

Sumner Center Newsletter



JANUARY 2023

Pastors' notes... In the name of our earthly born Savior, Happy New Year!

My prayer for each and everyone of you is that 2023 brings you good tidings and great joy. Folks we are in need of some "happy" in our lives, for sure. The valley we have journeyed through in the last 3 years has been nothing short of, well, exhausting.

But as I review the obstacles this world has thrown our way, I find hope and encouragement in the knowledge that with God walking beside us we can grow stronger, wiser and kinder by reaching deeper into our faith. You are amazing in God's eyes and you have fought the good fight these last few years. My dear friend, take a moment to exhale and gift yourself the well deserved time of letting peace wash over you with the refreshing effect of clearing out and washing away the negative in your life so you may move forward into the New year with clear vision and a new found spring in your step. The possibilities in this new years adventure are endless and you deserve to make yourself a priority this year. Isn't it time you gave yourself the gift of: Self care, A new hobby, Family fun and adventures, Connecting back with your community, Joining a group or event you enjoy, Picking up your bible and actually taking the time to commit yourself to the Word. There are countless bible study guides to help you - all you need to do is google them. I know your phone is right beside you, don't hesitate, do it right now and you will find yourself receiving the most priceless gift of all – a chance to grow in your relationship with our Lord and Redeemer. God is patiently waiting for you to open the door and invite him into your life. Are You ready to share yourself with him? Are you willing to make the commitment of saying yes, Christ your are important enough to me to make worship my priority, your word my actions, and your love the extension of my life. God bless your journey through 2023 may you find your "happy" through the divine grace of Jesus Christ our Lord!

**Worship:
Sundays
In Sanctuary at 11:00am
&
Sumner Center UMC Facebook
Page**

Pastor Bridget Sheely

Cell: 507-923-6247

bridget@countrywidecarriers.com

Visit our Church Website at:

<http://www.sumnercenter.com>

**Donations may be sent to our mailing
address:**

25378 151st Ave

Grace and Peace in the name of Jesus Christ:

If you have items you would like to be published in the newsletter, please contact Pastor Bridget, by the 3rd Thursday of the preceding month by emailing your information to (bridget@countrywidecarriers.com) Or by bringing your information to Worship on Sunday mornings)




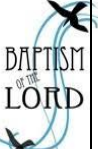

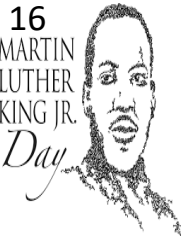
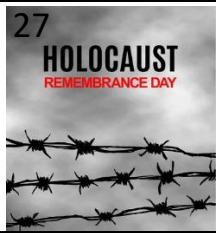
**The light of God remains
to shine bright in the
community of Sumner Center
UMC, only by your generous
giving heart!**

**Thank you for your dedication
and love!**

Calendar of Events

(Subject to change and/or be added to as the need arises)

January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 <i>happy New Year</i></p> <p>"Epiphany Service of Carols" Combined Worship Service at Sumner Center UMC @10am Meal to follow</p>	2	3	4	5	<p>6 <i>Epiphany</i></p> 	7
<p>8 Children's Storytime @10:30 am</p> <p>Worship Service 11:00 am</p> 	<p>9 Hamburger Night @ Wykoff Community Center 4:30-7pm</p>	10	11	12	13	14
<p>15 <i>Human Relations Sunday</i></p> <p>Worship Service 11:00 am</p> 	<p>16 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. Day</p> 	17	18	19	20	<p>21 SPRC Meeting 10am@ Wykoff UMC</p>
<p>22 Worship Service 11:00 am</p>	23	24	25	26	<p>27 HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY</p> 	28
<p>29 Worship Service 11:00am</p>	30	31				

Epiphany, also called **Feast of the Epiphany**, **Theophany**, or **Three Kings' Day**, (from Greek *epiphaneia*, "manifestation"), [Christian](#) holiday [commemorating](#) the first [manifestation](#) of [Jesus Christ](#) to the Gentiles, represented by the [Magi](#), and the manifestation of his divinity, as it occurred at his [baptism](#) in the [Jordan River](#) and at his first miracle, at Cana in [Galilee](#). [Epiphany](#) is one of the three principal and oldest [festival](#) days of the Christian church (the other two are [Easter](#) and [Christmas](#)). [Roman Catholics](#), [Lutherans](#), [Anglicans](#), and other Western churches observe the feast on January 6, while some [Eastern Orthodox](#) churches celebrate Epiphany on January 19, since their Christmas Eve falls on January 6.

