

AMANA SOCIETY BULLETIN

Vol. XCIV

Amana, Iowa, Thursday, December 25, 2025

No. 43

AMANA CHURCH SOCIETY NEWS

The Christmas Eve Service will be in Middle Church, Wednesday, December 24 at 8:00 p.m.

The Christmas Morning Service will be in the Amana Church, Thursday December 25 at 10:00 A.M. with Sw Emilie Hoppe presiding

Opening Hymn — "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." Testimony: Christian Metz, Neuwied, December 8, 1832.

Amana Church Choir: "Whisper, Whisper"

Scripture: Luke Chapter 2

Isaiah Chapter 9: 2-3 & 6 - 7

Closing Hymn "Joy to the World"

Benediction Amana Church Choir: "I heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

Song sheets will be provided for both Christmas Eve and Christmas services.

The Early Service will be in the Middle Church Sunday, December 28, 2025 starting 8:30 A.M. with Br. Peter Hoehnle presiding.

Opening Hymn: "Jesus komm doch selbst zu mir" No. 526 vs 1-5 Seite 524

Testimony: Ursula Meyer, Ronneburg, February 2, 1717

Scripture: Isaiah 63:7-9; Hebrews 2: 10-18

Psalm 148

Closing Hymn: "Gelobet seist Du, Jesu Christ" No. 316 vs 1-5 Seite 310

The Late Service will start at 10:00 A.M. with the following hymns:

Opening Hymn: "Jesus, Savior, Come To Me" No. 5

Closing Hymn: "All Praise To Jesus' Hallowed Name" No. 10

Visitors are welcome to join us in worship at all Amana Church Services. Childcare is available during Sunday's 10:00 A.M. Service.

The live link for the 10:00 A.M. service is --- <https://www.facebook.com/theamanachurch>

Links to services posted online may be found at: <https://amanachurch.com/category/podcast/>

AMANA COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Holiday Hours

Wed., Dec 24 & Thurs., Dec 25 - CLOSED
Friday, Dec 26 & Saturday, Dec 27- 9am-Noon
Monday, Dec 29 & Tuesday, Dec 30 - 9am-Noon
Wed., Dec 31 & Thurs., Jan 1 - CLOSED
Friday, Jan 2 & Saturday, Jan 3 - 9am-Noon

We wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season!

ESSEN WAGEN - HOME DELIVERED MEALS

The Amana Church, in conjunction with Colonial Manor, sponsors the Amana Essen Wagen, which provides a hot noon meal to home-bound, adults or their adult child, delivered to your home (even to your chair!) each weekday, except holidays. Enjoy not cooking and enjoy visiting with one of our volunteer drivers.

Please contact Colonial Manor at 319-622-3131 to sign up for this service. You can register for a short time while recuperating at home, or on a permanent basis. The suggested donation per meal is \$4.00.

Dear Families and Friends,

The Amana Elementary School is excited to inform you that we are participating in an incredible program that allows us to earn FREE classroom equipment and supplies!

Here's how you can Help!

Shop at Big G Food Store in Marengo from now - March 31, 2026

Save your receipts (the date must be on the receipt to be valid) and send them to school with your child

Your receipts will earn us points for free classroom equipment, donated by the store!

Please submit your receipts to our school by April 4, 2026. Receipts can also be dropped off at the Amana Community Library.

Thank You! Amana Elementary School

The *Amana Society Bulletin* is published by the Amana Print Shop for the *Amana Society Inc.* and distributed free as a public service to the Amana Community.

On-line at: amanacoloniestoday.com
Email: amanaprintshop@southslope.net

AUTHOR VISIT, BOOK TALK & SIGNING

MELINDA WICHMANN

Tuesday, Jan. 13 • 6:00 p.m.

Amana Community Library

Please join the Amana Community Library, 3023 220th Trail, Middle Amana, for a special evening with Homestead author Melinda Wichmann. Melinda will talk about her experience writing and publishing her first novel, *How to Live with a Ghost*, a mystery/romance that follows a restoration-minded home buyer who moves into a historic landmark—only to discover it already has a permanent resident.

