



# VOICE OF FAITH

Sunday Worship  
10:00 AM

Faith United Church of Christ  
3307 Mulberry Avenue  
Muscatine, IA 52761  
Phone: 563-263-5979  
[www.faihuccmuscatine.com](http://www.faihuccmuscatine.com)

**Church Office Hours**  
10 a.m. — 4 p.m.  
Monday - Friday

**Pastor Paris White**  
pastor@faihuccmuscatine.com  
Cell Phone: (309) 791-2602

Office Admin. Asst.: Lisa Allen  
secretary@faihuccmuscatine.com

Cong. Care: Coordinator: Pat Mundell  
pmundell@machlink.com

## Nomination of Officers & Committee Volunteers

Are you interested in  
serving the church?

We have opportunities  
through the Vestry  
or one of our many  
committees, please get in  
touch with the office before  
January 10th, and we will  
partner you up with a vestry  
member for a conversation  
on what it means to be in a  
leadership role and what  
requirements are involved.  
*You are the Church!*

## Stewardship Season

Remember to send in your  
pledges. We are looking  
forward to a new year with  
our new pastor, Rev. Paris  
White.

**Please fill out and return  
the time and talents sheets**  
to the church office by  
January 10th, extra forms  
are in the office!

## FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 28<sup>th</sup>  
immediately following worship. Potluck to follow! One thing  
we will be voting on at the Annual Meeting is the design  
and concept for a new, permanent sign for our church.



## Sign Task Force

As a congregation, we have been considering updating  
the brick sign in front of the building with our congregational  
name on it for roughly 20 years. Although this sign has  
served us well, it is falling apart and is due for an upgrade.  
We feel a new sign would allow us to update our branding  
to the current UCC standards, relocate the sign to a more  
visible spot, attract new potential members, and provide a  
means to promote activities within the church that invite  
others to join us.

The sign our task force has worked diligently to create incor-  
porates all the above goals. The brick foundation honors  
where we have been, the non-electric top portion honors  
the current UCC brand and our ONA commitment, and the  
electronic portion allows us the flexibility to promote and in-  
vite others to our worship services and activities. The sign  
would be in front of the current one, which is currently par-  
allel to the road. This new double-sided sign would instead  
be perpendicular to the sidewalk/road so that no matter  
which way people are driving they will be able to see who  
we are and what we offer.

While we know this sign is costly, if we approve this design at  
our Annual Meeting in January, we could then begin to  
fundraise and make a payment plan. We know it may take  
all year to raise the funds for the sign, but if we feel this is a  
priority for the future of our congregation, approving the  
design is the first step in making it happen!

Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

DECEMBER 2023 EVENTS



## Christmas Program on December 10th

This year we pulled out an old favorite for the Children's Christmas Program with *Grandpa Remembers*. The children, as always, did such a phenomenal job! Thank you to Tim Stelzner for playing grandpa, Beth Elshoff for directing, Tammy Ales for directing the music, McKenna Schumaker for her solos, Grace Kreitner for her bass clarinet solo, Cason Ales for drumming, and Mary Silberger, Julie Kundel, Tom Emerick, Claire Schumaker, Lauren Plemmons, and Pastor Paris for aiding our youth during practice and performance.

Finally, thank you to our confirmation class for helping lead the entire worship service and to all our youth for participating: Cleo Mathias, Haydon Tompos, Maddie Emmons, Brylee Wangberg, Luke and Cason Ales, Marley and Parker Welsch, Brayden Hayes, Stella Warren, Keaton Sharar, Gigi, Michael and Emmett Metcalf, Skyler Plemmons, and Weston Busch.

## Congratulations Youth Group!

Congratulations to the Faith United Church of Christ Youth Group for earning the 2023 Giles Joslyn Youth Initiative Award! The youth group was nominated by Kim Warren for planning, funding, and executing a Music Bingo fundraising event. The event had over 60 people in attendance and raised over \$2,200 for the Kids First Fund at United Way.

