



Weekly Booster

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Terry Stafford

Bells & Choir Directors

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Multimedia & Website

Jeff Hiser

Sunday Media Booth

Alan Hutchison

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Sunday Facebook Host

Craig Harris,

Facebook Contributors

Pastor David B. Clark,

Barb Cunningham,

Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Drew Morelock,

Pastor David



The Armor of God: How to Gear Up for Spiritual Warfare

When we become a child of God, we not only inherit God's blessings but God's enemies as well. The Lord's foremost enemy is Satan, whose purpose is to destroy his work (John 8:44), but Jesus came to "destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8).

Satan is a fallen angel (Isaiah 14:12-15) and as such, is only a created being. He is in no way equal to God, the Creator. While Satan is superior in intellect and strength to mankind, he is inferior to God in every way. Believers have the power of the indwelling resurrected Christ over them and protecting them (1 John 4:4).

Through Christ and his Holy Spirit, believers have been given the whole armor of God to "take [their] stand against the devil's schemes" (Ephesians 6:11). Each piece of the armor is to be "put on" to help believers overcome the temptations and attacks of the evil one.

Seven Parts of the Full Armor of God

1. The Belt of Truth Buckled Around Your Waist (Ephesians 6:14)

One of Satan's most effective weapons is the lie. As he did in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-12), Satan uses all kinds of influences too.

Continued page 2.

Quote

“Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.” Ferris Bueller’s Day Off (1986)

RemindersDecember 9th

Men’s Bible Study – 8:00 a.m.

December 10th

Second Sunday of Advent
Caroling -5:00 p.m.

Soup Supper to Follow Caroling

December 13th

Bible Study – 11:00 a.m.

Praise Team - 5:00 p.m.

Choir – 5:30 p.m.

Bell Choir – 6:30 p.m.

December 14th

T.O.P.S.

December 14th

Men’s Breakfast – 8:00 a.m.

**Worship Assistant is needed for
December 31st

** Fellowship Volunteers needed
sign-up in Fellowship Hall



**Two Volunteers Needed each Thursday
to Deliver Meals
Sign-Up Sheet is on the
Welcome Center Counter**

Armor of God- Continued from page 1.

convince us that we’re “less than,” that we’re unworthy of God’s or other people’s love; or, conversely, that we can make it through this life and into the next on our own, and that we don’t need help from the Savior who longs to draw us to himself. When we listen to these lies, we become convinced that God is not a loving God—which stands in direct contrast to the teaching of Scripture: John 3:16; Romans 8:39; Ephesians 2:4; 1 John 3:1; 4:8

The waist or abdomen area was generally thought to be the seat of emotions. To gird this area with truth is to commit your emotions to believe the truth. Often a person knowingly allows themselves to believe a lie because of fear or self-pity. Believers must hold a commitment to truth regardless of the repercussions (John 8:32,36).

The picture of God’s armor is of a Roman soldier’s tunic, pulled up and tucked into his belt so that he could fight or work unhindered. Living a life of honesty and integrity enables the Christian to be one in purpose with Jesus Christ, who is the Truth, and to be unhindered in the battle against Satan, who is a deceiver and liar.

Apply It:

- Be aware of how social media and other influences are making you feel. Are you looking at what others are posting and it’s making you feel “less than”? Or are you using posts to bolster the way you feel about yourself? Understanding who you are in God’s eyes—his beloved child, for whom he sent his Son to die—can help you understand the lies resident in what social and other media are telling you about yourself.
- Pray to God using Scriptures that help you understand who God is and what his power means for your life: Psalm 46:2-4,9-12; 63:1-8; 71:17-22; Isaiah 45:5-6.
- Hold on to these truths when your feelings are overwhelmed with the noise of this world.

2. The Breastplate of Righteousness in Place (Ephesians 6:14)

The breast holds the heart, which is generally thought of as the place of the soul. The heart must be kept pure and righteous because sin in the heart gives a foothold to the enemy.

Continued page 5.

