



The CIRCUIT RIDER

DECEMBER 2024

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A Monthly Publication of Solon United Methodist Church

Advent is a season of waiting and planning and preparing for Christmas. Children often wait with excitement for gifts and gatherings and singing. Adults make many preparations to keep traditions alive, and many travel to be with family. Many of us enjoy the decorations and lights and music, and all of the special foods. We make special preparations for both the secular and the religious traditions.

The original Advent was a season of waiting for the Jewish people. The Jewish people lived under Roman occupation, and did not have the benefits of being Roman citizens. They longed for a Messiah, someone who would re-establish God's rule and set them free from Roman rule.

Mary and Joseph waited for the birth of their child, and then were told they needed to travel to Bethlehem, when Mary was late in her pregnancy, in order to pay taxes to Rome!

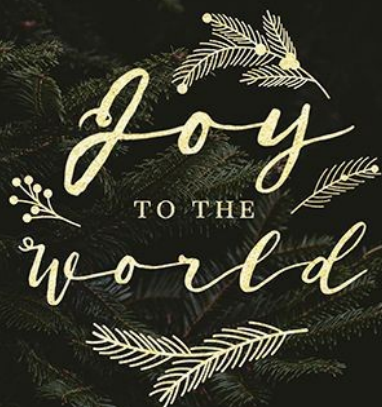
In our series both for worship and for the Advent study, we will be referencing and using the book, [On the Way to Bethlehem](#), by Rob Fuquay. The series focuses on different locations related to the story of Jesus' birth. First we visit Rome, a place of longing. Then we go to Jerusalem, a place of waiting. Then we go to Nazareth, a place of simplicity far from the centers of power, where Mary and Joseph lived. Then we travel to Bethlehem, a place of humility, with the focus on shepherds and a stable, but also the promised birthplace of a new king from King David's line, who would set the Jewish people free. Come celebrate Jesus' birth at 4PM or 5:30PM on Christmas Eve!

The Sunday morning Wesley class and the Monday evening Bible study class (beginning December 1 and 2) will both be using the Advent study books to guide their learning and conversation. If you are not able to join either of those, there will also be copies of a guided journal available for daily Advent devotions related to the study.

Or for a different study, but still related to the theme of travel, our Iowa United Methodist Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai will be leading an online Advent study on Tuesday evenings, entitled Migration, Immigration, and Beloved Community. You can learn more, or find a registration link here. We remember, too, that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were all refugees who had to travel to Egypt to keep Jesus safe from being killed by Herod, who was anxious about the birth of a new king who might challenge his power.

Pastor Peggy

The Circuit Rider



Music Ministry



It is Advent!! Yay! I finally get to play out of my many “Christmas” books. This always makes me giddy. I love to sit down at the piano and play through my books of holiday music. While I, admittedly, have a ton of music, nothing brings me as much joy as these books. I think this is a common sentiment for many of us.

As soon as we hear the holiday melodies in the department stores, it gives us a little extra lift in our step. Christmas has a common theme of joy in our culture. It is a thread that brings so many of us a sense of warmth and often includes thoughts of coming together as a family.

I am very thoughtful about choosing music for our services. I have all the holiday songs from all three of our hymnals mapped out on Excel sheets. I go through and try to choose as many of them as possible with the hopes that everyone’s favorites will be sung sometime during the season! I cross reference the scriptures and themes for each week of services to decide where will be the best location for each. Nothing is left to chance! I know that we each have hymns that have special meaning to us and I want to make this a special time for each of you. So, I invite you to attend all our Advent and Christmas services so that you can sing all your favorites! We also have time set aside after the Wednesday evening meal on December 11 to sing carols and finish with hot cocoa. Come for dinner and stay to sing!

Chancel Choir will sing on December 1 a special piece titled “Prepare!”, to kick off the Advent season. On December 8, Celebration Bells will perform “Angels We Have Heard on High” and “Christmas Lullaby”. On December 15, Chancel Choir will “Songs of the Promise”. Both groups are working on difficult music and pulling out all the stops to present some beautiful pieces for you! Christmas Eve will be wonderful, as always, with lots of music – both carols as well as special music. It is a busy and full month and you won’t want to miss a single event!

Wishing you all love, peace, and music during this season of Advent and Christmas!

