



Ankeny
Christian Church

POSITIVE PEOPLE DOING GOD'S WORK



DISCIPLES
OF
CHRIST



January 2021 Newsletter

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God is Holding Your Life

A Journey of Assurance for the New Year

*"The works of God's hands are faithful and just."
- Psalm 111*

Life is a series of exclamations from "O No!" to "Help!" to "Oh

Yeah!" We can swing between disappointment, helplessness, and gratitude on a daily basis. There are also seasons of our lives when we feel inundated with more of one than the others. As we enter the new year, we had hoped we would be past the "O No!" of the last several months. Instead we find ourselves with ongoing prayers for "Help!" The Book of Psalms knows all about this. Written over a span of time from exile and isolation to the rebuilding of the community, the poetry of the Psalms will accompany us in this series, reminding us that through it all, we can trust and even give our thankful "Oh Yeah!" because God is, indeed, holding our lives.

January 3, 2021 (Epiphany Sunday)

"These Lives are Precious"

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

January 10, 2021

"Awe and Wonder"

Psalm 29

January 17, 2021

"Where Can I Go?"

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

January 24, 2021

"In God Alone"

Psalm 62:5-12

January 31, 2021

"Whole Heart Hallelujah"

Psalm 111

February 7, 2021

"We Wait, We Hope, We Stay"

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

Rev. Gerald "Jerry" Sawyer Preaching

February 14, 2021 (Transfiguration)

"The One is Shining Forth"

Psalm 50:1-6

Sunday Worship Online

Worship services will continue to be live streamed on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. You can either use the Facebook Link or the YouTube Link to see the live feed, or

even worship a little later if you need to. Use the buttons below to choose which link fits your needs best.

[Facebook Link](#)

[YouTube Link](#)

January 2021 Calendar Link

[Google Calendar](#)

Special Offering for January

This month we will be receiving a special offering to build desks for school children in the Des Moines area. We are partnering with "Woodworkers with a Purpose." Our goal as a congregation is to contribute AND build 100 desks (build dates and times TBD, so keep your eyes open for the opportunities). The materials for 100 desks will cost roughly \$3500, so that is our financial goal. To get us started toward our goal, the Missions Committee will match the first \$750 given. You can donate through

www.accdoc.weshareonline.org

and identify "Desk Build" in the comments box of your Local Missions/Outreach donation. The Church Council is already excited about the project, as are we! Let's do this thing!!

The Missions Committee,
Chuck Fausch, Chair

A Special Thank You

Dear Members and Friends of Ankeny Christian Church,

Happy New Year!!!

2020 was, to put it mildly, a unique year with particular challenges, not just for the congregation, but for all of us as individuals and families as well. We have all had to learn new skills, change plans, and do things differently. Yet, Ankeny Christian Church has continued to be the Church of Jesus Christ here in this time and place. The church continued to worship, care for each other, and serve our community and the world around us.

We would like to take a moment to say “Thank you!” to so many people:

- ACC’s Executive Committee, led by Council President, Emily Porath, who early on made some difficult decisions and met regularly to lead us through the beginning of the pandemic.
- ACC’s Council including officers and committee chairs, who had to halt plans mid-stream and come up with new ways to do their work, often with little notice. They also kept meeting faithfully each month to brainstorm and work together on ways to help keep the church being church.
- The ACC Connections Team, led by Pat Morton and Georgene Raver, for their work in contacting and connecting with people in the congregation – making phone calls and sending cards and otherwise checking in on each other and the congregation as a whole.
- The Worship Committee, led by Karen Fausch, for their diligent work in all of the ways we found ourselves worshipping this year - outdoor, indoor, and virtually. There is also a fantastic group of people who decorate our sanctuary so that we might feel as close to “in the sanctuary” as possible as we worship virtually and in-person. They have been excellent at keeping up with our series and giving us beautiful decorations to help us visually.
- The Praise Team, led by Bob Brown, who, when this whole thing began, gathered quickly to record music for our first Sunday and has continued to sing and help lead online worship this whole year.
- Cindy Holub, Georgene Raver, soloists, and the choir for their contributions of music. The music has added to our experience of worship in some really excellent ways.
- The Christian Education Committee, led by Deanna Clingan-Fischer, for coming up with ways to do Sunday School in-person and virtually this fall!
- The volunteers for the Youth and Children’s weekly ministries who have continued to plug away all year long in both online and in-person formats, including a stay at home mission trip!
- The 40+ individuals who video and/or audio recorded parts

of worship to be able to have excellent worship services all year, as well as the 25+ families who recorded greetings for our worship services through the first few series.

