

Heartline

Keeping in touch with the heart of the Richfield United Methodist Church faith community.

2024
January / February



Nate Note
Page 2

All-Church Reading
Challenge
Page 3

New Member Class
Page 5

Children's Ministry
Page 6

Youth Ministry
Page 7

Winter Movie Nights
Page 8

Church and Society
Page 9

Time for LIFE
Page 10

2024 Church Budget
Information
Page 11

Team Colors Sunday
Page 12

Continuing Open Groups
Page 13

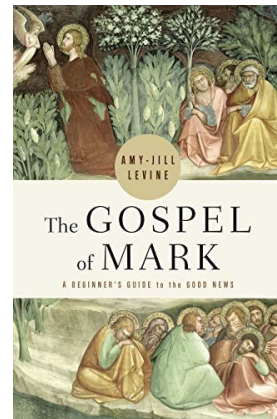
All-Church Reading Challenge: The Gospel of Mark

This January, EVERYONE in the church is invited and encouraged to:

- read the Gospel of Mark,
 - read Prof. Levine's book, and
 - participate in a class discussion group.
- Deepen your faith and take the challenge!

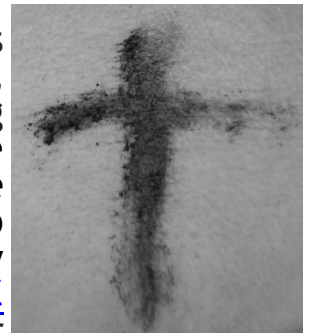
See page 3 for all the details!

Did you get your copy of Prof. Levine's book on Christmas Eve - If not, check to see if we have more copies on campus (while supplies last).



**Ash Wednesday
Worship Service**
Wednesday, February 14 at 7:00pm
(in-person only)

Begin the season of Lent with this interactive worship service of music, prayer, and spiritual practices - including the imposition of ashes. If you cannot be present in-person and wish to celebrate Ash Wednesday, you are encouraged to participate in one of the Ash Wednesday worship services in the [Richfield UMC archives](#), dated [February 17, 2021](#) or [March 2, 2022](#).





“Faith, fun, and fellowship” is a very overused church cliché. I’ve seen it used in so many churches that I’ve tried to steer clear of it whenever possible. But not in 2024. For this new year, I think we have many opportunities to lean directly into faith, fun, and fellowship as a church. I hope you will be an active part of your church in these three areas and beyond.

FAITH | May 2024 be a year for you to really build your faith. Church can be a key to explore faith in God, read the Bible, try out spiritual practices, and put faith into action. Be part of the churchwide challenge to read the Gospel of Mark in January, join a small group or music ensemble, be part of worship as often as you can, and submit theological questions for the summer worship series.

FUN | May 2024 be a year for you to relax and have fun with your church. Church can be at its best when we laugh and enjoy each other’s company together. Be part of Team Colors Sunday on February 11, storytelling in Lent, the joy of neighborhood children at the Easter Egg Hunt on March 23, a potluck on June 2, a church birthday party this fall, and some good-spirited fun with March Madness.

FELLOWSHIP | May 2024 be a year for you to recommend your faith community. Church can be in a growth mindset when we not only embrace new people who arrive but also invite new people in. Share about the outreach we do in the neighborhood, ask someone to give to our donation drives, invite a friend to worship and lunch, and always share the Good News of Jesus in your example.

These three areas may carry us all individually and as a church as we embark on our 170th anniversary. This year, we will seek out ways to celebrate our long heritage in the community since 1854, give thanks for who we are today, and step boldly into the future. We want to do as much active ministry as possible in these three arenas because they embody what 170

years of spirituality and perseverance has meant to this church. I’m excited to be part of this - who’s in?

I especially need to encourage you to share about your church. If worship moves you, the people in your life need to know. If a ministry is fun or you learn something new, the people in your life need to know. If you have had a conflux moment and encountered the holy, the people you trust the most in your life need to know. Rev. Jim Wallis wrote, “Faith is personal; it is never private.”

Churches can no longer assume the *Field of Dreams* model of evangelism, “If you build it, they will come.” Churches who want to grow shed their inhibitions of talking about faith and their faith community and they do the work of evangelism. If you read that and hoped I mean everybody but you, sorry - I mean you, especially! A Religion in American Life survey shows 85% of people attend worship after a friend or relative invited them; never underestimate the power of your personal invite.

We were featured in two *Star Tribune* articles on November 15 and December 3. These weren’t typical media articles about shrinking churches or scandal. These were about our outreach ministry. When we purchased and assembled items for 38 welcome kits for the new Agate Housing & Services affordable housing project a block from our building, we were the hands and feet of Christ to our neighbors, sight unseen! That is incredible. And, I have to ask: did you tell anybody about this? When was the last time we were in the paper as a church, and for amazing news? Friends, this is truly our opportunity to embrace... or our opportunity to squander. I hope you see the value in sharing this great accomplishment. It is not to brag! It is because serving God can be infectious. People deserve to see how they can be part of something bigger than themselves. Friends, take 2024 and embrace this opportunity! God is showing up in your church! Go tell it on the mountain!

In faith, in fun, in fellowship, and in Christ,
Rev. Nate Melcher

ALL-CHURCH READING CHALLENGE: THE GOSPEL OF MARK

This January, **EVERYONE** in the church is invited and encouraged to:

- read the Gospel of Mark,
- read Prof. Levine's book, and
- participate in a class discussion group.

Deepen your faith and take the challenge!

