## *Upcoming Events*

**Coffee at Grace**
*Every Sunday at 8:30 a.m.*

**Circle of Prayer**
*Every Sunday at 8:45 a.m. in the Amaryllis Room*

**Sunday School**
*(during worship)*
*"A Boy's Lunch"*

**Pastor's Bible Study**
*Tuesdays at 9 a.m.*

**Coffee with Pastor Gary**
*Wednesday, January 31st from 9-10 a.m. at Adirondack Coffee in Nisswa*

**Wednesday Evening Youth Group**
*Small Groups & Snowman Building*

**Men's Bible Study**
*Every Thursday at 8 a.m. at the Hungry Loon Café in Pequot*

**UMW**
*Thursday, February 1st*
*9 a.m. UMW Executive Meeting*
*10 a.m. Membership Meeting*
*11 a.m. Program*
*"Encountering God Through Prayer"*
*Noon Luncheon*

**Bells of Grace**
*Play during worship on February 4th*

**Ad Council Meeting**
** Note date change*
*Sunday, February 4th at 10:15 a.m.*

**Mission Trip Bake Sale**
*Sunday, February 11th*

**Ash Wednesday Worship**
*February 14th at 7 p.m.*

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## *Looking Ahead to Lent*

**Ash Wednesday Worship**
Wednesday, February 14th at 7 p.m.

**Lenten Sermon Series: God Chose You**
Series based on *He Chose the Nails* by Max Lucado

As we enter the season of Lent, we remember that God chose us by sending his son, Jesus. Jesus suffered, died and rose again to save us. We remember the cross, the crown of thorns, and the nails, and we pause and listen for the words God has spoken: ***I did this for you! I chose you!*** Each week, scripture and reflection questions will be provided in the worship bulletin to guide your Lenten experience. If you are interested in ordering *He Chose the Nails* for yourself, there is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

**Surprise the World: Small Groups**
All-Conference Lenten Video Study

In addition to our Lenten worship series, the Bishop and Cabinet invite all Minnesota United Methodists to take on some intentional practices of being generous, hospitable, Spirit-led, Christ-like missional people, who surprise the world. Each week throughout Lent in the e-grace newsletter, we will share a new video and discussion questions that introduce these practices, based on Michael Frost's book *Surprise the World: Five Habits of Highly Missional People*. You can also dig deeper by participating in Grace's "Surprise the World" small group, which meets on Thursdays at 4:30 p.m., starting February 15th. Stop by the table in the Narthex to learn more and to sign up for the small group and/or order a copy of the book.

## *Youth Summer Mission*

Our youth will travel to Wind River, WY, in July, to serve their community by painting and repairing homes in partnership with tribal housing authorities, running Kids Club programming for local children, and spending time with the elderly residents. Look for upcoming opportunities to support our trip, including a bake sale on Sunday, February 11th. The youth will also host the Easter Breakfast on April 1st.

## *Sunday Preview*

**Worship Message**
*"New Authority"*
*Psalm 111*
*Mark 1:21-28*

**Special Music**
*"One Pair of Hands"*
*- Brad Wallace -*

**Have you checked your church mailbox lately?**

## *Didn't We Just Celebrate Christmas?*

Greetings to all! February is soon upon us and it is in this month when we are reminded about love. Valentine's Day is a day full of love, flowers, cards, candy and other gifts, which are given to show that special someone how much we care about them. It is definitely a very important day!

Wednesday, February 14th, also signifies the beginning of Lent this year. Lent is a religious observance in the Christian church that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends approximately six weeks later, before Easter Sunday. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of a believer through prayer, asking for forgiveness of sins, giving of time and money to the church and/or to those in need, and self-denial. Lent is observed in many Christian churches like the Lutheran, Baptist, United Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches, just to name a few. Lent leads up to the week before Easter, Holy Week, which marks the death, burial and Jesus rising from the dead. Holy Week starts with Palm Sunday, representing Jesus's entry into Jerusalem. It continues with Holy Thursday, when Jesus shared His final meal with His disciples before His death. Good Friday then represents when Jesus was nailed to the cross, died and was buried. Finally, Lent and Holy Week reach a climax with the celebration of Easter Sunday and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As many people know, I like Advent and Christmas, times when we are reminded of the birth of our Savior. However, the season of Lent means a great deal more to me. Ash Wednesday reminds us that we are all sinners. Lent reminds us to reflect on how we have fallen short in worshiping and following our Lord. Lent is a season of sacrifice. Lent is a season of asking for forgiveness. Lent leads up to Holy Week and Easter, when we are reminded of the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus gave to all who believe…His death on the cross and His resurrection three days later!

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So you may be asking "All that sounds pretty negative, Pastor Gary...except for the resurrection. Why do you like Lent so much?" Simply put, there is a cleansing in the season of Lent. It's when we reflect on and proclaim our sins to our Savior and realize that our sins are forgiven; it is so very cleansing. It's like starting all over again. Starting fresh in our own eyes, as well as in His eyes. As hard as Lent can be for us as we look at our lives and our souls, in the end we are forgiven by our Lord and hopefully have a deeper relationship with Him. What joy there is in that!!

Soon you will be welcomed to the month of love and the season of Lent. May the love and forgiveness of Jesus surround us as we journey together!

*Pastor Gary*

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## Open Positions at Grace UMC

In the Methodist Church, we have many committees and ministries. Every year, people "rotate" off of committees that they are on, which leave committee slots to be filled. Some of our slots have been filled for this year, but we are still looking for volunteers for the following committee slots.

*Trustees Committee: 1 Open Position*
The Trustees Committee watches over and cares for the church building, the parsonage and the land owned by the church.

*New Lay Leader: 1 Open Position*
The Lay Leader nurtures cooperation and coordination of leadership between the pastor and the congregation. They forge a connection within the church and on behalf of the church. They serve as the representative of the laity of the church.

*Finance Committee: 3 Open Positions*
The Finance Committee of the church raises, manages and disburses the funds of the congregation to help realize the mission and vision of the church.

If any of these positions interests you or if you have questions about them, please talk with Pastor Gary. Thank you!