

# FAITHNOTES

December 2024

*The Newsletter for Communities of Faith/Peace  
United Parish, United Methodist*

**Clarissa - Clotho - Eagle Bend – Long Prairie**

## Thoughts from Kali . . .

Last fall my big Christmas cactus was outside too long. I was negligent. I enjoy the flowers of a Christmas cactus. I have 3 smaller ones which have not bloomed since I got them, but the leaves are pretty. One has been just a single spear, straight up, not much to it, but green. Last week when I was cleaning plants to winter them, I saw a couple buds on two of the barren plants. This week, both have bursted in buds, one, a very light pink and the other, a beautiful peach. I am excited for them to continue to show me the delight as they mature. Barren to flourishing. Nothing to fullness. It amazes me! The JOY in blooming and growth. Can you relate?

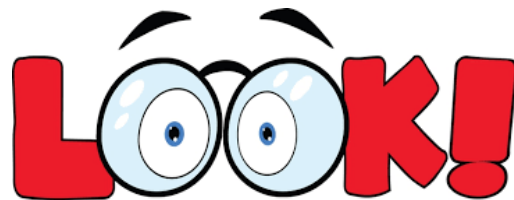
As I have studied both plants, one is full and lush, the other, a lone stock that has grown several inches, straight up over summer. Both are laden with buds. The straight up stalk has had to be supported because the weight of the buds has bent it down. The lush plant bends with the blossom, but the base is sturdy and the blossoms remain perfectly draped over the plant. Both are beautiful, but the trajectory reminds me that we all can use a little support and assistance when the load gets heavy. Some of us are based with big support and some are spindly, trying to find a way to blossom and maintain at the same time. We all get by with a little help from our friends...if all is as it should be. If we are paying attention to the Gospel, loving God and loving our neighbors. The JOY of Christmas, reminding us of the reason for this season, the love that came down, the humble beginnings and the great blessings that came with the pain and anguish and loss. It is an amazing time of year, isn't it? Good wishes and glad tidings, and the opportunity to see in each person, Jesus. The opportunity to look into the eyes of another and see all that is good...all that is of Christ, all that is a child of God. I love this time of year when people think in the way of hope and love and goodness. When people believe there is a way to find equity and care and a listening ear. I love it when we take envelopes to shop for others, when we gift people who serve us, when we send a card that says I was thinking of you, just wanted you to know. I love it when we offer another a base of support because it is the right thing to do, whether we know them or not. I love it when we introduce our kids and grandkids to the needs of others, not as concerned about making sure their list gets written in detail, being concerned that they learn that others have significant needs. I love it when you tell me you can cook for a family, wrap gifts for a family, pray for a family, send a card to someone who never gets a card.

I love it when you say, I can take care of that need, just give me the list, I will shop. I love it when you show up to decorate or bring the turkey because you know someone will need dinner on Christmas. I am so grateful when you see someone's need and wonder how we could help. I love it when you wear the Gospel on your sleeve and share it and shine it wherever you go. You inspire!

In all the sparkle and glitz, there is a baby who came that we may truly LIVE!!!! That we may feel the needs of others, that we would know the pain of our brothers and sisters struggling with a diagnosis, a mental illness, the raw realities of a divorce, the scars of anger that tears flesh, breaks hearts, and results in hardened souls and hearts. We are to bear each other's pain and to encourage one another to love and goodness and hope. There is a place to take our resentments and have them cared for in a way we cannot even imagine. Life need not be lived in the what ifs, but in the reality of grace and forgiveness and restoration.

This Christmas, in the midst of the preparations, the perfect bows, the pristine decorations, remember the cold of the night, the breeze through the house with minimal heat, remember the dinner of cereal and toast, remember the beds with no blankets, remember the rough straw, remember the Babe as you prepare, as you settle in, as you host the parties, wrap the gifts, send the cards.

Remember who you are and whose you are. Think of the ways we live, striving to become fruitful alone, wanting more, but needing support, and then, think of the lush ways to live in community, in hope, in the spirit of Love, in the care of a God who loves you more than you can imagine. Merry Christmas, dear hearts...be love in this world. Jesus is counting on you to share His heart.



