



Murmurs

Recently, I spent a few precious hours with a friend of mine doing what we do best: chatting while running random errands together. We bought greeting cards, picked up wasabi almonds for a care package (long story), donated a box of clothes and ended our afternoon at a sandwich shop, grabbing dinner to go. The guy piling lettuce on top of our sandwiches was chatty, and asked us what we'd been up to. My friend quipped, "Well, we went to the mall, and we did a lot of complaining." It was an amusing summary of our afternoon, but it immediately struck me. On the one hand, it was kind of true. Each of us had a frustrating situation we wanted to vent to the other. But on the other hand, "complaining" didn't quite capture it, either. The things we needed to say felt consequential, as opposed to petty. I'll be the first to admit that I'm not well-versed in the subtleties of anger. After all, I'm a middle-class Midwestern woman who was raised to be polite. It has taken years—years!—to use my car horn without guilt. So I'm no expert. But it seems to me that not all anger is equal.

Not surprisingly, Christians have been thinking about anger for hundreds of years. And few as thoughtfully as Benedict, the sixth century Italian monk known for his guidelines on Christian monastic life, helpfully called *The Rule of St. Benedict* or simply *The Rule*. Combining spiritual wisdom and practical insight, *The Rule* has a lot to say about anger—not surprising, when you think about it. Living with the same people, day in and day out, with little personal space or privacy, medieval monastics probably held few illusions about human nature. But notably, Benedict doesn't condemn all anger, categorically. He pinpoints a specific kind of anger poisonous to individuals and communities alike. He calls this form of anger "murmuring." We know it as complaining.

Benedict noticed that murmuring rarely concerns itself with an essential spiritual or theological issue; its fertile ground lies in the daily practicalities of life. The food is too hot or cold. I don't like the color on the wall. Why do you leave your

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clothes piled in a heap on the floor? By themselves, murmurs seem small and trivial. But put them all together, and allow them to grow unchecked, and they can gain destructive power. Who hasn't worked in an environment where co-workers bonded over complaints about the management? Benedict believed that some murmuring hurts only the person who practices it, while other murmuring tears a community apart, one rip at a time. Either way, he advised Christians not only to keep their murmurs to themselves, but to go one step further. Better to sidestep the whole dilemma. And avoid even the *thought* of a complaint.

It makes me wonder how close to complaining my friend and I actually traveled. Were we looking to each other for support, affirmation, and guidance? Well, yes. Was our anger about things of genuine import, and not just petty complaints? Mostly. Did our anger propel us to positive action? Well, that remains to be seen. All I know for sure is that I drove home with my sandwich in the passenger seat, both soothed and troubled. Benedict was no fool. He knew that anger is a shifty thing, capable of wearing whatever disguise most pleases us. Benedict was no fool. He believed in spiritual community. He knew we rarely become our Christ selves all by ourselves. We need each other. We need each other to remove the masks we wear, or at least, to reveal them, because otherwise we might not understand a very simple truth. The face of Christ is our face, too.

Yours on this journey,

Pastor Stephanie

Open & Affirming Work Group News

This group had a rip-roaring goal-setting meeting on January 16. Here are some actions coming up this year.

In process:

A community-wide program called “**OUCH!, that Stereotype hurts!**” will be held over the lunch hour IN OUR CHURCH on **Wed., February 7**. The program is sponsored by ISU Extension and the Jackson County Prevention Coalition is open to anyone wanting to improve their skill at communicating without causing hurt. Call Julie Furne at 652-2215 or just come!

Another community-wide resource coming to town will be a two-session workshop called **Mental Health First Aid**. Lynn Bopes and Maquoketa High School will bring this national program to town on **Feb. 15 and Feb. 22**, each day from 5:30 – 9:30. The educational event is designed for anyone who would like to know how to be more helpful to family and others dealing with mental health issues. Thanks to Lynn, the program is being offered at no charge at the Maquoketa Public Library Community Room. Open & Affirming and Spiritual Outreach will provide light refreshments. Watch for details about registration, or contact the church office to be put on a list of those interested.

In the planning stage:

A Rainbow Flag will soon hang outside our building as a signal that, inside, folks will be welcomed no matter their gender status.

An educational opportunity from the National UCC called Trans 101. This online presentation is a low-key presentation of some ways to be truly welcoming to transgender persons in our actions and in our words. This opportunity will be offered on a Sunday, following worship.

Opportunities to write letters to decision makers supporting public policies that support the basic rights of LGBTQ persons.

Participation this summer in a nearby Pride event—probably in Dubuque or Davenport.

Please feel free to join in or comment on any of these initiatives, or make your own suggestions.

Karen Manning for the Working Group

Have you seen the rainbow flag yet?



