

Sunday Service is at 9:45 AM

- Dec. 3 Isaiah 64:1-9
 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
 Mark 13:24-37
- Dec. 10 Isaiah 40:1-11
 2 Peter 3:8-15a
 Mark 1:1-8
- Dec. 17 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
 John 1:6-8, 19-28
- Dec. 24 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
 Romans 16:25-27
 Luke 1:26-38
- Dec. 31 Isaiah 61:10-62:3
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Luke 2:22-40

HOW TO FIND US



United Methodist Church Of Grand Rapids

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2 blocks west of the Grand Rapids Airport

218-327-2216

secretary@umcgrmn.org

www.umcgrmn.org



[https://www.youtube.com/c/
GRUMC](https://www.youtube.com/c/GRUMC)



Password:
BeOurGuest

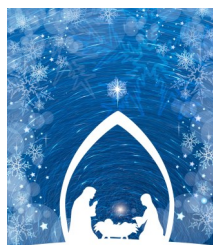
December 2023

United Methodist Church
Of Grand Rapids
1701 SE 5th Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

December 2023



United Methodist Church
Of Grand Rapids



MISSIONS

GROW
*in love of
God and neighbor*

REACH
new people

HEAL
a broken world

STAFF

Pastor
Rev. James Crecelius

Administrator
Jodi Martin

Accompanists
Susan Hoolihan

**Ready Set Grow
Preschool**
Mary Hanson
Shari Tverberg

Custodial
Justine Williams

Office Hours
Jodi:
M-F, 9am-3pm

Pastor Jim:
M-F, 9am-Noon &
By appointment

Justine:
Tu, Th, F afternoons
and as needed

GRACE HOUSE: The annual fundraiser dinner will be held on December 7th at the Timber-Lake Lodge. It will be a Prime Rib Buffet (pork & vegetarian plates available). Music by the Northern Lights Trio. Tickets: \$60 prior to 11/30, \$65 after 11/30.

CHRISTMAS FAMILIES: Please mark your calendars! Gift wrapping party on December 14 – 10:00 until finished. Itasca County Human Services will supply gift lists for the six families. The Youth Group will shop for two families. We still need 2 shoppers. If you are willing to help us out, please contact Kay Klingman at 612-845-6649 or rkklinger@gmail.com.

If you would like to contribute to this mission, please write your check to GRUMC with Christmas Families in the Memo. Checks or cash can be dropped off in the office or put into the Sunday offering plate. As of 11/20 newsletter deadline, \$320 has been donated.

TOYS FOR TOTS: Beginning on December 1, Toys For Tots gifts will be stored in our garage. Distribution will take place in our Multi Purpose Room 12/15 – 3:00 to 8:00 pm, 12/16 – 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, 12/17 – 1:00 – 4:00 pm. We will be serving cider and cookies. Please sign up to volunteer and/or bake cookies at the Information Desk.

OPEN DOOR COAT RACK: Grand Total Served: 1074
Kids: 653, Adults: 421 (Vets – 85) 70 Volunteers served 388 hours
Thank you notes from recipients are posted on the bulletin board by the office.

PAUL WEBSTER MISSIONARY: Paul Webster is no longer serving in Africa. The Missions Committee has decided to transfer the GRUMC support to the OC Ministries new school in Africa.

DIVORCE CARE: The 2nd session of DivorceCare will begin on January 18. If you know anyone who might be interested, please share the information with them. If you have any questions, contact Kay Klingman (612-845-6649 or rkklinger@gmail.com)

We don't expect everyone to donate and/or volunteer for every opportunity we present, but we hope that you will prayerfully consider missions that speak to your heart!



Winter Solstice & Christmas Eve Services:
Longest Night Service, Dec. 21st at 7:00 pm
Sunday Morning Service, Dec. 24th at 9:45am
Christmas Eve Service, Dec. 24th at 4:00 pm



How to share about the wonderful, overwhelming Truth of Christmas? Well, one of my favorite (and I think very important) theologians of the mid-20th century, Theodor Geisel, wrote a magnificent short treatise on the meaning of Christmas: *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Yes, Theodor Geisel's pen name is Dr. Suess (in fact, Suess is his middle name).

