



ALGOMA BOULEVARD
UNITED • METHODIST • CHURCH

Abumc.com

February/March 2025

2025 Lenten Series ABUMC



everything [in] between

Meeting God **in** the midst of extremes

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, March 5, 7 pm

Sunday services at 9 and 10:30 a.m.

March 9 - April 6

MISSION STATEMENT:

As the Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church family of faith, we will help people experience God through...transformational worship, lifelong learning, inspiring music, life-changing service, and passionate witness.



FROM THE HEART OF PASTOR ELLEN

February/March 2025

*"I pray that your partnership in the faith might become effective by an understanding of all that is good among us **in Christ**."~
Philemon 1.6 CEB*

Dear Beloved,

Thank you for your graciousness, kindness, patience, and prayers. The Circuit Rider is finally at your fingertips.

Last month I shared with you that Bishop Dan Schwerin invited clergy to meet with him in the morning and laity to meet with him in the evening on February 3. I traveled with Pastors Chuck Davis and Emmanuel Bang-Asan (First UMC) to Appleton for the Bible Study with the Bishop. I am grateful that I did!

Bishop Dan began asking us why should we do a Bible study together? For John Wesley, Bible study together is a means of grace and an opportunity for us to grow in grace and understanding together. We needn't fear disagreement, for disagreement can invite us to go deeper with the scripture and each other. The greatest gift that we may give each other is our differences.

Bishop Dan reminded all of us that we are Pastors-Priests-Prophets trying to harmonize our multi-faceted call. Sometimes being faithful to our call is costly and messy, but thankfully God creates beauty out of chaos.

Bishop Dan asked us to explore in small groups, how we understand the

phrase, "**In Christ**." We had the verse above, plus Romans 8.1; 2 Corinthians 5.17; Galatians 3.27-28; 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18; and Philippians 2.5. We shared that "**in Christ**" there is no harmful judgment, condemnation, or abuse of one another, that to be "in Christ" is to experience transformational status change. To be "**In Christ**" is to be grounded in God's love and grace.

In the Letter to Philemon, Paul ~ a literal prisoner for Christ Jesus ~ is asking Philemon to release Onesimus from the bondage of slavery and to do it out of love. Paul had a higher status than Philemon, who had a higher status than Onesimus, but Paul wanted Philemon to release Onesimus out of the recognition of Onesimus as a beloved, cherished child of God, and not because he felt forced by Paul to do so. Paul desired for all three of them to be "**In Christ**" and do the right thing. Paul was asking Philemon to be counter-cultural.

"**In Christ**," we are all transformed. "**In Christ**," we find the courage to do what is right. "**In Christ**," we are builders of the Beloved Community. I'm excited to explore what it means to be "**In Christ**" will all of you!

Love & Peace, Pastor Ellen

Conspiracy of Silence

Romans 12:9: “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.”

“There is a conspiracy of silence about hatred, its function and its meaning.”

--Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, p.65.



We are a love your neighbor religion. Scripture calls us to welcome the stranger thirty-five times. United Methodists ground their lives in grace that is offered expansively for all—to save and to heal and to grease our growth in love. And yet there is a culture of silence about the othering being done by powerful monied interests at work in the federal government.

In his book *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Howard Thurman has written an entire chapter on hate. Many who have counseled me to be silent for the benefit of the unity of the church, do not seem to be troubled by the ways in which silence supports a clear weaponization of the other. For example, seeds have been planted in the national discourse to displace millions of Palestinians. While some believe that only felons and bad actors are being rounded up in immigration raids, that is not true. Raids have been indiscriminate. I have read in more than one credible source that Indigenous persons have been rounded up in the raids, some in the government have even called for removal of their citizenship. We all know there is a battle in the courts over birthright citizenship guaranteed by the 14th amendment. Persons who identify as LGTBT, especially trans persons are also losing rights and access to medical treatment. The war on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means women and persons with disabling conditions also face losing their rights. Are these actions unrelated? Episodic?

