



# Maple Leaf Parish

“Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight!” Mark 1 :3

There is an old saying that in Minnesota there are two seasons: winter and road construction. With winter on its way, road construction is now ending for this year. One main road that Mark and I cross on our way to the church office in Spring Valley is Farmer Street, and as many of you know, it has been under construction all summer. On many days on the way to the office we were wondering which way would be open and dodging around orange cones, construction equipment and holes in the road. And if it was a hassle for those of us driving to work or to worship, it had to be much more so for those who live along the street or nearby. Thankfully, the work is now finished and the road is rebuilt once again.

As we begin the season of the church year called Advent, the gospels talk about an interesting guy called John the Baptist who was sent by God to do a sort of road construction to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus. John wore a robe made of camel’s hair and ate a diet of locusts and wild honey. He chose not to live like the majority of his people. His beliefs led him to the wilderness of Judea—the same wilderness where God had met with his people before bringing them into the promised land. There spiritually hungry people went to hear John the Baptist preach, and to be baptized.

John’s job was to be a highway builder in a sense, to prepare people for the coming of the Savior and to make his paths straight, as was prophesied by the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. In ancient times, servants would be sent ahead of a king to level and clear the roads to make them passable for the king’s journey. I remember that when one of our U.S. Presidents was traveling through our area, the way was prepared by blocking all of the side roads to clear the path for his motorcade. John the Baptist was preparing the way for Jesus by warning the people to turn away from sin and center their lives around God and his word. Then they would be ready for the coming of the Savior.

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, the birthday of the Savior, John’s words come to us once again as recorded in scripture. “Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight!” In our Christian life, we may need to make some improvements to our own spiritual road—some straightening of winding stretches, some leveling of rough places, some widening of narrow spots. Just as the task of the road construction crew is to improve, straighten and smooth a road, our task is to do this with our spiritual road. That may mean examining the bottlenecks, gridlock sections, potholed places and no passing zones that slow our connection with God.

We prepare for Christmas in many traditional ways, such as sending greetings, decorating, buying gifts and special foods, giving to the needy, listening to Christmas music and attending candlelight services. We might also prepare by offering a prayer: “Lord, I’m trying to follow you, but my self-centeredness (or whatever) creates an obstacle. Help me to surrender this roadblock and open in me a smooth path to you. Amen.”

Peace and joy to you, Pastor Deanna

## -Contact Information-

### Pastor Mark

☎ 507-346-2830  
☎ 507-271-6761  
@ mark.woodward.ponderosa@gmail.com

### Pastor Deanna

☎ 507-346-2830  
☎ 507-765-9856  
@ revdeannaw@gmail.com

### Parish Office Info

9:30-4:15 Tuesday through Friday  
☎ 507-346-2830  
@ faithunited@centurytel.net  
www.faithsv.net

## *The more you know...*

### Did you know we're on Facebook?

You can find Cherry Grove UMC at:

[https://www.facebook.com/  
cherrygrovechurch/](https://www.facebook.com/cherrygrovechurch/)

You can find Faith UMC at:

[https://www.facebook.com/Faith-  
United-Methodist-Church-  
229920383757905/](https://www.facebook.com/Faith-United-Methodist-Church-229920383757905/)

### YouTube Too!!

Just search for- Maple Leaf Parish  
UMC- Minnesota

## Faith Online Giving Instructions

1. Visit the church website at  
<http://faithsv.net/home/donations/>
2. Click on the **GIVE NOW** button,
3. Click on the Create Profile

Follow the onscreen instructions to  
create an online profile and to  
schedule your contributions.

## -Service Groups-

The Service Group handles the Sunday Coffee/Fellowship  
Hour for the entire month of Sundays.

