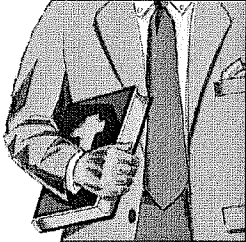


Burlington Zion Express

December 2014



Interim Pastor

The Key to Happiness is “Flow”

Do you want to be happy? What a silly question! Who DOESN'T want to be happy? How much energy do humans expend seeking happiness? How many trillions of dollars do advertisers spend to convince us that if we only buy their product, we will achieve happiness?

And yet, happiness can be an elusive target. By itself, no amount of wealth will guarantee happiness. You can buy all the big toys: palatial homes all over the world, jet planes, expensive cars, trips to outer space; and still be unhappy. Think about the news stories you have heard about wealthy people who are so unhappy they resort to drugs to escape from their misery—or even resort to suicide. Clearly, wealth alone is not the source of happiness.

And as a true Southerner, every thought begins with a story. So, here is a story to illustrate.

The Jordan River flows north to south, from the mountains in Jordan to the lake called the Sea of Galilee. It then flows out of Galilee, continuing south, and ends at the Dead Sea. There is no outlet for the Dead Sea. All the water that flows in remains until it evaporates.

As the water evaporates from this terminus of the Jordan River, the dissolved and suspended solids are left behind. As a result, the lake called the Dead Sea becomes saltier and saltier; it is now almost ten times saltier than the ocean. Tourists to the area enjoy having their photos taken floating in the extra briny water. The concentration of salts has become so concentrated that very little can live in that water. Only a few bacteria can live in the heavy concentrations of salt. Animals cannot drink the water. All the fish and other water life have long since died. The Dead Sea is dead because nothing can live in it.

(Continued on following page)

(Pastor's Page continued)

Jordan River water flows into and through the Sea of Galilee. It is alive and lively, a living eco-system that is continually refreshed. The Dead Sea fails to let the river flow through it, and is dead. The secret is in the 'flow.'

The story can teach us something important in our pursuit of happiness. When everything only flows in and nothing flows out, there is no happiness. The result is not an overflowing abundance; the result is stagnation and death. It may sound counterintuitive, but the secret to happiness is not found in capturing everything and comes our way. The secret is to allow life to flow through us.

Some people operate out of the theory that the way to abundance is to capture every dime that comes their way, allowing nothing to escape. What money we receive is held onto with a tight fist. As someone has said, if you hold onto your money with a tight fist, none of it can get away. The trouble is no more can come in, either. It is true that if you hold your money with an open hand some of it might slip away; but at the same time, you are open to more coming to you.

The happiest people are not the wealthiest. The happiest people are the most generous; the ones who live out a belief that abundance comes to us to be shared; that when we allow abundance to flow through us, we receive more abundance. This truth about life holds for more than money. It works in all aspects of life.

When we begin to focus on what has blessed our lives, we discover even more blessings. When we bless others, we find blessings for ourselves. When we express our gratitude to others, letting that gratitude flow through us, we discover more reasons to be grateful. When we love others and let them know we love them, we find more love for ourselves. When we share our abundance, we find ever more abundance comes our way. The more gratitude, love, and abundance we allow to flow through us, the more we receive. The more happiness we share with others, the happier we become. It's all about living in the flow.

Bless others, let God's blessings flow through you; be happy.

Grace and peace,

Brice



Worship

Sunday, December 7 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

10:00 am: Worship and Children's Church

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11;

