

Parish News • Friday, December 10, 2021

Greetings from Pastor Craig!

We've had over a foot of snow in Ely since the last edition of *Parish News* and the temperature as dropped below zero as well. Southwestern Minnesota could receive a foot of snow in a winter storm soon to sweep through that area. The snow there, unlike here will blow and drift in a manner that might close roads.

It looks like a White Christmas for us, even though the snow might melt off by Christmas for our neighbors to the south.

This season is one of hope, anticipation, and joy as we await our Savior's birth. God has been faithful across many centuries and will continue to pour out His generous love upon all Creation.

Yet the upheavals and uncertainties of life don't stop even during joyous times like Advent or Christmas. Or any other festival season within the church or without. Sin and suffering, pain and death remain part of life 365 days a year.

Tootsie Loe, our friend and fellow church member, died Wednesday evening at Ely hospital. She had been nearly a life-long Elyite and member of our church for over sixty years.

Since summer Tootsie knew her time was limited and was under hospice care at the time of her death, but lived life to the full even as her health declined. She crimped pasties on November 16th, joined in putting up Christmas decorations November 21st (chili lunch to follow), and was in church on Sunday, November 28th. Tootsie lived a long and lively life, filled with faith, family, and friends.

Tootsie's funeral service will at the church on Friday, December 17, at 11:00, with visitation beginning at 9:30. Visitation will also be at Kerntz Funeral Home from 4:00 to 7:00, Thursday, December 16.

Item #1: For those of you attending the UMW Christmas Luncheon this coming Monday, December 13, 2021, at 12 Noon, we'll have a large basket at the luncheon for donations of the following items needed by the shelters in Virginia and our local food shelf: paper products (paper towels, toilet paper, tissues) and women's sanitary products. If you can, please bring an item to add to the basket. Linda Hane will be delivering those to the shelters and food shelf.

Item #2: Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be at 5:30 Christmas Eve. This will be our traditional service of hymns and scripture readings. The choir will sing. We'll end the service by lighting candles, singing Silent Night in a darkened sanctuary, and then Joy to the World with the lights back on.

Item #3: Our Annual Church Conference is scheduled for Wednesday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m. The Annual Church Conference functions as the annual meeting in United Methodist churches. The meeting is typically very short and consists of

receiving a report from Finance Committee (the 2022 church budget which includes Pastor Craig's compensation), a Membership Report, and short report from Pastor Craig. The Nominating Committee will present their report for possible amendment and approval. All Ely UMC members are invited to attend.

Item #4: Our church has reluctantly gone back to a "people should wear masks" policy, and only after careful consideration. The world-wide and local situation with the virus is shifting so rapidly that no-one is really quite sure where we're at presently, where we're headed, and what it all means.

As our Administrative Council deliberated Saturday (November 27th) during a specially-called Zoom meeting we felt it was essential to develop a policy that could be adjusted as we go. Our criteria are and will be recommendations, first from the CDC (Center for Disease Controls and Prevention) and then our Governor's office.

I know this is deeply disappointing to many of you. It is to us as well; it feels like a step back and a wet blanket on the joy we've felt during our recent worship services. Our goal always is for services to be as worshipful and life-forming as possible, whether via Facebook Live or in-person with as few restrictions as we feel are safely possible.

We have the same high quality, disposable masks available you see at some establishments around town in case you arrive at church without one.

As always, we'll keep you updated as often as is necessary.

Item #5: Our Prayer Wall for this week is attached.

There may not be any editions of the *Parish News* for the next three weeks because of the church calendar and my personal calendar. Watch for a *Parish News* edition for sure on Friday, January 7, 2022.

In light of the cold and snow this week I'm reprinting Christina Rossetti's hymn "*In the Bleak Midwinter*" rather than a scripture reading. We'll be singing the hymn in church this Sunday.

It's in the public domain so we have permission to print it here.

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

By Christina Rossetti

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

The way I experience the arrival of Christmas follows a similar pattern each year. I don't think about Christmas much during September and early October when the colors are beautiful and fall weather is simply gorgeous. Then as the weather gets a little colder and especially if it's nasty, I find myself thinking about Christmas more and counting down the time to Christmas more often.

But once Thanksgiving has come and gone then December 25 seems to approach with the speed of a jet airplane.

I want to pause in the midst of all the events going on right now, the sights and sounds, the rush of time passing by and take the time to wish you and your family a truly joyful Christmas. May the joy of the angels and the wonder of the shepherds dwell in your heart.

God's peace be with you.

Pastor Craig

The Ely United Methodist Church

Prayer Wall

December 10, 2021

This is a guide for prayer this week. The *Prayer Wall* is a reminder of those needing prayers during devotional times. Thank you for dedicating some of your personal prayer time to lift up these requests.

Psalm 62: 8 (NIV)



“Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.”

We lift up the following in prayer...

- **Tootsie Loe’s family & friends** – Tootsie passed away last Wednesday evening. Pray for comfort for the family & friends.
- **Brooke Gruba** – She fell & broke a bone in the hip & has neurofibromatosis making surgery risky. Pray for comfort & healing.
- **Edye Ruoho** – Hospitalized in Ely still on O2 but holding her own. She will stay with us until God’s purpose in her is complete.
- **Stuart’s family and friends** – Lucy Diesslin’s friend, Karleen, her son Stuart, died in a trailer fire. Pray for family comfort.
- **Callie Stone** – Suffered a serious head-on car collision and was airlifted to Hennepin County Hospital in critical condition.
- **Eric St. Martin & family** – Own’s of Ely Liquor, their home burned down and thankfully all inside escaped safely.
- **John Huntbatch family & friends** – Tom passed away last week. Pray for comfort & peace for the family & friends.
- **Tom Hamilton** – Tom is facing surgery at Mayo to remove blood clots. Pray for him and his wife, Karen.
- **Pastor Paul Koehler** – Pastor Paul of First Lutheran church in Motley is hospitalized with COVID.
- **Gary Schimp family & friends** – Father of Linda Hane’s friend, Dawn, passed away from COVID.
- **Heidi Hanson’s daughter, Dorshann** – Just had knee replacement surgery. Pray for comfort and healing.
- **Mildred Koschak’s daughters, Phyllis & Betty** – Both have had recent surgeries. Pray for comfort and healing.
- **Nancy Markwardt’s brother, Red** – Has stage 4 cancer and is now in great pain with kidney stones.
- **Emma Smrekar Update** – Carolyn Fendt’s granddaughter & high school senior received her last chemo treatment for stomach cancer on June 11th & was believed to be cancer free. Her cancer has returned, pray for effective treatments and comfort.
- **All the residents and staff at Ely Carefree Living where there are reported 5 cases of COVID**
- **All essential health care workers exposed to the COVID-19 virus and the Delta variant**

We include all the United Methodist Churches and Pastors, both active and retired, in our MN UMC Annual Conference as we work in extraordinary ways to keep our congregations and communities free from infection by the COVID-19 virus.

Prayer requests are compiled from our church prayer chain, from our Sunday morning church congregation using the prayer request forms located in the pew welcome pads, and the North Star District Prayer List. Prayer requests will remain on the Prayer Wall through four weeks unless removed earlier because the prayer is known to be no longer necessary. People may ask that prayers be renewed on the list for subsequent 4-week periods. The Prayer Wall is finalized each Thursday for the Sunday morning service.