



***“The Voice”* Newsletter of The United Church of Mapleton**

201 Troendle Street SW; PO Box 413
Mapleton, MN 56065

www.unitedchurchmapleton.org 507/524-3141

DECEMBER 2017

Address Service Requested

*“The United Church of Mapleton is a Christian fellowship
of mission, worship, and faith formation dedicated
to the Maple River community.”*

The United Church of Mapleton
PO Box 413, 201 Troendle St SW
Mapleton, MN 56065



THE UNITED CHURCH OF MAPLETON

www.unitedchurchmapleton.org

secretary@unitedchurchmapleton.org

9:30 am Sunday Worship

Communion is held the 1st Sunday of each month with Activity Stations for Grade 1—5

10:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, Faith Formation (FF) during worship except first Sunday

Church Office Hours are Typically, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday from 8:00 am—Noon

DECEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
FF = faith formation for our children follows the <i>Faith Forming Moment</i> in Worship	<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0f0e0;"> December Mission Jar Funds go towards: Heifer International </div>				1 5:00 - 9:00 pm Parents Night Out RECYCLE!	2 9:30—11:30 am Mapleton Kilties 11:00 am CRC workday
3 9:30 am Worship Communion / Hanging of the Greens / Loaves & Fishes collections / Activity Stations gr. 1-5 / Coffee F. with Holy Conversation	4	5 6:30 am Men's Breakfast in GT 1:00 pm Quilters	6 10:30 am Bible Study 7:00 pm Search Committee	7 7:30 pm Bible & Brew at Maggie J's <small>Different Brews</small> BIBLE & BREW <small>Different Views</small> <small>BEER, CONVERSATION, & GOD</small>	8	9 9:30—11:30 am Mapleton Kilties
10 9:30 am Worship FF during worship 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	11 3:30 pm Women's Fellowship	12 6:30 am Men's Breakfast in GT 1:00 pm Quilters	13 7:00 pm Search Committee	14 7:30 pm Bible & Brew at Maggie J's <small>Different Brews</small> BIBLE & BREW <small>Different Views</small> <small>BEER, CONVERSATION, & GOD</small>	15 RECYCLE!	16 9:30—11:30 am Mapleton Kilties
17 9:30 am Worship FF during worship Coffee Fellowship with Holy Conversation	18	19 6:30 am Men's Breakfast in GT 1:00 pm Quilters Newsletter items due!	20 10:30 am Bible Study 7:00 pm Council Mtg.	21 7:30 pm Bible & Brew at Maggie J's <small>Different Brews</small> BIBLE & BREW <small>Different Views</small> <small>BEER, CONVERSATION, & GOD</small>	22	23
Pastor Cindy is on vacation for two weeks						
24 NO 9:30 am worship 5:00 pm Candlelight Lessons & Carols Christmas Eve worship	25 Christmas <i>Church office closed</i>	26 6:30 am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 1:00 pm Quilters 7:00 pm Search Committee	27	28 7:30 pm Bible & Brew at Maggie J's <small>Different Brews</small> BIBLE & BREW <small>Different Views</small> <small>BEER, CONVERSATION, & GOD</small>	29	30 9:30—11:30 am Mapleton Kilties
31 9:30 am Worship FF during worship Coffee Fellowship						

Pastor Cindy is on vacation for two weeks; in the case of a pastoral emergency please contact 507-524-3141



November 13, 2017

President Louise Webb called the meeting to order with 8 women present.

Devotions: Given by Mabelle Larson,

Secretaries Report: Given and accepted.

SonShine Committee: 1 get-well, 2 birthday, 1 sympathy and 1 thinking-of-you cards were sent

Business:

Report on the Veteran's Dinner was given and there were 96 people served. This included the Serateens and the kitchen help.

Discussion was held to purchase a new roaster, new tablecloths, and new serving utensils. *Motion passed by all in attendance.*

Joyce Johnson and Ruth Cummings are in charge of the upcoming wedding on Saturday, November 18th. The Ecumenical services for Thanksgiving will be held on Tuesday, November 21 at our church. Coffee and bars to be served following. Darlene, Joyce, Linda and Ruth will furnish the bars.

