

When do Groups meet next?

Book Group -	Will not meet in December
Bible Study Advent Study Meets at Minooka UMC	Thursday @ 6:30PM
Faithtalk - Advent Study Meets at Minooka UMC	Tuesday @ Noon
Prayer Team Praying for your joys and concerns Meets at Minooka UMC	Wednesday @ 5:00PM
Skeptic's Circle Meets at Starbucks in Channahon	Tuesday 12/10 @ 6:30PM
Youth Group 6th through 12th Grades Meets at Minooka UMC	Wednesday @ 7:00PM
UWF Afternoon Circle Meets at Minooka UMC	Monday 12/09 @ 1:30PM

For more information about our groups please contact the church office.

LEADERS IN TODAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE

LAY READER	MARLIN HARTMAN
ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTERS	NISCHKE FAMILY
SONG LEADERS	SUSAN SPENCER, RUTH SATORIUS & DALE LOCKWOOD

CHURCH STAFF

MINISTERS	ALL DISCIPLES OF JESUS
LEAD PASTOR	REV. DAVE BUERSTETTA
OFFICE MANAGER	MELISSA CANDLER
MUSIC DIRECTOR	JILL KOHLER
SUNDAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR	KATRINA NOLAN

CHURCH CONTACT

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“You Are a Blessing”



Welcome!

Minooka United Methodist Church

Sunday, December 1st, 2024 9:30am

Welcome to Minooka United Methodist Church
Sunday, December 1st, 2024 9:30am

* Stand if you are able

Entering Music

Welcoming Pastor Dave

Preparing

*Gathering & Advent Candle Lighting Nischke Family

Family: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again?
Where do we start?

Many Voices: Let us begin with the good news! Let us begin by trusting that we are a blessing, loved by a gracious God. Let us begin with music and singing! Let us begin with warmth and welcome. Let us begin with hope.

Family: Yes, let us begin with hope. Today we light the candle of hope to shine a light in a worn and weary world.

[Light 1 blue candle]

Many Voices: May this be our foundation. May this be our fresh start. May this be our new beginning.

Family: May hope flow forth from here. Amen!

*Singing "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" UMH #131

Verse 1

Come Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

~This Week at MUMC~

SUNDAY 1ST

8:00AM ADVENT STUDY
9:30AM SUNDAY WORSHIP

MONDAY 2ND

TUESDAY 3RD

12PM ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAY 4TH

5:00PM PRAYER GROUP
7:00PM YOUTH GROUP

THURSDAY 5TH

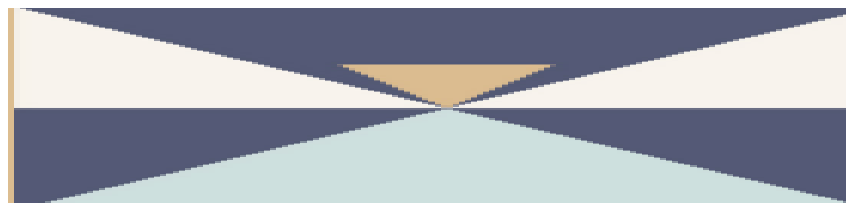
6:30PM ADVENT STUDY

FRIDAY 6TH

SATURDAY 7TH

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

- ~Sunday, December 8th @ 10:45AM—New Member Reception
- ~Tuesday, December 10th @ 6:30PM—Skeptic's Circle
- ~Thursday, December 12th @ 12 noon—Grief Support Group
- ~Wednesday, December 18th @ 12 noon—Senior Luncheon
- ~Saturday, December 21st @ 6PM—Longest Night Service
- ~Tuesday, December 24th @ 4PM & 9PM—Christmas Eve Service



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

7	Hannah Beitler
7	Michael Anthony Noe III

Weekly Bible Studies

It is always a great time to join our Tuesday or Thursday Bible Study. For the month of December, both groups will be part of our Advent Study as we explore the texts and themes of the season through scripture, poetry, music, and art. Cindy White leads Tuesdays at 12noon. Jennifer Ferguson leads Thursdays at 6:30pm. All are welcome!

For all our studies: no prior bible reading or knowledge or expertise is needed. No question is dumb and no one is forced to read the bible in one particular way. We all learn as we go by exploring what the text says, what it leaves unsaid, what history and tradition tell us about the text, and how our own experience influences our reading. Hope to see you there!

What is the Shop with Scrip gift card program?

