



***“The Voice”* Newsletter of The United Church of Mapleton**

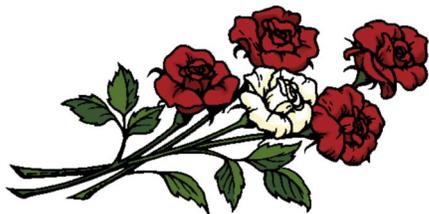
201 Troendle Street SW; PO Box 413
Mapleton, MN 56065

FEBRUARY 2016

Address Service Requested

*“The United Church of Mapleton is a Christian fellowship
of mission, worship, and faith formation dedicated
to the Maple River community.”*

The United Church of Mapleton
PO Box 413, 201 Troendle St SW
Mapleton, MN 56065



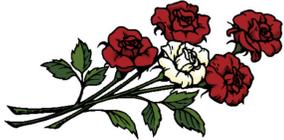
THE UNITED CHURCH OF MAPLETON

www.unitedchurchmapleton.org

secretary@unitedchurchmapleton.org

9:00am Sunday Worship
 9:00am Nursery Care
 9:15am PreK– 2nd Grade Sunday School
 10:00am Coffee & Fellowship

**1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month: 6-7pm
 G.I.F.T. (*Generations In Faith Together*)
 A meal will be served.**



FEBRUARY 2016



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|----------|--------|---|
| | 1 | 2 6:30am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 1:00pm Quilting 6:00-8:00pm Cooking Matters Class | 3 6:00—7:00pm GIFT: <i>Generations In Faith Together</i> | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 9:00am Worship with Communion and Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf Collection 10:00am Conf. Class | 8 7:00pm Women's Fellowship | 9 6:30am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 1:00pm Quilting | 10 Ash Wednesday 6:00pm Lenten Soup and Supper 6:30pm Lenten Service | 11 | 12 | 13 8:30—10:30am Community Breakfast at St. John Lutheran |
| 14 9:00am Worship 10:00am Pastoral Relations Training | 15 | 16 6:30am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 1:00pm Quilting | 17 6:00—7:00pm GIFT: <i>Generations In Faith Together</i> 7:00pm Church Council | 18 | 19 | 20 RECYCLE!  1:00 p.m. Mental Health Panel |
| 21 9:00am Worship with guest preacher: Rev. Sarah Griffith Lund Youth Center Collection 10:00am Conf. Class | 22 | 23 6:30am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 8:00am March Newsletter articles/ reports are due into the church office 1:00pm Quilting | 24 6:00pm Lenten Soup and Supper 6:30pm Lenten Service | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 9:00am Worship | 29 | | | | | |

The Voice

The Newsletter of The United Church of Mapleton



Phone: (507) 524-3141

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| | February 7 | February 14 | February 21 | February 28 |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Lay Reader | Karen Stanton | Pam Foster | Bruce Stanton | |
| Usher | Pam and Don Foster | | | Mike and Julie Johnson |
| Greeters | Mabelle Larson | Mabelle Larson | Mabelle Larson | Mabelle Larson |
| Coffee Hour | Church Council | Women's Fellowship | Youth Center | Christian Education |

Church Financial Envelope

For privacy and ease, please make a notation on the front of your envelope: **c/o Financial Secretary**. Thank you!



Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please call **Karen Stanton at (507) 327-8168** or **Joyce Johnson at 524-3727**. Please let them know your prayer request, including the name of the person to pray for if applicable, and whether or not you would like your request included in the church's public prayer list or if you'd prefer the request be kept privately within the prayer chain.

Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf

Sunday, February 7th, 2016 we will collect donations for the Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf. Please consider giving monetary gifts and/or non-perishable items to this meaningful mission.

The Maple River Youth Center

Sunday, February 21st, 2016 the Coffee Hour and Collection jar will go towards helping support our local youth at the youth center.

