

# GRACE COURIER

[lindstrommethodist.org](http://lindstrommethodist.org)

## December's Mission Focus - C.L.A.C.A.

### Chisago Lakes Area Clergy Association

The local churches that are typically a part of C.L.A.C.A. are: St. Bridget's Catholic, Lindstrom; Maranatha, Chisago; Trinity Lutheran, Lindstrom; Zion Lutheran, Chisago City; Chisago Lakes Lutheran, Center City; Lakes Free Evangelical, Lindstrom, and First United Methodist, Lindstrom.

The pastors from these churches meet monthly to support, encourage, and share ideas. They also invite community leaders to meetings to hear what is happening within our community and how we, as churches, can offer support or prayer.

These churches also contribute an annual financial gift to the C.L.A.C.A. Fund. This fund is kept and managed at St. Bridget's Catholic Church in Lindstrom. Local persons or families in need who visit our churches for financial assistance are sent to St. Bridget's where they can be assisted in their need.

It is so good how our congregations work together to provide this. Throughout the month of December we will be asking our members to make a financial contribution to our church which will then be given to the C.L.A.C.A. Fund, serving as our annual contribution.

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## Living Nativity

We are so excited to be offering a **Drive-thru style** Living Nativity this year! People will get to drive by scenes from the nativity and experience the story of the birth of Jesus from their vehicles.

Many volunteers are needed. If you would like to be involved in the living nativity this year please contact Erin Thorvalson.



Nativity will be held on December 19th from 6pm-8pm.

## Poinsettia Time is Here!

We will once again be ordering this lovely Christmas plant to decorate our sanctuary. -- Due to Covid and the difficulty of getting order forms to the congregation, we are asking members to purchase their own poinsettia (red, white or pink) and bring it to the church on **December 21<sup>st</sup>** during office hours: **9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4p.m to 6 p.m.** Please mark plant with your name if you would like to pick it up at a later date. If you don't place your name on the plant we will use it for decorating the sanctuary during its lifespan. If you would like to honor someone with your plant please include your name and the honoree.

Thank you! Sharlene and Dorothy

### Dates to remember:

- Dec. 19 - Drive Thru Living Nativity
- Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Online Service
- Dec. 25 - Christmas Day!!!



## From the Pastor...

Dear Friends,

Do you remember the song, "What the World Needs Now", recorded in 1965 by Jackie Deshannon?



Some of the words of that song are:

*What the world needs now is love, sweet love  
It's the only thing that there's just too little of  
What the world needs now is love, sweet love,  
No not just for some but for everyone.*

I heard this song as it popped up on one of my Spotify playlists a few weeks ago, and for the past few weeks, I've caught myself singing those words in my mind, over and over. They are so timely and so true. I invite you to read them again, and even better, search for the song on Spotify or YouTube, and listen to and reflect on their meaning in today's world.

To take it step further, now as our Advent and Christmas seasons have arrived, I am reflecting even deeper on the words to this song and I'm going to suggest we make one lyrical adjustment. Let's change the word "What" to "Who" and see what happens.

*Who the world needs now is love, sweet love*

What a difference a word makes. Who is love? God is love. We are reminded of this in scripture:

*"Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for **God is love.**" 1 John 4:7-8*

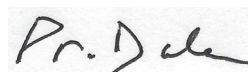
This lyrical adjustment of mine to an already timely song lyric, speaks even more to me because of the devastating effects the COVID-19 global pandemic is having on our celebration of Christ's birth this year.

2020 has tested our faith. We have witnessed the heart-breaking division between peoples of different ethnicities, races, and political parties. We are clearly a deeply divided people - globally, nationally, locally, and unfortunately even within our own denomination and congregational community of faith.

Why are we so divided? Did love fail? Yes, as humans, and as sinners, our love for one another has failed, but God's love has not, and never will. The Apostle Paul, knew this as well when he wrote in his first letter to the Corinthian Church, "What is really needed to build the church (and world) is love." (1 Cor. 8:1) It's more clear than ever, as we continue to face the devastating and divisive obstacles of this world, that we cannot build or rebuild without love. The world does not need a "What" - it

needs a "Who." And the "Who" the world needs now is Jesus - the Incarnation - God's love made flesh. I expect when reading, or hearing read, the traditional Christmas story from Luke 2 again this year, we might each hear it in a whole new way. I expect we'll be reminded that through it all, God's love, the kind of love our world needs now has, and will overcome all obstacles. That's what God does. God overcomes obstacles. And Luke reminds us that nothing was going to prevent the coming of the One Who the world needed then and still needs now. Nothing. I expect also that like Mary, we too will treasure and ponder these words in our hearts, as we reflect on how God (the Who) continues still to enter our world and our lives, to shine light and bring hope, comfort, and love - not just for some, but for everyone.

