



Grace & Aurora United Methodist Churches

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Lamont, Iowa 50650

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DECEMBER 2024 Newsletter

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Wednesday, December 24, 2024

Strawberry Point @ 5:00 pm

Lamont @ 6:30 pm





NEWS FROM

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES OF



AURORA



LAMONT



STRAWBERRY POINT



Grace United Methodist Church

745 Washington St PO Box 60
Lamont, Iowa 50650
LamontAurora@gmail.com
www.LamontAuroralowaUMC.com

Aurora United Methodist Church

506 Luella St PO Box 143
Aurora, Iowa 50607

Pastoral Care

Pastor Lisa Schroeder
(319) 325-4566
Lisaschroederpastor@gmail.com

Prayer Chain

Jane Richmond - (563) 933-6248

Church Food Pantry

Deb Brown or Jane Richmond

Mobile Food Pantry

Kay Hoffman - (319) 361-8100

District Superintendent

Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

www.iaumc.org

SPRC Chair

Jerry Griffin - (319) 202-4592

Administrative Council Chair

John Cook

Sunday School

Julie Mather
Brettjuliemather@gmail.com

Church Secretary

Joanne Lamphier
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(319) 213-2541

Church Treasurer

Nicole Goedken
ngoedken91@outlook.com
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Other Contacts

JoAnn Crow—(563) 920-5273
Deb Brown—(563) 920-5450
Jane Richmond —(563) 933-6248

Greetings, Brothers & Sisters in Christ!

December is here and we begin the Season of Advent as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ once again! On November 24th, we participated in the "Hanging of the Greens" service that helps us prepare the sanctuary for the season and also reminded us of the meanings and symbolism of the decorations we use. The evergreens are a sign of life flourishing in the midst of the dead of winter, as we remember the life and resurrection of Christ who overcame death. The Advent wreath reminds us that we wait for the birth of a baby who brings a message of peace, hope, joy and love and brings light into the darkness of the world. The circle of the wreath reminds us that God's love has no beginning or end and reflects the eternal infinite love of God. The star shaped leaves of the poinsettia remind us of the star that the wise men followed to find the baby Jesus. The red blossoms symbolize the blood Christ shed for us and remind us that Christ came to die for us. We recall the angels that brought messages to Mary, Joseph and the shepherds; simple people chosen by God to be blessed to be a part of God's story. Trees are a part of the Christmas celebration. The Christmas tree was called the tree of the Christ Child in early traditions and the decorative Chrismon's are the monograms of Christ and have symbols of Christ and early symbols of the church. The giving tree reminds us that Christmas is a season of giving, especially to the needy in our community. The nativity scene is a reminder of the beautiful story of the birth of Christ and those invited to participate and celebrate the coming of

"God in the flesh" to the world. That includes you and me! We are called to live, worship and wait for the One who is the world's light that shines God's love into the darkness and brokenness of the world. Then we are called to live it!

We celebrate Christ's coming into the world the four Sundays of December. We will need readers each Sunday to light the Advent Candles. We will also enjoy the children's Christmas programs on December 15 in Lamont at 9:00 AM and in Strawberry Point at 10:30 and on Wednesday night, December 18 at 6:30 in Aurora. The Advent Bible Study will meet on Mondays in Strawberry Point and Tuesdays in Lamont, and will focus on four locations that are part of the journey "On the Way to Bethlehem." The Christmas Eve Candlelight Services on December 24 will be at 5:00 PM in Strawberry Point and 6:30 PM in Lamont. Then we end the year with a joint worship and potluck on December 31 at Strawberry Point.

The month of December gets filled with lots of activities and you may find yourself overwhelmed by everything there is to do. I pray that you will make hearing the words of scripture foretelling the saving work of God a focus this month, as you remember that God sent His son to be the King of Kings and Prince of Peace that would come as a baby and die on a cross as our Savior, so that we might have new life that extends to eternity. This is the true celebration of Christmas and reason for the season!

