

## *From Pastor Moira's Desk . .*

The sun is shining, and it makes my office pretty warm, but that's an illusion. Outside the wind is blowing and we have the first "feels like" temperatures of the season in the teens. I know, it's Wisconsin, and this is to be expected, but those first bitter cold days are always a bit of an adjustment for my brain and my body, not to mention my spirit which takes a bit of convincing that we'll make it through the cold.

Even though these are the first bitter temperatures of the season, this year has already felt intensely cold and dark because there is so much happening ~ in our lives, our communities, our country, and the world ~ that weighs heavy on my heart and mind. The very places the baby we celebrate this month would grow to walk are under siege as Israel continues its war against Gaza, and now bombing Lebanon and beyond. The war in Ukraine slogs on through yet another winter, the war in Syria is more than twelve years old, Sudan is struggling with famine, and Taiwan has been battered by storm after storm. Our country is in the midst of the uncertainty that transition in national leadership brings, and people are just beginning real recovery after Hurricane Helene. Closer to home some (many maybe all) of the people we love are struggling with jobs, and health, and their finances, their relationships, and more. And this season is filled with grief for a lot of people, missing the folks we love who have gone on to life everlasting, whose presence we miss more intensely during the holiday season. Our collective anxiety is incredibly high, and worry about what next year and even tomorrow is going to bring seems to be everywhere.

Yet, as I look at this statue of Mary, I try to imagine what it might have been like for her, pregnant with Jesus, in the midst of the Roman occupation, invited by God to participate in the incredible miracle of God becoming human. And I'm reminded that anxiety and worry have always been part of our lives. They might just be part of how we're wired as humans. But there is more, that more we celebrate this season ~ the promise of Emmanuel, God truly with us. The



promise isn't that the road will be easy (for it surely wasn't for Mary & Joseph), or that if we are faithful "enough" the problems of our lives will vanish, but it is that God will always, always be with us, knowing our lives, and walking with us through the ups, the downs, and the in-betweens, in green pastures and the deepest valleys of our lives. As we live into these days, as the cold settles in and the nights grow longer, I pray we might find our comfort, a bit of peace and hope and maybe even joy in the midst of all that we are facing in the miracle that is happening again for us this year ~ Emmanuel, God with us bringing God's word of unending love and amazing grace, the promise to share our lives and remind us of the path to peace

*In hope and peace, Pastor Moira*

### 2024 Church Council Members

Sally Dickinson ~ President, 920-525-2137  
Trevor Rohloff ~ Vice-President, 920-228-0950  
Lizzie Tesch - financial secretary, 920-370-8692  
Lisa Waterstradt - treasurer, 920-422-0933

Connie Rohloff ~ 920-228-0940  
Brian Holz ~ 920-585-0078  
Pastor Moira ~ 715-851-3080

### Parish Relations Committee Members

Sally Dickinson ~ 920-525-2137  
Bob Menning ~ 920-268-8229  
Steve Seefeldt ~ 715-573-3509

Lizzie Tesch ~ 920-370-8692  
Steve Hanson ~ 920-984-3986

### UCC Christmas Fund

The Christmas Fund supplements the annuities (pension) and health insurance premiums of lower income retired clergy and lay employees of UCC churches, as well as providing emergency grants for clergy with emergencies including medical expenses and disaster recovery. Look for the envelopes at both doors to the sanctuary, or send a check with "Christmas Fund" in the memo.

Check Your Voter Registration,  
know what's on the next ballot,  
check the names of your elected  
officials, order an absentee ballot...

<https://myvote.wi.gov>  
*Next election*  
*Tuesday April 1, 2025*

### ***Congregational Annual Meeting*** ***Sunday January 26, 2025*** ***after worship***

We will review 2024, approve the 2025 church budget & elect council members.

If you have a report to submit for the Annual Meeting book, please get them to Pastor Moira as soon as possible.

If at all possible (given how bank statements work), reports are due by **Sunday January 5th**

Report books will prayerfully be available by **Sunday January 12th.**

### ***Christmas Program 2024***

#### Recording

Saturday December 7th

Foods provided

Talk with Pastor for more info

#### Program Sunday

Sunday December 15th

## Youth Group Turkey Fundraiser

Thank you to everyone who contributed.

**You're still welcome to make a contribution.**

**Send a check to church with "Turkey Fund"**

in the memo. Questions? Talk with Pastor Moira



*"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."*

*Luke 1.78-79*

## Stock The Pantry Shelves

If you're interested, here is the entire year's calendar of pantry focus items.

