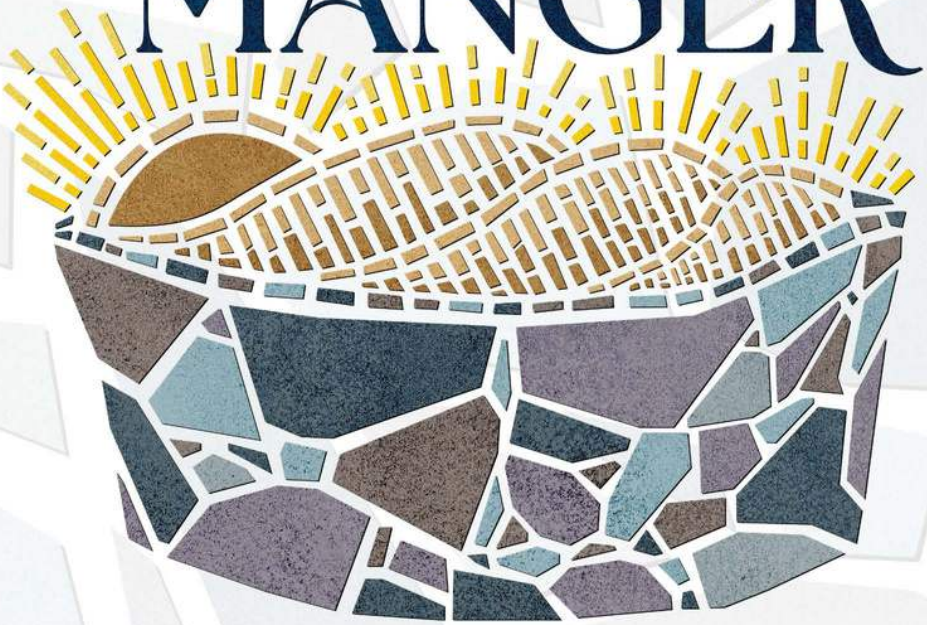
Valley Community

FROM THE MANGER



Sunday, December 1, 2024

First Sunday in Advent

illustrated MINISTRY

GATHERING US IN

PRELUDE *The Sweetest Gift* Craig Aven — Rachel Williams, cello; Sue Ruby, piano

LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Sojourners of faith, today we begin the journey to Bethlehem, to the city called "House of Bread."

All: We take one step toward Christmas, the first step of many. Let this journey transform us from beginning to end.

One: Whether your belly is full or empty, whether your heart is broken or whole, look toward the manger, toward the stars over the city of David, and find hope.

All: We look with hope because Christ is coming to fill hearts and satisfy bellies with goodness and peace.

One: Come, let us worship as we journey to the House of Bread, where our Brother and Friend will be born.

All: Glory to God, there is hope today. Let us worship!

GATHERING MUSIC *Bethlehem Highway* Brown/Hersch — Valley Choir; Craig Gottschalk, guitar

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE: Hope — The Gottschalk Family: Craig, Melissa, Connor & Gabe

ADVENT PRAYER

Compassionate God, when we look outward, the season of Advent heightens our awareness of the hunger in the world around us. Just as Jesus came to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the people, you also call us to that high and holy task. Increase our willingness to serve and our capacity to show generosity and compassion. May our actions reflect the character of Jesus, who fed people everywhere he went. Transform us to be your hands and feet, feeding the hungry and comforting the afflicted. Amen.

† Hymn #93 **Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates**

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide.
Let me thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION Rev. Jim Cochrane

God who cares for every sparrow and every child, we confess the enormity of the world's hunger feels overwhelming. We do not know what to do about famine and starvation, so we look away and distract ourselves from suffering people and all creatures, great and small. We confess we neglect small acts of generosity because the problems seem so big. We confess we shrink back from true solutions because the sacrifices seem too great. May your hope compel us to make choices reflecting our love for our neighbors and creation. You take our feeble efforts and magnify your glory. May the world be fed with hope. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Friends believe the Good News of the Gospel.

