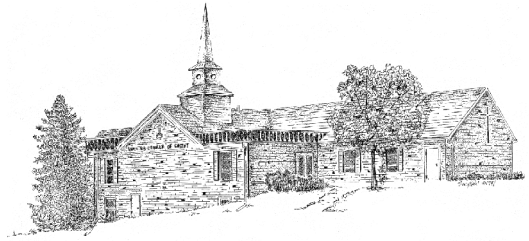


THE INFORMER

LARCHWOOD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MARCH, 2012



Visit Our Church's Website at: www.larchwooducc.org



Pastor's Page

I usually write my own article for the front page of the newsletter, but many times someone else says so much better the very thing I am thinking and it is always good to know when to let someone else speak. So this month I will share the words of one of my favorite poets and writers of liturgy, Ann Weems:

The Walk

Those of us who walk along this road
do so reluctantly.

Lent is not our favorite time of year.

We'd rather be more active—
planning and scurrying around.

All this is too contemplative to suit us.

Besides, we don't know what to do
with piousness and prayer.

Perhaps we're afraid to have time to think,
for thoughts come unbidden.

Perhaps we're afraid to face our future
knowing our past.

Give us courage, O God,
to hear your word

and to read our living into it.

Give us the trust to know we're forgiven,
and give us the faith

to take up our lives and walk.

Don't be afraid of the quiet, prayerfulness of Lent. Try facing it head-on and you may discover the strange and quiet beauty of it.

Peace, Pastor Kelly

The Season of Lent is a time to explore our faith and spend some extra time with God. Come each Wednesday evening in March and spend some time in worship singing your faith. Lenten Soup and Service begins at 6:30 PM with a light soup supper, worship begins around 7 PM.



The Fellowship Committee invites everyone to enjoy a fun Sunday afternoon on Sunday, March 18. First enjoy a meal at Pizza Ranch in Brandon @ noon and then Bowling just down the street. This is an afternoon the whole family can enjoy! Don't miss it!



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March Birthdays



3-3	Bobbie Kerkvliet
3-6	Jody Langenhorst
3-8	Jessica Timmer
3-8	Rod Bonander
3-9	Lee Rath
3-12	Chris Viereck
3-14	Mavis Maurer
3-14	Janelle Viereck
3-14	Dale Nielsen
3-16	Tyren Ulmer
3-19	Jacob Munger
3-19	Cory Viereck
3-23	Lanny Steen
3-23	Blake Steen
3-24	Lannie Bonander
3-31	Bobbi Jo Poppens



Your pastor apologizes because this Thank You should have been included in the February newsletter, but it was hidden under a pile on her desk—oops! The letter is from Preventive Health Strategies, which was the recipient of our Christmas Eve offering. The full letter is posted on the bulletin board in the church entry:

Dear Members of Larchwood United Church of Christ:

Thank you so much for your generous donation to Preventive Health Strategies. The PHS Team will return to Haiti November 30th this year. PHS team will ensure that all have received food and shelter relief, as well as counseling and medical care. A clinic is set up under tents on the grounds in Port-au-Prince as well as Ti-Riviere, and staff—with their family members—have the opportunity to sit with a doctor, a nurse and a counselor, to be heard and cared for and relieved of some of their pain.

It is going to be a long road to recovery and our teams of water engineers, architects, doctors, logisticians, counselors and managers are mapping out the transitional and long-term programming that fits with the needs and context for people to rebuild their lives. We'll be sure to share those updates and stories with you.

In the meantime, thank you for making this possible and please keep the people of Haiti in your thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

Annette Bosworth, MD

The Pastoral Relations committee met with five members in attendance: Pastor Kelly Volk, Lanny Steen, April Steen, Darcy Grotewold and Don Eiesland.

Four items that were discussed are as follows:

1. **Streamlining the Food Pantry operation.**
2. **Streamlining the newsletter operation.**
3. **Bolstering Lenten Service attendance.**
4. **Feedback from the congregation to Pastor Kelly via the Card feedback method.**

All these items can be accomplished by (NOT MONEY) but a token amount of time by members of our congregation.

