

Sumner Center UMC Newsletter

December 2025

The approach of Christmas brings back a rush of memories from various stages of life that make me pause in my thoughts and almost feel the warmth of cherished times with those I love. I think of the first Christmas I spent with my husband Brad and the first Christmas that we hosted the extended family at our own house. I remember so clearly the joy of watching my children anticipate Christmas, open presents, and playing in the of a pile of boxes and wrapping paper. However, sometimes, Christmas memories are difficult. Like the first ones spent without a loved one who had passed away.

Whether the season brings excitement or sadness in our personal lives, I find myself often forgetting the words of the angel to Joseph and the powerful declaration of “Immanuel,” God is with us. The angel’s declaration is taken from Isaiah who lived in a time of spiritual impoverishment among God’s people and prophesied about coming times of defeat and exile. The declaration is to Joseph, a poor carpenter, who lived in a time of Roman rule and who is experiencing the pain and doubt of finding his intended wife to be pregnant with a child that was not his own. In contrast to their dark times, Isaiah and Joseph are assured that God is with them.

For some reason it is so easy to see how God was with Old Testament saints like Isaiah and how Jesus was physically present with Joseph, Mary, and the disciples, but sometimes so difficult to understand how He is with us today. How do we incorporate the concept of Immanuel into our Christmas thinking? How do we prepare ourselves to fully experience God’s presence in the season in which we should most naturally celebrate the advent of Jesus into this world?

I find three simple practices to be extremely helpful in preparing oneself to experience God’s presence more deeply during the Christmas season. First, establish or step into Christian rituals before Christmas. Traditional ways of preparing for Christmas such as advent calendars and regular Scripture readings have been used for centuries and allow us to participate with believers worldwide as we remember Christ’s birth.

Second, set aside times each day to look to Christ’s second coming. I have often neglected this in the Christmas season, but His first coming is always reminding us that He’s coming again. This simple exercise will encourage you with hope, even if your Christmas situation this year may be less than you’d hoped.

Finally, live your life in a way that reflects the truth that Immanuel, God with us, is an ongoing reality if we have the Holy Spirit living within us today. God is always with us as the Holy Spirit warms our hearts with previous Christmas memories or comforts our hearts during Christmases that may be particularly difficult. The Holy Spirit proves to be “God with us” as our hearts take joy in Christmas carols and advent readings. The Holy Spirit is “God with us” as we take care and thought into buying and receiving presents for those we love and for those we don’t know. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is “God with us” in exactly the same way that He was with Jesus as He grew from an infant to adulthood – empowering, leading, teaching, comforting, and confirming the will of the Father each moment of our existence!

May God be with each of you and your families this Christmas season as you prepare to celebrate Jesus’ birth so long ago!



***Sunday Worship:
In Sanctuary at
11:15am***

&

***Sumner Center UMC
Facebook Page***

**Visit our Church
Website at:**

<http://www.sumnercenter.com>

**Donations may be sent to our mailing
address:**

**25378 151st Ave
Spring Valley, Mn 55975**

Pastoral Support Team

Pastor Bridget Sheely

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Cell # 507-438-1352

Pastor Jon Marburger

Email: marburgerjon@gmail.com

Cell #507-227-6711

Grace and Peace in the name of Jesus Christ:

If you have items you would like to be published in the newsletter, please contact Pastor Bridget by the 3rd Thursday of the preceding month by emailing your information or dropping at Church. The light of God remains to shine bright in our community only by your generous giving heart! If you would like to donate a gift, you may send donations to the address above or deliver it in person during Sunday morning worship service

Calendar of Events

(Subject to change and/or be added to as the need arises)

