



# GOOD NEWS

Congregational United Church of Christ

February 2020

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

- Romans 12:1-2

One of the many jobs I've had in my life was selling a product which claimed it could help people learn a new language naturally, quickly, and easily. Now, please don't infer my use of the word "claimed" to mean that the product *didn't* work. Far from it! In the work-based communication systems I had access to, I spoke with longer tenured sales people who had great results and were always sharing the things that helped them be successful learning another language, in some cases *multiple* other languages. It was impressive!

The problem was, as is so often the case, how each of us defines "easy" or "natural" or "quick." Because it wasn't like I could sit down, play a video game that felt like I was playing Super Mario Bros. for several hours and just emerge capable of discussing existentialism in French. It is still learning a new language as an adult after all. It takes dedication. In fact, every one of those sales people who had success were deeply committed to learning and incorporated other tools to help flesh out their understanding of their new language. They would go to local "meet ups" for opportunities to speak in the language or had friends and family members who were natural speakers they could practice with. Even the very best and most intuitive methods for doing something or learning something requires our effort and dedication.

So many people would purchase the product excitedly. They would use it a couple of times but then, when the lessons got a little tougher or their lives got a little busier, they would put it aside and never return to it again. (I know this happened because they would return the product and I'd get

that commission I'd received taken out of my future check...sometimes months after the sale.) This is not unfamiliar to any of us I would imagine, especially in this season of New Year's resolutions. Getting excited about something but then not following through because it was more difficult than I expected or I am just too comfortable in my rut, is a very relatable thing. And it happens no matter how much we might say we want more for ourselves.

What's true for people is usually true for systems and communities as well. Churches get excited about a program or process or person that is supposed to "fix" things or "grow" the congregation, but quickly the excitement wanes and people begin looking for the next thing promising to make everything better even more easily. It turns out, there's no one magic, easy thing to watch or listen to that can fix everything. Any community revitalization program can work, just like most any language learning method can work, if one is willing to roll up his sleeves and put some time and effort into following through.

In the scripture above Paul exhorted the believers in Rome present themselves as a "living sacrifice." He instructed them to be transformed and to discern the will of God. These are all actions. They are how we manage to live "not [...] conformed to this world." Faith isn't passive. It is something we practice. It requires practice to remain active in our lives. To be clear, the grace, love, and peace of God are always, *always* available to us. But if we become disconnected from our scripture, from our prayer lives, from our gratitude and praise, we will not have the tools to

*Continued on page 2*

Continued from page 1

access that love and peace in the moments we most need them.

So, as we move into February 2020, I invite you to give yourself grace on some resolutions that may have fallen away but might not have been very important, but take some time to reflect and commit (or recommit) to changes and actions which could provide a deeper connection to meaning and purpose in your life. Don't let your faith get dusty on a shelf, buried beneath so many other things you can't find it when you need it, or even return it where you got it from. Don't let go of your faith. Take this new year as an opportunity to rediscover the beauty faith can bring into your life.

May God bless you with a happy, healthy, and faith-filled year,



Pastor Shaun



### Office Hours

Pastor Shaun is in Evansville much of the week and always happy to make appointments for visits, meetings, or just a conversation. To get on his calendar you can speak with him directly or Denise. However, you are always invited to stop in for a chat when Pastor Shaun is in his office. The precise times he is in the office change because of community meetings, outside worship services, and visits, but you are most likely to find him there 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Monday - Thursday. Though Wednesdays he is frequently here all day because of evening meetings.

Pastor Shaun looks forward to seeing you soon!

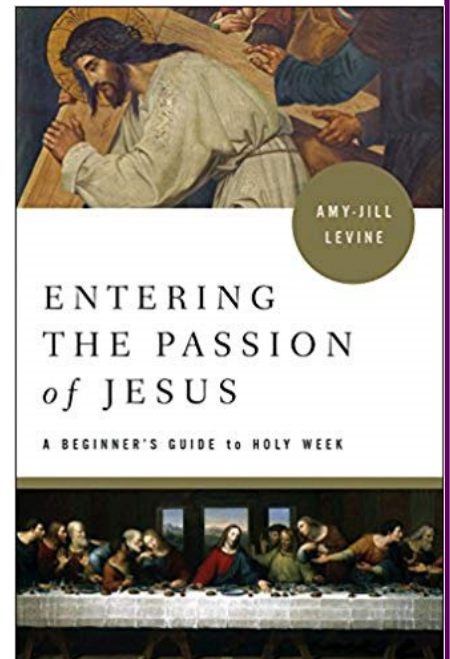
Our Lenten Study this year will be *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week* by New Testament Scholar Amy-Jill Levine. The description from the back of the book reads in part:

"In *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. She shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience."

Books can be ordered from your favorite online bookseller, or speak to Denise if you would like the church to order a copy for you. In addition to the readings, discussion sessions will begin with a video in which Dr. Levine offers some insights into each week's topic.

