



Meridian United Methodist
**Church of the
 Warm Heart**

FOOTPRINTS

February 2024

LOVING ALL. CHANGING HEARTS. TRANSFORMING LIVES.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:30 a.m.

11:15 a.m.

Both services are broadcast online.

Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study

2:00 p.m.

SERMON SERIES February 2024

02.04.2024

Simplicity

Lev 25:8-13, 23; I Cor 14:33



02.11.2024

Youth Sunday (Generosity)

Phil 2:3-4; Matt 6:1-4; Prov 11:25



02.18.2024

Study

Romans 12:1-2; John 8:31-32



02.25.2024

Solitude

Ecc 5:1-2; Matt 14:22-23

Groundhog Feed

The United Methodist Men invite you to join us for our annual Groundhog Dinner. Stop by the FLC on February 3rd from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. for a sausage dinner (it's ground hog, get it?). Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 12 and under.



Idaho Street Renovation



The City of Meridian has begun relocating the Hunter Lateral that goes by our property, which is going to make parking a little more difficult than usual. This project may take a couple of months - please park and walk carefully. For a map of available parking, you can visit:

www.meridianumc.com/parking

Pancake Breakfast

BSA Troop #1 is hosting their annual pancake breakfast in the FLC on February 10th. Drop by from 8:00 - 11:30 a.m. for all you can eat pancakes, sausage, eggs, & hashbrowns, plus a silent auction. The cost is \$5 per person (kids 5 and under eat free with a paying adult).



Ash Wednesday



Lent begins! Join Pastor Mike in the sanctuary on February 14th at 7 a.m., 12:30 p.m., or 5:30 p.m. for a moment of reflection and to receive the imposition of ashes. We are offering three short services (about 20 minutes each) throughout the day so you can attend one and still have time to celebrate Valentine's Day.

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January

NEW MEMBERS:

DEATHS:

Please pray for the families of...

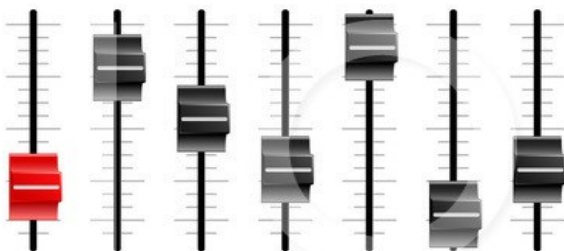
BAPTISMS:

Oliver Van Beek

JOIN THE TECH TEAM!

The tech team is looking for help running sound (and more) during Sunday services. No experience necessary – we'll train you! For more info, contact Debbie Jones:

worshiparts@meridianumc.com



STAFF

- Senior Pastor** (ext. 104)
Rev. Mike Benischek pastormike@meridianumc.com
- Adult Discipleship/Asst. Pastor** (ext. 109)
Jennifer Hunkovic adult.ministry@meridianumc.com
- Minister of Congregational Care** (ext. 105)
Lisa Miller care@meridianumc.com
- Minister of Worship Arts** 208-608-2520
Debbie Jones worshiparts@meridianumc.com
- Youth Minister** 734-316-9517
Nicole Walker youth@meridianumc.com
- Children's Minister** (ext. 108)
Malia Paz children@meridianumc.com
- Office Manager** (ext. 102)
Angela Perry office@meridianumc.com
- Receptionist** (ext. 101)
Lucinda Dyer receptionist@meridianumc.com
- Bookkeeper**
Maria Akers bookkeeper@meridianumc.com
- Communications Coordinator** (ext. 103)
Video Production
Jacob Walker cc@meridianumc.com
production@meridianumc.com

Nursery Coordinator

Jessie Layton nursery@meridianumc.com

Organist

Kristine Ciulla organist@meridianumc.com

Facility Personnel

Richard Stolle maintenance@meridianumc.com (M - Th)
Don Woods dandvwoods@gmail.com (F - Sun)

