



PATHWAYS

Emmanuel Community United Methodist Church



MARCH 2026

Emmanuel Community United Methodist Church Monthly Newsletter

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

LENT 2026:

Wednesdays during Lent

On Wednesday nights throughout Lent (through 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. All are welcome.



Lenten Food/Goods Drive

Collection to benefit Rooted & Rising.

- 3/2-8: Meal-Worthy Foods (soups, stews)
- 3/9-15: Power Up with Protein (canned meats, nuts)
- 3/16-22: Spice of Life (spices, condiments)
- 3/23-29: Hygiene Helpers (toiletries)
- 3/30-4/5: Rise and Shine (breakfast foods)



Holy Week

Daily devotions on YouTube

Palm Sunday, 3/29:

- 8:30 AM Worship (S)
- 8:30 AM Sunday School, all ages (V)
- 10:00 AM Worship (CH)

Thursday, 4/2, 7 PM:

Maundy Thursday Worship with Communion (S)

Friday, 4/3, 7 PM: Good Friday Worship (S)

Easter, April 5

8:30 & 10 AM: All-Choir Resurrection Worship (S)

No Sunday School on Easter.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY BREAKFAST SOCIAL

Saturday, March 14 at 9:00 AM

Ladies, you're invited! Join the Women's Ministry Team for a warm and welcoming breakfast social at **B52 Bombers in Menomonee Falls at 9:00 AM.**

Come enjoy good food, conversation, and fellowship. B52 Bombers offers a full breakfast menu, including favorites like pancake or French toast breakfasts and breakfast sandwiches. The regular lunch fare will also be available, so you can order whatever sounds best.



Please sign up using the link provided below by March 8: [https://](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10COD44A8AE23A4FC1-62392020-womens)

www.signupgenius.com/go/10COD44A8AE23A4FC1-62392020-womens

We'd love to have you join us!

CHILDREN'S MARKETPLACE, Sunday 3/8

The Children's Market Place will take place on Sunday, March 8 between services in Fellowship Hall. There will be a variety of arts and crafts, laser printed items, and baked goods for you to purchase all made by ECUMC children and youth.



All this happens with one goal in mind:

We want to buy a cow! Our Heifer International mission goal is to purchase a cow (or two)!

In this issue...

- p. 2 Pastor's Letter
- p. 3 Easter Flower Orders, Stewardship
- p. 4 Children's Ministries
- p. 5 Youth Ministries
- p. 6 Music Ministries
- p. 7 Green Tips
- p. 8 ECUMC March Calendar

Placebo Jesus

There are, depending on who's counting and what they include, over 1 million total words in the English language, with new ones added regularly. Most native speakers use only 20,000–35,000 words in daily life. Think about it, over a million words! Some scholars argue for more, some for fewer, and someone on the internet is absolutely convinced they're all wrong. But whatever the exact number, it's a lot of words—more than enough to say almost anything we want... and still miss what we actually mean.

What's funny is how rarely some words ever show up together. Take, for example,

Liquid Pizza – (you could blend it... but should you?)

Relaxed Panic – (when you've accepted the chaos.)

Some words don't naturally share the same sentence—until one day they do, and you can't un-hear it.

Recently, I heard someone use a phrase I had never encountered before: "Placebo Jesus." I laughed.

Then I paused. Then, annoyingly, I couldn't stop thinking about it. *What does that even mean? What could it mean?*

A placebo, by definition, is a fake treatment—like a sugar pill or a sham procedure—with no active medicine in it at all. It's used in medical trials to see whether a real treatment actually works. And here's the fascinating part: people who receive the placebo often still report improvement. Their symptoms lessen. Their pain decreases. Not because the pill did anything—but because they believed something was happening.

Belief, it turns out, is powerful. So what might a "placebo Jesus" be?

Maybe it's a version of Jesus who makes us feel better without asking us to change. A Jesus who soothes our anxiety but never disrupts our assumptions. A Jesus who calms us just enough to get through the week but never calls us to love our neighbor, forgive our enemy, or carry a cross.

A placebo Jesus comforts without confronting.

Affirms without transforming.

