BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



THE VISITOR

Volume 89, Issue 12

THE TWO STEEPLED CHURCH ON THE PRAIRIE

December 2024



Sunday School Reminders

Remember that we are now in our winter/spring schedule for church. This means that **Sunday School will now be BEFORE worship** service.
Sunday School will run from 9:45 to 10:45. Beginning in January, we'll also swap so that **ALL grade levels** will meet only on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month (previously it was only the youngest kids, but ALL grades will now be on the same schedule). As before, if there is **NO** public school (such as Christmas and New Year's break and Easter break) there is also no Sunday School.

Please make every effort to be in Sunday School this Sunday, Dec. 1st (for mini-rehearsal) and Sunday Dec. 15th (for Christmas program rehearsal and presentation). The 1st—3rd grade and 4th—6th grade will also have Sunday School on Dec. 8th as scheduled.

Sunday School Christmas Program



"Presence, Presents, and Gifts"
Shared by Preschool through
Confirmation Aged Youth
Sunday, December 15th
10:45 A.M. – During Morning Worship

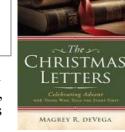
Sunday, December 15th you'll find the worship service a bit different from normal. This is the day that our Sunday School and Confirmation youth will be sharing their Christmas "program" with the congregation. Oh, wait! The congregation will be recruited to participate as well. Along with the familiar Christmas story, we'll be asking each person to reflect on their own personal gifts – that is, how each of us can help spread the

Light of Christ out into the world, in whatever big or tiny way that we're able. No action or words are too small. By program's end, Christ's light will, symbolically, be shining extra bright throughout the sanctuary. Hopefully, everyone will head out the door motivated to shine their own light for others. It only takes a spark. Following the service, birthday



cupcakes will be available to help celebrate Jesus' birthday in our Gathering Space. (There will be a sign-up sheet the next 2 Sundays asking volunteers to help bake/bring cupcakes.)

Prairie Lakes Parish Advent Study 'The Christmas Letters'



This December, we invite you to join in a time of connection, conversation, and reflection as we gather together for an

Advent Study based on Magrey DeVega's book, *The Christmas Letters*.

DeVega's writings have us looking at a special set of letters written to the earliest believers about the incarnation. We will look at Romans, 1 John,

Philippians, and Colossians to see what they reveal about the miracle that God became human in the birth of Jesus.

May this be a wonderful time together as we prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas.

Our Advent Study, open to all in our Prairie Lakes Parish, will be led by Deb Miller and Cindy Saufferer, at the following dates, times, and locations:

Sundays, December 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd 9:30 A.M. – Blooming Grove UMC 2:30 P.M. – Janesville UMC

Contact Deb (507-213-8011) or Cindy (507-363-9380) to let them know if you would like to be part of our Advent Study. They have books waiting for you – available at no charge!

December 2024

Blooming Grove Morning Worship.10:45 am Sunday School...9:45 am

Janesville Afternoon Worship.....4:00 pm Waterville Evangelical Morning Worship...9:30 am

Sunday Sen	Sunday School9:45 am					
9:30 AM Advent Study at BG 2:30 PM Advent Study at Janesville	2	3	4 6-7 pm Acts 29 at WV	9:30 am Parish Bible Study at Cool Wave/ WV 7 pm WV Jail Ministry/Rice County Jail	Pastor's Day Off	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9:30 AM Advent Study at BG 2:30 PM Advent Study at Janesville		4-6 pm Free Diaper Give- away at WV	6-7 pm Acts 29 at WV	7 pm WV Jail Ministry/Rice County Jail		10 am—Noon Cookie Walk at Waterville
					Pastor's Day Off	
9:30 AM Advent Study at BG 10:45 am Sunday School Program at BG 2:30 PM Advent Study at Janesville	23	24	18 6-7 pm Acts 29 at WV 11:30 am Prayer Brunch At Oscar's in Waseca	9:30 am Parish Bible Study at Cool Wave/ WV 7 pm WV Jail Ministry/Rice County Jail	Pastor's Day Off	hello winter
9:30 AM Advent Study at BG 2:30 PM Advent Study at Janesville		Christmas Eve Services 4:30 pm—BG 6:00 pm—JV 7:30 pm—WV	Christmas Day	7 pm WV Jail Ministry/Rice County Jail	Pastor's Day Off	20
29	30	NEW YEARS EVE			Parament Colors December 1 Blue December 8 Blue December 15 Blue December 22 Blue December 24 White December 29 White	

