The Messenger

DECEMBER 2025

St. Paul United Methodist Church
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Ebenezer United Methodist Church
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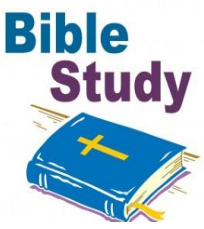
UPCOMING SCHEDULE FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Mondays, December 1st through 22nd, 7:00 p.m. Advent Study at St. Paul UMC

Sunday, December 21st, 7:00 p.m. Blue Christmas Worship Service, St. Paul UMC

Wednesday, December 24th, 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve at Ebenenzer UMC

Wednesday, December 24th, 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve at St. Paul UMC
(The Offering at this worship service will be given to the Elmwood Community Center to help them replace the front door and repair the window.)



UMYF NEWS

(UMYF is for all 7th-12th graders.)

Our normal Wednesday night Bible Study will be at Murdock on December 17th at 5:30 p.m. for a potluck meal. The kids have invited Adults to participate in the discussion and join in the fellowship.

Our monthly fun event will be Sunday, December 7th at 3:00 p.m. at St. Paul UMC. We will be baking cookies for the December food pantry distribution. We will also have a crazy gift exchange so bring a wrapped white elephant gift ($10 or less).

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Cass County Food Pantry Distribution
Saturday, December 20, 2025, 9:00–11:00 a.m.
Location: Old Village Town Hall Building
113 West E Street, Elmwood

Elmwood Community Center
The Center is open for meals at noon or the weekday lunches can be delivered upon request or can be picked up at the center. Call 402-994-2145 to make a request.
Grab 'N Go Meals are still happening every Friday of the month from 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. Please call to make reservations for these meals or just stop in.

The Breakfast Buffet will be on December 14th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Please make reservations no later than Friday, December 12th by calling the Center.

Activities: Low-Impact Exercises at 10:00 a.m.
Tuesdays and Thursdays
Pitch Card Games, Fridays, 2:00 p.m.
Pinochle Card Game, 3rd Monday/ Month, 12:30 p.m.

UPCOMING FCCLA BLOOD DRIVE
12:00 – 6:00 P.M.
Tuesday, December 16th, Elmwood Fire Hall

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH CORNER

The Elmwood UWIF will meet on Wednesday, December 10th, 1:00 p.m. at Donna Clements' home. We will be celebrating Christmas with a potluck meal.

The Murdock UWIF will host their annual Christmas luncheon on Saturday, December 7, 2025, starting at 12:00 p.m. Reservations need to be made by December 4th to Angie Friesell, 402-297-3126.

It has been decided to cancel the mat weaving sessions for the rest of 2025. We will begin again on Wednesday, January 14. 2026. Have a great Holiday Season!

**As we prepare for the season of Jesus Christ the son of God arrival,
Thank you to everyone who helped with decorating the Church for Christmas on Sunday, November 23rd.**

December Birthdays-Elmwood

Clayton Miller – December 2
Carolyn Oehlerking – December 5
Gerry Wilhelm – December 6
Donna Amberly – December 8
Nicholas Brewer – December 8
Jessie Lansink – December 10
Dalton Wheeler – December 10
Rex Clements – December 15
Scott Rorie – December 17
Debra Lenz – December 18
Wayne Stubbendeck – Dec. 19
Evren Anstey – December 21
Dana Kollars – December 23
James Stubbendick – Dec. 24
Gary Bornemeier – December 26
Conner Clements – December 28
Thomas Lenz – December 30
Joel Clements – December 31

December Birthdays-Murdock

Ella Zierott – December 3
Emerson Chesnut – December 5
Jane Leadabrand – December 6
Ramona Oehlerking – Dec. 21
Haddie Zierott – December 22
Jeff Backemeyer – December 24
Harvey Mills – December 24
Cindy Mills – December 25
Cheryl Patterson – December 29

ADVENT STUDY

Our class this year will feature the short book, On the Way to Bethlehem, by Rob Fuquay, Pastor at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, IN. Featuring the geography and history of four towns, Fuquay takes us from Rome through Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem and, with the Wisemen, back to Persia. Each location comes alive with an essential aspect not only of the Christmas narrative but also of its meaning in our lives.

Join us for study and discussion on Monday evenings, 7:00-8:15 pm, St. Paul UMC. starting December 1 through 22. Books will be available.

Mel Luetchens

FOOD BANK REQUEST

Would you be able to help with providing some homemade Christmas cookies/candies for the Food bank in order for us to provide plates of these delicious treats for the Food Bank families on December 20, 2025 (our next food pantry distribution date).