A motion was made to have our meetings in the afternoon starting at 3:30 pm, Monday, December 11th. *Motion passed.*

Discussion to give two baskets to Loaves & Fishes for their Christmas baskets. *Motion passed.*

We will be doing lunch for Parents Night Out evening Friday, December 1st.

Our meeting adjourned followed by a delicious dessert from Linda Whitney.

Respectfully Submitted, Darlene Fezler, Secretary



National Children's Memorial Day Service

Sunday, December 10, 2017

Sponsored by Mayo Clinic Health System

6:30—8:00 p.m.

Hilltop United Methodist Church

108 S. Manitou Drive, Mankato

Families are invited to light a candle in memory of their child and/or bring a keepsake/picture for display

(Please see church bulletin board flyer for details)

In Our Prayers

Our church prayer list includes:

- Those members living in Care Facilities: Kathy Cramer, Alberta Samuelson, and Marge Walters



The prayer requests and praises shared with the congregation during last month's worship services include:

Prayers and Thanksgivings

- For Tim Madsen and family
- For the life and family of Don Shubert. Help Robert, Lisa, Sam, and Nick know God's grace in this difficult time.
- Thank you for the life of Jack Madsen and Don Shubert
- For Teenagers
- For good results on Linda Daly's medical tests
- Thankful for modern medicine and fantastic doctors
- For the future of this church
- For a family that just lost a brother, uncle, father suddenly and unexpectedly this past week
- For my brother who has cancer and will be going to Rochester next week to see what the next step is
- For our daughter-in-law, Kerry Johnson, who will be having major surgery on November 27th
- Dear God, give guidance and safety to the people of Zimbabwe, as the government goes through major changes and protect our UCC missions in eastern Zimbabwe
- Thanks be to God for the safe arrival of my great grandson, Caden Wallace on November 16th
- Joy in the opening of Crescent Cove, Hospice Home for children
- Comfort our brothers and sisters of Egypt in recent terrorist attack killing over 300 worshippers. Bring justice into our world.
- For loved ones on the road



The prayers and sympathies of The United Church of Mapleton are extended to the family and friends of **Jack Madsen**, longtime United Church member, who passed October 27, 2017. A funeral was held at the United Church November 2, 2017.



Thank you to all who completed estimate of giving cards!

34 cards = \$92,718.00



Ministry Schedules & Coffee Hour Hosts

December 3

Lay Reader:	Lisa Shubert
Hospitality Team Lead:	Bair family
Pianist/Organist:	Guitar Group
Sound System:	Dick Dietz
Power Point:	Kathy Cox
Coffee Hour Host:	Council

December 10

Lay Reader:	Linda Whitney
Hospitality Team Lead:	
Pianist/Organist:	Janice Lange
Sound System:	Dick Dietz
Power Point:	Jay McCutchen
Coffee Hour Host:	Women's Fellowship

December 17

Lay Reader:	Sue Prenzlou
Hospitality Team Lead:	Patrick Pfeffer family
Pianist/Organist:	Ann DeWitz
Sound System:	Dick Dietz
Power Point:	Gary Fritz
Coffee Hour Host:	Youth Center

December 24 ~ 5:00 pm Service

Lay Reader:	Louise Webb
Hospitality Team Lead:	
Pianist/Organist:	Kathy Byram
Sound System:	Dick Dietz
Power Point:	Randy Cumming

December 31

Lay Reader:	Darlene Fezler
Hospitality Team Lead:	
Pianist/Organist:	Joanne Kramer
Sound System:	Dick Dietz
Power Point:	N/A
Coffee Hour Host:	Garden & Grounds



Newsletter Submissions

Please submit all items for the **January** newsletter into the church office no later than **Sunday, December 19th, 2017**. Thank you!



Contact Information

If you have a **pastoral emergency or need**, please contact Pastor Cindy Mueller. **Please check your bulletin each week** for Pastor Cindy's office hours and how to reach her.

To see the most recent approved Church Council Minutes, please check bulletin board outside of the church office. Thank you!

PLEASE CHECK BOTH CHURCH BULLETIN BOARDS WEEKLY, FOR CHURCH AND LOCAL COMMUNITY INFORMATION!