John 1:6-8, 19-28

11:00 am: Coffee Hour

Sunday, December 14 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

10:00 am: Worship and Children's Church

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38, 46b-55

11:00 am: Coffee Hour

Sunday, December 21 – 4th Sunday of Advent

10:00 am: Children's Christmas Musical

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11, Psalm 85:8-13

11:00 am: Coffee Hour/Cookie Reception

Wednesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

7:00 pm: Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 28

10:00 am: Worship and Children's Church

Scripture: Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

11:00 am: Coffee Hour



*Silent
Night,
Holy
Night*

Worship Helpers

December audio/visual: Jim Levins

December church closer: Judy Taylor

Sunday, December 7 – Communion

Communion preparers: Bill Daws and Sharon Thye

Greeters: Milt and Laurie Paule, Bob Parmeter, Sharon Thye

Reader: Theresa Ritters

Tower bell: Ethan Kerr

Valet: Tom Ralston

Sunday, December 14

Greeters: Dennis and Dyan Dietzman, Bill and Ann Hummel

Reader: Lisa Neises

Tower bell: Caleb Mehaffy

Valet: Milt Paule

Sunday, December 21

Greeters: Joe and Sandy Deal, Don and Vivian Kellar

Reader: Deb Goble

Tower bell: Emery Kerr

Valet: Bill Hummel

Christmas Eve, December 24

Greeters: Bill and Pam Daws, Rich and Deb Goble, Tom and Connie Ralston

Reader: Marlis Robberts

Tower bell: Pam Daws

Valet: Bill Daws

Sunday, December 28

Greeters: Matthew Patrick, Paula Renard, Jim and Deb Ritters

Reader: Rodney Botts

Tower bell: Milt Paule

Valet: Marvin Fraise



Church School News

by Janice Gibson

Youth Christmas Musical "A Christmas Carol"

Rehearsals have just started for the Christmas musical "A Christmas Carol" to be presented on **Sunday, December 21**, during the 10AM worship hour. Children and youth through 8th grade are invited to participate in this fun production! We will be rehearsing during the Children's Church time each Sunday until the 14th.



There will also be two Saturday rehearsals: **Saturday, Dec. 13, at 4PM** and **Saturday, Dec. 20, at 9:30AM**. It's not too late for your child to join in!

If you are willing to provide some **cookies** for the after-program reception, please sign up on the bulletin board at the back of the sanctuary or call the church office at 752-2305 and let us know. Thank you!

BTW -- Daily Advent Devotional booklets are available for each individual or family. They are on a table at the back of the sanctuary.

NOIZ Nites for Families/ All Church Advent Workshop

Wednesday, Dec. 3rd, will be our annual NOIZ Nites for Families/All Church Advent Workshop. The theme will be "Praise God with Music! The Messiah is Coming!"



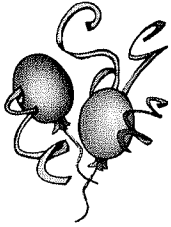
The evening will begin at 5:30PM with a light meal and devotions. Advent devotional booklets will be handed out to each young person in attendance. Afterwards, children will be invited to make decorations with a music theme to decorate the narthex Christmas tree, and adults will help decorate the sanctuary and the rest of the church. Many hands make light the work. We will conclude by about 7:15PM.

Don't miss this chance to start the Advent Season by helping to prepare our hearts and our church building!



Come
Decorate for
Christmas

Retirement Celebration



for Earnest Turner

Sunday, November 30

11:00 am – during Coffee Hour

Please plan to stay after the worship service on Sunday, November 30, as we honor Earnest Turner for his many years of service to Zion Church. He is retiring as Zion's custodian and building and grounds coordinator effective that day. Earnest was custodian for over 20 years and has held the building and grounds position for nearly 4 years. We thank Earnest for his dedication to Zion and a job well done and will miss seeing him there throughout each week.

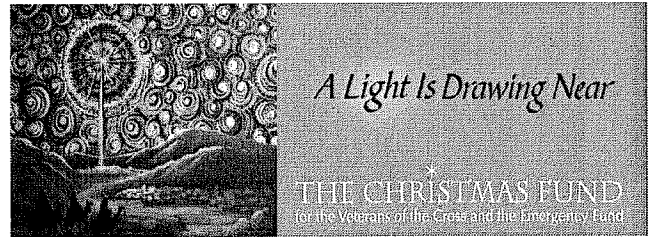
The consistory voted in their November meeting to hire our own **Jim Levins** to be the next custodian, effective December 1st. The Building and Grounds Committee will now handle the maintenance portion of Earnest's job.

Congratulations, Earnest and Jim!

5th Sunday Food Collection

Sunday, November 30

Please remember to bring your non-perishable food items to church on Sunday, November 30, to help stock up our food pantry. You may also donate money if you prefer to have us do the shopping for you. Just mark your donation "food pantry." Thank you so much!



The **Christmas Fund** for the **Veterans of the Cross** and the **Emergency Fund** is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that grants us an opportunity to recognize and honor those who have served and continue to serve in lay and authorized ministries of the United Church of Christ.

One of the unique aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees – the funds do not support programs or institutions, but people.

We will be receiving this offering **next Sunday, December 7**. Pew envelopes will be available, and you may give through December 21.

