

Black River Falls
United Methodist Church
100 North Fourth Street
Black River Falls, Wisconsin 54615

Return Service Requested



Lord, who may dwell in
Your sacred tent?
Who may live on
Your holy mountain?
Psalms 15:1



INWHA SHON, PASTOR

Worship Service: 9:00 am

Sunday School: 9:15 am
(September - May)

Office Hours: 9 am - 2 pm
Monday-Friday

Telephone: 715-284-4114

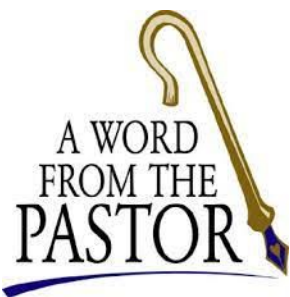
Website: brfumc.org
Facebook

You Tube Live: BRFUMC

**THE BLACK RIVER FALLS
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH**

NEWSLETTER

*"To make disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world."*



Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus at BRF,

Peace and grace be with you. I hope all of you have had a wonderful start to this New Year. We are already entering into the second month of 2023. Even in this fresh new year we have had a lot of things happen: increment weather, heavy snow, the loss of the beloved ones, Covid-19 variations, cold, economic difficulties, and continuing war in Ukraine and conflicts and riots are taking place in many other places. Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow. Our lives are complicated and unpredictable and there are so many things that require our attention. As a result, we feel overloaded and sluggish. It is time to hit the reset button.

Whether you are feeling overwhelmed or find yourself in a good season of life, you are going to need a reset sometime during your life. God wants to give you a new beginning in all areas of your life as you invite Jesus into your heart. In Revelation 21:15 Jesus says, *"I am making everything new."* This is what Jesus does. Once you have invited Jesus into your life and you have put your trust in Him, then there is a process of growth, change, growing, and resetting every area of your life (2 Corinthians 5:17, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!"*)

Paul says in Ephesians 4:22-24, *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."* We should take off all the old clothes that are smelly, sweaty, and dirty and get rid of those. And we should put on some new clothes, which are fresh and smell good and make you feel good too. You might know that there are some things and attitudes you should take off and there are some things and attitudes you should put on.

As you might see, our world is not the same as it once was. Even church life is different from the past. Who anticipated that hybrid worship service, which is both online and in person, would emerge? Who expected more than a thousand churches across America to close a year and over a thousand pastor would leave the ministry? Most churches have struggled with low attendance the world over during the Covid Pandemic and still are struggling now that Covid has lessened its grip on us. Is this the end? No hope?

We can find the answer from the history of the Old and New Testaments. We see Christians and the Israelites found their hope and vision through the faith in God during oppression and adversities. Even though they couldn't see hope with their eyes, they overcame their hardship and difficulties through faith in God who renewed and strengthened them. *"God is the same yesterday and today and forever."* (Hebrews 13:8).

I encourage you to fix your eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Love and peace in Christ,

Pastor Inwha Shon





Marcia Hagen will be traveling to Guatemala this month on a medical mission trip with Viterbo University. Thanks to many helping hands we have 25 dresses to send with her. What a wonderful feeling it is that something so simple can bring a child such pride and joy. Please don't let this stop you from continuing this great project as now we will start saving up for the next mission trip. I keep a supply of kits for dresses in the gathering area. If you are a sewer it is a quick project and easy to do. Please feel free to take one home. If you prefer you may use your own supplies. If you have pillow cases, bias tape or trims you could donate, that would be appreciated. All donations can be left at the church office.

Since we started our **Knit for Kids** mission outreach project in October, we already have 60 items toward our goal of 100. We are surely off to a great start. World Vision is asking for hats, mittens, scarves and sweaters for all ages of children. Also requested are blankets either knit, crochet or fleece that are 36 X 45 inches. Remember there are patterns, along with knitting needles and crochet hooks are available in the Wesley room by the yarns if you need them. Recently this area was re-organized and it should be able to locate what you are looking for.

As usual, our supply of yarn remains significantly depleted. Donations are desperately needed. Acrylic yarns are best but all would be accepted. So as you are closet cleaning, downsizing, or if you are at yard sales please keep the church and this worthwhile project in mind. Donations may be left at the church office.

Soon we will be gearing up for our Sleep in **Heavenly Peace Bed** build project. We will be needing monetary donations for supplies along with donations of bedding such as twin sheets sets, blankets or quilts and pillows. Volunteers will be needed on the day of construction. Pray and ask for guidance in how you might support this worthwhile project in our community.

