

January 2026

The Wesleyan Connection

Office: 235-3070

Pastor Chuck Emery

Christ's disciples who strive to know, love and serve God more faithfully through Christ-centered worship, education, fellowship and true compassion that show God's love for all people in the name of Jesus Christ.

Notes from the Pastor

Bishop Dan Schwerin in his message to the Conference declared that 2026 is the year in which we should practice HOPE.

I emphasize practice because it is more than just being hopeful, it is engaging the future with attitudes and actions that express and generate hope in the world in which we live. What is hope? It's not wishful thinking or fairy dust. It's practical, action-oriented, and has a lot in common with resilience.

We often think hop as an emotion alone. Naming our feelings is healthy. But a feeling without action to back it up won't help us heal or grow forward. Hope is actually more a way of thinking or a state of being.

In its simplest sense, hope is, I believe, the ability to envision a new joyful possibility. To hold a vision for where we're heading or where

we want to go, and then choosing to step out into that vision.

It does not mean we see the whole path ahead. All we have to do is to step out into the little bit of light we have. We find our way in (imperfect) action not before. A more scientific take on things, is that hope is a realistic sense of optimism or attitude of mind based on an expectation of positive outcomes. Agency and flexible thinking are also keys of resilience! In fact, hope and resilience have plenty in common.

Just as we often meet joy and freedom in the winter seasons of life, we generally don't call upon hope unless life is hard or things feel out of our control. Research tells us that "hope's true and unique nature is in the realm of possibility, when individuals are dealing with greater uncertainty.

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Our Vision statement:

Learn God's word, Teach God's word and Share God's love

Our Mission Statement:

Wesley United Methodist Church is a community of Christ's disciples who strive to know, love and serve God more faithfully through Christ-centered worship, education, fellowship and true compassion that show God's love for all people in the name of Jesus Christ.

Dates to Remember

Wednesday, January 1
Office Closed

Sunday, January 4
Pizza Orders Due

Wednesday, January 7
1:30 p.m. Worship Meeting

Tuesday, January 13
6:30 p.m. Education Meeting

Tuesday, January 14
1:00 p.m. Missions Meeting

Saturday, January 17
7:30 a.m.
Pizza Making
11:30 a.m.
Pick up orders

Tuesday, January 21
6:30 p.m. Church Council

(Continued from page 1)

Hopee has a couple of key characteristics: a sense of agency (the feeling of control over actions and their consequences) and the belief that we can produce alternative routes or pathways to our desired goals.

Hope gently reminds us that there is beauty and wisdom ever here, in the darkest season. It reminds us for instance that as the Celtic proverb goes, “death is the middle of a long life.” New life grows from broken or barren places. What seems impossible to survive can sometimes yield amazing fruit (which does not mean that we need to look for purpose in the suffering. John Wesley, the father of Methodism, in a moment of despair, confided to a friend that he was considering giving up preaching because he felt like he had not faith. His friend, Peter Bohler, replied, “Preach faith until you have it! Then you will preach faith because you have it!” The same is true for hope. We can choose to embody hope, by taking hope-filled action, in faith and trust that the feeling will follow. So how do we practice hope?

- **Reflection & Affirmation:** Journaling thoughts, giving yourself compliments, using positive self-talk, and practicing self-compassion
- **Connection:** Praying, praising, spending time in nature, performing acts of kindness, joining with others in praise and thanksgiving, and connecting with loved ones.
- **Spiritual Anchoring:** Grounding yourself in faith in God, Remembering past goodness, and claiming promises.
- **Engagement:** Engaging in spiritual practices, singing, creating, serving, and paying attention to sing of hope

in the world.

Hope can be learned with practice. Certain attitudes support it. One is patience, an ability to tolerate delays, a willingness to let events unfold in their own time. The other is courage, an attitude of confidence even when facing the unknown. A third is persistence, the determination to keep going no matter what happens. We have hope when we can say, all will be well, and we mean it.



BIRTHDAYS

1	Treu Monroe	19	Jim Bohlen
2	Jerry Vienola	20	Craig LaPoint
5	Robert Roe	22	Vicki Thomas
11	Rick Yell	24	Randy Lovell
	Gray LaPoint	25	Brian Kline
12	Sue Meyer	26	Michael LaPoint
17	Kathy Krueger		



Dear friends in Oshkosh,

MONTHLY MISSION FOCUS

Jabez School in Liberia, Africa

There is lots of good news to share with you. This good news is in part due to the monetary **gifts given by you**. Your generosity in 2025 is gratefully accepted. Thank you! Let us tell you a few of the projects it helped to fund.

First, at the end of the school year in June, we had 7 students that registered for the required West Africa exam for 9th graders which one of the requirements needed to attend high school. This test is a pass/fail examination. On the day of the exam one person was sick and so could not go. She plans to go the next time it is offered. So of the 6 students from Jabez that took the exam, all six of them passed. We are so very pleased with the students and the education they received.

This test is considered hard and a big achievement. One large school somewhat close to Jabez sent 40 students and no one passed. So you see it isn't "everyone gets in." Thanks for Wesley's gifts over the years, Jabez has been able to secure quality teachers and an atmosphere for learning.

Second, money given to the United Methodist Foundation for building a sustainable organization earned good returns which gives us hope for the future. With this account growing, Jabez is able to give the teachers a raise. Although salaries were not where we wish, they are climbing. Rev. Jakes reported that the excitement was high when they received their first paycheck and the notice of their increase in salary. This was not an across the board raise, rather it depended on skill, loyalty and Christian witness. We are grateful.

Third, the preschool afterschool program initiated this Fall at the request of parents has grown from the 26 in November to 41 in the middle of December, 2025. This program gives the children a chance for added quality education which is important since many times family finances do not always allow the little ones an on-time start.

Fourth, we were able to finish enclosing the entire school grounds with a wall-fence which improves the safety of the children and teachers within the ground especially from motorbikes and unwanted vehicles. Additional gates were added. Guards say they can do a better job now. We were told it has made a dynamic improvement. Also, a few hundred dollars were left over which was used to correct difficulties caused by erosion during the rainy season. It is most important that we keep up with saving our buildings from the elements of weather, age and use.

As 2026 unfolds we are looking at harvesting the palm oil from our farm, started five years ago to help with on-going sustainability. This will require hiring people for picking and preparing the gathering of the oil as well as a mill and storage area. And as always, many of the students need financial help. We want to help as many as we responsibly can, stay in school and succeed.



UMC Wesley CORNER

Human Relations Sunday is January 18, 2026

Human Relations Day, one of six church-wide Special Sundays, is celebrated by the entire UMC. This day invites congregations to strengthen communities, especially those facing poverty, injustice, or lack of opportunity. It is inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of the "beloved community". Human Relations Day calls us to build relationships rooted in dignity, equity and love.

Human Relations Day is a day to remember that every person deserves a chance to thrive. It reminds us that living out our faith means building stronger, caring relationships, especially with those who have been pushed to the margins of society.

Human Relations Day matters because it supports the Church's work in creating communities where everyone can flourish. When we give, we support church-based programs that work in local neighborhoods alongside those who need a second chance.

Special Sundays give us a chance to focus our prayers and support on important ministries all year long—uniting our gifts to multiply our impact. Your generosity strengthens communities working toward the vision of the "beloved community" making these ministries possible. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the money collected goes to community development programs. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the money collected goes to United Methodist Voluntary Services and ten percent (10%) goes to youth offender rehabilitation programs.

This year Human Relations Day is lifted up on January 18, 2026. Give as God's Spirit leads you. Thanks for giving.



Newsletter Sponsorship

There is no sponsor for the January 2026 newsletter. Please consider being a sponsor for the February-December 2026 newsletters. Your contribution helps defray part of the cost of the publication and is an extra gift of support to our expenses. Please contact the church office (235-3070) to 'reserve' your chosen month for 2026.

Lenten Book Study to Start in February

Jesus For Everyone—Not Just Christian by Amy Jill Levine. It can be purchased on Amazon for \$11.49. Figuratively speaking we'll be meeting Jesus in His time and ours on subjects of Economics, Enslavement, Ethnicity and Race, Healthcare, Family Values and Politics. If any of the text found in the Bible were to mean one thing, preachers and biblical studies professors would need to find another career. We will look at what a biblical text might've meant to an early first century Jewish audience. As gospel reader and what it means to readers today.

The study will begin Wednesday, February 4 at 5:15 p.m. Please read the first chapter before class. There is a synopsis for each chapter found in the introductions part of the book. I will provide a soup supper for the first class and would appreciate volunteers to sign up to bring their favorite soup for the remaining five classes. This sign up sheet will be available the first night of class. The class will not meet on Ash Wednesday, February 18 and also there will not be class on Wednesday, March 4 (I will be out of town). The last class will be on Wednesday, March 25 which is the Wednesday before Palm Sunday, March 29.

The pastor at First United Methodist is organizing a meet and greet with this author on April 21 for the three Methodist Churches in town. After studying this book, we can look forward to meeting the author.

Please let me know if you are interesting in attending this study.

Respectfully submitted by,

Donna LaPoint, Lay Speaker



Thursday Afternoon Adult Bible Study

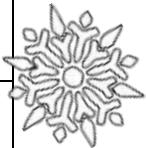
The Adult Bible Study will be finishing up the book of "Job" sometime in January and then we will begin the parables of Jesus.

Thanks

Wayne Zimmerman



January 2025

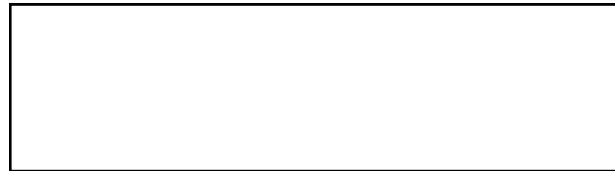


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			MA—Martial Arts TOPS— Take Off Pounds Sensibly MG—Morning Glory Singers CC—Chancel Choir	1 Office Closed	2	3
4—Pizza Orders Due	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45-a.m.—noon Lectioary Bible Study	5:30 p.m. MA 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts	10 a.m. TOPS 1:00 p.m. Mat Making	1:30 p.m. Worship 10:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study 5:30 p.m. MA 6:15 p.m. MG 7:30 p.m. CC	2:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study 5:30 p.m. MA		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:30 a.m. Worship Human Relations Day	5:30 p.m. MA 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts	10 a.m. TOPS 1:00 p.m. Mat Making 6:30 p.m. Church Council	10:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study 5:30 p.m. MA 6:15 p.m. MG 7:30 p.m. CC	2:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study 5:30 p.m. MA		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
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Change Service Requested

January



*The Wesleyan Connection is
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