

# Old Stone Church - January 2023

## **WORDS FROM WANG** – *Try, Try Some More*

I've never been big on making resolutions for the new year though I've always liked the idea. Setting goals or making renewed commitments is always a good practice for individuals as well as institutions (like churches). Perhaps we, as a faith community, could think about what new thing we want to do or improve upon in the coming year. Like resolutions, we can have really good intentions but half way through, find that we've lost pace with what it was we had resolved to do. Never the less, we strive to do better which is never a bad place to end up; to be making the effort despite the outcome or results.

As we approach the three-year anniversary of the beginning of the Covid pandemic it's important to consider where we have been and reflect on the experience and process as a whole. Making goals or commitments in recent times have been a challenge to say the least; partly because there is so much that we don't know as we blaze new trails into the unknown; as we boldly go where we have never gone before. Every institution (and not just churches) is being challenged, and we're all struggling to find new ways to exist and function with the ever-present questions looming; how can we grow? How can we compete? How can we remain relevant?

One thing I've heard repeatedly is the question of how the church can be intentionally different in the ways we do ministry; that we don't simply change for the sake of change, but that we actually work for change in order to bring new life, to spark new energy, and to tap undiscovered talent and opportunity that will ultimately inspire and motivate people to get involved and discover new meaning to the age-old message and call.

It's no secret that, like so many churches, we struggle to find the people needed to provide leadership and support for doing the basic tasks of ministry and simply to "run the church." This reality is played out at every level and the reason for a lot of tension and anxiety among those who currently serve and fulfill the various leadership roles in the church today. But I don't see this as a failure of the church, but rather an opportunity to welcome change rather than fear it. What we lack in numbers we make up for in the spirit to hearing God's call to serve and we thus remain vigilant; to *try, try some more*. And we are never alone in our struggles.

I remain inspired by the passion and drive by so many in our church(es) to do what is necessary to continue our work and remain relevant. But please remember that it may look and feel different in the process. But this is actually a good sign that we are alive and well and doing our best to "be the church." Please, therefore, resolve with me to continue the effort in spite; to keep the faith and trust that God will help us find a way.

See ya' in church.

*Pastor Bob*

## Worship Opportunities (January)

**January 8:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:13-17

**Sermon Theme:** *Separation Anxiety*



SEPARATION  
ANXIETY



**January 15:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

**Scripture:** John 1:29-42

**Sermon Theme:** *Come and See*



**January 22:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:12-23

**Sermon theme:** *Call and Response*



**January 29:** The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:1-12

**Sermon theme:** *A Bold Witness for Certain*

Note: This will be a “fellowship first” Sunday and be in fellowship hall.

**February 5:** The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:13-20

**Sermon theme:** *Shine*

Note: *The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served*



## Crooked River Ministries - SMAC

The shared ministry advisory committee is having its second meeting on January 4<sup>th</sup> and will be continuing their work on building some structure, developing some basic strategies, and helping to plan some events for 2023 and will have more to report soon.

Stay tuned for upcoming Crooked River Ministry events being planned for 2023 like more coffee houses and open mic nights, a joint dinner event, a spring bike event and other outdoor adventures, some joint children's ministries programming, and a special mission project - to mention a few.

FYI, the following appeared in the concert program used at the December 10 concert in Pec.:

*Crooked River Ministries was organized this past year and represents a collaboration between 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational of Pecatonica and the Old Stone Church of Rockton, both with the United Church of Christ. Our mission is to work together to expand ministries beyond the walls of our churches and includes forming community partnerships with organizations like Hoo Haven. Our mission field is the vast expanse of the land between our two parishes that follows the course of the Pecatonica River.*



### With Gratitude

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members and friends of Old Stone Church for the generous Christmas gift presented to me the week before Christmas. It goes without saying that I remain thankful for all the kind gestures offered to me as I continue to serve as your pastor and teacher. Again, my deepest gratitude to you all.

*-Pastor Bob*

### Birthdays and Anniversaries

#### Happy Birthday To:

3rd-Judy Huffman

4th-Gregg Seyler

11th-Deb Seyler

13th-Jan Barth-Huff

20th-Diane Piper

25th-Carol Henson

4th-Jan Cuthbertson

6th-Wendy Eltman

12th-Lisa Rudy

18th-Judy VanSchelven

23rd-Andrew Lancaster

29th-Patti Christenson

#### Happy Anniversary To:

28th-Dave and Lois

Proudfoot



# January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion	2	3 Worship-7pm	4 Grief Group-10:30	5 Pantry-9-11	6	7
8	9	10 Council-7pm	11	12 Pantry-9-11	13 Girl Scouts-5:30	14
15 Congregational Mtg. after service	16	17	18 Grief Group-10:30	19 Pantry-9-11	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Pantry-9-11	27 Girl Scouts-5:30	28
29 Fellowship 1st	30	31				

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