

THE HOPE MESSENGER

Bagley~Bayard~Cooper~Dawson~Linden~Yale



I was looking in to devotions for the New Year and found this one. This year Hope Parish will begin some changes in how we do things. All of the churches in the parish need to be looking at different options. Hope Parish is facing challenges, most churches the challenge is with finances. I've been praying for God's vision for Hope Parish and for each individual church, some of you may have noticed this during the Pastoral Prayer on Sunday. I've asked you to pray for God's vision for your church. We need to work together, all six churches, to come up with options in order for Hope Parish to continue. I was given the opportunity to lead this parish and I want nothing more than to continue to lead this parish. So I'm asking for your help, your abilities to come up with ideas that will keep Christ first and foremost in our midst.

God's blessings Pastor Karen

This devotion was written by Sierra Wendt. "I just don't want to stay on a ship that's sinking" a friend once told me in reference to our local church and youth group, adding "that's the Captain's job". True to her intentions, she proceeded to leave the church, jump ship and join the vast sea of statistics. In fact, according to a recent study done by LifeWay Research, 70% of youth and young adults will leave the church. Her statement still haunts me; if she was right, what am I doing still standing stubbornly on the deck of a sinking ship? In my personal search, I believe I uncovered a motivation to stay in church that is rooted in my very identity as a Christian.

The church is our responsibility: In 1 Peter 2:9, the Bible gives us not only a detailed job description, but a tried and true method to identify a true Christian. It states, "*But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.*" (The Message) In Bible days, the priests were the ones that took responsibility for the church. I guess we could compare them to the captain of a ship. So why does God tell us in this passage that WE are chosen for the same type of work in this generation? Why should we act like the church is OUR responsibility? I think the answer is simple. It comes down to deciding who you are to the church. Are you a passenger or a captain?

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Passengers and Captains: Passengers on ships are usually just there to enjoy the ride, complain when things go wrong, be guaranteed a safe exit in case of an emergency, and be served by the Captain and his or her crew. If you find yourself viewing the church as an organization there to serve you, to entertain you, and to make you happy, you are most likely a passenger at church.

But our role within the church is not to sit back and take it easy. It is to follow in Jesus' footsteps and do the work of a captain who serves. This is the highest calling, and one of the secrets to finding fulfillment in church. I'll be honest, there are some weekends when I actually wake up and dread going to church. Sometimes the feeling just isn't there, and going to church seems more like an archaic tradition than a relevant growing experience with God (probably due to a skewed passenger-to-captain ratio). But when I step back and look to the example Jesus set for us, I am left standing there awkwardly with a load of lame excuses.

Jesus - the church changer: You see, in the time of Jesus, "Church" wasn't all that different either. You had the Pharisees and Sadducees and all kinds of other passengers going to the churches during that time. These people could probably take home the prize for being the most hypocritical, fake, self-righteous church members of all time. They had very strict rules and formalities on the outside, but inside their relationships with God were rotting away. In other words, they were experts on masking their true identities. If you don't take my word for it, read what Jesus has to say about them in Mathew chapter 23! And yet, in Luke 4:16 it says, *"And he [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue (or church) on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read."* Not only does Jesus actually go to their hypocritical church, he actually leads the service! While Jesus was on earth, he totally gave the organized church a 180-degree revolution. It didn't happen overnight — the messed-up passengers didn't all disembark at one time — and the church wasn't magically "healed". But change did happen.

One of my all-time favorite quotes is from the peace loving Gandhi who once said, *"Be the change that you wish to see in the world"*. And I would venture to say that the same concept applies to church as well.

Change begins with you: If you want the church to be more loving, you have to love the church and the people in it more. Spend time with them, know their names, visit them, and get to know them individually. If you want the church to be more accepting, start by including the outcasts and those who get left out at church. Maybe it's an older lady who's gone to your church for decades, but still gets neglected. Or maybe it's that awkward new kid who just visited your youth group, you know, the one that the "cool crowd" is ignoring. If you want the church to be less judgmental, start by not judging the people who judge you. As soon as someone makes a hurtful or unjust comment to you, the easiest thing to do is think they are just being wickedly malicious. But you never know what someone is going through or the motives of their heart. Be fair even if they're not. If you want church to be exciting and relevant, get out there and do big things for God. Go on a mission trip to another country. Pledge to introduce Jesus to one of your friends, someone your age, this year. Get involved with actively reaching out to your community. Preach a sermon. Visit somebody in the hospital. Volunteer at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter. And then tell me that church isn't exciting! You see, church is more than going to a building once a week, church is a lifestyle.

