



Garner United Methodist Church

885 Maben Ave., Garner, IA 50438

Rev. Kristin W. Peters – On Parental Leave until Dec. 24

Church Office Hours: 9-2, M-Th., Phone 641-923-2191, Email: garnerumc@comm1net.net

GUMC is a community of ordinary people seeking to put into practice the extraordinary love of God.

Guest Message: On Christmas. . .

by Kevin Sweers

Christmas greetings to you and yours as we move into Advent and approach Christmas celebrations with our church family!

As Pastor Kristin enjoys a few more weeks on parental leave, you get one more newsletter article from me. Speaking of, she asked me to remind everyone they can pick up their Congregational Advent Devotional, lovingly penned by many of you for 2023, on Dec. 3 if you requested a print copy, or watch your email in-boxes for your digital copy as we near the end of November.



I will confess that I told Allyson how “Christmas” seemed like a pretty daunting essay topic for me. Who am I to try to add to the countless theological and musical and cultural messages we have all received on what is colloquially called “the most wonderful time of the year?” I could tell you about my own family traditions—about trips to my grandmother’s home in Florida or about begging to have sleepovers with my cousins when we returned to the cold—but you have your own memories and family stories to reflect on when the holiday season rolls around.

Speaking of the holiday season, I was part of a call last week with someone who declared they liked Christmas cards because they were a “Christmas person and not ashamed to say it.” It was slightly uncomfortable in a work setting, and because most of us on the call were probably “Christmas people” as well, the statement felt a little more political than Christian to be honest. I’m not going to settle or *attempt to settle* the recurrent cultural debate on what is the most appropriate greeting to offer in December. To be honest, I get Christmas greetings from people who mean it in the secular way that grates on my nerves, and I’m sure I’ve gotten a Happy Hanukkah at one point or another. My general conceptualization is that someone appears to be wishing me well and that I should do the same and go on with my business.

When I say “Merry Christmas,” though, as a Christian, I hope the meaning of that is somehow conveyed beyond the way that the phrase is used by people of all faiths or of no faith at all. I hope that I am communicating the blessing that God gave to us and the truly awesome, celebratory nature of that event. You know me; I’ll probably go back to music to try and make sense of these things. I don’t know if John Wesley really told his brother that he could sing religion into people faster than it could be preached, but I like to think he did. The piece that comes to me in closing notes is that “They’ll know we are Christians by our love,” so maybe that is how I will reconcile my feelings about the whole question of “Merry Christmas.”

May we take the gift of Christ this Christmas and extend it beyond the doors of our own church and our own homes to share God’s gift of love today and every day!



Worship Tech Assistants: Jill Blank, Stan Isvik, Kevin Sweers, Jody East, Steve East, Ruth Legge, Beth Myers, and John Bowman

Please consider becoming a worship tech assistant. We are hoping to add more people to the booth crew. Let Stan Isvik know if you'd be interested in being trained.

December Quarters: Christmas Giving

Sunday Schedule – Dec. 3, 10, 17, 31

9 a.m. Sunday School (Youth, Adult)

10:15 a.m. Worship

11:15 a.m. Fellowship

Christmas Eve – Dec. 24

NO Sunday School or Morning Worship

5 p.m., Christmas Eve Service



As we approach the holiday season, we are thankful for everyone at GUMC who gives so generously to our mission projects.

We are still collecting for God's Pantry through the end of November. Quarters collected during December have been designated for Christmas Giving. We will update you more on this in the coming weeks.

Wishing everyone a very happy Thanksgiving!
The Missions Committee

December Ushers and Fellowship Servers

Join us for coffee and fellowship after our worship service each Sunday in the Fellowship Hall.

