



The Circuit Rider

United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon



304 1st Street SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Telephone: 319.895.6286

www.umcmv.com

email: alisondix@umcmv.com

December 2020

Pastor's Letter

Dear Ones,



Rev. Terra
Amundson

In her book December Hearts, Anne McConney writes:

"The time of Advent is a strange time, a season of dark, a season of waiting. It is also, oddly, a season of movement and journeying, a season of discovery. It carries with it a powerful sense of a place left behind and a place not yet reached. Advent is filled with loss and regret and unshaped possibilities. Advent sings to us of death and birth and rebirth."

McConney goes on to write about the Australian custom called walkabout. When one feels a need for spiritual renewal, he or she sets out to go where chance or fate or impulse might take them to see the world as it is on that particular day, week, month, or year. It is a time to take in the present moment, in all of its complexity and fullness, to quench the thirst of the spirit. She then goes on to say: "In the Christian year, Advent is the season of the walkabout."

I think I can say with certainty that this Advent/Christmas season is unlike any which we have experienced previously. I know family gatherings and holiday traditions have been upended as our community, state, and nation are becoming overwhelmed by the spread of Covid-19. Many of us will not be seeing our family members in-person. Our Bishop and Cabinet have made the decision that all in-church worship and activities cease through January 10th in light of the staggering numbers of infections and hospitalizations in our state. We are taking a pause from in-person activities that hold such deep meaning for us. And we grieve these losses.

I do wonder: What if we can consider the disruption we are experiencing in this season as a "peculiar blessing"; a time in which we pay attention to the thirst deep within our souls? What if we can intentionally embrace the spirit of the walkabout, and to be attuned to the God's movement in the world, in our communities, in our own families? To have eyes open to the peculiar blessing that might be revealed at this time.

You will see in the newsletter and in the mid-week updates opportunities for on-line worship, study, connection, and reflection. We have gathered Advent Reflections written by congregation members that are placed in booklet form and will be distributed, as well as placed on-line. And I am available to wonder with, to question, and to support you.

I do not even pretend that this is an easy journey. But my prayer is that, in the light for the Spirit that is revealed as we are open, that this Advent season may reveal insight and blessing.

I hold you in my heart and in my prayers.

On the Journey, Pastor Terra



Our Advent Theme ...

Angels Among Us

#DoNotBeAfraid

A Time of Weekly Prayer and Reflection During the Season of Advent

During the season of Advent, I will be offering on our website a service of scripture, prayer, and reflection. The intention is that these meditative offering are available when you feel the need to pause, to quiet yourselves, and to take a breath and center yourselves.

The themes for each week are:

Week One: The Creative Breath

Week Two: Light and Darkness

Week Three: Obedience

Week Four: Birth and Rebirth

Blue Christmas Service

A Blue Christmas Service is offered especially for those hurting during the holidays. It is traditionally offered on or near the Winter Solstice - longest night of the year. Some come because they are mourning the death of a loved one. Some are far from home. Some suffer from illness, addiction, or estrangement. Some are lonely, struggling financially, or in conflict with another. Some hurt because of the great pain, need, and violence in our nation and world. And some will come struggling with the pain and disruption that this year has brought. The reasons for coming are many. We will offer this service virtually in the midst of suffering to remember God is good. God is strong. God is near. We are not alone and we have every reason to hold on to hope.

The Blue Christmas service will be posted on our website the week before Christmas.

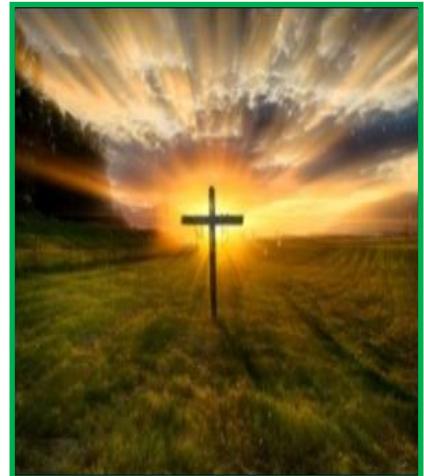
Coming Christmas Eve: “A Service of Prayer and Praise”

WORSHIP

It is ONLINE - on our website Sunday mornings!

Live ONLINE Worship from our sanctuary at
9:30 AM

or catch the Replay any time!



www.umcmv.com/covid-19-umcmv



We also made an ADVENT DEVOTIONAL with a daily reading written by someone in our church for every day. You can access it online if you did not get a written copy or let the church office know and we can get you a copy!

