

# Sumner Center UMC Newsletter



OPEN HEARTS. OPEN MINDS. OPEN DOORS.

## June 2024

### Pastor's Notes...

It is with sadness that we must announce starting July Wykoff UMC will no longer be affiliated with the Prairieland Parish. We pray for the Wykoff faith community as they move forward under the supervision of the District Superintendent. And with confidence I will say that knowing them to be a congregation of strong faith, ministry and mission God will be walking them each day. **Wykoff UMC will continue to hold weekly worship services with alternating guest speakers, and they will continue to be a beacon of God's love in Wykoff.** Please pray for our dear friends in Wykoff so they may always remember they have much continued support from the rest of our parish.

This news brings me to my next announcement concerning the times of worship for our parish churches.

### Sunday Morning Worship Times Starting July 2024 Prairieland Parish

Racine UMC – 8:30 am

United Church of Grand Meadow – 9:45 am

Sumner Center UMC – 11:15 am

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Dexter UMC – 8:30 am

Brownsdale UMC – 9:45 am

Sargeant UMC – 11:00 am

**Pastor's Jon and Bridget will be alternating every two weeks in leading these services.**

**By offering these variety of worship times we hope you will find a time that fits with your schedule to join in praising our Lord.**

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

Visit our Church Website at:  
<http://www.sumnercenter.com>

**Donations may be sent to our mailing  
address:  
25378 151st Ave  
Spring Valley, Mn 55975**

### Pastoral Support Team

**Pastor Bridget Sheely**

Email: [bridget@countrywidecarriers.com](mailto:bridget@countrywidecarriers.com)

Cell # 507-438-1352

**Pastor Jon Marburger**

Email: [marburgerjon@gmail.com](mailto:marburgerjon@gmail.com)

Cell #507-227-6711

**Pastor Abigail Ozanne**

Email: [pastorabigailo@gmail.com](mailto:pastorabigailo@gmail.com)

Cell #507-607-0779








### **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 or dropping at Church. The light of God remains to shine bright in our community only by your generous giving heart! If you would like to donate a gift, you may send donations to the address above or deliver it in person during Sunday morning worship service

# Calendar of Events

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

## June 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
<b>2</b> 11 am Worship 	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>9</b> 11 am Worship  No children's time this week	10	11	<b>12</b> All Church Conference Meeting @ Grand Meadow 6:30pm	13	<b>14</b> 	15
<b>16</b> 11 am Worship 	17	18	<b>19</b> 	<b>20</b> 	21	22
<b>23</b> 11 am Worship	24	25	26	27	28	29
<b>30</b> 11 am Worship						

# June Worship Schedule

MARK 3:35 Anyone who does God's will is my



**June 2, 2024**

**Pastor Bridget Leading**

As we sit and hear God's word—whether preached, sung, prayed, or otherwise—let's remember to ask ourselves, "Am I listening?" God is informing and guiding our time together. This is not just a party, a celebration, a special service, or a concert. This is Sabbath. This is God's time. Let's lift praise, give thanks, glorify God's name, and pause from every unessential mission so that we experience and spread the news. God is good, Jesus is the Way, and the Holy Spirit is ready to renew all who believe in the resurrection and healing power of Jesus Christ.



*The kingdom of God is like this.*

**June 9, 2024**

**Pastor Bridget Leading**

Today we celebrate the new creation that we have become in Christ and we encourage each other in continued growth on the path of discipleship. John Wesley called this sanctification, where we are made by the activity of the Spirit within and among us into something that more resembles the Christ we follow. It is a long and often difficult process, full of as many setbacks as advances. Yet we forge on in joy, knowing that we are the body of the Christ we serve.



**June 16, 2024**

**Pastor Jon Leading**

Bless Our Fathers - Heavenly Father, Today we ask You to bless our earthly fathers for the many times they reflected the love, strength, generosity, wisdom and mercy that You exemplify in Your relationship with us, Your children. We ask your blessing on those men who served as father figures in our lives when our biological fathers weren't able to do so. May the love and selflessness they showed us be returned to them in all their relationships, and help them to know that their influence has changed us for the better. In the name of

your Son we ask Your generous blessings today and every day. Amen.



**June 23, 2024**

**Pastor Jon Leading**

We, as followers of Christ, are called to share, to give, to lean into the transformation of the world as part of our mission. It's not enough that we are made into disciples; it's not enough that we are caring for our own souls. We are called to be in service to a hurting world. We can't do this alone. We need help. We need Jesus' help. So, today I ask our Lord to Lay His hands on us, bless us, ,

bless all we encounter. Use our hands, use our knees, use whatever it takes to save us, to make us well and alive. Lord, teach us how to be present to the world around us as a way of being present to You. Then we can learn to give what we have received, grace upon grace. Amen.



