

## Annual Report Celebrating 2023 Ministries





## *Our Focus for Moving Forward*

### **WHO WE ARE:**

*The Asbury United Methodist Church is a group of people who are followers of Jesus and part of the United Methodist Church. The congregation was formally organized in Bettendorf, Iowa in 1950. It is named for the Rev. Francis Asbury, who served as one of the first Methodist bishops in America from 1784 to 1816. His example of traveling thousands of miles on horseback to connect people with God still inspires us today.*

### **OUR MISSION:**

**Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.**

This is also the mission of the United Methodist Church.

Our definition of a disciple: **A follower of Jesus in all areas of life.**

Our definition of discipleship: **Helping each other move toward a life daily centered on God.**

### **OUR METHOD:**



Seek God's Light



Share God's Love



Do God's Will

### **OUR MESSAGE:**

***Jesus is the Bridge***  
***who connects people with God and one another.***



### **OUR VISION (how we transform the world):**

***To passionately serve in the world because God so loved the world.***





## Pastor's Annual Report 2023

For my final annual report to the Asbury Church, I'd like to invite you to join me on the balcony. I believe that the responsibility of leadership is not to tell people what to do, it is to get up on the balcony to gain a broader perspective and then tell people what you see.

I see a church that is on the way upward. In the last year we have made progress at reclaiming our roots as Methodists by developing a discipleship pathway. Our Discipleship Team leaders defined discipleship as *"helping each other move toward a life that is daily centered on God."* This is an expression of the Wesleyan teaching of God's sanctifying grace that moves us toward a deeper relationship with God and with other people. It's taking seriously Jesus' command to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Like any attempt at growth and getting stronger, it happens more effectively when done with a companion such as a partner or a coach. In other words, discipleship happens in a relationship. And healthy relationships are ones that are characterized by the divine qualities of truth and love (John 1:14, 17; Ephesians 4:15). Developing those healthy relationships is a primary mission of the church and what is needed so desperately in our world right now.

From the balcony looking back I see how the Asbury Church has been adapting to our changing world. We have broken the inertia that is so common in organizations of doing things the way we have comfortably done them in the past. COVID actually forced us to make all kinds of changes that have proven to be beneficial. We've lived into an organizational restructuring that is developing a leadership team with the task of gaining that broader view "from the balcony." We have also made significant updates to our building to make it more functional, flexible and inviting. The intent is to provide comfortable spaces that allow opportunities for people to share conversations that lead to deeper friendships and spiritual growth.

In looking to the future, change will continue to be a part of our lives. One of those changes will be a new pastor who will come to serve with you in July. A major goal for this year is to prepare for that change by putting into place a culture and system for developing leaders. A good sign for the future is that we are seeing a number of people, including younger families, coming to the church and finding a spiritual home.



Betty Houston and Debbie Stelk, long-time members,  
signed the Asbury United Methodist Church Charter in June

When the Asbury Church was officially organized on April 23, 1950, the founding charter stated that there was a need for a Methodist Church in this community. The need is still here for an expression of the Christian faith that is open to all, shares a vision of a better world, and helps each person grow in love, grace and service to become more and more like Jesus. It is a wonderful blessing for me to share this time with you. I truly believe that by seeking God's light together, sharing God's love and attempting to do God's will there is nowhere to go but Upward!

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Tom



## 2024 Church-Wide Goals

On Sunday, October 22, 2023 the Leadership Team consisting of the co-leaders for each of the 5 ministry areas of the church held an afternoon retreat to assess the current reality of the church and look ahead to the future. It was led by Ron Fielder, a retired consultant with experience in organizational strategic planning. He has previously served as the Executive Director of the Grant Wood Area Education Agency and on the faculty at the University of Iowa. Ron led the group in identifying qualities for pastoral leadership and in setting the following goals for 2024.

Members of the Leadership Team include: Vern Harvey and Jean Black (Discipleship); Stephanie Pim (Worship); Steve Sorensen and Jenny Bloomquist (Asbury in Mission); Cheryl Ewert and Cindy Bruhn (Welcome and Care); Cliff Pim and Pat Thornton (Administration); Kurt Streicher (Treasurer); Dave Stedwell (Council Chair) and Pastor Tom.

### 2024 ASBURY GOALS

1. Establish a transition plan to assure we have in place our leadership structure (staff and volunteers) for our new Pastor arrival.
2. Clarify and determine our church's unique mission in light of our congregation's denominational change decision. Establish a process for congregational discussion and eventual decision on issues of human sexuality.
3. Continue to strengthen and expand our ministry with Children and Youth.
4. Develop and implement a Strategic Communication Plan for within and outside our church. This will build on the lay and staff communications and marketing committee that was established in 2023.
5. Explore multiple strategies for church growth and development.







