

From Pastor Moira's Desk . .

For four years, I worked for Godiva Chocolates, through Christmas, and Easter, and the wonder that is Valentine's Day. We had folks who would arrive late on the 14th desperate for a red velvet heart box and we had to tell them we had sold out days (if not weeks) before. But we also had customers that would come in to pick out just a few of their loved one's favorite treats, including a little boy who came every year with crumpled dollar bills who wanted six chocolate covered caramels in a box with a green bow, for his dad. While the first kind of customer caused a lot of stress, and never went away happy, the second kind made my heart soar, reminding me of the tender connections that bind us together.

Yes, Valentine's Day is hugely commercial. And yes, for pastor folks like me (along with florists, candy sellers, choir directors, and more) it's a bit of a challenge this year since Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday are the same day this year. And yes, it's often focused entirely on romantic love (but that's changing if the aisles at the store are any indication ~ presents suggested for teachers, classmates, children, cousins, parents, friends, and more).

But, Valentine's Day is also our mid-winter reminder of the power of love in our lives. Packers fans have been talking about Love a lot in the past year. It's been about our new quarterback, Mr Jordan Love, who ended up having an incredible season, but still that word has been on more people's minds that I might have imagined possible. Love often gets dismissed as simple, or sappy, or romantic. People who talk about love (like me) are written off as idealistic and naïve. But love isn't simple, surely isn't just about romantic partners, and it is anything but naïve.

Love is the highest calling of our lives as Jesus' disciples, the work of our lives to live out the love he showed us throughout his life ~ from Bethlehem, by the shores of Galilee, to the cross in Jerusalem, and the miracle of the empty tomb. Love is what he taught, over and over again, a love that reaches out across boundaries to restore relationships and rebuild communities. Love is what Jesus lived ~ with his words and his actions ~ and what he invited us to do after he had gone from this world. This kind of love is a daily practice to remember that we are created in God's image, and so is everyone else, and that God's love has no exceptions, that everyone is included in God's grace, loved passionately and completely.

I pray that we might spend this month, anchored in the middle by Valentine's Day, remembering our calling to live love and to be love over and over again, relentlessly, passionately, with all of who we are and might yet become, that the abundance of God's love might fill all creation.

In peace and grace, and loads of love, Pastor Moira

Parish Celebrations

*If your special day is incorrect,
please let Pastor Moira know.*

February Birthdays

1st	...	Leo Halvorson
2nd	...	Aubrey Stevens
3rd	...	Lindsay Seefeldt
6th	...	Maggie Seefeldt Hadley Seefeldt
9th	...	Jim Rucci Bonnie Vander Linden
11th	...	Crissy Zuleger
13th	...	Bradley Holz Trevor Rohloff Ryan Schomisch, Jr.
14th	...	Adam Holz
15th	...	Steven Felton
17th	...	Stephany Boettcher
25th	...	Sue Biese
26th	...	Nate Seefeldt
27th	...	Steve Seefeldt Keegan Hooyman Raphi Jochman

February Anniversaries

February 7th
Duane & Carol Henke

News from the Congregational Annual Meeting

We had a wonderful group (54 members + 18 friends and children) gather after worship on Sunday January 28th to do the business of our life together. Reports were reviewed and the budget for 2024 was approved. We thanked Pat Schomisch and Todd St. John for their service on the Council and elected Connie Rohloff and Brian Holz to serve as new Council members. (The Council will organize itself with officers at its February 13 meeting.)

The members of the council are now:

Lizzie Tesch, Lisa Waterstradt,
Trevor Rohloff, Sally Dickinson,
Connie Rohloff, Brian Holz

We talked about delegates to the Conference & Association meetings ... if you're interested in attending, please talk with Pastor Moira!

Pastor Moira reminded us that we are AMAZING And we talked about combining Rally Day with the Fall Festival, having it be a church, Sunday School & Youth Group fundraiser, and about how we miss the fellowship and feasting of the big Fall Feast dinner so we'll think about ways we can include that kind of event in our lives together going forward. Thank you all for your support and commitment to our church and our parish!

SCRIP CORNER

SCRIP is a wonderful way to help you with your regular expenses like gas, groceries, dining out & entertainment. Plus you get to support the church with a percentage of the value of the cards you purchase (generally 2-10%).

*We order on the first Sunday of the month and
when we have enough other orders to offset shipping costs!*

Look for the SCRIP station in the Gathering Room.

Questions? Talk with Brandi Schomisch or Pat Schomisch

Sabbatical Corner...

