



Happy Birthday!

- 3 Burdell Kuhl
- 6 Justin Roelfs
- 8 Julie Hohensee
- 9 Jeffery Homan

Happy Anniversary!

- 4 Jason & Paula Behrens

Church Family Prayer List

Each week throughout the year, we pray intentionally for families from all of our churches - please include these families in your prayer life this week.

Ben Spiegelhoff
Jill Spiegelhoff
Liz Spiegelhoff
Jim & Amy Stefferud
John & Deb Steinle
Justin & Charity Steinle & family
Cole, Even & Jade Swank & family
Norma Swenson
Betty Taarud
Joshua Taarud
Randy & Marjo Taarud
Corky & Ginny Tate

Let's remember to visit those who are in Care Centers or are homebound: especially reach out to Jenola Uden, Betty Taarud, Lois Carlberg, Margaret Loger, Mary Prins, LaDee Grant, and Karen Lawrence.

One visit goes a long way!



PRAYER CORNER

Prayers for immediate health concerns:

Clyde Scheevel
Mary Prins (dealing with arthritis)
Tim Yager LaDee Grant
Marlene Wieneke Ajulo Ochala
Pat Huisenga Janelle Johnson

Persons impacted by COVID 19:
Covid long-haulers

Prayers for those dealing with cancer:

Laurie Blume
Scott Klooster
Christopher Allen Brown
John Kellen (Burdell Kuhl's friend)

Persons recovering/dealing with health issues:

Emma Schnyders Nancy Hyink
Gerald Fisher Mike Miller
Kristi Johnson John Clease
Weston Erlandson Bill Carlberg
Steve Timmons Ariana Lopez
Ken Bipes Phil Glembin
Aiden Remme

For peace in Israel and the surrounding areas
which are dealing with armed conflict...

For those dealing with grief and loss...

Giving thanks & praying for:

Our Bishop and District Superintendent...
Our teachers, administrators, students...
Front line health care workers...
Law enforcement & emergency workers...
Service women & men and their families...

If you have a loved one you would like to have added to the Prayer Corner list, or if any name needs to be removed from this list, please contact the church office:

507.372.2939
methodistoffice@gmail.com

God loves you!



Sunday, December 3rd, 2023
Worship - 10:30 a.m.



livestream links

The Boxcast TV Channel
First UMC YouTube Channel
First UMC FaceBook Channel
First UMC Website
(<http://firstumcworthington.com/>)

PASTOR:

Rev. Dr. Daren Flinck

ORGANIST/ACCOMPANIST:

Jolene Kuhl

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:

Lori Nienkerk

CHOIR DIRECTOR:

Jeanette Jensen

FAMILY LIFE:

Gretchen O'Donnell

CHOIR ACCOMPANIST:

Brenda DeSmith

CUSTODIANS:

Sarah & Chad Nickel

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR:

Brenda DeSmith

GREETERS:

Chad & Sarah Nickel

TECH TEAM:

Kari & Claire Meyer

408 11th Street - Worthington, MN 56187 - 507.372.2939

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS - Monday through Friday - 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

♦ Office Phone >> 507.372.2939

♦ Rev. Dr. Daren Flinck >> dfinck@gmail.com

♦ Office email >> methodistoffice@gmail.com



Sunday, December 3rd, 2023
10:30 a.m.

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Daren Flinck
Accompanist: Jolene Kuhl

UMH - United Methodist Hymnal

⚓ Please stand as you are able

CENTERING WORDS ¹

God is the potter; we are the clay.

May God fashion us into vessels of beauty and purpose this Advent season.

PRELUDE

WELCOME - ANNOUNCEMENTS

We Come to Worship God

PRAISE

TFWS #2090 - *"Light the Advent Candle"*
(verse one only)

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

*In the days to come, the Lord shall establish God's house upon earth!
Watch! Wait! For God will do something special,
something very unexpected. Do not be hesitant.*

We place our trust in God's promise.

*Today we light this first candle, a special candle, lighted in darkness,
shedding its meager light into our world. [The first candle is lighted.]
Come, see the light. Let its brightness fill you.*

We feel the warmth of the light. It gives us great comfort.

Come, draw near to the light, for it is God's way of breaking through to you.

We rejoice in the light, for God is with us!

⚓ PRAISE

UMH #202 - *"People Look East"*

Fireside Book Club

Our next book is *Unorthodox*, by Deborah Feldman. This is the memoir of a woman growing up in an Hasidic Jewish community who then fought to break free of that world. We will discuss the book on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. Pick up the book on your own and come ready to discuss this eye-opening story.