Wichmann spent a 35-year career in journalism as a reporter with The Pioneer-Republican, The Star-Press Union and The Hometown Current.

Copies of the book will be available for purchase during the event, and attendees are welcome to bring previously purchased copies for signing. Cash, check, or PayPal are accepted.

How to Live with a Ghost is published by Pearl City Press and is also available on Amazon.

In case of inclement weather, the event will be rescheduled to Thursday, January 15. Please watch for updates on the Amana Community Library Facebook page. We hope to see you there!

AMANA HERITAGE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP DRIVE UNDERWAY

The Amana Heritage Society collects, preserves, and interprets the 300 years of cultural heritage of the Amana Colonies. We strive to be the historian of our community, growing our collections and ideas, and making them available to our community and visitors. In order to carry out this important mission, we seek the support of our membership and try to make it grow. Your annual membership is vital to our current and future success. Please consider supporting Amana's heritage by becoming, or remaining, a member today. Visit us at <https://amanaheritage.org/> to purchase an online membership or give us a call at 319.622.3567 for more information. Help us to keep Preserving Our Heritage and Sharing Our Culture.

FOOD DRIVE COLLECTION AT COLONIAL MANOR

Colonial Manor Nursing Home is collecting Non perishable food donated to those who are in need this holiday season. We will be collecting in November, December and January at our facility. Questions/concerns Contact Joey. at 319-622-3131.



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AMANA AREA FELLOWSHIP

Church Services

All Are Welcome

Special Christmas Eve Service

December 24th, - 4:00 P.M.

Services return to Sunday 9:00 A.M.
at the Amana Performing Arts Center

www.amanaareafellowship.org

BULLETIN HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The plan for the Jan. 01, ASI Bulletin will have **deadline of Monday 6:00 PM** Dec. 29 & be available on Tuesday morning Dec. 30. On Dec. 30 at 6 A.M. I will be boarding a flight to Florida to see the Iowa game. Depending on what is available on Dec. 29, it may be necessary to print Bulletin on Jan. 2 after my return.

GO HAWKS

(My best friend lives in Tampa, & Chris is good with this.)

Phone 319-622-3912

amanaprintshop@southslope.net

Fröhliche Weihnachten

AMANA NEWS AND NOTES

Christmas Traditions in Amana

So much of what we do in Amana is informed by what happened during our communal era (from 1855 until 1932) that I wanted to do a story on Amana's Christmas holiday traditions.

In communal Amana Christmas was celebrated multiple days. Every holy day a mid-day service was held and the evening prayer services punctuated visits or began them between family and friends. Each holy day had hymns which were by sung just on that day – this evolved over the years and rarely changed.

Christmas Eve was "the day" that every family exchanged gifts – usually in the late afternoon before supper or just after supper, or perhaps after the evening service. But Christmas Eve, not Christmas morning, was the day.

Christmas Day, December 26, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day were all considered holidays and the schools, textile mills, grain mills, craft shops and general stores were closed and no mail was delivered. Indeed the entire week between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day was a holiday – there was no school and work hours were reduced.

But of course horses, cows, pigs and poultry all had to be fed, as well as the entire human population so all cooks and all farm workers went to work, though efforts were made to lessen their hours at work. Dairymen excepted. They of course had to appear twice daily to milk the 50-plus dairy cows in their village herd. The doctors too worked their regular schedules, but if at all practical, hours were reduced for everyone.

Christmas Eve the communal kitchens served what was considered "Christmas dinner." The menu was virtually the same in each kitchen house: chicken rice soup with bread dumplings, creamed chicken over mashed potatoes, a compote of canned sweet peaches, apricots and plums and Stollen for dessert. Stollen was sacred being made only once each year by the Kitchen boss – this sweet yeast bread, glazed with sugar, was chock full of chopped nuts, cherries, raisins and citron. Coffee was served by the 2 gallon coffee kettle. Coffee and tea was consumed in such quantity in the Colonies that the amount ordered into the general stores was astonishing even by today's standards.

