

December 2023

# THE BANNER

First United Methodist Church of Berthoud Monthly Newsletter

From Pastors Mark and Sandie Johnson



Dear Friends,  
It's the time of year that we like to settle down in the evening with a glass of eggnog and watch Christmas movies. After several years of movies, and many gallons of

eggnog, it seems like 90% or more of all Christmas movies include: a city slicker who travels to a picturesque small town a week before Christmas and meets a charming local. Besides the city slicker and the charming local there is a precocious child, a faithful dog, and a mysterious, but very wise, older person. The movie concludes with a Christmas tree lighting in the town square and caroling as a light snow falls. And, of course, the happy ending is credited to the true meaning of Christmas.

The Bible says the meaning of Christmas is something altogether different. John's Gospel shares: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." (John 1: 1-5, 14 NRSV)

Look again at the final verse: "... the Word became flesh and lived among us." The original Greek says "and he pitched his tent

next to us." If we were to write a "Broncos Fan Version of the Bible" we might translate this "and the Word left the Owners Box and is hanging with the folks in the South Stands."

Theologians call this *incarnation* which means "embodied in flesh." For Christians, Christmas celebrates God's decision to step out of eternity and into history in the person of Jesus Christ. As a living breathing person, like you and me, Jesus experienced all that humans experience. And Jesus, fully divine, has the power and compassion to transform our lives. And in incredible grace, Jesus gave himself for us and was resurrected from the dead so all who believe in Him can have eternal life. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Crucifixion and resurrection are the meaning of Easter story and the key word for Easter is *atonement*.

Pastor Sandi and I wish for each of you a Christmas season in which the true meaning of Christmas fills your lives. Almighty God incarnated in the person of Jesus has come into the world and into each of our lives that we might live lives of hope, faith, joy, and love. As the old Christmas carol proclaims,

"Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

From our family to you and yours: Merry Christmas!

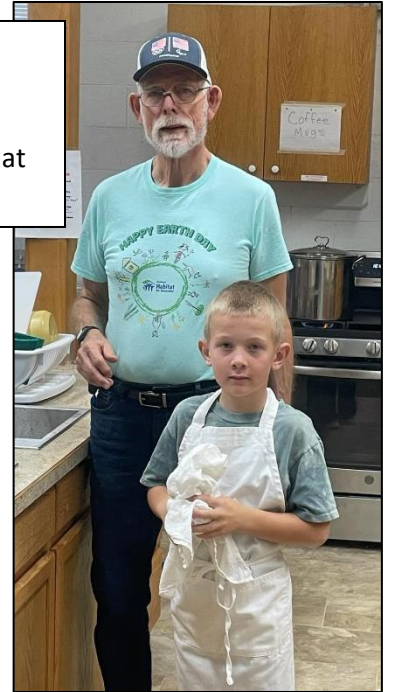
Blessings,  
Pastors Mark and Sandie

# A Look Back At November

November had a lot of events!  
And some of them were  
captured in photographs!



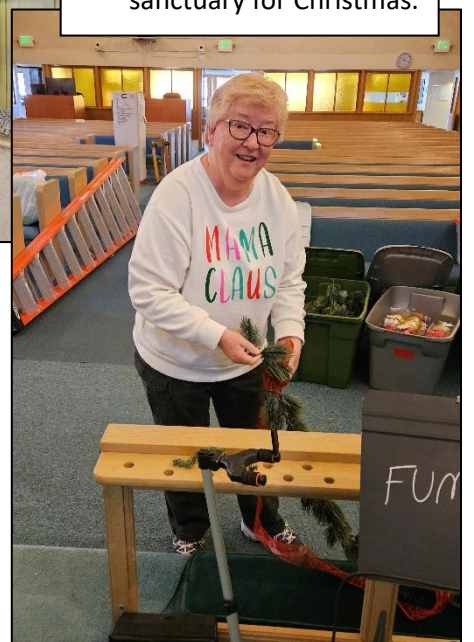
The Harvest Home Dinner on  
November 19th got rave  
reviews, and many people  
attended! This is the photo that  
was taken at the event. →



The United Women of Faith  
(formerly UMW) gathered on  
November 4<sup>th</sup> for the annual  
Thank Offering.



On November 29<sup>th</sup> a group  
of volunteers decorated the  
sanctuary for Christmas.







## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Don Elwood Christmas Concert

Don Elwood and his Big Band will be performing their Christmas concert in our sanctuary on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00 PM. All are welcome, and the concert is free, so spread the word!



### Blue Christmas

For many, the Christmas season is a time of joy and celebration. Yet for those who have lost a loved one or are grieving other loss, it is difficult to enter into any sort of Christmas celebration. Even so, the message of “God with us” is important for all of us.



