

FAITH TALK

Faith United Church of Christ

January 2017

Tripoli, Iowa#

Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived.

Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.

Be very sure now, you who have been trained to a self-sufficient maturity, that you enter into a generous common life with those who have trained you, sharing all the good things that you have and experience.

Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others – ignoring God! – harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.

So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.

~ Galatians 6:1-10

I hope you took the time to thoughtfully read through all of the above verses. If not, go ahead. I'll wait...

While I'm not big into making new life-response promises on January 1, I do find these verses from the Apostle Paul to be exactly how I hope to spend navigating the coming 525,600 minutes of 2017. Offering forgiveness. Reaching out to the oppressed. Sharing the burdens of others. Focusing on the work God has given me to do and making certain I excel at it. And as I do, making certain I do not become impressed with myself!

What I sense in these passages is Paul's recognition of each individual's responsibility in creating goodness around self and around others. We are to hold ourselves accountable for our actions and our reactions. For our life results. Yes, there are occasions when a life chaos or sadness or tragedy is beyond our control, but often we possess the ability to select our life paths and outcomes. Sure

it's often tempting to blame another but if we're honest with ourselves, we actually have a strong voice in our living ways.

It's a reality that seems to have been lost of late. As we look back upon 2016, we find a great deal of finger pointing. Democrats blaming Republicans. Republicans blaming Democrats. Donald Trump blaming the media. Hilary Clinton blaming James Comey. Labor blaming management and vice versa. Non-church attendees blaming church. Church proclaiming the world is going to hell in a hand basket because more people aren't attending worship. Even entertainers and producers go at each other when performances go awry rather than sharing in the blame or even realizing that sometimes things simply go awry. Life happens.

How do you feel about this lack of accountability? Is society too busy dividing everyone into groups – black and white...Christian and Muslim...rural and city...gay and straight...men and women...young adults and well-seasoned folks...and countless other dividing points – that we fail to remember we are all God's children? Created in God's image. Each person loved by God. Sometimes originators of some of the good stuff around us...and sometimes originators of some of the not-so-good stuff we encounter in our lives.

As we begin our next trip around the sun that will move us into 2018, will you join with me in living out Paul's message to the Galatian church? To reflect upon our every action and reaction in the light of the teachings of Jesus. Not simply those when we think someone's watching and we need to look "holy." Not only in those times when we're pretty certain we can look generous and yet not really get involved. We are called to be the voice and hands and feet of our Messiah each and every time we have the opportunity. Which, let's be honest, is relatively often.

Martin Luther was greatly influenced by this epistle to the people of Galatia. He knew the importance of taking care of one another. He wrote, "If there is anything in us, it is not our own; it is a gift of God. But if it is a gift of God, then it is entirely a debt one owes to love, that is, to the law of Christ. And if it is a debt owed to love, then I must serve others with it, not myself."

"But if it is a gift of God, then it is entirely a debt one owes to love, that is, to the law of Christ. And if it is a debt owed to love, then I must serve others with it, not myself."

Here at Faith UCC we have done some amazing law-of-Christ work for others this past year. We have served many within our faith community...those who visit...and those we will never meet. Can we do more? Probably. Can each of us do more individually? Undoubtedly.

Ponder upon this...

What would the beginning of 2018 look and feel and sound like if each of us spent the next 12 months consciously committing to softening our hearts so we might feel the needs of others? How might we diligently keep our eyes focused upon our daily impact upon the lives of others? How might we keep our ears carefully tuned in to spoken and unspoken messages of others?

"Every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all".

Yes. That. Let's do that. Let us follow the words of Paul. Let us work for the benefit of all every time we get the chance. Let us not point fingers or question motives or grumble against others. Let us simply be kind. Let us simply be love. Let us simply be who we are called to be.

~Pastor Marilyn

Faith United Church of Christ
Council Meeting Minutes
*December 8, 2016

Members in attendance - Melvin Ohlendorf, Sue Schwarze, Marlene Snelling, Mary Ann Meyer, Brenda Sievers, Dean Shinstine, Brian Bunce, Holly Johnson. Non-voting: Pastor Marilyn.

Members absent - Jodi Heinemann, Steve Hill, Roger Goudschaal. Non-voting: Barb Hill.

Opening Prayer - Pastor Marilyn.

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Secretary minutes were reviewed. The change made after the meeting regarding the time of the Christmas Eve Service to 6:00 was noted. MSC.

Treasurer report was reviewed. MSC.

Trustee's Report - The cement raising project on the north side of the connector has been completed.

Elder's Report - A committee will be formed to plan the Chili-Oyster Supper on Feb 12, 2017. Serving will be from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Liaisons - Nothing to report.

Pastor's Report - Services during Advent will be: Dec. 11 - Choir (10:00); Dec. 18 - Sunday School Program (10:00); Dec. 22 - Blue Christmas (7:00); Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve, with communion (6:00); Dec. 25 - Christmas Day (9:00); Jan. 1 - New Year's Day, with communion (9:00).

