



VOICE OF FAITH

Sunday Worship
10:00 AM

Faith
United Church of Christ
3307 Mulberry Avenue
Muscatine, IA 52761
Phone: 563-263-5979
www.faithuccmuscatine.com

Church Office Hours
10 a.m. — 4 p.m.
Monday - Friday

Rev. Paris White
pastor@faithuccmuscatine.com
Cell Phone: (309) 791-2602
Office Admin. Asst.: Lisa Allen
secretary@faithuccmuscatine.com
Cong. Life Care: Pat Mundell
pmundell@machlink.com
Christian Education: Lisa Shea
christianed@faithuccmuscatine.com

Happy Holidays, Beloved children of God!

'Tis the season for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years! It's the most wonderful time of the year! For some, yes.. However, if you don't feel particularly joyful, happy, or wonderful this year or during the holidays in general, that is OK too.



The GOOD NEWS is that Christ has come, taken on flesh like you and me, and succumbed to the full range of emotions human beings experience, BECAUSE God loves you so much that God wanted to ensure there is nothing you experience alone. God enters into our greatest joys and our deepest lament. 'Tis the season to remind ourselves and one another how much God loves us, to be thankful for God's amazing grace, and to celebrate the new life Christ brings. As the days get colder and the nights get longer, I invite you to light a candle or plug in those Christmas lights, so that you might feel the warmth as God's own embrace, see the light of God which cannot and will not be overcome, and spark the Spirit within you to share this good news with the world. Peace has come and the world will never be the same.
Thanks be to God! Amen. - Pastor Paris

SAVE THE DATE: Annual Meeting Sunday, Jan 26, 2025

The meeting will start immediately after the Sunday worship service. The agenda will include voting for 2025 Vestry and committee members and reviewing the 2024 year. The printed annual booklet will be available Sunday, January 12th,



December Worship



- Dec. 1st—Advent 1: HOPE with Vocal Choir
- Dec. 8th—Advent 2: PEACE with special music
- Dec. 15th—Advent 3: JOY with the Handbell Choir
- Dec. 22nd—Advent 4: LOVE with Christmas Program & Youth Bell Choir
- Dec. 24th—Christmas Eve Worship with Communion (6 PM)
- Dec. 29th—Lessons & Carols with special music

SAVE THE DATE: Annual Meeting Booklet Reports

If you are on a church committee, it is time to start working on the 2024 annual reports. If you need a copy of last year's, let the office know, and we will send it to you. Please send to Lisa Allen In the church office before noon on Jan 3rd.

The Christmas Fund Offering

"And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them..." —Luke 2:9



The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you! Please write the check to Faith UCC with "Veterans of the Cross Fund." in the memo.

OUR CHURCH IS THE BUILDING PLUS THE PEOPLE WITHIN



Imagine – How the next year at Faith will grow and how can you help build the church together! Please remember to send in or Drop off your pledges by Dec. 27th

Congregational Budget Meeting

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, December 1st. After the worship service, members are asked to stay to vote. The Technology Vote will be on the same day that we vote on the proposed 2025 budget. All 3 votes will be via paper ballot and absentee ballots will be counted for those who cannot be there in person or on Zoom.

- 1.) The 2025 Budget proposal for the new year's projected expenses
- 2.) up to \$30,000 for the audio-visual technology upgrades to the Sanctuary
- 3.) up to \$15,000 for the audio-visual technology upgrades to the Fellowship Hall

This is extremely important, as our budget reflects our priorities, values, and ultimately our mission. See email sent specifically for this meeting for additional details.

Building Update Project News

In the spirit of Wendell Day, who loved to pose matched-gift challenges to the congregation and who has blessed us with a contingency fund – the Vestry would like to challenge the congregation to raise \$30,000 for our building projects to be matched 100% by the Wendell Day Fund! Currently, we have raised \$ 5,284.16 in the Building Improvement fund and \$3,579.00 in raffle funds.

