Matthew's gospel records: "…an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." (1:20b-21) God promises through the voice of His angel that he will do a most unusual thing in a most unusual way.

God promises that the child (noun) will be born and we can expect that he will give (verb) humanity what it needs, salvation. This promise is both noun and verb.

The joy of the promise has been extended. It is coming. This is the time to make yourself ready.

Since the readership of this page is primarily adult, you have been to Christ many times. You know the width and depth of the story of the birth of Jesus and the joy of the promise it brings. For generation after generation, the prophets have screamed “It's coming! It's coming! Prepare the way of your heart for the Lord.” Have you prepared for the joy that comes at Christmas?

Page 201 in the United Methodist Hymnal prods us towards preparation:

Merciful God,
You sent your messengers the prophets
To preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation.
Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins,
That we may celebrate aright the commemoration of the nativity.
And may await with joy...

The work of a disciple, who looks forward to the joy of the promise of His coming, begins with our joining the generations who yearned, who craved a Savior night and day. The work of a disciple who looks forward to the joy of the promise of his coming lends itself to deep expectation and hope. Regardless of the mess of the world, we must expect, trust, BELIEVE that God will fulfill his promise in Jesus Christ.

Then, like Joseph, we must be obedient to the promise. We must allow the truth to gestate in us and the world that God, in the child of the nativity, comes to offer us a way. A way to him that leads through and then away from the muck of our sins and desires to the preferred future God has prepared for us, before the beginning of time.

The joy of the promise has been extended. It is coming. This is the time to make yourself ready.

Pastor Mike
New Furniture For Education Rooms
A set of furniture that will be used in the new education rooms has arrived. This particular design was selected as it gives us the most versatility throughout the age ranges of children and adults that will be sharing the education rooms in our new church. We will be using this furniture in the adult education rooms throughout the month of December and rotating to different classrooms, starting in room 105. Starting in January this set will be moved up to room 303/305 so the children’s ministry can tryout the furniture through their different grade levels. Please stop by to check it out.

The Feature Keyboard Instrument at Marion Methodist
Over the past year, our music and worship staff has been hard at work evaluating the needs of the Marion Methodist music programs as we prepare to move to our new facility at 5050 REC Drive. One part of this process has been to examine our options for keyboard instruments for the new facility. Because a new pipe organ for a church our size would cost a minimum of $750,000, our musical staff and volunteers set out to evaluate different options for a feature instrument for our new facility. This group went on multiple exploratory trips and played dozens of different instruments, coming to the unanimous conclusion to seek to purchase an acoustic Steinway & Sons Grand Piano as our feature instrument for the new worship facility. These pianos typically cost in the range of $100,000-$500,000 when new, and though that is a large price for one instrument, it was the unanimous opinion of our task force of staff and volunteers that an instrument of this quality was appropriate for the feature instrument leading future generations of the Marion Methodist congregation in worship.

After a lot of searching and deliberation, we are extremely pleased to announce that we have purchased a 1975 Steinway and Sons Model B Grand Piano. The Steinway Model B Grand is a handmade 7’0” acoustic grand piano. This piano has been refinished by an authorized Steinway technician and is in pristine condition. The integral part of the piano, the soundboard, is original and many of the other parts have been refinished or replaced with authentic Steinway components. This refinished model came in at a price of $49,000 (less than 50% of the cost of a comparable new piano) and is currently being stored at the refurbishing facility until it can be moved into our new church. The music staff and volunteers involved in this search are ecstatic about this instrument, and attest to the magnificent sound it produces. This piano will have a prominent position on the new sanctuary stage, and will be fitted with a state-of-the-art microphone system so that it can be used in both our traditional and contemporary services. Included in this article are pictures of this Steinway model to give a visual of what it will look like at the front of the new sanctuary.

We look forward to introducing this instrument as a part of our worship services in the new facility, and hearing the beautiful music it will produce to lift our hearts in worship of Jesus Christ.

December 10 at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary
No matter the age or cause, losing a child is a life altering experience. We hope you will join us at this hour-long memorial service where each family will have an opportunity to light a candle in honor of the memory of their beloved child.