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSE TO GOD'S PROMISE IN ADVENT

Light Shines in the Darkness by Dakota Road

Oh the light shines in the darkness and the light will not be overcome.
In this world broken and scattered, the light will not be overcome.

HEARING THE WORD

TIME WITH YOUNG WORSHIPPERS

Congregational Blessing: You are God's beloved child.
With you God is well pleased.

SPECIAL MUSIC *Bring Us Hope* Valley Choir
Ruth Elaine Schram Sue Ruby, piano
Rachel Williams, cello

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

† Please rise in body or spirit.

SCRIPTURE READING *Luke 2:6-7 and Mathew 14:13-21*

SERMON *Where Hope Grows* Sheila Sheldon, CRE

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

† Hymn #88 ***O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*** (vs. 1, 6 & 7)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

MINUTE FOR MISSION *World AIDS Day* Mary Dunham

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

SHARING OF THE BREAD & CUP

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION *Still, Still, Still* Sue & Rachel, 4-hand piano
arr. by Carrie Kraft

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Gracious God, in this holy moment of communion, you have fed us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation. May the nourishment we have received sustain us as we journey forth in hope and faith. We thank you for the mystery of Christ's presence among us, born in Bethlehem, the "House of Bread." From the creation of the cosmos to the baby in the manger to this moment in worship, you have been faithful, filled with lovingkindness. Guide us, Holy Spirit, as we go from here, empowered to embody the simplicity and compassion of Christ, sharing your abundant love with a hungry world. Amen.

† Please rise in body or spirit.

SENDING US OUT

† Hymn #767 ***Together We Serve***

Together we serve, united by love,
inviting God's world to the glorious feast.
We work and we pray through sorrow and joy,
extending God's love to the last and the least.

We seek to become a beacon of hope,
a lamp for the heart and a light for the feet.
We learn, year by year, to let love shine through
until we see Christ in each person we meet.

We welcome the scarred, the wealthy, the poor,
the busy, the lonely, and all who need care.
We offer a home to those who will come,
our hands quick to help, our hearts ready to dare.

Together, by grace, we witness and work,
remembering Jesus, in whom we grow strong.
Together we serve in Spirit and truth,
remembering love is the strength of our song.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Bright Star*
Norman Dello Joio
Sue & Rachel, 4-hand piano

The Worship Has Ended. The Service Begins.

Chancel Flowers

Sunday, December 1

Sponsored by Mariah Messer.
In celebration of Rory's 10th birthday & Walty's 4th birthday!
You are beloved.

Sign up for Chancel flowers in Fellowship Hall.

† Please rise in body or spirit.

Joys and Concerns

A joy from the **Karwans** as **Razaullah Karwan** had surgery to fix a heart defect yesterday morning. The surgery was successful, and there are no further surgeries scheduled or needed.

Prayers of recovery for **Gail Smith** who underwent hip replacement surgery on Wednesday. Gail and Doug are very grateful for their church family and friends for all of the support they've received.

Prayers for **Randee Melander** who is recovering from a leg injury during a recent vacation in Florida.

Prayers for **Jennifer Malecha** and the **Malecha family**, whose mother **Marilyn Eckerle** has entered hospice care.

Continued prayers for **Susie Potter** on her cancer journey. She began chemotherapy on Monday, the 28th. She is feeling good and filled with gratitude.
To visit Susie's Caring Bridge go to: https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/susiepotter

Continued prayers for **Taichi Chen** whose recent test results last week remain stable. He continues to live in gratitude for the love everyone has shared each and every day.
To visit Taichi's Caring Bridge site go to: https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/taichichen

Continued prayers for **Rick Carlson** who is approaching the one-year anniversary of his transplants. He continues to give thanks for the great gift given to him a year ago.
To visit Rick's Caring Bridge site go to: https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/rickcarlson101

