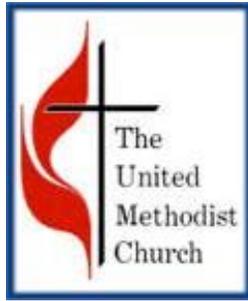


Parish of the Hills



Go and Make Disciples

FEBRUARY, 2023 - MARCH, 2023

PARISH VISITOR

Parish of the Hills



Parish of the Hills United Methodist Churches

Office Address: 400 Doty Street
Mineral Point, WI 53565
Phone: (608) 987-2700

Office E-mail: pohumc@gmail.com
Parish Website: parishofthehills.org
Conference email: www.wisconsinumc.org

Office Hours: M, T, Th, F
10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Bethel UM Church: Located on the Corner of
State Hwy. 39 & W
8:00 a.m. — Worship;

First UM Church: 400 Doty Street, MP
9:15 a.m. — Worship
Handicapped Accessible

Linden UM Church: In the Village on Hwy. 39
9:30 Sunday School
(see scheduled dates)
10:45 a.m. — Worship

Pastor Chris Droste
Cell: (608) 359-8180
E-mail: darling8180@gmail.com

Marcia Ajer, Administrative Assistant

Tea or Coffee:

You don't have to know much about me or know me for very long to know which of these two beverages I prefer. My husband on the other hand is a tea drinker, choosing what I have dubbed as "sadness in a mug" over "the sweet nectar of life". It is my guess that right after the fall of man, God handed them the coffee bean and said, "you're going to need this".

Seriously though, we have options in life. We have preferences and we have choices. We make these choices every day. Some we make and stick to therefore we no longer need to contemplate the question of tea or coffee; it's an automatic. Others we have to ponder. There are even times in life when making a decision seems like an impossible feat. Which path to go? Which possible future to choose? The not knowing can weigh heavy on the soul.

The Bible is clear about our inability to predict the future. James chapter 4 states "For you are just a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away". Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that"...anything else is considered arrogant.

It's natural to make plans, but remember that God is in control.

Proverbs 23:5 and 6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths".

In love and compassion,

Pastor Chris Droste

Enjoy
The
News



First News
By: Donna Toay

A big “THANK YOU!” goes to Carol Paynter for her time doing our section of the Mineral Point Parish Visitor news! You can now call me at (608) 987-2481 with your news.

Bible Chats started again on January 10th. It is being enjoyed by everyone in attendance. It is being held on Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend and bring your Bible. This session of Bible chats will end February 7th. A break will be taken during Lent and then Bible Chats will resume on April 25th for five weeks.

Our Christmas Eve service was cancelled due to bad weather. Our Christmas Day service had a small but mighty attendance. It was a service of carols and readings. Some members of the congregation read some of the readings.

A big “THANK YOU!” to Margie and Dan Stephenson who purchased, set-up and removed our beautiful Christmas tree, wreaths, sanctuary window decorations and nativity scene for the Christmas season.

The kitchen phone is now working as it rang during the January 8th service. Thank you Grace Ann for hooking it up again.

Parish Council was held at FUMC on January 9th and 30th to approve the Parish budget & new Nominees.

As most of you know by now, the parsonage has been sold and is being updated by the new owners. The parking lot is now private property.

Services continue to be held in Fellowship Hall to save on fuel costs.

We continue to pray for all the people on our prayer list. We are thankful that Pastor Chris got her emergency gallbladder surgery and other medical issues taken care of.

Upcoming Dates of Importance:

February 9 – Ad Council 7:00
February 11 – District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Amanda Stein’s Installation Service 2:00 at 1st
February 21 – Shrove Tuesday
February 22 – Ash Wednesday
February 26 – First Sunday in Lent
March 9 – Trustees 6:30, Ad Council 7:15
March 12 – Daylight Saving Time (turn ahead)
March 20 – First Day of Spring, P/V Deadline
April 2 – Palm Sunday
April 6 – Maundy Thursday, Communion 7:00
April 7 – Good Friday (at Linden) 7:00 p.m.
April 9 – Easter

A little introduction about me (Donna Toay) as I will be doing the Mineral Point Parish Visitor News. I started with Parish of the Hills at Willow Springs many years ago. When it closed I came to Mineral Point. I have been a Sunday School teacher and Superintendent in the past. I have helped serve Communion and also helped make pasties. I am now a Senior and will end with the Senior version of “Jesus Loves Me”. Does Jesus ever know we love Him?

JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me, this I know,
Though my hair is white as snow
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me! Trust in Him

(CHORUS)

**YES, JESUS LOVES ME...
YES, JESUS LOVES ME...
YES, JESUS LOVES ME
FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO**

Though my steps are oh, so slow,
With my hand in His I’ll go
On through life, let come what may,
He’ll be there to lead the way

(CHORUS)

When the nights are dark and long,
In my heart He puts a song.
Telling me in words so clear,
“Have no fear, for I am near”

(CHORUS)

When my work on earth is done,
And life’s victories have been won.
He will take me home above,
Then I’ll understand His love

(CHORUS)
I love Jesus, does He know?
Have I ever told Him so?
Jesus loves to hear me say,
That I love Him every day
(CHORUS)

Bethel News
By: Cindy Reynolds-Doyle

I'm still shouting out Happy New Year Greetings to everyone I meet. The beginning of a fresh new year brings excitement and hope. Our dreams and wish lists are just waiting for us to check them off as we make wonderful memories in our life journey. Achieving even one small goal can feel very, very good. Keep in mind it is often the little things that bring us much joy. The year moves along quickly so without delay make dreams happen in your life and encourage others along the way. May 2023 bring you much happiness!

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION SUNDAY

Bethel's Christmas Celebration Service was held on Sunday, December 18th during the 8:00 a.m. worship. Pastor Chris Droste conducted the morning worship service. Special music, a program and singing of Christmas Carols were all part of the service. Members of the congregation participated in various roles to make this day a true celebration of the Christmas story. Many were in attendance on this special Sunday at Bethel.

The Bethel Choir directed by Jeanne Massey performed the song: "In The Bleak Midwinter", accompanied by Jeanne Massey. Choir members included: Jennifer Reynolds, Greg James, Jennifer James Baker, Nancy Prussing, Elaine Schaaf, Lynn Freeman, Marcia Ajer and Cindy Reynolds-Doyle. The Bethel Chime Players directed by Jennifer Reynolds performed: "Away in the Manger", accompanied by Jennifer Reynolds. Chime Players included: Jeanne Massey, Jennifer James Baker, Elaine Schaaf, Lynn Freeman and Nancy Prussing. Pastor Chris performed the vocal solo - - - "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day". Program presentation titled: "Animals In A Stable in Bethlehem" and

"The Angels Story." The poem stories were written and directed by Cindy Reynolds-Doyle. The participants included members of Cindy's family.

Reader = Cindy Reynolds-Doyle "Animals In A Stable in Bethlehem"

Reader = Melissa (Doyle) Jacobson "The Angels Story"

Adults = Justin and Livia Doyle and Melissa and Trevor Jacobson

Children = Quayde Doyle (cow), Gentry Doyle (donkey), Meritt Doyle (lamb) and Sophie Jacobson (lamb).

Three wisemen = Quayde, Gentry and Meritt.

Many animals lived in the stable and made their animal sounds as they talked to one another. The audience participated making the animal sounds as the story was told. The animals were in for quite a surprise when they found a baby asleep in their manger.

The Christmas Celebration Service ended with the congregation singing "Deck the Halls" and everyone joining in the festive ringing of the bells. The message is clear, be joyful and spread the good news as we welcome a New Year! The service ended with a gift presentation recognizing individuals who have devoted much time and effort to the ongoing support of Bethel United Methodist Church. Refreshments and fellowship followed in the church dining room. Quayde and Gentry Doyle passed out the traditional treat bags to all who attended.

