

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



“What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” –Romans 6:1-4

You may remember that I once preached about the Buddhist story of “the mustard seed”--the story of a mother whose young son died and left her inconsolable. While she was grieving she heard talk of a great sage named Gautama, and so she went to him and asked that he bring her son back to life. In his compassion the Buddha instructed her to go throughout her village and ask for a mustard seed, with the stipulation that she could only receive it from a household that had never experienced a death. If she would bring such a seed, then a miracle would be possible.

Hearing this, the woman went door to door and asked at each house if they had escaped the tragedy of death, so that she might receive a mustard seed from them. At every house she heard the same sad news that they could not honor her request, for they too had lost ones who were dear to them. After she had visited every household in the village she returned to the Buddha, and asked to be initiated into the Way...for now she knew that *Death was the one great certainty of life.*

This story reveals a great truth about one type of death: **the Unchosen Death**. The Unchosen Death is the inescapable end of physical life; it is the one great certainty that we share with all living creatures on earth. Yet it is the one certainty that most of us seek to avoid, or deny, as did the grieving mother who had lost her child. Confronted with the Unchosen Death we flee from it, curse it, push it into the corners of our minds, or sanitize it with silk-lined coffins and park-like cemeteries. Like the grieving mother who sought refuge in the Buddha, we see the Unchosen Death as the thief, the enemy—the greatest thief and the greatest enemy of our lives.

And because we see it as the enemy, we cannot understand that the Unchosen Death is also the friend who comes bearing gifts. One of the greatest gifts the Unchosen Death brings is this paradox: it is only when we accept the inescapability of our death that we can truly begin to live. ***When we know that this life will end; when we meditate on that certainty, and feel in the very depths of our souls that the Unchosen Death will come to us...then we come to understand with clarity and a motivating urgency that what we do with our lives does matter, because the gift of this life won't last forever.***

When we see our lives with the clarity and urgency that is born of our acceptance of the Unchosen Death, we are empowered to rise from our spiritual sleep and embrace another gift: **the gift of the Chosen Death**. Each of us, from the time we are born until the time the Unchosen Death arrives, has been given the opportunity to choose how we will live. Each of us has the power and the responsibility to choose what we will live for, and what we will die to. That is what Paul means when he tells us just as Christ chose to die *for* sin, we can choose to die *to* sin—those beliefs and behaviors which only lead to more misery, suffering, and death in all of its forms--so that we may ally ourselves with God's purposes for our lives, and for all of Life.

By the time you read this, we will be but a few days away from Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. All of us would benefit from using this time to remind ourselves of the Unchosen Death that is coming, and the need to choose what we will live for, and what we will die to, so that we may truly live as God intends us to live. What do you need to die to this Lenten season...so that you may live? Do you need to die to the belief that your worth lies in the things that will die with your body: your looks, your strength, your IQ, your charm, your skills, your social status, your bank account? Do you need to die to negativity in all of its forms: anger, resentment, prejudice, bitterness, and the holding of old grudges? Do you need to die to the fears that are crippling you and keeping you from a life lived with courage and with joy? Do you need to let go of the belief that your happiness somehow resides in the behavior of others, or in the accumulation of things?

What *do* you need to die to, so that you may live? Friends, **the Unchosen Death is coming to us all...but before it comes there is much we can do to put to death the things that will cause us to die long before our physical deaths**. That is the way of the Chosen Death; that is the Way of Jesus. And that is the Way each of us is meant to travel on our journey through this life.

May your 2014 Lenten season be a time to re-commit to your walk of faith, as you follow the Way of Jesus: the way of death that leads to New Life! --Pastor Craig

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

- 1 - Jan Ryherd
- 1 - Lara Yungclas
- 1 - Maxwell Harfst
- 4 - Jordin Smith
- 4 - Vicki Blaufuss
- 5 - John Van Diest
- 6 - Jennie Williams
- 13 - Shirley Yungclas
- 13 - Shirley Hillyer
- 16 - Craig Blaufuss
- 18 - Mark Hollingshead
- 19 - Maribeth Martin
- 20 - Verna Bierle
- 20 - Jacob Meinders
- 21 - Colleen Fogle
- 21 - Connie McFadden
- 22 - Jacob Fogle
- 23 - Todd Sonsalla
- 24 - Garrett Shelton
- 26 - Melody Burtnett
- 28 - Shelly Sjoberg
- 28 - Nicolas Groves
- 28 - Jackson Leman
- 29 - Rose Deakman
- 31 - Marcy Nelson
- 31 - Ted Yungclas



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

- 7 - Robert & Mary Van Diest
- 15 - Curt & Lorraine McCoskey

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

February 2	67	February 8	53
February 16	66	February 23	69



Why you should love beans and legumes:

They're interchangeable with beef as a source of protein.

