



Ponderings from the Pastor's Pen

*A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks, a new and glorious morn"*

These words from the beautiful Christmas song, "O Holy Night" bring back nostalgic childhood memories for me. On Christmas Eve our whole family—my parents, my younger brother, and I—snuggled into the church pew alongside Grandma and Grandpa in our little country church, a white wooden building with a tall steeple and stained glass windows, perched on the hillside along a county highway, overlooking fields and farmsteads in every direction. Neighboring farm families filed in around us, all freshly scrubbed after completing their barn chores. What our little congregation lacked in musical talent we made up for in sincerity of faith as we held our lit candles and sang along with the beloved Christmas hymns. After I started taking piano lessons at the age of 8, I was asked to play a piano solo during the Christmas Eve service each year. My favorite was a simple but lovely arrangement of "O Holy Night". I was never a particularly skilled pianist, but the congregation was made up of kind and gracious folks who applauded at the end and smiled encouragingly even if I had played a few wrong notes. Those salt-of-the-earth folks embodied grace as well as anyone else I've ever known.

Those lovely lyrics and that profound grace speak

to me anew as we anticipate a very different Christmas celebration this year. Services will be online. The candlelight and singing will happen at home for most of us. Even that little country church from my childhood will likely be empty on Christmas Eve as some of those beloved farm families are battling and recovering from COVID. And yet, the words of the Christmas carols—and the beautiful truth they convey—are more meaningful and essential than ever.

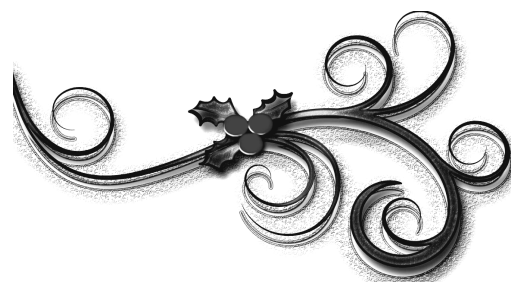
A thrill of hope. Yes! May this season of Advent bring renewed hope for each of us. May we wait and watch in confident expectation for the revelation of all the ways God is still present and actively working among us.

The weary world rejoices. Oh, may it be so! We are so very weary, but may we find joy breaking in once again!

For yonder breaks, a new and glorious morn. Oh, yes indeed! John 1:5 reminds us, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." Even on our gloomiest days, may we find evidence of light of Christ shining around us and within us.

I wish you a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas. I'll "see" you online, and I look forward to the day when I can safely see you all again in church!

In joyful anticipation,
Pastor Wendy



Inside this Issue:

Ponderings from the Pastor's Pen	1
Worship Services, Salvation Army Donations, Celebrations, Evening Prayer, Save the Date.....	2
United Methodist Church News.....	3
Children & Family Ministries.....	4
Faithful Families.....	5-9



Save the Date

There will be a North West District Training event for pastors and church members on

Saturday, January 23, 2021

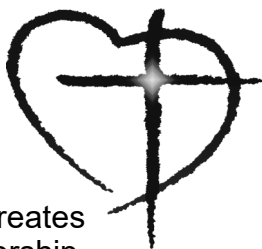
via Zoom.

The theme is "Radical Hospitality" led by two Discipleship Ministries staff, Rachel Gilmore and Bryan Tener.

These are our apportionment dollars at work!

Watch for more information to come soon.

Weekly Devotional, Prayer Request & Happenings Available



Each week Pastor Wendy creates a Devotional of Sunday's worship.

We also have a Prayers, Joys and Concerns and Happenings as well.

Please let Lori know at the office if you would like these emailed to you or sent to you via regular mail.



Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Due to the Covid virus, our UMC has decided not to participate in Salvation Army Bell Ringing this year. We do urge our members however to keep with the Christmas Spirit and send a special offering made out to :

Menomonie UMC

2703 Bongey Dr., Menomonie, WI 54751

and put the words

"Salvation Army" in the memo section so we know what it is for.

Our church will forward one check made out to the Salvation Army for all of us.

Thanks to all for contributing to this great charity!

Jerry Cederholm

Evening Prayer & Praise

Thursdays, Nov. 26, Dec. 3, 10, 17, Jan. 7 at 6:30 pm

for about 45 min - 1 hour.

We will use the United Methodist order for evening praise and prayer in the Methodist Hymnal. There is no cost, no deadline and no registration needed. People can join any night, week to week and this is not a cumulative class.

We will start by Zoom and may eventually meet in person depending on Covid-19 guidelines.

