

I was reading something this past week online and ran across something about the legend of the Christmas spider. Not knowing what this was, I decided to do some more investigation, which is the constant learner in me. Ask my husband and he will tell you any time I know don't something the first thing I do is head to Google. Anyway, I searched for the legend of the Christmas spider, and what I found out is there are multiple versions of the story. I found one I particularly liked, and since it concerns Christmas and the birth of Jesus, I thought I would share.

Legend has it that when Joseph was warned in a dream to flee from King Herod and the massacre which he intended to inflict upon the children of Bethlehem, several animals from the manger decided to accompany the Holy Family on their journey. Each of the animals was determined to protect baby Jesus, and each felt sure their particular talents would prove invaluable in that task. There was a spider who wished to join the journey also, yet none of the other animals felt the spider would be helpful. After all, she was only an insect and had no keen ears, sharp teeth, no strong bones or claws whatsoever. However, the spider persistently pleaded until finally the other animals agreed she could join them, provided she did not get in the way.

Unfortunately, as the journey unfolded, all of the other supposedly brave animals were either frightened off or distracted. They ended up returning home or embarking on some more appealing adventure. With Herod's troops on the march, and with the Holy Family growing more and more tired, Joseph and Mary had little choice but to try and hide. Finding a small and inconspicuous cave, they huddled inside, seeking shelter and rest, with only the donkey and the spider remaining with them. Holding Jesus in her arms, Mary gently rocked him to sleep and, for a while, it appeared everything would be fine. The only immediate problem was the chill in the air, so trying to be helpful in some small way, the spider carefully wove a web over the opening of the cave to try to keep the baby warm.

The spider had just finished her weaving when suddenly voices were heard outside the cave. The soldiers had caught up with the Holy Family and they were diligently searching the entire area. When they came to the cave where the Holy Family was hidden, both Mary and Joseph held their breath, certain they would be found. Yet the soldiers passed by the cave. One soldier said it was a waste of time to search it, since anyone who had entered the cave would have broken the spider's web over the opening. Thus, it was this seemingly insignificant spider who saved the day. Legend goes on to say this is why we hang tinsel on our Christmas tree; to remind us of the silver strands of the web which the little spider wove, and to remind us that no act of kindness, act of courage, or act through which peace with justice is sought is ever wasted.

The legend also reminds me that someone once suggested we need to keep not only Christ in Christmas but also to keep Herod in Christmas, because Herod, like Pharaoh before him, worshipped the love of power (enforced by violence) rather than the power of love. And in turn Herod reminds us we do not live in an ideal world but one where we often face both the threat and the destructive reality of violence. For the followers of Jesus to be alive in God—to be alive in the adventure the Christ child calls us to—is to side with all who are vulnerable, even as the Christ child was vulnerable. It is to live in defiance of those who see the vulnerable as expendable, to refuse to bow to any and every Herod and to any and every ruthless regime. It is instead to kneel before the Prince of Peace in the manger and then to go out to weave whatever webs we can as we continue to commit ourselves to acting justly, loving tenderly, and walking humbly with God.

Peace,

Pastor Leslie

# The Compass



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Holiday Services .....	2
Bless a Home .....	2
Blood Drive.....	2
Bakers Needed.....	2
Admin Team note ....	.3
YMCA passes .....	3
Birthdays/Anniv .....	3

## Blue Christmas Service

There is much on all our minds as we prepare for Christmas this year that is not pleasant. The last two years has seen much death and destruction, in the forms of mass shootings, a pandemic which has killed millions. Many of us do not find joy in the holidays because of difficult family situations. So why do we try to cover our pain and grief with Yuletide cheer?

This year, Cross Roads will be hosting a virtual Blue Christmas worship service on the longest night of the year. On Wednesday, December 21 at 6:30 pm, there will be a service to acknowledge our grief and pain this holiday season. This will be a liturgical service with prayers, candles, and readings to help us to realize that, even during the holidays, it is "okay to not be okay." If you are having difficulty dealing with this Christmas season due to loss of a loved one, or because you cannot with your family and friends this year, this service may be just what you need. We hope you will consider joining us online (the link for this service will be available on either the "Home Page" or the "Worship Page" of our church website...www.crossroadsspicer.com).



Cross Roads is once again partnering with The Link for our annual Christmas mission. We will provide 10 baskets of food for a holiday meal and gifts for 6 families. *Monetary donations will be accepted until December 11. If you'd like to help be a shopper or packager, please contact Jenny Daby.*

Please consider how you might give to those in need in our communities.

## Holiday Bakers Needed!

The Missions team will be putting together special Christmas bags of holiday cookies and candy. The bags will be delivered to local nursing homes/assisted living centers and will be distributed to residents who don't get many visitors over the holidays.



When you are making your holiday treats, please make an extra batch or two and bring to church on Sunday, December 11th. If you would like to help put the bags together, join us in the Fellowship Hall after Worship Services. If you have questions, please connect with Jenny Daby.

## Tuesday's Table

Cross Roads will also be hosting this meal again on Tuesday, January 31, 2023. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Jenny Daby.

