

In Our Prayers

- The ministries of The United Church, including our local missions: The Maple River Youth Center, Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf
- The local, regional, and national leaders of the church, including all ministers and missionaries
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments
- Those living in assisted living, a nursing home, or who are homebound, and all those who are caregivers
- Those who are grieving and mourning
- Those affected by mental illness, including anxiety and depression



Our church prayer list includes:

- Those with ongoing health concerns: Norma Baack, Kathy Cramer, Dawn Dietz, Janie Firstbrook, Mary Beth Fritz, Aubrielle Howley, David Keller, Lloyd Mitchell, Stan Solie, Alberta Samuelson
- Those recovering from recent health concerns or procedures: Clark Dobbs, Pat Larson, Jack Madsen, Sue Prenzlou, Eli (husband of Mary Dietz, the sister of Dawn and Dick Dietz), Roberta Ward
- Those undergoing ongoing health treatments: Marian Mallory
- Former President Jimmy Carter, a lifelong Baptist, who announced that he has cancer in his brain and is undergoing treatment
- Gabe Samuelson, who is in Advance Individual Training for computers and communications for the Army Reserves in Augusta, Georgia through March
- All those affected by the ongoing crisis in Syria and the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the Middle East
- Bill Pfeffer, who had shoulder surgery on December 14th and is now recovering at home

The prayer requests and praises shared during last week's worship include:

Prayers:

- For Marian, that her arm heals and the pain will go away
- For Dick Wishart, who had heart surgery at Abbott Hospital in Minneapolis
- For Jim Carey as he recovers from surgery to remove fluid from his brain due to a fall and a bump to the head

Thanksgiving:

- For my mom, that she may have a wonderful birthday today and many more to come!
- To be here this morning and for all the prayers (from Roberta)
- For Glen and Alberta Samuelson's 65th wedding anniversary and that they can celebrate it with family

The United Church of Mapleton

201 Troendle St SW; PO Box 413 Mapleton, MN 56065

(507) 524-3141

www.unitedchurchmapleton.org

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Our Mission:

The United Church of Mapleton is a Christian fellowship of mission, worship, and faith formation dedicated to the Maple River community.

Order of Worship

Sunday, December 20th, 2015

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Prelude

Welcome, Announcements

If you are a visitor today, please fill out the welcome card in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate later in the service so that we can get to know each other!

*Call to Worship and Advent Candle Lighting: Love

Pastor: "As soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

One: In the beginning was the Word—
spoken and breathed,
a promise made and kept.

Many: Trust the good news—

God's promise is true!

One: The Word was in the beginning,
and through him all things come into being.

**Many: Eternal and near at hand,
already and not yet,**

God's promise is the foundation of all life.

One: Trust in God!

All: Wait with faith, giving voice to Christ's love for all.

***Opening Hymn**

“We Light the Advent Candles” #175
(Verses 1 and 5)

***Prayer of Invocation**

***Gloria Patri**

Sung a whole step lower than printed in hymnal
“Glory Be to the Father” #734

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, Amen!

***Moment of Fellowship**

Message for God’s Children

After the Message for God’s Children, children are invited to return to their pews, use the Family Space in the Overflow Room in the back of the Sanctuary, or use the Nursery if they are younger than Kindergarten age. Worship Bags, The Sunday Paper coloring pages, and Ministry Card making kits are available in the back of the Sanctuary.

Mission Moment

Worship with Tithes and Offerings

Offertory “While by the Sheep” Adult Choir

The Choir’s music is an offering to God, not a performance for our entertainment. Please do not applaud to show your appreciation. Instead, please try saying “Amen” or thanking them individually after worship.

***Doxology**

“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” #34
Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen!

***Prayer of Dedication**

Sharing Prayer Requests and Praises

You are invited to take a Prayer Requests and Praises sheet from the pew rack in front of you to write your prayer requests and praises.

These will be collected by the ushers in a moment and shared with the congregation anonymously before our Preparation for Prayer.

