



**COMMUNITY CHURCH OF WALKER
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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“No matter who you are, or where you are, you are welcome here!” “No matter who you are, or where you are, you are welcome here!”

**CCOWUCC Update and News
By Michael Small**

For The Week of: December 2, 2024



December 2, 2024

Silver and Gold by
Martha Spong – UCC Clergy and
Clergy Coach

Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended. - Revelation 15:1 (NRSVUE)

When our adult children and their families arrive for Christmas, our favorite soundtrack for the season is Sufjan Stevens' *Songs for Christmas*, his homey recordings as much a part of our blended family traditions as grits casserole, Swedish meatballs, and cornflake cookies. We sing along with his raucous, joyful “O Holy Night,” until we are hoarse.

When Sufjan released another seasonal compilation, *Silver and Gold*, my musician son was excited to give it to me. But it is not the same. The soundscape is eerie, even threatening.

It is Revelation Advent.

These angels embody the end of God’s wrath, but only because it is the end of the world as we know it.

Sometimes it takes an apocalypse to make space for a new beginning: the end of a job, a marriage, or a dream. These angels force a renovation of our self-understanding. The glorifying of old ways must do more than diminish. Until that glow flickers out, we cannot perceive the glimmer of something new.

While I hesitate to look for these angels, I know at certain times in life we must confront their existence and hear their discordant tones and feel the angry heat or the disapproving chill they bring. I have done it, and I will again.

Our hope lies not in noisy games at the dining room table or a cozy rewatch of *It’s a Wonderful Life*, but in the disruptive possibilities of a new life to come.

Prayer

Holy One, open us to your righteous anger toward the world as it is and your in-breaking vision for the world as it should be. Amen.

First Sunday of Advent – December 1st – “Joy” and “Justice” were the words of the day. Hear wonderful music from the Chancel Choir, Sara Chaffe-Bates and Sabbastain Wilson Webb. From *The Lord of the Rings Volume 3 The Return of the King* by J.R. R. Tolkien Samwise speaks to Frodo when times seem most hopeless, desperate on the slopes of Mount Doom, *“It’s like in the great stories, Mr. Frodo. The ones that really mattered. Full of darkness and danger they were. And sometimes you didn’t want to know the end. Because how could the end be happy? How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad had happened? But in the end, it’s only a passing thing, this shadow. Even darkness must pass. A new day will come. And when the sun shines it will shine out the clearer. Those were the stories that stayed with you. That meant something, even if you were too small to understand why. But I think, Mr. Frodo, I do understand. I know now. Folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back, only they didn’t. They kept going, because they were holding on to something. That there is some good in this world, and it’s worth fighting for.”* The worship service may be viewed on the church website www.walkerucc.com or by clicking on the QR Code.



❖ **Prayers for the First Week of Advent:** – “Most Holy, gracious, and mysterious God – as the darkness and cold envelop us in this season of Advent – may your light break forth and guide us. As we wait, listen, watch, hear may our sense be focused on your presence, both near and far! In these days of uncertainty and mystery may we stand on the foundation of your word, your ways, and your hope that we may build up your realm, your kingdom. May we act and move with discernment for wisdom and courage to stand and act in Your truth knowing *‘That there is some good in this world, and it’s worth fighting for.’* In the name of the infant to be born in us – soon and very soon, we pray all of this. Amen.” – Michael Small

❖ **December 8th Worship Information – Second Sunday of Advent**

- **Theme: “Praying With Joy!”**
- **Revised Common Lectionary for 12/8/2024**
Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4 Luke 1:68-79 Philipians 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6
- **Focus Prayer:** God of Hope, surround us with your joy in season and out of season. Amen.
- **Focus Reading: Philipians 1:3-11 in conversation with Luke 3:1-6**

Philipians 1:3-11 - First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament (p. 358). Wildman, Terry M. InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

³ Whenever you come into my thoughts I give thanks to my Creator. ⁴ I always pray with a glad heart when I send up prayers for you, ⁵ because from the first day until now we have walked side by side in the telling of the good story. ⁶ I have no doubts that the one who set your feet on this good path will keep walking it with you until the day that Creator Sets Free (*Jesus*) the Chosen One appears. ⁷ It is right for me to think of you in this way, for you hold a warm place in my heart. You have shared with me in the gift of Creator’s great kindness, both in my chains and when I stand on the

I thank God every time I remember you.
Philippians 1 vs. 3



truth of the good story. ⁸ The Great Spirit knows that the longing I have to see you comes from the warm and tender heart of the Chosen One, Creator Sets Free (*Jesus*).

