

# Sumner Center UMC

## Newsletter

# October 2024



OPEN HEARTS. OPEN MINDS. OPEN DOORS.

Pastors notes...Get this: You are ALREADY loved by God. Full Stop. No conditions. No qualifications. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. You are ALREADY a beloved child of God.

In the church world we have a word for this love – we call it *grace*.

### Grace Defined

The bible is a great starting point for better understanding what grace is all about. According to New Testament lexicographer, Dr. Spiros Zodhiates grace is:

*...that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor and acceptance. A favor done without any expectation of return, the absolute free expression of the love of God finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the giver... It changes the individual to a new creature...*

In other words, grace is a no-strings-attached gift of love given to us by God that we may be transformed and made new.

The experience of grace is the foundational Christian experience. It's both the starting point of faith and the thing that keeps even seasoned Christians walking in the way of Jesus.

What is this experience like?

It's like being met with a hug when you expected to be locked out of the house. It's like being told you're forgiven when you know the thing you did was totally unforgivable. It's like being crushed with debt and living paycheck to paycheck only to be told you no longer owe a thing. The experience of grace is like all that and more.

Over the millennia much has been written trying to capture its breadth and depth, and yet theologians have yet to find its limits. But one thing is for sure: the experience of this embracing, forgiving, debt-relieving love is where the Christian journey begins.

This transforming Love carries on the ancient theological work of expanding and expounding on what the grace of God is like. My prayer is that you may find inspiration this beautiful time of year to connect with your Lord and feel the unconditional realization that God's love is for YOU. Just as you are. Just as God made you. No prerequisites. And may the Grace of God keep you and hold you close with a renewed commitment that having Christ as your center your daily steps will forever be strengthen in His Grace!

# GRACE

***Sunday Worship:***  
***In Sanctuary at 11:15am***  
**&**  
***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

### 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

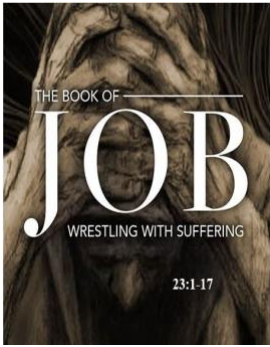
# Calendar of Events

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

## October 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>6</b> 11:15 am Worship  <b>WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY</b>	7	8	9	<b>10</b>  <b>Confirmation Zoom class 6:30pm</b>	11	12
<b>13</b> 11:15 am Worship 	<b>14</b> <b>Noon Potluck At Brownsdale UMC</b> 	15	16	<b>17</b>  <b>Confirmation Mission Project @ Wykoff Commons 5:30-7pm Help with clothing drive set up</b>	18	19
<b>20</b> 11:15 am Worship  <b>Laity Sunday</b>	21	22	23	24	25	26
<b>27</b> 11:15 am Worship 	28	29	30	<b>31</b> 	Friends and family of all ages are invited to stop by the Racine UMC on Halloween night from 6-8pm for community woodfire oven pizza and Ice Cream. Plus some fun activities for the kids!	

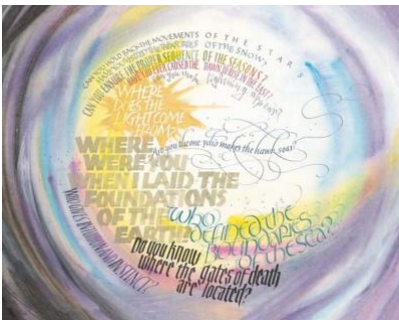
# October Worship Schedule



**October 6, 2024**

**Pastor Bridget Leading**

Compounding the experience of suffering is the feeling that one has been abandoned by God. In our text this week, Job gives voice to this pain. "Oh, that I knew where I might find him," he declared in bitterness. Our tendency is to search for solutions, to proscribe actions that can bring us through this moment to a happier existence. Lament often makes us uncomfortable. We'd rather present a stoic face to the world, even in the face of extreme difficulties. "I'm all right," we'll declare, even when we clearly aren't all right.



