

# Weekly Newsletter

MARCH 14, 2024



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## A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

### *Celebrating Our Reconciling Ministries Since 2016*

In January of 2016, our church family voted to become an official "reconciling church" in the United Methodist connection. We took the preparations for this vote very seriously, meeting in small groups for study and reflection, hosting guest speakers relating to the issues of gender and faith, and pursuing one-on-one conversations with those who had more questions.

Since making public our intentional welcome to members of the LGBTQIA+ community, we have needed to replace our rainbow flag standing outside our door several times, as it has torn by high winds and twice stolen. But today, our rainbow flag has been proudly replaced for our community to see who we are. We are a place of love, justice, and hope.

This Sunday, we will be celebrating our reconciling ministry during worship, reaffirming our Statement of Inclusion:

*We welcome into the full life of our church, people of every race, ethnicity, social or economic status, age, faith history, physical or mental ability, family configuration, sexual orientation and gender identity. We are a reconciling congregation that welcomes and affirms LGBTQ+ persons believing that all people deserve full inclusion in every aspect of church life. We believe that through diversity, our community of faith will flourish as we commit ourselves to spread love, justice and hope in the world.*

And so I introduce to you our new rainbow flag. We will christen it this Sunday with our prayers. May this new brilliantly-colored flag, freshly woven of strong threads represent our new resolve to work and pray for change in our denomination, in our community, our nation, and world. Let it be a guiding light of welcome to those who have been injured or turned away by a church or "churchy people".

Let it be a symbol of our love for those in our community who wear the rainbow in their hearts. May it be a beacon of hope to us all, who pledge our efforts to create a new day when sexual orientation is not a dividing issue, but a celebrated part of the lovely diversity of God's creation.

*Grace & peace +*

PASTOR SHARON



# Meet Your Church Leaders Series IV



CAROLYN REDMORE  
COORDINATOR, THE JUSTICE TEAM

Greetings Church,

My leadership is formed by a faith journey as a 3rd generation Methodist and participation in multiple Methodist churches in different places: rural small town, suburban and urban areas. That faith journey has also taken me beyond the Methodist circle: a World Council of Churches work camp in the west African country of Gabon as a young adult and emersion in ecumenical leadership with Church Women United while living in Arizona for a few years. In Tucson I became an ally of the LGBTQ+ community through enriching relationships with a trans woman friend, a gay church leader, and dedicated allies in Tucson United Methodist Churches. It was a privilege as Church Council chairperson to support our home church in Tucson becoming a Reconciling Congregation. That WUM had begun exploring becoming a Reconciling Congregation when we returned to WUM almost ten years ago made reentry into ministry here especially meaningful. Note: Derek and I were members of WUM almost 25 years before our time in Tucson.

An implicit thread, that engaging in ministry also means engaging society and working for just change, became more explicit with participation in the Justice Team, which I now lead. We returned to St. Louis just as Michael Brown was killed in an encounter with a policeman in Ferguson and the ensuing intense focus on related issues. I did a lot of listening through attendance at community conversations (Eden Seminary, Church Women United, Alliance for Interracial Dignity, Missouri History Museum). Accepting an invitation from Metropolitan Congregations United to a meeting about advocating against actions to make access to voting more difficult for marginalized persons opened the door for an ongoing partnership where there is a focus on change for the common good. Through that partnership WUM has supported Medicaid expansion, raising wages/requiring earned paid sick leave and Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline. Leadership also means supporting other voices which has resulted in the focus on caring for God's creation.

My leadership in Justice ministry is edgier than my more traditional Missions ministry. It means pushing my boundaries to deal with systemic issues. Change takes time and negotiating resistance. The joy is three fold: remembering that such leadership aligns well with the life of Methodism's founder, John Wesley; with United Women in Faith pioneers, such as Mai Gray (1st Black National President and her work with the Charter for Racial Justice); and, has biblical grounding, Micah 6:8 ...do justice...love kindness...walk humbly with your God.

BLESSINGS,  
CAROLYN REDMORE



# PRAYER CONCERNS

Kim Pacatte; Bev Mesey; Ron & Dianne Wallace; Reesor/Stuart Family; Kathleen (Katie Renkins); Mimi (Traci Stuart); Marian Junge & Elle Klein & Lana (Marcia Kennon); Peter Schüren (Debbie Lund); Jonah (Steve & Jan Hanson's grandson); and our country during this election year.