[Click here for Advent Devotional!](#)

*United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon
Advent Devotional
2020*

[https://www.umcmv.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Advent-
Devotional-UMCMV-2020.pdf](https://www.umcmv.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Advent-Devotional-UMCMV-2020.pdf)

For the sake of safety and health,
our building is currently closed.

The Church Office is open by appointment.

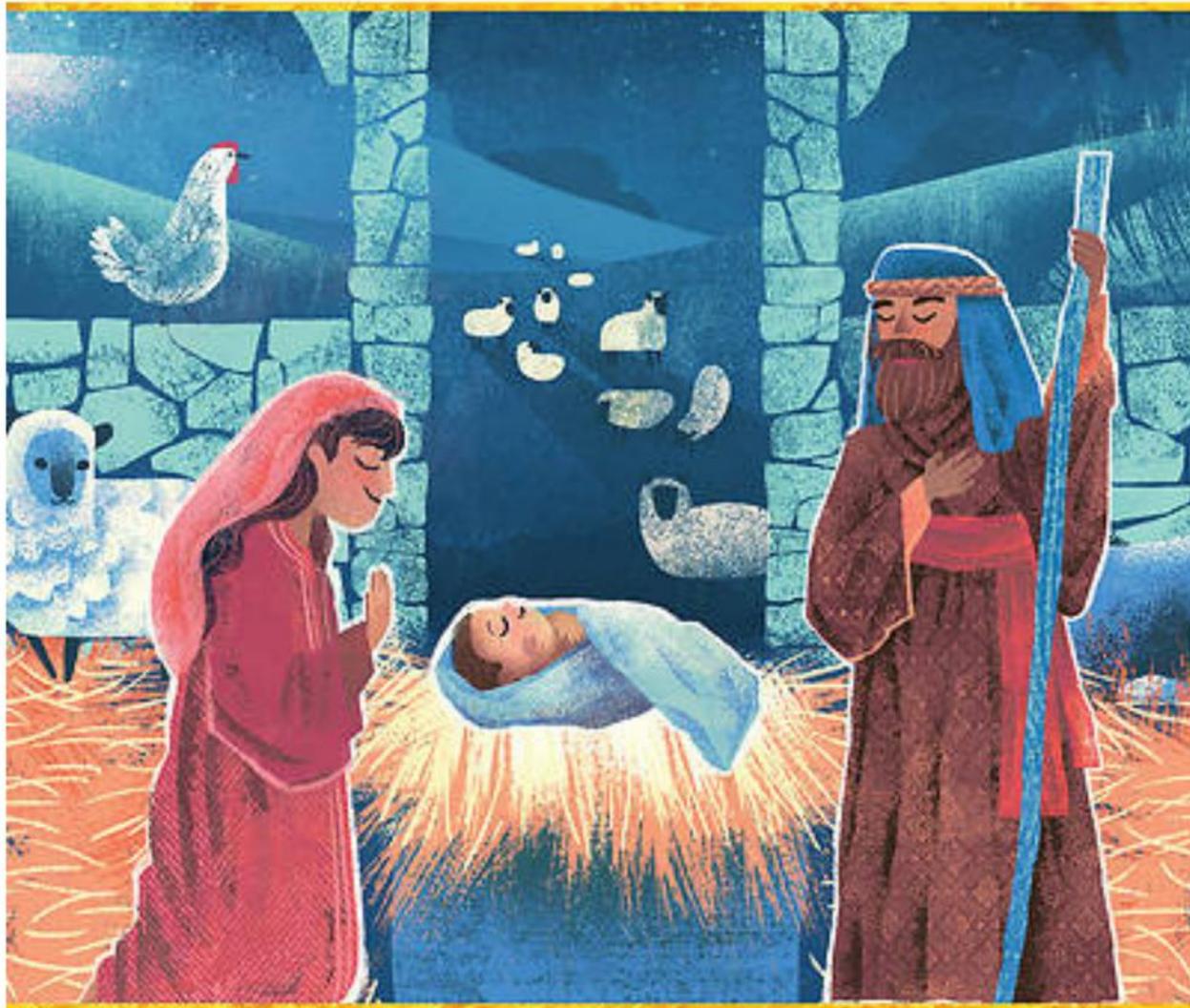
**Please contact Alison @ 319-895-6286 if you need to meet with her,
Pastor Terra or another staff member.**

If you need support, someone to talk to, or other assistance, we are here for you.

