

November 25, 2020

NEWS AND NOTES FROM GRACE & WESLEY



It is traditional to sing this classic hymn on the first Sunday of Advent (or on every Sunday of Advent, for that matter). After all, Advent is a season of preparation and anticipation. It is a period of time in which we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and, perhaps more importantly, prepare to meet Christ face to face, eagerly anticipating his return. "O come, O come, Emmanuel!"

Have you ever paid attention to the words of this Christmas hymn? It truly captures the longing the Jewish people had for centuries as they awaited the Messiah. Their waiting was marked by an aching for God to save his people as they suffered exile, captivity, foreign oppression, and a seemingly endless dread that they would never again have their own land and nation. "O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear!"

This hymn also, however, captures the longing we Christians have for the Messiah to return and restore heaven on earth, once and for all. It captures our aching for the Son of God to return and right all wrongs, destroy all suffering, wipe away every tear, and put an end to death for all eternity. "O come, o come, Emmanuel, and order all things far and nigh...the captives from their prison free, and conquer death's deep misery...cheer us by thy justice here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight...from dust thou brought us forth to life; deliver us from earthly strife." "O come, o come, Emmanuel!"

Perhaps many of us may have a keener sense of our longing for Christ to return during this Advent than we have in recent seasons. This year I certainly recognize more clearly my desire for Christ to return and bless us with his perfect presence forevermore. I find myself longing for an end to the suffering we witness on a daily basis. I mourn the fact that we will not all be able to gather together and celebrate Advent and Christmas Eve like we normally do. I feel a sense of loss and sadness, knowing this season will be very difficult for so many of you, whether it be due to isolation, anxiety, concern for a family member or friend who is sick, or the recent loss of a loved one. "O come, o come, Emmanuel!"

The good news is that Emmanuel, "God with us", *has* come and *is* with us. Even though the Messiah has not yet returned to restore all that is fallen and broken in the world, we can take comfort knowing God himself is indeed with us. Though he has not yet delivered us from earthly strife, we remember and celebrate at Christmas the truth that Christ, God in flesh, has already set us free. This is our eternal hope!

So, even though this Advent will look different, the reason we celebrate remains the same. Be encouraged, knowing that God is with you, regardless of the current circumstances. Let all of us, whose hope is in our Lord, joyously thank God for giving us his one and only Son, and let us join together in crying out in eager anticipation, "O come, O come, Emmanuel!"

God bless you, and Merry Christmas,

Pastor Craig Luttrell



The Bishop and Cabinet of the Iowa United Methodist Church directed all UM churches to **cease all in person activities until January 10th** due to increasing COVID rates and the strain on local health care workers. As such, Grace and Wesley will, in compliance, cease in person activities until the Iowa Conference lifts the restrictions. Thank you for your patience and understanding. Pastor Craig and Patty will remain available if you need anything.

For more information about the "Red, Yellow, & Green" phases, please visit: <https://www.iaumc.org/123churchreentry>



Christmas Eve Service

Due to UMC conference wide closures, we will be livestreaming the Christmas Eve service (at 5:30pm on December 24th) rather than holding in person services.

In lieu of communal candle lighting, Pastor Craig has purchased glow sticks, which will be available for pick up at Wesley beginning on December 21st.

We encourage you to pick one up for each member of your family and, at the conclusion of the Christmas Eve service, go outside together and sing Silent Night and/or Joy to the World.

Also, Pastor Craig encourages all of us invite our neighbors to join us on their porches as well. You may take extra glow sticks for your neighbors if you plan on handing them out.

Thank you and God bless you!



Christmas Offering

As we are all aware, this is an extremely difficult time for many right here in our own community. There are always needs, but they have been compounded by the pandemic. As such, I am asking you, as you are able, to give generously to the Christmas offering this year. The Grace Christmas offering this year will go to Grace cares, who will disburse the funds to local missions as well as national and international missions. The Wesley Christmas offering this year will go to the Mason City Salvation Army, who assist local persons in need.