THANKFUL FOR GIFTS GIVEN

Our Bethel Church Family is thankful for the kind donations and support given throughout the year that allows us to keep the doors open at our little country church. We continue to be an active congregation and help others through our Care and Share Missions. All are welcome to worship with us on Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m. and join us at our church functions. We invite you to be a part of our church family and celebrate Bethel's 143 years of sharing God's love.

CARE AND SHARE MISSION

Over the winter months we are collecting warm winter wear items for children ages four years

through fifth grade to be given to students at the Mineral Point Elementary School. Hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, socks, underwear, coats and any other clothing new or used in good condition are welcome. Your donations are appreciated!

PARISH COUNCIL

Parish of the Hills Council met on January 9th at First United Methodist Church. The 2022 budget and financial report along with the 2023 revised budget were approved. Council officers were elected for 2023: Chairperson (Mark Paynter), Vice Chairperson (Pam Redell), Treasurer (Jay Bennett) and Secretary (Jennifer James Baker). Council members include: Bethel: Jennifer James Baker, Linda Larsen, Cindy Reynolds-Doyle, Linden: Linda Nichols, Pam Redell, Jill Hughes, MP First: Linda Adams, Mark Paynter and Jay Bennett. Each church has a Linda serving on this council. How cool is that?

PALM SUNDAY (April 2nd)

EASTER SUNDAY (April 9th)

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS:

Eva Terrill (6th), Chester Small (14th), Meritt Doyle (22nd), Mary Milz (22nd), Steve Oellerich (25th) and Jeff Reynolds (27th).

MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

Carla (Fitzsimmons) Jacobson (1st).

MARCH ANNIVERSARY:

Shane and Lisa Sudmeier

Where there is love the heart is light, where
there is love the day is bright.

Where there is love there is a song to help when
things are going wrong.

Where there is love there is a smile to make all
things seem more worthwhile.

Oh, blessed are those who walk in love - - they
also walk with God above.

By Helen Steiner Rice.

Linden News
By: Dixie Edge

November 22, 2022 was a great day for Grandparents from our community. Wyatt Dean Nichols was born to Cade and Katelyn Nichols at

Upland Hills Health in Dodgeville. He joins big brother Waylon Allen. Grandparents from Linden are Al Nichols and Great-Grandmother Linda Nichols.

Autumn Jewel Edge was born to Aaron and Hannah Edge at Meriter Hospital in Madison on November 22nd. Grandparents are Randy and Dixie Edge and Great-Grandmother Lois Alton.

Mark and Jean Baker welcomed a new grandson on December 10th. Leopold John Baker was born to Eric and Hannah Baker of Madison and joins big brother Calvin Lloyd.

Congratulation to all the new parents and grandparents!!

A Belated Happy Birthday to Ruby Griffiths who turned 90 years young on December 2nd. Many family and friends joined Ruby to celebrate her milestone on December 3rd.

Thank you to the Linden First Responders for organizing the Christmas Fireworks display on Saturday evening, December 17th. It was such an amazing show of colors and seems more brilliant in the cold winter sky.

Our Christmas Eve service was held despite the cold weather. Many came to enjoy the Sunday School program. The children performed "Simply Christmas" with verses by each class. The teachers did an awesome job. The Nursery/Pre-K class: Amelia Oxnem, Rhyker Walter, RaeLynn Aide and Jacelyn Schmelzer; Kindergarten-4th Grade: Kya Allen, Larry Jeffrey Schultz, Brooklyn Paynter, Maddie Paynter, Maggie Schultz, Allison Milliken, Ava Allen, Brayson Draves; Promotion Class: Bryler Draves and Hadleigh Vivian. Everett Clay was the little baby Jesus. Thank you to the teachers, Megan Walter, Jessica Schmelzer and Brittany Spurley Clay. Lilliana Vivian sang a beautiful solo. Liz and Leah Hoffman, Ella and Carmen Parish, Alton and Addison Ross helped light candles for the traditional singing of "Silent Night" by candle light. Thank you to Rhoda Rule-Anderson for playing music for the Sunday School and for also being our loyal musician for Church services. It was a wonderful service, thank you to everyone who helped make it happen, Rhoda, teachers, parents, children and all who ventured out to attend.