Pastoral Support Contact Pastor Terra Amundson 712-304-1517

**Congregational Care Contact Julie Baty 319-533-2349
Communications Contact Alison Dix 319-573-4801**

CELEBRATE THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS



*May God bless you and keep you
this Christmas season.*

Mount Vernon Community Preschool UPDATE

December 2020 - We are so proud of how the preschool children have grown socially and emotionally in these first three months. Children's independence is growing and they continue to form relationships with each other. We are constantly amazed by the excitement our young children bring to the classroom each day. The joy they show for learning, playing and being with one another is delightful!

If you would like to support the preschool this holiday season, donations will be used for scholarships, new toys, books, art supplies and materials for the classroom. We wish you all a Merry Christmas!

Sunday School News:

We have had so much fun so far this fall with our Celebrate Wonder Sunday School lesson videos.

I am so grateful for all the children (and parents) that have been tuning in, sending pictures of their “Sunday School” time, and making videos to share in the lessons.

I am so excited for what we have coming this month!



This Advent Season is going to be WONDER-ful!

Advent is a season full of wonder.

Children will be receiving Advent bags full of fun ways to appreciate this special time of year when we prepare our hearts and celebrate Jesus’s birth.

Families can spend time together with an easy Advent wreath activity, a 12 days of Christmas countdown, Christmas games, crafts, and more!



Bags also include the Winter session Celebrate Wonder Sunday school materials-including a new Wondercube and Family Activity book so we can continue to explore, wonder, and celebrate our faith together.

We hope these Advent bags will provide families a fun, faith-filled way to celebrate the wonder of Christmas.



Advent Avenue Event



Toilet paper, candy canes, blessings bags, Sunday school goodies, prayers, advent devotionals... there were so many fun things our church distributed!





DID YOU KNOW?.....

(History Article for December 2020)

Mt Vernon Churches “Feed the 5,000” (cont.)

The first “mucking out” Flood Mission team, 60 people from Christ United Methodist Church in Fairview Heights, Illinois, was due to come June 20 and leave June 27. They

would be staying in Cornell dorms and our newly created food brigade would provide evening meals for them at the Catholic Church.

Cornell had hired someone to coordinate the dorm stays, but Sue and Mark Anton wanted more of a welcome than that. They volunteered to put up welcome banners in the dorms, provided lemonade and cookies for the teams’ arrivals, and brochures and handouts with all the great things to visit in Mount Vernon and the area! A spirit of generosity is catching!

To save time and streamline the decision-making, the Flood Mission Meals planning team begged Barb Shepley and Diane Legore to plan the meals and then the churches would provide the food and persons to serve and clean up. That worked great. The Illinois team, including a number of teenagers, wanted to order in pizzas the first night so our first meal was on Sunday...pulled pork sandwiches, toss salad, a variety of beverages and Federated Church pie for 60! Pastors from the participating churches rotated to give the blessing. We even got a little bit carried away by providing dinner music! Denise Cardon brought the harp group to play during dinner, and we managed to have a hymn sing.

The next evening, pans of lasagna were brought in by the Methodists, the Presbyterians did the serving, the Lutherans brought the salad fixings, the Federated Church provided the pies, and the Latter Day Saints washed dishes and cleaned up. There was a lot of laughter and new friendships emerged. Everyone said “We ought to do this more often!”

This same scene went on for all of June and July. Some of the visiting teams wanted to save Friday evening to explore local restaurants or to take a picnic to the Pal. One of the most popular experiences was the band concert in the park! Some of our guests said they felt as if they were part of a Saturday Evening Post cover!

From June 20 to July 26, we served Mission teams from Christ United Methodist Church in Fairview Heights, IL (60), Westend Christ Reformed Church in Grand Rapids MI (39), Brunswick Reformed Church in Brunswick, OH (13), Zion Lutheran Church in Tinley Park, IL (30), First Baptist Church from Chariton IA (12), St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Higginsville MO (15), Faith UMC in Orland Park IL (18), and Blissfield UMC, Blissfield, MI (6). And our multi-church effort with Cornell College was featured on the front page of the SUN.