**Look at all sections for more information.**

**Be sure to check the individual church sections for all the activities taking place...it is a busy and fun-filled month. We don't want you to miss out on these spirit-filled and engaging activities.**

## SPRC & Communities of Faith/Peace United Parish Council



**Laity Collaborative is RESCHEDULED.** Please read the information below:

The Laity Collaborative, originally scheduled for October 26th has been rescheduled as a virtual ongoing training, beginning in January. I am hoping many of you will say yes. See the information...Are you a lay person who wants to take the next step to live into your call? Are you also busy with limited time for in-person gatherings? Good news! The Laity Collaborative's inaugural series has shifted to a virtual launch starting in January that you can access at your convenience. The cost is 50 dollars, and the church will pay for your registration. Register now!

See the preliminary schedule and topics:

January...Welcome and an introduction to learning opportunities/resources. United Methodist History and Why Wesleyan, Why Now? Via zoom.

February...Holy gatherings: how to effectively facilitate small group discussions with Bobbi Nichols and guests. Feb 4, 11, 18, 25. Via zoom.

March...Taste of Scripture Circles, safe spaces where participants take a deep dive into sacred text and make space for the Spirit to meet them where they are...via zoom.

Living your Strengths with Jody Thine, director of ministry development, March 18<sup>th</sup>.

April...An evening of spiritual practice: lectio divina with Jody Thine, directory of ministry development, April 8. Via zoom.

Happy Earth Day, an opportunity to learn about Hopeful EarthKeepers and creation care.

May...What's a Deaconess and Home Missioner? Hear from Minnesota deaconesses and home missionary about their specific office and call to ministry. Via zoom.

What's a lay speaker: Hear from some Minnesota lay speakers about becoming a lay speaker and resources available for continuously improving your messages.

June...Pre-annual conference gathering in the form of a celebration of the Lay Academy with guest speakers...in person.

Jody Thone is coordinating this event in partnership with Garrett Evangelical Seminary. See the information sheet at church and register...



Decorating our churches...if you want to display a poinsettia, Christmas cactus, some greenery in honor or memory of someone, please do. It would be great to know who we are honoring if you choose to decorate in honor or memory. Peace United has a process if you are sharing a

poinsettia there. See the church sections for more information.



### Ministerial Team...

The team will meet, December 9th, 5:15 pm, Buford's.

Coverage for December:

8..Erin and Kali

15..Marlys and Kali

22..Marlys and Kali

29..Erin and Kali



**Christmas Eve Services** will be held on December 24th at each church. The schedule is as follows:

Clarissa Care Center, 1 p.m.

Peace United Church, 3:30 p.m.

Eagle Bend UMC, 5 p.m.

Clarissa UMC, 6:30 p.m.

Clotho UMC, 8 p.m.

Please have someone at each church to greet those coming to worship and to assist with the candle lighting. Thanks!



**ADVENT SERIES:** The Inn, Housing the Holy:

Economic disparity runs rampant, locally and globally. As we enter the

Advent season, how can our churches become houses where the Holy will be born anew—offering respite, sustenance and care, opening the doors ever wider to those seeking shelter from the onslaught of life? No one church can do it all, but each can do something. As we study the biblical prophets that call us to care for our neighbors and “make room in the inn,” the lonely and frightened spaces within us are filled with the light of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Please let Kali know that you are willing to read scripture and the Advent wreath readings, just text, call, or message. thanks!



### Confirmation...

Will meet over zoom again on December 11th, 7:15 p.m. Look forward to seeing each of you! Please hold in prayer these delightful young people, participating in

confirmation: Bennett Pachan, Brooklyn Woeste, Tucker Balbach.

**Annual Meetings:** Communities of Faith Churches, plan to host an annual meeting right after church on Sunday, December 22nd. This meeting will be to approve a budget and your slate of officers. We will have a 4-church gathering in January to establish goals and dreams for 2025. Plan to meet up for lunch and the 4-church meeting

on Sunday, January 5th, 12 noon at Peace United church. A main entree sandwich will be provided and you are invited to bring a dish to pass...chips, salads, veggies, dip, pickles, and dessert. We will fellowship, have a meeting, enjoy each other, and be on our way. Let's start the year off with an intentional commitment to our covenant and the work of John Wesley!!



