



What a joy it is to celebrate Advent and Christmas in the church each year!

Advent is to be a time of waiting, a spiritual discipline of slowing down to notice God's presence in the still small voice within a violent and hurried world. **"Be still, and know that I am God!"** the Psalmist reminds us in Psalm 46:10.

We can get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of Christmas that we forget the reason we are celebrating. Waiting for something that has already happened is a curious practice. The Advent season plays with our notion of time. **The church gathers in the present, to ponder the past, for a future hope.**

There are many events happening this season that will help you celebrate the true meaning of Christmas – beautiful music & meaningful messages in worship.

Make attending church part of your family's Christmas plans – there is no greater gift you can give yourself or them.

If you will be in Dent or Vergas on Christmas Eve, let your family know how much it would mean to you for them to attend worship with you.

Plan your family Christmas Eve celebration to begin with, be filled in the middle with, or end with, 3:30 pm worship at Dent United Methodist or 5:00 at Vergas United Methodist. Make welcoming the Christ child more important than Santa or a meal.



Blessings and See You In Church!
Pastor Joyce <><



Dent United Methodist Church
301 Main St, Dent MN 56528

Vergas United Methodist Church
200 W Main St, PO Box 243
Vergas, MN 56587

Pastor Joyce Slostad
email: jpslostad@gmail.com
Mobile: 763-742-4241

Dent Vergas Website:
dentvergasumc.org

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December Worship Happenings—
In Person 9:00 at Dent UMC, 10:30 at Vergas UMC
Online at 10:30 a.m. (Vergas Facebook Page)



December 3rd – Restore Us, O God: Hope. Sermon Series for Advent based on the meanings of the four Advent candles. Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19. We need God who is our hope -- in person, tangible. Not a message, not a text, not even just a star in the sky. Communion, have juice & bread ready if you're worshipping with us online.

December 10th - Restore Us, O God: Peace. Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13. True peace will escape us until our restless hearts begin to rest in God. Serenity cannot be granted by a diploma, a promotion, a

McMansion or a luxury sedan. It comes to us as a gift from God, and it includes forgiveness of sin and the restoration of our relationship with the Lord.

December 17th - Restore Us, O God: Joy. Psalm 126. It's one thing to live in God's grace when everything's going well, but it's quite another to experience the reality of that same grace after a period when we ourselves have been lost, searching or distant from God. It's not just something you nod and smile about but, like the psalmist says repeatedly, it's something you have to shout about!

December 24th – No Morning Service at either church.

A family-friendly Christmas Eve Services, gifts for children & guests, and concludes with a candle-light singing of Silent Night, 3:30 @ Dent, 5:00 @ Vergas. **Restore Us, O God: Love.** Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26. As we celebrate Advent and Christmas, we're fully aware of where God's love is leading us. The love might begin in the softly starlit manger, but it inevitably will lead to the harsh noonday sun reflecting on the Cross. God's extravagant love is demonstrated in God's willingness to give sacrificially.



December 31st – Don Garber will share a message at both churches.



TIS THE SEASON – to turn up & down the heat!

Please be sure if you turn up the heat (to 68, unless really cold out) that you also turn it down (to 58) when you leave the room or building. This helps keep our heating costs down.



PASTOR JOYCE'S
 Her schedule is subject to change due to appointments and evening activities, so these hours are just a guideline of when she hopes to be in the office. Please call ahead 763-742-4241 to be sure she's at church or if you'd like to schedule a time for her to meet with you:

OFFICE HOURS

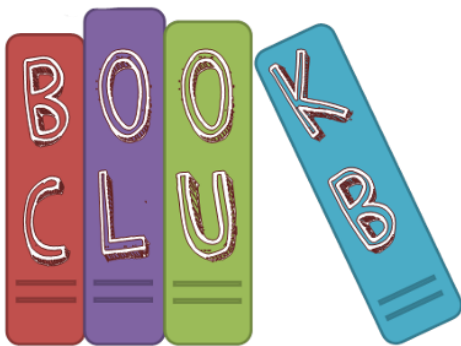


Mondays: day off
 Tuesdays: 10:00 – 11:30 Bible Study @ Dent, then 1 - 3:30 Office time
 Wednesdays: work from home, pastoral visits, meetings, other events in the area
 Thursdays: 10:00 – 11:30 Bible Study @ Vergas, then 1 – 3:30 Office time
 Friday: work from home or available for personal appointments 763-742-4241
 Saturday: day off
 Sunday mornings



