



THE ANCHOR

A publication of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Williamsburg, Iowa No. 12 December 2024

A Letter from Rev. Beth

Dear Church Family and Friends,

As I am writing this on November 21st, I am still looking forward to experiencing the Community Thanksgiving Meal, the Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Worship Service, decorating the church for Christmas, Special Christmas missions, Advent, the Children's Christmas Program, Christmas Eve Services, Epiphany, and so many other traditions that you celebrate here at St. Paul's UMC in this coming Holy Day time. I am so excited to go through these celebrations with you! I have my turkeys thawing for me to roast for Saturday's St. Paul's Thanksgiving welcome, and am beginning to plan Advent worship services with you. In case you have not heard, we will be holding the Traditional Christmas Eve Worship Service at 3:00 pm this year so it will still be light out for people who don't like to



drive in the dark. Then at 7:00 pm, we will have a more Contemporary Christmas Eve Worship Service with the Praise Band. Don't worry, we will sing Silent Night with candles and other lights at the end of both of the services! As the snow is flying already, I am grateful for the warm church building and atmosphere that will be created to welcome one and all to participate in these activities. What a hospitable church you are! I have been overwhelmed myself, with your welcome of me to the community including the lovely gifts and cards and beautiful drawings from the children that I recently opened from many of you for Pastor's Appreciation Month. I am so grateful!

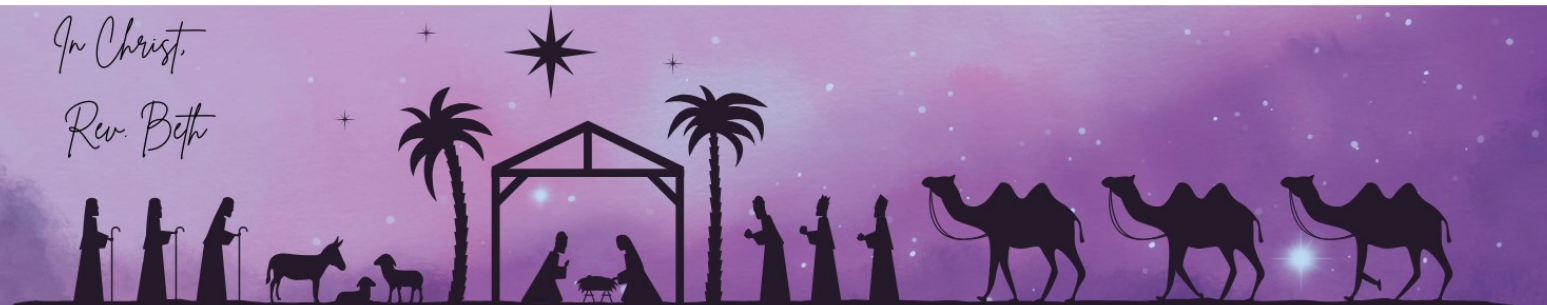
One thing that I have already mentioned in worship, is that the word 'advent' is a Latin word that means arrival, appearance, emergence, dawn, birth, origin, advance, development, dawn, materialization, and even departure. We also find this word in the term, 'adventure' which helps us to understand the excitement that the use of this word brings. In fact, the word 'dwell' in the whole one line nativity story in the Gospel of John, 'And the word became flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:14) means that our God decided to go tent 'tabernacle' camping with us human beings. Talk about an adventure!!! When we go camping, we leave a bunch of stuff at home, and especially when it storms, we get real personal with those that we camp with.

I believe that is the whole message of the incarnation. We know that the name 'Emmanuel' actually means, 'God is with us' and surely that is the Christmas/Christ story in our Bibles. Our God's very self in a form and life and vulnerability like ours. As the Eternal Christ that was present at Creation is the light, was also the Word indeed that became like us in the flesh, and brought us the witness of Holy Trinitarian Love through His relational celebratory dance with The Holy Spirit as well as Creation itself.

I look forward to continuing to partner with Christ to reveal my own REAL humanity more and more in my own life, and hope that this Advent, we will all welcome others to do the same. Learning more about our love, our light, and many more attributes and names of our God will advance and bring us the vocabulary to think about holy expectation of our own Human Being in the world.

