



HILLTOP HERALD-DECEMBER 2020 MONONA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH & IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA EL LIBERTADOR

NO IN-PERSON GATHERINGS

We will not be meeting for worship or group activities for the time being. The church office is open 9am – 2pm. Pastor Brad and Mark Buffat are available for pastoral care by phone. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you are in need of anything. We have **cloth face masks** available in the entryway to pick up if you are in need of one. If you would like me to mail you a mask, please let the church office know (608-222-1633, secretarymumc@sbcglobal.net).

FROM THE STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE QUILL

We have no immediate news of a new pastor at the time I write this note. I anticipate an announcement any day and by the time you are reading this, we should know. As we wait with anticipated delight, it is bitter sweet that we say farewell to Pastor Brad and Lou Ann. The sweet part is that they have truly earned their retirement and we pray for a smooth transition to a new beginning. The bitter part is the void that will be created in their absence. They both have been such an instrumental part in the way of life on our little Nichols Road knoll. We know it has for us and for that we are grateful and blessed that you were an enduring chapter of this Monona United Methodist Church spiritual journey. You two will be truly missed by all of us. God bless you both and congratulations on your retirement! Watch our worship service on **Sunday, December 13** to see our special recognition of Pastor Brad and Lou Ann.

AJ Feucht and The SPRC Team



Live Generously

TAKE HOLD OF THE LIFE THAT REALLY IS LIFE
1 THIMOTHY 6:19-21

FALL STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN "LIVE GENEROUSLY"

Thank you so much for your support of the 2021 Stewardship Campaign. Our pledges so far have totaled \$159,000 or 64% of budgeted revenue. Your giving makes it possible for the ministries of Monona United Methodist Church to continue to be a light in our community and beyond. Please return your estimate of giving card as soon as possible. If you cannot commit to a set amount for 2021, know that any gift that you can share with the church is much appreciated!

Your Stewardship Team

PASTOR'S COLUMN

Dear Friends,

This will be my last newsletter piece for the Hilltop Herald since the last worship service I will lead is the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. I am already experiencing some of what they call “anticipatory grief” about leaving you. I am truly sorry that we will not be able to have in-person farewells. The pandemic we are living through has changed how we do so many things. But all of us have been adapting pretty well, it seems to me.

Speaking of adapting, how we celebrate Advent and Christmas will also be affected. Some things we will not be able to do—singing Christmas carols in groups, for instance. But other things we can still try to do in an altered way. The following is what we are planning, and we need your help.

We are still sponsoring a Giving Tree to provide gifts for children in the community, gifts they otherwise may not have. It is more needed this year than ever because of the economic hardships that have hit low-income families hardest. So thank you for your participation in our Giving Tree Ministry.

And when you come to the church to drop off your Giving Tree gifts, bring an ornament with you to help decorate the church Christmas tree. Yes, we will have a Christmas tree outside the building near the entrance this year. We hope that you will be able to bring an ornament or two that you can spare, and help fill it up with decorations. Thank you ahead of time. I can't wait to see it filled up!

I am also asking you to gather the ingredients for an Advent Wreath for your home, since we will not be able to share the lighting of the Advent Wreath in person during the Sunday mornings of Advent. The ingredients for an Advent Wreath can be as simple as four candles arranged in a square with a white candle in the center (the Christ Candle). You could place them on some green felt or get fancy and put some pine boughs around them. I see that a set of advent candles (3 purple, one pink) can be ordered from Amazon for \$7. (Someone needs to tell Amazon about the white Christ candle so they can include it in an Advent set!)

The pink candle, by the way, is meant for the 3rd Sunday of Advent which is “joy” Sunday. A traditional sequence of themes for the four Sundays of Advent is hope, peace, joy, and love. And this will be the sequence for our Advent worship series this year as we celebrate that “Christ Comes to Us in Our Need.” He comes to us with hope, peace, joy, and love.

In short, we are asking you to light your Advent Wreath at home along with us at church during Sunday morning worship. But you could also light it briefly every morning of Advent as you read an Advent devotional and say a prayer. In fact, we will be sending an Advent devotional to your home. This is how we prepare our hearts for Christ's coming at Christmas.

Other events to note:

The 1st Sunday of December we will celebrate communion together.

