



PATHWAYS

Emmanuel Community United Methodist Church



JANUARY 2026

Emmanuel Community United Methodist Church Monthly Newsletter

N84 W16707 Menomonee Avenue, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051 ✧ 262-251-3830 ✧ www.ec-umc.com

GIVING STATEMENTS/OFFERING ENVELOPES

Gift statements for 2025 will be sent out the first week of January. If you itemize for tax purposes this is the statement to use.

Pledge envelopes are outside the church office, arranged alphabetically by last name.

If you give to the church through the website or electronic fund transfer, you will not receive pledge envelopes. If you need an envelope, for there are extras in the pew back. (Please be sure to include your name on the envelopes.)

If you have any questions please contact Anna Thompson, Financial Secretary at 320-309-2003 or Annabthomp@gmail.com



WOMEN'S MINISTRY - WEDNESDAY STUDY

January 14 – February 11, 7-8:30 PM

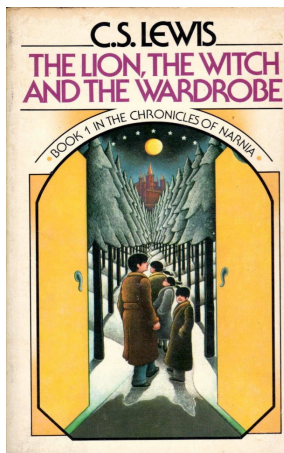
Join Women's Ministry for a 5-week study of C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Each week, we'll explore several chapters from this beloved classic—rich with adventure, mystery, and meaning in the magical land of Narnia.

Along the way, we'll also learn about the life of C.S. Lewis and how his faith and experiences shaped his writing.

The study will conclude with a showing of the movie and pizza on our last evening, 2/11, starting at 6 PM.

Please sign up using this link :

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D44A8AE23A4FC1-61319300-womens>



SO GRATEFUL FOR 2025; EXCITED FOR 2026

At the end of one year and beginning of another, it feels appropriate to remember and give thanks for all the wonderful things that happened in 2025.

The giving from the congregation was so generous – not just financial gifts but also gifts of time and talents.

The Mission Team strives to give a variety of opportunities for us to be the hands and feet of God in the world: volunteering on-site, cooking, knitting, quilting, painting 2x4s, assembling hygiene bags and courage bags, collecting egg cartons, buying jackets, selling items at the Children's Market, and so much more. Thank you! Looking forward to many opportunities in 2026, both old and new, for ECUMC to show God's love.



2026 FLOWER CHART SIGN UP

Do you know about the flower chart hanging in the Narthex? It lists every Sunday for 2026. You can sign up to bring altar flowers any week.



Why donate flowers?

- 1) Choose a meaningful date to remember or honor a loved one or a special occasion.
- 2) Help beautify our worship spaces. Your plant or cut flower arrangement is moved to Celebration Hall after the Sanctuary service and may be taken home at 11 AM.

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A WORD FROM PASTOR MATT

Pastor Matt Hadley; MattH@ec-umc.com

A Resolution Worth Keeping: Be in Worship in 2026

January is a season of fresh starts. We make resolutions about our health, our habits, our schedules, and our priorities. Some stick. Many don't. But occasionally, we stumble upon a resolution that doesn't just improve our lives, it shapes our souls.



As we step into 2026, I want to invite you to consider one simple, meaningful resolution: commit to being in worship each week—whether in person or online—as we journey together through the year ahead.

Worship is not about perfect attendance or checking a box. It is about showing up—repeatedly—to place ourselves before God, to hear the Word, to pray, to sing, to wonder, to wrestle, and to be reminded who we are and whose we are.

Worship shapes us over time. Week by week, it forms faith - not through dramatic moments alone, but through faithful presence.

This year's preaching plan is intentionally designed to invite curiosity, honesty, depth, and growth.

We begin January by asking a question many people already carry: **"Do You Believe in Miracles?"**

Together we will explore what miracles really are, wrestle with familiar stories like Jesus turning water into wine, calming the storm, and healing the blind, and consider what those stories mean for faithful people living in today's world.