May the blessings of Christmas fill your heart with peace, hope, joy and love as we continue serving Christ Together! Pastor Lisa

Regular Worship Times

1st Sunday of the month
 2nd Sunday of the month
 3rd Sunday of the month
 4th Sunday of the month
 5th Sunday of the month

Lamont

9:00 AM

 9:00 AM
 9:00 AM

Aurora

9:00 AM
 10:30 AM

Strawberry

10:30 AM
 10:30 AM
 10:30 AM Guest Speaker
 10:30 AM

Joint worship service with location TBA @ 10AM

December Communion

Server - John Richmond
 Supplies - Jane Richmond

January Communion

Server - Eric Morine
 Supplies - Mardelle Streicher

Ushers

Dec 1 - Brittany & Nicole
 Dec 22 - John & Jane Richmond

Scripture Readers

Dec 1 - Elaine Bliss
 Dec 22 - John Richmond

Christmas Card Shower

Grace Smith
 1006 Linden St #426
 Dallas Center, IA 50063

Steve & Pam Thacher
 15134 SE Evergreen Dr.
 Portland, OR 97236

Karen Murley
 Edgewood Convalescent Home
 513 Bell St
 Edgewood IA 52042

Harlan Murley
 Lincolnwood Assisted Living
 302 W Lincoln
 PO Box 10
 Edgewood IA 52042

Loretta Huddle
 Prairie Hills Assisted Living
 505 Enterprise Dr SW Apt 406A
 Independence IA 50644

UMYF Heifer Project

This year \$52.25 in quarters were collected which allowed the UMYF group to buy two families of chicks and bees and a Basket of Hope which is chicks and rabbits. Please continue to donate your quarters in the back of the church for this mission project.

Thank You from Pastor

Thank you to JoAnn Crow and Carol Raithel for setting up for our All Saints Sunday candle lighting and to all who participated.

Thank you to the UMYF for hosting the hot potato bar on November 5 and to all who attended! We made enough money to pay for our loom and to buy some items from the Heifer Project.

Thank you to everyone who helps with picking up food, donate, and volunteers to distribute the food.

Thank you for helping to provide Thanksgiving food boxes to local families.

Thank you to JoAnn Crow for taking the kits and money for blankets to In-Gathering and to all who donated kits and money.

Thank you to those who attended the presentation by Doug Williams on his missionary work in Argentina.

Thank you Lisa Timmerman and JoAnn Crow for reading my sermon when I was sick after returning from my trip to Greece!

Thank you to Terry and Scott for raking and mulching the leaves around the church and parsonage

Grace Food Pantry

Thank you all that keep our Matthew 25 project going! We are truly blessed. We are able to help many community families. Anyone in need of food, please contact Deb Brown or Jane Richmond.

Food Pantry Needs

Canned Fruit; Dish detergent; Laundry detergent

Mobile Food Pantry

When: Typically the 4th Wednesday of the month at 3:30 p.m. But their Holiday Schedule is: Thursday, Dec 19 Where: Line up in the alley behind the fire station in Lamont. Note: Bring two empty boxes to exchange for full boxes.

Hospitality Signup

Each Sunday after worship service, everyone is invited for fellowship. Goodies and coffee is served. If you would like to signup to bring treats, the notebook is in the library.

Prairie Hills Worship

Join us on the 4th Wednesday every month at 9 am in Independence at Prairie Hills Assisted Living.

Working Hands

Typically meets the 2nd Saturday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at GUMC in If you crochet or knit or sew, please come and join us or just come to see what we are up to!



United Women in Faith

Grace Lamont United Methodist Church
745 Washington St., Lamont IA 50650

**Tuesday, December 10
1:30 p.m.**

Anyone interested in being a part of the UWF is welcome to attend!

United Women in Faith

Nov 12 2024 minutes of UM in Faith Pres. Jane called meeting to order at 1:30 PM with 7 members + the Pastor present. She read 1st Thessalonians 5: 16-18 + prayer. Deb read the Least Coin "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff". The Oct. minutes were read and approved.

The current bank balance is \$2715.63. JoAnn was authorized to pay the 4th qtr. Pledge, due Dec 10. The Ingathering was a success: cash of \$578.50 that included a \$218 donation to Midwest Missions + kit value \$360.50. Our unit purchased 6 blankets from the extra change jar.

