

*Our calling is to reach all people with the life-changing power of God's Love and Grace available to all through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

# Newsletter

## Westby United Methodist Church

### December 2017

JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!

IN THIS ISSUE

### Purposeful Prayer

by Pastor Jim Aniol

Several weeks ago I met Reverend Charliam Renner whose church was experiencing powerful growth. He was speaking to all of the United Methodist students on the University of Dubuque campus about how this growth occurred. After our lunch together I took him out for coffee because I needed to know more and he gave all of the credit for the growth of his church to prayer, a form of prayer that he learned from a book called *Flood Gates* by Reverend Sue Nilson Kibbey. I immediately purchased the book and began reading it. I've had to put it down to complete my final seminary papers, but here is a recap of what I've read so far, with the focus on chapter two, **The Breakthrough Prayer Initiative**. I will be quoting from the book and providing you with page numbers in case you purchase the book, and want to highlight these sections.

The book is divided into eight chapters, with each chapter featuring one of the Flood Gates that our churches can release. The author also has additional online resources, video stories, and other helpful tools, all of which are available at <http://www.snkibbey.com/flood-gates/>. The author is even open for questions via the website.

Chapter two describes three types of breakthrough prayer with the author giving examples for each type.

- 1. Threshold Prayer** (pp. 34-35) - This type of prayer is most useful when a church isn't certain what needs to

happen next, but is definitely certain that something needs to change. Threshold prayer is simply, and repeatedly, presenting the current reality to God and asking for God to completely use and transform it for God's miraculous use. This type of prayer is also called "the prayer of being willing to be willing."

The scriptural basis for this type of prayer is Ephesians 3:20 *"Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us"*

**A sample of this type of prayer** – "God, we lift this to you with our prayers. Please do what we cannot do ourselves. Change what we cannot change ourselves, including you changing us—without limits!"

- 2. Archer's Prayer** (pp. 39-42) - This prayer is most easily defined as "breakthrough prayer with a target." This prayer is used when a congregation has clearly identified its need or hope. Archer's prayer happens when a church decides to specifically pray **together** on behalf of the need or hope, asking for breakthroughs

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that are impossible without God's miraculous action, intervention, or direction.

The scriptural basis for this type of prayer is Joshua 6:1-20 where the Israelites focused action in obedience to God caused God to bring down the walls of Jericho.

3. **Prevailing Prayer** (pp. 42-44) - Prevailing prayer happens when a congregation or ministry (or individual) sees and utilizes everything and everywhere as a platform to pray. Everything is a venue for prayer. Every member feels called to personal prayer involvement as part of the whole. Prayer becomes the church's primary ministry **above all else**, because when you are praying for your church, nothing can stop anything that you try.

One of the most exciting examples of prayer for me, begins on page 48, and it was the form of prayer that Pastor Renner used at his church as they continue to experience incredible growth and renewed spiritual life in the church that he serves. This form of prayer allows the entire congregation to pray in unison **every day** of the week where ever they are. Every member receives

a small card that they can carry with them that has the specific prayer they are all to pray at the same time every day. In the example in the book, their prayer was called the "8:11 Prayer", and each person would stop whatever they were doing at 8:11am and 8:11pm every day and pray the prayer on the card. Why 8:11? It was the address of their church.

James, the brother of Jesus tells us "You do not have, because you do not ask" (James 4:2 NRSV). I think it's time that we start asking.

During the month of December, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus, what do we need to pray for our churches? Do we know what we need to pray for?

May God be with you till we meet again.