Are we ready to call this evil and abhor what is evil? If these actions constitute hatred, we must ask how is such hatred functioning—to return to Thurman’s premise? What else is going on while the nation is being divided in this way? How does the silence of Christians help the harm continue? And what does this mean for the church? What would it look like to let love be genuine?

I will encourage us to break the conspiracy of silence about hatred by:

- ⇒ Creating circles for conversation about hard topics in your community of faith.
- ⇒ Creating a forum to discuss the Sunday sermon following services of worship.
- ⇒ Engaging in small talk with anyone as a step toward bridging life together.
- ⇒ Being in mission to express your witness to the love of Jesus.
- ⇒ Contribute in ways that strengthen the church’s voice.
- ⇒ Make relationships with persons who are different from you. Learn.

In The 2020/2024 Book of Discipline, among the disciplines by which bishops are encouraged to lead the church is: “a prophetic commitment for the transformation of the world” (403.1d). The subparagraph continues: “the role of the Bishop, is to be a prophetic voice for justice...and alleviation of human suffering.” Yes, we are to lead the whole flock of Christ, with all its gifts and differences. My hope is to offer a prophetic reminder that God’s relentless love is among us to reduce human suffering.

While these considerations are tearing at the hearts of all spiritual leaders, I would call us to our practices. I have been praying more. I have engaged in bible study with laity and clergy. I would call us all to the assembly of the faithful for worship and service.

I would also call us to our neighbors. Make them. Learn from them. Expand your definition of neighbor.

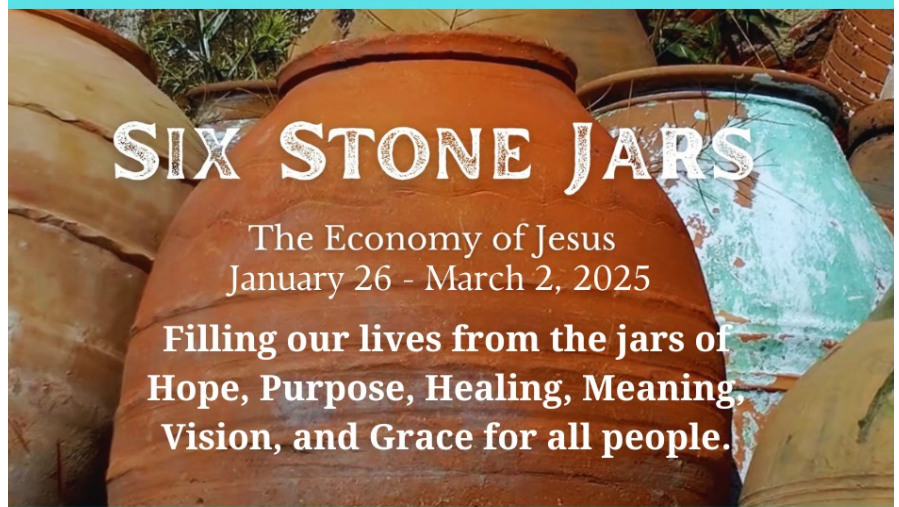
Know that I am praying for you.
Thank you.

Peace,
Bishop Dan Schwerin

What's Up in Worship—February & March 2025

Surprise! We did not engage the worship series, *Drawn In*, as originally planned for January and February. And, I know that you have already figured that out and have embraced the series we are engaging, *Six Stone Jars*.

Thank you! ~
Pastor Ellen



Six Stone Jars is a series developed by Marcia McFee and her staff from Worship Design Studios and is inspired by the story of the Wedding at Cana in John 2.1-11 and the theme, “Fill My House with Hoping.” The six stone water jars were transformed into wine and the situation was transformed from fear and embarrassment to abundant joy. The remainder of the series explores the 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters of the Gospel of Luke with weekly themes of “Fill My Plans with Purpose,” “Fill My Wounds with Healing,” “Fill My Days with Meaning,” “Fill My Future with Vision,” and we will finish with “Fill My Cup with Grace.” In the economy of Jesus, as our cups are filled to overflowing, we are to do all that we can so that everyone’s cup also overflows.

