



DECEMBER CHURCHLETTER

BUILDING A FUTURE WITH HOPE BY REACHING OUT AND GROWING DEEPER: Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, how goes it with your soul? Is yours feeling a bit worn some days? Good thing we serve a living God, whom we are in even more need of as we enter this time of waiting, waiting for a vaccine, waiting for this time to be over, waiting for all to be well in the world again, waiting for Jesus to come.

Maybe this year, we will enter Advent in the spirit of hope as we patiently wait. I am still praying that every day you grow more in faith as you welcome the opportunities to love God and neighbor.

Are you giving thanks for those brave prayer partners in our midst who are volunteering to pray for our revitalized church and committing to pray with another person weekly? Imagine the lives being changed! As a reminder for everyone, please pray with this as a guide covering the Body of Christ with prayer:

- For a joyful unified recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord
- For a hungering and thirsting after the Word of God and the Spirit of God in our local churches
- For pastors and leaders struggling to give leadership through this pandemic
- For a deepened appetite for prayer to arise and be mobilized in our churches
- For our churches to become agencies of all manner of healing in our communities
- For discipleship to take root and bring deep wholeness to people
- For the raising up of spiritually gifted apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers within our churches (Eph. 4:11)
- That churches would be awakened to their mission to make disciples who reach the lost

How is God inviting you to pray for one another, the world and all who live in it? My goal for this course was to have every person in ever congregation connected to another. This turned into a much more complicated project. A part of this project is to have current contact information set up so that each church's leadership could update people easier to improve communication with one another. This will help each church enter into the future with hope and courage.

If you feel God's nudging you to be a prayer partner with a particular person, please let me know. I want this time

to be renewing and life-giving to your spirit. Your prayers together make an impact beyond our human understanding. Your efforts are making disciples (the reason God placed us here) and leading our churches to accomplish the mission God appointed us to.

Call 1-507-333-0110
to hear our latest sermon



To further our mission, I applied for a free 6-month subscription to Sermons by Phone. When you call 3330110 (a local Faribault Number, you can listen to the Sunday service. I've recently upped the volume, thanks to your feedback. There is one higher level yet. Let me know if you think it needs it. This is another way, besides mailing copies of the bulletins and sermons to some who have requested it for the people without the necessary interne connection or technological source to remain connected with the church. YouTube links emailed and Facebook live the morning of worship continues, thanks for your prayerful support and assistance.

Attached to this newsletter is the form needed to participate in the 35th Light Up A Life Fundraiser for hospice patients. The community tree lighting is Monday December 7th at 7pm outdoors at the northeast corner of District One hospital. It will be livestreamed and broadcast on KDHL, and for those in person, socially distanced.

I am now halfway through my second course on governance for my **Non-Profit Church Leadership** course. One of the insights I learned is how we organize and lead our churches makes an impact for the church to be faithful to the unique mission God plans for us. Please continue to pray for your leaders through this time. Choosing to continue in ministry for Jesus Christ is the undergirding focus of leadership.

Both churches now have an online way of giving from their websites. It is quite easy and very convenient. The company name is VANCO. #1-Select your fund, click the donate button, choose the amount and frequency, then proceed to payment.

#2-Enter your credit card, debit card or checking account information, (if you sign up for a free account, you can save your payment information for future donations)

#3 Review and submit your gift by clicking submit From your Vanco Online account, you can review your giving history, manage recurring donations or update payment information. Thanks again for your gift based on God's transforming love.

Remember, I am taking vacation from December 22 through December 28. **In emergencies, please call 507.452.1448 (our landline phone number at Homer) Otherwise, text me at 507.525.4483.** I will send out a link for an online worship service for December 27, the First Sunday after Christmas and record a brief meditation for the Sermons by Phone number before I go. Sending you wishes for a Christmas of gratitude for all God does for us.

Reminder: No in person worship December 27, 2020. See you the 3rd of January for the beginning of 2021 in communion and prayer.

Be aware many dates and activities can be changed in a short time. Please watch for updates. Keep on praying.

Remember newsletter deadline is the 20th of every month.

