

The SPARK

Newsletter of the Choteau—Brady—Dutton UM Parish

DECEMBER 2020 Issue No. 219



December Worship Schedule

**Thank you for your patience
and flexibility during this time!**

Due to the increase in Covid-19 cases in our area, in-person worship for the month of December and January will be suspended until there is a downward trend in active cases. Please continue to join us for worship online.

Life is a Journey given to us by God.

We walk into sunlit meadows of joy
and through deep valleys of despair.

We climb mountain tops of success
and fall into lonely dark caverns of failure.
We move through vast fields of opportunity
on a road built by our choices,
interests and talents.

We create our Journey and in turn
are shaped into who we are by our Journey.

As you travel on,
and experience this extraordinary gift,
hold close to your heart a belief in yourself.

Act with respect and love
for your fellow man;
and always, always affirm profound
gratitude to your Maker.

For it is the gift of the Journey
and how you choose to travel
that forms the essence and purpose of life.





Advent Worship Series

Choteau UMC - Brady UMC - Dutton UMC

Learn the meaning behind the names of Christ and the difference He makes in our lives this Christmas!

His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh. In *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth. This Advent season church families will come together to remember what's important. In the face of uncertainty and conflict, Christians reclaim the Christ child who brings us together, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into the darkness. Now more than ever, we invite you to reflect upon the significance of the Christ child for our lives and world today!

December 6:
Luke 1:26-38

December 13:
Matthew 1:22-25;
Hebrews 1:1-4; 4:14-16

December 20:
Matthew 2:7-12; 5:14-16
John 1:1-5, 9-14

The Longest Night

Monday, December 21st
5:00pm-7:00pm
Choteau UMC Sanctuary

ALL ARE WELCOME!

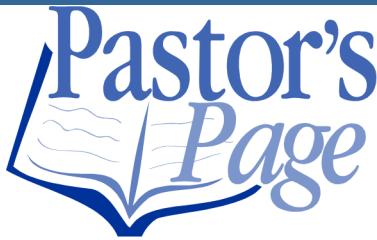
This year has been a difficult year for everyone. As we enter the holiday season, not everyone feels bright and cheery. So many people are living with the loss of a loved one, depression, health concerns, broken relationships, loneliness, or just need to step away from the chaos of the season.

Monday, December 21 is the winter solstice or longest night of the year. You are invited come spend some time in the sacred space of the Choteau UMC sanctuary to reflect and pray.

The sanctuary will be open from 5-7pm for anyone to come and go as it is convenient for you, light a candle, and spend as much time as you need. Pastor Julie will be available to pray with you.

Please wear your mask at all times and use hand sanitizer as you enter and leave the building. We also ask that you practice social distancing and respect the privacy of others.





Greetings Church Family!

I know that many of you have been wondering what worship is going to look like as we enter into the holiday season. So, I want to share an update with each of you. As you all know, we have been doing all that we can to slow the spread of Covid and keep everyone safe and healthy. This has included worshipping outdoors when the weather was nice and worshipping completely online as Covid cases began to spike in our area.

Unfortunately, Covid continues to spread rapidly in our communities and across the country. This week, Bishop Karen Oliveto released a letter urging all of the Mountain Sky Churches to consider suspending all in-person worship and fellowship through at least the end of January 2021. The Conference has also updated the Covid response guidelines. You can read the letter and updates here: <https://www.mtnskyumc.org/relaunch-church>

At the Choteau, Brady, and Dutton UM Churches, we will be following the guidelines closely and have decided to extend worshipping only online until at least the end of January 2021. We are already getting very creative with plans to make the holiday season meaningful and special, even though it will be different than other years. More information on our Advent and Christmas Eve services will be coming out soon.

If you have any ideas that you would like to see happen in our churches, please let me know!!!! I know this is a difficult time for all of us. Please reach out if there is ANYTHING that you need!

Mask up. Stay home when possible. Follow the local and state guidelines. And do good in all the ways and places you can.

You are all in my prayers.
In Christ's Love, Pastor Julie

Brady/Conrad Christmas Giving Tree 2020

The Brady United Methodist Church, along with seven churches in Conrad, sponsors the Conrad/Brady Christmas Giving Tree. Local businesses also contribute to the project.

Due to COVID-19, we will not be able to provide as many gifts as in the past because church attendance is down and collection and distribution of gifts will be more difficult. We will continue to give each child two articles of clothing and a toy. Hopefully, instead of an actual gift, adults will be provided with Conrad Chamber Bucks. We will try to continue to provide actual gifts to residents at PMC Extended Care. All families with children will receive the traditional Christmas Dinner Food Basket.



