



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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March 2023



Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends.

As I write this for the newsletter, it is the day after Ash Wednesday. And our best-laid plans for our worship service last night were “put on ice”, so to speak!

This morning Alison and I were touching base. She shared that she had worked hard to make sure everything was ready for the Wednesday night service, just in case we were able to go ahead with it. It was a bit of a bummer to do all of that preparation and planning for naught, both for her and for myself. As she was leaving my office, I quipped, “Well, we were faithful.”

That comment has not let go of my soul as I have pondered what to write to you. What does this mean for me as your pastor in this Lenten season? What does it mean for each of you to be faithful as you embark on the journey with Jesus as he chooses to walk towards the cross?

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus tells those who are gathered *All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow me* (Matthew 16: 24b). Another way of considering these words is how do each of us intentionally choose to deepen our relationship with God and with others, to ask ourselves what it would mean to take seriously Christ’s call to be faithful disciples in our homes, our workplaces, our life together as a community of faith.

I have a feeling these words are not yet done with their work within me. My prayer is that the Spirit may use them to raise questions, and to help guide you in this season of Lent.

Grace and Peace, *Pastor Terra*



**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 11:00 am

Online at 8:30 am

www.umcmv.com/online-worship

UMCMV Has a New Pastoral Appointment

Greetings friends. Last Sunday, February 26th, Council Chair Jim Baty attended both services to make an important announcement. Last fall, Pastor Terra Amundson announced her plans to retire this summer and the Iowa Annual Conference began working to identify our next pastor. On Sunday, Jim began with a celebratory moment of joy for the leadership, patience and guidance that Pastor Terra has given this church over the roughest period of time in all our collective lives. Her management through COVID and embracing a technical team to initially stand in the void where church was not possible was a tremendous gift to the congregation. Arriving into a church where she was not able to immediately engage and develop impactful relationships was beyond imaginable. Through it all, she began to lead in imaginative ways and eventually returned to this more normal approach as the pandemic released its grip on our activities. We will continue to celebrate her retirement over the coming months.

We are pleased to announce that Pastor Vicki Fisher has been appointed to serve this congregation. A 23-year elder in the church, Pastor Fisher comes to us from Spirit Lake where she will have served that congregation for the past four years. She has been married to her husband, Mark, a math teacher for 27 years and they have two children, a daughter Hannah serving her first year as a band teacher in Nebraska; and a son, Kory who lives with them and is taking education courses at a community college. Pastor Fisher is thrilled to be arriving to this congregation and bringing her passion for worship, full inclusion and embracing and empowering layers of connectedness and leadership for our mission to be transformative in our community, making disciples for the world. We will have many events planned for this summer to welcome and begin building relationships with Pastor Vicki and her family as they move in to our community. For more information, please seek contact with Matt Stewart, SPRC Chair or Jim Baty, Council Chair.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool Update

March 2023

The preschool year continues to be filled with fun and friendship. In February the children participated in many new game and art activities and learned new songs using sign language. The children continue to strengthen their relationships with each other through daily play and learning.

Registration for the 2023-2024 is in full swing! The Monday/Wednesday/Friday program is full for three year olds but there are a few openings for four year olds. We will again have a Tuesday/Thursday class and have several openings available. Reach out to Ellen Mueller with questions! mvcommunitypreschool@gmail.com



TRUSTEES CORNER

Trustees would like to ask that if you (members, committee chairs, organization chairs, etc) when setting up or having a meeting, class, practice, etc. please have it put on the church calendar by Alison. This will help us to know when to lock up the church, we do sometimes go thru the church and lock up early if nothing is on the calendar. Thanks for your help and support. If you have any questions or see anything that needs attention, please let us know.

