

## From the Pastor...

I've been reflecting on the statement "All are welcome" ever since I read through the Inclusion/Reconciling Survey people filled out at the beginning of January. Several people (8 people, to be exact) said something similar to this one person's comment: "I'm not in favor of labeling people. Just say all are welcome."

When I first read that statement, I thought, "Yah. That makes a lot of sense. Why would we want to single any group or groups out in our welcoming statement? Why not just say all are welcome?"

Recently I talked with my friend Jia Starr Brown. Jia has been serving as the associate pastor of Park Avenue United Methodist Church in Minneapolis. She is a gifted preacher, a kind and caring woman, an attentive mother and a lesbian woman who came out to her congregation in July 2019. In August of 2019, two members of her congregation filed complaints against her for violating the Book of Discipline which states, "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in the United Methodist Church (UMC)."

The bishop worked long and hard at reconciliation between Rev. Brown and the two complainants, and eventually dismissed the complaint.

When I heard what was happening at Park Avenue UMC, I went to their website and on their homepage, the first thing you see are the words ALL ARE WELCOME. While their website says that all are welcome, at least two members of that congregation didn't believe that "all" meant "all."

I have also, personally, thought that a long list of who is welcome is a dangerous road to go down, because you're always going to miss someone that you forgot to welcome, but didn't know that they needed a special welcome. I also, as someone who cares about being succinct and clear, thought a long list was unnecessary. But I have learned that being clear about who is welcome is important. Is the list incomplete? Yes. Can we improve? Always. But for this time and this place, this is our statement: "All are welcome—people of all ages, ethnicities, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities—to fully participate in all aspects of our hometown church with a global connection."

You are invited to come to worship on Sunday, March 29 and stay following the service to vote on this new revised statement of inclusion. It's not perfect but it's the best we have for this time and place.

~Pastor Holly

## February Celebrations

### Birthdays

- 2/4 Taylor B.  
Alan K.
- 2/6 Abby J.  
Melodie P.
- 2/7 Lisa S.
- 2/8 Candi H.  
Chuck S.
- 2/9 Rich R.
- 2/11 Wade R.
- 2/12 David K.
- 2/14 Rick K.
- 2/20 Mike K.
- 2/24 Deb H.  
Donna L.
- 2/25 Nancy K.  
LeAnne P.
- 2/27 Jasper B.
- 2/28 Katie A.  
Trevor J.
- 2/29 Tristan S.

### Anniversaries

- 2/15 Buck & Yvonne B.
- 2/27 Norb & Deb H.



\* If you do not see your special date, please let Michelle know!

## Thank You

Thank you to all those who have sent us cards and expressed their sympathy at the death of David's dad. We are grateful for your outpouring of love and support.

--David and Holly Aastuen

## Inclusion Survey Results

In February 2019 the global United Methodist Church voted (53% for, 47% against) to keep the current statements in our United Methodist Book of Discipline prohibiting same sex marriages in our churches and the ordination of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning) people. They also put in place greater penalties for those who go against the Book of Discipline.

In June 2019 the Minnesota Conference of the United Methodist Church voted for a vision (85% for, 15% against) of full inclusion of LGBTQ people.

In January of this year, we asked people to fill out an Inclusion Survey to help our Inclusion Team gain a sense of where we are as a congregation in anticipation that in the near future we as a congregation will vote on a statement that reflects who we are as a worshipping community. Fifty-six surveys were returned, whose results are below:

"The mission of Wyoming Church to 'make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world' could be better accomplished if we include LGBTQ people. 84% strongly agree or agree, 6% strongly disagree or disagree, 11% undecided.

"Including LGBTQ people will help us fulfill our vision of 'building bridges to Christ's love.'" 84% strongly agree/agree, 3% strongly disagree/disagree, 13% undecided.

"I am currently aware of or personally know family members, neighbors or friends who are LGBTQ." 95% strongly agree/agree, 4% strongly disagree/disagree, 2% undecided.

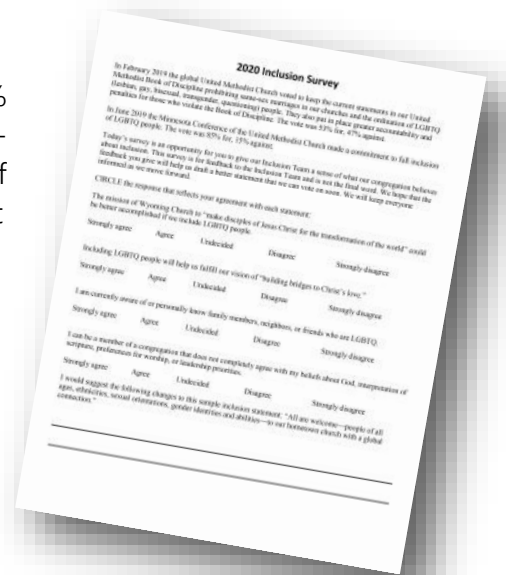
"I can be a member of a congregation that does not completely agree with my beliefs about God, interpretation of scripture, preferences for worship or leadership priorities." 67% strongly agree/agree, 18% strongly disagree/disagree, 15% undecided.

