



UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KEOKUK
The Church by the River

Volume 11 Issue 3

March 2014

RIVERSIDE CURRENT

From the Pastor's Desk

The penitential season of Lent begins this Wednesday, when we remember that we mortal – dust and ash, as the Bible puts it. If that was all the season represented, I know I'd be hard pressed to find a reason to observe it. But, of course, we do not believe that is all there is to the story. God is at work in the midst of what seems like chaos to us, redeeming and renewing and re-creating life – abundant, teeming, unstoppable life! We believe that this unfolding resurrection drama includes us, personally and individually, because of our connection with Jesus, a man who tasted death, but was not overcome by it.

A common Lenten practice in our modern day is to “give up” something for the 40 day season, as a symbolic kind of fast. Our Reformed fore-bearers, however, would have judged such a practice “proud”. Better, they would say, to take on a new habit of holy living, not for 40 days but for a lifetime. Yes, you could give up chocolate for six weeks, but to what benefit? Better, they would say, to learn to relish the pure, natural foods God provides. Then when we nourish our bodies, our spirits, too, are nourished with gratitude for the bounty God has given us.

Semantics? Maybe, but it seems to make a big difference in how we perceive the richness of our life. One of the great themes of the Reformed tradition is “a faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God’s creation” (Book of Order, F-2.05). That seems so much more substantial to me than giving up a bad habit for a few weeks. It actually sounds like a calling, and perhaps one that could change the world as well as my outlook.

There are many ways we can begin to take on a new habit of holy living in respect of caring for the creation given by God. If you would like to explore some of the possibilities, you are invited to participate in a Lenten study with the pastor as we consider “*50 Ways to Help Save the Earth*”. This small group study will take place in our home, at 6:30 pm on Thursday evenings beginning March 6th. Pick up a book after worship (two opportunities this week, both Sunday and Wednesday evening!), or give me a call. We have nothing to lose and everything in the world to gain.

Praising God always, in all ways!

Church Calendar March 2014

Sat Mar 1

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Sun Mar 2

09:30 Adult Christian Ed

10:30 Worship Service

Tue Mar 4

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Mar 5

10:00 Retired Teacher's Assoc. Lunch

11:30 Lunch-N-Learn

Where: HyVee's Cafeteria

15:30 Prayer group

18:00 WoRM Wednesdays

19:00 Ash Wednesday Service

Sat Mar 8

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Sun Mar 9

09:30 Adult Christian Ed

10:30 Worship w/ communion

Tue Mar 11

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Mar 12

11:30 Lunch-N-Learn

Where: HyVee's Cafeteria

15:30 Prayer group

18:00 WoRM Wednesdays

19:00 Confirmation Class

Thu Mar 13

14:00 Grief Support

Sat Mar 15

09:30 Deacon's Meeting

11:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Sun Mar 16

09:30 Adult Christian Ed

10:30 Worship Service (baptisms)

Tue Mar 18

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

18:00 Session Meeting

Wed Mar 19

08:30 Keokuk Ministerial Association

Where: United Presbyterian

11:30 Lunch-N-Learn

Where: HyVee's Cafeteria

15:30 Prayer group

18:00 WoRM Wednesdays

19:00 Confirmation Class

Sat Mar 22

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Sun Mar 23

09:30 Adult Christian Ed

10:30 Worship Service

Tue Mar 25

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Mar 26

11:30 Lunch-N-Learn

Where: HyVee's Cafeteria

15:30 Prayer group

18:00 WoRM Wednesdays

19:00 Confirmation Class

Thu Mar 27

18:30 Grief Support

Sat Mar 29

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Sun Mar 30

09:30 Adult Christian Ed

10:30 Worship Service

March Birthdays

1	Jacob Briscoe
9	Ryan Bliss
9	A. J. Swan
10	Barbara Wardlow
12	Barb Norman
16	Brayden Hall
17	Jennifer Briscoe
18	Rev. Randi Henderson
18	Kinnick & Karsyn Bliss
18	Casie Riney
19	Mae Foster
19	Clara Sallee
21	Jessica O'Neil
22	Jeanette Williamson
26	Monta Smith
31	Rachel Hausch
31	Ragen Hausch



2 February

- Rev. Randi announced the annual congregational meeting at the close of worship.
 - Lani offered a prayer of praise for his successful surgery and thanks for the care he received from our deacons.
 - Barb A. lifted a prayer of thanks for successful surgery for her friend's son, Cody, but asked that we pray for his complete recovery from the auto accident.
- Dena asked us to pray for her granddaughter, Molly, who has hip dysplasia, particularly that the joint continues to develop properly.
 - Rebecca offered a prayer of thanks that Mike's sister, Becky, has been moved to the rehab hospital at Burlington and continues to recover.
 - Ann invited everyone to stay after the meeting for lunch, and asked the deacons to see her after worship to pick up their new deacon's booklets.
 - Rev. Randi let us know the confirmation class will be collecting donations of money and health & hygiene items next Sunday for the Souper Bowl of Caring.

9 February 2014

- Rev. Randi let us know that our brother in Christ, Bill Shaffer, died to this life yesterday, and asked us to hold Sara and her daughters in our prayers as they mourn their loss.
- Angela offered a prayer of praise that Ray's surgery had gone well and that he is recovering. She also thanked everyone for the prayers and for the many practical ways people helped out.
- K.J. thanked Joe for taking down and putting away the stable and the Christmas tree. He also offered a prayer of thanksgiving that Dena and Kim traveled safely through the storm and reached their destination in Texas.
- Lori offered a prayer of praise for successful and safe procedures completed for the children. Both Tres and Heidi had tubes inserted in their ears to treat for infection, and both are doing well.
- Barb A. asked for continued prayer for her friend's son, Cody, as he recovers from the auto accident. She also asked us to pray for Carissa's father, who is back in the hospital for unexplained fever.
- Rev. Randi asked us to continue to pray for Barb's son, Ken. Barb said he ate some and they had him up out of bed, but his white blood count is very low. Barb thanks everyone for the prayers and asks us to keep it up.

16 February 2014

- Rev. Randi let us know that Barb's son, Ken, whom we have been praying for, passed away this week from complications of the cancer. She asked us to hold Barb, Cecelia, and Denise in our prayers as they grieve their loss.
- Joe offered a prayer of thanksgiving for all the people who pitched in to help the Shaffer family this week – Mike clearing the sidewalks, Bruce arranging to get the back lot plowed, Joann and Cindy and others taking care of lunch. It was a beautiful example of the community showing the love of Christ.

23 February 2014

- Joe offered thanks for prayers and physical help during Randi's medical needs, especially KJ & Oddfellows.

