# RELIGION

### PASTOR'S COLUMN

## May you know the 'P's' of Advent



If you are reading this on Black Friday, then you have perhaps already digested a Thanksgiving feast. It seems that the Christmas season begins even before this week, with advertisements and store displays urging us to spend our money and time making the best possible Christmas

we can pull off in a few weeks.

By contrast, the season observed in many churches is Advent, and it begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas. That's two days from today. Advent means "coming," but the season itself is about waiting. Anticipation for the coming of

Christ. As a retired pastor, I remember that folks wanted to sing Christmas carols throughout December, but I did my best to hold them back. Why? Because waiting itself is a gift.

Ask any child in December (or at any time)

whether waiting is a gift, and I'm sure they will say no. They want their "real" gifts as soon as possible. But in the process, they are skipping the pleasure of anticipation and the gifts of waiting.

Waiting grants us the gifts of patience, pondering and practices that can make our Christmas observance better in the long run.

In a season that hardly looks like waiting with all its frenzy, we need to cultivate patience. This is the skill of noticing what is good in the moment instead of looking past the blessings of each day. It is a recognition that many aspects of life take time, and the results are better for it. We can give ourselves the gift of patience in Advent. It is rewarding to find that we can do this.

Pondering is another gift of waiting. It takes time to dwell with the stories and teachings of Scripture. Might it be a good idea to eliminate one or two expectations from your list, and allow yourself a few moments every day to pray and read the Bible? This is not only a gift to you, it is

a gift to the Christ Child, who comes to a heart that has made room for him.

Mary spent nine months awaiting the child who was to fulfill God's promise to the world. She was noted for "pondering" things not only then but also later in life.

Perhaps that is what made her the ideal candidate to be the Theotokos, the God-bearer to the world. Meditating on God's love and blessings can do the same for us as those who bear the gospel to those around us.

Advent is a time when practices of faith can turn our eyes away from all the frantic activity and back to the coming of the Lord. Whether it is a practice of giving to those in need, attending worship, sitting quietly with a loved one, or reading Advent devotions, these practices provide the consolation our hearts need.

I grew up with a tradition of lighting our own Advent wreath at home once a week and reading together as a family. I repeated this tradition with my own children from a young age. My son was only about four years old when he asked, "Are we going to do the candles again?" It was a special time for all of us through the years.

Another simple practice helped my young children observe Advent at their level. We set up the nativity scene, and I told them that every time they did a kind deed, they were preparing the manger — and their hearts — for the Christ child. With each act of love, they were allowed to put a piece of straw in the manger for the baby Jesus, who would be unwrapped on Christmas. (If you don't have a manger scene, you can do this with a drawing of the nativity and a yellow crayon for straw.)

It can be hard to pull back from so much consumerism and frantic activity that has become synonymous with the season and wait instead. But even changing one habit will help you focus on the object and treasure of our faith. May you have a blessed Advent.

## AREA CHURCH LISTINGS

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

### Foundation Church, Spencer

Rev. Nicholas Hanges, Senior Pastor 1410 W. 18th St. 712-262-6292 foundationspencer.com Sunday School K-12, 9 a.m. Sunday Prayer/

Fellowship, 9 a.m. Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

 Kids Church Sunday, 10 a.m. Wednesday All Ages,

6:30 p.m.

BAPTIST

### Baptist Church, Sioux Rapids Rev. James Marshall

• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m. • Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

### First Baptist Church, Spencer Rev. Tim Smith

1200 Grand Ave. 712-262-1325 firstbaptistspencer.com Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Sunday Upward Look —

KICD 1240 AM, 10 a.m. Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m. Sunday AWANA, 4 p.m.

 Sunday FBC Youth Group, 6 p.m.

CALVARY CHAPEL

### **New Life Worship** Center, Spencer

Rev. Tracy Baugh 1217 Fourth Ave. W. 712-262-3125 Sunday Bible Church, 10 a.m. Wednesday Prayer, 6:30 p.m.

CATHOLIC

### St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Hartley Rev. Kevin Richter

260 N. Fourth Ave. W. 712-928-2626 Primghar St. Athony, Sunday, 8 a.m. · Hartley St. Joseph, Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

## St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Milford Rev. Brian Hughes

1305 Okoboji Ave. 712-338-2274

## Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Ruthven

Rev. Paul Kelly 1801 Rolling St. 712-852-3187

## Sacred Heart Catholic

## Church, Spencer

Rev. Kevin Richter 1111 Fourth Ave. W.

712-262-3047 Saturday Service, 4:30 p.m.

### • Sunday Service, 11 a.m. Livestreamed at: spencersacredheart.com/ onlinemass

## CHURCH OF CHRIST

### **Trinity United Church** of Christ, Hartley 140 N. Fifth Ave.

712-728-2889

### CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

### Church, Spencer Rev. Larry Neiderhiser 905 Fifth St. SW

**Spencer Family** 

712-262-7298 spencerfamilychurch.org

- Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.
- · Sunday Kid's Church, 10:30 a.m.
- Wednesday Life Group, 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

### **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day**

Saints, Spencer 1701 W. 11th St. 712-262-6172

- Sunday Sacrament Meeting, 10 a.m. Sunday School; Primary and
- Youth Meetings, 11:10 a.m. Sunday Men's Priesthood Meeting and Women's Relief Society, 12:10 p.m.

