

# ELY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*"The Little Church With the Big Heart"*

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## Parish News

September 2, 2022

### Additional Improvements to our Website

Our Ely United Methodist Church website has two goals:

First, to communicate as much information as possible about our church to our members and friends; and second, to be a "one-stop location" for people new to Ely or surfing the Internet who want to learn more about churches in Ely.

So what are the new improvements. They are twofold:

First, there is a link to our church Facebook page at [elyumc.org>about us>Facebook](http://elyumc.org/about-us/Facebook).

Second, there is a link to our YouTube streaming channel at [elyumc.org>about us>YouTube Recorded Worship Services](http://elyumc.org/about-us/YouTube Recorded Worship Services).

Note: If you want to livestream our worship services as they happen you will still need to click on the link we post each week in *Parish News* and at our Facebook account - Eumc MN.

## A Note from Pastor Craig

I've adopted a "Goldilocks" approach to life for as long as I can remember, meaning trying to find the "not too hot, not too cold, but just right" position with regard to just about everything. I've found both contentment and intellectual satisfaction in these Goldilocks positions, whether they be my views of current events; my political stances, faith convictions, or personal interests.

This often takes a lot of effort on my part to think things through in a manner that is honest, takes into account the best information available on all sides of an issue, doesn't sacrifice my principles, and isn't inconsistent. It also involves a commitment to being comfortable with ambiguity and being open to the possibility of being misunderstood by others.

I mention this because this is where the United Methodist Church and the Minnesota Annual Conference finds itself presently. We are going through an upheaval resulting from new understandings of human sexuality; understandings not embraced in good conscience by all members of United Methodist churches in Minnesota.

Delegates also passed legislation at the Annual Conference session this year to implement an audit of the diversity among the staff of the Minnesota Annual Conference. Again, not all delegates of the Annual Conference (even those committed to full equality) agreed with the specific legislation as written.

Annual Conference leadership, pastors, and church members (which means all of us!) are experiencing this in real time, which generates confusion and anxiety. I think this is a perfect time for us to take a Goldilocks approach - not over-reacting, but still taking time to thoughtfully read pertinent information. What is the Goldilocks position to being part of a fully inclusive denomination, but one that also fully respects and honors a variety of well-thought-out convictions?

Laurie Kantonen, our District Superintendent" has forwarded to us a succinct, helpful, and information-filled three-page document about the myths surround disaffiliation, which is attached to the electronic version of *Parish News*.

Our Church Council will discuss this at our September meeting. Jay Tomlinson, our Church Council chair, and I am available to answer any questions you have. Meanwhile our church will continue on much as we have for the last 130 years.

God's richest blessings and deep peace be with you as we turn the page on the calendar from August to September.

Pastor Craig

## More Progress on our Basement Floor Project!

This week the basement doors were put back on their hinges and the trim around them reinstalled. The new and freshly-stained baseboards are now in place. The pictures give you a feel for how things look. Note: the picture on the left appears bent because it's a panoramic shot for the purpose of including a larger field of vision.

We'll update you when it's time for volunteers to complete remaining tasks, such as washing dishes, moving items from the garage to the church, and returning them to their respective locations.



### Scripture Reading from the Book of Philemon

It's hard to picture Christianity or the New Testament as we know them without the Apostle Paul. He was primary missionary to Gentiles - non Jews. Thirteen or fourteen letters or 28% of the New Testament are attributed to Paul.

Some of his letters, for instance I Corinthians and Galatians, address specific situations in churches he had started. One letter, Romans, is an intricate and detailed theological treatise on who Jesus Christ is and what God has done through him for all the world.

Philemon, our Scripture reading for this Sunday, is only a single page in length. It's also the only personal letter Paul wrote that's collected in the New Testament; all the others were written to churches.

We see in the letter both Paul's compassion and boldness as he returns Onesimus, a slave Paul met in prison and who who embraced Christ, to Philemon, his former master who is also a Christian. Paul requests Philemon receive Onesimus as a brother in Christ and not a slave.

While we cannot be certain, there is some historical evidence that Philemon did release Onesimus and that Onesimus later became a bishop in the early church. We see here just how different the early church was from the Roman Empire that surrounded it

Minnesota Annual Conference  
of the United Methodist Church  
Southern Prairie District

August 23, 2022

To the people called United Methodists in the Southern Prairie District,  
Grace and peace to you in the name of Christ Jesus!

