

Faith First Community Church

1630 W. 38th Street, Davenport, Iowa 52806

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Email: office@faithfirst2024.org

Established January 1, 2024

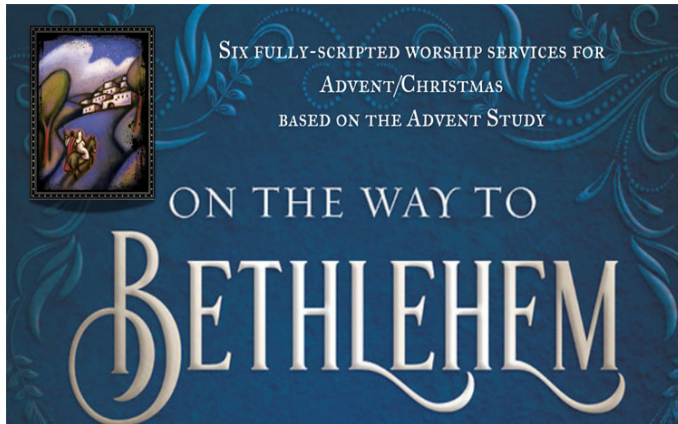
December 2024

Vol. 1-12 Issued Monthly

Rev. Heidi Hulme

Office Hours: 9 am to 12 pm M-TH

Focus on Faith



'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' — Luke 7:27b NRSVUE

We are so often focused on the destination in our travels. "Where are you going?" is the most common question upon hearing that someone is heading out of town. While the destination is perhaps the impetus for deciding to "go," it is often the journey itself that offers the most memorable moments—frustrating or delightful. This Advent season, we will pay attention not just to the destination of Christmas, but also to the places where events occurred that led to a starry night on which a child was born who would change the world. And we will ponder our own milestones—the progress and the potholes "on the way."

A worship series by Marcia McFee, Worship Design Studio, inspired by the book On the Way to Bethlehem: An Advent Study by Rob Fuquay



Christmas Schedule

Sunday, December 1

"Rome: A Place of Longing (Hope)"

Faith Formation – 9:00 a.m.

Worship – 10:30 a.m.

Thursday, December 5

Women's Group at Deb Sullivans - 6:00 p.m.

\$10 Christmas Gift Exchange / Bring an appetizer

Sunday, December 8

"Jerusalem: A Place of Waiting (Peace)"

Faith Formation – 9:00 a.m.

Worship – 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, December 10

Bazaar Celebration Dinner at Mo Brady's
Cocktails - 5:30 p.m. and Dinner - 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 15

"Nazareth: A Place of Simplicity (Joy)"

Faith Formation – 9:00 a.m.

Worship – 10:30 a.m.

Youth Bells

Potluck – 11:30 a.m.

Youth/Children Christmas Program following potluck

Saturday, December 21

Blue Christmas Service - 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 22

"Bethlehem: A Place of Humility (Love)"

Faith Formation—9:00 a.m.

Worship—10:30 a.m.

Adults Bells

Tuesday, December 24

"The Manger: A Place of Care"

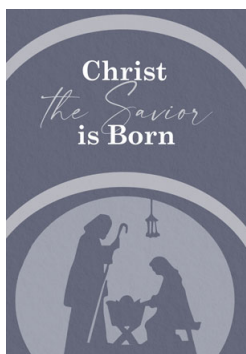
Worship – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 29

"Persia: A Place of Return"

NO FAITH FORMATION

Worship – 10:30 a.m.



May the love of God surround you.
May the light of Christ shine on you.
May the unexpected miracles of the Holy Spirit surprise you each day.
May you and yours find comfort and joy this Advent and Christmas season!
From our home to yours,
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

~ Love, The Hulmes

CHRISTMAS POTLUCK AND YOUTH/CHILDREN CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



There will be a potluck lunch following worship on Dec. 15th.

The youth and children will perform "Christmas Hallelujah" after the potluck.