They're high in soluble fiber, the kind that can lower bad cholesterol.

They have no saturated fat, unlike red meat.

They're a complex carbohydrate and can help control blood sugar levels in people with diabetes.

They can help with weight loss because they keep you feeling satisfied longer.

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor

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Michele Omvig: Admin. Assist. 838-2989

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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

Ash Wednesday

First Congregational will begin the observance of Lent with an Ash Wednesday Service, to be held Wednesday, March 5, in the East Chapel.

At 6:45 pm Pastor Craig will offer the Imposition of Ashes to those who desire it, and at 7 p.m. we will join together in an abbreviated and informal service of worship.



One Great Hour of Sharing

An offering will be taken on Sunday, March 30 to support One Great Hour of Sharing. Our giving through One Great Hour of Sharing unites us with Christians from Church World Service and nine denominations:

American Baptist Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Church of the Brethren
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Reformed Church in America
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church

Our partnership alone is worth celebrating; what we do together is even more inspiring. Our giving is magnified beyond what any of us could do alone, when we serve together in the spirit of Christ. For over 65 years, we, the United Church of Christ have worked with and through partnerships to serve God through our sharing, and in return we see the image of God who unites us all.

MEALS N' MORE

Join us for an Irish Feast at Meals N' More on March 12 at 5:00 pm. Please note the date change. Choose from corned beef and cabbage or Irish stew. Please use the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall to list your choice.

Daylight Savings Begins

Sunday March 9 is the beginning of Daylight Savings so make sure you set your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday night.

Two Dorothies

Dorothy Brim had her 90th birthday on February 25 and Dorothy Stearns will have hers on April 3. Happy birthday to both of you! Dorothy Stearns' family is sponsoring the coffee after worship on Sunday, March 30.

Quire

Please note, choir practice is now at 6:00 pm on Wednesday evenings. La la la 🎵🎵🎵

Thrift Sale April 25 & 26

Spring Cleaning and Sorting

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



On Friday & Saturday, April 25 &

26 the Women's Fellowship will be conducting their semi-annual Thrift Sale.

Beginning Wednesday, April 23 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 do not have anyone to take them after the sale.

If you have questions contact Cindy Henning at 515-297-0422.



Lenten Luncheon

The women of Asbury Church wish to invite you to the annual community Lenten Luncheons. The luncheons are on Tuesdays starting March 11 through April 15. Serving will begin at 11:45

followed by a short devotion. Sign up in Fellowship Hall or let Michele know by Monday noon

previous to the luncheon you are attending.



2nd Saturday Worship Continues March 8

Mark your calendars! Our next "Second Saturday" worship service begins at 5 p.m. March 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.

Community Workshop

Tuesday, March 11 at 10:00 am and again at 6:00 pm there will be a free program to teach about Legal Tools and Health Care Directives, Medical Assistance, Veterans Benefits, and Funeral and Cremation Planning held at Foster Funeral Home. There is more information on the bulletin board. Pre-registration is required, so call 832-2110 to reserve a seat.

Thanks

Thank you for all the prayers this past year for my dad, my mother-in-law and my mom. Thank you for continuing to pray for Ray as we await a diagnosis. A special thank you to all who sent cards, food and memorial money for my mom. I am really grateful to the Stephen Ministers for doing a grief support group. It has been a roller coaster year and as much as I think I can handle it all, I'm finding out I can't. Again to all the members of our UCC, you are simply the best.

Ray & Diane Vasquez



Steve Mather Speaks on Romania

Saturday February 8, Steve Mather returned and updated a gathering from our church on the Stepping Forward Romania missions.

He told of plans for 9 sessions of Christian Summer Camps at Camp Living Water. These camps will be attended by abandoned and orphan children, as well as local village and Roma children. Summer volunteers at the camp in Romania will include Joyce Gelhaus, her nephew Karl Heimberger, Dan and Donna Ryherd and Donna's cousins Bob and Katelynn Griffith. The Iowa team is planning to travel to Romania July 4-19. More information to follow. Do you have a Chicago Connection? Team Iowa is looking for a contact who lives near O'Hare Airport where they can park a vehicle or two for the time they are in Romania. Please contact Donna if you have a lead at 835-8016. We are also looking for a 6 passenger vehicle to borrow so we can drive together and save gas.