Heals feelings but never touches the deeper wound.

And to be honest, a placebo Jesus works—at least for a while.

You can take a small dose of inspirational quotes, a sprinkle of "everything happens for a reason," and a reassuring belief that God mostly agrees with you. Your spiritual symptoms may even improve. You feel calmer. Less guilty. Less challenged. The placebo effect kicks in.

But eventually, reality intrudes.

Because a placebo Jesus cannot sustain faith when grief comes crashing in.

A placebo Jesus has nothing to say to injustice.

A placebo Jesus cannot carry you through suffering, because he never went there himself.

The real Jesus does not operate like a sugar pill. He is not a spiritual mood enhancer. He is not a prop for our preferences. The real Jesus heals, yes—but often in ways that unsettle us. He forgives, but also says, "Go and sin no more." He offers rest, but also says, "Take up your cross." He promises life abundant, but never pretends that abundance comes without cost.

A placebo makes us feel better by convincing us nothing serious is wrong.

Jesus makes us whole by telling us the truth—and loving us anyway.

So maybe the question isn't whether we believe in Jesus. Maybe the question is whether we've settled for a placebo version—one that asks little and costs nothing.

Because sugar pills can't save lives.

And placebo Jesus can't save souls.

Only the real thing can do that.



ECUMC SHARES WITH NEIGHBORS

On Sunday, 2/15, Pastor Matt presented a check for \$7,419.65 to Widge Liccione, the Executive Director of the Falls Area Food Pantry.

These monies were collected as our Christmas offering last December.



EASTER FLOWERS

Members and friends of ECUMC are invited to purchase Easter lilies, daffodils, or tulips which will decorate our altar on Easter Sunday, and make be taken home following the 10 AM service.

There will be an order form in the bulletin starting 3/8. The cost is \$16.

Orders are due on Sunday, 3/22.

Please fill out the order sheet from the bulletin and handed in to the office. If you would like to purchase in Honor or Memory of someone there is a place to indicate that on the order form.

Make checks out to ECUMC and indicate "Flowers" in the memo line.

If you won't be in the building before March 22, please call the church office and someone will help you place an order: (262) 251-3830 or church@ecumc.com.

The Worship Team



GRACE THAT KEEPS MOVING

There's a difference between grace that stops with us and grace that keeps moving.

Grace, at its core, is a gift we didn't earn and can't repay. God offers love, forgiveness, mercy and belonging not because we've checked the right boxes, but because that's who God is. And while receiving grace can be life-changing, one of the most faithful responses to grace is letting it flow through us to someone else.

The 2000 movie "Pay It Forward" explores this idea through a simple, hopeful premise. A middle-school student is given an assignment to come up with an idea that could change the world. His solution is disarmingly small: instead of paying someone back for a kindness, you "pay it forward" by doing something generous for three other people; something they couldn't easily do for themselves. Those people then do the same for others, creating a ripple effect of generosity and compassion.

The film isn't naïve about the difficulty of living this way. Not everyone responds. Some people stop the chain. Others are changed deeply. But the idea at the heart of the story rings true:

grace grows when it's shared.

That's how God's grace often works in the real world. We receive forgiveness and

choose to forgive someone else. We experience generosity and become more generous. We are shown patience and learn to extend patience to others.

Grace doesn't lose power when it's shared - it multiplies.

Stewardship, at its best, is not about extracting resources or enforcing obligations. It's about helping people recognize the grace they've already received – and inviting them to pass it along.

When generosity is rooted in gratitude and grace, it stops being a burden and becomes a joy.

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



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

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

FREE SMILES – HAPPY HEARTS GUARANTEED!

The Children's Ministry Team would like to thank everyone that participated in the Prayers from the Heart. 81 children and youth of ECUMC received your postcards, Valentine's, and prayers throughout the month of February. That's approximately 324 stamps, 243 postcards, and 81 Valentine's Day cards. What a wonderful way to spread God's love!



FREE DAD JOKES – OUR CASHIER, MR. FRANK, WILL TRY TO MAKE YOU LAUGH!

