

THE SANCTUARY

DECEMBER 2025

DECEMBER: GOD COMES CLOSE

As we enter the season of Advent, we once again hear the invitation: “*Prepare Him Room.*” Advent is a time of holy expectation. It is four weeks when we make space in our hearts, our homes, and our community for God’s light to be born again. This year, our church is leaning deeply into this theme, exploring what it means to create room for hope, peace, joy, and love in a world that often feels crowded with noise and hurry.

Advent Stations in the Sanctuary

Throughout December, our sanctuary will include four interactive Advent stations—one for each theme of the season. These stations are designed for all ages and offer a gentle way to slow down, pray, reflect, and prepare room for Christ in new and meaningful ways. Visit them before worship, after worship, or anytime you need a moment of quiet in the midst of December’s rush. These stations invite us into stillness, mindfulness, and anticipation as we journey toward Christmas.

The Season of Christmas

It’s easy to think Christmas ends on December 25, but in the Christian tradition, Christmas begins on Christmas Day. The twelve days of Christmas carry us from the manger to the threshold of Epiphany, inviting us to dwell a little longer with wonder, tenderness, and light. This year, may we allow the joy of Christmas to unfold slowly, keeping space in our hearts for the mystery of Emmanuel—God with us.

Making Room Together

As a church community, we are preparing room not just for a story from long ago, but for the living Christ who continues to be born in generosity, justice, neighborliness, and hope. May this Advent season draw us closer to God and to one another as we prepare room, within ourselves and within our world, for love to take root.

Blessings to you in this beautiful season of waiting and wonder.

-Jill Sanderson

Director of Ministry & Education

CALENDAR

Sunday worship begins weekly at 10 AM. Childcare is available.

12/7 - Hanging of the Greens

12/8 - Church Council
7 PM

12/20
9 AM: Christmas Pageant Rehearsal
4 PM: *The Sound of Peace* Interfaith Concert

12/21 Christmas Program & Celebration of Tiff and Lynn Bates

12/24 - Christmas Eve
4 PM - Fellowship
4:30 PM - Candlelight Service

12/25 - Christmas Day
NO Worship Service

12/28 - Carols & Hymn Sing

WORSHIP VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

*Thank you to all of
our volunteers!*

12/7

Liturgist: Lynn Bates
Steward: Tammy
Campbell

12/14

Liturgist: Connie
Wiersma
Steward: Tracy Tronnes

12/21

Liturgist: Leia Maves
Steward: Krista Kim

12/24

Liturgist: Bavery/Thies

12/28

Liturgist: Reilly Family
Steward: Krista Kim

GUEST PASTOR LINEUP: JANUARY

4 - Barbara Wells
11 - Kathleen Remund
18 - Shelby Jeidy
25 - Associate
Conference Minister
Rachel Bauman

FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR TIFF

For Churches, the Christian calendar starts on the first Sunday of Advent which this year is on November 30th. This tradition goes way back in time as church leaders wanted the birthday of Jesus to be significant not only to Christians but to the rest of the world as well. Thus, the Christian year begins four Sundays before Christmas but the actual date changes each year. The same is true for Easter which can move around as much as 28 days. Personally, I like the years when Advent begins in December, not right on top of Thanksgiving.

Advent is one of those special seasons that takes on a variety of meanings and interpretations. On the surface it would appear to be a season of celebration and joy. It's the period of counting down the days until the birth of Jesus. It is kind of like the countdown for the liftoff of a rocket ship. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, ONE CHRISTMAS!!!

As the days go by the anticipation grows stronger and the excitement mounts. For children, it's right up there with their birthday, "Mom, how many more days till Christmas?" On top of all the religious traditions, the business world starts the countdown by early October. For many shop owners, the Christmas season is make or break for their bottom line.

But before we get the tree decorated, we need to review the darker side of the Advent season. Before we do jumping-jacks in front of the altar of God. We need to remind ourselves of how the story of Jesus ends up. Christmas and Easter are the bookmarks for the life of Jesus and in between were many trials and hard times. Jesus came into the world to share the love of God with all the nations but not everyone got the message. Even though his ministry brought hope and healing in all the villages that he visited, there was a gang in the back room planning his demise. The scriptures we read during Advent present the good news of God coming down to earth in the person of Jesus and a warning of the trials ahead for God's chosen messenger.