Above all, ask God what amazing and exciting plans He has for you individually. Be the change — act like a captain.



Greetings friends,

We have 'A New Vision' at Lake Okoboji United Methodist Camp that will take us into our next 100 years of ministry and allow us to continue changing lives at the lake.

For over 100 years, campers, families, church groups, and guests have visited our camp and called this Camp home for a week or more each summer. It is amazing to look back on our history and see the way this site has adapted and evolved to the current style of camping we have today. To think about how many actual lives have been impacted by time spent at Lake Okoboji United Methodist Camp is mind-boggling. How great would it have been to stand on the shores of West Lake Okoboji in 1915 with A. B. Snyder, C. L. Fillebrown, S. H. Turbeville, J. B. Walker, E. D. Hammerle, O. M. Bond, F. P. Quick, and D. A. McBurney and pray for the campsite they were creating.



The visioning that happened in 1915 is much like the visioning we are doing today in 2017. In 1914-1915 they were looking for a permanent location to have camp each summer. We are looking to have a better permanent structure for housing campers and guests. The vision we are presenting starts with a new 96 bed facility to house our campers and guest. The second and third phases will include indoor worship space, adult friendly suites, multi-purpose gym area and a possible swimming pool.



It was a large undertaking in 1915 to acquire 40 acres and start the process of creating our site. It is hard to imagine what life would be like had that visioning not taken place. Now we need your help to make our New Vision a reality. Will you stand on the shore with us today and pray for the future we can have with a new building? Make a gift towards this building project? Please contact the camp soon to make a gift in 2017 and share how you would like to give into the future.

I invite you to explore this email and our website for more information. If you have any questions or would like to talk more about ways to give and support, please contact me, Derek Bergman, Site Director by calling the office 712-336-2936 or email directly Derek@OkobojiCamp.com.

This kind of project will help us with our summer and year round ministry but, it cannot happen without your financial and prayerful support. Thank you!

January- February Mission Focus: The Children’s Clothes Closet

The Children’s Clothes Closet (3-C’s)

Is a ministry of the Panora United Methodist Church and provides free clothing for families in need. The ministry began in 2002 and has grown so that it now reaches out into Guthrie, Greene, Adair and Dallas Counties. They never turn away anyone who comes to them in need.

This ministry is supported by donations from people such as you. Please help by going through your children’s clothing and donating those items still in good shape. You can also help by providing cash and/or volunteering to help with the sorting.

Please bring your donations for this local ministry to your church during January and February.





Bayard United Methodist Church

502 3rd St. – Bayard, IA 50029
 Sunday Worship 9:00 am
 Sunday School 10:00 am
 Newsletter Report – Lori McGivney

A Bible Study on the book of Luke will start at the Bayard Church on January 7th at 4:00. We will meet for an hour on Sunday afternoons. We will study the book of Luke with the book "Following Jesus with Luke" by Stonecroft. The book is \$7.99 at Cokesbury. This book has 9 chapters and I anticipate it to take 3 months to go through the book of Luke. Everyone is welcome and when you have a Sunday you need to miss, just read that chapter on your own and join us when you can. If you want Carolyn Schwartz to order you a book, please let her know.

January and February Greeters	
Greeters	
1-7	Joan Mantz and Shirley Phelps
1-14	Ron and Joyce White
1-21	Dean and Sandy Robertson
1-28	Jill Albright and Lori McGivney
2-4	Dan and Gaye Imler
2-11	John and Nancy Shirbroun
2-18	Don and Carolyn Schwartz
2-25	Don and Norma Olesen



Bagley United Methodist Church

402 Main St. – Bagley, IA 50026
 Sunday Worship 10:30 am
 Sunday School 9:30 am

Dates to Remember

- Jan 14 Ad Board Mtg 11:30 am
- Jan 21 Fellowship @ 9:30 am
- Jan 24- Parish Council 7:00 pm @ Yale
- Feb 11 Ad Board Mtg 11:30 am
- Feb 18 Fellowship @ 9:30 am

Check the calendar on page 7 of this Newsletter for important upcoming meetings and events!

Happy New Year!!



Linden United Methodist Church

106 N. Evans – Linden, IA
 Sunday Worship 8:45 a.m.
 Dottie Hill, Newsletter Reporter

Remember these dates:

- January 1st Happy New Year!
- January 21th 9:45 am Ad Board Mtg
- January 28th Food Pantry
- February 14th Happy Valentine's Day
Ash Wednesday
- February 18th 9:45 am Ad Board
- February 25th Food Pantry

Recent Births: A pink rose on the altar for Olivia Rose Ocker, born this past fall!

No Sunset Circle meetings in January and February, March

Recent deaths: Our sympathy to the families of Carroll Wagaman, Janet Borst and Erwin Epley.



Yale United Methodist Church

101 Main St. – Yale, IA
 Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m. - Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
 Christie Ocker, Newsletter Reporter

Our Mission: To live in such a way that those who know us but don't know God, will come to know God because they know us.

We Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and hope you all have a wonderful New Year.

Serving our church in	January	February
Communion	Joan Fredrickson	Joan Fredrickson
Greeters/Ushers	Lowell & Carol Peters	Ryan and Emily Albers
Fellowship		Joan and Emily Albers

PARISH CALENDAR

January 7	4:00 pm	Bayard Bible Study "Following Jesus with Luke" at the Bayard UMC. Communion Sunday Dawson/Cooper
January 14	8:00 am 9:00am 11:30 am 4:00 pm	Communion Sunday Linden/Yale Bayard Men Serve Breakfast Dawson Ad Board/ Fellowship Bagley Ad Board Bayard Bible Study "Following Jesus with Luke" at the Bayard UMC.
January 21	9:30 am 9:45 am 11:00 am 4:00 pm	Communion Sunday Bagley/Bayard Bagley Fellowship Linden Ad Board Yale Ad Board Meeting Bayard Bible Study "Following Jesus with Luke" at the Bayard UMC.
January 25	7:00 pm 7:00 pm	Parish Council @ Yale UMC Bayard Youth Group
January 28	4:00 pm	Bayard Fellowship following Church service Linden Food Pantry Bayard Bible Study "Following Jesus with Luke" at the Bayard UMC.
February 1	11:00 am	Bayard UMW Soup Luncheon
February 4	4:00 pm	Bayard Bible Study "Following Jesus with Luke" at the Bayard UMC.
February 11	8:00 am 9:00 am 11:30 am 4:00 pm	Communion Sunday Dawson/Cooper Bayard Men Serve Breakfast Dawson Fellowship & Board Meeting Bagley Board Meeting Bayard Bible Study "Following Jesus with Luke" at the Bayard UMC.
February 14	7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday Service at Yale UMC Happy Valentine's Day!
February 15		NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
February 18	9:30 am 9:45 am 11:00am 4:00 pm	Communion Sunday Linden/Yale Bagley Fellowship Linden Ad Board Yale Ad Board Bayard Bible Study "Following Jesus with Luke" at the Bayard UMC.
February 25	4:00 pm	Communion Sunday Bayard/Bagley Bayard Fellowship following Church service Linden Food Pantry Bayard Bible Study "Following Jesus with Luke" at the Bayard UMC.
February 28	7:00 pm	Bayard Youth Group
Please email any new events to hopeparish@netins.net		

**HOPE UNITED
METHODIST PARISH**
 P. O. Box 25
 Yale, IA 50277
 Phone:
 641-439-2458
 E-Mail:
hopeparish@netins.net

Ministry Team	
Garold Hansen (H) 641-427-5435 (C) 641-431-0672 gnhansen@iowatelecom.net	Larry Monthei (H) 515-386-4584 (C) 515-370-1721 lmon37@netins.net
Karen Patrick (H) 712-651-2799 (C) 712-830-7706 karenpatrick72@gmail.com	