

THE PARISH CONNECTION

December 2023

A Community of Faith, Inspired by Christ, Gathered to Grow, Empowered to Serve.

Lectionary Readings

December 3, 2023

1st Sunday of Advent (Purple)

Isa 64:1-9; Ps 80:1-7, 17-19 (UMH 801);

1 Cor 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

December 10, 2023

2nd Sunday of Advent (Purple)

Isa 40:1-11; Ps 85:1-2, 8-13 (UMH 806);

2 Pet 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 17, 2023

3rd Sunday of Advent (Purple)

Isa 61:1-4; 8-11; Ps 126 (UMH 847);

1 Thess 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24, 2023

4th Sunday of Advent (White)

2 Sam 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55 (UMH 199);

Rom 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Christmas Eve: Isa 9:2-7; Ps 96 (UMH 815);

Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

December 31, 2023

1st Sunday after Christmas Day (White)

Isa 61:10-62:3; Ps 148 (UMH 861);

Gal 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

IN OUR PRAYERS

Joys—Birth of great-grandchildren, Combined worship service, Missionary Temba's visitation, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, hunting season

Concerns—Shawn, Mark, Jamie, Todd, Mike Kirk, Bernie, Larson, Edison, Betty, Jim, Terri, Israel, Ruth, Ivan, Jennie, Sue Ruble's mom Bonnie, Mary, Bonnie, Gary, Catherine, Libby, Hank, Elden, Mardell, those suffering from cancer, serious illness & injuries

Remembering—Family and friends of Bonnie Weyer Lescarbeau and Marilyn Zurcher

Hanging of the Greens will be celebrated at all three churches on Sunday, Dec. 3rd. Come help decorate our churches for the season.

Charge Conference 2023
Thursday, December 7th
at Deer Park UMC @ 6 p.m.

WRP Bible Study: On Wednesday, Nov. 29th at 6 pm on Zoom we began a new **Advent Study, An Unlikely Advent**. Please feel free to join us for this four-week study and let Diane, Jan T. or Heather know if you'd like to join us so we have enough books.

Christmas Tradition Idea: Beginning December 1st, read one chapter of the book of Luke in the Bible each evening. There are 24 chapters. On Christmas Eve you will have read an entire account of Jesus's life and wake up on Christmas morning knowing WHO and WHY we celebrate.

Schedule of Christmas Activities

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|---------|--|
| Dec 8 | Clear Lake Cookie/Rosette Sale & Baked Potato Supper, 3:30-6:30 p.m. |
| Dec 16 | Emerald Community Holiday Faith Family Church Craft and Bake Sale 1:30-5:30pm |
| Dec. 17 | CL Sunday school program 9:45 7pm Bells and Choir Concert at the First Lutheran Church |
| Dec 24 | Combined Christmas Eve Service 4:00 Clear Lake |
| Dec 27 | FF Fun Day School Program @ 6:00 |

Zoom: Please use the following information to join us Sundays for worship at 9:45 a.m.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88613652777?pwd=Ulp aSVhGN0g1Qnc3VDV5T0Jhci83UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 1365 2777
Passcode: 421072

Willow River Parish College Boxes and Youth

Breadbake: The youth will make homemade bread and sweetbreads and pack college boxes on Saturday, Dec. 2nd from 5pm-11pm at the CL Church basement. If you have a college student, be sure their address is turned in to Diane, Jan T or Heather before that date. Each church will collect items for the boxes. All sorts of individually wrapped snacks and goodies are appreciated by the students during their finals. Hot cocoa and hot cider packs, microwave popcorn, granola bars, cheese and crackers, candy, gum, Christmas candies—all are welcome and appreciated!

The bread will be for sale on Sunday morning at respective church services. Proceeds to the Youth.

