

# The Friendly Communicator

June 2026

## A Word from the Pastor

My family and I recently journeyed to the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico, and we are returning filled with wonder at God's creation and humanity's quest for meaning. One of the trip's most breathtaking moments came while snorkeling along the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef — the second largest coral reef system in the world. Hovering weightlessly between the sky above and the sea below, we watched sea turtles glide past with unhurried grace, spotted nurse sharks resting in the sand below, locked eyes with barracudas, and followed the silent arc of an eagle ray's wings "flying" by. It was impossible not to be moved by God's creative handiwork in such a space. The psalmist writes that the heavens declare the glory of God, but I would add — so do the depths. In every creature and current, I was reminded of the words of my friend, Sister Emelda, a Ugandan nun, who exclaimed, "Wow! My God made this?!" upon first seeing a polar bear while watching National Geographic.

The Yucatán also offered our family a profound window into the long and complicated story of Christianity's encounter with indigenous cultures. We visited ancient Maya sites where, centuries ago, Spanish missionaries built Catholic chapels directly atop sacred pyramids — a visible and sometimes painful reminder that the gospel has not always traveled without the weight of empire. And yet, in the local communities we passed through, we also witnessed a living, breathing faith that has taken root in Maya soil, blending deep reverence with ancient belonging. It stirred in me both humility and hope — humility about the ways the Church has caused harm, and hope that the Spirit of God is not bound by our failures, but continues to move among all peoples and cultures, drawing them toward the One who made them.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking part of our journey was standing before the great Maya calendars and learning how this civilization tracked time with extraordinary precision. The Maya didn't simply count days — they assigned meaning to them, building elaborate cycles that marked transitions: endings folding into beginnings, one era yielding to the next. Having now moved through the final days of Eastertide and into Ordinary Time, I find myself thinking about our own sacred calendar and its quiet wisdom. The Easter season did not end with a whimper — it ended with Pentecost, the rush of the Spirit and the birth of the Church. Now, we enter Ordinary Time, those long green weeks of summer and autumn that are anything but ordinary. They are the season of growth, of being formed, of living out the resurrection in the everyday.

And what better way to step into this season together than by sharing a meal on the church lawn? I want to invite every one of you to our **church picnic on Sunday, June 7th**. Bring your appetites, your best side dish, your neighbors, and your extended families. Come ready to laugh and linger. After the long journey of Lent and the joy of Easter, summer is God's invitation to simply *be* together — to enjoy one another as God's people, unhurried and glad. I'll see you there.

With continued wonder,

Pastor Stephen

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### April 2026 Financial Income Report

**General Receipts**

Envelopes	\$11,240.00
Loose Offerings	228.00
Church School	60.00
Birthday	5.00
Tithely	9.41
Easter	480.00
Maundy Thursday	218.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,240.41</b>

**Miscellaneous Receipts**

Pow wow	50.00
MMCC	400.00
ABF – 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr.	741.23
Indivisible SE WI	30.77
Indivisible SE WI	23.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,245.00</b>

**Communion Offering**

Project Focal Point	143.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$143.00</b>

**Memorial Fund**

Bonnie Bell	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25.00</b>

**Mission Offering**

America for Christ	366.00
Grand Avenue Club	150.00
MCC	150.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$666.00</b>

**Deposited Total** **\$14,256.23**

### June Birthdays

- 4 Addison Wood
- 6 Elsie Seese
- 13 Alicia Valentyn-Jones
- 14 Elizabeth Tangen
- 15 McKenzie Brophay
- 18 Jovan Guerrero
- 18 Reynold House
- 19 Fred Wilson
- 23 Kathy Schuttenhelm
- 29 Gregory Krueger

### June Anniversary

John Jones & Katherine Valentyn, 18 yrs

If we have inadvertently missed your special day, please accept our apologies, and let the office know so we can change our records.

Suggested items for the third Sunday (June 14) food and hygiene collection for the Milwaukee Christian Center are **Canned meat and toothpaste**. Please place your donations in the bins inside the office door entrance.

**Scholarship applications** for the 2026-27 academic year are due June 1, 2026. The form is available in the church office and on the CONNECT page of the church website .

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### Grand Avenue Club

#### Golden Guys and Gals

At **11:30 am, Thursday, June 4**, the Golden Guys and Gals (3Gs) will meet at church for a tailgate party before carpooling to the 1:10 pm baseball game at American Family Field. It will be Kids & Seniors Discount Day. Kids 14 and under and seniors 60 and older get tickets 50% off. The Milwaukee Brewers will play the San Francisco Giants.

If you missed the May 17 deadline for a ticket, you are still able to purchase tickets yourself at [mlb.com/brewers](http://mlb.com/brewers) or you can buy tickets at the stadium the day of the game. We'll be in Section 412, Row 3 (easy access if you have trouble with stairs).

Everyone is welcome to join us! If you can attend the tailgate but not the game, or the game but not the tailgate, that's fine too.

The **Communion Offering** for the month of June is designated for the Grand Avenue Club. The Grand Avenue Club is a diverse community of individuals who have a diagnosis of mental illness in common. By working together, its members discover abilities and build relationships that aid in recovery. Our church has its custodial work done through the Employment Program of the Grand Avenue Club.

