

# WEST CHELMSFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

242 Main Street, North Chelmsford, MA 01863  
Rev. Geisa Y. Matos

978-251-4834 | [www.wcumc.us](http://www.wcumc.us) | [office@wcumc.us](mailto:office@wcumc.us)

*WCUMC Faith, Family, and Future are the  
Cornerstones of this nurturing community.*

## FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Beloved Church Family,

Last Sunday, members of our Junior Methodist Youth Fellowship dedicated their time to create beautiful Valentine's Day cards for our cherished members who are homebound. The Committee on Children and Youth continues to provide excellent opportunities for our children to understand and embody the message of loving God and their neighbors.



This year, the Lenten season takes on special significance as it commences on Valentine's Day. Thus, our Ash Wednesday service this year will be part of our Valentine's Day celebration. We will have our traditional joint Ash Wednesday Service alongside Aldersgate UMC, which promising to be very meaningful. We will embrace the spirit of Valentine's Day as a holy invitation to acknowledge the immeasurable love bestowed upon us through the sacrificial death of Jesus.

We encourage you to embrace the Lenten season with intentionality and purpose; therefore, we will be hosting a Lenten book study based on Susan Robb's inspiring book, *Remember: God's Covenants and the Cross*. Rev. Robb takes us on a profound journey through the Old Testament, unraveling the various covenants God made with the people of Israel. She explores the rich tapestry of God's promises. Her book reaches its pinnacle with a thoughtful examination of the cross as yet another manifestation of God's promise for a new world. The group study will begin on Sundays, starting February 18, 2024. For more information, please see page 5.

May this Lenten season be a time of deep reflection, spiritual renewal, and communal growth as we embark on this shared journey.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Geisa

## *Prayer List*

In the Sunday bulletin under “Let us remember these people in our prayers,” we list those with more acute needs. Our Monthly Newsletter carries a list of more “on-going” concerns to bring to God in Prayer.

We will keep the description you provide as general or specific as you indicate. Please let us know what you would like included. We also encourage you to clip out these names and keep them in your prayers.

If you would like your name to be added or removed from any of the prayer lists, please contact the church office.

**It's never too late for a note, a card, or a call.**

### **Those who are at home or in nursing homes:**

Mark Leonard – at home

Joyce Abbott – at the Atrium in North Chelmsford

Betty Chaput – at The Saab Center at D'Youville in Lowell

### **Prayer list for on-going health needs:**

Judi Hill

Rebecca Markey's brother, Dennis Woodruff

Jen Weinbeck's friends, Mike and Sarah

Lisa Dushais



## *Inspiration Corner*

### **Six Gifts That Don't Cost a Cent to Give**

#### **The Gift...**

**Of Listening** – But you must really listen. No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response. Just listen.

**Of Affection** – Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back and handholds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

**Of Laughter** – Funny pictures. Share articles, funny stories, and funny greetings. Your gift will say, “I love to laugh with you.”



**A Written Note** – It can be a simple “Thanks for the help” note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may even change a life.

**A Compliment** – A simple and sincere. “You look great in red,” “You did a super job” or “That was a wonderful meal” can make someone's day.

**A Favor** – Every day, go out of your way to do something kind.

- Anonymous

## *Finance Committee Update - "What's New?"*

As the dust settles on our Stewardship and Capital Campaigns, I'd like to take a moment to share what is happening on the Finance Committee. We are blessed with dedicated, talented leaders on the Finance Committee who are focused on enabling God's good work through the work of our church family.

It's been a very busy few months because in addition to the monthly work of paying the bills and managing pledges/offerings, we are closing the books for 2023, and we proposed a budget for 2024. The Finance Committee proposed a deficit budget for 2024 with known gaps—some of which will be addressed by using some funds from the Parsonage Fund and the Christmas Fair/Rummage Sale Funds. There are also opportunities to reduce expenses by reviewing contracts and insurance rates. We are blessed to be making the most of opportunities to use our money wisely. Your generosity and reallocation of Capital Campaign commitments to support the operating budget or other ministries help a great deal. We are blessed.

To help us respect your generous giving, we are actively managing funds differently. The Finance Committee moved some of the Parsonage Fund into a CD, which earns a higher interest rate than the savings account. This helps our money work for us while keeping risk low as the interest rate is locked in. We are also looking into establishing an endowment (a donation of money that uses the resulting investment income for specific purposes) that is future-focused.

A named liaison is available to each of our WCUMC committees to support each other in ministry. The idea is to have a member of the Finance Committee touch base once or twice a year with the committee to see where the Finance Committee can help identify opportunities or needs. The liaison is not a member of the committee, as committees operate independently, but rather a person to be called upon when there are questions or struggles. The liaison is a resource for your committee to help you support your committee's work. Having a liaison will also help us get an earlier start on the budget in 2024, with a goal of having a budget for approval in November.