There will be an informative speech by a member or members of the committee on a Sunday very soon.

Serving in Worship:**Greeters:**

Sunday, March 4: Damon & Jody Langenhorst & Family

Sunday, March 11: Damon & Jody Langenhorst & Family

Sunday, March 18: Chris & Janelle Viereck

Sunday, March 25: Chris & Janelle Viereck

Fellowship Hosts:

Sunday, March 4: Fellowship Committee

Sunday, March 11:

Sunday, March 18:

Sunday, March 25: Paula & Deb Moser

March Candle Lighters: Shelby Kellenberger & Riley Sanderson

March Reader:

March Ushers: Paul Koch, Josh Koch, Nick Koch

Thank you for serving your church.

**March****Lectionary:****Sunday, March 4:****Second Sunday in Lent**

Old Testament: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalm: Psalm 22:23-31

Epistle: Romans 4:13-25

Gospel: Mark 8:31-38

Sunday, March 11:**Third Sunday in Lent**

Old Testament: Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm: Psalm 19

Epistle: I Corinthians 1:18-25

Gospel: John 2:13-22

Sunday, March 18:**Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Old Testament: Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-33

Epistle: Ephesians 2:1-10

Gospel: John 3:14-21

Sunday, March 25:**Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Old Testament: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm: Psalm 51:1-12

Epistle: Hebrews 5:5-10

Gospel: John 12:20-33



Rejoice in God's Vision

Is the realm of God a place? Or is it a vision?

A holy place can easily become a fortress, from which many are forcibly excluded. But a holy vision is large enough to include all who would embrace it. Our mission in the United Church of Christ is to lift high a holy vision, so that everyone can see it—and, seeing it, rejoice in their hearts.

That is the purpose and the meaning United Church of Christ Statement of Mission:

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called and commit ourselves. . .

To praise God, confess our sin, and joyfully accept God's forgiveness; To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our suffering world;

To embody God's love for all people;

To hear and give voice to Creation's cry for justice and peace;

To name and confront the powers of evil within and among us;

To repent our silence and complicity with the forces of chaos and death;

To preach and teach with the power of the Living Word;

To join oppressed and troubled people in the struggle for liberation;

To work for justice, healing, and wholeness of life;

To embrace the unity of Christ's church;

To discern and celebrate the present and coming reign of God.

One Great Hour of Sharing

The Ikengo Agriculture and Training Center, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of many programs supported by our gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

Participants in the training are taught how to raise and care for pigs and chickens. At the end of the training, they are given the animals to raise and breed and eventually sell to others in their community. More families in the community are thus able to earn a living and feed their children.

In addition to working with animals, Ikengo Agriculture Center provides direction on growing vegetables and fruits. A special growing project is offered just for women, who plant, tend, and harvest crops, all the while learning new skills and techniques that will help them in their own gardens. Upon completion of the training program, the women are given small hand tools for gardening, along with seeds and cuttings from the very plants that they cared for while at the Training Center.

One Great Hour of Sharing invests your gifts in hands-on, practical training and assistance. With One Great Hour of Sharing, a little goes a long way. Please be as generous as you are able, but know that gifts of any amount are needed and welcomed.

One Great Hour of Sharing

"To be a refugee is the most horrible feeling, because you lose your family, you lose your home, and you're also without an identity. Suddenly you're a nothing. You're just reliant on other people's good natures and help and understanding."

Inge Sadan, one of the survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, speaks for many of the twenty-five million people in the world today who have been forced to flee from their homes and communities because of persecution, war, and famine. What can we as American Christians do in response?

First, we can ask God to open our hearts to these hurting men, women, and children. Let us never forget that Jesus calls each of them by name, and loves every one of them. Then we can resolve to help them. With our gifts, Church World Service can help provide for the immediate needs of refugee families: waterproof tents and ground cloths; blankets; food and water; and life-saving medicine. Relief supplies like those are indispensable. But they are not enough.

