

# The Window

December 2019 Newsletter



## First United Methodist Church

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# The Conspiracy of Christmas

Have you ever played the game “Telephone”? You know how it works; a group of people sit or stand in a circle, and someone in the circle is given a phrase or sentence to say. They then whisper it in the ear of the person next to them, and around the circle it goes. When it reaches the last person, they say the phrase or sentence out loud. Usually everyone gets a good laugh out of how much it has changed going around the circle!

The same thing could be said about Christmas. How we understand and observe Christmas has changed immensely over the past 2,000 years since Jesus’ birth. In reality, how we observe and celebrate Christmas today would be unrecognizable even 100 years ago!



What happened? There are no doubt many answers, but here’s what we know: Christmas often leaves us in weariness rather than in wonder. Christmas seems to leave us more empty than elevated. We’re less connected to the depth of God’s love, even when we’ve heard the story over and over that Jesus came to earth at Christmas because of God’s love for us.

Rather than trying to figure out where it all went wrong, let’s refocus on how we can recapture the biblical “conspiracy of Christmas” that God birthed in Jesus. God conspired to interrupt history and break the chains of our human darkness with a message of hope, love and a fresh start for our lives. Redemption. Forgiveness. New Creation. The Christmas miracle we all need. A gift anyone can receive, open and own.

It all starts during this season before Christmas called *Advent*. Advent is a season of preparation. Getting ready for Christmas; getting ready to receive and open God’s gift. Like listening to the old favorite Christmas records (or CDs!) again, we pull out and listen again to the biblical stories of all that God did, just so you and I would have the Gift we need.

Advent. The *Advent Conspiracy* leading us back to Christmas again this December.

We’ll spend the Sundays of December singing again the favorite Christmas carols. We’ll hear the story again of God’s great conspiracy to bring light back into a dark world, starting with our dark hearts. Each Sunday I’ll cover a theme to help us navigate our way back to the manger: *Worship Fully; Spend Less; Give More; Love All.*

I invite you to be there each Sunday in December. Make the recovery of Christmas a priority for yourself and your family this year. I believe that a Christmas well celebrated can lead to a New Year well lived, because Christmas is all about redemption, forgiving and letting go of the past, and starting fresh—a new creation.

Join the *Advent Conspiracy*. Take Christmas back from a confused culture that has emptied it of its powerful message and truth. Break the chain of a bad game of “Telephone.” Instead, let God whisper directly to your heart his true message of Christmas this year.

*See you Sunday!*

*Pastor Mike*



### *Christmas Decorating*

We will decorate the church for Christmas

**Monday, December 2nd**

Men and women are needed for this fun day of decorating. If you are willing to help, please come for any part of the day that you are available. Most of the decorating is done between 9:00am and noon.



### *First Things Radio Ministry*

Our 2020 **First Things** radio ministry calendar has dates available for sponsorship. As of this printing, the first sponsorship opening is Sunday January 12th. If you are interested in sponsoring a broadcast for \$34, or if you have questions, please contact Jody Derickson in the church office at 831-3284 or by email at [umctreasurer@windomnet.com](mailto:umctreasurer@windomnet.com).

A graphic for a Christmas Eve service. The background is dark blue with white bokeh lights. The word "Christmas" is written in a large, white, cursive font, and "Eve Service" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. A white box at the bottom contains the following text:

Join us  
Tuesday, December 24  
4:00pm  
for a traditional Christmas Eve  
Service of Candlelight and Carols



WALK TO  
**EMMAUS**  
THE UPPER ROOM®

### **Fall Spiritual Retreats Good Counsel Mankato**

**Men's Retreat: January 16—19**

**Women's Retreat: January 23-26**

More information can be found online at [www.mnemmaus.org](http://www.mnemmaus.org) or by contacting the church office. Brochures are in the church lobby. Pre-registration is required.

### *Church Office Hours*

Monday—Friday  
9:00am—Noon  
1:00—4:00pm

Closed Tuesday December 24

Closed Wednesday December 25

Tuesday December 31  
open 9:00am—Noon



DECEMBER 2019

# Christian Education

## Special Points of Interest:

- **NO** Youth group on Dec. 1st.
- **KFC Meets on Dec 4th** right after school.
- **Sunday School Christmas Program Dec 8th**
- **December 15th Youth group Christmas party. We will meet from 4:00-6:30pm.**

No Sunday School December 22nd and December 29th  
Classes resume January 5th.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

## THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!

The Sunday School classes Prek—6th grade invite you to our Christmas program to be held on December 8th during our church service at 10:30.