Daily Devotions Online

You may visit the following website for daily devotions:

http://www.ucc.org/daily_devotional

We are asking for donations of poinsettia's to decorate the church for the Christmas season.



Please bring your poinsettia to the church by 9:00 am December 3, 2017.



This years **Christmas Eve Offering** will go towards: **Hurricane and other Natural Disaster Relief**

COMMAnts from the Conference Minister – November 2017

Celebrating our Small Churches

“We knew it was coming but it is still difficult.”

Those were the words of Rev. John Tschudy in a message to his parish in September, reflecting on the imminent closure of Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Williams. After 102 years of service and ministry, Pilgrim Congregational UCC celebrated its last worship service on October 15 and closed its doors forever.

Pilgrim Congregational was one of three churches comprising our Rainy River Regional Parish, sprinkled along Highway 11 in northern Minnesota, along the Canadian border. The parish shares one pastor, who has led worship in each of the Williams, Baudette, and Birchdale congregations on every Sunday and routinely ministers to members throughout the parish.

I preached at Pilgrim Congregational two years ago when they celebrated their 100th anniversary. I vividly remember the joy present in that sanctuary, the fun-loving fellowship that followed, and the pride they took in their congregation and building. But while on that particular day the pews were filled, worship attendance at Pilgrim more routinely averaged 6 people, and total membership on the rolls was 18. While those numbers may seem extraordinary to some of us, many more of our congregations in the Minnesota Conference are not much bigger.

According to our records, 63 of our 128 congregations in the Minnesota Conference have 50 or less people in worship on an average Sunday. That reflects national statistics in the United Church of Christ, where 2016 figures just released tell us that “49% of all UCC congregations now have a weekly worship attendance of 1-50 individuals”. (UCC Statistical Profile)

For these small congregations, many of whom have served their communities for over 100 years, part-time pastors are the norm. Care and maintenance of the church building becomes an increasing – and at times, insurmountable – challenge. Often, the decline of these once robust congregations can be attributed to the economic and population decline of the areas where they reside.

Nevertheless, the role of small churches and their pastors in their communities is significant. These churches are often the heartbeat of the community. They are the relational center of small communities. They are often the initiators of essential community programs and outreach. The clergy become pastor to members and townspeople alike, depended upon for wise counsel and community leadership, particularly in rural areas. The church buildings become the focal point for all manner of community-wide events. And the legacy these congregations have built over decades of faithful ministry is no less beautiful than any church twice as large or larger.

Small churches are vitally important in the life of their members and communities. They can teach us about perseverance and the value of deep relationships. And the depth of ministry and service they bear long witness to can be an example to all of us.

Let us hold all of our small Minnesota Conference churches in prayer. And let us celebrate their beautiful, living testimonies of faith and hope among us.

Your partner in service,

Shari





Rev. Steve Boorsma to Depart
Associate Conference Minister of the
UCC, Steve Boorsma
Announces His Resignation

Dear friends in the Minnesota Conference UCC:

For the last three years, we have been blessed by the ministry of Reverend Steve Boorsma as one of our Associate Conference Ministers. Today I write to share with you the news that Steve has tendered his resignation to the Conference effective February 28, 2018.

As Steve wrote to me in his letter of resignation: "I have enjoyed my work with and for the Minnesota Conference. It has been challenging and enriching and I will always treasure this experience. The work I have done on behalf of the Conference in areas of vitality and social justice issues has been humbling and empowering. But, the truth of the matter is, the more I work with our congregations the stronger the pull has been to return to local parish ministry." Steve has accepted a call to serve as pastor of St. John's UCC in Vincennes, Indiana.

During his tenure with the Minnesota Conference, Steve has had primary responsibility to our congregations in the southern half of the Conference. He has also served as staff liaison to our prophetic witness teams, the Vitality Team, and the Committee on Ministry. His love for the local church and clergy has been an apparent and driving force in his ministry with us. And Steve has been a beloved member of the Conference staff team, always willing to pitch in as needed and injecting a wonderful sense of humor into our office environment.