Memory Table - If you wish, you can place a picture of your child on the Memory Table. Please place it on the table by 6:45 p.m.*

Tree of Angels - You can also bring an angel ornament to hang on the tree during the service.*

Slide Show - If you would like to have a photo of your child displayed on the overhead screen while his or her name is announced, please submit a picture and brief message by Sunday, November 26 to Amy or Heidi:

Amy Tersinar – kamktersinar@gmail.com or call (319) 432-1911
Heidi Benson – hbenson@CedarMemorial.com or call (319) 393-8000

Sponsored by Marion First United Methodist Church and Cedar Memorial Funeral Home

Marion Methodist is Praying for:
Prayer is a powerful way of caring for each other in our Marion Methodist family. There are several avenues open to everyone – the prayer cards on Sunday morning and the prayer wall which is available 24/7, are two that are used most often. You can have a more active part in entering into prayer for each other. Check out the prayer wall frequently as prayers are submitted there often. Each time you visit, and pray for one of the requests found there, click the “I Prayed For This” tab; more prayers are always better.

Pray in these days ahead for all the extra opportunities we have in this church to celebrate the coming of Jesus – the Bell Choir concert, the children’s Christmas program, and the Chancel Choir cantata. Pray that these times may be used to invite others to attend these events, to share the Christmas message, and welcome them to Marion Methodist. Pray for all those who are members of these groups, who have been working hard to prepare for each offering to the church and community.

Remembering Our Children
A Candlelight Memorial Vigil
December 10 at 7:00 PM
No matter the age or cause, losing a child is a life altering experience. We hope you will join us at this hour-long memorial service where each family will have an opportunity to light a candle in honor of the memory of their beloved child.

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New church sanctuary window decision

This is not to be confused with the stained glass windows, which is a separate topic.

“No windows in the new sanctuary! Won’t it be incredibly dark?” These are two of the questions received when seeking feedback from other Marion Methodist members. I can say that I had the same concern and initially struggled with our Building Committee’s decision to remove the Sanctuary windows from the plan.

Windows along the top of the northeast facing wall (above the stage area) were originally proposed to allow outside lighting in the sanctuary. As the committee discussed the architectural design, it was quickly revealed / recommended, that if we had windows in the sanctuary, we would also need a remote control, motorized shade system. For example, the puppet ministry asked for the ability to reduce outside ambient light, etc…. Given that we have placed significant confidence and investment in our audio/visual (A/V) integrator to create the visual experience, the ‘non-outside light’ environment became increasingly important.

Our architect, as well as some committee members and Marion Methodist staff, reported that other recently built church facilities with robust A/V systems, either did not include sanctuary windows or if they did have windows, the shades remained closed almost 100% of the time. Of obvious consideration was the cost of windows and shades, which was estimated to be $68,000.

Our A/V integrator has demonstrated various and impressive lighting schemes that can be quickly and easily applied to illuminate the sanctuary as well as targeted highlighting for the cross and other areas such as doorways and aisles, etc. The house lighting and environmental projection will give the space a great deal of flexibility and can make the room seem warm and inviting.

For all of these reasons, the Building Committee made the decision to not include sanctuary windows.

Brad Schuver, on behalf of the Marion Methodist Building Committee

Construction Update - Day 145

Construction Financing

One aspect of a building project like ours is financing construction as we continue to faithfully support our capital campaigns. The Finance Committee developed a small document called a Request For Proposal (RFP) that described our project, our success with recent capital campaigns, and our projected need for financing to complete construction and take possession of our new facility.

This RFP was sent to multiple local lending institutions, and we asked them to return a proposal that would describe how they would structure a financing package tailored to our situation. Some did not respond, some declined, some asked more questions.

One response contained sufficient detail for the Finance Committee to evaluate and consider the financing proposed. This proposal was structured into two basic elements; a short-term "construction loan" to be secured by our TRANSFORM pledges, and a long-term "debt reduction" loan to be secured by our building and paid with donations to future capital campaigns. This proposal came from Farmers State Bank - our long-time banking and financing partner.

The Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees held special sessions to review and discuss the proposal. Both groups voted unanimously to accept the proposal and engage with Farmers State to create the specific terms and conditions that will satisfy our financing needs. This effort is underway and should be complete by mid-December 2017.

On a different topic – you may have noticed trucks moving the mound of dirt away from our construction site. Our general contractor, Rinderknecht, along with our Civil Engineering firm, Hall Engineering, have determined through their design processes that our property had sufficient top soil to adequately complete and landscape our new facility with a large excess of dirt remaining. This excess was sold, removed from the construction site, and we have received a market-based credit against our costs for the dirt removed.

John Terry, Construction Coordinator

Meal Schedule:

12/6 - Tomasó's Pizza
12/13 - Pizza Ranch

Powerhouse meets every Wednesday. From 5:45 pm to 6:15 pm we have a Family Meal (Free Will Offering) and from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm we have activities for all ages.

Preschoolers: Kids may forget what you say - but they remember what they discover on their own. Get them "Hands On" with God's Word. (Room 205)

Kindergarten - 5th Grade: Meet a Jesus that is real and relevant in your everyday life! Discover Jesus in you. (Room 303/305)

4:12 Youth Group: Junior High Worship 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm (Sanctuary). High School Worship 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm (Sanctuary).

Adult Classes: Come for a midweek boost. Check out classes at www.marionmethodist.org

Gift Card Giving Tree

As part of our Advent tradition, a tree has been placed in the hallway by the Chapel with tags on it for Kum & Go, Fareway and WalMart gift cards. As you are doing your shopping in the next month, please consider purchasing a gift card, for any amount you choose, from these businesses. These cards are used throughout the year to assist many people in our church and community who are in need of help. The cards can be used to purchase food, clothing items, household items, or gas to get to work, look for work and go to appointments.

The cards can be turned in at the church office or placed in the offering plate. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated by those who are struggling to make ends meet.

Candy for the TRANSFORM Campaign

Connie Leahy is making candy to help the TRANSFORM Campaign! Plan ahead for your holiday get-togethers. Peanut Brittle is $8.50, Coconut Peanut Brittle is $9.00, and Cashew Brittle is $10.00. Each bag of candy is approximately 16 ounces. $5.00 from each item sold will be donated to the TRANSFORM Campaign. If you would like to purchase some, please contact Connie Leahy at (319) 215-5906, or by email at conniekn@hotmail.com. Orders need to be placed by December 18, 2017.

Ingathering 2017

On Saturday, November 18, your Ingathering donations were delivered to United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) in Cedar Falls for transport to their headquarters. Because of your generosity, Marion Methodist was able to donate 300 Health Kits (now known as Hygiene Kits) and 396 School Kits, as well as 500 empty school bags to be used by other churches for their school supplies.

Thank you so much for your support of UMCOR. As many of you have heard, UMCOR will no longer send these kits overseas, but only use them locally. What changes this will bring remains to be seen, but I know we'll adjust to whatever comes!

Thanks again for your generosity.

Jan Dickinson

TV Broadcast

Marion Methodist worship services are typically rebroadcasted on Mediaco or ImOn Channel 4 at 7:00 PM on Monday evenings. There is a multiweek delay between when a sermon is preached and when it airs on TV.
I Have Seen The Light
Choir Cantata
Sunday, December 17
8:30 and 11:00 AM Services

“Have seen the Light” Choral Cantata
December 17, 2017 (8:30 and 11:00am services)

The Chancel Choir will be presenting their Christmas cantata on December 17 at the 8:30 and 11:00 am services at Marion Methodist. “I Have seen the Light” will be followed by the Christmas story being told with scripture and music (including guest musicians), as well as narrations by people who could have been present for these important events so long ago.

Please plan to join the Chancel Choir for this uplifting musical presentation for the Christmas season. We hope you will enjoy the music as well as examine whether you, like the innkeeper, have room for the Christ Child!