Advent and Christmas Blessings,



Pastor Dale



## Christmas Eve Worship - 2020 Style

Christmas Eve Worship needs to look different this year. It will be available for you and your family to view as a pre-recorded video. It will premier on our Church Facebook page at 3:00 p.m. but will be available on our church website Christmas Eve morning for viewing whenever you choose.

As usual the Christmas Worship will begin with our Christmas Music Prelude performed via video by members of our congregation, both young and old. If you, a member of your family, or your entire family would like to share a special song, reading, or poem, just record it (MP4 format) and send to Pastor Dale via shared google or dropbox files by Wednesday, December 16. The Christmas Prelude video will move right into our traditional Christmas service. Throughout the month of December members are invited to stop by the church and pick up hand held candles to use in your homes during the singing of Silent Night at the close of the service.

Following the pre-recorded worship video there will be another option - an opportunity to bundle up and gather in-person, outdoors, in front of the pavilion and around the fire at 4:30 p.m. to sing (acapella) Christmas songs of hope and praise, including the reading of the Christmas story from Luke 2, and ending again with the lighting of candles and Silent Night. This will be a holy and special time that may bring much needed healing, meaning and hope to each of us this Christmas.

## Prayer Requests

Please continue to pray for Erik and Ele Brohaugh and their family. They will be returning to Gambia to continue their ministry.



*Happy Birthday!*



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Jim Holweger.....December 6  
Pam Fossum.....December 11  
Cindy Kopp.....December 12  
Gary Gerke.....December 13  
Ernie Kertzsch.....December 14  
Gretchen Dorenbusch.....December 15  
Madelyn Tomczak.....December 16  
Rachel Tracy.....December 16  
Carol Lundberg.....December 22  
Jim Caldwell.....December 23  
Jeff Vitali.....December 24  
Chris Anderson.....December 29  
Karen Brohaugh.....December 29  
Larry Knopf.....December 30

## An Advent Quiet Mid-Week Opportunity

*"Advent's invitation about Christmas is to do nothing but be quiet.*

*Advent's invitation about Christmas is to do nothing but receive.*

*Don't just do something! Stand there!*

*Stand there at the manger, quietly adoring and eagerly awaiting!"*

-Pastor Carl Lee

You will have the opportunity on Wednesday evenings this Advent season to do nothing but be quiet and receive, as you eagerly await the birth of Christ. We are not having in-person worship this Advent and Christmas season but the sanctuary will be open for two hours, from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, December 2, 9, 16, and 23.

There will be quiet Advent and Christmas music being played, dimmed lights, and lit candles, creating an atmosphere and opportunity for quiet Advent prayer and reflection in the sacred space of our sanctuary.

There will be no structure to this time. Just quiet Advent peace and prayer. You may stay as long as you'd like and use the time for individual prayer, quiet devotion, or just to rest your weary mind. Any who attend are asked to wear masks, physically distance themselves from others, and refrain from socializing. May this be a time where you do nothing but gaze into the empty manger, anticipating Who is to come. May this be a place of rest and renewal as we prepare the way for His arrival in our hearts and minds this Advent and Christmas season.



Chisago County A Brush With Kindness completed another local community service project during September at Jeanne's home in North Branch. Volunteers power washed and re-

stained her porch and also scrapped and repainted her garage. Thank you to volunteers Duane L., Lee S., Kevin B., and Linda P., as well as ABWK board members Gerry G., John H., and Steve S. Chisago County ABWK, an affiliate of East Central MN Habitat for Humanity, is a non-profit that helps local low income homeowners with minor house repair and maintenance. If you, or someone you know, is in need of home maintenance assistance, phone ABWK at 651-361-0229 or email.



## Monthly Giving update

Our General Fund Budget for 2020 is \$174,321, which becomes \$14,527 per month.