- The children and families who recorded materials for the Children's Christmas Program, as well as Karla Rice and the Christian Education Committee for pulling together volunteers and making it a reality.
- The Property Committee, led by John Sayre, who continued to be available to help maintain the building, making repairs and replacements as they have been needed.
- The Covid-19 Committee, led by Arnie Porath, and their ongoing work to wrestle with the issues that the pandemic has created and plan and set up with safety in mind so that we could meet in-person when it was safe to do so. They continue to meet almost weekly and their work will continue for the next several months.
- The Social Life Committee, led by Mike St. Clair, for making some adjustments when we couldn't hold our regular events, like the Thanksgiving dinner, and organized some activities to help keep us thinking about and connecting to each other.
- The Missions Committee, led by Chuck Fausch, who did send a team on a mission trip pre-Covid but then also kept us serving beyond ourselves with volunteers from the congregation. We served at the CCC, yard clean up around Ankeny and in Marshalltown.
- The Nominating Committee for working diligently to secure leadership for the coming year, and those who have agreed to serve without really knowing what leadership might look like in the coming year.
- The Stewardship and Finance Committee, led by Curt Narwold, and our Treasurer, Jim Mann, who worked to secure funds to make sure we could continue to operate as a church and fund our ministry, and then who worked hard to put together a budget for this upcoming year so that we could continue to engage in the ministry of the gospel, whatever 2021 brings.
- We would also like to express our gratitude to our Office Manager, Melissa Webb. Melissa has worked diligently through the pandemic to serve and support the ministry of the church.

She has continued to take initiative and bring ideas to the table that have been helpful in the working of the church. She keeps us on track in our weekly staff meetings and makes sure that prayer lists, announcements, and other communications are up to date. She has had to adapt not only to new ways of doing things, she has had to adapt to us adapting to new ways of doing things. She continues to do this with grace and attentiveness. And we are grateful for her work!

- And finally, you. You have continued to be a part of the congregation. You have participated in online worship, you have prayed, you have done mission, you have sung, you have shared communion, you have given financially, you have volunteered to read or to show up or to make a phone call, you have served, in some capacity, the work of Ankeny Christian Church and we are grateful for you!

We have never felt alone or unsupported by the congregation. It is highly likely that we have left out some group or individuals that have done things this year, because in a year where it seemed like church was cancelled, or maybe even 'not really church', quite frankly, Ankeny Christian Church has done a lot!! More than we can even keep track of in our minds. And we are grateful! Beyond words, we are grateful. We are grateful to be your pastors and to serve alongside you in the work of ministry! Thank you. Very simply...thank you!

Shalom,
Pastors Owen and Alison

Pastor Owen's Note

I am hopeful!

I have been astonished at how just the news of a vaccine for COVID-19 has changed my outlook on almost everything. I feel more hopeful about the future than I have for quite a while. That is part of the surprise: I don't think I really had a sense of how deeply I was feeling anxiety and even a little despair, though I knew there was some. I shared a number of times with the leadership of the church and my PRC some things that kept me up at night this past year. My worry about those things, however, is all but gone. All because of the news of

a vaccine and seeing that people have been receiving it.

This past month, I have practiced Advent in a different way than I have in the past handful of years. It has been a while since I kept an Advent wreath in my office – well, really it is just the 5 candles sitting on my table. However, I was faithful in lighting the appropriate candles every time I was there. On more than one occasion, I caught myself looking at the flames, observing the journey toward Christmas. I caught myself pondering the news of things not yet present but announced – Christ's coming to set the world aright, a vaccine coming to help bring an end to the pandemic. As a family, we lit our Advent wreath at home nightly and shared in devotion and singing. We bought presents (some practices have remained the same), we decorated the tree and hung the stockings. We put up Christmas lights. We even got to see, afresh, Advent through the eyes of a preschooler. If you want to know about hope and waiting and joy, just talk to a preschooler during the early part of December. It will do your heart some good. Probably the biggest difference was the music I chose to listen to; music written specifically for Advent with the themes of waiting, hoping, peace, joy, love, and coming light. It resonated with my experience of expectant hopefulness.

Observing Advent in a renewed way also allowed me to receive Christmas differently. That is a little harder to describe, but with all that we have had to deal with together this past year, Christmas has felt...well, a little more like Christmas this year. Even though I won't get to see my parents or my sisters or nieces and nephews, we will gather later this year, Christmas still felt more like Christmas; like joining the those who walked in darkness, now seeing a great light, hearing the hosts of angels singing, like coming with the shepherds and the magi to see the holy family at the birth of Christ.

