

TUSCOLA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONNECT

DECEMBER 2023



A Note From The Pastor

Grace and peace to the People of Tuscola,

December is full of family events, student programs and sports, and special worship services. We see this time of year as an end, like the end of a semester or a calendar year. A lot of this feeling comes from this time of year being so dark. The Longest night of the year is December 21. We should not see it as an end but rather a beginning. We do this on New Year's. We made plans for the next year; we set goals for ourselves. For the Church, that is what Advent and Christmas should be for as well, so we have not already started a year and are just now starting to plan for it.

For my personality, this is something I try to do myself, and sometimes I succeed. As I write this newsletter, I am also planning all of next year's sermons and series. All of this is in the hope that it will help me and the church see the Church more than a week at a time. Church and our Christian walk is not a sprint. It is a long road with ups and downs, and we should plan accordingly. Does this mean that every Sunday starting January 1 is set in stone? No. Right now, I am planning the journey from a bird's eye view. We can see the big hills and valleys, for the most part, but we can't see the small hills that climb slowly over miles yet. We, as the Church, should do the same, and we have to start now because once the journey has begun, we will not have the time to get everything done. We will get stuck on the small things and not have time to plan for the big things. December is a time to relax and enjoy what we have worked so hard for all this last year, but it is also a time to plan for the future. Every End is a Beginning. And every beginning is new. New is not something to be afraid of, but rather new is a constant companion, new days, new weeks, and new years, that all need us to be ready for them. I will leave you with this scripture for the month. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," Hebrews 12:1

Blessings

Pastor Bennett A. Woods

September Attendance & Offerings

	Attendance	Offerings
Oct. 1	97	\$3,619
Oct. 8	85	\$2,022
Oct. 15	117	\$3,748
Oct. 22	71	\$2,712
Oct. 29	88	\$1,024
Digital Giving Total		\$4,015

(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!

November Worship at Brookstone

Dec. 3: Speaker — John Watson
Dec. 10: Speaker — Karen Benner
Dec. 17: Speaker — Cindy Pringle
Dec. 24 : Speaker — John Watson
Dec. 31 — Kate Watson

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

The people listed below are our members who live in retirement centers, nursing homes or are unable to be 'out and about' as much as they would like. It would be a blessing to them, if we, their church family, remember and care for them by sending holiday greetings. (If there are others who should be included on this listing, please let Sarah in the church office know.) You will have an opportunity to sign holiday cards, also, at a table at the church for the twelve members listed below between the dates of December 3rd and December 17th .

Homebound (all Tuscola, IL 61953)

Carol Gaddey, 806 Fleetwood
Dottie Riddle, 204 Douglas Dr.
Chuck and Mollie Seibold, 311 Holiday
Catherine Kellogg, 300 E. Sale St.

Brookstone Estates (1106 E. Northline, Tuscola, IL 61953)

Mary Smith (holiday cards may be directed to Mary at Brookstone) Room #7
George & Carol Weemer, Room #24
Jack Corum, Room #44
Nancy Shunk, Room #43

Carriage Crossing (909 Green Mill Road, Arcola, IL 61910)

Joe Wills

Tuscola Healthcare (1203 Egyptian Trail, Tuscola, IL 61953)

None

Other Members:

Gaila Ross, Piatt County Nursing Home, 1111 N. State St., Monticello, IL 61856
Marsha Leizer – 480 W. Polk Ave., Apt. 126, Charleston, IL 61920
Kathryn McCumber, 550 Stone Valley Parkway, Unit 1018, Columbia, MO 65203

Merry Christmas to the people of TUMC!

Read these prophetic words from Isaiah 9:2

*The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.*



And from John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

We have been given the greatest Christmas gift of all – our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! May we keep our eyes, always, on that wonderful light that came at Christmas so long ago.

