

NORTH POINTE NEWS DECEMBER 2023

Christmas Message From Pastor Sue

Advent can be filled with worry about finding the perfect Christmas gifts. Deep down we want people in our lives to know they are special and that we love them. But sometimes we overlook the greatest gift of all... our very presence. Our spiritual ancestors were also worried— often about survival in the midst of political occupation. And the response of the scriptures is "the Holy Living One is with you." Like a shepherd who never leaves the flock, we are held close. This season, you are invited to be the gift of presence for our loved ones, for our communities, for those who need it most.

Our Advent worship series, *The Gift of Being Present*, will explore the gift of presence in our lives, our community, and the world. We hope you will join us each Sunday as we discuss being present with hope, being present with peace, being present with love, and being present with joy.

To aid in your Advent journey, a devotional journal will be available. This devotional journal, based on our worship series, draws attention to the importance of practicing mindfulness and how staying in the "here and now" has profound impacts on our wellbeing and quality of life. I hope you find time to use this journal.

I offer this prayer for Advent: Holy, living God, you are our light. Let hope, peace, love, and joy grow in our hearts each day so we can be a present of light to others. Unwrap and open our hearts. May it be so. Amen.

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Emerita Post (P.E.P. Talk) December, 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Faith,

So, are you all ready for Christmas? Gifts purchased? Decorations up? Parties planned?

Here's another question to ponder: Do you ever wonder how Jesus celebrated Christmas? Cake? Candles? An iPhone 15 wrapped in bright red and green paper underneath the blue spruce? I know. Ridiculous. Maybe even heretical. However, the question does open the door to a more careful look at the Biblical stories of Jesus' birth.

Only Matthew and Luke include a birth narrative. Why doesn't the event show up in any other early Christian writings? (BTW, Scholars don't have an answer to this - and besides "why" questions are bottomless pits with lots of answers and speculations)

Anyway, it's good to remember the gospels were written decades after Jesus' death and the writers were relaying stories they had heard about him. It's also good to remember that Jesus lived in a land occupied by Rome. In his book, God and Empire, author John Dominic Crossan reminds us that the Roman emperors were considered Sons of God and their conceptions and births required a humandivine collaboration. Emperors ruled with military might. Crucifixion was common. Historical data reveals that thousands of people were put to death through this barbaric punishment.

Along comes Jesus, a poet, who tells evocative stories that point to a God who is present, a God who is not punitive. A God of kindness, love, peacefulness and justice. A Ruler God who includes care for the anawim, - the poor and marginalized ones who remain faithful during difficult times. (Or the "unwashed" bunch as my prof Rosemary Radford Ruether called them.)

Crossan writes "the stories in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 not only exalt Jesus within his own Jewish tradition, but place his birth and destiny in deliberate contradiction to Roman imperial theology." Or, we might say that calling Jesus the Son of God was a poke in the eye to the emperor. From the Roman point of view, there could only be one Son of God at a time. No wonder early followers of Jesus threatened their oppressors. Kind of an early protest movement.

So, back to the Christmas story.

Recently, I discovered another book: How do Stories Save Us? This morning I listened to a story from a person whose family is dealing with two deaths: a suicide and an accidental killing. This person does not belong to a faith community. Yet, as they told the story, they heard themselves rediscover their own strength within - values of love, kindness, peace, and justice - that will help sustain them as they continue to interact with their family.

We each have many, many stories. Do you have one or two that help you get through tough times? More to the point, is there something in the Christmas Story that saves you? Helps you become more kind, loving, peaceful, and just?

May this year's Christmas Story reveal love and peace to you in a new and surprising way!

Nancy



Spend Christmas With Us

Blue Christmas Service Sunday, December 17th 3:00 pm

Christmas Eve Services
Sunday, December 24th
North Pointe United Methodist
Sunday Morning Worship 9:30 am

Christmas Eve Joint Worship Service
3:00 pm
5:00 pm

North Pointe United Methodist Church Christmas Day Worship Service will be at 10:00 am

Church Office Hours:

The Church Office will be closed the week after Christmas.



