

JOY Newsletter

November 2023

United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay

A Life of Gratitude

It is amazing to me that I am already entering my fifth month of ministry here at The United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay. It will be so easy for me to express to God and others my thankfulness for the blessings that have been poured upon my life and ministry. Surrounded by gifted staff, leaders, and congregants has been amazing. My wife, Lori, and I continue to give thanks for our wonderful family, with so many great memories of experiences together.

All that being said, I must admit that there are times when life gets really full, and there are times I must deal with heavy concerns. Yet, when I can pause to offer genuine thanks for the blessings in my life, I am far more ready to address the challenges with faith, hope, and love. These are moments to remember that Thanksgiving is as much a spiritual discipline for everyday living as it is a holiday for family and friends to gather at a table of blessing.

Why is a life of gratitude so important? Scriptures give us a clear calling to rejoice and be thankful. A form of the word for gratitude is mentioned some 157 times in the Bible. A specific example would be in Paul's letter to the Philippians. This letter is filled with joy, even though at the time he is writing from prison. Here are a few verses to meditate upon (Phil. 4:4-7, CEV):

⁴ Be glad in the Lord always! Again I say, be glad! ⁵ Let your gentleness show in your treatment of all people.

The Lord is near. ⁶ Don't be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks. ⁷ Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.

May we all know the peace of God in our lives. It appears to begin with gladness and a thankfulness. There is so much research around the power of having a life of gratitude. There are links for a healthier heart, better sleep, increased optimism, more friendship. Wow, a life of gratitude is a life filled with great benefits...it is also our calling as people of faith. I hope you are able to not only have a blessed and fulfilling Thanksgiving Day...not to mention a filling of great food...but grow deeper into a life of gratitude each day. It is the power of the Christian faith for a greater peace, even when life is hard.

Thank you for being a congregation of faithful and thankful people. I am truly grateful to serve among you.

Blessings In Christ, Pastor Gary

LOVE GOD, CARE FOR EACH OTHER, AND SERVE IN THE WORLD

819 E. Silver Spring Dr. Whitefish Bay ~ <u>umcwfb.org</u> ~ 414- 964-2424

Faith

Taizé Worship Schedule

Mark your Calendars!

November 3, 7:00 p.m.

December 1, 7:00 p.m.

Taizé Worship is back on schedule. In November, we return to our usual first Friday of the month date. Join us for worship November 3 at 7:00 p.m.



Come center your heart. As usual, the invitation to kneel at the railing will also include remembering a lost loved one.



All-Church Meeting Sunday, November 12 after 10:30 worship

Greetings from the Accountable Leadership Board (ALB) and church staff. Please mark on your calendar an All-Church Meeting after 10:30 worship on **November 12** with hope you find this quarterly

update helpful as we renew our commitment to be followers of Jesus Christ who **Love God, Care for Each Other, and Serve in the World**. Furthermore, it will be on LIVESTREAM so everyone can watch.

Worship Service for The Weary In the tradition of The Longest Night

Saturday evening, November 18, at 5 p.m.

A space and time for prayer, reflection, quiet and remembrance.

This service is for all. Bring your grief. Bring your weariness. Bring your fatigue, and allow yourself a quiet space to reflect, to heal, and to draw near to God.



Pastor Gary will preside, and Jacquelyn Oliveira, Nell Nash, and Pat Wisialowski will help lead the service.

Faith

Women Offering Worship (W.O.W.)

W.O.W. invites YOU to a mid-week faith-lift with energized worship focusing on Psalms, at 9:30 every Thursday morning in the Chapel as well as two different friend-making, supportive community studies at 10:15-11:30 in the Wesley and Walnut Rooms. Contact Nell Nash at mnash@umcwfb.org, or just COME! Find your place that you never knew you were looking for on Thursday mornings. Come and be welcomed.

Calling all cookie bakers!

Saturday, November 11 - Holiday Fair and Cookie Walk is right around the corner. Bring a dozen or more of your favorite holiday cookie to Nell no later than Friday, November 10 at noon. All cookies will be for sale from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the fair.



Book Reviews

Angels Watching Over Me

Angels Watching Over Me (235 ALL) is a Guidepost Book from our UMCWFB library. It moves beyond the stereotype of angels in flowing robes, golden hair, wings and halos to a deeper reality that touches the lives of people everywhere. In Angels Watching Over Me, twenty-two people tell stories of their encounters with angels.