OLD BUSINESS:

Glenda moved, Joyce seconded to not donate to the Church account at this time. Motion carried. JoAnn moved, Marcia seconded to change the name on the bank checks to Lamont Women in Faith; motion carried. Glenda will take a copy of the minutes to Bank Iowa.

Special Mission pins arrived and will be presented during a service. Youth potato bar netted approx. \$400 after expenses paid. Money will pay for the mat loom, new t-shirts, a possible bowling party.

NEW BUSINESS:

A financial commitment to Rev. Doug Williams' Argentine mission was discussed & will be presented to Ad Councils of the 2 churches.

Thanksgiving boxes will be packed

Mon. Nov 18 and delivered. Deb will supply the boxes.

Samaritan Purse Christmas boxes must be returned to the church Sun. Nov 17.

Programs for 2025 were discussed. A pledge service will be in Jan (possibly part of a Sunday worship.)

Ad Council will discuss beginning a Grief Support group for the community to be held in a neutral location.

Advent Bible Study of 4 weeks entitled "On the Way to Bethlehem" will begin on Tuesdays Nov 26-Dec 3 at 5:15 PM at Lamont; Strawberry will meet on 4 Mondays Nov 25-Dec. 2. No book is needed; it will be a short video & discussion.

Hanging of the Greens will be Sun. Nov 24. Volunteers are needed for readers & Advent candle lighting. Invite someone to join you for the service on Sun to see what we do. Volunteers will get out the decorations Sat Nov 23 at 9 AM to prepare.

Christmas Eve services will be at 6:30 in Lamont, 5:00 in Strawberry. Dec 29 will be a 5th Sunday potluck & 10 AM joint service in Strawberry.

Wed. Dec 18 at 6:30 will be the Aurora Christmas program in Aurora.

It was suggested that a Church cleaning day be held in Jan 2025.

JoAnn presented the lesson "Favorite Dish Potluck" with members bringing their favorite appetizers + a dessert from Marcia. No one needed to fix supper that night!

Next meeting will be Tues Dec 10 at 1:30. Elaine will have the lesson and each member will bring holiday goodies to share.

Secretary, Glenda Schweitzer

Offertory

If you are unable to make it in-person, offertories can be mailed to your church at the address on page 1 of this newsletter.

SPRC/AD Council Meeting

The 2nd Monday of the month at 6pm in the basement Grace Lamont Please join us December 9th at 6:00 pm in the church basement.

Mission Statement

Making God's love and grace known to all of his children.

Vision Statement

To see God's grace and love made known to all of His children regardless of age, race, ethnic background, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, religious preference or any other human condition.

Lamont Community Club

The 2nd Tuesdays of the month at the Lamont Community Center. Checkout their Facebook page for more details.

Common Grounds Meeting

The 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10am at the Common Grounds. Checkout their Facebook page for more details.

Lamont City Council Meeting

The 2nd Wednesday of the month at City Hall 7pm



VIST OUR WEBSITE

www.LamontAuroraIowaUMC.com

DECEMBER 2024

Ad Council Meeting

November 11, 2024—Pastor Lisa began the meeting with prayer.

Pastor gave her report of activities in October and November. Some dates and times for the Advent Study may need adjusting. Christmas Eve services will be at 5pm in Strawberry Point and 6:30 pm in Lamont. December 29, 10AM Joint Service with potluck will be hosted by Strawberry Point. Pastor shared her itinerary of the Greece-Turkey trip.

Charge Conference information was shared. The District Superintendent emphasized financial support for the church camps in Iowa.

September 9, 2024 Minutes were read and approved. (No meeting was held in October.)

TREASURER reported on monthly offerings. It was noted that our income has been declining.

TRUSTEES reported batteries in clocks had been replaced and time set. Drain cleaner had been added to kitchen sinks.

PARSONAGE did not have a report.

MEMORIALS reported some thermometers for freezers had been purchased. The balance in account is \$1,675.26.

