



PATHWAYS

Emmanuel Community United Methodist Church



FEBRUARY 2026

Emmanuel Community United Methodist Church Monthly Newsletter

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LENT 2026:

40 DAYS FROM ASH WEDNESDAY TO EASTER

There are several ways to journey through Lent at ECUMC.

Ash Wednesday, February 18

We will begin with a communal meal at 6 PM prior to our 7 PM Ash Wednesday service in the Sanctuary.

This service will include both the imposition of ash and Holy Communion.

Drive through imposition of ash will be offered under our carport from 5-6 PM that day.



Other Wednesdays during Lent

On Wednesday nights throughout Lent (2/25-3/25), we will gather in Celebration Hall for a shared meal at 6 PM and a study with Pastor Matt at 6:30 PM.

The interactive study will be an extension of the current worship series, *Do You Believe in Miracles?*, and will examine the kinds of miraculous intervention of Jesus in people's lives. Maybe we still experience that miraculous intervention today...

All are welcome.

Sunday Worship: The Seven Deadly Sins

During worship this 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.



Study: *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*

Everyone has doubts. We may think our doubts must be the enemy of our faith. But uncertainty doesn't mean we lack belief.

In *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*, pastor Adam Hamilton encourages us to trust in a God that is not afraid of hard questions.

Topics include:

Is there a God?

Why such bad stuff in the "Good" Book?

Will non-Christians go to Hell?

Choose morning or afternoon sessions on Thursdays, either 10-11 AM or 5-6 PM, in Fellowship Hall.

We'll meet on February 19 & 26 and March 5, 12, 19 & 26.

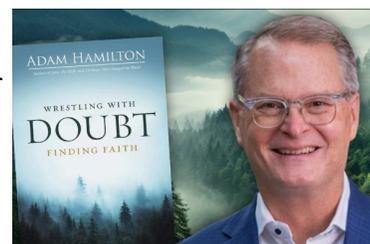
Study books are available in the church office for the discounted price of \$5, while supplies last.

Sign up on the bulletin board.

Lenten Food Drive

ECUMC Youth and Missions Team will conduct a "Goods" News Drive, collecting food, hygiene, and cleaning products to benefit Rooted & Rising. Donations will be collected throughout Lent. Weekly donation themes will bring into focus some of the most-needed items at R&R.

Watch for more information as it becomes available.



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“PRESSING ON IN FAITH”

“...I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.” Philippians 3:13b-14 (NLT)



As a competitive sprinter who did best at the 200- & 400-meter races, 800 meters was, in my mind, torture. In my young mind, anything longer than that was only for crazy people. I recently had a friend tell me he watched a short video that blew his mind. Trusting in his recommendation, I gave it a watch. It blew my mind as well! Why had I not heard of this story before?

In 1983, Australia hosted what was then considered the most grueling footrace on earth: a seven-day, 543-mile ultra-marathon stretching from Sydney to Melbourne. To put that distance into perspective, it is roughly the equivalent of running from Milwaukee WI to Kansas City MO, day after day, with little rest.

Among the elite athletes who gathered at the starting line—professional runners with sleek gear, support crews, and years of specialized training—stood an unlikely competitor: Cliff Young, a 61-year-old Australian sheep herder and potato farmer. Dressed in full length pants with holes cut in them for air circulation and work boots, Young didn’t look like a serious contender. Spectators laughed. Fellow runners assumed he would drop out within the first day. Back home, nearly everyone believed he was crazy for even attempting such a race. Everyone knew he would fail.

But Cliff Young had spent his life chasing sheep across vast stretches of farmland, sometimes running for days to keep them together during storms. Endurance, not speed, was his specialty. When the race began, Young shuffled along at a pace that looked almost comical. Yet hour after hour, mile after mile, he kept moving forward. While most competitors ran hard and then slept for six hours at a time, Young simply...didn’t stop. He ran through the night, resting only briefly, propelled by a steady rhythm that would later become known as the “Young Shuffle.”

