



Spiritual Growth

As a seed grows when it's planted and watered, followers of Christ grow in spiritual maturity when they are planted and watered in good soil.

In the Bible, Jesus describes a fictional scene of a farmer planting seeds. Some seeds fall on the path, some on rocky places, some on thorns, and some on good soil (Matthew 13:3-8), but only the seeds that fall on good soil grow into healthy plants. Jesus explains the meaning of the story this way: The one who hears the Word of God and understands it, is the one who grows in their faith (v. 23).

The Christian life is a relationship with God that develops over time. To grow in spiritual maturity (that is, to grow spiritually) is to look more like the person God designed you to be — increasingly like Jesus. What does it mean to grow spiritually? Journey with us as we explore the answer to this question.

What Is Spiritual Growth?

When, we plant the seed and wait for it to germinate and grow is a similar experience to spiritual growth, that is *the journey of growing in faith to know more about God and become the person that He created you to be.*

Peter who was one of Jesus' closest followers during the time that He was on earth, encourages us this way: ***“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18, New International Version).***

Paul, a leader in the early church who wrote much of the Bible's New Testament, describes this growth in another way: ***“We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His [God's] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Colossians 1:9-10).***

The type of person that God wants you to be is one who is characterized by His qualities: ***“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23).***

What Does the Bible Say About Spiritual Growth?

The Bible has a lot to say about what it looks like to grow spiritually. Here are some important verses of Scripture that can help you understand what it means to be spiritually mature.

God begins the work in believers and will continue it.

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6, NIV).

There is a hunger for knowing God.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” (Matthew 5:6, NIV).

God equips you through His Word.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV).

You can grow by meditating on God’s Word.

“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on His Law both day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers.” (Psalm 1:1-3, NIV).

The Holy Spirit teaches you to have the characteristics of spiritual maturity.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV).

The characteristics of spiritual maturity make you productive and effective in serving God.

“Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:5-8, NIV).

Growing in maturity and discernment is the natural and right path. Staying the same is not.

“Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” (Hebrews 5:12-14, NIV).

Let us try to grow spiritually to be the image God intended us to be.

Rev Dr. Douglas Obwoye



SPRC AND ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

At the request of our District Superintendent, we kicked off a fund raiser to help our Pastor and his family acquire green cards. The District has been very supportive of the family and has covered the Pastor’s application fees, but not the immigration lawyer fees. A green card makes him and his family permanent residents. This will also allow the members of the family to get jobs. Our goal is to raise \$6,200 to cover lawyer costs and medical exams for the green cards. Anything we raise beyond our goal will go to helping the Pastor with the family application costs. Please dig deep and contribute to this worthy cause.

Mark the memo line of your check with the words “Green Cards”.

Submitted by Mike Allen – Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) Chair



MANCELONA UNITED WOMEN OF FAITH

So, What Do We Do at Our Meetings?

We cover a lot of business, enjoy a variety of programs, and occasionally take time for special projects at our monthly UWF meetings. Here's a review of our most recent get-togethers:



March

- Jackie Bates brought us up-to-date on the plans for the Easter Egg Hunt which took place on March 28. At our UWF meeting, we helped Jackie fill the eggs with candy.
- We donated items for an Empty Bowls gift. The Empty Bowls event will take place on May 3. Funds go to the Northwest Food Coalition which provides food to our Community Meal program and Mancelona Food Pantry.
- Each year we honor our high school seniors near graduation day. This year our honorees are Ryan Naumcheff & Bidwell Mochama. Our Senior Recognition will be on Sunday, May 17.
- Our group sponsors both Snacks & Chats and Potlucks. For Snacks & Chats, this includes supplying food/treats, setting up, and cleaning up after each event. For Potluck, it is just setting up and cleaning up. We are fortunate to have others in our church family host and provide treats for these events also!
- We will be participating in the Craft Show at Mancelona Elementary School again this year. Jackie Bates found several toddler chairs stored in a church closet that are not being used. She suggested we ask church members to take a chair and decorate it to be sold at the Craft Show.