We expect to have one flying on the south side of the church building soon. The Open and Affirming group notes that this is an effort to signal the welcoming attitude of the congregation to the wider community.

The following summary of the history and meaning of the flag is taken from a 2015 article in the Washington Post.

“Where did that rainbow flag come from, and how did it come to symbolize gay pride and rights?. Gilbert Baker, an artist and drag queen, first created the Rainbow Flag in 1978.

In an interview Baker did with the Museum of Modern Art, which recently added the rainbow flag to its design collection, Baker says he started to seriously think about creating a flag for the movement in 1976, the year of the United States’ bicentennial. Baker says he saw a flag as a more powerful symbol than a seal or a sign, since it is flown to represent a nation, people or country. “Flags are about proclaiming power, so it’s very appropriate,” he said.

“We needed something beautiful, something from us. The rainbow is so perfect because it really fits our diversity in terms of race, gender, ages, all of those things,” said Baker. “Plus, it’s a natural flag—it’s from the sky! And even though the rainbow has been used in other ways in vexilography, this use has now far eclipsed any other use that it had.”

The rainbow had the added benefit of being a natural and universal symbol that works in any language. “

If you are asked to explain why the flag is there, you might say, “It symbolizes our conviction that all persons are children of God, no exceptions.” Or “it is a visible form of our statement of extravagant welcome, which we proclaim every Sunday: “No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to ask any member of the Council, the Open & Affirming group, or Pastor Stephanie.

Karen Manning, for the Open & Affirming Group

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship is at 9:30 a.m. on Wed. February 14th. All women are welcome!



Do you hear or read the Scriptures in worship and wish you had an opportunity to learn more?

You are invited to join the folks who enjoy Adult Bible Study. We meet in the church parlor at 8:45 a.m. on Sunday and discuss the day's lectionary readings.



Sunday School News

On February 11th the Education Board, with help from John Dague, is sponsoring an Intergenerational Breakfast. There will be pancakes eggs and sausage. More details to come.

Please join us!



February 20

Maquoketa United Church of Christ

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
				18:00 1:00 p 6:00 p 7:00 p
4 8:45 a Adult Bible Study 9:00 a Sunday School 10:00 a Worship 11:30 a Annual Meeting	5 6:00 p Karate Club	6 7:30 p Yoga	7 7:30 a Centering Prayer 9:30 a Spiritual Outreach 11 a—2 p ASAC luncheon 5:15 p Meal Deal (potluck) 6:15 p Centering Prayer 7:00 p Choir Rehearsal	8 8:30 5:30 6:00 7:00
11 8:45 a Bible Study 9:00 a Sunday School 10:00 a Worship 11:45 a Qigong	12 6:00 p Karate Club	13 9:00 a Ministerial Association 7:30 p Yoga	14 7:30 a Centering Prayer 9:30 a Women's Fellowship 5:15 p Meal Deal 6:15 p Centering Prayer 7:00 p Ash Wed. Worship 8:00 p Alcoholics Anonymous	15 8:00 6:00 7:00
18 8:45 a Bible Study 9:00 a Sunday School 10:00 a Worship 11:45 a Qigong	19 6:00 p Karate Club 7:00 p Prayer Shawl Ministry	20 7:30 p Yoga	21 7:30 a Centering Prayer 5:15 p Meal Deal 6:15 p Centering Prayer 7:00 p Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p Alcoholics Anonymous	22 8:00 6:00 7:00
25 8:45 a Bible Study 9:00 a Sunday School 10:00 a Worship 11:45 a Qigong	26 6:00 p Karate Club	27 7:30 p Yoga	28 7:30 a Centering Prayer 5:15 p Meal Deal 6:15 p Centering Prayer 7:00 p Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p Alcoholics Anonymous	*Plea Schw Praye

Service Committee

Sue Sandberg & Phyllis Rockwell

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	Fri	Sat
0 a Morning Prayer o Prayer Shawl Ministry o Karate Club o Centering Prayer *	2	3
0 a Morning Prayer a Child Advocacy Board p Council Meeting p Karate Club p Centering Prayer *	9	10
	16	17
a Morning Prayer o Karate Club o Centering Prayer*		
	23	24
a Morning Prayer o Karate Club o Centering Prayer*		

se confirm Thursday evening Centering Prayer time and location with Bonnie
enker before attending.

er Shawl Ministry will be held at United Church of Christ during the month of February.