General Fund giving for October was: \$9,578

*Thank you for your support of our ministries!*

## Year End Giving

Financial contributions for 2020 will need to be received into the church office by Tuesday, 12/28. Please allow sufficient time if mailing in your contributions. Any questions, contact Linda Ploog at 612.616.5657.



## COVID-19 Congregational Response UPDATE

Our C.A.R.E. Team met via Zoom on November 10, to reevaluate our weekly worship plan.

Given the series of record-breaking days in our state and country of new coronavirus infections, the decision was made to, beginning Sunday, November 22, refrain again from in-person, indoor worship. Worship continues to be livestreamed on our church Facebook page at 9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings and available on our website to view at any time during the week. This plan will be in place for the foreseeable future and will continue to be reevaluated on a monthly basis.

Leading health professionals in our state and across the country have warned that we are now in the most dangerous phase of the pandemic yet and that indoor gatherings of people continue to account for much of the spread of the virus. They are calling on us all, to do our part, to help reduce the spread of the virus.

It's important for you to realize that the decision to suspend in-person worship again was difficult for our C.A.R.E. Team to make. We all want our congregation to be together and to feel connected. We have legitimate concerns of the negative and lasting effects the pandemic ultimately will have on our small congregation. Yet we also

realize the inherent health risks there are in continuing to meet in-person. We don't want to potentially put any of you, our dear friends, in the dangerous position of contracting this virus. Our church has endured much over the years and has recovered. It will endure and recover again.

**Now, while it's easy to dwell on, and focus on, what we can't do, it's important to remember what is possible and what we can do.**

Already, in the absence of in-person worship we have offered other COVID-Safe opportunities to connect, like Bible Studies (both in-person and online), an apple orchard outing, and weekly Fun by the Fire gatherings. Extensive planning has been underway for our drive-through Living Nativity on December 19 for several weeks already. For these opportunities, the members who make them happen, and the excitement surrounding them, we are grateful. Yet, moving forward, to remain connected, we must be even more intentional about planning additional opportunities like these. **Our Church Council met on Tuesday, November 16. One of their action items was to create a Connecting Team** that will be in charge of planning and implementing COVID-Safe congregational opportunities of spiritual connectedness, service, and fellowship. There is no limit to how many members can serve on this team and so far many have stepped forward to be involved. Thank you! If you would like to be involved and share your ideas and help make them happen, please contact Sarah in the Church Office, our Council Chairperson, Wendy Vanderwerf, or myself. Watch your weekly worship announcements and our church Facebook page for the sharing of these newly planned opportunities.

Above all, however, pray for each other – and tell someone that you're praying for them. This is perhaps the best way to feel more connected to your community. Again, while we are unable to worship in person, there is much that we can do, and much for which we can be thankful. I am reminded of these words of the Psalmist, "I lift up my eyes to the hills — from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth." — Psalm 121

The C.A.R.E. Team, our Church Council, and I understand the pain and frustration of not being able to worship in person. We will get through this difficult season and year, dear friends. We will get through it together and, by God's grace, we will come out the other side stronger. We look forward to discovering new ways to connect this winter.

Grace and peace.

Pastor Dale





# Church Council Minutes

November 16, 2020

Council Members Present: Pastor Dale Stiles, Wendy Vanderwerf, Juanita Morgan, Adrienne Stegmeir, Erin Thorvaldson, Emily Honerbrink, Scott Lecy, Tom Ervasti, Andy Wilkerson

The November meeting was conducted virtually; it followed the Annual Charge Conference

## C.A.R.E. Team Update - Pastor Dale

Met last Tuesday night (10th) good meeting, but a struggle. Everyone wants to keep meeting in person, but need to weigh the risks. Balance between health of members and health of Church. Decision to go back to online worship only starting the 22nd. If we are taking away in person worship, need to add another form of connectedness. More opportunities. Decided that they would like Church Council to take lead on developing a Church activity planning team. Team to be intentional about planning activities and events that can be service oriented, provide fellowship, be COVID-safe. Examples include Christmas Caroling, Fun by the Fire, outing to the Apple Orchard. Need to be more intentional so that people feel there are options for their family. Charge to Council - approve/state that they will create a Church activity planning team (approved).

Wendy: Needs a more clever name - Connection Committee. Something more focused on connections, not just activities. Our Church comes together when it's for a purpose, helping people. Examples - Feed My Starving Children, Operation Christmas Child. New idea for team to consider - Methodist Mobile Care Unit (drop off little tidbits like Sudoku pages and cookies to members; one group put packages together, drivers to deliver goodies).

