

**OUR SAVIOR'S & GILMANTON
UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES**

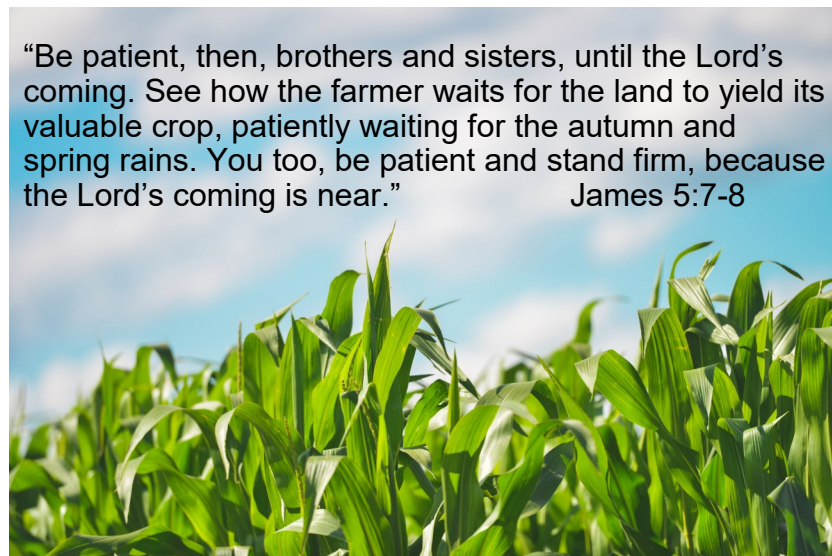
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Return Service Requested



“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. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.” James 5:7-8



*Our Savior's
& Gilmanton
United
Methodist
Church*



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Outreach

Pastor's Corner

August 2023

I returned from a conference two weeks ago at Korean American UMC in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Thank you for your prayers. This was the second long car trip I have experienced in the United States. The first was last year when I moved from Massachusetts to Wisconsin. Although I was tired of driving long distances this time, I enjoyed the fact that I was able to see different aspects of the United States as I passed through different states and cities, and I was able to meet and socialize with new people.

What I especially enjoyed was worshipping and singing in my native language for the first time in a long time, and it was refreshing to my soul. It was also encouraging and helpful to gather in small groups to hear the ministry experiences and advice of fellow pastors.



The most memorable place on this trip was Pikes Peak, which I went to with the pastors during the conference. Pikes Peak is 14,115 feet above sea level. The incline was so steep that we had to keep our eyes open the entire way up, and we had to move slowly and carefully because of the lack of oxygen up there. We had to change shuttles about two-thirds of the way up to get to the top, and I was a little worried when someone told me that the shuttle was about to leave, so I ran over and started having trouble breathing and getting dizzy. I was relieved to hear the shuttle driver say that it was natural.



My first experience with shortness of breath on Pikes Peak was a short one, but it made me realize that there are so many things I take for granted that are always around me.

Nothing we have is for granted. Let us always give thanks to God, who has given us everything.

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” Psalm 150:6

With love and blessings,
Pastor Dr. Hyuntae Kim



August Birthdays



- 1 Julie Brunsch
- 1 Luanne Swanson
- 1 Paula Thompson
- 3 Barb Plank
- 5 Hadlee Poeschel
- 5 Judy Schwartz
- 6 Alison Gilbertson
- 6 Darlene Saxe
- 6 Ann Schmidtkecht
- 7 Randy Moy
- 8 Jade Jehn
- 9 Clarence Pichler
- 9 Logan Thornton
- 9 Mason Thornton
- 10 Kristen Bishopp
- 17 Irma Fuller
- 18 Brad Gibson
- 18 Olivia Saxe
- 19 Grace Boley
- 21 Nathaniel Bishopp
- 21 Debbie Duncanson
- 21 Dave Holden
- 21 Dave Saxe
- 22 Toni Ede
- 23 Randy Johnston
- 26 Katie Sandberg
- 26 Macie Stambaugh
- 30 Orvilla Ede