I am indeed hopeful!

I am hopeful about what this new year will bring –

to be sure we still have things to deal with, and the pandemic is not yet over. However, its end has been signaled. I am hopeful about the church and taking the opportunity that this moment provides us to begin being church in some renewed ways. I am hopeful because of conversations Pastor Alison and I have had with some of our leadership for the next year. Hearing their enthusiasm for the church and the gospel has energized and excited me!

I am hopeful!

And I look forward to seeing you all again. Soon.

Shalom,

Pastor Owen

Pastor Alison's Youth News

Sunday School News

As you all may know, we are not holding Sunday School while we are worshipping virtually. As soon as our Covid Task Force deems in-person worship safe, we will then be holding Sunday School on Sunday mornings for grades K-12.

Parents: Please keep your eye on Monday Mayhem (K-5 weekly email) and Weekly CHAOS (6-12 weekly email) for more information. I will be communicating with you all via email about the plan for Sunday School as we are able to hold it in-person!

Thanks for your patience! I look forward to the time that we can meet for Sunday School again in-person.

CHAOS Ensues in January!

Our 6th – 12th grade youth group or CHAOS (Christ Honoring and Others Serving) will continue our fun in January. We will start 2020 off right with some great activities! Here's what's on our agenda:

January 10 - Cozy Catch Up Night: On this night, we will check in, hear about our breaks, and generally be cozy as we slowly start back into our youth group routine.

January 17 - Hot Cocoa Bar: My hope on this night is that we can meet up in some form or fashion for a good night of delicious hot

cocoa and games at the church. There will be a bunch of different things to put in your cocoa, and we'll spend our time just hanging out with one another. Cozy clothes welcome! Keep your eye on your email for more information.

January 24 - 3G Night: We will continue our Game, Gather, God night this day! It will be a nice opportunity to get back into a groove and spend some fun time together.

You may notice that I do not have a full month of activities out yet. Much of this is due to covid concerns and wanting to wait to get plans out until I'm sure that the weather/covid cooperates for us to meet either virtually or in-person. My hope is that it will be safe enough for us to do so as the year goes on. We were SO BLESSED with good weather this fall on Sundays that we could meet outdoors, but the winter is a bit different. I'll be working with the Covid Task Force to see which of our activities are doable indoors or outdoors with proper covid precautions.

Keep your eye on Weekly CHAOS for more up-to-date information! It's going to be a GREAT semester!

Mid-Week Mayhem in January

Mid Week Mayhem (Grades K-5) will continue in the month of January with some fellowship and fun! We normally meet online or in-person (covid/weather pending) from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Here's our schedule:

January 6 - How Was Your Break? - On this evening we'll spend some time filling each other in with how our breaks were through games and other fun ways.

January 13 - Hello, 2021! - On this day, we'll spend some time talking about this new year, and doing a fun craft to ring in the New Year!

January 20 - Bible Lesson- We'll spend a bit more time this Wednesday on our lesson that we're learning in Sunday School, or Pastor Alison will pick a story to explore if Sunday School hasn't started meeting yet.

January 27 - Game Night! - Just as it sounds! It'll be a fun time!

This schedule is subject to change due to covid! Keep

your eye on Monday Mayhem for more information, and to find out whether we're meeting in-person or virtually. I'll be keeping you informed as we walk through the semester.

We are looking forward to another great semester of Mayhem in the middle of the week! Hope to see you or your child there!

Birthdays

3 Brian Ostrem
6 Kara Duffy
7 Susie Bentley
9 Sue Jansen
14 Shelby Skinner
16 Marshall Moellers
Madi Narwold
17 Ken Johnson
20 Sydney Neitzel
21 Georgene Raver
23 Trinity Smith
24 Norm Honderd
25 John Harris
26 Kathryn Kalvig
Judi DeMoss
27 Fran Honderd
Emma Wehofer
30 Clint Fischer
31 Lori Leach

Anniversaries

4 Joshua & Crystal Ross
Tim and Kathryn Kalvig

The church continues to operate even in these difficult times. If you would like to continue (or begin) to contribute to the work of the church financially, you can mail in a check to 2506 SW 3 rd ST, Ankeny, IA 50023. Or, you can give online by clicking the button below.

There you can set up one-time or recurring donations.



[Online Giving](#)

Pastor Owen Cayton, Senior Minister
Pastor Alison Nicoll, Associate Minister
Melissa Webb, Office Manager

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