As the year unfolds, worship will continue to meet us where we are. In Lent, we will confront the **"Seven Deadly Sins,"** not to shame us, but to help us name what pulls us away from God and neighbor. Easter will proclaim again that death does not have the final word. Youth Sunday and Confirmation will remind us that faith is alive and growing in the next generation.

In the months that follow, we will hear **"Jesus' Red-Letter Words,"** explore **"A New Vision for the United Methodist Church,"** and spend the summer with a **"Baker's Dozen,"** getting to know the disciples—the imperfect, ordinary people Jesus chose to change the world. In the fall, our series is **"Confirmands ask."** In this series the confirmands will ask real, honest questions about faith, prayer, doubt, and denominations. October will focus on faithful stewardship through **"Wesley's Quadrilateral,"** and November will invite us to listen to God's voice through **"Dreams"** found in Scripture. Advent will close the year with the promise of **"The Gift"**—light, justice, hope, and joy.



You do not have to attend every single Sunday to belong here. But making worship a priority—weekly, intentionally, faithfully—creates space for God to work in your life over time. If your schedule allows you to be in the Sanctuary or Celebration Hall, wonderful. If life, health, or travel means joining online, that is worship too.

So, as you make your resolutions this January, consider one that lasts beyond a few weeks. Resolve to show up. Resolve to worship. Resolve to let God shape your year.

I can't wait to walk this journey with you in 2026.

Pastor Matt

CHURCH OFFICE

262-251-3830 Church@ec-umc.com

Hours: Monday–Thursday, 9 AM–1 PM

Closed 1/1 & 1/2 for New Year's

Closed 1/19 for MLK Jr. Day

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Contact: Anna Schoenenberger; AnnaS@ec-umc.com

A new year brings another chance to create fresh goals, renew commitments, and reflect on past events while looking ahead at how to make the next year even better.

This holds true for the Youth Ministry at our church, too.

As for reflecting on past events:

From November 15 - December 14, the Youth and Missions Team collaborated for the "Stuff the Sleigh" food drive. Our congregation generously donated 1,038 pounds of food to Rooted & Rising. What a way to be a blessing to others!

The Youth Group also hosted an ugly sweater Christmas movie night. Fun was had, with lots of nachos enjoyed! Even more importantly, though, the youth learned about the spirit of giving by assembling Cups of Christmas Cheer, which included a biblical merry message for the holiday season. The congregation was invited to take a cup to give to someone in need of a little

Christmas warmth and joy. The youth reflected on how, although it is enjoyable to receive presents at Christmastime, the act of giving is even better.

The next Youth Group event will be Sunday, January 11, from 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM in the Youth Room. It's the inaugural Youth Group Trivia Challenge! Kids will participate in teams (so start brainstorming those clever trivia team names now!) and test their general and Bible knowledge. Prizes and plenty of snacks!

Sign-up here: <https://forms.gle/AMQXDU9gLa3hxTVx7>

The Conference-wide Winter Youth Retreat at Camp Lake Lucerne is January 23 – 25.

Sign up with the QR code.

The cost for youth is \$50, with ECUMC paying the balance.

Please let Anna know once you sign up. Registration fee checks, made payable to ECUMC, should be given to Anna.

Be sure to check out the bulletin boards in the hallways at church and keep an eye on your Inbox for more Youth Ministry updates and opportunities to stay involved!



MUSIC NEWS: THANK-YOU, THANK-YOU!

Contact: Bill Follmann; BillF@ec-umc.com; 414-881-3023

Thank You is the theme for January's message from music. Gratitude and thanks!

Thank-you to all who participated in the children's pageant, **Manger Tales**, on Sunday, December 14. Thank-you to all who traveled through the below zero temperatures to four different care facilities, bringing Christmas joy through **caroling** to those who are unable to get out during the Christmas season.

Thank-you to all the musicians, over 75, who participated in making the **All-Choir Sunday** a meaningful experience. Special thanks to Doug Thopson and the other brave percussionists for all the added parts.

A big thanks to Abbey's sister, Sarah Feil, for adding her keyboarding talents.

Thank-you to the musicians adding to the three worship services on **Christmas Eve**.

Finally, a big thank-you to my college and friend Abbey Harkins for continuing to share her talents and time with almost every musical group, helping them learn and grow as well as providing quality music on a weekly basis.

We are blessed by so many willing to share their talents with us!

