



The Banner

Every person feels, knows and shares God's love

Monthly Newsletter for Bethany United Methodist Church • Madison, WI • Vol. 56, No. 5 • May 2024

Happening in May

Saturday, May 4

UWF Salad Luncheon

Saturday May 4 beginning at noon. This year's program, *Let There Be Chocolate*, will be presented by Gail Ambrosius. Full details on Page 4.

Sunday, May 5

Town Hall

Sunday, May 5 at 8:30 am. Pre-worship Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, May 5th, led by our Leadership Board and Pastor Julie. Pastor Julie will provide insights from General Conference, detailing decisions made and their potential impact on Bethany UMC. Additionally, we'll share updates on the MCCI process, as time permits. See you there!



Sunday, May 12

Bible Display

Do you have a favorite Bible or one that is special to you? Maybe it's a family heirloom, maybe it's the one you use every day, or maybe it's one you got as a child. Bring it by Sunday, May 12 for our Bible Display. Our 2nd Grade students will be receiving Bibles that day and as part of the celebration we want to share that Bible reading is a lifelong journey. You can add your Bible to the table in the lobby. Be sure to also fill out one of the slips of paper and share why the Bible you brought is special to you. Thanks for sharing!

Sunday, May 19

Senior Recognition during worship on Sunday morning.

Forum: Faith, Firearms and Forging — Guns to Garden Tools with Jeff Wild

Jeff Wild, a retired ELCA pastor and member of Midvale Lutheran Church, has been leading a protest against gun violence with a new biblical perspective on what makes us safe. Jeff was trained through the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship to coordinate Safe Surrender events (aka gun buybacks) and has assisted seven congregations resulting in the safe surrender of 100 firearms. Presently, two Safe Surrender events are scheduled, one with Covenant Lutheran Church of Stoughton on June 8 and the other with Middleton Community Church on June 15. Full details are on Page 5.



PASTOR'S COLUMN



As I write this note our rescheduled 2020 General Conference is underway and I'm preparing to leave for Charlotte as an observer to what many believe will be a pivotal meeting for the United



Methodist Church. Like many I have high hopes that this General Conference will pass legislation that removes harmful language from our Book of Discipline and seeks to repair the damage done to our LGBTQIA+ siblings and their families. I also have some fear of what happens if the legislation doesn't pass. If we don't make the changes that many of us have been anticipating for years. What then?

By the time you read this we may have an answer, or we may still be in the midst of our struggle. Whatever the case, what I'm holding on to is the love I feel for the United Methodist Church. This is not the denomination I was raised in. It is the denomination I chose, or rather, it's the denomination that chose me.

I felt love and welcome in the United Methodist Church that I had not experienced in the church of my childhood. In the United

Methodist Church I experienced a church family and a place where I felt loved and accepted. This is the church that taught me to ask questions about the Bible, my faith and church leaders. This is the church that nurtured my call to ministry and shaped me into the pastor that I am today.

The United Methodist Church is beloved to me and an integral part of my identity. So, whatever happens at General Conference, at this moment I'm holding on to gratitude. Gratitude for the people who have helped me to grow in faith. Gratitude for the pastors and teachers who shared knowledge and grace with me. Gratitude for my parents who instilled in me a love of God and a firm faith foundation. Gratitude for the congregations, large and small, that provided messages of love and acceptance that spoke to my heart. Gratitude to God who continues to work through the people of the United Methodist Church. I pray that our beloved denomination does us proud these next two weeks. And I pray that whatever happens we can continue to be a beloved community of love and grace.

In hope and love, Pastor Julie

General Conference Update — Regionalization

General Conference has now passed much of the legislation that aims to give The United Methodist Church's different geographic regions equal standing in decision-making.

In what outgoing Council of Bishops President Thomas J. Bickerton called "a historic day for our church," delegates voted 586 to 164 for an amendment to the denomination's constitution that will now go before annual conference voters for potential ratification.

A constitutional amendment requires at least a two-thirds vote at General Conference; the regionalization amendment received 78% of the vote. To be ratified, the amendment also will need at least a two-thirds total vote of annual conference lay and clergy voters. Annual conferences are church regions consisting of multiple congregations and other ministries.

Regionalization has become United Methodist shorthand for a package of legislation that would restructure the denomination. Under the legislation, the U.S. and each central conference — church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines — would become regional conferences with the same authority to adapt the Book of Discipline, the denomination's policy book, for more missional effectiveness.

