



STEEPLE NEWS

Centennial United Methodist Church at Ivy

DECEMBER 2023



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JOYCE:

If you're like me, you're busy getting ready for Christmas. It's supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year, but it can feel overwhelming - decorating, buying gifts, sending cards, baking, planning a big holiday meal, trying to hang on to family traditions because that's what's expected.

The truth is, there can be moments when the most wonderful time of the year can be a disappointment.

I remember the year I turned 16. All I wanted for Christmas was a car, a blue Volkswagen Bug. As we're unwrapping the gifts on Christmas morning, I got really excited when they told me that there was one more gift for me. I'd seen those commercials on TV where people get a new car for Christmas, and it's parked in the driveway with a big bow. Instead, my dad handed me a small wrapped box, and I sure there must be a car key in that box. When I opened it up, it was a blue Volkswagen Bug, only it was the Hot Wheels version. It was a good-natured joke, one that I can laugh about today. But my 16-year-old self was pretty bummed out. Christmas that year was a major disappointment. Simply because I had forgotten the real meaning of Christmas.

We are in the season, the church calls Advent, a time of waiting and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ. Instead of getting caught up in the things that don't really matter...all the noise and busyness of the season, let's remember to wait for Jesus with awe and expectation and wide-eyed wonder.

I want to leave you with a verse from Isaiah 62:1. It was written well before the birth of Jesus. The people needed saving, and the prophet Isaiah cried out to God, *Oh Lord, that you would tear open the skies and come down to earth.* I love that image of God ripping the skies open to come to us. More than 2,000 years ago, in a manger in Bethlehem, that's exactly what God did. And that's the gift we celebrate!

Grace to you and peace,

Pastor Joyce

ADVENT / CHRISTMAS EVENTS

There's a lot going on during the month of December. Be sure and get these things on your calendar and then let family and friends know so they can join us.

December 2nd Live Nativity 5:30-7:30 pm Refreshments will be served.

December 10th Christmas Program 10:30 am



Children & Youth help retell the Christmas Story

Children's Bell Choir

Christmas Carols

Santa will come during the fellowship time

All children present in worship are welcome to participate in the program.



Sunday, December 24th

7:00 pm & 11:00 pm

Both services will include lessons, carols, and candlelight. The 11:00 service will also include communion.

Be sure and invite family and friends to join you.



Chili and Oyster Soup Supper Thank You!

Thank you to the men's group for spearheading the return of the Chili and Oyster Soup Supper tradition. Thanks also to everyone who helped make the event a success. We served 110 people, many from the surrounding community, plus event volunteers. The response from the community was very positive. The church received \$1770 in free will offerings on the day of the event, in addition to other donations given ahead of time to help defray the cost of the oysters. Even after expenses are accounted for, the church will be able to make a nice gift to the Caring Hands Resource Center.



Hanging of the Greens

Centennial UMC has a beautiful sanctuary. On Sunday, November 26th, several members stayed after worship to decorate the inside and outside of the church for the Advent / Christmas Season.

The garland is up, the tree is decorated, the poinsettias are out, the nativity is set up by the road. The church looks wonderful and is ready to receive visitors. Stop by and check it out!



2024 Stewardship Campaign Results

Thank you to everyone who turned in a Giving Card for 2024. Your support is critical to the ministry and mission of Centennial UMC. So far, 30 families have turned in Estimate of Giving Cards totaling \$81,960. The Stewardship Committee is in the process of following-up and finalizing the 2024 campaign. If you need an Estimate of Giving Card, please contact Gaylen Heaberlin at (515) 967-2016 and he can send you one.



Sandra Stuart's grandson has been deployed to Saudi Arabia and he would love to have some mail from back home. (Grandma would love that too)!

Colton Hiatt
831st. EVCC 579 EN
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APO, AE 09877

Live Nativity



Come enjoy the peace of our live animals, lovely decorated sanctuary, some Christmas treats and a warm beverage.

