

# Pastor's Piece

December 2023

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Well, here we are, the first day of winter! No matter how hard we try to be ready, it seems every year December arrives and we wonder HOW? Wasn't it just the beginning of September? Shouldn't we have at least 3 months to prepare for Christmas??

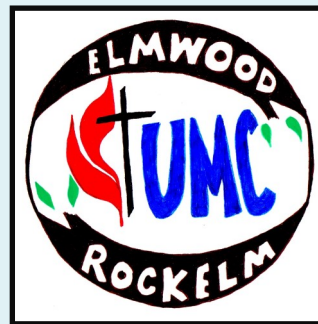
My prayer for each of us is that over the 23 days we have until we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, we will take time to focus on what this gift of God truly means for our lives. This should be a time of reflection, a time of anticipation and most importantly preparation. Beyond the gift buying, card sending and cookie baking, this is the season we are to make room in our lives for the light of Christ that comes to us through the love of God at Christmas.

December 3rd is the first Sunday of Advent. It marks the start of our journey to Christmas. Each of the four Sundays of Advent we will light a candle, and share a prayer of preparation. But don't stop there. Continue throughout the week by putting aside some time to read a scripture or Advent devotional. Look for the basket by the bulletins on Sunday. I will have some devotionals available for you at each church.

I look forward to seeing you during Advent as we gather for Sunday worship. The Elmwood Sunday School Christmas Program will be during worship (10:30 am) on December 17th, and of course we will gather for refreshments afterward. This year, the 4th Sunday of Advent falls on Christmas Eve, so we will begin our 4:00 pm Christmas Eve service at the Elmwood church, by acknowledging the final week of Advent and then transition to a celebration of the birth of Christ with the singing of carols. The service ends as we move from darkness to light singing Silent Night by candle light. Come, join us as we experience the wonder of God's love and the power of the Holy Spirit this Christmas season!

Shalom,

Pastor Meg



A Newsletter for the  
Elmwood and Rock Elm  
United Methodist  
Churches

Meg Erickson, Pastor

**Sunday Services:**  
Rock Elm 9:00 a.m.  
Elmwood 10:30 a.m.

**Email:** [ereumc@gmail.com](mailto:ereumc@gmail.com)

**Website:**  
<http://www.ereumc.org/>

**Facebook:**  
Rock Elm & Elmwood UMC

**YouTube:** Elmwood and Rock Elm United Methodist Church

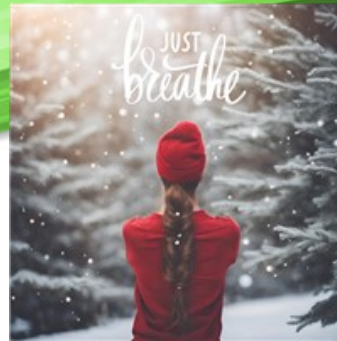
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### OF INTEREST

- Sunday school for 4K thru 8th grade during the school year
- Youth Group-6th-12th grade
- United Methodist Women
- Contemporary and traditional music

**Open Minds, Open Doors, Open Hearts**



by *Barbara Certa-Werner*

*Come near to God, and he will come near to you. (James 4:8)*

This spring, I participated in various self-evaluations to better understand my family of origin, intercultural competence, and spiritual gifts. All these inventories and/or interviews indicated that I am task-oriented; this would not surprise those who know me. I genuinely value getting things done, moving on to the next project, and accomplishing the goal.

The Wisconsin Conference clergy gathered for our Annual School of Ministry this fall. Our speaker invited us to various centering, focusing, and mindfulness exercises. At first, I resisted. My to-do list was a mile long; I felt pressure to meet my role's demands and prove that I could do this. I did not want to focus on a picture, take some deep breaths, or talk about it all. I wanted to get back to work.

I reluctantly participated as we moved into a breathing exercise connecting our breath to the Creator of all. And so we began, breathe in 2, 3, 4; hold 2, 3, 4; breathe out 2, 3, 4, breathe in 2, 3, 4; hold 2, 3, 4; breathe out 2, 3, 4 and breathe in 2, 3, 4; hold 2, 3, 4; breathe out 2, 3, 4. As I inhaled, held my breath, and exhaled, a deep rhythm began, and my mind wandered for a bit, and a beautiful thing happened – I slowed down. I was in the moment. My body relaxed, and I felt a letting go. As we moved out of this exercise, I noted how I felt mentally, spiritually, and physically. I felt more connected to God and the person God has created me to be.