On Sunday, February 23, First Congregational members gathered to again pack meals for Kids Against Hunger at the bridge.

Healing Touch Sessions available at a discount

Healing touch is a relaxing, nurturing energy therapy that assists in balancing your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Kathy Vaughn, a healing touch practitioner who is working toward her certification in Healing Touch, is offering members of First Congregational a "UCC" discount on healing sessions: until March 14 the sessions are discounted to only \$15! If you are interested in scheduling a session with Kathy, or wish to know more about Healing Touch, please call her at 515-835-0030.

KLAB

Our KLAB students have been studying the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, and they also have been discussing some of the temptations they face as young people. To help with that discussion we made a bulletin board that listed some of those temptations: PLAY WITH REAL GUNS, LITTER/POLLUTE, EAT/DRINK UNKNOWN THINGS, HURT ANIMALS, STEAL, FIGHT, MAKE FUN OF SOMEONE ELSE, GO WITH A STRANGER, RUN AWAY, PLAY WITH FIRE, LIE/HIDE THE TRUTH, HURT MYSELF, VANDALIZE/DAMAGE OTHER'S PEOPLE'S STUFF, CHEAT, IMPROPERLY POST ONLINE.



KLAB Hide N Seek



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Webster City, Iowa
Cabinet Meeting-February 11, 2014

Members Present:

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by the Moderator, Verna Bierle. Pastor, Rev. Craig Blaufuss, opened with a meditation and prayer. The minutes of last meeting and the board and committee reports were open for review and discussion. The cabinet asked the trustee representative, Tom Riemenschneider, what was happening with the possible church renovations. He explained that the renovation committee was experiencing difficulty getting bids. The cabinet felt that if the committee had someone draw up plans of what they wanted to do and how it would look, it would be easier for all to understand and to obtain bids. Tom said they would do this. Ginnie Veach moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting and the board and committee reports. Nancy Shelton seconded. Motion carried. The 2013 audit of the treasurer's book has not been done. Luverne Bierle gave the treasurer's report. The offering total for January 31, 2014 was \$10,674.94 and the expenses were \$11,965.97. Luverne moved and Holly Riemenschneider seconded to put the report to audit. Motion carried. As per the constitution, the church membership and associate membership is to be reviewed every year. Verna passed out the two lists and asked all to be prepared to review this at the March cabinet meeting. Ash Wednesday is March 5th. Pastor Craig will possibly hold a short service that evening in the East Chapel. The Pastor and his wife are in charge of Meals & More on March 12, 2014.

REPORTS OF PASTOR AND COMMITTEES

Pastor's Report: He reported that on January 11, 2014, the Rev. Brigit Stevens, our new Associate Conference Minister, worshipped with us and shared the pizza supper which followed. She noted that we are a friendly group, have a warm and inviting sanctuary, are very active in our community and with mission work and are using technology very well in worship. On January 26 the Stephen Ministers led our service of worship with Dale Olson, our new Stephen Leader, delivering the sermon. During the service we affirmed our Stephen Ministers and noted that 12 of our 13 Stephen Ministers have agreed to serve for another year. The church choir has made a schedule change in their rehearsal time. They are moving from 7:00 pm to 6:00 pm on Wednesdays. Pastor Craig reported that he has finished his duties as a clergy support person to a pastor who underwent a fitness review. He will attend the Committee on Ministry workshop in Des Moines to be held on Friday, February 14th. The adult Christian Ed class is continuing their study on "Healing"; are now studying the Healing of Shamans. KLAB continues with about 15 attendees. They are studying stories of Jesus that roughly follow the lectionary. They recently made some video vignettes of the students acting out some of these stories. Look for these videos

in worship and on Facebook. On January 15th and 29th, four people gathered for a book study/discussion of Mark Nepo's "the Book of Awakening." The Grief Support group sponsored by Stephen Ministry held their first meeting on February 2nd with 6 attendees. They will meet weekly on Sundays (the program is for 7 weeks) from 4:00-5:30 pm in the multi-purpose room. Kolleen Taylor and Al Fiala are the Stephen Minister facilitators. At this time seven of our Stephen Ministers are currently matched with care receivers. At the Souper Bowl fund raiser held on February 2, \$652.00 was netted for UDMO. From the Webster City Ministerial Association he reported that an ecumenical youth group is being started by Asbury UMC, Faith UMC and Trinity ELCA. This group is open to any youth from 5th grade through high school. The school Backpack program continues with over 150 students being served weekly. The program spent \$9,654 in 2013. There currently is \$6,400 in the fund account. There will be another summer lunch program again this year but no details have been released yet. The program did go through some revisions that will allow more flexibility over the menu and the food choices that the students can make. This should eliminate much of the food waste that was witnessed during last year's program.

