

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neillsville, Wisconsin
Church 715-743-2147
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APRIL 2025 NEWSLETTER

The Lord is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid?

The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble? Psalm 27:1

Dear Friends,

As I write to you today, I am busy preparing for Holy Week, my favorite week of the church year. Not so many years ago, Palm Sunday was all about celebration. The children waved palm branches, the congregation sang praises and shouted “Hosanna!” We celebrated the confirmation of our youth, who would then attend Maundy Thursday service and receive their first communion. Businesses would close for an hour on Friday afternoon to allow everyone to attend Good Friday services.

Over the years, the focus has changed. Confirmation rarely happens on Palm Sunday anymore, and we have become more open at the communion table, welcoming all ages, so that there isn't really an acknowledgement of first communion. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services are sparsely attended. We now worship on Palm Sunday with a full recounting of Holy Week so no one goes from “Hosanna” to “Alleluia” without the darkness in-between. As I get older, I am more acutely aware of the importance of those days, of the darkness and suffering that Jesus experienced, that we need to experience to fully understand the miracle of Easter.

When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, his disciples scattered. Many went into hiding. Peter outright denied knowing him. Few made the journey to Calvary to witness the death of their teacher and friend. We know that Mary was there to be with her son until the bitter end. We know that she watched his final moments, heard his final words, and cried out at his final breath. She wept, and she grieved. She saw him laid in the tomb, the stone rolled in front, and she left feeling defeated, devastated, afraid. She awoke Saturday morning, and the grief hit anew, as she faced the day without her beloved son, preparing to face a future without Jesus in it. She had no idea what the next day would bring.

Easter cannot be understood apart from the grief of Good Friday. The overwhelming joy of the Resurrection cannot be understood without the overwhelming sadness and shame of the Cross. We cannot fully rejoice in the light if we don't fully experience the darkness.

Lately, I often feel like there is more darkness in the world than there is light. It can be overwhelming and frightening and sometimes feels like there is simply no end in sight. But the promise of the Resurrection is alive in each of us. It is not just about life after death, but about God having the final say, the final victory over the darkness. Faith tells us that we need not fear the darkness, for God will prevail, the Light will return, the Love of God will have the final word. So, my friends, face the darkness with confidence that the Holy Spirit is with you, guiding you through, standing with you as we fight against the forces of hatred and division. No matter how dark the night, how deep the grief, just know this: Easter is coming!

Grace and Peace, *Pastor Julie*

Wisconsin Conference UCC Restructuring

Northwest Association pastors and delegates met at St. Paul's UCC in Wausau on March 8 to discuss the proposed restructuring of the Wisconsin Conference. The proposal is to dissolve the four associations and shift to a single middle judicatory body - the Conference - responsible for carrying out the wider mission and ministry of the United Church of Christ in Wisconsin. Although the Associations would no longer exist as we currently know them, there would be a shift to a regional designation for gatherings and support from the four conference ministers. Rev. Michael Jones, who is currently an invaluable resource as the NW Association Minister, would continue to support the northwest region.

Two values stood out when the conference staff asked people about their wider Church connections: meaningful relationships beyond the local church and more robust resources. Over the past decade the WCUCS has made significant progress in broadening digital connections and accelerating the sharing of resources. Thanks to Zoom, we have created several justice working groups. Additionally, we now have more than 20 Communities of Practice and several new resource networks including Supportive Ministries, Rural and Small-Town Ministries, Older Adult Ministries, worship resource conversations, Generosity webinars, and online Faith Formation, including confirmation available through the Damascus Project.

This web of interlocking connections across the Wisconsin Conference embraces in-person and online meetings. It invites individuals to align their passions with service to the wider Church, and it offers infinite possibilities for building relationships and sharing resources.

Our vision going forward is to continue building a network of resources to support congregational life. The most significant shift ahead will be the move of the ecclesiastical work of Committees on Ministry (also known as Division of Church and Ministry) to a unified approach across the Conference. The proposed Unified COM will have regional representation by nearly 50 volunteers in working groups dedicated to fulfilling three main ministerial functions: Authorization, Oversight and Support.

The dissolution of associations will be financially neutral because the missions and ministries carried out by associations will be carried out by the Conference. The administrative efficiencies and cost savings we gain will allow us to invest time and money into further developing relationships and resources. Our Church's Wider Mission will continue to be the primary way we fund the mission and ministry of the Conference.

