Maquoketa First United Methodist Church

December

NEWSLETTER



1019 Wesley Drive
Maquoketa, IA

563-652-4420

Facebook:
Maquoketa First
United Methodist

www.maquoketa1stumc.com

Rev. J. Cephas Z. K. Davis



The story the world keeps Mis-telling!

Have you asked yourself why Christmas? Why are there so many decorations at home and at church? Is that what Christmas is really about? Do you know that there were no decorations at the birth of Jesus Christ? As Luke puts it, “While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn” (Luke 2:6-7 NRSV). This biblical text says nothing about the decorations and evergreen trees in an inn.

I know some are wondering why Pastor is saying this. The truth remains that we continue to distort the narrative of God’s greatest love and humanity’s encounter with it. Our immersion in decorations and trees continues to distract us from God’s liberating love and mercy toward us. Long before Christianity, Europeans decorated with evergreen trees during the winter, which were associated with life, endurance, and hope. German-speaking Christians adopted this practice in the 15th and 16th centuries. Thus, these decorations continue to distract us from the essence of Christmas in our world. However, the star and nativity remain decorations connected to the biblical narrative of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let Christmas be about God’s greatest gift to humanity, and let us see the bigger picture of Christmas, which is the unseen God coming as a baby in the person of Jesus Christ to live among us and experience the world he created, all because of his love for creation (humanity). As John puts it, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13 NRSV). This baby lived among us, loved his enemies, fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger, crossed racial boundaries, loved the unlovable, and saw the worst of us by dying on a cross, yet still loved us because his mercies never stop. His mercy is new every morning, as Jeremiah wrote and humanity has experienced. Merry Christmas.

In Mission with Vision
Rev. J. Cephas Z. K. Davis
Facebook: Kankoryah Davis
Twitter: zebedee1977
Instagram: kankoryahdavis

Adult Bible Study:

Classes with Steve Schmudde & Jo Johnson are held on Sundays at 10:30 am in the memorial room.

Classes with Steve Kahler and Colleen Petaros are held on Sundays at 10:30 am in the library.

Prayer Group:

Pastoral Care Need If you have a pastoral care need, please contact Pastor Cephas Davis - 903.714.9974 or Colleen Petaros – 563.321.0450

Youth Group:

Youth Group started back up last month for those in 2nd-12th grade! There is a light supper served at 5pm with Youth Group following from 5:30-7pm. Pick up will be at 7pm at Fellowship Hall.

The Youth Group is planning to go Christmas Caroling in December. Once plans are finalized, we will be sending information home with the youth.

There will be no Youth Group on December 23rd or December 30th .











