***Closing Hymn**

"Savior of the Nations, Come" #168 *(Verses 1, 2, 4, 5)*

***Benediction**

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

Postlude

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

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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 Well Youth Center hours are Tuesdays-Fridays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The mission jar will be in the back of the Sanctuary on the third Sunday of each month.

Loaves & Fishes "Love Item"

Each month, The United Church features a "love item" of special focus for members to donate to Loaves & Fishes. This helps stock the shelves at Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf and helps increase our giving to this worthy and much needed mission in our own town. **Our Love Item for December is cereal!**

This summer, Loaves & Fishes noticed they needed more breakfast and lunch items than during the school year to help feed kids who rely on schools for those meals. So, for December, let's help stock their shelves so they can be ready to help out families over the upcoming winter break! Cereals can be an important source of nutrients, especially for kids in low-income households.

Loaves & Fishes Holiday Boxes

Maple River Loaves & Fishes will be packing these boxes December 14th at 1:00 p.m. at St. Teresa's and handing them out December 16th from 3-6 p.m. at St. Teresa's in Mapleton. We can always use volunteers to help!

The United Church of Mapleton

201 Troendle St SW; PO Box 413
Mapleton, MN 56065
(507) 524-3141
www.unitedchurchmapleton.org
secretary@unitedchurchmapleton.org

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 7th, 2014
Second Sunday of Advent

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

*Call to Worship and Advent Candle Lighting

Pastor: Last Sunday, we lit the first candle, the candle of hope. Today we light the second candle, the candle of peace. We light it knowing that peace is elusive, and in some parts of the world, it is almost completely absent. Yet in this season of Advent, we trust that God is never absent from us. God is always preparing something new. And even where there is no peace, God is present, gently leading us to new possibilities.

(Please keep silence as the second candle is lit.)

One: We have peace, for Christ is coming.

Many: Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning,
we thank you for the grace you unfailingly offer us.
Show us the creative power of hope.
Teach us the peace that comes from justice.
Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you,
that we may walk in the light of Christ.

One: Take your encouragement from Christ,
that your joy may be complete.

Continued
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Many: We will share in the Holy Spirit.
We will find comfort in grace.
One: Practice a ministry of humility and compassion,
for God is at work in you and is ever empowering you.
Many: We will welcome Christ into our hearts.
We will live lives worthy of the gospel.
We will shape our lives in Christ-like peace.

***Opening Hymn**

"Blessed Be the God of Israel" #158

***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

Children are invited to attend Sunday School after the Message for God's Children or return to their pews. Children's Worship Bags are available in the back of the Sanctuary.

Mission Moment Pastor Ashley Whitaker

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**

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**

"To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary" #171 (*Verses 1, 2, 4, 6)*

Scripture Luke 1:26-38 (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 "The Lord is With You"

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.

Serving Us Today: Sunday, December 7th, 2014

Preacher—Ashley Whitaker
Lay Leader—Jeff Gerdts
Organist—Jola Walker
Greeters—Bob and Lisa Shubert family
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 (*Sanctuary)*
9:00-10:40 a.m. Nursery Childcare *(Babies-Toddlers),*
Crib/Toddler Room, upstairs
10:00 a.m. Coffee Fellowship *(Fellowship Hall)*
10:00 a.m. Choir Practice
9:15 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Children's Sunday School *(PreK-5th Grade)*
Classroom A, upstairs
10:00 a.m. Children and Yourh Christmas Program Practice
10:10-10:40 a.m. Adult Sunday School, Classroom B, downstairs

Our **Call to Worship** today is by and Advent Candle Lighting Litany is by Jeanyne Slettom at processandfaith.org/resources/liturgy/advent-candle-liturgy.

The **paraments** are purple for Advent, because Advent is a season of spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ (Christmas) and looks forward to the future reign of Christ. Eschatological expectation rather than personal penitence is the central theme of the season. Advent is a preparation for rather than a celebration of Christmas, so Advent hymns should be sung instead of Christmas carols. The first Sunday of Advent is not the beginning of the Christmas season. The Christmas celebration begins on Christmas Eve and continues for the next "twelve days of Christmas." Purple is normally Advent's liturgical color, associated both with the sovereignty of Christ and with penitence. *(ucc.org)*

Worship & Care Connections

Children's Worship Bags with creative supplies are available at the back of the Sanctuary for children during worship.

The **Nursery/Toddler Room** for infants and toddlers is available throughout the morning worship service and is located at the north end of the hallway opposite the Sanctuary.

The **Family Space**, located in the Overflow Room in 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.

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 which can be utilized by parking in the east parking lot.

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 the church know! Feel free to contact Pastor Ashley, a Deacon, or the church office so that we may serve you. 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.

