

# The Applesseed

La Crescent and Dakota-Riverside United Methodist Church

## From the Pastor's Pen

Spring days are slowly giving way to warmer temperatures, and summer is not far off. There is just something about the fragrance of spring, the growing warmth, and watching the days grow longer that brings joy. Easter Day is over, but the season of Easter continues until Pentecost. On Easter, I said that I think Easter morning was the sending of the disciples, which would lead them to many places and ultimately share the gospel with the world. It was the reason they would even go to their deaths for the truth, and despite resistance, they did not and would not stop. They were telling what they knew to be true, for they had experienced those events themselves. It was the Easter experience that changed them. It was then Pentecost that equipped them. We cannot forget that many of them were fishermen and not highly educated. Their qualification was that they had been filled with the Holy Spirit. Education is in no way a bad thing—it can help us understand, but faith can move mountains. The task before them after Pentecost was just as daunting: to go out into the world and tell people who had not experienced the risen Lord that He had come back from the dead and had done so to save them from their sin. It was not an easy message, nor one that was easily explained. This did not stop them either. The message spread, and it spread not only because of what they said, but because of how they lived as authentic, faithful people. The world needs people who live



with an authentic faith. The issues we face often feel like mountains: loneliness, hunger, sickness, war, division, hate, technological overload, and so much more. Some are old issues, and some are new, but all are part of the world we live in, and we have been called upon to remain faithful despite the challenges of doing so. This is why we must be like the disciples, resurrection people who have been filled with the Holy Spirit and who take part in the mission Jesus set before us. To be a person of the resurrection means to be marked by the truth of the Gospel. The world needs people who have been marked by God—people who, no matter what the world throws at them, live out that truth just as the original disciples did. To me, this seems to be a smaller and smaller group. For many, faith has taken a backseat to all that the world has to offer. We see this in how little the world around us values Sunday as a day for worship, and in countless other ways that faith has been pushed to the sidelines.

The gospel truth is not just for Sunday, and despite what the world may say, your faith should not—and cannot—stay at the church. We, as the church, are part of God's plan. There is no plan B. Although God will see His work to completion, we can still choose to step back and let someone else take it up. There are many reasons we tell ourselves: we are too busy, or someone else would be better. Moses used the same excuses, and God's response to all of them was this: "I will be with you." God moves mountains and feeds thousands, and as the original disciples found out, we are His instruments. We are God's plan for the world, and we only fail when we refuse to be part of that plan. In the Jewish text *Pirkei Avot*, it says, "It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it." This is exactly right. We are not people of the end; we are people of the middle. God holds the beginning and the end, and we live in the process. But that does not mean we can simply step away, even if we may not see the outcome. God is calling you to be a person of the resurrection and to live out your faith.

**11** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

Let us live in light of the Resurrection!

Pastor Chris Leistra

## CONGREGATIONAL CARE UPDATE

"Age is simply the number of years the world has been enjoying you."-unknown. I don't know who wrote that quote, but it seems so true each time I have the privilege to visit one of our members who might be homebound, or in assisted care, or in nursing care. The visits always contain many memories spoken, many smiles shared, and prayers given before I leave. I love to hear their stories about their faith in God. It is truly a time that is enjoyable and I treasure.

Right now we have 8 people who visit, call, send cards, or if you are like Emma B. brings her guitar and sings to those members in our church who aren't able to get out as much as they used to. For each of us it is a joy to visit these friends. Please let us know if a member of the congregation is in the hospital or needs a visit.

I have also learned that being a caregiver can be a difficult time, and caregivers are often overlooked and can become isolated. We are so blessed to live in this area where we have support available. Two places I have learned about are Caregivers Program and Memory Cafe. Caregivers Program meets every 2nd Monday from 2:45-4:00 at Bay Harbor Theater Room in La Crescent. Memory Cafe meets from 10:00-11:30 at 611 Vista Drive in Caledonia. It is a safe space for people living with mild to moderate dementia and their caregivers. May we always remember : "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."-Psalm 73:26.

Blessings,  
Lavon Court -  
Chair of Congregational Care

## BLANK NOTE

*By Emma Blank*

Louise Hill went to her heavenly home last month. 102 years of life experiences went with her. Just thinking about everything she had experienced in those years is mind boggling. She was a living history book. What a blessing her family had in her.

Rod and I had the honor and privilege to grow close to Louise. Her house was opened up to us and we were accepted as an extended family of sorts. Having coffee with Louise was an event. Treats were always served and she loved to chat and fellowship for as long as you wanted. These times were cherished by Rod and I and he quickly became a favorite of Louise.

