

Faith Talk

Faith United Church of Christ

September 2020

Tripoli, Iowa

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

Dan Gloede
Kason Judisch
Cam Richards
Daryl Weidemann
Mary Jo Rathe
Richard Buhr

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

Brandon Burrows
Matthew Coulthard
Keenan Gienau
Kristian Heidemann
Ethan Henry
Austin Kingsbury
Kaitlin Westendorf

We hold in prayer our members in home...

Jean Bentley
Richard Buhr
Verlyn & Phyllis Buls
Velda Lynch
Orlyn Milius
Larry & Marty Smalley
Gar Snyder
Jo Ann Steward

*You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust."
~Psalm 91:1-2*

Do you recognize these words as the beginning lyrics (with slight variation) of Fr. Michael Joncas' hymn, "On Eagle's Wings"? It's a favorite of mine. I've played it at funerals and special gatherings. I've sung it in church and around the house. I love the reminder of God's never-ending presence in my life. How I am safely nestled in those wings of an eagle...held protectively in God's palm...not needing to fear the terror of the night nor the arrows of anger that fly by day. I am reminded that God is directing the angels to guard me in all of my days.

Then why am I still so scared?

*Do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.
~ Isaiah 41:10*

2020 has been one of the most challenging years I have ever experienced. I know I'm not alone. So I'm putting this out there to make certain you know that YOU are not alone either.

Now some folks think that ministers have it all together...that we have a super-strong faith to guide us through everything (we do have strong faith but we still stumble at times). Trust me. We are not that put together. Sorry to pull back the curtain and expose myself and my colleagues but we have worries and concerns and fears just as you do.

And today I am scared.

*When I am afraid,
I put my trust in you.
~ Psalm 56:3*

I am scared because this country has been experiencing wildfires in the west...dueling hurricanes and tornadoes in the south and the east...and a derecho right here in our beloved Midwest. While weather has always been a constant factor in our lives, the additional powerful strength of these natural disasters can be directly attributed to the changing climate in our country and the world. And I'm scared about whether we can stop it.

(continued)

*I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous;
do not be frightened or dismayed,
for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
~ Joshua 1:9*

I am scared (and so very sad) that in this country we cannot live into the words of the Declaration of Independence, "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men [and women] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.*" I continue to pray that "equality for all" will become a reality, but we know it has not. The system and the society of our country have not allowed that to happen. Black men and women are not equal in the eyes of too many. Nor are Hispanics. Latinos. Asians. Women. Immigrants. Children. LGBTQ. Individuals with disabilities. The elderly. The food insecure. The low-income. Vision impaired. Deaf.

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.
~ Psalm 23:4*

I am scared at how deeply our politics are in pandemonium. Blatant lies fill the newspapers, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, television news reports, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat. What to believe? Who to believe? When to stop believing? Who can vote? Who will vote? Where and how will they vote?

*Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them,
because it is the LORD your God who goes with you;
God will not fail you or forsake you."
~ Deuteronomy 31:6*

And then, of course, there is this pandemic that has overtaken our lives for most of this year and likely most of next year. This infectious COVID-19 disease has gripped the countries of the world. Here in the United States we listen to the guidance of doctors and scientists but then become confused when other sources tell us something else. Again, what to believe and who to believe? The virus is imbedding itself in people – some get a bad case...some experience just mild discomfort...or some display very few symptoms. And some very sadly die. As I write this, Iowa has added more than 1,000 positive cases in the past 24 hours (now at a total of 63,112) and 17 deaths (now at a total of 1,109). This past week we rose to first in the nation for per capita cases. I am scared for me. And I am scared for you. And I BEG you to wear your mask when you are not at home.

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
~ Psalm 46:1*

I find the above Bible verses good reminders of God's love and strength and presence. Good reminders that none of us are experiencing this atypical year of 2020 alone. God is with us no matter what...no matter when...no matter where. But if you are like me, sometimes it's just so darn hard to rise above the fear that rises in our body so I'm going to keep this list handy. I invite you to do the same and add others that soothe you.

And finally, let us continue to talk with each other. Really talk. When your friend or your sister or *your pastor* asks, "How are you doing?" don't instantly reply, "Fine!" By sharing our truth with our trusted confidants, we will likely discover we are not walking down the path of panic alone. And sometimes that alone can calm our fears. And God. Always God.