Women's Coffee



The women's weekly coffee group meets every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. at HyVee in the Starbucks serving area. All women are invited to come and join this fabulous group!

Men's Breakfast Group

The Men's Breakfast group meets every Wednesday at 7:00 a.m. at the Blue Line Cafe. The men discuss shared concerns, solve the problems of the world, and make sure the rain gauges are up to speed. All guys are welcome to join us each week!

Confirmation Class

This year's Confirmation Class is scheduled for one session each month until Confirmation Sunday on April 28th, 2024. The next class session is scheduled for Tuesday, December 26th at First UMC starting at 10:00 a.m.. The class will rotate between locations (First to Adrian) each month until Confirmation Sunday, April 28th, 2024.

 	Last Week's Offering		\$ 21,683.74
	Carry Over Revenue (2022):		\$ 31,543.00
	Revenue Year to Date:		\$ 303,003.15
	Expenses Year to Date:		\$ 310,654.86
<i>Thank you for your faithful giving!</i>			

Worship Attendance	Last Sunday	LIVE STREAM VIEWS	151
ADRIAN UMC	21	CRISTO EN TU AYUDA	21
FIRST UMC	58	TOTAL	251

C3-Christians Connecting at Church

Join us for C3! C3 is the new name for our Wednesday evening meals and activities. C3 stands for "Christians Connecting at Church" and it is our hope that you choose to connect with us there each week for a meal and, twice a month, an activity. We will be serving chicken rice & taco soup from 5:15-6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 6th and activities for Middle and High Schoolers to follow along with craft night starting at 4:30 pm. Please join us! We'd love to have you there!



Sunday School Christmas Program

This will be held on Sunday, December 10th, during the worship service. We will begin learning the songs for that program during November Sunday School classes. During Sunday School on December 3rd & 10th will be rehearsal. We will also have Christmas Program practice on Saturday, December 9th at 9:00 a.m.

Craft Night

Our December craft night will be on December 6th from 4:30—6:30 pm. We will be making a picture frame wreath. The cost will be \$5. Please sign up ahead with Gretchen or call the church office.

Operation Christmas Child Recap

The Missions Team would like to thank everyone that gave donations of items to help fill the Operation Christmas Child boxes. Also, thank you to those that gave monetary donations which helped purchase some additional items for the boxes along with helping to send a donation to Samaritan's Purse for shipping costs of the boxes.

Thank you to Myra Palmer and the ladies who gathered to put together some sewing and bead kits. Also thank you to Dianne Dalrymple for sewing some item that were included in the boxes.

Many thanks to the great group of ladies who helped to set up for the packing party. And then thank you to those who helped pack boxes on Wednesday, November 1st. 116 boxes were packed that evening.

With the joint efforts from First Church, Adrian Church and CETA we were able to deliver 200 boxes to the collection site at the American Reformed Church. A check for \$500 will be sent to Samaritan's Purse to help with shipping costs.

There will be many happy children because of your generosity and support of this project.

- Thank you!
Pam Soderholm and the Missions Team

✠ OPENING PRAYER ²

O Lord, our lives are so filled with chaos and tribulation. Help us be ready to receive your message and gift of love, that we might grow into faithful disciples, serving you by serving others with hope and compassion. In Christ's Name, we pray. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

DECORATING THE CHRISTMAS TREE

PRAISE

"My Lord He Is a'Comin' Soon"

First UMC Chancel Choir
Directed by Jeanette Jensen ** Accompanied by Brenda DeSmith

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE - THE LORD'S PRAYER

We Hear God's Word

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Mark 13:24-37

MESSAGE

"The Beginning of the End"

We Respond to God's Word

HYMN

UMH #626 - *"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"*

HOLY COMMUNION

All who intend to lead a Christian life, together with their children, are invited to receive the bread and cup.

Everyone is welcome to the table of the Lord.

When you come forward, please bring your offering and place it in the plates located near the railings.

We Go Forth to Serve God

✠ PRAISE

UMH #196 - *"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"*

✠ THE BENEDICTION - ✠ POSTLUDE

¹ The Centering Words are based on or inspired by Isaiah 64.

² The Call to Worship is based on or inspired by Mark 1.

³ The Opening Prayer is based on or inspired by Mark 1.

All are based on [or taken from] "The Abingdon Worship Annual 2023",
edited by Mary J. Scifres and B.J. Beu

GOD'S DIRECTION IS ALWAYS BEST!

