

# The Current of The River of Life

2345 Prairie Ave, Beloit, WI

December 2024

Vol. 41 Issue #12

# Love!

A Gospel Christmas Cantata

Presented by the Chancel Choir of

River of Life United Methodist Church

2345 Prairie Ave, Beloit, WI

Sunday, December 15, 2024

9:30 am & 3:00 pm

\*Free admission but an offering will be collected

# 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

**Kelly Lutzow**

608-362-8866

**Lois Ulvin**

**David Newman**

**Derek Bergh**

**Keith Putney**

608-774-3162

**Pastor**

*pastorbrenda@rolumcwi.com*

**Office Manager**

*Kelly.Lutzow@rolumcwi.com*

**Director of Music**

**Pianist**

**IT-Production Manager**

**Teaching Pastor**

## LAY LEADERSHIP 2024

**Ad Council Chairperson**

Shellie Olson

**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**

Jesse Calkins

**Hospitality Chairperson**

Diane Gemignani

**Lay Leader**

Pat Sands

**Memorials and Wills Chairperson**

Marietta Axmear

**Missions Committee Co-Chairpersons**

Diane Gemignani & Ellen Butchart

**Staff Pastor Parish Relations Chairperson**

Kelly Clark

**Stewardship Team Chairperson**

Pastor Brenda

**Tech Team Chairperson**

Derek Bergh

**Youth Ministry Team Chairperson**

Karen Parssinen



**Or out of town for the weekend?**

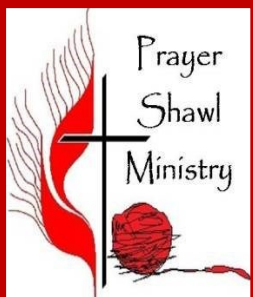
The Beloit Service is on the website, on Facebook, and also on our YouTube channel.

**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...



## MCCI UPDATE

### Missional Church Consultation Initiative

At the November pastor training, the MCCI pastors learned about Conflux Moments. Before you completely tune out because you've never heard of a conflux, at River of Life, we are changing the name of them to CONFLUENCE MOMENTS. It turns out that a conflux is another word for confluence – and we know what a confluence is! We have one just over the state line into South Beloit – where Turtle Creek and the Rock River flow together.

A Confluence is a place where two rivers flow together. For our purposes, a Confluence Moment is when our spirit and God's Spirit flow together in such a way that we are certain that we have had a divine-human encounter. It is the unmistakable reality of God's presence.

As we continue to worship and pray, as we continue to pray our Breakthrough Prayer, we should be expecting to have Confluence Moments. We should be expecting to feel our spirit flowing with God's Spirit in new ways. We should be expecting to feel an unmistakable reality of God's presence. Expecting.

Too often, as church members, we sleep through our days. We cannot make a Confluence Moment happen, but we can put ourselves in a place to notice them. It is that experience that helps us to awaken, spiritually.

Advent seasons tend to go by in a blur. It is a very busy time. Make sure you are carving out some time for you and God. Make sure you are putting yourself in places where it is easy for you to connect with God. Watch for those special times when your spirit and God's Spirit flow together.

I'll see you in church, where we focus on experiencing God together,

Love, Pastor Brenda

### How can you participate in MCCI?

- 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.

# Sleeping Mat Work Days

We're working on our 11<sup>th</sup> sleeping mat! 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. We even have some people in the neighborhood who join us! If you are interested in working on the sleeping mats, just show up! All ages and all abilities are welcome. We will show you what to do!

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

- † Friday, December 6
- † Wednesday, December 11
- † Friday December 20



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!

*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

<b>December 4</b>	<b>Taco's</b>
<b>December 11</b>	<b>Tater Tot Casserole</b>
<b>December 18</b>	<b>Ham Christmas Dinner</b>
<b>December 25</b>	<b>NO WATR</b>

**\*Suggested \$5 donation**

## ***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.**

## People we are praying for



† Ace	† John	† Matt
† Ann	† Judy	† Nancy
† Austin	† Kerri	† Ron
† Barb	† Kristen	† Rose
† Charley	† Leonard	† Sam
† Doug	† Linda	† Vern
† Doug	† Lyfe	
† Jim	† Marlene	



## HANGING OF THE GREENS

December 1, 2024  
10:30 am

Please join us after Sunday service to help decorate our church in celebration of the upcoming Christmas Season. Thank You!