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Zoom Study with the Bishop	2 Book Study In person 2pm @ Grand Meadow Church	3	4	5	6
7 11:15 am Worship ANNUAL BAKE SALE AFTER WORSHIP ALL DONATIONS BENEFIT OUR AREA CARE CENTERS	8 Zoom Study with the Bishop	9 Book Study In person 2pm @ Grand Meadow Church	10 Confirmation Zoom class 6:30pm	11	12	13
14 11:15 am Worship 	15 Zoom Study with the Bishop	16 Book Study In person 2pm @ Grand Meadow Church	17	18	19	20
21 11:15 am Worship  	22 Zoom Study with the Bishop	23 Book Study In person 2pm @ Grand Meadow Church	24 <i>Christmas Eve Service 7:00pm</i>	25 	26	27
28 11:15 am Worship	29	30	31 			

December Worship Schedule



December 7, 2025

Pastor Bridget Leading

Advent reminds us that we are people who share a story, the story of Jesus, who enacts peace by judging in favor of the poor and deciding with equity for the meek of the earth. Here these words from Isaiah 6:11...We long for the day when “the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them” **Today, we choose to live**

the story of peace, believing that true peace comes when we seek the flourishing of all God’s creation



December 14, 2025

Pastor Jon Leading

In the midst of our waiting and longing for God to make the world right again, we cling to the truth that God has saved, God is saving, and God will save. So today, we join our voices with the prophet Isaiah, who calls us to live in the joy of the truth of God’s salvation. Hear these words from Isaiah 35:10...We choose to believe that the day is coming when “the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion

with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away”



December 21, 2025

Pastor Jon Leading

Today, we come face to face with the scandal of Advent: Mary, the unmarried mother; God Incarnate growing in Mary’s womb as a vulnerable baby; and God’s love at work in ways that society and propriety could not understand. All that had been prophesied by Isaiah in 7:14 who said...God wants us to know, even when we aren’t sure ourselves. God wants us to experience God’s presence, even when we think we can handle life on our own. God sends us signs of God’s presence with us; all we need to do is keep our eyes open and look.

Christmas Eve Service

Pastor Bridget Leading

A Service of Word & Carols – 7:00pm



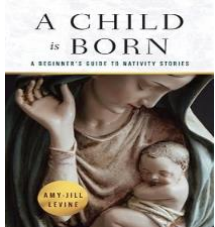
December 28, 2025

Pastor Bridget Leading

Today on this first Sunday after Christmas I would like us to find our center with the words written in Colossians 3:12-17: 12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Prairieland Parish
Is joining Together for a 4-week book study titled:
“A Child is Born” by Amy-Jill Levine

Each week we will watch a 10-minute Video followed by a time of connectional open forum and discussion.



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We will meet in-person Tuesday's @ 2 pm - @ United Church of Grand Meadow
December 2nd, December 9th, December 16th, December 23rd
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Zoom Study Opportunity
to be led by Bishop Lanette Plambeck

In this study, United Methodists across the Dakotas and Minnesota will gather via zoom on Monday Evenings with Bishop Lanette

Weekly discussions will be held via Zoom on Monday evenings,
Dec 1st-Dec. 22nd, 7-8:15 p.m.

Mark your calendars for this is a great opportunity to join with our Bishop and others!

To receive the Zoom link and join the Bishops weekly study go to minnesotaumc.org and register.

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Christmas Eve Service Opportunities to fit your holiday schedule
A Service of Word & Carols

Pastor Jon Leading Services at:
Brownsdale: 4:00pm
Dexter: 5:30pm
Sargeant: 7:00pm

Pastor Bridget Leading Services at:
Grand Meadow: 4:00pm
Racine: 5:30pm
Sumner Center: 7:00pm



Center your day with God

Reading one scripture lesson each day of advent from December 1st – 25th



Day 1: Isaiah 40:9-11

Day 2: John 1:9

Day 3: Isaiah 7:14

Day 4: Numbers 24:17

Day 5: 1 Peter 1:19-20

Day 6: Galatians 4:4-5

Day 7: Micah 5:2

Day 8: John 7:42

Day 9: Genesis 3:15

Day 10: Isaiah 40:3-5

Day 11: Isaiah 11:1-5

Day 12: Zechariah 6:12-13

Day 13: John 1:10-13

Day 14: John 1:14

Day 15: Luke 1:26-38

Day 16: Luke 1:39-45

Day 17: Luke 1:46-56

Day 18: Luke 1:57-66

Day 19: Matthew 1:

Day 20: Matthew 1:22-23

Day 21: Luke 2:4-7

Day 22: Matthew 2:1-2

Day 23: Luke 2:25-35

Day 24: Isaiah 9:2-5

Day 25: Isaiah 9:6



Kingdom Bloggers

Annual Christmas treats Bake Sale!

Sunday, December 7TH

Before and after our 11:15am Worship Service



Sumner Center is hoping for full Church participation for our annual bake sale!

If you have bake goods to share, bring them and/or come to purchase some delicious treats for a great assortment to serve at your holiday gatherings

Free will donations on all treats

100% of donations will be divided between our area Care Centers for their activities departments.

What a great mission for all of us to support!!



Christmas Word Search Puzzle

Courtesy of Christmas-Projects.com



TYULETIDEMCHRISTMASLIGHTSPACBNG
 NSLIHAOAHVHSNBGESNOWFLAKEBDKHC
 CRHDVCGSCTIGNTOMOTATHREEWISEMEN
 STOYSYUHAOMEDHEWNUTCRAACKERVFJWG
 CNLBJCMEYSNCBORNAMENTSUZSWIYZIE
 JOLLYARRUDEHALGAKIGLYMOECRAEOCR
 ITYOJWADXNYEMISTLETOEOLSEHSLLEB
 NSCANDYCANESECD FVG RYPNDOPDURNSAR
 GOBP UACHRISTMASTREEMNGLSTREMNGE
 LCSCROOGE BLNDYCAITNAIAGTREASTYA
 ETGTWDMBVSEULSEVNHCCECSFEKRECNAD
 BSNHIAEEFUITVCJRKTSEILUCDNHOIRM
 EILJRHTMRHGSHA EFEMASGEHOQUCOAIA
 LWKFUYZNERHCDISWBGRC EGVERN AKUKN
 LECAEPWVSAYVEQUJB TNALNNCSRSITAE
 SOOINREINDEERHSAOECARAH OMOEAPV
 NHTNYEVXRNTNSUMEIKUOMCUECHVSARI
 LMSOGSAETAESPODFAVMWSIHSILESNIT
 CEDBUEUNATIVITYOFSOJACKFROSTUHS
 UOGBTNHCOEYKRMUTLNORTHPOLECFWRE
 PSWINTERSLTEISDYS PENSASWRUKRNAF
 IEFRESVOIWRSTZOMTCHLROUCLYMOIRC
 DKLT LULMEUEPRANCEROGARLANDASETA
 JOSTVYAEAOUIHBNITREICTOE BWITYRG
 NAPWEFRXDEL CMZEPALRANEZVOXTYNOJ
 CHRISTMASDINNERCDEFBLITZENDFIMK

Angels
 Candy Canes
 Chimney
 Comet
 Donner
 Frosty
 Ivy
 Joy
 Noel
 Prancer
 Santa Clause
 Snowflake
 Tinsel
 Yuletide

Bells
 Cards
 Christmas Dinner
 Cookies
 Elves
 Garland
 Jack Frost
 Manger
 North Pole
 Presents
 Scrooge
 Snowman
 Toys

Blitzen
 Carols
 Christmas Lights
 Cupid
 Family
 Gingerbread Man
 Jesus
 Merry
 Nutcracker
 Reindeer
 Season
 Spirit
 Vixen

Bow
 Cheer
 Christmas Tree
 Dancer
 Festive
 Holidays
 Jingle Bells
 Mistletoe
 Ornaments
 Ribbon
 Sled
 Stockings
 Winter

Candles
 Chestnuts
 Church
 Dasher
 Fireplace
 Holly
 Jolly
 Nativity
 Peace
 Rudolph
 Sleigh
 Three Wise Men
 Wreath