

The
Communicator

December, 2023 Vol. 42 Issue 12

Connecting People



Collegiate United Methodist Church
and Wesley Foundation
Ames, Iowa

Contact Us

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Weekly Email Announcement Deadlines:

Send Weekly Email submissions to mail@cwames.org by NOON on Wednesday. Type *weekly email* in the subject line.

Cover Pictures:

taken in mid-November as usual
November weather arrived.

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About *The Communicator* and deadline submission dates —

The *Communicator* is a monthly publication of Collegiate United Methodist Church and Wesley Foundation. The goal of *The Communicator* is to inform and involve people in the life and work of the church. To submit articles, please email them to mail@cwames.org and put “*Communicator*” in the subject line. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the church office at 515-292-6936.

January 2024 Communicator Deadline: December 18, 2023

Message from Pastor Mary

by Rev. Dr. Mary Lautzenhiser Bellon

**"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."
(Charles Wesley)**



As the year slips toward the longest night, the beginning of winter and the sacred time of Christmas, we arrive weary and worn from the losses we may have experienced this year, the war in Ukraine, the war in the Holy Land and the way our country seems so divided. Yet, this Advent, as every Advent, we enter into a season of hope and celebration! Our theme for our worship experience is **"How does a weary world rejoice?" and we will be answering that in music and song, a wonderful Children's Program and beautiful services on Christmas Eve. We are a** people who rejoice! And let us remember, into world weariness, the Christ Child was born 2000 years ago. Into a time of shadow in the land, a child was born who was destined to bring hope and healing to **millions of people through the ages. This hope was fashioned from the capacity to make real God's love** and presence to all who came near Him. From the nativity stories of Angels and miracles, to the rising joy of Anna and Simeon and on through the years of his called disciples and gathered followers, Jesus has meant hope and healing in His presence and mercy, in His clarity of right relationship and in His calling out to us that the power of love and faith heals and changes us not only in this life but in the life to come.

This Advent we celebrate Communion on Dec. 3rd and during that service we will consecrate new Communion Chalices and Patens fashioned by potter Valerie Williams. We have special music throughout the season and offer several ways to participate in giving to make Christmas special for those in need. On **Dec. 17th we experience the Children's Christmas Program. We celebrate Christmas Eve with three** services: the Family Service at 10 am, the Traditional Service at 7:30 pm with Communion, and a Service of Lessons and Carols at 11 pm. You will be able to watch any or all of them on Christmas Eve or Christmas or the days following Christmas through our Livestream on Facebook or You Tube. Our Blue Christmas Service is at 5 pm on December 17th in Nichols Chapel. This service is a time to grieve together and receive the comfort of our fellowship. On Dec. 20th we offer the Christmas Before You Leave service in the sanctuary at 7 pm.

We come to the end of the year after a successful generosity season and enter these High Holy days grateful for the ways God has gifted us with each other and our commitment to sharing His amazing grace and love with everyone we can and with everyone who needs it. I wish to extend to you my personal well wishes for a meaningful and spiritually rich Christmas season. It is sometimes true that in the busiest of **times, the miracle of God's light breaks though to show us the way forward. It is my great privilege to walk** forward in that light with you for one more Advent before I retire next June.

Blessings to each of you,
Pastor Mary

How a Weary World Rejoices

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

The Second Sunday of Advent | How does a weary world rejoice?

We find joy in connection

December. 3 Advent Candle of Peace. Communion Serve. Consecration of Chalices and Patens by potter Val Williams. Scripture: Luke 1: 26-45
Sermon: The Holy Spirit will Come Over You

Focus Image: Two Mothers

by Nicolette Peñaranda

Inspired by Luke 1:24-45

Acrylic, ink, and mixed media collage on canvas



The Third Sunday of Advent | How does a weary world rejoice?

We allow ourselves to be amazed

December 10: Advent Candle of Joy. Children's Choir. Scripture: Luke 1: 57-66 Sermon: Write it on Tablets

What Wonder Turns Into

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 1:57-66



The Fourth Sunday of Advent | How does a weary world rejoice?

