

# Summit Congregational United Church of Christ



**“SUMMIT**

**SPARKS”**

January, 2024

**563-582-5661**

Website: [www.summitucc.org](http://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   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <div>31</div> <div>Pastor's Vacation</div> <div>10am - Worship</div> <div>11am - Fellowship</div>        | <div>1</div>  | <div>2</div> <div>9am - Pastor's Office</div> <div>7pm - Barbershoppers</div>     | <div>3</div> <div>6:30pm - Wednesday</div>  | <div>4</div>  | <div>5</div>                                  | <div>6</div> <div>9am - Music Men</div> <div>2pm - Rondeau Family</div> |
| <div>7</div> <div>10am - Worship</div> <div>11am - Fellowship</div>                                      | <div>8</div> <div>9am - Pastor's Office</div> <div>10:30am - Diaconate</div> <div>1:30pm - Bible Study</div>  | <div>9</div> <div>9am - All Church Cleaning</div> <div>7pm - Barbershoppers</div> | <div>10</div> <div>6:30pm - Wednesday</div> | <div>11</div> <div>1pm - Trustees</div> <div>6:30pm - Prochaska</div> | <div>12</div>                                 | <div>13</div>   |
| <div>14</div> <div>10am - Worship</div> <div>11am - Fellowship</div>                                     | <div>15</div> <div>Annual Reports Due!</div> <div>9am - Pastor's Office</div> <div>1:30pm - Bible Study</div> | <div>16</div> <div>7pm - Barbershoppers</div>                                     | <div>17</div> <div>6:30pm - Wednesday</div> | <div>18</div>   | <div>19</div>                                 | <div>20</div>   |
| <div>21</div> <div>10am - Food Pantry gifts</div> <div>10am - Worship</div> <div>11am - Fellowship</div> | <div>22</div> <div>1:30pm - Bible Study</div> <div>4pm - Council meeting</div>                                | <div>23</div> <div>9am - Pastor's Office</div> <div>7pm - Barbershoppers</div>    | <div>24</div> <div>6:30pm - Wednesday</div> | <div>25</div>   | <div>26</div> <div>Sparks Articles Due!</div> | <div>27</div>   |
| <div>28</div> <div>10am - Worship</div> <div>11am - Annual Meeting</div> <div>11am - Fellowship</div>    | <div>29</div> <div>9am - Pastor's Office</div> <div>1:30pm - Bible Study</div>                                | <div>30</div> <div>4pm - Tri-church Meeting</div> <div>7pm - Barbershoppers</div> | <div>31</div> <div>6:30pm - Wednesday</div> | <div>1</div>  | <div>2</div>                                  | <div>3</div>  |

Those who get this issue via email might want to view the calendar online. Simply go to [www.summitucc.org](http://www.summitucc.org) and click on the calendar button. The whole year is out there.

## *Sweet Inspirations ...*

As we come to an end of one year and begin a new year, I would like to use this space to share some both inspiring and informative words from our Interim Conference Minister, Rev. Phil Hart which he sent out through an email. In it he speaks of small churches and the concept of “Neighboring” and how important both are and how impactful they can be, so be watching for that. Our efforts in establishing better communication and collaboration with other churches and organizations, I believe, is our way of “Neighboring” and living out the gospel we proclaim in word.

May you be as inspired and informed by his words as I am. And may the light of God’s Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love guide you into and through all of 2024! – Pastor Karen

*“In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.” Luke 2:1*

Dear Friends,

Grace and Peace to you!

For as long as I can remember, when those words from the Gospel of Luke were spoken on Christmas Eve, I would get a lump in my throat. In just a few more versus Mary and Joseph will find an inadequate shelter, Jesus will be born, angels will call shepherds, and the world will change. For us, this time of year comes with a built-in pattern of review and planning. Where are we going this next year? What will we do? How will we do it? So much spiritual, physical and psychological energy is held in these next weeks.

