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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January 2022

Dear Friends,

There is something about the beginning of a new year that prompts reflection. Now understand that I've long ago given up on New Year's resolutions. But I do find myself reflecting on what is most important to me, and how I can go deeper and grow in faith.

Two traditions as the new year begins have guided my yearly reflections. The Sunday after Epiphany (January 6th) is traditionally when the church celebrated Jesus' baptism, and we are invited to remember our own baptism. This remembering may not be literal – many of us were baptized as infants – but remembering that we are among the baptized and are invited to renew those vows made at our baptism as a means of grace in our hearts and lives. We will participate in a "Remember Your Baptism" liturgy this Sunday as a visceral reminder of whose we are.

The second tradition for me is reviewing Wesley's Covenant Prayer. This prayer is a prayer of recommitment, of surrender, of yielding to God's work in one's heart and life. I find myself praying this prayer, pondering each line, sometimes struggling as I think about the true ramifications that these words might wrought in my life, yet knowing that it is in such surrender that God's light might shine more brightly through me. I invite you to prayerfully read this prayer, and reflect on what stands out for you.

Pastor's Letter

<u>The Wesley Covenant Prayer</u>

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.

In this year of new beginnings, may you grow in grace and love, and may we together be about God's work in our church, community, and world.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Terra

Join us for worship in person at

8:30 AM Praise worship

Or 11 AM Traditional worship.

Online worship is also available at 8:30 AM.

www.umcmv.com/online-worship

Thankful for…

- All the support for the Building projects we had pop up at the end of last year– the heat tape and the Sanctuary Visual upgrades.
- All the support for the Neighbor in need fund, as we will be able to help so many families in 2022 with these donations in our community.
- All the gifts and coats donated to the Angel Tag Tree in December, what a nice way to show our love for people at the time of Christ's birth.
- All the donations to the refugee families that were donated to the families at Fort McCoy

A Reminder

Many of you received a text purportedly from me asking for money this past week. It was a scam. Do not be fooled. These folks work on urgency and deceit, and prey on the sacred relationship between pastor and parishioners to steal money.

The trust and authority you give to me is a sacred trust. I will **NEVER** text or email asking for money. That would be a misuse of my ministerial office, and an abuse of power. I would not ask you to help me personally. And any requests to help someone would come through the normal channels of giving to a particular mission or ministry of the church, and would be asked through the church office.

If you receive such a request, please do not act upon it. If you have doubts, please feel free to check with either the church office or with me. I love you, and do not want you to become a victim of these crimes.

Blessings, Pastor Terra Amundson

Would be willing to be a Fellowship Volunteer?

We need 2 or 3 people to help set up and clean up coffee (and maybe donut holes) between services.

We would love to get a rotation of just a few people helping. Let Barb Shepley know or contact the church office.

CELEBRATE WONDER SUNDAY SCHOOL

Education Corner:

In person Sunday school started on December 5th and we've had a great turnout! We're seeing kids in the church services and the congregation has really enjoyed seeing their smiling faces and hearing their laughter. Our first unit theme was Advent. We started with the beginning of Luke, which took us from the waiting period before Jesus' birth to what happened after His birth.

Our next unit theme is Journey and we'll continue to delve into Luke as we learn about Jesus' life.

". . . 'You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness.'" Luke 3:22

UMCOR SUNDAY #1 January 16, 2022

HUMAN RELATIONS SPECIAL OFFERING FOR UMCOR

WHAT IS HUMAN RELATIONS DAY? We are all family. When we walk past our neighbor who is hiding in plain sight, we limit the gifts and graces that our sisters and brothers in Christ bring to the table. We limit the experiences, the voices and the beloved community that take place through mutual sharing of gifts. With a special offering celebrating Human Relations Day, we join with United Methodists around the world, remembering that the size of the table of divine love is unlimited.

Across the United Methodist connection we come together to help bridge the gap between church and community by participating in an offering set aside for Human Relations Day. For more than half a century, United Methodists have observed this churchwide special Sunday in recognition of the message Jesus demonstrated during his life: all of God's children are important.

One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together than we ever could do on our own. On Human Relations Day, we join other UMC congregations in a special offering to support neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk youth through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs.

In recognizing Human Relations Day, we are called to make an impact in communities where people struggle because they don't have the tools or resources to reach their God-given potential. Our gifts are part of building beloved community through faith-based volunteer programs, community developers and programs that work with at-risk teens.

Middle School Youth Group

Youth group was invited to sing for Magical Night on the 1st. Pastor Terra sang with our small group and we were joined by the choir ladies. Pastor Terra even broke out her flute! All in all we had a wonderful time! We were able to get together for a Christmas celebration before the holiday break and enjoyed some food, games, and friends.

Starting this month, we will consistently be having youth group every 3rd Wednesday of the month EXCEPT for March since that would be in the middle of spring break. For March we will meet on the 23rd. You can put this on your calendar and the only thing that would prevent us from meeting on these dates would be illness, weather, or other unforeseen circumstances. The dates are: January 19th, February 16th, March 23rd, April 20th, and May 18th. Should we get volunteers to help with youth group, we will announce any new meeting dates.

