

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

“Serve, Teach, and Love As We Grow In Faith”

JANUARY 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at BRF,

Happy New Year to dearly beloved people of God!

In retrospect, we entered 2020 expecting that something new exiting would happen. It was not long before we realized that we were facing unprecedented challenges. The challenges are very different from what we anticipated, even worse than we expected. The darkness caused by the coronavirus has forced us to be separate and apart from one another as congregation. The chaos is still on the way.

We are now entering the new year of 2021 with both anxiety and expectation. How long will this COVID pandemic continually challenge our lives, we wonder? Can it be ended so that we can come back to normal life if we get all vaccinated?

As you might know, the word January came from the Latin word Janus, who was a god of doorways, beginnings, and the rising and setting of the sun in ancient Roman culture. As the god of transitions, Janus is often depicted with two, bearded heads that face in opposite directions, looking to both the future and the past. We are in between the past and the future. We reflect on what happened in the past and at the same time wonder what will happen to us in the future.

Whenever I go through the end of the year and New Year' Day, I feel overwhelmed. Because I seem to doubt what I have done for God and people for the past year and what I can do through whole new year. As we are approaching the uncharted territory in 2021, I pray for all of you that we can walk through the unknown land by the help of the Holy Spirit.

First of all, I want to look back at the past year and how I went through it, what I did, and what I did not do. An old oriental metaphor came to my mind at the moment: “To know the new by studying the old.” I have found a similar English concept: “Dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants.” (*Latin: nanos gigantum humeris insidentes*). This quote was paraphrased in English by Isaac Newton in 1675: “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.” This phrase expresses the meaning of “discovering truth by building on previous discoveries.”

What are the previous discoveries for us who believe in God in order to discover truth? Hebrews 11:1-2 says, “*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.*” As we are Christians, we have precious discoveries of the ancients in belief from the beginning, such as Abraham, Noah, and Moses, according to Hebrews 11. They showed their faith with obedience to God, even though they couldn't see anything clear ahead. They lived by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, how would you go through this new year? Nobody knows what will happen in the future. We are blind to tomorrow, but we can cope with the difficult situation and crisis with the help of the wisdom learned from past experiences. I believe each of you can find what is essential and inessential for your life through this pandemic. I hope all of you hold the wisdom, truth, and faith to help you go through 2021. And we have the true light to light up the darkness and it is always with us, which is our Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:9). This is like an impregnable fortress for us.

I encourage all beloved people of God at BRF to have faith so that we could win over the world through the new year as Jesus promised, in spite of the COVID 19 Pandemic. “*We live by faith, not by sight.*” - 2 Corinthians 5:7

Pastor Inwha Shon



FROM OUR
PASTOR





JAN 1	Liz Lund
JAN 2	Jordan Hill
JAN 4	Renea Stoker
JAN 6	Dorothy Gearing
	Jim Kaphengst
JAN 8	Krystle Goldsmith
JAN 9	Pam Bue
	Tim McCann
	Abby Ross
JAN 10	Joel Pennekamp
	Norm Stoker
	Mary Van Gorden
JAN 11	Alex Hoffman
	Jennifer Leisgang
JAN 16	Bob Nesbitt
	Mason Schultz
JAN 17	Jeff Hagenbrock
JAN 18	Dawn Arndt
JAN 19	Jim Hostrawser
JAN 20	Rhonda Ammann
JAN 22	Allan Hostrawser
JAN 25	Theresa Paul
JAN 26	Megan Harelson
JAN 27	Jocelyn Brauner
	Sally Laubach
JAN 28	Gary Potter
JAN 30	Dylan Hill
	Ed Nemec



JAN 1	Jessica & Jonas Whitegull
JAN 18	Gary & Jackie Shankey
JAN 19	Elroy & Jann Dahl



**THANKS
FOR THE GIFTS!**

Many, many thanks to everyone who donated gifts and money to purchase additional gifts and food for a Christmas dinner for a family of four this year. As a result of your generosity and giving spirit, you have helped to make a difference in the lives of this family in our local community!



**GET YOUR UMC
NEWSLETTER ONLINE
OR BY EMAIL!!**

You can view our newsletter on our website at brfumc.org, or we can email it to you each month.

Only a small number of newsletters are sent by mail to people who do not have email.

Please call or email the church office and help us update our records with your current contact information.

715-284-4114.
brfumc@gmail.com

Happy 2021 to UMW Members and Friends,

We are certainly ready to welcome in a new year and though there is much we cannot forget, we must remember that:

- We got lonely; but we called, texted, emailed, face-timed, zoomed.
- We were told to stay home; but we had workers and volunteers who shopped and delivered our lists.
- We missed visits to the library; but we checked out books on-line and picked them up curbside.
- We ordered meals from our favorite restaurants and picked them up at the door.
- We missed our in-person worship with our church family; but we could join others by Facebook or radio.
- We rose to the challenge and will continue to support each other.