The 2nd Sunday of December the church children will present an online Christmas pageant for us, and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee will make a presentation at the end of the service.

The 3rd Sunday of December we will use a Litany of Farewell at the end of the service.

For Christmas Eve we are asking you to recreate the atmosphere of the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in your home. So candles, candles, candles! It will be worship by candlelight! If you get nervous about that much flame, you can get tea light electric candles for \$13 a dozen from Amazon. I think Christmas Eve will still be a beautiful and sacred time as we welcome the birth of the Christ-child together.

So thank you for all the adapting that you are doing. I know that it is difficult, sometimes tremendously so. I don't need to tell you, but I do want to remind you, that what we are doing—the mask-wearing, hand-washing, physical distancing, and isolating in our homes—these are life-saving measures we practice as a way to love God (in whose image we are all created) and love our neighbor. This is our faith at work. So thank you and God bless you for your sacrificial suffering. This is Christ-like living.

Finally, I cannot say how grateful I am to you that Monona UMC is a congregation that has listened to health officials and scientists during the pandemic. That's not the case for all my colleagues. I am immensely proud of the way we have planned and responded and adapted to the pandemic. We are blessed with strong lay leadership, and it really showed through in this crisis.

This column has gone on too long (something I'm sure Bob DeBraal, who used to time my sermons, would agree with), but it's my last one so I guess I can claim that privilege. I look forward to our remaining few weeks together, and to the new chapter in each of our lives, me beginning retirement, and you starting with the newly appointed pastor God has in mind for Monona UMC. God has been gracious to us and will continue to be. Is there anything better than that?

Pastor Brad

BIBLE PASSAGES & THEMES 10:00AM ONLINE SERVICE

Advent Worship Series: “Christ Comes to Us in Our Need”

November 29 First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11’ “Christ Comes to Us Bringing **Hope**”

December 6 Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 2:1-5; “Christ Comes to Us Bringing **Peace**”

December 13 Third Sunday of Advent

Children's Christmas Program

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 & John 1:6-8, 19-28; “Christ Comes to Us Bringing **Joy**”

December 20 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Luke 1:26-38; 46b-55; “Christ Comes to Us Bringing **Love**”

December 24 Christmas Eve 7pm Online

Isaiah 9:2-7 & Luke 2:1-20; “Christ Comes to Us Bringing **God**”

December 27 First Sunday after Christmas

Conference Online Covenant Renewal Worship service



YARD SIGNS

We received our yard signs that say Together Online. You are welcome to purchase one for \$13 to display in your yard. Please contact the church office to reserve your sign.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL SUNDAYS 11:30am

You are invited to spend the four Sundays in Advent talking about Walter Brueggemann's book: *Celebrating Abundance* (2017) with the Adult Sunday School group. All are welcome. The link will go out with the Sunday worship service email. You should purchase your own book for this class.

Here is the summary about the book from Amazon:

To "prepare for Christmas" in our society is to be sucked into a vortex of indulgence, from decor to gifts to calorie-rich foods. Layer upon layer of tinsel, lights, and wrapping paper create the illusion of abundance, disguising the feeling of emptiness in our souls. The arrival of the Messiah, by contrast, is true abundance disguised by the impression of scarcity. Training our eyes to see through the rough stable, the adolescent mother, and the anxious escape to Egypt, we can see in that poverty and powerlessness the wonder of God's abundant life and grace coming down to dwell among us.

This powerful devotional book by best-selling author Walter Brueggemann includes daily reflections on the Scriptures and stories of Advent in order to invite us to see beyond the world's faux extravagance and realize the true feast laid out before us. Twelve prayers are also included for the twelve days of Christmas.

MISSION OF THE MONTH St. Stephen's Food Pantry

Families throughout Monona and the greater Madison area rely on the food provided by the St. Stephen's Food Pantry. The pantry provides a four-day supply of food to about two dozen households each Monday to Thursday. Clients may visit the pantry once every two weeks.

Monetary donations are needed to supplement donated items.

To support this mission, please mark your checks or on-line donation "St. Stephen's Food Pantry".

Thank you for your generous support of this mission.

