



## OPEN DOORS UPDATE

News and Announcements



Celebrate Christmas Eve in the warmth and comfort of your home with your family and join us online as we retell the story of Christ's birth through scripture and song.

This will be a pre-recorded, online only, event on YouTube. It is set to premier (go live) at 4:00 pm on Christmas Eve. Gather your family around and join other church members and friends at 4:00 to celebrate, in unison, the birth of our King. The chat room will be active to wish others a Merry Christmas. Have a candle, or candles, on-hand to participate in a meaningful candlelight ceremony.

If you join late, the service will be in progress, but you can rewind the play. The service will remain online after the conclusion and be available to watch at any time.

Hello all!

In just a few short days until we celebrate the birth of that singular, person Jesus. We will sing and light candles as we always have. It may not be exactly the same but the hope, joy, peace and love of the season will still be as it always is, and will be until Jesus returns again to make all things complete.

May the light of Jesus find you and your family again this year and may that light guide you in the year to come.

Have a Merry and Joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

~ Pastor Chris



- For Advent, are rediscovering the Joy, Hope, Peace and Love of Christmas.
- Please have a candle ready for Christmas Eve, so as you watch our online service, you can sing by candle light with us. If you can, I would also ask that you stand by a window, preferable one that faces the street, so you can share the Christmas light with the world.
- I am asking people to take a video or picture with you or your family saying hi to the congregation in a virtual Christmas card. We've had many wonderful greetings so far. I hope many more of you will do this and we will play them in church on Christmas Eve so we can wish each other a Merry Christmas! (Technical notes: Please record video or take your picture in the horizontal format. Email to [opendoorsumc@bevcomm.net](mailto:opendoorsumc@bevcomm.net) or share via Messenger. Large files upload to Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, or similar cloud storage, and share the link with [opendoorsumc@bevcomm.net](mailto:opendoorsumc@bevcomm.net).)
- Remember to make a Christmas ornament using red paper and write on it what you are thankful for, then send in or drop off in the church mail slot in the NW door.

- I continue to urge you all to volunteer to come in and join in recording a service this winter so you can be at part of the service and people can see you. You can sing, read, pray or give testimony, and those are just examples – use your imagination. We will hopefully have many of you join in at different times for Christmas Eve so we can make this as special of a Christmas as we can.
- If you are having trouble finding our Sunday videos I suggest you make an account with YouTube. This takes an email address to sign up. You should find a place to click on the top right to make an account. If you need more help with this, here's a video that will walk you through the process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnmCMPTTiO8> Then you just need to subscribe to our channel, which you can do by going to our YouTube channel by either searching Open Doors UMC on YouTube or going to [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjsJrL3wwm\\_iCWJZN0WXb\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjsJrL3wwm_iCWJZN0WXb_Q) Then click on the word "Subscribe" that is in red, then click on the bell icon that is close by and that will give you an alert when we are going live or have a new video. On Sunday morning, just be ready at 9:30 and click on the video and you will join us live. You can click the video early and it will just say "going live soon" and you can wait till it starts. You can also find the link on our site <http://www.opendoorsumc.org/> that will bring you to the channel, just look for the YouTube icon in the red menu bar. Facebook is also an option and if you are friends with our page, then you will get alerts that we are going live. A note though, while it will show up on Facebook right away, it will take a bit to show up on YouTube. So if you don't see it right away, check back a little later. If you still have problems, feel free to contact me and I can help walk you through it.
- I continue to ask that if you would like to talk or meet, to give me a call and we can set up a time via Zoom, or in-person with all the precautions in place. This is part of the current situation but it is always best to make an appointment to be sure to catch me. You can also get the Marco Polo app on your smart phone and send me a video hello and I will say hi back.

## Advent Offering

Our Advent mission offering this year is going to two local organizations: Interfaith Caregivers and The Five Sisters Project. Please consider a generous Advent offering this year, as fundraising for all non-profits has been difficult this year, and these two organizations are making a difference in people's lives right in our area. You can find an Advent offering envelope in your December OneWay or in your box of offering envelopes. You can also give to the Advent Offering online from our website or GivePlus app.

**Interfaith Caregivers** is based out of Blue Earth, but serves all of Faribault County. They help seniors remain independent and make it possible for them to safely stay in their own homes as long as possible by providing a variety of services and non-medical care.

**The Five Sisters Project** is located on Broadway in Wells. They serve women experiencing crisis in their life such as domestic violence, abuse, depression. They provide short-term emergency housing, confidential comfort, spiritual coaching, and life skills training and resources.

## Year-End Giving

This year has been a struggle in so many ways. We thank the many of you who remained steady with your giving. And to those who switched over to electronic giving and set up a recurring schedule—*thank you!!!* That helps SO much to have that steady flow of contributions. E-giving on a recurring basis is the way to go if you have trouble remembering. Or maybe for you, since you aren't able to actually GO to church, then contributing hasn't been on your wave length. E-giving is a convenient solution for that. Set it up once on a weekly or monthly schedule and you don't have to think about it again until you want to make a change. Perhaps you can start before the end of the year!