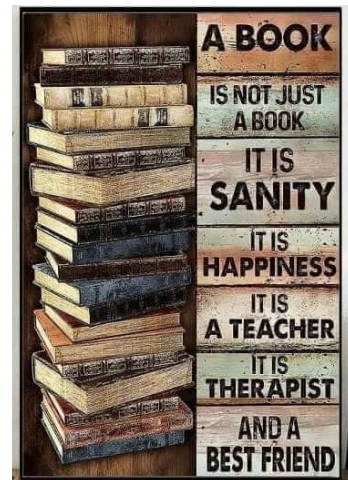
SAVE YOUR RECIEPTS FROM central market

Each church is asking everyone to save their receipts from Central Market (be sure the cashier stamps them with the red “we care” stamp). These are turned in for rebates and the money has been used for mission work as well as helping to pay for things around the church. Place your receipts and codes in the labeled box – that’s all you have to do. We have earned many dollars through this program.



Next Meeting
 Tues, Dec 5th 12:30pm at
 Mysteries Café in Dent

Books Chosen
 “How to Say Babylon”
 by Safiya Sinclair
 and
 “Killers of a Certain Age”
 by Deanna Rayburn



Dent Breakfast Club

meets at Mysteries Café (Nootzies) at 9am on the 1st Wednesday of the month

A SUGGESTION FOR CHRISTMAS EVE OR CHRISTMAS MORNING

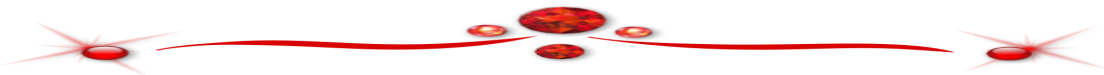
Gather around the tree before you open gifts and have someone **read this portion of the Christmas story** from Luke 2:1-7:

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.



Have someone **read this message about sharing:**

This is a season of sharing: we share our time, our most beloved traditions, our favorite recipes. We share stories and memories, music and moments of worship. And we share Christmas presents, which we will open in a few minutes. These gifts are not love in themselves, but they are simple reflections of the love we have for one another and they are given in honor of a greater love – God’s love for us in giving us Jesus. So we open these presents with thankfulness for Jesus and to celebrate his birthday.



Have someone **pray this prayer:**

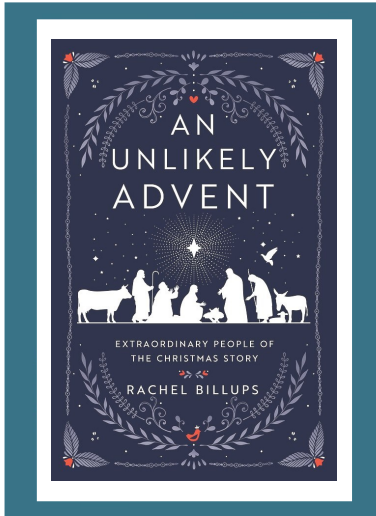
God of Heaven, it is You, we know, who has gathered us around this tree to share with one another the treasures that are hidden in these brightly colored wrappings...to share with one another your good gift of time together. We know you are with us too, dear Lord, sharing this time even as you shared your own dear Son that we might all be your children. For all of these gifts, we thank you and praise you. Amen.

The Magic of
Christmas
is not in the presents
but in
His
presence

Keep your
faith
and kindness
this Christmas.

