

First United Methodist Church
625 Fifth Street
Brookings, SD 57006

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FROM THE PASTOR

Once Upon a Time

Christmas is a time for storytelling. Hearing “*Once upon a time*” can settle even the most restless children, and can instantly gather a group of listeners around the story teller. Grandparents recall holiday times when they were young, adults remember happy moments with their family and friends, and children recount the awe of past Christmas surprises. Added to this are the Christmas stories of Joseph and Mary, of wisemen and shepherds, of angels and evil rulers, and the magnificent story of the birth of Jesus.

There is, however, an even greater story to be heard: this is the story of how our lives are changed by the story of Jesus. The story of Jesus is not a historical event to be viewed dispassionately from a distance. It is the kind of story that changes lives and causes us to see the world in a new and loving way.

This year Brookings FUMC is inviting us to reflect on our own life’s story through listening to the stories of the first Christmas. Each week of Advent we will take one of the Christmas stories and allow it to prepare us for Christmas. This reflection will happen in the Sunday and Wednesday teachings, as well as through a devotional booklet that is available at church or on the church website.

My wife Jenny and I want to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving, and a story-filled Christmas. We pray that God’s love will write a new story with you and your loved ones at this time.

Pete Grassow, Pastor

NOTE TO SELF: GOD IS
still writing your story.
STOP TRYING TO STEAL
the pen.

The logo for the First United Methodist Church of Brookings. It features a stylized white cross with a flame-like shape on the left side, set against a dark teal background. Below the logo, the text 'FIRST UNITED METHODIST BROOKINGS' is written in white, stacked vertically. Underneath that, it says 'AT THE CORNER OF CHURCH & COMMUNITY' in a smaller font, followed by the address '625 Fifth Street, Brookings', the phone number '605-692-4345', and the website 'www.brookingsmethodist.org'.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays

- 9:00am **'The Well' Worship**
Located in the Community Life Center
- 9:30am **Radio Broadcast**
(KBRK 1430AM)
- 11:00am **Traditional Worship**
Located in the Sanctuary

Missed the Sunday sermon? Find recent messages on our website: www.brookingsmethodist.org/worship

Wednesdays

- 6:00pm **Manna in the Middle Worship**
Located in the Community Life Center

CHURCH STAFF

- Pastoral Staff**
Howard Grinager grinagerh@gmail.com
- Education Director**
Gretchen Knutson education@brookingsmethodist.org
- Worship & Music Director**
Teresa Person music@brookingsmethodist.org
- Community Life Center Director**
Vonda Kirkham communitylife@brookingsmethodist.org
- Office Managers**
Amy Merchant/Deb Cowan ... office@brookingsmethodist.org
- Financial Secretary**
JoAnn Lee finance@brookingsmethodist.org
- Faith Community Nurse**
Joanie Holm jholm229@gmail.com
- Tech Coordinator**
Paul Schmidt tech@brookingsmethodist.org



SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

- 3:00pm WAM! (Wednesday Afternoon Music)
- 4:00pm Wednesday Afternoon Childcare
- 4:00pm Chiming Children
- 5:00pm Youth Bells
- 5:00pm Manna Meal
- 6:00pm "Manna in the Middle" Worship
- 6:45pm Wed. School (1st-5th graders)
- 6:45pm Confirmation/MS Youth Group
- 6:45pm High School Youth Group
- 6:45pm Men's Study
- 6:45pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

CONNECT WITH US

Church Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-12:00 pm and 1:00-4:30 pm,
Fridays 8:30am-Noon

Need prayer? Email prayer@brookingsmethodist.org and a pastor will pray with you.

[Facebook.com/FUMCBrookings](https://www.facebook.com/FUMCBrookings)
www.brookingsmethodist.org

Susan's Saga

Praise and thanksgiving are intertwined throughout Scripture, especially in the Psalms. What praise and thanksgiving have in common is that they take the focus off of oneself and on to someone else. In Scripture, we are given the model of offering praises and thanksgiving to God. Hebrews 13:15 adds in another element: that of praise as sacrifice. "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise..." Sacrifice means giving something up in offering, something which cannot later be recouped. How can praise and thanksgiving be construed as sacrifice?

