







Vol. 17 Issue 11

United Methodist Church in Beloit and Clinton Loving People Into Taking Their Next Step Wth Jesus

BELOIT CAMPUS 2345 Prairie Avenue

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CLERGY STAFF

Brenda Whitford, Pastor 608-482-0021 pastorbrenda@rolumcwi.com Retired Pastor Keith Putney 608-774-3162

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Christina Bergh Office Manager cbergh@rolumcwi.com Tom Alverson Worship Leader talverson@rolumcwi.com Bonnie Moore Receptionist bmoore@rolumcwi.com

MUSIC STAFF

Lois Ulvin Judith Paddock Marge Johnson Director of Music Organist Pianist





People we have prayed for....

Ellen Butchart Allen Kiser Peg Lund Hanna & TJ Liz Mark Our President Our Nation Bev Osborne Steve Rogers Aunt Sue

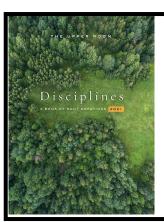




In addition to the Remembrance on November 8, 2020:

> Cheryl Rochester Phyllis Wright

Fifteen people without internet currently have the bulletin and sermon mailed to them each week. Call the church office if you would like them mailed to you as well!



To order your DISCIPLINES 2021 daily devotional, please call the office by December 10th.

> Cost is \$11.00 Large Print \$14.00

Sunday School - We are having fun!!

Every Sunday, there will be a video link on the church website that will take you to our video lesson! You can listen to the lesson whenever you want and even do the activity whenever it works for you!

If you don't have a bag yet, call the church office and tell them you are interested in Sunday School and we will take care of the rest! We will pull out our Kazoo and sing happy songs all the way to your home as we drop off your supplies. Yes, you get a Kazoo too! Tell a friend and have a virtual group watch party! We can't wait to "see" you again!

Mrs. Bolar and Miss Karen

From the Pastor



One of my favorite Christmas memories is the Christmas of 1989. My son Adam was born 5 weeks premature on the evening of December 23rd. Adam and I spent the next two days in the hospital while Dan worked feverishly to get ready for him at home. You would think that having my first child new at Christmas would be a tremendous joy. Instead, I felt very lonely.

Christmas Eve was always a huge celebration with my family, so with my son in my arms, on December 24th, I felt surprisingly

lonely that I missed Christmas Eve worship followed by Christmas dinner.

On Christmas morning, as I again felt lonely holding my son, I thought someone had on Christmas music and I found it very annoying. It kept getting louder. All of the sudden, someone asked if it was okay if the Salvation Army Band came into my room to play me two Christmas Carols.

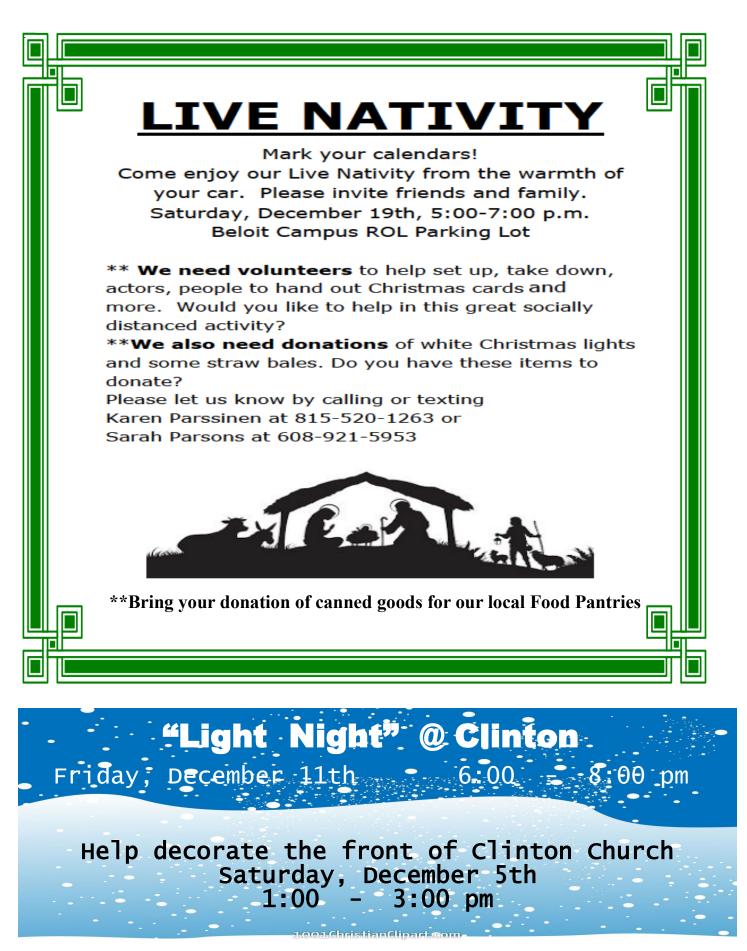
It was like someone flipped a switch. I cannot express how profoundly loved I felt at that moment. Those four people left their homes and their families on Christmas morning to share the love of Christ with those of us in the hospital. It was as if God sent them to remind me how much God loves me and all of us. With my son in my arms, I stopped feeling lonely and I cried over the love of Christmas.

