

December 2020 Newsletter

The people who
walked in
darkness have
seen a great
light

Isaiah 9:2



First United Methodist Church
Pastor Mike McInnis
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Riots, Covid, Recession, Politics, Christmas

Which one of the following words don't seem to belong on this list:

Riots, Covid, Recession, Politics, Christmas...

If you said "Christmas," then you may need a refresher on what Christmas is—what is the historical context, and meaning of, Christmas. Because Christmas DOES belong on that list!

Not only did Christmas—the birth of Jesus—happen in a world full of unrest, political intrigue, military oppression, dis-ease, and uncertainty—Christmas happened precisely because we live in such a broken, dark, hopeless world.

Jesus came to us because the world; and every person in the world—including you and me—needs saving, and needs hope! We've proven—generation after generation, culture after culture, century after century—that we can't fix this mess on our own!

But in typical human fashion here's what we've done. We've exchanged "Christmas the holy day" for "Christmas the holiday." It's become a Norman Rockwell scene: sleigh bells, decorated trees, gingerbread cookies, Bing Crosby or Perry Como holiday songs (okay, and throw in some Alan Jackson and Martina McBride for good measure!) playing endlessly in the stores as we shop, spend and wrap our latest gift list prizes.

Please understand – I'm not against any of our wonderful Christmas traditions or festivities. But we have to be honest, the secular has overwhelmed the sacred, the spending gets more energy than the spiritual. And we exit the other side of Christmas just as exhausted and unchanged.

The year 2020 has been one long, pathetic mess! We don't dare ask, "What next?" I don't need to go through the litany of disappointments and disasters this year has been—you can easily recite the list! And, just when we thought things might be settling back down to normal, there's another run on toilet paper—seriously?! You have to laugh or you'll cry.

Cry—and lose hope. Because there has been disappointment piled on disappointment this year, and it's not over yet! We can't even resolve who was elected president of the United States!

Christmas is the Gospel; unfiltered, undiluted. The Gospel proclaims that we're lost in our sins and without hope—defeated, doomed to an awful end. Not pretty. Brutally accurate. Christmas looks with fierce honesty at our bleakness, our blackness; there's no sugar coating, there's no attempt to downplay our circumstances.

That's why, at Christmas Eve worship, instead of singing, "Silver bells," or "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas," we sing:

*And ye, beneath life's crushing load whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing.*

The world—and our lives—are a broken, dark, hopeless mess. Only a divine intervention can save us. Jesus comes to the rescue; Christmas is the celebration of that divine intervention. Join me in receiving and worshiping Jesus, our only real source of hope in 2020—and in any year!

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Mike





Important Announcement

Because of the rise in the number of Covid cases in Minnesota, our bishop has asked all Minnesota UMC churches to suspend in-person worship. Regular in-person church activities have also been canceled. We will be posting messages from Pastor Mike and/or streaming services as we navigate this time together. Thank you for understanding.

We apologize to you who do not use email; you may not have received notice in time for the November 22nd worship service. Due to the timing of the decision, there was not time to directly notify you that we were not meeting in person starting that Sunday. We provided ads on KDOM radio, but that may not have caught everyone. Thank you for your patience.

Congratulations to our students who were confirmed on Sunday, November 1st....

Alex Altman	Kaylan Donchez
Bradley Brown	Braydon Kreofsky
Kaleb Curry	Lucas Vesey
Kole Curry	Nyah Visker

Church Office Hours

At this time, the church office is open regular hours, but we aren't sure if there will be any changes as we navigate the current shutdown. If changes are made, we'll do our best to let you know ahead (weather events may be the exception!).

Monday—Friday
9:00am—Noon
1:00—4:00pm

Closed Thursday December 24

Closed Friday December 25

Church Family News

Here is an update on Baby Cora...

"We are so thankful as 6-week-old Cora Jean Mathiowetz got home on Tuesday, Nov. 10. She has made it over many hurdles and still has many to go. She has a feeding tube for now, taking meds, being monitored and has weekly appointments. So, thank you for the prayers, God is answering them . . . keep them coming! God is faithful and we rejoice in this milestone!"

A **celebration of life** service was held for Charles Elston November 14th. May the Lord bring comfort to all of Charles' family and friends.

Congratulations to students from our congregation who were in the homecoming court! They are Jadyn Wormstadt, Rylie Raverty, and Kaleb LaCanne.

Congratulations to Kevin Stevens for his reelection for Cottonwood County Commissioner for District 2, and to Dustin Stevens for being reelected to the Windom School Board.

Congratulations to current and newly inducted members of the National Honor Society from our congregation: Hunter Walklin, Clair Walinga, Kaylan Donchez, Delaney Smith, and Jadyn Wormstadt.

Congratulations to Aaron Walklin, a member of the Windom Area Schools' custodial staff, for going the extra mile. The custodians were named Windom Friends of Education in appreciation for all the extra work that this team has provided during this extraordinarily demanding time.

Congratulations to Delaney Smith who signed with USD to further her academic & track/field career.

Congratulations to Peggy Pfeffer, who has been named as an inaugural board member of the new Windom Area Foundation.