## SEEK GOD'S LIGHT

**1. Formally launch and engage the Discipleship pathway process throughout the Church to support Asbury individuals and provide Wesleyan accountability on their Discipleship Pathway journey.**

- *The Discipleship Pathway Document was developed and shared with the congregation at the beginning of 2023.*
- *Articles describing the different areas of the Discipleship Pathway were published in the Good News throughout the year.*
- *Approximately 25 people participated in reading the Bible in a Year on the YouVersion Bible app.*
- *An online Spiritual Gifts Inventory was introduced to the congregation using the Church Growth Team Ministry Website. Information on how to access the inventory was shared with the congregation via QR code, Good News, and email.*

**2. Continue to strengthen and expand our Children and Youth Ministries**

- *Youth group continuing. Easter drama well received.*
- *Confirmation group of ten 8th & 9th graders. Meagan Moran helping to lead.*
- *Children Roots Kids attendance growing.*
- *Currently searching for a New Director of Children's Ministries*

## SHARE GOD'S LOVE

**1. Fully integrate Neighborhood Bridge Builders as a way of life throughout the congregation.**

- *Director of Engagement has organized Bridged Builder captains to include regular meetings for encouragement, support and sharing.*
- *Additional captains have been added.*
- *Regular mailing going out to all without a neighborhood captain.*

**2. Complete planned Phase 1 capital project including Fellowship Hall renovation, landscaping and back-lot development.**

- *Back lot has been graded, seeded and ready for outdoor activities.*
- *Fellowship hall renovations progressing.*
- *External painting and landscaping are in progress.*

**3. Continue to evaluate organizational alignment changes needed and modify to continue to position Asbury for long term sustainability.**

- *We have formalized our Treasurer position to be more in line with the Discipline.*
- *Quarterly Council meetings have been efficient and well attended.*
- *Individual committee and team meetings have needed to address the loss of consistency in moving from monthly to quarterly or as needed.*
- *The Leadership Team is functioning as a visionary group to seek a direction for doing God's will in our community.*

**4. Develop and implement a lay/staff communications/marketing committee to develop and execute an overall Church communications plan.**

- *A team is in place consisting of Rich Noble, Stephanie Pim, Rick Reed, Cindy Bruhn, and staff members Carrie Meumann, Marian Edmond-Paulson, and Patty Schwegler.*
- *The church logo has been updated and ready for use in publications and merchandise.*
- *The entryways have been remodeled to be more functional, flexible and inviting. Work has included the addition of a Welcome Desk and at wall coverings.*

## **DO GOD'S WILL**

**1. Explore and develop partnerships with nearby schools in cooperation with the Bettendorf Faith community to support children's needs within our Community.**

- *Asbury is currently in discussions with Mark Twain Elementary school regarding providing food backpacks monthly for about 36 children.*
- *Possibilities to partner with other faith communities exist due to connections with the Bettendorf Faith Communities group.*

**2. Develop link and provide on-going support to Global based ministry**

- *Connection with Fishers of Men was renewed.*

**3. Research, organize, and conduct a domestic church-wide sponsored mission trip.**

- *We were not able to inspire a leader to provide energy and guidance to make this happen.*

**4. Clarify and determine our Church's unique mission in light of our congregation's denominational change decision**

- *We are preparing for a congregational process to make specific decisions regarding same sex weddings and our ministry with LGBTQIA persons.*



## Director of Engagement



Marian Edmund-Paulson  
Director of Engagement

As Director of Engagement, I have had the honor of working with the various ministries and the leadership team of Asbury, but most importantly, with the individuals who attend Asbury, to connect them with our ministries to help them find a place to serve and grow their faith. I oversee the Neighborhood BridgeBuilder Program in a supportive role of the Captains of each of our 25 Neighborhoods. The Asbury households without a Captain receive a monthly letter, email or call from me, similar to the emails which the Captains receive (and can share with their Neighborhoods if they wish). These letters/emails share information on upcoming events at Asbury, the Ministry of the Month (focusing on Asbury Ministries who have an immediate need for volunteers) and encourage Non-Captain Neighborhood members to consider becoming a Neighborhood BridgeBuilder Captain for their Neighborhood. Other functions of the Director of Engagement position include the following over the past year:

Attended Newcomers and Next Step gatherings to discuss Neighborhood BridgeBuilders program and function of the Director of Engagement with our guests in regard to their connection to our Asbury Ministries.

Coordinated the church-wide Asbury Ministry Expo to help showcase our ministries, provide awareness of all of Asbury's Ministries and their functions, and allow representatives of each to discuss involvement and volunteer opportunities with our members and guests. The Asbury Ministry Expo was held on Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> in the UFH. All Asbury ministries were represented with a good turnout. All ministries were provided with a list of individuals interested in involvement in their ministry following the event.

Coordinated with Patty, on behalf of the Leadership Development Team, to update our current Church Windows database and provide a system to track and report our guests/members skills and interests to Asbury ministry leaders in need of volunteers and committee members.

Coordinated with the Visual Identity Team on development and function of our new Welcome Center and ongoing projects within the church.

Staff the Welcome Center for both services on Sunday mornings providing information to both guests and members.



2023 Ministry Expo



# ASBURY DISCIPLESHIP TEAM

The Mission of the Asbury Discipleship Team is:

***“To encourage personal and spiritual growth and to create a legacy by raising up disciples who raise up disciples.”***

In addition to updating our mission statement, the Discipleship Team also updated and set separate goals for Asbury's Adult, Youth and Children's Ministry Teams. The team also utilized a variety of internal and external sources to create the Asbury Discipleship Pathway.



## Small-Group Celebration

### Adult Small Group Ministry Statistics Summary

September, 2022-May, 2023

Asbury has continued to make adult small group ministry available in person or via ZOOM. While the Adult Small Groups “study”, their main goal is to offer conversation, feedback, fellowship, encouragement, and support. As they meet, they help one another as they hold each other up in prayer and experience personal discovery and spiritual growth that helps one cope with the many challenges of the present-day world. The Adult Small groups offer the opportunity for each person to choose an area on the Discipleship Pathway and to seek ways to move forward toward a deeper walk with God so that one is living a life that is daily centered on God.

From September, 2022 through May, 2023, there were 147 adults in a small group either on Sunday or during the week. We also had 25 people commit to reading the entire Bible in a year using an app that incorporated THE BIBLE PROJECT. (Four of those 25 were not involved in another small group). During this same time period, there was an average of 195 people (omitted the Easter Service) attending worship either online or in person. This means that there are approximately 75% of our congregation participating in a small group!

Running from June through August, 2023, the Summer Adult Sunday Small Group (facilitated by Phil Paulson and Marian Edmund-Paulson) followed the themes that Pastor Tom preached: June, The Boomerang Principle; July, Indescribable God; and August, Take Me Out To The Ball Game. This class had 29 different people attending with an average of 13 people per Sunday either in person or via ZOOM. (People attending this class were NOT included in the stats for September, 2022-May, 2023).

Asbury also supports small groups meeting in two facilities: The Summit has 8-10 people led by Realff Ottesen; The Quartet has 13-20 people led by Pat Tank.

The Adult Small Groups also participate in a wide variety of service projects of their choosing throughout the year which touch the lives of people both inside Asbury and within our community. A list of some of these projects include:

- Meals at Churches United Meal site at Zion Lutheran Church
- Christmas meal at The Center
- Christmas meals to homebound members of Asbury
- Provided socks stuffed with “necessities” to The Center
- Removed trees and bushes in the back of Asbury
- Landscape brick and replacement of mulch in front and back of Asbury
- Helped with setup of the Nativity Scene outside Asbury
- Helped with the decorations inside Asbury
- Delivered cookies to Clarissa Cook Hospice House
- Donations of clothing to Friendly Thrift Center
- Provided toiletries and cleaning supplies to Tapestry Farms
- Hiney Heroes Project—diapers, wipes, feminine hygiene products
- Provided Easter favors for Bettendorf/PV nursing homes
- Donated gently used books, magazines, puzzles for the Bettendorf Library Resale
- Provided toiletries and cleaning supplies for World Relief
- Monetary donations to: CCCF (Clinton County Conservation Foundation)
- Monetary donations to Hiney Heroes

- Monetary donations to One Eighty
- Monetary donations to World Relief
- Monetary donations to Riverbend Food Bank
- Assisted with church cleanup for Ashmore Wedding
- Potluck in the Park—Donated food/toiletries to Agape Center
- Pantry in Bettendorf
- Decorated car trunk/wore costumes/donated candy and participated in candy distribution for Fallween
- Knit for the Neighborhood – knitted scarves for people in need
- Coffee @ 392 Caffee/Knit for the Neighborhood with distribution of 31 scarves
- Earth Day Cleanup Event with breakfast and cleanup of approximately 15 neighborhood blocks
- World's largest Diaper Drive in conjunction with Hiney Heroes: Collected 2,630 diapers—diapers for 52 babies for one month
- Ongoing LIFT Facebook page with participation of approximately 45 people on the page
- Helped with the crafts at Starry Night
- Helped with the Garden Ministry
- Mitten Project





**Carol Jackson**  
**RN Parish Nurse**

## *Parish Nurse Program*

This program concentrates on the development of a wholeness-in-health ministry and strives to bring together one's spiritual and physical needs, which will enable one to experience the life God promised through Christ... to live life abundantly!

Our goal is to provide spiritual and emotional support through programming in a variety of ways. We serve on the Prayer Team by following up personally on requests. We visit individuals in their homes and in senior living facilities. This year we distributed 56 afghans that had been lovingly made by church members. We make hospital visits to members who are ill or following surgeries. We support other caring ministries including the card ministry, hospitality and funeral luncheons.

Spiritual and emotional support is also provided through quarterly anointing services (and when individually requested), leading grief share groups, taking communion into homes and sending sympathy cards. We provide educational programs presented by health care professionals on topics of interest.

Physical support is provided through four blood drives each year, monthly foot clinics and training in Hands Only CPR and use of the AED. We have monies available to assist those in need of food, shelter and travel aide.



**Cheryl Ewert**  
**Volunteer Health Care Advocate**



**Afghan Ministry**  
**Blessing of the Afghans**



**Delivery of the Afghans**  
**to One Eighty**



**Quarterly Anointing**  
**Service in the Chapel**



# We are Looking to Grow Asbury's Prayer Ministry

We would love to have you join us in this very rewarding ministry!

Contact Pam & Pat Thornton: [psthornton@gmail.com](mailto:psthornton@gmail.com)

## Asbury Prayer Ministry Team

- Marilyn Birmingham • Cheryl Ewert • Carrie Meumann
- Jean Black • Rob Gagnon • Marian Paulson
- Jean Bowrey • Carol George • Sharon Phillips
- Barb Brethauer • Carol Jackson • Pamela Rathe
- Gayle Buxton • Chere Jacobs • Michael Reese
- Linda Carver • Scott James • Moon Rockswold
- Tom Carver • Brenda Kane • Brenda Sherrick
- Dot Crosby • Nancy Kintz • Kurt Streicher
- April Crowder • Ann Lawson • Pat Tank
- Lisa Delzell • Rona Loweth • Pam Thornton
- Heather Dennis • Diana Mahoski • Pat Thornton
- Pam Duehr • Linda Manning • Jill Vogt
- Rebecca Erickson • Norma McKelvey

## Asbury Prayer Ministry Team 2023 Annual Report - November 17, 2023

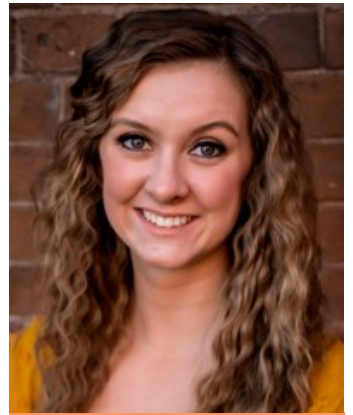
- The Prayer Ministry Team began April 28, 2020
- We have received **1,186** prayer requests since we began 1,299 days ago
- **47** requests are currently active and 1,139 are currently inactive
- **315** different families have requested prayers
- Prayer requests have come from multiple sources
  - Worship Cards – 262
  - Caring Congregation Team – 235
  - Website – 232
  - Facebook – 208
  - Calls – 88
  - Emails – 78
  - Sunday School Classes – 56
  - Other Groups – 27
- We have **38** active Prayer Ministry Team Members
  - 24 Prayer Servants – Praying for people
  - 5 Ministry Leaders – Children, Adult, Engagement, Music and Worship
  - 4 Prayer Partners – Praying for and with people
  - 2 Parish Nurses – Nursing care, prayer and communication
  - 1 Pastor – Pastoral care, prayer and communication
  - 2 Prayer Leaders – Prayer team leadership and communication
- Prayer Team Members are making a real difference for our families and friends in need.
- **We pray to grow our Prayer Ministry. Please join God's team!**





# 2023 Youth Ministry

*Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech & conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*  
1 Timothy 4:12 NRSV



Becca Johnson  
Director of Youth Ministries

**Element 412 continues meeting most Sunday evenings 6-7:30pm.**

Earlier this year we started the Element 412 Drama team and performed a lyrical skit for Easter Sunday. We are planning to do so again next year!

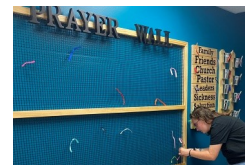
We had several kids assist in Fall-o-ween and Starry Night.

Element 412 also joined with a few other churches in the area to create the Allied Youth of the QC group that plans meeting a few times a year. We had a Fall Retreat at Camp Milan in November which was a huge success!

The Asbury Men's Group created an amazing Prayer Wall for the youth room.

We raised money for t-shirts and we hung up new lighting in the youth room as well, thank you Kevin Jones for all your help!

**We look forward to what 2024 will bring for the Youth of Asbury!**







Linda Carver  
Director of Children's Ministries



# 2023 Children's Ministries

**Asbury Children's Ministry continues to grow in numbers and bible knowledge. We continue to meet at 8:30 am and 10:30 am on Sunday so children have the opportunity to attend RootsKids while their parents attend church.**

During the summer we celebrated VBS with Mission to Mars. We had a 3-day event with 50 children learning about stories of the Bible.

Rally Day brought a new school year for RootsKids. Throughout this year the children have visited subjects such as the Armor of God, and understanding emotions they live with.



In October we hosted our third Fall-o-ween for our community. We offered a Trunk or Treat, Fall games, a maze and food. Hundreds attended and many left happy with bags filled with sweets!



As the holidays approached we were excited to bring One Starry Night back for its fourth year. This is a community event, with stations of the journey to Bethlehem and involves our whole church family.



**ROOTS KIDS presents "The Christmas Evening News Hour"**

**Children's Christmas Pageant**

A Family Friendly Event For All Ages!  
Kids Drama, Kids Bell Choir and the Asbury Praise Team



Kids Club for the 4th and 5th graders will resume with the new year. Monthly events and fellowship is our goal so they can build relationships with each other.

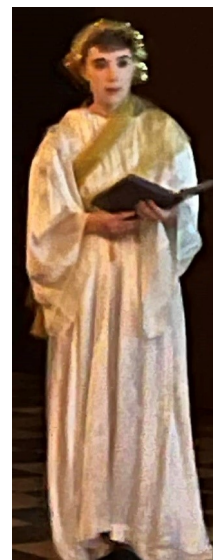
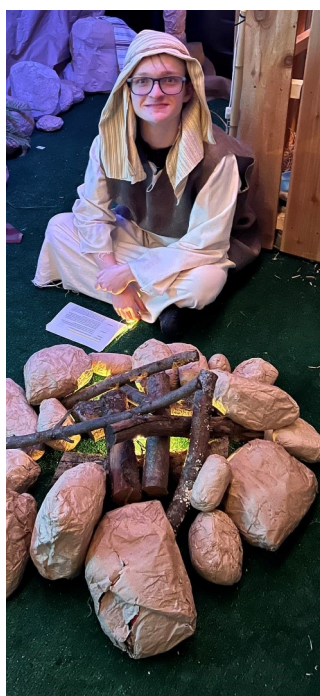
**The Good news is that our numbers are growing! And, as we keep RootsKids as a top goal for Asbury our ministry will continue to grow!**

The children were excited to show their talents at the annual Christmas Children's Pageant on December 10!





*One Starry Night*  
*a journey to bethlehem*  
**Sunday, December 3rd**  
**3pm - 5pm @ Asbury Church**  
Tour guides escort you upon arrival to multiple scenes  
where live actors tell the story of the Savior's birth  
Tours take approx 30 mins to complete - live animals inside!





# Worshipping at Asbury

We have an extraordinary Worship Team at Asbury! Each week it is amazing to see how God has been working in both the music and technical worship ministries at our church, all under the leadership of Pastor Tom Carver.