Building Project Fund 5 priorities:

- ADA Compliance - **Our front doors are Complete!**
- Technology Upgrade - Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall sound/video system for our services. **Vote on December 1st!**
- Still on the horizon in the brainstorming and fundraising stages:**
- ADA Compliance - Restrooms to accommodate everyone's needs.
- New flooring - Remove carpet, removing tripping hazards, improving cleanliness
- Sanctuary Pew chairs – For a multipurpose flexible space both for our needs and the needs of the wider community.

Nomination of Officers & 2025 Committee Volunteers

Are you interested in serving the church? We have opportunities through the Vestry or one of our many committees, please contact the office, and we will partner you up with a vestry member for a conversation on what it means to be in a leadership role and what requirements are involved. If you already know you'd like to serve, please sign up on the red sign-up board at the back of the sanctuary. **View Descriptions [Here](#). You are the Church!**



Time and Talent Sheets



Please remember to fill out a new time and talent sheet to indicate how you'd like to participate in 2025. Starting this December, we are going to have the monthly worship volunteer sign-up sheet posted a month before, so you can add your name to the Sunday opportunities ahead of time. Then, the open opportunities will be assigned based on turned in Time and Talent Sheets. This gives you time to plan for when you will be able to be a part of the worship. Thank you for being the Church!



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DURING ADVENT

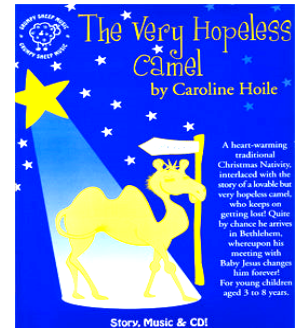


Our Traditional Poinsettia Garden

Each year we place poinsettias around the Christmas tree in front of the sanctuary. Please sign your name on the flower signup sheet if you're bringing a poinsettia and please put your name on the plant holder if you want it returned to you.

Christmas program, "The Very Hopeless Camel"

On December 22 the kids from the confirmation group and the K-4 are performing together! Any adults interested in participating in stage building, lighting, sound (boy I could use some help please) or stretching your acting Chops please reach out to Lisa Shea.



Christmas Eve Candlelight worship with communion



We hope Faith UCC can be your "home for the holidays" as we celebrate the light of Christ becoming incarnate on Earth in the birth of Jesus Christ. Worship on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24th, we will start at 6:00 p.m. and all will be invited to participate in communion. Please share this invitation with your family, friends, and anyone you think might need a place to experience the magic of Christmas.

Christian Education Winter Break

No youth or adult classes will be held the week of Dec. 23rd, nor the week of Dec. 30th. Enjoy Christmas and New Year's vacation Time!!



Children in Worship on Sundays



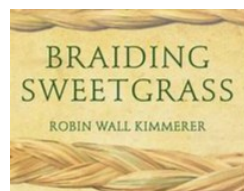
Infants and children are always welcome to be part of the worship service here at Faith UCC. Our nursery is open to infants through 5-year-olds. For those children who wish to remain in worship or are older than 5, we have a children's corner in the front of the sanctuary. We are also now experimenting with Children's Church! Each Sunday after the Children's Message in worship, the children are invited to go downstairs for a snack, activities, and a lesson.

Bible Study on Tuesdays

Pastor Paris hosts a weekly Bible Study on Tuesdays at 1 pm from September through May. We are making our way through the entire Bible, starting with the New Testament. All are welcome!



Adult Forum



The current book is an NYT Bestseller, *Braiding Sweet Grass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer. You are welcome to join in person or on Zoom. The Hybrid invitation Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83274674323>

Faith Singer and Ringer Choirs

The Faith Singer Choir sings during Sunday morning Worship one to two times per month. They rehearse on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm, September through May. The choir is always glad to welcome new members! The Faith Ringer Choir meets on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. for practice and will play the bells once each month.



THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Outreach Advent Collections!

The outreach committee have chosen the following groups to support during this Advent Season. We will have posters with gift tags on them to be taken and items purchased and returned to the church. We will be doing this during the entire month of December. Thanks for considering the various groups. Monetary forms are also available.



Laundry Love - vouchers are given once a month. A local laundromat proves the machines. Volunteers provide the clients with the soap, softener, and money for the machines. Volunteers do not touch other's dirty laundry. In some cases, this is the only time that laundry is done for some persons/families- once a month.

