



Faith Talk



Faith United Church of Christ

December 2025

Tripoli, IA

Connect with us!

Church Office phone:

319-882-3585

Office Staffed:

Tuesday & Thursdays 9am to 3 pm

Temporarily Nights and Weekends

Cell phone:

319-327-4441

If you cannot reach the office,
feel free to call the cell phone.

Website:

<https://faithucctripoli.org/>

YouTube:

@faithunitedchurchofchrist2821

Christmas: Is It Really The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year?

The background has faded from pumpkin spice, turkey and dressing to holiday scenery.

Christmas music is piped into stores, and Christmas shopping is in full force. Hallmark movies are on TV with holiday commercials that scream families always make it home for Christmas.

What if nothing about this time of year gives you the sense that this is the most wonderful time of the year? What if the only thing you can think of is how everything is different this year? You can not find joy in tackling holiday tasks such as decorating, baking, or shopping for that perfect gift. What if Advent season seems too far out of reach? How do you anticipate the birth of Jesus with excitement? Where do you find that hope, peace, joy, and love when lighting the Advent candle each week? What if your world screams of loneliness, grief and loss, unemployment, financial despair, addiction, failed relationships, and etc. What happens when these feelings seem stronger than the promises of Advent?

The question becomes who do you surround yourself with and how can you cope with these mixed feelings. This time of the year we are reminded firsthand of the mixed feeling between the loneliness we have found ourselves facing and the promises found in the Advent candles. How do we find light amid so much darkness? As believers we know that God is love and that love came from heaven to earth in human form. How can we honor our feelings of loneliness and grief while making space for love? Is there space to honor both grief and love?

Perhaps we can acknowledge it's different this year. Acknowledging our grief and loss, our pain, our hurt, and our anger. Perhaps we can sit with our loneliness, while also acknowledging the promises found in scripture.

The truth is it doesn't have to be one or the other. Perhaps it requires us to dig deep and acknowledge our pain while also holding onto the promises of Advent. Christmas also challenges us to be that welcoming space. If the light of the world can sit with those who have experienced despair and loss helping them to hold both their grief and their love, then we can sit and listen to one another too. We can show the love of Christ this Advent season. Giving opportunities for Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love while making space for the grief. We are called to love one another through the Christmas season while sharing the Advent message of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Then we can truly proclaim:

Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year!

Bonnie Travers



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

Carol Kammeyer	Dean Shinstine
Nadine Schnurstein	Keith Stahlhut
Cheryl Dahlstrom	Megan Anderson
Doretta Brandhorst	Gerald Liddle
Shirley Brown	Roger Davis
Dan Goskurth	

We hold in prayer our members in home...

JoAnn Steward
Verlyn & Phyllis Buls Marlys Ryan

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

Brandon Burrows	Charten Wells
Matthew Coulthard	Colton Henry
Kristian Heidemann	Alyssa Jones

We continue to pray for the families and communities where lives and sense of safety have been shattered.

We mourn with the family and friends of Edna Shinstine on her passing. We give thanks for Edna's new eternal home with God.

Faith United Church of Christ
Council Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2025

Members in Attendance: Kathy Westendorf, Traci Bahrenfuse, Vicki Oleson, Sharon McLavey,

Dave Kirchhoff, Mike Westendorf, Bonnie Travers, Conrad Marsh and Jay Ranard

Members in Attendance via Zoom: Brenda Shinstine and Kara Marsh

Also in Attendance: Barb Hill Absent Members: Dean Shinstine

Opening Prayer

Meeting called to order by Dave Kirchhoff

Approval of October 6th Minutes: Motion to approve by Kathy Westendorf. Seconded by Jay Ranard.

Treasurer Report: Motion to approve by Conrad Marsh. Seconded by Vicki Oleson.

Trustee Report:

Parsonage rent, October 24th renters reached out and asked us to work with them during this time, other costly repairs/issues came up this month.

Water disconnect is broken to the parsonage, Church's responsibility to repair. Sam Smith Excavating will be coming in to complete, needs repaired by November 30th .

Jay working with a consultant for Church360 to review the ledger system. Looking to get this scheduled this week. They charge per members of the church (294 total members with 127 active members) costs will be \$1,000/year. Grace church uses this software and love it. Jay is confident this would be a great addition to Faith UCC's financial systems. Better tracking, understanding and clear sections for each office personnel. There is a 30-day free trial that we will pursue after Jay and Barb meet with the consultant from Church360 and decide to move forward.

Snow removal – need to call Kevin Holme, last year charge was \$55/time, need to confirm price is the same. Spencer Snelling performs the church parking lot – calling to confirm will still perform this year.

November 30th after church– Trustees will get together to get a budget started.

Ellen Kalkbrenner still interested in backfilling Barb Hill's financial role. Ellen sent in a letter for consideration for this role.

Tree removal still needed at the cemetery, Brad Anthony out of Strawberry Point – insured and will be out to look to give us a quote.

Boiler did not pass inspection; it passed previously but now did not pass. Valves ordered and Ryan still needs to install, waiting on quote.

Elder Report:

Sunday November 23rd after Church – decorations for Christmas and prepare for hanging of the greens. Sunday the 30th Hanging of the Greens.

Confirmation has started; everything is going well. Confirmands choosing mentors. Confirmation

Sunday will be in May – still pending final date.

Ordering new curriculum for Sunday School to spread focus for all age groups.

Sharon motion to have Sunday school and Sunday service numbers added to the front board by head ushers every Sunday and seconded by Jay Ranard.

Women of Faith fundraiser on 11/16, silent auction on baskets.

Singing service 11/23, will be a great service with lots of music.

Liaison Report: Brad Buchholz wooden plaque to be hung above the basement piano.

Renewed CD's for the memorial funds. Bank has been notified that the endowment CD to accumulate interest instead of depositing it into the account.

Old Business: Meeting with St John Segal and Kendi Miller from the UCC conference in our December regular council meeting.

New Business: Barb Rich will be off starting November 13th for 4-6 weeks for recovery. Sharon McLavey will be backfilling for her while she is out. Council agrees to pay Sharon for training and for covering while Barb is out.

Ellen Kalkbrenner's daughter Ellie had a house fire and lost everything. Kathy would like to ask for donations to help this family.

New copier coming November 12 th .

Motion to adjourn by Traci Bahrenfuse . Seconded by Sharon McLavey.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted:

Traci Bahrenfuse

November 30th first Sunday in Advent –confirming if we will be doing hanging of the greens.

Sharon McLavey training with Barb Rich to cover her with any absences.

Looking into Amazon Prime to see if it would be worth purchasing to receive free shipping and other benefits.

Steve looking into the computer and printer in the Ed wing for printing for Sunday School activities when the church office is locked.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Congregational meeting all in favor to continue speaking with St John Church on sharing a Pastor. Reached out to Kendi Miller, she will be coming up in December to our council meeting to invite St John's UCC committee to have a meeting all together to further discuss.

Trunk or Treat – October 18th Motion for Sharon to be present for the trunk or treat and passing out treats if we are allowed to still signup by Vicki Oleson. Seconded by Mike Westendorf.

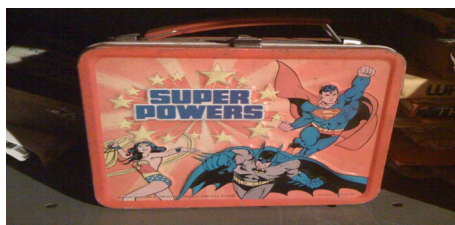
October 11th – Iowa Conference UCC Annual Meeting – Faith UCC was invited but no one was available to attend.

Motion to adjourn by Traci Bahrenfuse Seconded by Kathy Westendorf.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted:

Traci Bahrenfuse



Lunch Box Contributions

The Lunch Box Fund raised \$40.00! Thanks to everyone who has contributed. Feel free to contribute.

Thanks, Beth Goudschaal

Coffee Fellowship Servers

December 7 Dean & Brenda Shinstine

December 14 Sunday School Staff

December 21 Ken & Juanita Mohlis

December 24

December 28

Thank you for serving!



Sunday Supply Pastor Schedule

December 7 Rev. David Feltman (Communion)

December 14 Rev. Gary Catterson

December 21 Rev. David Feltman

December 24 Mike Westendorf / Roger Goudschaal

December 28 Rev. Cathy Young

'Women of Faith'

Wednesday December 3rd

will be the 'Women of Faith' Christmas Party

The Evening will begin at 5:00 p.m. with a Light Evening Meal followed by

Games of Fun \$15.00 Gift Exchange Offering for a Home Mission

All Women of Faith are invited to the party



A Special Thank You.....

**Faith United Church of Christ had another great event.
Our Hot Roast Beef Lunch and Silent Auction was a huge success.
We want to thank each and everyone of you who joined
us for the delicious lunch.**

**Thank you to the persons who donated the food,
Special Thank You to the person who donated the Roast Beef.
Thank you to the people that cleaned up after the lunch.**

**Many thanks to the persons that donated items for
the Silent Auction and a huge thank you to the winning bidders.
There was a lot of laughter, fun and great fellowship.**

Our Lunch and Silent auction was all profit.

**Thank you to everyone who helped in any way.
This is so greatly appreciated!**

**A lot of helping hands...make for a 'Faith Loving' Family.
The Lord shares His Love for us through 'Special People' like you!**

**Thank you for your help, your gifts, your kindness
and your support for this "Faith Fun" Event.
Thank you!!!**

**May God Bless You!
~ Women of Faith ~**

December Birthday's

December 4	Kristi Foelske
	Sandra Ladage
December 7	Bob Kammeyer
December 9	Breckyn Liddle
December 10	Larry Piehl
December 11	Laurie Brhrow
December 12	Ryan Osborn
December 16	Hayden Liddle
December 17	Brittany Quigley
December 17	Trevor Bunce
December 18	Kristi Bass
December 20	Verdeen Ohlendorf
December 24	Beth Goudschaal
December 24	Mary Moeller
December 26	Jessica Raymond
December 27	Scott Chapin

December Anniversaries

December 6	Gary & Sandra Snyder
December 31	Scott & JoEllen Behn

Faith United Church of Christ Finances

General Fund 2025

	<u>November</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Offerings	\$11,384.25		
Expenses	\$ 6,197.99	\$8,704.42	\$2,506.43

Year-to-date 2025

Offerings	\$111,764.88
Expenses	\$ 89,133.84

Cemetery Operations Fund 2025

September 2025

Portfolio Value	\$58,120.90
Checking Account Balance	1,578.14
Savings Account Balance	<u>105.46</u>
TOTAL	\$59,804.50

Worship by the numbers...

October 2025

	<u>In-person Attendance</u>	<u>Online Viewing</u>	<u>General Offering</u>
Oct. 5	56	32	\$ 1,385.25
Oct. 12	56	32	\$2,197.00
Oct. 19	71	30	\$2,440.00
Oct. 26	39	32	\$1,367.00

Church Council/Terms

President	Dave Kirchhoff
Vice President	Vicki Oleson
Recorder	Traci Bahrenfuse

Elders

Vicki Oleson	2nd term expires Jan. 31, 2026
Traci Bahrenfuse	1st term expires Jan. 31, 2026
Kara Marsh	2nd term expires Jan.31, 2027
Sharon McLavey	2nd term expires Jan.31, 2027*
Bonnie Travers (Head Elder)	2nd term expires Jan. 31, 2028
Kathy Westendorf	2nd term expires Jan. 31, 2028

Trustees

Dave Kirchhoff	1st term expires Jan. 31, 2026
Mike Westendorf (Head Trustee)	1st term expires Jan. 31, 2028
Jay Ranard	1st term expires Jan.31, 2028
Conrad Marsh	2nd term expires Jan. 31, 2026
Brenda Shinstine	2nd term expires Jan. 31, 2028
Dean Shinstine	1st term expires Jan. 31, 2026

Faith UCC Staff

Admin. Assistant	Barb Rich
Financial Secretary	Roger Goudschaal
Treasurer	Barb Hill
Custodian	Samantha Rossum
Director of Music	Beth Goudschaal
Musicians	June Buhr
	Phoebe Drape
	Sara Goudschaal
	Dawn Holm
	Mary Jo Rathe

December 2025

30 9:00 am Sunday Sch & Confirmation 10:00 am Worship w/Communion	1 6:00 pm Elders Mtg. 6:00 pm Trustee Mtg. 6:30 pm Council Mtg	2 8:15 am ZOOM Book Study	3 6:00 pm Choir practice	4 1 pm Drop-A-Stitch	5
7 9:00 am Sunday Sch & Confirmation 10:00 am Worship	8	9 8:15 am ZOOM Book Study	10 6:00 pm Choir Practice	11 1 pm Drop-A-Stitch	12
14 9:00 am Sunday Sch & Confirmation 10:00 am Worship Sunday School Sings Adult Choir Sings	15	16 8:15 am ZOOM Book Study	17 6:00 pm Choir Practice	18 1 pm Drop-A-Stitch Submission Deadline For Newsletter	19
21 9:00 am Sunday Sch & Confirmation 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am Memorial Comm. Mtg.	22	23 8:15 am ZOOM Book Study 2:15pm - Willow Winds 6:15 pm - TNH	24 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Ser- vice	25 	26
28 9:00 am Sunday Sch & Confirmation 10:00 am Worship	29	30 8:15 am ZOOM Book Study	31 New Year's Eve	1 WELCOME 2026!	27