## ***Worshipping through God's Word***

The Theme Team, in consultation with Pastor Carver, met throughout the year to collaborate and bring inspirational sermon ideas to fruition. It is the mission of this group to provide messages and worship experiences that inspire spiritual growth and reflection. During 2023, Pastor Tom had us pondering, *What Makes a Healthy Heart Inside & Out*, *What is on your Playlist*, and *The Boomerang Principle*. We could envision the *Indescribable* and *Awe* of an amazing God, and we enjoyed hearing the words of our Storytellers, Paul DCamp, Carrie Meumann, Cliff Pim, and Rev. Joshua Ngao.

## ***Worshipping through Song***

After an extended hiatus due to the pandemic, the Chancel Choir is back! In 2023, we welcomed long-time Asbury member, Paul DCamp, as our Chancel Choir Director. We thank you Paul for sharing your passion for music and your love for Asbury. It is clearly evident as he shares these highlights from the past year:

- The choir has been on a good path for establishing an active, loving and joyous fellowship. The choir all attends regular rehearsals, every Wednesday evening. We love the time with one another, and it's been a great joy to prepare for worship music with all who participate. For Easter and for Christmas Eve, the choir has been supplemented by additional singers who join for the special occasion, growing our group to about 25 for the event. The choir has a party for fun and fellowship, about twice a year.
- I have worked closely with Pastor Carver to plan and prepare anthems and hymns that offer musical themes that should match each sermon topic. As director, I have spent dozens of hours familiarizing myself and documenting information about Asbury's existing library. My priority is to select anthems we already own first, where the music fits the topic. Some new anthems have been purchased when needed
- Space was reorganized in the chancel area to the right of the altar, to allow the choir to stay seated during worship. This frees up some seating in pews, and reduces a small bit of disruption of having choir members move into position during the service. Feedback has also been that this has improved the choir's sound. This area has also become our rehearsal space, as we've nearly maxed out the space in the choir room.

Of course, not a small matter for me personally, is that Asbury leaders were kind enough to consider me for the position of choir director. I began the position officially in the Spring.

## ***Worshipping through Technology***

Carrie Meumann, Producer of Creative Worship and Media, continues to grow our technology footprint. She has assembled a great team of volunteers to help provide the visual component of Worship through slides, videos, sermon bumpers, and sound production. She also connects us to our community and each other through social media communication. Worship attendees can now register online with a QR code, as well as sign-up for special events held during the year. Pastor Tom had a little fun with technology when he did a live survey during a recent worship service. Attendees, both in-person and online, could see the questions on the projector, and view their results immediately! Pastor Tom and Carrie did a great job bringing some fun to a sometimes intimidating application.

## ***Worshipping through Volunteering***

The Worship Team staff leads us on Sunday morning, but the worship experience is further enhanced by the many volunteers including the Welcome Team, Liturgical Team, Praise Band, Chancel Choir, and Technology Volunteers. In 2024 we hope to recruit a Worship Co-Leader and Communion Chairperson, grow the number of volunteers that serve in the above ministries, and continue to bring a meaningful, spirit-rich worship experience to all those that attend either in-person or online.

Stephanie Pim, Worship Leadership





# Asbury In Mission (AIM) Annual Report for 2023

*(Doing God's Will by Embracing our Community)*

Applying what we learn as we "Seek God's Light", we "Share God's Love" by "Doing God's Will" serving others in our church family and in our community. That is the mission of AIM (Asbury in Mission). Below are just a few ways that Asburians have extended God's will to others during 2023.

Mission of the Month – Each month, the AIM steering team designated a "Mission of the Month" to promote and support through our service and donations. Missions of the Month in 2023 included Garden Ministry, Hope at the Brick House, One Eighty, Friendly Thrift Center, Thanksgiving in July, Santa for Seniors, Stewards of Creation, "Love Thy Neighbor" supply drive, Salvation Army Bell Ringing, CROP Walk, and The Christmas Dinner at the Center.

Zion Meal Site – Starting in May of this year, we "reinvented" the way Asbury prepared and served the Zion Lutheran Church-Davenport Meal Site meal on the first Wednesday of each Month. Working through Churches United, we have formed "teams" of 5-7 Asbury volunteers to prepare and serve a standard meal menu for 50-70 less fortunate people.

Mark Twain Elementary School Backpack Ministry - Prior to the pandemic, Asbury provided snack backpacks to students of families in need at Jefferson and Mark Twain schools. The pandemic put an abrupt end to this mission activity. We are excited that Asbury is once again partnering with Mark Twain to provide backpacks filled with nutritious snacks for designated elementary students. Each month through the end of the school year in May, we will purchase snack items; and then fill and deliver backpacks for more than 24 students.

Bettendorf Food Pantry – Once a month, Asbury member volunteers staff the food pantry at the Bettendorf Community Center to provide food and household supplies to Bettendorf residents in need.

CROP Walk - In November over 20 Asbury family members walked in the annual CROP Walk to raise funds to end hunger and poverty in the U.S. and abroad. Asbury members contributed \$800 to support this cause.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing at K & K – Asbury is once again ringing the bells for Salvation Army Red Kettle donations from the last week of November through Christmas Eve day. Asbury was awarded Salvation Army's "Volunteer Organization of the Year for 2022" for its bell ringing efforts at K & K.

