

## From the Pastor . . .

A recent Boston Globe article said, "We're mourning the lost rhythms of daily living. We're grieving for those beautiful mundanities." All of us are experiencing the grief of daily living. For me, the hardest part is seeing someone I would normally hug and not being able to hug them.

During our first months in this pandemic we rose to the occasion and learned new skills, new routines of FaceTime and Zoom, new responsiveness to emails and phone calls as our only way to connect with others. We didn't think this would go on too terribly long, and so we were willing and able to make the necessary changes.

Now, though, as our sheltering in place becomes routine, we have time to take in the reality of the new normal and hope and pray that nothing about it will continue to be our normal far into the future.

Some of us might feel guilty about mourning, because, after all, we haven't lost someone near and dear to us. Is it okay to mourn your daily coffee from Evergreen Coffee Shop? Is it acceptable to long for the days of Free Pie Wednesdays at Village Inn? Deep down, what we're really mourning is the loss of familiarity and safety.

So how do we cope? This grief over the intangibles is hard to pinpoint and so some of us cope by looking at the bright side, by writing in our gratitude journals or calling a family member to chat.

Our grief will continue to creep up on us while we're watching TV or knock us over with tears in the middle of a Zoom call, or make us feel angry at the slightest thing. Many of you have shared with me your confusion and frustration with such surprising emotions. We are all doing our best to get through this together.

I feel blessed to be entering the Advent/Christmas season with you. As we focus on the hope, love, joy and peace of this season, let us re-frame our understanding of what it means to celebrate this season. You might be surprised to find that as you center on what a magnificent gift God gave us at Christmas, you can embrace the warm joy and peace of the gift of the Christ Child, of the gift of that first Christmas.

Let every heart prepare him room.

~Pastor Holly

## Thank You

Thank you to all of you who turned in your Estimate of Giving cards in November. Thanks to you we are able to continue to plan for ministry into 2021 and know we can count on you to keep us building bridges to Christ's love. We are so grateful for your gifts and faithfulness!

## Upper Room Books

Upper Room devotionals are now available for January/February. Please contact the office to see if there is a time you can come and pick one up, or to request a copy be mailed to you.



### Birthdays

12-2	Carly K.
12-7	Brooke B.
12-8	Dolly A.
12-9	Derek I.
12-12	Nathan M.
12-13	Everyn S.
12-18	Derek S.
12-20	Brett H.
12-22	Lucas P.
12-27	Buck B. Chevelle F.
12-28	Jane R. April L.
12-31	Dave F. Al J.

\*If you do not see your special date, please let Michelle know!

## Christmas Eve Offering cont.

(a message from Missions Chair Jane Rylander)

### Hugo Family Shelter News

(from Carrin Mahmood, Director of Operations)

The Family Shelter in Hugo appreciates the commitment of all the churches in the area. The beautiful reality is we are helping to end homelessness in Northern Washington County, and it is because churches like Wyoming United Methodist absolutely hold this holy work as an important mission. During this time of COVID-19 we spent many of our donations turning the four bedrooms upstairs into two apartments so our families and staff could live and work separately and safely. We can now safely house three families. Right now, because of COVID-19, there is a moratorium on evictions. However as soon as that is lifted the projections state that a huge wave of homelessness is expected. We want to continue to be able to operate so we are ready to help as many people as possible when that happens. During the last few months, we have helped one mom with two children move out of her car, out of fear, out of constant worrying, and into a safe, warm home. Another mom with two toddlers, was able to take time to catch her breath, save some money and has successfully found housing for herself and her children. We thank you for your previous help and can't say enough about your commitment to volunteering and support of this mission. Merry Christmas!

## Seeing One Another

Please send us a picture of yourself holding a lit candle or behind or beside some Christmas lights as we plan to show these pictures during our Christmas Eve service. When you take the picture, be sure we can easily see your face (namely, have the camera up close!). One of the things that we miss most during this time is seeing one another. Since it is still too soon to gather safely in person, this is the best way we can see one another. Just like our pictorial church directory, this is not a beauty contest, but a way of connecting with our church family. Please get your picture to the church office by Thursday, December 17 (one week before Christmas Eve).

## Special Guest Preacher

On Sunday, December 27, Bishop Ough will be our preacher! Bishop Ough has been the bishop of the Minnesota/Dakota Annual Conferences for eight years now and at the end of December his time with us will come to an end. In honor of his years of leading the United Methodists of the Minnesota/Dakotas, we are having him preach for us on his last Sunday of his tenure. Please watch on Sunday, December 27 at 10 a.m. on our YouTube channel.