The Children's Market Place will take place on Sunday, 3/8, between services in Fellowship Hall. There will be a variety of arts and crafts, laser printed items, and baked goods for you to purchase all made by the children with one goal in mind: We want to buy a cow! That's no joke! Our Heifer International mission goal is to purchase a cow (or two)!



TRUST AND OBEY – FAITH IN ACTION



Sunday School has focused on the Olympic Winter Games and stories of Daniel. Just like with Samson, the overarching moral of these Bible stories

has been to trust in God and follow His commandments. While we did not have it in the budget to build an ice rink, we made do with pool noodle hockey, frisbee disc curling, an ice-skating wax museum game, and pretending to sled like in the skeleton races. Just like Daniel, we put our faith in God.



CLUB 4/5 NEWS

Club 4/5 has been staying warm and enjoying indoor activities during the winter months. Thank you to the Germana family who hosted a pizza and bowling event in January on the coldest day of the year. In February, the Kostka family organized an indoor miniature golf outing. The families collected gently

used books for Rooted & Rising as their service project. Check out what fun this group has - the proof is in the photos!



THE HUNT IS ON!

The annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place on Saturday, 4/4, 9 - 11 AM in Celebration Hall.



Bring your basket and your running shoes, because the hunt is over before you know it. Snacks and games will round out the morning.

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Youth classes have recently focused on getting "turned on" to the importance of staying connected to God by constructing electrical circuits with their teacher, Jean Reif.



A study of the "I Am" statements of Jesus has been combined with projects from a kit called "Snap Circuits." Students analyzed that in a simple circuit, God is like the battery, a person is like the light bulb, and the person is in control of the switch that causes us to connect (light up) with God. Included also is practice saying Breath Prayers in order to stay connected with God.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Contact: Anna Schoenenberger; AnnaS@ec-umc.com
 March has arrived, and with it comes the predictably unpredictable weather that is so hard to prepare for; however, we are also in the midst of Lent, a season in which we can intentionally prepare for the Good News of Easter.

Youth Ministries is prepping by conducting several upcoming events and ways to get involved at church and beyond.

Right now, Youth is partnering with the Missions Team for our **Goods News Drive**. This food and goods drive started on February 15 and runs through April 5 (Easter Sunday). Thanks to those youth that have been distributing handouts detailing each week's donation focus after services, and thanks to all of you that have been generously donating items to Rooted & Rising. Let's keep the momentum going by continuing to spread the word and, in turn, the Good News of Easter.

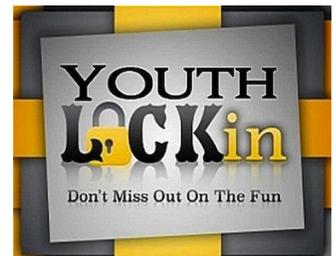


Donna from the Kitchen Klub is sharing her time and **baking** expertise with us. Come to the church kitchen at 3 PM on Saturday, March 7, to create delicious confections to sell. No need to bring anything, except maybe



a friend or two! Please sign up online or on the youth ministries bulletin board (next to the AV/Tech room) ahead of time for planning purposes. [Youth Baking Sign-Up](#)

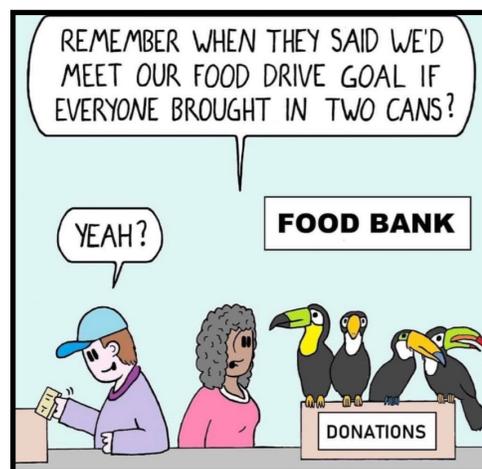
The **Lock-In** is coming, the Lock-In is coming! All 6th – 12th graders are invited to join for a night of fun, food, service, and fellowship (and little to no sleep!) on Friday, March 13, at 6:00 PM until 8 AM on Saturday, March 14. The youth group from Oconomowoc has also been invited. We will participate in a variety of activities, games, and discussions.



