

Sunday Service is at 9:45 AM

- Dec. 1 Jeremiah 33:14-16
 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
 Luke 21:25-36
- Dec. 8 Malachi 3:1-4
 Philippians 1:3-11
 Luke 3:1-6
- Dec. 15 Zephaniah 3:14-20
 Philippians 4:4-7
 Luke 3:7-18
- Dec. 22 Micah 5:2-5
 Hebrews 10:5-10
 Luke 1:39-45
- Dec. 29 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
 Colossians 3:12-17
 Luke 2:41-52
- Jan. 5 Isaiah 60:1-6
 Ephesians 3:1-12
 Matthew 2:1-12

HOW TO FIND US

United Methodist Church Of Grand Rapids

1701 SE 5th Ave • Grand Rapids, MN
2 blocks west of the Grand Rapids Airport

218-327-2216

secretary@umcgrmn.org

www.umcgrmn.org



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



December 2024

United Methodist Church
Of Grand Rapids
1701 SE 5th Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

*merry
christmas*

**RAPIDS
CONNECTION**



GROW
*in love of
God and neighbor*

REACH
new people

HEAL
a broken world

STAFF

Pastor

Rev. James Crecelius

Administrator
Jodi Martin

Accompanists
Susan Hoolihan

*Ready Set Grow
Preschool*

Mary Hanson
Shari Tverberg

Custodial
Justine Williams

Office Hours
Jodi:
M-F, 9am-3pm

Pastor Jim:
M-F, 9am-Noon &
By appointment

Justine:
Tu, Th, F afternoons
and as needed

SEVERAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES THIS MONTH!!

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING: UMC volunteers will be ringing the bell at SuperOne North Monday, December 2 through Saturday, December 7. We committed to 2 shifts each day: 10:00-12:00 and 12:00-2:00 PM. There is a signup sheet at the Information Desk. If you prefer to volunteer for the 2:00-4:00 or 4:00-6:00 shifts, please contact Kay Klingman (612-845-6649) and she will register you.

CHRISTMAS FAMILIES: This year we will be serving 9 families (7 families from Itasca Human Services and 2 from Pastor Jim's outreach). We will have a gift list. Volunteers needed: 2-3 Shoppers and 5 or more Wrappers!! The Shoppers will have a list from each family and will need to have gifts at the church on Thursday, December 12. We will be wrapping on Thursday, December 12 from 9:00 am to completion. The Youth Group will be shopping for 2 families. They will totally support the 2 families with \$ and shopping. We will be wrapping the gifts for all 9 families. Wrapping the gifts is a fun fellowship. If you like to wrap gifts, join us!! There will be a signup sheet at the Information Table.

If you wish to donate to the Christmas Family gifts, please write your check (or cash) to GRUMC with Christmas Families in the memo or in an envelope. Your donations may be brought to the office or put it in the offering plate by December 5. This is a wonderful opportunity to bless families who are truly in need.

TOYS FOR TOTS: We are hosting the Itasca area Toys for Tots. The actual distribution will be Friday and Saturday, December 13 & 14. We will be serving cookies and cider. UMC volunteers are needed to welcome participants. Cookies are provided by Missions. Please contact Carolyn Orlich (218-259-6380) to help with this community outreach!!

GRACE House: JOIN US AT THE ANNUAL SHELTER DINNER Thursday, December 5 at the TimberLake Lodge. We're excited to announce the dinner music will be shared by Moonlight Serenade. Susan Hoolihan will be joining Terry Price and Jerry to play for us. Tickets are \$70 after November 30. Kay Klingman has tickets.

UMCOR HURRICAN RELIEF: Thank you to all that donated to UMCOR! A total of \$2,785, which includes \$500 from the Mission Committee, was sent to UMCOR for the Hurricane Relief.

OPEN DOOR COAT RACK: A total of 895 were served; 570 children, 329 adults & 69 Veterans.

DIVORCE CARE: Sean Duffney is offering an evening session on Thursdays from 6:00 – 8:00 pm. Please share the information with friends & neighbors. Attendees may return for a 2nd time. If you have any questions, contact Kay Klingman (612-845-6649 or rkklinger@gmail.com) or Sean Duffney.