On page 6, we have provided additional resources for you if you would like to dig deeper into the series. You may also want to explore these organizations.

[Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice](#)

Mission: Drawing on the power of religions and human rights, the Kairos Center works to raise up generations of religious and community leaders committed to the unity and organization of the poor as the leading social force in the building of a broad transformative movement to end poverty. We are a center for movement strategy, coordination, and education among the poor across all lines of division.

[Partnership for a Healthier America](#)

Mission: We amplify & support our partners to provide access to good food for all.

[The United Methodist Church—Poverty](#)

2025 Lenten Series



everything [in] between

Meeting God in the midst of extremes

March 5 - April 18

everything [in] between is a Lenten series inspired by the Narrative Lectionary (Year 3) Gospel of Luke readings. Beginning with Jesus setting his face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9.51), the series flows through several familiar stories—the Good Samaritan, Mary & Martha, the fruitless fig tree, the Lost Sheep, Zacchaeus, and more. Many of these stories are well-known in both the sacred and secular imagination, carrying cultural relevance and lore. ***This is a great opportunity to invite folks to worship. They may be familiar with the stories, so just maybe, church won't feel so foreign.***

This series is an invitation to navigate the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. Each weekly sub-theme explores two supposed binaries, like “faith & works,” or “rest & growth,” or “grief and hope.” We often consider these ideas to be opposing. However, as we explore these concepts within the scriptures, we find nuance and

complexity. We find that these dichotomies are false. We might begin to see a full spectrum instead of black and white. We might find that God is present in between.

Ash Wednesday 7pm

March 5

intention & action

Luke 9.51-62

SUNDAY SERVICES

AT 9 & 10:30 AM

First Sunday in Lent—Sanctuary

March 9

stranger & neighbor

Luke 10.25-37

Second Sunday in Lent—Sanctuary

March 16

faith & works

Luke 10.38-42

Third Sunday in Lent—Paine Hall

March 23

rest & growth

Luke 13.6-9

Fourth Sunday in Lent—Paine Hall

March 30

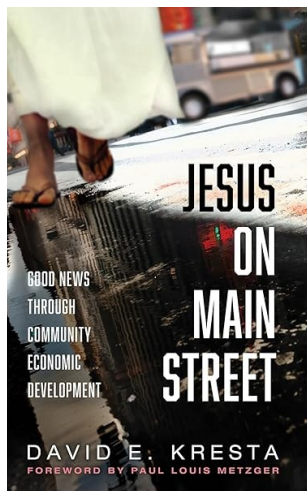
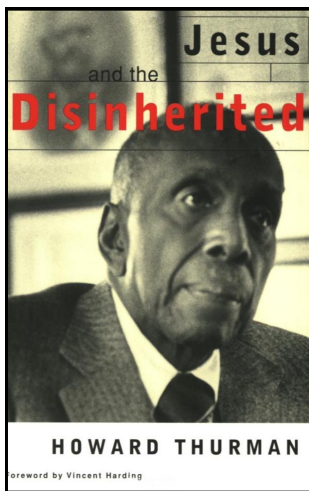
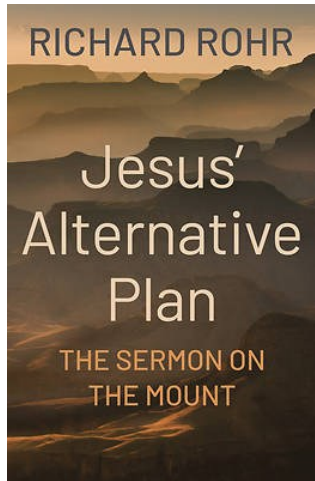
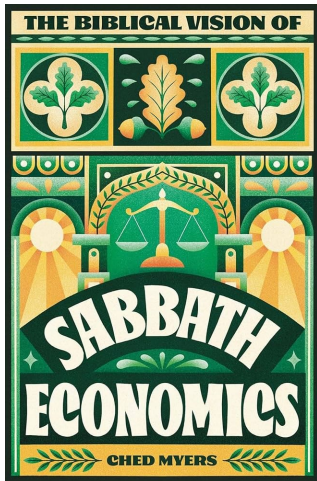
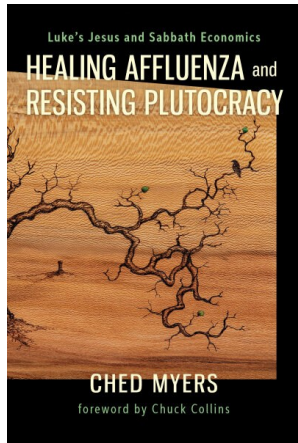
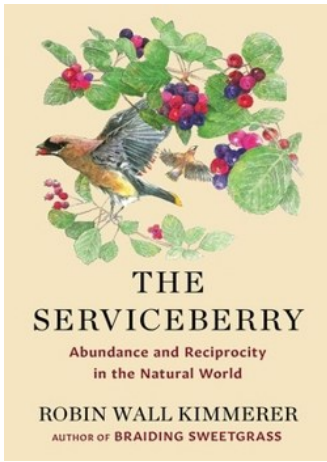
lost & found

