

**SEPTEMBER 2019  
CLARION CONNECTION  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
201 3<sup>RD</sup> AVENUE NE  
CLARION, IA 50525**

**Pastor: Rev. Mike Gudka  
Church Phone: 515-532-2845  
Pastor Mike's cell: 515-835-7847  
Email: [pastormikegudka@gmail.com](mailto:pastormikegudka@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.clarionumc.com](http://www.clarionumc.com)**

Secretary: Jodi Kraft  
Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon  
Email: [jodi@clarionumc.com](mailto:jodi@clarionumc.com)

Church Treasurer: Sam Moore  
Financial Secretary: Jodi Kraft  
Church Council Chair: Carol Townsend

Custodians: Aishel Goins and Carol Townsend

**Facebook Page** <https://www.facebook.com/ClarionFirstUnitedMethodistChurch/>.

Make sure and "like" this Facebook Page so you can stay up to date on happenings around the Church!

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**Sunday Teachings are Now Online**

If you want to see the past Sunday teachings please go to our website and click on "Teachings" at [www.clarionumc.com](http://www.clarionumc.com)

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**SUNSHINE VISITS -**

If someone is ill or in the hospital and would like Pastor Mike to make a Sunshine Visit to them, please let him or the office know. We don't always know when someone is in need of him visiting.

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**Friendly Reminder** from Staff Parish Relations Committee

Please remember that Mondays are the one day a week that Pastor Mike tries to save for rest and recuperation. In the event that an emergency, Pastor Mike would still like for you to contact him.

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Life Serve of Iowa (blood drive) will be at the Clarion United Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, September 3 from 1-6 p.m. for a blood drive. If you can donate, please call 1-800-287-4903 to set up an appointment or come when you can as a walk in. Blood is always needed.

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**Your Giving Makes a Difference**

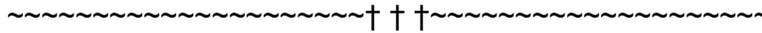
Last week: \$13,075 (8-18-2019), Needed weekly: \$3,942  
Year-to-date: \$141,062, Needed year-to-date: \$134,028

**September Hosts –**

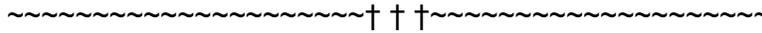
10:00 a.m. – September 1 - Hansen Family

September 8, 15, 22 and 29 – 8:30 a.m. – Jeff Farwell

10:45 a.m. – Karianne and Jake Johnson

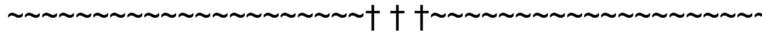


**September Liturgist – Kay Brooks**

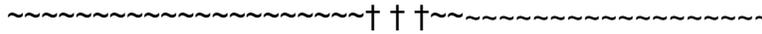


**September 1 Communion Stewards:**

10:00 a.m. –



We are in need of Communion Stewards for September as well as into the fall and winter schedule. Please sign-up on the Communion Stewards clipboard at the back of the Sanctuary. Thank you for prayerfully considering this need.



**July, August and September**  
**Quarterly Committees**

Chairpersons for **September**: Connie and Mark Hill  
Linda and Marlin Klehm

Additional Committee members:

Alison and Jeff Friesleben  
Shannon and Kelly Leist  
Tanja and Brian Jensen  
Kari Jo and Daniel Murray  
Kristina and Samuel Moore  
Helen and Ed Southard  
Alison and Kevin Marshall  
Beth and Steve Jackson  
Ruth Bohy  
Martha and Stan Busick  
Kay and Brian Marker  
Emily Harris

Sally and Ron Emerson  
Marilyn Mechem  
Jody and Darren Johnson  
Melvene Nickles  
Marilyn and Karl Olsen  
Donna and Bill Speirs  
Agnes Hendrickson  
Kathy and Nick Stahl  
Dolores Bowman  
Amy and Steve Krueger  
Kim and Bob Ott  
Shirley and Bruce Wigans

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**To Parents with Children of the Ages of Kindergarten and Below**

If you have a child of the age of Kindergarten and below, we will have a new process for the Sunday school class and the Nursery during the Contemporary Service. This new process is to help us keep your child safe and secure. Beginning on Rally Sunday, September 8, you will need to come to your child's classroom and sign your child in and out of their Sunday school class and/or the Nursery during the Contemporary service. We want to make certain that your child leaves with the right person and keep them safe. If there is someone else that you would like to come and drop your child off and/or pick your child up, please let the Sunday school teacher and/or the Nursery Attendant know. Thanks in advance for helping us with this new child safety process.