As we gather around a church full of symbols of hope and goodwill, may we remember the poor, the lost, the lonely, the homeless, the sick, and those left behind. May God empower us as individuals and as a faith community to celebrate the coming of Christ into our lives and to challenge us to greater discipleship. We are the carriers of the flame of hope, peace, love and joy. Let's remember this as we light a new candle each week.

Pastor Tiff

SPECIAL MUSICAL EVENT:

The Sound of Peace

The holidays invite us to lift up light, hope, generosity and care for those in need. In that spirit, we are honored to present a special musical event featuring musicians from around the world and different faith traditions.

“The Sound of Peace” is a free-will offering event, welcoming everyone to give as they are able. Proceeds will support Open Doors for Refugees, a volunteer-driven organization dedicated to helping refugees build a home in the Madison area.

We hope you join us as we celebrate the universal values that unite all faith traditions: compassion, mercy, the wish for peace and the call to love our neighbors.

FREE WILL OFFERING

The Sound of Peace

AN INTERFAITH CELEBRATION OF
MUSIC FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Proceeds benefit Open Doors for Refugees

SATURDAY
12.20.25
4 - 5 pm

FEATURING MUSIC BY
Jose Rendon
Tani Diakate
Fareed Haque
Wanees Zarour
Saraswathi Ranganathan

EDGERTON CONGREGATIONAL UCC
114 N. HENRY ST.
EDGERTON, WI 53534

OPEN DOORS FOR REFUGEES COALITION  

NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

- The worship life team, ECUCC's care ministry is looking for two people that would be willing to join the team to help with communion and special worship services. An average of one hour per month to assist with the serving of communion would greatly contribute to the team! Contact Mary Lou Behring at 608-290-4831 to volunteer.
- The holiday season is a busy season for “phishing” scams via email. We want to remind everyone that no member of our leadership team will ever solicit money online, and it is good practice to refrain from opening attachments and check the “sent from” address on any suspicious email messages. Please report any phishing attempts to the office as soon as possible upon receipt.
- As we prepare to say goodbye to Pastor Tiff in his current role as Interim Minister later this month, please take a moment to read the FAQ's from Moderator Krista Kim attached in this newsletter. We are looking forward to celebrating Tiff & Lynn Bates on December 21st with special guest Associate Conference Minister Rachel Bauman.
- Office hours will continue to be 10 AM to 12 PM on Thursdays unless otherwise noted. Pastor Tiff may be contacted at anytime via revtiffbates@gmail.com for pastoral care or pastoral needs.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

This month the Sunday School children will be learning about the season of Advent, practicing Christmas songs, and preparing for the busy Christmas season. The Christmas Pageant and Play will take place on Sunday, December 21. A rehearsal will be held on Saturday, December 20 at 9:30 AM.

PASTORAL TRANSITION FAQ'S:

FROM CHURCH MODERATOR KRISTA KIM

What happens in January when Pastor Tiff ends his interim work with us?

We will approach worship in a similar manner as we have in years passed when we did not have a minister. We will utilize the guest clergy from the “pulpit supply” listed in our conference as well as look to some lay leadership/guest speakers to round out our worship schedule.

Will we see Tiff and Lynn?

YES! We are excited that they will be joining us as members, and we will be celebrating their membership at a date to be announced soon. In addition, Rev. Rachel Bauman will join us for our Christmas Program (Dec 21) and oversee the official release/ending of Tiff's ministry.

Who will provide pastoral care in January?

Tiff has offered to provide pastoral care on an as-needed basis, and he would be compensated for this on an hourly basis. Examples include presiding over a funeral, hospital visits, etc.

Are we still searching for minister?

Yes, our church profile is still open. As we increase training and education opportunities for church members, we will be able to update our church profile to show this. The Search Committee learned that strong church leadership and paid positions that help with program coordination make a church more attractive to clergy who might be searching for a part time position. We will keep our profile open and in June 2026, we have the opportunity to revisit and adjust it as we'd like. Rev. Rachel Bauman will continue to provide valuable insight at the conference level.

Why are there so few ministers looking for jobs?

Across denominations, there are less students in seminary due to the demands of the job paired with (often) inadequate compensation. There are less people in society interested in attending mainstream Christian churches. People are finding alternative ways to fill spiritual needs and/or seek theological education in more individualized formats.

