

# The Current of The River of Life

2345 Prairie Ave, Beloit, WI

February 2025

Vol. 42 Issue #02



HAPPY  
*Valentines*  
DAY

Love never ends

- 1 Corinthians 13:8



# River of Life United Methodist Church

*Loving People Into Taking Their Next Step With Jesus*

Worship Location - 2345 Prairie Ave, Beloit, WI 53511

Office Location - 2375 Prairie Ave, Beloit, WI 53511

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am—2:00 pm

## STAFF

Brenda Whitford	Pastor
608-482-0021	<a href="mailto:pastorbrenda@rolumcwi.com">pastorbrenda@rolumcwi.com</a>
Kelly Lutzow	Office Manager
608-362-8866	<a href="mailto:Kelly.Lutzow@rolumcwi.com">Kelly.Lutzow@rolumcwi.com</a>
Lois Ulvin	Director of Music
David Newman	Pianist
Derek Bergh	IT-Production Manager
Keith Putney	Teaching Pastor
608-774-3162	

## LAY LEADERSHIP 2024

**Ad Council Chairperson**

Open

**Annual Conference Lay Members**

Bob Scheets & Carol Scheets

**Armed Intruder Chairperson**

Barb Kuska

**Board of Trustees Chairperson**

Kathy Rodgers

**Decorating Committee Chairperson**

Tracy Maxwell

**Finance Chairperson**

Open

**Hospitality Chairperson**

Diane Gemignani

**Lay Leader**

Pat Sands

**Memorials and Wills Chairperson**

Marietta Axmear

**MCCI Implementation Team**

Pastor Brenda

**Missions Committee Co-Chairpersons**

Diane Gemignani & Ellen Butchart

**Staff Pastor Parish Relations Chairperson**

Kelly Clark

**Tech Team Chairperson**

Derek Bergh

**Youth Ministry Team Chairperson**

Karen Parssinen



**Sick or out of town for the weekend?**

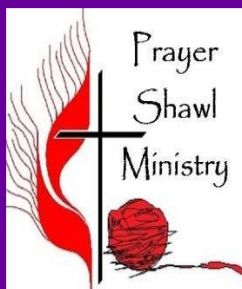
The Sunday morning Service is on the website, on Facebook, and also on our YouTube channel.

Remember to "Like" us on Facebook at

[www.facebook.com/theriveroflifeumc](http://www.facebook.com/theriveroflifeumc)

And on Youtube at

<https://www.youtube.com/@riveroflifeumcbeloit4853/streams>



Please contact the office if you or a friend would like a prayer shawl. We have many shawls to share.



# From the Pastor's Desk



I love my time on the South Florida beach because it is a wonderful time to spend with God. I also like to people watch.

This last time, I was watching two young children who I thought were being dangerous. They had one of those Nerf footballs with the tail. One would throw it as hard as they could into the ocean, and the other one would try to get it before the waves brought it to shore. The children, maybe 6 and 8 years old, were standing in knee-high water, but I was a little afraid for them when they would run out into the waves, especially because there was a rip current advisory that day. I couldn't see anyone who was watching them, so I decided to keep my eye on them.

A short time later, I noticed an older couple, who came from a different direction, go into the water and stand at about thigh level. They didn't get very close to the children, but I could tell that they were also watching them. As the children moved north and south in the water, this couple also moved north and south with them. The children moved deeper into the water and the couple also moved deeper in the water. After a half hour or so, the children were called by their parents a distance down the beach. After the children got out of the water, the couple waded back to their spot and got out of the water.

We often don't think about God's presence near us, but that doesn't change the fact that God is there. We often hit metaphorical rip currents in our lives, and God is right there, swimming with us should we begin to go down, helping us to swim again. Sometimes we fight against God during these times. Other times we recognize people that God has sent to help us. Perhaps at one of those times you have even recognized a Confluence Moment.

May we always be watching for God, and may we always watch out for each other.

I'll see you in church, where we navigate life and love together,

Love, Pastor Brenda

# Super Bowl weekend is Souper Bowl weekend

Come be a part of the fun following worship services  
the weekend of February 8th & 9th



Our annual Souper Bowl of Caring event invites  
all to take part in soup sampling!