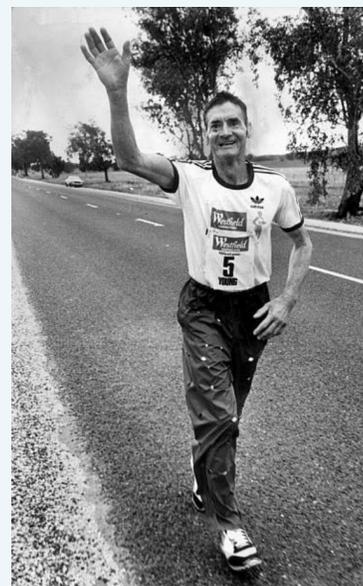
Against all expectations, Cliff Young finished first—more than ten hours ahead of the nearest competitor. What happened next was even more surprising. When he learned that prize money would go to the winner (something he hadn’t known about when he entered), Young chose not to keep it. Instead, he gave the money away to other runners who had struggled financially to compete. He said they needed it more than he did.

Cliff Young was a deeply spiritual man. He often spoke of God and his faith—especially his trust in Jesus Christ—as the source of his strength and motivation. While he wasn’t tied to a specific denomination or church tradition, he viewed running as a calling, even a form of service. For Young, the race was never about proving others wrong; it was about faithfully pressing forward, one step at a time.

What lessons can people of faith take from his story?

First, faithfulness often looks unimpressive at the start. God’s work is not always flashy or fast. Sometimes it looks like a quiet shuffle forward when everyone else assumes the race is already lost.

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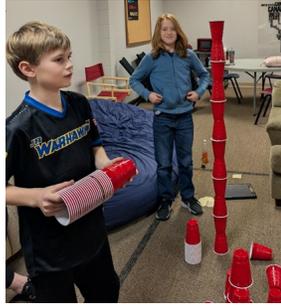


YOUTH MINISTRIES

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

Welcome, February!

Last month, the Youth Group kept away the winter blues by participating in a Youth Trivia Challenge. It was a battle of the brains as three teams squared off against each other answering questions about various topics from history to Harry Potter to Bible knowledge. We learned new things, laughed a lot, and won some prizes with Minute-To-Win-It games, too.



Eleven of our Youth and four adult chaperones trekked up to Camp Lake Lucerne for the Winter Youth Retreat, participating in a weekend of outdoor fun, worship, and community-building.

February will bring more chances to get involved. Our next Youth Group activity will be an open gym at the Tri-County YMCA on Sunday, 2/22, from 1-3 PM. There is an active sign-up for an initial headcount. Scan the QR code shown here and enter your names and numbers. You'll then receive a link to the official registration sign-up from the YMCA. The upfront cost is \$25/youth as you register through the Y, but ECUMC will reimburse each participant \$15.



It will be a great way to connect with Proverbs 27:17, *As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.* By participating together in friendly recreation and competition, youth can grow in their faith community and relationships.

Our next service project is also on the horizon. Youth will partner with Missions once again for a "Goods" News Drive, aptly named for this season of Lent. Benefitting Rooted & Rising, it will run through Easter and will have a weekly donation theme. These themes bring into focus some of the most-needed items at R&R.

More information will be coming soon on posters around the building and flyers handed out by the youth.

Share the Easter Good News with your generosity!



EATING FROM TREES WE DID NOT PLANT

There's a quiet grace in realizing that much of what sustains us comes from work we did not do. We eat fruit from orchards we didn't plant and sit under shade trees someone else nurtured long ago. We benefit from schools, churches, hospitals and ministries that were dreamed up and funded by people who never knew our names. Their generosity was never meant to circle back to them personally – it was offered for the sake of people they would never meet.

That truth can be unsettling in a culture that often asks, "What's in it for me?" Yet Scripture consistently points us toward a different way of living – one rooted in trust, hope and love for the generations to come.

Generosity that only exists when there is a direct benefit attached is really just a transaction. But generosity rooted in faith looks beyond immediate return. It plants seeds without demanding proof of harvest. It trusts that God will use our gifts – of time, money, energy and love – in ways we may never see.

Many of the faithful choices we make today won't bear fruit tomorrow. They may not even bear fruit in our lifetime. But they matter. They shape communities. They strengthen ministries. They create possibilities for people we'll never know, just as others once did for us.