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. Sunday School 9:45 a.m.

Worship Time Notes:

December – May:

• BGUMC Morning Worship switches to 10:45 A.M. (our 6-month rotation with Janesville UMC) to allow time to assess weather, road conditions, and the church parking lot for all involved, including Pastor Kathy and her travels from Janesville.

1 1	Sun Sun	9:30 am 2:30 pm	Advent Study at BG Advent Study at Janesville
5	Thur	9:30 pm	Bible Study at Cool Wave
8	Sun	9:30 am	Advent Study at BG
8	Sun	2:30 pm	Advent Study at Janesville
14	Sat	10:00 am	Cookie Walk in WV
15	Sun	10:45 am	Sunday School Program
15	Sun	9:30 am	Advent Study at BG
15	Sun	2:30 pm	Advent Study at Janesville
18	Wed	11:30 am	Prayer Brunch at Oscar's, Waseca
19	Thur	9:30 am	Bible Study at Cool Wave
22	Sun	9:30 am	Advent Study at BG
22	Sun	2:30 pm	Advent Study at Janesville
24	Tues	4:30 pm	Christmas Eve Service at BG

We invite you to join us for any of the Christmas Eve Services within our Prairie Lakes Parish

♦ 4:30 P.M. Blooming Grove UMC

♦ 6:00 P.M. Janesville UMC

♦ 7:30 P.M. Waterville Evangelical UMC



Prayer Brunch
At Oscar's,
1290-1380 State Street North
Waseca, MN
Wednesday 18th - 11:30 am
All are Welcome

Treasurer's Report

October 25—November 24, 2024



General Budget Income Cemetery Run for the Loaves Study Books Thanksgiving Basket	\$ 3,118.00 500.00 280.00 300.00 604.28			
Total Income	4,802.28			
Expenses Pastor's Salary Telephone Excel Energy Cleaning Food Shelves	2,223.64 57.40 124.32 255.00 1,034.58			
Total Paid Out	\$ 3,694.64			
(Net Income:	+ \$1,107.64)			
Building Addition				
Income Restoration	\$ 250.00			
Total Income	\$ 250.00			
Expenses Loan Payment Total Paid Out	\$ 5,505.13 \$ 5,505.13			
(Net Income:	 \$5,255.13)			
Restoration Fund Balance	\$55,996.17			
Building Addition Loan	\$210,758.79			





1	Dawn Karsten	
4	Walter Karsten	

6 Carol Karsten7 Becky Lustig

8 Maisie Morgan

10 Joshua Kanne

12 Fred Fyvie

13 Emilie Adamek13 Weston Janke

17 Gabe Mullenbach

17 Doug Wilkowske

17 Cindy Kennedy

19 Katie Adamek

19 Jacob Gasner

21 Marlis Mahler

21 Deb Miller

26 Leah Krell

28 Riley Poe

29 Sophie Morgan

30 Marge Wilkowske

31 Kaitlyn Kanne

31 Matt Rollins



Adoration with Gratitude



And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.. Luke 2: 8-20 NIV

It's Advent dear ones, that time of year when we are in a season of preparations for the Christmas 2024 celebrations. It is a time when children are energized and excited. It is a time when party planners are rushed and harried. It is a time when we are searching for just the right gift for our loved ones and friends. UGH! Preparations, planning, searching—exhausting! Top our season's expectations with life's experiences, many that cause depression and sadness at the coming of this year's Christmas and it's easy to see how many of us come to dread this time of the year.

