

August 2013 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue
Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232



"Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." --Matthew 10:42

If you attended church on Sunday, July 14, you had the opportunity to hear four of our mission trip participants share reflections of their experiences while serving in St Louis. Since I didn't speak that day I thought I would briefly share with you some of my reflections based on the preceding passage in Matthew, specifically focused on the "rewards" we received while participating in the Urban Mission Inn program.

Some of the rewards are easy to acknowledge and name. It was rewarding to have the little ones at Kinder Cottage share a few hours of time with us as we played, read, and colored. It was rewarding to see fresh paint applied to walls at the Jackie Joyner Kersee center and hear custodian Mark tell us what a great group of volunteer workers we were. It was rewarding to package 768 boxes of food at the Food Bank and know that our 3 hours of volunteering helped create 18,965 meals for low income seniors. It was rewarding to be able to serve a hot 4th of July meal of brisket, hamburgers and hotdogs to the homeless at the Bridge. And it was rewarding to be able to make monetary donations at each site we served, knowing that in some small way we were also financially helping them.

However, much of what we experienced and learned on this mission trip didn't feel very rewarding, at least in the conventional sense of the term. It wasn't rewarding to hear at Lydia's House (a transitional housing program for domestic violence victims) that one in four domestic relationships will eventually experience some form of internal violence or abuse. It wasn't rewarding to consider how many of the children at Kinder Cottage came from single parent homes. It wasn't rewarding to realize that 1,000 children in the neighborhood of the Kingdom House will receive donated school supplies because their families can't—or won't--provide them with these simple necessities. It wasn't rewarding on the anniversary of the signing of our Declaration of Independence to see firsthand that there are American citizens who are *dependent* on the generosity of others in order to have a meal to eat and a place to sleep. It wasn't rewarding to learn about the "Delmar Divide" (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17361995>) and realize that St. Louis remains one of the most segregated cities in the U.S. And it didn't feel very rewarding to weed the community garden while wondering where the "community" was...the people who were willing to provide their own sweat equity in order to enjoy some fresh produce from the garden.

As I reflect on the trip, I find myself continuing to wrestle with some big questions-- and I'm still waiting for the "reward" of satisfactory answers. I struggle to know how to balance the need for benevolence - versus the need for engaged activism - to address some of the root causes of the inequities we saw in St. Louis. I continue to wonder about the relationship between the opportunities afforded by charity, and the resulting opportunism that helps create a culture of dependency. I think about the brave new world of mainline Protestantism, and I wonder what churches will need to do in the coming years in order to survive as membership and finances continue to decline (Union Avenue Christian Church continues to keep its doors open in part by hosting an opera company in their sanctuary, and by leasing out building space to other organizations). And I wonder what my life would be like if I had been born in East St. Louis or north of Delmar Boulevard-- and I too was counted among the urban poor or the homeless who shelter-hop in downtown St. Louis.

And yet we who gave a few cups of proverbial cold water to a handful of St. Louisans in July can't help but feel that it was a rewarding experience overall. For me the greatest reward of this trip is the awareness that we can serve in the midst of ambiguities, wrestle with questions that stretch us, and still help others in Christ's way-- even if imperfectly and incompletely. Whether it was offering one's self to the "little ones" of Palestine in Jesus' day, or working with the urban poor in St. Louis today, service to others and the enlargement of minds and hearts seem to go hand in hand. That truth has been with us since the beginning...and I trust that those kinds of "rewards" are the kinds that are not lost—even in a world filled with so much need, so much injustice, and so much complexity as ours. —Pastor Craig



Grilling safety –

- Place grill at least 10 feet away from house, shrubs, or bushes.
- Never leave a grill unattended.
- Check connections of gas grills.
- Keep a fire extinguisher nearby.
- Never bring a grill indoors.
- Remove grease buildup from grates and trays.
- Use utensils with long handles.
- Allow grill to cool before cleaning or discarding charcoal.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

M	8 am - 1 pm
T	9 am - 1 pm
W	8 am - 12:30, 1 pm to 4:30
Th	8 am - 12:30, 1 pm to 4:30
F	9 am - 1 pm