**As a cost-saving measure, we will not be sending the Christmas offering letter on the pretty letterhead that you are used to receiving. You will find a Christmas Offering envelope in this newsletter or you can pick one up in the entryway at Wesley. It can either be mailed to the church or dropped off in Wesley's new secure mailbox located by the parking lot doors. Thank you!*



Drive Up Communion available in the Wesley parking lot on the first Sunday of the month, 1:30-2:00 PM.

Next Newsletter Deadline

Have something to put in the next newsletter? Write up an article and get it to the church office! The deadline for the next newsletter is Monday, December 21.



Wesley Family Outreach Ministry

**No cost!
No hassles!**

Home for the Holidays?

Covid-19 has led to our having to make some significant changes to our lives. For many this year, it extends to how we will likely experience the holiday season. So, how about we zoom through the holidays together?

Wesley United Methodist Church will be hosting zoom support visits this season. If you are not familiar with zoom, it is an application that you add to your computer (there is a free version) that allows you to connect with others in a way that you can see and visit with other members of the zoom meeting.

The “Zoom for the Holidays” meetings will provide a time to talk about what it is like this year for you and to discuss healthy and safe ways to manage your life during these challenging times doing so in faith with one another.

Did I say it was free? It is. You will need a computer that is connected to the internet and download the free version of zoom. If you are interested, call Ken Zimmerman to give him your e-mail address. He will use your e-mail address to create a zoom group and send out an e-mail invitation for the meeting. When the time comes, you will only need to click on the invitation to join the group.

Ken Zimmerman, who is involved with the Family Outreach Ministry, will serve as host to guide the conversation along with Pastor Craig.

Please give Ken a call at 641-512-5565 to learn more and get signed up. The zoom visits are planned for the following dates:

December 3	6:30-7:30 PM
December 10	6:30-7:30 PM
December 17	6:30-7:30 PM
December 30	6:30-7:30 PM
January 6	6:30-7:30 PM

Living a Healthy Life Despite Covid-19

The meaning of life, Victor Frankl who survived Auschwitz and Dachau, said “is the meaning one puts into their life.” We can face the reality of Covid-19 without it infecting the meaning of our life by investing in how we live our life every day—recognizing its presence as we invest in healthy actions. Let’s look at some things you might do to stay healthy...

- Invest in a time each morning on awakening to consider your blessings, contemplate your day, and be in prayer.
- Reclaim or affirm a healthy daily routine—get specific.
- Be in nature as much as you can—nature offers a healing. If you can’t be out in nature, spend time at least looking out into nature each day.
- Breathe deeply using self-calming skills—not just when you are upset, but as a preventative act.
- Get exercise to the extent that medical conditions will allow—exercise changes what goes on in our body.
- Recognize that the mind and body are one, not two. So take care of your body—listen to it. Your body will often send you messages before you are aware of it consciously.
- Keep things specific—don’t let them accumulate or get bigger than they are in reality.
- Cut yourself some slack—be nicer to yourself.
- See with your mind. Your eyes are actually lenses. We see with our mind. Be mindful of what you are looking for and at as you go about your day. If you look for trouble, guess what you are likely to find.
- One thing at a time—we don’t do well multi-tasking.
- Use time wisely and don’t let time rule you. Give yourself the gift of time. Pace yourself.
- Break tasks into measurable parts. Sometimes you don’t have to do everything all at once.
- Define the issue. Often we have defined it differently than what it really is.
- Listen to inspiring music. Music touches us almost instantly.
- Prioritize—not everything is of the same importance.
- Measure—keep issues in perspective on a 1-10 scale. Don’t make a 1 or 2 rate as a 10.
- Put yourself in the hands of faith.
- Refer issues to an authority or another person—you don’t have to be the problem solver on your own on every issue.