Domestic Abuse Shelter - provides women and children a safe place to stay when needed. Donations are accepted through MCSA.

Emmaus Cafe - serves meals each Sunday at First Presbyterian Church. Meals are prepared by the church members and served by members / friends. Lately, they have been serving approx. 70 people a week. This is funded by their church and donations.

Diaper Bank - serves those in need at daycares and family needs. This is a program under United Way. Diapers do NOT have to be a brand name.

MCSA Shelter - We continue to support a room at the facility. Starting January 2025 note the change in the amount per Sunday, we will be collecting **(\$35 for each Sunday)**.

MCSA Homeless Shelter Sponsors

- Dec 1—Pastor Paris in memory of Adrian Keller
- Dec 8—Jan Collinson & Rich Carroll, we are all so blessed!
- Dec 15—Larry & Marcy Clausen in honor of Kathy & Jim Trosen
- Dec 22—Alan Arkema, in celebration of families of all types at this Holiday season
- Dec 29—Dan and Alice Huss in welcoming a new year



Muscatine Food Drive in November

Faith UCC collected 140 items for the MCSA Food Pantry in November! Our Monetary donations totaled \$2,115.00 over the \$1500.00 challenge amount! For a Grand total of \$3,615.00 in addition to the 140 items. Thank you for all of your generosity during this trying times with families struggling to keep their children fed.



Outreach Undies and Sweatpants

This congregation came thru with great colors on how many undies and sweatpants and socks were donated this year. We received 84 pairs of girls undies and 83 pairs of boys. We received 74 pair of sweatpants. 35 pairs of socks plus a few other items of clothing. Thanks to everyone for supporting this cause. These items will be delivered to Julie Kundel at Jefferson School and the school nurses will divide up the items as are needed in their schools.



FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Special Joint Annual Meeting December 2, 2024



This Special Joint Annual Meeting will be conducted via Zoom and each Conference will vote independently on whether to call Rev. Ochoa as our Conference Minister. You can read Rev. Ochoa's biography on the red board at church or online: click on this link [HERE](#)



Baby Shower



Two New Baby Girls

are joining our community of Faith soon! Please join us in wrapping the mothers in love and celebrating new life!

Member—Courtney Mathias is looking forward to welcoming a fourth baby girl into her home, plus she has recently welcomed her sister's two children in her home as well. Courtney gives SO much to others, I hope we can join together in giving back to her!

Faithful Friend of Faith UCC, daughter of our accompanist, and newly hired Handbell Choir Director—Janelle DuSavage is also welcoming another daughter into her home! Having a teenage daughter, Janelle could use our support in resetting her up for the baby/toddler years.

We know it takes a village to raise a child and we are honored to be part of these amazing women's village! **Everyone is invited to fellowship after worship on Dec. 8th for a double baby shower!**

Gifts are welcomed and if you are unsure of what to bring, gift cards for Walmart, HyVee, Fareway, and local restaurants are always helpful!

We hope you'll join us for the shower, but most importantly, join us in walking the journey of parenthood with Courtney and Janelle!

Faith UCC Cookbook



Get your recipes ready Faith! We need all types. The ideas from Angelic to the Devilish will begin cooking up ideas soon. The first meeting will be held after the first of the year. So be prepared! Look through those old favorites. Reach out to those family members who keep recipes under lock and key and tell them this is for a fantastic cause. I found myself this weekend going through an old cookbook from the church I grew up in finding my favorite recipes that were used all the time that are/were family favorites. Think outside of the box. Cocktails, Mocktails (Remember the Devilish part). Contact Lisa Shea.

Harmony Guild Holiday Dinner at the Church, December 2nd

The Women will host a Holiday Dinner on Monday, Dec. 2nd at the church at 6 p.m. Co-hostesses are Pat Mundell and Cindy Rada. All women are invited.

Friendship Circle Dinner at the American Diner, December 5th

Friendship Circle will meet on Thursday, December 5th at 9:30 a.m. at the American Diner. (Note time change) Connie Miller will present the program & devotions. All women of the church are invited, members and friends.