At present, only central conferences have that authority under the denomination's constitution to adapt the Discipline as missional needs and different legal contexts require.

Under the amendment that passed General Conference, each regional conference would have the authority to:

- Establish and publish a regional Discipline with legislation and provision pertaining to church structures within its boundaries, including qualifications and educational requirements of clergy and specialized lay ministries.
- Set standards of character and other qualifications for the admission of lay members.
- Establish and publish a regional hymnal and ritual of church, including for marriage and burial. The rites approved would need to be in line with core doctrines of The United Methodist Church and in accordance with local laws.
- Allow the annual conferences to adopt structures adequate to their mission while upholding General Conference-mandated structures.

The above is an excerpt from a much more detailed article from [United Methodist News](#).

Simple Gifts for May — “The Playing Field”

Simple Gift offerings made in May are going to support our partners at [The Playing Field](#), which uses a unique model to offer the highest level of early child care and education to children from varied socio-economic backgrounds.

Bethany United Methodist Church has hosted The Playing Field since its launch in 2015 as an independent, nonprofit organization.

In addition, it was announced earlier this spring that more of Madison’s most vulnerable families will get access to free or low-cost child care come January, when The Playing Field opens another location on Madison’s far East Side at 2102 East Springs Drive. Located in a former Menards store, the new 15,000-square-foot space will have room for 100 children in 10 classrooms.

Access to child care is an important element for families seeking to move out of poverty. Reach Dane (Early Head Start,) United Way of Dane County, and the City of Madison provide financial support to families seeking access to quality care, which too often is out of reach for many families. Even with subsidized childcare, the rates at many centers are simply too high for struggling families. Unfortunately, this can mean that children most in need of quality early education are not able to access it.

The Playing Field (TPF) is dedicated to changing this reality by making the highest level of early education available to children of varied backgrounds. To accomplish this goal, its enrollment spaces are reserved for children based on three specific funding sources. One-third of TPF’s enrollment spaces are reserved for families who might choose any high-quality program for their child — but choose The Playing Field because they value diversity and support the center’s mission. For another third of the students, TPF attempts to raise scholarship funds to assist families who don’t qualify for childcare subsidies, or who would incur very high co-payments. And for another third of its students, TPF reserves spaces for families funded by Early Head Start. Families experiencing homelessness are given priority for these funds and welcomed into the school family.

Simple gifts are made by placing loose coins in the offering plates, or by putting cash or a check in mission envelopes. One can also give online by visiting [BethanyMadison.org](#) (click on We Serve and, from the drop-down menu, select Giving Financially).

Please give generously, as your support of The Playing Field will make a difference in real and relevant ways.

In addition to May Simple Gifts support, TPF also has a wish list of items that are needed to equip classrooms. If you would like to donate items, check out their Amazon Wish List and select any items that you would like to donate (items may be shipped to Bethany UMC at 3910 Mineral Point Road, Madison, WI 53705 or to your home). Or write a check out to Bethany and put “Wish List” in the memo field. Cash donations will be given to The Playing Field so they can order what is needed. To learn more about ways to donate to The Playing Field visit: <https://playingfieldmadison.org/donate/>.



The Playing Field
a place to begin





UNITE WOMEN IN FAITH ACTIVITIES



UWF SUSANNA CIRCLE

The next meeting of the Susanna Circle United Women of Faith is at noon on Wednesday, May 1st at the home of Judy Loveless (815 Maple Rd, Verona). Please bring a dish to share (beverages and dessert will be provided). Our program speaker is Kathy Mohs, Bethany's Youth Director. Let Judy know if you are coming and please bring a friend. All women are invited (608-848-8243).

UWF SALAD LUNCHEON

United Women in Faith is hosting a Salad Luncheon on Saturday, May 4 at 12:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. Tickets will also be sold at the door on May 4. Child care will be provided from 12:00 pm to 2:30 pm. There will be delicious salads and dinner rolls and scrumptious desserts! You will also have the opportunity to donate to a couple mission projects.

Let There Be Chocolate!! Our program for the luncheon will begin at 1:30 pm. It will be a presentation by Gail Ambrosius about her chocolate experiences. And there may be samples!

All are welcome as we enjoy good fellowship and support mission outreach!

