

THE PARISH CONNECTION

December 2025

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

Lectionary Readings

DEC 07 | 2nd Sunday of Advent (Purple or Blue)

Isa 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-7, 18-19 (UMH 795);
Rom 15:4-13; Matt 3:1-12

DEC 14 | 3rd Sunday of Advent (Purple or Blue)

Isa 35:1-10; Luke 1:46b-55 (UMH 199);
James 5:7-10; Matt 11:2-11

DEC 21 | 4th Sunday of Advent (Purple or Blue)

Isa 7:10-16; Ps 80:1-7, 17-19 (UMH 801);
Rom 1:1-7; Matt 1:18-25

DEC 24 | Christmas Eve (White or Gold)

Isa 9:2-7; Ps 96 (UMH 815);
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

DEC 25 | Christmas Day (White or Gold)

Isa 52:7-10; Ps 98 (UMH 818);
Heb 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

DEC 28 | 1st Sunday after Christmas Day (White or Gold)

Isa 63:7-9; Ps 148 (UMH 861);
Heb 2:10-18; Matt 2:13-23

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.



In the event of harsh weather due to too low temperatures or heavy snow and each church decides to close, we will have a Zoom worship at 10 a.m.

IN OUR PRAYERS:

Joys—Family Night, The beauty of late autumn nature, Hanging of the Greens and attempts and prayers to make the church more active, Thanksgiving, and Family Hymn Sing

Concerns—Tim Dreier, Linda O., Debbie, Penny, Meghan, Vern, Tim Buhr, Holly, Veronica, all countries with wars—Ukraine, Israel, Gaza—especially the children, Sheldon, migrants, immigrants, and refugees under the threat of forced deportation, Betty L, Craig Paulson, Jamie Pittman, Mark Halverson, Tom, Bruce, Ardys, and Dennis Rosen

Remembering—Family and Friends of Ruth Severson, Jim Fouks, Pete Fall, Rick, and Gene Pribnow



Zoom: Please use the following information to join us on Sundays for worship at **9:45 a.m.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88613652777?pwd=UlpSVhGN0g1Qnc3VDV5T0Jhci83UT09>
Meeting ID: 886 1365 2777 Passcode: 421072

5th Sunday Schedule

March 29, 2026 --- Clear Lake
May 31, 2026 --- Emerald
August 30, 2026 --- Clear Lake will be celebrating their 150th Anniversary
November 29, 2026 --- Deer Park
January 31, 2027 --- Emerald

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 kuhlq@cltcomm.net

WRP Bible Study:

We are planning on an Advent Study beginning Wed. Dec. 3rd, 10th and 17th on Zoom at 6 pm. The group will decide when the 4th gathering will be with Christmas Eve falling on Wed. We will be studying The Christmas Letters by Magrey R. DeVega. Imagine that, tucked among the piles of Christmas letters from family and friends, there waits for you letters from the God who created you, loves you, and draws near to you in Jesus. They give us the earliest glimpses about what the church believed about the Incarnation- the miracle that God became human. Please let Diane Blanchard know if you would like to join us for this 4-week study.

December Birthdays

Benjamin Pietz	12/2
Julie Longfellow	12/5
Faness Johnson	12/6
Stan Larson	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

December Anniversaries

Neil & Joan Lillie	12/30
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Schedule of Christmas Activities

Dec 12	Clear Lake Cookie/Rosette Sale & Baked Potato Supper, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
Dec 13	Emerald Community Holiday 1-4pm
Dec 21	CL Sunday school program 8:30
Dec 21	FF Church Christmas Program
Dec 24	Christmas Eve Services
Jan. 4	Bells Concert First Lutheran 10 am

January Newsletter Deadline is Dec. 27th

Clear Lake Youth sent 2 goats and a flock of chickens to Heifer International for families to have food and begin an ag business. It was given on a 3X match- so 6 goats and 3 sets of chickens! This was from their spring bake sale, Thanks to all for baking!

Willow River Parish Youth: On Sunday November 2nd the Youth packed College Boxes and hosted another MIA. Our MIA included winter gear for all ages!



Sunday, December 7th-Shopping for Christmas for Children. Youth will either meet in CL at 10:30 and carpool to Walmart in New Richmond or meet at Walmart in NR at 11am. Lunch to follow.