Join our Sunday school students as they present *Star of Wonder*, a Christmas musical. Along the way you'll meet such bright luminaries as Superstar, Shooting Star, Lucky Star,

Falling Star, Rock Star, the North Star, and a constellation full of stars as they anxiously watch the biggest announcement in history unfold—the birth of Jesus!

The children and Sunday school volunteers are busy preparing for this special day.

Thank you to all who are

sharing their time in helping to prepare for this program! Special thanks to Claire Walinga, Deanne Steele, Deloy and Ellen King, the Sunday School Teachers, and of course our Sunday School Students.

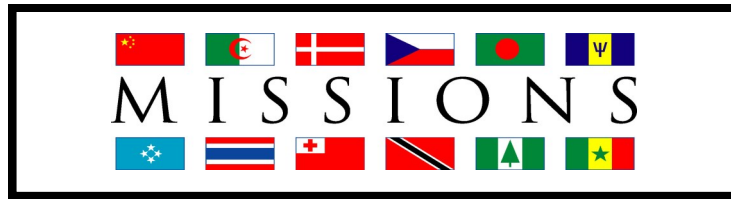


**KFC meets Wednesday, December 4th right after school. Please note the time change. We will be taking our crafts we made to the nursing home. Then returning to the church for refreshments.**

**A RSVP is a must, so we can get enough drivers and so we can find out who we will be picking up after school.**

**If you have any questions, or to RSVP please contact Robin.**







**CHANGE  
A LIFE**  
sponsor a child.

## Local Food Shelf

The Cottonwood County Sharing Center Food Shelf is in need of donations. Food donations are always welcome, and donations of money are even more helpful. They have sources where each dollar buys far more than what we can buy. Checks can be written to the church; please mark them for 'Food Shelf'.



Thank you to everyone who donated toiletries to the Comfort Cupboard for students in our schools. There are now enough supplies to last quite a while.

Toiletries are also needed at the Sharing Center, so they are welcome with your food donations. Travel or full size—all are welcome.

## Christmas Cheer Box

For ages Infant to 18 years old in Cottonwood County



Our church is collecting NEW toys, clothes, mittens, hats, etc. And cash donations for

Cottonwood County children under 18 years old. Cash donations can be paid to First UMC with Christmas Cheer Box in the memo. A collection box is in our church lobby through Tuesday, December 10th.



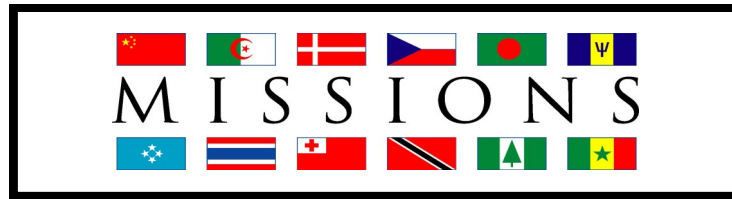
Ruby's Pop-up Pantry is America's Rural Foodbank. The next food distribution date is Monday, December 16th. Bring 2 empty baskets or boxes and \$20 cash to The Regional Worship Center, 2 Crossroads Drive, Sherburn MN.

Doors open for registration at 5:00pm, and distribution is from 6:00—7:30pm. There are no requirements to qualify for this foodbank. More information about Ruby's Pantry is available in the church's west hall.



The 2019 Hope 4 Christmas Giving Guide is available in the church lobby. There are suggested prices in every range to bless others through this mission outreach.

There are many different missions gift catalogs available on the lobby's info wall under 'LOVE'. Please feel free to take them home.



### *Advent and Christmas Missions Offering*

Our congregation has a tradition of taking a special mission offering throughout December, to be shared between two missions. This year the offering will be split evenly between the Cottonwood County Sharing Center (our local food shelf), and the Southwest Minnesota Crisis Center. Envelopes will be available in the lobby during December.

