

"Let the light of Jesus shine through you!"

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Upcoming Events

Communion Sunday

Sunday, December 1

Church Christmas Brunch & Cookie Distribution

Sun. Dec. 8, 9 a.m. @ Retreat

Retreat Board Meeting

Sun. Dec. 8, 9 a.m.

New Hope Board Meeting

Sun. Dec. 8, 11:30 a.m.

Liberty Pole Board Meeting

Mon. Dec. 9, 6 p.m.

LP Methodist Women

Wed. Dec. 11, 5 p.m.

@ Gasser's, Viroqua

Christmas Eve Services

4 p.m. @ Retreat

6 p.m. @ Liberty Pole

Church Basement Quilters

Mon. Dec. 2 & 16, 9 a.m.

Confirmation Class

Sun. Dec. 8, 3 – 5 p.m.

Wednesday Warriors

Every Wednesday, 3:30 p.m.

Food Pantry Open

Wednesdays: 5 – 6:30 p.m.

Thursdays: 9 – 11 a.m.

Love Came Down at Christmas!

The season of Advent is here! As the Christmas spirit fills the air, these days leading up to Christmas are filled with reminders of hope, peace, joy and love. We see it on everyone's faces as they hurry to and fro. In their actions and greetings. In the way they reach out and help one another. The Christmas spirit of God's amazing love is clear, evident, and everywhere!

Of course, we also see these reminders of hope, peace, joy, and love at church. We light a candle symbolizing them each week leading up to Christmas. We read scriptures that lead up to and recount the story of Christ's birth. Each week points to the Christmas manger. And yet, there's more to the story!

We invite you to join us during the month of December as we take a look at a love story, *A Bethlehem Love Story*. Now you probably immediately thought of Mary & Joseph when we said that, but there's another love story that you may not be aware of. One that has important lessons for us and without it occurring, the Christmas story that we know today might have turned out differently!

This Bethlehem love story will take us right up to Christmas Eve, and through it we will get to see the same themes of hope, peace, joy and love and how God's hand was at work in building our Christmas story long before Mary & Joseph ever set foot in Bethlehem. It is a series that you won't want to miss.

Finally, to round out the Advent season and celebrate Christmas, everyone is invited to join us on Christmas Eve for a candlelight service! You will have two opportunities to join us for Christmas Eve – 4 p.m. at Retreat or 6 p.m. at Liberty Pole. Together, we'll recount the Christmas story, singing praises, and prepare our hearts for the love that came down at Christmas – Jesus Christ! Make plans to join now to join us for one of these moving services and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas!



Christmas Eve Worship Services

4 p.m. at Retreat Methodist Church

6 p.m. at Liberty Pole Methodist Church

Notes from Pastor Sandy

The harvests are almost in, the leaves are all over the place, and the weather is harder to gauge... and as I write this the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons are approaching.

The Samaritan's Purse collection for hurricane relief is ongoing at Retreat Church. Please consider donating to this worthy and much needed effort. You can make your check payable to Retreat Methodist but put in the Memo line that it's for Samaritan's Purse. You can also give to your regular church offering in any another way-- just specify that it's for SP. The need is so great. Please help.

After the first of the year, we are looking to create more opportunities for church members to assist in worship. Prayerfully consider if you would be interested in reading a liturgy or Scripture offering, singing, or playing a song, ringing the bell, or greeting. Having this kind of involvement also gives Pastor Sandy and Ron a little leeway as we drive from church to church when the weather is less than terrific.

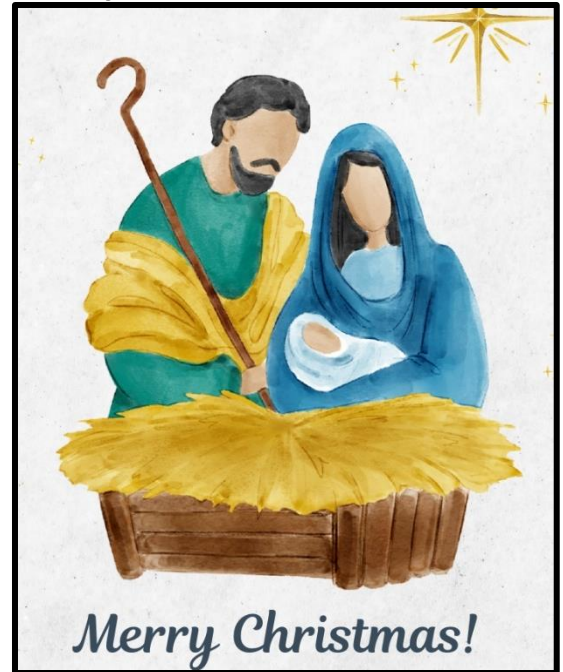
We will also be updating our contact information. Phone numbers and addresses can change, and the church directory does not. That makes it hard for Pastor Sandy and Ron to make contact so watch for this project starting in January or so.