Wine & Cheesus @ Proof Social December 17th

We meet at Proof Social/Wine Nutz at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 17, you do not have to be twenty-one, there are non-alcoholic options available, and you can order amazing pizza from Wine Nutz, anything on the menu from Skinny's BBQ, and even places like Boonies will take your order and deliver it to you! All are welcome!

Weather Cancellations

Check KWQC TV 6, listing of cancellations Link: [HERE](#)

Wednesday Night youth classes: If the Muscatine Schools are closed or let out early due to weather on a Wednesday, Christian Education activities at the church will be canceled.

Winter weather advisories If there are, please check to see if we will still be holding the event, worship service, or if the office will be closed due to the weather. Please use your judgment on driving conditions.



FAITH UNITED MEMBER AND FRIENDS

Card Shower Birthdays

Dec. 1 – Alice Huss
1730 Timberline Drive
Muscatine IA 52761

Dec. 8 – Darlene Vance
2016 Shady Lane
Muscatine IA 52761

Dec. 10 – David Kundel
3213 Anastasia Place
Muscatine IA 52761

Dec. 14 - Marilyn Wilson
2672 Tom Sawyer Rd.
Muscatine IA 52761

Dec. 15 - Denny Taylor
3204 Mulberry Avenue
Muscatine IA 52761

Dec. 18 – Bob Sharar
2446 Dewberry Ridge Rd.
Muscatine IA 52761

Dec. 19 -James Trosen
903 Sunrise Circle
Muscatine IA 52761

Dec. 26– Donna Reed
Apt. 415, Addington Place
3515 Diana Queen Dr.
Muscatine IA 52761

Anniversaries

1 – Jon & Judy Merritt
4 – Nick & Lauren Sharar
18 – Don & Pollianna Adams
21 – Ben & Sharon Hanssen
23 – Dave & Nancy Wangberg
30 – Frantz & Mary Silberger

Birthdays

1 – Alice Huss
2 – Ann Emerick
4 – Cindy Carver
4 – Cassandra Diercks
8 – Darlene Vance
10 – Dave Kundel
12 - Ronda White
13 – Nancy Harrison
14 – LeeAnn Weggen
14 – Marilyn Wilson
15 – Denny Taylor
16 – Parker Welsch
17 – John Kleffmann
17 – Melissa Schumaker
18 – Robert Sharar
19 – Mark Butterworth
19 – Jim Trosen
26 – Donna Reed

Please Keep These loved ones in Your Prayers

To all who are sick, with injuries & their caregivers
Myung Sharar, Chad Morgan, Audrey Beckey, Lane Clausen, Nancy Hultquist, Allison Odell, Susan Willis, Joey Merchan, Patricia Fischer, Allen Emerick, Chris Wildasin, Dennis Engel, Will Kreuger, Judy Merritt, Sandra Roth, Tom Emerick, Bob Murray, Mary Jo Murray, Nikki Bartenhagen, Ali Fahy (& baby Sophia), and Merlyn Feddersen

Altar Committee
Julie Kundel

Church Office Closed
Dec 24th & 25th, and
Dec 31 & Jan 1st.
Blessings to your families!

