

The Voice

The Newsletter of the Cedar Falls United Church of Christ January 23, 2018.

“In Jesus, God was given a face and a heart. God became someone we could love.” By Richard Rohr

Dear Family and Friends of Cedar Falls UCC,

We had a good turn out for worship and our Annual Meeting yesterday. The Annual Reports are available in the office if you want one and haven't picked one up. Larry provided time for folk to ask questions and talk about anything on their mind.

We would like to grow and be a strong self-sustaining church again. One person commented, questioned, or began to open up the line of thought that maybe our resources would be better used by turning over everything to the conference and letting a new church start happen in this area without a building. We haven't been talking about that. This was brought up and discussed during the interim time.

Since I have been here, we have mostly talked with other small churches in our area. We have talked about whether they might like to share our building. Some of the other points of contact include asking other small churches if they want to share me. The building and my salary package are the churches biggest expenses. We are sustained as a church longer if we share these expenses. We are depleting our endowment paying our expenses. Though

we haven't needed to tap into restricted funds we are within a couple of years to be looking at that possibility.

We are trying to stay open to God's leading and keep all these things on the table. It is important to the health of our community to keep sharing openly and together.

We have some real strengths to move forward with:

First, we love God and God loves us. In Christ we work at living Micah 6:1-8 that means we “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.”

Second, we have people who genuinely care about each other and who want to worship God together.

Third, We have no mortgage on our church building.

Fourth, We offer a progressive voice that no other Christian church in this area is doing at this point.

Fifth, we are maintaining and creating meaningful ministries. The first year of Kaden's Kloset didn't see much use or

growth and the last 6 months we have seen the change. We are affecting many families lives by this ministry.

Growth is slow. It seems to happen in spurts. We will continue to make head way against the trend of those who choose no church. Whether we have enough time financially, I don't know.

Many of us enjoy being with each other and the idea of not being a community of faith is sad and not our first choice. So if we are going to continue we may need to move out of a survival mindset and embark on sharing more boldly, more consistently that we believe God's love and our welcome is extended to all people.

I mentioned in the last Voice that I will be taking 1-2 hours each week to sit in a restaurant at a listening post for anyone to come and talk with me. This time isn't wasted because I have a book along. Currently it is "Tired of Apologizing for a Church I Don't Belong To" by Lillian Daniel. This is a new ministry to begin to offer people "safe" persons who will listen to them.

I have learned that the number 2 cause of death for kids age 10 - 24 years old is suicide. This is appalling to me. I also discovered that many adults have an actual plan to end their life. Please hold in prayer all these concerns and issues. We want to encourage all to value all lives and to know that they/we are not alone.

I saw this on a post and share it with you here: People don't always need advice. Sometimes all they really need is a hand to hold, an ear to listen, and a heart to

understand them. Please hold in prayer all those whom need a listening ear.

If you have news for the church, let me know. We want to include what is going on in your life. We give congratulations to the Newcomb family, Elijah announced that he was going to be a big brother. We look forward to meeting his new brother or sister in **August**. (Correction from the last Voice, I was rushing things.) Congratulations Joe and Karen and Elijah, we are excited for you all.

Instead of Peace Camps offered quarterly in 2018. I will be offering a Faith Retreat for Children around a topic that begins with an intergenerational event to kick off the event. I may see if there are other churches interested in joining with us for this kind of experience as well.

Janice is working with Unity Presbyterian Church and us in presenting a program called: Ceremony of Woman's Song. It is a lot of music and readings about women in the Bible. More information as it develops.

May God's love bring us together and may God's grace hold us together. We are making a difference where we can and how we can. You can make the church stronger. Invite and bring friends to worship.

God bless you! God is awesome! God loves you!

In Christ we serve,
Pastor Sue

FULLY RELY ON GOD!



The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,

The work of Christmas begins:

**To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.**

The Work of Christmas, by Howard Thurman,
from the book entitled *Black Fire: African
American Quakers on Spirituality and Human
Rights*.

We will be inviting anyone who wants to come a bit early on Wednesday evenings (6:15 p.m.) to join us in praying together. We will be praying for things that have been mentioned in worship and anything new.

THANK YOU NOTES

Thank you to Mary Henry and Randy Henry for the poinsettias that decorated our sanctuary. It sure added to our festivities. Thank you both! From your church family

We received a note:
Wilbur and Lorna Heronimus sent a note “to thank the carolers and the lovely gift box received at the Christmas season. We enjoyed it so very much – and know so many put in lots of time for others. Thank you again.”