We don't expect everyone to donate and/or volunteer for every opportunity we present, but we hope that you will prayerfully consider missions that speak to your heart!

MISSIONS



What were, or are your Christmas season traditions? Do they focus around a meal, or a destination, or people, or cherished objects, or? One of my favorite traditions is the advent calendar. It begins on the first day of Dec. and goes till Christmas Eve (some go to Christmas day). Growing up, my parents would purchase a new one each year. It had "flaps" for each day that you could pull open. It hung on the wall and my siblings and I would take turns each morning opening the numbered flap for that day. Behind the flap would be a picture of something "Christmasy". It was fun to see each new picture as we counted down the days till Christmas. I'd get especially excited each fifth day when it would be my turn to open the flap.

Jodel (my wife) made a long wooden Advent Calendar for our family with cubes in a row each covered by a cloth flap with each date's number on it that buttoned at the top. It sat (and sits each Advent) on our mantle or counter-top. Each cubicle has a little figurine inside of a toy horse, or an angel, or a teddy bear, or a shepherd, or some Christmas themed object with the last one being the manger. Our children would have the same excitement I had as they would daily unbutton the flap and see the figure inside. While each Advent calendar I enjoyed as a child were always new, it was wonderful to watch our children try to "out guess" each other seeing if they remembered which figurine was behind each date's flap.

The Advent calendar was a major part of our Christmas season. Both as a child and with my own family. It helps us think on the theme of Christmas; it's joys, and anticipation, and preparation, and blessings, and wonder. It wasn't Christmas itself, but it very much set the atmosphere and increased the experience of Christmas Day. It gave us a "reference point" that we journeyed toward together, talking through the Christmas story. Advent seems to "augment" Christmas, allowing its rich, deep meaning to fill our hearts even more fully.

The Advent season emphasizes the comings of the Christ (yes, plural). Whose birth we prepare to celebrate each Dec. 25th, who comes continually in Word and Spirit, and whose return in final victory we anticipate. Each year Advent calls and invites the community of faith to prepare for, be alert of, and lean into the opportunities for charity that define and undergird the season reflecting the selflessness and gracious gift that is the Christ child.

Christmas' foundation of grace and sacrifice expressed at the manger invites us all to remember the belovedness of each and all. At a time of such divisiveness in our culture, here are two full seasons (Advent and Christmas) of opportunity for the church to lead the way in demonstrating what it means to love your neighbor, to reach out to the Least, the Lost, and the Left Out in ways that touch lives and change hearts, and build bridges of understanding and community.

Jodel and I want to let you all know what a wonderful blessing and gift this congregation is in our lives. We are so thankful to be joined with you in mission and ministry, in family and fellowship. May you and your loved ones have a Blessed and Merry Christmas. May we all know the joy of God's grace and the gift of God's Peace.

Be God's, Pastor Jim

Stories From the Manger!

On Sunday's in December, as part of our Advent worship, we'll be welcoming guests from the Nativity Story! Each Sunday, a character from the Christmas story will be visiting the congregation and sharing a letter Pastor Jim has asked them to read about, "What Christmas Means to Them"! Also, as we do each Advent, families of our congregation will lead us through the lighting of the Advent Wreath's candles! With special Christmas songs offered from the choir, and these special worship experiences, Advent at UMCGR will be a great way to prepare you and your family for Christmas!





SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS IN DECEMBER



The Longest Night Service - Saturday, December 21st at 7:00pm at UMCGR

A contemplative service of healing and hope for those that are hurting this Christmas.



Christmas Eve Service - 4:00pm on December 24th

Again this year we will emphasize that “Christmas is Especially for Children”. We encourage families with children or grandchildren to join our 4:00pm service on December 24th. As children enter the building, they will be invited to choose a prop or costume item to wear. While the nativity story is told, as part of our traditional service, they will come forward to participate in a live nativity. No rehearsal necessary, just the work of the Spirit. As always, we’ll end our service by candlelight as we sing “Silent Night”!



Do you know of a family that does not have a church home? Invite them and share a flier about the event, which will be available at the information desk in the coming weeks.

Sunday, December 29th, Christmas Hymn Sing!