It was about a year ago that Louise and us had a meeting about her funeral planning. She planned the whole event. She knew what she wanted and her family made sure that her wishes would be followed. I think it gave her piece of mind to have that weight off of her shoulders. I wondered if she knew something we didn't as she was still in pretty good health for her age.

Then came a day where Louise was not doing so well and Rod and I continued to visit but we added hymn sings to the coffee hour. The music calmed Louise as she started to navigate her trip home to the Lord. She became

frail and hospice was called in. During all of these transitions her family took care of her at home 24/7. They would let us know if she wanted music and we would go and sing and pray with her and family members. They were cherished times knowing that time was short on this side of heaven with the matriarch of the family.

On the day she passed we went to be with Louise one more time. Both Rod and I knew it would be the last. Family gathered around her bed and we sang to her. The love was so tender as the caretakers held her hands, whispered in her ear and just held each other as she slipped into eternity.

Rod and I are so honored and grateful to have been part of her journey. Louise was a remarkable woman. Her life was not always easy. She worked very hard and navigated personal losses that would cripple most people. Her resilience shined through all of the up and downs life throws at us and taught her family that plodding through the tough stuff makes the good stuff even better. Thank you Louise for your friendship and love you gave to Rod and I. We hope to continue being an extended branch of your wonderful family.

We Love you Louise! Till we meet again!



# *Discover Your Place in the Greatest Story Ever Told*

Have you ever opened the Bible and felt a bit lost? Between the ancient laws, the complex genealogies, and the shifting timelines, it can be easy to lose sight of the "big picture." We often see the Bible as a collection of isolated snapshots, but what if we viewed it as one seamless, unfolding narrative?

Starting this May, we are embarking on a life-changing journey through "**The Story**" by Max Lucado and Randy Frazee.

## **Why "The Story"?**

Unlike a traditional Bible, *The Story* is arranged chronologically and reads like a novel. There are no verse numbers or interruptions—just the breathtaking account of God's love for His people. By looking at the Bible this way, we can better understand two vital perspectives:

- **The Upper Story:** God's grand plan to rescue and restore humanity.
- **The Lower Story:** The individual lives and choices of people just like us.

When we see how these two stories intersect, our own lives begin to take on a deeper meaning. We realize that we aren't just reading a history book; we are discovering our own place in God's ongoing work.

## **Mark Your Calendars: The Journey Begins**

We want everyone to be part of this experience from the very first page.

### **Kickoff Date: Sunday, May 24th**

**The Focus:** "Week Zero" – The Creation Story

We're calling this **Week Zero** because it's where everything begins. Before the chaos of the world set in, there was a perfect beginning. We'll dive into the heart of Genesis to see how God spoke light into the darkness and fashioned us in His image.

Whether you've read the Bible dozens of times or have never picked it up, this is your invitation to see the Word of God with fresh eyes. Join us on **May 24th** as we turn the first page together.

Video study to start May 31<sup>st</sup> after Church in La Crescent

# THE STORY

THE BIBLE AS ONE CONTINUING STORY OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE



LA CRESCENT & RIVERSIDE  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES

# YNOW

*Youth Night of Worship*

**SUNDAY**

**MAY 17**

6:00 PM

ALL 8TH-12TH GRADE STUDENTS WELCOME

WORSHIP. PRAYER.

TESTIMONIES. FELLOWSHIP.

# THE BRIDGE

The Bridge Youth Center will be open through Wednesday, May 6. Watch for summer pop-ups at the pool and sign-ups for our Amazing Summer Small Group Camps!

**Rainforest Falls**

**WBS**

**August 3-7**  
9am-noon  
Early drop-off and breakfast also available

**4K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
6th grade students and older invited to volunteer

Hosted by Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and La Crescent United Methodist Church at LUMC, 520 N. Elm St.



Register Here by July 22

# SCHOOL'S OUT

*for the summer!*



Stop by the church parking lot for rootbeer floats to celebrate!

**THURSDAY, JUNE 4**  
**12:30-2:00**

Bring your bike and ride around the parking lot, grab some sidewalk chalk and draw or bring a friend and play Four square.

Made with PosterMyWall.com

## BECOME A



## VOLUNTEER

THE LUNCH WAGON EXISTS TO FEED THE COMMUNITY'S CHILDREN DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. COME LEARN MORE ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED WITH THE LUNCH WAGON!