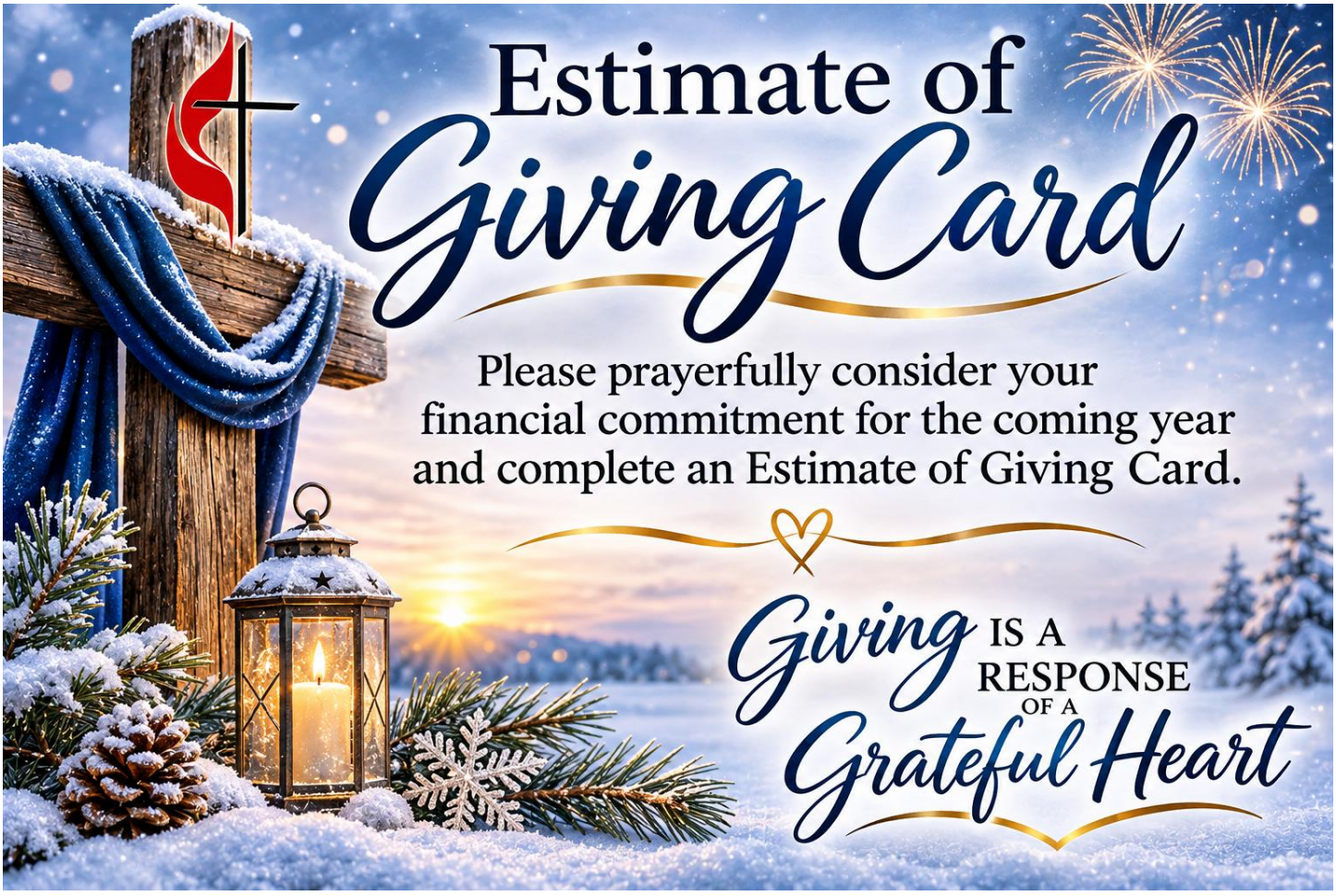
With winter approaching we've been busy wrapping up outside work as well as taking care of regular maintenance issues. In November we sold $333 worth of scrap metal thanks to your donation of material. The boiler for the fellowship hall area was relit to provide heat for that part of the Church. A new welcome sign was installed at the entrance of the Church. The blower for the sanctuary was serviced. Trees were trimmed to remove dead or damaged branches. Jason Effenheim donated the use of his bucket van making the job safer, easier,quicker and in general possible. Thank you Jason! We are still working on updating the lights in the entryway of the sanctuary. During these last nice days of fall the snow plow was put on the truck and the truck was serviced .

A big project coming up is the replacing of the parsonage roof. The original roof is nearing the end of its life and plans are being made for a new one. We are working on a plan for fund raising hoping to be able to set aside some money every month . This money would be designated specifically for the roof and under the control of the Trustees. Any other money raised or donated would go into this fund. We are looking at what our options are for replacing the roof for example do we use shingles or steel. What are the estimates for both kind and what are the pros and cons of either type? We will keep the congregation informed as plans become more definite.

As you can see the Trustees are very busy keeping our building in good condition while working within our budget. When a large project comes up that is outside of our budget we know we can count on the congregation to rise to the occasion financially. Our Church has a strong history of raising needed funds either through donations or supporting short term loans.



Thank you to those who have pledged for 2027! So far 25 giving units have pledged: $92,006 to the General Fund; $23,860 for Apportionments; and $20,920 to the Building Fund. The 2026 budget included $25,414 for Apportionments and $170,343 for General Fund expenses.
If you have not already turned in your commitment card, there is still time. You can return it to the office or drop it in the offering plate.





WIC

The government Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clinic takes place in our church the first Wednesday and Thursday of each month. Our church supplements the assistance WIC provides for families with 12 diapers, a package of wipes, a book, and the clothing we have available. Another important part of our ministry is visiting with the families who come to WIC and making them feel welcome in our church.

