

THE CHIMES



Pastor's reflections

On November 15 our church held our yearly Church Conference with our District Superintendent Rev. Young-Mee Park. After the meeting that night I spoke with Rev. Park, and she made an interesting request. Every year pastors fill out an "account or pastor ministry" or "pastor's report." This report isn't required to be part of the church conference packet, so I didn't include it, but Rev. Park asked me to share it with all of you. I wrote this back in October, and what was in the report is in italics, but at the end, I want to share a few final comments. I hope that seeing and reading this report will open us all up to God's leading as we week to serve Jesus Christ moving into 2018.

Report of the Pastor: Membership Supplement 2017:

List those who have been received into baptized membership since the last report.

*Isaac James David Carrion – Baptized on June 4, 2017
Evan Melton – Baptized on June 4, 2017
Jackson Melton – Baptized on June 4, 2017
Kyllian Jacobs – Received from St. John UCC, Freeport
Ronyyn Jacobs – Received from St. John UCC, Freeport
Maxwell James White – Baptized on June 11, 2017*

List those who have been received into professing membership since the last report?

On profession of faith or restored.

*Dylan Hinrichs – Reaffirmation of Faith
Lexi Hinrichs – Baptism & Profession of Faith
Cory Canas – Reaffirmation of Faith
Antonio Castaneda – Reaffirmation of Faith
Amber Farnham – Reaffirmation of Faith*

From other United Methodist Churches.

*David Carrion – Rock Falls UMC; Rock Falls, IL
Julie Carrion – Rock Falls UMC; Rock Falls, IL
Kathryn (Katie) Spangler – Prophetstown UMC; Prophetstown, IL
Kay Clark – Roscoe UMC; Roscoe, IL
Katie Herath – St. Matthew's UMC; Bellville, IL*

From other non-United Methodist churches.

*Beth Jacobs – St. John UCC; Freeport, IL
Debby Smith – St. Paul Lutheran Church; Dixon, IL
Randy Smith – St. Paul Lutheran Church; Dixon, IL
Don Warkins – Advent Christian Church; Prophetstown, IL
Sena Warkins – Advent Christian Church; Prophetstown, IL*

Church Events

- **Dec. 5** - Ad council 6:30 p.m.
- **Dec. 7** - Greeting card ministry
9:30 a.m.
- **Dec. 13** - Women's breakfast
8:30 a.m. Benny's
- **Dec. 15** - Ladies luncheon
11:30 a.m. Smoked On 3rd
- **Mondays** - Disciples bible study
9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- **Wednesdays** - Choir 6:00 p.m.
- **Thursdays** - Coffee with Pastor
7:30 a.m.
- **Thursdays** - Buddy bags packing
12:30 p.m.
- **Saturdays** - Men's bible study
8:00 a.m.
- **Advent study** is being held at various times until December 21st, Sundays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Please see the calendar for designated times.

I have only served at Sterling Wesley since July 1, and as such am still learning more about this congregation and community and how best to be in ministry, but in these first four months I have engaged in a great variety of ministries, and I am joyful and excited for the future of this congregation and where the Spirit is leading us to serve Christ.

- *Worship leadership is wonderful, and I am happy to be continuing the tradition of this congregation in taking communion each week. I am working closely with worship team to continue to improve our worship for people of all ages and backgrounds. I am also glad that we have the ability have audio portions of our worship service on our website to listen to and our Facebook page contains both audio and video.*
- *I am leading/have lead a variety of discipleship groups including: new member class, confirmation class, and two Disciple II Bible Studies, and a weekly coffee and conversation with the pastor on Thursday Mornings. We are excited about an all church Advent Study starting at the end of November. I am also working with several of my lay people to help them gain/improve skills in facilitating small groups, so that we can have more discipleship opportunities which are not led by the pastor. Currently we have two lay led small groups, and we hope to start more soon.*
- *Unfortunately due to some deaths, health crises, and acts of violence towards the extended family and friends of several people in the congregation, I have spent considerable time in pastoral care. I have also tried to get to know more of our members who cannot attend church due to health concerns, and I lead a monthly communion service at a local retirement facility. Since I've arrived, I had the joy of helping with/leading 4 weddings, and I have presided over two funerals. I am in consultation with two families, and hopefully we will have three baptisms before the end of this calendar year*