Confirmation continues to be a wonderful time. We have twelve kids in the class. I have been asking members of each church to come to a session and speak to us about their Christian walk. I think that has been an amazing part of the class so far, so expect that I may ask more of you to participate after Jan. 1! In the New Year, we will be intensively discussing Jesus Christ—who He was and why it's a good idea to have Him as the Lord of your life. We'll meet on December 8 and then not again till January 12. The meetings in January, February and March will be at New Hope from 3-4:30. The meetings for April 6 and 13 will be at Retreat and Confirmation will be Sunday, April 27. Thanks to all the kids and their families for being faithful!

Our December Sermon Series is A Bethlehem Love Story: The Book of Ruth. It's a wonderful story that is kind of a 'prequel' to the events of Luke 2. Please join us in December for carols, a wonderful sermon series, and worship that keeps the season about Jesus and not about stuff. What a wonderful time to celebrate together!

Grace and peace to you all,

Pastor Sandy



Annual Church Conferences

Similar to the annual charge conferences of the past, each of our churches will be hosting individual annual church conferences to review the previous year and plan for the year ahead. Currently, all three of our churches have each set a date for Sunday, January 19, 2024 for their church conferences. More information on these conferences will be coming in the next newsletter, so stay tuned. Until then, mark your calendars and make plans to join us as we prepare for our future ministry in our communities and beyond!





Keep Growing Through God's Word!

The Sunday Bible Study at Liberty Pole is taking a break for the month of December. However, we encourage you to continue to explore and study God's Word from the comfort of your home (and also during worship at church!). Work on making it a daily habit and continue to grow in your faith. The study group will gather again in January.



Spreading Christmas Joy!

Let's gather together and spread some Christmas joy! Coming up on Sunday, December 8th following the 8 a.m. worship at Retreat, the church will be having a Christmas potluck brunch and fellowship for everyone to come and enjoy (*this will take the place of the December Fellowship Sunday!*). All are invited, even if you don't come to worship! Please bring a dish to share to make the meal more enjoyable – and show off your cooking talent!

After brunch, cookie packages will be assembled for distribution to our area shut-ins, friends, and neighbors in order to give them a boost of Christmas joy! Because when you're overflowing with joy, you have to share it, right? If you would like to contribute to this festive Christmas ministry, we ask that you bring 3 to 4 dozen Christmas cookies for the distribution! And this is another opportunity to show off your Christmas baking skills – or better yet, make them together as a family project! Again, everyone is welcome to attend, even bring your friends and neighbors! Great fun is sure to be had by all! Hope to see you there!



Church Christmas Brunch & Cookie Ministry
Sunday, December 8th
9 a.m. (after worship)
Retreat Methodist Fellowship Hall



And the Winners Are...

Congratulations to the winners of the raffle prizes from Retreat's Fall Turkey Bazaar! Thank you to all who supported the church through this event. Whether you simply purchased a raffle ticket, came and enjoyed the meal, purchased items off the bazaar bake and craft sale, or were one of our many fabulous volunteers, your support for our church is greatly appreciated! We look forward to serving and doing ministry with you in the future!



CONGRATS TO OUR RAFFLE WINNERS!

- QUEEN-SIZE QUILT: DANNY FRADETTE
- BREAKFAST BASKET: CHRYSAL SUDOL
- COZY BASKET: KARHA L. PETERSON
- CHILDREN'S BASKET: CAROL GILMAN
- PECAN PIE: JOAN SEYMOUR
- PECAN PIE: DEBBIE GROVES
- EMBROIDERED PICTURE: ANN ADAMS
- \$25 KWIK TRIP GAS CARD: LYLE MICKELSON
- MULTICOLOR DOILY: MARTY PETERSON
- QUILTED TABLERUNNER: KATY MICKELSON
- BABY AFGHAN: PHYLLIS MUNYON
- QUILTED WALL HANGING: JERRY & SUSAN ELLIOTT
- PUMPKIN SPICE SPRAY: GLORIA WARMUTH

Food Pantry Needs

The New Hope Food Pantry welcomes your generous donations to help those in need in our communities. This month the pantry is seeking donations of **pork & beans, mixed vegetables, corn, and canned potatoes**. If you wish to donate items or funds, feel free to drop them off at any of our three churches. You may also drop them off during the pantry's open hours: Wednesdays, 5 – 6:30 p.m. and Thursdays, 9 – 11 a.m.