All gifts MUST be delivered to the CENTROL Shop no later than Sunday morning, December 20. Gifts may be dropped off Wednesday, December 16 through Sunday morning December 20.

Recipients of the gifts from the Conrad/Brady Christmas Giving Tree will pick up their gifts at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 20.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHOTEAU UMC

We will not be having our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the traditional way we are accustomed to this year. Plans are in the works to create a special, new service for our church family to participate (*weather dependent*). We will celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior in a most magnificent way! Be watching for further information as plans are finalized.



Advent Recitals *Trinity Lutheran Church*

December 11th—featuring
Cadhla Norris from Conrad
playing Christmas and Seasonal selections on the piano and violin

December 18th—featuring
Trinity's Holden Worship Team presenting "Holden
Evening Prayer"

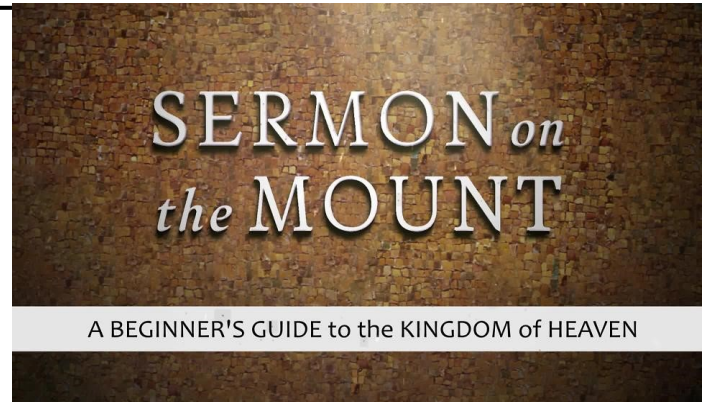


Both recitals begin at Noon.
Please remember to wear your mask.



Opportunities for Your Spiritual Growth

Wednesday Book/Bible Study
7:00 pm—online via Zoom



Sunday Parish Fellowship Hour **10:00 am—online via Zoom**

This is simply a time to get online and see each other's faces and say hello. The Zoom link will be available in the weekly email with the worship links.

Lectionary Readings

December 6

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 13

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24;
 John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 20

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55
 Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

December 24 ~ Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96;
 Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

December 25 ~ Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98;
 Hebrews 1:1-4; John 1:1-14

December 27

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148
 Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Materials for your Spiritual Formation **November / December**

Available in the front entryway
 and the Upper Room rack
 at the top of the ramp

- Upper Room
 - regular & large print

We will be studying the "Sermon on the Mount" by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine. (Read more about it below!) This is a 6-week study and will be held every Wednesday at 7pm. The participant e-book can be purchased and downloaded at this link: <https://www.cokesbury.com/Sermon-on-the-Mount-1-3> or if you would like a paperback copy of the book, we have them available for \$12 at the church office.

To join the Book Study, **please register** at the following link: <https://forms.gle/bnXyJWkqME9wiDSt7>

After your registration is completed, Pastor Julie will be in touch to email the Zoom link and more information.

The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, contains some of Jesus' most profound and most memorable teachings. What might these teachings have meant to his disciples and to the others who first heard them? How do they enhance our reading of the rest of the Gospel of Matthew, and how do they speak across the centuries to listeners today? How, if we pay careful attention to his words, does Jesus provide us a road map to living as God would have us live?

In *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven*, Dr. Amy-Jill Levine introduces the major topics in the Sermon on the Mount, explains historical and theological contexts, and shows how the words of Jesus echo his Jewish tradition and speak forward to reach hearts and minds today.

Postponed until further notice.

- > Skyline Lodge Bible Study
 and CCC (coffee, conversation, communion)
- > "Connect" Children's Ministry

A Candy Cane for You

A candy can is more meaningful than just a sweet for Christmas.

It can remind us of Jesus.
Its shape is like a shepherd's staff.

Its red stripe reminds us that Jesus shed His blood for our sins,
and "by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

Its white stripes reminds us of purity,
and by His death we are made pure in God's eyes.

The peppermint flavor is similar to hyssop,
which was used in Biblical times for purification.

Its tastes is sweet, as to know Jesus' love.

Turn the candy cane upside down and it becomes a
"J" for Jesus, the true reason for the season.

May a candy cane be a special treat
as it reminds you of all these things.



Puzzle!

Use the code to complete Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, our Savior.