- *Administrative Tasks*

- *I am working with the leaders of the church to continue to make the best use of our financial resources. We are in a time of plenty, and we seek to use these blessings to do ministry now and plan for the future, perhaps through our endowment.*

- *We are actively seeking to find and train up new lay leaders in the congregation.*

- *I am working with our leadership to have our church participate in the 2018 Leadership Institute at Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS. We are also desiring to participate in more of the conference training events and to help lay people find more training events. (We desire to provide some financial assistance to allow them to attend.)*

- *We will be continuing the tradition of having a yearly training and visioning session for our leaders after the first of the year, and we are planning for this event.*

- *I am working to make sure the hours of our lay staff allow them to do all we ask of them, and make sure their job descriptions are up to date.*

- *I am also working with our Office Manager to bring all records up to date. (She is also new to her position, so we've both had to learn together. This is an on-going process.)*

- *Connectionally, this congregation was extensively involved in cooperative feeding ministries to the local population, and I am eagerly encouraging that to continue. We hope to also offer more financial support to these ministries as well. I have also been working with other UMC pastors and ecumenically on efforts to address violence and racial injustice in the US, and some lay people from our congregation are involved in this effort as well. (We are a congregation that is predominantly Caucasians, but we have some people who identify as Asian-American, Native-American, and Latino, the congregation is less than 10% POC, but we are working to improve that and to better reflect the demographics of our community which is about 25% POC with the Latino population making up by far the largest share.)*

- *Personal and Professional Development*

- *For continuing education I have participated in the Conference Boundaries Training, and the 2017 Leadership Institute, and plan to attend again in September, 2018. I am part of a covenant group centered in the Moline area. I would be interested in knowing about any spiritual directors in this or the Rockford District, I have done that before, and I think it would be helpful I am mentoring a student at the local high school and will be volunteering to work with the Scholastic Bowl team there, and I am a volunteer for field trips at our daughter Abiella's elementary school.*

It is a profound blessing daily to be appointed to this congregation, and to live in this community. It's a larger congregation than any I've served alone before, so I'm working hard to improve & grow personally to meet the needs of a congregation of this size. I appreciate the support of our lay leadership here, of the district, of my friends & colleagues, & especially of my spouse & partner in ministry, Rev. Megan Thompson.

I love being the pastor of this congregation. This is one of the healthiest and more vibrant congregations I've ever been part of as a pastor or as a lay person; did you see how many people joined this congregation in 2017? I know change is hard, and I will never be exactly like some former pastors, nor will everything we all try in ministry always work as smoothly as we might wish. However, I believe the message of hope and grace in Jesus' Name that we as a congregation offer has a vital role to play in this community. The roots of this church are strong; we can bear much fruit if we live into who God is calling us to be. I believe in the mission of the United Methodist Church: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I believe Wesley UMC can invite new people to follow Jesus, can help followers of Christ grow in their relationship with God, and finally can effect positive changes in our community and world, working for health, dignity, and justice for all. Let us during this holiday season prayerfully open our hearts and minds to God to see where God would like to direct us for 2018 and beyond.

Merry Christmas and Blessings in Jesus' Name!

Pastor Jeremiah

Worship Services in December

As we enter the Advent and then Christmas season, our congregation will have several special services in addition to our regular Sunday services. We hope that as we progress through Advent and the holidays, these times of worship can help us all feel closer to Christ who came to us in such humble circumstances long ago to change our lives and our world.

