

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



**THE BLACK RIVER FALLS
 UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 NEWSLETTER**

Mission Statement:

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

REV. INWHA SHON, PASTOR

Worship Service: 9:00 am

Office Hours: Wednesday/Thursday
 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Telephone: 715-284-4114

Website: brfumc.org

We are also on Facebook and YouTube!



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at BRF,

Peace and grace be with you. I have noticed recently my blood pressure was higher than I expected. I think one of the reasons for that is lack of exercise. So, I decided to work out more. Physical health is very important to maintain well-being.

As Christians, we should check our spiritual health too. How do I know my spiritual condition? Are you dry or satisfied spiritually? Our Lord Jesus says in John 10:10, *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* As soon as we begin to believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord, the new life is conceived in us, which is the eternal life or God's life. As 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here."* Also, 1 John 5:12 says, *"Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."* Since a new life begins in us, that life must grow as a baby grows in the mother's womb. Where eternal life through Christ does exist, there should be not only health but also growth. Do you feel you are growing well as God intended? Do you want to diagnose your spiritual health?

Rev. Dr. Donald Whitney suggests ten questions to diagnose our spiritual health:

Lent season is coming up fast this year. It begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14th, and ends on

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|--|---|
| 1. Do you thirst for God? | 6. Do you delight in the Bride of Christ? |
| 2. Are you governed increasingly by God's Word? | 7. Are the spiritual disciplines increasingly important to you? |
| 3. Are you more loving? | 8. Do you still grieve over sin? |
| 4. Are you more sensitive to God's presence? | 9. Are you a quicker forgiver? |
| 5. Do you have a growing concern for the spiritual and temporal needs of others? | 10. Do you yearn for heaven and to be with Jesus? |

Holy Saturday, March 30th. Lent is a time of repentance, fasting, and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance for all Christians. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending themselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of themselves to others.

Just as Jesus is the source of spiritual life, so also is He the standard of spiritual health. And regarding spiritual growth, we are to *"grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ"* (Ephesians 4:15). Let us remember that our relationship with God is not something that we take for granted.

I encourage you all that we should make every effort to confirm our calling and election (2 Peter 1:10) in this Lent season so that we can grow more spiritually. God bless you.

In Christ love,

Pastor Rev. Inwha Shon



Too Valuable a Man

February 4



Some Christian workers, facing the sunset years, may retire from official positions and pace themselves more carefully in ministry. But withdrawing entirely from the Lord's work isn't an option, for Christians don't really retire. They just get transferred.

In 776 **Rabanus Maurus** was born in Germany with a good brain. His parents educated him in the best schools, and he eventually studied in Tours, France, under the great Christian educator **Alcuin**, who had advised Charlemagne. Alcuin mentored Rabanus with more than book knowledge; he equipped him to teach others. Back in Germany, Rabanus was appointed principal of the school in Fulda, and under his leadership German youth, both poor and rich, were afforded an education. Rabanus painstakingly developed the library into the best anywhere and made his school Europe's most famous, the mother of scholars and of a score of affiliated institutions. He extended the curriculum to include many sciences, and "reproved superstitions." His graduates were in demand across Europe.

At the heart of Rabanus's educational genius was a passion for God's Word. His academic programs included diligent study of Scripture. He wrote commentaries on almost every book in the Bible, preached regularly, composed hymns, wrote handbooks for ministers, and worked hard for a well-trained clergy — all in an age of darkness, ignorance, and superstition.

Finally in 842, exhausted, he retired. At 66, he longed to spend the rest of his life in quiet study, free from official responsibility. ***"But he was too valuable a man to be allowed to retire from active life."*** Appointed archbishop of Mainz, Germany, Rabanus spent his remaining years preaching the gospel and contending for the faith. He didn't lay down his labors until **February 4, 856** when, at age 80, the Lord transferred him home. What kept Rabanus going? The Spirit's anointing! In one of his hymns he prayed:

Come from the throne of God above
O Paraclete, O Holy Dove,
Come, Oil of gladness, cleansing Fire,
And Living Spring of pure desire.
Good people will prosper like palm trees,
And they will grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon.
They will take root in your house, Lord God,
And they will do well.
They will be like trees that stay healthy and fruitful,
Even when they are old. - Psalm 92:12-14



(Rabanus Maurus (left) with Alcuin presents his work to Otgar of Mainz (right). Illustration from Fulda manuscript, c. 830–840.)

