

CIRCLE TIMES



December 2023

United Protestant Church Newsletter

Silver Bay, Minnesota

The United Protestant Church Mission Statement

*We are an open-minded Christian fellowship. We seek
to follow the Word of God and to pass God's love on to others
as we actively welcome them into our church family.*

Rev. Paul Scaringi, Ph.D.

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Lynn Anderson, Church Secretary

Dedie Moore, Church Council Chair

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TEXTS AND TITLES

December 3 – 1st Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

2nd Reading: Isaiah 64:1-9

Title: *In Your Ways*

December 24 – 4th Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

2nd Reading: Luke 1:26-38

Title: *Overshadowed*

December 10 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: Mark 1:1-8

2nd Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Title: *Fading Flowers & Good Tidings*

December 24 – Christmas Eve

1st Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

2nd Reading: Luke 2:1-20

Title: *How to Turn the World Upside Down*

December 17 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

2nd Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Title: *They Want to Know*

December 31 – 1st Sunday after Christmas

1st Reading: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

2nd Reading: Luke 2:22-40

Title: *Amazed, Revealed, & Pierced*



We chose the name "Circle Times" for our first U.P. newsletter 62 years ago.

It was a way of reminding ourselves that we are a united group of several denominations.

This is a much needed witness in our world filled with diversities.



From the Pastor

*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away;
look, new things have come into being!*
- 2 Corinthians 5:17

We enter into the Advent season with all sorts of images, songs, and decorations before us – not only in our towns and cities but also within our faith communities. I think it is a fair assumption (providing this is not your first Advent/Christmas celebration) you have a particular favorite when it comes to this time of year. As people of faith, when we come to this time of year we rightly turn our attention to our ‘favorite,’ what we proclaim to be the foundation for this holiday – Jesus and his birth, the One who is God made flesh (John 1:14).

As we turn our worship and attention to this amazing event, it is easy to focus on the vulnerability of God at this moment. The apostle Paul points to this in his great hymn of praise of Jesus in Philippians 2:5-11. When he says Jesus “emptied himself,” he is talking about this moment, the time when the One through whom all things were created (back to that John 1 passage), became human and was laid in manger.

One of the things that makes Jesus’ birth so startling is that he was born at all. I’ve sometimes wondered why Jesus just didn’t show up on earth as a fully formed adult ready to begin his ministry. Why go through the vulnerability of the birth process? We know so little of Jesus’ early years, would not it have been safer if he just appeared one day? God did not, obviously, choose the safe path; Jesus became vulnerable and emptied himself for the sake of the world and the sake of you and me. Thus, the Son of God becomes a son to an everyday couple trying to fulfill yet another government attempt to keep track of all the people.

Vulnerability – that is, God’s vulnerability – is an important theme for this season. But there is another aspect of Jesus being born to Mary and Joseph that I’d like us to ponder, the theme of newness. Babies are not only vulnerable, they are of course new, and this is something that may be easy to overlook but is terribly important for how we live out our faith.

While it is certainly important and praiseworthy that God becomes vulnerable for our sake and the sake of the world, it is also important and praiseworthy that the Lord does a new thing in becoming human. It is one of the reasons we call the 2nd Testament of scripture, the New Testament. It is not because the 1st Testament is ‘old’ and therefore no longer needed (which is how we sometimes treat it). No, we refer to it as ‘old’ to indicate it is before the revelation of Jesus, a new revelation who has no precedent in history or in the life of God. It is this aspect of newness, particularly of a God who acts in a new way, that we are prone to overlook.

I think we often go through life believing (or at least acting as if we believe) that our past determines our present circumstances, or that “fate” determines our future. We see the brokenness of the world, the horrific images of war, poverty, hunger, and illness and we lose hope. We in the end look past the promise that our Lord is a God who can and will make all things new, and instead end up believing that life is simply a series of events beyond our control and the control of the One who created and sustains us. So, we join the crowds and say that dreaded phrase, “It is what it is.”

Jesus’ birth means many things for our world and our lives. As we go through this Advent season, I pray you’ll be able to return the ancient proclamation and truth that in Christ it is possible for all things to be made new, including (as the apostle Paul proclaims in the above verse) you and me.

Eileen and I pray you have a blessed Advent and Christmastide season.

Peace,
Paul

House of Love update

The House of Love (HoL) is our partnered mission. It is a Christian orphanage in Chiang Mai, Thailand that is a home for women and children affected by HIV/AIDS. Its mission is to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of each resident. Mark and Alise Juanes are American Baptist missionaries working with the local administrators and staff to further this ministry.