Thank you to Cheryl Keeney for filling the pulpit for Pastor Chris on January 1st, as she was healing from her surgery. Good to see she is back and hopefully almost back to 100%.



The pancake breakfast was held on Sunday, January 8th. Many came out to enjoy the food and fellowship. A big thank you to Larry and Mandy Schultz for their generous donation. It was great to see our regular friends and some “new” people attend. Thank you to all the great workers and everyone that helped make the breakfast a success.

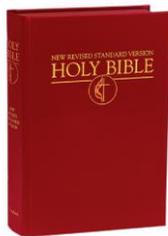
Our sincere condolences to Larry Springer and family on the loss of their loved one, Barbara Springer. Larry and Barb have been faithful friends of our Church Family for many many years.

Sunday School will start again on Sunday, February 5th. The dates as of now are February 19th, March 5th, March 19th, April 2nd, April 16th, April 30th, May 14th. The children will be singing in church on March 19th. For more information check the Linden United Methodist Church Sunday School Facebook page.

Plans are being made for the Men’s Soup Supper to be held on Wednesday, March 15th. Watch the Chronicle and Facebook for more details.

These three things continue: faith, hope and love. . . and the greatest of these is love!

Happy Valentine’s Day!



5 week Bible Chats start Tuesday April 25th:

(10:00 am & 5:30 pm in 1st UMC Fellowship Hall)

Below please find the Parish Visitor Rotating Church Collation Schedule for 2023. Our goal is to mail our newsletter out by the last week of every other month:

<u>Parish Visitor:</u>	<u>Article Deadline:</u>	<u>Church Collates:</u>
Feb/March-First	Jan 17	Jan 26
April/May-Linden	March 20	March 30
June/July-Bethel	May 15	May 25
Aug/Sept-First	July 17	July 27
Oct/Nov-Linden	Sept 18	Sept 28
Dec/Jan-Bethel	Nov 20	Nov 30



	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>				
<u>December</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>25</u>	
Bethel	19	21	35	N/A	
First	18	20	19	07	
Linden	13	12	12	12	
Facebook	18	22	13	13	
5 Day Total	23	78	55	62	
<u>January</u>	<u>01</u>	<u>08</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>29</u>
Bethel	10	10	19	20	N/A
First	14	23	23	18	17
Linden	06	13	10	09	07
Facebook	N/A	35	28	22	34
5 Day Total	N/A	195	189	93	92

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE AT LINDEN UMC

February 5 & 19

March 3/5 & 3/19 & sing at 10:45 service

April 2, 16 and 30

May 14th



**NEWS FROM THE WISCONSIN
CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH:**

**JOIN US FOR
REV. DR. AMANDA STEIN'S
INSTALLATION AS
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT!**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH AT 2:00
P.M. AT THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH IN MINERAL POINT,
WISCONSIN**

The ABC's of love: A – Accepts, B – Behaves,
C – Comforts, D – Defends, E – Empowers,
F – Forgives, G – Grows, H – Helps, I – Invests,
J – Joins, K – Kneels, L – Listens, M – Mentors,
N – Notices, O – Overlooks, P – Provides, Q – Quiets,
R – Rejoices, S – Supports, T – Tries,
U – Understands, V – Volunteers, W – Welcomes,
X – eXpects, Y – Yields, Z – adds Zest to life!

All are welcome! This is a worship celebration for the SW District – for lay and clergy alike – as well as friends and representatives of the Conference. In celebration of Valentine's Day, the theme will be "WI United Methodists – the People of the Heart." We invite you to consider wearing red, white, or pink to join in the fun. Can you consider a gift? There will be an offering taken to support the clergy of the SW District "The DS's Discretionary Fund" to help clergy and their families during times of hardship or crisis. There will be a "Flash Mob" choir. Are you interested in singing? We'll get you the music!" Congregants – bring a banner, flag, or sign designating your home church! Clergy – we invite you to go "High Church" collars or stoles are welcome! Please check out the SW District of the Wisconsin UMC Facebook page for more detailed information." Refreshments being brought from all UMC churches in attendance will be served after the service in Fellowship Hall. First UMC is to provide beverages, some snacks and servers.