Morgan, Robert J., *On This Day*



TEN OTHER THINGS YOU MIGHT GIVE UP FOR LENT

Magrey deVega

A recent online, non-scientific survey by *Christianity Today* revealed the most popular things people give up for Lent: 1) social networking, 2) chocolate, 3) Twitter, 4) alcohol, and 5) chips. I for one am giving up the use of electronic de-

vices at the dinner table, much to the delight of my two daughters. Madelyn is giving up playing games on her smartphone, and Grace is giving up afternoon snacks. I had to convince them that giving up homework was not an appropriate Lenten discipline.

As I've thought about it, there are some deeper parts of your life that you might consider giving up for Lent, for the sake of your own spiritual maturity and personal development. In no particular order, and by no means exhaustive, here are some things I thought of that you might want to consider as part of your Lenten journey this year:

Give up the need to be right all the time.

Business author Patrick Lencioni said, "People don't need to feel like they are right, as much as they need to feel like they've been heard." Yes, claim your voice, assert your convictions, and engage the issues that matter to you. But once you've been heard, consider the possibility that you might have something to learn from someone who disagrees with you. That's often how we learn our most important lessons in life. (James 1:19)

Give up your reluctance to ask for help.

It is true that giving up something for Lent requires discipline, will, and self-mastery. But it also requires the recognition that we cannot always be self-sufficient. You are not superhuman. You do not have inexhaustible reserves. Turn to loved ones for support, seek the wise counsel of others, and don't be afraid to ask for help. (Psalm 69)

Give up your fear of failure.

Mother Theresa said, "God does not call us to be successful; God calls us to be faithful." You may sometimes gauge your self-worth by what you have achieved and how you have succeeded. You might subconsciously depend on the affirmation of others to feel good about yourself. But your worth does not equal your work, nor are you defined by your failures. Some people live a whole lifetime before they come to realize that. Save yourself the heartache later. Learn it now. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Give up comparing yourself to others.

Forget the Joneses. They are not worth keeping up with. Find contentment in what you have, and who God has created you to be. You do not need the envious admiration of others. You need not be defined by what you do not have. While there is nothing wrong with being self-motivated and goal-oriented, don't evaluate your life in comparison to others. It's not worth it. (James 4:2-3)

Give up the need to have things all figured out.

Embrace mystery. Dance with your doubts. Acknowledge that you do not and cannot know it all. Resist the temptation to rationalize the irrational parts of your faith, and recognize that some of the greatest things in life are those things that cannot be explained or fully understood. Things like God's love for you, and how God is with you even when you don't believe it. (Romans 11:33-36)

Give up your fears of the future.

I get it. These are frightening times for many people. There is great nervousness about the way things are in the world. And I would guess that you are dealing with fears yourself. I have learned over my twenty years of parish ministry that everyone — without exception — has something that

they are dealing with. We all have our fears, but we don't need to be define by them. For God is a God of hope. (Matthew 6:33-34)

Give up anesthetizing yourself to pain and suffering.

The long shadow of suffering is cast in many shades, like loneliness, grief, abandonment, and betrayal. None of us enjoys going through difficulties, and our instinct is often to numb ourselves from the pain in ways that are actually self-destructive: giving in to addictions, accumulating possessions, pursuing temporal pleasures, and cocooning ourselves from the rest of the world. These might anesthetize us in the short term, but they prevent us from allowing that pain to help us stretch, grow, and trust in God. (Romans 5:3-5)

Give up the need to be in control.