If you can, please drop them off at the Food Bank by 8am on that date OR at Laurel's/Linda's homes, whatever works for you.

We have handed out some beautiful, delicious plates over the years because of your help.

Thank you so much!
Linda and Volunteers

CHOIR SINGERS AND BELL RINGERS NEEDED

Bell practice starts at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays
Choir practice starts at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays
(except the first Wed. of month)
Both at Elmwood St. Paul UMC

PASTOR'S PEN

Happy December! Here we are on the close of another year. December a month where we are working on getting in all the things that we didn't do the rest of the year. Visiting all the family and making sure we have all the gifts that we need and that we didn't forget anyone in the process of running around like a chicken with our heads cut off. It matters not if you are in the church or outside of the church, the month is hectic and it is easy to forget what we are actually supposed to be doing, what all the craziness is circled around.

The month of December is a season we call Advent in the church. We celebrate it every year, we light candles on Sunday mornings, the Children perform a Christmas pageant, the choir sings special music, the bells ring out music in celebration but do we really know what Advent means? Have you ever thought about what Advent means? Why do we call it Advent? I have grown up in the church, celebrated 42 Advents and yet I don't know that I have ever sat down to think about why we call it Advent.

So, I looked it up. What does Advent mean? Google is helpful for so many things these days. We look up football stats, movies, actors, how to do different math problems all at my house using Google. So, I Googled the meaning of Advent. Google being the ever helpful thing that it is, led me to the Oxford dictionary definition which says "the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event." That is all fine and good, it is easy to know the "notable person" we are waiting on is not Santa but Jesus. But I don't know if this definition is enough. So I went on, next we have the Merriam-Webster definition "The period beginning four Sundays before Christmas and observed by some Christians as a season of prayer and fasting **2**: the coming of Christ at the Incarnation **advent** : a coming into being or use." Okay so now we are getting somewhere. A time of prayer and fasting…not sure about you all but in my house during Advent there is not a lot of fasting that is taking place. That is an area that we probably should be doing more of. 😜

Overall, what Advent is, or is supposed to be, is the preparation for the arrival of a notable person. I don't know that we do that very well. I mean sure we prepare for our family to come over, clean the house, make all the food, get all the gifts. We prepare for all the parties we must attend, making food, getting dressed up, finding babysitters. But are we actually preparing for the right thing this season? Are we preparing for the coming of the right notable person? Are we preparing for the birth of Jesus? Are we preparing for Jesus to "come into" our lives? It is so easy to get wrapped up in the societal craziness of the season. It is easy to spend our month running around and making sure we get to all the places and see all the people and wrap the right gifts, but what about the real reason for the season? Are we making time to prepare our hearts, minds, and souls for the coming for Christ? Maybe a little more prayer and fasting is needed in this season. What would it look like if we stopped just for a little bit and focused not on our "to do" lists but on Jesus and what it really means for him to come into our lives at this time?

This month in worship we are focusing on the coming of Emmanuel and what it means for us. Will we be as ready as the shepherds to accept the good news if the angels come to us as they came to them saying "The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord." May we take some time to prepare ourselves for the arrival of a "notable person" this month. And may Jesus find a place to come into your hearts.

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Michelle Chesnut

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7:00pm Advent Study	2	3 6:30pm Bell Practice - E 7:30pm Choir Practice - E	4	5	6 12:00pm Christmas Luncheon – UWIF - M
7 9:00am Worship Service and Children's Program – M 10:35am Worship Service – E 3:00 pm UMYF – E	8 7:00pm Advent Study – E 7:00pm Church Council - M	9	10 1:00pm UWIF – E 6:30pm Bell Practice - E 7:30pm Choir Practice - E	11	12	13
14 9:00am Worship Service -M 10:35am Worship Service – E Children's Program – E	15 7:00pm Advent Study – E 7:00pm Church Council – E	16 12-6:00pm Bloodmobile - E	17 1:30pm Sew 'N Sews – M 5:30pm Youth Bible Study - M No Bell Practice 7:30pm Choir Practice - E	18	19	20 9-11am Food Pantry Distribution
21 9:00am Worship Service - M 10:35am Worship Service – E 7:00pm Blue Christmas Service - E	22 7:00pm Advent Study – E	23	24 5:00pm Christmas Eve Service – M 6:30pm Christmas Eve Service - E	25 Christmas	26	27
28 9:00am Worship Service - M 10:35am Worship Service – E	29	30	31 New Year's Eve			

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Address Service Requested

Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25, 2025