



STEEPLE NEWS

Centennial United Methodist Church at Ivy

December 2020



Finding Where We Belong

As Christ came to dwell among us, we too seek a place to dwell this Christmas

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR DANI:

I did not grow up in a church that stressed the importance of Advent. It was not until I became a United Methodist that I knew what Advent really was. In case you do not know, the four weeks leading up to Christmas Eve are known as the Advent Season. Every year, Advent reminds us of the importance of waiting and preparing. Moments of waiting are often uncomfortable, and I imagine you have become accustomed to the practice of waiting. We have been waiting to return to normalcy for ten months during the pandemic. We have waited to see friends and family we have not seen as often this year. We've been waiting to hug our close ones tight again... waiting has become a close friend we wish we didn't have. Waiting doesn't seem like the kind of activity many are interested in right now after months of waiting, and yet, as we approach the season of Advent, the season of waiting and preparing for Christ's birth, we are called to *wait* and to *wonder* what the possibilities are as Christ enters our world once again as a newborn lying in a manger.

If we don't prepare by waiting with excitement, then we may miss how significant Christ's birth is. Even though we enter this Advent season every year, I still look forward to the slowing down that Advent challenges us to practice. Especially when we enter a busy season of year-end deadlines and holiday expectations, Christ reminds the church that this is not a time for busy-ness, but a time of slowing down, mindfully waiting, and breathing in all that the Immanuel has to offer our world.

In our waiting and preparing at Centennial UMC at Ivy, we will reflect together on the dwelling place of Christ. Christ enters our world to dwell among us as we too seek a place to dwell. Each Sunday in Advent, we'll reflect on *Where we Belong* as we wonder together where God finds a home and where we can find home in community, in faith, and most importantly, in Christ. In the Christmas Season, we remember that God finds a home among us in the flesh of Jesus Christ as the Gospel of John makes known: "The Word became flesh and made his home among us." (*John 1:14*).

Where will we discover or rediscover our home as we approach the Christmas season this year? Perhaps you will find *home* in the community of the church where you can find respite and connection. Or maybe in the promises found in scripture of God's everlasting love and eternal peace which invites you to find a place to dwell and rest. Wherever you find a dwelling place this Advent season, may you remember that even in the midst of the wilderness and the difficult moments, God in Christ dwells within and around you. In the waiting of this Advent season, I offer all of us this blessing:

"The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before... What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God's [back] fade in the distance.

So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running.

For rushing. For worrying. For pushing.

For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon."

-Jan L. Richardson

With Love, Pastor Dani Musselman



MISSIONS COMMITTEE “ “HAT, MITTENS & COAT DRIVE”

Now through Dec 13th we will have our Christmas box in the Narthex to collect hats, mittens, and coats for Bidwell Riverside. If someone would like to donate but is not comfortable going out, Brandi is more than happy to pick up items from people. If you would like to donate, but you are not comfortable going out, please reach out to Brandi Jackson and someone will pick up the donations from your front porch!



This year at Ivy, we are asking everyone to record a Family Christmas Greeting or share with us your favorite Christmas Tradition. Send your video to Dani by December 9th. You can email the video to pastordanim@gmail.com or text it to her at 515-447-0497. Please make the video's short so we can share all that we receive. Some examples would be gathering around the Christmas Tree with your family or pets, maybe a Christmas baking day, picking out the perfect tree or decorating it with friends/family.

You can reach out to Mary Ferguson if you have any questions.



Ivy Centennial will again be sponsoring a family for Christmas. Stars with their wishes have been placed on the Youth Christmas Tree and they are now available to be picked up. Ages range from 4 to 15. If you don't have access to the church building or can't stop by on Sunday morning after worship on the radio, please reach out to Mary Ferguson and we can coordinate on how to get a start to you. **All gifts need to be returned to the church by December 15th.**