Noisy Offering

Sunday,

December 21



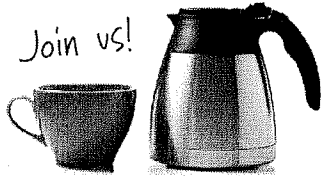
It has become a tradition at Zion to collect a "Noisy" Offering following the Children's Christmas musical. This is a time to bring as many noisy coins as you can, so that we can make a big ruckus while giving to a worthy cause!

The offering will go towards Zion's Bridging the Gap mission assistance program's Love Fund. So on Sunday, December 21, plan to bring some coins and make some noise – the louder, the better!



**COFFEE
FELLOWSHIP**

Join us!



**Our Coffee
Hour Sponsors
for December**

Dec. 7: Lin Parks

Dec. 14: Ann Hummel and Velma Johnson

Dec. 21: Cookie Reception after Program*

**A separate signup sheet will be on the bulletin board for volunteers who are willing to bake cookies for this special event.*

Dec. 28: _____

Please sign up on the bulletin board in the back of the sanctuary if you would be willing to be a Coffee Hour host/sponsor. You can make it very simple and ask others to help you. Thanks!



Zion's handbell choir will be rehearsing on the following dates:

Tuesday, December 2, at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, December 9, at 6:00 pm

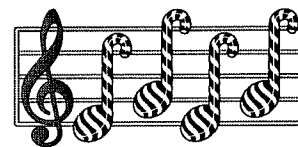
We plan to ring during the worship service on **Sunday, December 14.**



Bible Study

**Tuesdays - 7:30 am
Diggers Rest
Coffeeshouse**

Please join us on Tuesday mornings for our Bible Study group. We will continue to use the lectionary scriptures as the basis for our study in December. The scriptures are always listed under the worship section of the newsletter. Anyone is welcome to join the group!



There will be no regular **nursing home sing-along** in December due to all the Christmas caroling that always takes place, but look for the announcement in the January newsletter for our next sing-along.

We thank the following people who joined us on November 16th at Sunnybrook: **Sandy Deal, Janice Gibson, Debbie and Glen Gottschalk, Don Kellar, Donna Norris, and Paula Renard.**

Adult Sunday School

The **Adult Sunday School class** will not be meeting during December. We will take a break during the Advent and Christmas season and plan to begin again in 2015. Look for details in the January newsletter.



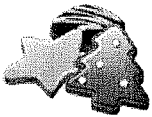
Sunday,
December 14
6:16 p.m.



The 37th consecutive (!!!) Annual Choir Christmas Party hosted by Don and Vivian Kellar will be held on Sunday, December 14th, at 6:16 p.m. at their home at 128 Greenwood Drive in Burlington.

All choir members and their guests are invited to attend. Thank you to Don and Vivian for hosting this event for our wonderful choir all these years!

**End of the Month
Free Community Meal
at Grace Methodist**



Thursday,
December 18



Zion is responsible for preparing and serving the drinks and desserts this month, along with washing the dishes and cleaning the kitchen. We will need volunteers to help and will not turn down any holiday desserts offered! A signup sheet is on the bulletin board if you are able to provide one.

Please notify the church office at 752-2305 or send an email to ucczionbur@aol.com if you wish to help out. You may contact Donna Norris with any questions at 754-8500. Thank you!

Zion will then have little commitment going into 2015 until the April meal.

It's Not Too Late

We believe that God has richly blessed us. We celebrate the joy of giving our time, talents, gifts and service in return. Our commitment to generosity is an important step on our journey of knowing, loving, and serving God. We approach the commitment of our financial resources as an opportunity to worship and serve God. When we return a portion of our financial blessings to God through God's tithes and our offerings, we invest in God's vision and mission, and we create an opportunity for God to work through us and through Zion UCC.¹

Zion is not some 'other' thing, some distant institution which provides us with services. We are Zion Church. Collectively, we are the ones who DO the work of the Church at Zion. Each of us is here because we have something of value to contribute. We are Zion's missionaries. We are Zion church together. Collaboratively we do what no one of us can do alone. We feed, house, clothe, visit, educate, and comfort others in the name of Jesus Christ. We provide for the maintenance of this space for worship. Zion is a light for the world; a beacon set on a hill to be seen by as many as possible. Zion is not a 'them.' Zion is us. We are Zion Church- together. And together, our time, energy, creativity, and yes, money supports the work of God as Zion Church.