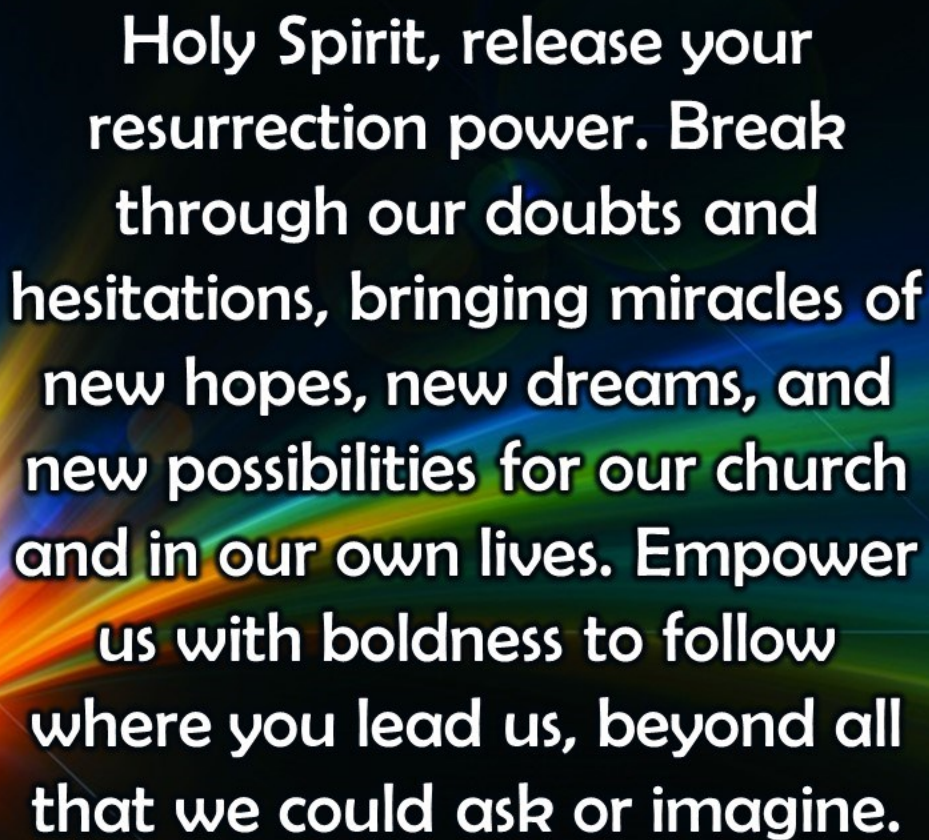
There are many ways to be a part of the fun:

- Bring a batch of soup for all to sample
- Bring a dessert for the dessert table
- Donate "toppings"
- Stay after worship and sample soup!

\*Monetary donations will be accepted and  
donated to Caritas for those "that don't even  
have a bowl of soup to eat".

\*Sign ups are located on the counter in Fellowship Hall  
\*\*Contact Tracy Maxwell (608)290-3597 with questions

Please cut out this Breakthrough Prayer Card and keep for your reference. People we prayed for this month will be conveniently listed on the back of the card once cut out.



Holy Spirit, release your resurrection power. Break through our doubts and hesitations, bringing miracles of new hopes, new dreams, and new possibilities for our church and in our own lives. Empower us with boldness to follow where you lead us, beyond all that we could ask or imagine.

## WATR

Join us for Wednesdays at the River for dinner beginning at 5:30

**\*Suggested \$5 donation**

<b>5-Feb</b>	Chili
<b>12-Feb</b>	Pizza Hearts
<b>19-Feb</b>	Meatball Subs
<b>26-Feb</b>	Chicken & Dumplings



†  
*thank you*

Words can not begin to express how much it meant to us to have Christian friends from our church come to the visitation and memorial service for our son "Steve". Thank you for the many ways you have shown us your wonderful love.

