



Monthly Newsletter *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.

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December 2022



Setting the Table

People, look East, the time is near of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.

*People, look east and sing today: Love, the Guest, is on the way. **

Dear Friends,

Among my very favorite Advent hymns is the lilting carol, *People, Look East*. Part of the joy of this carol is the lilting melody and dancing accompaniment in our hymnal. I find myself swaying and dancing when I sing it – it is one of those songs that evoke a full-body expression!

As much fun as the music is, the imagery contained in this carol is equally compelling. This week I have been captivated by the words “Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table... Love, the Guest, is on the way.” It is a reminder for me that in this season of Advent, with all the demands from other as well as self-imposed, to focus on the real reason we celebrate this season, the coming of the Christ Child.

I invite you to “plan your Advent” – to think about how you will make space in your lives to “set the table”; to prepare your heart for the celebration of Christ’s birth.

It may be a commitment to a daily/weekly set-aside time for prayer and reflection. There are great devotional aids available on-line that can help guide you. Or you could choose to reflect on the lectionary Scriptures each week. (see in this *Circuit Rider*). You might decide to engage in service, or intentionally looking for opportunities to share in random acts of kindness.

Worship is an active, participatory means of “setting the table”; opening our hearts and in this season preparing for the joyous celebration of Christmas. There is strength and support in being part of the gathered worship community. There is solace and hope in rehearsing the arc of God’s salvific love. There is joy and delight in singing the carols and remembering once again the story of the birth of Jesus. I encourage you to make the commitment of being in worship in these weeks leading to Christmas.

So, how will you “set the table” in preparation for Christmas? May your Advent journey be filled with preparation and anticipation.

On the Journey,

Pastor Terra

* From the hymn *People, Look East*, #202 UMH
WORDS: Eleanor Farjeon, MUSIC: Trad. French carol

Pastor's Letter



Season of Advent



For all who worship with us!

In person at 8:30 am

or 11 am



Online at 8:30 am

www.umcmv.com/online-worship

Lectionary Reading for December

Week One:

Isaiah 2: 1-5;

Psalm 122

Romans 13: 11-14

Matthew 24: 36-44

Week Two:

Isaiah 11: 1-10

Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19;

Romans 15:4-13;

Matthew 3:1-12

Week Three:

Isaiah 35: 1-19;

Luke 1: 46b-55,

James 5: 7-10;

Matthew 11: 2-11

Week Four:

Isaiah 7: 10-16;

Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19;

Romans 1: 1-7;

Matthew 1: 18-25

December 24:

Isaiah 9: 2-7;

Psalm 96;

Titus 2: 11-14;

Luke 2: 1-4, (15-20)

December 25:

Isaiah 52: 7-10;

Psalm 98;

Hebrews 1-14, (5-12);

John 1: 1-14

Generosity Campaign Update

Dear Church Family,

THANK YOU, dear Church Family, for your financial pledges our church has received this past month. I have just returned from a Finance Committee meeting and learned we have received 60 pledges amounting to \$313,911. This makes it so much easier to plan the budget for our coming church year.

The committee has worked many hours to pare down next year's budget to approximately \$404,000. They are convinced (hopeful) other projects throughout the year will bring in the rest of the needed funds to support our projects and staff for 2023. So, again, thank you!

PS: It still isn't too late to indicate your intentions for giving to the church this coming year if you haven't had the time or inclination to make a financial pledge (which is totally unbinding should your situation change!) to the church for the coming year.

In Christ's service,

Babs Moore
Lay Leader
United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon

TRUSTEES CORNER

Trustees would like to let you know the boilers are on so if you can please check to make sure the windows (if they should be open if it is warm in the room) are closed and lights are off when leaving a room or the sanctuary after a meeting, class, practice, etc. that would be great. Thanks for your help and support. If you have any questions or see anything that needs attention, please let us know.

Jeff Walters, Kevin Woods, Susan Pisarik, Brock Barber, Tim Legore, Kristi Keast and Warren Havill

Survey 2022

Please help us plan our future together! We are inviting you to complete a church survey, an online instrument that will help leaders gauge the strength, vitality, and trends in our church. The information gained from this survey will be valuable



in helping the leaders of the Iowa Annual Conference appoint a new pastor for our congregation. This information will also help of the leaders of United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon as we make decisions about the future of our church.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MOUNTVERNONUMC>

If we have a current email address for you, you should have already received a link to the survey in an email from the church on 11/14/22. If we do not have an email address for you, please let us know. We are asking you to go online to the link provided and tell us about your experiences in and priorities for our church. Please do not discuss the survey or your answers with others as this may influence their answers.