**June 30, 2024**

**Pastor Abigail Leading**

On this pre-holiday weekend, it seems to me that what we really celebrate is neither a historical happenstance nor the glories of a richly blessed nation. Instead, it is an ideal, a vision of what we could be, what we long to be. We who call the United States of America home love our country, but at the same time, we hope for more – more justice for all, more equality, more hospitality.

We all want a country that feels like home, which means we need people, all the people - of the people, by the people, and for the people - to show us the way to go home. Show us the way to be home, a home for all God's children.

# Summary of key decisions from the postponed 2020 General Conference

## Background info about General Conference

General Conference is The United Methodist Church's top legislative body. It typically meets every four years but was postponed in 2020, so this gathering in 2024 was actually the postponed 2020 General Conference. Each annual conference is allotted a specific number of seated/voting delegates based on its number of professing members. Minnesota has two delegates, both of whom were elected by members of the 2019 Minnesota Annual Conference Session: one clergy (Rev. Carol Zaagsma, Good Samaritan UMC in Edina and incoming assistant to the bishop for connectional ministries), and one lay person (Dave Nuckols, Minnetonka UMC). In total, there were approximately 740 delegates from 133 annual conferences. Bishops preside at General Conference but have no voice or vote.

### **LGBTQ+ inclusion**

· The United Methodist Church's longtime condemnation of homosexuality—which sparked a half-century of conflict—is now no more. By a vote of 523 to 161 after about an hour and a half of debate, General Conference delegates eliminated the 52-year-old assertion in the denomination's Social Principles that “the practice of homosexuality... is incompatible with Christian teaching.” In the same vote, delegates affirmed “marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith [adult man and adult woman of consenting age or two adult persons of consenting age] into a union of one another and into deeper relationship with God and the religious community.”

The United Methodist Church removed a 40-year ban on the ordination of gay clergy. Delegates approved this decision by a 93 percent margin, without debate. As of the conclusion of General Conference, the denomination's Book of Discipline will no longer include a statement saying: “The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as

ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.”

United Methodist pastors no longer face potential penalties for officiating at same-sex weddings or being in a same-sex relationship themselves. Delegates struck down a ban that prohibited clergy from officiating and churches from hosting “homosexual unions.”

Delegates voted to protect the rights of pastors to choose which weddings to perform or not perform by adopting the statement: “No clergy at any time may be required or compelled to perform, or prohibited from performing, any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple, including same-sex couples. All clergy have the right to exercise and preserve their conscience when requested to perform any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple.”

Delegates voted to eliminate parts of the Traditional Plan, which was approved at the 2019 General Conference and strengthened the denomination's longtime restrictions on same-sex marriage and “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy. For example, delegates removed a ban on annual conferences and denominational agencies from giving United Methodist funds to any “gay caucus group” or using funds to “promote the acceptance of homosexuality.” Instead, the provision now says annual conferences and agencies should honor the denomination's commitment not to reject lesbian or gay members. Delegates also voted to lift a ban placed on boards of ordained ministry from considering candidates without evaluating whether they are “self-avowed practicing” gay people, and to strike the requirement that bishops rule gay candidates ineligible.

### **What do these decisions mean for us in**

**Minnesota?** In 2019, the Minnesota Annual Conference named the inclusion of all persons, including LGBTQ+ persons, as one of our four core values and we have been living out that value for the past five years. For example, we have already been evaluating candidates for ministry on the

basis of nine leadership characteristics alone—and that will not change. But the General Conference votes are important because they bring the denomination into closer alignment with the ways we are already living and leading in Minnesota.

Other key decisions

- Delegates approved a series of petitions related to regionalization, which has become United Methodist shorthand for a package of legislation that would restructure the denomination. Under the legislation, the U.S. and each central conference—church regions in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines—would become regional conferences with the same authority to adapt the Book of Discipline, the denomination’s policy book, for more missional effectiveness. Currently, only central conferences have the authority to adapt the Discipline as missional needs and different legal contexts require. To be ratified, the regionalization plan will need at least a two-thirds total vote of annual conference lay and clergy voters, so this item will come to the Minnesota Annual Conference Session for a vote.

Delegates voted to grant sacramental authority to deacons. Deacons can now administer baptism and Holy Communion without having to obtain special permission to do so. Previously, a bishop could authorize a deacon to preside at a specific celebration of the sacraments and/or in a specific ministry context. But today’s vote changes the language in The Book of Discipline so that such authorization is no longer required. “For the sake of extending the mission and ministry of the church and offering the means of grace to the world, the deacon is authorized to preside at the celebration of the sacraments,” the sentence that was changed now reads.

- Delegates passed a petition to welcome “with a spirit of grace” churches that have disaffiliated or withdrawn from The United Methodist Church and wish to return. The legislation stipulates that every annual conference shall have a policy of re-affiliation for the churches seeking to return to the connection, so Minnesota Conference leaders will work to create such a policy.