~Keith, Barbara, and Ashley Putney



## People we are praying for



† Ace	† Jim	† Matt
† Ace	† John	† Ron
† Ann	† Kerri	† Rose
† Austin	† Kristen	† Shane
† Barb	† Linda	
† Charley	† Lyfe	
† Doug	† Mark	
† Doug	† Marlene	

## Our condolences to the Family and Friends of...

† Steve Putney  
† Sandy Hayes



### Circle Calendar

All women are invited to become a member of a Circle. We encourage you to come and enjoy fellowship with the ROLUMC women's community. Here are the meeting times, dates and contact persons. Please join us for a time of joy, learning, and service.

**Martha Circle** will meet February 19 at 9:40 am at Carol  
Braukhoff's home—weather permitting.

**Mary Circle** will meet February 19 in Fellowship Hall at 1:00.  
Susan Kiser is hosting

**Martha Circle:** 3rd Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.  
For details contact: Carol Braukhoff  
608-299-8738

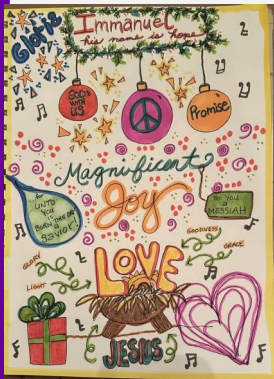
**Mary Circle:** 3rd Wednesday, 1:00 p.m.  
For details contact: Jacque Patch  
608-362-7729

# Hobby Club

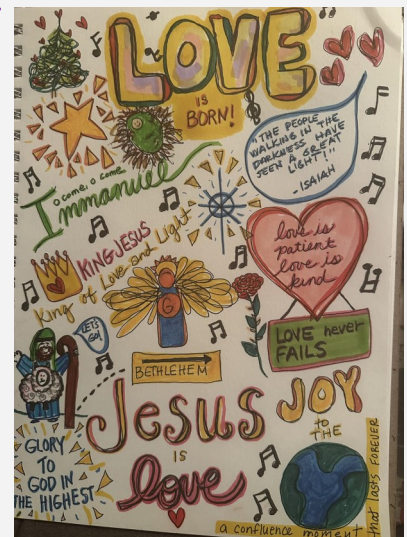


Hobby Club will meet on Sunday, February 9, at noon in Fellowship Hall. Our gatherings usually last about an hour and a half.

Kris Bakke will share her artwork with us. You know Kris as a friend of Pastor Brenda's from school days. Kris has attended several of our services and turned the message into her artistic version of the sermon.



We will continue planning to meet the third Sunday of each month. Future leaders include Patti Novy, who will teach us a small quilting project, Kelly Lutzow will create something with rhinestones, Carol Connors will return in April, and we look forward to what she has in store for us as well!



If you have a craft to share and would be willing to lead, please contact Kelly Lutzow or Pat Sands to get on the schedule. We look forward to seeing you January 19th!



## We Are Getting A New Electronic Sign!

Would you like to help pay for it?

Cost: \$29,164 Received: \$6,800

There is still \$400 remaining on the \$1,000 match.



## Midwest Mission Adult Mission Trip

We have two teams going to Midwest Mission in March. Some of our "regulars" wanted to volunteer for the whole week at Midwest Mission. They will be leaving on Sunday, March 23. Members of this team are:

Bruce and Lora Cawkins

Sarah Parsons

Bob Novy

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> team will be going for the traditional trip where they will volunteer for two days. They will be leaving Beloit on Wed., March 26. Members of this team are:

Carol Allen

Darlene Breden

Ellen Butchart

Diane Gemignani

Margaret Hansen

Kelly Lutzow

Jerry Parsons

Tish Polzin

Barb Sheffield

We will all return on Friday night, March 28. If anyone else is interested in participating in this trip, please contact Diane Gemignani (608-290-5274 or [dianegem23@gmail.com](mailto:dianegem23@gmail.com)). We'd love to have you come along, but Diane will need to contact Midwest Mission to see if we can add another person.



### **Confluence Moments Videos!**

A Confluence Moment is a time when God's Spirit and our spirit flow together in such a way that there is no doubt that we have had an experience of God. To help others see how God is working in our lives, won't you make a video of a Confluence Moment you have had?

Please make a horizontal video, less than three minutes in length and send it to Pastor Brenda. We will be sharing these videos in worship and putting them on our YouTube page. Blessed videoing!



