

CIRCUIT



WRITER

Pastor Jess De Los Santos

January 2026

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

Pastor's Corner



“FACING THE FUTURE WITH THE RIGHT CONNECTION”

This is what the Lord says, He who made the earth, the Lord who formed it and established it—the Lord is His name: “Call to me, and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33:2-3).

Praise the Lord! The New Year 2026 is here. Happy New Year to all! We may be tempted to speculate about what the future brings. Will there be challenges and trials? Unexpected blessings and windfalls?

I love this song. "I don't know about tomorrow, I just live from day to day. I don't borrow from its sunshine, for its skies may turn to gray. I don't worry o'er the future, for I know what Jesus said, And today I'll walk beside Him, for He knows what is ahead.

Refrain: Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand.

But I know who holds tomorrow, and I know who holds my hand."

Don't worry about tomorrow, what it may bring. The Prophet Jeremiah assures us that God reveals exactly what we need to know, the **“great and unsearchable things.”** Wonderful!

Jeremiah 33:3 offers a powerful invitation and promise from God. It speaks directly to the heart of faith and the relationship between the divine and humanity. This verse encourages us to seek a deeper and right connection with God, ensuring that He will respond in profound and unexpected ways. The holy God assured Jeremiah that he only needed to call out to God, and He would answer. Matthew 7:7 says, **“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.”** God is always ready to hear and answer our prayers. Surely, God could supply all our needs without our asking – but when we do ask, we are acknowledging that He alone is God and that He is All-powerful. When we pray, we must humble ourselves, lay aside our willfulness and worry, and determine to obey Him.

How often do we seek wisdom and guidance from God in our daily lives? The verse presses us to remember that when we turn to God and ask for His guidance, He will reveal to us great things that are beyond our comprehension. Jeremiah 33:3 serves as a poignant reminder of God's infinite wisdom and knowledge and His willingness to share it with us when we approach Him with faith and sincerity. So, let this verse inspire you to deepen your relationship with God through prayer and seek His wisdom and guidance in all aspects of your life.

As we look to the New Year 2026, we may try to gain a sense of control over the unknown by planning, setting goals, or making resolutions. Most of us realize that the future really lies outside of our control. However, we can trust God for what lies ahead because He knows everything. God sees us, and everything that will happen. Always remember, God knows the best for us. Our faithful and loving God encourages us to call on Him as we face the future and to anticipate an answer. So, let's face the future with faith and hope!

God has promised that He will be faithful to all of us. Be encouraged that He goes before you and me, and follows close behind. His powerful hand is lovingly directing our pathway of life. God bless everyone!

My whole family greets you all a Happy, Peaceful, and Prosperous New Year 2026!



HELLO january

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Fellowship Hosts: Gwen Rettenmund and Janelle Johnson	RL Liturgists Jan. 4: Lisa Mink Jan. 11: Heather MADison Jan. 18: Candy Bandli Jan. 25: Larry Neve	RL Greeter Jan. 4: Joyce Foster Jan. 11: Barb Burdick Jan. 18: Maggie Maust Jan. 25: Carolyn Kaupanger		1 Office Closed	2 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	3 
4 <i>Holy Communion</i> 9am RL Adult SS	5 Office Closed 9am Taking Down the Greens 4pm Confirmation 7:30 Dartball Bye	6	7	8	9 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	10
11 9am RL Adult & Canton SS Everybody's Birthday (special offering) and birthday cake	12 1:30 Brentwood 4pm Confirmation 7:30 Dartball	13 3:30 Worship 7pm Finance	14 10am UWF Exect Mtg 1pm Star Circle 2pm Trustees 3:30 Church & Society	15 10:30 Prayer Shawl Meeting	16 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	17
18 9am RL Adult SS	19 4pm Newsletter Deadline 4pm Confirmation 7:30 Dartball	20 1pm Game Day! 3:30 Invitation & Member Care	21 5:30 Serving Benjamin House	22	23 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i> 11:30 Lunch Bunch	24
25 9am RL Adult & Canton SS	26 4pm Confirmation 7:30 Dartball	27 9am Folders 2pm Woodstone Worship	28 8:30 Men's Breakfast	29	30 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	31

Canton Service is at 9:00 am– Sunday School also at 9:00 am on January 11th and 25th
Rice Lake's Adult Sunday School is at 9:00 am, Coffee Fellowship at 10:00 am, and Service is at 10:30 am.

