

OUR CHURCH GREETING

United Church of Christ - Congregational
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January, 2010

Shalom and Happy New Year!

Anthony B. Robinson has written and the United Church of Christ has produced a leaflet that has briefly explored “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Churches” and “The 7 Habits of Highly Ineffective Churches.” For the next few months, I want us to reflect on his insights. He lists: 1. “Strive for excellence in service to Christ” for highly effective churches. And the other side of the coin says that highly ineffective churches, 1. “Elevate mediocrity to a spiritual discipline. Effective churches are churches where people enjoy what they’re doing and do it well.” When a person is serving on a board or a committee that interests them, they are more likely to do their best because they enjoy it. Where is your heart? What do you enjoy doing? How can you give what you enjoy doing in the church? Ineffective churches seem to have the theology that “God doesn’t really expect much, anyhow.” Anthony Robinson implies that churches that are ineffective avoid doing things that might make someone uncomfortable. Do we avoid doing our best because it might make someone uncomfortable?

In this time of making resolutions, envisioning the future, and growing in faith, may we choose to have the habits of highly effective churches. Also, in the new year, it is my hope that we can choose as a church to have a confirmation program that is “church” owned more than “pastor” driven. I want to present to all interested persons a program that draws upon the talents of our members, provides opportunities for family participation, honors individual commitments, and encourages group or class experiences. Confirmation programs tend to be dated and in need of revision. I would like to attempt to have a more meaningful plan that perhaps will engage our youth for the long haul rather than become a graduation from church. Because of schedules, I know it will be difficult to get together. We have annual meeting January 31st. But perhaps January 24th, we can gather after worship, youth and parents, and any interested adults and talk about the faith journey of our middle school youth. Join me after worship for a time of sharing.

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Our 7:30 a.m. bible study on Monday mornings will resume meeting the first Monday of February. We are meeting in the home of Don and Jeananne Schild. Our 2 p.m. Monday bible study on the parables of Jesus will resume January 4th. We meet in the meditation room at Mayflower (above the health center). All are welcome.

The United Church of Christ no longer prints a newspaper, but still has much news to pass on to us. Many more people have computers and access to on-line resources. Check the website out at www.ucc.org. There are still those who don't use computers. Sometimes we forget that in our fast paced lives. So as long as we still are printing our newsletters, we will try and keep you updated on what is happening in the larger church.

Geoffrey Black, our General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ sent us Christmas greetings. He invited us to "rekindle our hope and renew our commitment to the quest for peace—inner peace and peace among people and nations!! There was also an article in Christian Century that has a picture of him and several quotes. It talks about our denomination as one who is not content simply to issue statements, but we take action. In the article he is quoted to say: "I would use the terms progressive and unabashedly Christian. Jesus was not about excluding people. He reached out to those who were marginalized and oppressed. Gay and lesbian people, just as Africans who were enslaved, have been marginalized and oppressed in our society." His task is major. Let's remember to keep him in our prayers.

May our faith journey be deepened and may our church witness reflect our commitment to justice in this new year. May all our choices reflect the love of God.

**In Christ,
Pastor Sue**

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From the Moderator...

As a result of the called congregational meeting on December 6, 2009, the congregation has approved a budget for 2010 of \$222,121. Details of the budget will appear in the Annual Report.

The Annual Meeting is set for January 31, 2010 after the meeting for worship. Lunch will be served prior to the start of the Annual Meeting. In addition, childcare will be provided. The Annual Report will be made available by January 24.

All Boards...*please have your reports to Gayle by Friday, January 15!*

Christian Education News

~ from Laura Nelson Lof, Christian Education Coordinator

A new year? So soon? I remember grandparents telling me how quickly the years passed for them and as a teenager, I could not grasp what they meant. Now, I understand. It's 2010? It really doesn't seem like it's been ten years since we welcomed the new millennium in 2000. We held our collective breath as the clock ticked 12 a.m. and the calendar went from 1999 to 2000. Would our systems crash? Would the Rapture happen, as our neighbors at the time had prepared for?

But when I think of all that has happened in the last ten years, I am stunned by the changes in the world and in our family. Living in Grinnell and serving as the Christian Education Coordinator of this congregation was certainly not on our radar screen. God does things in mysterious ways...

The Sunday School Christmas Pageant and finger food potluck was such fun! Thank you to all who contributed in some way, even as a member of the audience!