⁹ When I send my voice to the Great Spirit, I pray that the love you have for each other will grow strong and remain steady in wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰ In this way, you will be able to make good choices that will lead to a pure heart and keep you from stumbling until the day of the Chosen One.

¹¹ I pray that your lives will be filled with the good fruit of doing what is right, which comes from remaining true to Creator Sets Free (*Jesus*) the Chosen One. All of this will bring honor and praise to the Great Spirit.

Luke 3:1-6 - *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible* (pp. 2225). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Kindle Edition.

¹ In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, Philip his brother tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene. ² In those days, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the Word of God came to John, ben-Zechariah, in the desert. ³ John went through the entire region of the Jordan proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as is written in the words of Isaiah, the prophet:

“A herald’s voice in the desert,
crying,

‘Make ready the way of our God;
clear a straight path.

⁵ Every valley will be filled,
and every mountain and hill will
be leveled.

The twisted paths will be made
straight,

and the rough road smooth—


⁶ and all humankind will
see the salvation of
God.”



● **Focus Questions:**

- What prompts you to pray?
- How do you pray?
- Does joy enter your prayers?
- How do you engage in public ministry?
- How does the prophetic voice show up in your ministry or faith community?

● **Special Music: Tim and Shelli Johnson – Liturgist: Bev Jorland**



“...the Glory of God shone around them... Luke 2:9”

Be the Light

Power of Community

Among the many letters and notes the Pension Boards receives from recipients of gifts made possible by contributions to the Christmas Fund were these words:

As a lifelong member of the UCC, I have fond memories of the Annual Christmas Fund. I never thought we would be in a situation where we too would need assistance as medical expenses and caregiving costs increase. We are grateful that Christmas Fund is here to assist us.


*Reverend Christopher Gilmore, Lead Pastor
Sixth Avenue - United Church of Christ in Denver, CO*

Thanks to your generosity, last year the Christmas Fund provided over \$1.9 million in pension and health benefits, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired church servants and their families.

Every gift came from people like you. This year, please give what you can to continue supporting those who've devoted their lives to serving others.

Did you know that Americans owe an estimate \$220 billion dollars in medical debt? Your donation helps UCC members like Chris with unexpected medical expenses.

Visit christmasfund.org to learn more and donate online.



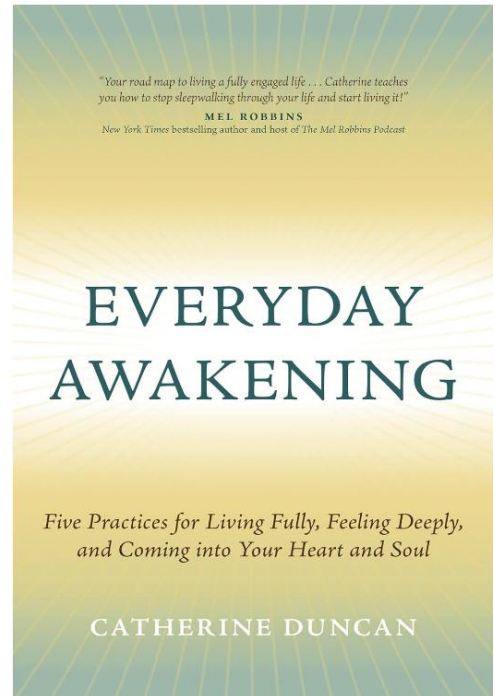
Donate Online Here!

Christmas Fund Offering December 24th

Events in December

Book
Conversation
**December 4th,
11th, 18th**
Soup - 6:00 pm
**Conversation -
6:30 pm**

*Call Out to
Something Greater
Come back to the
present moment and
breathe.*



- *As you come into your heart and soul, reach out and talk to something beyond you. In your mind or heart, either silently or out loud, say whatever comes into your heart.*
- *If no words come, you can try any or all of these:*

Thank you. Please forgive me. Be with me. Pour your healing spirit through me. Fill me with your love and light and peace. Help me open to your presence, your wisdom, your guidance. Lead me and guide me every step of my path. Protect me and my family. I pray for my family and friends. Be with me. Thank you.

