

ELY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"The Little Church With the Big Heart"

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Parish News

December 1, 2023

A Note from Pastor Craig

As December begins we are, once again, in the joyful and event-filled time of year between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Bustling from one activity to another at home, school, church, and groups we're part of in the community.

Gratitude comes naturally at Thanksgiving for all the bounty, almost beyond measure, which has flowed from God into our lives across the years. Joy and hope tumble into our hearts at Christmas as we experience the presence of Christ in our lives. It's difficult to keep smiles off our faces when surrounded by celebrations.

So, I'm going to be a "killjoy" of sorts by injecting some gloominess into what I'm writing before pivoting to how the Good News of the Christ Child inverts this gloominess to unsurpassable joy.

The gloominess: I'm in a short season of feeling aging and mortality pressing down upon me, not only physically, but also cognitively and my general state of mind. (Note: not to worry, I'm doing fine and will be A-OK; this is all part of being human.)

This is the second time I've noticed this happening. I'm blessed with good genes and have maintained a healthy diet and lifestyle, so the first episode of feeling the press of mortality caught me off-guard. Shortly after turning 60, I had a 95% blockage in the widow maker artery, despite being in excellent shape.

Today, approaching 68 years old, I'm finding everything noticeably more difficult - walking around town, staying current with pastoral responsibilities, doing miscellaneous chores, keeping up housekeeping, remembering things, and focusing on the many details of life. Just this week I completely forgot about an important meeting we were having at church. Life is more challenging than it was, plain and simple.

But this is what it means to be human. Zena Hitz summarizes it well when she discusses the fantasy of self-sufficiency in the first pages of *"A Philosopher Looks at The Religious Life."* She suggests one aspect of Original Sin is we come to believe that by hard work, money, and living in the First World, we can rise above the contingencies of life. Not so, because dependence and helplessness remain core realities for all of us.

So how can this possibly be good news, anytime and especially at Christmas? Because Jesus Christ was born in a cattle shed as a helpless baby. His first crib was a feeding trough. Mary and Joseph made a dangerous journey when she was 9 months pregnant not knowing where they would find food or shelter.

We all experience helplessness, dependency, aging, loss, and mortality. The Good News is we find new life, hope, salvation, and even joy in emptiness, vulnerability, loss, suffering, and all the rest. Now, I'm still going to exercise, eat well, get as much sleep as possible, practice good mental health, and all the rest. But without compulsion or through gritted teeth. This is God's world, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and each of us can "relax" as by faith we settle into the life that comes to us as followers of the Christ Child. Pastor Craig

Double Check the Locks When Leaving the Church

Our front door and lock have become a bit creaky as they have aged. Occasionally the front door is still open when it appears to have locked. This is because a slight misalignment of the two doors keeps the deadbolt from sliding completely across the gap between doors when a person pushes the “lock button.”

The solution: Push the lock button, then physically test to make sure the door is securely locked by pulling on the door. If not, push the doors firmly shut, lock the door again, and check once more. Also check to make sure both upstairs and downstairs doors are locked by pulling on them. Thank you!

A Reminder of December Events at Ely United Methodist Church

Children Decorating at Pioneer Apartments - the girls, boys, and their parents will decorate Christmas trees in Pioneer Apartments this Sunday (December 3) following worship, returning to church after for a pizza party.

Women’s Christmas Luncheon - Our United Methodist Women will have their Christmas Luncheon at the Grand Ely Lodge on Wednesday, December 6th at Noon.

Annual Church Conference - our Annual Church Conference will be Thursday, December 21st at 7:00 to be followed by our December Ad Council meeting. We will briefly cover annual business for our church - approving our 2024 Budget, Nominating Report, and Membership Report. All members of our church are invited to attend.

Christmas Eve Service - our Christmas Eve candlelight service will be at 5:30 Christmas Eve. The service will feature Christmas hymns, readings, and candle lighting while singing “Silent Night” and “Joy to the World.”

Christmas Eve Day and New Year’s Eve Day Worship Services - we will hold our usual 10:00 Sunday morning worship service both Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve days. There will also be Sunday School both Sundays.

A New Opportunity for Prayer

We have always been a praying church. Several years ago the Visioning Committee introduced the Pray Wall to our Sunday Service, which provides structure for the manner in which we pray for our church’s members and those dear to us.

