



UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KEOKUK
The Church by the River

Volume 10 Issue 11

November 2013

RIVERSIDE CURRENT

From the Pastor's Desk

When we were much younger, my husband and I pursued the American dream with a vengeance. Like many of our contemporaries, we just assumed we could “have it all” – successful careers, thriving family, comfortable home, cars, vacations, and satisfying volunteer activities that made a *difference* in the world. This belief is so basic in our culture, we assume that NOT having a picture-perfect life kind of marks you as a loser. It was the piercing honesty of a child that finally shattered the delusion. I was trying to get the boys bathed and ready for bed. They were squabbling, each trying to provoke the other in ways that only siblings can, but when the water started flying around the room, I lost my cool and snapped at them both. Whereupon my 3-year old put his hands on his hips, screwed on his best “angry face”, and said, “Well, I’m sorry! **!** had a hard day today!”

His comment hit me like a ton of bricks, because up to that point in time, I absolutely knew that “having it all” would make us all happy, and yet there I was, faced with clear evidence to the contrary. Neuroscientists tell us that all new information coming into the brain has to be assessed and a decision made about how to handle it. If it fits with what we already know and believe – if it’s consonant with our experience – it may reinforce what we already thought, or it may just be discarded since it offers no new value. When the information is dissonant, however – when it contradicts something we believe to be true – it takes a lot of energy and brain work to process it, no matter what we ultimately do with the new idea: ignore it, deny it, or construct logical reasons to reject it. There is another possibility, of course, though in my experience it takes even MORE energy and creative thought to consider seriously that the old information we’ve been using to make decisions might not be complete or entirely correct.

The problem with my son’s challenge was not that career, home, and financial security were bad, because they’re not. The difficulty arose because I had allowed those things to trump a much deeper, more fundamentally-held truth – that love is the purpose for which God created us. I didn’t do it consciously, of course, but the contradiction was there all the same, just waiting to be pointed out to me. I thought I knew all about the selfless love of God in Christ. Why, I could have recited *all* the right Bible verses for you, but I don’t think I really began to understand it, even a little bit, until I was confronted with the idea that **!** might need to sacrifice something in my life, for the sake of someone I loved. Change like that is for the brave of heart, and yet that is exactly what Christ calls us to – transformed lives, changed from the inside out.

You know, I’m pretty sure God had been sending me the message that “love wins” a long time before my brain was able to recognize it and decide to work through it rather than dodge it. But when I finally did, it was no longer possible to keep doing the same thing hoping for a different result. Within a year, we changed our lives in some pretty radical ways. Joe decided to stay home with the kids full-time, so we could focus on nurturing those strong, family relationships of love and respect we believe God calls us to, and I took on the role of sole provider for a while, to enable all that to happen. I probably wouldn’t suggest what we did to anybody else, for I can assure you it was terrifying, but it was also the right way for us to move forward. Our faith grew deeper, and stronger, because we were willing to re-learn something we already knew in a new way, and to be changed by it.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

Praising God always, in all ways!

Church Calendar November 2013

Fri Nov 1, 2013

13:00 Church Women United
Where: First Christian, 3476 Main St.
17:00 Rehearsal Hall-Terry Wedding
Where: Sanctuary / Fellowship Hall

Sat Nov 2, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours
15:00 Hall-Terry Wedding

Sun Nov 3, 2013

09:30 Adult Christian Ed
10:30 Worship Service

Tue Nov 5, 2013

10:30 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Nov 6, 2013

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

Sat Nov 9, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Sun Nov 10, 2013

08:00 Silent Auction begins
09:30 Adult Christian Ed
10:30 Worship Service

Tue Nov 12, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Nov 13, 2013

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

Thu Nov 14, 2013

18:30 Grief Support

Sat Nov 16, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours
09:30 Deacon's Meeting

Sun Nov 17, 2013

09:30 Adult Christian Ed
10:30 Worship Service

Tue Nov 19, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours
18:00 Session Meeting

Wed Nov 20, 2013

08:30 Keokuk Ministerial Association
Where: Bethany Baptist Church
11:30 Lunch-N-Learn
Where: HyVee's Cafeteria
15:30 Prayer group

18:00 WoRM Wednesdays
19:00 Confirmation Class

Thu Nov 21, 2013

10:30 Food Pantry

Sat Nov 23, 2013

08:30 Called Meeting
Presbytery of East Iowa
Where: First Presbyterian Church,
2701 Rochester Avenue, Iowa City,
IA 52245

Sun Nov 24, 2013 – Christ the King

09:30 Adult Christian Ed
10:30 Worship Service w/ Communion
19:00 Community Thanksgiving Service
Where: First Baptist Church

Tue Nov 26, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

Wed Nov 27, 2013

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

Thu Nov 28, 2013

08:00 Holiday (Thanksgiving)

Sat Nov 30, 2013

09:00 Pastor's Office Hours

November Birthdays

1 Steve Swan
3 Gracie Briscoe
6 Tom King
19 Verna White
21 Kaylee Mahannah
22 Meg McGhghy
29 Mike Mauzy
Kylie Miller
30 Steve Dunn

November Anniversaries

7 Rebecca Bliss & Mike Mauzy
15 Fred & Jana Hausch
26 Bill & Sarah Shaffer



6 October 2013

- Randi let us know Marianna is recovering from her surgery, but would still appreciate our prayers as healing and then reconstructive surgery proceed.
- Kim lifted thanks for the awesome group of children that we have, and the blessing that teaching Sunday School this morning was. She encouraged others to volunteer to help read Bible stories to the children – they are a very appreciative audience!
- KJ offered a prayer of thanks for Joe's help in patching the leaks in the belfry.
- Joann let us know that 19 families were helped at the food pantry this last week, and thanked the church for their support of this important mission work in our town.
- Randi reminded us to bring bread to share for World Communion Sunday next week, and Joann added that it would help the food pantry a lot if we could each bring in an extra loaf.

13 October 2013

- Please pray for those who have no work to do this week through circumstances beyond their control
- Please pray for those of our congregation who are ill and separated from the community
- Please pray for the Nominating Committee as they do their work considering candidates for elders and deacons
- Please pray for the churches in our presbytery and for the Spirit's guidance as they work together.

20 October 2013

- Ray asked us to pray for Matthew, that he makes it through his job training program and succeeds at the job
- Barb A. asked that we keep her mom, Beth, in prayer as she struggles with pain issues
- Barb also asked us to pray for our church, that we work together and tell people the good things that are going on here
- Please pray for the churches in our presbytery and for the Spirit's guidance as they work together.

27 October 2013

- Thank God for the blessings in your life and the life of our church. Think about the lessons God has taught us, the times God has forgiven us and loved us, no matter what.
- Please pray for the members of our church who are ill and in need of physical healing.
- Please pray for the children who come to our church, and for the adults who are teaching them about Jesus.

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.

The congregation is cordially invited to attend the **wedding** of Amber Terry and Andy Hall on Saturday, November 2 at 3:00 pm. Reception to follow at Meyer's Courtyard.



Operation Christmas Child is well underway, and it's easy to participate! Pick up a shoe box, fill it with toys, school supplies, and other gifts for a needy boy or girl. Boxes go to children around the world, and our goal this year is contribute 25 boxes. Or, if you'd prefer, you could help by donating the cost of postage for one or more boxes (\$7 per shoe box). With all of us working together, we can make a big difference! Boxes are due back by November 17th.

United's **Silent Auction** to raise funds for the Tri-State Scholarship and the Food Pantry begins November 10th and runs through December 8th. You may bring in gift items, arts & crafts, other goods, or services to be donated to the auction this year any time. If there should be a minimum bid for specific items, please let us know, and start talking to your friends and neighbors about "shopping" with us! We will post photos of the items on the church's Facebook page if you can't make it to the church to look at the items in person. Search for "United Presbyterian Church of Keokuk" in Facebook, or follow the link directly from the church's web site at www.churchbytheriver.net If you need additional information, talk to Joann Cramer or Cindy Dunn.

Advent begins the first Sunday in December. Look for your Advent devotional materials to arrive the week of Thanksgiving, and plan to stay for soup and sandwiches after worship on December 1st as we decorate the sanctuary for the holiday season.

United Presbyterian Church is now part of the Presbyterian Mission Exchange, which provides us a safe, user-friendly way to accept on-line donations. The small transaction fee goes to support mission work of the church, rather than into the profits of a private bank, so it's a good deal in more ways than one. You can check it out on the church's web page, <http://www.churchbytheriver.net/make-donations>, which will take you directly to the exchange.

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