

Sewickley United Methodist Church

February 2024 Newsletter

The Pastor's Peace

Love, Lent, and Leadership! If I were to title the Pastor's Peace for this month that is what I would call it. There are a lot of good things to talk about and it is hard to decide which one deserves attention. Let's start with the best, love! Love covers all. As we enter Black History Month, I want us to take a moment to celebrate the beauty our African American siblings have added to our lives. Maya Angelou was an American memoirist, poet, and civil rights activist. Her ability to weave words together in a way that brings hard truths in connection with human emotion and motivation, has encouraged many to take up the banner for the fight against racism. She said this about love, "In the flush of love's light, we dare be brave. And suddenly we see that love costs all we are and will ever be. Yet it is only love which sets us free." This captures the very essence of Jesus' work in humanity. It was his great love that laid down everything for us so that we might be free. Yet what we discover is that often we are the ones keeping ourselves in captivity because we don't choose to love freely. Let love be the choice you make to continue the fight against racism so that all may truly be free. Let love be the choice that drives you to experience a culture of music and art beyond your own. Let love be the choice that drives you to seek educational opportunities about black history. Let love be the choice that drives you to intentionally shape the present and the future, so they do not reflect the cruel past. Sometimes that takes being brave but all the time, it is worth it.

February also marks the beginning of our Lenten journey which will take our wandering hearts alongside Peter all the way to the cross and up from the grave. We will once again use a sermon series by A Sanctified Art. The series is called "Wandering Heart" and is based upon the disciple Peter. "In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. In Peter, we often see ourselves. By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out—just like us." Let us join together as we wrestle with trying to figure it all out. Let us join together for a time of devotion on Monday morning at 5:30 a.m. over Zoom beginning February 19th or on Tuesday Evening at 6 p.m. in the Simpson room beginning February 21st. Let us join together as a faith community with our siblings from St. Matthew AME Zion church, St. Paul's Lutheran church and the Sewickley Presbyterian church. The schedule for our time together with our siblings over lent can be found on page 2. We will begin our first gathering at the Sewickley Presbyterian church on February 14th at 7 p.m. with our community Ash Wednesday Service. You can also receive ashes on this day by stopping up at the gazebo in the center of Sewickley around 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

We have covered love, lent and now it is leadership. I hope you notice the way love really is a part of this all. In January we had our Leadership Retreat and our first official leadership meeting. In the month of January alone we spent 13 hours gathered around a table to work out all the new details and gain a deeper understanding of each other, of where the church currently is and where God is calling the church to go. We have realized there are some administrative cracks that need to be quickly filled. Therefore, in addition to the time gathered all together, small groups of us have been gathering to care for our current administrative needs. Those needs include putting together a financial policy, an employee handbook, and a strategic plan for building maintenance and care. As part of this good work, we also took some time to pray, seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance and come up with our church's Mission, Vision, and Core Values. One of the things I can assure you of is the diversity within our group that is a solid reflection of our congregation. As we poured our hearts into this task, we felt all voices were well represented and the church we truly are, was captured well. You will begin to see this Mission, Vision, and Core Value reflected on our website, on social media platforms and on printed materials. In the newsletter there will be a page dedicated to the work that the Leadership Board is doing so you can stay in the know. All of our minutes from our meeting will also be available by request in the church office or emailed to you. As a part of this newsletter you will find what the leadership packets consist of which are emailed out to each Leadership Board member ahead of time. You will also find the Mission, Vision, and Core Values. Please turn to page 2 for this information. Our next meeting is on February 21st at 6:30 p.m. and you are invited to join us. In the coming months we will be hosting another town hall in order to check in with the congregation about how communication is going, and offer more information about what is being done. We thank you so much for your prayers, your trust in us and your patience.