### Faith UMC Service Group

#### DECEMBER

Jon & Dana Kuehn	346-2181
Marilyn Matson	346-2673
Susan Nodtvedt	346-7853
Lance Sikkink	346-7709
Garry & Diane Termaat	346-2907

### Cherry Grove UMC Service Group

#### OCTOBER-DECEMBER

**Chairperson: Mike & Brooke Carr**

Joe & Bonnie Austin  
Karly Irish  
Roger & Luann Jones  
Gary Michener & Roxie N.  
Lois & Chanda Nagel  
Roger & Carol Sanford  
Lynn & Roxie Tienter  
John & Sharon Grass

## Deadlines

**Newsletter:** The newsletter deadline is the 21st of every month at 4:00 pm.

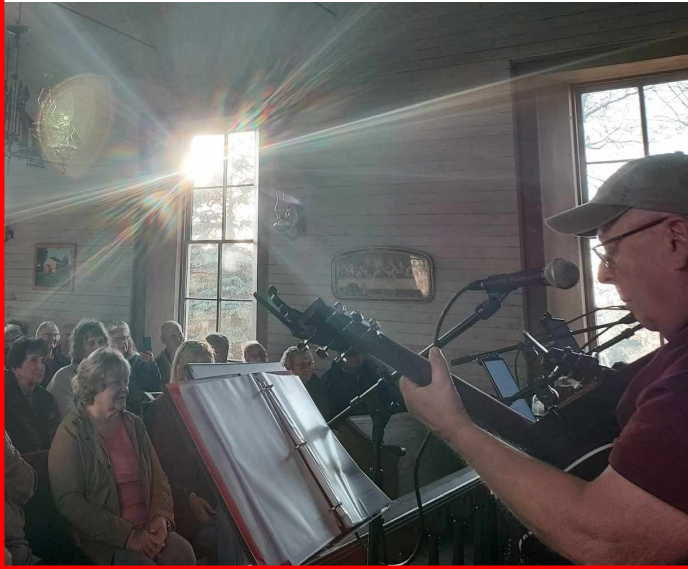
**Bulletin:** Please submit announcements for the Sunday bulletin by noon on Thursday.

Occasionally these deadlines may need to be adjusted. Please submit your articles as soon as possible.

Thank you for understanding.



The sun is shining in the window of the historic Lenora Church (1865) while musicians play Gospel music and upbeat songs inside the old church. Nonperishable food and other donations are being made to local food shelves in the Fillmore County area.



## Historic Lenora Church Christmas Service Schedule

Dec 10 3 pm and 5 pm  
Dec 17 5 pm and 7:30 pm

Special music and accepting donations of non-perishable items for food shelf.

Please share the dates



SPECIAL MUSIC  
WITH MATT AND  
BRENDA STIER AND  
BELL CHOIR -FAITH  
DECEMBER 10TH AT 9 A.M.  
AND IN PRESTON AT 11 A.M.

## FAITH CHRISTMAS POTLUCK LUNCHEON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5TH NOON

Faith United Women of Faith is hosting a Christmas luncheon to celebrate the birth of Jesus and to celebrate you, our wonderful church family. Everyone is invited, including men. UMF will provide chicken and side dishes. There is no charge. Please come and enjoy some good food and fellowship. Sign up on the bulletin board or call the church office. 346-2830



## Faith & Cherry Grove Sunday School Christmas Programs

December 17th

Faith @ 9 a.m.

Cherry Grove @ 10 a.m.

It will be a special Christmas blessing.  
Please<sup>3</sup>pray for our boys and girls and their families.



In our front yard is a silhouette manger scene....a black cut out on a light colored board. At night a light illuminates the manger figures. The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness will never overcome the light of Jesus! It is a joy and privilege to share in ministry with you....together may the Light of Jesus shine in each one of us, now and into the New Year of 2024!!!! "God will open the door in 2024! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Your friends and pastors,  
Deanna and Mark Woodward



# Christmas Eve

---

## Candlelight Services

-Faith: 5 p.m.-                      -Preston: 7 p.m.-  
-Fountain: 6 p.m.-                -Cherry Grove: 8 p.m.-





# Community Christmas Dinner

Monday, December 25  
12 Noon  
at Faith United Methodist Church

Join us for the annual Community Christmas Dinner  
Sponsored by the Spring Valley Ministerial Association  
Music by Matt and Brenda Stier

If you need transportation or to have a meal delivered call:  
346-7251 Our Savior's Lutheran  
346-2830 Faith United Methodist  
346-7153 Number to call on Christmas Day (FUMC Kitchen)

\*Each Church participating in the annual Christmas Dinner is asked to donate 3 salads and 4 pies. Sign up on the bulletin board.