Preparation for Prayer (Moment of Silence)

Pastoral Prayer

Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

***Hymn**

“Savior of the Nations, Come” #168
Verses 1, 4, 5

Scripture

Luke 1:39-56 (NRSV)

One: For the Word of God in Scripture,

For the Word of God among us,

For the Word of God within us,

All: Thanks be to God!

Message

“Magnifying the Lord”

***Closing Hymn** “People, Look East” #161

***Benediction**

Please be mindful of others who continue to worship through the Postlude.

Postlude

****Please rise in body or spirit.****

Serving Us Today: Sunday, December 20th, 2015

Pastor—Ashley Whitaker
Lay Reader—Ginny Kinzie
Organist—Jola Walker
Greeters—Delbert and Ella Conrad
Head Usher—Diaconate
Coffee Hour Host—Youth Center

Today's Worship & Fellowship

9:00 a.m. Morning Worship with Youth Center Collections
9:00 a.m. Nursery/Toddler Care (*upstairs north end of hallway in the Nursery/Toddler Room*)
10:00 a.m. Choir Practice
10:00 a.m. Coffee Hour

Today's *Call to Worship and Advent Candle Lighting* is by Rev. Teri Peterson at clevertitlehere.blogspot.com and is based on Luke 1:5-24a, 57-80 and Luke 1:44-45.

After a **Choral Offering**, please refrain from applause, which traditionally follows a performance meant for entertainment in our culture, whereas the choir's music is offered to God in a spirit of worship. If you would like to show your appreciation, please say "Amen" after their offering, or thank them individually after worship.

The **paraments** are purple for Advent, a season of spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ (Christmas) while looking forward to the future reign of Christ. Eschatological expectation rather than personal penitence is the central theme of the season. Advent is the preparation for, rather than a celebration of, Christmas. The liturgical color purple symbolizes the sovereignty of Christ and communal penitence. (ucc.org)

Worshipping With Children

Children are always welcome at The United Church!

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." (Matthew 19:14)

During worship, several options are available for children: *The Sunday Paper* is a coloring page based on the Scripture reading for each Sunday. Two versions are available, one for older and one for younger elementary aged children.

Ministry card decorating kits are also available, and a sign next to these kits lets children know to whom their card will be sent (e.g. homebound members, Treats for Troops recipients, etc.).

Worship Bags with creative supplies are located at the back of the Sanctuary.

The Nursery/Toddler Room for infants and toddlers (Kindergarten and younger) is available throughout the morning worship service and is located at the north end of the upstairs hallway.

The Family Space, located in the Overflow Room at the back of the Sanctuary, is for our families with infants and small children.

This space is available for families in addition to the Nursery so that families can both see and hear what's going on in worship.

Care Connections

If you are in need of **wheelchair assistance** on Sunday mornings, please let us know by calling the church office at (507) 524-3141 ahead of time to make arrangements or you may have an usher assist you on Sunday morning when you arrive at the church. There is a ramp located on the east side of the church.

If you or a family member would like a **pastoral care visit** for any reason, or would like to be added to our **weekly prayer list**, please let us know! Feel free to contact Pastor Ashley, a Deacon, or the church office. The church phone number is (507) 524-3141.

Pastor Ashley's phone number is (507) 381-8199 and her email is pastor@unitedchurchmapleton.org.

If you have a prayer request for the **Prayer Chain**, please call Karen Stanton at 327-8168 or Joyce Johnson at 524-3727. Please let them know your prayer request, including the name of the person to pray for, and whether you would like your request included in the church's public prayer list or if you'd prefer the request be kept privately within the prayer chain. There is also a prayer request submission form available on The United Church website under the "Ministries" tab.

Community
Holiday Box Packing Today!

Maple River Loaves & Fishes will be packing the boxes **today, December 20th at 1:00 p.m. at St. Teresa's** and handing them out on December 22nd from 3:00-6:00 p.m. at St. Teresa's in Mapleton. We can always use volunteers to help!

Thank you for your generous support for our food shelf, both financially and with prayer. God Bless!

Local Missions

Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf is open Tuesdays from 3:00-6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.-noon. Volunteers are always welcome! Please bring donations to church on the first Sunday of each month.

The Maple River Youth Center: The mission jar will be in the back of the Sanctuary on the third Sunday of each month.

