

## *Advent and Christmas Events*

Sunday, December 15, Children's Christmas Sing during 9:30 am worship  
Wednesday, December 18, 6:30 pm, Children's Christmas Pageant  
Wednesday, December 18, 4:00 pm Advent Service of Peace and Healing, musical prelude 3:45 pm, St. Peter's Lutheran Church

## *Christmas Eve Services*

December 24 – 4:30 pm, Christmas Eve Worship (nursery available)  
service will be livestreamed  
December 24 – 10:00 pm, Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

No Super Wednesday December 25 and January 1

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Pastor Donna Dempewolf  
David Miller, Piano

## *Hanging of the Greens* *Wednesday, December 4, 2024*



**Northfield United Methodist Church**  
**1401 S. Maple St., Northfield, MN 55057**  
**507-645-5689**

# *Hanging of the Greens*

*December 4, 2024 - 6:30 pm*

## **Welcome**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 9:2, 6

**Hymn:** *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing* UMH #240 vs. 1

## **The Colors**

Advent is the time of preparation for Christmas. The church uses colors to mark the changes of the church seasons. Blue is the color of Advent, a color that symbolizes hope: think of the night sky before the dawn arrives. Tonight, it is used in hopeful anticipation as we prepare this house of God for the celebration of Christmas.

**Hymn:** *It Came upon the Midnight Clear* UMH #218 vs. 1

## **The Candles**

Candles change the unknown into the known. They change darkness into light. One legend is that Mary and Joseph found shelter on Christmas Eve by following a lighted candle in the stable window. The ancient church almost immediately took the candle as a symbol for Jesus Christ who is the Light of the World.

**Hymn:** *Silent Night* UMH #239 vs. 1 & 4

## **The Advent Wreath**

Advent has been observed by the church for over 1500 years. The Advent wreath came from German and Scandinavian traditions. It has four candles on the outside ring. This year the four candles represent Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, and are lit on each Sunday of Advent. Let the circle of the wreath remind you of God's endless presence and love. Let the green be a sign of hope and newness. Let the light of each candle remind you that it is Christ's light that brightens the whole world and guides us on our way.

**Hymn:** *What Child is This?* UMH #219 vs. 1

## **The Evergreens**

The use of evergreens, cones, and fragrant herbs for making wreaths and garlands dates back to Biblical times. The evergreen boughs represent eternal life and the circular wreath tells of the love of God through Jesus Christ, which is eternal and without beginning or end.

**Hymn:** *The First Noel* UMH #245 vs. 1

## **The Poinsettias**

The only North American symbol used to decorate our church tonight is the poinsettia. Mexicans call it the "Flower of the Holy Night" because its white or red leaves resemble the brilliant Bethlehem star. Mexican legend says that a boy had no gift to give to the baby Jesus, so he took all he had – a bundle of twigs – to the manger. His friends laughed, but when he laid the twigs at the foot of the manger, they bloomed into beautiful red flowers. Poinsettias got their name from the first U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett. He brought the plants to the States in 1828 and we bring the plants to our sanctuary again this Advent.

**Hymn:** *O Come All Ye Faithful* UMH #234 vs. 1

## **The Manger**

Mary and Joseph used a manger, an animal feeding box, as a cradle for baby Jesus. It was filled with dry grass and straw that the animals ate. Francis of Assisi first staged the nativity scene in 1223 using real people and live animals. Over the centuries it has remained one of the most endearing symbols of Christmas.

**Hymn:** *Away in the Manger* UMH #217 vs. 1

## **The Tree**

Trees had religious meaning even before Christians started using them at Christmas. The Romans trimmed their trees with trinkets and candles during their Sun God Holiday. One legend says that in Germany, Martin Luther, the leader of church reform, was inspired on Christmas Eve by the beauty of tall evergreens against the starry sky. He cut a fir tree down, took it home, and put candles on its branches. The candles stood for the stars in the heaven above Bethlehem.

**Song:** *O Little Town of Bethlehem* UMH #230 vs. 1

## **The Christmas Story**

"Twas the Evening of Christmas" by Glenys Nellist

## **Prayer for the Advent and Christmas Season**

In every heart, there lies a Bethlehem:

**A place where light shines with tender memories,**

**A place where angelic voices are clearer,**

**A place of child-like wonder and awe,**

**A place where the humility of shepherds and the wisdom of the magi embrace.**

In every heart, there lies a Bethlehem:

**A time to gather from lands far and near as family and friends,**

**A time to kneel in prayer and praise at the manger,**

**A time to decorate and celebrate in the house of God,**

**A time to make ourselves ready for the birth.**

May the preparation of our hearts and our halls fill us with Christmas Joy!

**Hymn:** *Joy to the World* UMH #246 vs. 1