

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



The Lord will guide you always;
He will satisfy all your needs.

Isaiah 58:11

**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!

FROM
THE
PASTOR



Now he [God] who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. - 2 Corinthians

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at BRF,

Happy New Year!

I hope all of you had a wonderful Christmas season with your family and friends. I pray for those who cannot have this joyful season for some reason like us. Also, I appreciate that all of you have prayed and supported our church this past year.

A new year is coming up but I feel as if I still live in 2023. I am not sure how I went through this past year. It was rough. I ask myself what divides the past year and the new year. Just by the dates in the calendar? Regardless of our intent and circumstances, a new year arrives without fail. What drives us in this eventful and tough world? Where do you find the purpose and the meaning of life amid a crooked and twisted generation?

Since our church had the spiritual experiment of *Dynamite Prayer* by Rosario Picardo and Sue Nilson Kibbey every morning for 28 days last fall, I am sure our church has been changing spiritually. There were a total of 150 people attending Morning Prayer time over the 28 days. As some of them witnessed to the congregation their spiritual moments and their prayer requests were answered by God, I am convinced they have grown in terms of spirituality. This practice was so unfamiliar to us that it was not easy for us to come to church every morning to pray. But God has been with us and worked among us and many people got inspired and carved out a new spiritual habit.

After that prayer movement, I was asked by a few faithful members who experienced a spiritual moment during the prayer practices to continue to gather for the Morning Prayer every day. So, we had Advent prayer time during the last four weeks. We used two books, *Advent 2023: A Calendar of Devotions* written by Sam McGlothlin and *Jesus Listens-For Advent and Christmas: Prayers for the Season* written by Sarah Young for prayer and meditation every morning from 7 am to 8 am. It was amazing that we encountered God every morning before a new day began.

Timothy 4:5 says “*Because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.*” We are called to be holy as God is holy and called to be lights to shine forth to the world and called to grow to become like Jesus (“*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (2 Peter 3:18). So, I will focus on the spiritual practices such as prayer meeting, Bible reading, and the discipleship class next year.

Also, our church is going to launch a new ministry, “*Dinner Church*” every Wednesday to reach out to our community for the sake of God’s kingdom. You are ministers to do His mission. I invite you to help us with these ministries.

May God bless you all so that both you and our church give glory to God and live abundantly in the Spirit.

In Christ’s love,
Pastor, Rev. Inwha Shon



What happened on this day in the Christian history?

“The Tongue Screw”

January 4



Travel brochures of the Netherlands tell of windmills, dikes, and boys named Hans with their silver skates. But the years 1531 to 1578 were not so peaceful. Hundreds of Protestants were slaughtered, including a young man named Hans.

Hans Bret supported his widowed mother by working in a bakery in Antwerp. The two belonged to a Protestant group there, and in his spare time Hans studied the Bible and taught new converts in the church, preparing them for baptism. One evening a knock sounded on the bakery door. Hans opened it to find a delegation of officers. The house was surrounded and Hans was arrested. For the next several months, authorities alternately questioned and tortured him. From his dark isolation hole, Hans managed to smuggle letters to his mother.

From him alone we expect our strength to withstand these cruel wolves, so that they have no power over our souls. They are really more cruel than wolves—they are not satisfied with our bodies, tearing at them; but they seek to devour and kill our souls.

Hans's treatment worsened, and when intense torture failed to break his spirit, he was sentenced to the stake. Early on Saturday, **January 4, 1577**, the executioner came to Hans's cell and ordered him to stick out his tongue. Over it he clamped an iron tongue screw, twisting it tightly with a vise grip. Then he seared the end of Hans's tongue with a red-hot iron so that the tongue would swell and couldn't slip out of the clamp. The officials didn't want Hans preaching at his execution. The young man was taken by wagon to the marketplace, secured to a post with winding chains, and burned alive.

