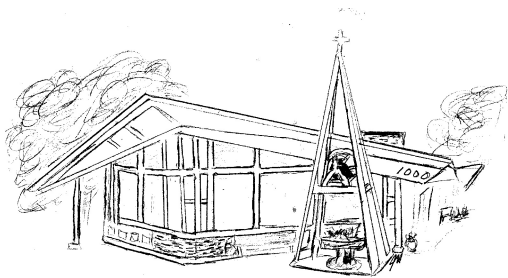


# Buffalo United Methodist Church



December 2020

1000 30<sup>th</sup> Street NE  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

## The Common Good

by Bishop Laurie Haller

This past week I was thinking a lot about the idea of the “**common good**” that is required of all of us in order to make it through the COVID-19 pandemic. So, I turned to Genesis chapter 1 (CEB) where the word “good” appears seven times.

- *On the first day, God said, “Let there be light,” and saw how **good** the light was.*
- *On the second day, God created the waters and dry land.*
- *On the third day, God created the earth and seas and saw that it was **good**.*
- *God also created plant life and fruit trees and again proclaimed it **good**.*
- *Stars, sun, and the moon were created on the fourth day, and God saw how **good** it was.*
- *On the fifth day, God created birds and sea animals and saw how **good** it was.*
- *On the sixth day, God created every kind of wildlife and saw how **good** it was. Finally, God created humanity in God’s own image. When God saw everything that God had made, God called it “supremely **good**.”*

At the same time, I noticed that there is a place where the words “**not good**” are used. In Genesis 2:15, we read, “The LORD God took the human and settled him in the Garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it. God said, “It’s **not good** that the human is alone. I will make him a helper that is perfect for him.” It was **not good** that it was **not good**, so God put Adam to sleep and took a rib from him, fashioning a woman.

Jesus made it clear in John 10:10b (CEB) that his mission from God was to proclaim and advocate for abundant life for each person on this earth. “I came so that they could have life – indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.”

You and I were created and called good so that we could embody the common good by our words and actions. *Brittanica.com* defines “common good” in this way: “In philosophy, economics, and political science, the common good refers to either what is shared and beneficial for all or most members of a given community, or alternatively, what is achieved by citizenship, collective action, and active participation in the realm of politics and public service.”

Our corporate responsibility to ensure the common good for all is clearly expressed in the Preamble to our US Constitution, “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America” . . . .

My friends, this is a time when we must think seriously and soberly about the common good. I implore you to do all that you can to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Too many people have died, and too many people are still becoming infected. Genesis reminds us that God not only creates each person in God’s own image but calls everything that God has made “supremely good.”

Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks, even in the midst of hardship. . . . Now it is our time. Be wise. Be diligent. Be safe. Be grateful, and work for the common good. We can do this together!

[The complete text of Bishop Haller’s November 16 reflections on the common good can be found at her blog *Leading from the Heart*.]

## December Special Offering

We are now collecting money that will be given to HACAP in order to provide holiday gift certificates for a family in the Garfield school district. Donations can be mailed to the church or placed in an envelope in the church mail box. Please mark your donation for the Garfield family.

## Buffalo's Financial Obligations

Thanks to everyone for continuing to support the church as we deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and our recovery from the August derecho. All those pennies and prayers are deeply appreciated.

## Bless the Trustees

A special word of appreciation for everyone, guided by the Trustees, who have been working to restore the church and grounds to a more normal state. Thanks to Mitch, Terry, and Barb Crawford, the west side of the church is ready for new gutters. As for the new shed, it is completed and the lawn tools and machinery are inside, protected from the elements. A rousing "Hurrah" for Judy and Gary Hackney, who spent untold hours to insure the construction of the shed was completed before winter.

## We Did It Again!

It was another successful Election Day Bake Sale. Thanks to everyone who contributed baked items and other tasty treats, we earned a profit of \$185.

## Cancellations

- In accordance with the guidelines of the Iowa UMC and Bishop Haller's recommendations, there will be no church services or church activities at Buffalo until after January 10, 2021.
- Our Annual Charge Conference has again been delayed because of the relentless virus; no date has been set for when it will be convened.
- No bake sale donations for the First Nation food baskets on December 16.

*"Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home."* ~G. K. Chesterton

## Books to Welcome Advent

For those of us looking for books appropriate for the Advent Season (perhaps as gifts for grandchildren?), here are some recommendations from the staff of the United Methodist Publishing House:

### • Little Mole's Christmas Gift

The second in a series, this children's picture book starring Little Mole is a Christmas tale of kindness and generosity. The book is written by Glenys Nellist, a United Methodist pastor's wife, and illustrated by Scottish artist Sally Garland.