Luke 15.1-7

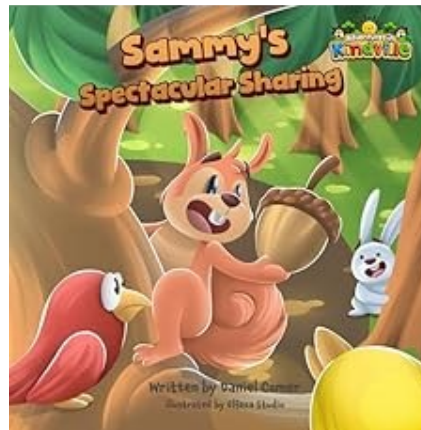
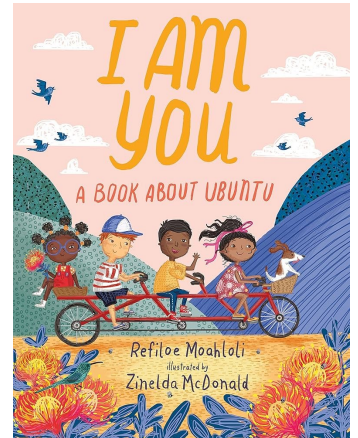
Resources for Diving Deeper

ECONOMY OF JESUS

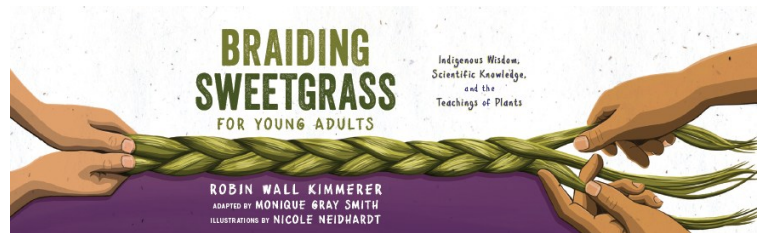
Books for Adult



For Children



For Youth/Young Adult: Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults by Robin Wall Kimmerer





everything [in] between

Meeting God in the midst of extremes

General reading & listening recommendations for this series

Read *The Gospel of Luke*, by Amy-Jill Levine and Ben Witherington III. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

(Note: This is the first commentary co-written by a Jewish Scholar (Amy-Jill) and an Evangelical Christian (Ben). The dedication reads, "For Jews and Christians in hope that they love the Bible like we do, and in hopes that this commentary may show how the Bible can be used as a bridge to build better Jewish-Christian relationships." In the book, it is noted when the authors disagree or have different interpretations.

