

The Church Bell

The Newsletter of the

United Church of Christ, Congregational

226 East Main Street, Vermillion, South Dakota 57069

www.uccvermillion.org; uccv@uccvermillion.org; 605/624-3120

December 2011-January 2012

Special Worship in December

Please come and join us for these wonderful and unique worship celebrations during this holy season!

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| December 4, 2011 | 10:30 am | Advent Taize and Communion |
| <i>A special communion service in the manner of Taize, including music by a USD string quartet.</i> | | |
| December 11, 2011 | 10:30 am | 67th Annual Carol Service |
| <i>Our Adult and Bell Choirs will share a rich array of carols both old and new, featuring our UCC music team and friends.</i> | | |
| December 18, 2011 | 10:30 am | Children's Christmas Pageant |
| <i>"Singing Our Story" - our sacred story presented by our LAF and BC children through the rich drama and poetry of our favorite Christmas carols.</i> | | |
| December 24, 2011 | 7:30 pm | Candlelight Christmas Eve Service |
| <i>A service of lessons and carols for the whole family.</i> | | |
| | 11:15 pm | Taize Prayer Vigil |
| <i>A quiet Taize service, waiting for midnight bells.</i> | | |
| December 25, 2011 | 10:30 am | Christmas Day Service |
| <i>Come as you are (even pajamas) to a warm and friendly worship. Take a break from your own family celebration to quietly give thanks with your family of faith.</i> | | |

THE ANGEL TREE OF GIVING

Our 2011 Angel Tree of Giving will go up in the sanctuary this Sunday morning. Please help others in our community by choosing a card, with suggested gift ideas, from the tree. The gifts need to be wrapped and returned to the church on or before Sunday, December 18th after worship. Please remember to attach the card to the outside of the gift. Financial donations will also be accepted and may be dropped off at the church office. Thank you so much for helping to make a brighter Christmas for those in need.

POINSETTIAS

If you have a poinsettia you would like to share this holiday season, you may leave it in the sanctuary. If your poinsettia is in memory/honor of someone, please leave that information in the church office.

STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

Our 2012 campaign goals are to receive 150 pledges in a dollar amount of \$215,000! If you have made a pledge for 2012, thank you! If not, please consider a pledge to support the ministries of the church. You may leave a pledge card at the church or simply provide your pledge information to the church office (624-3120 or uccv@uccvermillion.org) or to a member of the Stewardship Committee.

DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

December 4
Advent II – Taize Prayer
“Songs of Hope”
Psalm 126
Communion

December 11
Advent III – 67th Carol Service
“Songs of Promise”
Baptism

January 1
“Truth to Power”
Matthew 2: 1-18
Communion

January 8
“Where Did He Come From?”
Mark 1:4-15

December 18
Advent IV – Pageant
“Singing our Story”
Children’s Pageant

December 25
“Let the Whole Creation Cry”
Psalm 98
Luke 2:8-20

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

January 15
“I am Listening”
I Samuel 3: 1-11

January 22
“The Time is Now”
Mark 1: 14-20

January 29
“End of the Line”
Deuteronomy 18: 15-22
2012 Annual Meeting

CHRISTMAS JOY AT NORA STORE

The members of the Women’s Fellowship agreed at their November meeting that it is time to move out of the long-standing traditional group. They also voiced their hope that future programming will include a variety of growth opportunities for the various adult ages in our congregation.

With these thoughts in mind, the newly visioned UCCV movement of fellowship and spiritual nurture, “People of a Certain Age,” officially begins with a special trip to Nora (pop. 5) on Saturday, December 3 at 1:30 p.m. Mike Pederson, organist extraordinaire and owner of the old Nora General Store, opens the door each Advent season and welcomes people to enjoy his tradition of Christmas carol music accompanied by a restored tracker organ. Mike will provide the coffee and cider – we provide the treats. **Please call the church office if you plan to go, whether a driver or a rider: 624-3120.** Meet in the church parking lot at 1 p.m. to car pool. Maps are available. We’ll be back in Vermillion in plenty of time to participate in the Clay Co. Historical Society’s Christmas Tour of Homes.

ANNUAL MEETING

The 2012 Annual Meeting of the United Church of Christ, Congregational of Vermillion, is set for Sunday, January 29, 2012 following our morning worship. There will be a simple soup lunch served by our youth and then we will move back to the sanctuary for this annual gathering. Please join us as we review the past year and begin to look ahead to our mission and ministry for 2012. Board chairs are reminded that annual reports are due in the office by Friday, January 6th. You may email your reports to uccv@uccvermillion.org or leave them in the church office.

