



Monthly Newsletter 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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February 2021



**The Season of Lent begins
Wednesday February 17.
We will observe this holy day by
holding an **ASH WEDNESDAY**
worship that evening
at **6:30 PM**—in person and
ONLINE.**

Why ashes on Ash Wednesday?

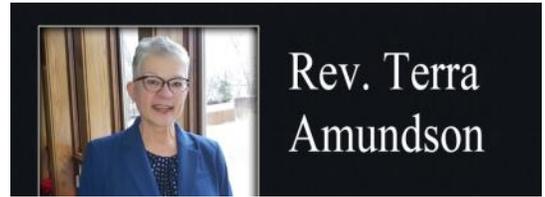
Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline.

Ash Wednesday emphasizes two themes: our sinfulness before God and our human mortality. The service focuses on both themes, helping us to realize that both have been triumphed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

During some Ash Wednesday services, the minister will lightly rub the sign of the cross with ashes onto the foreheads of worshipers. (We will be modifying this due to Covid precautions.) The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship. Historically, ashes signified purification and sorrow for sins.

We save last year's palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday service to burn to produce ashes for this service. Sometimes a small card or piece of paper is distributed on which each person writes a sin or hurtful or unjust characteristic. The cards are then brought to the altar to be burned with the palm branches. The ash cross on the forehead is an outward sign of our sorrow and repentance for sins. - Adapted from *The United Methodist Book of Worship*

Pastor's Letter



For God so loved the world... John 3:16a

Dear Friends,

Valentine's Day is a minor holiday in the Amundson household. Not that Jay and I don't take our commitment to one another seriously. But we generally do not spend extravagantly in our celebration. Exchanging cards usually suffices. Then we move on.

Years ago, when our son Aaron was at Appleby's we showed up to bring him something – I don't even remember what – and arrived a noontime to find the parking lot absolutely packed. When he was finally able to break away for a moment, Jay exclaimed, "What is going on?" Aaron gave us a look like we had just arrived from Mars, then responded incredulously, "Mom, Dad – it's Valentine's Day!" Like I said, a minor holiday in our household.

In these familiar words from the Gospel of John, Jesus tells Nicodemus (and us),

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. – John 3: 16-17 NRSV

This is no casual, minor expression of love; words exchanged, then moving on. God sent Jesus to live among us, to be "God-with skin-on", to show us to what ends God is willing to go for each of us. God loves us. No hesitation, no limits. God is all in, extravagant in grace and love.

May you hear these words of scripture as a valentine from God, and know in your hearts the depth of that love.



On the Journey, Pastor Terra

Lenten Worship Schedule

2-17 Ash Wednesday

2-21 1st Sunday in Lent Mark 1:9-15

2-28 2nd Sunday in Lent Mark 8:31-38

3-7 3rd Sunday in Lent John 2:13-22

3-14 4th Sunday in Lent John 3:14-21

3-21 5th Sunday in Lent John 12:20-33

3-28 Palm/Passion Sunday

4-1 Holy Thursday

4-2 Good Friday

4-4 Easter Sunday John 20:1-18

WORSHIP

Our worship is currently **IN PERSON**

and ONLINE.



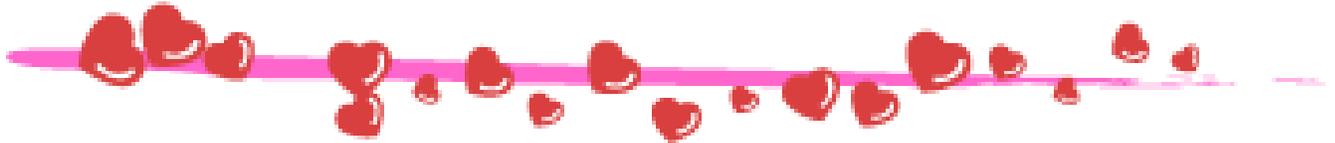
Come join us in person at 9:30 AM Sunday mornings

or join in our worship via our website

at 9:30 AM Sunday mornings.

You can also view the worship on replay any time!

www.umcmv.com/covid-19-umcmv



As recommended for precautions due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, our building is currently closed during the week.

The Church Office is open by appointment.

Please contact Alison @ 319-895-6286 if you need to meet with her, Pastor Terra or another staff member.

