



Faith in Action

“Grounded in Christ, open to make a difference – together”

Dec. '21 / Jan. '22

Greetings,

The first Sunday of Advent, my 7 year old colored this picture in Sunday School at Faith UMC in St. Anthony.



As I was looking at it later in the day, several things struck me. First, her kindergarten teacher would be so proud since she has colored every speck of white out of existence. Second, I was confused by the big blue blur on the lower part of baby Jesus' face. “It's baby Jesus' mask,” I was informed. Of course it is! My very conscientious child, who will not walk into a public building without a mask on her own face, of course, made sure that the baby Jesus was wearing his mask to keep himself and others safe from COVID.

This is not a reflection on whether mask wearing is a good thing, though I do believe that wearing masks is one easy step that we can all take to show our love of God and neighbor and help to curb the spread of airborne illnesses (including the cold and influenza). Rather, the beauty I see in my child's depiction of the Christ-child is in how it so clearly reflects how she experiences the world. I would never think to color God with a face covering; that's not my experience of God, despite the fact that I wear a mask whenever I am in public. However, it is how my child experiences God.

We all have moments and emotions that come together to make up our unique experience of life. It is through those experiences that we come to know and see God in our lives. The beauty of being a part of a community of faith is that we get to share our experiences of life and of God with one another in order to gather our experience together and more fully experience God together. The more individual experiences of God that are shared, the more beautiful the picture becomes, much like a complicated stained

glass window where each individual's experience is represented by one piece of glass.

The challenge, I believe, comes in remembering that sometimes our experiences of God seem conflicting, but are really just a more full picture. God exists in paradox. I can experience God without a mask, just as my child depicts the Christ-child in a mask. Neither is wholly complete, but at the same time, neither is wrong. God is both masked and mask-less at the same time.

This advent season, I encourage you to take the time to hear the faith stories of those around you. How do your friends and family experience God? What image do they have when thinking of God? How does that differ from your own image? Then, share your experiences and impressions. You might just find that, in the end, you come away from the conversation with a more full understanding of God.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Marianne

December/January Birthdays

12/2 – Nathaniel DeNardo	12/18 – Jazlynn Gallegos	1/3 – Lucy Schwendinger	1/19 – Randy Roberts
12/6 – Nancy Rankin	12/19 – Meta Nachtsheim	1/6 – Jackie Emery	1/25 – Jalen Haom
12/8 – Angel Doughty	12/24 – Greg Nelson	1/8 – JoAnn Loutsch	1/25 – Carter Johnson
12/11 – Dylan Cox	12/25 – Patrick Short	1/8 – Austin Worden	1/31 – Scott Spatafore
12/11 – Olivia Stehr	12/27 – Adaline DeNardo	1/9 – Jacob Kranz	1/31 – David Peine
12/14 – Laurel Venhuizen	12/28 – Ryan Boelter	1/14 – Alexander Boelter	
12/15 – Christian Johnson	1/1 – Hailey Worden	1/18 – Barbara Henk	
12/16 – Peter DeNardo	1/3 – Beverly Ysaguirre	1/18 – Alexander Sielski	

• If your birthday is missing or listed incorrectly, contact the church office for additions/changes. Happy Birthday, everyone! •

The Sunday School

of Faith Church will bring the message during worship on Sunday, December 19, the fourth Sunday in Advent.

Church Conference

Our annual Church Conference to celebrate the ministry of 2021 and look forward to the ministry of 2022 will be happening in late January. More information will be available in the Weekly Update after Christmas.

Men's Breakfast Group will meet on Saturdays:

12/11, 1/8, 1/22 & 2/5. All men are invited to join us! For more information contact Bill Short at bill.short26@gmail.com or 651-552-0736.

Welcome Restoration Hope Church!

Starting at the beginning of November, Faith UMC welcomed a new worshipping congregation to our sanctuary. Restoration Hope Church is a new church plant out of the Converge denomination, which has roots in the Baptist church. They worship Sunday evenings at 4pm; their pastor is Josh Williams. For more information about Restoration Hope Church, see their website at:

<https://restorationhopechurch.com/>

★ Do you need a day brightener or thought provoker?