I hope you had a wonderful summer. On Rally Sunday, September 8, I am looking forward to seeing everyone when we return to our two Sunday morning worship services and Sunday school starts again.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NRSV) is where God speaks to Isaiah and says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

And we experience these contradictions as a Christian in many ways. For instance, the world tells us to be proud, get what you want, and believe you are better than others. Yet Christ tells us to humble ourselves; and give to and help others. The world says you need to personally strive to reach higher. Yet Christ teaches that to reach higher, we must bow down and submit to Him. The world says that the measure of success is having a lot of money and worldly things. Yet, Christ teaches that the true eternal riches come from loving God and loving others. The world says to "go for it", do what feels good, and live life anyway you want too. Yet Christ tells us that in order to find eternal life we must surrender, let our old selves die, repent of our sins, and live a holy life in order to honor the One that saved us.

Over the next twelve to eighteen months, we are going to live out one of this paradoxes between what the world says and what Christ says. We are going to live out what it means to go "deeper" in order to go "higher." As the Body of Christ, we will accomplish this by focusing on going "deeper" in our relationship with God and with others, so that we can reach "higher" into the Kingdom of Christ.

Now some may say, "My relationship with Christ and others is just fine. I don't need to do anything more." This my friends is a fallacy. As fallen human beings seeking to become more and more like Christ, there is always room to go deeper in our relationship with God and with others. Too many times we hit a "comfortable plateau" where things in our lives are pretty steady and we settle in and think that we will just ride this time out. I heard this saying many years ago and I don't know who said it, "Do you know the only difference between a rut and a grave?" The answer is, "The dimensions." While there is nothing wrong with enjoying the times in our lives when things are going well, as Christians we cannot stay stuck and let it become a rut.

To help us go deeper in order to go higher, we are going to be offering several major programs over the next twelve to eighteen months and I want to personally encourage you to jump in one or all of these opportunities; even if it looks like something that might make you uncomfortable. Saying you don't have time is simply not the way to look at it. All of us don't have enough time to do all things that we want and need to do. Instead, it is a matter of prioritization. The things we place at the top of our priorities list get done. It is simply a matter of having the right priorities and deciding what you are going to stop doing in order to make room for the things of God.

Our Church is ready to do go deeper. You are ready to go deeper. And this aligns with our mission statement, which is, "To know Jesus and Make Jesus Known." We cannot go deeper unless we deepen our relationship with Christ by knowing Him more. And we cannot help others go deeper in knowing Christ if we don't go deeper with others by sharing our faith.

So here are just a few of the items that I want you to pray about and commit to participating in over the twelve to eighteen months. And remember, anyone inside or outside of our Church can participate in any of these opportunities. So invite your friends.

- Attend worship on a regular basis and come expecting to meet Christ.
- At a date yet to be determined, we will be offering a 20-session program called "Living Waters." Twenty sessions is a big commitment. So if you want to learn more before deciding on the full program, come to "Introduction to Living Waters" on September 14. It will be a great experience whether you come alone, come as a couple, or invite friends.
- We are now offering the Spirit-filled worship service called "Deep Encounters" on the second Saturday of each odd-numbered month at 6:00 PM. We will begin on November 9, 2019. Everyone is welcome.
- If you are a girl in sixth through eighth grade, get active in CHICKS.
- Get involved in a small group (or a Life Group) and we have one started called "Beginnings: Going Deeper." They meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month at 5:00 PM in different people's homes. So check your bulletins for where the next meeting will be held.
- If you are an adult, then attend the men's or women's retreat called "Walk to Emmaus." This is a powerful 72 hours of being with God.