UMW members, we hope you are enjoying your first UMW Staying Connected newsletter and that you can share some thoughts from the lesson with other UMW members.

Luane Meyer



PRAYER FAMILIES **FOR JANUARY**

JAN 3	Gary Potter Dave, Ann, Sophia & Julia Smetana Leroy & Sarah Wiersma Gary & Rhonda Ammann
JAN 10	Pam Bue Dave & Kae Dettinger Don & Charlene Galston Sonny & Marcia Hagen
JAN 17	Mark, Amy, Alex & Kristian Hoffman. Dan & Mary Jelinek Liz, Sam & Lauren Lund Bob Nesbitt
JAN 24	Rich & Jill Prochaska Leyah & Brody Staszak Eric, Kyle, Owen & Iris Zenz Jessa Ammann
JAN 31	Roger Bue Chuck & Marcia Devendorf Todd & Lyn Gates Jeff & Barb Hagenbrock



Many thanks to Roxie Hostrawser who so beautifully decorated the Christmas trees in the Sanctuary this year. Also, many thanks to all who provided the beautiful poinsettias, and to Roxie Hostrawser who watered and cared for the plants each week.

A special thank you again to Dick Hilliker for donating the beautiful fraser fir Christmas tree that decorates the front entrance of the church in memory of Beth Hilliker.



Church Camp

Even though UMC Summer Camps were canceled in 2020, we are praying that camps will be able to happen in 2021!

The month of February was always our yearly pancake breakfast camp scholarship fundraiser, but with the church being closed due to the Covid pandemic, we are unable to have the fundraiser at this time.

Watch for more information about UMC Summer Camps in upcoming newsletters.



ALTAR FLOWERS

Poinsettias were given in memory of . . .

- **William Hostrawser** from Jim & Roxie Hostrawser & family.
- **Donna Smikrud** from Jim & Roxie Hostrawser & family.
- **Francis & Dorothy Harmer** and **Nicole “Niki” Stetzer** from their family.
- **Gary Lovlien** from his family.
- **Ken Peterson** from Jean Lovlien
- **Mary & Vernon Gjerseeth** from Barry & Karolyn Gjerseeth & family.
- **Penny Elmore, Jayden Gjerseeth, and Richard Carrier** from Barry & Karolyn Gjerseeth & family.
- **Elwin & Juanita Buchholz** from John & Theresa Paul.
- **Michael Buchholz** from John & Theresa Paul.
- **Steven Dougherty** from Mary Van Gorden.



UNDESIGNATED FUND:

In Memory Of:

Vernon Gjerseeth from Marlene Taylor

Mary Gjerseeth from Marlene Taylor, and Snow Creek Homemakers.

Vernon & Mary Gjerseeth from Darlene Hostrawser, Jan Guy, and Janet Gaier.

SOUND SYSTEM FUND:

In Memory Of:

Mary Gjerseeth from Nyla Musser.



Church Photo Directory



Copies of our Church Photo Directory have been received and are ready to be picked up. Kae Dettinger, our Photo Directory Coordinator, will be at the church in the Gathering Area on Wednesday afternoons starting January 6, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. to hand out directories. (The entrance under the roof will be open). Each family who had their photos taken for the directory will receive one free directory. If you have any questions, please contact Kae at 715-284-5570 or Jill in the Church Office at 715-284-4114.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS 2020

Thank you to everyone who gave to one or more of the ministries that were selected to be the recipients of our Christmas Gifts 2020 offering this year. A total of \$1,385.00 was given to the ministries as follows:

- ♦ Friends Sharing Food - \$350.00
- ♦ Bolton Refuge House - Jackson County Outreach - \$370.00
- ♦ Senegal Agricultural Missionary - \$235.00
- ♦ Senegal Feeding Stations - \$285.00
- ♦ California Wildfire Relief - \$145.00

Your generous response to the needs of others is greatly appreciated! May we all continue to answer God's call and spread His love to those in need in our community and around the world in 2021!





Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children."

2020 proved to be a different, challenging kind of year for everyone, with very limited in person Worship and Sunday School, masks, virtual school, Zoom meetings, and the list goes on. But 2020 also taught us things such as patience with virtual school, empathy towards others, the value of a relationship, how to look for positives in the day, and flexibility in schedules. 2021 is a new year. We cannot control what happens, but we can control how we respond.

Jeremiah 29:11 says "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." A new year is a gift from God! Thank Him in the joyful moments, bless Him in the busy moments, trust Him in challenging moments, and finally praise Him in the quiet moments. Here is to a better 2021!

