

# Summit Congregational United Church of Christ

## “SUMMIT SPARKS”

November, 2020

563-582-5661, Website: [www.summitucc.org](http://www.summitucc.org)

### *Thanksgiving Inspiration and Fun*



Throughout the month of November, I encourage us all to begin and end each day with giving thanks to God for at least one thing. The spiritual practice of gratitude can transform our outlook and perspective on how we see and live our lives.

For Fun – See how many words you can make from the letters in the words  
HAPPY THANKSGIVING

If you write them down and send them in to me,  
I will post all your combined words in the December Sparks.

Summit Congregational United Church of Christ  
2885 J. F. Kennedy Rd.  
Dubuque, Iowa, 52002-1081

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am - Worship	2 9am - Pastor's Office Hours	3	4	5	6	7
8 10am - Worship	9 9am - Pastor's Office Hours 10:30am - Diaconate 12:30pm - Trustees	10	11	12	13	14
15 10am - Food Pantry gifts 10am - Worship 10:45am - Congregational	16 9am - Pastor's Office Hours 10am - Christian Education	17 7pm - Barbershoppers	18 10am - Women's	19	20	21
22 10am - Worship	23 9am - Pastor's Office Hours 4pm - Church Council	24 7pm - Barbershoppers	25 <b>Thanksgiving</b>	26	27 Sparks Articles Duel	28
29 10am - Worship	30 9am - Pastor's Office Hours	1 7pm - Barbershoppers	2	3	4	5

## *Sweet Inspirations ...*

### *Stripped-down: How Might We Grow in Stripped-down Times?*

Pastor Ed Sheppley had a major influence on my life and played a major role in me accepting God's call to enter into the path of ordained ministry. Pastor Ed, like me, entered into that path later in life. As a matter of fact he entered seminary at the age of 55. He shared with me that it was only when he was stripped of all that he thought was important in his life that he was able to hear beyond all the distractions, God's call on his life into ministry. Even though that time of his life caused him much pain, it also gave him much growth and a new sense of purpose and hope. God used that stripped-down time of his life to speak both to him and through him.

The year 2020 has stripped us of many things as we know it; worship is different, being the church is different, getting together is different, even being able to get out in community may have been stripped from us. Many have lost their source of income. Many have lost their loved ones. Many have lost their homes to storms and fires. As we approach the holidays which traditionally are times of parties and gatherings, we are facing rising numbers of not only cases of Covid 19, but rising numbers of hospitalizations and deaths from the disease. Health care professionals are pleading for us to wear masks, social distance, wash our hands and to be wise about how we gather. In our scripture readings from last Sunday in Leviticus 19 we heard the directive *"Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life."* And in Matthew we heard Jesus reply to the Pharisees, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*<sup>38</sup> *This is the first and greatest commandment.*<sup>39</sup> *And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*<sup>40</sup> *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

My question to all of us is this, How might God use this time of trial that is stripping us of much of what we treasured and for many, especially those who lost their source of income, health care, and homes, what was/is needed? How might God help us grow in our understanding of our interconnectedness not only as human beings, but with all of creation as well? How might we grow in our understanding that just because we have a right to do something, doesn't necessarily mean it is the right thing to do? How might God be guiding us through our grief over all that has been lost into a future of hope and new life? How might stripped-down holiday celebrations and traditions help us grow closer to God, one another, and creation?

In Dr. Seuss' story the Grinch tried to steal Christmas but couldn't. Today Covid is trying to steal Thanksgiving and Christmas by stripping us of our traditional celebrations, but what remains is the core of these celebrations that can never be taken from us unless we give it away, which is God. Thanksgiving is a time of noticing what it is that we do have and thanking God for those provisions; even being able to thank God for lessons learned and strength and courage gained through times of trial. On Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, but why. What is so significant about that birth. In that birth, God reveals a love for humanity so deep that God is willing to take on human form and walk among us in order to save and redeem us from our sinful ways that harm and bring death and destruction. In that birth we see how God works with humans to bring about this story of salvation that brings healing and hope into this world, not by force but through invitation. In that birth we see and experience God's ministry of presence, Emmanuel, God with us! Even if we cannot be physically present for one another through the upcoming holidays, may we not let go of the true gift of these holidays, the gift of God with us; then let us embrace how God is leading us into a ministry of presence wherever and whenever it is needed.