- Regardless of your age, make it a two-hour Sunday by attending both a worship service and Sunday school.
- If you are a Sophomore through Senior in High School, then attend Chrysalis. You will be with youth from all over Iowa and the surrounding states. The next Chrysalis session will be on March 27-29, 2020.
- If you are in Middle School or High School, then regularly attend Youth Group. Youth Group meets on the second and fourth Wednesday at 6:00 PM.
- If you are a teenager, then sign-up to attend "SOULutions: A Disciple Group for Teens." See Pastor Mike for more information and a registration form. This starts on Sunday, September 29.
- This fall we will be co-sponsoring a Christian Concert at our Church with the Christian radio station KJYL. We are in the process of working with an up-and-coming Christian singer to bring to Clarion. Look for more details on this Christian concert in the near future.
- If you are interested in going on a mission trip to the Philippines during the summer of 2020, then come for a question and answer meeting on Sunday, September 29 right after the second worship service.
- All Christians are to be missionaries. Some are called to be missionaries right where there live and work, others are called to go on short-term mission trips, while others become full-time missionaries. If you want to explore what it means to be in mission where ever the Holy Spirit has called you, then plan on attending a program called "Activate." It will be facilitated by the world-wide mission group TMS Global on Saturday, May 16, 2020.
- Participate in short-term local mission experiences at Lantern Apartments and The Beacon of Hope. Look for more information as these dates are set.
- If you want to improve your ability to share your faith, then look for a six-session class that will be coming in 2020.
- Read a daily devotional, pray often, and read your Bible on a daily basis.
- And this is only a sampling of what to look forward to over the twelve to eighteen months...

Christ is calling ALL OF US into a deeper relationship with Him and with others. So answer His call. And jump in to go deeper in order to reach higher!

God bless,  
Pastor Mike

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**RALLY SUNDAY – SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8**

Come one, come all! 8:30 a.m. Traditional, 9:40 a.m. Sunday school, 10:45 a.m. Contemporary

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**"Beginnings: Going Deeper"**

Our once per month gathering called "Beginnings" is moving in a new direction. **First**, we have changed the gathering time to the fourth Sunday of each month at 5:00 PM. **Second**, the purpose has changed. This is now a Life Group led by Pastor Mike. It is open to EVERYONE, as we worship through music, prayer, and sharing. In addition, during this casual small group meeting we will have a Bible study lead by Pastor Mike. **Third**, the location has changed. It will now be held in homes. To know where we will be meeting each month, check out our Facebook Page called "Beginnings: Going Deeper." So if you have been to Emmaus or Chrysalis, and would like to join a small group, then this is your invitation. If you are just interested in being in a small group where you can share, ask questions, learn, and be loved, then this is your invitation. If you don't know Jesus or if you have known him all of your life, then this is your invitation. If you don't like to speak in large groups, then this is your invitation. If you just want to come and check this out, then this is your invitation. And if you can (this is not required), everyone is invited to bring their favorite snack to share as we learn and grow together.

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**Iron Men Weekend Retreat**, September 13 – 15, 2019 at Northeast Iowa Christian Service Camp. Cost \$50 (by early bird date of August 31), \$60 (after August 31). Great worship, testimonials, breakout groups, 6 meals included, videos, manly fellowship and spiritual growth. Please contact Warren Curry, call or text at 515-851-1064 or email at [ironmen2717@hotmail.com](mailto:ironmen2717@hotmail.com)

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**"Introduction to Living Waters" is Coming!**

Living Waters is a 20 session gathering for adults that are truly ready to get to know Jesus. While at the same time, getting rid of some of the junk that is keeping them from living life to its fullest and being set free to be all that God wants them to be. And we will have a great time along the way. The date for these sessions has not yet been set and it will most likely start in the spring of 2020. But to get ready for Living Waters, we are bringing you a one-day session called "Introduction to Living Waters." This will be held on Saturday, September 14. Registration will be from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM and the session will be from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Lunch and snacks will be provided for a free-will offering. Living Waters is a great follow-up to Emmaus, but you do **not** have to have attended Emmaus in order to attend Living Waters. So if you want to get a taste of what Living Waters is going to be, then please sign-up on the clipboard in the back of the sanctuary or call the Church office. Also, you do **not** have to be a member of this Church in order to attend. It is open to all adults.

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**All-Church Potluck on Sunday, September 15**

We will hold an all-Church potluck immediately following the second worship service on September 15. The reason is that a small team from Living Waters Philippines will be teaching "Introduction to Living Waters" on Saturday, September 14. And then on Sunday, September 15, Pastor Jayvee Dychioco will be preaching. This potluck will be an all-Church welcome to our friends from the Philippines. So come and say hello!

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**Attention: New Confirmation Class is Starting**

Do you have a child who will be entering the eighth or ninth grade? Are they interested in attending Confirmation? We will meet each Sunday during the regular Sunday school time starting on Sunday, September 15 and running through Sunday, May 3. Confirmation is provided during a time when a child reaches the "age of accountability." In other words, they know right from wrong and they become accountable for their sins. Church tradition places this age at about 14 to 16 years old, depending upon the maturity of the child. During Confirmation, Pastor Mike will explore what it means to truly accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and have a life-long ever-deepening relationship with Him. At the completion of the class, the students will be Baptized (if they have not Baptized before) and join the Church. If you have a child that is interested, please see Pastor Mike for a sign-up form.

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**SOULutions: A DG for Teens:** "DG" means "Disciple Group. And this group is for all teenagers. And you do not have to go to our Church to attend. SOULutions is a 20 session disciple group is for teens that are serious about getting to know Jesus and breaking through all of the junk that holds them back. Oh, and we are going to have a lot fun too! As result of the need for your commitment, you and your parent(s) must attend a meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, September 22 in the Fireside Room. Your parent(s) have to sign some documents to approve your attendance. In addition, you will need to fill out a confidential application. And you will need to be committed to coming to every session, as you can only have one unexcused absence. We will meet on Sundays, from 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM in the Fireside Room. It will be led by Pastor Mike and Juliet Gudka. Here are the dates for the group: 9/29, 10/6, 10/13, 10/20, 10/27, 11/10, 11/17, 11/24, 12/8, 12/15, 12/22, 1/5, 1/12, 1/19, 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/16, 3/1, 3/8, and 3/15. For more information and to receive an application, please see Pastor Mike or Juliet Gudka. This also a great follow-up to Chrysalis, but you do **not** have to have attended Chrysalis to attend SOULutions.

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**Mission Trip to the Philippines in Summer of 2020**

Would you like to hear more about a possible mission trip the Philippines during the summer of 2020? Pastor Mike and Juliet will be holding a Question and Answer session for anyone that might be interested. If you attend this meeting, please know that you are NOT committing to go on the trip. Instead, this meeting is just to answer questions and gauge interest. You do not have to attend our Church to go on this trip. We will hold the Q&A meeting on Sunday, September 29, immediately following the second worship service. The meeting shouldn't take too long, so hopefully you will not be too late for lunch. This trip is open to mature teenagers and up.

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**Women of Joy** – "Overwhelmed - Finding Peace in a Chaotic World". Two fall dates: October 4 – 6 in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee and October 11 – 13 in Branson, Missouri. For more information and to see who is speaking go online go to [womenofjoy.org](http://womenofjoy.org) or call 1-256-355-1554.

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**All-Church Potluck on Sunday, October 27**

We will hold an all-Church potluck immediately following the second worship service on October 27. The reason will be to celebrate the completion of the Kitchen Remodel Project and to bless our remodeled kitchen to do the work of Jesus Christ. So come and let's celebrate all that God is doing in our Church!

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**"Deep Encounters" Spirit-filled Worship Service**

Our first "Deep Encounters" worship service was a powerful Spirit-filled experience. It was well accepted that the Worship Committee has decided to offer this worship service on an ongoing basis. "Deep Encounters" will be on the second Saturday of the odd-numbered months at 6:00 PM. And we will start the regular offering of this worship service on November 9. Anyone can attend this incredible worship experience. You don't have to come to our Church; you don't have to come to any Church; so invite your friends and neighbors.

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**"Activate"** seminar given by TMS Global will be on Saturday, May 16, 2020. Registration will be from 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Class begins at 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. with lunch provided. Participants must preregister no later than May 2. More information to come.



## YOUTH GROUP

YoUth GrOuP KICKOFF!!! Welcome ALL 7th-12th youth! Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2-5pm

Bowling and Pizza, Cost: \$5, RSVP to Jody or Emily by Wednesday, September 11th!

\*Permission Form REQUIRED - available in school offices or on YG's Instagram and Facebook pages\*

Welcome Back, YoUth GrOuP!!! Welcome ALL 7th-12th grade youth!!

Fall Start Date: Wednesday, September 25th

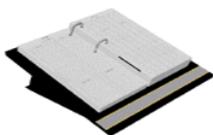
2nd/4th Wednesdays of each month from 6-8pm, Clarion Methodist Church Fellowship Hall

Contact: Jody Johnson or Emily Bernhardt

Calling all 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Fall Youth Retreat, October 4-5, 2019

Come enjoy. Worship. Speakers. Games. Campfire. Friends. Fun and Food!

Questions: Contact: Kelly Kirstein 515-851-8332, Free registration until September 27



### **SEPTEMBER CALENDAR**

- 1 – 10:00 a.m. Worship Service  
6:00 p.m. DVD at The Meadows
- 2 – Labor Day – Church office closed
- 3 – 1:00 – 6:00 p.m. Blood drive at UPC
- 4 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
6:00 p.m. Youth Group Team meeting  
6:00 p.m. Praise Team practice  
7:00 p.m. Education Team meeting  
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir practice
- 7 – 9:30 a.m. – Noon “Breath of My Beloved” Ministries
- 8 – Rally Sunday, return to fall schedule  
8:30 a.m. Traditional Service  
9:40 a.m. Sunday school  
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Service  
6:00 p.m. DVD at The Meadows
- 11 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
6:00 p.m. Praise Team practice  
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir practice  
8:00 p.m. Worship Team meeting
- 12 – 10:00 a.m. Communion at Assisted Living  
7:00 p.m. SPRC
- 13 – Church office closed
- 14 – 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Introduction to Living Waters
- 15 - 8:30 a.m. Traditional Service  
9:40 a.m. Sunday school  
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Service  
Noon – All Church Potluck  
2:00 p.m. Youth Group Kick-off  
6:00 p.m. DVD at The Meadows  
6:30 p.m. Trustees meeting  
7:00 p.m. MOE
- 16 – 5:00 p.m. Proteus Clinic  
7:00 p.m. Lydia Circle

- 18 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
 2:00 p.m. Isabella Thoburn at Assisted Living Dining Room  
 6:00 p.m. Finance Team meeting  
 6:00 p.m. Praise Team practice  
 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir practice
- 20 – 9:00 a.m. Proteus Clinic
- 22 - 8:30 a.m. Traditional Service  
 9:40 a.m. Sunday school  
 10:45 a.m. Contemporary Service  
 2:00 p.m. SOULutions (see newsletter)  
 6:00 p.m. DVD at The Meadows
- 25 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Youth Group  
 6:00 p.m. Praise Team practice  
 7:00 p.m. Church Council meeting  
 No Chancel Choir practice
- 27 – 2:30 p.m. BINGO for Quarterly Committee
- 29 - 8:30 a.m. Traditional Service  
 9:40 a.m. Sunday school  
 10:45 a.m. Contemporary Service  
 Noon – Q & A meeting for 2020 Philippines trip  
 2:00 – 5:30 p.m. SOULutions  
 6:00 p.m. DVD at The Meadows
- 30 – 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Charge Conference here

## September Birthdays and *Anniversaries*

- 1 – Kim Ott
- 2 – ***Nancy and Paul Ahlstrom***
- 3 – Holden Walton
- 4 – Tyler Marker, Barb Moore
- 6 – Allison Warnke
- 7 – Frank Mechem, Dean Meinders, Dakota Hennigar
- 9 – Mason Warnke
- 10 – ***Melissa and Terry Hackley***
- 11 – Jordyn Jondle
- 12 – Tom Riley, Brandon Thompson, Matthew Fishburn
- 13 – Michael Boothby, Kevin Speirs
- 14 – Tim Young, Logan Carey
- 15 – Jeff Farwell, Mike Geary, Jordan Marker, Kyle Marker
- 16 – Peyton Rasmussen, ***Maureen and Vern Elston***
- 17 – Adam Walton
- 18 – Kay Marker, Marilyn Olsen
- 19 – Corey Howell
- 21 – Ryan Nail
- 22 – Shelley Fletcher, Roy Kraft
- 23 – Rose Meinders, Matthew Guina
- 24 – Kristin Ahrens
- 25 – Mitch Nickles, ***Marilyn and George Disney***
- 28 – Leroy Wicks
- 29 – Cheryl Hilgendorf, Jim Snively
- 30 – Marge Moore

**Happy Birthday and *Happy Anniversary* to all!**

Note: If your birthday or *anniversary* is not listed, or we have the date wrong,  
 Please contact the church secretary.

**CLARION FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES**  
MAY 22, 2019

The Church Council of the Clarion First United Methodist Church met on Wednesday, May 22, 2019 with fourteen members and one guest present: Carolyn Bowman, Dennis Bowman, Jerry Boyington, Tana Boyington, Cathy Farwell, Pastor Mike Gudka, Bob Herbst, Kent Kirstein, Angela Lantzky, Daniel Murray, Kari Jo Murray, Todd Sorensen, Kathy Watts, Bud Young and guest Craig Warnke.

Pastor Mike called the meeting to order. It was voted on and approved to adopt the agenda. Kent made a motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting. Second by Todd. Voted on and carried. Kent presented the Treasurer's Report. We did well with the special offering to pay off the Audio/Visual loan and that amount will be added to the kitchen fund. Carolyn made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Second by Cathy. Voted on and carried. Cathy offered devotions.

Craig, Todd and Carolyn went through the proposed kitchen and salad room remodel. Three separate projects were discussed for different areas in the remodel. After discussion Jerry made a motion to proceed with the remodeling and obtaining a \$60,000 line of credit through the bank with the following people on it for signers: Carol Townsend, Kent Kirstein, Sam Moore and Jodi Kraft. Second by Bud. Voted on and carried.

Pastor Mike updated the Council on what was happening in the UMC and what has transpired since the Special Conference passed "The Traditional Plan".

Pastor Mike reminded team chairpersons to contact their committee and how many members they need replaced and to also review their budgets for next year. Pastor Mike reported that the Safe Sanctuary Policy changes are still being worked on.

Education – Tana reported they had a good year. Memorial – There is over \$65,000 for the kitchen remodel. SPRC – Jerry reported they used a program "Another Set of Eyes" to do Pastor Mike's evaluation. The main concern voiced was visitation which they have been working on. Worship – Angela reported Holy week services went well. They continue to work on the worship service for Festival in the Park. They discussed the 2 Sunday's Pastor Mike is gone on vacation. They also are continuing to work on the New Spiritual service and plan on starting it in August and involve the Youth. Finance – Kent reported nothing different from the Treasurer's Report. MOE – Kari Jo and Daniel reported they are planning a cookout at Lantern Apartments in June. The mission trip to "Beacon of Hope" went well and they are continuing to work with KJYL radio station to sponsor a Christian artist concert in November. CHICKS - Kent reported they are planning the fall retreat. Trustees – Plans were discussed for what to do for funerals during the kitchen remodel. UMW – Carolyn reported guest day went well and people enjoyed the program. Youth – Kent thanked the council for the meal provided and they are starting to plan for the next year.

Cathy closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Watts, Secretary