

Upcoming Events/Announcements

If someone you know has become homebound or has moved to a care center, please let us know so we can include them in our care ministries. We love our whole church family and want to ensure that everyone is included, remembered, and loved.

SHOEBOX CHRISTMAS UPDATE: We have surpassed our goal of 234 boxes for our Shoebox Christmas mission! Boxes delivered on December 5. **Thank you** for continuing to keep this wonderful CLUMC tradition alive!

Our December mission is MUSH – Mittens, Underwear, Socks & Hats. We are collecting WARM mittens, socks, and hats for ADULT men and women. And everyone needs (clean) underwear, too. Thank you for providing some of the "essentials" needed for cold winter days and nights.

CLUMC will be holding a **Longest Night service at 5:30 p.m.** on Saturday, December 21. This service is for those who need a quiet moment away from all the hurry and hype of Christmas.

Christmas Eve services will be held on December 24 at 2 p.m. (Family Focused), 4 p.m. (Contemporary), 6 p.m. (Traditional), and 10 p.m. (Candlelight/Acapella).

Financial Report (January 1-November 30, 2025)

	Actual	Budget
Revenues	\$618,961	\$640,550
Expenses	<u>\$587,653</u>	<u>\$635,480</u>

Calendar at a Glance

December 21: Longest Night Service @ 5:30 PM

December 24: Christmas Eve Services @ 2 PM, 4 PM, 6 PM, and 10 PM

December 25 & 26: Office is Closed

December 28: One combined Sunday Service @ 9 AM

December 28: No Children's or Youth Sunday School

December 31 & January 1: Office Closed for New Year's

In the midst of the holiday season, we pray for safe travels and for love, joy, peace, patience, and unity among family and friends as they gather.

THE PATH

For the week of
December 21, 2025

Canyon Lake
United Methodist Church
Rapid City, SD

Advent 4

"Jesus Birth Happened This Way"

There are multiple places in scripture where Jesus' life and birth are predicted. None of them completely agree with all the others. Imagine this scenario: You are standing on a street corner in downtown Rapid City when you witness a car accident. The Police officers are there very quickly and ask you if you could give them a report of what you witnessed. They do the same thing with three other people on the other three corners. All four of you would speak the same story in the same place with the same vehicles involved, but each of you would tell it from the perspective of where you were standing. This week we explore different stories from different witnesses all speaking their truth each from their perspective. Some of these were written after Jesus' life and death. Others were written centuries before Jesus' birth. But all of them speak of Jesus coming to earth.

Prayer: God of Earth and Heaven, we praise you today for the gift of your son given to our world. Two thousand years is a long, long time for us to remember and celebrate Jesus' birth, but in your eyes, this was just yesterday. As we rest in your hands, this story is still brand new. Open our eyes and our ears. Open our minds and our hands. Open us this day to your living and loving presence in our world. Amen.

This is not a Christmas passage. This is a crucifixion passage. It is helpful to remember that for the first three centuries of Christianity, the major focus was on Easter not Christmas. It centered on the power of Resurrection. It was not until after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire that the focus shifted to include Christ's birth. The reason for this was that there was a lot of competition from other religions and other gods. The early Christians needed to prove Christ's validity and relevance. We absolutely believe that Jesus came to earth with a real body to live a real life that really mattered AND he was crucified and resurrected. "Surely, he has borne our griefs." The table was set for baby Jesus to be born.

Matthew and Luke have birth stories, but not Mark and John. Mark just jumps into Jesus' life at the time of his baptism around the age of 30. John, on the other hand, begins not with a birth story but rather with the concept that Jesus is the light of the world and that light shatters the darkness no matter how deep that darkness may be. Today stop and think. What is the darkness that is in your life right now? How is it that Christ's light can shatter even that darkness?

Look closely. What you will observe is that Matthew's story focuses on Joseph while Luke focuses on Mary. Put yourself in Joseph's shoes. If you were caught by surprise by your fiancé's pregnancy, how would you have felt? How would you have reacted? How would you have relied on God? Now translate this into the surprises that you experience in your own life. How do you feel; how do you react; how do you rely on God in the middle of difficult surprises?

Shepherds, angels, and a manger. There is such incredible beauty in this story. It is not the story of wealth and power, but instead the coming of a child in the darkness in the middle of the night but also the darkness of the world trying to survive poverty and cruelty. What is it about this story that Luke tells that is most powerful today?

Seven hundred fifty years before Jesus' birth the prophet Isaiah wrote these words. They have been words of promise for almost three millennia. The promise is a gift to us, not to hold onto but rather to share with others.

We still live in a dark world that has too much violence and too much cruelty. But in the midst of that darkness, Christ's light still shines. How do you see this in your own life? May you celebrate Jesus' birth this whole week!

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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. / Friday 9 a.m.- 12 noon