

A Note from Pastor Craig

Nearly everything about December and Christmas sends me to a happy place. There are seemingly an endless number of “triggers.” For instance:

- I see a movie trailer for a Christmas film while getting some business done online.
- I think about how I want to decorate the parsonage for Christmas this year.
- I come across an announcement for a Christmas program either at the school or in the Ely community.
- I hear a Christmas song or a Christmas hymn.
- I think about how I’m going to get my Christmas presents to my family who live in other places.
- I look out the window and see snow falling.
- I read through the Scripture readings for Christmas Eve or Sunday mornings in December.
- I review my calendar for December.
- I see Christmas displays in stores.

You see what I mean? The only way to escape Christmas is to hide out in your house disconnected from radio, TV, or any device. Now I know there are excesses to Christmas everywhere – we are encouraged to spend too much money, keep schedules that are insanely busy, and eat too much rich food packed with empty calories. I know, I know.

But Christmas, at its best, is about the most important things in all the world. Christmas is about opening our hearts, minds, and lives to each other (family and strangers alike) and embracing the wonderful reality of God come near in the Christ-child, born in a manger two thousand years ago, and also present to us up-close in 2019.

I invite each one of you this December to find, once again, the balance between attending those community/family events that make the season so bright and finding time and silence to open yourself to the presence of Jesus. The wonderful line from a Christmas hymn is a lovely summary: *“Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.”*

Our Christmas Eve candlelight service is at 5:30 again this year. I hope you are able to attend. And I pray, the words from another verse from the same hymn, are very real to you this month and into 2020:

*“O holy Child of Bethlehem descend on us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.”*

A Joyous Christmas and Blessed New Year to you!
Pastor Craig

Contact Information and Office Hours for December 2019

Church Office: (218) 365-3355

Parsonage: (218) 365-3716

Email: elymethodist@elyumc.org Website: elyumc.org

Pastor Craig is planning to be in the church office from 9 AM to 11 AM on Tuesdays through Saturdays through most of November. He will be out of town December 1-3, December 13th and on vacation December 25-28.

**Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service
December 24, 2019 - 5:30 PM**

Based upon the wonderful attendance at our 2018 Christmas Eve Candle Lighting, we will be holding it again at 5:30 PM on Tuesday, December 24.

We invite everyone to attend this service as we celebrate not the close of the Advent Season but the birth of God's Son into the world and God's gracious Christmas Gift to all of us: Baby Jesus.

**ALL Church Conference
Wednesday, December 19 at 7 PM**

Our annual Church Conference will be held on Wednesday, December 18 starting at 7 PM in the sanctuary. All church members are invited to attend this conference to finalize and approve the 2020 Budget and nominate/approve the 2020 "Personnel Nominations". (In this case, "Personnel" are church member volunteers.) If you are already a nominee – or if you would like to learn more about possible volunteer opportunities within the church - please come and lend your voice – and vote.

The Administrative Council will meet immediately following the Church Conference in the room at the back of the sanctuary.

**UMW Christmas Luncheon
Wednesday, December 11 at 11:30 AM
at the Grand Ely Lodge Evergreen Restaurant**

Calling all Methodist Women! Take a little break from the busy holiday preparations and join us for a relaxing Christmas lunch at the Grand Ely Lodge on Wednesday, December 11 starting at 11:30 AM. It's your chance to just sit down and be served a nice meal, enjoy some pleasant conversation and not have to do any clean-up afterwards!

We will each be ordering our own meal from the menu so there is no advance payment needed. But we will need to let the GEL know ahead of time for how many places to set up, so please sign up at church, (or call (218) 235-8470 and leave a message), by Sunday, December 8 if you will be able to come.

**Update on our
Reach-Renew-Rejoice
Final Year Contribution**

As mentioned in the November 2019 *FISH*, "Reach-Renew-Rejoice", sometimes tagged as "R3", is a special five Year Campaign Drive set up by our Annual Conference in 2015 to nurture the growth of the United Methodist Church here in the Minnesota Annual Conference. We mentioned how our church's contributions for this final year were less than \$200. But, once again, upon hearing this, our amazing congregation has responded so generously. In just a few weeks' time, our 2019 "R3" fund is already at \$588.25, and we know that contributions yet to come will help us meet our goal

of \$1,000. Thank you so much to all who have contributed so far – and to whomever still plans to contribute. And special thanks to Gary & Betty Ellis in West Virginia for helping “prime the pump”! It’s such a privilege to be a part of this wonderfully responsive church family.