On the Sunday between Christmas Day and New Year’s Day, Join together in a Christmas Hymn Sing! We’ll gather at our regular time, in the Fellowship Hall and Sing our favorite Christmas songs and hymns! Everyone bring your left over Christmas cookies, pastries, snacks, crackers & cheese...whatever. We’ll enjoy our fellowship, read again the Christmas story, and join in the hymns of the Christmas Season!!



A Fun Family Event - Our Annual Noon Year’s Eve Party

On Sunday, Dec. 29th , following the Christmas Hymn Sing Service, we will have our Annual Noon Year’s Eve Party! We’ll continue to snack on treats into the Fellowship Time which will also include activities and a New Years craft to make. As always, at 12:00 noon – The Balloon Drop!



Fireside Readers

The Fireside Readers will be meeting on Monday, December 16th at 5:30pm at the church. Please note that this is the 3rd Monday due to the 4th Monday landing during Christmas week. We will be meeting earlier so that we can enjoy a meal together. We will be discussing a Christmas short story followed by our annual book exchange (we all bring a wrapped book- used or new).





October 2024 Monthly Snap Shot			
	Income	Expenses	Net Income
General Fund	19,512	22,504	(2,992)
YTD - 2024	254,733	227,556	27,177
Monthly average - 2024	24,501	22,756	1,745

Our Advance monthly offering YTD is \$54,266. The above monthly average amount has been adjusted to account for this. Thank you for your continued support of the day to day ministry of our church. We try to be careful stewards of your gifts.

News From The Finance Committee:

2024 is drawing to a close. It is hard to believe that it's been almost a full year since the finance committee presented the congregation with a deficit budget. It was a scary time for us all but like so many other things, you have worked hard and it looks like we will be ending the year in the black. We all believe in the mission of GRUMC and have worked together to make it a reality. Thank you! It is a joy to be a member of this very special church family.

Salad Luncheon 2024 Recap:

Thank you to all who contributed to the Salad Luncheon which was held on Saturday, November 13th. We planned for more people than came, so we didn't make as much money as the Finance Committee had hoped we would, but the fellowship for those who worked together was priceless. The total collected from the lunch & bazaar is \$2408!

Many people worked to make the event take place:

- Trustees and friends set up tables and chairs in the dining room and the gathering area on Thursday afternoon.
- Lloyd Weeks put out signs early Saturday morning and furnished the ice for the ice table in the kitchen.
- Stephani Zimmer coordinated a kitchen crew that mixed salads, put them in bowls for the serving table and kept the serving table supplied.
- 33 people donated 43 salads and Carolyn Chase organized a crew to make all of the potato salad in the church kitchen.
- Nancy coordinated a crew to make all of the pumpkin bars for the desserts.
- A crew came together on Friday afternoon to set tables.
- Another crew came in on Saturday afternoon to help with clean-up and to assist our faithful dishwashers who worked during the luncheon
- Several people donated crafts and bake goods that were for sale. And Caroline Orlich and Linda Rasmussen served as cashiers.
- Roni Skoglund served as greeter at the door to welcome all who came.
- Marilyn Hutchins and Jane Gilbert sold tickets and Kathy Pliska and Carol Kerr collected them when people went into the dining room.
- Jodi Martin was extremely helpful in getting announcements out, making tickets, placemats and name tags.

As you can see, "it takes a village" to make events like this take place at the church. We are deeply grateful for all who participated in this year's Salad Luncheon.

June Johnson and Marva Jean Hutchens



Youth News!

Awesome job on Cinnamon rolls! Thank you to Justine for anchoring the effort and making it happen. The money raised is going to the families our youth group will be purchasing presents for when we go shopping during our youth meeting on the fourth! We'll be doing the rolls again on Sunday, Dec. 15th! Again, **"All Hands On Deck"** when we serve the congregation who so graciously supports our Youth Group! December's Cinnamon Roll Sunday's gifts will go to our 2025 summer's "Minnesota Mission Magical Mystery Tour" we'll be going on!!

December is a very busy month for our group! The 4th is shopping, **on the 5th we're serving at the Grace House Gala at the Timberlake Lodge!! Be there at 4:45!** We're receiving a gift from a sponsor for helping. The Grace House is the homeless shelter here in town that serves all of Itasca County.

