



DECEMBER 2025

WELCOME TO

The Compassionate Way

we're so glad you're here!

Christmas Compassion

One of the things I look forward to each Christmas is the opportunity to bless individuals who may otherwise be forgotten. This year, some wonderful residents from Good Samaritan Society – Woodland will be joining us in preparing gifts for children we have served at Stoneybrook Mobile Home Park, women at Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge, and others who are walking through difficult seasons.

What makes this effort so meaningful is the way compassion multiplies. Residents at Woodland have eagerly embraced the chance to serve. They understand what a small gift of kindness means to someone during a challenging time. Their tender hearts and willing hands remind us that every person has something beautiful to offer. As they package gifts and pray over each one, they are participating in a sacred act – passing along God's love from one generation to another.

These gifts may seem small, but they carry something far greater than what is inside the wrapping. They carry encouragement. They carry dignity. They carry the message, "You matter, and you are not alone." For the children at Stoneybrook, many of whom face instability or limited resources, a simple Christmas gift becomes a moment of joy – proof that someone remembered them. For the women at Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge, the gifts serve as a tangible reminder that there are people cheering them on as they work toward healing and renewal.

It is our hope to bring joy to these beloved people, to let them know they are seen, valued, and held in God's care during this holy season.





Hold On, Pray Expectantly

We have entered the season of Advent, and this week we turn our hearts toward hope. I decided to create an acronym for the word hope: Hold On, Pray Expectantly.

When I was a child, I loved riding my horse, Sugar. Her name, however, did not match her personality. When she decided she was finished being ridden, she would bolt for her pen. No amount of “whoa” or pulling on the reins slowed her down. All I could do was hold on.

There are seasons in life that feel exactly like that—when all we can do is hang on. Yet even then, we are not left helpless. We can hold on and pray expectantly, trusting that God is present and at work.

Advent is a season of waiting and watching. While Christmas celebrates Jesus’ first coming, Advent reminds us that we are still waiting for His return. As we wait, we draw near to God through prayer. We hold on and pray expectantly for Christ to come again and make all things new.

In this time of waiting, we also hold on and pray expectantly for a world no longer divided. We pray for peace in our land and in our relationships. We pray for the day when God’s Kingdom will fully reign—when pain and suffering will cease, and when we are reunited with the loved ones who have gone before us.

As Christians, we do not place our hope in the shifting promises of this world. Those things can never give what our hearts truly long for. Our hope is rooted in the character of God, who is trustworthy and true. In 1 Peter 1:3 we hear this good news: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Friends, we hold on and pray expectantly for the day when we will worship God face to face. And in this Advent season, may this blessing rest upon you: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” Romans 15:13.

Connection and Compassion are for Everyone

It was so good to gather, share a meal, and converse about compassion last month. Individuals offered stories of how they had recently experienced, extended, or witnessed compassion, love in action. Each story brought warmth and light to our souls.

In a time where we often focus on what is wrong with the world. These gatherings are an opportunity to connect deeply with others about what is right in the world – where you see and experience compassion. Through our conversations, we hope that individuals will be inspired to extend compassion to others.

Please consider joining us for this wonderful opportunity to connect and grow more in our understanding of compassion. We will gather on Saturday, December 20, at 12:00 p.m. at Lakes Area Presbyterian Church. Please register by Wednesday, December 17 so that we have enough food for everyone. There is no commitment to attend more than one gathering. We meet for one hour.

This is an opportunity to connect with others. We believe connection and compassion are for everyone!



This event is sponsored by the Initiative Foundation.

Give a Gift that Makes an Eternal Difference – Yearend Giving

All proceeds donated to The Compassionate Way go to support our ongoing efforts to extend compassion to those who are all too often overlooked or forgotten! Please send a check of any amount to Lakes Area Presbyterian Church at 7761 Excelsior Rd.; Baxter, MN 56425. Be sure to note on the memo line: The Compassionate Way.