

December 2017

Buffalo United Methodist Church



Pastoral Letter

I want to thank you for a wonderful year in ministry with all of you. You have pushed me to be a better person than I might otherwise have been. I've wrestled with more questions in prayer than I would have thought possible, and I've struggled to let loose of some bad habits. I have a few gifts that I would like to give you all.

The first is the gift of some quiet time for reflection, for wonder, for soothing your soul. I can strongly recommend saving some time just for yourself each day. Let it be time when you can relax, let go of all the busyness, and share time with God. Whether it is prayer time, listening to favorite music, reading a good book (or even the Good Book), or just looking at the tree and thanking God for all the gifts He has given you, set aside some time every single day. Not only will you have a chance to appreciate the happenings in your life, it will renew your energy and enthusiasm for the next day.

The second is the chance to worship with friends and family. We have several special dates for you to remember:

- Weds., Nov. 29 at 7 p.m. We are hosting a Taizé Service of Peace and Reconciliation here at Buffalo, along with some students from Coe College. Candlelight, shared music, Scripture,

and reflection will make this a truly sacred time. I guarantee you won't be sorry that you came. Better yet, bring some friends and give them a special gift to start the Advent season.

- Sun., Dec. 3 at 8:45 a.m. We will be sharing in Holy Communion as a congregation.
- Sun., Dec. 17 at 8:45 a.m. You all earned a second hymn sing with the Great Peanut Butter Challenge, and this is it! There will be no excuse for not singing your favorite Advent/Christmas song, no matter what it is.
- Sun., Dec. 24 at 4 p.m. - In addition to morning worship, we will share a Candlelight Service rich with all the beauty of the season. Bring the family, and hear the old, familiar Scriptures. Once again, I will be telling a story rather than preaching a sermon.

My third present for you is the opportunity to share with others! We are again doing the Reverse Advent Calendar as a congregation. Instead of opening some trinket or a piece of candy each day, set aside something for the Linn Community Food Bank. Canned goods, paper goods and toiletries, cash--they are all welcome. You may bring your items to church each week, or we can pick them up from you. Consider decorating with your children or grandchildren a box to use for this purpose.

Shared activity is yet another gift you can give yourself. We will also be collecting mittens, scarves, and gloves for the kids at Garfield Elementary School. Contact me if you would like to help make fleece scarves for each of the backpacks. I would be glad to supply the cocoa and cookies for an old-fashioned work day at the church. Items for Garfield need to be at the church by Dec. 17th.

My most special gift for each of you is the hope that Jesus Christ will be at the center of every aspect of your holidays. Who could have ever imagined that God would give us a part of himself, in the form of a tiny baby, to change the world and give each of us the precious gift of salvation? It is pretty amazing, isn't it?

~Much love, Pastor Kathryn
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United Methodist Women

UMW will not be meeting in December, but on Thursday, January 18, at 9:30 am we will meet for a brief business meeting and an interesting lesson. Everyone is welcome. Marlene Himes will provide the program and the treats. We look forward to the lesson and fellowship!

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Golden Age Potluck

We will gather on Thursday, December 14, at 11:30 am at the Buffalo UMC for fellowship and good food. Bring a dish to share and a friend (or friends). Place settings and beverages will be provided. Don't forget to bring a gift (costing no more than \$5) for our exchange.

Garfield Backpack Update

We plan to collect gloves, mittens, hats, toothpaste, and toothbrushes for 58 children. We will also make treat bags, which may include small wrapped candies, pencils, fruit, and granola bars. Items are due at the Church by Sunday, December 17.

An individual backpack bag costs \$5.00. Each month HACAP provides over \$1000 worth of food for Garfield students. If you are able to donate money to the program, please mark the donation for HACAP and the money will be mailed to the proper office. HACAP will accept donations throughout the year.

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Treat Bags for Christmas Eve Service

For many years Fred and Marlene Himes have provided bags with oranges, apples, and peanuts for this service. If you can donate wrapped candies or other suitable goodies for the 100 Christmas Eve bags, your contributions will be greatly appreciated.