We are still looking for volunteers to help with youth group! Please let Veronica (veronicafisher@umcmv.com) know if you are able to help.

Potential New Member Information Gathering & Lunch

UMCMV Potential New Member Information Gathering & Luncheon

Sunday January 23 @ Noon
In Common Ground

Come for some soup, goodies and learn a little about the Methodist Church and how this church came to be in this community.

Please RSVP to the Church office by January 20.

Pictured Rocks Basic Lay Servant Training
Friday, January 28, 2022 - 6:00 PM-9:00 PM
AND Saturday, January 29, 2022 - 9:00 AM-4:00 PM
(You must attend both days to successfully complete the training).

***Lay Servant Ministries* – BASIC COURSE:** This class is the beginning foundation for all courses in Lay Servant Ministries. Participants are encouraged to discover and employ personal spiritual gifts as God intended and to consider the importance of exercising servant leadership, developing future leaders, remaining rooted in consistent spiritual practices, and being part of a group that holds members accountable in their discipleship.

Lay Servant Ministries – Basic Course
Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson Participant's Book • DR626 • 978-0-88177-626-3
This book can be purchased through the Upper Room, Cokesbury, or Amazon.

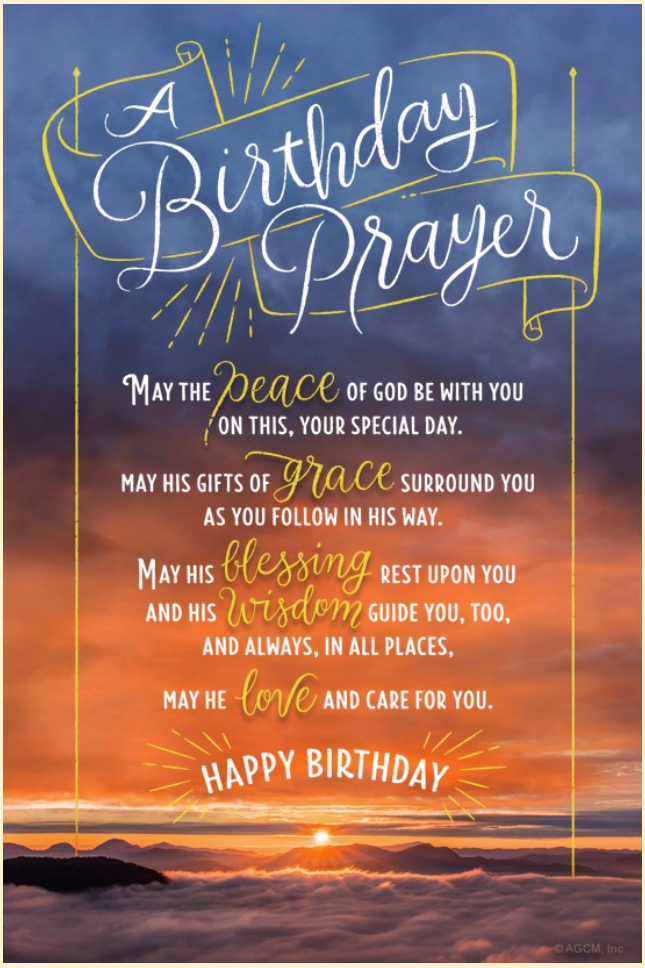
Instructors: Rev. Scott Keele Kober, Lisa Congdon (Certified Lay Speaker) & Hugh Mackintosh (Certified Lay Minister)

Cost for the class is $10.00. Each registrant is required to purchase their own participant book for the class. You will need to pay online for registration to be complete. ***Click HERE to register.***

Registration deadline is January 15, 2022.

January Birthdays Happy Birthday!

Clint Stanerson	01/01
Tessa Baty	01/02
Myrt Bowers	01/02
Julie Nosek	01/03
Gavin Light	01/04
Paige Roos	01/04
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
Angie Swartzendruber	01/19
Benjamin Havill	01/20
Terry Pisarik	01/20
Teresa Stewart	01/20
Shellie Kamaus	01/21
Fred Lehman	01/26
Lily Booth	01/27
Maddison Hotz	01/28
Gentry Barber	01/29
Lori Merlak	01/29
Emily Stamp	01/29



Online Giving and ACH (Automatic Bank Withdrawals) are available to make your giving easy and worry free.