Dial up *Ideas for Positive Living!* Every Thursday Gil Kinnunen provides an uplifting phone message. So call 651-602-2176 each Thursday for a weekly picker-upper!

Thanks

• Dear friends, thank you so much for your October donation of 157 pounds of wonderful garden produce! We are grateful to the volunteers who tend the garden with love. — *The team at Neighbors, Inc.*

• A big thank you to everyone who helped with our Basket & Book Sale: JoAnn Loutsch, Paul Williams, Bill Short, John Hiniker (Ellen's son), Johnny Gallegos, Lynn Mens, Gloria Gurtin, Nancy Rankin, Terry Bougie, Taffy Storck, Judy Pfenning, Pastor Marianne Ozanne, Dawn Kinnunen, Dan Miller, Carol Schuldt, & Bruce Opp. We couldn't have done it without you! If we missed anyone, we are sorry, but please know your help was appreciated. As of November 22, we made \$1,400 and we have several more awesome baskets and items in the fellowship hall to sell!

— *Lynn Bonkowske & Judy Turk*

• WE ARE READY! Thank you to everyone who helped decorate our church for the Advent/Christmas season. It looks awesome! Thank you to Pat Williams for taking the lead and to our helpers: Gil & Dawn Kinnunen, Dan Miller, Carol Schuldt, Gloria Gurtin, Sharon Yekaldo and Bruce Opp.

Church Office Hours

Pastor Marianne is in the office Mondays and Thursdays in the morning. Fridays are Pastor Marianne's regular days off. Please call her on her cell (320-219-3341) if it is an emergency and you need to reach her.

Susan will be in the office Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays from 11:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Care Centers:

- ◆ Colleen Spadaccini – *White Pine, Mendota Heights*

Ongoing Concerns:

- ◆ Ben Brummund, son of Ron Brummund, Jr., continues to struggle with health problems.

Concerns Beyond our Doors:

- ◆ Our local, state, national & international leaders
- ◆ Those struggling with or caring for someone with COVID
- ◆ Healthcare professionals treating and caring for those struggling with COVID
- ◆ Racial inequality in our community and around the world
- ◆ Those struggling to find work, reliable shelter and/or healthy food

Want an e-Newsletter?

Did you know that our newsletters are available in print, email, and on the church website? Electronic newsletters arrive quickly, save us time, money, and use less paper! If you are interested in changing the way you get your newsletter, let the office know.



Mission Well Offering

The Mission Well welcomes your donations to help support the offering of the month. **December's** Mission Well offering will support Neighbors' Holiday Gift Program. *'The Holiday Gift Program at Neighbors supplements the resources of families living in our service area to provide toys and clothing for children and seniors. The program makes wishes come true for children and seniors in more than 750 households in our community. Each year generous sponsors, donors and hard-working volunteers come together to make the season brighter for our neighbors that need it most.'*



Faith's **January** Mission Well offering will support **Loaves & Fishes**, a volunteer-driven organization that provides healthy meals to Minnesotans in areas where need is greatest. **Read on page four** about Faith's plans to work with Loaves & Fishes to establish a community meal program in the coming year.



You may contribute to the Wishing Well by mail or by placing donations directly in the Mission Well located in the church lobby. <https://www.loavesandfishesmn.org/>



The Prayer Chain is active. If you have a prayer concern, please contact the church office. If unable to reach Susan or Pastor Marianne in the church office, please contact Sharon Yekaldo at **612-450-3277**. Please make sure the pastor knows so she can respond to pastoral care needs, and knows what is going out over the telephone prayer chain so it can be sent to the e-mail prayer chain as well. ► **We are updating our prayer chain list. If you would like to be on the prayer chain, or your phone number has recently changed, please let Sharon Yekaldo know.**

Hospital Calls: If you learn someone is hospitalized, please contact the church office or Pastor Marianne. Because of HIPPA laws, hospitals no longer call when a member is admitted. We would rather have several calls telling us of someone's hospitalization than not to know. Thank you.

FOR YOUR TIMES OF DEVOTION: Remember to pick up the **NEWEST issue** of the devotional *The Upper Room* (daily readings in regular or large print). This booklet is found on the table by the parking lot door.

COVID Taskforce Update

When we paused singing for in-person worship services in August, I never imagined that we would be approaching Christmas and still requesting that individuals in the sanctuary refrain from singing during worship. Such is my experience of the COVID pandemic: adaptations that seem very difficult and I want to be very temporary last much longer than expected, but lead to creativity and new ways of worship. All of this is to say that COVID is not done with us yet, but we will continue to find ways to be a community of faith no matter what the pandemic brings.

The Reopening Taskforce met recently to discuss the ongoing COVID situation in Minnesota and Dakota county and look at adopting some metric-based protocols related to worship and the easing of restrictions. Using guidance and work from the Minnehaha United Methodist Church, who looked at current CDC recommendations, our operating protocols will be as follows:

- We will begin singing (masked) during in person worship once the Dakota County positivity rate goes below 5%.
- We will remove the roped-off pews when the 7 day average of new cases in Dakota county is at or below 10/100,000.
- We will stop encouraging masking for individuals in the building when the 7 day average of new cases in Dakota county is at or below 7.1/100,000

As of 11/29, the Dakota county positivity rate is 12% and the 7 day average of new cases is 65.9/100,000.

All of the data used to make decisions for Sunday mornings will be taken from covidactnow.org each Thursday afternoon. As the course of the pandemic continues to evolve and recommendations change, we will communicate how those changes affect our community at Faith UMC through the Weekly Update. If you are not currently receiving a Weekly Update, please let the office know. If you have any questions, please let me know — Pastor Marianne.

Church Planning Update

Several leaders of the church gathered on October 2 to take a deep look at our church mission and vision and to plan for the future. In the process, we looked at our current mission and vision statements and combined them with our experience of the congregation to name the “why” of Faith United Methodist Church, a statement of who we are and why we are unique as a church. From that why, we moved toward naming one area that we want to focus on as a church in the next six months to help live our why more fully into being.

Our “why statement” is that Faith United Methodist Church in West St Paul is a spiritual community seeking to live the love of God through exploring, teaching, and supporting one another in serving our neighbors. You may have noticed that I have started using parts of this statement at the beginning of worship to remind us who we are. Note, this is not a new mission or vision, but a statement of who we are and an evolution of the previous statements that we have had.

Our focus for the next six months, or rally cry, is to create a signature feeding-based outreach ministry by April of 2022. A team of individuals has already begun work on this process, researching different organizations already doing feeding ministries. At the beginning of November, the council voted to work with Loaves and Fishes to establish a community meal program. Our goal in working with Loaves and Fishes is to help provide food to our neighbors who need a meal, as well as partner with our friends and neighbors who also have a passion for hospitality and feeding people. There is much planning yet to be done before we serve our first meal, but we are working to start small and well, with the plan of increasing our capacity as we go. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Pastor Marianne.



December-January Worship Update / Calendar - 5 -

Worship Update

Worship is one of the most recognizable ways that we demonstrate our life of faith. Each week we learn something new as we gather as a community of faith in person and online to celebrate the love of God in our midst. Join us every Sunday either in person or on Zoom at 9:30am.

Here are some notable things about the worship services in December and January:

December 5 is the second Sunday of Advent. We will light advent candles, celebrate communion and look at the promises Zechariah celebrates in Luke 1:68-79

December 12 we will continue to celebrate God's promises through Mary's song found in Luke 1:46-55

December 19 our children and youth Sunday School students will be presenting their Christmas program.

December 26 we will worship ONLINE ONLY using a prerecorded service, with space for community prayers.

January 2 we will kick off the new year with a Wesleyan Covenant service, renewing our commitment to one another and to God.

January 9 is the last in our Celebrating Promise series as we look at Simeon's song found in Luke 2:25-32.

January 16 we will begin our look at the life of faith in Christian love with 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

January 23 continues our study of 1 Corinthians with 12:12-31a.

January 30 we will look at perhaps one of the most iconic passages on Christian love as we dig into 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.



December-January Calendar

(sign-in begins at 9:15 for Sunday Worship Zoom meetings)

Thur., 12/2	7 pm	Staff Parish Relations
Sat., 12/4	9 am	Decorate for Advent/Christmas
Sun., 12/5	9:30 am	Worship (and Zoom)
	10 am	Children's Sunday School
	11 am	Adult Sunday School
Mon., 12/6	5 pm	Loaves & Fishes meeting
Tue., 12/7	6 pm	Lay Leadership meeting
Sat., 12/11	8 am	Mens Breakfast
Sun., 12/12	9:30 am	Worship (and Zoom)
	10 am	Childrens Sunday School
	11 am	Adult Sunday School
Tue., 12/14	6:30 pm	Women of the Bible Study
Sun., 12/19	9:30 am	Worship (and Zoom)
	10 am	Childrens Sunday School
	11 am	Adult Sunday School
Fri., 12/24	4 pm	CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
		(and Zoom — use the Sunday Morning Zoom link)
Sun., 12/26	9:30 am	Zoom Worship only
Sun., 1/2/22	9:30 am	Worship (and Zoom)
	10 am	Children's Sunday School
	11 am	Adult Sunday School
Wed., 1/5	6 pm	Trustee meeting
Thur., 1/6	6 pm	Finance meeting
	7 pm	Church Council
Sat., 1/8	8 am	Mens Breakfast
Sun., 1/9	9:30 am	Worship (and Zoom)
	10 am	Children's Sunday School
	11 am	Adult Sunday School
Tue., 1/11	6:30 pm	Women of the Bible Study
Sun., 1/16	9:30 am	Worship (and Zoom)
	10 am	Childrens Sunday School
	11 am	Adult Sunday School
Sat., 1/22	8 am	Mens Breakfast
Sun., 1/23	9:30 am	Worship (and Zoom)
	10 am	Children's Sunday School
	11 am	Adult Sunday School
Tue., 1/25	6:30 pm	Women of the Bible Study
Sun., 1/30	9:30 am	Worship (and Zoom)
	10 am	Childrens Sunday School
	11 am	Adult Sunday School



Faith United Methodist Church
 1530 Oakdale Ave.
 West St. Paul MN 55118



Dec. 2021/Jan. 2022



Sunday Worship Schedule

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

We are holding worship services in the sanctuary. For those not yet comfortable worshipping as a gathered community, please join us in worship via Zoom link and/or the materials you receive by mail or email, or by visiting our website at www.faihumcmn.com

Facebook Page

Remember to like the Faith Facebook page at:
<http://tinyurl.com/FaithUMCmn>

Connecting to Zoom Meetings

IF YOU ARE NEW TO ZOOM and unfamiliar with the technology, we can help! To connect to Zoom through a computer, tablet or smart phone app, click the link provided to you. For Sunday morning worship services, that link is <https://zoom.us/j/96745619949>.

This will allow you to connect through video and voice or voice only. The first time you join a Zoom meeting, you will need to download the Zoom app to any mobile device, but you will not need to create an account if you do not want to. Every meeting after that, the link will open your app automatically.

To connect by voice only over any phone line, call (312) 626-6799 (long distance) and enter the Meeting ID #: 967 4561 9949.



JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS WORSHIP!

- We will have Christmas Eve worship on Friday, **December 24 at 4 pm** both in person and on Zoom (using the Sunday morning worship link).
- **Sunday, December 26**, we will be having an **ONLINE ONLY** service at 9:30 am on Zoom in order to give our worship team time with their families for Christmas. The service will be prerecorded and will include a live prayer time.
- **Sunday, January 2**, we will be back to hybrid worship with a traditional Wesleyan Covenant Renewal service, including the distribution of Epiphany Star Words.