



Platteville United Methodist Church



December 2024



"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). Matthew 1:23

Dear Friends,

This has been a month to celebrate all the good things in our life and December is a month of celebration too! However, some of us know all too well that grief can invade the holidays. It does not take a month off and often in the midst of everything being busy and happy around us that instead of dispelling the grief it feels stronger. Maybe it is the stark contrast between the "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You" and "In the Bleak Midwinter."

We are in Wisconsin, and the days are growing shorter and on gloomy days it seems to permeate our very beings. I think the doctors call it Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD. It makes sense to me. Winter can be long, hard and dark. If we are missing someone, or are sick it is even longer. We worry about politics, driving in the snow and ice, increased utility bills. There are many different things that bring us down.

I was reading the scripture this morning for my sermon this week and Elkanah is talking to a very sad Hannah. She is unable to get pregnant and have a child. He exclaims, "Aren't I worth more than ten sons." That is a great sentiment, but not always helpful when you are in the midst of suffering. She was being bullied and shamed by something that was beyond her ability to change and the love that Elkanah had for her did not change her circumstance. Hannah rose and went to the temple and prayed. Even then she was bullied by the priest who thought she was drunk. In the midst of her terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day the Lord stepped in and answered her prayer.

I have never been able to understand why some prayers are answered and others are not, and sometimes I feel a little like her husband wanting to exclaim that there is no problem. Perhaps, that in itself is a problem. Maybe we need to listen more and talk less. Not all of us have Hannah's problem and not all of us will have Hannah's answer, but we all have our moments. I want you to know that although I do not have all the answers and I hold no magic wand, I am available to listen. My door is open and we can always sit down and have a glass of cold water or a cup of hot coffee. I may not be able to change your circumstance, but you do not have to have a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day on your own.

The love of Jesus is the light of the world and can brighten the darkest of nights even in the midst of a bleak midwinter. Immanuel means God with us! He was born to save!

Merry Christmas,

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NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



The food and fellowship free community meal will take place at **5pm on December 11th**. Please invite your friends! There is plenty of food for everyone. and dessert.

Ruby's Pantry will be on the first Thursday of the month,

December 5th from 4-6pm.

It will be \$25 per share. Please call the church office at 608-348-9508 if you have any questions or would like to volunteer!



Family Promise

Thank you to everyone who volunteered in November!






Quilting and Crafting 4 Christ

Our work on this project continues to progress, and as evidenced by the picture, we have a number of lap quilts that have been started and/or finished. We have a small group that meets Tuesdays from 3-6pm in the Fellowship Hall to work on a variety of projects, and we want to see this group grow.

Please consider joining us for this mission work and fellowship. In addition to making quilts, we are working on several sewing projects, such as making cards, coloring cards, knitting, and crocheting, and we will

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:30am Worship 5pm Cantata Rehearsal 6pm Bell Choir practice	2 9am Money Counters	3 3pm Quilting 4 Christ 5:30pm Choir practice	4 4pm Youth Group 4:30pm Ruby's Parntly Set up 5pm Band Practice 7pm Alive Worship Service	5 4pm Ruby's Parntly	6 11am PEO Auction	7 6am Quota Club Cookie Sale
8 8:30am Worship 5pm Cantata Rehearsal	9 9am Money Counters 1pm Platteville Holiday Project Gift Basked Distribution set up	10 8am Platteville Holiday Project Gift Basked Distribution 3pm Quilting 4 Christ 5:30pm Choir practice	11 4pm Youth Group 5pm Food & Fellowship 5pm Band Practice	12 9am Family Connections Play Time 1:30pm Small Group 1:30pm Trustee/Building Meeting	13 4pm Quota Cookie Sale Set-up	14 6am Quota Club Cookie Sale
15 8:30am Worship 1pm Cantata Performance	16 9am Money Counters	17 9am MCB Starz Luncheon 2pm ALB meeting 3pm Quilting 4 Christ 5:30pm Choir practice	18 4pm Youth Group 5pm Band Practice 7pm Alive Worship Service	19 9am Family Connections Play Time 1:30pm Small Group	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21
22 8:30am Worship	23 9am Money Counters	24  5pm Christmas Eve Service 10pm Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day OFFICE CLOSED 	26 9am Family Connections Play Time 1:30pm Small Group	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28
29 8:30am Worship	30 9am Money Counters	31 3pm Quilting 4 Christ 5:30pm Choir practice 	Alysha Vacation			
Alysha on Vacation						



Mission Sunday

In November, we put together gift bags for people who are homebound or are in nursing homes. The bags consisted of candy, lotion, hand sanitizer, word search puzzle books, room freshener, and a holiday knickknack. Thanks to everyone in the congregation who helped put together the bags and wrote notes to put into the bags. A special thanks to Jan Hollaway and Kay Young for making and donating the beautiful cards to include in the bags. In December, we will be making bags for the homeless. Mark December 15th on your calendar to help put these bags together after church.

Adopted Family Donations Greatly Appreciated

The mission committee would like to thank everyone who contributed food or gift cards for our adopted family holiday baskets. The families are so appreciative of all the donations and they have told us many times how much this help means to them throughout the year. There is still time to donate to our adopted families. You can just write a check to the church and put adopted families in the memo line. Again, thanks to all who contributed.

Save the date!

The next Alive Worship Service will be at 7pm! Come and enjoy a fellowship meal after every worship. Alive Worship services will be the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7pm. The dates below are subject to change.

2024:
December 4^h
December 18th

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The Church's Need To Receive or The Giver's Need To Give

When I was first learning about stewardship early in my ministry, I heard someone say, "Good stewardship practices focus on the giver's need to give, rather than the church's need for money." At the time, I didn't buy it. To my cynical ears, it sounded like a line. Today (many years later), I can say that I was wrong. We love our churches. We want them to thrive and succeed. They are near and dear to our hearts. So, when the church faces financial challenges, we want to plead with people how important it is to keep the ministries of our beloved church going. We need to pay the bills. Throw in the anxiety that surrounds any financial topic, we may want to push the point. The truth is the church's mission isn't to keep existing. In fact, we love our churches because of the ways God has touched our lives through them —ceremonies and rituals, helping us grow in faith and connection. Likewise, a church's teaching about faithful stewardship should be centered on helping people learn about the place of money in a Christian's walk of faith. It's about discipleship and partnering with God to make a positive difference in the world — whether people do that by being generous with the church or other organizations. (Note: I do believe people who are generous as a part of their faith include the church in their generosity if the church is faithfully living out its mission.) Tithing benefits the giver as much as it strengthens the mission and ministry of the church — especially in the midst of our materialistic and consumerist society. We are immersed in a culture that feeds the appetite for more and bigger and that fosters that self-worth is found in material wealth and happiness comes by possession. As one person once said, "We buy things we don't even need with money we don't even have to impress people we don't even know!" At the root, these are spiritual problems, leading to continued discontent, discouragement, and unhappiness. We can never earn enough to be happy. In fact, studies have shown that people believe all they need is more money to be happy, when in reality, an academic study concluded that money can only boost happiness up to a certain point (at about \$75,000 in annual income). Practices like embracing gratitude do lead to more contentment. For instance, consider making a list of the things in your life for which you are grateful. It doesn't have to be long or take much time. Taking time to focus on what you have rather than concentrating on what you don't, can be transformative. Beyond embracing gratitude, consider the following questions: • How does living generously help you see the world through God's eyes? • How is your own perspective shaped by materialism, acquisition, and the desire to possess? How is it shaped by the wisdom of God? How do you resolve tensions?

~ **Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation**

Ordering Additional Scripps Cards

We plan to continue to have several Scripps cards available for purchase through the church office. There are hundreds of additional cards that are available to be purchased as well. Each month, we will be making a special order of cards that individuals want to purchase, based on order forms that you fill out and turn into the church. To find the different cards that are available for purchase, please go to <https://www.raiseright.com/shop> and scroll to the bottom of the page and click on shop all

categories and let the church office know what cards you would like to have ordered. This is a great fund-raiser for the church and doesn't cost you any additional money. A church our size should easily be able to make \$7000 per year through this program. If you have questions about this program, please contact Dawn Drake.





Christmas Eve Services

Tuesday December 24th
5pm Family Candlelight Service
10pm Candlelight



Staff Christmas Gifts

If you would like to give a Christmas card to staff members, feel free to place them in the mailboxes that can be found in front of the doors in the Narthex in December. We invite you to show your appreciation to our staff by contributing to a financial love gift. Please do not put money in the Narthex mailboxes. All financial gifts can be given directly to the office. We are grateful for each of our staff (Alysha, Lori, Randy, and Tracy) who do their job duties so well. If you choose to participate please do something to indicate that it is for the Staff Gift rather than the General Fund. Merry Christmas!

Alone For Christmas

The First English Lutheran Church is hosting the 38th annual free Christmas dinner on Wednesday the 25th. The food will be served at noon. Call 608-330-1948 or 608-778-5461 from December 19th to the 23rd. Deliveries will only be made to the homebound and those with serious covid concerns.

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Platteville Unit Supports Socks Project

The Platteville United Women in Faith Unit, along with many other UMF units in Wisconsin, is collecting old worn-out socks. These are sent to Northcott Neighborhood House in Milwaukee and made into pallets. One pound of old socks will earn \$1.00 for Northcott.

As members of UWF we feel the necessity to reuse what can be recycled to not only help Northcott, but to also save the old socks from going into the landfill. We feel it is our responsibility to do what we can to save God's creation for future generations.

So, friends, save your old worn-out socks, your mix matched socks, or lone socks, put them into a bag and bring them to the narthex of the church to place into the box prepared for that purpose. Don't be concerned about faded colors, mended socks or socks with holes. We don't care, Northcott doesn't care and neither will the pallets!

About Northcott Neighborhood House.

Northcott Neighborhood House established in 1961 is one of over ninety National Missions, excluding international missions, sponsored by United Women in Faith. Today it is a multipurpose center that supports basic education, offers employment opportunities, teaches career options, and provides necessities for children, youth, families and senior citizens. During the Pandemic the Neighborhood House continued to serve its constituents by delivering food from the food pantry and supplying other basic needs and services. It is a safe place for children and youth to engage in recreation and skill-building activities after school and on Saturdays.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are special, festive days for families of the Northcott Center. Each family may pick up a box of food with all the trimmings on the holidays. Gifts are purchased or donated for community members at Christmas.

Invitation

In closing, remember that the next meeting of the Platteville UMF Unit is December 3, 2024 at 1:30 pm in the Wesley Room. Women of all ages are welcome. If you have children, bring them, and there will be activities for them to do. We are a small unit, but we offer friendship and hospitality. We'd love to see you on December 3.



Quota Club
Cookie Sale!

December 14th 6am
The Fellowship Hall in
the Platteville United
Methodist Church



Platteville United
Methodist Church

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