- Delegates voted to reduce the portion of church giving requested to fund the general-church budget. Minnesota will still set its own apportionment formula, but the bottom line is that U.S. annual conferences will be asked to pay apportionments to the general church that are 38% to 41% lower than what delegates passed at the 2016 General Conference. Also, denomination-wide ministries that rely on those apportionments—including general agencies and episcopal leadership—will need to be budgeted with those cuts in mind.

- Delegates voted to enter a full-communion partnership with The Episcopal Church after years of dialogue about this possibility. Full communion means each church acknowledges the other as a partner in the Christian faith, recognizes the validity of each other’s baptism and Eucharist, and commits to work together in ministry. Such an agreement also means Episcopalians and United Methodists can share clergy. The agreement still needs the approval of the Episcopalians—which might not happen until 2027.

- Delegates overwhelmingly approved a new retirement plan for U.S. clergy. Called Compass, the plan was conceived and championed by Wespath, the denomination’s pension and benefits agency. The new Compass plan will mean benefit changes starting Jan. 1, 2026. Unlike previous clergy retirement plans that Wespath has offered, Compass does not include a lifetime benefit. Instead, Compass is entirely a defined-contribution plan similar to the 401(k) plans most U.S. corporate employees now have. The benefits of clergy who already have retired will not be affected by the plan. Wespath says the switch to the Compass plan is needed to continue providing reliable and sustainable retirement income.

- Delegates approved a resolution condemning racial-ethnic discrimination and gender-based violence against Asian Americans. It condemns increasing discrimination against racial-ethnic minorities, especially Asian Americans, during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. It also condemns the violations against religious minorities in India. The resolution calls on annual conferences to urge

local churches to be informed and to work against discrimination and gender-based violence.

· Delegates approved a variety of resolutions related to creation care. One resolution calls for every annual conference to name a “caretakers of God’s creation coordinator” who will be responsible for helping the conference develop programs to help it become more ecologically sustainable and to address environmental injustices. Another resolution calls for every local church to create a “green team” to provide people with inspiration, knowledge, encouragement, and practical means for caring for creation and justice. Additional resolutions call on church gatherings to avoid single-use plastics whenever possible and urge churches to conduct annual carbon footprint and/or greenhouse gas emissions audits of their buildings.

### **UMC Bishops To Promote Ratification of Regionalization Legislation**

Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church  
Press Release - For Immediate Release  
May 7, 2024

At the conclusion of the General Conference in Charlotte, N.C., the Council of Bishops (COB) of The United Methodist Church has committed to vigorously supporting the delegates from around the world who have overwhelmingly passed legislation regarding the regionalization of our worldwide church.

Several constitutional amendments will be necessary for The United Methodist Church to restructure itself into regions (Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and the United States) with equal authority to make context-specific decisions regarding mission and ministry.

Within the next eighteen months, these constitutional amendments must be ratified in every annual conference. The Council of Bishops has unanimously agreed to dedicate time, effort, and encouragement to promoting ratification across the connection and providing leadership to every annual conference. Constitutional amendments must be passed by two-thirds of the aggregate/combined votes of all annual conferences.

The Council of Bishops acknowledges that regionalization will:

1. **Allow for adaptive evangelism** that enables The United Methodist Church to fulfil Paul's teachings as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. *“For though I am*

*free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might gain all the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to gain Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might gain those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not outside God’s law but am within Christ’s law) so that I might gain those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I might become a partner in it.”*

2. **Emphasize the denomination's worldwide nature**, maintaining a connection that supports and holds each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission while respecting individual cultural and social contexts. *“United Methodists throughout the world are bound together in a connectional covenant in which we support and hold each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission. Integrally holding connectional unity and local freedom, we seek to proclaim and embody the gospel in ways responsible to our specific cultural and social context while maintaining ‘a vital web of interactive relationships.’”* (Book of Discipline, ¶ 125).

3. **Strengthen our connection** by prioritizing mission and ministry, granting autonomy in nonessential faith matters, and de-centering the United States. Regionalization will allow missional contexts worldwide the freedom to adapt worship, music, membership, administrative practices, and evangelism strategies. However, it will not alter doctrinal standards, core beliefs, Social Principles, or the Ministry of All Christians. The Trinity, the Word of God, the Resurrection, and other essential aspects of our faith will remain unchanged.

Over the next two years, the Council of Bishops will: Offer resources and opportunities for conversations about regionalization and its necessary amendments. Vigorously support the passage of needed amendments through teaching and preaching.

Prohibit the spread of misinformation about regionalization by United Methodists or external church and political entities.

Error!

# June Dairy Month

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GUERNSEY  
JERSEY  
CHOCOLATE MILK  
STRING CHEESE  
MOZZARELLA  
BULL  
MOO  
CHEESE CURDS  
COWS  
SHERBET  
CHEDDAR CHEESE  
ICE CREAM  
BULK TANK  
HAY  
CALVES  
DAIRY FARM  
BARN  
MALT  
MILKER  
UDDER

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