We take a break at the end of December. No Sunday School, Seekers, or Children's Church on Sunday, Dec. 27. The Seekers will start up again on January 3, but the children and youth will not have Sunday School or Children's Church until January 10.

All our classes have done wonderful things this fall...learning foundational bible stories, learning to pray, learning to sing, making things with our hands, learning about others, and tackling some heavy topics. From our preschoolers to our adult Seekers, this fall has been filled with learning and sharing! Please join me in thanking our leaders, Caroline Saxton, Imogene Knowles, Jean Libbey, Becky Petig, Karen Edwards, Anne Pederson, Yvette Aparicio, Jamie Leonard, Orlan Mitchell, Sarah White, Henry Rietz, Don Schild, Pastor Sue, Warren Reinecke, Tommy Haas, Vic and Wilma Graden.

From January 10 through 31, the 1st through 8th grades will focus on peace and will meet all together in the Friendship Hall. We'll spend some time thinking about what is peaceful for us and what challenges our sense of peace. The students will work on a collaborative peace mural on what peace means to each of us as individuals and what we can do to promote peace. Our older students will be working together with the younger students. Warren Reinecke, Tara Shukla, Jean Libbey, and I are organizing this four-week session for our students. Any and all are welcome to join us for this interesting time of learning from 9:30 to 10 a.m. on Sundays.

The Seekers will spend January with Gordon Packard facilitating an in-depth discussion entitled, "Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White." Seekers meet from 9 to 10 a.m. in the Seekers room on the lower level at the bottom of the steps by the alley door. One can always find engaging and thought-provoking conversation no matter the topic. (and usually a cup of coffee!)

In my other role, you know me for my Monday morning quotes...here's one to consider. "We spend January 1 walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives...not looking for flaws, but for potential." ~ Ellen Goodman

From the Pastor Parish Relations Committee ...

“Realistic visibility in the community” was topic at December PPRC meeting.

Where do we imagine our pastor should be visible in Grinnell?

- visiting members in the hospital locally and in Des Moines and Iowa City”**
- visiting members in the care centers and at Mayflower and/or in their homes?**
- attending school events like plays, concerts, and ball games?**
- serving as President of Grinnell Ministerial Association?**
- attending Lenten Services and other events?**
- tending her day-to-day activities?**

Jan Peak, Chair

Outreach Board Makes Stone Soup...

January is the time for hot steaming soups and stews. The Outreach Board has the stone and the kettle and needs your help in making a wonderful “stone” soup. You remember in the story how each person added something to the pot to make a delicious soup. That’s what we want to do during January—fill the kettle with food items that can be put in soup. For example, select one or more of these: pasta, tomato sauce, onion flakes, canned soup, dried soup, veggies, broth, Chile beans, or whatever you like to put in soup. The kettle is in the parlor. Let’s fill it up, leave the stone at home, and take the rest across the street to MICA (Mid-Iowa Community Action) to help warm some children’s tummies. The items will be delivered the end of January.

Our February “Valentine” outreach will be “How do you mend a broken heart” with first aid items. More details in the next newsletter.

***All Annual Reports are due
Friday, January 15, 2010!***

During the meeting after church on January 6 to approve the 2010 budget, there was considerable discussion of the recommendation that our OCWM be reduced from 15% of our budget to 10%. The trustees deemed this necessary for us to begin to live within our means while paying back \$10,000 dollars of our current debt of approximately \$100,000 to the Endowment.

Several expressed serious disagreement with the reduction in our OCWM commitment, a commitment that has been central to our mission. Others emphasized the necessity to provide a balanced budget while beginning to discharge our fiduciary responsibility to those who contributed to build our Endowment.

During the course of the meeting it was suggested that those who are able might make a special pledge to restore the missing 5% of our OCWM contribution. The sum needed is approximately \$9,000. Five families have decided to increase their pledges in the collective amount of \$3600. We invite others to join us in this Christmas season so that we can meet our goal of a responsible budget along with the generosity that is so vital to our life as a Christian community.

As with your first pledge, payments can be made throughout 2010; just be sure to write OCWM on the memo line to insure correct accounting of your gift..

Thank you for considering this appeal,

The Schild, Adams, Leggett, Drake and Zimmerman families

What's coming in January for the Seekers?