On Sunday (NOV 16), we officially received Estimates of Giving from the congregation. The response was better than expected, but we would like to hear from every family in the church. There is still time for you to respond. You can drop your pledge card in the offering plate on Sunday, drop it by the church during the week, or mail it to Zion UCC, 412 N 5th St. Burlington, IA 526

¹ Adapted from material supplied by Cornerstone, a UCC Fund



Your Giving is Connected to your Faith

- If your giving is in proportion to your income, it will be meaningful to you, no matter what the dollar amount.
- If it represents a sacrifice of some pleasure you are doing without for the sake of God's mission in the world, it will be a delight in God's eyes.
- If it represents a significant sacrifice to you, it will transform your life.
- If it is made as a humble offering to God, it is one of your greatest forms of worship.
- If it is more than you had planned to give, it represents evidence of God's working in your life to grow your faith.
- If it is given with no thought of self, it will be returned to you a hundredfold.
- If it is given with regret that you cannot give more, it is your link with the saints of God throughout history.²

²Adapted from "Inspiring Generosity" © 2002, United Church of Christ publication, pg 102.

Zion is Changing Lives

Zion Church is changing lives through our support of **Our Church's Wider Mission** (OCWM). Your generous giving to Zion Church changes lives in places you could not go, in ways you cannot imagine.



PLEDGE



REPORT

To everyone who has returned your **Pledge Card for 2015**: Thank you! Of the pledges we have received, almost half of you have increased your pledge from last year. Thank you for reaching higher. We received 4 new pledges; a special Thank you to those givers. If you have not yet returned your pledge card, please do so this week. Your estimate of giving helps us in preparing the church budget. Any amount, large or small, helps us do ministry together. Through Zion Church, you are changing lives. No amount is too small. Every gift matters; every giver counts.

Thank you, Pastor Brice

Zion impacts lives in many different ways.

Some of those ways are subtle and unobtrusive, but can have a powerful impact.

Hosting a funeral luncheon may not seem very important, but extending hospitality to the family gives an opportunity for family and friends to share memories and offer hugs and support without the time pressure felt before the funeral. We offer the use of our building as a comfortable gathering space. We offer food to nourish and sustain, and we offer our quiet service so that families may be relieved of the burden of hosting after the funeral. In a quiet way, the church building and members support the community of faith in a time of sadness. In the midst of a funeral luncheon, ministry happens. We offer sustenance and compassion, a place to rest and be renewed, and given strength for the next part of the journey.

Thank you for giving generously to support the ministries of Zion, including the ministry of hospitality.



Pastoral Search Committee Update

Your Search Committee is diligently working to find Zion's new pastor. We have had several discussions with prospective candidates.

Thank you all for keeping us in your prayers as we do this important work.

Pam Daws, Search Committee Chair

The Search Committee members are: **Rodney Botts, Paulette Cavanah, Pam Daws, Joe Deal, Deb Goble, Sandy Levins, Craig Neises, Lin Parks, Tom Ralston, and Scott Wood.**



Time remembered is grief forgotten. Your kind remembrance will remain forever in our hearts.

The family of Mary F. Robberts

Thank you so much for a wonderful luncheon after my mom's funeral. The food was delicious. The time spent with family and friends was very comforting to me and my sisters. We realized how much our mom enjoyed her time at Zion in worship and fellowship.

Thanks again for all you did!

God's blessings,
Malinda, Melissa, & Marlis

October Community Meal

Appreciation for a Job Well Done

Ninety-six pork dinners were served at the October Community Meal by Zion volunteers who prepared and served the main entrée (roast pork, green beans, baked potato, and applesauce). We were rewarded by lots of smiles and words of thanks.

Kudos to the following for all their assistance:

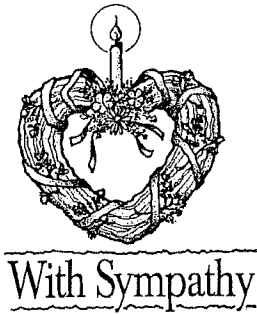
- Table set up – **Lisa Neises and Janet McCannon**
- Preparation – **John Riessen, Tom Ralston, Rodney Botts, Gail Lawlor**
- Servers – **Bill Daws, Sandy Levins, Donna Norris, Scott Wood**
- Kitchen cleanup – **Bill Daws, Kathy Morrish**, and all who were still standing

A special thanks goes to **Barbara Nelson-Botts**, master shopper and planner.