Why would someone want to steal the joy of Christmas from those around them? Well, according to this story, the Grinch's heart was two sizes too small. I wonder how it got to be that way. What shrinks the heart? I believe that the coldness and callousness of the world can have this effect on folk. The world's selfishness, bigotry, greed, hate...the list is longer, has the power to diminish. These attributes of the world can "shrink" our hearts. Also, the Grinch is outside of community. The Grinch lives "Just north of Whoville", alone in a cave up on a mountain. When we are separated from community and relationship, again, it can "shrink" our hearts.

So, as we know in the story, after stealing all the presents and trappings of the season, the Grinch discovers he hasn't stolen Christmas – that it's impossible to steal Christmas! Expecting cries and wails from the Whos; "all the Whos down in Whoville were singing – without any presents at all!" There he is on a rocky out-crop: "And the Grinch, with his Grinch feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, How could it be so?"

The True meaning of Christmas is demonstrated in the celebration of the Whos who sing joyfully, gathered together in the town square (circle) singing a song of welcome to Christ-mas. As the story reads; "He hadn't stopped Christmas from coming, it came! Somehow or other it came just the same! The Truth of God's love for all the peoples of the earth cannot be stopped. Even in the midst of crisis, confusion, chaos, strife, and brokenness – The gift of Emmanuel (Literally God-with-us) breaks through to restore us to Godself and each other. Love overcomes and God is not thwarted!

And what can this mean for hearts shrunken by the world's coldness and callousness? Well..."And then the true meaning of Christmas came through". God's love and God's good news breaks through to our hearts and minds! Our souls are rejuvenated in God's grace! Shrunken hearts are liberated and given increase to become even more!

And there's more! Not only does the Grinch's heart grow THREE sizes that day – the day He discovers Christmas, but..."then the true meaning of Christmas came through, and the Grinch found the strength of ten Grinches, plus two!" We can find new strength to overcome the brokenness of the world! We can live and work in ways that share the joy of God's love and restore, reconcile, renew, and revive this world that God so loves! We can be a part of the healing and redeeming work! And what does this changed Grinch do? He brings back that which he stole – a restorative act that brings him into community where he is received in grace and embraced as part of it! "And he, he himself, the Grinch carved the roast beast!!" We also can find new strength and power we didn't know we have/had to bring and make restorative change in the world!!

May we seek to know and share the true meaning of Christmas. May we gather at the manger and receive this divine gift of God's unconditional, unlimited, unovercomable (yes, it's a real word – if not, it should be) love.

May you, your family, friends, and all loved ones have the merriest and a blessed Christmas! Joy to the world...for unto each and all...a way of salvation!

Be God's, Pastor Jim



Shower/Sprinkle for Carlee and Matt's second girl:

The Shower/Sprinkle will be Sunday, December 3rd at 5:00pm at GRUMC. We'll have dinner and dessert as well as a couple of prizes for the winners of the games. Hope to see you there!

The baby is due at the end of December. Because they have so many girl clothes, toys, and books already, they are requesting consumables. Examples include: diapers, creams, wipes, etc. Another idea is frozen meals. They are not picky, but request the meals or soups are in zip lock bags and frozen flat to conserve freezer space. If you need recipe ideas, please reach out to Emilie Duffney or Heather Smith.



CHRISTMAS EVE WILL LOOK DIFFERENT THIS YEAR!

This year on Christmas Eve we will emphasize that “Christmas is Especially for Children”. We will be encouraging families with kids or grandkids to join our 4:00 p.m. service on December 24th. When kids enter the building, they will be invited to choose a prop or costume item to wear. As the nativity story is told, they will come forward to participate in a live nativity. No rehearsal necessary, just the work of the Spirit.

Do you know of a family that does not have a church home? Invite them and share a flier about the event, which will be available at the information desk in the coming weeks. Invite your nieces, nephews, and grandkids to join us. They will be a blessing to all in attendance, young or old. And we all know that kids love candles so they will enjoy passing the light as we sing “Silent Night”!

The Fireside Readers



In December the Fireside Readers will be meeting on Monday, December 18th. That is the 3rd Monday of the month instead of the usual 4th Monday due to Christmas. Every December, we have met an hour earlier, enjoyed a dinner together, discussed our book and participated in a fun book exchange game. This year we will be discussing “Velma Still Cooks in Leeway” by Vinita Hampton Wright. I have a paperback copy of this book and plan to leave it at the church for someone to borrow as soon as I have finished reading it. We will be meeting at the church at 5:30pm and the meal menu will be decided at our November get together. Hope to see a good turnout this December. Remember to bring a used or new book wrapped and you will be going home with a book.

