

Summit Congregational United Church of Christ



“SUMMIT SPARKS”

February, 2026

563-582-5661

Website: www.summitucc.org

Summit Congregational United Church of Christ
2885 J. F. Kennedy Rd.
Dubuque, Iowa, 52002-1081

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship	2 9am - Pastor's Office	3 6:30pm - Barbershoppers	4	5 9am - Trustees	6	7
8 10am - Worship 11am - Annual Meeting 11am - Fellowship	9 9am - Pastor's Office 10:30am - Diaconate	10 9am - All Church Cleaning 6:30pm - Barbershoppers	11	12 10:30am - Meet with Rev.	13	14
15 10am - Food Pantry gifts 10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship	16 9am - Pastor's Office	17 6:30pm - Barbershoppers	18 5:30pm - Ash Wednesday 6:30pm - As Wednesday	19	20	21
22 10am - Worship 11am - Fellowship	23 9am - Pastor's Office 4pm - Council meeting	24 6:30pm - Barbershoppers	25 5:30pm - Neighbors on the	26 6:30pm - Prochaska Zoom	27 Sparks Articles Due!	28

It is hard to believe that Lent is already upon us. This year I did not find a Lenten devotional put out by the UCC, but what I did find was an invitation from the Tri-conference of Iowa Nebraska South Dakota Conferences and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska to participate in a Lenten Journey together. I know not everyone has email or are very uncomfortable using technology so I decided that besides sending the information out through email for how to join in this Lenten Invitation of Neighbors on the Way, I would provide a time on Wednesday evenings during Lent from 5:30 – 6:30 PM to gather in Fellowship Hall and share some of the information, prayers and activities provided weekly by the Tri-conference and DOC that I receive. If people would like to bring a sack supper to eat while we gather, feel free to do so. Below you will see a portion of the letter that was sent telling about the opportunity to be “Neighbors on the Way” through Lent.

Please join with me on Wednesday Evenings at 5:30 on 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25 & 4/1 for a time of fellowship, prayers, reflections, and practices as we find ways to be “Neighbors on the Way” through Lent. Maybe the practice of neighboring will enhance and broaden our imagination how we neighbor beyond Lent. All are Welcome!

In Shared Hope!
Pastor Karen

Neighbors on the Way

In Luke 10, after telling the story of the one who showed mercy along the road, Jesus asks, “*Which of these was a neighbor?*” and then sends his listeners with a simple charge: “*Go and do likewise.*” This shared journey is our invitation to take that command seriously—not as an abstract ideal, but as a lived practice of mercy, compassion, and care.

We are inviting our Region and Conference into a shared Lenten journey called *Neighbors on the Way*. This journey is not about uniformity or agreement on every issue. It is about practicing what we already confess: that we belong to Christ, and therefore we belong to one another. It is about learning again how to see our neighbors clearly, listen deeply, and remain faithful to love—even when the road is hard.

Throughout Lent, we will offer simple weekly resources—prayers, reflections, and practices—for individuals and congregations who choose to participate. We will also host optional weekly Zoom conversations, creating space for connection, reflection, and shared witness across our communities.

Our collaboration this season is a testimony, a sign that relationship matters and the church can model what it means to walk together. Please know that our collective prayers are with the people and congregations of our Region and Conference. We journey with you in hope, faith, and love as we make our way through Lent and to the empty tomb.

May the God who created us, the Christ who shows us the way to Divine Love, and the Holy Spirit who sustains us with courage and comfort be upon you, your loved ones, and our world always.

In shared hope,
Rev. Roberto Ochoa
Conference Minister
Iowa Nebraska South Dakota Conferences
United Church of Christ

Rev. Robin Blakemore
Transitional Regional Minister
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska

<p><u>February Birthdays</u></p> <p>6th Janaan Milcoff 7th Julie Kass 11th JoAnn Datisman 28th Rick Grace</p>	<p><u>February Anniversaries</u></p>
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Important Calendar Dates:

Sunday, February 7	11 am	Annual Meeting
Tuesday, February 10	9 am	All Church Cleaning
Wednesday, February 18	5:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Soup Supper
Wednesday, February 18	6:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Service
Wednesday, February 25	5:30 pm	Neighbors on the Way

Scheduled Committee Meetings Please remember that **ALL committee and council meetings are open to the congregation.**

Monday, February 9	10:30 am	Diaconate meeting
Thursday, February 5	9 am	Trustees meeting
Monday, February 23	4 pm	Council meeting

<p><u>Contributors:</u> Rev. Karen Candee, Pat Kreimeyer (clerk), Merlin Green (editor).</p>



"Souper" Bowl Sunday

Corresponding with Super Bowl Sunday is the "Souper" Bowl Sunday. While many of us will be feasting on chili, pizza, vegetable trays, and various other foods while we watch the Super Bowl game between the Patriots and the Seahawks, which takes place on February 8th there are still many in this city who go hungry and are malnourished. Whether or not we watch the Super Bowl it is one more opportunity for us to live out the scripture from Matthew 25 which states

"When I was hungry you gave me to eat."

