



# The CIRCUIT RIDER

DECEMBER 2023

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## *A Monthly Publication of Solon United Methodist Church*

Advent is one of my favorite times of year. But for me it is not primarily about getting ready for the Christmas holiday. It is more about connecting with the sense of longing for peace and justice, and waiting expectantly for a fresh sense of God's presence in the midst of a hurting world. I love many of the Advent hymns, that are about looking forward to signs of God's love, and looking forward to God entering into our world, when our world seems so full of anxiety and division.

I found a very nice Advent devotional booklet from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota that was offered online for free--I could not find any comparable ones offered free by United Methodists. The devotional booklet has daily reflections and uses the hymn "Creator of the Stars of Night" that is #692 in our United Methodist Hymnal. The Lutheran hymnal, however, includes 3 additional verses, which are printed out in the booklet. Much of the text is from a Latin hymn from the 9th century. If you received this newsletter by email, there is a link to the devotional booklet attached. If not, you can find it on our website—[soloniaumc.org](http://soloniaumc.org) or there are printed copies in the entryway.

The night sky can connect us with those across the world and across the ages—we all see the same sky, just from slightly different perspectives. Just as the image of Jesus as light in the darkness connects Christians across the world, and across the ages. Those shepherds so long ago would have seen a very similar night sky to ours, with the glory of angels appearing in the sky as a glorious light! The wise men saw an additional star in the night sky, guiding them to Bethlehem to visit the child Jesus.

Seeing the night sky can also help us see the bigger picture across the ages, and across the expanse of space, that the troubles and anxieties of the times we live in will not have the last word. God's grace and glory and love will have the last word.

I'll look forward to our major event of the Christmas Kaleidoscope to kick off the season on December 2!

Plan on watching the Treasure Seekers kids putting on a short Christmas pageant just before our Wednesday dinner on December 20, then singing some carols, and decorating cookies along with drinking hot cocoa afterwards.

On Christmas Eve, we will have two services, one at 4 pm, and one at 5:30 pm. These services will include lessons, carols, and candle lighting. I look forward to celebrating our first Advent and Christmas together. I pray that we will experience the wonder and joy of Christmas with fresh eyes this year, and be ready to start a new year of reaching out in Jesus' name!

**Pastor Peggy**



*The Circuit Rider*



# Music Ministry

*Emmanuel! Emmanuel!  
Wonderful Counselor  
Lord of life Lord of all  
He is the Prince of Peace  
Mighty God Holy One  
Emmanuel Emmanuel!*



Michael W. Smith and Amy Grant co-wrote "Emmanuel" in 1983. It continues to inspire and touch with its message of hope, love, and faith. Emmanuel, which translates to "God with Us" in Hebrew, centers around the concept of God's constant presence in our lives. It holds the reminder that no matter what challenges or difficulties we face, we are never alone. It was written to paint a picture of a loving and compassionate God who walks with us through every high and low. We will be singing this for our Response to the Offering for December and January. I hope you enjoy it!

There are so many wonderful musical opportunities this month:

**Sunday, December 3** - Chancel Choir will be joined by a few members of the Bell Choir for our Special Music.

**Sunday, December 10** - Bell Choir

**Sunday, December 17** - Chancel Choir

**Wednesday, December 20** - Singing of Christmas Carols in the Sanctuary from 6:15 - 7:00 following the Wednesday evening meal. These will be carols "on request". Bring yourself and a couple of your favorites you'd like everyone to sing together!

**Sunday, December 24** - Chancel Choir will sing at the 5:30 pm Christmas Eve service

*Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas season!*

*Angie*

## NOVEMBER 2023 WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

9:00 AM

NOVEMBER 5	64
NOVEMBER 12	68
NOVEMBER 19	58
NOVEMBER 26	32

# Worship Schedule

December 3-Communion, First Sunday of Advent  
Scripture: Isaiah 64:1-4 & Mark 1:1-8  
Msg: Unrelenting Grace Connects Us to Each Other

December 10—Second Sunday of Advent  
Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-5 & Luke 1:26-38  
Msg: Unrelenting Grace is God's Way of Life in the World

December 17—Third Sunday of Advent  
Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-4 & Luke 1:39-56  
Msg: Unrelenting Grace and the Healing of Our Churches