CODE:

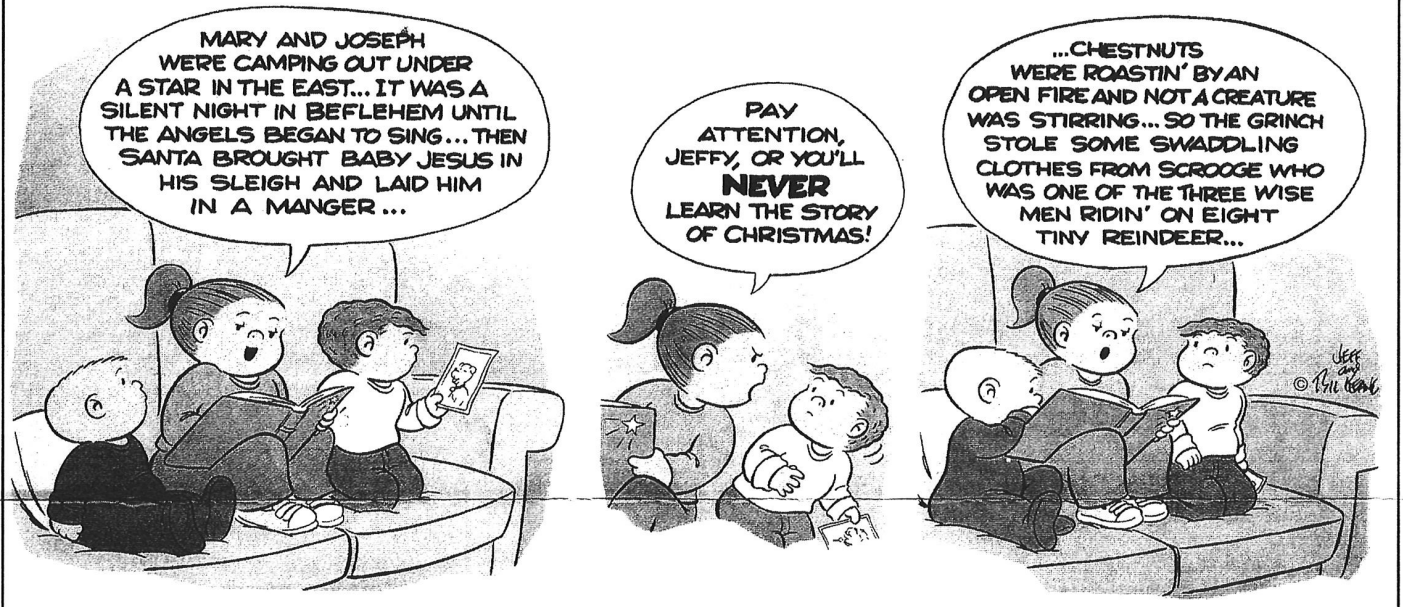
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11	14	12	10	21	21	14	13	
6	24	23	13	14	1	15	4	21
12	24	4	23	2	14	21	24	1
22	18	16	17	3	8	16	24	13
14	5	14	1	21	10	2	3	18
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24	15	25	14	10	12	14		
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Answer: And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6, NIV

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane





😊 **Norman & Sharon Haug** for Fall cleaning of the debris from the rain gutters of the church. We are grateful for your efforts!

😊 **Sharon Haug** who provided items to fill the College Care boxes and **Pastor Julie** who wrote a note to our students. Your continued support of this outreach ministry is appreciated.

😊 **Steve Nylund, Perri Lindgren, Terry & Lila Dunn, Pastor Julie & Robert Dye** for keeping up with the snow removal on the church grounds. This is looking like a long winter!

😊 **Lila Dunn, Duane Halverson, Jacquely Cooney, Casey Lindgren and Tom Tesch** for all your extra time and effort to decorate the church and grounds for the Advent and Christmas season. This seasonal change takes several days and many hours. You are appreciated!

When my arms can't
reach people who are
close to my heart...

I
always
hug them
with my
prayers.

www.iampoopsie.com



Birthdays & Anniversaries

DECEMBER

1	Chris Proff
3	Nolan DeBruycker
4	Zach Bechtold
♥	Ryan & Kelly DeBruycker
6	Marsha Hinch
8	Larry Maurer
9	Lorran Depner
10	JesiAnn Sessions
15	Stacy Reynolds
17	Charles Hinch
18	Charles Wesley (1707)
	Syd Clark
	Billy Tallmadge
19	Karen Peebles
	Cheryl Schlepp
21	Katie Kostelnik
♥	Alois & Julia Kostelnik
24	Frank Bemis
25	JESUS
	Linda Forrest
26	Craig Zwerneman
♥	Frank & Donna Bemis
27	♥ Larry & Sue Schilling
30	Debbie Armstrong
	Toni Christman
	Jack Clark
	Tiffany Maltby
♥	Andy & Kirsten Passmore
31	♥ Rich Clough & Mary Sexton



*"The most disastrous times
have produced
the greatest minds;
the purest metal comes
of the most ardent furnace,
the most brilliant lightning
comes of the darkest clouds."*

– Baron de Montesquieu (1755)



Choteau UMC has a new adopted family this year! We need your assistance!