Maple River Youth Center

You may order your Christmas Cut-out Cookies for \$7.00 per doz. by calling 524-3839 or 351-5075. You may pick them up through December 23rd. Proceeds will benefit the youth center.

Maple River Youth Center

Throughout this past year Maple River Youth Center has been blessed by many donations and in many ways. Some donations came in the way of in-kind items, others monetary and still others in gifts of dedicated individual volunteer time and talents. All of these donations are of utmost importance in the ongoing operation of our communities' non-profit youth center. It is the center's hope that we may continue to serve the youth of our communities, with your help, for years to come. Please keep us in your minds and hearts for you donations for next year.

We send out our heartfelt Thanks to you from the youth, staff, volunteers and Board of Directors of Maple River Youth Center.
Board of Directors: Roberta Ward, Ceal Caldwell, Dan Kraft, Jon Ek, Jeff Lindemann, Jeannette Brandt, Marji Schwichtenberg, Louise Webb, Rebecca Benson - Administrator, Dawn Dietz - Accounting
You may contact Maple River Youth Center at any time:
The Well Youth Center, PO Box 83, 106 Main Street NE, Mapleton, MN 56065, 507-524-3839, wyc@hickorytech.net

Welcome to The United Church of Mapleton!

This announcement insert includes information about upcoming church, community, and area events. Please also take advantage of the many opportunities listed here to serve our community!

This Week at The United Church of Mapleton

Sunday, December 20th, 2015

Sunday, December 20th, 10:00 a.m. Confirmation
Tuesday, December 22nd, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT
Thursday, December 24th, 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

Planning Ahead

Tuesday, December 29th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT
Friday, January 1st, 2016, Office Closed
Sunday, January 3rd, 10:00 a.m. Confirmation
Tuesday, January 5th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT
Friday, January 8th, Annual Reports due into the church office
Saturday, January 9th, 9:00-11:00 a.m. Kilties
Sunday, January 10th, 10:00 a.m. Confirmation
Monday, January 11th, 7:00 p.m. Women's Fellowship
Tuesday, January 12th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT
Wednesday, January 13th, 7:00 p.m. Deacons
Saturday, January 16th, 9:00-11:00 p.m. Kilties

Sign-Up for Lay Readers and Ushers

Please sign-up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board outside the main office. Thank you in advance for your service.

If you would like more information, please contact Marian Mallory or any member of the Diaconate.

Ambience Poinsettia Plants

Please bring your poinsettia plants to the church at anytime and place by the altar. Thank you for helping decorate our sanctuary for the Advent/Christmas season!

The United Church News and Announcements
Sunday, December 20th, 2015

How to Contact Pastor Ashley

Pastor Ashley's cell phone number is (507) 381-8199 and her email is pastor@unitedchurchmapleton.org. Her usual weekly schedule includes these times and places. *Monday* Sabbath. *Tuesday* 9:00-11:00 a.m. church office, noon-1:00 p.m. Pastors' Preaching Text Study Group in Mankato, 3:00-5:00 p.m. Maple River Youth Center. *Wednesday* noon--1:00 p.m. Maggie J's Restaurant (Location for Community Office Hours may change occasionally and will be announced here), 1st & 3rd Wednesdays 6:00-7:00 p.m. G.I.F.T. *Thursday* 9:00 a.m.-noon church office, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Bible Study. *Friday* Sermon writing. At other times, she may be making pastoral visits or be serving elsewhere in the community. Please feel free to contact her for a visit or meeting!

Partners in Prayer

After worship each Sunday of Advent, all are welcome to come to the Overflow Room immediately after worship to join in a brief time of devotions (with coffee and bars, too, of course). We will be using *Partners in Prayer*, a daily Advent devotional written by members of The Young Clergy Women Project (of which Pastor Ashley is a part). Copies will be available to take home and use throughout the week.

Annual Reports

Please submit all board, committee and group annual reports, in an attachment and (copy ready) into the church office by, and no later than Friday, January 8th, 2016. Thank you so much for your consideration!

100th Birthday Celebration!