As you already know, this is A LOT of information and things worth celebrating. I am overjoyed at the amount of good work that is being done. Sitting around the table this past Sunday with the leaders of our ministry team and meeting with each of them individually has fed my soul to hear the way God is moving through them and the ministry they are committed to. We all are the church. Whether administratively or through ministerial services you all inspire me to be better and do better. Thank you for your faithfulness to God and to fulfilling our mission: "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

From one light to another,

Hannol M Laughman

Pastor Hannah Loughman

Ecumenical Lenten Services

February 18: 1st Sunday in Lent Host: Sewickley UMC Preaching: Rev. Coriño Casas Time: 6pm with fellowship to follow

March 10: 4th Sunday in Lent Host: Sewickley Presbyterian Church Preaching: Rev. Hannah Loughman Time: 6pm with fellowship to follow

March 28th: Maundy Thursday Host: Sewickley Presbyterian Church There will be no preaching Time: 7pm February 25: 2nd Sunday in Lent Host: St Matthews AME Zion Church Preaching: Rev. Mike Creamer Time: 6pm with fellowship to follow

March 17: 5th Sunday in Lent Host: Sewickley UMC Preaching: Rev. Ryan Kobert Time: 6pm with fellowship to follow

March 29: Good Friday The Cross Walk begins at 5:30 at St. Matthews AME Zion Church Service will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church at 6pm Preaching: Rev. Hannah Loughman March 3: 3rd Sunday in Lent Host: St. Paul's Lutheran Church Preaching: Rev. Emily Miller Time: 6pm with fellowship to follow

March 24: Palm Sunday Host: St Matthews AME Zion Church Preaching: TBD Time: 6pm with fellowship to follow

March 31: Easter Sunrise Service Host: Sewickley Cemetery Preaching: Rev. William Rankin Time: 6:30am

LEADERSHIP BOARD

In the month of January, we have done a lot of work and are excited to share it with you. In this section you will find the Mission, Vision, and Core Values. You will also find an outline of what is included in a Leadership Board Packet. Please reach out to any of our members with any questions you might have. As a reminder, the members are Mark Benjamin, Laura Powell, Dan Gittins, Kristine Swaney, Ron Smith, Jere Cowden, Lynn Colosi, Pam Honeychurch and Jenine Furry who is the chair of the Leadership Board

Mission: Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

This the mission of the United Methodist church. As members of the United Methodist community that means this is our mission as well. As followers of Jesus Christ this is simply following the commands that he has set before us in Matthew 28:16-20.

Vision: Be present in the community as a welcoming and growing Church, living out the radical love of Jesus in vital ways. It was once asked by a D.S. and then we (LB) read it repeated in John Edmund Kaiser's book titled, Winning on Purpose, if you (the

church) were no longer a part of the community what would they (the community) miss? This is a great question that was the driver behind the vision statement. Each church's vision should be unique to their culture and ethos when it comes to how they live out the mission of making disciples. How then, are we making disciples in a way that the community would miss? We are present in the community. We don't just stay within our walls. We are welcoming to ALL who we meet. We are a church that is growing and not dying. All these things are informed by, encouraged by, and strengthened by the radical love of Jesus which we will live out in ways that serve our community.

Core Values:

- We welcome and want all persons regardless of age, race, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ethnic and religious background, marital status, immigration status, socio-economic class and disability.
- We serve and engage others with empathy, compassion, dignity, and respect.
- We believe in the sanctity of Scripture as holy and alive. As the inspired word of God, we do not interpret it literally, but through the Holy Spirit with our experience, reason, and tradition as our guide.
- We pursue peace and justice for the marginalized and underserved by giving our time, talent, and resources.

Leadership Board Packet: January's packet can be emailed to you or printed out for you at your request.

- 1) Agenda
- 2) Leadership Covenantal Agreement
- 3) Vital Signs:
 - a) Worship Attendance
 - b) Financial Giving
 - c) Small Group Participation
 - d) Service Participation
- 4) Impact Stories

- 5) Guest
 - a) 1st Time
 - b) 2nd Time
- 6) Minutes From Last Meeting
- 7) Financials
- 8) God-Sized Goals Update
- 9) Reports From Ministry Teams
- 10) Special Reports

As you can see, the Leadership Board packet has the potential to be quite lengthy. This past Leadership Board meeting the packet was 13 pages. It is all good work! We are committed to being a board that creates a permission-giving environment for our church's ministry to feel well supported and to flourish!