Jeff Walters, Kevin Woods, Susan Pisarik, Kristi Keast, Warren Havill, Mary Jane McWilliams and Mundo Guardado



Join us for Worship during Lent
Sundays

1st Sunday of Lent— Sunday February 26

2nd Sunday of Lent— Sunday March 5

3rd Sunday of Lent— Sunday March 12

4th Sunday of Lent— Sunday March 19

5th Sunday of Lent— Sunday March 26

Palm Sunday— Sunday April 2

Easter Sunday— Sunday April 9

Palm Sunday April 2 & Communion Sunday

8:30 am Praise Service & 11:00 am Traditional Service

Stations of Jesus' Life Wed., April 5 12 to 6 pm & Thursday, April 6 12 to 7 pm

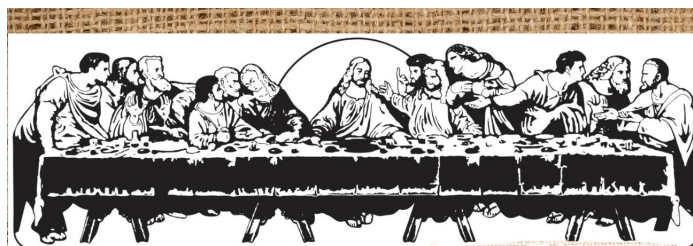
Good Friday Worship April 7th @ 6:30 pm

Holy Easter Sunday April 9, 2023

8:30 am Praise Service

11:00 am Traditional Service

Save the date for this great performance!



Among Friends:
A Dramatic Adaptation of the
Last Supper
Sunday April 2nd at 7:00 pm

United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon
304 1st St. SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314

Missions Committee March Update



Your Mission committee is thinking “spring” – specifically **Sunday, April 30** – as we actively plan our next **UMCMV Servant Sunday**. Our committee is working with representatives of the church ministry groups to plan ways we can reach out to the Mount Vernon/Lisbon community in Christian love and service. Please save the date and plan to come as individuals, couples, or families to give back to our great community. In place of our traditional Sunday morning schedule, we will meet, share breakfast, have a brief worship in Fellowship Hall, and then spend the remainder of the morning working on assigned projects and outreach connections in our area. Watch for more details, sign ups, and outreach suggestions **COMING SOON!**

Our Mission focus for these cold winter months has also been on supporting our SE Linn partners by delivering Meals on Wheels, providing fleece for the youth group to tie into blankets, and collecting footwear (through the end of March) for Soles4Souls. Thanks to everyone for supporting these worthy projects.



Your Mission Committee

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

Women's Ministry Connection and Conversation



WOMEN'S
MINISTRY *Connection and
Conversation*
3:30-5PM
SUNDAYS
UMCMV-COMMON GROUND

We have had such a great kick off month and we hope you will check us out one or two weeks this month! We meet Sundays from 3:30-5:00 PM. Anyone is invited, meaning we aren't geared only towards young women, older women, singles, or marrieds - we are inviting and welcoming all women. This is going to be very a very informal group - bring your own drink/snack if you wish kind of informal - to make this easy for everyone.

Come check it out and let's build faith & connection together women of UMCMV!

Sunday school

We have been learning about different parables and what the Kingdom of God looks like. The 1st/2nd/3rd grade class dress a mural of what they think will see there. Come check it out, along with some new decorations to the hallways! In March we will be finishing our current unit, then we will learn about the Last Supper. The Faith Word will be “Parables”, which are the stories Jesus told that teach us how to live. The Unit Verse will be Matthew 13:3a, “He said many things to them in parables”.

There will be no Sunday school on Sundays March 12th or 19th due to spring break.

Birthday in a Bag Update

Brittany Booth & Barb Shepley wanted to thank all who brought BIRTHDAY IN A BAG items to the All Church Birthday Party last month. We were able to deliver 20 Birthday in a Bag kits to SE Linn using the items from the Church Birthday Party. As always, they were very appreciative and said that the bags are very popular with the people they serve. Thank you for making this donation happen!