Live Nativity at Centennial UMC at Ivy

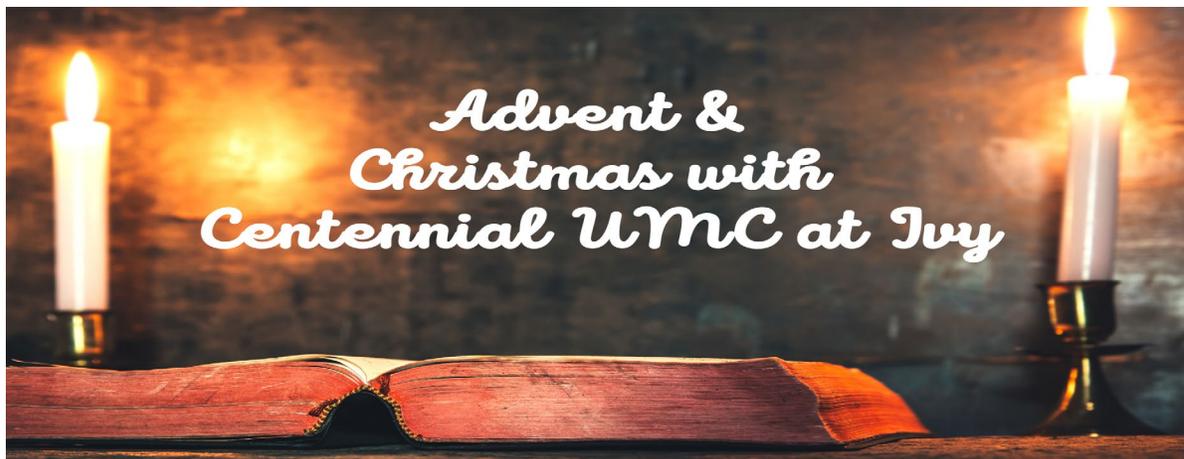
Sat. December 5, 2020
6-8pm

9150 NE University Ave Altoona, IA 50009



**Join us for the Live Nativity at
Centennial UMC at Ivy
Saturday, December 5 from 6-8pm**

Due to the Bishop's Directive and guidelines to help keep us safe in the pandemic, we are asking folks to visit the live nativity by witnessing our take on the night Christ was born from the safety of your car. When you arrive to the church, tune your radio to 88.5 FM to hear Christmas carols and songs as you sing-along!



We worship together every Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. (online & radio)
& Wednesday evening from 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.
(online only until at least January 10)

Saturday, Dec 5 6-8 p.m. Outdoor Live Nativity

Sunday, Dec 13 6:00 p.m. "The Zoom Call that Changed Mary's Life:" Virtual Children & Youth Christmas Program. (Visit our church website to watch our online sing-along Christmas program!)

Thursday, Dec. 24 7:00p.m. & 9:00 p.m. Radio & online Christmas Eve services
8:15pm: Candle lighting in parking lot singing Silent Night

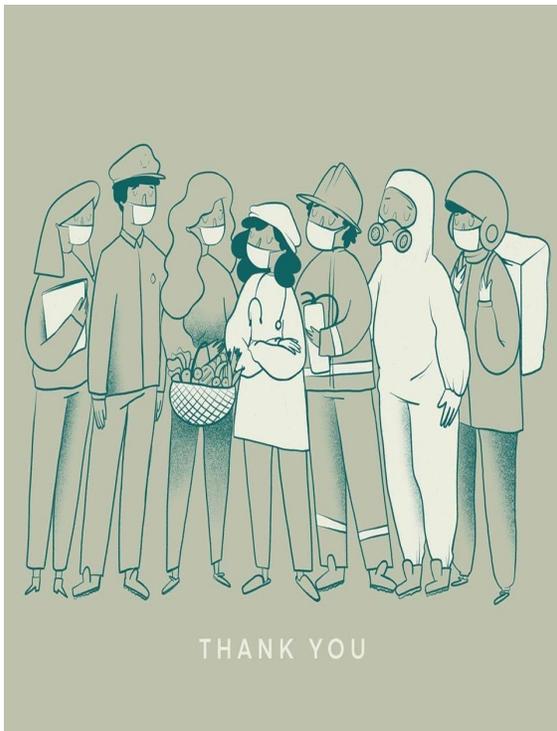
Join us for one of two Christmas Eve services in our parking lot or online. Join us in the parking lot with your mask on at 8:15p.m. (after the 7 o'clock service or before the 9 o'clock service to sing Silent Night at candlelight with the church)

Visit ivycentennial.org or our Facebook page at facebook.com/CentennialUMCatIvy for service links and event details. Drive to our parking lot, tune to 88.5 FM & listen to services on the radio.

The Zoom Call that Changed Mary's Life

Sunday, December 13
6:00 p.m.

Visit our church website to watch our online children and youth Christmas sing-a-long program!



There are quite a few people in our church community who care for the world and live out their calling by serving daily as front-line, healthcare, and essential workers in this global pandemic.

