

## A Note from Pastor Craig

Greetings! The “hot stove league” is in high-gear right now for baseball fans. The term refers to the manner in which baseball lovers make it from Christmas to the beginning of Spring Training, by discussing their team’s off-season trades/free agent signings and speculating on their chances to contend in the upcoming year. An iconic painting by Norman Rockwell shows two men holding baseball publications while sitting in chairs in front of a wood stove. One man is enthusiastically promoting his team with grand gestures. The other sits with a disgusted look on his face.

“Hot stove league” is a good description of January 2020 for Minnesota United Methodists – we’ve been in the papers a lot, with much of it not being complementary. Remember these stories?

- The recent proposal for the United Methodist Church to divide into two denominations over our differences regarding human sexuality resulted in headlines: “United Methodist Church is going to split.”
- Peaceful Grove United Methodist Church in Cottage Grove is going to close and restart at a future date in an effort to revitalize and reach out to younger families. The headline: “Cottage Grove church to usher out gray-haired members in effort to attract more young parishioners.”

In both cases news organization’s reports were inaccurate. While including important facts and getting the kernel of the

story right, they missed important details and in doing so ended up incorrectly reporting the story.

While our Annual Conference office and Bishop Ough have issued statements clarifying each situation, the initial stories are what most people remember, which is unfortunate. In and out of season Minnesota Annual Conference Communications people work hard to provide accurate information to churches and to assist pastors and church leaders in interacting with the media.

It’s obvious to me Ely United Methodists are well-informed. You pass along articles to me and mention what you’ve heard about our denomination. I’m grateful you care about our church and are paying attention to what’s happening in our denomination in Minnesota and beyond.

While our church is affected by both situations, I don’t think either will influence us very much one way or another. When you live at the end of the road, in a relatively small town, surrounded by miles and miles of trees, where winters are long and summers are short, you learn to live with all kinds of people and take the long view of things.

Thank you for being who you are. I’m glad to be your pastor and look forward to 2020 with you. I hope you have a blessed February!

Pastor Craig

**Contact Information and Office Hours  
for February 2020**

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For this month, Pastor Craig is planning to be in the church office from 9 AM to 11 AM on Tuesdays through Saturdays but he'll be out of town Friday & Saturday, February 7-8.

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**ALL-CHURCH POTLUCK  
Sunday, February 9, 2020  
immediately following the Worship Service**

It's time again for our quarterly all-church potluck!! Don't miss another wonderful opportunity to spend time in worship together and then spend some valuable and precious moments in fellowship together with a meal.

For this particular potluck, the Olson family will be providing a good sized birthday cake for dessert (and doing some birthday celebrating in the process, of course) – so, if you can, please bring whatever main dish/side dish/salad/snack etc. you'd like to share – other than a dessert! Even if you don't have an item to bring - come anyway and share in the food and fellowship. There's always plenty!

**A New Sponsored Child**

As mentioned in the March 2019 *FISH*, our church donates regularly to *Children's International* to cover the cost of sponsoring a child. Normally we are assigned a specific child and we get to hear from or about the same child through his or her growing years. Our most recent "child", Evelin, whom we sponsored for over a decade, has turned 18 and we now have been assigned a new child!! Her name is Lizzbeth and she lives in Guatemala City, Guatemala. She is currently in preschool and likes dance, math and art. For fun she spends her free time exercising, playing with siblings and playing soccer. She's only 6 years old so we will probably be sponsoring her for the next 10 years or so and will be able to follow her growth and development with regular updates from *Children's International*, and sometimes letters from her. Please check out her picture and learn more about her by checking out the information sheet on the small bulletin board in the annex just above the recycling basket.

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**Small Group Sessions**

As discussed in the November *FISH*, we are holding small group sessions to share and explore different topics from the 2019 Annual Minnesota Conference. The topics for the November sessions were "The 2020 General Conference/The Lydia Scarves" and "The Way Forward". The topic for the two January sessions was "Evangelism for Non-evangelists". We have had good participation at these sessions.