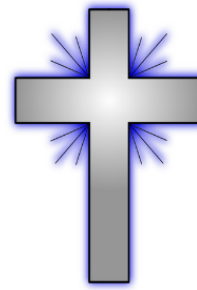
I hope to spend just the right amount of time and spiritual generosity with you and with Emmanuel in the coming festivities.

*In Christ,
Rev. Beth*



Care Connection News

December 2024



Care-Team Members: Kim Ebsen, Laura Gustafson, Donna Heitman, Marvel Jones, Bonnie Kinkead, Kelly Loftus, Karen Phelps, Roger Rathjen, Delores Reinhart, Beth Ann Schlesselman and Rev. Beth Harbaugh

Our care-team decided to try a once a month fun-time & fellowship afternoon to help beat the winter blahs. Our first one will be Monday December 16th from 1:00 to 3:00 pm or for however long you wish to participate and you are welcome to bring a friend. Each time we meet we would like to offer a few different options for folks so you are welcome to try a variety of activities. Our first meeting will offer a gift wrapping time for anyone that needs help with that; please bring in your gifts and we will get them wrapped for you (limit 5 per person). We will have some wrapping paper available but we invite you to bring in some of your own paper and gift tags if you wish to use them. Our group activity that day will be some chair yoga (only for those who wish to try it- no special equipment needed just comfortable loose clothing) and then adult art coloring and puzzle making will be available and if we have any musical talent we could all sing some Christmas carols. Our 2nd meeting will be January 15th combined with the O.W.L.S. luncheon; we can go from Kim and Rick's event to the Crossroads area for our afternoon of fun.

These will be times to enjoy one another's company. Getting out of the house for a while, interacting with others and possibly trying some new things is healthy for our brains and body. We look forward to spending time together as a church family; we hope you can join us. We are providing the place and time but only you can make this successful by attending if you are able. Since these are winter events we will watch road conditions carefully and reschedule if needed.



Kelly Loftus,
Congregational Care Coordinator

Father God, we are thankful for our lives and that you intended us to be in communion with one another. We ask you to bless our church, congregation and community and help all of our ministries thrive. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

DECEMBER APPRECIATION HONOREES

This December we are recognizing all of our youth leaders and the ministry they provide our children. The preparation time and the hands-on time spent educating and modeling Christian behavior is invaluable to our church and parents and the future of United Methodists. We want to thank all those involved with curriculum,, Sunday school classes, musicals, and Wednesday afternoon E.P.I.C. and E.P.I.C. Jr., PB & J, SPUMY, and confirmation classes, and all youth mission activities. You are all special people sharing your gifts and we are grateful for your willingness to serve and further the Great Commission; making disciples of all nations.

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Tuesdays

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Wednesdays

10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Thursdays

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Fridays

By Appointment

November Attendance

11/3 - 138 11/10 - 121

11/17 - 108 11/24 - 98

Prayer requests can be emailed to
office@stpaulsumcwilliamsburg.com

The ANCHOR is a publication of
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Organist: Sue Heitmann

Custodian: Melissa Savage

Editor: Shelley Berger
Deadline for news for next month's
newsletter is the 20th of the month.



Christmas Eve Services

3:00 PM - TRADITIONAL SERVICE

7:00 PM - CONTEMPORARY SERVICE



Thursdays in December: 12/5 & 12/19

Men's clothing, socks, underwear, athletic shoes, and work boots are always in high demand. We are also in need of new or gently used sheets, bedding, and towels. **NO MORE SUMMER ITEMS**



Gifts for the L.O.V.E Network need to be at church by December 2nd

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND (FORMERLY BUILDING FUND) SUMMARY:

Building Fund Account Balance : \$13,225.17

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY:

CURRENT TOTAL BANK BALANCE AS OF November 25, 2024

\$174,619.45 which includes the following breakdown:

- \$ 40,000 (from the sale of the parsonage to be invested soon)
- \$3,836.35 from closure of Farmers Trust and Savings accounts
- \$16,949.35 in designated amounts such as memorials, scholarships, and specific donations.