We will soon be entering a high-demand cultural and religious season of Christmas. There are high expectations of presents, cards, concerts, celebrations, parties, worship services, children's church programs, school programs, and so much more. Whether you are task-oriented or not, the demand will throw you off – and a significant moment in your Christian walk – the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ may become just another thing to do.

When you are feeling this way – take a moment or two, ground yourself in the power of God, who breathes life into you, loves you, invites you into stillness: breathe in 2, 3, 4; hold 2, 3, 4; breathe out 2, 3, 4, breathe in 2, 3, 4; hold 2, 3, 4; breathe out 2, 3, 4 and breathe in 2, 3, 4; hold 2, 3, 4; breathe out 2, 3, 4.

Amen.





PLEASE JOIN US AT THE ELMWOOD UMC FOR OUR  
**SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023  
DURING OUR SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICE  
AT 10:30 AM  
WE WILL ALSO BE LIVE STREAMING THE SERVICE.



PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR  
**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023  
AT 4:00 PM  
ELMWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH





A little child,  
A shining star,  
A stable rude,  
The door ajar.  
Yet in that place,  
So crude, forlorn,  
The Hope of all  
The world was  
born.

Anonymous

Homemade  
GIFTS MADE EASY

## The Advent Candles

One mid-November in a city store  
Four candles stood tall on a shelf by the door  
They shared their dreams of giving light  
Of making their buyers world so bright

Said the **FIRST** one, "I think I shall be  
Giving light to carollers in a community!"  
Said the **SECOND**, "I think I shall give light  
To some poor person's home tonight!"  
Then the **THIRD** said, "As for me,  
I'll shall shine on top of a Christmas tree!"  
Then the **FOURTH** shouted to all,  
"I am going to the New Year's Eve ball."

Then one bright morning, a bit after sunrise  
To the poor candles' surprise  
They were bought and taken away  
To a church far, far, far away  
"Why are we all here?" They kept saying;  
Confused, worried, hoping and praying

Then a **LARGE** candle appeared in angelic white  
"Do not be afraid. I have heard your plight  
You are destined for greater than you can see  
For you, dear candles, shall be a light for me.

**First** candle, you are **HOPE** for the lost earth  
That waited so long for the Messiah's birth  
**Second** candle, you are a song of **PEACE** and **PREPARATION**  
To people in all the world, especially this nation  
**Third** candle, do you know you are such a **JOY**  
To every man, woman, girl and boy?  
**Fourth** candle, the greatest of all is **LOVE**  
The nature of the triune God above

So you see, you are fulfilling your mission to all  
To listen and answer to God's continuous call  
For I know the plans God has for you  
Plans to make bigger, better dreams come true

The candles smile bright and began to sing  
*Jesus is coming, Jesus is coming.....*



## FIND JOY IN THE JOURNEY

December 1	John 1:1-5
December 2	Isaiah 9:2-7
December 3	Isaiah 11:1-10
December 4	Jeremiah 33:14-16
December 5	Luke 1:5-10
December 6	Luke 1:11-17
December 7	Luke 1:18-25
December 8	Luke 1:26-38
December 9	Matthew 1:18-21
December 10	Matthew 1:22-26
December 11	Luke 1:39-45
December 12	Luke 1:46-56
December 13	Luke 2:1-5
December 14	Luke 2:6-7
December 15	Luke 2:8-12
December 16	Luke 2:13-14
December 17	Luke 2:15-18
December 18	Luke 2:19-20
December 19	Micah 5:2-5
December 20	Matthew 2:1-2
December 21	Matthew 2:3-6
December 22	Matthew 2:7-8
December 23	Matthew 2:9-12
December 24	John 1:14

My Heart's Song

## Merry Christmas

May you feel the presence of Lord in the candles  
that spreads their glow on Christmas and  
experience the wonder of His abiding love while  
you are guided through each day of the  
coming year by him! I wish the God's  
Blessings be with you on Christmas  
and New Year!

christmas.365greetings.com



**Secret Santa Giving Opportunity!**  
 We are collecting items/gift cards for students in need in the Elmwood School District.