The Day and Hour Unknown

Mark 13:24-37

²⁴ But in those days, following that distress,

"the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

²⁶ At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

²⁸ Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.

²⁹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

³² But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁴ It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

³⁵ Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back - whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.

³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL [YOUR] HEART...

PROVERBS 3:5

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Reverse Advent Calendars

Once again this year we will be doing "Reverse Advent Calendars" if you are interested. Pick up a bag from the narthex with a list of suggested items attached, and each day in December up until Christmas, you will add one food item to the bag. So, rather than an Advent calendar where you *get* something daily, you're *giving* something daily instead. Bring your filled bags to the church by the end of the month of December and we will bring them to local food shelves. Thank you!

Ladies Advent Bible Study

We still have two advent study books available if you'd like to be a part of the Advent Bible Study this year. We will meet at 9:00 a.m. on Mondays, December 11 & 18 and again one time in early January, to be determined. Cost of the book is \$10. If you're unable to meet with us, you are welcome to order a book to study on your own if you'd like.

Chamber Singers Concert

This holiday season, let your heart be light and your spirits soar with the Worthington Chamber Singers at their 30th annual concert, 'Heaven and Nature Sing.' Gather with us at the First United Methodist Church on December 10th at 2 pm for an afternoon where the sacred meets the symphonic. Revel in the glory of 'Joy to the World,' the serene beauty of 'Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming,' and the angelic strains of 'Angels We Have Heard on High.' No tickets are needed for this festive celebration, but a free-will offering will be graciously accepted. Come, be enveloped by the essence of Christmas with celestial music that promises to lift your spirits!

Christmas Cookie Walk

Come to the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, December 13th from 5:00-6:00 P.M. for the annual Christmas Cookie Walk. You can fill a bucket with cookies for \$15.00. If you are unable to attend and would like some cookies there will be delivery available; please call the church office by Tuesday, December 12th.

Christmas Cookie Bakers

Thank you to those that have offered to bake cookies for the Cookie Walk. Please have your cookies to the church kitchen by noon on Wednesday, December 13th. More cookies are needed so if you have not signed up and are able to bake some please feel free to bring them.

If you have any questions please contact Pam Soderholm or Alyssa Hietbrink.

MN West Food Pantry

Minnesota West offers a Pop-up Food pantry for their students who are on campus or off campus. Your financial donations will help to purchase gift cards that will be given to the college to purchase food items that are needed for students. Please make your check to First United Methodist Church with Pop-up Food Pantry on the memo line. Thank you for your consideration to help this mission!

Coat Closet

Love INC provides for those who need warm clothing during the winter months, taking donations of new or clean, gently used coats and snow pants for all ages. They also accept donations of new hats, scarves, mittens and boots for all ages. If you would like to donate any of these items, please bring them to the church and place them in the collection spot in the hallway. These items will be taken to First Lutheran Church Coat Closet for them to distribute to those in need. Thank you for your consideration as we reach out to help others during the cold winter months.

Children's Winter Clothing Monetary Donations

The Missions Team would like to help with a need for winter clothing — coats, snow pants, hats, gloves, mittens, and boots at Worthington Prairie Elementary School. They are asking for monetary donations to purchase items for the children who are in need of winter clothing. As needs are identified by the school staff clothing will be delivered to the school. Please make your check payable to First United Methodist Church with Winter Clothing on the memo line. Thank you for your consideration of this local mission. FYI: Winter clothing ministry at First Lutheran Church has asked if people would look through their children's boots and clothes and send any items that don't fit their way to First Lutheran. There is a huge need in this area.

Souper Bowl Soup Cook-off

Mark your calendar! The Missions Team will be holding the annual Souper Bowl Soup Cook-off on Sunday, January 28th. We will be looking for participants to serve a soup along with taste testers. Watch for more details coming in January.

507 St. Nicholas Middle School Night

The Worthington Area Youth Ministers Association would like to invite all youth in 6th through 8th grade to the "507 St. Nicholas Middle School Night" which will be held on Wednesday, December 6th at the Worthington Christian Church. The evening starts at 6:30 p.m. with free pizza, followed by a chance to learn a little bit about the real St. Nick from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.














The "Chrismon" Christmas Tree



















Each one of us here today will be a part of decorating our tree this year! Every child and then each family, as supplies last, will be handed an ornament to hang on our Sanctuary tree during today's service.

