

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



"Three keys to more abundant living: caring about others, daring for others, sharing with others." - William Arthur Ward

If you had to condense the essence of being a Christian into a fortune cookie-sized message, I don't think you could do much better than this quote from William Ward. Jesus came to bring life abundant (John 10:10) to the world through these key life commitments: caring for others (love), daring for others (engagement/witness), and sharing with others (stewardship/benevolence). These three keys are the foundation not only of our lives of faith, but also the life of our church. As we enjoy a few remaining weeks of summer before beginning our fall programming and ministries, I want you to consider these points:

First Congregational UCC church's ministers are its *members*. That proclamation has been on our indoor signboard since I placed it there in October of 2010, and it remains the call not only of our faith, but also the key to our church's future. Smaller membership churches live or die by the ministries of all of their members, which means that all of us must take ownership of this church and its life if it is to thrive. I once saw a church sign which announced: ***"a church that gets nothing but our leftover time, energy, and resources will have all the appeal of...left-overs."*** Well said!

Our faith and ministries are not based on "common-sense" values, regional or local mores, civil or political agendas, or even well-loved customs and traditions within the church. Our faith and ministries are based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. In this we all face challenges, for we are immersed up to our eyeballs in our cultural contexts, and we spend but a few minutes a week in our church hearing the counter-cultural proclamation of a greater reality to which we offer our ultimate allegiance—the Kingdom of God. As an older pastor once reminded me, ***"we need to evangelize ourselves."*** Exactly! And the first step in that process is to become like children and open ourselves to a lifetime of learning and growth in our faith—a *lifetime of learning and growth that happens in church*.

Nothing—NOTHING—is more important than a lived encounter, an experience, of the HOLY. Your real and lived connection to the Presence and Mystery we call God is the empowering connection that makes it possible to follow Jesus. Without a lived connection—a *real* connection—to God, church deteriorates into a club, a charity, a restaurant, a music hall, or an extended family support system. None of those things are bad in themselves, but none of them contain the full power and promise of the church! By tending to your God-connection, everything else *will* change. And if your God-connection has lapsed, then hear this: it is never too late to establish or re-establish that God connection--that's the essence of Grace! The not-so-good news is that it requires an intentional commitment and heartfelt desire on our parts. It won't just "happen" on its own!

Friends, the miracle of church is that it can lead ordinary folks like you and me into finding "life abundant" as Jesus promised. My hope is that we never forget that truth, and pray and work to shape our church into such a miracle. -- Pastor Craig

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

2 - Bruce Perry
4 - Jessica Fiala
5 - Patty Gescheidler
6 - Vicki (Weissinger) 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 (Jaycox) 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

ATTENDANCE

July 6	58	July 12	48
July 20	54	July 27	62

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



VBS 2014 was held with Asbury
July 28-August 1 (more pics on page 6)

“No Brainer” Stress reducers

- Go to bed and get up on time.
- Say NO to projects you don't have time for or that will compromise your mental health.
- Organize, simplify, and unclutter.
- Delegate work to other capable people.
- Spread out big life changes and difficult projects.
- Avoid using credit cards for everyday purchases.
- Keep an extra car key in your wallet. Hide an extra house key in a safe place.
- Think of five things that you're grateful for every day.
- Allow extra time to do things and to get to places.
- Talk less and listen more.

WARM HEARTS WARM HOMES WINTER WEATHERIZATION 2014

Central Iowa RSVP, in partnership with a number of community organizations, will be coordinating the **Warm Hearts Warm Homes Winter Weatherization Program** in Hamilton County for 2014.* We have set the date for winterizing homes for **Nov. 15, 2014**, from 8:30 to noon. A **task force** is being established to take the necessary steps of action to have a successful weatherization program. Members of the task force will assume particular responsibilities, and report their progress to the group on a monthly basis.

Task Force Areas of Responsibility:

- Publicity—KQWC, Daily Freeman-Journal, City Newsletter, Chamber Newsletter
- Challenging civic groups, churches, businesses, banks to set up teams of volunteers (3-4 people plus one team leader)
- Establishing list of teams of volunteers (need 15 teams)
- Determining eligibility of applicants (goal of serving 30 households)
- Scheduling audits of homes, assigning auditors to visit homes

- Assigning teams to homes
- Communicating with team leaders for training and preparation

Your help is needed to organize the WHWH Winter Weatherization Program, and to promote the program as a worthwhile effort for the whole community. Will you give some of your time to ensure the success of this program? Your participation would be greatly appreciated. **Please let me know** if you are willing to be on the task force. The first task force meeting will be held in mid-August.

Here's to a successful weatherization program!

Becky Koppen

Central Iowa RSVP

North

515-832-2525

rsvphamco@circsvp.org



*RSVP is currently securing funding sources for this project.

RELAY FOR LIFE!

First Congo raised \$1,026 for Relay for Life. The team included; Marjorie Groves, Mabel Prescott, Michele, Ian and Connor Omvig, Sherry Leksell, Katie Short, Nancy Shelton, Greta Oberender, Megan Hughes, Dale and Gayle Olson, and Mary and Duane Vavroch.



