

# TUSCOLA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONNECT

## FEBRUARY 2024

### *A Note From The Pastor*

Grace and peace to you, the people of Tuscola,

The New Year is here. The cold weather will be here a while longer, but this is the perfect time for us to work on ourselves and help ourselves grow. This is where the tradition of New Year's resolutions comes from. We want to better ourselves, whether that is eating better, working out more, saying we will learn something new, or reading X number of books this year. We all want to do better. The Church also tries to do this look at what worked last year and what we want to do this year. So, if this is a good idea and we should set resolutions or plans for the year, why don't they always work out for us? Why can we not stick with the goals we have set?

In a video titled "Your Theme," the YouTube educator CGP Gray argues that we set the goals the wrong way. Because for many, when we set a goal, we set it specifically to what we want, and every step of the way, it is a point where the resolution could break, "like I will read one book a week." Every week, you have an opportunity to fail. CGP Gray argues that we should set a theme for the year. A goal that is specific enough to get us to be the healthier person we want to be but not so strict that we will never be able to achieve the goal. For example, instead of saying I will read a book of week this year, say that this year or this season will be a year of reading, set up the space to read, line up books you would like to read. This helps us accomplish the goal or resolution where upon examination of the year or season you can say yes, I have read more than I have in years past.

CGP Gray argues that the Data would bear this out, that specific data point don't matter when you are looking at overall data the trend line is what matters. This is why more health applications, or trainers now encourage you not to check you weight daily, one it will drive you crazy, and two you weight fluctuates for many reasons and tracking it that closely will give you the false sense of failure instead of seeing the progress as a journey. That is why I am reminded not just at the end of a journey to read this scripture but at the beginning. Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV, "and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of Faith." Christ is perfect we are not.

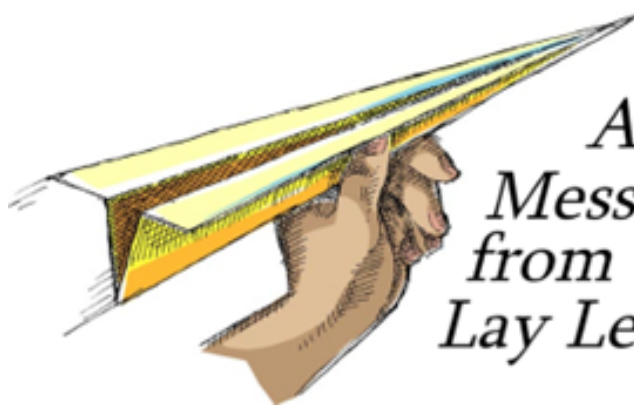
Blessings

Pastor Bennett Woods



Happy New Year! How many of the resolutions you made in January have already been broken? Was the new weight loss goal, the new outlook on a problem, the new relationship or maybe the desire to begin a new Bible study all endeavors that never even began? This time of year can be a good moment to attempt new experiences but sometimes "new" is hard and scary. However, with God's help and guidance your plans can succeed! As we continue into this new year, let us not be afraid of what lies ahead but let us depend on God to guide us. With his help, we have no need to fear. Isaiah 41:13

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.



## A Message from Our Lay Leader

I am going to consolidate the news from committee meetings held in December with the news from January in this article.

**SPRC** met on 12/12/2023. Unfortunately, there have not been any more applications submitted for the open Children and Youth Director position. This is a problem with many churches in our area. Pastor Bennett spoke to the UMC pastors in Villa Grove and Arcola about a possible merge of youth groups. He contacted the director of connectional ministries for the conference and the suggestion was for Pastor Bennett to move some of his responsibilities that could be handled by the laity of the church to others so he has more time for duties that are being put on the backburner at this time.

**Trustees** met in December and January and voted to accept the Mediacom contract to provide internet and phone service to the church. The contract provides for two voice over IP phone lines and unlimited 1 GB service at a cost of \$417/month. Pastor Bennett purchased a new switch and access points and Dave Butler helped with the installation. As of 1/29, the work was completed. The trustees voted to donate \$10,000 to the general operating fund of the church from the insurance money remaining from the roof replacement. Pastor Bennett is looking at the cost of a tankless or heat pump water heater for the parsonage after it was discovered the current one was installed in the 1990s. The TCHS band requested the use of the church's round tables for a fundraiser. A motion was made to allow this with a \$100 refundable deposit and the motion passed. The fan in the main men's restroom quit working and was replaced by Leon Kinney. There are doors to the outside of the church that need repaired and Pastor Bennett will contact Bacon and Van Buskirk. Gould has been contracted to clear the parking lots of snow this winter. However, we do not have anyone to remove the snow and ice from the sidewalks. The church does have a working snowblower for this job. If you are interested in performing this service, please contact Pastor Bennett or Bruce Wood.

The **Finance** committee met on 12/18/2023 and on 1/29. There was a surplus of \$25,670 at the end of 2023 of which \$10,000 was donated from the trustees' account. A little over \$1000 in interest for the year was earned from Edward Jones. The Ameren bill in December, 2022 was double the bill from December, 2023 so the installation of the new LED lights has helped to lower the electric bill. New chart of account numbers will be coming in the January, 2024 financial reports which should make them easier to understand. The Church Windows software is working better once more RAM was added to the office computer. However, new accounting software is still being explored by Pastor Bennett and Sarah Evans for possible purchase. The church currently does not have an auditor after Mike Ovca's retirement. The district has requested the audit be completed by March 31. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this position, please contact Pastor Bennett or Dick Berg.

The **Church Council** also met on 1/29 under the helm of new chair, Jim Pattenau and the following reports were made to the members.

Dave Butler, treasurer, reported for the **Finance** committee. Please see the paragraph above for the information presented to the Council.

Pastor Bennett reported for the **Trustees**. The new phone and internet from Mediacom are working. New networking equipment was purchased and installed by Dave Butler and Pastor Bennett. The office network is separate from the rest of the building and is password protected. There were some shingles lost from the roof recently. Roofs by Rodger was called and they promptly came out and replaced them. Their work is guaranteed so the church is always call them when something is amiss. Please see the previous paragraph regarding more from the trustees' meeting.

New **SPRC** chair, Cheryl Bozarth, reported that their first meeting will be February 13. Wayne Ward will be the new member on the committee.

The **Nominations** committee has two openings for lay members to annual conference. If anyone is interested in attending, please contact Pastor Bennett.

**Children's Council** will be meeting to discuss Vacation Bible School. There are volunteers willing to help if someone will take charge in planning VBS. There were four TUMC youth who attended the BYG (Big Youth Group) on 1/29 in Champaign. There were eight churches represented by approximately 80 people at the event.

