



## July 2023

**Pastors' notes... Pastors' notes...** This summer we are diving into a worship series centering on discipleship. As you journey through your summer plans, I encourage you to make one of your destinations be at worship service. Here are six Ways Going to Church Can Benefit Your Life because there will always be obstacles to attending church. Maybe you work or have sports practice on Sundays, you don't think church is necessary, or you just want to relax after a stressful week. Whatever obstacles you face, you will be blessed for choosing to follow God's commandment to worship at church.

### 1 - Worshipping God is a commandment

As one of His Ten Commandments, God commanded that we keep the Sabbath day holy (see Exodus 20:8-11). One of the ways we keep this commandment is to meet together on Sundays to worship God and give Him thanks. We are also strengthened when we are around other believers, see their faith, and hear their experiences and testimonies.

### 2 - The Sacrament helps us remember Jesus

At church, we partake of the sacrament (or Communion). Jesus commanded, "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me"

### 3 - God's Church relies on you

In the Bible, the Apostle Paul compared the church to a body, with Jesus as the head. He said for a body to work, every member is important and must do its part (see Ephesians 4:16). Participating in church and offering your time and talents will improve and strengthen both you and the people around you.

### 4 - Church services teach and uplift

What we learn at church gives us guidance on how to follow God, improve our spirituality, and live better lives. You can be uplifted by fellow believers and by the opportunity to serve and worship. You can also feel the Holy Spirit who brings "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, [and] faith" (Galatians 5:22).

### 5 - You gain a sense of belonging

Church is a community where we can socialize and support each other. You can make friends, feel a sense of belonging, and build a support network that you can rely on. The church community helps us to "mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:9).

### 6 - God can speak to you

You can find answers at church. Maybe you're struggling with a specific question or need some direction in your life. Maybe you just need to feel God's love and know that He is there. As you listen to sermons and study God's teachings, you will have opportunities to receive insight from God. He wants to communicate with you, and church is a good place to hear His voice in your heart and mind.

**Finding strength in community is a true blessing!**



**The Lord has reserved a pew just for you!**

**Sunday Worship:  
In Sanctuary at 11:00am  
&  
Sumner Center UMC Facebook  
Page**

Visit our Church Website at:

<http://www.sumnercenter.com>

**Donations may be sent to our  
mailing address:  
25378 151st Ave**

**Pastoral Support Team**

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**Grace and Peace in the  
name of Jesus Christ:**

*If you have items you would like to be published in the newsletter, please contact Pastor Bridget, by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the preceding month by emailing your information to ([bridget@countrywidecarriers.com](mailto:bridget@countrywidecarriers.com)) Or by bringing your information to Worship on Sunday mornings)*

# Calendar of Events

(Subject to change and/or be added to as the need arises)

## July 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
<b>2</b> 11 am Worship Pastor Bridget Food Shelf Mission Collection Sunday  communion sUNDAY	3	4 	5	6	7	8
<b>9</b> 11 am Worship Pastor Bridget  Children's time Stories of Jesus @ 10:30 am	10	11	12	13	14	15 Ad Council Meeting @ Church 10:00 am
<b>16</b> 11 am Worship Pastor Jon	17	18	19	20	21  An inspiring concert featuring students from around the world! Friday, July 21 7:00pm at Stewartville United Methodist Church	22
<b>23</b> 11 am Worship Pastor Jon	24	25	26	27	28	29
<b>30</b> 11 am Worship Guest Speaker	31					

**Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup> Racine UMC will be hosting National Night out. Serving Pizza and Ice Cream from 5-7pm**

# July Worship Schedule



**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**

**July 2, 2023**

**Pastor Bridget Sheely Leading**

**Communion Sunday**

Today our focus is on hospitality. Jesus sees hospitality as central to our discipleship and our Gospel text relating to hospitality is short and sweet, straightforward and to the point. Jesus is preparing his disciples to go out and tell the good news. It is their first mission trip. But instead of driving nails and cleaning up disaster areas, they are to knock on doors and ask if it would be all right to talk about Jesus. Hear the words from our Lord this day.



**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost**

**July 9, 2023**

**Pastor Bridget Sheely Leading**

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28

Who was Jesus talking to? Well, Jesus was talking to the people of the day who were weighed down by the rules put in place by the Jewish religious authorities. They couldn't possibly live up to the expectations set before them and they are weary from trying. Then comes Jesus and what an incredible invitation he extends to them.



**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost**

**July 16, 2023**

**Pastor Jon Marburger Leading**

Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer and invite God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, we are engaging in an act of imagination and visioning. Any time that we claim something of the prophetic vision or embrace a kingdom image of how we could be living in beloved community together, we are imagining a new reality. This is a disciple's task. We are called to see more than simply what is — not that disciples ignore the world as it is. We are not called to be “so heavenly minded that we are not earthly good”! No, we do live in the world that is. But we also hold out hope, a living, driving, motivating hope for what could be. For what is promised. We lean into the promises of God with joy and with confidence, even as we

recognize how far we still must go to reach that mountaintop.

