



December 2019

906 N 1st St, Groton, SD 57445

...from Pastor Brandon

Hello Church Family,

In 1741, John Wesley preached his famous sermon titled "The Almost Christian" in which he encouraged people to follow Christ wholeheartedly. We should not be satisfied with the basics of Christian living or in Wesley's terms, being "almost" Christian. Instead we should strive towards wholehearted faith and trust and action in Jesus, being an "altogether" Christian.

In Almost Christmas, our Advent series for this year, we will explore how we can make the same commitment to Christ during Advent, connecting our Wesleyan heritage with the traditional Advent themes of Love, Hope, Joy, and Peace.

We will tackle the barriers that prevent each of us from experiencing an "altogether" love, hope, joy, and peace in Christ. We will highlight the promises God offers to us that makes those longings a reality, inviting us to claim those promises for ourselves this Advent and celebrate an altogether Christmas.



Advent is a season of preparation, not just for the day we sit around our trees and offer gifts to one another, but preparation to hand ourselves wholly to God's very own son... sent in the form of a baby... who came to deliver us into the hands of our Father. I invite each of you to explore and be praying through each of the questions on page 2, 1 each day leading up to Christmas Day, taken from Wesley's memorable sermon. Consider how God may be leading you in a steady movement from an "almost" faith to an "altogether" one with a fresh arrival of Jesus Christ our savior.

Also, if you are not connected to the Groton UMC Facebook page look us up and like it! I will be posting reflections and Hymn Reflections that correspond with the Calendar below to help assist in your devotionals.

If you are interested in joining one of our small groups, we will be meeting on Mondays at 6:30pm at Groton UMC, and 6:30pm on Tuesdays at Conde UMC.

Pastor Brandon Dunham



And he went and lived in a city called **Nazareth**, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled.

—Matthew 2:23, ESV



Pastor  
In Office  
Tuesday &  
Thursday  
Mornings

Friday  
Day Off

Day 1	Do I so far practice justice, mercy, and truth, as the world requires?
2	Do I appear on the outside to be a Christian?
3	Do I practice godly behavior?
4	Do I refrain from doing evil things, as is described in the Bible?
5	Do I do good with all my might?
6	Do I seriously follow God’s commandments whenever I can?
7	<i>Hymn Reflection: Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus (Will be on Groton UMC Facebook!)</i>
8	Do I do everything with a sincere plan and desire to please God in every way?
9	Am I, at the very least, observing the qualities of an “almost” Christian according to John Wesley?
10	Am I willing to go a step further and be an “altogether” Christian?
11	Is the love of God shed abroad my heart?
12	Can I cry out, “My God, and my All”?
13	Do I desire nothing but God?
14	<i>Hymn Reflection: Peace upon earth be restored (Will be on Groton UMC Facebook!)</i>
15	Am I happy in God?
16	Is God my glory, my delight, and my source of joy?
17	Is this commandment written on my heart: “That he who loves God loves others also”?
18	Do I love my neighbor as myself?
19	Do I love everyone, even my enemies, even the enemies of God, as my own soul?
20	Do I love others as Christ loved me?
21	<i>Hymn Reflection: And God Himself is born!” (Will be on Groton UMC Facebook!)</i>
22	Do I believe that Christ loved me and gave himself for me?
23	Do I have faith in Christ’s blood?
24	Do I believe that Jesus has taken away my sins and cast them as a stone into the depth of the sea?
25	Hymn Reflection: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



## Thank You

We would like to thank everyone who helped with the fall dinner, either by donation of money, delicious desserts and pies, made posters and all the advertising, help work wherever needed. The youth group for their help. We appreciate all the work.

Blessings to all,  
The Fall Dinner Committee

### Church Information

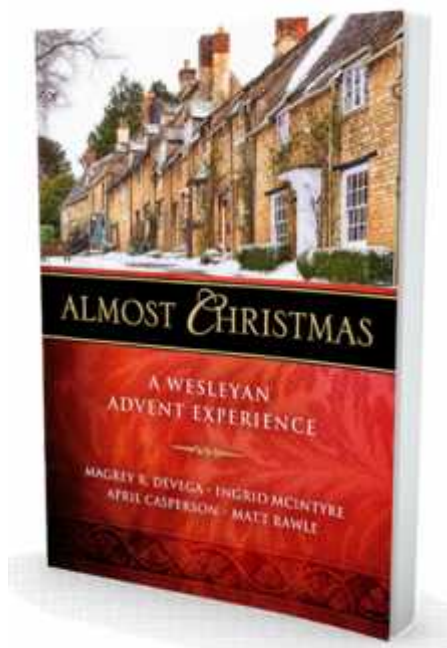
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906 N 1st St Groton, SD 57445

## Advent Sermon Series

In *Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience*, author and pastor Magrey deVega leads a group of authors including Matt Rawle, April Casperson, and Ingrid McIntyer in exploring how we can make a whole-hearted commitment to Christ during Advent, and connect our Wesleyan heritage with the traditional Advent themes of Love, Hope, Joy, and Peace.

If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the book to follow along, please notify Pastor Brandon Dunham and we'll get you connected with a copy.



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

## What's Pastor Reading?

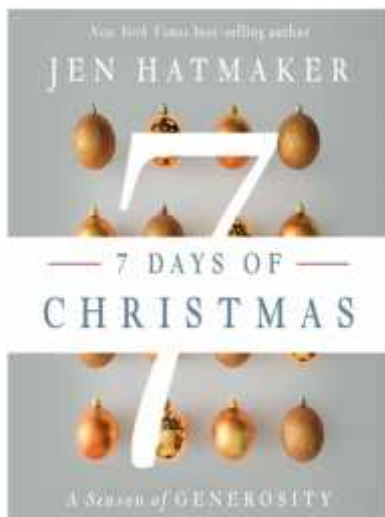
Last month, as I was scanning Cokesbury.com for my next good read, I found this massive banner across the top of my screen showcasing Jen Hatmaker's new book, “7 Days of Christmas- A Season of Generosity”.

Instantly I was gripped by the title and cover, as my Christmas loving heart was so eager to wake again, and I placed my order. But what I came to find was a book unlike what I had expected.

Inspired by her breakout book “7”, Hatmaker highlights 7 categories: kitchen, fashion, stuff, streaming, tossing, spending, and stressing. 7 areas of her life she recognized she could find more peace.

“7 Days of Christmas” is full of stories, scripture, quotes, and ideas, encouraging readers toward a little less hustle and busyness in exchange for a little more family, laughter, and generosity this Christmas.

I personally loved reading Hatmaker's words as I imagined the future holiday traditions our young family will create and focusing those efforts towards not just entertainment for ourselves, but ultimately loving God and one another. If you are looking for a quick and easy read this holiday season, I would highly recommend.



December 22



## Groton Trunk or Treat



## All Saints Sunday



### The Sacred in Everyday

All of the places of our lives are sanctuaries; some of them just happen to have steeples. And all of the people in our lives are saints; it is just that some of them have day jobs and most will never have feast days named for them.

—Robert Benson, *Between the Dreaming and the Coming True*

# Groton UMW Christmas Celebration

December 19th at 11 am the Groton UMW will be arranging plates and cans of cookies, candy, and snacks to be delivered around to various service people. We encourage all UMW Members to please help us by contributing baked Christmas items individually wrapped. Please have them at the church before 11 am on Dec 19th.

Following the assembling of Christmas Goodies, we will have a UMW Christmas Luncheon at Olde Bank & Café at 12:30 pm. Please RSVP to Gloria Pharis if you will be joining us.



## “Be born in us today”

In 1865, Phillips Brooks, an Episcopal preacher from Boston, went on a Holy Land pilgrimage. Riding horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem for Christmas Eve worship at the Church of the Nativity was so moving that he wrote “O Little Town of Bethlehem.” The hymn’s final stanza addresses the town’s most famous newborn:

*O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

# Puzzle!

Unscramble the Christmas-themed words below, writing each extra letter on the blank to the right. Then place those extra letters in the correct spots below to discover what we receive at Christmas.



1. TGLBEHHEME \_\_\_\_\_
2. NEAGLO \_\_\_\_\_
3. NRMEDAG \_\_\_\_\_
4. ODEKSNY \_\_\_\_\_
5. AMGYR \_\_\_\_\_
6. OHESJIP \_\_\_\_\_
7. EFJUSS \_\_\_\_\_
8. ITEENMSW \_\_\_\_\_
9. SPHDSREEO \_\_\_\_\_
10. EMCFAL \_\_\_\_\_
11. TLSRA \_\_\_\_\_
12. CSSNUEO \_\_\_\_\_
13. HEVSPE \_\_\_\_\_
14. ENIN \_\_\_\_\_

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9		10		11		12	
13		14					

Answers: Bethlehem (C), angel (O), manger (D), donkey (S), Mary (G), Joseph (I), Jesus (F), wise men (T), shepherds (O), camel (F), star (L), census (O), sheep (V), inn (E); God's gift of love





## Wild Hope

What keeps the wild hope of Christmas alive year after year in a world notorious for dashing all hopes is the haunting dream that the child who was born that day may yet be born again even in us.

—Frederick Buechner



## Our Church Celebrations...

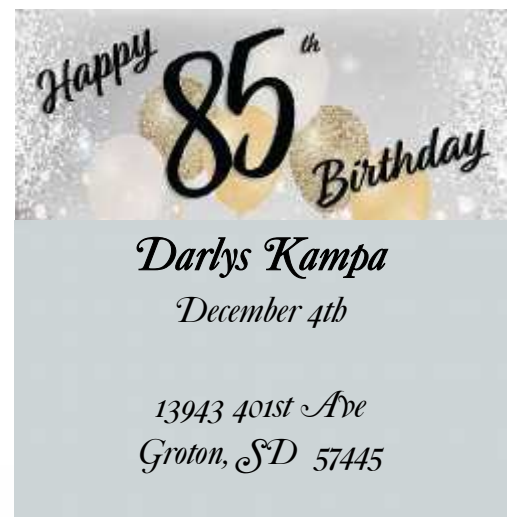
### Groton

- Dec 2 Meri Erickson
- Dec 3 Anthony Sippel  
Edison Foltz
- Dec 4 Darlys Kampa (85)
- Dec 7 Morgan McNickle
- Dec 9 Ann Rix  
Brooklyn Gilbert  
Wesley Morehouse
- Dec 10 Jim Zeck
- Dec 13 Melissa Gilbert
- Dec 15 Marjae Schinkel
- Dec 16 Dan Schinkel  
Sage Mortenson
- Dec 17 Alan Townsend  
**Pastor Brandon**
- Dec 18 Dylan Hanson  
Michaela Oleson
- Dec 20 Lon & Marva Gellhaus
- Dec 21 Bo Flieds  
Kent Webb  
McKenna Tietz

- Dec 22 John Padfield
- Dec 23 Marc & Fran Sippel
- Dec 27 Emily Overacker  
Jane Johnson  
Karla Pasteur
- Dec 28 Jaden Dobbins
- Dec 29 Andrea Davidson
- Dec 30 Alec Oleson  
Alex Graf

### Conde

- Dec 17 Pastor Brandon**
- Dec 20 Rex Taylor
- Dec 25 Larae Taylor



## The promise of the future

A nursing home resident who longed for fresh Georgia peaches discovered a pit overlooked in his serving of canned fruit. In an old coffee can, he planted the stone, which sprouted! The man gave the small tree to friends to plant. Years later, the peaches were so abundant the neighbors had to give some away.

Lila Docken Bauman recounts this story for the *Christian Century*, saying the man who took that gamble “did not live to see [it] grow into the tree that ultimately produced this harvest. But when he looked at that pit years ago he saw the promise of fresh fruit. ... ‘Who despises the day of small things?’ asks the prophet Zechariah. It’s in those small things that the promise of the future rests.”

Just so, some 2,000 years ago, in a small baby born in a tiny town —both seemingly inconsequential —rested “the promise of the future” —the salvation of the whole world.



## Groton Jan Family Committee

### Angela & Perryn Dobbins

### Harlan & Peggy Place

- ) Amber & Adrian Daly, Tyson
- ) Kay & Doug Daly
- ) Andrea & Scott Eisenbeisz
- ) Marva & Lon Gellhaus
- ) Jay & Linda Johnson
- ) Mendy & James Jones, Marlee, Austin
- ) Jessica & Brent Morehouse
- ) Mike & Joann Nehls
- ) Jaymie & Jesse Overacker, KayLynn
- ) Marjorie & Roger Overacker
- ) Alan Strom & Shelly Lerew
- ) Mark & June Thompson
- ) Jim & Judy Zeck

### Honorary Members

- ) Ann Rix
- ) Doris Strom
- ) Ruby Luce

### January Responsibilities

- ) Check Kitchen Supplies for the month

- ) Check & Clean Oven and Fridge as necessary
- ) Coffee Hour workers (make coffee, provide cookies, launder towels, and remove trash)
- ) 2 Ushers for each Sunday
- ) Straighten the Sanctuary Pews
- ) Change the banners as needed as per schedule in back of this book
- ) Maintain the Altar Flower Arrangements
- ) Shovel snow from doorways before Church
- ) Take down Christmas decorations with all church helping
- ) If tree lights need replacing, do so before putting them away
- ) Change decorations on tables in fellowship hall with the seasons

- ) Serve at Avantara Nursing Center - 4th Sunday
- ) Potluck 2nd Sunday - give church secretary details for bulletin

January 2020						
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	

Groton Stewardship Report Oct 2019
Average Wkly Giving \$2,143
Needed Wkly for Church Mission \$2,347
Average Weekly Attendance Sunday 72
Total Building Fund Donations for Repairs \$15



*Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him*







December 2019

December 2019						
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 First Sunday of Advent
- Dec 2 Groton Weekly Advent Study w/Pastor 6:30 pm
- Dec 3 Conde Weekly Advent Study w/Pastor 6:30 pm
- Dec 3 Conde Ad Council 5 pm
- Dec 4 Groton Youth Group & Confirmation Angel Tree Shopping 6 pm
- Dec 11 Youth Group Caroling at 6 pm
- Dec 15 Groton Sunday School Program 5 pm**
- Dec 19 Groton UMW Treat Can Assembly at 11 am  
Meeting for Lunch at Old Bank following at 12:30 pm
- Dec 24 Groton Christmas Eve Service 5 pm**  
**Conde Christmas Eve Service 7 pm**