

## 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, Marian Mallory, Lloyd Mitchell, Alberta Samuelson, Stan Solie,
- Those recovering from recent health concerns or procedures: Jack Madsen, Bill Pfeffer, Sue Prenzlou, 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 those affected by the car accident near Beauford this morning
- For healthy newborn babies
- For the family of Sue Klein, a beloved mother and friend
- For great grandma Neda who is at the Mapleton Community Home
- That everyone can have a good Christmas regardless of their circumstances or what they are going through

**The United Church of Mapleton**  
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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 27th, 2015  
First Sunday After Christmas Day  
A Service of Readings and Carols

### 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!*

### Prayer of Invocation

### Relighting the Candle of Hope

One: Today we relight a candle for hope in our world.

**Many: Thanks be to God for the hope and reality of a Messiah in Jesus Christ, the Bethlehem child born to save his people.**

One: On this first Sunday after Christmas, may our lives bear witness to the hope this small child brings.

**All: Make us hope-bearers, O God.**

### Scripture

Psalm 62:5-8

### Reading

"The Christmas Spirit"

Ann Weems

### \*Hymn

"What Child is This" #184

### \*Moment of Fellowship

### Message for God's Children

### Relighting the Candle of Peace

One: Today we relight a candle for peace in our world.

**Many: The Prince of Peace has come! Thank you God for your gift of peace, deep and abiding.**

*Continue*

One: That peace is not simply the absence of war; it is the presence of compassion and justice. May our lives bear witness to the work of the Prince of Peace.

*All: Make us peacemakers, O God.*

**Scripture** John 14:25-27

**Reading** "Christmas Bells"  
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

**\*Hymn** "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" #191

**Mission Moment** Kathy Kunkel

**Worship with Tithes and Offerings**

**Offertory**

**\*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**

**Relighting the Candle of Joy**

One: Today we relight a candle for joy in our world.

**Many: Jesus said, "I have come so that your joy may be complete." It is so; thanks be to God!**

One: It is a joy that is brighter than the glitter of holiday lights and a joy that lasts longer than the excitement of new toys. It is a joy that can transform us.

*All: Make us joy proclaimers, O God.*

**Scripture** Philippians 4:4-7

**Reading** "First Coming" Madeline L'Engle

**\*Hymn** "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" #198

**Relighting the Candle of Love**

One: Today we relight a candle for love in our world.

**Many: In Christ Jesus, God's greatest give of love is born, a love the whole world needs.**

One: It is a love that endures all things, a love that never lets go, a love that never ends. It is a love that we are called to share with the whole world.

*All: Make us love-givers, O God.*

**Scripture** 1 John 4:7-9

**Reading** "Unexpected" Ann Weems

**\*Hymn** "Love Came Down at Christmas" #210

**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.**

**Relighting the Christ Candle**

One: Today we relight the Christ Candle.

**Many: The Light of the World shines brightly and nothing can defeat it, not even the darkness.**

One: The good news of Christmas is not just for Christmas. It is for the whole year, the whole world, and our whole lives.

*All: Make us Christ followers, O God.*

**Scripture** John 1:1-5

**Reading** "The Work of Christmas" Howard Thurman

**\*Hymn** "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" #218

**\*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 27th, 2015

Pastor—Ashley Whitaker

Lay Reader—Sean and Marian Mallory

Organist—Jola Walker

Greeters—Robert and Lisa Shubert

Head Usher—Diaconate

Coffee Hour Host—Board of Christian Education

### Today's Worship & Fellowship

9:00 a.m. Morning Worship

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 Candle Relighting Litanies are by Rev. Elizabeth Garrigan-Byerly.

"The Christmas Spirit" and "Unexpected" by Ann Weems are published in *Kneeling in Bethlehem*, Westminster John Knox Press.

"Christmas Bells" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow is published in *The Complete Poetical Works of Longfellow*, Houghton Mifflin Company.

"First Coming" by Madeline L'Engle is published in *Cry Like a Bell*, Shaw Books.

The **paraments are white** during the Christmas season (culminating in the feast of the Epiphany) and help invite the church to reflect on the incarnation (embodiment) of God as a human being: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory" (John 1:14). In Christ, God enters human history and identifies fully with the human condition. The traditional color of this season is white, symbolizing joy in the light of God. *Information from 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](mailto: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.

## **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 27th, 2015**

Tuesday, December 29th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT

Tuesday, December 29th, 8:00 a.m. **Newsletter Articles and Reports due into the church office**

Friday, January 1st, 2016, Office Closed

#### **Planning Ahead**

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

#### **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.

**The United Church News and Announcements**  
**Sunday, December 27th, 2015**

**How to Contact Pastor Ashley**

Pastor Ashley's cell phone number is (507) 381-8199 and her email is [pastor@unitedchurchmapleton.org](mailto: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!

**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.

**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.**

**Annual Meeting Updates**

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held following our regular Sunday morning worship service on **January 17th, 2016**, to review the 2015 Financials, approve the 2016 Budget, and to approve the 2016 Committees and Boards. **Everyone is invited to participate.** Coffee and rolls will be served by the Women's Fellowship.

**Annual Reports** are due into the church office by **Friday, January 8th, 2016.** Please submit your reports electronically and in an attachment (not a paper copy) to the church office by emailing Sheila at [secretary@unitedchurchmapleton.org](mailto:secretary@unitedchurchmapleton.org). Thank you!

**The United Church News and Announcements**  
**Sunday, December 27th, 2015**

**Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf**

**Sunday, January 3rd, 2016** we will collect donations for the Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf.

**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!

**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.

## Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

**Scripture for the Week:** Bear fruits worthy of repentance.  
Luke 3:8

### **Sunday:**

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.  
James 3:13

Fount of all Wisdom, today, as we worship, we remember the gentleness of your nature—how you hold us in your hand, offer us shelter, and whisper words of comfort and encouragement. May we model this gentleness as we live our faith. Amen.

### **Monday:**

Mortals look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7

God, you see through the artifice of our attempts to impress the world. As we contemplate Mary, mother of Jesus, we realize that you honor those whose hearts are filled with humble faith and perfect obedience. May we strive for hearts like that. Amen.

### **Tuesday:**

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.  
Colossians 3:17

Christ, fill our minds and hearts so that all we think, say, or do is a reflection of you. We thank you for the everlasting life we have received through your sacrificial grace. Amen.

### **Wednesday:**

Jesus welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured. Luke 9:11

Benevolent God, by the power of your Spirit your attention to all our needs knows no bounds. Moreover, through your Son, you have provided for our greatest need—our salvation. Thank you.  
Amen.

## Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

### **Thursday:**

You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. James 5:8

Patience is not our strong suit, O Lord. We want instant gratification and easy answers. May these weeks of Advent waiting teach us once again to have patient trust in the perfect timing of your plans for us. Amen.

### **Friday:**

Abraham was fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Romans 4:21

Our right relationship with you, O Promise Keeper, is the foundation of our faith and the incentive for our trusting obedience. We give our utmost thanks for your Son whose coming to earth convinces us of your eternal love and grace. Amen.

### **Saturday:**

Turn back to the Lord whom you have deeply betrayed.  
Isaiah 31:6

Jesus Christ, Son of God, we acknowledge our sinfulness and come to you with repentant hearts. By your abundant grace, have mercy on us. Amen.

*Source: Moravian Daily Texts*

*Continue*