

The Circuit Rider

United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon



304 1st Street SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

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January 2019

Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends,

What a beautiful gift this year has been in the church. As we enter the New Year, I can't help but hold tight to the beautiful gift of Jesus Christ, as our way, our truth, and our life. I'm grateful for the Word who is Immanuel, God with Us. I'm grateful for the opportunity to celebrate the birth of our Savior, and the great love of God the Father. I'm grateful that God offers opportunities to start fresh each and every day, to walk away from the sins that try to tear us away from God and one another, as we have the opportunity to run into the loving arms of God our Father, who transforms us by the incredible power of God's Holy Spirit.

Many enter this year with anxiety and trepidation for the church, wondering what will happen to our local church in the midst of the turmoil of the greater United Methodist Church. Please hear these words. Our God is not anxious. Jesus reminds us not to be anxious, reminding us that he feeds the birds of the air. God will care for us. Our job is to be faithful to our God. We will continue to love the Lord our God with all of our Heart, all of our Soul, all of our Mind, and all of our Strength, because God first loved us. We will continue to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and equip the saints for ministry. We will continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, because of God's love for us.

I've been offered a special opportunity to travel to Romania with a class from Asbury Theological Seminary this month. I depart on January 4th and will return on the 13th of January. I'll be traveling to Arad, Romania with a class of ten Master of Divinity students, and Randy Jessen who is the professor. He's asked me to co-lead the trip. The class will be looking at ministry from the different cultural contexts. We will visit Ana's house, which is a ministry of Global Hope. (Global Hope is the organization we are partnering with in Sibiu, Romania that holds the Super Kids Academy). We will visit the Romanian Orthodox Seminary, a Pentecostal Seminary and have theological conversations as we compare our Wesleyan denominations (of which the United Methodist Church is one) to theirs. We will visit a Baptist church and several others. We will discuss the context of their population and history, including the Roma people who are known as the Gypsies of Romania. I will miss you as you worship together on January 6th and 13th, but I have great faith in the preaching of Dillon Fawcett on January 6th, and Jim Baty on the 13th. My friend, Melody Williams, who pastors at the UMC in Anamosa will be available if there are any pastoral emergencies that arise while I am gone. She will be a blessing to you. I'll look forward to returning to worship with you on January 20th.

As you look forward to this New Year, I challenge you to take one scripture, and learn to live into it. What is it that God is trying to teach you in this season of life? Let's live into the promise of transformation that God offers. Choose one word, one scripture verse or passage, and ask God to help you to transform into the Sanctified Christian he is working on in you. What will that look like for you? "Do not be anxious?", "Put on the armor of God.", "Pray continually", "Give thanks in all circumstances."... What is it that God is working to transform next in you to bring you to the holiness and whole self he has created you to be? Remember that first, he loves you right where you are, and next he loves you too much to leave you there. Rest in his grace, his love, and his peace.

With Great Love, Pastor Joy



Alpha, a ten-week course in the basics of Christianity, has been used all over the world as an effective means of evangelism and practical introduction to the Christian faith for people of all different backgrounds. The

course is meant to offer a very open and easy

place to ask questions and to explore the claims of Christianity.

Alpha is awesome for persons new to faith or questioning what it is all about, it is also a refreshing and renewing experience for persons who already claim their faith. Do you want to start the New Year out on the right foot? Do you want to be part of a course that could be life changing for you? Be sure to save Monday evenings in the New Year to be part of the exciting Alpha experience.

Watch for more information in early January—in the meantime, contact our ALPHA Leaders with questions:

Chase Sonnemaker {sonnemakerchase@gmail.com}

Judith Pim { judithannpim@gmail.com }

Kim Stoner {KStoner@hacap.org}

Join in the Conversation!