Quote

“A little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest men.” Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (1971)

Volunteers Needed



LAST PERSON LEAVING
PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS
AND LOCK DOORS

First United Methodist Church
Please wear your name tag on Sunday mornings



Church Office Hours

**** Children & Jr.-Sr. High Sunday School – PK-6 during service, Jr/Sr High at 10:30 a.m.**

****Choir –** Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. Sunday 8:30 a.m.
****Bell Choir –** Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

The front door to the church will be unlocked during office hours and closed only for errands and lunch.

Monday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Tuesday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Wednesday
CLOSED
Thursday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Friday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00

Please continue to call in advance if you need in the church to make sure someone is in the office. If you reach the answering machine please leave your name, number, and a brief message and your call will be returned. Calls after 2:00 p.m. may be returned the next business day.



In his greeting in 1 Timothy, what did Paul call Timothy?

- a) fellow servants
- b) co-labourer
- c) true child in the faith
- d) pastor

What did King Artaxerxes give Ezra unrestrained access to when he was sending him out?

- a) King's throne
- b) King's treasury
- c) King's tributes
- d) King's customs

Who was the father of Rachel and Leah??

- a) Isaac
- b) Laban
- c) Bethuel
- d) Jacob

Check page 4 for answers from the previous week.



- 10th – Todd Ashenfelter
- 13th – Don Rorebeck
- 15th – Craig Foster, Vicki Woodford, Eldon & Loraine Manchester
- 16th – Robin Hensen, Michael Williams

****See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added, please call the office, or send an email to office@shen.church**

**Shenandoah First United
Methodist Church**

200 Church St.
Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail
office@shen.church

Same address – a new look at
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our YouTube
channel only.

<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192/streams>

*Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: **Terry Stafford**

Call to Worship

Leader: Bring tidings of peace and wholeness.

People: We cry out in the wilderness that we are ready.

L: God will speak to us with gentleness and kindness.

P: We need a path, for there is none in this wilderness.

L: It seems as though God is delaying.

P: We will wait, for surely peace will come like the dawn.

“Unrelenting Peace”

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Songs

O Come, All Ye Faithful v.1-3 #234

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen v.1,3,5 #3052

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear v.1,2,4 #218

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus v.1,2 #196

Last Week's Attendance

In-Person Worship – 101

On-Line Worship – 12

Our Mission:

“Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ's Love.”

Our Vision:

“We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a difference in our world.”

Answers for Dec 3rd are c) name above every name c) Ish Bosheth b) blew it away

Quiz hints – Q1) 1Timothy Q2) Ezra Q3) Genesis

Armor of God- Continued from page 2.

Confession and forgiveness based on the blood of Christ cleanse the heart (1 John 1:9).

The breastplate covered the body from neck to thigh and was usually made of bronze. Believers do not need to seek protection or right standing with God through works of their own; they can confidently stand in what Christ has done on their behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Apply It:

- When we think of protecting our hearts, Jeremiah 17:9 comes to mind. That verse says, “The **heart is** deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” As such, the heart needs to be wrapped in a righteousness that goes well beyond what our human efforts can produce. When we understand that giving our hearts to Jesus allows us to claim his righteousness as our own, we can begin to live under the protection that this breastplate offers: Romans 5:19; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Job 11:13-19 tells us about the real, tangible benefits that this surrender produces:

“Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then, free of fault, you will lift your face; you will stand firm and without fear. You will surely forget your trouble, recalling it only as waters gone by. Life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning. You will be secure because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety. You will lie down, with no one to make you afraid, and many will court your favor.”

3. Your Feet Fitted with the Readiness that Comes from the Gospel of Peace (Ephesians 6:15)

Proper shoes enable the feet to go from place to place. The believer is to be about their Father’s business, which is to spread the gospel of peace and reconciliation. An undaunted sense of this mission keeps the believer headed in the right direction (Matthew 28:19– 20).

The soldier wore sandals with cleats made of sharp nails designed to give firm footing on even the most rugged terrain. “Readiness” may have the sense of preparation to share the gospel with others at a moment’s notice. “Readiness” may also refer to a prepared foundation that consists of the gospel of peace with God (Ephesians 2:17).

Apply It:

- As Christians, we want to build our lives on the firm foundation of Jesus. The Bible is the source of that foundation—our guidebook for understanding who God is and how he supports us, for this life and the

next: “God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: ‘The Lord knows those who are his’” (2 Timothy 2:19).

