

2021 MESSENGER

Presbyterian United Church of Christ
858 7th Ave SE, Le Mars, IA 51031



A Word from Pastor Jan

Somehow the traditional greeting of “Happy New Year” seems so shallow in 2021. We woke up to a new year on the calendar on January 1st, but the deep challenges that changed our lives in 2020 were still hovering like the gloomy clouds that blocked the sun. On the day the church celebrates Epiphany, January 6th, it seemed the light in our nation had gone out as we anxiously watched events beyond anything we could ever imagine unfold at our nations’ capital. Now as we watch and listen for clues as to what is coming next, any chance at a Happy New Year seems to be only an illusion. The year upon us seems to be demanding something more than happiness, something deeper, something hopeful that will nurture, strengthen and endure even in the darkest of days.

When I think of what is needed right now, what comes to mind is something we already have, the abiding presence of God with us. We just spent a season celebrating the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. In these first weeks of the New Year, our focus turns to this amazing truth that God chooses to reveal God’s self to us. God provides an epiphany! One of the best things we, as people of faith, can be doing in these days, is to intentionally seek God; to wait, watch, listen for, and anticipate the light, life and truth of the Lord’s presence in our midst.

The late Henri J. M. Nouwen offers this guidance in his book, “Making All Things New”
“Simplicity and regularity are the best guides in finding our way. They allow us to make the discipline of solitude as much a part of our daily lives as eating and sleeping. When that happens, our noisy worries will slowly lose their power over us and the renewing activity of God’s Spirit will slowly make its presence known. Although discipline of solitude asks us to set aside time and space, what finally matters is that our hearts become like quiet cells where God can dwell, wherever we go and whatever we do.”

In the days in which we live, it is important to consider where we anchor ourselves. It is easy to be taken away with all the voices and activities that fill our lives. To intentionally ground ourselves in practices of faith, is of utmost importance in order not only to get through these days, but also to live them faithfully.

I close with this words from Rev. Dr. Margaret Grun Kibben, the newly appointed chaplain for the House of Representatives. “Faith matters. It mattered on Wednesday (January 6th), it matters today and it will matter tomorrow.”

“Be still and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”
Psalm 46: 10



Presbyterian United Church of Christ

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OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday- Friday

9:00 am-12:00 p.m., 1:00pm-3:30pm

Closed Mondays

Sunday Worship

10:00 a.m.

Nursery available for children under six years during worship service.

Weather-related

cancellations will be aired on KLEM
1410 AM

PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT

The per capita payment which supports the greater ministry of the Presbyterian Church is \$42.48 for 2021. Each Presbyterian confirmed youth and adult member of the congregation is assessed this amount. Per capita envelopes will be available in your 2021 envelope box.

ANNUAL MEETING

On February 14th, we will gather for our annual meeting.

Reports Due!

Please have all Commission, Deacon, Committee and team annual reports in the office no later than January 28, 2021.



Noah's Ark



Preschool

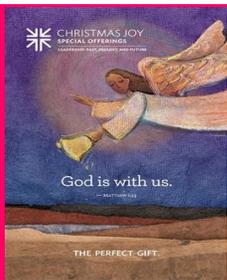
Noah's Ark 1st Semester update:

- 1) **DHS:** We had our annual DHS inspection on December 3 and passed with flying colors.
- 2) **Scholarships:** We just have one scholarship application for second semester. It is a family who received a scholarship first semester and is VERY deserving because of medical circumstances. One of our new families is also receiving 100% tuition paid 2nd semester by an anonymous donor from the church.
- 3) **Enrollment:** After we mandated masks, we lost two families. We have two children who will begin at Noah's Ark in January! Both children attended last year but did not attend first semester 2020-2021 due to Covid. This will bring our enrollment to 43/50.
- 4) **Clean Team:** I am SO so SO appreciative of the Clean Team. While this semester has been a lot of extra work for me (both physically and emotionally), the volunteers have taken one large task off my plate.
- 5) **Covid:** We have had just one child with covid (we think; he wasn't technically tested but was directly exposed and showed symptoms). One out of 41 over a 4 month period is a blessing I'd say!
- 6) **Registration:** We will register for next year in April (This is a change from previous years, so tell your friends!)