Old Business - Motion to purchase a headset microphone from D B Acoustics for \$238.50. MSC. Discussion was held on the decorative painting to be done in the Narthex.

New Business - Motion to continue the contracts for snow removal provided by Kevin Holm for the sidewalks and Spencer Snelling doing the parking lot. MSC.

Motion to adjourn - MC.

Submitted by Sue Schwarze, Council Secretary

*These minutes have not yet been approved by the church council.

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WOMEN OF FAITH

The Women of Faith will meet on Wednesday, January 11th at 6:45 pm. All women are invited to attend this meeting as we move forward in planning for 2017. We are looking for women to service on the Executive Board. Please pray about being a part of this amazing group!! Hope to see you then.

The **FAITH UCC WOMEN OF FAITH** bring to the church the opportunity to support **HIS HANDS FOOD PANTRY** in Oran through donations.

Each month the items collected are blessed during our 3rd Sunday worship before delivery to the food pantry. For the month of January His Hands Food Pantry has requested donations of

Hygiene Products, such as shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, soap, deodorant

Thank you for your support of this important Mission Project of the church.

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***From HIS HANDS
FOOD PANTRY IN
ORAN...***

Totals for November

Families served: 78

Individuals Served: 196

Total pounds

distributed: 4961

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NE IOWA FOOD BANK MOBILE FOOD PANTRY (MFP)

If you know of a family or single person struggling with food insecurity, please let them know of this opportunity to receive.

Volunteers are a vital part of making the MFP successful. We extend a HUGE thank you to the many volunteers of all ages who give of their time and talents for the MFP! If you can assist in unloading the truck, setting up the food tables, distributing the food items, helping clients carry items to their car, and/or loading remaining items onto the Oran His Hands Food Pantry truck, we invite you to stop by between 4-6 pm on January 26 and lend a hand!

NOTE FROM THE FAITH EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Children's Christmas Program has been rescheduled for January 15th during the 10:00 worship service. Please plan to attend and join us in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments afterwards. Your child/children will also be receiving their Christmas Sacks during this time.

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Waverly Health Center

Waverly Health Center (312 9th St SW, Waverly) is offering "High Blood Pressure: Check, Prevent, Treat" on Tuesday, January 17, 7-8 pm in the Health Center's Tendrils Rooftop Garden. The class is presented by Dr. Renu Bansal of the Christophel Clinic. High blood pressure (hypertension) increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Learn to check, prevent, and treat! If you have questions, call LeAnn Hoffman at 319.483.1360.

ANNUAL MEETING

It's January and that means it is time once again for the Faith United Church of Christ Annual Meeting. Mark your calendars for Sunday, January 22. This meeting is more than a business meeting. It is the opportunity to give thanks to God for the past year...look ahead to how we will move through the coming year...and celebrate all that we are as God's beloved children!

In that spirit, the various official elements of the meeting will be woven into our 10:00 am worship service. We hope you will come and be a part of all that God has, is, and will do at Faith UCC!

Following our worship we will gather in Fellowship Hall for a YUMMY potluck (because you know how well we do those) See you on the 22nd!

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Sacred Space

Prayer for the New Year

A new year coming and God is with us.
In loving and in carrying, in hoping and expecting,
God is with us and never lets us go.
God live in us, God live with us, God live through us.

God keep us faithful through the days that lie ahead,
God keep us caring in the pain that fills your world,
God keep us serving as we seek to do your will,
God live in us, God live with us, God live through us.

God keep us loving toward neighbours near and far,
God keep us trusting through the uncertainties of life,
God keep us sharing from your generous abundance.
God live in us, God live with us, God live through us.
Amen.

~ written by Christine Sine

Scripture Readings for January

These readings are based upon the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) for Year A. The United Church of Christ participates in the Consultation on Common Texts, which has designed the RCL. For more information on the Lectionary, go to www.commontexts.org

	January 1	January 8	January 15	January 22	January 29
Hebrew Scripture	Eccl 3:1-13	Isaiah 42:1-9	Isaiah 49:1-7	Isaiah 9:1-4	Micah 6:1-8
Psalms	Psalms 8	Psalms 29	Psalms 40:1-11	Psalms 27:1, 4-9	Psalms 15
Epistle	Rev. 21:1-6a	Accts 10:34-43	1 Cor. 1:1-9	1 Cor. 1:10-18	1 Cor. 1:18-31
Gospel	Matthew 3:13-17	Matthew 3:12-17	John 1:29-42	Matthew 4:29-42	Matthew 5:1-12

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Thank You!

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Thank you for the Christmas gift.
Kenny & Darlys Buhrow

Thank you for the Christmas gift. I appreciate your thoughtfulness. I enjoy my job at Faith and feel so lucky to be part of this staff.
Happy New Year!
Barb Rich

Thank you to all who helped make this such a special holiday season for me. Thank you to the congregation for the generous Christmas gift. Thank you to the Women of Faith for the gift card (I see a shopping spree in my future!) Thank you to all who extended to me a blessed Christmas wish by stopping into the office, phoning, mailing a card or bringing in a gift. You are all a gift in my world during Christmastide and all year long!