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Prayer Service at Buffalo

Wednesday evening, November 29

7:00 pm

Buffalo UMC and the Chaplain's Office at Coe College are co-sponsoring a Prayer Service at the Buffalo Church. This hour-long program of prayer and meditation will use music and a worship format developed by the Taizé Brothers community in France.

Two Reports

- Trunk or Treat: Despite the challenging weather, we had a good time on Sunday, October 29th. A neighbor won the inflatable spider, so we may see the spider next October. Thanks to Nancy Carter for taking care of the refreshments and to everyone who donated cookies and other treats.
- Election Day Bake Sale (November 7). Thanks to everyone who brought baked items. All items were purchased, and we collected over \$68. We will try a second bake on Tuesday, December 5, when voters choose the city's next mayor.



November Board Meeting Report

- The front windows facing 30th Street have been painted.
- Gary Hackney has installed a light over the fellowship hall door and using his new chain saw has cut down and removed the roots to the evergreen on the northeast corner of the building. Thanks, Gary!
- Tom Ferguson has diagnosed the stove burner problem. Thanks, Tom!
- The budget was set for the upcoming year. See Judy Hackney, our Church Treasurer, if you would like to see the budget.

"Silence is sometimes everything in prayer."

A meditation from the Taizé Brothers, quoted in the October 13

posting to the Bison Blog on the Buffalo UMC website.

Second Annual Reverse Advent

Calendar: December 3-24

Find a box and each day add an item for donation to the local food bank. Nancy C. will collect the boxes at church or in your home if you give her a call after the 24th. Items needed include canned vegetables and fruit, tuna, soups, pastas, cake and brownie mixes, cereals, toothpaste and brushes, shampoo, deodorant, paper towels, and toilet and facial tissues. If you need more suggestions--or have questions about this project--contact Nancy C.



Holiday Dinner in January

Mark your calendar for Sunday, January 21, at 12:15 pm for our annual dinner with Bertram Church members. Neither the menu nor the cost has been determined, but we will ask those attending to bring desserts and a gift (maximum value of \$5) for a gift exchange. Stayed tuned for further information.



Caroling in February

The Administrative Board decided to organize a Pre-Valentine's Day Caroling after the Sunday morning service on February 11. After singing for homebound members and those in care centers, we return to the church for homemade soup, warm beverages, and appropriate fixings and desserts.

A Way Forward

[An excerpt from Bishop Laurie Haller's blog posting for November 10; the complete blog posting is available at the URL: <http://www.lauriehaller.org/a-way-forward/>]

For the past five days, I have been meeting with the Council of Bishops (COB) With an interim report from the Commission on a Way Forward in hand and an overwhelming commitment to the unity and mission of the church, we explored three different models presented to us by the Commission. The Commission's mandate is to help the Council of Bishops fulfill its charge to bring a recommendation to a special 2019 session of General Conference.

The Council of Bishops is deeply grateful to the Commission on a Way Forward for their sensitivity to the variety of deeply held views of faithful United Methodists around the world. Three models were presented to us, each one emerging from the mission of our church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

- The first sketch of a model affirms the current Book of Discipline language and places a high value on accountability.
- The second sketch of a model removes restrictive language and places a high value on contextualization. It also specifically protects the rights of those whose conscience will not allow them to perform same gender weddings or ordain LGBTQ persons.
- The third sketch of a model is grounded in a unified core that includes shared doctrine and services and one Council of Bishops, while also creating different branches that have clearly defined values such as accountability, contextualization, and justice.

These sketches of models are intended to provide space for different views, an overarching unity of heart and mind, and an emphasis on the mission of the church. Each sketch represents values that are within the Council of Bishops and across the church and also

includes a gracious way of exit for those who feel called to leave the denomination.

The moderators of the Commission on a Way Forward . . . noted that the values highlighted in any one model also live within the fabric of the other models. Values expressed by any one model are not exclusive to one or absent in another. The values that may be associated with the identity of any one model are there because it may be a value lifted to a higher level of preference or differentiation among the models. Bishop Steiner Ball encouraged the bishops, "Operate with a heart of peace and an openness. All three models grew out of mission, vision, and scope. Each one of these models connects to a story and experience that is represented in this body."

The bishops began a process of prayerful discerning and offered substantial feedback to the Commission, but they did not take a vote on any of the three models presented in the interim report of the Commission on a Way Forward. The Commission will continue its work with guidance from the COB, both groups of which are open to learning, listening, and improvement. . . .

The members of the Council of Bishops have great hope for the future of The United Methodist Church and are united in the desire to lead our denomination through this challenging time. In this season of conversation, visioning, and discernment, we covet your prayers, ideas, and willingness to imagine who God is calling us to become as United Methodists in a rapidly changing world.

I have made it a priority to meet with the General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation and various other groups in the Iowa Annual Conference in the coming weeks and months. We will be engaged in teaching and discernment together. I will also be present in each of the eight districts in the spring to have conversation with both laity and clergy. Please watch for the schedule to be published. You are welcome to attend whatever time and location works best for you.

Buffalo UMC Calendar: December 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>“In normal life we hardly realize how much more we receive than we give, and life cannot be rich without such gratitude. It is so easy to overestimate the importance of our own achievements compared with what we owe to the help of others.” — Dietrich Bonhoeffer, written while in prison, shortly before his execution by the Nazis in April, 1945</p>					1	2
3 8:45: Worship Service	4	5 Election Day Bake Sale	6	7	8 8:00: Popping Corn at Garfield	9
10 8:45: Worship Service	11 9:30: Church Cleaning	12 <i>Hanukkah begins at sunset</i>	13	14 11:30: Golden Age Potluck	15	16
17 8:45: Worship Service	18	19	20	21 <i>First day of Winter</i>	22	23
24/31 8:45: Worship 24 th : Christmas Eve Service at 4	25 Christmas	26	27	28	29	30

December Birthdays

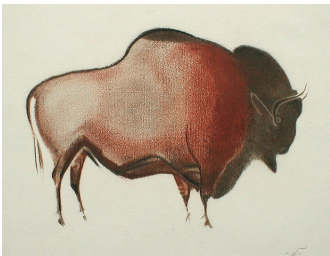
11: Gary Hackney

18: Faye Renolds

Four Lines from a Poem
by the English Poet Alexander Pope
Dedicated to Martha Blount
in Honor of her Birthday, 1723

OH, be thou blest with all that Heav'n can send,
Long Health, long Youth, long Pleasure, and a Friend.

Is that a birthday? 't is alas! too clear,
'T is but the funeral of the former year.



Buffalo UMC Upcoming Dates

November 29: Taizé Prayer Service
December 3 to 24: Collecting items for the Reverse Advent Calendar
December 5: City Runoff Election at the Church (please bring baked goods for our Election Day Bake Sale)
December 8, 8 am: Popping Corn at Garfield
December 11, 9:30 am: Church Cleaning
December 14, 11:30 am: Golden Age Potluck
December 17: Items due for backpack kids

Bertram UMC Upcoming Dates

December 5, 11:30 am: Serve Lunch at Mission of Hope
December 24, 6 pm: Christmas Eve Service
December 27, 4-6 pm: Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus! A light supper and other activities. Donations for babies will go to Waypoint.

Submit items for the January 2018 Newsletter by Tuesday, December 26 to Bob Marrs at rmarrs@coe.edu.

An invitation to the Buffalo Congregation from Westminster Presbyterian

Rev. Randi Henderson, a pastor at Westminster Presbyterian, is conducting a series of 14 lesson on prayer. While the sessions typically meet on Thursdays and Mondays, Rev. Henderson has arranged for the third session to be the Taizé Prayer Service at Buffalo. Rev. Henderson has invited all members of Buffalo to attend any of the classes at Westminster. The next session on "Praise and Thanksgiving" will be Thursday, December 14 at 6:00 pm or the following Monday, December 18 at 12:00 noon. No sessions depend on attending a previous class. A schedule of the remaining ten classes in 2018 will be posted to the Buffalo website on the page "UMC Connections."

Buffalo United Methodist Church

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