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor

Office: 832-2232 Cell 297-4316

Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net

Michele Omvig: Admin. Assist. 838-2989

Church's e-mail: fcuccwc@wmtel.net

Sharon Perry: Stephen Ministry Ldr 832-5435

Nancy Shelton: Choir Director 835-0208

Myra Maxon: Organist 832-3662

Mary Van Diest: Pianist 832-3754

Curt/Lorraine McCoskey: Cust's. 832-5341

Myra Maxon: Financial Secretary 832-3662

Luverne Bierle: Church Treasurer 832-4752

ATTENDANCE

June 29	78	July 7	56
July 14	62	July 21	72
July 28	50		

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

- 2 - Bruce Perry
- 4 - Jessica Fiala
- 5 - Patty Gescheidler
- 6 - Vicki Long
- 6 - James Van Diest
- 7 - Richard Tudor II
- 9 - Caitlyn Gapp
- 10 - Amy Olson
- 10 - Addison Marie Stearns

- 12 - Jan Maxon
- 12 - Howard Stearns
- 12 - Vicky Hahne
- 12 - Tracy Bahrenfuss
- 12 - Regan Hollingshead
- 13 - Sue Hollingshead
- 15 - Audrey Burtnett
- 15 - Laurie Epps
- 15 - Ron Long
- 16 - Tom Riemenschneider
- 16 - Samantha DeWitt
- 16 - Anne McMurray
- 16 - LaVonne Osmundson
- 18 - Andrea Gordon
- 18 - Debbie Jaycox
- 19 - Allison Yungclas
- 19 - Mary Van Diest
- 19 - Eric Larson
- 20 - Lieum James Luevanos
- 21 - Mark Carlson
- 21 - Mary Worthington
- 24 - Nick Oberender
- 26 - Britny Fortune
- 27 - Shari Rothrock
- 28 - Bob Weieneth
- 31 - Betty Ploeger
- 31 - Margy Wood



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

- 2 - Carl & Shannon King
- 11 - Luverne & Verna Bierle
- 11 - Mark & Jennie Brim
- 23 - Don & Gretchen Bruner
- 23 - John & Beth Van Diest
- 29 - Daniel & Samantha DeWitt
- 31 - Daniel & Amanda (Maass) Strahl

Hygiene Kits

The Mission Board would like to remind everyone that the Hygiene Kit collection tub is still in Fellowship Hall as an ongoing project. With the devastation parts of the country have felt due to the tornados I am sure that these kits would

be a welcome sight for victims of these disasters. So this is just a friendly reminder that the tub is available and if you want to add to it, the Mission Board will see they get to CWS and on to folks who need them. As a reminder these are the items that go in the kits: Hand towel, Washcloth, Wide tooth comb, Nail clipper, Bar of soap, Toothbrush, 6 Band-aids, \$2.00/kit as postage costs.



Save the Date

The Evangelical Board invites you to a summer picnic to be held on Sunday, August 4, beginning at 5:00 p.m. at "The Barn" shelter house at Briggs Woods. Please bring a main dish and one other dish to share. Also plan to bring your own table service. We will have iced tea and water. Pastor Craig will have games for us to play. See you then!



Thrift Sale September 27 & 28

Summer Cleaning and Sorting

- **SORT**
- **CLEAN**
- **REDUCE**
- **RECYCLE**
- **DONATE**



On Friday & Saturday,

September 27th & 28th the Women's Fellowship will be conducting their semi-annual Thrift Sale.

Beginning Wed. September 25 we will be accepting those items cluttering up your lives. If you need assistance transporting your items, call Cindy Henning.

Please note that the organizations we donate to after the sale have restrictions on what they are taking. We ask you to help us by bringing only items that are clean, complete, and in good repair. Ask yourself, would I want to purchase this item, before you bring it to donate. We will **no longer accept TVs** because we do not have anyone to take them after the sale. If you have questions contact Cindy Henning at 515-297-0422.



Condolences

We offer condolences to the family of Larry Olmstead who passed away on June 29. Funeral services were held at Foster's on July 3.

Thanks

Kind deeds are like little prayers being answered. Thank you all, Pastor Craig, the Women's Fellowship and oh so many of our church members, for all you have done for us!

Laurie & Ron Epps

Dave & Sheri Olmstead

Brenda Boyington

Thanks

Thank you all again for your amazing work in St. Louis during your stay at the Urban Mission Inn. I had a lot of fun sharing in our work and ministry during the week. Whether it was serving the Fourth of July meal at The Bridge, loading boxes at the food bank, giving the walls of the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center a fresh coat of paint, or the other projects you took on, every day was a pleasure to spend with you and a blessing to the St. Louis community.

