



# **Monthly Newsletter The Circuit Rider**

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MOUNT VERNON**

304 1st Street SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314

*Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

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**January 2023**



Dear Friends,

First – Happy New Year! It is the season where we look forward with hope. There may be anticipation of occasions of great joy, such as weddings, graduations, reunions that are on the horizon in 2023. And, indeed, we celebrate those and give thanks.

But life can take a turn in an instant. Jay and I experienced such a turning in the death of a dear friend on Christmas Eve after the vehicle he was in was struck by a drunk driver. We were reminded once again of the frailty of life, and how important it is to be present, to take the time to tell others that they are loved, and to hold one another a little closer. We don't know what this year will bring. And yet we look forward with hope.

It was in light of this context that I read this poem by Howard Thurman:

*I will light candles this Christmas.  
Candles of joy, despite all the sadness.  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.  
Candles of courage where fear is ever present.  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days.  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.  
Candles of love to inspire all my living.  
Candles that will burn all the year long.*

## **Pastor's Letter**

As we transition from this season of Christmastide, celebrating the birth of Christ, and Epiphany, learning more about the light of Christ in this world, I am choosing to light a candle and to reflect on these words as a form of prayer and centering. And I invite you to take a moment to do the same. May we work together to bear witness to the Light in our church, community, and world.

On the Journey, *Pastor Terra*

Mystic, poet, philosopher, and theologian Howard Thurman's reminds of the true meaning of Christmas in his poem, "The Work of Christmas."

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost, To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner, To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among brothers, To make music in the heart.



**For all who worship with us...  
we are so blessed to have you with us  
on Sunday mornings**

**In person at 8:30 am  
or 11 am**

**Online at 8:30 am**

**[www.umcmv.com/online-worship](http://www.umcmv.com/online-worship)**

## **Danforth Adult Sunday School in the New Year**

The Danforth Adult Sunday School class meets weekly in the upper classroom near the elevator from 9:45 to 10:45 AM. Once we finish up our study of "A Bigger Table", we plan to explore a video series by Adam Hamilton, Senior Pastor of a large Methodist Church in Kansas. The Rev. is a written, verbal, and video defender of the "UMC" and its vote to reject the policy of forbidding gays to marry and be in ministry. Evidently, the newly formed/forming Global Methodist Church, "GMC" (One wonders what General Motors, or GMC Trucks thinks about this acronym) in the form of one Ron Renfroe, a prominent member of the GMC, has been putting out videos trying to convince UMC members to leave and join the GMC. Adam Hamilton has taken note, and offense, and produced (6) videos in rebuttal at the site listed below. Please join us for these timely, thoughtful discussions.

<https://proudtobeumc.com/> <https://www.adamhamilton.com/>

# *Mount Vernon Community Preschool Update*

January 2023

Happy New Year! The preschool year is going by quickly and we are so proud of how the children have grown socially and emotionally in these first four months. Children's independence is growing and they continue to form relationships with each other. We are constantly amazed by the excitement our young children bring to the classroom each day. The joy they show for learning, playing and being with one another is delightful!

Early registration for the 2023-2024 will begin in January. Contact Ellen Mueller with questions at [mvcommunitypreschool@gmail.com](mailto:mvcommunitypreschool@gmail.com) or 563-321-0752.



**Online Giving and ACH (Automatic Bank Withdrawals) are available to make your giving easy and worry free.**

- **Check out our online giving or contact Jackie Morrical about setting up automatic payments for your convenience.**
- **Our website can be used for special gifts or if you want to try out giving electronically.**



**Check it out [here!](https://bit.ly/3t7r0PE)**

**<https://bit.ly/3t7r0PE>**



# **All Church Birthday Party**

**Soup, desserts and Fun activities**

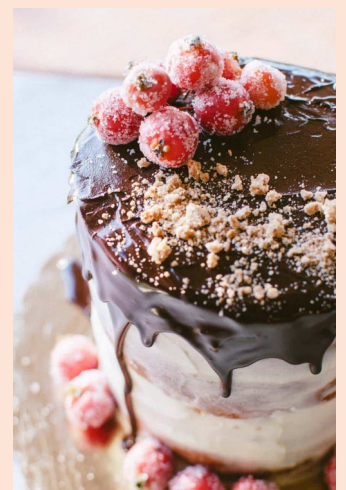
**Sunday January 29**

**5 PM**

**Fellowship Hall**

**Break up the Winter Blues and join in  
the fun!**

**All ages invited & encouraged!**





# Missions Committee January Update



As we begin 2023, the United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon has many things to celebrate and acknowledge, including our generous holiday giving to the Mount Vernon Lisbon community. By using SE Linn Community Center and all their services, we assure that our donations are reaching those in need, and that the dollars you generously share are given directly to those with specific concerns. Our Missions committee meets monthly and always welcomes suggestions and input on our church Missions activities.