The large family with children resides in Teton County and has few wishes but some definite needs. With the continued generosity of our congregation, we will be able to continue doing some important things for this family during the approaching holidays and the coming year. God bless each of you for contributing to this very worthwhile "at home" mission.

If you would like to contribute to this mission, please make your checks out to Choteau UMC and make special notation that this is for the "Adopted Family" mission.

Kelly DeBruycker is our coordinator for this special mission and will give periodic updates to the congregation.

CHECK THIS OUT BEFORE YOU HOLIDAY SHOP



About AmazonSmile

We (**Choteau UMC**) are partnered with AmazonSmile as another opportunity for our church to raise funds through the AmazonSmile program.

....check it out!

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when customers shop on AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers.

How does AmazonSmile work?

When first visiting AmazonSmile, customers are prompted to select a charitable organization from almost one million eligible organizations. In order to browse or shop at AmazonSmile, customers must first select a charitable organization. For eligible purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the customer's selected charitable organization.

There is no cost to charitable organizations or to customers?

The shopping experience is identical to Amazon.com with the added benefit that the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate to the charitable organizations selected by customers.



Save these Festival dates! December 2nd to 6th, 2020

This year's Intermountain Festival of Trees will be a combination of safe, socially distanced live events, and virtual events. We have all necessary safety precautions written into our Lewis & Clark County Health Department approved plans. Because our annual event is a Helena holiday/tradition, we are committed to devising options which will allow everyone of every age to participate at their level of comfort.

What you should know...

- 1.) The theme this year is "Do You Hear What I Hear?" (To us, it sounds like Hope!)
- 2.) Our silent auction, featuring locally designed tabletop trees and wreaths, will be fully accessible online for viewing and bidding.
- 3.) This year, locally designed full-sized silent-auction trees will be hosted for viewing and bidding in multiple Helena businesses

NOTE: Location information will be updated on intermountain.org/fot once locations are confirmed.

The trees hosted in these Helena businesses will also be featured online for viewing and bidding.

YOUR MONETARY GIFTS AT WORK

The ministries of Choteau United Methodist Church are made possible by your on-going financial contributions. Our congregation is 100% self-funded; we receive no outside funding. Your gifts enable us to provide weekly worship, pastoral care, educational opportunities, youth group, Sunday school for children and adults, mission opportunities, the opportunity for us to provide responsible charitable contributions to help those in need, etc. I hope you will consider making a financial contribution to Choteau UMC to support our life-transforming mission. To make a tax-deductible donation you can send in a check to our church office, or contribute on Sundays during the offering. Financial statements are available upon request at the church office.

VITAL STATISTICS – Choteau

2020 Budget for Choteau	\$109,975
Needed to meet budget –November	\$100,810
Received through November 22	\$ 85,327

Thank you for your on-going support!



**Leadership
Board Meeting**

Choteau UMC
Thursday, December 10
7:00 pm
Downstairs Dining Room



ADVENT WREATH

December 6 – Stubblefield Family

December 13 – Duty Family

December 20 – Christensen Family

December 24 – DeBruycker Family

*"You can judge
the character
of a man
by how he treats
those who can do
nothing for him."*

– Author unknown

Background photo by Roger Kelly

Quarantine

Q – Quiet your soul.

U – Unite as one with God.

A – Act with Godly love.

R – Read your Bible.

A – Activate your faith.

N – Nourish your soul.

T – Talk to God.

I – Intercede for others.

N – Nestle in the presence of God.

E – Elevate God in worship.

– via Rev. Dale A. Schoening

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Julie King, Pastor
Lila Dunn, Admin. Assist.

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Seeking and Empowering Disciples of Jesus Christ to Love, Witness and Serve

This month's newsletter is sponsored by:

Darlene Ferris

In loving
memory of
Donald Ferris
December 8



In honor of
Lee Pourroy—Dec. 29
Allana Clark—Nov. 19
Catriona Clark—Nov. 19

Lois Gustafson

In honor of
Rich Clough &
Mary Sexton's
anniversary on
December 31

Georgia Buck

In praise, honor,
love and gratitude
for the Holy Trinity

Please continue to consider sponsoring an issue of *The Spark* for \$40, and your sponsorship will be noted in the newsletter.

What a nice recognition in honor or memory of someone, or as a gift!

Submit your sponsor information to the parish office.