**JOIN US IN CHURCH...** Would love to have you join us in church...we are missing you and look forward to connecting at worship services at any of our churches. While the opportunity for social media to keep us connected is beneficial, there is nothing like personal presence. We encourage you to think about how and when you

could worship with us. Thanks to everyone who continues to financially give as they can. Our churches are operating and have a desire to extend our presence in the communities. Your gifts support the mission and operation of our churches.

Clarissa, Clotho, Eagle Bend people, feel free to send any monetary gifts to PO Box 158, Clarissa, MN. 56440. Peace United Folks, send your offering to 524 Central Avenue, Long Prairie, MN. 56347. Hope to see you soon. Feel free to be in touch. You can reach me at 320-808-6301 or Communities of Faith UM Parish, PO Box 158, Clarissa, MN. 56440 or Peace United Church, 524 Central Avenue, Long Prairie, MN. 56347.



**Coffee to Reflect and Share...** Kali will host coffee time at 110 Coffee to discuss Holiday grief and loss during the

holidays. Please stop in on December 10th at 3:30 and/or 8:30 a.m. on the 19th. Coffee on me. Looking forward to seeing you.



**Advent Study** with Bishop Lanette is being held on zoom Tuesdays, 7-8:15 p.m. You must register to get the zoom link. I think you would enjoy the opportunity.

The book this year is The Christmas Letters by Magrey R. DeVega. Zoom sessions will be held from November 26th to December 17th. Give your Advent a boost as you join the Bishop and many neighbors across Minnesota and the Dakotas for this opportunity. Register for the Zoom link and join the fun!

<https://tinyurl.com/mnumc-christmasletters>



**LONGEST NIGHT/BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE**, December 19th, 7 p.m., Clarissa UMC. We will host with Highway 71 Lutheran Churches in the honoring of our lives

as we grieve, feel losses, embrace emotions, and feel all the feels of this season and life. We invite you to join us, regardless of any personal losses, this space gives honor to the challenges and the somber spaces of this holiday season. We look forward to celebrating and being present with you. Refreshments and time for conversation will be part of the evening. Hope to see you there.

## Nothing to prove

Fall Bible study, written by Jennie Allen

Our study this year was based on the gospel of John. Each year, a group of women from different denominations gather together in the UMC Clarissa basement to share Gods word with one another and grow together.

Nothing to prove guides us and explains "we don't have to be perfect".

The seven week study sessions invited us to find contentment, joy and freedom when we see what Christ can do in our lives if we allow him in. Each week is a new chapter fulfilled

-Connected: The end of loneliness

-Rest: The end of striving

-Risk: The end of passivity

-Hope: The end of fear

-Grace: The end of shame

We often walk through life feeling as if we don't measure up.

We seem to thirst for more and if we work harder we would be better and could be enough but the truth is we have nothing to prove except to God.

We are stronger together!

PS: We will be celebrating Christmas together on December 4th!

Peace, Pam Cook



## Meanderings of the Preacher...Advent Begins,

December 1st! Baked Potato Bar at Hilltop Regional Kitchen, 5-7 p.m., December 2nd. Comprehensive

Planning Meeting, Long Prairie City Hall, December 3rd, 6 p.m.; Coffee at Clotho, Dec. 6th. Nursing Home Worship, Wednesday, December 4th and 11th, Clarissa Care Center, 2:30 p.m. and at Long Prairie Nursing Home, Wednesday, December 11th, 9:45 a.m. Concert and light parade in Eagle Bend, 2-7 p.m., December 7th. Annual meeting at Peace United after church, Dec. 8th. Ministerial team, December 9th, Buford's, lunch time, Hilltop Regional Kitchen and Community Circle meetings at Hilltop, Tuesday, December 10th, 11 a.m.-1:15 p.m., Women of Peace at 1:30 p.m. and



Grief Coffee at 110 at 3:30 p.m. Confirmation on zoom, 7:15 p.m., December 11th. Rural Ministry Matters Zoom on the 13th, 1 p.m. Sunday School program and Christmas in the Country, both at Clotho, December 15th. Pianos tuned at Eagle Bend, Clarissa, and Clotho, December 16th. Soup and Sandwich Supper, December 17th. Day off and night of Christmas Music, December 18th. Grief Coffee at 110, 8:30 a.m. and Longest Night Service, December 19th. Annual meeting after church service for Clarissa, Clotho, Eagle Bend, December 22nd. December 24th, Christmas Eve Services at all 4 churches: 3:30 (Peace); 5 (Eagle Bend); 6:30 (Clarissa); 8 (Clotho).



