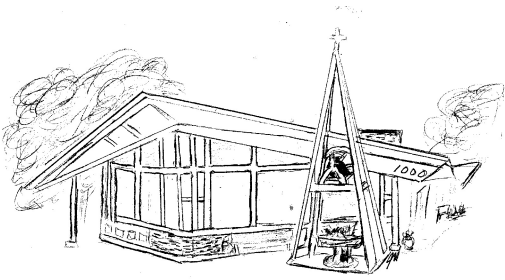


# Buffalo United Methodist Church



January 2021

1000 30<sup>th</sup> Street NE  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402



## The Great Adventure

When I was younger, we often went ice skating at the church-owned farm. The pond was a great size, deep enough that there wasn't any debris along the edges to trip up a novice skater. My mother had grown up in New England and was an enthusiastic proponent of winter sports. ("You kids look nice and healthy with your red cheeks." "That's frost-bite, Mom. I can't feel my toes.")

One Saturday, we picked up my father from church and the four of us went out to skate for several hours. I was about 7, Paul was 4, and my mother was old enough to know better. When we got to the farm, Mom tried the ice first and it creaked and groaned in a suspicious manner. After deliberation, it was decided that it wasn't worth risking any one's neck. Safety always comes first.

On the drive back into town, Mom took notice of the long narrow ditches along the fields covered in ice. She convinced my father to stop, explaining "We can't skate anything fancy, but we could go up and back several times. After all, the kids and I are all dressed for the outdoors, and it will still be good exercise!" My dad uttered those famous last words: "I don't think it's a good idea, but if you really want to. . ." My Mom, who could make anything fun, never hesitated.

One thing you need to know is that Illinois does not do conservation plowing the way that Iowa does, so the roadside ditches are often full of dirt that has blown off of the fields and they are not tiled to drain in any way. So, we three skaters got out on our narrow ice strip and began to skate. Since Dad was in dress clothes and a wool coat, he elected to walk alongside the ditch and hold on to Paul. After several minutes of brisk exercise, you can probably imagine what happened next--the ice split exactly in the middle, opening like double doors, and dropped us into 3 feet of water and frozen mud!

I can still remember that moment of surprised horror before the exclamations of "Oh, no! Oops!" rang out. It was, literally, freezing cold and we were soaking wet in the nastiest of slime. Dad fished the three of us out of muck and, grimacing over the potential damage to his new car interior, stuffed us all in and then got into the driver's seat. While we were washable in play clothes, he was wearing his one and only dry-clean dress coat. There was a long pause, and then my mother started to laugh hysterically, saying "Oh, I wish you all could have seen your faces! Well, at least we got some fresh air!" By then, we were all laughing and it had become an adventure instead of a disaster. Two loads of laundry and a dry cleaning bill later, it had become a family story that still makes me chuckle.

All this is offered as an introduction to the Bishop's declaration that we will not be having face to face worship until January 10<sup>th</sup> at the earliest. I personally believe the edict will continue after that, based on hospital occupancy rates and the continued rise in COVID-19. While I have tolerated and adapted to the long stretches of pandemic isolation, I always had the prospect of Advent and Christmas worship to cheer me up. This season is the high point of the year for pastors. It has the best music, the easiest sermons, the decorations and traditions that make everyone happy. It's the sweet interior to the daily work and struggles of the rest of the years. Well, not in 2020. But it can still be an adventure instead of a disaster; a chance to try some new and different things; a season of celebration that we will remember and tell stories about in the future--if we have the right attitude to reframe it into an adventure and not a loss.

So how do we turn traditional worship into Adventure Worship? I would like several volunteers to help me deliver hymnals and *The Faith We Sing* books to everyone.

I know I can trust you to return them eventually, and in the meantime it would enrich worship in your homes. I think creating home worship spaces should be a project for everyone. I got a lovely photo from Pat and Tom Ferguson showing me their Christmas display. Epiphany is coming up – does anyone have a stuffed camel and a globe? Or a National Geographic map to put down and have a candle and a wrapped gift on? The creative ideas are endless, and we can share them with each other. Lent is coming up soon, with the purple liturgical color. Buddhist and Hindu families typically have family altars at home. Maybe it's time we joined them!

I would like to put together Lenten booklets to share. If you are willing to write a short devotional or prayer, let me know (about a half page long). I would also like to start joining together in prayer via Zoom or in a carefully calibrated small group. Do you have other ideas? I have found it to be a challenge so far, but it has also forced me to be creative. If we will laugh about this later, why not laugh now and have some fun? We can call this a disaster, or we can reframe it into a Great Adventure. Which will it be?  
~ Pastor Kathryn

## Buffalo United Methodist Women

The United Methodist Women's group will not be ordering RADA cutlery in the future. The current inventory is available for purchase. A list of available items can be obtained from Barb Crawford (826-2468) or Marlene Himes (393-3374). The UMW will meet on Thursday, January 21 at 9 am. Marlene will provide the program and the treats.

## Human Relations Day

Our special UMC offering in January is identified as Human Relations Day. Donations will be used to strengthen UMC outreach to communities in the United States and Puerto Rico, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth.

## Buffalo's Generosity

For this year's Christmas project, we collected \$300 that was donated to HACAP in support of a family in the Garfield school district. Thanks to everyone who donated to this worthy local cause.

Despite all the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and the August derecho, Buffalo church members have continued their robust support of our church with their prayers and their financial contributions. We are truly blessed to be part of such a marvelous community.

## Church Officers for 2021

Administrative Board Chairperson: Margie Marrs (new)

Recording Secretary: Chris Gochenouer (new)

Lay Leader: Mary Fredericksen

Worship, Music & Education: Marlene Himes, Judy Hackney, Margie Marrs

Outreach, Mission & Evangelism: Faye Reynolds, Sheryl Arnett, Chris Gochenouer

Church Treasurer: Judy Hackney

Financial Secretary: Chris Gochenouer

Council Members at large: Sheryl Arnett, Gloria Clinton, Bob Marrs

Historian: Barb Crawford (new)

Annual Conference Lay Delegate: Bob Marrs (Judy Hackney, alternate)

## Annual Charge Conference

After several delays, our 2020 Annual Charge Conference was held in the worship center on Saturday, 12 December, with our new District Superintendent, Dr. Moody Colorado, presiding. During the meeting, the following reports were approved, all by unanimous voice vote:

- **Mission and Ministry Plan for 2021.** The plan includes growth in our understanding of the global church and enhanced visibility in the local community.
- **Board of Trustees Report.** The report focused on the successful completion of work in response to the August 10 derecho: tree and stump removal, roofing and duct work, and construction of a new shed. The treasurer confirmed the insurance company has provided us with substantial financial support of over \$27,000.

## Cookies

Donations of baked goods for the First Nations Community food baskets should be brought to the church by noon on Wednesday, January 20. Each package should have 6-8 cookies. Diabetic baked goods are appreciated. Please label the kind of cookies on the package.

## Buffalo Community Outreach

- Do you have suggestions how we can reach out to the community during the Covid outbreak?
- The Little Library is visited frequently and more books are needed. Cash donations can be given to Judy Hackney.
- Send cards to our church members who are in care facilities or staying at home. If you need names and addresses, contact Barb Crawford (826-2468).
- The Linn Community Food Bank is always seeking donations of money, canned goods, toiletries, etc.

