

**February 2014 Newsletter**  
**First Congregational United Church of Christ**  
**1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595**  
**515-832-2232**  
<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>



*Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times." --Matthew 18: 21-22*

Recently our dog Missy has started to sporadically attack Kitty, one of our cats. These aren't major scuffles and (so far) no one has been hurt, but Missy's violent outbursts have surprised us since Missy considers Kitty to be her surrogate mother, and will often nudge Kitty with her paw until Kitty bathes her like a kitten. But what has been even more surprising to us is to find Kitty bathing Missy just a few hours after being attacked by her! This has happened several times this winter, causing Vicki and me to both wonder aloud "How can you be so forgiving, Kitty?" ...and also to wonder, "Why can't we humans be that forgiving?"

Now perhaps Kitty is so forgiving because she doesn't have the "brains" to hold a grudge. People do, however—as I'm sure you know. One of the reasons we humans find it so hard to forgive is because we tend to remember all the hurts and violations, the injustices and wrongs that have been done to us throughout our lives. The memories of those pains persist even after the hurtful events have long been over, and the feeling of being violated and wronged can persist for a lifetime—shaping our outlooks, behaviors, and relationships with others. This makes it difficult for us to "forgive" those who have hurt us... because of the lingering power of the hurt.

In our Sunday adult education class we are studying to topic of "healing," and we will next study Shamanism. One of the healing techniques of a Shaman is called "Soul Retrieval", which is the releasing of fractured pieces of a human soul from their entanglements in traumas and violations. According to Shamanic teaching, every time a human being experiences a trauma or violation a piece of their soul splinters off and becomes entangled in the highly charged negative energy of the event. The Shaman's work is to journey into the life of the troubled individual to find those missing soul pieces and help disentangle them, so they can return to the individual and thereby restore their soul-wholeness. This ancient and powerful healing modality reminds us that if we aren't intentional about seeking healing for our old wounds, we run the risk of eventually becoming "soulless"-- lost in the painful and unforgiven moments of the past.

Apparently Jesus must have been a shaman, for he was always trying to heal souls by preaching of our need to forgive others. When Jesus told Peter to forgive not 7 times but 77 times not only was he pointing the way to peace between souls, but he was also pointing the way to peace *for our souls* that are lost in the negative entanglements of the past. And forgiveness as "disentanglement" is a message that Jesus not only preached, but lived! For the sake of his soul Jesus forgave his own townsfolk who tried to kill him when he returned to preach to them; for the sake of his soul Jesus forgave the religious leaders who demeaned him and called him demon-possessed; for the sake of his soul Jesus forgave his disciples who deserted, denied, and betrayed him; for the sake of his soul Jesus even forgave those who pounded nails into his hands and hung him on a cross. *Because Jesus could forgive all those who had wronged, hated, and abused him, he could resurrect as the Christ rather than a soulless avenger seeking revenge for all that had been done to him. Because Jesus could forgive...he showed us how forgiveness can bring Life back into us.*

I preached this message at our care center worship services this past Sunday because on Saturday night Vicki and I again watched Kitty forgive Missy as she bathed her with a mother's love. Perhaps Kitty can forgive like that not because she has less brains than I, but because she has more heart and a less entangled soul. She reminds me of my unfinished work of practicing forgiveness, just as Jesus' life of forgiveness reminds me of the New Life that comes from this "unnatural" (at least to us humans) act.

Friends, what unfinished work of forgiveness does your soul require of you, so that you may again know soul-wholeness? Who still needs your forgiveness, so you can get your soul back? Remember forgiveness isn't forgetting the past (that's amnesia), and it isn't requiring that you remain a victim or become a doormat (that's giving permission to be abused). Forgiveness is Spirit-led healing--a God-inspired grace-- that restores our soul power. It as a gift we give to ourselves as well as others, so that we may truly Live.

May you practice the soul-restoring art of forgiveness with the courage of Jesus—and the generosity of Kitty!  
--Pastor Craig



**Kitty showing forgiveness**

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:**

- 2 - Jolan Fogle
- 3 - Isabella Nicole Nelson
- 4 - Leanna Ploeger
- 5 - Jane Klaver
- 6 - Sharon Perry
- 7 - Gene Royster
- 7 - Beth Van Diest
- 8 - Erin Sue Bailey
- 8 - Michele Omvig
- 9 - Les Ploeger
- 11 - Ryan McCoskey
- 11 - Greta Oberender
- 13 - Peter Brim
- 14 - Curt McCoskey

- 15 - Everett (Bud) Crystal
- 16 - Ronni Arnold
- 16 - Nicholas Paul Harfst
- 17 - Letabelle Riemenschneider
- 18 - Jackson Groves
- 18 - Lindsay Anderson Murray
- 19 - Gretchen McGlynn
- 19 - Jenna Short
- 21 - Alan Maxon
- 21 - Ann Heimberger
- 22 - Alexis Anderson
- 22 - Curtis Alan (PJ) Swanson
- 23 - Stephanie Hill
- 25 - Dorothy Brim
- 25 - David Weieneth
- 25 - Rachel Hollingshead
- 26 - Richard Fogle
- 26 - Wilma Taylor
- 27 - Luverne Bierle
- 28 - Conner Clum
- 28 - Midge Tudor
- 28 - Gracie Elizabeth Smith



**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:**

- 10 - Dick & Jayne Hahne
- 13 - Dick & Midge Tudor
- 13 - Rob & Brenda Brown

**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

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>January 5</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>January 11</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>January 19</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>January 26</b>	<b>70</b>



More, not less, for the new year:  
 More passion about everything you undertake.  
 More peace and less stress.  
 More love; the key to longevity.  
 More laughter; it improves metabolism and is infectious.  
 More faith; faith in a higher power, in yourself, and in others.  
 More self-love; feel good about yourself.  
 More food; more of the right foods in the right amount.  
 More exercise; essential components of a healthy life.  
 More empowerment to stay healthy.  
 More freedom to start a new life.

### Church Staff

**Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor**  
 Office: 832-2232 Cell 297-4316  
 Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net  
**Michele Omgig: 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

### MEALS N MORE

Join us for Meals N More on February 5 at 5:00 pm.

### Grief Support Group

Stephen Ministers are offering a grief support group for anyone coping with the loss of a loved one. They will be each Sunday afternoon from 4:00 to 5:30 starting February 2 through March 16. Call the church office for more info.

### Souper Bowl and Annual Meeting



**SOUPER BOWL**

Join us February 2<sup>nd</sup> for the Annual Meeting following our 10:30 am worship service. After the meeting make sure you stay and take part in our annual Souper Bowl, our current UDMO Appeal for January. Plans are underway to have a variety of soups and sides available. Plan to join us in fellowship to support a great cause.

### Church World Service Hygiene Kit

Church Family - Just wanted to update you on what your generous support of our Hygiene kit collection has allowed us to do. On January 23, 20 kits were packed into a box and shipped off to CWS. This is the largest amount we have sent to them and I believe this is the 5th or 6th time we have sent kits to them. Thank you so much for your ongoing support of this project that sends these very basic kits to persons who have suffered from a disaster where they do not have other access to basic hygiene items.

The tub to hold donations continues to reside under the table outside the church office in Fellowship Hall.

Again - thank you!  
 Mission Board



### Second Saturday Worship Continues February 8

Mark your calendars! Our next "Second Saturday" worship service begins at 5 p.m. February 8, As with all of our Saturday Services, there will be children's Sunday School following the children's message, and there will be NO Sunday School or church the next day.



## Thanks

To my 1st Congregational UCC church family and Pastor Craig, I would like to try to express my heartfelt thanks for your cards, emails, call, visits, food, and encouragement. Most of all I am thankful for all the prayers said for Don and me. At my lowest point, as I was praying, I was overcome with peace and the knowledge that everything was in God's hands because I had so many prayer warriors interceding for me. I knew I wasn't alone. As I write, we are packing to leave for Florida. We look forward to seeing you in April. God bless you all.

Gretchen Bruner



## UCC Members

Thank you so much for the contribution of food which helped fill our pantry shelves. You made a difference to a number of families in need. We have between 35 and 40 family units visit the pantry monthly. Each unit numbers 1 to 6. Thank you again for your gifts of food.  
Trinity Lutheran Church

Thank you for the cards, visits, calls and encouragement during my recent surgery and recovery.

Vicki Blaufuss



***Karin delivering our \$175 donation to Beacon of Hope***



**Stephen Ministry Sunday January 26**

**Check the bulletin board for more "thank yous"**

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Webster City, Iowa**  
**Cabinet Meeting-January 14, 2014**

**Members Present:**

Moderator-----	Pastor-----Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice-Moderator---Verna Bierle	Trustees-----Bruce Perry
Treasurer-----Luverne Bierle	Women's Fellowship---Dalene Schlitter
Finance Sec.-----Myra Maxon	Mission-----Gayle Olson
Finance-----	Worship-----Holly Riemenschneider
Staff/Parish-----	Evangelism-----Nancy Shelton
Christian Ed-----	Clerk-----Mary Van Diest

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by the Vice-Moderator, Verna Bierle. Under the Board and Committee reports Luverne Bierle reported that the Cole stock will be sold, a discussion was held on the possible renovations of the church and Myra Maxon asked for an exception to the church rules on the charge of using the piano for an upcoming concert. Nancy Shelton moved and Gayle Olson seconded to accept the minutes of the previous meeting, the Board and Committee reports, and the proposed agenda. The Treasurer's report by Luverne stated that the December 31, 2013 offering was \$14,529.56 and expenses were \$18,899.26. As of December 31, 2013 84.83% of income to budget has been given and 97.12% of expenses to budget has been spent. Luverne moved and Dalene seconded to put the treasurer's report to audit. Under pending business it was noted that the Annual Meeting will be January 26, 2014 immediately following worship service. Mission Board will be serving a soup luncheon following the meeting with the cabinet furnishing relishes and bars.

## **REPORTS OF PASTOR AND COMMITTEES**

**Pastor's Report:** He expressed his thanks to all for the many cards, gifts, greetings and gestures of friendship and appreciation that were offered to Vicki and himself during the Advent and Christmas Season. He thanked those who made the Advent and Christmas Eve services special; the Advent candle liturgists, music and choral music, the ushers and greeters, Chancel committee for arranging poinsettias and the volunteer readers who led the service on December 29<sup>th</sup> in his absence. After worship on Epiphany Sunday the Christmas decorations were packed away for another year. On January 11 the Rev. Brigit Stevens, the Associate Conference minister, will be with us to worship and lead communion. After the service pizza will be served during which time Rev. Stevens will have the opportunity to visit with members. Special thanks for the Christmas gifts were given to the Women's Fellowship for the beautiful quilt and the feeder for Webster that he and Vicki received. Look in January's Webster City Living magazine (the inside over) for a full page ad with a New Year's message from our church. He stated that the NW Association CoM is in the planning stages of the annual relicensing for Association licensed clergy, which will be held March 15<sup>th</sup> at Primghar. After the Christmas break the adult Christian Ed class will begin a study of "Healing." KLAB went caroling at the care centers on December 18<sup>th</sup>. A book study/discussion of Mark Nepo's "The Book of Awakening" will be held on January 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. On January 26<sup>th</sup> the Stephen Ministers will lead the worship service. Dale Olson will be taking his Stephen Leader training in Florida in January and will be installed into this ministry on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Sharon Perry, with the help of Stephen Ministers, will be

conducting a Grief Support group program for our church members and the wider community. The first series will begin February 2<sup>nd</sup>. The offering on Christmas Eve for the Christmas Fund was \$1,907.50. The Mission Board will be holding a Souper Bowl luncheon after the annual meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup>. This will be a fundraiser to support UDMO.