Mission Board: Fifty men were served on January 22 at Beacon of Hope. Lorraine McCoskey will head the March meal to be served on Wednesday, March 26th. As there has been only one response to a possible mission trip for 2014, the board will look at doing something in 2015. There is a group who may possibly be going on their own this summer to Romania. Twenty hygiene kits were mailed in January to Church World Service. This is an ongoing project so we ask all to continue with their gifts for this project. Kids Against Hunger will be on Sunday, February 23, 2014 at The Bridge. The board decided to have a coffee and put the pickle jar out at this time. Ginnie Veach will check with Faith UMC about upcoming ice cream social this summer. It will be held at Faith this year. For our annual offerings Diane Vasquez will promote Neighbors in Need; Gayle Olson- Strengthen the Church; Karin Yungclas - One Great Hour of Sharing; and Ginnie- the Christmas Fund. Lorraine will promote the D/SAOC annual cake auction. Each Mission Board member is asked to bring an idea to the next meeting on Thursday, March 16, 2014 at 5:15 pm for a basket for the D/SAOC auction.

Women's Fellowship: Cindy Henning gave the treasurer's report for Verna Bierle She reported a balance of \$2,168.91 and \$1,734.47 in the Alverson Trust. Get well cards have been sent to Betty Broshar, Ina Cormany, Gretchen Bruner and Vicki Blaufuss; sympathy card to Diane Vasquez. Under old business it was reported that Meals & More is filled up thru March; the dates of March 2nd and 9th are open for servers for coffee following church. Treats for KLAB are needed. Emphasized that uniformity in treats is crucial and only a small snack is necessary. The World Day of Prayer is March 7th. Discussion was held about viability of continuing this ministry. After discussing with Asbury and Trinity, it was decided to discontinue this ministry due to lack of interest and attendance. The Women's Lenten Luncheons are on March 11, 18 and 25th at Asbury. No date in May has been set for the Birthday Parties at the care centers. Discussion was held but no decision reached on whether to include Windsor Manor. The May Dinner will be held on Wednesday, May 21st at 5:30 pm. Providence Circle is the hostess and Mayflower is in charge of decorations. Following are dates to remember: February 20- Piecemakers Work Day at 9:30 am, February 21-Providence Circle at Donna Ryherd's at 6:00 pm, February 23-Providence Circle hosts coffee after church and also on that day is Kids Against Hunger at 1:30 at the Bridge, February 27-Piecemakers work day at 9:30 am, March 1-Executive Board Meeting at 8:00 am, March 30-Providence serving coffee for Dorothy Stearns 90th, April

24-thrift sale workday, April 25-thrift sale workday from 12:00-3:00 and sale from 3:00-6:00,
April 26-thrift day sale from 8:00 -12:00.

Staff/Parish Board: The chairman of the board is Glenda Wehrhan with Shirley Yungclas serving as secretary. The board will be meeting the first Wednesday of the month at 5:15 pm. They noted that proposed changes to salaries for employees need to be presented to the Cabinet for approval before such changes are made

Worship Board: The board and Pastor Craig will be reevaluating the one Saturday service each month to see if it should continue as is or if changes needs to be initiated.

Christian Ed Board: No report

Finance Board: No report

Trustees: Refer to beginning paragraph

Evangelism: No report

The next meeting date will be March 11, 2014 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Van Diest ,Church Clerk

**10:30 A.M. WORSHIP
9:00 & 9:15 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Treasurer's Report

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>JANUARY</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Pledges and Offerings	\$10,674.94	\$10,674.94
Other Income	175.97	175.97
Memorial/Special Income/Interest	2,157.98	2,157.98
TOTAL INCOME	\$13,008.89	\$13,008.89
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,583.37	\$1,583.37
Pastoral Services	5,115.41	5,115.41
Maintenance and Repairs	2,555.96	2,555.96
Church Office	1,728.12	1,728.12
Music Ministry	589.58	589.58
Christian Education	28.99	28.99
Local Ministry	6.42	6.42
Mem. Funds Distribution	873.52	873.52
Misc. Expenses	358.12	358.12
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$12,839.49	\$12,839.49

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Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