## A Prayer for Christmas time

God grant you  
the light of Christmas,  
which is faith;  
the warmth of Christmas,  
which is love;  
the radiance of Christmas,  
which is purity;  
the righteousness of Christmas,  
which is justice;  
the belief in Christmas,  
which is truth;  
the all of Christmas,  
which is Christ.

by Wilda English  
(1916 - 1997)

## Salvation Army Bell Ringing

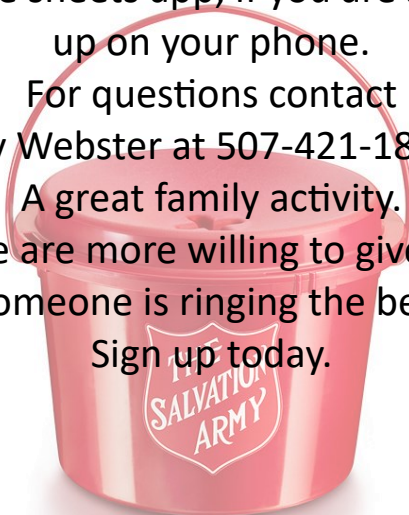
Spring Valley Kiwanis is looking for volunteers to ring the bell for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign at Sunshine Foods starting on November 20th. Sign up at [www.springvalleyeda.org](http://www.springvalleyeda.org). You may need to download the free Google sheets app, if you are signing up on your phone.

For questions contact Jay Webster at 507-421-1821.

A great family activity.

People are more willing to give when someone is ringing the bell.

Sign up today.

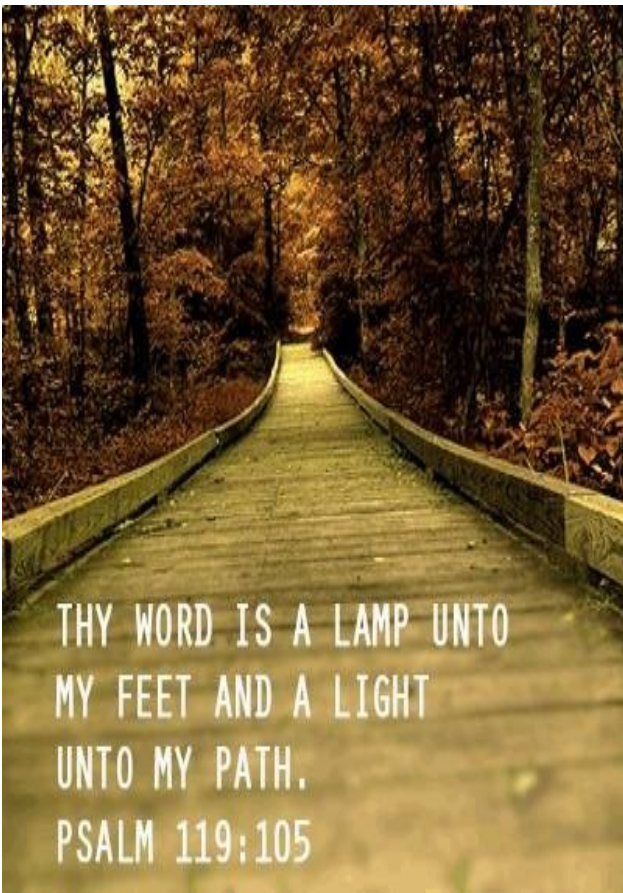






Brad Boice and Suz Eberle  
in Preston  
Preston Autumn Market

Preston Church LIFT  
ministry... Living in Faith  
Together



THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO  
MY FEET AND A LIGHT  
UNTO MY PATH.  
PSALM 119:105





# Faith Mini Market and Quilt Show



Winter clothes deeply appreciated, thank you everyone!!!