Santa for Seniors – Asburians once again are spreading some Christmas Cheer to seniors residing at the Iowa Masonic Village skilled nursing unit. Church members are donating dollars for items to include in Christmas gift bags for 75 seniors at Iowa Masonic plus gift bags to Asbury members who are unable to attend Sunday services on a regular basis.

Special Offerings/Donations – Asburians gave generously to support various local not-for-profits such as Hope at the Brick House, Friendly House, Churches United; national and global disaster relief such as hurricane and flood victims; Ukrainian refugees; and the United Methodist Church special offerings several times throughout the year.



Santa for Seniors

## AIM Steering Committee

Jenny Bloomquist, Co-Leader  
Steve Sorensen, Co-Leader  
Robin James  
Pam Duehr



Mark Twain Elementary Back Backpack Ministry



# 2023 Year-End Finance Team Report

Finance Co-Chair: Cliff Pim & Phil Paulson

Holiday greetings Asbury UMC,

Thank you for your generosity in 2023! Overall giving for the year is down slightly from 2022 and expenses are up due to increases in utilities and insurance along with a complete year with a full staff. We are blessed with some reserves to be able to cover the small shortfall and we remain in a solid financial position moving into 2024 with all our obligations and apportionments paid for the year.

Renovation to the front of the church, fellowship hall and backyard were done with interest and investment growth from the Foundation account and did not impact the operating budget. These investments in our facility will hopefully pay dividends as we continue to optimize the space inside and outside the sanctuary.

The Finance Team had 3 goals moving into 2023, two of which we completed.

1. Continue streamlining the finance reporting and match up the budget and accounts to the current ministry categories.
2. Bring a Treasurer on to the Finance Team.
3. Establish a complete Policy and Procedure document outlining how the Finance Team operates and how the records are kept/reported.

We are excited to have Kurt Streicher as our new Treasurer and Rich Coon as a new member of the Finance Team. Both have strong finance and accounting backgrounds and will be excellent additions to our team.

As we approach 2024 we are finalizing a budget for all ministries which will be completed within the next few weeks. Our next priority is to complete and formalize the Policy and Procedures documentation.

The church needs your continued generosity and support. Proverbs 11:24 states *"One gives freely yet grows all the richer"*.

Thank you for your support of Asbury UMC to help make disciples in the world.

Asbury Finance Team

## Asbury United Methodist Church Foundation

Our church continues to be blessed by the work of the Asbury United Methodist Church Foundation which was established several years ago. Its purpose is to receive and administer funds given to the church for the following intentions:

1. To support activities of The Church that, but for the existence of The Foundation, may not be funded.
2. Not for the operating expenses of The Church, which are an ongoing obligation of the then current membership.
3. For capital improvements and equipment to The Church facilities with the hope that capital fund drives for The Church may not be necessary in the future.
4. As a one-time contribution or as seed money contributions to support missions of The Church.
5. As deemed necessary to support any special projects of The Church.

The generosity shown in these funds has allowed the church to fund the various building improvements of the past year.

Current membership of the Asbury Foundation includes John Rabine (chairperson), Kim Brenner, Jerry Finley, Bob Gallagher, Phil Paulson, Cliff Pim and Jim Spelhaug.

## During 2023 the Trustees have approved and made some upgrades to church facilities including:

### 1. Maintenance & Repairs

- A couple of repairs to HVAC
- Replaced backup batteries and one smoke sensor for Fire Alarm System
- Patched small hole in roof membrane

### 2. Security

- Added remote opening capability for Main Entrance from church phones
- Added four remote cameras and linked into church system

### 3. Improvements to Fellowship Hall

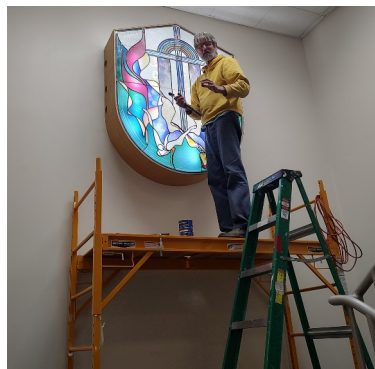
- Reupholstered 2 pews and 8 chairs for use with four new tables long west wall
- Added big TV to east wall
- Added windows to north wall
- Painted cathedral ceiling
- Removed audio visual equipment in anticipation of updated sound system

### 4. Improvements to Hallway Areas

- Added slat board walls to both East and West Narthex
- Purchased and set up portable Welcome Center in West Narthex
- Reworked and relocated large stained glass wall fixture from Fellowship Hall wall to west stairwell landing

### 5. Outside Improvements

- Painted north and west walls
- Remounted Methodist Cross & Flame and added LED lighting
- Added patio and landscaping outside new window
- Removed overgrown bushes and trees from south of church



