

# The Chimes

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 2024



## From Our Pastor...

As we journey through the sacred season of Advent, I'm reminded of the hope and wonder of Advent to reflect on the miraculous story of God stepping into our world.

Lately, I've updated our church website. This new platform reflects the vitality of our ministry, offering easier access to information about upcoming events, ministries, and ways to connect. It's a resource designed to help us share the love of Christ far and wide, and I encourage you to explore it. Please visit the website at [sterlingwesley.org](http://sterlingwesley.org).

While watching video clips on "Ministry Galleries," I was grateful for how God has walked us through challenging times, including the Pandemic. Through it all, our congregation has remained steadfast in our commitment to love God and one another. You have demonstrated radical hospitality, profound care, and a willingness to embrace the needs of our community. These efforts remind me that we are not just a congregation but a vibrant, living testament to God's love. Please visit our website and see our past, present, and future.

Our calendar for December is filled with opportunities to worship and celebrate:

- **Children's Christmas Program & Ugly Sweater Sunday on December 15:** Come for joy, laughter, and creativity.

## Church Events

Tue/.Thur. -*Exercise class*

@ 4:00 PM @ Fellowship Hall

Tues.: Fiber Group @ 2-3:30 PM

Wed.: Bible Study @ 9:30 am

Sat.: *Men's Bible Study* @ 8:00am  
@ Fireside Room

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12/1 & 12/8 Children's Christmas Program Practice

12/5: *Greeting Card Ministry*  
@ 9:30AM Fellowship Hall

12/15: Children's Christmas Program  
Ugly Sweater Sunday

12/19: Ladies Luncheon @ 11:30 AM  
@ A's Kitchen ( Sterling)

12/21: Blue Christmas Service @ 7PM

12/24: *Christmas Eve Services*  
@ 7PM & 11 PM

12/25: Merry Christmas!!

**1/1/2025 - Happy New Year!!**

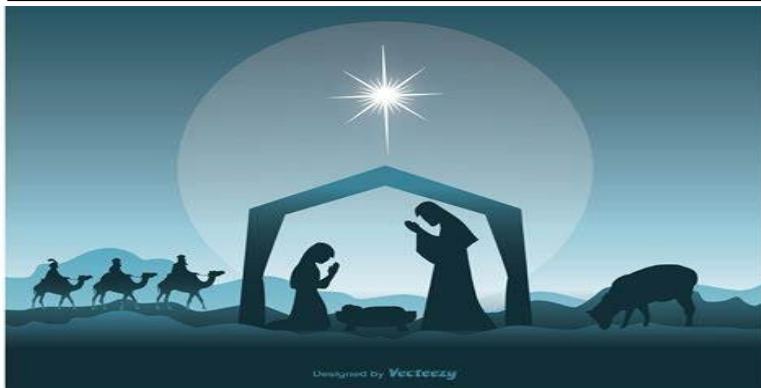
1/5: Path Forward, Day of Grace  
after the 10 am service

- **Blue Christmas Service on December 21:** A space of quiet reflection and healing for those who find the holidays difficult.
- **Christmas Eve Candlelight Services at 7 pm and 11 pm:** Join us as we welcome the Light of the World with candles, carols, and the timeless story of Christ’s birth.

As we come together in worship and fellowship, let us remember the true meaning of Christmas. Christmas is God’s love letter—a message of grace, hope, and a profound invitation. Through the birth of Jesus, God calls us to know God’s love deeply and to live as the people we are designed to be: bearers of light, love, and joy in a world that desperately needs it.

This Advent, may you find moments to pause, reflect, and marvel at the miracle of Emmanuel – God with us. May our hearts overflow with the joy and hope Christ brings into the world.

Peace in Christ,  
Rev. Dr. Paul H. Lee



## Birthdays



- Dec. 1 JJ Campbell
- Dec. 2 Derek Fitzanko, Coralee Jacobs
- Dec. 4 Emily Schwingle
- Dec. 12 Kay Clark
- Dec. 13 Sue Morris, Julie VanAusdal
- Dec. 15 Luther Stutzman
- Dec. 16 Nick Ceruzzi
- Dec. 18 Zephan Drew
- Dec. 19 Chad Duncan
- Dec. 22 Elliot Noble, Sally Unterzuber
- Dec. 23 Elaine Hilger
- Dec. 24 Lenna Drew
- Dec. 27 Sarah Rodriguez, Sierra Sotelo
- Dec. 30 Mallory Osborn, Lacey Young, Sandra Minor
- Dec. 31 Maddux Osborn