Sacrifice implies some sort of cost. If one offers material resources to God, whether money or gifts in kind, the connection is fairly obvious. A monetary offering is something that one did not spend on oneself. But what is the cost of praise and thanksgiving? They are more intangible. There is no material transaction. Why is it so hard to thank others, and ultimately God? Perhaps it has something to do with our innate self-centeredness. Increasingly, our expectations are that services and transactions go smoothly. We want things to go our way all the time. Our culture revolves around customer satisfaction, efficiency, comfort, convenience, and ease. When things don't go right, we quickly get our noses out of joint. The concept of thankfulness grows fuzzy and out of focus when our underlying expectation is that everything should always go the way we want them to. We get irate if they don't. We become the center of our own petty little universe, and we want to be in control. It takes a concerted effort to take a step back and look at the larger picture. We need to massively re-orient our perspective.

Perhaps a crucial first step is to acknowledge who God is. Next we need to recognize that our very being, our life and breath, are gifts from God. We did not make ourselves. The abilities to think and feel and move and worship all come from God. When we give our energies to praising and thanking God, that is an offering. Acknowledging God as the source of life is an act of thanksgiving. Taking the time to get our focus off of ourselves and our expectations and instead turning to God is an expression of praise. Using our energies and time to recognize God are all forms of sacrifice. May we make the choice to praise God in all circumstances. May God help us individually and collectively to give thanks.

Susan Huggins

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, New International Version.



THANK YOU to all who have contributed to the #onething **October and November** projects - Feeding Brookings Thanksgiving meal box and "Brookings Backpack Project." We collected well over the 175 boxes of stuffing mix needed for Feeding Brookings. And the contributions of fruit snacks exceeded the 1,800 pouches requested by at least 200. Thank you for helping make sure our community is fed.

In **December**, our #onething will be **Sleep in Heavenly Peace**. The mission of this organization is to build bunk beds for kids that do not have a bed. The bed, mattress, and bedding are provided to kids at no charge. The beds are built by volunteers and funded with donations. We will be collecting **TWIN** sheet sets and pillows to be included with the beds when delivered to the kids. SHP Motto - "NO KID SLEEPS ON THE FLOOR IN OUR TOWN." **The TWIN sheet sets and pillows** can be placed in the #Onething tubs in the narthex, education unit, and CLC.

Also, as in past Decembers, you are invited and encouraged to help our little ones in the community by contributing to our **Manager gifts**. Please bring diapers and wipes to any of the worship services or drop off anytime in the #onething tubs in the narthex, education unit, or at the CLC during the advent season. These diapers and wipes will be available to the children through the Harvest Table Diaper Den.

United Methodist Student Day—December 1

WE GIVE BECAUSE GOD FIRST GAVE TO US

Across the country, the people of The United Methodist Church are serving the people God loves in Jesus' name. We're doing it at home, but so often we'd like to do more.

- We want to serve those in other places who are suffering.
- We want to offer spiritual words of hope and life.
- And we want to be well-equipped to do both!

But the reality for most of us is that our responsibilities—home, family, work—don't allow us to engage with every need we'd like to meet. Right now there are UMC young people who might not have had the resources to attend a school of their choice, or for some, any school at all, who've been sent by you into the world God loves because of your giving to United Methodist Student Day. When you give generously you are support these students as they prepare for a life that unites faith with knowledge.

TOGETHER, WE EDUCATE STUDENTS SO THEY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.

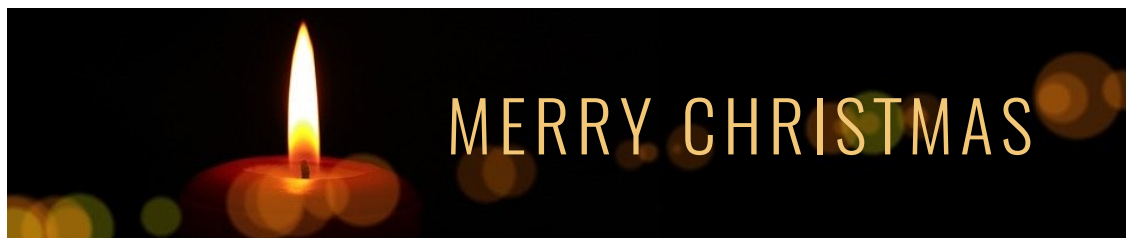
Missions Committee

Christmas Eve Offering Destinations

Our Christmas Eve Offerings will be shared with the following:

- Teen Challenge
- Domestic Abuse Shelter
- Brookings Empowerment
- Pastor's Fund
- Missions Committee

Thank you for your gifts at Christmas! Missions Committee



Together Campaign Update

We are so grateful for the gifts that you have made for the Together Capital Campaign. In case you have not noticed, your gifts have made a difference. The outside of our building has been tuckpointed giving it more years of useful service. Our building is now being heated with a boiler that is much more efficient. They are still putting the finishing touches on the controls. We have paid down our building loan by 48% to \$164,856. And we have the funds on hand to extend our internet through both buildings, increase and upgrade our hearing assistance capabilities in both buildings, and add the ability to livestream our worship services. We are also working on receiving a bid to complete our internal signage. All of this is made possible by your generosity. To date we have received \$568,477. You are helping us live into the dream God has for us as a church family.

Thank you again.

Howard Grinager



Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Services

Tuesday, December 24

- ◇ 5:30 p.m. Family Friendly Carols & Candlelight in the Community Life Center
The Manna Band leads the music at this service with a mix of old and new favorites. Children from our WAM group will present the scripture through the use of drums and singing.
- ◇ 7:30 p.m. Traditional Carols & Candlelight in the Sanctuary
This service features the traditional Lessons & Carols format using a wide variety of musical resources including organ, handbells, choir, and soloists/instrumentalists.
- ◇ 9:30 p.m. Traditional Carols, Candlelight & Communion in the Sanctuary
If you are looking for a casual, less crowded service with an intimate feel, this service is for you. In addition to the beautiful music offerings, we celebrate the gift of Holy Communion.

Sunday Morning Advent Study by Pastor Pete

We will be doing an Advent study which Pastor Pete has written, entitled 'Rediscover the Christmas Story'. The first lesson is called 'Joseph'. The second week will be 'John the Baptist,' with the third week being 'The Angels and Shepherds Story'. The final week will be 'Mary's Story'. Dr. Murphy will be leading this study at 10:00a.m. in the church basement. The material will also be available on the Welcome Centers and on the church's website.

Meet Deb Cowan

Deb has joined our church staff as job share office manager. She comes to us from Onalaska, WI. Deb has most recently worked as office administrator in the Onalaska United Methodist Church. She brings with her many skills and knowledge of the United Methodist Church. In addition to this, Deb also has a background in Nursing and is certified in Stephen Ministries.

Deb is a native of Aberdeen, SD, attended SDSU, and even has a well used copy of one of our church cook-books! Sadly Deb's husband died unexpectedly in March of 2019. She has moved to Brookings to be closer to her family. Deb has a son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter in Volga, a daughter and son-in-law in Mankato, MN, and a sister in Brookings. Deb will be working Monday through Thursday mornings from 8:30 - 12:00. Stop in, introduce yourself, and join SPR in welcoming Deb to our church family.



Faith Community Nurse Note— Tips to Prevent Holiday Stress and Depression

Tears come from the heart and not from the brain. — Leonardo da Vinci

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

- **Acknowledge your feelings.**
- **Reach out.**
- **Be realistic.**
- **Set aside differences.**
- **Stick to a budget.**
- **Plan ahead.**
- **Learn to say no.**
- **Don't abandon healthy habits.**
- **Take a breather.**
- **Seek professional help if you need it.**

Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Joanie Holm

Financial Peace University to begin in January

Financial Peace University is a 9-week financial class where you learn to live within your means, get out of debt, create a budget, save for an emergency fund, and eventually build wealth. It's a great course taught by Dave Ramsey via DVD. Come to the first meeting for free! It will begin on Monday, January 13, at 6:30pm in the youth room. You won't regret taking this class! There is a charge for the material – the church will pay \$50 toward the purchase of a kit. Please contact Gretchen at 692-4345 for further information.

No Sunday School

There will be no Sunday school on December 22 and 29. Enjoy the holidays! Sunday school will resume on January 5.

Children's Christmas Program

I would like to invite you to the Children's Christmas program which will be held December 8 at 5:00 in the CLC. The program is entitled, "The Amazing Story of Christmas," and the 2-year olds – 5th graders will be involved with the program. Come join us for an uplifting time while the children help us tell the Christmas story.

Gretchen Knutson

Confirmation and HS Youth

Calling all 6th-12th graders! I would like to invite you to Winter Connection on January 24-26 in Sioux Falls. It is a time for youth to connect with other youth in this part of the conference. You will have a chance to share, worship, and serve others.