JANUARY HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS



Sunday, January 1, 2023
Racine, Wykoff and Sumner Center UMC's
Will consolidate all 3 worship services into:
One Worship Service at Sumner Center UMC @10am

Epiphany Service of Lessons and Carols

Communion

Mission focus - HYGIENE KIT INSTRUCTIONS

A MEAL WILL FOLLOW WORSHIP

**Mulligan Stew and Bean & Ham Soup,
garlic toast and angel food cake with strawberries**



Sunday, January 8th –

At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus presented himself to John to be baptized in the Jordan. So let us find our center on this Baptism of the Lord Sunday. Today we not only remember Jesus' baptism, but we celebrate our own: the baptism we share with Christ. Accordingly, we will gather to celebrate the reaffirmation of our baptismal covenant.



HUMAN RELATIONS DAY



TOGETHER
OUR REACH IS BEYOND MEASURE

The United Methodist Church's special giving structure ensures your generosity blesses as many people as possible in sustainable, strategic ways

YOUR DONATION CHANGES THE WORLD ONE LIFE AT A TIME
GIVE TO YOUR CHURCH:
Make checks payable to your local church or donate online via credit/debit card at ResourceUMC.org/SSGive



TO GIVE ONLINE SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA

 Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church*

EVERY ONE OF US IS OF SACRED WORTH

We are all family. When we walk past our neighbor who is hiding in plain sight, we limit the gifts and graces that our sisters and brothers in Christ bring to the table. We limit the experiences, the voices and the beloved community that take place through mutual sharing of gifts. With a special offering celebrating Human Relations Day, we join with United Methodists around the world, remembering that the size of the table of divine love is unlimited.

One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together than we ever could do on our own. On Human Relations Day, we join other UMC congregations in a special offering to support neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk youth through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs.

Our gifts are part of building beloved community through faith-based volunteer programs, community developers and programs that work with at-risk teens. You may donate today by making checks payable to our church with "human Relations" in the memo or go to ResourceUMC.org/SSGive to share your gift today.

4 Ways to Approach the New Year with Jesus

And so it is that the calendar has (finally!) flipped and we have begun a brand new year. Last year,—with its mix of joys and sorrows, goals met and goals missed, friendships gained and friendships lost—is behind us.

For many, New Year's is just another holiday. For others, it's a time of deep reflection, both on the past year and on the one ahead. New Year's reminds us of the new birth. In a sense, each day with Jesus is a chance to turn the page on an old way of life and embrace a new one. We are, after all, new creation people, and we serve a King who renews us daily by the Holy Spirit.

Setting goals for a new year are an important sign that we're intentional about glorifying God in our callings—work and business, home and church, private and public witness. But before we write out our goals, we should begin in the heart. The temptation for Christians is to make our plans and add a dollop of Jesus on top, rather than allowing him to form in us the desires and motivations to do his work. So, whether or not we're making concrete goals or more abstract ones, whether we're writing down resolutions or foregoing them altogether, here are four important steps we can take, as we peer into 2023, to draw closer to Christ.

1. Remember - The wise man of Ecclesiastes said, "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them'" ([Eccl. 12:1](#)). In January, the year is young and the opportunities seem fresh. So many productivity gurus preach a gospel of self-empowerment, but as gospel people, we know the fragility of human life. We know every breath is a miracle, a gift given to us by our Creator. I love the words of hymnwriter Thomas Obediah Chisholm (1866-1960):

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

In a cursed and tumultuous world, creation itself reminds of God's great faithfulness. Every new season is a testimony, a signpost, to grace. So, the proper response to the past year, whether good or bad, is not "I made it through" or "Look what I achieved." It is "Thank you, Lord."