As we enter January, remember this is a great time to begin to get involved with one or more of the musical groups here at Emmanuel. Choir is on Thursday evenings at 7 PM. I look forward to seeing you there!

Please contact me with questions or concerns.



SEW & SEWS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We recently completed 21 quilts to be donated to Rooted & Rising and 5 quilts which will go to Lyden Grove. Many, many thanks to everyone who helped by sewing squares together for the top layer, adding batting and backing layers, or tying knots. Some people helped with one specific task; some did every step.

New members are welcome to join – whether or not you sew, your help is needed and our fellowship is so special.

Sometime soon, the Sew & Sews will offer a variety of their projects for sale; proceeds will help fund our mission.



Farewell 2025!

The Sunday School children of ECUMC finished the last quarter of 2025 in so many wonderful ways!

This Fall we wanted to encourage the children to contribute to our mission to purchase a flock of chicks through Heifer International. Each flock provides eggs and protein for nourishment, boosts income through sales of extra eggs and offspring, and ensures security for generations through Passing on the Gift. Essentially, the family that receives the flock pays it forward by sharing chickens with other families.



The goal was \$20 for a flock of chicks and for the children to see that a little generosity can go a long way. This gift donation helps provide a family in need with a starter flock of 10 to 50 chicks. It was a slow start, but one child in particular felt such a sense of urgency that he cleaned his entire house to earn \$20. Way to go, Wesley Kostrzewa, and to all of the children that gave a little to give so much! Our next goal is a flock of a dozen ducks.



Thank you to the Matthias Family for hosting the December Club 4/5 event. The group enjoyed a Christmas movie, shared cocoa and snacks, and worked together on a service project. They spread the joy of the season and made Christmas cards for our Community Care members.



Club 4/5 was restarted in 2024 and was awarded a \$1,000 grant from the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation for 2025. These funds were used for outings and missions each month. Their outreach included Rooted & Rising, the Falls Area Food Pantry, and Meals on Wheels. I am pleased to share that our grant from WUMF was renewed for 2026 for over \$660, and I cannot wait to see what they do this year!



"Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11 CEB

We truly hope that you enjoyed our Christmas Program, "Manger Tales." The children rehearsed for two months to bring you this performance! Our Children's Choir Director, Laura Hohl, dedicated her time to bring their singing voices to the play, and our Children's Ministry Team helped support and guide the group throughout the season. Thank you to Tricia Gequillana, Meaghan Germana, Angie Schneider, and Stacy & Todd Velie. Special thanks to our youth volunteers Clarie Heinen, McKayla Loehe, Katelyn Mosher, Maggie Schlotthauer, and Noah Velie. Also our fabulous guest pianists, Millie Germana and Sylvia Petrie!

Our Advent curriculum corresponded with the Christmas Program as we explored the perspectives of the animals at the manger and the reason for the season. We started with "Doug the Donkey", then "Clara the Cow", and "Sam the Sheep." Our final lesson will cover "Cody the Camel" on January 4 - just in time for the Epiphany.



Hello 2026! Happy New Year!

As we start 2026, the Children's Ministry Team has set some lofty goals for the New Year. We look forward to sharing stories and images with you from all the fun things we have planned.

To start, we will be preparing packets for pick up on January 18 and 25 for this February's "Prayers from the Heart." Feel the love in February and become a prayer partner with a child from ECUMC!



YOUR 2026 PLEDGE

DID YOU KNOW? You can give directly from your checking account *without* using a credit or debit card through the church website?

Giving this way rather than through an EFT (electronic funds transfer) may eliminate bank charges for both you and the church.

If you are interested in converting your EFT to a gift through the church website, please contact Anna Thompson, Financial Secretary, at annavbthomp@gmail.com or 320-309-2003.



POINSETTIA PICK UP

Thank you to those whose poinsettias brightened our worship spaces!

If you haven't brought yours home yet, they can be picked up whenever the church is open during the week, or on Sunday morning.

Please check off your name on the list in the back of the church so we know you've got yours.



MORE THAN A RESOLUTION: Practicing Faithful Stewardship for the Long Haul

Every January, many of us start the year with good intentions. We resolve to spend less, save more, pay down debt or finally feel less anxious about money. Some of these resolutions stick for a while. Many don't. And it's not because we lack discipline or desire.