Research Richard Rohr's writings on "the dualistic mind" and "non-dual oneness," such as:

- "The Dualistic Mind," by Richard Rohr. *Center for Action and Contemplation*. January 29, 2017.

cac.org/daily-meditations/the-dualistic-mind-2017-01-29/

- "Dualistic Clarity Before Nondual Oneness," by Richard Rohr. *Center for Action and Contemplation*.

May 28, 2021. cac.org/daily-meditations/dualistic-clarity-before-nondual-oneness-2021-05-28/

- "Non-Dual Consciousness," by Richard Rohr. *Center for Action and Contemplation*. December

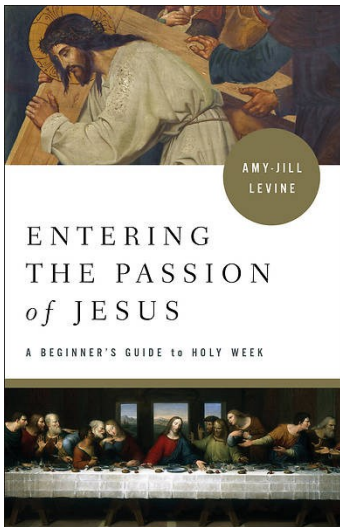
18, 2015. cac.org/daily-meditations/non-dual-consciousness-2015-12-18/

(Note: Franciscan priest and writer, Richard Rohr, states, "I am convinced that Jesus was the first nondual religious teacher of the West, and one reason we have failed to understand so much of his teaching, much less follow it, is because we tried to understand it with dualistic minds."² He has several

- ⇒ **In the logo**, the two hands reaching toward each other represent our longing for connection despite the politics, assumptions, beliefs, and narratives that divide us. The hands look as if they are reaching in for a handshake, but they are paused just before they connect.
- ⇒ The negative space in between the hands creates the shape of a doorway, symbolizing hospitality or a pathway forward. The doorway invites us to look for God in the spaces in between.
- ⇒ In the typography, the "in" is bracketed, emphasizing the promise that God shows up in surprising ways and unexpected places, but is present in it all. The shape of the hands further echoes the bracket shape. Grammatically, brackets are used to provide additional explanation or information. The brackets around the [in] represent the charge to each of us: to dig deeper into complexity and nuance, to ask questions and stay curious, and to be open to where God might meet us along the way.



LENTEN STUDY



2025 Lenten Study Facilitated by Don Nelson Sunday Mornings following the 9 am service

What if we look at the "ordinary" people who witnessed the Passion events... the women around Jesus? Or the "bad" guys... Judas, Pilate, and Caiaphas? If we look closely at the people who were part of Jesus' life during the last days before the crucifixion—their relationships and roles in the story—how might that deepen our understanding of what happened?

You are invited to join Don Nelson for this year's Lenten study, *Entering the Passion of Jesus*, beginning Sunday, March 9 and concluding on Palm Sunday, April 13. The group meets in the Fireside Room—down the hall from the nursery— following the 9 am Sunday worship service. All are welcome, but the class size is limited to 12. It's a combination of a video and reading a chapter in the book each week.

From Cokesbury: Jesus' final days were full of risk. Every move he made was filled with anticipation, danger, and the potential for great loss or great reward. Jesus risked his reputation when he entered Jerusalem in a victory parade. He risked his life when he dared to teach in the Temple. His followers risked everything when they left behind their homes, or anointed him with costly perfume. We take risks as we read and re-read these stories, finding new meanings and new challenges.

In Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. She shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience.

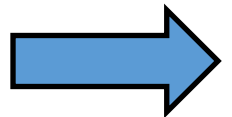
Books are \$10 and will be available to be picked up on Sunday, March 2, from Don.

INTRODUCTORY VIDEO

The video series is available at Amplify Media.

Sign up for your **FREE account today!**

- Session 1: Jerusalem: Risking Reputation
- Session 2: The Temple: Risking Righteous Anger
- Session 3: Teachings: Risking Challenge
- Session 4: The First Dinner: Risking Rejection
- Session 5: The Last Supper: Risking the Loss of Friends
- Session 6: Gethsemane: Risking Temptation



Resources for Growing Disciples

Amplify Media ~

A **FREE to user** online digital library for individuals, small groups, and families!