Kevin Jones  
Volunteer Facilities Manager







## 2023 SPRC Update for December 18, 2023 Church Conference

- An all-staff luncheon for Brenda Sherick's Retirement was held in February 2023. Gift cards were presented to all staff members as a thank you for their dedicated service to Asbury.
- Paul DCamp was hired as the new Director of the Asbury Chancel Choir in February 2023, replacing Joe Buck, who retired from the position February 2023, effective January 15, 2023.
- New SPRC members Kristi Berst, Kay Parch & Rick Reed were recruited and welcomed in April 2023.
- The continuation of Linda Carver as the Director of Children's Ministry Director through calendar-year 2023 was confirmed in April 2023.
- The 2023 Ministry Appraisal for Pastor Tom Carver and Asbury UMC was completed and submitted to our District Superintendent in June 2023.
- The annual Appointment Advisory Consultation 2024 for Asbury UMC Bettendorf was created, reviewed, approved and submitted to the District Superintendent in August 2023.
- A new Part-Time Office Assistant position to cover Office Manager absences and provide additional resources as needed was created, reviewed and approved in September 2023. Jean Black was approved to fill this position.
- Overview documents for Asbury SPRC, Finance and Trustee Committees for use in the 2023 Expo Fair were created in September 2023.
- The Pastoral Support Form, Resolution on Clergy Owned Housing Form and Resolution on Accountable Reimbursement Plan for 2024 were created, reviewed and approved by SPRC. These forms were reviewed and approved by voting members of the Church Council on September 18 at the Church Conference.
- The 2024 SPRC budget proposal was created, submitted and received preliminary approval in October 2023.
- Asbury Staff - SPRC Liaison assignments were finalized in October 2023.
- The recruiting and hiring of a new Children's Ministry Director in October 2023 to replace Linda Carver, who will retire at the end of 2023 began in October 2023. The process to fill the position continues currently.
- SPRC met with Reverend Brian Oliver, Golden Valley District Superintendent on October 25 to discuss the replacement of Pastor Tom Carver, who will retire June 30, 2024. Asbury's needs were discussed and SPRC provided inputs for the appointment of a new minister. Outputs of the October Asbury Leadership Retreat were provided to and discussed with Reverend Oliver. Asbury has a "clean open" so our position will be one of the first considered for appointment. Additional information about our community and its attributes and amenities will be included for consideration of our opening by clergy in the Conference.
- Efforts to bring new members into SPRC to replace those completing their current term are underway.

Respectfully Submitted December 18, 2023  
Pat Thornton, Asbury UMC SPRC Chairperson

# GARDEN MINISTRY

*Responding to God's call to "Feed the Hungry".  
Isaiah 58:10*

The Asbury Garden Ministry gardens a 1.2 acre plot graciously donated for our use by the Grace Evangelical Free Church located at 5520 Eastern Avenue in Davenport. The Ministry was initiated in the spring of 2002 with the following mission statement: "Provide fresh vegetables to those who would otherwise not have access to them". Harvested vegetables are distributed to over 20 organizations which includes food pantries, meal sites, home shelters, senior living apartment complexes, and individual families. The Ministry had a record harvest of over 66,000 lbs. this growing season. Since its inception, over 780,000 lbs. of fresh vegetables have been distributed. All volunteers have a great time "playing in the dirt"; and, it's good exercise. Everyone is welcome; our youngest volunteer is age 8; and our oldest volunteer is age 90!



Winter Cover Crop



Part of the Onion Harvest



Garden Volunteers are of All Ages Austin is 8 and Eileen is 90!



Record Watermelon Harvest



Tomato Harvest

## 2023 HARVEST—66,051 LBS

Highlights of this season included a record harvest of over 66,000 lbs. of fresh vegetables. Using equipment purchased last fall (subcompact John Deere tractor, tiller, mower, cultipacker, and mulch layer), we were able to facilitate our gardening activities and undertake new initiatives; e.g., planting a winter cover crop (rye) last fall which was tilled in the spring adding nutrients to the soil. To foster camaraderie, t-shirts were procured for volunteers and we initiated having "Supper at the Garden" at the church's pavilion twice a month. Sincere thanks to those volunteers whose involvement contributed to another record gardening season and to the following businesses who supported our Ministry: Wallace's Garden Center, K & K Hardware and C.D. Ford & Sons in Geneseo.





## Stewards of Creation



God, help me to align my actions so that they reflect the sense of appreciation I have for your creation.  
Inspired by  
Colossians 3:17

*We believe that caring for God's creation is an essential part of our Christian faith.  
We honor God's Creation by protecting and preserving it for future generations.  
Everyone is invited to take part in the Stewards of Creation ministry.*

### Stewards of Creation 2023 Goals/Actions

#### Inspire and Encourage Everyone to Actively Participate in Creation Care

- **Nine Monthly Challenges in 2023** (54 Monthly Challenges to date!) Examples include carpool, switch to LED bulbs, pick up litter, recycle rechargeable batteries, plant to support pollinators, less food waste, and buy local food.
- **Recognize and support Asbury groups and leaders as they initiate and participate in creation care activities.** A letter with a list of example activities went to Asbury small group leaders. It invited them to develop and share their own ways of being stewards of creation. Other Examples: Earth Day worship, LIFT hosted a community clean up, Garden Ministry reported an experimental no-till with cover-crop and our parish nurses shared how knowledge of climate can be used to protect children.
- **Terracycle** drop off site inside Asbury Church - 2,273 chip/snack & cereal bags have been collected, so far, in 2023, with a total of 6,504 collected since we started our Asbury program! We also accept pens, markers, toothpaste tubes & dental floss containers.
- **Notification of church, community and online events** - Examples: X-stream clean-ups, bird migration response, virtual events for Earth Week, UMCOR, and workshops for QC plastic reduction.
- **New Stewards of Creation Pamphlet** –Available at Asbury Ministry Fair and on the information entry wall.

#### Offer Awareness and Information about Ways to Support Creation's Needs

We shared information about organizations and events. AIM May Mission of the Month offered two information and donation opportunities this year: The Canopy Project and Terracycle.

#### Initiate Ways to be a Green Church with Sustainable and Energy Efficient Practices

LED conversion (100 LED lights have been purchased with many installed), continuing recycling habits and programmable thermostat set for maximum efficiency.