This book is divided into four chapters: Angels in the morning, noon, afternoon, and at night. You will enjoy these stories regardless of your own experiences or the experiences of your friends and family. Check it out and see.

Angels Everywhere

Angels Everywhere: Encounters With Angels (235 Ware) is written by Inger Waern and Sannie Wiese. They sought out friends and others with similar encounters with angels to write this book. Chapters include: An Angel by Our Bed, Encounters with Angels, and Answered Prayers. Each chapter is written by different authors who share their unique experiences with angels, answered prayers, consolation and others. You will take much from this book. It is available in our library. - Reviews by Sybil Harrison



THANKSGIVING PIE FEAST November 19



TO DONATE A PIE, SIGN UP AT THE OFFICE, OR CONTACT LYNN BENNETT (BENNETT.LYNN@GMAIL.COM)

United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay





Events

WEDNESDAY NIGHT FAITH-FOOD-FRIENDSHIP SCHEDULE



ALL ARE WELCOME!

5:00-6:00 pm Dinner - \$10 Adults/Kids eat free

Fellowship Hall (East Basement)

5:45-7:00 pm Kid's Choir and Children's Activities

Infants/Toddlers - Nursery on 2nd Floor - 5:45-7:00 pm

Kindergarten - Grade 2 - Activities in Youth Room on 2nd floor - 5:45-6:30 pm Kid's Choir in Sanctuary - 6:30-7:00 pm

Grades 3 - 8 - Kid's Choir in Sanctuary - 5:45-6:30 pm
Activities in Youth Room on 2nd floor - 6:30-7:00 pm

6:00-7:00 pm Adult Faith Classes Oct. 25-Nov. 15

Book Study led by Senior Pastor Gary Holmes - Walnut Room
"Soul Reset: Breakdown, Breakthrough, and the Journey to Wholeness"
by Junius Dotson

"Siblings Without Rivalry" Parenting Class led by Kristal Melbye - Chapel

Bible Study led by Sue Stanley - Wesley Room "Something about the Bible: Book of Acts"

7:00-8:30 pm Adult Chancel Choir - Sanctuary

A BIG THANK YOU to the ladies of Claudia's Circle for volunteering as servers on Wednesday, October 25 at our Faith, Food, and Friendship meal.



If you have a ministry that would like to help as volunteers to serve food on a Wednesday night from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m., please contact Tom Van Cleave at tvancleave@ameritech.net.

Care

Daily Meditation | October 17, 2023

from Henri Nouwen

To Care

To care one must offer one's own vulnerable self to others as a source of healing. To care for the aging, therefore, means first of all to enter into close contact with your own aging self, to sense your own time, and to experience the movements of your own life cycle. From this aging self, healing can come forth and others can be invited to cast off the paralyzing fear for their future. As long as we think that caring means only being nice and friendly to old people, paying them a visit, bringing them a flower, or offering them a ride, we are apt to forget how much more important it is for us to be willing and able to be present to those we care for. And how can we be fully present to the elderly when we are hiding from our own aging?

How can we listen to their pains when their stories open wounds in us that we are trying to cover up? How can we offer companionship when we want to keep our own aging self out of the room, and how can we gently touch the vulnerable spots in old people's lives when we have armored our own vulnerable self with fear and blindness?

Only when we enter into solidarity with the aging and speak out of common experience, can we help others to discover the freedom of old age.

Companion Ministry

It's the little things, the smallest kindness...come be a part of the Companion Ministry for our homebound.



Prayerfully consider how you might benefit from being a companion to a member who is no longer able to physically come to church. Your friendship and caring conversation are all that is asked.

If you or a loved one is in need of a companion, let us know that as well. We will match up companions as volunteers permit. Pat Wisialowski 414-964-2424 x224 pwisialowski@umcwfb.org

By gratefully receiving another's care we call forth community and provide our caregivers an opportunity to give their own gifts of compassion, care, love, and service. - Henri Nouwen

Events

Shine On

Last year, a host of heavenly angels looked down from Cloud 9 and saw that humanity was struggling in the wake of Covid-19 and world conflict. They decided the best way to get people to "Believe Again" was to show them the miracle of Jesus' birth. When the angels descended to Earth and reenacted the holy nativity, divine magic took hold and people started to regain their faith.