If you’d like to learn more about what the Minnesota Conference has been doing with these funds, please check out following website:

www.minnesotaumc.org/newsdetail/reach-renew-rejoice-5-year-progress-12125380

Gift of Giving **Calling all Volunteers**

The gift lists for all residents of the Boundary Waters Care Center (BWCC) and the Carefree Living facility have been provided and the gifts are in the process of being purchased. Christmas cards are being made by our Sunday School kids. Dates for the BWCC and Carefree Living Christmas parties have been determined. The time for sorting and packing gift bags and distributing gifts is coming fast upon us.

Last year there were folks who had additional gifts they wished to give. If that is the case this year, please contact Tricia Scheffler or Jay Tomlinson so your gifts may be included when we sort and pack the gift bags.

Speaking of sorting and packing the gift bags, our first scheduled sort & pack day is Thursday, December 12th at 3:00 PM. It should take us about an hour to an

hour and a half to complete the task. We will be packing the gifts bags for the residents of the BWCC. We will be delivering these gift bags to the BWCC on Sunday, December 15th, so they can place the names of the residents on the gift bags. Then we will be participating in distributing the gifts to the residents at their Christmas party on Tuesday, December 17th at 3:00 PM. All volunteers are welcome to help sort and pack the gift bags and participate in the distribution of the gifts.

We will again be sorting and packing gift bags for the Carefree Living residents on Thursday, December 19th at 3:00 PM. Again, it should take about an hour to an hour and a half to complete the task. We will then deliver and distribute the gifts to the residents at their Christmas party on December, 24th at 1:00 PM, Christmas Eve day. Again, everyone wishing to help, sort and pack the gift bags on Thursday and then distribute the gifts to the residents on Christmas Eve day is welcome.

2019 Church Bazaar Results

Our bi-annual Church Bazaar was held on Saturday, November 2 and proved to be a very successful one. We had a wide variety of crafts and lots of delicious bake sale items in addition to a very festively decorated fellowship hall to welcome attendees for some good shopping and some yummy desserts and coffee. We raised a total of \$2,523.30 for our church General Fund.

Thank you so much to all of you who made this

bazaar happen – supplying crafts and baked goods, helping make 72 loaves of cardamom bread, making desserts for Coffee ‘N, setting up the tables for the sales and doing such a wonderful job decorating the tables for the desserts and our customers, helping “behind the tables” with the sales, serving the coffee and desserts, sticking around for clean-up afterwards on Sunday – and especially for all of you who came and shopped!! So many people pitched in to make this happen - THANK YOU!!

Small Group Sessions

The Visioning Committee has been studying the responses to the questions from the *Natural Church Development Survey* and while all our results were within the average range for all churches participating in the survey, one of the categories that received a lower value for our church was *Holistic Small Groups*.

The importance of Holistic Small Groups (meaning the relationship of small groups to the whole) to churches ranging in size from 200 to 250 active members is paramount to their health and continued growth. The size of our church congregation allows for us to know everyone in attendance, even if we need a name tag reminder from time to time. It doesn't mean our church does not have small groups. We have our fellowship after the church service, the 10:00 AM morning coffee group at the DQ, our Pastie crew, the UMW, and

the Sunday lunch group at the Steak House, just to name a few.

That said, the Visioning committee felt that a special series of small group sessions expanding on the topics presented at the 2019 Minnesota UMC Annual Conference might lead to regularly scheduled small group meetings for fellowship and learning. Jay Tomlinson and Lucy Diesslin volunteered to be group facilitators.

The first small group session was held on Sunday, November 10th at 1:00 PM with the same topics covered on Monday at 3:30 PM, and on Tuesday evening at 6:00 PM. The topics dealt with the up-and-coming 2020 UMC General Conference, the 2020 Minnesota UMC Annual Conference and *The Way Forward*. Short video presentations helped initiate discussions about the topics and the session lasted between 35 and 45 minutes.

The hope is that as more sessions are scheduled in the future, the attendance would grow for each session and stabilize. The next sessions will be scheduled in January and announced at Sunday worship services in December and in the January newsletter, *The Fish*. Future topics include “*Evangelism for Non-Evangelists*” (2 sessions); “*UMC Seeks to Eliminate Racism*”; “*Assimilating New Members/Community Outreach and Witness*”.

Sessions for each topic will continue to be offered on the Sunday at 1:00 PM, the following Monday at 3:30 PM, and then on Tuesday at 6:00 PM. Sessions are designed to be 35-45 minutes with short video

presentations to stimulate discussion and learning. It is hoped that by offering the same session topic at 3 different times, all who wish to participate will be able to attend at least one of the sessions.