If you need support, someone to talk to, or other assistance, please contact us. We want to help meet your needs as this unusual time continues.

**Pastoral Support: Contact Pastor Terra Amundson 712-304-1517
pastorterra@umcmv.com**

Congregational Care: Contact Julie Baty 319-533-2349

Communications: Contact Alison Dix 319-573-4801



Giving Opportunities

LOCALLY IN FEBRUARY

SE Linn Community Food Bank—Bulk Food Offering:

To show love to our neighbors locally, we are collecting funds all month long for SE Linn Community Center Food Bank. Towards the end of February, we will contact the Food Bank to see what their greatest needs are and put an order in to restock them with our love offerings. Want to be part of this outreach? Please give online at our website noting it is for special offering Bulk Food, or send donations to the church office. Checks can be made to UMCMV with the memo line: SELCC Bulk Food.

To Support Methodist Organizations:

Iowa Justice For our Neighbor Immigration Services:

Iowa Justice For Our Neighbors has been serving low-income immigrants throughout Iowa for over 19 years. We currently hold monthly clinics where we take in new cases in Storm Lake, Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Columbus Junction, Ottumwa, Marshalltown and Decorah. We provide a wide range of immigration legal services, including family-based immigration, naturalization, VAWA, T- and U-visas, removal defense, asylum, refugee adjustments, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Temporary Protective Status (TPS), and more. Your financial support allows us to continue this important work in Iowa.

Does this ministry call to you? Donations to support Iowa Justice for Our Neighbors can be sent to the church office or donated online on our website at online giving.



Sunday School -Showing Love!



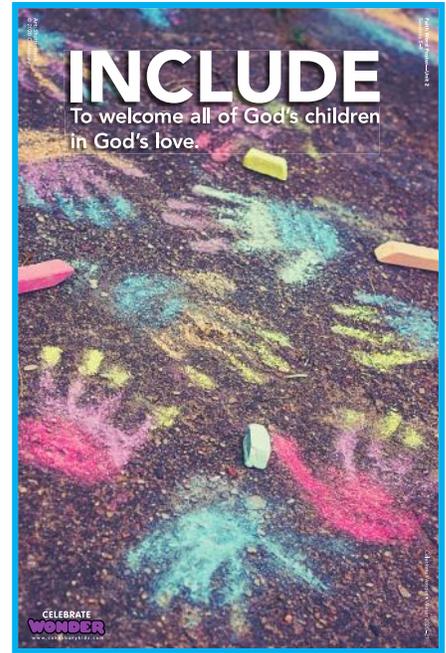
OUR FAITH WORD

INCLUDE – To welcome all of God’s children
in God’s love.

Include has been our *Celebrate Wonder* Faith Word this past month. Our Bible stories – Jesus’ Baptism, Calling the Disciples, Sermon on Mount (Loving our enemies) and the parable of the Mustard seed—teach us that EVERYONE is included in God’s love and God’s kingdom.

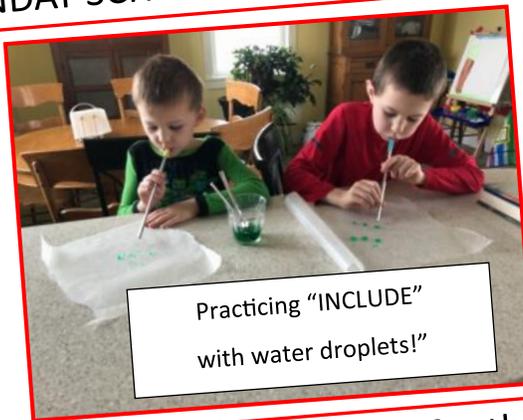
“We are called to love everyone, for everyone is included in the community God envisions.”

Let us all keep the faith-filled meaning of **INCLUDE** in our hearts as we head into February celebrations of Valentine’s Day and the start of Lent.