# January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p align="center"><b>A Mid-Winter Bouquet of Thank You Messages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks for the Advent Candle display created by Pastor Kathryn with the assistance of Gary and Judy Hackney.</li> <li>• Thanks for the recipes submitted by church members to the Buffalo website.</li> </ul>					1 New Year's Day	2
3 Three Kings Day - No Sunday Morning Worship	4	5	6 Epiphany	7	8	9
10 No Sunday Morning Worship	11 <i>Plough Monday</i> (traditional start of agricultural year)	12	13	14	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	16
17 Human Relations Day Special Offering	18 <b>Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday</b>	19 Cookie donation for First Nations due tomorrow	20 Inauguration Day for U.S. President	21 UMW Meeting (9:00 am)	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

**January Birthdays:** 6 – Charlotte Stanford  
14 – Nancy Lacy

8 - Ward Seufferlein  
22 – Sheryl Arnett

14 – Hep Hentrich

**January Anniversaries:** 1 – Hep Hentrich & Eileen Kaplan

## A Message from Margie

As we start a new year, it is also time when we welcome a new administrative board. Having served as board secretary for two years, I recently agreed to chair the board in 2021. In considering this commitment, I thought of Chris and Barb who have chaired the board since I joined Buffalo six years ago. They are both long-time members and have demonstrated a remarkable and inspiring dedication to the life of this church. Could I be the right person for this position?

I asked myself the same question in 1985 when Jim Phifer, Coe College's president, asked me to become chair of the Music Department. Becoming an administrator was never one of my professional goals, but after some arm twisting, I finally agreed to serve for two years—which

eventually totaled fifteen. I was fortunate to be supported by two dedicated emerita faculty members, Eleanor Taylor and Alma Turechek, who were my friends and invaluable mentors on that journey.

As you read the new list of board members, you will recognize many names from previous years. With Chris and Barb assuming other board positions, there's no question I will benefit from their experience, guidance, and prayerful assistance throughout the coming year.

As we celebrate the advent of the COVID-19 vaccine, I know we are eagerly looking forward in the spring to the resumption of services (though still wearing masks). Until then, if you know of issues the congregation needs to address or you want to discuss some other matter, don't hesitate to contact me either by email ([mmarrs@coe.edu](mailto:mmarrs@coe.edu)) or phone (319.362.9494). ~Margie

## O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, How Straggly Are Thy Branches

~Bishop Laurie Haller

Our family always purchased live Christmas trees when I was growing up, and we would often plant the trees on our property after the New Year. However, we never had any adventures like the tiny owl found hiding in the 75-foot-tall Norway Spruce from Oneonta NY that was set up in New York City's Rockefeller Center a few weeks ago. The rescued owl, nicknamed "Rockefeller," was taken to a wildlife center and later released back into the wild.

*O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,  
How steadfast are your branches!  
Your boughs are green in summer's clime,  
And through the snows of wintertime. . . .*

Gary and I made a major decision about Christmas trees two years ago when I was so preoccupied by work and holiday responsibilities that we did not purchase a tree until a few days before Christmas. Off we went to Menards, where only a few straggly trees were left. Not having time to search elsewhere, we ended up with a tree that had been passed over by hundreds of shoppers. After some discussion, we decided that every tree needed a home, no matter how ugly it might be, so we bought it. We loved our pitiful tree, but we also decided that there would be no more live trees in our home after this one.

Last year, we purchased an artificial tree, which is "perfect." No live tree to butcher, no blemishes, no needles imbedded in the carpet, and no need to water. While we miss the smell and charm of live trees, we also know that the ornaments on the tree tell the real story of our love for Jesus and the church and our family and friends.

The Christmas story was not as romantic as it seems today, for the Christ child appeared in human form in the most lowly of places. Yet Jesus still comes to bring us salvation and hope and reminds us that God's love extends to the farthest corners of the earth.

The truth is that both Christmas trees, the straggly one and the crafted one, are beautiful in their own right, for God creates and loves us just as we are. Most of all, God wants us to be authentic human beings, with hearts for loving and hands for giving.

To whom will you reach out today with Christ's love? To whom will you take a pot of soup, make a phone call, or send a Christmas card? How will your voice be heard as we seek justice and mercy for all of God's children? At a time when many churches across the globe will not be holding in-person Christmas Eve services, how will you let the light of Christ's love shine in you and through you to a broken world? Can you hear the angels sing?

Into a straggly world, Christ is coming.

[The complete December 7 blog post can be found at  
<https://www.lauriehaller.org/>]

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