Will worship format change?

Not really. We will still worship together on Sundays at 10:00am. Our bulletin will look the same and we will continue to follow the liturgical calendar and read from the common lectionary. Currently we still plan on having communion the first Sunday of each month.

Will Tiff ever be one of our guest ministers?

Maybe! For the first 6 months of 2026, we will let Tiff enjoy his new role as church member. If Tiff is interested, he might eventually choose to join our pulpit supply list.

ONLINE GIVING

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BIRTHDAYS

- 6 - Matt Thies
- 7 - Dan Granger
- 9 - John Norland
- 10 - Doug Cutting
- 11- Devin Crumbliss
- 17 - Josephine Navarro
- 20 - Holly Gould

WEATHER-RELATED REMINDERS

In the event of unsafe road conditions or weather leading to the cancellation of a Sunday service, an email will be sent to all members in our email database. We are grateful to our member volunteers who make phone calls to folks who may not receive an email! If you would like a phone call in the event of cancellation, please let the office know.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to our new Sunday Stewards who continue to help our church run smoothly. As always, we are grateful for every person who participates in planning, presence and prayer.

In particular, we would like to thank all of our members and friends who assisted with November's stewardship potluck and the spaghetti dinner to benefit JAMS!

PRAYERS

As a reminder, you may use a prayer request slip located in the sanctuary or contact Pastor Tiff if you'd like to request prayers for yourself a loved one.

"Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you."

-St. Augustine

Thank you for reading! If you would like your newsletters delivered to your home address, please reach out to officeecucc@gmail.com

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Moderator: Krista Kim - rigertkim@gmail.com
Interim Pastor: Tiff Bates - revtiffbates@gmail.com
Ministry/Education: Jill Sanderson - jillesanderson@gmail.com
Vice-Moderator/Treasurer: Tracty Tronnes - tntronnes@nylumber.com
Worship Life: Mary Lou Behring - hairchair@yahoo.com
Trustees: Bruce Morris - brucem929@gmail.com

CONTACT

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CHURCH COUNCIL

Sunday, October 5 2025

PRESENT: Rev. Tiff, Krista Kim, Jill Sanderson, Tracy Tronnes, Bruce Morris via phone, Mary Lou Behring and Kathleen Matson. Krista called the meeting to order. Tiff led us in prayer. The minutes from Sept 8th were reviewed. Tracy made a motion to approve them as written. Bruce seconded it. Minutes were approved.

MINISTERS REPORT: Rally Day went well. We are enjoying our confirmation kids. Tiff stated he would help with the worship (communion) on Oct 5 as Krista will be giving the message. He will also preach Oct. 19, Nov. 9 and 16th, and Dec. 7 and 14th. The Christmas pageant will be Dec. 21 during worship. Lynn is working on costumes. He stated he is in hopes of getting a holiday choir put together to sing a few times during Advent and Christmas.

COMMUNICATIONS/ADMIN: Pledge cards as well as time and talent sheets will be sent out the end of Oct. Stewardship will begin on Nov. 2 with Tracy Tronnes leading the service. Stewardship will continue the 9th and the 16th with a chili dinner to follow worship on the 16th. Kathleen stated that a mailing will be going out soon with a church calendar for the rest of the year. There will also be a letter designed to explain that our search committee is still in place as Tiff is getting closer to his retirement and how we plan to move forward with our planned themes and guest ministers. Communion will remain the first Sunday of the month when possible.

MINISTRY ENGAGEMENT: Jill stated that all Sundays are planned through Dec. She is planning a spaghetti dinner to raise funds for our JAMS obligation. This will be held on Nov. 14. The Jazz band from the high school will be entertaining as people dine. A free will offering will be asked. Time to be announced. Jill shared that her lay ministry class this semester is CHRISTOLOGY. She must write a paper for this! Maybe with some luck we will get to hear it. Jill and Connie Tronnes are hosting a "Parents night out" on Friday Oct. 17. During Advent Jill is planning Advent stations each Sunday. It will be a different one each week. Blue Christmas will be held again this year on Dec. 20 at 4:00. Christmas eve will be held at 4:00 or 4:30 TBA.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully,
Mary Lou Behring