

THE MESSENGER

The United Methodist Church in Stow



February 2025

All of the fun and traditions of Christmas are now in the past. The celebration of Easter is coming, but it is still a long way away. So now we are stuck with February.



But February is not such a bad month. It has the unforgettable Ground Hog Day. Also Valentine's Day, Presidents Day, and it is Black History month. I am sure there are some other exciting events I have missed. And if that isn't enough it is the middle of Winter. Well maybe February isn't many people's favorite.



But there is one aspect of February that we forget. It is a time of change. Here is a fact that you are probably not aware of. During the month, almost every day has 2 minutes more of daylight than the previous day. That is the sun rises one-minute earlier and sets one-minute later. I don't know about you, but for me that brings hope for the spring. Another reason for optimism is that the winter is now half over, and we can now say the cup is only half full.

One part of this month that I like is that the Lenten Roses in my garden begin to bloom. That is a sure sign of things to come.

But I think the biggest reason that February is good is because our chili cook-off is coming soon.



Upcoming Events

Worship Planning Meeting

All are invited to attend a worship planning meeting on Sunday, **Feb. 9th** following the service. This will be an opportunity to weigh-in on scripture lessons, themes, and music for the upcoming worship services. We will continue to meet monthly on the second Sunday of the month going forward. The meetings should last no more than one hour. Please plan to attend.



CHILI-FEST and Dessert Auction is coming! Mark your calendars for Saturday 2/22/25 at 5PM. Signups will be on the tripod soon for chili or soups to be judged, desserts to be auctioned and other items for the chili/soup dinner. Proceeds from the dessert auction will be split between trustees and hospitality. This is a fun evening, with good food, fellowship and some friendly auction high jinks.



Book Club will be meeting on Monday, Feb 24th at 3 pm in the church parlor to discuss The Memory Police by Yoko Ogawa. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion!





From the Stow UMC Preschool.....

The families and teachers of Stow UMC Preschool were happy to be back together after Winter Break. Our units have focused on snow, arctic animals and other winter themes. The students also enjoyed a fun PJ and Hot Chocolate Day!

The Stow UMC Preschool is now registering for classes for the 2025/26 School Year (beginning in September of 2025). All registrations will be taken via email.

If you know of any families with 3, 4, or 5 year olds who are looking for a preschool for the Fall, please spread the word. Families of church members also get priority registration!

Anyone interested can visit our website at umcstow.org/umc-stow-pre-k for further class information, or email our Registrar, Karen McCaffrey, at stowumcpreschool@outlook.com

Noisy Offering



We collected **\$132 on Jan 26th** for our Noisy Offering. Thank you! This offering is collected on the 4th Sunday of each month. Any loose change or other money collected goes to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for their missions. Please save your change for our next collection on February 23rd. Thank you!

Please keep saving your Acme Cash Back receipts dated August 1, 2024 thru February 15, 2025.. When you shop Acme Fresh Market and purchase qualifying products, Acme will donate a portion of your total to the church! Please place your receipts in the donation "church" located in the outer narthex.



Sign Up For Safe Space Training! It's Free!

Are you ready to impact your congregation or your workplace? Come experience an empowering Safe Space Training at The Church in Silver Lake on Saturday, February 22, 2025, from 9:00 AM to Noon.

Guided by Ken Ditlevson, one of the leading LGBTQ+ experts, this engaging workshop will provide you with the tools and expertise to create a welcoming, inclusive, safe space.

Perks:



Enjoy a complimentary breakfast!



****Registration is FREE! ****

Don't miss out—space is limited! Register today using the link below and join us in making our community more welcoming.

<https://forms.gle/t2spxAjiVMno1ACo8>

Let's build connections of knowledge and acceptance together!



Thank you for keeping our shelves stocked!!

We are currently in need of the following:

Spaghetti noodles, pasta sauce, canned ravioli, canned fruit, Ramen noodles, pancake syrup.

Thank you for your continued support!!





The **2025 Flower Chart** is up in the hallway outside the offices. We still have many weeks open. Please sign up to donate flowers to beautify the communion table. You do not have to buy flowers, you may supply your own, but please sign up on the chart so we know which Sundays will be covered.

Offering Envelopes



The 2025 Offering Envelopes are here and ready to be picked up.

Here are the YouTube links for the February worship services.

Feb 2 - <https://youtube.com/live/5d3DMiSrM6g?feature=share>

Feb 9 - https://youtube.com/live/_2n2C3gqkgk?feature=share

Feb 16 - <https://youtube.com/live/P5BteroVjMQ?feature=share>

Feb 23 - https://youtube.com/live/OsCMFzS_-v0?feature=share

Something for the Post-Christmas Blues

I said to myself, "Let's go for it—experiment with pleasure, have a good time!" ... Then I took a good look at everything I'd done, looked at all the sweat and hard work. But when I looked, I saw nothing but smoke. Smoke and spitting into the wind. There was nothing to any of it. Nothing. Ecclesiastes 2:1a, 11 (MSG)

We got super into the Christmas Spirit this year. At-home Advent devotionals, cheesy Christmas movies, icicle lights trimming the house. Embracing my suburban-middle-aged-dad-ness, I even turned the lamp post into a Christmas tree. It's stunning(ly gaudy).

We've decided to keep up the decorations until Lent. Figured we might need some extra light and wonder. A little something to stave off the post-Christmas blues. But I know it's temporary. I'll probably get wicked bummed out after I put away everything. Was it all Nothing?

With apologies to Drs. Thurman and Seuss, it can be hard for me to hold onto the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christmas without the visual cues. I know I should internalize it. Deck the halls of my weary winter heart with the bright light of God's radiant glory no matter the season and all that. But for those dark, dreary days when the inner light needs extra wattage, it'd be nice to have a little outer something to outshine the dreaded inner feeling that it's all Nothing.

Maybe I'll keep up one little light as a reminder. Or the gaudy lamp post. Ah, heck! Maybe I'll keep up all the decorations—inside and out! But what would the neighbors think?!

Well, maybe they also need a little outer something to outshine the dreaded inner Nothing.

Prayer

Radiant God, illuminate my heart with the glow of your Everything year-round.

Chris Mereschuk

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
9am Sunday School 10am Worship Service						
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Holy Communion	9am Jazzercise 9am-12pm Food Pantry 2pm CYMC mtg 6:30pm Scout Troop 270/FH	5:30pm Jazzercise	9am Jazzercise 9am-12pm Food Pantry	5:30pm Jazzercise 6-8pm Food Pantry 6pm Chancel Choir 7pm Brees Bells	9am Jazzercise Office closed	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Worship Planning Meeting following the service	9am Jazzercise 9am-12pm Food Pantry 6:30pm Scout Troop 270/FH	5:30pm Jazzercise 7pm Committee Night	9am Jazzercise 9am-12pm Food Pantry	5:30pm Jazzercise 6-8pm Food Pantry 6pm Chancel Choir 7pm Brees Bells	9am Jazzercise Office closed	9am-4pm Cub Scout Pack Blue & Gold Banquet
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	9am Jazzercise 9am-12pm Food Pantry 6:30pm Scout Troop 270/FH	9am-12pm Helping Hands 5:30pm Jazzercise	9am Jazzercise 9am-12pm Food Pantry	5:30pm Jazzercise 6-8pm Food Pantry 6pm Chancel Choir 7pm Brees Bells	9am Jazzercise Office closed	10am set up/FH 5pm Chili-Fest & Dessert Auction
23	24	25	26	27	28	
12pm-8pm Scout Troop 270 Pasta Dinner Noisy Offering	9am Jazzercise 9am-12pm Food Pantry 3pm Book Club 6:30pm Scout Troop 270/FH	5:30pm Jazzercise	9am Jazzercise 9am-12pm Food Pantry	5:30pm Jazzercise 6-8pm Food Pantry 6pm Chancel Choir 7pm Brees Bells	9am Jazzercise Office closed	



United Methodist Church
In Stow
4880 Fishcreek Rd.
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GROW-GATHER-GO

**RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED**

Contact us:

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Our Mission: Grow in Faith in Christ~ Reach Out in God's Love

Pastor: Pastor Michael Swab: 330.673.7752 swabcats@yahoo.com

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Director of Music Ministries: Jeremy Gilpatric: jer4192@yahoo.com

Director of Vacation Bible School: Karen Rocco: kdrocco6@aol.com

UMC Preschool: Karen McCaffrey: stowumcpreschool@outlook.com

Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am– 3:00 pm

Deadline for the Sunday Worship bulletin: Wednesdays at noon

Deadline for the newsletter, *The Messenger*: 24th of each month

Don't forget our Permanent Endowment Fund in your will. Make The United Methodist Church in Stow a part of your financial planning.