Best of all, of course, was that we witnessed to our faith, we broke down old barriers, we weren’t daunted by what seemed to be an unsurmountable task, and we let Christ’s love lead us. Our only goal was to make those we had never met feel welcomed, fed and thanked for the efforts they were making to help others.

-----Kay Graber, MVUMC Church Historian

POINSETTIAS

Since we will not be having in person services this Advent, we will be cutting back on holiday decorating within the church. This includes the poinsettias given in memory or in honor of someone. If you feel strongly about honoring a loved one please consider giving what you might spend on the flowers to SE Linn or another charity of choice. There are numerous needs out there, especially this year. This would be a great way of paying tribute to those loved ones.



Or if you would like to contribute to our church flower fund for future use, in memory of someone, you can do that too. We would be happy to list those you'd like honored in our Christmas bulletin and/or Circuit Rider. If you have questions, please contact Barb Shepley at 895-6566 or email brshepley@q.com.

Reminder if you had a Front Porch photo taken by Jeff Schmatt of Rubicon Photo this spring during the COVID-19 quarantine time, he is accepting orders from your family photos. If you would like to make prints, Christmas cards, or even photo Christmas ornaments. Contact Jeff at 319-895-8776 or jeff@rubicon-photo.com. Reminder a portion of the proceeds will be used to benefit our Mission funds.



ANGEL TREE - Online

[https://www.signupgenius.com/
go/60b0f44afa72aa31-angel](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0f44afa72aa31-angel)



The season of hope and giving is here. It's been an especially tough year for all of us in many ways; socially, emotionally, physically and for many, financially. In response to the pandemic, the Angel Tree is coming to you in a different way this year. UMCMV is again partnering with SELCC to assist elderly and families in need this holiday season.

We are also continuing support of Mission of Hope through the collection of winter coats for their clients in need, especially men. To ensure we can assist while staying safe during this time, members can sign up and donate electronically.

You can drop jackets off at the Hoffman family front step at 930 16th Avenue SW, Mount Vernon. Make no mistake that your support of these charities is especially critical during a time when many have seen a decline in donations and a rise in those requesting support.

Please also pray for these organizations as they work hard to assist those in need and that they are able to do this as safely as possible. My prayer is that our congregation is able to commit such that we need to create more signups slots!

Thank you. Jen Hoffman (319.721.3882)

December Birthdays

Samantha Back	12/01
Gregg Glenn	12/01
Matthew Morrical	12/03
Cody Connolly	12/05
Claire Light	12/05
Bill Meyer	12/05
Mackenzie Kraus	12/07
Kameron Brand	12/10
Becker Reinken	12/10
Trude Elliott	12/11
Alaina Pospisil	12/11
Vern Sand	12/12
Carew Kamaus	12/14
Joyce Loomis	12/15
Denae McGrath	12/16
Oscar Krapfl	12/20
Tyler Roos	12/20
Todd White	12/22
Trevor Baty	12/26
Denise Havill	12/26
Stephanie Boggs	12/27
Brogan Meyer	12/28
Donna Walters	12/29
Teresa Bothell	12/30
Russell Yeater	12/30

Happy December Anniversaries!!

Roger & Marilyn Schnittjer	12/21
Harry & Sherryl Osborn	12/23
Beth & Preston Johnson	12/28
Al & Barb Shepley	12/28

WE MAKE A **LIVING** BY
WHAT WE GET,
BUT WE MAKE A
LIFE BY
WHAT WE GIVE.

~WINSTON CHURCHILL

Giving Opportunities

We will be sending out a SIGN UP GENIUS for Angel Tree 2020 (we will be doing it a little different this year) so be watching for that!

SE Linn Community Center

- <https://selinn.org/>

Matthew 25 HUB

<https://www.hub25.org/donate25/>

Mount Vernon Community Preschool

Send donations to Church, we are collecting support for their mission as they could hold their cookie walk this year.