UWF received Special Mission Recognition pins and will be presented at church. Programs for 2025 will be discussed and planned. The group will be deciding what extra donations will be made for 2024. Support for the missionary work of Doug Williams will be discussed. A grief support group may be formed for 2025 as a community project.

YOUTH finished one plastic mat and was taken to the InGathering. The

Worship
TOGETHER

Sunday, December 29
10 am



Strawberry Point United Methodist Church
202 W Mission St, Strawberry Point, IA 52076

UMYF group wants to be bowling sometime soon. New T-shirts have been ordered for this group. The Sunday School Christmas Program is being organized.

AUDIO / VISUAL reports the new system is working well. Gage may fill in when Lamphier's are gone in December.

ADMIN ASSISTANT has completed formed for the Charge Conference and requested the use of the basement on November 17 for a baby shower.

OTHER - Gage Wallace will do sidewalk snow removal. The church will provide ice melt. Flemings will be contacted about parking lot snow removal.

Appeals for funding were received from the Independence Food Pantry and the Salvation Army.

OLD BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS - none

FORUM—agenda items for December include Support for Missionary Doug Williams and Grief Support Group formation.

ADJOURNMENT - next meeting is December 9 at 6pm

Jane Richmond, Recording Secretary

★
Joy
Love
Peace
Believe
Christmas

A Year in Review

United Women in Faith

- * Pledges made \$350/quarter.
- * In March hosted World Day of Prayer. Offering taken is sent to support programs of Church Women United.
- * Donated towards expenses to send one child to EWALU.
- * Donated towards the new camera system in the sanctuary.
- * Planned and organized the April garage and bake sale.
- * Made 40 large and 10 small rhubarb pies.
- * We donated food, served, and cleaned up at the Jon Downer funeral.
- * Several UWF women helped serve snacks at Bible School.
- * Donated towards Moody Colorado mission project in the Philippines.
- * Donated to help in the mission work of former pastor Doug Williams.
- * Organized, donated food, served, and cleanup the Elaine Sheldon Akerly funeral
- * Lamont Day bake sale
- * Donated to Starmont's Backpack program.
- * We planned and hosted a farewell brunch for Steve and Pam Thacher.
- * Attended the Annual meeting of Pictured Rocks District UWF at Strawberry Point. District officers shared the work of UWF and looked ahead to 2025.
- * We hosted a speaker from Cedar Valley Hospice.
- * The Fall supper and bake sale was organized.
- * Special Mission Recognition pins were given to two people.
- * Organized Samaritan's Purse Christmas Shoeboxes

- * Gathered kits and money for Ingathering
- * Purchased 6 blankets for Blanket Sunday.
- * Discussed plans for a Grief Support Group.
- * Donated to Iowa's two mission projects: Families Forward in Des Moines and Women at the Well Prison Ministry.
- * Donated towards the Coats for Kids campaign in Strawberry Point and Iowa's Church Camps.
- * Fulfilled any leftover tags on our church's "The Giving Tree"
- * We maintain ties with formerly active members who are no longer in the community by cards, visits and prayers.
- * Direct help to projects or families in need in the community.
- * This group of women were also instrumental in starting the Financial Emergency Fund at Grace UMC.
- * Detailed United Women in Faith (UWF) 2024 in Review / Highlights can be found on the church website and will be in January's newsletter.

PASTORS TRAVELS AND TRIPS

Attended Orders Meeting in Cedar Rapids. Attended 7 Circuit meetings in Oelwein. Attended Pictured Rocks District Conference in Jesup. Attended Iowa Annual Conference in West Des Moines. Attended Spirituality and the Arts Retreat in Nebraska. Attended Leadership Institute in Kansas City. Attended Educational Opportunities Trip in Greece and Turkey. Details about each of these trips and meetings can be found on the church website.

