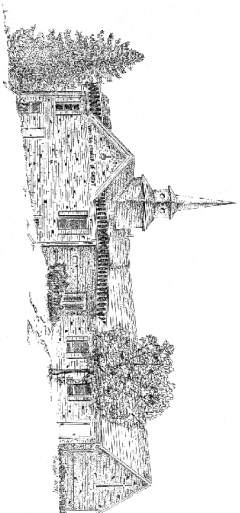


# THE INFORMER

LARCHWOOD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

FEBRUARY, 2012

Visit Our Church's Website at: [www.larchwooducc.org](http://www.larchwooducc.org)



## Pastor's Page

Each winter I take a deep breath and steady myself a bit... I am not preparing for the snow and the cold, but rather for Lent. For many folks Lent is that bothersome fuzz that you must clean out of your dryer vent, but for those of us in the church Lent is the long season of preparation for Easter. Centuries ago, church leaders decided that Easter is such a big and important event in the life of a Christian that we cannot possibly arrive at that day fully prepared unless we spend some time in prayer and study, so was born the season of Lent.

Lent is not the happiest of seasons, so it is not particularly a favorite among many church-goers. The tone is a bit mellow, and low, since we are supposed to be praying more and trying to repent of our sins during the season. Even I will agree that six weeks is rather long to torture myself thinking about my sins! But those six weeks can also be a growing time, a time to explore new spiritual possibilities and, instead of only thinking about sin, to make some extra time to pray and to experience a new way to serve God. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, this year: February 22. We will gather for worship and the imposition of ashes in the sanctuary at 7 PM. For the five Wednesdays following, we will gather at 6:30 for a light supper and then a worship experience in the Fellowship Hall. This year, our worship will be guided each week by a different hymn. We will "Sing Our Faith" and explore the ways our hymns shape our faith and understanding. These worship services are designed to be informal and even enjoyable for all ages. If you have never attended, please try them out—you just might enjoy yourself, which is pretty good for Lent!

The season of Lent can become a little long and the emotional ups and downs of Holy Week can be draining, but if you spend some time in prayer and preparation you just might arrive at Easter feeling spiritually refreshed.

See you in worship—

Pastor Kelly



The holy season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22. We will gather for worship at 7 PM in the sanctuary. This service includes the imposition of ashes.

### **Are you interested in the 2012 Mission Trip?**

Come to church on Thursday, February 16 at 7 PM to discuss where in the world Larchwood UCC will go this summer ...



Lenten Soup & Service begins on Wednesday, February 29 at 6:30 PM. Come each Wednesday during Lent for a light meal and an informal, family friendly worship service in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like to help host the meal look for the sign-up sheets at church. The theme for this year's Lenten Services is: We Sing our Faith. Each service will use a hymn to guide our worship.

Plan to bring your family to church on the Wednesdays during Lent and you will have supper and a worship service all in an hour!

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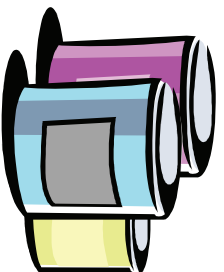
# February Birthdays



2-2	Harlan Maurer
2-3	Norma Maurer
2-4	Cole Koch
2-5	Jerry Maurer
2-7	Bard Brown
2-7	John Sanderson
2-9	Michelle Sanderson
2-11	Carla Manning
2-12	Luella Vosburg
2-18	Mike Burgers
2-23	Isaac Koch
2-24	Nicholas Kellenberger
2-24	Joel Middleden
2-25	Kaitlynn Hess
2-25	Avery Moser
2-27	Evan Taggart



On Saturday, February 11 there will be a Sweetheart Dinner at church at 6 PM. This dinner is a fund raiser for the Dancers Against Cancer Team, raising money for the American Cancer Society, Relay for Life. The meal will be served to your party at your table and there will also be a silent auction. Please make reservations before the event with Jill Funke or Kelly Volk. The cost of the meal is a free will offering at the door. This is a perfect night to treat your sweetheart or even your whole family and do something wonderful to help fight against cancer! Don't forget to call Jill or Kelly to make your reservations!



The Food Pantry has been well used this winter! Did you know that during November and December we had over 60 visits?! And because of your generosity and the generosity of this community, we had plenty of food to share. But now the shelves are low and we could use your help. If you are able to bring something, these are the items especially needed: Hamburger Helper, canned tuna or chicken, peanut butter, spaghetti sauce, macaroni & cheese, boxed potatoes, cereal, flavored rice mixes, canned fruit. Thank you for feeding the hungry!

## February Lectionary:

**Sunday, February 5:**

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:21-31

Psaln: Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

Epistle: I Corinthians 9:16-23

Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

**Sunday, February 12:**

Old Testament: II Kings 5:1-14

Psaln: Psalm 30

Epistle: I Corinthians 9:24-27

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

**Sunday, February 19:**

Old Testament: II Kings 2:1-12

Psaln: Psalm 50:1-6

Epistle: II Corinthians 4:3-6

Gospel: Mark 9:2-9

**Sunday, February 26:**

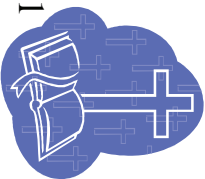
**First Sunday in Lent**

Old Testament: Genesis 9:8-17

Psaln: Psalm 25:1-10

Epistle: I Peter 3:18-22

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15



## Serving in Worship:



### Greeters:

Sunday, February 5: Al & Sandra Knobloch

Sunday, February 12: Al & Sandra Knobloch

Sunday, February 19: Bob & Deb Moser

Sunday, February 26: Bob & Deb Moser

### Fellowship Hosts:

Sunday, February 5: Fellowship Committee

Sunday, February 12: Marlys Snyders &

Marilyn Van Ash

Sunday, February 19:

Sunday, February 26: Pam Steen & Melinda Moser

**February Candle Lighters:** Taylor Warner &

Landon Moser

**February Reader:** Barb Maurer

**February Ushers:** Les Manning, Chris Viereck &

Janelle Viereck

### Adult Study

continues for the first

three Sundays in

February in the



sanctuary at 11 AM. Enjoy a bit of Fellowship time and then come to the sanctuary for an engaging class. It is OK if you miss a Sunday—each lesson stands alone and there is no preparation or reading required.



The Church Council requests that each committee hold a meeting before February 7, please. Don't forget to tell Pastor Kelly about your meeting!



## Is This the Church of My Heart?

February, in some ways, is the season of the heart, with Valentine's Day providing an opportunity to tell those we love just how much we care about them. We send gifts, cards, and flowers to let them know that they occupy a special place in our hearts.

But love is something that is always "in season," and it needs to be expressed, day in and day out. That includes love for our church. Many of us have grown up in the United Church of Christ: we know its history, its traditions, and its "feel" from having breathed the air of this great denomination all of our lives. Others among us have come to the United Church of Christ from a "far way off," having searched for a church home that offers extravagant hospitality, a bold witness, and, for many, a safe haven. Here, in this faith community, we learn from one another, we worship God together, we follow Jesus more closely than we would alone.

Whether we have claimed the United Church of Christ as our home all of our lives and only in recent years, there comes a time to look at the gift of both the local church and the wider church, their mission and witness, their ministries of caring and outreach, their faithfulness and welcome, and ask ourselves, "Is this the church of my heart?" Faith itself is truly the way of the heart as much or more than the way of the mind. Offering our hearts leads to deeper faith and a closer walk with God, in the good company of so many others who are also "on the way." Let us give thanks for all we have received, and for all we hope to become, together!

## Seminary Scholarships for Church Vocations

One of the most cherished features of the United Church of Christ has been rigorous practical and academic preparation for people seeking church vocations, whether as pastors, chaplains, administrators, or educators. Today, that tradition continues through scholarships made available through our national ministries.

Linda Jaramillo, a 2002 grant recipient, was raised a Catholic and came to the UCC over 20 years ago. She says, "As a lay woman in the United Church of Christ, I feel respected, I feel honored and I feel heard. I have hope for the United Church of Christ to become the multi-racial, multicultural, open and affirming, accessible-to-all church that it seeks to be. And I really do believe that this will happen in my lifetime." Linda has been helping it happen, serving on several national boards of directors over the years. And today, the Rev. Linda Jaramillo is the Executive Minister of our national Justice and Witness Ministries for the United Church of Christ.

**Each congregation's contribution to Our Church's Wider Mission helps provide for the administration of precious scholarship funds that prepare church leaders to guide us into God's future.**

## February Calendar of Prayer

**2/2/2011**

The question of immigration reform is an emotional issue, and that is exactly why Algonquin UCC of the Illinois Conference scheduled a mission trip to Postville and Decorah – the site of Immigration raids at a meat processing plant in 2009. One of the participants wrote of being deeply moved: "I went on the trip to Postville and Decorah with my mind pretty much made up about the il-legal immigrant. However after hearing about the immigration raid and seeing the awesome commitment of the folk in both places my mind and heart was changed. What an awesome experience!" Hearing from people who have been involved in the aftermath of the raid, learning of the efforts to help the women and children left behind and knowing the emotional pain of those who have been detained and are awaiting trial is a life changing experience.

**2/10/2011**

The best way to learn about being in mission is to go to the source. Global Ministries has created a resource with a series of missionary interviews, available online at <http://globalministries.org/resources/multimedia-resources/in-dex/>. One of those interviews is with Lisa and Steve Smith, former missionaries to Germany, who speak about 'Berlin, Before and After the Wall'. The Smiths give churches in Germany well deserved credit for their role in the peaceful revolution which took place in Germany before the wall came down in 1989. In their estimation, the actions of German churches deserves the same kind of re-spect and reverence afforded to other peacemakers, such as Gandhi. After the wall came down, these same churches have done a good job of looking at their past honestly and trying to heal the injustices perpetrated on German citizens.

**2/15/2011**

Children are the future. At Inanda Seminary in South Africa, that future is being made more secure through the school's success in nurturing its students. The school was founded in 1869 by American Congregationalist missionaries and is now administered by the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), a partner of the United Church of Christ. Part of Inanda's success stems from their belief in developing the whole child – socially, intellectually, physically and spiritually – and in upholding six core values; honesty, respect, responsibility, loyalty, self-discipline and sociability. While the future is important, so is the preservation of tradition and the past. The students at Inanda Seminary know the balance of holding the future in one hand and carrying their culture, stories and traditions in the other. There are 392 female students whose future is brighter and whose families have made an important investment both for their financial stability and for the preservation of future generations.

**2/21/2011**

"Let me see your papers" is a sentence one might expect to hear in a movie about Nazi Germany – not spoken by an officer of the law on the streets of a city in Arizona. SB 1070, signed into law on April 23, 2010 by Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer, made unlawful presence a state crime and required police to question those they suspect of having questionable immigration status. Members of the Southwest Conference sent an open letter to President Obama and two cabinet members saying, in part, "It is legislation such as this that codifies racial profiling and creates an atmosphere of suspicion, hatred, and scapegoating of immigrants and U.S citizens." The Conference and other racial justice groups call for comprehensive immigration reform that will focus on justice and move the country forward, "striving to be our best selves, not our lowest selves," said UCC minister for racial justice Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson.

*PRAYER: O God most holy, in Jesus Christ you have laid a foundation upon which to build our lives. Help us to follow your perfect law of love, that we may fulfill it and observe it to the end. Amen.*

***UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST***  
**CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**January 2, 2012**

Present: Pastor Kelly, Kevin Munger, Lanny Steen, Janelle Viereck, Melinda Moser, Barb Maurer, Bob Moser and Rich Jensen.  
Lanny Steen called the meeting to order.

Pastor Kelly opened the meeting with devotions and a prayer was given.

The September minutes were reviewed and approved. Bob made the motion to approve and Barb seconded the motion.

The Financial Report was reviewed with motion to approve by Janelle and seconded by Bob.

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

There were no committee meetings during the month of December.

## OLD BUSINESS

Janelle acquired the needed paperwork to complete to update the Church's non-profit status. Janelle and Pastor Kelly will work on this.

Janelle will check with the Church's insurance why they did not pay the complete bill to replace shingles on parsonage. Shingles & labor costs totaled \$7,743.36. Insurance paid a total of \$6,851.22 in 2 checks. This left a balance of \$892.14 unpaid by insurance.

Janelle had new Job Description completed for each committee in the Church. These will be distributed to the Chairperson of each committee. Janelle did a very good job on this.

## NEW BUSINESS

The Annual Meeting will be held Sunday January 22, 2012 following the Church service. A meal will be provided.

## PASTOR KELLY'S TIME

Pastor Kelly distributed a list of her accomplishments for December. This included 32 visits to the food pantry in December.

The Iowa UCC Conference has offered matching funds to be applied for and used for mission trips. The Council agreed it would be beneficial for our Church to apply for these matching funds. The application to apply has to be submitted no later than the end of January. Pastor Kelly will take care of completing this paperwork.

Sunday School for the children will start next Sunday. There will also be adult Sunday School starting next Sunday and will go on for 5 to 6 weeks.

Pastor Kelly has invited all current Council members and their spouses to her house for a supper to thank Council members for their work on the Council this past year.

A thank you was extended to Lanny Steen and Bob Moser for their work on the Council. Both Lanny and Bob's time on the Council ended with the January Council meeting. New Council members will be Jodi Langenhorst and Debbie Moser. New Church Council chairperson will be Melinda Moser.

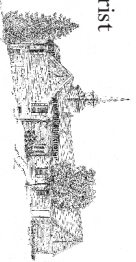
A motion was made by Melinda and seconded by Barb to adjourn.

The next Church Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Barbara Maurer, Church Council Member acting as Clerk.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Club JAM 3:45-5	2	3	4
5 Worship 9:30 Holy Communion Sunday School 10:45 Adult Study 11	6	7	8 Club JAM 3:45-5	9	10	11 Sweetheart Dinner for Relay for Life 6 PM @ church 
12 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Adult Study 11 Youth Group	13	14 Happy Valentine's Day! 	15 Club JAM 3:45-5	16	17	18
19 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Adult Study 11	20	21	22 Club JAM 3:45-5  Ash Wednesday Worship 7PM	23	24	25
26 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:45	27	28	29 LEAP! Club JAM 3:45-5 Lenten Soup & Service 6:30 PM			
Newsletter Deadline						

United Church of Christ  
P. O. Box 25  
Larchwood, IA



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