Remember, our budget reflects only part of our gifts. In the past few months, we have also donated Halloween candy bags for the Open Pantry, provided warm socks and hats for the Lowell Transitional Living shelter, served multiple meals at St. Paul's, shared resources through the Rummage Sale and the Holiday Fair, and greeted each other with generous emotional support regularly. I list only a few items to celebrate – there is so much more.

I want to end by expressing my gratitude for your presence, time, talent, and treasure to support WCUMC's ministry. I encourage you to continue to lift us all through prayer and love as we continue together.

Angela McAlister, Finance Committee Chairperson.



February 14-March 28<sup>th</sup>

Lent is a season of personal reflection and preparation before the celebration of Easter. Christians take this time to experience Jesus's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. The three main things we focus on is being introspective, giving something up to focus on our connection to God and giving more to others.

This year we would like to ask you to take this journey using The Upper Room site [www.upperroom.org](http://www.upperroom.org). Lent is a personal journey, one you have to decide to do for yourself. We hope you will take this journey with us and that each image you are shown will inspire you to see the beauty around you and "see God's presence in the world."

- Log in to the church webpage [www.wcumc.us](http://www.wcumc.us) and scroll to the **Lenten Journey**. Click on the **Upper Room Sight Psalms** button, this will take you to the Site Psalms webpage directly. If you are using your iPhone, you will need to go to **menu** and then **daily** to find **Sight Psalms**. The Sight Psalms site is a daily photo inspired place to use for your own personal reflections. If you wish to share your reflections simply go back to the Lenten journey box on the homepage and click **Personal Lenten Reflections**. Your church family will be able to read your response on this Reflection site.

If you need technical assistance please contact Bill Evans [evans1818@verizon.net](mailto:evans1818@verizon.net)

- Starting Sunday February 11<sup>th</sup> we will use the postlude time to show you an image and a word. Our hope is that you will remain seated during the postlude time throughout Lent and reflect on how the image inspires you.
- In each Wednesday's email during Lent, we will be posting a request for you to reflect on.

Let's go on a journey together!

Congregational Care Committee

## Ash Wednesday Service



This year West Chelmsford UMC will host the Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at 7:30 PM with our brothers and sisters from Aldersgate United Methodist Church.

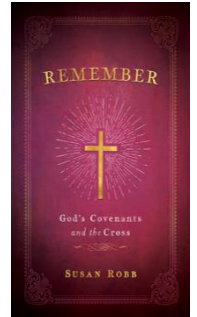
Refreshments will be available after the service.

## Lenten Group Study

**Lenten Group Study** - Based on Susan Robb's *Remember: God's Covenants and the Cross*

God's covenants throughout the Old Testament show the character of God's promises to the people of Israel. In this book, Susan Robb leads readers through the covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, followed by the new covenant established on Maundy Thursday. The Lenten story culminates with an examination of the cross as another example of God's promise for a new world.

Susan Robb teaches readers the basic lessons of the covenants through a mixture of biblical history and personal stories. Her pastoral character and warm tone provide a basis for understanding God's promises through history and the role of Jesus's passion and crucifixion in the history of the covenants.



The Lenten Book Study will take place on **Sundays beginning on February 18, 2024, following the worship service in the Library**. To Register and order your book, please contact Roberta in the Church Office.

## Embracing Hope Update

### Looking Forward

We have had a busy, busy few months as we came together in our stewardship campaign AND our Capital Campaign. It feels good to take a moment to breath. I want to thank all the members of the Capital Campaign, the Housing Task Force, the Vitality Task Force, and the Finance Committee for their clear sighted and faithful hard work. It is through your hands and voices that God's work is done in our community.

As I consider the prayer " God, what do you want to do through me", I am thinking about the recently completed Embrace Hope capital campaign. Though we do not yet have the enough financial commitment to purchase a parsonage, I remain supportive of a vision of West Chelmsford UMC which includes a full time pastor. Full time pastoral ministry enables a rich spiritual life and extends our reach into our community.

We also know that over time rental expenses will continue to rise which strains our operating budget and restricts how we use our financial resources. As a steward of WCUMC's resources, I believe owning a parsonage will help us manage expenses over time.

Since we closed our capital campaign deciding not to purchase a parsonage immediately, we have an opportunity to redirect our capital campaign commitments. While I know I could ask for the gift to be returned, I also believe Embracing Hope is still our mission. I am choosing to honor the financial commitment Terry and I made redirecting it to a general fund and completing it in three years.

I remain hopeful that we will continue our commitment to our current community and our future community. I believe we will, working together, thrive as we continue to make disciples of Christ.

As you consider WCUMC's commitment to full time ministry, I hope you will also consider how you would like your capital campaign gift to be directed. Please reach out to Ellen O'Neill, WCUMC Financial Secretary, at [fin\\_sec@wcumc.us](mailto:fin_sec@wcumc.us) as soon as possible in order for gifts to be allocated as directed.

