

Like us on
Facebook!



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First United Methodist
Church
202 E. Fourth St.
Ottumwa, IA 52501

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 225
OTTUMWA, IOWA



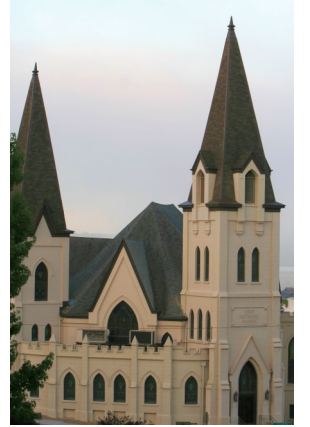
Christmas poinsettias will once again fill our beautiful sanctuary this season! If you would like to purchase one in memory of or in honor of a loved one, order forms will be available in the Sunday bulletins or by calling the church office. Poinsettias are \$10 each and will be displayed Sunday, December 23rd, and for our Christmas Eve Service, December 24th. You may take your poinsettia home anytime after the Christmas Eve service. The deadline to order is December 18th and payment must be included with your order.

The Broadcaster



For
to us
a child is
born, to us
a son is given.

Isaiah 9:6



Church Staff:

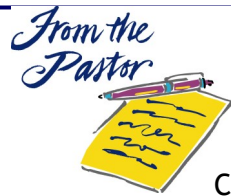
- Jon Disburg
Pastor
- Julie Vose
Office & Finance
- Michael Philipson
Director of Music
- Anthony Navarro
Custodian

Staff may be contacted at the church or through the church's email.

First United Methodist Church
202 E. Fourth St.
Ottumwa, IA 52501
Office: (641) 684-5451 or 684-5452
FAX: (641) 684-8052
Website www.ottumwafirstumc.org
E-mail: fumcott@gmail.com

Pastor's Cell Phone: (641) 680-7464
Church Office Hours: 9-12:00 T-F

Julie's office hours vary. Please call ahead if you need to see her.



Scandal & Humility

Christmas can be a very sentimental time of year. Between the Hallmark channels playing Christmas movies for 7 weeks straight, the wall-to-wall Christmas radio stations and incessant Christmas advertising we can lose sight of the Christmas story itself.

When we overlay the Biblical descriptions of Jesus' birth with the idealized plot lines of Hallmark movies and the over-the-top commercialism, we distort a beautifully humble, yet scandalous, narrative of God becoming one of us.

For a moment, try to hear the story as one hearing it for the first time. Mary and Joseph must travel to Bethlehem because the occupying Roman army leaders want to take a census for the purpose of extorting more money from these citizens living under Roman rule. Mary is pregnant with a child conceived out of wedlock and the Son of God - the Savior of the world - is born in a barn and has a feed bunk for a crib.

Think of the splendor God could have employed to promote and celebrate that first Christmas! Instead, the Son of God slipped into this world almost unnoticed in a place and manner far removed from the ways in which most would expect a King of Kings should be born. But this combination of scandal and humility in the Christmas narratives foreshadows Jesus' identity with the poor, the scandalized and rejected, and the homeless. Through these Christmas stories found in Matthew and Luke we are shown that we who follow Jesus are called to identify with these same folks Jesus identified with.

So watch some of those Hallmark movies and be reminded of those Christmases in our past that were perfect. And, yes, do the shopping and sing "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" with your kids and grandkids. But, leave - room to identify with those who are scandalized and rejected in our community; leave room to humbly serve. Ring a Salvation Army bell. Take some Christmas cookies to the Police or Fire Stations. Go down to Blessings and eat a meal with some of the homeless and poor of our community - and be sure to engage them in conversation. Send Christmas cards with notes of encouragement to those who have thankless jobs in our community.

May God bless you this Christmas season.

Grace & Peace, Pastor Jon

MISSION NEWS

THE CHURCH HAS LEFT THE BUILDING!

- * You gave 166 hats & gloves sets, and 100 gloves to James and Douma Elementary Schools!
- * You will be sending 246 warm-weather gift bags to in-need elderly through SIEDA!
- * You Rang the Bell for the Salvation Army all day on November 27th @ North HyVee! (It was a COLD day and the foyer blower wasn't working! Everyone hung in there! THANK YOU!)

