

Old Stone Church - February 2022

WORDS FROM WANG – *“The Times They Are A Changin’”*

First off, let’s take this opportunity to say “happy anniversary;” as it was exactly one year ago (2.1.21) that we were just getting started as I began my ministry among you. And as always, I am grateful to all of you for the warm welcome you offered. And I encourage you all to read the church’s annual report where I highlight, in more detail, just some of the things we’ve accomplished in our first year together.

At the January church council meeting I offered what I described as a “state of the church” address. And suffice it to say, all things considered, we are doing quite well. But the flip side tells a different story. The timeless words of the Dylan song imply that in any given era, what we define as normal is completely subjective; that what we once knew as familiar is slowly changing. The times are a changin’ and this is a quandary for many of us and is where I want to direct my words this month.

The past two years have taught us more than we ever bargained for. In many ways, the pandemic has caused a ‘fast forward’ in effect. In short, it has forced many churches to begin some of the more difficult conversations; sooner than expected. Important questions like how does the church remain vital when faced with so many challenges? But perhaps if we re-framed the question, then we just might be able to turn the difficult challenges into new opportunities - and into new ways to “be the church.”

So, it begs the question, what new thing is God doing with the Old Stone Church? But the hard part is always in trying to determine exactly what it is that God is trying to tell us. And then, to discern the viability, weigh the costs and benefits, and finally reach a consensus and develop a strategy. Today we are in a time of discernment and we are excited to share a promising, though bold, venture and opportunity for the Old Stone Church. And we have a sister church, the Congregational United Church of Christ of Pecatonica, Illinois that is having the same conversation, praying the same prayers, and engaging in a period of discernment over the same opportunity.

A couple months ago, several interested parties began a conversation which has led to multiple conversations among those in a wider circle; a wider circle that includes a few key folks from both of our congregations. The common theme that is being pondered and discussed is the idea of a shared ministry between the two churches. In short, the formation of a joint/wider parish (in covenant) that could open up many new opportunities and models for doing ministry. The encouraging word about a covenantal approach to doing church, especially for small rural churches, is that it is quite trending these days and is already being practiced and celebrated by many churches across the nation. And not simply as a way to survive, but actually as a way to thrive and go places never thought dreamed of.

After our worship service on Sunday, February 20, we would like to expand that small circle of church leaders and extend that topic of conversation to include the members and friends of the Old Stone Church. So, come and bring your questions, your concerns, and your ideas that you might engage with us in some fruitful dialogue. In the words of Gracie Allen, words oft quoted in UCC circles, “never place a period where God has placed a comma; God is still speaking.”

See ya’ in church.

Pastor Bob

Worship Opportunities (February)



February 6: The 5th Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Luke 5:1-11

Sermon Theme: *Catch of the Day*

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served

PRIVILEGE



February 13: The 6th Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Luke 6:17-26

Sermon Theme: *The Woes of Privilege*

February 20: The 7th Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Luke 6:27-38

Sermon Theme: *Mixology 101*



February 27: The 8th Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Luke 9:28-36

Sermon Theme: *Why So Hush, Hush?*

March 2nd: Ash Wednesday

7pm Worship



TRIALS AND TEMPTATION

March 6: Transfiguration Sunday

Scripture: Luke 4:1-13

Sermon Theme: *Trials and Temptations*

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served

Flames of the Spirit: *Rekindling the Flame*

In addition to the information shared in the “Words From Wang” piece, we are still in the process of forming a special **visioning task force** which will be convening some time in February to do some planning for the new year. The purpose of this team is to creatively address some of the various issues, challenges, and new opportunities facing us as we continue to transition during this interim period. Some of the topics we will be exploring together are, but not limited to:

- New fundraising ideas
- Staffing models
- Building use
- Impact investing of our property and assets
- Shared Ministry
- Reexamining and redefining our purpose as a faith community
- Community Outreach events such as Coffee House (open mic night)
- Fellowship events (church member events as well as member-guest events)
- Developing a 2022 Mission/Vision

Prospective members for this task force will be invited to participate but we are also open to anyone else interested in joining in on the conversations. If you feel called to get involved with our visioning team, and possess an entrepreneurial spirit, then speak to Pastor Bob.



Faith Formation Retreat - March 4-6

We are pre-registered for the “Faith Formation” retreat being offered at the UCC camp in Green Lake, WI (the Daycholah Center). This will be an amazing opportunity to meet youth from other UCC churches who are also going through the confirmation process. Much of the time shared will be discussing current events and how our faith helps us deal with the many challenges that are all being faced with. All of our church camps continue to monitor the health crisis and are always following current mandates and protocol.