Community Center Holiday Luncheon for Seniors – December 4

Joan Lillie, our volunteer chef extraordinaire, is planning a special menu to match the time of year so be sure to call your reservation to 715-263-2233 any time before December 1. A free will donation is gratefully accepted for the meal. As always, Bingo will be set up to start by 1 pm following the luncheon. The 100% payback game is also scheduled for the second Tuesday of every month at 1 pm in the center dining room (December 9, January 12, February 10, etc.). The community center's 2026 schedule for Senior Luncheons will be available early in the coming year. Stay tuned.....

WORSHIP MINISTRIES

Clear Lake

Dec 7th Reader: Vidalia Gorres
Communion: Oliver Gorres
Acolyte/PwrPt: Ben Avery, Jr
Potluck/Coffee: Avery Family

Dec 14th Reader: John Koerper
Acolyte/PwrPt: Vidalia Gorres
Coffee: John & Stacia

Dec 21st Reader: Dawn Cress
Acolyte/PwrPt: Lily Avery
Coffee: Gail K and Dawn C

Dec 28th Reader: John Koerper
Acolyte/PwrPt: Oliver Gorres
Coffee: Jennie K & Becky R

Jan 4th Reader: Oliver Gorres
Communion: Vidalia Gorres
Acolyte/PwrPt: Oliver Wood
Potluck/Coffee: Roger & Carla

Counters for December: Carla & Joan
Counters for January: Carla & Diane

Faith Family

Dec 7th Michael Clark
Communion: Michael Clark

Dec 14th Paul Webster

Dec 21st Terri Wilson

Dec 28th Debbie Stevens

Jan 4th Gracie Perkins Greene
Communion: Gracie Perkins Greene

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 13th** 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.bulletins.

Community Sing Along Christmas Caroling Dec 20th @ the Clear Lake Bandstand

Join the Clear Lake Junior -Senior High Choir for a festive evening of songs, Christmas cookies, hot cocoa, and cider. All donations benefit the Clear Lake Museum.

2025–2026 Confirmation Class

Our November confirmation session was a wonderful success! We had such a warm and joyful time together with our youth, parents, and mentors. In fact, the adults might have enjoyed it even more than the kids! 😊

Please continue to pray for everyone involved in this confirmation journey, that each one may grow deeper in faith and closer to Christ.



Deer Park UMC News

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

Noisy Can--4th Quarter to Various Charities

Keep Practicing Hope: An Advent Message From Bishop Dan Schwerin

The Christian year begins with Advent, and I would start by sharing a story about hope as we engage 2026 as a year of practicing hope in the Northern Illinois–Wisconsin Area.

I've been thinking about Isaiah 16:11: “. . . my heart plays sadly like a harp for Moab.” Another version reads, “my heart quivers like a harp.” Moab was suffering, Isaiah says, like orphaned birds pushed from a nest. We know God is impacted by God's experience of our suffering. Advent is the season in which we affirm that the one who knows our needs and limitations comes among us for our healing.

Advent affirms the hope that God's word is always breaking in for our good.

Yesterday I spoke to an immigrant pastor. This pastor told me that when he arrived, he met a prominent leader of the church, and the pastor held out his hand to shake hands but that the leader wouldn't shake his hand. The pastor tried again the next week. The leader began to avoid such interactions. The pastor prayed about that relationship and tried to improve it, but nothing seemed to work.

Many immigrant clergy will tell you their days hold not only rejection in the world, but resistance in the church. And yet as he told me his story, he smiled and said, “But I kept practicing hope.”

Unfortunately, the leader was diagnosed with a serious illness, and decline was rapid. The pastor did what he usually did in such cases: he brought the leader communion. Next was a very basic question: “Do you want communion?”

What a fine question to reflect on: Do you want communion?

He did. After communion, the pastor did what he always did: he reached out to take the leader's hand and pray. This time, the leader took his hand. This pastor wanted me to know how much it meant to his ministry to practice hope, and for me to share his story because God is working among us to help us grow in love.

