



A publication of First-Faith United Methodist Church

THE MESSENGER

Peace to you and all praise to God! I can't believe that it is already December, where did the year go? It seems like only a few weeks ago that we were hosting ball games in the heat of the summer. I am looking forward to this winter and the many joys that come from cold days, snow, a warm cozy blanket, and time spent with families and friends. I hope that this newsletter finds you and your families well during this special time of year. It is an exciting time at First-Faith, a time that we wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!

November 28th is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent is the season of waiting and anticipation of the coming of Emmanuel, God with us. Our Advent worship series is called "God With Us." Each week we will be focusing on a different person or people in Jesus's birth stories. We hope that by seeing through their eyes we will put ourselves in the place of the first people who awaited and celebrated Jesus' birth. Through their stories, we will learn what it meant for God to be with them, and we will open our eyes to experience God with us, too.

I hope you will join us each Sunday of Advent, that we may make ourselves ready for the coming of Jesus Christ and what that means for us. It is Jesus that continues to provide, care, and walk with us through the many changes in our lives. Jesus strengthens us and calls us to live a life of service and love, our lives will never be the same when we understand that God is with us.

We have several special events as we enter this season. Sunday December 19th is the Children's Christmas program that will be during the worship service. Practices are scheduled for Saturdays 10:30-11:30; all children are welcome to participate. On December 20th from 7:00-9:00 pm we will be having our Blue Christmas time of remembrance. This year Blue Christmas will not be a worship service, but a self-guided time of contemplation and prayer. You are free to come and go during that time as you wish. I will also be on hand for prayers during that time. Our Christmas eve service will be at 7:00 pm on December 24th. I hope you will join in with us in person and online to celebrate Christ Jesus birth.

As we come to the end of this year I want to thank our church lay leadership and their work this last year. We have come a long way from where we were this time last year and I am grateful for their dedication, flexibility and their desire to make things work. I am looking forward to next year and see where the Holy Spirit is leading our church.

I also want to thank our amazing staff that have worked so wonderfully this last year. We are a truly blessed congregation to have such amazing people that work at this church. I know that they each have made my life better and have made the ministries of this church better through their work.

Have a happy Thanksgiving, and a merry Christmas to you all!

Pastor Ray



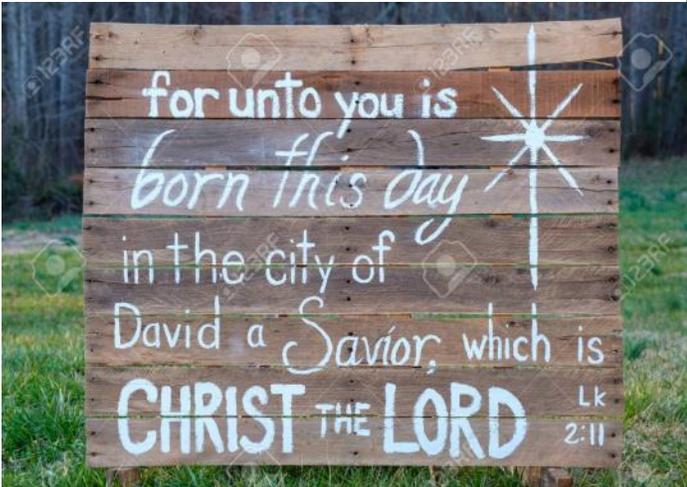


Every Sunday

Worship Service at 9:30 a.m.
Join us in person or online on our Facebook page!

The Church Office will be closed on the following days :

- Friday, December 3rd
- Friday, December 24th
- Tuesday through Friday, December 28 to 31



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE Friday, December 24th

Our Christmas Eve Service will be held at 7:00pm. Please join us in person or online as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, with Christmas hymns and Holy Communion, and singing Silent Night by candle light.



We hope you will make our worship a part of your evening.

Meetings and Circles

Tues, Dec. 7th - Ruth Circle
Christmas Party - Dine Out

Mon, Dec. 13th -

Finance Team Mtg., 5:30 pm
Church Council Mtg., 6:30 pm

Tues, Dec. 14th -UMM Meeting,
6:30 pm

Mon, Dec. 27th - Susanna Circle, 6:30 pm



Ladies' Sewing Group December 14 & 28 9:30 a.m.