Frances Kipps Spencer created the first Chrismon tree in 1957. Spencer wanted to decorate a tree with spiritually connected ornaments rather than merely secular items. The evergreen tree remained as the backdrop, symbolizing everlasting life, a tenet of the Christian faith. The tradition took root, and Chrismon trees grew to become a staple in Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran and interdenominational Protestant churches.

The word "crismon" is a contraction of the two words "Christ" and "Monogram". A Christmas tree decorated with these Christian monograms or "crismon" symbols from Christian history, tells the story of the true spiritual meaning of Christmas. It's meant to be a reminder that Christmas is about more than just the presents and the fun. It's about our shared history throughout the ages and it points us back to the baby Jesus in the manger who grew to be the Savior of the world. Here is the meaning behind each Chrismon:

	Irish or "Celtic Cross"	A normal cross with a circle in the middle to symbolize eternity.
	Triumphant Cross	Represents the earth with the cross on top, reminding us that Jesus is triumphant over the whole earth.
	Crown	Symbol representing Jesus as King.
	Furca or "Upsilon Cross"	Comes from the Greek letter Y. It is also called the "Thieves' Cross" from the two robbers who were crucified on each side of Jesus.
	Anchor Cross	Reminds Christians that Jesus is the anchor of their faith
	Fish	One of the oldest Christian symbols
	Alpha and Omega	The first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. Used together, they symbolize that we believe Jesus is the beginning and end of all things.
	Chi-Rho	Looks like a P with an X on top of it. These two letters are the first two letters of the Greek word "Christos", which means Christ.
	Star of David	A symbol that Jesus was a Jew and a descendant of King David.
	Five Pointed Star	Represents the five wounds of Jesus on the cross.
	Nativity Star	Symbol of the Star of Bethlehem or Epiphany, when the Wisemen visited Jesus.

The "Chrismon" Christmas Tree

	Eight Pointed Star	Represents baptism and regeneration
	Shepherd's Crook or Staff	Recalls that Jesus called himself a shepherd
	Scroll	Represents the Bible.
	Triquerta	Three loops making a triangle, representing the three parts of the trinity.
	Trefoil	Three equal circles intertwined to form a whole, representing the three parts of the trinity.
	IHS	The first three letters of 'Jesus' in Greek.
	Hands in Prayer	Help Christians remember the importance of prayer.
	Dove	The symbol of peace and the Holy Spirit.
	The Lamp and The Candle	Represent Jesus as the Light of the World.
	Shell	A symbol for baptism.
	Keys	Symbol for the Church in all the world.
	Ship	A symbol of the Church, sailing towards heaven.
	Cup or Chalice	Symbol of Communion.
	Angel	Reminds us of the angels who told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus, as well as the Second Coming of Christ.
	Manger	Represents Jesus as a baby at Christmas.
	Lamb	A symbol for Jesus, The Lamb of God.
	Butterfly	A symbol for transformation.
	Lion	A symbol for Jesus, The Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

Care Center Residents:

First UMC:
The Meadows Memory Care Unit
Karen Lawrence

South Shore Care Center
Lois Carlberg LaDee Grant

Adrian UMC:
Mary Jane Brown Ctr (Luverne)
Mary Prins

Adrian Country Living Cottage
Margaret Loger

Live Streaming...

You can catch our live stream broadcast on your smartphone, iPad, Smart TV or computer at on any one of four different app channels or online websites:

[The Boxcast TV Channel](#)

[First UMC Website](#)

[First UMC YouTube Channel](#)

[First UMC FaceBook](#)

Please note that all of our services can be viewed at the above locations even after the service is over. For example, the live stream library on our Facebook page has services from several years ago. For questions about our broadcasts, please contact the church office.



This Week

SUN	Dec 3
6:30 am	Worship Re-Broadcast on TV3
9:00 am	Worship @ Adrian
9:00 am	Sunday School
9:45 am	Coffee Fellowship
10:30 am	Worship @ First
1:00 pm	Cristo En Tu Ayuda @ First
5:00 pm	Outreach
MON	Dec 4
3:00 pm	Worship Re-Broadcast on TV3
TUES	Dec 5
9:30 am	Ladies' Coffee @ Hy-Ve
3:00 pm	Worship Re-Broadcast on TV
7:00 pm	Chamber Singers (Sanctuary)
WED	Dec 6
7:00 am	Men's Breakfast @ Blue Line
4:00 pm	KFC (First Lutheran)
5:15 pm	C3 Meal/Craft Night
5:45 pm	Bell Choir Practice
6:15 pm	G1 @ Adrian UMC
6:30 pm	507 Event Middle School only (Worthington Christian Church)
7:00 pm	Chancel Choir Practice
THURS	Dec 7
7:00 pm	Chamber Singers (Sanctuary)
Sat	Dec 9
9:00	Christmas Program Practice
SUN	Dec 10
6:30 am	Worship Re-Broadcast on TV3
9:00 am	Worship @ Adrian
9:00 am	Sunday School
9:45 am	Coffee Fellowship
10:30 am	First/Christmas Program
1:00 pm	Cristo En Tu Ayuda @ First
2:00 pm	Chamber Singers Concert

