

# THE PULSE

MCFARLAND UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

a church with heart - weekly newsletter

*"I will put my teaching in their minds and write it on their hearts..!"*  
Jeremiah 31:33

**November 26 - December 2, 2021**

## HAPPENING EVERY WEEK

You can find brief descriptions of these weekly programs on our website:

[mcfarlanducc.org](https://mcfarlanducc.org)



**SUNDAY Morning, 10 am Zoom Worship**

<https://zoom.us/j/97010988439> Password: **bettogether**



**SUNDAY Morning, 12 noon Zoom Bible Study**

<https://zoom.us/j/262314649>



**MONDAY - FRIDAY, 8 am Morning Devotion**

<https://zoom.us/j/94276813637>



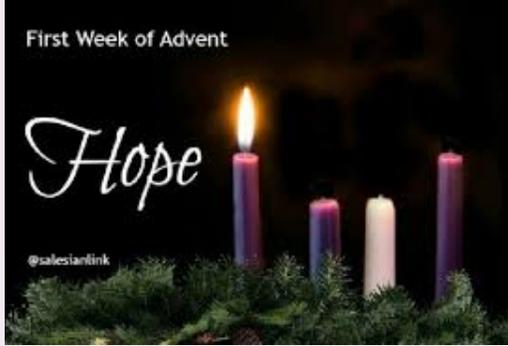
**WEDNESDAY Eve., 6:30 pm Midweek Inhale Spiritual Practices**

<https://zoom.us/j/123020606>

## Happening This Week

***Sunday Morning Worship***  
***November 28th 10:00 a.m.***  
***in person and on zoom.***

The Season of Advent is here once



again starting this Sunday. We'll begin our spiritual preparation for Christmas with the lighting of our first Advent candle--the candle of Hope.

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**Thursday, December 2nd, Monthly SaLT Meeting 6:00 p.m. <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83012586522>**

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**Friday, December 3rd, 5:30-6:45 p.m.**

**Our first Friday Night Monthly Younger Youth Meeting!**

***That's NEXT FRIDAY!***

After conversation with parents of younger youth recently, we've decided to begin a monthly Friday evening younger youth meeting. We'll meet (masks on at this point still) inside our building at 5:30 p.m., share a Bible story, do a craft, and have a simple pizza dinner. In 2022, we will meet the 2nd Friday of each month and share the same basic format. Pastor Bryan will send out a schedule of our meetings and Bible story themes to parents of children 12 and under. Spread the word, bring your friends--the more the merrier!

***Next Sunday, December 5th: Teen Youth***

***Meeting: 4:30-6:00 p.m.*** We'll meet at our church with youth from Lake Edge UCC and possibly some other area churches. Come enjoy some fun games, good conversation about things that matter, make some new friends, and eat some pizza. Your friends are welcome!



***Now In Our Name (NION) Team***

**November 18th Meeting update**

(submitted by Joan Jacobsen)

The NION Team met Thursday, 11/18 and heard **an update about Yara, a Nicaraguan refuge with two young daughters (ages 6 and 2 months) whom the NION Team provided some assistance (e.g., baby equipment, diapers, clothes, financial support) a few weeks ago in collaboration with the Shelter from the Storm Ministries in Sun Prairie.**

Yara currently has an efficiency apartment with the Shelter from the Storm Ministries, is employed, and her older daughter is attending school. Yara is anticipating her return to Madison College for ESL classes (taught by MUCC's Judy Emmrich). Recently NION provided financial support from our NION Funds to initiate the process for seeking legal status for Yara. NION anticipates continuing to collaborate with Shelter from the Storm Ministries to support Yara over this next year.

**During the 11/18 meeting, the NION Team also learned more about how Shelter from the Storm Ministries helps “children and their mothers step up and out of homelessness”.** Shelter from the Storm Ministries (SFTSM) is a 501 (c)3 non-profit ministry, incorporated in WI, led by a local volunteer Board of Directors and Executive Team, with no national affiliation. SFTSM is a Christian organization made up of individuals with various religious affiliations who have come together to address the problem of homelessness for single moms and their children.

Gynel Orr, the Opportunity Coach from SFTSM, shared information about the many ways support is provided for single mothers and their children experiencing homelessness. SFTSM receives referrals from school social workers, Joining Forces for Families, churches, Salvation Army, The Beacon, and other private individuals. Their building consists of efficiency apartments to house up to eleven families. Each unit is furnished and SFTSM provides everything the family needs when they move in, including personal care items, bedding, dishes, silverware, pots, pans, and all basic food essentials. The building has 24/7 coverage with daytime and nighttime house managers and overnight staff.