Living generously is an act of hope. It's a declaration that God's story is bigger than our own chapter – and that we're willing to plant trees so others can eat, rest and thrive long after we're gone.

Courtesy of the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation
ECUMC Stewardship Chair – Gary Wilkes



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

Contact: Liz Cannon (LizC@ec-umc.com)

One of the coolest things about teaching Sunday School is that there is always something new to learn. Sometimes it is a detail from a Bible story that you never heard before. In December, at the end of our unit from the Book of Samuel, we learned that King David was so excited when the Ark of the Covenant returned to Jerusalem, he danced in the streets wearing little more than his underwear! No wonder his wife Michal was upset with him! (There's a lot more to the story that we did not go into.) Other times it is just getting to know the children of ECUMC a little better.

After Advent, we read more Old Testament stories. Our most recent unit was "Hairy Situations" about Samson from the Book of Judges. Only one child knew about Samson: Calvin Schoenenberger proudly shared that when he was younger, he often read and reread the story of Samson because it was one of his favorites from a children's Bible story book he had. (His mom, Anna, was surprised to hear it!)

The Children's Ministry Team is excited to share that we are striving to incorporate STEM activities that connect with our Bible lessons. STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The acronym was coined in 2001 by the National Science Foundation to describe their focus on developing curriculum to enhance learning in these four areas.

Using this approach is one way to keep children engaged in Sunday School while making real life connections from the Bible to our modern world.



This month we are exploring the stories of Daniel and connecting them to the Olympics.

God wants us to use our

talents to take care of others and be faithful by trusting in the LORD. If we take care of ourselves, we can better serve God.

The "Prayers from the Heart" program is this month, and I highly recommend you send your prayers and postcards early. This is a special opportunity to show our faith in action and the love of the Lord to those who receive your heartfelt messages and prayers. Many adults have shared that in the past these



interactions between children and congregants have developed into meaningful life-long relationships. What is the church if not an extension of our family? The Children's Market Place will be on Sunday, March 8, in Fellowship Hall between the 8:30 AM and 10:00 AM services. We look forward to showing off the skills and talents of the children with the goal of making money for our Heifer International mission. The children are hoping to make enough money to purchase a heifer or two! Heifers bring health, prosperity and peace.

Heifer cow gift donations can change lives, giving hope to families in even the most dire of circumstances. (This donation also funds training in the care of the heifer and improving the animal's health.)

Cows have many uses and are capable of bringing stability to the lives of people struggling with hunger. Their versatility gives a family new hope.

To find out more, go to: <https://www.heifer.org/>
Thank you for your support!



SEWS & SEWS

The Sew & Sews will meet on Monday, February 16, at 9:30 AM.



FAITHFUL RESISTANCE

The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society and the General Commission on Religion and Race are participating in an interfaith worship service and march calling for the humane treatment of immigrants.

Faithful Resistance: A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice is happening in Washington D.C. on Wednesday, February 25.

The day will begin at 10 AM ET with worship, followed by a prayerful march to the U.S. Capitol and afternoon congressional visits. United Methodists are encouraged to attend in-person, follow the event on social media, or hold simultaneous events in their local area.

This is an opportunity to show solidarity for immigrants and call upon Christians everywhere to live out Christ's call to "welcome the stranger".

[Learn more](#)



MUSIC MINISTRY

Contact: Bill Follmann; BillF@ec-umc.com; 414-881-3023
Music. Nothing stirs your emotions more than music. Imagine a movie, a worship service, or a day without music. Hard to, isn't it?

Studies have shown there are many positive effects of music and belonging to a choir.

Singing makes you feel better

There's an increasing amount of evidence that singing releases endorphins, serotonin and dopamine – the 'happy' chemicals that boost your mood and make you feel good about yourself. Scientists believe that's one of the reasons why people report being on a high during choir rehearsals and continue to feel positive and uplifted afterwards

Singing enhances lung function

We take our lungs for granted and rarely use them to full capacity. Breathing while singing requires you to do just that, increasing lung capacity and engaging the muscles around the ribcage.

Singing helps you beat stress and relax

Breathing properly while singing releases anxiety and helps transition to a state of rest and relaxation. If you've had a bad day, give singing a try. Its stress-busting properties will help you forget your worries and simply be in the moment.