The **Southwest Crisis Center** exists to restore help and healing from domestic and sexual violence and exploitation. They are committed to assisting and empowering survivors through every step of the healing process. SWCC has offices in Windom, Worthington, Luverne, Pipestone, and Jackson. Brochures are available in our lobby on the right side of the information area.

### **the Dinner Table**

We served our monthly meal at The Dinner Table the week of Thanksgiving, and the next date we serve will be Tuesday, December 17th. At this event, a free meal is served to anyone in the community who will join us at the Presbyterian church (a central location). There is no signup needed; everyone is invited to come and check it out, and to enjoy a meal. Serving begins at 5:30pm. Come for a meal, and/ or to volunteer.

**December 17, 2019**

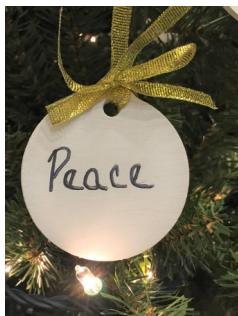
#### **Opportunities to Volunteer**

- People to prepare food
- People to serve food, visit with guests, clean up, greet, etc.

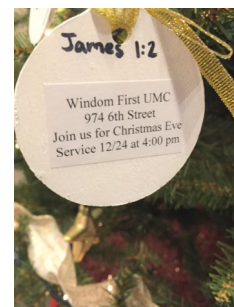
If you can help in any way, please let our church office know. There will also be signup sheets available in the lobby in December. Thank you to all our volunteers!



*Immanuel,*  
God With Us



# Embracing our COMMUNITY



*A message from Jody Derickson and her 7th & 8th grade class....*

## *Festival of Trees —The Gift of Giving*

Our congregation shares the reason for our Christmas celebration: Jesus, God's gift to us! The handmade white wooden ornaments on the tree were made by our 7th and 8th grade Sunday School class. When you visit our tree, please take one of the handmade ornaments as a gift from us to you. May your Christmas season be filled with the Love of God, and all your days to come as well.

Visit our tree at the [Cottonwood County Historical Society](#) from [December 1st through 23rd](#). If you would like to 'vote' for our tree, bring a quarter to drop in the donation can. Funds raised go to CCHS.

## *Blankets*

After hearing about some new employees at Prime Pork who were recruited from Puerto Rico, some ladies from our church made tied fleece blankets to help the workers and their families keep warm in their new (much colder!) home in Windom. A total of 21 blankets were made and delivered.



## *Lunch Buddies*

The Windom Presbyterian Church works with the Lunch Buddies program—adults sign up to have lunch with a child. At this time, the school has kids who want to be in the program, but there aren't enough adults to pair them with. If you are interested in being a Lunch Buddy to a child, please contact the Presbyterian Church at 831-2532. All participating adults will get a background check. It's a great opportunity to make a difference.





## Inclement Weather

When Windom schools close due to inclement weather, church activities will also be canceled. A group may decide to meet despite the school closure; that decision will be made by the group leader. If you have any questions about whether your activity is canceled, please contact the group's leader. The church and office will typically close during these winter weather school closures.

For winter weather closings, please listen to the following for information:

KDOM Windom 1580am  
KKOJ Jackson 1190am  
Windom cable channel 3

Like our FaceBook page for weather-related postings: [Facebook.com/FirstUMCWindom](https://www.facebook.com/FirstUMCWindom)



## McPrayer!

**Who:** Students in grades 7 through 12

**What:** McPrayer is a gathering of students who come for breakfast, devotions, and to pray.

**When:** Fridays @ 6:30am during the school year

**Where:** McDonald's

**Cost:** Free to you

All students are welcome; you do not need to be from any congregation. If you need transportation to or from McPrayer, please call the church office. Adults are also welcome to help with McPrayer!



## United Methodist Women Calendar

Executive Meeting 9:30am Tues Dec 3  
Lois Circle: 3:30pm Wed Dec 4  
Sogge Pie Social 2:00pm Thurs Dec 5  
Friendship Circle 2:00pm Wed Dec 11



Did you know that you can provide your financial giving to the church by convenient automatic withdrawal?

You control the amount, the frequency, and how it is directed (First UMC Ministry, missions, capital, education, etc), and you can change it whenever you like. Automatic giving can be set up with any bank in the U.S.

