



The Chimes



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | FEBRUARY 2026



Greetings,
These are unsettled days. Many of us can feel it in conversations that end a little too quickly. In the way we choose our words more carefully than we used to. In the tired sigh that comes after the news, no matter which side of the aisle you stand on. The world feels unsettled, and the

country feels strained. And even people of deep faith are asking, often silently, *“How are we supposed to live faithfully in a time like this?”*

Scripture offers us a wisdom that doesn't rush us toward easy answers. James writes, *“Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger”* (James 1:19). That verse is not an escape from justice. It is not a call to politeness instead of truth and justice. It is a posture—a way of being shaped before we try to shape others.

Listening doesn't mean we stop caring. Slowing down doesn't mean we stop acting. Refusing anger doesn't mean we stop naming what is wrong. It means we trust that the Spirit works most deeply in hearts that are open, grounded, and attentive.

As United Methodists, we hold a faith that refuses to separate what belongs together. Our mission is clear: we are called to **make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world**. That calling begins in the heart, but it never stays private. It shapes how we treat our neighbors, how we speak across difference, and how we seek justice together.

John Wesley understood this well. He insisted that **personal holiness cannot grow apart from social holiness**.

Church Events

Tues./ Thurs. @ 4:00 pm, Exercise Group (Activity Room)

Wed. @ 9:30 am, Bible Study (Fireside Room)

Sat. @ 8:00 am, Men's Bible Study (Fireside Room) All men are welcome! Come join us!! The more the merrier!

Save the Date

Mon. 2/2, Groundhog Day

Thurs. 2/5 @ 9:30 am Greeting Card Ministry (Fellowship Hall)

Thurs. 2/5 @ 1:30 pm Member Care (Fellowship Hall)

Sun. 2/8 , Youth Group with Aaron after 2nd service

Sat. 2/14, Valentine's Day

Sun. 2/15, Potluck after 2nd service (bring a dish to pass and join the fun!)

Mon. 2/16, President's Day - Office Closed

Thurs. 2/19 @ 11:30 am-Ladies Luncheon @ A's Kitchen (Rock Falls)

Faith that never touches real lives and real suffering is not the faith Jesus formed. And justice work that is disconnected from prayer, humility, and grace eventually loses its grounding.

This February, our worship life is shaped by that conviction. In January, we reflected on Discipleship in the Age of AI. Now, as we move toward Lent, we will spend three weeks reflecting on **Jesus' Three Gifts: the Church, Baptism and Communion**.

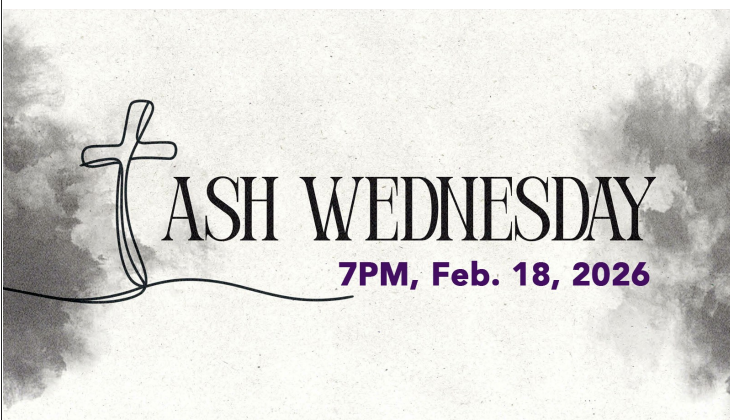
Many of us carry honest questions about these practices—questions we may never have voiced. What is the church really for? Why does baptism matter? What actually happens at the Lord's Table? I invite you to share those questions with me. As we walk through this series, I will listen carefully and reflect on them in our time together. We will learn that grace gathers us at the church, claims us through Baptism, and nurtures and sends us forth through Communion.

As Lent approaches, my hope is that we become more faithful, listening more carefully, speaking more truthfully and staying in relationship across difference.

Grace is already at work among us.

May we stay close enough to notice.

Upcoming Events



A graphic for Ash Wednesday featuring a simple line drawing of a cross on the left. The text "ASH WEDNESDAY" is written in a large, serif font, with "7PM, Feb. 18, 2026" in a smaller font below it. The background is a textured, greyish-white.

ASH WEDNESDAY
7PM, Feb. 18, 2026



A graphic for Prairie South Leadership Training. The top half has a blue background with a photo of hands holding colorful paper figures. The text "PRAIRIE SOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING" is in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, on a white background, is "SATURDAY, MARCH 7" in red, "9 A.M. to NOON" in blue, and "OREGON UMC" in black. The Wesley United Methodist logo is in the bottom right.

PRAIRIE SOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING
SATURDAY, MARCH 7
9 A.M. to NOON
OREGON UMC

Wesley UNITED METHODIST



A graphic for Lent. The word "Lent." is written in a large, cursive, gold font. Below it, in a smaller, sans-serif font, is "A SEASON OF RENEWAL". To the right is a gold cross with a vine-like pattern. The Wesley United Methodist logo is in the bottom right.