Becca Dunn, the new PASS director, and Harvey Pettry, a PASS board member, were in attendance as the **Trustees** met on November 9 to discuss the PASS rental agreement. The rooms and times of use will be updated in the current agreement. Ms. Dunn asked that the use of the playground equipment be added and the trustees agreed to this. The leasing agreement will also be changed from three years to one year. Ms. Dunn expressed her desire to grow the PASS program and answered other questions pertaining to PASS for the trustees. SAM pantry is still looking for a coordinator. Jason Swearingen reported that 94 family members were served on the previous Wednesday. They will continue distributing food one day a week. A motion was passed giving Jerry Reynolds the authorization to pursue looking for an outdoor walk-in cooler for the pantry's use which would be placed outside the kitchen door. The roof on the church, parsonage and parsonage garage have been replaced. Gutters were also installed and gutter guards are in place at the parsonage locations. Yearly furnace maintenance has been performed at the parsonage. Pastor Bennett will contact Ameren to see if they have any programs for replacing the parsonage water heater with a heat pump water heater. A new policy will be put in place for memorial donations. If the total amount donated for an individual is less than \$1000, the money will be placed in a memorial fund to be used at the trustees' discretion. The playground fence will be placed at the border of the playground and will be black enamel and four feet tall. There has been \$5400 collected for this project. A hydrangea bush has been planted in the area just to the east of Pastor Bennett's office in memory of Joan Cross by the Doc and Mary Smith family. The thermostats in the building will be set at 62 degrees for unoccupied rooms and at 68 degrees when occupied during the winter months. It was agreed to give MOPS a key for access to the building for setup and for meetings when the church is not open.

SPRC met on November 14. The church is still searching for a children and youth director candidate. If you know of an individual who would be a good fit for this position, please contact the church. Pastor Bennett reported that many churches in the area are also looking for someone to fill this position. In the meantime, Pastor

Bennett will continue in this role until a replacement is hired. If the position is unfilled by the end of the school year, there will have to be discussion on whether he can continue to do so. Pastor Bennett has formed a group consisting of United Methodist pastors from Douglas county and Tolono which will meet once a month.

The **Finance** committee received some welcome news at their meeting on November 20. Pastor Bennett reported that the estimates of giving for 2024 totaled \$170,908 which was growth over the \$141,940 pledged in 2023. This was due to an increase in the amount pledged by 39 giving units and not an increase in the number of people completing estimates of giving nor by people moving from “identifiable giving”. Pastor Bennett reported that an individual in the church will pay the entire yearly salary for the children and youth director position for one year if/when they are hired. In addition, the trustees will donate an amount to be determined to the general operating fund after the roof insurance claim is closed. These donations will move the 2024 budget into the black and therefore, a motion was passed to approve the budget. See below for the new 2024 budget. John Watson will look into doing a golf outing at Iron Horse in 2024 as a fundraiser. Mike Ovca has decided to resign as auditor for the church after 13 years in this role, and we appreciate his years of service. Pastor Bennett will contact other churches to determine who they use for audits. The church received a notice from our banking institution, First Mid Bank and Trust, stating that another customer in an institution they have recently purchased has the church’s same checking account number. We will ask that our account number be changed and First Mid will assist Sarah Evans, financial secretary, with all that is required to make this transition.

The **Church Council** met on 11/20 also. In addition to the previous information from the **Trustee** meeting in a preceding paragraph, Pastor Bennett reported that the cracked window glass at the parsonage has been repaired. **Finance** chair, Dick Berg, reported that we are hoping that the deficit in the 2023 budget will be made up in December which normally sees an increase in giving. **SPRC** chair, Mary Ann Pattenau, stated that group is working on updating the lay employee handbook. Please see previous paragraphs for additional information from the Finance and SPRC meetings. **Children’s council** has not met but Pastor Bennett reported that the Junior and Senior High youth groups will be combined moving forward. Georgia Wilkinson, president of the **Women United in Faith**, stated that they provided a meal for the youth group and will be doing so again in 2024. Chili for Chaddock was a success as reported by Jerry Leonard for **United Methodist Men**. They will be able to send \$500 to Chaddock even though expenses were higher. The caterer for their monthly meetings requires a certain number of attendees before they will commit to provide the meal so the members are still attempting to determine what format their meetings will