Each new resident meets with a SFTSM Case Manager who does an intake to assure all basic needs are met through local services. The SFTSM Opportunity Coach works with each resident to set goals and assist with employment needs to earn a living wage. Financial Coaches help residents create a budget, negotiate with creditors, and pay down debt. SFTSM offers transportation and/or help obtaining a driver's license. Life-skills classes

include basic car maintenance, healthy cooking, understanding rental leases and liability, child development, self-defense, and employment skills. For the children, referrals are made to partner agencies and optional programming helps with reading, socialization, and success in school.

SFTSM is supported by fundraisers, individuals, churches in the Greater Madison area, corporate donations, private foundations, grants, and monthly program fees from their clients. The flame of compassion has been ignited in the hearts of a few **generous donors who have offered to match every dollar donated to SFTSM with another dollar up to \$65,000 between now and December 31<sup>st</sup>.**

Use this link to find information about **SFTSM** <https://sftsm.org/> and consider a donation to one of MUCC's collaborative community partners on Giving Tuesday, 11/30/21. Providing a contribution to SFTSM is one way you can aid Yara who benefits from the many services and support that SFTSM has to offer. P

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## Upcoming Events

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### ***Share Your Christmas Season Music and Art For Worship Again This Year!***

***(That's Andra Moran's "Amish Nativity" in the photo)***

Last year since we were completely on zoom a number of you shared

music and readings on video and we used these for our Christmas pageant and Christmas Eve and New Year's weekend services. That was fun and a number of you asked if we could do that again since there's a good chance we may not be able to sing or have wind and brass instruments in the sanctuary because of COVID. So please feel encouraged to create video recordings or take still photos once again of your artwork and send them to me (Pastor Bryan). I'll do my best to figure out how to use them in worship and let you know when your art will be featured. If you need help recording something please let me know and I'll do my best to help you out with that.

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## ***The Solar Panels were installed!***

Don't they look great?! Way to go and thanks to everyone who helped make this happen!!



## ***A Few Words From Pastor Bryan***

Well I hope you had a meaningful Thanksgiving. I know some of you were surrounded by friends and family and lots of food. The fact that many families could do that at this point in the pandemic journey is truly a blessing. For a number of you I know it was an emotionally complicated day and you're glad it's behind you. Not that you aren't grateful, etc. It's just a hard day if/when family stuff is complicated or there are loved ones you are not able to be with, or perhaps you were alone and feeling that. As we point out each year, the holiday season is often a mixed bag of wonder and magic and stress and depression for so many. All the more reason to stay in the center of our church community and be in a circle of love and caring as much as possible.

This Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent. I'll focus the message on hope and we'll remind ourselves of the Divine Hope that is at the heart of our spiritual tradition. I think we're all needing it. Just about an hour ago I heard that there is a new COVID variant that is causing concern and that a travel ban to/from certain African countries is in effect. I guess I'm bracing myself for some more COVID related challenges. I "hope" it's nothing. But that's really just a wish. The kind of Advent Hope we'll focus on this Sunday is deeper than a wish, but I'll save the sermon for Sunday.

What I really want to say today is simply that we all have a chance to take advantage of the true purpose and meaning of Advent this year. It doesn't start until Sunday. It's still all in front of us.

So many years I've said to myself something like, "This year I'm going to tell all my loved ones NOT to send presents unless there's something they REALLY want to give me that they're invested in and excited about." I've said, "I'm NOT going to get caught up in the hype and the obscene degree of commercialization that runs away with most of us from today--so called "Black Friday"-- through the end of the year.

I'll help you if you'll help me. Let's figure out ways to encourage each other to truly be vessels of God's Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love this Advent. One way to do that is to become part of the "Advent Conspiracy." [\*Here's a link to a website and a video\*](#) that will tell you more about it. It's really just about making a commitment to spending less, giving more, and focusing on the Spirit of Christ .

But I have an idea. Throughout Advent this year, now and then, send an email to someone from our church that simply says, "Mary's pregnant. Have you seen her lately?" Let's see if this catches on. I'm not going to say another word about it. It will just be our little code for encouraging each other to have a deeply meaningful time of preparing for the Child to come.

Mary's pregnant. Have you seen her lately?

And I hope to see you Sunday morning,

Pastor B

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