This year, the angels are back on Cloud 9, joined by a new cast of brilliant stars looking down from the sky. God commends the angels for their good work last year, getting people to believe in Him again. However, God explains that when you truly have the love of Jesus in your heart, you are not satisfied to just believe. You have to put your faith in ACTION! You are called to make a difference and help create the kingdom of God on Earth. You are called to spread the gospel news and make disciples!



The angels and stars decide it is time to show the beautiful mystery again, but in a new light. After all, the nativity story characters did not just believe; they lived out their faith. Mary traveled to Bethlehem and gave birth! The shepherds left their sheep to find the manger! The wise men journeyed hundreds of miles to deliver gifts and spread the word about the newborn king! What are YOU called to do?

Join us in our Sanctuary on December 16 to see this amazing story come to life!

Events & Services



Missions



Thanksgiving Express Food Drive and Mission of the Month

November is a special time to be thankful for all that we have. Here at the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay we have two opportunities to share our bounty with our friends at Northcott Neighborhood House. **Northcott is our November Mission of the Month** where loose change and other donations will go to support their purpose of providing education, employment opportunities, and basic necessities to youth, families, and senior citizens in the Milwaukee area.

In addition, we will be collecting non-perishable, healthy food items for our friends at Northcott.

Please bring your food donations to church by Sunday, November 19.

Below is a list of food items that are most needed:

Soup, Stew, Chili Canned Vegetables & Fruit

Canned Beans Whole Grain Cereal (no added sugar)

Canned Chicken or Tuna Fish Peanut Butter

Missions

Tree of Love

This year we will be running our "Tree of Love" event by supporting the "Next Door Foundation" and the "United Methodist Children's Services." You will have the opportunity to purchase gifts of \$10-\$25 for young children who attend the "Next Door Foundation" and the opportunity to purchase \$25 Walmart gift cards that will be given to each of the families at UMCS at their annual Christmas party. The gift cards will be procured through our church's RaiseRight Scrip program. You will not need to procure the cards yourself.



Look for details on how to pick which children you wish to buy for and how to donate the money to Scrip in upcoming weekly Wednesday e-Joy. Year after year during this festive season our church has been very generous in it's support for these organizations. Let's make 2023 another success.



Our 2023 Pumpkin Sale a Success!

Our 2023 pumpkin sale unofficially made \$4,446 in sales which results in a profit of \$2,911. The profits will be split evenly among the 3 meal programs that we supply the food for and the 2024 youth trip this coming summer.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who helped out this year. These include those who helped to unload the pumpkins on Oct. 5, those who sat outside through not always the best weather, those who counted and recorded the daily sales and to Tink Thomson for setting up the materials we needed and for checking the safe deposit box for donation envelopes.

Do you have a Windows 7 or 10 laptop collecting dust!

Since our NHU Computer Literacy and Access Initiative launch in January 2004, we have provided computer access and training to more than 800 individuals with disabilities as well as providing free technical support. Our refurbishers are people with disabilities pursuing new employment skills. (We also granted computers in 2004 for the UMCWFB computer lab.)



Today there is an urgent need for laptops for home bound individuals with disabilities, as well as our recipients with disabilities who are trying to return to school or employment. To donate your computer equipment, please text, 414-339-2183 to make arrangements to meet me at church with your computer donation or call NHU Tuesdays or Thursdays at 414-299-0124 to make an appointment to deliver at our downtown offices. You will receive a receipt for your donation. Any questions, please text.

Thank you for your assistance to provide opportunity for people with disabilities! Learn more about this organization at https://www.new-horizons.org.

Missions

A Big 'Thank You' from the Mission Team

There are many people who contribute to the success of our mission programs.

Recent activities include:

- 1. **Pumpkins**. Many people unloaded, sold, or purchased pumpkins in support of our inner city meal program and ASP Youth mission trips.
- 2. **Inner City Meal Program**. Many people are involved in purchasing food, cooking over 250 meals per month, delivering to the meal sites, and serving. For Rescue Mission and St. Benedicts we provide servers, but do not provide the food.
- 3. **Temba Nkomozepi**, **United Methodist Missionary**. Thank you to members who provided one night's lodging and to those who attended the presentation. The Mission Team will consider ongoing support of this mission, so you will likely hear much more about this opportunity.
- 4. **Habitat For Humanity**. We had one work day in September and another in October involving 14 workers. Pastor Gary worked with us on one of the days. Over the year we have had 7 work days involving approximately 60 men and women. One more day is scheduled for 2023, December 2nd.
- 5. **Tutoring**. Many people are involved at both Marvin Pratt School (elementary students), and MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary (adults getting their G.E.D.)