The award was established in 2011 to recognize the talented, generous youth in our communities and honor the legacy of Giles Joslyn. With this award, the youth group received a \$1,000 stipend to be directed to their charitable cause of choice. They have chosen to donate this grant to the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital. They are arranging a time to present the check and take a tour of the hospital.

Please help us congratulate these students!

McKenna Schumaker, Claire Schumaker, Maddox Warren, Brynn Castle, Addie Weggen, Grace Kreitner

A note from Pastor: "We truly have some extraordinary youth! When I graduated high school with Giles he was nominated as most likely to change the world. My heart could not be more full to see how these youth are following in those inspiring footsteps in his honor!" ♥



## Bowling Party!

After worship on December 3rd our Youth celebrated with a bowling party ☺ ☐

We also want to give a BIG thank you to Kim Warren and LeeAnn Weggen for their unconditional love and dedication to this group, it truly makes all the difference!!!

JANUARY 2024 EVENTS

## Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

On Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup> school is out in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In his honor, the Pastor has set up a service opportunity for Faith to participate in, so that we might continue the building up of the Beloved Community. Pastor has set up a project with the Muscatine chapter of **Sleep in Heavenly Peace**. **All ages** are welcome to attend! There are two time slots you can volunteer for: **10 – Noon and/or 1 – 3 pm**. We will meet at DW Improvements (2110 Stewart Road) to build bed frames for those in our community in need of a place to rest their head. Even the little ones can help count screws and be a part of this project in (not so) small ways! Please sign up to participate on the red board in the back of the sanctuary or by talking with the Pastor or the office.

## Youth Fellowship Snow Star Event

January 20<sup>th</sup> from 3 to 5 pm

All Faith youth from ages 3 and up are welcome to join us for a tubing party! Carpooling is available for those who need a ride!

We will need a head count, so please sign up by January 14<sup>th</sup> at Noon. The signup sheet is on the red board at the back of the sanctuary.

## Blanket Sunday, January 14th

"Love never fails." - 1 Corinthians 13:8

When difficult times happen, a kind and loving response can make all the difference. That's why the Church World Service Blankets program was created—to give a kind, loving and tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them that they are not alone. Through the generosity of CWS partner organizations, congregations, and individual supporters, our most vulnerable neighbors around the world can feel safe and keep warm with fresh linens and clean sleeping quarters. When our neighbors are in need, even \$10 for a single blanket goes a long way. Please make checks payable to Faith and in the memo add Blanket Sunday.

## Adult Forum on Wednesdays

New Book in January!

*The Comforting Whirlwind, God, Job and the Scale of Creation* by Bill McKibben. From the Back Cover: Pointing to the now-familiar consequences of our self-centered environmental practices--the greenhouse effect, the ozone hole, and deforestation--Bill McKibben's mix of modern science and biblical wisdom forces us to acknowledge that growth and economic progress are not only undesirable but downright deadly. The office will have copies for sale, stop by to pick yours up today!

## Advent Decorations

We will be taking down the decorations Sunday, Jan. 14 after the worship hour.

## ONA meeting

Next meeting:  
January 4<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm

## Green Team

Next meeting:  
January 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm

## Friendship Circle

No meeting in January

The next meeting will be on February 1, 2024, at the Church, at 10:00 a.m.

## Muscatine Food Pantry

For January we will be looking for soups or stews that can be a meal example: Progresso, chicken and dumplings, Dinty Moore stew.

## Love in Action

Do you knit, crochet, quilt, or sew? Pastor Paris is looking to start a stockpile of prayer shawls and blankets that can be given to the newly baptized, confirmed, married, or to even comfort the grieving. If you'd like to contribute, please drop off your gifts at the office. If you have more questions about what to make, please speak with Pastor. Thank you for contributing to wrapping each other in God's love!

## THANK YOU NOTES FROM MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

- Dear Faith Family, Thank you for the generous care package! It was a great surprise and will be appreciated this Fall semester. Best Wishes, - **Brenden Schumaker**.
- Greetings! I wanted to personally Thank You for the recent donation. Your gift of \$1400 will provide 200-weekend packs to children facing hunger in your community! In addition, I wanted to share with you a bit of an update on the current landscape of the Food Bank. Right now, we are experiencing a novel situation. As you and I both know (and I'm sure feel in the checkout line), food prices continue to be high (an increase of 18%). In addition to that, our food donations from retailers and manufacturers are still down from what they were before the pandemic (a decrease of 29%). Add to that the increased need from people experiencing hunger – we have been purchasing about 62% more food than ever before to offset these trends. Last year we spent \$3 million on food – the year prior we spent \$1.3 million. As you can see we have had a challenging year and we do not see these trends changing in 2024. Your gift could not have come at a better time, We Appreciate You and your Congregation. Thank you and Merry Christmas! - **Dorie Arp-Benore, Director of Donor Relations at Riverbend Foodbank**.
- Thank you for your generous gift this semester. The staff of Faith United and the entire congregation are very kind to have done this for me. My semester was quite successful here at the University of Iowa. I am happy to say my time here has been a dream come true, and with God by my side and continued support from friends, family, and the lovely people at Faith United Church of Christ. I have no doubt it will continue to be great! All the best, - **Nathan Sharar**.
- Thank you to everyone who sent special and beautiful Birthday Cards to me, it made it much easier to turn 90 this year. You are all a great bunch of friends at Faith, and I am grateful. – **Darlene Vance**.
- Thank you so very much for all the birthday cards and wishes. I really appreciate all the special thoughts, - **Alice Huss**
- A BIG THANK YOU to all who helped in making the Children's Christmas Program a big success: Tim Stelzner for being Grandpa; McKenna Schumaker, Grace Kreitner, and the Faith Ringers for their wonderful music; Tammy Ales for leading the Krystal Bells and youth choir; Mary Silberger, Julie Kundel and Nancy Wangberg for dressing the children and behind the scenes crowd control; McKenna and Claire Schumaker and Lauren Plemmons for helping with the props and staging and whatever else they were asked to do; Frantz Silberger, John Elshoff; Dave Wangberg and Pastor Paris for helping to put up all the props before and during the program and taking them down after; the parents who brought their kids to participate; and to all the children who came and participated with smiles on their faces and songs in their hearts. All showed the true meaning of Christmas. - **Beth Elshoff**
- There aren't enough words to express my sincere gratitude for your generous Christmas gift! Calling me to be your pastor has been the gift of a lifetime. I am eternally grateful. Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU - **Pastor Paris**
- Thank you to everyone who shared your gifts with the staff, blessings, - **Lisa Allen**
- Dear Faith, on behalf of the Muscatine CROP Hunger Walk, it is my privilege to share with you a check for \$581.43 to be given to the Bag of Blessings Fund. It is presented in recognition of the outstanding work you're doing to help stop hunger and poverty in your community. The funds reflect that portion of the CROP Hunger Walk income to date in your community. Thank you and God Bless you for all you are doing in your community to help those in need.—**Rick Santos, Church World Service**.
- Faith family - thank you for the staff gift you gave at Christmas time - it was a pleasure to serve you this year and I'll enjoy the treats in the new year. - **Beth Elshoff**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, TALENTS, AND GENEROSITY!

## Local Outreach Advent Giving Totals

—Thank you for your Generosity! Total \$3,215.00

Emmaus Café	\$135.00	Local Veterans	\$255.00
Comm. Diaper Bank	\$215.00	Laundry Love	\$143.00
Diversity Center	\$125.00	Domestic Abuse	\$255.00
Christmas Outreach Giving	\$200.00		
MCSA	\$600.00		
Bag of Blessings	\$1,287.00		

The **BEST** Advent  
Gift **EVER**

## MCSA Room # 5 Homeless Shelter Sponsors - Thank you!

Jan 7 in memory of Sylvia Trumbull

Jan 14 Mark & Mary Odell for hopeful news in 2024

Jan 21 Scott & Kim Warren in honor of our wonderful choir

Jan 28 Jim & Kathy Trosen in honor of Pastor Paris White

Stop by the church office to see available Sunday's we have in 2024!

Or take a look at the available 2024 dates [Here](#)



## Thank You Notes from Faith UCC

- Thank you to Dave Wangberg for supervising the work done to get the heat back into the church offices, adding two new handicap parking signs, installing a new extinguisher, and replacing the dishwasher over at the parsonage, we are grateful!
- Thank you, Dan Huss, for helping put up the fire extinguisher in the sacristy.
- Thank you to Beth Elshoff for being the Christian Educator for these many years, we are very grateful for your time & talents, and for a wonderful Christmas Program this year!
- Thank you to Tammy Ales, Tim Stelzner, and all who helped lead an amazing Children's Christmas Program in December! Connie Miller and the Bell Choir, thank you!
- Thank you to McKenna Schumaker for the Solo Music that was enjoyed by all on the Christmas Program. Thank you to Grace Kreitner for your talents with the bass clarinet during the Christmas program, you have a gift, and thank you for sharing.
- Thank you to Melissa, Claire, and McKenna Schumaker, along with Connie Miller and the Faith Singers for the beautiful special music on December 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Thank you to Judy Wilson and Janelle Wilson-DuSavage, for their beautiful special music during the Christmas Eve Morning worship service.
- Thank you to Julie and Lauren Kundel, Connie Miller and the Faith Singer Choir for the beautiful music during the Christmas Eve worship service. Michelle Servadio Elias, for your talent with the Flute, all the music was a special Christmas gift.
- Thank you to Tammy Ales for leading our children in bell ringing! We hope they grow up with a strong desire to be involved with music!
- Thank you to all the families that helped present the advent candle lighting and readings, the Schumaker family, the Busch family, the Plemmons family, the Castle family, and the Ales family, along with the readers for the Dec. 31st worship time.
- Thank you to our Liturgist: The Confirmation class, Tom Emerick, Erin Plemmons, Julie Kundel, Tim Stelzner, and our readers on December 31<sup>st</sup>: Tom Emerick, Mike Morgan, Julie Kundel, Mike Johannsen, Sue Johannsen, and Mark Butterworth.
- Thank you to our Ushers and Greeters and Acolytes, our youth, Mark Odell, Liz Busch, Tom Emerick, Mike Morgan, Pat & Caleen Pagel, Ann Emerick, and Virginia Cooper.
- Thank you for the beautiful flower arrangements during advent: Lisa Shea, Sharon Hanssen, John Jones, and Mike & Sue Johannsen.
- Thank you to our Altar Committee member Nancy Wangberg for helping serve Holy Communion, along with Deb Hagy and Julie Kundel.
- Thank you to our refreshment hosts: Brook Tompos and Tom and Ann Emerick, and everyone who brought cookies to share on Christmas Eve.

FAITH UNITED MEMBER AND FRIENDS

### January Birthday Card Shower

January 5th  
Michael Morgan  
3301 Anastasia Pl  
Muscatine IA 52761

January 14th  
Watson Hays  
4825 Grist Mill Circle  
Newport Richey FL 34655

January 17th  
Sandra Roth  
Addington Pl., Apt. 207  
3515 Diana Queen Dr.  
Muscatine IA 52761