Angela McAlister, Embracing Hope Chairperson

### *"The 1619 Project" Book Study Grant Award*

In November 2023, the United Methodist Foundation of New England announced the availability of a grant to support the study of "The 1619 Project: A New Origin Project," by Pulitzer Prize winner Nikole Hannah-Jones and the New York Times Magazine. "The 1619 Project" challenges us to reframe U.S. history by marking the year when the first enslaved Africans arrived on Virginia's shores. With the start of "Black History Month," WCUMC's Task Force on Anti-Racism and Racial Justice is pleased to announce the receipt of copies of the book.

The Anti-Racism/Racial Justice Task Force plans to announce the schedule for the book study in April and will use resources published by the United Methodist New England Conference's Commission on Religion and Race and the Pulitzer Center.

### *WCUMC Members Attended Anti-Racism Documentary*

On the evening of January 17<sup>th</sup>, seven members of our church community (Deb Allen, Diana Bard, Nancy Bissell, Bill & Lori Evans, and David & Judy Troughton) joined over one hundred other participants at Westford Academy to view the "Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America" documentary. The program was sponsored by Greater Lowell's Community Teamwork and the Westford Public Schools. In the documentary, "The Who We Are Project" founder Jeffery Robinson draws a stark timeline of anti-Black racism in the United States, from slavery to the modern myth of a post-racial America. The documentary was powerful and left viewers with many emotions. At the same time, the documentary sparked a powerful dialogue and raised many hard questions for the viewers. The documentary is available for viewing at <https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/who-we-are-a-chronicle-of-racism-in-america>

We are reminded of WCUMC's Anti-Racism/Racial Justice Task Force Mission Statement: *To educate and challenge our congregation to address the presence of systemic racism and white privilege within the church and the world-at-large. We will do this within the context of our Christian faith.*

## College Addresses



If there has been any change in your son or daughter's college address please notify Roberta in the church office – [office@wcumc.us](mailto:office@wcumc.us) or call 978-251-4834. Valentine mailing for each student will be going out very soon!

Thank you!

## Sunday School News

In January, we used the Hugging the World mission study to examine faith, hope, and love in action through the global adventures of five children- Choogie, Caroline, Vladimir, Jong Sung, and Lydia. It helped us develop a clearer understanding of what God's mission is and how we can be a part of it.

In February, we begin our Lenten curriculum, 24 Hours that Changed the World, by Adam Hamilton. This curriculum was also an adult Bible study a few years ago, and there are a few books available if parents are interested in following along with their children while we experience Jesus' last hours.

A registration form was sent to all Sunday School families, but if you haven't filled it out yet, you can access it here: <https://forms.gle/TXndPVzhw8gj3Awi6> or you can use this QR code:



If you are interested in volunteering in our Sunday School program, please contact Kathy Clark (Sunday School Superintendent) at [kathysbiz@verizon.net](mailto:kathysbiz@verizon.net) or 978-857-1651.

## St. Paul's Meal

**The sign-up sheet for the St. Paul's Meal** is now online. To volunteer, please click on the following link. The St. Paul's Meal will be served on Wednesday, February 28, 2024.

Please note we have increased the number of items to prepare the monthly meal at St. Paul's Soup Kitchen. The meal count continues to increase each month, and we need additional items. Thank you for your support of this important mission.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040448A8AB28AAFF2-47445475-stpauls>



*Do you know how to raise your issues and concerns in our Church?*

If you have a question, suggestion, concern, or complaint, you can talk to any of our Church Leaders, who will help you. We welcome your ideas and will address your concerns within our Christian fellowship. Talk to any of us on the list below.

Pastor: Rev. Geisa Y. Matos

Minister of Music: Karen Leonard

Church Secretary: Roberta Davidson-Stratton

Co-Lay Leaders: Elly Evans, Kathy Ha

Co-Chairpersons Church Administrative Council: Ben Weirich, Elly Evans

Chairpersons Staff Parish Relations Committee: Kathy Ha

Co-Chairpersons Missions Committee: Mark Smith and Rev. Geisa Matos

Chairpersons Congregational Care Committee: Lori Evans

Chairperson Worship Committee: Holly Cerullo

Co-Chairpersons Trustees: Adrienne Kielsing, Mark Smith

Chairperson Finance: Angela McAlister

Treasurer: Kimberly Stewart

Financial Secretary: Ellen O'Neill

Children and Family Ministries: Kathy Clark, Harry Johnson

## Thank you!

Dear West Chelmsford UMC!

We are so blessed to have you as a vital part of our organization! We are also grateful for the devotion you share for our organization through your service and your generous donation of \$40.00 that continues to keep St. Paul's Soup Kitchen going.