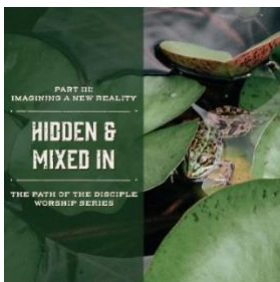


**8<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost**

**July 23, 2023**

**Pastor Jon Marburger Leading**

Sometimes we may think that perfection is acquired by becoming aware of our faults and working to root these out. However, when we become more familiar with Jesus' attitude to the limited and sinful side of ourselves, we learn to accept our limited and sinful self just as Jesus did with Zacchaeus. If we don't accept this side of ourselves, we tend to become fixated with it and fail to appreciate the fullness of life Jesus has already given us. So Folks, today we are reminded to be with Jesus and let him teach us to let the weeds grow with the wheat lest seeking to root them or we might fail to appreciate all that is good and even beautiful about our life.



**9<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost**

**July 30, 2023**

**Guest Speaker Sunday**

Hebrews 11:1 reminds us that faith “is the conviction of things not seen.” Not seen? Like a treasure hidden in a field, or like yeast mixed in the flour, hidden and mixed in. That's how grace works.

So how do we find it and how do we celebrate it?

By telling the stories, by pointing it out. Glory sightings, some call them. Sharing with the whole body the moments of joy and grace that we experience day by day. Often, our prayer time is one of petitions, requesting more of the Spirit in our lives or in the lives of those we love or the world as a whole. An important and necessary part of our ongoing prayer life, to be sure. But we can also give thanks and praise for all that has and is happening in our lives of faith.

**Come! For all God's children are invited each week to gather in His name and Worship Him who loves us!**

# Songs of Hope

An inspiring concert featuring students from around the world!

**Friday, July 21**

**7:00pm**

**at Stewartville United Methodist Church**



**Free will offering with proceeds benefitting Songs of Hope**



Sounds of Hope  
245 Summit Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55102 USA  
Tel: (651) 225-4179



**STEWARTVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
900 John Wesley Ave NW  
Stewartville, MN 55976  
*open hearts • open minds • open doors*

# 2023 conference highlights



**The 2023 Theme:** Drawing on Luke 24:13-35, the theme of this year’s gathering is “Encounter. Transform. Respond. The Emmaus Experience.” This post-resurrection story where everything has changed and the implications still seem a bit cloudy mirrors the time and space we are living in as a church. We, like the two disciples, are on the road, asking deep questions, and trying to make sense of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus today. And we, too, are finding that we encounter Christ in transforming ways when we do.

**Bishop’s Episcopal Address:** In the Emmaus Road story, the impossible becomes possible as the world is made right again through encounters with the resurrected Christ who brings healing, reconciliation, and hope. Bishop Lanette Plambeck, in her inaugural Episcopal Address, reminds us that this story for the two disciples on the road is our story too. During this challenging time in The United Methodist Church, she invited those of us in the Minnesota Conference to lean in to one another and declare that there is enough love for all of us, and she reminded each person: You are loved. You are a child of God and a person of worth. There are no exceptions. (Watch or download Episcopal Address.)

**Milestones in ministry:** Those gathered honored and thanked 14 clergy entering retirement, and they celebrated four pastors ordained as elders, two commissioned as provisional members, three local licensed pastors who completed their five-year course of study, and 13 people authorized to serve as local pastors in the congregations and ministry areas in which they are appointed.

**Fresh expressions with Michael Beck:** Rev. Dr. Michael Beck is co-pastor of two Florida churches and a network of “fresh expressions” led by laity that gather in various community venues and public spaces around shared interests and hobbies. He talked about fresh expressions as a new movement of Christian communities where people with no connection to the church are finding life and encountering Christ. Dinner church whereby people gather to share a meal is an easy starting point for a fresh expression, Beck said. Some of the other fresh expressions he’s involved with take place in a tattoo parlor, at a restaurant, in a virtual reality space, at dog park, and even at Tesla charging stations.

**Love Offering:** Conference members, on behalf of their churches gave just over **\$40,000 to the 2023 Love Offering**. Sixty percent of it will fund a new grant to support churches that have partnerships with mental health services offered in local schools or communities, 30 percent will go to three Minnesota nonprofits engaged in mental health education and advocacy, and 10 percent of the Love Offering each year goes to Volunteers in Mission scholarships, which support first-time mission trip participants. You may continue to donate throughout 2023.