Forms are available on the lobby info wall, or by contacting the church office.

# SHARING BRINGS JOY

TO US. TO OTHERS. TO GOD.

*First UMC Finance Committee*







# 2020 Mission Trip Dates

Restoring hope to kids & families around the world since 1978

14-day mission trip

## India/Nepal

Jan 14 - 27

Application deadline November 14, 2019

Adults: \$1995 Students: \$1695

## Philippines

Feb 11 - 24

Sept 28 - Oct 12

Adults: \$1995 Students: \$1695

## Uganda

March 24 - April 6

July 7 - 23

July 28 - Aug 2

Nov 3 - 19

Adults: \$1995 Students: \$1695

\* Gorilla trek excursion offered July 20, limited availability, please sign up for the trip and the gorilla trek excursion by February 18, 2020.

10-day mission trip

## Cuba

Oct 20 - 29

Application deadline July 8, 2020

Adults: \$2295 Students: \$2295

## Romania

May 6 - 14

Adults: \$1795 Students: \$1695

## Romania/Israel

May 6 - 23

Application deadline February 4, 2020

Adults: \$3695 Students: \$3495

Israel excursion is double occupancy, includes roundtrip airfare from Hungary to Israel, is not deductible, and there is an additional \$200 non-refundable deposit to excursion travel agent.

8-day mission trip

## Guatemala

June 6 - 11

Adults: \$995 Students: \$895

3-day mission trip

## Mexico

July 24 - 26

Trip Cost: \$200 App Fee: \$50

Driving or carpooling is required for this trip.

Apply now @ [h4ki.org/trips](https://h4ki.org/trips)

All trip dates are subject to change. One month application deadline on all trips unless otherwise noted. \$250 application fee for all trips unless otherwise noted. The trip fee includes room and board, bottled water, outreach participation costs, and daily transportation to outreaches, when applicable. Trip fee excludes travel to destination, visas, vaccinations, and excursion costs. For more information regarding trips, including excursion information, please contact Amy at [teams@h4ki.org](mailto:teams@h4ki.org)

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Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

## CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

All United Methodist churches are connected through shared mission and ministry and united in their efforts to grow in love of God and neighbor, reach new people, and heal a broken world. Check out these news tidbits from the Minnesota Annual Conference, which serves all 360 United Methodist churches in the state.

- **Area makes 13,000 scarves for General Conference visitors:** Hundreds of United Methodists across the Dakotas-Minnesota Area and beyond have participated in the Lydia Project (after Lydia in Acts 16)—which will provide every delegate, bishop, visitor, and volunteer with a handmade purple scarf when they arrive in Minneapolis next May for the denomination's quadrennial gathering. Participants have collectively made roughly 13,000 scarves, which will be given to all who attend General Conference 2020, regardless of their role. "What I have learned through this experience is to not put limits on God's extravagance," said Rev. MaryAnne Korsch, who coordinated the Lydia Project and initially hoped for 5,000 scarves. "It's a tangible reminder that we love and serve a God who gives without limits. God's extravagance is for everybody." Thank you to all who have participated in this effort to provide radical hospitality to our siblings in Christ!

- **Navigating this liminal time:** Many have named this era in the life of The United Methodist Church a liminal one. Something has ended; a new thing has not yet fully emerged. It is disorienting as what is familiar fades away and what is to be is not yet clear, said Rev. Cindy Gregorson, Minnesota Conference director of ministries. She points out that there are no quick fixes, and this is a time of listening and learning. Drawing from author Gil Rendle,

she suggests the questions we need to hold in this season are: How will we now be with God? And how will we now be with one another? "Liminal times are messy and can be anxiety-producing for those us who have a hard time with the unknown," she said. "But this is where God shines. We are invited to enter into the mystery of this holy, creative work, and listen deeply for what God is up to."