If you need a paper copy, please call or come to the office, and we will provide one for you along with a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

All answers are strictly anonymous. We have no way of matching any survey to a particular person, so please feel free to candidly share your perceptions, opinions and experiences. Our future together is dependent on your participation and honest answers.

If you have questions, please contact Alison in the church office at 319-895-6286

Many thanks,

UMCMV Survey Team

Jim Baty, Kim Guardado, Al Shepley, Suzette Kragenbrink, Matthew Stewart

Holiday Poinsettias



The traditional Christmas plant is the beautiful poinsettia. The plant's shape has been suggested to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem, with red leaves symbolizing the blood of Christ.

We would like your help in filling the sanctuary with poinsettias during Advent and the Christmas holiday in honor or in memory of your loved ones.

Poinsettias are \$15 each. To place your order, please fill out the information form in the bulletin, and place it in the offering plate. You may also call the church office (319-895-6286).



Orders need to be in by **Monday, December 5th**



COOKIE WALK MAGICAL NIGHT DECEMBER 1

@ UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MOUNT VERNON

ALL DONATIONS TO SE LINN FOOD PANTRY

Youth group—Wednesdays @ 6:30 to 8 pm

Youth group has been meeting every Wednesday evening from 6:30pm to 8pm. We November with an escape room created by Jonathan (FPCMV) - which was incredible! We learned some watercolor techniques from Howard Chapman and participated in random acts of kindness. Helping with the Soup Supper for Magical Night will end the month for us.

Next month we will be having a board game night and a Christmas party (with a white elephant gift exchange!) then we're off for a couple weeks for Christmas break. We will start meeting again January 4th and once we have a better idea of our activity schedule, we will get that sent out 😊

Please let Veronica (veronicafisher@umcmv.com) if you have any questions, concerns, or comments.

Magical Night Soup Supper

Thursday,
December 1st

5 to 7 pm

Fellowship Hall

We are reinstating the annual Youth Group sponsored Soup Supper this year! The proceeds from this fundraising event will go towards the Southeast Linn Community Center.



Sunday school

Last month we learned about what a prophet is and what they do (they speak up when things are unfair and help people know what God wants them to do). Our new unit starts on December 4th and the Faith Word is “Hope” - to trust in God’s promises. The Unit Verse is Luke 2:10, “Look! I bring good news to you – wonderful, joyous news for all people”. We will be learning about the angels’ visits to Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds.

Don’t miss our Christmas pageant on December 11th at 6:30pm! Please let Veronica (veronicafisher@umcmv.com) if you have any questions, concerns, or comments.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 6:30PM

UMCMV SANCTUARY

JOIN IN THE FUN!



CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP

&

NEW YEAR'S DAY WORSHIP

DECEMBER 25 @ 10 AM

JANUARY 1 @ 10 AM

Online Giving and ACH (Automatic Bank Withdrawals) are available to make your giving easy and worry free.

- **Check out our online giving or contact Jackie Morrical about setting up automatic payments for your convenience.**
- **Our website can be used for special gifts or if you want to try out giving electronically.**



Check it out [here!](https://bit.ly/3t7r0PE)

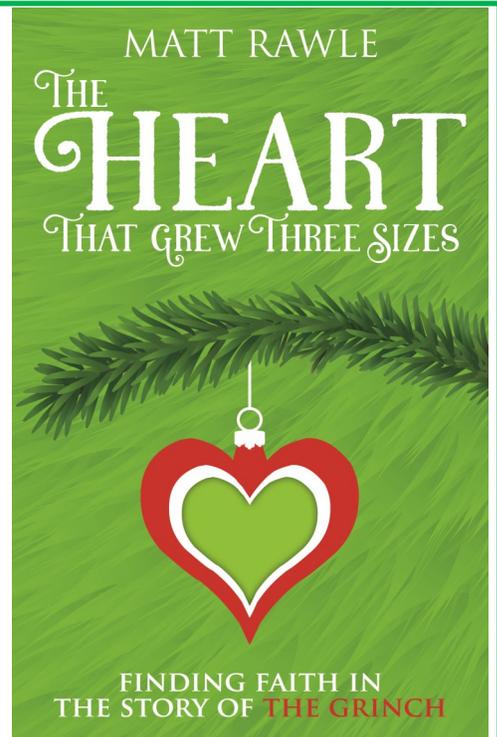
<https://bit.ly/3t7r0PE>

OUR ADVENT STUDY CONTINUES ...

**The Heart that Grew Three Sizes:
Finding Faith in the Story of the
Grinch**

by Matt Rawle

**Sunday Evening Advent Study, 5:00
PM in Common Ground Meeting
Room**



Or

**There is also a Sunday School Class at 9:45 AM on Sundays led
by Jim & Julie Baty.**

“We don’t know why the Grinch hated Christmas. We just know he did. In this new Advent study, Matt Rawle explores the faith themes in the Christmas classic, How the Grinch Stole Christmas! Including how did the Grinch’s heart grow three sizes come Christmas morning. How did Christmas save the Grinch? Could it be that the very thing we think we hate is the one thing that changes our lives?”

