



Maple Leaf Parish

As I write this article for the January, 2025 newsletter, snow is blowing around outside, Christmas carols are playing on the radio and lights are twinkling in windows. Christmas is almost here. Soon we will celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus and we will come to the manger to be born anew to a living hope.

We will come to the manger of Jesus along with angels, shepherds, cows, donkeys and children to experience for ourselves the joy of Jesus Christ. In the days after Christmas, we will reflect on the goodness of God who blesses us with his unending love and as the joy of Christmas fills our hearts we begin to move toward the end of 2024.

For many of us, including myself, 2024 is was a difficult year as we experienced sadness and death of people we loved dearly. As 2024 draws to a close it is time to flip the calendar to be open to new beginnings and new opportunities for healing, compassion, kindness and love. This is the message of Christmas God sent redeeming love into our lives in the birth of a little baby named Jesus!

As I type these words, the triumphant words and melody of "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" play on the radio. It is in Jesus "that God and sinners are reconciled. Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die. born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth...Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!" I am emotionally moved and inspired.

As we move into 2025, we move to a time of new beginnings, fresh starts and to take the powerful message of Christmas into the New Year. On page 383 of The United Methodist Hymnal is an inspiring hymn written by Brian Wren in 1978: "THIS IS A DAY OF NEW BEGINNINGS."

I am reading and reflecting on these words as I write this article in getting ready for the New Year of 2025. Please read and think about these words:

"This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember and move on, time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that's gone.

For by the life and death of Jesus, God's mighty Spirit, now as then, can make for us a world of difference as faith and hope are born again.

Then let us, with the Spirit's daring, step from the past and leave behind our disappointment, guilt and grieving, seeking new paths, and sure to find.

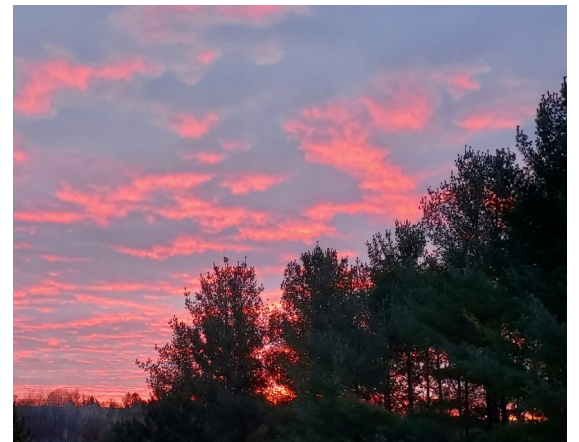
Christ is alive, and goes before us to show and share what love can do. This is a day of new beginnings; our God is making all things new." (Revelation 21:5)

Together let us take the powerful message of Christmas into the New year of 2025! Let's make it a priority to be people of Jesus

Christ in the New Year to be open to new beginnings and to be able to live and share the Good News of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. "This is a day of new beginnings; our God is making all things new" and that includes you and me!!!! "Christ is alive, and goes before us to show and share what love can do..." I am thankful for the Good News of Christmas! I am thankful for you! I am thankful for the mission and ministry we share together. Let's see what love can do in 2025....this is a day of new beginnings....filled with the love of God in Jesus Christ.

your friend and pastor, Mark Woodward

P.S. Do you see the beautiful sunrise picture printed here? It is taken at dawn just a few days before Christmas looking out the front door of our Ponderosa house. The sunrise is sprinkled with pink clouds. Deanna's favorite color...It is the dawning of a new day. This is a day of new beginnings all to the glory of God!



-Contact Information-

Pastor Mark

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

-Service Groups-

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

Faith UMC Service Group

Faith UMC Service Group

JANUARY

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

Cherry Grove UMC Service Group

January-April 2025

Chairpersons –

Corey & Holly Sanford	507-273-7172/507-937-3645
Co-Chair Ryan & Angela Forland	507-272-7698
Janice Mensink	507-346-1771/ 507-259-3533
Jeff & Natalie Atwood	507-951-3501
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 Mensink	612-208-4159

Deadlines

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

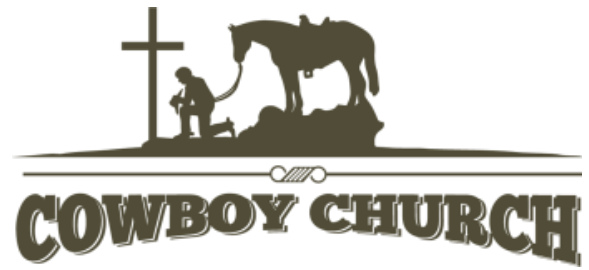
Bulletin: Please submit announcements for the Sunday bulletin by noon on Thursday.

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

Thank you for understanding.