This one is at the heart of the season of Lent. It is a reminder that we ultimately are not in control of what happens to us. We cannot control others, and we can hardly claim to have full control of ourselves and our future. Let the Covenant Prayer of Wesley be your guide, to remind you that you are not your own; you belong to God. For we must ultimately surrender our control over to a God who has created us and claimed us from the beginning. (Matthew 16:24-25)

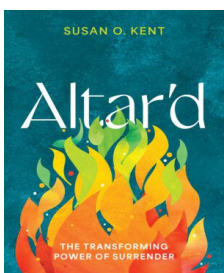
Give up the need to make everyone happy.

It's not like you can, anyway. You may have a knack for understanding what others want from you, but you must also claim your own convictions and understand your limitations. Your job is not to be all things to all people and please everyone you know. God calls you to live a life of integrity, uncompromising in your commitment to Jesus Christ. For God, after all, is the only one you need to please. (Galatians 1:10)

Give up all the non-essential noise in your life.

This may be the toughest thing of all to give up, but it may be the key to a deeply moving Lenten season for you. Your life is inundated by competing voices and blaring noises from the culture around you. Pay attention to your breath. Take walks. Drive without the radio on. Set the cell phone down when you're at the family table. Watch less television, read more newspapers and books, and look people in the eye when you talk to them. Most of all, pray to God, "Silence all voices but your own." Turn down the volume of your life, and connect to a God who knows you better than you know yourself. (Psalm 46:10)

Blessings to you on your Lenten journey!



Bible Study in Lent Wednesday, 6 pm

Discovering how Jesus transforms and heals us through **altars**! **Altars** have always represented change. They are the places where sacred space meets our surrender and leads into authentic spiritual transformation. From the beginning of time, God's people have built altars to mark the places where God spoke, gave direction, or gave his blessing. It is the place where God's people surrendered offerings to him in obedience. A book, \$10.

Fresh Expressions UMC National Gathering



Feb. 7-9, Charlotte, NC

The First National Gathering of Fresh Expressions United Methodist.

It's time for United Methodists to come together in fellowship to reawaken through time of learning, experience, and worship.

Marcia Hagen, Charlene Galston, Esther and Pastor Shon will be attending. Pray for them.



Mission Outreach Committee Report

February 2024

We continue to prepare for getting Dinner Church up and running. Our target date has been changed to March 20 with a practice run on March 13. This was changed as several key people involved with the project will be gone for extended periods in February. We have a marketing/advertising plan in place, art and music lined up, Jesus stories to share and we have watched videos to help us prepare. The next big project will be to work on menus and look closely at food costs and our budget.

There are sign up sheets in the gathering area at church. We are asking everyone that is able or has an interest in supporting Dinner Church to sign up with the committee or committee groups with whom they would like to serve. Job / duty descriptions are at the beginning of each group so that you might have an idea of what would be expected. These lists will be used to contact volunteers on days when we might be short. In the future, there will be other sign up sheets with dates to choose the Wednesdays that you are able to help out. We are also working on an electronic sign up sheet to make it easier. If you are not able to get out or don't like to get out in winter would you be willing to make phone calls when more help is needed? Please let Marcia Hagen or Charlene Galston know.

We will continue with our Wednesday Connection until Dinner Church starts. Groups, families or individuals are needed to sign up to provide a meal on Wednesdays. The sign up sheet is located on the door leading into the kitchen area.

We had a successful campaign at Christmas for the giving tree, Here are the totals:

UMCOR \$50.00

Food for Kids-\$ 122.00

Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers -\$55.00

Heifer International -\$280.00

Thank you everyone for your donations.



We had a fun and productive sewing day on January 17th doing pillowcase dresses for Marcia Hagen to take to Guatemala with her. We were able to complete 12 dresses and have several others prepped for our next sewing day. Thank you to everyone that either participated or donated supplies to support this project. Our next sewing day will be on March 6 from 10-3. This time we will be sewing reusable sanitary pads for the Patricia Project. In the future be watching for a sewing day to work on quilts for the Sleep in Heavenly Peace bed build project. Please let me know if you are able to attend.

