



THE VISITOR



Attention ALL kids (not just S.S. youth) & Parents:

2 important dates coming up!!

Sunday, December 3rd: We switch times!! Sunday School begins at 9:45 am till 10:35 am Church comes AFTER S.S. at 10:45 till 11:30. This will be our winter worship schedule. Remember, S.S. at 9:45 'til 10:35!

Sunday December 17th: Special S.S. Make & Take. All 3 classes will be combined as we take a break from lesson time and make something Christmasy that you can take home. Parents/grandparents/aunties/uncles are welcome to come and help any of the S.S. kids that might need a bit of adult assistance.

Sunday, December 17th: After "take a break, make & take", during church worship time (10:45) will be our



Youth Christmas Program

Kids of all ages including toddlers (or littler) thru H.S. No lines to learn, no rehearsals to attend, no 'public speaking', no itchy halos, no songs to perform, no trip-on-it robes. Your dress-up Christmas clothes won't be covered up (but please wear whatever you want to, nothing fancy needed). *Not Yermama's Christmas program.* It will be impromptu and easy, and, because you kids are part of it, it'll be GREAT.

Refreshments afterwards and ...
Did somebody say treat bags???

Lotsa cool stuff coming up,
Your Sunday School Staff (by Patti Ellingson)



Advent, Christmas, New Year's Eve 2023

With five Sundays in December this year, the 2023 Advent, Christmas, and New Year's Eve schedule is a little unusual. Please note this for your calendars:

- ◇ Sundays in Advent: December 1, 10, 17, 24.
- ◇ Christmas Eve: Sunday, December 24. (Because each church in our parish will host an evening Christmas Eve service, there will be no in-person worship that morning.)
- ◇ Christmas Day: Monday, December 25.
- ◇ New Year's Eve: Sunday, December 31. (Morning worship at the regular times in each of the three churches in our Prairie Lakes Parish.)

Winter Clothes for Students Project

Thanks to everyone who donated clothing for the Medford School Winter Clothes for Students project. The donated items will be delivered to the school social worker in early December so that they will be available as needed during the winter. Everything is much appreciated! The following items will help keep students warm:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 27 pair of warm socks | 2 fleece jackets |
| 1 pair pants | 1 long-sleeved shirt |
| 9 hooded sweatshirts | 8 pair waterproof gloves |
| 8 pair of leggings/sweatpants | |



Prairie Lakes Parish Charge Conference


Our annual Prairie Lakes Parish Charge Conference was held on Sunday, November 26th at 2:30 P.M. at Blooming Grove UMC. Pastor Dean Wolf, elder in the United Methodist Church, and pastor of the United Methodist Church in Elysian, met with us to preside over our meeting. We approved Pastor Kathy's 2024 Compensation Package and various other reports. We also voted affirmatively to provide the opportunity for local church items still in progress to be presented to each individual church council for review and approval by December 31st.

December 2023

Blooming Grove
Morning Worship.10:45 am
Sunday School.....9:45 am

Janesville
Morning Worship.....4:00 pm

Waterville Evangelical
Morning Worship...9:30 am

Parament Colors					1	2
12/3 Blue 12/10 Blue 12/17 Blue 12/24 White 12/25 White 12/31 White					Pastor's Day Off	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
			6-7 pm in WV Acts 29	9:30 am Par- ish Bible Study at Cool Wave Coffee Shop, WV 7:00 pm WV Jail Ministry	Pastor's Day Off	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		4-6 pm Free Diaper Give- away at WV	11:30 Prayer Brunch at Oscars 5-6:30 pm Spaghetti Supper at WV 6-7 pm in WV Acts 29	7:00 pm WV Jail Ministry	Pastor's Day Off	<i>10 am—noon</i> <i>Cookie Walk at</i> <i>WV</i> 
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
10:45 am BG Youth Christ- mas Program		6 pm Bible Conversations at Half Pint	6-7 pm in WV Acts 29	9:30 am Parish Bible Study at Cool Wave Coffee Shop, WV 7:00 pm WV Jail Ministry	Pastor's Day Off	10 am—noon Free Diaper Give-away at WV
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Christmas Eve Services 4:30 pm WV 6:00 pm BG 7:30 pm JV			6-7 pm in WV Acts 29	7:00 pm WV Jail Ministry		
31	<i>New Year's Eve</i>					



PONDERING



“So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.” Luke 2: 15-20 NIV

The Thanksgiving celebration is in our past in this year of 2023. I hope your celebration gave you time to enjoy family, food, and friends. I appreciate all who came to the Thanksgiving service in Janesville. It was a time to be together as a parish community. We have much to be grateful for as I think back over this year. We grew as a community, we relied on one another, we enjoyed fellowship and we prayed for one another; and we supported our communities, and our world. Sounds like a faith family to me!

As we draw ever near to Advent 2023, it seems our season is being condensed by our calendar—Advent begins December 3rd and our fourth Sunday in Advent is also Christmas Eve. December 24th, our Sunday morning service will be virtual only so we can gather in our church homes for our Christmas Eve services. Christmas Eve Service times are:

4:30 pm Waterville EUMC
6:00 pm Blooming Grove UMC
7:30 pm Janesville UMC

I hope you can join us for one of these service times!

I chose a verse from the familiar story of Christ’s birth from Luke for this month’s consideration. In the chaos of delivering Jesus in a stable with shepherds from the hillsides coming to see the miracle of his birth, Mary treasures what happened and she “ponders them in her heart.” While we may not be in the chaos surrounding birth in a stable, we know chaos in our living. We are busy people who choose the things we prioritize that will benefit our family. I ponder what it is that we prioritize. It is my hope that you, too, ponder the things you prioritize for your family. Do we celebrate the Savior who is Jesus Christ our Lord? Do we place him first in our hearts and minds or does the busyness of living in 2023—soon to be 2024—put Jesus low on our list? May we be more like those who heard the shepherd’s story and may we be amazed by the One born to take away the sins of the world: Jesus Christ.

May you ponder, dear ones.

Jerry and I wish you a blessed Christmas with our prayers that your New Year is blessed beyond imagination!

Pastor Kathy

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Sunday School 9:45 a.m.

7	Thur	9:30 am	Bible Study at Cool Wave
13	Wed	11:30 am	Prayer Brunch at Oscars
16	Sat	10-noon	Cookie Walk at WV
17	Sun	10:45 am	Youth Christmas Program
19	Tues	6:00 pm	Bible Conversations at Brewery
21	Thur	9:30 am	Bible Study at Cool Wave
23	Sun	6:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service (NO MORNING WORSHIP)



1	Dawn Karsten	17	Gabe Mullenbach
4	Walter Karsten	17	Doug Wilkowske
6	Carol Karsten	17	Cindy Kennedy
7	Becky Lustig	19	Jacob Gasner
8	Maisie Morgan	21	Marlis Mahler
10	Joshua Kanne	24	Elizabeth Bartosch
12	Fred Fyvie	25	Levi Blake
13	Weston Janke	26	Jenine Koziolk
		26	Leah Krell
		28	Riley Poe
		28	Faye Kanne
		29	Sophie Morgan
		30	Marge Wilkowske
		31	Kaitlyn Kanne

Congratulations to Mikayla Janke



Congratulations to Mikayla Janke upon earning the 2023 American FFA Degree at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis in November. This is the highest degree achievable in the National FFA Organization. To be eligible to receive the American FFA Degree, members must meet an extensive set of qualifications and requirements, including the following: receiving a State FFA Degree, holding active membership for the past three years, completing secondary instruction in an agricultural education program, and operating an outstanding supervised agricultural experience program. Community service, leadership abilities, and outstanding scholastic achievement are also required.

Treasurer's Report

October 31—November 28, 2023



General Budget Income	\$ 4,173.00
Other Income	
Cemetery	200.00
Food Shelf	3,437.00
Poinsettias	146.00
Prayer Shawl Ministry	50.00
Total Income	\$8,006.00
Expenses	
Pastor's Salary	1,959.32
Mileage	18.34
Cell Phone	23.58
Printer Ink	25.35
Software	68.02
Telephone	54.37
Excel Energy	126.86
Food Shelf	2,736.00
Total Paid Out	\$ 5,011.84
(Net Income: + \$2,994.16)	

Building Addition

Income	
Restoration	\$ 350.00
Total Income	\$ 350.00
Expenses	
Loan Payment	\$ 3,045.06
Total Paid Out	\$ 3,045.06
(Net Income: — \$2,695.06)	
Restoration Fund Balance	\$67,898.85
Building Addition Loan	\$257,460.64



Historical Note



As we were hanging the Christmas backdrop this year, there was discussion and questions as to when the backdrop was created and who was involved in the process of creating this masterpiece? A few answers were determined. The backdrop was painted sometime in the early '70's by Junior High Youth Fellowship under the leadership of Ardis and Marvin Sutter. This makes it slightly over 50 years old! (We probably missed the actual 50th anniversary during Covid.) Marsha Trandem was the designer and artist who sketched the sheep, buildings, and star. The full group included: Brian Kanne, Walter Karsten, Neil Krippner, Judy Mahler, Marlis Mahler, Harlan McColley, Keith Parrish, Brad Saufferer, and Jan Sutter. The pastor at the time was Norman Witt. Three of this crew are still involved in hanging it most years! The stable currently in use was actually part of the original backdrop, made by a different Youth Fellowship group several years before.

Michael Kanne - Historian

Saturday, December 16 10:00 am to Noon Cookie Walk at Waterville EUMC

It's time again to think about those mouth-watering cookies and fudge. Cookies will sell for \$8.00 per pound. Come walk through the tables filled with holiday goodies! Hope to see you all there!



Service Time Change

Starting the first Sunday in December, worship times will change to the later service. Blooming Grove service will be at 10:45 am thru May 2024. Sunday School will be at 9:45-10:30 am.



Christmas Poinsettias



Greenwald's Nursery is again offering the opportunity to order poinsettias (red, white, pink) through them this year at a cost of \$19.00 (includes delivery to BGUMC). A double poinsettia will also be available for \$35.00. Please order your poinsettias by **December 5th**. If you choose, you may designate your poinsettia to be "in honor of" or "in memory of" someone important in your lives. These designations will be listed in a Sunday morning bulletin and the bulletin for Christmas Eve. A sign-up sheet is located at the back of the church or you can return this form to Chery Southworth, 26651 Elmore Avenue, Morristown, MN 55052 (Call or text (507) 339-3534 or Email Cherysouth@gmail.com). Make checks payable to BGUMC with "poinsettia" in the note section. Check can also be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church at PO Box 171, Medford, MN 55049.

Given By: _____

Number _____ Size _____ Color: _____ Include Bow

Number _____ Size _____ Color: _____ Include Bow

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

Turkey Tracker Thanks!

We give thanks for the 87 folks who gathered at Blooming Grove UMC on Friday evening, November 17th for food, fun, fellowship, and fund-raising!



In a span of three hours - over delicious potluck hot dishes, surrounded by silent auction items, and immersed in group games – just over \$3,400 was raised to be shared between the Steele and Waseca County Food Shelves. For each \$25, a feather - and a note about our food shelves, and the impact of food insecurity - was added to our Turkey Tracker. And yes - we ran

out of feathers! The majority of the evening's funds were gathered via competitive bidding on 26 silent auction baskets, as well as gifts placed in our Thanksgiving Free-Will Donation Baskets throughout the event. In addition, donations of 80 shelf-stable food items were made – all to go to the Waseca Food Shelf.



The generosity of all who made this evening, and these funds, possible, is humbling indeed!



Thank you, in particular, to the following folks:

- ◆ Members of the extended Spinler family, who came up with, and coordinated this great idea.
- ◆ The BGUMC Missions Team who made connections with our local food shelves to learn of their current needs and then created unique ways to tell stories of those needs throughout the evening, via informative placemats, table centerpieces made of shelf-stable food items high on the food shelf “need” list, Thanksgiving Free-Will donation baskets, and our Turkey Tracker, whose tail feathers provided examples of the impact of food insecurity in our local communities.
- ◆ Our hosts for the evening, Brad Spinler, Justin Krell, and Will Mullenbach.
- ◆ Kristin Krell, Alex Spinler, and Gil and Beth Christesen, who led games and art activities for 11 children in our new addition.
- ◆ Our donation counting crew, including Gabe Mullenbach and his “turkey gobbler” that called out fund-raising milestones throughout the evening.
- ◆ All who helped clean-up and set up in the basement fellowship hall ahead of the event.
- ◆ All who donated baskets for the silent auction, as well as prizes for Turkey Bingo.
- ◆ All who brought potluck food and delicious desserts to share.