In the crowd, another Hans watched in horror—Hans de Ries, Bret's pastor and friend. After the ashes cooled, he sifted through them and retrieved a keepsake—the tongue screw that had fallen from Bret's consumed body. Shortly after, Hans de Ries married Hans Bret's mother, and the tongue screw became a symbol of faithfulness that has passed from generation to generation. Each generation will announce to the next your wonderful and powerful deeds. I will keep thinking about your marvelous glory and your mighty miracles. Everyone will talk about your fearsome deeds, and I will tell all nations how great you are. Psalm 145:4-6

Morgan, Robert J., *On This Day*: 365





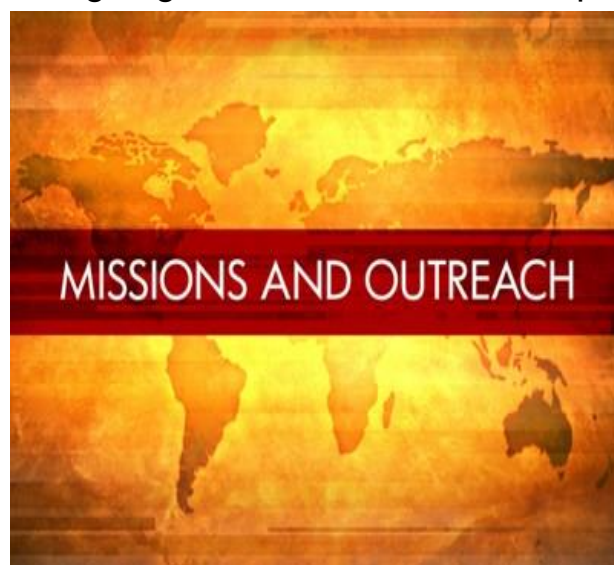
Mission Outreach Committee Report

We continue to prepare for getting Dinner Church up and running. Our target date remains in February but more near the end of the month than the beginning. We've had one training meeting on December 27 to begin learning about ways to communicate with individuals that attend Dinner Church. Some topics may come up that seem awkward and we must be careful not to come across as judgmental if individuals or families share that they are facing challenges. There are two more trainings coming up. Next is January 3 and then the 10th both at 6pm after Wednesday Connections. Judy Hanson will be leading this training. Please come. There is a Fresh Expressions conference coming up in February in Charlotte North Carolina. A small group from our church will be attending to learn more about this initiative of which Dinner Church is one piece.

The Mission Outreach Committee was awarded \$4800.00 for the Dinner Church initiative. We are grateful that the United Methodist Conference did elect to award us some grant monies but it is below what we requested. Apparently there were many other well deserving applications. We have had to modify our plan but will move forward. Instead of buying a freezer you may have noticed in the bulletin recently that we were looking for a gently used freezer that someone could donate. Also needed is utility shelving to hold shelf stable food that we purchase. Is this something that you might consider donating?

On December 13 and 14 members of the Mission Outreach Committee spent some time in Alma Center seeing Dinner Church in operation. The Assembly of God Church hosts Dinner Church twice a month at the VFW hall. We witnessed and learned more about food preparation on the 13th and joined in the meal and fellowship on 14th. Their team was eager to share their knowledge so that we might be successful. They often serve over 50 but their numbers were down on the night we attended.

We have 2 sewing days scheduled. Our first will be on January 17th from 10-3 to make dresses from pillowcases (double fold bias tape (all colors) and gently used or new cotton pillow cases are needed). Marcia Hagen will once again be going on a medical mission trip in February and will take these with her. Please bring a sewing machine and any fabric pieces that might be appropriate for pockets or for making bias tape. We have found that a colorful pocket dresses up a plain pillow case so much. We will once again try to wrap up our sewing for the Patricia project. This will take place on **March 6** also from 10-3. Please note this is a date change from a previously announced date. We will meet in the fellowship hall at our church. Refreshments and a light lunch will be provided. Please join us for all or part of the day. To help us complete these big projects, sewers from other groups have been invited as they also share a similar mission. To plan for food, please let me know if you plan to attend.



Continued on next page.

To all those that knit or crochet, how are you doing on your Knit for Kids project? There have been some busy people out there and already we have 15 items toward our 125 item goal. If you don't knit or crochet, donations of acrylic (regular worsted) yarn in any color would be appreciated. Is there anyone that would like to learn how to knit or crochet? I would be happy to help you get started.

At the time of this writing the Christmas giving tree still had envelopes on in for donations. I will provide a summary report in the next newsletter of the totals. Thank you to everyone that contributed.