As mentioned previously, in order to offer our congregation maximum opportunities to participate, each session is offered on a Sunday at 1:00 PM, the next day (Monday) at 3:30 PM, and the day after that (Tuesday) at 6:00 PM. The same topic is discussed at each of these three opportunities. Sessions are designed to be 30 to 45 minutes in length and feature short video presentations along with topic discussions. Session facilitators are Jay Tomlinson and Lucy Diesslin.

The remaining two sessions will be

**Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>** (1 PM) **3<sup>rd</sup>** (3:30 PM) **4<sup>th</sup>** (6 PM)

**Prejudice, Bias, Racism or Inclusion**

- What do the MN UMC leaders say?
- What can one person do about it?
- How do we propagate Racism?
- What is being done to eliminate Racism?

**Feb 9<sup>th</sup>** (1 PM) **10<sup>th</sup>** (3:30 PM) **11<sup>th</sup>** (6 PM)

**Community Outreach & Witness**

- What are other UMC churches doing?
- What are we doing?
- What more could/should we be doing?

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**Community Bible Study**

In addition to the Small Group Sessions mentioned above, we have another study opportunity. Chris Maroni, Phd, a native Elyite and former Mesabi Community College professor, will be holding a 12 week community Bible Study at our church.

The focus will be on the Early Christian Church from 33 CE to 200 CE (CE=Christian Era). It will be on Thursdays from 11:30 AM to 1 PM upstairs in the back of our sanctuary or in our Fellowship Hall depending on attendance. It started on January 23 and will continue each week until April 9. This study is open to anyone who is interested.

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**ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL – Minutes**

**January 22, 2020**

**Call To Order:** Chair Dan Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**Attendees (9):** Lucy Diesslin, Craig Haberman, Bev & Dan Johnson, Margie & Mark Olson, Keith Rue, Jay & Jeanne Tomlinson.

**Opening:** Jay Tomlinson provided the “Opening Thought” from *Poems and Philosophies* by Walter J. Kent. **Christians Are People:** Heard a Preacher over the radio say, “You can’t go to Heaven by being good.” Maybe not, but you can bring a lot of Heaven to earth by so doing.

**Minutes:** The December 8 Ad Hoc Ad Council meeting minutes, and the December 18, 2019 Church Conference & Ad Council minutes, were approved as printed in the January *FISH*. Motion to approve by Jay Tomlinson; second by Lucy Diesslin. Motion passed.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Mark Olson presented the December 2019 Treasurer’s Report which included the 2019 totals for comparison to the budget. He commented how the December receipts were the highest he could ever remember. Receipts & disbursements for December were \$16,543.48 &

\$10,625.21, respectively. Total receipts & disbursements for 2019 were \$114,366.32 & \$109,063.59. He pointed out that for the year our receipts exceeded disbursements by \$5,302.73. We did have a delayed fuel delivery that would normally have been delivered and paid for in December but wasn't done until early January. Although some line items were over budget, many were well under budget so we ended up under budget for our 2019 budget items by \$3,956.45. Ending balances were: Undesignated Funds \$21,091.02; Building Fund \$4,112.49; Memorial Fund \$10,35.92; Parish Health Ministries \$340; Gift of Giving Project \$7.81. Motion to accept by Jeanne Tomlinson, second by Bev Johnson. Motion approved. Mark also asked if it was ok to go ahead and pay the annual amount for our Church Multi-coverage Insurance. Since it saves money to pay annually rather than monthly, and we have the funds, we agreed he should do that.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- **Trustees:** Margie Olson reported they hadn't had a meeting but that they are hoping to address the large snow piles in the lower parking lot that could cause problems for the neighbors. She's going to approach Phil Hegfors about possibly removing a lot of the snow before it gets too packed down. She also reported there was a minor toilet problem at the parsonage and Pastor Craig took care of it.
- **Worship:** Bev Johnson reported that the committee met on January 7 to discuss the Christmas decorating and the decorations. It was felt the turn-out was good for the decorating and take down and the process that