Fund Raising Opportunity at the Farm Progress Show, Boone Aug 26-28

There is an opportunity to raise funds for the church by working the Southwest Food Court of the Farm Progress Show in Boone from Tuesday, August 26 through Thursday, August 28th. This work would entail several different functions: cashier, preparing sandwiches, stocking, running fill lines, etc. The hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., although partial day help from 9 am until 2 pm is also desired. There may be some lifting involved depending on the job. The wage is \$8 per hour payable to the church! If you are interested or would like to know more, please speak with Pastor Craig.

Preschool

Webster City Head Start currently has a few preschool openings for children 3 or 4 years of age. Children will attend 4 hours per day, 5 days a week with breakfast, lunch and transportation provided. Call 1-888-484-1039 to complete an application.

KAH

The Sunday that Floyd Hammer and Kathy Hamilton were in church and shared about their mission of Outreach International we learned that summer is a quiet time for packing meals for them here in WC. So the Mission Board has decided that we could gather a group and get some meals packed since the need for food is not a seasonal thing! The date has been set and we will gather at The Bridge on Monday, August 4 at 5:30 in the evening. Remember this is an activity that all ages are able to participate in and we generally only work about 1 hour. Hope to see lots of folks there!

Thanks!

◆Thank you so much for your gift to the work of the Ecumenical Human Needs Committee. We have had a busy spring assisting those who have fallen through the cracks of the human services in Hamilton County. We have assisted with housing and utility payments throughout the county. We were able to assist one client to obtain hearing aids to make his life more beneficial and enjoyable. Thank you.
Ecumenical Human Needs Committee

◆The Webster City Free Clinic sincerely appreciates your donation of \$443.00 to our clinic. This money will be used to purchase medication for our uninsured patients.
Sincerely,
Joan Hisler, Clinic Manager

◆Church Family

Thank you seems very inadequate for all of the caring thoughts, prayers, love and support we received and felt at the time of my mom's death. The day I got home and saw and read all of the cards from this caring church family truly filled an empty space in my being. Thank you so much for all of that. You are truly a blessing in our lives.
Gayle & Dale Olson

◆Thank you for your generous contribution of \$315.00 to Outreach in support of our mission and programs. The mission of Outreach is to provide safe water, food, medical care and education to children and families in need for current and future generations.
Sincerely,
Katheryn Hamilton

◆On behalf of the Midwest Division staff and volunteers of the American Cancer Society, I graciously thank you for your continued contributions. Your most recent gift through Relay for Life makes you a part of *The Society*, an elite group of the American Cancer Society's most dedicated supporters.
Karen M Humphrey

◆Upper Des Moines would like to THANK YOU for your generous donation. Your support in the communities is greatly appreciated.
UDMO staff

UDMO

The Back to School Bash will be Thursday, August 7 from 3:30 to 5:00 pm at 1440 E 2nd St.
UDMO needs help to make this happen, monetary donations or school supplies are greatly appreciated.

Saturday Service

Our next Saturday evening service will be on August 9 at 5:00.

PICNIC!

Our last picnic had a great turnout, we hope you can join us on August 24 for our next one at The Barn at 4:30 pm.

RALLY DAY

Keep this day open - September 7th - for rally day. It will start at the open lot across from the church with games for all ages. We will have a potluck after worship with the church providing drinks. Bingo will be in fellowship hall after lunch for those who wish to play. Plan on having a good time and celebrate the beginning of Sunday School. The party will begin at 9:15 am. See you all then - watch the bulletin for further information!

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

A Back to School ice cream social is being held on Sunday, August 17 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm at St. Paul Lutheran Church. A free will offering will be taken with proceeds going to the Backpack food program.

Ever Thought about Becoming a Stephen Minister?

First Congregational United Church of Christ has had a Stephen Ministry program within our church and community for 3 years now. All of our 11 Stephen Ministers are matched with a care receiver and it is time to train a few more members from our church to become Stephen Ministers.

We will be training another class of Stephen Ministers beginning in September. Stephen Ministers work alongside our pastor to care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support to people who are going through a difficult time, such as divorce, grief, hospitalization, unemployment, terminal illness, relocation, chronic illness, or loneliness. If you have gifts for caring, encouragement, and listening, please begin to prayerfully consider whether you might want to be part of this exciting ministry.

Stephen Ministers bring distinctively Christian care to those in need. They use both words and deeds to express Christ's care for others—listening and comforting, calling on the training they have received and employing the tools of faith. If this job description fits your personal goals for ministry, please consider becoming a Stephen Minister. A training class is starting soon. For more information, contact Pastor Craig Blaufuss, Dale Olson or Sharon Perry.



KLAB had a pool party at the AmericInn on Friday, July 18. Two hours of splashing, screaming and laughing along with snack time was enjoyed by about 10 children.



VBS 2014

Treasurer's Report

INCOME	July	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$12,250.88	\$75,991.40
Other Income	(17.43)	1,008.65
Memorial/Special Income/Interest	<u>3,518.96</u>	<u>17,792.55</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$15,789.64	\$112,925.28
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,583.33	\$9,959.02
Pastoral Services	5,509.26	42,951.72
Maintenance and Repairs	7,838.49	20,998.85
Church Office	2,906.50	15,186.19
Music Ministry	604.00	3,624.00
Christian Education	98.94	761.44
Local Ministry	2,224.00	2,255.42
Mem. Funds Distribution	20,211.02	22,199.83
Misc. Expenses	<u>919.52</u>	<u>2,323.08</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$41,895.06	\$120,259.55
Difference	(\$26,105.42)	(\$7,334.27)

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Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