Can't stay the whole night? No problem - please join us for a portion of the night! Dinner and a small breakfast will be provided. Those who sign up will get more information as the date gets closer.

RSVP by March 7: [Lock-In Sign Up](#)
 If you are interested in chaperoning at this event, please reach out to Anna at AnnaS@ec-umc.com.

Save the date for **Youth Sunday and Confirmation** on April 12. We hope to have a large contingent of 6th-12th graders filling a variety of roles on this date. More details to come!



The Goods News Drive

Lenten Food and Goods Drive Benefitting Rooted & Rising
 February 15th - April 5th

WEEK ONE <small>ending 2/22</small>	Give from the Heart <i>heart healthy foods & snacks</i>
WEEK TWO <small>ending 3/1</small>	Bake it Happen <i>baking ingredients</i>
WEEK THREE <small>ending 3/8</small>	Dinner's on Us! <i>meal-worthy foods</i>
WEEK FOUR <small>ending 3/15</small>	Power-up with Protein <i>canned salmon, tuna, chicken</i>
WEEK FIVE <small>ending 3/22</small>	Spice of Life <i>spices & condiments</i>
WEEK SIX <small>ending 3/29</small>	Hygiene Helpers <i>toiletary items</i>
WEEK SEVEN <small>ending 4/5</small> <i>Easter</i>	Rise and Shine <i>breakfast foods</i>

If possible, please bring donations in cloth reusable bags; these will also be utilized at Rooted and Rising.

On Sunday, March 8, the Children's Marketplace will be taking place between services. Youth are encouraged to participate, and the perfect opportunity for doing so is available!

UNITED METHODIST GREEN TIPS FOR CREATION JUSTICE

Heating our water consumes much energy. **Consider these simple changes** to reduce the cost to Earth (and yourself):

- ◆ Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees, purchase a new Energy Star water heater, install the tank in an enclosed space, or add a water heater blanket.
- ◆ Remember energy was used to produce all of the goods we consume, including food. **Simply, reduce consumption in general**, don't waste anything, and eat lower on the food chain, and you will save energy.
- ◆ Avoid animal products from factory farms. In addition to being cruel, these farms are public health hazards and pollute the land, air, and water. **Choose pasture raised animals** and eggs from pasture raised chickens. The United Methodist Social Principles speak to this issue.
- ◆ It takes only about 160 gallons of water to produce a loaf of bread, but it takes about 2,500 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef. Plus, conventionally raised red meat produces 150% more greenhouse gases than chicken or fish. Simply by reducing the amount of meat that we eat, we can have a much smaller environmental impact. **Have a meatless day each week.**
- ◆ If you love dairy, simply **try products made from goat's milk**, which has been shown to have smaller ecological and carbon footprints.
- ◆ Ask questions and learn where your food came from and how it was produced. Simply **read the label** and avoid foods with too many ingredients, especially those you don't recognize. Ask yourself, *Would my grandparents recognize this product as food?*
- ◆ Skip the aluminum foil, plastic wrap, and baggies, and **put food into reusable containers**—preferably glass. When you cannot avoid packaging, choose metal or glass over plastic—and anything recyclable or compostable over items destined for the trash bin.
- ◆ **Get in the habit of not throwing things away or replacing them** unless necessary, and fix them when broken. Check for leaks in your toilet and repair if necessary. Leaks are usually caused by worn out flapper valves and can be easily and inexpensively replaced. Replace any worn out washers in faucets to stop drips and leaks.
- ◆ **Be mindful of all of your water consumption** and find ways to reuse your greywater, if feasible. For example, use the glass of water you didn't finish, cooled cooking water, or dishwashing water for houseplants or the garden. Save water, protect watersheds, and grow a beautiful landscape. Online classes are available. Check the link.
- ◆ Conserving water can be simple: Take short showers of five minutes or less. **Turn the water down in the shower** so it's not full blast. Scrape plates instead of rinsing them before they go in the dishwasher. Don't leave the water running while washing, shaving, or brushing your teeth. Turn it on and use only as needed.