Youth group

Youth group has been meeting every Wednesday evening from 6:30pm to 8pm. This month started with Jaimie Hanson helping us create journey boards. We talked about mental health and made calming jars to help when we're stressed or anxious. Our last meeting was with the Praise Team. They talked to us about what they do and we learned some info about each member, such as who their favorite Pokemon is! (In case you're wondering, Pikachu was the front runner). We ended February youth group on a great note, going out singing some praise songs! Next month we will be learning about the denominations of our three churches as well as brushing up on our Bible skills.

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. Enjoy these pictures from our night with Jaimie and our night with the Praise Team!



We're Listening and Moving Ahead

Friends, we are very thankful for the outpouring of support and participation for the recent Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) survey completed last December. Some of you may recall that we had completed a very similar activity not quite three years prior to this. However, the pandemic did not allow us to do anything with the results until now. Over two successive events, concluding with a potluck All Church event Sunday, February 26th, church and conference leadership has detailed the results of both survey efforts.

Here's what we know. 93% of our worshipping congregation completed the survey. 60% represented the 8:30 am service and 40% the 11:00 am service. The February 2020 survey evidenced a church steep in conflict, low in energy and low in satisfaction. The December 2022 survey brought the evidence that we are now a transformational church with big steps made in both energy and satisfaction and no longer in conflict but longing for community. There were no aha moments or items found in the latest survey but rather across the board a desire to see, know and be more. This means each of you taking the survey and reading this message are now being challenged to take up opportunities.

Sunday night, the next fellowship moment was offered, a potluck of magnificent quality. After the final summary discussion of the survey results, those attending had a chance to sit at round tables and discuss two initial questions; 1) Where is God working in this Congregation now, and 2) What are ways we can begin making an impact on the sense of fellowship in our congregation? Did you know there are numerous areas that God is felt to be working already in this congregation since the survey was just taken? These include:

- The upcoming Servant Sunday planned for April 30th
- The many new persons/families choosing to worship here
- The incredible level of donations and missions giving we have experience
- The growth of our two choirs
- The growth of Sunday School and Youth Group (an ecumenical community effort)
- Our financial stability and the growth of average pledge commitment despite a decline in total number of pledges
- Our four small groups underway—Iron Sharpens Iron on Saturday Morning, a women's Sunday afternoon group and two vibrant adult study classes on Sunday morning
- The upcoming Among Friends portrayal of the Last Supper
- The energized all-birthday gathering
- Positive trend statistics in the CAT
- Kim and Mundo Guardado beginning Laity training

Along with this list, the groups identified initial brainstorm ideas for ways to increase the number and kinds of fellowship opportunities. Included in these were:

- A fall worship retreat/picnic at Bass Farms
- Offer a worship breakfast on 5th Sundays
- Begin more active announcements of activities and engagements early in our services
- Reaching out to those who have yet to find their worship rhythm again post-pandemic
- A presence in the Heritage Days parade involving our youth and our energy
- A student-led group worship once per month
- Increased activity in our Cornell outreach committee
- Strengthening our ecumenical youth group
- Engaging parents of youth for "break time"
- Bring back a gazebo worship in the summer
- Rekindle Metholarks youth choir, invitation to be Cornell led
- Restart Life Groups and/or Wesleyan Classes and Bands
- Keep the 4th Sunday potluck or meal fellowships
- Challenge our congregation for more personal invites and "come with me"

These and many more were great ideas flowing from what we have already learned. You want more input and want to know more of what is taking place here at "your" church. We are committed to many further steps to advance our transformation and preparation for what God will next. This will be most successful if your voice is heard as well. Want to know more about the CAT? Seek Jim Baty, Council Chair or Kim Guardado, past Council Chair. We are only moving forward now, looking through the windshield.