Shannon Jensen, Director/Teacher

**Session Highlights
December 8, 2020**

1. Elders met in the fellowship hall with all members present. Pastor Jan moderated the meeting.
2. Jan opened with an update of church activity since the last meeting. Three members of the confirmation class were confirmed on 11-22. The other two will take this step on 12-13 due to COVID restrictions. The Holbrook's were warmly welcomed on 11-8. Jan was pleased to have been able to lead a worship service at Park Place Estates in November, after months of needing to stay away due to the pandemic. She shared concerns for our church members, and a reminder to be prayerful about COVID statistics in our community. She reported the choir will not be singing until a future time when it becomes safe.
3. Pat shared a devotion about hope and encouragement.
4. A quorum was declared. The Agenda was approved.
5. Reports from the Clerk, Moderator, Deacons, Worship and Finance commissions were approved. The minutes of the October Session meeting and the November 22 special meeting were also approved as part of the consent agenda. Communion was served on 10-4 to 50, 11-1 to 38, and on 12-6 to 36. New members Jerry and Shelby Holbrook III were welcomed to the church on 11-8. Simon Bixenman, Ally Keunen and Sienna Kass were confirmed on 11-22. Tyson Alcorn and Kari Cunningham will be confirmed on 12-13.
6. The 2021 Budget was approved. Elders were made aware that a grant received from United Way in 2020 for Noah's Ark Outdoor Space will be used for some expenses in 2021.
7. Pastor Jan requested that 70% of her compensation go toward salary and 30% toward housing. MSC.
8. The annual meeting was set for February 14, 2021. Details will be worked out at the January session meeting.
9. Officer training was never finished this past year due to the pandemic. The class of 2023 will join the class of 2024 for training this spring.
10. We will be participating in the Christmas Joy Offering during Advent. Alissa Presuhn and Rachel Cunningham will present a Moments for Mission on December 13th and 20th.
11. Pastor Jan responded to her recent review, thanking elders for their feedback. She reflected on stewardship, the pandemic and the challenges of preaching during a contentious election season. She requested the elders keep her in prayer.
12. Elders approved going ahead with the Christmas Eve service and spoke of ways to help keep people safe. Social distancing and masks will continue to be mandatory. Individual candles will not be used. Over flow seating will be available in the fellowship hall. Ushers will help seat people safely and help people leave in a relaxed and safe manner.
13. Session decided to not have in person worship on January 3rd in order to keep the chance of a COVID spread down. Pastor will provide online worship that day.
14. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 with the Lord's Prayer.



We are ever grateful for God's presence with us. This year our congregation received \$620 as part of the Christmas Joy Offering, a denominational offering of the PC(USA). Through these gifts, we are able to be a part of showing love and support to past, present and future ministry leaders throughout the world.

Thank-you for your gifts, they make a wonderful difference!

Delores Maser's family is having a card shower to celebrate her 85th birthday on January 24th, 2021. If you would like to help celebrate this day call the church office for the address.



*With Deepest
Sympathy*

We keep Pastor Jan and her family in our prayers upon the death of her mother, Marlyce Christensen, on December 16th. A memorial service is planned for early summer. Besides Jan, Marlyce is survived by 2 sons, Jim & Kim, and Brad & Libby, 5 grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren. Thank you for surrounding our pastor with love during these days.

We extend our love and prayers to the family of Rod Schuller. Rod died unexpectedly on December 19th in Arizona. A service was held for him on December 31st at PUCC. Rod is survived by his partner, Helen Manzer, his son Matt & Kim Schuller, his daughter Heather Nemer, and 6 beautiful grandchildren. Rod's son-in-law, Adam Nemer, died on December 20th after a 4-year journey with cancer. Thanks for holding this family in your hearts as they walk through this time of profound loss.

We remember former PUCC member, Mildred Wagner, in prayer upon the death of her son, Stuart, on December 27th in Omaha. If you would like to send a card please call the church office for the address.



We rejoice with Alex and Callie Kellen who were married at the Wayside Chapel North of Sioux Center on November 27th. It was a blessed day! If you would like to send a card to the happy couple please call the office for the address.



Special Thank you!

Dear Church Family, Thank-you so much for the love & care you show me throughout the seasons of life! I think of how you have supported me through times of joy & sorrow through the years. Thanks for sharing your love with me through the recent death of my mother. You've walked with me through her illness and your compassion now through cards, visits, and prayers has meant so much! Thanks also for the generous Christmas gift you presented me on December 20th. Your love, support, & thoughtfulness touch my heart! With love, Jan

PUCC Members- Thank you so much for the Chamber dollars for Christmas. I am extremely blessed & grateful to work in such a positive environment, and I appreciate your support and generosity. Happy New Year! Shannon Jensen

Pastor Jan and PUCC family, Thanks for all the help this long & trying year. We are so thankful for our church family. The prayers, meals, basket of goodies both last & this year. So many friends checking in on us all thought the year. Love, Roger & Karen Dempster

Special thanks to the Deacons for remembering me with the nice Christmas basket. Hester Caswell

Thank you all for the gift basket, we really enjoyed it. Cindy & Steve Roosa

THANK YOU to Jeff and Teresa Peters, Jerry and Audrey Scholten, Lowell and Pat Penning, Bill and Mary Bomgaars and substitute driver George Wagner for delivering Meals-on-Wheels the last couple of weeks. The people who receive these meals greatly appreciate your efforts and the gift of your time.

