

# Racine UMC Newsletter

401 East Main Street, Racine, MN 55967



OPEN HEARTS. OPEN MINDS. OPEN DOORS.

Pastors notes... There's plenty to love about eggs, bunnies and chocolates, but Easter Sunday holds a much deeper meaning. Yes, this highly anticipated holiday offers an opportunity to gather with family, but it can be so much more. On Easter, we remember the love Christ showed mankind when he gave the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf. He is risen from the dead, so we truly have reason to celebrate! While this special day offers a valuable reminder and reason to celebrate, it should by no means be the only day on which we show our gratitude. After all, the essence of Easter is not exclusive to one single day. So let me offer a few tips for incorporating Easter's message into your daily life.

- **Find Meaning Beyond Easter Day** - The resurrection story can be told throughout the year, for it is always imbodied with a deeper meaning. This story forms the essence of our faith; we know that, in Christ, death can be defeated and give way to everlasting life. By remembering this throughout the year, we can find relief from the burden of sin as well as greater joy in the blessings of everyday life. Christ's resurrection gives us a reason to live not only for today, but to sustain hope in our future, no matter how difficult the circumstances we currently face.
- **Show compassion and grace for others**
- **just as Jesus has done for us**
- **Commit to regular prayer**
- **Read relevant Bible passages**
- **Continue to testify**
- **Attend church or participate in a Bible study group.**

**Remember the hope and renewal of Christ's promise after spring has given way to summer.**

Spring lends itself to a greater consciousness of the idea of Easter. During this season, we are surrounded by new beginnings and a fresh sense of optimism. To celebrate Easter year-round is to keep the hope of that special day alive, even as the seasons change. This Easter, go beyond the eggs and candy to find a deeper, more meaningful experience. You can find great hope and fulfillment in Christ's remarkable feats on Easter Sunday and throughout the

**Worship on Sundays:  
In Sanctuary at 8:30am  
&  
Racine UMC Facebook  
Page  
FM Radio 89.7 @8:30am**

**Pastoral Support Team**

Pastor Bridget Sheely

Email: [bridget@countrywidecarriers.com](mailto:bridget@countrywidecarriers.com)

Pastors cell # 507-438-1352

Pastor Jon Marburger

Email: [marburgerjon@gmail.com](mailto:marburgerjon@gmail.com)

Cell #507-227-6711

Pastor Abigail Ozanne

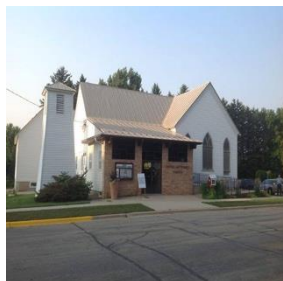
Email: [pastorabigailo@gmail.com](mailto:pastorabigailo@gmail.com)

Cell #507-607-0779

**Racine UMC Office hours  
Thursdays  
5-7pm  
Office Phone: 507-378-4801**

## Grace and Peace in the name of Jesus Christ:

If you have items you would like to be published in the newsletter, please contact our church secretary, Norma Kenning, by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the preceding month by emailing your information to: Racine UMC ([rscumc@hmtel.com](mailto:rscumc@hmtel.com)) Or by bringing your information to Norma during office hours (Thursdays, 5-7) The light of God remains to shine bright in the community of Racine only by your generous giving heart! If you would like to donate a gift, you may send donations to the address above or deliver it in person during Sunday morning worship services.