OTHER REMINDERS OF THE YEAR

- * Electric wiring updates and LED light in the toy room, Senior Sunday School room, church secretary office
- * Received \$11,000 Grant for new Live System and tech upgrade.
- * Joe Rawson started coordinating food donations from Dollar Fresh in Dyersville and Manchester.
- * Joanne Lamphier continues to be the church secretary.
- * Nicole Goedken continues to be the church treasurer.
- * Deb Brown took over the custodial position from Steve Hutchinson upon him moving from the area.
- * Sold apple pies and pecans.
- * Lenten Study utilizing "The Third Day", by Tom Berlin
- * Special services included Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Sharing of Ashes,
- * 125th Anniversary service in Aurora
- * Deaths: Ida Mae Harford, Elaine Sheldon Akerly, Roger Homewood, Shirley Bond, Jon Downer, Eleanor McGraw, Ken Magsamen
- * Completed statistical reports and charge conference reports.
- * New District Superintendent. Scott Keele Kober replaced Moody Colorado.
- * Received Hunger Grant
- * Donated to Starmont Post Prom
- * Combined SPRC and Ad Council meetings into one.
- * Updated Safe Sanctuary Policy
- * Replaced refrigerator in kitchen; installed new outlets
- * Created website for church. www.LamontAuroralowaUmc.com

- * Leon Goedken family rebuilt and stained basement columns
- * Easter breakfast put on by UMYF
- * Steve Thacher resigned as board chairman. Steve and Pam moved to Oregon.
- * United Women in Faith changed their meeting days from Wednesdays to Tuesday at 1:30 to allow for more attendance.
- * Faith on the Farm Vacation Bible School held in July
- * Gage Wallace mowing church and parsonage lawns
- * John Cook replaced Steve Thacher on the Administrative Council
- * Rhubarb pies were made and sold
- * Pastor Doug Williams came and spoke.
- * Donated 32 hymnals to Moody Colorado and the Philippines Church on Wheels.
- * Passed out 28 Easter food boxes.
- * Working on getting the church bell working again.
- * Wallpaper removed and painted or replaced in various areas of church
- * Ingathering kits were collected. Glenda resigned from position and JoAnn Crow replaced her.
- * Fall Bazaar Swiss Steak Supper organized by Joyce Geistkemper and JoAnn Crow.
- * Had a UMYF Baked potato bar.
- * UMYF purchased loom to make mats for the homeless.
- * Missionary Doug Williams came to speak of his missionary work and experiences in Argentina.
- * Sanctuary had wasps visit during a couple services.

A Heartwarming Youth Group Journey at Aurora Methodist Church



On Wednesday nights, Aurora Methodist Church comes alive with laughter and energy of young hearts gathering for the weekly Youth Group. This vibrant program, led by the dedicated team of Brooke Teeter, Dave Young, and Pastor Lisa Schroeder, combines faith, fellowship, and music to nurture the spiritual growth of the church's youth.

Each week, these three passionate instructors guide the group through engaging lessons and uplifting music, helping the participants deepen their understanding of faith while building lasting friendships. Pastor Lisa, known for her inspiring leadership, brings a warmth and wisdom that resonates with the youth. Brooke and Dave add their unique talents, creating a supportive and creative space for everyone involved.

This holiday season, the Youth Group is channeling their enthusiasm into preparing a special Christmas program. The event scheduled for Wednesday, December 18 at 6:30 pm, promises to be a joyful celebration of the Christmas spirit. Through song, storytelling and heartfelt performances, the youth aim to share the message of hope and love with the congregation and the wider community.

Following the program, attendees are invited to stay for delicious treats and fellowship—a perfect way to cap off an evening of joy and reflection.

Mark your calendar and join us in celebrating the season with Aurora Methodist's incredible youth. Witness their hard work and creativity while basking in the warmth of community and faith.

Come and support the future of our church as they bring the story of Christmas to life!

Details at a Glance:

- **Event:** Youth Christmas Program
- **Date:** Wednesday, December 18
- **Time:** 6:30 pm
- **Location:** Aurora Methodist Church
- **Treats:** Fellowship and refreshments to follow

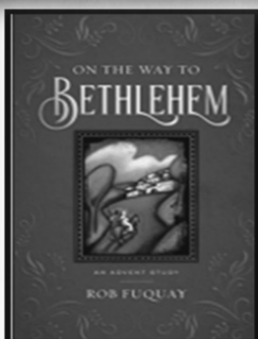


DECEMBER 2024

Advent/Christmas

I D K P T I J J I A W N W T J P G G T N R B C O
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 J R L I B R T V H G M W I S E M E N J S V B X B