December Birthdays

Benjamin Pietz	12/2
Julie Longfellow	12/5
Faness Johnson	12/6
Graham Millermon	12/6
Beth Thompson	12/11
Oliver Wood	12/12
Andrea Jilek	12/14
Michael Stark	12/18
Noah Pederson	12/21
Patty Warner	12/21
Gail Kuhl	12/23
Liz Larson	12/29
Cindy Warner	12/30

December Anniversaries

Neil & Joan Lillie	12/30
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WRP Youth: Youth are planning a Christmas party for Tuesday, December 26th @ 6:30 pm. Place to be determined. Bring your favorite Christmas treat. Pizza will be provided. Watch for more information!

Deadline for Jan Newsletter is Dec 26th

Willow River Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/Willow-River-Parish-103076225619623/>. Please send any information you would like posted to Heather Greene mr.mrs.greene5@gmail.com or Gail Kuhl kuhlg@cltcomm.net

DECEMBER WORSHIP MINISTRIES

Clear Lake

Dec 3rd	Reader: Youth Acolyte/PwrPt: Lily Avery Brunch: Jan
Dec 10th	Reader: John Koerper Acolyte/PwrPt: Ben Avery Coffee: John & Stacia
Dec 17th	Reader: Christmas Program Acolyte/PwrPt: Jordan Blanchard Coffee: United Women of Faith
Dec 24th	Reader: Lily Avery Acolyte/PwrPt: Oliver Gorres Coffee: None
Dec 31st	10 am Comb. Service/Potluck at FF

Counters for December: Carla & Jan

Faith Family

Dec 4th	Debbie Stevens
Dec 11th	Terri Wilson
Dec 18th	Millermon Family
Dec 25th	Paul Webster
Dec 31st	Combined Worship

Ruby's Pantry distributes food at Pop-Up Pantry locations across MN & WI. There is no income or residency requirement and for a \$25 bundle donation you will receive an abundance of groceries. One food distribution will take place **December 9th** in the **SMC LTD** parking lot at 9000 Griffin Street E in Amery. This is a drive-thru distribution from **7:30 am to 9:00 am**. Volunteers are greatly appreciated and should arrive at **6:45 am**. If you would like to volunteer or if you would like more information, please contact 715-268-7390 or email office.ameryucc@gmail.com.

Another Ruby's Pantry location is: 1245 County Highway CC, New Richmond, Wisconsin 54017, which distributes on the 3rd Thursday of the Month. Registration begins at 5:00 PM. Food bundles available 5:00-7:00 PM. Hosted by: Faith Community Church. Check out their website www.rubyspantry.org to find a location and time that works for you.

Pastor's Pen: The Advent season just started. It's in December, so it can be confusing—we might think it's the end of the church calendar and that Epiphany marks the beginning. But actually, Advent is always the start of the church calendar.

In the Season of Advent, we prepare four candles, lighting them one each week. The pulpit color, including the candles, is purple. Purple is used not only in Advent but also in Lent because it signifies a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice. During this

period, we remember the Christ who came to us and wait for the Christ to come.

Lighting candles during Advent is an old tradition. People often think of Advent candles being lit in churches, but in Germany, families also light four purple candles at home. In the first week, they light one candle, then two in the second week, taking time to remember the love and sacrifice of the Christ and pray for the Christ to come.

When you read my pastor's pen, I'll likely be praying daily surrounded by Advent candles. I encourage you to do the same at home during Advent by lighting candles for about 30 minutes to an hour each day. In seminary, I made Advent candles with a liturgy professor. Next year, I plan to make my own to welcome the Advent season. If you light candles and spend Advent praying each day, the Advent and Christmas season will be even more meaningful for you.

Advent candles have names and meanings for each candle.

The first candle is called the 'Prophecy Candle,' symbolizing Hope. During the first Sunday of Advent, we reflect on Isaiah 60:2-3: 'See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.'

The second candle is the 'Bethlehem Candle,' representing Peace. On the second Sunday of Advent, we meditate on Isaiah 9:1-2: 'Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past, he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future, he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned.'

The third candle is the 'Shepherd Candle,' signifying Joy. (In some cultures and regions, the third candle may be pink or red.) On the third Sunday of Advent, we ponder Isaiah 35:10: 'And those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.'