On the 6th and 7th is our Annual Fall/Winter Lock-In! We'll start with Dinner at 6:00 pm on Friday and end with breakfast on Saturday (9:30). We'll, as usual, have movies, play games, talk to our "guest interviewees", make snacks, worship, maybe even sleep a little!

The 18th is our Christmas Party – with gift exchange! The gift must work for either male or female and cost no more than \$15. We'll have Christmas cookies, watch a Christmas video, and celebrate God's manger miracle gift!

A Message Our Lay Leader:

O Holy Night— one of my favorite Christmas hymns. Words which were composed in 1847, yet hold truth through each century; the stars are still brightly shining (though one may have to travel outside city limits to see their brilliance), even though the world is still in sin and error pining; we do feel the thrill of hope even in our weary world and rejoice! As the day of Christmas comes upon each of us, may we remember; 2 Thessalonians 3:13 But as for you, brothers and sisters, do not grow weary of doing good. Let us be as Mary's goodness in accepting God's will (Luke 1:38), and Joseph's goodness in doing as the Angel of the Lord's command (Matthew 1:24). As God's goodness in the birth of Jesus Christ. As Jesus goodness in his divine living, giving and sacrifice. May our goodness this season be their reflections as we serve, give and refill the love and joys of one Holy Night. . .the truest gift of Christmas. Thank you for gifting me this time as your Lay Leader, I am humbled and blessed. In the words of Tiny Tim; "God bless us, every one!" Merriest Christmas ~ Teresa



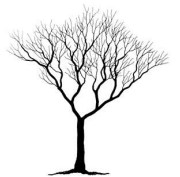
UMCGR Endowment Fund NEWS

December brings us to the final Fifth Sunday Special Offering for the Endowment Fund. As the Church Calendar turns to Advent and Christmas, you are invited to think about those who have gone before us and taught us Christmas traditions.

- When you were a child, what were some of the favorite foods that your family ate?
- Who were the people who were there? Some of them have been commended to God's eternal care, but their memory still surrounds you.
- Did you ever participate in a Christmas pageant? What was a memorable moment in that experience.
- What was your favorite Christmas Carol?
- What Christmas traditions do you try to continue today?
- What new traditions have you started?

You have been invited to donate a poinsettia or a senior scholarship in memory or honor of the people who have shared the gift of love at Christmas with you and shaped your life.

That is a wonderful current expression of your love. A gift to the Endowment Fund will contribute to thanksgiving for loved ones who have shaped your life for years to come, even after you have joined the Communion of Saints.



Keys: If you have a physical key for any of the doors in the building, including the garage or shed please let Jodi know. This **DOES NOT** include key cards, she **DOES NOT** need to know if you have a key card. This is the information she will need: Your name, what the key is for and the number if there is one on the key.



Congregational Care & Hospitality

COMING IN 2025! NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY! Photo sessions tentatively planned for early June. Thank you to Marion Mason for spearheading this project.



LET'S BE THE CARING CHURCH FAMILY GOD WANTS US TO BE! During the month of December, the Care & Hospitality Committee is encouraging everyone to reach out to people in our church family who are shut-ins or have special needs. You may do this with a card, call, or visit. You choose who and how many people you want to reach out to. If you know of others, you are welcome add them. A list of people will be available on Sundays at the Info Desk & Fellowship Time or during the week in the office. If you prefer it can be emailed or texted to you by contacting Nancy at 218-256-7711 (call or text).



LET'S EXPAND OUR PRAYER CHAIN!

We have a very active Prayer Chain with around FIFTY people who pray for specific requests. New members are always welcome. Would you like to be a part of this vital ministry? It's easy. Just contact Nancy O'Toole at nlotoole@me.com or 218-256-7711. Your name will be added to the list and you will begin receiving emails. They will come from Nancy or Jodi in the church office.

Here are a few guidelines for participation, important for new members and a good review for all others.

DO make initial requests brief and specific. E-mail Nancy (nlotoole@me.com) or Jodi in the church office. (secretary@umcgrmn.org)

DO immediately stop what you are doing and offer a prayer for that need. You may pray in any way that suits you: silently or out loud, head bowed or looking up, kneeling or standing. God will hear all prayers, but only if they are offered.