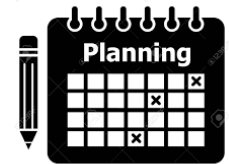
- Program – Ellen Whitehead led our program on prayer. We discussed various ways we as Christians pray and what our ways of praying have in common with other religions of the world. We read various Bible verses on prayer and selected our favorites.

April

Our April meeting was held at the home of Laurie Allison. Laurie led the program with an emphasis on Psalm 103. Everyone shared the many joys they have in their lives. Rhonda handed out pledge cards for those who may want to donate to UWF missions.

So, What's Next?

Plans are being finalized for our upcoming meetings as follows:



May 13 – 1 pm business meeting – Fellowship Hall. 1:30 - Program by Nancy Wheeler. Host/Treats – Nancy Wheeler and Carol Kingsley

June 10 – 1 pm at The Dockside Restaurant (Annual Luncheon)

July 8 – TBD (We are considering a field trip to Lavender Hill Farm in Boyne City.)

August 12 – A visit to Au Sable Institute, a Christ-centered professional and vocational institution of higher education.

Submitted by Ellen Whitehead

UWF Secretary



Community Meal

Yes, Community Meal is entering our 15th year! Our Community Meal made the front page of The Antrim Review in the Thursday, April 2, 2026 issue. We are grateful that Joanie Moore, Contributing Writer, stopped in to visit our Community Meal. Since it was the fourth Tuesday, she interviewed the “Avery” sisters of the long-time Avery Restaurant. Marilyn Avery-Swan and Shirley Tracey, have faithfully served for four years as cooks for Community Meal. We all know how many years in cooking, feeding, and giving these two have had in the Mancelona Community!

Yes, 14 years! Sandy Neumann shared that our “Founding Mother” was Jeanette Hayes, and I am sure Mike was right there as Jeanette’s right-hand man! Jeanette heard that another man in Rapid City was making soup for visitors to the weekly food pantry, and Jeanette thought *why not our Church for Mancelona!* And so, it began! Sandy has been right there all 14 years. First as a cooking team member, and now for several years she has taken over Jeanette’s responsibility of keeping the Community Meal Pantry filled as well as overseeing the whole operation!

Music was originally enjoyed with Patti Dykhouse on the piano playing everyone’s favorite tunes. Ron Oyer shared his talents of entertaining also. For quite a while Carolyn Hines greeted, then Ruth and Don Johnson became greeters. Ruth still welcomes folks! One snowy evening Don was spotted out near the corner of 131 and Hinman picking up our very heavy sign. That’s when we decided we needed a permanent sign!

Quoting Sandy from the article:

Our vision for the future is to keep going.

This is God’s plan. It is a wonderful community outreach.

Sandy notes we are more than a soup kitchen. Community Meal has become a time for friends to touch base. We encourage you to come, share in the camaraderie and excellent food! Sometimes parents’

schedules are such that nutritious meals are hard to prepare, so know that your teens and your family are welcome!

With nicer weather, we are seeing our numbers increase. In March, we had one Tuesday night closed due to bad weather and another Tuesday for spring break for all volunteers during the Mancelona Schools scheduled spring break. However, we still served a total of 98 meals with 11 seconds and 47 take outs. In April, we have served 210 meals which includes seconds and takeouts.

Thanks to Sandy Neumann for keeping our shelves, refrigerator, and freezer full! Sandy took the time to make sure hams were an Easter option. *One of our cooks shared their pleasure in this well-stocked pantry!*

Remember, Empty Bowls is coming up tomorrow, May 3. This is a major fundraiser for the Northwest Food Coalition. See flyer on bulletin board as you enter the Sanctuary, the last issue of our newsletter, or go to northwestmifoodcoalition.org for ticket info and details.

Northwest Food Coalition tidbits:

Food Rescue reported receiving 4,000 lbs of carrots, 6,000 lbs of potatoes, 2,000 lbs of onion some of which will make it to our Community Meal pantry and Mancelona Food Pantry.

If you have banana boxes or parts of banana boxes (tops/bottoms), please put them in Fellowship Hall near the serving table.