We want to keep you informed and encourage you to share this good news of giving with others in our community. Hopefully, we can be an inspiration to other groups to join us in these projects. Below are our major donation amounts during this holiday season:

Holiday Hams - \$1,869 to purchase hams for holiday meal baskets delivered to SE Linn clients.

Magical Night Soup Supper - \$1,698 organized by the youth group. This amount was donated to the SE Linn Food bank along with the \$700 raised by the Cookie Walk, which went directly to the food bank also. What a great way to share our church building and youthful energy to benefit the Mount Vernon/Lisbon residents! Thanks to all the volunteers and youth group participants who made this event happen.

Angel Tree – All 22 tags with individual gift requests were taken and returned. These 44 gifts were taken to SE Linn for the specific recipients. Along with 20 + donated new coats which were delivered to the Willis Dady Center in Cedar Rapids, these two groups used our gifts to benefit many families outside our church, making their holiday more joyous.

Cap and Mitten Tree – The tree pictured is covered with hats and gloves to be distributed to local families. Approximately 40 items will be delivered to SE Linn for distribution to the schools, as needed. (See picture at right)

FISH Fund – \$2,123.00 (which includes some donations from outside our church) Our Christmas Eve offering supported this fund which meets short term emergency needs of our community and those traveling through.

Bulk Food Buy - \$2905 has been donated to purchase bulk buy foods through Gary's Foods and delivered to the SE Linn Food Bank. The food bank continues to serve 80 to 100 families weekly who are experiencing food insecurity. Our donation is a foundation for this support.

What a joy to serve such a generous church congregation!

Your Mission Committee: Vern and Arlene Sand, Mary Jane McWilliams, Barb Shepley, Jen Hoffman, Alison Dix, Renee Nydegger, Karen Stewart



# Sunday school

Last month we learned about the Christmas season and how the angels shared the good news. Sunday school resumes on January 8th and we start the new year with a new unit. The Faith Word is "Believe" - to know in your heart what is true about God and faith. The Unit Verse is John 6:14b, "This is truly the prophet who is coming into the world". We will be learning about Jesus' early ministry.

We also had our Christmas pageant on December 11<sup>th</sup> and it was so great! You can view the recording of it at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFN2AUyXzw4&t=1s>

Here are some pictures from the event:





# Youth group

Youth group has been meeting every Wednesday evening from 6:30pm to 8pm. We ended November with our annual (except during Covid) Soup Supper during Magical Night.

In December, we had a game night and a Christmas party. Game night was very loud and competitive, and the kids FINALLY got to play their favorite game – Sardines! We had a white elephant gift exchange at the Christmas party and there were some festive holiday themed gifts...and there were silly gifts like a pooping dog calendar and a hairy belly/bellybutton fanny pack These kids are so funny!

We are still working on the schedule for the new year but will send that out and update the website as soon as we have everything worked out.