Happy Reading, Wendy



Bowling went great! Good to see so many there! As we look at the next month, were a pretty busy bunch! Our next meeting is Wednesday, Nov. 28th! November has five Wednesdays in it! Part of our meeting that day will be finalizing plans for the Lock-In on Friday and Saturday, December 1st & 2nd. We’ve got lots to coordinate with supper pool time at the YMCA, worship, mission project, movies, midnight pizza,..

On Sunday, Dec. 3rd, we’re serving Carmel Rolls to the congregation during fellowship time following service! The love offering the congregation gives is a great demonstration of how much they support our youth ministries!

On Wednesday, Dec. 6th, we’ll use our meeting time shopping for Christmas families who don’t have the resources to give their kids presents. On Wednesday, the 20th we’ll have our Christmas Party!

A Message from your Lay Leader:

JOY is my favorite word to describe the Christmas Season. There are many other that I love too like Blessed, Peace, Merry, Giving, Magic, etc. I like **JOY** because there is so much about Christmas that brings me the most **JOY** in my life than any other time of year. There can also be times of stress if we let things pile up and we seem pressured and running out of time. That is why I want to share a quote that I just read: “To worry about tomorrow is to forfeit your **JOY** today”.

May we all remember to place the birth of Jesus at the top of the reasons for celebrating Christmas this year.

This is a time of gifting and there are many places to donate if you feel like that is a gift that you want to give. If your mailbox is like ours, there are many places that would love to see a check or credit card payment sent to them. Choose the one(s) that give you the most **JOY!**

Merry Christmas To My Church Family, Wendy



October 2023 Monthly Snap Shot			
	Income	Expenses	Net Income
General Fund	22,048	22,713	(665)
YTD - 2023	208,499	213,850	(5,351)
			-
Monthly average - 2023	20,184	21,385	(1,201)

Our Advance monthly offering YTD is \$25,280. The above monthly average amount has been adjusted to account for this. Thank you for your continued support of the day to day ministry of our church. We try to be careful stewards of your gifts.

Advent:

The word “advent” derives from the Latin “adventus”, meaning “coming.” During its earliest observances, Advent was 40 days of repentance, fasting and prayer as new believers prepared for their baptisms. Oftentimes, these baptisms took place on the day of Epiphany--which is a day remembering the Magi’s visit to baby Jesus; it was a celebration of Jesus’ incarnation on Earth.

Later Christians began tying Advent not just to Christ’s incarnation, but to an anticipated second coming of Christ. Advent became a period for renewing the anticipation and longing for Jesus’ return.

Today, Advent is a period of preparation for both “advents”--or arrivals--of Jesus. Lester Ruth, a professor at Duke Divinity School and a historian of Christian worship, offered this distinction for Advent: “The simplest way I have to distinguish between Advent and Christmas is that advent uses the word “come” as a longing petition, expressed in anticipation, whereas Christmas is a commemorative reflection on how the Lord has come in Christ’s birth and thus the trigger for a new redemptive order has begun.”

In our culture, the close ties to Christmas seemingly outweigh the anticipation of another “advent” of Jesus. As a church let’s both celebrate the coming of the Christ Child, as well as keep the anticipation of Jesus’ second coming. Holding on to both will help build the urgency of our Christian call to enact God’s love and justice on Earth.

CONGREGATIONAL TRUST FUND NEWS

This December has 5 Fridays, 5 Saturdays and 5 Sundays. The year of 2023 has been unique in having 5 Fifth Sundays in the year. Most years just have 4 Fifth Sundays.



The last Fifth Sunday of 2023 is right in the middle of the 12 days of Christmas where we celebrate the birth of Christ. The next Fifth Sunday will be March 31, 2024 which is Easter Sunday where we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. It is thought provoking that these Sundays are sort of the book ends of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ.

We have just completed the stewardship drive for the day to day, week to week, month to month financial support of our annual ministry supported by the General Fund. We are also asked to support that ministry with our prayers, our presence, our service and our witness. Doesn’t it feel good to participate in our support of discipleship growth for ourselves and for others?

The Congregational Trust Fund, soon to become the Congregational Endowment Fund, offers an opportunity for second mile giving to go beyond the day to day operations to year to year ministries. Thank you for all the support you give.

May God bless you and your families in this Christmas Season and guide you in the New Year!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS



“My dear friends, if you know people who have wandered off from God’s truth, don’t write them off. Go after them. Get them back and you will have rescued precious lives from destruction and prevented an epidemic of wandering away from God.” James 5: 19-20

This is part of the daily devotion I read this morning. As Membership Chair, it struck a chord with me. Apparently, even in Bible times, people “wandered off”. A world-wide epidemic that began in 2019 definitely contributed to the number of people who have drifted away from the habit of weekly worship.