Contact Sarah Zarbock for details.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/96788482249?](https://zoom.us/j/96788482249?pwd=VXVrQnB1NGtzanI1cjZEZ3p2dnI3dz09)

[pwd=VXVrQnB1NGtzanI1cjZEZ3p2dnI3dz09](https://zoom.us/j/96788482249?pwd=VXVrQnB1NGtzanI1cjZEZ3p2dnI3dz09)

Meeting ID: 967 8848 2249

Passcode: 759864

One tap mobile

+19294362866,,96788482249#,,,,,0#,,759864# US (New York)

+13017158592,,96788482249#,,,,,0#,,759864# US (Germantown)

Dial by your location

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 967 8848 2249

Passcode: 759864

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/j/96788482249?pwd=VXVrQnB1NGtzanI1cjZEZ3p2dnI3dz09>

Let's Celebrate!

If you would like us to post in our newsletter birthdays or anniversaries, please let

Lori know at the church office

in advance.

Your church family would like to celebrate your day!



Happy Birthday!

Dorothy Wreford's

96th Birthday December 6th

Mary Blakeley December 11th

Jan Friest December 14th

Jane Butsic December 17th



Find us at:

www.menomonieumc.org



Prayer Shawl Meetings have been postponed until January.



Stepping Stones
of Dunn County

Food. Shelter.
Support.



You're invited to join the Stepping Stones Clean and Shovel Crew!

Please let us know if you are available to help us keep our facilities accessible, clean and healthy for our wonderful clients, volunteers and staff. We are looking for volunteers to help with light custodial tasks and sidewalk snow removal.

Here's a list of our needs:

Light Custodial—Stepping Stones Offices and Food Pantry

Volunteer for one-or-more days each week

Less than two hours most days

Help needed Mondays-through-Saturdays

Light Custodial—Broadway Shelter Common Area

One volunteer needed to help once a week

About an hour most weeks

Will work with you to set a regular schedule

Move-Out Clean-Out—Broadway and Stout Road Shelters

Volunteers needed to prepare units for incoming clients

Time and schedules vary with client turn-over and

amount of work to be done

Sidewalk Snow Removal—Stepping Stones Office/Pantry, Broadway and Stout Road Shelters

Four-S: Snow-blow, Shovel, Sand and Salt as needed

Will need primary volunteers and back-ups, for sore backs and big storms

Shovels and snow-blowers on-site

Sign up to help on a regular schedule – or let us know you are interested in chipping in by being in a 'willing to help' pool.

Contact Jill Seichter at 715-235-2920 or
communityconnect@steppingstonesdc.org

Office Hours Reminder

Office hours will vary during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please call before you stop in to verify that someone will be here to assist you.

Thank you!

VIRTUAL MEMORY CAFE

LOG IN FROM YOUR HOME



Join us for coffee and camaraderie while we create simple Christmas ornaments together. This group is designed for people with early to middle-stage dementia and their care partner.

December 8 at 10 am

To register contact Carla at ADRC of Chippewa County at 715-738-2584



Yarn Donation Site



- Yarn
- Buttons
- Ribbons
- Large beads

The ADRC is collecting yarn donation to create fidget blankets and muffs for those in our community living with dementia.

Please drop off your donations by January 31, 2021

Yarn donations are accepted here at United Methodist Church, please call ahead for office hours 715-235-0654



Questions?
Contact Carla at
715-738-2584



Sunday Study | 2020-2021

Join us via Zoom

Sunday Mornings at 10:30am

During the month of November, we dove into the New Testament. We learned through following the life of Jesus that Jesus loves everyone. We saw that Jesus loves not only those that feel like they fit in and have it all together. Jesus loves us when we feel like outsiders and sees our potential even when we are not so sure. We will continue this theme into the first week of December when we learn that Jesus loves everyone and wants us to believe in him. We continue the theme of love as we focus on the birth of Jesus and what Christmas means to us as Christians.



How we celebrate Christmas as a Church family is going to look a little different this year, just like many things look different this year. In addition to your Sunday Study supplies, this next round of Sunday Study baskets will include an Advent box that you can enjoy with your family. We pray that these Advent boxes will help you draw closer to God as a family this year. In the midst of so many things that feel and look different this year, the love of God is forever constant.

The Education Team will be delivering a new supply basket to registered families for the next round of lessons on 11/30 so that you have what you need for our new unit starting on 12/13 and so that you will have your Advent box in time for the start of the Advent Season. We will also be collecting the beautiful "stained glass" ornaments that your children made when we drop off the baskets (or you can return the completed ornaments to Church if you prefer).