Looking for other ways that you can serve others? The Wisconsin Conference Volunteers in Mission (VIM) website [Volunteers in Mission - Wisconsin Conference of the UMC \(wisconsinumc.org\)](http://Volunteers in Mission - Wisconsin Conference of the UMC (wisconsinumc.org)) lists several opportunities some of which are nearby. I would encourage you to check out the web site for more information or the mission outreach web site for a full listing. If you prefer to remain local, check with the pastor as to whom might benefit from a friendly visit or phone call. Does your neighbor need help getting to an appointment or snow shoveled? Additionally, Interfaith volunteer caregivers have many volunteer opportunities and are always welcoming new volunteers. As some volunteers have become snowbirds, there is a greater need for volunteers now.

As we begin a new year, let's remember to live as one of his disciples by shining a light for others and sharing His word.

Submitted by Charlene Galston 715-284-9544

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 coordinator 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.



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

YOUTH MINISTRIES

January 2024



Happy New Year!

Reminder, there is NO YOUTH GROUP on Wednesday, January 3rd. Regular groups resume January 10, 2024.

If you have not signed up for the Winter Retreat on January 19-21 and would still like to go, please contact Suzanne ASAP.

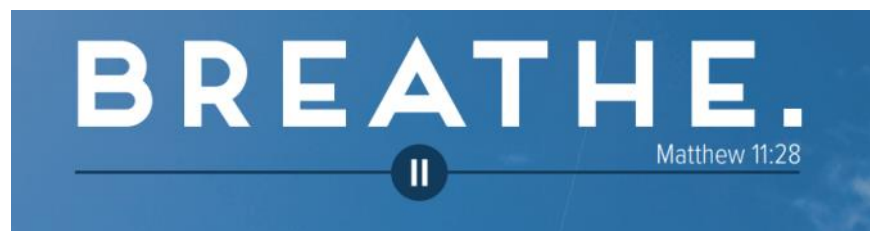
If you didn't receive information about the 3 different youth events happening in January (Winter Retreat-Lake Lucerne) February (Quake Youth Gathering--Wisconsin Dells) and March (Confirmation Retreat--Lake Lucerne) and would like information, please contact Suzanne.

The youth group received a grant through the United Methodist Foundation. Any youth will be able to have 1 of the 3 gatherings paid for in full through the grant.

Any question call or text Suzanne 715-896-0224

Blessings

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



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2023 Trustee Report

2023 began as a year of new experiences. This is my first time as part of the Trustees for United Methodist church, not to mention being asked to be chairperson. A lot to learn in a short time, kind of flying by the seat of your pants.

After a couple of months of getting into the groove of what's what and who's who, we finally got the ball rolling. First off were some minor building and grounds issues that needed attention and a schedule was put into action. The first major issue was the need for roof repairs, but because of weather conditions we needed to wait for warmer weather to get the work quoted and schedule repairs. A local contractor's bid was approved.

The next major project to tackle was to focus on getting a much-needed Audio and Visual system upgrade. Our present system has started to fail, and repairs would be outdated. After several meetings and reviewing our options, we were presented with a quote from a local company who was able to re-view our equipment and provide us with a new system upgrade that would meet our needs and give us a long-term future with quality equipment. The new system was approved by the Trustees and the Ad Council for installation in January 2024.

As we come to a close of 2023, we are faced with a heating issue and the need for a new boiler system for the older part of our church. A quick response from our heating contractor should have us warmed back with a short time. A big but necessary expense that could not be avoided. We have all experienced these things ourselves and know the challenges it can cause, but with God's blessing and the support of our congregation, we will find a way.

Our list of spring projects has already started to grow and with the good people on our Trustee board, we will get it done.

Thank you to our board members and our congregation for your support and guidance this past year. It makes the starting off a new year something to look forward to.

Patrick Moe
Trustee Chairman





This January 2024 newsletter update will give you an idea of where we are at financially through the first 11 months of 2023.

As of 12/19/2023, we had a balance of \$32,627.58 in our General Fund checking account (please note that we had a bunch of bills to pay prior to the end of 2023, so that balance will be considerably lower).

Through November 2023:
Income \$237,977.00
Expenses \$255,576.00



We were able to pay \$21,000 towards apportionments which is what we had agreed to pay.

With the new Sound and Video system costing about \$45,000 and the new boiler for the heating system costing about \$11,000, we will need about \$40,000 to help cover the costs of these 2 larger expenses. With the help of the congregation, we hope to have additional pledges of about \$40,000 to help cover these costs. This is over and above the general fund budget pledges that have been made. We hope that our congregation can help with these expenses. Your additional support will be appreciated. We will be talking about this more over the next month.

