

United Methodist Church of Elmwood
P.O. Box 477
Elmwood, IL 61529

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

December 2011

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Organization
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Permit No. 10
Elmwood, IL 61529

Upcoming Events:

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------|---|
| 12/3 | 9 a.m. | Decorate church |
| 12/4 | 11:30 a.m. | SS Teacher/Aide Meeting |
| 12/5 | 6 p.m. | Advent Study |
| 12/8 | 9 a.m.
6:30 p.m. | Mom Squad Brunch
Ad Council Meeting |
| 12/11 | 5 p.m. | Jr./Sr. High Youth Group
at Country Club |
| 12/12 | 5 p.m.
7 p.m. | Advent Study
Manna Board Meeting |
| 12/13 | 9:30 a.m. | UMW Christmas Meeting |
| 12/15 | 9:30 a.m.
6:30 p.m. | Stuff-a-Bus Delivery
Alpha Group |
| 12/17 | 9 a.m. | Scrapbooking Workshop |
| 12/18 | 2 p.m.
4 p.m. | Good Grief Group
Christmas Caroling |
| 12/24 | 5 p.m. | Christmas Eve Service |
| 12/25 | 10:30 a.m. | Christmas Worship
Service |
| 12/29 | 12 p.m. | Manna Meal |



The Beacon

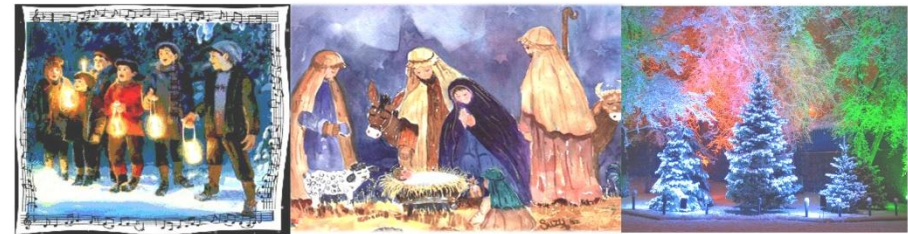


Christmas Services (and New Years Day)

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Saturday Dec. 24, 5:00 pm. (Gathering music 4:45 pm)

Christmas Sunday Service
Sunday Dec. 25, 10:30 am (one service only)
Fellowship Time with Christmas Goodies at 10:00 am

New Years Sunday Service
Sunday, Jan. 1, 10:30 am (one service only)



The United Methodist Church of Elmwood
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Church e-mail: umc@elmnet.net
Church Website: www.elmwoodumc.org

We are followers of Jesus
Connecting to God and
One another, growing in
Faith and pouring our
Lives into serving others.

MISSION NEWS

Stuff-A-Bus-:

The elementary school will be collecting canned goods and non-perishable food items during the first two weeks of December. On **Thursday, Dec. 15, at 9:30 a.m.** the elementary children will pack everything that is collected into a school bus which will then deliver the items to the United Methodist Church. Churches in the community will organize all of the food items and divide them for Christmas baskets. **Volunteers are needed** to help organize the food items that are brought in and pack them for Christmas baskets. It is a very rewarding experience that takes, at most, a couple hours of your time. Mark your calendars and plan to be involved in this fun and fulfilling part of Christmas in Elmwood.

Trip to Joplin, Missouri:

Pastor Mark and Steve Davis went on a 4-day mission work trip to Joplin, Missouri with a group of volunteers from other area United Methodist churches. It was a very interesting and rewarding experience. Much of the work that was done was at the home of a retired couple who barely survived the tornado when their house was destroyed. They were able to purchase a home that had sustained considerable damage but was livable. The work team was able to repair windows, replace trim on the outside of the house, and build a garage from the ground up. Pictures and additional explanation of what was done are available at www.elmwoodil.org. Click on the link: <http://www.elmwoodil.org/JoplinPhoto1.htm>

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service:

Please encourage family and friends to come to the Christmas Eve Service on **Saturday, December 24, at 5:00 p.m.** There will be pre-service music at 4:45 p.m. Nursery will be available for infants through pre-school children. The service is good for all ages – it includes an impromptu retelling of the Christmas story with the

children who are present at the service, music specials from local musicians, your favorite carols, and candle-lighting during the singing of “Silent Night.” I hope you will make this service an important part of your family’s Christmas celebration.

Worship on Christmas Sunday, December 25:

There will be one service on Sunday **December 25 at 10:30 a.m.** and no Sunday School. Coffee Bar and Fellowship time will be held in the Fellowship Hall at 10 a.m. for those who would like to come in a few minutes early for coffee, hot chocolate, and Christmas goodies.

One Service on New Year’s Day:

There will be one service on **Sunday, January 1, 2012, at 10:30 a.m.** There will be no Sunday school on that Sunday.