December 24 (9:00 AM) - Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Scripture: Isiah 11:1-9 & Luke 2:1-5, 8-12  
Msg: Unrelenting Grace Afresh in Our World

**December 24**  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**  
**4:00 PM and 5:30 PM**  
**A Service of Lessons & Carols**  
**Music: Chancel Choir (5:30 PM)**

December 31  
Scripture: Isaiah 61:10-62:3 & Luke 2:22-40  
Msg: Remembering and Celebrating New Beginnings

*Come  
Worship  
With Us*

May your Christmas be filled with laughter and prosperity.

# SOLON CHRISTMAS KALEIDOSCOPE

TREE WALK AND ARTS FESTIVAL

DECEMBER 2ND 10AM-3PM

SOLON UNITED METHODIST FAMILY LIFE CENTER

- Bake & Craft Sale • Basket Auction •
- Solon Area Artists Market • Scavenger Hunt •
- Chicken Noodle Soup • Church Burgers •
- Fresh Baked Cookies & Homemade Desserts 11AM-1PM •

# & Santa! 12:30-3:00PM

Donate a tree for the Display:  
[brodie.bohlen@solon-iowa.com](mailto:brodie.bohlen@solon-iowa.com)

For more information:  
Barb Kalm 319.321.4078

Will you have a special event on December 2nd??  
Contact the SOLON ECONOMIST before November 17, 2023  
to get your event in the SPECIAL THANKSGIVING EDITION!  
[catherine.bilskie@wcinet.com](mailto:catherine.bilskie@wcinet.com)

We have a few members that will be singing in the Christmas Cantata (details below).  
Mark your calendars and head down to Iowa City for a wonderful  
night of holiday music!



# Christmas Cantata

featuring John Rutter's *Joy To the World*

## Friday, December 15

at 7:00pm at The First UMC and  
Wesley Foundation of Iowa City  
(214 E. Jefferson Street)

Presented by the Iowa City Area Circuit: Grace UMC, Tiffin;  
First UMC, North Liberty; Coralville UMC; St. Mark UMC;  
First UMC, Iowa City; Springdale UMC; West Branch UMC;  
Sharon Center UMC; Solon UMC; In Christ UMC;  
and other community members.

# CHRISTMAS PAGEANT, CAROLS, COOKIES & COCOA

On Wednesday, December 20th we will have special Christmas activities before and after the dinner. Join us for the celebration!

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 5:15-5:30    | Christmas Pageant by the Treasure Seekers kids in the Sanctuary                      |
| 5:30         | Family Dinner  |
| 6:15         | Carol singing in the Sanctuary, by request—be ready to suggest your favorite carols! |
| 6:45 or 7:00 | Cocoa and cookie decorating in the Fellowship Hall                                   |



## CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. **We will hold our regular Sunday worship at 9:00AM**, along with our candlelight services in the evening.

We are currently looking for anyone interested in helping with Christmas Eve Worship, ie. Lighting Advent candles, reading scripture. If you are interested please sign up on the clipboard and Pastor Peggy will be contacting you.



## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

This year we are offering the opportunity for anyone who wishes to donate towards the poinsettias for Christmas Eve to do so in honor or memory of a loved one. In the past, we have found that many people, for various reasons, don't actually want to take a poinsettia home. So while we continue to actually purchase a limited number of poinsettias, we want to offer additional people the chance to donate. Please indicate when you sign up whether you want to actually take a poinsettia home after the Christmas Eve service (if we have some available).

All donations in memory or honor of a loved one will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin for the 4PM & 5:30PM services.

Any donations received above the actual cost of the poinsettias will go towards a discretionary fund for Pastor Peggy to be able to offer small amounts of assistance to people who come to the church asking for support with food, gas, or other immediate needs.



# Adult Bible Study –Mondays 5:30PM



SUMC's Adult Bible Study group have been meeting on Monday nights in Fellowship Hall at 5:30PM for a couple of months now!

This group has been looking into authorship, history, culture, context, characters, Bible stories and the overall big picture of God's Word.

Retired Pastor Jill Mack leads this group and invites you to join in!