*The New Hope Food Pantry is located at
E2286 State Highway 82, De Soto, WI 54624*



O Holy Night: An Advent Devotional December Online Bible Study



"O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;" Can you name this tune? If your answer was "O Holy Night", you were correct. The words to this Christmas carol are very descriptive and give us a glimpse of what it must have felt like to be a witness of our Savior's birth. Can't you imagine a sky filled with multitudes of stars and their beauty, set as a backdrop as angels announce Jesus' birth? This carol continues to describe in detail what happened the night that Jesus was born.

As we journey through the Advent season, we invite you to join us as we experience the birth of Jesus through the Christmas carol, "O Holy Night" in this month's online Bible study. This 25-day study will begin on December 1st. Use the link below to join us on our Advent journey!

O Holy Night: An Advent Devotional – begins on Dec. 1st
<https://bible.com/p/70009119/25ee74fd6162c6fb9a874cc2978d076a>

These online studies and more can be accessed through the Bible App or bible.com website, which are free resources. In addition to wonderful devotional and reading plans, they provide a verse of the day, and you will be able to read the Bible in a wide variety of versions. The Bible App is available in your app store on your mobile device, or accessible online at www.bible.com. Please note that Bible.com online will no longer support Plans with Friends. You will need to open the Bible App on your mobile device to continue to use this feature.



Liberty Pole Methodist Women

The Liberty Pole Methodist Women group will be gathering for food and fellowship at Gassers in Viroqua. They will meet at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11th. Come and join in the fun!



***For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do.***
~ Ephesians 2:10 NIV ~



Free Online Christmas Study

If you like author Max Lucado, you are invited to access a free online Christmas study from Max Lucado, based on the book "Because of Bethlehem". Find the link for it on our home page: www.driftlessministry.org

Prayers for December

Each day of the week, use this simple prayer starter as part of your conversation with God.

Sunday

Mighty God, heal my heart during this season. Help me to love more fully. To forgive more generously. To wait more patiently for Christmas, embracing each day and hour knowing the joy that awaits. In Your name I pray. Amen.

Monday

God, be with me today. Help my heart be open to the ways Jesus is at work in my life. Amen.

Tuesday

I pray for focus today, dear God, because during this season, my mind and attention tend to wander. There are so many distractions, many of them well-meaning. But nothing gives my heart rest like resting in You. I pray to keep You at the focus of my day today, because I know the peace that only You offer. Amen.

Wednesday

Heavenly Father, grant me the strength to have the same trust in You that Mary had, as she awaited the birth of Jesus.

Thursday

Lord, send down Your Spirit to guide me during this season. May the Holy Spirit help me journey closer to You and lift me up when I feel down and lead me when I feel lost. I may stumble at times, but I know my ultimate journey is to draw closer to You and build Your kingdom here on earth – a kingdom that Jesus’s birth, life and death helped secure. Amen.

Friday

I pray for humility today, Father. Our Savior entered this world in a manger with animals. When I feel too proud, let me remember the humble birth of Jesus.

Saturday

Dear Lord, please allow me to embrace this season in the way that You intend: as a way to prepare for Your arrival. May everything I do – every gift I send, every party I attend, every meal I share – remind me to prepare space in my heart for You. Amen.



Working Together in Ministry

It’s easy to sit on the sidelines and watch the church do its ministry. But it is much more fun and gratifying to be a part of the action! You are invited to be a part of the work of the church! We encourage everyone to come and participate in the discussions at your respective church meeting. Your ideas are vital to our ministry!

Retreat Church Board Meeting

Sunday, December 8th, 9 a.m.
(it will be brief)

New Hope Church Board Meeting

Sunday, December 8th, 11:30 a.m.

Liberty Pole Church Board Meeting

Monday, December 9th, 6 p.m.



A Productive Year of Quilting and Crafting!

The Church Basement Quilters have had a very productive year of creative, fun, fellowship and gifting. While we work on our own personal projects, we made an agreement in the beginning that we would do at least 1 charity project each quarter. This is because the church does not charge us for use of the building. In the last year, we have donated 40+ throws to Gundersen Pediatric unit, Norseland nursing home, and foster care. In addition, we gave about 20 pillowcases, a dozen throws, and a couple stuffed animals to Toys for Tots. We made clothing protectors (bibs) and fidget blankets for an area assisted living facility. One member worked on 8 tops that were sent to Lutheran World Relief. As Christian women, we firmly believe that it is our mission to share with others. If anyone is interested, everyone is invite to come and visit, or join us on the first and third Mondays of the month!



