

# ELY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*"The Little Church With the Big Heart"*

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## Parish News

February 23 , 2024

### In this Edition

#### **Fellowship Area Update:**

We are remodeling the fellowship area in the rear of the church. Our goal is to increase opportunities to visit and become better acquainted. Also to improve the functionality of this space. On the next page are a few pictures to keep you up to date on our progress.

#### **Connections Committee**

**Announcement:** Last week in worship Jay Tomlinson made an announcement concerning the purpose of our newly formed Connections Committee. He's reformatted his words for this edition of Parish News - they are on the final page.

#### **This Week in "Journeys with the Messiah:"**

Our meeting this week (Tuesday, Feb. 27) will explore pictures #19 (Quandary) and #20 (Ragamuffins). We invite you to join us at 6:00 p.m.

## A Note from Pastor Craig

I was heartened, but not surprised, upon moving to Ely to discover what a strong, vital, and lively church we are. Often family-type churches are this way and I knew Dana Thompson to be an energetic pastor dedicated to Christ. It also came as no surprise to find a group of committed leaders, who possess such a wide variety of gifts and the desire to use them on behalf of Christ, our church, and the Ely area.

Within a year and a half of my arrival we were plunged into a pandemic that disrupted life in every corner of our planet - families, schools, businesses, governments, and health systems were turned upside down. Churches were no exception.

Every generation seems to experience at least one major tribulation, sometimes more. Covid-19 was ours. Once again, we found God's provision carried His human family through the sound and fury of it all.

Ely UMC was no exception. Our church leadership responded each step of the way to what was being required. You supported us in remarkable ways - financially and with your participation. We are every bit as strong, maybe stronger, than in March of 2020. For this I'm grateful, even as I grieve for churches in our Annual Conference and beyond who either are severely diminished or have closed as a result of Covid-19.

Now the pandemic is mostly in the rearview mirror. Our church feels the same to me as before in many ways - our activities, level of participation, and vitality. But we have also entered a new season whether we realize it or not. This would be the case even if I weren't retiring; I suppose my retirement makes it more recognizable.

Our Ad Council sees this as an opportunity and not something to be to be avoided or ignored. We are embracing the moment by enthusiastically "getting busy" for the right reasons and in the right ways. The remodeling project is just one example. We are relying on the Holy Spirit to lead us into this new day.

At our meeting this week someone showed our Ad Council a series of pictures of our church building years ago. We were astonished at how much the exterior changed even during that span! But it is still clearly recognizable as our church. The same is true with our church family. Details have changed across the years, but we'll still the same at heart in worship, fellowship, study, and prayer. I have little doubt church members of yesteryear would smile if they walked through the door today. Pastor Craig

There are a multitude of reasons for deep and abiding fellowship within churches. One, it's been part of our calling and DNA from the very beginning. The Greek word "koinonia" is used 20 times in the New Testament to denote "to hold something in common;" in this case "a sharing and mutual encouragement towards Christ." Two, the pandemic only highlighted the already-existing loneliness for many people in our country. Three, we just plain enjoy friendship and conversation with one another.

Fellowship is already an established part of our church is, yet one of our church's emerging goals is to deepen and extend our fellowship. Our coffee time following worship is one aspect of this, but this area of our church hampers us in both preparation of coffee time and traffic flow during. So this project.

The picture on the left looks from the fellowship area east, through where the bulletin board used to be into the former choir room, which is behind. The opening will become a serving counter, with the room behind being transformed into a kitchenette, complete with a sink and electricity. Notice how beautiful the stained glass windows are, which were previously obscured. (Note - the stuff temporarily stored in the room will be moved.)

We are widening the doorway between the fellowship and the narthex/entryway to improve people moving fro. You this to the this text.



remember how this used to be such a bottleneck? Well, not, anymore. Notice also, the bulletin board has been moved to the small wall on the left side of this passageway. Below left is a view from the narthex all the way through the fellowship area into the

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kitchenette-to-be. The view from the kitchenette looking into the



fellowship area is below right.



## The Ely United Methodist Church

### ***Prayer Wall***

***February 23, 2024***

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.