Pastor Jim



### Pastor Jim's Schedule:

Monday – Seminary (All Day)

Tuesday – Driftless Regional Ministry office  
(9 am - 5 pm)

Wednesday – Westby UMC & Visitation

Thursday – Driftless Regional Ministry office  
(9 am - 5 pm)

Friday – Sabbath, Emergency Only

Saturday – On Call (9 am – 12 pm)

Sunday – Worship Services (8 am – 6 pm)

## December Office Hours

### Driftless Regional Ministry Office:

E2286 Hwy. 82 in De Soto

### Contact Information:

Cell Phone – 608-632-3939

Parsonage Phone – 608-648-2528

### December Birthdays

Dec. 5 – Luanne Olstad

Dec. 9 – Dody Wruck

Dec. 11 – Norm Davis

Dec. 14 – Donna Karasek, Deb Rubasch

Dec. 17 – Barrett Brown



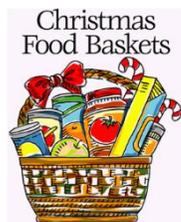
Dec. 25 – Happy Birthday Jesus!

Dec. 26 – Adelia Holey

Dec. 28 – Aniah Olstad

Dec. 31 – Ruth Gillmore

## Missions of the Month – Baskets of Love & Gifts for Norseland Residents



We announced one of our December missions in November. We wanted to be able to collect donations for Baskets of Love early. This was to enable us to shop and put the boxes together containing the ingredients for a complete Christmas meal for needy families in the area, before Christmas. We would like to remind people who wish to give to Baskets of Love, we would like your donation by December 10th. A big THANK YOU to those who have already given.

In addition to Baskets of Love, we would like to support the Gifts for Norseland Residents who might not otherwise receive gifts at Christmas. Lois will be bringing the names and gift suggestions for residents who need gifts. Those who are able and willing to shop for a nursing home resident should watch for the display of names on the mission bulletin board. The gift requests are usually very modest and not all that expensive, but can mean a great deal to a lonely nursing home resident who does not have a lot of family near by. The date to have gifts at the church is Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. The presents need to be unwrapped or placed in gift bags. The presents will be given to the residents at their Christmas Party.



Ardith Hoff, Mission Coordinator

## Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to everyone who brought toys and donated to Operation Christmas Child. We packed 18 boxes to share with kids across the globe who don't normally celebrate Christmas. Each box had a letter and a special painted handprint to let the receiver know they were prayed for. We couldn't be a part of this mission without your help.



## Sunday School News

The Sunday school kids will be sharing **A Christmas Promise** during children's time on December 17th. Please join us for the message and music of this amazing season!

Planning ahead: We will not have children's Sunday school on Dec. 24th or Dec. 31st. We will resume in January.

The adult Sunday school group will meet on December 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. We will look at the Prophecies and their fulfillment of the Messiah.

★  
For  
unto  
you is  
born this  
day in the  
city of David  
a Savior, which  
is Christ the Lord.  
Luke 2:11

## Christmas Cookie Walk – Dec. 2

Just a reminder that the Christmas Cookie Walk is on Saturday, December 2 from 9:00 – 1:00. All proceeds from this fundraiser will go towards youth activities and community outreach projects.



## Westby United Methodist Church - Board Meeting † November 8, 2017

**Present:** Pastor Jim Aniol, Tim Gaskell, Kelly Bjornstad, Jane Gaskell, Jean Shore, Verna Drake, Ardith Hoff and Linda Weilnau

**Opening** – Jane Gaskell opened with prayer.

**Approval of Minutes** - The October minutes were emailed to the board members and published in the November newsletter, so they were to be read by each member before the meeting. Jean Shore and Verna Drake motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report** – Verna Drake presented the Year-to-Date and October financial reports. Verna said that she is missing the website fees from one of the other churches. She will let Pastor Jim know which one and he will remind them again that they need to pay for their portion of the website costs. Verna indicated that the Property Tax Exemption needs to be filled out for 2018. Jane Gaskell and Ardith Hoff motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