In the last six weeks I have noticed the temperature rise in the district concerning denominational schism. The cybersphere is full of many people from other annual conferences speaking into our denominational impasse with increased fervor. I try to stay connected to what is being said, and I have identified what I believe are “myths” that have created a false sense of urgency at least for the Minnesota United Methodist Churches. I hope you might find this document helpful.

**I. MYTH: THE UMC IS SPLITTING!** A denominational split is a specific negotiated plan to separate as an entire denomination. This has not occurred. What has happened is a new denomination (Global Methodist Church) has formed as of May 2022 and some congregations in then worldwide United Methodist Church are choosing to leave the UMC and join that new denomination.

**II. MYTH: WE MUST LEAVE NOW!** News sources from other conferences and caucus groups have increased the sense of urgency that if you don’t disaffiliate this year, you will miss the most advantageous window. In fact, it’s hard to predict what window will be most opportune for churches considering disaffiliation, since the General Conference has not met and will not meet until 2024. It could be voting to leave now will be a greater burden than if you leave later. We simply don’t know. What we do know is that our Minnesota Annual Conference Trustees have stated that they are committed to the most gracious exit for disaffiliating churches that the discipline allows and have shown this posture towards the three churches who disaffiliated in 2022.

**III. MYTH: EVERY CHURCH WILL HAVE TO VOTE TO CHOOSE TO STAY OR LEAVE!** Your congregation is United Methodist. Only those churches considering disaffiliating would have to vote to do so.

**IV. MYTH: THE ONGOING UMC DOESN’T HAVE ROOM FOR A CONSERVATIVE OR TRADITIONAL EXPRESSION OF THE FAITH.** To my knowledge in the history of the UMC, no member, no clergy, nor church has ever been asked to leave the UMC because they held to a more traditional or conservative viewpoint. One of the four values of the Minnesota Conference is “inclusive of all.” All means all! And our own Wesleyan understanding of sanctification is grounded in a “social holiness” that demands viewpoints different than our own. The current cabinet and bishop are committed to making space for all.

**V. MYTH: THE HISTORIC TENETS OF THE FAITH ARE AT STAKE!** There are no intentions, plans or legislation coming to General Conference to move the United Methodist Church away from the doctrines laid out in the Apostle’s Creed or in our Doctrinal Standards as found in the Book of Discipline Paragraph 104. In fact, there are very restrictive rules making it extremely difficult to change the United Methodist doctrinal standards which include the historic doctrines of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren articles and confessions of faith. Are there people in service to the denomination who don’t ascribe fully to these doctrines? Of course, and this is the case in all denominations – progressive or conservative. We believe it best to stand on the historic

## **Our Mission**

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

## **Our Vision**

Grow in Love of God and Neighbor  
Reach New People  
Heal a Broken World

## **Expression of Our Vision as Lived Out Values**

Rooted in Jesus  
Grounded in Wesleyan Theology  
Inclusive of All Persons  
Engaged in the Work of Justice and Reconciliation

tenets of the faith as the launching pad for theology and ministry. Unlike other denominations, our understanding of grace demands that we allow freedom of thought to explore the new things the Spirit of God may be doing. And as Steven Guthrie writes; "*We remember that while we may hold doctrines, our doctrines don't hold God — neither controlling him nor containing all there is of him.*" Pastors and churches that hold more closely to traditional theologies built from these historic tenets are welcomed and needed.

#### **VI. MYTH: WE CAN'T GET ANSWERS ABOUT THE PROCESS OF**

**DISAFFILIATION!** If your church is considering disaffiliating from the UMC, you should inform your DS. They can provide information concerning the process which has been established by the Conference Board of Trustees. If you hope to disaffiliate in this conference year, you should inform your DS prior to October 1, so that your congregation has enough time to consider the matter and walk through the process prior to next year's annual conference. For congregations that have this kind of clarity we want to help them as graciously as possible so they can move on and get about the work of the gospel. What we cannot provide are answers regarding the GMC as we do not serve that denomination.