This Christmas, because of Covid, many people are going to feel lonely. Covid numbers keep rising and hospitals are at capacity. It is not safe to even gather with family, and certainly not safe to gather in the sanctuary for worship. People will be profoundly lonely this Christmas. You may be one of those. In this newsletter you will learn of ways our church is trying to make it a little less lonely.

I would encourage you to think about how you can make Christmas a little less lonely for others this year. This may be the year to reinstate sending Christmas cards. This may be the year to reinstate making Christmas cookies or candies and delivering them to family, friends' and neighbors' doorsteps. This may be the year you call people to with them Merry Christmas. What can you do to help others feel less lonely while making yourself less lonely in the process?

Christmas is about God loving us so much that God became a baby boy. What an incredible gift of love! 31 years ago, four musicians showed me Christ's love on a lonely Christmas morning. How will you show extraordinary love on Christmas this year? Holding you all in my thoughts and prayers until we can meet in person together,

Love, Pastor Brenda



Reopening Update:

The Task Force on Re-Opening continues to meet monthly (now by Zoom) and continues to be increasingly surprised at our county's extraordinary high Covid numbers. This month we share the latest letter from our Bishop Hee Soo Jung imploring us to not worship in person inside.



October 28, 2020

To all my sacred siblings in Christ in our Wisconsin Conference,

I look with deep sadness and dismay at the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases across our wonderful state and wonder when this will come to an end. As the winter months arrive, the flu season approaches, and the pandemic continues to flourish and spread, I increase and intensify my prayers for health and wellness, safety and vitality for all people. To that end, I continue to strongly recommend that our churches do not engage in in-person worship during these difficult days.

Across our Conference, we are receiving daily reports of pastors and parishioners who have contracted COVID-19 and are suffering through the disease. This impacts individuals, families, communities, and congregations, and the more we are together, the longer this terrible virus will continue to spread. I know, and I share the grief of, how hard it is not to be able to be together to worship and praise God. I am continually amazed and inspired by the creativity of our pastors, worship leaders, and teachers to provide online alternatives. Safety, health, and protecting life must be our top priorities as disciples of Jesus Christ. Setting aside our personal wants and desires to return to church is the responsibility of every Christian – the health and well-being of others is the most important thing.

There will come a day in our future when we can return to our regular engagements and encounters. On that day, we will rejoice. On that day, we will sing, and we will celebrate. On that day, we will give God thanks and praise that we have emerged from the wilderness into the Promised Land. That day is coming, but that day is not yet here.

(continued on next page)

We have not mandated that churches cannot meet following the most stringent protocols of masking, social distancing, numbers in attendance, and sanitizing guideline, but this is the closest I can come. I am asking all Wisconsin United Methodists to NOT gather in person until our state health officials tell us it is safe to do so. We are suffering, and many lives are permanently damaged or lost. It is our duty and our privilege to care for one another and not spread this terrible virus.