This year we will partner with the good people of First Presbyterian Church for a “Blue Christmas” (also called “Longest Night”) worship service. This will be a calmer, more reflective time focusing on hope and healing.

The Blue Christmas worship will be December 21 at 6:30 PM at First Presbyterian Church, 531 8th St, Berthoud, CO 80513. Please invite your friends, neighbors, and family members who may appreciate this sort of worship and an opportunity to work through their loss.

## Christmas Eve Worship



This year, Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday and so we have several unique opportunities to worship.

- At 10 AM we will celebrate the fourth Sunday in Advent in our typical worship format.
- At 7 PM we will share a family focused Candlelight/Communion service.
- At 11 PM, we will re-introduce a “Midnight Candlelight Service.” First UMC Berthoud may be the only area church that is offering worship at 11 PM so please help us get the word out.

Please take the opportunity to invite friends, family, and neighbors to Christmas Eve worship.

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## Who Is Interested in Dinner, Games, (and a smidgeon of training)?



If so, join Pastors Sandi and Mark on Saturday afternoon, January 20 at 3 PM. We will share a meal (Pastor Sandi will cook so you needn't worry about getting one of Pastor Mark's creations). There will be time for board games and perhaps some other shenanigans. Somewhere in there we will have some catch up training for liturgists, ushers, candle lighters and the introduction of our new, exalted, highly coveted position – “Sunday Slider.” What's a Sunday Slider, you ask? Well, join us January 20 and find out. Hope to see you then.

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**The House of Neighborly Service needs your contributions.** You can place your donations in the bins at church, in the downstairs hallway across from the elevator.

### HNS Thanksgiving/Christmas Baskets

Turkeys/hams, Potatoes – boxed (mashed, au gratin, etc.), Stuffing/Stove Top, Pie filling – if giving plain pumpkin, include evaporated milk, Pie crust, Cranberry sauce, Canned yams or sweet potatoes, Biscuit/roll/cornbread mixes, Gravy – jar or mixes, Chicken broth, Cream of Mushroom soup, Green beans, Hot cocoa

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## Pop-Up Christmas Market

There will be a pop-up Christmas Market in Van Amburg Hall on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup>. Come shop for hand-made items and baked goods after worship. Proceeds will be donated to the General Fund.

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## Request for Cookies

We'll be providing cookies for all who attend the Don Elwood Big Band Concert on December 10<sup>th</sup>. If you can provide any cookies for this event, please bring them in. Thank you!



## Small Groups

### United Methodist Men

United Methodist Men is a creative, supportive fellowship of men who seek to know Jesus Christ, to grow spiritually and to daily seek His will. Our primary purpose is to declare the centrality of Christ in the lives of men and in all their relationships. If you would like to be involved with the Berthoud United Methodist Men, please e-mail Ric Haskins at [rghask@aol.com](mailto:rghask@aol.com).



### United Women In Faith (Formerly United Methodist Women)

**UMW Executive Board Meeting:** Every Second Wednesday – 8:00 AM in the Library

**Hope Circle:** Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – 1:30 PM in the Library

**Early Bird Circle:** Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday – 8:00 AM in the Library



### Wednesday Workers

The Wednesday Workers are a group of men and women who maintain the building and grounds, and prepare the sanctuary and Sunday School rooms for Sunday.



Craft  
and  
Chatter



**Craft Group** meets every Thursday at 9:30 a.m. in the library. Bring your favorite craft, sewing, crochet or embroidery project to work on while enjoying the company of other crafters and seamstresses!

**Spanish Classes** will meet in the Library on Tuesdays at 10:30AM.

**In December we'll meet in Fellowship Hall on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM for the annual soup and salad dinner.**



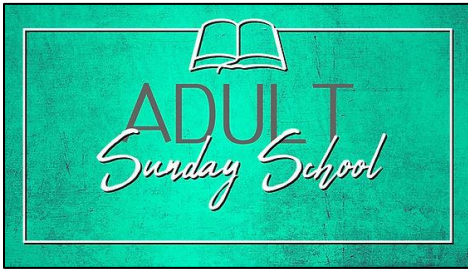
**Caring Connections** helps to care for the needs of our congregation. All are welcome to join us! Meetings are held in the Library at 9:00 AM on the first Wednesday every month.

## Sunday School Ministry



### Youth and Children Sunday School

Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will meet in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor classroom. Youth in middle school will also meet for fellowship, activities, and study.



**Exploring the Bible**, led by Keith Henderson meets Sundays at 8:30 AM in the Builder's Room; all are welcome to join us!