# Youth Group –Wednesdays 6:15PM

Middle school and high school youth group meets from 6:15 to 7:30 on the upper level of the Family Life Center each Wednesday. Leaders are Lee Ann Gilroy and Sue Wilkinson.

We continue to study the life of Christ throughout the Bible. We'll also be making nativity-themed ornaments for the church's tree for the Christmas Tree Walk.

*Youth Group will not meet on Wednesday December 27th, due to the holiday break.*

**Please join us after the family meal!**



# YOUTH GROUP



JOIN US!

# Treasure Seekers Winter & Spring 2024

We had a wonderful fall session of Treasure Seekers this year, with 13 children actively involved on Wednesday afternoons! Registration forms are available now for the Winter/Spring 2024 session, which begins January 3, and runs through April 24 (with no session on March 13, during spring break).

You can find the registration forms on our website <https://soloniaumc.churchtrac.com/> or if you received this newsletter by email, a form is also attached to this email.

Thank you to our many volunteers: Dee Swartzendruber, Randy Mack, Jill Mack, Janeen Moses, Barb Kalm, Jan Stock, Connie Railsback, Coleen Pumphrey, Alan Harrington, Linda Slusher, and special guest Sally Hartman, with support from Pastor Peggy.



## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

The UWF will hold its Christmas guest day luncheon on December 6 at 1 o'clock in the fellowship hall. All members will bring a covered dish and guests are welcome. Hostesses for the luncheon are the UWF officers. Phyllis Cabbage will again present the Christmas program, which is an always inspiring and fun.



United  
Women  
in Faith

Anyone needing a ride to the luncheon may contact Barb Kalm 319-321-4078 or Shirley Anderson 319-541-0732.

There will be no January meeting, and the next meeting for the group will be February 1 at 1:30 PM. Hostesses are Connie Koeppen and Ruth Spieker.

Bingo will be February 16 at 1:45 at the Solon care center. Cookies will be furnished by Barb Kalm and Colleen Pumphrey.

## UNITED METHODIST MEN

Join us every Saturday morning at 6:00 am at the Family Life Center. The SUMC men are studying the Bible. If you would like to attend, call Mike Turner at (319)624-2061.



# Missions-Community Garden Cleanup

## THANK YOU WAYNE AND TOM!

Wayne Anderson for cleaning up the garden at the end of the season.

Tom Moore for hauling away the garden debris and giving the soil a good tilling.

IT IS ALL READY FOR SPRING PLANTING!



# Missions-Midwest Mission Student Bags Delivered



Thank you to Paul Saupe for volunteering to deliver the Student Bags and products to the In-Gathering. We appreciate you stepping up on short notice!

Thank you to all who donated to this mission. Together we made a difference!



# Family Meals

Attendance has been increasing. We serve multiple generations from ages 3 to 93! Check our church Facebook page every Wednesday morning to see what's on the menu! To-go meals are available, think of your neighbor that needs a meal or someone in need. We will be closed only Dec 27th. Family Meals will resume on January 3rd. Volunteers always come and make it happen be it dish washing, food prep, serving, clean up, making desserts.

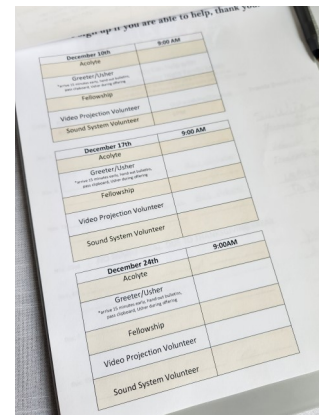
**EVERYONE WELCOME!**



# Weekly Worship Volunteers

Do you want to volunteer and aren't sure where to start? Volunteering on Sunday morning when you are already here may just be the place! You can check out ways to volunteer through the link below. Some of the positions include: being a greeter, providing refreshments and serving during fellowship time, as well as being an acolyte for the kids and more! Click [HERE](#) to view the online sign up. You can also sign up on the clipboard that is passed around during worship on Sundays!

If you have questions, please call the office at 319-624-2288, or email at soloniaumc@gmail.com





# Holiday Missions

## SUMC will again be collecting for Toys for Tots

Toys for Tots is a program run by the United States Marine Corps Reserve which distributes toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy them gifts for Christmas. The program was founded in 1947 by reservist Major Bill Hendricks.