Please know that you are all in the prayers of your Bishop and cabinet. We care very deeply, and we will continue to do all in our power to thrive through this pandemic and get our churches open and fully functioning again.

Thanks be to God!

In Christ's Love,

>for profery

Hee-Soo Jung, PhD Bishop

If you know of someone who has a need, please call the office: 608-362-8866



You can watch worship online in two ways:

- * On our church website
- * Through Facebook

The benefit of a "Facebook Premiere" (similar to a Facebook Live) is that we can comment in real time. So, as we watch at the same time, we can interact with the video together. This gives at least a little more sense of the community of our church family as we see each other's comments.



Christmas Eve Schedule

- 5:00 pm Livestreamed Worship through our Website and Facebook
- 6:30-7:30 pm Drive-Through Christmas Prayer & Communion Beloit Campus 8:00-9:00 pm Drive-Through Christmas
- Prayer & Communion Clinton Campus

Drive Through Christmas Eve

After we worship online together on Christmas Eve, each campus will have a time for drive-through prayer and Communion.

It's disappointing that we can't worship in-person, together, but each family will have a couple of minutes in Christmas prayer with Pastor Brenda.

People are asked to stay in their cars, masked.

Congregational Candle Lighting Video

As part of our Livestreamed Worship Service on Christmas Eve, we will share a video of our congregation members passing each other the light of Christ. We will soon have candles available for you to pick up. Then, using your phone or a video camera, take a horizontal video of you and your family, where you light your candle off screen to your right, hold it in front of you for a second, then move it off screen to the left.

We will put these videos together with a recording of Silent Night underneath. The finished video should look like we are passing the flame from each person to another. Couples / families may record with everyone together. If you don't have a recording device but can Zoom, we can help you record that way. Then, on Christmas Eve, light your candle again, as we watch the video together and sing Silent Night together.

Please send your video, which should only be a few seconds long per person, to Pastor Brenda by December 19th at pastorbrenda@rolumcwi.com. This should be very powerful, so we hope you will participate!

Christmas Eve Candles

You will need a candle on Christmas Eve. They will be available in the bins outside of each campus building by December 1st. If you would like one delivered to you, please call the church office. If you would like to deliver candles, also please call the church office.

<u>Special Offering:</u>

United Methodist Student Day Apportionment

LOOSE COINS:

<u>November:</u> Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign <u>December:</u> God's Fund



December 1 Peggy Buckler Delores Hahn December 2 Jeff Caple **December 6** Madeline Cawkins December 10 Britta Hartje December 12 Louise Juniq December 13 Marilyn Busjahn **December 15** Destiny Knutsen **December 16** Sandra Hays Lee Kuska December 17 Ralph Irvin Karen Parssinen **December 19** Zekaeus Lutzow-Fuller December 21 Pam Dodge **December 24** Priscilla Pann **December 25** Roger Brendenmuehl December 27 Bob Lang **December 30** Barbara Putney

January 2 Eleanor Burnside Lora Cawkins **January 3** Timothy (T.J.) Hammond January 4 Katie Ward January 6 Amber Cornford January 7 Mary Jane Kellicut **January 8** Jean Schrader January 12 Wilma Shultz January 18 **Steve Haas** January 20 Nita Hansen Shirley Sweet January 22 Marlene Erickson Kellyse Lutzow Doug Mitchell Nadine Stoner January 26 Elsie Lynch Don Parish **January 28** Nancy Bryant Mark Hammett January 30

Zachary Christiansen



December 1 Steve & Susie Haas December 15 Tim & Jean Crawford December 16 Paul & Gretchen Dixon **December 18** Dennis & Vicki Boschma December 23 Bruce & Lora Cawkins December 31 Scott & Kathy Weiser January 16 Don & Deanna Parish January 23 Bill & Kathy Rodgers

Note: If your name is not on our lists, please call the office so we can update our records.



