



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH NEWS

The United Women in Faith is taking their summer break. We will meet again in August to start planning our fall activities: UWF Sunday, Guest night, and the Fall Bazaar.

**God Bless,
Celene Duley**

Philippians 4:13 - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

July Birthdays and Anniversaries

1	Janis Waite Hayden	12	Betty Montgomery
2	Roland & Becky Caulkins Anniversary	15	Joe & Deb Gasparovich Anniversary
4	Tom Hayes	16	Griffin Wagner
6	Rachel Link	17	Kristina Link
7	Jared Roberts	24	Lori Berry
9	Roland Ekstrand	24	Randy May
10	Larry & Norma Bowhay Anniversary	25	Derek Cantu
10	Hayden Warner	29	Catie Tracy



Let's get fit so we can serve!

Monday – Wednesday – Friday
8am – 9am
Elmwood UMC Fellowship Hall

JOIN US! We have “changed up” our exercise routines. In addition to some of the original routines, we are following several different exercise videos. This provides extra cardio and strength moves. Come “sweat” with us!

No experience necessary! I will show you modifications for exercises to address all levels.

Questions? Please call or text Janet Vallas at 309-712-3935 or email at kvallas@mchsi.com.



SLOPPY JOE CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- 1 Bag (32 ounces) frozen Tator Tots, divided
- 2 Pounds ground beef or turkey
- 1 Can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1 Bottle (8 ounces) sweet chili sauce
- 2 TBLS. packed brown sugar
- 1 TBLS. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 TBLS. dried minced garlic
- 1 TBLS. dried minced onion
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 1¼ cups shredded Colby-Monterey Jack Cheese
- ¼ tsp paprika

Directions

1. Place half the Tater Tots in bottom of a 5-qt slow cooker.
2. In a large skillet, cook beef over medium-high heat until no longer pink, 5-6 minutes, breaking into crumbles; drain. Stir in the next 8 ingredients; reduce heat and simmer 2-3 minutes. Place beef mixture in slow cooker; top with remaining Tater Tots. Cook, covered, on low 4 hours.
3. Top with cheese. Sprinkle with paprika. Let stand, uncovered, 15 minutes before serving.

****If anyone has a recipe they would like to share, please email the office at:**
umchurch@elmwoodumc.com

COOKIE SUNDAY

We are looking for volunteers to run the coffee bar on Cookie Sundays. The duties include making the coffee and then cleaning up afterwards. It is only the last Sunday of every month. If you have any questions, contact Heidi Ennis at 309-696-9987.



Greetings, church!

Summer has come! Summer is a period where we as the church focus on rest and relaxation, on preparation for the next fall, where we will take the next steps in our ministry. It is a time when almost every program in the church (ie Bible Studies) gets put on hold so that we can have more time to relax and prepare for what comes next.

But there is one big exception to this. Vacation Bible School or VBS is the big summer program for each church. This is arguably the most important program most churches put on a year when it comes to guiding others to better understand Christ. Because many kids who are not consistently part of a church will receive their only teaching about Christ's love for them at these kinds of programs.

I recently watched a video by an agnostic YouTuber who generally focuses more on fantasy books reading through the Bible (specifically the New Testament) for the first time. While he came away still saying that he was not a believer, that he had too deep-rooted skepticism in his life to accept many of the more extreme claims, he emphasized repeatedly that he was impressed by the Bible, that it was different than he had expected: more loving, more revolutionary.

VBS is our chance to show kids this truth who otherwise would only know Christianity through the cultural memes and propaganda that others create about us. That view Christians as "judgmental", "holier-than-thou", "hypocrites", and even "joyless". It is essential for the future of our church and of our community that we take this opportunity to show those who will not get another glimpse of what the church is like who we are, the joy, and peace, and love that we stand for through our VBS program.

Our VBS this year is July 21-23. Our theme is Minecraft, with a focus on creativity and respect for creation. We have no specific needs as far as volunteers at this time, so if you want to get involved, you are free to choose whatever station you want to help with! The only qualifications required are the abilities to smile and encourage the kids, as well as listen to them and experience their learning about God and God's love for them! We will also be putting out a sign-up sheet for food donations for snacks in the coming weeks, if you want to help in that way.

So, enjoy your summer, find time to relax. And, if you feel called, get involved in helping with a VBS to show kids the love of Christ who otherwise only get to see what others say about us Christians.

Pastor Austin Miller

MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP

Mental Health First Aid Basic Training Workshop: August 22nd, 8:30-4:30

I am so excited to announce that we are going to be hosting a Mental Health First Aid training. The purpose of this training is to let you, as a layperson, better understand the role that you can play by seeing how someone is struggling and referring them to the help they need.

I heard some concern that addressing mental health is a big challenge and that we as a church are not ready to do it yet. That is what these kinds of trainings are for! It is through workshops like these that we better understand how to do what we can, as well as recognize what we cannot do ourselves and learn about the resources that we should be referring to those whose struggles are beyond our ability to help.

By participating in this program, you will be putting yourself in a position to be able to help many who are struggling not just in our church, but in our community as a whole.

The cost of the book is \$31 per person.

DO NOT LET THIS STOP YOU!

We will find scholarships for those that want to participate (even if I have to pay for them personally).

We as a church want to build up our people to be able to effectively answer our calling to address and assist with the mental health crises in our community. This is the most important thing happening for the future of our church's mission, and we will gladly pay \$31 a person to get more of our people trained to assist.

If you are able to cover the training yourself, that is greatly appreciated. If not, please sign up anyways and we will gladly pay for it!

Throughout July there will be sign-up sheets in the Narthex, or feel free to call the church office to get signed up.

I want to again emphasize that I am so excited that our church did the work and found our calling! We have found a need in the community and an opportunity for us to show God's love through meeting it!

Our next step, the one we are focusing on this summer, is to put in the work, to go through the trainings, so that we are ready to begin to contribute to addressing mental health crises in our community starting this coming fall.

That is what this workshop is doing, and why I hope that you are able and willing to join us!

Pastor Austin Miller

Creating God's Creation

Elmwood United Methodist Church

Vacation Bible School 2026.

July 21st, 22nd, and 23rd. 6-8PM

Register Night of @ EUMC