These are the December **ushers**:

Dec. 3: Steve Wood and Gary Thoms

Dec. 10: Jim and Deb Hill

Dec. 17: Jake Pringnitz and Ken Smith

Dec. 24: Rick Gilbert and Russ Trulson

Dec. 31: Bob Abele and Jerry Myers

These are the December **fellowship servers**:

Dec. 3: Scott and Renee' Kramer

Dec. 10: Russ and Barb Trulson

Dec. 17: Mary Andrews, Joyce McClintock, and Kay Mestad

Dec. 24: NONE – Christmas Eve (5 p.m.) Service

Dec. 31: Jan Sweers and Kevin Sweers

Thank you for your service. If you are unable to serve, please switch with someone or call Susan Hovda at 641-923-2909. If you find a substitute or switch, please let Lori in the church office know as well.

Join Us at the Next All-Church Fellowship & Fun Event

Join us Sunday, Dec. 3, from noon to 3 p.m. at GUMC as we gather as a church family for some fun activities and enjoyable fellowship. Here's what we have planned for this event:

- Meal (provided)
- Christmas cookie decorating
- Games for kids big and small

As before, all ages are welcome! You may bring a Christmas treat to share if you like, and feel free to break out your festive sweaters and shirts to wear. Come and go or stay the entire time, but we hope you will join us! Be sure to check out pictures from our October event that appear later in this newsletter.



If you need pastoral care while Pastor Kristin is on parental leave, call Lori in the church office (641-923-2191) if it's during office hours, or call Jan Sweers, Cong. Care Team leader (641-843-4055 or 641-860-1887).



United
Women
in Faith

Circle Meetings

Sarah Circle: Monday, Dec. 4, 6 p.m.
Prairie View

Joy Circle: Thursday, Dec. 21, 9:30 a.m.
Hostess and Program: Kay Mestad

Rebekah Circle: Date TBD
Christmas Brunch

It's the time of year to celebrate our continued support of missions and their work to support families and individuals who need God's love. Because of your donations, pledges, and commitment to projects, the Garner United Women in Faith will contribute monies toward the support of Families Forward, Hospice of North Iowa, SMILE (Single Mothers in a Loving Environment), God's Pantry, Northern Lights Alliance for the Homeless Shelters, and Crisis Intervention of Mason City. We also completed our yearly financial support to district and conference missions.

Save the date for next year's Garner UWFaith Women's Spiritual Retreat: Saturday, June 15, 2024.

Our Unit Meeting will be Wednesday, Nov. 29, at 5:15 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will kick off the Christmas season, install our elected officers, and collect our World Thank offering.

Cheri Brown
Publicity Chair

We believe love in action can change the world.



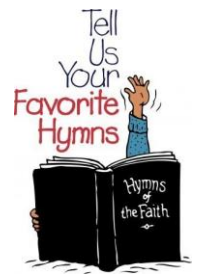
UMM to Return in January

All men are invited to the next meeting of United Methodist Men, which will be on Monday, Jan. 8, 2024, at 6 p.m. Watch for more details in the January newsletter.

Turn In Your Picks for Favorite Hymn Sunday

The worship service on Sunday, Dec. 31, will focus on LIGHT and favorite hymns. To help with the planning of the service, take a mental inventory of your favorite hymns and email those to John Bowman (jlmkbowman51@comm1net.net) by Friday, Dec. 15. Also, if you are submitting a favorite hymn that has a verse about light, please include the verse number.

Be sure to join us for worship on Sunday, Dec. 31, at 10:15 a.m. as we enjoy lifting our praises and our voices to close out the calendar year.



A big **THANK YOU** goes to all those from GUMC who helped with the Garner Community Thanksgiving Dinner:



- ✓ 10 pumpkin pies baked by 6 volunteers
- ✓ 14 other pies prepared/baked by 7 volunteers
- ✓ 2 turkeys roasted and deboned by 2 volunteers
- ✓ Thanksgiving Day dinner shifts worked by 5 volunteers
- ✓ 60 pounds of potatoes peeled by 4 volunteers
- ✓ 60 pounds of potatoes cooked and mashed by 2 volunteers Thanksgiving morning

Fine job, people!