Official action on the restructuring proposal will occur during the Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting, scheduled for June 6 and 7 at Green Lake Conference Center. The associations will meet in breakout sessions on June 7 to conduct final association business, to vote on dissolution and to offer a litany of gratitude and leave-taking. That afternoon, Annual Meeting delegates will vote to take on the functions of associations, with appropriate timetables established for the transition.

This is an important moment in the life of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ. If you are interested in being a delegate to the Annual Meeting in June, please contact Pastor Julie by May 15.

Extravagant Welcome in the Church Family

It is a blessing to be a part of a church family that extends a warm and genuine welcome to friends and visitors alike. Part of that welcome includes continually evaluating our building and our services to make sure that we are accessible to everyone. Accessibility goes beyond ramps and elevators and large-print bulletins; it is acknowledging the many diverse and beautiful people with their unique needs and gifts. True welcoming accessibility recognizes that it is not enough to make simple accommodations for people with challenges, but we need to create comfortable spaces where each person feels free to be who God created them to be, loved for exactly who they are, in all their uniqueness. Some challenges are physical, some are mental or educational, and some are emotional. If we desire to offer a truly extravagant welcome to all God's children, we need to be aware of how we are making our church a place where all these differences are celebrated, and people are included in all aspects of church life. We are looking into making our church a more welcoming and inclusive, accessible place for all. If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact Pastor Julie. If you have any suggestions or concerns, please contact Pastor Julie or any member of the Deacons. We look forward to working together to make Neillsville UCC a place where all God's children feel welcome and invited, loved and accepted.



This year we will be ordering a variety of spring blooming plants for **Easter Sunday**. These are all 6" pots

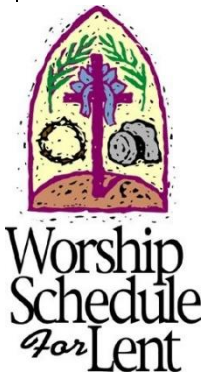
Easter Lily	\$17	Daffodil	\$15
Hyacinth	\$15	Cineraria	\$15
Tulip		\$15	

Please have your order into the office by **Friday, April 10th**

We will continue to gather with members of Calvary Lutheran on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. for a brief worship and deeper study of the Sunday scripture. Light snacks will be available.



April 2 at UCC
April 9 at Calvary



April 17th -Maundy Thursday
6:30 PM at UCC

Ministerial Alliance
April 18th – Good Friday Service
6:30 PM at UCC



Continuing the following in our thoughts and prayers.

Janet Harrington	Gayle Schermitzler
Lisa Schermitzler	Fran Ormond
Duane Marty	Mike & Sherrie Holub

Please let us know if others not listed (with their permission) would like prayer requests.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Do not forget to do good and help one another, because these are the sacrifices that please God.
Hebrews 13:16



JAM for youth
ages 3K to 6th grade
Wednesday, April 2nd & April 16th - 5PM at Calvary
Wednesday, April 30th - 5 PM at UCC

Confirmation class
each Sunday 11 AM after worship
No confirmation class on Easter
Confirmation Sunday will be May 4th

Upcoming VBS will be held on Sunday, June 1 from 10:30 - 2:30 PM



Sundays, March 2 and 30, the radio broadcast was sponsored anonymously with a message "May His Word be Heard by All"

Sunday, March 9, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Sue & Jim Pople in loving memory of Sue's parents, Norbert & Phyllis Embke.

Sunday, March 16, the radio broadcast was sponsored in memory of Eileen Zank by Susan Smigelski & family.

Sunday, March 23, the radio broadcast was sponsored anonymously in "Praise of Jesus Christ".

2025 Radio Broadcast Sponsors Needed

Would you like to sponsor a radio broadcast?
You may choose to dedicate or honor someone for a particular service date.
The cost remains the same - \$75
Please contact Janice in the office or phone 715-743-2147 to reserve a date.

