

## Sunday Service is at 9:45 AM

- Feb. 1 Micah 6:1-8  
1 Corinthians 1:18-31  
Matthew 5:1-12
- Feb. 8 Isaiah 58:1-12  
1 Corinthians 2:1-12  
Matthew 5:13-20
- Feb. 15 Exodus 24:12-18  
2 Peter 1:16-21  
Matthew 17:1-9
- Feb. 22 Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7  
Romans 5:12-19  
Matthew 4:1-11
- Mar. 1 Genesis 12:1-4  
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17  
John 3:1-17

## HOW TO FIND US



### United Methodist Church Of Grand Rapids

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# February 2026

United Methodist Church  
Of Grand Rapids  
1701 SE 5th Avenue  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

# RAPIDS CONNECTION



 **Ash Wednesday - February 18th: Our Ash Wednesday service will be at 6:30 pm with the imposition of ashes.**

**GROW**  
*in love of  
God and neighbor*

**REACH**  
*new people*

**HEAL**  
*a broken world*

**STAFF**

**Pastor**

Rev. James Crecelius

**Administrator**  
Jodi Martin

**Accompanists**  
Susan Hoolihan

**Ready Set Grow  
Preschool**  
Mary Hanson  
Shari Tverberg

**Custodial**  
Louis Baumel

**Office Hours**  
Jodi:  
M-F, 9am-3pm

Pastor Jim:  
M-F, 9am-Noon &  
By appointment

Louie:  
Mondays - and as  
needed for special  
events

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4:10

## MISSIONS

**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!** This February we would like to take a moment to THANK our congregation for all of the special ways you have supported the Mission work of UMCGR. You have willingly shared your \$, your time and your talents to help others in our world and in our community!

**GRACE House:**

**Thank you all for your continued support of the homeless in our community!**

The board held the annual meeting on 1/13/26. The following board members were elected officers for 2026: Jim Crecelius-President; Luke St. Germain-Vice President; Andy Morgan-Secretary and Angie Tanner-Treasurer. Committee chairs appointed include Angie Tanner-finance; Megan Hilback-board development; Jim Crecelius-fundraising, Andy Morgan-building & grounds. Feel free to speak with any board member with questions.

The GRACE House mission is, "to provide safe, temporary shelter for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and connect them to community resources". Individuals interested in GRACE House and its mission are encouraged to be involved on a committee or the board and can do this by calling GRACE House, 326-2790. Volunteers are extremely important to the success of GRACE House serving 2,408 hours in 2025 and are needed for overnight shifts as well as breakfast, lunch, and dinner meal shifts.

**QUILTERS: 100+ QUILTS MADE IN 2025!** Quilts were taken to Community Connect, Foster Love and AEOA as well as given to each of the Christmas Families. Quilts were given to the UMC staff as a thank you for all they do for all of us. In 2026, we will be making some twin size quilts to be given to older children who come to Foster Love. We truly appreciate the financial support and the large piece fabric donations!

**TOYS FOR TOTS:** We hosted the Itasca area Toys for Tots distribution on 12/12 & 13. The final numbers are in! What a blessing this mission is to so many disadvantaged families in our community. This year, **1012 Children Ages 0-18 years old (338 families)** were served. In 2024, 962 children (290 families) were served. We are happy to be a part of this community project.

*We don't expect everyone to donate and/or volunteer for every opportunity we present, but we hope that you will prayerfully consider missions that speak to your heart!*



**The Chosen Bible Study - Season 4 Begins Thursday, February 5th at 5:30pm**

There is no need to have attended the Season 1 - 3 study. It is recommended (but not required) to have watched Season 1 - 3 which you can find on The Chosen App for free. Dinner is served at 5:30 and we watch the video as we eat, discussion follows. **Thursdays, 5:30—7:30pm, February 5 - March 26, 2026.**

How exciting that we're bringing back the Gala this year! We have several folks and members of the congregation who are creating wonderful gifts and crafts to be a part of the silent auction. I'm trying to add my own contribution putting together some things in my wood shop. To do so, I've had to purchase a couple additional power tools.....(Darn! Well, if I *have* to....since it's for the church and all)

But I needed to practice with them on spare pieces of wood from the scrap bin from other projects before I could trust myself with them on the expensive wood for the projects. (Wow, does wood cost so much these days!) Sorry, that's an issue for another Pastor's Corner.

I remember making a candle sconce for my mother and a wall clock for dad in Shop Class in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Thank goodness for Mr. McMillen, the shop teacher, and his patience with me.