EASY WAYS TO GIVE TO VALLEY AND/OR COMMUNITY PARTNERS GIVE ONE TIME OR RECURRING

1. **MAIL YOUR CHECK TO VALLEY**
   - In the memo of the check, indicate what your donation is for (i.e. Pledge, PRISM, etc.)
2. **ONLINE GIVING**
   - Visit Valley's secured online giving by visiting: https://valleycommunitypresbyterianchurch.breezechms.com/give/online to make a one-time or recurring gift to Valley or our community partners.
3. **AUTOMATIC WITHDRAWALS FROM YOUR BANK ACCOUNT**
   - Contact Chelsie Larsen: 507-272-1914 | chelsie.larsen@valleychurch.net to set up withdrawals directly from your account. You can always adjust the amount.

This Week at Valley

Sunday, December 1
1st Sunday in Advent
Hanging of the Greens
9:30 am Worship Service
10:30 am Fellowship Hour
4:00 pm Youth Group & TEAMS

Monday, December 2
11:30 am Lunch Bunch
7:00 pm 12-Step Meeting

Tuesday, December 3
1:00 pm Bible Fellowship
6:30 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 4

Thursday, December 5
Presbytery Meeting
5:30 pm 12-Step Unity

Friday, December 6

Saturday, December 7
10:00 am Craft Club

Sunday, December 8
9:30 am Worship Service
10:30 am Fellowship Hour
3:00 pm Youth Group & TEAMS
5:30 pm Holiday Dinner

Notice of Recording: Please note that services are broadcasted via live stream and digitally recorded on our YouTube Channel.

Special thanks to our Stream Team: Katie Decker, Roger Graphenteen, Myron Jones, Larry Johnson, Joel Larsen, Brandon Novy, Janet Triplett, and Kurt Wheeler for broadcasting the services!

Valley Staff

Ministers
All 382 members of this congregation.

Transitional Pastor
Head of Staff
Rev. Jim Cochrane

Educational Ministries Director
Sheila Sheldon, CRE

Office Administrator
Savannah Martinez

Program & Communications Coordinator
Mariah Messer

Music Coordinator
Rachel Williams

Choral & Handbell Director
Janet M.T. Carlson

Sunshine Room Leader
Jamese Decker

Custodian
Hunter Sheldon

PARISH ASSOCIATES
Rev. Jim Cook
Rev. Bill Davnie
Rev. Kate O'Brien Soltau
Rev. David Phillips
Rev. Nancy Phillips
Rev. Rebecca Tollefson

SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE
November 17: 238 (133 in-person)
November 24: 222 (132 in-person)

PRISM 2024
HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

VALLEY IS COLLECTING NEW, UNWRAPPED TOYS AND GIFTS FOR PRISM'S HOLIDAY TOY SHOPPE

MOST NEEDED ITEMS

- ACTION FIGURES
- TODDLER TOYS
- SPORTS ATTIRE
- BLANKETS
- NERF TOYS
- LEGOS
- GAMES
- **TEEN GIFTS** (HEADPHONES, GAMING KEYBOARDS, HAIR TOOLS, SLIPPERS)
- **$25 GIFT CARDS** (TARGET, AMAZON, VISA, ETC.)

QUESTIONS CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE

DROP OFF GIFTS AT VALLEY BY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

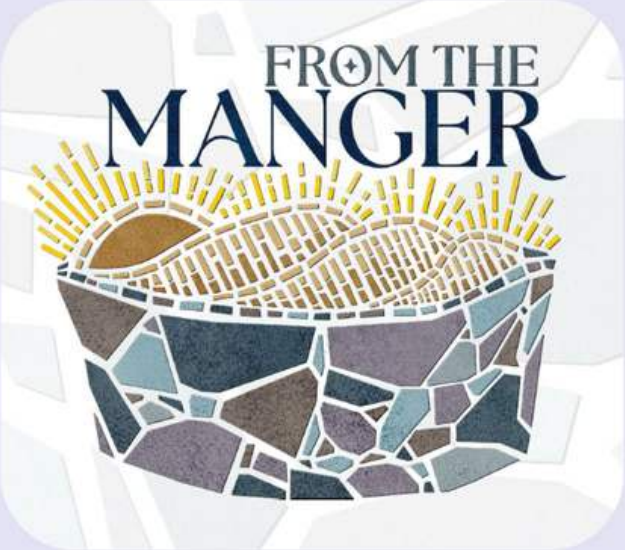
Valley Community

ALTERNATIVE GIFT CATALOG

CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO MAKE AN ALTERNATIVE GIFT DONATION THIS SEASON!