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

- Administrative Council Chair** Dennis Moberly
Staff Pastor Parish Relations Chair Margaret Pridmore
Trustees Chair Ron Pridmore
Systems Administrator Integrity Computer Consultants
Finance Chair Lori Jones
Treasurer Lori Jones
Financial Secretary Diane Brister
Futures Team Chair Lori Jones
United Methodist Men President Ed Emmel
United Women in Faith President Dixie Jacky
Lay Chaplain Coordinator Faye Gabriel
Lay Chaplains Emma Jean Bedsole, Phyllis & Gordon Bouza, Don Brister, Faye Gabriel, Ruth Hayes, Gary Himes, Dixie Jacky, Donna Melville, Lisa Miller, Shirley O'Neal, Carole Ravine, Mary Rich, Carol Rounds, Eloise Stemple
Health and Wellness Co-Coordinators
Lisa Miller, Sue Mattison

CHURCH INFORMATION

MERIDIAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

240 E. Idaho Ave. Meridian, ID 83642
235 E. Pine Ave. Meridian, ID 83642 - Mailing Address
Phone: 208.888.2245 Fax: 208.888.5741
E-mail: office@meridianumc.com
Website: www.meridianumc.com
Facebook: [Meridian United Methodist Church](https://www.facebook.com/MeridianUnitedMethodistChurch)

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Prayer & Praise Requests - prayer@meridianumc.com

MINISTRIES & NEWS

PASTOR MIKE'S MUSINGS

Dear Warm Heart Friends and Family:

I was about ten years old, and had an appointment at the Dental College. Even though I brushed—maybe not after every meal, but once a day...maybe—I had the occasional cavity, and that's what happened that day. The technician wanted to show me how to brush, so we went off into this little room with a sink and mirror. She said, "Show me how you brush." And so I did. And then some. I embellished just a little bit. About five minutes in, I was almost done with my upper teeth, left side. I was trying to make it look convincing. I was just doing what I thought she wanted to see.

Many years ago, I led a double life. Maybe a triple life. To be honest, I probably had a dozen or so lives. When I was with my parents, you see, I acted as I thought they wanted me to act. When I was with my friends, I acted as I thought they wanted me to act. At school, I acted as I thought the teachers wanted me to act. When I was alone, I didn't know how to act - for there was no one there to please.

I have seen this sort of "multiple personalities" in other people as well. Some of the sweetest moms turn into ruthless, blood thirsty killing machines when their kids start playing soccer. I have seen some of the most caring fathers and husbands turn into crude and insensitive jerks when they are on the worksite or out on the town with their buddies. I'm not against being competitive or enjoying time with friends, but I do wonder why and how we change our personalities so quickly when our environment changes. I remember telling jokes when I worked at a tavern that I wouldn't tell now. What was it about that environment that made raunchy jokes okay, and why did I change personalities?

Someone once told me that a sign of maturity is being able to adapt to your surroundings. To be able to fit in and be a part of that community. But I wonder if that is misguided advice. Yes, it's good to relate to different people and situations, but I wonder if maturity is better defined as being able to keep true to yourself in spite of your surroundings. Where you don't have to change who you are because of your environment.

And I think that is why the Apostle James once wrote a letter. "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him...everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you."

See you in worship on Sunday,

Pastor Mike

MUSIC MINISTRY

Free Concert – Come support your Koinonia Handbell Choir on Saturday, February 10, at the Snake River Handbell Conference Concert at Central Elementary Gym in Nampa. The concert begins at 6:30 p.m. We hope to see you there!

Looking for a short term music opportunity? – Come join The Celebration Choir as we begin rehearsing music for the Good Friday Tenebrae service and Easter Sunday service. If you would like to join us, we rehearse on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. Contact Debbie Jones with questions. Hope to see you there!

Jailhouse Rock – Our Warm Heart Children's Ministry will present "Jailhouse Rock" by Celeste Clydesdale on Sunday, April 28 at the 11:15 a.m. service. We welcome all children (and grandchildren) ages 4-5th grade to join us for this special musical presentation. Rehearsals take place on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m.