WEEKLY SPIRITUAL PRACTICE - JOEY

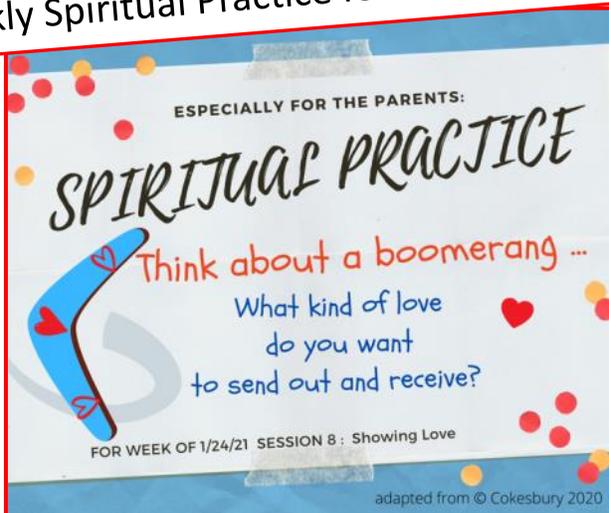
SUNDAY SCHOOL – AT HOME!



Practicing “INCLUDE” with water droplets!



Weekly Spiritual Practice for the Parents too!



Jesus would love this community!

Trustees Corner

Trustees are currently making plans for ongoing updates to our building.

In the spring we plan to replace 3 more windows on the east side of the church. These window frames are rotting. We hope to implement an adopt a window program. If interested, reach out to any trustee. More details later.

The yard on the East side of the church has drainage problems. We are looking into changing the grade of that hill.

We are getting new storm windows for the Chancel room.

We are considering moving the sound room to the balcony. The area that it is currently in will become better seating for handicapped members.

We are looking into a possible air sanitization system for the sanctuary.

If you have any input, or expertise for any of these projects be sure to reach out to a trustee. We'd be happy to discuss all or any issues!

Projects completed include...

STRIPES ARE FINALLY PAINTED IN OUR PARKING LOT. WOO HOO!

A new rail has been put up at the parsonage side door for Pastor Terra and Jay's safety.

A new window has been installed in an upper classroom that got destroyed in the Derecho.

Front wall repairs have been finished on west side of chancel stairwells.

New lights have been installed in upper ceiling of the organ room and a new outlet was added off music closet.

Mount Vernon PRESCHOOL UPDATE

WOW! Thank you so much for your generous donation to the preschool! We are continually amazed by the support and generosity of the UMC MV and its congregation. Your contribution will help cover scholarships for five children at the preschool!

WONDERFUL!

The preschool children are learning everyday through play opportunities, toys, art, music and games. Here is a fun photo of what the children have been up to.

Thank you again for your continued support and prayers!



Prayers for Healing:

- For Truman Jordan & his medical team as they stabilize his heart rate after a 24 hour hospitalization on 1/25
- For Sherryl Osborn as she continues the lengthy recovery from Covid-19
- For Jim (Jim Baty's father) who is recovering from heart bypass surgery
- For Cora Collins who has been diagnosed with liver cancer, (a beloved friend of several in our congregation) and began treatment in January.
- For Pat Sorgenfrey as she continues to struggle with health issues. Prayers for her continued good spirits in the midst of discomfort and that she can find some relief
- For all who are currently infected with the COVID-19 virus and their family members
- For all our friends and family members who are fighting the battle against cancer

PRAYER LIST

Prayers for Comfort and Strength:

- For couples dealing with marital stress during this time of uncertainty and social isolation
- For individuals dealing with mental health issues that may be magnified during this time
- For the family and friends of Judy Stine, as Judy passed away on January 8th. We pray specifically for Don and for their children as they mourn her passing. Judy's presence will be missed by so many within our church community and the Mount Vernon community
- For the family of Bill Bacher, (especially Doris). Bill passed away on January 10th
- For anyone who is working in the healthcare field or another "frontline" occupation during this pandemic and unprecedented time. Prayers for their safety, strength and comfort
- For those who are feeling lonely or isolated due to recent changes in how we live day to day. Prayers that they will reach out to others, that God will comfort them, and we will all make extra efforts to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus
- For those worrying and anxious about health issues
- For all who are struggling: emotionally and spiritually
- For individuals and families who are under financial stress
- For those suffering silently with anxiety and depression
- For this church, this building, these people, and ways to love on and stay connected with one another even if we are not in worship services together
- For all not mentioned by name who are mourning the loss of a family member or friend

Prayers for Transition:

- For school administrators, school board members, teachers and students as school resumes after winter break and they continue to move forward week by week
- For the leaders of our church here at UMCMV to know how to lead us and what to do in these unusual times
- For the United Methodist Church: including the global church, the Iowa Conference and our Mount Vernon congregation