How are you being called to serve others? Our committee has a long list of organizations or opportunities to donate financial support or your time and/or talents. Please let someone on our committee know if you have recognized a need in our community that we might be able to assist.

Submitted by Charlene Galston

YOUTH MINISTRIES



February 2024



Hello Everyone!

DONATIONS NEEDED FOR GARAGE SALE.....



As your spring cleaning comes up, please keep the youth in mind. We will be having a **"garage sale" May 10-11th** and need your donations to make this successful. We are raising funds for a basketball hoop and dodgeball pit. There will be a room designated downstairs we will use to store the items until the week of the sale. We can arrange to pick up items if you need. Thank you in advance. If you have any questions please call/text Suzanne 715-896-0224 or Paula 920-562-1332.

February Schedule;

- February 7th Youth group serving supper and clean up
- February 14th Youth attending Ash Wednesday worship
- February 21st Supper at 5pm. Youth meeting at 6pm
- February 28th Supper at 5pm. Youth meeting at 6pm

The youth will be attending the Quake Youth Gathering in Wisconsin Dells February 16-18th. Please let Suzanne know by February 4th if you are able to attend.

Blessings

Suzanne Goldsmith
 suziegoldsmith@hotmail.com
 Facebook: Black River Falls UMC Youth Group
 Website: www.BRFUMC.org



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

February Trustee Report

Hello Everyone,

There is little to report this month however, the exciting news that work on the new audio/visual system has begun and should be up and running by late February! Also, one boiler has been replaced!

Board of Trustees will meet **February 5th at 5:00 PM.**

Patrick Moe
Trustee Chairman



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. Jim Bible, Chair, Staff Parish Relations Committee

CHURCH STAFF OPENINGS AVAILABLE

Praising God through Music

To continue our excellence in music ministry, Black River Falls United Methodist Church is seeking 1-2 persons to serve as pianist and as co-ordinator and director of our music program.

***Director of Music** requires training and experience in music performance as well as familiarity with Christian music. This is part-time and would consist of 6-10 hours/week. Enthusiasm and creativity are encouraged.



From Your BRF UMC Finance Committee

February 2024 Update

At the time of our last report, we had not yet completed our 2023 end of the year accounting.

Total income for 2023..... \$377,861.82

Total expenses for 2023.....\$362,309.94

General Fund Checking as of 01/23/2024.....\$15,873.00

We are in the process of updating our Segregated Accounts to have our “church windows” accounts balance with our “accountants” recordings. This will take a few months to accomplish to make sure we have all Income and Expenses recorded. Once completed, we can be up to date with each Segregated Accounts and be able to mover forward with more accurate information.

Our 2024 Annual Pledge Drive to cover expenses went very well. We should be able to continue 2024 with a balanced budget. We are very grateful for all whom have given and continue to give towards the Missions of our church. This assumes all those that pledged will continue to submit their pledge amounts regularly. We should be able to let givers know (1) What they have given for that quarter and (2) What they have pledged for the year on the same document.

Quarterly statements will continue.

The Pledge Drive for the (1) Sound and Video System (2) Boiler replacement and repairs..... We have started to receive gifts. We are expecting to raise at least \$40,000 to cover additional expenses not paid yet. We thank you all for your generosity.

Thanks again for all that you do for your church.

Howard Gomer
Finance Chairperson





2023 – United Women in Faith Highlights

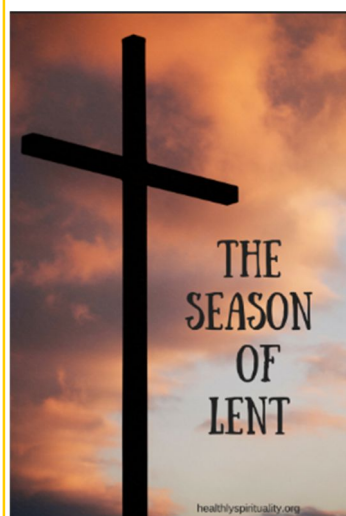
Greetings United Women in Faith Members and Friends,
United Women in Faith is looking toward experiences in 2024 to partner with committees and groups in our church along with the community to support families in our neighborhood. We know we reach out so much further when we work together.

