

United Methodist Church  
PO Box 94  
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Boyceville, WI 54725

Return Service Requested



Newsletter of Boyceville, Faith and Grace  
United Methodist Churches  
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December 2020

The Gleaner

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In Proverbs it says: “In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.” (Proverbs 16:9 NIV)

In the past I have been reminded many times that I may plan a course to follow only to have something happen which changes it. Sometimes it’s a matter of making a list of things to accomplish in one day or a week only to realize in the end that it couldn’t be done in the length of time I had allotted.

This year has been different. Course changes have been major rather than the relatively minor changes that seem to happen. As Covid-19 has almost every county in our country in red, it has become evident that things will be different this year as we journey through Advent to Christmas. Some of the sustaining rituals during this time, include lighting the Advent candles followed by the candlelight Christmas Eve service, the music, the lessons, and the light, will not be held as usual. Ritual/ traditions are important to us but sometimes they need to be continued, only differently.

I can’t help thinking about Mary and Joseph. They had planned their course. They were engaged to be married. I have to believe they were to have a wedding that was traditional for the time. But that all changed when Mary was told God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus, God incarnate. Joseph planned to divorce her quietly when an angel in a dream told him not to be afraid but to take Mary as his wife and to raise the child as his own. And if those weren’t enough changes to their planned course, the government decided to have all males go to his hometown to be counted. It couldn’t have happened at a worse time as the pregnancy had progressed to a point that the baby could come at any time. Imagine the uncertainty and fear they must have experienced. In some small way the world may have experienced some of this fear, and uncertainty this year, a fear and uncertainty that most people in countries such as ours have not experienced in recent memory.

When we focus on what we originally planned to do we miss celebrating the things we did accomplish, blessings we received along the way as we learned to do things differently. Mary and/or Joseph could have chosen to say no, we are going to do things the way we planned, the way they always have been done. Instead, they set aside their plans to follow the steps established by the Lord. And what did we receive, God Incarnate, fully God, fully human. Radical love come down at Christmas.

As we journey through Advent to celebrate Christmas, the birth of God with us rather than some inaccessible god out there someplace, we are given an opportunity to find the blessings as well as the grieving in continuing traditions but differently.

Leadership in these three churches has been busy exploring and planning ways to carry out traditions in different ways. Those who would like them will be mailed bulletins along with the message to follow for worship in home. Virtual worship will continue and can be accessed through the Boyceville website. And as you read on you will find information on a new phone service that should allow you to hear the message and other parts of the worship service.

You are invited to continue tradition, if differently, by joining in lighting of the Advent Candle. You can do this through lighting your own candles during the virtual worship service or as you worship following your bulletin.

If you do not have an Advent wreath one can be made by gathering four candles, place them in a circle, possibly on a plate, and adding a fifth candle in the center. The color and size of the candles does not matter, although if you have it, use a taller white candle in the center as this is the Christ Candle. Add some greenery if you would like or leave it plain. If you do not have candles let us know and someone will get battery operated tea light candles to you.

Unfortunately, at this time, we will not be holding in-person Christmas Eve services but there will be a virtual service, phone service, as well as bulletins mailed to those who would like them. Recognizing the fatigue and grief people are experiencing, we will also be providing a Blue (longest night) Christmas service on December 21st.

May Christ be with you as you journey through this Advent time.

May you experience joy this Christmas as we celebrate the birth of radical love come among us.

Pastor Shannon

## **Worship**

At present, all in-person worship and activities are cancelled. Weekly worship videos are available on the [boycevilleumc.org](http://boycevilleumc.org) website and the United Methodist Church of Boyceville Facebook page.

## **Sermon by Phone**

The Boyceville church is offering a new service, Sermon by Phone. Each week you can call into our Sermon by Phone telephone number and listen to the scripture reading and sermon. The phone number is 715-309-5114. This is a Menomoneie number, and it is a local phone number for Boyceville and Wheeler. There is no charge to listen to the sermon. The first sermon will be available to call Sunday, December 6 after 8 am. Each service will be available till the following Saturday afternoon. If you have any questions call Marguerite at 715-643-2164.

Sermon by Phone - call 715-309-5114. The message will change each week, but the phone number stays the same.



