

# 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!

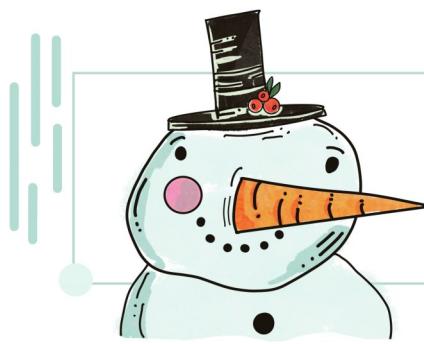
Jeremiah 33:3 offers a powerful invitation and promise from God. It speaks directly to the heart of faith and the relationship between the divine and humanity. This verse encourages us to seek a deeper and right connection with God, ensuring that He will respond in profound and unexpected ways. The holy 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
<b>Fellowship Hosts:</b> Gwen Rettenmund and Janelle Johnson	<b>RL Liturgists</b> Jan. 4: Lisa Mink Jan. 11: Heather MADison Jan. 18: Candy Bandli Jan. 25: Larry Neve		<b>RL Greeter</b> Jan. 4: Joyce Foster Jan. 11: Barb Burdick Jan. 18: Maggie Maust Jan. 25: Carolyn Kaupanger		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 1 Office Closed	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 Exec 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

**Canion 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](http://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



## 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

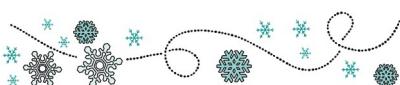
# Canton UMC



## Birthdays

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

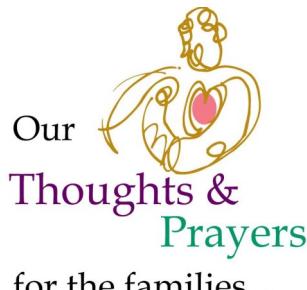
Please call the office (715-234-3919) if we are missing any of your important dates.



## **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.



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

Marlene Raether who passed on December 23rd.

## 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

### COORDINATORS

Communion Steward: Sharon Hagberg

## 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](http://svdpricelake.org)

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

**Community Cat Coalition:** 715-736-2287 [communitycatcenter.net](http://communitycatcenter.net)

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

**Sr. Citizen Center:** 715-234-7224 online application [ricelakeseniorcenter.org](http://ricelakeseniorcenter.org)

**Rice Lake Public Library:** 715-234-4861 print online form and return to front desk [rlpl.org/about-rlpl/volunteer](http://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 [dovehealthcarestudentandvolunteer.isolvedhire.com](http://dovehealthcarestudentandvolunteer.isolvedhire.com) (help with parties, play bingo, write letter, companion during outings/shopping)

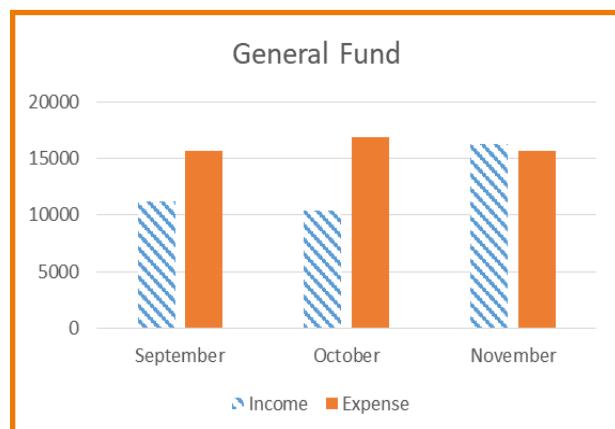
**ADRC (Aging & Disability Resource Center of Barron County):** 1-888-538-3031 Day Break Program assistance

**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



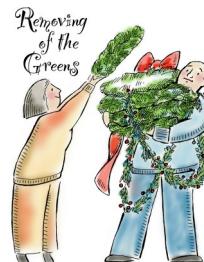
With your help the Missions Committee was able to provide 60 items from the mitten tree and over 100 items for Heritage Lakeside Christmas. In addition, enough funds were collected to provide 69 haircuts to residents of Heritage Lakeside. Thank you so much for supporting our projects for Christmas and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

## Worship Committee

“Tis the season to sparkle.” I’d like 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 5<sup>th</sup> at 9am

Celebrating “Everybody’s Birthdays” on Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> like last year. We will do birthday cake after service.



## 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.



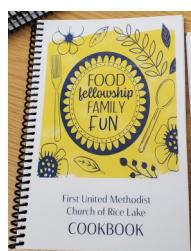
**January 4**  
**Holy Communion**  
Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Psalm 147:12-20  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
John 1:1-18

**January 11**  
**Everybody’s Birthday (special offering) & Birthday Cake**  
Isaiah 42:1-9  
Psalm 29  
Acts 10:34-43  
Matthew 3:13-17

**January 18**  
Isaiah 49:1-7  
Psalm 40:1-11  
1 Corinthians 1:1-9  
John 1:29-42

**January 25**  
Isaiah 9:1-4  
Psalm 27:1, 4-9  
1 Corinthians 1:18-31  
Matthew 5:13-20

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

Address Service Requested



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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](mailto:office@ricelakeumc.org)  
Website: [www.RiceLakeUMC.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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 YouTube 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.