When we give from the heart, we receive unexpected blessings—especially the joy of making a difference in someone's life.

February 05	MPCC Resident's Fund
February 12	Super Bowl Sunday: Hodan Center
February 19	Apportionments
February 26	Improvement Fund
March 05	Improvement Fund
March 12	Apportionments
March 19	UMCOR Sunday - Ukraine
March 26	Improvement Fund

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT:**

1. Would be available from 2:15 to 3:30 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and from 1:00-3:15 on Wednesday.
Open to anything!
2. Availability after school each day, but is not interested in anything food related.

If you are looking for help, please let me know so I can forward on to the MP School District.
Thanks, Cory Mineral Point Chamber of Commerce at: info@mineralpoint.com

NEW PARISH COMPUTER

Our 15 year old Parish Computer is showing signs of needing replacement. We are in the process of getting a new one. We hope the transition will be seamless and hope for the best! Please bear with us during this transition and learning curve as we adjust to all the new software upgrades. Blessings, Marcia

QUILT OF HOLES

(author unknown)

As I faced my Maker at the last judgment, I knelt before the Lord along with all the other souls. Before each of us laid our lives like the squares of a quilt in many piles; an angel sat before each of us sewing our quilt squares together into a tapestry that is our life. But as my angel took each piece of cloth off the pile, I noticed how ragged and empty each of my squares were. They were filled with giant holes. Each square was labeled with a part of my life that had been difficult, the challenges and temptations I was faced with in every day life. I saw hardships that I endured, which were the largest holes of all. I glanced around me. Nobody else had such squares. Other than a tiny hole here and there, the other tapestries were filled with rich color and the bright hues of worldly fortune. I gazed upon my own life and was disheartened. My angel was sewing the ragged pieces of cloth together, threadbare and empty, like binding air. Finally the time came when each life was to be displayed, held up to the light, the scrutiny of truth. The others rose; each in turn, holding up their tapestries. So filled their lives had been. My angel looked upon me, and nodded for me to rise. My gaze dropped to the ground in shame. I hadn't had all the earthly fortunes. I had love in my life, and laughter. But there had also been trials of illness, and wealth, and false accusations that took from me my world, as I knew it. I had to start over many times. I often struggled with the temptation to quit, only to somehow muster the strength to pick up and begin again. I spent many nights on my knees in prayer, asking for help and guidance in my life. I had often been held up to ridicule, which I endured painfully, each time offering it up to the Father in hopes that I would not melt within my skin beneath the judgmental gaze of those who unfairly judged me. And now, I had to face the truth. My life was what it was, and I had to accept it for what it was. I rose and slowly lifted the combined squares of my life to the light. An awe-filled gasp filled the air. I gazed around at the others who stared at me with wide eyes. Then, I looked upon the tapestry before me.

Light flooded the many holes, creating an image, the face of Christ. Then our Lord stood before me, with warmth and love in His eyes. He said, "every time you gave over your life to Me, it became My life, My hardships, and My struggles. Each point of light in your life is when you stepped aside and let Me shine through, until there was more of Me than there was of you."

May all our quilts be threadbare and worn, allowing Christ to shine through! God determines who walks into your life...it's up to you to decide who you let walk away, who you let stay, and who you refuse to let go. When there is nothing left but God that is when you find out that God is all you need.

THE CALL OF THE MICAH CONTINUES

by Rev. Tsuker Yang

"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

(Micah 6:6-8)

I heard this text read or alluded to in a couple of messages in the past few weeks, primarily related to the Martin Luther King Jr.'s celebration and his dream of the beloved community where every human being is "cared for, absent of poverty, hunger, and hate", and living together in the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood. I think this is also the reason we are called to live our faith and life as United Methodists. The word "united" tells us that we are not separated or individual, but together and one for a common purpose... "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." And the world we hope to transform is not any different from the dream of Martin Luther King Jr. for a beloved community.

