

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

As we set around the house with a full stomach and have had enough football for the weekend (if that is possible). We have had time with our families and/or friends. But more importantly, have we taken the time to let God know what we are thankful for. Was it the food we just ate, or the people we spent it with. Letting our Father know is what is most important. We have so many other things that we should be thankful for. The house we live in, the clothes on our backs. We are spoiled a little bit or a lot, compared to other people in this world.

Most of us here all have houses that are warm, have lights that we can turn on and off as we need it. We have beds to sleep in, food in the refrigerator or freezer, at least one car in the drive way if not two, and several clothes to choose from. We are really blessed here in this country. Most of the country, but there are those that do not have all of these things that we take for granted. It's that time of year when most people think of them. We think of ways that we can help. What way does your family or you help them?

Do we buy gifts for kids that otherwise would not get any gifts. This is being sponsored by the Denison police along with KDSN radio station. Maybe you get involved with the church's mission committee. Or do you provide a meal to a needy family. These are just a few ways in which you can get involved. As we have been discussing in church lately, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. I encourage that you and your family get involved in helping our neighbors in one way or another.

As we enter December we all think of Christmas. On the 3rd we will be having our kids Christmas program and after the program we will be having a potluck. We invite everyone to attend this time to enjoy in fellowship with our church family. We ask that you bring a dish to share with everyone.

During the Sundays we will be discussing Christmas through the eyes of Joseph. This will be from a book written by Adam Hamilton Called, "Faithful." This will be an interesting look from a different point of view that we don't think of much. I invite you to come and listen to Joseph's view on the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Church service for Christmas Eve will be held at 5:00 PM. There will be no service on Sunday morning or Sunday school.

So have a very blessed Merry Christmas with your family and friends. As we celebrate the birth of Lord and savior. The one called the Wonderful Counselor! The Mighty God! The Everlasting Father! The Prince of Peace! The Big Cheese! The Head Honcho!

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas!!!

Pastor Kirk Manchester

Poinsettia Memorial Tree

We have purchased a beautiful tree that will be used to display poinsettia flowers in memory/ in honor of loved ones. Instead of purchasing a live poinsettia, (which most people don't want after Christmas Eve) your donation will be used to "purchase" a poinsettia flower to be displayed in the Poinsettia Memorial Tree in memory/in honor of your loved ones. Each week, we will see the list grow on PowerPoint on the screens before the worship service and see poinsettias added each Sunday.

**Please have forms
and donations into
the office by
Wednesday, De-
cember 20th to be
included in the
Christmas Eve bul-
letin insert.**



PEOPLE TO REMEMBER

Shae Hansen
Prairie Breeze Apt 7
One Mazour Drive
Pender, NE 68047

Lois Jacobs
c/o Marcia Wenberg
1315 S. Royce St.
Sioux City, IA 51106

Delores Nemitz
Gracewell
114 S 20th Street
Denison, IA 51442
Chris Adkins

Gracewell
114 S 20th Street
Denison, IA 51442

Jeanetta Knief
Gracewell
114 S 20th Street
Denison, IA 51442

Naomi Friedrichsen
Gracewell
114 S 20th Street
Denison, IA 51442



POINSETTIA MEMORIAL TREE Fund

IN HONOR OF OR IN MEMORY OF: _____

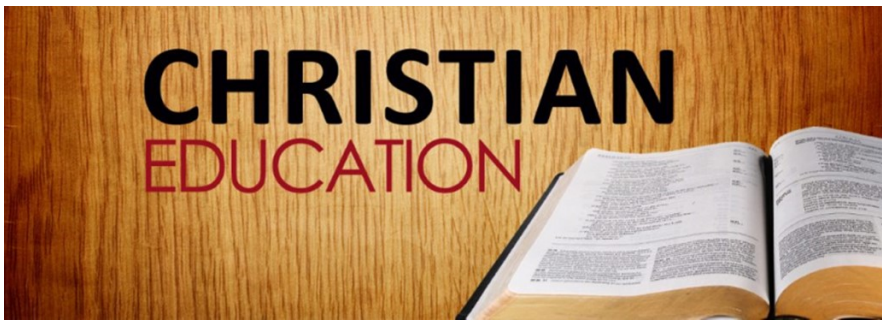
GIVEN BY: _____

SPECIAL WORDING: _____

AMOUNT OF DONATION: \$ _____



PLEASE RETURN FORM and DONATION TO CHURCH OFFICE **BY DECEMBER 20TH** TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CHRISTMAS EVE BULLETIN INSERT.



November is always a chaotic month for Christian Education. This is when we begin working on the Christmas program, which will be Sunday, December 3rd during the worship service.

We have all the kids split into groups and each group is working on a different part for the Christmas program. Thank you to Talsha and Leisha for working with our "Littles" each Sunday morning. They have been working very hard on learning their song, "Jesus Jingle Bells" for the program. The congregation was even able to hear a sample of their song during children's time on Sunday, November 19th. The "Littles" also made beaded snowflakes to decorate a tree for the Avenue of Trees and heard the story of Jesus' birth.



The older girls have been working with the "Littles" on the song, "Jesus Jingle Bells" and have also been working with Jessica and Jersey on a song called "We Wise Guys" which they will perform during the Christmas program.

The confirmation boys have been working on the skit for the program with Candice on Wednesdays and Sundays. Its been a lot of work for everyone. The kids have done a fantastic job learning their parts. And I can't thank CE enough for helping every Sunday. We hope to see you this Sunday for the program and a potluck to follow.



DECEMBER GREETERS

December 3- Jeff & Jenny Boelter

December 10- Darrell Schmidt & Larry Kastner

December 17- Paul Outhouse & Shannon Cose

December 24 - Kelli Rupert & Janet Lafrentz

DECEMBER ACOLYTES

December 3- (Christmas Program)

December 10- Cale Paulsen & Jett Paulsen

December 17- Jersey Bral & Huntur Johannsen

December 24 - Gracie Outhouse

& Taryn Johannsen



- | | |
|----|------------------|
| 1 | Al Friedrichsen |
| 2 | Brian Sieren |
| 4 | Tracy Kastner |
| 5 | Sarah Fineran |
| 5 | Aidan Larson |
| 7 | Adam Kragel |
| 7 | Lucas Kragel |
| 10 | Shari Thies |
| 10 | Emma Strandburg |
| 11 | Wendy Bumann |
| 11 | Sara McDonald |
| 11 | Cassandra Slater |
| 16 | Steven Jepsen |
| 16 | Jason Wiebers |
| 16 | Derek Johannsen |
| 18 | Janelle Lewis |
| 19 | Paul Outhouse |
| 20 | James Lacey |
| 21 | Phyllis Sedore |
| 22 | Leisha Kragel |
| 23 | Brittani Briggie |
| 24 | Jayden Denker |
| 27 | Randy Kragel |
| 28 | Arlis Bahnsen |
| 29 | Tina Wellendorf |
| 30 | Shelby Stender |

FROM YOUR COUNCIL

We have accepted with regret Candice's resignation as Christian Education Director as of December 31, 2023. She has filled this position for several years with talent, dedication, ingenuity, and hard work. Many times, she found too little help from our congregation. We wish her well in removing some stress from her life. She will continue as our secretary and her other part time jobs.

We will be advertising for a replacement but wanted to give any in our congregation the opportunity first. It is imperative that we have an active Sunday School for the future of our church. We had 11 younger children in church this morning in addition to confirmation class and the in between age group. This is not something we can ignore. Everyone has busy, full lives but this is important! We welcome applications and suggestions.

Sandy Lacey, Council President

DECEMBER STEWARDSHIP

Last month I explained how we develop the budget for the next year and warned you it always an educated guess. We never know how prices will change and how much! One way the congregation can help is to assist us is to brainstorm ways to save money. This month I challenge you to come up with some ways to cut expenses and still have an active and vibrant church.

The first thing we can look at is energy savings. You have all been exposed to methods to decrease energy use – turn off lights in unoccupied rooms, lower the thermostat in the winter and raise it in the summer.

We have no intention of forcing you to wear a parka in church in the winter but if the running fans bother you, move to a different spot so you don't feel a draft. Please don't complain if the temperature is lowered a degree. Use solar gain on sunny days for natural warming and cover windows on cold, windy days. Your utility company can give you all kinds of ideas.

Be prudent in use of supplies and office materials. Recycle communion printouts as the order rarely changes. Recycle what you can. Occasionally volunteer to help Candice to lighten her job. We don't want to lessen her hours but help manage the work load. That means meeting deadlines to get reports and schedules to the office.

If you use the kitchen or basement, please leave it as clean as you found it. That means laundering the towels you used, wiping counter tops, and labeling things you store in the refrigerator or freezer.

We have only a limited time before Gracie graduates and is off to college. We will miss her cookies and other treats. Anyone willing to take the job – it does pay? We don't want to stop as it is a time of precious congregational fellowship.

I challenge each of you to think of ways to reduce our spending without reducing our fellowship, meaningful worship, influence in the community, and mission efforts. I'll bet you can come up with idea that never entered my mind.

Remember the time and talent arms of stewardship. We want to be thrifty, not stingy!

**All giving must be in by
Tuesday, December
26th at 9:00 AM to be
included in 2023. Any
donations given on
December 31st will be
recorded in 2024.**

Giving Statements

If you would like a giving statement printed for 2023, please call or email the church office by January 10, 2024. This year, statements will **only** be printed if you contact the office. In the past, many statements have not been picked up. In a cost saving effort, statements will be placed in your church mailbox to be picked up, can be emailed (please provide email address when you call) or if you prefer, will be mailed. Thank you for working with us on this cost saving effort.

The Nominating Committee is beginning to search to fill positions on some of our church committees. Please contact the office or a nominating member, if you are interested in serving on a committee.

Santa Claus Day is Saturday, December 2nd. The Missions and Outreach Committee is asking the congregation for donations of pies/desserts/bars to help with their meal. There is a signup sheet in the Narthex. Thank you for your support!



Children's Christmas Program will be during the worship service on Sunday, December 3rd.



HYMNS ON THE CHIMES

December 7th 10:00 AM "*Amazing Grace*" In memory of Melvin & Karen Miller from their family.

December 9th 6:45 PM "*On Eagle's Wings*" In memory of Eldo Paulsen from his family.

December 24th 5:00 PM "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*" In memory of Hans B. Carstensen

December 24th 9:00 PM "*Silent Night*" Given by the UCC Sunday School.

December 24th 9:00 PM "*O Holy Night*" In honor of Christmas Eve

December 25th 9:00 AM "*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*" From the UCC Church

December 25th 9:00 AM "*Go Tell it on the Mountain.*" From the UCC Church

December 25th 9:00 AM "*The First Noel*" From the UCC Church

December 25th 9:00 AM "*O Come All Ye Faithful*" From the UCC Church

December 25th 9:00 AM "*We Three Kings*" From the UCC Church

December 26th 5:00 PM "*Joy to the World*" In memory of Alice Johnson from her family

December 31st 7:00 PM "*Come Thou Almighty King*" From the UCC Church

December 31st 8:00 PM "*Auld Lang Syne*" From the UCC Church

OFFICE HOURS

Candice has typically worked about 3 hours in the church office Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday as church secretary. You may see some variation of that in the future. To enable her to accept substitute teaching jobs she may accept jobs on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. She will always be in on Thursday and Friday and will vary her day off on the first three days of the week. Rarely will she take two days of teaching in the same week. This allows her to maintain her teaching license and protect her future. Kirk will try to be in the office on the days she is absent or you can leave a voice mail. If you have an immediate need you can always call Kirk's cell phone.

IOWA UCC CHRISTMAS FUND DRIVE

One of the unique aspects of the Iowa UCC Christmas Fund is that the funds provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees – the funds do not support programs or institutions, but people. With your continued generosity, more individuals will receive the support of the church in their time of need.

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

PLEASE USE THE ENCLOSED PURPLE ENVELOPE TO GIVE TO THIS FUND BY DECEMBER 24, 2023.

SANCTUARY CURTAINS

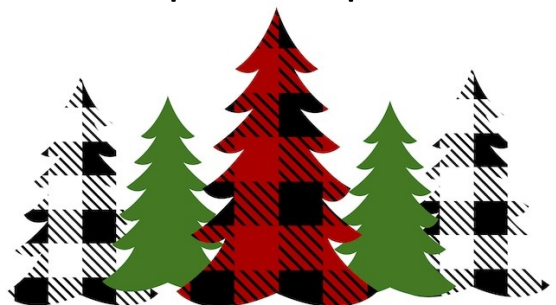
You might have heard someone talking about the curtains on the East windows in the sanctuary. We are aware they are several years old and get a lot of morning sunshine. There are no holes, plans to clean or launder them (which could accelerate problems), and no committee to investigate replacements. We have considered solar shades that roll from the top.

Council decision is we would like to designate this project as a memorial project. We have more than \$1000 of mostly undesignated money for memorials in the clearing account. With no in-depth study of the options, we estimate the cost will probably be in the range of \$10,000, maybe more. We want to offer the opportunity to contribute to the project. Once we reach 50% or so of the projected cost, we will appoint a committee to gather information and costs. Then we can actively pursue more income. Hopefully, they won't suddenly develop problems that require faster action!

Jim & Jolene's Christmas Open House

**Saturday, December 2nd from
1pm -10 pm and**

**Sunday, December 3rd from
1pm - 10 pm**



October Financials

Income:		
Weekly envelopes	\$	2455.00
Loose Offering	\$	165.80
Seasonal Offering	\$	1.00
Misc. Offerings	\$	0.00
Misc. Income	\$	0.02
Chicken Dinner Income/ Donations	\$	5558.00
Interest Income-Gen. Fund	\$	61.64
Investment Income	\$	19.73
Total Income:	\$	8261.19
Expenses:		
Association Dues	\$	841.00
Insurance & Taxes	\$	1079.18
Janitor Supplies	\$	192.96
Misc. Expenses	\$	2874.46
Music	\$	160.00
Office Expense	\$	1005.01
Pastor Expenses	\$	5250.34
Payroll Expenses	\$	0.00
Repairs and Maintenance	\$	163.24
Supplies	\$	0.00
Support Staff Salaries	\$	2925.00
Utilities	\$	1960.91
Total expense:	\$	16452.10
Net Ordinary Income	\$	(-8,190.91)

Numbers for the Books

Date:	Attendance:	Contributions:
October 1	38	\$316.75
October 8	40	\$444.50
October 14	30	\$6431.80
October 22	44	\$453.00
October 29	44	\$ 301.75
Total:	196	\$7947.80
Average:	39	\$1589.56

**Committee Reports
for the Annual
Report are due in
the office by
Monday, December
18th.**

**Holy Communion will
be on Sunday,
December 10th.**

**Christmas Eve worship
service is at 5 PM on
Sunday, December 24,
2022. No morning worship
service or Sunday School.**

Church Council Minutes

October 25, 2023

Call to Order—President Sandy Lacey called the meeting to order. Those present were Sandy, Leisha, Jeff, Judy, John B., John D., Cheri, Pastor Kirk. Absent was Seth.

Candice addressed the Council about days off, which will be on a rotation. So, she can substitute teach during the week: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. She would be available to sub on those days and work two days at the church. She would most likely sub two days and say no on the third day. She's hoping to squeeze time in for subbing. A motion was made to approve this and seconded. The motion carried.

Pastor Kirk opened the meeting with a prayer.

A motion to approve the September minutes was made and was seconded. The motion to approve the minutes carried.

A motion was made to approve the financial report and was seconded. The motion carried.

A motion was made to approve the bills to be paid and was seconded. (We are still holding the payment for the TKE \$3,451 until things are negotiated). The motion carried.

Committee Reports:

CE: Working on sprucing up one of the Sunday School rooms with paint and new lights. Talked about how Trunk or Treat went well. They had 17 trunks and over 50 kids attend. They will start practice for the Christmas Program, which will be December 3rd, the first Sunday of Advent (December 10th as a snow day).

CSFD: Met about the CDs and found a good rate. They will meet again in December.

CSFI: Nothing to report.

Property: The roof is being worked on. Ken is dealing with TKE and their bill. The bill is an exorbitant amount and no work was done to

fix the elevators.

Spiritual Life: New shelf unit was built to organize Christmas items. Working on more "Welcome Bags" are being made. Recently cleaned toys in the toy room.

Missions & Outreach: They will do Santa Claus Day uptown and will adopt a house of Wesco residents for Christmas giving.

Stewardship: Sandy is writing an article about explaining how we meet and make our budget.

Pastor's Report: Pastor did visitations and gave communion. He met with committees, completed four baptisms, did a funeral service, went to the annual meeting, and worked the chicken dinner. There will be a Sing Along on November 19th. Also, Pastor will be attending the veteran's banquet and the Veterans' Day Celebration. Christmas is on a Monday this year. Church service will be Sunday night at 5:00.

Old Business:

Day Care Update: There is no update as of yet; Mike is waiting for news on a grant to help fund the day-care.

JAC Grants: These are proposed amounts. The council will vote on these amounts.

Total for requested funds was \$61,000 by the aforementioned entities.

The proposed amount by the council will total \$28,000.

A motion was made to pay an amount of \$28,000 in grant money to the aforementioned groups and seconded. The motion carried.

Elevator Repairs: previously talked about with Property Report.

Chicken Dinner: No report as of yet.

(Council Minutes Continued)

Council Minutes

Virtual Meeting

October 9, 2023

New Business:

Sanctuary Curtains: Sandy wants to form a committee to look into new curtains. The old curtains are going to fall apart. There was no decision made at this time, but we have a project in the works.

Confirmation: The kids and parents are complaining that they are not learning anything, but numerous confirmation books were left at the church. How do the kids intend to learn if they don't take their books with them? The Council needs to take time on Sundays to teach the kids about the church and its functions. The Council discussed consequences for not going to Sunday church service.

Budget for 2024: Tabled for next meeting.

Claussen Agreement: We have had a discussion with Craig about amending the agreement.

Holiday Schedule: Christmas is on a Monday this year. Church service will be Sunday night at 5:00. The Christmas Program is scheduled for December 3rd.

Where is the church going? We are concerned about the future of the church. How will the church survive with a lack of younger members and dwindling numbers.

Pulpit Supply: Tammy did the sermon on September 24th while Kirk was sick. She will be paid for her services. A motion was made and seconded it. The motion carried.

Adjourned with the Lord's Prayer, concerns, and celebrations.

Respectfully Submitted,

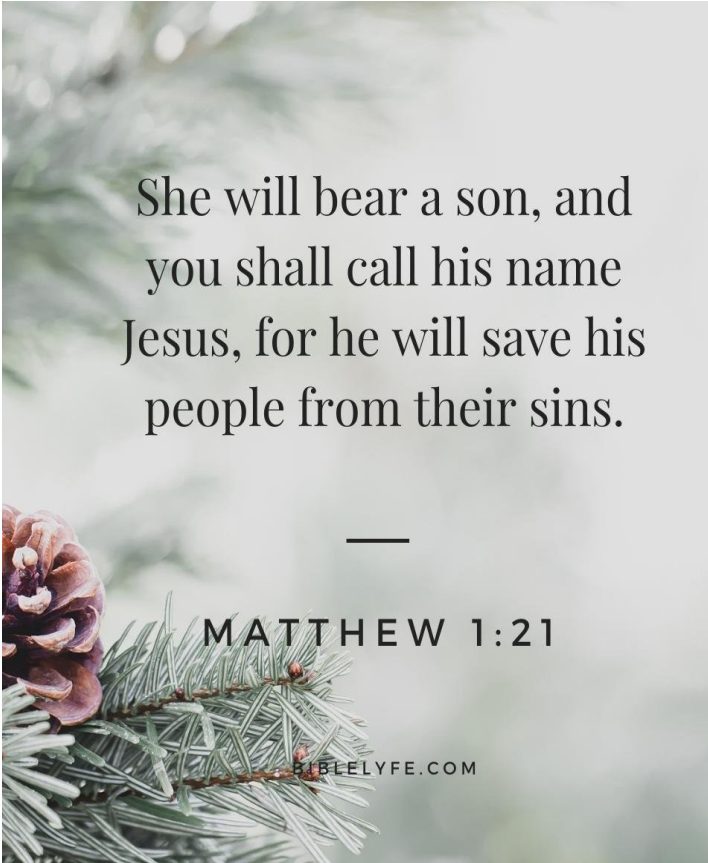
Jeffrey A. Boelter

Present: All were present via cellular devices.

A motion was made and seconded to pay TKE Elevator Company a total of \$6,180 for repairs on the church elevator. The amount will come from the farm account. The motion carried and the necessary repairs will be made.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Boelter



She will bear a son, and
you shall call his name
Jesus, for he will save his
people from their sins.

MATTHEW 1:21

BIBLIFYE.COM