

Faith[†] *news*

WOOD RIVER FIRST & ALDA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MARCH 2025

You're Invited!

If you have a birthday or anniversary in the month of March, come receive a special blessing from Pastor Rachel and the congregation on March 9 at the Alda UMC at 10:00. We want to celebrate you!



Church Events

- March 3 Ruth Circle 1:30
- March 5 Ash Wednesday service 6:00 @Alda
- March 6 Rachel Circle 1:30
- March 7 World Day of Prayer 10:00 @Presbyterian Church
- March 12 Youth Group
- March 20 Sewing 9:30
- March 26 Youth Group 6:30
- March 27 UWF 1:30

Pastor's Note



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I remember the first time I ever fasted was when I was 10 years old. I grew up in a Christian home and my parents saw fit to teach us Christian practices that would be useful to us. Above all, they wanted to ground us in our faith by showing us different ways of practicing it. Our fast was to take place on a Sunday. The idea was to do it as a family, since for some of us it was the first time. My father wanted us all to have this support, whether we'd done it before or not. He had also already explained to us about how the day would go.

I was ready! My mind was already ready to commit to the big day. I thought maybe I would enjoy the experience and next time I could try doing it on my own. On Sunday morning, we got ready, did not have breakfast and rushed to the car to go to church. Our children's Sunday School always took place in the classrooms at the same time as the church service in the sanctuary. Who has time to think about food while jumping up and down, singing and listening to interesting Bible stories? The time passed very quickly that I even forgot that I was fasting. It was a success!

By the time we got home it was already midday. My excitement slowly began to fade, and I started to worry about my stomach. Would I have enough strength to make it through the day? When were we going to break the fast and eat? Luckily for me, we had in-between times where my father would get us all together to pray and tell fun Bible stories. He made things so interesting that I thought fasting was not such a bad thing after all.

Fasting can take many forms, but in simple terms it is a way of putting aside the things we most enjoy or are used to doing for something greater, in this case, connection with God. You can fast from food, just as you can fast from something else, like your phone. Jesus took 40 days and 40 nights to connect with his Father and prepare his mind for the work ahead. For us, that is what we commemorate during this Lenten period. Inspired by the example of Jesus, we believe that this time should be an opportunity for self-examination and preparation for Easter, and this can be done in many ways, giving up being one of them.

Is there something you are holding on to that you know you are not supposed to? Maybe this is the time to take a break. Pause and prepare your heart, in repentance towards God and humility, knowing that we are finite beings and that, without God, we are nothing. I would like to encourage each of us to adopt a practice to observe during this Lenten period. Whether it is giving something up, fasting or something else. Just pause to let God work on you inwardly.

Prayers for strength and renewal this Lent!

Pastor Rachel N.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH —*Renae Graham, President*

United Women in Faith returned to their regular schedule after taking January off due to weather. After the break, the ladies are excited to get back to plans for this year. Initial plans for the Ladies' Annual Salad Supper are underway. The date of the supper will be April 30, 2025. All ladies are invited to host a table for the event. Our theme will be: 'In the Garden'. Our ladies always come up with such creative ideas!

We will be hosting a Mission Study on June 21. The Senior Center is once again allowing us to use their facility. We thank them for the use of the building! The study will be 'Welcome Home' which was the Mission study from 2024, held at Trinity UMC in Grand Island in July of last year.

Other events to note are World Day of Prayer on March 7, and 'Call to Prayer and Self-Denial' on March 27. More information to come on those events.



World Day of Prayer 2025

Women, men, and children in more than 170 countries and regions will celebrate World Day of Prayer (WDP) on March 7, 2025. This year the women of Cook Islands call us to worship with the words, "I made you wonderful." The WDP 2025 program is based on Psalm 139:1-18.

This year's service will be held on Friday, March 7 at 10:00 am at the Presbyterian Church hosted by the United Women in Faith.

The 2025 program invites us into the knowledge that each one of us was made with care and love by God. When we can receive this profound truth, everything in our life changes and we begin to radiate and shine from within. We also learn how to treat every other person as made wonderful by God.

Too often, women and girls have been silenced and oppressed, making this upcoming theme from WDP Cook Islands particularly relevant. The message that we, as women and girls, are "fearfully and wonderfully" made in the image of God reinforces our movement's support of women in expressing their faith and speaking about their lives in prayer and worship before God and in community.

The Worship Service invites us to notice aspects of our divinely created bodies that we often take for granted. The scripture reading is woven together with stories of three women from the Cook Islands. We come to understand that God knows us, is always with us, and made us unique and special.

The service leads us to offer prayers of adoration and thanksgiving to our Creator, followed by prayers of confession and longing. Finally, the prayers of intercession guide us to ask God for wisdom, courage and healing, that our world would come to treat all people as "fearfully and wonderfully made."

Please contact Susie Powell at 308-390-3491 for questions or more information.

March 2025



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1 Ashley Gewecke
2 Dual Worship @Alda 10:00 Renae Graham	3 Ruth Circle 1:30 Hannah Paulk Kiernan Paulk Carson Schultz	4 Spencer Rohrich	5 Ash Wednesday Service 6:00 Bible Study 9:30 Steve Powell	6 Rachel Circle 1:30 Brandon James	7 World Day of Prayer Service 10:00 @Presbyterian Church Arlo Molczyk	8 Sophia White Bull
9 Daylight Savings Dual Worship @Alda 10:00	10	11 Donna Bilsend	12 Bible Study 9:30 Youth Group 6:30 Lonnie & Carolyn Hoard	13 Sara Arnett Bruce Howe Kensley Schofield	14 Ron Saner Chanda Miles	15
16 Dual Worship @Alda 10:00 Bailey Landanger	17 	18 Jackie Riley	19 Bible Study 9:30 Mike Smith Kenna Thompson Taylor Glenn	20 Sewing 9:30 Cody Brandt Matt & Lisa DeVore Dave & Julie Ogden	21 Brad Earnest Deb Rohrich	22 Sabrina Molczyk
23 Dual Worship @Alda 10:00 Jerry Shears	24 Cassie Lechtenberg	25 Charles & Judy Mead Larry Powers	26 Bible Study 9:30 Youth Group 6:30 Craig Anderson Lisa DeVore	27 UWF 1:30	28 Sean Smith Shane Smith	29
30 Dual Worship @Alda 10:00 Matthew Duval	31 Kaye & Cathy Doane Addison Oster Courtney Smith					

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Ash Wednesday is March 5. Worship service will be held at Alda UMC at 6:00. All are welcome!

- **World Day of Prayer is March 7 with a service held at 10:00 at the Presbyterian Church hosted by the United Women in Faith**

- The Carter Family would like to thank everyone and a special thanks to the ladies for the luncheon following Jan's funeral.



Daylight Saving Time begins March 9 at 2:00am. Be sure to change your clocks before bed!

Giving & Attendance Report

Wood River:

Feb \$5,562

Jan: \$8387

Dec: \$9625

Average weekly attendance: 27

Alda:

Feb: \$503

Jan: \$650

Dec: \$1441

Average weekly attendance: 7



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