It was just few weeks ago I was in Osaka, Japan and I was telling the owner of a bar about you all. I have known him for years, visiting his little bar in the evenings and meeting a nice mix of Japanese folk and visitors. On the last evening, the topic of my job came up. For years it had never been discussed, but in the last few hours in Osaka it did come up. I told him I was a minister in the United Church of Christ and that I was the Interim Conference Minister for the Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota Conferences. After a few minutes of talking about what that all meant and what we did and believed (because let’s be honest, I don’t know if even many UCC people know what a Conference Minister does), he clapped his hands and shouted “Wonderful!” He then spent some time telling me about his theory that aliens might have been “God” and that the Jews had possibly visited Japan centuries ago because there are places in Japan where Hebrew words and symbols are common. I just listened. Then he started talking about his mother in Australia, and I just listened. Then he sang a karaoke song, and I listened. When I left, he hugged me and shouted as I walked away, “Safe travels back Father!”

What struck me about that encounter was the joyful transformation that took place for him. It didn’t happen when I told him I was a minister but when I told him what kind of church I served. It happened when I told him about you all, how we go about our faith, what you do in your churches and what you do in the world.

It is easy sometimes to wonder what kind of difference we are making. To ask if it matters if we are here and ponder why we should continue. We have gotten off track sometimes in the church when we think our success or usefulness is based on the size of our church or membership. I am not one who believes we should be closing small churches unless, and until, they discern that is God’s leading to them to do that. Big or small, a community of people who are open to the movement of God can change the world. Just look at that small group on the first Christmas. Now, imagine hundreds of communities doing that across our Conferences!

The first time I spoke to you when I arrived here, I talked to you about being “UCC Church Neighbors” and we needed to extend our love and care to one another in a new wave of “Neighboring.” That actually is all that a “Conference” is...a group of Neighboring churches that bind themselves together in a holy covenant, maybe hire some staff to do some of our common work, and support each other as we seek to do the very best we can in our ministries and try to change the world.

Over this last year we have worked to do the very best we could in the re-structuring and update to administration in our Conferences. We have made significant changes in our Conference that will help us be more effective and sustainable in this expression of our common ministry. We have made significant reductions in expenses (around \$750,000), rearranged our staffing model and adding Conference Deacons, and worked very hard to make sure that every gift given by you was used responsibly and effectively.

As we come to the end of the year, we often see that churches “catch up” on their covenanted giving to

the Conference (Our Church's Wider Mission- OCWM). This is expected pattern and important to us being able to meet our financial commitments. This year, we are asking for you to please send in your OCWM gifts by January 12, 2024. This will be our cut off for OCWM to be marked for the 2023 year. I know that many of our churches continue to struggle financially, and so we are so thankful for each gift you send. These gifts help us support and care for one another, do that Neighboring and caring for each other.

Friends, thank you again for your gifts, but also all that you do in ministry! In the next few days, we are going to celebrate the birth of a baby who was then placed in a manger and sung lullabies by angels. It is a good story, a powerful story. It is a story that has changed the world. It is a story that will change the world.

Merry Christmas dear friends! Phil

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b><u>January Birthdays</u></b><br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Pat Kreimeyer<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Ashlyn Welbes<br>6 <sup>th</sup> Jean Lindenberg<br>Jacob Hansen<br>16 <sup>th</sup> Brandon Lawver | 28 <sup>th</sup> Rick Heinz<br><br><b><u>January Anniversaries</u></b><br>31 <sup>st</sup> Paul & Ernie Schmitt |
|---|---|

### **Important Calendar Dates:**

|                           |                 |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Sunday, January 28</b> | <b>10:45 AM</b> | <b>Annual Meeting</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|

**ALL committee and council meetings are open to the congregation.**

### **Scheduled Committee Meetings**

|                             |                 |                          |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Thursday, January 11</b> | <b>9 am</b>     | <b>Trustees meeting</b>  |
| <b>Monday, January 8</b>    | <b>10:30 am</b> | <b>Diaconate meeting</b> |
| <b>Monday, January 22</b>   | <b>4 pm</b>     | <b>Council meeting</b>   |