Our next committee meeting has yet to be scheduled but should be soon as we need to work out an activities plan for 2023. Be watching announcements in church for the next meeting date and time.

Submitted by Charlene Galston



Wednesday Connections

⁴² *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ...*

⁴⁶ *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.*

They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

- Acts 2:42; 46-47

Join us for a meal, fellowship and devotions. Meals begin at 4:45 pm –6 pm.

A short devotion, at 5:45-6 pm



February	1	Esther
February	8	The Youth, Spaghetti
February	15	The Zenz Family
February	22	No Meals (Ash Wednesday Service)
March	1	Rod & Katrina McGillivray



John 15:12, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

Luke 6:31, "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

Corinthians 16:14, "Do everything in love."

Proverbs 17:17, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."



These are a few bible verses that I think about when I think about love. February reminds me of love. The love God has for us and us for God and each other. I challenge you to find one or more of the many bible verses that help remind you of what is important in your life in the changing seasons of life.

February Happenings for the Youth Group:

The week of February 5-12 we need a group to help pack bags at the neighborhood food pantry

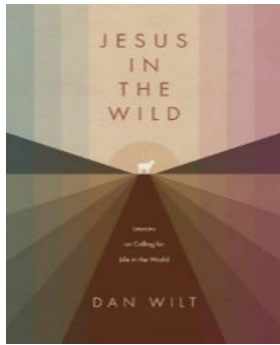
- February 1st Youth Group
- February 5th Youth Group potluck/sledding at Bruce Mound
- February 8th Youth Group serves spaghetti supper and clean up
- February 15th Youth Group
- February 22nd Youth Group attend Ash Wednesday Worship Service

Contact Suzanne 715-896-0224 with and questions

Email: suziegoldsmith@hotmail.com

Website: www.brfumc.org

Facebook: Black River Falls UMC Youth Group



Jesus in the Wild during Lent

Small Group Study: 10:30 am, Sunday. Feb. 26 – Mar. 26
5:30—6 pm, Wed. Mar. 1 – Apr. 5

What is the meaning within the remarkable scene in Luke 4:1–14 of Jesus being challenged by the devil in the “wild”—the untamed and unruly wilderness?

And what are the surprising implications of this event for followers of Jesus today?

In *Jesus in the Wild* you’ll take a forty-day journey into the heart of one of the most unusual, and often most misunderstood, stories in the Gospel accounts.

In this encounter, following his baptism in the Jordan and before the inauguration of his ministry, Jesus is alone with the adversary—the one whose works he had come to destroy (1 John 3:8). He faces three tests, or “temptations”—all aimed at unseating him from his identity, his belovedness, and his purpose as the Son of God.

Leadership Retreat

Will be held on **February 24, Fri. 5-8 pm and 25, Sat. 8 am-3 pm** with a book, *Being The Church in a Post-Pandemic World* by Kay Kotan.

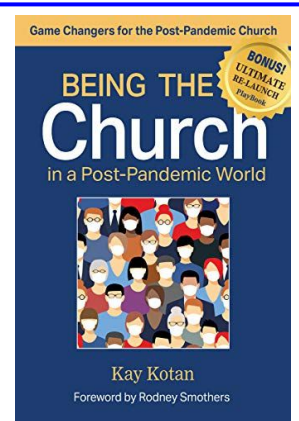
... Opportunity is born out of crisis. The global pandemic has been horrific. No one could have predicted such chaos to occur for so long. Yet, there is opportunity, the proverbial silver lining. Crisis is an accelerator.

The church was catapulted into the digital future. Some churches had no choice but to embrace technology they once refused. The church learned there are more ways to offer worship than we had previously imagined. We learned it is possible to engage people in online ministry that might never become involved in on-site ministry. ..

The church learned that it could change, and it changed quickly. During a pandemic period, when everything seems to have turned upside down, there is an opportunity to stop some things that had not been working anyway, eliminate some things that were seemingly impossible in “normal” times, and start new things that might have been hard to imagine in the past.

It’s time to renew our heart and mind to become a healthy, vital and culturally relevant church.

Lecturer: **Rev. Scott Carlson**, director of Congregational Development of the Wisconsin Conference. He will be also preaching on Feb. 26. Sunday. Meals will be provided.





SCRIP CARDS

Our church started the Scrip Card program in 2011. In the years since we started, the Scrip Cards have raised \$23,000 for the church's general fund. This is made possible by the discounts we get when buying cards.