**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN (UMW) – MINUTES
October 23, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 12:56 by Bonnie Berglund.

Members Present: Lucy Diesslin, Tootsie Loe, Donna Rusco, LaVerne Lindholm, Beverly Johnson Janice Tessier, Margie Olson, Marge Forsberg, Carol Linneman.

Bonnie read from the Upper Room as our devotional.

Beverly Johnson (acting recording secretary) read the minutes. There was one correction: A second savings account for \$1000 was opened – not purchased a second CD for : \$1000.

Lucy Diesslin moved that the corrected minutes be approved. Margie Olson seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: Checking Account: \$5380.91 (October pasty deposit included but supplies not paid); Savings Account: \$5226.59 (Withdrawal from account to add to interest to make \$1000 for new CD. Interest was \$177.34 and withdrawal was \$822.66). Savings Account: \$1000.32.
CD: \$10,000 – term is 15 months at 2.35%.

Tootsie Loe moved that we accept the Treasurer’s report; Donna Rusco seconded; motion carried.

Wreath for Northwoods Partners Festival of Trees:
Pick up date is November 20 (or so). Tootsie will coordinate wreath decorating.

Christmas Luncheon: Tootsie moved that we go to the GEL on December 11. Margie seconded. Motion carried. Lucy will contact the GEL.

Old Business:

Bazaar:

Craft Table: Lucy Diesslin, Pam Turnbull, Paula Matilla – Set up at 9:00. Pam has a cash box, Stickers/tags

Bake Table – Donna Rusco...Workers Carol Laine, Bonnie Berglund, and another person
Price for Cardamom Bread is \$8 and pies are \$15.

Change: Lucy Diesslin will take care of change

Advertising: Bonnie Berglund will contact the Echo and Lucy Diesslin will contact the Shopper.

Tootsie Loe will contact Chris Urbas about 3 posters. Check with Marge Markwardt about sitting at Coffee ‘N Table – Beverly Johnson can also sit there (bring a basket for money) Patty will call for desserts – needs to get kitchen help for Coffee ‘N and cleanup (Carol Linneman will help).

Set up tables Friday afternoon after cardamom bread is finished.

Lucy will contact Jeanne about the flyer and hopefully run them off and post them around town.

New Business

Tootsie reported that Gayle Haney no longer wishes to do calling for funeral refreshments. A committee was selected (appointed) to handle funeral refreshment arrangements (Patty Rusco, Margie Olson, Pam Turnbull, Carol Linneman, Patty Niskala)

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 after a motion by Lucy Diesslin and due to time constraints, the Study Book was deferred to November. A delightful Carrot Cake was provided by Linda Hane

Next Month’s meeting will be held on November 20 (not November 27 – the day prior to Thanksgiving). Since Lucy will be out of town, Beverly Johnson will chair the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Beverly Johnson (acting temporary recording secretary)

**ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL – MINUTES
November 20, 2019**

Call To Order: Jay Tomlinson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Attendees (7): Craig Haberman, Bev & Dan Johnson, Margie & Mark Olson and Jay & Jeanne Tomlinson.

Opening: Pastor Craig provided the “Opening Thought” from chapter 3 of Habakkuk emphasizing rejoicing in all circumstances. He then opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes: The October 16, 2019 Ad Council minutes were approved as printed in the November *FISH*. Motion to approve by Beverly Johnson; second by Margie Olson. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report: Mark Olson presented the October 2019 Treasurer’s Report. Receipts & disbursements were \$8,653.09 & \$8,269.96, respectively. Ending balances were: Undesignated Funds \$13,728.72; Building Fund \$3,768.64; Memorial Fund \$10,209.62; Parish Health Ministries \$400; R3 Project \$170.25; Gift of Giving Project \$1,135.16. Motion to accept by Jeanne Tomlinson, second by Margie Olson. Motion approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Trustees:** Margie Olson reported that there was a temporary heat issue in the sanctuary during pasties but it seems to have resolved itself. Mark suggested the cold air coming in through the walls may impact the thermostat temperature sensor. Margie pointed out what looks like possible vandalism to the screen covering a hole under the office stairs as well as handicapped sign on the building. Pastor Craig brought up an issue with the parsonage home line suggesting we may want to consider dropping it. For now, he’ll contact Frontier to look into the problem and will also have the number forwarded to his cell phone.
- **Memorial Fund:** Via a report sent to Jay prior to the meeting, Carol Linneman reported tat \$111.29 was spentfor books & crayons for the kid’s activity bags in memory of Eric Schultz; \$59.05 was spent for a cabinet in the upstairs restroom in memory of Molly Hill; \$185.25 was spent for choir music in memory of John Bakesley. The next meeting,

originally scheduled for February, was postponed to April 28 since Carol will be in Arizona for the winter. At that meeting they will finalize plans for Memorial Sunday which will be on May 10, 2020.