Singing builds a sense of community

The sense of community and belonging in singing groups is huge. There's also the pleasure in sharing an interest, ensuring you always have something to talk about. In a larger church like Emmanuel, it also creates a "church" within a church. People get to know one another, care for one another, pray for one another, and rejoice with one another.

Singing lets you express yourself

Singing is the perfect way to let go and express how you feel. Contrasting pieces of music help tap into a range of emotions. Of course, when you sing in a group, there's the added fun of watching other people enjoying themselves too!

Singing boosts your confidence

Many people get nervous at the thought of singing in public, but singing in a group can actually help boost

your confidence and self-esteem – the more you do it, the more confident you'll feel.

Singing is for everyone

The good news is, it doesn't matter whether you think you can carry a tune - the health benefits will still be the same.

Everybody has a voice and everybody can sing. Use your voice and enjoy the physical sensation of breathing in and creating with your body.

At Emmanuel, we are blessed to have music leaders

leading preschoolers through the elementary years, youth through many decades of adulthood. We have opportunities for instrumentalist as soloists or as part of larger ensembles, such as handbells and



hand chimes.

And of course, singing, whether in an ensemble of women or men or the mixed voices of Chancel Choir.

All we need, and for the health benefits *you* need, is each other. Use the talents God has given you.

Let's sing together!

Beatitudes *by Steve Garnaas-Holmes*

Blessed are you who have nothing to offer,
for you are offered everything.

Blessed are you who are broken-hearted for the world,
for God weeps with you, and will rejoice with you.

Blessed are you who do not seek to dominate,
for love dominates your life.

Blessed are you who sacrifice for the sake of justice,
for you will know victory.

Blessed are you who are gentle,
for God's gentleness enfolds you.

Blessed are you who seek only love,
for God will be everywhere for you.

Blessed are you who remain peaceful in conflict,
for so you reveal God.

Blessed are you who are treated harshly,
for God treats you to the entire realm of God.

Blessed are you who are punished for your compassion,
for this is the way of the cross.

CHURCH OFFICE

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

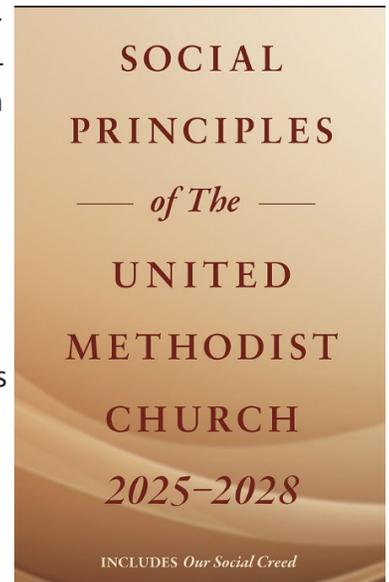
Hours: Monday–Thursday, 9 AM–1 PM

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH RE: MIGRANTS, IMMIGRANTS, AND REFUGES

As United Methodists we have firmly declared through our *Social Principles* that we are called to actively welcome the migrant, immigrant, and refugee among us.

- Affirming the dignity, worth and rights of migrants, immigrants and refugees.
- Recognizing that displaced people are particularly vulnerable as their in-between status often provides them with few protections and benefits, leaving them open to exploitation, violence and abuse.
- Urging one another to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants into our congregations, providing concrete support, to them including help with navigating restrictive and often lengthy immigration policies, and assistance with securing food, housing, education, employment and other kinds of support.
- Opposing all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize or punish displaced individuals and families based on their status as migrants, immigrants or refugees.
- Decrying attempts to detain displaced people and hold them in inhumane and unsanitary conditions.
- Challenging policies that call for the separation of families, especially parents and minor children.
- Opposing the existence of for-profit detention centers that are used for the purpose of detaining migrants, immigrants, and refugees including minor children.