**October 13, 2024**

**Pastor Bridget Leading**

What ought we expect when we come to worship? To ease into some comfortable bubble protected from the difficult world out there. Or to be shaken to the core by the awesome majesty of the God we worship? One thing that is clear throughout the biblical witness is that no one encounters God and comes away unchanged. The question is, "Are we ready to be transformed by meeting God in worship?"



**October 20, 2024**

**Church Laity Leading**

Today is Laity Sunday which is a day set aside to remember and lift up a constant reality: the priesthood and ministry of all. Every person on the planet is invited to share in God's community of healing, love, justice, and world repair.

So, as we gather on this special Sunday, let us unite under the definition of what the General conference calls a day "to celebrate the ministry of all Christians" Because Laity Sunday is one way we have opportunity to express the core Christian conviction that all are called to participate in God's mission to create healthy, flourishing life in the world.



**October 27, 2024**

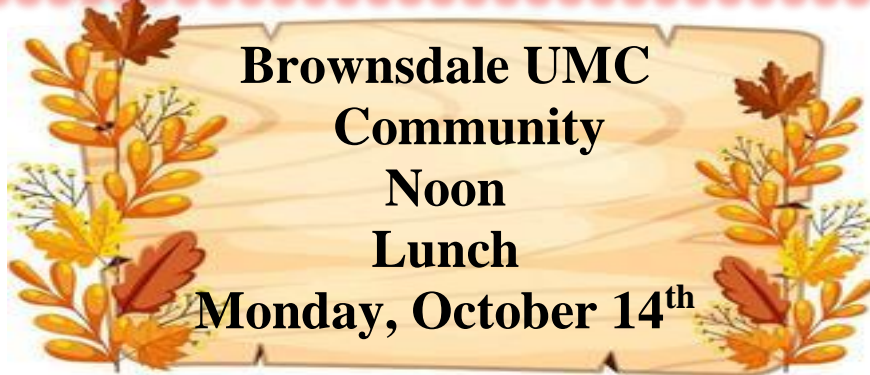
**Pastor Jon Leading**

Today Jesus is in Jerusalem and the pressure against him continues to rise. The religious authorities bring a series of controversial questions to Jesus in an effort to discredit him in the eyes of the people. But today we look at a question brought by a scribe. Unlike the other questions posed to Jesus so far, this one appears to be sincere and yet given the context it too was likely meant as a trap for Jesus. And so he asks Jesus: Which commandment is the most important of all? It all boils down to love. The summary of the law is love. -Love for God and love for others are not separate items.

# October Prairieland Parish Events

**Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup>:** First zoom meeting for our Confirmation class via zoom 6:30pm

**Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup>:** Confirmation Mission project (Wykoff clothing drive 5:30pm – 7pm)



**October 20<sup>th</sup> – Laity Sunday – This is a great opportunity to invite your family, friends and neighbors to come to church and enjoy a full participation of church members leading worship!**



**Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>:** Pastor Jon and Bridget will be attending a conference clergy meeting 9-5pm @ Hennepin Ave UMC



**Thursday, October 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**Racine UMC will host their annual Spooktacular Community Halloween Event**  
**Stop in and enjoy-Woodfire Oven Pizza**  
**Ice Cream**  
**Fun activities for all the little goblins**  
**6-8pm**



# The Laity Collaborative to equip, empower lay people

By: Christa Meland & Jody Thone



All are called, and laity play an integral role in making new disciples of Jesus and sharing God's love with the world. The Minnesota Conference has developed a robust new opportunity to engage and empower laity to live into their unique calling.

## What is The Laity Collaborative?

The Laity Collaborative is a brand new learning community focused on equipping laity and unleashing the power of the Holy Spirit throughout the Minnesota Conference. The Laity Collaborative includes an opening kick-off event this fall, followed by a virtual learning series that's included in your registration fee and online-accessible resources that we'll continue to curate on [MNSource](#), our online resource sharing platform.