- We don’t want to be like one who builds a house on the shifting sands of culture and fads and philosophies that stand against God: “He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure” (Isaiah 33:6).
- As you start your day each day, visualize your feet standing on the firm foundation of God’s Word. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be the one who helps you stand firm, no matter what your circumstances. And pray that he will also help you as you guide your family to stand firm on that same solid foundation: “The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalm 18:2).

4. The Shield of Faith (Ephesians 6:16)

The wicked one is “the accuser of our brothers and sisters” (Revelation 12:10) and will send his fiery darts to instill doubt, fear, and guilt in each of our lives. Faith acts as an invisible shield that deflects such false accusations (Hebrews 11:6) and helps us understand who we truly are in God’s eyes.

The long, oblong, or oval shield was crafted from two layers of wood covered with linen or animal hides, bound together with iron. When fighting side by side, soldiers could hold these shields together to form a long wall. Soaked in water, they served as adequate defense against the enemy’s “flaming arrows”— arrows that had been dipped in pitch and ignited.

The shield of faith offers God’s unlimited resources of power and wisdom (Ephesians 3:16–21) to resist the flaming arrows of distressing circumstances and temptation to evil (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Apply It:

- Ask that God literally increase your faith (Mark 9:24).
- If you’re feeling like the darts of the evil one are finding their mark, understand that finding others to link arms with can be a great encouragement. Talk to your believing friends, or find a qualified Christian counselor to talk to about how to take up this shield and guard your life from the lies and accusations of Satan. And ask for the prayers of others so that your shields are joined together. A supportive Christian community can become a powerful defense in the face of spiritual attack.
- Realize that, even though you’re called to take up this shield yourself, the shield is given to you by God, and you hold it through the power he provides: “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and *he helps me*. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him. The Lord is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed one” (Psalm 28:7-8, emphasis added).

5. The Helmet of Salvation (Ephesians 6:17)

A helmet protects the head, that is, the brain and thoughts. Assurance of salvation is a mighty defense against doubt and insecurity and the kinds of works bred by them (1 John 5:11– 13).

The soldier's bronze helmet had leather attachments to hold it in place. Christians can experience protection from Satan's attacks as they rest confidently in their position as members of God's family (John 1:12– 13), set apart for his purposes (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Further, they can know God's present work or sanctification in their lives, experiencing deliverance from sin (Galatians 5:16; Philippians 2:12– 13) and having the guarantee of future, eternal deliverance from every kind of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

Apply It:

- The mind is the place where the spiritual battle takes place. Having the helmet of salvation securely fastened to protect our minds allows us to gain a perspective on our circumstances. When our salvation in Jesus is foremost in our minds, we can set our minds on God's priorities, not our own (Colossians 3:2).
- Are you struggling to find God's path forward in your life? Have your financial, family, or emotional circumstances derailed you from what you believed was God's plan for you? If so, Romans 12:2 offers guidance in this area: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will."
- Understand that the helmet of salvation, rightly secured, connects our minds—our wills, emotions, and actions—to the path that God wants us to take. Consider this Scripture:

"Above all else, guard your heart [or your mind], for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways.

Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil." Proverbs 4:23-27 (brackets added).

6. The Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17)

The Word of God, the only offensive weapon in this armor, was used by the Lord Jesus against Satan (Luke 4:1– 13). The living Word is powerful, effective, and instructive (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16– 17).

The short, two-edged sword enabled the heavily armed soldier to attack deftly and defeat his enemy at close range. The believer's sword may be understood to be either supplied by the Spirit or used by the Spirit. Paul further identified this sword as "the word of God" (see Hebrews 4:12). "Word" (Gk. *rhema*) most probably refers to specific sections of Scripture the Holy Spirit brings to mind to meet a particular need. Jesus' use of specific

sections of Deuteronomy in his encounter with Satan in the wilderness exemplified this (Matthew 4:4,7,10).