North Pointe Women's Christmas Gathering (United Methodist and United Lutheran and Friends)

Let's Celebrate and Share the Goodwill of Christmas When: Saturday, December 9th 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Where: North Pointe Church Lounge

What to Bring: A smile and a joyful spirit.

An unwrapped article of clothing to keep school-aged children warm in the cold months – hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, socks. Items should be new or like-new. (This is the NPUMC Mission project for December and January.)

A wrapped "white elephant" gift.

An appetizer or dessert to share. (Beverages will be provided.)

Reservations due by Tuesday, December 5th. You can call or email the UM office at 262-639-2441 / office@northpointeracine.org; or call, text or email Linda Jackson at 262-498-0431 / lindajackson@yahoo.com.



Mission News

Winter Project: Warm Items

Our November-January Mission project: warm clothing will now be delivered to children at S. C. Johnson Elementary and Olympia Brown Elementary School, beginning in 2024.

Please donate warm clothing to the children at these schools. Items may be jackets, hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and any other warm outer clothing would be appreciated. A box(s) is in the Narthex to collect warm items. The box will be available until Sunday, **January 24, 2024.**

DECEMBER SCRIP NEWS

Who did you forget this year on your Christmas List? We have just the answer for you: SCRIP CARDS!



SCRIP Card are great gifts for the mail person, paper person, school teachers, aunts and uncles, those who are "hard to buy for". Keep a few cards stashed away for the people that stop by with a gift for YOU and you have forgotten to get them a gift.

Don't forget the Christmas Eve Gatherings as well as Christmas Day. Maybe a SCRIP Card next to your families place setting as a small gift.

There is only one order day left in 2023. It is Sunday, December 10th!

Cash & Carry (cards that we carry 'in stock') are available for sale in the church office when Sue Dennison is in the office. Cash or checks are accepted. We carry a variety of cards in our Cash and Carry. Questions/help contact: Elinor Offerdahl, or Lillian Brown.

Food Pantry Items for DECEMBER:

Instant Potatoes or Package Potato Dishes Macaroni and Cheese Instant Oatmeal



Worship Assistants in DECEMBER

| <u>Liturgists</u> | | <u>Ushers Team C</u> | Wordsin |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| December 3 | Lauren Miksa | Rommel Ellis | Assistants |
| December 10 | Kathy Young | Jack Duchac | |
| December 17 | Jeanne Tyree Francis | Jared Ellis | |

December 31 Donald Tyree Francis

Suzanne Pritzlaff

December 24

<u>It' not too late to return your 2024 Commitment Card. You may leave it in the church office or the offering plate.</u>

2023 Dedication of Baby Quilts

Baby quilts that have been handmade by the North Pointe Quilter's Fellowship will be dedicated at the Sunday, December 10th Worship Service.



Nurse, Michelle, from the Racine Unified School District School Aged Parenting Program (SAPAR) will be in attendance to receive the quilts and to speak to us about the good things that are happening in the SAPAR program.

The goal of this program is to assist school-aged parents in either graduating from high school or completing their GED. SAPAR serves district students who are pregnant or are parenting while in school. The program helps students reduce obstacles and barriers that may prevent them from graduating.

SAPAR health care coordinators assist student with pregnancy and parenting health.



Global Mission Project

Thank you for all the wonderful baby hats you made for the hospital in Ghana, Africa.

Pastor Mensah came to pick them up. They will be going to Ghana the end of this month.

Thank you for Bridget McNeal and Mellie Concentine's Sorority Women for making caps as well. The total number was 215 caps. Great job ladies!