was used to assign people to different groups and having the "experienced" folks do more guiding than doing worked well. The tree tinsel will be replaced with something that is more uniform and the red bows will be replaced with red balls. All the greenery garlands with older bows will get new bows to match those made for the garlands in the front of the church. We discussed the problems some people had with the candles at the Christmas Eve service and decided that this year we should use 4 ushers for speeding up the lighting and turn off the fans since that makes the candles burn a lot faster. She reported that so far folks are signing up for ushering, scripture readers & refreshments. She'll continue to put the reminder in the bulletin about signing up. For Lent we'll be having an Ash Wednesday service and a Tenebrae service on Maundy Thursday as was done last year.

- **Outreach:** Jay Tomlinson reported the *Gift of Giving* project was a success again. They were able to purchase more gifts this year by taking advantage of Black Friday sales. They could have used more gift distributors at Boundary Waters. There weren't many who came to help at Carefree Living either but the space was very limited so it worked out. Tricia Schreffler will be coordinating the project this year. Jay also reported the *Keep Warm* project, a multi-church project coordinated in our church by Paula Mattila, went very well. They distributed ~150 coats, 69 hats, 35 scarfs, 56 gloves/mittens, 36 socks, 45

boots and a few more items to 78 students, who were very appreciative.

- **Visioning:** Jay Tomlinson reported that Kid's Club has been changed a little for this year, having more activities like cooking and visiting nursing homes rather than lessons. Sharon & Devon Luthens have been helping Jan Rue with this. In response to a suggestion made at the previous Visioning Committee meeting, three members each reported on churches they had visited. Jay also reported they are still discussing the more detailed results of the survey but don't have any new ideas yet to address areas that were "below average". One discussion item is how to encourage congregation members to "tell their story". The Small Group sessions that Jay and Lucy are holding address that.
- **UMW:** Lucy Diesslin reported that the UMW had just met earlier in the day and had discussed the changes being made to handle funeral hospitality by a "Celebration of Life Committee". Marge Olson will be the primary contact for that committee who will then contact the persons responsible for different areas: Patty Niskala for Table Set-up; Patty Rusco for Kitchen Crew & Servers; Carol Linneman for Clean-up and Pam Turnbull as a backup where needed. It was decided we'll serve sandwiches, potato chips, pickles and bars. Volunteers will be asked to bring bars. The sandwiches will be made in the kitchen just prior to the service with supplies purchased at the store.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. **All Night Grad Party:** Mark Olson brought up the request he had received in 2019 from the All Night Grad Party committee for a donation. Mark moved that we donate \$50 as we have in the past; second by Bev Johnson. Motion passed. We have two seniors graduating this year: Luke Olson & Lauren Porthan.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Updates needed on web site:** Dan Johnson commented that he had recently reviewed our church web site and noted that a number of pieces are out of date. He asked Ad Council members to each do a review and make a note of pieces that need to be changed and bring back the results to the February Ad Council meeting.
2. **Need for a third checkbook signer:** Mark Olson reported that he and Butch (Blaine) Diesslin are the only signers for the General Fund checkbook and that they will both be out of town for a stretch later this year. He recommended we add another signer. It was moved that Jay Tomlinson be added as a third signer, making three official signers: Mark Olson, Blaine Diesslin and Jay Tomlinson. Motion by Bev Johnson; second by Margie Olson. Motion passed.
3. **Confirmation Sunday:** Pastor Craig reported that he has been having regular confirmation classes with Matt Johnson, Lauren Olson and Lily Tedrick with help from Keith and Sheri Rue and they will be ready for Confirmation by this spring. He would like to schedule

it for late April, early May. He'll discuss timing with the families keeping in mind that Memorial Sunday will be May 11.

4. **Directory 2020:** Jeanne Tomlinson commented that we normally do a new church pictorial directory every 5 years and it is time to do another one. She asked if it was ok to contact *Lifetouch* who has done our last few directories to get the process in motion. The group agreed for her to do that.
5. **Community Bible Study:** Pastor Craig reported that Chris Maroni will be holding a 12 week community Bible Study. It will be on Thursdays from 11:30 AM to 1 PM in our Fellowship Hall starting January 23. This study is about the early Christian church and will be open to anyone who is interested.