## CHAPEL AT BETHESDA DILWORTH, SUNDAY, MARCH 17

Every other month volunteers from WUM help Pastor Sharon provide a thirty-minute worship service for the residents of skilled-nursing facility Bethesda Dilworth (9645 Big Bend Road in Kirkwood). At 2:00 pm volunteers gather in the chapel on the second floor to receive assignments from Chaplain Michael Tooley, and then disperse to floors 1, 2, & 3 to bring residents in wheelchairs to service who wish to attend. The half-hour service begins at 2:30. At BD we have the reputation of singing a lot because we begin singing beforehand. By 3:30 pm we have finished returning residents to their rooms. We're providing the chapel service on Sunday, March 17. If you would like to volunteer this month, have questions, or wish to be added to the e-list of volunteers for future dates, please contact Beth Anderson, [TrebleCross1980@gmail.com](mailto:TrebleCross1980@gmail.com) or #314-781-9923 (home, no texts).

# *Holy Week 2024*



PALM SUNDAY - MARCH 24TH

**10:30am** - Traditional Worship Service

MAUNDY THURSDAY - MARCH 28TH

**6:00pm** - Potluck Dinner at Unity United Methodist Church

**7:00pm** - Worship Service

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*Easter  
Sunday*

MARCH 31ST

**Easter Breakfast**

**9:00am - 10:15am**

**Easter Service**

**10:30am**

**Easter Egg Hunt**

**Following Service**







# ENHANCING SECURITY

Improving security for the church facilities had been discussed for some time but not acted upon until the Rainbow flag was stolen. A collaboration between the Justice Team, the Safety Team and the Trustees has developed a project to address security. The plan calls for installation of security cameras at each of the four church entrances which has already begun. This is a costly project, just over \$8,000, that will provide surveillance, monitoring and recording 24/7. Any acts of maleficence or mischief will be captured. Commitments of \$4,100 have already been made by church members, led by members of the Justice team.

The Church Council at the February meeting voted to inform church members of the opportunity to support this project. Will you join those who have already contributed?

Contributions can be made by check with a note in the memo line "Security Cameras" or by making a donation online via the church website.

On behalf of the Church Council,  
Derek Redmore, Chair of Finance.

## LIFEWISE STL ANNOUNCES SPRING BLING FROM ROOTS TO WINGS" BRUNCH & AUCTION

Tickets are now available for the LifeWise annual spring fundraiser.

**Saturday, April 13, 9:30 AM-1 PM**

at Missouri Athletic Club, 405 Washington Ave., St. Louis, 63102.

Attendees will enjoy a delicious brunch as well as a silent auction featuring jewelry, handbags, beautiful accessories, and unique gift sets.

For more information and to register, go to [WWW.LIFEWISESTL.ORG](http://WWW.LIFEWISESTL.ORG) or call 314-260-6369.



## LOOKING FOR EASTER RIBBON DANCERS FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP!

We are forming an Easter Parade of Ribbon Dancers, aged 4 years-6th grade, to perform on Easter morning, March 31st. There will be a rehearsal on Saturday afternoon, March 30th.

Sign up by contacting Pastor Sharon at  
[pastorsharon@websterum.org](mailto:pastorsharon@websterum.org)  
or through the Blue Connection Card.

**UNFORTUNATELY WE WILL NOT BE STREAMING THE SERVICE THIS SUNDAY, AS ALL THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ABLE TO STREAM ARE OUT OF TOWN.**

## WHERE ART SERVES THE WORLD: AN AFTERNOON WITH INTERNATIONALLY-NOTED ST. LOUIS SCULPTOR DON WIEGAND.

*Wednesday, April 10, Noon – 2:00 PM at Mercy Conference and Retreat Center in Frontenac.*

*Doors open at 11:30 AM; box lunch & drinks served at noon. Cost: \$50 individual ticket; \$275 table of 6; livestream \$15 per household.*

*Purchase tickets at [MERCYCENTERSTL.ORG](https://MERCYCENTERSTL.ORG)*

## NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE

All articles and submissions must be sent to  
[secretary@websterum.org](mailto:secretary@websterum.org) by Monday  
at 5pm to be in that week's newsletter.