ALL-CHURCH READING CHALLENGE: THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Everyone in the church is challenged to read the entire Gospel of Mark as well as *The Gospel of Mark* by Amy-Jill Levine. We gave out copies of the book on Christmas Eve - check to see if we have more copies on campus (while supplies last). This reading pace matches the sermons for the worship series:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| January 7 | Mark 1-4 and
pages 1-26: The Good News Begins |
| January 14 | Mark 5-7 and
pages 27-52: Restoring Purity and Wholeness |
| January 21 | Mark 8-10 and
pages 53-86: Sacrifice, Ransom, Prophet, Messiah |
| January 22 | Mark 11-12 and
pages 87-108: Fig Trees and Tenants |
| January 28 | Mark 13 and
pages 109-128: The Little Apocalypse |
| February 4 | Mark 14-16 and
pages 129-148: Judas Iscariot and the Naked Young Man |

DIVE DEEP INTO THE GOSPEL OF MARK WITH PROF. AMY-JILL LEVINE

Pop quiz! Amy-Jill Levine is which of the following:

- A. Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, Hartford International University
- B. Creator of the book and video series *The Gospel of Mark* on [Amplify Media](#).
- C. The author whose work inspires three study groups and our Epiphany worship series.
- D. Coming to our church for a live Q&A session by Zoom.
- E. All of the above!

The exciting answer is **E. All of the above!** As we begin a new year, may we dive deep into the Gospel of Mark and ignite our discipleship. Spend time with amazing material by Prof. Amy-Jill Levine, including a live talk with the scholar herself!

Q&A LIVE ONLINE WITH PROF. AMY-JILL LEVINE

Monday, January 22, 7:30 pm-8:30 pm

[Zoom](#) Meeting ID: 819 9039 0338 / Passcode: 5835 or call: (312) 626-6799

Prof. Amy-Jill Levine joins us for a Q&A session about her book, *The Gospel of Mark* as we enter the new year. We are excited to have one of the most prominent scholars of Jesus with us and you're encouraged to bring a question, bring a friend, and bring excitement to this unique opportunity to engage an amazing author!

FOUR VIDEO DISCUSSION CLASS OPPORTUNITIES

Gather to discuss the book and video series by Prof. Amy-Jill Levine, *The Gospel of Mark* on [Amplify Media](#) (get a [free account](#) today). You'll learn, smile, and wonder as Prof. Levine offers new insight with her trademark charm and accessible scholarship. Pick from these four opportunities:

1. **Sundays in Epiphany, 9:00 am-9:20 am Hybrid: Grace Room and [Zoom](#)** Meeting ID: 819 9039 0338 / Passcode: 5835 or call: (312) 626-6799 These classes are a breezy 20 minutes: 10-minute videos and 10-minute discussion. Videos start promptly at 9:00 am so please arrive in the Grace Room or the Zoom Room early!
2. **Mondays in January, 7:30 pm-8:30 pm Online-Only: [Zoom](#)** Meeting ID: 819 9039 0338 / Passcode: 5835 or call: (312) 626-6799 These classes watch and discuss two videos per session, with Prof. Levine present on January 22.
3. **Tuesday Women's Bible Study, 9:30 am-11:00 am Online-Only:** Contact Zoom coordinator Molly (mollyreko@comcast.net or 612-270-4700) or class leader, Rev. Ruth Phelps (952-929-1595). Join this weekly Bible Study to discuss *The Gospel of Mark*.
4. **Wednesday Bible Study Wednesdays at 9:00 am-10:00 am Hybrid: Grace Room and [Zoom](#)** Meeting ID: 819 9039 0338 / Passcode: 5835 or call: (312) 626-6799 All are welcome to join this weekly Bible Study to discuss *The Gospel of Mark*.

UPCOMING WORSHIP

EPIPHANY WORSHIP SERIES: "INTRO TO JESUS" January 7-February 11, 2024

The Gospel of Mark begins with a bang and never lets up! From his baptism to calling the disciples, from teaching and healing to the cross and resurrection, the story of Jesus is for all people. This series is inspired by the latest book from Amy-Jill Levine, *The Gospel of Mark*, where she takes a deep dive into several key moments of the story of Jesus. Be part of a churchwide challenge to read the entire Gospel of Mark. See the articles on page 3 for information on what to read, how to get Prof. Levine's book, four video-based discussion classes, and Prof. Levine's guest appearance.



LENT WORSHIP SERIES: "NOTABLE NARRATIVES" February 18-March 24, 2024

The season of Lent is more than the road to Easter. It's a season of trying on new spiritual practices and getting intentional with our faith development and discipleship. Listen to stories of personal faith and be inspired to write your own. We will write about our life stories in Lent so we can share them with our families. Come and see that faith in the living Jesus can change your life forever.



REMINDER ONLINE-ONLY WORSHIP ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, DECEMBER 31, 2023 youtube.com/richfieldumc or 888.650.5835

Holiday weekends in the life of the church historically see low worship attendance, yet we've proven we know how to have meaningful worship experiences online. On December 31, 2023 (New Year's Eve), we will give our hard-working servant volunteers time to be with their families and you are invited to worship live online or by phone. Please do not come to campus, thank you.

2024 IS OUR CHURCH'S 170TH BIRTHDAY!

This milestone birthday is our chance to celebrate our ministry and outreach in the community since 1854. We can give thanks to God for the church we are today and prepare ourselves to step boldly into God's future together. We can make this year special with a team of people who are dedicated to affirming our history and heritage and excited about our dreams to come. If you'd like to help your church celebrate 170 years, please contact Pastor Nate today.



HELP WANTED: MANY VOLUNTEERS MAKE WORSHIP HAPPEN!