Starting Monday nights, First Session: January 21st

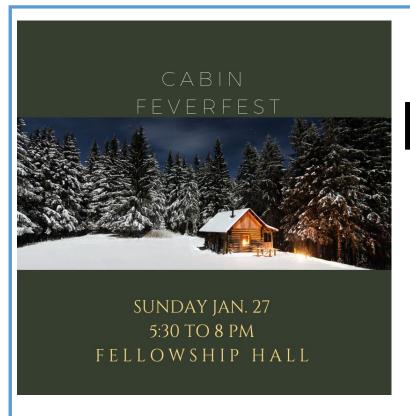
Program is for 11 weeks

Sunday Worship Schedule:

8:30 am Praise Worship

9:45 am Sunday School

11:00 am Traditional Worship



Cabin Feverfest

Mark your calendars for "Cabin Feverfest"!!

Sunday, January 27, 2019 from 5:30 – 8:00pm, in Fellowship Hall. Come enjoy an evening of food, fun and fellowship for all ages, during this intergenerational celebration!

We will have a soup (chili and chicken noodle) potluck,

We will have a soup (chili and chicken noodle) potluck games and desserts. Watch for more details and sign up information coming soon.

UMCMV Hospitality Committee



Woman's Bible Study

Part 2 starting January 9th

Wednesdays, 9:30-11:00 am

Balcony Classroom @ UMCMV _ "The Amazing Life of Jesus Christ"

"Whether you are just meeting Jesus for the first time or if you have known Him for years, the Scripture and in-depth, thoughtful questions in this 12 week DVD study, The Amazing Life of Jesus Christ, will help you apply His truth to your life."

To Register Text or Call - Cathy #319-551-6666

Clint Stanerson	01/01
Tessa Baty	01/02
Myrt Bowers	
Julie Nosek	01/03
Gavin Light	01/04
Paige Roos	
Lauren Adams	01/05
Kerry Kahl	01/07
Janet Griffith	01/08
Ed Fordyce	01/12
Barb Shepley	01/13
Karlyn Connolly	01/15
Lara Cooper	01/16
Camden Meyer	01/19
Robbin Rekemeyer	
Angie Swartzendruber	
Bill Bacher	01/20
Benjamin Havill	
Terry Pisarik	
Teresa Stewart	

January Birthdays

01/21
01/22
01/23
01/25
01/26
01/27
01/28
01/29
01/31

JANUARY Anniversaries

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Walt & Sharon Krambeck	01/05
Ray & Nancy Reasland	01/26

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

In response to our 4th SE Linn Bulk Food delivery, their director, Nicole Alexander sent over this statement: "Southeast Linn Community Center is so grateful for your support of the food pantry. The donations from United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon are crucial to keeping the pantry well-stocked. Especially this time of year, when families have increased expenses, the food pantry is a much-needed resource. Since July 1st of this year, 365 different individuals have received food from the pantry. Thank you so much for helping reduce hunger here in our community!" Thank you to all who have supported this outreach ministry.



January Giving Schedule

January 13, 2019 – UMCOR Human Relations Day Special Offering

Romania 2019

The next international mission trip to Romania is being planned for June 13 and will return by June 23rd of 2019. We will be spending time in Sibiu, Romania with Pastor Cristian (Cristi), Ligia, and the team. We hope to then also travel to Arad, Romania to visit Global Hope's long term orphanage, Ana's house. This will allow our congregation to continue to



build relationship with Super Kids Academy, and learn more about the organization, Global Hope, that we are working through. The final cut-off to sign-up for the trip will be January 15th. Please reach out to me, Pastor Joy Mitchell at <u>pastor-joymitchell@umcmv.com</u> no later than January 15th, if you have any interest and want to know more.

Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON) Hires New Attorney

First, there were the generous contributions from the first-ever JFON Volunteer Celebration and Fund-Raiser on October 6th at Coe College. Then a terrific grant, written by the new Iowa JFON Director, Sol Varisco, to a legal foundation, came through. So now, JFON HAS HIRED A FOURTH ATTORNEY!

This is huge for the Iowa JFON ministry, especially at this time when so many immigrants and refugees are desperate to seek legal permanent residency, work permits, and citizenship. The process is so convoluted that only those with a specialty in immigration law can negotiate it. In addition, the Iowa JFON attorneys are on a conference call every week with the National Methodist JFON headquarters in Washington DC, just to learn the new restrictions that have been announced.

Since August of this year, the Cedar Rapids JFON Clinic has accepted 60 more clients from 17 countries. JFON limits itself only to free assistance with obtaining legal status, a process which may take 2-3 years. Interestingly enough from what we might think from the news, only about 10-15 percent of the JFON clients seen in Cedar Rapids are from Spanish-speaking countries.

For other services, JFON refers clients to Catholic Charities, Kirkwood, and HACAP which provide a wide range of services, including English language classes, a food pantry, transportation, assimilation training, pairing with Iowa families for socialization, social work services and temporary housing. Kirkwood College is partnering with Goodwill Industries to provide job training. In addition, among the various ethnic communities, leaders are emerging who are helping others in their culture negotiate the services that are available and ease their transition to American life.

Cedar Rapids prides itself in being a very welcoming community. There are two major groups that meet regularly for updates on immigrant service options and emerging national and state issues. These are called the Immigrant Concerns Group and the Refugee Alliance. This coordination allows all of us to be more effective.



Circuit Rider Deadline for *February 2019* will be January 28, 2019—please email any information you want included to: alisondix@umcmv.com

Thanks!

WE CAN SEE THRU FOR A WAY FORWARD Jim Baty, UMCMV Council Chair

My friends, I'm writing today to you as brothers and sisters in Christ. A speeding 2018 is now rushing to an end. Your life, I'm certain, is no different than mine. We have a crazy pace right now, don't we? With all that this holiday stretch combined with school vacations offers us, no doubt adding one more thing to the mental heap is not what you would like and perhaps you avoid at all costs.

I have been approached time and time again this year about the discussions, resource content and news coming from our Annual Conference related to the Way Forward. Have you heard of it? Do you know of it? Right now, quick...what is it? There is a reasonable chance you either have not heard of it or have not been given enough of a chance to be able to process it, much less describe it. Let me be honest with you. I have spent dozens of hours on this in reading, listening and researching and probably hundreds more meditating and searching. As a leader in this church, I feel a responsibility to not only be informed but also to be able to guide and support and this is one of the most important moments of any I've experienced in my faith journey. Yet, I am as perplexed and confused as ever at how to give a succinct explanation that might help you get started. Here's where I am right now:

The Way Forward is a process initiated by the global Methodist Church to discern the future of irreconcilable differences surrounding the accuracy and authority of the Bible and therefore the application of scripture for our present day lives. These differences begin with the teaching of God's nature and authority and extend through human life issues; including persons of LGTBQ orientation. At the end of this process, church leadership at the highest levels will vote on direction for the United Methodist Church to go, remain or divide.

That's a big nutshell, isn't it? I can tell you that in 45 seconds, but your eyes may very well gloss over. Let me take a few more moments to dive a little deeper. I believe the Way Forward is also learning to work together in process to first focus and then harmonize the gifts God freely gives us in sanctifying, justifying and prevenient grace for the goal of leading all people into a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ. There have been several offerings in this newsletter that describe the issues and there are many resources available. Our church has also held a Q&A session a few months ago to get the process of understanding started.

During recent research, I was listening to sermons from a variety of conferences. As one speaker was being introduced, the moderator quoted esteemed Christian, social critic and author, G.K. Chesterton who once said,

"Sometimes the same words mean very different things to different people but that is only because evil always takes advantage of ambiguity."

In other words, the more uncertainty, difference of opinion and focus exists in a society, the greater the reality that these differences are used by Satan to accentuate our differences, frustrate our relationships and drive us apart. As I heard this, I almost immediately thought of each of you and a verse often recited during the close of weddings,

"Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." – Mark 10:9

You see, right now, we are in community together, and we have not come to this place by happenstance or by luck. Perhaps you decided to try this church, but you are unsure what has kept you here.

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CONTINUED—Page 2 of WE CAN SEE THRU FOR A WAY FORWARD Jim Baty, UMCMV Council Chair

Maybe you wonder why you worship in this specific church, pass the signs of peace among those around you, contribute regularly or pledge to the missions and vision we maintain, and yet there is something unmistakable about the feeling here. I believe it to be God; He is at the center of it. Notice Mark 10:9 begins with the word, therefore, which as we've heard in numerous sermons means there is something coming you need to pay attention to. God is recognized for laying the path for relationships, holding you in a state of community. Finally, see that one is not capitalized, that is you and I. Here in Mark I read that God has set the stage for our relationships here in this community we call our church to be established. We must be willing to fight for unity in spite of our differences. Differences, or rather commonalities should not dictate where and why we build those relationships because we will always find a basis for difference. Rather differences should define our opportunity to experience, learn and express love.

That is what the Way Forward needs to be about and, in the end, will be about. In about a month from now, I will be leading a congregation workshop called POV, which stands for Point of View. The process of this work is exploring and learning together what it means to hold differences and to love through them. This one-day workshop will use different perspectives to help us understand the challenge that will be faced at General Conference at the end of February and uncover the role empathy should play in decision making. It will also develop how our church will be part of a global healing process for the Methodist Church over the months and possibly years that follow. We are, after all, a church developed intentionally and methodically by John Wesley for the purpose of holding true to the delivery of God's grace to the nations.

In the sermon that followed the quote from Chesterton, Bishop Scott Jones of Texas closed by referring to John Wesley's preaching and his own effort to discern paths in this process (www.extremecenter.com). He stated:

"John Wesley's 'Catholic Spirit' sermon is very important [here] because he distinguishes between essential doctrines and matters of opinion. Essential doctrines like the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, the resurrection, and salvation by faith through grace are held by all Christians. If I were to make a list of all my opinions, I am certain of only one thing: I am wrong somewhere. To be human is to make mistakes, and no persons gets it all right all the time....We must always remember, when disagreeing with other Christians, that the other side just might be right on this point."

I want for you to be informed. I want for you to participate and discuss these matters. I want to hear your questions and to know our differences. No matter what is next along this Way Forward path, it is so important for us as a congregation to remain firm and even to grow into our foundation for this church, this ministry, this community, this Love...a Love that God has freely gifted us, as Methodists, as Christians, as His children. We are joined together by God and by God His ministry shall prevail. Let any one of us not be the first to cast a stone or to break a bond.

We are excited to announce that Dee Pata will be our new Christian Education Director starting in January.

Please welcome her in this capacity!

January 2019 United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon

Sunday						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Breakfast, Skillet	6:45 PM Praise Team Rehearsal, Sanctuary	4 Pastor Joy - Visiting Profes- sor Romania	Pastor Joy - Visiting Professor Romania 9:00 AM Exploring So- cial Communities / mak- ing cookies & bars, Kitchen 8:00 PM AA Meeting Fellowship Hall
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9:30 AM Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45 AM Sunday School, Classrooms 11:00 AM Traditional Wor- ship 3:30 PM Girl Scout Lead- ers, Fellowship Hall	Visiting Professor Romania 7:00 PM Boy Scouts Meeting, Fellowship Hall	sor Romania 7:00 AM Council Breakfast, Skillet Cafe 5:30 PM Cub Scouts, Fellowship Hall & classrooms	Bible Study, Balcony Classroom 6:00 PM Middle	Visiting Professor Romania 6:45 PM Praise Team Rehearsal, Sanctuary	Pastor Joy - Visiting Profes- sor Romania	Pastor Joy - Visiting Professor Romania 8:00 PM AA Meeting Fellowship Hall
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Pastor Joy - Visiting Professor Romania Jim Baty Message 8:30 AM Praise Worship, Sanctuary 10:30 AM Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45 AM Sunday School, Classrooms 11:00 AM Traditional Worship	Scouts Meeting, Fellowship Hall	Meeting, Chapel Room 5:30 PM Cub Scouts, Fellowship Hall & classrooms	Bible Study, Balcony Classroom 6:00 PM Middle School Youth Group, Fellowship Hall & Youth Room 7:15 PM HS Youth Group, Fellowship Hall & Youth Room	Rehearsal, Sanctuary		8:00 AM Electronics Merit Badge session, Fellowship Hall 8:00 PM AA Meeting Fellowship Hall
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
8:30 AM Praise Worship, Sanctuary 10:30 AM Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45 AM Sunday School, Classrooms 11:00 AM Traditional Worship	7:00 PM Boy Scouts Meeting, Education Classroom	Scouts, Fellow- ship Hall & classrooms	Bible Study, Balcony Classroom 6:00 PM Middle School Youth Group, Fellowship Hall & Youth Room 7:15 PM HS Youth Group, Fellowship Hall & Youth Room	Rehearsal, Sanctuary		8:00 PM AA Meeting Fellowship Hall
27		29		31		
Sanctuary 10:30 AM Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45 AM Sunday School, Classrooms 11:00 AM Traditional Wor- ship 5:00 PM Birthdays potluck & Trivia Night	mon Ground meeting room	meeting, Chapel Room 5:30 PM Cub Scouts, Fellowship Hall &	Bible Study, Balcony Classroom	6:45 PM Praise Team Rehearsal, Sanctuary		



Christmas Pageant on December 9 was a hit!

Sing a Song of Christmas

"Christmas is all about love--God's love for us, our love for Him, and our love for others. It's all possible because of Jesus. That's why we celebrate! That's



Sunday School News...

No Sunday School on December 30th—Happy New Year and we will resume Sunday School on Sunday, January 6th.

Please be in prayer for these people (from 12/19/2018)

Prayers for Healing:

- Wrenlie Bixler (John Bixler's daughter) continued prayers for healing.
- Bonnie Hunwardsen (Jeff Walter's mother) dealing with multiple health issues
- Pat Sorgenfrey (for full rehabilitation after breaking her collar bone, she is continuing her recovery at the Lisbon rehabilitation facility).
- Terry Sill (as he continues recovery from radiation and chemo treatments)
- Kitty Chadbourne (cousin to Karen Stoll) recently diagnosed with ALS
- Kierstan Nemmers (Karen Stoll's daughter) scheduled for surgery on January 9th
- Marsha Hansen (Marci Schmatt's mother) as she recovers from surgery at a long term care facility.
 Prayers for Marci's father during this time as well.
- Maxine Havill (dealing with health issues)
- Marty (Fred and Marion Lehman's son-in-law), who took a bad fall and is now in skilled nursing care in Cedar Rapids. Prayers for continued recovery so he can eventually return home.
- Jennifer Mann (friend of Matt and Allison Traynor) battling stage 4 non-Hodgkins lymphoma
- Jo Harman (for successful cataract surgery on December 26th and complete healing)
- Amanda Meeker
- Tiffany Snodgress

Prayers for Comfort and Strength:

- For the family and friends of Marsha Light, as they grieve the loss of Marsha
- For everyone that may be feeling "blue" or sad during the holiday season
- For family and friends dealing with mental illness
- For persons trying to manage depression
- For people who are dealing with self doubt and worry
- For all who are mourning the loss of a family member or friend

Prayers for Safety and God's Guidance:

Safety for all Christmas and Holiday travelers

Prayers for Transition:

- For members of Noble Center UMC as they close December 30th and look for a new church home (Kristi Keast's home church)
- Sandy Sill's parents as they adjust to their new home in assisted living at Western Home in Cedar Falls
- For those in the midst of changing seasons of life.

Prayers for Sustenance:

- For the children in Sibiu, Romania being served at The Super Kids Day Center and the staff who are ministering to them. Specifically, prayers for Pastor Cristi and Ligia.
- Agape Ministry in Cedar Rapids (leader Abraham Boniface)
- UMCMV pastor, staff, lay leader, and committee members
- UMCMV Life Group ministry
- UMCMV Stephen Ministers and Care Ministers
- Mission of Hope in Cedar Rapids, volunteers and attendees
- Women at the Well United Methodist Church, Pastor Lee Schott & the women

Prayers for our World:

- For love, peace and dignity among all
- Prayers for unconditional love; loving one another even amongst disagreements
- Prayers for Alaska as they recover and rebuild following the recent earthquake
- For everyone who has experienced the trauma of the California fires
- For everyone on the East coast who have been affected by hurricanes
- The United Methodist Church

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Joy:

- Wrenlie Bixler has improved greatly and has been moved from the PICU to a pediatric floor. Praise and Thanksgiving that this little girl's body is healing.
- Praise God that Gavin Hayes (nephew of Roger and Marilyn Schnittjer) is tumor free (the chemo worked)!
- Thankfulness for the CHRISTmas and the gift of Jesus to our world
- What a JOY: Beth Johnson got a good report from NIH: "thanks for prayers"
- Ellie Namin got tenure at Cornell College
- Thanksgiving for our church family who pulls together to love and support each other

January 2019 Worship Assistants

January 6th at 8:30am (Praise Service)		January 6th at 11:00am (Traditional Service)			
Parking Lot Door	Brian Bothell	Parking Lot Door	Al Shepley		
West Door Greeters:	Nancy Reasland	West Door Greeters:	Barb Shepley		
Worship Assistants/Ushers:	Ben Merlak & Family	Worship Assistants/Ushers:	Michael Briesemeister & Family		
Nursery:	Anna Hoffman	Lector:	Rainey Brown		
Slide Presenter:	TBD	Nursery:	Rosa Moss		
Soundboard Tech:	TBD	Slide Presenter:	Kraig Hunter		
		Coffee Host:	Janet Griffith		
January 13th at 8	30am (Praise Service)	January 13th at 11:00am (Traditional Service)			
Parking Lot Door Greeter:	Todd Norton	Parking Lot Door Greeter:	John McWilliams		
Red Door Greeter:	Jennifer Back	Red Door Greeter:	Mike Kragenbrink		
Worship Assistants/Ushers:	Ben Merlak & Family	Worship Assistants/Ushers:	Michael Briesemeister & Family		
Nursery:	Ryley Hoffman	Lector:	Judy Stine		
Slide Presenter:	TBD	Nursery:	Brittany Booth		
Soundboard Tech:	TBD	Slide Presenter:	Jackie Wallace		
		Coffee Host:	Trude Elliott		
January 20th at 8	30am (Praise Service)	January 20th @ 11:00am (Traditional Service)			
Parking Lot Door	Amy Jackson	Parking Lot Door	Jan White		
West Door Greeters:	Ron Jackson	West Door Greeters:	Bonnie Keith		
Worship Assistants/Ushers:	Ben Merlak & Family	Worship Assistants/Ushers:	Michael Briesemeister & Family		
Nursery:	Becca Conrad	Lector:	Dan Hakken		
Slide Presenter:	TBD	Nursery:	Cindy Strong		
Soundboard Tech:	TBD	Coffee Host:	Denae McGrath		
Communion Assistants:	Ben Merlak & Family	Slide Presenter:	Jackie Morrical		
		Communion Assistants:	Michael Briesemeister & Family		
January 27th at 8	30am (Praise Service)	January 27th at 11:00a	am (Traditional Service)		
Parking Lot Door	Shellie Kamaus	Parking Lot Door	Dixie Raiber		
West Door Greeters:	Lance Kamaus	West Door Greeters:	Roger Raiber		
Worship Assistants/Ushers:	Ben Merlak & Family	Worship Assistants/Ushers:	Michael Briesemeister & Family		
Nursery:	Anna Hoffman	Lector:	Kristi Keast		
Slide Presenter:	TBD	Nursery:	Brittany Booth		
Soundboard Tech:	TBD	Coffee Host:	Mary Jane McWilliams		
	11	Slide Presenter:	Trude Elliott		



United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon Staff

Senior Pastor Joy Mitchell Director of Youth and Worship... Dillon Fawcett Sunday School Coordinator **Brittany Booth** Congregational Care Coordinator Julie Baty Office Manager/Newsletter Alison Dix Admin. Asst./ Membership...... Jo Harman Nursery Care. Melissa Oxley Praise Team Director Director, Adult Handbell Choir . ..Kristi Keast Organist Karen Stoll Joleen Woods Chancel Choir Director Custodian Rosa Moss Maintenance & Repair Director . . . Trustees Wedding Coordinator.....Barb Shepley Financial Secretaries Richard Jacob, & Jackie Morrical Treasurers Mike Kragenbrink Alison Dix