## December Worship Schedule

- Dec. 1 First Sunday of Advent  
Micah 5:2, Matthew 2: 1-2  
Who’s the Child to You?
- Dec. 8 Second Sunday of Advent  
Matthew 1:20b-21, Luke 2:8-12  
Christ’s Title: Savior
- Dec. 15 Third Sunday of Advent  
8 AM John 1:1-5, 14 - Incarnation  
10 AM Christmas Program
- Dec. 22 Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Matthew 1:20-23, Hebrew 1: 1-3  
Incarnation: Emmanuel
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Service at  
10 AM, 7PM & 11PM
- Dec. 29 First Sunday after Christmas  
Beth Wicks

## Anniversaries

- Dec. 11 Rich & Sue Morris
- Dec. 12 Roger & Nancy Wait
- Dec. 16 Darrin & Amy Driscoll
- Dec. 23 Toby & Heather Johnson
- Dec. 28 Lowell & Coralee Jacobs,  
Greg & Chris Gallentine
- Dec. 31 Rick & Karen Palmer





We had a sacred time of **All Saints Sunday** to honor and remember the lives of those who have gone before us, celebrating faith and the legacy they leave behind.



We honored our Veterans with heartfelt gratitude on **Veterans Sunday** for their courage, sacrifice, and service to our community and country, enabling us to enjoy peace, safety, and security in our lives.

(Picture after the 10 am service)

## Salvation Army Bell Ringing: Total Collected Amount: \$350.02





## Missions Corner

**Thank you** for your contributions to **Loose Coins** in the month of **November**. We were able to raise 172.71 for **FISH Food Pantry**

**Thanksgiving envelopes** also contributed \$325.00 to the **FISH** ministry with your generous donations!

The **Thanksgiving Baskets** ministry provided additional funds of \$ 1341.00 that was enough for **38 Baskets** for the Township to purchase meals for the community!

**Loose Coins** for **December** is **Loaves & Fishes**

Christmas Eve & Christmas Envelopes is **Loaves & Fishes/UMCOR Disaster Relief Fund**

Fifth Sunday in December is **Native American Ministries**

**December** we will be collecting **Shampoo** for pantries.

## Church Finance Report

	September, 2024	October, 2024	Year to Date (by Oct)
<b>Offering (Income)</b>	<b>\$15,025</b>	<b>\$11,301</b>	<b>\$160,096</b>
<b>Expense</b>	<b>\$17,342</b>	<b>\$18,977</b>	<b>\$186,583</b>
<b>+/-</b>	<b>-\$2,317</b>	<b>-\$7,677</b>	<b>-\$26,487</b>

## Announcements

Wesley's Greeting Card Ministry will meet Thursday, December 5th at 9:30 in Fellowship Hall to prepare and send cards. Please join us!



The Missions Committee would like to thank the congregation for all their support for Loose Coins, 5th Sundays, special appeals and all our projects for this year, you have been wonderful giving your time, talents and financial support. A extra thank you to all those who rang the bell for the Salvation Army, the total will be made known in January.

Hello Lunch Ladies,

Our next lunch will be Dec. 19th at 11:30 at A's Kitchen in (Rock Falls )

Come and enjoy a festive time.

I will e-mail closer to the time for reservations.

Beth Mathew



## Thank You

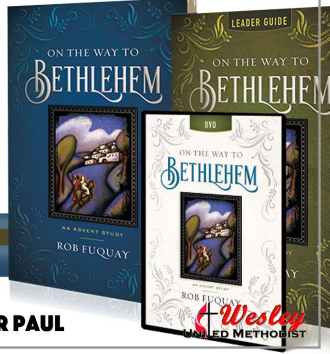
A **BIG** Thank you to anyone who sent me a Birthday card. Love all of you!!!

Mary Anne Batten

**Happy 90th Birthday Mary Anne!!!**

Love your Wesley Family

**ADVENT BIBLE STUDY**  
**WEDNESDAY 9:30 AM**  
**STARTING ON NOV. 20**



**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS,  
PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE OR PASTOR PAUL**

**Advent Bible Study**

Prepare your heart for Christmas by joining our Wednesday Advent Bible Study as we journey through the book *On the Way to Bethlehem*. Together, we'll explore the stories and lessons of Advent, deepening our understanding of God's promises and the hope found in the birth of Christ.

**New Membership Class**

Are you interested in learning more about our church and becoming a member? Join our New Membership Class, where we'll explore our church's mission, beliefs, and opportunities to grow in faith and service. This class is a great way to ask questions, connect with others, and take the next step in your faith journey.



**Christmas Program on Dec. 15 (Sun)**

Celebrate the joy of the season with Children's Christmas Program! Watch as our children bring the story of Jesus' birth to life through songs, readings, and a heartwarming performance that will fill your heart with the wonder of Christmas.



**Ugly Sweater Sunday on Dec. 15 (Sun)**

Join us the Sunday after Christmas for Ugly Sweater Sunday - a fun and festive way to celebrate the season together. Wear your most creative, colorful, or downright outrageous Christmas sweater and enjoy a lighthearted time of worship and fellowship. Let's share laughs, memories, and the joy of Christ.







