

# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

“Serve, Teach, and Love As We Grow In Faith”

DECEMBER 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

Peace be with you all. The end of this year is around the corner. Time flies: I feel it as if the beginning of the year was yesterday. When I drove out lately I saw some farmers still working on the field day and night. In retrospect, this year has been rough and tough. The whole world has been suffering due to COVID pandemic, wars, conflicts, and tensions; our precious friends have gone; harvest was not as plentiful as last year; and, the weather has been inclement for farming and cropping.

Considering all these circumstances, I hardly see hope in the midst of uncertain reality. In fact, this uncertainty has been with us from the very beginning. Out of chaos God has made all creation. In the midst of unrest in Israel our King Jesus Christ came to earth. Under the fear of the death the Holy Spirit was poured on the disciples of Jesus Christ.

While people and world make chaos, fear, uncertainty, and political polarity, our God creates order, peace, hope. Preparing Christmas during this Advent season, I encourage all of you to expect peace, hope, joy, and love as a baby Jesus comes to us. Advent literally means waiting for Jesus' Second Coming. We are in the hope of the Lord's coming during Advent season. He is the king of peace. *“Through Christ, God made peace between us and himself, and God gave us the work of telling everyone about the peace we can have with him”* (2 Corinthians 5:18). It was through Christ Jesus that God made peace between us and Himself. Without Jesus Christ we couldn't have peace or be reconciled to God.

I recently realized from a book that one of the main themes throughout the entire Bible is peace. The Bible is all about the story of peace. When Jesus was born a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, *“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests”* (Luke 2:13-14). When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He urged them, “Peace be with you,” because they were in fear.

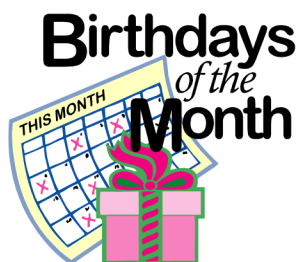
As a matter of fact, most people are in fear for some reason. That could be money, or family, or business, and future. As you know, fear has been with us from the very beginning. The book of Genesis tells about the origin of fear through the stories of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel. After Adam and Eve's falling short we have been in agony and sorrow. The story of the Old Testament is about waiting for the king of peace. Jesus is the very king of peace who made peace between us and God. Once you know of Him, accept Him, and reside in Him, you have peace. In addition, the peace that Jesus gives us is not the same as the world gives; *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid”* (John 14:27).

The worldly things are always shaking and changeable. I encourage my all friends in Christ to stay in love with God and find yourself in the presence of God.

Merry Christmas ~

Pastor Inwha Shon





DEC 2	Marge Paulin
DEC 5	Lori Holcomb
DEC 6	Lance Leisgang
	Jean Lovlien
DEC 7	Jessa Ammann
	Gene Krohn
DEC 8	Mary Loveland
DEC 10	Mary Maurer
DEC 12	Charlene Galston
DEC 13	Roxie Hostrawser
DEC 14	Sally Burgau
DEC 15	Howard Gomer
DEC 20	David Jelinek
DEC 21	Sharon Nemec
DEC 22	Kathie Boehm
	Elroy Dahl
DEC 24	Renee Nosbisch
DEC 25	Karolyn Gjerseth
	Ryan Ransom
DEC 26	Jason Breining
DEC 27	Darrell Armbruster
	Lisa Perry
DEC 28	LeRoy Amborn
DEC 29	Ellen Hieb
DEC 30	Marcia Hagen
DEC 31	Kristin Breining



DEC 3	Norm & Renea Stoker
DEC 9	Keith & Chris Odeen
DEC 11	Jeff & Cheryl Dolsey
DEC 14	Bill & Kathy Perry
DEC 17	Rod & Katrina McGillivray
DEC 18	Don & Vangie Stender
DEC 20	Rich & Judy Lee
DEC 30	Bob & Sally Laubach
DEC 31	Gene & Linda Atkinson



### **Christmas Eve Worship Service:**

Thursday, December 24

5:30 p.m.

(Please join us on Facebook Live

**NO** worship in Sanctuary)

### **New Year's Eve**

### **Come and Go Communion:**

Thursday, December 31

5:00—7:00 p.m.



Due to the continuing high risk and spread of Covid-19 cases in Jackson County and the state of Wisconsin, our Sanctuary will continue to be closed to the public until further notice. Please worship with us on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. by listening to our Radio Broadcast on WWIS Radio 99.7 FM or by watching Facebook Live.