During 2022 Johnson and Washington Counties of Iowa distributed 6,945 toys and supported 3,534 children. You can make a difference this holiday!

***The donation bin is in the Narthex! We will collect unwrapped toys through December 10th. Please consider donating to this great cause!***



Our Project Holiday Christmas Tree will be appearing soon in the SUMC Narthex. On the tree you'll find envelope tags in which your donation can be placed. Each year we collect to help spread joy to those families in need, right here in our area!

Project Holiday is the Crisis Center's annual holiday meal distribution which takes place the week before Christmas each year. The goal behind this drive is to provide families with the **ingredients they need to create their own family traditions**. Each year, the Crisis Center provides meals for over

**1,700 families in our community.**

**Will you help us spread joy this holiday season? Your \$25 contribution covers the cost of the meal for one family**, including a turkey, ham, or other entrée item, sides, vegetables, and a variety of other grocery items needed to prepare a holiday feast. By taking a tag and returning it to the Crisis Center, you help us brighten the holidays for hundreds of our neighbors in need.

**Happy Holidays!**  
**The Crisis Center of Johnson County**



The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.

-Proverbs 11:25

# FINANCE

The following comes from a pledge campaign report delivered by Ivan Hasselbusch, SUMC treasurer, at a recent worship service.

=====

I have a bit of good news to share with you regarding the stewardship campaign that concluded the last Sunday of October.

The current results are:

	Units	Amount	Pledging	Pledged
2024 Pledges	56		\$161,850	
2023 Pledges	51		\$140,360	



15 giving units increased their pledge for 2024 and that increase accounted for about one third of the total increase in campaign giving. The remaining increase comes from a combination of new pledging units, less pledging units dropping out for 2024 plus existing pledging units that pledged in 2024 but did not do so in 2023.

I have yet to pull together the 2024 giving budget so I don't know what the final impact on our expected giving will be. This certainly gives us some promise that maybe we have decreased that slide we have had in giving I talked about a couple weeks ago and, who knows, perhaps we can turn that around into an upswing in our gifts to SUMC.

So, we have some good news to carry with us as we begin to look towards the new year. My personal feeling is this is a continuation of the goods news we have been experiencing since Pastor Peggy arrived in our midst.

Let us hope....and pray..... other 'good news' stories await us.

# FOOT CLINIC

Visiting Nurses of Johnson County will host a Foot Clinic on Thursday Dec. 7th from 8AM to Noon in Fellowship Hall. If you are interested in participating, please call 319-337-9686 to schedule.

## In Our Prayers

For Tawnia's Friend Joyce, whose brother recently passed.  
Moriah Gilroy who was hospitalized.  
Continued prayers for Kay Geguzis' daughter-in-law, who has been diagnosed with cancer.  
Mary Gruber who is recovering from cataract surgery.  
Ruth Ann Richards who was hospitalized.  
Tanner's dog Zoe needs prayers for healing .  
Julia Woessner's sister-in-law's husband died, prayers for all of their family.  
Sue Wilkinson's nephew Jermil has been called to active duty as a National Guard. He is going to Louisiana.  
For the families of those killed in Lewiston, Maine and for their community after a shooter went on a rampage  
Continuing prayers for all impacted by the horrific violence in Israel and Gaza. We offer prayer for all who are suffering, and prayers for peace in the region. We are glad that at least some humanitarian aid is now being allowed into Gaza.  
People of Ukraine, and all other places in the world torn by violence.  
Darcy Miller's daughter and family in Cedar Rapids who had COVID.  
Joyce Cook's brother who passed away.  
Dave, a cousin of the Grubers died this past week.  
Jan Stock's granddaughter, Maddie, is traveling.  
Sue's niece Kaylee has decided to move and work on her own at a ski resort.  
People of Israel and Gaza, and prayers for peace in that region.  
All other places in the world torn by war and violence.  
For our Veterans, those who have served and sacrificed.  
For the Family of Aaron McAtee.  
Scarlett, who was lifted up by Nadine.  
Knox, who has Covid.  
Mila, who was lifted up by Sue.  
Kim, the daughter-in-law of Kay.  
Maria, who was lifted up by Phil.  
Prayers for Pastor Peggy's mom, Pat Garrigues, following her surgery and praises that it went well and there appears to be no sign of lymphoma.