Here are some pictures from the Juanes' last House of Love report:



It is rice planting time at the *House of Love*.

HOUSE OF LOVE SUNDAY

Join us on Sunday
December 10th
for a special Sunday
supporting the House of Love.
A video made by Post,
our student nurse who we
are supporting, will be shown.



Homework time is often a group activity.

UNITED PROTESTANT CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

November 14, 2023 6:00 pm

ATTENDEES: Dedie Moore, David Moore, Peg Osmundson, Mike Osmundson, Philip Christman, Agnes Gilson, Shirley Whiteford, Terry Eggum, Ruth Eggum, Pastor Paul.

Chair Dedie Moore called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm and Pastor Paul opened in prayer.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: None.

M/M/S by Philip Christman/Terry Eggum to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2023 meeting with the correction made naming Eileen Scaringi as the Chair of the Nominating Committee, rather than Shirley Whiteford. Motion carried.

TREASURERS'S REPORT: M/M/S by Ruth Eggum/Agnes Gilson to approve the Treasurer's report from October, 2023 for audit. Motion carried.

Checking Account:	\$17,332.02	Memorial Fund:	\$26,465.65	Ministry
Fund:	\$67,031.98	AmazonSmile:	\$463.74	
House of Love:	\$7,864.50	Checking SS:	\$3,293.69	
YTD Food Shelf:	\$1,279.00			
YTD Income:	\$82,945.76			
YTD Expense:	(\$92,499.31)			
YTD Net:	(\$9,553.55)			

DIACONATE REPORT: Ruth Eggum reported that Amy Wasson and Jeff Miller (Milner?) were interviewed and accepted into membership at UPC via transfer from their previous church. They will officially be welcomed on November 26 at the morning worship service. The piano was tuned on 11/14.

TRUSTEE REPORT: Chair Philip Christman reported that there are five projects in the works, but no progress to report, due to illnesses and contractors failing to show up. These include: 1) exterior locks on the doors; 2) finishing the work on the front of the building (in the spring); 3) working on the control system for the boiler (can be done in winter); 4) replacing the sidewalk at the back of the church (in the spring); and working on the window frames (in the spring).

CHRISTIAN ED REPORT: The Youth Group (as a replacement for Sunday School) will begin this Sunday, November 19, at 9:15.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor Paul reported that no one is in the hospital at this time. Philip Christman and Mike Osmundson continue with their infusion treatments. Rebecca Snook is still in CO. There will be a funeral on Thursday, November 16, for Becky Goutermont's mom, Shirley Larson Delaney. Visitation is at 12:30 with the funeral at 1:30. Game Night was a success. The plans for the Thanksgiving Community Meal are going well. We will add to the posters around town that there is "no charge" for this meal. There will be a House of Love committee meeting next week. The Juanes' have sent a thank you video from Post (our nursing student), which we will show to the congregation soon. We will decorate the sanctuary for Christmas the last week in November (day and time to be decided). On November 19, there will be an ecumenical Thanksgiving service at Beaver Bay Community Church at 6 pm. Pastor Paul will be participating.

OLD BUSINESS: There will be a brief congregational meeting following the worship service on Sunday, November 26, to elect the slate of new officers for 2024. Next year we will check on the status of supplies for the Tabitha Ministry and spend the remainder of funds designated for replacement

The Budget Committee met and approved the proposed budget for 2024. This proposed budget will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting. M/M/S by Philip Christman/David Moore to discontinue the highway clean-up project when our two-year term expires. After some discussion, a vote was taken and unanimously did not carry.

NEW BUSINESS: The Annual Meeting date was set for January 28, 2024. Annual reports should be turned into Secretary Lynn Anderson by January 12, 2014. After Thanksgiving, Chair Dedie Moore and Pastor Paul will get together and write the year-end appeal letter.

The next Council meeting will be December 12, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

M/M/S by Peg Osmundson/Philip Christman to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm. Motion carried. Pastor Paul closed in prayer.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ruth Eggum, Council Secretary
November minutes will be approved at the December council meeting.

Taking 5

Below you will find the Taking 5 scripture and prayers for this month. I encourage you to take 5 minutes each day to read the scripture closely, pray the prayer attentively, and spend the remaining time in prayerful silence, seeking out God's presence and prompting in that time. Thank you for being part of this important discipline for our church and for you.

Peace,
Paul

The week of December 3rd

Scripture: Isaiah 40:9-11

Prayer: In this Advent, mighty Lord, I pray for the eyes to see you coming. May my hope may be found in you and your promise to gather all unto you. Amen.