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED WITH THESE MISSIONS!

Thank you also to everyone who helped decorate the church for the Christmas Season!

God Bless you for your generosity!

The 2018 Fall Festival was a success! We will have a wrap-up meeting on December 6th at 9:30 a.m.! Proceeds from the Festival will help fund missions. Thank you to everyone for all of your hard work!



The FUMC Ministry Council will not meet in December. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 6:30 pm.

Knitting Lessons at Hobby Lobby

Linda Vogt will be giving FREE knitting lessons at Hobby Lobby.

December 4, 6, 11, & 13; 4:00–5:30 pm

Ages 6 to Adult

Supplies needed: 20yds worsted weight yarn and size 6 knitting needles. Call Linda if you would like to register. 641.777.6021

It's the Season for Giving

Here are some ways you can give gifts throughout this season of giving.

- Think of people in our community who have thankless jobs and send them a thank-you note.
- If you know a former teacher of yours, thank them for the impact they had on your life.
- Give God thanks for the weather for 7 straight days whether it's sunny or snowy; find the blessing in the forecast.
- Let the person behind you in the grocery store check out go before you.
- Offer to babysit for free to allow young parents a night out.
- Volunteer a few hours at an animal shelter.
- Help a family member accomplish something on their to-do list.
- Purchase grocery store gift cards and carry them around and hand out to those who appear needy.
- Take a prayer walk and give God thanks for creation.
- Pay for the car behind you in the drive-thru line at a fast-food outlet.
- Ask a public school teacher for a list of supplies they need for their classroom and gather some folks and try to fill it.
- Hold a door open for a stranger and wish them Merry Christmas.
- Send a small "care package" to a college student.
- Share a favorite book with someone and encourage them to give it to someone else after they've read it.
- Put a Mason jar on the kitchen cabinet with scraps of paper. Each day between now and Jan. 6, write down something you're thankful for or how you saw God at work and put it in the jar. Take them all out on Jan. 6 and read them.
- Volunteer to read to nursing home residents.
- Make a donation to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (umcor.org) in honor of someone.
- Take a package of Post-its and write 'Merry Christmas,' 'Joy to the World,' and other greetings on them and put them on some windshields of cars in a store parking lot.

All of these acts of giving have been done and are recommended by United Methodists from all over the nation. Doing 5 or 6 of these acts will bring deep meaning and joy to your Christmas season.

Charge Conference - 7 pm, December 11 @ Willard St. UMC

The joint Charge Conference of the 3 United Methodist Congregations of Ottumwa will meet at 7 pm, Dec. 11 at the Willard St. UMC. The agenda will feature the usual business requirements of the Annual Charge Conference; that is, election of officers, setting pastoral support, and affirming the ministries of the past year as well as establishing basic goals for the coming year.

Following the usual Charge Conference business, there will be a vote on the merger of the three congregations. The vote

will be taken by written ballot. A 2/3 majority is required for the congregation to become a part of the merger.

Your membership will be confirmed when you enter the building and you will be issued a ballot. Non-members may attend, but cannot vote. You must be physically present to vote; no absentee ballots are allowed by rule of the Book of Discipline.

Printed information on the merger is available at the office. There will be an open forum discussion on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at the Railroad Club House, 210 W Main St, at 5 pm for questions and discussion.

Longest Night Service

This year our Longest Night Service (formerly called "Blue Christmas") will actually be held on the longest night of the year, Friday, December 21. We will meet at 5 pm in the Chapel.

The purpose of this service is to provide a time of worship and reflection for any persons who may be experiencing grief, pain, depression or other forms of distress this Christmas season. All are welcome to attend but we especially want to invite those who may be facing their first Christmas without a loved one.

Be sure to mark your calendar and invite your family and friends to attend our Special Christmas Music Service on Sunday, December 23rd at our regular 10:30 a.m. Worship time! Our special Christmas service will feature the Chancel Choir, the Bell Choir, and special readings for the celebration. It will be a heart warming service in music and praise.



Christmas Eve Service

First UMC will offer a 9 pm service featuring lessons, carols, communion and candles on Christmas Eve. All are welcome!

As in previous years, Willard St UMC will offer a service at a more "family friendly" time of 6 pm on Christmas Eve and they invite any for whom a 9 pm service is too late.