### Old Business:

- † Building Usage Policy – The updated policy was emailed to board members. Motion was made by Verna Drake and Jean Shore to approve the updated Building Usage Policy. Motion passed.
- † Furnace/Air Conditioner – Has Coulee Refrigeration had an opportunity to check on the moisture issue? – Kelly Bjornstad contacted Coulee Refrigeration about our moisture issue. They said we are still on the list.
- † Water Heater – The new water heater has been installed and is working. Lind's Home Center will be sending the bill to Verna Drake.
- † Broken Oven Door – Kelly Bjornstad has not had time to remove the broken oven door.
- † Cemetery – The cemetery checking account has been switched over to Verna Drake and Cindy Brown. One of the CDs for the cemetery comes up on Dec. 2, 2017 and the other one will be in 2019. Pastor Jim will call Church Mutual to inquire as to why we should have insurance for the cemetery. Tim and Jane Gaskell will check on the prices for a new, larger storage safe for the church records. It was decided to set a date in January 2018 to go through the filing cabinet in the back room to determine what documents would need to be added to the new document safe.
- † Vision Planning – Results of the forms which were turned in – Only 6 people have submitted forms at this time. We will ask that the forms be submitted by Nov. 19.
  - Pastor Jim found out that Westby Coon Prairie is already doing food backpacks for children.
- † Snow Removal – Janzen has been contacted and agreed to do our snow removal again this season. It will be the same price as last year.
- † Carlos (Compassion International child) – Verna Drake did submit a letter online to Carlos. It was decided that Pastor Jim will have the confirmation class write letters to Carlos once a month and send him pictures of them. Verna Drake sent \$30 to Carlos for Christmas gift(s) from the Youth checking account.

**New Business:**

- ✝ Local Church Appointment Update form – We went over this form as a group and answered the questions. There is a Driftless Regional Ministry meeting on Sunday, Nov. 12 to go over item #4 (characteristics we want in a pastor). Linda Weilmann and Ardith Hoff will be attending this meeting, so they will relay what characteristics Westby UMC wants in a pastor.
- ✝ Water Protection Sensor Program (brochure was emailed to board members) – After some discussion, it was decided to not pursue this item.
- ✝ Westby Meal Site for Seniors – The group which does the Westby Meal Site for Seniors needs a new location and they have asked if they can use our church. They would use the church four days a week (Mon. – Thur.) from 10:30-1:00. Pastor Jim will present the following questions/concerns to Megan Hanson about the Meal Site (Megan's replies are in red):
  - ◆ Will they need to use the oven or microwave? – **No, they do not need these items.**
  - ◆ Will they need to store anything at the church? – **Yes. They need to store utensils, plates, cups, Steno pot warmers, coffee pot, any other items used for serving.**
  - ◆ Does the team bring in all of the food warm and ready to eat? – **Yes.**
  - ◆ We would need to train someone from the team on how to set the thermostat. – **This will not be an issue. They will have their meal site manager learn how to set the thermostat.**
  - ◆ We don't have a way to remove snow from the sidewalks during the week. - **If there is a lot of snow and school is closed, the meal site is closed as well, due to any inclement weather. This would not be an issue because there are 2 drivers that deliver the Home Delivered meals and they can potentially get them to help out with the sidewalk if there is a little bit of precipitation, we are very flexible!**
- Pastor Jim provide Megan's answers via email to the board members. It was decided to allow the Meal Site to use our church, starting in January. It will be a 6-month trial period and at that time we will review how it is working out for everyone.

**Business from Board Committees:**

- ✝ **Trustees** – Kelly mentioned that there are some lights which need to be replaced in the fellowship hall.
- ✝ **SPRC** – No report.
- ✝ **Worship** – We need a substitute for the Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday service. Tim Gaskell volunteered to present the message on that day. Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year. It was decided to have an evening candle light service at 7:00 PM. The morning service on Sunday, Dec. 24 will be a service in song.
- ✝ **Education** – The Sunday school classes will start packing the OCC boxes on Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>. The boxes will be blessed during the service on Sunday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>. The Sunday school children will also sing during the service on Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>.
- ✝ **Lay Leadership** - No report.
- ✝ **Missions** - No report.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Jim mentioned a book, "Flood Gates" which is about prayer ministry. It has been used to help churches rejuvenate through prayer. Pastor Jim had a few extra copies that he handed out.