**Merry
Christmas**

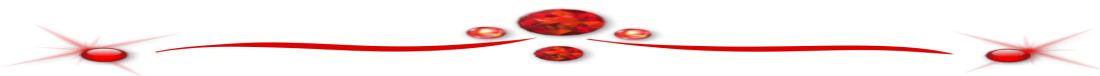
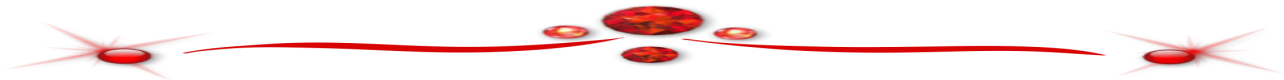




Advent Bible Study

Tuesday's 4 weeks
Starting December 5th
10am at Dent and 6:30pm
Online via Zoom

Thursday's 4 weeks
Starting December 7th
10am at Vergas



The needs of God's ministry are constant, please be sure your giving is current, especially over this last month of the year. If you are not able to be in church, please mail in your tithes and offerings to the addresses listed below. Make your offerings in advance of Sundays you will be gone.



Dent mail to: Karen Johnson, 33875 Downey Dr, Dent MN 56528

Vergas mail to : Sheri Schoenberger, 36755 Hungry Lake Ln, Frazee MN 56544
or Tithe online at dentvergasumc.org





Spread the Holiday Cheer
PAY IT FORWARD



Sunday, Dec 10th we will be randomly passing out the Pay it Forward envelopes for you to pass on to someone in need.



Sunday, Dec 10th wear your Ugly Christmas sweater to church, or a nice Christmas sweater if you want.



The following is a story of paying it forward. It's been adapted from 10 Christmas Reflections on Christ and Community by Our Daily Bread.

Mission Impossible by James Banks.

A few days before Christmas my wife, Cari, was standing in the checkout line. The young mother in front of her was carefully assessing the contents of her cart and slowly setting aside items one by one. Cari's initial impatience turned to compassion as she surveyed the growing pile of items that had been removed and realized the woman didn't have enough money to purchase them.

"I'd like to pay for those," she told the checker.

The young mother turned with a surprised look:

"That's too much!" she said. Cari, prompted by God's love and remembering how a stranger, miles away, had bought our own daughter's groceries in a difficult time, smiled and responded, "Merry Christmas." They both left the store with tears in their eyes.

Christmas came early to our home with a fresh awareness of God's kindness and generosity to us through His Son. Proverbs 11:25 speaks to generosity: "Those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed". In the following days we were refreshed by a renewed understanding of how God had met our greatest need of all – our need of a Savior – and how His love can unexpectedly overflow from our hearts to others in need.

M&M Christmas Poem

As You hold them in your hand, and turn them you will see. The M becomes a W an E, and then a 3. They tell the Christmas story, it's one I'm sure you know. It took place in a stable, a long, long time ago. The E is for the East, where the star shone so bright. The M is for the Manger, where Baby Jesus slept that night. The 3 is for the Wise Men, bearing gifts they say they came. The W is for Worship, Hallelujah, Praise His Name. So as you eat those candies, or share them with a friend, remember the meaning of Christmas,

It's a Love story that never ends.





The Vergas Church Ladies

We had a great day for our Combined Service in Dent on November 5th. The service was wonderful with the Band of Faith, All Saints Day celebration, and great meal. The Vergas Church Ladies held a craft and bake sale and were thrilled to collect \$591!

We sent 37 filled boxes for Operation Christmas Child and a check for \$400 for shipping and expenses.

The Church Ladies have raised over \$3000 this year with our projects. Decisions were made to send money to the following organizations: Total = \$3000

Relay for Life	\$500	Boys and Girls Club	\$300
Firefly Fields	\$500	Bridge Food Pantry	\$500
Hospice	\$500	Samaritan's Purse	\$400
Young Life	\$300		

Supporting missions is our goal and working together and having fun is how we achieve our goal.



Kitchen Cleanup



The Church Ladies cleaned out the kitchen cupboards and are organizing the items that are needed. One thing that we noticed is that people buy things or leave things in the cupboards, and we have way too many of some items. Please take home the items that you bring for fellowship. We appreciate the

donations of items, but we will let the congregation know when we need things, so we don't have extras. Thank you for helping us keep our church "cleaned up"!