Racine Pi Chapter

Delta Kappa Gamma Society

Annual Craft and Bale Sale

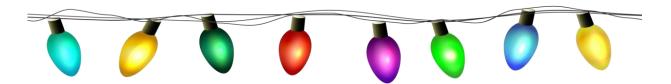


Tuesday, December 5, 2023 From 4:30 pm-6:00

pm At Christ United Methodist Church

5109 Washington Avenue Fellowship Hall

The proceeds of the fair will go to the Delta Kappa Gamma Society Scholarship Fund



YOU t.h. T.E.A.M. News

The YOU t.h. T.E.A.M. wants to wholeheartedly thank our North Pointe U.M.C. church family for all your love and support. Your encouragement and support mean more to us than we can convey, but our hearts are filled with gratitude for each and every one of you. Your support of our resin heart project along with the donations of time, energy, money, and candy for our Trick or Treat Community Event blessed all of us and so many more. Your generous spirit has allowed us to be able to be in ministry and continue dreaming. Thank You!!!



We have another offering for our church family. As of this writing, we are planning on having more of our resin hearts available for purchase as well as our newest project. **On Sunday December 3**, **10**, & 17 we will be offering 4 different Mason Jar Christmas Cookie Mixes (\$5-\$15 will have 1 gluten free option) as well as 3 different Hot Cocoa Ornaments for purchase. These will make great gifts for many. The additional funds raised through this project will be used to help us get the youth room painted and decorated the way we are planning, as well as starting the Banned Book Library Ministry. Right now – both these projects are visions, but we know they will become a reality because of all the love, support, and encouragement that we've experienced. We plan to start painting our room over the Christmas break from school. We are excited to make this room a reflection of us and look forward to showing it off to you all soon. May you have a wonderful and blessed Advent and Christmas season.

It's Time For North Pointe's Christmas Cookie Ministry

The **Christmas Cookie Ministry of North Pointe** continues this December. This ministry provides a gift box of two dozen cookies and candy to people in our congregation who are alone or have difficulty leaving home.



This year, we have at least 18 people on our Christmas Cookie Ministry list.

If you would like to make cookies this year as a donation, please contact Peter Eckblad at 2622217114. We need to have the cookies to Peter or to the church office by **December 17th.** The cookies will be delivered by Peter and Elena that week before Christmas. Thank you for your help and God bless you. The recipients are so appreciative of the cookies.



Women's Retreat Update

THANKS to the women who attended and participated in the Women's Retreat on Saturday, November 4th.

It was led by Rev. Heather Monkmeyer. *The Encircling Love and Presence f God*.

We explored Scripture, a variety of prayer practices. Creativity. (collages), lavish love and faithful presence of God. We all had a wonderful Christian learning journey.

Thanks to Gary Dennison, for helping us with the material to set up the Quilting Room. Special thanks to Paul Walquist, Eric Ellis and Rommel Ellis for coming to help take down after the event. We are truly grateful for their HELP>

We also thank the women for their donation of trats and finance.

Karen Moser, Linda Jackson, Kathy Young and Georgia Owens

Blue Christmas Service, Sunday, December 17th, at 3 pm



Martha Jackson Oppeneer again will provide luminaries for our Blue Christmas Service.

If you wish to have a luminary for someone please fill out this information and in order to give Martha time to prepare your luminary, please have it back to the church office by **Sunday**, **December 10th.**

There is no cost for the luminary. Form is included in this newsletter.

PLEASE INCLUDE: Dedication (e.g., "In memory of [name]")

You can use a first name only, or first and last. Feel free to add phrases such as, "In loving memory of [name]"

Tribute (e.g., "Forever in my heart")

Again, feel free to be creative. I will make the space work!

BLUE CHRISTMAS LUMINARIES

PLEASE INCLUDE:

Dedication: (e.g. "in memory of (name))

You can use a first name only, or first and last. Feel free to add phrases such as, "in loving memory of (name)".

Tribute: (e.g. "Forever in my heart")

Again, feel free to be creative. I will make the space work!

Signature line: (e.g. "love", love forever") Please

leave in the church office.



From Everyone In The Church Office And A Happy 2024





North Pointe United Methodist Church

3825 Erie, Racine, WI 53402

262-639-2441

Website: NorthPointeRacine.org Email: office@northpointeracine.org

WORSHIP AT NORTH POINTE

SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM COMMUNION ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

ALL ARE WELCOME