Email [ereumc@gmail.com](mailto:ereumc@gmail.com) to sign-up to help!

We have a lot of kids in need of items.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord".

*Luke 2:10-11*

THANKSGIVING+CO.

**Prayer For Christmas Dinner**

Dear Jesus, Thank you for all that you are. Holy and merciful! Please forgive us of our sins and help us to forgive others. You've blessed us with being able to have this bountiful table of yummy food before us and wonderful friends and family to enjoy it with us. Equally be with and bless those that couldn't be here with us today. Keep us safe and focused on you this season. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CoffeeWithStarla.com

*Happy Birthday*

DECEMBER 3-PAUL MOSS  
 DECEMBER 7-KAMI JOHNSON  
 DECEMBER 7-PAMELA MARTIN  
 DECEMBER 11-BUTCH WELCH  
 DECEMBER 11-JULIE HOYT  
 DECEMBER 15-KIRK HOLT  
 DECEMBER 16-RUTH LUKES  
 DECEMBER 19-MIRANDA HOLCOMB



*The Legend of Poinsettia*

*Legend has it that a poor child in Mexico having nothing to give the Christ-Child on His birthday gathered some weeds into lovely bouquet; the only gift he had to offer. When he brought his gift to the manger, this simple weed was transformed into a brilliant red bloom -- a poinsettia. Now known as the beautiful "Flower of the Holy Night"*



**2024**

Happy New Year!





# 40 Christmas Activities Your Family Will *Actually* Enjoy!



## Family Together Time

- Cut or choose Christmas tree
- Have an ugly sweater competition
- Make a holiday greeting video and send it to friends and family
- Go on a Christmas themed scavenger hunt
- Have a Christmas movie marathon
- Make a Christmas song playlist and have a family dance party
- Take family photos with Santa
- Have a silly, Christmas-themed family photo shoot
- Take a ride to look at Christmas lights in the neighborhood
- Attend your community's tree lighting event
- Go to a Christmas show
- Go on a sleigh ride
- Read stories together by the Christmas tree
- Plan a red and green day
- Game night with hot cocoa and candy canes

## Christmas Cheer in the Kitchen

- Have a hot cocoa bar
- Have a cookie decorating party
- Make Christmas cookies
- Make reindeer treats
- Decorate a Gingerbread house

## Christmas Acts of Kindness

- Adopt a family for the holidays
- Donate new toy to charity
- Visit a nursing home and sing Christmas carols
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen
- Donate towels and blankets to an animal shelter
- Donate canned goods to a food pantry
- Leave a 'thank you' note for your mail carrier
- Send care packages or holiday cards to troops overseas

## Christmas Crafts for Kids

- Make Christmas tree ornaments
- Decorate a wreath
- Make your own ugly sweater
- Design Christmas cards
- Make mason jar snow globes
- Design and decorate gift tags
- Make paper snowflakes
- Write a letter to Santa

## Christmas Decorating Fun

- Decorate the Christmas tree
- Hang Christmas lights outdoors
- Deck the halls with Christmas decoration
- String popcorn garland and put on Christmas tree

2015 kiddiematters.com



# A Christmas Story

## December



- Day 1: Micah 5:2
- Day 2: Isaiah 7:14
- Day 3: Psalm 72:9-11
- Day 4: Jeremiah 31:15
- Day 5: Numbers 24:17
- Day 6: Isaiah 11:1-2
- Day 7: Luke 1:26-28
- Day 8: Luke 1:29-31
- Day 9: Luke 1:32-33
- Day 10: Luke 1:34-35
- Day 11: Luke 1:37-38
- Day 12: Luke 1:46-48
- Day 13: Luke 1:49-50
- Day 14: Luke 1:51-52
- Day 15: Luke 1:53-55
- Day 16: Luke 1:67-69
- Day 17: Luke 2:7
- Day 18: Luke 2:8-9
- Day 19: Luke 2:10-11
- Day 20: Luke 2:13-14
- Day 21: Luke 2:29-32
- Day 22: Luke 2:33-35
- Day 23: Matthew 2:1-2
- Day 24: Matthew 2:10-11
- Day 25: Matthew 2:16-18
- Day 26: John 1:1
- Day 27: John 1:4-5
- Day 28: John 1:14
- Day 29: John 1:15-16
- Day 30: 1 John 5:1
- Day 31: Romans 8:2-3