Handbell Choir – Do you read music? The Koinonia Handbell Choir (our four-octave handbell choir for adults) is always in need of substitutes who can join in for rehearsals (and sometimes on Sunday mornings) when our ringers are unavailable. We rehearse at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings. If you or someone you know can help, please contact me for more information.

Rolling Tones – Our chime choir is open for all youth, grades 6-12. Music reading skills are optional! Come give it a try on Wednesdays from 6 - 6:30 p.m.

Blessings,

Debbie Jones
worshiparts@meridianumc.com

MINISTRIES & NEWS

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

"Let all that you do be done in love."
~ 1 Corinthians 16:14

Hello Warm Heart Families!

What a crazy start to the year. Our Wednesday evening programs were interrupted by snowy days. Although I was sad to have to cancel, I loved seeing the joy and excitement the kids had while experiencing the wonder of the snow.

The month of February is kicking off with our Parent's Night Out. We will be meeting on Friday the 2nd from 6 - 8:30 p.m. for an evening full of fun. This month's theme is "Let God's love shine bright from your heart". Our next Parent's Night Out will be Friday, March 1st. Please RSVP by 02/28.

Pioneer club will begin meeting again on the 7th, but since February 14 is Ash Wednesday, we will not meet that week. Ash Wednesday marks the first day of Lent and the beginning of a period of reflection. Many Lenten activities revolve around prayer, penance, and fasting. These may be hard for children to grasp, especially younger ones. I urge you and your family to take this time to focus on gratitude and kindness. Here are some simple activities for Lent that you can do to help connect littles to the season.

Gratitude:

- Write a list of those who you are thankful for.
- Talk about the things you love about your family.
- Keep a journal and everyday write something you loved from the day.

Kindness:

- Invite someone new to play with you at recess.
- Bake or make something for a neighbor or friend.
- Pray for someone in need.

February Events

Pioneer Club

Wednesdays, February 7, 21, and 28

Parent's Night Out

Friday, February 2, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Friday, March 1, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.; please RSVP

Take care,

Malia Paz
children@meridianumc.com

YOUTH MINISTRIES

February 2024 is a month of variety for the youth group! In around Ash Wednesday (also know as Valentine's Day this year) we have confirmation classes, Youth Sunday, a winter retreat, and lots of chime choir practice. If you're in grades 6-12, you're welcome to join us for all the fun!

Sunday, February 4 – Youth Sunday Rehearsal
6 – 8 p.m., Sanctuary

Tuesday, February 6 – Backpack Program
3:30 – 4:30ish p.m., Meridian Food Bank

Wednesday, February 7 – Final Youth Sunday prep
6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Sanctuary
with Chime Choir practice in the Sanctuary at 6:00 p.m.!

Wednesday, February 14 – Ash Wednesday
No Youth Haven, but you can come receive the imposition of ashes from Pastor Mike at 5:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Saturday, February 17 – Monday, February 19
Youth Retreat in McCall, Idaho
\$75 per person; must sign up by February 4

Wednesdays, February 21 and 28 – Haven
6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Youth Room
with Chime Choir practice in the Sanctuary at 6:00 p.m.!

Sunday, February 25 – Pizza and Movie Night
6:00 – 8:00 p.m., FLC

With joy,

Nicole Walker
youth@meridianumc.com



Covid and snow forced us to postpone a few times, but we finally made our Christmas Party a reality!

MINISTRIES & NEWS

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

"And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love."

~ II John 1:5-6

I am writing this month's article as a self-proclaimed person with a fear of birds, I have ornithophobia of sorts. I believe my bird trauma story goes something like this. I was roller-skating at Ann Morrison Park and I was dive bombed by crows. I guess they thought my thick golden hair would be a good ingredient for a nest. I have several similar stories where I feel birds have had it out for me. Needless to say, I have never been a bird person.