Greeters are the first point of contact for new guests and longtime members when they arrive on campus. To help your church be a welcoming community, contact Mick and Marlys Hudson.

Ushers assist people in the Sanctuary worship space with bulletins, listening devices, and other hospitality items. To help your church be an organized community, contact Wayne Johnson.

Liturgists read the scripture text of the day and write and deliver Prayers of the People to lift the world to God. To help your church be a prayerful community, contact Rev. Nate Melcher.

Tech Crew makes worship accessible with slide decks, streaming cameras, and audio programming. To help your church be an accessible community, contact Rev. Bill Johnson.

PIZZA WITH THE PASTOR / NEW MEMBER CLASS

January 14, 10:45 am-12:00 pm,
Fellowship Hall

Please RSVP to Pastor Nate

at nmelcher@richfieldumc.org or 612-861-6086

Learn about becoming a church member and RSVP for "Pizza with the Pastor." We'll get to know each other over lunch and talk about church ministries and membership vows. New members are scheduled to join on January 28. Can't make that date, yet you're interested? RSVP, anyway!

PUB THEOLOGY

First Sundays

7:00 pm-8:00 pm (in-person only)

Protagonist Kitchen and Bar,

6601 Lyndale Avenue S.,

Richfield, MN 55423 (ramp parking)

Next Gatherings: January 14 (special 2nd Sunday night), February 4, March 3

Pub Theology is drop-in discussion about faith, God, and life over a tasty beverage. Be part of the informal atmosphere and talk with people of many generations about faith questions big and small. More information: <https://richfieldumc.org/pubtheology>



FILM THEOLOGY

First Wednesdays at 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

Hybrid: Grace Room and Zoom Meeting ID: 819 9039 0338 / Passcode: 5835 or call: (312) 626-6799

Go watch the latest hit movies in the theater, then come together to discuss them over a bowl of popcorn! Pastor Nate will lean on his Film Studies BA to guide our discussion. Here is the lineup:

January 3 - *Migration* (release date: Dec. 22)

February 7 - *The Book of Clarence*
(release date: Jan. 12)

March 6 - *Bob Marley: One Love*
(release date: Feb. 14)

LENT DAILY DEVOTIONAL IS COMING - NO SUBMISSIONS NECESSARY

The 2024 Lent Daily Devotional is back in a different way. This year's focus is for each of us to write about our life story and share it with our friends and family. You'll find a daily writing prompt for you to try or adapt. Between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, you'll have 47 opportunities to write about who you are! Print copies will be on campus and a PDF copy will be at richfieldumc.org/devo.



COFFEE WITH THE PASTOR

9:00 am-12:00 pm, most Tuesdays

Sign up: calendly.com/natemelcher

Pastor Nate is meeting with church members like you to check-in, reconnect, and pray. Sign up with the calendar link (if you cannot go online, please call the office) for a meeting at Starbucks (5351 Lyndale Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55419). Your drink is on Pastor Nate!

SHARE YOUR FAVORITE SERMONS, SONGS, AND WORSHIP MOMENTS

Worship is archived at youtube.com/richfieldumc.

Sermons are timestamped and archived at richfieldumc.org/sermons, listed by sermon series, title, preacher, and scripture passage.

Music is timestamped and archived at richfieldumc.org/music, listed by title alphabetically.

Sharing a favorite sermon or song with a friend is an invitation for them to learn more about the mission of your church, be glad for your church experience, and perhaps consider if this church is a good fit for them, too. NEW: Some of the 2023 sermon series are now collected in videos that put them all together for you to revisit all at once and share with your friends!

Children

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES UPDATE



Rev. Hope Hutchison
Director of CYF & Outreach Ministries
hhutchison@richfieldumc.org

It was so much fun to work with our children on this year's Christmas Pageant. This year, our children told the Christmas story through ornaments that they used to decorate a Christmas tree in the Sanctuary. And afterwards, we got to celebrate the pageant with our annual Christmas Party! We gathered during Sunday School to make and decorate graham cracker manger scenes. Thank you so much to everyone who worked hard to create such a wonderful Advent season for our children.



As the new year starts, we will be indoors for Sunday School for the foreseeable future. We are having Sunday School on the main level in the Fellowship Hall so that we can play games, and run around while we learn about God and how to love our neighbors!

Finally, Children First Worship is returning on March 3, 2024! This worship service is where our children lead us in worship alongside adult volunteers. While this service has traditionally taken place on the first Sunday of every month, we have shifted to a once a quarter schedule. Our children are not only the leaders of our future, they also offer a unique perspective and gifts to lead us in the present! If you are interested in leading alongside children in worship, or if your children have particular jobs they would like to help with, like greeting, reading Scripture, or leading a prayer, please contact Rev. Hope at hhutchison@richfieldumc.org.

Calendar:

- ⇒ Sunday, January 7: No Sunday School
- ⇒ Sunday, January 14: SOUPer Bowl Drive Starts
- ⇒ Sunday, February 4: No Sunday School
- ⇒ Tuesday, February 6: Winter Movie Night: The Peanuts Movie
- ⇒ Sunday, February 11: Super Bowl/Team Colors Sunday/SOUPer Bowl Drive Ends
- ⇒ Tuesday, February 13: Winter Movie Night: Lilo & Stitch
- ⇒ Tuesday, February 20: Winter Movie Night: Babe
- ⇒ Tuesday, February 27: Winter Movie Night: Kung Fu Panda
- ⇒ Sunday, March 3: No Sunday School; Children First Sunday

CARING FOR CHILDREN

Richfield UMC's Early Learning Center

The children had fun learning about and preparing for Christmas.

We decorated a Christmas tree in the Commons Area, read books about the Christmas season and made Christmas crafts.

This January and February, we are all looking forward to winter and fun playtime in the snow.

Kathy Newbauer, Director



CHILDREN AND YOUTH SAVE THE DATES

Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 23 from 2-4pm

Easter is early this year, and that means our annual Easter Egg Hunt is early too! Save the date for the Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 23. This event will be held indoors, and will feature carnival games, lots of candy and prizes, and the Easter Bunny! More details will be available soon, as well as details about how to sign up to volunteer!

My Changing Self

**Saturday, April 13 from 9am-3pm
at Lake Harriet UMC**

For the first time since 2019, Richfield UMC will be partnering with Lake Harriet UMC & Minnehaha UMC for a special one day event teaching our children in grades 3-8 about their changing bodies and selves. Grounded in both science and our shared faith tradition, this program will teach children age appropriate lessons about their physical and mental health, relationships, and prepare them for adolescence. More information and registration is coming soon!

Vacation Bible Camp: Camp Firelight from June 24-28 at Lake Harriet UMC

Come join us as we partner with Lake Harriet UMC for Vacation Bible Camp. The theme will take children on a summer adventure with God. This camp is open to children pre-K-5th grade, with leadership opportunities available for children in 6th grade and above. All VBC programming is free, and will happen from 9am-12pm daily. There is also after care available from 12-4pm for \$30 per child, per day. More information and registration is coming soon!

Summer Movie Nights

**Wednesdays in July, starting at 5pm
(July 10, 17, 24, 31)**

Summer is right around the corner, and that means Summer Movie Nights! We will again be watching movies on Wednesday night. Movies will start at 5pm, and there will be tables set up for families to eat while the movie starts. Snacks will be available during the movie as well.

Youth

YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATE

This fall has been a time of transition for our youth ministry. As programs like confirmation, and weekly youth group on Wednesdays come to a close for now, we found some time to celebrate together at our Christmas Party. There was boba tea, hot chocolate, lots of fun snacks and games! It was a joy to celebrate with both our high school and middle school youth together, and talk about what is coming soon.

This winter and spring, both the high school and middle school groups will have monthly gatherings. Some will be opportunities for both groups to gather together, get to know each other and learn from one another. Other programs will be divided into age groups so our youth have opportunities to create lasting friendships with their peers, and learn about God in age appropriate ways. As we move forward into this new year, I am excited to journey with our young people and learn more about God together.

Calendar:

- ⇒ Sunday, January 14: SOUPer Bowl Drive Begins
- ⇒ Saturday, January 20: Middle & High School Groups will attend The Event, which gathers United Methodist Youth from across Minnesota for a day of fun and fellowship
- ⇒ Friday, February 9: High School Service Project: Feed My Starving Children
- ⇒ Tuesday, February 6: Winter Movie Night: The Peanuts Movie
- ⇒ Sunday, February 11: Super Bowl/Team Colors Sunday/SOUPer Bowl Drive Ends
- ⇒ Tuesday, February 13: Winter Movie Night: Lilo & Stitch
- ⇒ Sunday, February 18: Middle School Family Sledding Day
- ⇒ Tuesday, February 20: Winter Movie Night: Babe
- ⇒ Tuesday, February 27: Winter Movie Night: Kung Fu Panda
- ⇒ Sunday, March 3: Children First Worship

WINTER MOVIE NIGHTS TUESDAYS IN FEBRUARY (6, 13, 20, 27) 5:00 pm

Join us this winter as we find some indoor fun with movie nights! This February, we will be watching movies together on Tuesday evenings. Movies will start at 5pm, and there will be tables set up for families to eat during the movie. Snacks will be available too. All ages are welcome to enjoy these family friendly films.

February 6: The Peanuts Movie
February 13: Lilo & Stitch
February 20: Babe
February 27: Kung Fu Panda

February 6: The Peanuts Movie



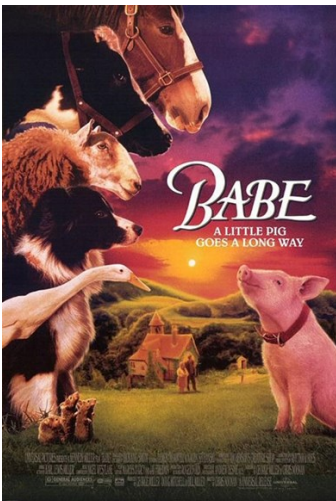
Charlie Brown tries to impress the red-haired girl. Can he get the girl to love him? At the same time, Snoopy is writing about his time as a WWI flying-ace and battles with The Red Baron.

February 13: Lilo & Stitch



A Hawaiian girl, Lilo, adopts a small ugly "dog," whom she names Stitch. Stitch would be the perfect pet if he weren't the galaxy's most wanted extraterrestrial who has escaped from an alien planet and crash-landed on Earth. Through her love, faith and unwavering belief in ohana, the Hawaiian concept of family, Lilo helps unlock Stitch's heart and gives him the ability to care for someone else.

February 20: Babe



Babe, an orphaned piglet, is chosen for a "guess the weight" contest at a county fair. The winning farmer, Arthur Hoggett, brings him home and allows him to stay with a Border Collie named Fly, her mate Rex and their puppies, in the barn. But will the other farm animals accept a pig who doesn't conform to the farm's social hierarchy?

February 27: Kung Fu Panda



Po is a lazy and clumsy panda, but he secretly dreams of becoming a kung fu legend. When the villainous snow leopard Tai Lung threatens Po's homeland, he is chosen to fulfil an ancient prophecy and defend against the leopard's attack. Training under Master Shifu, Po embarks on an epic high-kicking adventure as he sets out to thwart Tai Lung's evil plans. A DreamWorks animation.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The last year has been a busy one for your Church & Society team, as we worked together with you all to raise funds for food insecurity, refugees and migrants, held multiple donation drives, and advocated for affordable housing. Together, we raised over \$10,000 for different donation drives, allocated another \$5,000 from our Church & Society funds to respond to crises around the world and welcome our new neighbors just down the street at the former Metro Inn. In 2023, we also donated almost 2,000 pounds of food to VEAP. This church never fails to amaze with your extravagant generosity, and thank you all so much for the difference you have made in our community and around the world in 2023.

One of the things that the Church & Society team allocates funds for every year is our Rapid Response Giving. Every year, we set aside \$1000-\$1500 that can be sent to help disaster relief efforts in the United States, and around the world through the United Methodist Committee on Relief. As climate change continues to increase the severity of storms around the world, the need for this kind of response will only continue to grow. If you see a disaster happening around the world, and you feel moved to respond, and would like your church to respond too, you can start the process to make a Rapid Response donation too! All you need to do to start this process is to email Rev. Hope at hhutchison@richfieldumc.org.



January 14-February 11

In January, we will kick off our annual **SOUPER Bowl of Caring Drive**. This annual drive, which partners with the NFL and organizations around the country, seeks to stock food shelves with as much shelf-stable canned soup as possible. Soup is a hearty, healthy meal that can help to keep people warm over the

winter. Starting on Sunday, January 14, and going through Super Bowl Sunday on February 11, Richfield UMC will be collecting canned soup in the Commons area, and collecting online donations for VEAP so that our local food shelf can continue to feed people throughout the coldest months in Minnesota.

As we look forward to the Lenten season, your Church & Society team is looking forward to Minnesota FoodShare. This annual drive, across the state of Minnesota aims to work with all food shelves throughout the month of March to ensure that all of them are fully stocked. This mission has endured throughout all 42 years of this campaign, but it is especially needed this year. As food costs have risen, food shelves around the state have found themselves facing higher demand, as their own costs continue to rise. Join us in March as we join with churches across Minnesota to fill our food shelves this Lenten season.



BEACON CONGREGATIONAL CONVENING

Every year, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, one of our long term mission partners, gathers in January at their congregational convening to celebrate the successes of the past year, and plan for the coming year. This year, we are excited to host this wonderful event at Richfield UMC on Thursday, January 18 from 6:30-8:30pm.

Join hundreds of Beacon community members from other congregations to celebrate the impact of our advocacy and organizing power. We'll ground ourselves in the urgency of the current housing crisis, explore Beacon's proposed interventions and legislative campaigns in 2024, and identify actions we can take to increase access to deeply affordable housing.

We'll hear from Beacon's CEO, Chris LaTondresse, and other housing champions. Plus, we'll spend time in assembly and workshops that will equip us to build the power we need to meet this moment. Light refreshments will be provided.

You can register at the event, or RSVP ahead of time here: <https://www.beaconinterfaith.org/event/congregational-convening-1-18-24/>

FROM THE PARISH NURSE

Time for LIFE: Learning, Inspiration, and Fellowship for Everyone

**Legacy Letters: A Two-Part Series
February 8 and March 14**



It is strongly encouraged to attend both sessions.

Program #1

Sharing Our Lives and Preserving Our Legacies: Why Legacy Letters Matter
Thursday, February 8th
1:00 - 2:30 pm
(both in-person and online offerings)

Program #2

Give the Greatest Gift of All: Complete a Legacy Blessing Letter
Thursday, March 14th
1:00 - 2:30 pm
(both in-person and online offerings)

Presenter:

Lynne Kolze, Legacy Letter Facilitator and Author

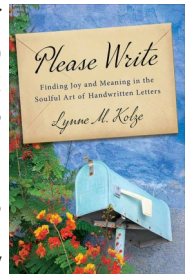
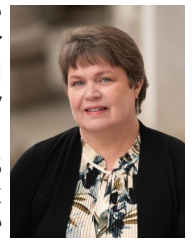
Cost: \$10.00 for both sessions. This fee is to help offset the cost of Time for LIFE programming and is for in-person participants only. Please pay at the first session.

Please RSVP no later than Sunday, February 4th.

In the first session (February), we will be introduced to the importance and joy of writing legacy letters at any time in our lives, but especially in our middle to later years. This will include understanding their historical roots, how one is structured, and why they matter to current and future generations. Several examples of legacy letters will be shared, and participants will be guided in taking some initial steps to crafting their own legacy letters for loved ones.

In the second session (March), we will build upon what we have learned in the previous workshop by drafting our own legacy letter. Lynne will offer writing prompts and give us quiet time to think and write as we begin crafting a legacy blessing letter. As these letters are intended to share a sacred story with our family or loved ones, we will learn ways to present them to our chosen recipients as well.

We are so blessed to have Lynne Kolze, Legacy Letter Facilitator and Author, here to instruct and guide us in the writing of legacy letters. Lynne's educational, career, and volunteer activities have all focused on public service, primarily in the environmental field. During those years, she became interested in the power of storytelling to unite us and to help us solve complex public problems. Lynne has always been fascinated by the ways in which stories allow us to discover our similarities as people and find grace and wisdom in the day-to-day experiences we all have. She is honored to assist others in their own journeys to express their most authentic selves and to share their most cherished life experiences with others through the writing of legacy letters. Lynne believes that few other gifts can surpass the legacy letter in terms of importance, poignancy, value, and generation impact.



For more information about Lynne and her book, *Please Write: Finding Joy and Meaning in the Soulful Art of Handwritten Letters* (Beaver's Pond Press, 2023), visit her website: <https://www.LynneMKolze.com>.

RSVP by Sunday, February 4

Sign up in the Commons, call the church office (612-861-6086), or email kbergeland@richfieldumc.org

Zoom link

Meeting ID: 813-2660-1056 Passcode: 5835
OR Call-In: 312-626-6799, then enter Meeting ID and Passcode (standard rates may apply)

Save the Dates: Time for LIFE Series

Thursday, April 11th

Doug Ohman, a popular historian and entertaining storyteller.

Thursday, May 9th

Dazzling Dave, national yo-yo master.

2024 CHURCH BUDGET: INFORMATION AND VOTING

TOWN HALL: OPERATIONS BUDGET

Sunday, January 21 at 10:35 am in the Sanctuary and by Zoom Meeting ID: 886-0975-2661, Passcode: 5835 or call in: 312-626-6799 (standard rates)

The Finance Team's final affirmed 2024 operations budget will be published on January 17 at richfieldumc.org/statements. Church members are encouraged to read it before voting about it at the church conference on January 28 and/or ask questions at a town hall on January 21.

CHURCH CONFERENCE ON JANUARY 28

Sunday, January 28 at 10:35 am in the Sanctuary and by Zoom Meeting ID: 886-0975-2661, Passcode: 5835 or call in: 312-626-6799 (standard rates)

There is a church conference to receive reports and approve the 2024 operations budget.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR NATE ABOUT THE BUDGETING PROCESS

At the beginning of the year, we hold a church conference for members of the church to vote on an operations budget (our next church conference is on January 28). The budgeting process relies on mutual trust and investment between the church membership, your elected leaders, and the paid staff. Creating the operations budget is a 5-month process leading up to this important day:

1. In late September, paid staff compare the annual budget-to-actuals in their ministry areas (music, curriculum, technology, office supplies, pastoral care, facilities, worship, community events, etc.). Then, they submit proposed budgets based on that information, anticipated (and sometimes rising) costs for the next year, and any new opportunities worth exploring.
2. At the end of October, the stewardship season ends, and the church receives your Annual Giving Commitment for the next year. This is key for the church to build an informed budget. These commitments are grouped with other anticipated revenue sources (CFC tuition, building use fees, grants, etc.) and then put alongside anticipated expenses.

3. In November, the elected leaders of SPRC, Finance, and Ad Board work on the budget. SPRC makes decisions and recommendations regarding staff compensation and benefits. Finance, and then Ad Board, reviews the preliminary budget, asks questions, and makes suggestions. There is a charge conference for the elected leaders of Ad Board and any retired clergy who list this church as their charge to vote on clergy compensation prior to a December 1 deadline as mandated by the Minnesota Annual Conference.
4. In December, staff and the Finance Team make more decisions about where expenses can be cut and discern where additional revenues may be part of the big picture. Usually, people continue returning Annual Giving Commitments throughout the rest of the year.
5. In January, the elected leaders of the Finance Team take a final pass at the budget and affirm it to go before the elected leaders of Ad Board. They then affirm it to go before the membership at the church conference. All members have a vote on the operations budget.

Since the 2019 budgeting process for 2020, we have actively chosen to never “just pass the same budget as last year.” Instead, your paid staff and elected leaders have worked hard to ensure we look at actual numbers, determine where we can find savings, consider the ways we receive revenue, and make their best educated guess for a fresh budget every year. In that time, we’ve switched some of our vendors and negotiated better prices with others, let some items go and invested in others, and always worked to be mindful stewards of the financial resources of the church.

If you personally have questions or concerns, I encourage you to reach out directly to Kathy Gertsema, Business and Administration Coordinator, Win Neuger, Finance Team Chair, or me, Rev. Nate Melcher, Senior Pastor. Thank you for your prayerful support in this important process!

SAVE THE DATE FOR SPECIAL UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

- December 31 Online-Only Worship
- January 28 Church Conference after worship
- February 11 Team Colors Sunday
- February 14 Ash Wednesday
- March 28 Maundy Thursday
- March 29 Good Friday
- March 31 Easter Sunday
- May 26 Online-Only Worship
- June 2 Semi-Annual Meeting and Pot Luck
- June 9 Richfield Bandshell
- July 14 Lake Harriet Bandshell
- August 11 Richfield Bandshell

HEALTH AND SAFETY AS THE CHURCH

In the cold and flu season, please do your part for public safety. Wash your hands, get your COVID-19 vaccine and flu shot, and please stay home if you're sick. Anyone is welcome to wear a face mask on campus. Thank you for looking out for your health and the health of others.

CHURCH SAFETY ONLINE

Scammers send fake emails from bogus email accounts pretending to be church staff or clergy in a "phishing scam" to trick good people like you into sending them gift cards or bank information. Richfield UMC clergy and staff will *never* solicit money, gift cards, or other "assistance" like this. Staff emails *always* come from richfieldumc.org. If you get a scam email, please do not reply in any way. Block the sender and delete the original email. Watch out for online "trolls," or people who harass others online. If someone makes inflammatory remarks, inappropriate comments, or tries to provoke the church into a response, do not respond. Never give out any personal information about staff or members to someone you don't know. If someone needs to "talk to the pastor," send the message to the clergy instead. Thank you for your cooperation.