Copies are also available at church

January	Saltines
February	Cereal
March	Toilet Paper
April	Brownie & Cake Mixes
May	SPAM & Tuna
June	Spaghetti Sauce
July	Peanut butter & Jelly
August	Ramen
September	Hamburger Helper
October	Canned Fruit & Juice
November	Ketchup & Mustard
December	Jello & Pudding

## Stock The Pantry Shelves

"When I was hungry, you fed me."

Matthew 25.35

**November Focus**

**Jello & Pudding Mixes**

**Make life a little sweeter ...  
vanilla & chocolate pudding  
and orange & red jello  
are the best,  
but any flavor is great.**



**Remember, it never needs to be name brand & you can always send a monetary contribution as well with "food pantry" in the memo.**

## St. John's UCC Black Creek Council News

In November, the Council gathered with our friends in parish leadership from Cecil & Trinity for a delicious dinner prepared by Pastor Moira and a time of fellowship.

*Our next meeting is Tuesday December 10th at 6:30pm*

## Women's Guild News & Events

Sunday December 1st after worship

All Church Christmas Potluck

Join us for a potluck lunch after worship along with some carol singing & a time of fellowship & community

Program ~ Sue Biese , Vi Brown-Luebke,

Connie Rohloff & Jan Rohloff

Decorations ~ Audrey Hooyman Blake & Roberta Lorenz

There is no gathering scheduled for January

## SCRIP CORNER

SCRIP is the easiest way you can support our church ~ buy gift cards that you & your recipient get the full value of, and the church gets a percentage of the value (generally 2-10%).

*We generally order on the first Sunday of the month and when there are enough orders to offset the shipping.*

Look for the SCRIP station in the Gathering Room.

Questions? Talk with Brandi Schomisch or Pat Schomisch



## News From The Church Garden... The Garden of Eatin

The garden has been made ready for winter. We put down landscape fabric & lots of mulch so hopefully we have less weeding between the beds next year. Many thanks to Devin Schmidt for his help with this project. Everything that needs to be put away has been stored for the winter, and the fence damaged by the falling tree has been repaired.

Bulbs have been planted, and now we wait, dreaming of next year's crops

~ beans, peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes & carrots (plus maybe radishes).



# Readers & Greeters Schedule

If you are unable to make your date, please talk with Pastor Moira & Connie Wheeler.

On communion Sunday, greeters help serve communion.

## Sunday December 1 ~ Communion

*First Sunday of Advent*

Reader Randy Miller  
Greeters Trevor & Sarah Rohloff  
Gary Vander Linden  
Robin Schmidt

## Sunday December 8

*Second Sunday of Advent*

Reader Jan Rohloff  
Greeters Ryan & Stephanie Julius

## Sunday December 15

*Third Sunday of Advent*

*Christmas Program Sunday*

Reader Audrey Blake  
Greeters Gene & Audrey Blake

## Sunday December 22

*Fourth Sunday of Advent*

Reader Audrina Bohn  
Greeters Steve Hanson & Jan Rohloff

## Tuesday December 24 ~ Communion

*Christmas Eve, worship at 7pm*

Reader Bob Menning  
Greeters Bob & Carla Menning  
Connie Wheeler  
Sally Dickinson

## Sunday December 29

Reader Devin Schmidt  
Greeters Steve & Pat Schomisch

## Sunday January 5 ~ Communion

Reader Sue Biese  
Greeters Sue Biese & Sally Dickinson  
Steve Hanson  
Keith Kruse