# Calendar of Events

(Subject to change and/or be added to as the need arises)

## March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
<b>3</b> 8:30 am Worship 	4	5	<b>6</b> Lenten gathering 6:00pm meal followed by group discussion. Hosted by: Brownsdale UMC	<b>7</b> Food Shelf 6-8 pm	8	<b>9</b> 
<b>10</b> 8:30 am Worship 	11	12	<b>13</b> Lenten gathering 6:00pm meal followed by group discussion. Hosted by: Wykoff UMC	<b>14</b> Food Shelf 6-8 pm	15	16
<b>17</b> 8:30 am Worship  	<b>18</b> Brownsdale UMC Noon Community Potluck	19	<b>20</b> Lenten gathering 6:00pm meal followed by group discussion. Hosted by: Grand Meadow UMC	<b>21</b> Food Shelf 6-8 pm	22	23
<b>24</b> 8:30 am Worship  	25	26	27	<b>28</b>  Food Shelf 6-8 pm	<b>29</b>  GOOD FRIDAY Service @ Dexter UMC 7pm	<b>30</b>  HOLY SATURDAY
<b>31</b>  HE IS RISEN						

# March Worship Schedule

**March 3, 2024**

**Pastor Jeremy Girard Leading**

*Third*



SUNDAY

OF LENT

We are now fully on our journey through Lent. Today we will hear from the Gospel of John, it seems, is in a hurry to get to Jerusalem. So, even though we aren't ready for this, here we are today hearing about cleansing the temple even before we get to the teaching or healing or storytelling that we love so much. It's almost as if Jesus – according to John – has an agenda, and it begins with worship. No, wait, it begins with the right kind of worship. Not right in form or structure, not right in genre or setting, but right in intention. Right in presence.

**March 10, 2024**

**Pastor Bridget Leading**

FOURTH SUNDAY IN  
LENT

Ask someone on the street to quote a Bible verse, any Bible verse, and you may get a blank stare. But ask them to name a Bible verse and you are in business: As many will say - John 3:16. It's the perfect verse. Because it seems John 3:16 has become a kind of trademark for society — it provides a way to reduce and simplify one version of the Christian gospel to a quick sound bite.

**March 17, 2024**

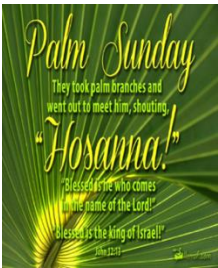
**Pastor Bridget Leading**

FIFTH  
Sunday  
IN  
LENT

Let us come together this day with our focus to be on a day of prayer - for the inspiration to discover and the wisdom to know what is ours to do.. Losing our lives to God does not mean we burn ourselves out to save the world all on our own. Let us remember that losing our lives to God also means trusting that God does not need us to do everything—only the things we are called to do. So, let us find our center as a time to both surrender to God and commit ourselves to discerning God's call to service in the specific neighborhood and community where we are planted.

**March 24, 2024**

**Pastor Jon Leading**



The story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, tells us that after his celebrated arrival. He went into the Temple and looked around at everything. As we gather here for worship today may it be with a sense that Jesus has walked in too and is looking around. May our eyes be open to see Him, may our hearts be ready to be seen by Him, may our worship be worthy of His presence, and may we be transformed so that we see the world through His eyes. Amen



**GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE – March 29, 2024**

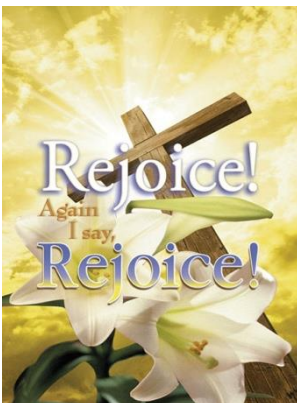
**7:00 pm**

**Hosted by: Dexter UMC**

**No Meal served for this Service**

**MARCH 31, 2024**

**Pastor Jon Leading**



Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed!**

Death has been swallowed in victory.

**The grave has lost its sting.**

Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed!**

**And we are alive in Christ! Glory to God! Alleluia!**

# A LENTEN REFLECTION CONCERNING WORSHIP

Lent gives us an opportunity to reflect, re-connect and repent. Lent is also a wonderful time to find answers to the many questions we have about our faith. One of the basic questions I hear more and more in our current culture is this...