SEE ARLENE FREEBERG IN FELLOWSHIP HALL BEGINNING NOVEMBER 24!

2024 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



The VCPC Christmas Pageant dress rehearsal is **Saturday, December 7th**:

- **2 PM** - kids with speaking parts
- **3 PM** - full cast dress rehearsal

The pageant will be performed during worship at 9:30 AM on **Sunday, December 8th**. **Cast report at 8:45 am!**

Let Sheila or Mariah know if you would like to be in the Pageant this year! There are speaking and non-speaking roles.

We will be joining together on **December 8 at 5:30 p.m.** for socializing followed by dinner and entertainment. **Tickets available in Fellowship Hall!**

DINNER WILL BE CATERED!

MENU:

- Fresh baked rolls with butter
- Field greens berry salad with Feta
- Roasted root vegetables
- Au gratin potatoes
- Holiday Baked Ham/Pineapple Sauce
- Oven roasted chicken w/garlic parmesan sauce

VEGETARIAN AND KIDS MEALS ALSO AVAILABLE

Fridays in the Valley Presents:

ABOVE AVERAGE TUBA QUARTET

Friday, December 13, 2024 | 7:00 pm

FREE-WILL OFFERINGS BENEFIT
PRISM HOLIDAY TOY SHOPPE

Valley Community

Cookie Exchange

Sunday, December 15
11:00 am
Fellowship Hall

Valley Community

ATTENTION COOKIE BAKERS!

BAKE 6+ DOZEN OF YOUR FAVORITE COOKIE(S) AND BRING THEM TO FELLOWSHIP HALL FOR THE BIG SWAP!

Sign up in the Fellowship Hall or email Katie Decker (katiebdmn@gmail.com) or Sheila Sheldon (sheila.sheldon@vallechurch.net).

Happy Birthday Valley Family!

John Chancellor
Madeline Lund
Anders Tracy-Heinonen
Andy Wandmacher
Marisol Freeberg
Betsy Malecha
Aubrey Soens
Brian Parks
Leigh Gautsche
Terry Goslinga
Jill Reiswig
Stephanie Toering-Peters
David Hole
Naomi Tracy-Hegg
Leo Kummer
Andrew Pitan
Melinda Marshall
Sydney Kara
Jennifer Malecha
Nikii Minter
Janet Biggs
Jim Tarbell
Sarah Willey
Eda Inman

William Chancellor
Kurt Modert
Pam Magill
Sylvan Tracy-Heinonen
Melissa Novy
Mary Rom
Marjorie Deutsch
Sheila Sheldon
Michael Craven
Aurora Messer
Sharon Pleimling
Ellen Vannucci
Virginia Day
Cynthia Malinowski
Beverly Mattin
Evan Jurgensen
Chuck Ulmer
Heather Griffin
K Marshall
Dave McCunn
Theo Morrow
Sara Schiebout
Carrie Priem

Valley Community

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Open Hearts • Open Minds • Opening Lives to God

—Established May 20, 1951—

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Valley Community Presbyterian Church sits on the ancestral and contemporary land of the Dakota people, for whom the land holds historical, spiritual, political, and cultural significance.

We acknowledge the ongoing injustices that we have committed against the Dakota people and pledge to interrupt this legacy. We will educate ourselves about Indigenous history and recognize, support, and advocate for our Native neighbors.

LOGO DESIGN BY WÓOKIYE WIŊ (SISSETON WAHPETON DAKHÓTA AND OJIBWAY)

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Scan to give online!