## PLEASE REMEMBER OUR NURSING HOME AND ASSISTED LIVING FAMILY...

### Central Todd County Care Center & Assisted Living – Clarissa

- Shirley Carrick - Darlene Bodle  
- Gene Bodle

### Meadow Place – Long Prairie

- Darlene Baxter - Jan Miller - Devona Berry

### Long Prairie Memorial Nursing Home

- Orin Baxter

Services at the Nursing Homes:

Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> & December 11<sup>th</sup>, Central Todd County Care Center, 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, Long Prairie Memorial Nursing Home, 9:45 a.m.

Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, Central Todd County Care Center, 1:00 pm

Wednesday, January 1<sup>st</sup>, Central Todd County Care Center, 9:30 am



## CONVERSATIONS. . .

continues Wednesday mornings, 7 am, Facebook, Kali Christensen page...join in on the fun! Any topic of interest you want

covered? Let Kali know.



Cossentine/Donley Families in the death of Jacob Virginia Butler

Doris' grandkids, healing from car accident

Vic Carlson

Family of Richard Hlatky

Dr. Duncan

Family of Pastor Howard Krueger, served at Peace

United in the 70's

Those facing mental health challenges

Dale Cline

Pam Cook, good reports following scans

Ava Mae, Doris' great granddaughter, headed home from NICU

Military Men and Women who have served and are serving

Gifts of those serving in all capacities....musicians, readers, communion stewards, ushers, acolytes, board members, cleaners, decorators, set up people....it takes all of us to be "the church" Thanks to everyone for showing up and sharing your gifts and talents.

Family of Bonny Marcyes

Marv Hillig

Heidi Masters...Linda & Noel VanValkenburg's niece, melanoma, breast cancer. Tumor has not spread.

Cindy Rachuy, found cancer in her chest wall on the left side. Going to try a different chemo.

Boston and Carter, high school students with shoulder injuries.

Family of Henry Borchert

Justin Lundeen is having surgery this morning for more work on his arm. If you remember, Justin had a snowmobile accident a couple years ago and has had extensive surgeries on his arm.....more work to be done this morning. Justin is a mechanic and this is his left arm which is the arm he uses most.....

Rod Kamphenkel

Evey Mathews 2 brothers, Robin and Bruce, both hospitalized

Family of Tony Becker

Victims of Hurricane Helene and Milton

Family of John Luberts

Rita Wehking

Kay Prather is HOME!

Dena, Doris' granddaughter has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer, chemo will begin soon.

Bennan is doing well after the surgery on his broken leg, returns to school today!!!!

Jerry & Wanda Tepley

JOY of Baptism for Silvia Eleanor Roggenkamp

Family of Ben Kedrowski

Family of Al Rausch

Family of Dean Wolf

Family of Larry Steffen

Carol Hanson received a GOOD report!

## BIRTHDAYS

4..Carol Frerichs

4..Makenzee Sales

6..Sharon Willie

6..Paxton Woeste

9..Bobbi Knutson

13..Shannon Jedlicka

15..Deb Blake

15..Brianna Lux

15..Addie Noska

16..Jaxen Klimek



17..Amy VanValkenburg  
17..Kelly Bican  
19..Brian Kunerth  
21..Kim Mollner  
24..Cathy Salathe  
25..Noel VanValkenburg  
29..Kevin Boyer



## Son of a Fisherman

By: Pam Cook

While following the news showing the damage destruction and devastation, as a result of hurricanes Helene and Milton...Loss of lives, homes, livelihoods and so much more. I decided to go "fishing" in hopes I would "catch"

someone on Facebook who could provide me with some information and referrals of people they personally know who were affected by the hurricanes. It didn't take long and I got a "bite" with a response on messenger about a family they know in Florida that got hit hard .