What is striking in my reading the text this time is the emphasis on the number: “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil.” Today we see and hear disheartening statistics from every area of life that affect people’s well-being. Besides the cause of Covid-19 and natural disasters, people are suffering from wars, gun violence, hunger, poverty, heart disease, injustice, human trafficking, racism, discrimination, air pollution, climate change/weather, and many others. The statistic in any one of these areas is always alarming. Here are some:

- 14.9 million deaths associated with Covid-19 from January 2020 to December 2021.
- 1.9 million new cancer cases in 2021, and 608,750 deaths.
- 3.1 million children are starving every year, and 38 million or more Americans face hunger every day.
- 24.9 million people worldwide are victims of human trafficking.
- 773 million people worldwide are illiterate.
- 2.7 million people worldwide surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ every year.
- 47% of U.S. adults in 2020 belonged to a church, synagogue or mosque, surveyed by Gallup. This is less than half of the U.S. population.

For these reasons, the message of Micah and the dream for a beloved community continue with us. What is required of us? It may not be the giving of thousands of dollars to charity or ten thousands of hours to services, but to do “justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.” The meaning of this is a call for a change of heart, attitudes and behaviors. Most of us don’t have much to give and may not be able to serve, but how we live our lives is what matter.

It is not how much we give but how much we care for those who are in need and around us, even when we cannot give. Not every person is needed of giving or service, but relationship,

understanding, acceptance, respect, kindness, equity, hospitality, and love. Living in these attributes is the essence of the beloved community. To transform the world, first, let us be transformed. As we live out the transformative life, we may become agents of change without knowing it for those who surround us. And, together, we can transform our community, if not the world, to a beloved community.

WE SHOULDN’T GIVE UP ON CHURCHES

by Richard Kyte

Christians in the United States today enjoy great religious liberty than at any time in our nation’s history. Yet it doesn’t feel that way to many Christians because the influence of American churches is declining.

Not only is membership falling in mainline denominations, Christians are under-represented in our nation’s major institutions, including universities, government agencies and traditional media outlets.

As a result, Christians increasingly find themselves on the defensive, having to justify their beliefs and practices to strangers, friends an even family. It can be difficult to explain why you believe something you have always taken for granted and which, until recently, had widespread social acceptance.

It also can be hard to convince somebody who doesn’t already belong to a church that they ought to join one. This is especially the case with young people. Many have simply given up on the church. They just don’t see it as essential to their understanding of living a good life.

One reason is the complacency of many churches. They fail to focus on their mission, ignore abuses and focus more on politics than theology.

Many churches I have belonged to have had lively discussions about politically controversial topics regarding sexual orientation, abortion, evolution, climate

change and vaccinations. They had relatively few discussions about topics central to Christian life, such as prayer, sin, grace, hospitality and forgiveness. If the church is just one place among many to discuss politics, why join a church?

Another reason is the privatization of spirituality. Many contemporary Christians regard their values and the beliefs that give rise to them as deeply personal. They do not feel a need for guidance to undertake what they think of as their own spiritual journey. If they do feel a need for the church, it is as a place to meet with people who share their personal values rather than as a place to form a set of shared, public values.

A third reason is that an increasing number of Americans feel religion is a malign influence on society. Christians deny this, of course, but many have little understanding of Christian theology and history and little experience of other religious beliefs and practices. As a result, most Christians ignore the critics, while those who confront them often come off as angry and defensive rather than compassionate and wise. Both approaches end up bolstering the critics' claims.

Nevertheless, churches, when functioning properly, are ethically important, both for the well-being of society and for the health of communities and the individuals who comprise them.