Loving Thoughts and Prayers Surround:

New Perspective

Joan Schwake

Pleasant View Estates

Shirley Bauer

Pleasant Manor

Ken Bauer

Faribault Senior Living

Mildred Tatge

The Homestead of Rochester

Lorry Wille

Ivy Hill

Ken Shaske

Mill City

Richard Hanson

At Home

Jean Pederson

Donovan Mueller

Doris Hildebrandt

Arlene Shaske

Arlene Bultman

Kaye Spike



Joys and Concerns

The Shaske family says THANK YOU to all who sent cards to Dad on his 90th birthday, it made his day, it was a warm

day so he could sit outside and they sang happy birthday. God Bless You All!

THANK YOU!!!

The ladies of the St. John's U.C.C. Women's Guild would like to send out one GIGANTIC thank you to the members of St. John's for all their support in our many projects over the years. It is with deep regret that we have to dissolve our group, but we can no longer keep it going with so few active members. Please continue to support our church in whatever way you are able. St. John's U.C.C. Women's Guild Officers

While the Christmas Eve Sunday School program will not be held in person, St John's UCC will still be distributing traditional Christmas bags to our youth. If you desire to contribute to the cost of the Christmas bags, there will be a special offering plate set up at worship each Sunday in December. We would also welcome donations by mail.



Please give your bag order to one of the Elders: Doug Spike, Gayle Bauer and Gloria Karl; or Sunday School Superintendent Carrie Hess. Arrangements for pick up will be made when you place your order.

Thank you for helping continue this tradition!

St John's Sunday School and Elders

St. John's Sunday School is currently being held via Zoom at Sunday mornings at 9:30. Please contact Carrie Hess with questions. Although we will not be gathering at church on Christmas Eve for our traditional St. John's Sunday School program, we are making plans to provide a 2020-version of our Christmas Eve program. A link to our pre-recorded program will be sent for viewing. Most of all, please know that the Sunday School wishes EVERYONE a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a truly HAPPY NEW YEAR!

NUMC Christmas program will be Dec. 20th during morning worship -9:00 a.m. We are taking precautions with No cards and No food. A Special offering for Lowell and Ruth Gess eye clinic.



It doesn't seem "fitting" that there will not be a Christmas Day service this year-(since we didn't gather to worship at Easter or Pentecost either.) But with the levels of COVID 19 cases, we want everyone to be safe. It is very disappointing not to be able to gather for worship and celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

But, we plan to pre-record a Christmas Carol sing-along for Christmas Day. We invite you to join in as you can watch a YouTube on St. John's UCC website.

Just a friendly reminder, I send out prayer chain requests and other announcements via email. If you want to be a part of this valuable ministry, please email me your email to pastorlora@live.com. Thanks so much for your prayers and help in building the kingdom of God here on earth. Pastor Lora

One hundred fifty years ago, the construction of St. John's German Evangelical Church, near Nerstrand, in Wheeling Township, Rice County, Minnesota, was completed.



Built solidly of local limestone, the church has been in continuous use since then.

The congregation was founded largely by German immigrants from near Hannover, and Schaumburg-Lippe, Germany, in 1856, and for the first twelve years, 1857-1869, a modest log church was in use until a fire on Reformation Sunday, 31 Oct 1869.

Remarkably, within just one year, by the first Sunday of Advent, in 1870, the stone church was completed. This late-November marks the 150th anniversary of this local, historic church!
-Jeff Kindseth

Wednesday Wear

We started Nov. 1 with Winter Hours: Nov. through March our hours are Wednesdays 1-5 p.m. and Saturdays 9 to noon. **Dec. 23 & 26 Closed**



Thank you for all your help and support with money and donated items. At this time, we are in need of girls clothing sizes 3 to teen and boys 3-6- & 9 month. We could also use infant boys and girls sleepwear.

On Wed. the 11th we had 38 people -this broke our one-day record!

Also, our Christmas items have had a great interest and shoppers have taken about 3/4 's of the items for a donation.

We are thankful we are still open to fulfill a need. We are being careful and taking precautions.

Have a Wonderful and Blessed holiday season.

We do require masks and we only allow so many people downstairs at a time. But, you can shop in our fellowship hall for holiday décor. These items are yours for a monetary donation.

We are now taking donations (clothing and household items) again but, please don't bring a carload, maybe a bag or two at a time. Everything needs to be clean and ready to wear-No tears or stains.

Come see us on Wednesdays 1-5 pm or Saturdays 9am to noon.

November 29 marks the first Sunday of Advent. Even more special this year it also marks the 150th Anniversary of the dedication of the "Wheeling Stone Church" building. Remarkably, 150 years ago, members of St.



John's congregation constructed this beautiful stone landmark church, as a place of worship for many future generations. Even though we won't be meeting in person that day, and with this year being a very difficult one for all of us, let us still pause to reflect the significance of the day. May we, as members of St. John's and our whole community of friends, still have joyful hearts as we praise and reflect on the words of the beloved hymn sang at the dedication 150 years ago!-"Open Now the Gates of Beauty, Zion, let me enter there, Where my soul in joyful duty-waits for Him who answers prayer; O how blessed is this place, filled with Solace, Light, and Grace." Amen!

P-P-P Remember 2-2-2, 2nd 2sday of the month 2pm. December 8 is the date, **2 pm**

is the time and I ask you to set aside time to pray. Please keep setting aside time for pausing and praying for our communities and praising God for all that God gives us. If you know of a prayer concern or joy, please let me know and I will add it to my prayer journal. Let me know if you'd like others to be with you in prayer.



Remember, your presence in prayer matters. That is what changes lives. Plan for at least a half hour, no longer than an hour. It makes a difference in the world and in your own life.

As Tropical Storm Eta, which was a Category 4 hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico, crossed over Florida on its way toward the Atlantic Ocean, Typhoon Vamco hit the Philippines with winds equal to a Category 2 hurricane. Both storms have been deadly, causing severe flooding and displacing hundreds of thousands – all during a pandemic. Please help UMCOR respond. Eighty years

ago, the Methodist community was moved by the mass suffering of men, women and children when war in Europe and the Pacific forced the evacuation, expulsion and deportation of millions of individuals and families from their homes. Today, UMCOR remains a voice of conscience for the suffering, poor, exploited and displaced around the world. Be a part of an enduring legacy of hope – give, today.

GIVE NOW

Sunday, December 6, Nerstrand UMC will observe UMCOR Sunday. To give by mail: Send checks to: GCFA, P.O. Box 340029, Nashville, TN 37203 Please put name of Sunday in note section

Sunday, December 6, St. John's UCC will observe The Christmas Fund Offering. The offering provides gift checks to hundreds of annuitants, but it also provides emergency assistance to clergy and lay employees and their families throughout the year.

After Katrina pounded the Gulf Coast, the Christmas Fund was able to allocate funds to completely pay two quarters worth of insurance premiums for 10 retired clergy who were displaced in the FEMA-declared zip codes. An additional \$5,000 went towards premiums of active clergy in those same affected zip codes.

Thank you in advance for your faithful sharing of God's abundance for the healing of the world. To God be the glory.

St. John's UCC Sunday School

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18 -- Children ages 4 years through 8th grade are always welcome, and substitute teachers are also appreciated. ☺ Contact Carrie Hess with questions or for more information: 651-775-5594 or littlehesshouse@gmail.com.



St John's UCC Council Meeting Minutes

The November meeting for St John's UCC was called to order by Moderator Doug Spike on November 9, 2020 at 6:30pm. Opening devotions offered by Pastor Lora

Pastor Lora has requested vacation from November 24th through November 30th. There will be no in person worship November 24th through November 30th. Service may be recorded ahead of time.

In person worship will resume the first Sunday in December. There will be no Christmas Eve/ Day or New Year's Services. SPRC reports that open conversations will continue with Nerstrand United Methodist Church. The Secretary's report was read and approved. The Treasurer's report was read and approved. 2021 proposed budget in the working phase. Trustee's report WIFI has been moved The furnace will be serviced on November 16th. Supplies for roof project to be delivered the week of the 16th. Trustees will plan on a date to decorate the church.

Old Business

The Sunday School will record a service this year with bags distributed after recording. Dates and times for this project are to be determined.

New Business

Women's guild has disbanded. Future Bibles for the confirmands to be purchased by the Sunday School with the remaining funds.

Date for the Annual meeting is January 17th at 1pm following church.

A motion was made and passed to change the language in the bi laws of the church to read "Moderator" instead of "President". This will follow the U.C.C. conference language.

The next council meeting to be held on December 14th at 6:30pm.

Meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Secretary -

Sarah Becher

Next Council meeting is Monday, Dec 14 @6:30pm via Zoom only.

St John's Elders:

Doug Spike

Gayle Bauer

Gloria Karl

St John's Spiritual Council

Pastor Lora Sturm

Doug Spike

Gayle Bauer

Gloria Karl

The Annual Congregational Meeting of St John's United Church of Christ will be held on Sunday, January 17 @ 1:00 pm. Due to COVID concerns, the meeting will be held by Zoom only. Although we will not be meeting in person, your attendance is no less important. Please join us on-line at:

<https://umcom.zoom.us/j/95775176785?pwd=aHVJSmkwVFV4WUJTa0tsai91NVp1QT09> or by phone at 1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

See you on January 17!

St John's Council

2020 SJUCC WOMEN'S GUILD

November 4, 2020, 1:30pm St. John's U.C.C. Women's Guild Minutes: The November meeting of the St. John's Women's Guild was called to order by Vice chairperson, Judy Meese. Pastor Lora opened with a prayer. There were 5 people present.

Secretary's report was read and approved. Treasurer's report was read and approved and filed subject to audit. We have a balance of \$819.55 in checking.

Pastor Lora shared that she will be taking vacation days on November 22-29 and December 21-28. There will be no actual church service for Thanksgiving and Christmas this year. Plans are being discussed for a virtual children's program. They will be announced later.

Correspondence was shared from cards over the past year. Due to covid-19, this is the first meeting, (and last) for 2020. Old Business:

A memorial will be sent to the council in memory of Kathy Reinhardt. Haley Homeier did not receive her graduation quilt this year as no quilts were tied. If quilting resumes, she will be given one then. Christmas cards to shut-ins will take the place of poinsettias this year due to Covid. Shirley will mail them out.

New Business:

Discussion was held on the decision to dissolve Women's Guild. Due to circumstances beyond our control (and Covid), it was decided the time has come to dissolve our group and turn our operating funds over to the SJUCC church council to be added to the Sunday School fund for purchase of Bibles for the upcoming confirmation classes. Shirley will send letters to the organizations we now annually donate funds to i.e. Emmaus homes and Bob and Marcia Flaa. Projects such as jelly, bake sales, quilting, kitchen upkeep and supplies AND appliances will need to be assumed by the council after December 1, 2020. This decision was not made lightly or without deep regret!!!! Four or five people just could no longer keep it together.

There was no devotional program or singing. Motion was made and seconded to adjourn our final meeting. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted.

Shirley Little, Women's Guild secretary

St. John's UCC Cleaning Committee

The St. John's UCC cleaning committee for the month of December is: Doug Spike, Becky Tatge and Keith & Kim Keller



Second Saturday Quilters

SSQ is open to people of all churches & their friends. Contact Deb Wille 507-323-4813 or 83159deb@gmail.com



Special notices, Save the dates, Surround in Prayer:

Dec 8 2pm PPP please pray at least 30 minutes-thx

Dec 14 6:30pm council-SJ

Dec 16 5pm council-N

Dec 20 newsletter deadline

Dec 22-28 Pastor Lora vacation-emergencies 5074521448 or text 5075254483

Dec 23 no Wednesday Wear

Dec 26 no Wednesday Wear, Enger's-N

Dec 27 no in person worship

Jul 21, 2021 7pm Eagle Center program-SJ

Aug 31-Sept. 10, 2021 UMC General Conference-Mpls

Nov.10-12, 2021 North Central UMC Jurisdiction Conference: Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Election and assignment of bishops occurs.

Fare For All 2020 Pick Up Dates: canceled for now

Food assistance is at The Society of Saint Vincent

de Paul, Divine Mercy Chapter, located at 617 3rd Avenue NW in Faribault for food assistance. If you are willing to volunteer call Kevin at SVdP at 334-2100.

There are plans in progress for the Northfield Community Action Center to expand food availability and other assistance in Faribault.

Food Shelf Items always welcome. Each church has a location where you may bring items. Your help by delivering those items to our local food shelves is greatly appreciated. Your gifts witness to our mission focus for anyone coming to our churches! Thanks for your ministry. Together, we help feed our communities. In times of need, our help is needed even more.

Ruth's House thanks the Rice County community for their generous donations, which go to provide basic needs to local families. Donations may be dropped off at Ruth's House in Faribault on Tuesday 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm and Saturday Noon - 2:00 pm. If you would like to offer other items please contact Ruth's House Donations Coordinator, Sandy, at 507-581-1374 or psvarley@gmail.com, before dropping off. Please contact Suzanne for volunteer opportunities! suzannef.ruthshouse@gmail.com

Habitat for Humanity Rice County Habitat for Humanity www.habitatricecounty.org 507.323.5167, 204 7th St. W, PMB 128, Northfield, MN 55057 invites you to 365 Days of Prayer: Thanks for your interest in supporting this ministry and mission through prayer. Here are some examples of what to pray for:

- Partner Families - as we select families and through the process of building
- Volunteers - that they sign up with excitement and for their safety

•Resources - that we have the resources we need (materials, sub-contractors, cash) to complete these builds

•Community - we pray these builds add to the existing vibrant community and that the community responds with support and enthusiasm

When you sign up, you'll be signing up for a whole day. That doesn't mean you have to pray the WHOLE day, but just create some intentional time on that day. Share with your family this opportunity for prayer. Share with your faith community. Share on social media. Or simply do what Matthew 6:6 says, "...whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your father who is in secret..." Or, another version from The Message by Eugene Peterson, "Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense God's grace."

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Minnesota serve children ages 5-14 in Dodge, Rice, Steele and Waseca Counties. Our mission: Contact info: 545 Dunnell Drive, Owatonna 607-451-5922, 322 Central Ave., Faribault, 507-334-0258 202 W Main Str., Kasson, 507-634-4595, Waseca 507-451-5922 www.bbbsouthernmn.org megan@bbbsouthernmn.org

Remember that our NAMI Family Support group meets every 1st and 3rd Tuesday 7:00-8:30pm in Room 220 at the Northfield Community Resource Center (1651 Jefferson Parkway). (NAMI is National Alliance for the Mentally Ill)

Faribault Area Hospice Foundation is committed to supporting Faribault Area patients receiving Hospice Care. For more information or to apply for assistance, please contact: www.faribaultareahospicefoundation.org or info@faribaultareahospicefoundation.org or call 1-866-506-7049 Or write Faribault Area Hospice Foundation 200 State Avenue, Faribault, MN 55021

Jesusfood is a mission project in the Faribault mall. They have time available to pack meals for children around the world on the 1st Sat of every month starting at 10AM, done before noon. Cost averages about \$60 per person, if you can afford it. But there is not a minimum, so as people can afford, it's what we'll pack. Call for info: 507-469-4357, or email: info@JesusFood.org

Volunteer Opportunities at Allina District One Hospital Contact information for Sharon Jacobson: 507-497-3527 Sharon.jacobson@allina.com Mail Route 77000, 200 State Avenue, Faribault, Minnesota 55021

Honoring Choices There is no cost for this service. To request our involvement: Email: honoringchoices@allina.com Phone: 507-977-2330 - To obtain an Honoring Choices Health Care Directive: <https://www.honoringchoices.org/health-care-directives/english-directives/22-hcd-long-form-fillable/file> Contact our office if you would like a health care directive mailed to you. Please contact me if you have any questions or suggestions for program outreach. Pat Heydon Follow us on Facebook: @honoringchoicesFaribaultOwatonna

Upcoming scriptures, read and reflect to prepare for worship: Year B DEC 6 2nd Sunday of Advent Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8 COLORS Purple Blue, DEC 13 3rd Sunday of Advent Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Psalm 126 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28 COLORS Purple Blue. DEC 20 4th Sunday of Advent 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Luke 1:47-55 Romans 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38 COLORS Purple Blue. DEC 24 Christmas Eve Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-20 DEC 25 Christmas Day Isaiah 52:7-10 Psalm 98 Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12) John 1:1-14 COLORS Gold White

**Service Schedule for 2020/2021: Sunday
9:00 AM WORSHIP AT NERSTRAND UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

12 Maple Street, Nerstrand, MN 55053
E-mail: stjohnsuccnumc@live.com
Website: <https://nerstrandumc.org>
Phone: 507.332.4089



**10:30 AM WORSHIP AT ST JOHN'S UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

19086 Jacobs Ave, Faribault, MN 55021
E-mail: stjohnsuccnumc@live.com Phone: 5077895766
Website: <https://stjohnsunitedchurchofchrist.info>
Phone: 507.330.0025



Lora Sturm, Pastor All the People, Ministers
Phone: 507.330.0025 office/ 507.525.4483 cell/ 507.452.1448 home
E-mail: pastorlora@live.com
Sabbath on Friday

Christmas Blessings