Blood Drive at Faith UMC

Thursday, January 16th 1 p.m. –7 p.m.
Make an Appointment by calling
1-800-RED-CROSS or visit
Red.CrossBlood.org



JOIN US ON JANUARY 5TH
AT 6 P.M.
IN CHERRY GROVE



Life is...

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.

Life is beauty, admire it Life is a dream, realize it.

Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a duty, complete it.

Life is a game, play it. Life is a promise, fulfill it.

Life is sorrow, overcome it. Life is a song, sing it.

Life is a struggle, accept it. Life is a tragedy, confront it.

Life is an adventure, dare it. Life is luck, make it.

Life is too precious, do not destroy it. Life is life, fight for it.

Mother Teresa

December 8 was a special day in the Preston Church. Sophia Marie Cahill was baptized by her Grandfather.



Grandchildren assisting with lighting of the Advent calendar



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE
for making the Advent and Christmas
season so joyful in our Maple Leaf Parish
Churches! When we share together the joy
of Jesus, we reach out to enrich the lives of
many people....

It is great to be in ministry together!
Please make it a priority to be in church on
Sundays in 2025 because when we work
together as a team incredible and great
things happen to the glory of God!





Nativity Scenes

Fountain,
Preston
and
Cherry Grove



Where Did It Go?

United Women in Faith disbursed over \$3,000.00 in 2024 using proceeds from Mini Market (about \$2,300.00), member contributions, funerals, and other sources.

Here is where it went:

Faith UMC

Henderson Settlement

Kingsland DARE program

Maple Leaf Services

DAC (Fillmore County Developmental Achievement Center)

Rural Concerns Task Force (Christmas in Fillmore County)

Spring Valley Area Food Shelf

Jane Baker, Paul and Suz Eberle

Kingsland Backpack Program

UMCOR

Food for Kidz

Regional Treatment Center in St. Peter

Fillmore Hope for Recovery

Heifer International

River Bluffs District of UW in Faith and Emma Norton Services

Thank you to all who made it possible for us to have the funds to help so many.

United Women in Faith meets at 9:30 am on the second Wednesday of each month except no meeting in January. All women are invited to attend. Come and check us out. For more information see Norma Merkel, Nancy Cornell or go to www.uwfaithmn.com.



United
Women
in Faith

Cherry Grove Christmas Program December 22, 2024



Faith Sunday School Program
December 15, 2024



Mark Woodward and Mike Hovey at Fountain Church.



Food Shelf



Local Food Shelves are in need of:

- Cereals
- Cream soups
- Peanut Butter
- Holiday sides (cranberries, stuffing, etc)
- Christmas baking supplies
- Monetary donations are also welcome

Please remember to support your local food shelves this time of the year.

May the Light of Jesus shine in us! May the Star of Bethlehem guide us each and every day! Let's let the Light of Jesus shine in each one of us in the New Year!



Congratulations to Hailee and Max. Both of these young adults are members of Faith UMC. Good Luck!

Kingsland Knights



PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

GIRLS BASKETBALL	BOYS BASKETBALL
<h3>Hailee Warren</h3>  <p>The Kingsland girls basketball team kicked their 2024-25 season off this past week with a nice win on the road over St. Charles and a tough loss at home to Grand Meadow. With just eight players on the active varsity roster at the moment, the team would need contributions from everyone and one player that was able to make a nice impact in the two games was Hailee Warren. The junior did her part in the scoring column against St. Charles with nine points for the Knights and really stepped up near the basket against GM with a team-high ten rebounds. Hailee really had a breakout season last year as a scorer from outside and still fills that role nicely for the team. This year the plan is to expand her overall game and use her length inside a lot more and so far it looks like things are paying off for Hailee.</p>	<h3>Max Erdman</h3>  <p>It was a busy start to the season for the Kingsland boys basketball team with four total games last week to kick things off. They split those four games and saw some outstanding performances from Max Erdman in those contests, picking up double-doubles in games against Schaeffer Academy and Grand Meadow. In total between all four games, the 6'5" senior had 87 points, 39 rebounds, nine steals, 12 blocks and knocked down 11 shots from three-point range. Going into the season, Max was going to be counted on a ton to help pick up the scoring load for the Knights with a number of new starters stepping onto the court and he has not disappointed through the first week of games. He has a great all-around game, can hit shots from anywhere on the court and is a prolific shot blocker in the paint.</p>