Christmas Eve



We don't know yet what Christmas Eve worship service(s) will look like, but we will let you know when we know.

Please watch your email or mailbox for an announcement when we get closer.

On Sunday, December 6th we will celebrate Holy Communion from our homes online through our service on Facebook or by listening to our First Things ministry on KDOM radio AM 1580.



Sealed Communion elements will be available at the church's Welcome Center for you to pick up prior to December 6th (available starting Monday November 30th). Or, if you prefer, you can provide your own juice or wine and bread.

The church's library is open! Hand sanitizer is at the door for you to use before entering. When the church office is open, the library is open.



Just in case!



Weather Announcements

We don't know when we'll be returning to in-person services and activities, but when we do, you may want to check these media resources to stay informed when there is a winter weather event. The church may be closed during winter weather events.

Please check with the following media for weather-related church announcements:

Jackson KKOJ radio 1190AM
Windom KDOM radio 1580AM
Windom TV cable channel 3



[Facebook.com/FirstUMCWindom](https://www.facebook.com/FirstUMCWindom)

First Things Radio Ministry

Our 2021 **First Things** radio ministry calendar has dates available for sponsorship. As of this printing, all Sundays in January are available for sponsorship: January 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31. If you are interested in sponsoring a broadcast for \$34, or if you have questions, please contact Jody Derickson at the church office at 831-3284 or by email at umtreasurer@windomnet.com.

Ways to Give

- Collection boxes are available at the in the church lobby
- By mail: 974 6th Street, Windom MN 56101
- Online at www.windomfumc.org
- Download the Give + app for one-time giving, or for recurring gifts

Thank you for your support of the ministry and missions of First UMC.

**SHARING
BRINGS JOY**
TO US. TO OTHERS. TO GOD.

DECEMBER 2020

Christian Education

No Sunday School
December 27th and
January 3rd
Classes resume
January 10th.

Special Points of Interest:

- Dec 2nd—KFC from 3:30-5:30 in the Fellowship Hall.
- Dec 6th— Youth group meets 4:00pm, we will be drawing names for a gift exchange to be held at our Christmas Party
- Dec 13th—Jr. High Youth group meets at 4pm
- Dec 16th—Children's Christmas Program for immediate family and Grandparents. 6:30pm
- December 20th Youth group Christmas party. We will meet from 11:30-2pm
- December 27th— Church wide sledding at 2pm. Hot chocolate following in Fellowship Hall

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 will be having a Christmas Program, *A Blessed Christmas*, for immediate family & grandparents on Wednesday, December 16th at 6:30pm.

Our Sunday school students will present a

Christmas musical. Remembering, even during the hard times, that Christmas is a blessing to all of us.

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, Kathy Jo McInnis, our Sunday School Teachers, and of course our Sunday School Students.



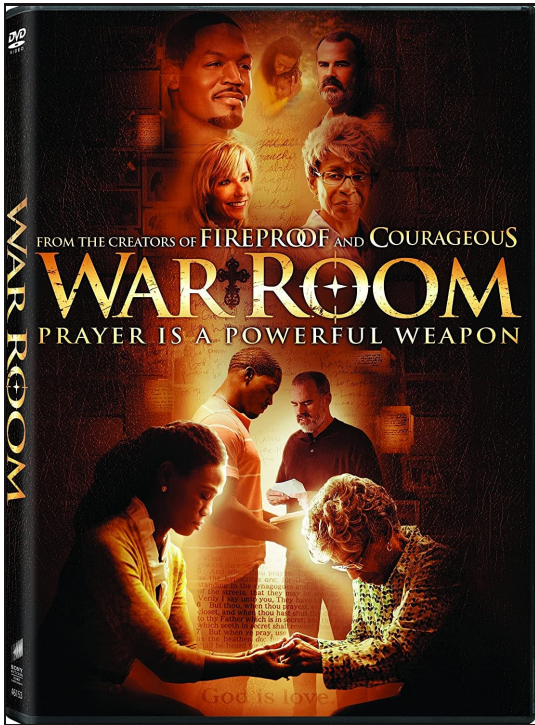
All events, dates, and times are subject to change. Please watch our church's facebook page and your email for any announcements.

KFC meets Wednesday, December 2nd at 3:30pm in the Fellowship Hall.

We will be making gifts for the Nursing Home residents.

If you have any questions, need a ride, or to RSVP please contact Robin.

Join us on Saturday, December 19th at Windom's State Theater for a **FREE** showing of War Room The movie begins at 11:00am and is rated PG. The movie is open to everyone, invite your family and friends. We will see you at the movie, and don't forget to pick up some hot popcorn!



With great jobs, a beautiful daughter (Alena Pitts) and a dream house, the Jordans seem to have it all. Appearances can be deceiving, however, as husband Tony (T.C. Stallings) flirts with temptation and wife Elizabeth (Priscilla Shirer) becomes increasingly bitter, crumbling under the strain of a failing marriage. Their lives take an unexpected turn for the better when Elizabeth meets her newest client, Miss Clara (Karen Abercrombie), who encourages the couple to find happiness through prayer.