Amplify Media is a wonderful tool for discipleship growth at ABUMC! Amplify Media is a multi-media platform that delivers high quality, searchable content with an emphasis on Wesleyan perspectives for church-wide, group, or individual use on any device at any time.

We pay a small monthly fee that gives us access to an amazing online library from the United Methodist Publishing House. It is **FREE** for individuals, families, and small groups to use.

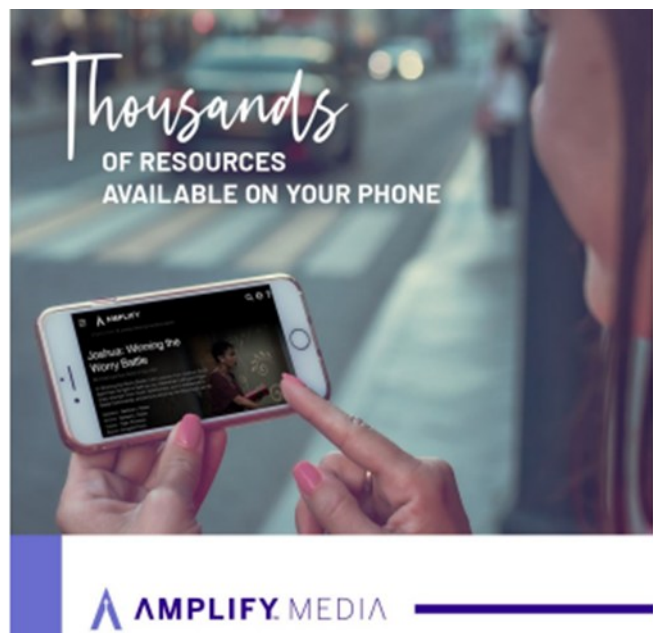
In order to take advantage of this amazing resource, users need to create an account. And it is as easy as 1-2-3!

1. Go to my.amplifymedia.com
2. Find the person icon in the upper righthand corner and enter this access code: VLMNWX
3. Create your account and explore the site! There's something for everyone. Once your account is created, you can Browse by topics, speakers, or writers.

You can use the Discover tab and explore Recently Added, Most Watched, Featured Studies, and Studies & More. Both of these tabs are located in the upper right corner of the screen. On the upper left corner of the screen, you can explore what's available in the Channels—just use the drop down menu and select from Amplify Media, Cokesbury Kids, Fresh Expressions, or Everyday Faith.

Got Questions—Talk with Pastor Ellen

**SIGN UP FOR YOUR
FREE ACCOUNT TODAY**



Valley Fox

March 16, 12:34pm



- Free food & free music
- Come early; potluck at 11:30am
- Music starts at 12:34pm
- 3rd Sunday of every month

Algoma Boulevard UMC
1174 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh, WI

"Valley Fox is a Midwestern folk power trio made up of guitar, mandolin, upright bass, and vocals. With a focus on delivering bold, haunting harmonies, the trio seamlessly blends pristine vocals with gritty string music to create a forceful yet thoughtful sound, blurring the lines of folk, bluegrass and country music."



Singer-songwriter and playwright

Katie Dahl

Feb 16, 12:34pm

- free food & free art
- come early; potluck at 11:30am
- music starts at 12:34pm
- 3rd sunday of every month

Algoma Boulevard UMC
1174 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh, WI

**Thank you,
Katie Dahl!**

**Katie shared an amazing and
impactful show with us on
February 16.**

Check out her work at:

[Katie Dahl Music](#)



Recycling Update

ABUMC is committed to doing our part for the planet God gifted us and as such has a robust recycling program. All staff, members and guests are asked to pitch in when using the church building and use the various recycle bins that we have in the kitchen. We have a bin to recycle aluminum cans, one to recycle paper and cardboard, one to recycle plastic bags, and two to recycle glass, tin and plastic. Everyone's cooperation in properly recycling appropriate items is hugely appreciated.