Lent.
A SEASON OF RENEWAL

Wesley UNITED METHODIST



A graphic describing Lent. The word "LENT" is in large, bold, white font. To its right, "begins on Feb. 18 (Wed)" is in a smaller, italicized font. Below this, the text "is a 40-day season of repentance, prayer, and fasting, leading to Easter. It emphasizes reconciliation with God, restoration, and spiritual preparation for Christ's resurrection." is in white. The background is a purple cloth with a wooden cross and a palm frond.

LENT *begins on Feb. 18 (Wed)*
is a 40-day season of repentance, prayer, and fasting, leading to Easter. It emphasizes reconciliation with God, restoration, and spiritual preparation for Christ's resurrection.



A graphic for a Genesis Bible Study. The word "Genesis" is written in a large, green, cursive font. Below it, "SAT. MEN'S BIBLE STUDY" is in a smaller, bold, black font. The background is a wooden desk with a notebook, pens, and a small plant.

Genesis
SAT. MEN'S BIBLE STUDY



A graphic for a Lenten Bible Study. The text "Lenten Bible Study" and "Wednesday Morning" are in a bold, purple font. Below this, "9:30 am -11:00 am" is in a smaller, bold, purple font. The text "If you are interested, Please contact the office or Pastor Paul" is in a smaller, black font. The background is a portrait of Jesus. At the bottom, a dark purple banner contains the text "THE MESSAGE OF JESUS" in white.

Lenten Bible Study
Wednesday Morning
9:30 am -11:00 am
If you are interested, Please contact the office or Pastor Paul

THE MESSAGE OF JESUS

Thank You & Announcements

Thank you for your continued support of Bear Necessities. You truly do make a difference!

RFUMC

Bear Necessities

We are truly thankful for the generosity of our congregation. Through your faithful giving, our church has ended the year with income exceeding expenses by \$5,000. That's a powerful testimony to what God can do through a committed congregation. Your support allows us to continue our ministry, care for one another and serve our community. Thank you for being partners in this ministry.

Sincerely,

Wesley UMC Finance Committee

February Worship

1st- Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Matthew 16:15-18; 1 Corinthians

12:27; Matthew 5:14-16

Church: Grace Gathers Us

8th- Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Luke 3:3, 21-22; Matthew 28:18-20

Baptism: Grace Claims Us First

15th- Transfiguration Sunday

1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 6:35, 51, 53-56, 58

Communion: God Nurtures Us and Sends Us Forth

22nd- First Sunday in Lent

Psalms 99:4-5; Isaiah 9:2;

Mark 1:14-15

The Kingdom Has Come Near

Attention Lunch Ladies!

Our February lunch out will be Thursday, **February 19th** at **11:30 AM** at A's Kitchen. Please let Beth Mathew know if you are planning to attend. She will make reservations.

Greeting Card Ministry will be meeting **Thursday, February 5th** at **9:30 am** in Fellowship Hall. Come help prepare for March birthdays and anniversaries. All are welcome to attend!!!

Membership Care

We have a great group of prayer warriors at Wesley through our prayer chain managed by Mary Spitzer. It is good to know we can request prayer at anytime for ourselves or loved ones. Now we are going to have the opportunity to join with a personal prayer partner. Sometimes things are too heavy to put out on a public prayer chain but we still need prayers. We are offering a chance for a more intimate prayer experience. We will have a basket in fellowship hall with papers to fill out with your name, phone number and email. Fill it out and put it in the basket if you are interested in being a prayer partner or are in need of a prayer partner. Prayers are confidential so need to worry. If you are homebound and are interested just call the office. This can be a very rewarding, spiritual and heartwarming experience. More info to follow soon.

Missions Corner

Thank you for your contributions to: **LOOSE COINS** in the month of **January** we were able to raise \$ 165.16

LOOSE COINS for **FEBRUARY** is **Grace Children's Hospital and Pediatric Clinic, Haiti**

February we will be collecting **TOOTHPASTE**

Sterling Wesley Lovers' Workshop

This year's annual workshop was part of a longer journey our church has been walking together for several years—a journey shaped by Radical Hospitality and Divine Friendship. From the beginning, this has never been about quick fixes or new programs. It has been about becoming more faithful, more grounded, and more honest about who we are as the body of Christ.