- 2) Grief Share has asked Gretchen if she could be a substitute leader for that ministry in the future (about 6-8 times per year). The Pastor Staff Parish Relations Committee [PSPRC] will discuss this at their next meeting.
- 3) Gretchen inquired if the Children’s Music Room could be used as a Family Life space. She will put together a proposal for the council to consider at their December meeting.

Cutting Edge Issues:

Item #1: 2024 Pastoral Compensation: James Jenson reported that the PSPRC is recommending a 3% increase for Pastor Daren’s compensation (it represents a \$1100 salary increase for the first six months of the 2024 year). They also recommend that the 85% /15% mileage figures should be charged 100% to each church’s use. Both motions carried.


Item #2: 2023 Financial Update: Ellen Hoefker reported that our financial position is not too bad (we are current with all of our expenses, including apportionments, but we have used \$19,000 of our surplus to help pay our bills through the first ten months of the year). We continue to be grateful for the faithful giving of our congregation.

The next council meeting is set for
Thursday, December 21st at 5:30 p.m..

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Dr. Daren Flinck

Christmas Poinsettias

Don't forget to order your Red Poinsettia for a Christmas decoration of the sanctuary this year in memory of a loved one or for a special occasion. The cost per poinsettia will be \$10 and will be delivered to the church. Please share them with the church until after the Christmas Eve service. The deadline for the order is December 8th. Clip the order form below with \$10, place in the offering plate (please indicate what this is for) or deliver it to the church office.









Name: _____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

Enclosed: _____ Phone Number: _____

The “Chrismon” Christmas Tree

	White Rose	A symbol for purity and can also represent Mary.
	The Cross	Reminds us that Jesus Christ was crucified on a cross, taking away the sins of the world.
	The Latin Cross	Sometimes called the Roman Cross, has three steps that symbolize faith, hope, and love.
	Eastern Cross	Used by many Eastern or Orthodox churches.
	Jerusalem Cross	Symbolize the Four Gospels in the Bible or the spread of the Gospel to the four corners of the earth
	Heart	Reminds us that God is love.

We can point out the specific symbols to you on the tree after the service, if you’d like!



Faith Comes by Hearing - Through the Bible in One Year

The Family Life Team at First Church is excited to present the opportunity for you and your family at Adrian UMC to read through the Bible in one year! Starting January 1st, we will be listening and reading through the Bible by using various methods. With the Faith Comes by Hearing app, Bible Is (which is no cost) you can follow along with a scheduled reading and listening plan to hear the Bible in one year. If you do not have a smartphone you can access this resource on the Faith Comes by Hearing website. If you do not have access to a computer, you can order a listening device which has entire Old and New Testaments recorded for your listening pleasure.

If this is something you have done in the past, it’s always good to renew your understanding of Scripture. If this is something you have always wanted to do but just couldn't’ find the time, perhaps now is that time! Join us in the Fellowship Hall at First UMC on Wednesday, December 20th at 9:00 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. to hear more about how you can participate in Faith Comes By Hearing!





Here are the highlights from the First Covenant Council meeting held on Thursday, November 16.

Celebrations:

The Missions Team reported that they put together 116 boxes for Operation Christmas Child (OCC), packed on Wednesday, November 1st. The Cristo en tu Ayuda congregation has packed over 60 boxes. The boxes will be blessed at the worship service on Sunday and then taken to the American Reformed Church where the OCC drop site is. We are very appreciative of the monetary donations that helped to purchase soccer balls, pumps, & jump ropes along with other items to put in the boxes and also help to provide a donation for shipping costs. The donation of items to put in the boxes was also appreciated. We will also be sending \$500 to Samaritan's purse to help with shipping costs. We had a great group of people that helped to set up the packing party and also another great group of people that helped to pack the boxes and are very appreciative of their time to help out.