FROM THE PASTOR

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own town to register." ~ Luke 2:1-3

As I am preparing for the beginning of the Advent/Christmas season, it has occurred to me that over time, we have chosen to make this birth story all fuzzy and warm because we don't want to admit that things may not have been all that different then, as they are now—some 2,000 plus years later.

At the time of Jesus' birth, there was political unrest. People were afraid of what was to come. I wonder what it would have been like if there had been social media back then. Would the Romans have run a campaign based on fear? Might they tell everyone that they would kill all those under the age of two, because those children were evil and, upon birth, immediately try to become dictators, so they must be stopped?

Would the other side have fought back saying that once the census was done, everyone who didn't have citizenship rights to Bethlehem would be kicked out so everyone would be safe? I know those are funny comparisons to make to our time, but when we intentionally read all of the scripture, not just the warm and fuzzy parts, this is what we find. We find fear mongering and violence, just because a few people are afraid of losing their power.

That isn't all that different than today. But because we are 2,000 plus years in the future from this story, we know what is going to happen. And we know that it ends horribly for Jesus, this baby whom we are making a big deal about celebrating. Just like all stories, it is important for us to know and understand both the good and the bad sides of this story. Jesus - God Immanuel, God come to us in human form - was born in a humble manner, raised by a carpenter and his wife, and eventually killed on a cross because the powers that be were afraid of losing said power.

In this time, I would invite you to look around, open your eyes, ears and heart to what is happening right now. We are just over 2 weeks past the Presidential election, and people are still fighting and arguing because they are afraid. We continue to stay in our reaction mode—our fight, flight, or freeze mode, instead of moving to our logic mode.

We are approaching Advent, the season of waiting. What if, instead of reacting to each and every comment made that we don't agree with, we intentionally chose to take a moment to pause and take a couple of deep breaths, allowing for space in which the calm of the Holy Spirit could enter, and bring the peace that passes all understanding into our bodies into our communities, and into our nation? What if, during this season of waiting, instead of making stories up in our mind of what we think might happen in the future, we pause, breathe, and wait to see what God is doing.

I know that breathing and waiting isn't easy, especially in this highly reactive time. But if we truly understand what scripture tells us about the nature of God, then we would remember that God is the Creator. Out of chaos, God can, and has, created..... everything. Our moment in history is no different. Even when it feels like God isn't present among us, all we have to do is turn back to scripture and read. Read about when God created space to save baby Moses. Read about how God told Moses to approach Pharaoh to let his people go. Read about when God gave them water, and manna, and the 10 Commandments.

Read about when God chose a young shepherd to be King instead of his brothers. Read about how God chose to become one of us, and live among us. Everything we read, involves God creating new ways for humanity, for us, to return to right relationship after we have turned our backs on Them. Our time now will be no different.

But, as the saying goes, the ball is in our court. We have to decide to trust God. To trust that God can, and will, take our chaotic world, and create something new.

Do you trust that? Try it for a moment. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. As you breathe in, say, "I trust you, God," and as you breathe out, say, "to make all things new." Do this several times. Pay attention to how you feel. When you find yourself anxious about the future, take a few moments to center yourself in God's presence.

This time of Advent, of waiting and watching, is an excellent time to practice. Because, just like the arrival of the baby we are waiting to celebrate, God will reveal Themselves to us through hope, peace, joy, and love, in surprising and unexpected ways. May you find these things this season.

Always Peace,
Pastor Heidi



BIBLE QUIZ

Who was governor of Syria when Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem for a mandated registration, or census?

- A. Theophilus
- B. Herod Antipas
- C. Pontius Pilate
- D. Quirinius



Answer: (See Luke 2:1-7.)

Hope at the Brick House

We are scheduled to serve at 3:30 p.m.
December 12th.

Share-A-Meal

We are scheduled to serve at
5:15 p.m. December 20th.



Christmas Gift Exchange
Deb Sullivan's home
Dec. 5 at 6 p.m.
Bring Appetizer

Newsletter articles due the 3rd Sunday of the month.

January Newsletter article deadline is Dec. 15.

January Newsletter will be mailed by Dec. 28.

Treasurer's Report October 2024

PLEDGE ACCOUNT	MO.PLEDGE	OCTOBER	GIVEN YTD
General Fund	\$ 7,058.00	\$ 7,403.38	\$ 68,262.69
Non-Pledge Gen Fund	\$ -	\$ 5,553.00	\$ 9,908.00
OCWM	\$ 165.00	\$ 165.00	\$ 1,800.00
DOCM	\$ 410.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 3,300.00
Maintenance Reserve	\$ 380.00	\$ 270.00	\$ 3,923.75
Total Giving	\$ 8,013.00	\$ 13,401.38	\$ 87,194.44
GENERAL FUND	MO BUDGET		TOTAL YTD
Pledged & NP Giving	\$ 7,058.00	\$ 12,956.38	\$ 77,706.68
Misc Gen Fund Giving	\$ -	\$ 121.21	\$ 5,467.91
Transfers In	\$ -	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 25,621.18
Total Gen Fund Inc	\$ 7,058.00	\$ 28,077.59	\$ 108,795.77
Pastor Expense	\$ 7,261.00	\$ 6,706.32	\$ 70,569.59
Employee Expense	\$ 1,335.00	\$ 1,162.78	\$ 11,696.83
Church Ministry Exp	\$ 447.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 2,966.43
Office Expense	\$ 599.00	\$ 733.20	\$ 6,069.63
Property Expense	\$ 2,057.00	\$ 1,869.36	\$ 18,489.59
Total Gen Fun Exp	\$ 11,699.00	\$ 11,571.66	\$ 109,792.07
Net General Fund	\$ (4,641.00)	\$ 16,505.93	\$ (996.30)

Submitted by Martha Watters

WALKING WITH THOSE WHO GRIEVE

The holiday season can be difficult for people who are grieving a death or deep loss. As Christians, we do well to be aware that not everyone feels wholehearted joy this time of year. How can we support them?

Grief counselor Alan Wolfelt explains that walking alongside — “companionship” — one who grieves “is not about assessing, analyzing, fixing or resolving another’s grief. Instead, it is about being totally present to the mourner, even being a temporary guardian of [his or] her soul.” It’s about being present to another person’s pain, not taking it away. It’s about listening with the heart, not analyzing with the head. It’s about walking alongside, not leading.



May God bless you as you share the love of the Christ Child, his caring parents and his compassionate heavenly Father with people who are hurting.



Board Notes

Board Meeting
November 10, 2024

1. Fire department inspected the building last month. Recommended that we purchase a few more fire extinguishers for the sanctuary. Walt Lambach updated the fire extinguishers and will give us a quote for new ones.
2. Share A Meal served 65 on October 29th. Hope at the Brick House currently averages 45 children at the meal we serve the 2nd Thursday of each month.
3. Andy Byorum, Barb Koenig’s son, has agreed to help clean and wax the Fellowship Hall floors soon.
4. The board approved getting a new dishwasher for the parsonage. The cost for a part to fix the old one was almost the cost of a new one. It was decided to get a new one rather than fixing the old one.
5. SIG property will be doing our Fall cleanup.
6. Next meeting is December 8th at noon.



- 1 Don Emde
- 4 Alexander Marvin
Sophia Marvin
- 16 Pam Edmond
- 19 James Walck
- 21 Becky Christy
- 27 Chandler Ozmon



CHRISTIAN SYMBOL

ADVENT COLORS — One of the season’s symbolic colors is blue, representing hope. During Advent, we wait in hope to celebrate again God’s coming in human form. We also look forward in hope to Christ’s coming in glory at the end of the age. Purple symbolizes the royalty of Jesus, the coming Prince of Peace, and the penitence with which we receive him. Some congregations also use pink or white candles in Advent wreaths, with pink symbolizing joy and white symbolizing the Christ Child.