Apply It:

- Using a weapon requires that we understand its potential. That can only be done in this case by reading the Word of God regularly.
- The Spirit equips us with this sword, and it is his joy and responsibility to help us understand how to use it: “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26). Pray that the Spirit will give you the instruction you need to use this sword when you need it.
- The Spirit will empower us as we take up this sword. As Jesus told his disciples, “Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit” (Mark 13:11).

7. Pray in the Spirit on All Occasions (Ephesians 6:18)

Prayer opens the channels between us and God. During battle, we as believers must keep in constant communication with our Leader for directions and encouragement. Our prayers for one another are important and effectual (James 5:16).

Prayer is not listed as a separate weapon of warfare but is rather given an all-encompassing status. Prayer is to be constant (1 Thessalonians 5:17) as the Christian prepares for battle, engages in it, and rests from it. All kinds of prayers are to be offered through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Apply It:

- Make prayer your first response rather than your last resort.
Learn how to focus as you come to God in prayer by following Jesus’ specific instructions: “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matthew 6:6).
- Bathe your life and your family in prayer before you do anything else: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6).
- Pray with confidence that God hears you—“In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence” (Ephesians 3:12)—and that he cares for you: “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

As we've observed in this post, the spiritual realm is very real. While they may be invisible to us, we as Christians understand that there are powers at work trying to influence our hearts and minds every single day. This is exactly why Paul gave us these instructions for protecting ourselves with God's armor. Through his Word and Spirit, God gives Christians the resources to fight and empowers us to follow his way.

Pray that God will guide and transform your thoughts and desires as you seek to walk closely with him.

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"Each of you should GIVE what you have decided in YOUR HEART to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES a cheerful GIVER." (2 Corinthians 9:7)



NOISY OFFERING

The Noisy Offering is one more way to do ministry for those in need and also teach your children the importance of giving and serving. Each Sunday a new opportunity for mission giving will take place after the Children's Message. Sunday School students will walk around the congregation, collecting your loose coins and currency in their colorful metal pails. This would be a good time to clean out the loose change from your pockets or purse. The money donated in December will go to the Shenandoah Food Pantry.



December

Peanut Butter and jelly, Green Beans, Corn, Peas, Stuffing Mix, Potato Flakes, Boxed Potatoes, Pineapple, Mandarin Oranges, Cinnamon Applesauce, Pasta (any variety), Spaghetti Sauce, Chili and chunky Style Soups, Cake, Brownie, Cookie, and Muffin Mixes, Toothbrushes & Toothpaste.

There are times when people who use the Food Pantry come to the pantry on foot. They are then forced to walk home carrying, pushing, or pulling several pounds of food. Southwest Iowa Transit, for a very reasonable fee of \$5.00, will take individuals with their food items home. If you are interested in helping pay for these fees, simply seal your cash (whatever you would like to give) in a plain envelope and add it to your donated food items.

Over thirty-one years ago, concerned citizens in the Shenandoah community had a dream of all community families having a happy and healthy holiday and formed the **Adopt-A-Family** project. Our church will provide a local family-in-need with a brighter holiday with gifts appropriate for their age or need. No adult information will be given, this way we can help the children in more families. This year we will be able to ask for contributions of money in the Mission Cans as we have done before. The mission Cans are placed on top of the wooden offering boxes and just inside the middle set of the sanctuary doors. As soon as I receive the information from the **Adopt-A-Family** committee regarding the size of the family and items on their wish list, I will put the information in the Booster. Thanks for your ongoing support for this important community project. *Edi Norris*



Hat & Mittens Collection – we are collecting hats, mittens, scarves, and gloves for children in need. Until the hat and mitten tree have been put up, please place these items in the back pew in the Welcome Center near the elevator.



The Hispanic Center is now collecting items for their Christmas Shoe Boxes. There are 15 children, which includes 8 girls ages 6-14 years of age and 7 boys ages 2-14 years old. Children's lists of ages are on a sheet on the Welcome Center counter. There are also slips of paper for you to write your Shoe Box child's information and then take with you. You may also contact Sue Jones with questions.



The PK-6 Sunday School students have been busy decorating bags so they can be placed around the church. They are collecting food for the food pantry to help the holidays a little better for others. Each month we receive a list of food items that the food pantry could use. The congregation has touched so many lives that need assistance and it is a great project for the Sunday School students to be involved in and learn what it means to help others.