The next WIC sessions are **Wednesday, December 2nd** and **Thursday, December 3rd** from 9a – 3p**.** Colder weather is approaching so any jackets and coats (up to 6T) would be welcomed as well. If you would like to be a part of this ministry, you could also become part of our team!

In November, we distributed: 144 diapers, 8 packages of wipes, 32 books, 3 blankets and numerous clothes, especially some winter items. We recently received 60 small hats from the Grateful Threads group at the Senior Center. We will share them with our WIC families as well as putting some on our Mitten Tree in the Sanctuary. The Grand Mound Methodist Church shared 20 Linus Blankets with us. This is a very active ministry that shares small handmade blankets with various schools, hospitals and emergency personnel in the area.

Team members: Holly Parmer, Rachel Parmer, Becky James, Sarah Hogan, Linda Stewart, Lana Flagel and Ann Otteman.



Plarn Mat Group

Ladies from across the community have been gathering together to make wonderful mats made out of recycled plastic bags. This group meets on Monday mornings from 9a-11a. Stay and enjoy a cup of coffee, pastry and conversation afterwards. We just completed another mat on November 23rd. Camanche, Delmar, DeWitt, and Maquoketa all have plarn mat groups.

Quarters

With your generous contributions we have been able to give $150 to Joanne Evans for the Grade Level Reading Program that supplies books for WIC.

Give Carol Struve $150 for the purchase of the Ingathering supplies.

We have also been able to give $150 to the Laundry Love. Laundry Love is a nationwide volunteer-driven initiative that provides free laundry services to low-income and no-income individuals and families, promoting dignity, hygiene, and community support.

Avent Season

Fir the advent season, we will be offering 3 different ways to give to the community.

1. ***Salvation Army Bell Ringing*** – We are covering 2 days. **Wednesday, December 9th and 16th** from **10am-6pm** at Fareway. The sig-up sheet is in the back of the sanctuary, or you can call Holly Parmer at (563) 249-2760 to sign up. 90% of this money stays in the community for local needs.
2. ***Grade-Level Reading Tree*** - This small tree is decorated with small stockings made by our own Shirley Brandon. Each stocking contains a note about donating to the Grade Level Reading Program that contributes a lot of books we hand out at WIC.
3. ***Mitten Tree*** – This tree is located at the back of our sanctuary and collects mittens, scarves and hats for our local schools and to our WIC families. Grateful Threads has given us small hats so mittens, scarves and larger hats would be appreciated.

Circuits

Tornado Kits

a. Tornado Kit includes items below:

- 2 Pairs Work Gloves
- 24 One-Gallon Resealable Plastic Bags
- 2 Permanent Markers
- 1 Roll Colored Duct Tape
- 2 Dust Masks (no surgical)
- 24 Heavy Duty Trash Bags (33–45-gallon size)
- 1 Two-Gallon Resealable Plastic Bag

*$20 donation for two 18-gallon totes

b. We decided we would collect items in January and February and deliver them in March, at the beginning of hurricane season.

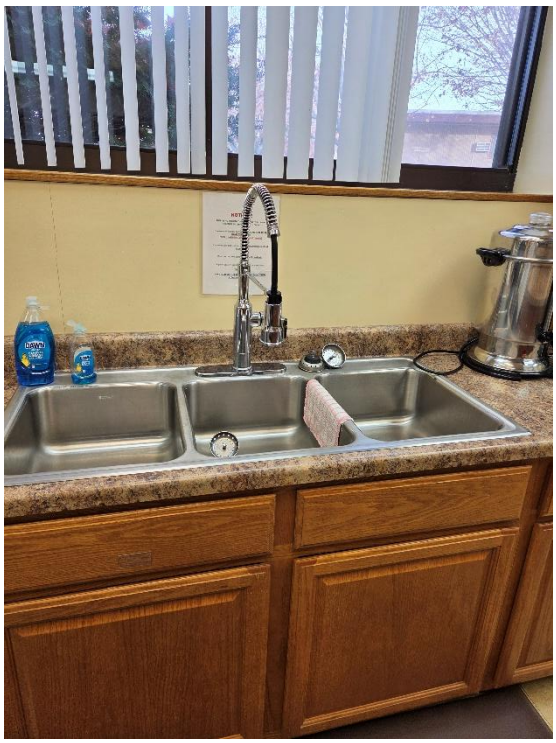
c. The website suggests we not put the kits together but simply collect supplies and bring them to Midwest Mission.