Church Basement Quilters

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Monday, December 2nd and December 16th
Basement of Liberty Pole Methodist Church



Thinking Ahead: Christmas in July



The Retreat Methodist Church is planning to bring a bit of the Christmas season into the summer of 2025! The church will be hosting a Christmas in July Craft Show at the Viroqua Eagles Club (216 S Rock Ave., Viroqua, WI) on Saturday, July 12th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The show will feature handmade items only, no vendors. Crafters are wanted to fill the spaces! Each space will be 10 feet wide and cost \$25.00 per space. If you would like to reserve a space (or two) or if you would like more information, please contact Crystal Nummerdor at (608) 606-9082.



Westby UMC Christmas Cookie Walk

Start your Christmas baking the easy way, without having to find recipes or dirty any dishes. Come to the Westby UMC Annual Christmas Cookie Walk on Saturday, December 7th, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. There will be a wide variety of Christmas cookies, homemade candies, and other baked goods available. The cookie walk is like having a salad bar, where you get to choose your own salad toppings, but with cookies in place of the salad items. The cost is \$7 per pound, with some items priced separately. Coffee and hot chocolate will be available. Proceeds from this fundraiser will go towards Westby UMC's outreach and other needs. Remember to come early for the best selection of cookies.



Hope Night La Crosse

Are you needing HOPE in your life? Do you need healing in your body or freedom from addiction, depression, anxiety, or hopelessness? Join us for this FREE EVENT where we will have live music and a life-changing message! Hope Night is a live event where you will experience powerful worship and life changing messages. Our heart is to create an atmosphere for people to encounter God's presence. Come if you need: • Hope • Healing • Deliverance • Freedom

Date: Friday, December 13th

Time: Doors open 6PM, Event starts 6:30PM

Location: The La Crosse Center, 300 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse, WI



For more information, or to watch Recaps from past Hope Nights, head to www.hopenightwisco.com or check out their Facebook Event page!

Liberty Pole, New Hope & Retreat Methodist Churches – Visit us online at: www.driftlessministry.org

Wednesday Warriors News



In October, the Wednesday Warriors had a special outing! They visited the De Soto Public Library, exploring the resources available to learn and grow in the community! Debbie Groves stated that after a similar trip last year, the library had many more kids visiting. What a wonderful outing for the group!

If your kids would like to get in on the fun at Wednesday Warriors, all are welcome to join us each Wednesday after school at the New Hope church!



Samaritan's Purse Delivers Thanksgiving Meals in Western North Carolina

Felicia Honeycutt was miles from home at work when the worst of Hurricane Helene hit her community. It took three days for her to get home where she cares for an ailing husband in the Big Creek community of Yancey County, North Carolina.

As residents enter Thanksgiving, now, more than two months into an ongoing recovery for the region, they are still uncertain how soon life will return to normal. Felicia was one of the hundreds of residents helped by Samaritan's Purse as we delivered water, food, and generators to the area.

Felicia said she's very thankful, even though her community is still struggling. "This Thanksgiving I'm just thankful to be alive," Felicia said. "And I'm thankful for family and having them all together. I'm going to have them all this year. Usually there's one that doesn't make it. But we're going to have them all this year, so I'm thankful for that."

In the days after the storm, Samaritan's Purse conducted multiple airlifts to Big Creek and the surrounding area delivering water, food, generators, medical supplies, and satellite communication. U.S. Army General Dick Cody joined in on these operations piloting his own aircraft to help with the transport.

Gen. Cody partnered with Samaritan's Purse this week as well, providing Thanksgiving meals to a number of families in the Big Creek area. Our teams distributed the meals out of Big Creek Freewill Baptist Church, a local congregation that we provided with a large tent so the congregation could continue to meet. Their building experienced catastrophic flooding. Residents who came for the meals also asked for prayer. Samaritan's Purse teams also brought meals to homes.

Rick Wilson, a lifelong resident of Big Creek and a deacon at the church, said the storm brought the community closer together. "Working together has been really good for the community," Rick said. "It's just amazing how good they worked together." Rick said all that Samaritan's Purse has done reminds him their community, cut off during the storm, hasn't been forgotten. This includes the Thanksgiving meals donated by Gen. Cody.