2026 First United Methodist Church Committees

CHURCH COUNCIL

Chairperson: Paul Toft

Secretary: Barb Burdick

Members at Large:

2026 Gwen Rettenmund

2027 Pat Moin

2028 Heather Madison

Lay Leader: Lisa Mink

Conference Delegates: Paul & Shirley Toft

Finance Chairperson: Jodi Wessman

Treasurer: Cheryl Aune

Financial Secretary: Stephanie Byrnes-Hampton

SPRC Chairperson: Nancy Zabel

Missions Chairperson: Bruce Kaupanger

Worship Chairperson: Mary Pautsch

Membership Secretary: Stephanie Byrnes-Hampton

UWF Co-Pres.: Cheryl Hedgecock, Kathy Wagenbach

Trustees Chairperson:

Invitation & Member Care Chair: Steph BH

Church & Society: Larry Neve

FINANCE

Chairperson: Jodi Wessman

Treasurer: Cheryl Aune

Finance Secretary: Stephanie Byrnes-Hampton

2026 Pete Bandli, Jodi Wessman

2027 TBD

2028 Ty Cunningham, Bernie Kahl

Council Chairperson: Paul Toft

Trustees Chairperson:

SPRC Chairperson: Nancy Zabel

Lay Leader: Lisa Mink

Conference Delegates: Paul & Shirley Toft

AUDIT

2026 Deb Wille

2028 George Petry

TRUSTEES

Chairperson:

2026 Mike Madison, Russ Johnson, Kathy Duerkop

2027 Don Cherry, Ken George

2028 Jeff Wille, David Bandli, Pam Forrester

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

Judee Gonyea, Margaret Maust, Carolyn Kaupanger

MISSIONS

Chairperson: Bruce Kaupanger

2026 Pat Turgeson, Helen Anonich, Pam Petry

2027 Connie Kilcoyne, Janelle Johnson, Pat Asuma

2028 Bruce Kaupanger, Gwen Rettenmund, Nancy Kahl, Becki George

NOMINATIONS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson: Pastor

2026 Barb Burdick, Candy Bandli

2027 Mary Mattson, Paul Toft

2028 Pam Petry

Lay Leader: Lisa Mink

WORSHIP

Chairperson: Mary Pautsch

2026 Mary Pautsch

2027 Imelda De Los Santos

2028 Linda Dufner

Choir Director and Pianist: Nancy Kahl

Communion Steward: Maggie Maust, Mary Mattson

Ushers:

Liturgist & Greeter Coordinator: Barb Burdick

IT/Sound system: Jeim & Jehiel De Los Santos

Worship Media: Stephanie Byrnes-Hampton

Committee of the Month: Jeanne Parker

STAFF PARISH RELATIONS

Chairperson: Nancy Zabel

2026 Maggie Maust, Nancy Zabel, C-Lexi Halvorson

2027 Mary Mattson, Connie Kilcoyne, C-Amanda Alton

2028 Heather Madison, Larry Neve

First Lay Leader: Lisa Mink

Conference Delegates: Paul & Shirley Toft

Canton Lay Leader: Michele Halvorson

CHURCH & SOCIETY

Chairperson: Larry Neve

2026 Larry Neve, Steph Byrnes-Hampton

2027 Jeim & Jehiel De Los Santos

2028 Kathy Wagenbach, Dawn O'Brien

INVITATION AND MEMBER CARE

Chairperson: Stephanie Byrnes-Hampton

2026 Pat Turgeson, Carolyn Kaupanger, Steph BH

2027 Mary Pautsch, Joyce Foster

2028 Jeanne Parker, Cheryl Hedgecock, Candy Bandli

COORDINATORS

Librarian: Mary Pautsch

Counters: Stephanie Byrnes-Hampton

Funeral Coordinator:

Prayer Tree: Jeanne Parker

Men's Breakfast: Bernie Kahl

Prayer Shawls: Shirley Toft



United Women in Faith

Living on the edge of a wood containing oak trees has made me more aware that they are stubborn about shedding their leaves, retaining them throughout much of winter. I learned this is an adaptive strategy known as marcescence. Ecologists have a few theories to explain this. One is that the leaves act as a protective barrier for the future growth of the buds against the extreme cold and frost. Another is that the retained leaves deter browsing herbivores. Also, there may be an ecosystem advantage as leaves shed in early spring add nutrients just when the tree begins actively growing. (extension.illinois.edu)

Though oak trees have been around for centuries, we don't have all the answers. We will never totally understand nature but I take the lesson of marcescence as a symbol of patience and resilience. Hopefully a metaphor we can apply to our UWF unit when we feel we are in a season of change and struggle. We will stick around, working to connect and nurture as we map our way forward.

Kathy Wagenbach, co-president



2-Pam Petry
5-Dedrick Hampton
5-Kari Chafer
6- Imelda De Los Santos
9-Lily Rettenmund
11-Rayne Semple
12-Jacob Weaver
13-Gwen Rettenmund
17-Brock Buergi
22-Michael Breitzman
23-Jenay Hammang
24-Hailey Sirek
27-Kathy Nielsen



1- James & Sharon
Campbell

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed then please call the office 715-234-3919. Thanks!



A Purposeful New Year

The man who goes into the new year without some priorities governing his life and without some principles guiding his behavior, is prey to the tempting, unimportant and destructive things in life.

The new year is an opportunity to sort out the useless tasks and plan for the important; to review the failures and resolve to be successful; to take an inventory of causes and pledge life to purpose and service. These being done, the new will truly be new, different and better.

— C. Neil Strait

The UWF theme for 2026 is 'Mapping Our Way Forward'.

The Executive Committee will meet Wednesday, January 14 at 10:00 a.m. to plan for the new year.

World Thank Bank Suggestions for 2026

We can be grateful for everyday joys. Add coins to your Thank Bank for:

- January-Your car starting on a frigid morning!
- February-Having a soft blanket to cover up with.
- March-Enjoying a morning cup of coffee or tea.
- April-The sound and smell of rain.
- May-The beauty of the changing seasons.
- June-Reading a good book.
- July-Having a well stocked cupboard.
- August-Having a community to worship with.
- September-Having a good hair day!
- October-Finding money in your pocket.
- November-Starry night skies.
- December-Celebrating with loved ones.

“Belief is truth held in the mind; faith is a fire in the heart.”

—Joseph Fort Newton

Canton UMC



Birthdays

5- Rick Boortz
17- Wyatt Gifford
23- Amanda Alton
30- Stacey Castillo

Please call the office (715-234-3919) if we are missing any of your important dates.



Canton Liturgists

1st Sunday: De Los Santos
2nd Sunday: Arlene Ciulla
3rd Sunday: Halvorsons
4th Sunday: Kristie Kringle

If you're interested in being a liturgist, please let Kristie know.

2026 Canton United Methodist Church Committees

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

2026 Chairperson
2026 Secretary
2026 Treasurer
2026 Financial Secretary
2026 UWF President
2026 Member at Large
2026 Member at Large
2026 Conference Delegates
2026 Education Chair
2026 Trustees Chair
Lay Leader

Justin Alton
Michele Halvorson
Sarah MacDonald
Stephanie Byrnes-Hampton
Michele Halvorson
Sharon Hagberg
Kristie Kringle
Paul & Shirley Toft
Arlene Ciulla
Cole Halvorson
Michele Halvorson



STAFF PARISH COMMITTEE

2026 Lexi Halvorson
2027 Amanda Alton
2028 Arlene Ciulla
Lay Leader: Michele Halvorson

AUDIT

2026 Sarah McDonald
2027 Kim Stoeberl

NOMINATIONS

Chairperson: Pastor Jess
Lay Leader: Michele Halvorson

TRUSTEES

Chairperson: Cole Halvorson
2026 Cole Halvorson, Justin Alton
2027 Micah Halvorson
2028 Kristie Kringle

COORDINATORS

Communion Steward: Sharon Hagberg



Our 
Thoughts & Prayers
for the families...