For firefighters, grocery store workers, hospital and nursing facility staff, retail store and food delivery workers, police officers, truck drivers, janitors, and so many more, we offer this prayer:

*God of love,
You are a Vocational God. Not because You need a vocation, but because You made us for and call us to live meaningful and purposeful lives of service. You call people in our community and around the world to be nurses and doctors, farmers and firefighters, assistants, delivery workers, and so many other people who serve. In our faithfulness to You, we discern what it is that You call us to do for the sake of Your kingdom. In this pandemic, so many around the world have new expectations and tasks to accomplish that put their lives in danger in new ways. For the danger of exposure to the virus, may You grant Your security. For the frustration and exhaustion, may You grant Your comfort. For the anxiety of it all, may You grant Your grace. Help us all offer grace and rest for those in our lives who care and love by putting themselves at risk for the greater good of our world. With trust in Your Son who is our ultimate healer and protector, we pray...Amen.*

A Prayer for Putting on a Face Mask

Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacramental nature of wearing this cloth. Let it be a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbors, as I love myself.

Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes. Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly, not only with my words, but with my actions.



Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet. May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner, and may each breath that it holds, be filled with Your love. In Your name and in that love, I pray. Amen.

By Rev. Richard Bott, Moderator Presbyterian Church of Canada



The Missions Committee would like to thank everyone for all of the sock donations. We collected and delivered 294 pairs to Altoona Elementary and Bidwell Riverside.



Congratulations to the Southeast Polk Football Team along with Brock Jackson for making it to the 2020 High School State Football Championship Game. We are proud of you Brock and the awesome team you are a part of!



CHURCH LIBRARY

DECEMBER READING CELEBRATION:

Read a New Book Month: With it being the busy Christmas season, this holiday we want to encourage everyone to stop, take a minute and delve into a great new book. Who knows, maybe by participating in this holiday you will knockout another gift on your list with a great book!

A great place to find that great book is the church library! Rev. Bill Cotton, who served Centennial from 2002 through 2006, was not only an exceptional minister but also a gifted author. Two of his books, A Madison County Journal, and Iowa Roots Vol. 1, can be found in the library. They would make good winter reading!

Remember that the newest issue of the Upper Room devotionals are in the Little Free Library for your convenience.

UMW:

Centennial United Methodist Women have been unable to meet since October 1st, but they did serve the Caring Hands Simple Supper on Oct. 26th. The group served approximately 50 people sack lunches, including a Halloween treat. All those served were most appreciative for the meal.

FOOD PANTRY:

For more information about the food pantry, go to caringhandsiowa.org. A few of the requests that they are currently in need of are cans of soup, peanut butter, and monetary donations.



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we approach Christ the King Sunday, I am reflecting on how this marks the end of the Christian year. Alongside the Thanksgiving holiday, this last Sunday of the liturgical year encourages us to pause and be thankful for the blessings we have known, even in the midst of this most troubling time.

As you know, COVID-19 infections remain high in Iowa. In Governor Reynolds' daily briefing yesterday, she mentioned that over the past seven days, there have been 22,000 new COVID cases in the state, with a 17.5% average positivity rate. Reynolds warned, "While we may be cautiously optimistic, we have a whole lot of work to do to bring the numbers down to a level where we can safely manage the virus while getting life back to normal." As of this writing, six of our 99 counties are below 15% positivity, 21 counties are between 15% and 20% positivity, and 76 of our counties are over 20% positivity. This is why the White House Coronavirus Task Force, in its November 15 report to Iowa leaders, cautioned that "The spread in Iowa is exponential and unyielding," as we close in on 200,000 total confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 2,102 deaths in Iowa.

In light of the continuing COVID crisis in Iowa, which is maxing out our hospitals and putting at great risk our health workers as well as the elderly and the vulnerable, people of faith are called to respond. In a press release on Wednesday, I directed clergy and congregations to refrain from in-person indoor worship and church activities through and including January 10, 2021. This allows ample time for any families who are traveling for the holidays to quarantine before gathering in person in their churches. We do this to preserve life and the well-being of our health care system and our frontline workers, who are being stretched to the limit.

Advent is coming, and our churches are now adjusting plans and preparing for outdoor and drive-through events so that people may still have a vital Christmas experience. Thank you for the many ways in which you are creatively adjusting to this new reality and are sharing the love of Jesus.

Many of us have dearly missed being physically present with our friends. I love singing Christmas carols and spending time with the children, talking about the birth of Jesus. However, by refraining from in-person worship at this time, we are being true to our call as people of faith to do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God. Our faith gives us support and encouragement but also reminds us of our responsibility to ensure that all people are safe, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Many in our state, country, and around the world are experiencing what has been called COVID fatigue. We are tired, we are weary, and we are anxious. We miss worshipping in our church buildings, and we miss being with family and friends. If you are feeling overwhelmed, please reach out to your pastor, a neighbor, or a friend. And be on the lookout yourself for ways in which you can care for others. The apostle Paul reminds us of our call and responsibility for such a time as this, **"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."** (Galatians 6:2) Please know that all of our district superintendents and conference staff will be available to you to help with support. We are collecting [Advent and Christmas resources on the Iowa Conference Website](#) for online worship and tech support. We will get through this together.

