

# *The Growing Edge*

*(A Monthly Publication of Fridley United Methodist Church)*

*Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the  
Transformation of the World.*

## *December 2023*

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### **ADVENT Begins Dec. 3**

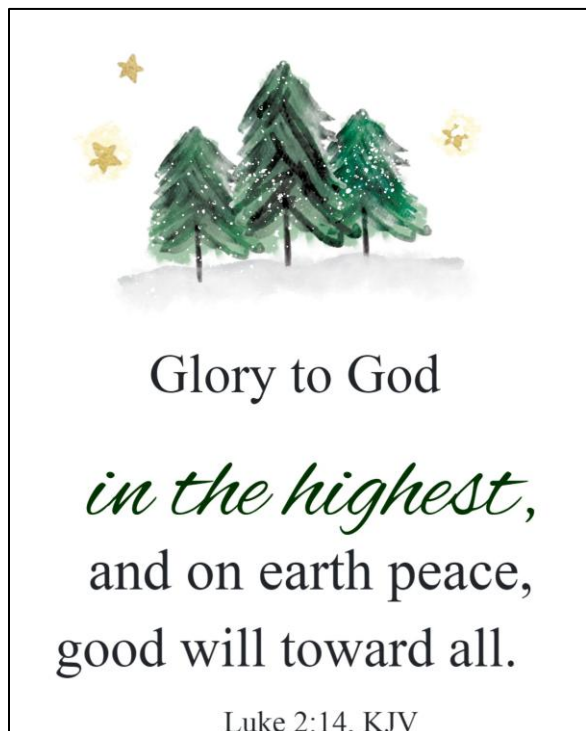


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### **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

December 24 @ 7:00 PM

**All are invited to worship with us!**



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### **December 25, Christmas Day**



### **Prayer Chain Information**

*Call to share your joys  
and concerns:*

*National United Methodist  
Prayer Chain:  
1-800-251-2468*

## DARKNESS & LIGHT

Stores are playing “Joy to the World,” Starbucks is serving Gingerbread Tea Lattes in red cups, and trees on every corner are aglow with radiant lights. We are rushing full force toward Christmas. Soon we’ll be lighting candles and hearing John declare, “God is light and in God there is no darkness at all,” and Isaiah proclaim, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”

Our towns and cities are filled with images of bustle and brightness. Yet the coming of the Christ child does not take place in a splash of artificial light, but in the darkness of night.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the season of Advent – the four weeks leading up to Christmas – comes during some of the longest nights of the year. We often refer to darkness in negative terms. We think of the darkness of terror in our world – in Palestine and Israel, Ukraine, and Uvalde, Texas. There is also the darkness of anguish in our lives – depression, addiction, angst, illness, trauma. Terror and anguish weigh heavy on our hearts.

Advent is not a time to artificially light the darkness, but to trust that even in the depths of darkness God is present. God is with those who lose their lives in acts of terror; God is with those who engage in acts of compassion; God is with those who march for justice; God is with those who seek to walk more gently on our planet; God is with those who struggle with their own dark nights of the soul. The season of Advent is a time of germinating, where even in the darkest places, God’s thrill of hope takes root.

On Christmas Eve we will hear Isaiah’s words, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined” (Is 9:2). We will welcome the Christ child, Emmanuel, God with Us, knowing that Christ is present even in the darkest corners of our lives. Our worship services on December 24<sup>th</sup> will be at 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM, with different sermons and music. Consider attending one or both of these services, and inviting a family member, neighbor, or friend.

With peace, Donna



## Poem: BLESSED ARE YOU WHO BEAR THE LIGHT

*By Jan Richardson*

***Blessed are you***  
who bear the light  
in unbearable times,  
who testify  
to its endurance  
amid the unendurable,  
who bear witness  
to its persistence  
when everything seems  
in shadow  
and grief.

***Blessed are you***  
in whom  
the light lives,  
in whom  
the brightness blazes—  
your heart  
a chapel,  
an altar where  
in the deepest night  
can be seen  
the fire that  
shines forth in you  
in unaccountable faith,  
in stubborn hope,  
in love that illumines  
every broken thing  
it finds.



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### **ADVENT WORSHIP SERMONS**

Dec. 3: Meanwhile

Dec. 10: Surprised

Dec. 17: Light

Dec. 24: Rejoice

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Worship Service at 7:00 PM

– Star Light

**All are invited!**

In Advent, we celebrate and anticipate the earth-shaking, life-transforming good news that God is coming to us. Watch out, get ready, God is on the way.



**YOU ARE INVITED TO WORSHIP WITH US!**



On December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM please join our church family as we celebrate the birth of our Savior on Christmas Eve with a Candlelight Service.

Let's pack our sanctuary with Praise, Prayer and Amazement. One incredible birth brings the possibility of new birth to all of creation!