We meet at the church and all are welcome!



A Perk & A Prayer

is available every Wednesday morning in December (weather permitting) from 7 to 9 a.m. Come and get a free cup of coffee and have someone pray with you.



Blue? Yes, blue as in the blues. Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved

one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with health issues that puts a question mark over the future, and several other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities. We hope that you will participate in our Blue Christmas devotion time on Monday, December 20 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. We will have a space for prayer, self guided contemplation, and Pastor Ray will also be available. You can stay as long as you like as we come together and make space for those who are struggling during the holidays.



12/2 Stephen Hayes
Dwayne Kubicek
12/3 James Kolar
12/6 Tyrene Hisey
12/8 Erick Schwartz
12/10 Sandy Engel
Cutler Obermiller
12/11 Meghan Pennell
12/14 Matthew Bigger
12/15 Penny Shultz

12/16 David Reynolds
12/19 Julie Berggren
Jan Wells
12/20 Deb Trosper
12/23 Colette Sorensen
12/27 Merna Clayton
Larry Lucas
12/28 Heather Welsh
12/31 Karleen Beckman
Shirley Stelk

CHOIR ROBES: The church had decided to sell the choir robes that have been in storage for quite a while. When they didn't sell at the Junk Jaunt in September, we placed a classified ad on the UMC website on October 13th and Rev. Ivan Milosi from the Lakin United Methodist Church in Lakin, Kansas, contacted us the same day. He let us know that he would like to send them to his home church choir in the Republic of the Congo.

On October 29th, our District Superintendent, Rev. Charles Murithi, came and picked up about 50 choir robes and drove them to Wichita, KS (279 miles). He was meeting 3 other pastors there and going to a conference in Texas. From there, Rev. Zach Anderson, DS in Dodge City, KS, took them to his church (167 miles) and then Rev. Milosi picked them up from there and drove them back to his church (78 miles away).

We are so excited that some faithful choir members, far away in the Congo, will be able to enjoy the choir robes. Please pray that they make it there safely.



*Floyd & Sharon Sorensen - December 17, 1966
Warren & Randi Pennell - December 18, 1993
Larry & Gloria Craven - December 28, 1963
Dick & Leola Harlow - December 31, 1956*

Thank you so much to the anonymous person who donated two boxes of baby clothes and diapers for the WIC bags. We really appreciate it!

The Ladies' Sewing Group

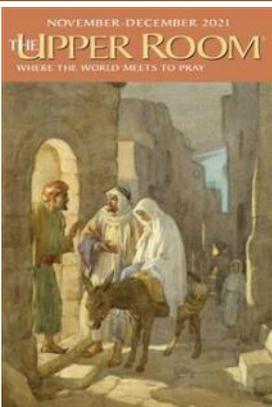


Hip Hip Hooray!

Thanks to the generosity of FFUMC and New Steps Youth Group we were able to donate 39 filled boxes to Samaritan's Purse Christmas Child Project.



Your participation is appreciated and will be heartfelt all over the world.



**THE UPPER ROOM
DAILY DEVOTIONAL**

Pick up your copy of the November/December issue in the narthex!

Regular Print - \$1.00
Large Print - \$1.50

S SINGLE
P PEOPLE
A ACHIEVING
R REAL
C CHRISTIAN
C CONNECTIONS

SPARCC EVENT
Grand Island City Singers
Christmas Concert

We will be attending the Grand Island City Singers Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 5th, at 2:00 p.m.

It will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church at 1515 S. Harrison St. in Grand Island.

We will gather at the Lutheran Church between 1:30 and 1:45 pm. Prior year entry fees have been around \$5 per person.



Please call the church office at 308-384-5620, to let us know if you will be attending, by Thursday at 3 p.m. on December 2nd.

UMW INSTALLATION OF NEW OFFICERS FOR 2022

On November 2, 2021, at 5:30 pm, UMW held its installation of new officers vote and installation ceremony led by Pastor Ray. We welcome:

- President: Deb Trospser**
- Secretary: Sharon Sorensen**
- Treasurer: Mary Jo Mowinkel**

Our thank offerings were offered followed by a program presented by Ruth Circle. Soup was served by the Friendship Circle and Susanna Circle. We are all looking forward to a blessed 2022.



