

January 2018

THE CHIMES

Monthly Newsletter of Wesley United Methodist Church

Pastor's Reflections

My vision had seemingly always been good. I remember reading the letters off the wall at the doctor's office as a kid. I guess I always got them right, or at least good enough because I went through elementary school with no glasses. Then something happened. My mom noticed in 7th grade my grades slipped, particularly in the class where I had to sit in the back and take notes the most. Then that summer we went out west. For years I had been the family navigator, but Mom and Dad noticed I didn't seem to be able to read road signs well. I was just looking through my eyes as I always had, and I didn't know anything was wrong. When we got back from vacation and before school started, they took me to the optometrist in Aledo, IL. Turned out, I needed glasses, big time! Suddenly my vision cleared, and in a real sense, I could see where I was going better than I had in years.

We need clear vision; it makes everything better. Now without clear vision we can still function; we can even see beauty and wonder. Even with my blurry vision that summer after 7th grade, I could see the beauty of the national parks in the West. However, maybe I missed something amazing because I couldn't see clearly.

On Saturday, January 20, from 9-1:30 (lunch and childcare provided) our congregation will have a visioning day. It will be a day for us to look to God to see where we are called to go for 2018 and perhaps beyond as a congregation. We are not doing this because we are blind and stumbling. On the contrary, much beauty in the love, faith, and discipleship of our congregation exists. However, without clear vision, it's possible we are missing something. It's possible we might miss the road sign, miss the turn, have to double-back wasting time and resources. We need to make sure our vision is clear; we need to look to the source of all wisdom and knowledge: God known to us through Christ Jesus.

Church Events

- **Jan. 4** - Greeting card ministry 9:30 a.m.
- **Jan. 10** - Women's breakfast 8:30 a.m. Benny's
- **Jan. 10** - Missions meeting 5:00 p.m.
- **Jan. 19** - Ladies luncheon 11:30 a.m. Candlelight, Sterling
- **Jan. 20** - Church visioning day 9:00 a.m. - 1:30
- **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. Airplay Sports
- **Thursdays** - Buddy bags packing 12:30 p.m.
- **Saturdays** - Men's bible study 8:00 a.m.

Everyone from our church, junior high age and older, is invited to be part of our visioning. You don't need to be part of a church team or committee, you don't need to be a member; all we ask is if this is your church home and you are committed to helping this congregation serving Jesus Christ as we are called, join us for the conversation. We do ask that you sign up on the sign-up sheets in the Fellowship Hall, or email the church office with your RSVP. If you are one of our elected leaders on one of the teams or committees, please make every effort to be there.

Whether or not you will be able to attend, please be in prayer about the future of our congregation. Please seek God's guidance about what His vision is for us, how we can invite more in our community into relationship with God, and what needs we can best meet in our community. Bring your prayerful thoughts and reflections, maybe some notes, with you on the 20th. If you can't come, but have some reflections, please share them with Pastor Jeremiah or Jan Glover, our Lay Leader. We trust the Spirit of God speaks to all and inspires all. We need and desire your input!

One final point: You may or may not have heard about considerable debate about the future of the United Methodist Church. Some proposals that may significantly affect the future of our denomination are being prayerfully discussed. A plan for the future of our denomination is being formed and will be released in May of 2018. That plan, likely with some amending, will then be voted on by delegates from the United Methodist Church across the world in February 2019. Neither I nor any of our lay leadership know what will be in that plan, and how it might affect our congregation or lead to anything that might require our congregational action. Many within our denomination and our local congregation have very different understandings of many issues, particularly around acceptance of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgendered individuals in church pastoral or Episcopal (bishop) leadership. To use a phrase I've heard frequently over the years, "We are not of 'one mind' on these questions."

Regardless of what happens with these discussions affecting our denomination, our congregation is called to serve Jesus Christ and spread the Good News of the Reign of God. God has a purpose for us here in Sterling-Rock Falls. As a congregation made up of many people of all ages, backgrounds, politics and understanding, I believe we are called to love God, follow Christ, and serve our neighbors. This day of visioning will hopefully be a time when God's plan for us comes into greater focus. May we pray for that vision!

In Christ,

Pastor Jeremiah

Thank you...

From the missions committee:

Thank you to the 29 people who rang the bells for the Salvation Army, we raised \$202.51.


In January, we will be collecting for Betty Tshala - Zambia. Betty Tshala, missionary with the Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, serves in the nutrition program with the Muzila Falls Project, Zambia, Africa. The Muzila Falls Project provides education that is accessible to people with limited income and education.