Ronn Kopp's sister Kay Marino passed December 22nd.

Marlene Raether who passed on December 23rd.

Thursdays @ the U

This series, partly funded by the UW-Barron County Foundation, will explore topics in the arts, sciences, public affairs, literary fields and cultural areas. While hosting a variety of speakers, the university does not seek to endorse or promote a particular idea, opinion, topic or product over others. These lectures are free and open to the public every Thursday from 12:30-1:30 and are held in our Blue Hill's Lecture Hall, BRRH234.

Details of the Spring 2026 Thursday@U Presentation Lineup can be found at <https://calendar.uwec.edu/barron-county/>

29-Jan De Anna Westphal [Reindeer Farm](#)

5-Feb Matthew Meyer [AI and Our Humanity](#)

If viewing the newsletter online, you can click the links for more information.

Church & Society

Ways to Volunteer in Our Local Community

If one of your New Year's Resolutions is to make a positive difference, here are several places with contact info where you can be of service to others with your time or donations:

Boys & Girls Club: 715-736-7445 (assist with programs; snacks, homework, etc.)

We Share Food Pantry: 715-205-8181

St. Vincent de Paul Pantry & Kitchen: svdpricelake.org

Benjamin's House: 715-736-2437; online application benjamins-house.org (stamp envelopes, pick up food rescue items, handyman work, drivers for appointments)

Community Cat Coalition: 715-736-2287 communitycatcenter.net

Kinship of Rice Lake & Cameron: 715-234-1995 online mentoring application

Sr. Citizen Center: 715-234-7224 online application ricelakeseniorcenter.org

Rice Lake Public Library: 715-234-4861 print online form and return to front desk rlpl.org/about-rlpl/volunteer

Meals on Wheels: 715-537-6225 Joanne Sweet, coordinator

Dove Health Care: 715-234-2604 Nadine Williams, coordinator online application dovehealthcaresstudentandvolunteer.isolvedhire.com (help with parties, play bingo, write letter, companion during outings/shopping)

ADRC (Aging & Disability Resource Center of Barron County): 1-888-538-3031 Day Break Program assistance

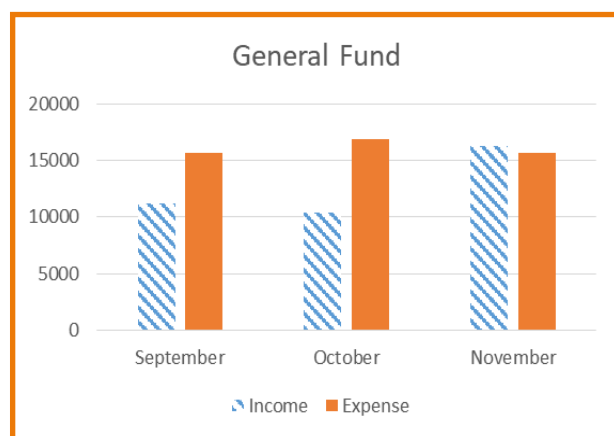
Rice Lake Area Free Clinic: 715-736-3733 (machine, leave a message)

These places are not in any particular order. They all need our help and by volunteering, you might benefit yourself by giving something back, gain a sense of connection and improve your well being.



Two of our members who volunteered to ring the bell for the Salvation Army at Marketplace:

Bruce Kaupanger & Larry Neve



Missions Committee



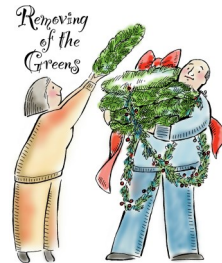
With your help the Missions Committee was able to provide 60 items from the mitten tree and over 100 items for Heritage Lakeside Christmas. In addition, enough funds were collected to provide 69 haircuts to residents of Heritage Lakeside. Thank you so much for supporting our projects for Christmas and throughout the year!