However, the last few years I have found myself fascinated by the behaviors of the geese. Each winter, thousands of snow geese dance across the sky, honking a beautiful melody as they fly in a V formation. One such day happened last week in January. I happened to be home on one of our snow days and I heard them "singing" so I went out in the backyard. WOW! What a sight. If you have never experienced this, it's amazing. I found myself wondering. How do they know where to fly? How do they know when it is time to change positions? When one moves out of the way, how does the other goose know the next move? Is this one large group or several small ones joining for the big journey? Are they all honking the same song? So I did a little research and googled the facts. When geese flap their wings, they create an uplift for the birds following. Geese always fly in the shape of a V. The whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if a goose flew alone. They mate for life and are very protective of one another.

What a marvelous lesson as birds share the work load. If one of us gets tired, just move back and another friend can take the lead. To my surprise, there have been many things written on leadership and what the geese can teach us. Who knew! Just as geese are created for community, so God also created us for community. Geese sing a song of encouragement. Geese flying in the back honk and sing a melody encouraging the ones in the front to keep up the pace. If one goose falls out of formation, two geese fall out with him. They stay together until he recovers or dies, then they will rejoin the group. The next lesson I learned is that dependence is a good thing.

Symmetrically flying or sticking together is loving one another, helping others for the good of all — not just yourself. What does this have to do with my challenge last month to develop an action plan of "Being the Light"? I would say take it from the geese and love like a goose.

Lisa Miller
care@meridianumc.com

ADULT MINISTRIES

*God, of your goodness give me yourself, for you are enough for me. And only in you do I have everything.
Amen*

~ Lady Julian of Norwich

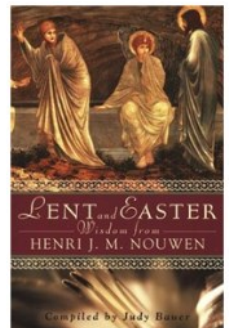
Greetings Church Family!

The Lenten season is fast approaching. You may associate Lent with sacrificing or giving up things like chocolate, soda, or maybe even caffeine. For some, Lent may be very new. Perhaps, you've never observed Lent but are curious to learn more. The word, Lent, comes from the Anglo-Saxon word, Lencten, which means "Lengthen". This refers to the longer days of spring. The season lasts 40 days — beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Holy Saturday. Sundays in Lent are not counted in the 40 days, because each Sunday represents a "mini Easter". The 40 days are reminiscent of the time Jesus spent in the wilderness being tempted and tested as he prepared to begin his ministry.

For Christians today, Lent is a sacred time. It is a time of spiritual formation, quiet reflection and transformation. It's a time to practice the continual presence of God through meditation, prayer, and fasting, in preparation for the resurrection. It's a time to sift through "the ashes" of life, if you will. It is a time to learn how to lean in, listen, and respond to the Holy Spirit at work in your life.

During this contemplative season of Lent, we invite you to join us on our Lenten journey as we embark on a six-week "study." This is designed as a personal daily devotional, and our weekly meetings will be for checking in, sharing our thoughts, and supporting one another through the journey. We will meet Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m., beginning February 21.

The book that we will be using, *Lent and Easter Wisdom* from Henri J.M. Nouwen compiled by Judy Bauer, is available on Amazon for purchase. We are asking participants to order their own book if they can. Please let the church office know if you plan on attending the class. If you do need the church to order a copy of the book for you, please let the office know by February 11 to allow time to process the order and for delivery. The suggested donation for the book is \$12. I hope you will be able to join us. Please let me know if you have any questions about this opportunity.



Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jen
adult.ministry@meridianumc.com

MINISTRIES & NEWS

FINANCIAL NEWS

Budget	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	Budget Change
Personnel	\$603,092	\$512,852	\$549,194	(\$53,898)
Prop/ Maintenance	\$99,700	\$111,250*	\$99,900	\$200
Shared Ministry	\$73,695	\$73,695	\$75,587	\$1,892
Local Ministries /Programs	\$70,400	\$56,827	\$58,075	(\$12,325)
Total	\$846,887	\$754,624	\$782,756	(\$64,131)

For General Operations:	Dec 2023	Year to Date 2023
Given	\$113,799	\$733,188
Need	\$59,640	\$754,624
Outcome	\$54,159	(\$21,436)

For the first time in my recent memory, we did not receive enough tithes and gifts to cover our operating expenses for the year. Even though we failed to meet our goal, we should take pride in giving almost \$114,000 in December; we managed to cut our deficit from more than \$75,000 to only \$21,000. I stated in November that we would need to average around \$21,000 each week in November and December to make ends meet. I guess we just needed one more week in 2023. History is usually a good barometer to evaluate our finances, so I went back and checked the article I wrote a year ago to reflect. I said that the 2023 budget was realistic, and it came close to being at break even. I also mentioned tweaks that were made to the budget process; those did, in fact, make it easier to prepare the budget this year.

Last year I also expressed the hope that we would see increased attendance at all services. I am happy to report that attendance was up 8% from 2022. We were confident that if attendance increased, that giving would likewise be up. That was not quite the case, as giving was down by almost \$12,000. To compound the issue, our expenses were up over \$22,000. Due to the deficit, we have no surplus to begin the year. This has not happened in many years, so we must be vigilant in our spending and must adhere to the budget passed for 2024. We have grown our children and youth ministries, and we had a Youth Mission Trip that was a tremendous success. So that is a positive before we explore the 2024 Budget.

The budget consists of four major categories:

- Personnel** — Staff wages and benefits. This largest category includes five full-time and 11 part-time employees (70%)
- Property/Maintenance** — Utilities, property insurance, janitorial, maintenance, and repairs. Lawn upkeep. (13%)
- Shared Ministries** — Our tithe to the Oregon-Idaho Conference includes conference wide leadership and education, worldwide services, and missions. (10%)
- Local Ministries and Programs** — Worship arts, children, youth, and adult ministries, congregational care, marketing, and administrative costs. (7%)

The budget has been decreased by more than \$64,000 from the 2023 budget. However, this is still a \$28,000 increase over the 2023 Actuals, due to small increases in shared ministries, utilities, and insurance. The property/trustees expenses in 2023 did exceed budget due to some unanticipated major repairs. The Church is just like our individual households—some costs are up and will continue to increase as the year moves forward, due to inflation. There are also some increases in the marketing area as we strive to enhance our presence in the community and improve our online outreach. We are still in an area of uncertainty as to the changes in the downtown Meridian footprint and how it may affect our church, the parking situation, etc.

On a positive note, I need to point out we were blessed to make major improvements in both the sanctuary and FLC (new video & sound systems, carpeting, new exterior doors, repainting, etc.) that have enhanced our worship experience. The costs of these projects were provided by several generous donors who made supplementary “directed” donations and did not come from the general fund.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the congregation for its continued support of the following missions: Meridian Food Bank, Good Samaritan Fund, Memorials, NU2U, Youth Mission Trips, Scholarships, Camperships, Quilters, Card Makers, Joseph’s Closet, Scouts, Veteran’s Footlocker, Mirror Image, UMCOR, Refugees, Adopt A Family, Thanksgiving Boxes, and the Crop Walk. A total of more than \$42,500 was given in support of these missions last year!

As always, please continue to pray for our financial health. If you have any questions regarding our finances, please don’t hesitate to contact Lori Jones, Finance Committee Chair, at lhjones2021@gmail.com, or Don Brister, Stewardship Chair, at maroontycoon63@gmail.com. We will always take the time to visit with you and discuss our finances. Also continue to keep our industrious staff in your prayers! May God continue to bless the Church of the Warm Heart.