It's simple: Shop with Scrip is a way to purchase gifts cards and donate to Minooka UMC's Youth Mission Trips with ASP at the same time! How's that work? Every gift card purchased donates a percentage to our church and our church, in turn, uses that money to fund our Youth Mission Trips—all at no extra cost to you, the gift card buyer.

Gift card order forms are available on the table in the sanctuary under the Youth Group bulletin board. Fill out the form and return (with payment) to Adrienne or Marlin Hartman. Next order begins Sunday, December 1st. Orders are due December 8th and the gift cards will be distributed December 15th.

Poinsettias

As is MUMC's tradition, orders for poinsettias given in honor or memory of loved ones are being taken. Please check our ushers table for an order form. All orders will need to be returned with payment by Sunday December 15th.



Verse 2

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious Kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Conversing With Children

Praying

Lay Reader

Call to Confession

Reader: In the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel tells Mary two things: that she is highly favored, and that she is going to have a child. Mary's response to this news is simple. With awestruck authenticity, she asks, "How can this be?" Every time we approach the prayer of confession, I ask myself this same awestruck question, "How can this be?" How can God's mercy know no end? How can God be so gracious with someone as fickle as me? Regardless of the week we've had, this good news never changes. So join me in speaking the truth of our lives. Join me in the prayer of confession, and may God's mercy leave you awestruck. Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

Many Voices: Affirming God, Your first words to creation were words of love. You looked at this earth and said, "It is good." You spoke affirmations through the prophets. You spoke blessings over Mary. You spoke belonging through Christ. At every turn, you have reiterated that we are a blessing, made in your image, held in your love. Forgive us for forgetting this truth. Forgive us for measuring our worth by society's measuring stick instead of yours. We believe. Help our unbelief.

Small Group Opportunities for Gathering, Serving, and Learning

[Quiet prayer]

Words of Forgiveness

Reader: Family of faith, I don't know the last time someone told you that you are good, just as you are. I don't know the last time you heard that you are loved and created in the image of God. I don't know the last time you trusted those words and truly believed that you are a blessing. However, in case it has been a while, hear these words from Isaiah: God says, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine." We are forgiven. We are loved. Let it leave you awestruck.

Many Voices: Thanks be to God!

Prayers for the World

Reader: Our prayers continue, Blessing God, today we lift up those of us who have ever been told that we are unworthy or are not enough by this demanding society.

We pray for those of us who have ever been discouraged from chasing a dream or have been made to feel small. We pray for those of us who know insecurity and dance with self-doubt. We pray for all who hear your words of blessing and want to respond, "How can this be?"

Let this day be a new beginning, Creator God. Erase our memories of self-doubt. Erase our insecurities and fears, and in their place, fill our hearts with trust. Fill our spirits with conviction. Fill our minds with the knowledge that, like Mary, we are made in your image. Like Mary, we are good.

God of blessings, once again, we find ourselves standing at the beginning of the month, at the beginning of this Advent season, at the beginning of this new day, bringing our hearts to you. We lift our voices together to pray the words your son taught us to pray, saying. . . [Lord's Prayer #894]

Weekly Youth Group

Youth Group meets every Wednesday evening from 7 to 8 pm. We provide dinner and fun, meaningful activities for 6th-12th grade students. We are working on getting to know each other and building relationships. All our leaders are background checked and Safe Sanctuary trained.

We are in need of volunteers to provide dinner and a beverage for 10 to 15 people. You can sign up to bring a meal or to help with our Youth Group on the bulletin board located behind the sound booth. If you have any questions about our Youth Ministries, please contact Jennifer Ferguson or Pastor Dave.

Youth Group will meet Dec. 4th, Dec. 11th (Wal-Mart shopping night), and Dec. 18th (Christmas Party). We will not meet on Dec. 25th or January 1st.

Grief Support Group

Our Grief Support Group meets the second Thursday of each month at 12pm in the Sanctuary. It is open to anyone grieving a death. Our next gathering is Dec. 12th and is titled "Loneliness: Grief's Uninvited Guest." Contact group leaders Karen Pubentz or Chris Vause with any questions.



The Angel Tree is Here!

The Giving Tree (aka Angel Tree) is our opportunity to live our value of giving by providing Christmas gifts for neighbors in need this holiday season. Take a tag from one of the trees in the church lobby. Purchase and wrap the gifts; then return them with the tag on the outside of the gifts by Sunday, December 15th. Remember to complete the Giving Tree tag sheet.



ADVENT HAS ARRIVED!

This Sunday, December 1st, is the beginning of Advent—the season of anticipation and longing as we await the incarnation of God in Jesus.

Our theme for Advent this year, “Words for the Beginning,” is inspired by the visual concept of quilting because this series feels like a blanket wrapped around you, providing warmth and comfort as we begin again. This theme connects our Advent experiences in worship, Sunday School, Youth Group, and adult small group Advent Studies.

Advent Studies are short-term opportunities that meet for just three or four weeks and are one of the best ways to grow our faith. There is no cost, all materials for the study are provided. There is **no homework** required. There is **no sign up** required (except for a possible class via Zoom). You can just show up on:
 Sundays, Dec. 1, 8, 15 & 22 at 8:00am in MUMC’s classroom
 Tuesdays, Dec. 3, 10 & 17 at 12:00noon in MUMC’s classroom
 Thursdays, Dec. 5, 12, & 19 at 6:30pm in MUMC’s classroom

If we garner enough interest, we can also offer a class via Zoom on Mondays, Dec. 2, 9, & 16 at 6:30pm. Contact Pastor Dave or the church office to sign up.

Big THANKS to our Advent Study leaders **Kim Nave, Cindy White, and Jennifer Ferguson!**

***Singing**

“In Case No One Ever Told You”

Verse 1

In case no one ever told you or you have forgotten
 You are a blessing and have been since you were begotten
 Fashioned from love
 Sent to the earth from above
 You’re nothing short of a godsend

Verse 2

You are the masterpiece born of God’s imagination
 Even the parts that are crying out for restoration
 All that you are
 Born out of stardust and scars
 Reflects God’s perfect creation

Verse 3

You are uniquely created for love and belonging
 Forcing yourself to be someone you’re not is exhausting
 You are a gift
 There is no box you must fit
 Let your belovedness blossom

Reading Scripture

Luke 1:26-38 (NRSVUE)

Lay Reader

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”

Pastor Dave: With thanksgiving we eat and drink; With joy we remember, and with Christ's inclusive love we gather together around this table.

Many Voices: Amen!

[The United Methodist offers open Communion. That means all are welcome at this table. Today we serve by intinction: lightly dip the piece of bread into the cup then eat. Please walk up the center aisle and return by the side aisles. If you have mobility issues, we will bring the elements to you. Self-contained packets of bread and juice are also available. All the bread is gluten free.]

***Singing** "The King of Glory Comes" TFWS #2091

Refrain

The king of glory comes, the nation rejoices. Open the gates before him, lift up your voices

Verse 1

Who is the king of glory; How shall we call Him? He is Emmanuel, the promised of ages.

Refrain

The king of glory comes, the nation rejoices. Open the gates before him, lift up your voices

Verses 2

In all of Galilee, In city or village, he goes among his people curing their illness.

Refrain

The king of glory comes, the nation rejoices. Open the gates before him, lift up your voices

Celebrating Communion

Pastor Dave: Loving God, we come to this Table today longing for a new beginning. In a world that so often feels like it's ending, we crave the hope of a new beginning. We long to heal from the endings and crash landings of our hurting world and start again, rooted in your good news. So week by week, bit by bit, we return to your Word. Week by week, bit by bit, we return to each other. Week by week, and bit by bit, we repeat the truths that we so often need to hear, trusting that by your grace, it is never too late to start again.

So in this spirit of beginnings, we come to your Table. Once more we ask that you would meet us here. Pour out your Spirit on this ordinary meal, that in this bread and cup we may glimpse a new day. May the sight of everyone being welcomed at this Table remind us that all are loved by you. May the evidence that there is food for all remind us that no one is meant to go hungry. May the fact that our own sin, shame, and doubt do not keep us from this Table remind us that you welcome and love us as we are. May all of these Communion truths serve as building blocks for a new day, for a new beginning. With hope in our hearts, we pray. With hope in our hearts, we gather. With hope in our hearts, we begin again. Meet us here. Allow this joyful feast to be the start of something new.

Pastor Dave: On the night before he died, Jesus took the loaf of bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his friends, saying:

Many Voices: This bread is broken as my body will be broken. Remember me whenever you eat it.

Pastor Dave: When supper was finished, Jesus took the cup of wine, blessed it, and gave it to his friends, saying:

Many Voices: This cup is poured out as my blood will be poured out. Remember me whenever you drink it.