- **Finance:** Bev Johnson reported that the committee met on November 13 to develop the 2020 Budget and submitted the results to the Ad Council for approval. Motion to approve by Mark Olson, second by Margie Olson. Motion passed. This budget will be presented at the Church Conference on December 18 for church approval.
- **Outreach:** Jay Tomlinson reported updates on the *Gift of Giving* project for this year. Tricia Schreffler is working with Jay as they meet with the Carefree Living and Boundary Waters Care Center staff to develop the gift lists. Tricia has volunteered to take over the project next year. The kids will be working on making about 90 cards to go with the gifts. Gift bags have already been purchased. The gifts will be distributed on Dec 17 at 3 PM at BWCC and on Dec 24 at 1 PM at Carefree Living. Bagging date(s) will be scheduled for prior to those dates and will be announced at church.
- **Worship:** Bev Johnson reported that the *Hanging of the Greens* was tweaked a little from what was originally announced and mentioned in the November *FISH*. The decorating will begin at 2 PM with a meal to follow prepared by the Rue family. There were sign up sheets handed out at the November 17 worship service for people to indicate their interest in the different tasks. Dan Johnson will help guide people to the various

tasks to ensure that experienced people will guide any new helpers through each of the tasks. The committee is working on lining up readers for the Christmas Eve program which will once again be at 5:30 PM; Patty Rusco is handling getting readers for the Advent Wreath for each Sunday in Advent.

- **Visioning:** Jay Tomlinson reported that the committee met on November 14 and discussed the responses to specific survey questions. This discussion will be continued at the next meeting. The committee did conclude that for the size of our church and our current programs & activities, we don't really need to pursue developing specific "holistic small groups".

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Progress on Church Handbook:** Jeanne Tomlinson distributed a second draft copy of the revised handbook for additional review & comments. She will send an electronic copy to all Ad Council members with the suggested changes.
2. **Christmas decorations and lights:** Jay purchased replacement lights for sanctuary decorations and the apartment trees.
3. **Sanctuary Lights:** Mark Olson & Dan Johnson have taken care of this.
4. **Sewer line repair:** Margie Olson is waiting on BJ for a date.
5. **Outdoor Lights** (over front porch and old ones in the furnace room): Margie Olson is still waiting to hear back from an electrician.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Welcome Visitor pamphlets update:** Jeanne Tomlinson distributed copies of a revised pamphlet for committee review. A couple corrections were noted. Jeanne will work on getting them copied and ready for the sanctuary.

Correspondence

1. Update letter about our sponsored child who will be turning 18 in April. We will probably be assigned a new child shortly.
2. Request for donations for the **All Nite Grad Party**. We'll discuss a donation early next year.
3. Thank you from Northwoods Partners for our annual gift.

Items of Information

1. **November 2019 Pasty Report:** 797 made; gross income \$4782; cost \$1,353.28. Net Income \$3,428.72.
2. **All Church Conference:** Wednesday, December 18 at 7 PM followed by our Ad Council meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM with a unison reciting of *The Lord's Prayer*.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Tomlinson, Ad Council Secretary

Christmas Poinsettias

It's time to order your Christmas Poinsettias. Orders have to be in by December 12th. There will be a sign-up sheet on the refreshment table in the back of the church on December 1st and December 8th. Cost this year is \$14.00 each. Make checks out to

the Ely United Methodist Church and write Poinsettias on the memo line. Thank you.

A Note from Gail Haney

When I was asked to be hostess for church funerals in 2012, I did not anticipate keeping the position for seven years. The main reason I accepted the job was remembering how grateful I was when my mother died. My home church provided a meal for fifty people, though Mom had been absent from the area for seven years. This relieved a stress-filled time for my brothers and myself.

I continued as your hostess for seven years. I continued doing so only because of the generous volunteers who donated their time, efforts, food, friendship and fellowship,

I thank everyone who helped provide me and our church-related families with the care and comfort we were able to provide.

Thank you.

Gail Haney