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With our gifts through Our Church's Wider Mission, we can also provide something else that people cannot live without: hope. Hope comes to people only when they know they won't be forgotten. Let us not stop giving until all of the world's refugees have returned to their homes or resettled in safe new communities.

Making Room for God

Lent is a good time to reflect on the deep meaning of the word "sacrifice." The root words for sacrifice are "to make sacred," and that's exactly what we do with our lives when we choose to give up, or to offer, one thing for the sake of another. When we share our time and our love generously, our families grow stronger.

When we share our talents and our wisdom generously, our churches and our communities grow stronger. When we share our treasure and God's gifts generously, the relationships we have even with strangers grow stronger, and the world is transformed.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in more than eighty countries.



The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, and advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response. When you hear on the news that there has been an earthquake, tornado, hurricane--usually the first money sent comes from One Great Hour of Sharing.

The OGHS offering will be collected on Sunday, March 18 during worship. Offering envelopes can be found on the usher's table at the back of the sanctuary.

Happy St. Patrick's Day

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
February 7th, 2012

Present: Pastor Kelly, Rich Jensen, Debbie Moser, Jody Langenhorst, Barb Maurer, Melinda Moser, Kevin Munger, Janelle Viereck.

Melinda Moser called the meeting to order.

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

The January minutes were reviewed and approved. Rich made the motion to approve and Debbie seconded the motion.

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

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Christian Ed is meeting tonight so no minutes yet.

Stewardship/Evangelism committee met and assigned monthly speakers & they will have a monthly article in the newsletter.

Memorial Committee met and divided up the responsibilities; discussed a large painting project which would include 4 various rooms; they checked out some table cloth samples; they also discussed having people order Lillies for Easter.

Pastoral Relations also met sometime this past month.

Fellowship Committee met and did some high level planning for the year. Some outings discussed were Pizza & Bowling on March 18th; Easter Breakfast in April; Wednesday night golf outing in June; Pizza & trip to the Zoo in September. They talked about a plan to keep the kitchen supplies full and the possibility of three upcoming wedding showers.

Communion Servers did not meet but Janel put together a schedule for preparing and serving for the whole year.

We discussed the fact that there is still an open spot on **Diaconate Board** and Kelly agreed to put it in the bulletin for the next few weeks to see if we can get a volunteer.

OLD BUSINESS

RIVERBOAT FOUNDATION TRAINING MEETING & NON-PROFIT STATUS

-KELLY, JANELLE, CHRIS, AND ANN ATTENDED THE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 1ST AT WEST LYON SCHOOL TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GRANT PROGRESS. IT WAS VERY INFORMATIVE AND CONFIRMED THAT WE NEED A FEDERAL IRS NON-PROFIT DETERMINATION LETTER AND CURRENT IOWA SECRETARY OF STATE CERTIFICATE OF STANDING WITH THE GRANT APPLICATION. THE COUNCIL FEELS THIS IS A BIG JOB AND WE SHOULD START DOING SOME OF THE GROUND WORK NOW, BUT WE WOULD ALSO SEEK THE APPROVAL OF THE CONGREGATION BEFORE ACTUALLY MOVING FORWARD WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS.

INSURANCE FOR PARSONAGE ROOF – UNDER PAID BY \$892.

-DISCOVERED THAT WE WERE DOUBLE CHARGED FOR THE RIDGE. LARCO CHARGED US FOR THEM AND SO DID LARCHWOOD LUMBER. WE WERE CREDITED \$329.56 FOR THE RIDGE BY LARCHWOOD LUMBER. THE ONLY OTHER DISCREPANCY FOUND WAS THAT LARCO CHARGED US TO INSTALL 30 SQUARES OF SHINGLES, HOWEVER LARCHWOOD LUMBER SOLD US 34 SQUARES AND THERE IS NO RECORD OF RETURN OF THE OTHER 4 SQUARES. (3 BUNDLES IN A SQUARE @ \$28 A BUNDLE) JANELLE TALKED TO TERRY @ LARCO AND HE WAS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT ROOF WOULD NOT TAKE 34 SQUARES AND IT WAS ESTIMATED BY THE INSURANCE COMPANY THAT IT WAS 27 SQUARES. IF INDEED THOSE WERE RETURNED THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A CREDIT OF \$336 PLUS TAX. JANELLE HAS BEEN WORKING WITH LARCHWOOD LUMBER BUT HAS NOT HEARD BACK FROM JEFF YET. NEED TO FOLLOW UP ONE MORE TIME TO SEE IF WE CAN GET A FINAL RESOLUTION.