Each week we also invite prayers for churches and pastors in our Annual Conference with these words: *“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.”*

We are going to begin intentionally praying for our congregation in the same way by inviting us to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide specific aspects of our life together.

We’re asking individuals and committees to forward what they would like us to pray for to elyumc.elymn@gmail.com For example: “We pray for the Annual Conference as it selects a replacement for Pastor Craig.”

We’ll put these prayer requests in Parish News.

The Ely United Methodist Church

Prayer Wall

December 1, 2023

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.

John 15: 7 (NIV)

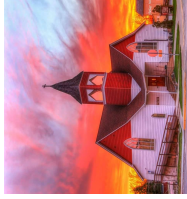


"Jesus said, If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."

We lift up the following in prayer...

- **Rachael** – Rachel, daughter of a dear friend of Heather & Marshall Monthei's, is in psychiatric care for serious depression and her new treatments are not working. Please keep Rachael in your prayers.
- **Lindsay and Crystal's friend Greg** – Crystal Nickerson asked for prayers for her niece, Lindsay, who has been diagnosed with breast cancer & for her friend, Greg, who had heart surgery and now has complications.
- **Nathan Jann** – Erin Moravitz asked for prayers for her cousin, Nathan, who broken his tibia in 5 or 6 places and his fibula in 2 places while ice skating. He will require several surgeries and long-term physical therapy to recover fully from this very serious break.
- **Nick's family & friends** – Marge Forsberg's brother's father-in-law and her sister-in-law's father, Nick, passed away. Marge requested prayers for Nick's family and friends and her brother, John, and his wife.
- **Lynn** – Pam Turnbull asked for prayers for her husband Mike's uncle, Lynn, who had open heart surgery and also has cancer issues.
- **Rod Loe** – Pam Turnbull asked for prayers for her father, Rod Loe, who is residing at Ely Carefree Living.
- **Kathy Nelson's brother-in-law** – Kathy asked for prayers for her brother-in-law who's just started chemo therapy.
- **Zach & Jake Rue's friend** – Sheri Rue asked for prayers for Zach and Jake Rue's friend who has been diagnosed with cancer.
- **Delbert Smith's family & friends** – Delbert, a former church associate member, passed on October 24th.
- **Sarah Grafton's family & friend** – **Update: Sarah Grafton passed away.** Cathy Aldrich asked for prayers for Sarah Grafton, a work colleague, who had an accident at home. She had brain bleeding.
- **Loren Barnes** – Please continue prayers for Lucy Diesslin's brother, Loren, who has now contracted COVID and has been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.
- **Bernie Barich** – Patty Rusco asked for prayers for her uncle, Bernie Barich, who is in his eighties and has spinal stenosis and is having surgery on his back. Pray for healing of body, mind and spirit.
- **Nancy Olson** – Linda Hane asked for prayers for her neighbor, Nancy Olson, who broke her leg and is currently in rehab in Duluth. Pray for healing and regaining her strength and mobility.
- **Wes Weisinger** – Vicki Wagner asked to have her nephew, Wes, back on the Prayer Wall as he has been placed on hospice. He has been struggling with liver cancer and surgery.
- **The Russia / Ukraine conflict • Political Unrest in Africa • The People of Israel & Those Involved in the Current Conflict** – Pray for a world-wide lasting resolution, safety of the people, and peace.

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.



December 2023

Sunday
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday

31 10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School New Year's Eve					1	2
3 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School <i>Holy Communion</i>	4	5	6 12:00 NOON UMW Christmas Luncheon at the Ely Grand Lodge	7 6:00 PM Choir Practice	8	9
10 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School	11	12	13 10:00 AM Ely Ministerial Association	14 5:00 PM • Visioning Committee Meeting 6:00 PM Choir Practice	15	16
17 10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School	18	19	20	21 6:00 PM Choir Practice 7:00 PM - All Church Conference Followed by Ad Council Meeting	22	23
24 10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School 4:45 Choir Practice 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28 6:00 PM Choir Practice	29	30

December 11 - December 13 • Pastor Craig at St. John's Abby

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL – MINUTES

Thursday, November 16, 2023 at Ely United Methodist Church

Call To Order: Chair Jay Tomlinson called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Attendees (7): Craig Haberman, Linda Hane, Don Ingerson, Margie & Mark Olson, Sheri Rue and Jay & Jeanne Tomlinson.