AGAPE

The Agape Circle of UWF will meet Monday, May 13 at 6:30 pm in Room 228 at Bethany. Gail Steinhorst will be taking us on a "Journey through Viet Nam" based on their recent trip there. In some way, Viet Nam was a war we all know some part of. Come to see where the country is now! Eileen Dunne will be our hostess. Please come. All are welcome!

FOOD & FELLOWSHIP

Food and Fellowship is an informal group of men and women who meet for lunch at a local restaurant on the third Wednesday of each month. Everyone orders from the menu and separate checks are issued. The next luncheon will be on May 15 at 11:30 at Imperial Gardens in Middleton. This is a good opportunity to get to know some of your fellow Bethany friends and to share in good food and lively conversation. The hostess for May is Beverly Klumph. If you plan on attending in May, please let Beverly know by Monday, May 13 so she can give the restaurant a count on how many to plan for. You can let her know by [email](#) or by telephone at 608-722-9226. All are welcome!

UWF BOOK BROWSERS

The last Book Browsers meeting for the 2023-24 year is on Monday, May 20 at 1:00pm [via Zoom](#). There will be a discussion of books we've read and books we want to read. A good summer reading list will be generated. Please join us.

UWF LYDIA FELLOWSHIP

The final meeting of the 2023-2024 year for Lydia Fellowship is scheduled for Thursday, May 23, at the home of Sandy Brewer. Sandy has a fabulous garden full of many varieties of irises that will be in bloom at this meeting time. Be sure to join us (all are welcome to attend) for this garden tour! If you are able to attend, please email [Eileen Rech](#) or phone (608-228-6256).



ANNOUNCEMENTS



FORUM: FAITH, FIREARMS AND FORGING

Guns to Garden Tools with Jeff Wild
Sunday, May 19, 11:15 am in the Chapel



Jeff Wild, a retired ELCA pastor and member of Midvale Lutheran Church, has been leading a protest against gun violence with a new biblical perspective on what makes us safe.

Jeff's opinions about firearms were most deeply formed by ten funerals he presided over in his ministry of men who died by suicide – six of them using a gun. As he said “I knew these people. I grieved their deaths and knew the implications and ramifications that it had on the loved ones that really affected me to the core.” To that end, he sees the voluntary surrender of firearms as a new angle in the rigid gun control debate in our country, stressing there is room to encourage some to get rid of guns laying around, and for all to reflect on our safety anew.

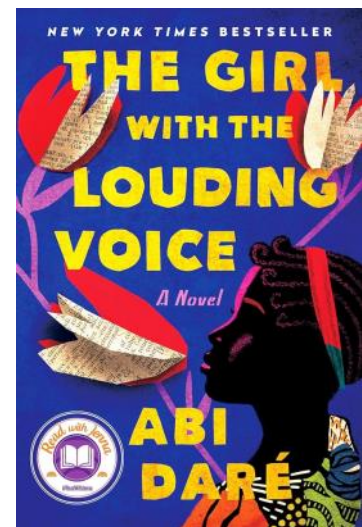
As a blacksmith, Jeff's beliefs, while forged from funerals, were further inspired by his affiliation with RAW Tools an organization that forges guns into garden tools founded by a young Mennonite pastor Michael Martin after the heinous massacre at Sandy Hook.

Jeff was trained through the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship to coordinate Safe Surrender events (aka gun buybacks) and has assisted seven congregations resulting in the safe surrender of 100 firearms. Presently, two Safe Surrender events are scheduled, one with Covenant Lutheran Church of Stoughton on June 8 and the other with Middleton Community Church on June 15.

Jeff sees his purpose to be a resource for congregations and pastors that are willing to dialog about prevention of gun violence and learn more about the guns to garden tools movement spreading across the United States. Jeff has given many demonstrations at church sites in Dane County, St Paul and Kansas City. This year he is providing hand spades to gardeners who serve community food pantry gardens and they will be asked to fill out a survey of the effect of the garden tool has upon them as a gardener.

REFLECTIONS BOOK GROUP

Reflections Book Club will meet Tuesday, May 28 at 1:00 pm in the Bethany library. May's book is *The Girl With the Louding Voice* by Abi Dare. It tells the story of a teenage Nigerian girl called Adunni who becomes a maid and struggles with many things growing up, including her limited education, poverty and her inability to speak up for herself. Copies of the book are available at the Madison Public Library. Come and join our lively discussion. Everyone is welcome.





EASTER PHOTO BOOTH





EASTER PHOTO BOOTH





GAME NIGHTS



On Saturday, April 20th friends and families of Bethany enjoyed another Game Night! There was plenty of pizza, games, puzzles, and laughs to be had.





GAME NIGHTS



For Children's Ministry information, contact Lisa Weaver, Director of Children's Ministries
Phone: (608) 238-6381 / Email: Children@BethanyMadison.org

Bible Presentations

We are delighted to present Bethany 2nd graders with Bibles on Sunday, May 12, during 10:00 am worship. This year Bibles will also be given to several children who have joined the Bethany community after 2nd grade -- so we have a sizable group! Your joyful presence in this worship service is an important part of this faith milestone for our children.

5th to 6th Grade Recognition

Worship on May 12 will also include a recognition of our Bethany Sunday School participants who will be completing 5th grade this spring, and entering the Bethany Youth Program this summer. This is another exciting faith milestone to celebrate!

Easter Egg Hunt

A robust group of kids enjoyed searching for Easter Eggs on the church lawn on Sunday, March 31. In addition to colorful, plastic eggs with sweet treats, children also found felt eggs, flower and vegetable seed packets, Cheddar Bunnies, Fruit snacks, and small wooden crosses. Easter morning sticker scenes were given out during the Children's Message in both services.



Youth News

For Youth Ministry information, contact Kathy Mohs, Director of Youth Ministries
Phone: (608) 238-6381 / Email: Youth@BethanyMadison.org

Senior Recognition Sunday:

Our high school seniors will be recognized on Sunday, May 19th will be Senior Recognition Sunday.

Bethany will present each senior with a special gift. On Sunday, May 12th, the congregation will be invited to help with preparing these gifts during fellowship time in Fellowship Hall.

Confirmation

On Sunday, April 21st, our three confirmands, along with their mentors, attended Confirmation class at Holy Wisdom Monastery. They were joined by First UMC and their confirmands and mentors as well. The focus of this time together was on health and wellness and making faith-based healthy choices: physically, mentally and emotionally.



Sunday, June 2nd is Confirmation Sunday. Our three confirmands are Erik Jacobson, Kerala O'Rourke and Zachary Rahn. Please join us as we welcome them as newly appointed members of Bethany United Methodist Church. Reception to follow after the service.

Summer Youth Mission Trip

Youth who have completed grades 6-12 are invited to join our summer mission trip July 22- 26. The focus will be on Ecology, Justice and Faith, Food Security and Homelessness. This will be an opportunity to serve with and learn from our neighbors here in Wisconsin.

The first day and night will be spent in Milwaukee, then we will return to Madison for some local serving and learning. There will be some fun and faith building along the way and the final day will be spent enjoying a water park in Wisconsin Dells. Contact Kathy Mohs, Director of Youth Ministries, to register or for more information.

SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE (IN-PERSON AND YOUTUBE)

Sunday, Mar. 31	Sunday, April 7	Sunday, April 14	Sunday, April 21	Sunday, April 28
Total 323	Total..... 163	Total..... 148	Total..... 168	Total 169



United Methodist Church

3910 Mineral Point Road
Madison, WI 53705-5911



We are a Reconciling Congregation,
welcoming all people to be a part of
our church family.

Information

Office Hours: 8 am - 2:30 pm, Monday — Friday

Church Office: (608) 238-6381

Email: BethanyOffice@BethanyMadison.org

Website: bethanymadison.org

Sunday Morning Schedule

Faithlink Adult Discussion Class 8:45 am

Coffee Fellowship 9:15 am

Worship (in person and on YouTube) 10:00 am

Coffee Fellowship Following Worship

Staff

Lead Pastor.....	Rev. Julie Wilson
Pastor of Visitation	Rev. Brad Mather
Deacon	Rev. Kory Douglass
Office Administrator	Carl White
Director of Children’s Ministries & Music	Lisa Weaver
Youth Director	Kathy Mohs
Director of Music	Kristie Halverson
Director of Bell Choirs	Nick Bonaccio
Organist.....	Sue Poullette
Pianist.....	Evan Lange
Custodian.....	Ron Rebholz

E-Banner Deadline: Fridays at Noon

Banner Deadline for the June Issue: May 20