

The
Communicator

January, 2024 Vol. 43 Issue 1

Connecting People



Collegiate United Methodist Church
and Wesley Foundation
Ames, Iowa

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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.

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Cover Pictures:

taken in late December.

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.

February 2024 Communicator Deadline: January 20, 2023

Message from Pastor Mary

by Rev. Dr. Mary Lautzenhiser Bellon

We begin. The year unfolds from its beginning, and as we enter 2024, we do so with an anticipation of things yet to be discovered, revealed or accomplished. As we look at our calendars for the year ahead, we find marker events. Epiphany, the season of lights, or enlightenment, is a marker event in our church calendar. We recognize the weeks between the turning of the year through Ash Wednesday as a time of awakening, of suddenly seeing, of knowing beyond all doubt something that we need to know. Several things we need to know as we begin: we need to know that we are following Christ.

We need to know that God's time is now, that the star of Bethlehem is in the sky, and that Christ's message for our lives remains unchanged: you are loved; you are cared about; God is with you; you are a part of God's great project on earth.



Here at Collegiate/Wesley one thing we know is we believe we can accomplish more together than apart, that we believe God calls us from our solitude into community. We see in this Epiphany Light that, whether we are physically alone or physically together, we are emotionally and spiritually in communion with all of God's people. **We are thus strengthened to do God's work without wavering.**

And we know that when we cannot see the Epiphany Light, we still walk with others who companion us and help us. **We need to know that we can trust ourselves in the darkness because "the light and the dark are the same to me" says the Lord. God is with us.**

In all things Christ reaches out to us, calling us, as John Wesley said, to be full or empty, to have all things, to have nothing. **God is with us in it all. We need to know that we are people of God's covenant,** and that this covenant is carried by us out into the world, into the lives of our families, our friends, our co-workers and our world.

This year in 2024 there are changes afoot that bring excitement and new possibility but also farewells and changing of relationship. You will receive a new senior pastor and I will be entering retirement status. The Appointive Cabinet is working on bringing you a great leader for the next leg of your journey. I am looking forward to spending time more frequently visiting my son in Portland, ME, my daughter and her husband in California, and some other travel adventures with my husband. It will be a year of new beginnings for all of us!

As we come together in worship and service and fellowship, we know that the Epiphany Light which allows **us to see the path, will allow us also to see Christ's face in each other as we continue to look at each other in love.** Let us look long and well in 2024.

Blessings for the New Year,
Pastor Mary

Coming in Worship

December 31, 2023: Theme: How Does a Weary World Rejoice: We Root Ourselves in Ritual.
Scripture: Luke 2: 21-38.

January 7, 2024: Theme: Belovedness. Scripture: Lamentations 3: 22-24; Luke 3: 21-22 NRSV;
Service of Holy Communion

January 14, 2024: Theme: Taken: God Chooses You. Scripture: Ephesians 1:3-13.

January 21, 2024: Theme: Blessed: Entering by the Gate. Scripture: Revelation 22:1-14 NRSV

January 28, 2024: Theme: Blessed, Broken and Broken Open. Scripture: Romans 12:7b-10 NRSV

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.



Christmas Attendance

Event	Attendance	In-Person	Digital
Bells & Brass Concert Thursday, Dec. 7	159		
Children's Program During 10 am worship on Dec. 17	333	205	129
Christmas Eve Before You Leave Wednesday, Dec. 20	49		
Christmas Eve	552	303	249
10 am	179	106	73
7pm	250	145	105
11pm	123	52	71

Pictures From December



Children, Youth and Families



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school will start again on Sunday, January 7th. We are looking forward to more learning and growing in our faith!

No Sunday School over Spring Break on March 10th



THANK YOU

December was a busy one!

- Thank you to everyone who helped make the Children and Youth Christmas Program such a great success! It was wonderful. I hope all of the participants had a great time.
- Thank you to all who donated and purchased from the bake sale and Christmas card fundraiser table. We raised over \$1,000 for our summer service trips!
- Thank you to the youth who made time to attend Meals from the Heartland and package many many meals for those in need!



YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group and our weekly meal will start back again on January 10th

Middle School 6:00-7:00

High School 7:00-8:00

High School Girls Small Group 8:00-9:00

Youth Group Christmas/New Year parties will be on January 10th. Youth are invited to bring new socks, wrapped for our sock exchange, and a snack that starts with the same letter as their first name.

Children, Youth and Families





EPIPHANY SERVICE

details

- Sunday January 7th, 2024
- 3:00 P.M.
- Fort Dodge First United Methodist Church



CONFERENCE EPIPHANY WORSHIP SERVICE

Join Bishop Kennetha and our onference in a powerful Epiphany Service of Commitment and Healing at First United Methodist Church, Fort Dodge, on January 7th at 3 p.m. Embrace the light of Christ as we gather for worship, connecting and committing to the healing radiance God brings. Isaiah 60: "Arise, shine, for your light has come!"

NEW AED's INSTALLED

Three new AED's (Automated External Defibrillators) have been installed in the Church and Annex. These were funded through a 2023 Endowment Grant. One is located in the Gathering Space.



CAT Survey Update

The Church Council had to postpone its review and discussion of the results of the CAT Survey due to Covid 19 in the family of the discussion facilitator. The discussion is now scheduled for January 22. Information will be shared with the CW community following that meeting.

Thank you to all of the individuals who responded to the survey. Our response rate of 153 is outstanding.

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 cwesley.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.



Thank You

Thank you for your generous donations for this year's Advent Special offering. Due to your generosity, we have raised over \$5,500 for UMCOR international disasters focused on Gaza and Israel. Your donations will help fund grants that will serve those impacted by the conflict.



thank you!

FOR ALL OF THE GREAT
GIVING TREE ITEMS FOR
SLEEP IN HEAVELY PEACE!

Volunteer Opportunities and Donations Requested

Sunday, January 7 is Donation Sunday for the Little Food Pantry but donations are welcome any day. Please give as you are able.

- Tuna/Canned meats
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Ravioli/Spaghetti
- Soup (pop tops are best)
- Dry Pasta
- Spaghetti/Tomato Sauce
- Individual sized apple sauce/fruit cups
- Hot and/or cold cereals (oatmeal, cream of wheat, raisin bran, corn flakes)
- Personal Items: Shampoo, Deodorant, Soap



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 increasing 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). Donations should be dropped off when CTW is open: Wednesdays, 2-5pm and the first Saturday of the month, 9am-noon.



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 opportunity to serve are **January 26**. 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

Thank You Notes

Thank you to all who turned out for the Advent Workshop. We had about 90 people, which is the largest turnout since before the pandemic. A huge thank you to Paul Brackelsberg for all his work collecting the evergreens for the wreaths and then helping make 29 wreaths. A big thank you to Paul and Mary Ann Lundy for providing the Black Hills spruce and Mike and Lori Sulzberger for providing the Arborvitae for the wreaths, and Mary Jo Banwart for donating the cookies for cookie decorating. A big thank you to Stephani Scherbart for providing the music. Thank you to my committee of Jill Brand, Dianna Nelson, Megan Schroder, Bonnie Nichols, Sandy Stevenson, Jane Jacobson and Elaine Trinkle. Thank you to all those who volunteered - Brian, Tyler, Sean, Zach, and Dylan Brand, Jamie, Maddi, Elsa and Evelyn Rabe, Steve, Clara and Avis Schroder, Ann Sandine, Lillie Galvin, Mary Ann Lundy, Fran Berger, Janelle Keltgen, Lily Cassady, Barbara Munson, Kitty Lamont, Kris Meinhard, JoAnn Barten, Leah Bigelow, John Jacobson, Stephanie Hamilton, Jerry Nichols, & Philomena and Kalliope Lane. - Mary Buck



Thank you to Mary Buck and Jane Jacobson for taking care of our poinsettias during the Advent and Christmas season. They make sure the plants are watered, they move them from the Sanctuary to the Gathering Space so the poinsettias get sunlight, and they move the plants back to the Sanctuary when we want them to beautify our worship space. This task was a bigger one this year because we had **33 poinsettias ordered, compared to last year's 20. Mary and Jane have quietly done** this for several years. Mary and Jane also give TLC to the Easter flowers. We all appreciate their efforts!

