

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
- Sean Mallory, who was hospitalized over the weekend for a bowel obstruction and will be having surgery for it soon
- 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 prayer requests and praises shared during last week's worship include:

Prayers:

- For all those affected by the recent severe weather and tornadoes in the South

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, January 3rd, 2016

Epiphany of the Lord Sunday

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

Based on Isaiah 9, 60

One: Arise, shine, for your light has come,

Many: and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you!

One: For thick darkness shall cover all the earth,

Many: but the Lord's glory will appear over you.

One: Nations shall come to your light,

Many: and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

One: The people who walked in darkness

Many: have seen a great light;

One: those who lived in a land of deep darkness,

Many: on them light has shined.

One: Let us celebrate the Light of the world,

All: for upon us the Light has shined!

***Opening Hymn**

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory” # 189

***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

Dick Dietz

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**

“We Three Kings of Orient Are” #233

Scripture

Matthew 2: 1-12 (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

“First Worship: Joy and Wisdom”

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**

“Wise Men, They Came to Look for Wisdom” #234

***Benediction**

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

Postlude

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

Serving Us Today: Sunday, January 3rd, 2016

Pastor—Ashley Whitaker
Lay Reader—Sue Prenzlou
Organist—Jan Lange
Greeter—Clint Lindemann
Head Ushers—David and Roberta Ward
Coffee Hour Host—Deacons

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*)
10:00 a.m. Coffee Hour

Today's *Call to Worship* is from *The Song of Simeon: Luke 2*
(*Sunday after Christmas*), posted on the Calvin Institute of Christian
Worship website (worship.calvin.edu).

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.

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.

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.

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, January 3rd, 2016

Sunday, January 3rd, 10:00 a.m. Confirmation
Tuesday, January 5th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT
Tuesday, January 5th, 1:00 p.m. Quilting
Tuesday, January 5th, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Cooking Matters Class
Wednesday, January 6th, 6:00-7:00 p.m. **GIFT**
Friday, January 8th, Annual Reports due into the church office
Saturday, January 9th, 9:00-11:00 a.m. Kilties

Planning Ahead

Sunday, January 10th, 10:00 a.m. Confirmation
Sunday, January 10th, 5:00 p.m. Chili Cookoff
Monday, January 11th, 7:00 p.m. Women's Fellowship
Tuesday, January 12th, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT
Tuesday, January 12th, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Cooking Matters Class
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, January 3rd, 2016

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!

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! Today!

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. Thank you!

The United Church News and Announcements
Sunday, January 3rd, 2016

Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf

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

Women's Fellowship Program

You are invited to the Women's Fellowship meeting on Monday, January 11th to hear Carolyn Becker speak about Master Gardening. All ladies of the church are invited to attend!

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!

Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

Scripture for the Week: God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. Luke 1:52

Sunday:

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors! Luke 2:14

Infinite One, Creator and Ruler of all, may we glorify you not only in our worship today, but every day, with our whole selves, for that is the purpose of our lives. Amen.

Monday:

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness. Isaiah 58:10

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Philippians 4:5

Jesus, grant us the gentle strength we need to be steadfast in our compassionate conduct toward the suffering people of this world. May our persistent actions shed light on the plight of the hungry and thirsty, so others may see and act on their behalf. Amen.

Tuesday:

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. Romans 15:7

As we prepare our homes and hearts to welcome you again, Divine Savior, may we do as much to offer welcoming aid to the stranger in need, native or immigrant. Remind us of our call to serve you to the glory of God. Amen.

Wednesday:

While the son was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Luke 15:20

Benevolent Father, how reassuring it is to know that you always welcome us home with open, expectant arms. Your infinite, immeasurable love overwhelms us with joyous thanksgiving. As we celebrate Jesus' birth, may we remember we are celebrating your love for us. Amen.

Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

Thursday:

The angel of the Lord said to Joseph, "Mary will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

It is easy to concentrate on the beauty of this holy night as we recite the story of your birth, Jesus. But as we light candles and sing carols of joy, let us not forget the reason you came to earth: to save us from sin. Thank you, Shepherd of our souls. Amen.

Friday:

David and all Israel were dancing before God with all their might, with song and lyres and harps and tambourines and cymbals and trumpets. 1 Chronicles 13:8

Loving Giver of life, receive our words and deeds of celebration as offerings of praise and thanksgiving for the magnificent gift of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Please accept our undying gratitude for his life, death, and resurrection. Amen.

Saturday:

Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1

Lord, remind us that Christmas isn't over! We know the story of Christ's coming must not be packed away with the nativity figures. Help us stay focused on the message of salvation we are called to celebrate and share every day, all year long. Amen.

Source: Moravian Daily Texts

Continue