Celebrate	Shepherds	Christmas	yuletide	December
Paitence	Wisemen	Manger	Stable	Wreath
Purple	Joseph	Advent	Angel	Peace
Jesus	Love	Holy	Rose	Star
Mary				



ADVENT STUDY

invited

On the Way to Bethlehem follows the long journey to Christmas. The story begins in Rome with a decree issued from the seat of worldly power for a census, setting into motion events leading to the birth of the Savior of the world in a town that represents the very opposite of worldly power, Bethlehem. Author Rob Fuquay provides insight into the geographical and historical significance of Rome, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem, along with the important characters through whom the Christmas drama unfolds. You will be drawn into those places in a way that helps you experience the spiritual truths each location holds. The reflection we give in these places prepares the heart and soul to experience wonder, awe, mystery, and joy. Celebrate the birth of Jesus as you celebrate the presence of Jesus in your life today, tomorrow and forever.

SESSION	MONDAY <i>Strawberry Point</i>	TUESDAY <i>Lamont</i>
1: ROME: A place of Longing	November 25 @ 5 pm	November 26 @ 5:15 pm
2: JERUSALEM: A place of Waiting	December 2 @ 4 pm	December 3 @ 5:15 pm
3: NAZARETH: A Place of Simplicity	December 9 @ 4 pm	December 10 @ 5:15 pm
4: BETHLEHEM: A Place of Humility	December 16 @ 4 pm	December 17 @ 5:15 pm

**Strawberry Point
United Methodist Church**
202 West Mission

**Lamont Grace
United Methodist Church**
745 Washington St



**SUNDAY
BREAKFAST
8:00 AM
to NOON**

HELD AT EACH BREAKFAST
50/50 RAFFLE
NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN



Carry-outs Available

**NOVEMBER 3
DECEMBER 1
JANUARY 5
FEBRUARY 2
MARCH 2**

All you can eat pancakes; also biscuits & gravy, sausage, ham & scrambled eggs with milk, juice or coffee

ADULTS \$10.00
5-8 YEARS \$5.00
PRESCHOOL FREE



Common Grounds
MON - SAT 6 to 9am
621 BUSH ST, LAMONT IA
563-924-2367



**PREORDER: Call (563) 924-2367 or (530) 300-0317
By 9am the Friday before**

NOV 6 PORK LOIN

NOV 13 GOULASH

NOV 20 TURKEY & DRESSING

NOV 27 BBQ SANDWICHES

DEC 4 SWISS STEAK

DEC 11 CHICKEN CASSEROLE

DEC 18 CHICKEN & NOODLES

DEC 25 NO MEAL -

MERRY CHRISTMAS

\$8

Carry-out only

<div> <div>DEC 2024</div> <div> WEDNESDAY - Pick up your Common Grounds Special between 11am and Noon FRIDAY - Order your Wednesday Special from Common Grounds by 10 am FRIDAY & SATURDAY - Pastor's regular day off </div> </div>							
	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
FIRST SUNDAY	1 Aurora Legion Breakfast till noon 9am - Lamont Worship	2	3 ADVENT STUDY 5:15PM—LAMONT	4 UMYF 630pm	5	6	7
SECOND SUNDAY	8 9am—Aurora Worship	9 SPRC/AD Council 6pm Lamont	10 <i>United Women in Faith</i> 1:30 pm ADVENT STUDY 5:15PM—LAMONT	11	12	13	14 Working Hands 9am
THIRD SUNDAY	15 Lamont Christmas Program 9am during worship service 9am - Lamont Worship	16	17 ADVENT STUDY 5:15PM—LAMONT	18 Aurora Christmas Program 630pm UMYF 630pm	19 Mobile Food Pantry 330pm	20	21
FOURTH SUNDAY	22 9am - Lamont Worship	23	24 Christmas Eve Service Lamont 6:30pm	25 Christmas	26	27	28
FIFTH SUNDAY	29 10am Joint Service in Strawberry Point	30	1	2	3	4	5