Christmas Caroling in the Elmwood Area:

The whole family is invited to go Christmas caroling to the homebound residents in Elmwood and the surrounding area on Sunday, December 18, from 4 to 6 p.m. We will **meet at the church at 4 p.m. on the 18th** and finish our caroling at Janet & Ted Mottaz’s home at **708 N. Fairground Way** with a time of fellowship and Christmas goodies. You can sign up at the church ahead if you would like to participate or just come!



Building Update:

The new addition is well on the way-- walls are up, insulation is in, it is all enclosed, and sheet rock is being mudded and prepared for painting. On the outside, the brickwork is close to being finished – just in time before cold weather hits. We know that it will be after the first of the year before everything is completed, but the progress over these last several weeks has been very encouraging and the end is almost in sight. There will be further opportunities to express thanks to God and thanks to the members of the Building Committee who have put in many hours in meetings to make the necessary decisions to bring us to this point. As we approach the end of the year, I would like to express my thanks to Lawrence Kane who has had an incredible responsibility with this project - many calls and many meetings beyond what we will ever know. On behalf of the congregation, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks for his leadership and commitment to bring this project to completion.

I also express my thanks to the entire congregation for your prayers, your resources, and your support to see this through. Everything is coming together to move into the new year with the facilities, the leadership, the volunteers, and the momentum to have a fruitful year to share God’s love and to grow as followers of Jesus. It won’t be long now! Pastor Mark



Start

In the church year, the four weeks leading up to Christmas is a season known

as Advent. Advent is about beginnings. One definition for advent is the arrival of something important. Something is getting started. During advent we look back at the people, the places, and the events that led to the birth of Jesus. We look back to the beginning, how it all started, and then hopefully we learn what it is that God wants us to start now.

God is the Great Starter. In the beginning, God said, “Let there be light.” This is the biblical understanding of how creation began. It is not so different from what scientists call the big bang theory – an explosion of energy. Light is energy. So when God said, “Let there be light,” bang, there was light -- energy.

The prophet Isaiah predicts the coming of the Messiah with these words, “The people who lived in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in deep darkness on them has light shined... Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.” (Isaiah 9) These timeless words communicate that once again God said, “Let there be light,” when the light of Jesus was sent into a dark world. Mary was the one chosen to bear the light.

When the messenger visited her, and told her God’s plans for her to bear the Messiah, I believe she had the option to decline. But she said yes, she said, “Let it be, according to your will.” (Luke 1) Mary started a journey that was filled with uncertainty and complexity and heartbreak but also a journey filled with grace and hope for the world. She started something that was built on the foundation of her simple faith and obedience to God’s will.

Just think what God started when he said, “Let there be light.” Just think what Mary started when she said, “Let it be.” And think what God can do through you with your abilities, your willing spirit, your compassion, and your love when you start.

Pastor Mark

CHRISTMAS SHOE BOXES

Thank you to everyone for all your help in putting together the Christmas shoe boxes this year. Your generosity helped us put together 101 boxes to help share God's love. What a wonderful way to share all around the world.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH SPECIAL ADVENT SCHEDULE

Thank you so much to our pre-k, kindergarten and 1st grade classes for sharing their talents on our first Advent Sunday. They were definitely all beautiful stars singing *O' Little Town of Bethlehem*. Other presentations are as follows: December 4: 2nd - 4th grades; December 11: 5th and 6th grades; and December 18: Jr. and Sr. High. We hope everyone will have the opportunity to enjoy their creativity. Thank you to all our youth for sharing. Karla



ACOLYTE CHANGE

Just a reminder to all acolytes, beginning Sunday, December 4, the acolyte duties will change. Acolytes will light candles at the beginning of both services only. The ushers will handle the offering and putting out the candles at the end of the service. This will allow students to serve in worship and participate in Sunday School. Anyone in 3rd grade or older is welcome to serve as an acolyte. Contact Karla Kane if you are interested or have any questions.

BOYS WIN WITH CASH & PRESENCE!!

The 5th and 6th grade Sunday School class fought to the finish in their Attendance and Giving Contest. However, the boys defeated the girls in both categories running from October 1st through Thanksgiving. Their prize (in addition to bragging rights) was choosing the recipient of the class's donations. They decided to send their \$72 to the Heifer Project, with preference to flocks of chicks and ducks, a goat, rabbits, or a part of a pig or llama. Congratulations, boys!



NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please remember we will not have Sunday School classes on December 25th or January 1st. Have a blessed holiday season – Karla.

YOUTH GROUP – SPECIAL GATHERING

This month the Jr./Sr. High Youth Group will only be meeting on December 11. We have decided to do something a little different and meet at the Country Club. We'll be making our own pizzas, playing games, and sharing holiday fellowship. So if you haven't joined us yet, we hope you'll give youth group a try. Friends are always welcome.