This story is about that family, Todd, Shelia and their son Nate, his wife Lexi and their two small children, Xion and Rhianne, who live in Cortez, the oldest fishing community in Florida, across from Annamarie Island. There you will find two large fish houses, The Bell and The Star and a family who own and operate an offshore fishing business (This is the family we want to help out). So I reached out to my family to see if they were interested in getting "on board" with my plan...it didn't take long "our basket was full"...two fishing vessels, one named The High Roller and the other, Captain Toasty. The other survived the winds, rain and turbulence of hurricane Helene. The family was just starting to prepare their vessels for crabbing season. They located their nets two miles out from shore all twisted, tangled and destroyed they had planned to head out on October 15th and plans changed!

A card containing a message along with a small wooden cross and a donation was hand delivered to the family. A message was returned with words of gratitude and love. They shared these words "We haven't cried until we received your message." "The cross will be placed at the Bow of the vessel called Captain Toasty."

(I write this message letting you know we received a response from the family with thanks and gratitude for the donation given from the four churches and the Cook family).

November 20th Update:

We received a video featuring this family's story on ABC seven news "going fishing"

"Nate is now out at sea"

Thanks to Kelly Bican, Friends of this family, for reaching out to me and delivering the note. Thank you to our family for their gifts and to the church families for their gift card donation.

Matthew 4:19 And he said "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men"

Peace and Gratitude, Pam and Larry Cook and families

## COMMUNITIES OF FAITH/PEACE UNITED OPPORTUNITIES-NEWS

### Clarissa Chatter. . .

Cheer Plates will be assembled. Stay tuned for the specifics.

A celebration of Christmas through music...please join us at Clarissa UMC, Wednesday, December 18th, 7 p.m. There will be a great night of music...time to settle in and enjoy. Mark your calendar and don't miss this night of refreshment!

Longest Night/Blue Christmas, Thursday, December 19th, 7 p.m. A night to honor our losses and grief. Allan Mortenson, Highway 71 Lutherans, will join us as we acknowledge our sorrow and sadness around the holidays. We will share in refreshments after the service.

### Clotho Corner. . .

Coffee in Clotho, perked and ready with treats!

December 6th, 6:30-9 a.m. Stop in for a quick cup to go or stop for a fun visit!

Music Jam, Monday, December 9th, 1 p.m. Join the fun...bring your instrument, your tapping toes, your delight in enjoying the opportunity! Refreshments served!

Sunday School Program will be held during church on Sunday, December 15th. Don't miss this annual program about the Good News of Jesus! Looking forward to seeing you at 8 a.m. on the 15th!

Christmas in the Country, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. This is a night of pure fun and joy, laughs and more. Bring your musical talent, your skits, your voices. Come and experience zero stress and pure delight. Invite anyone who is willing to share their talent and fun! Refreshments served!

Cheer plates will be assembled. Stay tuned for the details.

### Eagle Bend Box. . .

Christmas Concert, Dave Burgett and Friends. Dave has been coming to bless us with Christmas music for the past several years, thanks to his connection with Carol Hammond. We are always so blessed with the good music and fun conversation. Please join us this year on Saturday, December 7th, 2 p.m. for the concert. You will be so glad you came and this is the Eagle Bend Santa Day, so it all works out GREAT! Refreshments will be served and know your spirits will be refreshed for certain!

That same day we will walk in the Light up Eagle Bend Parade at 5:30 p.m. Peeps from all churches, meet us up in the School parking lot...to line up for the parade at 5:20 p.m. Let's walk together. We have items to pass out to the Kids. Should be fun!!!!!!

Soup and Sandwich Supper will be ready for the eating on Tuesday, December 17, 4:30-6:30 p.m. We are getting very close to the feeding of 5,000 goal! Come and enjoy this great meal and the fellowship so enjoyed!

Cheer plates will be assembled. Stay tuned for the details.

## Peace United Update...

December 1st, Hanging of the Greens. Please come and join us for this meaningful service. All are welcome!