Thanks to all who were involved in these mission activities. And thank you to those serving in many other mission programs.

Christmas has arrived in Lydia's Treasure!



New things arriving every week.

If you would like to donate items to Lydia, please see Mary Paull or contact her at mpaull53223@gmail.com. We will be **open on**

Mondays and Tuesdays through November 14 as well as Saturday, November 11 during the Holiday Fair. Come see what's new, including Fair Trade Divine Chocolate Bars, Christmas cards from Credo Designs and Fair Trade nativities and gifts.

Help us help our three missions:

Camp Home Town Heroes, CAGE, and Just One More Ministry. Collectively, they are mentoring agriculture and peaceful skills, supporting children and families of fallen military and first responders, and rescuing food to feed the hungry here in Milwaukee.

Ministries



HOLIDAY FAIR

Saturday, Nov. 11, 9:30am-1:30pm

United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay 819 East Silver Spring Drive

One-of-a-kind handmade gifts and delectables Start your holiday shopping!

• Jams and Jellies • Pickles • Cookies • Handcrafted Items

Cash . Checks . Venmo





United Women in Faith

UWF Luncheon
 and Presentation
 "The Joys of Christmas"
 Tuesday, December 12

11:30 a.m. – Punch and Fellowship Noon – Lunch and Merriment

> Please join us to celebrate the Joys of Christmas! \$10 per person

Stop by the office on Sunday to sign up, or call 414-964-2424. * Childcare available upon request











Ministries

United Women in Faith Reading Program

United Women in Faith Reading Program

The 2024 list of books for the UWF Reading Program is now online at <u>uwfaith.org/read</u>. There are so many wonderful selections to choose from the last five years of lists. Our church launched the Reading Program in February of 2023. At the UWF Southeast District gathering in September, our church unit was recognized for having two members complete Plan 1 of the Reading Program this past year. Congratulations to Rena Szewczuga and Mary Mueller. We look forward to more women completing the program in 2024.

The basic plan involves reading one book in each of five categories.

Book Categories

- 1. Education for Mission
- 2. Leadership Development
- 3. Nurturing for Community
- 4. Social Action
- 5. Spiritual Growth



The **Wisconsin Southeast District of UWF has a monthly virtual book club** to encourage discussion among women from other churches in the district. Dates and books for fall and winter have been selected. The sessions will be at 6:30 pm via Zoom on various weeknights.

Tuesday, Nov. 29, 6:30 p.m. *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei (Education for Mission) Wednesday, Dec. 27, 6:30 p.m. *Our Strangely Warmed Hearts* by Karen Oliveto (Leadership) Thursday, Jan. 25, 6:30 p.m. *The Seed Keeper* by Diane Wilson (Nurturing for Community)

Contact Gail Burgess at hb53104@aol.com register and receive the Zoom link.

The **Deborah Reading Circle** also chose three books from the UWF Reading Program for 2023-24. All are welcome to read the books and join them for great discussion and fellowship. They meet the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at church. (swjip@hotmail.com)

Jan. 2, 2024 *Ida B. the Queen* by Michelle Duster (Leadership) March 5 *Together: The Healing Power of Connection* by Vivek H. Murthy (Community) April 2 *Four Winds* by Kristen Hannah (Social Action)

Complete information about the program is online at <u>uwfaith.org/read.</u>

Ministries

Men's Ministry for November



Thank you to everyone that came to our October breakfast with Pastor Gary.

HOLOCAUST

TRAVELING EXHIBITION FOR LIBRARI

AMERICANS KNOW?

WHAT MORE COULD

Watch for a Date in November to join our guided tour of a traveling exhibition at the Milwaukee Central Library, entitled "Americans and the Holocaust"

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C. and the American Library Association (ALA)

Public Programs Office present "Americans and the Holocaust," a traveling exhibition that examines the motives, pressures, and fears that shaped America's response to Nazism, war, and genocide in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s. The special library exhibition is based on the exhibition at the USHMM in Washington, D.C.