VERMILLION FOOD PANTRY

Most needed items at the Food Pantry (located at Trinity Lutheran Church, 816 E. Clark Street) are: peanut butter, cereal, all canned vegetables – especially corn, all canned fruits – other than applesauce, any flavor chunky soups, regular size soups – tomato, chicken noodle, creamed, pasta – spaghetti or noodles, chili and chili beans, and cereal. **Volunteer Opportunity:** Two persons to work as part of our grant writing team in January 2012. Individuals will need to be able to do research in USD’s Library Grant Search Program. We have an experienced mentor, but we need some more researchers. If you could give a few hours each week searching data bases for grant money for Food Pantries, call Mary @ 624-8488.

CONSIDERING A CALL TO MINISTRY

The United Church of Christ is in transition toward new approaches to developing pastoral leadership. An important change has been the approval of alternate paths to ordained ministry, which made possible the joyful celebration of Elaine Miller's ordination in May 2009, the first in the South Dakota Conference for a licensed minister with years of effective pastoral experience.

Now we have the opportunity to pioneer another aspect of the new plan, involving our lay member Marjory Coker as a candidate for licensed ministry after she completes the Associate in Theology degree. The "in care" designation which once applied to students in training is being phased out and a new process of discernment leading to any type of authorized ministry is taking its place. The local church is encouraged to participate early in the process through 1) recognizing gifts of ministry within its membership, 2) forming a Ministry Discernment Committee (MDC) to assess a member's gift and calling, 3) reporting the MDC's affirmation to church leadership (in this case, the Diaconate) and 4) sending a letter from the Diaconate to the Conference Committee on Ministry (COM) asking that a covenant be formed between the local church, the COM and the Member in Discernment in order to continue the exploration process.

Within our congregation, each of these steps has been followed with Marjory and she had an introductory meeting with the COM in May. We are now at the point where covenant papers have been created by the COM for the first time and are ready to sign. We plan to formalize this on a Sunday in January when the congregation will have the opportunity to affirm its support for Marjory and the continuing discernment process. Although the covenant is mutual between the three parties, the final decision regarding licensure rests with the Committee on Ministry.

"ENCOUNTERS"

by Elaine Miller, Assistant Pastor

"I've got some bad news." These are words a person would rather not hear at the end of any day but they are what greeted me one recent Sunday when I got home from Vermillion. "What is it??" I queried. "You know those twinkling twig stakes you put outside as part of the Christmas decorations?" my husband continued, "Well, I didn't know what they were, I didn't even see them when I trimmed the landscape bushes this afternoon. No more twigs....only stakes." The confessional look on his face was so serious it was only possible to laugh as I responded, "You must have some mighty sharp shears!"

You see, I'd been busily putting up the outdoor decorations while the days were warm and dry. I'd finished just two days earlier, even turning everything on to see how the lights would look after dark. So organized....so ready.....so unexpected.

Then it struck me. That is exactly what I believe the Advent and Christmas season calls us to do: be ready but also leave room for surprising and unexpected revelations of God's grace in our busy lives.

May the blessings of the love and peace of Christ be yours now and in the New Year. ~ *Elaine*

CULTIVATING QUESTIONS – SCIENCE AND FAITH

Through the playful work of Jake Kerby and Steve Miller, our church has received a grant to launch a community program intended to create an on-going conversation around issues of science and faith. Although the program will officially kick-off in 2012, there will be another gathering this month to continue planting the seeds for successful dialogue. If you are interested in these ideas, you are welcome to join Jake and Steve at Leo's Lounge on Monday night, December 12th at 7:00 pm.

IDEAS FOR COMMUNICATION (LONG RANGE VISION)

One of the important areas for improvement which has come from our long range vision process is the need for stronger communication within our church family. This includes things like: all church mailings, the Church Bell (newsletter), phone trees, our website, emails, facebook, etc. We would like to hear more specifically from each of you: what means and modes of communication would you like to see in helping our church family communicate better ways? Please drop off your ideas at the church office or send us an e-mail.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Friday, December 2

1:00 pm Baking Bandits (every Friday)

Saturday, December 3

1:00 pm Nora Trip

Sunday, December 4

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

10:30 am Worship

11:30 am Coffee Hi

NO Diaconate Meeting

5:30 pm Confirmation Dinner/Meeting

7:00 pm UU Fellowship

8:00 pm Taize at Danforth Chapel

Tuesday, December 6

6:00 pm B.C.

7:00 pm Boy Scouts (every Tuesday)

Wednesday, December 7

3:10 pm Jolley LAF

5:30 pm LAF

7:00 pm Adult Choir

8:30 pm Meditation

Thursday, December 8

4:00 pm PALS

Sunday, December 11

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

10:30 am Worship

11:30 am Coffee Hi, Cabinet Meeting

5:30 pm Confirmation Dinner/Meeting

8:00 pm Taize at Danforth Chapel

Monday, December 12

7:00 pm Science and Faith at Leo's

Tuesday, December 13

6:00 pm B.C.

Wednesday, December 14

3:10 pm Jolley LAF

5:30 pm LAF

7:00 pm Adult Choir

8:30 pm Meditation

Thursday, December 15

9:30 am PALS

Sunday, December 18

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

10:30 am Worship

11:30 am Coffee Hi, Trustees Meeting

5:30 pm Confirmation Dinner/Meeting

7:00 pm UU Fellowship

8:00 pm Taize at Danforth Chapel

Tuesday, December 20

6:00 pm B.C.

Wednesday, December 21

NO LAF

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Saturday, December 24

7:30 pm Candlelight Service

11:15 pm Taize Service

Sunday, December 25

NO Adult Bible Study

10:30 am Worship

NO Coffee Hi

NO Confirmation or Taize

Tuesday, December 27

NO B.C.

Wednesday, December 28

NO LAF OR CHOIR

JANUARY CALENDAR

Sunday, January 1

9:00 am Adult Bible Study
10:30 am Worship
11:30 am Coffee Hi
Diaconate Meeting
5:30 pm NO Confirmation
7:00 pm UU Fellowship
8:00 pm Taize at Danforth Chapel

Tuesday, January 3

6:00 pm B.C.
7:00 pm Boy Scouts (every Tuesday)

Wednesday, January 4

3:10 pm Jolley LAF
5:30 pm LAF
7:00 pm Adult Choir
8:30 pm Meditation

Friday, January 6

1:00 pm Baking Bandits (every Friday)

Sunday, January 8

9:00 am Adult Bible Study
10:30 am Worship
11:30 am Coffee Hi, Cabinet Meeting
5:30 pm Confirmation Dinner/Meeting
8:00 pm Taize at Danforth Chapel

Tuesday, January 10

6:00 pm B.C.

Wednesday, January 11

3:10 pm Jolley LAF
5:30 pm LAF
7:00 pm Adult Choir
8:30 pm Meditation

Thursday, January 12

3:30 pm PALS

Sunday, January 15

9:00 am Adult Bible Study

10:30 am Worship
11:30 am Coffee Hi, Trustees Meeting
5:30 pm Confirmation Dinner/Meeting
7:00 pm UU Fellowship
8:00 pm Taize at Danforth Chapel

Tuesday, January 17

6:00 pm B.C.

Wednesday, January 18

3:10 pm Jolley LAF
5:30 pm LAF
7:00 pm Adult Choir
8:30 pm Meditation

Sunday, January 22

9:00 am Adult Bible Study
10:30 am Worship
11:30 am Coffee Hi
5:30 pm Confirmation Dinner/Meeting
8:00 pm Taize at Danforth Chapel

Tuesday, January 24

6:00 pm B.C.

Wednesday, January 25

3:10 pm Jolley LAF
5:30 pm LAF
7:00 pm Adult Choir
8:30 pm Meditation

Thursday, January 26

10:00 am PALS

Sunday, January 29

9:00 am Adult Bible Study
10:30 am Worship
11:30 am Soup Lunch, Annual Meeting
5:30 pm Confirmation Dinner/Meeting
8:00 pm Taize at Danforth Chapel

Tuesday, January 31

6:00 pm B.C.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

As we approach 2012, new Coffee Hi and Lay Reader schedules are being prepared. New members and those who have participated in the past are invited and encouraged to sign up. If you have particular Sundays that do or do not work for you, please let Diane know by emailing diane@uccvermillion.org or calling the church office at 624-3120. Thank you!

IMPORTANT UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES

As we approach the end of this fiscal year, the Board of Trustees encourages you to catch up with your 2011 pledge to meet our budget requirements. At present we are approximately \$5,000 behind budget. The ministry of this congregation depends on all of us working together and supporting each other. Thank you.