#### **Romans 8: 26 (NIV)**



***“...We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”***

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

- **Kim Lloyd** – Kim just lost her sister, Sherry, who lived in Montana with her husband Bob and her daughter Donna. Please pray for peace and comfort for Kim who lives here in Ely and for her extended family.
- **People of Gaza** – Duane Bieber asked for prayers for the people in Gaza remembering the 28,500 women and children who have been killed.
- **Al Kovall** – Judy Bonderson asked for prayers for Al Kovall who had a stroke last month & is not doing well.
- **Nina Emmons** – Sue Peterson asked for prayers for her mom, Nina Emmons, who fell & broke her upper arm.
- **Georgine Ahlstrand** – Bruce Olson asked for prayers for Georgine Ahlstrand who is having problems with blood clots.
- **Janet Greig** – Linda Hane asked for prayers for Janet Greig who had a major stroke and is experiencing lots of challenges.
- **Mike Loisel** – Paula Mattila asked for prayers for Mike Loisel who has had a very bad car accident breaking numerous bones. He has had 2 surgeries already with more to follow, but is in good spirits in spite.
- **Karen – Update:** Cathy Aldrich’s friend, Karen, is having a PET scan to determine treatment for lymphoma.
- **Nancy Hinzmann** – Peggy Koschak asked for prayers for her sister-in-law, Nancy Hinzmann, who had a biopsy on her jaw and is waiting results. Please pray for favorable results.
- **Jeremy:** Rosie Johnson’s son, Jeremy, is experiencing kidney failure. His brother, Brian, may be a kidney donor. Please pray that this all goes well.
- **Ray Vessel & his wife** – Linda Hane asked for prayers for Ray and his wife both of whom have COVID. Pray for healing and a quick recovery.
- **Lisa Porthan’s father & mother** – Lisa’s mom & dad are struggling with the progression of his Parkinson’s.
- **Teri – Update: Teri is back home recovering from a stroke caused by COVID complications. She is having a difficult time with anxiety. Please keep Teri in your prayers.** Carol Laine’s daughter, Teri, is hospitalized with COVID and has had a stroke.
- **The Russia / Ukraine conflict • Political Unrest in Africa • The Military, Humanitarian & Political Crisis in the Middle East** – Pray for a world-wide lasting resolution, safety of the people, and peace.

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. People may ask that prayers be renewed on the list for subsequent 4-week periods. The Prayer Wall is finalized each Thursday for the Sunday morning service.*

## Connections Committee Announcement

Two weeks ago, we had our first formal meeting of the new Connections Committee.

Our task for this meeting was to merge three former committees, Nurture & Membership, Outreach, and Visioning, into one new committee titled Connections and to define the responsibilities and who is actively carrying out those responsibilities.

It ended up being much more than that. At the conclusion, we had a new Connections Committee Responsibilities document worthy of being included in the future revised Church Handbook.

The most important revelation discovered during this process was that the Connections Committee is a pathway for supporting you, as in all the members of the entire congregation, with any of your spiritual outreach ideas or thoughts for our church members, for our local community, or the world community.

So, we are letting you know that your ideas and thoughts are important and that we will encourage and support you in bringing those ideas to fruition.

For instance, if anyone of you in our congregation is passionate about having a booth at the Blueberry Festival and/or at the Harvest Moon Festival for our church, or having a brochure for our church at the Chamber of Commerce and community welcome center, or having a church float in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade, you should know the Connections Committee is here to help make your idea happen.

You don't have to join the Connections Committee.

The point is that you have a team to support you and your ideas to spread the love of Christ throughout our membership and our community.

So don't be afraid to share your thoughts with any member of the Connections Committee: Rich Floyd, Anna Urbas, Gail Haney, Patty Rusco, Linda Hane, Don Ingerson, Kathy Nelson, or Jay Tomlinson.

And, of course, we would welcome any of you who would like to join the Connections Committee if you are so inclined. Thank you.

You may be noticing we have made a couple of extended announcements during the worship service recently, once during the announcement time, the other following the sermon. Pam Turnbull mentioned our fellowship area remodeling project in detail, Jay Tomlinson the formation of our Connections Committee.

The purpose of these announcements in worship is to communicate significant events in our church, both in print and in person face to face. The primary purpose of worship continues and will always be to praise God, to hear the Scriptures read and proclaimed, to pray, and to gather at the Lord's Table. We're never going to lose this, even as we do our best to keep our entire congregation (in-person and online) informed with what's happening in our church life. To this end we're reprinting Jay's announcement below as we did with Pam's a week ago.

**Squeezing in Two Final Notes:** *First*, Sunday (2/25) is the final day to sign up to purchase Easter Lilies. *Second*, there will be a potluck dinner following worship on Palm Sunday, March 24th. You are all invited, so let's join together for fellowship and tasty food! Watch for more details in the weeks to follow. Thank you!