- **Check out our online giving or contact Jackie Morrical about setting up automatic payments for your convenience.**
- **Our website can be used for special gifts or if you want to try out giving electronically.**

Check it out here! https://bit.ly/3t7r0PE

Lift Up these Prayer Requests

Prayers for Healing:

- For Kamryn Kahl, who will be having spinal fusion surgery at the U of I hospital on January 7th. She was diagnosed with scoliosis this past year and is having surgery to correct the curve. Prayers are requested for Kamryn during surgery and while in the hospital a few days post surgery. Complete recovery will take 6 months.
- For Bonnie (Jeff Walter's mother) and Evelyn (Donna Walter's mother) who are both dealing with various health concerns
- Continued prayers for Chad Conrad, and his family (Amy, Becca and Nathan)
- For Emily Stoner Bell, continued prayers for healing
- For all our friends and family members who are fighting the battle against cancer

Prayers for Comfort and Strength:

- For Jim Baty and his family, as they mourn the loss of his grandmother, Margaret Robertson. Tessa Margaret is her great grandmother's namesake. The family gives thanks that she is no longer suffering and trying to manage a tired body, but they will certainly miss her presence in their lives
- For Talia Breidinger and her entire family, as they mourn the loss of Talia's grandmother, Margaret Koppenhaver. Margaret was a spirited woman who will be missed by many in Mount Vernon, and most dearly missed by her husband and family
- For anyone who is feeling sad or uncertain with the start of a New Year. May we all reach out to others in love and support, and may God comfort each and every one
- For family of Kenneth Hansen (Marci Schmatt's father) as they mourn his passing. Marci's family lost their mother in August of 2020. Let's keep Marci, Jeff and all the family in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time
- For the family and friends of Suki Morrissey who passed away on December 13th
- For Alpha, a prisoner in Linn County Prison, who Clint Stanerson is acquainted with. Alpha's sentence was affirmed and he has received the maximum sentence. Please lift him in your prayers
- For Mundo and Kim Guardado and family, as they have entered into a waiting time as they continue Mundo's immigration process. Prayers that this process will move more swiftly than expected and that they can have courage, faith and patience during this time
- For Randall Baier (Kristi Keast's father) who is dealing with increasing health concerns at age 95, and for both of Kristi's parents as they transition to living apart.
- For those concerned with 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
- For all not mentioned by name who are mourning the loss of a family member or friend

PRAYER LIST continued

Prayers for Transition:

- For all students, teachers, school staff and board members continuing to do the best they can as they begin the second semester of the school year
- Specific prayers for all first year college students as they return to college after winter break
- For young adults who are struggling to find their future path, may they feel God's presence, encouragement and love in their lives
- For the leaders of UMCMV as they continue to work on behalf of our church
- For the United Methodist Church: including the global church, the Iowa Conference and our Mount Vernon congregation

Prayers for our Nation and our World:

- Pray specifically for, Stephanie Wallen, a young teacher at a Christian school in Haiti. She is from Grundy Center. Kidnapping is on the rise and she would be a target. Prayers for her safety, and for strength and comfort too
- Prayers for our health care professionals who are again, under much stress as hospital beds are in high demand. Prayers that their bodies can remain strong to do their jobs and that their hearts will remain hopeful
- For those in our country and around the world dealing with natural disasters. Prayers for their safety, peace and comfort
- May we evidence Christian love for one another
- For people all over the world who are suffering from the COVID-19 virus
- Pray for peace and calm for humanity

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Joy:

- Happy Birthday wishes for Pastor Terra, celebrating her birthday on January 7th
- We are thankful for Jody Stewart, as she celebrates her recent retirement after 41 years of working behind a chair and taking special care of her customers/friends. Thank you Jody!
- Congratulations to Sherryl and Harry Osborn who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 23rd, we wish this special couple many more happy and healthy years together
- Congratulations to Rik and Jamie Smith on the arrival of Abigail Elizabeth on December 7th. Excited siblings Ellie and Jacob welcomed her home, and proud grandparents are Jackie and Jim Wallace. What a joy to welcome Abigail into our church family
- Chad Conrad's most recent monthly check up was positive, his MRI continues to be stable. We celebrate this good news with the Conrads
- Thanksgiving that Ann Booth's recovery from hip replacement is going smoothly
- It is a JOY that the church roof repair is complete! And also, the organ has been repaired. Gratitude to all who helped in this process. Special thank you to Jeff Walters and his dedication to this project
- Gratitude for our many blessings

United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon
304 First Street SW
Mount Vernon, IA 52314
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon Staff

Senior Pastor . . . . Pastor Terra Amundson
Praise Team Director–…. Clint Stanerson
Christian Education Director
& Director of Youth Ministries…Veronica Fisher
Congregational Care Coordinator Julie Baty
Office Manager/Newsletter . . . . . Alison Dix
Nursery Care. . . . . .Melissa Oxley
Director, Adult Handbell Choir . . .Kristi Keast
Organist Karen Stoll
Chancel Choir Director Joleen Woods
Custodian . . . . . …. Night Shift
Maintenance & Repair Director . . …….. Trustees
Wedding Coordinator…… Barb Shepley
Financial Secretaries . . ……... . Richard Jacob,
Tim Legore & Jackie Morrical
Treasurers . . . . . ……. Mike Kragenbrink
Alison Dix

Happy New Year from United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon!

We pray that our connection will be strengthened this year and our Church family will join together to find ways to be the hands & feet of Christ.

AMEN!