



January 2024 Newsletter "Circuit Rider" for



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MOUNT VERNON

304 1st Street SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314

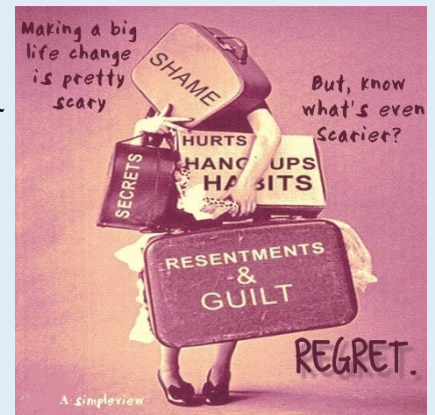
Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Telephone: 319.895.6286

www.umcmv.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UMCMV>

"Behold, I am about to do something new! See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland." (Isaiah 43:19)



Pondering on the Paha: New Beginnings

I could not be a Pastor without believing in new beginnings. The forgiveness of sin and redemption of humanity is at the heart of the scripture. God can change hearts. God can turn criminals into saints. The broken can be healed, the sin-sick restored, and people can change.

New Year's resolutions prove that it's not easy, though! It's a cliché how quickly we make and break our resolutions. Why is it so hard? Because often we try to change on our own. Or maybe, we try to do it with God's help, but neglect the help available from God's people.

Being a Christian is a community activity. We are called into a church, a fellowship of believers, because we are not meant to make this journey alone. In small groups, in praying for each other, we find strength that we need to make lasting changes. We are not meant to be alone. Before you make another empty resolution, ask God for help. What change does God hope to see in your life?

What does God want you to let go of as you begin the new year? Are you carrying bitterness and resentment? That can make it hard to take on something new! Have you bought into the lie of shame and need to hear again of God's great love? I believe in a God who is making all things new, even me and you!

You are loved,

Pastor Vicki

Pastor's Letter

January 2024



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 & 11 am

www.umcmv.com/online-worship

New Message Series begins January 14!

“Jonah: Not Just Another Fish Story”

Where is the line between loyalty to country, and loyalty to God? Do we really want God to save our enemies? Jonah is a book in the Old Testament we often associate with Sunday School lessons. I remember hearing many different versions of it as a child. More than once I made a great whale and put a little figure of Jonah inside. It's one of those stories, that if you grew up in the church, you probably know how the story goes, at least on the surface. During the next month we're going to take a deeper look at the book of Jonah and see some interesting surprises.

1/7 Epiphany Sunday: “Where are you going?”

Communion Sunday

Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12

1/14 “Jonah! You can't Run from this God!” Jonah 1:1-16

1/21 “Jonah: The Very Awkward Prayer” Jonah 1:17-2:10

1/28 “Jonah: The Unexplained Season”

Worship Focus: Sometimes the right message comes through the wrong

2/4 “Jonah: When you've Betrayed your People Because God said to”

Communion Sunday Jonah 4

All Church Townhall Meeting:

What are our goals for 2024? What has the leadership of the church been working on? What dreams do we have? What makes you excited or concerned about our church?



Join us on **January 28th, 9:45-10:45 am in the Fellowship Hall** as some of our lay leadership invites us to dream together. Opportunities for table talk and questions will be provided along with updates on our Education Wing, finances, and the work of the Church Council. Everyone is welcome.

Our missional priorities (goals) for 2024:

- 1) Create and Install a Covenant for Leadership.
- 2) Increase opportunities for meaningful relationships.
- 3) Improve transparency of governance.



Christian Leadership Workshop

Monday, January 29, 6-8 PM

Common Ground Meeting Room

Join Pastor Vicki for an interactive gathering to explore leadership from a faith perspective. How does leading in a church look different from other non-profits? What tools can help build our trust, even as we attend to the practical needs of the church? How can we address burnout and poor boundaries? Grab some basic tools that you can use in various leadership settings, plus build relationships with others from our church. Everyone is welcome! Please RSVP to the church office or to Pastor Vicki (vicki.fisher@iaumc.net).

How to reach Pastor Vicki:

For emergencies, call her cell at 712-563-6094 and leave a message. Otherwise, leave a message at the church at 319-895-6286 or email vicki.fisher@iaumc.net. She will be taking Thursdays as her Sabbath, except in dire emergencies.