December 8th, Annual Meeting after Church. All are invited to stay for this meeting.

December 10th, Women of Peace meet at the church, 1:30 p.m.

Poinsettia orders are due by Sunday, December 15th. Please leave your order on Sunday at the church. The cost of a poinsettia is \$11.50 per plant. This is a great way to honor or remember another.

## A little of this and a little of that...



### Ministerial Fund...

In November we received 1,050 dollars from people in our communities. We are so appreciative of the gifts that are making a difference in so many lives. We have had several opportunities to assist people walking through the difficult journey of illness and other challenges. Your gifts to the ministerial fund are needed and are making a huge difference when life catches us off guard. Bless you for your generosity.



### Giving project...

All of our churches are participating in Project Joy. If you want an envelope to purchase a gift for a child, see Mindy Denny, Marcia Woeste, Kelly Prather, Nancy Tuorila, Barb Willie. If you want to assist others, reach out as there are other needs outside of the Project Joy opportunities too. Appreciate your care for food, gifts, and assistance always!



(Mark your calendar)

4-Church Lunch gathering to discuss goals and dreams for 2025, Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 12 Noon at Peace United Church. See newsletter for more information regarding lunch.



## December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> Church Services: Clotho – 8 am Eagle Bend – 9:15 am Peace United – 10 am Clarissa – 10:30 am  Hanging of the Greens, Peace United.	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Advent Study w/Bishop Lanette, over Zoom, 7:00-8:15 pm	<b>4</b> Conversations on Facebook, 7:00 am	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Coffee in Clotho, 6:30- 9:00 am	<b>7</b> Christmas Concert, Dave Burgett & Friends, Eagle Bend UMC, 2:00 pm  Light Up Eagle Bend Parade, 5:30 pm
<b>8</b> Church Services: Clotho – 8 am Eagle Bend – 9:15 am Peace United – 10 am Clarissa – 10:30 am  Annual Meeting, Peace United, following the church service.	<b>9</b> Music Jam, 1:00 pm, Clotho UMC	<b>10</b> Women of Peace, Peace United, 1:30 pm  Coffee to Reflect & Share w/Kali, 110 Coffee, Long Prairie, 3:30 pm  Advent Study w/Bishop Lanette, over Zoom, 7:00-8:15 pm	<b>11</b> Conversations on Facebook, 7:00 am  Confirmation Zoom meeting, 7:15 pm	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> Church Services: Clotho – 8 am Eagle Bend – 9:15 am Peace United – 10 am Clarissa – 10:30 am  Christmas Sunday School program, Clotho UMC, during the church service.  Christmas in the Country, Clotho UMC, 7:00 pm	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Salad & Sandwich Supper, Eagle Bend UMC, 4:30-6:30 pm  Advent Study w/Bishop Lanette, over Zoom, 7:00-8:15 pm	<b>18</b> Conversations on Facebook, 7:00 am  Evening of Music, Clarissa UMC, 7:00 pm	<b>19</b> Coffee to Reflect & Share w/Kali, 110 Coffee, Long Prairie, 8:30 am  Longest Night/Blue Christmas Service, Clarissa UMC, 7:00 pm	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Church Services: Clotho – 8 am Eagle Bend – 9:15 am Peace United – 10 am Clarissa – 10:30 am  Annual Meeting at each church, following service.	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve Services: Conversations on Facebook, 12:00 Noon Clarissa Care Center, 1 pm Peace United, 3:30 pm Eagle Bend UMC, 5:00 pm Clarissa UMC, 6:30 pm Clotho UMC, 8:00 pm	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Church Services: Clotho – 8 am Eagle Bend – 9:15 am Peace United – 10 am Clarissa – 10:30 am	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 				





### Color by Number

1. Yellow

2. Blue

3. Green

4. Red

5. Purple

6. Orange

Communities of Faith/Peace United Parish  
P.O.Box 158  
Clarissa MN 56440

TO:

December 2024  
Pastor Kali Christensen  
Cell: 320-808-6301  
Email: [kali.christensen55@gmail.com](mailto:kali.christensen55@gmail.com)  
Facebook: Communities of Faith – Clarissa,  
Clotho, & Eagle Bend