In Our Prayers

- The ministries of The United Church, including our local missions: The Well 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

Our church prayer list includes:

- Those with ongoing health concerns: Norma Baack, Shirley Bowen, Benjamin Brockmann, Hutch Cramer, Kathy Cox, Dawn Dietz, Jodie Gerdts, David Keller, Stan Solie, Alberta Samuelson, Marge Walters, Jonathan Ziert, Isaac Kolstad
- Family members and loved ones who are ill
- Traveling mercies for our members, family, and friends
- All who are grieving and mourning
- The 2015 American Baptist Churches, USA Biennial Mission Summit, to be held June 26-28 in Overland Park, KS
- The 2015 United Church of Christ General Synod 30, to be held June 26-30 in Cleveland, OH

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

Thanksgiving:

- To God for the safe travels of Mary Beth Fritz and Joyce Ireland; they have arrived safely in Arizona
- And praise to God for families who were able to get together over Thanksgiving and count our blessings together

Prayers:

- For Sean Mallory for a health concern

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 7th, 2014

Sunday, December 7th, 10:00 a.m. Children's Christmas Practice in the Sanctuary
Monday, December 8th, 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve music practice
Monday, December 8th, 7:00 p.m. Women's Fellowship
Tuesday, December 9th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT
Wednesday, December 10th, 7:00 p.m. Called to Care
Wednesday, December 10th, 7:45 p.m. Deacons
Thursday, December 11th, 3:00 p.m. Bible Study
Friday, December 12th, 5:00—9:00 p.m. Parents Night Out
Saturday, December 13th, 1:00 p.m. Kilties
Sunday, December 14th, 9:00 a.m. Children's Christmas Program
Sunday, December 14th, 1:00 p.m. Youth Group Service Project

Planning Ahead

Tuesday, December 16th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT
Wednesday, December 17th, 7:00 p.m. Trustees
Thursday, December 18th, 3:00 p.m. Bible Study
Saturday, December 20th, 9:00 a.m. Kilties
Sunday, December 21st, 6:00 p.m. Youth Group Fun & Fellowship Christmas Party
Tuesday, December 23rd, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT
Tuesday, December 30th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT

The United Church News and Announcements
Sunday, December 7th, 2014

Children's Christmas Rehearsal—Today!

Rehearsal will be held TODAY, Sunday, December 7th in the sanctuary after the worship service for all children grades **PreK—5th and Youth Group**.

Children have been practicing Christmas songs during Sunday School time.

The **Children's Christmas Program will be held next Sunday, December 14th** during our worship service.

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 **Friday, 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 7th, 2014

Stocking Stuffers for The Well

There is a donation box available in the narthex for you to start placing stocking stuffer donations for the youth of The Well to receive at their Christmas party. **Please have items to the church by Friday, December 19th.**

Suggested items include: lip balm, beanie babies or stuffed animals, socks, perfume body sprays, jewelry, candy, gum, bouncy balls, playing cards, etc.

Christmas Poinsettias

The Ambience Team is looking for donations of **poinsettia plants** to decorate our sanctuary area for the Christmas season.

Please purchase the plant/plants on your own. Place your name on the bottom of your plant and bring the plant to the church. Thank you for helping beautify our sanctuary!

Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

Scripture for the Week: God says, "I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak." Ezekiel 34:16

Sunday:

See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered. Isaiah 65:17

In you, dear Lord, all is made new. Help us to treasure the life and love you have given us, to see that your kingdom surrounds us today, and to know that you will come again to make for us a world of peace, love, and hope. In your name we pray. Amen.

Monday:

Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand." Matthew 7:26

Dear God, like the man who built his house on sand, we rely on things that shift rather than the one thing that remains like a rock for us. Help us to find the meaning of our life through you. Amen.

Tuesday:

Daniel said, "My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me." Daniel 6:22

We know there are lions in our world—those who persecute, hate, oppress, and destroy. Gracious God, our charge is to demonstrate your love to these beasts, so they may turn from evil, while bringing hope to their prey, that they may be safe. Help us in this, we pray. Amen.

Wednesday:

To you, O Lord, I call; my rock, do not refuse to hear me. Psalm 28:1

Heavenly Lord, hear our prayers and calls to you. Help us to be witnesses to all that is good and peaceful through your grace and love. Amen.

Continue

Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

Thursday:

You are great, O Lord God; for there is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 2 Samuel 7:22

Giver of life, the world that surrounds us presents many distractions that divert us from experiencing your presence. Help us to clear away the obstructions in our way and see your influence alive in everything around us. Amen.

Friday:

Whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. Ecclesiastes 3:14

Everlasting Lord, be with us throughout our day. Help us be mindful to do your work and to take care of the precious life you have given us. Amen.

Saturday:

See, O Lord, how distressed I am; my heart is wrung within me, because I have been very rebellious. Lamentations 1:20

Lord, in each of us you see a follower and a rebel. We look to you for hope and guidance so we may rebel against the darkness in the world and follow—and share—the light of your loving grace. In this we humbly pray. Amen.

Source: Moravian Daily Texts