The fourth candle is the 'Angel's Candle,' representing Love. On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we reflect on Isaiah 9:6-7: 'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and

upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.'

Every day, when you light the candle, turn off the lights and quiet the house, including the TV. Take a moment for reflection, read some scriptures, or say a prayer. You can also share daily experiences with your families or friends. Just sit in silence and look at the light or organize your thoughts. Enjoy some music while sipping tea. Instead of pushing yourself, just relax in the moment.

Just like someone who devoutly spends the 40 days of Lent can truly feel the joy of resurrection, spending the four weeks of Advent devoutly will let you experience the wonder and gratitude of Christmas more deeply.



Blessings,
Pastor Hakki

Deer Park UMC News:

Greetings everyone!

Once again the 2023 Charge conference is soon to be behind us and all the paperwork is done and that is a good feeling.

Get well wishes to those in our parish that are struggling with health issues. It is our Prayer that God will bless you with healing and peace.

May this Blessed season bring you love and peace in your hearts, homes and communities and the whole world.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season with family and friends, also a happy, healthy and warm New Year.

Blessings from your Church family in Deer Park.

Send Offering to: Janice Thompson, 110 North Street E, Deer Park, WI 54007

4th Quarter Noisy Can--Grace Place

Clear Lake UMC News

- Coffee after church
 - Potluck-1st Sunday of each Month after church.
 - Food shelf donations any Sunday
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Send Offering to: Josy Wood, 260 40th Avenue,
Clear Lake, WI 540045

Noisy Can: 4th qtr. Food Pantry

Clear Lake Church Cancellations: In the event of bad weather, please contact Roger Blanchard 715-263-2690 to find out if worship services are canceled.



Bell Choir: Christmas Bell Choir and First Lutheran Choir Concert @ First Lutheran Church in Clear Lake. 7 PM on Sunday, December 17, 2023.

Clear Lake Midweek School: On Wed. December 20th we will meet for Christmas Caroling and treats. We would love to invite anyone that would love to sing some Christmas Carols and share some Christmas Cheer to join us.

Dorcas Piecemakers Work Days: On Monday, Dec. 4th, maybe the 11th also and Monday, December 18th we will meet to sew on new Christmas banners and pillowcases from 1-3 pm. We invite all who can visit, iron or match fabrics to join in our afternoons!

Shop with RaiseRight (formerly Scrip): If you want to place a Raise Right order, please contact Andrea Jilek 263-2575. Nilssen's gift cards can be ordered at any time, too.



Clear Lake Christmas Cookie and Stuffed Baked Potato Sale: Friday, December 8th from 3:30-6:30 pm-- **Indoors** this year. All church family members please donate 6 dozen Christmas Cookies. Workers needed, watch for sign up sheets back of church or contact Debi Ahrens at 715-441-5477.

Meeting Minutes

Nov. 1, CLUMC Ad. Council Min.

Secretary and Treasurer reports approved.

Old Business:

1. Thanksgiving Eve Community Service @ First Lutheran, 7 pm, Bells Play
2. Christmas Eve Sunday- 3 normal services
3. 4:00 pm Service at Clear Lake
4. Dec. 31, New Year's Eve 5th Sunday 10 am @ Faith Family
5. Thank you note and GC will be given to Justin and Oliver Wood for Lawn Maintenance
7. Salvation Army Bell Ringing on Thurs, Nov. 16th; 8am-8pm, need more to ring

New Business:

1. Worked on our Budget, will meet after Church Nov. 12 to finalize
2. Church insurance went up \$1700, Josy will check in with Church Mutual and get one other quote.
3. Apportionments went up over \$5000, Pastor will call
4. Sound doesn't work on our Zoom, Pastor will check it
5. Pastor attending Mission Conf. in Atlanta, 11/28-29

Closed with Prayer

**Clear Lake United Methodist Church Special Ad Board Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2023**

Opened Meeting with prayer.

Discussed the Parish numbers.

