there was a little over \$500 in undesignated funds. It was decided to send \$500 to Honduras to help with the clinic remodel..

## Other Mission News

We are taking a couple of weeks off before starting a new project. The new project should be announced by late January. The Mission Team appreciates all the support you have given to our projects. Together we are making a difference in our community and beyond.

## Blessing Box

Thank you to everyone who has donated items for the Blessing Box. If you don't want to shop, we do it for you. Cash donations are always appreciated. Marguerite works hard to make our dollars go as far as possible when shopping for the box.



## Faith United Methodist Church Prairie Farm

**Worship Service at 8:30 a.m.**

thank you

- To Michelle McMorrow for a monetary donation to our church.
- To Nathan and Becky Splett for a monetary donation to our church.
- To Eleanor Harstad for a monetary donation to our church.
- To Chris and Robin Burke for furnishing apples for Christmas Eve.
- To all who helped decorate the tree and church.
- To Lay Readers: Frisle's, Roxanne White, Robin Burke, and Bill Wiseman.
- To Coffee Servers: Frisle's, Roxanne White, and Robin Burke.
- To all who attended Charge Conference
- To those helpers/children who presented their Christmas program at Boyceville.
- To Jim Strupp for maintenance on the cold air return in the kitchen.

### Lay Reader Coffee/Snack

Jan 5	Open	Open
Jan 12	Open	Open
Jan 19	Open	Open
Jan 26	Open	Open

### United Women In Faith

United Women In Faith met at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Barbara Bender. We decided to give \$325 to the Food Pantry, \$50 to the Blessing Box, and \$50 to the Gramman Foundation for now as our Mission Giving. We, also, decided that we will not be serving at the Ridgeland Farmer's Market in July. We will give Dale, David, and Mike \$25 gift certificates from the Synergy Store. We had a few Christmas readings and then played a Frosty the Snowman game for the White Elephant gift exchange. We enjoyed a delicious potluck lunch with the good comradery of friends and UWF members. Our next meeting will be March 6th. Roxanne has the Call to Prayer and Self-Denial program.

**Administrative Council meets  
on January 14th at 5:30 p.m.**

United Methodist Church  
PO Box 94  
804 St. John St.  
Boyceville, WI 54725

Return Service Requested



Newsletter of Boyceville, Prairie Farm Faith and  
Wheeler Peace United Methodist Churches  
Pastor Vicky Strupp  
Parsonage: 715-749-6351  
Prairie Farm: Faith Worship Service 8:30 a.m.  
Boyceville Worship Service 9:45 a.m.  
Wheeler: Peace Worship Service 11:00 a.m.  
Welcome

January 2025

The Gleaner