The more sales made the more we raise. Our discounts vary from 2.5% up to 10% depending on the retailer. The church buys cards at a reduced amount.

We sell them to you and others at face value, the same amount you redeem them for when shopping. You may use the cards for your own use; gas for the auto, food for the table, etc. Another nice use is gifts for friends and family. Maybe someone would like a special meal out or a fancy cup of coffee. Lots of options are available.

Stop in the gathering area on Sundays or call Marcia at 715-284-3346 to see if we can provide what you are looking for.

Contact Marcia at 715-284-3346, if you have any questions.

To UWF Members and Friends,

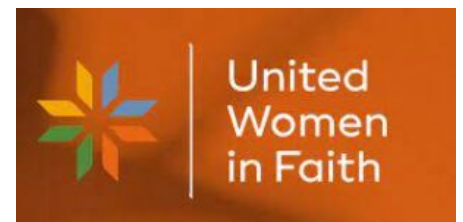
February, a month to celebrate **love** for the work of UWF in the global community. Our local unit meeting will be on Monday, February 6 at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. We will be having fellowship with snacks followed by the making of Valentine cards for our church friends. We hope you can join us.

UWF shows their Christian **love** in many ways. In Georgia, the Sewing Hearts Circle was formed at the Dahlonge UMC. In 2022, the UWF members provided more than 230 heart-shaped pillows for children in their church, to school children in El Salvador, to a local shelter for abused children, a homeless shelter, and other sites supporting families. A small pocket is sewn in each pillow where a Bible verse and cross are placed.

Mission Giving dollars contributed **lovingly** from members in our own local unit and others, combined with district and conference donations, are given to the National Office to be used carefully and thoughtfully to be sure that our mission programs remain strong year after year. UWF continues to put **Love** and Faith into Action. Be sure to join us **on February 6**.

Go Forward with God's Blessing and **Love**,

Luane Meyer



From your BRF UMC Finance Committee:

Monthly Financial Report



Welcome to 2023. We made it. We have so much to be thankful for.

Everyone should know that we finished 2022 in the **BLACK**. By pinching pennies, we were able to enter 2023 with money in the checking account.

A detailed budget report will be provided in next month's newsletter. We expect our income to be about \$275,000 and our expenses to be about \$273,000.

Members of the Finance Committee for 2023 will be: Pastor Inwha, Howard Gomer (Chairperson), Gil Homstad, Dave Olson, Jim Hoffman, Karolyn Gjersest, Jim Bible, Chuck Devendorf, Tom Epps, Katrina McGillivray.

Some internal changes have been made. We have eliminated the treasurer's position and have hired Dobson Accounting as our accounting firm. We will accomplish as savings with this move. Adam Bantell will continue to be our financial secretary. We will continue to use Church Windows to input financial data and keep track of members data.

Financial Committee will continue to meet once per month with some possible day of the week changes and may skip months in the summertime.

Thanks again for all of your contributions to your Methodist Church and the ministries that we fund each and every month.

Howard Gomer, Chair

Seeking Applicants for Children's Ministry Coordinator

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." - Proverbs 22:6

We are blessed to have younger families with children in our church. The Staff Parish Relations Committee is looking for a person to lead the of Children's Ministry.



This rewarding 5-10 hour/week opportunity for someone with love and enthusiasm for helping children learn about the Bible, God's unending love and grace, and what it means to be a follower of Jesus. The coordinator works closely with the Children and Youth Activities Committee to select curriculum for Sunday School and Vacation Bible School (VBS). Additionally, they will help to recruit teachers for Sunday School (grade 4K – 5th grade) as well as coordinate and oversee VBS. Other responsibilities for this paid position, include the ability to evaluate the need for additional programs to support our families and children and work with our music coordinator to provide music for Church School.

If you, or someone you know would be interested in this position, please contact Carol Hornby at 715-896-7684 or chornby@centurytel.net,

Katrina McGillivray, Chair, Staff Parish Relations Committee

LENT: THE ORIGINAL QUARANTINE

What might the origins of Lent offer us—a weary, wilderness people in a seemingly unending season?

The old English origin of the word Lent is *lencten*, referring generally to the Spring season and its lengthening of days. The Latin origins of the term add even more specificity to these lengthening days. *Quadragesima* means “forty days.”