With an increase of over \$5000 in the apportionments a motion was made to allow Josy to pay all or part of our monthly apportionments as needed per the money available. Motion by Debi, 2nd by Jennie. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Carla to approve the 2024 Clear Lake United Methodist Church Budget. 2nd by Debi. Motion carried.

Closed Meeting with The Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, Dec. 6, 4 pm

CHRISTMAS FOR CHILDREN: The CL UMC will be sponsoring the "Christmas for Children" drive again this year to provide gifts for area children who otherwise may not receive gifts at Christmas time. "Christmas for Children" is designed to reach more needs of our local community. We are coming up on our 30th year and are so grateful for all of the support that we have received from everyone.

Anyone wishing to donate items to "Christmas for Children" can do so by leaving them at True Value Hardware, or our church November 6th, through December 5. All gifts will be given to children ages 0-18 in the Clear Lake School District Area.

If you are in need of gifts for your children or if you know of other families in the Clear Lake School District area who are in need of Christmas gifts for their children, we would like to hear from you. Call Debi Ahrens 715-441-5477 or Diane Blanchard 715-263-2690 (if no answer, please leave a message). All names will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you for your support.

UWF November Minutes: No meeting in November but met to make cookies for the Baked Potato Supper.

Clear Lake Sunday School Christmas Program "What Child is This?"



**Sunday, Dec.
17th 9:45 am
during the
Service.**

Please join us for
Christmas Coffee
following the
service.

By Bishop Hee-Soo Jung: *"Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" Ephesians 4:3.*

Our world is facing much division, with issues of wars, responses to major natural disasters, polarization of political stances, and an inability to negotiate a middle ground. As Christians, we must focus on the essence of the Gospel so we can live in the way of Christ. We must obey the prayer of Jesus, Who prayed that His followers might become one – as He and the Father were one.

Suppose the Gospel were divided into "left" and "right" ideologies based on the mantras of our culture. With that, the Church would fail with the first step in following Jesus! Rather, let's turn our

focus to Jesus, Who called us to do difficult things, like truly honoring differences, living united, and even loving our enemies. Only Jesus can be the savior of the world, so let's obey His often difficult but important teachings that lead to an abundant life.

Theological prejudice fractures the light that confronts the darkness. The power to fight darkness is not separation but Christian unity and perseverance in love. Since we are members of the body of Christ, we must work hard and strive to love and understand one another no matter what. Suppose the church continues to divide, follows the cultural ways, and focuses on a narrow-minded ideology that favors only one side. In that case, it will fracture the light of holiness and leave us with nothing distinct from culture.

Let's take on the way of Jesus! Let's pray to understand each other, seek ways to strengthen relationships - even through tears, and stay together - even though it may be difficult. I believe that the Holy Spirit is like lubricating oil that grinds away the rough parts and makes us into beautiful and generous people. We are being made perfect in God's love and grace.

I believe the secret to living as siblings in Christ is to become people of prayer and perseverance in faith. I pray that our most significant work will be to love the Gospel and to bear witness to it so that our efforts will not be only in defense of the institutional church but the fruit of obedience to Christ Jesus.



2nd Annual

Emerald Holidaze

Emerald Community Park ~ Emerald, WI

Saturday, December 16th 2023

1:30	Fires lit in the Community Park	
3:00-5	Reindeer Acres Flight Team (Souvenir photos with Santa & Reindeer \$20)	
5:30	Light Parade (Line Up at 5:00)	
All Day:	Music, Campfire, Food & Beverages, Reindeer Games, S'mores Station, Craft/Bake Sale at Faith Family Church	
	Pending Weather : Icy Bowling with Turkey's & Chickens, build a snowman contest & skating rink, bring your skates!	
	For more information, to sign up for the parade, AND/OR to make a monetary donation, please message us on Facebook (Emerald Community) or contact Angela Jeske 715-781-5416	

(Please Note: NO PARKING on County Road D "Main Street" after 4:00pm)



Faith Family Church News:

Thank you to those that set up the church for Christmas!