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
- UMCMV Stephen Ministers and Care Ministers
- Mission of Hope
- Women at the Well United Methodist Church

Prayers for our Nation and our World:

- Continued prayers for peace and unity in our nation
- May we evidence Christian love for one another
- For justice and peace for people of color in our country. May the Holy Spirit move throughout our churches and individuals to help us be part of the solution to the current unrest and racism. Lord hear our prayers, and guide this country and your world to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you
- For all people and countries of this world who have been and continue to be effected physically by the COVID-19 virus
- For all people across the globe who are concerned about financial implications of pandemic, both personally and beyond
- For national and state leaders to deal with the COVID-19 virus effectively
- Pray for love among all people
- Prayers for peace for people everywhere - peace worldwide

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Joy:

- We joyfully celebrate Fred Lehman's 98th birthday the last week in January
- Joy in the beauty of the wintry scenery we have been gifted recently
- Thankfulness for online methods of staying connected during this time of social distancing
- Gratefulness for the love and kindness shown to one another
- Gratitude for our many blessings

Join us online after worship.

Grab your coffee at 10:30 am Sundays and join Pastor Terra and Zoom host Jeff Schmatt to discuss the sermon message, or just a time for conversation of what is on your mind for 45 minutes and we will see where the Spirit leads the conversation. All ages welcome. We will use the same Zoom information every week and hope this will be a new tool to stay connected to our Church family.

Coffee Time
to discuss Sermon
Sundays @ 10:30AM

Join Pastor Terra & Host Jeff Schmatt as we have a time together on Zoom, discuss the day's sermon and have great conversation.

Questions Call Jeff Schmatt or email jeff@rubicon-photo.com.

TIP: Copy and Paste this ZOOM link info on your calendar so you remember where it is on Sunday!

Jeff Schmatt is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84490122987?pwd=c1lna29oVzVFRDlCMHhaTXB3OG8xZz09>

Meeting ID: 844 9012 2987

Passcode: coffee

One tap mobile +13017158592,,84490122987# US (Washington D.C)

+13126266799,,84490122987# US (Chicago) Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Ethan Stanerson	02/02
Julie Baty	02/09
Mike Kragenbrink	02/11
Jennifer Hoffman	02/13
Kit Currie	02/14
Hannah Bradbury	02/16
Tim Legore	02/19
Jake Stanerson	02/19
Maxine Havill	02/20
Mel Steen	02/21
Karen Stoll	02/21
Natalie Ott	02/22
Jared Booth	02/24
Asher Eichhorn	02/25
Jeanne Snodgress	02/26
Allison Traynor	02/27

February Birthdays

BIRTHDAY PRAYER

Thank you, God, for giving me another year of life.
Thank you for all the people who remembered me today
by sending cards, and letters, gifts and good wishes.

Thank you for all the experience of this past year;
for times of success which will always be happy memories,
for times of failure which reminded me of my own
weakness and of my need for you,
for times of joy when the sun was shining,
for times of sadness which drove me to you.

Forgive me
for the hours I wasted,
for the chances I failed to take,
for the opportunities I missed this past year.
Help me in the days ahead to make this the best year yet,
and through it to bring good credit to myself,
happiness and pride to my loved ones,
and joy to you. Amen.

JOB OPENINGS

at United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon

Part-time Christian Education Director

Seeking enthusiastic Christian to nurture family spiritual growth through education programs within the congregation of the United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon. This candidate should possess strong organization and leadership skills to promote Christian education to children, youth, and adults. This position will help organize the Sunday School and Vacation Bible School programs. The preferred candidate will have college degree and experience in an education, youth or ministry field.

This Christian Education position could be combined with the UMCMV Director of Youth Ministries position for one full-time job opportunity.

Please send Cover Letter & Resume to Pastor Terra Amundson at pastorterra@umcmv.com

Part-time Director of Youth Ministries

Mount Vernon United Methodist Church is seeking an energetic adult passionate about youth to organize and lead youth programming, including evening youth ministry and confirmation programs. This candidate should possess strong communication and leadership skills and be able to lead adult and teen volunteers in effective youth ministry. The preferred candidate will have a college education in youth ministry along with experience working with youth.

This Director of Youth Ministries position could be combined with the UMCMV Christian Education Director position for a full-time job opportunity.