Ad Council
Wednesday, Dec 20th
Dent 3:00pm
Vergas 6:30pm

Church Mission's



Vergas Local Outreach

The Little Library Post arrived and was installed and looks great, thank you to Neil and Rick for their work. The October local mission dollars will go to the Teresa Alicia Leon Grave Benefit in Pelican Rapids which is to help this family with costs associated with travel to Children's Hospital in Minneapolis. The November dollars will be sent to Mike Nettetstad, who directs the Band of Faith, to support their band. The December dollars will be used for Pay it Forward envelopes which will be handed out December 10.



Vergas Mission of the Quarter October / November / December

Water
for
South
Sudan



Salva Dut was born in a rural village in southwestern Sudan to the Dinka tribe. At 11 years old, the Sudanese Civil War reached his village and separated Salva from his family. He joined thousands of boys, famously known as the Lost Boys of Sudan, on their journey by foot to seek safety in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya. After living in refugee camps for 10 years, Salva was given the opportunity to move to the United States, where he was embraced by a family in Rochester, New York. Several years later, Salva learned that his father was still alive in Southern Sudan but was suffering with a disease caused by waterborne parasites. His father's illness inspired Salva to help both his father and his country by bringing clean water to those in need. This was the beginning of Water for South Sudan.

Their Mission is to deliver sustainable quality-of-life services to and with the people of South Sudan by efficiently providing access to clean, safe water, and improving hygiene and sanitation practices in areas of great need.



Dent Mission of the Quarter October / November / December



The Mission of the Quarter is **The Salvation Army**. In June 1865, William Booth preached to crowds outside the Blind Beggar pub; a new organization, The Christian Mission, was born. Over the next few years, the movement flourished. Its focus on teaching people about the message of Jesus in a way they could relate to, as well as addressing some of their material needs, saw many people become Christians. Despite opposition from parts of the public who disliked some of the Booths' methods and style, many joined. Their focus on those who had been rejected by the traditional churches was key. All were welcome – including those impoverished and disadvantaged.



Thank you for your
continued generosity

DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS LISTS

December Ushers

Lyndon & Peggy M

Dec	Liturgist	Fellowship
03	Don G.	Peggy & Lyndon M.
10	Michelle S.	Karen & Richard J.
17	Darlene H.	Peggy Meissner
24	Augie A.	Christmas Eve
31	Russ W.	Lisa & Russ W.

Dec	Liturgist	Ushers
03	Tonja J.	Neil & Donna
10	Bev F.	Rick & Margy
17	Margy N.	Faye & Tonya
24	Christmas Eve	Byron & Connie Z
31	Bryan G.	David & Carla R.

Dec	Vergas Fellowship
03	Tonya J.
10	Lana J.
17	Christmas Goodies
24	No Fellowship
31	NEEDED

If you are unable to be there on a Sunday, please find a substitute to fill in for you. Thank You!

Vergas

Dec 18th Neil
Dec 21st Tonya J
Dec 28th Ken S



Dent

Dec 15th Gretchen D
Dec 17th Austin H
Dec 28th Ivy M
Dec 30th Lyndon M

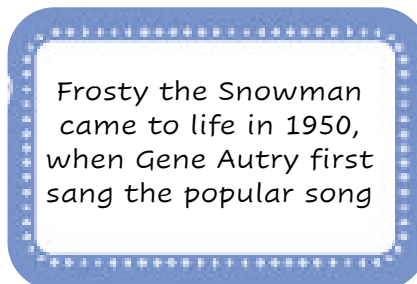
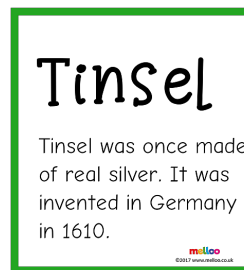
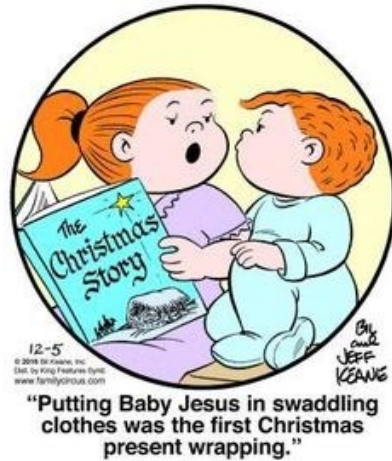


