

DECEMBER 2023

Advent Communicator

COLLEGIATE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND WESLEY FOUNDATION



INSIDE YOU WILL FIND

- A message from Pastor Mary
- Advent Sermon Series
- Worship Experiences
- Children and Youth Opportunities
- Advent Special Offering
- Special Events
- And more!

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MARY

Advent and Christmas are times of making memories and recalling memories. We set up the tree, we decorate our homes, schools, and churches; we bake. And for older children and adults, we remember Christmas past: who was with us, where we went, how we gifted and were gifted. All of this weaves us into a fabric of love and support no matter what. This year at Collegiate/Wesley our theme is How Does A Weary World Rejoice? How do we in the midst of the many sorrows and confusions in the world, rejoice in our personal relationships, our fellowship together as a welcoming congregation, our identity as members of the community of Ames, and our certainty of God with us personally and together? We find an answer by taking a look at some of the early Biblical people who also lived in uncertain times and who found joy in their relationships and experiences of God. We find an answer in experiencing together the feeling of purpose and of hope. Because we are with each other in our Collegiate/Wesley community, we can feel hope that we are not alone, that we are a part of something vital. I invite you to join in on our Advent services and programs as we journey to the manger of Bethlehem.

The great testimony of Christmas is that because God came into the world in the baby Jesus on that night long ago, so everyone counts, everyone matters. And ever since the first Christmas, it is appropriate that we ask ourselves and name the names of people who have mattered to us and to place ourselves in the association of these great witnesses to the faith. This, too, is a part of the hope that we can experience. We are surrounded in the present time and in a spiritual time by so great a cloud of witnesses.

What we believe and what we know about love is carried on by us in good and powerful ways and, truth be told, sometimes in broken and limited ways. But we learn again and again as we meet the baby Jesus who has come into the world to be with us that without love we are lost. With love, which as the Bible tells us, comes from God, we are able to create, to be curious, to engage with others and the world, and to feel the grace and acceptance that God gives us through Love. Our hope is founded on this.

On a night long ago, in a stable, under a star of mystery, God's angels sang a song – perhaps it was a lullaby – to put love at the center of our lives. May we hear the song again this year, in our hearts, in our preparations, and in our commitment to find hope amidst the weary world.

“Trust your belovedness. Let it be a protest, an act of resistance, a song of celebration...” (Rev. Sarah Speed).

I look forward to seeing you at Collegiate/Wesley this Advent Season as we live out the Hope that we have been given.

Pastor Mary

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

Starting November 26th



How does a weary world rejoice?

Christ was born into a weary world. King Herod ruled the land with a legacy of ruthlessness. The Romans treated the people of Israel with contempt, imposing harsh taxes and land seizures that forced many into subsistence farming.

Poverty and destitution were pervasive. And yet, Christ was born, bringing good news of great joy for all people. As Advent comes again to a weary world, we ask, “How does a weary world rejoice?” From the opening chapters of Luke’s Gospel, we have found a few answers: we acknowledge our weariness, we find joy in connection, we allow ourselves to be amazed, we sing stories of hope, we make room, we root ourselves in ritual, and most importantly, we trust our belovedness. In the parallel birth stories of Jesus and John, joy arrives—despite trepidation, fear, or grief. In these stories, we find rhythms for rejoicing. As we move through our series, we hope to create space for acknowledging the weariness of our world while celebrating God’s closeness with great joy.

And so, this Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a “thrill of hope” in our hurting world. We will welcome joy—even if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, may we find many ways to rejoice.

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

We acknowledge our weariness

November 26: Advent Candle of Hope.

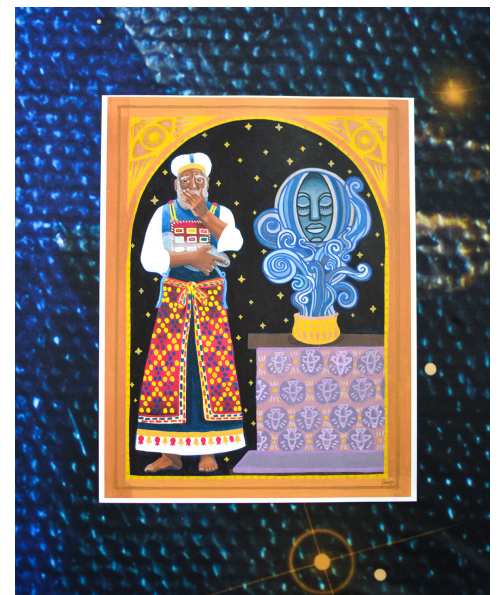
Scripture: Luke 1:1-23 Message: The Promise of Good News

Focus Image: Annunciation to Zechariah

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Luke 1:1-23

Acrylic and ink on wood panel



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



DECEMBER 24TH

In-person, on Facebook, YouTube, or [cwames.org](https://www.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 a.m. Interactive, Intergenerational Family service

7:00 p.m. Traditional Service: Carols, Communion and Candle Lighting
(This service will be live streamed)

11:00 p.m. Service of Lessons and Carols

SPECIAL SERVICES

Children's Christmas Program Sunday, December 17th 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



Christmas Eve Before You Leave Wednesday, December 20th 7:00 pm

An annual opportunity to celebrate Christmas Eve at CW before you leave for the holidays



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.

ADVENT SPECIAL OFFERING

UMCOR- INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE

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 gift cards listed that you can purchase to donate to recipients.



ADVENT SPECIAL EVENTS

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

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.

ADVENT WORKSHOP

The Advent Workshop will be held on Sunday, December 3 from 1:30 to 4:30 in the Annex Auditorium. It's a chance for all ages to make fun Christmas ornaments and small gifts. Each participating family can make and decorate a fresh evergreen wreath. Plus, there will be cookies, frosting, and sprinkles to take home for cookie decorating. Questions, contact Mary Buck (515) 460-4571.



FOOD AT FIRST PASS ALONG PARTY



This year Collegiate Wesley will again be hosting the Food at First Pass Along Party! The event will be on December 9th. Interested in donating? **Items for all ages will be needed such as, coloring books, bath bombs, games, gift cards, scarves, and mittens. Gifts for babies-teens are always in high demand. No clothes or Christmas decorations, please.**

If you have new items to donate our donation days are:

Thursday, Nov. 30th, 5-7:00 pm,

Saturday, December 2nd, 10 am-1:00 pm.

You can drop donations off at the Wesley Hall door.

Questions? Contact Lauren lauren@cwames.org

ADVENT SPECIAL EVENTS

BELLS AND BRASS

Thursday, December 7th 7:30 pm

The Annual Bells and Brass concert will be on Thursday, December 7th at 7:30. Please join the Chancel Handbell Choir and Collegiate Brass in a concert of sacred and secular Christmas music and a chance for everyone to sing some carols and Christmas songs.



ALTERNATIVE GIFTS

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 will also be available in the church office from November 26 to 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.

YOUTH FUNDRAISERS

Homemade Goods!



This Holiday season you can support the Middle School and High School summer service trips in a couple of ways. Purchase Christmas cards! The youth have been making Christmas cards for you to purchase in two different forms. There will be bundles of 6 cards (copies of the original works for sale for \$10 and then specialty cards for sale for \$5/each. You can purchase cards in the gathering space. The other way to support us is by purchasing items from our bake sale on December 17th.