

## 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, Jack Madsen, Marian Mallory, Stan Solie, Alberta Samuelson
- 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
- Marian Mallory, who was recently diagnosed with a recurrence of cancer and is undergoing treatment
- Jack Madsen, who recently had knee surgery and is in recovery and rehabilitation in Mankato
- Sue Prenzlów, who is recovering from toe surgery
- Eli, husband of Mary Dietz (sister of Dawn and Dick Dietz), who recently had a stroke and is recovering in Waseca
- The people of Bamako, Mali, after militants took 170 hostages at the Radisson Blu Hotel on November 20th, claiming the lives of twenty people.
- The people of Tunis, Tunisia, after an explosion on a military bus killed at least twelve people on November 24th.

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

#### Thanksgiving:

- To our Lord for his healing powers as we welcome Jack back into our fellowship
- To God that Bruce survived his fall two years ago and has recovered!

#### Prayers:

- For God to bless the little children and bring them to learn about Jesus
- For families without a church home, that they may find one
- To give comfort to all who were harmed, mentally and physically in the events in Paris last week. Help us to remember all are children of God and to ask for God's guidance as we continue our lives in God's service

## 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, November 29th, 2015

First 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: Hope

*Pastor: Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.*

*Lead me in your truth, and teach me,*

*for you are the God of my salvation;*

*for you I wait all day long.*

One: In the beginning was the Word—

spoken and breathed,

a promise made and kept.

**Many: Listen and hear—**

**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: Listen!

*All: Renew the covenant of God, giving voice to a future with hope.*

**\*Opening Hymn**

“We Light the Advent Candles” #175  
*Verses 1 and 2*

**\*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**

Laura Fritz

**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.*

*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**

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” #154

**Scripture**

Luke 21:25-36 (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**

“Signs of Hope”

**\*Closing Hymn**

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” #153

**\*Benediction**

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

**Postlude**

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

## Serving Us Today: Sunday, November 29th, 2015

Pastor—Ashley Whitaker

Lay Reader—Joyce Johnson

Organist—Jola Walker

Greeters—Mabelle Larson

Head Usher—Pat Carter

Coffee Hour Host—Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf

### 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*)

9:15 a.m. Children's Christmas Practice (*PreK-5th SS classroom*)

10:00 a.m. Choir Practice

10:00 a.m. Coffee Hour

The **altar arrangement** is in loving memory of Blair Shuck.

Today's *Call to Worship and Advent Candle Lighting* is by Rev. Teri Peterson at [clevertitlehere.blogspot.com](http://clevertitlehere.blogspot.com) and is based on 2 Kings 22.1-10, 23.1-3 and Psalm 25:4-5.

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))

**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.

## 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.

**The United Church News and Announcements**  
**Sunday, November 29th 2015**

**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 1st** so we may prepare ahead of the Sunday, December 13th practice.

**Mapleton Sertoma Poinsettias**

Please pick up your order for poinsettias at the Town and Country Leisure Center on Monday, November 30th between the hours of 1:00-7:00 p.m.; or Tuesday, December 1st from 9:00-11:00 a.m. and 4:00-7:00 p.m. Thank you for supporting your local Sertoma Club!

**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!

**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.

**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, November 29th, 2015**

Sunday, November 29th, 9:15 a.m. Children Practice for Christmas  
Sunday, November 29th, 6:00 p.m. Confirmation  
Tuesday, December 1st, 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast in GT  
Wednesday, December 2nd, **5:45 p.m.** meet at the church to participate in The United Church living nativity scene for the Snowflake Dazzle parade  
Saturday, December 5th, 9:00-11:00 a.m. Kilties

**Planning Ahead**

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  
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

**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.

**The United Church News and Announcements**  
**Sunday, November 29th, 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!

**GIFT Update—Generations In Faith Together**

GIFT will not be meeting on Wednesday, December 2nd. Instead, everyone is invited to help promote Parents Night Out (PNO) at Snowflake Dazzle and serve as a living nativity! We will have a float in the parade route displaying our living nativity and also advertising PNO, and we'll have two people in cow costumes handing out fliers for PNO along the parade route. If you would like to participate in the Living Nativity and parade, **meet at The United Church at 5:45 p.m. to get in costume** and head to the Christmas Tree (located by the Fire Station) by 6:00 p.m.! At 6:45 p.m., we will head up to the old Casey's to get ready for the parade. The parade ends at the Christmas Tree, which will be lit in a ceremony when the parade ends with our Living Nativity scene next to it. **Please dress warmly!** We need some hay bales to help set the scene on our parade float—if you have we could borrow, please let the church office know. **All are welcome to help promote The United Church and PNO at Snowflake Dazzle!**

GIFT will meet on its regular 3rd Wednesday date 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.

*Continue*

**The United Church News and Announcements**  
**Sunday, November 29th, 2015**

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!

**Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf**

**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.

**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!

**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.

## Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

**Scripture for the Week:** Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for God who has promised is faithful.  
Hebrews 10:23

### **Sunday:**

Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise. Psalm 84:4

Faithful God, your word of challenge to live in praise of all you have done comes to us this day. Give us strength and courage to live fully in Jesus' way. Amen.

### **Monday:**

In him we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28

Creator, you made us with a capacity to live in relationship with you and with one another. Help us to follow Jesus' example as we live in your world, loving one another freely and completely. Amen.

### **Tuesday:**

Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6

Jesus, you have shown us what it means to live as God intends. May our lives show your love, mercy, and compassion to all those we meet as we seek to be your disciples. Amen.

### **Wednesday:**

In Jesus Christ every one of God's promises is a "Yes." For this reason it is through him that we say the "Amen," to the glory of God. 2 Corinthians 1:20

Holy God, you keep your promises and we entrust our lives to you. Help us to share your love and grace as you have shared it with us. To you all glory on earth and heaven be given! Amen.

*Continue*

## Weekly Scriptures for Prayer and Devotion

### **Thursday:**

Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always continue in the fear of the Lord. Proverbs 23:17

Gracious One, let us not forget that your love shelters all. Help us to reach out to your children with love and grace for each one. Transform our lives to show your love in everything we do. Amen.

### **Friday:**

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever. Luke 1:54-55

Faithful One, you sustain and nurture us in life that we may have the energy and nerve to share the good news of your love. Enable us to do your will and live your promise of life for all. Amen.

### **Saturday:**

Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts. Ephesians 5:19

Giver of joy, we are filled with songs of praise and thanksgiving! Give us grace to honor you in all we do and say. May your love be known by others as our hands and feet serve you. Amen.

*Source: Moravian Daily Texts*