take. Jerry also reported for **SAM pantry**. They still do not have a coordinator although someone has expressed interest but they cannot start until May. In the meantime, Margie Delheimer is helping in this capacity. The pantry has started seeing an increase in the number of people being served. They have begun handing out less-popular government commodities, such as garbanzo beans, to make room for more food. The **Christian Justice** team is hoping to have Dayspring Native American United Methodist Church come and conduct a worship service at TUMC. The **Worship** team discussed the Christmas Eve services. There will be the fourth Advent Sunday worship on the morning of 12/24 and then a family Christmas Eve service at 7:00 PM and the traditional candlelight Christmas Eve service at 11:00 PM. If none of those times will work for you, Pastor Bennett will also be conducting a morning service at 8:30 and a Christmas Eve service at 3:30 PM at Pesotum UMC on 12/24. There will be a Blue Christmas service on 12/21 at TUMC. The **Congregational Care** team is creating a digital list of shut-ins. The hospice care presentation by Sarah Bush Lincoln was well attended. The team is considering a class on CPR and scams that target the elderly. The **Evangelism and Missions** team will again hold their Fall Festival next year. This team will determine to which organization our Christmas offering will go. In the Pastor's Report, Pastor Bennett stated he will continue in the role as children and youth director until someone is hired or summer arrives. He has been in contact with the conference regarding the lack of applicants and they feel the low pay is the reason. The Mattoon and Sullivan United Methodist churches are also looking to fill this position. Pastor Bennett informed Council members that TUMC has been chosen by the conference to send an additional lay person to annual conference to equalize the vote between the clergy and the laity. If you are interested in attending, please see Pastor Bennett. **Church Council Chair**, Wayne Ward will be stepping down in January and was thanked by the members for his years of service.

As always, if you have questions or comments, you may contact me, Karen Benner, at kbbenner@gmail.com or by phone at 217-721-7750.



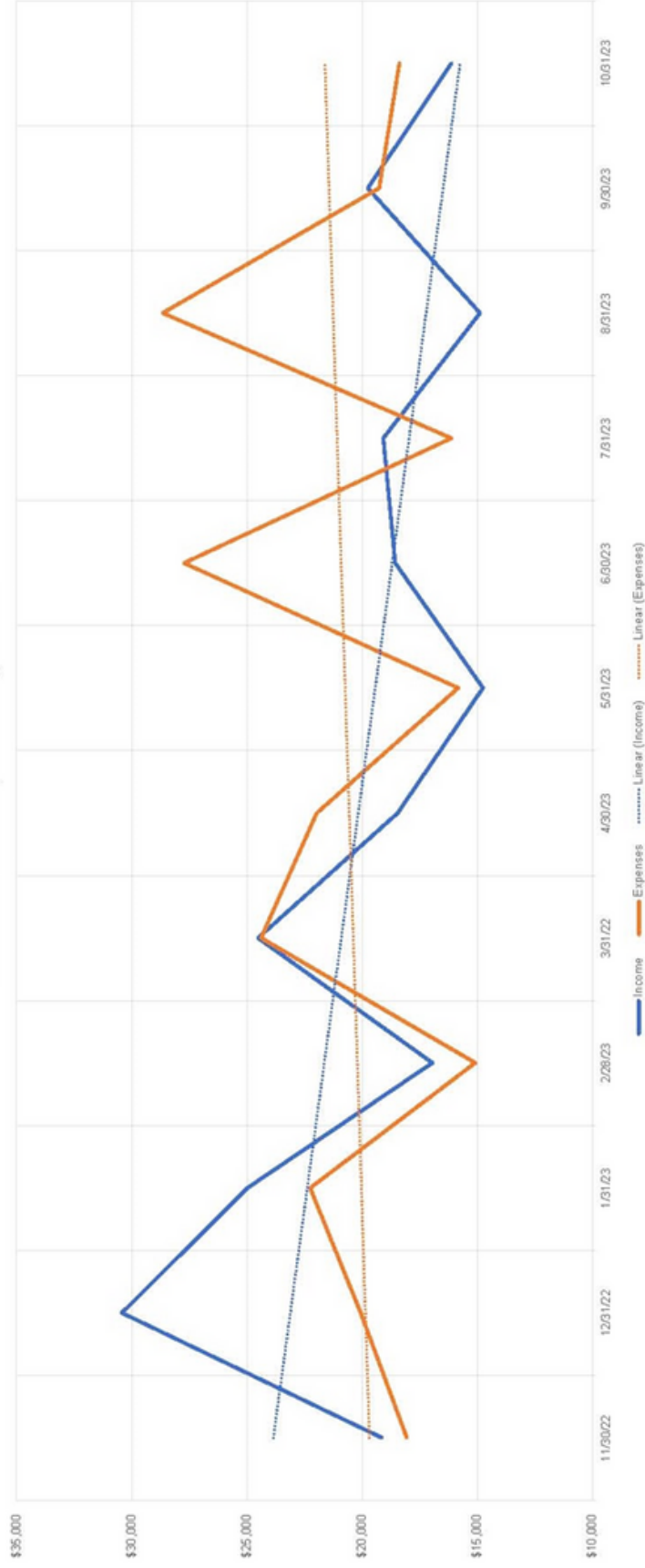
Tuscola United Methodist Church
2024 Proposed Budget