**Faith and Fellowship**, meets in the Library at 11:30 each Sunday.

## December Calendar



Day	Date	Time – Event – Location
Sunday	3	8:30 AM – Exploring the Bible Adult Sunday School, Builder's Room 10:00 AM – Worship, Children & Youth Sunday School 11:30 AM – Faith and Fellowship Adult Sunday School, Library
Tuesday	5	10:30 AM -- Spanish Class, Library 1:30 PM – A.B.C. Pastors' Meet-up, Kó-fē House
Wednesday	6	9:00 AM – Caring Connections, Library 1:00 PM – Advent Book Study, Van Amburg Hall 6:30 PM – Choir Practice, Sanctuary
Thursday	7	9:30 AM – Craft Group, Library 10:00 AM – A.B.C. Pastors' Meet-up, Rise Bakery
Sunday	10	8:30 AM – Exploring the Bible Adult Sunday School, Builder's Room 10:00 AM – Worship, Children & Youth Sunday School 11:30 AM – Faith and Fellowship Adult Sunday School, Library 3:00 PM – Don Elwood Christmas Concert
Tuesday	12	10:30 AM -- Spanish Class, Library 1:30 PM – A.B.C. Pastors' Meet-up, Kó-fē House
Wednesday	13	8:00 AM – UMW Executive Board Meeting, Library 1:00 PM – Advent Book Study, Van Amburg Hall 6:30 PM – Choir Practice, Sanctuary

Thursday	14	9:30 AM – Craft Group, Library 10:00 AM – A.B.C. Pastors' Meet-up, Rise Bakery 1:30 PM – Hope Circle, Library 6:00 PM – Book Club Dinner
Saturday	16	8:00 AM – UMW Early Birds, Library
Sunday	17	8:30 AM – Exploring the Bible Adult Sunday School, Builder's Room 10:00 AM – Worship, Children & Youth Sunday School 11:30 AM – Faith and Fellowship, Library
Tuesday	19	10:30 AM -- Spanish Class, Library 1:30 PM – A.B.C. Pastors' Meet-up, Kó-fē House
Wednesday	20	1:00 PM – Advent Book Study, Van Amburg Hall 6:30 PM – Choir Practice, Sanctuary
Thursday	21	9:30 AM – Craft Group, Library 10:00 AM – A.B.C. Pastors' Meet-up, Rise Bakery 7:00 PM – Blue Christmas Service, Sanctuary
Sunday	24	8:30 AM – Exploring the Bible Adult Sunday School, Builder's Room 10:00 AM – Worship, Children & Youth Sunday School 11:30 AM – Faith and Fellowship Adult Sunday School, Library 7:00 PM – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary 11:00 PM – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary
Monday	25	<b>MERRY CHRISTMAS!!</b> 
Tuesday	26	<b>Office Closed</b> 1:30 PM – A.B.C. Pastors' Meet-up, Kó-fē House
Thursday	28	9:30 AM – Craft Group, Library 10:00 AM – A.B.C. Pastors' Meet-up, Rise Bakery
Sunday	31	8:30 AM – Exploring the Bible Adult Sunday School, Builder's Room 10:00 AM – Worship, Children & Youth Sunday School 11:30 AM – Faith and Fellowship Adult Sunday School, Library 

## December Birthdays and Anniversaries

December 2	Anne Boyd	December 11	Quincy Denning
December 2	Carter Vining	December 11	Mark Patterson
December 3	Eila Green	December 12	Walker Reid
December 3	Logan Rees	December 13	Sue Ellis
December 5	Linda Henderson	December 17	Janette Sisler
December 5	Tammy Rees	December 20	Shirley French
December 6	Abigail Reid	December 24	Kent and Carrie Davis (A)
December 9	Jay Denning	December 27	Caleb Smith
December 9	Peggy Edwards	December 29	Larry Wrenn



Please keep us informed about your joys and sorrows. Many are in need of prayer (both in public and in private). Call the office and we will notify the appropriate contact and add your name to the Prayer Corner of the Sunday bulletin. We are here to serve God, and we want to share your burdens and joys. Phone: 970-532-2142. Email: [secretary@berthoudumc.org](mailto:secretary@berthoudumc.org), [pastormark@berthoudumc.org](mailto:pastormark@berthoudumc.org) or [pastorsandie@berthoudumc.org](mailto:pastorsandie@berthoudumc.org).

### First United Methodist Church of Berthoud

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Phone: 970-532-2142

Website: [www.BerthoudUMC.org](http://www.BerthoudUMC.org)

Church email: [secretary@berthoudumc.org](mailto:secretary@berthoudumc.org)

Pastor email: [PastorMark@berthoudumc.org](mailto:PastorMark@berthoudumc.org)

[PastorSandie@berthoudumc.org](mailto:PastorSandie@berthoudumc.org)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJqSxMBHmcpSPv5SldlcyAg>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/berthoudmethodistchurchon9th>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/berthoudumc/>