



“Yucca

January
2017

Breeze”

T H E U N I T E D C H U R C H E S O F H O T S P R I N G S

P A S T O R ' S C O R N E R :

New Beginnings, New Opportunities

By the time you receive this newsletter Christmas will be in the rear-view mirror, and 2017 will be on the doorstep. New Years is traditionally a time to take stock of our lives and make necessary changes. Some of us think about going on diets (Weight Watchers makes a pretty penny in January). Others of us consider getting out of debt once and for all. We envision a new start. New starts are a good thing. They are a gospel-like kind of thing, these new starts that offer a second chance again.

This year, with the transitions that United Churches faces on the horizon, it is also a chance for you to envision a new start as a congregation. With a pastor leaving and an interim and then a new pastor coming, you need to look at where you have come from and where you are, and then to ask yourself where you are wanting to go in the future as a congregation. This moment in time is a crossroads for United Churches. Don't be afraid to do the work of charting a new course for mission and ministry in 2017, even as you wait for your next pastor. It will be the perfect time to do this kind of work, so that you will know what kinds of gifts and abilities you are looking for in a pastor to lead you into the future.

2017 is a time for you to get comfortable with new things. As you look at pastoral candidates, I hope you will consider candidates with assets and skills sets that you might not have considered otherwise. For instance, it may be that God has prepared a biblically-grounded and amazingly gifted woman to be your pastor. I hope you will not close yourself to where the Spirit leads just because of the gender of a candidate. Or perhaps you will encounter a clergy couple, like Priscilla and Aquilla in the book of Acts, that are called to pastor together. Don't close yourself off to where God might lead. Also, as you look to reach out, I hope you will be open to orient your ministries in whatever way best equips you to reach other folks for Christ. If you find that you do better reaching seniors than children, that is ok—embrace that gifting. And if you believe your mission in to reach children and younger families, make sure you continue to develop practices to help them feel welcome to come and be who they are.

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In 2017, be willing to take risks. It is important to be good stewards, and it is also important to do more with your assets than balance a budget and establish a healthy reserve. Take steps of faith in ministry as God leads, even if it requires a little more expense to do so. Standing still as a church will only have you move further behind.

In 2017, be strategic. Evaluate your staffing, your ministries, and your efforts on a regular basis. Ask, is this ministry building the kingdom? Is it growing our church? If it is not doing either, you may not need to continue it just because you have always done it.

Celebrate the day of new beginnings.

God Bless,
Pastor Clint

A NOTE OF THANKS

Dear United Churches Congregation,

Thank you all so very much for your prayers, kind thoughts and visits made during the entirety of Dad's illness and death. Our family truly felt lifted up by your thoughtfulness and we thank God for each and every one of you! A special thank you to Pastor Clint and Tracy Bastian for conducting such a wonderful memorial service! Dad truly would have loved the sentiments shared and the beautiful music played. Last, but certainly not least, sincere and heartfelt thanks go to the Hospitality committee members that took time away on a holiday weekend to serve and clean up the luncheon after Dad's service. We enjoyed getting to visit with those attending the luncheon and you ladies certainly made it easy for us to do so! We truly feel blessed by our hometown church and we thank you so much again! God's blessing to you all in 2017!

Sincerely,
Jean, Jay, Jon and Sara Schuchardt and Families



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HOT SPRINGS, SD