Sessions will be Sunday mornings in Lent (March 1st—April 5th) beginning at 9:15 a.m. If you are interested in this book study but that time does not work for you, please speak with Pastor Shaun. There is discussion about adding a second weekly session if there is interest.

This year, join with your church family and prepare for Holy Week by taking time to reflect on all the things Jesus risked in his life and ministry.



## IN OUR PRAYERS

✝ Kent and Mary Libby

✝ Angela Wyse

---

Thank You!



Thank you to Norma Bjugstad for bringing a cake and helping with the Birthday party at the Manor, a long with the help of Ardis Zwicky.  
- Ruth Sperry

A thank you to Margaret Brigham and Angela Wyse for providing and using their talent for the Christmas Eve service. It was very much appreciated. Wonderful.  
- Elvina Patterson

### Lenten Soup Suppers



Over the past few years it has become more difficult to find volunteers to contribute to the weekly Wednesday Soup Suppers during Lent. This year there has been discussion in Diaconate and the Council to no longer have the Lenten Suppers (this year March 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, and April 1st) and have only the Potluck Suppers on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday.

If you would like to volunteer to provide soup and/or salad and host one of those evenings so these fellowship opportunities can continue, please speak with Norma before the February 5th Diaconate meeting where the final decision about the suppers will be made. Thank you for all you are doing for the church.



In February we will be collecting: toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss and mouthwash.

Thank you to all who donated toilet paper in January.



5:45 potluck

6:30 Worship Service

Sign up sheet for potluck is on the bulletin board in the back of the sanctuary.

### **Lakeland University Concert Choir**

Thursday, February 27 at 7 p.m.  
Salem UCC  
502 Mark Dr., Verona

Friday, Feb. 28 at 7 p.m.  
McFarland UCC  
5710 Anthony St., McFarland



Everyone is invited to attend;  
no fee and no tickets required.

**CAMP SCHOLARSHIP ARE AVAILABLE AGAIN THIS YEAR.**

Church camp and warm weather will soon be here. Monies are available from the Mission portion of the Endowment Fund.

If you are interested in receiving scholarship money please fill out the camp scholarship form below and turn it into the church office. Additional forms are available in church office.



Congregational United Church of Christ

**Camp Scholarship Form**

**Camp Scholarship Policy**

Scholarships to Wisconsin UCC camps are available to all members and friends of this congregation. Each scholarship will be for 25% of the total cost of the camp. Additional scholarship funds may be available based on individual need.

All campers are responsible for paying the initial deposit required by the camp.

The Christian Education Committee asks that this form be filled out, submitted, and approved before attending the camp.

Please indicate any need for additional funding, camp equipment, etc. in the spaces provided below. Please note that if you check the box for additional funding, confidentiality will be maintained.

It is the goal of Christian Education Committee that no one is denied the opportunity for this enriching experience at our UCC camps because of lack of funds.

-----  
**Camp Scholarship Form**

Camper's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Camp Session and Location: \_\_\_\_\_

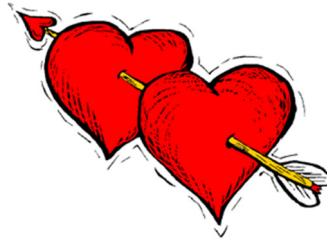
Total Cost of Camp: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Camp: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Additional Funds Needed

( ) Specific equipment needed. Please list: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Return Form to Church Office.





## **February Anniversaries**

Roger & Jolene Schnabel 14<sup>th</sup>

Gilman & Hattie Harry 25<sup>th</sup>

### **February 1**

Terri Weaver

Sage Beck

### **February 3**

John Rasmussen

### **February 5**

Don Fago

### **February 12**

Nancy Arthur



## **February Birthdays**

### **February 13**

Luis Hermanson

### **February 14**

Barb McCool

### **February 15**

Elanor Craig

### **February 23**

Joann Brunsell

Norma Bjugstad

### **90th Birthday Party!**

Ladies we will be celebrating Joann Brunsell's 90th birthday on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. at the Main Street Café. We will have coffee or tea and coffee cake.

Everyone is welcome. Come and join the fun. Please call Ardis Zwicky if you plan to attend at 608-882-4269 .

Joann suggested no gifts , a card would be wonderful.

Ardis Zwicky



40  
+  
days  
of Lent

# February 2020

40  
+  
days  
of Lent

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Piano Lessons 9:00-2:00
2 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Worship/S.S.	3	4	5 Diaconate Meeting 5:45 p.m.	6	7	8 Piano Lessons 9:00-2:00
9 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Worship/S.S.	10	11	12 Trustee Meeting 7:00 p.m.	13	14 Valentine's Day	15 Piano Lessons 9:00-2:00
16 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Worship/S.S.	17	18	19 Council Meeting 6:00 p.m.	20	21	22 Piano Lessons 9:00-2:00
23 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Worship/S.S.	24	25	26 Ash Wednesday 5:45 Potluck 6:30 Service	27	28	29 Piano Lessons 9:00-2:00