



December 2023

906 N 1st St, Groton, SD 57445

## ...Pastor Rob's Ponderings

Have I ever told you I enjoy Christmas music? I like it so much you could catch me in June listening to "Joy to the World" as I'm watching a baseball game. I enjoy Christmas music so much I bought a speaker so I could listen to my Christmas music on my noisy school bus route in the mornings.

I've built a playlist of all sorts of Christmas music. If I hear something in a movie, on a TV show, in a store, or recommended on radio, I'll add it to my playlist. Over the years, I've added "standards" like Bing Crosby's White Christmas and Frank Sinatra's "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." I was introduced to Mannheim Steamroller's Christmas albums by a good friend. And I added music I've heard walking in Walt Disney World in December (Why do you think I keep taking a week in December to do something with Disney? I love the music!). I will never forget the reaction from my Mom who asked me who was singing, "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," one day and I told her it was the group, Barenaked Ladies. Haha!

While in seminary, I was indoctrinated with the idea of strictly following the church calendar. I was



taught, "You only sing Advent music during Advent – the four weeks before Christmas and then you can sing Christmas carols." When I arrived at my first pastorate, I tried following this teaching but was loudly told, "We want Christmas music in December!" My first year there I was stubborn and refused to give in but by my second year I had softened my reasoning to, "These simple folks just don't get it." By my second pastorate, I was the one experiencing a change of heart and mind.

Consider the classic, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (sung in my playlist by that great Christian group, Straight No Chaser). I wonder how many people know it is a "Methodist

Hymn" when they sing this Christmas carol written by Charles Wesley, the co-founder of the Methodist Movement?? Like all his hymns, Wesley writes what he believes using the songs to teach Christian beliefs to the people singing them.

In the first verse, Wesley quickly uses the phrase, "God and sinners reconciled" to explain the purpose of the newborn King. In the second verse, the words, "Christ, the everlasting Lord" and "Veiled in flesh the God-head see" tell us who Jesus is. And in the third verse, Wesley describes Easter by writing, "Risen with healing in his wings." Who would ever guess there's so much in this carol?

So you might get tired

of Christmas music starting in October; you might even shake your heads at those of us listening to the stuff in August. I would like to offer some advice, "Think about the words you're hearing. Ponder them." Yes, there is something silly to listening to "Jingle Bells" or "Dashing through the Snow" in July. So try out "Hark! The Herald Angels" or even "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" Think about the message.

I might just convert you into a "Summer Christmas music listener!"

## OFFICE HOURS



Pastor Rob  
In Office  
Tuesday &  
Wednesday  
Mornings

Monday  
Day Off

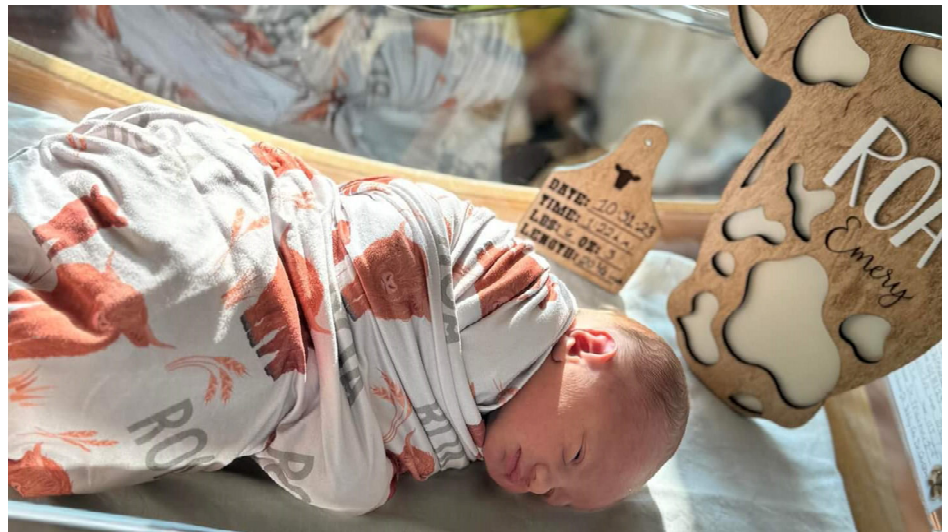


# Groton Sunday School Christmas Program

The Sunday school children will be presenting a Christmas musical called "A Shepherd's Story" on Sunday, December 17 at 10:30 a.m. The Shepherds, keepers of sheep, will tell the story of meeting the greatest Shepherd of all – Jesus! Come join us as we celebrate the real story of Christmas. We will continue the celebration with a lunch following the program. All are welcome!



Jedd and Jasmine (Schinkel) Groft  
Announce arrival of their son, Roa  
Emery. Born 10-31-23 6lbs 1oz.  
20 1/2" long.