As you know, needy families and individuals in our community go without proper food, shelter, and essential medical care every day due to a variety of factors including low wages, job loss, injuries, illness, age, domestic violence, and divorce.

With the generous support of people like you, we will be able to help many of these families and individuals by meeting an essential daily need by providing meals from St. Paul's Soup Kitchen.

For more information on how your donation is helping to make a difference in the lives of so many in our community, we invite you to visit our website at [stpaulssoupkitchen.org](http://stpaulssoupkitchen.org) or follow our Facebook page at [facebook.com/stpaulssoupkitchen/](https://facebook.com/stpaulssoupkitchen/).

Thank you again, and we look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,

Paula Forest, Vice President

## Church Office Information

- The Church Office is open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. The office phone number is 978-251-4835 and the email address is [office@wcumc.us](mailto:office@wcumc.us).
- Rev. Geisa's office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM.
- We have six e-mail addresses:
  - [office@wcumc.us](mailto:office@wcumc.us) – for general church business
  - [pastormatos@wcumc.us](mailto:pastormatos@wcumc.us) – for Rev Geisa only
  - [music@wcumc.us](mailto:music@wcumc.us) – for Karen Leonard, Music Minister
  - [treasurer@wcumc.us](mailto:treasurer@wcumc.us) – for Kimberly Stewart, Church Treasurer
  - [fin\\_sec@wcumc.us](mailto:fin_sec@wcumc.us) – for Ellen O'Neill, Financial Secretary
  - [trustees@wcumc.us](mailto:trustees@wcumc.us) – for the Trustees
- Church Website is [www.wcumc.us](http://www.wcumc.us)
- Items for the mid-week email are due in the church office by **Monday morning**.
- Items for the church bulletin insert are due in the church office by **Tuesday morning**.
- Items for the **monthly Newsletter** are due in the church office on the third Monday of each month. **All articles must be signed**. The next submission deadline is **Monday, February 19, 2024 for the March 2024 Newsletter**.



# FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> 7:30PM-Senior Choir Rehearsal	<b>2</b> 7:00PM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Den Meeting	<b>3</b> 7:00AM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Pinewood Derby
<b>4</b> 9:30AM Worship Service In-Person & via Zoom 9:30AM-Sunday School 10:30AM-Coffee Hour 1:30PM-MVR Rehearsal	<b>5</b> 7:00PM- Congregational Care via Zoom 7:30 PM-BSA Troop 70 Mtg	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 1:30PM-Fiber Arts Group 7:00PM-Missions via Zoom 7:30PM-Festival Ringers Rehearsal	<b>8</b> 7:30PM-Senior Choir Rehearsal	<b>9</b> 5:30PM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Den 1 Meeting	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9:30AM Worship Service In-Person & via Zoom 10:00AM-Sunday School 10:30AM-Coffee Hour 11:00AM-Acolyte Mtg 1:30PM-MVR Rehearsal	<b>12</b> 7:15PM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Tiger Den Mtg 7:15PM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Webelos Den Mtg 7:30PM-Trustees via Zoom 7:30 PM-BSA Troop 70 Mtg	<b>13</b> 7:00PM-Christian Ed via Zoom 7:30PM-Finance via Zoom 7:30PM-Festival Ringers Rehearsal	<b>14</b> Valentine's Day 7:30PM-Ash Wednesday Service In-Person & via Zoom	<b>15</b> 7:30PM-Senior Choir Rehearsal	<b>16</b> 5:30PM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Den 1 Meeting 6:00PM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Bear Den Meeting	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 9:30AM Worship Service In-Person & via Zoom 10:00AM-Sunday School 10:30AM-Coffee Hour 11:00AM-Lenten Group Study	<b>19</b> President's Day	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 7:30PM-Staff/Parish via Zoom 7:30PM-Festival Ringers Rehearsal	<b>22</b> 6:30PM-Fiber Arts Group 7:30PM-Senior Choir Rehearsal	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>

<p><b>25</b>  <b>9:30AM Worship Service In-Person &amp; via Zoom</b>  <b>10:00AM-Sunday School</b>  <b>10:30AM-Coffee Hour</b>  <b>11:00AM-Lenten Group Study</b>  1:30PM-MVR Sectional Rehearsals</p>	<p><b>26</b>  7:15PM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Tiger Den Mtg  7:15PM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Webelos Den Mtg.  7:30 PM-BSA Troop 70 Mtg</p>	<p><b>27</b>  <b>7:30PM-Church Admin Council via Zoom</b></p>	<p><b>28</b>  <b>St. Paul's Meal</b>  7:00PM-Cub Scout Pack 70 Wolf Den Mtg  <b>7:30PM-Festival Ringers Rehearsal</b></p>	<p><b>29</b>  <b>7:30PM-Senior Choir Rehearsal</b></p>		
--	---	---	---	--	--	---