



## Monthly Newsletter

April 2024

Sunday Worship: 8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.

Check us out on our web site [www.monticelloumc.com](http://www.monticelloumc.com)

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### *From Pastor Anne:*

As I write this note, it is Wednesday, March 27th and we are in the midst of Holy Week. Tomorrow begins the *Triduum*, the Three Days (measured in the old way, from sunset to sunset) that form the central mystery of the Christian Faith. On Maundy Thursday we remember Christ's last meal with his friends. On Good Friday we remember his death on the cross, and of course on Easter Sunday we celebrate his resurrection from the dead. These are the events without which nothing else in our faith really matters. As I said to the Church Council at our last meeting: the world makes a big deal out of Christmas, but we Christians know that without Easter, Christmas is just some guy's birthday.

It is, of course, even more essential than that. If Christ's resurrection were *the only* resurrection, then really why would we care? "It's all very well for *him*," we would say, "but he's left *everybody else* just as mortal as ever!" But in fact that is not true. We believe that Jesus's resurrection was just the beginning, just a foreshadowing, an *amuse-bouche* if you will, of a resurrection that all of us will one day experience. As St. Paul said, "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died." He's the "first fruits", but we in our own time will be the harvest. Death itself has been defeated. Alleluia.

### *Our Sympathy to...*

The family of Imogene Pontious Gustafson who passed away on Saturday, March 30 at home. Visitation and funeral services were held here at MUMC Wednesday, April 3. Donations may be made to The American Cancer Society.

### *What's up with the...*

...big white candle next to the baptismal font?

Several of you have asked me about the big white candle next to the baptismal font, so here is a little explainer. When I very first arrived here at MUMC, I did what I always do in a new church: I went through the closets & cupboards & storage rooms to see what I could see. One of the things that I found was the lovely purple leather-bound lectionary book that I read the gospel

lesson out of every Sunday. What a find! It appears to be a legacy from the (now sadly closed) United Methodist Church in Deland. Another thing that I found was the big white candle. It was stored in a metal shelving unit along with a large number of other candles and various other worship accoutrement, but it caught my eye right away because you don't often see this particular kind of candle in a United Methodist church. Usually it's only our Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Lutheran brothers & sisters who have them

This particular kind of big, white candle is called a Paschal Candle, and it is meant to call our attention to the fact that all of us have been united to the death & resurrection of Christ by virtue of our baptism. We light it on Easter Morning to signify the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It will burn through all the 50 days of Easter right up until the festival of Pentecost. We also light it every time we baptize someone, for every funeral that we hold in the church, and on All Saint's Day. Right now, we have the candle that I found in the metal cupboard, sitting on a plate, on top of a side table, but this Easter we will consecrate a new Paschal Candle and stand purchased as a memorial.

### *April WA.T.C.H. Meals*

- April 3 Sloppy Joes, Waffle Fries, Seasoned Green Beans, Chocolate Thunder Cake
- Apr 10 Baked Potato Bar, Salad Bar, Chocolate Brownies, Ice Cream
- Apr 17 Lasagna, Bread Sticks with Cheese, Salad, Apple Crisp, Ice Cream
- Apr 24 Chicken and Noodles, Mashed Potatoes, Green Bean Casserole, Rolls, Chocolate Eclairs

**JOIN OUR TEAM**

Monticello United Methodist Church will once again have a team participating in the Willow Tree Missions Trivia Night, Saturday April 13th, 6-9 pm. We still need more team members to enhance our breadth of knowledge so see Pastor Anne if you want to have a night of fun and contribute to a great cause. Willow Tree is still trying to complete living spaces for those that need immediate sanctuary from domestic violence.

### *Graduation time is here!*

If you are planning on graduating from 8th grade, High School, College, University, Trade School, Graduate School, or anything else, we would like to know about it so that we can celebrate your accomplishment. Please let the office know of any graduates in the congregation or in your family who should be lifted up. We will recognize their achievement in our worship services and at a Festive Fellowship Time on Sunday, May 5th.

## *It's also Scholarship time!*

Springtime is the season for the celebration of graduations, but it is *also* the time when students plan for the next step in their education. This congregation awards scholarships each year to people who are planning to devote their lives to the service of humanity. ***The Kathryne Valentine Scholarship*** is awarded to a Monticello High School graduate who intends to major in the field of education in his or her undergraduate study. ***The Local Emma and Dick O'Dell Scholarship Fund*** awards those who are studying to enter an area of ministry of the United Methodist Church, such as Ordained Clergy or Ministers of Christian Education, Music, or Youth. If there are no applicants planning on entering the ministry, the O'Dell Scholarship Fund can make awards to students in the fields of nursing, teaching, social work, or health care. Those who have previously received Valentine or O'Dell scholarships are welcome to re-apply for a second year. Application forms & guidelines are available in the church office.

