



UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KEOKUK
The Church by the River

Volume 11 Issue 1

January 2014

RIVERSIDE CURRENT

From the Pastor's Desk

There's no denying it, autumn is over and done with and we are deep in the heart of winter. There's ice on the river, you dare not leave home without mittens and hat, and the eagles have returned, hoping for a meal.

We've been watching the eagles from our window. You'd think if you were at the top of the food chain, life would be a bowl of cherries – or fish, in this case – but it's not. The poor birds are harassed from sun-up to sun-down, by every other flying creature along the river. The crows and gulls are almost like shadows, following them where ever they fly, in the hope one of the big guys will drop that fish they're trying to swallow in mid-air.

None of us are very good at imagining what life is like for someone else. In the press of living our own lives, we forget that other people have demanding jobs, and family obligations, and bills to pay. We may be unaware of the worry they feel for loved ones who live in far away places, and we're not likely to know much about the sleepless nights they endure because of their own pain. The tears of loneliness they weep when they are by themselves are invisible to us, and we hope we are never in the way of the anger they just can't hold inside any longer. While it may be true that we all have different levels of tolerance for frustration, fear, and injustice, it is neither wise, nor kind, nor helpful to condemn a brother or sister when we do not understand the troubles they face.

A new year is beginning, a time when many of us look to recommit ourselves to a more Christian way of living. We promise to lay down our vices and pick up new virtues, but in short order, we're right back where we were. That's because our brokenness – our sin, to use an old-fashioned word – is inherent to our life. Accepting Jesus does not make us perfect, it makes us forgiven sinners. The kicker about that is that repentance and reconciliation then have to become the rhythm of our lives. We will always mess it up, and we will always need to ask forgiveness, and we will always need to reach out to our brothers and sisters, offering our forgiveness and understanding to them. When you think about it, this gift of salvation – the resilience to turn and turn and turn again, to cling tight to the promise that we are redeemed, and to refuse to give up on a brother or sister – is miraculous, plain and simple.

All that passing laws against sin did was produce more lawbreakers. But sin didn't, and doesn't, have a chance in competition with the aggressive forgiveness we call grace. When it's sin versus grace, grace wins hands down.

Romans 5:20

Praising God always, in all ways!

Church Calendar January 2014

Wed Jan 1, 2014

08:00 Holiday (New Year's)

Thu Jan 2, 2014

08:00 VACATION

Fri Jan 3, 2014

08:00 VACATION

Sat Jan 4, 2014

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Sun Jan 5, 2014

09:30 Adult Christian Ed

10:30 Worship Service

Tue Jan 7, 2014

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Jan 8, 2014

11:30 Lunch and Learn

Where: HyVee's Cafeteria

15:30 Prayer group

18:00 WoRM Wednesdays

19:00 Confirmation Class

Thu Jan 9, 2014

18:30 Grief Support

Sat Jan 11, 2014

09:00 Officer Training Retreat

Sun Jan 12, 2014

09:30 Adult Christian Ed

10:30 Worship Service

Tue Jan 14, 2014

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Jan 15, 2014

08:30 Keokuk Ministerial Association

11:30 Lunch and Learn

Where: HyVee's Cafeteria

15:30 Prayer group

18:00 WoRM Wednesdays

19:00 Confirmation Class

Sat Jan 18, 2014

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

11:00 Eagle Days

Sun Jan 19, 2014

09:30 Adult Christian Ed

10:30 Worship Service

11:00 Eagle Days

Tue Jan 21, 2014

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Jan 22, 2014

11:30 Lunch and Learn

Where: HyVee's Cafeteria

15:30 Prayer group

18:00 WoRM Wednesdays

19:00 Confirmation Class

Thu Jan 23, 2014

18:30 Grief Support

Sat Jan 25, 2014

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Sun Jan 26, 2014

09:30 Adult Christian Ed

10:30 Worship Service &

Congregational Meeting

Tue Jan 28, 2014

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Jan 29, 2014

11:30 Lunch and Learn

Where: HyVee's Cafeteria

15:30 Prayer group

18:00 WoRM Wednesdays

19:00 Confirmation Class

January Birthdays

9	Kevin Peterson
11	Dixie Jutte
14	Kathryn Bliss
14	Drew Hymes
17	Madge Gowing
25	Amanda Swan
27	Jeremy Marshall



1 December 2013

- Joann told us 30 families were served at the food pantry this week.
- Joann also shared a joy in her eight grandchildren, grateful for their success in school.
- Cindy D. let us know of the work the deacons have been doing to stay connected to members of our faith family that are far away. Goody boxes have been sent to our college students, and a fellowship lunch for homebound members is planned for Tuesday. Please keep all these people in your prayers.
- Meg offered thanksgiving for prayers answered. Rich's brother, Mike, whom we've been praying for, seems to be passed his problems and has a new job.
- Angie S. lifted a prayer for tornado victims in Washington, IL, and also asked we remember Cailin and Christine in prayer, home with illness.
- Cindy D. let us know that Mariana sends her thanks for the cards and the prayers during her recovery.
- Steve asked us to lift his co-worker, Megan and her new husband, Jared, in prayer, that God bless them in this new life they are beginning together
- Joann reminded us we are filling stockings for soldiers, and that we can bring donations to the church next Sunday.
- Joe asked that we pray for healing for his brother, Peter, who will be undergoing surgery for cancer.
- Joe also reminded us to check our bids in the Silent Auction, as we have a number of on-line bidders upping the ante. If you want to stay on top of that special item, you can check in daily via the Facebook page.

8 December 2013

- Rev. Randi announced that there will be a congregational meeting at the close of worship next week to elect officers and representatives to the 2014 Nominating Committee.
- Sally let us know about the arrival of her new granddaughter, Adeline Joy. Welcome, sweet child!
- Barb R. asked us to remember Kenneth in our prayers, for relief of his pain.
- Joe reminded us that the Silent Auction ends next week, with bids closing at 10:30. He also asked for volunteers to help up-date the on-line bidding so our distance bidders can continue to participate up to the last moment.
- Lani asked that we keep him in prayer, as he goes to a consultation this week about cataracts, specifically that he might be able to postpone treatment until the new year.

15 December 2013

- Rev. Randi let us know that Doris took a fall and broke her hip. Surgery went well, but please keep both Doris and Bill in your prayers.
- Cindy reminded us that the Community Chorale is singing this afternoon at 2:00 at St. John's.
- Kim asked that we pray for Emily and all the other students facing finals in the coming weeks, that they be calm and successful in their endeavors.
- Kim also offered thanksgiving that Amber has finished her program of study and is graduating.
- K.J. offered thanks for the Scullys' participation in worship, lighting the Advent candle and getting the children involved in church activities.
- Ann asked people to check their personal information for the church directory on their way out today, so we can get the directory out in January. She also let us know there is an updated listing for the prayer chain – if you are not on the list and want to be, please let Ann know.
- Ray asked that we pray for Angela's Aunt Pam, who had a cancerous tumor removed from her tongue. Thanks that surgery went well, praying for complete recovery.
- Joe offered thanks for the incredible support and interest in the Silent Auction, both from people

here and friends far away.

- Steve asks us to pray for Betsy, the daughter of an acquaintance, who has started a girl's school in Guatemala. Please pray for her safety and for the success of the girls she will be serving.

22 December 2013

- Please pray for Pat, Angie and Ray's neighbor, who fell on the ice.
- Please pray for people away from home this holiday. Some will be traveling to visit family, some will be sitting alone in a hospital room or a nursing home or a prison cell. Some are soldiers, serving far away, others are refugees, fleeing from disasters both natural and man-made. Some will be grief-stricken this year over partings they did not choose, while others will be filled with joy at reunions they had not dared to dream about. Pray for them; pray for us all.
- Give thanks for all the people we know who have received healings this year and for the many people who had a hand in their care – doctors, nurses, aides, social workers, family members, friends. They faced so many physical ailments and diseases, some of them came very near to death, and yet, they are still with us and we rejoice – thanks be to God!
- Pray for the officers of our church, to receive wisdom, and a spirit of peace, and a sense of God's purpose for us in this time and place. And pray for the church everywhere, that she might have both the courage and the voice to witness to the immense love of Christ for this broken-hearted world of ours.

Others on our prayer list: those touched by the school shooting at Arapaho High School: students, teachers, parents, and administrators; the family of Ashley Robertson, who died to this life earlier in the month – she is survived by a husband and three children.

The annual **congregational meeting** will be held at the close of the worship hour on Sunday, 26 January 2014., for the purpose of receiving the annual report and reviewing adequacy of the pastoral terms of call. We will also be ordaining and installing new officers during worship on that day.

Eagle Days are scheduled for January 18th and 19th. This year we are partnering with Common Ground, to raise money for this ministry to the youth of our community. Volunteers are needed both at the church and at Common Ground in the mall. See Dena to sign up for your slot.

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