Our heartfelt thanks to our Wesley church family for your cards and kind words upon the death of our granddaughter and niece, Emily Vikler, and for your prayers and support of her family in upstate New York.

Janet Palmer
Rick and Karen Palmer

We would like to say thank you for all the Christmas and Anniversary cards we received. It was wonderful hearing from our Wesley family as we miss you all. We hope your Christmas was as blessed as ours and we wish you all a Happy and healthy New Year.

Lowell and Coralee Jacobs




A large group assembled in December to send handmade cards designed by Debbie Kramer and a few of her card making friends. Everyone is invited to help with this monthly ministry. The group meets on the first Thursday of the month at 9:30 AM in the fellowship hall. It's a good time of fellowship. The next meeting dates are January 4 and February 1. Come if you can, all are welcome!




Worship Services in January

As we start a New Year on the calendar and finish celebrating the Christmas season, we will begin a new sermon series: Faithful Resolutions. Each year many of us make New Year's resolutions: sometimes one, sometimes many, sometimes one we've never tried before, and sometimes one that we've tried over and over again. This year, let us consider what resolutions might not just help us get fitter in body or get our finances in order, but which can help us improve our relationship with God and with others. Join us through January and early February as we look at: Friendship in Christ, Prayer, Scripture Reading, Worship and how resolving to do these 4 things can open our lives to God's transforming love.

- January 7: Epiphany Sunday: Join us as we conclude the Christmas season with a look at the story of the Wise Men visiting Jesus, and what this story still has to say to us today; join us for "A Story of the King."
- January 14: Human Relations Sunday: As we start our new sermon series, Faithful Resolutions, we will remember our call as Christians to love all our neighbors. We will consider what it means to be "Friends in Christ."
- January 21: We will continue our Faithful Resolutions study and consider the topic of "Prayer."
- January 28: The topic for the week is "Scripture," our third of four Faithful Resolutions. We will focus on how it helps form us in Christ.
- February 4: Our final sermon on Faithful Resolutions, "Worship," will encourage us to consider the reasons we gather each Sunday.



*"With God as our Leader,
may we be prepared to live
another year under His guidance.
Happy New Year! "*



*May This New Year Wish Fill Your Heart With Hopes Of A
Brighter Tomorrow And Unfold New Dreams To Realize God Has
A Great Faith In You ! Happy New Year !!!*

Calling All Church Laity!

Join the DeKalb District United Methodist Church family for a day of learning for those in leadership and in service to the local church. This is an excellent opportunity for all those who are serving within Wesley to gain and improve leadership skills at a location close to home. The event will be held on Saturday, January 27th at the First UMC at 202 S. Peoria Avenue in Dixon from 8:30am to 2:30 pm. Lunch and childcare will be provided.

The cost is \$15 per person or \$60 per church (5 or more people). By Monday, January 22nd, contact Jan Glover, Pastor Jeremiah, or the church office if you would like to save a little money and register as a group. We can also carpool. Posters and descriptions of the different workshops being offered are in the Fellowship Hall.

There is no way we can ever say Thank You enough for the generous gift that the Wesley congregation gave to the Thanksgiving Offering. Your gift was \$1,900. This is enough money for more than a month of expenditures at the Fish Food Pantry. We serve about 7,000 people in a year. It is a constant challenge to keep our shelves and freezer filled. There is less food available from the Sauk Valley Food Bank. We buy as much there as we can, but we also must buy more groceries at “store” prices and from other sources. We appreciate your generous gift and we work to spend it wisely throughout the year.

Beth Mathew

Hello and Merry Christmas to Everyone,

Once again it's time to look at the January and February sign up schedule for Janet and Lark Perry. Please check your schedule and see if you are able to select a date. I know Christmas time is a busy time for everyone but please check your calendars and see what you can do.

Effective January 1, 2018 Frank Rausa will be the contact person for Take Them A Meal. Please assist him and the Larks by filling the January and February calendar. If you have any questions or if you have trouble signing up for a date, please contact him via his cell phone 815-370-8757 or by email frankrausa@comcast.net. Please continue to support this Wesley Outreach Program. Also, if at any time you see a need to temporarily assist any of our church family with meals, please feel free to contact Frank.

I want to thank everyone for each and every time you have volunteered to help with meals. I appreciate how easily this program has operated every week for over 2 years. I will continue with coordinating the Friendship Bread Program. Please let me know if you would like to occasionally bake Friendship Bread or greet visitors with a loaf (815-590-1614). I look forward to keeping busy in other areas of Wesley Church. Once again.... Thank you!

Sharon

Please Join us...