Trunk or Treat and Men's Breakfast





Moving Forward with enthusiasm! 2024 is knocking at the door!!!  
Open the door to Jesus! "GOD WILL OPEN THE DOOR IN 2024"

The churches of the Maple Leaf Parish are getting ready to begin 2024! Let's begin the New Year of 2024 by completely opening our hearts to Jesus and really stepping forward with renewed faith, compassion and love! There are people out there who really need the mission and ministry of our churches!



- + As we end 2023, let's do our very best in meeting our covenant commitment for paying our Christian Service Fund (apportionments). Each of our churches has an apportioned amount, let's do our best in upholding our commitments!
- + let's look forward to new beginnings and new opportunities as we explore new mission projects and new ministries in 2024.
- + let's be thankful for the accomplishments of a challenging year and look to the future with optimism, faith and love as we sense God's leading into the New Year of 2024....
- + God will open the door in 2024
- + Ready? Let's move forward to the glory of God!



### Faith Noisy Offering

You did it! You donated \$348.63 to the children of Ukraine through the Noisy Offering. Thank you all so much. Special thank you

to Faith's Sunday School classes for helping. When we all work together, great things happen.

CONNECT TO GOD



The password is:  
**PRAYER**

### WEATHER CANCELLATIONS...

Minnesota weather is difficult to fully appreciate in the middle of winter! Ice storms, snow storms, blizzards, extreme cold and all of it together make for real adventure. If schools are closed, we will follow school closings and also cancel various events depending on the situation. Sometimes "one size does not fit all.." Above all, please use good winter weather judgment. We will do our best to get announcements out on Facebook, KIMT, KAAL and KTTC, but sometimes the local television stations do not scroll announcements on the screen. In the event of extreme weather conditions, please use good judgment and be safe in all situations.







JOIN US ON  
DECEMBER 3TH  
AT 6 P.M.  
IN CHERRY GROVE

Thank you from the Mosher Family

Cowboy Church,

We would like to thank each and every one of you from the bottom of our hearts who have been supporting us through this devastating time in our lives from the house fire. There are so many good, caring, compassionate, and generous people and we are forever grateful to be living in such a wonderful community!

Thank you,

Kim and Tom Mosher

*Thank You*

### Time to Update!!

Please let the church office know if you have discontinued your land line and/ or have a new cell phone number or a different email. It has been a challenge for the service group coordinators, volunteer callers, the office and Pastors in trying to reach some of you. You can update your information by filling out a slip found on the church bulletin board or by calling Jane at 346-2830.

### WARM THE PEWS

Warm the pews with your heart, soul and body this Christmas season.

Let's show up to worship and spread cheer.

Let's show up to support our pastors, our youth, our children and each other.

Give thanks and be joyful.

See you in church!



Fountain November 12th, Thank Offering Sunday. Music provided by the Arnold Family and Walter Bradley.

## Faith UMW– Women In Faith

United Women in Faith met on November 8<sup>th</sup> with 6 members and 2 pastors present. Deanna opened with prayer. Motion by Marilyn and second by Deanna to accept the minutes, motion carried. Nancy made a motion to accept treasurers report second by Danette, motion carried. Coming events include Love Lights a Tree on November 26<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m., \$10 per luminary or 3 for \$25. World Thank offering Psalm to Show Gods Love. Christmas Luncheon is December 5<sup>th</sup> at noon, all are welcome. The UMW will furnish chicken, Norma will decorate the tables.

We went over a form about Missions Today 2023. Completing Mission Action that your UM Faith is sharing in your unit congregation, community, country and/ or world.

