

## 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 challenges: Jack Madsen, Sue Prenzlou, Eli (husband of Mary Dietz, the sister of Dawn and Dick Dietz)
- 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

**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 6th, 2015  
Second 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: Peace

*Pastor: Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;*

*then it was said among the nations,*

*“The Lord has done great things for them.”*

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

**Many: Speak it loud and clear—**

**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: Do not hold back!

**All: Speak out, giving voice to God’s peace that passes  
all understanding.**

### \*Opening Hymn

“We Light the Advent Candles” #175 (*Verses 1 and 3*)

**\*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.*

*Children that would like to participate in the Christmas Pageant for All Ages during worship on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> are invited to go to the Children’s Sunday School classroom after the Message for God’s Children to learn more about the Christmas story and a song.*

**Mission Moment**

Karen Stanton

**Worship with Tithes and Offerings**

**Offertory**

Guitar Group

*The musician’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.*

*Continue*

*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**

“Blessed Be the God of Israel” #158

**Scripture**

Luke 1:67-79 (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**

“Guiding into the Way of Peace”

**Communion Service**

*At the United Church of Mapleton, the Communion Table is open to all without restriction. This is not our table, but it is God’s, and it is open to all of God’s children.*

*Today, we will participate in communion by passing two sets of plates that contain the elements of bread and juice. Please hold each element until all have been served so that we may celebrate communion together after each element has been shared.*

*All of our Communion elements are gluten free. During the serving of the bread, Pastor Ashley will walk through the Sanctuary to offer a pastoral blessing if you or your child(ren) choose to not receive Communion today.*

**\*Closing Hymn**

“Prepare the Way, O Zion” #152

**\*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 6th, 2015

Pastor—Ashley Whitaker  
Lay Reader—Lisa Shubert  
Organist—Jola Walker  
Greeters—Delbert and Ella Conrad  
Head Usher—Diaconate  
Coffee Hour Host—Diaconate

### Today's Worship & Fellowship

9:00 a.m. Morning Worship with Communion and Loaves & Fishes  
Food Shelf Collections  
9:00 a.m. Nursery/Toddler Care (*upstairs north end of hallway in the Nursery/Toddler Room*)  
9:15 a.m. Children's Christmas Practice (*PreK-5th SS classroom*)  
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 [clevertithere.blogspot.com](http://clevertithere.blogspot.com) and is based on Isaiah 40.21-11 and Psalm 126:2.

After a **Musician's 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](http://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 6th, 2015**

Sunday, December 6th, 9:15 a.m. Children practice for Christmas

Tuesday, December 8th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT

**Wednesday, December 9th, 7:00 p.m. Deacons**

Thursday, December 10th, 2:00 p.m. Bible Study

Saturday, December 12th, 9:00-11:00 a.m. Kilties

Saturday, December 12th, 5:00-9:00 p.m. Parents Night Out

### **Planning Ahead**

Sunday, December 13th, 9:00 a.m. The United Church  
Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 13th, 10:00 a.m. Confirmation Class

Sunday, December 13th, 10:15 a.m. Christmas Eve practice

Monday, December 14th, 7:00 p.m. Women's Fellowship

Tuesday, December 15th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT

Wednesday, December 16th, 6:00 p.m. GIFT

**Wednesday, December 16th, 7:00 p.m. Trustees**

### **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.

### **Thursday Bible Study Group**

The final Bible Study session will be held Thursday, December 10th, 2:00 p.m.

### **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 6th, 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!

**Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf**

**Today, Sunday, December 6th, 2015** we will collect donations for the Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf. Please consider giving monetary gifts and/or non-perishable items to this meaningful mission on the **first Sunday** of each month.

**Parents Night Out!**

Parents, take the night out to go Christmas shopping or get away for date night! Kids will enjoy dinner (6:00 pm), crafts, cookie decorating, games, movies, and more!

You may drop off your children, ages 2 and up, at the United Church of Mapleton, 201 Troendle Street SW on **Saturday, December 12th after 5:00 p.m.** and then pick them up by 9:00 p.m. You may call to pre-register (not required) at 524-3141.

A Freewill offering will help support "Cows for Christmas (Heifer International). May we all pass on the gift!

**Adult or youth-age volunteers** are especially needed during Parents Night Out in these areas: **Registration, Nursery Attendants, Craft Leaders, Playing Board Games, "Floaters" from area to area.** Also, If you have big, comfy blankets or oversized pillows that could be used to sit or lay on that you'd be willing to lend for Parents Night Out, that would be great. They may be needed if we choose to show the movie on the projector in the Fellowship Hall (instead of the Youth Lounge).

