



Union Avenue News

KEEPING MEMBERS UP TO DATE

DECEMBER 2020

Think about the first and last words of the Scripture. The book of Genesis opens with “In the beginning...” (Gen. 1:1). The book of Revelation closes with “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20), followed only by a postscript extending Christ’s grace to all the saints.

The season of Advent brings together both ends of the Bible. Advent is a beginning, the start of a new church year, a fresh opportunity to immerse ourselves in the great story of our salvation through Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem. Advent also points to an ending, the consummation of all things when Christ returns in glory to bring righteousness, justice, and peace to the earth.

David Gambrell, associate for worship in the PC(USA) Office of Theology & Worship, points out the double significance of Advent as “coming” and “arrival.” We begin the season of Advent with our eyes on the horizon: watching and waiting for Christ’s coming again. Advent readings support this theme with visions of the prophets about the coming day of the Lord, letters from Gambrell the apostles about the imminent return of the Lord Jesus, and teachings from Jesus himself about the unexpected hour of judgment.

“As the weeks of Advent progress and the candles burn more brightly, the focus of Advent shifts to another arrival. We prepare to celebrate the light that has already come into the world at the birth of Jesus, God’s Word made flesh, our Emmanuel. The readings draw us to Bethlehem where the message of the apostles draws its first breath, and the hope of the prophets is finally fulfilled.

It is important to hold both meanings of Advent together. We believe that God is with us in Jesus. A new day has already dawned. This is the year of the Lord’s favor. The time of salvation is now. This is indeed a cause for celebration, good news of great joy for all.

But we also believe that Christ will come again. Creation is still crying out for redemption. Captives are still struggling for freedom. Communities are still yearning for peace. And these are reasons for vigilance and renewed discipleship, hard work and fervent prayer. The season of Advent teaches us to live in this tension.” (Presbyterians Today, November/December 2019).

Advent is an annual refresher course on the nature of Christian hope. We look back across the long arc of history to understand and remember who God is and how God works in the world: mighty and merciful; ever-faithful and abounding in love; creating, redeeming, sustaining all that is. We look forward, too, straining to see the new thing God is doing: a river flowing in the desert; a fresh shoot growing from an old stump; weapons of war turned to instruments of peace. Thus, we learn to proclaim the gospel with confidence, trusting that the Spirit will work wonders, the promises of God will come to pass, and Jesus will continue to lead the way.

As we “prepare the way of the Lord,” may these ancient patterns of the Christian year reform and transform us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to live out our faith in Jesus, the Alpha and Omega.

Christmas Blessings,
Pastor Doug

December Worship

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2	5:30p.m. Worship
"A Star for Hope"	Isaiah 9:2; Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 2:1-12
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>	
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6	9:30a.m. Worship
"Dream the World Better"	Isaiah 40:1-11 & Luke 3:1-18
Advent 2	<i>Celebration of The Lords Supper</i>
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>	
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9	5:30p.m. Worship
"Levelled in Love"	Isaiah 40:1-5; Luke 1:67-80; Mark 1:1-8
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>	
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13	9:30a.m. Worship
"Joy on Display"	Psalms 123
Advent 3	
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>	
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16	5:30p.m. Worship
"Joyful & Joy-Filled News"	Zephaniah 3:14-17; Romans 15:7-13
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>	
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20	9:30a.m. Worship
"The Savior Reveal"	Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)
Advent 4	
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>	
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23	5:30p.m. Worship
"A Blanket for Peace"	Micah 5:2, 4-5a; Romans 5:1-2a, 13; Ephesians 2:14-18
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>	
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24	Christmas Eve
This year, more than ever, we need Jesus, our Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, our Everlasting Father, and our Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 will be our theme for our Christmas Eve Services.	
5:00p.m. - A Family Friendly service: Pastor Doug will use objects to explain the titles for Jesus found in Isaiah 9:6!	
7:00p.m. - The Story of Jesus' birth in scripture and song with a Celebration of The Lord's Supper! Meditation on Isaiah 9:6	
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27	9:30a.m. Worship
"The Gore-Tex of Righteousness"	Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Christ the King Sunday	
<i>Pastor Doug Dent</i>	

Dates to Remember

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

5:30pm Advent Service - A Star for Hope

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

6:30pm Ministry Nite

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

5:30pm Advent Service - Levelled in Love

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

5:30pm Advent Service - Joyful & Joy-Filled News

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

6:30pm D&E Meeting

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

5:30pm Advent Service - A Blanket for Peace

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE: OFFICE CLOSED

5:00pm Worship
7:00pm Worship and Communion

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY: OFFICE CLOSED

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

NEW YEARS EVE: OFFICE CLOSED

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1

NEW YEARS DAY: OFFICE

Christmas Eve Bags: If you plan to worship from home, we will provide a Christmas Eve bag which contains everything you will need to participate in worship: glow sticks (all services), objects for kids (5pm), and communion kits (7pm). Please call (739-3227) or email (church@federatedff.org) the church office to reserve a worship bag. You may pick up your worship bag beginning December 16, 2020 during regular office hours (M-Th: 10am-2pm and F: 9am-12pm). If you need a worship bag delivered, please let us know.



Christian Education News:

During the month of November our children's and youth ministries continued to meet! Kidz Club and Sunday school maintained a consistent average across age-groups, and we even added a few new participants to our senior high youth group. God has been very good to us! With so many changes in our community and world right now, it is truly a blessing to be able to minister to our younger members and give them some "sameness" each week.

During Kidz Club and Sunday school we learned about God's "attributes", the qualities of God's character. Each week we study a different story from the Bible that illustrates one of God's attributes. This past month some of the qualities we studied included: God is ALMIGHTY, God is the COMFORTER, God is FAITHFUL, God is GLORIOUS, God is GRACIOUS, and God is TRUSTWORTHY. Our willing volunteers help make this time possible, and so thank you to all! With youth activities paused we will provide the learning sheets for each week on our website under the Christian Education heading!

Middle school confirmation will meet at 2pm and 9th grade confirmation will meet at 6:30pm by Zoom. I am happy to say that we are finding a good balance of learning and fun. This is challenging when we are a new group and only able to see one another online! Our 9th grade class is inching closer to the completion of their study and will be writing their faith statements soon into the New Year!

Youth group continued to be active and the participants appreciate being able to see one another and have some consistency in their week. Seizing the opportunity to enjoy unseasonably warm weather, one Wednesday we had a campfire at Molly Stoddard's (thank you Molly!). On another night we put together 22 Boxes of Blessings in Fellowship Hall. The group just loves spending time talking about what is going on in the world and how God is moving in it.

I am truly so grateful to be able to continue doing these important discipleship ministries with our wonderful children and youth! With all that is going on, it is vital for faith development and encouragement that we not neglect their spiritual needs. We pray that these ministries may continue as we go through this challenging time!

Church News:

Programming Paused: We made the difficult decision to pause all in-person programming and youth activities until the New Year. There will be no Sunday School (kids or adult), Kidz Club, confirmation classes, or youth group in the church building until January 2021. We plan to offer confirmation classes online and to provide learning pages for families.

A Note About Pre-Pledging: As we near the new year, please remember the following when pre-pledging. If you prepay your pledge, by law it will appear on the statement in the year it was received. For example, 2021 pledges received in 2020 will appear on 2020 statements.

Safety At Federated Church: We are committed to keeping our worshipers and our community safe. For the safety and security of all, please adhere to these safety procedures if you plan to worship in person. Please wear a face mask, sanitize your hands when you arrive, wash hands often, refrain from physical contact with others, stay spatially distanced of 6 feet apart, sit only in marked pews and designated seats at tables, sanctuary seating is limited to 75 people, additional seating is in fellowship hall, and allow our musicians to do the singing.

Meals By Wheels: Federated Church is scheduled to deliver Meals-by-Wheels Monday-Friday, December 21-25 and 28 - Jan 1. No deliveries on Christmas Day or New Year's Day. Drivers should gather at the Senior Center at 11:00am. It takes about an hour to deliver these meals. If you can help, please contact Michelle Loomer at (218-731-225).

Closing & Online Worship: We hope to worship together during Advent and Christmas. However, we recognize that cases of COVID-19 are rising in Otter Tail County. We are receiving information and guidance from state and local county services, the school district, and our denominational offices about when/if to close the church building and return to all online worship.

We support your decision to worship safely from home and we are grateful for your online presence. Should we need to close the church and move to all online worship, we will notify by mail, email, text, Facebook, and the church website. If you have any questions, please give us a call (739-3227) or send us an email (church@federatedff.org).

We wish you and your family the very best Christmas and we add our prayers to yours for a healthy and prosperous New Year!



Federated CHURCH

224 North Union Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FERGUS FALLS, MN
PERMIT #285

Time sensitive information
Please deliver by December 1st

Stewardship Report

General Fund Report	
Revenue	\$27,947
Expenditures	\$30,646
Year to Date Pledge Offering	
Budgeted	\$311,381
Actual Received	\$333,295

Grocery Receipts

THE GROCERY RECEIPTS

Service Food	
November	\$2,974.36

December Birthdays

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 12/01 Shannon Wilson | 12/28 Amber Underdahl |
| 12/01 Dave Loeks | 12/28 Courtney Meder |
| 12/03 Patty Shol | 12/29 Molly Stoddard |
| 12/05 Aaron Link | 12/29 Jonathan Collins |
| 12/09 Jamie Brause | 12/29 Jonathan Dent |
| 12/10 Tami Anderson | 12/29 Jacob Hatling |
| 12/17 Rebecca Thanel | 12/30 Myron Lenning |
| 12/17 Riley Peterson | 12/30 Mary Olson |
| 12/18 Syler Steinbrenner | 12/30 Daniel Anderson |
| 12/19 James Worner | 12/30 Camen Andrews |
| 12/19 Perry Werner | 12/31 Don Davenport |
| 12/20 Carol Hoivik | |
| 12/21 Amy Donoho | |
| 12/21 Jacob Gustafson | |
| 12/21 Jessica Steinbrenner | |
| 12/21 Mara Braaten | |
| 12/22 Lori Beske | |
| 12/23 Jean Giles | |
| 12/24 Phil Link | |
| 12/24 Ronnie Becker | |
| 12/24 Iyla Iverson | |
| 12/25 Jesus Christ | |
| 12/26 Ron Henely | |



Christmas Joy Offering

As we enter the Advent Season, we face more uncertainty and new challenges. To help alleviate some of that stress, the Mission Committee is asking for you to support the Christmas Joy Offering. The "catch phrase" associated with this offering is "if we all do a little, it adds up to a lot." By giving to this offering, we share our love with the leaders of our Church - past, present, and future. The proceeds are split: 50% for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color, and 50% providing assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs. Please use the envelopes included in your newsletter to make a generous gift that supports others. You can also visit pcusa.org/christmasjoy for more information.

		The Federated Church is a joint ministry of The Presbyterian Church (USA) and The United Church of Christ.
224 N. Union Avenue, Fergus Falls, MN 56537		
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