This leaves \$113,833.75 available to cover general expenses.

YEAR TO DATE SUMMARY - January 1, 2024 to November 25, 2024 (48 weeks)

Total offering received YTD: \$233,348.49 (\$4,861 average weekly offering)

Total expenses YTD: \$256,594.39 (\$5,346 average weekly expenses)

Stay tuned for a date to celebrate paying off our building loan!

Thank you to Everyone who came together to make our Community Thanksgiving Dinner a wonderful time of fellowship and fun! God has truly blessed us with a loving community. Staff and volunteers from 4 churches worked together to not only donate all the ingredients needed for this huge meal, but also to make everything from scratch! I am thankful for everyone who stepped forward to organize or take the lead on any given part of this huge endeavor. From leading youth groups who made individual pies to go, to setting up the Sign-Up Genius, and packaging meals to deliver or carry out, to all the folks who kept the serving dishes full and the tables cleared. I am truly grateful for all the hands that made this day a success. We served 168 meals and were blessed with many donations at our dinner. Those donations (after expenses) will be sent to our Iowa County Ministerial Alliance to help those in our community that need a helping hand.

Blessings for a holiday filled with love and fellowship.

Yours in Christ,
Delores Reinhart



WILLIAMSBURG HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS IN WILLIAMSBURG

A Celebration of Carols
Featuring the High School Choir, Community Chorus, and Community Orchestra

DECEMBER 15 - 3:00 PM
WILLIAMSBURG HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM

Free Will Donation

2024 Holiday Alzheimer's Education Series

Attend the live Zoom seminar on Thursday at 11am or join Kelly Loftus, Congregational Care Coordinator for a gathering to recap the following

<u>Zoom meetings</u>		<u>Recap sessions</u>
Dec. 5th at 11AM		the following week
Dec. 12th @ 11AM		Dec. 4th @ 2PM
Dec. 19th @ 11AM		Dec. 11th @ 2PM
Dec. 26th @ 11AM		Dec. 18th @ 2PM

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

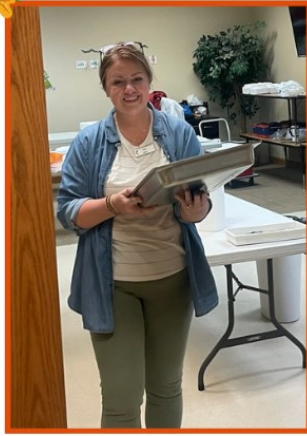
Sing With Us!

Join the Community Choir as we prepare for *Christmas in Williamsburg*

WHS Choir Room	Music Provided!
Sunday, December 1 - 1:00-3:00 p.m.	
Thursday, December 5 - 6:00-8:00 p.m.	
Sunday, December 8 - 1:00-3:00 p.m.	
Thursday, December 12 - 6:00-8:00 p.m.	
Saturday, December 14 - 1:00-4:00 p.m.	(dress rehearsal with orchestra)

Christmas in Williamsburg Performance
Sunday, December 15 - 3:00 p.m.

SO VERY
Thankful



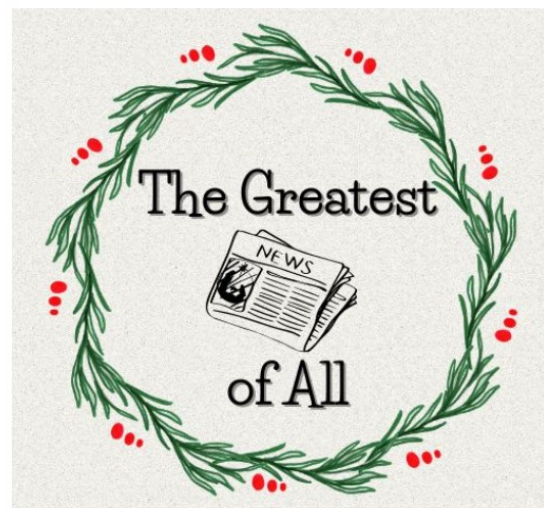


December 2024

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES EDITION

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM DRESS REHEARSAL 12/11 - 6PM

On Wednesday, December 11th there will be an attendance required dress rehearsal at 6:00PM, in the sanctuary. If your child plans to participate in “The Greatest News of All”, they must be here. This is a complete run through (or two) with: costuming, microphones, music/ instruments, etc. Due to limited time all together, it is imperative that we are able to have all of the pieces here for this rehearsal. Practice will begin promptly. Please eat at 5:30, if you plan to eat the meal here, so you are ready to start at 6!