#### Seek to Provide Hope

We set a 2024 goal to show examples of hope-filled actions to the congregation during worship and on Facebook.

#### Serve as a Hub for Stewardship Action and Documentation

Stewards of Creation has documented Asbury creation-care related activities and shared this information with the congregation through Facebook, the Good News, Church Council and Asbury annual reports.



For more information "like" and "follow"  
the Stewards of Creation Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/AsburyStewardsOfCreation>

• Good News • Worship Service Announcements •  
or contact a member of the Stewards of Creation Planning Team





# Asbury Men's Group 2023

The goal of the men's group is building Faith through Study, Service, and Fellowship. This is done by watching a short video, having group discussions, and studying the Word and how it relates to everyday life as a Christian man. Fellowship is built through some fun time at each meeting and through one-on-one prayer partners.

An "open chair" is always there to greet you, so please join them! They meet at 7:45am on Saturday mornings at Asbury and via Zoom .

**Please contact Cliff Pim or Phil Paulson for the link to Zoom.**



**Phil Paulson & Cliff Pim**



**Ramp Building Project 2023**



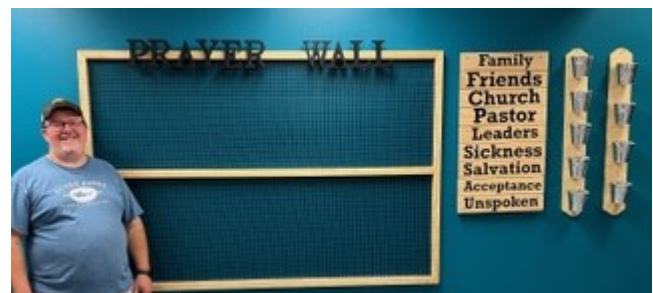
**Asbury Slat Wall Project 2023**



**Hanging of the Greens**



**Annual Christmas Dinner at The Center**



**Asbury Youth Center Prayer Wall Project**



# Asbury Card Ministry

*The Asbury Card Ministry was initiated in May 2009.*

*Its mission is to send greeting cards to those in our congregation who need an encouraging word or just a reminder that someone is thinking of them!*

We work with the Parish Nurses and office staff to obtain the names of these individuals. We make many kinds of cards including sympathy, birthday, thinking-of-you, congratulations, new baby, holiday, and others when the need arises, along with bookmarks for the Bibles given to Asbury students. We also have cards for sale in the church office to support our ministry as Card Ministry does not have a budget line and works solely on donations.

In 2023, the Card Ministry team made 513 cards, which included a card for anyone on our team to take home if they so choose.

**Please check out Card Ministry's Facebook page, it includes every card we have made.  
To date the Card Ministry has made 232 different designs of cards!**

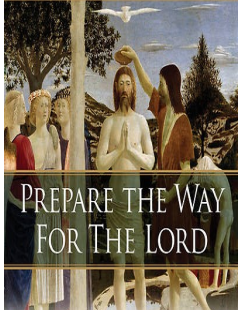


**Card Ministry is a team effort. Shown here are examples of their beautiful creations!**

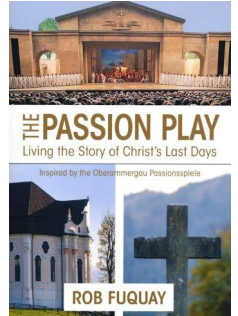


# Women in Ministry

## Ladies' ARM Group



The Ladies ARM Group is a caring and sharing group of women whose primary focus is to create an atmosphere where group members affirm and encourage one another, build each other up in Christ, and help each other grow. This is accomplished through short-term Christian studies and occasional service projects. They meet every other Thursday from 7:00-9:00 PM via Zoom. They are participating in the Advent Sunday Sermon Study Series, PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD by Adam Hamilton. That will be followed by the study for Lent, THE PASSION PLAY by Rob Fuquay.



**All women are welcome! Contact Sharon Phillips for the link to Zoom.**



## Hannah Circle

Hannah Circle is a socially oriented group of women that meets on the second Tuesday of the month from September through May. Gatherings rotate between breakfast and lunch outings in the community to share joys and concerns, catch up on the latest news, and share milestones with one another.

**Everyone is welcome and should contact Donna Stradt for needed information.**



## Rachel Circle

Rachel Circle meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at Asbury. One of their goals is to support and encourage each other in their Christian journey. Members rotate responsibilities as hostesses and plan programs that could include a speaker who presents information on a relevant topic. Because their mission is to form relationships with community agencies and assist them either with a monetary donation or with goods and services, a service project is also included each month.

**Everyone is welcome to drop in and join the group at any time.**

**Please contact Sue Gallagher, Katie Nelson or Jo Winegar for more information.**





Through Christian fellowship, we will gather to support those in need, grow our relationships within and beyond Asbury's walls, and serve the community, spreading God's word and love.

This Ladies group has their own Facebook page. They meet at different locations or via Zoom for fellowship and service projects which vary each time. Connect with them on Facebook or by contacting Stephanie Pim, Jenny Bloomquist, Marian Edmund-Paulson, or Julia Hensch.



Knit for the Neighborhood



Earth Day  
Neighborhood Trash Pick Up



One and Done Book Discussion  
*The Good Life*



Ministry Expo Set Up



Green Bean Casseroles for  
Christmas Meal at The Center



A Not So Silent Night - A Study of Mary



Hiney Heroes  
Diaper Drive