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- Be willing to accept when you are wrong. Being wrong does not make you a bad person. When you're wrong, fix it.
- Consider giving yourself a realistic measure. Perfection won't happen. Did you do the best you could at the time, with what you knew and had available? If the answer is "yes" then settle and let it go. If it is "no", decide what you can do differently and move on.
- Do something for another person—invest in acts of kindness.
- Take the time to listen to another person and offer empathy. (Empathy is not sympathy.)
- Examine the evidence. We can make things pretty bad inside our heads. Before you go there, take the time to be your own objective reviewer and examine the actual facts.
- Study vs. react. Sometimes it helps to withhold judgement we want to make or hold on to an emotional reaction by being our own scientist, so to speak, and actually studying the issue.
- Face fear head-on, move it to a plan of action—one can be concerned without being fearful.
- Invest in the moment. Anxiety takes us to things yet to happen. Depression and guilt take us often to the past. Both remove us from the here and now. They rob us of the moment.
- Little things count—look for everyday things in your life that give you value and meaning.
- Be mindful of your private self-talk. Words count. We live 24/7 inside our heads. Be nicer to yourself.
- Talk with someone. We know that talking allows us to give voice to our concerns.
- Get quality and sufficient sleep. After age 50, we get much less deep, restorative sleep.
- Eat healthy and eat healthy foods. A common cartoon during Covid-19 highlights the Covid-19 fifteen, referring to weight gain. Too often we turn to comfort foods, which are good at the moment, but not so good for us in the long term. Consider when and how you eat as well. Slow down and enjoy your meal, avoiding meals on the run and mindless snacking.

To be healthy is to have a focus on being healthy. We each have our own journey. We are our own continuous quality improvement project, so to speak. One does not have to win every battle and we may stumble along the way. It is what we do with the stumble that impacts our journey. Be healthy. If you want to talk more about this, you can give the Wesley Family Outreach a call at 641-512-5565.

Ken Zimmerman

WESLEY NEWS



The Wesley United Methodist Women would like to announce that our current Priscilla and Sarah Leah circles will be joining to create one new circle, effective January 1, 2021. It will be called Esther Circle. This new circle will meet monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 3:45 PM.

UMW circles are open to all women of the church. Attending circle is an excellent way to get to know other women.

Our primary goals throughout the year are to strengthen our relationships with God and to coordinate events to earn money for the many different missions that we support.

We invite anyone interested in joining to call Judy Alman (424-8056) or Susan Dixon (423-8488).





Hospital Ins & Outs:

(Due to HIPAA regulations, we can only publish names of those who have given their consent, either by letting the church and/or pastor know or through the hospital chaplain.)

Kathy Rasmuson, Bob McGowan, Donna Rafferty, Ken Christensen

Condolences: ...to the friends and family of Edwin Beenken who passed away on 10-26-2020.

Thank You

A special thank you to the Women's group for my treats I received for Halloween and Thanksgiving. This is a hard time for all of us, so it is so nice to be remembered at this time. God Bless all of you -

Marlene Oswood

Than you so much for the Thanksgiving treat bag from the UMW that Ann Butcher delivered to me. I so appreciate being remembered!

Ruby Smith

Once again the UMW ladies surprised me with a Fall package of goodies and a book. I read the book right away. It was great and I say thanks for making my day!

Charlotte Ring

Dear Church Family and United Methodist Women,

A note to thank you for the Halloween treats and word find book. Also, thanks to Barb DeVary for bringing the church bulletin every week.

Charlotte Parcher

Thank you to the Wesley United Methodist Women for the Halloween gifts. I feel so honored you remember me. Thanks again -

Phyliss Preftakes

Thank you to everyone who donated to the 100 personal dignity kits that were made for Ingathering. These will be distributed by Midwest Missions to help those experiencing natural disasters or difficult times. A big Thank-You to Brent and Katrina Hamilton for delivering Wesley and Grace's kit to the Ingathering site on November 7.