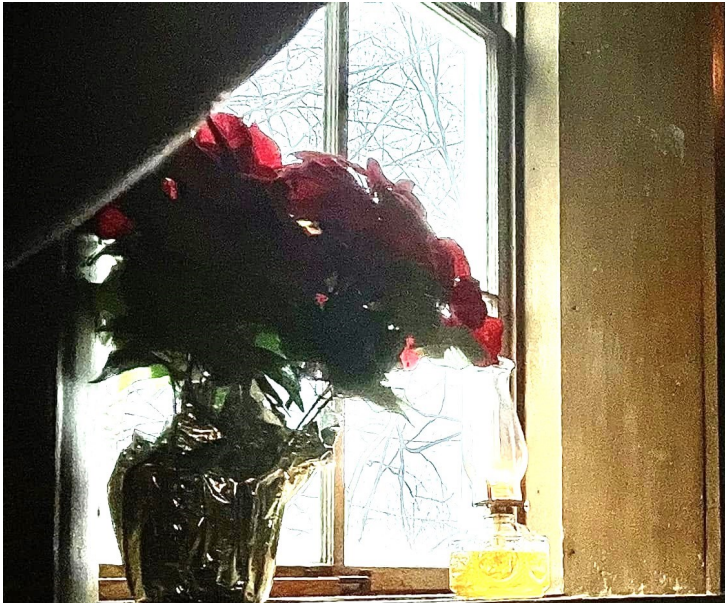
Christmas in Fillmore County event at Faith UMC





Christmas Services in Lenora

The old Lenora Church was truly a beautiful and holy place as people gathered to share the Good News of Christmas. Pictured here: Lenora United Methodist Church on December 15th, 2024. Celebrating the birth of Jesus!



Faith UMC



The Light of Jesus shines in the darkness and the darkness will never overcome it!

Each of our Maple Leaf Parish Churches has a cross on them....The crosses at Cherry Grove, Fountain and Preston light up at night. Currently, the one at Spring Valley: Faith Church does not. Pastor Mark is proposing that in memory of Rev. Deanna Woodward and others we find a way to light up this cross, too.... This project will be discussed soon by the Spring Valley Board of trustees....we'll gather information together and see how best to proceed. Stay tuned!



Suppose, Just Suppose
Written by Sharon Grass of the Cherry Grove UMC

Suppose the Christ Child had not been born in the Bethlehem manger that first Christmas morn.

Suppose that God whose mighty hand created worlds had never planned
A way for man to be redeemed.

Suppose the Wise Men only dreamed that guiding star whose light still glows.

Suppose, Just Suppose Christ never walked here in men's sight
Our blessed way and truth and light.

Suppose, he counted all the cost and never cared that we were lost and never died
for you and me and shed his blood on Calvary.

Suppose, just suppose that having died he never rose and there was none with power to save
our souls from death beyond the grave. As far as non-believers know these things that
I've just supposed are sadly so.



Do you want to selubrat
Jesus? That is Christmas!
Christmas happed along time
ugo. Jesus was born in
Bethuham. Wen Jesus was a
gron-up he die for our sin. And
he rose ugen. So we invent
Christmas to selubrat Jesus.
That is how to selubrat Jesus.
Corbin Kappers

Corbin Kappers age 9 from
Cherry Grove UMC recently
wrote a short article which was
published in the Mower
County Independent.
We're very proud of Corbin and
his Sunday School buddies.
With a few spelling corrections
this is what Corbin had to say
about Christmas.

Christmas Symbols



Candy Cane: Represents the shepherd's crook. Christ is called the Good Shepherd.



Gifts: Symbolizes gold and frankincense.



Evergreen Tree: A symbol of eternal life. points to heaven and reminds us that God is eternal.

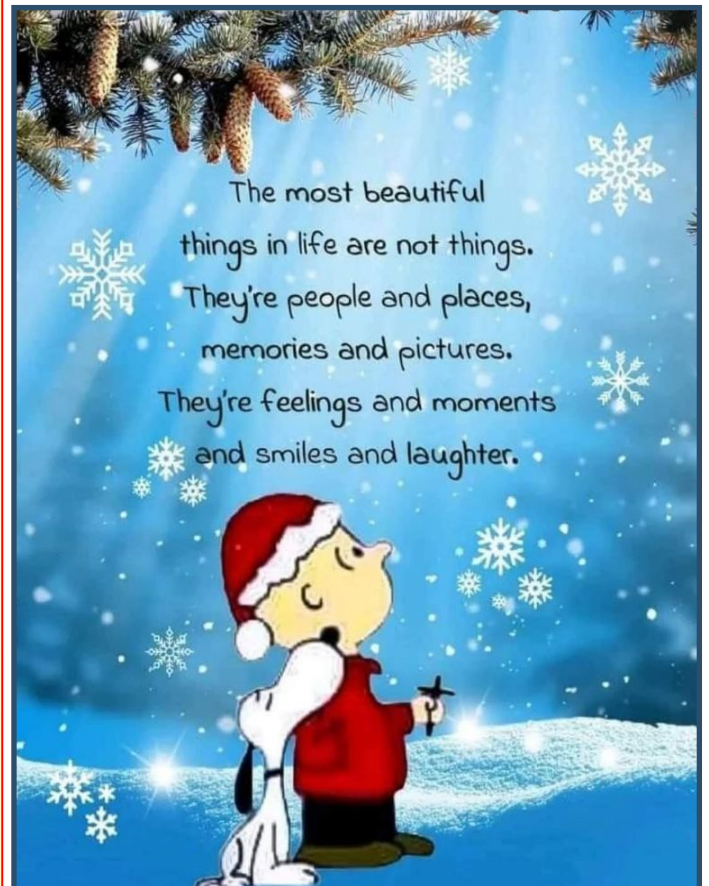


The Wreath: is a circle reminding us that God's love for us never ends.