Facts and Figures of March 2025
Attendance for In-Person Worship

March 2	online 8	Sunday 73
March 9	online 9	Sunday 44
March 16	online 8	Sunday 62
March 23	online 4	Sunday 66
March 30	online 7	Sunday 58



- 4- Carla Marty
- 5- Tye Kranz
- 6- Kirk Rodman
Bonnie Weyer
- 9- Ray Weyer
- 10- Marlys Riedel
- 11- Kevin Erickson
- 13- Kathy Seelow
- 15- Janice Miller
- 21- Nancy Rodman
- 23- Stephanie Heck
- 24- Jenny Erickson
- 25- Bryce Erickson
Leslie Hemp-Buchholz
- 27- Susie Karl
- 28- Ben Mathis
- 30- Scott Williams

*Happy Birthday to all who have an April birthday!
 Did we miss your birthday or have the wrong date?
 Let us know if we did.*

**PERMANENT TIME CHANGE FOR WORSHIP SERVICE
 WILL BEGIN ON SUNDAY, May 25th at 9:30 AM**



- 2- Jenna & Josh Ziegler
- 6- Neil & Corinne Armitage
- 14- Chad & Lacey Erickson
- 21- Nancy & Harold Boon
- 26- Lynne & Thomas Abel
- 27- Russ & Susie Karl
- 28- Joel & Marla Raine



MAY 1-9

We are adding the first days of MAY birthdays and anniversaries so as not to miss any if the newsletter comes out late.

May 1-9

Birthdays

- 1- Donald Quicker
- 3- Duane Marty
- 6- Sharon Buddenhagen
Ashley Vine
- 7- Jocelyn Vine
- 9- Haylee Erickson

Anniversaries

- 1- Roberta & Bob Gaier
- 4- Ruth & Bob Schmidt
- 9- Ben & Kelly Mathis

GRADUATION is right around the corner

*Please let us know if you have graduates
 in your family, we would like to honor them
 on Sunday, May 18th*



The Circle of Friends is looking for more “friends”. No special talents are required, we can do on the job training.

We meet on the first and third Mondays of the month at 9 AM in the fellowship hall to work on making cards. On the second Thursday at 1:30 PM we gather for our monthly meeting.



Baked Goods Auction Scheduled

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, April 6th** right after church in the fellowship hall. Remember, it’s just not pies, we will auction off bars, muffins, casseroles, hot dishes, or any other type of baked goods.

Proceeds from this auction will go into the church’s general fund to help with our deficit.

Thanks for your continued support and get ready to bid!



MEAL GIVEAWAY
United Church of Christ
Neillsville
515 West Second Street
April 27, 2025
10:45 am-11:00 Noon
Chicken, Beans
Coleslaw, Dinner Roll



FUNDRAISER

The baked goods auction will be behind us soon and a **chicken bbq fundraiser** is in the planning stages for April 27th . There will be an option for a carryout (pickup) meal that will include chicken, beans, coleslaw and a dinner roll. The dine in only meal will be a chicken bbq buffet.

We are requesting casseroles, salads and desserts/bars. We will also need people to help that Sunday. There will be a sign up sheet in the back of the church or you may call Barb Petkovsek at 715 429-0486.

This is the second of four fundraising events planned for 2025. The other two events will be later in the year.

CHICKEN BBQ FUNDRAISER
United Church of Christ
Neillsville
515 West Second Street
APRIL 27, 2025 11:15 am-12:30 Noon
Donation

1/4 Chicken
14 and over-\$10
6-13-\$7
Under 5-Free

1/2 Chicken
14 and over-\$15

Carryout
Chicken, beans
coleslaw, dinner roll



Dine In
Chicken Buffet

UCC Financial Update

Below is an update of UCC Financials. Included are receipts of regular offerings as well as nontraditional donations. Expenses include regular operating, salaries, benefits as well as 10% contributions to area and wider missions. If anyone has more specific questions please contact Bonnie Weyer or Don Quicker.

	January	February	March	Year to date
Receipts	\$7054.00	\$6139.00		\$13193.00
Expenses	\$13931.61	\$12645.10		\$26576.71
Grand Total	(\$6,877.61)	(\$6506.10)		(\$13,383.71)

Statements can easily be printed on request during the year. If you would like to be on a list to have your statement quarterly please notify the church office or Bonnie. They can be emailed or printed. Thanks for your continued support of our church.



Approved Minutes
Neillsville United Church of Christ Council

The meeting was held on February 26, 2025 in the lounge at the Neillsville United Church of Christ.

Moderator Vine called the meeting to order at 5 PM.

Attendance

Council Members Present: Trustee Representative Doris Bakker, Christian Education Representative Stephanie Heck (joined at 5:05 PM), Vice Moderator Barb Petkovsek, Moderator Paul Vine, Deacons Representative Karlene Wallace, and Treasurer Bonnie Weyer.

Others in Attendance: Pastor Julie.

Prayer

Pastor Julie guided the committee with a prayer.

