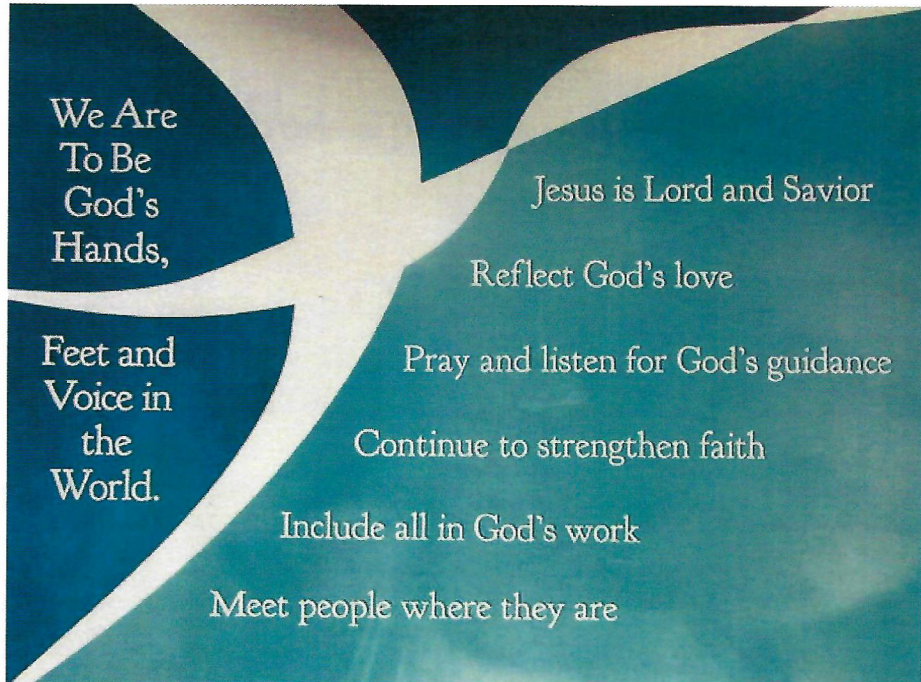


Love Letters

To

United in Faith Lutheran Church



Enclosed in this booklet are some reflections from members of United in Faith Lutheran Church.

It includes what we love about United in Faith and what we would lose if this congregation were to disappear.

This booklet is a work in progress...

Dear United in Faith,

I love you because everyone is kind and helpful. They care about everyone. I walked into the church many years ago, the people made me feel like I had been coming there for many years.

If you disappeared tomorrow, I would be very upset and sad. I would have nowhere to go. I love going to church, if I miss going to church on Sunday, I do not have a good week, I am sad all week.

-Ardelle Wray

Dear United in Faith,

I love you because you provide a place of community that welcomes all and values the gifts that everyone shares. You taught me how to forgive others and how to forgive myself. You taught me that it's ok to ask questions about my faith. And the amount of grace I've experienced here over the past 15 years is humbling.

If you disappeared tomorrow, I would hold you in my heart and deeply grieve the loss of this community while moving forward with all you've taught me.

With love,
Gretchen Quillen

Dear United in Faith,

I love you because of the camaraderie of the congregation and staff. Our willingness to try new ideas. I am surprised by changes we see with the church's layout. It was inspired to have a flexible worship space. I love the inspiration I receive from our pastor's sermons and the variety of ways a weekly service is presented. Our music team is always up to the challenge. The bell choir, choir, and trumpet use are very inspirational.

If you disappeared tomorrow I would miss all the above: the friendships, the staff, the music, the ministers with their sermons that inspire!

With love,
Dian Hoyem

p.s. I also miss the people who aren't attending anymore and having children in worship. I am personally "burnt out" but I am thankful for all the people who are willing to make the church work. I often think of the ways Pr. Carla tried to get us involved and not many people joining in. I felt there is too much apathy and don't know how to overcome it, even some of my own.

Dear United in Faith,

I love like you because when I went Church shopping in 2013 after Good Shepherd closed, your church came to the closet to what I grew up with at GS. It also helped that several GS members joined UIF over the years. Even our former GS organist Lois Cornils was the organist for UIF. (She does have a following of former GS members.) The Redeemer Chicago's worship service was too loud (Christian Rock) and the congregation was geared to 20-30 year olds. Grace in River Forest was too stuffy with the Ushers wearing carnations in their suit jackets. I did not want to go to Marshall Fields for church. Martin Luther's congregation did not seem to have any energy left. Hardly anyone sang during the service. UIF was the only church that had a wide range of ages and a somewhat high energy level due to the large membership at the time which unfortunately has gone down for various reasons. What I also liked and still do is the all welcoming nature at UIF, no matter if you are rich or poor, black or white, gay or straight. (Just look at the congregational acceptance of our current Pastor). There is a lack of snobbery in this congregation.

If UIF would close, which is a possibility down the road with our declining membership, I would feel a certain sadness that another chapter in my book of life has come to an end, but my faith in the Holy Trinity (which has been strengthened at UIF) would help guide me toward the new church for the next chapter in my life just as it did during my transition from GS to UIF.

In addition to what I found at UIF, I would also look for a congregation that has more of a handle on current world events and is willing to discuss the pros and cons of global issues rather than just watching each other in silence just eating & drinking in the fellowship hall. It is one area that I feel is missing in the make-up of the congregation and at times, makes me feel as an outsider looking in. (3 Dimensional vs. 2 Dimensional. I learned that in my high school Geometry class as well as in our high school current events club).

