

February 21, 2024

CLAIR CONNECTION

NW District <http://www.northwest.moumethodist.org/>

Missouri United Methodist Conference <http://www.moumethodist.org/>

SOUPper Bowl Celebrated at Clair



CLAIR CONNECTION



I am excited to begin our study of *The Chosen* this Wednesday evening! Joe and I have enjoyed watching several episodes of *The Chosen*, which is a powerful television series about the life of Jesus. We will begin at 6:15 PM on Wednesdays with some background information for the episode, watch the movie, and then follow with comments, questions, and conversation. If Wednesday evenings don't work for you, consider joining me at Ebenezer UMC at 2:00 on Thursday afternoons.

The "what R U up 2?" Lenten series got off to a great start on Sunday as we were reminded of God's words to Jesus as he came UP from the waters of baptism. Mark 1:11 *And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."* God loves us, too, and is proud of us, even though we often fall short. God promises to be with us always, during the UP times as well as in the challenges that come our way. It is our responsibility as Christians to help spread that word through our words, actions, and acts of service. May this season of Lent be one of keeping our eyes, ears, and hearts open to ways that we can be up to something good!

Karen Jones, chair of Clair's Ad Council, has written a thoughtful letter to our congregation that you will find elsewhere in this newsletter. Please join Joe and me in taking a step UP in our financial gifts to the church.

Blessings to you as our Lenten journey continues. As always, it is an honor to be your pastor!

Cindy



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Since joining this congregation I've been impressed at the things so many people in our congregation do to keep the church going – things that most churches where I have attended in the past paid staff to do. Here are some examples of essential functions in our church that are provided by volunteers: streaming our services on YouTube, accounting, janitorial, lawn care, snow removal, tree trimming, painting, small building repairs, our newsletter, and more.

Starlight also does funeral luncheons (donations are accepted but not required) and an annual flower sale to raise money. This money is used to pay for paper supplies (plates, cups, paper towels, toilet paper and tissues) and for cleaning supplies. Barb Elder balances the Starlight checkbook and does the purchasing for these items.

All of these talented and committed people have allowed our church to get by on a very bare bones operating budget. There are not a lot of places where expenses could be cut. However, this is my second year on Ad Council, and we're seeing a concerning trend downward. At the end of 2022, our expenses exceeded our donations by \$860. At the end of 2023, the shortage for that year was \$6,790. For 2024, it is expected to be around \$11,574 if our giving stays at the same level. Obviously, we have some reserves, but they are being steadily depleted.

The general operating budget covers the day-to-day costs of keeping the church open and operating. This includes insurance, internet, phone, utilities, building maintenance, salaries (minister, organist, and nursery staff), payroll taxes, apportionments, software, and materials for worship and spiritual growth.

I have seen our congregation respond generously to mission needs and to the Capital Campaign. Neither of these are part of the general operating budget, so when you contribute to missions or the capital campaign, the general operating budget is not affected. I'm writing this in the hope that it will inspire all of us to look at our giving and consider stepping up where we can if we are all aware of the need.

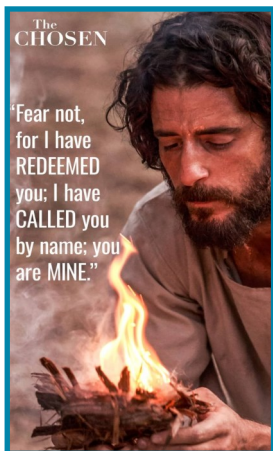
Altogether we need to improve our giving by a little more than \$900 each month to cover our basic expenses. 2023 Year End Reports indicate there are 48 identified giving units in Clair's congregation. If each of those 48 families increase their giving by \$20 each month, we will cover the shortfall. If you are not a regular giver, please consider making a commitment to support the church financially. I hope you will join me in stepping up!

Thank you! *Karen Jones, Ad Council Chair*

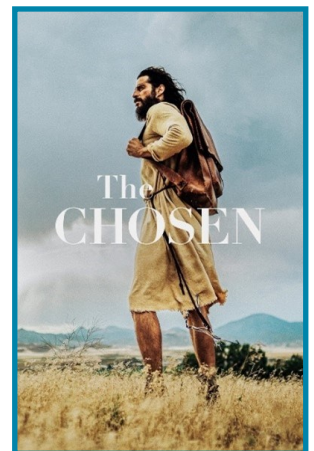
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Starlight Group met February 13th. We enjoyed a charcuterie board of delicious food from Roxyann along with other finger food. We will begin meeting at 6 PM in April. The annual flower sale will be held May 4th. Some of our mission projects will include foster care backpacks, Bliss Housing supplies and Bode hygiene items. We closed the meeting with a Bible Scavenger Hunt!



Don't miss The Chosen!
Wednesday evenings during Lent
at Clair—6:15 PM
Watch an episode and review it
to learn about Jesus' life



February 20
February 21

Special Ad Council Meeting 6 PM
The Chosen Lenten Study Series 6:15 PM—Wednesdays at Clair
2 PM Thursdays at Ebenezer
Serve Open Door Food Kitchen 9 AM
Fellowship Dinner Following 11 AM Worship
Starlight Group 3:30 PM
Ad Council 6 PM

February 29
March 10
March 11
March 12

Calendar

CLAIR CONNECTION

We Scored a Win Against Hunger



*THANK YOU
FOR DONATING
FOOD TO
INTER-SERV'S
FOOD PANTRY!*

THE OLD HAS DIED. THE NEW IS COME.




ASH
WEDNESDAY

