

# GROWING IN CHRIST TO SERVE THE WORLD

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS



As each day in November passes, I'm seeing more and more homes glowing with Christmas lights. They're strung along rooftops, wrapped around trees, and shining from living room windows. (Of course, businesses seem to put up Christmas decorations earlier and earlier each year!) Personally, I tend to wait until after Thanksgiving before stepping fully into the Christmas season. In our home, Helen decorates the inside, and I take responsibility for the outside.

As I think about decorating—especially putting up Christmas lights—I've been reflecting on what it means to me to display them on our house. Truthfully, the season would be a bit easier if I didn't have to put them up and take them down. And I'm not one for extravagant displays. There are no inflatables or flashing reindeer at our place. My lights are simple: white strands draped across the front bushes. Nothing elaborate, but they hold deep meaning for me.

I put them up as a small sign that I'm participating in the work of Jesus, who is the Light of the World. The lights on our home are a reminder that I want the light of Jesus to shine from our household. I doubt many people see our lights and think of that message—but it speaks that message to me. Each year, as I hang them and later take them down, I'm reminded of my role in letting the light of Jesus shine in my life and through my life.

This Advent season, beginning November 30, we will focus on **Christmas Lights**—lights that shine in us,

through us, and around us. Each week, we will reflect on the lights of **hope, love, joy, and peace**, remembering that God sent His Son to be Emmanuel, God with us. My prayer is that you will be blessed by this journey and that you will let the light of Jesus shine brightly in your life.

One meaningful way to let your light shine is to invite someone who may not have a church home to join us for worship this season. Christmas is a beautiful opportunity to share the greatest gift God has given: Jesus Christ. Let's celebrate together the Christmas lights that shine the love of Jesus into the world.

*"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* — John 1:5

Pastor James



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**MARION**  
*Cares*  
Our Children. Our Families. Our Community.

# Angel Holiday Assistance

Gifts due back to Marion Methodist on Sunday, December 7  
Adopt a child, purchase all four gifts, follow the wrapping instructions for that child, put all four gifts in the same garbage bag together, and label the bag with the Child Code.

Scan QR Code on screen, go to Church App, or MarionMethodist.org/MarionCares



## Welcome New Members

On Sunday, November 9, Marion Methodist confirmed 11 students as new members.



**Top to bottom:** Cole Hunt, Parker East, Noah Kelley, Cassidy Stockert, Harper Wildman, Maddyn Steward, Millie Stevens, Lou Kneeland, Macie Dirks, Pastor James, Lucie Cahalan, Isabel Budzinski, Pastor Helen

## Joys and Concerns

### BIRTHS:

**November 17:** Brecken Renee Cutler, daughter of Lauren and Andy Cutler. Grandparents Barry and Sheri Soukup.

### DEATHS:

**November 11:** Ila Mae Greer

### December Food Pantry Focus - Holiday Dinner Drive



**Holiday Dinner Drive**  
Benefiting the Churches of Marion Food Pantry

**Bring items on December 14**  
*EACH DINNER WILL CONTAIN:*

- Box of Stuffing Mix
- Instant Potatoes made with water
- Jar or can of gravy
- Canned Sweet Potatoes or Yams
- Canned Vegetable

Bring items on Sunday, December 14  
Packing holiday bags on December 14  
at 3:00 PM in The Center.

SUPPORT A FAMILY IN NEED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

## Prayer Requests

1. To submit a prayer concern, request or praise, please use the Prayer button at the end of the weekly email or on the church website, [www.marionmethodist.org](http://www.marionmethodist.org).
2. To be on the email prayer chain to pray for others, email Vicki Standley, Minister of Pastoral Care at [vstandley@marionmethodist.org](mailto:vstandley@marionmethodist.org).

## Pastoral Care Message - Tenacity

This far into November, almost everything is put away and cleaned up in our yard for the winter. As much as I love planting all kinds of flowers in the spring, it's also satisfying to have the flower beds and planters cleaned off in late fall. This year I disposed of many bedraggled plants and put the planters away in stages but left the ones that were still flourishing for later.

Back in mid-July I'd done a late planting of some geraniums and pansies, perfectly satisfied with what was available that late in the planting season. They were beautiful most of the summer and added some wonderful color to our yard. Much to my surprise, despite lack of care, the geraniums in particular, continued to bloom and show their colors through September, October and even into November.



It wasn't until we got a harsh cold snap that they finally gave up and looked ready to pull, even though a few blooms had a hint of color. Clearly this plant was hanging on for dear life. I don't claim to be a master gardener, and keep things watered and pruned as needed, but eventually the plants are basically on their own. It's amazing how tenacious some types of plants can be, even with the bare minimum of care they still seem to thrive, sometimes much longer than I really care to deal with them.



What if we approached our Christian faith with that kind of tenacity, hanging on through all kinds of adversity, just like those geraniums clung to life? Going without regular watering, shorter days and even a few frosty mornings thrown in and still blooming away? What if we read our Bible regularly, making it a priority in our busy schedules, or engaged in fellowship often with our church family, and served with the same kind of tenacity as those geraniums in my planter?

How about instead of praying on the run, sending up shotgun prayers here and there throughout the week, we found a quiet place and calmed our spirits to listen to God and how He wants us to pray. I have to believe our spirits, our faith journey and our very lives would take on a whole new vitality and spirit as we armed ourselves with God's word and reached out to care for his people and serve in God's kingdom.