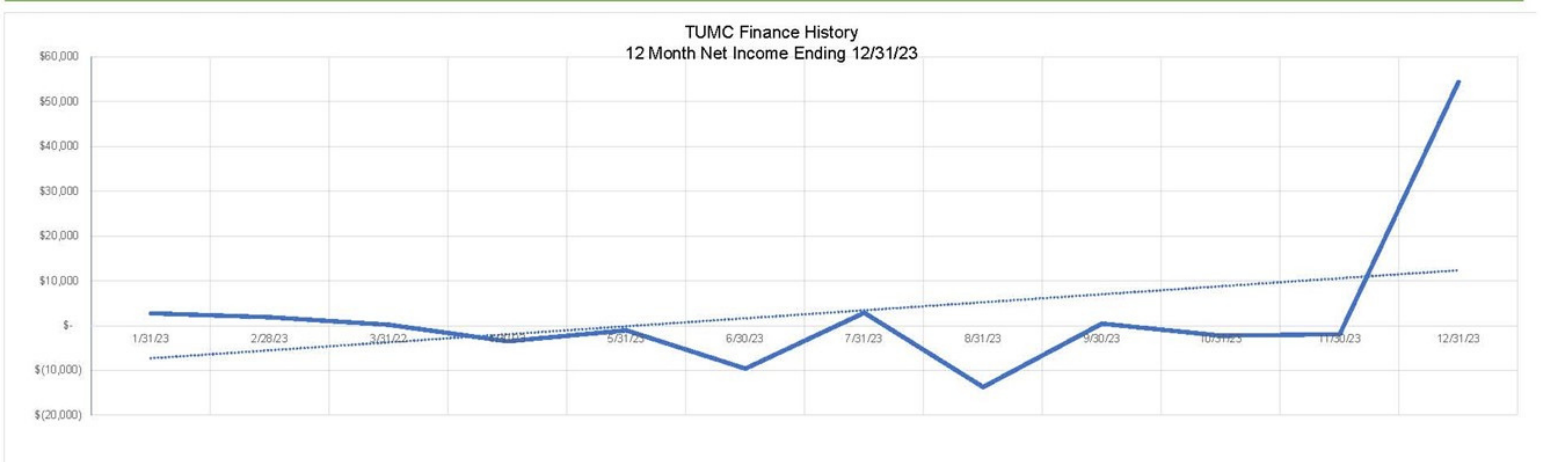
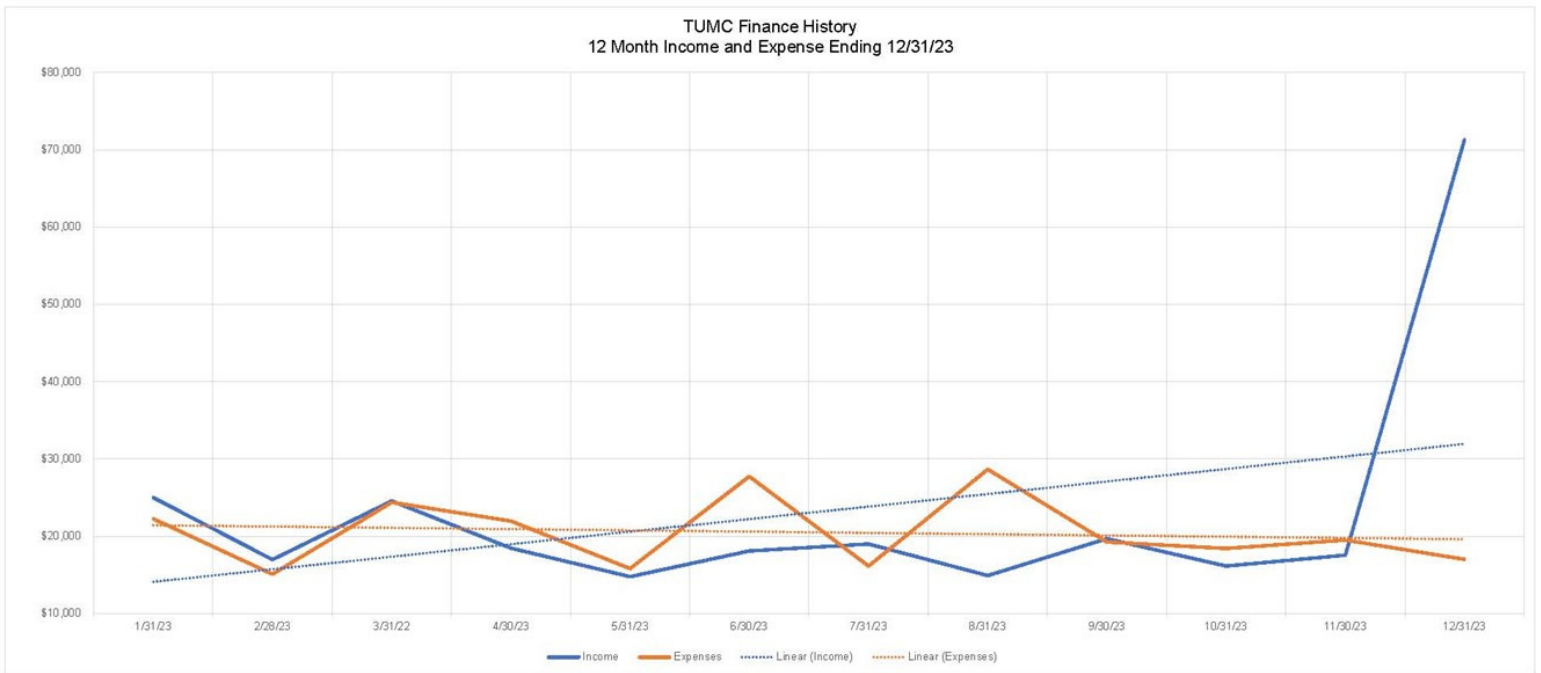
The **Worship** team will be discussing plans for Easter at their next meeting. There will be a Maundy Thursday worship on 3/25 and a Good Friday worship on 3/29. Both of these services will start at 6:00 PM.

**UMM** had no report.

**UWF** will be having their Mother-Daughter banquet on April 18 at 6:30 PM.

Dave Butler reported that **SAM pantry** is still searching for a coordinator. This position is responsible for coordinating volunteers and coordinating with the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. The pantry currently only has one person authorized to order food from the foodbank. They are hoping to get an outdoor walk-in refrigerator to place at the west kitchen door.

In the **pastor's report**, Pastor Bennett said that there will be a guest speaker from Cunningham Children's Home on Sunday February 18th as well as a representative from EIU's Wesley Foundation on Sunday April 14th. He will begin advertising for the Children and Youth director again. This position pays \$31,200 per year ( \$20/hour). We are 1 of 15 churches in a 100-mile radius looking for a Children and Youth director. It is difficult to share this position with other churches because everyone wants the person to be present on Sunday mornings. The meeting ended with a discussion of the mission and vision statement. The Church Council authorized Pastor Bennett to form an ad hoc committee to create the statements.