This is just one way in which Zion supports those who are less fortunate in our community. The activity is coordinated on behalf of Zion through the Social Justice Committee. The monthly dinners (held the last Thursday of each month at Grace Methodist Church) are the result of six churches joining efforts. It takes three churches per month for each meal: one to provide the main entrée, another to handle drinks and desserts, and a third to greet guests. Schedules are established yearly.

We also appreciate Zion's support by those who are not on the Social Justice Committee who have committed time and/or donations to help assure a great representation of Zion UCC.

Donna Norris



Eloise G. Oetken

**January 30, 1930 –
November 13, 2014**

We extend our thoughts and prayers to the family of Eloise Oetken who passed away on Thursday, November 13, at the Burlington Care Center. Her funeral was held on November 19th at Lunning Chapel, with interment in Burlington Memorial Park Cemetery. Memorials were established for Oak Street Baptist Church and Mediapolis Ambulance Service. She was the mother of **Mark Oetken** and grandmother to **Lindsey, Austin, and Crystal Oetken**.



Please have your January news items turned in by **Monday, December 29, at 9:00 am**. We will try to have the newsletter available for you by the first Sunday in January if all news items are received early enough.

Remember that we do provide *These Days* devotional books each quarter for you. These are on the back table. Some are ordered in large print for your convenience. The new ones will begin in January. We simply ask for a \$2.00 donation if you can do that to help offset their cost. An envelope is provided with each book.

Bridging the Gap Update

During the month of November, our Bridging the Gap program assisted several families through our Love Fund resources. Unfortunately, we were out of funds by the end of the first week so we were unable to assist anyone else after that.

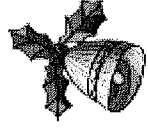
- We helped with 2 utility bills.
- We assisted 3 families with their rent.
- We helped with 8 water bills.
- We provided 5 local monthly bus passes.
- We purchased prescriptions for 2 people.
- We also gave out food to 26 families from our food pantry as of Nov. 25th.

Thank you so much for all you do to help the people in our community!

Deb Ruble, Director
Bridging the Gap

Reminder

Please remember to notify the church office of all **address changes** so we can keep our records up to date. An email to ucczionbur@aol.com will work great or just call the office at 319-752-2305 or send a note to us at 412 N. 5th Street. The same goes for **email addresses** or **phone numbers**, especially if you change from a land line to only a cell phone. We appreciate it! Thanks.



December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
10:00 am: Worship & Children's Church 11:00am: Coffee Hour	1 Study at Diggers Rest 6:00 pm: Handbells 7:00 pm: Building & Grounds Committee 7:15 pm: Choir	2 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest 6:00 pm: Handbell choir rehearsal	3 5:30-7:15 pm: NOIZ Nites for Families / All Church Advent Workshop 7 pm: Confirmation	4 7:00 pm: Stewardship Comm. Marilyn out of office all day	5 Pastor Brice's day off	6
7 10:00 am: Worship & Children's Church 11:00am: Coffee Hour	8 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest 6:00 pm: Handbell choir rehearsal	9 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest 6:00 pm: Handbell choir rehearsal	10 6:30 pm: Choir 7:00 pm: Confirmation	11 6:00 pm: Elders 7:00 pm: Consistory	12 Pastor Brice's day off	13 4:00 pm: Children's Christmas Musical rehearsal
14 10:00 am: Worship & Children's Church 11:00am: Coffee Hour 6:16 pm: Choir party	15 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest	16 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest	17 6:30 pm: Choir 7:00 pm: Confirmation	18 5:30 pm: S.U.M.M. End of Month Meal	19 Pastor Brice's day off	20 9:30 am: Children's Christmas Musical rehearsal
21 10:00 am: Children's Christmas Musical 11:00 am: Reception	22 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest 6:30 pm: Choir No Social Justice Committee	23 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest 6:30 pm: Choir No Social Justice Committee	24 7:00 pm No Bridging the Gap	25 Church offices closed	26 Pastor Brice's day off Marilyn on vacation No Bridging the Gap	27
28 10:00 am: Worship & Children's Church 11:00am: Coffee Hour	29 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest	30 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i> No Confirmation or Choir	+		