We made it through Pastor Moira's sabbatical! She is back, and well rested, and enthusiastic about the future of our ministry together.

Many, many thanks to Student Pastor Mark Schmitt for his worship leadership and pastoral care during June & July 2023 and December and January 2024. We are so blessed to have him, and to be part of his journey in the ordination process in the UCC.

Student Pastor Mark's next steps are finishing his seminary coursework this spring, then writing his ordination paper and what is called an ecclesiastical council where he presents the paper and is asked questions by members of the Association. When he is approved at that council, he can then look for a call (a place to serve) and then will be ordained. Both his council and ordination will take place at his home church, Grace UCC in Two Rivers, and when the time comes we will organize carpools to the events to support him as he continues his journey.

During this part of her sabbatical, Pastor Moira spent about a week being sick (which happens to a lot of us during January), went to Boston with her friend Helen to visit their friend Lella. They went to many ethnic grocery stores, visited Fenway Park (home of the world's greatest baseball team), visited the Boston Public Library, the city of Salem, and the headquarters of King Arthur Flour. They also ate lots of wonderful foods, particularly dim sum lunches in Chinatown, and attended Quaker meeting for Sunday worship. Pastor also worked on her book about long-term ministry. That book is a set of stories and reflections on why you should stick around as a pastor, long enough to learn everyone's dog's names and so much more. The book nears completion, will need to be edited, and then Pastor Moira will look for a publisher.

Now, mark your calendars ... the next sabbatical takes place in 2030 and 2031! 😊

Let's Talk About Death

Making plans for your funeral is a gift you can give your loved ones. Join us for a conversation about what options are available and how to express your wishes, and to understand what hospice services can provide for you at the end of life.

Wednesday February 21st at 6:30pm

with representatives from

Muehl-Boettcher Funeral Home & Unity Hospice

Light refreshments will be served

St. John's U.C.C. Black Creek (101 S. Clark St.)

Upstairs in the sanctuary ~ Our facility is accessible

Readers & Greeters Schedule

If you are unable to make your date, please talk with Pastor Moira & Connie Wheeler.
On communion Sunday, greeters help serve communion.

Sunday February 4, 2024 ~ Communion

Reader Connie Wheeler
Greeters Connie Wheeler
Cailey Wheeler
Trevor & Sarah Rohloff

Sunday February 11, 2024

Adult choir sings
Reader Nate Seefeldt
Greeters Steve & Lindsay Seefeldt

Sunday February 18, 2024

Children's choir sings
Reader Robin Schmidt
Greeters Robin Schmidt & Carol Schmidt

Sunday February 25, 2024

Reader Devin Schmidt
Greeters Brandon & Melissa Rohloff

Sunday March 3, 2024 ~ Communion

Reader Sue Biese
Greeters Mike & Connie Rohloff
Lisa Waterstradt
Kelly Stevens

Sunday March 10, 2024

Reader As Schmidt
Greeters Jan Rohloff
Darwin Ethington

Sunday March 17, 2024

Reader Audrina Bohn
Greeters Steve & Pat Schomisch

Sunday March 24, 2024 ~ Palm Sunday

Children's choir sings
Reader Sally Dickinson
Greeters Ryan & Stephanie Julius

Sunday March 31, 2024 ~ EASTER

Communion
Adult choir sings
Reader Bob Menning
Greeters Gary Vander Linden
Keith Kruse
Bob & Carla Menning