Plan to join this tour of a timely exhibition which will be open to all.





Habitat Volunteer Date Set for Saturday, December 2

After a successful Friday when 7 church volunteers helped finish and raise an outside wall plus the inside walls in late October, we have another opportunity to do the flooring for a Habitat house at 1931 N 26th St. **The date is Saturday, Dec. 2** (inside) from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Please let Don Lybeck (<u>mdonlybeck@sbcglobal.net</u>) know that you can be there to help. Remember, Habitat builds the most affordable houses in Milwaukee for a living cost that is in most cases less than the owner would be spending on rent.

Youth



Hey friends!

As we look forward to Thanksgiving and Christmas there are lots of ways that we prepare: food, decorations, shopping... but how do you prepare your soul? Here are some ways that we can build community and get closer to God and one another!

Family Game Night

This family game night will test your creativity and problem-solving skills while you meet new people and have fun!





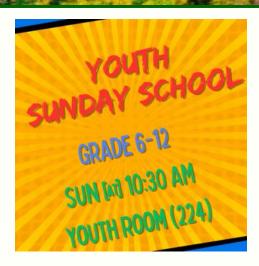
Family ADVENTure!

The event is designed to model ways that families can celebrate Advent at home through scriptures, stories, prayers, and devotionals that are connected to the physical reminders of the nativity, countdowns, and traditional Christmas symbols.

Youth

Shift our Youth Plans

Youth are busy all week between school, sports, and activities, but we have found a time that works to meet the needs of our growing youth group. Come Sundays at 10:30 a.m. and help us plan ways we can develop this community!





GMT 2024! Save the Date!

Our next youth mission trip will be in **Nashville**, **July 20-27**, **2024**, so mark your calendars. This year we are partnering with an organization called Group Mission Trips. When you volunteer with Group Mission Trips, you'll have the opportunity to engage in meaningful service projects that have a lasting impact on residents and communities around the area. GMT is open to all current 8th graders through current high school seniors. We also need adult leaders to accompany us on the trip.

Please let Lori Aeschbacher (<u>loriaeschbacher@sbcglobal.net</u>) or Pastor Andrew know if you have interest in going or have questions about the trip. We will reserve a spot for you!



Notes from the Board

On October 17, the Accountable Leadership Board met for the regular monthly meeting. In attendance were ALB members Don Behrens, Nancy Anderson, Jeff McClellan, Tom Van Cleave, Chelsea Montague, Lori Aeschbacher, Hui Zhang as well as Pastor Gary Holmes, Nell Nash, Jenny Fisher, Pam Vaughan, Laurie Jeffery, Kathy Schluter, Jean Erickson, and Dick Steinmetz. In addition, joining for the Mission topic were Don Lybeck, District Superintendent Ebenezor Insor, and Missionary Temba Nkomozepi.

Opening Prayer and Consent Agenda

Jeff opened the meeting with a prayer and a moving testimonial on his faith journey. Lori has volunteered to provide the prayer/testimonial for November's meeting. ALB approved the September meeting minutes by consent.

Devotion and Pastor's Report

Pastor Gary warmed up with a question and complete this sentence for the group: What do you value most in a friendship? I wish I had someone with whom I could share" The answers led to a discussion around character-driven leadership and how do we use our spiritual gifts to serve one another. Jesus has been described as the most influential leader ever. From 1 Peter 4:10 *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve on another.* Final discussions focused on two concluding questions: Who has encouraged you by offering the priceless gift of their time when you were in need? How can you be an encouraging leader today?

Missions

Missions team led by Don Lybeck asked the ALB to have Temba Nkomozepi provide a short 10-minute overview of his missionary in Zambia and allow the ALB to ask questions. Note: A 7:30 p.m. presentation by Temba in the Chapel followed the ALB meeting. Key highlights included: Temba, United Methodist missionary in Zambia, replaced Paul Webster around 6 years ago. He received his BS degree from African University then spent 6+ years in South Korea where he earned his master's degree and PhD with a focus on water resources. Temba continues the work that Paul led while incorporating some new projects which include developing a trade vocational school allowing people to develop life-long, employable skills.

SPRT Updates

Don Behrens reported that SPRT continues their work updating the employee handbook. Jeff will identify someone who specializes in family law to review once completed.

Based on the book titled, *Mission Possible* by Kay Kotan, Tom stated that he will be sharing his learnings on board fundamentals in the upcoming months.

