



THE TIDINGS

December
2016

Ministerial Moments

Advent: The start of the church's new year as we prepare for the coming of Christ. During this time we both remember the infant born in a manger and the Christ who has promised to come again. The first time, we are told in Philippians 2 that though Christ was in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself and taking the form of a slave, was born in human likeness. As a human, he then humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Of all the early scriptural Statements of Faith, this is probably my favorite because it reminds me even during Christmas time that the story is not about the baby in the manger but about the Son of God who emptied himself to come to earth and become one of us, obeying God, His Father unto the very end. It was through living as we live and experiencing our difficulties that Jesus not only showed us how to live, but also was able to bring us closer to God because of His experience as one of us.

And so we start the cycle again. By now, you all should have received my letter informing you of my retirement on January 31, 2017. When I was first ordained, I was ordained as an Interim Minister. One of the things we were taught was that in many ways the Interim is a lot like John the Baptist, in that the Interim is not THE One, but is pointing to the one to come.

To some extent, all ministers are like John the Baptist, because we are always not only pointing the way toward Jesus Christ, but hopefully, pointing the church forward to its future minister and future ministry. Even when you have someone like Rev. Schmidt, who I believe was here 18 years, there were other ministers who came after.

One of the books I read back in my Interim ministry days said that God must love transition periods, because it seems we are always in one. Much as some of us would like to fight change, it cannot happen. We and our loved ones get older whether we want to or not. Still water grows stagnant. No one can avoid change.

What of your days ahead? I am hoping you, or at least some of you, will be meeting with Rev. Shana Johnson, our conference minister, very soon. You will see less of Ron as he is trying to get my mom's home in South St. Louis County ready for us to move in. I have Medicare straightened out, but still have to apply for Social Security. Ron and I are trying to go through the boxes we never unpacked in the 10 years we've been here so we don't have to move them again. I have resigned as treasurer of the Marissa Ministerial Alliance, Rev. Deb Harkness will once more be at the helm, and as a member of the Board of the New Athens Home for the Aged.

As stated before, I will be here through Christmas and until after the Annual Meeting. Rest assured that I love each and every one of you and wish you the best.

Blessings,

Pastor Gail

Inside this issue:

Birthday's & Anniversary's	2
Annual Meeting Info	2
Church Mouse	3
Christmas Fund	3
Greeter and Usher List	3
December Calendar	4
Veterans of the Cross Offering	5
Community Christmas Carol	5
Thank You	5
Poinsettias Order Form	6



2017 Annual Meeting Sunday, January 22nd

We will enjoy a potluck dinner after church service and then begin our meeting. All organizations are asked to please have their yearly reports turned into the church secretary by **January 11th.** It is important we receive the reports early so our secretary has time to type them and compose an informational packet the week prior to the meeting. Thank you very much. You can email them to loriselman@gmail.com. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

DECEMBER Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

Mabel Schickedanz	1
David G Schneidewind	3
Jay Lehman	9
Leroy Karsten	10
Brian Duffie	19
Allen Waeltz	22
Ron Geisel	27
Justin Dressel	27

Anniversaries

David & Mindy Schneidewind	4
Andrew & Elizabeth Stuart	6



Sunday Jan. 1 Service for those who wish to be here. Communion will be delayed until Jan. 8.





GREETERS AND USHERS

	4	Gene & Betty Bollmeier, Linda Jones
	11	Jay & Leslie Lehman, Lorrie Lehman, Neal Galle
December	18	Dave & Pete Dressel, Duane Waeltz
	24	Christmas Eve - Council Members
	25	Ruby Lehman, Larry & Kathy Matzenbacher

	1	Marlene Karsten, Sandy Smith
	8	Marlene Karsten, Sandy Smith
January	15	John & Janet Fauth
	22	John & Janet Fauth
	29	Tim Campbell, Duane Waeltz

CHURCH MOUSE

My, such a lot of things happened in October and November – including the Wurstmarkt, Halloween, All Saints Day, a double christening, Emma Schmierbach's Confirmation, and meetings, meetings, meetings.

Missing my older family relatives, I was saddened anew when during the All-Saints service, the church bell would toll after Pastor Gail read each deceased member's name who had died in the past year. Then Susie Stewart would present the family present with a white rose. It was very touching. We also honored those early church pioneers who started Friedens.

I have learned how to turn pages. It's a new skill that I am rather proud of. With this skill I can read more and report more. As soon as I get to read more church history, I'll comment about it. You know, I'll tell you things such as who did what and what memorials we had.