Jean Shore motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.

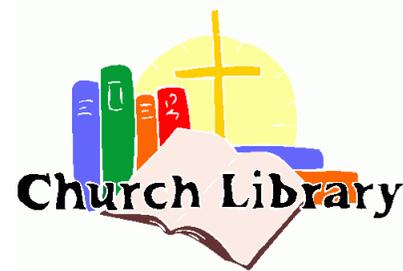
Minutes submitted by Linda Weilmann, acting Secretary

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## Church Library News

The church library has received a few booklets on “Following Jesus – Relationship or Religion”. They are the size of the *Upper Room* devotionals, so they will be put in the rack beside the library door.

Come and check out all the books that are available for you to read for expanding your knowledge and your enjoyment.



## Christmas Caroling



Christmas Caroling in Westby will be Wednesday, December 13th at 5:00 pm with a chili supper to follow. We will meet at the church at 5 pm and travel to Norseland, the Friendship House, Old Times, Halverson Apartments and various church family homes to share the sounds of the season. Afterwards, we'll warm up back at the church with chili and treats.

## Advent and Christmas Services

The first Sunday of Advent is Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> which will be the “Hanging of the Greens”. The fourth Sunday of Advent is on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>. We will still meet during our normal worship service time (10:45 AM) on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, but the service schedule will be a little different. Instead of having a regular message from Pastor Jim, we will be doing a message in song by singing Christmas carols.

There will be a Christmas Eve service on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM. This will be a candlelight service.



## Praise Group



The Praise Group welcomes any requests for worship music during the Christmas season. Make sure we sing your favorites! Place your requests on the blue clipboard, which is kept on the table in the narthex, or let Jane Gaskell know what Christmas songs you'd like to have us sing.

## Upcoming Lay Speaking Classes

If you are interested in attending Lay Speaking Classes, here are the dates and times for some upcoming classes which will be held in our area. The classes are 5 hours long with a half-hour break for lunch. There will more detailed information available in January.



✝ **Basic Lay Speaking Class** – February 10 and 17 (9:00-2:30 for both days)

✝ **Advanced Lay Speaking Class** – March 10 and 17 (9:00-2:30 for both days)

## Bible Basics Study Group

Bible Basics will meet Tuesday December 12th and 19th in Apt.116 at Halvorsen Apts. We will be looking at Prophecies of the Messiah and their fulfillment.

## The Forever Club (by LaVonne Barlow)

### Forever Club Bible Study #6

## Christmas Special "I Can Only Imagine"

Let's celebrate Christmas with a merry heart as it is the Conception Day of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, He who is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, He who created the world, Immanuel, who loved us so much, He humbled Himself to be born of woman and live in a temporary flesh body that can feel pain at times that seems unbearable, just so we who accept Him, can spend Eternity with Him. He wants us with Him. Unbelievable, what have I ever done that would warrant such sacrificial love? He did it all!

### 'I Can Only Imagine'

*I can only imagine what it will be like when I walk by your side.  
I can only imagine what my eyes will see, when your face is before me.  
I can only imagine. I can only imagine.*

#### Chorus

*Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel?  
Will I dance for you Jesus, or in awe of you be still?  
Will I stand in your presence, or to my knees will I fall?  
Will I sing Hallelujah, will I be able to speak at all?  
I can only imagine. I can only imagine.*

#### 2 Verse

*I can only imagine when that day comes, and I find myself standing by the Son  
I can only imagine when all I will do is forever, forever worship you.  
I can only imagine. I can only imagine.*

+++++

God said **"I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found"**. [Hosea 14:8.9] You will have a symbol of God in your home for the season, your tree will probably have lights so that will be a symbol of His Son Jesus who said, **"I am the Light of the world"** I have enjoyed having the symbol of God and His Son in our sanctuary this past year along with the cross. It is appropriate that we hang our prayers on it.