Also, did you know we are on social media? You can follow our pages at

<https://www.facebook.com/UMCMVRooted/>

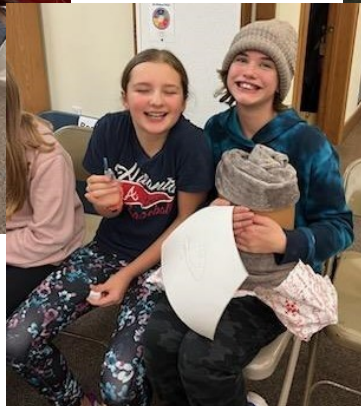
for Facebook

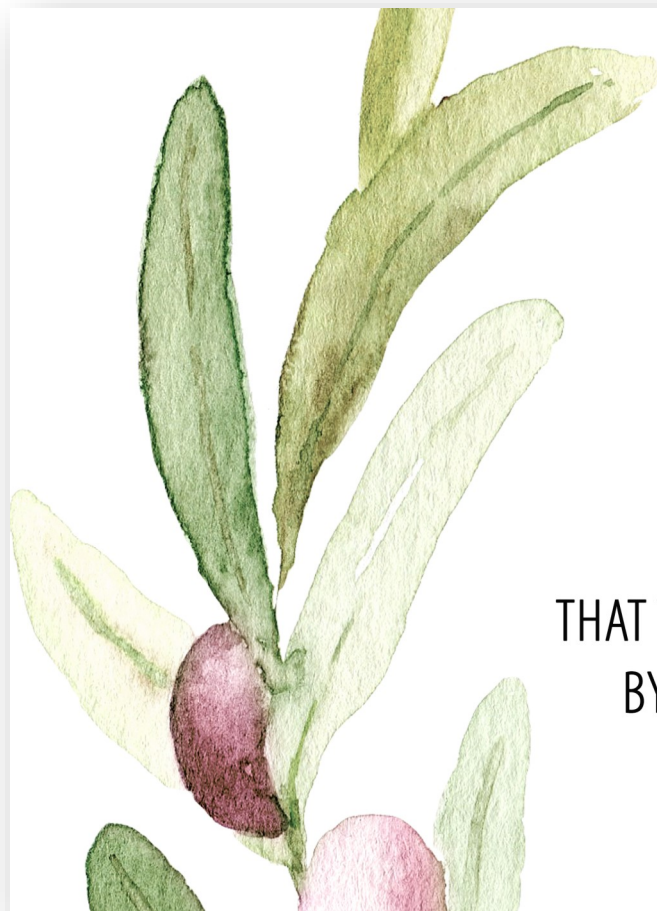
and

<https://www.instagram.com/rootedumcmv/>

for Instagram!

These pages will include updates and pictures. Please let Veronica (veronicafisher@umcmv.com) if you have any questions, concerns, or comments.





MAY THE GOD OF HOPE  
FILL YOU WITH ALL  
*joy and peace*  
AS YOU TRUST IN HIM,  
THAT YOU MAY OVERFLOW WITH HOPE  
BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ROMANS 15:13



# United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon Calendar

## January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 10:00am New Year's Day Combined Worship, Sanctuary	<b>2</b> 6:30pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall 7:00pm Entre Nous Book Club, Common Ground Meeting Room	<b>3</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting Common Ground Meeting room	<b>4</b> 6:00pm Youth Group @ AirFX Hiawatha	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Confirmation Class, Balcony Classroom 9:45am Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45am Sunday School Classes 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary	<b>9</b> 6:30pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	<b>10</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting Common Ground Meeting room	<b>11</b> 6:30pm Missions Meeting, Chapel Room 6:30pm Youth Group, Fellowship Hall	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Confirmation Class, Balcony Classroom 9:45am Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45am Sunday School Classes 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary	<b>16</b> 6:30pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	<b>17</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting Common Ground Meeting room 6:30pm Service Sunday planning meeting, Chapel Room	<b>18</b> 6:30pm Youth Group, Fellowship Hall	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Confirmation Class, Balcony Classroom 9:45am Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45am Sunday School Classes 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary	<b>23</b> 6:30pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	<b>24</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting Common Ground Meeting room	<b>25</b> 6:30pm Youth Group, Fellowship Hall	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Confirmation Class, Balcony Classroom 9:45am Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 9:45am Sunday School Classes 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary 5:00pm All Church Birthday Party, Fellowship Hall	<b>30</b> 6:30pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	<b>31</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting Common Ground Meeting room 7:00pm Finance Committee Meeting, Common Ground Meeting Room				

## Lift Up these Prayer Requests

### Prayers for Healing:

- For Betty Poula, who suffered a broken neck during a fall on December 27th. Betty is hospitalized and upon discharge will transition to a skilled facility for rehabilitation. Prayers specifically for pain management and Betty's recovery
- Continued prayers for Steve Angel (Donna Walter's cousin) who continues to struggle with difficult health issues
- For Barb Neal (mother of Abby Bock) recently diagnosed with breast cancer. Prayers for her mental and physical strength as she battles through treatment
- For all our friends and family members who are fighting the battle against cancer

### Prayers for Comfort and Strength:

- For the family and friends of Walter Lehman (brother of Fred Lehman) as they mourn his passing. Walt passed away on December 18th and was Fred's younger brother, at the age of 98
- For Tim and Diane LeGore, as they mourn the death of Tim's cousin, Marsha, who died on Christmas Day. Prayers for Marsha's family and friends during this difficult time
- For Mark Mohn, as he mourns the death of a dear friend, David, who passed away just before Christmas. Prayers for the friends and family of David who are grieving
- For the family and friends of Jim Zimmerman who passed away on Christmas Eve. Jim was a close family friend of Pastor Terra and Jay
- For Robin Carr, an extended family member in the Jeff and Donna Walter's family, who has just experienced double amputation of her legs. Prayers for her as she heals and learns to adjust to this major life change
- For Ben Johnson, who will be having a biopsy in January, prayers that he is able to manage worry about this along with all other responsibilities of being a college freshman. Prayers also for Ben's parents as they also look ahead to this, prayers for peace and strength
- For the family and friends of Gayle Wallace (Jim Wallace's sister) who passed away on Monday, December 5th. Prayers for the Wallace family and Rik and Jamie Smith family as they grieve this loss
- Mike Ryan passed away on December 5th. Prayers for Mike's family and friends, especially his wife Shirley, as she adjusts to life without Mike and his big personality
- For the Loren and Jen Hoffman family, as Loren's sister-in-law passed away suddenly at the age of 52, leaving her husband and 4 children. Prayers for Kim's family and her friends as they grieve
- For those feeling weary or struggling with the change of seasons
- For those concerned with health issues
- For all who are struggling: emotionally, physically or spiritually
- For those suffering silently with anxiety and depression
- For this church, this building, these people, and ways to love on and stay connected with one another
- For all not mentioned by name who are mourning the loss of a family member or friend