Move forward with calling it Connection Team for now, email going out to congregation. **Bring ideas forward!** More connection ideas: Other: Angela Remplewetter volunteered to go to people's homes and record messages from them, edit into weekly messages. Either have people send them in, or offer to record them (COVID-safe).

Team would also be tasked with ideas for Christmas togetherness

Point people: Wendy & Pr. Dale. First meeting Sunday, November 22nd, 10:30am.

## SPRC - Juanita Morgan/Pastor Dale

SPRC had annual check-in with the District Superintendent of the MN Annual Conference, Susan Neinaber; Juanita provided annual update. Walked through form, asked about concerns. **Committee needs new Chair if anyone feels called to volunteer.**

## Council Chairperson - Wendy Vanderwerf

Wendy proposed that we email people ideas for open committee positions; decide who calls. Wendy to draft up email for Council to reply to. Council was charged during Charge Conference with coming up with list of names to serve on open committee positions. **If you are interested in an open position, please contact Wendy or Pr. Dale.**

## Trustees - Mark Vanderwerf

Mark gave update in Lloyd's place. Lloyd has volunteered to stay on the committee and Chair, one other potential person as well.

## Finance - Scott Lecy

Short on pledges; cautiously optimistic that we will catch up. Through 10 months this year expenses have outpaced income by \$12,255. This is a concern; we can't continue to operate on a loss. Lloyd was able to get the Church a CARES Act Grant because our HELP program qualifies us as offering a service to the community. Approved for a \$10,000 grant. Restrictions: Cannot be used for payroll, which is a large part of our expenses. Must be used by the end of the year. Work being done to determine where money could be spent (2021 cleaning supplies, PPE, A/V equipment upgrades, advanced website payment, etc). Look at reaching out to Music Connection for recommendations for A/V.

## Missions - Adrienne Stegmeir

Mission of the Month (November) is Angel Tree. Because of COVID, monetary donations only due to lack of access to Church. Tina Forcier is spearheading; worked with Sarah for forms for families. Shopping first week in December. Discussion on Mission for December - CLACA (Chisago Lakes Area Clergy Association) proposed; normally Thanksgiving offering goes to CLACA but no service this year (area Churches producing joint video for service, encouraging members of all Churches to give to Family Pathways Food Shelf). Discretionary fund also proposed; but funds aren't being fully utilized right now. Decision to move forward with CLACA.

**Children, Youth & Family/Events** - Erin Thorvaldson Drive through Nativity had planning meeting last week, everything is underway. Could use more people to take on roles in case weather isn't favorable (want to have two shifts). No acting/speaking involved. 5 scenes, Sarah & Rob Sandgren making sets. Signs with stories. **If interested, please contact Erin Thorvaldson.** Still working out audio/music; suggestion for creating mini videos to promote event and to recruit volunteers.

## Worship - Pastor Dale

Worship committee met; planned all the way through the end of year. Four Wednesdays in Advent. Would like to have sanctuary open each Wednesday evening during the season; members invited to come in and sit quietly between 6 & 8pm. Christmas music playing, allows for quiet reflection time. Provides opportunity to sit in worship space and have personal prayer/meditation.

Sharlene going to decorate sanctuary, large tree won't be put up this year due to amount of work.

Working on logistics for Christmas Eve service - recorded video for sure, but may be opportunity for meeting outdoors afterwards. Pr. Dale looking into ideas.

## Social Media - Erin Thorvaldson/Pastor Dale

Barb remains active for posting images. Erin helped live stream worships.

## Hope Circle - Juanita Morgan

No report; waiting until 2021 to meet.

Minutes continued on next page...

## Meeting Minutes cont.

### Pastor's Report - Sent by Pr. Dale

I am thankful for all of our church leadership for the ways they have stepped up and help make difficult decisions for the safety of us all. As I continue trying to minister as best and effectively as I can in the midst of a pandemic, I want to reassure you that God is bigger than this pandemic and our faith in God will carry us through it, safely to the other side of it. So stay strong, stay healthy, and stay hopeful.

### Closing Prayer - Pr. Dale

Respectfully submitted,  
Emily Honerbrink



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

**The people of The United Methodist Church®**

## Winter Sidewalk help

Trustees is looking for help with snow removal this winter. If you would be willing to help shovel the church sidewalks on the weekends please contact Lloyd Jones.