### • Stillness of Winter

This beautiful gift book from journalist and author Barbara Mahany is part spiritual guide, almanac, scrapbook, field notes, and recipe box, sharing ideas for experiencing joy and curiosity in the winter months.

### • Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas

United Methodist pastor and author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, while exploring the historical and personal significance of Jesus' birth. Incarnation is a standalone book that is also available as a four-week Bible study with leader guide, DVD, and children and youth resources.

### • Making Room

This Advent study explores the "warmth of welcome" at Christmas as readers follow interactions with Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the magi. As Jesus makes room in God's Kingdom for all people, including the marginalized, Dr. Ed Robb (a UMC pastor and author) asks us to ponder who we can make room for this Christmas.

### • The Advent Calendar of Devotions 2020

This pocket-sized book provides daily devotions centered on the importance of Advent and preparing to celebrate Jesus' birth. Cokesbury sells the devotional as an ebook or the physical booklet in packs of 10.

Other perennial UMPH favorites include:

- *The Gift of the Nutcracker* and *The Redemption of Scrooge* by Matt Rawle
- *Not A Silent Night* by Adam Hamilton
- *7 Days of Christmas: A Season of Generosity* by Jen Hatmaker
- *Heart & Home for Christmas: Celebrating Joy in Your Living Space* by Victoria Duerstock
- *Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience* by Magrey deVega, et al.
- *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent* by Amy-Jill Levine
- *Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph* by Adam Hamilton
- *Christmas Gifts that Won't Break* by James W. Moore with Jacob Armstrong
- *Sent: Delivering the Gift of Hope at Christmas* by Jorge Acevedo, et al.

# December 2020

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
<b>All Sunday Morning Church Services Canceled for December</b>		1 World Aids Day	2	3	4	5
6 Second Sunday of Advent	7	8	9	10 Hanukkah begins at sundown	11	12
13 Third Sunday of Advent	14	15	16	17	18	19 Publication of Dickens' <i>A Christmas Carol</i> in 1843
20 Fourth Sunday of Advent	21	22	23 Publication of "The Night Before Christmas" in 1823	24 Christmas Eve	25 <b>Christmas Day</b>	26
27	28	29	30	31	1 New Year's Day 2021	

## December Birthdays:

9 – Eileen Kaplan  
18- Faye Reynolds

11- Gary Hackney  
24 – Jim McKibbin

## The Bishop's Weekly Advent Series

For each week of Advent and Christmas Eve, the "Web Worship" resources page on Buffalo's website will be posting a short service conducted by Bishop Laurie Haller. This series of 5 video programs is an invitation for everyone to join her on a journey into a new Christian year as we renew our collective practices in Prayers, Presence, Gifts, Service, and Witness.

The brief messages are based upon a lectionary passage for each Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve. In the message for the First Sunday of Advent, Bishop Laurie asks us to consider how we respond to this fundamental question: "What is it that holds us together as people called United Methodists?"

## Barb & Gary Building a Shed



## **Pandemic Guidance from Bishop Laurie and the Iowa Conference Appointive Cabinet**

In light of worsening Covid-19 positivity rates, Bishop Laurie Haller and the Appointive Cabinet is directing clergy and churches to cease in-person indoor worship and church activities through and including January 10, 2021. "We need to remember our neighbor during this time and John Wesley's rule of Do No Harm," said Bishop Laurie Haller. "This directive comes out of love for our neighbor."

The Re-entry Team, Extended Cabinet, and Communications Team will meet and discuss ways that the Iowa Conference can guide churches in utilizing technology and supporting shifts in ministry and planning for the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany season. "One of the most comforting truths for the Christian is the ever-present reality that God is with us," said Rev. Dr. Lanette Plambeck of the Re-entry Team. "God's presence is one of the greatest gifts God gives God's people. God is personally near. Even now--when we are in these pandemic times--this is our truth and where we place our hope."

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## **World Aids Day**

The United Methodist Global AIDS Committee has announced plans for a special service to commemorate World AIDS Day on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 1:00 PM CT. World AIDS Day, which occurs on December 1 each year, serves as opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV and AIDS, to show support for people living with HIV or AIDS, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day. The worship service--held virtually--will be free and available to all online at [www.umc.org/en/content/world-aids-day-2020-worship](http://www.umc.org/en/content/world-aids-day-2020-worship).

## **Buffalo Website Resources**

In November we introduced two new pages on the church's website:

- **Web Worship.** On this page you can find Pastor Kathryn's Sunday Morning Worship programs (supplemented by audio and video links) and other resources--such as the Bishop's five-part Advent series.
- **Heavenly Recipes.** Recipes with brief commentaries submitted by Buffalo's community of great cooks.