**Correspondence** - None

**Items of Information**

1. **January Pasty Report:** We made 699; deposits were \$4,221; cost was \$1,506.67; net income was \$2,714.33.
2. **Next meeting: February 19, 2020 at 7:00 PM**

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 PM with a unison reciting of *The Lord's Prayer*.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanne Tomlinson, Ad Council Secretary

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**United Methodist Women (UMW) Minutes  
January 22, 2020 1-3 PM**

President Lucy Diesslin opened the meeting at 1 PM with prayer and a unison reading of the UMW pledge with Marge Forsberg, Beverly Johnson, Sharon Luthens, Patty Niskala, Margie Olson, Donna Rusco, Janice Tessier, Jeanne Tomlinson, Pam Turnbull, Jeri Walburn and Pastor Craig in attendance.

The minutes from our November 20, 2019 meeting were read and approved. Motion to approve by Bev Johnson; second by Donna Rusco.

Sharon Luthens reported that our current account balances are: checking \$3,639.94; savings (1) \$5,229.22; CD \$10,000 and savings (2) \$1,006.19. We learned that UMW only needed to pay \$153.50 to make our \$1,000 goal for the 2019 Reach-Renew-Rejoice campaign.

**Old Business**

- **Christmas Luncheon:** Jeanne Tomlinson reported that we had 23 women attending our luncheon at the GEL. It was deemed a success.

**New Business**

- **Church Supplies:** Jeanne Tomlinson reported that Toni Floyd had turned over to Pastor Craig the details for ordering the church supplies that UMW covers, such as coffee, M&Ms, paper goods, trash bags, cleaning supplies, etc. Jeanne asked for volunteers to help set up a process for tracking and ordering that would not rely on just one person. Bev Johnson volunteered.
- **Celebration of Life Committee:** Margie Olson reported that the group taking over Funeral Hospitality had

decided to call their group the *Celebration of Life Committee*. They had met and decided to divide up the responsibilities as follows:

- Margie Olson: Contact person for the committee
- Patty Niskala: Set-up
- Patty Rusco: Kitchen Crew/Servers
- Carol Linneman: Clean-up
- Pam Turnbull: Back up as needed

They had discussed some ideas about the food and wanted to bring these ideas to the UMW for final decisions. After some discussion it was decided that we would serve sandwiches, chips, pickles, and bars (not cakes). We would recruit volunteers for bars and possibly the chips with specific instructions about type, but everything else would be purchased. Sandwiches would be made at the church prior to the service. Jeanne Tomlinson moved that UMW cover the costs for these food items and that we then inform the family about the costs and ask them to make a free will donation to cover it. Second by Bev Johnson & Janice Tessier. Motion passed.

- **UMW Opportunities:** Lucy Diesslin reported that she'd received mailings about the following opportunities for UMW members later this year.
  - **May 5-15:** Volunteering for General Conference that will be held in Minneapolis
  - **June 26-28:** UMW North Central Jurisdiction Quadrennial Meeting in Sioux Falls, SD
  - **July 11-19:** Mission Studies – contact Lucy for details if you would like more information.

We adjourned the business meeting portion at 1:37 PM.

For our devotional study, we read Chapter 6 of our study book, *Attitude is Your Paint Brush - It Colors Every Situation*. This chapter was about having an "Attitude of Perseverance" and never giving up on your commitment, love and Jesus.

We then enjoyed a delicious lemon cake supplied by Margie Olson. The hostess for February 26 will be Jeri Walburn.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanne Tomlinson  
Secretary

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### **JANUARY BLUES**

By Walter J. Kent

I am glad that January plagues  
my life but once a year.  
I live within its space of time  
in apprehensive fear.

So many oldsters slip on ice:  
fall down and break a bone.  
Which handicaps their living as  
they struggle alone.

This hazard and so many others  
come with ice and snows.  
I always say a thankful prayer  
when January goes.