Dear UMW Members and Friends,

December brings magic of the Christmas season. Although we are limited in our gatherings and favorite ways to celebrate, I hope that each of you will experience a special memory of the season. Maybe you will listen to some favorite Christmas music; read a holiday-themed book; bake a special recipe and share with a neighbor; call a friend, family member, or fellow UMW member. Maybe you will even enjoy all of these ways to share the holiday spirit.



The UMW officer team looks forward to staying in touch with each of you as we go into 2021. We hope you enjoy the UMW Staying Connected newsletter which will soon start arriving monthly in your mailbox. We will continue to work with some creative ways to share news with you in the months ahead.

As I looked through past publications of *response*, I was drawn to the Bright Lights section. This section describes fund-raising and community-serving activities of our UMW units around the country. This summary of ideas has challenged me to reach out to new and expanded ways that I can serve during this “giving season.” As we prepare for this season of giving, we also ask that if you have not already mailed in your Pledge to Mission, to prayerfully consider what you might be able to contribute to our unit’s support of the many UMW missions.

I leave this thought that has been seen and heard in many ways and is not a new message to 2020 but has certainly taken on a new meaning – May the past months of disrupted lives encourage us to act in new ways of being, understanding and caring for ourselves and community.

Luane Meyer



The work of the Mission Outreach continues, but has been limited by the pandemic. Many of our on-going projects have been put on hold or canceled until we are able to meet again in groups such as the Patricia Sewing projects and Good Neighbor day. Still small projects of reaching out to shut-ins this summer and Terrie Stevens’ collection of clothing for the homeless were successful. Our committee continues to meet to explore ways to serve others in our community and abroad. If you are aware of unmet needs or a project for the committee please let us know.

We recently wrapped up the Knit for Kids project that we began last fall with a shipment to World Vision of over 100 items. This surpassed our goal of 75 items. Super job everyone and a big thank you!! Since we usually begin this project each Fall, it is time to start all over again. I propose that since we made 100 items last time, that we make 100 items the goal to shoot for again. So, everyone, keep your hands busy knitting and crocheting. Items that are needed are hats, mittens, sweaters, scarves and blankets. Our supply of yarn has been greatly depleted, so to complete this work we are in desperate need of more yarn. If you don’t knit or crochet, your donation of yarn would be a big help. Call the church to find out the best time to pick up or drop off yarn.

You show God’s love whenever you give of your time and talents or donate to support projects. Thank you.

Submitted by Charlene Galston



## RADIO BROADCAST

NOV 15

In memory of Nicole "Niki" Stetzer, whose birthday was November 13, sponsored by her family.



Sincere sympathy is extended to the family and friends of the following members of our church family who passed away recently:

**Irma McNeely**  
October 6, 2020

**Vernon Gjerseeth**  
November 13, 2020

**Mary Gjerseeth**  
November 25, 2020



### RADIO BROADCAST FUND

**In Memory Of:**

**Mary Gjerseeth** from Louis Shaw

### SOUND SYSTEM FUND

**In Memory Of:**

**Vernon Gjerseeth** from Nyla Musser

### MUSIC FUND

**In Memory Of:**

**John Bechtel** from Judy Sheppard

**Vernon Gjerseeth** from Louis Shaw

### GOOD SAMARITAN FUND

**In Memory Of:**

**Irma McNeely** from Darlene Hostrawser, Marlene Taylor, and Family & Friends

### UNDESIGNATED FUND

**In Memory Of:**

**Irma McNeely** from Louis Shaw, and Tom & Lois Epps  
**Vernon Gjerseeth** from Freddie & Donna Dolesy and family



Many thanks to Roxie Hostrawser for using her time and talents to beautifully decorate our UMC Church Sanctuary for Christmas!

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Thank you to Dick Hilliker for the donation of large Fraser Fir Christmas tree in memory of Beth Hilliker. This beautiful tree is displayed in front of the church by the main entrance.

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Dear BRF United Methodist Church:

Thank you for your continuing support of the Friends Sharing Food Program.

Lois Smetana  
Food Shelf Coordinator

## *Come~and~Go Communion New Year's Eve*

**Come and Go Communion** is an opportunity to take communion with your family, to raise your prayer needs for the coming year, and to be prayed for by the pastor. This opportunity is offered only once every year, on New Year's Eve.

**Come and Go Communion** this year will be on Thursday, December 31st. You can come **anytime between 5:00 and 7:00pm**. You will be greeted at the door and will have the opportunity to fill out a prayer request card. You are then invited to sit and enjoy meditative music until you are ready to step to the altar to receive communion and prayer.

Some people who have experienced this very special communion say it helps them to feel closer to God. Others feel encouraged that they are moving into the new year under a blanket of prayer.





## Sunday School

**Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children."**

I hope all of my friends are enjoying the activities I sent in the mail. It's so hard to be away from each other especially at this time of year, but safety comes first. Another envelope will be mailed for January activities the last week of December. There will be **NO SUNDAY SCHOOL** the month of January. I will keep you posted for February.

November 29 was the first day of Advent. This is the time of year we prepare for Jesus' birth and remember the real meaning of Christmas. The candles on the Advent wreath symbolize hope, love, joy, and peace. This year we are all struggling with this pandemic, unable to see family and friends, masks, social distancing, and the list goes on. However, instead of focusing on the struggles this Advent and Christmas, let's focus on the 4 candles we light every Sunday. I have **HOPE** this pandemic will end because Jesus is in our lives and He can make a difference. There is **HOPE** for the road ahead! Jesus gives us inner **PEACE**. I have the **PEACE** of mind knowing He will heal our country and everyone will feel that **PEACE**. Even during this struggling time we have to trust in His promises. I feel the **LOVE** God gave me when He sent His one and only son, Jesus to save us. Can you imagine the sounds of **JOY** the angels sang that night Jesus was born? When the Joy candle is lit, it reminds me of how the world must have felt when He was born. The last candle is the **CHRIST** candle. This candle is lit on Christmas to remind Christians that Jesus brings light to our lives.

Like our Facebook page Black River Falls Sunday School to see photos of our activities. You can also go to the church's website, [www.brfumc.org](http://www.brfumc.org) for photos and other information.

Please continue bringing in your ink cartridges and old cell phones. There are boxes in the front entryway and by the Church Office for the ink cartridges and cell phones.

## YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

DEC 16	Iris Zenz
DEC 20	Charley Boehm
DEC 23	Dylan Dutton
DEC 25	Ella Peterson
DEC 30	Charlotte Christianson

**The last Sunday to special order  
Scrip cards for Christmas gift giving  
is Monday, December 14!**

**During this time of pandemic Scrip Cards are still available. You can order cards by calling Rhoda Gulso at 715-284-9393.** She will arrange a time for you to pick up your order.

A special thank you to all members of our UMC family who have continued to support the Scrip program. Your generosity and faithfulness have made it possible for this program to help support the needs of our church.



Many thanks to everyone who has returned pledge cards for 2021. A total of 53 pledges have been received for a total of \$154,794.00. If you have not returned your pledge card, it is NOT too late. With your help we will be able to continue to support the important ministries of our church.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Contributions for the year 2020 must be received in the Church Office by noon on Thursday, December 31, in order to be counted for your 2020 giving.





## YOUTH GROUP

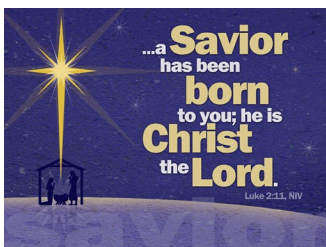
Youth Group will continue to meet via Google Meets each Wednesday from 6:00-7:00 p.m. Look for an invite link on our Facebook group. We understand this isn't the most ideal way to meet, but it is the safest at this time. Please join us each week for some fun Advent activities.

We will not meet December 23rd or 30th.

Suzanne Goldsmith  
suziegoldsmith@hotmail.com  
715-896-0224

## PRAYER FAMILIES FOR DECEMBER

DEC 6	David & Marilyn Hoffman Patty Iverson Mary Loveland Ed Nemec
DEC 13	John Piotrowski LeRoy & Fran Simonsin Jessica & Jonas Whitegull Orv & Beth Amborn, Aaron Dawley
DEC 20	Gertrude Bue Lovey Dambach Sue Gaede Rhoda Gulso
DEC 27	Jim & Andrea Hoffman Mark, Carol & McKenna Jarrett Jean Lovlien Larry & Sharon Nemec



## E-GIVING EASY AND CONVENIENT!

It will soon be time to renew the automatic contributions to the church for 2021. Those who already have their contributions set up for 2020 will be contacted to renew or make changes to their contributions for next year.

If you would like to have information about how this program works, please contact Jill in the Church Office. She will be glad to answer any questions you may have and help you fill out an easy authorization form. Now would be a great time to take advantage of this easy and convenient way of giving to your church!



**From all of us on the BRF UMC Staff!!**

*Pastor Inwha*

*Jill Prochaska*

*Kent Severson*

*Theresa Paul*

*Beth Bue*

*Suzanne Goldsmith*

*Jackie Shankey*

*Jeff Woodward*



## What Happened On This Day in the history of Christianity?

### Thunderstorm Over Canterbury

#### December 1

Henry II was among England's most remarkable kings, forceful and brilliant. But he is best known for his quarrel with close friend Thomas Becket. Becket was born in London in 1118. His father was a Crusader, his mother a princess. He was Henry's equal in appearance—handsome, tall, commanding, affable, athletic, and alert. Henry appointed Becket, 37, chancellor of England, the highest civil post in the land, and for seven years Becket lived in splendor, traveled in style, and ruled in power. He became de facto king, Henry's closest ally.

In 1162 Henry wanted to appoint Thomas as archbishop of Canterbury. Becket warned him he would lose a friend, but Henry nonetheless made him head of England's church. The change in Becket was immediate. He traded his splendid clothes for rags and wandered through his cloisters shedding tears for past sins. He whipped himself, read the Bible, and spent hours in prayer. And to Henry's horror, Becket endlessly sided with church against crown. The frantic king finally banished him from the country.

On December 1, 1170 Becket returned, electrifying all England. Henry, foaming with rage, shouted, "By the eyes of God, is there none of my cowardly courtiers who will deliver me from this turbulent priest?" Four knights took up the challenge, and on December 29 they fell on Becket during evening vespers. "In the name of Christ and for the defense of his church, I am ready to die," Becket uttered as the blows fell. "Lord, receive my spirit." The attackers slashed at his head, spilling his blood and brains on the floor. A violent thunderstorm broke over the cathedral. The Christian world reeled with horror, and Henry saw the tide turn against him. Walking through Canterbury's streets with bleeding feet, he entered the cathedral, kissed the spot where Becket had died, and placed his head and shoulders on Becket's tomb. There he was flogged by the priests. But the rest of his days were calamitous, and he died broken in spirit, cursing his life.

## What Happened On This Day (cont.)

*"Controlling your temper is better than being a hero Who captures a city. We make our own decisions, But the Lord alone determines what happens". - Proverbs 16:32,33*

Morgan, Robert J. *On This Day*



## Mission Outreach Christmas Presents

Our annual BRF UMC Christmas giving program is taking a different approach this year. Instead of the usual Christmas Giving Tree, the Mission Outreach team has instituted a **Christmas Presents** donation form that promotes individual giving to an international, a national, and two local humanitarian causes.

For your convenience, the **2020 Christmas Presents** donation form is included on the next page of this newsletter. Your completed form along with payment will need to be received in the church office no later than December 28, 2020 to qualify for an itemized income tax credit.





## **BRF UMC Christmas Presents**

This fund raiser donation form is being used instead of a Christmas Giving Tree and last year's Love Gifts for Jesus program. Our goal is to provide funds for one international, one national, and two local humanitarian causes. You may donate any amount you wish to any or all of these programs.

### **Program**

### **Donation Amount**

#### **Friends Sharing Food – Food for Kids**

As proposed, each Friday, local student recipients would receive a bonus of an 18 ounce jar of peanut butter which will cost \$1.50 per jar. For instance, a \$15.00 donation will result in 10 students being given a week's worth of peanut butter.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Senegal**

##### **Senegal Agricultural Missionary Program (David Makeobo)**

These donations will be used to purchase such items as sets of garden tools and seeds for individual household gardens.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

##### **Senegal Feeding Stations**

BRF UMC has long supported this program but we have been rather lax about it lately. The various Senegal Feeding Stations provide nutritious meals for starving Senegal children.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Bolton Refuge House – Jackson County Outreach**

Located in Merrilan, WI, Jackson County Outreach provides for transitional and emergency housing, and services and support to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, intimate and dating violence, and stalking. In addition to helping to pay for the above services, your donation will also make possible the purchase of household items such as brooms and dustpans, Clorox wipes, and bedding.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **California Wildfire Relief**

Our donations will result in a direct payment to UMCOR, Atlanta, GA for households that were affected by the California wildfires. BRF UMC donated funds will be used to purchase such items as fire relief buckets for each family, work gloves, rakes, shovels, trowels, and tarps.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Please make your check payable to the Black River Falls United Methodist Church and write *2020 Christmas Presents* in the memo line. All *2020 Christmas Presents* donations need to be received in the church office by December 28, 2020 to qualify for income tax credit.