### **Ongoing Meetings**

|                       |                |                                |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Mondays</b>        | <b>1:30 pm</b> | <b>Bible Study (in-person)</b> |
| <b>Wednesdays</b>     | <b>6:30 pm</b> | <b>ZOOM Fellowship</b>         |
| <b>Second Tuesday</b> | <b>9am</b>     | <b>Church Cleaning</b>         |

Speaking of deadlines ... all articles for the annual report must be submitted to the office by Sunday, January 14, 2024

### **Did you know ...**

First of all, we like to see you in person for our worship services. But there are two alternatives if you are unable to be here in person:

1. **Zoom** using the links provided in Pastor's weekly updates.
2. **Livestream.** Simply go to the Summit website ([www.summitucc.org](http://www.summitucc.org)), and click on the "Worship Livestream on YouTube" button. You might need to then click on the heading "LIVE" to see all that are out there if you connect in at a later date. During the live service what you see and hear will be about 15 seconds behind what is happening live.

**Contributors:** Pastor Karen, Pat Kreimeyer (council minutes), Merlin Green (editor).



Ring in the New Year  
with Worship and a Potluck on December 31<sup>st</sup>!

Worship was planned by your faith-filled deacons  
and will be held in Fellowship Hall on December 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:00.

Be ready to hear God's word, sing, pray and  
share your traditions and where you encountered God.

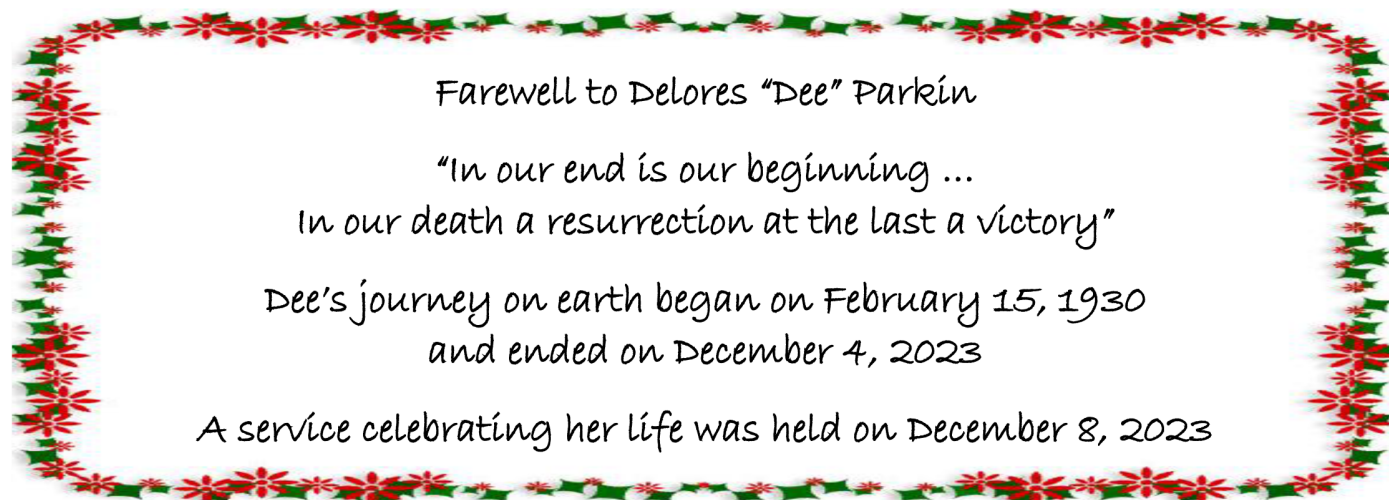
Please bring a dish to share and ring in the New Year together  
as we worship and feast together as God's beloved children.



Pastor Karen will be on vacation from December 25<sup>th</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Rev. Dianne Grace will be filling in for any Pastoral Care Needs.

Steve Bruse will be checking phone messages.



