

THE UNITER

JANUARY 2021

**Maquoketa
United Church
of Christ**



a just
world
for all
ucc.org

God is still speaking

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

Isaiah 60:1-3

***Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.***

***For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;***

***but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.***

***Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.***





Beloveds,

This has been a season of change for all of us. Yet here we are welcoming 2021 with arms wide open with the possibilities ahead. We have weathered the storm and we are venturing forth with the optimism that a new year brings and the promises of God's grace of the season of Epiphany. Halleluiah!

Unfortunately, we are still living in the era of Covid 19, and yet the light seems to be shining at the end of the tunnel. While it may be a while before we return to a "normal" which we all know will never be the same as the old, it is certainly something to look forward to.

Changes, changes. I started my journey with you on December 15, 2019, as I presented my first worship service during Advent's week of "joy." It was certainly a joyful celebration as you voted me in as your new pastor. It has been a big change for you all as you have had to get acquainted with another pastor in your midst.

My first official day was January 7"and we have been walking together ever since. I am looking forward to our season of Epiphany that will follow the Baptism of Christ through Transfiguration Sunday in February. As we think of the Baptismal promises and vows of affirmation, we are reminded that we are in a covenantal relationship, not only with Christ but the Body of Christ, the Church. This is where we practice our unity in Kin-dom, using the gifts the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon us.

During our Advent season we spent a lot of time reflecting on work that needs to be done in our world. We affirmed we are not only witnesses in the community, but active members of the Body of Christ. It is our job to bring forth into the world justice for all of the Kin-dom by celebrating Christ's presence and furthering Christ's mission in all the world. Here we grow as a people of God, loving one-another as we journey together. I am looking forward to a time when we will worship in each other's presence. Until then, let us all work as if we are creating a "City on the Hill," a beacon for all the world to follow as we work toward Kin-dom.

A Prayer of Confirmation (Book of Worship)

We rejoice, O merciful God, with us in the gift of the Holy Spirit,
And the Spirit's power to awaken us to new truth,
And inspire us to venture into fullness of life.

We give thanks that we have been moved to affirm our baptism.
Help us to live not for ourselves but for Christ and those whom Christ loves.
Keep us steady and abounding in hope, never giving up, pressing
Toward the goal of life with you in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Peace and Blessings to you all!

Pastor Maxx

Celebrate with Pastor Maxx!

as she completes a year with us as our called pastor. We can all agree that her job is now not what we thought it would be, and not what she had prepared for. But here we are, still being the church, though in different ways!



Congratulations to Shelley LaMar on the birth of baby Samuel! He was born on Dec. 18. Shelley's family lives at 206 S. Jones.. Katie likes him, too!

Announcement

ANNUAL MEETING PROCESS TO BEGIN SOON

Greetings to you all in the New Year! Under normal circumstances we'd already have set a date for our congregation's Annual Meeting in February, at which we would receive annual reports, discuss and eventually adopt a budget, elect Council members, affirm other members of boards and committees, and do some group bonding. Under current pandemic conditions we must accomplish these self-governance activities by other means.

Annual Reports

We plan to get the annual reports to you as soon as possible. Warning! They may not all come at once! This will happen by email for those who are on our email list; printed copies will be made available for others. We will invite questions and comments, especially about decisions made by the Council this year that would normally have involved more congregational input. We'll also welcome proposals to amend the budget we present and welcome additional nominations for the three Council positions that will be vacant.

Next Steps

Your Council will review, summarize, and send out the responses you give us so everyone can benefit from your insights and opinions, much as discussions often occur at our traditional in-person meetings. We'll also provide you with ballots to cast and designate a date on which they will be counted. You'll be notified promptly of the results, and the new congregational year will begin!

The process summarized above will not be the equivalent of a good in-person annual meeting, but we hope it will serve to move us forward together. We are a do-it-yourself congregation. Please help make this happen!