The Italian *Quaresima* is especially interesting. In the fourteenth century during the Black Death, an isolation period of *quaranta giorni*—forty days—was prescribed to all ships and people before entering the Venetian city of Dubrovnik (now in Croatia). These terms, *Quaresima* and *quaranta giorni* are etymologically linked to a word we never would have guessed to become so colloquial: quarantine.

What was the nature of this quarantine? Was it always forty days? Was it always connected to Easter? To baptism? To fasting?

Lenten Origin Stories

Perhaps the origins of Lent are to be found in a three-week preparation for baptism by catechumens in Jerusalem and North Africa. There is a spurious fifth-century reference by Socrates about a three-week pre-Easter observance in Rome. We have early Roman lectionary-based evidence about this three-week period. We also have the fifth-century Armenian lectionary mentioning a pre-baptismal instructional period of three weeks or more, which likely reflects an earlier practice.

We even have harmony with the Jewish tradition. Jewish liturgical historian Lawrence Hoffman points out early rabbinic sources that encourage a three-week preparation for the Passover by cleansing oneself of impurities. However, even with all these correlations, here is the biggest problem aside from their dates of authorship: the connections to Easter are tenuous at best.

Our Lenten Quarantine

Over the centuries, the ground for Lent seems unsteady because so much historical and theological shifting and pivoting occurred. As pastors and leaders, this is fitting terrain for the quarantine we are about to encounter.

Our Lenten quarantine is right around the corner. Believe it or not, it’s the third(ish) Lent that we’ll observe during this pandemic. Unsteady ground seems to be the norm, these days. However, the norm remains uneasy. We still have jobs to do. There is so much we are asked to be steady and certain about: worship planning to do, sermons to write, people to visit, phone calls to make, volunteers to mobilize, classes to teach, vision to cast, and all the other balls we have in the air. On top of this, we are asked to make decisions with certainty about how we gather in a pandemic: virtual-only or hybrid, masks-required or masks-optional, indoors or outdoors, food or no food, singing or no singing, etc. So much certainty is asked of us in such uncertain times.

If the origin stories of Lent can offer us any wisdom in these days ahead, it is this: normalize unsteadiness. Codify mystery. Find comfort in the uncertainty. Take delight in what might be[come].

In an age where certitude is lauded, Lent invites us into a season of unknowing: fasting, praying, confessing, and pardoning—journeying alongside Jesus. If you are like me and could use a blessing right now in this unsteady season, receive these words:

May the God who, in Christ Jesus, took on flesh and walked these unsteady forty days, go with you, guide you, and sustain you. Amen. by Nelson Cowan from *Ministry Matters*



What Happened on This Day in the History of Christianity?

Apostle to the North

February 3



In the evangelization of Europe, the Scandinavians were the last Teutonic peoples to accept Christianity. These Vikings from the North threatened Western Christendom, and their raids terrorized Britain and Western Europe. One man wanted to reach them, and his desire for a martyr's crown gave him courage to try. **Anskar**, born in France in 801, was schooled from age five at the monastery of Corbey founded by Columba, and he possessed a tender heart. As a young man he was recruited to help establish a new monastery, New Corbey, in Germany.

While there Anskar heard of a Scandinavian politician, Harald, who was asking for military assistance. The resulting discussions opened a door, albeit dangerous, for a missionary to go to the Danes. Anskar volunteered. His friends tried to dissuade him, but he was ready, he told them, to perish if need be. He didn't die, but little is known of Anskar's resulting trip to Denmark, and when Harald fell from power, Anskar was expelled.

Swedish envoys soon requested missionaries, and Anskar again headed north. This time his ship was attacked by pirates, and he lost his possessions but not his life. Reaching Sweden, he was warmly welcomed by King Bjorn. But his preaching produced few converts.

Meanwhile, German emperor Louis the Pious, seeing Anskar's work, conceived an ambitious plan for Christianizing the North. He had Anskar appointed archbishop, gave him money, and established a monastery in Flanders as headquarters for the Scandinavian thrust. Anskar did his best, but headway was difficult. Pirates raided his monastery. He lived in hiding. His missionaries were driven from Sweden. Many of his converts reverted to paganism.

But Anskar prayed and fasted and worked until **February 3, 865**, when he felt the life draining from his body. He gave urgent instructions to his associates, then died peacefully — without gaining his coveted martyr's crown. His efforts failed to establish a permanent Scandinavian base for Christianity, but the seed was planted, and in the tenth century the church there gained a sure foothold. For this reason, Anskar is known in church history as the "Apostle to the North."