## WHY DO WE NEED TO GATHER TO WORSHIP?

We were created to worship God. Whether we are praising Him in an extravagant celebration of joy, a quiet expression of reverence and humility, or out of simple obedience to His voice, our worship is an outward expression of what's going on in the inward heart of mankind. Worship has often been misunderstood as the musical prelude to the sermon, rather than the means by which we, as the people of God, invite the dominion of His Kingdom to be established on earth. The purpose of our worship is to glorify, honor, praise, exalt, and please God. Our worship must show our adoration and loyalty to God for His grace in providing us with the way to escape the bondage of sin, so we can have the salvation He so much wants to give us.

## HOW, WHEN and WHERE DO WE WORSHIP?

Since God is the object of our worship, He and He alone has the right to determine how we are to worship Him. Worship is a time when we pay deep, sincere, awesome respect, love, and fear to the one who created us. Our singing, praying, studying His word, giving, and communion are designed by God to bring us closer to Him and to cause us to think more like He thinks, thus becoming more like Him. James 4:8 tells us to, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." Our worship not only honors and magnifies God, but it is also for our own edification and strength. Worship helps us develop a God-like and Christ-like character. We become like unto those we admire and worship. When we worship God, we tend to value what God values and gradually take on the characteristics and qualities of God, but never to His level.

**To call ourselves children of God, we must be in a constant atmosphere of wanting to learn more and to learn we must be in community with others who are aspiring to draw closer to God. Worship is built and based off coming together in community. We can believe, love and know God but we cannot grow in faith without joining together in community.**

**Jesus said: Matthew 18:20**

**For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."**

The guide to worship is based in the beginning chapters of the Old Testament. After giving the Ten Commandments, the Lord gave explicit directions to Moses about building a tabernacle of worship in which He would come to dwell among His people (Exodus 25:8, 9). The people spent a year at Sinai building the tabernacle according to God's pattern and learning how to worship. God's plan for His people's redemption was to be realized through the priestly ministry of worship. In Christ, all believers have become a "royal priesthood" that

we “may proclaim the praises of Him who called [us] out of the darkness unto His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

**But the command to worship did not stop there. We are to this day in covenant with God (promising our obedience to worship Him) and called to be His “chosen people.” Through Jesus Christ we have been adopted into his grace.**

**MANY TIMES IN SCRIPTURE OUR CALL TO WORSHIP IS EXPRESSED.  
HERE ARE JUST A FEW FOR YOU TO MEDITATE ON THROUGHOUT LENT.**

Psalm 84:10

For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside.

I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God  
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.”

Luke 4:8

Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”

Psalm 99:5

Exalt the Lord our God  
And worship at His footstool;  
Holy is He.

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Psalm 100:1-4

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.  
Serve the Lord with gladness;  
Come before Him with joyful singing.  
Know that the Lord Himself is God;  
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;  
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.  
Enter His gates with thanksgiving  
And His courts with praise

Hebrews 10:24-25

24And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Isaiah 56:7

Even those I will bring to My holy mountain  
And make them joyful in My house of prayer.  
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar;

Revelation 14:7

and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”

**Let us unite in love to praise our Lord and Savior  
so we may grow together in our  
Christian Maturity!**

**And always remember Jesus encourages us to  
invite others as well!!**

## 4 new districts pave way for strategic alignment, diversity, innovation



An approximate outline of the four new districts.

**By:** Christa Meland

For the past two years, the Minnesota Conference has piloted having four district superintendents rather than five—with churches in the Big Waters District shared between North Star, River Valley, Southern Prairie, and Twin Cities superintendents.