We sing stories of hope

Dec. 17: Advent Candle of Love. Children's Christmas Program. Scripture: Luke 1: 46-55. Message: Opening Presents

Embroidered Borders

by Nicolette Peñaranda

Inspired by Luke 1:46-55

Acrylic, ink, and mixed media collage on canvas



Christmas Eve Services



December 24th

In-person, on Facebook, YouTube, or cwames.org

"Luke's Gospel tells us that when Mary gives birth to Jesus, she lays him in a manger, for there was no place for them in the guest room. Scholars argue about where, exactly, the birth occurs—and why. Was it in a stable or the living room of a simple peasant home? Was Bethlehem teeming with visitors who were **also there to be counted in the census?** Was Joseph's family inhospitable because they disapproved of his marital situation? Regardless of where the birth occurs, we know that Christ is born in a crowded, unlikely place. And yet, God makes a place here anyway. God draws the circle wider as shepherds and unexpected guests arrive. This Christmas, let us also make room—for strangers and neighbors alike. For this is good news of great joy for all people." Sanctified Art, From How Does a Weary World Rejoice?

Come tell the story with us on Christmas Eve

10:00 am Interactive, Intergenerational Family service

7:00 pm Traditional Service: Carols, Communion and Candle Lighting

11:00 pm Service of Lessons and Carols

Livestreamed Worship

Helpful links for watching our worship services:

For our livestreamed worship, you can "tune in" on our [Facebook page](#) at 10:00 am to watch live.

You can also view the service on our [Youtube channel](#) or [Digital Worship Page](#).

Whichever way you worship, we would love for you to fill out the [check-in form](#) on our website so we can do our best to stay connected. You can also share your prayer requests and give at the same link.



Pictures from November



Pictures from November





CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

SUNDAY DECEMBER 17 10:00 AM

What's better than seeing our Sunday school children and youth take part in 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 17th during worship at 10:00 am

BLUE CHRISTMAS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 5:00 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 BEFORE YOU LEAVE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20 7:00 PM

Holiday plans taking you out of Ames on Christmas Eve? Have other Christmas Eve commitments and can't make it to any of our Christmas Eve services? Love Christmas Eve services so much that you want an early opportunity to attend one? We would love for you to join us at Christmas Eve Before You Leave. This interactive, intergenerational service will include special music, carols, the Christmas story, and of course candle lighting with Silent Night. Following the service stop by the hot chocolate bar and take some pictures at the photo booth.



WESLEY CENTER DECEMBER UPDATES



me
and
white
supremacy

Combat Racism,
Change the World, and
Become a Good Ancestor

"Buy this book for
yourself, your family, your
students. Don't put it off and
don't look away. It's time."
—ELIZABETH GILBERT,
New York Times
bestselling author

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**ME & WHITE SUPREMACY
BOOK STUDY**

This advent our church and Wesley Center are studying the book “Me and White Supremacy” after worship on Sundays.

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FINALS BREAKFAST

The Wesley Center will have breakfast in the student lounge 8-11 from Dec. 11th-13th, come and grab some grub before class!

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Stay connected with us on
Instagram, Facebook, and our
Website



Church Council

CHURCH COUNCIL – FUTURE BUDGET DISCUSSION UPDATE

In September and October the Collegiate Wesley Church Council hosted three events designed to share information from the Visionary Budget Task Force and to collect comments from the CW community. The following are highlights from the listening sessions.

Around 80 people participated in the listening sessions. They ranged in age from high school youth to church elders. In each setting members of Church Council shared a power point describing the current **financial situation and the need to prepare a new financial plan for CW's future.**

The financial reserves of Collegiate and Wesley Foundation are forecast to support the ministries of CW through 2027. The Church Council is choosing to use the next two-three years to develop a new financial **strategy that will sustain CW's ministries for many years beyond 2028.**

The new fiscal plan will incorporate several financial strategies.

1. Increase annual giving by individual households and increase the number of giving households.
The CW community has a great deal of control over this part of the financial plan.
2. Maximize other sources of annual revenue.
 - a. Increase the number of rentals. Trustees is currently working on this. Spaces include both the church building and the Annex auditorium. There will be some associated costs such as additional cleaning or upgrade of technical services.
 - B. Fully expend CW Endowment grants. Each year the CW Endowment Board offers around \$80,000 to support programs of CW and capital improvements. This year all funds were distributed. It is the goal to make that happen every year.
 - C. Apply for external grants. This fall Trustees was awarded a competitive FEMA grant to improve security in the church buildings.
 - D. Apply to the Riverview Park District (our district within the Annual Conference) for an **“asking” to support Wesley Foundation programming.**
3. Control expenses.
 - A. Insurance costs increased dramatically this year and are projected to continue that trend. We cannot control the increase but we can look at how best to insure our needs in the most economical way.
 - B. Church Council voted to maintain all current staff positions. The Director of Generosity position was not continued when David Orth left. Staff Parish Relations will consider salaries on an annual basis.
4. Capital campaign for a specific purpose. The current need is a new parking lot which must conform to city code for water abatement and environmental impact.
5. Sale of property to create a fund to be invested to support CW ministry for the future. This would be done only after an analysis of the property assets CW currently owns along Lincoln Way and **Sheldon and how those can contribute to CW's future ministry and financial stability.**

The list of next steps includes action items for both the Church Council and individuals.