Of the 18 who suggested changes to the sample statement: "All are welcome—people of all ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and abilities—to our hometown church with a global connection," half (9) simply wrote their agreement: "Oh, yes!" "No change," "Jesus included all, loved all and supported all. How would we be wrong if we did the same?"

One stated that they felt ordination of LGBTQ people was inappropriate.

The final 8 responses questioned whether we needed to name groups, or asked that we add "to fully participate in all aspects of our church."

Thank you to all who participated in our survey.



## Vote on Inclusion/Reconciling Statement

On Sunday, March 29, District Superintendent Susan Nienaber will be with us to conduct a vote on our new Inclusion/Reconciling Statement which has been revised based on the feedback we got from our Inclusion Survey the first two Sundays in January.

The new Inclusion/Reconciling Statement reads: "All are welcome—people of all ages, ethnicities, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities—to fully participate in all aspects of our hometown church with a global connection."

We encourage you to come to church on Sunday, March 29 and stay after worship for the written vote on this statement which offers clarity on who we, as a congregation, welcome to our hometown church.

*Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. - 1 Peter 4:8*

## Care Crew

Do you know about the Care Crew? Have you used the Care Crew? Do you know someone who needs help?

Perhaps you answered "no" to the first 2 questions and "yes" to the last one. If so, keep on reading! The Care Crew is a group of volunteers willing to help those in the community who need tasks done for them, either on a one-time or on-going basis. Care Crew does a variety of tasks including driving others to appointments, minor plumbing jobs, cleaning, and alterations.

For anyone who needs help, they simply call the Care Crew phone number at 651-462-4890, explain the task, when it is needed, their name, phone number and address. This is a message line that is checked several times a day. The church member who checks the line matches a volunteer with the task. The volunteer calls the person with the need(s) to finalize details and introduce themselves. The service is designed for ALL ages in the community surrounding our church.

Wyoming UMC • 651-462-5276 • Care Crew North: 651-462-4890 • [www.wyomingunitedmethodist.org](http://www.wyomingunitedmethodist.org)  
Pastor Holly's email: [hollyaastuen@gmail.com](mailto:hollyaastuen@gmail.com) • Church email: [office.wyomingumc@gmail.com](mailto:office.wyomingumc@gmail.com)

## New Pathways Hosting Week

Our next New Pathways hosting of families experiencing homelessness is Sunday, March 1 through Sunday, March 8. Please mark your calendars and watch for a signup sheet coming soon!



# Wyoming United Methodist Church Messenger

February 2020

## Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge Choir

The Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge Choir is coming to our sanctuary on Sunday, February 23. Our Christmas Offering is designated to go to their good work as Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge. Since 1983 Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge has been restoring hope to people struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. In addition to their effective and affordable residential Licensed Treatment, faith-based Long-Term Recovery and convenient Outpatient program, they have extensive prevention and transitional/aftercare services. Come on Sunday, February 23 to hear their songs and testimonies and stay afterwards for the potluck lunch we are providing for the choir. We anticipate we will have 30 members of the choir come to our church that Sunday. Come and see!



## Worship Services in February

In February we are going to finish up our series called "Neighboring" based on the television series *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. Taking a look at scripture through the lens of Mr. Rogers' compassion and imagination, we will remind ourselves of what it means to treat all people with genuine care and respect. The final two sermons of this series will be on February 2 and 16.

**February 2:**  
Neighboring:  
You are Special  
1 Samuel 16:1-13

**February 9:**  
Guest Preacher,  
Denny Hebrink

**February 16:**  
Neighboring:  
Look for the Helpers  
Matthew 22:34-40

**February 23:**  
Minnesota Adult & Teen  
Challenge Choir

## Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 26. We have two opportunities to share in remembrance of this day. In the morning, Pastor Holly will be offering Ashes to Go at Evergreen CoffeeHouse from 7:30-9:00am. Evergreen CoffeeHouse is located at 26395 Forest Blvd. in Wyoming.



In the evening, Pastor Holly will be offering the imposition of ashes from 5:00-6:30pm in the narthex while the worship space will be available as a quiet place to read and pray.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, which is the 40 days before Easter, not counting Sundays, and is a season of preparation for Easter, when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection. As we prepare for the season of Lent, you are invited to receive the ashes and begin the holy season of Lent either by stopping by the coffee shop Wednesday morning at Ashes to Go (buying coffee or tea is optional) or by taking some time to receive ashes and pray in our sanctuary in the early evening as we remember our mortality and anticipate our eventual reunion with God as we enter eternal life.



And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

- 1 John 4:16



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