RUMC LIBRARY NEWS

Instead of an article on a theme, here are a few random one-sentence suggestions: 1. If you wish to have a Bible in worship to follow along, take one from the top-left shelf in the Christian studies section; 2. Take a look at the hymn commentaries in the worship area and learn the background of your favorite Christmas carols and hymns; 3. Check out books paired from two sections, such as cooking and devotions or children's and ethics. (Reflect how each section connects or how they contribute to each other.) 4. Winter's coming; check out a puzzle (and return it so others can enjoy). 5. Make a first-half 2024 resolution to learn about some Biblical theme or book and delve into one or more of the good Bible study commentaries on the shelves below the Bibles. 6. Return, return, return any books you've had out for a while and have read so others might receive the gift each book gives. (And, think of it as both an ethic and a children's story, even for adults.) Thank you.

Rev. Wayne Albertson

TEAM COLORS SUNDAY IS FEBRUARY 11

February 11 is the "Big Game," and everyone is encouraged to wear their favorite team colors to worship that day. Whether it's a football team t-shirt or a hockey jersey, your current school colors or your alma mater, we'll have a vibrant, colorful Sunday gathering to worshipping God with a little fun. This also coincides with the last day of the Souper Bowl food drive and we will have a special blessing in worship.

SEND IN YOUR "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR" POSTCARD PHOTOS WITH A NEW WINTER THEME

We had fun receiving and posting your "Love Your Neighbor" postcards from your 2023 travels. Let's keep it up with a seasonal theme rotation in the new year. Take a photo of you and your "Love Your Neighbor" postcard, then send it to rumc@richfieldumc.org. Postcards are available in the Commons area on campus. The 2024 Winter theme is "Fresh."



CONTINUING OPEN GROUPS

Women Who Read (WWR)—1st Mondays of the Month, 1:30-3:00 pm, online by Zoom

To join by Zoom, email Fern wfalbertson@gmail.com.

If you are a woman who enjoys good books and thoughtful discussion, then consider joining fellow readers for Women Who Read. At the January 8, 2024, meeting (note second Monday) the women of the group recommend books to each other that they would like to read, and in that process, the group develops their book choices for the following year.

The books for February and March 2024 have already been chosen.

The book to read and then discuss at the February (2/5/24) gathering is The Dictionary of Lost Words by Pip Williams

The book to read and then discuss at the March (3/5/24) gathering is Horse by Geraldine Brooks.

Women's Bible Study—Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00 am, Online by Zoom or phone

You are invited to contact Molly, mollyreko@comcast.net or 612-270-4700, our Zoom coordinator, or Ruth Phelps, 952-929-1595, leader. There is plenty of food for thought in scripture, for as old as the scriptures are, they are alive with truth for these days.

Gather to discuss the book and video series by Prof. Amy-Jill Levine, *The Gospel of Mark* on [Amplify Media](#) (get a [free account](#) today). You'll learn, smile, and wonder as Prof. Levine offers new insight with her trademark charm and accessible scholarship.

Wednesday Bible Study—Wednesdays at 9:00 am-10:00 am

Hybrid: Grace Room and [Zoom](#) Meeting ID: 819 9039 0338/Passcode: 5835
or call: (312) 626-6799

Contact Pastor Nate to be on the frequent participant email list for the latest updates.

Gather to discuss the book and video series by Prof. Amy-Jill Levine, *The Gospel of Mark* on [Amplify Media](#) (get a [free account](#) today). You'll learn, smile, and wonder as Prof. Levine offers new insight with her trademark charm and accessible scholarship.

All are welcome to join this weekly Bible Study to discuss *The Gospel of Mark*.

THE CHESTER E. AND MARION D. GROTH MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

The purpose of this Fund is to award annual post-secondary scholarships for qualified students to matriculate and pursue careers in performance, music education or music therapy.

Scholarships will be awarded for tuition for the 2024-2025 school year. Previous recipients are eligible to reapply for the scholarship for up to three additional years or until a Bachelor's Degree is earned, whichever occurs first.

To be eligible to receive this scholarship, an applicant must:

- Be a graduating high school senior from a Minnesota high school
- Be entering college as a freshman

Applications must be received in the church office no later than Noon, Thursday, February 22, 2024. Applicants will be notified if invited to a finalist audition on March 16, 2024.

These scholarships are made possible by the generous gift of Marion Groth on behalf of her husband, Chester.

For more information and an application form, contact the church office, 612-861-6086 or visit the church website richfieldumc.org/events/scholarships



AN EVERYDAY PRAYER LIFE IS FOR EVERYONE

May we devote time and energy to God and neighbor and pray every day for:

- Open minds and hearts for “conflux moments.”
- People in need of a loving church home.
- Our church’s journey toward vitality.

Our prayers are a beautiful expression of care and solidarity for each other.

We pray in celebration and with gratitude.
We pray for those who grieve:

- Lee Weiser in the death of his father, Joseph Weiser.

WELCOME

WELCOME NEW GUESTS ON SUNDAYS

Anyone can make new people feel welcome in the life of the church. **Show up** for worship on campus so new people get excited to be with others. **Show up early** to say “hello” to newcomers while you get a cup of coffee. **Show your welcome** with a friendly attitude that makes people feel at home. Thank you for your inclusive attitude as we build a culture of a friendly church atmosphere.

CHURCH SAFETY ON-CAMPUS

- Be Mindful With How You Enter

The main front doors are nearly always locked for the safety and security of those inside. When you visit campus during business hours, please use the Aiphone intercom system to gain entry. If someone tries to enter with you and you don’t know them, it’s okay to say, “Sorry, I don’t know you. Please use the intercom.” Please do not “piggyback” and enter with someone you don’t know and please don’t take offense if they tell you no. It takes all of us working together to keep the children of CFC safe, the staff and members safe, and the overall building secure. Thank you for your cooperation.