Either way, whether you give by cash, check, or electronic, we appreciate every gift! And if you're able to give a little extra to help us meet our apportionments (we have \$13,497 to go) for the end of the year and give us a strong start in 2021, that would be fantastic. To have your contribution counted on your 2020 giving statement, please have it to the church office by noon on Friday, December 31, or post-marked by Dec. 31. Thank you!

## CARES Act allows tax payers to deduct up to \$300 of charitable giving

You can now write off \$300 of Charitable Contributions without itemizing. Taxpayers can take this universal deduction no matter whether they itemize or take the standard deduction on their taxes. In short, with the CARES Act, if you donate up to \$300 in cash to a qualified 501(c)(3) organization, which Open Doors is, your adjusted gross income will be reduced up to \$300.

## Pillowcase Mission

Hey, if you are bored and have some fun material at home, the Ronald McDonald House will take homemade pillow cases. They send one home with all the kids that come to the house during treatment. What a fun way to love on those kids, as they are going through such a tough time. I made and brought 18 pillow cases last week. Here's a tutorial video on how to make pillowcases: <https://youtu.be/MrYWCma9wgM>

If you have any questions, please call me. They are so much fun to make. And you can pray for the kids as you are sewing! ~ Sandy



## Merry Christmas

*For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation. (Psalm 100:5)*

You are loved!! During this time, remember how much the Lord loves you all! Talk to him daily, sing praises to Him, and let Him lead you now and always. And remember to love your neighbor as yourself! Have a very Merry Christmas, and remember that Jesus is the Reason for the Season! Blessings to you all! ~ Sandy

## Calendar:

- 12/16 "Disciple" Bible Study – 12pm & 6:30pm  
Youth Group Zoom – 5:30 pm
- 12/17 Newsletter Deadline
- 12/20 Online Worship – 9:30 am
- 12/21 Pre-recording of Christmas Eve worship – 6:00 pm
- 12/22 Youth Group Zoom – 5:30 pm
- 12/23 "Disciple" Bible Study – 12pm & 6:30pm
- 12/24 Christmas Eve worship premieres – 4:00 pm
- 12/25 **Merry Christmas!**
- 12/27 Online Worship – 9:30 am

## Prayer Concerns:

The family of Marlene Wedin, who died December 7 (memorial plans are pending). Those dealing with cancer: Aurora Blank, Charlie Johnson, Karen Gimberline, Bebo Getchell. Continued recuperation for Sherry Asmus, Dan Willaby, Reese Druckenmiller, Glenn Johanson. All the people fighting Covid-19 – everyone knows someone. All those who will be alone this Christmas, either because of Covid or because there's just no family around. Our military personnel. All others grieving loss, dealing with family crisis, or any type of physical or mental ailments.

**OFFICE HOURS:** I'll be in and out through the rest of December. Please call me at 507-317-4322 or email [opendoorsumc@bevcomm.net](mailto:opendoorsumc@bevcomm.net) if you need anything at all. Merry Christmas! ~ Sarah



**Facebook:** Streaming live at 9:30 am on Sundays and saved there as a recording to watch later.

**YouTube:** Streaming live at 9:30 am on Sundays and saved as a recording to watch later. Click the YouTube icon in the red menu bar on our website or search YouTube for Open Doors UMC to find our channel. "Subscribe" to our channel and click the "bell" icon to be alerted anytime that Open Doors goes live.

**Website [www.opendoorsumc.org](http://www.opendoorsumc.org):** Video recording is posted here to watch anytime.

**Bevcomm Cable TV:** Mondays at 11am and 6pm and Tuesdays at 8pm.



## Rare “Christmas Star” to appear in the western sky December 21.

The two largest planets in our solar system, Jupiter and Saturn, will align on Dec. 21 to create what's sometimes referred to as the “Christmas Star” or the “Star of Bethlehem.”

When the planets line up on the day marking the start of the winter solstice, they will appear to form a double planet. It's a rare event and one that hasn't been seen since the Middle Ages, according to Forbes.com. But in reality, the planets won't be close at all. It will just look like that to viewers on Earth.

The best time to view the “star” will be 45 minutes after sunset, which will set at 4:41 in Faribault County on December 21, so about 5:26 pm, and will last about an hour. It will be low in sky near the southwest horizon. Find an unobstructed place to view it and imagine being the wise men gazing at the heavens and being guided by this special light.

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” (Matthew 2:1-2)*

## Join the Go Light Your World Campaign



Minnesota Conference of the United Methodist Church is launching a “Go Light Your World” Campaign. Watch for a full-page ad in the Dec. 19 Star Tribune. Open Doors is going to participate by sending thank you cards to health care workers at the clinics and care facilities in town. If you would like to help with the mailing, contact Sarah at [opendoor-sumc@bevcomm.net](mailto:opendoor-sumc@bevcomm.net) or 507-317-4322. Or you might like to send your own cards to healthcare workers and other essential workers like law enforcement, postal & shipping carriers, grocery store workers, etc.

The theme “Go Light Your World” is meant to extend to Christmas Eve and beyond. On Christmas Eve, light up every window in your home. Church will be lit up. We may not be gathering, but hope is alive. Christ is born, and the light shines in the darkness. May we be a collective witness of hope in our world.

*“Carry your candle, run to the darkness  
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn  
And hold out your candle for all to see it  
Take your candle, and go light your world  
Take your candle, and go light your world”*

Go Light Your World.