206 E Platt Street | PO Box 1177
Maquoketa, IA 52060
Phone: (563) 652-4296
Email: info@maqucc.org



February 4

WC Tom Breuch
GR Joel & Sara Tubbs
WL Karen McClintock

February 11

WC John Dague
GR Elaine Tubbs &
Jane Bentratt
WL Bonnie Schwenker

February 14—Ash Wednesday

WC Marta Romer
GR Burton Romer &
Jean Claeys
WL Chris Tubbs

February 18—Lent

WC Geni Carr
GR Kathy Geronzin &
Jennie Stewart
WL Caroline Bybee

February 25—Lent

WC Mary Hayward
GR Oswalt family
WL Marilyn Deegan



Joan Crawford	Feb. 2
Chris Nissen	Feb. 12
Rosemary Francois	Feb. 15
Chamberly Bock	Feb. 20
Sarah Hobbs	Feb. 21

Council Minutes

The council minutes will be posted on the bulletin board outside Pastor Stephanie's office after they have been approved by the council.



Dates to Remember:

- Feb. 4 Annual Meeting
- Feb. 7 ASAC Luncheon
- Feb. 8 Child Advocacy Board
- Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday Worship

Meal Deal Dates:

- Feb. 7 (potluck)
- Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 21
- Feb. 28

Need a ride?

If you need help in getting to worship, or other church events

Please call David Manning 563-652-3089.

Narcotics Anonymous

Saturday evening Narcotics Anonymous meetings have been cancelled until further notice due to low attendance.

A big thank you -- for sharing birthday cake after worship January 14, for the cards, the phone calls, the emails, the visits, the poems, for all the good wishes on my Big Birthday! A birthday like that only happens once in a lifetime, and you all made it memorable!



Cheers to you all -- Carol Breuch

Worship at Maquoketa UCC



OUCH! That Stereotype Hurts

Communicating Respectfully in a Diverse World

Do you *struggle with keeping silent*
in the face of demeaning and
hurtful stereotypes?

**Just one person speaking up can
inspire others to do the same.**



You are invited to join the Jackson County Prevention Coalition and Community Partnerships for Protecting Children for an interactive session to learn useful, easy-to-learn phrases and skills for speaking up effectively against bias and stereotypes.

Wednesday, February 7, 2018 *11:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m.*

at the United Church of Christ, 206 East Platt Street in Maquoketa

Pizza and soda provided by CPPC

RSVPs for the training and lunch are due by February 1, 2018.

To RSVP, please email Julie Furne at jfurne@asac.us.



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Based on the training program: Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts, Leslie Aguilar ©2009, International Training and Development, LLC

Mental Health First Aid

Join the movement.



Sometimes, first aid isn't

a **bandage**,
or **CPR**,
or the **Heimlich**,
or calling **911**.

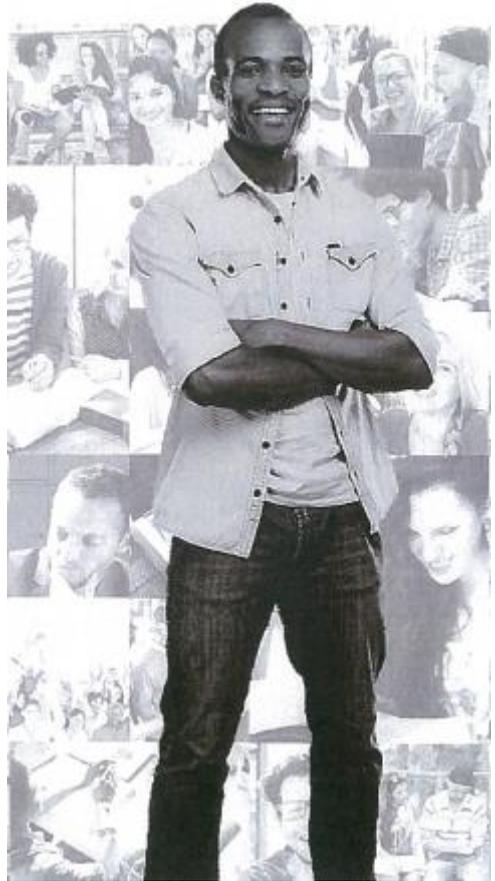
Sometimes, first aid is **YOU!**

Thurs. 2/15/18 & 2/22/18
from 5:30—9:30 p.m.
Public Library—126 S. 2nd St. Maquoketa,
Register by February 9th—
call 652-1743 or
email lbopes@co.jackson.ia.us
There is no cost to attend

A person you know could be experiencing a mental health or substance abuse problem.

Learn an action plan to help.

You are more likely to encounter someone in an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack. Learn how to help a friend, family member, coworker, or neighbor in need. Get trained in Mental Health First Aid.



Take a course. Save a life.
Strengthen your community.

Maquoketa United Church of Christ

PO Box 1177

Maquoketa, IA 52060

Phone: (563) 652-4296

Email: info@maquucc.org