The truth is that healthy financial stewardship is rarely achieved through willpower alone.

Getting out of debt, learning to save, practicing contentment, growing in generosity and cultivating gratitude are not quick fixes. They are habits – formed slowly, intentionally and often imperfectly over time. Like prayer, worship and service, faithful stewardship is a spiritual practice that shapes us as disciples.

Scripture reminds us that transformation is ongoing work. Paul writes, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Romans 12:2). That kind of renewal does not happen because the calendar flips from December to January. It happens when we acknowledge that our relationship with money, possessions and generosity is deeply spiritual – and that God's work in us unfolds over a lifetime.

For some this might mean seeking help to escape cycles of debt. For others it may mean learning to live with enough, resisting the pressure to accumulate more. For still others it might be discovering the joy of generosity – not just financial giving, but generosity of time, skills, hospitality and compassion.

As individuals and as churches, the invitation at the start of a new year is not simply to make resolutions, but to recommit ourselves to practices that help us to grow in trust, gratitude and faithfulness. Stewardship is not about perfection. It's about progress – taken one faithful step at a time.



Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation



December 2025

Dear Friends,

As we close out 2025, we find ourselves reflecting on another year of meaningful and deeply impactful work here at Rooted & Rising. We are deeply grateful for this community, for our partners, and for all of our volunteers and supporters who make our mission possible.

Our work is not easy. Families in Washington Park continue to face steep challenges – housing pressures, financial uncertainty, a legacy of disinvestment and other barriers that can make basic needs feel out of reach. And yet, time and again, your support has helped us show up with consistency, compassion, and dignity. Because of you, we are able to walk alongside families through difficult moments and create pathways toward hope and progress.

Those of you who visit or volunteer at Rooted & Rising see the impact every day. A child learning with confidence in a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment. A family finding the stability they have long hoped for. A neighbor leaving the Community Food Center with both groceries and a sense of being supported by a staff member or volunteer who genuinely cares.

These moments don't just happen – they are the direct result of your generosity and belief in the important work that our tireless staff, volunteers, and community partners put in on a daily basis. As we look back, we have much to celebrate from 2025 – accomplishments that you helped make possible:

- For the past two years, we have worked hand in hand with a dedicated group of resident leaders and community partners to develop a new **Washington Park Quality of Life Plan**. This plan, a collaborative effort powered by resident leadership and strengthened by donor support, will guide future investments in housing, economic opportunity, public safety, youth engagement, wellness and anti-trafficking efforts, helping to build a stronger neighborhood for generations to come.
- Rooted & Rising's Growing Tree Children's Center earned a **4-Star YoungStar rating**, an achievement made possible through hard work, donor commitment, professional development, and the exemplary care and commitment of our team of educators.
- Rooted & Rising is nearing completion of **four new single-family homes** that will be sold to first-time homebuyers. These homes, funded in part through philanthropic partnerships, will give dedicated early childhood educators the housing and economic stability they deserve in the community they serve.
- Our food security network continues to grow because donors make it possible – demand at our **Community Food Center** climbed considerably this year. Every stocked shelf, every full grocery cart, every week without shortages – these were direct outcomes of your support.
- Our Supportive Housing Program maintained **100% occupancy** throughout the year, providing security and stability to the 72 families who live in our collection of apartments and townhomes, including families who have successfully transitioned out of previous homeless experiences and are now building new lives with the secure foundation of safe and stable housing. Donor contributions support case management, family-friendly programming, and on-site support that help residents work towards achieving their goals.

When we say we could not do this without you, we mean it.

Your donations, large or small, add up to life-changing impact. You help keep families housed. You help feed neighbors facing food insecurity. You help children learn and thrive. You help us build a more vibrant, resilient Washington Park. Thank you for choosing to make Rooted & Rising part of your life and part of your giving. Your generosity keeps this mission strong, and your belief in our work fuels our hope for what is possible.

My wish for you and your loved ones this holiday season is peace, joy, and connection.

We look forward to continuing this journey with you in the New Year.