**December Attendance & Offerings**

	Attendance	Offerings
Dec. 3	97	\$6,171
Dec. 10	85	\$5,199
Dec. 17	117	\$4,708
Dec. 24	71	\$27,401
Dec. 31	40	\$7,417
<b>Digital Giving Total</b>		<b>\$3,951</b>

**January Attendance & Offerings**

	Attendance	Offerings
Jan. 7	97	\$4,296
Jan. 14	85	\$1,190
Jan. 21	117	\$8,227
Jan. 28	71	\$2,220
<b>Digital Giving Total</b>		<b>\$4,534</b>

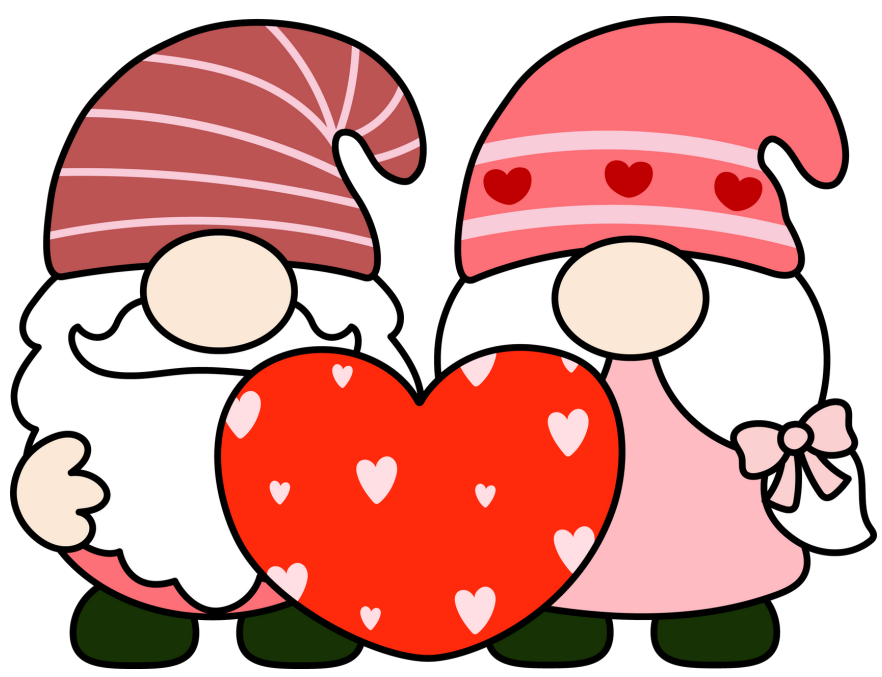
*(The offerings above are what is collected on Sunday in the plate and the electronic giving's)*

*We also offer electronic giving that is safe and easy from your checking or savings. Call the church office, 253-4232, to get started today!*

**February Worship at Brookstone**

- Feb. 4 : Speaker — Karen Benner**
- Feb. 11 : Speaker — John Watson**
- Feb. 17 : Speaker — Mary Ann Dier-Zimmerman**
- Feb. 25 : Speaker — Cindy Pringle**

*If you would like to help with this ministry, please contact John Watson at 217-369-6867 or email to: [jfw@craiglaw.net](mailto:jfw@craiglaw.net)*



Thanks to the following people who delivered Peace Meals in November for our church! Many also helped in December as there was not an organization in charge of that month! TUMC also has the month of May to deliver Peace Meals so keep that in mind. It is great way to help others!

November Peace Meal helpers were: Karen Benner, Janet Butler, Cheryl Bozarth, Pat Damler, Tina Hall Kestner, Susan Hall, Carol Morris, John Morris, Debbie Nivens, Mary Ann Pattenaude, Cindy Pringle, Judy Schenkel, Darcy Sementi, Lenny Sementi, John Waldrop, Kyle Walker, Stephanie Walker, Robert White, Melanie Woods & Ryan Woods



# BLOOD DRIVE

**BLOODCENTER.ORG**

## Tuscola United Methodist Church

**Friday, February 16**

**9 am – 1 pm**

**Donate in Fellowship Hall** *901 N. Prairie St.*

To schedule, call ImpactLife at 800-747-5401, visit [www.bloodcenter.com](http://www.bloodcenter.com) or scan the QR code below.