Angie



NOVEMBER 2024 WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

9:00 AM

| | |
|-------------|----|
| NOVEMBER 3 | 77 |
| NOVEMBER 10 | 59 |
| NOVEMBER 17 | 66 |
| NOVEMBER 24 | 68 |

Worship Schedule

December 1-Communion,
Scripture: Romans 8:18-25; Luke 2:1-3
Msg: Rome: A Place of Longing

December 8
Scripture: Romans 12:9-18; Luke 1:5-17
Msg: Jerusalem: A Place of Waiting

December 15
Scripture: Roans 15:12-13; Luke 1:26-38
Msg: Nazareth: A Place of Simplicity

December 22-Children’s Pageant
Scripture: Romans 13:8-11; Luke 2:1-14
Msg: Bethlehem: A Place of Humility

December 24
4:00 PM and 5:30 PM
A Service of Lessons and Carols
and Candlelight
Nativity Figures Brought Forward by Children

December 29
Scripture: TBA
Msg: TBA
Guest Preacher, Phil Kakacek

Come Worship With Us

May your Christmas be filled
with laughter and prosperity.



Solon's Annual **CHRISTMAS** TREE WALK & ARTS FESTIVAL

..... ❄️

**SOLON UNITED METHODIST
FAMILY LIFE CENTER**

December 7, 2024
From 10AM to 3PM

..... ❄️

Area Arts & Vendors
Silent Auction
Craft & Bake Sale
Scavenger Hunt & Pun Trees
Homemade Soup,
Sandwiches, Pies

..... ❄️

SPECIAL GUEST
Santa from 12:30-2:30PM

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Greetings,

As our month of November comes to a close we focus our thoughts on how grateful we are of God's gift to us, his son, Jesus.

Pre-K through 4th graders learned about David this past month. Our students helped act out the story of David and played games that challenged their ability to use the talent God gave David. We also talked about how God is always with us when we use the talent that is given to us. We have made crafts to remind us that God cares for us like David took care of his sheep. Next month we will be learning about Advent and Jesus' birth. On December 22nd, during the service our students from pre-k-8th grade will be presenting a short play called "The Night that was Different" by Sharilyn Adair and performing music that they have been working very hard on. Come and see what our students have learned!

Our 5th through 8th grade students are learning about how the Bible can help them through their life's journey as they face some difficult questions about their faith. They learned that going to church is important even though God is with them always. They also learned that they too are a very important part of the church. We talked with the pre-school-4th grade class on how important children are in the church. All the students knew that they are the next generation to keep the church growing.

We have some great news! Angie Bransky-Grecian is taking over the music part of the student's curriculum. The students will have music right after Sunday school in their own music room. Angie has some awesome ideas for our students and we look forward to hearing great things from Angie and the students. We would like to thank our high schoolers who moved the piano to the new music room.

Our confirmation class continues to learn more about their faith's journey through reading the Bible and talking about their journey. They learned about the Wesleyan Heritage, the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, and the Wesleyan way of life. They also learned about important people who started and grew the Methodist faith. They met with their mentors and discussed what they learned the previous week. They worked with their mentors on how to use the Wesleyan Quadrilateral to solve hypothetical situations. Several of our students visited the New Creations International Church and explored their faith by attending a church different than their own-in the African American Tradition. They will also have a tree in the Christmas Tree Walk "Tis the Season". Come and spend a few minutes and see the tree.

As we look towards the Christmas season we may be reminded that Christmas is more than shiny tinsel, presents, bright colorful lights, and cookies. It is the season to be celebrating the wonderful gift God has given us, Jesus.

*Peace,
Dee*



Jesus
IS THE
Reason
FOR THE
Season

COCOA & CAROLS

On Wednesday December 11th, be sure to join us for Family Meal at 5:30 PM in Fellowship Hall...and then stay for Cocoa & Carols!

We'll join together to sing some holiday favorites and finish up in Fellowship Hall with some Cocoa!

Come together for a night to truly sit back and enjoy the holiday season with your church family!



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Please join us for Christmas Eve worship services at 4PM and 5:30PM.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

We are offering the opportunity for anyone who wishes to donate towards the poinsettias for Christmas Eve to do so in honor or memory of a loved one. In the past, we have found that many people, for various reasons, don't actually want to take a poinsettia home. So while we continue to actually purchase a limited number of poinsettias, we want to offer additional people the chance to donate. Please indicate when you sign up whether you want to actually take a poinsettia home after the Christmas Eve service (if we have some available).

All donations in memory or honor of a loved one will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin for the 4PM & 5:30PM services.

Any donations received above the actual cost of the poinsettias will go towards a discretionary fund for Pastor Peggy to be able to offer small amounts of assistance to people who come to the church asking for support with food, gas, or other immediate needs.



Adult Bible Study –Mondays 5:30PM

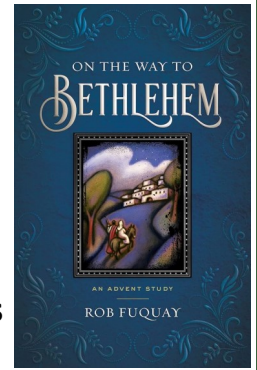


SUMC's Adult Bible Study group meets on Monday nights in Fellowship Hall at 5:30PM!

This group will be starting an Advent Study from the book, *On the Way to Bethlehem* by Rob Fuquay, on Monday December 2nd.

We'd love to have you join!
Contact the church to see how to get your copy of the book.

Retired Pastor, Jill Mack leads this group.



HS Youth Group –Wednesdays 6:15PM

The high school youth group is finishing our four-week study of "Dilemmas." We're looking at an Advent Bible study and a study of the book of Revelation, which the youth requested. I'm sure we'll have a lively discussion!

The youth are very involved in volunteering as Sunday School helpers, assisting with painting signs for the Christmas Tree Walk and continue to help with serving the Wednesday night meal and cleaning up afterwards. Be sure to tell them thanks when you see them!

We're looking forward to the return of Super Bowl Subs which will be a fundraiser for next summer's mission trip and will consider another coffee cake sale before Easter.

We have an energetic and engaged group, with five boys and two girls attending regularly. Please encourage any high school students you know to attend!

Please join us after the family meal!



Family Meals

We serve 65-75 people every Wednesday including diners who eat and share in fellowship plus many who stop by and take food to go. Several volunteers help prepare, serve, and clean up after the meal each week 5:30-6:00. Free will donations keep this community event supported. Anyone can come –those with food insecurity, those who wish not to cook, those who participate in Wednesday evening church events that follow the meal, or those who just come weekly to enjoy the food and conversation vibe! Generous people give so others may participate! Wondering how you can get involved?

1. Come eat
2. Make a dessert
3. Make a donation of food or money
4. Help clean or serve.
5. Take a meal to someone
6. Spread the word!



Matthew 25:35

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.

Due to the holidays, there will be no meal on November 27th, December 24th, or December 31st.

Weekly Worship Volunteers

Do you want to volunteer and aren't sure where to start? Volunteering on Sunday morning when you are already here may just be the place! You can check out ways to volunteer through the link below. Some of the positions include: being a greeter, providing refreshments and serving during fellowship time, as well as being an acolyte for the kids and more! Click [HERE](#) to view the online sign up. You can also sign up on the clipboard that is passed around during worship on Sundays!

If you have questions, please call the office at 319-624-2288, or email at soloniaumc@gmail.com



Toys for Tots

SUMC will again be collecting for Toys for Tots

Toys for Tots is a program run by the United States Marine Corps Reserve which distributes toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy them gifts for Christmas. The program was founded in 1947 by reservist Major Bill Hendricks.

During 2022 Johnson and Washington Counties of Iowa distributed 6,945 toys and supported 3,534 children. You can make a difference this holiday!

The donation bin is in the Narthex! We will collect unwrapped toys through December 8th. Please consider donating to this great cause!



The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.

-Proverbs 11:25

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

The UWF will hold their annual luncheon on December 4 at 1 o'clock in the fellowship hall. Sherry Lohman, former associate pastor, will present the program. All members will bring a covered dish and guests are welcome.

Anyone needing a ride to the luncheon may contact Barb Kalm 319-321-4078 or Shirley Anderson 319-541-0732.

There will be no January meeting, and the next meeting for the group will be February 5 at 1:30 PM.



United
Women
in Faith



UNITED METHODIST MEN

Join us every Saturday morning at 6:00 am at the Family Life Center. The SUMC men are studying the Bible. If you would like to attend, call Mike Turner at (319)624-2061.

United in Faith (UWF) Missions Completed –November

Mercy One and Unity Point Waterloo Hospitals

On Friday, November 1, an urgent UWF Workday was planned to create pillows for hospitals located in Waterloo. These were delivered when the Book Bags were delivered to the In-Gathering. Mercy One Waterloo Medical Center and UnityPoint Health – Allen Hospital were the recipients of 33 heart pillows and 13 port pillows each. Special thank you to those who helped at this last minute scheduled event!

Chains Interrupted

At our UWF meeting in November we were blessed to have a representative from Chains Interrupted to present what their organization does.