## Sunday January 12

Reader Audrina Bohn  
Greeters Gene & Audrey Blake

## Sunday January 19

Reader Vi Brown-Luebke  
Greeters Vi Brown-Luebke  
Duane Henke

## Sunday January 26 ~ Annual Meeting

Reader Sally Dickinson  
Greeters Mike & Sally Dickinson

## Sunday February 2 ~ Communion

Reader Bob Menning  
Greeters Bob & Carla Menning  
Trevor & Sarah Rohloff

## Sunday February 9

Reader Randy Miller  
Greeters Ryan & Stephanie Julius

## Sunday February 16

Reader Jan Rohloff  
Greeters Jan Rohloff & Carol Schmidt

## Sunday February 23

Reader Isaac Schmidt  
Greeters Steve & Pat Schomisch

# Scripture Readings

## Sunday December 1, 2024

*First Sunday of Advent ~ Hope*

*Communion*

Isaiah 60.1-2, 17b-19

Luke 1.67-79

Sermon ~ Preparing

## Sunday December 8, 2024

*Second Sunday of Advent ~ Peace*

Isaiah 40.1-5

Luke 1.46-55

Sermon ~ Great Things

## Sunday December 15, 2024

*Third Sunday of Advent ~ Joy*

Christmas Program Sunday

## Sunday December 22, 2024

*Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ Love*

Isaiah 55.8-13

Matthew 1.18-25

Sermon ~ Fostering

## Sunday December 24, 2024

*Christmas Eve*

*A service of lessons (scriptures) & carols...*

Isaiah 9.2-7

Luke 1.26-79

Luke 2.1-20

Matthew 1.18-25

Matthew 2.1-12

## Sunday December 29, 2024

Luke 2.21-52

Stories & Cookies

# Parish Celebrations

*If your special day is incorrect let Pastor Moira know.*

## December Birthdays

1st	...	Brandy Burrows Julie Hein Portia Fenske
5th	...	Brian Holz
7th	...	Sheila Neff Lella Baker
9th	...	Kennen Peotter
10th	...	Pastor Moira
12th	...	Lisa Raaths
14th	...	Ila Mae Jens
18th	...	Brandon Rohloff
19th	...	Justin Kruse Michael Felton
20th	...	Hollie Wheeler Mark Schmidt Scott Sassman
22nd	...	Samantha Shepard
23rd	...	Keira Neff Terry Rihm
24th	...	Mike Rohloff
25th	...	Mary Tesch
27th	...	Austin Nieland
30th	...	Montgomery Bohn

## December Anniversaries

8th	...	Wes & Angie Biese
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## US Mass Shootings in 2024

**1/1 - 11/26: 466**

*According to the  
Gun Violence Archive*

# December 2024

How to reach Pastor Moira: phone 715-851-3080  
email pastormoira73@gmail.com

Pastor's In The Office  
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays  
Please call/text to make sure

Sunday Schedule: Trinity ~ 8:45am Worship  
Black Creek ~ Christian Education 9am & Worship 10:15am  
Cecil ~ 4pm Worship

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 Communion Advent One</b>  Black Creek Christmas Potluck after worship	2  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> <b>Key to locations:</b>                      BC = St. John's Black Creek                      T = Trinity                      C = St. John's Cecil                      ALC = Ascension Lutheran                 </div>	3  10am ALC Pantry board  2pm T Circle  6:30pm BC Council	4  6:30pm BC Choir	5	6	7  BC Christmas Program Recording
<b>8 Advent Two</b>  BC Choir sings  11:30am BC Confirmation	9	10  10am ALC Pantry board  2pm T Circle  6:30pm BC Council	11  6:30pm BC Choir	12  9am C Closet work day  5:30pm T Council	13	14
<b>15 Advent Three</b>  <i>Christmas Program Sunday</i>	16	17  Noon-3pm C Closet	18  4-6pm ALC Pantry  6:30pm BC Choir	19	20	21  9-11am ALC Pantry
<b>22 Advent Four</b>	23	24  <b>Christmas Eve</b> <i>Candles, carols &amp; communion</i> 3pm Cecil 5pm Trinity 7pm Black	25  <i>Merry Christmas Blessings</i>	26	27	28
29  <i>Last day for contributions to be recorded for 2024</i>	30	31  Have a safe & happy New Year's Eve	January 1  <i>Happy New Year</i>	January 2	January 3	January 4  <i>Tomorrow... Communion SCRIP order</i>

December  
2024

"The purpose of this congregation is to be a faith community promoting the kingdom of God through worship, teaching, and action ... get ready!"

**St. John's United Church of Christ**  
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Black Creek, Wisconsin 54106

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Facebook: St. John's UCC Black Creek  
YouTube: search for Moira Finley

**Pastor Moira Finley**  
Phone 715-851-3080  
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**Wisconsin Conference UCC**  
[www.wiucc.org](http://www.wiucc.org)

**United Church of Christ**  
[www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)



## *Christmas Eve ~ Tuesday December 24th*

Join us for worship with candles, communion, scriptures & music as we welcome the newborn Jesus.

**Cecil ~ 3pm**

**Trinity ~ 5pm**

**Black Creek ~ 7pm**

A special edition of our print & video outreach will be posted to Facebook & YouTube and emailed no later than the morning of Christmas Eve.