Our journey of faith as we grow as disciples is a process of learning and discovery. As we begin following Jesus, it is a new way of living; one I and many feel unaccustomed to in those early days. We're learning new skills, discovering new understandings, and seeing life in new ways. It's a bit like learning carpentry. (I understand myself more of a "wood butcher" than carpenter).

We begin with foundational tools and learn how they can "Build" a life in Christ. Just as learning how to use a new tool, the first attempts don't always come out the way we envisioned or hoped. But that's why we practice; learn how the tool feels in our hands, get accustomed to how it shapes and changes the wood you're working with. As we move to other projects, other tools are needed. Not "Better" or more "sophisticated" tools; just different tools for different projects needed to be done.

As we grow and continue in our journey of discipleship, we discover other spiritual disciplines, deeper ways of following Christ, a larger array of Means of Grace. It is good to intentionally add these "tools" into our tool chest of discipleship. The more we work our "trade" of following Jesus, the more adept we will be in crafting our lives in Christ.

Sometimes I'm not so patient with myself as I should be. I have a project I want to accomplish, and I don't allow myself the time and practice I need with the tool. The results are usually evident that I worked in haste. Then there are times when I procrastinate, and the job falls behind because I didn't apply myself to becoming competent with the tool and the deadline is missed or the work rushed, and the project lessened because of it. This is why a disciple applies themselves to the journey daily...as you would a relationship, for that's what it is!

In this season of Epiphany, as we move toward Lent, I encourage you to daily walk with Christ in conversation and commitment: Discipleship. Learn from the Master carpenter in the use of spiritual disciplines as you grow in Christ as a follower in the ways of Jesus.

Be God's, Pastor Jim

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## Photo directory update from Roni Skoglund, Membership Secretary:

**Hello Everyone, I hope this message finds you are doing OK. I have rediscovered that OK can be a very powerful state of mind. To me, it means that although you haven't accomplished all of your goals, you can feel satisfaction that you're still moving toward them. Many of you know that I**

**have taken on Finance Treasurer duties in addition to my membership duties. I haven't put as much effort into getting the directory done as I could have done. The good news is that I will be sending it to the printers the week of January 20<sup>th</sup>. The estimated turnaround time is 8-12 weeks, which will put delivery in March-April timeframe. A delay, I know, but it will be a wonderful springtime gift for all of us. God's blessing to all.**





December 2025 Monthly Snap Shot			
	Income	Expenses	Net Income
General Fund	27,176	27,039	137
Full Year 2025	299,903	298,438	1,465
Monthly average - 2025	24,992	24,870	122

Thank you for your continued support of the day to day ministry of our church. We try to be careful stewards of your gifts.

### News From The Finance Committee: Online Giving - Change

Our new online giving platform is up and running. If you had a reoccurring contribution on the old system, you will need to set that up again. We apologize for any inconvenience. Scan the QR Code to donate online.



2025 Giving Statements were mailed on 1/26/26 or handed out at church 1/25/26.

### News From the Office: Database Update:

During the month of January, the Monday and Friday emails came to you from BOTH the old & new systems to make sure everyone is receiving the emails from the new system. In February emails will only come from the new system. **Please make sure that you are receiving the emails from the following email address: [noreply@people.myamplify.io](mailto:noreply@people.myamplify.io) if you are not receiving the emails or would like to be added to the email list, contact Jodi.** Information will be coming about how you can access your profile on the new system in the coming weeks. The new Website will hopefully be up and running by mid-February and we will also have an App for the church in the near future. Blessings, Jodi



**NOTE: When I send Mass Emails such as the Monday & Friday message you will not be able to reply to those messages. You will need email me directly at [secretary@umcgrmn.org](mailto:secretary@umcgrmn.org) by creating a new email. I apologize for any inconvenience. Jodi**

### Lent:

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on the Saturday before Easter (often called Holy Saturday). Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "lecten", which means "Spring". The season is a preparation for celebrating Easter. Historically, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by converts and then became a time for penance by all Christians. The First Sunday describes Jesus' temptation in the wilderness; and the Sixth Sunday (Palm Sunday), shares the story of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. From Palm Sunday to the Following Saturday is Holy Week which includes Maundy Thursday (Christ's Last Supper in the Upper room with his disciples) and Good Friday (Jesus' crucifixion). The Great Three Days, from sunset on Maundy Thursday through sunset on Easter Day are the climax of Lent (and the whole Christian year) and a bridge taking us into the Easter Season.



## Youth News!



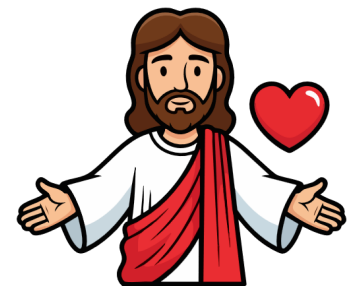
And we're off! - into the second semester of the Youth Fellowship year! We had a pretty successful first half of the year, finishing it off with a Lock-In, shopping for Families for Christmas gifts, and then our Christmas party! It's great to begin with more new faces this semester – Welcome to Aiden & Chance! As we look to the coming semester, we're scheduling a Youth Sunday, trip to Duluth, hopefully one to the Twin Cities on the theme of Race Relations and Restorative Justice (which will include ValleyFair, of course), tubing in Coleraine, and even a Late Winter/Spring Retreat! All these, plus our regular meetings. Our theme for this Semester comes from Dr. Suess; What if I ran the Zoo? We're re-imagining and re-envisioning what church is? Better question – **Who** church is and are? (But that's part of the conversation).

As we continue to build both the program and the number of youths involved, the group wants to put out the invitation again to all Junior & Senior High youth in our congregation; Come join us on 1st and 3rd Sunday evenings at 6:30 to 7:45! There's great fun (and prizes to be won), engaging discussions, new adventures, food, and learning together what it might really mean to be a Jesus Follower!

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### A Message Our Lay Leader:

Does anyone remember singing this Sunday School song;  
Love, Love, LOVE. That's what it's all about!  
God loves us, We love each other  
Mother, Father, Sister, Brother~  
Everybody sing and **shout**, cause that's what it's all about  
It's about love, Love, LOVE!



This is what popped into my head as I prayed for words to write February's newsletter article, how appropriate! With the chaos and upsets, the hurts and uglies, the dark and disastrous that seems to be engulfing the news, what can be done? What can we do? We can **LOVE** ♡

It is what God instructs us to do as Jesus shares in Matthew 22:36-40

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

It's not about who is in office, or who is doing what or not, it is about what we can do, here in our homes, our communities, it is what's commanded of us, we are to **LOVE** 'cause that's what it's **all** about according to Jesus!

I believe, When we love, we pray, when we pray, we lift up hopes, when hopes are raised, light shines and when the light shines, God is present! This is still His world, His Creation, His love and all He needs is for each of us to spread it, to share it, to embrace it and pass it on. . .

Another favorite song in my heart; What the World Needs Now is Love ~ I hope it triggers you to look it up and your soul to singing, especially the chorus:

What the world needs now is love, sweet love

It's the only thing that there's just too little of  
What the world needs now is love, sweet love  
No, not just for some but for everyone

remember, it's for **everyone!**

Keep \***H O P E** in our Lord, for He will never leave us nor forsake us,

Your Lay Leader, Teresa

— **HAPPY** —  
**VALENTINES**  
♡ **DAY** ♡

## KEENAGERS (women & men 55+) who stay active, engaged and youthful in spirit!

Time to restart this group! I'm asking those interested to send me an email with your name, phone number, email address PLUS comments on what type of events/activities you would like to do as a group. It will take a couple months to get this set up and running. Thank you for your input and signing up. Faye Mostoller ([jeanettemostoller@gmail.com](mailto:jeanettemostoller@gmail.com))



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## Congregational Care & Hospitality

**Lumberjack Day** was a wonderful event with eight- five people attending and most wearing buffalo plaid and flannel. Many people helped with baking apple pie, bringing stew, beans, potatoes, mac-n-cheese and LOTS of cornbread. The tables were set with white placemats and lumberjack napkins to add to the festivity. We even had birthday cake in honor of Dave Hutchin's 95th birthday. Dave's lumberjack name for the day was High Rigger Hutchins and he received lots of cards in a leather rucksack. Kelly Smith was an excellent BINGO caller and the many winners were surprised by what was inside the plain bagged prizes they chose. It's a blessing to be part of a church family and share a meal and some fun together!



**Valentine Care Lists** are available in the narthex on Sunday mornings. The names and addresses of shut-ins or people with special needs are provided so you can reach out to them with a call, note, or visit by Valentine's Day. Just contact as many as you wish. If you need a list to be emailed or snail -mailed, just request one from Nancy (218-256-7711). Even people who are gone for the winter can receive a list and participate. Maybe you missed the chance to do this at Christmas, so this is another opportunity.

**Nametags** are helpful for learning who everyone is. If you attend regularly and would like to order one there are two ways to do it. Sign your name on the list at the Info Desk on Sunday. If you wish to reimburse the church, it is \$10.

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## Family Ministry Coordinator

For the next couple of weeks, we'll be testing a new learning format for Discovery Zone called Super Book! It's a wonderful biblical based video curriculum. I'm still looking for people to help lead Discovery Zone on Sunday mornings. No prep, just show up and help the kids. I would like 4-8 new people so we can have 2 leaders each week and preferably only have to lead every 8 weeks. Couples are welcome to help! Blessings, Jodi



## Young Families ~ Reminder:

**Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 1st. We will have an organizational meeting following the service so I can get a feel of what you would like to see happen with this developing ministry. Bring your thoughts and ideas about Discovery Zone (Sunday School), Nursery, and Family & Children's activities.**

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## Strock Missionaries, An Important Message From The Mission Team:

Our missionary, Greg Strock and family are experiencing a crisis. We learned about their family crisis through their letter "**Wounded on the Front Lines**" sent December 12, 2025. **The full letter is posted on the Mission Board on the kiosk in the narthex or you can read it on the link below.**

Greg and Kori appreciate your love and prayers as well as the yearly UMC financial commitment. We will be offering a special opportunity to financially help them. **If you would like to contribute, checks made out to UMCGR (with Strock in the memo line) will be accepted until February 15.** Then UMCGR will send a check to Josiah Venture for their benefit.

Greg would like to personally thank each of you for your donations. We have asked Jodi to keep a list of contributors so that we can give it to Greg. It is also possible to contribute directly through Josiah Venture. The link is <https://mailchi.mp/0a0647589ed2/wounded-on-the-front-lines>



# FEBRUARY



- 1 Jim Danielson
- 2 Emily Meyer
- 1 Cindy Ridley
- 3 Mike Gorham
- 4 Gene Rasmussen
- 5 Keith Seward
- 7 April Akre
- 9 Sheila Weeks
- 10 David Strock
- 14 Jodi Martin

- 15 JoLynn Linder
- 15 Matthew Buchacker
- 18 Zach Martin
- 20 Mike Skoglund
- 20 Dean Anderson
- 21 Blaine Sawdey
- 22 Dale Anderson
- 25 Donna Schuder

- 1 Tommy & Sherry Thompson
- 2 Louie & Sandy Baumel
- 27 Jim & Rae Stephens



**Hospitality MINISTRY**


**Coordinator:**  
**Nancy O'Toole**

*The captain will contact you if there is a need for help serving a lunch, funeral or other event.*

Marie Duffy	Gloria Gooler
Deb Hagenbuck	June Johnson
Sue Kolka	Sally LaDoux
Becky Larson	Lisa Randall
Gene & Linda Rasmussen	Justine Williams

**Congratulations to Cole and Mackenzie!!!**

Their family welcomed baby boy Archer. We have started a meal train for quick easy meals. No food restrictions. Favorites are hot dishes and tacos/mexican. Or gift card Ideas - Jimmy Johns, Subway, Sammy's, Target/ Amazon/Walmart. Contact Mackenzie to drop off meals. Call Jodi in the church office for their address/phone number.



**Thank You** Dave Hutchins would like to post his "Thanks" for the many cards and birthday greetings he received on Lumberjack Sunday.

**Thank You** Thank you for all the Christmas cards and well wishes. Bertha Hamilton.

## "Spring Fling" Gala:

If you remember back in 2020, we held a Gala as a UMCGR fund raiser. (It was a pretty great success!) Well, after a 6-year hiatus, it is scheduled for **Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> of this year!!**



Please start thinking about ways you can help. We'll need donations of items for the silent auction, a crew to work the event, a pair of folks to coordinate and collect the items for the silent auction, and a couple people to partner with Pastor Jim to organize and coordinate the event!

**Please circle this date!** The Finance Committee seeks to make this an important tool for empowering mission and ministry in 2026!

## Fat Tuesday: Feb. 7th from 5:30 to 7:30!

For a third consecutive time we're having a Fat Tuesday party. Fat Tuesday is the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. In New Orleans it Mardi Gras! Here at church, it's a Mardi Gras themed party & Square Dance! As we have each year, we've contracted again with Dan Sahlstrom, one of the Mid West's best Square Dance Callers! Along with the square dancing we have games and prizes, crafts, dinner (including authentic Jambalaya!), and more!

Come, dressed for the Mardi Gras celebration if you want!

This year the date is Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:30!

This is a wonderful way to introduce a friend or neighbor to our UMCGR family!

Hope to see ya' there – and bring a friend!!