Throughout the year, we hope to initiate programs and projects that will provide women, children and youth and their families with a sense of support and care from the United Methodist Church and the community.

We invite all women to join us during our monthly meetings held on the 1st Monday at 5:30pm and we will be involving you, our church family, in our mission projects. Our next meeting is Monday, February 5th. Please join us.

Go Forward with God's Blessing,

Luane Meyer
UWF President



Lent Season Schedule

February 14th to March 30th

Morning Prayer	Daily	7:14 AM
Bible Study- Altar'd	Wednesdays	6:00 PM
Prayer Study on Draw the Circle	Thursdays	10:00 AM
Dinner Church Team Study on Prayer	Sundays	10:30 AM

Men's Walk #37: 15-21 April



Women's Walk #38: 25-28 April

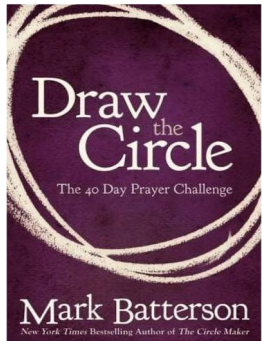
The Walk to Emmaus develops Christian disciples and leaders by inspiring, challenging, and equipping active adult church members for Christian action in their homes, churches, workplaces, and communities. It also benefits less active members who are seeking to renew a relationship with God, grow spiritually, or discover firmer foundations for their lives.

Through The Walk to Emmaus, as they seek to become healthy and vital congregations, local churches have both a means of growing disciples and a tool for developing leaders for their disciple-making systems.

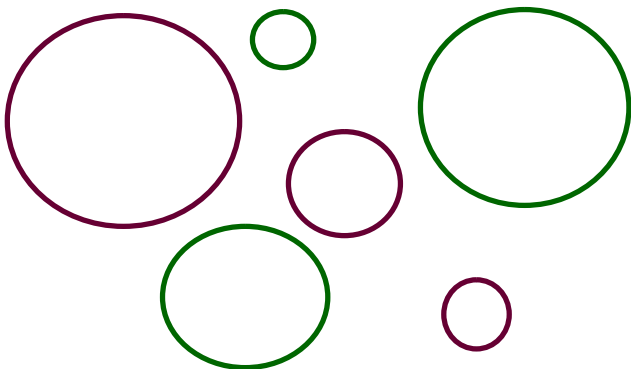
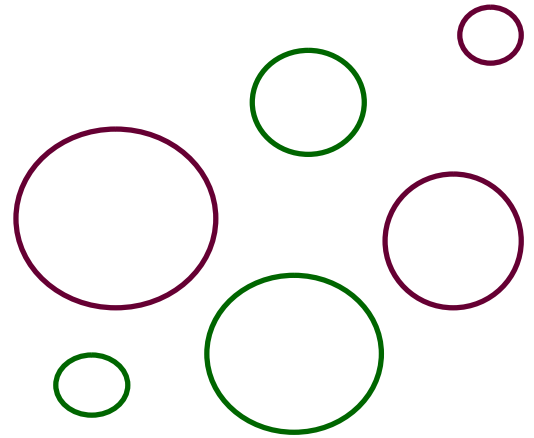
The program begins with a 72-hour short course in Christianity that is wrapped in prayer and signs of sacrificial service. It continues for the rest of participants' lives with follow-up groups that, along with the local church's robust offerings, contribute to participants' ongoing growth in grace.

