

I spent last Monday with my colleagues at the “Bible Study with the Bishop” at the Woodridge UMC. Bishop Dan Schwerin chose the Epistle to Philemon, one of the shortest books (or epistle, which means letter) of the bible.

We dug into the twenty-five verses for two hours. If you’re unfamiliar with this letter, it is the only personal letter of Paul that has survived, dating back to the mid-50s in the first century. Paul wrote this letter to Philemon requesting to forgive his runaway slave, Onesimus. Paul met Onesimus during his imprisonment, most likely in Rome. Paul’s teaching and witness inspired him, and Onesimus became a Christian there. Sending him back to Colossae, the community to which he belonged, Paul is asking Philemon to welcome him as a brother and coworker in Christ’s ministry. Once, he was a thief who stole his master’s money. However, Paul now called him “my child” and a “dearly loved brother.”

Bishop Schwerin pointed out how scriptures were often used to advocate slavery in our history and challenged us to read the letter in our context today. Bishop noted, in the contemporary version of the story, Paul honored this fugitive’s appeal for asylum status and demanded liberty based on our sacramental promise - “Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races?” (*Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith, The Baptismal Covenant I, the UMC Hymnal, p.34*)

When we meet and see people, do we consider this status as brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, more than what society frames, defines, categorizes, and values? One phrase that repeatedly appears in Paul’s writings is “**in Christ.**” Whatever he felt in his heart or suggested something to do to a community of faith, he was grounded in Christ and desired the Christian communities to be and do in Christ. Bishop Schwerin said life in Christ is the center of our life together.

As we move into another holy season of Lent, I invite us to refine and reclaim this center. In Christ, there is always a power of new life and reconciliation. In Christ, there is always more grace and forgiveness beyond our measures. “The old life is gone; a new life emerges! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18, *The Message Version*)

Blessings & Peace,



Pastor Mi-Sook Yoo

*If you want to receive the Lent Devotional booklets and cards at home, please contact the church office.

March 2025 Newsletter



This Lent, we are wading into the middle of sacred texts to find God. Let us find the sacred space between us, where God is found.

March 2
Transfiguration Sunday
Communion Sunday
“A Glimpse of Glory”
Luke 9:28-37

March 5
Ash Wednesday
Imposition of Ashes at noon
Service at 7 p.m.
“Intention & Action”
Luke 9:51-62

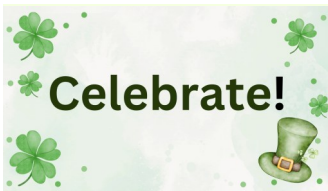
March 9
First Sunday of Lent
(Day Light Saving begins)
“Stranger & Neighbor”
Luke 10:25-37

March 16
Second Sunday of Lent
“Faith & Works”
Luke 10:38-42

*** Potluck lunch**

March 23
Third Sunday of Lent
“Rest & Growth”
Luke 13:6-9

March 30
Fourth Sunday of Lent
“Lost & Found”
Luke 15:1-7



March Birthdays

Julie Kukreja 3/1
Enrico Santoso 3/3
Austin Christopher 3/4
Michele Linner 3/7
Nathan Santoso 3/12
Diane Joy Miller 3/15
Dan Holtz 3/21
Katy Spooner 3/21
Janet Kleckner 3/22
Peggy Literski 3/23
Emily Perry 3/30

March Anniversaries

Tom & Charlotte
Letterle 3/20
Jason & Nisha
Waters 3/27

If you are celebrating your birthday and/or anniversary this month, but do not see your name, please call the office and let us know.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

SMALL GROUP GATHERINGS

Contact each group leader or call/email the church office to join the conversation. Check the weekly e-news or your leader's email for their in-person and zoom meetings.

Spirituality Group, Wednesdays at 9 a.m.

Linda Mullen mullen520@comcast.net

Women's Bible Study, Thursdays at 10 a.m.