This past Monday I had the blessing of participating in the Berger Lectures hosted by the University of Dubuque. The keynote speaker was Rev. John Brooks aka Pastah J. What an inspiration! His real focus was on a ministry of presence. Ministry of presence builds relationships and breaks down misconceptions; builds understanding and even topples barriers as people work together, using their gifts and resources for the good of the whole. He proclaims there are no Godforsaken places only churches forsaken. He took the word "outreach" from his church's vocabulary because it sets up a dichotomy of us helping them situation; and failing to see how God is already present in the places we seek to help. It also set up the assumption that if we need to go somewhere else to do outreach, we are assuming that there is not a need where we reside. We all have room to grow; the needs are just different. Instead he focuses on community building, getting people to work together; focusing not on the need but on what gifts and resources are already present to build upon and in that transform communities and meet the needs of the community. The prophet Jeremiah told the Israelites who were brought into exile to seek the well-being of the city to which they had been carried, for in that they would find their own well-being. The same is true for us today. Throughout the days ahead, may we remember we are not God-forsaken; may we experience God's ministry of presence to us, and in that may we be God's ministry of presence to others.

My prayer for you this day, tomorrow, and every day comes from Romans 15:13:  
*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,  
 so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

*God Bless!  
 Pastor Karen*

<b><u>November Birthdays</u></b>	13 <sup>th</sup> Connie Kitchen
2 <sup>nd</sup> Margaret Walser	19 <sup>th</sup> Sawyer Cox
3 <sup>rd</sup> Erich Deutsch	20 <sup>th</sup> Lisa Hansen
Gwendelyn Deutsch	Scott Kreimeyer
4 <sup>th</sup> Jarrett Herber	22 <sup>nd</sup> Kim Robinson
6 <sup>th</sup> Dick Wepking	30 <sup>th</sup> Bruce Watters
12 <sup>th</sup> Brandon Kelly	<b><u>November Anniversaries</u></b>
	None

**Important Calendar Dates:**

<b>Tuesday, November 3</b>	<b>All day</b>	<b>Election Day, Fellowship Hall</b>
<b>Sunday, November 15</b>	<b>10 am</b>	<b>Stewardship Sunday (ZOOM)</b>
<b>Sunday, November 15</b>	<b>10:45 am</b>	<b>Congregational Meeting (ZOOM)</b>
<b>Thursday, November 19</b>	<b>10 am</b>	<b>Women's Fellowship</b>
<b>Thurs, November 26</b>	<b>All Day</b>	<b>Thanksgiving</b>
<b>Thursday, Dec 24</b>	<b>5 pm</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Service</b>

**Scheduled Committee Meetings** ALL committee and council meetings are open to the congregation.

<b>Monday, Nov. 9</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Diaconate meeting</b>
<b>Monday, Nov. 9</b>	<b>12:30 pm</b>	<b>Trustees meeting</b>
<b>Monday, Nov. 16</b>	<b>10 am</b>	<b>Christian Ed Meeting</b>
<b>Monday, Nov. 23</b>	<b>4 pm</b>	<b>Church Council</b>

*Farewell to Chester Louis “Chet” Kamm*  
*“In our end is our beginning ... In our death a resurrection at the last a victory”*  
*Chet's journey on earth began on June 7, 1924*  
*and ended on October 24, 2020*

**Contributors:** Rev. Karen Candee, Flora Brown (Clerk), Shirley Hansen, Judy Trent, Beth Boleyn (Moderator), Merlin Green (editor).

Your Church Council and Diaconate had an emergency meeting on Friday October 30th to discuss Pastor Karen needing to self-quarantine for at least 2 weeks and maybe more, dependent on results of her Covid testing and further possible exposure. We discussed in length of possible scenarios and how to proceed with Church activities. We have decided that the Church will be off limits to everyone except Pastor during this time. (The one exception is Tuesday November 3rd. Pastor will not utilize the Church until after election day.) We want Pastor to have access to her office and Church so she can continue to provide her services to her Church community. So any meetings / activities / etc will need to be done via ZOOM, going elsewhere, or rescheduling to meet until further notice. This means our Church meeting scheduled for November 15 to vote on our proposed changes and electing of new leadership will be done via Zoom. So be sure to join in so we have enough for a quorum. The good Lord willing in a few weeks we can go back to "normal" procedures. We will keep you up to date as best we can through all this. Our prayers go out to Pastor and Neil for a good outcome.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to any of your Church Council members.

Thank You Beth Boleyn, Moderator

## **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

October 30, 2020 via Zoom  
Emergency meeting called.