Below is a glimpse of what we will be covering and when we will be meeting over the next 7 weeks:

11/29- No Sunday Study- Happy Thanksgiving!

12/6- Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman *John 4:1-42*

Jesus loves everyone... and wants us to believe in him.

12/13- An Angel Appears to Joseph *Matthew 1:18-24*

We celebrate Jesus... because we trust him.

12/20- Magi Search for the Messiah *Matthew 2:1-12*

We celebrate Jesus... because he's the King of kings.

12/27- No Sunday Study- Merry Christmas!

1/3- No Sunday Study- Happy New Year!

1/10- Sunday Study Resumes!



If the Zoom meeting is not your preferred way to Worship and Study, all of the lesson materials and more are located right on our church website www.menomonieumc.org > Grow> Children and Families. New lessons are put up each Wednesday evening and stay available for the week.

Please continue to pray over our children and families that this year would draw us closer to God.

Blessings,

Amanda Tireman

Email: cyfministry@menomonieumc.org

Cell: 402-658-4344



Find us at:

www.menomonieumc.org



FAITHFUL FAMILIES

Excerpted from *Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas: 100 Prayers, Practices, and Lessons to Make the Season Sacred* by Traci Smith
(Chalice Press: 2020, All Rights Reserved).



YOU WILL NEED:

- A journal or paper
- Pens, markers, crayons, whatever

SET AN ADVENT INTENTION

A Spiritual Practice for Beginning the Season

Spiritual practice is not just "accidental." If your Advent season is to be a team when connection, family time, and spiritual practice are the focus, it will happen because you and your family have made it a priority. This is not easy, as it goes against the tide of culture. Before the hustle and bustle of the seasons, take a few moments to set an Advent intention. What would you like the season to look like? Would you like to intentionally limit the number of outside invitations you accept as a family in order to have more peace and less rush? Would you like to set aside one day of the week for family time? Maybe you would like to be guided by an Advent word such as peace, joy, hope, or love. Get the whole family in on the discussion, as age and maturity level allow. If you choose, write down your intention in a journal or somewhere the whole family can see it. The Advent intention will look different for each family, but here are a few examples:

- This Advent, we will focus on the Advent values of hope, peace, love, and joy.
- We will not be overscheduled this Advent, but instead, we will take time for one another.
- Every Sunday evening during Advent, we will do a spiritual practice together.
- Advent will be a time of peace and quiet for our family, not noise and hustle.

ADVENT WREATH

Many Protestant and Roman Catholic churches use Advent wreaths to mark the passing of the four weeks in Advent. The candles are lit, one additional one per week, for four weeks. On Christmas Eve, a fifth candle is lit to represent Christ, the light of the world. In this version for the home, the family gathers around a very simple votive wreath to have dessert together and reflect on each of the four Advent values: hope, peace, joy, and love.

To make your wreath, place four votive candles on a plate in a circle with a pillar candle in the center. Light one candle per week, starting with the first Sunday in Advent (four weeks before Christmas). On each subsequent week, light an additional candle. The first week represents hope; the second, peace; the third, joy; and the fourth, love. On Christmas Eve, light all four candles as well as the candle in the middle, representing the baby Jesus.

During each of the four weeks of Advent, on Sunday evening after dinner, sit around the table with your dessert and candles and go through the simple routine of lighting the candle, discussing the Advent value, and ending with a simple prayer. The depth of discussion will vary, depending on the ages of children involved. For very young children, simply saying the word and ending with the prayer is sufficient and lays the foundation for future ears. For more in-depth discussion of each of the values, you may choose to lean on some of the practices in chapter 6.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 4 votive candles
- 1 pillar candle
- 1 plate
- 1 Lighter or a box of matches
- (Optional): Greenery or other decor



Week 1: Hope

Light: Today we light the candle of hope.

Read (optional): Psalm 25:4-5

Discuss: What does it mean to have hope? What do you think about when you hear the word hope? How can we share hope with others?

Pray: God, we thank you for giving us hope. Help us to have hope and to share hope as we wait for Jesus to be born. Amen.

Week 2: Peace

Light: Today we light the candle of hope and the candle of peace.

Read (optional): John 14:25-27

Discuss: What does it mean to have peace in your heart? How can we share peace in our family and in the world?

Pray: God, please help us to understand peace and to share it with others. We wait for Jesus to be born with hope and peace. Amen.

Week 3: Joy

Light: Today we light the candles of hope, peace, and joy.