How to Contact Pastor Ashley

Pastor Ashley's cell phone number is (507) 381-8199 and her email is pastor@unitedchurchmapleton.org. Her usual weekly schedule includes these times and places. *Monday* Sabbath. *Tuesday* 9:00-11:00 a.m. church office, noon-1:00 p.m. Pastors' Preaching Text Study Group in Mankato, 3:00-5:00 p.m. Maple River Youth Center. *Wednesday* 9:00-11:00 a.m. church office, noon-1:00 p.m. Maggie J's Restaurant (Location for Community Office Hours) 1st & 3rd Wednesdays 6:00-7:00 p.m. G.I.F.T. *Thursday* 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. church office, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Bible Study. *Friday* Sermon writing. At other times, she may be making pastoral visits or be serving elsewhere in the community. Please feel free to contact her for a visit or meeting!

Sign-Up for Lay Readers and Ushers

Please sign-up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board outside the main office. Thank you in advance for your service.

If you would like more information, please contact Marian Mallory or any member of the Diaconate.

Pastor's Corner – February 2016

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” *John 13:34-35*

“Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” *Luke 22:19-20*

Lent is a season filled with language of covenant. All of the Lenten season is oriented toward the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Just before Jesus' arrest and trial, he shared the last supper with his disciples. During that meal, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus speaks of his blood as the new covenant and his body as given for them. Matthew and Mark's texts include similar language of covenant in their account of the upper room. Although the Gospel of John doesn't include the last supper in the night of Jesus' betrayal, Jesus instead washes the feet of the disciples and pronounces the new commandment.

Throughout Lent at The United Church, our times of worship together will focus on this idea of covenant. Covenant is a word with many meanings. In the church, we covenant together to live together in accordance with the gospel and in service to others. God's promises to humanity and our response to God also create covenants.

GIFT will continue on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 6:00-7:00pm. On the 2nd and 4th Wednesday evenings of the month during Lent, we will gather from 6:00-6:30pm for a light supper and from 6:30-7:00pm for worship (“Lenten Supper & Service”). During this contemplative time of worship, we will be guided by a resource from Rev. Sarah Griffith Lund called *Fellowship of Prayer* help us focus on the dreams and visions God provides to us through the covenant of faith. (Rev. Griffith Lund will also be with us the weekend of February 20th-21st for a panel and worship on faith and mental health – look for other announcements and flyers!)

This month, we will have the opportunity to hear from several guest preachers about their understandings of covenant. We will also have special opportunities to partner the dreams and visions we receive from God with our own God-given gifts, talents, and resources so that we may better live out the covenant of living together as The United Church in service to the world for the sake of the good news of Jesus Christ.

As you may know, the forty days of Lent are often associated with giving something up; putting things aside in order to make more room for a relationship with God in Christ, like a habit or vice that gets in the way. Or, more recently, a tradition has developed of *beginning* a new practice during Lent to help foster and nurture our relationship with God. I've included with my column this month a calendar by Rev. Laura Stephens-Reed, a clergy coach and consultant, which include suggestions of ways to pray for The United Church of Mapleton throughout this Lenten season.

This Lenten season will provide us with extra, unique opportunities to connect for worship, study, and fellowship. May we always, above all, prayerfully seek after the heart of the gospel, which is the new covenant of the love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Blessings,
Pastor Ashley



Lenten Prayer Calendar

Use these prompts to pray for your congregation during Lent:

“Holy One, help my church to...”

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| | | | Acknowledge change and leverage times of transition | Repent for ways church has excluded people | Serve as a touchstone for people in crisis | Celebrate the fullness of its history |
| Welcome genuinely without overwhelming | Be honest about core values | Understand and meet the needs of the surrounding community | Assess growth using metrics that matter | Encourage inter-generational relationships | Lean into fruit-bearing discomfort | Resist the temptation to imitate other churches |
| Effectively form lifelong disciples of Christ | Offer hope to those lacking hope | Educate about and identify spiritual gifts | Emphasize communication and transparency | Laugh together | Appreciate efforts and sacrifices of leaders | Understand the congregation as one part of the larger body of Christ |
| Integrate new voices into leadership | Seek justice for all God’s children | Dig for the courage to innovate | Care well for one another | Connect with denominational partners and resources | Embrace the church size needed to carry out God’s mission | Be a place where members are eager to invite others |
| Open hearts and engage minds and bodies in worship | Spread out the workload | Listen for God’s mission for our church instead of our agenda | Become more nimble as shifts happen more quickly | Train and support members in ministry | Streamline governance to prioritize ministry over meetings | Play together |
| Enter one by one but worship as one | Confess times the church has been too inwardly-focused | Collaborate with nearby churches and organizations | Utilize congregational assets to their fullest | Appreciate generational differences | Support and love our clergy and family(ies) | Teach stewardship as a spiritual discipline year-round |
| Enjoy the noise and chaos of young families’ participation | Interpret current events through the lens of faith | Fight well with one another | Turn away from individual and corporate anxiety | Get to know neighbors and engage with them gladly | Know when to end ministries to direct energy into new ones | Wait on God’s timing |
| Take note of and live into areas of new life | | | | | | |

*Image courtesy of Hermano Leon Clip Art,
www.cruzblanca.org/hermanoleon.*

Created in 2015 by Rev. Laura Stephens-Reed,
Clergy Coach & Congregational Consultant
E: reverendlaura@gmail.com, T: @CoachLauraSR

In Our Prayers

Our church prayer list includes:

- Those with ongoing health concerns: Norma Baack, Kathy Cramer, Janie Firstbrook, Mary Beth Fritz, Aubrielle Howley, David Keller, Marian Mallory, Lloyd Mitchell, Stan Solie
- Family members and loved ones who are ill
- Traveling mercies for our members, family, and friends
- All those who are grieving and mourning
- Those affected by mental illness, including anxiety and depression
- Those undergoing ongoing health concerns: Norma Baack, Kathy Cramer, Janie Firstbrook, Mary Beth Fritz, Aubrielle Howley, David Keller, Marian Mallory, Lloyd Mitchell, Stan Solie
- Those recovering from recent health concerns or procedures: Geri Howieson, Jack Madsen, Sean Mallory, Bill Pfeffer, Roberta Ward, Tom Samuelson
- Former President Jimmy Carter, a lifelong Baptist, who announced that he has cancer in his brain and is undergoing treatment
- Gabe Samuelson, who is in Advance Individual Training for computers and communications for the Army Reserves in Augusta, Georgia through March
- All those affected by the ongoing crisis in Syria and the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the Middle East
- Tom Samuelson, who recently had lung surgery due to an infection



The prayer requests and praises shared with the congregation during last month's worship services include:

Prayers:

- For all those affected by the recent severe weather and tornadoes in the South and for the flashpoints of chaos all over the world
- For the thousands of flood victims
- For God's blessings to watch over our families as they travel home after the holidays
- For peace around the world
- For our meeting today—to find us with renewed dedication to go forward in our mission
- For Jola Walker's family, as her father, Lester Anderson, passed away on January 12th

Thanksgiving:

- To God for the professionals, doctors, teachers, and pastors who tend to the needs of all. They are servants of God, as is everyone.
- For successful surgery and prayers for continued healing for Sean
- For Good News from Marian's doctors

The prayers and sympathies of The United Church of Mapleton are extended to the family and friends of Dawn Dietz, longtime United Church member, who passed away on Sunday, January 17th, 2016.

Sunday Morning Wheelchair Assistance

If you are in need of wheelchair assistance on Sunday mornings, please let us know by calling the church office at (507) 524-3141 ahead of time to make arrangements **or** you may have an usher assist you on Sunday morning when you arrive at the church.

There is a ramp located on the east side of the church which can be utilized by parking in the east parking lot. If it is too difficult for you to push a wheelchair up the ramp, please feel free to contact an Usher or Deacon for assistance.

Pastoral Relations Committee

The Pastoral Relations committee (PRC) exists to foster healthy and clear communication between pastor and congregation. PRC meetings are a regular and confidential means of support and accountability for the pastor.

PRC members keep their ear to the ground in the congregation to help keep the pastor in-the-know about possible issues or concerns, and they can bring constructive and addressable concerns to the pastor from the congregation.

Our PRC members are Laura Fritz, Warren Allevan, and Joyce Johnson.

Pastoral Care Connections

If you or a family member is ill, in the hospital, is homebound, would like a pastoral care visit for any reason, or would like to be added to our weekly prayer list, **please let the church know!**

Feel free to contact Pastor Ashley, a Deacon, or the church office to let us know so that we may serve you.

Pastor Ashley's phone number is: (507) 381-8199 and the church phone number is: (507) 524-3141. Thank you!

Pedal Past Poverty

Partners for Affordable Housing will hold its Fourth Annual Pedal Past Poverty event on **February 27th, 2016** at the YMCA blue gym from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. This event will support the homeless shelters, Theresa House and Welcome Inn, as well as help look to the future for more available space in the Mankato area. To register go to www.partnersforhousing.org/pedal and click *Register Now*.

Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf

Loaves & Fishes hours are Tuesdays from 3:00-6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:00-Noon. The food shelf is always in need of volunteers to work. Please contact your church food shelf board member to volunteer!

Maple River Youth Center

A mission jar will be in the back of the Sanctuary on the third Sunday of each month for this local mission.

Senior Dining/Meals on Wheels of Mapleton

You are invited to dine at the Town & Country Leisure Center! Nutritious and delicious **Meals are served daily, Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m.** The cost of a meal is \$4.00, as a suggested donation for those 60+. Low-salt and diabetic meals are available. Stay afterwards to play cards or games and to enjoy the company of others.

Meals on Wheels is also available for those who wish to eat at home. Call Darlene at (507) 524-4868 for more information or to reserve your meal.

Meals are being furnished by Maple River School, Mapleton. You may also look for us on Facebook.

Free Community Breakfast

On the second Saturday of each month, everyone in the community is invited to a free breakfast held at St. John Lutheran Church. See you **Saturday, February 13th**, from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Quilters Group

Quilters Group will be quilting every Tuesday afternoon from 1:00-3:00 p.m. starting Tuesday, February 2nd, 2016.

There is no need to be an experienced quilter as the group will be happy to teach you! You may tie quilts if you do not sew. Afterwards, you get to enjoy a relaxing coffee time together.



Important Giving Clarification Reminder

The Treasurer and Financial Secretary would like to remind you to please clarify how you want your donations to the church handled. Checks written to “The United Church of Mapleton” are cashed and handled by The United Church for our budget and ministries.

In order to complete this task faithfully, we need to know how to apply your donation. If you want your check to go to the General Fund for general church budget expenses, please write “General Fund” in the memo line. If you want your check to go to the Capital Improvement Fund, please write “Capital Improvement Fund” in the memo line.

If you want part of your check to go to the General Fund and part of your check to go to the Capital Improvement Fund, please write how much you want for each fund in the memo line. If you want your check to go to a fund other than the General Fund or the Capital Improvement Fund, please indicate your intent on the memo line of your check.

The same procedure can be done if you use a personal envelope or a church envelope. When using a general/personal envelope for your donations, please put it to the attention of the Financial Secretary for confidentiality.

Checks written to area ministries, such as Loaves & Fishes or The Youth Center, and put in the church’s offering plate are not cashed by The United Church, but instead passed along to those organizations so that you, the giver, are duly credited for your gift by that organization.

Given the many ways that we do and support mission at The United Church, we always want to honor your intent with your donation dollars. To this end, please be as specific as possible with your memo notes.

If you have any questions, please ask Keith McCutchen (Treasurer) or Ginny Kinzie (Financial Secretary). Thank you!

Women’s Fellowship

January 11th, 2016

With ten members present, President Louse Webb called the meeting to order. Devotions were read base on Galatians 3: 26, 28, 29. This passage is about being yourself.

Secretary Report: was given and accepted as read.

Sunshine Report: Chairperson, Mabelle sent out seven cards which included, get well, thinking of you, and sympathy cards. Thank you cards were read from those receiving Christmas presents, and poinsettias.

Women’s Fellowship listened and watched a lesson on starting our seedlings for summer gardens by presenter Carolyn Becker.

Meeting adjourned.

Pat John served a delicious lunch.

Our next meeting will be held February 8th at 7:00 p.m. Darlene will furnish lunch.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darlene Fezler

Mission Committee

Thank you to all who gave to our last mission project which was The Christmas Fund/The Retired Minister and Missionaries Offering. The total we received was \$90.00.

Our mission focus for February and March will be One Great Hour of Sharing. Both denominations support this wonderful mission. The money we receive for this offering will be divided equally between the United Church of Christ (UCC) and the American Baptist (ABC). Please give generously to this wonderful mission. We have been given so much. We can say thank you to God for all we have by giving to this wonderful mission.

Please remember our local missions, The Maple River Youth Center and Maple River Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf. These are very worthwhile missions that help many people in our own communities and make it a better place to live in. Thank you for your caring. Please give generously as you can.

Respectfully Submitted,
Roberta Ward, Mission Chair

Maple River Loaves & Fishes

Greetings from Maple River Loaves and Fishes! 2015 was an amazing year, with challenges and enormous growth. Here are our final numbers for the year:

232 different families served at least once this year
1365 Family visits (up from 1159 in 2014)
4984 people served (up from 4306 in 2014)
2097 children served (up from 1768 in 2014)
151,499 pounds of food!! (up 21,194 pounds from 2014)
141 Thanksgiving Boxes and 145 Christmas Boxes

We thank the Lord for this community and churches! Without so many of you, MRLF could not help feed those needy families in our area. If you have not been to the food shelf recently, please see your board member to volunteer. You will so glad that you did! Please call the food shelf at (507) 524-3046 or stop by when we are open. Our hours are Tuesdays from 3 -6 pm and Saturdays from 9am – noon. Thank You!

Jon Klenk, Director, Maple River Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf

Lent at The United Church: Covenanted in Christ

GIFT (Generations in Faith Together)

Supper & Church School

1st/3rd Wednesdays: 6:00 - 7:00pm

Lenten Supper and Service

2nd/4th Wednesdays: 6:00 meal, 6:30 worship

February 10th: Ash Wednesday Supper and Service

February 17th: GIFT

February 24th: Supper and Service

March 2nd: GIFT

March 9th: Supper and Service

March 16th: GIFT

March 23rd: Supper and Service

March 24th: Maundy Thursday 7:00pm

March 25th: Good Friday 7:00pm

March 26th: Holy Saturday Vigil 4:00pm

March 27th: Easter Sunday 9:00am



*"The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it."*

Blessed Are the Crazy

Panel Discussion:

Saturday, February 20th 1:00pm

Rev. Griffith Lund, Preaching in Worship:

Sunday, February 21st 9:00am

All are welcome!

| | |
|--|--|
| | <h2><i>Blessed Are the Crazy</i></h2> <p>Talking about Faith and Mental Health with Rev. Sarah Griffith Lund</p> <p>Panel Discussion Saturday, February 20th - 1:00pm</p> <p>Panelists will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rev. Sarah Griffith Lund• Sue Abderholden, MPH, Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota• Ann Langworthy, Maple River School District Licensed School Counselor• Kristine Madsen, MSW, LICSW, Maple River School District Licensed Social Worker <p>Worship, Rev. Sarah Griffith Lund preaching Sunday, February 21st - 9:00am</p> <p>Events at The United Church of Mapleton 201 Troendle Street SW Mapleton, MN 56065 (507) 524-3141 unitedchurchmapleton.org</p> |
|--|--|

Board of Trustees Report

January 20, 2016

Board Members Present: Dick Dietz, Ron Conrad, Gary Fritz, Lisa Shubert, Patrick Pfeffer, Sean Mallory, Pastor Ashley

Treasurer: Keith McCutchen

Guests: Pastoral Relations Committee: Joe Samuelson, Laura Fritz, Warren Allevan, Joyce Johnson

Meeting called to order by Dick Dietz at 7:00 pm.

Secretary's minutes from December meeting reviewed.

*Motion to approve the minutes was made by Sean Mallory, seconded by Ron Conrad. **Motion passed.***

Treasurer's report was reviewed.

Bills to be paid were presented.

*Motion to approve the Treasurer's report and the bills to be paid was made by Ron Conrad and seconded by Sean Mallory. **Motion passed.***

Capital Campaign

Beginning balance = \$21,366.73

Ending balance = \$17,806.73

Parsonage Furnace and Water Heater Replacement

Bill for this work from Schwickerts was received and paid from the capital campaign in the amount of \$7,200.00.

Pump replacement on church furnace

The church furnace has had a pump out for over a year and the weather has been such that it has not been needed. Discussion ensued on whether we should replace the pump now (approximately \$1,000) or wait until we update the system as part of the capital campaign (hopefully this coming spring/summer/fall time frame).

*Motion to hold off on the repair of the pump until we update the system was made by Lisa Shubert and seconded by Patrick Pfeffer. **Motion passed.***

Organist replacement

The person we had offered the position to turned down the job. He is possibly looking at transferring schools to be closer to his family farm in Wisconsin. The search will begin again.

Parsonage Sump Pump

On January 2nd, the sump pump in the parsonage was spraying water from the fitting. The situation was caused by the pump continuing to run when the hose to the outside was frozen and the water could not be expelled.

Bob Shubert replaced the damaged pipe and fitting but asked the Whitakers' not to turn it on until the line has thawed. When it is started, it needs to be monitored for cracks in the pipe that is above the ceiling. Because it froze, there is a possibility that there are cracks in it.

The church may want to look at reconfiguring the pump from disposing outside to disposing in the sanitary system during the winter months. The City of Mapleton does allow for this during the months of November – April. This should be discussed before next winter arrives.

Continue

Pastor's Contract

The pastor's contract was finalized after discussions and recommendations from the Pastoral Relations Committee. Previously agreed to changes in the contract included:

- Reduction in mileage from \$0.575 per mile to \$0.54 per mile
- Reimbursement up to \$850 during this contract period for the purchase of a computer which will belong to Pastor Ashley
- Christmas Day as a paid holiday

Motion was made by Lisa Shubert to adhere to UCC Minimum Guidelines for time off for the contract. This included the following:

Total 10 days of continuing education (2 Sundays included)

Total of 20 days of personal paid time off (4 Sundays included)

Total of 10 weeks of parental leave (8 weeks (including Sundays) paid and 2 weeks (including Sundays) unpaid)

Total of 12 sick days per year with no carryover of unused days

Motion died for lack of second.

New motion was presented.

Motion was made by Lisa Shubert and seconded by Ron Conrad for time off for the contract to include the following:

Total 8 days of continuing education (0 Sundays included)

Total of 22 days of personal paid time off (16 PTO days and up to 6 Sundays included)

Total of 10 weeks of parental leave (8 weeks (up to 8 Sundays included) paid and 2 weeks (including Sundays) unpaid)

Total of 12 sick days per year with no carryover of unused days

Motion passed.

Next meeting is pending the congregational vote at the Annual Meeting in January. If the proposed organization structure is approved, this committee will cease to exist. If the proposed organization structure does not pass, the next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 17, 2016 at 7:00 pm

Meeting Adjourned – motion made by Ron Conrad at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Shubert, Secretary