United
Women
in Faith

THANK YOU FROM THE UWF

The UWF (United Women in Faith) would like to thank everyone for their support this year, 2023. The craft fair was well attended, and your support of local businesses is greatly appreciated. We also want to thank everyone who donated goodies for our bake sale and to those who purchased them we hope you enjoyed your treats.



THANK YOU, EVERYONE WHO MADE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL!

Many church staff and servant volunteers invested time and energy into making Christmas Eve worship a special experience. In fact, the entire Advent season was a true blessing, and we are grateful for all who played a role in this.

Whether you hauled items out of storage and decorated the church or you got every piece of paper and email we needed all set to go.

If you lit an Advent candle wreath or sang a joyful song celebrating the arrival of Jesus.

If you are a child in the Christmas Pageant or the parent/guardian who encouraged them to try or the church member who cheered them on.

If you livestreamed worship across the world online or made sure the coffee was hot and ready.

If you drove someone to campus or welcomed someone at the door.

All of these roles - and so many more - didn’t just enhance Advent and Christmas Eve, these roles made it happen!

Thank you for caring about your church!

GROW THE REACH OF YOUR CHURCH!

Sign Up For - Or Resubscribe To - The Church Email List.

Get weekly news updates in the *eHeartline* announcements, a bulletin link and worship preview with *Worship Launchpad*, and updates on pandemic-related announcements, funerals and memorials. Send the emails to a friend if something in it would interest them. Subscribe or resubscribe in seconds at richfieldumc.org/email. Help your church go from **300 to 305 subscribers**.



Engage Your Church On Our Facebook Page.

Interacting with [your church's Facebook content](#) puts it in front of new people. "Like," comment, and share your church's content. "See First" in your News Feed and "Turn On" Notifications so you'll see fresh content. Help your church grow from **602 followers to 605 and more!**



Engage Your Church On Our Youtube Channel.

Engage with [your church's Youtube Channel](#) to put our content in front of new people. "Subscribe" and "Ring the Bell" icon to receive Notifications when new videos come up or we go live. "Like" and "Share" the videos with friends. Help your church grow from **333 to 335 subscribers**.



CAMPUS IS CLOSED DECEMBER 25-29, 2023

Caring for Children and Richfield United Methodist Church will be closed December 25-29, 2023. Your church and CFC staff have shown tremendous dedication, flexibility, and teamwork this year. In recognition of their hard work, the elected leaders of SPRC and the Finance Team affirmed 3 additional days off for that week beyond the regular Christmas paid holidays. With January 1, 2024 as a scheduled paid holiday, the campus reopens on January 2, 2024. **Please tell a staff person "thank you" for their hard work for the mission of your church!**

CHURCH BUS

We are in the midst of the winter season when snowy roads and icy sidewalks often present a barrier to getting out and doing the things we want to do. One of those things can be going to church on Sunday mornings! We are so blessed to have a church bus and team of dedicated drivers to help you get safely to and from church all winter long (except on Sundays when there is too much snow, or it is simply too cold outside).

Whether you are a brand-new rider or a regular, we would love to have you worship with us on Sunday mornings! Please call the church office for more information about the church bus.

HAPPY JAN. & FEB. BIRTHDAYS

January

Rexi Warner	01	Meg Spicher	19
Devin Teal	03	Nakia Neal	19
Lynn Borgeson	04	Steven Gieseke	20
Brooke Nelson	06	Laura Gilmore	23
Alex Restemayer	07	Hope Hutchison	23
Inez Gustafson	08	Anne Ruona	24
Promise Williams	10	Isaiah Crandall	24
Morgan White	11	Swen Crandall	24
John Wittenborg	12	Paul Pieper	25
Terry Bumgarner	13	Renee Jackson	25
Christie Neuger	14	Phyllis Olson	26
Mariah Norberg	14	Lucas Bengtson	27
Jerry Schilling	15	Jane Parry	29
Gavin Locke	15	Vicki Sells	29
Ann Johnson	16	Dave Oliver	29
Kenzie Lambert	16	Phyllis Killam	30
Dorthea Doty	17	Christina Loge	30
Liam Knuttila-Tanhoff	18	Dorothy Holland	31
Olivia Knuttila-Tanhoff	18		
Beverly Borneman	19		
Win Neuger	19		

February

Ron Doncavage	02	Emily White	13
Daniella Callahan	03	Jessica Gieseke	16
Lyra Olson	04	Bea Melcher	17
Bill Johnson	06	Aubrey Nelson	17
Ron Larson	07	Steve Warner	19
Lois Schatschneider	07	John Watne	20
Lori Claussen	07	Betty Friesen	23
Cynthia Knutson	07	Remi Gaertner	24
Jennifer Teal	09	Sandra Williams	25
Katie Labelle	09	Dorothy DeFreese	26
Sharon Gardner	13		



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www.richfieldumc.org

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Heartline

Keeping in touch with the heart of the
Richfield United Methodist Church faith community.

*Please join your church in praying the
Breakthrough Prayer daily at 8:35.*

Worship on Sundays at 9:30 am

⇒ In-Person Worship
in the Sanctuary

⇒ Online Worship
<http://youtube.com/richfieldumc>

⇒ By touch tone phone at
1.888.650.5835

OUR BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

Loving God of all,
renew our hearts and minds.

Reveal your wildest dreams,
breakthrough to each of us.

Unite us in your vision,
equip us for your work.

Transform us by your song,
create our harmony.

May we embrace your future
and be your loving church.

Amen.