Veronica Willis, another member of the church, told her hurricane story as she received turkey, rolls, sides, and pies for her family. She was 33 days without power and caring for a husband with heart problems. She said Samaritan's Purse supplies were critical to make it through, including the winter clothing recently delivered to the area. "That was absolutely wonderful," she said. "We were digging into those coats like it was Christmas time. It was amazing. I've never seen so much outpouring of love."

Samaritan's Purse continues to work in the affected region, deploying volunteers into communities to clean out homes and property damaged in the storm. Please continue to pray for the still-hurting families facing many difficult days ahead.

To aid in the recovery efforts, our churches have decided to collect donations to support Samaritan's Purse and the life-changing work they are doing in these communities. All funds raised will be used to aid the people and communities affected by the hurricanes. Donations will be collected and sent in at the end of each month, getting the funds to the people in need as soon as possible.

*If you would like to donate funds to the recovery efforts, you can join us in a few ways! If you attend worship in any of our churches, you can drop your donation into the offering plate/box with a note/memo that it is for hurricane relief. If you would like to mail in your donation, you can send your check, made out to one of our churches with "Hurricane Relief" in the memo line to: **Driftless Ministries, c/o Hurricane Relief, E2286 State Highway 82, De Soto, WI 54624***

Liberty Pole, New Hope & Retreat Methodist Churches – Visit us online at: www.driftlessministry.org



Shining Celebrations!

Birthdays

Jane Gianoli – Dec. 1st
 Rachel Gianoli – Dec. 1st
 Taylor Newsome – Dec. 1st
 Julie Stalsberg – Dec. 2nd
 Carol Snitker – Dec. 4th
 Stephanie Taylor – Dec. 6th
 Madison Kumlin – Dec. 8th
 Arlene Lingren – Dec. 8th

Dale Long – Dec. 8th
 Debbie Groves – Dec. 9th
 Elsie McDowell – Dec. 12th
 Ron Slack – Dec. 12th
 Ann Adams – Dec. 14th
 Eldon Gardner – Dec. 14th
 Casey Johnson – Dec. 16th
 Lloyd Hardy – Dec. 19th

Amanda Baker – Dec. 22nd
 Alan Matson – Dec. 23rd
 Bill Lepke – Dec. 26th
 Nancy Wakefield – Dec. 27th
 Carol Gilman – Dec. 28th
 Marlene Springborn – Dec. 29th
 Tom Zitzner – Dec. 29th

Anniversaries

Brian & Carole Funk – Dec. 5th
 Maynard & Nancy Cox – Dec. 6th
 Loren & Marlene Springborn – Dec. 29th



Did we miss your birthday, anniversary, or other special day?
 Let us know! E-mail us at newsletter@driftlessministry.org.



Church Contacts

- Pastor – Rev. Sandy Conrad
(608) 881-4276
pastor@driftlessministry.org
- SPRC Chair – Barb Robson: (608) 606-5809
- Lay Leaders – Debbie Groves: (608) 648-3684
Barb Robson: (608) 606-5809
Jeffery Nelson: (608) 379-2933
- Food Pantry – Debbie Groves: (608) 648-3684
Robbin Hennen: (608) 804-0314



December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1 Communion Sunday 	2 Basement Quilters 9 a.m., Liberty Pole	3	4 Wednesday Warriors 3:30 p.m. @ NH Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.	5 Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.	6 Pastors Sabbath	7 Westby Cookie Walk 9 a.m. @ Westby UMC	
8 Church Christmas Brunch & Cookie Distribution 9 a.m. @ Retreat NH Board Meeting 11:30 a.m. Confirmation Class 3 – 5 p.m. @ LP	9 Liberty Pole Board Meeting 6 p.m.	10	11 Wednesday Warriors 3:30 p.m. @ NH LP Methodist Women 5 p.m. @ Gassers, VRQ Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.	12 Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.	13 Pastors Sabbath Hope Night La Crosse 6:30 p.m. La Crosse Center	14	
15	16 Basement Quilters 9 a.m., Liberty Pole	17	18 Wednesday Warriors 3:30 p.m. @ NH Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.	19 Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.	20 Pastors Sabbath	21	
22	23  Newsletter Submission Deadline	24  Christmas Eve Candlelight Services 4 p.m. @ Retreat 6 p.m. @ Liberty Pole	25 	26 Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.	27 Pastors Sabbath	28	
29	30	31	1	Driftless Ministries Rev. Sandy Conrad Mobile: (608) 881-4276 Parsonage: (608) 648-2528 pastor@driftlessministry.org			LP: Liberty Pole NH: New Hope R: Retreat

Shine

Liberty Pole, New Hope & Retreat Methodist Churches
c/o Jeff Nelson
120 Rosewood Ln N
West Salem, WI 54669

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