The week of December 10th

Scripture: John 1:6-8

Prayer: Illuminating God, illumine my life so I may see and follow the wonderful and strange ways in which you move through my Advent days. Amen.

The week of December 17th

Scripture: Luke 1:28-30

Prayer: Holy God, in this season where darkness comes early and holiday lights are lit, shine your light on my path and help me to see how I am favored by you. Amen.

The week of December 24th

Scripture: Luke 2:28-32

Prayer: Holy God, prepare a place in my heart this day where your light will shine through me to the world around me so that in you I may be made whole. Amen.

The week of December 31st

Scripture: Matthew 2:10-11

Prayer: Holy Lord, I need your wisdom to see your light that shines, your grace to follow your leading, and your joy to offer what I have. Hear my prayer. Amen.



Parish Nurse Notes
Dedie Moore R.N.

*This day is holy to our Lord; and do not be
grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

Nehemiah 8:10

We are entering the season of dwindling light, cold and often challenging weather. Also, the season of Advent where we are waiting, anticipating the coming of the Light of the World, Jesus. The holidays can be stressful, sometimes in a good way, but also can be a time to especially miss people we have lost.

Some people are especially sensitive to the loss of light and can experience significant depression during this season. This may be Seasonal Affective Disorder. Symptoms include:

- Persistent sad, anxious feelings
- Feeling hopeless, irritable, frustrated
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Loss of interest in usual activities, decreased energy, fatigue
- Oversleeping

Treatments for SAD include light therapy using a light box developed specifically for SAD; also, getting outside in direct sunlight with eyes protected and therapy, including cognitive behavioral therapy.

Focusing on memories of joyful times, writing these down and focusing on these 3 times a day for 5 minutes. Vitamin D may help, and medication can help. Exercise, especially outside, healthy diet, making an effort to make connections with people also helps.

If you or someone you know is concerned about symptoms of SAD, contact your health care provider. If symptoms are severe, call or text 988, the Mental Health Crisis Lifeline, or chat at 988 Lifeline.org. In a life-threatening situation, of course, call 911.



The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

John 1:5

OUR CIRCLE

“OUR CIRCLE” is a news article that features a member or friend of U.P. Church. The article is based on conversations and written answers to questions. We hope you will enjoy learning about the folks who are familiar participants in our church life.



Dawn Connor

Dawn was born in Santa Barbara, California in 1959 to Donald Hansen and Maryann Mraz. She had one brother and two sisters. When she was in fifth grade her mom and the children moved to Barnum, Minnesota to live on her grandparent's farm. Dawn and her grandpa were good buddies—she helped him with milking the cows and other farm chores. She has fond memories of teaming up with her grandparents to play canasta. Her grandmother made delicious buttermilk donuts and a sweet bread with prunes called kolaches which originated in Eastern Europe. One time her grandma made the kolaches with poppy seed as a filling. Apparently, this looked like what was left in the spittoon that her grandpa used. Dawn did not like this version of her treat. When she was a teenager she babysat and worked at a restaurant in Barnum. She recalls that she made 50 cents an hour. A roast beef sandwich cost 99 cents. She always worked hard just as her mother did. In high school Dawn played baseball and basketball. Dawn graduated from Barnum High School in 1977.

Shortly after graduating, Dawn got married and moved to Tower -Soudan, Minnesota. Her husband worked at Erie Mining and Dawn worked at a home for people with mental disabilities. She was blessed with three children, Lawrence Folstad (1979), Jeremy Folstad (1981) and Tony Folstad (1982). Dawn looks back at the years raising her children and commented that it was the best time of her life. In 1989 Dawn became single. Dawn then worked for Potlatch Wood Products for 13 years. She quit after her children were graduated and on their own.

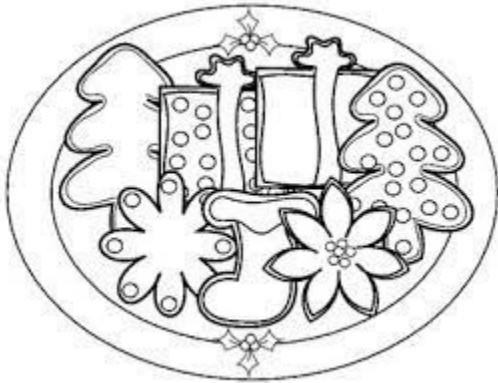
Her next life adventure was living in Cable, Wisconsin where she worked with a contractor who remodeled and built houses. She learned a lot of skills on that job. She then worked for Georgia Pacific in Hayward, Wisconsin. In 2010, Dawn moved to Silver Bay where she worked for Northshore Mining Company and worked running the car dump. She retired in 2021 after 14 years. So now Dawn works for an independent contractor that delivers for the post office. She drives a truck 150 miles a day and really likes the job. Being a physically active person, Dawn likes to hike and plans to snowshoe with Nancy Viola this winter. Her grandma showed her how to knit, but says she's just not good at it. What Dawn really loves to do is help people who need rides to doctor appointments. She does this through volunteering at North Shore Area Partners. She has really done so many things to help people out. Dawn has ten grandchildren and one great grandchild. She loves to visit with them and has taken trips to the Black Hills and Las Vegas with some of her family. She is planning a trip to Washington D.C. with her granddaughter, Harmony. Dawn looks forward to her next adventure in life.