January 20th  
Sharon Hanssen  
2202 Oak Valley Drive  
Muscatine IA 52761

January 23rd  
Gary Lewis  
2807 University Dr #135  
Muscatine IA 52761

January 23rd  
Donald Frost  
13559 Avista Dr.  
Tampa FL 33624

January 30th  
Diane Littrel  
2446 Lucas Road  
Muscatine, IA 52761



### January Birthdays

- 3 – Matt Weggen
- 4 – Pat Burnette
- 5 – Michael Morgan
- 10 – Marcie Hanssen
- 12 – Windy Welsch
- 13 – Chris Rada
- 14 – Watson Hays
- 14 – Rich Carroll
- 14 – Tory Hunt
- 15 – Carla Reynolds
- 17 – Dustin Plemmons
- 17 – Sandra Roth
- 20 – Sharon Hanssen
- 23 – Tonya Estabrook
- 23 – Don Frost
- 23 – Mike Harrison
- 23 – Gary Lewis
- 23 – Steve Rada
- 24 – Alec Chartier
- 26 – Todd Schneider
- 30 – Diane Littrel

### January Anniversaries

- 18 – Justin & Lena Botkin
- 21 – Darla & Watson Hays

### Please Keep in Your Prayers

To all who are sick or with injuries, and to their Caregivers

- Sandra Roth
- Myung Sharar
- Chad Morgan
- Audrey Beckey
- Lane Clausen
- Nancy Hultquist
- Allison Odell
- Susan Willis
- Joey Merchan
- Patricia Fischer
- Allen Emerick
- Chris Wildasin
- Carl Platteter
- Norma Stelzner
- Cathy Deters
- Bob Murray
- Dennis Engel

### Sincere Condolences

Our fellow church member Ben Hanssen, 81, passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023. Please keep his family in your prayers. Condolences can be sent to Sharon Hanssen at 2202 Oak Valley Drive, Muscatine IA 52761. (Son) Jeff Hanssen and family at 3229 Mulberry Avenue, Muscatine IA 52761. (Daughter) Heidi Hoffman, 1224 Vista Court, Muscatine IA 52761.

### Weather Cancellations

Check KWQC TV 6, listing of cancellations at:  
Link: <https://www.kwqc.com/weather/closings>

Wednesday Night classes: If the Muscatine Schools are closed or let out early due to weather on a Wednesday, Christian Education activities at the church will be canceled.  
Sunday Worship service and events: Please use your judgment on driving conditions. If there is a winter weather advisory, please check to see if we will still be holding the event or worship service, or if the office will be closed due to the weather.

VESTRY NOTES MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023

Stewardship Pledge report. Sixty-three pledges yielding the pledge amount of \$131,733. Property report (fire safety, bell tower, HVAC, etc.) Deb called about an active shooter drill for Vestry and staff. New fire extinguishers have been procured. Julie is looking into details on an AED. A Genii lift or an electrician will be secured to change the lights in the sanctuary. Dave will follow up.

On January 7 Baby lyla Tompos will be baptized; there will be a reception after worship. Pastor Paris will be out of the office from Christmas to New Year's Day . The Handicapped parking spaces are not enough, designating more. Bylaw/Constitution updates – anything besides new members and voting?

Recruit four new vestry members for next year to replace the 4 leaving the vestry, plus other elected positions. Replace: Deb Hagy, Frantz Silberger, Julie Kundel, Dave Wangberg and will need an Auditor. Including the youth of the church was discussed. The pastor will share the Vestry agenda with the youth group to get their ideas. New Fire extinguishers hung at the entrance and in the sacristy. Annual Reports are due Dec. 15. Tim will moderate.

Worship Committee: Judy Wilson is having surgery on her hand after Christmas and won't be able to play until at least March. Sheryl Ringen will be our substitute during that time.

Christian Education Committee: We will not purchase the curriculum for the rest of the year. We will collectively come up with lessons from January 10th – February 7th. Then we will join in intergenerational education/dinner church with the Ecumenical Lenten Soup Supper Church hosted at Wesley UMC's Life Center. After Easter, we will finish off the year with our own lessons and have our end-of-the-year party on May 15. Confirmation classes will continue with the Pastor as planned, but they will also combine their class with the Ecumenical Soup Suppers during the weeks of Lent. Wednesday night adult forum is also looking at adjusting their time during Lent to participate in dinner church.