Worship Opportunities - February 2024



Contemporary Worship Service: 9 am Traditional Worship Service: 11 am Our Worship Services are live streamed on <u>sewickleyumc.org</u> and <u>youtube.com</u>. The recorded services are also available later on Sunday afternoon.



February 4, 2024 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany Sacrament of Holy Communion Liturgist: Donna Sawhill Scripture Lessons: Psalm 99 Message: "But, What If? The Power in Partnership."

Every hero story in scripture has a sidekick. All the movers and shakers, though they have a single call that often belongs to them alone, they also have support. They have people surrounding them and the comfort of knowing they are not alone. This is the fulfillment of God's promise; God will always be with us. God does not call us and then send us all on our own.

> February 11, 2024 Transfiguration Sunday Liturgist: Ron Smith Scripture Lesson: Psalm 40:6-10 Message: "Called to a Community."

Just as God does not call us and then send us all on our own, God does not call us to a task that benefits only ourselves. We are called to a community to serve in some type of way. Staying connected to that community helps us to burn bright without burning up.



February 18, 2024 First Sunday in Lent Liturgist: Jere Cowden Scripture Lesson: Psalm 25:1-10 Message: Wandering Hearts: "Jesus Sought Me"

"Jesus doesn't seek out trained rabbis and priests to be his disciples; instead, he calls a few Galilean fishermen to follow him and join his ministry. In this story, Jesus tells Simon Peter to drop his nets one more time, even though they've been fishing all night long and have caught nothing. To their surprise, they haul in nets bursting with fish. In

response to this abundant miracle, Peter says, "Go away from me, Lord!" And yet, Peter and his partners drop their nets and follow Jesus. What is the beginning of your faith story? When has God sought you out? Have you ever felt like your calling was pursuing—or chasing—you? Did you resist? Did you follow?"

February 25, 2024 Second Sunday in Lent Liturgist: Laura Powell Scripture Lessons: Psalm 22:23-31 Message: Wandering Hearts: "Rescue Me From Danger"

"As a new disciple, perhaps Peter wants to prove himself. Boldly, in the middle of a storm, Peter steps out of the boat to join Jesus who is walking on top of the waves. He, too, walks on water until the wind shakes his trust and he begins to sink. Many of us know what it feels like to be thrown off balance, to feel as if we're sinking. Maybe this looks like doubt, unexpected change, too-busy seasons of life, devastating grief, or distance from God. In this story, we empathize with the desperation Peter feels as he cries out, and we pray for God to save us when we sink."

	20	2024	
	Budget	Actual	Budget
Income			
Congregation's Giving	270,313.32	267,807.70	308,420.00
Facility Use	11,100.00	11,272.50	11,080.00
Miscellaneous Sources	15,950.00	19,901.34	18,000.00
Trusts & Estates	14,735.12	17,205.34	14,376.00
Total Income	312,098.44	316,186.88	351,876.00
Expense			
Payroll Taxes	4,676.00	4,348.10	5,071.00
Connectional Apportionment	31,327.00	31,327.00	34,145.00
Pastor & Staff	160,073.44	157,133.72	165,931.25
Facilities & Equipment	57,662.00	57,284.91	58,435.00
Utilities - Church	27,666.00	27,863.22	28,254.40
Utilities - Parsonage	9,444.00	9,558.60	9,708.00
Administration	5,800.00	5,487.86	8,100.00
Worship	5,300.00	3,550.90	4,800.00
Education	1,750.00	1,603.59	1,500.00
Nurture	1,600.00	1,371.69	1,600.00
Outreach	3,800.00	3,780.79	2,000.00
Witness	200.00	92.84	200.00
Finance	800.00	964.23	900.00
Marketing	2,000.00	1,623.68	2,000.00
Total Expense	312,098.44	305,991.13	322,644.65
NetIncome	0.00	10,195.75	29,231.35





*The full budget for 2024 will be emailed separately

We just finished the 2023 budget year, making this a good time to summarize the final figures from 2023, the budget for 2024 and to review what makes up our annual operating budget.

The table at the top of this page shows the budget and actual expenses and receipts for 2023 as well as the 2024 budget that was adopted by the Leadership Board at its January 17 meeting. From January through November 2023, expenses were consistently higher than receipts, but thanks to generous donations received in December and actual expenses for the year being lower than budgeted, we were blessed to finish 2023 with our receipts \$10,195.75 higher than our expenses.

The task of preparing a budget is not taken lightly. There are many large "fixed" expenses that, when balanced against our budgeted receipts, make up the bulk of our church budget. At the same time, we know that to do God's work and "Be the Church" we need to provide adequate funding to our various ministries. At the Leadership Board's retreat in early January, a number of Godsized goals for 2024 were established, one of which is a 20% increase in congregational giving to help us live into our vision which is to, "Be present in the community as a welcoming and growing Church, living out the radical love of Jesus in vital ways." Therefore, you will note the God-sized goal for congregational giving in the 2024 budget that was adopted. Our annual budget includes the receipt sources and expenses as outlined in the chart below.

As your church treasurer, I want to thank you for faithful support of the ministries of Sewickley UMC! If you have any questions concerning the church finances please feel free to ask me, Pastor Hannah, or Jenine Furry, Chair of the Leadership Board.

Blessings, Pam Honeychurch



	Receipt Sources		
Congregation's Giving	Donations given by people		
Facility Use	Fees & donations for use of church facilities		
Misc. Sources	Monies raised by fundraisers and other sources		
Trusts & Estates	Disbursements from our 4 investment accounts (bequeaths left to the church)		
	Expenses		
Connectional Apportionment	An amount determined annually by the Western Pennsylvania Conference, through our apportioned giving we participate in and support the ministry and mission of the United Methodist Church both locally and around the world.		
Pastor & Staff	Costs associated with having a fulltime pastor & part-time staff (custodian, minister of music, secretary, and nursery attendant): payroll, taxes, worker's comp insurance, and pastor's insurance, pension and reimbursement,		
Facilities & Equipment	Costs associated with the upkeep of our beautiful, historic church building & parson- age: insurance, property taxes, janitorial supplies, interior and exterior maintenance, exterminator, equipment maintenance and repair, security, clock tower maintenance, and organ and piano maintenance.		
Utilities - Church	Electricity, gas, water & sewer, phone & internet service, trash collection, water ser-		
Utilities - Parsonage	Electricity, gas, water & sewer, internet, trash collection, security		
Administration	Office supplies, postage, miscellaneous expenses, copier service, Annual Confer-		
Worship	Worship materials and equipment, music, guest musicians, special flowers		
Education	Material & supplies for Sunday School, VBS, Nursery, Bible Study, Youth Group,		
Nurture & Hospitality	Costs associated with ministries that help care for our church family and visitors: fellowship events (food, beverages, paper products, etc.), card ministry, prayer blanket & pillow ministry		
Outreach	Costs associated with helping those outside our church, including Center for Hope dinners, devotionals, Pumpkin Patch & Light Up Night tracts, gift cards for community food bank, Pastor's Pantry, support for ministries, plus Pastor's monthly outreach stipend		
Witness	Costs associated with sharing the Love of God with others including Light Up Night,		
Finance	Safe deposit box rental, giving and pew envelopes, Vanco (electronic giving) monthly		
Marketing	Website hosting fees, image hosting service fees, advertising expenses		

We're going to let our Sewickley UMC children cater our shared prayer this month, and they have provided an extraordinary menu.

In our first 9 a.m. Children's church of 2024, our first activity was to pray into the New Year. The children wanted to pray for more of God's Light in our homes, schools, work places, church, neighborhoods, nation and our world.

In a New Year's prayer constructed and shared during an 11 a.m. Children's church,

children and youth asked for justice and protection for everyone, peace on Earth, and end to gun violence, and an end to all wars, including the conflicts in Ukraine, and in Israel and Gaza. We also asked God to show us how to help others more often, to be happy for others and to help others know the love of God and Jesus. We also prayed for the homeless, the hungry, nature, schools and family.

We can also draw prayer prompts from the four young people who addressed our gathering to remember the work and dreams of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in January.



"Has (King's) dream come true?" one of the youth asked. "It feels like we're going backwards a little bit today."

The youth also reminded us King is still leading us to "treat people with kindness," and "stand up to injustice" and "promote equality, justice and peace."

On February 4, as the sunsets around 5:20 p.m., from wherever you are, with whoever wants to join you, let's lift the prayer concerns of our children and youth.

Lord, bless and protect our homes, schools,

workplaces, communities and nations. Wrap your arms around all those impacted by war, violence, hunger, homelessness, and fear.

Lord, help each of us to find new ways to serve each other, encourage each other, and share your Love and Light.

Lord, help each of us to pursue the dream of a world shaped by kindness, equality, justice and peace.

And, Lord, we thank you for our children and youth, their hopeful vision, their willingness to serve and love, and their faith in you. Amen.



PRAYER REQUESTS	Mollie Devine (Renee Gittins' sister)	Matthew Kania Grace & Murch King	Megan Shong (Renee Gittins' great-niece)
REQUESTS	Betty Dornetta	Henrietta Kretzler	Nancy Shuluga
	Nick Devine (Renee Gittins'	Carol Lewis	C.R. & Lorraine Simpson
Peace in the Holy Land	great nephew)	(Susie Moffett's mom)	(Edie Erkert's parents)
Family of John A. Sava	Friends and Family of Daniel	Family of Elizabeth "BJ"	Jacqueline Stancil
(Martha Boward's nephew)	Frank	Manzinger	Bill T
Hurst Bartley	Clyde Grossarth (Steve's	Nikki and John	Lauren Tillman
Betty Burrows (Wilma	brother)	Sandra Obeng	Morgan W. and Family
Hamilton's sister-in-law)	Steve Grossarth	Lorraine Offner	Karen Yant
Dee Bursick (Family Friend of	Candy Grudovich (Joe	Keith Pelphrey	Rich Zahrobsky
Carol Egenlauf)	Boward's sister)	Jean Reed	Dennis Zeveny
Sydni Canney	Rev. Jim Hamilton	Family of Heather Rose	
Anne Clifford (Jenine Furry's	Beate Henkel	(Jennifer Jones' cousin)	
sister-in-law)	Lucas James	Jim Rogansky	
Bruno Crapis	(Sel Dean's brother)	Jasmine Ross	

FEBRUARY 2024 MINUTES



MEAL MINISTRY — When someone in our church family is facing a difficult or challenging time (sickness, death, new baby, etc.), our Meal Ministry volunteers provide meals. If you would like to be added to our list of volunteers willing to help with the meals please let our Nurture Chair, Sandy Kuriger, or the office know.

Learning Tree Pepperoni Roll Fundraiser—Please support the Learning Tree with a purchase of a Sunseri Pepperoni roll or two or three. Each Monster roll is 2 pounds of pepperoni and mozzarella/provolone blend wrapped in delicious dough. The rolls can be frozen and reheated, so stock up!! Price: \$12 each. Sandra Lane will be accepting orders during the month of February. Orders will arrive on March 13. You can make arrangements for pickup with

Sandra (412) 841-7169. Proceeds from this fundraiser will go towards a new play kitchen for the classroom.

SUMC Choir is getting back together, and you are invited to make a joyful noise! Come for Singing and Snacks on Thursday, February 1, at 7:30 p.m. We'll make music, enjoy fellowship, and get started on our musical ministry. Reach out to Erik Kolodziej with any questions: ejk.580@icloud.com

Save the Dates for six United Women of Faith (UWF) meetings in 2024:

February 18, March 10, April 14, September 15, October 13, November 10

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED — Occasionally we get re-

willing to drive, please let Pastor Hannah or the office know.

quests from members of our church family who need a ride to a medical appointment. If you'd be willing to be on a list of people

The UWF meets six times a year on Sundays in the Simpson Room following the traditional service. Everyone is invited to attend any and all of our meetings. Each person brings his or her own lunch; beverages and desserts are provided. The purpose of our group is to raise money for UWF mission projects. Other than having fun together, sharing and caring for each other, all we do is raise mission money. With the funds we raise by holding three Rummage Sales for Missions each year, we support local, national and international mission projects. The first meeting in 2024 will be held on February 18. All are welcome. Kristine Swaney, 412-716-5772 (cell) or 412-741-2092 (home).