Only 2.6 percent of the immigrants disappeared by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents at the Broadview Processing Center have a criminal record, yet many hundreds are detained. The suffering of those detained is extreme. None has access to a clergy person or family. Health care is offered in exchange for signing a document that gets them sent to a country they have never seen. Mothers who are in the U.S. legally are ripped from their babies and many not yet seen again. Members of The United Methodist Church who are here legally and without criminal records are in these detention centers.

The body of Christ is shackled. The body of Christ is being disappeared. Soon the body of Christ will read about innkeepers and Bethlehem and ask how we would welcome Jesus if the Christmas story unfolded on us.

“My whole being quivers like a harp for Moab.” In this text we see a Wesleyan openness to be changed by suffering, to be changed by relationship, to be changed by God's call forward, for the expansion from love of those near us to love of otherness, which is the way of God's love. Isaiah, like the strings of an instrument, quivers on the way to being changed. What would it mean for you to allow your whole being to quiver with pathos? Have these days changed you in some way?

I believe hope is a practice of God's creative freedom at play in human creativity and freedom.

I believe hope knows the present is held with a comma, and that God's word is always breaking in for good. We as the church may be smaller than we once were, but I believe we are not too small to steward the moral imagination of Jesus.

I believe that as long as we have a relationship with Jesus Christ, we have a relationship with hope. May these days of Advent open you, lead you to be changed, and may we quiver with pathos until we make music with hope. I wish you a blessed Advent, one that allows us to be changed by our suffering until we sing.

Clear Lake UMC News

- Coffee and pot luck **AFTER** church at 9:15.
- Potluck-1st Sunday of each month **FOLLOWING** church.
- Food shelf donations any Sunday

Send Offering to: Josy Wood, 260 40th Avenue, Clear Lake, WI 540045

CL Noisy Cans:
4th Qtr- Salvation Army



Clear Lake Christmas Cookie and Stuffed Baked Potato Sale:
Friday, December 12th from 4:30-6:30 pm-- All church family members please donate 6 dozen Christmas Cookies.

We will also schedule days to make extra cookies at the church. Workers needed, watch for sign up sheets at the back of the church or contact Debi Ahrens at 715-441-5477.

Bell Choir

Bells practice this year on Sunday evenings at 7. If anyone is interested in playing, we can use more ringers! We will be having our Christmas Concert in conjunction with the First Lutheran Church choir on Sunday, January 4th at their 10 am service. Come and continue to celebrate Christmas with wonderful music.

Clear Lake Church Cancellations: Winter is fast approaching; in the event of bad weather, please contact Roger Blanchard 715-607-4246 to find out if worship services are canceled.

CLUMC rang Salvation Army Bells at Nilssens on Thursday, Nov. 20th. **Thanks** to all who rang!!

CL UMC Ad C meeting Wed. Dec. 3 at 4 pm.

UWF Dec 17--Thanksmas Party at Ridgeview Commons 12:00 Pot Luck.

Holy Socks

The United Women of Faith are gathering clean, mismatched, old, worn out holy socks for a cash donation to Northcott Neighborhood House in Milwaukee. We'd love to have anyone's donations.

Dorcas Piecemakers Work Days: On Monday, Dec. 1st, we will meet at church from 10 am to 3 pm and bake cookies. Come whenever you can help. We will have lunch at church. On the 15th we will meet at Irma's at noon and sew from 1-3. We will continue working on our 150th Anniversary Christmas Ornaments. Please join us for baking, lunch and working on ornaments.

Debi and Becky delivered walker bags, dinner aprons and pillowcases to Golden Age Manor.



Stacia, Sandi, and Paula delivered to Amery Memory Care.



Camilla and Diane delivered to Willow Ridge.



CLUMC Vintage Christmas Night/Hanging of the Greens: November 19, 2025

The Hanging of the Green is a beautiful tradition where the church is decorated with evergreen symbols of everlasting life, signifying the waiting and preparation for the coming of Christ, our Savior.

Just as the congregants decorated the church with one heart and one mind, we pray that all the churches in our Parish will unite together during this Advent season, preparing for the Light of Christ.

May this be a blessed season of anticipation and unity for our entire Parish!



CHRISTMAS FOR CHILDREN 2025

The Clear Lake United Methodist Church 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 32nd year and are so grateful for all of the support that we have received from everyone.

All gifts will be given to children ages 0-18 in the Clear Lake School District Area.