Account #	Account Name	2023 Budget	2024 Proposed Budget	Corrections	Amount Difference	Percent Difference
Income						
400.100	Estimates of Giving	141,940.00	170,908.00		28,968.00	20.41%
400.150	Identifiable Giving	80,000.00	80,000.00		0.00	0.00%
400.200	Plate Offering	4,000.00	4,000.00		0.00	0.00%
400.300	Sunday School Offering	1,200.00	1,200.00		0.00	0.00%
400.425	Designated Gift	0.00	31,200.00		(31,200.00)	#DIV/0!
400.500	Other Income	1,000.00	1,000.00		0.00	0.00%
400.550	Building Usage Funds	15,500.00	3,000.00		12,500.00	80.65%
	Total Income	243,640.00	291,308.00		10,268.00	4.21%
Expense						
500.100	Committee on Finance	1,000.00	1,000.00		0.00	0.00%
500.110	EFT Charges	1,300.00	1,300.00		0.00	0.00%
500.200	Moving Expense	800.00	1,000.00		200.00	25.00%
500.300	Annual Conference Expense - Lay Member(s)	1,000.00	500.00		(500.00)	-50.00%
500.500	Office Supplies	3,000.00	3,000.00		0.00	0.00%
500.550	Postage	1,500.00	700.00		(800.00)	-53.33%
500.600	Kitchen supplies	300.00	500.00		200.00	66.67%
500.700	Miscellaneous	200.00	200.00		0.00	0.00%
	Subtotal Admin Expenses	9,100.00	8,200.00		(900.00)	-9.89%
501.150	Electricity	25,000.00	18,000.00		(7,000.00)	-28.00%
501.250	Gas	7,000.00	7,000.00		0.00	0.00%
501.350	Water & Sewer	2,000.00	2,000.00		0.00	0.00%
501.400	Office Phone Lines	2,000.00	3,000.00		1,000.00	50.00%
501.550	Trash Removal	1,100.00	1,100.00		0.00	0.00%
502.100	Insurance - Building	12,500.00	20,000.00		7,500.00	60.00%
502.150	Maintenance - Building	10,000.00	10,000.00		0.00	0.00%
	Maintenance - Parsonage	0.00	1,000.00		1,000.00	NEW
502.200	Acquisition - Equipment	2,000.00	2,000.00		0.00	0.00%
502.250	Maintenance - Equipment	5,000.00	5,000.00		0.00	0.00%
502.300	Internet services	1,920.00	1,920.00		0.00	0.00%
502.350	Tech Support	550.00	550.00		0.00	0.00%
502.400	Church Website	1,000.00	1,000.00		0.00	0.00%
	Subtotal Bldg/Equip Operations	70,070.00	72,570.00		2,500.00	3.57%
	Pastor Compensation	79,981.00	81,399.00		1,418.00	1.77%
	Pastor BW - Salary	58,467.00	52,200.00		(6,267.00)	-10.72%
	Pastor Healthcare Stipend	0.00	15,225.00		15,225.00	NEW
	Pastor BW - travel	2,300.00	2,200.00		(100.00)	-4.35%
	Pastor BW - Professional Exp	600.00	700.00		100.00	16.67%
	Pastor education	400.00	500.00		100.00	25.00%
	Annual Confrence - Pastor	0.00	500.00		500.00	NEW
	Parsonage Phone Line/Cable	840.00	1,200.00		360.00	42.86%
	Direct Billing Confer Pension #1	3,674.00	3,915.00		241.00	6.56%
	Direct Billing Confer Pension #2	5,700.00	4,959.00		(741.00)	-13.00%
	Pastor TH Pension Contribution	8,000.00	0.00		(8,000.00)	-100.00%
503.200	Service Musician	3,300.00	3,300.00		0.00	0.00%
503.210	Sanctuary Choir Director	2,800.00	2,800.00		0.00	0.00%
503.220	Handbell Choir Director	1,575.00	1,575.00		0.00	0.00%
503.230	Children's Choir Director	1,575.00	1,575.00		0.00	0.00%
503.250	Family Ministry Director	20,800.00	31,200.00		10,400.00	50.00%
503.255	Youth Director Assistant	4,368.00	4,368.00		0.00	NEW
503.400	Secretary	25,350.00	27,040.00		1,690.00	6.67%
503.500	Custodian	9,360.00	9,360.00		0.00	0.00%
503.700	Staff Continuing Education	300.00	300.00		0.00	0.00%
503.800	FICA - taxes	6,500.00	6,500.00		0.00	0.00%