Present: Pastor Karen, Judy Prochaska, Pat Kreimeyer, Beth Boleyn, Shirley Hansen, Steffany King and Flora Brown

Pastor Karen was notified this morning that her husband, Neil, has been in direct contact with Covid19. They both have been tested but haven't received the results yet. Pastor will not be able to be at church for at least three weeks, possibly longer because Neil will be exposed to it every week at his job.

Council needs to decide how to proceed with services for the next two weeks. Council decided to close the church until further notice. All services and meetings will be held via Zoom, nothing in person. This Sunday is All Saints Day—Pastor will notify the families that were to be recognized. She will also send out an email to notify the congregation. The issue was addressed of how things would be handled if Pastor is positive for Covid19—her time off, if services would be held, etc. Possibly have a very informal service with a lead person, various scripture readers, etc. or share links to various services in the community. If Pastor Karen should become incapacitated, the Diaconate chair is in charge. Council voted that if Pastor gets Covid19, it will not affect her salary, Pat motioned to approve, Shirley seconded and the motion carried. All in favor, no abstentions. Judy will report this back to the Trustees. Pastor will let the Barbershoppers know that the church is closed until further notice. She will not enter the church until after Tuesday, November 3. The Election/Congregational meeting scheduled for November 15 will be via Zoom. Beth will post all the changes in the Sparks. Judy motioned to adjourn the meeting, Pat seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted, Flora Brown, Clerk

### **O/M/E**

Think Bingo! Fun and Prizes! Baskets of Happiness!

During all of November OME is promoting the giving of items as Bingo prizes for use at Sunnycrest Manor. Items for prizes may be left at the church in the Baskets of Happiness. Here are a few suggested items: body wash, lotion, shampoo, individually wrapped desserts, snack foods in variety multipacks of individually wrapped foods, diet pop. It can be fun to see what ideas you have for prizes. Not needed are puzzles and coloring books as they have a nice supply now. Bingo! Bingo! Bingo!

## **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

October 19, 2020 via Zoom

Present: Pastor Karen, Beth Boleyn, Pat Kreimeyer, Fran Jones, Judy Prochaska, Judy Trent, Shirley Hansen and Flora Brown

Pastor opened the meeting with a prayer.

### **Trustees:**

The committee met on October 10. The committee reported the transfer of \$5000 to cover the insurance premium. A reimbursement check was sent to the Barbershoppers for the unused months of Fellowship Hall. Since Pastor Karen has her own health insurance, she confirmed she can continue to claim housing allowance. Everett gave a summary of his conversation with Church Mutual. The committee decided to keep the deductible at \$1000. Judy P. checked on getting quotes for embezzlement protection, which were \$5000 up to \$20,000. Trustees decided on \$20,000 coverage at \$40 a year. Merlin reported he purchased a camera. Also, still checking into faster internet service—voted to table doing anything, pending on if there would be better offers in the future. Pastor Karen and Merlin collaborated on the revisions of the stewardship letter. They are hoping to get it sent out the following week.

### **Diaconate:**

The committee met on October 12. They discussed All Saints Day, which is the first Sunday of November. Due to this, communion has been moved to November 8. A new candle rack was made to hold the small candles that recognize those gone on before us. Thank you Terry and Beth Boleyn for making it. Veteran's Day recognition will be November 8. The pledge cards are due November 15. The committee discussed Advent ideas and different ideas for how to decorate the church due to Covid19.

### **Christian Ed:**

The committee met on October 19. They discussed the ongoing Bible study on Mondays at 1:30 pm. With no other business, they decided not to set up another meeting. They will call a meeting if something comes up that needs attention.

### **B & G:**

The front door has been fixed. It was done for free due to the problems we had with it.

### **O/M/E:**

The committee reported that \$200 from their budget was given to Pastor's Discretionary Fund: for Outreach --\$100 was given towards the Derecho victims. The committee will be promoting the Christmas Fund, which they do every year. Also, the committee is asking the congregation to donate items such as little bags of snacks, lotion, etc. that will go to Sunnycrest to be used for bingo prizes, starting the first Sunday in November. They also discussed another outreach possibility—staying connected with shut-ins through cards, phone calls, etc.

### **Women's Fellowship:**

The ladies met on October 15. \$2000 has been set aside for the painting and labor of Pastor's office, narthex, library and the hallways. This committee will be sponsoring the Cookieless Cookie Walk. Letters for this will be going out around the week of November 19. If you know a friend of Summit that might want a letter, let Carrie know the name and address. Marty Wepking will be checking in with local agencies to see what is needed for the upcoming Christmas project. Jo Ann Datisman will be hosting the summer 2021 trip.