Opening: Pastor Craig shared some thoughts from a devotional book from St John's Abbey based on Psalm 131 noting "In you, Lord, I have found my peace". He then opened our meeting with prayer. **Minutes:** The October 19, 2023 Ad Council minutes were approved as distributed in the *Parish News*. Motion to approve by Margie Olson, second Mark Olson. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: The October 2023 Treasurer's report was presented by Mark Olson. Current balances are \$52,156.29 in the General Fund, \$13,357.83 in the Building Fund and \$16,356.28 in the Memorial Fund. Motion to accept by Jeanne Tomlinson; second by Margie Olson. Motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1. Trustees:** Margie Olson reported that the Trustees have not met since the last Ad Council meeting so there was nothing new to report.
- 2. Pastor-Parish Relations:** Sheri Rue reported that they met with our DS, Laurie Kantonen, after the service on November 5 to share information from the church profile. Laurie indicated we probably won't hear about our new pastor until towards the end of February 2024. Laurie had also commented that with our current average worship attendance between 40 & 50 we are not really a "small" church anymore. The committee is meeting on November 29 to work with Pastor Craig on salary for 2024. Pastor Craig's last Sunday with us will be June 16. We'll need to arrange for speakers for June 23 & 30. Jay suggested that one of those could be his Annual Conference report.
- 3. Worship:** Linda Hane reported that Patty Rusco is lining up Advent wreath readers/lighters. Advent decorating will be after worship on Sunday, November 26 followed by a meal of chili & cornbread with potluck sides & desserts. December 24 will have a normal 10 AM Worship Service and our 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service.
- 4. Visioning/Outreach/Nurture & Membership:** Jay reported that it has been decided to combine these 3 committees into one, to be called **Connections**. He reported that the *Journey with the Messiah* Bible Study went well so they will continue with the next a second session in February 2024. They are working on having the men's group hosting a weekly dinner during the school year for anyone in the congregation or community to have a break from cooking on a school night. The objectives for these dinners would be to (1) provide companionship for those in attendance, especially the kids, (2) provide a touchpoint for new families, (3) be a catalyst for rekindling the men's group, (4) give parents a break from dinner preparation one night a week. The next steps in the process would be to check with our church families who have children to see if they felt this initiative would be something they would regularly participate in. Also, to gain any helpful information from other churches that provide weekly meals.
- 5. Education: No report**
- 6. Parish Care: No report**
- 7. Memorial Fund Task Force: Carol Linneman had sent in a copy of the minutes from their**

meeting on November 7. Memorial Sunday on November 5 went well. Twenty *Shadow and Light* Advent study books were purchased for \$173.37 and memorial funds will also be used to

pay an additional \$15 each for submitted pictures to be added our new pictorial directory. Carol

is resigning as Chair; Marge Forsberg will be the new Chair.

8. **UMW:** Margie Olson reported that Pastor Craig will be taking about dozen dough balls and one of our dough roller “O” rings to the Alexandria church this next week on his way to Sioux Falls. They’ll be using those to set up the machine so that we can try it out for rolling out our pasty dough in January. Craig will pick up the machine on his way back. Marie also reported that the Shadow & Light women’s Advent study is going well with about 15 women attending. The UMW Christmas Luncheon will be Wednesday, December 6 at the Grand Ely Lodge. There will be a sign-up sheet at the church starting this Sunday to get a count of participants. Margie also reported that Paula Mattila is working on lap quilts to give to Carefree Living residents for Christmas. Paula invited anyone interested in helping to let her know.
9. **Nominating Committee:** Pastor Craig reported that the committee has met several times and will be reporting on the results at our Church Conference. Some notable nominations are: Sheri Rue for Ad Council Chair, Pam Turnbull for Ad Council Vice-Chair, Cathy Aldrich as PPRC chair, Bryan Rusco as Trustee President, Marge Forsberg as Memorial Chair. New committee members will be Lucy Luthens for the PPRC as a youth representative, Anna Urbas for Connections and Ginny Nelson to Memorial. He also reported that Patty Niskala will be our sole Financial Secretary and Devon Luthens & Cathy Aldrich will be Money Counters. They are revising money handling processes and will have a notebook in the office with the new procedures.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Church Directory Project:** Jay and Jeanne are finalizing the files and paperwork to be sent to

