

**JANUARY 2020  
CLARION CONNECTION  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
201 3<sup>RD</sup> AVENUE NE  
CLARION, IA 50525**

**Pastor: Rev. Mike Gudka  
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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: Carol Townsend and Juliet Gudka

**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.



Life Serve of Iowa (blood drive) will be at the Clarion United Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, January 7 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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**Happy New Year!**

As we look forward to a new year, we are in need of **Communion Stewards** for both services. Please sign-up on the Communion Stewards clipboard at the back of the Sanctuary. Thank you for prayerfully considering this need.

**Your Giving Makes a Difference**

Last week: \$4,215 (12-15-2019), Needed weekly: \$3,942  
Year-to-date: \$231,678, Needed year-to-date: \$201,042



## January 2020 Newsletter Article

Happy New Year!

For many people, when they read this opening sentence, they might be thinking, "2019 was a great year, and 2020 will be even better." For others, they might be thinking, "2019 was terrible and 2020 can only go one way, and that is up." And still others might simply dismiss this as a familiar greeting and move on to the rest of this article.

Regardless of what happened in your life in 2019, the calendar just keeps on advancing forward. Regardless of what we would like to get done in the time that we have, we only have so much time. And all we really have is right now. Now, I have no great insight into every little detail regarding what will happen in 2020, but I would like to share some of my hopes for this New Year.

I have witnessed so many new people coming to our Church. I hope that the Holy Spirit continues to empower us all to invite more people into our Church family.

I have witnessed many current attendees go much deeper in their relationship with and love of God. My prayer is that we will ALL continue to go deeper in loving God and loving each other. This is the reason that I will start off 2020 with a twelve-part teaching series on "How to Love Like God Loves."

I have witnessed a few people go through very difficult times. And I have watched how the Holy Spirit and our Church family has been with them every step of the way. And I hope that as time goes by, they too will see how God carried them through their struggle.

I have witnessed miracles in our midst and powerful transformation through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is truly God's house and I pray that these will not only continue, but grow in number and strength.

I am really looking forward to 2020, as there could be a major event in the history of the UMC occurring at General Conference in May, 2020. Since 1974, our denomination has spent too much time, talent, energy, and millions of dollars arguing over the same issues. And many people believe that we have reached an impasse, and it is now time for the denomination to split. I for one, believe that this time has come, and for many reasons. Our understanding of Christianity and the Bible has grown so far apart, that these different theologies are simply no longer reconcilable. Our institution has grown bloated, dysfunctional, and has been focused more on personal power, money, and position, than on humbling ourselves to be true Disciples of Jesus Christ. In many areas, the Holy Spirit has withdrawn His power. As a result, some of the parts of the institution are dying and we need to let these go. Some are so outdated that no one knows what they do and we cannot even know why we funded them in the first place.

It is time to let the "institution" die and get back to being a "movement" for Jesus Christ!

I feel that if an amicable split does happen, and we can go our separate ways hoping nothing but the best for the other groups, then I believe that we are at the cusp of a seeing massive revival in the Church that has remained true to God's Word and remained focused on following the lead of the Holy Spirit. As we work our way through the details of any split, I see nothing but a powerful future for our Church right here in Clarion. Sure, we may have to change the sign and change the name on our letterhead, but these are trivial tasks compared to what the Holy Spirit is going to do. I see a time when we can shed off the dead and dying parts of our institutional Church that have held us down. And this will allow us to come together with like-minded Churches that will open up the opportunity for a complete rebirth and a rising of the Holy Spirit in ways we simply have never thought possible. Our future is not only brighter than it has ever been, but there has never been a more important time for us to take up our cross and move forward by making a complete commitment to participate in God's plan.

And each and every one of you have an incredibly important part to play in this family of God and the plan that is about to unfold. Each one of you brings exactly the right time, talent, resources, prayer, and witness that will help us collectively become the Bride of Christ and ready for His return. Regardless of the amount of time, talent, resources, prayer, and witness that you think you have, please know that the Holy Spirit will multiply it a hundred fold!

So as we enter 2020, let's keep our hearts, minds, bodies, and souls focused on God's bright and powerful future for our Church family. The possibilities are truly limitless when let God do the directing, and we do our best to follow His lead.

So I truly mean it when I say, "Happy New Year!"

God bless,  
Pastor Mike

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**Do You Want to Join Our Church?**

If you would like to "place a stake in the ground" by becoming a member of our Church, please see Pastor Mike. While being a member will not get you a better place in heaven, it is certainly a powerful statement to declare Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and commit to finding ways to serve within our Church.

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**Going Deeper Spirit-filled Worship**

This worship service is filled with powerful music, testimony, prayer, and a relaxed atmosphere to love God and love each other. Come and join us and leave inspired, refreshed, and uplifted. This service is offered on the second Saturday of each odd-numbered month at 7:00 PM.

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**Beginnings: Going Deeper**

This is a small group that includes praise, worship, prayer, fellowship, fun, and Bible study. And if you want to bring a snack to share, that is great too. Whether you have never read any of the Bible, or read the whole thing a hundred times, this is a great place to be. Beginnings is always on the fourth Sunday at 5:00 PM at Judy Watne's home at 210 6th Ave NE in Clarion.

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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.

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**Women's Gathering – Saturday, January 25, 6:30 p.m.**

Clarion First United Methodist Church

A gathering of women in and around the state of Iowa to come together for worship, exhortation from God's Word and a time of ministry.

More information to come!

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**Weather Related Church Closings**

If the Church is going to be closed due to bad weather, please remember the following.