**The United Church News and Announcements**  
**Sunday, December 6th, 2015**

**Advent Reflections Worship Service**

The community is invited to join in a service of readings, reflections, and music to welcome the deeper meaning of this Advent season. Come, light a candle to hold in love a memory, or a hope for the future. This service will be held at 1st Congregational United Church of Christ, 150 Stadium Court, Mankato, MN on **Sunday, December 6th, 4:00 p.m.**

Worship leaders for this worship service will include: Rev. Ashley Whitaker, Mapleton UCC; Rev. Michelle Hargrave, Centenary Methodist; Rev. Cherie Daniel, St. Paul's/Peace UCC; Rev. Dana Mann, 1st Congregational UCC; Rev. Ava Adams-Morris; and Prof. Blake Couey.

**Holiday Boxes!**

Maple River Loaves & Fishes will be packing the boxes on **December 20<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. at St. Teresa's** and handing them out on December 22<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**The United Church News and Announcements**  
**Sunday, December 6th, 2015**

**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 (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.**

**A Note from the Firstbrooks**

We are so thankful for your generosity! It brought us to tears as we were amazed at the size of the gift. Please continue to remember us in prayer, as each day is a huge challenge, especially for Janie. Blessings, Rev. Clint Firstbrook, Beauford United Methodist Church

**The United Church News and Announcements**  
**Sunday, December 6th, 2015**

**United Church Christmas Pageant for All Ages**

**During worship on Sunday, December 13th, all are welcome to participate in the United Church Christmas Pageant this year— young and young at heart alike!** This year, the Board of Christian Education will be presenting the “No Fuss, No Muss Christmas Pageant.” Costumes of all sizes will be available and there are no lines to learn. Participants will be invited to join the tableau in character groups as the Christmas story is proclaimed and favorite carols are sung by all.

During worship on November 29th and December 6th, children 5th grade and younger are invited to their Sunday School classroom after the Message for God’s Children to learn the Christmas story and the first verse of “Joy to the World.”

If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Board of Christian Education (Liz Bair, Louise Webb, Linda Whitney, Marissa Pfeffer, Jeff Whitaker) or our new Christian Education Coordinator, Pam Foster. Thank you!

**Christmas Eve Music Practice**

**Sunday, December 13th at 10:15 a.m.**, we will hold a practice with guitars/instruments/voices for all those interested in singing or playing an instrument at Christmas Eve Service.

If anyone has an instrument they would like to play for Christmas Eve, please contact Sheila **by December 6th** so we may prepare ahead of the Sunday, December 13th practice.

**GIFT Update—Generations In Faith Together**

**GIFT will meet on December 16th from 6:00-7:00 p.m.**

The Christian Education Committee (Liz Bair, Louise Webb, Linda Whitney, Marissa Pfeffer, Jeff Whitaker, and our new Christian Education Coordinator, Pam Foster) is seeking your feedback about GIFT and the Church School model we have been trying this fall at The United Church. The Board of Christian Education will be meeting on **Wednesday, December 9th** to discuss our Christian Education plans for 2016, so please share your feedback with a board member before then. Thank you!

## Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

**Scripture for the Week:** “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. Revelation 1:8

### **Sunday:**

Our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 3:20

Lord of all, hear our praises and our songs! Thank you for all the gifts of abundant life here today and with you tomorrow. Shape us in your likeness to share this good news with all the world. Amen.

### **Monday:**

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Matthew 5:9

Patient Teacher, we are sometimes distracted from your hope for the world by anger, mistrust, and doubt. Send us your peace that the burdens we carry may be released so we can follow you well. Amen.

### **Tuesday:**

Deliver us from evil. Matthew 6:13 (NASB)

Lord of grace, we cannot comprehend the gift of your salvation for the world. May our lives express the gratitude for this tremendous gift of love and may we share that love with others. Amen.

### **Wednesday:**

Honor the Lord with your wealth. Proverbs 3:9 (NIV)

Generous God, your gifts are abundant! Open our hearts to show your generosity by sharing with and caring for those who know the reality of “not enough.” In Jesus’ name. Amen.

## Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

### **Thursday:**

Christ Jesus became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 1 Corinthians 1:30

Guiding Savior, you show us how to live and share your love. Help us remember this call to justice in your name through graceful action and service with your children at home and in the world. Amen.

### **Friday:**

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. Psalm 34:1

Amazing God, we find ourselves faced with many challenges and opportunities to share your good news. Be with us in the sharing as we offer all we have to you. Amen.

### **Saturday:**

Paul said; “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up.” Acts 20:32 (NIV)

Gracious Lord, help us to follow your direction and live our lives in peace. Fill the hearts of all humankind with love, faith, and hope that the world may know the fullness of your grace. Amen.

*Source: Moravian Daily Texts*

*Continue*