

# The Applesseed

La Crescent and Dakota-Riverside United Methodist Church

## From the Pastor's Pen

**Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**  
Almost ten years ago, I was sitting in a dentist's office with a toothache. We had recently moved, I was soon to start seminary, and I was preparing for my first Sunday as a pastor. A tooth issue was about the last thing I needed at a time when so many things were changing and life felt so uncertain, but there I was, waiting to find out what needed to be done.

In the waiting room, I did what everyone else was doing: I pulled out my phone and started looking to see what could occupy my time and—what mattered more—my mind. I am not exactly sure how I ended up on the page I found, but it was an article in the *Wisconsin Life* section of WPR titled “**August Rites of Passage.**” I decided to read it, and it ended up being exactly what I needed at that time in my life.

The article, written by a schoolteacher, was about how she teaches her kids about the concept of *liminality*, or the “spaces in-between” in life. The image she used was the month of August because it marks the end of summer before the school year begins. She talked about her kids and how August was the month where that last bit of summer became even more precious as the last lazy days were ending. She also wrote about her children moving toward adulthood, noting how summers mark new “rungs on the ladder to adulthood” for them. My own son,

Noah, is now very close to being a teenager, but when I read this article, he was only around two years old—my, how time goes!

This month of August also marks my time in La Crescent at a full year. Last August was a very liminal month for me because I was leaving my old appointment, but since I didn't start here until the second Sunday, I had not quite started yet; I was in-between.

This concept of liminality is often marked by either celebration or solemn ceremony, and the truth is that when we really start to think about it, we are often living in a liminal space. In Scripture, we hear the story of how God takes a difficult people and makes them into a nation. It doesn't happen all at once, and they end up passing through a few liminal spaces—the biggest being where they wander for 40 years. They have the promise, but aren't yet ready to take the land that will officially make them a nation; they are a people, but without a nation.

We all pass through these spaces in life. Some are good and allow us to grow as people, but some are difficult, and we struggle to find meaning. These liminal spaces always mean change—a word that can bring us so much worry. But as a sign in one of my fellow pastor's offices read:

*“Change is inevitable, but growth is optional.”*

The truth in life and in the Church is that we are almost always in some sort of liminal space, and the call of faith is to trust in God and where He is leading our lives and the Church. What we need as a Church is to be faithful, and for people to help be a part of the leadership that will guide the Church into the future God has for us. We have some very wonderful people who have said yes to being leaders, but what's missing is **you**.

We don't know what the future holds for our Church, but I am excited to see what my second year will bring. If you are excited too, then I pray you will want to join in listening to God's call and shaping the future for our Church home in La Crescent.

In their hearts humans plan  
their course,  
but the **LORD** establishes their  
steps. Proverbs 16:9

With Jesus as our guide,  
Pastor Chris



## BLANK NOTE

By Emma Blank,  
Director of Music Ministries

**Romans 8:38-39:** Nothing in all creation—including death or life—can separate believers from the love of God.

First, thank you everyone for all the love and support we have received as a family during this time. We all realize that our God is with us even when we think he is gone. I think he is above us like an umbrella shielding us from the darkness.

This month has been so hard. Our lives took a hard turn on July 3rd when we were given horrible news that Rod had stage four metastatic cancer to palliative and now hospice.

We as a family came together and are now caring for Rod as a team. God is in control of this team and we feel his holy presence daily.

Thank you for the time you have so gracefully given me to be with and care for the man I love so very deeply. Our hearts are breaking but we do know we will see him again in heaven.

Hug your family every time you see them. They are precious as is the time you have with them.

God's Peace,  
Emma



**Rod Blank**

**1953-2026**

Rod went home to be with the Lord on Thursday, July 30th. He was an invaluable member of our church family and will be missed dearly.  
“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

## MISSION TEAM UPDATE – August 2026

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”-Winston Churchill

We are turning yet another page in the calendar and summer seems, I think, to be winding down toward its end. Or at least I sure hope that's what the summer heat is doing! I hope all of you have been able to keep cool and hydrated these last few weeks and continue to do so as we move into August.

In the last newsletter I shared that we are preparing for the Back to School Event which will take place on August 12<sup>th</sup>. I want to give a big shout out to Carole Plenge as she is the primary organizer and caretaker for the Clothes Closet. I know she has had a team of people helping her out, so if you have been working on this upcoming project thank you as well!

If you have the means, please support this event by donating needed school supplies, new or gently used clothing, making a monetary contribution to specifically support this ministry, or volunteering your time to contribute directly to this mission opportunity if it is a way in which you can share your gifts with our community.

We have also successfully found a hairdresser to provide back-to-school haircuts; big thanks to our very own Gracie Wellendorf who has volunteered her time and talents to provide these to kids in need.

And lastly, we are working on acquiring a grant to purchase supplies to provide meal-in-a-bag kits on a first-come-first-serve basis for those who may experience food insecurities. Thanks to Mike Ryan and Claudia DeVetter for your assistance with this piece of the project.