August Anniversaries

- 6 Jim & Holly Hesselman
- 13 Larry & Becky Davis
- 18 Matt & Sarah Thompson
- 20 Jay & Kolleen Branger
- 25 Jim & Deb Coppage



REFLECTIONS ON ANNUAL CONFERENCE
BY: ANN YELLE...LAY MEMBER TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2023 Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church was held on June 8-12 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Prior to these dates, I participated in two pre-conference virtual training sessions. I have been a lay member for about 15 years. I have found this to be a valuable experience for learning about the United Methodist Church and for meeting other loving people. It is my belief that one needs to be a lay member to Annual Conference a number of times to really understand what is happening in the United Methodist Church. The theme for this year's conference was, "On Earth as it is in Heaven"-Engaging in Transformative Community Building. This is based on Philippians 2 which tells us that it is God's intention that all people engage in fruitful work of transformation. One-third of the lay members participated on-line yet this year. Next year all members will be attending in person.

The plenary sessions (another word for the business of the church) were quite ordinary again this year. Four churches were discontinued: Bashford UMC, Madison, WI; Wellspring UMC, Madison, WI; Wittenberg New Horizons UMC, Wittenberg, WI; and Beetown UMC, Beetown, WI.

We were updated via reports and presentations from various committees, boards, ministries, etc., that operate within the Wisconsin Conference or are in partnership or supported by the Conference. The United Methodist Church is a connectional church and as such we are involved in many areas locally and throughout the world. A delegation from Dongbu Conference, with whom the Wisconsin Conference has had a relationship for 20 years, was present at our conference. Next year the Wisconsin Conference will send delegates to the Dongbu Annual Conference in South Korea.

Global Ministries, an arm of the United Methodist Church, provides mission outreach. As part of Global Ministries, the Wisconsin Conference has sponsored local churches in Bolivia. Since 2021, six motor cycles were purchased to assist in mission work in remote areas of Bolivia. Presently, sewing machines are being collected and sent to Bolivia. Global Ministries supports 15 missionaries throughout the world. Dignity Kits, collected for Midwest Distribution Center, totaled 1,456 kits or 15,720 pounds. We, at Our Savior's UMC and Gilmanton UMC, provided 52 kits. These kits will be sent to those in need throughout the world as part of Global Ministries' work. As John Wesley said, "The world is our parish."

Voting matters included the disaffiliation requests by 43 churches. Specific requirements for disaffiliation were fulfilled by them. These churches had decided they could not live as part of and express their faith in the United Methodist Church. This is due to the changes in the church DISCIPLINE regarding the matter of human sexuality. Preceding the vote reading, Bishop Jung shared the need for us to respect the discernment that had taken place.

"It is not a time for taking sides, expressing anger, or cheering, or clapping. It is a time for prayer and generous care for one another." The vote to allow these churches to disaffiliate was 93.5 percent yes and 6.5 percent no. No church in our District, the North West District, disaffiliated. The disaffiliated churches no longer have pastoral leadership from the United Methodist Church effective July 1. The Wisconsin (continued on page 3)

Keep in Prayer...



Members who are in long-term care facilities

Military Veterans

All Firefighters, EMTs, Police and Military Personnel

Brothers and Sisters in Christ around the world

Motion made by Jim Williams and seconded by Linda Johnston to accept the May 2023 Executive Summary and Memorial Report. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report

Breakthrough prayer: As the waves break on the shores of Wisconsin, so break through our lives, our church and our community with new ideas, new hope and your new possibilities, O God. We pray with the confidence of Scripture which promises that you will do exceedingly more than we can ask or imagine. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Pastor report (May 19- June 21).