**VII. MYTH: THE UMC DOESN'T VALUE SCRIPTURE!** Our doctrinal standards regarding the Bible state: 1) the Bible contains everything necessary and sufficient for salvation; 2) the Bible is to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice; and 3) Whatever is not revealed in or established by the Holy Scriptures is not to be made an article of faith nor is it to be taught as essential to salvation. The United Methodist Church believes that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine, and we interpret individual texts in light of their place in the Bible as a whole. While we acknowledge the primacy of Scripture in theological reflection, our attempts to grasp its meaning always involve tradition, experience, and reason. (Book of Discipline paragraphs 104 & 105). Yes, there are conservatives and progressives alike who do ignore, misinterpret, and misappropriate the Bible. However, in my experience, most people's positions on human sexuality are formed precisely because they value scripture.

#### **VIII. MYTH: OUR CLERGY WILL BE COMPELLED TO PERFORM MARRIAGES THAT VIOLATE THEIR CONSCIENCE!**

The following is an excerpt from a recent cabinet publication: We understand and respect that Minnesota United Methodist clergy who have engaged in prayerful discernment have differing views on officiating marriage ceremonies for LGBTQIA+ couples. No clergy will be expected or compelled to officiate marriage ceremonies that their conscience does not allow. Clergy have always been able to decline officiating marriages for any number of reasons, and clergy will be able to continue to exercise that discretion.

#### **IX. MYTH: WE WILL BE COMPELLED TO RECEIVE A CLERGY APPOINTMENT THAT ISN'T A FIT FOR US!**

Appointment decisions are first and foremost based on a match of leadership characteristics and missional fit. Consideration is given for the unique situations of clergy and the context for congregations to ensure a strong bond between pastor and people. The cabinet works tirelessly to ensure the healthiest of alignments of clergy with churches.

**X. MYTH: MY CONGREGATION IS OF ONE MIND ON THIS!** While it is often the case that one position is loudest, I've yet to be in a church where multiple positions aren't held regarding human sexuality and disaffiliation from the UMC. Therefore, it's imperative to do the hard work of providing brave spaces with healthy ground rules so that important discernment can happen. I've yet to be in a church that isn't capable of this. Your congregation is not of one mind and yet more able and ready than you think to talk about this.

#### **XI. MYTH: MOVING TO ANOTHER DENOMINATION WILL SOLVE ALL OUR PROBLEMS AS A LOCAL CHURCH!**

The good news is that regardless of your denomination your local church is completely free to be a faithful, faith-filled, life-giving expression of the gospel in your context. The bad news, if you are not these things already, a denominational switch will not help you. If you have difficulty with things like establishing Sunday School, affording, or receiving an appointed pastor,

or reaching young families – this will continue regardless of denomination. You are completely free now to offer Christ in relevant ways to the world who desperately needs him. I can't think of a bishop, DS, or pastor that would stop you.

A few final notes:

1. The UMC has been and will likely remain a theologically diverse worldwide Christian denomination on a mission to make disciples for Jesus for the transformation of the world.
2. The Minnesota Annual Conference has developed and approved the vision and values it seeks to live by. You can find them here: <https://www.minnesotaumc.org/about>
3. The Charles Wesley hymn, “*And Are We Yet Alive,*” was used by his brother John to begin annual society meetings. The third verse, regarding conflicts and fears, can seem especially poignant right now, but we cannot linger there. No, the richness of the Wesley hymns are found in the progression towards the ultimate destination of not salvation only in part, or only for heaven, but “uttermost salvation” available to you in me today. I invite you to read the six stanzas and then I invite your church to occupy itself in nothing less than verse six.

1 And are we yet alive,  
and see each other's face?  
Glory and thanks to Jesus give  
for his almighty grace!

2 Preserved by power divine  
to full salvation here,  
again in Jesus' praise we join,  
and in his sight appear.

3 What troubles have we seen,  
what mighty conflicts past,  
fightings without, and fears within,  
since we assembled last!

4 Yet out of all the Lord  
hath brought us by his love;  
and still he doth his help afford,  
and hides our life above.

5 Then let us make our boast  
of his redeeming power,  
which saves us to the uttermost,  
till we can sin no more.

6 Let us take up the cross  
till we the crown obtain,  
and gladly reckon all things loss  
so we may Jesus gain.

*Be blessed,*

*Rev. Fred Vanderwerf*

David Bard, Interim Bishop • Fred Vanderwerf, District Superintendent  
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## The Ely United Methodist Church

# Prayer Wall

September 2, 2022

This is a guide for prayer this week. The *Prayer Wall* is a reminder of those needing prayers during devotional times. Thank you for dedicating some of your personal prayer time to lift up these requests.