Family of  
Alan Strom  
Died Nov 11, 2023



### Church Information

Pastor Rob Moorlach  
Office Phone 605-397-8270  
Parsonage Phone 605-397-4538

Pastor Email: [pastorrob@nvc.net](mailto:pastorrob@nvc.net)  
Secretary Email: [grotonumc@nvc.net](mailto:grotonumc@nvc.net)  
Website: [www.grotonumc.org](http://www.grotonumc.org)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/grotonsdumc/](https://facebook.com/grotonsdumc/)  
906 N 1st St Groton, SD 57445



**Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 11 am**

at the Groton United Methodist Church

*Light Meal will follow the service*

Hosted by the Tuesday 10 AM Bible Study – J.O.Y. Group  
Everyone is Welcome!

Please RSVP to the church office or a Bible Study Attendee



## Decorating the church for Christmas

Many churches invite their members to help prepare the church for Advent and Christmas. Some call the event the “Hanging of the Greens.” Pine or fir branches, holly, pine cones, candles, colorful cloths or ribbons and an Advent wreath are used for decorations. A tree with Chrismons hanging on it is often placed somewhere in the sanctuary. Some churches add a new decoration to the sanctuary each week dur-

ing the season.

The custom of displaying a Nativity scene in the chancel dates from the early 1600s. The tradition started in Germany.

It is thought that the first live Nativity scene — in which live animals and people representing shepherds and wise men gathered at an outdoor manger — began with St. Francis of Assisi around the year 1220.





*Christmas Eve*

Conde UMC 5:00 pm  
Groton UMC 7:00 pm

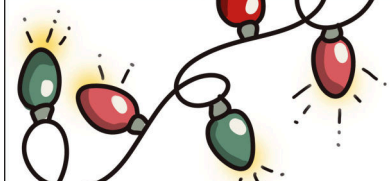
# Table Talk

Hello, we would like to take the opportunity to tell you about an exciting, weekly gathering for high school age youth in Groton. For the past 9 years, around 50-75 students have met to enjoy a meal together, and be fed spiritually during their routine school day. We call ourselves Table Talks and we gather at St. John's Lutheran Church to hear about the Truth of God's word. As well as fellowship around a hot meal generously prepared by volunteers. There is no cost to the students. Speakers have selflessly given of their time to share how the Truth

can be lived out daily in their life and share their faith journey.

If you feel called to support Table Talks with a gift of your time, talents, or resources, we would be extremely grateful. We would love to have you to share your faith story, donate a meal, bars/cookies, or paper products. We ask that you keep these youth in your prayers and that the seeds that are planted will grow. For more information, please contact Pam Rix 605-377-3297 or Becky Hunter at 605-216-3075.

God Bless

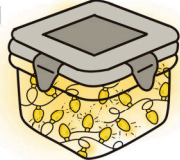


## LIGHT-UP BOX

Christmas lights remind us that Jesus shines in the darkness. Here's a fun way to play with holiday lights.

**What you need:**

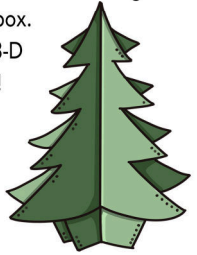
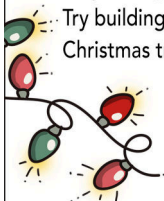
- A strand of Christmas lights
- A large clear plastic container and lid
- Green tissue paper
- Colorful beads



**What you do:**

1. Plug in the lights and place them in the container.
2. Put on the lid. (If the lid isn't transparent, flip the box over.)
3. Play with your light box, using these ideas as starters:
  - Cut tissue paper into triangles and arrange them in a tree shape. Decorate the tree with colorful beads.
  - Use the light box for tracing. Place a picture on it, with a clean sheet of paper on top. Then trace the drawing.
  - Use magnet tiles to build designs atop the light box.

Try building a 3-D Christmas tree!

## Our Church Celebrations...

### Groton

- Dec 2 Meri Erickson
- Dec 3 Anthony Sippel  
Edison Foltz
- Dec 4 Darlys Kampa
- Dec 7 Morgan McNickle
- Dec 9 Doris Anderson  
Wesley Morehouse  
Brooklyn Gilbert
- Dec 10 Jim Zeck
- Dec 13 Melissa Gilbert
- Dec 15 Marjae Schinkel
- Dec 16 Dan Schinkel  
Sage Mortenson
- Dec 18 Dylan Hanson  
Michaela Oleson
- Dec 20 Lon & Marva Gellhaus
- Dec 21 McKenna Tietz  
Bo Fliehs  
Kent Webb
- Dec 22 John Padfield
- Dec 23 Marc & Fran Sippel
- Dec 27 Karla Pasteur  
Emily Overacker
- Dec 28 Jaden Dobbins
- Dec 29 Andrea Davidson
- Dec 30 Alec Oleson  
Alex Graf

### Conde

- Dec 1 Betty Haskell
- Dec 4 Greg & Stacey Bonn
- Dec 27 Richard & Dorothy Sanderson

### Conde MISSION STATEMENT

“The Conde United Methodist Church is seeking to satisfy the spiritual and physical needs of all.”