Blessings,
Pastor Marilyn

Outreach Ministries

At the August 27 **Tripoli Mobile Food Pantry** we served 45 households (104 individuals). The NE Iowa Food Bank once again sent boxes of food – one frozen, one dairy, one produce, one dry food, and one with Girl Scout lemon cookies! Although we didn't have the Iowa National Guard to help load this time, we did have the strong help of Rich, Helen, Steve, and Dan. Thanks for caring and thanks for working through the heat of the day!

His Hands Food Pantry in Oran continues to serve residents of Denver, Fairbank, Frederika, Maynard, Oran, Randalia, Readlyn, Sumner, Tripoli, and Westgate. Tuesday nights, 5-8 pm. Friday mornings, 9-noon. If you have questions or an immediate need, contact Pantry directors, Roger at 563.920.8522, or Mary at 563.920.3857. In July, His Hands serviced 75 families consisting of 205 individuals and distributed 9,568 pounds of food.

Helping Hands Clothing Closet, 2028 Viking Ave, Sumner, had 134 client visits in August and their volunteers gave 47 hours of their time. They received \$500 from the Northeast Iowa Board of Realtors, donations of new underwear, socks and clothes for school kids from individuals and many donations of gently used clothing. The monetary gift will be used to purchase winter clothing and boots for kids. Helping Hands is open on Tuesdays 9 to 11 am; Wednesdays 6:30 to 7:30 pm, and the first Saturday of the month 9 to 11 am. Helping Hands continues to follow all the CDC guidelines for the safety of volunteers and clients.

Prayer Chain

The Faith UCC prayer chain is a group made up of members of our beloved congregation. They are a dedicated and vital part of our church, leaning upon their deep faith in God and prayer. If you have a prayer need, contact Pastor Marilyn at the church office at 319.882.3585 or email. rev.msargent@gmail.com. Prayer Chain coordinator Pat Warner will be notified and the prayer chain begins.

The power of prayer is real as many of you have undoubtedly experienced. If you would like to add your voice to the prayer chain, please contact Pastor Marilyn.

Blood Drive

Faith United Church of Christ hosted a **Community Blood Drive** on Wednesday, August 19, 2:30-5:30 pm in the Educational Wing lobby. Twelve individuals donated blood, helping an estimated 36 lives! THANK YOU!!! The next blood drive is Wednesday, December 16th. Appointments are **required** to give blood. There are three ways to schedule your appointment:

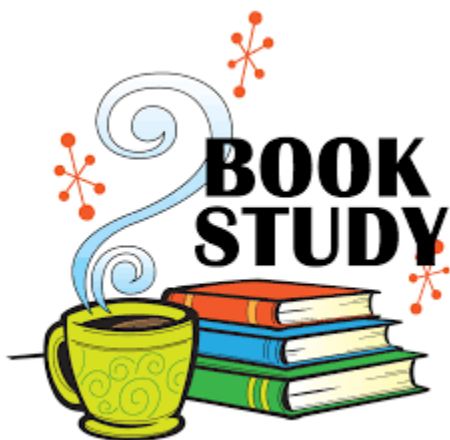
- Call LifeServe at 800.387.4903
- Text LIFESERVE to 999-777
- Visit www.lifeservebloodcenter.org

Bring a valid form of identification such as a donor ID card or driver's license. All donors will be required to wear a mask for the duration of their appointment. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided. *Walk-in donations are not accepted at this time.*



For many years, Faith United Church of Christ has been recognized as a **5 for 5 Congregation**. This is a recognition of which we can be proud. Only 32.6% of all UCC congregations receive this designation. For those unfamiliar with term, a 5 for 5 Congregation provides monetary support to each national ministry of the United Church of Christ – the ongoing giving to Our Church’s Wider Mission, plus the four special mission offerings throughout the year: One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need and The Christmas Fund.

The week following our decision to halt in-sanctuary worship was the week we were scheduled to offer our gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing. While some did send money to the office, most of that offering opportunity and the ones following have not or will not be promoted and received in the typical fashion. While our giving totals may not be at the level of previous years, I believe it is important for our congregation to continue to honor our long-standing commitment to 5 for 5. Might you be able to contribute additional funds to any or all of these giving opportunities in the coming months? If so, please mark your check or envelope as to what fund or funds you are contributing. Thank you!