This year, your church has planned worship around the United Methodist Church resources that call us to *Come and Adore Him*. When many of us are dealing with so much these days, how can we be about a spirit of adoration? I ask, "how can we not be about a spirit of adoration?" Our Christmas story from the Apostle Luke reminds us that the angels came to shepherds, merely living life—working in their fields doing what shepherds do—watching over their flocks. The angels brought incredible news to those simply living life. Friends, if we open our hearts in this season, we will experience the incredibly Good News that reminds us that Christs' birth can change our living if we step into adoring Christ with spirits of gratitude. Christ came and changes depression and sadness with his abundant love and grace. Friends, let us spread the Word!

I hope you make time to gather and experience all that this season offers. Our parish worship opportunities are a part of this December newsletter. I am grateful for those who work to bring you your faith family's news and opportunities that include being in mission in your communities and around our world.

Merry Christmas dear ones. You are a blessing to Jerry and me!

Pastor Kathy

Pastoral Care



Note from Pastor Kathy King: Please call or text me if you would like me to visit or if there is a prayer concern that you prefer to keep private.

 Trudi, as she continues rehab/ recovery from surgery to repair a fractured hip. Keep Dick in your prayers as well, in his role as caregiver and advocate.



- The family of Joyce, Val Mullenbach's Aunt, who passed away.
- A friend of Lacey Spinler, who mourns the loss of her baby, and within that context, faces additional medical heartache.
- Shirley, the younger sister of Carol Karsten, who was hospitalized, and has now entered new living arrangements - at Foxdale Assisted Living & Specialty Care in Waseca.
- Marlis, as she works her way through physical therapy guidelines and regimens following recent hip replacement surgery.
- Carol as she recuperates from medical concerns.
- Sherry, as she continues chemo, and experiences additional medical concerns. Keep Sherry's family in your prayers as well, as they care for Sherry.
- Kallie, the daughter of Tracie Spinler's good friend, who was just diagnosed with a difficult medical condition.
- Ollie, young grandson of Patti Ellingson, as he undergoes testing and consultations for a heart condition. Also keep Ollie's parents in your prayers as they walk this road together with Ollie.
- Sharon, dear friend of Pastor Elden Eklund, who is experiencing medical concerns.
- For others in our BGUMC family journeying through many weeks and months of ongoing health concerns.
- All in our faith community who privately hold heavy concerns in their hearts and lives. Help us to reflect God's love and care through our words and deeds that they may know BGUMC as a place of solace, comfort, trust, and support.

In Sympathy

Duane Scott Gasner, age 98, of Owatonna, passed away on October 29th.

Duane was born on October 6, 1926, to Christian and Mabel (Dartt) Gasner. Duane was a cherished member of a large and loving family. He was preceded in death by his wife, Dessie



(Allen); a great-grandson Robert; and his siblings: Leslie, Christ Jr., Dorothy, Margaret, Robert, Russell, JoAnn and Vernon. He is survived by siblings Carol Karsten and Shirley Burdick; and sister-inlaw Beverly Allen.

Duane proudly served his country as an Army veteran during World War II. He was stationed in Germany during his service. After returning from the service, he embarked on a lifelong career as a carpenter, a trade he both mastered and adored. He worked for Jacobson & Casey Construction in Owatonna for many, many years until his retirement. In 1956, he built his family home where he resided until 2022. His craftsmanship also graced many structures in Owatonna, including Federated Insurance, the VFW & numerous family homes.

Duane was deeply devoted to his wife and family, finding his greatest joy in the time spent with his children and their families, including grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren.

Duane enjoyed the outdoors, mainly hunting and fishing and the many camping and fishing trips to Lake of the Woods with his sons, sons-in-law, and grandsons. Duane and Dessie and families enjoyed their French Lake cabin, especially the 4th of July gatherings. His passion for the outdoors was only matched by his skill in woodworking, which continued well into his retirement.