Financial Report

Pam Vaughan reported that our YTD (year-to-date) financial picture continues to be favorable for the first quarter as income exceeded expenses by over \$35k. In addition, the Wednesday FFF (Faith, Food and Friendship) mid-week program is off to a strong start over the first five weeks both in attendance and financially, where funds collected have consistently exceeded food expenses which positions for a sustainable program.

Notes

Leadership Discernment Team - Spiritual Journey Pathway

Tom sent out a pre-read of the highlights from The Leadership Discernment meeting held October 14, 2023. Tom noted that Pastor Gary kicked off the meeting by describing the current situation:

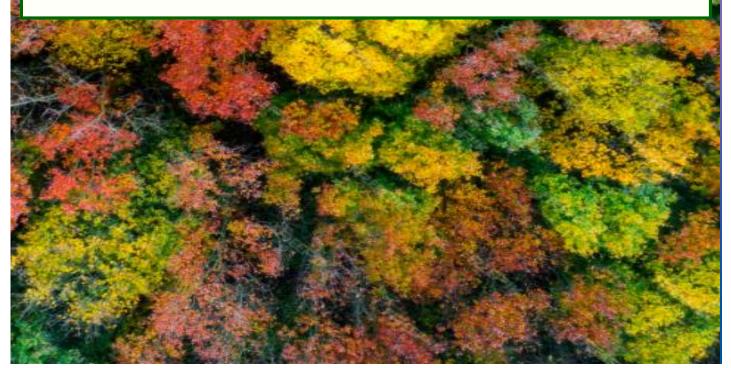
"People are no longer looking for a building where they can find and develop spiritual relationships. But they are looking for deeper spiritual relationships for themselves and their families, as well as opportunities to connect with others. The Pathway we can provide should extend beyond the church walls into people's everyday lives. In order to make this Pathway accessible, people need to see and believe that acts of discipleship and spiritual growth can be part of everyday activities. Discipleship doesn't just happen in the building on Sundays and Wednesdays."

In addition, to bring our congregation together as one spiritual unit, our pathway must be intentional, easily understood, accountable / measurable and relational through small group participation and church-wide/community wide connections. Tom mentioned that Georgia Mavrinac walked the team through our key strengths and opportunities as well as gaps and challenges were identified. There will be several communications to the congregation over the next months before the launch of Spiritual Journey Pathway during Lent, beginning February 14, 2024.

Closing Prayer and Plans for Next Meeting

Tom closed the meeting with a prayer.

Our next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, November 21**, with the closed session beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Wesley Room for ALB members, and the General session will begin around 7:00 p.m. where all are welcome. A Zoom option will be provided.



Birthdays for November

William	Read	11/01	Colin	Han	11/12
John	Serrano	11/01	Dan	Linsley	11/12
Roxanne	Plapp	11/02	Scott	Wunderlich	11/12
Alexander	Lindfors	11/02	Phoebe	Kotecki	11/12
Deborah	Woods	11/03	Isaac	Ashun	11/12
Sheila	Hendrix	11/04	Walt	Ebersohl	11/13
Scott	Siebert	11/05	Ann	Rowoldt	11/14
C.J.	Neville	11/06	Becca	Clark	11/14
Ariel	Geiger	11/07	Laurie	Haig	11/16
Pat	Kissinger	11/09	Todd	Stuebe	11/16
Don	Lybeck	11/09	Julia	McMahon	11/17
Trent	Huber	11/09	Hannah	Lybeck-Smoak	11/17
Lindsay	VandenPlas	11/10	Nancy	Behrens	11/18
Leni	Siker	11/10	Andrew	Carey	11/19
Karen	Rinehart	11/10	Michael	Rinehart	11/19
Allianna	Balmer	11/10	Judy	Pelton	11/20
Christie	Wrenn	11/11	Jack	Korducki	11/20
Richard	Steinmetz	11/11	Vernetta	Jefferson	11/20
Dorothy	Koch	11/11	Sean	Gaffney	11/23
Riley	Murphy	11/11	Savannah	Potter	11/24
Elizabeth	Lybeck-Smoak	11/11	Bonnie	Henderson	11/24
			Harper	Bayer	11/25
			Daniel	Mngoja	11/27
			David	Hahn	11/28
			Janice	Hahn	11/29