"Father, I don't ask you to take my followers out of the world, but keep them safe from the evil one. They don't belong to this world, and neither do I. Your word is the truth. So let this truth make them completely yours. I am sending them into the world, just as you sent me."

- John 17:15



FEB 3	James Bible
FEB 6	Jessica Whitegull
FEB 7	Kimberly Gjersest
FEB 8	Jana Nandory
	Renata Caponigro
FEB 9	Kay Finch
FEB 11	Donald Holcomb
FEB 12	Freda Goldsmith
FEB 13	Judith Sheppard
	Derek Peterson
FEB 16	Roy Hefty
FEB 18	James Hoffman
FEB 20	Inwha Shon
FEB 22	Dorothy Hefty
FEB 23	Jeremy Nandory
FEB 24	Jerry Overman
FEB 25	Madelyn Calderon
FEB 26	Linda Heller
FEB 28	Danielle Dougherty

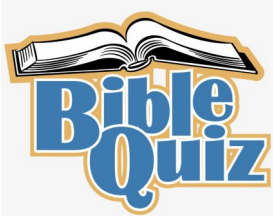
FEB 17 Paul & Robin Hoffman



Youth Birthdays

FEB 8	Corbin Kapfer
FEB 10	DraMayne Sanders
FEB 12	Benson Ammann
FEB 23	Logan Hoffman

JESUS LIVES YOU.



There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them?

This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends.

One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized.

Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph.

During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen.

As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight." Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown.

One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers.

Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus; there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found. God Bless.



Bible Trivia Question of the Month

Of which of these is it said, 'He walked with God'?

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| A. Methuselah | B. Lamech |
| C. Enoch | D. Noah |

See: Genesis 5:24



UPCOMING EVENTS:

PRAYER MEETING: Every Wednesday, 10 am

MEN'S GROUP: Saturday, February 4th 8 am, at Perkins

YOUTH GROUP SNOW DAY: February 5, at Bruce Mound Ski
Resort after service

UWF MEETING: Monday, February 6, 5:30 pm

LENT DEVOTIONAL: Every Wednesday 5:30-6 pm. "Jesus in the Wilderness"
Every Sunday, 10:30 am.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS: February 13, Trustees Meeting, 5:30 pm
February 14, Finance Committee, 5:30 pm
Administrative Council, 6:30 pm
February 23, Worship Committee, 5:30 pm
Children/Youth/Family Committee, 5:30 pm

PRETZEL SUNDAY: February 19

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE: February 22, 6 pm

IMPOSITION of ASHES: 9-10 am & 2-4 pm

LEADERSHIP RETREAT: A Leadership Retreat will be held February 24 from 5-8 pm and continuing on Saturday February 25 from 8 am– 3 pm. Please plan to attend to help improve your church.

Rev. Scott Scarlson (Director of Congregational Development of Wisconsin Conference) will be leading this event and be preaching for us on Sunday, Feb. 26.



TOP TEN THINGS YOU CAN TRY FOR THE LENTEN SEASON:

10. Try an electronic fast. Give up TV, Facebook, texting, tweeting, e-mail and all things electronic for one day every week. (Or everyday of Lent!) Use the time to read & pray. Learn about fasting. (Learn more about media fasts.)
9. Start a prayer rhythm. Each day of Lent, go to The Upper Room's prayer wall and pray for another person.
8. Go deeper into the Bible. Take the online course, Worship In Light of the Cross.
7. Forgive someone who doesn't deserve it (maybe even yourself.) Study a book on forgiveness, such as Forgiveness, the Passionate Journey.
6. Give up soft drinks, fast food, tea or coffee to grow closer to God. Give the money you save to help folks in a different part of the world who are in crisis. Pick a current global issue and help change the world.
5. Create a daily quiet time. Spend 10 minutes a day in silence and prayer. Read a daily devotional for the season of Lent. See how it can help you add spiritual practice to your daily life beyond Lent.
4. Cultivate a life of gratitude. Write someone a thank you letter each week and be aware of how many people have helped you along the way. Learn more about spiritual practice of gratitude.
3. Participate in a Lent Photo-a-Day practice and pray each day with your camera in your hand. Start praying.
2. Volunteer one hour or more each week with a local shelter, tutoring program, nursing home, prison ministry. Learn about the global issues and how you can help.
1. Pray for others you see as you walk to and from classes or drive to and from work. Download the Prayer app and pray as you go through your day.