2. Repent - Our worship of God for his faithfulness and majesty, evidenced by the changing of seasons, should then lead us to repentance. His goodness breaks us in fresh ways as our sin is exposed by the light of his glory. But this isn't a morbidly introspective, navel-gazing exercise. To repent is to rejoice. We claim the promise of [1 John 1:9](#) because we know our forgiveness has already been purchased at the cross. Beginning the new year with repentance is to draw closer to Jesus, to appropriate the fresh grace that is ours in him. This is why confession always brings relief and joy. It is the gateway to greater intimacy with God.

3. Renew - New Year's should also be a time of renewing old commitments, like marriage, family, and church. Before we begin grand plans to lose weight or develop a new skill—good creational goals—let's begin by renewing the core commitments we already have. Our most vital work is what we do within the walls of our homes—loving our spouses and raising our children in an atmosphere of godliness and grace. We live out the gospel best when we live it out in the daily rhythms of repentance and forgiveness with loved ones. We must reject the lie that says success requires abandoning family commitments. We should also renew ourselves to the faithful body life of our local Bible-treasuring, gospel-preaching church. The local church is the locus of God's mission in the world, where we gather in community to declare Christ's kingship each week, and where we work out our salvation in fear and trembling ([Phil. 2:12](#)) with brothers and sisters in Christ.

4. Rest - New Year's should be a time to rest. First, we rest in the reality of our identity in Christ. We may have failed to meet our heady goals in 2022. Jesus still loves us, despite our failures, unchecked boxes, and disappointment at the scale. The gospel tells us that he loves us in the midst of these. Second, we should plan to physically rest. We don't often do this on New Year's. We plan to work and hustle. But do we schedule time to reflect and acknowledge our need for sleep and leisure? Rest isn't a sign of laziness or weakness; it's a sign of spiritual strength and confidence that when we close our eyes, our lives are in the grip of a sovereign God.

So as we make our plans for 2023, let's remember that even in our failures, we serve the One who remembers our frame and knows we are dust ([Ps. 103:14](#)).



I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord, as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well. Greet Prisca and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but also all the churches of the gentiles. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Israelites who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my fellow Israelite Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and greet his mother—a mother to me also. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Romans 16:1-15

This is not a typical Scripture reading for this season in the church. And if you are preaching, this is not a passage to assign to another reader. It is, however, a regular feature of Paul's correspondence. Paul often ended his letters with such particular notes. It is a wonderful reminder that faith in Jesus Christ is lived with particular people in particular places and circumstances. The church is not some abstract idea of Christian community, but is Christian community with particular people, in particular places and times..

I am reminded of the line from "The Book of Discipline," which says that "the people of God, who are the church made visible in the world, must convince the world of the reality of the gospel or leave it unconvinced" (§130). This is the gift and task of ministry and we engage in this ministry in our concrete circumstances with particular people.

Another way to say this is that ours is an incarnational faith. It is in this time and place, it is with these people, that we need to make the gospel real, that we must convince the world of the reality of the gospel or leave it unconvinced.

One of my theology teachers, the late Schubert Ogden, once wrote about the church, "if the church is necessary, this is not because its absence would mean the absence of grace in the world, but because without the church the grace always already given to the world would not be adequately signified" ("The Understanding of Christian Faith," 101). God is always already graciously at work in the world healing, redeeming, freeing. As witnesses to God's grace in Jesus Christ, we point to places where God's healing love is reconciling and making new, thus doing our best to convince the world of the reality of the gospel. As signifiers of God's grace, we seek to be people in whom and through whom God's love in Jesus Christ touches the world, moving it toward justice, peace, reconciliation, beloved community, beauty, and love. We witness to the grace of God, we seek to embody the grace of God in certain times and places, with certain people.

Bishop Bard preaches at the Minnesota Annual Conference Session in 2022.

