



### Greetings from Pastor Mary

For over a year, we have all been staying close to home. Truly, we are gathered together as a world sheltering near our homes, because of the pandemic and how it has restricted us in so many ways. But for us as Christians, home itself is layered in meaning. In all the nearness and farness of home, for each of us uniquely, the Advent season invites us to journey to the manger of Bethlehem to meet God born into this world. The mystery and beauty of this abiding relationship of love and light means we can carry home within us. We can be at home in the world because God is at home in the world with us. Even in the barns of our lives, so, there, God appears to us.

This season, the promise of Advent is that God gives us a home in His heart: for us who will be decorating our physical homes or going to our ancestral home; for those who are living in wayfaring situations like refugees and migrants; for those whose homes

have been damaged or destroyed by fire or flood; or for those who are simply homeless. In my years in ministry, I have come to believe that each of us has a deep longing to rest in the home that God offers us, “not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.”

(2 Cor 5). Though our busyness or our difficulties make us sometimes feel adrift, there is a manger in Bethlehem that invites us to come home where we meet Him, where we know Him, and in seeing Him, understand again how we are loved.

Within this Advent Communicator are so many opportunities for us to take the journey to Bethlehem together: worship, music, children’s programs, greening the sanctuary, study, remembering our loved ones, and lighting the candles together on Christmas Eve. I invite you to be with us, as we travel home to God together.

Sincerely,

Pastor Mary



## Sermon Series: Close To Home



First Sunday of Advent, Nov. 28: Luke 21: 25-36. We all Get Homesick (Hope). The last miles of the journey are often the longest. But we are almost there. Advent Wreath Lighting

Second Sunday of Advent, Dec. 5: Luke 1: 57-80 Laying the Foundation (Peace). What our names mean in the story. Advent Wreath Lighting, Baptism of Ellis Talbert, Reception of new members, Communion

Third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 12: Luke 3: 1-6; 15-18 A Home for All (Joy). Getting out the Decorations. Advent Wreath Lighting, Choir “The Messiah” (11 a.m.)

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec. 19: Luke 1: 26-37 Seeking Sanctuary (love). Conversation with the Angels. Advent Wreath Lighting. Children’s Christmas Program (9 a.m.)

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24: Luke 2: 1-20 Invited Home. When we need to get Home. Advent Wreath Lighting. Services at 5 (Family); 7 (Traditional); 11 (Lessons and Carols).

First Sunday after Christmas, Dec. 26: Chosen Home. Singing carols and reading stories. Service at 10 a.m. (no service at 9 or 11; no Sunday School).

## Blue Christmas

Monday, December 20th at 7:00 pm

For those who have experienced loss, the holidays can be a particularly painful time, stirring up grief in acute ways. As a result, churches around the world have adopted the practice of having a “Blue Christmas” or a “Longest Night” service during the Advent season. A Longest Night service is designed to provide space for prayer, reflection, and remembrance amidst the holiday hustle and bustle.



## Christmas Eve Services

### Christmas Eve Before You Leave

- December 21, 2021

### Christmas Eve

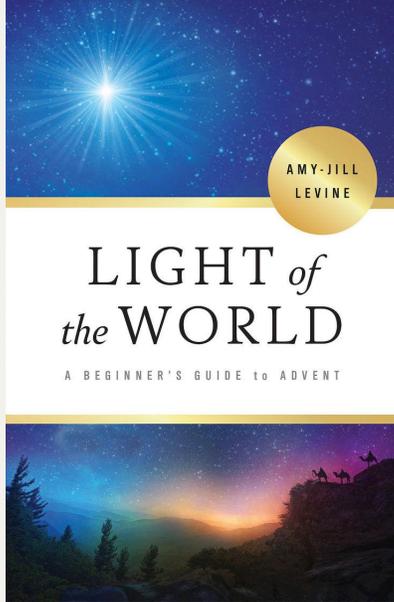
December 24, 2021

- 5:00 pm All ages, Interactive
- 7:00 pm Traditional
- 11:00 pm Lessons and Carols



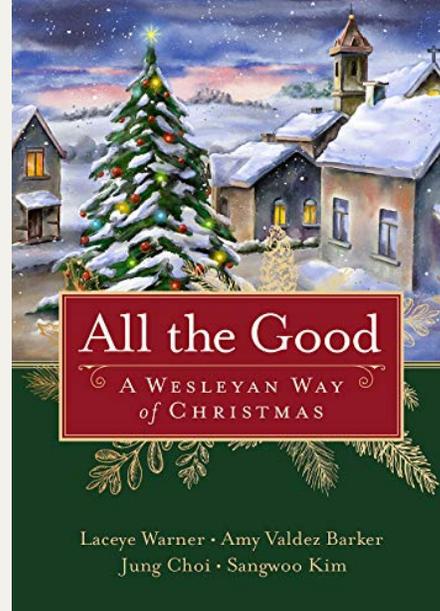
## Christmas Eve Worship Support Needed.

We need you to help us create a welcoming environment this Christmas season. Sign up to welcome, usher, run slides and more for our Christmas Eve services using this link [here](#). This is the perfect opportunity for your family, friends or small group to serve together this Christmas.



## Advent Small Group with Pastor Mary

Light of the World Small Group Using Dr. Amy-Jill Levine's book, *Light of the World*, explore the biblical texts surrounding the birth of Jesus from a Jewish perspective this Advent season. This study approaches the stories of John the Baptist's and Jesus' birth stories with fresh insight and connections to the Gospels and the Old Testament. Join with Pastor Mary Bellon on Wednesday evenings, via zoom, beginning Dec 1, 8, 15, 22 at 7pm. Sign up [here](#).

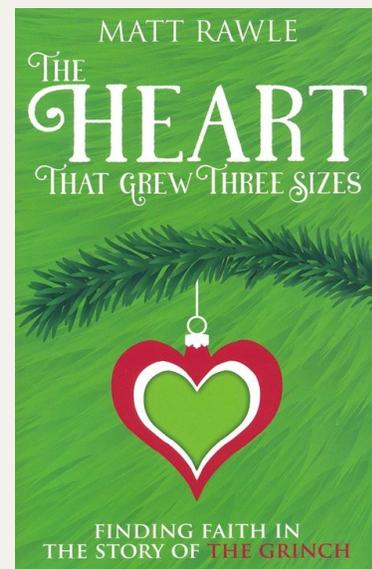


## All The Good - A Wesleyan Way of Christmas Small Group

The season of Advent offers time and space for Christians to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas through reflecting on the story of grace and love. Take time this season to explore the scriptures of Christmas using the lens of John Wesley's means of grace. This group will meet on Sunday mornings, beginning Nov 28th, during the Sunday school hour in the church library. Books are available for purchase (\$10) at the Welcome Center. Sign up [here](#).

## All Ages Advent Study

Sunday's November 28, December 5, 12 and 19th. We will gather from 4:00-5:00 in the Fireside room. Rediscover the gift of Advent that comes without packages, ribbons, and bows. We don't know why the Grinch hated Christmas. We just know he did. Using portions of Matt Rawle's book *The Heart that Grew Three Sizes* we will explore the faith themes in the Christmas classic, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* To sign-up for the group click [here](#).



## Advent Workshop

The Advent Workshop will be held in person on



Sunday, December 5, 1:30-4:30pm in the Annex Auditorium. Come join us for fun for all ages, and make some Christmas memories. Each family can make a fresh greenery wreath. There will be various crafts for individuals of all ages. If you would like to volunteer to help, contact Mary Buck at 515-460-4571 or [maryeileen51@q.com](mailto:maryeileen51@q.com).

## Advent Special Offering

This Season we would invite you to participate in our Advent Special Offering. This season we will be collecting monetary donations for HOPE. The Ames School District food pantry and SHOP the Iowa State Student food pantry. Starting on November 28th in worship in person and digitally you will hear more about these two organizations that support and provide a basic right and need for those in our community, FOOD. There are multiple ways to support this special offering.

1. **Pray.** Pray for our community as it works on food insecurity and how that impacts our children, youth and students.
2. **Give.** You will be able to do that online, through the mail or offering baskets.
3. **Share.** Share with others about this giving opportunity and the organizations doing this food insecurity work.



## Giving Tree

While doing some holiday shopping grab an extra \$20 gift card for The Bridge Home (formerly ERP). Gift cards will be shared with clients of The Bridge Home. You will find the giving tree located in the gathering space starting on November 28th. Cards can be dropped on Sunday mornings or during the week until December 12th. Gift card location recommendations: Target, Walmart, Hy-Vee, Dollar Tree, Aldi, Fareway, Casey's etc.

## Advent Decorating

Sunday, Nov. 21, 12 noon, Sanctuary  
 Enjoy an afternoon of decorating our church for the season. We'll gather in the Sanctuary around noon following the second service.  
 Together we'll decorate the Sanctuary and building for Advent and Christmas. All ages welcome! Can't make it but would like to help at another time during the week? Contact Lauren Loonsfoot [lauren@cwames.org](mailto:lauren@cwames.org)



## Messiah

The Chancel Choir will offer the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah at the 11:00 service



on Sunday, December 12. "And the Glory of the Lord," "For Unto Us a Child is Born," and other seasonal favorites will be presented along with solos featuring students from the Department of Music and Theater at Iowa State University.

## Children's Christmas Program

What's better than seeing our Sunday school children and youth take part of the Christmas story during Advent? We can't think of many things better. So please come and support the children and their program on December 19th at the 9:00 am Service.



## Advent Spiritual Formation Class topics:

On November 21, we will distribute the Advent devotional "Close to Home" by A Sanctified Art to those attending class in person and mail it to those not in person that day.

November 28 "Close to Home: Homesick" (Hope) led by Mike King

December 5 "Close to Home: Laying the Foundation" (Peace) led by Tim Gossett

December 12 "Close to Home: A Home for All" (Joy) led by Mike King

December 19 "Close to Home: Seeking Sanctuary" (Love) led by Tim Gossett

December 26 No class, but will offer "Chosen Home" An at-home liturgy

January 2 "Close to Home: Chosen Home" led by Mike King

January 9 "Close to Home: Home by Another Way" (Epiphany) led by Tim Gossett

Meeting at 10 AM Sundays in the Pine Room or via zoom.

If you aren't comfortable meeting in person and you haven't signed up for the zoom group, you can sign up here: <https://cwames.churchcenter.com/groups/digital-adult-sunday-school-classes/spiritual-formation>



## Poinsettias

If you would like to help us decorate our sanctuary for the Advent season, please complete this form and leave it in the church office, or put it in the offering plate. The cost for the 6" red poinsettia is \$13.50. Your check must accompany your order. The deadline for orders is Sunday, Nov. 21. If you have any questions, please contact the church office. You may pick up your poinsettias after the Christmas eve service, or on Monday, December 27. Thank you! [Order form](#)



Collegiate United Methodist Church/Wesley Foundation | 2622 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50014

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