RIVER OF LIFE  
UMC ANNUAL  
COOKIE WALK

Saturday, December 7  
9:00 AM - Until sold out

We are looking for volunteers to help on this day. Please reach out to Pat Sands if you are able to assist.

## Upper Room Discipline book for 2025



### The Upper Room Disciplines features:

- A focal scripture passage for each day of the year
- Brief, insightful meditations from 53 thought leaders from diverse Christian traditions
- A prayer or reflection to carry with you each day
- Weekly scripture overviews
- An index of scripture readings
- A guide to daily prayer
- A small group leader's guide

**COST: \$14.00**

Please have orders in by December 23 so I can try to have them here before the end of the year.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment: ( Cash / Check ) Check # \_\_\_\_\_

## Donations for the Adult Mission Trip



Every year, we encourage people to sign up for the adult mission trip. We always tell them,

*"Please do NOT let the cost of the trip keep you from signing up! There is money available in a fund specifically to help people with the cost of participating in the adult mission trip."*

Every year, we have one or two people who are helped by that fund. This financial assistance fund could use some replenishing. If you would like to contribute to this fund to allow others to participate in the mission trip, please make out a check to ROL-UMC with Adult Mission Trip in the memo. This check can go into the offering, but please let Diane Gemignani know that it's a donation. (Otherwise, she will actually sign you up to go on the trip!)

You can contact Diane by phone: 608-290-5274 or [dianegem23@gmail.com](mailto:dianegem23@gmail.com)

Thank you for your generosity!

## Loose Coins

Loose coins for December will be divided between **Northcott Neighborhood House** and the **Salvation Army**.

Northcott Neighborhood House is a multi-program community center in Milwaukee established by the United Methodist Church in 1961. From its modest beginnings providing food, clothing, and family support out of an old house, it has grown to occupy several modern buildings. Its many programs include teaching job skills, providing employment opportunities, and assisting with basic food and clothing needs, as well as providing recreational and community meeting space.

In addition, Northcott offers educational programs for all ages, with GED, literacy, Head Start, and after-school programs held at locations around the city of Milwaukee. Northcott serves one of the most segregated cities in the nation with community-building support for youth, families, and senior citizens.

Closer to home, the Salvation Army of Rock County includes both the Janesville and Beloit locations. In Beloit, the Red Shield Center at 528 Broad St., offers community meals on Tuesday and Thursday and a food pantry Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Social services are available by appointment on Wednesdays, and those wishing to attend Sunday church services may ride a shuttle to the Janesville center. Our donations to the Salvation Army remain in the community and help meet the critical food insecurity needs in the Stateline area.

To give to the Loose Coins offering, 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 your camera on your phone. Thank you!



-- Ellen Butchart

**January: \$336.86**  
Family Promise

**February: \$470.88**  
Vacation Bible School

**March: \$225.38**  
Beloit Meals on Wheels

**April: \$393.39**  
Caritas Community Resource Center

**May: \$477.60**  
In Gathering

**June: \$538.99**  
Rock Valley Community Programs

**July: \$262.68**  
God's Fund & Blankets of Warmth

**August: \$602.47**  
DEFY Domestic Violence

**September: \$442.32**  
Midwest Missions

**October \$385.07**  
Caritas



## River of Life Historians ...



Do you know the purpose for the items in these drawers? They are located in the church historical cabinet.

Please contact the church office with any information you have regarding this. Thank You!



### 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 be meeting for lunch December 18 at 11:00 am at Road Dawgs

**Mary Circle** will be meeting for lunch December 11 at 11:00 am at Mary's Market

**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

# LASAGNA LOVE



*Feed families, spread kindness, strengthen communities.*

Lasagna Love is a global nonprofit and grassroots movement that aims to positively impact communities by connecting neighbors with neighbors through homemade meal delivery.