Did you miss worship? Check out our online worship at <https://tinyurl.com/weloveUMCMV>

Scholarships for New and Returning College Students:

Is your child a High School Senior or currently enrolled in college? The Iowa United Methodist Foundation has one scholarship portal for hundreds of scholarships for new and returning students. In fact, the Iowa United Methodist Foundation has over \$250,000 worth of scholarships to be distributed. Check it out at <https://iumf.org/scholarships/>

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

If you've ever felt like you just can't get in control of your money, you're not alone. You'd be surprised how many people you know are struggling just like you. But it's time for your struggle to end—starting today. Join my virtual *Financial Peace University* class starting on January 11, 2024 and learn



how you can pay off debt, save more money, and build wealth.

Coordinators: Adam & Erin Krapfl

Thursday Evenings starting at 6:30 pm

Chapel Room Classroom @ UMCMV

<https://www.financialpeace.com/app/classes/0330E4>

Thank YOU...

To our Education Team, especially Teresa Stewart, for their wonderful Christmas program. To our Trustees for locking up the church! For Terry, Warren, and Denise for your work behind the scenes. For our Tech Team and the depth they add to our worship services. To everyone who sang, played an instrument, and made a joyful noise! To everyone who helped with Magical Night, Caroling, the funeral, the potluck, and our Christmas Eve services. To the Missions Team and all who gave generously to make a difference! To our Committees for their leadership. To our church staff, for all the extra work they did in December! You are a blessing!



Scrip Fundraising Program

What Is Scrip?

Scrip is a term that means “substitute money”. When you purchase scrip, you’re purchasing gift certificates and prepaid cards that are used just like cash. You can use scrip to purchase everyday items like food, clothing and other essentials. With every purchase, you earn revenue for the church. Scrip comes in different forms – it could be a physical gift card, an electronic eCard, or a reload of a physical gift card.

Find Out More

In addition to Gary’s cards, there is a complete list of all retailers (over 500) available at www.umcmv.com/scrip or in the church office. Please feel free to write in other participating retailers not on the form. Return completed order forms (and check/cash) to the church office or drop them in the collection plate. Checks should be made out to UMC of MV-Scrip Account. Orders will be placed on the 15th of each month. Gift Cards should be received in the church office 7-10 days from the order date. Questions? Contact Jackie Morrical at morricalhome@gmail.com or 319-330-1646.

How scrip generates revenue for our church

The Great Lakes Scrip Center acts on behalf of churches, schools and other non-profit organizations to purchase large amounts of scrip from grocery stores, department stores, and other retailers. Because the scrip is purchased with cash up front, the participating retailers offer a substantial discount. Our church buys the scrip from Great Lakes Scrip Center at a discount, and re-sells the certificates to families like yours for full face value. The discount - from two to fifteen percent or more – is our organization’s revenue.

Thanks to repeat users!

Our church has been offering Scrip for over 12 years! There is a dedicated group that have been ordering regularly! In 2023 we generated \$1,300 for the church general fund through Scrip. Gary’s cards are the most popular and a supply is kept on-hand at all times, just ask! If you are interested in receiving a monthly email reminder for scrip contact Jackie Morrical at morricalhome@gmail.com.

Scrip Family Order Form

Please include cash/check (payable to UMCMV Scrip) with the order form which can be dropped in the collection plate or left in the office. Orders need to be placed by the 15th of the month and will be received by the 25th of the month.

Name			
Order Date			
Product	%	QTY	Total
Applebee's® \$25.00	8%		\$
Amazon \$25	1.7%		\$
Barnes & Noble \$25.00	8%		\$
Bath & Body Works \$25.00	12%		\$
Best Buy \$25.00	4%		\$
Buffalo Wild Wings® \$25.00	8%		\$
Casey's \$25.00	3%		\$
Chewy \$25.00	5%		\$
CVS Pharmacy \$25.00	6%		\$
Dairy Queen \$25.00	6.5%		\$
Dick's Sporting Goods \$25.00	8%		\$
Fandango \$25.00	4%		\$
Fareway \$25.00	3%		\$
Gap \$25.00	14%		\$
Gary's \$25/\$50/\$100/\$200	5%		\$
Hardee's \$25.00	5%		\$
Home Depot® \$25.00	4%		\$
JCPenney \$25.00	5%		\$
Jimmy John's \$25.00	8%		\$
Kohl's \$25.00	7%		\$
Kwik Star \$25.00	4%		\$
L.L.Bean \$25.00	16%		\$
Lands' End \$25.00	15%		\$
McDonald's \$25.00	2%		\$
Menards \$25.00	3%		\$
Michaels \$25.00	6%		\$
Old Navy \$25.00	14%		\$
Olive Garden \$25.00	8%		\$
Panda Express \$25.00	8%		\$
Panera Bread \$25.00	8%		\$
Papa Murphy's \$10.00	8%		\$
Pizza Hut \$10.00	8%		\$
Red Lobster \$25.00	8%		\$
Red Robin \$25.00	8%		\$
Sam's Club \$25.00	2.5%		\$
Scheels \$25.00	8%		\$
Staples \$25.00	5%		\$
Starbucks \$25.00	4.5%		\$
Subway Restaurants \$50.00	4.5%		\$
Target \$25.00	2.5%		\$
Visa Gift Card \$25.00	1.25%		\$
Walgreens \$25.00	5%		\$
Walmart \$25.00	2.5%		\$
Wendy's \$25.00	6%		\$

