

Maple Leat Parish

Recently, the Spring Valley Overhead Door Company came to our house to repair and adjust our garage doors. Neither door was working properly....they sometimes would not open and at other times they would not close....they were temperamental and kind of unpredictable. The repair person came and sized up the situation. Within a fairly short period of time he had the garage doors working as they should -- they went up and down smoothly as they were supposed to!

Doors are very important. In fact, Jesus mentions doors in his ministry. In Revelation 3:20 we are told "Jesus stands at the door and knocks..." We are called to open the door and to let Jesus come in to be with us....Yes the Bible is full of references to doors and how we are called to open the door to let God into our lives.... The Scripture also references how God symbolically opens the doors to let the Holy Spirit move in and through his people. The Bible is full of examples of doors, doorkeepers, opening doors, and all kinds of images of opening doors to Jesus.

Here we are standing at the threshold of the New Year of 2024. The door leading to new beginnings, new opportunities and new adventures is about to open.

How will God open the door in 2024? How will we respond to all that God is doing in our lives and in the life of our churches? Early in my ministry, Willet Stoskopf was the custodian of the Preston Church building. He would often tell me how important it was to keep the church doors unlocked during severe, arctic cold winter weather. He was of the era when churches were seldom locked. Since then, times have changed and our world is not the same. Nevertheless how do we allow God to move in and through us in the New Year of 2024?

"God Opens the Door in 2024..." God opens the door for new commitment, involvement, opportunity, mission and ministry...God moves in our lives to bring about new energy, enthusiasm, encouragement, and excitement..... We are being called afresh to do the work of mission and ministry as disciples of Jesus.

The beautiful and inspiring Christmas carol, "Joy to the World" calls us to repentance and to turn away from the power of sin and evil.

"NO MORE LET SINS AND SORROWS GROW, NOR THORNS INFEST THE GROUND; HE COMES TO MAKE HIS BLESSINGS FLOW AS FAR AS THE CURSE IS FOUND....HE RULES THE WORLD WITH TRUTH AND GRACE, AND MAKES THE NATIONS PROVE THE GLORIES OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND WONDERS OF HIS LOVE..."

Let's begin the New Year of 2024 totally open to God's way of living. Let's allow God to open the door in 2024....to begin the New Year walking hand in hand with our Savior Jesus. It is my prayer that 2024 will be a year filled with new opportunities for mission and ministry as we seek to build up the Body of Christ in our communities and in our world.

God opens the door in 2024..... Jesus stands at the door and knocks.....Jesus is knocking at the door right now....

I opened a door on an old shed that hadn't been opened in a while....at first it squeaked and was hard to open, but with a shot of oil it opened easily....Sometimes we need a shot of oil, too from the Holy Spirit as God opens the doors of our hearts.....God opens the door in 2024..... Praise be to God!

May your 2024 be filled with blessing and joy as we share together the Good News of our Savior Jesus! Happy New Year! Keep the door open to experience God's redeeming and transforming love.....

Your friend and pastor,

-Contact Information- -Service Groups-

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/

You can find Faith UMC at:

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.

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

Faith UMC Service Group

JANUARY

*Jake & Peggy Merkel 657-2392 *Norma Merkel 346-2569 Bryan & Jody Hagan 346-7253 Roberta Heckerson 346-2242 951-9880 Darla Lecy Phil & Cyndy Sheldon 346-2860 346-7518 Iola Thompson Brad & Jennifer Vreeman 507-440-8735

Cody Merkel Gavin Merkel

Cherry Grove UMC Service Group

JANUARY-APRIL

Chairpersons - Corey & Holly Sanford 507-273-7172/507-937-3645

Co-Chair Ryan & Angela Forland 507-272-7698

Marlo & Janice Mensink 507-346-1771/507-259-3533

Jeff & Natalie Atwood 507-951-9501

Deb Curry 507-259-3871

Chuck Forland 507-696-2231

Gene & Beth Mulhern 507-346-7511

Pixie Nielson 507-937-3392

John Kappers 507-251-6852

Joan Bessingpas 507-251-2822

Justin & Shelby Antoff 507-421-0867

Todd & Dicia Kappers 507-251-6515

Shawn & Megan Merkel 507-251-5756

Derek Mensipk 612-208-4159



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.

A COLORFUL START TO THE NEW YEAR.....

Do you notice anything different about this newsletter? It is in COLOR!! With the new lease agreement of our new copier, the lease indicates that all ink/toner including color ink is included at NO ADDITIONAL fee and/or charge. Therefore, we can print THE MAPLE LEAF PARISH NEWSLETTER in color for the same price as before! (no additional cost!)

"God Opens the Door in 2024" with new beginnings and new opportunities including printing our newsletter in color all to the glory of God in Jesus Christ!

THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR MAKING CHRISTMAS, 2023 SUCH A BLESSING....

We have been blessed in many ways....thank you everyone for sharing in making this a beautiful season in celebrating the birth of our Savior Jesus. Thank you for the Christmas gifts, cards and good wishes.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year as we share in ministry together!

Pastors Deanna and Mark



Historic Lenora Church The Light shines in the darkness....Christmas services were held on December 10th and 17th.





THE HISTORIC LENORA CHURCH

Is closed now for the winter season, but it will re-open in May, 2024. Would you like to be a part of the team that guides the ministry at Lenora?

Please let Pastor Mark know.







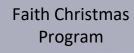


The Cherry Grove Christmas Program.





Thank you to everyone who made our children's Sunday School Christmas programs so much fun and so uplifting. It is such a joy to watch our boys and girls as they share together the story of the birth of our Savior Jesus





ASSEMBLING FOOD BASKETS FOR FOOD SHELVES

See some of the pictures taken while assembling 48 recipe baskets for the Preston and Spring Valley Food Shelf. We took 24 to each location. For several years, Cherry Grove church has been donating Christmas baking supplies to our local food shelves.



CHURCH CONFERENCE MEETINGS TO BE HELD

This month the churches in our parish will be holding their annual church conferences in conjunction with their regular church council meetings. The church conference is the church's annual meeting for the purpose of reviewing and evaluating the mission and ministry of the local church, receiving reports and adopting goals. All members of the church are welcome to attend and vote at the church conference. With the permission of our district superintendent, Pastors Mark and Deanna Woodward, as ordained elders, will be convening the church conferences. Business to be considered will include the election of church leaders, setting the compensation of church staff and voting on the annual budget, membership reports, and other business. The church conferences will be held at the churches on the following dates and times:

Cherry Grove UMC-Monday, January 8th at 7 p.m.
Preston UMC-Tuesday, January 9th at 6 p.m.
Fountain UMC-Wednesday, January 10th at 6:30 p.m.
Spring Valley Faith UMC-Thursday, January 11th at 7 p.m.







LIFT "Living in Faith Together" After School Program to Resume

At Preston U.M. Church, students and adult volunteers will start a new series of lessons in the LIFT program beginning January 3rd. LIFT is an after school program on Wednesdays providing Bible lessons, crafts, music and snacks. Our six week session from Jan. 3-Feb. 7 will look at Jesus' early ministry and teachings. Kindergarteners through sixth graders who sign up for LIFT meet at the church for a time of faith and learning experiences with friends. Parents are welcome, too! Busing for LIFT is provided from the Fillmore Central School. For more information, contact Nancy Dahly at 507-765-2480.



Fountain nativity





Cherry Grove nativity and snowman



Preston nativity

Do You Have a Few Minutes?

The number of people receiving Meals on Wheels in Spring Valley is increasing.

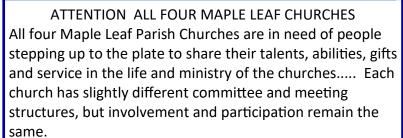
Meals Wheels

Consequently, we now need

more volunteers. Do you have a few minutes a month to volunteer?

Faith UMC is responsible for delivering meals one week every four weeks. You will have a partner. Usually one drives and the other delivers the food. You will be called a week ahead and asked about your availability. Our goal is to have four people deliver each day. Currently, we only have two per day. The more we have the shorter the time commitment.

If you have any questions, ask one of our faithful volunteers: Norma Merkel, Marti Warren, Iola Thompson, Ranae Clouse, Gayle Reiland, Marilyn Matson, Gail Rollie, Carol and Stu Gross or Nancy Cornell. To volunteer, contact the church office or Nancy Cornell. (346-2044)



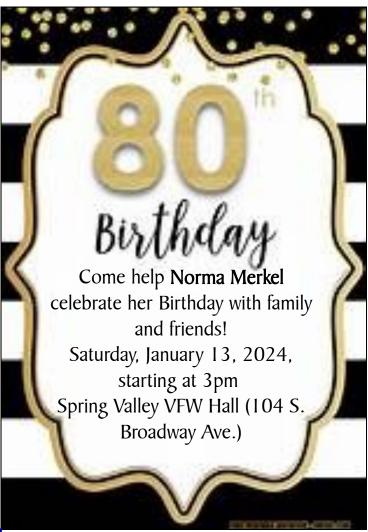


Specifically for Spring Valley:

People are needed for the Worship Team Technology Team Sunday School Team **Board of Trustees** Finance and Treasury Team Youth Ministry Team Staff Parish Relations Team

Preston, Cherry Grove and Fountain Churches also need people to step up to the plate to offer their time and talent. As we move into the New Year of 2024, each one of us is needed in building up the ministry of our churches as part of the Body of Christ.

All four Maple Leaf Churches have much to offer our communities and surrounding area.... Let's step up to the plate and allow God to use us in some great ways!!!!





Blood Drive Monday, January 15th 1:00 p.m.-7 p.m. **Faith UMC Fellowship** Hall

Plans will soon come together for the Lenten Season, we're considering a new format this year, perhaps having a noon lunch and program rotating



among the four churches. This would most likely be held on Thursday noon due to other scheduling complications in our communities.... Please stay tuned as announcements will be made soon....Plans will soon come together for the Lenten

Spring Valley United Women In Faith

The ladies of UMW in Faith met on December 5th at noon for our Christmas luncheon with 18 guests present. A delicious lunch of chicken and salads, hot dishes and desserts were enjoyed by all. There will not be a meeting in January.

-Submitted by Norma Merkel

Fall Mini Market And Quitt Show

Thank you all who helped make this year's Mini Market a success, from donating gift baskets, sharing your lovely quilts, buying items and enjoying a cinnamon roll and coffee to having lunch with us. It would not be possible without your continued support.

There were 19 gift baskets plus 2 donated quilts that brought in \$1109.00. Fantastic! 78 meals were enjoyed.

United Women in Faith, who organized the event, took in around \$2500.00. At our last UWF meeting, we dispersed around \$3500.00 to local non-profits, Faith Church and global non- profits. These were listed in the December Newsletter.

Some interesting history of Mini Market.

Starting in 1972, Mini Market was known as The Bazaar. It was held on November 10th from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm! At that time, there were 8 Women's Circles and 18 workers were needed the day of the event.

Lois Carson was the chairwoman and Judy Vreeman was the co-chair. The menu consisted of sloppy Joe's, baked beans, cabbage salad, tossed salad, pie and beverage. And the charge for the meal was \$1.35. Morning doughnuts and coffee were 10 cents each. About 225 people were served.

The name was changed to Fall Mini Market in 1975. Members of the committee that year were Darlene Vrieze, Huberta Fenstermacher. Lena McKenzie, and Hazel House. The youth sold candy and the couples club offered cards for sale. Isla Seabright was in charge of making doughnuts and the Senior High youth made the posters. At that time there were 8 Women's Circles.

Today, we have one UWF unit and no circles.

Circle assignments in 1975 were:

Circles 1&2 - Baked goods and produce

Circle 3 - Crafts & Christmas items

Circle 4 - White elephant items

Circle 5 - Clean up

Circle 6 - Morning & afternoon coffee

Circles 7 & 8 - Lunch

Hours: 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

A total of \$767.63 was taken in.



Over the years, the length of Mini Market has decreased to the present time of 1:30 pm. By 2000 there were only 4 circles: Mary, Ruth, Naomi and Sarah.

Stay tuned for more history in the February Newsletter with the "rollers" and "friers".

Preston United Methodist Church Administrative Council Minutes December 12, 2023

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

Greg called the meeting to order on December 12, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

John moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Marlene. Motion passed.

John moved to approve the Secretary's Report. Seconded by Dan. Motion passed.

In the Treasurer's Report prepared by Kristi Anderson, the expenses in November were less than income. November expenses were consistent with previous months. A memorial gift of \$1110 was received to be used for General Funds. Another gift of \$250 was received to be used for special occasions in the church. Kristi is preparing a proposed budget for 2024. John moved to pay the remaining apportionment due for 2023 from the General Funds after designated funds are used. Seconded by Marlene. Motion passed. John moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Seconded by Sue. Motion passed.

From the Finance Committee, Dan reported the average weekly offering for November was \$1165.75, which was more than the weekly needed amount of \$1000.17. Apportionment received in November was \$1310. YTD apportionment received was \$4121.50. Average attendance during November was 24.

From the Trustees Committee, Jerry removed the screens in the sanctuary and vacuumed out the screens and windows.

From the Worship Committee, Pastor Mark reported the performance of Matt and Brenda Stier on December 10 was wonderful. PUMC Christmas Eve Service will be at 7pm.

From the Missions Committee, Sue reported the donations for the Mitten Tree will be collected after Christmas and taken to the Preston Food Shelf/SEMCAC office.

From Staff/Parish Relations Committee, Marlene reported the funeral policy is being worked on. The meeting with the District Superintendent in November went well, and the new DS wants this church to succeed.

From Evangelism and Outreach Committee, John is still looking to update the member roster with cell phone numbers.

From the Education Committee, Nancy reported the next session of LIFT starts on January 3, 2024.

In Business, John and Shirley Goutcher would like to restart the tradition of goody bags of apples, oranges, candy, etc. to give out after the Christmas Eve Service. They are willing to assemble bags with anyone who is willing to help. Pastor Mark seconded this idea. The Council approved unanimously.

During the Pastor's Report, Pastor Mark reported a gift of \$1000 was received for the Good Samaritan Fund. His motto for the upcoming year is "God opens the door in 2024."

Jenny moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Dan. Meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm. Respectfully submitted, Jenny Dornink, PUMC Council Secretary

Preston Church Attendance and Offerings – Amount needed weekly is \$1000.16

<u>October:</u> <u>November:</u>					
1	32 people	\$1911.00	6	28 people	\$1,634.75
8	21 people	\$967.00	13	21 people	\$1579.00
16	19 people	\$1334.00	19	27 people	\$1950.00
22	16 people	\$1926.00	<u> 26</u>	25 people	<u>\$555.00</u>
30	14 people	\$428.00	101 t	total people (a	ivg. of 25 people)
102 total people (avg. of 21 people)		Appo	Apportionments: \$1,310.00 (\$1000 from Men's group)		

Apportionments: \$310.00 Total Apportionment for year= \$4,121.50

Faith United Methodist Church Administrative Council Minutes December 8, 2022 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Pastors Deanna and Mark Woodward, Diane Howard, Gail Rollie, Nancy and Denis Cornell, Mary Grems, Stuart Gross, Harry Boland

Church Council: Council Chair Diane Howard called the meeting to order. The minutes of the November meeting were reviewed. Mary moved to approve, second by Denis. Motion approved.

Finance Committee: The estimated 2023 budget was reviewed. Diane commented that it is a lean budget. The committee recommends paying other church staff the same percentage increase as the pastors in 2024. It was suggested that we have a representative from our insurance agency attend a future meeting to discuss the premium increase. Apportionments are still short. We will see what receipts come in by the end of the year. There was a discussion about the use of mission endowment savings. Mark moved and Diane seconded the motion that we add monies from mission endowment savings to what was given in the noisy offerings to total \$500 for the children of Ukraine. Motion carried.

Membership Committee: Total Membership 245. Recorded the death of Mariel Greenlee, restored Angela Grabau, and transfer of Lois Suckow.

Trustees: The furnaces are operating. Tom Ramaker is monitoring the use of ceiling fans in the sanctuary. **United Women in Faith:** Eighteen people attended the Christmas luncheon on December 5. The next UWF meeting is in February. There were many compliments on the Mini Market food, the basket fundraiser, and the beautiful quilt display.

Missions: Nancy reported that the special Christmas offering will be given 75% to the Kingsland backpack program and 25% to Church World Service. There were many at the church to pick up gifts on December 12th as part of the Christmas in Fillmore County program.

Education: The Sunday School Christmas program is this Sunday, December 17. Thank you to Pam Shaw, Diane Howard, Cindy Seabright and Suz Eberle for leading the Christmas program and Sunday School. Substitute teachers are willing to help. The teachers are happy with the curriculum materials. It's great to have the supply room organized. It would be fun to have a youth lock-in this winter.

Worship Committee: The Stiers' music was enjoyed on December 10. Christmas Eve services are at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Norma and Peggy Merkel are reorganizing coffee hour servers into quarterly groups. Updated member's phone numbers are needed. It was suggested to have a card drop in the offering with updated phone and address information. Lent is on the horizon. Possible weekly noontime soup luncheons and services are being considered.

Pastors' Report: Mark commented that God is good and God will "open the door in 2024." All committees need more involvement and people need ways to connect. Diane Howard added that we have come a long way in a year given the many challenges and she is proud of where we are. Deanna mentioned the need for more to sign up to provide food items for the community Christmas dinner. A blood drive will be held at Faith UMC on January 15. Meals on Wheels is in need of more volunteers.

New Business: We will be printing the newsletter in color at no extra cost as color copies are included in our contract. Pianos are being tuned.

Denis moved to adjourn, seconded by Stuart. Motion approved. Pastor Mark closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Deanna Woodward, Acting Secretary

Fountain United Methodist Church Administrative Council Minutes November 28, 2023

The Fountain U.M. Administrative Council meeting was held on November 28, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at the church. Those present were Steve and Sheila Arnold, Joel and Sheila Walbridge, Jerry Wingert, Loni Wingert and Revs. Deanna and Mark Woodward. Chairman Steve Arnold called the meeting to order. Rev.Deanna opened with prayer.

The minutes from the October Council meeting were reviewed and approved on a motion by Jerry, second by Loni.

Treasurer Loni W. reported that \$3225 was received for the Thank Offering. The balance owed for conference apportionments will be paid this week. She also reported on interest rates for certificates of deposit at the Fountain Bank. We will consider investing some church savings at a future date.

Jerry moved and Loni seconded the approval of the pastoral support budget for Deanna Woodward. Fountain Church pays 24% of Rev. Deanna's total salary and benefits. Approval of the pastoral support budget was given by unanimous vote.

Someone is needed to help count Sunday offerings to replace Beezie Cambern. Some people were suggested and will be approached. Jerry and Shirley W. will change altar cloths and replace candles. Dec. 6 at 10 a.m. was set as the day to decorate for Christmas.

Thank you to Debbie Elliott, Jan Earley and Sheila Arnold for cleaning the storage closet. After discussion, Loni moved and Jerry seconded the motion to keep financial records from the past 10 years for IRS purposes. Membership and baptismal records will be kept permanently.

Christmas Eve falls on Sunday this year. After discussion, Loni moved and Sheila W. seconded the motion that we have a 6 p.m. candlelight service but no morning service on Dec. 24. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Items donated for the food shelf will be delivered this week. Rev. Mark reported on the recent Maple Leaf Parish Pastor-Parish Relations Committees' meeting with the district superintendent. He also mentioned some plans for outreach in the Fountain community. Rev. Deanna reminded the Council that our church conference will be held in early January, on a date yet to be set.

Loni moved and Jerry seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned.



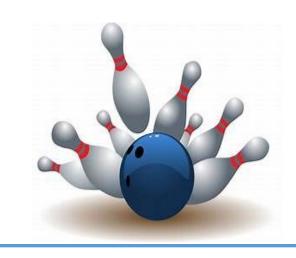
"The Work Of Christmas"

By Howard Thurman

When the song of angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

Upper Elementary and Middle School Youth Event

January 14th at 1:00 p.m. **B&B** Bowling Alley in Preston Friends are Welcome Please RSVP to the church office by January 12, 2024 Please bring cash for shoe rental, \$3.50





Spring Valley

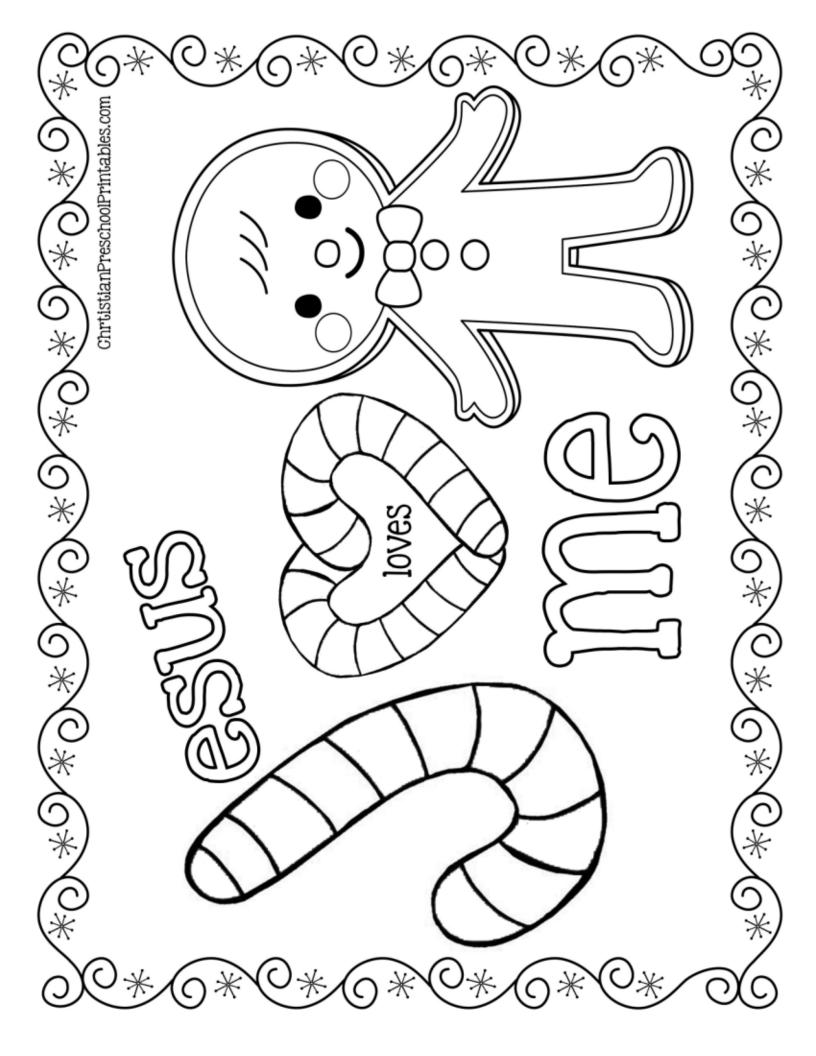


Community Christmas Dinners Both Preston and Spring Valley have community Christmas dinners. Pictured here is the Spring Valley Community Christmas dinner held at Faith United Methodist Church and sponsored by the Spring Valley Ministerial Association. Approximately 200 people were fed a Christmas dinner.

In Preston a Christmas "to go" dinner was served at the Preston Servicemen's Club, coordinated by Gabby Kinneberg and her family, about 150 meals were served. It is a real blessing that in both communities the dinners were offered. Preston





















		AM	MURKY 2024	54 ** ** * * * * * * *		
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		Men's Breakfast in Preston- 8 am Faith Trustees- 6:30	2 LIFT in Preston— 3:15 Bell Choir Practice- 6:30	4	S	9
7 Communion 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship 6 p.m. Cowboy Church	8 Cherry Grove Council & Church Conference -7	9 Men's Breakfast in Preston- 8 am Preston Council & Church Conference-6	10 LIFT in Preston—3:15 Bell Choir Practice-6:30 Fountain Council & Church Conference—6:30	11 Faith SPRC-6 Faith Finance-6:30 Faith Council & Church Conference-	12	13
8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship	15 Blood Drive @ Faith UMC 1:00 p.m7p.m.	Men's Breakfast in Preston - 8 am	17 LIFT in Preston– 3:15 Bell Choir Practice- 6:30	18	19	20
21 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship Newsletter Deadline	22	Men's Breakfast in Preston- 8 am	24 LIFT in Preston– 3:15 Bell Choir Practice- 6:30	25	26	27
28 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship	29	30 Men's Breakfast in Preston- 8 am	LIFT in Preston- 3:15 Bell Choir Practice- 6:30			

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

Address Service Requested

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

MAPLE LEAF PARISH

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