CONGREGATIONAL

#### **Grace Congregational** Church, Greenville Rev. Tonna Parsons

 Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

**EPISCOPAL** 

## The Way Station, **Spencer**

Rev. Beth Preston 120 W. Fourth St. 712-580-5463 revbethpreston@gmail.com Sunday Service, 3 p.m.

### St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Spirit Lake Rev. Carolyn Tuttle 23rd and Zenith 712-336-1117

 Sunday Mass/ Eucharist, 10 a.m.

**All Saints Episcopal** Church, Storm Lake Rev. Stacey Gerhart 121 W. Marina Road 712-202-6624

• Sunday Eucharist, 10 a.m.

## **EVANGELICAL FREE**

## Free Church, Linn Grove

**Riverside Evangelical** 

- Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.
- Ignite: 6:30 p.m.
- · Salt Youth: 7:15 p.m.

### CrossWinds Church, Spencer

Campus Rev. Jordan Gowing Rev. Dr. Kurt Trucksess 1900 Grand Ave. Suite A 712-584-3151 spencer@crosswinds.tv

- · Sunday Worship,
- 8:30 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

FIRST CHRISTIAN

### **First Christian** Church, Spencer (Disciples of Christ)

Pastor Interim 915 Fourth Ave. SW 712-262-2945 · Sunday Service,

- 9:30 a.m. In-House and Facebook Live
- Wednesday Kids Sunday School: 4:30 p.m.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

#### First Congregational Church, Peterson 712-295-7150

• Sunday Worship, 8:45 a.m.

## Sunday School, 10 a.m.

**First Congregational** Church, Spencer Rev. Dr. Shazzy Britz

- DCYM Katie Baltis 1212 First Ave. W. 712-262-4392
- Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m. · Adult Sunday School, 9 a.m.
- Sunday School, 4 years old to fifth grade, 9:30 a.m.
- Adult Bible Study Tuesday, 10 a.m., Wednesday 7 p.m. Spencer Congo Youth Wednesday's, Middle School, 6-7 p.m., High School, 7-8 p.m. Livestream on YouTube

LUTHERAN

All are welcome

### **Hope Lutheran** Church, Everly

Rev. Dan Taylor 206 N. Washington St. 712-834-2767 • Sunday Worship 10 a.m.

- Sunday School and Adult Education, 9 a.m.
- Services livestreamed on YouTube at "Hope Lutheran Church — Everly, IA"

### **Lost Island Lutheran** Church, Graettinger Rev. Peter Morlock

- Sunday Service, 8:45 a.m. • Fellowship, 9:45 a.m.
- · Sunday School, 10 a.m.

# St. Paul's Evangelical

Lutheran, Hartley Rev. Christopher Nitzel 60 N. Central Ave.

- 712-728-2711 • Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.
- Sunday School 10 a.m.
- Fellowship, 10:30 a.m. · Confirmation, 11 a.m.
- · Choir Practice, 11 a.m.

(712) 262-5931

### **Harbor of Joy Lutheran** Church, Milford Rev. Tim Voth

1204 L Ave. 712-338-2355

- · Sunday Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday School, 8:30 a.m. • Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

## **First Lutheran**

1525 Three Cross Road Rev. Perry Aalgard, Senior Pastor Rev. Brian Jack, Associate Pastor 712-338-4514

Church, Milford

- 3cross.org · Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- · Sunday Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.
- Education/Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

**Bethlehem Lutheran** Church, Royal Rev. Dr. Mark F. Wilms

- 207 Church St. 712-933-2229 Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.
- **Zion Lutheran** Church, Ruthven
- Rev. Eric Patten • Sunday Service, 9:30 a.m.

## 10:30 a.m. First Lutheran Church,

• Sunday Fellowship,

**Sioux Rapids** Rev. Tonna Parsons

## • Sunday Worship, 9 a.m. **Bethany Lutheran**

**Church-ELCA, Spencer** 15 W. 14th St. 712-262-2327

bethluthspencer.com · Worship, 9 a.m.

### **Christ the King Lutheran** Church, Spencer Rev. Michael McGinley

500 Fourth Ave. SW 712-262-2244

• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m. • Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

• Services on Facebook, 9 a.m.

## Podcast" released Sundays **Faith Lutheran** Church, Spencer

Rev. Ben Unseth 2912 Highway Blvd. 712-580-4316

on YouTube

• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m. • Sunday School, 10:30 a.m. Services are streamed

### flcspencer.org First English Lutheran Church, Spencer Rev. Paul Kaldahl

1311 E. 18th St. 712-262-5598 spencer-church.com Divine Worship, also

broadcast on 1240 AM

## and 102.5 FM, 8 a.m.

- Fellowship, 9 a.m. • Child care in the nursery,
- 9:15 a.m. to Noon Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
- Bible Class, 9:40 a.m. • Divine Worship, 10:45 a.m.