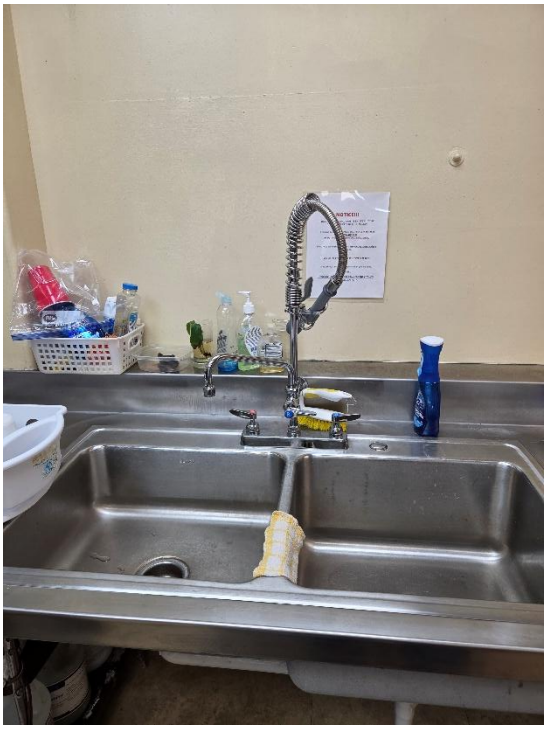
UNITED WOMEN in FAITH

Who we are: We're a sisterhood acting in faith to tackle the hard work of the world without hesitation.

Our Mission: We seek to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

This group just recently funded an upgrade in the kitchen. Cindy Sellnau contacted Josh Woods to move the faucet from the big sink into the smaller sink and install a new, more industrial one, in the larger sink. Between our regular weekly activities and our special events, the kitchen gets a lot of use!
Our next big event is our Christmas Tea on **December 2nd!**
We did not meet in November in preparations for the Gather Together Dinner and will not meet in December. There is a flyer attached to the newsletter with more information.





Our next meeting will be **January 27th** at **6:00pm**.

We continue to collect pop tabs for The Ronald McDonald House. There are collection boxes in the narthex and outside the serving window by the kitchen.

Did you know it takes 1,128 tabs to equal 1 pound?
Each pound nets between 40 and 50 cents for the organization!!



December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 • WIC 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. • Christmas Tea 9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. • WOW 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.	3 • WIC 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	4	5
6	7	8	9 • Caregiver Support Group 1:30 p.m. • Trustees Meeting 6 p.m. • WOW 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 • WOW 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.	17 • Care Team Meeting 4 p.m.	18	19 Poinsettia Delivery
20	21	22 • Finance Meeting 5:30 p.m. • Church Council 6 p.m.	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Office Closed in Observance of Christmas	26
27 Pick Up Poinsettia Order	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		

December
Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

12/1	Ben Shearer
12/3	Zoey Scott
12/4	Nancy Higgins
12/6	Steve Kahler
12/9	Jeanne Owen
12/11	Irene Wallroff
12/13	Sandra Kinrade
12/15	Bill Otteman
12/17	Mildred Wilcox, Kerry Schepers
12/18	Doug Lane
12/19	Kaylee Ann Marie Welch
12/20	Thomas Wiebenga
12/22	Carrie Klemme, Jim Carstensen
12/27	Charles Sagers
12/29	Wendy Scott
12/30	Tammy Willimack
12/31	Ethan Carstensen

Anniversaries

Wayne & Barb Mayberry
12/30

Richard & Lucinda Schwenker
12/31



Radio Sponsors in December

Decemebr 6th Mike & Vicki Wing
December 13th Don & Connie Patridge
December 20th Don & Connie Patride
December 27th Judy Tonderum

If you wish to sponsor a Sunday broadcast in 2027, please call the office at (563) 652-4420 to sign up. The cost is $28. Thank you for considering this opportunity to help spread the word of our faith!