A man of integrity and kindness, Duane never spoke ill of others and maintained his sense of humor to the end. His life was a testament to the values of family, work ethic, and kindness. He will be remembered for his gentle spirit, his expert hands, and his heart full of love.



Blooming Grove UMC 2024 Adopt-a-Family All Gift Items & Cash Donations to church by Sunday, Dec. 8th

Each Advent, our congregation supports families in need through the

Adopt-a-Family program coordinated by the Medford High School National Honor Society and Student Council. We invite you to join in this amazing avenue of helping others.

How to Help

See below to find information about our 2024 Adopt -a-Family members and things they need or want for Christmas. Sign-up sheets can be found by the bulletin board in the SW corner of the sanctuary – please place your name by the items that you plan to purchase.

Donating and Shopping Tips

- ♦ If you can't make it to church to sign up, call Carolyn Kanne (507-475-0100) and she will note the items on the sign-up sheet for you.
- ◆ If you'd like us to do the shopping, please give your **cash** donation to Carolyn Kanne by December 8th, and indicate on the sign-up sheet what you want to provide.
- Please do not wrap items, but do mark them with the "E" code provided for each individual below.
- ◆ Purchases may be dropped off at the church or with either Carolyn Kanne or Hjordi Churchill.
- Items in red have already been purchased.
- ♦ All items/cash donations need to be at church by December 8th.

Thanks to everyone for helping to make this a Merry Christmas for our adopted family!

Family E

Needs:

- Dish Soap
- Sensitive Skin Laundry Soap
- Large Laundry Baskets
- Queen-sized bedding
- Wash Cloths
- Shower Curtain Liner
- Mom: Snow Pants XL
- Dad: Snow Pants 2XL

Wants:

- Gift Cards
- Family Game

E-1 Male, Age 13,

Shirt Size: Adult Large, Sweat Pants: Large, Jeans: 32/32

(Note from parents: "He is so smart and considerate of everyone else. I wish I could afford the things he wants.")

Needs:

- Durable Gloves
- Dog toys for his pet
- Cetaphil Face Wash
- Large Winter Coat
- Queen-sized Bedding

Wants:

- Acne cleanser life ProActive
- Gift Cards: Old Navy, Panda Express, WalMart, McDonalds
- Adidas Shoes (No shoe size provided. Perhaps a gift card to a store would work here.)
- Gaming Keyboard and wired mouse

E-2

Female, Age 9

Shirt Size: Junior Large, 10-12, Pant Size: 14-16,

Shoe Size: 5

Needs:

- Winter Boots
- Durable Gloves
- Hat
- Snow Pants
- Girl's Twin Bedding

Wants:

- Paint/Brushes
- Alcohol Markers
- Barbies
- Barbie toys/outfits
- Disney Descendants
- Baby Doll Alive
- Slime Kit or Tattoo Kit

E-3 Male, Age 6

Shirt Size: Child 6x or 7-8, Pants: Child 6x or 7-8, Shoe: 2

Needs:

- Winter Boots
- Durable Gloves
- Hat
- Snow Pants

Wants:

- Blue Robot
- Bubbles
- Foxy/Rockey Plushie
- Boxxie Plushie
- Pikachu Plushie

The Stretch—Come, let us adore Him!

By Cindy Saufferer Prairie Lakes Parish Love Through Justice Coordinator

Earlier this month, I received a text from my sister, Patty. It included a picture of her holding her three-day old granddaughter. Her expression of complete *adoration* captured my attention as she was completely present to the tiny life sound asleep in her arms.

Adore. What does it mean to adore someone or something? I am dating myself, but I can't help but hear Eva Gabor singing in my head "I just adore a penthouse view" from the sit-com "Green Acres". (You can thank me later for that little earworm!) With the theme song on a loop, I began my research.