Motion made by Marilyn and second by Deanna to disperse the monies to recipients in Fillmore County and River Valley District.

Recipients included: Henderson Settlement, DARE, Maple Leaf Services, DAC, Rural Task Force, St. Peter Reg, Cancer Fund, Food Shelf, Jane Baker, FUMC Apportionments, Eberle's, River Valley District, and the Back Pack Program.

**Total \$3584.00**

Sent to Heifer program earlier in the year.

Submitted by Norma Merkel

## *A Christmas Prayer*

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus,  
that we may share in the song of the angels,  
the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.  
Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.  
Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every  
greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,  
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.  
May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children,  
and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful  
thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

-Robert Louis Stevenson



*Preston United Methodist Church  
Council Meeting Minutes – November 14, 2023*

Present: Pastor Mark Woodward, Pastor Deanna Woodward, Jenny Dornink, John Goutcher, Marlene Peterson, Dan Miller, Greg Dornink, Jerry Brink, Dollie Acton, Nancy Dahly, Sue Hovey.

Greg called the meeting to order on November 14, 2023 at 6:00 pm. Opening devotion and prayer was led by Pastor Mark.

John moved to approve the agenda with additions. Seconded by Jerry. Motion passed.

Pastor Mark moved to approve the Secretary's Report. Seconded by Marlene. Motion passed.

In the Treasurer's Report prepared by Kristi Anderson, the expenses in October were consistent with previous months. Memorial gifts were received of \$490 for Good Samaritan Fund and \$500 for landscaping. Apportionments received in October was \$912.50 (includes \$172.50 proceeds from Pop-Up Market). Pastor Mark moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Seconded by Dollie. Motion passed.

From the Finance Committee, Dan reported the average weekly offering for October was \$1405.20, which was above the weekly needed amount of \$1000.17. Apportionment received in October was \$740. At the end of October, 99% of the budget has been spent. Average attendance during October was 20.

No report from the Trustees Committee. List of projects needed to be done in the church is ongoing.

From the Worship Committee, Pastor Mark reported there will be a Thanksgiving Service during worship on November 19. Matt and Brenda Stier will be playing Christmas songs during the worship service on December 10. Christmas Eve service will be at 7pm at Preston. Advent begins on December 3. The Brad Boice concert on October 22 was enjoyed by all, along with the soft serve ice cream provided by the Dornink's.

From the Missions Committee, Sue reported the Mitten Tree will be going up soon in the narthex for donations of cold weather gear. Pastor Mark recommended donating \$300 to Christmas in Fillmore County and \$200 to the Preston Food Shelf on Give to the Max Day on November 16. Council accepted the recommendation.

From Staff/Parish Relations Committee, John, Dollie, and Dan completed a questionnaire on the pulse of the church and the community to be presented in a meeting with the District Superintendent on November 16 at 1pm.

From Evangelism and Outreach Committee, Pastor Mark greeted about 50 kids and gave out candy at the church on Halloween.

From the Education Committee, Pastor Mark reported the 1st session of LIFT ended in November and overall went well.

From the UMW, Dollie reported they will no longer be an official/active UMW group, but they will still try to do mission projects as able. She reported they will be assembling cookie plates for shut-in members in December. Officially, the UMW will no longer serve funerals. Instead, the church will still provide funeral services and members of the church will help (like we have been doing). The lunches will need to be catered by the family. There will need to be 1-2 coordinators to provide oversight of funerals in the church and members of the church will need to help. There will need to be guidelines on what is expected to be provided by the church. There will be more discussion to come.

In Business, John reported he was part of an Annual Conference zoom call on November 13 to approve the disaffiliation of 6 churches from the Conference. It was approved 292-2. Future plans for churches to disaffiliate are unknown.

Pastor Deanna presented the proposed Pastoral Compensation for 2024 for Pastor Mark. John moved to approve the Pastoral Compensation package. Seconded by Sue. Motion passed unanimously.

