



the journey of
LENT

The Current of The River of Life

2345 Prairie Ave, Beloit, WI

March 2025

Vol. 42 Issue #03

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 608-482-0021 | Pastor <i>pastorbrenda@rolumcwi.com</i> |
| Kelly Lutzow 608-362-8866 | Office Manager <i>Kelly.Lutzow@rolumcwi.com</i> |
| Lois Ulvin | Director of Music |
| David Newman | Pianist |
| Derek Bergh | IT-Production Manager |
| Keith Putney 608-774-3162 | Teaching Pastor |

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



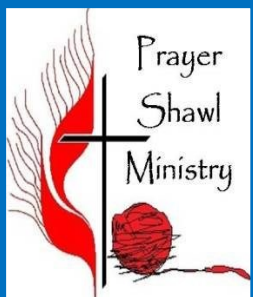
Sick or out of town for the weekend?

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

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



When my husband Dan and I take our winter trip to South Florida, we drive three days each way. It helps in winding down from work, and then getting ready again. This year, I felt motion sick the middle day both ways of driving.

We stopped at a truck stop to use the facilities and I picked up a pack of mint gum to settle my stomach. When we paid for it, the cashier said something that I didn't understand. I asked her to repeat it. She had asked if I wanted the gum in my purse instead of in a bag (which I did).

I laughed. What I heard was something about the gum and prayer. I said some silly things about praying over the gum, or using the gum in prayer. And then I quieted, took a more serious tone, and asked her if she would like me to pray for her. Since I thought she said "Prayer," maybe she could use a prayer. She said no, but thanked me for the offer.

On our way to the car, I told Dan that she probably thought I was the weirdest customer of the day. Dan replied that he thought I made her day. He said the look on her face changed, and that she felt cared for, even though we didn't pray.

Reflecting on that interaction, I wonder how often we see someone just doing their job, and how often we see a person. For that moment, I saw the image of God in her. I don't take the little bit of time that takes very often. I wonder if you do.

What difference could we make in our little circle of influence if every time we interacted with someone, we took the extra few seconds to see the image of God within them? How could doing this bring some much-needed joy into the world? How much light could we bring if we did this?

I think God has great things in store for us, individually, and as a church, to partner with God in building God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Little things like this make such a difference.

I'll see you in church, where we celebrate the image of God in each other,

Love, Pastor Brenda

Let us break bread together



Sharing of the Bread

**Wednesday, March 12, 2024
9:30am**

**First Baptist Church of Beloit
617 Public Avenue
Beloit, WI 53511**

**Inspirational Speaker
Sally Green**

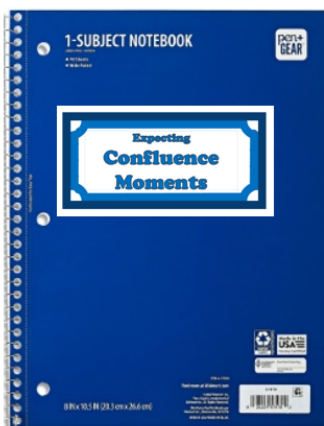
Light refreshments, wheelchair accessible

Free of charge, "Love Gift" donation welcome

**RESERVATION REQUIRED BY MARCH 7. Please call the church
office at 608-365-8455 or Email: secretary@firstbaptistbeloit.com
Celebrate with women from churches throughout our community**

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.



During Lent You Are Encouraged To Expect Confluence Moments!

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5th. During Lent we are going to be bold in our expectations that God is going to bring us new hopes, new dreams, and new possibilities!

Each day, spend some time reading your Bible, reading a devotional, or just speaking your heart in prayer. Then spend 5-10 minutes being quiet, expecting God make God's self known in your meeting there.

If your mind wanders, which it will, you may want to think of yourself as a leaf on a stream, floating along, as it comes to the river of God's presence.

Write down anything you thought or felt during that time.

In what way might God break through your doubts and hesitations during this time? How might God call you to follow where he leads you? How might you find this time utterly amazing?!

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 2nd 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). We'd love to have you come along, but Diane will need to contact Midwest Mission to see if we can add another person.

REMEMBER TO "LIKE US"

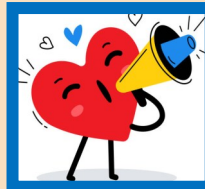
Our Facebook page is active and there you'll find current postings on upcoming events, activities, church happenings, and lots more.

OUR FACEBOOK LINK

The River of Life United Methodist Church.

www.facebook.com/theriveroflifeumc

Don't forget to "Like" us to stay up-to-date.



Please remember to fill out your Connect Cards with your most current information so that we can verify your information is accurate in our computer systems.

These phone numbers are used for our Voice Shot software which is used to notify members of upcoming meetings and church service cancellations.



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...
† Shirley Sweet

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 & Mary Circle will meet March 12 (second Wednesday) at 1st Baptist Church for "Breaking of Bread", hosted by the Baptist Women's Group

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



With the rising cost of eggs Hobby Club will be meeting on Sunday, March 9, at noon in Fellowship Hall to paint rocks like Easter Eggs! Bring your imagination and join us for some rock painting fun! Our gatherings usually last about an hour and a half.

A huge thank you Kris Bakke for sharing her artwork with us at Hobby Club! 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 second Sunday of each month. April 13 Bob Parssinen will be showing us his remote control race car collection. Future leaders include Patti Novy, who will teach us a small quilting project, Kelly Lutzow will lead a diamond painting craft, 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 March 9!



MCCI UPDATE

Missional Church Consultation Initiative

During the month of February, the MCCI pastors practiced some of the skills we have been learning. We each brought examples of how we have been working in our congregations with the language of possibility and with urgency.