(Social Principles of The United Methodist Church, The Political Community Basic Rights and Freedoms, Section G. Migrants, Immigrants and Refugees)



UNITED METHODIST GREEN TIPS FOR CREATION JUSTICE

Did you know? Consumption of beef increases the demand for grazing land and corn cultivation, which increases deforestation (even in the Amazon Rain Forest) and emissions as grain travels to cattle, cattle to slaughter, meat to groceries and restaurants. Reduce those pressures. **Eat less beef.**

Stop wearing plastic. Synthetic fibers from clothing are a significant contribution to microplastic pollution. Go back to nature—wool, cotton, silk, and even bamboo and hemp.

Plastic bottles or aluminum cans? Technically, both are recyclable. However, due to multiple factors beyond putting it in the recycling bin, plastic is less likely to be recycled into new products. On the other hand, the systems for recycling aluminum are effective. **Choose aluminum.**

To God's prophet Jeremiah, it seemed nobody was listening as he warned of impending doom from the Babylonians. In the face of climate change, we too may feel ineffective as we speak out for justice. Jeremiah continued: He was faithful to his call from God to speak up, and he bought land as a sign of hope, trusting God that the people would return. **Stay faithful to your call.**

Drilling for gas and oil on previously protected lands is disrupting the habitats and reproductive patterns of the native species. So, in addition to spending valuable resources to provide deadly greenhouse emissions, the policy is also killing wildlife. **Speak up for funding alternative energy sources** and for protecting God's creation.



February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>8:30am - Worship (S) 8:30am - Sunday School (V) 8:45am - Adult Study (CL) 10am - Worship (CH) 11am - Confirmation Class 1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH) 5pm - Kitchen Klub Dinner</p>	<p>2</p> <p>10am - Staff Meeting (FH) 6:30pm - Green Team (CL) 7pm - 4:12 Singers (MR)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>10:30am - Spiritual Guidance 5:45pm - Children's Min. (FH)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>10am - Bible Study (FH) 6:30pm - Trustees (CL) 7pm - Women's Study (FH)</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Office Closed 10am - Bible Study (Z)</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8</p> <p>8:30am - Worship (S) 8:30am - Sunday School (V) 8:45am - Adult Study (CL) 10am - Worship (CH) 11am - Kitchen Klub Soup 1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)</p>	<p>9</p> <p>10am - Staff Meeting (FH) 5:30pm - Stewardship (CL) 6:30pm - Mission Team (FH) 7pm - 4:12 Singers (MR) 7pm - Finance (CL)</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10am - Bible Study (FH) 6pm - Women's Study (FH)</p>	<p>12</p> <p>6pm - Women's Choir (MR) 6:30pm - Men's Choir (MR) 7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Office Closed 10am - Bible Study (Z)</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Pathways Deadline by Noon 8:30am - Worship (S) 8:30am - Sunday School (V) 8:45am - Adult Study (CL) 10am - Worship (CH) 11am - Confirmation Class 1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9:30am - Sew and Sews (112) 10am - Staff Meeting (FH) 7pm - 4:12 Singers (MR)</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9:30am - Comm Care (FH) 11:30am - YAHAS (CH) 6:30pm - SPRC (CL)</p>	<p>18</p> <p>10am - Bible Study (FH) 5pm - Drive-Thru Ashes 6pm - Meal (CH) 6pm - Scout Pack 60 (V) 7pm - Worship (S)</p>	<p>19</p> <p>10am - Doubt Study (FH) 5pm - Doubt Study (FH) 6pm - Men's Choir (MR) 6:30pm - Women's Choir (MR) 7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Office Closed 10am - Bible Study (Z)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>10am - Club Scout Banquet</p>
<p>22</p> <p>8:30am - Worship (S) 8:30am - Sunday School (V) 8:45am - Adult Study (CL) 10am - Worship (CH) 11am - Confirmation Class 1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH) 1pm - Youth Group(YR)</p>	<p>23</p> <p>10am - Staff Meeting (FH) 7pm - 4:12 Singers (MR)</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>10am - Bible Study (FH) 6pm - Soup & Study (CH)</p>	<p>26</p> <p>10am - Doubt Study (FH) 5pm - Doubt Study (FH) 6pm - Women's Choir (MR) 6:30pm - Men's Choir (MR) 7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Office Closed 10am - Bible Study (Z)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>8am - Comm Breakfast (CH)</p>