The Clubhouse in Milwaukee, at 210 E Michigan St, is part of an international movement consisting of 320 clubhouses in 32 countries.

Gluten free Communion bread is now available.



#### All-Church Picnic

Everyone is invited to the All-Church Picnic after morning worship on **Sunday, June 7th**. The picnic will be held on the church lawn. Grills will be available, so please bring your favorite meat to grill and a dish to pass.

Workout tip: Come early, before worship, and help to move tables and chairs from Fellowship Hall to the church lawn.

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### Trustees at Work

Thirty-five people from First Baptist Church and Milwaukee Myanmar Christian Church (MMCC) showed up on Saturday morning, May 16, for the church workday. What a great turnout!

We trimmed yew bushes, removed organic debris from the flat roof of the Education Wing, cleaned out the long window well on the north side of Fellowship Hall, cut weeds in the alley, and pulled dandelions from the church lawn. Inside the church, we dusted, swept floors, vacuumed carpets, and cleaned woodwork.

At break time, we enjoyed coffee, doughnuts, pancakes, and fruit.

Thanks to everyone who participated!



Greg Krueger, Joseph Khai, and David Aung on the flat roof of the Education Wing.



Time to take a break from working on the church lawn

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**PLEASE JOIN US FOR 2026 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**  
**FUMCWA 7520 West Lapham Street, West Allis** **July 20-24, 2026**  
**9:00 am to 12:00 pm**

Kids (3K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade) will step into the role of **Challengers**, gearing up for frosty games, snowy surprises, and hands-on lessons about resilience and faith. Each day they'll be guided by **Ollie the Arctic Seal**, our cheerful on-site reporter, who helps them see that they're not just playing games; they're discovering how to draw strength from their faith through powerful stories of courage and hope. With its unique winter game's theme—complete with snowboards, ski lifts, and plenty of chilly fun—and solid theology at its core, this VBS offers joy and meaning in equal measure. Throughout the week, children will learn that *"I can do all things through him who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13, NRSV).

VBS is a free weeklong event. VBS registration forms are available in the narthex and in the church office. Invite your neighbors and friends. Please return the student registration forms to the church office by **July 10, 2026**. Each family that registers will receive a free Student Take-Home Music CD.

The VBS **Challengers** will learn that they serve as God's hands, meeting others' needs. Our mission project will be The Hope Closet. The Hope Closet provides new clothing to homeless families or families in transition in the West Allis/West Milwaukee School District. **We ask that all our VBS Challengers bring some change each day, which will be collected during the opening session for the mission project.**

On Thursday evening from 6:30 -7:30 pm, the **Challengers** will present a VBS program, and then families will enjoy supper together. Friday will be a fun day to wrap up the week with special activities and surprises.

VBS offers a fun experience for kids and helps them strengthen their faith through interactive activities, engaging games, and meaningful lessons. Children will enjoy themselves as they face their challenges and discover their strength in God. You'll hear them say, "Challenge accepted – with God I am strong." For questions, please contact the FUMCWA church office at 414-774-5500 or [fumcwaoffice@fumcwa.org](mailto:fumcwaoffice@fumcwa.org).

**Join us for the COOLEST week of the summer at Snowball Mountain Challenge!**

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**VBS 2026: Join us for the Snowball Mountain Challenge: Find Your Strength in God** Kids (3K through 5th Grade) will step into the role of Challengers, gearing up for frosty games, snowy surprises, and hands-on lessons about resilience and faith. Each day, they'll be guided by Ollie the Arctic Seal, our cheerful on-site reporter, who helps them see that they're not just playing games; they're discovering how to draw strength from their faith through powerful stories of courage and hope. With its unique winter game's theme—complete with snowboards, ski lifts, and plenty of chilly fun—and solid theology at its core, this VBS offers joy and meaning in equal measure. Throughout the week, children will learn that "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13, NRSV). This free, fun-filled week, July 20-24, 2026, Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to noon, will include engaging activities, games, and lessons about God's love. Registration and information will be available in June in the Narthex and the church office. VBS will be held at The First United Methodist Church, 7520 West Lapham Street. Invite friends and family for a memorable experience!

2026 VBS REGISTRATION FORM- PLEASE RETURN BY JULY 10, 2026  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH WEST ALLIS

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Last School Grade Completed \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone/Cell Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, contact \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_  
Allergies or other medical conditions/any special needs \_\_\_\_\_

For the safety of the children, please indicate who will be picking up your child each day (relationship to child)

\_\_\_\_\_  
I acknowledge that I am the parent or legal guardian of the child, and I release First United Methodist Church of West Allis and The First Baptist Church of West Allis and its agents, employees, representatives, and volunteer workers from any and all liability if my child is injured July 20-24, 2026, during any VBS activity. I give permission to photograph/video my child during VBS and to use such photographs/videos in all forms of media, including crafts, class pictures, videos/slideshows, websites, newsletters, and displays.  
Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE COMPLETE THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL FORM ON THE REVERSE SIDE