The cost is \$40 which includes two meals and an activity. Attendance is highly encouraged for all confirmation students. Here is the link to the website - <https://www.dakotasumc.org/dakyouth/happenings/winter-connection>.

There is no group registration – please follow the link on the page to register individually. Please let Gretchen know if you are interested in attending, as chaperones are needed.



UMW Memorial Service

All women are invited to the annual UMW Memorial Service honoring departed members over the last year. The luncheon will start at noon on Thursday, Dec. 5. Please RSVP to the office at 692-4345.

Youth Selling Calendars

Be sure to pick up a beautiful wall calendar with inspirational Bible verses for \$10. The youth are selling them as a fundraiser for youth mission trips. Calendars are located at the narthex & CLC Welcome Centers.

New Membership

If you have interest in becoming a member of the church, please note this on a sign in card during a Well or Manna service in the CLC, or on a fellowship pad in the Sanctuary. Please make sure to include your phone number. You may also call the office at 692-4345.

Hospitality Opportunity

We are in need of ushers, greeters, and a welcome desk person for the month of December for the 11:00 service. Will you help us out? Sign up sheets are at the Welcome Center in the narthex. This is a wonderful way to serve with others, so please consider signing up for one or all Sundays in Dec.

Manger Gifts

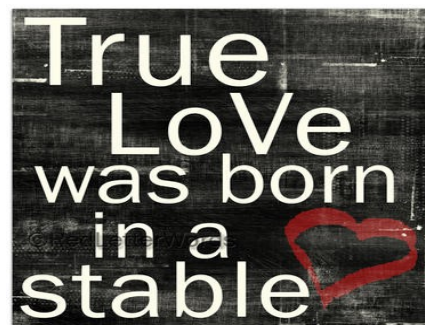
This church has a wonderful tradition of bringing gifts to the manger during the season of Advent. Please bring diaper donations of all brands and sizes to the mangers in the Sanctuary or the Community Life Center during the month of December. These diapers help supply the Diaper Den at the Harvest Table.

Cookbooks for Sale!

Ease your holiday cooking/baking by purchasing a leftover cookbook from the United Methodist Women for only \$3! Cookbooks will be available in the narthex during Sunday services. You may also call the office at 692-4345 if you would like to purchase a cookbook.

Home Visiting Volunteers Needed—Put Your Love in Action

The Health Ministry Team is looking for a dedicated group of people to consider visiting with homebound church members. We will provide training and support for this very important mission. Please speak with or email Joanie Holm at jholm229@gmail.com, or let someone on the staff know of your interest. Our current visitors report that the visits are a win-win, with benefits for both the person visited and the person who makes the visit. Put your Love in Action and become a visitor!



Hy-Vee Receipts

I first want to thank all of the congregation for diligently turning in Hy-Vee receipts! You do a wonderful job at keeping those coming. We need someone who would be willing to add up the receipts. It is a job which can be done while sitting – all you need is an adding machine with tape, scotch tape, and a pen! If you would be interested in volunteering to add up our receipts, please talk to Gretchen.

Christmas Cantata

The Chancel Choir will present “The Promise of Light” by Joel Raney on Sunday, December 22nd, at the 11a.m. traditional worship service. This beautiful Christmas Cantata also features handbells and four hands on the piano. Be sure to make this part of your Christmas experience this year!

Poinsettias

Although the time for the group poinsettia order has passed, you may still bring a poinsettia to either of the worship spaces to display in honor or memory of a loved one. If you would like a name published in the bulletin, please let us know by calling 692-4345.



2019 Radio Broadcast Sponsorships

If you would like to sponsor a radio broadcast in memory, honor, or celebration of a loved one or event/anniversary next year, a sign up sheet is available at the welcome center in the Sanctuary. You may also contact Amy or Deb at 692-4345 to sign up. Each broadcast is \$60 and airs at 9:30am on KBRK 1430AM. Sponsors are recognized in the weekly bulletins.

Thanksgiving Schedule Note

There will be NO Wednesday afternoon kids' activities or Manna in the Middle meal, worship, or ministry groups on Wednesday, November 27th, the day before Thanksgiving.

Please note that the office will be closed on Thanksgiving Day and on Friday, November 29.