You can visit this website to request a free meal made by a local volunteer.

<http://lasagnalove.org>

You can visit the same website to become a volunteer with the organization!

Contact Kelly Lutzow with any questions or reach out to the organization directly.



## **Office Angels**

Thank you to my current office angels: Ellen Butchart, Marlene Erickson, Mary Alice Harris, Kathy Rodgers, & Pat Sands.

I will be reaching out in the middle of December for help to stuff Christmas Letters and also in January to help with year end statements.

Stuffing envelopes and bulletins is so much more fun when people are here to help! If you'd like to join in on the fun of office "work", please let me know and I will add you to the email/call list when I have another job with which I could use some help.

**Firm**

**Focus**

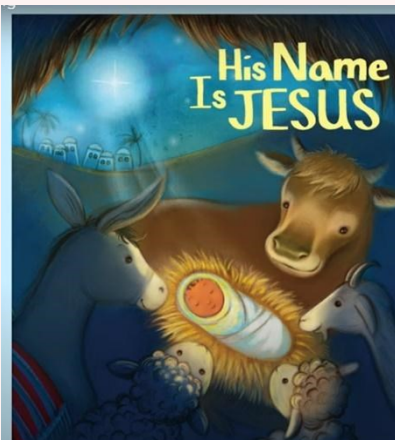
**Core Strength  
&  
Balance**

**Friendly**

**Tuesday & Thursday 9:00—10:00 am**

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. Individuals dress in comfortable clothing, bring their own weights, and water.

**Family Christmas Service  
Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>**



Last year Christmas Eve was on a Sunday, so we had our Family Christmas Eve Service in the morning. Not only were families appreciative of this, our older members who do not drive in the dark were thrilled. So, we will do it again! On Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, our 9:30am regular worship service will be Christmas Eve type service appropriate for children and families. The children will receive a book, and we will light candles and sing Silent Night!

# Celebrating Shirley Sweet

Photo Credit: Ellen Butchart & Karen Morris





On November 11–12 around 20 church members made the trip in two 15 passenger vans to visit Shirley Sweet. We performed a program of seven songs and had lunch with her at Autumn Glen before heading back home. It was a great time had by all! Thank you to everyone who chose to make this trip. The joy radiating from Shirley was evident.

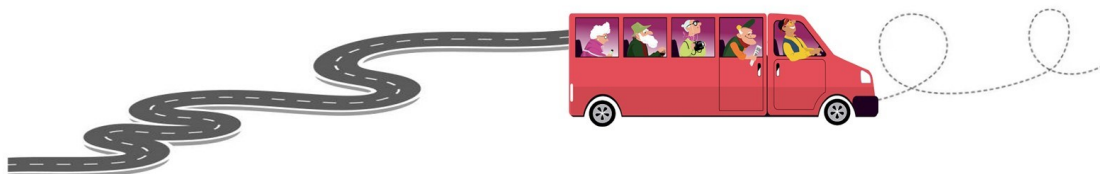


### *Program*

- + Rising Up With The Sun
- + Surely The Presence Of The Lord
- + To Trust Him More
- + I Saw The Light
- + I Come To The Cross
- + Just A Little Talk With Jesus
- + His Eye Is On The Sparrow

### *Road Trip Participants*

- |                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Marietta Axmear     | Kelly Lutzow            |
| Karin Bohr          | Karen Morris            |
| Darlene Breden      | David Newman , Pianist  |
| Ellen Butchart      | Bob Novy                |
| Doris Davis Gaustad | Patti Novy              |
| Kathy Dearth        | Tish Polzin             |
| Gretchen Dixon      | Lois Ulvin, Director    |
| Paul Dubler         | Clara Welch             |
| David Haas          | Brenda Whitford, Pastor |
| Tom Hamlett         | Dan Whitford            |





**Adult Mission Trip to  
Midwest Mission  
Chatham, Illinois  
March 2025**

Join our team volunteering at the Midwest Mission near Springfield, Illinois! We will have a Long Adult Mission Trip (Mar. 23 – 28) and a Short Adult Mission Trip (Mar. 26 – 28). In addition to the cost of the trip, we will have three dinners at economical area restaurants.