Lisa Greenwood lisajogreenwood@yahoo.com

Men's Group, Saturdays at 7:30 a.m.

Bryan Doyle amybryandoyle@aim.com

Traveling Tea Party

Do you love to visit people and listen to their stories? Do you have a heart for our seniors? The Nurturing Team is prayerfully considering forming a group of people who can visit our church family seniors every two months. We hope these visits will be a time of fellowship with simple treats and sharing communion (with pre-blessed elements). **If you are interested, please join us for a training meeting on Sunday, March 2, following service.**

Lent Study ♣ Wednesdays at 10 a.m. or Thursdays at 11 a.m.

Throughout his ministry to his final days on the road to the cross, we find stories of Jesus encountering ordinary, flawed, and unexpected people. Many were struggling and considered unimportant; some were outsiders or even outlaws. Whoever they were, Jesus brought the good news of God's kingdom to those who most needed to hear it. This Lent, we invite you to a Lent study to explore Jesus' life and teaching through the gospel of Luke. In Luke's stories, we will find Jesus' care and compassion for all as he welcomes sinners and outcasts.

Easter Choir Practice ♣ Sundays following service

If you are interested in singing in the Easter choir, please reach out to Becky Kock at bkock@yahoo.com and join the praise team after Sunday service for any or all of the practice sessions. Each Sunday until Easter, we will have a brief practice following service and you will receive a recording of the song via email to practice any time you like.

The Bread of Life

Ever heard of Friendship Bread? We thought it would be fun to make starter dough and share with those interested. Once you receive your dough bag, you will need to nurture it and feed it for several days before baking. As the dough grows, you can share with others or when you bake the bread you can give it as a gift! We plan to have the bread starters available on Sunday, March 9th. If interested, see Lisa Greenwood at fellowship time. There will be an instruction sheet provided along with your zip lock bag so you know what to do!

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Sunday School Class ♣ 10:15 a.m.

We are now offering in person Sunday School for children. After Children's Time during worship, the children will be dismissed to the Sunday School room. If you have any questions or would like to teach the class, please contact Mindy Zeppo at mamcall27@yahoo.com.

Praise, Pizza and Paint Party ♣ Saturday, March 15 ♣ 3-6 p.m.

Kids Drop-Off Event for the parents (of course, parents are always more than welcome to stay). Come and enjoy a guided paint party, pizza and some games! This event is open to the public, so please bring friends.

Youth Group ♣ Sunday, March 9 & ♣ 23 4 p.m.

Come meet your friends and learn and share a great time of fellowship and fun!

Confirmation Class ♣ Sunday, March 9 & 23 ♣ 5 p.m.

Youth in 7th grade and up are invited to join this journey to learn more about God and faith.

Save the Dates

Sunday, March 16 - St. Patrick's Day Potluck Lunch

Sunday, March 30 - New Member Class

Saturday, April 12 - Easter Breakfast with Bunny, Petting Zoo, and Egg Hunt



March Collection



Grafton Food Pantry



You can drop off gently used clothes & shoes in the bin.

 **Reach Everyone**
with Acts of kindness & build Communities of Hope

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Rev. Mi-Sook Yoo, Pastor
Nisha Waters,
Administrative Assistant

LET US GIVE

Thank you for your generous donation supporting Warm Your Hearts Bake Sale on February 2. We made over \$500. Thanks to all who baked the delicious desserts, soups, meal baskets, and more and all the shoppers!

Nineteen people from our church family joined the Summon 2 Serve meal-packing event at McHenry County College on Feb 9. This was the First UMC of Crystal Lake's annual Mission Day event. We were glad to collaborate with them and the First UMC of Woodstock. We can serve more when we work together. When we work together, we are stronger and united in love.



Summoned 2 Serve Meal Packing Event At McHenry County College

Watch for the next mission opportunities in the worship and e-news. Thank you!

Thank you for being a partner of Christ's ministry through your generous gifts!



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