You are also invited to make a contribution to a scholarship fund which has been established in the name of our late Youth Director, Natalie McDowell. Checks made out to ***The Natalie Mauck McDowell Nursing Scholarship*** may be sent to the Monticello Area Education Fund at P. O. Box 473, Monticello, IL 61853.

## *Outreach News*

The quarterly area-wide Outreach Agency Lunch was held February 5 at MUMC. These are put together by our own Liz Fairchild and are a terrific opportunity for all the agency leaders to learn more about what each of their organizations do so we can better coordinate efforts to serve the community. This time we learned that Dove Inc. of Decatur will partner with other agencies that would benefit from their full-time staff and resources. We are now in the process of setting up that partnership and look forward to using them to help with vetting of clients who need housing/rental assistance and for matching us up with other agencies to pool funds for when large assistance requests arise.

In other news, our food pantry has recently benefited from the Heart of Illinois Community Foundation of Macon County as they have extended their reach into Piatt County. We received a generous grant from them of \$3000 and will discuss how best to put this to use at our committee meeting April 9.

## *Thank You...*

...to The Luscious Lunch Ladies, Harry & Dave, the Ericksons, the Fun & Fellowship committee, and ALL the volunteer helpers for keeping our church members and visitors filled to the brim with delicious food and drink for both routine and special occasions. We have had many lately and you've really come through.

## *Fun & Fellowship News*

Fun and Fellowship is hosting another bingo and potluck night during Family games night on Sunday April 7th at 4:30 PM. There will be other games available as well. Please bring a white elephant gift and dish to share.

We would also like to thank everyone that donated candy and helped with our Annual Egg Hunt. We had another successful event with lots of kiddos and new faces welcomed.

Please be sure to watch upcoming news for future spring and summer events!

## *Music Ministry News*

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the members of our Music Ministry teams. We are blessed to have such talented musicians that choose to share their gifts and talents with us in worship. This Lenten season (and throughout the year) our organists, Sanctuary choir, Bell choir, New Day Praise Team, Children's Choir, song leaders, soloists, and special guest musicians have worked diligently to enhance our worship experience each Sunday. Their music uplifts and supports us in our worshiping and adds to the sacredness of Sunday worship and special services throughout the year. Please take a moment and thank them when you see them on Sunday mornings.

## *Family Ministry News*

What a blessed time of the year; time to be out in nature and making memories with your families. I read a quote from Charles R. Swindoll, that says, "Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children." What kind of deposits are you making in the lives of your children or other children that you may come into contact with?

Looking ahead...

- Just a reminder to send an offering with your students to Sunday School for missions.
- VBS will be July 22nd-26th from 6:15-8:00pm.
- We will take our summer break from the Orchard from June 30th-August 17th.

## *May Newsletter Deadline*

Thursday, April 25th

## ***Meetings & Events***

### **Typical Weekly events:**

T.O.P.S., Monday, 4 pm  
Food Pantry, Tu & Th 1:30-3 pm  
Boy Scouts, Monday, 7 pm (if school is in session)  
Baby Moms - Mon & Thurs, 10 am    Just Walking - Tu & Th, 8:30 am  
W.A.T.Ch. Meals - Wed, 5 pm (coordinates with school schedule generally)  
Choir, Bell Choir, New Day rehearsals -Wed, 6, 7, 8 pm respectively  
Confirmation Class - Sunday 3:30-4:30  
Youth Group - Sunday, 5-7 pm

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### **Monday, April 1**

P.E.O. 6:25 pm

### **Tuesday April 2**

Eagle Scout Ceremony, 6:30 pm  
SPRC meeting, 7 pm

### **Sunday, April 7**

White Elephant Bingo & Potluck, 4:30 pm

### **Monday, April 8**

Outreach Comm. Mtg., 9:00 am;  
Fun & Fellowship, 6:30 pm

### **Saturday, April 13**

Willow Tree Trivia Night, 6-9 pm

### **Monday, April 15**

Girl Scouts, 6 pm  
P.E.O., 6:15 pm

### **Thursday, April 18**

Midwest Missions - All Day

### **Sunday, April 28**

4H, 2-4 pm

**\*\* There will be no Worship Committee Meeting in April.\*\***