### BRIGHT SPOTS IN OUR MIDST

- **Youth explore what it means to follow Jesus at The Event:** When we choose to follow Jesus, we have a new perspective and a new mission in the world. This is the message that 300 youth (and chaperones) explored in early November when they gathered in St. Cloud for "The Event," an annual conference youth gathering that drew people from 32 churches. "I hope these youth understand that following Jesus is a choice you make," said Youth Ministry Co-chair Sami Tierney. "When you choose to follow Jesus, you're a new creation and it impacts how you care about people and how you show up in the world. I want these students to know they have an opportunity to live that out every day."
- **Recovering Love Church transforms lives: Recovering Love Church in Richfield, which specifically targets those recovering from addiction, launched public worship seven weeks ago.** "The most important thing I've learned at this church is that I am powerless over the fact of God's love for me," said Michael Coyne, a recovering alcoholic who recently joined both the faith community and its launch team. "I have a stronger connection to God now than I ever have in my life." Rev. Brad Herman hopes that as the church becomes more established, it connects with clinical treatment centers and becomes an extension of their work.

### STAY CONNECTED!

"Like" the Minnesota Annual Conference on Facebook, follow the conference on Twitter and Instagram (@MinnesotaUMC), and sign up (at [www.minnesotauc.org](http://www.minnesotauc.org)) for e-newsletters. For more information about any of the items listed above, visit [www.minnesotauc.org](http://www.minnesotauc.org).

# First United Methodist Church ~December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 9:00a Sun School 9:00 Adult Groups 9:00 Coffee 10:30 Worship Service 11:30 Kids Lunch & Program Practice 11:30 First Things Radio	<b>2</b> 9:00am Christmas Church Decorating	<b>3</b> 9:30a UMW Executive Meeting 5:00p Worship Broadcast Ch 3	<b>4</b> 9:00a Bible Study 3:30p Lois Circle After School - KFC 6:30 Confirmation 6:30 Bible Study	<b>5</b> 6:30a Men's Breakfast @ Hardee's 2:00p UMW Pie Social at Sogge Home	<b>6</b> 6:30a McPrayer at McDonalds	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 9:00a Sun School 9:00 Adult Groups 9:00 Coffee 10:30 Worship Service Children's Christmas Program 11:30 First Things Radio	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 5:00 Worship Broadcast on Cable Channel 3  Last day for Christmas Cheer Box	<b>11</b> 9:00a Bible Study 2:00p Friendship Circle 6:30p Confirmation 6:30 Bible Study 7:00 Trustee Mtg 7:30 Finance Mtg 7:30 Staff Parish	<b>12</b> 6:30a Men's Breakfast @ Hardee's	<b>13</b> 6:30a McPrayer at McDonalds	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:00a Sun School 9:00 Adult Groups 9:00 Coffee 10:30 Worship Service 11:30 First Things 4:00p All Youth	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 1:00p Missions Team 5:00p Worship Broadcast on Cable Channel 3 5:30 The Dinner Table at Presbyterian Ch	<b>18</b> 6:30p Confirmation	<b>19</b> 6:30a Men's Breakfast @ Hardee's	<b>20</b> 6:30a McPrayer at McDonalds	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:00a Coffee 9:00 Adult Groups 10:30 Worship Service 11:30 First Things Radio	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b> Candlelight Service 4:00pm Church office closed 	<b>25</b> <b>Christmas Day</b> Church Closed	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 9:00 Coffee 10:30 Worship Service 11:30 First Things Radio	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Church office Open 9am - Noon			Historical Society Tree Display Dec 1-22 Vote for our First UMC Tree!	 adore him

# First UMC Birthdays & Anniversaries ~December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Jerry & Barb Torkelson	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Danielle Ambrose Jan Dehmlow Jerry Torkelson	<b>5</b> Karina Buresch Mavis Thompson	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Sharron Tibodeau Jason & Sarah King	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Jim Glidden	<b>12</b> Jan Falk Becky Stevens	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Moesha Blodek Wayne Wormstadt	<b>21</b> Betty Haack
<b>22</b> Harold Johnson	<b>23</b> Eric Pfeffer	<b>24</b> Tom Christensen	<b>25</b> Roger Ambrose	<b>26</b> Jerry Moon	<b>27</b> Rebecca Marker	<b>28</b> Marjorie Eichner
<b>29</b> Dana Krumrey Josh & Miranda Schunk	<b>30</b> Jake VanNorman	<b>31</b> Margaret Grunig Jamie Thiessen		Updates and additions are welcome! Please let the church office know.	Green = Birthdays Red = Anniversaries	