 Communion on first and third Sundays. Services & Bible Class

livestreamed via website

### **Riverview Terrace** Chapel, Spencer 1501 St. Luke Drive

712-262-5932 • Sunday Worship, 10:45 a.m.

### St. Luke Home and Services, Spencer Rev. Perry DeGroot

1301 St. Luke Drive 712-262-5931 • St. Luke Lutheran Home

## Riverview Terrace Worship, 10:45 a.m.

Worship, 10 a.m.

**Trinity Lutheran** Church, Spencer Rev. Renae Behrends 900 11th Ave. W.

712-262-1287 Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

## NONDENOMINATIONAL **Faith Community**

Church, Milford 805 Okoboji Ave. Rev. Jennifer Hesebeck faithcommunitymilford.com

fcc@milfordcomm.net · Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

# The New Light of

- the Lakes Friends Church, Okoboji
- Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. · Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m.

• Group Bible Study, 5 p.m.

## **Living Word Outreach Ministries, Spencer**

Rev. Barb Dean, **Lead Pastor** Rev. Mark Feauto, **Associate Pastor** 905 10th Ave SE 712-262-9545

livingwordspencer.org

Livestream also

• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

available on the website,

## Facebook and YouTube. River's Edge Church, Spencer

Rev. Tim B. Frasher Pastor Joseph Leggett 701 E. 18th St. 712-580-3013

Spirit Life Fellowship, **Spirit Lake** 

Sunday School, 9 a.m.

• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

Rev. Eric Holdeman 2504 Enterprise Ave. 712-336-0114 • Sunday School, 9 a.m.

• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

### **Maple Grove Church** of God, Sutherland

Rev. Michael Hyde · Sunday Worship,

- 9:30 a.m. · Sunday Fellowship,
- 10:30 a.m. • Sunday School, 11 a.m.

**PENTECOSTAL** 

### **Faith Pentecostal** Church, Spencer 1700 11th Ave. SW 712-262-3368

fpcspencer.com

REFORMED

Rev. Brad Wallace

- Rev. Dale Hodges • Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.
- Wednesday Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.

**Good News Community** Church, Okoboji Rev. Brandon Morrow

- 1010 Julia St. 712-332-5698 · Sunday Worship Services,
- Fellowship. 10:15 a.m.

9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

- Hope Church, Spencer Pastor James Runcorn
- 919 Grand Ave. 712-262-3016 · Sunday Worship,
- 8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m. • Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

# **Seventh Day Adventist**

Church, Spencer 1910 10th Ave. E. 712-262-5766

 Saturday Sabbath School, 9:45 a.m.

## • Saturday Worship, 11 a.m. **UNITED METHODIST**

## **Calvary United** Methodist Church,

**Arnolds Park** Rev. Chris St. Clair

- 209 N. Okoboji Grove Road 712-332-2447 Saturday Worship, 6 p.m.
- Sunday Lakeshore Worship, 7:30 a.m. • Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

**Dickens United Methodist Church, Dickens** Rev. Donna Gray Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

### **United Methodist** Church, Everly Rev. Michael Eeten 301 N. Ocheyedan

712-834-2501 • Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

**Community United** 

Methodist Church,

## **Gillett Grove** Rev. Donna Gray

· Sunday Worship, 10:15 a.m.

**GROW WITH US** 

## **United Methodist**

Church, Hartley 361 Eighth Ave. 712-928-2649 Sunday Church School/Confirmation

Classes, 9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.

**United Methodist** Church, Langdon Rev. Chris St. Clair Sunday in-house

and Facebook Live

Worship, 11 a.m.

## First United Church,

**Sioux Rapids** Rev. Dr. Mike Currier Rev. Karen Currier • Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m. Church of Christ, Spencer Contact Jeff Cookinham

1304 St. Luke Drive

· Sunday Worship,

712-262-2294

10:30 a.m.

10.15 a.m.

10:30 a.m.

## Sunday Bible Study, 11:15 a.m. **First United Methodist**

Church, Peterson Rev. Tyler Thomsen

103 E. Third St.

• Sunday Worship, 9:15 a.m. Sunday Fellowship,

## **First United Methodist** Church, Royal

Rev. John Battern

· Sunday School,

408 Church St. 712-933-2489 • Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

Church, Ruthven Rev. Kathy Kluis • Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

**United Methodist** 

### First United Church, **Sioux Rapids**

**Grace United Methodist** Church, Spencer Rev. Michael Slininger

• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

311 Second Ave. W. 712-262-5970

## • Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m. **Zion United Methodist** Church, Spencer

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.

 Sunday Worship, 10:45 a.m. **United Methodist** 

302 S. State St.

712-853-6549

Rev. Michael Eeten

Church, Terril Rev. Terry Luiken

## **Trinity United Methodist** Church, Webb

• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

Rev. Kari A. Etherington

• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

• Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.

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