There was nothing further to add in the Pastor's Report.

Jenny moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Jerry. Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

*Respectfully submitted, Jenny Dornink, PUMC Council Secretary*

## Cherry Grove United Methodist Church

### Administrative Council

November 13, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Mark Woodward, Deanna Woodward, Corey Sanford, Holly Sanford, Marlo Mensink, Janice Mensink, Gene Kappers

The November Administrative Council Meeting was called to order by Pastor Deanna.

Opening Prayer was given by Pastor Mark.

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved as written. A motion was made by Marlo Mensink and seconded by Gene Kappers to approve.

**Financial Report:** The financial report was reviewed. The second half of apportionments will be paid in the next week. A motion was made by Marlo Mensink and seconded by Corey Sanford to approve the report.

#### **Trustees Report:**

The road signs have been replaced and a new sign has been put up by the entrance to Forestville State Park. The front door lock has been acting up. Marlo got an estimate to replace the front door lock. It was decided to have the back door lock also replaced so both doors will be keyed the same way.

#### **Parish Relations Committee:**

The church will once again be putting together Baking/Holiday Baskets for the Spring Valley and Preston Food Shelves. Please bring baking ingredients to the church by December 3. The Sunday school kids will be helping put them together. There was discussion regarding purchasing an AED for the church.

#### **Pastor's Report**

Pastor compensations were reviewed. A motion was made by Marlo Mensink and seconded by Gene Kappers to approve Pastor Mark's compensation package. A motion was made by Corey Sanford and second by Marlo Mensink to approve Pastor Deanna's compensation package.

The District Supervisor, Michelle Hargrave will be traveling through the area on Thursday, November 16 at 1:00 p.m. and will be meeting with Pastor Parish Relations Committee.

November 12 – The church had their Harvest Potluck.

November 26 – Please stay after church to help decorate the church and Christmas tree.

December 3 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

December 17 – Sunday School Program

December 24 – There will be two services that day being as Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday.

January 8 – Next Council meeting to include the Charge Conference Meeting.

A motion was made by Gene Kappers and seconded by Janice Mensink to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. and the next meeting is scheduled for December 11 at 7:00 p.m.





**Faith United Methodist Church  
Administrative Council Minutes  
November 9, 2023 6:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Pastors Deanna and Mark Woodward, Gene Halverson, Nancy and Denis Cornell, Stu Gross, Mary Grems, Harry Boland and Jane Baker

**Finance Committee:** Jane gave report. Mark has reached out to Conference Treasurer to see where reductions are being made. Suggestion was made to use Mission Endowment Savings for mission projects like UMCOR and Children of Ukraine. This will be revisited in December. Nancy made motion to approve the Finance report, Gene seconded. Motion approved.

**Church Council:** Pastor Mark led with a prayer. Pastor Deanna called the meeting to order. The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Stu made a motion to approve, Mary seconded. Motion approved.

**United Women in Faith:** Nancy reported that the Mini-Market and Quilt Show was a success. There was a total of 19 gift baskets for the Silent Auction and a large volume of quilts on display, with 78 meals being served. A profit of \$2500 was made with \$3500 being dispersed to several programs in Fillmore County. United Women in Faith will host a Christmas Luncheon December 5<sup>th</sup> at noon.

**Missions:** The Noisy Offering total for the Children of Ukraine totaled \$348.63. Faith Church will be the western drop off location for Christmas in Fillmore County.

**Membership Committee:** Total Membership 246-withdrawl of Ben Miller, Kim Terbeest and Andrew Ness.

**Education Committee:** Trunk or Treat was well attended. Sunday School is going strong. The 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> grade group are meeting Sunday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. Donation of a popcorn popper was made by Harry and Elaine Boland, and will be put to use on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Worship Committee:** Matt and Brenda Stier will be performing at the Worship service on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Christmas Eve day there will be a 9 a.m. service and a 6 p.m. candlelight service. There will not be a living Nativity this year.