LUNCH BUNCH

Our next Lunch Bunch Potluck will be on Wednesday, December 8th, at 12 noon. It will be at the church and everyone

is welcome! Bring a dish to share and then join in the fun afterwards as we play RUMMIKUB!!!

Join us for Pitch (a card game)!

Monday, December 27th, 7 to 9 p.m. at church. Bring a partner or we'll find you one!



Our Refresh "Grandmas" would love to give you a break. We provide FREE quality child-care for ages 6 and under. If you need a few hours to get things done, bring your little ones by the church and our ladies will take great care of them! They will have fun during play time, reading, snack and a craft.

We will only be open on Wednesday, December 8th, this month, from 9 to 11:30 a.m. We will be closed on December 22nd. Please feel free to invite friends and family to use this service.

Questions? Call Sharon Sorensen at 308-382-7543.

2021 GIVING

All donations to the church must be received in the church office by Monday, December 27th. Thank you.

CHANCEL AND HANDBELL CHOIRS



Practices this month are on Wednesday nights,

December 1, 8 and 15.

Come and join us!

Handbells: 6:00 p.m.

Choir: 7:00 p.m.

New singers and ringers are always welcome!





EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Be a part of our partnership with Engleman Elementary School with bi-monthly workdays scheduled throughout the school year. Upcoming workdays are December 2nd and 16th at 8:30 a.m. If interested, or if you have questions, please call Glenda Vetter at 308-383-1716.

FREE BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS

We will be giving free blood pressure checks on Sunday, December 26th, before and after the morning service. This is sponsored by the Healthy Congregations Ministry Action Team.



HAVE YOU NOTICED? The cross on the side of the church and the tower are now lit up at night! This was done on October 20th by Middleton Electric. It was paid for from the Hueske Memorial Fund which is designated specifically for maintenance of the church and parsonage. Thank you Trustees...it looks great!

EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP WITH ENGLEMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

There are some specific needs right now for some children at Engleman Elementary School. Here are some of them:



- * Underwear, pants and shorts - Size 4T to Youth XL
- * Boys and girls shoes
- * Pencil bags
- * Backpacks

Items can be brought to the church any time during the month of December and placed on or under the Christmas tree in the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Glenda Vetter at 308-383-1716.

WOMEN'S EXERCISE CLASSES

CHAIR YOGA CLASS

Sessions are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, at 10:30 a.m., and an evening session is held on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. Remember to wear comfortable clothing and invite your friends!



There will be no classes on December 21, 23, 28 and 30.



Women's Step Aerobics

Come and join us every Monday, Tuesday and

Thursday from 5:15 to 6:15 pm.

We will exercise to Christmas music all month!

Equipment is provided!

There will be no class on: Dec. 27, 28, & 30

STRONG WOMEN

This class meets on Mondays and Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. at the church. Bring your own weights from 1 to 5 lbs.



If you have questions, please call Barb Wieczorek at 308-382-2428. Leave a message if she does not answer right away and she will call you back. Come and join us!

STAFF APPRECIATION



It is time to remember our staff this Christmas season. There will be a Christmas Box in the lobby for our church family to place cards, holiday wishes, and contributions for our staff. We hope you will help thank them for the wonderful work they do! Merry Christmas and thank you from the Staff-Parish Committee.



NOODLE MAKING FOR THE CRAFT FAIR!



CRAFT FAIR AND BAKE SALE

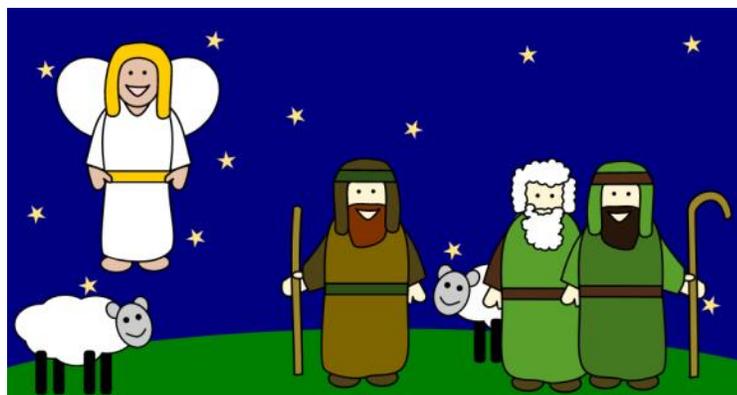


ARE YOU 4 to 14 YEARS OLD?