I'll be the first to admit I don't always water the soil of my faith with regular Bible study, prayer and time for reflection. I let the busyness of life rule the day and get caught up in all the things I feel I "have" to do, rather than spending time at Jesus' feet. If you can make that admission too, then that's why we're part of a community of followers; to help each other, to encourage each other, and confess when we need help. Let's cling to God's word and each other as we live out our faith in community.

*Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!*  
Psalm 105:4

God's blessings to you,  
Vicki



**DECORATING  
THE  
CHURCH**

**NOV  
23**



JOIN US ON SUNDAY,  
NOVEMBER 23 AT 3:00 PM TO  
DECORATE AND GET THE  
CHURCH BUILDING READY FOR  
THE ADVENT SEASON.




5050 REC Drive, Marion, Iowa

*You Are Invited!*  
Ladies of the Marion Methodist Church  
congregation:

Marion Methodist Women invite you to join us  
on  
Wednesday, December 10, at 10:00 AM in  
The Center  
for a

*Christmas Brunch*

Enjoy refreshments, music, and a short program

Please reply to Carolyn Munson at  
susiescience72@yahoo.com by Dec.3rd

**LIGHT OF THE WORLD**  
A HANDBELL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Sunday, December 7 at 4:00 pm  
Marion Methodist Church  
5050 REC Drive, Marion  
Watch online at  
MarionMethodist.org/Watch-Live

Featuring: A Joyful Noise, Jubilation,  
Bell Canto, and Touch of Brass

No admission charged - bring a non-perishable food item to benefit the Marion Food Pantry.  
Soup Supper following the concert for freewill donation benefiting the Marion Food Pantry.



**Holiday Cookies  
for the Food Pantry**  
BRING HOLIDAY COOKIES TO  
THE KITCHEN ON DECEMBER 14  
Marion Methodist Women will be packaging for  
Food Pantry on Monday, December 15. Containers  
will not be returned, please use disposable.

**GOAL IS 200  
DOZEN  
COOKIES**

*Messiah! Heaven's Glory*

*A Christmas Worship Experience*

Featuring the Marion Methodist Chancel Choir and guest ensemble musicians

**Sunday, December 14  
8:15 AM and 10:15 AM  
Marion Methodist Sanctuary**

*Thank You*



FLY (Feeding Lunches to Youth) has graciously received a \$5,000 grant from Theisen's. Theisen's believes in giving back to the community and out of 600 applicants, FLY was selected along with other agencies to receive a grant. A huge shout out to Carolyn Munson for reaching out to them and relaying all about FLY - a program they were never aware of. Several members of our FLY Board pictured above were able to go for the presentation of this gift. Thank you Theisen's for helping us to feed children that are in need in our community.

*Remembering our  
Children*

Worldwide Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 14 at 7:00 PM  
Marion Methodist Church  
5050 REC Drive, Marion IA




## Be Part of the Welcome: You Are Needed This Advent

As we enter the beautiful season of Advent—a time when many guests come to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child—we have a special opportunity to extend the love of Jesus through genuine hospitality.

Hospitality is simple, yet powerful: greeting others with friendliness, offering a kind voice, and helping everyone feel at home. Marion Methodist has often been described as a “*very friendly and welcoming church*,” and our Hospitality Team helps make that true each and every Sunday.

The team serves on Sundays at the 8:15 AM and 10:15 AM worship services and special services through Advent including the Handbell Concert and Christmas Eve Services. Opportunities include greeting at the East or West Welcome Centers, East or West Doors, or serving as Ushers at the three Sanctuary Doors. Each service needs just seven smiling faces—and you’re still able to participate fully in worship.

We’re looking for additional volunteers to help share warmth and welcome this Advent season. You can choose the time and location that work best for you. It’s a wonderful way to meet others, serve the Lord, and share the joy of the season.

For more information or to sign up, please connect with Jennie Wildman [jjwildman@marionmethodist.org](mailto:jjwildman@marionmethodist.org) or Judy Schnittjer [jschnittjer1@gmail.com](mailto:jschnittjer1@gmail.com)



# PATHfinders

CHILDRENS MINISTRY

## SUNDAYS

8:15 AM – All-Together Sunday School

9:15 AM – Fellowship Time

- Nursery & Preschoolers (Infants through 4-Year-Olds)
- Elementary Kids (PreK – 4th Grade)
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10:15 AM – Pathfinders Bible

- Nursery (Infants–2-Year-Olds)
- Preschool (3- & 4-Year-Olds)
- Elementary (Pre-K–4th Grade)

## WEDNESDAYS 6:30 PM Pathfinders Club

### Upcoming Lesson Themes/Scriptures

November 23

Peter Escapes Prison  
Acts 12:6–17

No Pathfinders Club on Nov 26

Nov 30/Dec 3

Paul Encourages Others During a Shipwreck  
Acts 27

Dec 7/9

God’s Armor Gives Us Strength  
Ephesians 6:10–18

Sunday, Dec 7– 10:15 AM Kids singing  
(Practicing at 10 AM in Room 100)

Please take time to practice the two songs with your kids.

Light up our Life

<https://youtu.be/42-u3aALT-Q?si=HL2TK8khwH20a5uF>



Light Up Our Life

Born to Bring Us Joy

<https://youtu.be/7x8Y2ai2NiE?si=oBc6TxUd->



Born to Bring Us Joy

Dec 14/17

Jesus is Born in a Stable  
Luke 2:1–7

Sunday, Dec 21

Pathfinders Birthday Party for Jesus

No Pathfinder Club on Wednesdays until  
January 7

No Elementary Pathfinders on Sunday,  
December 28.