**Legislation:** Hundreds of voting members in attendance at Annual Conference approved all pieces of legislation before them, including resolutions opposing assault-style weapons, addressing the Israeli detention of children, and supporting both a U.S. Regional Conference and the removal of all discriminatory policies and harmful language related to sexual orientation from the Book of Discipline.

**Disaffiliating churches:** members ratified the terms of disaffiliation agreements made between the conference Board of Trustees and 14 local churches that have discerned that their path goes a different direction from the Minnesota Annual Conference. After the vote, Bishop Lanette asked Minnesota United Methodists to keep these congregations in their hearts and to pray that even as we part ways, they may continue to live out their faith and serve as a beacon of light and hope for all.

Akeley UMC  
Central UMC  
First United UMC of Ortonville  
UMC of Raymond  
UMC of Hawick  
UMC of Hewitt

Olivet UMC  
Salem UMC  
UMC of Sebeka  
Verndale UMC

Villard UMC  
First UMC of Windom  
Korean Evangelical UMC  
Money Creek UMC

# Scripture for Summer Joys

One joy of summer is its beauty. We can praise God for this beauty with Psalm 96. A portion of that psalm reads:

*Sing to the Lord a new song;  
sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
Sing to the Lord, praise his name;  
proclaim his salvation day after day.  
Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

*For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;  
he is to be feared above all gods.  
For all the gods of the nations are idols,  
but the Lord made the heavens.  
Splendor and majesty are before him;  
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.*

Another Scripture verse that can remind us of the joys God has created is 1 Chronicles 16:32 to 34:

*Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;  
let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them!  
33 Let the trees of the forest sing,  
let them sing for joy before the Lord,  
for he comes to judge the earth.*

*34 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.*

**Using these Scriptures daily can help us to remain joyful and to project that joyfulness to others.**

## Scripture for Summer Stresses

Scripture also can help us cope with stress by reminding us of all that God does for us and of God's constant presence. If we feel stress, we can recite these Scriptures daily.

Romans 8:28 reminds us that no matter what happens, God will bring good from it. It reads, "*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*"

Deuteronomy 31:8 reminds us that we never go anywhere without God, and is comforting if we are going into a new place or to someplace that is difficult for us. In the New International Version translation, it reads: "*The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*"

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus addresses worry, which is a major source of stress. He says: "*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you, by worrying, add a single hour to your life?*"

## Scripture for Summer Reflections



Because of its slower pace, summer often provides us with time to reflect. We reflect upon the year so far; we reflect upon this summer and past summers. While we sometimes wallow in the difficult aspects of our lives, God hopes that we will spend time dwelling on the positive, joyful parts of our life. To help us remember and reflect on the joys of the past, our daily devotions about summer might include these Scriptures:

**To reflect on the treasures God has given us.** Matthew 13:44: "*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*"

**To reflect on how we praise God with joy.** Psalm 27:5: "*And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.*"

**So that our joy will bubble over in laughter.** Psalm 126: 2-3: "*Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, The Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.*"

Christian devotions for summer are important in helping us to remember that God is with us no matter what happens. They also help us remain joyful and let that joy flow and bless the lives of others. Repeating these Scriptures often helps us grow in faith, too.

E S S R A T S A C Y Y N K V H W V O  
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 J M V C L O A N T L S E P I R T S D  
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AMERICA  
 BANNERS  
 BARBECUE  
 BEACH  
 CELEBRATION  
 COUNTRY  
 DEMOCRACY  
 FIREWORKS

FLAG  
 HAMBURGERS  
 HOT DOGS  
 ICE CREAM  
 INDEPENDENCE  
 JULY  
 PARADE  
 PATRIOTIC

PICNIC  
 SPARKLERS  
 STARS  
 STRIPES  
 SUMMER  
 TRAVEL  
 UNITED STATES  
 VACATION

## Words of Inspiration in Honor of our Countries 4<sup>th</sup> of July Birthday Celebration!

By: Kathy Hawkins

I look down from my heavenly home  
 And wonder how my children have grown  
 To be lost in the "it is all about me" thoughts  
  
 When others are suffering and have naught  
 This country so rich, large, and free  
 Please take the less fortunate and let them be  
 They too can contribute to this land so abundant  
 The dreams they can share without judgement  
 Their ancestors came from far away  
 Their journeys long and families afraid  
  
 Would this country take them as they stand?  
 Yes, they said, come work our land

Difficulties were often, some large some small  
 The forefathers remained standing tall  
 The wars they came and took ones they held dear  
 The cause was great but they fought even in fear  
 Since 1776 when this country began so young  
 It's many people stood together and sung  
 The heart of this country is the people, it's true  
 Working together and caring for others to make it  
 through  
  
 So, as I look down with eyes full of tears  
 I ask them just when they will listen and hear  
 Do unto others, says the Good Book for us  
 Share these words and give me your trust  
 I made this land for all to enjoy and love  
 Remember that it came from the one up above.