With deep gratitude,

Bill Schmitt, Executive Director Rooted & Rising – Washington Park



January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>28</div> <div>9am - Worship (S)</div> <div>1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)</div>	<div>29</div> <div>No Staff Meeting</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>31</div> <div>New Year's Eve</div> <div>Office Closed</div>	<div>1</div> <div>New Year's Day</div> <div>Office Closed</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Office Closed</div>	<div>3</div>
<div>4</div> <div>8:30am - Worship (S)</div> <div>8:30am - Sunday School (V)</div> <div>8:45am - Adult Study (CL)</div> <div>10am - Worship (CH)</div> <div>1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)</div>	<div>5</div> <div>10am - Staff Meeting (FH)</div> <div>6:30pm - Green Team (CL)</div> <div>7pm - Singers 4:12 (MR)</div>	<div>6</div> <div>6:30pm - Youth Council (YR)</div>	<div>7</div> <div>10am - Bible Study (FH)</div> <div>6:30pm - Trustees (CL)</div>	<div>8</div> <div>6pm - Men's Choir (MR)</div> <div>6:30pm - Women's Choir (MR)</div> <div>7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)</div>	<div>9</div> <div>Office Closed</div> <div>5am - Scout Pack 60 - setup</div> <div>10am - Bible Study (Z)</div>	<div>10</div> <div>9am - Scout Pack 60 (CH)</div>
<div>11</div> <div>8:30am - Worship (S)</div> <div>8:30am - Sunday School (V)</div> <div>8:45am - Adult Study (CL)</div> <div>10am - Worship (CH)</div> <div>11am - Confirmation Class</div> <div>1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)</div> <div>2:30pm - Youth Group (YR)</div>	<div>12</div> <div>9:30am - Sews & Sews (112)</div> <div>10am - Staff Meeting (FH)</div> <div>5:30pm - Stewardship (CL)</div> <div>6:30pm - Mission Team (FH)</div> <div>7pm - Finance (CL)</div> <div>7pm - Singers 4:12 (MR)</div>	<div>13</div>	<div>14</div> <div>10am - Bible Study (FH)</div> <div>7pm - Women's Study (FH)</div>	<div>15</div> <div>Pathways Deadline by Noon</div> <div>9:30am - Worship Team (FH)</div> <div>6pm - Women's Choir (MR)</div> <div>6:30pm - Men's Choir (MR)</div> <div>7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)</div>	<div>16</div> <div>Office Closed</div> <div>10am - Bible Study (Z)</div>	<div>17</div>
<div>18</div> <div>8:30am - Worship (S)</div> <div>8:30am - Sunday School (V)</div> <div>8:45am - Adult Study (CL)</div> <div>10am - Worship (CH)</div> <div>11am - Confirmation Class</div> <div>1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)</div>	<div>19</div> <div>Office Closed - MLK Day</div> <div>7pm - Church Council (CL)</div> <div>7pm - Singers 4:12 (MR)</div>	<div>20</div> <div>11:30am - YAHAS (CH)</div> <div>6:30pm - SPRC (CL)</div>	<div>21</div> <div>10am - Bible Study (FH)</div> <div>7pm - Women's Study (FH)</div>	<div>22</div> <div>6pm - Men's Choir (MR)</div> <div>6:30pm - Women's Choir (MR)</div> <div>7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)</div>	<div>23</div> <div>Youth Retreat</div> <div>Office Closed</div> <div>10am - Bible Study (Z)</div>	<div>24</div> <div>8am - Comm Breakfast (CH)</div>
<div>25</div> <div>Youth Retreat</div> <div>8:30am - Worship (S)</div> <div>8:30am - Sunday School (V)</div> <div>8:45am - Adult Study (CL)</div> <div>10am - Worship (CH)</div> <div>1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)</div>	<div>26</div> <div>10am - Staff Meeting (FH)</div> <div>7pm - Singers 4:12 (MR)</div>	<div>27</div>	<div>28</div> <div>10am - Bible Study (FH)</div> <div>7pm - Women's Study (FH)</div>	<div>29</div> <div>6pm - Women's Choir (MR)</div> <div>6:30pm - Men's Choir (MR)</div> <div>7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)</div>	<div>30</div> <div>Office Closed</div> <div>10am - Bible Study (Z)</div>	<div>31</div> <div>8am - Versiti Blood Drive (CH)</div>