Please send Cover Letter & Resume to Pastor Terra Amundson at pastorterra@umcmv.com

HISTORY CORNER

The Story of the East Window

As we slowly begin to worship again in our church building, we're reminded of the beautiful windows in our church with the sun streaming in through them, each of which has a story connected to it.

Certainly one of the most stunning windows is the East Window . The story of its design is available to us from the autobiography of the person in charge of its selection, Prof. William Harmon Norton. Prof. Norton was the founder of the first Department of Geology in Iowa which is located at Cornell College: the Norton Geology Center. But we revere him as a devoted member and leader in the Mount Vernon United Methodist Church.

Here are his words from his autobiography:

“I had charge of the window glass (*and had to raise the money*). I sold all the small stained glass windows from the gallery and the main floor for memorials at, I think, \$50 each. The Upper Iowa Conference contributed some \$1200 as a memorial window for one of their eminent members, Alpha J. Kynett. He had part in building more churches than, I dare say, any man living or dead.

The East transept window assigned to his memorial would be illuminated by the sun during the morning service. It contained three large circles. It was Dr. King's suggestion that the theme of the window's three circles would be Solomon's building of the temple, Christ's teaching in the temple, and the temple of the New Jerusalem.

The firm we engaged in New York City, (second, we thought only to Tiffany) approved our suggestions. In the sketches they sent us, Solomon was a very proper Jewish King. The pulpit at which Christ spoke was Early American, remarkably like the wooden pulpit in the old college chapel. The upper circle was still worse. The temple of the New Jerusalem was on the lines of one of the worst Capitol buildings in the United States, Des Moines.

Their second attempt was still Corinthian and not much better. I wrote them suggesting that they give us something like Tiffany's famous treatment of the same theme in the city of New Jersey---the glassy sea in the foreground, the vast stairs rising from it on which angels ascended and descended, above all the Temple with its multitudinous domes.

They (the design firm) practically copied the Tiffany window and no one sued them or us for the infringement. It occurs to me, just now as I write, to question the morality of our acceptance of Tiffany's design.” (to be continued).

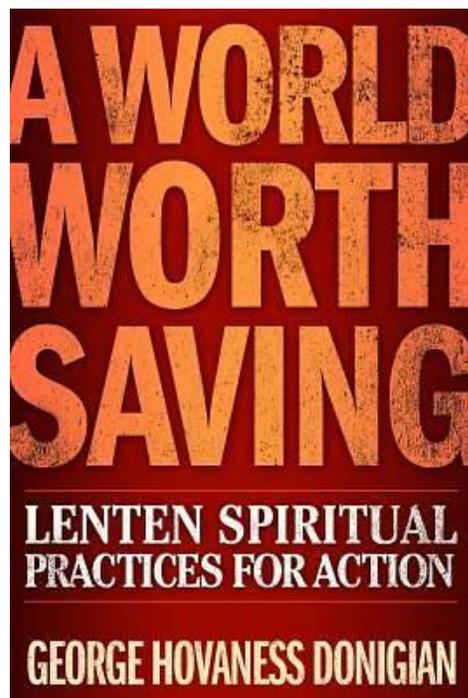
Kay Graber, UMCMV Historian

Pastor Terra Lenten Study

“A WORLD WORTH SAVING”

Monday Nights @ 7 pm
Starting February 15

We are excited to announce Pastor Terra will be doing a weekly study during Lent called “A World Worth Saving” and would encourage you to get your book ordered today to be able and ready to start the study on Monday February 15 @ 7 pm. The discussion will be on Zoom each week and you can sign up on our website or contact Alison at the Church office to sign up.



[Here is a link to the book to purchase.](https://www.cokesbury.com/A-World-Worth-Saving) <https://www.cokesbury.com/A-World-Worth-Saving>

Description of the book: For anyone who dismisses Lent as a seemingly endless time of self-sacrifice and introspection, this 6-week Lenten study offers a breath of fresh air. God thinks the world is worth saving and invites Christians to join in the movement of redemption, Donigian emphasizes. He challenges readers to grow in their prayer life by praying about daily news reports, discovering the needs around them, and responding with love and compassion. Each chapter of this engaging study includes well-known hymn texts for inspiration, exercises for spiritual growth, and questions for reflection.

We look forward to a great discussion about the topics in this book and think it will be an inspiring read for us during this season of our faith.

Contact Alison at the Church Office to Sign Up for this interesting study!