- Saturday, May 20, 10 AM, DS Barb's celebration (First UMC, Rice Lake).
- Monday, May 22, 11 AM, Wisconsin Annual Conference Harmony Choir Rehearsal at Columbus UMC.
- Wednesday, May 24, Mondovi High School Baccalaureate.
- Thursday, June 1, 9:30 AM, Annual Conference Clergy Session at St. Paul's-The Springs UMC, Stevens Point, WI.
- June 9-11, Wisconsin Annual Conference 2023.

The atmosphere of the Annual Conference was generally gracious. There was frequent worship, prayer, and praise throughout, and good Bible study. There was no heated debate on agenda items, just a few mild comments and mostly voting.

The sad part was when 43 churches were approved for disaffiliation and 4 churches were approved for discontinuance.

A fun part was a participatory theater presentation. It was about a church with a cross-cultural appointment and how the members of the congregation are divided by language issues and how to overcome them. They invited one or two people from the audience to stand in for some of the actors and do an impromptu play. It was very funny and provided insight into how to overcome the challenges associated with cross-cultural appointments. I think our church is already doing a good job.

At the ordination service on Sunday, it was a special time to see Rev. Ho Lee, who invited us to Wisconsin, ordained as an elder pastor. I'm grateful that the Harmony Choir I'm in performed well. We sang two songs, the "Hallelujah" from Handel's "Messiah" and the "Prayer" of St. Francis. You can view photos in Wisconsin Conference Weekly ENew.

Thursday, June 15, 2 PM, American Lutheran Homes Communion Service.

Pastor's absence:

- Sunday, July 2 (study leave from June 26 to July 2). David Boley will fill in the pulpit.
- July 11-14, North Central Jurisdiction Conference of Korean Association of the UMC.

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Welcoming our new District Superintendent, Rev. PyungAhn Peace Kim. He will be moving from Lodi to Eau Claire with his family - wife Jongjin, daughter Claire, and son Clay. He will be attending our services without notice one Sunday. We can invite him to preach too.

Long-term mission agenda: Special prayers are continuously needed for missions for Christian education and the next generation. Pastor Jin and I contacted Missionary Rev. Michael Cho a few times. We gave him information about our churches and areas. We will be meeting him by Zoom again to discuss and learn about mission strategies for our community during our study leaves next week. I think we need at least one year to research and study how to build up the church. He is developing information materials in English. He is planning to come and see us and our area and preach someday if God allows, maybe in November (TBA). Before that, we can meet him in Zoom to have a conversation about our mission agenda. He will be sharing information about IM (International Mission) and its mission strategies to help revive small churches.

Pastor Jin's churches will gather at Colfax UMC for the Zoom meeting on July 19, Wed, 7 PM Central Time. I will set up a place here at Mondovi, Our Savior's Church, to join them in Zoom.

United Women in Faith Report (Linda Johnston, Chair)

Linda presented the following as submitted by Ann Yelle.

On June 14, 2023, United Women in Faith met with 10 people present.

Old Business: Gloria Williams expressed that the Aspire event was a very wonderful event. Five women attended this event in Eau Claire on May 5th.

New Business: Treasurer, Julie Brunsch, indicated that there has been a check outstanding since December 2022. She desires to put the money back into the account. A motion was made, seconded and passed allowing her to do so. The Fall Gathering date has been changed to September 30th. It will be in River Falls. The installment of Rev. Peace Kim as our new District Superintendent will be on September 23rd in Barron.

Trustee Report (Sonny Sandberg absent)

Julie Brunsch inquired regarding the masonry work on the church. Dave Boley will follow up on this.

SPRC (Jim Williams, Chair)

Jim reported Mike Stoughton will be our new custodian. A background check will be completed.

Dave Boley will check with Kathy, Administrative Secretary, on where background check paperwork is located.

Worship Committee (Rita McDonnell absent)

Dave Boley inquired if there are any Worship Committee meetings scheduled. He will follow-up with Rita.

Old Business

The Issues Bin was reviewed and the review and update of the church office secretary job description and the correct name of the church were removed as completed.

