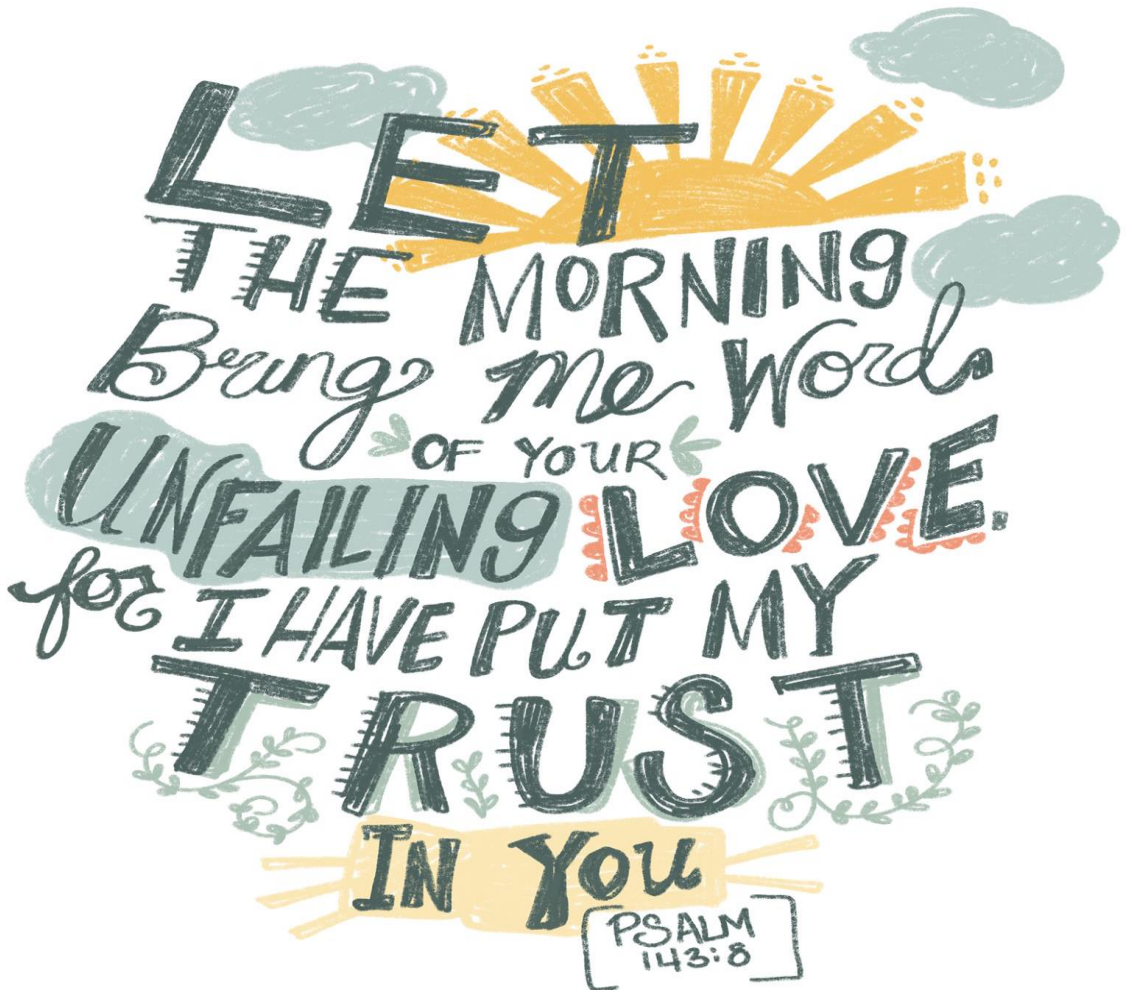


The Word



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January 2025

Ministers Musings

Did you have a perfectly wonderful Christmas? With candles and chocolate and family and one happy dog? Or with lots of singing and jolly grandchildren? Or maybe it was perfectly quiet and relaxed with cheese and puzzles and a small tree with gold garland? I had a very nice Christmas, but it was not perfect. There were short tempers and crying cousins mixed in with the laughter and singing; the quiche should have been warmed, the dog jumped too much, and some of the gifts just weren't quite right. I'm not complaining at all. I loved our celebrations. But I can't call them close to perfect. We were all, dog included, going on to perfection.