AS WE APPROACH WINTER, please be aware of the weather. If you question whether to be in church, chances are, you shouldn’t be in worship! We will announce on Facebook, as well as the television news stations (WQAD and KWQC) if we have to cancel worship. But even if we don’t choose to cancel worship, if you don’t think it is safe outside, then please stay home and watch us online. Be safe!



Our Faith First Family

Bob Cobb
Glenn Perreault
Pam Edmond
Pastor Heidi
Don Walton
Sid and Ardella Boots
Jeff McWilliams
Karen Risler
Deb Lobdell
Rev. Barb Koenig

Our Homebound

Paul Dammeier
Connie Disney
Nancy Giles
Dennis Jacobsen
Jan Johnson
Hazel Jones
Virginia Lemons
Harriet Meye
Colleen Skinner
Harry Stroupe

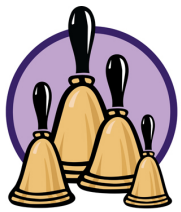
Our Family and Friends

Nancy	Heather
Fran Frutiger	Bruce
Kim Rigg	Terry Showens
Jake Folcik	Melissa Haynes
Fran Leamer	Judy Cummings
Allison Byers	



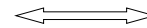
Our World

Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and the Mainland of China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Stateless people.



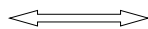
AMY DOWELL, BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR, along with her bell ringers have been practicing every Sunday after church for their performances in December!

PASTOR HEIDI AND FAMILY will be on vacation from December 25—January 5. She will be back in the office on Monday, January 6. **Jill Pepper** will be on call in case of emergencies. You may contact her at 563-370-1359.

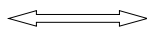


HANDBELL

PERFORMANCE The youth are scheduled to ring their bells during worship on December 15th. The adult bell choir will perform during worship on December 22nd.

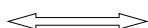


THE MITTEN TREE is up and ready for your donations. We will be giving all donations to the Student Success Store. If you are not able to get out to shop, we will gladly shop for you. Just drop off or mail in your cash donation indicating that it is for purchasing something for the Mitten Tree!



The **Bazaar Celebration** will be Tuesday, December 10th. 5:30 for Cocktails with dinner at 6:00 p.m. At Mo Brady’s, 4830 N Brady St, Davenport, IA. Hope to see you there!

SPECIAL OFFERINGS We have two this month—The Christmas Fund for the UCC which goes to caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees. The DOC special offering supports the Upper Midwest Region.



December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Faith Formation 9:00 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m.	2 Troop 828 Meeting 6:30-8 p.m.	3  Merit Badge 6 to 8 p.m.	4	5 Women's Group 6 p.m. Deb Sullivan Home	6 	7
8 Faith Formation 9:00 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Board Meeting 12:00 p.m. <i>Newsletter Articles Due</i>	9 Troop 828 Meeting 6:30-8 p.m.	10 Bazaar Celebration 5:30 Cocktails 6:00 Dinner Merit Badge 6 to 8 p.m.	11 	12 Hope at the Brick House 3:30 p.m.	13	14
15 Faith Formation 9:00 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Christmas Program Potluck After Worship <i>Newsletter Articles Due</i>	16 Troop 828 Meeting 6:30-8 p.m.	17 Merit Badge 6 to 8 p.m.	18	19 Basket Class 5:30 p.m.	20 Share A Meal 5:15 p.m.	21  Blue Christmas Service 5:30 p.m.
22 Faith Formation 9:00 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m.	23 Troop 828 Meeting 6:30-8 p.m.	24  Christmas Eve Service 5:00 p.m.	25  Merry Christmas	26 Office Closed Pastor Heidi Vacation	27	28
29 Faith Formation 9:00 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Pastor Heidi Vacation	30 Troop 828 Meeting 6:30-8 p.m.	31				