Christmas cookies were baked by each household and are a perfect example of communal ac-

cord. First the baker would establish which day each house would have to bake their cookies in the village bakery – no one of course had an oven at home since the kitchens provided the meals. The day once established (and we have to think the day was chosen on that first Christmas in the village and never varied) was the same every year saving Sunday. No one baked on Sunday. Say your family baking day was December 11, so December 8 through 11 you and your Mom would beat together as many cookie batters and doughs as you could. Most housewives baked up a storm. This of course may explain why our annual Amana Church Cookie Walk fits our culture so exactly. Since cookies were rarely, if ever, baked at any other time during a year, the Christmas cookie frenzy took hold and baking ten to 12 different kinds at one time was the norm.

Then all the women of the household would walk to the bakery lugging bowls and tins of dough and batter which they would bake en masse in the still hot ovens of the village bread bakery. Using the big baking sheets they could bake dozens in one crack, still it took all morning to do the baking. Then every cookie was packed in tins and stored in the house's attic or "cold room" until Dec. 24 (ok, maybe a few were snatched by Opa and the kids). From the 24th on the cookies were shared. Hence good keepers like the hickory nut cookies, honey cookies and the Wiesbadenbrot cookies were favored.

Starting December 24th and continuing through New Year's Day "visiting" took place. Visiting one's aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, distant cousins and inter-related connections was what Christmas meant in many respects. Visits were punctuated by the serving of wine, cookies and hot tea.

Families in Amana were pretty evenly split between having a Christmas tree made of pine boughs inserted into a drilled dowel to replicate a tree or having a wooden pyramid. At one time the Elders on Amana's ruling council, trying to curb overspending and waste especially during some very lean years early on, tried to ban the use of Christmas trees and gift giving. But the rule never took hold and any offense was generally overlooked as everyone, celebrated Christmas.

The Christmas tree has such a long, storied tradition in Germany that it makes absolute sense that it would be an important feature of Amana's Christmas celebration. The wooden pyramids came to be when it became outlawed to cut a tree in the privately-owned forests and since all forests in Germany, Austria, Bavaria were owned by someone usually the local ruler or royal, so folks made

their own trees building or carving them of wood. The late arrival Saxons who came to Amana in the 1870s-1880s may have brought the wooden pyramid tradition with them but it certainly took hold. In Amana the pyramids were generally painted white with bright green and then adorned with cherished figures, usually animals. Painting the wood became the norm since all were made of scraps of various types of wood and the paint gave it a pleasing uniformity.

Gifts were simple – hand made doll clothing, knitted caps and embroidered lace gloves, doll houses made of scrap wood. The craft shops were enlisted to build things – sleds and toy wagons at the wagon shop, uppers for ice skates, dolls shoes and house slippers at the cobblers, ice skate blades and sled runners at the blacksmith and machine shops, leather bound hymnals and Bibles from the book bindery.

The general stores played a big role in the Christmas gift giving being the only source for candy, imported treats like oranges, German story books, novels, puzzles, games and so forth. The High Amana Store kept a special attic room where all the Christmas goodies were displayed and where parents shopped afterhours. The Homestead, Amana, South and West Amana Stores each had a room on the first floor the door of which was kept firmly closed to all but adults. Believe it or not, starting about 1920 the Upper South Amana used to host roller skating parties during the holidays in its upper story attic which was huge and had a perfect wooden floor for roller skates. In 1932 with the publication of the first Amana Society Bulletin small advertisements began to appear to let residents know that the Christmas candies were in at the stores of that the Amana Store had a new shipment of games and dolls in.

The week long celebration ended with the New Year's Day worship service. New Year's Day was a very important day in the Amana calendar as it was the moment when the Christian calendar began and the passage of time, as a marker of how you are progressing as a moral and Christian person was turned afresh. Making progress toward a higher spiritual life was, and still is, an important tenant in Amana's faith. Here expressed in a 16th century hymn sung on New Year's Day:

Oh, help us to forsake all sin, a new and holier course to being!

Mark not, what once was done amiss, A happier, better year be this!



Good Tidings
May the spirit of the holiday
season bring happiness
& warmth to your home
throughout the year.

In observance of
Christmas and New Year,
we will not be open
December 24-25 &
December 30 - January 1.

The Amana
Print Shop

The Amana Print Shop
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