Not only was your work greatly appreciated, but your generous gift to our congregation will be a great asset to the Inn and will help us grow and sustain our ministry. We are planning to renovate the living space of the Inn this winter, making your donation an especially timely gift for our church.

I hope you enjoyed your stay at the Inn as much as I enjoyed working with you. You have truly been a blessing to our church and to our city through your service, generosity, and presence. We would love to have you return again in the future! May God continue to bless you and your work.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Cahill

Union Avenue Christian Church

Thanks

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your gift of \$1,000 to the work of the Ecumenical Human Needs Committee. We have had a VERY busy three months assisting clients with rent, utilities, and deposits. We were even

able to help a client with dental work to become a more productive employee.

Thank you again for your continuing support.

EHNC

Scholarships

The Finance Board has awarded scholarships to the following people: Karmen Wehrhan, Heidi Menard, Kara Hutton, Katie Short, Amy Doolittle, Jessica Patterson, Jan Ryherd, Erica Oberender and Alexis Byrne. These will be presented on Sunday, August 11.

CROP Walk 2013: 1st Congregational UCC Leads!

Dig out your walking shoes – and mark Sunday, October 13, on your calendar. The CROP Walk is coming back to Webster City, with our church in charge. Seven churches will be invited to take part. We're planning to gather at the Brewer Creek shelter at 2 p.m. We'll sing a few songs and Rev. Craig Blaufuss will send us off with a blessing. Then, we'll walk the designated route of a couple of miles to remind ourselves how far many people in the world have to go to get water every day.

When we return, the Mission Board will provide coffee, cold drinks and bars. We're inviting each walker to bring a jar of peanut butter (a good source of protein) for the Upper Des Moines Opportunity food pantry.

When CROP began, under the wing of Church World Service, the name stood for Christian Rural Overseas Program. Now it means Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty. Of the money collected for CROP, 75 percent goes to the international program and 25 percent to UDMO locally.

You can donate in support of Team Congo at www.cropwalkonline.org or drop cash or checks into the pickle jars in Fellowship Hall. If you have questions, please check with Mabel

Prescott or Marjorie Groves. More info later. Many thanks!

Mayflower Board Seeks Candidate

I will soon finish my second term on the Mayflower Community Board of Trustees so the Nominating Committee is looking for someone to replace me. Here's the official description: "Members of the Board of Trustees meet periodically to receive reports, review financial statements, establish policies, set direction for short and long range goals, and provide governance of the Mayflower mission." The Mayflower Community, previously called Mayflower Homes, is in Grinnell, Iowa. Members serve a three-year term and are eligible to serve two terms. I served an extra year because I completed another person's term. Ideally, the board would like a candidate with financial savvy or experience with nursing homes or retirement communities. Not everyone on the board has that skill set but we all keep track of Mayflower business, governance, finances and resident care. Bob Mann has been the executive director for the past 6+ years. Please email me at marjoriegroves@hotmail.com if you have questions about the board or are interested in serving. The Board of Trustees meets quarterly, with other meetings by conference call or in Grinnell, depending on committee business. I hope to hear from you!

Marjorie Groves

Budget

It's time to begin work on the 2014 budget. As your board or committee meets in August and early September please look over your current budget and prepare a request for 2014. The Finance Board needs this information by September 15. Thank you.

~Finance Board

VBS with Asbury



St Louis Mission Trip



Treasurer's Report

INCOME	JUNE	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$16,644.93	\$83,011.54
Other Income	167.54	175.25
Memorial/Special Income/Interest	4,010.82	20,542.24
TOTAL INCOME	\$20,823.29	\$103,729.03
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,417.00	\$8,888.96
Pastoral Services	10,316.93	41,659.45
Maintenance and Repairs	4,118.99	17,227.88
Church Office	1,876.53	13,857.65
Music Ministry	589.58	3,537.48
Christian Education	0.00	19.48
Local Ministry	0.00	30.00
Mem. Funds Distribution	0.00	13,095.03
Misc. Expenses	468.74	1,008.85
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$18,787.77	\$99,324.78
Difference	\$2,035.52	\$4,404.25

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Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

