



# The Message

December, 2021

## Your Heart for Christmas

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/blog/life-and-relationships/holidays/4-ways-to-prepare-your-heart-for-christmas.html>

Every year, the scene is the same: In November, I'm driving somewhere, flipping through radio stations, and suddenly, Christmas music is wafting through my speakers. And, every year, my response is similar. I'm not ready to think about Christmas. It's too early. So, I switch stations and put it out of my mind. Can you relate to that feeling?

Though the holiday season can be stressful, the four weeks leading up to Christmas Eve, also known as Advent, is a great time to set aside a bit of space each day to ready our hearts for Christmas — the entrance of Christ into the world.

This season of preparation always catches me off guard. But rather than let the busyness of the season overshadow a holiday designed to celebrate God's love and sacrifice — Emmanuel, God with us — *what if I was preparing my heart to respond to the gift of Christ out of love and gratitude?*

**Author Ann Voskamp writes**

*"We're ready for Christmas, not when we have all the gifts, but when we are ready for Christ—when we're ready to give all of ourselves to Christ."*

Here four ways to consider preparing your heart, not just your home, for Christmas this year:

- Spend intentional time digging into the Bible as Christmas approaches.
- Read a month-long or two-week Advent devotional each day.
- Get a traditional or make your own Advent calendar. Each day, as you enjoy the treat or treasures inside, read and reflect on a Bible verse about the Christmas story or the gospel.
- With family or friends, decide on something you can do together each week of Advent to love your community. Here are "12 Ideas to Show Christ's Love at Christmas."

Pray and ask God how you can best prepare your heart to celebrate the entrance of His Son into the world.

Whatever you end up doing, consider observing Advent in community with other believers — your family, friends, or small group. May your heart be captured by the ultimate gift — Jesus — this Advent season.

# Advent Sermon Series

November 28  
December 5, 12, & 19

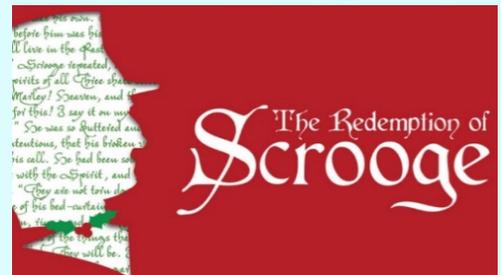
During the 4 weeks of traditional Advent, we will be exploring the world of Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim, and the Cratchits, with an eye to the Christian faith in a sermon series titled: **"From 'Bah! Humbug' to Blessed."** Along the way we will meet the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come and learn about living with and living for others in a world already blessed by Jesus. God owns culture, not the other way around. In this series, we can see the startling spiritual truths in even the most secular of places.

## Advent Study

December 1, 8, 15, & 22

by Matt Rawle (lead pastor at Asbury UMC in Louisiana)

A Christmas Carol begins with "Marley was dead", a rather unconventional way to welcome the holiday season, don't you think? But, by the end of Scrooge's journey, we find that Scrooge has found new life. At the beginning, Scrooge was just as good as dead—but on Christmas morning he wakes up a new man. Let us take that journey with him these 4 weeks of traditional Advent!



**Worship on Wednesdays (W.O.W.)** continues at 7:00 pm.  
Music is recorded on Facebook.  
**Participants for the study portion must use ZOOM.**

## Finding Our ZOOM Link on Our Website

Go to our website: [peumc.org](http://peumc.org).

The link can be found in several places (always the same one):

1. Under "Above Us"—choose "[Committees & Leadership](#)"—top of page.
2. Click on "[Worship](#)" - scroll down to "Worship on Wednesdays"—click on the word "ZOOM."
3. Under "Ministries"—choose "[Bible Studies & Small Groups](#)"—bottom of page.
4. Click on "[Calendar](#)"—link appears just below the monthly calendar. (each time, the icon appears as red video camera)

If any information listed is inaccurate, please contact the church office to have it corrected.