CHURCH OFFICE
262-251-3830 Church@ec-umc.com
Hours: Monday–Thursday, 9 AM–1 PM



March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:30am - Worship (S) 8:30am - Sunday School (V) 8:45am - Adult Study (CL) 10am - Worship (CH) 11am - Confirmation Class 1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)	2 10am - Staff Meeting (FH) 6:30pm - Green Team (CL) 7pm - 4:12 Singers (MR)	3 5:45pm - Children's Min (FH) 6:30pm - Spirit Ringers (MR)	4 10am - Bible Study (FH) 6pm - Soup & Study (CH) 6:30pm - Trustees (CL)	5 10am - Doubt Study (FH) 5pm - Doubt Study (FH) 6pm - Men's Choir (MR) 6:30pm - Women's Choir (MR) 7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)	6 Office Closed 10am - Bible Study (Z)	7 1:30pm - Baby Jesse BD 3pm - Youth Baking (CH)
8 8:30am - Worship (S) 8:30am - Sunday School (V) 8:45am - Adult Study (CL) 9:15am - Market Place (FH) 10am - Worship (CH) 11am - Confirmation Class 1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)	9 10am - Staff Meeting (FH) 5:30pm - Stewardship (CL) 6:30pm - Mission Team (FH) 7pm - 4:12 Singers (MR) 7pm - Finance (CL)	10 11:45am - Food Pantry 5pm - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Spirit Ringers (MR)	11 10am - Bible Study (FH) 6pm - Soup & Study (CH)	12 10am - Doubt Study (FH) 11:45am - Food Pantry 5pm - Community Banquet 5pm - Doubt Study (FH) 5pm - Food Pantry 6pm - Women's Choir (MR) 6:30pm - Men's Choir (MR) 7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)	13 Office Closed 6pm - Youth Lock-in 10am - Bible Study (Z)	14 9am - Women's Breakfast
15 Pathways Deadline by Noon 8:30am - Worship (S) 8:30am - Sunday School (V) 8:45am - Adult Study (CL) 10am - Worship (CH) 11am - Youth Gathering (YR) 1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)	16 9:30am - Sew and Sews (112) 10am - Staff Meeting (FH) 7pm - 4:12 Singers (MR)	17 11:30am - YAHAS (CH) 6:30pm - Spirit Ringers (MR) 6:30pm - SPRC (CL)	18 10am - Bible Study (FH) 6pm - Scout Pack 60 (V) 6pm - Soup & Study (CH)	19 10am - Doubt Study (FH) 5pm - Doubt Study (FH) 5pm - Scout Pack 107 (CH) 6pm - Men's Choir (MR) 6:30pm - Women's Choir (MR) 7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)	20 Office Closed 10am - Bible Study (Z)	21
22 8:30am - Worship (S) 8:30am - Sunday School (V) 8:45am - Adult Study (CL) 10am - Worship (CH) 11am - Confirmation Class 1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)	23 10am - Staff Meeting (FH) 7pm - 4:12 Singers (MR)	24 6:30pm - Spirit Ringers (MR)	25 10am - Bible Study (FH) 6pm - Soup & Study (CH)	26 10am - Doubt Study (FH) 5pm - Doubt Study (FH) 6pm - Women's Choir (MR) 6:30pm - Men's Choir (MR) 7pm - Chancel Choir (MR)	27 Office Closed 10am - Bible Study (Z)	28 8am - Comm Breakfast (CH)
29 8:30am - Worship (S) 8:30am - Sunday School (V) 8:45am - Adult Study (CL) 10am - Worship (CH) 11am - Confirmation Class 1pm - Hmong Alliance (CH)	30 10am - Staff Meeting (FH) 7pm - 4:12 Singers (MR)	31 6:30pm - Spirit Ringers (MR)	1 10am - Bible Study (FH) 6:30pm - Trustees (CL)	2 7pm - Worship (S) 8pm - Chancel Choir	3 Office Closed 10am - Bible Study (Z) 7pm - Worship (S)	4 9am - Easter Egg Hunt (CH) 9am - Rehearsal (S)