Bishop Lanette Plambeck and the Bishop’s Leadership Team (BLT) have spent months exploring redistricting possibilities, and they are officially recommending moving to four new districts going forward, each of which will include a mix of urban, suburban, and rural churches. The district lines have been redrawn, with the new lines moving through and across what is now the Twin Cities district. All churches currently in the Big Waters District will have a dedicated superintendent under this new plan, which will go to the 2024 Annual Conference Session in May for a vote and take effect July 1. The BLT addresses key adaptive questions and serves as a think-tank of sorts for discerning new strategies, with a focus on creativity, generative ideas, and leaning into new ways of being church. The team continues the work of the Transitional Table, a former think tank that was called together in June 2022 by then-interim Bishop David Bard, and intentionally includes some members of that team. The initial impetus for going to four districts was to reduce costs in recognition of financial realities facing the conference, but there are additional benefits that have shaped the shift as well: creating strategic alignment around our shared mission, addressing the metro-Greater Minnesota divide that conference constituents have named in various listening sessions, and investing in innovation. The change provides new opportunities to live into our gospel imperatives to grow in love of God and neighbor, reach new people, and heal a broken world.

Each superintendent will have approximately the same number of churches in their care and will work with the full breadth of church sizes and geographies across the state—thus enabling new partnerships and learning opportunities within districts. “Realigning the districts gives us a great opportunity for collaboration across the

state of Minnesota,” said Rev. Michelle Hargrave, who now superintends the River Valley District. “Each superintendent having the opportunity to work with rural, town and country, suburban, and urban churches is going to change the way we work together and the way we think about ministry.”

The redistricting is a continuation of the work of the Transitional Table, whose members reported at the 2023 Annual Conference that they were coalescing around the idea of four permanent districts, each of which encompasses both rural and urban churches, and renaming the role of “district superintendent” to “conference superintendent”—which is also part of the new plan.

Under the Book of Discipline, an annual conference chooses its number of districts, and the Appointive Cabinet draws the district lines. Bishop Lanette chose to expand that process by entrusting the redrawing of the district lines to the Bishop’s Leadership Team, with input from the Appointive Cabinet. A sub-group of the BLT was tasked with exploring how to consolidate the five current districts into four. They mapped out a variety of possible boundaries based on rivers, highways, and population density—and ultimately recommended the model that uses population density. In the coming months, there will be an opportunity for Minnesota United Methodists to be involved in the process of naming the four new districts. Something that appealed to BLT members is that each new district will encompass the richness in diversity that’s visible throughout the state: woodlands, prairies, lakes, and rivers, as well as a wide variety of languages and cultures.

Bishop Lanette said when she visited each of the current districts last year, both clergy and laity voiced concern about a perceived disconnect that seemed to separate the Twin Cities metro area from the rest of the conference. Their input motivated her to design a way forward that would help address that gap. “I believe the proposed redistricting provides an opportunity to close that gap and invites each district into new and renewed relationships that will foster unity, support, innovation, and mission effectiveness within the Minnesota Conference,” she said. “I am looking forward to the varied ways each district will embrace a new way forward and embody what it means to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

# Hoppy Easter

S S Y E Q S A S P R I N G B R E A K E X S E H K  
 T E A M G W K S Y V F F U T Y T T T D G K G U V  
 I G A G U C H D W H X U K X U A N E V C C X Y V  
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 B X G R A S S B T U L I P S S P G M G G Z B L A  
 R F T U M C C O L O R I N G E N U I T T S H W M

Basket	Blue	Bonnet	Bunny	Candy	Carrot
Chicks	Chocolate	Coloring	Cottontail	Daffodil	Decorate
Ducks	Dyed Eggs	Easter Basket	Eggs	Flowers	Grass
Green	Happy	Hard Boiled	Hats	Hidden	Hippity
Hoppity	Jelly Beans	Lily	Marshmallows	Pastel	Peeps
Pink	Plastic Eggs	Posies	Purple	Rabbits	Spring Break
Sweets	Tulips	White	Yellow		



Racine United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 127  
Racine, MN 55967

**RACINE  
UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH  
Prairieland Parish**

401 E. Main St.  
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Phone:

507-378-4801

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rscumc@hmtel.com

Our mission is  
to make disciples  
of Jesus Christ for  
the transformation  
of the world

Sunday Morning Schedule

8:30 am in person

Online

Radio 89.7 FM

Church Website

<https://www.umcracinemn.org>

  
**March 2024**