A Stranger Rang the Door Bell

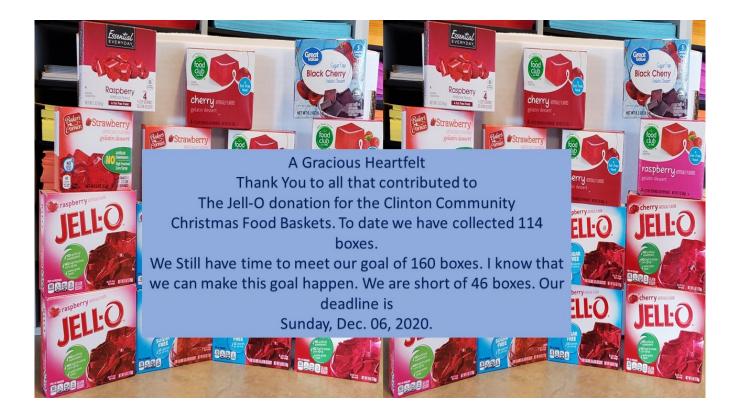
It was Wednesday morning, November 11, 2020. I arrived to the church office and brought up the slide for Veterans Day up on the sign. I looked out of my office window to make sure that the sign had changed and it did. I went on and started to get organized as to what I was going to work on first. Made coffee, came

back to the office and started to read emails. It was probably around a half hour later and I heard the front door bell ring. I grabbed my mask and went to see who was at the door. I was expecting a package, so when I opened the door, an older gentleman was standing there instead of one of a delivery person.

I asked him what I could do for him? He told me that he went to the church to see if anyone was there and when he couldn't see anyone, he saw the sign telling where the office was located so he came to the office. He asked if we controlled the sign from the office. I said yes we did. He said that today is Wednesday and that a church has taken the time to remember the Veterans. He said that he hadn't see any other church that do this, today. We had talked about how Veterans day came about and that it wasn't always called Veterans day. He asked me if I knew of the original name was. I told him yes. My Mother always taught us about Armistice Day. We had a great conversation. He was just so "Thankful" that our church had placed the words, "Thank You Veterans" on our digital sign and that it did not change to another slide. He said that the sign made him feel special. He had noticed that the background had a moving flag and a cross. He said that when the flag moved a certain way you could spot the cross. He had tears in his eyes. We said a prayer together, he thanked me again and went on his way. I told him that he is more than welcome to come to church with us when we get back to face-to-face worship and that he could watch our services on our webpage. He thanked me and told me that he attends his own church. He left with a smile of a great feeling knowing that a church had taken time to say, "Thank You Veterans". May God's love and peace be always with this gentleman. -Tom Alverson







Something to look forward to...

Mission Committee will be organizing an adult mission trip to Midwest Mission Distribution Center this fall. We will carpool from the church on Wednesday morning, September 15. We will work Thursday and Friday, and return to Beloit Friday night, September 17.

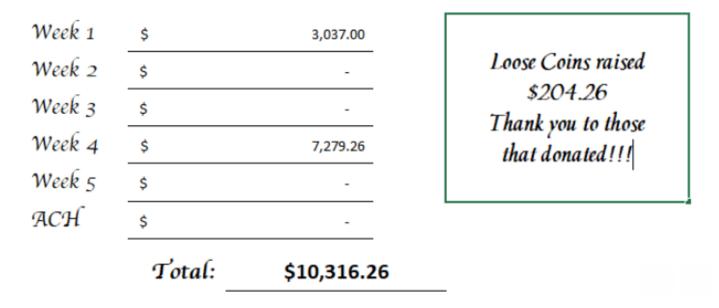
If you are curious about the Distribution Center, their website is <u>www.midwestmission.org</u>. Many of us stay in the dorm at the distribution center. They have showers, air conditioning, wi-fi, and a complete kitchen. We will sleep one person per bedroom (unless you are family members) which are equipped with 2 bunkbeds per room. If you would prefer to stay in a regular motel, there is a nice Baymont Inn 5 miles away in Springfield, IL.