Kingdom Bloggers







# December 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>Submissions for the calendar and newsletter can be sent to by the 29th of each month: <a href="mailto:ereumc@gmail.com">ereumc@gmail.com</a></b></p>						
3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
<p><u>9:00 AM</u> Rock Elm In-Person Service <u>10:30 AM</u> Elmwood Live Stream and In- Person Service <u>11:30 AM</u> Charge Potluck</p>			<p><u>6:00 PM-7:30 PM</u> Youth Group/ Confirmation</p>			
10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
<p><u>9:00 AM</u> Rock Elm In-Person Service <u>10:30 AM</u> Elmwood Live Stream and In- Person Service</p>		<p><u>7:00-8:00 PM</u> Advent Book Study via Zoom</p>	<p><u>6:00 PM</u> Elmwood UMC Administrative Counsel Meeting</p>			
17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	23.
<p><u>9:00 AM</u> Rock Elm In-Person Service <u>10:30 AM</u> Elmwood Live Stream and In- Person Service <b>Elmwood Sunday School Christmas Program</b></p>			<p><u>6:00 PM</u> Candles &amp; Carols worship service at S.V. Senior Living &amp; Health Care Cam- pus (youth helping with the service. Families are invited to come)</p>			
24.	25.	26.	27.	28.	29.	30.
<p><u>4:00 PM</u> Christmas Eve Worship at Elmwood UMC</p>						
31.						
<p><u>9:00 AM</u> Rock Elm In-Person Service <u>10:30 AM</u> Elmwood Live Stream and In- Person Service</p>						



# AUTHORIZATION FORM

Elmwood United Methodist Church

For: Donations, Tithes and Offerings



FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		ENVELOPE/DONOR #		DATE	
Effective date of authorization: ____ / ____ / ____					
Type of authorization: <input type="checkbox"/> New authorization <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation amount <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation date <input type="checkbox"/> Change banking information <input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue electronic donation					
Last Name			First Name		
Address					
City				State	Zip
Email Address					
DATE OF FIRST DONATION: ____ / ____ / ____		FREQUENCY OF DONATION: <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly – Mondays <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Monthly – 1 <sup>st</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 1 <sup>st</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 15 <sup>th</sup>		FUNDS: <input type="checkbox"/> General/Operating <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
				AMOUNTS: \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ Total \$ _____	
CHECKING / SAVINGS	Please debit my donation from my (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Savings Account (contact your financial institution for Routing #) <input type="checkbox"/> Checking Account (attach a voided check below)			Routing Number: _____ Valid Routing # must start with 0, 1, 2, or 3  Account Number: _____ 0210 0001 0001 0001 0001 0001                     Routing Number Account Number Check Number	
	I authorize the above organization to process debit entries to my account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.				
Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____					

If using a checking account, please attach a voided check at the bottom of this page.

**Elmwood UMC Address:**  
307 S Main Street,  
Elmwood, WI

**Rock Elm UMC located at:**  
5591 170th Street  
Elmwood WI  
(about 6 miles west on HWY  
72)

**Rock Elm Mailing Address:**  
PO Box 52  
Elmwood, WI 54740

Our worship style is a blend of traditional and new. We combine older hymns with praise choruses. You can come as you are, people dress from semi-casual to casual. Blue jeans are very acceptable. If you come from a church background, been away for a long time, or maybe have never been to church, you will feel welcome here.



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

**The people of The United Methodist Church®**

## OFFICE

**Meg Erickson, Pastor**

**Katie Schneider, Secretary**

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**Youtube Channel: [Elmwood and Rock Elm United Methodist Church](#)**

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**Want to be on our email list? Send request to [ereumc@gmail.com](mailto:ereumc@gmail.com)**

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Elmwood ~ Rock Elm  
United Methodist Churches



PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE