

December 2023

PINE Chips^{2.0}

United Methodist

Of Church of the Pines

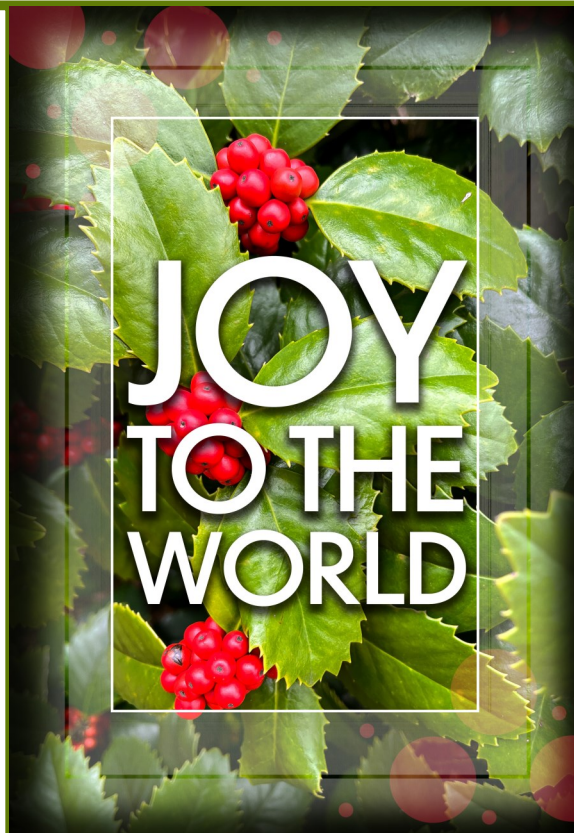


*Live Christ's Love
NOW!*



At Church of the Pines, we offer everyone an opportunity to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and to grow in a committed relationship with God.

We are Living Christ's Love NOW through Nurture, Outreach, and Worship.



Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m.
In-person and Livestreamed
on Facebook and YouTube

Christmas Eve Services
4:30 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

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Did you get Pine Chips 2.0 in your email?

*Not only is the monthly Pine Chips 2.0 sent to our church community via email, but we also have weekly announcements and events emailed and posted online.
Contact the church at (715)356-3041 or email office@umchurchofthepines.org.*

Pastor's Message



As we begin to celebrate an Unlikely Advent this year, we will see how people just like us had important parts in bringing Christ to life in this world.

Advent is when we prepare for the new possibilities God brings into our world through Christ.

This Advent, I am excited about the new possibilities we are preparing for here at Church of the Pines. This year, we engaged in three focus areas: community, spirituality, and generosity as a church. The results have been tremendous. We have grown closer to each other, our community, and, most importantly, to God. By the wisdom of God, these focus areas have become something more and are bringing new possibilities to us. They have become the core values of our church. They genuinely shape our identity of who we are as a church and what we do together. Our values help us to focus our energies, empowering us to do new and more things for God.

From our core values comes a new sense of mission and vision as a congregation. Over the last couple of months, the Ministry Council has worked to develop and adopt two exciting things that have grown out of our values. First, we adopted a new vision and Mission statement, which align with God's purpose for our church. Our vision statement is UMCOP: Living Christ's Love. We see our church as one that has, is, and will be a living expression of the love of God in Christ Jesus. Our new Mission Statement is: To make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ to love and serve the world.

This is only the beginning. We have also developed a new mission focus. You have already heard about the mission's focus, but it officially begins in the New Year. UMCOP's

mission focus for 2024 through 2027 is to increase food security for people in our community and throughout the world. This mission focus will include opportunities for all of us to learn, serve, and give towards food security issues locally, nationally, and globally. It will enhance our mission actions and the effectiveness of all our efforts.

I know this is a lot, but there is still more.

We are encouraged by the positive trends in worship this past year and look forward to enhancing the overall in-person and online worship experience. We will do this most notably by transitioning our Sunday worship schedule to 9:30 a.m. starting Memorial Day weekend 2024. There will be more coming with this transition that will enhance how we reflect our core values during worship.

Brothers and Sisters, all of this may seem like a lot of new and a lot of change. However, just like Christ coming into our world brought a lot of new and a lot of change, it still was something that grew out of God and humanity's relationship and became what God desires for us.

All the new things happening here at UMCOP are growing out of who we have been, who we are now, and who we are becoming in the life and love of Christ as we grow into the glorious future God has for us all.

Blessings.

Pastor Mark



Leadership, Prayers, Altar Flowers, Worship

Church Staff & Leadership

Pastor Mark D. Gilbert, ext. 4
pastor@umchurchofthepines.org

Church Administrator:
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Stephen Ministry Leader:
Holly Nash, nashholly@yahoo.com

Call 1-715-203-1990
to hear our latest sermon
CHURCH OF THE PINES



Office Hours

Monday - Thursday - 9 am - 5 pm
Friday - 9 am - Noon

There are times when we are away from the office, so it is a good idea to call in advance to ensure we are available to assist you. Call 715-356-3041.

**The church office will be closed on
Monday, December 25, 2023
& Monday, January 1, 2024.**



To have your name or the name of a loved one included on our Prayer List, in the Weekly Update, Prayer List, or on our Prayer Chain, please contact the church office. 715-356-3041 or office@umchurchofthepines.org.

Consider signing up to provide a flower arrangement or a plant to place on the altar on Sunday mornings. It is a nice way to honor or remember a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion.



Contact Merry to reserve dates on the calendar for altar flowers.
715-356-3041 - office@umchurchofthepines.org

Welcome to WORSHIP

Worship Information

Attend the 10:00 a.m. Sunday worship services held in the sanctuary.

Watch Sunday morning worship services on our Church of the Pines' YouTube channel by going to:
<https://www.youtube.com/@umchurchofthepines>

Livestreams of Sunday Worship Services are on Church of the Pines' Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/churchofthepines/live/>

Watch videos of Sunday Services on our church website
<https://www.umchurchofthepines.org/worship-videos.html>

December Birthdays & Anniversaries, Charge Conference, Children's Christmas Program



Birthdays in December

December 4	Jay Hull
December 5	Chris Anderson
December 6	Sue Shapiro
December 9	Holly Nash
December 9	John Lightfoot
December 13	Rudy Vlosak
December 15	Florence Melka
December 21	Doug Clark
December 23	Rick Rausch
December 26	Skip Tosch
December 30	Alexis Kroening

Anniversaries in December

December 23	Brett & Nicole Myers
December 29	Rich & Nancy Klatt

Blessings to you on your special day!

If you are celebrating your birthday or anniversary in December and your name is not listed, please contact the church office so we can update our records.



Church of the Pines Charge Conference

Sunday, December 3rd - Noon

All-church potluck at 11:00 a.m.

Our annual Charge Conference is Sunday, December 3rd, at noon. Enjoy a potluck luncheon following the worship service. Bring a dish to share. There will be more than regular business. Come and celebrate the good things of this past year and hear about the new things coming our way in 2024!



To our members and friends of Church of the Pines who will be leaving for the winter, we send you off with prayers for safe travels. We hope you have a healthy, happy, and blessed Christmas and New Year's.



The children of Church of the Pines will present a Christmas Program entitled "Jesus Comes to Earth" on Sunday, December 10th, during the 10:00 a.m. worship service. Everyone is invited to come and support the youth of our church as they present "Jesus Comes to Earth."

December Worship Themes



An Unlikely Advent

Our Advent worship series is based on Rachel Billups' book, *"An Unlikely Advent."* We all know the main cast, the stars of the story, even "the star" of the nativity story. Yet sometimes we find it hard to relate with them, how do we connect our lives with someone like Mary. How do our stories relate to theirs? This Advent season we will look at the ensemble cast of characters in the nativity story, the people on the margin of the story—the unlikely people with whom we might find a closer connection.

December 3 - First Sunday of Advent

Theme: Believe It or Not

Scripture: Luke 1:5-17

We, like Zechariah and Elizabeth, may feel we have no part in what God has done or will do. We are too young, too old, too insignificant. Whatever our rationale is, God still has a part for each and everyone of us in the good news of Jesus' birth.

December 10 - Second Sunday of Advent

Theme: An Unexpected Proclamation

Scripture: Luke 1:26-33

What an unlikely thing for Mary to hear an angel proclaim to her. Today, we hear the children proclaim the good news of Jesus' birth for us.

December 17 - Third Sunday of Advent

Theme: There is Always a Villain

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-8 Herod is the villain of the story, right? We know he is threatened by a new king of the Jews being born. He lies, he wants to

protect himself, he even hurts innocent people. He is the villain. Yet there is a bit of King Herod in each one of us. All of us, at some time and in some way, have been the villain. It reminds us that for this is part of the reason that Jesus came.

December 24 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Theme: Curiously Watching from the Side

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-2 and 9-12

No one in Israel expected to hear from some strangers from the far east. Yet, these unlikely guests came with curiosity and questions. What makes you curious about the nativity? Do you have questions you want answered?



December 24 - Christmas Eve Services

Theme: Sometimes God Shows Up

Scripture: Luke 2:1-15

Sometimes God shows up in unlikely places and with unlikely people. People like me and you! Tonight, we celebrate the time God showed up in a manger and people just like us were the first to know. We also look for the other times and ways God has shown up in our lives.

The Unlikely Story Continues

December 31

Theme: The Unlikely Story Continues

Scripture: Luke 2:22-40

Jesus continues to connect with people like us. What does it mean for you to have a part in Jesus' story?

Christmas

Stephen Ministry



This is a tough holiday season for many people. Grief due to loss of a loved one, wars around the world, political unrest in our own country, and financial stress make it hard. The shorter days, added responsibilities of the holidays, and time crunches don't help either.

If you are grieving, here are a few tips that may help the holidays be more meaningful:

Take care of yourself

- Recognize the holidays won't be the same
- Decide what you really want to do and make changes in traditions if you feel more comfortable
- Get enough rest and exercise
- Express your feelings

Decide what you can handle

- Find your own comfort zone in holiday planning and what events you will attend
- Re-examine your priorities: do what you enjoy, try to delegate those things you would not

Manage your relationships with others

- Share plans and feelings with other family members
- Remember, laughter and joy are not disrespectful to the loved one you have lost
- Be careful not to isolate yourself

Remember your loved one

- Share stories
- Light a special candle in his/her honor
- Help someone else or volunteer at a food pantry, Salvation Army, or other charity that was important to your loved one
- Buy a special wreath or tree and decorate it with items representing things that were important to your loved one
- If you don't feel like having a Christmas tree, plan on buying a live tree in Spring in memory of your loved one and planting it somewhere special
- List the gifts your loved one taught you (humor, generosity, etc.) on cards; have family members and friends pick a card and relate what that gift meant to them

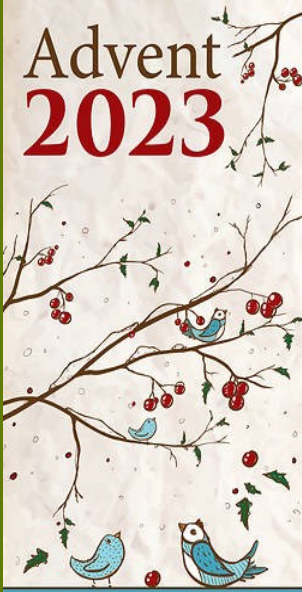


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If you or someone you know is having a difficult time this holiday season and would like a Stephen Minister to talk to, contact Stephen Leader: Holly Nash at 715-356-6861.

Advent Devotional, Upcoming Activities, Giving

Advent 2023



A Calendar
of Devotions

SAM MCGLOTHLIN

Advent: A Calendar of Daily Devotions 2023 provides daily devotions for Christians as they prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ. This annual favorite is a wonderful resource for families to emphasize the importance of the Advent of our Lord. Each day's reading, from Sunday, December 3rd. to Christmas Day, is based on the Revised Common Lectionary and includes the Scripture, a short devotion, and a brief prayer or practice, and is printed using a larger font for ease of reading.

Copies of the Advent Devotional are available on the tables at the back of sanctuary.

MEN'S BREAKFAST will not be held in December, but will be back in the new year.

KEENAGERS December 20 Noon

Keenagers will meet at noon in the Ministry Center for potluck on Wednesday, December 20th. The festive lunch will be followed by a quick meeting and singing Christmas carols. All are welcome! If you want to come just for the fellowship of singing together, plan to come at about 12:45 p.m.

BETWEEN



FRIENDS

Enjoy the day with friends at Church of the Pines on Tuesday, December 26th, from 9:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. in the Ministry Center. Bring your lunch and sewing or craft project and enjoy time **BETWEEN FRIENDS!**



**Giving a contribution to
Church of the Pines
is easy!**

Thank you for continuing to financially contribute to Church of the Pines as you are able. There are a variety of ways to make your gifts: Text "give" to 833-358-0472; use ACH (Automatic Clearing House) to contribute from your checking or savings account; go to www.umchurchofthepines.org and click on the GIVE graphic to make an electronic gift using your debit or checking account; drop off or mail a check made out to Church of the Pines to P.O. Box 144, Minocqua, WI 54548, or place your gift in the offering plate on Sunday.

New Church Member Classes, Winter Weather Policy, 2024 Offering Envelopes

New Church Member *Classes*

Why consider becoming a member of United Methodist Church of the Pines? Plan to attend one of our New Church Member classes to learn more about what it means to become a member of the church.

**Sunday, January 14th or 21st 11:15 a.m.
in the Pine Room**

Contact the church office at 715-356-3041
or send an email to
office@umchurchofthepines.org to let us
know which Sunday works best for you.

Consider making Church of the Pines your church home where you feel a sense of community, experience spiritual growth, enjoy opportunities to serve, and participate in learning opportunities and fun and meaningful activities.



Offering Envelope packets for 2024 will be available for pick up beginning December 1st.

If you did not receive an offering envelope packet for 2023, and would like a packet for 2024, contact the church office at 715-356-3041
or send an email to
office@umchurchofthepines.org.

WINTER *Weather Policy*

Winter Weather Cancellation Policy

Sunday Morning Worship

For severe winter weather, cancellation of the Sunday Worship service will be considered when there is dangerous ice and when there is a winter storm warning.

A decision to cancel worship services during a winter storm will be made no later than 6:00 p.m. on Saturday evening. A mass email and phone call will be made to the church membership, and a special notification will be sent via MailChimp to everyone who subscribes to our church Weekly Updates. Notifications will also appear on our Facebook page and sent to local television stations that provide cancellation notices for church activities.

Weekday Church Activities and Office Hours

Children, Youth, and Family ministries will be canceled if schools are closed or if after school activities are canceled. Parents will be notified via email.

The Church office and other church adult ministries will be closed at the discretion of the pastor and/or the Chair of the related ministry, based on safety. Appropriate forms of communication will be used to inform the congregation.

Caught in the Act of Serving



Food for Kidz

It was another hugely successful Food For Kidz event on Saturday, October 21st, at Lakeland Union High School. There were 569 volunteers, including 522 volunteers who

did the meal packaging and another 47 volunteers who helped set up, worked the event, and cleaned up after the event. The volunteers packaged 243,800 meals, which will provide meals for many local food pantries and for many hungry children. Thanks to all who helped with this year's Food for Kidz event:

Rebecca, Valarie Susor, Carolyn Susor, Deb Harris, Doug Clark, Tammy, Holly Nash, Loran Susor, and Miron. Miron and Rebecca visit Val and Loran in the summer. Additional volunteers (not in the photo) include **Sue Henning, Sue Claflin, Karen & Joe Augitto, and Donna Clark.**



Mission Team

Our Mission Team - Church of the Pines members - **Sue Loeffler, Sue Henning, Venus Hilgart, and Val Susor**, and friends of UMCOP - **Jayne Claflin, Rose Doucette, Sharon Warsaw, and Judy Emerson** spent

several days volunteering at the Midwest Mission Distribution Center in Pawnee, Illinois. They went through an orientation and training, sorted medical supplies, painted walls, made sleeping mats, worked on sewing projects, cut out patterns, assembled kits, and much more. They had a lot of fun and were physically exhausted at the end of their trip. But, they were filled with gratitude for having been able to serve in this way.



**Mark your calendar - Mission Trip 2024
October 14 - 18, 2024**



School Bags for Kids in Need

Stuff the School Bags is a special mission project for Church of the Pines youth. On Wednesday, October 18th, the kids assembled over 60 school bags filled with supplies.



The school bags were delivered to the Midwest Mission Distribution Center in Illinois and sent to students who don't have adequate school supplies.



Thanks, kids, for wanting to make a difference for other kids around the corner and around the world!

Thank you, Church of the Pines members and friends, for donating all the items stuffed into the school bags. Thank you, Venus Hilgart, for coordinating this mission project and delivering the school bags to the Midwest Mission Distribution Center!



On Sunday, October 22nd, the school bags and other items were blessed during the worship service.

Caught in the Act of Serving, continued

Fall Yard Clean Up Day

October 25th was the Fall yard clean-up day at Church of the Pines. As you can see from the photos, the volunteers did a lot of leaf blowing, raking, trimming bushes, and cleaning out the flower beds, and, of course, having a lot of **FUN!** Thanks to the Trustees for organizing the work day and for spending the day at the church getting everything ready for winter. **THANK YOU, Jerry Weber, Tom Frandy, John McCadden, Dave Kozeluh, Larry Duffee, and Bob Nash.**



**THANKS,
GUYS, FOR
ALL YOU DO
FOR
CHURCH OF
THE PINES!**



Toy Drive

Thanks to United Women in Faith for organizing a toy collection at Church of the Pines for the Lakeland Sharing Foundation's annual Toy Drive. New toys and books were collected during October and November.

Sue Loeffler (left) and Sue Shapiro are shown with some of the toys that were donated by members of United Women in Faith and members and friends of our congregation.

**Thanks for making Christmas a little brighter
for families in our community!**



United Women in Faith, Cookie Walk & Craft Sale



United
Women
in Faith

Thank offering: We stand grateful before the Lord for His loving gifts. Put in fifty cents in celebration of Christmas.

Circle meetings for December:

Dawn Circle meets Tuesday, December 7th, at 9:30 in the ministry center.

Deborah Circle meets Wednesday, December 13th, at 5:30 at Country Terrace for Christmas caroling, followed by One Penny Place. Bring some cookies for a cookie exchange.

Esther/Martha Circle meets Tuesday, December 5th, at noon at the home of Jeanne Van Order.

Lydia Circle meets Thursday, December 14th, at 9:30. Will be going out for brunch, place to be determined.

Ruth Circle meets Wednesday, December 13th, at noon in the ministry center. They will be having a pot-luck and white elephant exchange.

Upcoming dates:

Monday, December 4 - Cookie Walk Bake Day

Friday, December 8 - Cookie walk set up at 4:00 p.m., followed by pizza.

Saturday, December 9 - Cookie Walk & Craft Sale from 9:30 until 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, January 3, 2024 - Executive Board meeting at 10:00 a.m. in the Ministry Center.

Cookie Walk & Craft Sale

**Saturday
December 9th
9:30 - 11:00 a.m.**

**Church of the Pines
415 Chippewa Street
Minocqua**

Cookies/Candy - \$10/lb.

Proceeds go to MISSIONS



United
Women
in Faith

715-356-3041

Endowment Fund, Parable Remix - Volume 2

United Methodist Church of the Pines



ENDOWMENT FUND



We are the seeds of hope for those who succeed us. We dream and envision and set things in motion. The fruition of our decisions will be known only to others whom we will not meet. We are called to partner in faith with those who have gone before us and to offer the best that we have to give to those who will follow.

Why Donate to the Endowment Fund

Endowments provide a means for sustaining those things you care about, forever! Like many churches today, Church of the Pines has experienced income shortfalls due to declining membership. Your gift will help sustain the United Methodist Church of the Pines for future generations!

Gift Designations & Recognition

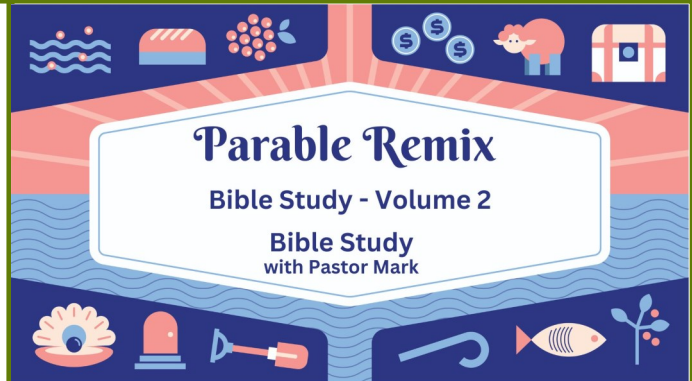
The Endowment Fund can receive both directed and non-directed gifts. A directed gift, where the donor designates its specific use, must be a minimum of \$10,000. Non-directed gifts can be of any amount. A permanent display will honor gifts with Bronze (\$5,000+), Silver (\$25,000+), Gold (\$50,000), and Platinum (\$100,000+ designations.

Your gift can remain anonymous.

NEXT STEPS: IF YOU HAVE MADE A GIFT, THANK YOU! IF YOU ARE STILL EXPLORING, speak with your advisors.

Contact the church by phone at 715-356-3041 or by email at office@umchurchofthepines.org to arrange for a confidential consultation with a member of the Endowment Committee.

*Thank you for considering an endowment gift to
United Methodist Church of the Pines.*



Join Pastor Mark for **Parable Remix, Volume 2**, a four-week Bible study, meeting on Thursdays at noon in the Ministry Center, **beginning January 11th.**

One of Jesus' favorite ways to teach his disciples about God and how we should live was with parables. Parables are little stories of people doing real things that reveal profound truths about God and life. The beauty of parables is that they make us think because there is no one simple way to understand them, and they can speak to us today as profoundly as they did when Jesus first spoke them.

In this study we will explore some of Jesus' more famous parables, by looking at how they might have initially been understood, as well as thinking about how we might rethink them in today's world.

Bring a sack lunch, Bible, and be ready to take a fresh look at these famous parables.

January 11 - Parable of the Prodigal Son

January 18 - Parable of the Sower/Soils

January 25 - Parable of the Good Samaritan

February 1 - Parable of the Lost Sheep and of the Good Shepherd

A sign up sheet is located on a table in the Ministry Center or register online by going to our church website at www.umchurchofthepines.org.



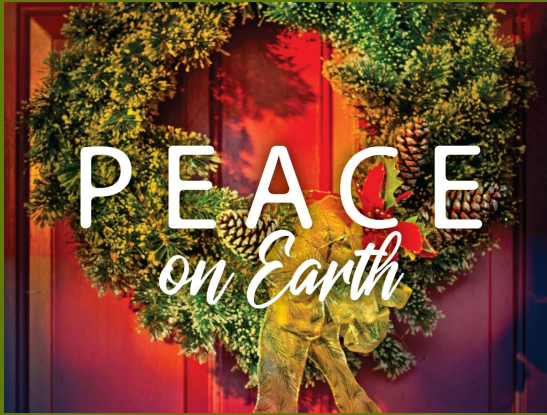
December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 4:30pm - Odd Couples - Decorate Church 6:00pm - Odd Couples (Monical's Pizza with dessert at the church)	2
3 1st Sunday of Advent 10:00am - Wor- ship Service/ Communion 11:00am - Pot- luck 12:00pm - Charge Confer- ence (Ministry Center)	4 9:00am - 2:00pm - Cookie Bake Day (Kitchen)	5 12:00pm - Esther/ Martha Circle (Jeanne Van Order's home)	6 3:30pm - Church School (Lower Level) 4:00pm - Christmas Program Rehearsal	7 9:30am - Dawn Circle (Ministry Center) 2:30pm - Advent Study (Ministry Center)	8 4:00pm - Set up for Cookie Walk & Craft Sale (Ministry Center/ Pine Room)	9 9:30 - 11:00am - Cookie Walk & Craft Sale (Ministry Center)
10 2nd Sunday of Advent 10:00am - Wor- ship Service/ Children's Christ- mas Program 11:00am - Coffee Fellowship	11 10:00am - Key Leaders (Library) 1:00pm - Prayer Shawl (Pine Room)	12 10:00am - Worship at Milestone 1:00pm - Worship at One Penny Place 5:00pm - Tom's Com- munity Table (St. Matthias')	13 12:00pm - Ruth Circle (Ministry Center) 3:30pm - Church School (Lower Level) 4:00pm - Christmas Program Rehearsal 5:30pm - Deborah Circle (Country Ter- race & One Penny Place)	14 9:30am - Lydia Circle 2:30pm - Advent Study (Ministry Center)	15	16
17 3rd Sunday of Advent 10:00am - Wor- ship Service 11:00am - Coffee Fellowship 4:00pm - Piano/ Violin Recital	18	19	20 12:00pm - Keenagers (Ministry Center)	21 2:30pm - Advent Study (Ministry Center)	22	23
24 4th Sunday of Advent Christmas Eve 10:00am - Wor- ship Service 11:00am - Coffee Fellowship 4:30pm - Christ- mas Eve Service 7:00pm - Christ- mas Eve Service	25 Merry Christmas Church office closed 	26 9:30am - 3:30pm - Between Friends (Ministry Center)	27	28	29	30
31 10:00am - Wor- ship Service 11:00am - Coffee Fellowship	<p>Have something for Pine Chips 2.0? Email the church at office@umchurchofthepines.org. The deadline for receiving information for the January Pine Chips 2.0 is December 6th. Announcements for weekly updates are due no later than Monday for the following weekend. Call the Church Office at 715-356-3041 with questions.</p>					



Monday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Friday
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

There are times when we are away from the office, so it is a good idea to
call in advance to ensure we are available to assist you.
Call 715-356-3041.



Contact Us

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Office Phone: 715-356-3041

Visit us on the web at
www.umchurchofthepines.org

Visit us on Facebook at
[www.facebook.com/
churchofthepines](https://www.facebook.com/churchofthepines)

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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