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## JOURNEY OF GENEROSITY

One of the most profound statements ever uttered in the English language is "there are no atheists. There are only those who know, and those who don't know, what God they serve." In other words, we all orient ourselves toward some highest good. It's merely a question whether that highest good is the transcendent, triune God, or something of this world.

The same is true of church. Everyone goes to church. It's just that some of us know, and some of us don't know, what church we attend. Many of us attend a secular church that has little room for growth or compassion. For these churches, there is only fealty to a particular ideology or avocation. I know because I have attended many such churches.

To those who might be languishing in a secular church, I would say "come and see." Come and see what it's like to attend a church filled with disciples of Jesus Christ who welcome each other as Christ has welcomed them. Come and see Fridley United Methodist Church.

Come and see how Joyce Dahlberg and Linda Paulsen have taught me theology. Come and see how Donn Erickson and Jim Jachymowski place their hand on my shoulder every time they talk to me as if to say "for lo I am with you always until the end of the age." Come and see how Marcia and Ginny Erickson give me a hug every Sunday. Come and see how Tim, Terry and I hold down the bass section of the choir. Come and see how I get a beautiful poem every so often from Gene Kohl. Come and see how Cindy lovingly gives me a hard time about being overdressed.



But most of all, come and see how we divide one another's sorrow and multiply one another's joy. Come and see how we, as a family of God, get a little bit closer each day to being able to say "it is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

I began attending Fridley UMC a little over a year ago, and, if you'll forgive me for plagiarizing *The Chosen*, I was one way back then, and I am completely different now. What happened in between was Jesus and the people of this church. I extend my deep gratitude to you all for profoundly changing the trajectory of my life.

*Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,  
Ethan Light*

**COMMITTEE LEADERS** please remember to send your agenda and meeting minutes to Brenda in the office for our permanent church files.

**EDUCATION**



**EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Sunday School starts 11:30 AM.

**LINKING FAITH AND LIFE CLASS (Advent Study)** Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation, Will Willimon. We have 10 books available, please see Jennie Kratzer. *(This is the same study as Bishop Lanette Plambeck is offering via Zoom.)*

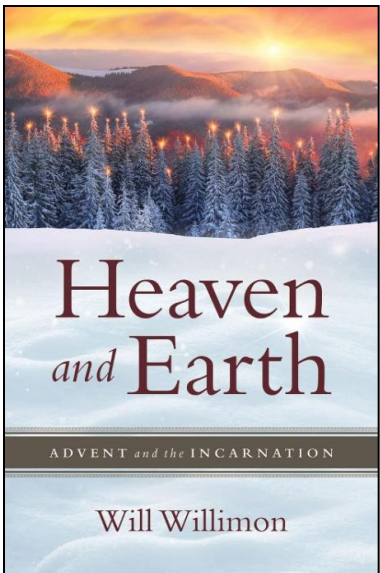
**Children are welcome to attend worship with their family.** Children’s coloring pages and crayons can be found on the back sanctuary table.

ALSO (mid-week learning opportunity)

**WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE SHAPING** at 9:30 AM.  
Come join us in the lounge, or join us by Zoom.

**MEN'S BIBLE STUDY:** A Men's Bible Study Group meets every Friday morning at 7:30 AM at the Sunset Grill in Blaine. We eat breakfast; take turns leading that week's lesson, guiding us through a reading of scripture, story and discussion. We share prayer concerns. All men are welcome. For more information contact Bill Ekstrum.

**A GATHERING FOR GUYS:** *Grit & Spit* meets every Saturday at 9:00 AM in the Lounge. Join us for coffee and courageous conversation and prayer. See you there.



**LENTEN STUDY:**

It’s not within our own power to make a fresh start. If we’re to have a future different from the past, it must come as a gift, something not of our devising. What we need is a God who refuses to be trapped in eternity, a God who not only cares about us but is willing to show up among us and do something with us, here, now.



In *Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation*, Will Willimon introduces you to the God who does just that, bringing heaven to earth and changing everything. In Advent, we celebrate and anticipate the earth-shaking, life-transforming good news that God is coming to us. Watch out. Get ready. God is on the way.

Join Bishop Lanette Plambeck for a four-session Advent Study via Zoom on Tuesday evenings beginning November 28. The schedule is:

- **Nov. 28**, 7-8:15 p.m. Chapter 1: Meanwhile (Mark 12:24-37), pg. 1-36.
- **Dec. 5**, 7-8:15 p.m. Chapter 2: Surprised (Mark 1:1-8), pg. 37-70.
- **Dec. 12**, 7-8:15 p.m. Chapter 3: Light (John 1:6-8, 19-28), pg. 71-94.
- **Dec. 19**, 7-8:15 p.m. Chapter 4: Rejoice (Luke 1:26-55), pg. 95-140.

**YOU CAN REGISTER** at: <https://www.minnesotaumc.org/2023-advent-study-heaven-and-earth>

Order your book through Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Earth-Incarnation-William-Willimon/dp/1791029035/>

# MISSIONS



## ADVENT MISSION OFFERING

Please refer to the Advent Mission Offering letter included in this Growing Edge.  
Thank you for your continued support and generosity to our missions.