If you are interested, pencil this date in on your calendar! I will include registration materials in the spring issue of *The Current*.

If you have any other questions, please contact Diane Gemignani at <u>dianegem23@gmail.com</u> or 608-290-5274.

FINANCIAL CORNER

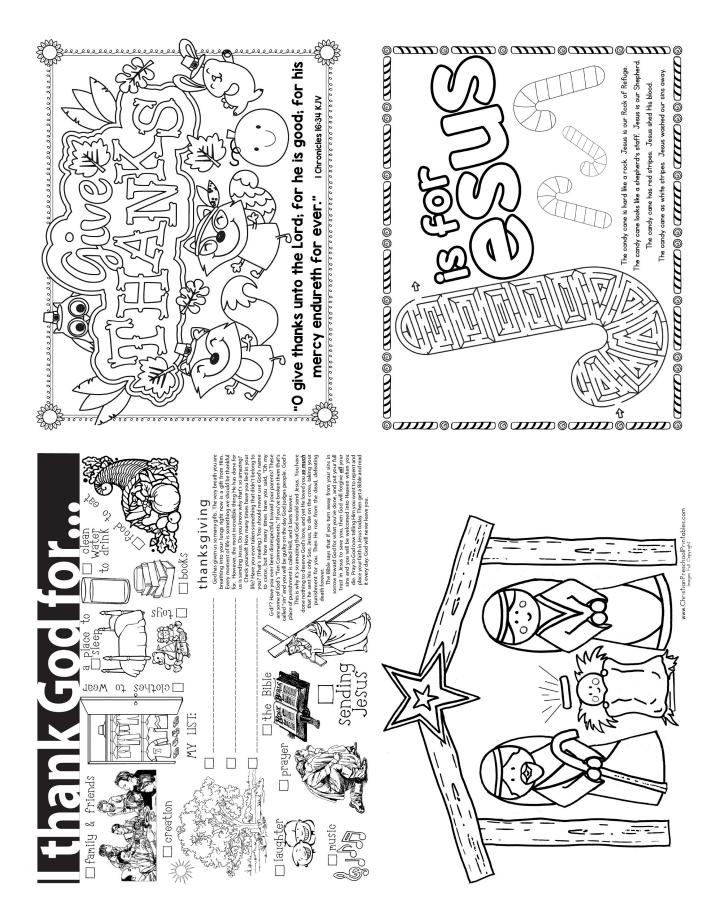
MONTH OF: OCTOBER



NOTE from Chrissy: Bonnie was out on medical leave, and I was also ill. There was no deposit done week 2 and 3 of October and week 4 had 3 weeks worth of a deposit. Also, I had October ACH entered, but did not process it. So, if anyone would like to make an additional payment, call me and leave a voicemail or an email and I will process an October payment, November is on time. (cbergh@rolumcwi.com) Office: 608-362-8866 or cell: 608-352-1093.



This fabulous crew served a fabulous drive through pancake breakfast to participants of the Clinton Food Pantry and others! Next breakfast is December 12th.





Thanksgiving and Stewardship

Thanksgiving is just a few days away. Its a nice holiday, and like Christmas, it has special significance to Christians due to its origin and also because of the importance of thankfulness in our daily lives. It also has significant meaning in the context of stewardship.

The main idea behind stewardship is that everything we have has been given to us by God. Our very lives are a gift from him and we have an obligation to God (and to others) to use all that God has given us – our time, our talents, and our treasure – for our own joy, the good of others, and the glory of God.

It's a very simple concept, really, but it can be difficult in practice. We have a tendency to credit ourselves; to think that it's all about our hard work, our sacrifices, and our wise decisions. We tend to overlook the simple fact that God is the ultimate source of everything.

Since God is the ultimate source, the only natural response toward him is thankfulness and gratitude. In fact, Thanksgiving should really be all about gratitude. The outward giving of thanks is simply an expression of an inner gratitude toward God.