Sunday April 7, 2024 ~ Communion

Reader As Schmidt
Greeters Mark Hooyman
Steve Hanson
Mike & Sally Dickinson

Sunday April 14, 2024

Adult choir sings
Reader Bob Menning
Greeters Bob & Carla Menning

Sunday April 21, 2024

Children's choir sings
Reader Devin Schmidt
Greeters Gene & Audrey Blake

Sunday April 28, 2024

Break The Silence Sunday
Reader Sue Biese
Greeters Joe & Sue Biese

St. John's United Church of Christ Black Creek Council

Minutes of the January 16, 2024 Meeting

- Present were Pat Schomisch, Lisa Waterstradt, Trevor Rohloff, Lizzie Tesch, and Sally Dickinson; absent were Todd St. John and Pastor Moira
- Pat called the meeting to order
- The minutes of the previous meeting (December 2023) were reviewed; nothing the absence of names approving/seconding the motion under New Business of Christmas gifts; after confirmation that the gifts were given, Sally in retrospect made a motion to approve and second by Trevor, motion passed; motion was made by Sally to approve the December minutes, seconded by Trevor, motion passed.
- The December financial secretary & treasurer's reports were reviewed; motion to approve by Sally, second by Trevor, motion passed
- No Pastor's Report
- No Committee Reports
- Old Business—Elevator Phone; Pat contacted Kone elevator to discuss the labor charge, she requested a copy of the contract and explanation of the labor charge, as of this date there has been no return call and the invoice remains outstanding.
- Old Business—2024 Budget; choir director salary to be referred to the parish relations committee for possible removal from future budgets.
- New Business ~ Sassman Memorial; the family has memorial funds to donate and are coordinating with Pat
- New Business—two positions open for Council, possible nominees discussed
- Motion to adjourn by Lisa, second by Lizzie
- The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer
- Next meeting ~ Tuesday February 13, 2024 at 6:30pm
- respectfully submitted, Sally Dickinson

Note ... no financials are included in this newsletter as the year-end financials were in the annual report. If you would like a copy (paper or email) please be in touch with Pastor Moira

Garden of Eatin News

The garden is sleeping, but we are dreaming.

We're going to plant some perennials this spring to attract pollinators,
and make the garden more beautiful.

We're going to paint a rock border along the north side, and change up the
layout of some of the beds to increase our growing space.

We're going to plant beans (pole & bush), cucumbers, and if we can find them some sweet
yellow tomatoes to help provide for our community's most vulnerable.

And we're looking forward to all the bulbs we planted ushering in the Spring!



Scripture Readings

Sunday February 4, 2024

Fifth Sunday of Epiphany

Psalm 147.1-11 and Mark 1.29-39

Sermon ~ Healed For What?

Sunday February 11, 2024

Transfiguration Sunday

Psalm 50.1-6 and Mark 9.2-10

Sermon ~ Mountains

Wednesday February 14, 2024

Ash Wednesday

Isaiah 58.1-12 and Matthew 6.1-6, 16-18

Sermon ~ Fasting

Sunday February 18, 2024

First Sunday of Lent

Psalm 25.1-10 and Mark 1.9-15

Sermon ~ Temptations

Sunday February 25, 2024

Second Sunday of Lent

Psalm 22.22-31 and Mark 8.31-38

Sermon ~ Profit Margins

Sunday March 3, 2024

Third Sunday of Lent

Psalm 19 and John 2.13-22

Sermon ~ What's The Church For?

Sunday March 10, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Psalm 107.1-9 and John 3.1-21

Sermon ~ Questions In The Night

Sunday March 17, 2024

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Psalm 119.1-16 and John 12.20-26

Sermon ~ Gain And Loss

Sunday March 24, 2024

Palm & Passion Sunday

Mark 11.1-11 and Mark 14.32-50

Sermon ~ From Palms To The Garden

Thursday March 28, 2024

Maundy Thursday

1 Corinthians 11.23-26

John 13.1-20, 31-35

Sermon ~ Commanded To Love

Friday March 29, 2024

Holy Friday

Mark 14.1-15.47

Sunday March 31, 2024

Easter Sunday

Acts 10.34-43

Mark 16.1-8

Sermon ~ Early On The First Day

Easter Flowers For The Sanctuary

To celebrate Jesus' resurrection we would like to beautify our sanctuary on Easter Sunday, March 31st. Kailhofer's in Seymour (920-833-2321) will deliver to church, but you should call early for the best selection. *You are also welcome to bring your own plants or flowers.*

Dedications must be received by Sunday March 24th to be included in the Easter worship bulletin.

Everything **MUST** be at church by Friday March 29th
Questions? Talk with Karen Arnold or Pastor Moira



2024 Easter Flower Dedication Form

Please PRINT clearly

Your name:

How you would like your dedication to read:

Return to Pastor Moira by Sunday March 24th

Holy Week & Easter Schedule

Palm & Passion Sunday ~ March 24

Worship at all three parish churches at the usual time as we remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem & the last week of his earthly life.

Maundy Thursday ~ March 28

Remembering the last meal Jesus shared with his disciples ~ Black Creek at 7pm

Holy Friday ~ March 29

Remembering Jesus' arrest, trial & crucifixion ~ Cecil at 6pm

Easter Sunday ~ March 31

Celebrating the good news of the resurrection

Tri-Jo AT Trinity

Worship at 8:30am with breakfast after

Black Creek

Breakfast at 9am and worship at 10:15am



Women's Guild News

The Guild enjoyed the All Church Christmas Party on Thursday December 7th with a delicious potluck dinner, singing, prayers, and a game show too! In **February**, we'll host "Let's Talk About Death" gathering with representatives from Muehl-Boettcher Funeral Home, and an area hospice program on Wednesday February 21st beginning at 6:30pm with refreshments to follow in the Gathering Room (if you're interested in helping with refreshments, please talk to Pastor Moira). Our next regular meeting will take place on Wednesday March 6th at 1:30pm with program and snacks provided by Roberta Lorenz.