Additionally, we work with TerraCycle to ship toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes and floss containers to be recycled. And lastly, we ship Kroger brand food item bags from Pick 'n Save to be recycled through TerraCycle. This includes Simple Truth, Kroger and Private Selection bags. We would like to challenge our ABUMC members to take part in these two programs by bringing your clean Kroger food bags and your dental hygiene items to church for us to ship out. There is a bin outside the church building for the dental items and there is a bin on top of the shelf in the mission area for the Kroger bags. We accrue points with each shipment of these recyclables which is converted to donations to charitable organizations.

We no longer accept #6 rigid plastic cups (Solo).

HOME RECYCLING TIP:

Never put your recyclables in the bin in a plastic bag. Put them in the bin loosely. The bag is not recyclable and will result in the whole bag full of items being thrown in the garbage at the recycling facility.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE FEBRUARY LOOSE COIN OFFERING:



The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization that is working to put an end to modern slavery and human trafficking through comprehensive, life-transforming services to survivors and a platform to advocate for groundbreaking policies and legislation. Over the past two decades, CAST has supported thousands of survivors through every phase of their journey to freedom, from counseling to legal resources, housing, educational and leadership training, and mentorship. Thank you for your generous support!



United
Women
in Faith

United Women in Faith

What would you do with an extra \$2,000? That's a question that Northcott Neighborhood House in Milwaukee had to answer recently.

Why? Because of a simple program that recycles your church socks! You know the ones, the "Holy Ones"! What about the "lonely" ones? You know, the ones that somewhere along the line, lost their mates/partners/amigos!

There is a program through TerraCycle that accepts socks that are destined to end up in the trash. Instead, they are collected and recycled. Since becoming a part of this program in 2024, a check for \$158.20 and another check for \$1,888.90 has been sent to Northcott Neighborhood House.

Please join us in collecting your unwanted socks and turn them into cash for Northcott! You can find a collection box for your washed lonely, holy/holey or just unwanted socks in the Open Door Library! (We'll take care of the rest!)

Every April, the Wisconsin Conference of United Women in Faith sponsor a "Social Action Day" via Zoom. Our Oshkosh unit has participated by hosting a watch party right here at church for the last three years.

This year, our Social Action Day will be held April 12 from 9 a.m. until noon. The topic is "For Love and Grace-Resisting Oppression and Hate – Opening our Doors to ALL God's Children."

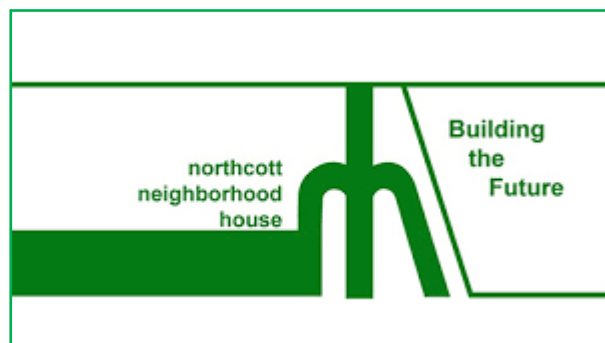
Since 1972, The United Methodist Church has struggled with the full inclusion and affirmation of LGBTQ+ persons in its life and ministry. With the removal of harmful language from the Book of Discipline at the UMC General Conference in 2024, finally United Methodists are urged to speak up for people who face marginalization of any kind, including because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. "The United Methodist Church commits to befriending and caring for all persons, including LGBTQ+ persons in our churches and communities." (Revised Social Principles)

The Rev. Dr. Israel "Izzy" Alvaran (he/him) will present "Becoming an Inclusive Community." Alvaran is a United Methodist Elder from the Philippines

and a clergy member of the California Pacific Conference. He is the only openly gay clergy ordained in the Philippines Central Conference and a founding member of the United Methodist Queer Clergy Caucus. He previously served as RMN's Director of United Methodist Connections. He facilitates "Building an Inclusive Community" Workshops.