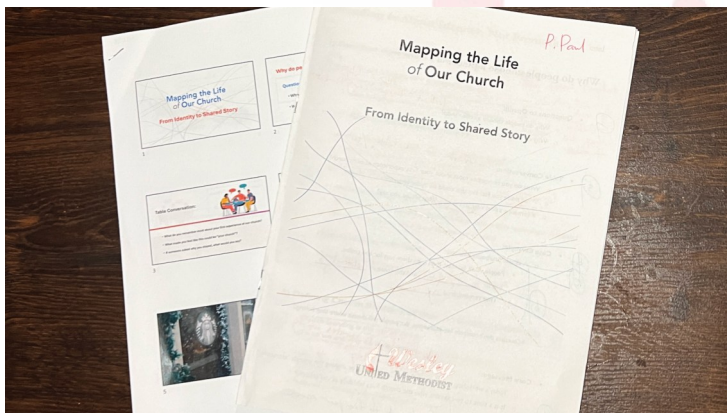
We began with a simple question: Why do people choose a place to belong? Not just a coffee shop, but a church. Through table conversations, many of us reflected on our own first experiences here—what we noticed, what we felt, and what made us stay. Again and again, the answers were not about sermons or structures. They were about a welcoming community marked by kindness, inclusiveness, and a sense of belonging—where people feel seen, welcomed and at home.

That insight shaped the heart of the workshop. Branding, as we explored it, is not about slogans, strategies, or promotion. It is about identity—shared clarity about who we are, why we exist, and how we live our faith together. Churches do not compete like businesses, but people still choose where they belong. Long before anyone understands our theology or governance, they experience our tone, our hospitality, and our relationships.

We reflected on a simple truth: people remember experiences, not explanations. Rarely do people say, "The sermon was well structured." More often, they say, "They were kind," "I felt welcomed," or "It felt like family." That is why Radical Hospitality is not a side ministry, and Divine Friendship is not an abstract idea. They are lived out in how we greet, listen, care, gather, and organize our lives together.

Another key shift was moving from fixing weaknesses to naming and amplifying strengths. Growth does not come from correcting everything that feels lacking, but from recognizing what is already life-giving and stewarding it well. Even our structures and schedules communicate who we are.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who participated so thoughtfully, and especially to the Membership Care Team for preparing a lunch. Together, we continue becoming a church rooted in clarity, faithfulness, and shared life for the sake of God's mission and our community.



Birthdays

February 1	Debbie Hodges	February 17	Tracy DuRall
February 2	Carol Cravatta, Al Rude, Fabien Plummer, Evelyn Styles	February 19	Mary Nelmes
February 3	Diane Rude	February 20	Jack Graves
February 5	Amber Celletti	February 21	Jessica Truedson
February 7	Stacey Stutzke	February 22	Caleb VanAusdal, Charlie VanAusdal
February 8	Brandon Fredericks	February 24	Lynn Majewski
February 12	Kari Hansen, Warren Heuck	February 26	James Allen
February 16	Rachael Turffs	February 28	Holly Taylor-Vrhel



Anniversaries

February 13	Nick & Shay Papoccia
February 14	Dave & Roberta Fredericks
February 23	Doug & Ann Wiersema



February 8am Rebecca Tieman /Shannon Klausing Head Ushers

Door Greeter(s)	Usher/Acolytes	Liturgist
2/1 Jan Glover Larry Schuchard	Rebecca Tieman Shannon Klausing	Nancy Pitsch
2/8 Larry Schuchard	Rebecca Tieman Shannon Klausing	Jan Glover
2/15 Derek & Aaron Fitzanko	James Fitzanko Rebecca/Shannon	Wendy Fitzanko
2/22 Greg & Chris Gallentine	Rebecca Tieman Shannon Klausing	Greg Gallentine

February 10 AM Steve Lopez/ Bill Parker Head Ushers

Door Greeter(s)	Usher/Acolytes	Liturgist	Matthew Meetings
2/1 Rich & Sandra Lobdell	Jaxson Williams, Eric Allen Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Justin Allen	Nancy Pitsch Communion w/kids
2/8 Matt & Myla Wendelken	Ellie & Sadie Acolytes Matt & Ellie Wendelken Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Stacey Wendelken	Jamie Schwingle
2/15 MarySue & Sharon Puckett	Arianne & Tim Acolytes Rita Smith & Carolyn Allen Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Rory Smith	Jaime Greenfield
2/22 Rita Smith Carolyn Allen	Bob & Cheryl Allen Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Rory Smith	Stacey Wendelken Ellie, Myla & Sadie

Wesley United Methodist Church

2200 16th Ave.

Sterling, IL 61081

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wesley United Methodist Church

Phone: (815) 625-1968

Website: www.sterlingwesley.org

Email: office@sterlingwesley.org

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

You are invited to join us for in person

Sunday Services at 8 am and 10 am

We will continue to Livestream worship on

Facebook at 10 AM

Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/SterlingWesleyUMC>

Mission Corner

Sterling Wesley UMC has always been a mission-minded church. The purpose of this space is to keep the congregation informed of our various mission efforts.

- February's collection for local pantries is toothpaste
- Travel-sized toiletries
- Loose coins to benefit Grace Children's Hospital and Pediatric Clinic, Haiti in February.
- Items collected in January were: 14 bottles of laundry soap