Universal Church Directories for them to proceed with a Proof printing. These will be sent by the end of the week. We had 44 photos taken by UCD and we have 37 digital photos we’ll be submitting. We’ll get 81 directories to give to each photo group. We get 5 “credits” based on the number of UCD sittings and are using 2 of those to cover the cost of getting the on-line directory app, 2 to pay for 14 of the submitted digital photos and 1 to get us 8 additional directories (20% of the UCD sittings). We recommended ordering an additional 20 directories to have available for handing out to new members. Direct cost to our church will be \$505: \$345 for the 23 additional submitted photos at \$15 each plus \$160 for the 20 additional directories at \$8 each. Margie Olson, on behalf of the Memorial Committee, indicated that this would be covered by Memorial funds.

2. **Rule of Christ Study:** Pastor Craig has arranged with John Nowell, a Rule of Christ trainer, to come on Sunday, January 28. He’ll meet with everyone from 11:30 AM to 1 PM, then we’ll have lunch and then he’ll meeting with the PPRC starting at 1:20 PM. An ending time was not specified for the later meeting. Sheri asked if we could possibly do lunch right after worship with the two meetings following. Pastor Craig gave John’s contact information to Sheri and she’ll do the following with John on those questions.
3. **Remote Video Streaming:** Jay reported that Mauro is still checking for equipment that would allow our camera to be fully remote controlled. Jay will also contact Voltz.

4. **Sponsoring a tree for Northwoods Partners' Festival of Trees:** Pastor Craig reported that Northwoods Partners had enough trees purchased and that our donation of \$105 (tree cost of \$55 and \$50 to cover tree decoration costs) we had decided on would go towards the costs of putting on the Festival of Trees.

NEW BUSINESS –

1. **Presentation of the 2024 Annual Budget:** Finance committee members Mark Olson, Jay Tomlinson and Pastor Craig Haberman met to prepare the 2024 church annual budget. Mark distributed copies to the meeting attendees. The pastor's salary has not yet been decided, nor have some of the other ministerial support figures so the focus was on the Connectional Ministries and Church Administration & Program accounts. Linda Hane moved that we approve the budget figures that we discussed; second by Jeanne Tomlinson. Motion passed.
2. **Ely UMC's portion of Semer's Park picnic expense:** Margie Olson moved that we authorize payment of \$45 to Mary Groeninger to cover our share of the costs. Second by Sheri Rue. Motion passed.
3. **Donation to Wes Weisinger:** Margie Olson asked if we could make a donation to Wes Weisinger to help cover some of his medical costs. It was decided that we should have a "free will offering" on a coming Sunday to allow the church family to participate. It will be held on November 26 and announced this coming Sunday. Pastor Craig will also include a short note about it in the *Parish News*.
4. **Door lock combination:** We briefly discussed possibly changing the combination on our door locks since we don't really know who has the combination and decided that it wasn't really that much of a problem. We have had some problems with the front door not actually locking when the Lock button is pushed, mostly because the two doors don't always line up properly when closed. It was decided to simply put in a brief instruction in the *Parish News* about double checking that the door is actually locked.
5. **Decorating trees at the housing apartments:** Sheri Rue reported that she & Chris Urbas are going to work with Sunday School families to set up and decorate three Christmas trees at Pioneer. Mark and Margie Olson may set up a tree in Sibley. Zenith now locks their community room so we won't be setting up a tree there.
6. **Pastor Craig's retirement party:** We decided that we'll do this after Pastor Craig's last worship service on June 16 in our Fellowship Hall. Sheri Rue will also be inviting people from the various groups that Pastor Craig is very involved with (ECR, Northwoods Partners and the North American Bear Center).
7. **Ely All-Class Reunion:** Sheri Rue reported that the All-Class Reunion (for all Ely school graduates over the years) will be held on either June 30 or July 7 and will include a community wide church service. She will be working with Pam Turnbull in identifying graduates from our church that we can send a personal invitation to attend our church while in town for the Reunion.

Items of Information

1. **Next Ad Council meeting:** Thursday, December 21, 2023 following the Church Conference.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM with a group recitation of *The Lord's Prayer*.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Tomlinson, Ad Council Secretary

The **UMW** at Ely United Methodist Church Wednesday, November 15, 2023 10-11:15 AM

President Margie Olson opened the meeting at 10:04 AM with a prayer from our study book and then led us in a unison reading of the UMW pledge. Ten UMW members were present: Lucy Diesslin, Marge Forsberg, Linda Hane, Gail Haney, Sharon Luthens, Paula Mattila, Margie Olson, Lorie Poulson, Janice Tessier, Jeanne Tomlinson. Pastor Craig also attended.