2024 CHRISTMAS PROGRAM - “THE GREATEST NEWS OF ALL”

On Sunday, December 15th, our annual Christmas program, will once again be held during both the 8:30 and 10:00am services. SPUMC’s Children’s Ministry is proud to present, “The Greatest News of All”. It's hard to imagine a world without the news. If something happens on the other side of the world, we know about it only minutes later. But when the greatest news event of all time happened, there were no reporters to cover the story. What would have happened if the technology had existed for reporters to be present at Jesus' birth? Lend us your imagination while we take a look at what it might have been like!

WED. DEC 18 - FAMILY COOKIE DELIVERY AND CAROLING

Wednesday, December 18th will be a “Special Christmas Edition” of Epic! We will be decorating and delivering cookies around the community! We delivered goodies last year and had such a wonderful time, we want to make this a yearly tradition! This is a FAMILY event! ALL ages are welcome! We will spend time together, spread holiday cheer to our community (caroling encouraged but not required), and meet back at church for cookies and cocoa to end the night!





EPIC, Jr. Programming Pause

Epic, Jr. will meet on Wednesday, December 4th. All Epic Jr. kids are invited to participate in the Christmas Program. Music practices will be held during Sunday School, 8:45-9:45 Sunday mornings.

The Christian Ed team has made the decision to pause the Epi Jr. programming for the months of January and February, due to the lack of volunteers. We will re-visit for March and April if we are able to recruit enough help to resume classes and continue moving forward with this program.

2024 Christmas Parties

PB & J: Wednesday, Dec. 11- just bring yourself and your Christmas Cheer

SPUMY: Wednesday, Dec. 11- Please bring a \$5 gift (we will have a few extras in case)

Sunday School: Sunday, Dec. 22 - "Happy Birthday, Jesus" party during the Sunday School hour

Children & Family Ministries in Action



**STAY
CONNECTED**

www.stpaulsumcwilliamsburg.com

Facebook - @STPAULSUMC803

<https://www.youtube.com/c/stpaulsumcwborg>



St. Paul's Vision Statement:

...to be a church where you can S.E.E. (Serve. Experience. Embrace) Christ

DECEMBER WORSHIP

December 1st 1st Sunday in Advent

Preparations-Don't Rush In

Luke 1:68-79 & Jeremiah 33:14-16

December 8th 2nd Sunday in Advent

Passion for the Christ Child

Luke 3:1-6 & Malachi 3:1-4

December 15th 3rd Sunday in Advent

Fulfilled Promises in Faith

Luke 1:5-80

December 22nd 4th Sunday in Advent

So, You are a King?

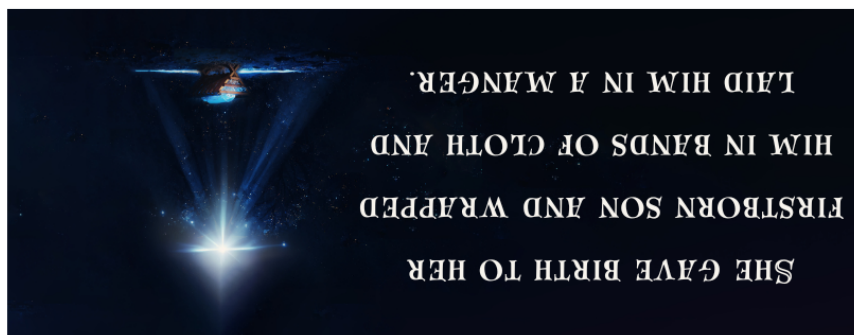
2 Samuel 23:1-7, John 18:33-37

December 24th

Christmas Eve

3:00 PM - Traditional service.

7:00 PM - Contemporary service



St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Williamsburg, Iowa

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