



UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KEOKUK  
The Church by the River

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December 2013

## RIVERSIDE CURRENT

### *From the Pastor's Desk*

The elements of the periodic table have fascinated me for a long time – even before I really understood what chemistry was all about. I liked the orderliness of the table, the rows and the columns, the “secret” code names for the individual elements – AG for silver and FE for iron. But mostly I liked the idea that all the fundamental building blocks for everything we know about was right there, on that table. If you knew all about those elements, you knew everything you needed to know about matter.

Our devotional this winter explores the “elements” of Advent – the basic building blocks from which we can assemble the complete story of God’s love come down to us in Jesus Christ. These elements are quite different from those found in the periodic chart, though – these essential elements include things like trust, joy, patience, and love. No single one will get you there by itself, but taken together, they connect elegantly to point out the way to Christmas and the child who changed everything. If you learn all about these elements, you will learn everything you need to know about God’s love.

I hope you enjoy the daily devotions – if you have access to the internet, there is beautiful music to go with each of these elements at [www.littleflockmusic.com/Advent2013/](http://www.littleflockmusic.com/Advent2013/). And I hope you take the time this Advent to rediscover and explore the fundamental elements of your faith – dust them off, polish them up, lay them out and organize them, putting each one in its proper place in your life. He came for many reasons, but most of all, that we might have life and have it abundantly. Accept the gift graciously, and use it well.

*According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.*

*1 Corinthians 3:10-11*

*Praising God always, in all ways!*

## Church Calendar December 2013

### Sun Dec 1, 2013

09:30 Adult Christian Ed  
10:30 Worship Service  
11:30 Hanging of the Greens

### Tue Dec 3, 2013

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

### Wed Dec 4, 2013

11:30 Lunch-N-Learn  
Where: HyVee's Cafeteria  
15:30 Prayer group  
18:00 WoRM Wednesdays  
19:00 Confirmation Class

### Fri Dec 6, 2013

19:00 Walk Thru Bethlehem  
Where: First Baptist, Ft. Madison

### Sat Dec 7, 2013

19:00 Walk Thru Bethlehem  
Where: First Baptist, Ft. Madison

### Sun Dec 8, 2013

08:00 Silent Auction Ends  
09:30 Adult Christian Ed  
10:30 Worship Service  
14:00 Community Chorale Christmas Concert  
Where: St. John's Episcopal Church

### Tue Dec 10, 2013

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours

### Wed Dec 11, 2013

11:30 Lunch-N-Learn  
Where: HyVee's Cafeteria  
15:30 Prayer group  
18:00 WoRM Wednesdays  
19:00 Confirmation Class Church

### Thu Dec 12, 2013

18:30 Grief Support

### Sat Dec 14, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

### Sun Dec 15, 2013

09:30 Adult Christian Ed  
10:30 Christmas Pageant  
14:00 Top Hatter's Dance Benefit  
Where: Fellowship Hall

### Tue Dec 17, 2013

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours  
18:00 Session Meeting

### Wed Dec 18, 2013

08:30 Keokuk Ministerial Association  
Where: Calvary Foursquare Church  
11:30 Lunch-N-Learn  
Where: HyVee's Cafeteria

15:30 Prayer group  
18:00 WoRM Wednesdays  
19:00 Confirmation Class

### Thu Dec 19, 2013

19:00 Quiet Christmas Service  
Where: Sanctuary

### Sat Dec 21, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

### Sun Dec 22, 2013

09:30 Adult Christian Ed  
10:30 Worship Service

### Tue Dec 24, 2013

14:00 Pastor's Office Hours  
19:00 Christmas Eve w/ communion  
Where: Sanctuary

### Wed Dec 25, 2013

08:00 Holiday (Christmas)

### Thu Dec 26, 2013

10:30 Food Pantry  
18:30 Grief Support

### Sat Dec 28, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

### Sun Dec 29, 2013

09:30 Adult Christian Ed  
10:30 Worship Service

### Tue Dec 31, 2013

14:00 Pastor's Office Hour

## December Birthdays

1	LeRoy Guymon
3	Tres Cannon
3	Michele Winston
4	Ray Scully
8	Bill Jutte
9	Ken Sallee
11	Mark Washburn
11	Alice Hawes
13	Johnna Erbes
16	Yvette Bliss
16	Eloise McWaters
27	Jared Altgilbers
30	Barbara Robertson



### **3 November 2013**

- Dena let us know that the youth groups will not be meeting this Wednesday evening.
- Dena also asked that we pray for K.J.'s sister, Marie, for quick and complete recovery from a heart attack.
- Ann invited us to celebrate World Community Day with Church Women United on Friday, at First Christian.
- Joann reminded everyone that the Silent Auction is coming up soon.
- Kim offered a prayer of praise for Uncle Marty's successful heart surgery.

### **10 November 2013**

- Randi asked us to hold Joe's family in prayer as they gather to say good-bye to his brother Michael.
- Randi also asked us to join in a prayer of praise for the new family that was formed when Andy Hall and Amber Terry were married yesterday.
- Please pray for families, as well as those who are separated from their loved ones.

### **17 November 2013**

- Ann offered a prayer for all the victims of the Philippines
- KJ offered a prayer of thanks for the help of his in-laws, getting the church ready for Amber's wedding.
- KJ also thanked Kim for updating the church sign out on the street.
- Dena let us know that Operation Christmas Child is coming to an end, and that we need to get boxes in next Sunday.
- Ray offered a prayer for Joe's family, as they grieve their brother's death, and Randi added a prayer for strength and comfort for his widow, Johanna.

### **24 November 2013**

- Randi reminded us that the holidays are not happy for many people, and invited us to extend an offer of hospitality to family, friends and neighbors to join us at church this Advent.
- Ann reminded us that Hanging of the Greens will take place December 1<sup>st</sup> and invited every one to stay after worship to share lunch and decorate the church.
- Joe offered thanks to the congregation for their prayers and condolences on Michael's death. He shared a praise to God for the peace and joy the family received being able to gather and say good-bye to their brother.
- Joann let us know that there are Thanksgiving cards to sign, which will be delivered to our home-bound members. She also encouraged people to get in on the Silent Auction while there is still time.
- Barb A. offered a praise for the birth of a new grandchild, Brody Jeremiah, and for his health. She also asked that we continue to pray for Jared's protection.
- Kim told us there are potted plants in the church in need of a caretaker or an adopted home. If you can provide either, please feel free to act.
- Dena asked that we continue to pray for K.J.'s sister and brother, Marie and Harry, as they deal with serious health issues.

Others on our prayer list: David Montgomery (healing); Bill Sapp (healing); tornado victims in Illinois.

Prayer requests are taken up by pastor and the prayer group every Wednesday, and anyone is welcome to join us. If you, a member of your family, a church member or friend is ill, hospitalized, or otherwise in need of prayer or pastoral care, please let the pastor know, (319) 520-6626.

We are stuffing **Stockings for Soldiers**, in partnership with DeJong-Greaves. Pick up a flyer on your way out – they list suggestions for appropriate stocking stuffers. Then bring your goodies back to the church before December 2nd, and the Deacons will take care of the rest – that’s all there is to it! Thank you in advance for your generosity.

There will be a **congregational meeting** at the close of the worship hour on Sunday, 8 December 2013, for the purpose of nominating and electing officers (deacons and ruling elders), as well as choosing at-large representatives to the 2014 nominating committee. All active members are entitled to vote, but you must be present at the meeting.

**PW and Living Waters for the World** are offering the Celtic Christmas music CD “*Legacy Christmas*” for a donation of \$15 or more, to raise funds for their important mission work. If you are interested, contact pastor.

Keokuk High School is hosting its annual **Christmas Dinner for Senior Citizens** on Tuesday, 10 Dec 2013. Check the bulletin board for details if you or a friend is interested in attending. There is no charge for the meal.

After much prayer and consideration, Session has decided to shift the focus of our local pantry mission. Beginning in January, we will partner with God’s Way, putting our primary emphasis on **personal hygiene and cleaning** products, such as body wash, toothpaste, toilet paper, and laundry soap. While these things aren’t glamorous, they’re very important to health and well-being, and often difficult to get. We’ll collect donations here on the first Sunday of the month (supplies or money), then transport them to God’s Way for distribution. Session extends sincere thanks for all the support that has been given to the Food Pantry over the years, and asks for your continued prayer and support as we sharpen our mission to address the unmet needs of our neighbors.

The weeks before Christmas can be the loneliest weeks of the year for many people. This Advent, we are offering a “**Quiet Christmas**” service of readings, prayer, and music on Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm, for those who may not feel “merry”, but need the comfort of Christ’s love very much. If you know someone who is need of healing and comfort, please let them know about the service.

The schedules for **worship helpers** are posted on the bulletin board in the narthex to help you keep track of your week to assist in worship. If you’re not on the list and would like to help out, let Rev. Randi know – we’ll be making a new schedule soon.

The **office is closed on Mondays**, which is pastor’s Sabbath day. If it can wait till Tuesday, leave a message on the church machine and she’ll get back to you. In the event of a pastoral emergency, though, don’t hesitate to call her cell phone, 319-520-6626.