## Giving Thanks When It Is Hard

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the Lord is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations. (Psalm 100)

Many may find thanks-giving to be a real challenge in this pandemic year. Virtually no one has come through this year untouched by grief, loss, anxiety, illness, or financial challenge. We have been separated physically, and this has had significant emotional and spiritual implications for people around the globe. In many ways, this is a brand new experience for the majority of us, but it is helpful to remind us of what God's people have faced century after century throughout time.

The large majority of United States citizens have never been an oppressed people, though in this past year, we have seen the fruit of racial oppression in shocking ways. Planet-wide and historically, cultural oppression has been the norm rather than the exception. Even today, many people live hand to mouth, never sure where the next meal may come from, never have access to basic shelter, clothing, or healthcare. The shadows of fear, threat of violence, infant and childhood mortality, famine and disease, cover a significant population in our world.

This was normal for primitive, pre-modern people from the Hebrew culture. Imagine no clean water, no sanitation, no electricity, no technology, no travel, no entertainment that we all take for granted each and every day. A virus like the one we are dealing with today could easily wipe out a village, a tribe, a community, a culture, a society. Food was scarce most of the time – the practical reason (in addition to the spiritual) for fasting twice a week was to make sure food would stretch throughout the full year. No dentistry, no eye care, no antibiotics, no complex surgeries, no vitamins. People were considered old at 40, if they lived that long. Infant mortality was in excess of 70% in many regions. No air conditioning, refrigeration, no books, no movies, not TV, no computers – so many things we use to make our life easier.

Truly, my siblings in Christ, this is a time for us to rise above our losses, to heal from our grief, to move beyond our grievances and frustrations so that can focus on all that we have to be thankful for. We have many things that help us enjoy a quality of life, even in the midst of the pandemic.

One thing we share with our pre-modern Hebrew ancestors though is that we have been gifted with loving relationships and community. People are the greatest gift God gives us, second only to the gift of God's Son, Jesus the Christ. We have grown even more grateful for our relationships as we have been denied close contact. Let us rejoice in the gift of partners and children, grandchildren and siblings, friends and neighbors, community and culture. We may not be able to gather with loved ones for traditional Thanksgiving gatherings and meals, but we still have loved ones. Hold in prayer all

those who have lost family and friends through this COVID-19 pandemic and celebrate with joy those whom you cannot see in person this year.

Imagine what it will be like when we can reunite safely and comfortably, engaging in hugs and kisses and table fellowship and enjoyment of one another's company! We will offer a different kind of Thanksgiving then, but this year, let us rejoice, let us give thanks to God, and let us reach out in whatever way we can to tell people what gifts they are to us in this challenging year. Make a joyful noise, give thanks and praise. Have a blessed Thanksgiving. Bless you all.

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

## Something different for Advent

Looking for a different way to prepare for Christmas? Willing to try something different? How about a virtual Advent study?

Purchase the book, read the chapter, and join in the Zoom discussion.

*Down to Earth*

*The Hopes & Fears of All the Years Are Met in Thee Tonight*

· By Mike Slaughter, Rachel Billups

When Heaven Comes Down to Earth, Greatness Gets Redefined.

A virgin birth. God's son...a helpless baby. Fleeing certain death. Nothing about the Christmas story is ordinary. Mike Slaughter says it's enough to confound the mind and make the heart contrite. In his book, *Down to Earth*, Slaughter presents a four-week Advent study that opens up God's Christmas surprise to us and examines how it changed everything.

Zoom meeting dates will be, Wednesday, December 2, 9, 16 and Monday December 21 at 6:30pm.

Please let Pastor Shannon know if you will be joining ([shannonmattison@yahoo.com](mailto:shannonmattison@yahoo.com)) and an invitation to the Zoom meeting will be emailed to you. If you have never used Zoom before, that's okay. We are all learning how to do things differently.

## Gleaner Deadline

NewsLetter  
**DEADLINE**

Gleaner news is due Tuesday, December 22nd. Please contact Tammy Nelson at 715-505-2657 or [rsmnelson@hotmail.com](mailto:rsmnelson@hotmail.com) with your news. Thanks. ☺

IN OUR  
*Thoughts and Prayers*

Angie Thomas	Samantha Christian	Pat Schoonover
Chloe Howey	Jackie Vos	Shirley Christopherson
Jeanna Hollister	Parker Knutson	Doris Herdahl
Jean McIntyre	Irene Schmidt	Virgil Schoonover
Family & Friends of Les Tracy		Missionaries
Victims of Violence and Natural Disasters		Food Harvest Ministry
Our shut-ins & those in nursing homes		Honduras Mission

A reminder: Please remember our shut-ins with calls and cards.