Sue W. lifted up the family of AJ Goldsmith (Connie & Ed's son) who was killed in a motorcycle accident.  
Dee S. asked for prayers for Roger who is undergoing intensive treatments for neuropathy.  
LeeAnn G asked for prayers for her youngest sister whose cancer has come back and also for two friends dealing with difficulties and loss: Myrna and Tyler.  
Doris T reported that her daughter-in-law, Jessica Smith, did not get a good report on her cancer treatments.  
Verlee L asked for prayers for safety for all those traveling over the holiday.

## Rejoices & Thanksgiving

Sue Wilkinson shares joy that her daughter, who is cross country coach in Madrid, their team placed first in the state, and Sue's granddaughters are also part of the team.  
Ruth Ann Richards is home from the hospital, and came to worship.  
Mary Gruber's recent cataract surgery went well, and she was at worship.  
Gloria Bulechek's granddaughter Ally's tumor is shrinking after chemotherapy.  
Connie Railsback had good test results.  
Darcy's son Nick and daughter-in-law Sterling and their kids are visiting, and were in worship.  
Gloria B. had twin great-grandchildren born. Virginia, who lifted up the joy for a new grandson, Tommy Ray.  
The beautiful day and weather as of late.  
Verlee L reported that her great-niece, Ally, had a good report: only 1 tumor is left and it is smaller.  
Nadine S shared the joy that her great-granddaughter, Scarlett, was home from the hospital and also thanked everyone for the prayers following her back surgery.  
Bob G lifted up prayers of gratitude for service men and women, EMT's, and other emergency personnel who must work during the holidays.  
Al H expressed thanks to Phil Kakacek and Jill Mack for leading worship while Pastor Peggy was gone.

## December Birthdays

MOTTINGER, Dina	12/01
HANSEN, Denny	12/03
STRANG, Kevin	12/03
WHEELER, Tim	12/04
Miller, Paul	12/06
RUFF, Nathaniel	12/08
LOCKE, Ryan	12/11
PROFFITT, Helen	12/11
TURNER, Mike	12/12
Hawker, Krew	12/14
Moses, Janeen	12/14
LEIGHTON, Jim	12/17
GRUBER, Mary	12/18
WEETMAN, David	12/18
SWAN, Gretchen	12/20
DURR, Ellie	12/21
WEARS, Irene	12/24
HESS, Thelia	12/25
OWEN, Lexi	12/25
BARK, Jeanne	12/30
OAKES, Natalie	12/31
Miller, Nathan	12/31
SWAN, Jeff	12/31



**Prayer Requests** The SUMC family wants to support and encourage you throughout your time of need. If you have a prayer request, please fill out the Prayer Request card located in the pew, and place it in the offering plate during worship. If you would like to add your prayer request to our church-wide prayer chain, please call the church office at (319) 624-2288, or email us with your request.

## Birthday Announcements

Do you have a birthday in this month but don't see your birthday listed? Contact the Church at [soloniaumc@gmail.com](mailto:soloniaumc@gmail.com).

Be sure to give your month, day, and year. We need your birth year to be able to enter in the software.



STANDARD MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 4  
Solon, IA 52333

**DECEMBER CIRCUIT RIDER**

Return Service Requested

*Making disciples of Jesus Christ  
for the transformation  
of our world*



**Sunday Schedule**  
**9:00 AM—Worship**  
**9:00 AM —Sunday School**  
**10:15 AM —Adult Sunday School**

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship**  
**December 24th 4:00 & 5:30 PM**

Rev. Peggy Garrigues, Lead Pastor 319-855-7911  
pastorpeggy@soloniaumc.org  
Angie Grecian-Bransky, Music Director  
Lindy Hopp, Office Administrator  
Mary Kucera, Director of Hand Bells  
Ivan Hasselbusch, Treasurer  
Ruben Galvan, Custodian

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Facebook: Solon United Methodist Church—Iowa  
Instagram: soloniaumc