



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

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

MARCH 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



Happy St.Patrick's Day !



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.

MARCH 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 6:30am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 1:00pm Quilting	2 6:00-7:00pm GIFT: <i>Generations In Faith Together</i>	3	4	5
6 9:00am Worship with Communion and Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf Collection 10:00 Choir Practice 10:00am Conf. Class 10:00am Odd Fellows Pancake Breakfast	7	8 6:30am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 1:00pm Quilting	9 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper 6:30pm Lenten Service	10	11	12 8:30—10:30am Community Breakfast at St. John Lutheran
13 Daylight Saving Time Begins! 9:00am Worship 10:00am Conf. Class	14 7:00pm Women's Fellowship	15 6:30am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 1:00pm Quilting 7:00pm Church Council	16 6:00-7:00pm GIFT: <i>Generations In Faith Together</i>	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 RECYCLE!  10:00am Palm Sunday Brunch set-up
20 Palm Sunday 9:00am Worship with Youth Center Collection 10:00am Palm Sunday Brunch	21	22 6:30am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 8:00am April Newsletter articles/ reports are due into the church office 1:00pm Quilting 3:00pm Loaves & Fishes workday	23 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper 6:30pm Lenten Service	24 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service	25 7:00pm Good Friday Service	26 4:00pm Holy Saturday Vigil 9:00am Loaves & Fishes workday
27 Easter Sunday 9:00am Worship	28	29 6:30am Men's Breakfast in Good Thunder 1:00pm Quilting	30	31		

The Voice

The Newsletter of The United Church of Mapleton



Phone: (507) 524-3141

March 2016

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	March 6	March 13	March 20	March 27
Lay Reader	Ginny Kinzie			Pam Foster
Usher	Ron Conrad	Ron Conrad	Ron Conrad	Ron Conrad
Greeters	Don & Pam Foster	Bob & Geri Howieson	Mabelle Larson	Mabelle Larson
Coffee Hour	Odd Fellow's Breakfast	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, March 6th, 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 United Church supports this mission on the **first Sunday** of each month.

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!

The Maple River Youth Center

Sunday, March 20th, 2016 the Coffee Hour and Collection jar will go towards helping support our local youth at the youth center. The United Church supports this mission on the **third Sunday** of each month.

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.

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!

“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 13:33-34*

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.” *John 15:13-15*

At this point in Lent, we are about halfway through the season. We are still in the midst of our Lenten penitence and practices, the banners that hang on the walls and the paraments on the pulpit and lectern are still purple, and our foreheads still remember the sensation of dry ash. However, our memories and our calendars know that Easter is quickly coming, and by the time I next sit down to write my Voice column, Easter will be behind us and we will be looking toward Pentecost, the next holiday of the church.

On both Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings, our times of worship have centered on covenant. As I mentioned last month, 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. On Sundays so far, we’ve heard about the new covenant promised by the prophet Jeremiah, how Jesus evoked the language of the new covenant through the bread and cup, and how we live our lives together in covenant as citizens of Heaven. On March 6th and 13th, we’ll have the opportunity to consider in a unique way how we are faithful to our covenant with God as members of The United Church of Mapleton.

As you know, I’ve often shared “photo-a-day” guides for different liturgical (or worship) seasons through the Voice in the past. Allow me to confess that, in spite of my sharing them with you and my own best intentions to observe them, that hasn’t always happened. However, the American Baptist Lent Photo-A-Day 2016 guide has, for unknown reasons, really caught my attention these past few weeks and has been inspiring to me. It has helped me be more mindful of my surroundings, of each day as it goes by, and of my faith as an integral part of my life.

Today is Thursday, February 25, and the #lentabc word for today is *prophet*. Earlier today, I posted a picture of the cover of the book I’m currently reading with some other clergy women: Brené Brown’s *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. My caption was based on two of Brown’s quotes.

First, in the introduction, Brown says this: “The surest thing I took away from my BSW, MSW, and Ph.D. in social work is this: Connection is why we’re here. We are hardwired to connect with others, it’s what gives purpose and meaning to our lives, and without it there is suffering” (page 8). Second, Brown defines vulnerability as “uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure” (page 34).

How do or don't our churches cultivate connection and healthy vulnerability? The first example Brown gives of vulnerability is love. As Christians, we all know of the greatest love, one that would inspire Jesus to lay down his life for his friends, and a love that he commands us to share with one another – the new commandment that we remember on Maundy Thursday and every day of our lives.

We thrive on true connection, where we can know one another, even as we ourselves are fully known (1 Corinthians 13:12). Connection, so necessary for a meaningful, “whole-hearted” life, also requires vulnerability. An authentic community, like the church Christ calls us to be, requires vulnerability and connection. This kind of vulnerability and connection are at the heart of what it means to be a community formed in covenant, because they are also at the heart of what it means to be a people formed by the love and grace of Jesus Christ. And so, I ask (admitting I don’t know the answer, but I’d love to have the conversation): How do or don't our churches cultivate connection and healthy vulnerability?

Blessings,
Pastor Ashley

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
- 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
- All those affected by last week's earthquake in Taiwan, including the 24+ people who lost their lives and the 100+ people still trapped in rubble as of Sunday
- All those affected by the outbreak of the Zika virus and the serious health concerns suspected to be related to it
- Jack Madsen, who broke his hip during a fall last week and is now recovering from surgery
- All those affected by the recent cyclone in Fiji, which killed at least 21 people
- All those affected by the drought in Ethiopia, which is the worst the country has seen in over fifty years and has affected more than 10 million people



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

Prayers:

- For Mike Smith, who was diagnosed with an aggressive neurological disorder
- For Joan Timm, who is recovering at Pathstone after a fall
- For Jack Ward, who is having surgery this week to remove his tonsils and adenoids
- For an elderly aunt with health issues who is currently in the hospital in Mankato
- For the Hernandez and Luhring families for strength and understanding of God's love during their time of loss
- For healing for all who are in need, whether physically or emotionally
- That God would be with those in deep grief, ease their suffering, and give them peace
- For all those who are lost and need God' light in their lives
- For a friend hospitalized in Rochester who had an accident and has been in a coma for two weeks
- Of healing for Wally Johnson who fell Friday and broke his left collarbone
- For sisters Carol and Connie and Connie's family
- That the Lord would teach us acceptance and understanding of those afflicted with mental health challenges and addiction difficulties
- For Phyllis Lindemann, wife of Tim Lindemann, who is having an evaluation at University of Minnesota on March 3rd for a lung transplant

Thanksgiving:

- For a healthy, beautiful granddaughter, Amelia Mae. Thank you, God!
- For continuing healing and improved health
- To God for grandchildren and their energy
- To God for a church home to come to. May our church reach out to all and bring them closer to God.

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!

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, March 12th**, from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Quilters Group

Quilters Group will be quilting every Tuesday afternoon  from 1:00-3:00 p.m. 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 wish to sew.

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.

Easter Season Plants

Please sign up on the sheet posted on the Sanctuary door to **purchase and bring in** Easter lily, tulip, daffodil or hyacinth plants in (M) memory of, or in (H) honor of your loved ones. Please bring your plants to the church **by Sunday, March 20th or sometime during that week.** Please write your names under your plant. Thank you for helping beautify our Sanctuary for the Easter season! 

Palm Sunday Brunch and Set-Up

There will be a Palm Sunday Brunch set-up time set for **Saturday, March 19th at 10:00 a.m.** in the Fellowship Hall. **All children and youth are encouraged to help both days.** All proceeds from the brunch go to help send our children and youth to camp.

Christian Education is hosting their annual **Palm Sunday Brunch Sunday, March 20th** following worship service. The menu will include: ham and eggs, cheesy potatoes, applesauce and muffins. A free will offering will be accepted to support the camping fund for United Church children and youth.



Congratulations to Alberta Samuelson on being voted as Valentine Queen at MCH!

Fellowship of Prayer

After worship each Sunday of Lent, all are welcome to come to the Overflow Room immediately after worship to join in a brief time of devotions (with coffee and bars, too, of course). We will be using *Fellowship of Prayer*, a daily Lenten devotional written by Rev. Sarah Griffith Lund. Copies will be available to take home and use throughout the week.

Mapleton Sertoma Club

The Mapleton Sertoma Club is accepting letters of nomination for Service to Mankind. Please send your letter of nomination **by March 15th** to Louise Webb, PO Box 93, Mapleton, MN 56065.

Odd Fellows Pancake Breakfast

“Pancakes with a Purpose” will be held on **Sunday, March 6th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall of The United Church of Mapleton. You can enjoy a delicious breakfast of pancakes and more from our Mapleton Odd Fellows! All proceeds will go to help sponsor our local youth’s attendance at Camp FaHoCha, (Faith, Hope, and Charity) located at German Lake, southeast of Cleveland MN. What a wonderful and delicious way to help out some of our local youth!



Chili Cook-off for Heifer International
A great success!



*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."*





Church Council Report

February 17, 2016, 7:00pm

Attendees: Robert Shubert, Ginny Kinzie, Chad Kunkle, Pastor Ashley Whitaker, Dick Dietz, Marissa Pfeffer, Sheila Samuelson, Pam Foster, Keith McCutchen, Gary Fritz

Pastor Ashley gave a Devotional and Prayer. Pam will give the Devotional at the next meeting.

Dick went over the committee reports procedure; procedure for setting agenda items for upcoming meetings; church vitality discussions addressed at future council meetings.

Treasurers Report given by Keith. Motion to Accept, Marissa; Seconded, Robert

Discussion on need of replacement for Marian Mallory's position as head of the Congregational Relations Coordinator.

There was discussion as to whether this position could be co-chaired to help facilitate finding person(s) willing to fulfill the position. There will be a request made at the next church service for anyone willing to become the Congregational Relations Coordinator(s).

Continue

Church Council Report continued...

Sheila presented a proposal for changes to the church choir loft area. There was council discussion on the proposal, with general tentative agreement to the changes, pending the council/property committee physically assessing the area and the proposed changes. Part of the proposal was for removal of the railing and two pews. The proposal has much merit and was given a motion for tentative approval by Pam and seconded by Marissa.

Capital Campaign: HVAC for the church is the next big ticket item that is needed. Work is to be done this spring/summer; \$34,000 is the “ballpark” price for the project, with the decision to be made to put in 3 or 2 boilers, with digital components.

The parsonage is in need of siding, windows, and more.

Church Foundation monies have not been tapped as of yet for any expenditures, though the need/prudent thing would be to ask for their contribution soon.

Pastors Report was given. Discussed was time off, travel, and continuing education. More discussion at future meetings.

Church Vitality Discussion: [Saturday Event: Mental Health]

Church ministry elements/community elements to be put into binders (books), with evaluations of the events and what transpired at the events. These compiled books of church activities would be used as a guide for present and future activities to help with the facilitation of church activities, and to improve and enhance any future activities.

Start of discussion on each church members' spiritual gifts that can be shared with others in the church and community, and how to bring out such gifts to share.

Discussion of having a confidentiality agreement signed by each person that handles church money, and other confidential information. Church members are already trusted, but signing an agreement would be a “proper procedure” to have in place and done by said individuals. Said agreement is to be formatted by Marissa.

Discussed was the need to have a list of “preferred vendors” so that someone of good repute could be called in the need of emergency repair, etc. or for future needs. Dave and Robert “volunteered” to compile a list.

The first Sunday of the month, for the next few months, the Church Council will facilitate “Coffee Hour”.

There is a need for a leader, and members, of the Ambiance Group. Discussed was how to have all the congregation be church decorators.

Ending Prayer given by Pastor Ashley.

Report Respectfully Submitted,
Clerk, Gary Fritz



American Baptist Lent Photo-A-Day 2016

Feb 10: Journey	Feb 26: Mystery	March 13: Transform
Feb 11: Human	Feb 27: Practice	March 14: Prepare
Feb 12: Alone	Feb 28: Healing	March 15: Truth
Feb 13: Injustice	Feb 29: Brokenness	March 16: Hope
Feb 14: Covenant	March 1: Shadow	March 17: Solidarity
Feb 15: Path	March 2: Emptiness	March 18: Restore
Feb 16: Wilderness	March 3: Thirst	March 19: Believe
Feb 17: Tell	March 4: Search	March 20: Entrance
Feb 18: Silence	March 5: Beloved	March 21: Anoint
Feb 19: Wonder	March 6: Wise	March 22: Solitude
Feb 20: Doubt	March 7: Confession	March 23: Grief
Feb 21: Bless	March 8: Mercy	March 24: Meal
Feb 22: Prayer	March 9: Forgiveness	March 25: Cross
Feb 23: Hear	March 10: Cup	March 26: Wait
Feb 24: Follow	March 11: Still	March 27: Life
Feb 25: Prophet	March 12: Sorrow	

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