



The Messenger

Red Oak First United Methodist Church ♦ Jenn Van Nostrand, Pastor ♦ January 2023

From Jenn's Pen

Have you heard the saying, “A New Year, A New You?” I have, and whenever I hear it, I feel frustrated and maybe a little sad. Because for me, a new year does not mean a new me.

I have never been one for making New Year’s resolutions. Maybe it’s because I have failed so many times it seems pointless. Maybe it’s because I seem to be fairly satisfied with who I am. Or maybe, just maybe, it’s because I have the assurance of Jesus in my life. A new year is not going to bring me the kind of “New You” that Jesus already gave me when I became His follower.



There are a lot of scriptures about how Jesus has given us new life. Here are a few:

- 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”
- Romans 6:4 “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”
- And finally, Ephesians 4:22-24, teaches us exactly how we can experience a New You! “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds, and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

When we experience the new life only Jesus can provide, there is no need for “A New Year, A New You” because as followers of the true giver of new life, we don’t need a new year to get a new life. All we need is Jesus. All the world needs is Jesus. And we have the honor and privilege to introduce Him to the world.

And so, as the new year begins, I encourage you, as Jesus followers, to not seek new life in a new year, but to share with the world the new life you received from Jesus when you surrendered your life to Him! Perhaps by doing so, you can help someone become a “New You” by introducing them to Jesus, who is the true giver of new life!

Pastor Jenn



Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who helped make our Christmas Eve so very special. The sermon, the music, the candles, the children, the family members who returned home – all made the service a very special worship experience. Let's not wait until next Christmas to experience the magic again. Come back on Sunday. Bring your family and all the kids. Bring the love. Bring the magic. See you in church!



Thank You!



Red Oak First United Methodist Church received a huge thank you from the mom who came to us for help. She and her three kids were trying to recover from some unfortunate circumstances. Our membership opened their hearts and provided a variety of Christmas presents for the family.

The mom sent her heartfelt thanks for the love and kindness shared in the spirit of Christmas.

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

-- Matthew 25:40

Thank You!

A very special thank you to EVERYONE who represented Red Oak First United Methodist Church in spreading Christmas joy throughout our community. Did you know...

- Members of our congregation delivered door hangers to nearly 140 homes within a 25-block radius of our church. These hangers invited the members of each home to our Christmas Eve service as well as our weekly church and study events throughout the year.
- Our Women's Fellowship donated a carload of health and hygiene products along with a financial donation to Christ's Cupboard.
- Our youth group made Christmas treat bags for every resident of Good Samaritan Society, Arlington Place, Regency Retirement Residence, and Red Oak Rehab and Care Center.
- Our choir, along with various church and community members, sang Christmas carols to the residents of all four retirement and care centers.
- Our pastor and her family opened their home to dozens of their congregants to celebrate the Christmas season.

And these don't even address and many, many individual kindnesses done by our individual members. Congratulations to all of you who helped out. We can't wait to see your love in action throughout 2023!!





New Year's Resolutions

Do you make New Year's resolutions? Nearly 40% of Americans do. Most of them focus on external image-related issues. Our bodies – losing weight, exercising more, eating better. Our homes – remodeling, redecorating, improving. Our finances – paying off debt, saving money, “enjoying life.” If you're in the process of making resolutions for 2023, we have a few suggestions you might want to consider to help you “enjoy this life” ...and the next!

- Talk to God at the beginning of each day – preferably before you get out of bed!
- Read the Bible every day. A few verses if you're short on time. An in-depth study when you can. You might consider installing a Bible app on your phone to make your study even easier and oftener. Google “Bible apps” to see what's available.
- Attend church every Sunday. Lively worship happens at 9am. Sunday school for all ages starts at 10:30am.
- Begin tithing if you don't already. (Don't be surprised if your finances grow when you give 10% of your income back to God.)
- Join our Bible Study. (You're gonna LOVE our upcoming study! Details on page 5)
- Spend less time gossiping and complaining. Spend more time complementing and encouraging.
- Be a Christian role model to your family and friends. And while you're at it, invite them to come to church with you.
- Volunteer – at church, in the community, or wherever you have a passion to help others.
- Surround yourself with positive and/or Christian music, books, and friends.
- Perform random acts of kindness.

You'll never be bored when you try something new. There's really no limit to what you can do.

-- Dr. Seuss

It was a real Epiphany!

The word epiphany means appearance or manifestation. We often use it to refer to an “aha moment” or a “lightbulb moment.”

Epiphany falls on the 12th day of Christmas. January 6th. According to umcdiscipleship.org, it's among the church's oldest and most important feasts. It commemorates the Magi's visit to the Baby Jesus.

The Magi or Wise Men were non-Jews who were willing to travel outside their comfort zone to follow wherever the star might lead them. But instead of finding the royalty they were expecting, their long, expensive journey led them to a baby born to young, inexperienced parents who lived on the poor side of town.



They brought gifts to this new king. Gold was the kind of gift people brought to a king. Frankincense was often brought to a priest or leader. Myrrh was given to someone in preparation for their death. But maybe the greatest gift of the Magi was a realization...or epiphany. The Wise Men were the first Gentiles to recognize that Jesus belongs to everyone.

As we approach the day of Epiphany, may we all consider what gifts we can offer God in the coming year. The gift of time? The gift of our talents? Our service to our church or community? Our witness and testimony? The gift of undying love and devotion? Whatever our gifts, may God give us all inspiration for this year's journey.



This month, Pastor Jenn will begin a new sermon series about “Bearing Witness.” When we become professing members of a United Methodist congregation, we profess our faith in God, our desire to live as disciples of Jesus Christ, and our commitment to uphold our local congregation through “our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.” We all witness about our faith. Sometimes it’s through words. More often it’s through our actions.

We’ve also witnessed the love and power of Jesus in our lives. Pastor Jenn is asking anyone who has witnessed Jesus in their lives to share their story. Think about it. If you have an example of Jesus moving in your life, contact the church office or Pastor Jenn. We would love to know about it.

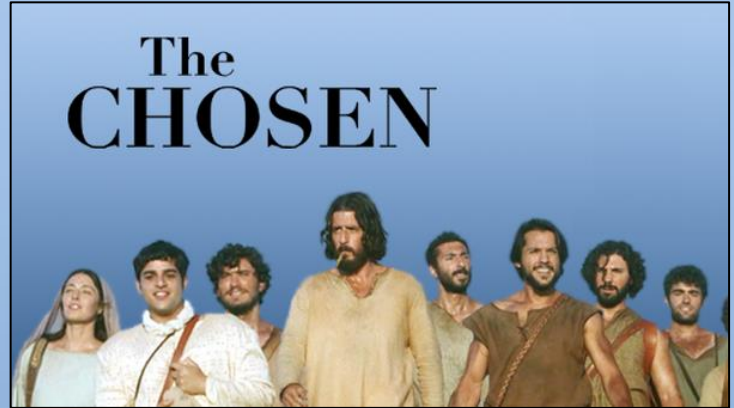
New Bible Study

“Extraordinary! A labor of love in motion.”

“Must-see, even if you're not into Christian or historical programming.”

“Surprisingly funny and relatable.”

“A fresh take on the pre-ministry of Christ.”



The Chosen is the #1 crowdfunded media project in entertainment history and the first multi-season show about the life of Jesus Christ and His disciples. It's also the new Bible Study led by Pastor Jenn. Join us!! Never saw it? No problem. Never attended a Bible Study? No problem. Can't make every class? No problem. Join us for...

What Does It Mean to Be Chosen? An Interactive Bible Study Tuesdays at 10:00 am

Beginning January 10th

To order the workbook at \$14.20, contact Nicole in the church office – or purchase on your own at <https://a.co/d/hZEmNaC> (at a slightly higher price).

**²⁴Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. ²⁵And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another...
Hebrews 10:24-25, NLT**



Now that we have a partner church in Villisca, we have a bigger community. A potentially bigger impact in southwest Iowa. A bigger celebration when we party!! And every 5th Sunday of the month, that's exactly what we're going to do. Party!! Our first 5th Sunday Fellowship is

Sunday, January 29th

10:45 am – Worship together at Villisca United Methodist Church

12:00 pm – Potluck

1:00 pm – Pigeon Pitch (Guaranteed fun – or your money back!)

January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 New Year's Day 9 – Church 10:30 – Sunday School  Epiphany Sunday	2 New Year's Day Observed 9 – WIC Clinic	3	4 10:30 – Nishna Game Day 6 – Choir Practice 6:30 – Youth Group	5  Fred Pilecki	6  Three Kings Day	7
8 9 – Church 10:30 – Sunday School  Jean Bozwell	9	10 6 – Ad Board	11 Human Trafficking Awareness Day 2 – Women's Fellowship 6 – Choir Practice 6:30 – Youth Group  Kennady Adams	12	13	14  Jeanette Gillespie  Robert Lewellen
15 9 – Church 10:30 – Sunday School  Missy Torbett	16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 	17 10 – <i>The Chosen</i> Bible Study	18 6 – Choir Practice 6:30 – Youth Group	19  Holly Paulson	20	21  Diana Heitbrink  Carol Sparr
22 9 – Church 10:30 – Sunday School  Richard Fisher	23	24 10 – <i>The Chosen</i> Bible Study	25 6 – Choir Practice 6:30 – Youth Group	26	27	28
29 10:45 – Church at Villisca Potluck Pigeon Pitch  David Anderson	30	31 10 – <i>The Chosen</i> Bible Study	 <p> Red Oak First United Methodist Church 600 East Hammond Street Red Oak, Iowa 51566 712-623-2367 Email: office@redoakfumc.org Website: redoakfumc.org Office Hours: 9am – 1pm Monday-Friday </p>			