When asked what keeps her going, Dawn says she prays every day. She said that it is important to be patient, and have faith that answers will come. Dawn hopes volunteering to help people with what they need is her way of making the world a better place. She recommends a book entitled The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren. She listens to a daily encouragement that helps relieve stress. Psalm 53 echoes her words: “I pray to you, O Lord; you hear my voice in the morning; at sunrise I offer my prayer and wait for your answer.”

This and That

THE MITTEN TREE IS BACK

Winter is here and kids need mittens, gloves, scarves and hats. We can help by decorating the mitten tree. Donations will be given to Salvation Army. The deadline for donations is December 13th.



CHRISTMAS COOKIE SUNDAY DECEMBER 17TH

If you like, it's time to share a dozen cookies with each other to celebrate the season of sweets.



NORTH SHORE VOICES CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

December 3rd 3:00 pm Baptism River Community Church

December 10th 3:00 pm Sychar Lutheran Church

What's up now with U.P. folks!!!

Keep these folks in your thoughts and prayers:

Pat Viola is at home in the Silver Bay, MN Veteran's Home (56 Outer Drive).

Ellen and Karsten Hogenson, Phyllis Pearrow, Ray Burge, Dave and Kay Colby, Irene Johnson, Mary Aijala, Mary Carroll, Chuckie Knutson, Mike and Peg Osmundson, David Gustafson, Rebecca Snook, Phil Christman Serine Ege, Deanne Reiten and Agnes Gilson of our congregation as they deal with health-related changes and recoveries.

All the caregivers.

We extend our sympathy to the family of Shirley Ann (Larson) Delaney who died on November 10, 2023.

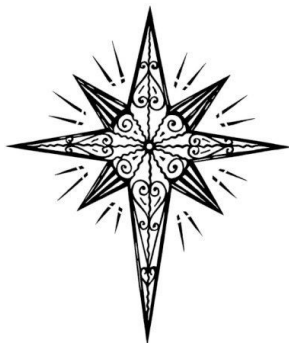
December Birthdays

Rebecca Snook	8
Paul Taintor	10
Shirley Whiteford	10
Ellen Hogenson	15
Bob Myers	16
Dick Stronach	24



December Anniversaries

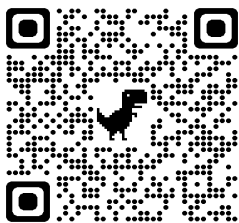
Dan and Karen Bzdok	2
Jack and Bonnie Anderson	11



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

**Sunday, December 24th
6:00 pm**

**Please note:
Sunday 10:30 service
will be held as usual.**



For those who would like to support the UPC ministry electronically, please scan this code to access our website's online giving page:



Wednesday Morning Bible Study 9:30 am

Join us as we explore the Bible.
Everyone is welcomed.

Check out our website:

<https://www.unitedprotestant.org>.
You can download the latest newsletter and sermon as well as keep up to date with what is happening here at UPC.

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Pastor Paul will be in the office on Tuesday and Wednesdays . He will be in his home office on Thursdays and Fridays. Lynn in office Wed & Thurs 1:30 -4:00 pm					1	2
3 Sunday Worship 10:30 am Communion	4	5	6 WMBS 9:30 am Thanksgiving Committee 2:00 pm	7	8	9
10 Sunday Worship 10:30 am HOL Sunday	11 GLAD 6:30 pm	12 Boards meet 5:00 pm Council meets 6:00 pm	13 WMBS 9:30 am Prayer Shawl 2:00 pm	14	15	16
17 Sunday Worship 10:30 am Christmas Cookie Sunday	18	19	20 WMBS 9:30 am	21	22	23
24 Sunday Worship 10:30 am Christmas Eve 6:00pm	25 GLAD 6:30 pm Merry Christmas	26	27 NO WMBS 9:30 am Prayer Shawl 2:00 pm	28	29	30
31 Worship 10:30						

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