Please join me in giving thanks to God for Steve's ministry among us in the Minnesota Conference, and offer him your blessing as he follows his call and continues to faithfully serve Christ's Church.

Grace and peace,
Shari Prestemon, Conference Minister

Think about returning to church.

*Come back for the community,
the extravagant welcome, the love.
God knows we need it now
more than ever.*

This Christmas, return more
than just that sweater.



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Notice of Annual Year End Congregational Meeting



To be held immediately
following worship on
Sunday, January 28th, 2018
to except the Year-End Reports
from all entities of the church.

United Church Foundation Annual
Meeting to follow.

Other business can be considered at this
time. Please inform the Moderator if you
wish to place an item on the agenda.
Everyone is invited to attend and participate.

**Year-End Reports are due into the church
office by and no later than
Tuesday, January 2nd, 2018.**

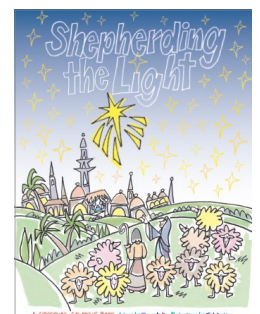
Special Offering Received This Month

Christmas Fund (UCC) and Retired Ministers & Missionaries Fund (ABC) special offering will be received during the month of December. The money received will be divided evenly between our two denominations.



Your offering can be mailed to the church or put in the small manila envelopes found in the pew racks and placed in the offering basket.

Thank you for your generous gifts!



Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please call
Karen Stanton at (507) 327-8168 or
Joyce Johnson at 524-3727.

Please let them know your prayer request, including the name of the person to pray for if applicable, and whether or not 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.



Continue to keep the United Church **Search Committee** in your prayers as they continue to work on the church profile.

Thank you!

Karen Stanton; Chair, Louisa Belle Shuck, Gary Fritz, Annalivia Bair, Carolyn Becker, Jay DeLeon & Kathy Cox

Different Brews  *Different Views*
BIBLE & BREW

— BEER, CONVERSATION, & GOD —

Every Thursday evening at 7:30 pm
in the back room of Maggie J's.

All are welcome! Bring a friend!



Thank you for your compassionate and generous giving of \$640 to the Special Mission Offerings during the month of October. The World Mission (ABC) and Neighbors in Need (UCC) donations received will be divided evenly between both denominations. Thank you for your action of helping bring about justice in our world.

Hanging the Greens



Sunday, December 3rd during Worship

Ever wonder what the meaning was behind all the Advent/Christmas decorations we use? Why do we always have poinsettias? And what about those lights on trees, is there a reason for them besides making the tree look pretty?

Why do we use garland or holly, or wreaths?

Join us for worship the first Sunday of Advent, December 3rd at 9:30 am.

Parents Night Out!

On **Friday, Dec. 1st** you may drop off your children (ages 2 and up) at the United Church, 201 Troendle Street SW **by 5:00 pm**, and pick them up **by 9:00 pm**. A Freewill offering will help support **"Cows for Christmas" (Heifer International)**. May we all pass on the gift! Questions? Call 524-3141.



A Christmas Pledge

As we experience Advent, our time is filled with shopping, parties, wrapping and family traditions. Which is why it is important for us to keep the reason for these seasons of Advent and Christmas at the heart of our celebrations. In *Unplug the Christmas Machine*, Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli shares this

Christmas Pledge:

Believing in the true spirit of Christmas

I commit myself to:

Remember those people who truly need my gifts;

Express my love in more direct ways than gifts;

Examine my holiday activities in the light of my deepest values;

Be a peacemaker within my circle of family and friends;

Rededicate myself to my spiritual growth.

Perhaps you and/or your family would want to consider adopting this pledge or writing your own pledge this holiday season.

I hope you will join us in worship throughout **Advent** Sundays, 12/3, 12/10 & 12/17 and on **Christmas** Eve, Sunday, 12/24 (there will be no 9:30 am worship held that day) when we will celebrate a beautiful tradition of Lessons and Carols at our candlelight service.

May the season of preparation – *Advent*, and giving birth – *Christmas*, bless you and your family.

With the Greatest of Hope,
 Pastor Cindy Mueller, Intentional Interim Minister