## What is the commitment?

The Laity Collaborative's inaugural series starts with a kick-off event Saturday, Oct. 26 from 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at Hennepin Avenue UMC in Minneapolis and offers virtual learning opportunities for participants over the subsequent four months. The series will conclude with a special day where all participants will reconvene for learning and celebration. After this first Laity Collaborative series concludes, the hope is to offer another series every year that welcomes new participants.

## Who is involved?

Jody Thone, Minnesota Conference director of ministry development, is coordinating The Laity Collaborative and will do some of the teaching. The conference is partnering with Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois; Rev. Becky Eberhardt, vice president for strategic initiatives and partnerships at the seminary, is part of The Laity Collaborative planning team and will develop and present some of the content.

## How can I participate?

Although this series is designed to equip laity, both laity and their clergy leaders are welcome and encouraged to attend together. [Register online](#), and then plan to attend the event on Oct. 26! The cost is \$75 for the entire four-month experience (or \$50 per person if you come as part of a group of three or more).

## Why The Laity Collaborative?

"Laity are cornerstone to the Methodist movement," said Thone. "Nearly all the leaders of the early Methodist societies were lay people. John Wesley established a system to develop and empower them by organizing them in small groups for accountability and support for living the Christian life. We believe the clergy-lay partnership is vital to our mission, and The Laity Collaborative aims to equip laity in partnership with our local congregations for ministry in our evolving church."

## Why is it so critical to equip and unleash laity within our Methodist movement?

"One of the powerful gifts of the Wesleyan way is engaged and equipped laity who lead," said Rev. Elizabeth Macaulay, lead pastor at Hennepin Avenue UMC and a member of The Laity Collaborative planning team. "The health of the church is dependent upon the empowering of and partnership with laity. Any other way of doing ministry robs the pastor, the church, and the larger movement of vitality, meaning, mutual blessing and joy...Laity and clergy need each other!"

## What is the hope for the Laity Collaborative?

Bobbi Nichols, a longtime member of Christ UMC in Rochester who is part of The Laity Collaborative planning team and will teach one of the virtual learning sessions, articulates it this way: "I hope..."

- We see real value in the opportunities offered via the Laity Collaborative.
  - We encounter new ideas that are exciting and relevant to us.
  - We feel empowered to share ideas gained from our own experiences.
  - We feel more confident and supported as we go about our work.
- We continue to learn more about ourselves and what God calls us to be.
  - We forge new relationships across the conference.
  - We have fun!"

## What are the virtual learning opportunities?

After the Oct. 26 kick-off event, there will be multiple virtual sessions to continue the learning; The Laity Collaborative attendees can attend whichever ones they'd like. Among the topics for those sessions are:

- **Finding & Keeping Your Practices**
- **Holy Gatherings: How To Effectively Facilitate Small Group Discussions**
- **Scripture Circles Taste and See**

# 15 Beautiful Fall Bible Verses for the Autumn Season

Here is a collection of heart-warming Bible verses about autumn and harvest. These Scriptures are perfect for a time of reflection during the fall season. May you be inspired by these fall scripture quotes which evoke gratitude and hope in the Lord. Find your favorite Bible verses here to share with family and friends and pass along the encouragement! The fall season is the time of harvesting crops and preparing for winter, related to the biblical phrase "reap what you sow." In spiritual terms, we reap the benefits of our faithful labor of prayer, love, and humility.

## 2 Corinthians 9:10

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

## Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.

## Ecclesiastes 3:1

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

## Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

## Luke 10:2

He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

## Ecclesiastes 3:11

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart, yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

## Psalms 85:12

Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.

## James 3:18

Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

## 2 Corinthians 9:6

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

## Habbakuk 3:17-18

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

## Proverbs 3:9

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops

## Matthew 6:26

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

## Hebrews 12:11

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

## Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

## James 5:7

Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.