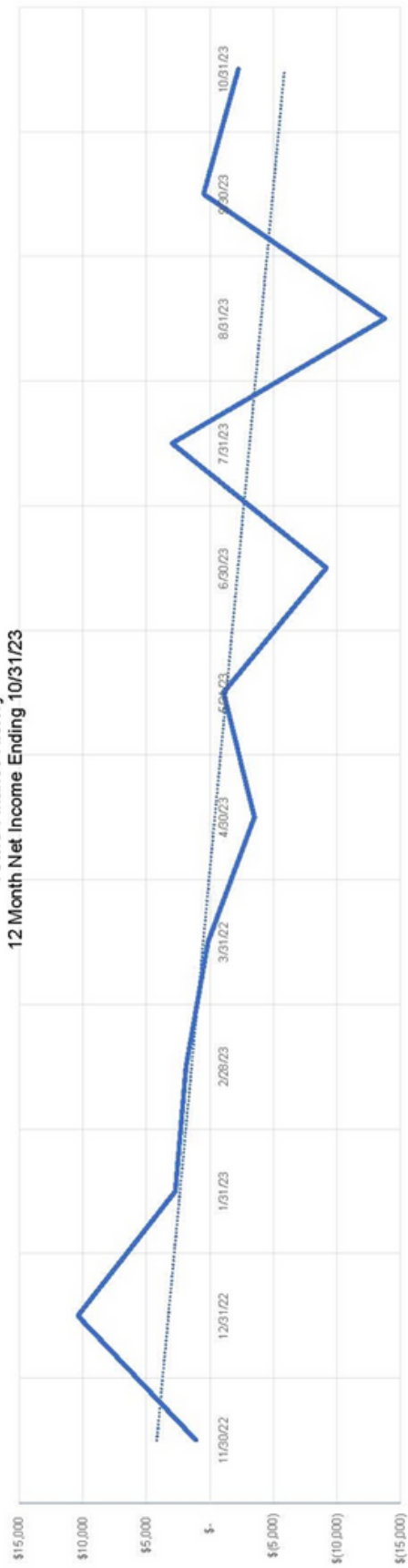
<i>Account #</i>	<i>Account Name</i>	2023 Budget	2024 Proposed Budget	Corrections	Amount Difference	Percent Difference
503.850	Insurance - Workman's Comp	1,000.00	600.00		(400.00)	-40.00%
	Subtotal Staff Parish Expense	156,909.00	170,017.00		13,108.00	8.35%
504.200	Evangelism	1,000.00	1,000.00		0.00	0.00%
504.600	Advertising	400.00	400.00		0.00	0.00%
	Subtotal Evangelism Expense	1,400.00	1,400.00		0.00	0.00%
505.100	Choir Music Materials	150.00	150.00		0.00	0.00%
505.105	Bell Choir Music Materials	200.00	200.00		0.00	0.00%
505.110	Children's Choir Music Materials	75.00	75.00		0.00	0.00%
505.200	Bulletins	600.00	600.00		0.00	0.00%
505.300	Devotional Literature	350.00	300.00		(50.00)	-14.29%
505.900	Worship Supplies & Equipment	1,000.00	1,000.00		0.00	0.00%
	Subtotal Worship Expense	2,375.00	2,325.00		(50.00)	-2.11%
506.210	Teacher/Leadership Resources	200.00	200.00		0.00	0.00%
506.300	Children's Ministries	2,500.00	2,500.00		0.00	0.00%
506.400	Adult Ministries	750.00	750.00		0.00	0.00%
506.800	Library acquisitions	350.00	350.00		0.00	0.00%
507.000	Youth Ministries	1,500.00	1,500.00		0.00	0.00%
	Subtotal Education Expense	5,300.00	5,300.00		0.00	0.00%
	Clergy Support/Admin Apportion	19,500.00	16,812.00		(2,688.00)	-13.78%
508.100	Benevolences/Connectional	7,968.00	11,784.00		3,816.00	47.89%
	Subtotal Apportionments	27,468.00	28,596.00		1,128.00	4.11%
509.100	Mission Support	850.00	850.00		0.00	0.00%
509.200	Glabe Salary Support	1,400.00	1,400.00		0.00	0.00%
	Subtotal Other Expense	2,250.00	2,250.00		0.00	0.00%
	Total Expense	274,872.00	290,658.00		14,658.00	5.33%
	Net \$	(31,232.00)	\$ 650.00		\$ (4,390.00)	14.06%