Stay safe.
The Mission Team

THE GIVING TREE

The Giving Tree Project still needs our help. Simply check out the link to see which gifts are still needed. **Please return your unwrapped gift to church by December 11.**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904094DA8AE22AB9-20201>

Call Kay in the office at 222-1633 with any questions. Thanks!!!

MADISON AREA JAIL MINISTRY

Coat Drive

Please continue to donate winter coats, jackets, hats, scarves, gloves, and mittens. Often inmates have been incarcerated in warm weather months and do not have anyone to bring them a warm coat when they are released. A bin is located in front of the office.

Christmas Cards

Chaplain Todd Marcotte is requesting Christmas cards which he can deliver to the inmates at Christmas time. Please write an encouraging message from the heart to the men and women. The cards cannot have any glitter, sequins, or envelopes. The more cards the merrier. The cards are due at Church by **Tuesday, November 24**. There will be a basket in the office for your cards.

BAPTISM

Josephine Beth Lovejoy, daughter of Corie & Ryan Lovejoy, was baptized on November 14. Congratulations!

OUR SYMPATHY GOES TO

- Siv Goulding and her family, upon the death of her husband, Jim, on October 29.
- Mary Murphy and her family, upon the death of her husband, Jerry, on November 1.
- The family of Josey Zell, who passed away on November 16.

OUR WEBSITE

Check out our improving website: www.mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org

- Join us for virtual Worship services on Sunday mornings at 10am by clicking the link on the front page.
- We have a **Giving** tab on our website to make a donation with your credit card.

MONONA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH BAZAAR!

We are having our bazaar online this year. It's from **Saturday, November 21 to Saturday, December 5**. We have 13 vendors (Scentsy, Paparazzi, Usborne Books, Cocoa Exchange, Norwex, Little Rose, Tupperware, Pampered Chef, Mary Kay, Jewelry, Color Street, Crafts and our very own Fair Trade!). You can join early. It's on Facebook using this link:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/389807042214513/?ref=share>

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

As the waves break on the shores of our beautiful Madison lakes, so break through our lives, our church, and our community with new ideas, new hope, and the future you desire for us, O God. Break through anything that might hold us back and use each of us individually and together for unimagined new purposes. Amen.

Thank you for being a part of our praying community of faith at 6:06 am and pm. May God break through to each of us as we discern the future God wants for us.

JAVA JIVE

Christmas Gifts to consider for Justice, Equality and Sustainability for God's People and Magnificent Creation

As I was thinking of giving these AFT products, grown by small farmers, as Christmas gifts to family and friends and service people, it made me think of where Jesus was born - in a manger with farm animals. Seems like appropriate gifts.

We are sorry we can't meet together at the table and assist in wrapping, etc. this year. Miss you all. But we all are doing what we need to do at this COVID epidemic time.

On our display table in December, we will have free decorative bags and tissue paper that you may put your items of choice in.

We will also have Wisconsin cheese in refrigerator, pick up info on table about Red Barn Farm Coop, 10 farms in mid-state WI. Equal Exchange is in partnership with Red Barn to access markets. They could not exist on low milk prices so came together and making artisan cheese so as to stay on farms.

We also have gift cards, info on table. Kay D. our Admin. Assistant has graciously said you can tap on her office door and she will sign one and give to you.

Also church is open 9am-2pm, Monday-Friday. But these times may not work for some who would like to purchase some items; weekends may be more convenient for some. You may call me Kay Mackie 512- 2053 or Jackie Hull 221-3974 and we can set up a time to meet you at church. Glad to accommodate.

Thank you for your continued support of this UMW Mission. This is not a fundraiser.

We are in the Interdenominational network of EEx thru UMCOR. EEx sells to us at wholesale prices and we pass this on to you so as to help as many small farmers stay on their farms as possible and these farmers together build community and it seems that Jesus was always about building community- and we enjoy their excellent products.

At EEx Interdenominational network sales have declined 30% as many churches are locked. Thankful MUMC is open for certain times.

Our Faith purchasing power brings good to many and we are connected to a greater good. Together we make a huge difference in many people's lives.

Thanks be to God that we can be a part of this Mission. A Chiapas, Mexican coop farmer said "when consumers and farmers walk together we walk for a Life of Peace."