I would also look for a congregation that has a thirst for Theological & Eschatological education beyond what is in the lectionary. The lectionary is a good starting point, but Sundays and Seasons does not go far enough for me. I have to turn to other pastors on You Tube for spiritual guidance on contemporary issues and their relation to biblical prophecy. The Israeli-Hama war is a case in point. I am a firm believer in the global politics of Oil (my international relations training at NU) and its relationship to the End Times.

Lastly, I would also look for a congregation that is willing to learn about Near Death Experiences, where people have died and either gone to heaven or hell. (You Tube has tons of these on its website.) I am also a firm believer if more people would hear of these experiences, that our church pews would start to fill up again with Christ Believers. It's a shame in my mind that the Lutheran church in general does not seem to capitalize on this.

In conclusion, I hope that whoever reads this letter begins to understand that UIF has a very nice congregation and a wonderful worship experience. Its why I keep coming back. However, the constraints put upon it by peer customs and Churchwide/Synod guidance may lead me down the road to shop for an additional church that will fulfill my spiritual based intellectual needs that are not being met at UIF.

Pete Herberg

Dear United in Faith,

I love you because of the comfortable surroundings, both physical and emotional.

If you disappeared tomorrow, I would hate to go church shopping again.

-Elfriede Reiss

Dear United in Faith,

I love you because of all the good friends and ministers we have had along with the good times we have had with the dinners and celebrations.

If you disappeared tomorrow, I would miss a place that I enjoy going to and meeting the good friends I have made.

With love,
Harold Hoyem

Dear United in Faith,

I love you because I am comfortable with you, and you accept me for who I am. You don't make me feel like I don't belong in this church family. We have been together for a long time, and we have had our ups and downs. I won't lie, but there have been times that I wanted to leave you and never come back but knew I wouldn't be able to replace that void in my life. I have disagreed with you many times and I have cursed the distance I travel to be with you. I have been very dedicated to you in many ways and then get mad when you occupy too much of my life. I tell myself it is God's house so don't complain because He sees what I do for His glory. And it's hard to get along with so many family members in this house, but we are all here just trying to strengthen our faith for our final journey. If I didn't love you, I wouldn't be here so let's just leave it at that.

If you were to disappear tomorrow, I would be upset but not devastated. I would find love, support, and faith in a different community. Nothing lasts forever and everything seems to change too quickly. We have had more than a quarter of a century together and have watched our church dwindle and change for many reasons. We have experienced loss. We have experienced drastic change (Covid year). We have experienced disasters in our dwellings and yet we still come out strong enough to maintain, so if you were to be gone tomorrow, I can only be happy that I was able to spend so much of my life with you. No complaints, no tears, just happy for the time together. God has a plan for all of us, whether it is at UIF or elsewhere, it is His plan and I will follow His plan for me.

With love,
Julie Lozich

Dearest United In Faith!

You are my Home Church & my Church Home - I am very blest to have found You back in 2006 - You have given me a great place to worship (bright, warm, cozy & comfy!) and to share God's Life. Your liturgy, messages, music, and friendly relationships are the very best thanks to Your most welcoming clergy, music ministry, and especially our congregation!

If You were to leave, You would be truly missed - not to mention a tremendous loss of all You provide for our congregation and neighborhood - Godspeed in Your journey to stay!

Love & Always Friend!
Mickey Bligh :-)

Dear United in Faith,

I love you because from the first worship service I attended, instead of making me feel guilty and doomed to eternal punishment, you told me that God loves me unconditionally.

If you disappeared tomorrow, I would need to search for another church who would reflect God's unconditional Love with every encounter and in every person and event. Such may be very difficult to find, and I did search before.

Mary Haas

Dear United in Faith Congregation, Pastor, and Staff,

I love and am inspired by you because you/you are:

- Family
- Welcoming
- Comfortable yet challenging to my faith and discipleship
- Open to new ideas and ways of doing things
- Open to teach and learn from students (interns, MIC) and each other
- Offer friendships and support to/care of each other
- Hard working
- Let people use their gifts
- Permission giving, separation of governing and ministry functions
- Justice focused
- Have the will to keep going despite reduced numbers (people, finances)
- Have great musicians
- Offer worship that is meaningful to me
- Like to celebrate!

I am very thankful to have you in my life and if you disappeared tomorrow I would:

- Not have an easy time finding a new church community to replace you
- Miss your history and how it shaped the church you are today
- Miss my friends and the community that I see weekly
- Miss the familiarity of worship, space, organizational structure
- Miss my roles in leadership
- Take a break and then start the search for a new spiritual home

With love,
Pam Marino

Dear United in Faith:

I love you because I appreciate the special personal attributes our Pastor's had AND used to make us Who We Are. Their guidance and direction have helped us develop the "personality" of United in Faith. There is no other congregation with the determination and all of the characteristics that we possess.

This congregation IS my "religious family". The dedication of our members is what makes them so special. Their reliance upon each other to use all of their special attributes and knowledge and capabilities to support United in Faith is what connects us to each other as a family and also what makes us Who We Are. THANK YOU ALL.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard E. Guzik". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Richard E Guzik

Dear United in Faith,

I love you because you are full of wonderful and caring people. There is always a message that makes me think about being God's hands, feet and voice in the world. I love the music.

If you disappeared tomorrow, I would miss you terribly. I would need to search for a new church, but it would be hard to replace you.

With love,
Denise Boyer