~ Pastor Marilyn

A message of gratitude from Melvin and Verdeen Ohlendorf...

We would like to thank all of our Faith family for all the concerns, thoughts, and prayers during the two years and eight months of our daughter Mary Lou Mattke's struggle with brain cancer. Following her death, the overwhelming response of all the many cards, memorials, and prayers from all of you is just unbelievable.

Thank you to Pastor Marilyn for your many times of comforting words and prayers during this time that we were all hoping for a miracle instead of death. That helped tremendously. At a time like this is when you really find out how many friends you have. Mary will truly be missed.

Again, thank you each and every one for all you have done for us. May God Bless you all.

~ Melvin and Verdeen

Let us pray...

If you would like to add a name to our monthly prayer list, please contact the church office at 319.882.3585 or email faithuccchurch@gmail.com. The names will typically remain on our prayer list for three months, however we recognize that there are situations and concerns that continue for a longer period of time. If you would like your prayer request to be extended, please notify the office at 319.882.3585 or Pat Warner at 319.882.3162.

In times of crisis and concern, knowing that others are praying for you can be a healing comfort for the ill or injured one as well as the family. Faith United Church of Christ has an active prayer chain that fervently prays in times of need. If you would like to be added to the list of folks who pray, please call Pat Warner, 319.882.3162. If you would like to have a prayer chain begun for you or someone you know needs prayers lifted for them, please call the church office, 319.882.3585 or Pat Warner.

We pray for healing and well-being for these beloved children of God...

DiAnna Arthur (receiving treatment)
Forrest Bolte (receiving at-home Hospice Care)
Richard Buhr (receiving rehab at TNH&R)
Carma Buska (receiving treatment at Bartels)
Scott Hyde (receiving treatment)
Fran Kirchhoff (receiving treatment at Waverly Health Center)
Bob Rathbone (receiving rehab at Bartels)
Sue Sinwell (Dolores Schmidt's daughter)

We pray for members and friends of the church actively serving in the Military...

Brandon Burrows	Matthew Coulthard	Kaitlin Westendorf
Derek Ohlendorf	Adam Ohlendorf	Shane Buchholz

We hold in prayer those in residence...

<i>Bartels</i> (Waverly)	Lorraine Hastings	Betty Holm
<i>Hillcrest Home</i> (Sumner)	Les Biermann	
<i>Mallard Point</i> (Cedar Falls)	Mardell Kirchhoff	
<i>Shell Rock Healthcare</i> (Shell Rock)	Fran Kirchhoff (see above)	
<i>Tripoli Nursing & Rehab</i> (Tripoli)	Betty Hills	Orlyn Milius Jean Bentley
<i>Whispering Willows</i> (Fredericksburg)	Bernice Ambrose	
<i>Cobblestone Court</i> (Sumner)	Garnetta Snyder	

We also pray for all of God's children who are living in a world of chaos and anger and hunger and fear. We pray for those who call out to God and those who feel unworthy to lift their eyes to the One who loves them unconditionally. We pray for those who may be sitting at the desk next to us or living down the street or waking up in a community on the other side of the globe.

God of love and grace and promise, hear our prayers...

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JANUARY SCHEDULE

HEAD USHER: Dean Shinstine &
Jodi Heinemann

Ushers:

1 Council
8 Sandra Snyder
15 Mike & Kathy Westendorf
22 Larry & Joan Struck
29 Kenneth & Darlys Buhrow

Greeters:

1 Dolores Schmidt
8 Steve & Dawn Dahlstrom
15 Dean & Brenda Shinstine
22 Tracy Buchholz &
Theresa Drewis
29 David & Ruth Kirchhoff

Liturgists:

1
8 Larry Struck
15 Helen Milius
22 Sunday School Program
29 Susan Cline

Fellowship Time Servers:

1 Jerry & Marlene Snelling
8 Marlys Biermann,
Kenneth & Darlys Buhrow
15 Sunday School Program
22 Potluck
29 Barb Hill & Dolores Schmidt

Sunday School Treats

1 No Sunday School
8 Marlys Biermann
15 Sunday School Program
22 Vernetta Bunce
29 Darlys Buhrow

In the coming months would you like
to volunteer for one of these tasks?
Contact the church office,
319.882.3585

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 Adam Kirchhoff
3 Marian Meyer
4 Levi Root
5 Doug Weeber
6 Phoebe Drape
Kristin Sievers
7 Alfred Gloede
8 Velda Lynch
10 Darlene Bahlman
11 Maguire Johnson
12 Judy Buhr
Adam Kehe
13 Brad Buchholz
Kim Kehe
14 Ron Quigley
15 Max Moeller
16 Karen Bolte
17 Aubree Swift
19 Mary Ann Meyer
20 Shawn Marquis
21 Donna Sassman
23 Larry Kammeyer
25 Paisley Liddle
27 Brian Buchholz
28 Sherri Blume
30 Shane Buchholz
Marlys Ryan
31 Jim Boeckman