TUMC Finance History
12 Month Income and Expense Ending 10/31/23



TUMC Finance History
12 Month Net Income Ending 10/31/23



Automatic Withdrawal (ACH) Authorization Form for Tuscola United Methodist Church

Tuscola United Methodist Church
 901 N Prairie St
 Tuscola, IL 61953
 217-253-4232

Authorization for Direct Payment

I (we) _____ authorize Tuscola United Methodist Church to
 initiate a withdrawal from

Bank Name _____
 Name(s) on the account _____

Checking Savings

Routing Number _____
 Account Number _____
 Email Address _____

Signature _____
 Signature _____

Contribution Schedule

Please indicate your contributions below

Amount	Account	One Time	Reaccuring	Proc. Date (please circle one)	Start Date
\$	Estimates of Giving			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	General Fund			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	Advent/Christmas			1st 15th EOM	
\$	Easter/Lenten Offering			1st 15th EOM	
\$	SAM Food Pantry			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	Mission Field Fund			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	Memorials			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	Building Fund			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	Maintenance Fund			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	Youth Group			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	Kids Club			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	Childrens Ministries			1st - 15th - EOM	
\$	Total				

I authorize the above-named church to debit from the account specified on this form. This authorization will remain in effect until I give reasonable change or cancellation notice to terminate authorization. I understand there will be a **\$25** nonsufficient funds (NSF) fee charged to my account for NSF debits.

If a contribution day falls on a non-business day, the withdrawal will take place on the next business day. All holiday based givings will be processed on the 15th of the month.

You still have time to get your Estimate Of Giving Cards into the office. Please turn them in as soon as you can. You can drop them off during the week to Sarah, mail them in, or drop them in the offering plate on Sunday. There is also a copy of a giving card below if you haven't received your card yet or need a new one. You can fill it out, detach it and mail it back to the church or drop it off. Which ever is convenient for you. Also, if you would like to sign up for automatic giving, the form for that is also included this month as well.



TAKE ONE STEP UP . . . FOR CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

In response to God's love and as a concrete expression of my faith in and commitment to Christ and his church, I plan to TAKE ONE STEP UP in my giving.

- STEP UP BEYOND TITHING**
My desire is to do more than God's minimum.
- STEP UP TO TITHING**
I will give 1/10 of my income to God's work.
- STEP UP TOWARD TITHING**
I am not yet a tither, but I will move toward that goal.
- MY COMMITMENT IS \$ _____ per week**
- This represents an increase over last year.