Merriam-Webster defines adore as: 1.: to worship or honor as a deity or as divine. 2.: to regard with loving admiration and devotion. Knowing this helped with my earworm as the popular hymn O Come, Let Us Adore Him replaced Green Acres! With, Let Us Adore Him, firmly circling in my head, I continued by googling "adoration". This is where is gets interesting!

Roman Catholics practice "Adoration" and go to "Adoration". Of course, if you occasionally read my babblings held within these articles, you understand that this rabbit hole was more than I could resist! The full and proper name of this practice is "Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament". Within the Catholic tradition, it is thought that the person of Jesus Christ is truly present in the eucharistic host, the bread and wine of communion. With this is mind, the practice of Adoration is the actual being in the presence of the bread and wine, being *present with Jesus*.

My heart goes back to the image of Patty and her gaze upon little Arleigh Imagen. What I was witnessing was her love, devotion, and adoration all made obvious by her complete presence to the child. It prompts the question within me: *Is this the presence that is being asked of us this Advent season?*

Amid the hustle and bustle, shopping, partying, baking, decorating and elf on the shelf craziness, let us be a community that is *present* to the moment and the divinity held within it. Let us be *present* to Christ in all things this Advent. *O come, let us adore Him.*



Christmas Poinsettias



Greenwald's Nursery is again offering the opportunity to order poinsettias (red, white, pink) through them this year at a cost of \$20.00 (includes delivery to BGUMC). A double poinsettia will also be available for \$38.00. Please order your poinsettias by **December 11th**. If you choose, you may designate your poinsettia to be "in honor of" or "in memory of" someone important in your lives. These designations will be listed in a Sunday morning bulletin and the bulletin for Christmas Eve. A sign-up sheet is located at the back of the church or you can return this form to Chery Southworth, 26651 Elmore Avenue, Morristown, MN 55052 (Call or text (507) 339-3534 or Email Cherysouth@gmail.com). Make checks payable to BGUMC with "poinsettia" in the note section. Check can also be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church at PO Box 171, Medford, MN 55049.

Given By:			
Number	Size	Color:	Include Bow 🚨
Number	Size	Color:	Include Bow 🚨
☐ In Honor of			
☐ In Memory of			

Missions

Mission Team Updates



Upcoming Mission Opportunities at BGUMC

Looking ahead to January & February Hurricane Relief through United Methodist Relief Agencies

2023/2024 BGUMC Mission Team Thanks!

Our Mission Team is blown away by the generosity of heart, hand, and finances from the people of BGUMC during 2023 and 2024. With gratitude, we celebrate the unique gifts and talents that each person in our midst shares - to be the hands and feet of Christ. 2023 and 2024 provided many opportunities for us to be actively involved in our surrounding rural community - and beyond. In this context, we continue to build new relationships, strengthen existing relationships, and serve as a "caring soul" for individuals in need. See below for a list of ways that we helped to make a difference.

Advent Adopt-A Family (2023 and 2024)

Our congregation supports a family through our local Adopt-a-Family program, coordinated by the Medford High School.



Local Food Shelves (2023 and 2024)

Adopt-a-Family

We raised money for local food shelves by hosting several public events, at which all supplies were

donated, and all proceeds go to the food shelves:

- Spring Breakfast, hosted by the Men of BGUMC (2023 and 2024)
- Fall Outdoor Run 4 the Loaves 4-Mile Run/ Walk and Holy Hog BBQ Cook Off (2023 and 2024)
- Nov. Evening of Thanksgiving Fun (2023)
- Nov. Offering to support the Waseca Area Neighborhood Servicer Center & Food Shelf Thanksgiving Food Basket Program (2024)

Annual Love Offering of the MN Conference of the UMC (2023 and 2024)

We gathered donations for this offering - to support various service programs in MN, the USA, and overseas.

Prayer Shawl Ministry (2023 and 2024)

Artisans in our congregation knit/ crochet prayer shawls of warmth and love to be given to people in need of support and prayer. Our congregation "loads" each shawl



with prayers for its recipient before it begins its journey into their lives.