### Prayers for Transition:

- We pray for the new pastor that will be assigned to our church to begin in July 2023. Prayers that God will prepare and call just the right pastor to come to UCMV to join us in ministry. Prayers for the Bishop and Cabinet as they begin to think about appointments, may God lead them in this task
- Prayers for the Bishop that as been assigned to the Iowa Conference, Bishop Keneetha Bingham Tsai has been assigned to our conference and we look forward to welcoming her into our midst and offer prayers for her during this time of transition
- Prayers for all students, teachers, school staff and administrators
- For the leaders of UCMV as they continue to work on behalf of our church
- For the United Methodist Church: including the global church, the Iowa Conference and our Mount Vernon congregation

## PRAYER LIST continued

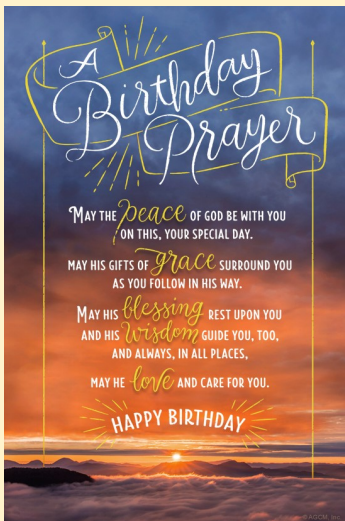
### Prayers for our Nation and our World:

- For safe travels for all during winter driving conditions
- Prayers for anyone struggling to stay warm and safe with winter weather
- Prayers for all who have recently had their lives traumatically affected by gun violence
- Pray for peace in our world. Specifically for the people caught in the tragedies of war in Ukraine and Russia. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers
- Pray for peace and love for all humanity

### Prayers of Thanksgiving and Joy:

- With thanksgiving we share that Gail (Pastor Terra's daughter-in-law's mother) is recovering well from her second surgery.
- We celebrate that Josie Bothell's ankle injury has shown some improvement over the past month
- We celebrate the birth of Jesus and all the comfort, love and joy He brings to our world
- With thankful hearts we praise God for the blessings in our lives
- We are thankful for our confirmation class
- What joy that youth group is going strong this year, and also that it is an ecumenical effort including UCMV, Seeds of Faith and First Presbyterian Church

## January Birthdays Happy Birthday!



Ben Kraus	01/01
Clint Stanerson	01/01
Tessa Baty	01/02
Myrt Bowers	01/02
Roselyn Krapfl	01/02
Julie Nosek	01/03
Gavin Light	01/04
Paige Roos	01/04
Lauren Adams	01/05
Landry Sage	01/05
Kerry Kahl	01/07
Janet Griffith	01/08
Janet Griffith Ira	01/08
Ed Fordyce	01/12
Barb Shepley	01/13
Karlyn Connolly	01/15
Mike Connolly	01/16
Vickie Reynolds	01/18

Camden Meyer	01/19
Angie Swartzendruber	01/19
Benjamin Havill	01/20
Terry Pisarik	01/20
Teresa Stewart	01/20
Ben Alger	01/21
Shellie Kamaus	01/21
Brenda Vanvalen	01/22
Harrison Voigt	01/22
Nick Bock	01/25
Breanna Niec	01/25
Hagen Waters	01/25
Fred Lehman	01/26
Lily Booth	01/27
Maddison Hotz	01/28
Gentry Barber	01/29
Lori Merlak	01/29
Emily Stamp	01/29
Kolsie Bixler	01/31





United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon  
304 First Street SW  
Mount Vernon, IA 52314  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## ***United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon Staff***

Senior Pastor . . . . . Pastor Terra Amundson  
Praise Team Director—.... Clint Stanerson  
Christian Education Director  
& Director of Youth Ministries... Veronica Fisher  
Congregational Care Coordinator Julie Baty  
Office Manager/Newsletter . . . . . Alison Dix  
Nursery Care. . . . . Melissa Oxley  
Director, Adult Handbell Choir . . . Kristi Keast  
Organist Karen Stoll  
Chancel Choir Director Joleen Woods  
Choir Accompanist Denae McGrath  
Custodian . . . . . Night Shift  
Maintenance & Repair Director . . . . . Trustees  
Wedding Coordinator..... Barb Shepley  
Financial Secretaries . . . . . Richard Jacob,  
Tim Legore & Jackie Morrical  
Treasurers . . . . . Mike Kragenbrink  
Alison Dix



You are invited to our...

# All Church Birthday Party

January 29, 2023  
5:00 PM  
Fellowship Hall

All Ages invited  
& encouraged!  
Soup, desserts  
and fun activities!