In the context of stewardship, in this excerpt from his excellent book Money, God or Gift, Jamie Munson

contrasts gratitude with its opposite with regard to money and possessions – greed:

There are actually many verses in the Bible that encourage us to have a thankful heart toward God (and also to others). "Give thanks", as it turns out, are pretty common words in the Bible (in fact, they occur almost 80 times.) One particular verse comes to mind – one that might seem to be a little out of context as it doesn't mention giving thanks per se' – but the more you think about it, the more relevant its message becomes to the relationship between thanksgiving and stewardship:

"For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?" I Cor. 4:7 (ESV)

(continued on next page)

GRATITUDE OR **GREED**

Which heart do you have about your money?

	Gratitude	Greed
Attitude	Humility (Phil. 2:3)	Grumbling (Phil. 2:15)
Perspective	Grace: "I am a sinner who de- serves death but Jesus paid the price and gave me his perfect righteousness."	Entitlement: "I am a good person who deserves heaven—plus a comfortable, pain-free existence in the meantime."
Desire	Jesus is enough to satisfy my life.	Jesus is not enough. I want wealth / fame / comfort / power as well.
Money	God gives. Therefore my money is his, and I use it to glorify him.	l earn. Therefore my money is mine, and l use it however l please.
Possessions	Contentment: I have enough	Covetous: I never have enough
Church	Serve as a member of God's family	Be served as a consumer
Job	Work heartily for the Lord; cul- tivating thanks for God's provi- sion (Deut. 8:17; Col. 3:23)	Work begrudgingly for the man; becoming bitter and jealous against others (James 3:16)
Family	A blessing to embrace	A burden to escape
Future	Eternal: optimistic/hopeful (2 Cor. 4:7-9)	Temporal: pessimistic/anxious
Worship	Time, energy, and resources go to God	Time, energy, and resources go to me
Identity	Jesus and his achievement	My abilities and my achievements
Giving	Generous	Guilt- or gain-motivated (or non-existent)
Which column most accurately describes your life? In which areas are you encouraged? Where do you need to repent and seek foreiveness?		

This scripture is actually a rather scathing comment by Paul to the Corinthians. There was obviously some pride and conceit among them as related to the gift of salvation, but pardoned sinners can boast of nothing but the grace of God.

In the last part of the verse, Paul is charging them with a serious sin – the sin of ingratitude. The Corinthians, who owed everything to the kindness and mercy of God, clearly have nothing in themselves in which they can boast. In the end, Paul reduces the Corinthians to speechless shame.

So how might this scripture be applied to us in the context of thanksgiving and stewardship? Well, if we are to consider what we are to be thankful for on this Thanksgiving Day, perhaps our focus should be on this simple truth: All that we have, we have received. Our very life source is God himself, and everything else that we have – material and spiritual – has also come from him. Even our trials and temptations are ordained by God and are given for our own good, and ultimately, his glory.

While it's true that human effort and ability are involved (we work and earn in order to provide for ourselves), it is God who gives us the skills and ability to work. What do we have that we could have possibly earned or acquired on our own apart from God? The answer is, of course, nothing. This is so simple yet staggering – all that we have, all that we are, and all that we could ever hope to be is given to us by the gracious hand of God. For that, our hearts should be overflowing with gratitude and thanksgiving. So let us give thanks to our God who has given us all things in and through Jesus Christ, his Son.

-Tom Alverson



Thank you all so much for thinking about the Aldrich kids, with your amazing donations of school supplies! They have been delivered to the school and are ready for use, when school starts up again. Youth Ministsry Team (formerly Nurture & Discipleship)





It's been a l-o-n-g time since we've met together for fellowship and learning, and it may well be a long time before we can meet together again. Your board just held a meeting by e-mail and that was no easy task! But, we got it done with joy in our hearts.

You can easily see that a circle meeting by e-mail would eliminate the fun of food and fellowship.

Phone calls, cards and letters are the next best thing for keeping us together. While words and pictures of cupcakes don't equal the real thing, the joy of any contact will do for now. Call, contact and pray for your sisters in Christ today!