Dent UMC Annual
Rudolph's Closet

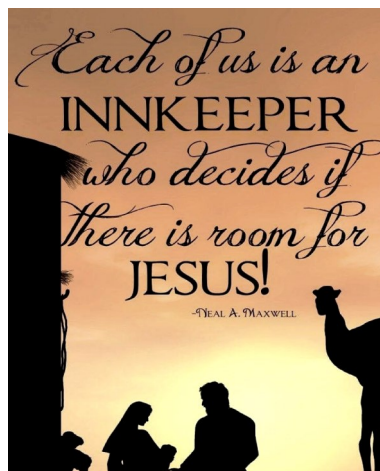


From 9 am to 12 noon the same day as Dent's Santa Day. The community children are invited to come and shop for Christmas gifts for their family members. They will be assisted with shopping, all gifts will be wrapped and refreshments will be available....





A Thought for The Day



Let us WORSHIP Together

"Worship Times"

Dent UMC

8:30am Pre Fellowship
9am Worship Service

Vergas UMC

9:30am Adult Sunday School (Sep thru May)
10:30am Worship Service
11:30am Coffee Fellowship



Livestream Service begins at 10:30am on the Vergas Facebook page



Recorded Service will be posted on YouTube and dentvergasumc.org

Click on the icon or link to go to the site

Are there things you would like to see each month in your newsletter? Would you like to write an article? Submit photographs? Share a recipe? Please let us know and we will do our best to include it here. Also, If you want your Newsletter delivered by email. Please let Sheri Schoenberger know at sheri.Lschoenberger@gmail.com or call her at 218-329-7465

Additions to the newsletter, **deadline for January, is December 26, 2023.**

We will be sending out the newsletter on the first or second Sunday of each month, if possible. To defray costs the newsletter will be offered in the following formats:

Email - Website - In person pick up at church - 1st or 2nd Sunday of the month.

US Mail - Remaining newsletters will be mailed on the 1st or 2nd Monday of the month.

Church Secretary / Newsletter editor

Sheri Schoenberger

Phone or text: 218-329-7465

email: sheri.lschoenberger@gmail.com

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Worship Times 9am Dent 10:30am Vergas and Livestream	Pastor Joyce Office Hours 1 - 3:30pm Tuesdays Dent	Pastor Joyce Office Hours 1 - 3:30pm Thurs. Vergas			1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2 - 4pm Relay for Life A Christmas Gathering	Advent Bible study 10am Dent 6:30pm Zoom 12:30pm Book Club @ Mysterries Café	9am Dent Breakfast Club @ Mysterries Café	10am Vergas Advent Bible Study	10am Vergas Advent Bible Study	9am - Noon Dent UMC's Rudolph's Closet	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Advent Bible Study 10am Dent 6:30pm Zoom		12:30pm Vergas Church Ladies @ Pastor's Apt.	10am Vergas Advent Bible Study	Gretchen D. (D)	
Austin H. (D)	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Neil S. (V)	Advent Bible Study 10am Dent 6:30pm Zoom	Ad Council 3pm Dent 6:30pm Vergas	10am Vergas Advent Bible Study	Tonya J. (V)	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Christmas Eve Services Dent 3pm Vergas 5pm		Advent Bible Study 10am Dent 6:30pm Zoom	9am Dent Breakfast Club @ Mysterries Café	Ken S. (V) Ivy M. (D)	Lyndon M. (D)	
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Advent Bible Study 10am Dent 6:30pm Zoom	Advent Bible Study 10am Dent 6:30pm Zoom	9am Dent Breakfast Club @ Mysterries Café	10am Vergas Advent Bible Study		

Ad Council Minutes
Vergas United Methodist Church
November 15, 6:30 pm at the Church

Present: Pastor Joyce Slostad, Jane Wasvick, Sheri Schoenberger, David Reiten, Faye Courneya and Tonya Johnson Absent: Lisa Wrabek

Stories were shared about how God has worked in our lives this week. Pastor Joyce opened with prayer.

Secretary Report

The minutes from October 18th were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer Report

The Treasurer report was approved as handed out. The project on the Roof and ceiling are completed and bills are paid. There needs to be pictures sent to insurance for final payment. The parsonage in Frazee was sold and Vergas gained some dollars from that sale. Decisions will be made soon on what work needs to be done around the church. Dollars will be assessed after an evaluation of the building and grounds to determine if any dollars should be invested. Currently dollars are in a savings account called Combined Fund which is earning interest. Contingency dollars are in a money market savings account.

Trustee Report

David reported that the project is complete. There was discussion on what should be done next. There was a list developed a few years ago and it was suggested that we do a walk around after church on the 26th to discuss what needs to be done.

Mission

1. The Library Post arrived and was installed and looks great, thank you to Neil and Rick for their work. The October local mission dollars will go to the Teresa Alicia Leon Grave Benefit in Pelican Rapids which is to help this family with costs associated with travel to Children's Hospital in Minneapolis. The November dollars will be sent to Mike Nettestad, who directs the Band of Faith to support their band. The December dollars will be used for Pay it Forward envelopes which will be handed out Dec 10th
2. The final mission of the quarter is Water for Sudan.
3. 37 Shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child were taken to the Distribution Center with a check for \$400 to help with shipping provided by Vergas Church Ladies.
4. Tonya will work on a list of 6 ideas for Mission of the Quarter and the Ad Council will decide at the next meeting which 4 will be supported in 2024.

Copier

The new copier is in the works, thank you to Faye and Sheri who worked to complete this project. Faye will cancel the Marco contract when it concludes in November.

Trunk and Treat

There were 50 children who came to the church for candy and were given information about our church. This is felt to be a good project to continue.

Pastor Report

1. Don Garber will fill in for Pastor during Joyce's next absence which falls on New Year's Eve.
2. Joyce asked if the Vergas church should have "Faith We Sing" hymnals. A motion was appropriately passed to purchase 30 hymnals for Vergas to put in the pews. The dollars will come out of the Memorial fund.
3. Joyce also reported that she attended an online Conference for pastors in Minnesota. 28 churches or 8% disaffiliated from the United Methodist Conference. This has not been an issue to date in Dent and Vergas.

Christmas

The decision for Christmas Eve which falls on a Sunday will be that there will not be church in the morning, but there will be a service in Dent at 3:30 and in Vergas at 5:00. There will not be fellowship at either service. New Year's Eve will be regular Sunday service times. Joyce will be gone that Sunday. This will be put on the church sign. Christmas offering will be given to the Food Banks, 1/3 each to The Bridge, Detroit Lakes, and Pelican Rapids. There will be "Ugly Sweater" Sunday on December 10th.

Kitchen and Cleaning

Jane reported that the Church Ladies completed a cleanout of the kitchen cupboards and will continue to work on this. Additional items will be sold at the Rummage Sale to clear some of the extra items from the kitchen downstairs. The Church Ladies completed a new job description for the custodian. Margy Nelson will be the new contact person for Tyann Jacobson. Tyann will no longer be asked to buy supplies. We will also put an article in the Newsletter about donating items, so we don't have too many.

Central Market Receipts

Jane said that these receipts were discussed at the Church Lady meeting. The group was wondering where the dollars were deposited. These still go into Campership funds. There was question if this money should be put into the mission dollars for quarterly missions. Sheri will talk to Connie Zitzow about this issue as she oversees Campership dollars.

Pastor Joyce closed with prayer.

The next meeting will be on December 20th at 6:30 at the church.

Parking Lot

- New Mission Statement
- Goals for 2023-24
- Active Shooter Discussion, Faye to follow up with Renee to set time.
- Measurements of Success
- Community Kids