Listen to our Sunday broadcast every week on KMAQ 95.1 FM @ 10:30 a.m.



ALZHEIMER'S® ASSOCIATION

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP



2nd Wednesday of each month
1:30 P.M.

First United Methodist Church
1019 Wesley Dr. Maquoketa

USE EAST ENTRANCE

Join in person or by Zoom

For more information contact Sally at 563-221-1081 or Sally918@osterhausrx.com

2026 SUPPORT GROUP DATES

JULY 8	AUGUST 12
SEPTEMBER 9	OCTOBER 14
NOVEMBER 11	DECEMBER 9



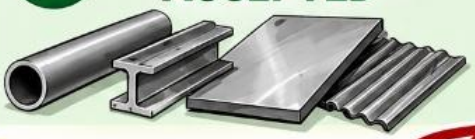
SCRAP METAL

DONATIONS ACCEPTED!



PLACE ITEMS IN THE TRAILER LOCATED AT
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PARKING LOT
1019 WESLEY DR, MAQUOKETA

METAL ITEMS ACCEPTED



NO TIRES

NO ITEMS CONTAINING FREON

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE **TRUSTEES BUILDING FUND.**

Thank You FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Thank You!

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and came to the

Gather Together Dinner!

Your time, talents, generosity, and support made this event a wonderful success. Without you, it would not have been possible!

Christmas Tea

DONATIONS & HELP NEEDED!

For Our Christmas Tea Event

on December 2nd

♡ Volunteers Needed:

- ☐ Help set up after 9:00 a.m.
- ☐ Set up and serve at 8:30 a.m.
- ☐ Prep food for lunch
- ☐ Clean up after the event

♡ Food Donations Needed:

- ☐ 3 pounds of shaved turkey
- ☐ 4 pounds of chicken breasts
- ☐ 6–12 packs of buns
- ☐ 2 dozen cookies
- ☐ Muffins
- ☐ Rolls
- ☐ Coffee cakes



♡ Thank You ♡

for Supporting Our Christmas Tea!

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Invites you to our annual

Christmas TEA

Join us for a time of fellowship, delicious treats, and the true spirit of Christmas.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2026

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Coffee & Goodies

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Soup, Sandwich & Dessert

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Everyone is welcome!

Free-will offering



THE SALVATION ARMY

Bell Ringer Schedule

Open Volunteer Times!

Wednesday, December 9th	Wednesday, December 16th
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.	10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
2 p.m. – 3 p.m.	11 a.m. – 12 p.m.
3 p.m. – 4 p.m.	1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
4 p.m. – 5 p.m.	2 p.m. – 3 p.m.
5 p.m. – 6 p.m.	3 p.m. – 4 p.m.



Maquoketa Fareway

Contact Holly Parmer at (563) 249-2760 to sign up!



Scripture Reflections

Word Search

Find the Bible words below. They are inspired by passages from Isaiah 64, Psalm 80, Mark 13, 1 Corinthians 1, Advent, Mark 1, Isaiah 40, Psalm 85, John 1, 1 Thessalonians 5, Ephesians 2, Isaiah 61, Psaim 126, John 8, Matthew 5, Luke 1, 2 Samuel, Luke 2, and Psalm 48.

R E S T O R A T I O N K I N G
A D V E N T W A T C H F A I T H
M E R C Y S A L V A T I O N J O Y
E M M A N U E L P R E P A R E Q
P E A C E J U S T I C E L I G H T
B E L I E V E R E J O I C E S V I
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P E O P L E G O O D N E S S L O V E

ADVENT
ANNOUNCED
BELIEVE
BORN
CHRIST
COMFORT
COVENANT
DAWN
EMMANUEL
FAITH
FREEDOM
GLORY
GOODNESS
GRACE
HOLINESS
HOPE
ISRAEL
JOY
JUSTICE
KING
LIGHT
LIFE
LOVE
MERCY
MESSIAH
NATIONS
PEACE
PEOPLE
PREPARE
PROMISE
REJOICE
RENEW
RESTORATION
SALVATION
SAVIOR
SHEPHERD
TRUTH
VIGILANT
VOICE
WAYS
WILDERNESS