Vision

Chains Interrupted is a nonprofit fighting for the freedom from trafficking and exploitation in Eastern Iowa, the U.S., and the world.

Mission

Chains Interrupted is a driving force that empowers communities and contends for the freedom of youth from human trafficking and exploitation through Awareness, Prevention, and Advocacy.

In response to a growing problem and a community needs assessment, we now focus on youth through our three pillars:

*We raise awareness of all forms of human trafficking through our current 17 (and growing!) educational programs, print material, booths, parades and many other events.

*Chains Interrupted is increasing efforts in prevention through strengthening our School, High-Risk Youth, and Survivor Guidance Programs, as well as enhancing partnerships with community youth mentorship programs.

*Our advocacy team provides support to youth survivors of human trafficking, and is implementing a new program to equip organizations working with youth to identify and assist those who have experienced this specific form of victimization. Through our BRYX (Building Resilience in Youth against exploitation) program, our advocacy team partners with organizations working with youth to provide education and training for staff equipping them to identify and assist those who have been impacted by human trafficking. This program works to fill in the gaps and provide resources for restoration care for those 18-24 years of age.

UWF donated products to the organization valued at \$145 and a \$50 cash donation to help this organization continue their work.

Bridgehaven

There were 13 baby gifts created that contained receiving blanket, bibs and burp pads for new mothers who are supported by Bridgehaven in Cedar Rapids. Thanks to Coleen Pumphrey for these requested gifts.



FINANCE

From the Finance Committee

The 2025 stewardship campaign has ended but a few pledge cards continue to trickle in. We are happy with the trickle! Every card we receive indicating a pledge is eminently more accurate than any estimate of giving we would otherwise have to make.

The first report after the conclusion of the campaign indicated the number of giving units pledging had decreased, but the amount pledged for 2025 was within \$3,000 of equaling the pledged amount for 2024. This was considered to be good news as we were comparing a preliminary figure for 2025 against a 'final-final' 2024 number.



The 'good news' has gotten better! Updated campaign totals show giving units responding to this year's campaign is just one less than last year but the amount pledged is \$172,048, an increase of \$6,600 over last year!

With just two months remaining, a conservative estimate of 2024 giving for the whole year indicates gifts received for the year is quite likely to exceed 2023 giving. If this does, in fact, occur, 2024 would be the first year of increase in year over year giving since 2018. Now, the amount given in 2018 is considerably more than expected for this year, but this year's results are moving in the right direction!

We are all aware of the budget challenges SUMC is facing. The indicated giving for 2025 will not fully meet these challenges but it is clearly moving in the right direction. Thank you for your continued support of the programs of this church.

JANITORIAL UPDATE

We Have a New Cleaning Service!

We began with a new cleaning service at the end of November: The Cleaning Crew.

George Volk and Cory Youngblut will be doing most of their work during the day on Mondays and Fridays. Know that there will be new faces around, and feel free to greet them if you see them around.



In Our Prayers

Ivan Hasselbusch had cancer in his lung that metastasized to a rib, and radiation treatment that worked very well on his lung, did not work on the rib. He is contemplating chemotherapy, asks for guidance in discernment, and support in his healing journey.

Gloria Bulechek is home now after her hip surgery. She would be glad to receive cards.

Kris McAtee as she continues to recover from her foot infection.

Connie Koeppen for recovery from illness.

Darcy Miller asks for prayers for her friend Val, who recently had liver surgery herself, and her daughter had her tonsils removed, and her husband just knee replacement surgery.

Betsy Saupe was in the hospital for being severely anemic, home recovering now.

Roma Pearl and her family on the recent death of her sister-in-law Sharon

Darcy Miller asked for prayers for her family, after the death of her brother-in-law Phil Short.

Family of Rita Ann Brannaman, who died recently. She was very active in the Solon schools

Leaders in our congregation.

Our District Superintendent, Rev. Brian Oliver, who was here with us one Sunday.

Our Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai.

Ministry of the other UM churches in our Iowa City area circuit..

All who lost family members, homes, and more from the recent hurricanes, and for those who are responding to those in need of help.

Prayers for all the places in the world where there is war, violence, hunger, fear, and poverty.

Prayers for Jeanne and Wilbur Erhart's son Tom, who now has a diagnosis for his health issues.

Darcy Miller's daughter Tara who has shingles.

Verlee Lauderbaugh, had hip surgery, and is recovering at home.

Dan and Cathy Bogg's son-in-law in California is getting treatment for epilepsy, and was not be able to attend the family wedding.