Please join our family to celebrate the **100th birthday for Sylvia Moore** on Sunday, January 3, 2016, 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Mapleton T&C Leisure Center, 304 2nd Ave. NE, Mapleton, MN. Your presence is your gift. **Please R.S.V.P. to 507-340-4023.**

The United Church News and Announcements
Sunday, December 20th, 2015

Children's Sunday School Teachers Needed!

The Board of Christian Education and our new Christian Education Coordinator are in need of teachers to help with the Children's Sunday School class. This class is for children PreK-2nd grade during Sunday morning worship after the Message for God's Children and will be offered every Sunday beginning January 3rd. We already have teachers through January 17th, but could you help with a Sunday after then? Give it a try! All ages and both men and women are welcome. No long-term commitment required.

You're invited to sign up on your own or in pairs. Pre-selected stand-alone lessons are available next to a sign up sheet on the bulletin board outside the church office. Simply choose a lesson that looks like fun to you and prepare it for your selected Sunday. If no children on that Sunday are interested in Sunday School, then hang on to your lesson and sign up for another Sunday. It's that easy!

Pastor Ashley recently spoke with several young families from our church and they all said that Sunday School is an important ministry for their children. By having a wide variety of teachers for Sunday School, you can help ensure the long-term viability of this ministry and help our children have a meaningful faith formation experience. Teaching is also a great way to get to know the children and families of The United Church. Children aren't the future of the church—they are the church, here and now. How can you help support them as they seek to grow in their faith? Thank you!

Chili Cook-off and Silent Auction

Our Chili Cook-off and Silent Auction will be held **Sunday, January 10th, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall. Contestants choose from three categories: Mild 'n' Mellow, Hot 'n' Spicy, or White 'n' Light and provide 5 quarts of chili for tasting. Entries must be to the church by 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 10th. There will be one winner in each category, plus one overall winner. Winners will be selected by popular vote through a blind taste testing. Entry deadline is Wednesday, January 6th, 2016. All proceeds will benefit Cows for Christmas-Heifer International.

We are also accepting items for Silent Auction such as gift certificates, gift card, handcrafted items, baked goods, gift baskets and other services.

For more information, to register as a chili contestant or donate items for the auction, please contact the church office at 507-524-3141 or Marian Mallory at 507-524-3000.

Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

Scripture for the Week: : Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. Luke 1:68

Sunday:

You are all children of light and children of the day.

1 Thessalonians 5:5

Morning Star, when the days grow short and dim and our lives feel empty and dark, remind us that we are offered the true and everlasting light of your love which enables us to shine so that the world may see your glory. Amen.

Monday:

God our Savior desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3-4

Jesus, triumphant witness to the power of the Holy One's saving love for all creation, grant us wisdom to understand that what we know now is merely a glimpse of the glory of the Almighty which will be ours to share by your grace. Amen.

Tuesday:

Worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water. Revelation 14:7

From microorganisms to the majestic mountains, from molten minerals to frozen tundra, nothing exists except by your will, O Creator God. We worship you with humble awe and with thanksgiving for all that you provide today and always. Amen.

Wednesday:

Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and the disciples woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" Mark 4:38

There is no refuge for us, O Ruler of the Elements, when we seek protection from fear and death by our own devices. Only when we rely on you can we weather the trials of life. In this Advent season we focus on Jesus, whose power calms all our storms. Amen.

Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

Thursday:

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. Matthew 10:29

Nothing we decide to say or do escapes you, ever-vigilant Spirit. All our choices are detected as you move among us, seeking to guide us from self-indulgence and self-centeredness toward sacrificial love. We welcome your presence as we prepare our hearts for the coming Christ. Amen

Friday:

Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

We fondly recall annual Sunday school Christmas programs designed to honor you, O Child Divine. No matter how many, the years have not diminished the importance of telling of your birth. With joy we repeat the message of your love for the world, celebrate your coming, and share the good news. Amen.

Saturday:

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Psalm 34:7

Mysterious God, in this scientific age we often struggle with the idea of angels moving among us to accomplish your will. Help us grow in faith to trust and accept what we cannot understand or explain. Cast out our unbelief. Amen.

Source: Moravian Daily Texts

Continue