May it be so as we celebrate the Birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Joys of the season from the AFT Team- we will in time see one another in church!!☺
Kay Mackie - a UMW AFT team coordinator

BOOKS IN THE ENTRY

We have some books from our library and previous Adult Sunday School classes that you are welcome to take, read and return. The UMW book shelf is also available to check out a book.

UMC GIVING TUESDAY

Give Love, Joy, Hope and Peace

United Methodists will come together to support vital ministry projects and missionaries around the world on #GivingTuesday, **Tuesday, December 1**, as they generously #GiveUMC. Giving through The Advance empowers hundreds of dedicated project leaders and missionaries to share the love of Christ in meaningful, life-saving ways. As always, 100% of all giving will support the designated Advance ministry! Visit umcmission.org/GiveLove to donate online and choose a ministry for your donation.

END OF YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

We will try to do our best to find any donations that have been postmarked by December 31, 2020 and to credit them to 2020. If you receive your end of the year statement from the church, and believe a particular donation should be for 2020, which wasn't included in that statement, we will be happy to give you an amended statement. Give Anna Skiles a call if that is the case (839-4251).

EASY AUTOMATIC GIVING

Make giving to the church very easy and save the church some time. The automatic transfers are completely safe and secure, and cost you nothing. You control the amount and frequency of the withdrawals, and can cancel any time you like. Transfers done electronically, along with any additional donations you make, will be listed on your normal periodic statement from the church. Just fill out the form that is in the church office.

For those who already have automatic giving and want to change for the new 2021 pledge amount, just fill out a new form. On the form, check the box "Change Donation Amount", put your name, the new amount, the date of the first donation, and finally sign and date the form. For questions or other information, call Barb Pearson at 271-2702 or Kay in the church office at 222-1633.

JUST BAKERY

We can still enjoy the wonderful goodies from Just Bakery. Search for "Just Bakery" online to view their many products. You may call 608-598-0420 to place your order. Due to COVID-19 their store front is no longer open but their products are available for delivery in Dane County for a \$5.00 charge or you may pick up your order curbside on Saturdays (9:00 - 2:00) at 1708 Thierer Rd. Madison.

RIVER FOOD PANTRY

The River is currently accepting 18-count egg cartons until further notice. Also, The River is NOT accepting clothing or household items until further notice. If you have items to donate, please check with either Agrace or Boomerang. You are welcome to drop off egg cartons, paper bags, non-perishable food, or personal hygiene items at church daily from 9am until 2pm. You can put them in the entryway if you don't want to come all the way into the building. We have also been disinfecting the entry doors and other surfaces often. Tim Eberle said that you could drop items off at his home by his garage door.

River Food Pantry is looking to start a delivery program for those that have a hard time picking up, and are looking for individuals to volunteer to make those deliveries. If interested, email Helen Osborn-Senatus, her email is: helen@riverfoodpantry.org. Feel free to mention your connection to Tim Eberle.

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING

For the first time in 130 years, The Salvation Army is starting its annual holiday fundraising campaign early across the country in order to 'Rescue Christmas. The funds raised through the organization's iconic red kettles and mail appeals are at risk this year due to COVID-19, while requests for services are at an all-time high. Due to the closing of retail stores, consumers carrying less cash, and the decline in foot traffic, The Salvation Army could see up to a 50% decrease in funds raised nationally through the red kettles, which would limit their capacity to provide services for the most vulnerable.

To put this in perspective, last year \$559,000 was raised from the red kettles in Dane County alone, while this year's campaign has already seen a drop in active kettle locations, from 75 to 65. The kettles are out now.

HOW TO HELP:

- Participate in a sustaining monthly gift of \$25 per month by visiting SalvationArmyDaneCounty.org.
- Sign up to ring at RingBellsDane.org. To ensure the safety of bell ringers, donors and partners, The Salvation Army has adopted nationally mandated safety protocols.
- Mail a check with "Christmas Campaign" in the memo line to 3030 Darbo Drive in Madison, WI 53714.
- Donate digitally with Kettle Pay at any red kettle.
- Ask Amazon Alexa to donate by saying, "Alexa, donate to The Salvation Army."
- Give any amount by texting "**DANE**" to **24365**.

Every donation provides help and hope to those in need, and all gifts stay in Dane County.