Blue Christmas Service

GUMC will be hosting a Blue Christmas service on Thursday, Dec. 21, at 6:30 p.m. in the chapel. This is a time of hope for ALL those whose year has been a struggle, including those who have had a death, divorce, loss of job or home, or other loss, as well as for those feeling down.

Additionally, Robin Sweers has literature available about surviving the holidays that she would gladly share with anyone for their own use or to share with those they know who have experienced a loss. Contact her if you'd like copies of that resource.



December Birthdays

Ben Furst	Dec. 1	Jess East	Dec. 15
Anders Albertson	Dec. 2	Ron Smith	Dec. 15
Rich Welsh	Dec. 2	Winona Schulz	Dec. 16
LeAnne Blanchard	Dec. 5	Sheri Isvik	Dec. 16
Paul Nelson	Dec. 5	Brisbane East	Dec. 19
Barb Haugland	Dec. 6	Bob Abele	Dec. 20
Pastor Lou Peters	Dec. 7	Lukas Fry	Dec. 23
Braxton Sonquist	Dec. 7	Kim Nelson	Dec. 23
Kris Hanson	Dec. 8	Lisa Schoneman	Dec. 25
Drew Furst	Dec. 10	Mike Brown	Dec. 31
Aaron Abbas	Dec. 13	Nancy Haan	Dec. 31
Sheila Kelly	Dec. 13		

December Anniversaries

Maddie and Jordan Oleszczak	Dec. 11	Kris and Joan Hanson	Dec. 16
Al and Teri Jenniges	Dec. 15	Rich and Deb Wiese	Dec. 28
Greg and Paula Schoneman	Dec. 15		

If your name, birthday, or anniversary is listed incorrectly or is missing, please call the church office so we can update our information. Thanks!

Contact Us

Church Office

Phone: 641-923-2191

Email: garnerumc@comm1net.net

Office Hours: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., M-Th

Office Closed on Fridays

Look for GUMC on Facebook by searching *Garner Iowa United Methodist Church*

YouTube Channel: Garner IA UMC-Media

Jan Sweers, Cong. Care Team Leader

Phone: 641-843-4055 or 641-860-1887

Email: janicesweers@gmail.com



Glimpses of October's All-Church Fun & Fellowship



Garner Community Blood Drive

Garner United Methodist Church
885 Maben Ave | Garner

Tuesday, December 12

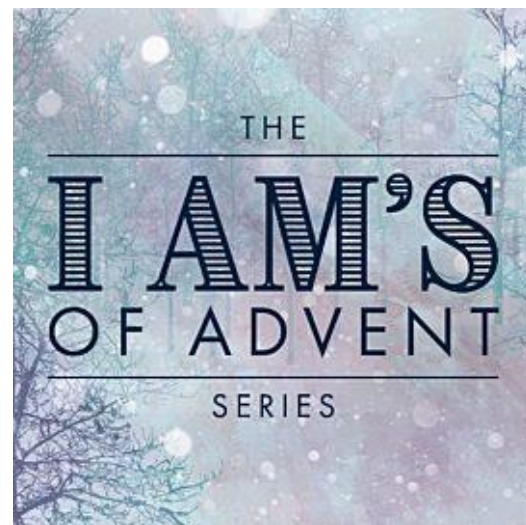
1:30 PM - 6:00 PM

Text: LIFESERVE to 999.777 | Call: 800.287.4903 | Visit: lifeserve.info/schedule



LifeServe BLOOD CENTER

YOUR BLOOD. YOUR HOSPITAL. YOUR NEIGHBORS.



This year's Advent devotional, *The I Am's of Advent*, features contributions of GUMC members and friends. Lori will email a PDF version to all those who get bulletins and newsletters that way. If you need a paper copy, please sign up on the sheet on the lobby table or call the church office (641-923-2191) to let Lori know.