How many times during your everyday conversations do you muse with others—"how does my faith guide me in the face of daily challenges to living, or how do I put into perspective ways my faith helps me understand huge issues on a national and global scale?" The group will address just such questions as Gordon Packard guides discussion based on a series called "Seeing Grey in and World of Black and White." This series is based on material developed by the Rev. Adam Hamilton, minister of a Methodist Church in Kansas City. Earlier this fall Tommy Haas used material also developed by the Rev. Hamilton when she led discussions on the subject of "Enough."

Starting January 3 and continuing throughout the month Gordon will lead the class through discussions on such subjects as: the ethics of Jesus; when faith and politics meet; and what would Jesus say to Americans today.

Many will know Gordon, a retired Methodist minister, as former Mayflower resident Pat Yungclas' brother. He lives in Grinnell and has led similar discussions at the First United Methodist Church in Grinnell where he is a member.

As always, this is a wonderful group of people who gather weekly to ponder subjects related to their faith. Do join them—right next to the kitchen on the lower level. They will make you feel welcome with a cup of coffee or tea. The time—Sundays, from 9-10 a.m.

We are extremely grateful for leadership many have given to this class during the fall. Those include Tommy Haas, Warren Reinecke, and Wilma and Vic Graden and each member as they participate in discussions—thanks to each of you!

PARISH LIFE MINISTRIES...

Thanks to all who visited our community's "No Room at the Inn" held at St. Mary's Church hall, Dec. 4. Families of our congregation displayed 17 or the 160 Bethlehem Christmas scenes.

A colorful book, Water, Come Down! (The Day You Were Baptized) has been selected as a gift from our congregation to the newly baptized and their families. Walter Wangerin, Jr. is the author, with illustrations by Gerado Suzano. It is published by Augsburg Press and is available at Stepping Stones Bookstore, in Grinnell. Pastor Sue Weier has copies for viewing in her study.

The Care Ministry team sponsored by Parish Life continues to visit "shut-in" members and friends. Speak with Imogene Knowles, Judy Kuehl, Karen Weaver, Mark Thelin, John Saxton, or Pastor Sue if you have an interest in this caring ministry.

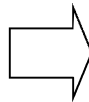
There is in process a new Parish Life ministry of sharing meals. "We see our church as extended family, therefore, we would like to be sure we are taking care of those in need. Please let the church office know when you or someone you know is in need of help with meals due to hospitalization, injury, or extended illness. Gayle will then send out an email to all church members asking for volunteers to help with meals. Those in need will remain anonymous in the blanket email. Anne Pederson will then be able to coordinate days and times for those willing to help out."

We plan to honor Phyllis Bellis on her 100th birthday, January 3, 2010 with a card shower. Her Mayflower address is: 624 Broad Street, Grinnell, IA 50112. Contact Judy Kuehl if you desire to have a birthday or anniversary published in *Our Church Greeting* in 2010.

Parish Life is seeking to support the Grinnell Ministerial Association effort for transporting persons who badly need assistance to medical appointments—especially out-of-town. First Presbyterian Church processes most of the requests, with some help from several other congregations. Carol Nielsen is the coordinator for our church. Peter Boeke, Nancy Wolff, and Carol have been drivers. Volunteers may contact Carol.

We have decided not to have a Mardi Gras event before Lent in 2010. Instead, there will be a fun gym and beach party at the Day Care building at Ahrens Park!

Planning continues, but please mark your calendar: Sunday, February 7 from 4-7 p.m.



We wish you a good New Year!

*Dave Eberbach, Judy Kuehl, Paul Lof, Pam Vosburg,
Anne Pederson, John Saxton*

February 2010						
Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

January 2010

Friday, Jan. 1		Happy New Year!
Sunday, Jan. 3	9:00 am 10:30 am	Seekers Worship/Communion
Monday, Jan. 4	Noon 2:00 pm	AA Meeting Bible Study - Parables of Jesus - Mayflower Mediation room
Tuesday, Jan. 5	Noon	Lectionary Study
Wednesday, Jan. 6	11:00 am 5:00 pm 7:00 pm 7:00 pm	Staff Meeting Parish Life Christian Education Brass Ring
Thursday, Jan. 7	Noon	AA Meeting
Sunday, Jan. 10	9:00 am 9:00 am 9:30 am 10:05 am 10:30 am 11:40 am	Breakfast Seekers Children and Youth Sunday School Sonshine Singers Worship—Children's Church Sonshine Ringers
Monday, Jan. 11	Noon 2:00 pm 7:00 pm	AA Meeting Bible Study - Parables of Jesus - Mayflower Mediation room Trustees
Tuesday, Jan. 12	Noon	Lectionary Study
Wednesday, Jan. 13	11:00 am 5:00 pm 7:00 pm 7:45 pm	Staff Meeting Chancel Brass Ring Pealers
Thursday, Jan. 14	Noon	AA Meeting
Friday, Jan. 15		ALL ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE
Sunday, Jan. 17	9:00 am 9:00 am 9:30 am 10:05 am 10:30 am 11:40 am	Breakfast Seekers Children and Youth Sunday School Sonshine Singers Worship—Children's Church Sonshine Ringers