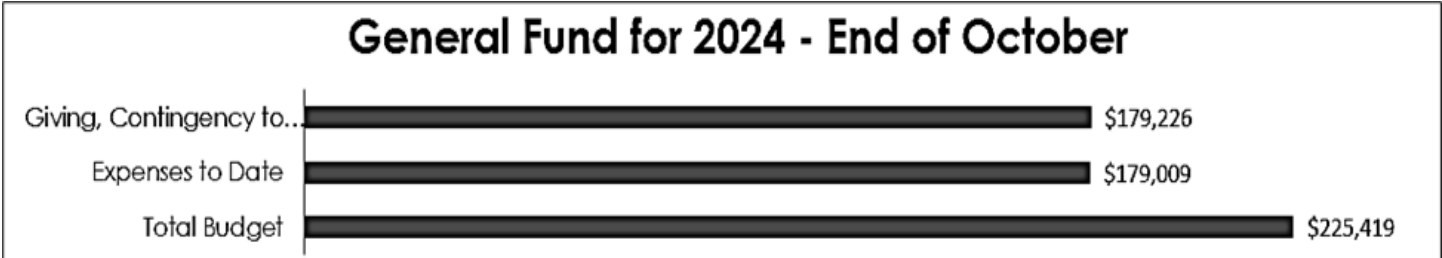
Thank You Notes

- I cannot say enough thank yous for making me feel so special on my birthday this Sunday! Thank you to every person who wished me a happy birthday, gave me a card, hug, or birthday treat! I appreciate you more than I can express! – **Pastor Paris**
- Thank you, Faith and Pastor Paris, for the care package! It made my day and the notes from the kids made me smile 😊 The card is going on my wall, so I see “you got this ” every day and smile. Thank you again for the reminder and the encouragement to help me through the year! - **ZuZu Hartman**
- Dear Faith Family, words can’t express how grateful I am for the many years of leading our youth in singing, ringing the bells, and teaching the many meaningful lessons through songs. I have enjoyed working with the children and learning from them along the way and realizing just how truly blessed I am! Thank you so much for the lovely recognition, reception, and heartfelt notes of appreciation! It truly was moving. Thank you again. – **Tammy Ales**
- Members and Friends of Faith United. Thank you so much for celebrating the years of service I’ve given to this Faith Family. It was a great morning with all the special recognition. The many cards, the remembrances, and the kind words that were shared will be treasured for a long time. I’m looking forward to the next journey for me. Many blessings to each of you - **Pat Mundell**
- Dear Faith Family, Thank you for the many kind messages and the wonderful reception after church on November 3rd. I have been truly blessed with all of your support and have many fond memories of the past 50 years. Love to all of you. – **Connie Miller**
- Many thanks to everyone for the cards and well wishes for my birthday. Somehow it always makes getting older just a little bit easier. It was nice to hear from so many of you! —**Sincerely, Gary Lindley**

VESTRY SUMMARY NOVEMBER 11, 2024

Meeting summary: Mary Wildermuth led the meeting in the absence of our President and Vice President.

- Rich Carroll's Budget report of October 2024 was run through and approved.
- The Deacons stewardship report stated a total of 30 pledges for \$82,000 as of Nov. 11th had come in.
- The Elders reported on the search for directors for the choir and handbells. Seeing the 2025 Proposed Annual Budget did not include pay for a handbell director—Sue Johannsen made a motion to adjust the pay to \$25/hr with 12 hours a month for the vocal choir and 8 hours a month for the bell choir, both for 8 months of the year (\$4000). This increases the proposed 2025 budget by \$200. **Motion carried.**
- The Trustees reported on our Insurance Questionnaire & Risk Audit for a possible reduction in rates. The Vestry also examined and voted on the quote for the final piece of sign from Nagle Sign at \$2993.29. Nagle Signs Inc. wants 50% of the total invoice to start working on the top of the sign. There is \$3000 left in the sign fund. **Motion carried.** Pat Pagel paid \$500 for an outlet to be included on the sign. The Vestry so moved to reimburse Pat for this expense. Guidelines for using the new sign – Rev. Kendy Miller said as a 501c3 there should be nothing political, but there was no further guidance. Lisa Allen and the Pastor will be trained on how to programming the sign. If others want to be trained in the future, Pastor or Lisa can hold a training session. Also, Chris Lary made improvements to the parsonage bathroom, but the flooring is broken and some pieces need replaced. Lastly, the HVAC will finally come next Monday, Nov. 18th to start.
- Pastor Paris reported on the notable events since Vestry last met like her continuing education in Colorado, continuing Pub Theology once per month, the Fall Bash, fulfilling her boundaries training, special worship services, and she moved! Lisa Allen will be on vacation from Nov. 18-22. The office will be closed for Thanksgiving on Nov. 28th & 29th. The pastor will take vacation time Nov. 25-27th.
- Last month, the idea of a suggestion box was proposed. A motion was made to install a suggestion box with instructions that anonymous written suggestions will be discarded. **Motion carried.**
- We considered the need to add more processes to our discussions to engage members to speak up on votes. No action taken. At our last meeting, we postponed the technology upgrades vote for Dec 1st with paper ballots. To offer paper ballots at all congregational meetings going forward, the Constitution/Bylaws need to be updated at the Annual Meeting in January. Our intention is to provide time for discussion on Dec. 1 about paper ballots. An amendment to the Constitution may follow based on the content of the Dec. 1 meeting. Carver - downstairs bathroom updates – on hold. Pew Chairs, flooring, and 'interior design' items are on hold, Mary is building a team. Raffles are done – what is the next phase of fundraising? We did not have time to discuss this in November.
- We still need to recruit Vestry members for 2025 and a financial secretary.
- The Vestry also discussed guidance for discarding unused/old/out-of-date materials at the church. Sue Johannsen made a motion will create a gift policy to decide if something can be removed. If a donation is given to the church, it becomes the church's property to determine what happens to it. **Motion carried.**
- ONA suggests a welcome letter to the Rev Robert Ochoa, (anticipated) newly called Conference Minister for the Tri-Conference. Let's invite him to join us for Sunday worship sometime! There was a consensus to write a welcome letter.
- Reports due to Lisa Allen in the church office for the annual booklet before Jan 1st.
- The next meeting will be on Monday, December 9, 2024.