The cost of the Long Adult Mission Trip is between \$260 to \$385 depending on whether you share a dorm room or not.

The cost of the Short Adult Mission Trip is between \$125 to \$175 depending on whether you share a dorm room or not.

Please do NOT let the cost of the trip keep you from signing up! There is money available in a fund specifically to help people with the cost of participating in the adult mission trip. Please let Diane Gemignani know if you are interested in the assistance.

**If you have any questions, contact Diane Gemignani (608-290-5274 or [dianegem23@gmail.com](mailto:dianegem23@gmail.com)). If you would like to sign up for the trip, fill out the slip below, include the non-refundable \$50 deposit, and mail it to:**

**Diane Gemignani, 1005 Milwaukee Rd., Beloit, WI 53511.**

**\*\*\*Deposit is due by Jan. 15\*\*\***

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I am interested in joining the Adult Mission Trip to Midwest Mission.

Please circle the type of mission trip you would like:

Long trip (March 23 – 28)

Short trip (March 26 – 28)

(I understand the \$50 deposit is non-refundable, but it is transferable if someone else can take my place.)

---

Name

---

Email

---

Address

---

Home phone

---

Cell phone

## Rice Meal Pack Event!

On September 7<sup>th</sup> a number of us went from River of Life to Sugar River UMC to assemble Rice Meal Packs for Midwest Mission. Together, a number of churches paid \$6,500 to assemble 3,000 bags for 18,000 meals! We received this message from Midwest Mission:

*Your supplies were shipped on our 29th shipment of the year. This container went to Guatemala on October 24, 2024!*

*The container weighed 23,807 lbs. and its value was \$182,032.50. Midwest Mission disbursed medical supplies, pillow cases, blankets, diapers, washcloths, onesies, shower chairs, wheelchairs, tarps, toys, sewing machines, hospital beds, mattresses, coolers, Rice Meals, and Personal Dignity Kits.*

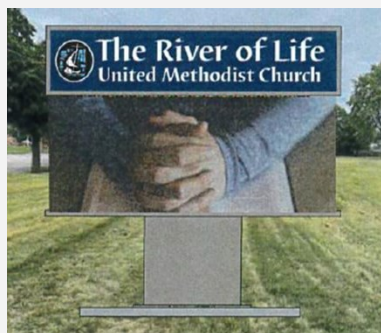
*This shipment was sent through our partner Food For The Poor (FFTP). FFTP serves 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Because of your donations, people around the world have the supplies they need to live a hope-filled, healthy life.*

*Thank you to all our donors and mission volunteers who purchased and assembled these essential kits that show God's love in a practical way. Every kit assembled at Midwest Mission is made by a volunteer. Without your dedication, we would not be able to continue to help others.*

*Thanks so much for sending hope and empowerment around the world and around the corner.*

Many of us would like to have a Rice Meal Pack event at River of Life. As you can see above, it is costly. We have begun a fund and will schedule the event when we have raised half of the money needed. You can donate online or write "Rice Meal Kit Event" on your check.

## We Are Getting A New Electronic Sign!



Our current electronic sign is getting old and is costing too much to repair, so we are getting a new one! The picture should be sharper and we should be able to do more with it. The cost is \$29,164. We hope it will be paid for by donations and then Trustee funds as needed. We have collected \$5,100. Write in you check memo that it is for the electronic sign.

### 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 *Psalms*.

### WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday Evening Bible Study meets at 6:00 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!**



## Stewardship Second



Our **Beautiful Feet** Stewardship Series was wonderful. Thank you to everyone who took a picture of their **Beautiful Feet!** We had a total of 70 pairs of feet!