**New Volunteer Trainings**  
**Tuesday, May 19**  
**9:30 am**

Made with PosterMyWall.com

# Graduation Celebrations

Community Baccalaureate Service

Wednesday, May 27

7:00 pm at LUMC

Senior Sunday

Sunday, June 7

Breakfast at 9:00 am, Worship at 10:10

*The Jim Flagg Scholarship will be awarded during worship*

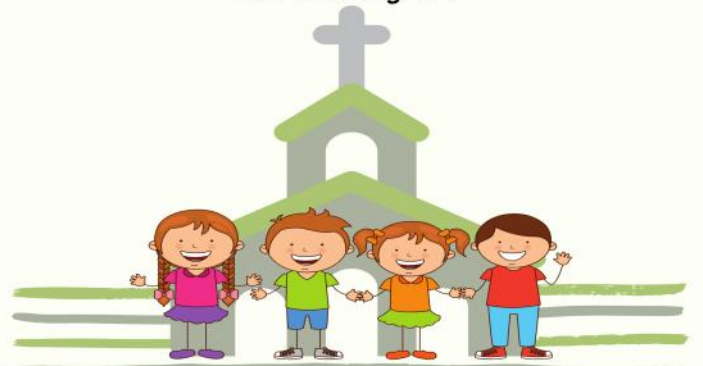
Please help us celebrate our graduate:

Charlee Gile

## THANK YOU FOR A GREAT YEAR OF SUNDAY ADVENTURES!

A huge thank you to our teachers,  
Julie Van Berkum, Rochelle Undeland and  
Laura Leder.

Our last day of Sunday Adventures  
will be May 17.



Made with PosterMyWall.com

## MISSION TEAM UPDATE – May 2026

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.”  
Psalm 100:1(KJV)

What an amazing Church Family we have! Coins for Lent ended on Easter Sunday with our final Noisy Offering collection and the final tally to be contributed to the Back to School Event this summer is \$498.12 so thank you to all those who participated in Coins for Lent and sought ways to seek gratitude in your daily lives while giving Lenten alms to help those in need as they prepare to return to school this fall.



A huge shout out and thank you to those who were able to participate in this year's La Crescent Neighbors Day event which was held on Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup>. It seemed to be a busy day this year as Neighbors Day themselves were struggling to find volunteers and also had an increase in the number of requests for assistance compared to previous years. We were able to assist two community members with spring yard clean up and we had a few congregants receive services from the Neighbor's Day organization as well. This is such a great community wide event; I hope we can continue to be positive representatives in our community again next year.

As we turn toward summer the Missions Team will be meeting again on Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at 0845 am in the church library to continue working on activities for the rest of the year. If you have any ideas or suggestions for mission opportunities that our church can participate in, please join us. All are welcome to attend.

With a Grateful Heart,  
Mandy



## Mission's Team

"Mission work is your opportunity to play a key role in God's plan; think of it as your "front-row seat" to God's life-changing power. It is an opportunity that opens doors, creates relationships, and solves problems."



*We celebrate  
through*  
**STORY TELLING!**

Join us during worship over the next few months as we celebrate the great work we do through storytelling.

**MAY  
MISSIONS**

## Bay Harbor Senior Care Worship

Every 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday  
of the month  
2:00 PM

1384 County Rd 25, La Crescent

Help us share the word of God  
with our senior community!





## GIVING MADE EASY

Did you know we offer electronic giving? You can contribute anywhere, anytime right from your computer, smartphone or tablet.

- Give online at [lacscentumc.org](http://lacscentumc.org)
- Download our free mobile app by searching for "Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement" in the App Store or Google Play.

To learn more about our eGiving options, visit our church website or contact the church office.

Vanco

### Dakota Riverside United Methodist Church

**Send donations to:**  
**Dakota-Riverside United Methodist Church**  
PO Box 282  
Dakota, MN 55925



Adult Bible Study  
Thursdays 9:00am  
LUMC Library



ALL ARE WELCOME!

WORSHIP  
VOLUNTEERS

## SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER TODAY!

VOLUNTEERING IS EASY AND AN IMPORTANT STEP IN  
CONNECTING DEEPER WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY  
CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE TO JOIN THE TEAM

Taking a break for the summer.  
See you in the fall!

Coffee with  
Pastor Chris



## The Clothes Closet

The Clothes Closet is an on going mission all year. We can use slightly used, clean and folded clothes for children and teens. Monetary donations are also appreciated to purchase new clothes when needed.

If you need our service or would like to donate, contact the church office or Carole Plenge at 507-895-2079. Thank you!



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

**Phone:** 507.895.2373  
**Website:** [lacscentumc.org](http://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

**MAY 2026**

La Crescent & Dakota-Riverside United Methodist Churches

*The* **Appleseed**