[peumc.office@gmail.com](mailto:peumc.office@gmail.com) or 715-887-3011



# What's Ahead

## Sundays in December

### *Ugly* Christmas Sweater Sunday - Sunday, December 19th



On the Sunday before Christmas, wear your ugliest (or funniest) Christmas sweater to church. A certificate will be awarded to the unfortunate soul whose wardrobe choice we judge most severely. One award will be for the ugliest (congregational choice) and another for the funniest.

### **Newborn Saints Sunday - Sunday, December 26th**

In honor of the birth of our Savior, we will be observing a new tradition this Christmas Season: Newborn Saints Sunday! It's like All-Saints but with a tiny twist: we are going to recognize all those saints who have been BORN in 2021. *They should be directly related to our church.*

On the last Sunday of the year, we will read off the names of each baby and ring a bell.

Email the church office ([peumc.office@gmail.com](mailto:peumc.office@gmail.com)) with the following information no later than December 23:

- Baby's full name
- Date of birth
- Names of parents
- How is baby related to you?
- Photo of baby (if possible)

PLEASE ~ get permission first from the parents (even if they are your family members); let them know we would like to include a photo in our bulletin inserts for that Sunday. In your email, please make explicit that this photo can be used with permission. We cannot use any photo without permission. Thanks for your understanding!



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## **Blue & Busy Christmas Service**

Tuesday, December 21st @ 7:00 pm  
(Held in-person and on ZOOM)

Blue Christmas Services are becoming more popular with each passing year. Blue Christmas Services are also known as "Longest Night Services" and are, thus, often

held on or around the Winter Solstice (usually the 21st of December). This is, of course, the day with the shortest daylight of the year. This will be a service primarily of healing. It is an honest service. It is somber, not dreary. It is reflective, not sad. It is for anyone who is even slightly "blue" this holiday season (for whatever reason). But it's not just Blue—it's also Busy! This is also a perfect opportunity for all those who feel busy to slow down and have a moment to reflect on some deeper themes before the final rush toward Christmas Day. It is a powerful service for people across the spectrum—from blue to busy—and those who have attended these services in the past have walked away with a deeper sense of empowerment. The service will be held in the church sanctuary.

## **At a Glance**

### **Sunday, December 5th**

- ▶ Fifth Sunday of Extended Advent  
(Second Sunday of Normal Advent)
- ▶ Communion Sunday

### **Sunday, December 12**

- ▶ Sixth Sunday of Extended Advent  
(Third Sunday of Normal Advent)
- ▶ Leadership Sunday - Our outgoing 2021 leadership will be thanked for their service;
- ▶ Our incoming 2022 leadership will be commissioned with a blessing!

### **Sunday, December 19th**

- ▶ Seventh Sunday of Extended Advent  
(Fourth Sunday of Normal Advent)
- ▶ Children will present some Christmas songs.
- ▶ Ugly Christmas Sweater Sunday  
(award for ugliest / funniest)

### **Sunday, December 26th**

- ▶ First Sunday of Christmas (Second of Twelve Days of Christmastide)
- ▶ Newborn Saints Sunday



### **Christmas Eve Lessons-and-Carols Service**

Christmas Eve: 7:00 pm & 11:00 pm (a.k.a. "Midnight Mass"). Held in-person and on ZOOM.

We will once again be having two services on Christmas Eve. Each service will be similar, with slight variations.

- Both are in the style of lessons-and-carols, where portions of the birth story of Jesus are interspersed with our traditional Christmas carols.
- A time for children will be incorporated into both services.

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# Noteworthy

## Find Pastor Caleb on Facebook!



I have a public page on Facebook you can “like.” It is titled [“Pastor Caleb.”](#) Several people have requested being friends through “Caleb McGregor” which is my personal profile. Everyone handles their own Facebook differently. Some pastors add their parishioners to their personal profiles, but I am choosing to keep my personal profile limited to friends and family only. Yes, you are my church friends and family—so you get a special page! If you tried requesting friends on my personal profile, you may still be waiting for my acceptance. But I do hope you can “like” my public page instead and stay connected there! Thanks!