### **Pastor's Report:**

Pastor Karen's duties have included leading and setting up Sunday worship, phone calls and Wednesday evening Zoom fellowship. She attended the Annual Meeting of the Iowa Conference of UCC via Zoom all day Saturday, October 17. She will be presiding over a non-member graveside service this coming Saturday. On October 9, Pastor and her sister, Diane Rondeau were interviewed by Shannon Moudy from CBS/Fox 28 News about Covid19 and the impacts it has on family members that are living in long term care facilities. It aired on October 21.

### **Old Business:**

The special Congregational Meeting went very well. We are still needing people on committees: Financial Secretary, Diaconate, Christian Ed. and B & G all have open positions. If you are interested in serving let church council know.

### **New Business:**

Pat will be talking with the kids to see if they want to do something/program for Christmas. An inquisition was made of if there was discussion regarding guidelines if we need to have a funeral—no there hasn't

been. Pastor stated we could probably hold the funeral with social distancing and guidelines but not a funeral dinner; would also need to check on overflow, making sure everyone can hear, etc. Pastor Karen would like everyone to document when they have been in the building in case there would be a person with Covid19, that the appropriate protocol can be followed. After some discussion, Council agreed to change the next meeting time. Sparks articles are due Friday, October 30. Next meeting—Monday, November 23 at 4 pm via Zoom. Shirley motioned to adjourn the meeting, Judy T. seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Flora Brown, Clerk

### **Women's Fellowship**

Greetings from Women's Fellowship! The ladies have decided that we will send out the Cookieless Cookie Walk fundraising letter later in November. The donations from this will allow us to aid local charities to assist families and help provide a Christmas for many. We choose to provide financial support for our church to help when supplies and purchases are needed. We will be providing funds for interior painting of the church: the Narthex, hallways, Pastor Karen's office, and the library.

JoAnn Datisman has generously offered to host the Women's Fellowship summer of 2021 trip. Our next meeting is Thursday, November 19th at 10:00 AM in the Fellowship hall at church. Please join us!

We are saving you a socially distanced seat with a free mask!

Many Blessings to all, Judy Trent

**A Stewardship Notes:** (Merlin Green) As we are in our annual Stewardship drive, I want to say a special thanks for your faithfulness in giving during these trying times. As indicated in the Stewardship letter, we are doing many things in different ways, sometimes painfully, and sometimes very successfully. One thing that has become evident is that, even when we are able to return to all of the in-person life, some of the new things we have learned to do should continue as we are able to reach more people on a regular basis. **Because of your faithful giving we have been able to do the things that we need to do to maintain a vibrant ministry.** With your pledges and giving estimates, the Trustees look forward to building a faithful budget for 2021 that continues to grow Summit.

For the current year ... if anyone would like an update on your year to date, please let me know ... it is really easy to get updated statements. Many of you might not be aware that we are now using a new Church Management software for record keeping. We have mostly figured it out ...

#### **Tax tip ... IF you have IRA savings and are above 70 1/2 years of age:**

IF you have IRA savings you are **normally** required to take out an annual RMD which is taxable as ordinary income. **The RMD is NOT required for 2020**, but you are still able to donate directly to Summit from an IRA and avoid any income taxes on that amount. Who knows what the rules will be for 2021, but you can avoid taxes by donating directly from an IRA to Summit on a monthly or annual basis. Any donations made in this way can count as part of your RMD (if required) and will avoid the taxes that would otherwise be due.

If you are interested in trying this tax avoidance trick, please check with your financial advisor to set it up and make sure it is appropriate for your circumstances. If it isn't done properly, taxes will still be due!

## **Congregational Meeting October 18, 2020**

Moderator : Beth Boleyn

The purpose of the meeting is to propose the recommended changes to the Constitution and Bylaws by church council to the congregation.

Proposed changes to the Constitution:

B & G and Trustees will be combining as one committee.

Under Business--clarification was made that—During this meeting the newly elected leadership will be installed into their elected positions stating that their service will begin January 1. It was stated that each committee can have up to 5 members each. In hopes to incorporate more people, anyone that would like to help out in any way, please let us know.

The quorum number was changed from 25 to 20.

Proposed changes to the Bylaws:

These were all primarily wording changes.

Board of Diaconate—B & G was added, the word shall was added and Board of Diaconate was omitted.

Board of Trustees/ B & G—B & G was added next to Board of Trustees. “The Board of Trustees will” was replaced with the word Shall. The following was added: Shall be responsible for the planning, budgeting and execution of property and facility maintenance and improvements. Shall create a five year forward looking plan, forecasting, costing and recommending maintenance of and improvements to the church and its property.