Church-wide Sledding!
Tuesday, December 27th
at 2pm.

Meet at Abby Hill!

Hot Chocolate Following
Sledding in the
Fellowship Hall.





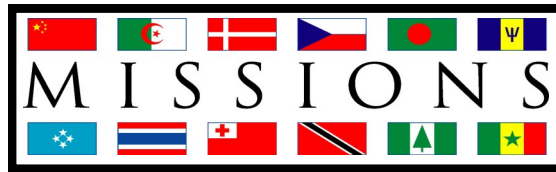
CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS FOR OUR PASTOR AND HIS WIFE

It is our congregation's custom to offer a monetary gift to Pastor Mike and Kathy Jo for Christmas. If you would like to participate, please give your cash gift to the church office no later than Monday, December 21st. You are also welcome to put your gift in an offering collection box, designated for "Pastor's Gift", or mail it to the church at 974 6th Street, Windom.

If your gift is by check, please write a separate check payable to 'cash'. The cash gifts will be combined and presented to Pastor Mike and Kathy Jo in a card on Christmas Eve.

Thank you,
The Staff Parish Team

P.S.
Pastor's newsletter copy doesn't include this page!



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'.



the Dinner Table

Thank you to all the donors and volunteers who make this mission to serve our community possible! Our next serving date will be Tuesday, December 15th (please note the date change due to Christmas week).



How does the Salvation Army help families? They directly assist families in many ways, including camps and recreation programs, food assistance, holiday programs, housing aid, and activity centers. Other services such as adult rehabilitation and worldwide disaster relief also help families directly or indirectly. The Salvation Army is both a church and the second-largest U.S. charity, according to Forbes. Helping families is one of the major focuses of the Salvation Army's benevolent work.

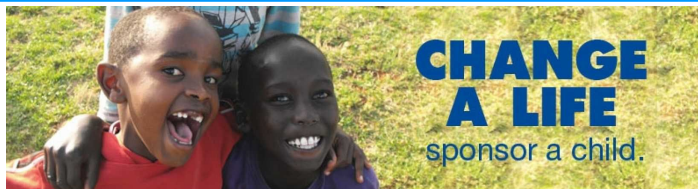
Christmas Cheer Box



For Infant to age 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 made out to the church with Christmas Cheer Box in the memo. The collection deadline at the church is Monday, December 7th.



CHANGE A LIFE
sponsor a child.

Children need our help now more than ever due to Covid lockdowns.

The 2021 Hope 4 Kids International Giving Guides are available in the church lobby, or by email on request. There are suggested prices in every range to bless others through this mission outreach.

Ruby's Pantry, America's Rural Foodbank, will have a food distribution Monday, December 21st from 5:30—7:00pm, at the Regional Worship Center, Sherburn MN. There are no income qualifications.

They will be doing a drive-thru again. They ask that you have your trunks ready to go as the food will be placed directly in the trunk by their great volunteers. Come and be blessed with an abundance of food for just \$20 (cash only).



America's Rural Foodbank



December

31 Day Scripture Writing Plan

Each of the scriptures below takes ten minutes or less to copy out. Commit to spending ten minutes each day listening to God's voice as you simply copy these texts out of your Bible.

Day 1-Isaiah 7:14-17
Day 2-Isaiah 9:6-7
Day 3-Isaiah 11:1-5
Day 4-Isaiah 11:6-10
Day 5-Isaiah 40:1-5
Day 6-Isaiah 52:7-10
Day 7-Jeremiah 33:14-16
Day 8-Psalm 72:1-7
Day 9-Psalm 72:8-14
Day 10-Psalm 72:15-20



Day 11-Psalm 95:1-7
Day 12-Malachi 3:1-3
Day 13-Matthew 1:18-20
Day 14-Matthew 1:21-25
Day 15-Matthew 2:1-6
Day 16-Matthew 2:7-12
Day 17-Luke 1:26-29
Day 18-Luke 1:30-34
Day 19-Luke 1:35-38
Day 20-Luke 1:46-50

Day 21-Luke 1:51-56
Day 22-Luke 2:4-7
Day 23-Luke 2:8-12
Day 24-Luke 2:13-16
Day 25-Luke 2:17-20
Day 26-Galatians 4:4-7
Day 27-Philippians 2:5-8
Day 28-Philippians 2:9-11
Day 29-James 1:16-18
Day 30-Titus 3:3-7
Day 31-Choose your own verse



Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.
Psalm 119:18

First United Methodist Church ~December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Please note that the calendar this month is subject to change!	1	2	3	4	5
6 10:30 Online Worship Service 11:30 First Things Radio	7 Last day for Christmas Cheer Box	8	9	10	11	12
13 10:30 Online Worship Service 11:30 First Things Radio	14	15 5:30 The Dinner Table at Presbyterian Ch	16	17	18	19
20 10:30 Online Worship Service 11:30 First Things Radio	21	22	23	24 Please stay tuned as we determine what our Christmas Eve will look like in this unusual time 	25 Christmas Day Church Closed	26
27 10:30 Online Worship Service 11:30 First Things Radio	28	29	30	31		

First UMC Birthdays & Anniversaries ~December 2020

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