## Pastor’s Tithing

In 2020, I vowed to begin tithing in full (10%). I am also fulfilling my goal for 2021!

Since 2020, I have broken my tithe into four components:

- **1%** would go to the greater denominational ministries.
- **1%** would go to the Illinois Great Rivers Conference ministries.
- **8%** would be divided between my two congregations.

That amounted to **\$32.22 per church per week.**

For 2022 - My salary is **\$48,000.00.**

A deduction of 13% is removed for my pension (because that is taxed later), leaving a total of **\$41,760.00** (before taxes). From this amount:

- **\$417.60** will go to national and international United Methodist ministries.
- **\$417.60** will go to Wisconsin Conference ministries.
- **\$3,340.80** will go to Port Edwards UMC (**\$64.25 a week**).

I have chosen to detail my tithing above on my own accord and have not been asked by anyone to do so. It could be argued that my salary is funded by public monies

(your money), so out of transparency (to you) and motivation (to me), I have voluntarily disclosed my tithe here.

I pray you will be inspired to begin such a goal as well. In 2019, I was giving \$5 a week per church.

Due to many circumstances outside our control, not everyone can do a full 10% tithe right now. The People Called Methodists are a grace-filled people! But I do encourage you to begin by giving *regularly* and to start with *what you can*. Give yourself a goal, even a spreadsheet to help you!

The widow's mite was more important in Jesus' eyes because she gave just a little from her scarcity. Perhaps her offering was just worth a half percent or less! I have chosen to take 2% of my tithe toward ministries beyond the local church since United Methodist clergy are not members of the local church but of the Annual Conference and I have vowed in my ordination to support the denomination at all levels by my own "prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness." Thanks for your understanding!



## November/December Missions

Collect ~\$250 for The Neighborhood Table (November emphasis) has been completed. We have raised close to the \$250 we requested. During our week in November, we "served" 111 people, and the volunteers there told each client that PEUMC sponsored their meal that evening.

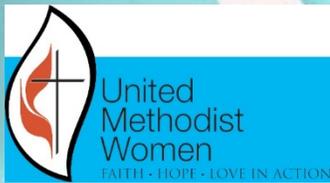
Collect Money for Port Edwards School Christmas Gift Giveaway has been completed. The money has been collected and gifts purchased for the school.

Christmas Baskets - We are now preparing 4 baskets of holiday goodies to be delivered on Monday, December 13th. Each recipient is associated with our church family. Those we have been identified to receive a basket are those who have lost a close loved one this year (sibling, parent, child) or have made a major life transition recently.

- A suggested list of items is available on the front table in the foyer.
- We would like to fill these baskets with some goodies.
- These are not meant to be full meals, but an assortment of goodies (food or other).
- You may bring complete ingredient kits for baking or prepare your own baking.
- Bring them to church by Sunday, December 12th.

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**The United Methodist Women** would like to say a HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to our Ghost Bazaar. Because of your generosity, we have reached our goal of \$1,500.

We designated \$400 toward mission projects at our November meeting and will hopefully complete our spending in December. A full accounting will appear in the January Newsletter. Again, our grateful thanks.

The UMW will meet on Thursday, December 2, at 12:15 pm for a Christmas Tea. The program will be presented by Sara Tyne and a business meeting to follow. All women are welcome.

The Circle of Friends will meet on Wednesday, December 8 at 1:00 pm. Christmas will be our theme. Please bring a gift for our white elephant exchange and wrapped candy and non-perishable food items for the Pantry Shelf. Thank you!



For EVERYONE! That means men and women! Also, all your neighbors! On Jan. 6 our UMW is sponsoring a special program to start the new year. We will be learning about the resettlement of Afghan refugees in the Wausau area. First United Methodist Church of Wausau has taken leadership in this need. Here's the story as written by our presenter.