We are still collecting First Fruits at the beginning of each month.



It has been a few years since we took a bus and went caroling. Thanks to Heather Weiss, Jamie Burdorf, and Michelle Morelock they have planned a caroling and soup supper this coming Sunday, December 10th. The bus will depart from the church at 5:00 p.m. and the soup supper will follow caroling. They have planned to Carol to homes and care centers.

The ladies have set out a sign-up sheet, on the Welcome Center counter if anyone would be interested in helping by providing soup, food, and to help that night.

Finally, they would ask that you dress warmly and wear your ugly Christmas sweater if you have one in your closet.

WHAT: The Iowa United Methodist Foundation has over 100 scholarships available for the 2024-2025 academic year. There are scholarships specifically for high school seniors, general scholarships for students going to non-Methodist colleges, scholarships for students going to United Methodist colleges, and seminary scholarships designated for individuals following the call to join the ministry.

WHEN: Applications will be accepted starting December 1, 2023, and will remain open until March 1, 2024 (see the tentative timeline below).

HOW: Check out the criteria on our website for any scholarship at any time to make sure you are eligible to apply. After December 1, go to our website at <https://iumf.org/scholarships> and click APPLY NOW to begin the application process.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIMELINE:

Dec. 1-March 1: Submit Applications

March 5: Recommendation letter turned in

April or Earl May: Notification of your application status

May to June: Accept or decline your scholarship(s) online





What do the candles in our Advent wreath mean?

The Advent wreath began as a German and Scandinavian home devotional practice used to mark the four weeks of Advent. Families would light a candle for each past week and the current week at their dinner or evening time of prayer. The configuration of candles, whether in a line or a circle, did not matter. Neither did the color of the candles (all colors are used in homes in Europe). What mattered was the marking of time and the increase of light each week in the face of increasing darkness as the winter solstice approached.

As Advent wreaths began to be used by congregations on Sundays in some places in Europe and America beginning in the late 19th century, several adaptations were made to make them work better in public worship spaces. Candles needed to be larger and more uniform than the "daily candles" handmade or purchased for home use. They also needed to be more uniform in color to fit with other décor in the sanctuary. That is why candles used in the Advent wreath are usually purple or blue, to coordinate with the color of the paraments used during this season.

This shift in context from home to public use also made it important in the eyes of some for the candles to be given a meaning more than simply marking time and increasing light. This led to special ceremonies being developed for lighting these special candles each week.

As this practice began to catch on by the mid-twentieth century, several church supply houses that sold Advent wreaths and candles for public worship also developed resources, banners, and bulletin covers assigning a theme to each week, and thus each candle, based on scriptures from the one-year lectionaries used at that time. Those themes were Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace, in that order.

Today, almost no one uses those one-year lectionaries, so those themes may not always fit the scriptures we hear in worship. The one exception is the Third Sunday of Advent, where the current lectionaries have continued to support the centuries-old observance of "Gaudete" or "Joy Sunday." That is why church supply houses often offer rose or pink-colored candles for the wreath for use on this day.

So how may we talk about the meaning of the Advent wreath today?

We can reclaim the original home use of marking time with the hope of increasing light as we await the return

of Christ, that day when "The city no longer needs the sun or the moon to shine upon it, because the glory of God illumines it, and its lamp is the lamb."

We can develop meanings or themes for each week based on the focus of the scriptures themselves. After all, the candles and the wreath are an accessory, not an end in themselves. Their meaningfulness comes from how we use them to point toward Christ, the world's true light, who was, and is, and is to come.

This content was produced by Ask The UMC, a ministry of United Methodist Communications.

The Longest Night

DECEMBER 21, 2023 @ 6:30 PM



The Longest Night Service creates a sacred space for those in a place of loss, pain, loneliness, and doubt. Through reflective prayers, songs, and silence, we will seek to encounter a God that meets us in the depths of our lives. You are invited to join us in this contemplative space on Thursday, December 21 at 6:30pm.



Men's Breakfast
Sunday, December 17th
8:00 a.m. – Fellowship Hall