40-Day Prayer Challenge

During Lent, 7:14 am



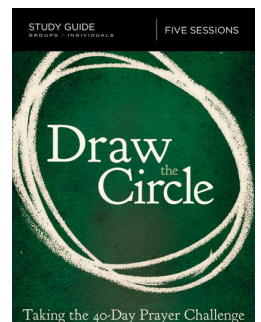
Have your prayers become stagnant? Do you long to see God move in fresh ways? Are you ready to move to new places in your walk with God? If so, it's time to take the 40-day prayer challenge and press into God like never before. Contact the office or the pastor for a book. \$10.

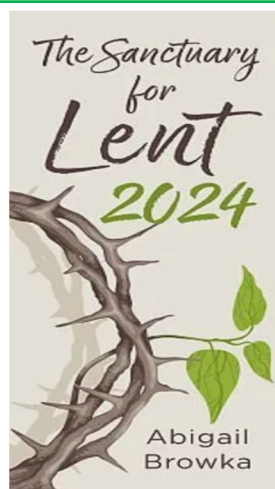


Study on Draw the Circle

**5 Thursdays in Lent,
10 am**

In this five-session video study, the author reveals how taking up this prayer challenge will not only change the way you pray today but also dramatically impact the rest of your life. You will witness the miraculous results in your life, church, community, and world that only God can bring. \$10. **Feb. 15, 29, Mar. 7, 14, 21.**





The Sanctuary for Lent 2024

Devotional

The Sanctuary for Lent 2024 contains daily devotional readings for each day in Lent, from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday. Along with suggested scripture passages, it contains a short devotion and a brief prayer for each day.

Copies are available for anyone who would like one.

Freewill donations are much appreciated.



STOCK UP!

Now that the holidays are over, you probably need to restock your pantry or maybe just go out and enjoy a meal that someone else has prepared. Church has Scrip cards that can help either way. We have cards for Hansen's, Walmart or several restaurants available for purchase.

Stop in the gathering area on Sunday morning or call Marcia at 715-284-3346 to purchase.



Do you know that people still listen to the radio? We do not know how many lives we touch with our weekly worship service on WWIS Radio, but we know our reach goes all the way to Washington state where one person communicated their thanks for a meaningful service heard on I heart Radio. You have an opportunity to give to this ministry. We invite you to sponsor a Sunday broadcast.

First come, first serve! You can sponsor a week in the name of someone or for a special event.

Each week is \$100.

If you are interested, please let the church office know or send email to brfumc@gmail.com.

FEBRUARY 2024

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2	3
							UMM 8:00 AM
4	Sunday Worship 9:00 AM	5	6	7	8	9	10
	New Memb Cls 10:30						
	SPRC Training 3-6:00 PM	Trustees 5:00 PM UMF 5:30 PM					
11	Sunday Worship 9:00 AM	12	13	14	15	16	17
	New Memb Cls 10:30			Morning Prayer 7:14	Group Study on Draw the Circle 10:00 AM	Morning Prayer 7:14	
			Warship Committee 5:30 PM		Admin Council 5:30 PM	QUAKE YOUTH GATHERING WI DELLS	QUAKE YOUTH GATHERING WI DELLS
18	Sunday Worship 9 Breaking Spiritual Strongholds 10:30 AM	19	20	21	22	23	24
	QUAKE YOUTH GATHERING WI Dells	Morning Prayer 7:14	Morning Prayer 7:14	Morning Prayer 7:14	Morning Prayer 7:14	Morning Prayer 7:14	
				Bible Study 6:00 PM Alter'd	Group Study on Draw the Circle 10:00 AM	February Newsletter Deadline	
25	Sunday Worship 9:00 AM	26	27	28			
	Breaking Spiritual Strongholds 10:30 AM	Morning Prayer 7:14	Morning Prayer 7:14	Morning Prayer 7:14	Morning Prayer 7:14	Morning Prayer 7:14	
	Mission Outreach 10:15 AM			Bible Study 6:00 PM Alter'd	Group Study on Draw the Circle 10:00 AM		

WEDNESDAYS AT CHURCH:

Wednesday Connections 5 pm-6 pm
Youth Group 5:30 pm-7 pm
Confirmation Class 7 pm-8 pm