Weekly Sunday School Resources for Families

Order of Worship for September 13, 2020

Click Here for Electronic Online Giving

Drive-in/Outdoor Worship Safety Guidelines

## Sunday Worship Available Online

Complete worship services are live-streamed weekly on our church Facebook page. They are also posted weekly following the service on our website. Orders of Worship are available to view on our website as well to follow along with the service. Visit our website: [www.lindstrommethodist.org](http://www.lindstrommethodist.org).



**MEALS on WHEELS**  
AMERICA

## Drivers for December 2020

December 1 - Greg McCarthy  
December 2 - Greg McCarthy  
December 3 - Wendy Braski  
December 4 - Donn & Sharlene Arnold

December 7 - Phil & Joan DeMunck  
December 8 - Cindy Kopp  
December 9 - Gary Gerke  
December 10 - Jim & Joyce Stafki  
December 11 - Jim & Joyce Stafki

December 14 - Michelle Gillespie  
December 15 - Grace Schmidt & Erma Broecker  
December 16 - Bonnie Bielicki  
December 17 - Dick Berglund & Wally Ostlie  
December 18 - Dick Berglund & Wally Ostlie

December 21 - Jon Glader  
December 22 - Irv & Dorothy Lecy  
December 23 - Grace Schmidt & Erma Broecker  
December 24 - Phil & Joan DeMunck  
December 25 - CHRISTMAS

December 28 - Jon Glader  
December 29 - Jon Glader  
December 30 - Fred Prindle  
December 31 - Fred Prindle

Meals on Wheels Coordinator:  
**Juanita Morgan, 257-9268**

## How Can We Help? Contact Us!

### Church Office Hours:

Monday - Friday  
9am - 1pm

### Church email address:

[office@lindstrommethodist.org](mailto:office@lindstrommethodist.org)

### Pastor Dale's email address:

[dale@lindstrommethodist.org](mailto:dale@lindstrommethodist.org)

### Church Office Phone Number:

651-257-4306

[lindstrommethodist.org](http://lindstrommethodist.org)



# December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 6-8p Quiet Sanctuary Advent	3 7p Living Nativ- ity meeting	4 Pastor's Day Off	5
6  9:00a Online Worship	7	8	9 6-8p Quiet Sanctuary Advent	10	11  Pastor's Day Off	12
13  9:00a Online Worship	14	15  <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	16 6-8p Quiet Sanctuary Advent	17	18  Pastor's Day Off  6p Rehearsal for Living Nativity	19  6p Drive- thru Living Nativity
20  9:00a Online Worship - <b>Mission Sunday</b>	21	22	23 6-8p Quiet Sanctuary Advent	24 3p Online Christmas Eve Service 4:30p In- person campfire worship  Office Closed	25 <b>Christmas Day</b>  Office Closed 	26
27  9:00a Online Service of Carols and Lessons	28	29	30	31		

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Address Service Requested  
Contains dated material

*Sent with a prayer to:*

December 2020



# First United Methodist Church

## Pastor Dale Stiles

### Practicing Grace Until We Are Perfected In Love

The *Grace Courier* is a monthly publication of First United Methodist Church.

**Deadline: the third Tuesday of each month for inclusion in the next month's publication.**

Articles received after this date will not be printed. Place articles in the secretary's mailbox, on the desk in the office or email them to the church. The editor reserves the right to edit any material submitted for publication.

**We welcome you to worship with us!**  
Worship at 9:00 a.m.  
Steaming online on our Facebook page

#### Our Ministry Team:

Pastor...	Dale Stiles
Office Administrator...	Sarah Sandgren
Children's Coordinator...	Erin Thorvaldson
Choir Director...	Tom Ervasti
Church Council Chairperson...	Wendy Vanderwerf
Custodian...	Cheryl Hultquist
Finance Chairperson...	
Financial Secretary...	Linda Ploog
Foundation Chairperson...	Donn Arnold
Lay Leader...	Andy Wilkerson
Lay Member to Annual Conference...	
Mission Chairperson...	Adrienne Stegmeir
Staff/Parish Relations Chairperson...	Juanita Morgan
Treasurer...	Lloyd Jones
Trustees Chairperson...	Lloyd Jones
Worship Coordinator...	Bret RempelEwert
Youth Coordinator...	Erin Thorvaldson

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