First time EVER all 37 food pantries with public hours had fresh fruits and vegetables when they opened their doors. 2014 it was 13%, 2020 it was 64%, In 2023 it was 66% and **today it is 100%**.

Sandy Neumann and Carol Kingsley

Community Meal Co-Chairs

Trustees May 2026

I think winter has finally given up. There is still a small amount of snow under all the evergreen branches in the church parking lot. They will all need to be cleaned up before mowing season begins. I thought about scheduling a spring yard clean up, but with everyone's different schedules I decided that if you have spare time with nothing to do, then branch pickup would be appreciated. If we pile them by the road the Village crew will dispose of them.

When the snow finally melted, I noticed what appeared to be a wash-out of soil under the pavers in the Memorial Garden. I have contacted Matt's Underground Utility. Some of the pavers will have to come out to find the problem. I'm hoping it's a simple fix, but preparing for the worst, hoping for the best.

There is a summer lawnmowing sign up sheet posted in the Narthex.

I haven't forgotten about Tressie Peterson's house. I've contacted a surveying company to have the property surveyed so we know the property lines. I will be scheduling some Saturday work bees to sort through the contents and find the items Tressie wanted to donate to the Historical Society: her brother's WWII uniform and medals. We will be having an estate sale this summer, probably more than one weekend.

Submitted by Laurie Allison – Trustee Chair



Denise Plakmeyer-Vliet	May 4
Doris Felton	May 8
Emily Nixon	May 11
Jan Patterson	May 11
Nate Derror	May 12
Laurie Allison	May 18
Maureen Naumcheff	May 19
Elsa Brenner	May 20
Evalyne Magare	May 22
Annemarie Rasor	May 22
Bidwell Mochama	May 26
Earl Castle	June 14
Ken Lockman	June 14
Mary Ann Petersen	June 18
Oscar Brenner	June 21
Chris Derror	June 22
Lori Derror	June 24
Bob Humphrey	June 30



Brian & Diane Lirones	May 10
Jennifer & Kyle Toms	June 7



What's Happening

Each week (usually Monday) an email is sent noting prayers, praises, and announcements, that have been shared in our service on Sunday, and it includes Pastor Douglas' Gospel Lesson, Music, and Message for the week which is posted on Facebook. If you wish to be on that email list, send an email request to carolkingsley62@gmail.com

May 11 – Ad Council, 4:00 pm, Conference Room

May 13 – 1:00 – United Women of Faith Business Meeting -Fellowship Hall - 1:30 Program begins: *Paws for Praise*. All women are invited! Refreshments: "Beary" yummy!

May 13 – 2:30 pm – Women's Book Study, completing "A Mary Heart in a Martha World."

May 17 – Senior Recognition

May 24 - Snacks and Chat in the Welcome Center.

June 10 - 1:00 Annual UWF meeting at Dockside. Bring a friend!

June 14–Potluck

June 25 - MUMC July/August Newsletter deadline

June 28 Snacks and Chat in the Welcome Center.

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"Paws for Praise" May 13, Wednesday

United Women of Faith

1:00 pm - Business Meeting

1:30 pm - Program "Paws for Praise"

Nancy Wheeler will share her *Bearable Treasures* through Music and Word--ALL WOMEN ARE INVITED.

Refreshments will be "beary" yummy!

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

We have completed the book of Amos.

We will be meeting again in September.

WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY

Completing A Mary Heart in a Martha World

May 13, 2:30 pm



Thank you for the beautiful flowering plant and most generous money gift given to me while filling the pulpit during pastor's illness. It was not necessary, but it was appreciated.

Blessings,

Nancy Wheeler

Mancelona United Methodist Church

PO Box 301

117 E. Hinman Street

Mancelona, MI 49659

231.587.8461

Sunday Service @ 11:00am

Ad Council Meeting - 2nd Monday of month/Odd

Months at 4PM

Boyne Falls UMC

3057 Mill St

Boyne Falls, MI

Sunday Service @ 9:30 am



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