Minutes

Motion by Barb Petkovsek, seconded by Bonnie Weyer to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2025 meeting taken by Moderator Vine in Emile's absence that month. Voice vote taken with all "aye"; motion carried.

Financial Report

Motion by Doris Bakker, seconded by Karlene Wallace to approve the financial report as presented by Bonnie Weyer reading Assistant Treasurer Don Quicker's written report. Voice vote taken with all "aye"; motion carried.

Stephanie Heck joined the meeting at this time.

New Business

Ad Hoc Future Connections and Outreach Update

Moderator Vine shared the following fundraising activities and dates:

- April 6 – Baked Goods Auction
- April 27 – Church Barbecue
- August 23 – Pancake Feed and Carnival
- October 25 – Chili Feed

The committee is going to open these activities to the community in hopes to generate more funding from others besides church members.

Bonnie Weyer stated that the church has a program that can help develop posters for these events and the person in charge of each event should make a draft poster and send to her to implement into the program. Doris Bakker suggested that when completing the posters, the complete street address and city should of the church should be included.

Old Business

Annual Report

Barb Petkovsek will lead the annual report on Sunday, March 2, 2025 in the sanctuary following church services. Fellowship for that Sunday will be held upstairs with light refreshments. The Annual Report is missing the Audit Committee report currently, otherwise the church administrator has completed it. An agenda item of "Church Service Time Change" will be discussed and voted on.

Pastor Report/Update

Pastor Julie shared the following:

- January 26 – Barb Petkovsek filled in for the church service due to Pastor being ill
 - Clark County Choraliers performed
- Since the last meeting:
 - Four (4) funerals
 - One (1) hospital visit
 - Zero (0) Assisted Living visits (due to Pastor's illness)
 - One (1) house blessing in December for Steinbach family
- February 1 – Attended retreat via Zoom to renew Pastor's license
- February 21-23 – Confirmation Retreat
 - Pastor Julie and Jenny Erickson were chaperones
- February 23 – Sue Vornholt led the service
- February 25 – Attended a Ministerial Alliance meeting
 - meeting quarterly in the future
 - will extend an invitation to the new school superintendent, once hired
- March 8 – Northwest Association in Wausau
- March 9 – Vacation
- Lent Services
 - March 5 – Ash Wednesday will be held at UCC at 6:30 PM
 - April 17 – Maundy Thursday will be held at UCC at 6:30 PM; Calvary holding their own service
 - April 18 – Good Friday will be held at UCC at 6:30 PM with all churches in the Ministerial Alliance participating
 - Wednesday night Lent services will alternate between Calvary and UCC
 - 6 PM for approximately a half hour with light snacks, a few hymns, and discussion that will lead to Sunday's service
 - UCC – Fellowship Hall
 - Calvary – Entry Way
 - No soup suppers are being held this year
- June 6-7 – Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting
- March through May - Theology Class

Committee Reports and Requests for Action

Trustees

Doris Bakker shared the following:

- Repair items:
 - Kitchen lights
 - Sewer issues
 - Single-sheet toilet paper will be used from now on
 - Main problems seem to be coming from the handicapped stall in the women's restroom
 - Shampooing of the fellowship hall carpet will be completed after Easter

- Heating system – one (1) part is on back order
- Church's Insurance Company will be at the next Trustee's meeting to discuss if we have adequate insurance coverage

Christian Education

Stephanie Heck shared the following:

- The committee needs one (1) board member to replace Cheryl Steinbach
- Jesus and Me (JAM)
 - met on February 5 and 19
 - meeting on March 5 and 19
 - attendance has dropped since the Christmas program, but this happens every year

Deacons

Karlene Wallace shared the following:

- Lent Services – see Pastor's Report
- Looking into a Polka Service again

Other

Bonnie Weyer stated that the next month's agenda should include "Camp Scholarships".

Next Meeting Date and Time

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 5:30 PM.

Adjournment

Motion by Barb Petkovsek, seconded by Stephanie Heck to adjourn. Voice vote taken with all "aye"; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:41 PM.