Youth Group: Thanks to a nomination by Kim Warren for their outstanding Musical Bingo fundraiser for the Kids First Fund, our youth were granted the 2023 Giles Joslyn Youth Initiative Award of \$1,000 by the Community Foundation of Muscatine. They have chosen to donate this grant to the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital. Kim will arrange a day to present the check to them and give the group a tour. We are also working on setting up a tubing trip (for Faith youth) at Snow Star in Andalusia, IL this January.

Outreach: We completed our Nov. challenge to match our gift of \$1000. We blew that out of the water with over \$2,670.00 in donations and 194 items collected.

**11. Quick Items: 12. Upcoming Events:**

- Sunday, Jan 7, Baptism during worship with a reception after.
- Sunday, Jan. 14, Blanket Sunday Offering
- Sunday, Jan. 14, Take down the Christmas décor after worship.

## A New Year at Faith! New Congregational Life Grants

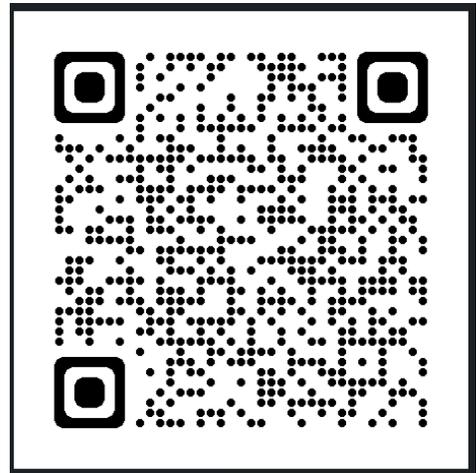
These grants help us to be an active and supportive Church. If you have a request for a Grant to help support our spiritual and mission interests, you can find the request Form [HERE](#). **Forms are Due in the office on February 15<sup>th</sup> at noon.**

<b>General Fund for 2023 - End of November</b>	
Giving, Contingency to..	\$160,382
Expenses to Date	\$159,652
Total Budget	\$206,208

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH FAITH



Welcome  
to the Faith UCC  
Apparel Store,  
click on the link: [Here](#)  
or scan the QR Code  
on the right, to see the  
Church Apparel Shop.



VOF JANUARY 2024

**Faith United**  
**Church of Christ**  
3307 Mulberry Avenue

### Faith United Church of Christ - Open and Affirming Statement

We the members of Faith United Church of Christ declare ourselves to be an open and affirming church.

We affirm all people are individuals of sacred worth created in the image of God.

We embrace and celebrate the diversity of the human family and God's unconditional love for ALL, including but not limited to people of all ages, races, ethnicities, cultures, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, socio-economic conditions, physical, mental and emotional abilities, faith backgrounds, nationalities, marital status, languages, and education levels.

We invite and encourage all persons into full participation by sharing in the life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of membership in our Faith community.

We welcome all to journey together in faith toward greater understanding, compassion and mutual respect.

We believe that in meeting each other in Christian love, God's spirit frees us all to give, to grow, to be ourselves, because, **"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE."**

- adopted April 7, 2019

### Ways to Continue Supporting the Work of the Church:

The church is more than just a building. We the people are the church, and we will continue to find ways to be a community that shares in the love of Christ together. To help maintain all that we do, your monetary offerings to the church are welcome.

*Our options for giving currently are:*

- Drop off your envelopes to the locked mailbox by the front door, in Box 3307 with a Faith UCC sign on the box used by the church. (Push it to the back of the box after opening with the front handle). If there is mail going out clipped to the front, just slip yours over the mail into the back of the box and we will retrieve it.
- Send in the mail to 3307 Mulberry, Muscatine Iowa 52761.
- Talk with your bank to set up a direct payment to the church.
- Use our website link for the church's PayPal, transfer charges apply.
- **You can now send funds through Zelle if your bank has that option.**

Thank you for your generosity.