DO record prayer requests in a notebook or a folder on your computer for further prayers and reference.

DO pray for God's will. (DON'T pray answers, but pray requests.)

DO reach out in other ways if you are inspired to do so, perhaps writing a note or sending a message.

DO share and record follow up information on people who have been receiving prayer.

DON'T call the people being prayed for to tell them that you are praying.

DO invite others to join our prayer group and have them contact Nancy.

DO remember that confidentiality is vital!

Getting to know.....



Tom Callahan is one of our newest members, joining in October of 2024. He was born and raised in the town of Fremont, Nebraska. Tom lived in Missouri, Colorado, & Ohio before moving to Minnesota. He first came to Hibbing to be near his daughter. Tom's most recent job was working at the switchboard of a company in Denver that helped people with disabilities. Tom enjoys spending time at Keisler Wellness Center and Elder Circle.

Tom was looking for a church and Kenyon Casper suggested that he check out GRUMC.

He likes the friendliness of our people and the way he feels at home. Even though he uses a walker, Tom was happy to serve as an usher.



December



- 1 Mack Buell
- 2 Jane Todd
- 3 Roni Skoglund
- 7 Sue Kolka
- 8 Keith Lightfoot
- 14 Patricia Kutzorik
- 17 Madison Williams
- 20 Bill Hagenbuck
- 20 Muriel Johnson-Fattic

- 20 Jen Lund
- 21 Abigail Zimmer
- 21 Bob Mitchell
- 22 Nancy O'Toole
- 23 Joni Namyst
- 23 Parker Buchacker
- 23 Nevaeh Sisco
- 26 Arnold Hietala
- 26 Deb Hagenbuck

- 5 Ross & Margaret Cass
- 17 Kent & Darla Kirwin
- 28 Matthew & Carlee Buchacker





Coordinator:
Carolyn Orlich & Stephanie Zimmer

The captain will contact you if there is a need for help serving a lunch, funeral or other event.

Margaret Cass	Sandy Hansen	Mary Hanson
Marva Jean Hutchens		Carol Kerr
Kathy Pliska	Cindy Ridley	Candice Kortekass
Margy Strock	Sheila Weeks	Carrie Zimmer

News From The Office: NEW CELLPHONE FOR THE CHURCH OFFICE

PERMISSION TO RECEIVE TEXT MESSAGES IS REQUIRED - SEE BELOW.

The new cellphone number is 218-256-8250, please save it in your contacts so if calls or texts come from that number you know who it is. This will also ensure the calls & texts don't go to spam. **If you wish to receive text messages, please send a text message to Jodi at 218-256-8250 with your name. Doing so will indicate that you want to receive text messages from the church (permission).** Please keep in mind that this is a work in progress, and it will take time to get this service up and running! The cellphone will be answered during office hours which are: 9am - 3pm, M - F. This will also be the best way to reach Jodi on Wednesdays when she works from home. The cell phone is NOT replacing the main office number and we will continue to send emails. Text messages in an additional means of communication.



I am truly blessed by each and everyone of you. May you all have a Blessed Christmas and Joyous New Year!

Jodi Martin, Office Administrator

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)

Update from Boy Scout Troop 4041

Scouts are busy finishing up Communications Merit Badge and starting Music Merit Badge soon.

Preparations already in the works for this winter's Klondike Derby. Not sure if it will be in Bemidji or Ely, but our troop is on the planning committee. Usually held in February, last year's was at the Forest History Center in town here. Had a good showing from our Scouts.

On Veterans Day, our Troop held a flag retirement ceremony. We involved the cub scout pack and had some members of the public stop by. The script for the ceremony we used was developed by a scout for her Eagle Scout Project. We were able to participate in it at camp this summer and were given a copy to use. It is very well written, educational, powerful and patriotic. We received many compliments. The Troop is honored to take on this responsibility and conduct flag retirements respectfully. We have collected the grommets from the ashes and will give them to our Cubs and Scouts for them to distribute to veterans they know.

Thank you to all the veterans in our armed forces. Thank you for your service, and thank you for your sacrifice.

Sincerely, The Troop 41 Committee