ANN COE TO BE CO-LAY LEADER

Ann Coe has agreed to be co-Lay Leader of our church (with Babs Moore) for the coming year. Ann and her husband, Ron, moved into Mt. Vernon in 2008 from Clarence where they were very involved in the Methodist Church there. After a number of years of commuting for church activities, they joined the Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church in 2015. Two of their three daughters, Erin Krapfl and Amanda Bishop, live in Mt. Vernon. A third daughter lives in Massachusetts.

Ann is retired from a career in social work and Ron is retired from banking. Ann's hobbies include volunteering at SE Linn Center and crafting. (You might sometime be fortunate enough to receive one of her handmade greeting cards!)

Welcome to the team, Ann!

Council Chair Report:

Happy New Year, church! I am so very thankful for the leadership in this church exemplified everywhere this past year. In 2023 we launched a new Diversity Team to passionately curate the outward message our church desires to live out. We saw another year of gracious and generous giving that empowered us to begin solving the dire need of energy performance and comfort improvements in our Education Wing. We have been blessed by a wonderful appointment in the Pastor Vicki and her family. The list could go on but this is to be brief. 2024 will begin with our Administrative Council meeting more frequently on the even months, a leadership committed to covenant relationships and greater transparency, a budget set with conservative aspiration, and an energized church that continues to grow in worship and service. My resolution challenge for the church is how will this be reflected in your faith journey. How will you prune branches in order to thrive on the vine? #thankful, Jim Baty Ad Council Chair



Congrats to Ben Krack,
son of Veronica Fisher on
his baptism on Sunday
December 10.



Mount Vernon Community Preschool Update: January 2023

December was filled with holiday activities and special events. Children created ornaments for their families, explored new art materials (melted crayons!) and read many stories about Christmas. One class took advantage of the warm weather and walked to the library. To celebrate the end of 2023 we made and decorated a piñata and children took turns trying to break it open!

We welcome children back in January after a restful break! Happy New Year!





Sunday School

Happy New Year! Thank you to all who came out to support us for the Christmas pageant! We were beyond blessed to share over \$350 to Yusef! It was so much fun and the kids did SUCH a great job! A HUGE THANK YOU to all of the volunteers who helped!

We are done with our unit and are on to the second unit of the Winter quarter. As we prepare for Lent, we will be getting to know the Lord through the Gospels. Our unit 2 Faith Word is Include, which means “To welcome all of God’s children in God’s love”. Our unit Bible Verse is Psalm 145:9: “The Lord is good to everyone and everything; God’s compassion extends to all His handiwork!”. This unit includes Jesus’ baptism, calling the disciples, showing love, and God’s kingdom.

Unit 2: Include

1/7 – Jacob’s Ladder Genesis 28:10-22

1/14 – A Peaceable Kingdom Isaiah 11:6-9

1/21 – Jacob’s Ladder Genesis 28:10-22

1/28 – A Peaceable Kingdom Isaiah 11:6-9

They were making carpet angels because there wasn’t any snow for Christmas!



Rooted Youth Group

December was quite a month! Magical Night was a great success! We estimate at least 300 people came, likely more! \$1,623 were raised for SELCC, pretty darn close to what we raised last year! After Magical Night prep, we did watercolors with Jonathan! We were able to brush up on what we learned last year as well as learning a few new things this year. Then we had our Christmas party, which was a huge hit! We played some reindeers games, ate some yummy food, and had a white elephant gift exchange. No dog poo calendar this year! Next up we have a new activity this year, bowling at Spare Time. Then we will be talking about mental health with Licensed Mental Healthcare Provider Sami Crain. After that will be a scavenger hunt and sledding (or Sardines if there is no snow. It's a win for the youth either way!)

THANK YOU to all our amazing volunteers for Magical Night!

YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

January

1/3 NO MEEETING

1/10 Bowling

1/17 Mental health with Sami

1/24 Scavenger hunt

1/31 Sledding/games



February

2/7 Family Feud

2/14 NO MEEETING (Ash Wednesday)

2/21 Service project

2/28 Prayer



Please contact Veronica or Pastor Vicki to volunteer at 319-895-6286. Regular youth leaders and helpers are always welcome. Thank you!

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.



Mission Committee

January 2024 Update

Once again, our congregation responded with generous support to the many opportunities to share with others during the Christmas season. Holiday hams for SE Linn, Tag Tree gifts for SE Linn and Mission of Hope, Cap and Mitten Tree for SE Linn and the local schools, donations to the FISH fund, and our last bulk food order of the year were all well received and generously supported. Thank you for your generous giving on behalf of our community. Many people had more joyous family Christmas celebrations because of your giving.

As we begin a new calendar year, our committee continues to strive to provide opportunities for you, our congregation, to be the hands and feet of Christ in our community. We extend an invitation to any of you with a heart for service and giving to join us for our monthly meetings. Our next meeting is Tuesday, January 16 at 6:30 PM in the Common Ground, and we'd love to have you join us. Topics will include support for the Willis Dady homeless shelter, upcoming projects of Meals on Wheels, a Mission of Hope meal, Service Sunday on April 28, Soles for Souls, and a local mission work opportunity in June. Together, we are making a difference for those in need of support and Christian sharing.

Sincerely,

Your Mission Committee – Mary Jane McWilliams, Vern and Arlene Sand, Alison Dix, Renee Nydegger, Jen Hoffman, Barb Shepley, Pastor Vicki Fisher, Karen Stewart.

How to contact United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon

Office Phone # (319) 895-6286

Email: alisondix@umcmv.com

Website: www.umcmv.com

[ONLINE GIVING LINK \(or QR code\)](#)

<https://bit.ly/UMCMVonlinegiving>



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT of the FISH FUND ON CHRISTMAS EVE—
Contributions to the FISH fund were \$1,550.43.

United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon Calendar January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 6:00pm Cub Scouts Pack 40, Fellowship Hall	3	4	5	6
7 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Sunday School Classes 9:45am Sunday School using Kitchen 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary	8 6:00pm Entre Nous Book Club, Common Ground Meeting Room 7:00pm Boy Scouts Meeting, Fellowship hall	9 6:00pm Cub Scouts Pack 40, Fellowship Hall	10 6:30pm Middle School & HS Youth Group, Fellowship Hall	11 6:00pm PEO Meeting, Common Ground Meeting Room 6:30pm Financial Peace University Class, Balcony Classroom	12	13 12:00pm Private event Fellowship Hall - birthday party
14 UMCOR Human Relations Day 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Sunday School Classes 9:45am Sunday School using Kitchen 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary	15 Offices closed 7:00pm Boy Scouts Meeting, Fellowship hall 7:00pm Trustees Meeting, Common Ground Meeting Room	16 6:00pm Cub Scouts Pack 40, Fellowship Hall 6:30pm Missions meeting, Chapel Meeting Room	17 6:30pm Middle School & HS Youth Group, Fellowship Hall	18 6:30pm Financial Peace University Class, Balcony Classroom	19	20
21 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Confirmation - Mentor meetings, Fellowship Hall 9:45am Sunday School Classes 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary 6:30pm Confirmation Class, Fellowship Hall	22 7:00pm Boy Scouts Meeting, Fellowship hall	23 6:00pm Cub Scouts Pack 40, Fellowship Hall 7:00pm Finance Meeting, Common Ground Meeting Room	24 6:30pm Middle School & HS Youth Group, Fellowship Hall	25 6:30pm Financial Peace University Class, Balcony Classroom	26	27
28 8:30am Praise Worship, Sanctuary 9:45am Sunday School Classes 9:45am Town Hall community session -listening & sharing activities- Fellowship Hall 11:00am Traditional Worship, Sanctuary	29 6:00pm Christian Leadership Workshop, Common Ground Meeting Room 7:00pm Boy Scouts Meeting, Fellowship hall	30 6:00pm Cub Scouts Pack 40, Fellowship Hall	31 6:30pm Middle School & HS Youth Group, Fellowship Hall			

Lift Up these Prayer Requests throughout the week...