We had a wonderful Consecration Sunday. Worship was lovely, we prayed over our Estimate of Giving (Pledge) Cards, and we enjoyed a delicious Beef Stew lunch. Thanks to Pat Sands for organizing the lunch, and to all who helped serve and clean up.

We have received 49 cards totaling \$202,572 toward the general fund, including apportionment giving. Thank you to all who turned in their card. It is not too late to turn in yours in. You can mail it to the office or place it in the offering plate.

## Worship in December



We will be celebrating Advent and Christmas in December, as well as our Cantata! Be sure not to miss a single Sunday!

- † Dec 1 Advent: Waiting
- † Dec 8 Advent: He's Coming!
- † Dec 15 Christmas Cantata: Love
- † Dec 22 He's Here! Family Christmas Service
- † Dec 29 God Is With Us!

**A look ahead: Pastor Brenda will be on vacation after worship on January 5<sup>th</sup> through January 19<sup>th</sup>. If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Pastor Keith directly at 608-774-3162.**

# September Calendar

December 1	10:30 AM	Hanging of the Greens
December 3	6:00 PM	Youth Ministry Team
December 6	9:30 AM	Sleeping Mat Work Day
December 7	9:00 AM	Cookie Walk
December 9		Office Closed
December 11	9:30 AM	Sleeping Mat Work Day
December 11	11:00 AM	Mary's Circle - Mary's Market
December 14	10:00 AM	Cantata Rehearsal
December 15	9:30 AM	Love! A Gospel Christmas Cantata
December 15	3:00 PM	Love! A Gospel Christmas Cantata
December 15	11:00 AM	Martha's Circle - Road Dawgs
December 19		Office Closed
December 20	9:30 AM	Sleeping Mat Work Day
December 24		Office Closed
December 24	5:00 PM	Candlelight Christmas Service
December 24	9:00 PM	Candlelight Christmas Service
December 25		Office Closed
January 1		Office Closed
January 6	6:00 PM	Youth Ministry Team
January 6-19		Pastor Brenda's Vacation

## 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

**December 1**  
Delores Hahn  
Peggy Bucker

**December 2**  
Jeff Caple

**December 4**  
Mikyah Longman  
Armoni Longman

**December 5**  
Callen Lynch

**December 6**  
Madeline Cawkins

**December 8**  
Sean Lynch

**December 10**  
Britta Hartje

**December 12**  
Louise Junig  
Terry Wilson

**December 13**  
Marilyn Busjahn

**December 16**  
Sandra Hays  
Lee Kuska  
Bonita Moore

**December 17**  
Karen Parssinen

**December 19**  
Zekaeus Lutzow

**December 21**  
Pam Dodge

**December 23**  
Natalie Valdez

**December 24**  
Priscilla Pann

**December 27**  
Robert Lang

**December 28**  
Tishauna Polzin

**December 29**  
Brenda Whitford

**December 30**  
Barbara Putney

**January 2**  
Eleanor Burnside  
Lora Cawkins

**January 3**  
TJ Hammond

**January 4**  
Katie Ward

**January 11**  
Matthew Polzin

**January 12**  
Wilma Shultz

**January 15**  
Sandra Ovist

**January 18**  
Eric Stoner  
Steve Haas

**January 20**  
Shirley Sweet  
Tru Longman

**January 22**  
Doug Mitchell  
Nadine Stoner  
Kellyse Lutzow  
Marlene Erickson  
Albert Kohls

**January 25**  
Betty Kohls

**January 26**  
Elsie Lynch

**January 27**  
Donald Parish

**January 28**  
Mark Hammett  
Nancy Bryant

**January 30**  
Zachary Christensen  
Kaitlen Freeman

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

**December 1**  
Steve & Susie Haas

**December 15**  
Tim & Jean Crawford

**December 23**  
Bruce & Lora Cawkins

**December 31**  
Scott & Kathy Weiser

**January 16**  
Don & Deanna Parish

**January 23**  
Bill & Kathy Rodgers

**Issue deadline:**

**December 23**

The next newsletter  
will be available on

**January 5**



**CHRIST** *the savior*  
*is* **BORN**