Mission statement

"Faith United Church of Christ exists to provide a safe place for people to worship, explore their faith, gain a sense of community, and improve the world around them."

HELPING THE CHURCH GROW IN COMMUNITY

Instant Church Directory

"Stay connected with your church community like never before! We are excited to introduce our new instant church directory, available for download on your mobile device. This easy-to-use app will enable you to connect with fellow members, stay up to date on church contacts, and access valuable information at your fingertips. Download the app and start building meaningful relationships with your fellow Faith community today!"

Downloading the Instant Church Directory in your Mobile app to a device can be easy, just follow the steps below:



Instant
Church Directory™
Your church directory
on your
mobile device.
Instantly!

For Apple devices: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/instant-church-directory/id589542221?ls=1&mt=8>

For Android Devices: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.instantchurchdirectory.members>

Pledging and offerings just got easier!

Introducing **Zelle®** – a fast, safe, and easy way to send money in minutes to your friends, family, and congregation right from your phone! If you have the MidWestOne Bank mobile app, Zelle is already included in your banking app. Just open the app and click on Zelle in the bottom ribbon of your home screen. Once in Zelle, simply scan this QR code to pull up Faith United Church of Christ and give an offering in seconds. Zelle works with many other banks as well, so check your app too! If Zelle is NOT already in your banking mobile app, simply download the Zelle app through your app store and create an account before connecting to Faith United Church of Christ.

Ways to Continue Supporting the Work of the Church:

The church is more than just a building. We the people are the church, and we will continue to find ways to be a community that shares in the love of Christ together. To help maintain all that we do, your monetary offerings to the church are welcome.

Our options for giving currently are:

- Drop off your envelopes to the locked mailbox by the front door, in Box 3307 with a Faith UCC sign on the box used by the church. (Push it to the back of the box after opening with the front handle). If there is mail going out clipped to the front, just slip yours over the mail into the back of the box and we will retrieve it.
- Send in the mail to 3307 Mulberry, Muscatine Iowa 52761.
- Talk with your bank to set up a direct payment to the church.
- Use our website link for the church's PayPal, transfer charges apply.
- Use Zelle to set up payments from your bank or credit card.

Faith United Church of Christ - Open and Affirming Statement

We the members of Faith United Church of Christ declare ourselves to be an open and affirming church. We affirm all people are individuals of sacred worth created in the image of God. We embrace and celebrate the diversity of the human family and God's unconditional love for ALL, including but not limited to people of all ages, races, ethnicities, cultures, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, socio-economic conditions, physical, mental and emotional abilities, faith backgrounds, nationalities, marital status, languages, and education levels. We invite and encourage all persons into full participation by sharing in the life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of membership in our Faith community. We welcome all to journey together in faith toward greater understanding, compassion and mutual respect. We believe that in meeting each other in Christian love, God's spirit frees us all to give, to grow, to be ourselves, because, **"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE."** - adopted April 7, 2019



VOF DECEMBER 2024

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Muscatine, Iowa 52761