### Psalm 17: 6 (NIV)



*“I call on you, O God, for you will answer me; give ear to me and hear my prayer.”*

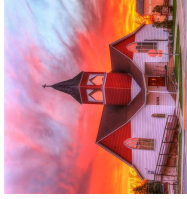
### We lift up the following in prayer...

- **Keith Vandervort family & friends** – Keith, *Timberjay* reporter, passed away unexpectedly Friday, Aug 26<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for comfort and peace for his wife, Kay, family members, friends and our community who will be feeling his loss.
- **Julia Thorson** – Linda Hane’s niece, Julia, had a “medical event” Wednesday morning, but is doing ok now.
- **Marla Tezak** – Linda Hane’s sister-in-law, Marla, had shoulder surgery in Duluth is past week.
- **Vicki Podominick** – Vicki is scheduled for surgery September 13<sup>th</sup> to remove a non-cancerous polyp from her stomach.
- **Ted Harbaugh** – Glenda Harbaugh asked for prayers for her son, Ted.
- **Jason King** – Lucy Diesslin’s cousin, Jason, suffered a brain aneurysm this past week.
- **Joni Dahl family and friends:** Joni was killed in an auto accident. She was good friends with Anna and Chris Urbas and was a member of the Chix with Sticks hockey team with us. Pray for comfort for the family in their loss.
- **John Lauderdale family & friends:** John, stepson of Linda Hane’s sister-in-law, was killed in a motorcycle accident. He has two small children. Pray for comfort for the family.
- **Red Nied** – Nancy Markwardt’s brother, Red, and his family are facing increasing physical challenges.
- **Bev – Update:** Bev’s heart surgery went well and she is on the mend. Sheila Sultz friend, Bev, is going for tests in Duluth prior to her heart surgery scheduled for Tuesday August 16<sup>th</sup>.
- **Jan** – Cathy Aldrich’s friend, Jan, has developed an infection following a medical procedure. Pray for quick healing.
- **Thomas Hane** – Linda Hane’s brother-in-law is suffering from possible agent orange exposure.
- **Bobbi Gruwell – Update:** Bobbi’s surgery went well and she is recovering at home. Bobbi (summer choir member) is having hip replacement surgery on August 22nd.
- **Friend of Vicki Podomonick – Update:** Vicki’s friend, diagnosed with Bell’s Palsy, has an abscess on her eye & needs surgery.
- **Patty Niskala** – Continued prayers for Patty as she works with the doctors on the next course of treatments.
- **Ropey – Update:** Ropey broke his hip, opted not to have surgery, and is now in hospice care, but doing better.
- **The Russia / Ukraine conflict** – Pray for a world-wide lasting resolution, safety of the people, and peace.
- **All essential health care workers exposed to the COVID-19 virus and the Delta & Omicron variants**

We include all the United Methodist Churches and Pastors, both active and retired, in our MN UMC Annual Conference as we work in extraordinary ways to keep our congregations and communities free from infection by the COVID-19 virus.

*Prayer requests are compiled from our church prayer chain, from our Sunday morning church congregation using the prayer request forms located in the pew welcome pads, and the North Star District Prayer List. Prayer requests will remain on the Prayer Wall through four weeks unless removed earlier because the prayer is known to be no longer necessary.*





# September 2022

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

					1 6:00 PM Choir Practice	2	3
4 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:00 AM Worship Service Holy Communion	5	6	7 2:00 PM Zoom Bible Study	8 6:00 PM Choir Practice	9	10	
11 10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School	12 2:00 PM Worship Committee Meeting	13	14 2:00 PM Zoom Bible Study 7:00 PM Administrative Council	15 6:00 PM Choir Practice September 15 – 20 • Pastor Craig will be on Vacation	16	17	
18 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School Sheri Rue leading Worship Service September 15 – 20 • Pastor Craig will be on Vacation	19	20	21 10:00 AM United Methodist Women 2:00 PM Zoom Bible Study	22 5:00 PM Visioning Committee 6:00 PM Choir Practice	23	24	
25 10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School	26	27	28 2:00 PM Zoom Bible Study	29 6:00 PM Choir Practice	30		