Worship Committee

"Tis the season to sparkle." I'd to thank all those who joined us to make our church "sparkle" for the Advent season! Our crew included: Pastor Jess, Imelda, Gwen Rettenmund, Mary Pautsch, Pam Forrester, Paul and Shirley Toft, Lisa Mink, Cheryl Aune, Heather Madison, and Nancy Zabel. We enjoyed a potluck for lunch after our hard work! Thank you!

We'll be taking the Greens down on Monday, January 5th at 9am

Celebrating "Everybody's Birthdays" on Sunday, January 11th like last year. We will do birthday cake after service.



WEEKLY READINGS



January 4

Holy Communion

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Psalms 147:12-20

Ephesians 1:3-14

John 1:1-18

January 11

Everybody's Birthday

(special offering) &

Birthday Cake

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalms 29

Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 3:13-17

January 18

Isaiah 49:1-7

Psalms 40:1-11

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

John 1:29-42

January 25

Isaiah 9:1-4

Psalms 27:1, 4-9

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Matthew 5:13-20

Invitation and Member Care

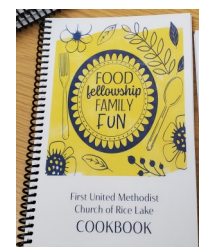
What's Happening in January:

- ♦ **Celebrating January Birthdays!**- Cake following service on Jan. 11th.
- ♦ **Game Day!**- January 20th at 1:00 pm. Bring your favorite game or try one of ours.
- ♦ **Invitation & Member Care Meeting**— also January 20th at 3:30 pm. Bring your ideas on more ways to get more people in church (Invitation) and how we can take care of the people we have and maybe bring back some people that we miss (Member Care).



- ♦ **Lunch Bunch**— is January 23rd at 11:30 am at Applebees. Lunch Bunch is a casual gathering at various restaurants in the area. Please call the office to let us know if you are coming by 3pm on Thursday.

Cookbooks for sale, \$17 each!



Available in the office or the narthex.

**First United Methodist Church
Canton United Methodist Church
1221 Wesley Drive, Rice Lake, WI 54868**

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January 2026 The Circuit Writer

First United Methodist Church

1221 Wesley Dr., Rice Lake, WI 54868
Phone: (715) 234-3919
Email: office@ricelakeumc.org
Website: www.RiceLakeUMC.org

Worship Service: 10:30 am
Coffee Fellowship: 10:00 am
Adult Sunday School: 9:00 am

Canton United Methodist Church

2408 15 3/8 Ave., Rice Lake, WI 54868
Office: 1221 Wesley Dr., Rice Lake, WI
Phone: (715) 234-3919
Email: office@ricelakeumc.org

Worship Service: 9:00 am
Sunday School: Jan. 11th & 25th at 9:00 am

Pastor: Rev. Jess De Los Santos

Email: pastorjess@ricelakeumc.org
Cell: 1-757-761-2735
Office Hours: Tues.-Thurs. 9:30am-12:30pm & by appmt

Office Manager: Stephanie Byrnes-Hampton

Office Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 9:00 am-4:00 pm



Facebook— search for First United Methodist Church of Rice Lake, make sure to “Like” us and Facebook should notify you when we go “Live.”

You-tube— you can find the latest Sunday services on our You-tube page: First UMC of Rice Lake Media. Facebook is deleting the videos after 30 days so I am moving them to Youtube weekly.

Over-the-Phone— Call 1-855-788-3919 and sign up for it to call you automatically any time we go “live” by pressing 1 when it asks you to, or you can call or email the church office to manually add you to the list that is called automatically, OR you can just call in every week. If you call before the service “goes live” you will hear some of last week’s service but it will switch over automatically to the new service. Just hang on the line.

****Reminder:** 2026 offering envelopes are in the overflow area. If you don’t see yours give me a call.