Deleted: Funding for maintenance and improvements must be coordinated through the Board of Trustees for all non budget expenditures.

Also deleted: Building and Grounds Committee is responsible for the planning, budgeting and execution of property and facility maintenance and improvements. Funding for maintenance and improvements must be coordinated through the Board of Trustees for all non budgeted expenditures. Shall create a five year forward looking plan, forecasting, costing and recommending maintenance of and improvements to the church and its property. The Building and Grounds committee shall elect one committee member as their representative on the Church Council.

Article 3—Amendments: the word this was changed to these.

The council has voted to postpone the meeting for the election of new leadership until November 15, following worship, where we will first vote officially on the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws and then hold the church elections.

The floor was then opened up for discussion, seeing none, Beth thanked everyone involved to make this possible. A straw vote was taken to see how it would pass at the November meeting. All in favor, no abstentions. Diane Rondeau motioned to adjourn, Terry Boleyn seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted, Flora Brown, Clerk



## **BIBLE STUDY**

**Bible/Book Study: Books are Here!** If you are interested in participating in this study or would like to study this on your own please let me know. Cost of each book is \$12. If you choose to help out with the cost of your book please make your check payable to Summit and in the memo section write Christian Education. Below you will see the information about this book. Because of my potential exposure to Covid 19, for the next few weeks we will gather via the Sunday Zoom link only at 1:30 on Mondays. When it is safer to do so we will resume in-person study at a later date.

### **Revelation for the Progressive Christian**

**About the Author Donald Schmidt** -Whenever he can choose what to do, Donald Schmidt likes to spin wool, knit, and weave. In his spare time, he also works in ministry in a variety of settings. He has served parishes in Quebec, New York, Vermont, Washington, and Hawai‘i. He has also worked as an Associate Conference Minister with the United Church of Christ, and is a retired United Methodist minister. Perhaps his favorite ministry has been as an editor and writer of church resources, for worship, education, and church revitalization. He has published 3 books, and has had a few pieces of music appear in various collections around the world. He also loves to travel, finding that visiting anywhere new and different can open us up to learn new things about others and, in the process, ourselves. More recently Donald has served with the United Church of Canada, and was Minister for Worship and Leadership Development at First United Church in Kelowna, British Columbia. He lives in the Okanagan Valley of BC. He is a grandfather of 8, and father of 3.

**Synopsis of the Book:** More material has probably been written about the biblical book of Revelation than the rest of the Bible combined – or at least it can seem that way. What’s more, people who write or talk about Revelation often have a passion that defies all logic. They speak vividly and forcefully about plagues, and judgements, and the end of the world. All interesting themes – but are they the real concern or message of Revelation?

Revelation is a powerful book that was written a long time ago to express a powerful message. Unfortunately, so many people have played with it and interpreted it and have found in it only the things they wanted to find, it’s difficult to “hear” the original intent through all the interpretation.

Yet, when we set aside the nonsense and speculation, we find a story of God’s presence with a fractured and frightened community, with a church that had no idea what the future might hold, and with a people who wondered if it was time to give up and abandon what they believed – all of which makes Revelation a *perfect* book to study in our own time and place, because so many church communities today and so many of the people who inhabit them are all of those things: fractured and frightened, uncertain of what the future might hold, wondering if we should just give up.

*Revelation... for Progressive Christians* is a seven-session study guide that invites readers to explore Revelation as a fun, hope-filled book that contains a lot of fanciful imagery and symbolic references, to be sure, but that, at its core, offers words of assurance and hope to the church and its people today.

### **Reviews of the Book:**

***Cheryl Perry, Minister for Families and Social Justice, First United Church, Kelowna, BC***

Beyond a few well-loved and familiar passages read at funerals, the Book of Revelation is largely ignored by progressive Christians because of its sometimes troubling imagery. In his study guide, *Revelation for Progressive Christians*, Donald Schmidt makes the argument that it shouldn’t be! He makes a case for the book’s relevance for the church today as it struggles with issues of membership, leadership, vision, and purpose. Through this 7-week study guide, he offers insightful questions for reflection that will help readers explore Revelation and its powerful and hopeful message for 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians.

***Judy Steele, Lay Worship Leader***

I recently used this study with a group of ten United Methodists. They all enjoyed the study. I found it easy to use and very informative. You have to move along to get each lesson finished in the hour, but there is time for discussion. Very insightful. Prior to this study I avoided the book of Revelation. I am no longer afraid to read it and use it.