



The Messenger

United Methodist Church – 2210 Sixth Avenue East, Alexandria, MN 56308

Gary Taylor – email: pastorgary@alexumc.org

January 2021

Ginger Mayer

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace and Peace be with you this and every day.

Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off. – Proverbs 23:18

Well, by time you read this 2020 will be over. What a year!

The litany of bad things happening in our world, country, and state is long. If you don't wish to remember them please skip this section.

Natural disasters: Wildfires, hurricanes, typhoons.

Global pandemic named COVID-19.

An awakening here in the US of the systemic nature of racism.

A very divisive presidential campaign and election aftermath.

As I was writing these four main events, it occurred to me how much of these overlap with each other.

What's the Good News? Plenty, if you take time to look.

Doctors, nurses, and others giving all they have to care for COVID patients; some gave their very lives.

The researchers and pharmaceutical companies developing vaccines in record time.

People coming together to rebuild home and communities after the fires and hurricanes.

People and churches finding ways to worship together even when they can't worship together. Thank you Facebook Live, Zoom, and YouTube Livestream.

Creativity abounding: baking, sewing (face-masks), art, music, woodworking, etc.

Cleaner air to breath since so many people switched to "Work from Home".

The people who provide goods, labor and services we depend on: home deliveries, grocery stores, big-box stores, etc.

What does this mean for 2021? Who knows? If I could accurately predict the future, well . . . I do know that whatever comes, God is with us if we but look. God will sustain us, but maybe in new ways.

God will lead us into God's future that will not look like the past. We won't be the same people or the same church we once were. Whatever we are to become, it will be God's work. It won't be easy. Some may get upset and some may leave, but God will set the path before us if we but choose to follow.

As we emerge from this pandemic, let's promise not to be the same-old-church we were, but to be the New Creation God is calling us to be. Beginning early in 2021, the Alexandria UMC will begin a program offered by the Minnesota Annual Conference called "Healthy Church Initiative". This program will guide us as we seek to emerge from our liminal and pandemic shutdown period into God's future. Let us resist the urge to simply do what we've always done.

"If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got." "What's the definition of insanity? Doing the same thing over and expecting different results."

The Good News for AUMC? God is with us, always. God loves us, always. God forgives us, always. God gives us New Life, always. Jesus is our salvation and is the Way (into our future), the Truth (of our need for God's love) and the Life (for all peoples and for us), always.

I believe that God has a plan for Alexandria UMC. I believe that it will take some hard work and some letting go by us. I believe that AUMC has a bright future beginning in 2021. Let us be, with God's presence and help, that church where all are welcome and all are cared for. God is and always will be with us.

Happy and Blest New Year!

Pastor Gary

Welcome to 2021

Happy New year





Nursery is no longer staffed. So parents MUST watch their own child(ren). There is a speaker in the room to listen to the sermon.

Toys are available in Cart Two.

Reminder that we are following our Building Use Policy—the church entrance doors will remain locked unless there are two people present in the building. Please call ahead before you come to church, as there are times when we are not in the building, even though we are working. Also, most days someone is in the office earlier than 9:00 a.m. and

**Published by Alexandria
United Methodist Church
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Office Hours

Pastor Gary—Tue-Friday

Admin. Assist. Ginger Mayer

Office is open (9:00-1:00)

Mon-Tue-Wed-Thurs-Fri

Megan Lenz— Director CYFM

Mon, Thurs, Fri (9-11:30)

Publication Date for the next *Messenger*:

Articles for the February issue need to be in the office by NOON on Monday Jan 25th

Worship Attendance

Service	2020	2019	
	1st	1st	2nd
Dec 6	79	168	
Dec 13	74	43	66
Dec 20	111	38	81
Dec 24	115	185	40
Dec 27	83	14	18



In your prayers, please remember all in positions of leadership, people serving in dangerous and difficult settings, returned and returning service people and their families, all who seek and await peace.

January 2021

Children's Newsletter

Announcements

Hello everyone! I hope you had a wonderful Christmas this year! We are already starting the new year of 2021! I am looking forward to what God has in store for our children's program! So far, we are planning on being virtual until the numbers get smaller. But never fear! Our CYF team has been working hard for you guys! Coming up with fun ideas for virtual Sunday school as well as a safety plan for when we do start meeting in person!

Are you interested in the Christian education of your children and love planning fun activities? We have just the spot for you! We are looking for more volunteers to join our CYF team! Contact Megan Lenz for more information!

If you have any questions or have prayer request, don't hesitate to send Megan a message and she will help answer your questions and pray with you!

God bless, Megan Lenz

Amy Rieke

Cheryl Taylor

**Kim
Tryggeseth**



JANUARY 2021

Youth Newsletter

Hello Youth and family!

Welcome to the year 2021! I am excited to get to start the new year with such amazing students! As of right now, we are going to continue running virtual youth group until the Covid-19 numbers go down and stay at a steady decline in Douglas county. We are doing zoom meetings for our youth group, so if you haven't received the links for some reason, please let me know! I will get them to you! If you have any other questions, concerns, or prayer requests, please email or call me! I hope you enjoy the rest of your Christmas break and have a good January! God bless, Megan Lenz

**Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.
-Philippians 4:7**

Are you interested in the Christian education of your children and love planning fun activities? We have just the spot for you! We are looking for more volunteers to join our CYF team!

**January
Schedule
Jan 6th—Zoom
Youth Group
6:30 P.M.
Jan 13th—Zoom
Youth Group
6:30 P.M.
Jan 20th—Zoom
Youth Group
6:30 P.M.**

**Looking ahead
Watch your
emails and/or
our youth
Facebook for
zoom links and
information
regarding
February.**



JANUARY



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Happy New Year Office Closed	2
3 9AM Worship On Youtube Channel	4 	5 9:30 AM Brush & Palette 3:00 PM Bible Study	6	7 	8	9
10 9AM Worship On Youtube Channel 	11	12 9:30 AM Brush & Palette 3:00 PM Bible Study	13 5:30 Trustees	14 6:30 Church Council 	15	16
17 9AM Worship On Youtube Channel	18 	19 9:30 AM Brush & Palette 3:00 PM Bible Study 	20	21 	22	23
24 9AM Worship On Youtube Channel 	25	26 9:30 AM Brush & Palette 3:00 PM Bible Study	27 	28	29 	30
31 9AM Worship On Youtube Channel						

Alexandria United Methodist Community News

Healthy Church Initiative

At the December Council meeting, the council accepted an invitation from the Minnesota Annual Conference to join a program called “Healthy Church Initiative.” We will begin HCI early in 2021. The following is edited from an article published October 3, 2018, “[HCI is ‘check-up,’ opportunity to ‘shine light on ourselves’](#)”.

In April 2018, four churches started the Healthy Church Initiative (HCI)—a revitalization process designed to transform congregations by providing them resources and recommendations to reach new people for Christ. The conference-wide [Reach • Renew • Rejoice initiative](#) helps make this program possible. Within the past eight years, 45 Minnesota United Methodist churches have completed the process. We’ll follow the four current church participants as they go through the program, checking back with their leaders periodically to find out what they are doing, and what they are learning and discerning.

One of the first things church leaders – the pastor and a designated HCI team of lay people – have done as part of the process is conduct interviews with city and county officials, business owners, and a variety of other representatives in their area. The purpose is to find out what the greatest needs are and to determine to what degree the church is known within its community.

Another initial step for all HCI churches is to assess their resources – everything from their budgets to their personnel and buildings.

One of the greatest learnings for a congregation is seeing the church through visitors’ eyes. A small group walks through the building as if they were coming in for the first time and identified a variety of changes that would make it more inviting and accessible to newcomers. [This won’t happen for Alex UMC due to COVID. Not doing this reduces the cost of HCI.]

HCI is “about shining a light on ourselves and being honest about who we are – as pastors, leaders, and churches.”

After doing the community interviews and assessment of resources, HCI teams and pastors go through several training sessions. Each church will have a consultation weekend led by an HCI team from the Minnesota Conference. The pastor(s) and staff will be interviewed, church members will be invited to a town hall-style informational meeting about HCI, and the conference team will present a report that contains a handful of strategic recommendations—suggested actions that each church can take to live into its mission, reach new people, and meet critical needs in its community.

Healthy Church Initiative continued. Once the recommendations are presented, each church will take a vote on whether to accept and work on them. If at least 70 percent of members vote to proceed, the church will be assigned a coach (or several) to help it work on the suggestions, which might include things like changes in governance, developing a signature ministry, or creating a more dynamic Sunday experience.

Rev. Bob Kandels, who serves Grace UMC in Paynesville, said his community interviews indicated that people know the church. The question in his mind is: Then why aren't they coming? He hopes the HCI process helps the church think about invitation and creating a culture of evangelism to reach new people.

Store Cards : We still have store cards (Elden's, Cub, and Fleet Farm) available in the office. If you need a quick gift for someone or need groceries.

Worship services at Alexandria UMC will be conducted via [livestream to YouTube only](#) until further notice.

January Birthdays

- 1) Pat Baustian
- 2) Marge Jensen
Ron Reiber
Brookelyn Scribner
- 4) Arlana Langner
Sue Walker
- 6) Kathy Reiber
- 10) Jack Carpenter
- 11) Deloris Venekamp
- 12) Jessica Nelson
- 13) Toby Helgeson

- 14) Jim Bridenstine
Dorothy Menk
- 18) Brenda Tompson
- 19) Peyton Kor
- 22) Kathleen Pohilg
Mason Zins
- 25) Chris Hays
- 26) Betty VanZomeran
- 27) Geri Zabrosky
- 29) Diane Strehlow
- 30) Barbara Keepers

- 31) Jennifer Cavers
Ashley Scribner
Jeremy Scribner





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Return Service Requested