- 1 ---- **Abbigail Eden** (9), 200 S. Gunnison
Betty Ford, 509 W. Agency, Lot #62
West Burlington, IA 52655
Richard Kerr, 9328 Glenmark Drive
- 2 ---- **Ian Hedges**, 11774 Greenwood Dr.
Dugan Thye, 10240 155th St.
- 11 --- **Pauline Kuster**, 1525 Mason Lane
- 16 --- **Austin Oetken** (16), PO Box 513
Drake Levins (14), 11737 Tama Rd.
- 19 --- **Paula Renard**, 11593 154th Avenue,
West Burlington, IA 52655
- 20 --- **Laurine Paule**, 2601 S. 3rd St.
Keith Schulz, 922 N. 3rd St.
- 21 --- **Cathy Boeset**, 8428 Woodstone Ct. SW,
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
Donna Norris, 2736 Sunnyside Ave.
- 24 --- **Jamie Jarrett**, 814 Cottonwood Ct.
- 26 --- **Marian Fritz**, 5956 Hunt Road
Emily Mercer (15), 10994 115th Ave. #18


- 20 --- **Tom & Connie Ralston** (44)
3219 Crystal Drive
- 25 --- **Rich & Deb Goble** (43)
2000 Charles St.
- 29 --- **Randy & Stacey Wachter** (30)
1028 Short Avenue
- 31 --- **Jeff & Sarah Lawlor** (9)
101 N. Gunnison St.

Early January Anniversary

- 1 ---- **Sandy & Jim Levins** (14)
714 Whitewood St.



December 2014: The Gift of Hope

 globalministries.org/bulletin/en/december-2014.html

Written by Karen Campbell-Nelson
December 1, 2014

Guess I had it wrong – interpretation of the Christmas poinsettia, that is. According to legend, Pepita, a young girl from Mexico, visited baby Jesus on Christmas with only a bouquet of weeds to greet his birth. But because of her sweetness and sincerity, the weeds were miraculously turned into gorgeous poinsettias. The traditional gloss on what this means is that the shape of the poinsettia leaves represents the Christmas star, the red represents Jesus' blood, and, if the leaves are white, they are said to represent Christ's purity. There is also a redemption message embedded in the poinsettia. Where others see Christ's blood on the cross and God's redeeming love, I see red flower against white snow and feel hope.



October is usually the driest time of the year in Timor (Indonesia), but this year it has stretched well into November. Throughout Timor much of the landscape is barren, the land cracked deep, no color but brown. Cattle have died of thirst, tempers run short, emotions high, constructive energy low.

But some gifts are given only at this hottest time of the year, like the bougainvillea plants, their flowers glorious in shades of pink, orange, and white. The bougainvillea flowers remind me of the Christmas poinsettia – in the midst of a desolate landscape, there is always, year after year, this sign of hope that life persists and will flourish again. Bougainvillea is a tough plant with big thorns that run all along its branches. Its blossoms stand out against a dominant backdrop of monotonous brown.



That's the thing about hope as well. Often it is more thorny than velvety and can be difficult to handle. It often seems prickly because it must push back against all that threatens it. To be hope in the midst of pain, denial, or just dull oblivion may not always appear as an oasis or feel comfortable. Hope stands, speaks, and expresses itself in flamboyant contrast to the dryness and monotone resignation that often surrounds it. It is hope, in large part, by virtue of its contrast to the dominant landscape.

Christmas poinsettia, Timorese bougainvillea—these plants remind me that God so loved the world; God still does. May Christmas renew our hope to keep struggling for peace, justice, and the integrity of God's good creation.

Karen Campbell-Nelson and her husband John serve with the Evangelical Church of West Timor. Karen's appointment is supported by One Great Hour of Sharing, Our Churches Wider Mission, Disciples Mission Fund and your special gifts.



Global Ministries



The BZ Express

December 2014

Zion United Church of Christ

412 N. 5th Street, Burlington, Iowa 52601

319-752-2305 - Office phone

319-754-1467 - Office fax

515-450-1321 – Pastor's cell

Church email: ucczionbur@aol.com

Pastor's email: bricehughes@hotmail.com

Website: www.zionuccburlington.org

Staff

Reverend Brice Hughes, Interim Pastor

Janice Gibson, Organist, Choir Director,
and Christian Education Director

Marilyn Stein, Office Administrator

Kay Jacobs, Treasurer's Assistant

Renita Jarrett, Choir Accompanist and
Wedding Coordinator

Megan Agnew, Nursery Supervisor

Jim Levins, Custodian

Volunteer

Deb Ruble, Director of Bridging the Gap