



# ***“The Voice”* Newsletter of The United Church of Mapleton**

201 Troendle Street SW; PO Box 413  
Mapleton, MN 56065

**January 2014**

*Address Service Requested*

“The United Church of Mapleton is a Christian fellowship of mission, worship, and faith formation dedicated to the Maple River community.”

The United Church of Mapleton  
PO Box 413  
Mapleton, MN 56065



# THE UNITED CHURCH OF MAPLETON

www.unitedchurchmapleton.org

secretary@unitedchurchmapleton.org

**Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.**  
**Coffee & Fellowship 10:00 a.m.**

**Choir Practice 10:05 a.m.**  
**Sunday School for All Ages -**  
**During Worship and After Worship**

## January 2014

			<b>1 NEW YEAR'S DAY</b>	2 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Bible Study in Overflow Room	3	4
5 9:00 a.m. Worship with Communion and Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf Collection Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 10:05 a.m. Choir	6 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Cub Scouts	7 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast— Good Thunder  <b>Annual Reports due</b>	8 1:00 p.m. Quilting  7:00 p.m. Deacons	9	10	11 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Mapleton Kilties
12 9:00 a.m. Worship Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 10:05 a.m. Choir	13 7:00 p.m. Women's Fellowship	14 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast— Good Thunder	15 1:00 p.m. Quilting 7:00 p.m. Board of Trustees 7:00—8:00 p.m. Confirmation	16 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Bible Study in Overflow Room	17	18 <b>RECYCLE!</b> 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Mapleton Kilties
19 9:00 a.m. Worship with The Well Collection Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 10:05 a.m. Annual Congregational meeting & Pot Luck	20 <b>MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY</b> 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Cub Scouts	21 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast— Good Thunder  <b>Voice Reports due</b>	22 1:00 p.m. Quilting  7:00—8:00 p.m. Confirmation	23 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Bible Study in Overflow Room	24	25 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Mapleton Kilties
26 9:00 a.m. Worship Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 10:05 a.m. Choir	27	28 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast— Good Thunder	29 1:00 p.m. Quilting  7:00—8:00 p.m. Confirmation	30 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Bible Study in Overflow Room	31	
						

# The Voice

The Newsletter of The United Church of Mapleton



Phone: (507) 524-3141

January 2014

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Date:	January 5	January 12	January 19	January 26
<b>Greeters:</b>	Wally and Joyce Johnson	Warren and Cindy Allevan	Robert and Virginia Clark	Sharon Shuck
<b>Coffee Hour:</b>	Diaconate	The Well Youth Center	Women's Fellowship <b>*Annual Meeting</b>	Board of Christian Education
<b>Head Usher:</b>	Robert Shubert	Robert Shubert	Robert Shubert	Robert Shubert

## Annual Meeting Updates

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held following our regular Sunday morning worship service on January 19th, 2014, to review the 2013 Financials, approve the 2014 Budget, and to approve the 2014 Committees and Boards.

Everyone is invited to participate. There will be a Potluck Dinner served by the Women's Fellowship. **Please bring a dish to pass!**

**Annual Reports** are due **Tuesday, January 7th, 2014.**

**Please submit your reports electronically** (not a paper copy) to the church office by emailing Sheila at [secretary@unitedchurchmapleton.org](mailto:secretary@unitedchurchmapleton.org).

## Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf

**Sunday, January 5th, 2014** we will collect donations for the Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf. Please consider giving monetary gifts and/or non-perishable items to this meaningful mission.

The United Church supports Loaves & Fishes in this way on the first Sunday of each month.

## The Well Youth Center

**Sunday, January 12th & 19th, 2014**

Coffee Hour (12th) and the Collection jar (19th) will go to help support our local youth at The Well Youth Center.

The United Church supports The Well Youth Center in this way each month.

## Bulletin and The Voice Newsletter Notice

It would be very much appreciated if all **bulletin notices** would be into the church office by Thursday mornings, 8:30 a.m., and reports for **The Voice** into the church office as quickly as possible after meetings are held.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

## Church Correspondence

For privacy and ease, please make a notation on the front of your envelope correspondence of: c/o Financial Secretary. Thank you!



### Youth Group Plans

All youth are welcome to attend!

**Sunday School:** each Sunday, in the Youth Lounge, from 10:00-10:30 a.m.

**Confirmation Class:** for youth during 6th grade or later, 7:00-8:00 p.m., Youth Lounge, **every Wednesday evening starting January, 15th, 2014.**

**Fun & Fellowship:** TBD!

**Service Events:** about once every other month.

**Summer Camping Trip:** Quest Camp at Green Lake, WI.

Parents and youth, please let Pastor Ashley know your email addresses and cell phone numbers. Thanks!