David Manning, Moderator for 2020

Open and Affirming of LGBTQ People: Why it Matters

A sermon by Rev.. [Carolyn Pressler](#), Jun 2019

Submitted by Karen Manning for the Open & Affirming Task Force

I am often asked to speak to congregations wrestling with whether or not to become Open and Affirming.. The folks want to know why I, a lesbian and Bible teacher, think it matters. .First, it matters because those of us who are in the sexual minority need to know—explicitly—where we can safely go without being subtly or not so subtly attacked. For twenty-five years, this church has provided a place where queer people like me can worship without experiencing ongoing challenges to our humanity, our worth as children of God. This is a church home where we are no longer “strangers and aliens.” That matters.

Second, by becoming open and affirming this congregation has been an important witness to the larger community. Large segments of our society are convinced that all Christians believe that homosexuality is an abomination unto the Lord. The impact on families of LGBT folk, on kids who wrestle with their sexuality, on anyone who struggles to reconcile their faith and their love, can be devastating. You—we-- provide public witness that faith in God, through Christ, need not be defined by who is excluded and condemned, but by who is welcomed and blessed through God’s inclusive love.

Third, by providing safe space for us, being an ONA congregation helps to make queer folk visible, and to normalize our lives. Our culture has come a long way since 1969—and yet...Valentine’s Day cards still overwhelmingly depict heterosexual couples; romantic movies are most often about boy meets girl, not girl meets girl. How healing, how hope engendering it is to worship with a congregation where there are other couples who look like us. How healing, how hope engendering, to be simply one more family. For twenty-five years, this congregation has welcomed openly gay or lesbian couples, transgender persons, queer families. You have made our presence visible and normal. That is a huge gift.

Those are the three things I lift up to congregations that ask why being open and affirming matters. Psychologically, pastorally, socially and politically, the hard work it takes to be open and affirming matters—it matters hugely.

Yes, Christianity has too often shattered God’s peace, too often built massive walls of division. But that is precisely why communities that embody reconciliation –however provisionally--are so extraordinarily important. Wherever walls of division are brought down, we glimpse, however briefly, the loving, powerful and self-giving work of God. In that love, we “are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.”



gg81324761 GoGraph.com

2021

Maquoket

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
3 10:00am Zoom Worship	4	5 Pastor Maxx returns from vacation.	6 5:30 PM Eat, Play & Pray Zoom	7 6:30 PM Centeri
10 10:00am Zoom Worship	11	12	13 5:30 PM Eat, Play & Pray Zoom	14 5 p.m. 6:30 PM Centeri
17 10:00am Zoom Worship	18	19 Newsletter Submission Deadline	20 5:30 PM Eat, Play & Pray Zoom	21 6:30 PM Centeri
24 10:00am Zoom Worship	25	26	27 5:30 PM Eat, Play & Pray Zoom	28 6:30 PM Centeri

Weekly Community Events: Mondays & Thursday -Karate at 6:00 pm Wednes

Maquoketa United Church of Christ

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

	Fri	Sat
	1 New Years Day Church Office Closed	2
M Zoom ng Prayer	8	9
Council Meeting M Zoom ng Prayer	15	16
M Zoom ng Prayer	22	23
M Zoom ng Prayer	29	30 31

days –Al-Anon at 7 p.m. , AA at 8:00 pm



Our dear Katie Nichols died in Mount Pleasant. On Dec. 22. Only family services are planned at this time, Her family can be contacted through Dawson Funeral Home. God's blessings to her family.



[Lutheran Services of Iowa](#)

Raising Our Voice for Iowa Children and Families

Families struggling without access to mental healthcare. Human services providers overworked and underpaid. Former refugees and immigrants striving to build new lives.

These are all issues faced by Iowans. Help us ensure their voices are heard at the Iowa State Capitol.

This legislative session may look different from past years. But now more than ever, Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) will be advocating for our community members who are so often overlooked in our society.

You can join us in this important work. Visit LSIowa.org/advocacy and sign up for our Advocacy Alerts. Learn more about the legislative process, the issues impacting your neighbors, and your role as a citizen in helping to amplify their voices. If you would like more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Compassion During Crisis

Across the state, LSI team members work with families at risk of child abuse or neglect, connecting them to the tools and resources they need to keep their children in their homes whenever safely possible.