## Blue Christmas on Dec. 21 (Sat)

For many, the Christmas season can bring feelings of loss, loneliness, or hardship. Blue Christmas offers a quiet, contemplative space for reflection, healing, and hope. Through scripture, prayer, and music, we will come together to acknowledge our struggles and find comfort in God's abiding love and peace.

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Experience the wonder of Christmas at our Christmas Eve Candlelight Services (at 7 pm and 11 pm). Join us for a sacred evening of scripture, carols, and the glow of candlelight as we celebrate the birth of Christ, the Light of the World.



## A Path Forward: A Day of Grace (Jan.5)

You're invited to "A Path Forward: A Day of Grace," our Annual Sterling Wesley Workshop. We will focus on embracing God's grace as we explore new ways to grow in faith, serve others, and strengthen our church community. Let's journey forward in grace together.

## Job Openings:

We are looking for three important roles.

Please contact the Staff-Parish team or Pastor Paul if you are interested or if you know someone who is interested in the position.



# Worship helpers for December

## December 8am

Door Greeter(s)	Usher/Acolytes	Liturgist
12//1 Tony McCombs	Katie McCombs Rebecca / Shannon	Nancy Pitsch Lily Wetzel
12/8 Rita Smith	Rebecca / Shannon -bulletins & Rita help pass offering plate	Rory Smith
12/15 Rory Smith	Rita Smith Rebecca /Shannon	Nancy Pitsch
12/22 Nancy Pitsch	Nancy Pitsch Rebecca /Shannon	Jean Moe
12/29 Renee/Lynn	Steve Downes	Mary Downes

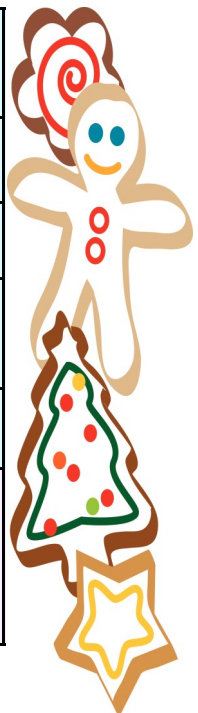


## December 10AM

Door Greeter (s)	Usher/Acolytes	Liturgist	Matthew Meetings
12//1 Eric Allen Elias Halverson	Jaxson Williams Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	James Allen	Nancy Pitsch/ Ellie <b>Practice program</b> <b>Communion</b>
12/8 Bob & Cheryl Allen	Andy Pitsch Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Eric Allen	Jamie Schwingle Ellie/Emily <b>Practice program</b>
12/15 Frank & Janne Rausa	Remy & Jovie Flick (Acolytes) Steve Lopez, Bill Parker, Andy Pitsch & Nancy Pitsch Usher	Aaron Marken	Aaron & Devon Flick Nora/Carlisle/ Ellie <b>Xmas Program</b>
12/22 Justin & Kala Allen	Eric & James Allen Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Jaxson Williams	No Class
12/29 James Allen	Jaxson Williams & Eric Allen Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Justin Allen	No Class

## Advent Scripture Readers/ Candle Lighters 2024

		8am Reader/ Candle Lighters	10AM Reader/ Candle Lighters
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday - Hope	Dec 1 <sup>st</sup>	Jean Moe, Sue Reese	Frank & Janne Rausa
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday – Love	Dec 8 <sup>th</sup>	Greg, Chris Gallentine,	VanAusdal Family
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday -JOY	Dec 15 <sup>th</sup>	Larry Schuchard Jan Glover	Castaneda Family
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday – Peace	Dec 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Tony/Katie McCombs Family	
Christmas EVE Christ Candle	Dec 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>7pm Service</b> Justin, Kala, James, Eric Allen Jaxson Williams	<b>11PM</b> Graves Family



## Wesley United Methodist Church

2200 16<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Sterling, IL 61081

### RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wesley United Methodist Church

Phone: (815) 625-1968

Website: [www.sterlingwesley.org](http://www.sterlingwesley.org)

Email: [office@sterlingwesley.org](mailto:office@sterlingwesley.org)

### *Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors*

Join us for in-person Sunday services

8:00 am and 10:00 am

We will continue to Livestream worship

on Facebook at 10 a.m. Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/SterlingWesleyUMC>

## Mission Corner

Wesley has always been a mission-minded church. The purpose of this space is to keep the congregation informed of our various mission efforts.

We currently are receiving:

- December's collection for local pantries is **shampoo**.
- Travel-sized toiletries
- **Loose coins** to benefit **Loaves & Fishes** the month of **December**.
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Envelopes is **Loaves & Fishes/UMCOR Disaster Relief Fund**