Sunday Worship Services

- December 3, 2017, First Sunday of Advent, Hope Sunday: join us as we consider how through God's love hope can come from very unexpected places.
- December 10, Second Sunday of Advent, Love Sunday: God's love can change our lives, save our lives, save our world, and do all this through people who some humans might reject, but who God never rejects or abandons.
- December 17, Third Sunday of Advent, Joy Sunday: Join us for the children's Christmas program, and also for a short reflection on the song of joy that Mary the Mother of Jesus sang to God as she carried her son Jesus, the Hope of the World.
- December 24, Fourth Sunday of Advent, Peace Sunday, Christmas Eve: In times of struggle, in times of uncertainty, in times of busyness Jesus offers us peace. Let's reflect on how the Prince of Peace came to us in hectic times, a sign that God offers us peace and love every day.

December 31, First Sunday of Christmas, New Years Eve: Come for a special service, the Wesley Covenant Service, as we prayerfully consider giving our lives to God for the first time in the year 2018, or renewing a covenant we made before. Also join us for the opportunity to hear more reflections of our members that were recorded for our 150th Anniversary Celebration this Fall.

Christmas Eve Worship Services: We will have 3 extra Services on December 24, to help celebrate Christmas. Please join us and invite your friends and loved ones to worship with you!

- 2:00 PM: Join Pastor Jeremiah and some of our musicians as we lead worship at the Parkway Center retirement community for the residents there. This will be a service of scriptures, Christmas songs, and communion. Please share with the residents the joy and love of this season and wish them Merry Christmas as they worship and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

7:00 PM and 11:00 PM: Our Christmas Eve services will be services of "Lessons and Carols", a time to hear parts of the story from the scriptures, reflect on them, and sing in joy about the Good News these passages relate. It will be a service of familiar music, wonderful stories, and more of remembering God's love. Both services will end with the lighting of candles and the singing of *Silent Night*.



Parent's Night Out

Saturday, November 11, 14 children representing 7 church families gathered for three hours of fun while their parents had a date night. Dressed in their pajamas, they began with games using dried corn, building, drawing, and more. Next they had supper. Two story tellers entertained the children with stories of the season and songs. Later the children settled into their sleeping bags or blankets to watch a movie. Special thanks to the 13 volunteers who cared for the children and were delighted by them.

MEMBERSHIP CARE

The Membership Care Committee is one that does just that; it cares for the members and friends of our congregation in a variety of ways. Among its many activities:

- Baking mini loaves of bread to hand out to visitors on Sunday morning
- Sending greeting cards for birthdays/anniversaries as well as “get well” and just “thinking of you” cards
- Knitting prayer shawls to give out when needed
- Planning parents nights out
- Preparing/delivering meals as needed
- Visiting shut-in and senior members of our congregation
- Providing transportation as needed
- Packing and sending “goodie” boxes 2xs yearly to our college students and service men and women

**At this time the committee is looking for the following:
One or two persons to co-ordinate the Take Them a Meal
ministry. One or two persons to co-ordinate a Visiting
Ministry.**

As you can understand it takes many hands to accomplish all of these important ministries for our growing congregation. If you are interested in serving on the committee or assisting with any of these activities please contact Sharon Siex 815-590-1614.



The Christmas program is being held this year on Sunday, December 17th at the 10 a.m. service. Practice will be at 9 a.m. Saturday, December 16th and on Sundays during Sunday School until the day of the program. Kids of all ages are welcome!!!

Thank you!

We wish to thank you all for the prayers, comfort and support extended to our mother Darlene Kereven in her last months. You have been phenomenal. We are truly blessed!

The family of Darlene Kereven
Susie Cedro and Rene Morris

150 Years Strong Thank You to 150th Committee

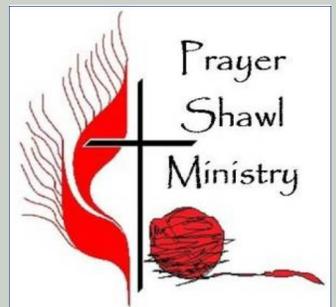
October 8th ended a year long journey of the 150th anniversary committee. I would like to thank each and every one of them from the bottom of my heart for all the work and enthusiasm they put into this event. What a fantastic group and I so enjoyed working with them. We should all be very proud of our church for the past 150 years and look forward to its future! Please extend your thanks and acknowledgement to the following group of talented people. *(Hope I didn't miss anyone)*