The Stretch

November 28, 1933: 7,000 white people hang and burn 18-year-old black man in public spectacle lynching in Missouri.

<https://calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/nov/28>

2024 calendars are beginning to arrive at our house taking space on the flat surfaces of my kitchen. I always enjoy thumbing through them admiring the beautiful scenes, adorable faces of children, and finding myself grateful for the men and women who serve in our military. Then, with no need for another calendar, I try to find homes for these pieces of Americana. Honestly, most of them find a home in the recycling bin.

Last year, when the ritual arrival of the calendars was in full swing, a friend sent me, you guessed it, a calendar. As I pulled it from the envelope, a beautiful photo of the weathered hands of a former slave grabbed my heart. The calendar is produced by *Equal Justice Initiative* and includes daily historical facts of racial injustice in the United States. I went online to learn more about the organization and subscribed to their daily digital experience. For the past year, the most heartbreaking stories of racial injustice have found their way to my inbox. At first, I read them every day and shedding a tear on most. Then, very slowly, I would skip a day or two. It hurt too much. Until I noticed that I was just deleting them each morning to clean up my inbox. Just a single click, and it was gone. No heartbreak, no tears.

My privilege was staring me right in the face. I can choose not to know this history. I can choose not to let it affect me. Ignorance is bliss. Yet, this is not what Jesus is asking from us. We are to go to the margins and walk with our neighbors. These stories that I have chosen to delete are about our neighbors. A history that continues to impact their lives daily. I espouse the values of wholeness and interconnectedness, that my wholeness relies on the wholeness of all. Yet, there it was, click.

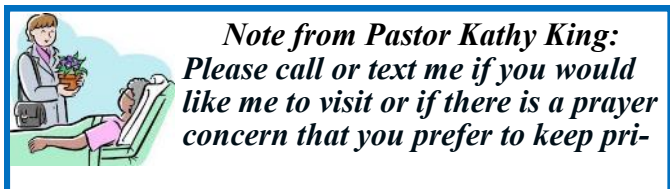
We cannot bring wholeness to all if we don't address today's most urgent problems in a meaningful way, without learning about our nation's history of racial injustice and its legacy. I invite you to *stretch*, and maybe shed a few tears, with me by engaging at www.eji.org. Subscribe to the calendar. Love deepens with knowledge as we work toward justice for our neighbors.

What's Next: Watch for details for the viewing of *Killers of the Flower Moon*. In lieu of watching the 3.5-hour movie in the theater, we have decided to wait for it come out through a streaming platform and make it a two-part experience. Your backsides will thank me!

Do you have a recommendation for a book study? Want to engage in a Bible Study? Or maybe investigate a particular topic. Let me know and we will make it happen!

Much Peace,
Cindy Saufferer
Prairie Lakes Parish
Love Through Justice Coordinator

Pastoral Care



- Tracie – as her wrist heals from an unexpected slip and fall.
- The aunt of a friend of Marlis Mahler, who is in the midst of significant health concerns.
- Prayers for friends and relatives of Matt and Val Mullenbach.
- Prayers for Patti Ellingson’s son and his family as her son’s employment has changed.
- Family and friends of Zona L. Karsten, Carol Karsten’s sister-in-law, who passed away in November
- Phyllis Giebner’s father, who is experiencing ongoing health concerns.
- Val Mullenbach’s dad as he recovers from a recent surgery.
- A good friend of Tracie Spinler, who was diagnosed with melanoma.
- Family and friends of Linda, Sheryl Brisel’s dear friend in Kansas City, who passed away in November.
- Faye Kanne’s dear friends Chuck and Trish. Chuck fell recently and broke two ribs, and Trish is experiencing newly developing medical concerns.
- The family of Mitchell Olson, age 31, who lost his life in a farming accident in our BGUMC neighborhood. Mitchell farmed with his wife’s uncle, Brian Bloomer. Mitchell’s wife, Brittany, is the daughter of Diane Bloomer Hulstein and grand-daughter of Harold & Harlean Bloomer. In addition to his wife, Mitchell leaves behind three young children – Saige (4), Chase (3), and Sloan (1) - and their 4th is on the way.
- All in our faith community who privately hold heavy concerns in their hearts and lives. Help us to reflect God’s love and care through our words and deeds that they may know BGUMC as a place of solace, comfort, trust, and support.



Baptism Blessings

Baptism blessings to Maryl Rose Christenson, daughter of Tess and Quinn Christenson, who was born on February 21, 2023, and baptized at Blooming Grove UMC on November 12th! Welcome to your church family, precious one!

Welcome to New Member!

On Sunday, November 26th, we officially welcomed Deb Miller as a new member of our BGUMC congregation!



Please extend a warm hello of welcome to Deb in the weeks ahead – and introduce yourself to Deb if you have not already had the opportunity to do so!

MN UMC Conference Forms/Reports Due Soon

Each church in our parish is asked to complete the forms listed below and present them to their respective church councils for approval by December 31st. The forms can be found on the Minnesota United Methodist Church website under the “People Portal”. (<https://mnumc-reg.brapp.com/!D2bJtrZPyjYcj+Vk3WX1ey-DtML3AJa0C5D0qYI0WYW>)

- ◆ Election of Church Leadership
- ◆ Report of the Trustees – **Form 10**
- ◆ Checklist for Protection of Church Finances – **Form 11**
- ◆ Fund Balance and Certification of Annual Audit – **Form 12**
- ◆ Annual Budget
- ◆ Missions Report – **Form 13**
- ◆ Appointed or Assigned Clergy Report – **Form 14**





*Invitation to
Share our Hearts with the Olson Family*

**Special Advent & Christmas Offering
November 26th – December 17th**

(This takes the place of our annual Adopt-A-Family Gifting)

On Wednesday, November 15th, Mitchell Kenneth Gregory Olson, age 31, lost his life in a tragic farming accident at the family farm just 5 miles NW of Blooming Grove UMC. (Mitchell farmed with his wife's uncle, Brian Bloomer. Mitchell's wife, Brittany, is the daughter of Diane Bloomer Hulstein and grand-daughter of Harold & Harlean Bloomer.) In addition to his wife, Mitchell leaves behind three young children – Saige (4), Chase (3), and Sloan (1) - and their 4th is on the way.

From now through Sunday, December 17th, we invite you to share your hearts and love in support of this family through a special Advent & Christmas Offering here at BGUMC. All funds raised will be consolidated into one check that will be delivered to the Olson family at Christmas, for use however/wherever/whenever needed. Please consider donating whatever you would have typically spent in your participation in our December Adopt-A-Family program in past years.

If you would like to contribute toward this special offering, please note "Olson Family" on your check or offering envelope, and place your donation in the white "offering coffeepot" at the back of the sanctuary. Checks should be made out to Blooming Grove UMC.

Thank you.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED to:
Box 171, Medford, MN 55049

December 2023

The Blooming Grove Visitor

Since 1936

Blooming Grove United Methodist Church

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 171

Medford, MN 55049-0171

Physical Location:

43089 180th Street, Morristown, MN 55052

(NE corner of Waseca County)

Website: www.bloominggroveumc.org

Email: bloominggroveumc@gmail.com

Check us out on Facebook!

**Pastoral Care and Emergency
and General Pastoral Questions:**

Pastor Kathy King

kking5@hickorytech.net

507-382-2483

Join Us

If you are interested in
becoming a member of
Blooming Grove UMC,
see Pastor Kathy.



Requests for Prayer Chain Email:

Pastor Kathy King at:

kking5@hickorytech.net

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in color) check us out at
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Special dates in December

Sunday
December 17th

9:45 am combined Sunday
School "make it—take it"

10:45 am
Youth Christmas Program



Sunday Evening
December 24th
"Christmas Eve
Services"



4:30 pm Waterville EUMC

6:00 pm Blooming Grove UMC

7:30 pm Janesville UMC

Sunday Morning
December 24th
Worship Service Online Only