In the spring and summer of 2021, members of First United Methodist Church in Wausau were growing increasingly concerned with the conditions for asylum-seekers at our borders. What can we do? How do we begin? Whom do we contact?

God has been opening one door after another for us, inviting us to step in. It starts with prayer and being open to the moving of the Holy Spirit. Are we willing to try a new thing? Can we risk leaving our comfort zones?

We fund organizations that would help sponsor asylum seekers from Central America and Mexico. And when the Afghani refugees began coming to Fort McCoy, our pastor agreed for FUMC to be the collection point for donations from churches in the District. For about two years now, our church building has housed the Presbyterian Free Clinic and Catholic Charities' Warming Center. One evening in October, a

Spanish-speaking family of four arrived at our door, looking for medical help and assistance. That Nicaraguan family is now settled. Currently, we're working with the immigration office and the Presbyterian and Unitarian churches as we wait to receive Afghan refugees.

Our presenter is Margaret Getzin, who is a retired Spanish teacher, wife, mother, and grandmother. She is a UMW member and serves on the Unit leadership team and is the Spiritual Growth Leader on the North Central District team.

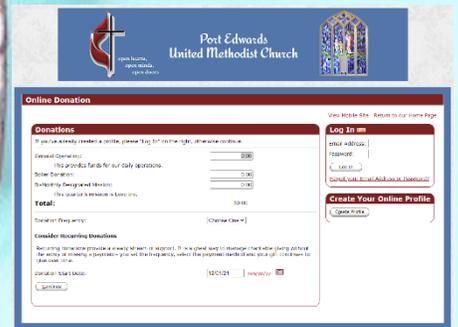
Mark the date now...Thursday, Jan. 6... 12:15 p.m. Bring a brown bag lunch as you wish... Dessert and beverages will be provided by the UMW.

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## Getting Help with Our Electronic Giving Portal

**Vanco** is our Electronic Giving platform for the church. It can be accessed via the **"Donate"** button at the top of our website: [peumc.org](http://peumc.org) (or use this direct link: [Donation \(eservicepayments.com\)](http://Donation(eservicepayments.com)) if you are viewing this from a PDF file).



1. If you wish to begin electronic payments, you can use the paper application forms found on the welcome tables as you enter the sanctuary and put them in the offering plate OR click on the link above and choose *"Create Your Online Profile."*
2. If you are returning to **Vanco** to change your donation amount or frequency, and need help, follow these instructions:

If you forgot your log-in information, don't worry. Click on *"Forgot Your Email Address or Password."* Your User Name is usually the email you chose when you signed up. This will send a password reset link to your email.

Once you are successfully logged in, you can make changes by clicking on *"edit"* under *"My Scheduled Transactions."* In edit mode, you can either change the amount or change the frequency of payments (one-time, weekly, monthly).

**NOTE:** You must make your adjustment immediately before you wish them to go into effect; for most people, this means at the end of December or the beginning of January. You may wish to start a *"New Scheduled Transaction"* to commence at the beginning of January, but you will have to manually delete your *"Old Scheduled Transaction"* when December ends to avoid double charges.

Still confused? Call our handy-dandy Financial Secretary, Bill Parks.



### "Hanging of the Greens" THANK YOU

For *Becky Taylor* and *Pastor Caleb* for pulling the boxes out of the storage room and checking the lights beforehand. For *Mike, Lori, Adam,* and *Lindsey Hintz* for setting up the two large Christmas trees; *Mike* also helped set up the outdoor nativity scene as well. For *Jeff Taylor* for hanging the chain and Advent Wreath. For *Bill Parks* for hanging the garland strands. For our other helpers who lent a hand on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, including *Sue and Ken Brzezinski, our new friends of the church.* The church sanctuary looks beautiful and festive! Thank you, friends!