The Candle: shines brightly, showing us that Jesus is the light of the world.

Amen if you Believe



The most beautiful
things in life are not things.
They're people and places,
memories and pictures.
They're feelings and moments
and smiles and laughter.

Cherry Grove Administrative Council Meeting for December 7 Canceled
Faith Administrative Council Meeting for December 12 Canceled

Preston Church Council Meeting Minutes – December 10, 2024

Present: Pastor Mark Woodward, Jenny Dornink, Greg Dornink, John Goutcher, Marlene Peterson, Nancy Dahly, Sue Hovey, Dollie Acton, Kristi Anderson.

Greg called the meeting to order on December 10, 2024 at 6:05 pm. Opening devotion and prayer was led by Pastor Mark.

Jenny moved to approve the agenda with an addition. Seconded by Sue. Motion passed.

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

In the Treasurer's Report prepared by Kristi Anderson, the expenses in November were consistent with previous months. Both upstairs and downstairs pianos were tuned. The donations for use of the church from the Pop-Up Market in November will go toward apportionments. Donations for lunch will also go toward apportionments after expenses are covered. At the end of November, 79% of the budget had been spent.

From the Finance Committee, the November average weekly offering was slightly over the needed amount to meet budgeted expenses. Apportionment received in November was \$764. Average attendance in November was 24.

From the Trustees Committee, Pastor Mark reported they recently met after church. The furnace filters have been changed. The cleaning items are getting taken care of as needed.

From the Worship Committee, Pastor Mark reported the Thanksgiving Service went well and the music by Matt & Brenda Stier was enjoyed. Christmas Eve services will be at 3pm in Fountain, 4:30pm in Preston, 6pm in Spring Valley, and 7:30pm in Cherry Grove, with Pastor Mark and Phil Hebrink leading the services. On December 22, Matt & Brenda Stier will lead musical worship service.

From the Missions Committee, Sue reported the Mitten Tree is up in the narthex for donations of gloves, hats, scarves, etc. The cookie plates for shut-ins will be assembled December 11 at 1:30 pm.

From the Staff/Parish Relations Committee, Pastor Mark reported on the progress of filling the second pastor position. Tentatively, Pastor Mark's position will be split at 25% between all 4 churches, and the 2nd position would likely be 0.50 split between Spring Valley and Cherry Grove. The District Superintendent is looking for someone to fill the part-time position.

No report from the Evangelism and Outreach Committee.

From the Education Committee, Nancy reported registrations are going home with the kids on Friday for the January session of LIFT.

In Business, Kristi presented the 2025 budget. There was discussion about the internet and phone expenses and whether the internet is necessary. John moved to approve the budget as presented. Seconded by Jenny.

John asked about doing the goodie bags on Christmas Eve again this year. Sue will pick up apples, treats, and supplies. The goodie bags will be assembled after church on December 22.

During the Pastor's Report, Pastor Mark reported he did not have anything further to add. He reflected that it was a joy to see the church full of family and friends for Sophia's baptism on December 8.

John moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Jenny. Meeting adjourned at 7:22pm.

Respectfully submitted, Jenny Dornink, PUMC Council Secretary



JANUARY 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 	2	3	4
5 Communion 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship 6pm Cowboy Church	6 Men's Breakfast @ B&B in Preston- 8 a.m	7 Men's Breakfast @ B&B in Preston- 8 a.m	8 LIFT 3:15 at Preston UMC Confirmation- 7 p.m.	9 Faith Finance-6:30 Faith Council-7	10	11
12 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship	13 Cherry Grove Council -7	14 Men's Breakfast in Preston - 8 am Preston Council -6	15 LIFT 3:15 at Preston UMC Confirmation- 7	16 Blood Drive At Faith UMC 1p.m.-7 p.m.	17	18
19 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship	20	21 Men's Breakfast in Preston- 8 am Newsletter Deadline	22 LIFT 3:15 at Preston UMC Confirmation- 7	23	24	24
26 8:30 Fountain Worship 9 Faith Worship 10 CG Worship 11 Preston Worship	27	28 Men's Breakfast in Preston- 8 am	29 LIFT 3:15 at Preston UMC Confirmation- 7	30	31	

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



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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