Any questions? Call/text Pastor Ashley at 381-8199 or email [pastor@unitedchurchmapleton.org](mailto:pastor@unitedchurchmapleton.org).

### Youth Group Updates

By Pastor Ashley

Confirmation continues to go well! Our three confirmands this year are Carter Bair, Jayden McCutchen, and Cody Walters. Please pray for them as they continue in their Confirmation education and Christian formation. Beginning Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, confirmation class will meet weekly from 7:00-8:00 p.m. Our confirmands served communion on Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup> and their service was a blessing.

In Sunday School, we just finished studying “The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem” by Adam Hamilton, which looked at the Christmas narrative, the characters of the story, and the world of ancient Israel. Two options for our next Sunday School curriculum are on their way, so our next study topic is TBD, but it will start in January!

In Youth Group, we have fun, too! We had our Christmas Party and White Elephant Gift Exchange on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> with pizza and silly gifts. In January, we will go bowling at Wow! Zone together.

Our youth helped out with our Children’s Christmas Program during worship on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. Cody, Carter, and Jayden were our three Wise Men and Konnor McCutchen was our “star,” complete with light-up sign!

Want to help send our youth to camp? This summer, our Youth Group will continue the United Church tradition of camping by going to Quest camp at Green Lake, WI! We will be selling “Sweets for Your Sweet” for Valentine’s Day – hand-decorated-by-youth heart-shaped cookies by the dozen! Cookie orders are due to the church office on or by Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> for pick up on Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. Cookies will be \$5 per dozen. Youth and parents, look for an email or text from Pastor Ashley about a time to gather and decorate the cookies.

Children's Christmas Program

All the participants, worshipping together!



Silent Night.....



Could we be any more adorable?!



Youth Group Christmas Party

Just what I always wanted!



Can you explain this to me?



**Bible Study**

Announcing The United Church of Mapleton Bible Study! The study group will meet on Thursdays from **3:00 to 4:00 p.m.** in the Overflow Room with Pastor Ashley. All are welcome!

**Adult Church Choir**

The Adult Church Choir practices on Sunday mornings at 10:05 a.m. following the morning worship service.

Please come and join us! New voices are always welcome!

**Thank You!**

Thank you to all the families who encouraged their child/children in preparation and participation of the Nativity Christmas Program. Thank you to those who created props, costumes, led music, provided cues, and prepared and provided the children and youth goodie bags.

**Poinsettia Plants**

Thank you to those who donated poinsettia plants to beautify our sanctuary:

Pat and Ken Carter, Jodie and Jeff Gerdts, Pat and Hugo John, Joe and Sheila Samuelson, Roberta and David Ward, and Pastor Ashley and Jeff Whitaker.

Thank you Stan and Linda Whitney for the bales of straw for the outdoor manger scene.

A **2014 Flower Chart** is posted on the hallway bulletin board. You are welcome to sign up to bring in a floral arrangement for your special occasion or memorial.

**Christmas Tissue Boxes**

The Women's Fellowship has purchased boxes of tissues to be given to our golden members and shut-ins. The boxes will be in the narthex with the member's names on them. Please pick up a box and pay a visit to our members in the near future.

**Report of Deacons Meeting**

December 11th, 2013

The Deacons meeting was held on December 11th and began at 7:00 p.m. in the Overflow Room. Those present for the meeting were: Ruth Cumming, Dan Prenzlou, Dawn Dietz and Jodie Gerdts. The new Church Moderator, Dick Dietz, also sat in on the meeting. Jodie started the meeting off with devotions.

**Old Business:** Dawn has continued to work on the altar candles issue. She has found a company online and is researching a palm oil based candle. It would be nice to try a sample of this type of candle before purchasing them. Communion on December 1st, with the help of the confirmands serving, went well.

**New Business:** There will be two baptisms in January to plan for and anticipate. Pastor Ashley will have January 12th off and we are in need of pulpit supply. Dick has some interesting ideas for our group to ponder and the upcoming year will bring more information.

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 8th, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Jodie Gerdts

**Reminder from our Diaconate**

The Diaconate requests your help in filling out and submitting your Membership Information sheets which were sent to you by mail. Filling these sheets out in a timely manner will help our Deacons proceed with the work they are doing in updating our church membership files.

Thank you again for your help.

**Community Closet**

If you have a non-profit group that would like to take advantage of profits from the Closet, please call Gay Rice at (507) 524-4040 for more information.