Dear Church Family,

All of you are invited to an ***Epiphany Open House*** on Sunday, January 7th from 2:00-4:30 at the parsonage, located at 2104 11th Avenue in Sterling. Pastor Jeremiah and Megan will be hosting as we celebrate the Epiphany, which officially ends the Christmas season. Food, fellowship, and activities for the children will be enjoyed by all.

Beverages will be provided. We hope for a large turn-out, so we are requesting that you bless this gathering with either an appetizer or a dessert to share. Please sign-up in the Fellowship Hall if you are able to provide one of these choices. This will also allow us to provide enough beverages for all. Please do not feel compelled to bring food; invariably we always have more than enough to eat. We are eager for all who attend Wesley to join us for this celebration.

We hope this will be a wonderful time of casual and relaxed fellowship in which we get to know one another better as we begin a new year together!

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Jeremiah

Church Visioning Day

On Saturday, January 20, 2018 from 9:00 AM through lunchtime, we will have our Church Visioning Day. All those who attend Wesley are invited to participate. Those who are elected leaders on our various teams and committees are especially encouraged to attend. If you are new to your position, we will have pertinent information that will help you as you begin your term of service.

A time of visioning to determine where God is asking us to move as a church in 2018 will be a part of this day's discussions. Please prayerfully consider how and where you think the Holy Spirit is guiding us to best serve Jesus Christ, share the Good News, and love and serve others in His name.

Please RSVP on the sheet in the Fellowship Hall, so that we can know how much food to prepare. Please also indicate if you will need childcare, including your children's names and their ages.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Jeremiah

*PEACE on earth and Best Wishes
throughout the New Year!!*

Has your address changed in the last year? Giving statements will be out sometime in January. Please be sure that Tammy has your new address and any other information that may need updated. Thank you!

A look back at 2017



Birthdays

January 1 - Joan Partridge
January 3 - Norma Church, Steve Michel
January 5 - Joshua Greenfield
January 8 - Joe Gatz, Carol Shaw
January 11 - Susie Cedro, Melissa Freas
January 12 - Matthew Taylor
January 13 - Molly Papoccia
January 14 - Michael Quick
January 15 - Carol Hubbard, Max White
January 16 - Toby Hodges
January 18 - Reid Blackburn, Ryan Blackburn,
 Bowen Malhi, Lucy White
January 20 - Randy Clodfelter, Janne Severson
January 22 - Mitchell Clodfelter, Cathy Williams
January 23 - Eileen McDonald, Katie Spangler

January 24 - Antonio Castaneda
January 26 - Darrin Driscoll, Cal Jacobs,
 Kaitlyn Williams
January 27 - Tom Brown
January 29 - James Melton
January 30 - Lexi Hinrichs
January 31 - Wendy Fitzanko

Anniversaries

January 1 - Jeremiah & Megan Thompson
January 5 - Jon & Christie Freas
January 18 - Gene & Sue Klock
January 23 - Rock & Sharon Gentry
January 26 - Edd & Marianne Rosser

Servers for January- 8 a.m.

	Greeters	Ushers	Liturgist
January 7	Fitzanko family	Fitzanko family	Amy Poci
January 14	↓	↓	Wendy Fitzanko
January 21			Jan Glover
January 28	↓	↓	Mitch Clodfelter

Coffee

Jan. 7 - Frank & Janne Rausa
 and Rod & Beth Snyder
Jan. 14 - Steve & Mary Downes
Jan. 21 - Toby & Debbie
 Hodges
Jan. 28 - Joe & Elisa Gatz

Servers for January- 10 a.m.

	Greeters	Ushers	Liturgist
January 7	Debbie Kramer, Rosie Davis	James & Linh Melton family	Bruce Kramer
January 14	Rory & Rita Smith	Antonio/Amber Castaneda family	Rory Smith
January 21	Debbie Kramer, Rosie Davis	James & Linh Melton family	Bruce Kramer
January 28	Greenfield family	Antonio/Amber Castaneda family	Jaime Greenfield

Acolytes

January - 8:00 a.m.:
 Aaron & Derek Fitzanko
January 7 - 10:00 a.m.:
 James & Linh Melton Family
January 14 - Antonio /Amber
 Castaneda family
January 21 - James & Linh
 Melton family
January 28 - Antonio/Amber
 Castaneda family

Wesley United Methodist Church

2200 16th Ave.

Sterling, IL 61081

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wesley United Methodist Church

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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.
- **Laundry detergent** for Bear Necessities, Everyday Essentials and the FISH Food Pantry.
- **Travel-sized toiletries** for the Trinity and FISH pantries.
- **Loose coins** to benefit Betty Tshala - Zambia for the month of January