UPCOMING STATE BUDGET LISTENING SESSIONS

Budget Listening Session on Environment, Infrastructure, and the Economy

Wednesday, December 2, at 6 p.m.

Registration will open and be live one week before the listening session date.

Budget Listening Session on Criminal Justice Reform

Tuesday, December 8, at 6 p.m.

Registration will open and be live one week before the listening session date.

Budget Listening Session on Our Schools and Education

Wednesday, December 16, at 6 p.m.

Registration will open and be live one week before the listening session date.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR OPTION

We are trying a new way to celebrate the Advent season which will also help the River Food Pantry replenish their food supplies. You collect a nonperishable food item for every day during Advent and then drop the items at church so they could be transported to the River Food Pantry after Christmas. For example, on December 1, put a box of cereal in your collection box, on December 2 add a jar of peanut butter, and on December 3 a stuffing mix. Drop-off the box the week after Christmas during the church office hours. Check out the schedule below. Please let the church office know if you will be participating.



R E V E R S E
ADVENT CALENDAR

EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX.
ON CHRISTMAS EVE DONATE THE CONTENTS TO A
FOOD BANK.

- December 1 - box of cereal
- December 2 - peanut butter
- December 3 - stuffing mix
- December 4 - boxed potatoes
- December 5 - macaroni and cheese
- December 6 - canned fruit
- December 7 - canned tomatoes
- December 8 - canned tuna
- December 9 - dessert mix
- December 10 - jar of applesauce
- December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 - cranberry sauce
- December 13 - canned beans
- December 14 - box of crackers
- December 15 - package of rice
- December 16 - package of oatmeal
- December 17 - package pasta
- December 18 - spaghetti sauce
- December 19 - chicken noodle soup
- December 20 - tomato soup
- December 21 - can corn
- December 22 - can mixed vegetables
- December 23 - can carrots
- December 24 - can green beans

PASSIONATEPENNYPINCHER.COM

\$ Financial Report \$

Cash Flow
October 31, 2020

General Fund	Month	Year to Date
Income	\$ 17,006	\$ 224,274
General Operating Expenses	22,570	223,395
Net Surplus (Shortfall)	\$ (5,564)	\$ 879

GIVING: GIVING WHOLEHEARTEDLY

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
(Matthew 6:19-21)*

Is **Giving Wholeheartedly** a minor stewardship theme OR, is it the whole point of being a follower of Christ? Is **giving wholeheartedly** the essential to having a relationship with the Creator? Is **presenting our gifts to God** not just an important part of Sabbath worship, but is it the central and most important part and the true reason for our worship?

“Giving Wholeheartedly means committing ourselves entirely to the mission and ministry exemplified by the life of Jesus Christ. This means that **every** bit of time, **every** bit talent and **every** bit of treasure, even that which we spend on ourselves and our families, is for God’s purpose.

“Giving Wholeheartedly means that when our hearts are open, our arms are open as well. When we are practicing our discipleship, we are sharing the love and grace with our neighbors near and far. We live out our love by reaching out to those in need, for example, Ruby’s Pantry food distribution that served 380 families and individuals this week.

“Finally, **Giving Wholeheartedly** means a willingness to give to the church so that whatever ministry unfolds, it is funded. **Giving wholeheartedly** provides opportunities for our local churches to be ready, willing and available to serve in whatever manner Christ calls us to serve.” [Source: Think Greater, Wisconsin Conference UMC]

What we can conclude from this is that you need to give for your own spiritual benefit. Not selfishly because it makes you feel good, but because it fulfills your need to be a faithful follower of Christ.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, 888-903-9863 or wumf@wumf.org

MONONA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

606 NICHOLS ROAD
MONONA, WI 53716

The HILLTOP HERALD is produced monthly for distribution to the members and friends of Monona United Methodist Church & Iglesia Metodista Unida El Libertador.

Monona UMC Church office 222-1633 (Fax 222-2395); Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Homepage www.mononaunitedmethodistchurch.org

Pastor Brad 414-534-8791 – bkvanfossen@gmail.com

Kay – secretarymumc@sbcglobal.net

Mark – markbmumc@gmail.com

Virtual Worship 10:00am

Iglesia Metodista Unida El Libertador 514-9470

Pastora Estrella Benítez 414-736-9521 (cell)

esbe2013.eb@gmail.com