We had a successful 2024 annual pledge drive to cover the annual expenses. Not all pledges have been received as of this date. We expect to have a balanced budget for 2024.

Finance Committee will meet on January 9th, 2024 to go over end of the year numbers and to review the 2024 budget. Howard will send out an email to all members to confirm the time and to reconfirm the date (meeting will depend upon receiving the end of the year financial statement from the accountant)

Your financial support of this church is so valuable in maintaining the ministries of our church and we thank you all for your support.

Thanks again for all you do for our church,

Howard Gomer
Chairperson of Finance





2023 – United Women in Faith Highlights

As we look toward 2024, United Women in Faith would like to thank all of you that supported our mission projects and programs through your financial support, prayers, and attendance during 2023. We want to keep sharing and including our church family and our community in the work that UWF does.

During the past year, we were fortunate to learn more about the ministry with inmates at the Jackson Correctional Institute and how a young mom grew her faith and family. We heard about the work that goes on in communities to transform unused land and buildings into productive resources for the community and how we can reach out and help families that are tapping into local resources to address the challenges they are facing. UWF looks toward opportunities to keep supporting the programs that are reaching out to women, children, youth and their families.

As we plan ahead to 2024, we extend an invitation to any woman, including young women, in our Jackson County community who would like to join our monthly meetings or be involved in mission projects during the year. You are also welcome to join our e-mail list to receive updates on what we are working on. You may contact me at 715-299-1539 for more information.

We wish all of you a Blessed 2024.

Luane Meyer
UWF President



January 18th & 25th

6:00 PM

Feel free to come and join.

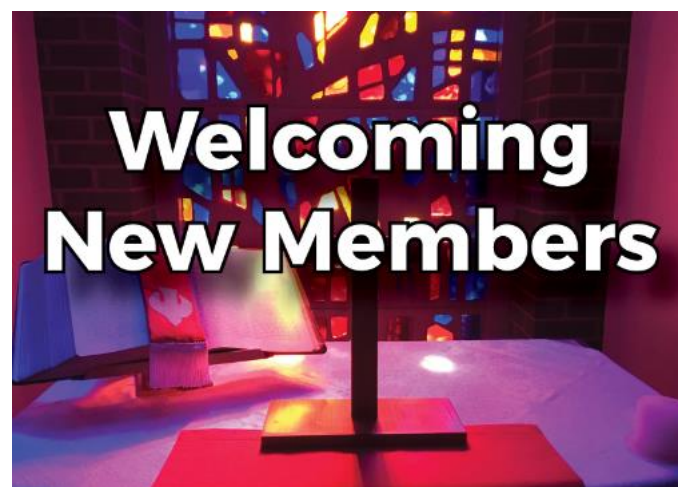
Come join us in learning 4 forms of Prayer life based on your personality type.



New Member Class

January 14, 21, and 28

10:30 AM



Happy New Year!

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.

Community Discussion

Homelessness & Housing Instability

January 17, 2024

3:30 PM

**Community Room at
BRF Public Library**

Jackson County is seeing more families living without basic necessities such as living in tents, elders raising grandchildren on fixed incomes, and multiple families squeezing into smaller homes.

Jackson County Schools are also seeing more families experiencing homelessness.

Be part of the solution and join our discussion about homelessness/housing instability.

RSVP

715-284-4112

v.fisher@wrlsweb.org

Servant Led Community & Jackson County Homelessness Coalition

JANUARY 2024

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	No Youth Group	4	5	6 UMM 8:00 AM
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Sunday Worship 9:00 AM				Youth Group 5:30 PM Confirmation			
		Finance 6:30 PM		7:00 PM			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Sunday Worship 9:00 AM							
New Member Class 10:30 AM			Youth Group 5:30 PM Confirmation	Prayer Workshop 6:00 PM			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
Sunday Worship 9:00 AM				7:00 PM	February Newsletter Deadline		
New Member Class 10:30 AM			Youth Group 5:30 PM Confirmation	Prayer Workshop 6:00 PM			
28	29	30	31				
Sunday Worship 9:00 AM			7:00 PM				
New Member Class 10:30 AM			Youth Group 5:30 PM Confirmation	7:00 PM			

WEDNESDAYS AT CHURCH:

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