Emma Norton Restoring Waters Construction Project (2023)

Our Lent/Easter Mission offering supported this St. Paul organization/project, that provides transformational housing and growth for women and families on their journey of recovery.

Personal Dignity Kits for Midwest Distribution Center (2023)

We gathered materials for, and assembled, kits to be delivered to the United Methodist Mid-



west Distribution Center in Illinois, and from there, to be distributed throughout the USA & world.

United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries (2023)



We continued our ongoing mission-giving partnership with Lorraine Charinda and the Kamisamba Farm and Training Center (KFTC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and also supported T.P. & J.P., missionaries in SE Asia.

(Continued)

Mission Team Update—Continued



Winter Clothes for Medford Elementary School (2023)

We helped replenish the Medford Elementary School's supply of spare winter clothes for their students, to help keep children

warm who may not have access to much in the way of winter clothing.

Financial Support to Local Family (2023)

Persons from our congregation pooled donations to deliver as a Christmas gift to a local family whose husband and father lost his life in a tragic November farming accident at their home farm, located just five miles NW of our church.

Bethlehem Inn of Waseca (2024)

Our Lent/Easter Mission offering supported Bethlehem Inn, of Waseca, a faith-based organization that provides short-term transitional housing for homeless women & children, as well as social service connections to empower these families to be able to journey toward a more stable future.





Blankets and Backpacks (2024)

Our congregation partnered with the employees of Steele/Waseca Co-op Electric to make hand-tied double sided fleece blankets,

crochet/knit blankets, and purchase new blankets to be given to three local organizations for use in their work with people in need. In addition, through this project, new and used backpacks were collected, to be given to Bethlehem Inn for distribution to their residents, who often arrive with nothing more than the clothes on their backs.



Turkey Tracker Thank You!



Thank you to all who contributed to our November Mission Opportunity - raising \$724.28 to help provide Thanksgiving Food Baskets to folks in need through the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center! In this season of actively living out our gratitude for God's great love, your generosity speaks vol-

umes. Our Turkey Tracker says it all, with tail feathers too many to count - one for each \$20 we raised!

Each November, the Waseca Area Neighborhood Service Center and Food Shelf distributes Thanksgiving Food Baskets containing all the fixings needed to prepare a complete Thanksgiving meal to income-eligible families that might not be able to afford to buy these groceries on their own. In 2023, the Food Shelf distributed 200 Thanksgiving Bas-

kets to income-eligible families. In 2024, they anticipate that the number needed will increase to 250. Cost of each basket is somewhere around \$30 -\$40, depending on bulk pricing available at neighboring grocery stores and Walmart.





WEUMC Cookie Walk Saturday, December 16th 10:00 am to Noon

It's time again to think about those mouth-watering cookies and fudge!
Waterville Evangelical UMC would like to invite you to their cookie walk which will be held on Saturday, December 14th from 10:00 am until noon. Cookies will sell for \$8.00 per pound. Come walk around the tables that will be decorated in a White Christmas theme.

You won't be disappointed! Something for everyone!

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED to: Box 171, Medford, MN 55049

The Blooming Grove Visitor Since 1936

Blooming Grove United Methodist Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 171 Medford, MN 55049-0171

Physical Location: 43089 180th Street, Morristown, MN 55052 (NE corner of Waseca County)

Website: Www.bloominggroveumc.org Email: <u>bloominggroveumc@gmail.com</u> Check us out on Facebook!

Pastoral Care and Emergency and General Pastoral Questions:

Pastor Kathy King kking5@hickorytech.net 507-382-2483

Join Us

If you are interested in becoming a member of Blooming Grove UMC, see Pastor Kathy.



December 2024

Requests for Prayer Chain Email: Pastor Kathy King at: kking5@hickorytech.net

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May You Be Filled With the Wonder



May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child.

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. (Author unknown)