A good life depends on the formation of virtues developed in the context of a community with a shared understanding of what's important. Communities develop such an understanding chiefly through the stories they tell each other. These stories give them an idea of where they came from, who they are and where they are going. This provides the basis for a hierarchy of values on which the virtues rest. Christians are people of the book, a set of stories coming down to them through history. They argue interminably over the precise meaning of those stories, over the nature and extent of their authority, and about the relevance of those stories to situations in their lives.

Christians mostly agree on the basic things their stories tell them, which is that all people are created in the image of God and have inherent, inestimable worth. Yet people are sinful, failing to live up to the standards of their intended nature. The stories tell them that suffering and death follow from those failures. Despite this, everyone is loved by their creator and owes love to one another. The stories reassure them that through love comes redemption, a release from suffering and death, and eventually some form of peace.

Many of the people I have known over my lifetime who lived rich and meaningful lives have been devout Christians. They have not been perfect, but they have all shared important virtues such as humility, patience, kindness and reverence. I don't think these virtues are exclusive to Christianity. Nevertheless it is rare to see them combined in one who has not been shaped to a community of faith.

Life is hard work, and living a life one considers good, even using one's own standards of goodness, is especially difficult. That is why we need deep, consistent, reciprocal relationships in a community of people who pledge to help one another.

But a church is more than that. Churches are primarily places of worship and reverence, where one is reminded of a relationship to the divine and where beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are shaped, examined and challenged in a community of mutual accountability.

In a world obsessed with self-glorification and the exercise of power, the best churches today are places of reverence, where we learn to see ourselves in the lives of God's love.

Kyte is director of the D.B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership at Viterbo University in Lacrosse and co-host of "The Ethical Life" podcast.

FEBRUARY 2023

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
29  FEBRUARY	30	31 	1 National Freedom Day	2  Groundhog Day	3	4
5 8:00 Bethel Svc with communion 9:15 1 st Svc 9:30 S/S at Linden 10:45 Linden Svc with communion	6	7 10:00 & 5:30 Bible Study at 1 st UMC #5 of 5. (Resumes 4/25)	8	9 7:00 Ad Council at 1 st National Pizza Day	10	11 Rev.Dr.Amanda Stein's 2:00 D.S. Installation Service at FUMC
12 8:00 Bethel Svc 8:30 Choir practice 1 st 9:15 1 st Svc with communion & Choir 10:45 Linden Svc (5:30 Super Bowl Sunday, Lincoln's birthday)	13	14 <u>Valentine's Day</u> 	15	16	17	18
19 (Transfiguration Sunday) 8:00 Bethel Svc 9:15 1 st Svc 9:30 S/S at Linden 10:45 Linden Svc	20 	21  Shrove Tuesday	22  Washington's Birthday Ash Wednesday	23	24	25
26 (1 st Sunday in Lent) 8:00 Bethel Svc 8:30 Choir practice 1 st 9:15 1 st Svc w/Choir 10:45 Linden Svc	27	28	1	2	3	4

MARCH 2023

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<p>26</p> 	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> 	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>World Day of Prayer</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5</p> <p>8:00 Bethel Svc with communion 9:15 1st Svc 9:30 S/S at Linden 10:45 Linden Svc with communion</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p>6:30 Trustees 7:15 Ad Council at 1st UMC</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12</p> <p>(Daylight Saving Time begins) 8:00 Bethel Svc 8:30 Choir practice 1st 9:15 1st Svc with communion & Choir 10:45 Linden Svc</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Men's Annual Soup Supper at Linden UMC</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> 	<p>18</p>
<p>19</p> <p>(UMCOR Sunday) 8:00 Bethel Svc 9:15 1st Svc 9:30 S/S at Linden 10:45 Linden Svc</p>	<p>20</p> 	<p>21</p> 	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26</p> <p>8:00 Bethel Svc 8:30 Choir practice 1st 9:15 1st Svc w/Choir 10:45 Linden Svc</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Charles Wesley Died (1788)</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Collate Parish Visitor (Linden)</p>	<p>31</p> 	<p>1</p>