Women's Fellowship
Christmas Party
Wednesday
December 11th - 12 noon
Sue Grage's Home - Park Rapids
Carpooling from Walker

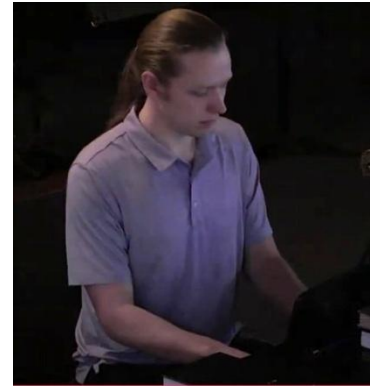




**Christmas Concert at
Union UCC Hackensack
Features**

Sabbastian Wilson Webb

Friday, December 13, 2024, 7:00 p.m.



Christmas Eve Service

**Community Church of Walker
- UCC**

12/24 at 4:00 p.m.

All Are Welcome to this most

Holy Night to a worship service filled with

music, carols, and words shaped by LOVE!

All Donations go to the UCC Christmas Fund Offering



Holy Humor Sunday

Lessons and Laughter

First Sunday of Christmas

December 30th at 10:00 a.m.



This service is designed with two truths in mind. First, the Christmas season is hallmarked by joy. The angels sing. The shepherds run. The star shines. Mary cherishes. Christ is born! In response to all this good news, we sing "Joy to the World!" with grateful celebration. Second, by the time the Sunday after Christmas rolls around, all of us are usually running on empty. Therefore, this service is intentionally designed to not only provide some much needed levity and support one another, but to also lean into the holy joy of this season.



❖ **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

- 12/10 Nathan Kalli
- 12/12 Rev. Michael Small
- 12/12 Vern Bader
- 12/14 Larry Johnson
- 12/18 Tim Johnson
- 12/25 Earl Niedermann

❖ **DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

- 12/27 Steve and Chris Kolp
- 12/28 Jack and Kathy Hopen

❖ ***A Reminder!!!*** – current bulletins, Churchly Happenings, and **Good News, Good News** - our monthly newsletter, and the **Weekly Update** may be found on the church website – www.uccwalker.com

❖ **St. Mark's WELS meets at CCOWUCC** serving as a "Worship Station". They will continue to meet on the second and fourth Monday of each month between 6:30 – 8:30 pm.

❖ Addresses – You are invited to be in touch.

Meryle O'Connor
Waterford Estates
6288 Louisiana N. #111
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

Betty Fisher
4222 Larch Street NE
Bemidji MN 56601

Kevin Wedel
107 Highland Ave. W.
Apartment 102
Walker MN 56484

Alison Koch
1803 South Court Street
Fergus Falls MN 56537

❖ ***Democracy works best if we speak with one another. Whatever your opinion, I encourage each of you to be in contact with your representatives. Communicating is an on-going and two-way process of sharing gratitude and wisdom.***

Below is listed state and national elected leadership for the Walker Area.

If you do not reside in the Walker area, go to <https://www.gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts/> to obtain information on the elected state leadership for your location.

Senator Steve Green (R) (Dis.02)
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., # 2319
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-297-8063

E-mail:
sen.steve.green@senate.mn
<https://www.house.mn.gov/members/profile/15458>

Office of Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
<https://mn.gov/governor/connect/contact-us/contact-form.jsp>

Senator Amy Klobuchar (DFL) MN
425 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510
phone: 202-224-3244
fax: 202-228-2186

<https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/>

Rep. Matt Bliss (R) District: 02B
311 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-5516
Toll Free: 877-838-5537
E-mail:
rep.matt.bliss@house.mn.gov
[https://www.house.mn.gov/
members/profile/15458](https://www.house.mn.gov/members/profile/15458)

Rep. Pete Stauber (R) U.S. House # 8
145 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-6211
<https://stauber.house.gov/>

Senator Tina Smith (DFL) U.S. MN
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-5641
<https://www.smith.senate.gov/>

Prayers and Blessings – Pastor Michael