Kolleen Branger reported that Rita McDonnell had given her a description of Financial Secretary duties.

Discussed putting a notice in the church bulletin, newsletter and website regarding a sign-up sheet for the Buffalo County fair booth.

Discussion ensued regarding the potential mailbox location.

Lay Member to Annual Conference (Ann Yelle)

Ann gave an update on Annual Conference which was held from June 8 to June 12. Ann attended virtual training prior to Annual Conference. The theme this year was "On Earth As It Is In Heaven." Bishop Jung had several messages.

Dave Boley closed the meeting with prayer.

Motion to adjourn made by Dave Boley, seconded by Jim Williams. Motion carried.

Account Balances 6/30/2023

Checking

\$49.49

Elevator Repair

\$524.00

Local Disaster

\$390.00

New Ministries

\$2019.80

Christmas Walk

\$5400.00

Scholarships/Youth Awards

\$260.00

Sunday School

\$825.00

Total Account Balances

\$9468.47

Highlights from the June Council Meeting

Council members present: Dave Boley, Jay Branger, Kolleen Branger, Ann Yelle, Julie Brunsch, Jan Bechel, Jim Williams, Pastor Kim, Linda Johnston.

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Dave Boley.

Pastor Kim opened with prayer.

Next Meeting: July 16, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

United Methodist Church Calendar

Father's Day – June 18.
Independence Day – July 4.

Our Savior's United Methodist Church Calendar

Sundays – 10:30 a.m. Worship Service, in-person and online; Communion 1st Sunday; coffee/sweets 2nd and 4th Sundays.

Activities on the Calendar

Sunday, June 18 – Father's Day.
Wednesday, June 21 – Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 25 – Gilmanton choir practice at 8:30 a.m.; choir sings at 9:00 a.m. service.
Sunday, June 25 – Newsletter deadline.
Monday, June 26, to Sunday, July 2 – Pastor Kim Study Leave.
Wednesday, June 28 – Our Savior's choir practice at 6:30 p.m.
Sunday, July 2 – Our Savior's choir sings.
Tuesday, July 4 – Independence Day - office closed.
Sunday, July 9 – No service in Gilmanton (Gilmanton Fair).
Tuesday, July 11, to Friday, July 14 – Pastor Kim, General Conference, Colorado Springs.
Sunday, July 16 – Worship in the park with potluck. Discussion ensued regarding having communion at worship in the park. Linda Johnston will verify.

Wednesday, July 19 – Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Secretary's Report

Ann Yelle reported a correction to the ending balance for April 2023 in the Memorial Report which should be \$19,162.64. Julie Brunsch also reported that Jay Branger's name was missing from the May report as attending the meeting.

Motion to accept the May 2023 Secretary's Report with the above changes was made by Kolleen Branger and seconded by Julie Brunsch. Motion carried.

Finance Committee (Jay Branger, Chair)

Jay reported the Finance Committee had met and developed a Church Funding Contingency Plan as follows:

The Our Savior's Church Finance Committee recommends the following Contingency

Funding Plans if weekly offerings are insufficient to meet local operating expenses.

Short-Term Funding Plan

Plan A – Use \$12,000 of money designated as Christmas Walk funds (\$8000 in checking account and \$4000 in the account administered by Jan Bechel). Profits from the 2023 Christmas Walk will be added to these funds later in 2023.

Plan B – Once the Christmas Walk money is depleted, use \$2020 designated to New Ministries.

Plan C – Once the New Ministries Fund is depleted, use funds in the Undesignated Memorials Account totaling approximately \$3500.

Funds in the Tom Cook memorial will be used to pay for the kitchen cabinet improvements related to F3.

Funds in the Sunday School and Youth Fellowship accounts will be used for F3 expenses.

The Finance Committee will determine if church maintenance expenses should be funded by other memorial accounts on a case-to-case basis.

Funding Plan for 2024 and beyond

Share pastoral expenses with another church besides Gilmanton. Chairman Dave Boley will contact the District Superintendent to set up a meeting to discuss this option further. Without this action, it will be difficult for Our Savior's Church to remain in existence once the funds referenced in the Emergency Funding Plan referenced above are depleted.

The earliest we likely could begin partnering with another congregation to share pastoral expenses is in July 2024 after the annual conference.

Discussion ensued regarding the Short-Term Funding Plan.

Motion to approve Plan A through Plan C in the Short-Term Funding Plan was made by Jim Williams, seconded by Jan Bechel. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the remaining three bullet points in the Short-Term Funding Plan made by Jim Williams, seconded by Jan Bechel. Motion carried.

Discussion ensued regarding longer term funding. Dave Boley will follow up.

Motion to move forward with the funding plan for 2024 and beyond made by Jim Williams, seconded by Jan Bechel. Motion carried.

Jay presented the following message that will be published in the July newsletter, church bulletin and website.

Happy summer! I hope this message finds everyone enjoying summer and time spent with family and friends. The summer months often reduce Church attendance due to weekend activities and personal travel. As a

result, weekly offerings typically decline and the Church's ability to pay monthly expenses becomes more difficult. This year is no different as we have used nearly \$7000 of emergency funds through the first five months of the year to meet our local operating expense needs. We need everyone's help in keeping our monthly expenses paid and the Church financially sound. This can be accomplished by contributing to the offering during Sunday services, mailing funds to the Church office, or by making an electronic payment via the offering line for Vanco at <http://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z3D4/home>. There is also a GIVE button on the Church website home page that will take you directly to the site. The address for the Church website is www.oursaviorsumc.org.

My goal is for all of us to increase our offerings to eliminate using our emergency funds to keep our expenses paid since this source of funding is limited and quickly decreasing. I hope and pray you will remember the Church and its financial needs as you go about your daily lives as the Church is always here for you to provide spiritual assistance and support during times of need. There is an old saying that many hands make light work! I am convinced that if we all pitch in, the financial needs of the Church will be met! In God we trust.

Jay Branger, Finance Chairman

Executive Summary (Julie Brunsch, Treasurer)

Checking account totals are as follows: Beginning balance of \$13,183.97; deposits of \$8637.30; interest of \$9.30; expenditures of \$8646.17; uncleared transactions of \$1036.16 with an ending balance as of May 31, 2023, of \$12,148.24. Checking account reconciled with bank statement. Internal account balances are Checking \$129.26; Elevator Repair \$524.00; Local Disaster \$390.00; New Ministries \$2019.80; Christmas Walk \$8000.00; Scholarships/Youth Awards \$260.00; Sunday School \$825.18 for balance of \$12,148.24. Other accounts: Building/Restoration \$1970.36; Youth Fellowship Account \$4246.58.

Julie reported we received a final payment from Amazon Smile of \$39.19.

Julie used \$500.00 from the Christmas Walk fund to cover May bills.

Current checkbook balance is \$-3684.20 with \$960.00 in bills due by the end of June.

Memorial Report (Ann Yelle, Chair)

Balance as of April 30, 2023, \$19,162.64 with credits of \$28.66 and no debits with ending balance of \$19,191.30. A donation of \$20.00 was added to the Larry Lindsay memorial. Ann has separated the memorial accounts into Designated and Not Specified Memorials.

Finance Secretary (Kolleen Branger)

Kolleen reported she had nothing to report.

Buffalo County Fair Booth

We are looking for volunteers to help at our UMC fair booth in two-hour increments, starting with set-up at 5 pm on Thursday, August 3 through



take-down beginning at 3 pm on Sunday, August 6. You can sign up in the back of the church or by calling Dora at 715-210-0682. You can also call or email the church office to sign up.

FAITH
FOOD
FUN

Mark Your Calendars!

F3 resumes Wednesday,
September 27

5:30—6:00 Meal

6:00—7:00 Children's Programs
and Confirmation Class



United
Women
in Faith

August 9 at 2 pm

Mark Your Calendars!
The Christmas Bazaar
is coming November 4
9am—4pm



Food
Crafts
Boutique



If you would like to bring refreshments on the 2nd or 4th Sundays of the month, please sign up on the clip board in the back of the church.



(continued from page 2) Conference will reach out to those from the disaffiliated churches who want to continue to be United Methodists, helping them connect with a new United Methodist Church. At this time it is unknown how actions taken by the General Conference, when it meets in the spring of 2024, will affect disaffiliation actions previously voted on by them. General Conference's decisions become part of the DISCIPLINE and affect every conference worldwide. Due to COVID, General Conference did not meet on schedule. They are to meet every four years.

Conference statistics were given. These come off of the EZRA report that churches need to submit electronically by February of each year. Information gathered showed that Wisconsin had 448 local churches with 77 per cent submitting their information on time. It was noted that membership trends are down. The Wisconsin conference has 42,000 members. Of this number 2/3 of the members are attending 1/3 of the churches. From the information gathered by this report, all churches would receive a "D" in Outreach Ministry. Only 65 per cent of churches reported doing Outreach.

Appointments of District Superintendents took place. The North Central District, of which we are a part, will have Rev. Peace Kim as our new Superintendent. He replaces Rev. Barbara Certa-Werner. He and his family will reside in Eau Claire. Plans continue for the combining of Northern Illinois and Wisconsin into one conference. Bishop Jung continues as Bishop in our Wisconsin Conference.

Activities that we shared in included an excellent Bible Study, worship, communion, singing, praying, meeting new people, etc. In addition, we shared in a Service of Remembrance, where persons connected to the Wisconsin Conference, who have died since the previous Annual Conference, are honored. We also honored pastors for their length of service, beginning at 25 years. One pastor was honored for 74 years of service, the longest number of years. The names of clergy retiring were read. If I counted right, these numbered twenty-three. Changes in appointments, to begin July 1, were read. Five of the churches received a pastor from the Philippines. This is the first time pastors from the Philippines have been assigned to Wisconsin Conference churches. At the time of Annual Conference some churches had yet to be supplied pastors.

As at other Annual Conferences, the Recognition, Commissioning, and Ordination Service continues to be a very special service. This included four, to be licensed as a local pastor, three who had completed the course of study for a licensed local pastor, and one who was an associate member. Additionally, two were commissioned as an elder, two ordained as an elder, one ordained as a deacon, and five were transferred in. Adding to my love of this service, was the singing by the Harmony Choir, of which our own pastor, Pastor Kim, was a member.

I again thank you for the opportunity to represent Our Savior's and Gilmanton Churches at Annual Conference. I continue to pray for our local churches, and also the United Methodist Church throughout the world. May we be a church that loves all. Let us make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Let us proclaim love in every corner of the world. "Peace, I leave with you. My peace I give to you." John 14:27


AUGUST 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3 Buffalo County Fair	4 Buffalo County Fair	5 Buffalo County Fair
6 9:00 am Gilmanton Worship 10:30 am OS Worship Buffalo County Fair	7	8	9 12:00 pm United Women in Faith Potluck 2:00 pm Membership Committee Meeting (please note time changes)	10	11	12
13 <i>Holy Communion</i> 9:00 am Gilmanton Worship 10:30 am OS Worship	14	15	16 6:00 pm Council Meeting	17	18	19
20 9:00 am Gilmanton Worship 10:30 am OS Worship (OS Choir Sings)	21	22	23	24 September newsletter deadline	25	26
27 8:30 am G Choir Practice 9:00 am Gilmanton Worship (G Choir sings) 10:30 am OS Worship	28	29	30 6:30 pm OS Choir Practice	31		

Zucchini Drop Cookies Linda Engen

1/2 c. shortening	1/2 tsp. cloves
1 c. sugar	1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1 egg, beaten	1 c. zucchini, peeled and grated
2 c. flour	1 c. raisins
1 tsp. baking soda	1 c. chopped nuts
1 tsp. cinnamon	

Cream the shortening and sugar; add egg. Alternately add dry ingredients and zucchini. Add nuts and raisins. Drop by spoonfuls onto greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 for 12-15 minutes.



Thrivent "Cans" Hunger Food Drive

Join us for a food drive to benefit the Mondovi Area Food Pantry. For every non-perishable food item donated, your Thrivent Member Network South WI will donate \$3 (up to \$3000) to the Mondovi Area Food Pantry.

When: Tuesday, August 15, from 11 am to 6 pm

Donation Drop Off: Zion Lutheran Church, Mondovi

What items are needed? Breakfast cereals, hearty soups, and crackers. However, all unopened, non-expired, non-perishable items will be graciously accepted.

Stop by between 11 am and 6 pm to drop off your items to benefit the Mondovi Area Food Pantry. In appreciation for your generosity, the first 50 donor households will receive 2 vouchers for ice cream cones from McT's (redeemable August 15 only).

Questions? Contact Jessica Kilde at 715-318-0581 ext 73 or jessica.kilde@thrivent.com

Worship Service Helpers

	Worship Leader	Greeters/Ushers	Money Counters
Aug 6	Ann Yelle	Ann Yelle & Rita McDonnell	Donna Moy & Linda Johnston
Aug 13	Katie Sandberg	David & Lori Boley	Mary Beth Pichler & Katie Sandberg
Aug 20	Lori Boley	Jim & Gloria Williams	David Saxe & Jay Branger
Aug 27	Linda Sandberg	Bob & Sue Stoughton	Jan Bechel & Bill Lier

Camera Operators: Lori Boley & Saul Ness

A Letter from District Superintendent PyungAhn "Peace" Kim

Hope and Joy!

Entering into the second week in my new role, my prayers were centered around these two words: hope and joy. "O God, we are your people committed to following Jesus through and with the United Methodist Church here in North West Wisconsin. Increase hope and joy in us. Let them extend beyond us and flourish in our communities through our ministry."

Greetings to you, my beloved and respected leaders of the United Methodist churches in the North West District of the Wisconsin Conference. I didn't want it to take long to send my greetings to the churches after my first letter to the clergy of our district. You are important. You are appreciated. Thank you for your dedication as leaders of The United Methodist Church. Thank you for embodying God's message of hope and joy.

I am here as your servant leader and fellow follower of Jesus Christ. You have refused to give up on our faith communities despite the challenges of declining numbers. I join you in holding steadfast to the promise given by God: "a future with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)"

"Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5:5)"

Yes! We have a reason to be hopeful, so we "rejoice in the Lord (Philippians 4:4)" and share "the reason for our hope with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15)" in our communities and beyond. We are God's people who "rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who

mourn, living in harmony with one another. (Romans 12:15-16a)"

I am grateful for the opportunity to begin my one-on-one meetings with the clergy. Each encounter reveals the unique and diverse stories of God's calling and the remarkable work being done through the United Methodist Church. Of course, there are challenges that must be named within our stories. However, as Henri Nouwen wrote, "As long as we have stories to tell to each other there is hope. As long as we can remind each other of the lives of God's people in whom the love of God becomes manifest, there is reason to move forward."

My commitment will remain unwavering to celebrate the stories that God continues to weave in us, among us, and through us. I am honored to be a mere instrument in God's hands, joyfully writing new faith stories without fear but with an abundance of hope and joy.

Together, as encouraged with the words of Romans 12:12, let us rejoice in our confident hope, display patience amidst troubles, and persistently lift our prayers.

May the joy of trusting in God and the hope that comes from it be yours on every Sunday with your church family and friends. May such overflowing joy and hope flourish in your life every day as you walk with God.

Hope and joy!
 PyungAhn "Peace"
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