NEW BUSINESS

Lighting at the end of the steps -It was brought to our attention at the Annual Meeting that the lighting is scarce at the bottom of the steps and railing out front of the church. We agreed that this is a hazard and discussed a couple options. We thought we should seek the advice of an electrician to see what our options and the cost would be.

Community Garden -Lyle Impehoven, Lee Rath, and Dave Childress met with Kelly to discuss the possibility of doubling the size of the Community Garden. The existing plot would still be designated for the food pantry but they are proposing that they double the size and the new half would be divided into 8 small plots for people to adopt. They would plant, care for, and harvest with a small weed deposit that would be returned as long as they keep the weeds under control throughout the year. They would announce this opportunity to the community through the city office via a letter with utility bills giving everyone a fair shot at the plots. The council did have questions about where the water would come from and Kelly said possibly the church but also they discussed getting this from the city. The council would like to see them get a separate hydrant if possible. Kelly did confirm that although they used our water last year, it was not noticeable on our utility bill. She will check on that.

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PASTOR KELLY'S TIME

Pastor Kelly distributed a list of her accomplishments for January.

Food Pantry usage: 26 visits

Kelly received a check from Land O Lakes and Farmer's Elevator for a total of \$4000 for the Food Pantry.

Kelly requested 2 weeks of vacation following Easter, April 9th – 22nd. This was approved by the council. Kelly will get pulpit supply.

Rich asked if there is anything we should do to remind the church members of the Lenten services. It was decided that Rich will send an email to everyone on Feb. 21st as a reminder for Ash Wednesday service and Janelle will set up a phonevite reminder for February 28th to remind everyone of the first Lenten Soup Supper/Service.

The next Church Council meeting will be held Tuesday, March 6th at 6:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Janelle and seconded by Debbie to adjourn.

Janelle Viereck, Church Council Member acting as Clerk.



Good Morning.

I am a member of the stewardship committee here in church. Our intentions are to bring to you a brief message or story usually around the third Sunday every month as a brief reminder of our goals to support this ministry through our weekly giving and maybe a bit of guidance for those who would like to contribute in other ways.

I would like to start by telling you another little story about that 8-year old boy in the old Lutheran church in Lester back in the late fifties sometime. The year is approximately 1959 and I had made it that far in my life and somewhat grateful for having done so. With 6 brothers and 2 sisters, all older, you just never know. The Reverend Wolffram was still in the pulpit, preaching & teaching as best he could about the Bible and the importance of what it had to say.

As you remember, my brother Alan and I had, at times, a fondness for trying to skip Sunday school by sneaking out of the church and heading downtown (about 4 blocks), this time to buy a candy bar (a cherry bing) from the tall scary man behind the counter in the only establishment to be open on early Sunday morning in Lester. That tall scary man was Slim Marnette, for those of you who never met Slim, to me he was the twin of spooky, character actor David Carradine. The establishment was Slim's Saloon, bar and counter in the front, pool table in the back, out of sight from the passersby.

Back at the church, the collection plate was passing by and when it passed in front of Alan, I saw him reach up and put a coin in the collection plate and it made a slight clinking sound. When I saw his coin in there it was a dime. My mother had given us each a quarter to put in this Sunday and I was in awe how he had made change somewhere and probably was planning ahead for the trip downtown to Slim's. Cherry Bings were only a nickel then. In one deft and skillful move I made my attempt to put my quarter in the plate and at the last second I decided to take out a dime and a nickel as change. This move had never been seen before in our church and judging from the look on my Mom's face, it would never be seen again. Yes, you guessed it, turned to stone by just a gaze. The usher continued to hold the plate in front of me and I somehow released my grip and the dime and nickel fell back in. There went the trip to Slim's. This is the second thing that I had done in my short life that was completely unique to me. I have many vivid and fond memories of that little church.