From now through February 15th, we will be collecting crackers and cans of soup, any other non-perishable foods and cash to be donated to the Dubuque Food Pantry. You can bring in your donation in before or after worship on Sundays through February 15th, on Mondays through February 9th, or call and set up a time to drop it off and set it on the side of the football field that corresponds with the team you either want to win the Super bowl or think will win. If you don't care which team wins you can place your donation along the center of the football field. Results of the collection will be shared on Sunday February 22nd, announced in the next issue of the Sparks and posted on our website and Facebook Page. Monetary donations can are also accepted.

As we provide nourishment for hungry bodies,
may it also nourish souls that hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Let us make the Dubuque Food Pantry and those they serve
the real winners of the "Souper" Bowl.

Lent Begins † Ash Wednesday February 18, 2026

A Joint Soup Supper and Worship Service

With Immanuel and Summit at Summit

Soup Supper – 5:30 PM

Worship Service – 6:30 PM

A service of hymns, prayer, scripture, meditation,

Sacrament of Holy Communion & the Imposition of Ashes

In-person and Livestreamed

Farewell to Linda Marie Krings Watters - Wife of Bruce Watters

"In our end is our beginning ...
In our death a resurrection at the last a victory"

Linda's journey on earth began on October 20, 1941
and ended on January 9, 2026

A service celebrating her life was held on January 27, 2026

Farewell to Kelly Liddle - Daughter of Steve Bruse

"In our end is our beginning ...
In our death a resurrection at the last a victory"

Kelly's journey on earth began on September 3, 1972
and ended on January 26, 2026

A service celebrating her life was held on January 31, 2026

Congregational Annual Meeting
Sunday February 5, 2026 following worship.

We will need to elect leadership at this meeting
as well as receive annual reports.

Prayerfully consider how God
is calling you to serve.

Call to Order: Pastor Karen called the meeting to order in the absence of chair, Steve Bruse.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Karen led the group in prayer.

Attendance: Merlin Green, Ann Herr, Pat Kreimeyer, Judy Prochaska, Joanne VanNatta, and Pastor Karen.

Minutes: The minutes were read and approved.

Committee Reports:

Deacons: Ann Herr reported:

Communion will be February 1

Kim Kitchen began serving a 3-year term on Deacons

The altar cloths were changed to green in January for Common Time and will change to purple for Lent.

We will host the Ash Wednesday service. Immanuel UCC will join us and First will determine their plans at their next council meeting this week.

Ann's term is completed, suggestions for a new deacon would be appreciated.

Next meeting will be February 9 at 10:30 am.

Trustees: Judy Prochaska reported:

Garbage disposal has been removed.

There was a problem with the alarm system due to a low battery and it/they were replaced.

Pastor Karen has been having a problem with the sign by not being able to make changes to it without the help of Merlin and his phone. Dubuque Sign came and diagnosed the problem as needing a new antenna. After emails and text messages among the trustees, it was agreed we needed to replace the antennae and that has been ordered.

Judy reported that starting in 2026 Independent Contractors can earn up to \$2,000.00 and not have to report their earnings on their income tax return.

Worked on finalization of the Proposed Budget for 2026

Next meeting will be February 5th, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

OME: Joanne reported.

Delivered cleaning supplies, paper towels, popcorn, 4 cash donations to the Lantern Center. The director said it will be noted in their newsletter.

There will be no blood drive in March due to health concerns among the potential donors. We may try again in July.

We will celebrate the Souper Bowl on Sunday February 8 after church. Members are invited to donate soups for the Food Pantry through February 15.

A March date will be chosen for One Great Hour of Sharing offering collection.

Christian Education and Summit Fellowship: No report

Pastor's Report: Pastor Karen shared an oral report as she did not create a printed one.

Had three nursing home visits in the last month
Created weekly reflections and sent letters and cards
Completed pastoral calls and counselling in person
Counted James Birch service times as contacts with her

Met with Linda Watter's family at St. Luke's last Tuesday to make plans for the visitation and service.

Enjoyed vacation days which included family time and an opportunity to face time with the new great-grandson and family. (Congratulations Great-grandma and pa.

Preparing reports for Annual Meeting

Attended board and committee meetings too

Met with Steve Bruse's son-in-law to begin plans for the service, visitation, and meal for his wife's and Steve's daughter's memorial.

Assisted in OME tasks

Hosted the Tri-Church Meeting. Another is scheduled for April 30.

Steve has stepped down as moderator so we need to nominate and elect one.

Business:

Merlin reported a shortfall in meeting Summit's 2025 budget. It can be covered with reserve funds.

We have received and Merlin has filed Ellie Craff's letter of transfer.

Steve is stepping down as moderator at the election of officers in 2026.

Merlin met with Merle of First Cong. UCC. They agreed that it is time to start talking and dreaming about the future of the United Churches of Christ in Dubuque. Church Council has agreed that talks could be beneficial

- * There is excitement around the arrival of the new interim pastor's arrival at First Cong. UCC. The new pastor has arrived and will serve a 2-year term. Start time was delayed due to a broken ankle, but she has now begun her service.
- * Merle shared with Merlin that First is looking at expanding local mission as non-profit organizations are being forced to move and need a new location. Might it be something we could partner with?

Adjournment: With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Pat Kreimeyer, secretary