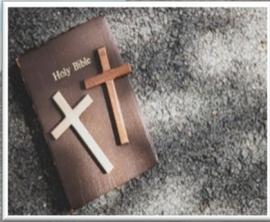
**THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS, FOR HELPING  
OUR NEIGHBORS IN NOVEMBER!**



A program of Aspirus Riverview Hospital  
made possible by United Way of  
South Wood & Adams Counties

**Home Delivered Meals Drivers**  
Julie Berg  
Pat & Kathy McGrath  
Becky Taylor  
Leo & Sue Thomasgard

Every four weeks, PEUMC volunteers deliver a hot and nutritious noon meal to homes of Wisconsin Rapids area residents who are unable to prepare their own meals. Anyone interested in helping with this program may contact Becky Taylor (715-887-2163) for more information. **THANK YOU!**



# December Bible Studies

## *Suggested Readings from The People of the United Methodist Church*

### **Week of December 5**

- ▶ Mal 3:1-4
- ▶ Luke 12:68-79 (UMH 208)
- ▶ Phil 1:3-11
- ▶ Luke 3:1-6

### **Week of December 12**

- ▶ Zeph 3:14-20
- ▶ Isa 12:2-6
- ▶ Phil 4:4-7
- ▶ Luke 3:7-18

### **▶ Week of December 19**

- ▶ Mic 5:2-5a
- ▶ Luke 1:46b-55 (UMH 199)
- ▶ Heb 10:5-10
- ▶ Luke 1:39-45

### **Week of December 26**

- ▶ 1 Sam 2:18-20, 26
- ▶ Ps 148 (UMH 861)
- ▶ Col 3:12-17
- ▶ Luke 2:41-52



### **VOICES IN PRAYER (Prayer Chain) Port Edwards United Methodist Church**

**Daytime Contact (9:00 am – 7:00 pm)**  
**\*Maribeth Lacasse-Salo – 715-887-3504**

**Evening Contact (7:00 pm – 9:00 pm)**  
**Mary Heuer – 715-887-3758**

*If you cannot reach Maribeth please call Mary Heuer – 715-887-3758  
You may also call Pastor Caleb at 618-263-8058*

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# December Calendar



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
				12:15 pm UMW Christmas Tea		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10:00 am Church Service Sunday School			7:00 pm WOW – Worship <a href="#">Zoom Link</a> 1:00 pm Circle of Friends			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10:00 am Church Service Sunday School Fellowship Hour	6:00 pm Trustees Meeting		7:00 pm WOW – Worship <a href="#">Zoom Link</a>			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		7:00 pm Blue and Busy Christmas Service			7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service 11:00 PM Christmas Eve Service OFFICE CLOSED	Merry Christmas 
26	27	28	29	30	31	
10:00 am Church Service Sunday School			7:00 pm WOW – Worship <a href="#">Zoom Link</a>		New Years Eve	

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**December 2**  
Melanie Sillars

**December 11**  
Kevin Swensen

**December 13**  
Lucy Silvester

**December 21**  
Alison Bruener  
Ethan Bruener  
Justin Bruener  
Judy Miller  
Sue Thomasgard

**December 31**  
Pat Arendt

**December 5**  
Art and Carol Ann Harvestine

**December 26**  
JoAnn & Guy Detlefson  
Terry & Marie Hernesman

**December 29**  
Damon & Donna Klinger  
Peter and Joann Kurth  
Mike & Kali Mayek

**December 30**  
Pat & Kathy McGrath



## Christmas Tree Walk

Dec 4, 5 & 6  
12 p.m.-4p.m.  
(Saturday-Monday)

Dec 10  
5 p.m.-8p.m.  
(Friday)

Dec 11 & 12  
12 p.m.- 4 p.m.  
(Saturday-Sunday)

*This family-friendly event  
is free to the public*

South Wood County  
Historical Museum  
540 Third Street South  
Wisconsin Rapids