### Don't miss out!

In his poem “The Inn That Missed Its Chance,” Amos R. Wells writes from the perspective of the “fairly crazed” innkeeper who recalls Bethlehem becoming “a hive at swarming-time.” Of the couple who requested shelter on what became Christmas Eve, the proprietor asks, “Could I know that they were so important?”

There was a sign, they say, a heavenly light  
resplendent; but I had no time for stars.  
And there were songs of angels in the air  
out on the hills; but how was I to hear  
amid the thousand clamors of an inn?

If the innkeeper had only known Jesus’ true identity, he says, he would have turned the place upside down, sending other guests out to the stables instead. When Jesus returns — “as he will surely come” — the anonymous innkeeper wants everyone to know: “Tell my Lord that all my inn is his, to make amends.”



**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS  
& ANNIVERSARIES**



**CELEBRATING**

**100**

**WONDERFUL  
YEARS**

Please Join Us For A Birthday Party In Honor Of

*Elda Stange*

December	St John's Lutheran Church
9	308 n 2nd st. Groton, SD
1-3:00	RSVP Text or call Connie Rose 804-301-7480

## Groton Ad Council—Nov

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, AM Mitchell. Those in attendance were Pastor Rob Moorlach, Roger Rix, Allen Walter, Lon Gellhaus, Carna Atherton Pray, AM Mitchell, and Jeanne Wanous. Pastor Rob shared a prayer prior to the opening of the business discussion.

The agenda was approved on a motion from Allen Walter.

The previous meeting minutes were approved on a motion from Lon Gellhaus.

Correspondence: none

**Committee Reports:**

Membership: No update.

**Trustees:**

No report.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Church Treasurer-Anita Lowary: No verbal report. The printed report was available.

Financial Secretary-Allen Walter: Allen motioned to put net proceeds from the for 2022 & 2023 Fall Dinner into the Building Fund. The motion passed unanimously.

The Nominations committee has a task force assigned to select a new treasurer.

Pastor Parish-Meri Erickson: no report.

**Bills to be Presented:** none

**Administrative Report:**

Pastor Rob will be taking a vacation soon and Carna Atherton-Pray & Dale Kramer will be covering. The nominations committee is working on restructuring our hospitality/membership team. Pastor Rob will soon be scheduling a confirmation meeting with 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents, with classes scheduled to begin in January, 2024.

**Old Business:**

CPR Classes: Carna noted that she is still working on scheduling training classes and explained that it is very hard to find a trainer.

**New Business:**

Children’s Christmas Program: Carna shared that the annual Christmas program will be held on Dec. 17. There will be a lunch served afterward and the Administrative Council has agreed to help with that lunch. Carna & Merri Erickson will be chairing the event.  
December Ad Council Meeting: The council decided not to have a December meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Secretary,  
Jeanne Wanous

<b>Groton Stewardship Report Oct 2023</b>
Average Wkly Giving \$4,729
Needed Wkly for Church Mission \$2,393
Average Weekly Attendance Sunday 50
Total Building Fund Donations for Repairs \$5



## A season of relationship

For his Christmas album *Milk & Cookies*, worship leader David Crowder wanted to focus on the relationship aspect of the holidays and the mixed emotions involved. Deaths of loved ones, absence from home or having “no home to get back to,” he says, can wrap sadness into what’s supposed to be a joyful season.

Yet pain and separation perfectly mirror the meaning of Christmas, according to Crowder. “It’s about the created being at a distance from their Maker and ... God making a way back into communion with [them].” He adds, “I feel like most of the stuff that we experience around the season points to what is the miraculous — that there was the best gift ever given, and it was to make a way back into relationship with our Creator.”





December 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## *Our Church Happenings...*

- Dec 1 Groton Angel Tree is up in the fellowship hall with cards
- Dec 3 1st Sunday of Advent
- Dec 4 Groton Hanging of the Greens Service 11:00 am by Bible Study
- Dec 6 Groton UMYF fulfilling Angel Tree gifts and Christmas party 6:30 pm
- Dec 10 2nd Sunday of Advent
- Dec 13 Groton Confirmation Meeting for Parents of 7-8 graders 6:30 pm
- Dec 17 3rd Sunday of Advent
- Dec 17 Groton Sunday School Christmas Pageant
- Dec 19 Groton Angel Tree Items due a church for delivery
- Dec 24 4th Sunday of Advent

## **Dec 24 Christmas Eve Service**

**Conde 5 pm and Groton 7 pm**