### The Well Youth Center

**The Well Youth Center thanks all who have generously given to our local youth center throughout this past year of 2013.**

Our Fundraising Committee and Board of Directors have offered many fundraisers to our communities, and we appreciate your attendance and support.

**We ask for your continued support through 2014** as we keep our doors open to a safe, after-school environment while offering an afternoon snack, crafts, special events, programs, homework help, and adult supervision to youth grades 4—12 in our communities of the Maple River area.

Along with all of the above mentioned items, we also pay monthly rent and heat for the building.



### Decorating Christmas Cookies at The Well Youth Center



### The Well Christmas Party

Thank you for your generous donations of stocking stuffers for The Well Youth Center youth! The youth thank you all for everything!

We thank our “pizza lady”, Roberta, for providing pizza for the youth and we thank Steve Breiter for providing us with a Christmas music sing-along on the guitar. Thank you to our adult volunteers, Dawn Dietz, Dustin Russ, Sheila Samuelson and Pastor Ashley Whitaker.

The youth enjoyed food, beverage, treats, Christmas music, games, prizes, and Christmas stories. We do not want to miss mentioning that the youth enjoyed laughter, friends, and the true meaning of Christmas in a safe place they love.

These special days are made possible by the generous donations of the caring individuals, churches and organizations of the wonderful communities of the Maple River Area!

The Well Youth Center will reopen after the Christmas and New Year season on **Tuesday, January 7th, 2014.**

### Greetings from Maple River Loaves & Fishes!

1 John 3:17-18, “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need, but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.”

We had a very busy November! Because of you, we are able to provide food to many families in the Maple River school district. We provided 97 families (143 children) with over 13,000 pounds of food. **That’s right, over 13,000 lbs. of food!** Your donations directly affect our ability to serve them. Thank you!

If you haven’t visited, would like to volunteer, or need our services, please call the food shelf at (507) 524-3046, or stop by when we are open. **Our hours are Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m.—noon.**

### The United Church Women's Fellowship

Monday, December 9, 2013

President Louise Webb opened the meeting with Linda Whitney giving the devotions based on a Czech Christmas and John 1:9. Secretary's report was given and accepted as read. Treasurer's report was given and accepted. Bills turned in were from a new coffee pot, tablecloths, Kleenex boxes, Blood Mobile, Joyce, and the repair of sewing machine. Joyce made a motion that the bills be paid and Ruth seconded it. All voted aye. There were 11 members present and Pastor Ashley was also present.

Mabelle reported she had sent out 3 get-well cards, two thinking-of-you cards, and sympathy cards.

We have 15 boxes of Kleenexes for our shut-ins, which will be delivered later.

A discussion was held on the Annual meeting coming up on January 19th. Work group one will be in charge of a pot luck. All groups will assist. At our next meeting we will clean-up the cupboards and the pantry in the kitchen area.

Meeting was adjourned.

Our next meeting will be on January 13th.

After our meeting it was decided that Louise would be bringing lunch next month. We then played a game Louisabelle brought. Mabelle gave a reading on Jesus is the Reason for the Season. Louisabelle gave a reading on a Partridge in a Pear tree, and then Mabelle gave another reading. Following the reading and games we had our cookie exchange. We enjoyed a lunch served by Joyce Johnson, Ruth Cummings, Louisabelle Shuck, and Darlene Fezler. We had a fun time and wish more could have joined us.

Respectively Submitted,  
Darlene Fezler, Secretary

### Women's Fellowship Cookie Party



### How to Contact Pastor Ashley

My office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to noon. In the afternoon, I may be in the office, or I may be out in the community for pastoral care or outreach. If you'd like to stop by to visit another time, just email or call. Monday and Saturday are my days off.

My email address is: [pastor@unitedchurchmapleton.org](mailto:pastor@unitedchurchmapleton.org). If I'm not in the office, my phone number is (507) 381-8199.

### Pastoral Care Connections

If you or a family member is ill, in the hospital, is homebound, would like a pastoral care visit for any reason, or would like to be added to our weekly prayer list, **please let the church know!** Feel free to contact Pastor Ashley, a Deacon, or the church office to let us know so that we may serve you.

Pastor Ashley's phone number is: (507) 381-8199 and the church phone number is: (507) 524-3141. Thank you!

### Sunday Morning Wheelchair Assistance

If you are in need of wheelchair assistance on Sunday mornings, please let us know by calling the church office at (507) 524-3141 ahead of time to make arrangements **or** you may have an usher assist you on Sunday morning when you arrive at the church.

There is a ramp located on the east side of the church which can be utilized by parking in the east parking lot. If it is too difficult for you to push a wheelchair up the ramp, please feel free to contact an Usher or Deacon for assistance.



## Pastor's Corner

“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:  
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his  
mercies never come to an end; they are new every  
morning; great is your faithfulness.”  
Lamentations 3:21-23

As we get out the new calendar and open it up to January 2014, we can see all the blank spaces on the page as either terrifying (what busy-ness will fill those days?) or exhilarating (how will we see God move those days?). I'll admit that I see those blank spaces with both anxiety and excitement...but when I think of The United Church, the excitement is too strong to ignore!

Our conversations around vision, mission, and purpose over the last year have been a blessing to be part of and to witness. We're a changed people – there's no way for a year to go by without change making its mark. And I firmly believe that God is doing a new thing in our midst. Look back over the last few months of 2013, and see all the ways that the Spirit has moved in us and through us!

When I read this Advent devotional by a favorite pastor and theologian of mine, I knew I had to share it with you all. It does a great job of describing the work we've been about in 2013 and the kind of United Church we want to see more of in 2014. So, allow me to share this wisdom by Lillian Daniel, a UCC pastor and brilliant writer.

“I want to make a case for a church that is reasonable, rigorous, and real.

By reasonable, I mean that we should not demand that people believe things that seem preposterous to them. We should respect people's questions. We should expect that we will land in different places, intellectually and experientially.

I want the church to be rigorous. You can be welcoming and open and still have standards and expectations. You can say that attending worship matters. You can ask people to share their money. You can expect people to follow through in their ministries and be of service. You can hold up the minimal standards of a sports team or music teacher by saying that the more you practice, the better you will get at this.

I also want the church to be real. I want there to be room for the people who don't follow through, don't show up, and who don't yet get what any of this is about. I want the church to admit that sex, drugs, and rock and roll are a tempting trinity for a reason. I want mental illnesses to be listed in the prayer concerns as often as cancer treatments and surgeries.

And if it's all you can do to get out of bed in the morning, I want you to come to church in your pajamas.

Reasonable, rigorous, and real. Bring your questions, your uncombed hair, and your low expectations. Jesus can work with all that. And then he may raise the bar.”

As we consider all the blank spaces on the calendar in the year to come, may we keep the vision of a reasonable, rigorous, and real church ever before us. Amen.

Blessings,  
Pastor Ashley

### In Our Prayers

Our church prayer list includes:

- Those with ongoing health concerns: Bill Brice, Stan Solie, Ramona Swann, Lorraine Stanton, Alberta Samuelson
- Family members and loved ones who are ill
- Traveling mercies for our members, family and friends
- All those who are grieving and mourning
- Pastor Deb Celley of First Congregational UCC of Mankato. Deb was diagnosed with two kinds of cancer (b-cell lymphoma and Burkett's lymphoma) one month after answering the call to be the pastor of First Congregational Mankato. She took a leave of absence to undergo chemotherapy, but has just heard that the cancer remains. Please pray for Pastor Deb and her family (husband Richard and daughters Julia and Jennifer) as she begins radiation therapy.
- For Norma Baack, who continues to recover from a fall and recent hospitalization

The prayer requests and praises shared with the congregation during December worship services include:

- Prayers...
  - That Advent will open our hearts wide to let God in. Praise be to God!
  - For Terri Jenkins and Cheri Passen, who are both dealing with cancer
  - For Sue Prenzlów's father who is having surgery in the Cities for his heart and gall bladder this week
  - For Bob Clark's sister, Pastor Judy, who is safely home from Costa Rica after her son's wedding, but who had a four-wheeler accident and broke several ribs
  - For a daughter who deals with health problems
  - For safe travels for all during this holiday season
  - For members of the Clark family at the recent death of Nathan Potter at age 30 from carbon monoxide poisoning in Springfield
  - For continued healing and patience
- Thanksgiving...
  - For being able to share in the table of fellowship with family, celebrating the season
  - For a granddaughter who just celebrated her 9th birthday
  - From Clint Lindemann, who sends his thanks to those who helped him move furniture and for all those who sent cards and well wishes after his recent back surgery
  - To all who helped with Parent's Night Out
  - For all the children and the folks who gave time and effort to prepare the Children's Christmas Program
  - For all those that volunteer with our children and youth
  - Praise God for God's message given through our children
  - For healing of my breast cancer and letting me be here today with my family to watch my grandson take part in the children's program
  - For being able to share in the joys of the season with family and friends
  - To have my daughter and three grandchildren here today
  - That my dad is home from the hospital and healthy (from Sue Prenzlów, whose father recently had heart surgery)
  - To see our brother Bruce in our midst