### New Pathways Shelter in Cambridge News

(from Mary Westlund, Executive Director)

We expect the need for our programming to grow as time goes on and the extra supports to help people survive run out. As soon as the eviction freeze is lifted, we expect to get blasted with people in need. The last time I saw something like this was back in 2008, during that time we were turning away more families in a month than we would serve in a whole year because we were at capacity. I expect this situation to be far more difficult. We also have the unique situation of trying to keep the shelter open. Our partnering churches are not able to serve currently. Having the hotel as an option is such a blessing but it is expensive (approximately \$5400/month), and I am not sure how long we will be able to sustain it. Those experiencing homelessness have the same problems we all have, but they are magnified by their living situation. They get sick, they are distance learning, they have money issues and relationship problems, too. We canceled all our in-person fundraisers in 2020 and into the near future. We are trying to come up with a fundraiser we can do remotely.

Join us in helping them find the safety they need and the support that is vital to their success. Help us get them back on their feet.



## Joy Bells Ministry

Joy Bells will be different this year, thanks to the COVID pandemic, but we still want to help families in need as we have done for the past 24+ years. Bea has talked with the Wyoming Elementary School counselor and they have decided the best plan will be to purchase gift cards for the family to use to purchase clothing and gifts for their children. Please be as generous as you are able and purchase gift cards (from Target/Walmart/other kid-friendly place) or make a cash/check donation (written to the church with Joy Bells in memo) in \$25-\$30 amounts and mail or bring them to church to arrive by December 8. Please call Bea with any questions 612-270-1396.

## Zoom Devotions

Join us for Zoom gatherings every Monday afternoon at 2pm! We gather and talk about our week and catch up on any news we might have. Our social gathering is good for the soul, especially when we can connect face-to-face with one another. Our time together ends with a devotion and prayer from Pastor Holly. You are invited! Please see your weekly update from Pastor Holly in your email in-box to find the link to these fun gatherings!

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Wyoming United Methodist Church

# Messenger

December 2020

## Christmas Eve Offering

(a message from Missions Chair Jane Rylander)

Our Christmas Eve Offering this year will be going to the two homeless shelters we support: New Pathways Shelter in Cambridge and the St. Andrews Hugo Family Shelter.

If you are like me, this year has been a time to stand back and wait for the next shoe to drop. What next? It's been a roller coaster year to be sure. But at Christmas it's time to open our hearts, trust in the hope God gives us, and give knowing this is not the time to give from what you have left-over. This is the time to give knowing a vaccine is on its way and a time to give sacrificially knowing someone out there needs you desperately, knowing your gift can make a "real life" difference to keep a family safe, warm, and together. I ask you to pray over your Christmas offering as a family knowing that this gift will be the love of Jesus to those we help.

Pastor Holly is challenging us to consider giving to the Christmas Eve offering an amount equal to the amount we spend on all our Christmas gift giving this year. Donate at any time during December or early January with your cash or checks to Wyoming Church, marked 'Christmas Offering.' May God lead you to be generous as you bless others as you have been blessed!

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## December Sermons

Advent is a season of anticipation – of great joy and hope. Advent is also a reminder that there is more to come, that through Christ's hope, love, joy and peace we can find a new way to live. Come with us as we journey toward the blessed Savior's birth.

### December 6

God With Us Brings Love  
Isaiah 40:1-11

### December 13

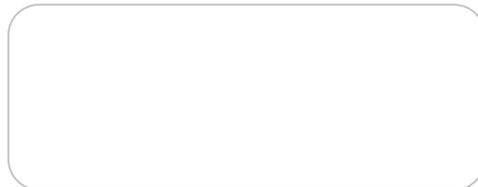
God With Us Brings Joy  
John 1:6-8, 19-28

### December 20

God With Us Brings Peace  
Luke 1:26-38

### December 27

Bishop Ough,  
Guest Preacher



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## Christmas Eve Worship Service

Our Christmas Eve 5pm worship service will be a traditional service of Lessons and Carols as together we welcome the Christ Child into our hearts. This is a perfect time to invite friends and family to join you online and access our worship service on our YouTube channel. Come, sing the well-known songs of Christmas and celebrate the one who brought light into the darkness.