Hope to see you Sunday, December 11, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the Country Club in Elmwood.

CHIMES GROUP

The Chimes Group is continuing to practice at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings in the sanctuary. We will be performing during worship service in December and then taking a break over the Christmas Holidays. We welcome anyone who is interested in joining us or learning more about playing chimes. See Lois Hill for additional information.

UMW NEWS

The United Methodist Women meet at 9:30 a.m. on December 13 and will hold the installation of 2012 officers. Don't forget the gift for your prayer pal, as this is our Christmas party when we reveal our names. Pastor Mark is in charge of installation of officers and the program and Mary Stenwall and Carol Kemper will handle the social. Also, don't forget there is no Morning Circle meeting in December. Merry Christmas!

Carol Kemper

IF THE WEATHER IS ICY . . .

If the weather is bad and there is a considerable amount of snow and ice, please use your best judgment to attend events at church and please check ahead to make sure the events have not been cancelled. If there is a church event or worship service and the parking lot has slick spots, we encourage people, especially our senior citizens, to pull up to the front doors of the church to enter the building and let one of a number of careful drivers who are on call to serve as valets park your vehicle so that you do not have to walk across the

parking lot. We are concerned for your safety and wish to do all we can to keep people safe. The Trustees.

CONGRATULATIONS!

We would like to extend a heartfelt Thank You and Congratulations to Master Sergeant Jeff Roberts who will be retiring from military service on January 1, 2012, after approximately 21 years. Jeff enlisted in the US Air Force on October 23, 1989. During his military career, he spent time in Saudi Arabia serving in Desert Shield/Desert Storm and in Kuwait supporting Iraqi freedom in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn. Best wishes and blessings to you and your family.

MANNA MEAL HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Just a reminder that the Manna Meal for December is Thursday, December 29, at noon. Please join us for great food, fellowship, and entertainment each month.

SERVING ON GOD'S TEAM 9 AM WORSHIP SERVICE

December 4, 2011

GREETERS: Norma Bowhay/Janet Vallas

USHERS: Don/Marge Haahn

LITURGIST: Chris Ewalt

0-5 NURSERY: Lisa Doubet/Alex Vallas

COFFEE BAR: Brad Johnson Family

ADVENT CANDLE: Jeff Roberts Family

December 11, 2011

GREETERS: Roland/Cathy Ekstrand

USHERS: Bob Paige/Kurt Webster

LITURGIST: Marilee Hurst

0-5 NURSERY: Robin Furrer/Kristi Link

COFFEE BAR: Armbruster Family

ADVENT CANDLE: Ryan Potts Family

December 18, 2011

GREETERS: Carol Foster/Bev Keefer

USHERS: Chris/Michelle Dunn

LITURGIST: Emily Webel

0-5 NURSERY: Michelle/Bill Seipel

COFFEE BAR: Duley/Kemper Families

ADVENT CANDLE: Bert Haskell Family

December 25, 2011 – Christmas Day

No 9 a.m. service or Sunday School

**SERVING ON GOD'S TEAM
10:30 AM WORSHIP SERVICE**

December 4, 2011

GREETERS: Dean/Sandy Cantu
USHERS: Brad Crisco/Dave Pittman
LITURGIST: Wayne Callister
ACOLYTES: Ben/Emmie Crisco
0-5 NURSERY: Michelle/Haleigh Forrest
ADVENT CANDLE: Lawrence Kane Family

December 11, 2011

GREETERS: Al/Evelyn Dorich
USHERS: Mark/Carol Kemper
LITURGIST: Mary Howard
ACOLYTES: Erica Kane/Zofia Lehew
0-5 NURSERY: Nancy Davis/Celene Duley
ADVENT CANDLE: Ted Mottaz Family

December 18, 2011

GREETERS: Wayne/Gaye Fleisher
USHERS: Don/Michelle Forrest
LITURGIST: Dave Pittman
ACOLYTES: Nathan/Sam Rushing
0-5 NURSERY: Angie/Catie Tracy
ADVENT CANDLE: Tom Tracy Family

December 24, 5 p.m. – Christmas Eve

GREETERS: Nancy Davis/Winifred Horney
USHERS: Alex/Erik Davis
LITURGIST: Dean Cantu
NURSERY: Alana/Hannah Parm

December 25, 2011 – Christmas Day

GREETERS: Dave/Pat Pittman
USHERS: Marilyn Bowhay
Sherry Powers
NURSERY: Robin Furrer
COFFEE BAR: Chris Ewalt/Mary Stenwall



ATTENTION: If you are unable to serve on the day given, find someone from the list to trade with. Please let the office or Alana Parm/Robin Furrer (nursery) know if you no longer wish to serve or if you wish to add your name to the list and which service you attend. **THANK YOU!**