



THE MEETING HOUSE

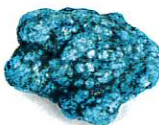
Washington United Methodist Church

DECEMBER 2025

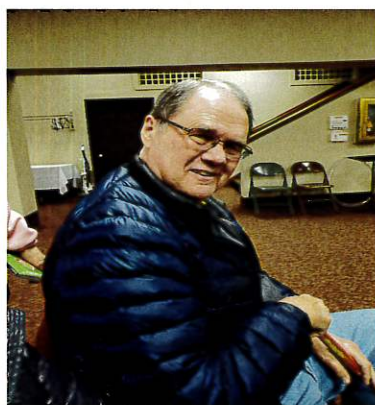
Inside This Issue

Pastor's Corner	2-3
Pastor Thank You	3
What is Advent?	4
Nativity Meaning	5
December Missions	6
Worship Update	7-8
Finance Update	9
This & That	10
Recipes	11
Birthdays & Anniversaries	12
Calendar	13

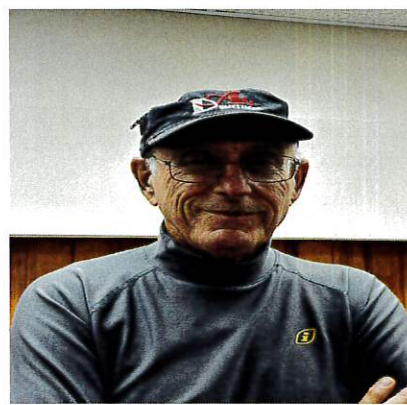
December's flower is Holly.. The birthstone is the Turquoise. Dec. 7 is Pearl Harbor Day. Dec. 25 is Christmas Day. Dec. 31 is New Year's Eve.



BEING THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS



Bob Helscher has taken care of the Church's Foundation since 2007.



Richard Gilmore has stepped up as Trustee Chair since Jeff's injury.

"And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" – Matthew 25:40

**"Best of all,
Christmas means
a spirit of love,
a time when
the love of God
and the love of
our fellow men
should prevail
over all hatred
and bitterness..."**



Chris Marshall has volunteered to be, not only the organist, but also Treasurer of the Church



Linda Soukup volunteers as the music Director, chair of Worship Committee and many other roles.



Pastor's Corner December 2025



Amos 5:21 and 23 reads as follows: "I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps."

There are some people who feel this way about the Christmas season. Perhaps your response to this is that those people are being Grinchy. When Theodor "Dr. Seuss" Geisel wrote *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* in 1957, he was feeling pretty Grinchy himself. His wife was having some serious health issues which caused him a lot of stress. Like the Grinch, Geisel was also dismayed by the commercialization of Christmas.

I think that Geisel's book was a real gift to people who struggle with their honest feelings about Christmas. Society tells us to feel joyful and to be generous and to be more loving and forgiving. However, when we are forced to display feelings and behaviors that are fake, then we are not being our honest and authentic selves. We're not being the people that God created us to be.

I admit that I am somewhat Grinchy during Christmas. Like many other clergy, I won't be spending Christmas Eve or Christmas Day with my family. I will not be celebrating Christmas dinner with my family. Clergy are under pressure to make sure the church celebrates the Christmas traditions that are important to the congregation and do all of the special things that make Christmas a special time of year, which involves a lot of work, negotiations, and often misunderstandings. Many clergy feel the pressure to preach the perfect Christmas sermon so that the people who only attend church during Christmas will come back next Sunday. It can leave clergy feeling Grinchy and wondering if their church has commercialized Christmas inside of the sanctuary.

Pastor corner con't...

During the season of Advent, we will be looking at Matt Rawle's book *The Heart That Grew Three Sizes* in a book study and sermon series. We will take a look at the Grinch story and consider how our hearts can heal and grow as we prepare for Christmas so that we can rejoice at the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Maybe we will be able to get to a place of wonder as described in the poem "Love Came Down at Christmas" by Christina Rossetti in 1885:

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine,
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,
Worship we our Jesus,
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas,
Pastor Alyssa

Pastor Alyssa's "Thank You's" for December

Thank you for everyone who stayed after church to decorate the sanctuary. It looks wonderful! Your help was very much appreciated!

Thank you for coming out for the Grinch Night Movie and supporting the youth at Washington UMC. Thank you to Alison for coordinating the snacks and to Marilyn for her wonderful Grinch cupcakes!

Thanks to all of you for participating with the Advent book study and for helping with providing the food. Thank you to Alison for working with the youth during the Advent book study.

Thank you to all who are doing special things to make each Advent service a blessing by doing readings, lighting candles, doing special music, coordinating activities, etc. Thank you for your service!

Thank you to the family and loved ones who provided memorial money to buy new church paraments for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Your generosity is very much appreciated!

Thank you to the office staff, Alison, Chris, and Linda for coordinating all of the extra stuff to make Advent special. Your work is appreciated!

Thank you to the leadership of Washington UMC that keeps everything running smoothly. You are our unsung heroes!

Thank you for allowing your pastor to go to Florida to spend Christmas with her Dad for two weeks. Thank you for those of you who are covering worship while she is gone. You are appreciated!

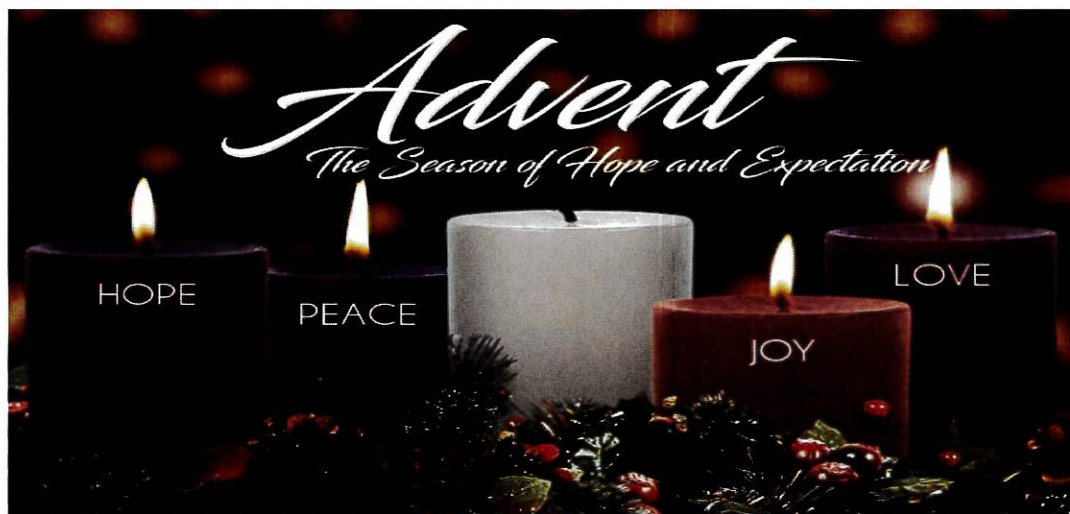
What is Advent?

Advent is not pre-Christmas. Advent comes from the Latin word “adventus,” which means “coming.” Advent was originally celebrated much differently than how we celebrate Advent now. Advent was originally celebrated as 40 days of repentance, fasting, and prayer as new believers prepared to be baptized on the day of Epiphany (January 6). Epiphany is a day that celebrates the Magi’s visit to the baby Jesus and celebrating God in the human and divine form of Jesus.

Later on, Christians began to bring together not only the celebration of Jesus’ birth, but to also celebrate the anticipated second coming of Christ back to earth. Advent is also seen as the anticipation and longing for Jesus’ return. Lester Ruth, a professor at Duke Divinity School and a historian of Christian worship, explains it this way: “The simplest way I have to distinguish between Advent and Christmas is that Advent uses the word “come” as a longing petition, expressed in anticipation, whereas Christmas is a commemorative reflection on how the Lord has come in Christ’s birth and thus the trigger for a new redemptive order has begun.”

Christmas seems to take a bigger role in our celebrations and Advent seems to take a back seat. It’s really a backward way of looking at things. When we choose to ignore the importance of Advent, we really are saying that we have little interest in the hope we are to have as Christians to Christ’s Second Coming. We believe that when Christ comes again, he will judge the living and the dead. When we ignore Advent, we are essentially saying that we do not long for our world to be free from death, sin, and injustice of Christ’s Second Coming and that we are unwilling to do the work needed to make the Kingdom of God a reality, one in which we fully love God and each other.

As we celebrate Advent, let us be a people of hope. As we light the Advent candles each Sunday, let us remember that we hope for the Advent (coming) of Jesus, the Light of the World.



Did you know the nativity scene has many symbols?

Here are the meanings of each symbol...

Stable – You can't get any more common and down-to-Earth as a stable! This represents Jesus, the Son of God, coming down to dwell amongst humanity in all its forms – even the lowliest and the poorest!

Open arms – The Christ child is usually depicted with his arms stretched wide. This is symbolic of Jesus' invitation of salvation to all mankind.

Halos – Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus and the angels all have halos around their heads. These are a symbol of holiness and represent the spirit of God within.

Swaddling clothes – The swaddling clothes which Jesus is wrapped in are prophetic – they foretell the shroud He will be buried in.

Mary – Mary is most often shown wearing a blue robe. This is the color of the sky and shows that, as the mother of God, she is the link between Heaven and Earth.

Shepherds – As well as representing the common people, the shepherds are also symbolic of Christ's ancestor, King David, and of Jesus Himself – the good shepherd come to gather His sheep.

Magi – The three wise men are usually of three ages – young, middle-aged, and old. These represent the different stages of a human's life.

Gifts – Even the gifts of the Magi have meaning. Gold is for Christ's royalty, frankincense for His godliness and myrrh is for the sacrifice He will make for mankind.

The ox and the donkey – These two animals show aspects of Jesus' personality. The ox symbolizes patience and the donkey humility.

Lambs – The lambs (which accompany the shepherds) are symbolic of both Christ's innocence and His coming sacrifice.

Dog – Some nativity scenes include a dog and, as any dog-owner will know, these animals are famed for their loyalty and faithfulness.



DECEMBER MISSION IS THE **SALVATION ARMY**

Salvation Army donations used for:



Helping families with holiday giving

Homeless shelters

Rehabilitation

Rent and utility assistance

Food pantries

Summer camps for children

Help for domestic abuse

Job training

Life skills to escape poverty

Responses to human trafficking



NOVEMBER 20, 2025 MISSION MEETING MINUTES

Present: Deb Lueck, Sue Meeks, Dianne Gray, Kim Charlier, Pastor Alyssa

Pastor Alyssa led the meeting in prayer.

Dianne reported that she had been in touch with Becky Carter, who works at Halcyon House, and Jan Fleig, who works at the UP Home. They will both be providing us with a list of names for the Giving Tree in December. We will get the paper ornaments prepared once we have the lists of names.

Kim said she has not received the list of families yet from Renella at HACAP for our Christmas Adoption donations. Once she does, the Youth Group will go and shop for those families in need.

Lori Bauer is planning to organize the Salvation Army mission again this year. Pastor Alyssa thinks we have been assigned to bell ringing at Fareway this year.

Dianne has spoken with the Latinos of Washington group and they have requested that the May missions, which we normally split between the citizenship fund and the Latinos of Washington group, go completely to the citizenship fund. They feel that's where the greatest need is.

Deb stated she would like a report by the end of the year that can be published in the Bulletin and Meeting House showing the donations given for our missions this year. We should include a figure for how much was given by the congregation as well as how much was given from our Missions Fund.

Our next Mission Meeting will be December 18 at 1:00 p.m..

Sue Meeks



November 18, 2025

The Washington UMC Worship Committee met at the Wesley Center Library on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 5:15 p.m..

Linda opened the meeting at 5:15pm with a Thanksgiving devotional called, "Gratitude in Every Season", followed by prayer. Those present were: Linda Soukup, Chris Marshall, Pastor Alyssa Nantt, Shirley Textor, Jean Potratz and Sue Meeks. Alison Greiner and Dana Rembold were unable to attend. Minutes from the October 2025 meeting were approved.

Committee Reports:

Technology: Linda noted that things are going okay technologically. The group discussed static online, noting that there is noise possibly between the computer and the soundboard. We will get together with those involved in using the system along with other committees as needed, and then determine whether to contact DB Acoustics.

Gratitude: Shirley reported that in October, the committee completed care notes to the homebound members. For November 20th at 1:00 p.m. in the library, they will be writing 60-65 Christmas greetings, and will also meet in early December to finish this project.

Youth and Adult/Education: Shirley noted that the after church study on Acts is completed, and a study on the Holy Spirit will begin on Sunday, January 4th, 2026. Alyssa's Bible study on Thursdays from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. will finish the book of Daniel on Thursday, November 20th. The Thursday Bible Study will take a break, and resume again on January 15th, with the book of Esther. Starting November 30th, Sunday, we will be doing the Advent Study, 'The Heart That Grew Three Sizes', by Matt Rawle, finding faith in the story of The Grinch. So far there are 30 people signed up to be present for this study.

The Christmas program will be held on Sunday, December 14th.

Ushers/Greeters/Hospitality: SPRC talked about asking a member to do the Turnkey position, but this has not yet been determined. Linda discussed helping Marilyn Whitenack with reimbursement of costs for Sunday morning food. After discussion, Jean P. made a motion that Worship Committee funds be used to reimburse this cost at \$20 per week, on a monthly basis. Seconded by Sue. All voted aye, motion carried.

Altar/Decorations: Sue put the horn of plenty on the altar for the Fall/Thanksgiving season. New paraments have been pressed and will be added this Sunday, November 23rd, with a special liturgy of consecration. We have the Lenten/Easter paraments, and Pastor Alyssa discussed ordering general use paraments next year to be used in other times of the Christian year. Hanging of the Greens is also scheduled for this Sunday after church.

Worship meeting con't...

Worship/Music:

- November 23rd—Christ the King Sunday; bless new paraments; Hanging of the Greens;
- Movie night—Grinch, 5:00 p.m.. Do sign-up sheet for movie nights.
- November 30—1st Sunday in Advent; we will not have all music Sunday that day
- December 14—Christmas Program
- December 24—Christmas Eve Service, Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.
- December 28—“Lessons in Carols” service + hot cocoa bar (Alyssa on vacation)
- January 4—Alyssa gone on vacation, guest speaker

Old Business:

Fundraiser Dinner and Dessert Auction went well. Food was very good and we had a nice crowd and great desserts donated.

Movie Night— (The Grinch) on Sunday, November 23, at 5pm, will have snacks included— popcorn and other concessions will be sold by the youth group as a small fundraiser.

Advent Study Dates: November 30, December 7, 14 and 21, at 5:00 p.m.. Casseroles to share for the meal; 30 have signed up so far and we have a sign-up list for these.

New Business:

Poinsettias will be ordered for Christmas, and we will add requests for these in the December bulletins; cost will be \$15.00 each.

The Christmas program for December 14th is called, “The Symbols of Christmas”, and will be presented by an intergenerational team of members.

Shirley requested that choir robes be dry cleaned before the Christmas season.

Linda discussed candles for the Christmas Eve service. We decided to order a dozen or so battery candles for little children/any others who wish to use them, and use the wax candles for all others.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 5:15 p.m., at the Church Library.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m..



Finance Meeting October 13, 2025

Present: Chairman Rick Meeks, Pastor Alyssa, Tom Patterson, Bob Helscher, Karen Norman, Chris Marshall and Jennine Wolf.

Pastor Alyssa opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes from the last meeting were reviewed. Tom made a motion to approve the minutes, Karen seconded; Motion passed.

Chris presented the Fall Fundraiser report. She explained the income from the dinner was \$2,802.00. There was \$470.00 in donations towards the food costs. She said the groceries were \$565.87. The net profit of the fundraiser was \$2,236.00. Jennine told Chris there was still the bill from Kalona News for the advertising of the Fall Dinner. Chris said she will deduct that from the net total.

Chris explained the total of tithes and offerings is \$222,709.00. This total includes a donation to the Church's general fund of \$50,000.00, bringing the net income for the end of October to \$45,877.11. The consolidated fund balance is approximately \$85,000.00, which includes this \$50,000.00 donation. The general fund balance is at \$33,012.00 at the end of October.

Bob gave the Foundation Fund report. He stated the Endowment/Foundation fund purpose is not to see how much money we can make, but to use the money to accomplish things for the Church. He suggested creating a scholarship for church members to use toward going to college. The group discussed having the scholarship also open to grandchildren of members, as well as to older members returning to college. Pastor Alyssa stated that this option would need approval from the Ad council. Bob stated we should get a scholarship committee of about 4 to 5 people to set the guidelines for the scholarship qualifications. Pastor Alyssa said when this is presented to the Ad Council, they will vote for permission for the nomination committee to form a scholarship committee.

Chris went over the Operating Budget for 2026. After discussion and a couple of updates, Tom made a motion to approve the 2026 Operating Budget as presented with changes. Karen 2nd. Motion passed.