Come and be a part of our Christmas program! Practices are happening every Sunday during Sunday School. Please come and join us! We are also having 3 important practices on Saturday mornings on December 4th, 11th and 18th from 10:30 to 11:30 am at the church. You must practice with us in order to be a part of the program. The practices will be fun and we'll keep them short. Once you get your part, you will be able to practice it at home and have it ready.

EVERYONE: Please come to our Christmas program, The Shepherds Tell the Good News, on December 19th. at 9:30 am. This will be during the worship service. We will have speaking parts, readings from the Bible and songs. If you are in middle school, and would like to sing or play your instrument, please let Randi know! Not only did the Shepherds witness Jesus' birth, but they ran and told everyone they met the Good News. Likewise, did you know Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and he cares for you and me?

Randi will be texting you to remind you about the practices. You can also reach her on Facebook Messenger. Please text her with any questions at 308-920-0462.





CHANCEL AND HANDBELL CHOIRS

Music is one of the most important parts of Christian worship. Methodists in particular have always had a strong connection to music and singing. Music expresses so much that cannot be said and emotionally touches us in indescribable ways. We have a great heritage and commitment to music at First-Faith and seek to provide exciting ways to share music with our community.

The Handbell and Chancel Choirs are an important part of the worship ministries of First-Faith. They provide worship music every week for our services. Members of the choir also perform solos and sing in smaller groups throughout the year.

When the pandemic started it was challenging to see when these two amazing ministries would get to perform again especially when singing was still not allowed in service. The amazing members of these groups found a way to help during our toughest times. Members of the chancel choir helped provide singing and special music for our online worship services throughout the pandemic.



The Handbells have just started practicing again and are looking for people that wish to play. The Chancel Choir is also looking for people that wish to sing.

Handbells practice on Wednesday nights at 6:00 pm and the chancel choir practices at 7:00 pm. All are welcome to participate!

If you have any questions or are interested in joining, please contact Director Randi Pennell.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOME DEDICATION

Our amazing sewing group made a beautiful quilt for Adriana and Serafin who are the proud new owners of the home. They have three beautiful children, Gabriel, Fernanda, and Santiago. They are a very generous couple, after completing their own 500 hours of sweat equity on the construction site, they gave their extra hours to the other future homebuyers who have been working with them.

On top of all of our education classes and construction, Adriana successfully passed her citizenship test and took the Oath of Allegiance in October. This family is blessed with loving, caring hearts and it radiates in all that they do.

The house was dedicated on Saturday, November 13th, and the quilt was presented to them by our ladies' sewing and quilting group. It was even covered on the Channel 5 news!



First-Faith United Methodist Church
4190 W Capital Ave
Grand Island, NE 68803

Return Service Requested

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Grand Island, NE

Worship Schedule

Sunday

9:30am - Morning Service
10:30 am - Sunday School
and Fellowship Time

Office Phone:

(308) 384-5620

Office Email:

firstfaithumc@gmail.com

Website:

http://firstfaithumcgi.org

Office Hours:

Mon-Fri 8:00-4:30
(Closed 12-1 pm - Lunch Hour)

Pastor: Rev. Wm. Ray Stone



New Steps Youth Group

New Steps Youth will be meeting during the month of December on the following dates:

- December 1st: Bible lesson and change the church sign
- December 8th: Bible lesson and games
- December 15th: **Christmas Party!** We will be exchanging silly socks again! Please bring a wrapped pair of silly socks to youth group for our exchange game. Weather permitting we may carol at Pastor Ray's house.

During the month of December, please bring a box of your favorite cereal to youth group at **each meeting** to donate to the food pantry located on the north edge of our parking lot.

New Steps Youth will not meet again until January 5th. Enjoy the time at home with your family and friends. I hope to see you in church!



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Article Deadline for January Newsletter: December 22, 2021