The second speaker will be Dr. Sherry Warren (she/her) presenting "God's Beloved and Diverse Children: LGBTQ+ Identity and Terminology." Warren is the Directory of Equity, Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve. She is a trainer and "served the UUA/Our Whole Lives human sexuality curriculum." Warren served the UUA and UCC at the national level and is a lecturer, author, and educator, which includes teaching master's level Advanced Policy and Advocacy at the UW-Green Bay. She is thrilled for the United Methodist Church to welcome all of God's children and loves consulting with congregations to create welcoming communities.

Everyone is welcome to join us at the event. Refreshments are always available! Registration forms are available in the Open Door Library. ~ Sandy Butcher



Northcott Neighborhood House is a multipurpose community center created by the United Methodist Church in 1961.

We provide education, employment opportunities and basic necessities to youth, families and senior citizens in the Milwaukee area.

Our goal is to lift the spirit of the whole community through our mission:

- ⇒ To empower families to meet their survival needs and provide good parenting to their children
- ⇒ To provide a safe place for youth as well as recreational and skill-building activities—after school, on Saturdays, and in the summer
- ⇒ To provide the neighborhood with space, activities, and the opportunity to engage in community building and crime prevention.
- ⇒ Created employment for individuals reentering the workforce transitioning from prison.
- ⇒ And so much more. Visit the website at

[Northcott House](#)

Connections Ministry



TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW!

SATURDAY, MARCH 15

DOORS OPEN at 5 pm

DINNER at 5:30 pm

It's the event you've been waiting for: **the spaghetti dinner and auction** to support the youth mission trip next summer!

Mark your calendar for Saturday, March 15!

Tickets are on sale NOW for this fun event featuring delicious food and delightful auction items to bid on. Tickets are available from the youth from 10:00—10:30 am in Paine Hall on March 2 and 9, and from the office during the week.

Silent auction items will be available for preview beginning Sunday, March 9.



A Special Treat for Special People

We have a number of ways that we support the children and families of Read Elementary School and now we are going to show our appreciation and gratitude for the staff as well. On **Friday, March 21**, we have offered to provide an array of delectable treats and appetizers for the entire staff of 40 during their lunch hour. We are hoping lots of you will offer to whip up and drop off your favorite cookies, veggies and dip, cake, hors d'oeuvres, etc., so that we can show how much we recognize and admire their hard work and dedication to the children of Read.



Please reach out to Lisa-Marie, connections@abumc.org, and let her know you'll chip in!

March Coins

In 2023, we raised funds for an orphanage in Aworowa, Ghana. The orphanage was completed and began operations in January 2024 and houses 32 orphans. Now, an obstetric clinic is being built in the same community, so we are dedicating our March coin collection to this endeavor.



Currently, women in the Aworowa community go to the local clinic to have their babies and must walk home four hours later with their newborn. The clinic does not offer prenatal or postnatal care. With the completion of the new clinic, women will have access to prenatal, delivery, and postnatal care. Construction is underway and the hope is to have the clinic completed by January 2026. If you wish to contribute additional funds beyond your offering coins, you may do so via your online giving, the attendance envelope, or by sending a check to the office. Please be sure to indicate it is for Aworowa Clinic.

How To Give At ABUMC

We honor our baptismal and membership vows to God by our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. As contributors to a connectional system, our gifts have a global impact. Thank you for your generous support of the ministries at work in and through the people of ABUMC.

To Give In-Person: Envelopes are available at each worship experience, and you can designate how you would like your gift distributed.

Cash and checks payable to ABUMC are accepted.

To Give Electronically:

Online at: <https://www.abumc.org/giving> —Select “How to Give” and follow the online giving link.

Through your bank: Work with your online banking system to set up recurring or one-time payments through options like ZELLE or electronic funds transfer.

To Mail Gifts:

Please make your check payable to ABUMC and send your gift to
ABUMC, 1174 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh, WI 54901

For assistance with any of these options, please contact our staff at 920.231.2800.

Thank you for your gifts.