Our Prayers

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- for the life of Rosalynn Carter, who used her position as First Lady to fight the stigma that is associated with mental illness. ~ Tim Garner
- for the wonderful turnout (between volunteers and participants, around 90 people) at the Advent Workshop.
- for the joy of my induction into the Special Olympics Iowa Hall of Fame. ~ Joshua Dobbs
- **for the children's Christmas Program**
- for our church and our wonderful staff. ~ LaRue Clark

Prayers of Concern:

- for the family and friends of Jan and John, who just passed away. ~ LaRue Clark
- for Steve Bellon and his family on the death of his brother, Randy Bellon.
- for my wife and her family as they celebrate the life of her uncle Bruce. ~ Joshua Dobbs
- safe travels for all!
- for LaRue Clark, recovering from a procedure.
- for my son-in-law Kenny as he recovers from surgery. ~ Pastor Mary Bellon



Music at Collegiate/Wesley

by Patrick Gagnon, Director of Music Ministries

My resolution for 2024 is a commitment to write to you each month on a variety of Music and Worship topics. Hopefully this will help you get to know me and what I hope to bring to the Music Ministry here at C/W. This month I will share a bit about myself and what I wish for the near future.

My first instrument is piano. I love to sing. I love to play the organ. I LOVE handbells. I love to teach. I love to direct. **I'm not from here.** I attended Boston University. I graduated in 1998. My degree is in Music Education/Vocal Emphasis. I have played and sung in Baptist, United Methodist, ELCA Lutheran, Catholic, and UCC churches. I have played and sung for temple services. I am Chimes Chair for the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, Iowa Chapter, and have chaired or worked twelve regional Festival/Conferences. I teach K-12 Vocal music. I am married to Jodi. She is the pianist in the house. **She is also the cook, but I'm an able helper.** I prefer to do the laundry and the dishes, but not to put them away. **I'm very interested in vocal pedagogy.** I think that every human can sing, and can get better at singing. I like that in the United Methodist church, the bible is taken seriously, but not literally. Jodi and I love owning our first home. **It's pronounced like "canyon."** Jodi and I never went on a honeymoon. Both of my primary voice teachers were Greek. I ate breakfast, lunch and dinner for a week **at Casey's in Hubbard when I first arrived in 2009 because the appliances hadn't come yet.** The first time the noontime siren went off I hid in the basement for two hours. Having been a church musician, **I'm not sure I could ever not be.** I support Iowa Public Radio. My forehead is growing daily. I own nine black shirts. I am an internal processor.

If you have met me, you have probably already formed an opinion.

Now, YOU! You are hereby invited to join the Collegiate/Wesley Chancel Choir! New members are needed in all sections and although I acknowledge that singing in Chancel is a huge commitment, we need more folx to make that commitment to keep singing into the future. Weekly rehearsals will resume on Wednesday, January 3 at 6:30 pm.

Now, YOU, KIDS!!! It has been so much fun to sing with you before Sunday School every week and we will continue to sing during worship on the Second Sunday of every month. It has also been awesome to direct both the Middle School and High School handbell ensembles. We can always welcome new ringers in both groups. MS bells rehearses at 5:00 every Wednesday starting January 10th and HS bells rehearses every Sunday following worship at 11:15(ish).

Alfred, Lord Tennyson said it best in "In Memoriam: Ring Out, Wild Bells"

*Ring out the old, ring in the new, Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go; Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

Happy New Year, Collegiate/Wesley!





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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