Faith Family Ad. Board Highlights:

Important dates and current information from our last meeting notes:

• **Charge Conference Thursday, December 7, at Deer Park Church at 6:00 p.m.**

• **Hanging of the Greens: Sunday, December 3.**

• Christmas Eve Services TBA

• Children's Program TBA

Positions

1. Secretary

2. Anchor of Hope Leader - Heather resigned as of December 31st.

NEXT MEETING: December 14 at 6:00 on Zoom.

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

Stay tuned for more information:

- ☐ December 3rd hanging of the greens
- ☐ December 7th: charge conference
- ☐ December 11th Decorate the town.
- ☐ December 14th: Ad board on zoom
- ☐ December 16th Emerald Holiday.
- ☐ Christmas program Wednesday, December 27th

FUN DAY SCHOOL CORNER:

We ended our month together again with a nerf war because we want to be champions of Jesus just like Paul. We learned our fruits of the spirit and took time planning for our Christmas Program which we plan to present for all of you and our parents, grandparents and friends on Wednesday, December 27th. .

Noisy Cans--4th Quarter--Humane Society
Send Offering to: Terri Wilson, 3127 200th Ave,
Glenwood City, WI 54013

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK:

[Faith Family Church | Facebook](#)

ANCHOR OF HOPE:

DS Peace has announced that the cabinet has decided to put Anchor of Hope on a pause at the beginning of the year. Our leaders have decided we wanted to make sure to have a plan for continuum of care we are transitioning to Thursdays this month so we are consistent with the church of the resurrection and those that are interested in continuing to meet are able to continue to meet on zoom with the Testimony Thursday option that the church of the resurrection already offers. During our Saturday social we will be discussing the advent devotional by Kate Bowler which can be found: <https://courses.katebowler.com/courses/advent-devotional/>

Our website can be found at

<https://anchorofhopeemerald.wixsite.com/my-site>

[ANCHOR OF HOPE](#) Facebook Live.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 830 9477 1703 Passcode: 781739

WHO WE ARE:

At Anchor of Hope we believe we are all in recovery at some point in our lives may it be mental health, addiction, drugs, alcohol, food, grief, trauma, all around inclusion, our society, our church or so much more.

HOW TO CONNECT:

If you need to connect with someone from Anchor of Hope please reach out to Heather Greene anchorofhopeemerald@gmail.com or 612-799-6215 or District Superintendent Peace pkim@wisconsinumc.org or 608-478-4527.

WHAT'S HAPPENING:

Advent devotional by Kate Bowler

Saturdays: Devotional Study 2pm on Facebook
Testimony Thursday (Pizza and Testimonies @ 6:00pm- discussion at 7:00pm. Via zoom and in person)

Mission Moment: UMCOR Hygiene Bags

PRAY WITH US: Every month we create a monthly prayer that you can pray every day with us.

Anchor of Hope December Prayer:

Almighty God, thank you for your grace and guidance. Show us our path and help us to find our way in the darkness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



THE WILLOW RIVER PARISH
CLEAR LAKE, DEER PARK, FAITH FAMILY
420 4TH AVENUE – PO BOX 269
CLEAR LAKE, WI. 54005-0269

Address Service Requested

The Willow River Parish United Methodist Churches
Parish Office Phone: 715-263-2700
E-Mail: willowriverparish@gmail.com
Website: www.willowriverparish.org

Willow River Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/Willow-River-Parish-103076225619623/>

Hakki Min, Pastor
Office Hours: Tues-Friday 1-3 pm

Parish Secretary
Email: wrpsecretary@gmail.com
Office Hours: To Be Determined

Amanda Millermon, Parish Treasurer
Email: WRParishconnect@gmail.com

Heather Greene, Anchor of Hope Lay Supply
Email: anchorofhopeemerald@gmail.com
Phone: 612-799-6215

Sunday Worship
8:30 a.m. – Deer Park 9:45 a.m. – Clear Lake
11:00 a.m. – Faith Family (also Zoom)

Children's Church School
"Fun Day" School—4:30 pm on Wednesdays @ Faith Family
Sunday School—9:55 am on Sundays @ Clear Lake