Calendar continued on next page...

January 2010 (continued)

Monday, Jan. 18	Noon 2:00 pm	AA Meeting Bible Study - Parables of Jesus - Mayflower Mediation room
Tuesday, Jan. 19	Noon 6:00 pm	Lectionary Study Outreach
Wednesday, Jan. 20	11:00 am 7:00 pm 7:45 pm	Staff Meeting Brass Ring Pealers
Thursday, Jan. 21	Noon	AA Meeting
Sunday, Jan. 24	9:00 am 9:00 am 9:30 am 10:05 am 10:30 am 11:40 am After Worship	Breakfast Seekers Children and Youth Sunday School Sonshine Singers Worship—Children's Church Sonshine Ringers Meeting with youth, parents, and interested adults - Confirmation
Monday, Jan. 25	Noon 2:00 pm	AA Meeting Bible Study—Parable of Jesus—Mayflower Mediation Room
Tuesday, Jan. 26	Noon	Lectionary Study
Thursday, Jan. 28	Noon	AA Meeting
Sunday, Jan. 31	9:00 am 9:00 am 9:30 am 10:05 am 10:30 am 11:40 am After Worship	Breakfast Seekers Children and Youth Sunday School Sonshine Singers Worship Children's Church Sonshine Ringers ANNUAL MEETING

	Jan. 3	Jan. 10	Jan. 17	Jan. 24	Jan. 31
Acolytes	Marcus Brandenburg Dane Edwards	Jonah Benning-Shorb John Lof	Emily Lof Katherine Leathem-Rietz	Sam Pederson Parker Klyn	Cara Klyn Emily Lof
Chancel	Teresa McCall	Sara Adams	Oliva Wright	Teresa McCall	Sara Adams
Fellowship Host	Saxton Family	Dennis and Tommy Haas	Steve & Karen Langerud	Nancy Wolff	Annual Meeting Luncheon
Greeter(s)	Netia Worley	Nancy Wolff			
Liturgist	Netia Worley	Caroline Saxton	Phil Jones	Anne Pederson	Glenyce Conway
Ushers	Lyle & Judy Kuehl Karen Weaver Merle Zirkle	Lyle & Judy Kuehl Karen Weaver Merle Zirkle	Lyle & Judy Kuehl Karen Weaver Merle Zirkle	Lyle & Judy Kuehl Clark and Karen Weaver	Lyle & Judy Kuehl Clark and Karen Weaver
Worship Host	Janice Springer	Jodi Brandenburg	Elizabeth Trimmer	Tommy Haas	Jeananne Schild
Van	Jay Hansen	Rick Ramsey	Lyle Kuehl	Jim Ahrens	Denny Conway

Happy 100th Birthday to...

Phyllis Bellis

on January 3, 2010

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Monthly Periodicals

New Office Hours For Office Administrator...
Monday - Friday 7:00 am - 12:30 pm

Office Hours:
***Monday - Thursday 7:00 am - 3:00 pm**
Friday 7:00 am 12:30 pm

***with possible exceptions**

United Church of Christ—Congregational

An Open and Affirming Church—Just Peace Congregation —Still Speaking Ministry

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Susan K. Weier

Christian Education Coordinator: Laura Lof

Office Administrator: Gayle Uhlenhopp

Clerk: Janis Peak

Historian: George Drake

Children's Liturgical Arts Director: Sally Anderson

Church School on Sunday: adults at 9 a.m., all youth at 9:30 a.m. (September-May)

Worship: Sunday at 10:30 a.m. (September-May)

Sunday at 9:30 a.m. (June-August)

Treasurer: Austin Jones

Music Director: Phil King

Moderator: Gerald Adams

Moderator Elect: Nancy Wolff

Past Moderator: Esther Bethel

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