Anissa Erkert	2/2
Tony Ream	2/2
Alan Honeychurch	2/6
Myles Kennedy	2/6
Lorelai Cymbalak	2/8
Heather Cymbalak	2/14
Joe Boward	2/15
John Emmert	2/15
Owen McCombs	2/15



Jim Hamilton	2/17
Austin Hiles	2/18
Mark Benjamin	2/20
Charlotte Roebuck	2/20
Russel Shuluga	2/23
Dean Selina	2/25
Nicholas Garafalo	2/26
Rebecca Malarik	2/26
Kristine Swaney	2/28

CANDYGRAMS FOR A CAUSE

The Fellowship of the Cross is again selling Candygrams to help pay the school fees of the student we sponsor in Zimbabwe through the Nyadire Connection. Candy grams - \$1 each or five for \$4 - include an encouraging note and a lollipop or a small chocolate. You can place your order at our table in the sanctuary before or after worship services on February 4th and February 11th.

Candygrams will be available on February 18th. FOTC youth can, if you choose, deliver the candygrams to church family attending worship on February 18th. Please consider ordering candygrams for family, church family, friends, neighbors, classmates or work associates. For more information, contact Grace Rogansky or Bill Utterback.

FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:15pm Bell Choir 7:30pm Choir	2 6:30pm AA	3
4 9am Contemporary Service 10am Adult Sun. School 11am FOTC 11am Traditional Service 12pm Education Meeting	5 7pm AA	6 10am Women's Growth Group: Daniel 6pm Growth Group Study: Daniel 7pm AA	7 6:30pm Leap of Faith	8 6:15pm Bell Choir	9 6:30pm AA	10
11 9am Contemporary Service 10am Adult Sunday School 11am Fellowship of the Cross 11am Traditional Service	12 7pm AA 7:30pm Council Meeting	13 10am Women's Growth Group: Daniel 6pm Growth Group Study: Daniel 7pm AA	14 10am SUMC Prayer Group 6:30pm Leap of Faith 7pm Ashes	15 6:15pm Bell Choir	16 6:30pm AA	17
18 9am Contemporary Service 10am Adult Sunday School 11am Fellowship of the Cross 11am Traditional Service 12pm UWF (UMW) Luncheon Meeting 6pm 1st Lenten Service	19 5:30am Wandering Heart Devotion:Zoom 7pm AA	10am Women's Growth Group: Daniel 6pm Growth Group: Wandering Heart	21 2pm World Day of Prayer Meeting 6:30pm Leadership Board Meeting 6:30pm Leap of Faith	22 6:15pm Bell Choir	23 6:30pm AA	24
25 9am Contemporary Service 10am Adult Sunday School 11am Fellowship of the Cross 11am Traditional Service 6pm 2nd Lenten Service	26 5:30am Wandering Heart Devotion:Zoom 7pm AA	27 10am Women's Growth Group: Daniel 6pm Growth Group: Wandering Heart 7pm AA	28 6:30pm Leap of Faith	29 6:15pm Bell Choir		

WALKING WITH JESUS — Come join the Walking with Jesus group for adults on Sunday mornings at 10am in the parlor. Bring your coffee, your ideas, and your faith. See Willie Nicholson or Sandy Kuriger with questions.

THE WOMEN'S GROWTH GROUP—All women are invited to the Growth Group that meets at 10am on Tuesdays in the Church Library. Activities include Bible study, prayers and praise, fellowship, and service to others. Come add your ideas to this lively and inspiring group. They are currently studying the story of Ruth **FELLOWSHIP OF THE CROSS (FOTC)** - meets at 11am on Sundays in the Simpson Room to work on service projects. All school age children and youth are welcome to be part of FOTC. Contact Grace Rogansky for more info: vgrogansky@gmail.com.

CHRIST IS COUNTING ON YOU — Join our diverse adult group Sunday mornings at 10am. in the Library to discuss societal issues and Jesus-based ways we can make a difference

A CROCHET AND KNITTING CIRCLE has been formed by Amanda Pelphrey and Patti Ellis. They will meet at 10am in the Simpson Room in between Sunday services. Be sure to bring your hooks and needles and join in!