There will be NO SUNDAY SCHOOL the month of January. Watch for an envelope in the mail with activities inside.

RECYCLING: Thank you to everyone who has brought in ink cartridges and cell phones for recycling. This fundraiser is used to purchase Vacation Bible School supplies. Please continue bringing in your ink cartridges and old cell phones. There are boxes in the front entryway, by the Church Office, and by the Youth Rooms for the ink cartridges and cell phones.

Like our Facebook page Black River Falls Sunday School to see photos of our activities. You can also go to the church's website, www.brfumc.org for photos and other information.

YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

JAN 2	Alice Christianson
JAN 3	Nolan Boehm
JAN 5	Ryan Nandory
JAN 6	Ruth Ann Christianson
JAN 21	Cooper Peterson

E-GIVING - EASY AND CONVENIENT!

Electronic Giving (E-Giving) is a way for individual congregation members to direct gifts to the church with-out having to write out a check or fill out an envelope. In E-Giving money can be automatically transferred from your savings or checking account to the church's bank account. — and there is NO CHARGE for this service. A number of our members are already taking advantage of this easy way of giving contributions to the church..

If you would like to sign up for E-Giving, please call Jill in the Church Office. She will be glad to answer any questions you may have and help you fill out an easy authorization form. Now would be a great time to take advantage of this easy and convenient way of giving to your church!



DON'T FORGET!!

to let the Church Office know if you or your family members change your address, telephone number, email address, etc., so that we can keep in contact with you! Call us at 715-284-4114 or send us an email at brfumc@gmail.com. **THANK YOU!!**



Happy New Year everyone. Blessings and prayers for 2021. We are hopeful that we will be able to meet in person soon, but at this point we will continue to meet via Google Meets each Wednesday from 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Hopefully everyone received a packet during school break and was able to use some of the activities or share them with friends and family.

Please continue to pray that our isolation will end soon and we will be able to see each other in church. Watch our Facebook page for any updates.


Contact me with any questions or suggestions for our Google Meets.

Suzanne Goldsmith

715-896-0224

suziegoldsmith@hotmail.com

Facebook: Black River Falls UMC Youth Group



Finance Committee

Thank you to everyone for continuing to remember the church by making financial contributions. Your support is so important to help us fund the many important ministries of the church.

Many thanks to everyone who has returned their pledge cards for the General Fund for 2021. So far there have been 61 pledges returned for a total of \$165,474.00. It is NOT too late to make a pledge! If you need a pledge card, please contact Jill in the Church Office (715-284-4114).

A full financial report for the year 2020 will be printed in your February Newsletter.



What Happened On This Day in the history of Christianity?

Verse by Verse January 1



When preached simply and purely, verse-by-verse and book-by-book, the Bible can change lives and transform history. Just ask Zwingli.

Ulrich Zwingli was born on January 1, 1484, in a Swiss shepherd's cottage in the Alps. His parents instilled in him a love for God. The young man proved a brilliant student, and following a brief stint as a schoolteacher he entered the priesthood. For ten years he labored in the village of Glarus, and there he began corresponding with the famous Greek scholar Erasmus.

The Swiss church was bubbling with corruption during this time. In 1516, when Zwingli moved to Einsiedeln, he, too, was struggling hard with sin. In his new village, the young priest fell into an intimate relationship with the barber's daughter. But it was also in Einsiedeln that he borrowed a copy of Erasmus's newly published Greek New Testament. Zwingli copied it. Carrying it everywhere, he pored over it continually and scribbled notes in the margins and memorized it. The pure Scripture began doing its work, and Zwingli's life and preaching took on new vigor. Soon he was invited to Zurich as chief preacher in the cathedral. He arrived on December 27, 1518, and began his duties on his thirty-sixth birthday, January 1, 1519, with a shock. He announced that he would break a thousand years of tradition by abandoning the church liturgy and the weekly readings as a basis for his sermons. Instead, he would teach verse-by-verse through the New Testament, beginning immediately. He proceeded to preach that day from Matthew 1 on the genealogy of Christ.

Such preaching was radical in its day, but Zurich loved it. Zwingli's concern for the city's youth, his courage during the plague, and his cheerful temper dispelled initial doubts about his reformation ideas. Later, when opposition arose, Zurich's City Council and 600 other interested citizens gathered to evaluate his actions. The assembly (the First Zurich Disputation, 1523) affirmed Zwingli and encouraged his work. Lives were changed; history was made. The Swiss Reformation had begun.

Jesus Christ came from the family of King David and also from the family of Abraham... The Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "A virgin will have a baby boy, and he will be called Immanuel," which means, "God is with us." Matthew 1:1, 22, 23

Morgan, Robert J. *On This Day.*