**Please keep our prayer list current by letting Pastor Shannon or Tammy know when names should be added or removed.**

### *Parish Birthdays and Anniversaries in December*

4 - LaVonne Nelson	16 - Sharon Zachow
5 - Thomas Dummer	17 - Wesley Danovsky
6 - Dianne Dummer	17 - Gail Mitchell
8 - Karen Wreford	17 - Kevin Smith
9 - Mark Vos	18 - Dellene Miller
10 - Kirstin Dummer	21 - Merlyn & Shirley Jones (anniv.)
11 - Jordan Carufel	22 - Dan & Julie Fedderly (anniv.)
11 - Mary Barstad	24 - Brooke Salsbury
11 - Eric Carufel	26 - Louise Roemhild
13 - Julia Hoff	27 - Shellie Dean
	30 - Gary & Gloria Kahl (anniv.)



### **Angel Tree at Boyceville**

We are sponsoring 10 children for Christmas, through Westcap. The Angel Tree tags are ready to go. Each child has three tags. Some tags will just have clothes on them. Don't worry, every child will receive fun items from their wish list. If you would like a tag or two or more, contact Marguerite, she will be happy to get you tags. Cash donations are always welcome. We are happy to shop for you. Call Marguerite at 715-643-2164 or email her at [crazy2quilt@gmail.com](mailto:crazy2quilt@gmail.com) to get a tag. Monetary donations can be mailed to: Marguerite Blodgett, N9996 320th St., Boyceville, WI 54725. Please make checks out to the church. Gifts need to be to Marguerite by Saturday Dec. 12th.

# *Faith United Methodist Church News for December*

Worship Service at 8:30 am



- To Dean and Leslie Frisle for the monetary donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of Darlene Wilcox.
- To Bill and Margie Wiseman, Barbara Bender, Chris and Robin Burke, and Roxanne White for the monetary donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of Darlene Heller.
- To Barbara Bender for the monetary donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of Marcella Kahl.

## *Faith United Methodist Women*

Faith United Methodist Women and others cleaned the church in October. The World Thank Offering program was in November. Robin Burke was in charge of it. With no fundraising this year because of the pandemic, we will not be doing any of the mission projects or giving of fruit baskets at Christmas time. Also, there will be no meetings in December or January. We did pledge \$100 for our 2021 District pledge, and if things change in the future, we will try to contribute more.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed Holiday Season.





And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in the manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.



## Giving Giving Wholeheartedly December 2020

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)*

Is **Giving Wholeheartedly** a minor stewardship theme **OR**, is it the whole point of being a follower of Christ? Is **giving wholeheartedly** the essential to having a relationship with the Creator? Is **presenting our gifts to God** not just an important part of Sabbath worship, but is it the central and most important part and the true reason for our worship?

**“Giving Wholeheartedly** means committing ourselves entirely to the mission and ministry exemplified by the life of Jesus Christ. This means that **every** bit of time, **every** bit talent and **every** bit of treasure, even that which we spend on ourselves and our families, is for God’s purpose.

**“Giving Wholeheartedly** means that when our hearts are open, our arms are open as well. When we are practicing our discipleship, we are sharing the love and grace with our neighbors near and far. We live out our love by reaching out to those in need, for example, Ruby’s Pantry food distribution that served 380 families and individuals this week.

“Finally, **Giving Wholeheartedly** means a willingness to give to the church so that whatever ministry unfolds, it is funded. **Giving wholeheartedly** provides opportunities for our local churches to be ready, willing and available to serve in whatever manner Christ calls us to serve.” [Source: Think Greater, Wisconsin Conference UMC]

**What we can conclude from this is that you need to give for your own spiritual benefit.** Not selfishly because it makes you feel good, but because it fulfills your need to be a faithful follower of Christ.

Jim Wells,  
Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation Helps for the Stewardship Chair  
Visit the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation at [www.wumf.org](http://www.wumf.org) or Facebook/wumf.org  
or call 1-888-903-9863