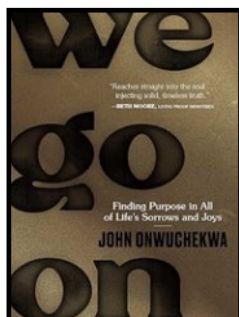
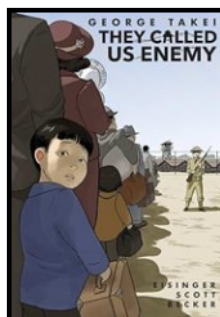
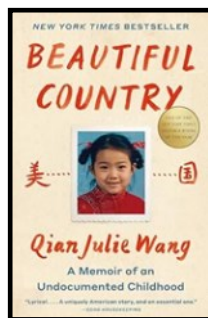
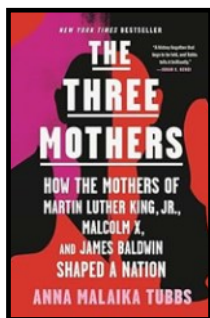
MINISTRIES & NEWS

THE BOOK NOOK

Claudia Moberly

The United Women in Faith Book Club has chosen their five books for 2024. Anyone is welcome to attend. We meet the third Thursday of January, March, May, September, and November (then end the year with a fun Christmas luncheon). We gather in the Family Life Center for a brown-bag lunch at 12:30, then discuss the book from 1 to 2. One copy of the book is available on the UWFaith kiosk in the Family Life Center, but you can also acquire these books from the library or a local book seller.

Here is what we have chosen: In January, we read *The Three Mothers: How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr, Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped A Nation*. The March selection is *Running* by Natalia Sylvester, a young-adult novel about a girl whose father decides to run for office (timely for an election year). In May, we will read *Beautiful Country: A Memoir of An Undocumented Childhood*, by Qian Julie Wang. September's selection is a graphic novel, *They Called Us Enemy*, by George Takei, which is set in a Japanese internment camp during World War II. We will round out the year in November with *We Go On: Finding Purpose in All of Life's Sorrows and Joys*, by John Onwuchekwa.



These five books are from the five categories of the Reading Program, so by participating, you will automatically fulfill Plan I of the Reading Program. In addition, you'll read books that might not otherwise be on your reading list, and you'll meet and share ideas with other book lovers. We hope to see you sometime in 2024, and always remember that the books on the kiosk are available to everyone, whether you are a Book Club member or not.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

It's not too late to sign up for the Western Jurisdiction event to be held in Anchorage, Alaska, May 9-11, 2024, with the Legacy Banquet beginning on May 8. There are some funds available to help with expenses so don't hesitate to talk to your District Unit partner and your unit! To register go to:

<https://www.wjumw.com/>

Why go to Anchorage? It is absolutely the best location of all the Jurisdiction events! But also, the best reasons are the sisterhood, the music, and the workshops that are being offered.



National UWFaith is starting to consider books for the 2025 reading program. Have you read a great book you would like your sisters in Christ to also read? Submit your suggestion by visiting <https://uwfaith.org/resources/reading-program>.

One more thing all members should do is to sign up on the new member portal on the official UWFaith website. The website will give you access to member resources nationwide. Go to <https://uwfaith.org/> and then click on Member Login on the upper right of the page.

Hope to see you in Anchorage!

Blessings,

Dixie Jacky
United Women in Faith President



A big thank you to all who came out for our Days for Girls work day! We had over 20 women in the FLC, cutting, snapping, folding, marking, sewing, ironing, threading, and more! If you missed this event but want to learn more about the vital, ongoing work of Days for Girls, you can search "days for girls meridian" online and find their Facebook page with information and donation opportunities.



Meridian United Methodist Church
235 E. Pine Avenue
Meridian, ID 83642

February Events to Celebrate!

Please watch the E-Blast and Facebook for additional church events.

February 3 – *Groundhog Feed, FLC, 4:30 - 7 p.m.*

February 5 – *Blood Drive*

February 10 – *Pancake Breakfast, FLC, 8 - 11:30 a.m.*

February 14 – *Ash Wednesday (& Valentine's Day)*

February 27 – *Ladies Night Out, details coming soon!*

March

NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE:

**Monday,
February 26th**

Submissions may be
emailed to Jacob Walker at
cc@meridianumc.com

or brought by the
church office.

Thank you!