Kids in Need— Care Packages for Kids

Our traditional Christmas Eve offering is given to MV & Lisbon schools to use in emergency need situations. Send to Church—Christmas Eve

PRAYER LIST

Prayers for Healing:

- For Jan White who has recently been hospitalized
- For Pastor Terra as she has surgery this week on Wednesday, also prayers for a positive outcome
- For Barb (Jeff Walter's aunt) who is in the hospital with Covid-19
- For Kelly Moore (Babs Moore's nephew in Texas) who is having sudden and unexpected heart issues
- For Ruth Reckling who is currently at Lisbon Rehabilitation Center, following a fall at home. Ruth is hopeful to possibly return home this week
- For Stephanie Hotz's mother, Toni, who is dealing with health issues
- For Mike Ryan as he continues to manage back issues and is gaining strength through physical therapy
- For Pat Sorgenfrey as she continues to struggle with an infection that has been hard to treat. Prayers for her continued good spirits in the midst of discomfort and that the medical team can find the right treatment to give Pat longterm relief
- For Gavin Hayes (Marilyn and Roger Schnittjer's nephew) who continues to fight cancer. Specific prayers that he will stay healthy as his immune system tries to rebuild, and that his most recent procedure will prove to be successful
- For all who are currently infected with the COVID-19 virus and their family members
- For all our friends and family members who are fighting the battle against cancer

Prayers for Comfort and Strength:

- For the family and friends of Erin Scott (Ruth Miller's niece) who died suddenly last week following a common surgical procedure. Her immediate family includes husband, Paul, and teenage sons, Nate and Connor
- For the family and friends of Ron Frantz (especially Stephanie) who passed away November 29th, due to alzheimer's and Covid-19
- For Judy and Don Stine as they continue to cope and adjust to Judy's cancer diagnosis. Prayers for Judy's quality of life to continue to be good for as long as possible, enabling her to do things she enjoys as she continues to embrace each new day
- For anyone who is working in the healthcare field or another "frontline" occupation during this pandemic and unprecedented time. Prayers for their safety, strength and comfort
- For those who are feeling lonely or isolated due to recent changes in how we live day to day. Prayers that they will reach out to others, that God will comfort them, and we will all make extra efforts to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus
- For those worrying and anxious about health issues
- For all who are struggling: emotionally and spiritually
- For individuals and families who are under financial stress
- For those suffering silently with anxiety and depression
- For this church, this building, these people, and ways to love on and stay connected with one another even if we are not in worship services together
- For all not mentioned by name who are mourning the loss of a family member or friend

Prayers for Transition:

- For school administrators, the school board members and teachers as they work to serve students and families this year
- For the leaders of our church here at UCMV to know how to lead us and what to do in these unusual times
- For the United Methodist Church: including the global church, the Iowa Conference and our Mount Vernon congregation

Prayers for Sustenance:

- For the children in Sibiu, Romania being served at The Super Kids Day Center and the staff who are ministering to them. Specifically, prayers for Pastor Cristi and Ligia
- UCMV Stephen Ministers and Care Ministers
- Mission of Hope
- Women at the Well United Methodist Church

Prayers for our Nation and our World:

- May we evidence Christian love for one another
- For justice and peace for people of color in our country. May the Holy Spirit move throughout our churches and individuals to help us be part of the solution to the current unrest and racism. Lord hear our prayers, and guide this country and your world to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you
- For all people and countries of this world who have been and continue to be effected physically by the COVID-19 virus
- For all people across the globe who are concerned about financial implications of pandemic, both personally and beyond
- For national and state leaders to deal with the COVID-19 virus effectively
- Pray for love among all people
- Prayers for peace for people everywhere - peace worldwide

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Joy:

- Thankfulness for a fun Advent Avenue event and the joy shared among church friends/family
- Thankfulness for online methods of staying connected during this time of social distancing
- Gratefulness for the love and kindness shown to one another in times of crisis
- Gratitude for our many blessings



United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon
304 First Street SW
Mount Vernon, IA 52314
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon Staff

Senior Pastor	Pastor Terra Amundson
Director of Youth	
Praise Team Director– Interim–	Clint Stanerson
Christian Education Director....	
Sunday School Coordinator	Brittany Booth
Congregational Care Coordinator	Julie Baty
Office Manager/Newsletter	Alison Dix
Admin. Asst./ Membership.....	
Nursery Care.	Melissa Oxley
Director, Adult Handbell Choir . .	Kristi Keast
Organist	Karen Stoll
Chancel Choir Director	Joleen Woods
Custodian	Night Shift
Maintenance & Repair Director . .	Trustees
Wedding Coordinator.....	Barb Shepley
Financial Secretaries	Richard Jacob, & Jackie Morrical
Treasurers	Mike Kragenbrink Alison Dix



**Love
and
blessings
this advent
season!**

Luke 2:10:
"The angel said to them,
"Do not be afraid. I bring
you good news that will
cause great joy for all the
people."

HAPPY ADVENT!