One thing I heard about and didn't have to read was that the Dressel family donated Dorothy's lovely old piano. Some of our church guys managed to bring it from their house and install it in the church basement. Nancy Barbee was very happy with it and with its superior sound. Now when the choir practices in fellowship hall, the piano is in tune.

Daughters and other groups will be starting the "hanging of the greens" as they decorate our church for Christmas. Our church is so beautifully decorated at Christmas. It's just lovely.


Of course, our church is always pretty, but made even more so during Advent season.

I like to have it shown off for all occasions. It wasn't decorated when the November 14 blood drive was to be held. Carol got a call as she was leaving for one of her historic re-creation things that the drive had to be cancelled. It was about 3 o'clock on Friday, and there were some medical emergencies with some of the Red Cross crew. What a dilemma! Oh, well "life" happens.

I also got to read the disturbing news that Pastor Gail is retiring. I think it will be some time after Annual Meeting. I'm sad because she was rather kind to me – ignoring me, leaving Lori's office door open so I could sneak in to write my comments, and occasionally leaving a few crumbs for me in her office. It will be a hard job finding a replacement for a small sized congregation, in a small town, with a small budget. We'll all need to pray.

Hey, a little mouse can pray, too. Do pray for Friedens, all of you.

DECEMBER 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>December 4: Emma Schmierbach's First Communion. Schmierbach family will be doing the Advent Candle Lighting</p> <p>December 6: Don't forget to bring a toy worth at least \$5.00. We will meet at the church at 11:15 am.</p> <p>Christmas Eve, December 24th: Family needed for Advent Candle Lightening</p>						
4 Community Carol Sing at 1st Baptist 6:30 pm	5 Daughters Mtg 6:30 pm	6 New Athen's Women's Guild Luncheon	7 Choir 7:00 pm	8	9	10
11 Family needed for Advent Candle Lightening	12	13 Council Mtg 7:00 pm	14 Choir 7:00 pm	14	15	17
18 Family needed for Advent Candle Lightening	19	20	21 Choir 7:00 pm	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 7:30 pm
25 Service for those who wish to be here	26	27	28 Choir 7:00 pm	29	30	31 





COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CAROL

6:30 PM 2016 Christmas Caroling – Leave our church at 6:15 to walk down to First Baptist Church. Refreshments at First Baptist afterwards. (weather permitting for the walk down) Any questions contact Susan Oyler at 967-2736

VETERANS OF THE CROSS OFFERING

Every year at Christmas we collect for Veterans of the Cross. For 115 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a tangible expression of God's love. It is one of our four special offerings we collect during the church year which with Our Church's Wider Mission makes us a 5 for 5 church. The Christmas Fund provides UCC congregations and members an opportunity to reach out in loving compassion, providing assistance to those who have so faithfully served our Church and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs.

In 2015, UCC congregations and members generously contributed \$1,528,481 to the Offering. This enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance program to provide, on behalf of the whole church, Pension Supplementation, Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to individuals and families in need.

The Theme this year is "God's Love Colors Everything", and the goal is to raise \$1.7 million to help and support these ministries of love and care. Last year 464 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees received monthly pension supplements. 235 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees received quarterly health premium supplementation. 528 retired UCC clergy and lay church employees received Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks. Lastly, 58 active/retired UCC clergy and lay employees received emergency grants. These grants go toward large medical expenses, or home damage resulting from natural disasters. On behalf of the hundreds of clergy and lay employees and their families whose lives were touched by your support of last year's Christmas Fund Offering, the UCC offers its sincere thanks to you for your generosity and for the love that colors everything in God's name.

THANK YOU'S

Thank you to Evangelical Daughters for the meal you made on Nov. 27 and to all those who helped with the Hanging of the Greens.

Thank you to Susan Oyler for being part of the Community Christmas Carol Sing organizing group and getting our church's contribution ready.

Order Form for Christmas Poinsettias DUE BY DECEMBER 11th.

Name of person ordering

Reason for giving poinsettia: In Honor of In Memory of

Name of person for whom poinsettia is ordered for:



Number of poinsettias ordered _____ X \$6.00 each or 2 for \$10.00
= Total Amount Due: _____

Money or check may be attached to this form and dropped in the offering plate. Orders MUST be in by December 11th. The poinsettias will be placed in the chancel and should be picked up after the December 24th Candle Light Service.



*Friedens United Church of Christ
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Marissa, IL 62257*

***Merry Christmas!
and
Happy New Year !!***