MISSION GIVING

Each year individual United Methodist Women pledge funds for Mission Giving through Prayer and Self-Denial, Pledge to Mission and World Thank Offering.

Prayer and Self-Denial calls us to bow to meet God in prayer and meditation and then rise to give of ourselves sacrificially so that God's vision of an abundant and beloved community for all can be realized. If you were unable to give funds in February and are able to give now please do so.



Pledge to Mission is your commitment to the foundational mission work of UMW and contributes to the largest channel of Mission Giving. If you did not give your pledge earlier this year please do so now as well.

World Thank Offering allows us to give out of God's abundance with spontaneous gifts of gratitude and thanks. If we were meeting in our circles this month we would have a program on World Thank Offering and you would be giving to this offering now.

Please send your gifts to our Treasurer and make your check payable to UMW and mail to: Jacque Patch, 9028 S. Butterfly Road, Beloit, Wi. 53511

Thank you for giving of your talent and treasure to UMW. God Bless YOU.

Marlene Erickson



Remember UMW Mission Projects when you are Christmas shopping.

Give the gift of helping a young girl to read!

Joy will fill your heart. Hello United Methodist Women!

It's December 2020, and our logo is on a green background. Yes, green is an important color in December.

Evergreen trees brighten our outdoor landscape and evergreen trees decked in glittery ornaments brighten our indoor landscape. We sing about the holly and the ivy while hanging pine boughs and wreaths inside and outside. Yes, green is an important color from the greenbacks we give out for holiday charity and expenses to the lime jello mold that graces traditional midwest dining room tables.

Our church also celebrates a color during December, but it's not green. It's blue. Read the story below to find out about a Blue December.

Merry Christmas to all UMW here and around the world.

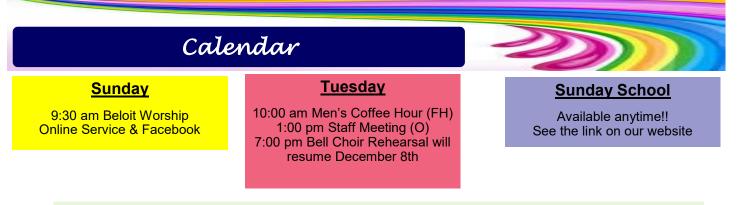
Blue December

The church year is divided into cycles with a color representing each cycle. The color is used to decorate the sanctuary and remind us of the area of christian life we are celebrating. The Christmas Cycle includes Advent, and the preparation for Advent is represented by purple.

However, blue may also be used. It seems that the idea of using blue started in Scandinavia. Purple dye was very expensive, whereas blue was much more economical.

Blue may symbolize blue skies or the life-giving air we breathe. It may also symbolize good health or hope. Surely the Advent season presents the greatest hope for all humankind—the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

Since all UWM meetings and programs have been put on hold until further notice due to Covid-19 concerns, this page in The Current will have to serve as our time together. If you have news about any UWM Mission events or news about members, please contact Carol Connors, Communications Coordinator at 608-754-2014. Let's keep in touch. -Carol Connors



Weekly Events are posted on the Web & Facebook

- November 236:30 pm Trustees (Zoom)November 26Have a Blessed ThanksgivingDecember 51:00 pm Decorate front of Clinton ChurchDecember 116:00 pm "Light Night" in ClintonDecember 146:30 pm Stewardship (Zoom)December 195:00 pm Live Nativity in parking lotChristmas Ever(acc page 2 for additional details)
- <u>Christmas Eve: (see page 8 for additional details)</u>
- 5:00 pm Livestream Worship (Web & FB)
- 6:30 pm Drive-Through Christmas Prayer & Communion (Beloit Campus)
- 8:00 pm Drive-Through Christmas Prayer & Communion (Clinton Campus)



Issue deadline:

January 8th The next issue of the Current will be available January 17th



Just a reminder River of Life Beloit and Clinton Campus buildings and Office Buildings are closed due to the public health emergency.