The examples that I brought? Too much instruction, not enough possibility language and not enough urgency! (And I had thought I had done a good job!) This was a common theme for all of us pastors. Pastors are not used to this, and it is harder than we thought!

But the church isn't just the pastor. We all speak into how we be the church, together, and into the world.

How is your language? How are you framing to others what we do? Are you framing the things you say in the incredible possibilities of God? What would God do in our church if we did? (FYI - that question was possibility language.)

I can't wait to see what God has in store for us. (FYI - urgency language.) I hope you are excited too. Let's continue to pray our Breakthrough Prayer every day, spend time with God expecting those Confluence Moments, and anticipate God's miracles!

~Pastor Brenda



How can you participate in MCCI?

- Pray our Breakthrough Prayer every day!
- Spend time Expecting Confluence Moments and writing them in your journal.
- Everyone needs to participate in our day with our consultants in 3-4 months.

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 their 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!



Season 5 of "The Chosen" will be coming to theaters in the end of March. The seven episodes (three movie times) will be about Jesus' last week in Jerusalem. Contact Bob Parssinen if you would like to go to the theater with the group from River of Life.

WATR

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

| | |
|--------|--------------------------|
| 5-Mar | Lasagna |
| 12-Mar | Tater Tot Casserole |
| 19-Mar | Sub Sandwiches |
| 26-Mar | Breakfast for Dinner |
| 2-Apr | No Tutoring Spring Break |

Issue deadline:

March 24

The next newsletter will be available on

March 30

Sleeping Mat Work Days

We have completed 16 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 March (at 9:30) are:

- † Fri., Mar. 7
- † Wed., Mar. 12
- † Fri., Mar. 21
- † Wed., Mar. 26
- † Fri., Apr. 4



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

March 26th at 1:00

Office Workroom



All knitters & crocheters are invited!

Questions? Call Sandy Ovist at 608-362-6583



LOOSE COINS

Meals on Wheels



March is the month for Madness, along with spring fever and unpredictable weather, but at the River of Life it's also about Meals.

Our March Loose Coins will go to **Beloit Meals on Wheels**. This amazing, literally volunteer-driven organization delivers daily nutritious meals to the homebound elderly, ill, and disabled. Clients can choose to receive a hot noon meal, and optionally supper, either 5-days or 7-days per week, including holidays. For many it's the only social contact of the day, and it can be an important safety check.

Did you know:

- 76% of clients are 70 years or older
- 79% live at very low to extremely low income levels
- 32% are veterans or spouses of veterans
- 63,877 meals were delivered in 2023
- 306 homebound seniors were served

Funding for Meals on Wheels comes from community donations, federal and state program funds, and client contributions. Those unable to pay the full cost are encouraged to make a contribution, but no one is denied service due to inability to pay.

To give to the Loose Coins offering, you can drop your change in the offering plate, 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!



Ash Wednesday, March 5th

WATR Dinner will be Lasagna at 5:30pm
(\$5.00 donation)

Worship service at 6:15pm.

Ash Wednesday worship is always a meaningful worship service, as we consider that we come from dust and to dust we will return. It is a

reminder that it is through the grace of Jesus Christ that we are able to be made right with God, and have eternal life, for this life, and the life to come.

Fresh Flowers for the Sanctuary

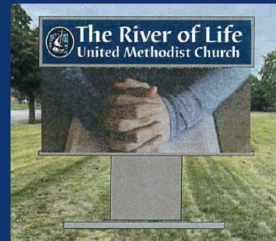


Would you like to provide flowers for worship?

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.

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



Our new electronic sign is being put on hold due to an expected change in ordinances in the City of Beloit.

Firm

Focus

Core Strength &

Friendly

Tuesday & Thursday 9:00—

A low-impact exercise class has begun in our Fellowship Hall. Focus is on improving balance through core strengthening. Class is

March Calendar

| | | |
|----------|---------|---|
| March 4 | 6:00 PM | Youth Ministry Team |
| March 5 | 6:00 AM | Ash Wednesday Service |
| March 7 | 9:30 AM | Sleeping Mat Work Day |
| March 12 | 9:30 AM | Sleeping Mat Work Day |
| March 12 | 1:00 PM | Mary & Martha Circle - Sharing of the Bread |
| March 17 | 5:00 PM | Bell Choir |
| March 18 | 4:00 PM | Hospitality Meeting |
| March 18 | 5:00 PM | Finance Meeting |
| March 21 | 9:30 AM | Sleeping Mat Work Day |
| March 24 | 5:30 PM | Trustees Meeting |
| March 25 | 6:30 PM | Ad Council Meeting |
| March 26 | 9:30 AM | Sleeping Mat Work Day |
| March 26 | 1:00 PM | Knitting With A Mission |
| March 30 | | Special Sunday: UMCOR Sunday |
| April 1 | 6:00 PM | Youth Ministry Team |
| April 2 | | NO WATR - Spring Break |
| April 4 | 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)
 5:30 pm Saturday Worship

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

April 3

Bob Parssinen

April 5

Tom Alverson
Carol Allen

April 6

Carol Scheets

April 7

Paige Parish
Pam Sylvester
Kim Kuska

April 9

Frankie Ward
Nora Strother

April 10

Sarah Parsons

April 12

Sheryl Horvath

April 4

Bettie Jo Bussie

April 15

Donna Hammett

April 16

Ray Hartje

April 19

Jon Butchart
David Clark
Marvin Miller

April 21

Barbara Kuska
Kathy Allen

April 22

Tom Hamlett

April 22

Joan Michels

April 24

Kelly Clark

April 25

Judy Paddock

Phil Story

April 29

David Robinette

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

March 25

Sarah & Jerry Parsons

April 5

Brenda & Dan Whitford

April 17

David & Mary Haas

April 11

Dale & Diane Gemignani

April 30

John & Cheri Butchart