Prayers for Healing:

- For Cathy Stoner as she recovers from knee replacement surgery
- For Ralph (friend of Susan & Terry Pisarik) who recently started cancer treatments
- For our friends and family members who are fighting the battle against cancer or other health issues

Prayers for Comfort and Strength and Safety:

- For the family and friends of Gordon Reed (Angie Watson's father) who passed away on Christmas Eve
- For the family and friends of Nancy Thomas who passed away on Dec 6th
- For the family and friends of Barb Thomsen Neal, as they continue to grieve her death
- For those concerned with health issues
- For all who are struggling: emotionally, physically or spiritually

Prayers for Transition:

- For all teachers, students and administrators returning for second semester at our local schools
- For all college students as they return to their respective campuses
- For the leaders of UMCMV as they continue to work on behalf of our church
- For the United Methodist Church, the IA Conference & our Mt Vernon congregation

Prayers for our Nation and our World:

- For all who have had lives impacted by the trauma of gun violence
- For the people of Israel and Palestine; Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers
- For families and communities devastated by natural disasters
- For people caught in the tragedies of war in Ukraine and Russia; Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers
- Prayers for peace for all humanity

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Joy:

- With joy we continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus and the light He brings to our world
- With thankful hearts we praise God for the blessings in our lives, and also take comfort that He knows the yearnings of our hearts

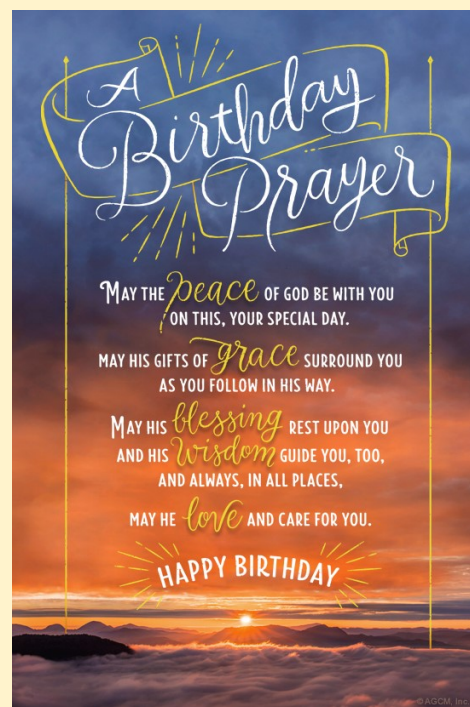


We, as the United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon, are here to say we are making spaces safe and affirming for all people to be themselves and that we are specifically in support of the LGBTQ+ community members. We affirm that those in the LGBTQ+ community are persons of sacred worth, full and whole members of the human family, and are beloved by God.

Clint Stanerson	01/01
Tessa Baty	01/02
Myrt Bowers	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
Ed Fordyce	01/12
Barb Shepley	01/13
Karlyn Connolly	01/15
Vickie Reynolds	01/18
Camden Meyer	01/19
Angie Swartzendruber	01/19
Benjamin Havill	01/20
Terry Pisarik	01/20
Teresa Stewart	01/20
Shellie Kamaus	01/21
Harrison Voigt	01/22
Michael Bray	01/24
Breanna Niec	01/25
Fred Lehman	01/26
Lily Booth	01/27
Maddison Hotz	01/28
Gentry Barber	01/29
Kolsie Bixler	01/31

January Birthdays

**Happy
Happy
Birthday!**



Congratulations to Alison Dix!

On December 10, there was a special Church Conference where Alison Dix was unanimously affirmed as a candidate for becoming a Licensed Local Pastor. Alison plans to attend a week long Licensing School in May, and is then eligible to be invited to serve as a Local Pastor.

Pastor Vicki, Pastor Terra, and Alison Dix after the Special Church Conference. Thanks Jeff Schmatt for the photo!

Magical Night Soup Supper
Fellowship Hall
November 30th



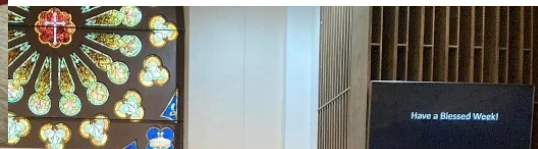
Caroling in the
community in
Mount Vernon.
Photo: Jeff
Schmatt



A glimpse of our
Children's Pro-
gram. Photo:
Jeff Schmatt.



Abigail Smith and Jamie Smith her mother enjoyed the Church Conference! Photo: Jeff Schmatt



ABOVE & RIGHT:
Some of the fashions
at our Christmas
Clothes Sunday! Sun-
day December 17





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 Vicki Fisher
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 McNeese
Director, Adult Handbell Choir . . .	Kristi Keast
Organist	Karen Stoll
Chancel Choir Director	Kit Currie
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



**All Church
 Townhall
 Meeting:**

What are our goals for 2024? What has the leadership of the church been working on? What dreams

do we have? What makes you excited or concerned about our church?

Join us on **January 28th, 9:45-10:45 am in the Fellowship Hall** as some of our lay leadership invites us to dream together. Opportunities for table talk and questions will be provided along with updates on our Education Wing, finances, and the work of the Church Council. Everyone is welcome.