The retreat begins at 8:00 p.m. on Friday night. So, we will carpool from Rockton (or Janesville, where a couple of you reside), stop somewhere for a fast-food dinner, and arrive at camp in time to get checked in before programming begins. The actual departure time from Rockton will be determined but probably somewhere around 5:00 p.m. More specifics on the retreat are forthcoming so stay tuned.

Note: we will also need a couple (one male, one female) adult advisors/drivers, so speak to Pastor Bob if you are willing and able commit.

The individual cost for the retreat is \$180 per youth. The OSC is aware of this reality and is prepared to assist our youth with this financial expectation which is the reason for the **Soup Supper** being planned for **February 13th**. The Church Council and Fellowship teams are joining forces in organizing a special benefit with all proceeds going to help defray the retreat costs. (It’s also *Super Bowl Sunday*, note play on words!) We are asking that the youth be on hand to help with serving and clean-up. We will be accepting freewill donations from those planning to stay and enjoy some amazing soup recipes prepared by our volunteers.

And that’s not all. In addition to the soup supper, we are inviting church members to consider the **“sponsor a youth” campaign** (consider them “camperships”). Noting the \$180 cost for the retreat, we know that there are some folk out there who would simply love to write a check in the amount of the total cost and consider it a total sponsorship of one youth. Again, let Pastor Bob know if you are interested in participating in this worthy cause.



Streaming Video Help

Every Sunday, a small team of us work to bring those at home a live streaming service. This small team has been doing this work for almost a year now, and we would love to open up the opportunity for people who may want to help, and give them a chance to learn what we do.

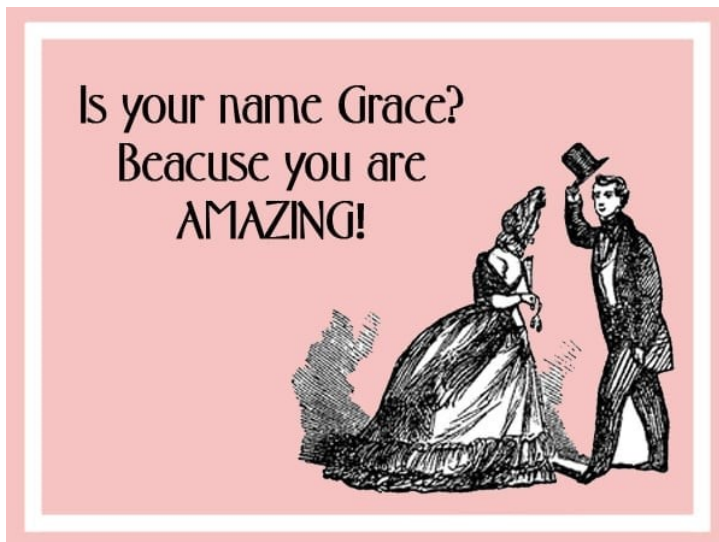
On Sunday, **March 13th**, after our Sunday Service, we will be running a training session on how to run the equipment for live streaming. If you would be interested in learning how to run the streaming equipment, please contact Lindsey in the church office at 815-624-6212, or send an email to oldstonechurch@oldstonechurch.net.

This will be any easy, informal way to learn about the streaming services in the church. We hope to see you!



Comic Corner

Comic Corner



February Birthdays



- 1st- Kenneth Rudy
- 5th- Lynn Arnsmeier
- 7th- Nicholas Herdklotz
- 10th- Ethan Butler
- 12th- Jenny Middleton
- 16th- Dana Williams
- 18th- Mike Bailor
- 19th- Laura Bode
- 22nd- Delbie Insko
- 27th- Nadine Slocum
- 28th- Grayson Bailor

Happy Birthday!

February Anniversaries

- 13th- Dean & Jenny Middleton



February 2022

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----|
| | | 1 | 2 Grief Group 10:30 | 3 Pantry 9-11am | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 Council 7pm | 9 | 10 Pantry 9-11am | 11 | 12 |
| 13 Soup Sunday | 14 Girl Scouts 5:30p | 15 | 16 Grief Group 10:30 | 17 Pantry 9-11am | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 Boy Scouts 6pm | 22 | 23 | 24 Pantry 9-11am | 25 Old Guys 8:30am | 26 |
| 27 | 28 Girl Scouts 5:30p | | | | | |

Old Stone Church
 101 E. Union St
 Rockton, IL 61072
 (815) 624-6212
 Email: oldstonechurch@oldstonechurch.net
 Oldstonechurch.net



Old Stone Church Staff:

Pastor Bob Wang: (262) 308-4180
Lindsey Lancaster: Office Administrator
Bob Estrada: Custodian