Chris explained she would sit down with Richard Gilmore to talk about capital needs for the Church to create a capital budget for 2026. The Trustees will then look over, adjust and approve the Capital budget for 2026. It was suggested the congregation should have a list in the back of the sanctuary to look at for the purpose of suggesting any additions and for memorial or gift designations.

Pastor Alyssa said she emailed Jeff Lueck stating the Daycare Board is pausing negotiations of moving the daycare to the church. They said our proposals were too expensive and there were a couple of building issues to overcome. At this time, they are looking at other buildings to rent. It was discussed this could open the church up for other opportunities for church use or other rental purposes. The committee suggested that Richard Gilmore, Pastor Alyssa, Chris, Rick, and Connie Larson be asked to consider and suggest other business prospects for the Church/Wesley Center.

Karen made a motion to close the meeting. Tom 2nd. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned.

THIS & THAT

Hawkeye Cans for Cancer

Cindy and Larry Guy would like to remind the congregation that Hawkeye Cans for Cancer is still going strong in memory of their son, Nathan Guy.

If you redeem cans at the Redemption Center in Washington, please tell them you want to donate the deposits to Hawkeye Cans for Cancer. Your donation goes to help other families who need financial support during this difficult time.

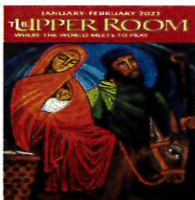
The Mission Committee is asking the congregation to donate some of the following for the Resource Room:



**Blankets
Bath towels
Bath toiletries
Kitchen utensils-towels**



Things or gifts you may have and have never used...



The Upper Room

The cost of *The Upper Room* has gone up again for the Church!

**Did you know you can have
The Upper Room delivered to your email?**

If you purchase a digital subscription to *The Upper Room*, you will have access to read each day's devotional via the website and mobile app and receive each day's devotional in your email. You will also gain access to exclusive content such as author bios and photos and an audio recording of each daily devotional.

An added benefit is you can **listen** to the devotion instead of reading it!

The cost of the digital subscription is only \$14.99 a year and you will have *The Upper Room* wherever you go!

Please go to www.upperroom.org.

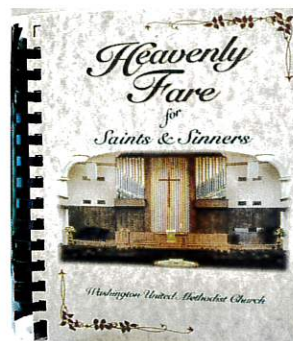
Click on Subscribe

Click on the option to subscribe to the digital for \$14.99 a year.

Please call the office if you have any questions.

THE RECIPE CORNER

Recipes taken from the:
"Heavenly Fare for Saints & Sinners" Cookbook
(page 83 & 34)



Breakfast Brunch

From the kitchen of Virginia Tschantz

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2-1/2 c. seasoned croutons | 3/4 T. prepared mustard |
| 2 c. shredded cheese | 2-1/2 c. milk |
| 2 lbs. sausage, browned and drained | Salt and pepper to taste |
| 4 eggs | 1 c. mushroom soup |
| 1/2 soup can milk | |

Line 9 x 13 greased pan with croutons. Over that sprinkle the cheese. Then pack the sausage on top of the cheese. Beat the eggs with mustard, milk, salt and pepper. Pour over the sausage. Refrigerate overnight. Before baking, combine the soup and milk; pour over top and bake 1-1/2 hours at 300°.



Christmas Jello

From the kitchen of Fran Roland

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 pkg. cherry Jello | 12 big marshmallows, cut up |
| 1 pkg. lime Jello | 2 T. Miracle Whip |
| 1 pkg. lemon Jello | 1 (15-1/2 oz.) can pineapple, drained |
| 2 (8 oz.) Philadelphia cream cheese | 1 c. whipped cream or Cool Whip |

Set red Jello in the bottom of 9 x 12 pan. While it is setting mix lemon Jello with the 12 marshmallows using hot water. When lemon Jello is about set, whip and add cream cheese, cream and Miracle Whip. Add drained pineapple when whipped. Pour lemon mixture over red Jello. Let set. Mix lime Jello as directed and when cooled pour over lemon layer. Refrigerate until ready to use.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



2
Stephen Bay
Anna Miller

3
Tate Greiner

4
Diana Hamilton
Deb Lueck

5
Andy Greiner
Jaedyn Moore
Russ Munn
Ann Williams

6
Fiona Pence

8
Mark Thode
John Unternahrer

9
Kirk Bailey
Allen Griggs

10
Shawna Manz
Mike Williams
Jennifer Young

11
Johnathon Bowles
Layne Moore

12
Bill Chmelar
Layla Schneider

14
Tim Brinning
Caden Greiner
Lyle Moen

15
Ashley Crull
Sherry Massey

16
Robert Bauer

19
Richard Magdefrau
Shirley Textor

20
Kinser Cortum
Audrey Goldsmith
Veta Thode

21
James Soukup

22
Ted Miller

23
Kurt Hinrichsen

24
Lori Bauer
James Davis

25
Mark Beatty
Cassandra Vazquez

26
Blake Hartzler
Linda Quigley

27
Connie Messer

28
Jean Cluney
Craig Johnson
Nancy McCreedy
Phil Speece

31
Emily Hotle
Audrey Stark

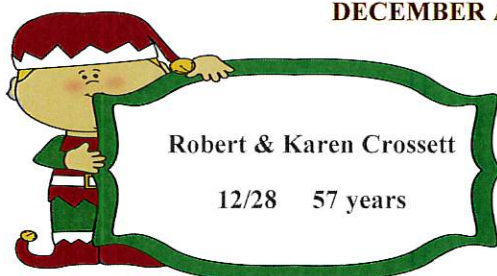


BOLD NAMES

90+ BIRTHDAYS!



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES



December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Men's Fellowship 9:00 a.m.-Library	2 Zoom Prayer Meeting 1:00 p.m. Celebrate Recovery 6:00 p.m. FH	3 Handbell practice 5:45 p.m.-FH MYLIFE 6:30 p.m. WC Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.-Sanctuary Praise Team TBA Sanctuary	4	5 Pastor's day off	6
7 Communion SS. Youth 10:15 a.m. Worship Service 10:00 a.m. Advent Study 5:00 p.m. FH	8 Men's Fellowship 9:00 a.m.-Library SPRC Meeting 6:30 p.m. Library	9 Zoom Prayer Meeting 1:00 p.m. Celebrate Recovery 6:00 p.m. FH	10 Handbell practice 5:45 p.m.-FH MYLIFE 6:30 p.m. WC Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.-Sanctuary Praise Team TBA Sanctuary	11 Trustee Meeting 6:00 p.m. Library	12 UWF 12:00 p.m. FH Pastor's day off	13
14 SS. Youth 10:15 a.m. Worship Service 10:00 a.m. Youth Christmas Program Advent Study 5:00 p.m. FH	15 Men's Fellowship 9:00 a.m.-Library Finance 5:30 p.m. Library	16 Zoom Prayer Meeting 1:00 p.m. Worship Meeting 5:15 p.m. Library Celebrate Recovery 6:00 p.m. FH	17 Handbell practice 5:45 p.m.-FH MYLIFE 6:30 p.m. WC Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.-Sanctuary Praise Team TBA Sanctuary	18 Care Note Ministry 1:00 p.m. Library Mission Meeting 1:00 p.m. Library	19 Pastor's day off	20
21 Worship Service 10:00 a.m. Advent Study 5:00 p.m. FH	22 Men's Fellowship 9:00 a.m.-Library	23 Zoom Prayer Meeting 1:00 p.m. Celebrate Recovery 6:00 p.m. FH Ad Council 6:30 p.m.	24 Office Closed Christmas Eve Service 7:00 p.m.	25 	26 Pastor on vacation until January 11	27 Pastor on vacation
28 Worship Service <i>Lessons in Carols</i> 10:00 a.m. Pastor on vacation	29 Men's Fellowship 9:00 a.m.-Library Pastor on vacation	30 Zoom Prayer Meeting 1:00 p.m. Celebrate Recovery 6:00 p.m. FH Pastor on vacation	31 Office Closed 			



December Meeting House

Washington United Methodist Church
206 West Second St.
Washington, IA 52353-1925
319-653-5446
churchofficewumc@gmail.com

Sunday Worship

Traditional Service: 10:00 a.m.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Washington United Methodist Church
206 West Second Street
Washington, IA 52353-1925