United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon Calendar March 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:00pm Praise Team Practice, Sanctuary 6:30pm Servant Sunday Planning meeting, Chapel Room 6:30pm Youth Group, TBD 7:30pm Chancel Choir Practice, Sanctuary	2	3	4
5 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 3:30pm Women's Ministry Connection & Conversation, Common Ground Meeting Room 4:30pm Among Friends rehearsal, Sanctuary	6 6:30pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	7 9:30am Staff Meeting Common Ground Meeting room 11:00am Piano repairs - Sanctuary 6:00pm Cub Scouts, Fellowship Hall	8 6:00pm Praise Team Practice, Sanctuary 6:30pm Youth Group, Fellowship Hall 7:30pm Chancel Choir Practice, Sanctuary	9	10	11
12 No Sunday School- SPRING BREAK 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Confirmation Class, Balcony Classroom 9:45am Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary 3:30pm Women's Ministry Connection & Conversation, Common Ground Meeting Room 4:30pm Among Friends rehearsal, Sanctuary	13 6:30pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	14 6:00pm Cub Scouts, Fellowship Hall	15 6:00pm Praise Team Practice, Sanctuary 6:30pm Youth Group, Fellowship Hall 7:30pm Chancel Choir Practice, Sanctuary	16	17	18
19 No Sunday School- SPRING BREAK 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Confirmation Class, Balcony Classroom 9:45am Fellowship Time, Common Ground Meeting Room 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary 3:30pm Women's Ministry Connection & Conversation, Common Ground Meeting Room	20 6:30pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	21 5:30pm Cub Scouts- Blue & Gold, Fellowship Hall 7:00pm Finance Committee Meeting, Common Ground Meeting Room	22 6:00pm Praise Team Practice, Sanctuary 6:30pm Youth Group, Fellowship Hall 7:30pm Chancel Choir Practice, Sanctuary	23	24	25
26 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 3:30pm Women's Ministry Connection & Conversation, Common Ground Meeting Room 4:30pm Among Friends rehearsal, Sanctuary 6:00pm All Church Meeting, Fellowship Hall	27 6:30pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	28 6:00pm Cub Scouts, Fellowship Hall	29 6:00pm Praise Team Practice, Sanctuary 6:30pm Missions Committee meeting, Chapel Meeting Room 6:30pm Youth Group, Fellowship Hall 7:30pm Chancel Choir Practice, Sanctuary	30	31	1 Among Friends rehearsal, Sanctuary

Lift Up these Prayer Requests

Prayers for Healing:

- For Beth Johnson who is receiving treatment for cancer. Prayers that the side effects will be manageable and that the treatment will be successful. We pray for Beth's resilience, spirit and courage as she continues to fight cancer
- For Phyllis, Kristi Keast's mother, who is dealing with hip pain. Also prayers for her as she is considering assisted living options
- For Bill Bowers who is recuperating at home following a hospitalization
- For Fred Lehman, who is doing pretty well, but does need lots of rest. Prayers for increased stamina are requested
- For Bella (Donna and Jeff Walter's fur baby) who is having knee surgery on 2/27/23 and will have a lengthy recovery
- For Summer Brand, who is again fighting Lymphoma. Summer's treatment plan is long and hard, prayers for her strength, courage and healing are requested
- Continued prayers for Barb Neal (mother of Abby Bock) as she fights 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:

- Prayers for a job opportunity to come through for Alex
- For families in the generational squeeze of aging parents, child care and grandchildren care
- For those feeling weary or struggling with winter weather and cloudy days
- 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:

- For Betty Poula, who is now residing at Hallmark Care Center. Cards of care and support during this time of transition can be sent to the following address: Hallmark Care Center, 215 US -30, Room #25, Mount Vernon, Iowa 52314
- For Pat Sorgenfrey who is now residing at Lisbon Rehabilitation Center, Room #110. Pat thoroughly enjoys visitors
- For college students as their Spring Semester is in full swing
- We pray for our new pastor, Vicki Fisher, that will be joining us in July. Prayers for Pastor Fisher and her family as they prepare for their move. Prayers for our hearts to embrace and welcome our new pastor and look to the future with hope and excitement for the ministry that lies ahead
- Prayers for Pastor Terra as she looks forward to and begins her transition into retirement
- 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 UMC MV 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 all impacted by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. Prayers for those who lost loved ones, for rescue workers and medical teams, and for these countries as they face the devastation to their cities and communities
- For safe travels for all who will be taking Spring Break trips in March
- 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:

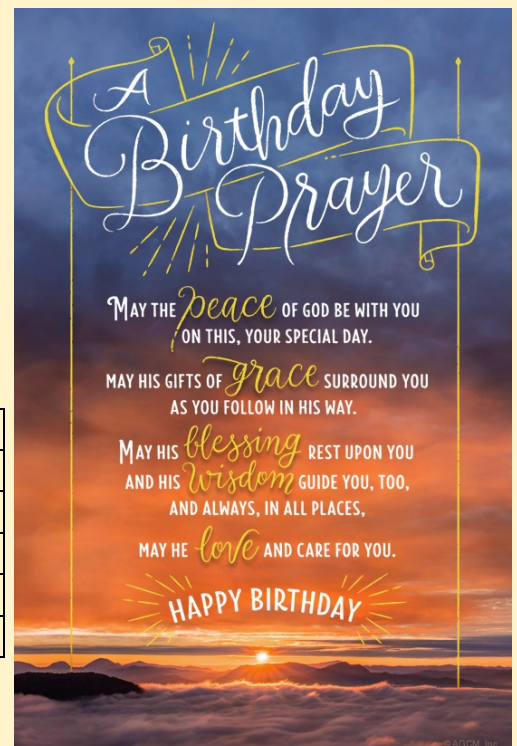
- We are grateful that Vern Sand is healing well from his heart surgery
- We celebrate repaired relationships, specifically we are happy for Emily as she and her brother are making steps to repair their relationship
- We celebrate Henry Steine's graduation from combat medic training on Feb 23rd. Congratulations to Henry (and his proud mother, too)!
- 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 an ecumenical effort including UMCMV, Seeds of Faith and First Presbyterian Church. We are thankful for the way God is at work within this group

Brian Bothell	03/02
Abe Tubbs	03/02
Jase Jaspers	03/06
Vaughn Jace Havill	03/07
Suzette Kragenbrink	03/09
Anna Newby	03/09
Ann Coe	03/10
Mike Moellering	03/10
Ira Kraus	03/13
Jan White	03/13
Ryley Hoffman	03/15
Kellen Johanningmeier	03/15
Charlie Schaller	03/17
Mick Snodgress	03/19
Dan Stoner	03/19
Mary Jane McWilliams	03/20
Janet Ault	03/21
Owen Rushford	03/21
Michael Briesemeister	03/23

March Birthdays

**Happy
Birthday!**

Anna Hoffman	03/23
Josie Bothell	03/24
John Gee	03/25
Michael Woods	03/25
Cindy Roberts	03/30
Eleanor Kraus	03/31





Order your Easter Lilies

In honor or memory of a Loved one

Often called the "white-robed apostles of hope," lilies were found growing in the Garden of Gethsemane after Christ's agony. Tradition has it that the beautiful white lilies sprung up where drops of Christ's sweat fell to the ground in his final hours of sorrow and deep distress. Churches continue this tradition at Easter time by banking their alters and surrounding their crosses with masses of Easter Lilies, to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and hope of life everlasting.

Easter is such a great time to remember loved ones or those very special to us and what better way to share that love than through flowers.

We'd like to fill the sanctuary with Spring flowers on Easter in honor of or in memory of our loved one.

Easter lilies are \$15 each.

To place your order, please fill out the form in the bulletin on Sunday March 19 or March 26th and put it in the offering plate OR call the church office (319.895.6286).

Orders need to be in by **Monday, March 27**

Checks should be made out to: **UMCMV** & designated for **Easter Lilies**.

If you are sending in a check please indicate on a note who the flowers are in memory or honor of. Thanks!



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



Among Friends:
A Dramatic Adaptation of the
Last Supper
Sunday April 2nd at 7:00 pm

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