I have similar expectations for the year 2025. There will be happy times, I trust, songs to sing, games to play, hills to ride down fast on a bicycle. There will be opportunities to make a difference in the world, chances to proclaim the gospel, to offer a listening ear, to help feed hungry neighbors, to stand up for truth when lies are seeking the upper hand. There will be days of sorrow and disappointment, and times when I will be angry and not be able to do anything to solve the problem at hand. And there will be many moments of nothing all that special at all. Hours of driving, of working at a computer, of almost getting a great idea, but not there yet. And there will be dinner to think about, to plan and then to cook, every night. Sometimes it's a bit overwhelming, considering all that in the first week of January. How will we get through?

Around here, we say thanks. Every day. Sometimes for the dog, sometimes for the love of friends, sometimes for grandchildren, sometimes for an especially fun choir anthem, always for the food, whatever it is. Saying thanks reminds us that it's all gift, that God provides for us, even through difficult times. Saying thanks grounds us in the wonder of each particular day. Not perfect days, but often quite nice days. If God is full of grace, loving and giving – and God is – then receiving goodness from God is always at the heart of our lives as God's people. Gratitude is where we begin. From gratitude, from acknowledging our dependence on God's gifts and our joy in receiving them, we can then grow into imitators of that same grace. From gratitude we move to loving and forgiving and then to standing up for truth. It's how we grow in grace and holiness, how we go on to perfection, day by day, year after year.

Blessings to you in the year that lies ahead. May you be thankful for all of God's gifts in your life. And may you grow in love and grace.

Pastor Cathy

Worship Questions for Pastor Cathy

(An occasional feature. Ask more questions, get more answers.)

Why is Easter's date so flexible?

Easter Sunday is the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the spring equinox. It can be as early as March 22 or as late as April 25. This year Easter is on Sunday, April 20.

When do we celebrate Communion in worship?

It's always appropriate to include Communion in worship. At UMD, we celebrate at the Lord's Table on the first Sunday of each month and on special Sundays – Easter, Pentecost, Baptism of the Lord, etc.

Why do the acolytes light the candles as they do?

The acolytes bring the light of Christ into worship, tend it if necessary during worship, and bring it before us into the world as worship ends.

Why are the pieces of communion bread so big?

The pieces of bread are intended to be big enough to hold onto and dip into the cup without getting one's fingers wet with grape juice. Human fingers have lots of germs on them.

Announcements

Rev. Dr. Karen A. Monk, our UMC District Superintendent, will preach in worship on Sunday, January 19. She'll then stay for lunch and for our **Annual Meeting**. Please plan to be there!

We will install **new leadership** of the church on Sunday, January 26, during worship.

Highlights of December Parish Council

Parish Council began with devotions led by Ruth Vredenburgh. She shared a reading from "These Days" devotions.

The topic of the month was the proposed 2025 budget. There was a lot of discussion about it and the future actions that we felt needed to take place. Parish Council agreed that there is a need to develop a task force or planning committee to look ahead and that changes that need to be made should come from the broader congregation. The Parish Council has explored many different avenues in 2024 including sharing Pastor Cathy with other congregations and pursuing grants to support our community' building use without finding success in both areas. It was expressed by many that the model that we have been using and operating under is not sustainable. We must take this year to challenge our thinking, foster our vision and find solutions to ways to continue our support for the ministries that we are called to do and that are near and dear to our hearts. Good suggestions were made about trying coffee hour focus groups and people hosting dinners where we can talk about change. Council has been feeling the burden of change because it is hard and there are unknowns. We will be seeking the help of the congregation in 2025.

Eloise reported that Playschool has postponed their movie night fund raiser until January. In the Spring they are planning on a bottle drive and bake sale. Several holiday activities are ongoing. The next board meeting will be January 27th..

With Laura's help we reviewed the Treasurer's report as of November 30th. Finance committee met on December 2nd and worked on the 2025 budget.

Gideon Frisbee reported that Trustees met on December 10th. The annual parsonage walk through was completed on 12/16/24 with SPR and the form was filed out to be submitted. There have been some issues with the furnace at the parsonage and that has been repaired by Kiff. Several ongoing projects were discussed that can be worked on over the winter. Trustees also did some brainstorming about the work that is needed on the stones of the front steps. They initiated the transfer of \$15,000 from investments to support the budget.

Barb Jones reported that SPR met on November 19th and continued to work on the Methodist annual reporting documents 1 & 2. Intent is to submit these documents this week. Sexton job description was update and Ron and Pastor Cathy

will be doing an interview for the vacant position this week. The annual parsonage review with Trustees was completed.

Pastor Cathy has been busy with preparations for the Advent Season. The pageant will be this Sunday the 22nd and a Blue Christmas service is planned for Thursday the 19th in the fireside room. Two Christmas Eve Services are planned for 7pm and the second one at 11pm. The Nominating Committee has been meeting often. Pasto Cathy continues to do Coffee with Pastor at the indoors farmer's market. Potluck lunch and decorating occurred on December 8th. Many thanks to those who helped.

Mission reported that the Community Thanksgiving Dinner went well with a huge thank you going out to Liz Frisbee for her organization and leadership. All tags have been taken off the tree for the Adopt A Family and the committee will meet after church on the 22nd to get the gifts packaged and ready to be picked up. Edie has been working hard to get her Christmas boxes ready to distribute to the many that use our food pantry.

Fred reported that he really enjoys church and interacting with people during coffee hour. He has a good feeling about the church right now and knows that everyone is working hard.

We continue to open our doors to groups for the use of our building. We approved a new request for the use of McIntosh for the start of a group called Adult Children of Alcoholics led by Alexis deBoshnek.

If you have questions at any time, please feel free to talk with myself or other council members.

Carol Greene

Annual Meeting, January 19th

Immediately Following Worship

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend the Annual Meeting! We need you to help make this meeting a valuable and meaningful gathering for discussion, discernment and decision-making!



Annual Meeting & Dish-to-Share Lunch *Sunday, January 19*

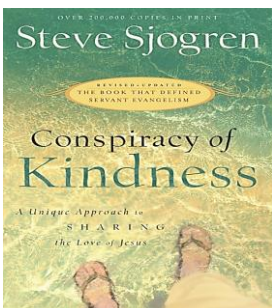
Lunch in McIntosh Hall immediately following worship. Annual Meeting will begin after lunch. Bring a dish to share!

Women's Open Circle

The Women's Open Circle will meet on Thursday, January 9, at 12 noon in the Harder Room. All Women of The United Ministry are invited! Bring lunch; dessert and beverage provided!

Adult Book Study

The **book study** gathering will look together at *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus* by Steve Sjogren. We'll meet on Thursdays, January 16, 23, and 30, at 10:30. If you'd like to be part of the discussion, join us. Copies of the book are available from Pastor Cathy.

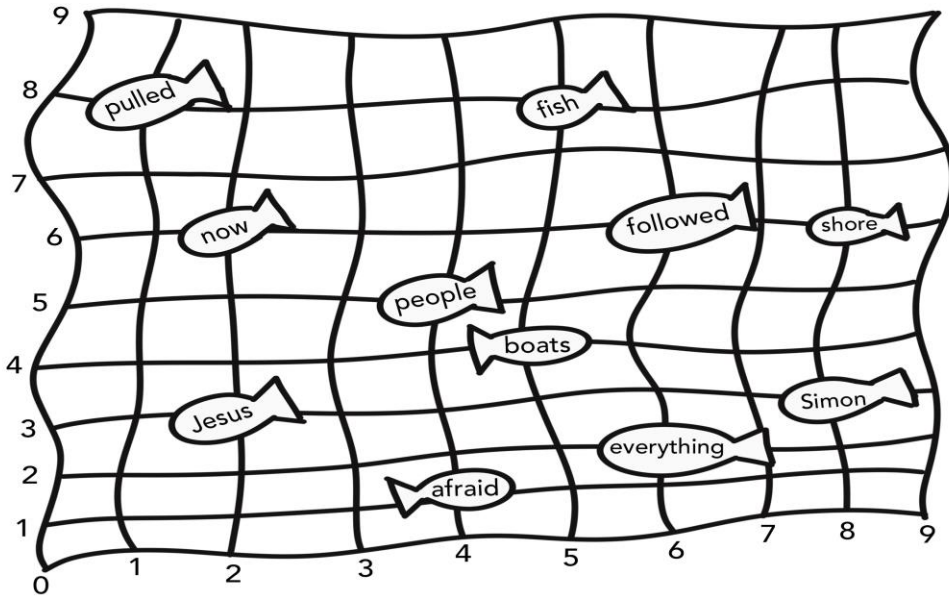




FISHING DIRECTIONS

When fishermen obeyed Jesus and let down their nets, they caught so many fish that their boats began to sink! Simon Peter fell at Jesus' knees. What happened next?

Directions: Use the coordinate clues to locate the correct words and complete Luke 5:10-11 (NIV) below. The first number in each clue pair goes across, and the second number goes up.



Then Jesus said to _____, "Don't be _____; from _____
 on you will _____ for _____." So they _____ their
 _____ up on _____, left _____ and _____ him.

Luke 5:10-11, NIV

Answers: Jesus, Simon, afraid, followed, pulled, boats, shore, everything, people, fish, now, afraid, Simon, afraid, followed

Play School January 2025 Update

Play School wishes everyone Happy Holidays! Enjoy time with family and friends and embrace the New Year with Hope and Grace! During the Month of December, oh what fun, we made Gingerbread Houses with a special family member. We also made Gingerbread men Cookies with Mrs. K. What an adventure the kids had trying to figure out where the gingerbread men have gone! When we returned to the oven to retrieve our gingerbread men cookies for snack, they were gone! The kids had to follow clues around the church to find out where they had gone! Thanks Deb and Ruth for making this so much fun for the kids! We have also worked on holiday projects, songs, games, play, stories, special guests, and our Christmas Class Party.

We are planning to host a Winter Family Movie Night in January as December ended up being too overloaded with activities for the children around the area. Please keep watch for additional information to come. Play School would like to remind you that we have an open account at Dutch Redemption for cans and bottles with a 5¢ deposit. If you would like to drop off all your holiday cans and bottles to the Play School Account, or drop them off to Play School after the holidays, we would greatly appreciate it! If you don't have cans and bottles to donate and would like to make a monetary donation to Play School that would also be appreciated! Just please remember to write Play School in the memo section of your check.

Thank you and we wish you many blessings this Holiday Season!! Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Savage

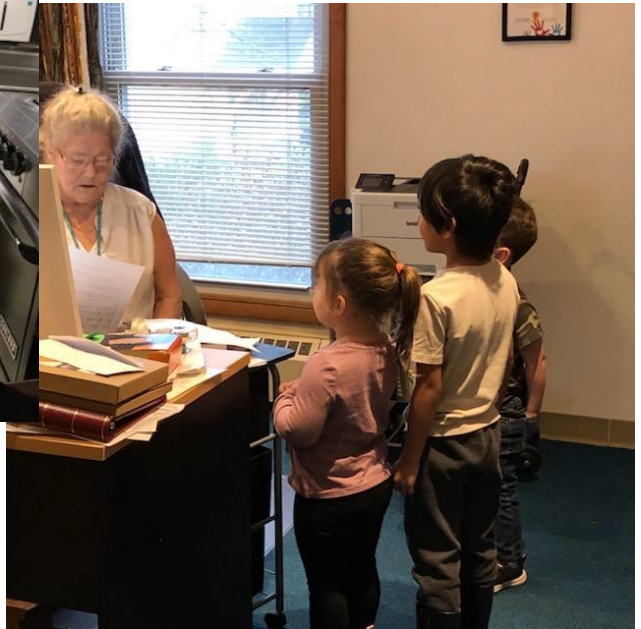
Play School Director



Showing off the gingerbread house . . .



Following clues to find the missing gingerbread men cookies . . .



Coffee Hour Hosts & Flowers for the Sanctuary



Have you signed up to host Coffee Hour yet? Coffee, tea, lemonade, and paper goods are supplied. Cookies are optional. Sign up on the sheet on the Bulletin Board or call the church office to pick your date.

Coffee Hour

Jan 5 _____
 Jan 12 Charle Cash
 Jan 19 Dish-to-Share lunch
 Jan 26 _____

Would you like to commemorate a loved one or special event in your life? Garden and wild flowers are always welcome! If you are uncomfortable creating the arrangement, call the office and we can make the arrangement for you.



Flowers

Jan 5 _____
 Jan 12 _____
 Jan 19 _____
 Jan 26 _____

Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board outside the office.



Duane Buddle	1/4	Evan Kruppo	1/18
Don Haight	1/9	Noah Kruppo	1/18
Bryce Burrows	1/16	Olivia Kruppo	1/18
Ryan Burrows	1/16	Cyndee Pattison	1/20
Emily Briggs	1/17	Glenn Reynolds	1/24
Landa Palmer	1/18		

Word and Worship

January 2025

January 5, 2022

Epiphany Sunday

Isaiah 60:1-6; Jeremiah 31:7-14
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

January 12, 2022

Baptism of the Lord

Congregational Reaffirmation of Baptism

Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29
Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 19, 2022

Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Rev. Dr. Karen A. Monk, guest preacher

Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10
1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

January 26, 2022

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:21-31a; Luke 4:14-21

Lectors

January 5 *Fred Onasch*

January 12 *Ann Peet*

January 19 *Evelyn Jacksto*

January 26 *Rev. Rick Edwards*

Acolytes

January 5 *Virginia Mills*

January 12 *Wyatt Frisbee*

January 19 *Virginia Mills*

January 26 *Virginia Mills*

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