- Monday through Friday: If the school is closed then the Church is closed.
- Sunday: You can look on the Church's Facebook page, or listen to one of the following radio stations: KQWC 95.7 Webster City (the announcements do not go out until 9:00 AM on Sundays); KJYL 100.7 Eagle Grove (they post closings on their website at [kinshipradio.org](http://kinshipradio.org)).

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**JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH QUARTERLY COMMITTEES**

January Co-Chairpersons: Nikki and Tom Conlon, Judy Kirstein

February Co-Chairpersons: Carolyn and Dennis Bowman

Cathy and Jeff Farwell

March Co-Chairpersons: Beth Clutter

Bonnie and Bud Young

Additional Committee persons:

Sally and George Boyington

Deb and Mike Geary

Kim and Tim Marker

Kristine and Robert Ahrens

Deanna and Kevin Lehman

El Marie and Manie Nel

Shirley and Steve Hill

Rosa and Jorge Martinez

Nora and Brandon Thompson

Andy Young

June and Allyn Christensen

Casey and Corey Howell

Jamie and Chance Wahl

Cindy and Jim Dorn

Holly and Steve Martin

Anna and Tyler Warnke

Kim and Kirk Disney

Barb Nail

Tina and Doug Zieman

Kelly and Kent Kirstein

Bill Drury

Deb and Gary Keller

Nancy and Paul Ahlstrom

Abby and Dean Kirstein

Troy Schultz

Jill and Jeremy Campbell

Micki and Chad Disney

Joella Steffenson

Allison and Austin Warnke

## January Birthdays and *Anniversaries*

- 3 – Marlene Brown
- 5 – Jim Morford
- 7 – Kennedy Trca
- 8 – Alexandria Hackley, Teryl Marker
- 10 – Gavin Disney, Indy Johnson
- 11 – Luke Maxheimer
- 12 – Miriam Jensen
- 13 – Brenna Harklau, Hannah Leist
- 14 – Chad Disney
- 15 – Laura Beenken, Pam Smith
- 16 – Jenna Clutter
- 17 – Deb Geary, Sandra Larick, Amelia McOllough, Jean Snively
- 18 – Katy Warnke, Dan Carey
- 22 – Bryce Rasmussen
- 26 – Manie Nel Sr.
- 27 – Sara Abbas
- 28 – Kasey Adams, Raven Kinnetz
- 29 – Craig Warnke
- 30 – Darren Johnson
- 31 – Mark Bernhardt, Taylor Beenken

Happy Birthday and *Happy Anniversary* to all!

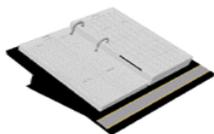
Note: If your birthday or *anniversary* is not listed,  
or we have the date wrong, please contact the church secretary.

### Traditional Irish Band Coming to Our Church

Carter Nath, a life-long Kossuth County, Iowa native is bringing in a quartet of friends from Ireland who make up the band, "Crogadh" based out of Limerick, Ireland. Crogadh has made two large tours in the past year to China as well as Washington D.C. and had the opportunity to play for both nations' Presidents. They will be collaborating with Carter Nath in concert featuring Irish traditional music including pipes, fiddle, concertina, guitar, piano and voice. This will be a fun filled event with talented musicians for all ages to enjoy! No tickets are required. A free-will offering will be taken to help with the Band's travel expenses. The concert will be on Saturday, January 11 at 3:00 PM. It will be GREAT family fun!

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**Iowa United Methodist Foundation** – Scholarship information available at online at [iumf.org/scholarships/](http://iumf.org/scholarships/) Over 100 scholarships available, these scholarships opened in December 2019. Find out the criteria by going to the above website.



### **JANUARY CALENDAR**

- 1 – New Year's Day – Church office closed
- 5 – 8:30 a.m. Traditional Service  
No Sunday school  
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Service  
6:00 p.m. DVD at The Meadows
- 7 – 1:00 – 6:00 p.m. Blood Drive at UPC  
3:30 p.m. Whiz Kidz
- 8 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
6:00 p.m. Youth Group  
6:00 p.m. Praise Team practice  
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir practice  
8:00 p.m. Worship Team meeting
- 9 – 10:00 a.m. Communion at Assisted Living  
7:00 p.m. SPRC

- 11 – 9:00 a.m. Chrysalis Planning meeting  
3:00 p.m. Irish Music Festival  
7:00 p.m. “Deep Encounters”
- 12 – 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
- 13 – Noon – “Impact for Women”, contact Martha Martinez  
5:00 p.m. Bears Cub Scouts
- 14 – 3:30 p.m. Whiz Kidz  
7:00 p.m. MOE
- 15 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
2:00 p.m. CHICKS  
No Isabella Thoburn  
5:00 p.m. Webelos Cub Scouts  
6:00 p.m. Praise Team practice  
6:00 p.m. Finance Team meeting  
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir practice
- 19 - 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  
6:30 p.m. Trustees meeting
- 20 – 7:00 p.m. Lydia Circle
- 21 – 3:30 p.m. Whiz Kidz
- 22 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
6:00 p.m. Youth Group  
6:00 p.m. Praise Team practice  
No Chancel Choir  
7:00 p.m. Church Council meeting
- 25 – 5:00 p.m. Women’s Gathering
- 26 - 8:30 a.m. Traditional Service  
9:40 a.m. Sunday school  
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Service  
5:00 p.m. “Beginnings: Going Deeper”  
6:00 p.m. DVD at The Meadows
- 27 – Noon – “Impact for Women”, contact Martha Martinez  
5:00 p.m. Bears Cub Scouts
- 28 – 3:30 p.m. Whiz Kidz
- 29 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
6:00 p.m. Praise Team practice  
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir practice
- 30 – 6:30 p.m. Cub Scouts Pack meeting
- 31 – 2:30 p.m. BINGO for Quarterly Committee

**GOD IS LOVE!**