Advent begins on Sunday December 3rd. My prayer is that during this season leading up to Christmas, you will join me in praying for the “drifters” to return. Then I hope you will seek to bring people back. Is there someone you can reach out to? Maybe a phone call to invite them on Sunday or Christmas Eve is just what they need. Maybe they would be blessed to volunteer with you for one of the many opportunities to serve in December? (Salvation Army bell ringing, shopping for needy families and wrapping gifts, attending the Grace House fundraiser, serving cookies to Toys for Tot parents....).

In recent weeks I have been very encouraged to see the faces of some people who haven’t been around for a long time. Let’s keep the momentum going! - Nancy O’Toole

Membership Shorts:



Need a nametag? Sign up on the Info Desk.

CARE NOTES: Find helpful messages for life’s issues on the rack in the Education Wing.

SAVE THE DATE: Lumberjack Festival- January 21, 2024

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH DANA & SANDY GRINA:

Dana and Sandy Grina became members of GRUMC in November of 2023. They were married in our church on November 21, 2020. They both grew up in Grand Rapids and attended Riverview School, although not in the same class. Sandy’s maiden name was Erholtz. Together they have one daughter, two sons, and three grandchildren.

Dana retired from the Air Force after serving twenty years. His work involved diffusing EXPLOSIVES! His second career was as a respiratory therapist in Great Falls, MT. Sandy lived in Dilworth, MN and worked in customer service for a benefits company with COBRA to help people continue with insurance after leaving an employer. The couple reconnected through Facebook.

Dana told Sandy that she reminds him of his mother, Beryl Grina, who was a long -time member of our church. Sadly, Sandy did not meet her before she passed away. She said that she feels the same welcoming and comfort at GRUMC that she experienced at her Lutheran church in Dilworth.

A Note of Encouragement:

As you know, all committees and committee chairs are volunteers at GRUMC. When Keith Lightfoot asked me to be Chair of the Finance Committee, he assured me that I would do fine even though I told him I didn’t like fundraising. Well, as it turns out, the fundraising part (summer garage sale and fall salad luncheon) were really rather fun. Emilie Duffney stepped up and organized the sale and Marva Jean Hutchins organized the luncheon. They were such a blessing. I just wanted everyone to know. So if someone asks you to step out of your comfort zone and assures you that you can do it, BELIEVE! Our church is full of caring people who are there for you. Wishing you a holiday season filled with many warm, fuzzy feelings.

June Johnson



- 1 Mack Buell
- 2 Jane Todd
- 3 Roni Skoglund
- 7 Sue Kolka
- 8 Keith Lightfoot
- 14 Patricia Kutzorik
- 17 Madison Williams
- 20 Bill Hagenbuck
- 20 Muriel Johnson-Fattic
- 20 Jen Lund

- 21 Abigail Zimmer
- 21 Bob Mitchell
- 22 Nancy O'Toole
- 23 Joni Namyst
- 23 Nevaeh Sisco
- 26 Arnold Hietala
- 26 Deb Hagenbuck

December



Coordinators:
Carolyn Orlich & Stephanie Zimmer

The captain will contact you if there is a need for help serving a lunch, funeral or other event.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Margaret Cass | Sandy Hansen |
| Mary Hanson | Marva Jean Hutchens |
| Carol Kerr | Jen Lund |
| Kathy Pliska | Cindy Ridley |
| Candice Kortekaas | Margy Strock |
| Sheila Weeks | Carrie Zimmer |

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

Happy Anniversary

- 5 Ross & Margaret Cass
- 17 Kent & Darla Kirwin
- 28 Matthew & Carlee Buchacker

THANK YOU Thank you for the many beautiful cards, phone calls, food, visits and prayers. Thank you Pastor Jim for your visits. I'm slowly recovering from the stroke and hope to be back in church soon. God bless you all. Margaret Cass



Noon Year's Eve

On Sunday, Dec. 31st, following the worship service will be our Annual Young Families Noon Year's Eve Party! The fellowship time following service will include games for the whole family. Instead of bars and coffee we'll enjoy a lunch together. We'll have crafts to make and as always, at 12:00 noon – The Balloon Drop!

And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" Luke 7-14 KJV