Gifts are always needed for older teens, guys and girls. Personal care, nail items, cosmetics, hair products and gloves. Art supplies for all ages, canvases, sketch books, paints and drawing pencils. Guys can use small tools, personal care items, gloves, outdoor sports items for hunting and fishing and team sports.

Call Debi Ahrens 715-441-5477 (if no answer, please leave a message). All names are kept strictly confidential.

To mail a donation please send to: Christmas For Children, Box 42, Clear Lake, WI 54005

Hanging of the Greens @ FF and DP: 11/23/25

What a joyful day! Both Faith Family and Deer Park: Trinity came together for our Hanging of the Greens service. Each wreath, candle, and evergreen placed by our members marks the beginning of the Advent season—a time of waiting, hope, and preparation.

We're grateful for a church family that decorates not only our worship spaces, but also each other's hearts with love and expectation.





Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church



Dear Colleagues,

In our United Methodist work in the area of immigration, we have been assisted by information shared with us by the National Immigration Litigation Alliance (NILRA). Today we received the following information from the NILRA concerning immigrant children in the U.S. that is deeply concerning.

Beginning tomorrow, October 3, 2025, ICE will launch an operation reportedly named “Freaky Friday,” targeting unaccompanied children aged 14 and older of all nationalities.

- Children detained and released will be sent a “threat” letter from ICE threatening indefinite detention and immediate transfer to ICE upon age-out if they do not waive jurisdiction under the TVPRA and withdraw applications for relief
- Children will be offered \$2,500 to return to their countries of origin
- If children do not comply with the “offer”, the letter intimates their parents in the US will be arrested
- ICE plans to detain all children who reach the age of 14 and are ready to be released from detention, and they anticipate legal challenges.
- There are indications that the age threshold for this threat letter may be lowered to 10 years old.
- We understand they plan to first target detained children but will also target children released from custody

Given this alarming information, we strongly encourage annual conferences and local churches to the extent possible, to:

- Provide Know Your Rights presentations to the families of children in ICE custody advising them of this plan and their right to not sign anything document without consulting their attorney
- Also, consider advising the families of immigrant children out of ICE custody about the possibility of receiving an ICE letter.
- If a child receives a letter, please consider helping them to prepare an affidavit that particularly highlights the manner in which this ICE letter was delivered (was counsel present and able to advise, were youth able to ask questions), evidence of coercion or intimidation, underlying fear of being returned to the country they immigrated from.
- Litigators are coordinating and we will provide more information shortly on who to direct these affidavits to.
- Please report concerns to the HHS Ombudsman office here: UCOO@acf.hhs.gov.

Conference Chancellors may be able to provide support in this critical situation.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns. We are here to support you.

Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño, Chair COB Immigration Task Force

Faith Family Church News:

Hanging of the Greens at Faith Family Church.



Fun Day School get-together baking cookies. 8 different kinds of cookies. We made about 40 dozen cookies to disperse amongst our community of friends and family. Some of the confirmation youth came and met with their mentors to discuss the history of our church. If you have more information about the history of our church Grace, Michael, Baylie and Jordyn would love to hear from you.



**Faith Family Church
Christmas Program
December 21st.**

Community Events:

Save the Date! 🌲 The Emerald Community Holiday Event is coming up on Saturday, December 13th, 1–4 PM in the park! Santa and Mrs. Claus will be there for photos, plus chili, cocoa, gifts, and festive fun for everyone. Don't miss it! 🎅 🧑🏻‍🎄 🎁 🌲



Noisy Can–WestCap/Food Pantry

Send Offering to:

Terri Wilson: 3127 200th Ave
Glenwood City, WI 54013

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK:

[Faith Family Church | Facebook](#)





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 9-11 am

Anitra Kaczmariski, Parish Secretary

Email: wrpsecretary@gmail.com

Amanda Millermon, Parish Treasurer

Email: WRParishconnect@gmail.com

Sunday Worship

8:30 a.m. –Clear Lake

9:45 a.m. – Faith Family (also Zoom)

11:00 a.m. – Deer Park

Church School @ Faith Family & Clear Lake

“Funday” School– Wednesdays 5:30 @ Faith Family

Bible in a Binder Sundays @ Clear Lake