The weekly themes are:

Week One (Nov. 27th) : When Everything Is Wrong

Week Two (December 4th) : When Christmas Isn’t Christmas

Week Three (December 11): When Light Shines

Week Four December 18th) : When Joy Is Our Song

Missions Committee December Update

The Season of Giving continues with our turning of calendars. Our celebrations of Thanksgiving and Christmas remind us that our celebrations also assume lavish meals, generous gift giving, and travel to spend time with family and friends. We also need to acknowledge that these traditions aren't

available to all in our community this season because of the financial needs many are facing. Our Missions Committee has made the LOCAL COMMUNITY support a priority for our holiday giving this year. We have several opportunities to extend Christian love through projects that support our neighbors and friends. They are listed below. We hope you support them as you are able, continuing to allow us to be the "Hands and Feet of Christ in our community".

November focus – *Perky Pig collection* for SE Linn Food Pantry Holiday food box hams – \$1869

December focus

December 1, Magical Night – Youth soup supper with proceeds to SE Linn



November 27 to December 12 – Angel Tree gift giving to SE Linn—pick up a tag today!

December 13 to December 30 – Cap and Mitten Tree giving to area schools

December 24 – Christmas Eve Offering to community FISH fund

Thank you generous congregation, Your Missions Committee



United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon Calendar

December 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Soup supper prep 4:30pm Cookie Walk, Fellowship Hall 5:00pm Magical Night Soup Supper- Fellowship Hall	2	3
4 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:30am Fellowship time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45am Confirmation Class, Balcony Classroom 9:45am Sunday School, Classrooms 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctu- ary 1:00pm Piano recital @ 3pm - Sanctu- ary & Common Ground Meeting Room 5:00pm Advent Study "The Heart that Grew Three Sizes" - Common Ground Meeting Room	5 6:30pm Boy Scouts week- ly meeting, Fellowship Hall	6 9:30am Staff Meeting, Com- mon Ground Meeting Room 9:30am Women's Bible Study, Balcony Class- room	7 6:30pm Praise Team Practice, Sanctuary 6:30pm Youth Group- Middle School & HS, Fellowship Hall 7:30pm Chancel choir practice, Sanctuary	8 6:30pm PEO Meet- ing, Common Ground & Sanctuary	9	10 8:00am Merit Badge Worksheet - Fellowship Hall
11 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:30am Fellowship time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45am Confirmation Class, Balcony Classroom 9:45am Sunday School, Classrooms 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctu- ary 5:00pm Advent Study "The Heart that Grew Three Sizes" - Common Ground Meeting Room 6:30pm Sunday school Christmas pag- eant - Sanctuary	12 6:30pm Boy Scouts week- ly meeting, Fellowship Hall 7:00pm Trus- tees Meet- ing, Common Ground Meeting Room	13 9:30am Women's Bible Study, Balcony Class- room 7:00pm UMCMV Ad Council Meeting, Fellow- ship Hall	14 11:00am Staff Christ- mas gathering, Barb Shepley home 6:30pm Praise Team Practice, Sanctuary 6:30pm Youth Group- Middle School & HS, Fellowship Hall 7:30pm Chancel choir practice, Sanctuary	15	16	17
18 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:30am Fellowship time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45am Confirmation Class, Balcony Classroom 9:45am Sunday School, Classrooms 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctu- ary 5:00pm Advent Study "The Heart that Grew Three Sizes" - Common Ground Meeting Room	19 6:30pm Boy Scouts week- ly meeting, Fellowship Hall	20 9:30am Women's Bible Study, Balcony Class- room	21 6:30pm Praise Team Practice, Sanctuary	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 5:30pm Christmas Eve Worship 9:00pm Christmas Even Worship
25 10:00am Christmas Day Worship / Christmas Hymn Sing, Sanctuary	26	27	28	29 8:00am Boys Basket- ball Team / Using Fellowship Hall for Mission of Hope Lunch prep	30	31

Lift Up these Prayer Requests

Prayers for Healing:

Continued prayers for Steve Angel (Donna Walter's cousin), hospitalized following surgery earlier this month

For Diane LeGore, who had foot surgery on November 22nd. Prayers for a positive time of healing

For Barb Neal (mother of Abby Bock) recently diagnosed with breast cancer. Prayers for her mental and physical strength as she battles through treatment

Prayers for Ann Booth as she continues recovery from shoulder replacement surgery