Name _____ Date _____
 Address _____ Apt. No. _____ Phone (_____) _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

This commitment may be revised or cancelled at any time at my request.
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UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Three members attended the E.I.U. Wesley Foundation fundraiser, where folks donated over \$2200 to support students' programs. Our unit donated \$50 to their work (from Strings Attached who did not accept money for playing at our Salad Supper). Beyond our budget, our unit donated a total of \$600 to Connie Wieck, missionary to Laos, Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House, and our church's Children and Youth programs. Members donated desserts and attended the UMM Chili for Chaddock dinner.

We pay the MOPS charter and serve as Mentor Moms and baby sitters. One member makes baby gowns, hats, blankets, and a memory bracelet/charm for the mom who grieves the loss of her baby. Tricia Willoughby has been providing this mission outreach for many years and has distributed hundreds of gifts to several area hospitals. We provide funds for supplies. Members cook and serve funeral dinners, serve on most church committees, teach Sunday School classes, and meet monthly to stay informed about missions, where our money goes, legislation being considered, plans to take action, etc.

If you have a desire or passion to put your faith, hope, and love into action for women, children, and youth, we have a place for you. Consider joining an existing circle (Rebekah meets the 4th Monday, 7:00 pm, usually at church, and Rachel meets 4th Tuesday, 1:00 at Flesors' Candy Kitchen).

You may help start a new circle with meeting time, place, format decided by the group. There is so much need in the world and as United Women in Faith, we continue 154 years of action. Opportunities- create craft items, quilts, lap blankets, prayer shawls or squares for Cunningham Children's Home and quilt show in Urbana or Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House in poverty stricken East St. Louis. The Midwest Mission Distribution Center in Chatham needs flood buckets, sewing kits, newborn layettes, dignity kits, book bags for teachers and students, and school supplies. Volunteer- SAM food pantry, Kids' Club and Youth meetings, mentor or tutor, write cards to elderly, sick, lonely, college students, military and bereaved or visit nursing home/shut-ins.

As United women in Faith and church members, let us continue practicing "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control". Galatians 5:22,23

Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy, Safe, Successful 2024!

Patty Russell, UWF Social Action



TUSCOLA UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

FAMILY SERVICE @ 7PM
TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT
SERVICE @ 11PM

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 24, 2023

COME CELEBRATE THE BIRTH
OF JESUS CHRIST!

Blue Christmas Service

The beauty of the Christmas season sometimes reminds us of the people we have lost or the losses we have suffered.

Winter solstice - the longest, darkest night of the year - is a good time to gather, to sit with our griefs and to offer them up to God.

Our Blue Christmas Service is a time to remember and name the losses that come as part of living as caring people, looking forward with hope and peace.

December 21, 2023

7:00pm

Tuscola United Methodist Church
901 N Prairie St.
Tuscola, IL

CONNECT.

TUSCOLA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

901 N. PRAIRIE ST.

TUSCOLA, IL 61953

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

KATHLEEN DYER
CUSTODIAN

OUR STAFF

DECEMBER
2023

WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE

3 Coffee Hour 9:30 Worship 10am	4	5 TUWF Board 10am	6 SAM Pantry 7am Bible Study 11am Kids Club 3pm Sanctuary Choir 6pm Celebration Ringers 7pm	7	8	9
10 Coffee Hour 9:30 Worship 10am Youth Group 5pm	11	12 SPRC 6pm	13 SAM Pantry 7am Bible Study 11am Kids Club 2pm Sanctuary Choir 6pm Celebration Ringers 7pm	14 MOPS 9am Trustees 5pm	15	16
17 Coffee Hour 9:30 Worship 10am Youth Group 5pm	18 Finance 5pm	19	20 SAM Pantry 7am Bible Study 11am Sanctuary Choir 6pm Celebration Ringers 7pm	21 Blue Christmas Service 7pm	22	23
24 Coffee Hour 9:30 Worship 10am	25  MERRY CHRISTMAS	26 Office Closed	27 SAM Pantry 7am	28	29	30
31 Coffee Hour 9:30 Worship 10am						