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Like a potter, God shaped man from clay (Is. 64:8) and breathed into him the breath of life (Gen. 2:7; Job 33:4). Humans are the only creatures privileged to have the breath of God, setting us apart from other creatures, for only humans are created **"in the image of God"** (Gen. 1:27). Each person is a unique individual, possessing the mental, emotional, and spiritual consciousness of our Creator and the capacity to have a personal relationship with Him.

The Old Testament patriarch Job may be the first person to acknowledge that **"[God's] hands shaped me and made me.... You clothed me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews"** (Job 10:8, 11-12). The prophet Jeremiah proclaimed that God had preordained his destiny and life even before he was formed in his mother's womb! [Jer. 1:5] David, celebrating himself as one of God's masterpieces, says he has been **"fearfully and wonderfully made"** by God. [Ps. 139:13-16]

Ref. Daily Bread 11-19-17

## Events at Other Churches:

### Women of Faith Christmas Gathering at Borgen's – December 5 (1:00 PM)

It's Celebration Time! Women of faith will be hosting their annual Christmas gathering on December 5th at 1:00 PM at Borgen's in Westby. We invite all the women and friends of the Driftless Ministry churches to attend. We order off the menu and everyone pays for their own meal. Instead of exchanging gifts, we ask everyone to give a donation (suggested amount \$10 or whatever God leads you to give) toward our Christmas food baskets for needy families. Please call Sheri Ballard (608) 634-4228 or Marla Lavold (608) 689-2590 to let them know you are attending so they can make reservations. Hope to see you there!



*Sounds  
of the  
Season*

### Community Christmas Program – December 17 (4:00 PM) at New Hope UMC

On Sunday, December 17 at 4:00 PM, there will be a Community Christmas Program at the New Hope United Methodist Church. There will be music by *The DisChords* during this program. Following the program, please join everyone for fellowship with a delicious meal provided by the members of the New Hope United Methodist Church.



December 2017 - "Save the Date"

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Pastor Jim's Sabbath Day	2 9:00-1:00 – Christmas Cookie Walk
3 – <b>1st Sunday of Advent</b> ☩9:30 AM – Sunday School – Youth ☩10:00 AM – Fellowship ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service (Communion) ☩12:00 PM – Confirmation Class	4 Pastor Jim at Seminary	5 1:00 PM – Women of Faith Christmas Luncheon @ Borgen's	6	7	8 Pastor Jim's Sabbath Day	9
10 – <b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b> ☩9:30 AM – Sunday School – Youth & Adult ☩10:00 AM – Fellowship ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service	11 Pastor Jim at Seminary	12 1:00 PM – Bible Basics Study Group @ Halvorsen Apt. #116	13 5:00 PM – Caroling/Chili Supper 6:30 PM - Church Board Meeting	14	15 Pastor Jim's Sabbath Day	16
17 – <b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b> ☩9:30 AM – Sunday School – Youth & Adult ☩10:00 AM – Fellowship ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service & Children's Christmas Program ☩12:00 PM – Confirmation Class 4:00 PM – DisChords @ NewHope UMC	18 Pastor Jim at Seminary	19 1:00 PM – Bible Basics Study Group @ Halvorsen Apt. #116	20	21	22 Pastor Jim's Sabbath Day	23
24 – <b>4th Sunday of Advent</b> No Youth Sunday School ☩10:00 AM – Fellowship ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service (Christmas Carols) ☩7:30 PM – Candle Light Service	25 <b>Merry Christmas!</b>  <i>Pastor Jim on Vacation</i>	26 <i>Pastor Jim on Vacation</i>	27 <i>Pastor Jim on Vacation</i>	28 <i>Pastor Jim on Vacation</i>	29 <i>Pastor Jim on Vacation</i>	30 <i>Pastor Jim on Vacation</i>
31 No Youth Sunday School ☩10:00 AM – Fellowship ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service – Guest Speaker <i>Pastor Jim on Vacation</i>						