Ed Haury is in a lot of pain.

Kent Connelly passed away in November. Our prayers are with Diana and their family. At this time no services are planned.

Mandy Dyer's step-grandmother in Indiana died recently. Our prayers are with Mandy and her family

Al Hulse's brother Bill passed away recently in Des Moines. Our prayers are with Al and his family.

Prayers for our nation as we move forward after the elections.

Pastor Enna and Grace UMC in Tiffin.

Barb Kalm's niece, going through cancer treatment.

Sue Wilkinson's friend, Janan Geick's, mother Cheryl. Hospitalized after a fall, in care center for rehab. Also has dementia, so very confused.

Darcy Miller's friend, Bill Michler, who is having eye treatments.

Carrie Schmidt, and her parents Karen and Kevin, as Carrie's cancer has spread to her brain.

Amanda Vollbrecht's student who had their thyroid removed due to cancer.

Prayers and gratitude for all veterans who have offered their service.

Rejoices & Thanksgiving

Ruth Spieker and Neil Webster shared the joy of the birth of a granddaughter: Elliot Webster

Al Hulse who celebrated his birthday!

Connie Railsback shared gratitude for the mission work of the United Women in Faith. They made 170 book bags for the mission ingathering, and many heart pillows for two hospitals in Waterloo.

Dan and Cathy Boggs' son got married!

The Madrid girls cross country team, with Sue Wilkinson's daughter as coach, came in second in the state.

The Mt. Vernon girls' volleyball team, with Dolfi Kalm as coach, won the state championship.

Phil thanked Pastor Enna for being with us Norma Novak expressed joy that their grandson, Lou, is engaged.

Hal Kleinsmith expressed joy for Selma's senior recital and her last day of cheer for football at Wartburg.

Nadine Sojka shared joy that their grand daughter Alyssa is pregnant.

The opportunity to gather with family.

Liam Gilroy's birthday on November 24th.

All of Pastor Peggy's heart tests have come out fine after her ER visit.

December Birthdays

| | |
|-----------------|-------|
| MOTTINGER, Dina | 12/01 |
| HANSEN, Denny | 12/03 |
| STRANG, Kevin | 12/03 |
| WHEELER, Tim | 12/04 |
| Miller, Paul | 12/06 |
| RUFF, Nathaniel | 12/08 |
| LOCKE, Ryan | 12/11 |
| PROFFITT, Helen | 12/11 |
| TURNER, Mike | 12/12 |
| Hawker, Krew | 12/14 |
| Moses, Janeen | 12/14 |
| LEIGHTON, Jim | 12/17 |
| GRUBER, Mary | 12/18 |
| WEETMAN, David | 12/18 |
| SWAN, Gretchen | 12/20 |
| DURR, Ellie | 12/21 |
| WEARS, Irene | 12/24 |
| HESS, Thelia | 12/25 |
| OWEN, Lexi | 12/25 |
| BARK, Jeanne | 12/30 |
| OAKES, Natalie | 12/31 |
| Miller, Nathan | 12/31 |
| SWAN, Jeff | 12/31 |



Prayer Requests

The SUMC family wants to support and encourage you throughout your time of need. If you have a prayer request, please fill out the Prayer Request card located in the pew, and place it in the offering plate during worship. If you would like to add your prayer request to our church-wide prayer

Birthday Announcements

Do you have a birthday in this month but don't see your birthday listed? Contact the Church at soloniaumc@gmail.com. Be sure to give your month, day, and year. We need your birth year to be able to enter in the software.



**SOLON UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**
122 North West St., Solon, IA 52333

DECEMBER CIRCUIT RIDER

STANDARD MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 4
Solon, IA 52333

Return Service Requested

*Making disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation
of our world*

Rev. Peggy Garrigues, Lead Pastor 319-855-7911
pastorpeggy@soloniaumc.org
Angie Grecian-Bransky, Music Director
Todd Bransky, Handbell Choir Director
Dee Swartzendruber, Christian Education Director
Lindy Hopp, Office Administrator
Ivan Hasselbusch, Treasurer
Lisa Hilton, Security



Sunday Schedule
9:00 AM—Worship
9:00 AM —Sunday School
10:20 AM —Adult Sunday School

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
December 24th 4:00 & 5:30 PM

Church Phone: (319) 624-2288
Address: 122 North West St., Solon, IA 52333
Website: <https://soloniaumc.churchtrac.com/>
Facebook: Solon United Methodist Church—Iowa
Instagram: soloniaumc