Please continue to support this church as best you can, that church closed a few years later, a victim of dwindling weekly giving and a division amongst the members about joining the Missouri Synod. Even a small amount in our collection plate will make a big difference.

Jerry Maurer

March Calendar of Prayer

March 5, 2012

There are no borders or boundaries that we cannot bridge with love and support. The Southern California Nevada Conference bridged the Mexican/U.S. border with their 2011 Annual Gathering Hygiene Supplies Mission Project. SCNC Board Moderator Paul Tellstrom wrote about the board's planning meeting in the main hall of the Romero Center – a ministry that connects people on both sides of the border to facilitate dialogue and understanding. During the meeting, the SCNC got the idea for collecting hygiene kits for families on the other side of the border. "If you were sleeping outside on the other side of the border, feeling unsafe and hungry, what would you want to have?" Tellstrom asked. Church members brought items to the Annual Gathering. Conference youth were involved in packing the kits and bringing them to the altar at a Saturday morning worship service singing, "We are called to act with jus-tice. We are called to love tenderly. We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God."

March 14, 2012

In a write-up featured on the UCC Web, Cally Rogers-Witte asks us to "contrast any welcoming local church with the municipalities and states in our country that have recently voted to close their doors to undocu-mented immigrants. Many states are passing laws to make it illegal to rent an apartment to a family without proper papers, or to transport a sick person to a hospital if that person is undocumented." She asks each of us, "How hospitable are we? Will your local church offer to spon-sor a refugee family who has fled Iraq? Will we speak up for immigrant rights?" "

March 19, 2012

"We are the Body of Christ sitting patiently on the curb and bringing hope to a little boy with sparkling eyes," said Elena Huegel, a Global Ministries missionary who serves the Pentecostal Church of Chile. Three days after the fifth largest earthquake in history destroyed so much of Chile, Elena sat on a curb with a little boy, six or seven years old, as he clutched a bag given to him by a Sunday school teacher. He wouldn't speak, and the bag remained unopened in the boy's hands. With prod-ning from Elena, they began to uncover what the bag had to offer – a pencil, a toothbrush, a comb. "Little by little we worked our way through the bag, and by the time we finished identifying all of the ob-jects, he was smiling and speaking with confidence," Elena said. These, and other, health and school kits collected by churches in Chile and the United States, represent Church at its best. We pray, with Elena, "God, help us be Church at its best this Lenten season. Amen."

March 26, 2012

Members of the Northern California Nevada Conference participated in a postcard ministry at their Annual Gathering in 2011 to send greetings of support to UCC clergy and church workers serving in the Philip-pines. Messages in Tagalog were provided from which to choose, such as, "Mabuhay mga Kapatid sa Kris-to. Kaisa nyo po Kami," (Good life Broth-ers and Sisters in Christ! We are with you.) The conference wanted to express solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Christ living with mili-tary, political and econom-ic struggles. The ministry was in keeping with the gathering's guiding scripture, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses all knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the full-ness of God." [Ephesians 3: 17-19]

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <h1>March</h1>				1	2	3
					World Day of Prayer	
4 Worship 9:30 Holy Communion Sunday School 10:45	5	6 Church Council 6:30 PM	7 Club JAM 3:45-5 Lenten Soup & Service 6:30 PM	8	9	10
11 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Daylight Savings Time begins	12	13 Happy Valentine's Day!	14 Club JAM 3:45-5 Lenten Soup & Service 6:30 PM	15	16	17 *  * Happy St. Patrick's Day
18 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Fellowship Committee Pizza & Bowling in Brandon @ noon Newsletter Deadline	19	20 First Day of Spring	21 Club JAM 3:45-5 Lenten Soup & Service 6:30 PM	22	23	24
25 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:45	26	27	28 Club JAM 3:45-5 Lenten Soup & Service 6:30 PM	29	30	31

United Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25

Larchwood, IA



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED