



The First Word

January 2026

First United Methodist Church, Racine

745 Main Street, Racine, WI 53403

262-633-7632

1racineumc@gmail.com

<https://www.firstumcracine.org>

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Looking Ahead with Hope and Expectation

Happy New Year!

As we reflect on our past themes at Racine First United Methodist Church, one message continues to rise to the surface: our future rests securely in the hands of a loving and faithful God. This truth does not ignore the realities we face or minimize the challenges before us. Instead, it grounds us in a deeper confidence that God is present, active, and at work—even when the way forward is not immediately clear.

Throughout Scripture, God's people are often called to trust Him not when circumstances are easy, but precisely when they are uncertain. Faith has never been about having all the answers. It has always been about learning to depend on God's character. We look ahead not because everything looks perfect, but because God is good, steadfast, and trustworthy.

As a church, we move forward with expectation and hope. Hope is not wishful thinking; it is a disciplined trust in God's promises. We believe that God still has meaningful work for Racine First United Methodist Church and for the communities we are called to serve. The Spirit is not finished with us. God continues to shape, refine, and send His people for the sake of the world He loves.

As we begin 2026, our deepest aspiration is not simply growth or success as the world defines it, but renewal of the heart. We long for more of God's Spirit to guide us, strengthen us, and draw us closer to Christ. That renewal begins and deepens through the ordinary but powerful practices of faith—prayer that keeps us grounded, Scripture that forms our minds and hearts, and fellowship that reminds us we do not walk this journey alone.

Rebuilding and deepening our relationship with God is not a quick task, but it is holy work. As we commit ourselves anew to prayer, Bible study, and life together, we open ourselves to God's transforming grace. Step by step, God shapes a community rooted in love, faith, and hope.

May this new year be one in which we walk forward together—trusting God, listening for the Spirit, and believing that even now God is preparing good things for us and for our neighbors.

Happy New Year, and may 2026 be filled with the peace, grace, and presence of God among us.

Pastor Temo Rios

“WHEN GOD SHOWS UP” January 2026 Sermon Series

Series Big Idea

Epiphany reminds us that God did not stay hidden. In Jesus, God stepped into the world in a way we could see, hear, and touch.

The light of Christ was revealed—not just for a moment, but for everyday life.

The question after Epiphany is simple and honest: Now what?

What does this light change about how we live, how we treat one another, and how we face the ordinary days in front of us?

This series invites us to pay attention to where Christ is still showing up—in our homes, our church, and our community—and to ask what it means to live differently now that we have seen the light.

January 4 – Epiphany Sunday

Theme: **“Seeing the Light**

Scriptures: Jeremiah 31:7-14, John 1:10-18

January 11

Theme: **“Power of Presence”**

Scriptures: Isaiah 42:1-9; Matthew 3:13-17

January 18

Theme: **“Give them Your Light”**

Scriptures: Isaiah 49:1-7 & John 1:29-42

January 25

Theme: **“Carrying the Light”**

Scriptures: Psalm 27:1, 4-9 &
1 Corinthians 1:10-18

HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN JANUARY

2 – Connie Boehm

5 – Bryce McKenny

7 – Tracie Feest

24 – Daphne Schnaare

25 – August Grulich

29 – Joy McClelland

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY IN JANUARY

14 – Jayne & Jerry Dresen



OUR FOOD PANTRY ITEM

For January, our food pantry items are paper grocery sacks and/or toilet

paper. Plastic or heavy grocery bags with handles are needed for clients that walk, ride the bus or bike. Thanks so much for your support of this mission. Thanks for helping feed the hungry of our city.

The First Word

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First United Methodist Church

745 Main Street, Racine, WI 53403

Phone: 262-633-7632 - (414) 852-3722 (Pastor)

lracineumc@gmail.com or

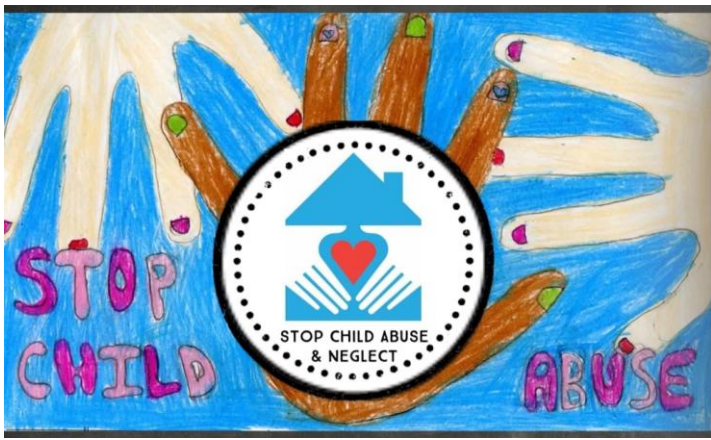
temorios@icloud.com

Pastor's office hours – Wednesday and Friday

8:00 until 3:00

Pastor – Temo Rios

Editor – Carol Feest



LOOSE CHANGE OFFERING FOR JANUARY will support the local SCAN program of be-leaf. Our programs help reduce child victimization and the stigma of abuse by teaching children to recognize dangerous or abusive situations, distinguish between safe and unsafe touches, say “no” to unwanted advances, tell trusted adults when something is wrong and understand that abuse is never their fault.

Between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 SCAN served 7,556 students across more than 40 schools in Racine County delivering 517 free personal safety lessons and partnering with 354 teachers to enhance classroom safety.

Your generosity ensures that children in our community continue to learn that abuse is never their fault and that help is always available.

Place your Loose Change – or more – in the envelopes found in the pew racks and indicate “Mission Project” on the envelope.

OFFERING ENVELOPES WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON. Check the sanctuary tables if you would like to use the weekly envelopes.



January 2026 Stewardship Newsletter More Than a Resolution: Practicing Faithful

Stewardship for the Long Haul

Every January, many of us start the year with good intentions. We resolve to spend less, save more, pay down debt, or finally feel less anxious about money. Some of those resolutions stick for a while. Many don't. And it's not because we lack discipline or desire. The truth is that healthy financial stewardship is rarely achieved through willpower alone. Getting out of debt, learning to save, practicing contentment, growing in generosity, and cultivating gratitude are not quick fixes. They are habits – formed slowly, intentionally, and often imperfectly over time. Like prayer, worship, and service, faithful stewardship is a spiritual practice that shapes us as disciples. Scripture reminds us that transformation is ongoing work. Paul writes, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds” (Romans 12:2). That kind of renewal does not happen because the calendar flips from December to January. It happens when we acknowledge that our relationship with money, possessions, and generosity is deeply spiritual – and that God's work in us unfolds over a lifetime. For some, this might mean seeking help to escape cycles of debt. For others, it may mean learning to live with enough, resisting the pressure to accumulate more. For still others, it might be discovering the joy of generosity - not just financial giving, but generosity of time, skills, hospitality, and compassion. As individuals and as churches, the invitation at the start of a new year is not simply to make resolutions, but to recommit ourselves to practices that help us grow in trust, gratitude, and faithfulness. Stewardship is not about perfection. It's about progress – taken one faithful step at a time.



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The Vision statement:

Inspire all to live faithfully in Jesus Christ

The Mission statement:

Gather, Equip, and Serve our community and the world in the name Jesus Christ!

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