For Susan Pisarik as she continues recovery from shoulder surgery

For Craig Smith and his continuing treatments

For Josie Bothell (one of our 8th grade confirmands) who is healing from an ankle injury earlier this Fall

For Gail (Pastor Terra's daughter-in-law's mother) who is recovering from tongue surgery, due to a cancer diagnosis, and continued prayers as it appears another surgery will be required

For Gayle Wallace who continues to deal with health issues and is currently residing at Cottage Grove

For all our friends and family members who are fighting the battle against cancer

Prayers for Comfort and Strength:

For those feeling weary or struggling with the change of seasons

For those concerned with health issues

For all who are struggling: emotionally, physically or spiritually

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

For all not mentioned by name who are mourning the loss of a family member or friend

Prayers for Transition:

We pray for the new pastor that will be assigned to our church to begin in July 2023. Prayers that God will prepare and call just the right pastor to come to UMCMV to join us in ministry.

Prayers for the Bishop that as been assigned to the Iowa Conference, Bishop Keneetha Bingham Tsai has been assigned to our conference and we look forward to welcoming her into our midst and offer prayers for her.

For our college freshman as they continue their transition to college life, may they feel God's presence and love surrounding them

Prayers for all students, teachers, school staff and administrators

For the leaders of UMCMV as they continue to work on behalf of our church

For the United Methodist Church: including the global church, the Iowa Conference and our Mount Vernon congregation

PRAYER LIST continued

Prayers for our Nation and our World:

Prayers for all who have recently had their lives traumatically affected by gun violence

Pray for peace in our world. Specifically for the people caught in the tragedies of war in Ukraine and Russia. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers

Pray for peace and love for all humanity

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Joy:

We celebrate the baptism of Lennon Catherine Kraus, daughter of Ben and Mackenzie Kraus, what a joy to welcome her into our church family

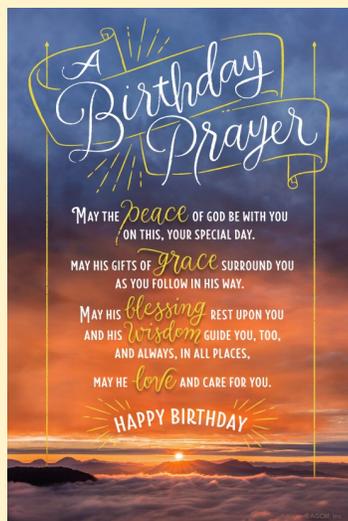
With thankful hearts we praise God for the blessings in our lives, both big and small. May we also think of those who may be hurting this holiday season and be reminded of reaching out and blessing those who need our love and care

With joy we celebrate with the Krapfl family as their daughter Grace was married on November 19th. We wish Grace and Michael much joy and happiness as they begin their married life together

Our confirmands are sharing special time together as they learn what it means to be a member of our church. We give thanks for these thoughtful and caring young people

What joy that youth group is going strong this Fall, and also that it is an ecumenical effort including UMCMV, Seeds of Faith and First Presbyterian Church

December Birthdays Happy Birthday!



Matthew Morrival	12/03
Cody Connolly	12/05
Claire Light	12/05
Bill Meyer	12/05
Mackenzie Kraus	12/07
Abigail Smith	12/07
Gary Briesemeister	12/09
Kameron Brand	12/10
Becker Reinken	12/10
Alaina Pospisil	12/11
Vern Sand	12/12
Carew Kamaus	12/14
Leroy Klaus	12/14
Joyce Loomis	12/15
Denae Mcgrath	12/16

Tyler Roos	12/20
Josef Briesemeister	12/22
Trevor Baty	12/26
Denise Havill	12/26
Stephanie Boggs	12/27
Brogan Meyer	12/28
Jordan Hunt	12/29
Donna Walters	12/29
Teresa Bothell	12/30
Russell Yeater	12/30



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
Praise Team Director-....	Clint Stanerson
Christian Education Director & Director of Youth Ministries...	Veronica Fisher
Congregational Care Coordinator	Julie Baty
Office Manager/Newsletter	Alison Dix
Nursery Care.	Melissa Oxley
Director, Adult Handbell Choir . . .	Kristi Keast
Organist	Karen Stoll
Chancel Choir Director	Joleen Woods
Choir Accompanist	Denae McGrath
Custodian	Night Shift
Maintenance & Repair Director	Trustees
Wedding Coordinator.....	Barb Shepley
Financial Secretaries	Richard Jacob,
	Tim Legore & Jackie Morrical
Treasurers	Mike Kragenbrink
	Alison Dix



You're invited to...

**CHRISTMAS EVE
 WORSHIP**



**DEC 24
 5:30 PM
 &
 9:00 PM**