How to do a Book Study in these times of social distancing? Well, that’s what Vicki Olesen and Pastor Marilyn are hoping to discover! Vicki has offered to lead the study and set up the Zoom audio/video conferencing. Even if you do not have access to a computer, with Zoom you are able to use any phone to join in on the conversation. The book study will allow us the opportunity to read and discuss faith-focused books. Through weekly discussion we will be free to wrestle with questions which may or may not have answers; experience some “ah-ha” moments; understand how our faith influences our lives and the lives of those around us; and reflect upon our continuing spiritual journey with our Still-Speaking God. If you’ve never been a part of a book study, we encourage you to give it a try. To quote a member of another book study, *“Being honest, a book club really is the least likely activity I thought I’d ever join in with at church. That said, I’ve been surprised by how much I’ve enjoyed journeying through a book with others.”* We will post more details after we determine who is interested. Might that be you? We’d love to hear from you. Have questions? We will answer them as best we can. Email Vicki at vickioleson57@gmail.com or Pastor Marilyn at rev.msargent@gmail.com or call the church office at 319.882.3585.

Faith United Church of Christ
Council Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2020

Members In Attendance via ZOOM: Roger Goudschaal, Tracy Buchholz, Steve Hill, Keith Stahlhut, Vicki Oleson, Brian Bunce, Lisa Chapin, and Juanita Mohlis.

Also In Attendance via ZOOM: Pastor Marilyn Sargent and Barb Hill

Member(s) Absent: Ashley Penrod, Dean Shinstine, Daniel Groskurth , and Trevor Johnson

Opening Prayer: Pastor Marilyn Sargent

Meeting called to order at 6:36 pm by President Roger Goudschaal.

Minutes of July 6, 2020:

Motion to approve previous minutes by Tracy Buchholz; Second by Brian Bunce. Motion Carried

Treasurer's Report:

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report by Lisa Chapin, Second by Steve Hill. Motion Carried
Ed Buchholz account dipped due to Covid and has come back.

Trustee's Report:

No new business

Elder's Report:

No new business

Liaison's Report:

Faith Education Committee has not yet met to discuss Sunday School start date.

Pastor's Report:

Barb Rich will begin working one or two days a week.

Pastor is helping with other Bremer County leaders in planning the Holiday Shoppe during the pandemic. The Shoppe is a longtime tradition that provides holiday gifts to children and families who live in Bremer County and receive public assistance. The gifts are donated and then “shopped” by the parents. During the pandemic, receiving and distribution will need to be restructured. Traditionally numerous students from Wartburg College assist with the planning and staffing. This year most Wartburg students will be gone from Thanksgiving to January 1. However, the planning group is committed to find a new way to experience an old tradition!

Old Business:

Continue discussion on when we could reopen church. Contact Grace Church and they will be opening church on August 9th.

New Business:

No new business

Adjourn:

Motion by Steve Hill, Second Lisa Chapin. Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Bunce

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Council.

Did you know...

- there is a box on the altar in the connector where you can place your checks for the church or notes for Pastor Marilyn.
- your continued financial support is SO appreciated. The expenses do continue. To date we have not found it necessary to borrow money to pay our expenses. PRAISE GOD!!!
- if you prefer online giving, visit our website www.faithucctripoli.org. On the far-right side you'll find a "Giving" button. Click on that, follow the instructions, and your gift will be on its way to the church's bank account!
- also on the website home page is a link to the most recent worship/message video. Older videos are under the tab "Faith Chat."
- If you would like the monthly newsletter delivered directly to your inbox, send your email address to Pastor Marilyn, rev.msargent@gmail.com. If you know someone who is unable to receive by email and is not currently receiving by mail, please contact Pastor Marilyn to have a copy mailed to them.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2	Lisa Chapin	19	Roger Buchholz
	Orlyn Milius		Bonnie Travers
3	Peyton Benson	21	Amy Drewis
4	R.J.Ott	22	Justin Dillon
5	Vern Bolte	24	Randy Rinkenburger
8	Travis Buhrow	27	Sue Schwarze
9	Brian Bunce	28	Delores Meier
	Jennifer Dillon		
12	Wendy Hawes		
15	Cheyenne Moore		
16	Rich Milius		
	Garnetta Snyder		
	Adelade Lang		
17	Jan Heidemann		

**Happy
Birthday!**

What is faith?

**It is the confident assurance
that something we want is
going to happen.
It is the certainty that what we
hope for is waiting for us,
even though
we cannot see it up ahead.**

~ Hebrews 11:1
(Living Bible)