

THE CRUSADER

Web Site: christchurchhome.com

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH JANUARY, 2021

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Ministry in 2021

Welcome Children of God to the new year of 2021. We have been through a lot as a family, as a nation and as a world. We are a people who know loss and pain, but we also know of God's faithfulness and love. In this article we will be looking at new and innovative ways in which to join Jesus where He is already at work; this is the heart of ministry.

One of our areas of outreach and growth will focus upon drawing in college students and young adults during the coming year. We have already made many connections on Mil-

ikin University's campus and I have heard of many people who long to have a spiritual family and home. We yearn to reach these people with the love and exuberance of the Lord Himself. In so doing, we will be looking into creating a Saturday night service. This service would look differently than our more traditional service on Sunday mornings. The style of music and atmosphere will be different. There will be a lot more creative freedom in the focus of the service. I pray that we can create an environment where college students would lead the worship and are the ones who are doing the technical aspects of leadership.

On top of this, I am planning on creating more opportunities to partner with Millikin and Richland for outreach in the Decatur community and in church ministry. Some of these may include concert on the green, college small groups, coffee house events, and much more. All these events are ways of building authentic relationships in which people are caring about each other and praising God together. This is a call to reach out to those who are not being reached out by churches in our community.

Another area of growth will include discipleship. God is calling us to know Him more intimately. This means knowing His word (both written—Scripture and Living—Jesus). We need to be people who are discipled so that we may be those who are discipling others. In this family, we have many

who have been faithfully following God for many years. There is such an importance in reaching out to those, no matter the age, who are longing for God and His Kingdom to transform their entire lives. There are people of all ages who need the love of Jesus. Through our outreaches there are people who have come to me with their stories of longing, who want to be part of the family of God. God is leading His hungry and thirsty children to us as we join Him in His work.

In our story of Scripture, there is beautiful relationship of discipleship that takes place through the lives of Paul and Timothy. Paul was always encouraging Timothy, his spiritual son, to live in constant intimacy with Jesus. Timothy was a young man looking to be led by the Holy Spirit into His calling of being a ministry of Jesus' Gos-

pel. Paul was there to help guide him, in love, through the journey of life and faith. We all need to have a Paul in our lives. And in this family, I see people who are like Paul in this analogy. I have seen and heard the stories of people like Timothy in our family and in our community. We need to be taught in how to disciple people so that we may be given the eyes of Christ to see the Timothies in our daily lives. This is an invitation to relational ministry; the ministry which was heart and soul of Jesus' life. We are calling people into relationship with Christ—with life Himself.

In short, I want to thank this entire family for all the love, encouragement, and support for the ministry we have already accomplished in the power of the Spirit. As we journey together through the start of 2021 and currently are not able to have in person worship, please know that we appreciate your faithful giving. The ministry of the church continues. We are looking forward to

the day that we can meet again in person and are planning for continued outreach.

Now, God is calling us to greater ministry with Him as we seek His face and seek those who yearn to be drawn into Christ's beautiful family. May we journey with God in 2021 in joy, faith, and love as we seek to be found in Him and in fellowship and ministry to all the world starting here in Decatur.

In love,

Rev. Braden Parks



It is not too late to send a sympathy card or thinking of you card to Marilyn Haynes' daughter. Her name and address:

Nancy Garner
300 S. West St.
Warrensburg, IL
62573

2020 is close to being over. Soon 2021 will arrive. There is always a lot of talk about New Years Resolutions. I have never been successful with the "resolutions."

In 2019, I started choosing a Word of the Year and I like it 100 times better. I pick a word that encompasses what I wish to accomplish during the year. I can set mini goals each month in areas that I would like to focus on. 30 days is much easier to wrap your head around than 365 days. Each month you can focus on something new or refocus your effort.

In 2019, my word was "determination." I had some areas that I was determined to tackle. Of course, I got derailed when dad was hospitalized then passed away. I did tackle some things on my wishlist, but processing grief and an estate takes time.

For 2020, my word was "Polaris"- the guiding star. I got sidelined again by another family death and the pandemic. But I was successful in closing dad's estate this year which was one of my areas to focus on.

For 2021, I have chosen "Recenter." The last two years have changed my views and focus. I see things a bit differently than before, so now I need to work on refinding my center. I would like to strengthen my health, strengthen connections, tackle household organization, and increase self-care. So each month, I will ask myself what one thing in each area that I can tackle to help refind my center.

Do you pick a Word of the Year? If you do, what is your word for 2021?

Written by Jenny Garver

One activity I really enjoy is learning something new every day. All we need to do is listen more and talk less. As long as we continue to open our minds, we can learn so much from everyone we meet. I have learned various things from members of our congregation, and the knowledge I gained is precious to me. One word comes to mind, and that is **metacognition**. It means "thinking about thinking" (brookings.edu 11/15/17). The first time I heard this word, I was attending an adult education training session. It seemed like double talk, but the more I considered how we learn, it really made sense. It ties in with the ways I have learned from others and the Christ UMC people who have taught me new skills.

A few years ago, **Mary Ferguson** taught the United Methodist Women how to make sleep mats from strips of plastic grocery bags. Each of us knew how to flatten the bags and cut them into strips to crochet the sleep mats. However, several of us did not know how to crochet. **Erma Lewis** took the time to teach me how to single crochet so I could complete one of the sleep mats for North East Community Fund. Several women in our church completed many of the mats. These were distributed to people who slept on the streets, and it was a thrill to see people carrying the mats over their shoulders with the straps that completed each project.

Harold Keown taught me how to prepare the deposit for the church offering every Monday morning as well as how to record the individual giving. At that time, I was the financial secretary, and Harold had been involved in the financial aspects of our church for over 40 years. Even though he was well versed in this skill, he took the time and showed patience as he taught me how to "think about thinking" and complete the job in a precise manner.

Written by Karen Rivera

Audrey Maurice taught me about the quilters and the dedication of the women in the group. Learning about the strength and skill of these women was a significant experience in the bonds of Christian fellowship.

Jenny Garver is another person whose posts on the internet have inspired this article about learning from others and “thinking about thinking”. I read her post about Word of the Year a few days ago, and that led to researching the idea. I had never heard of the concept, but it has proven to be a springboard that helped me choose my Word of the Year. Jenny wrote a wonderful article about how she chose her word for 2021, and she gave permission for the article to be included in the January, 2021 Crusader. It is printed on page 4.

One of the articles I found is from dayspring.com. It is truly a good explanation of the Word of the Year.

YOUR 2021 Word of the Year

Here it is, January. Another new year, but this one feels different than ever before. The things that we went through together in 2020 have changed us, shaped us, challenged us, broken us, healed us, and transformed us into totally new people than we were at the end of 2019. 2020 was the year of life change – big and small.

So when we ask ourselves, “What are you going to do differently in 2021?”, we’re not just talking New Year’s resolutions, which usually end up forgotten and replaced with discouragement and a feeling of failure. We are talking life change.

What if you replaced your resolutions with truth from God’s Word? What if you chose to focus on this one theme all year, helping you filter decisions, calm emotions, and face each day with resolve? God’s Word serves as a reminder of His truth in your life and inspires you to live your faith each and every day. Let us help you discover who God is calling you to be in 2021 – a theme from His Word that may just meet you exactly where you are and help you live out 2021 in an intentional way. (dayspring.com)

The internet has an endless list of words that a person can choose, but my word is **HOPE**. 2020 has been a hard year, and I have felt discouraged by health issues, loss of dear friends, restrictions on churches, businesses, and restaurants. As I see that calendar turn to 2021, I am hopeful that the coming year will be exciting, challenging, and full of happy times.

Written by Karen Rivera



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS	
6	AUDREE DENTON
8	SHARON PARKS
16	JOEL HAWKINSON
18	BRIAN KELLER
24	MARY ANN CARR



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES	
11	BILL AND SHIRLEY WALKER

Prayers for all members of our church!