Pastor Jeremiah	Lynn Majewski
Carolyn Hueck	Bill (<i>historian</i>) and Sue Abate
Darlene Davis	Karen Palmer
Gene and Sue Klock	Sharon Pritchard
Carol Shaw	Gloria Grant
Vi Windham	Susie Cedro
Allison Venezuela	Sally Unterzuber
Jamie Schwingle	

Special thanks to Keith Kimball and his helpers for getting the corner stone from the old 4th street church and plaque in place out by the memorial area. It all looked wonderful, so inviting and peaceful.

Thank you to anyone else who helped and supported us in any way along the journey.
Thank You and God Bless You All!

Renee Duncan



Reminder: Prayer Shawl Ministry will not be meeting now until March. Our supplies are depleting, if you are able and willing to knit or crochet shawls, you can drop them at the church office. We appreciate your help!

Birthdays

December 2 - Derek Fitzanko, Coralee Jacobs
December 4 - Emily Schwingle
December 12 - Kay Clark
December 13 - Sue Morris, Julie VanAusdal
December 15 - Bill Adams, Luke Stutzman
December 16 - Nick Ceruzzi, Shane Williams
December 19 - Jonathan Abele, Chad Duncan
December 20 - Mahala Larson
December 22 - Elliot Noble, Sally Unterzuber
December 23 - Cindy Melton, Abiella Thompson
December 27 - Sarah Rodriguez, Sierra Sotelo
December 30 - Mallory Osborn
December 31 - Maddux Osborn

Anniversaries

December 4 - Rich & Sue Morris, Roger & Nancy Wait
December 16 - Darrin & Amy Driscoll
December 27 - Lowell & Coralee Jacobs, Bob & Marty Egert
December 31 - Scott & Emily Morgan, Rick & Karen Palmer

Coffee

Dec. 3 - Bob & Cheryl Allen

Dec.10 - Jim & Jackie Turffs, Cory Canas & Katie Herath

Dec. 17 - Greenfield family

Servers for December- 8 a.m.

	Greeters	Ushers	Liturgist
December 3	Amy Poci, Jan Glover	Rory & Rita Smith	Rebecca Tieman
December 10	↓	Marc & Cindy Melton	Jack Graves
December 17		↓	Nancy Pitsch
December 24			Jan Glover
December 31			Dylan Hinrichs

Acolytes

December 10, 8:00 a.m. - Sydney Graves

Servers for December- 10 a.m.

	Greeters	Ushers	Liturgist
December 3	Rick & Karen Palmer	Mark Taylor, Jeff Davey, Max Parker, Bill Parker	Rick Palmer
December 10	Cameron Taylor, Denny Vetter	↓	Nancy Pitsch
December 17	↓		Elisa Gatz
December 24			Rosie Davis
December 31	Rosie Davis, Darlene Davis		Holly Taylor-Vrhel



Wesley United Methodist Church

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wesley United Methodist Church

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Website: www.sterlingwesley.org

Email: office@sterlingwesley.org
castiger1@gmail.com

Open Heart, Open Minds, Open Doors

You are invited to join us for worship Sundays at 8 and 10 a.m. with Sunday School and fellowship at 9 a.m.

Mission Corner

Wesley has always been a mission-minded church. The purpose of this space is to keep the congregation informed of our various mission efforts.

We currently are receiving:

- Donations of bedding, small appliances, and other **household items** to support Trinity UMC and the VA Clinic/Valor Program, as they work to find homes for local veterans. A list of needed items is on the table in the fellowship hall.
- **Shampoo** for Bear Necessities, Everyday Essentials and the FISH Food Pantry.
- **Travel-sized toiletries** for the Trinity and FISH pantries.
- **Loose coins** to benefit Loaves & Fishes for the month of December