Rick and Dianne Dalrymple took our food donations that have been collected over the last couple of months to the Manna Food Pantry.

The Education Team shared that three youth who hadn't been attending Sunday school who have returned! Praise God for that news! We are grateful to our Sunday School teachers - Amber Nielsen has been teaching this fall. Pam Soderholm is currently teaching the next section. Pastor Daren and Sherry Benton are leading confirmation once again this year, with 3 students from First and 3 from Adrian meeting once a month on a Saturday. The Monday morning women's Bible study has ended with about 12 to 15 attending. The women's advent Bible study is set to begin soon. Pastor Daren's November Bible study has had about 7-8 persons each week.

Gretchen O'Donnell shared that the craft nights have been well attended. Last week there were nine people from The Meadows and a several from Adrian UMC. The Thankfulness calendars and the gratitude pumpkins have been in use for the past few weeks. She also shared that we have participated with First Lutheran on an outreach night in Iowa. She also reported that the Trunk or Treat event with First Lutheran had about 100 kids participating, with nine cars showing up.

The annual holiday parade has been shelved due to weather concerns - an indoor gathering for families will be held at the JBS facility instead. Gretchen shared that the youth did meals for Wednesday night's C3. To date, the Wednesday Night meals have taken in about \$1000 while paying \$1500 for the meals. First Church hosted the Worthington Area Youth Ministers Association last month.

The Friendship Club was a blast! We thank everyone for their contributions and volunteering. Special thanks to the Night Lights Circle for organizing this event and to John Steinle for calling the Bingo numbers!

The annual Polka service was held in October and was well attended. That Sunday the Southern Prairie Rev. Dr. Woojae Im preached and then met with church leaders from both congregations, helping them to gain a clearer understanding of what we are looking for in a new pastor.

Rick, Pat Grimmus, John, and Gretchen encouraged everyone to join in for the Fresh Expressions workshop at First UMC on Saturday, December 2nd from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Zoom.

Jim Nickel shared that the Trustees met with Ameriprise last week and learned that their investments were doing well. Pastor Daren expressed appreciation for those who assisted in helping him move some belongings to their new home in Rochester.

Challenges:

The Council discussed the constant moving of chairs and tables in the Fellowship Hall, wondering if something could not be done to help the Hispanic Church. Pastor Daren will talk with them next week.

Gretchen shared that they are still working on marking the doors with numbers. It is also taking a while to form a team of people to monitor the sanctuary doors after worship has begun.

Current Focus:

Pam shared that the Missions Team has received a good amount of monetary donations for the Winter Clothing for Prairie Elementary. The Team will be checking with them to see what their current needs are and will collaborate with them throughout the cold months. We also continue to collect warm winter clothing for the Love INC gap ministry Clothes Closet at First Lutheran Church. Winter boots (especially kids winter boots) are needed. The Missions Team is planning to do the Souper Bowl Soup Cook-off on Sunday, January 28th. More details will be given in the near future. Lastly, the Missions Team reported that they were disbursing funds to Linda Doeden, Every Meal, MN West Pop-up Food Pantry. and Morning Star. They are grateful for the Foundation's yearly contribution along with other individual contributions throughout the year.

The Trustees shared that they will be looking into the issue of the parsonage for new pastor in July of 2024. They will be looking at all avenues from providing a parsonage or a housing allowance. Jim also shared that insurance costs are rising. He is working on a possible change for lower costs but less coverage.

Gretchen shared the following Advent Christmas events: the reverse advent calendar will be printed again this year, which suggests daily items you can give each day of Lent. C3 will decorate the church on Wednesday, November 29th right after the meal. The Sunday School program is scheduled for December 10th. The annual Cookie Walk has been moved to a Wednesday (December 13th) and the proceeds from the sale of the cookies will be donated to the CETA church for purchasing gifts for children. Motion made to commit proceeds to CETA church for Christmas gifts for children and whatever is done with any leftover funds is up to them. Motion second and carried.

Our yearly Christmas Caroling outing will be on Sunday, December 17th - more information later on this. We usually do to some of our home bound members and the area care centers. Christmas eve services will be held on the afternoon of Sunday, December 24th (normal Sunday services will also be at the same time that Sunday). C3 will undecorate the church on January 10th.

First Church will host Youth 507 group in February. In addition, the Community Kids Camp is working toward next year's event.

Gretchen shared three items:

- 1) There is a Youth Leadership Seminar in Chandler that she is planning on attending next year.