Candy for Treat Bags Needed

We are in need of individually wrapped candy for treat bags which will be given to all children at the Children's Christmas program on Sunday, December 8. If you choose, you may also make a financial donation. Please bring bags to the church or education office by Thursday, December 5. Thank you very much!

(CLC) = Community Life Center

(Sanc) = Sanctuary

DECEMBER 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9am—The Well Worship (CLC) 9am/10am—Adult Classes 10am—Sunday School 11am—Children’s Christmas Program Practice (Speaking) 11am—Traditional Worship 4:30pm—CrossWork Emmaus	2 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC) 5:30pm—Harvest Table served by UMM(CLC) 5:30pm—Health Ministry Team (library) 7pm—Retired Group (parlor)	3 9am—CARE Group (basement) 10am—Singles Grp (Conf. Rm) 1pm—Staff meeting 5:30pm—New Day Al-Anon 6pm—Jubilee Ringers 7pm—Staff Parish Relations 7pm—Movie Night @Cinema 8	4—# 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC)	5 12pm—UMW Memorial Service (basement)	6 6:30am—Men’s Fellowship Breakfast (Hy-Vee) 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC) 6pm—Men’s Group Baking Cookies (CLC)	7
8 9am—The Well Worship (CLC) 9am/10am—Adult Classes 10am—Sunday School 11am—Children’s Christmas Program Practice 11am—Traditional Worship 1:45pm—Neighborhoods Sun. Service 2:30pm—ULC Sunday Afternoon Serv. 5pm—Children’s Christmas Program	9 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC) 5:30pm—Harvest Table served by First Bank & Trust (CLC)	10 9am—Memorial Committee (library) 9:30am—UMW Board Meeting 1pm—Staff meeting 5:30pm—New Day Al-Anon 6pm—Jubilee Ringers 7pm—Movie Night @Cinema 8	11—# 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC)	12 5:30pm—Missions Committee	13 6:30am—Men’s Fellowship Breakfast (Hy-Vee) 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC)	14
15 9am—The Well Worship (CLC) 9am/10am—Adult Classes (parlor) 10am—Sunday School 11am—Traditional Worship 4:30pm—CrossWork Emmaus	16—FOCUS Deadline 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC) 5:30pm—Harvest Table served by Larson Manufacturing (CLC) 7pm—Retired Group (parlor)	17 9am—CARE Group (basement) 1pm—Staff meeting 5:30pm—New Day Al-Anon (parlor) 6pm—Jubilee Ringers 7pm—Movie Night @Cinema 8	18—# 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC) *No HS Youth Group	19 9:45am—The Neighborhoods Communion 10:30am—Edgewood Vista Communion 2pm—Stoney Brook Comm. 3pm—ULC Communion	20 6:30am—Men’s Fellowship Breakfast (Hy-Vee) 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC)	21
22 9am—The Well Worship (CLC) 9am/10am—Adult Classes (parlor) *No Sunday School 11am—Traditional Worship w/Choir Cantata	23 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC) *No Harvest Table	24—Christmas Eve Day *Office Closed in afternoon 5:30pm—Candlelight Christmas Eve Service (CLC) 7:00pm—Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary) 9:30pm—Candles, Carols, & Communion Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary)	25—Christmas Day *Office Closed	26 *Office Closed	27 *Office Closed 6:30am—Men’s Fellowship Breakfast (Hy-Vee) 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC)	28
29 9am—The Well Worship (CLC) 9am/10am—Adult Classes (parlor) *No Sunday School 11am—Traditional Worship	30 *Office Closed 10am—Healthy Movement Class (CLC) 12pm—SOUL Potluck (CLC) 1:15pm—Aging & Spirituality Group (basement) *No Harvest Table	31—New Year’s Eve Day *Office Closed 5:30pm—New Day Al-Anon Group (parlor) 6pm—Jubilee Ringers 7pm—Movie Night @Cinema 8	January 1—New Year’ Day *Office Closed	Wednesday Schedule—# 3pm—WAM! (CLC) 4pm—Afternoon Childcare 4pm—Chiming Children 5pm—Youth Bells 5pm—Manna Meal (CLC) 6pm—Manna Worship	Wednesday Schedule—# 6:45pm—Chancel Choir, Men’s Study, Wednesday School, Confirmation/MS Youth Group, HS Youth Grp	