As we continue to track the trends of COVID-19 infections, we will watch for positivity rates to decline below 15%. Like you, we want to gather again for in person worship and activities and will continue to keep you updated.

Blessings,

Bishop Laurie and the Appointive Cabinet

Sent on Friday, November 20, 2020

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| | | 1 Josey Fry Butch Griffel Hannah Griffiths | 2 Barb & Ken Sharp | 3 Charles Southcott | 4 Diane Griffel Brili Jackson Mary & Mike Ferguson | 5 |
| 6 Linda Howard | 7 Jacquelyn Purcell Jamie Remster | 8 Marc Dorris | 9 Dean Fiene | 10 Paul Quick Beth Shipley | 11 Gerry Ordway | 12 Laney Seaman |
| 13 Gail & Tom Gish | 14 Torie Hermann Mark Olgren | 15 | 16 | 17 Paige Geisenhoff Laura Hiatt Jane Wendel | 18 | 19 Brenda Cox Jen Griffiths |
| 20 Brent Scheel | 21 Allison & Chris Lehn | 22 | 23 Marc & Penny Dorris | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 Andrea & Scott Hackett | 28 Jo Ordway | 29 Abby Glann Kim Wilson | 30 Karla Heaberlin | 31 | | |



Tuesday, December 1st – Finance Committee @ 7:00 pm
 Saturday, December 5th – Live Nativity 6:00 – 8:00 pm
 Saturday, December 12th – Men’s Group @ 9:00 am
 Sunday, December 13th – Virtual Christmas Program

WoW (Virtual) – Every Wednesday during the month of December – from 6:30 – 7:30 pm

**FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
2020 ACTUAL GIVING VS 2020 BUDGET GOAL**

| | REQUIRED | SUNDAYS | TITHES | OTHER INC | TOTAL | INCOME ONE YEAR AGO |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| JANUARY | \$12,477.50 | 4 | \$11,640.11 | \$450.00 | \$12,090.11 | \$ 7,058.33 |
| FEBRUARY | \$12,477.50 | 4 | \$11,750.17 | | \$11,750.17 | \$12,370.73 |
| MARCH | \$12,477.50 | 5 | \$11,605.44 | (8.58) | \$11,596.86 | \$19,623.40 |
| APRIL | \$12,477.50 | 4 | \$ 7,401.17 | (11.50) | \$ 7,389.67 | \$12,891.06 |
| MAY | \$12,477.50 | 5 | \$30,172.17 | (13.34) | \$30,158.83 | \$11,292.53 |
| JUNE | \$12,477.50 | 4 | \$ 6,566.13 | (9.68) | \$ 6,556.45 | \$10,422.00 |
| JULY | \$12,477.50 | 4 | \$ 9,976.83 | (11.60) | \$ 9,965.23 | \$ 7,672.17 |
| AUGUST | \$12,477.50 | 5 | \$ 8,426.83 | (8.07) | \$ 8,418.76 | \$11,830.17 |
| SEPTEMBER | \$12,477.50 | 4 | \$ 8,666.83 | (7.90) | \$ 8,658.93 | \$13,625.92 |
| OCTOBER | \$12,477.50 | 4 | \$ 9,923.58 | (5.72) | \$ 9,917.86 | \$ 7,554.17 |
| NOVEMBER | \$12,477.50 | 5 | | | | \$ 9,141.17 |
| DECEMBER | \$12,477.50 | 4 | | | | \$13,052.34 |
| | | | | | | |
| 2020 BUDGET | \$149,730.00 | | \$116,129.26 | \$373.61 | \$116,502.87 | 77.81% |
| | 52 Sundays in 2020 | | | | Required: | 82.69% |

As of November 15th, our congregation has donated \$3,260.00 for the Caring Hands Food Pantry since the beginning of 2020. On the 5th of May we received **\$20,232** from the Small Business Administration as part of the Covid-19 Stimulus Package. These funds were for the "Paycheck Protection Program" which helps us keep paying our Pastor, Organist, Custodian and Secretary. In order to meet our 2020 budget, we need to average about \$12,480 per month.

Gaylen Heaberlin, Financial Secretary



Pastor: Dani Musselman pastordanim@gmail.com
Trustees: Ardean Williams 515-967-4189
Email Prayers Requests: Missy Shaver Mishaver2@gmail.com 515-967-6288
Secretary (Newsletters & Bulletins): Amy Ferguson anbscorbin@gmail.com 515-402-6056
Financial Secretary (Estimates of Giving): Gaylen Heaberlin 515-967-2016