One of the critical programs available to parents is the Strengthening Families program. The program typically provides 14 weeks of in-person parent group work, family activities, and a family meal to enhance child development, help parents create their own support network, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse or neglect.

When COVID-19 created challenges to this in-person model, LSI did not give up on the families who relied on this important service. Instead, LSI's Behavioral Health Intervention Services team has gone virtual.

Maria, a program supervisor with LSI, has been leading a virtual version of the program this year, where families join a Zoom meeting and use "breakout rooms" for individual sessions. Meals are purchased from Hy-Vee and delivered the night of the session, so families are still able to celebrate their tradition of eating together each week.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

[Rhonda's House](#) in DeWitt, Iowa has a peer-supported Hot Line for people with mental health or addiction issues, helped by recovering people with similar issues. The phone number is 516-688-7484. This could be a true life line for someone we know! Website: www.lifeconnectionsrecovery.org

Treasure Sale Report

At our last sale in November, we raised over \$500. Our suggestion for the money was approved as follows: \$400 to OCWM and \$100 to Salvation Army. We found 2 sources to take suitcases and duffel bags for foster kids—JC-DHS and LSI Clinton Office. People are already asking when our next sale is. We are hoping for February or March.

WISH LIST: 1) Do you have any old musical instruments of any kind?

2) Do you have any small end tables or nightstands?

Please bring items to the North Lobby of the Church or take downstairs to sale room, or call Geni: 652-2175 or Dianne 652-2738 to come pick up from your house. Thank you,

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to our very own Geni Carr. She was recognized for her 25 years of employment at Osterhaus Pharmacy with a \$100 Charity check. Shown here is Bob Osterhaus presenting the check to the Kids of Baldwin Park Fund, represented by Allison, Chamberly, Casey and Coral Bock. They want to refurbish the park gazebo. Geni also received a Waterford crystal bowl for her years of service.





Happy Birthday Blessings from
Maquoketa UCC !

Jim Dean	Jan. 10th
Elizabeth Manning	Jan. 15th
Carol Breuch	Jan. 16th
Connie Francois	Jan. 16th
Jenny Nabb	Jan. 16th
William McClintock	Jan. 16th
Steve Tubbs	Jan. 21st
Jeff Clark	Jan. 28th



OFFICE *hours*

**Tuesday - Friday
9:00 am - 12:00 pm**



[https://www.facebook.com/
maquucc/](https://www.facebook.com/maquucc/)

**Maquoketa United Church of
Christ**





Steve and Chris Tubbs extend a heartfelt thank-you to all the kind notes and cards at the time of their anniversary

Thank you to **Jack & Marilyn Willey** for the lovely poinsettia in memory of John and Frances Willey and Tim

Pledge Report—Good News!

The pledges to date have been tabulated and we are happy to report there were **27 pledging units and \$83,424.00 pledged**. We want to thank everyone. It is not too late to add to this if you desire to pledge. In Thanksgiving, **Stewardship and Mission**

SANCTUARY COMMITTEE REPORT—More GOOD NEWS

The Sanctuary Committee has been hard at work. We sent letters to members and friends asking for donations for our upcoming project. As of December 15th we have received \$26,240, which includes a very generous donation of \$15,000 from Jerre and Mary Jo Stead. (Mary Jo is a former member of our church)!

We anticipate the work to begin either January 11th or 18th. There is a designer board in the hall near the Belva Duncan room. Stop and take a look any time! We will keep you informed as the work gets underway.

We anticipate by next year we will be worshipping in our newly refurbished sanctuary! We continue to be grateful for your ongoing support.

Merry Christmas!

The Sanctuary Committee,

Caroline Bybee, Jane Bentrrott, Carol Breuch, Lin Redling, and Barry Francois.

Maquoketa United Church of Christ

PO Box 1177

Maquoketa, IA 52060

Phone: (563) 652-4296

Email: info@maqucc.org