**Trustees:** A sound bar has been purchased for the choir. Don Bruner is working with Chris McNeil on the wiring. As the trees have been trimmed by the city, we now will obtain estimates to remove the ash tree. A request by Melissa Borer to use the church on May 27, 2014 for a recital was given. A charge of \$100 and proof of insurance will be required. A church usage request from Illini 4000 for Cancer bikers, who need some floor space for sleeping, on the night of June 17, 2014, was approved. They were informed that there is no shower available, no cooking will be done, no drinking, no smoking and possible that the church may be in the renovation process at that time. If they do stay, there will be someone from the church with them and they will also need proof of insurance. Bruce Perry, Les Ploeger and Joyce Gelhaus will serve two more years on the Trustees. Another coat rack was found in the church and was moved to fellowship hall. Jiffy has repaired the furnace (control on the blower). This has helped the heating in the office and study. Tom Riemenschneider moved and Gretchen Bruner seconded the motion to purchase Wi-Fi routers for the church. Questions were raised on the renovation estimate on the entry and basement bathroom. Tom will get answers from Lynn Jaycox. The moving of the library and doing the coat rack under the renovation could be done by the trustees or church members themselves.

**Worship Board:** Discussion was held concerning the level of conversation in the sanctuary before the worship service begins. A reminder will be put in the Sunday bulletin encouraging these conversations take place in Fellowship Hall and that members use soft voices while in the sanctuary before the worship service begins. See the pastor's report on the January 11<sup>th</sup> evening worship when the new associate conference minister, Rev. Brigitte Stevens will be with us.

**Staff/Parish:** Concern was expressed for Gretchen Bruner, Mary Worthington, Vicki Blaufuss and Betty Broshar. A review was done concerning evaluations and concerns and any updates or issues. Members remaining on the board will be Mark Vance, Glenda Wehrhan and Shirley Yungclas. The next meeting will be February 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 in the church dining room annex. A regular meeting time will be determined after new members are on board.

**Mission Board:** The Christmas Fund offering totaled \$1907.50. It was decided to continue the Alternative Giving Fair next year. The stockings for Quakerdale were well supported. Next year the UDMO offering will be the Angel Tree and NOT a family. Stephanie Hill will chair the Beacon of Hope meal on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Donna Ryherd will contact missionary, Steve Mather, on his upcoming February 7<sup>th</sup> visit. The Mission Board will hold an UDMO Souper Bowl meal on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Each member will furnish a different soup and will ask Pastor Craig to bring potato soup. The cabinet will furnish relishes and bars. Lorraine McCoskey will write a statement to see if there are any members interested in doing a Mission Trip this year. Gayle Olson will obtain a date at the end of February to pack bags for Kids Against Hunger. There are now enough complete hygiene kits to mail. Ginnie Veach will pay the postage that is sent with each kit. It was noted that the 2014 Summer Lunch Program is "a go." This was the last meeting for Stephanie Hill and Kay Harfst as they are going off the board.

**Women's Fellowship:** Reported that a delicious luncheon and enjoyable time was had at the Christmas luncheon.

**Evangelism:** Reported that on February 7<sup>th</sup> the missionary, Steve Mather, will be here and on January 26<sup>th</sup>, Stephen Ministry will conduct the worship service.

**Christian Ed:** No report

**Finance:** No report

Next meeting date is February 11, 2014

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Mary Van Diest, Church Clerk

10:30 A.M. WORSHIP 9:00 & 9:15 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL
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### Treasurer's Report

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b><u>DECEMBER</u></b>	<b><u>YEAR TO DATE</u></b>
Pledges and Offerings	\$14,529.56	\$154,998.93
Other Income	175.06	1,300.41
Memorial/Special Income/Interest	4,411.03	44,804.84
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$19,115.65</b>	<b>\$201,104.18</b>
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,537.00	\$17,908.96
Pastoral Services	10,316.93	82,984.95
Maintenance and Repairs	4,659.75	34,625.07
Church Office	1,669.64	27,679.62
Music Ministry	589.62	7,215.00
Christian Education	90.00	587.43
Local Ministry	36.32	2,874.88
Mem. Funds Distribution	1,205.64	26,653.50
Misc. Expenses	0.00	4,152.66
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$20,104.90</b>	<b>\$204,682.07</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>(\$989.25)</b>	<b>(\$3,577.89)</b>

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
1000 Willson Avenue  
Webster City, IA 50595

**Address Service Requested**

God is still speaking  
to everyone in the home of:

