

Fern Prairie United Methodist Church January-February 2026 Newsletter

Greetings and blessings to you all in the new year. Thank you to everyone that visited, participated, and volunteered in our many special services and celebrations throughout the Advent 2025 season.

We met new and old friends alike during Santa's visit on December 6th. It was heartwarming to see the joy on children's faces (along with cocoa and cookie crumb mustaches 😊).

We listened to moving songs and music coordinated by Brenda (thank you for your hard work and encouragement!). Caroling at Lacamas Creek Post Care and Acute, choir and solo performances, and instrumental selections added to a festive and faith-filled atmosphere.

We saw the decorations and candlelight during our services, Advent Wreath Meditations, and Christmas Eve-Eve evening service.

We smelled the holiday traditional baked goodies and spiced cider and appreciated those whose hands lovingly contributed.

But most of all, we felt the love shared by all of you and our mentor pastors. Please accept our continuing love and prayers and let us know how we can be of service to you.

<https://fernprairieunitedmethodist.org>

Link for online giving: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZA35>

STOLEN JESUS

Thefts have been somewhat routine in my life. Of course, I wasn't the thief but a victim of thefts— one terrifying home invasion robbery, two car break-ins, and two car theft attempts. These experiences were upsetting and costly. Of course, bank heists and art thefts are more expensive in terms of treasure, but even those seem petty compared to two attempted thefts in the New Testament.

The first burgle attempt involved King Herod. Herod was determined to remove any threats to his rule even if it was a child born to humble parents in Bethlehem. So he tried to solicit help from foreigners who were following a star that led to God's precious Son, Jesus. (We remember the event on Epiphany Sunday on Sunday, January 4.) Herod

asserted that he wanted to give tribute to the infant king. The wise men, of course, discerned Herod's ulterior plot so they refused to be his pawns.

On the other end of Jesus' life, some grieving women thought that his corpse was stolen. This seemed plausible since many plotted his death to steal the early Christians of their Messiah. And it was feasible that those who celebrated his death might have feared he had become a martyr and his tomb would become a shrine if his remains remained.

And so it seemed apparent that the women were robbed of merely giving Jesus' hastily buried body a proper and dignified burial. But Jesus would not let death rob them of hope, light and life. Neither Herod nor Pilate nor the religious leaders could defeat him or deny humankind of their Lord and Savior. Jesus is victorious even in death. Praise God.

But be aware— there are modern Jesus snatchers. I remember when our Washington State Capitol had a modest nativity. It was annually erected on the campus by a Christian group that was granted permission by state officials. Many Olympia residents were dismayed that it was occasionally vandalized and Jesus was frequently stolen. The culprits and thieves were never identified.

Though the criminals were not apprehended, I can name those who still wish to burgle Jesus. For instance, truth deniers, dismissers, naysayers, critics and the like try to purloin Him. Brokenness, sin, hurt, hardship and more can also be effective in nabbing Jesus from our unguarded hearts.

How do we safeguard ourselves from all the foes that aim to swipe our Lord? A robust faith. So may we deeply cherish the gift of God's precious child and tightly cling to our faith in a risen Christ. Let our convictions shield our hearts from anything or anyone that can rob us of our beliefs and hope we find in Jesus in 2026. — Pastor Don

Calender of upcoming events:

January

4- Kathy leads service

11- Marilyn leads service

18- Rev. Keith Hackett

***Holy Communion**

***council meeting following service**

25- Guest speaker, Doug Wood

February

1- Marilyn leads service

8- Surprise speaker

15- Music service/Valentine potluck

***17-** Shrove Tuesday

***18-** Ash Wednesday

22- Rev. Keith Hackett

*** Holy Communion**

***Please watch for additional information coming regarding specific dates and events marked in February!**