**Pastors Report:** Mark proposed the theme for 2024; "God Opens the Door in 2024"

The District Superintendent, Michelle Hargrave will be meeting with SPRC from all Maple Leaf Parish churches on November 16<sup>th</sup> at 1 in Preston. November 26<sup>th</sup> is "Love Lights a Tree" and December 3 is the first Sunday of Advent.

**New Business:** Pastor Deanna reviewed the Pastoral Compensation for 2024 for both Pastors. Stu moved to accept the compensation for Mark, Denny seconded. Motion approved. Nancy moved to approve the compensation for Deanna, Gene seconded. Motion carried.

Gene made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Dennis.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Secretary, Jane Baker



**Faith UMC**

**Poinsettia Garden**

**If interested in purchasing a poinsettia in memory of family and loved ones. Please contact Norma Merkel. 346-2569 or the church office 346-2830.**

**Prices range from \$14.99 to \$33.99 depending on the size.**



# Christmas Wordsearch

M E H E L H T E B U G H D S  
Y C E O U R W J O S E P H A  
S B D E A W M A R Y K Q I X  
D F A T L B C K S U S E J Y  
O C S B W T O P A T W T T E  
N Q S D D R T R Z T Z I W U  
K S S T E R T A V W V S Z D  
E R W G N Y E N C I H G A O  
Y I N G F E X H T D S M N S  
Y A V F Y C S A P J V H G E  
M G S L C S N E M E K E E V  
S P I B I X G W R U H K L L  
X X N X O U B W T P I S C C  
U R H L E L B A T S Q I R F

Angel  
Baby  
Bethlehem  
Cattle  
Donkey  
Jesus  
Joseph

Manger  
Mary  
Nativity  
Presents  
Shepherd  
Stable  
Star





# DECEMBER 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	
3 Advent Begins Communion 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship 6pm Cowboy Church	4 Faith Bell Choir Practice-6 p.m.	5 Men's Breakfast in Preston- 8 am Faith Christmas Potluck- Noon Faith Trustees- 6:30	6	7	8	9
10 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship /Stiers 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship Lenora Christmas Services 3 & 5	11 Faith Bell Choir Practice- 6 p.m. Cherry Grove Council -7	12 Men's Breakfast in Preston - 8 am Preston Council -6	13 Preston Cookie Plate Assembly - 1 p.m.	14 Faith Worship Com 5:30 SPRC-6 Faith Finance-6:30 Faith Council-7	15	16
17 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship-Sunday School Program 10 CG Worship, SS Prog 11 Preston Worship Lenora -5 & 7:30	18 Faith Bell Choir Practice-6 p.m.	19 Men's Breakfast in Preston- 8 am	20	21 Newsletter Deadline	22	23
24 Christmas Services 6 p.m. Fountain Worship 9 & 5 Faith Worship 10 & 8 CG Worship 11 & 7 Preston Worship 31 Normal Worship Times-No SS @ Faith	25 Merry Christmas 12- Community Christmas Dinner @ Faith	26 Men's Breakfast in Preston- 8 am	27	28	29	30



**Maple Leaf Parish**  
**Cherry Grove UMC**  
**Faith UMC**   
**Fountain UMC**  
**Preston UMC**  
617 Maple Lane  
Spring Valley, MN 55975

Spring Valley, MN  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit #62  
Non-Profit  
Bulk Rate

Address Service Requested

# Maple Leaf Parish



**HELLO**   
*December* 

**Cherry Grove United Methodist Church**  
18183 160th Street - Spring Valley, MN 55975

**Faith United Methodist Church**  
617 Maple Lane - Spring Valley, MN 55975

**Fountain United Methodist Church**  
Cedar Street & County Road 8, PO Box 46  
Fountain, MN 55935

**Preston United Methodist Church**  
212 St. Anthony Street, PO Box 247- Preston, MN 55965