## Holiday Worship Services

The holidays are rapidly approaching, and we want to make sure everyone is aware of all the opportunities for worship at Cross Roads. Below is a list of worship services during the Advent and Christmas seasons:



- December 4 (2nd Sunday of Advent) 9:30 am
- December 11 (3rd Sunday of Advent) 9:30 am
- December 18 (4th Sunday of Advent) 9:30 am
- December 21 (Blue Christmas service-online only) 6:30pm
- December 24 (Christmas Eve Candlelight Service) **4:00pm**
- December 25 (Online only)-viewable by 6:00 am
- January 1 (Online only) 9:30 am

*PLEASE NOTE: Christmas Day and New Year's Day will be ONLY ONLINE due to the holidays. Unless otherwise noted, all other services will be in-person and online. We will resume regular in-person worship on January 8, 2023.*

## Blood Drive

Cross Roads is hosting another Red Cross Blood Drive! On Wednesday, December 14, from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm. in the Fellowship Hall.

What do we need from the congregation? Two things:

1) If you able to give blood, go the Red Cross website and put in your zip code to find our blood drive. Then sign up! You can also call 1-800-RED-CROSS to sign up. We need to have at least 30 people registered to give blood in order for the Red Cross to hold the blood drive.



2) We still need some volunteers for the 5-7 shift to work the check-in desk.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Jenny Daby at (320) 470-0518 or jennydaby5@gmail.com, or you can contact the church office or Pastor Leslie.

## Administrative Board Meeting

Admin Team will be meeting on THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, not on Wednesday, December 14 as originally scheduled. The meeting will start at 6:30 pm. The focus primarily will be determining a process to establish and/or review policies for the church.



## The Cross Roads Mission

To help everyone find joy in their journey by:

- Inviting everyone to walk with Jesus,
- Growing together as His disciples, 2
- Serving others we meet along the way
- And Joyfully Celebrating the Journey

## Administrative Team Notes

### THE SEASON OF JOY

The calendar and our church's fiscal year will come to a close at the end of December--so what has the Admin Team been up to?

The Admin Team is now meeting monthly. In December/January, our focus will be pulling together church policies (existing and those needed). Doing on-line only services on the December 25 and January 1 Sundays was approved. The 2023 pastoral salary was approved at the November 17 Charge Conference. Our 2023 budget is done. (A letter will be issued to everyone about the budget, but suffice it to say we are on track to finish the year in the red. In December, red means Santa Clause and holly berries but when it comes to budgets, red means our expenses have exceeded our giving.) There are plans to have more conversations about stewardship and discipleship in early 2023 so stay tuned.

But December is more than a discussion about the "nuts and bolts" of church administration! Last Sunday was the first Sunday of the Advent season and several people mentioned how heartwarming and exciting it was. Many of you know I have a young dog named Yeti. I was playing with him outside recently and he would scoop up his tennis ball, toss it in the deepest snow he could find, pounce on it, bury it in snow, dig it up and toss it, and start all over again. The absolute joy with which he played in the snow brought a smile to my face and a smile to my face. Joy. It's a wonderous thing and this is definitely the time of the year when I hope that everyone's hearts are filling up with joy, and joy is fueling a huge smile on your face! As our hearts fill with joy as we prepare for Christmas, may it spill over into generosity and sharing our blessings with others!

My favorite verse of the Christmas story comes from Luke 2:10: But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."

And there's that word again--Joy. We have so much to be grateful for and so much to bring us joy this Advent season whether it's the Bless a Home project, the Bloodmobile, sharing Christmas cookies with nursing home residents, decorating the sanctuary and church for Christmas, serving the community at Tuesday's Table or just worshipping together in preparation for the birth of Jesus.

Joy. It's all around us and it's contagious. Go catch some!

Pat Solheid

Admin Team Chair

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### Thank You!

I want to thank everyone who donated candles for the homeless charity in the Twin Cities. I delivered TWO BOXES of candles to my sister who will pass them on to Walking With a Purpose ([walkingwithapurpose.org](http://walkingwithapurpose.org)). The charity distributes items directly to the homeless population in the Twin Cities (food, blankets, clothing, shoes, socks, candles, etc.). As it says in Matthew 25:40: The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Thanks be to God and thanks be to you!

Pat Solheid

### December Birthdays

Barb Gerdes 1st  
Judy Kluver 2nd  
Cera Finney 3rd  
Kay Ruhl 7th  
Tom Smith 8th  
Dustin Pflipsen 9th  
Briella Kennedy 12th  
Mae Barker 18th  
Bob Erickson 19th  
David Evermann 19th

Carson Smith 22nd  
Ashley Massmann 28th  
Daryl Hoogeveen 30th  
Bonnie Hoogeveen 30th  
Annette Muetzel 30th

### Dec Anniversaries

Don & Leslie Zeek—23rd

*If we have missed your special day, please let the office know.*

### YMCA Passes

The YMCA in Willmar is a great asset for our entire area. Of course, there's the fitness center located in Willmar, with weight machines and a walking track. The Y offers a variety of fitness classes and has programming for senior citizens. The Y is one of the largest providers of childcare in the area with a center in Spicer and in Willmar, plus it provides summer day camp and after school care. The pandemic was hard on many organizations and the Y is no exception. The Y is striving to build back membership so it can continue to be a premiere contributor to the local area in many areas. If you're not a Y member but you'd like a guest pass to try out the facility to see if you'd like to join, please contact Pat Solheid ([psolheid@tds.net](mailto:psolheid@tds.net)) and she'll get you one.





Cross Roads Community  
United Methodist Church

3400 113th Ave NE  
Spicer, MN 56288

320-796-2339  
[www.crossroadsspicer.com](http://www.crossroadsspicer.com)

December 2022

Christian radio stations in the area:

K-Love 90.9

KTIS 92.7 & 98.5

Spirit 92.9