# MCCI UPDATE

## Missional Church Consultation Initiative

During the month of January, the MCCI pastors learned about urgency. There are times when congregations feel urgency: when offerings given don't meet expenses, and when attendance declines dramatically. We have experienced these things that led to the merger of the churches that became The River of Life United Methodist Church.

But when things feel fine, like now, it is very easy to become complacent. It's easy to rest on the good things that we are doing. "What's the urgency?" we think. "Things are fine."

Jesus has not called us to be stationary. Jesus is always calling us to grow in our understanding of how we are to be love and light to others in our church and in the community.

The MCCI process that we are doing is urgent. Yes, there is always concern about finances. And yes, there is concern about our attendance numbers. But more importantly, there is an urgent call from Jesus to be and do what Jesus calls us to be and do. This is exciting!

We will be talking about how we can add a sense of urgency to what we are doing as a church. How has God been stirring your heart?

### How can you participate in MCCI?

- Fill out the Spiritual Gifts Inventory if you haven't already.
- It is not too late to join our MCCI Implementation Team. Connect with Pastor Brenda if you would like to be on this exciting team.
- Everyone needs to participate in our day with our consultants in 5-6 months.
- Pray our Breakthrough Prayer every day.

**Did you turn in your Spiritual Gifts Inventory? Our MCCI Implementation Team would like you to complete this and return it to them.**



# Sleeping Mat Work Days

We have completed 14 sleeping mats! Volunteers meet every week in Fellowship Hall to cut bags or weave. We work from 9:30 - 11:30. It's okay to come a little later or leave a little earlier. If you are interested in working on sleeping mats, just show up! All ages and all abilities are welcome. We will show you what to do!

Weaving dates for February (at 9:30) are:

- † Fri., Feb. 7
- † Wed., Feb. 12
- † Fri., Feb. 21
- † Wed., Feb. 26
- † Fri., Mar. 7



Thank you to all the people bringing in plastic bags! **We have two bins in the coatroom for all the bags.** A lot of people thought you leave them by the loom, but very quickly, the loom area starts looking cluttered. We are trying to keep that area tidy for all the groups who use Fellowship Hall throughout the week. Thank you for all your help!

## Knit & Crochet With A Mission February 26th at 1:00 Office Workroom



All knitters & crocheters are invited!

Questions? Call Sandy Ovist at 608-362-6583



## LOOSE COINS

Vacation Bible School



The Loose Coins offering for February will go to **Vacation Bible School (VBS)**.

VBS typically brings about 30 children (and some of their parents) to our church in August for a week of learning about Jesus, crafts, games, music, food, and fun. Some of the children are regular or occasional

attendees, but some are friends and neighbors who may not have a church home and for whom VBS can open the door to experiencing God's love. VBS is one of the most important outreach programs of the church.

It takes a lot of planning and work, and many volunteers, to put on the amazing experience of our church's Vacation Bible School. It also takes funding to purchase the curriculum, theme decorations and costume materials, craft supplies, food and snacks.

Let's show our hardworking planning team and volunteers that we appreciate their effort and that we recognize the impact VBS has on children and their families!

To give to the Loose Coins offering, you can drop your change in the offering plate, and if you can, include a check or bills marked for Loose Coins, click on the Donate button on the church website (<https://www.rolumcwi.com>), or scan the QR code below with the camera on your cell phone. Thank you!



-- Ellen Butchart



### WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday Morning Bible Study meets from 10:30-11:30 am via Zoom. **Contact Pastor Brenda for the Zoom link.**

This group is studying the book of Daniel.

### WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday Evening Bible Study meets at 6:15 pm in person, in the couch area of the Fellowship Hall.

***This group is watching and discussing “Jesus And His Jewish Influences” by Great Courses.***

### SATURDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Saturday Morning Bible study meets on Zoom at 7:30 am. Bob Parssinen leads the group using videos from “The Bible Project.”

**Contact Bob or Pastor Brenda for the Zoom link.**

### SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Sunday Morning Bible Study meets at 11:00 am in the Middle School Room. Video clips from “The Chosen” and “The Bible Project” combine with scripture to fuel lively discussions.