Thirty-eight years ago, I became a probationary member of the Minnesota Conference of The United



Methodist Church. You are the people with whom I have been in ministry for quite some time now. Together we have sought to witness to the activity of God's grace. Together we have worked to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world—creating new places for new people, seeking to grow in love of God and neighbor, bringing healing to a broken world. Together we have sought to embody God's grace. Together we have shared good news. Together we have worked for justice, peace, reconciliation,

beauty, and love. Together we have sought to build beloved community. We have done this together rooted in our Wesleyan values.

Six years ago, I was elected a bishop in The United Methodist Church and the context of my ministry changed. There were new people, new places, new circumstances. But then two years ago an unlikely set of circumstances brought us together again. I returned to this community, to work with you who had for so long been my companions in ministry. My role was different—"bishop," but the work was the same, making real the love of God in Jesus Christ through our particular lives, in our particular places, in this particular time. The circumstances were a challenge, but the joy of working with you again was deep.

There are some regrets about these past two years. I regret that COVID marked many of our months together, limiting our ability to be together in person, even when it may have fit my schedule, which was also a challenge. There is the heartache over disaffiliation. As necessary as this may be for our church right now, it is nevertheless painful. There may have been times when I disappointed you, and times when I disappointed myself.

All these are overshadowed by the good work we have done together in ministry and the opportunities we have had to connect and celebrate. We have often reminded ourselves of the centrality of our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, and of our vision for embodying that mission, that is, every congregation being a vital center where we are creating new spaces for new people, helping people grow in love of God and neighbor, and working to heal a broken world. We have become clearer in affirming our core values, that our work is rooted in Jesus, grounded in Wesleyan theology, that ministry necessarily includes the work of justice and reconciliation, and that all have a place in Christ's body the church. All four of these values are critical and must be held together.

As I offer my final words as your bishop, I encourage you to continue to embody this mission, this vision, these values. Keep making them real in this time and place with these people. Keep making them real in your communities from open country areas to small towns to county seats and urban areas. We are those who witness in word and deed to the grace of God already at work in the world. We are those who must convince the world of the reality of the gospel or leave it unconvinced. We are those who must point to and signify the grace of God at work in the world through Jesus Christ.

Thank you. Thank you for our shared work for over 30 years, but particularly for these past two years. Thank you for your friendship and encouragement in Christ. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Thank you. Love, joy and peace be yours in Jesus Christ and in the Spirit.
Merry Christmas and blessed new year.

[Bishop David Bard](#) is interim bishop for the Minnesota Conference through Dec. 31, 2022. He also serves as resident bishop for the Michigan Conference.

Epiphany - Twelfth Night Word Search

Find the hidden words associated with January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany also known as Three Kings Day or Twelfth Night.

X P P B E P I P H A N Y T O T S A E F
I U L Y Q B N H T M O V D L E V W N F
W M I W Z A A G D T A E J U G B I M G
N A P M C L S V T L E N E G N V S L N
U R P A C T N Y Y R O S G B I F E M I
Y Y K T M H I U H U N G E E K X M J R
M C Z T K A G T B E S T F A R M E L E
O S T A R S H H C N H U U D C Q N Q F
T E V Y E A T N A L E I S W T K B L F
H Z E H K R I R E M Q E N E Z N J R O
E I L U H K R H K E T V U A J M A Z O
R M Z P N J E H K Y A N K Q F Y R E U
S X Q A M M N L O S R E Y E S A B G L
E R R A C H R I S T M A S T I D E A O
R F G G O D W E C U H X G G H A X M B
U I N U D L I H C L F T H I L C R O H
S U U G G Y O M V Y K H F U F A Y H D
A S X H Q I T A C Z R C C L P T O I W
E S V H A N A F E B A L M S E N S M Y
R R O I H C L E M Y J L A G R W X Q D
T Q M Y R R H B A X Y C T V M E T E J

BABYJESUS
BALTHASAR
BETHLEHEM
CASPAR
CHILD
CHRISTMASTIDE
EPIPHANY
FEAST
FRANKINCENSE
GIFTS
GOLD
HOMAGE
KING
LABEFANA
LOSREYES
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MOTHER
MELCHIOR
MYRRH
NIGHT
OFFERING
QUEEN
STAR
THREE
TREASURE
TWELFTH
WISEMEN