- Church Council is in the process of preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the purpose of assessing our property. The RFP will be sent to architecture firms in the area to solicit proposals. Currently this is on pause while the Trustees complete the next stage of compliance with the FEMA grant mentioned earlier.
- Complete the Church Assessment Tool (CAT survey). All CW community members can respond to this action item. The survey is available through Dec. 3. Information will be used not only to help select our new senior pastor, but to provide insight into your thoughts and feelings about CW and its future.
- Clean up membership lists. A formal process, but can also be checking in with friends who used to be in attendance and you have not seen for awhile. Do they still consider themselves part of the CW community?
- Research external grant opportunities. Are there grant funds available to help pay for a parking lot remake?
- **Tell CW's story. Why did you return to CW after Covid? What did you miss?**
- Spread the word about renting church spaces for meetings or events.
- Park in front on Sunday morning. Gather on the front terrace, weather permitting. We want people to know that we are open and alive.

The Church Council will continue to keep you informed as the process progresses. If you have additional questions or suggestions please contact Ann Sandine, Church Council chair (ann.sandine@gmail.com). Future decisions will be shaped by events in the coming year such as the results of the 2024 Generosity Campaign and the appointment of our new senior pastor.

- Jane R. Jacobson for the CW Church Council

2024 Generosity Campaign

Friends,

As of this writing, we have collected pledges from 81 households. This an amazing start. Thank you so much to all that joined us for Generosity Sunday and have submitted your pledge card.

For those who have not had a chance, please submit your Generosity Card via email to me at jason@cwames.org, use our online giving form to submit, or deliver your card to the church office. Your pledge makes a difference, especially in preparing the 2024 budget!!

Looking forward to getting more of those Generosity Cards collected and Thank You again to those who have already submitted their card.

With gratitude, Jason (Janssen)

Our Prayers

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- for the fantastic crew at Food at First on Friday, Oct. 27 - Dean Phillips, Dee Dreeszen, Bev Kruempel, Mary Ann & Paul Lundy, Sally Wilson, Betty & Tom Barton, Cinian Durbin, Robert & Lilli Allie, Ashley, Andy, Izzy & Camren Smelser and friend Mike, Mike Parsons, and Brad Brinkmeyer.
- for the life of my brother, Mike Garner, who died on Nov. 9th in Cedar Rapids after a lengthy battle with cancer. ~ Tim Garner
- for the loved ones with whom we'll celebrate Thanksgiving.
- for the wonderful Food at First crew on Nov. 24- Dean Phillips, Dee Dreeszen, Mary Ann and Paul Lundy, Grant Olsen, Ann Sandine, Evelyn Beavers, Mike Parsons, Robert Allie, Stephanie Walker, Brad Brinkmeyer, Ashley, Andy, Izzy and Camren Smelser, and Lauren Loonsfoot
- for all of the helpers who decorated the church for Advent!



Prayers of Concern:

- for the two million Palestinian civilians caught in the onslaught of the Israeli military. ~ Bonnie Nichols
- for my brother Mike, who is hospitalized at the Veteran's Administration hospital in Iowa City. ~ Tim Garner
- for the ministry of my cousin who is volunteering with Christian Aid Ministries in Jerusalem. She is safe and plans to stay in Israel. ~ Janell Eby
- Jerry will be having knee surgery this Wednesday, November 1. ~ Ann Sandine
- **Thank you for prayers for my brother's thyroid cancer surgery** It was successful and had not spread. ~ Jane Jacobson
- for Joshua Dobbs, hospitalized at Mary Greeley Medical Center.
- for Bud Everett, recovering at Green Hills Medical Center.
- for Jerry Sandine, recovering from knee surgery.
- for our dear neighbor as he faces chemo and radiation for bladder cancer. ~ Sally Wilson
- for Ron Moorman as he continues his recovery.
- for Mary Stratton, undergoing treatment.
- for LeAnn Meehan, undergoing treatment.
- for Tim Garner and family, on the loss of his brother.
- for safe travels during the holidays.