**Join us for tutoring on  
Wednesdays at 3:30!**

**Make a difference in children's lives!  
Wednesdays after school!**



**I would LOVE to be a tutor!**



**I would LOVE to provide snacks!**

**Contact Karen Parssinen today!**

## Hospitality Fellowship

Thank you to all the people who helped with snacks this past January!

Tish Polzin  
Kaitlyn Peters

Sarah Parsons  
Sheryl Horvath

Cindy Peters  
Diane Gemignani

Thank you to Dalton Polzin who laid out the cheese trays and washed dishes, and to Reid who cleans out the coffee urns.

There are lots of opportunities to sign up to bring snacks this winter. The Sign-up clipboard is either at the end of the snack table or on the counter by the recycle bin. When you sign up, it helps to pair up with someone. Or you can sign your name, and soon someone else will sign up to join you. You don't have to completely fill the table with food. Keep it simple. We will gladly eat and enjoy whatever you bring! Thank you for considering this!



### ***Fresh Flowers for the Sanctuary***



Would you like to provide flowers for worship?  
You may bring in flowers for no reason, or there can be a sentence in the

bulletin that states the special occasion for which the flowers are being provided.

**Look for the flower sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.**



**Firm**

**Focus**

**Core Strength  
&  
Balance**

**Friendly**

**Tuesday & Thursday 9:00—10:00**

A low-impact exercise class has begun in our Fellowship Hall. Focus is on improving balance through core strengthening. Class is on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00-10:00.

# February Calendar

February 4	6:00 PM	Youth Ministry Team
February 7	9:30 AM	Sleeping Mat Work Day
February 11	11:00 AM	Memorials Meeting
February 12	9:30 AM	Sleeping Mat Work Day
February 18	5:30 PM	Finance Meeting
February 19	9:30 AM	Martha Circle- Carol Braukhoff Hosting
February 19	1:00 PM	Mary Circle- Fellowship Hall
February 21	9:30 AM	Sleeping Mat Work Day
February 24	5:00 PM	Trustees Meeting
February 25	11:00 AM	Missions Meeting
February 26	1:00 PM	Knitting With A Mission
March 4	6:00 PM	Youth Ministry Team
March 7	9:30 AM	Sleeping Mat Work Day

## Sunday

9:30 am Sunday Worship  
11:00 am "The Chosen" Bible Study

## Monday

12:30 pm Card Club (FH)

## Tuesday

9:00 am Exercise Group  
10:00 am Men's Coffee Hour (FH)  
1:00 pm Staff Meeting (O)

## Wednesday

10:30 am Adult Bible Study (Zoom)  
3:30 pm Tutoring  
5:30 pm WATR Dinner  
6:15 pm Adult Bible Study (FH)

## Thursday

9:00 am Exercise Group  
4:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

## Friday

—

## Saturday

7:30 am Bible Study (Zoom)

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## February 2

Susan Kiser

## February 6

Bruce Cawkins

## February 7

Raven Strother

## February 8

Ann Hegge

## February 9

Patti Novy

## February 10

Savannah Barbian

## February 11

Emma Miller

## February 15

Tony Ward

## February 17

William Churchill

## February 18

Stephen Wadle

## February 19

Candy Jacobson  
Charles Weiser

## February 22

Katie Parsons  
Mary Porter

## February 23

Clay Ward

## February 26

Linda Lyman

Stephanie Klett

## February 27

Doris Davis-Gaustad

## February 28

Kelly Lutzow

## February 29

Cindy Peters  
Mary Van Meter

## March 1

Evan Peters

## March 2

Stephanie Longman

## March 6

Jon Condon

## March 7

Bill Watson

## March 13

Diana Merwin  
Hayley Rosenthal  
Kathy Weiser

Lois Ulvin

Lynn Caple

Robert Novy

## March 17

June Divan  
Keith Putney  
Lynn Fosler

## March 18

Frank Ward

## March 19

Debora Kelly

## March 20

James Churchill  
Jeanette Waite

## March 23

Jean Crawford  
Kaitlyn Peters

## March 25

David Haas  
Derek Bergh

## March 29

Carolyn Lynch  
Barbara Peterson

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

## February 24

Dick & Anita Markley

## March 25

Sarah & Jerry Parsons

### Issue deadline:

**February 24**

The next newsletter  
will be available on

**March 2**