Farewell to Delores "Dee" Parkin

*"In our end is our beginning ...*

*In our death a resurrection at the last a victory"*

Dee's journey on earth began on February 15, 1930

and ended on December 4, 2023

A service celebrating her life was held on December 8, 2023



SAVE THE DATES

Annual Meeting – January 28, 2024 Following Worship

Annual Reports are Due – January 15, 2024

**Summit Church Council Minutes**  
**Monday, December 18, 2023**

**Call to Order:** Moderator Steve Bruse called the meeting to order at 4 pm via Zoom

**Thank you: Steve expressed thanks to:**

Pat Kreimeyer for taking minutes in Flora's absence.

Judy Prochaska for her spectacular job as treasurer for 26 years and for staying on as trustee secretary in the transition. Judy also expressed her appreciation as it worked for her and for the trustees.

**Devotions:** Pastor Karen led devotions, using one from the Summit Advent Devotions written by Maxine Tomes, entitled "Looking for a Savior in a Topsy Turvy World"

**Minutes:** JoAnn moved/Judy seconded that the minutes of the November meeting be approved as printed.

**Trustees Report:** Judy reported and moved /JoAnn seconded/passed that we accept the dishwasher will be installed in the future, the furnace inspection found and drained the water in the southwestern corner of Fellowship Hall because a hose had been disconnected, Everett finished replacing the screws attaching the gutters around the building, Tom left a message for Gracious Glass but has not connected with them regarding the stained glass window issue and will keep trying to connect with someone to address the concern, and the screws in the pews have not yet been checked, Arbor Oaks Church requested use of our parking lot and facility October 15-17 for a regional meeting expecting 200-300 attendees. Permission was granted to use the parking lot whether they used the rest of the building or not. They will get back to us. Arbor Oaks is projecting a gymnasium addition to the building but has no specific plans. Cleaning the garage is scheduled for spring Budget for 2024 is the same as 2023 Recommended that of the total cash salary for Rev. Karen Candee for the calendar year January 1 through December 31, 2024, \$750.00 be designated as a monthly housing allowance (\$9000 annually) and that any part of the allowance not used as authorized under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code will be reported as taxable income at the close of the year. Judy moved/JoAnn seconded/passed.

**Diaconate Report:** Pat reported

As Pastor Karen will be on vacation December 31, Deacon's will plan an informal worship service held in the Fellowship Hall at the usual time, followed by a potluck. Steve will cover the phone Dec. 25-31. Diane Grace will cover pastoral care.

The tree will be removed from the sanctuary after Deacon's meeting Jan. 8 with the rest of the decorations left through the end of Epiphany, February 11.

Pastor Karen will check with Ernie regarding the piano tuner for the piano in Fellowship Hall.

**OME Report:** JoAnn reported

Funds budgeted for 2024 are \$1500 for local missions, \$1200 for the pastor's discretionary fund, and \$500 for people in need.

The next blood donation date will be Thursday, March 24, 3-6 pm in Fellowship Hall.

**Christian Education:** The book group will not meet for two weeks due to Christmas and New Year's Holidays.

**Pastor's Report:** See attached printed report

Ann Herr and possibly Steve Bruce will join Pastor Karen for the Missional Communities training.

Pastor Karen will do home visits before vacation and turn in mileage

**Old Business:**

Steve expressed appreciation for the excellent Advent presentations by the Community Action Centers and was impressed by the extent of their mission. One or two members expressed interest in volunteering at the Dream Center

Thanks to Kim for updating the outdoor wreath and adding a new bow.

**New Business:**

Karen reminded of us of two services December 31, the 10:00 morning service at Summit and 5:00 pm Christmas Eve service at Immanuel. One more reader is still needed for the 5:00 service.

Steve will be our Eastern Iowa Association representative

Annual reports deadline is January 14. Reports are welcomed earlier.

Annual meeting will be January 28, 2024.

Recommended that of Pastor Karen's total cash salary for 2024, \$750.00 per month be designated housing allowance for 2024.

**Adjournment:** JoAnn moved/Judy seconded/passed that the meeting adjourn.

**Next meeting:** January 22 at 4 pm via Zoom

Pat Kreimeyer, acting secretary