Again, please remember to be looking for things that we can use for Operation Christmas Child, later this year. This would include any craft supplies for making craft projects including small sewing kits (thread, needles, scissors, buttons, etc.) fishing kits (line, hooks, sinkers, etc., and old T-shirts for a jump-rope t-shirt project; as well as things that could be placed in the Operation Christmas Child boxes such as small toys, school supplies, and personal hygiene items.

The missions committee will be meeting again on August 30<sup>th</sup> at 0845 in the church library; all are welcome to attend, and as always, thank you for all that you do to support the ongoing mission's projects of our church.

Blessings,  
Mandy

## Exciting news!

We have officially upgraded our campus technology! Our worship service will now be live-streamed directly to the TVs in the Narthex, Fellowship Hall and Nursery. Whether you are just arriving, serving on a hospitality team, or need to step out with a restless toddler, you won't miss a single moment of worship. We are so grateful for everyone who helped make this happen to make our space even more welcoming and accessible for everyone. Check out the new set up the next time you are at worship!

SUNDAY

# WORSHIP

NOW LIVE STREAMING

Fellowship Hall, Narthex and Nursery

Stay Connected wherever you are!

WE LOVE HAVING YOU AS

a part of  
our Flock!



Keep in touch with us via  
email and text!



TEXT  
LCUMC  
TO 84576



OR CONNECT WITH US ONLINE AT:  
[lacscentunitedmethodis.flocknote.com](http://lacscentunitedmethodis.flocknote.com)

Text STOP to 84576 to stop txt notifications at any time. Text HELP for help. There is no charge for this service, but your carrier message and data rates may apply. View full privacy policy & terms at [flocknote.com/txt](http://flocknote.com/txt).

La Crescent United Methodist Church

JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM

*Serve & Inspire*

*Sign up today!*



SCAN HERE

- Usher
- Greeter
- Communion Server
- Tech Guru
- Liturgist



**The Lunch Wagon**

# SUPPLY DRIVE

The Lunch Wagon will be serving food at the La Crescent Live event on Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>. Please consider bringing an item to donate to help us finish our summer up on a strong note!



**SCAN ME!**



to see our Amazon wish list!!

**ITEMS NEEDED**

- ▶ Paper Lunch Bags
- ▶ Snack sized ziploc bags
- ▶ Sandwich ziploc bags
- ▶ Granola bars
- ▶ Fruit cups

Follow us on Facebook: [Facebook.com/TheLunchWagon](https://Facebook.com/TheLunchWagon)




## HIGH MILEAGE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5  
5:30p.m. - 7:30p.m.  
322 S 1<sup>st</sup> St, La Crescent MN

# Clothes Closet



The Clothes Closet depends on everyone's support all year. Our back to school event is a busy day. It will be August 12th this year.

Everyone that comes gets new socks, underwear, shoes and a new outfit. This is only possible with the donations we receive to shop with.

We also accept new or slightly used clean and up to date clothes. We make appointments for drop off or requests for clothes.

We are thankful for all the donations to keep this mission program going. Any questions can be directed to the church office or Carole Plenge.

## Can you help with the Back to School Event School Supply Drive?

Supplies needed include:

Backpacks, Dry erase markers, Sharpies, Washable markers, Colored pencils, Glue sticks, Scissors, Looseleaf paper, Paper towels, Antibacterial wipes, Kleenex

New supplies can be dropped off at La Crescent United Methodist Church, 520 N. Elm St. anytime between now and August 10.

Thank you for your support!



## LA CRESCENT UMC INVITES YOU TO THEIR: **BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT** WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 12-8 PM

We are offering free school supplies and back-to-school outfits for all children. Appointments will be made in 15 minute increments for families during this time. An adult from each family must be present to receive supplies.

To register, please call the church office, (507) 895-2373  
T-F between 8:30-2:00.

**New this year! We are offering free haircuts on a first come, first serve basis. Call the church office to reserve your time.**

The Back to School event will be held at La Crescent United Methodist Church, 520 N. Elm St. La Crescent, MN

Helping students get the supplies and clothes they need to be set for a successful school year



**La Crescent and Dakota-Riverside United Methodist Church**  
520 North Elm Street | La Crescent, MN 55947

**Phone:** 507.895.2373

**Website:** <https://lacscentumc.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/lacscentumc>

<https://www.facebook.com/Riverside-Dakota-UMC-436563933430687>

**Pastor Chris Leistra**

Youth Director: **Mindy Kearney**

Music Director: **Emma Blank**

Office: **Jessica Wallace-Bialecki**



When emailing the church office use:

**[office.lacscentumc@gmail.com](mailto:office.lacscentumc@gmail.com)**

Made Specially For

**The Applesseed**  
La Crescent & Dakota-Riverside United Methodist Churches  
**August 2026**