Submitted by:

Emile J Miller

Neillsville UCC Council Secretary



Hnatiuk Family Update



Colby School District

2h · 🌐



Bus Driver and Student Share a Heartwarming Friendship

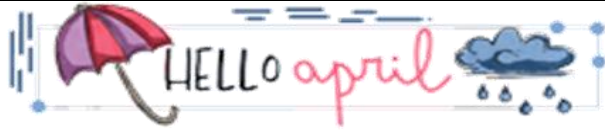
Roman is in the 2nd grade and his family is from Ukraine and new to the Colby District this year. Roman always greets his bus driver, Jon, with a fist bump, says good morning, and every afternoon another fist bump, thanks the driver and inquires how his day was. But there was one more question, Roman admires his bus driver's sunglasses and asks where he got them and was disappointed when he was told they are prescription glasses. The bus driver went shopping and purchased sunglasses with green mirrored lenses and neon green trim on the bows which also had a draw-string bag, a lanyard so they don't get lost, a tiny screwdriver, and a secret card where you can only see the picture with the sunglasses on. As you can see in the attached photo when Roman received his sunglasses he was very happy young man. He was thrilled to show his family his new (and very cool) shades. Bus driver, Jon states "This child is an example of great humanity, kindness, and friendship. Undoubtedly a direct reflection of his parents. His outlook is pure and without judgment. If a simple pair of sunglasses with chrome green lenses and neon green trim make him and his parents so happy, just think how happy he made me with his excitement! As you well know, a single child can make your day, week, month, and year." [#colbyhornets](#) [#kindness](#)



A special Thank-you to Rosie & Jim Repinski
for donating a new mini-fridge to our church lounge
and Byrl & Sharon Buddenhagen
for picking up, installing and disposal of the old one.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE
April 6, 2025 – May 25, 2025

	Deacon/ host	Greeter(s)	Usher(s)	Power Point
Sunday, April 6, 2025	Sally Sadowska	Nancy Boon	Ben Mathis	Barb Petkovsek
		Audrey Vradenburg	Paul Schmidt	
Sunday, April 13, 2025	Karlene Wallace	Debbie Holman	Hap Eddy	Bonnie Weyer
		Sue Gurney	Roger Carl	
Sunday, April 20, 2025	Janice Miller	Larry & Kathy Marshall	Mickey Marty	Paul Vine
EASTER			Joel Raine	
Sunday, April 27, 2025	JoAnn Wren	Nancy & Kirk Rodman	Russ Karl	Barb Petkovsek
			Paul Schmidt	
Sunday, May 4, 2025	Wayne Voss	Lydia Schumacher	Craig Heck	Emile Miller
		Karen Northup	Max Heck	
Sunday, May 11, 2025	Byrl Buddenhagen	Cris & Lisa Hediger	Paul Vine	Bonnie Weyer
			Kelley Burch	
Sunday, May 18, 2025	Barb Shoemaker	Phil & Donita Follen	Roger Carl	Paul Vine
GRADUATION SUNDAY			Hap Eddy	
Sunday, May 25, 2025	Sally Sadowska	Jim & Rosie Repinski	Mike Perkl	Janice Miller
			Deb Perkl	
Please call the church office if you are unable to be here, or make arrangements with another church member. 715-743-2147				



2025 United Church of Christ

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Each Tuesday - 1 PM Marge Goetsch Bible Study – church lounge / bring bible	2 JAM 5 PM at Calvary 6 PM Lenten Study at UCC 7 PM NA	3	4	5
6 <u>Fifth Sunday in Lent</u> <u>Communion</u> 10 AM Worship Baked Goods Auction 11AM Confirmation 7 PM NA	7 9 AM Card Making	8 1 PM Bible Study 5:30 PM Deacons Mt	9 6 PM Lenten Study at Calvary 7 PM NA	10 1:30 PM Circle of Friends Meeting Noon- T& C Quilters	11	12
13 <u>Palm Sunday</u> 10 AM Worship 11AM Confirmation 7 PM NA	14 6 PM PEO	15 1 PM Bible Study 5:30 PM Trustees Mt	16 JAM 5 PM at Calvary 7 PM NA	17 at UCC Maundy Thursday 6:30 PM Service	18 at UCC Good Friday 6:30 PM Service with Ministerial Alliance	19 Holy Saturday
20 <u>EASTER</u> † 10 AM Worship No fellowship today No Confirmation 7 PM NA	21 9 AM Card Making 9- AM T& C Quilters 6 PM Council Mtg	22 1 PM Bible Study 6 PM – HCE meeting	23 7 PM NA	24	25	26
27 <u>Second Sunday of Easter</u> 10 AM Worship 11AM Confirmation MEAL GIVE AWAY / bbq FUNDRAISER 7 PM NA	28	29 1 PM Bible Study	30 JAM 5 PM at UCC 6:30 PM Confirmands & families meet with Council 7 PM NA			