Minutes: The minutes from the October 18, 2023 meeting were read and approved as read. Motion to approve by Lucy Diesslin; second by Gail Haney. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Sharon Luthens reported that the Highland Bank had not yet resolved the issue with the \$20.08 "account analysis" charge and that there was an additional \$18.76 service charge in the latest statement. She spoke again with a Highland Bank employee who said she'd take care of it. The October pasty deposit was \$6,615. Sharon paid the 70% to the Building Fund which came to \$3,300.59 and the Zups bill for \$1,620.81 for a net of \$1,693.60 going to the UMW checking account. She also paid \$150 for cleaning. The current balances are \$6,682.79 for checking, \$1,637.37 for savings, \$10,000 in a CD. Linda Hane moved we accept the Treasurer's Report; second by Paula Mattila. Motion passed.

Old Business

- **Mission for knitted/crocheted baby hats:** This was tabled again since Susan Laine is still not available.
- **Highland Bank:** Marge Olson said that we need to get new check stamps for the four church accounts. Jeanne Tomlinson offered to take care of this. She'll need to get the account information from Margie & Mark.
- **Pasty Dough Rolling Machine:** Pastor Craig reported that he'd be driving down to Alexandria after church on Sunday and he will take about a dozen dough balls and one of the O-rings with him. On Monday morning, he'll meet with the lady who will work on setting up the machine with the proper rollers for us and Craig will pick up the machine on his way back after Thanksgiving.
- **Advent Study:** Margie reported that the study is going well. About 15 women have been attending the weekly event. Sharon Luthens indicated she'd not yet received the receipt for the Oct 29 luncheon; Margie will follow up with Sherie Rue.
- **Thank You to Brian & Betsy Forsberg for donation of coffee:** Jeanne Tomlinson couldn't remember if she'd sent a note or not, so she'll make sure she does one this time. Margie Forsberg relayed a message from Brian that we should let him know when we need more.
- **Emma Norton Donation:** After some discussion, Lucy Diesslin moved that we donate \$300 to Emma Norton to be used where it is needed. Second by Janice Tessier. Motion passed.
- **Thank you to Ron Forsman:** Margie had taken care of the sending Ron the note and the check for \$50. The check has been cashed so it's confirmed that he received it.

New Business

- **Christmas Luncheon:** We decided to try for December 13 as the time for our annual

Christmas Luncheon. Jeanne called the Grand Ely Lodge to verify availability. The Events person was not available but will call back. December 6 was suggested as an alternate date. If neither of those are available we'll need to do an "email discussion" to determine another day. Paula Mattila offered to make special ornaments again and Linda Hane offered to take care of the nut cups. Jeanne will ask Patty Rusco to take care of a short devotion.

- **Northwoods Partner donation:** Sharon Luthens reminded us that we hadn't decided yet on our annual donation to Northwoods Partners (in lieu of doing a wreath or tree). Jeanne Tomlinson moved that we give \$100; second by Marge Forsberg. Motion passed.
- **Lap Quilts:** With Donna Rusco having resigned from handling an annual donation of lap quilts and prayer shawls to the Boundary Waters Care Center and Carefree Living residents, Paula Mattila asked if there was any way to know how many are needed. She showed us some of the lap quilts she'd made – many by using fabric from Tootsie Loe. Paula agreed to speak with Donna Rusco to get more information and then contact the two facilities. Paula invited anyone who sews to come to her house and help make more.
- **Carefree Living "Giving Tree":** In the course of our lap-quilt discussion it was mentioned that Carefree Living usually puts up a tree with "gift idea" tags for unnamed residents. Jeanne will check with Carefree to see if they'll be doing that again this year.

We adjourned the business meeting at 10:50 AM and read chapter 8, "Rich in Friendship" in our study book, *Rich in the Things that Count the Most*. This chapter was based on the story in Mark 2:1-12 of the four friends who were determined to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus and ended up lowering him down through the roof of the home where Jesus was to make it happen.

Our December gathering will be our Christmas party. Our next regular meeting will be on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 10 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Jeanne Tomlinson, Secretary