Dear Friends,
I was surprised to find a Christmas gift from you...but how nice! Thank you! I like the beautiful blue on the Children's Christmas Plate, and the picture of the children around the lighted tree is lovely. I have kept a record of our family Christmases for about 50 years, and on the page for 2017 I recorded that gift as an addition to our Christmas, a gift from all of you. The nicest gift that you have given me, though, is your warm welcome to me, your friendship, and the opportunity for me to be part of a loving community. God bless you all.

Janice

Dear Friends,
Thank you so much for the Birthday cards! I had a great 60th birthday.

I also want to thank Morning Circle and the church for the Christmas box and gifts. I appreciate you all and your thoughtfulness.

Thank you.
Pastor Sue

**Happy Anniversary
to
Randy and Georgia Henry**

**They celebrated their 43rd
anniversary on January 18th.**

Morning Circle
Next meeting is in February.
Morning Circle meets at 9:30 a.m.
on the Third Thursday

United Fellowship

January's United Fellowship went to Cedar Falls' Freshii's for lunch. 5 of us enjoyed the food and time together. Thanks Barb Kuhlman for organizing us.



United Fellowship will be meeting at Sub City 111 Main Street at 11:45 a.m. on Thursday February 1st. A menu is available for viewing in advance, just see Barb Kuhlman and she can show it to you. They have choices of a wide variety of subs and soups.

Cedar Falls UCC Foster Children's Closet (Kaden's Kloset)

In December, we have had a lot of traffic through Kaden's Kloset. Some weeks we have had someone donate or come by to shop almost every day and one Weds. we had around 10 families. There are organizations that are choosing Kaden's Kloset to donate goods to. We have had several children choose to have their friends donate something in honor of their birthdays. We have had a few of the families that are students at UNI or Hawkeye that have used our closet as well. We had one foster family that brought back items they had gotten from us that their child outgrew and they picked out clothes that will now fit. This is a blessing that our closet provides for those families and our community. If

you know of anyone who needs this closet please send them to us. If you have children's clothes, pass them along. Thanks for your on-going support. We can always use diapers so if you are able to find a good deal, these are always welcomed.

A missionary from Zimbabwe came on January 16th. She needed items that still had tags on them that were new. Her ministry is supported by a little shop where they sell these items. We were able to contribute a few items to help them in this cause.

UCC Beyond our Local Church

On January 19th the first ENews letter of the Iowa-Nebraska-South Dakota Conferences of the UCC came out. Brigit Stevens, Executive Conference Minister wrote about the new organization, new structure, new e-mail addresses, and other changes. She also reminded readers that "the really important stuff hasn't changed at all. You see, from God's perspective, all this rearranging and partnering may be well and good and even holy, but it's still just the surface stuff. Sure, we need good structures to do our work and be excellent in our ministry. But email addresses and job titles don't live the gospel and spread love, grace, and justice, people do. People who are in love with God and know Christ as our brother, Savior, and friend, and are inspired by the community of the Holy Spirit reveal the Kin-dom of God here on Earth. People of the church, our constantly changing and rearranging institution, are the chosen vessels for the Gospel of Jesus Christ!"

She goes on to say that "what matters most is that we are all called to BE THE CHURCH together! Love God with all your heart and soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself! Be bold in generosity! Take risks with your abundant love! Watch what God can do among

us and through us to transform our communities and our world!"

Please remember in your prayers all the staff members who have been effected by all the changes and remember to keep Brigit and her family in your prayers as they embark on this new leadership ministry.

West Central R/Y/E Regional Youth Event 2018

When: June 19-22, 2018

Where: Grinnell College

Learn more by going to: rye2018.org

Church Community News

Community Meal on Tuesdays at First United Methodist Church. Our turn to serve is January 30th at 4 p.m.

Community Forum

UNI Center for Holocaust and Genocide Education and UNI Museum have an exhibit to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27, 2018. (Exhibit: January 22 – February 1, 2018 UNI Museum 1st Floor, Rod Library)

We celebrate the many joys in the life of our church family. These major events are precious and give us new life. If you have an event you want to share with the rest of our church family, please send it to:

cedarfallsucc@gmail.com

Congratulations to Brittany and Cam Argotsinger on the birth of their daughter December 30, 2017. Claire Noelle was born healthy and we celebrate her arrival! Her grandfather, Larry Buchholz, was proud to announce her birth on Sunday. She is a delightful joy to all!



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
An Open and Affirming Congregation
“Listening to God with open minds.
Welcoming all with open arms.”
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