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## FAMILY TABLE

Due to our regular Family Table Saturday being so close to Christmas, we will not be serving a meal in December. Please join us as a guest or volunteer in the new year! The next meal will be Saturday January 27, 2024. May you be blessed and be a blessing to others this Advent and Christmas time.

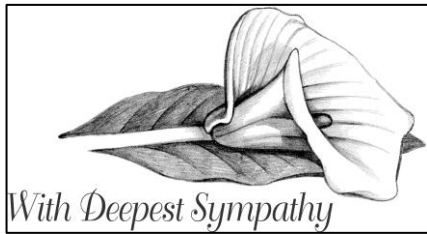
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**REMINDER:** Please bring your own coffee cup for fellowship time to help with the 3Rs of conservation: *Reduce, Reuse and Recycle*. Thanks!

# CHURCH ALBUM



Blessings to Lee Wallace and Judy Owen on their wedding on November 26.



Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of Bob Schuldt upon his passing.

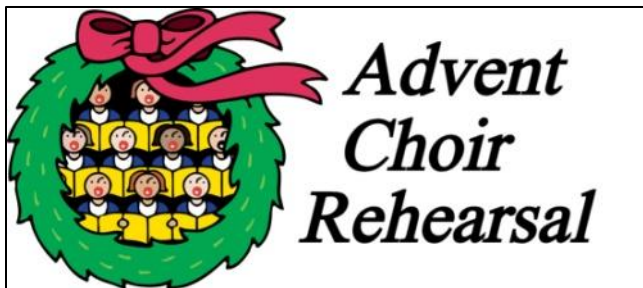
*When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure.*

## 55+

### 55+ BREAKFAST!

55+ folks, join us for breakfast at Perkins at 7520 University Ave in Fridley, every *first* Monday of each month at 9:30 AM. This is just a social time – come, relax and enjoy the company of FUMC friends.

## EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



### ADVENT CHOIR

An Advent choir is being formed to sing on December 10<sup>th</sup> during our worship service. A sign-up sheet will be on the choir room door. Rehearsals will be Wednesday November 29<sup>th</sup> and

December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary. Come join us. Questions?? Call Sharon White or see her at church.

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### ADVENT CHRISTMAS DECORATING

December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 AM

Join us to decorate our church.

Your help is needed to adorn our sanctuary and other parts of our church for the Advent Season. We will decorate on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 AM. *There is a sign up sheet in the hallway.*

Many hands will make the decorating go fast!

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### KNITTING/CROCHET GROUP

All are welcome to join us on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the lounge. The next time we will get together is December 12. Questions? Call Evie Skurich.





## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



**ALL WOMEN** of the church are invited to the UWF December Holiday Potluck that will be on **Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 – 8:30 PM** at Banfill Crossing Apartments at 8310 University Avenue, Fridley, MN 55432.

We plan to meet at Banfill Crossing at 6:00 PM and will eat at 6:30 PM. We will be carpooling from church – planning to leave the parking lot at 5:45 p.m. Parking is limited so we are trying to get as many to carpool as possible. If you are willing to drive, please contact Cindy letting her know how many your car will hold. Each person that drives will need a parking ticket from Banfill Crossing to ensure your car will not be towed in the event of a large snowfall and the parking lot would need to be plowed. If you plan to carpool, please contact Cindy Doerr. If you plan on driving alone, please make sure you obtain a parking ticket from Brenda prior to the event. (Brenda's office hours are: Tuesday, Dec. 5, 9-2:30; Wednesday, Dec. 6, 9-3:30; Thursday, Dec. 7, 9-2:30. Brenda will not be in the office the day of the potluck.)

Bring a dish to share and come ready to celebrate the reason for the season! There will be music and fun!

(Our Christmas offering this year will going to Hayes Elementary and Stevenson Elementary).

**NAOMI FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE** will have a short meeting December 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM in the choir room. We will be sending Christmas cards to the shut-ins. Marilyn Forsberg will give a devotional message, but we will have no treats.

**RUTH CIRCLE** will be attending the **ALL WOMEN'S** Christmas party. and Potluck on Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you there!

Fridley United Women in Faith,

Thank you for your generous donation of \$150.00 received on 10/16/2023. Your gift is already hard at work providing nutritious meals for children, families, and seniors in our community. Many thanks for being part of our mission to end hunger together.

Sincerely, *Allison O'Toole, CEO of Second Harvest Heartland*



A great thank you to all who helped with the Funeral Service for Harriet Stubbs and the Memorial Service for Edna Garrison. Everyone's help is so very much appreciated. For all your contributions, the Stubbs and Garrison families were so very pleased. Many hands make work easy. May each of you be blessed with the kindness you give and share with others.

*Jinny Erickson, and Funeral Reception Committee.*

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*May you all have a Blessed  
Advent and Christmas Season!*