Saturday, December 2

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Centennial United Methodist Church at Ivy

9150 NE University Ave.

Altoona, IA 50009

One mile east of Southeast Polk High School

Ivy WOW WORSHIP ON WEDNESDAY

Worship on Wednesday (WOW)

We will meet at 5:30 for a meal followed by a time of learning and will end our time together with a short, contemporary worship at 7:00.

You are invited to come for any or all of the evening's activities. *If you read the Pastor's article, you will notice that WOW offers opportunities for Faith, Fellowship and Flourishing.*



Worship on Wednesday (WOW) meets on each Wednesday 5:30-7:30

Sunday	11/26	11:45 am	Hanging of the Greens
Saturday	12/2	5:30-7:30 pm	Live Nativity Event
Sunday	12/3		Dinner Day
Wednesday	12/6	7:40 pm	Administrative Council Meeting
Thursday	12/7	1:00 pm	Ivy Women's Fellowship
Saturday	12/9	9:00 am	Men's Group
Sunday	12/10	10:30 am	Christmas Program
Sunday	12/24	7:00 / 11:00 pm	Christmas Eve Services

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1. Josey Fry Butch Griffel Hannah Griffiths	2. Rich Webb
3. Charles Southcott	4. Diane Griffel Brili Jackson Mike & Mary Ferguson	5.	6. Linda Howard	7. Jacquelyn Purcell Jamie Remster	8. Marc Dorris Joyce Webb	9. Dean Fiene
10. Paul Quick Beth Shipley	11. Gerry Ordway	12. Laney Seaman	13. Tom & Gail Gish	14. Torie Hermann Mark Olgren	15.	16.
17. Paige Geisenhoff Laura Hiatt Jane Wendel	18.	19. Brenda Cox Jen Griffiths	20. Brent Scheel	21. Liam Deutmeyer Allison & Chris Lehn	22.	23. Marc & Penny Dorris
24.	25.	26.	27. Scott & Andrea Hackett	28. Jo Ordway	29. Abby Glann	30. Karla Heaberlin
31.						

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
COMPARISON OF OPERATING INCOME**

	Offerings 2023	Offerings 2022	Offerings 2021	Offerings 2020
January	\$17,243.17	\$11,240.28	\$11,270.04	\$11,273.44
February	\$7,101.46	\$9,698.09	\$8,480.01	\$10,933.50
March	\$5,903.26	\$9,669.39	\$12,192.01	\$10,780.19
April	\$10,174.26	\$14,356.63	\$12,506.01	\$6,573.00
May	\$6,837.26	\$9,004.49	\$8,717.05	\$9,110.16
June	\$7,021.56	\$7,083.14	\$8,118.89	\$5,739.78
July	\$9,413.26	\$8,636.81	\$6,295.75	\$9,248.40
August	\$5,192.26	\$7,081.26	\$7,919.24	\$7,701.93
September	\$7,791.06	\$5,610.25	\$9,763.24	\$7,942.10
October	\$9,101.26	\$12,111.46	\$12,038.34	\$9,201.03
November		\$8,679.97	\$10,568.68	\$11,111.78
December		\$7,552.26	\$10,477.42	\$10,282.93
Total Offerings	\$85,778.81	\$110,724.03	\$118,346.68	\$109,898.24
Government Paycheck Protection Program			\$20,177.00	\$20,232.00
Iowa Conference Assistance Program			\$4,300.98	\$9,201.00
Total Offerings & Programs	\$85,778.81	\$110,724.03	\$142,824.66	\$139,331.24

2023 Average Monthly Offerings align="right">\$8,577.88
 2023 Average Required Monthly for Budget align="right">\$8,750.00
 2023 Average Offerings vs. Average Required for Budget align="right">(\$172.12)

This comparison does not include memorial, building fund, food pantry or mission project donations. As of October 31st, we have collected \$2,098.00 for the Caring Hands Food Pantry.

Joy Warner, Financial Secretary



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