Note of Thanks

A Message of Gratitude

Dear Friends at Ames Collegiate/Wesley,
Thank you so much for welcoming me to worship and charge conference to share about Women at the Well. It was a joy to be with you and celebrate the partnership that makes this vital ministry possible. Thank you for the support of prayers, presence and witness. Peace, (Rev) Paul (Witmer)

Trustees

by Doug Warren, Facilities Superintendent

Wow! This year is just flying by! I don't know how it's already December, but somehow it is! While December seems to have snuck up, Trustees have been hard at work preparing for it all year. The boilers were lit on November 17th, setting a new record for how far into November we have waited to fire up the boilers! This was due to strategic planning in the last few years, focusing on efficiency. The new windows and heat pumps are why we were able to make it this far. Prepandemic, we would average 210-250 dekatherms of natural gas in the month of October. This year, we used around 40 dekatherms for our building. This is a huge decline in our fossil fuel consumption! Now that we are on steam heat, we will continue our Preventative Maintenance program to keep everything running optimally. The Trustees are very concerned with keeping our efficiency up to help reduce our costs. On Wednesday, November 15th, our Board of Trustees held a work day to help reduce the utilities associated with Wesley Place. The Trustees gathered with hairdryers in hand to put plastic film on the insides of the windows. This will help greatly with drafts from the old windows. As you can see, the Trustees had a great time, and were smiling knowing how much their work pays off with decreased utility costs.



Left to right:

Owen Kolstad

Patty King

Jon Banwart

Text-To-Give

Text-to-give: Using your smartphone, simply text the amount you want to give to 84321. You will receive a text message that helps you through the process of identifying Collegiate/Wesley as the church to whom you would like to give, logging into your profile, adding or selecting a payment method, and submitting a donation. After the initial setup, next time you want to donate it's as easy as texting the amount you want to give to 84321.

Ways to give

1 Text-to-give: Using your smartphone, simply text the amount you want to give to 84321

2 QR Code

3 Website: You can give anytime on our website cwames.org under give for general giving or mission giving

4 A physical donation, place a donation in the offering plate on Sundays or mail your donation to the office.

At Collegiate Wesley, your giving makes a difference in our community.

Sending to Serve

Advent Special Offering

UMCOR is processing grants to support those impacted by the ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza. One grant supports a partner providing psychological treatment and counseling to women and children and the other grant will provide telemedicine funding for mothers and children in need of follow-up care. Recently, getting humanitarian aid where it is needed most has become more difficult.

UMCOR has been working diligently to provide emergency assistance to those impacted by the conflict in Israel and Gaza. An emergency grant has been awarded to a local partner who used UMCOR funds to procure and distribute hygiene kits for internally displaced people in Gaza. UMCOR is working with partners in Israel to provide humanitarian relief there as well.

We invite you to continue praying for a peaceful resolution to this conflict. To learn more about UMCOR's response to the war in Israel/Gaza, or to donate, visit our International Disaster Response webpage: <https://umcmmission.org/umcor-international-latest-responses/>

You Can give using the Special Offering Envelopes in the pews, online at cwames.org or by mailing a check to the church office. Thank you for your support.



Giving Tree

The giving tree this year will concentrate on Sleep in Heavenly Peace. An Ames chapter has just started. SIHP provides beds and bedding to children. Their goal is to make sure all children have a bed and nobody is sleeping on the floor. We invite you to grab a tag off the tree to support recipients with new bedding and pillows. There will be different tags of items you can purchase on the tree. Please drop off donations to the church by December 17th.

Thank you to all who helped make blankets on November 29th for SIHP!



Volunteer Opportunities and Donations Requested

Free Little Food Pantry

The LFP has fresh paint inside and out, thanks to Alan & Donna Vandehaar!
Come take a look and while you're there, put a can or two inside.

These items are taken most frequently:

- Peanut Butter
- Tuna
- Canned Ravioli/Spaghetti (pop tops are best)
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Canned Beans (Pinto, Black, White or Kidney)
- Canned Vegetables
- Individual sized apple sauce/fruit cups

Please bring your donations directly to the Little Food Pantry, located outside the north door of the Annex, or to the box inside the west door of the church. If you'd like to make a financial donation, please click [here](#). Thank you so much!



Clothing That Works Needs Your Help.

Clothing That Works has been serving record numbers of people. CTW is in need of your clean usable adult clothing. Needed most: t-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, and jeans. Help others by cleaning out your closets.

OR you can donate money (checks can be sent directly to Collegiate with a notation that it be given to Clothing That Works, or donate through our website [here](#)).

CTW is located at 130 S. Sheldon, Ames (in C/W's Annex building).



Food at First Volunteer Opportunity

We have the opportunity to prepare and serve the daily meal for Food at First on the fourth and fifth Friday of every month. There are two shift opportunities 3:30-5:30 AND/OR 5:30-7:30 pm. Early shift volunteers (we need 6 volunteers for this shift) work together on prepping the meal for the evening. Second shift volunteers (we need 10 volunteers for this shift) help serve the meal along with cleaning up following the meal.

The next opportunities to serve are **December 22 and 29** This is a great opportunity to build community, have fun, and serve others. To learn more, email Lauren Loonsfoot at lauren@cwames.org or sign up at [Food at First Volunteer](#).

Food at First is located inside First Christian Church, 611 Clark Ave., Ames

Bell and Brass Concert

Please join us for the annual **Bells & Brass Concert** in the sanctuary on Thursday, December 7th, 2023, at 7:30 pm. You will hear a mix of sacred and secular music by the Chancel Handbell Choir and the Collegiate Brass. Be prepared to sing along!



Advent Workshop



Mark your calendar for the Advent Workshop on Sunday, December 3, 1:30 to 4:30 pm in the Annex Auditorium. Each participating family can make and decorate a fresh evergreen wreath. There will be fun crafts for all ages. If you would like to volunteer, no crafting experience necessary, please contact Mary Buck (515-460-4571).

Questions? Contact Mary Buck.

Alternative Gift Market

Alternative Gift Market is Coming!

As Christmas approaches, we are thinking of gifts we will give to friends and relatives. The Alternative Gift Market is coming in December to help you give meaningful gifts. As Christians, we are called to show the love of Christ through our actions of caring for others, and the Alternative Gift Market is a way of giving that provides an opportunity to provide for those in need locally and around the world. Through AGM you may choose from approximately 21 international and six local projects for your gifts, choosing them to match the interests of a friend or family member. It is also a way to encourage children to think about others while helping people around the world.

After choosing from the list of available projects with descriptions given in a catalog, donors select an attractive card to send along with an insert describing the selected project and its impact on the world. Last year, members of Ames churches donated \$20,000 to AGM projects. Local causes included the Bridge Home, Habitat for Humanity, Good Neighbor and Food at First.

Look for the AGM table in the Gathering Space on December 3 and 10 before and after services. The form with the list of projects is available in the church office now through December 10.

Please consider participating in the market by giving an alternative gift to someone on your Christmas list. If you have questions, call Maureen Wilt at (515) 450-4411.

If you are interested in assisting with this program please let us know. We are in need of an organizer for next year.

Helping Our Neighbor

Helping Our Neighbors would like to thank those who attended our “Listening and Learning from our Immigrant and Refugee Neighbors” event on November 12, 2023. We had an attendance of 78 from CUMC and our community.

We were fortunate to hear stories from immigrants and refugees from Honduras, South Sudan, Haiti, Venezuela, and Ukraine, as well as comments from some DACA individuals who received scholarships for their DACA renewal.

Group discussion points on the challenges and actions we can take included: proactively befriend the immigrants and refugees in our community; be a part of a support system; assist with language support including conversations in English; assist with transportation; assist in identifying affordable housing and potential job opportunities; prepare them for job interviews; and introduce them to resources in our community.

Several attendees were shocked at the steps involved and the length of time required to obtain a work permit; our legal system is complicated and restrictive, which adds to the hopelessness and isolation for our immigrants and refugees.

Again, thank you for your interest and caring for our immigrant and refugee friends.



Spotlight on the Helping Our Neighbors group



The current Helping Our Neighbors group at CUMC started in 2019 and was built from earlier efforts of a sanctuary committee started by Jim Shirbroun in early 2017. Following a program at St. Cecelia, “A Civic Academy on Immigration” in the fall of 2019, several of us who attended began to meet to discuss ways we can help and also to be represented at meetings in our community (AIRA, AISP, County Coordination/Community ID card, COVID 19 Emergency Fund, Story County Immi-

grant and Refugee Collaboration) and then share with each other. We welcome anyone interested. We typically meet every 5-6 weeks in the park when weather cooperates, or via zoom. Meetings at this time are in the afternoons. Contact Donna Vandelaar (advand2715@gmail.com) if you wish to join our group.

Again, we welcome your support and interest in assisting our immigrant and refugee friends in connecting and being a vital part of our community.



You are Welcome Here!

Collegiate United Methodist Church and Wesley Foundation welcomes and affirms all persons without regard to gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical or mental ability, marital status, economic condition, or anything else which **threatens to divide God's family.**

The purpose of C/W is to build an inclusive community that invites all people to **experience God's unconditional love, grow in faith, and serve others.**



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