Also Thank You to all who donated diapers and wipes in October. We collected over 400 diapers and 25 containers of wipes that were distributed to Crisis Intervention and Salvation Army. They were very excited to receive these items. Our donations do make a difference in lives of others!

SUNDAY SCHOOL News

Children's Packets will be available during Sunday church services or for pick up in the church entryway.



Barb DeVary is looking for garage space to rent for her car during the months of January, February and March. Give her a call at 641-423-1669 if you can help.

Wesley Financial Report

10/30: \$3565
11/20: \$8671



December

- 2 Dorothy Yanney, Gary & Donna Sutcliffe, Larry & JoAnn Mozack
- 3 Deb Lindsay, Diane Walrod
- 6 Kae Colville, Ryanne Bailey
- 7 Calista McCollough
- 8 Allen & Rhonda Halfpop
- 9 Brock Rezabek
- 10 Steve Hansen, Bruce Kaasa
- 11 Todd Peters
- 12 Laurent Pongo
- 13 Jim Harbeson
- 16 Lowell Cook
- 17 Helena Lamoreux
- 18 Marilyn Harrington
- 19 Paul Dixon, Bill Frelund, Rich & Nancy Lloyd
- 20 Jo Ann Johnson, Jovani Pongo
- 22 Marilyn Cook, Charlotte Parcher, Michael England
- 24 Christelle Adungy, Randy Behrends
- 27 Bea Dannen
- 28 Jon Mariner
- 29 Tim Walrod, Julie Fox, Katie Kranz
- 30 Sherri Clemons

Wesley's Year of Giving Back: November & December 2020

Winter is coming!
Can you help give the gift of warmth for our school children and homeless shelters? This November and December, we will be collecting hats and mittens and other cold weather items such as socks, scarves, underwear, boots and snow pants for those in need.



(The boxes for Hawkeye Harvest Food Bank and Mohawk Market remain in the entryway for your donations.)

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." 1 Peter 4:10



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Thank You!

Grace delivered Meals on Wheels the week of October 19. Thanks to Marilyn & Jack Mueller & Paul Garcia for delivering those meals.

December

- 6 Todd Eldridge, Doug Barrett
- 10 Steve Hansen
- 19 Sue Kraus
- 23 Ramona Morse
- 29 Shirley Stephen

Christmas Food Baskets



December HOLY PAIL:

Christmas basket money can be sent/given at church until December 13. Names for basket recipients to be given to Pat Colby by Sunday,

2020 Grace Cares Giving Report

These amounts were given as a result of your faithful giving:

Heifer International \$1370.00

This included one donation of \$500 for a cow and 29 hives of bees.

Women at the Well \$885.00

Cleaning buckets to Salvation Army 55 buckets

Cleaning buckets to Habitat for Humanity home dedications 2 buckets

We are presently delivering 10 food boxes for Thanksgiving and plan to deliver at least that many in December.

Thanks for your generous gifts to mission through Grace Cares.

Grace Cares Committee

GRACE & WESLEY



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the position of Wesley/Grace secretary is now officially part-time.

Office hours are variable, but Patty will generally be in the office M-W-F mornings. Since nothing is engraved in stone, you might want to call ahead to make sure the office will be open before coming.

You can also call Patty (641-430-4726) or Pastor Craig (641-691-5447) to set up a time and we can have the church open for you.

Wesley United Methodist Church
 1405 S. Pennsylvania Ave.
 Mason City, IA 50401
 641-423-6549 patty@mwesley.org
 Office Hours: Variable (Please call Patty at 641-430-4726 or Pastor Craig at 641-691-5447 to arrange a time.)
 Worship Times: Sunday, 9:00 AM
 Facebook Livestream service

Next newsletter mailed
 December 23, 2020.

Grace United Methodist Church
 200 14th St. NW
 Mason City, IA 50401
 641-423-5727
 Worship Time: Sunday, 10:30 AM