**SCAN ME!**



**GIVE & get your choice of gift card or bonus points to shop our rewards store for our new long sleeve shirt or more!**

**16-year-olds must have parental consent forms.**  
**Drink water in the days before you give.**  
Please eat before donating and bring photo ID.  
Last Date to Donate Elsewhere: 12/22/2023  
Group Sponsor Code: 71203

 **ImpactLife**

# **UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH**

Our General Secretary and CEO of United Women in Faith, Sally Vonner, has these words for us. It's time to "reset,refresh,and renew our commitment to loving God,our neighbor,and ourselves as Jesus taught". This year,let us "keep dreaming new possibilities and innovative ways to inspire,influence and impact lives,and expand our reach to connect with more women." Let us serve God through "our time,talents,giving and service,as we advocate for women,children,and youth".

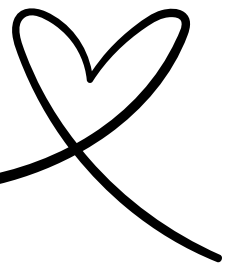
Our UWF National President,'Ainise Isama'u,uses Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 to emphasize it is time to do more. The theme for 2024 is "Breaking Bread Together". We are "entering a season of unity,fellowship,and sharing. It is time to sow seeds of compassion,understanding,and love. Let us come together with open hearts and open arms,breaking down barriers that may divide us and embracing the diversity that enriches us. May our gatherings not only be breaking physical bread together,but also breaking of barriers, prejudices,and misunderstandings. Let us listen,learn,and love without boundaries." May we United Women in Faith be shining examples of "Breaking Bread Together with hearts full of hope,joy,purpose,and faithfulness".

Our United Women in Faith National Office Headquarters has been moved.

United Women in Faith  
Church Center for the United Nations  
777 United Nations Plaza 11th Floor  
New York, New York 10017  
Phone 212-682-3633

Did you know, our United Methodist building in Washington, D.C. turned 100 years old on January 19,2024? The General Board of Church and Society decided to build it in 1917. The Methodist Episcopal offices were built 1922-23 with its mission to be the promotion of justice and pursuit of peace. The Social Justice ministry continues work on peace building, immigration, migration, civil and human rights, healthcare for all, climate, and racial/ethnic justice. Our building is the only nongovernmental building on Capitol Hill, a Holy Place, God Space, near the center of our government. The sign in front of the United Methodist building reads, "Living Faith, Pursuing Peace,Seeking justice".

Patty Russell  
Tuscola UWF East District-Social Action Coordinator  
Illinois Great Rivers Conference-Church and Society Committee



# CONNECT.

TUSCOLA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
 901 N. PRAIRIE ST.  
 TUSCOLA, IL 61953

PASTOR BENNETT WOODS  
 PASTOR  
 BWOODS@TUSCOLAUMC.COM

SARAH EVANS  
 FINANCIAL &  
 ADMINISTRATIVE  
 SECRETARY  
 SEVANS@TUSCOLAUMC.COM

JEANNIE CRADDOCK,  
 DIR. SANCTUARY CHOIR,  
 CELEBRATION RINGERS HAND  
 BELL CHOIR  
 DCJC91@GMAIL.COM

INGRID MINGER  
 CHILDREN'S CHOIR DIRECTOR  
 INGRIDMINGER@GMAIL.COM

KATHLEEN DYER  
 CUSTODIAN

## OUR STAFF

FEBRUARY  
 2024

# WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<i>Happy valentine's day</i>			01	02	03
<b>04</b> Coffee Hour - 9:30am Worship - 10am Brookstone Worship - 10:30am Youth Group - 5pm	<b>05</b>	<b>06</b> Bible Study 11am	<b>07</b> SAM Pantry - 7am Kids Club - 2pm Choir - 6pm Handbells - 7pm	<b>08</b> MOPS - 9am Worship - 3pm Trustees - 5pm	<b>09</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> Coffee Hour - 9:30am Worship - 10am Brookstone Worship - 10:30am Youth Group - 5pm	<b>12</b> Staff Meeting - 5pm	<b>13</b> Bible Study 11am	<b>14</b> SAM Pantry - 7am Kids Club - 3pm Ash Wednesday Service - 6pm <b>LENT BEGINS</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Blood - Drive 9am - 1pm	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> <b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b> Coffee Hour - 9:30am Worship - 10am Brookstone Worship - 10:30am Youth Group - 5pm	<b>19</b> Finance Committee - 5pm	<b>20</b> Bible Study 11am	<b>21</b> SAM Pantry - 7am Kids Club - 3pm Choir - 6pm Handbells - 7pm	<b>22</b> NAMI - 7pm	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> Coffee Hour - 9:30am Worship - 10am Brookstone Worship - 10:30am Youth Group - 5pm	<b>26</b> Christian Justice Team - 1pm	<b>27</b> Bible Study 11am	<b>28</b> SAM Pantry - 7am Kids Club - 3pm Choir - 6pm Handbells - 7pm	<b>29</b>		