Read (optional): Philippians 4:4-6

Discuss: What does it mean to rejoice? How is joy the same or different from happiness? How can we share joy with others?

Pray: God, we thank you for the gift of joy. Help us to share with one another. We wait for Jesus with hope, peace, and joy. Amen.

Week 4: Love

Light: Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Read (optional): 1 John 4:7-12

Discuss: When have you felt or seen God's love? How can we show God's love to the world?

Pray: God, thank you for showing us what true love is. Help us to love you and to love one another. We wait for Jesus with hope, peace, joy, and love. Amen

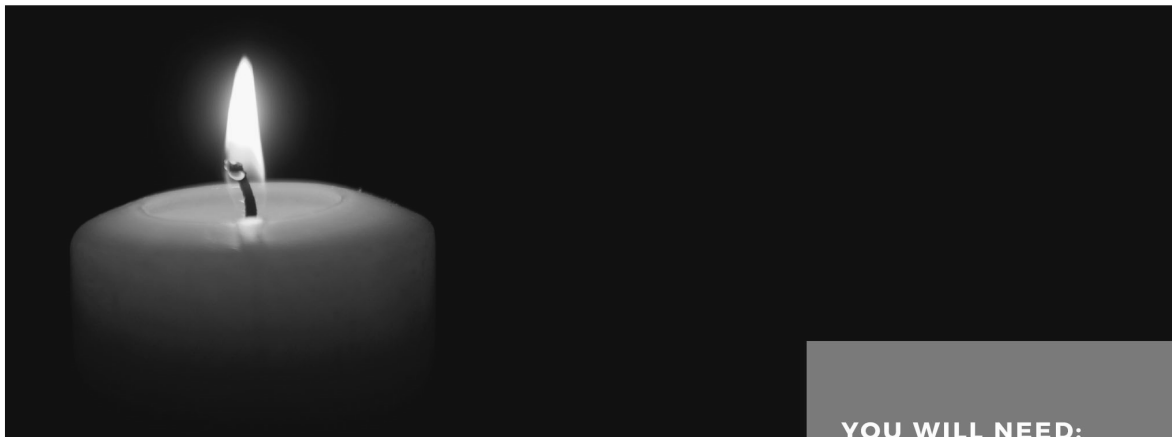
Christmas Eve or Christmas Day: The Christ Candle

Light: Today we light the candles for hope, peace, joy, and love, and we light the center candle for the birth of Jesus.

Read (optional): Luke 2:1-16

Discuss: The day we have been waiting for is here! How does it feel to celebrate the birth of Jesus today? What does the birth of Jesus mean to you?

Pray: God, today we are thankful for the birth of your son, Jesus, and for the lessons he teaches us about how to love one another. Help us throughout the year to share hope, peace, joy, and love wherever we go. Amen.



THE LONGEST NIGHT/SOLSTICE

Marking Grief or Sadness

For those who live in the Northern Hemisphere, the longest night and shortest day falls between December 20 and December 22. The longest night is also called the winter solstice. If your family is feeling down for any reason or experiencing grief, the winter solstice is a good time to name that hard time or grief, mark it, and remember that subsequent days will be getting longer. The longest night doesn't last forever; the days eventually get longer and brighter.

All you need for this practice is a candle and the words below. Gather everyone around a table with the candle and say,

"Today, on this longest night, we remember that even though there is a lot of joy during the Advent season, sometimes there is sorrow, too. We light a candle for [name the reason you've decided to have a longest night ceremony]. We take a moment to remember that, though the nights can feel long and dark sometimes, brighter and longer days are coming soon. Let's pray together. *[Read the longest night prayer or any other prayer you like.]*"

YOU WILL NEED:

- One candle
- A lighter or match

LONGEST NIGHT PRAYER

God, this candle reminds us that there is light, even in the longest night. We thank you for the opportunity to name the things that are difficult for us this season, and for the hope we have as the sun shines more and more each day. Help us to be near to one another and to you as we lift up our prayers on this day.

You can close your longest night moment by extinguishing the candle and saying, "Peace to our family and to our hearts. May we trust in the light that is to come. Peace, peace. Amen." After the ceremony, do something quiet together, enjoying one another's quiet presence. Snuggle together and watch a movie, or go for a drive to enjoy the Christmas lights around town. Remember that sadness and joy can exist together.



YOU WILL NEED:

- *Your loved ones*

CHRISTMAS MORNING

We open our eyes with joy.
Christmas Day is here!
We are happy to love,
 happy to share,
 happy to be with one another.
We pray today will be a special and holy day!