February Focus Of Giving ~ Fire & Rescue

Our volunteer fire & rescue workers do so much to help keep us and our community safe & healthy. From medical emergencies, to fires, to cleaning up storm damage and helping with so many other challenges in life, they're here for us, just at the other end of the phone when we need them the most. This is your chance to give back, to help support their work, and provide a little financial cushion so they can update and replace their equipment and provide necessary training. Look for the \$5s for Firefighters envelopes to support the Black Creek Fire & Rescue services.

Stock The Pantry Shelves

"When I was hungry, you fed me."

Matthew 25.35

**February Focus Items
Raisin Bran & Cheerios
(well, any cereal is great!)**



Remember, it never needs to be name brand & you can always send a monetary contribution as well with "food pantry" in the memo.

Dreaming Of Summer? Think About Church Camp

The Wisconsin Conference is blessed with incredible camping facilities that provide year round events for folks of all ages. There are camps for littles to go with their adults (parents or grandparents) to get a taste of camp, short (2-3 day camps) for kids to get a camp experience without being away all week, full week youth camps, and varieties of family camps for families of all descriptions! There are also LOTS of camps for adults with focuses on crafting, fishing, and so much more. There are scholarships available for members of UCC churches, and financial assistance is also available through the church. You can check out all the offerings at the UCCI website: ucci.org (that will open with a pop-up window where you can click on "take me to the event calendar showing all camps and events) to see everything that is on offer.

If you have questions, please talk with Pastor Moira or Gary Vander Linden

February 2024

How to reach Pastor Moira: phone 715-851-3080
email pastormoira73@gmail.com

Pastor's In The Office
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays
Please call/text to make sure

Sunday Schedule: Trinity ~ 8:45am Worship
Black Creek ~ Sunday School 9am & Worship 10:15am
Cecil ~ 4pm Worship

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Key to locations: BC = St. John's Black Creek T = Trinity C = St. John's Cecil ALC = Ascension Lutheran </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Wednesday Lenten Worship <i>all at Black Creek 2/28—3/27</i> 5:15pm ~ dinner ready 6:15pm ~ worship (1/2 hour) 7pm ~ choir practice </div>		1	2 Rodent based meteorology day (Groundhog's Day)	3
4 <i>Communion</i> SCRIP Trinity Annual Meeting 11:30am BC Confirmation	5	6	7 6:30pm BC Choir	8 5:30pm T Council meeting	9	10 Happy Lunar New Year
11 <i>BC Choir sings</i>	12	13 9am ALC Pantry board 2pm T Circle 6:30pm BC Council	14 Ash Wednesday Worship 5pm ~ Trinity 7pm ~ Black Creek	15	16	17
18 <i>BC Kids choir sings</i> 11:30am BC Confirmation (with mentors)	19	20	21 6:30pm BC Let's Talk About Death NO Choir 4-6pm ALC Pantry	22 9am C Closet work day	23	24 9-11am ALC Pantry
25	26	27 12-3pm C Closet	28 Wednesday Lent Worship (see box)	29	<i>March 1</i>	<i>March 2</i> <i>Tomorrow...</i> <i>Communion</i> <i>SCRIP</i> <i>Confirmation</i>

February
2024

"The purpose of this congregation is to be a faith community promoting the kingdom of God through worship, teaching, and action ... get ready!"

St. John's United Church of Christ
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Wisconsin Conference UCC
www.wiucc.org

United Church of Christ
www.ucc.org



The Cross, The Grave, The Skies

Art & Music of the Crucifixion & Resurrection

Join us on Wednesdays at Black Creek for our Lenten series. We'll be looking at art & music to help us think about Jesus' life, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. We'll gather downstairs in the fellowship hall for a simple supper, and then have about 35 minutes of discussion & prayer time. We'll be done in time for choir practice. Come for one week, or all of them.

Come and feed your body & your spirit.

Wednesdays February 28th through March 27th.

5:15pm ~ Supper ready

6:15pm ~ conversation & prayer

7pm ~ choir practice

US Mass Shootings

2023 Total

656

1/1 – 2/1/2024

36

*According to the
Gun Violence
Archive*