

February 2015 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232
<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>



We are now nearly to the season of Lent (Ash Wednesday is February 18!), that 40 day observance in the Christian calendar leading to the passion, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a time associated with self-examination and repentance, acts of charity and self-denial, and prayer and meditation on the words of scripture. Lent has always held out the possibility of spiritual renewal and transformation to those who take this holy time seriously, and so it helps us all to set “intentions” for ourselves as we prepare to observe and keep a meaningful Lent. Here are some suggestions:

Set the intention that you are open to receive a new Word from the “Still-Speaking” God. This Word may come in many ways: from a book passed your way, an article read in a magazine or devotional, a snippet heard in a sermon, a dream, a word spoken to you by a stranger or a friend, a scripture passage that speaks to you in a new way. What is important is the intention to be open to hearing whatever new thing God wishes to convey to you. This intention is powerful if done sincerely.

Set the intention that you will try to see life from the viewpoint of one other person. This does not require you to lose your integrity, nor does it require you to endorse another person’s attitudes, behaviors, or outlook. It does require you to suspend your judgment of others so that you may try to feel what life is like for another human being. From this intention the possibility of compassion arises, as well as an increase in your own self-understanding.

Set the intention that you wish to assist another soul—entirely for the sake of that soul. So often we “bargain” in our relationship with others, and seek some form of benefit for ourselves as a precondition for helping others. Use this intention to practice “detachment”, which is not dis-interest but the ability to “detach” from our own selfish agendas so that we may see and act from a higher perspective. As paradoxical as it may sound, from detachment arises true loving intention and communion with the ultimate power: God’s inexhaustible Spirit of Love.

Set the intention that you wish to release one negative “attractant” from your life. One of the difficult disciplines of Lent is self-examination, not only because we don’t like to see what is painful or undesirable within ourselves, but also because we come to the understanding that life-robbing and destructive memories, beliefs, and behaviors not only cling to us, *but we also cling to them*. Setting a genuine intention to release negative attractants will produce true miracles of healing, but be forewarned—such “miracles” may well require courage, painful acknowledgments, and perseverance on our parts. The Good News is that God actively seeks our release from every sort of bondage, and offers insight, strength, and healing as we work through the process of release.

Perhaps one of these suggestions may speak to you as an intention you could set as part of your observance of Lent; perhaps there are other disciplines you might practice, or goals you might set for yourself. **The important point for us all to remember is that Lent, like pretty much everything else in life, will to a great degree be what we make of it.** In our society Lent might seem to be some kind of an anachronism, a remnant from a by-gone age with little relevance to our fast paced, consumer oriented culture. Yet there is something for us all to gain by setting aside special times in our lives to “seek first the Kingdom of God and God’s righteousness.” The promise from God is that if we will do that we will grow in our discipleship *and* in our sanctification—our growth into beings of great light, grace, truth, and joy.

May Your Lent be fruitful and blessed! --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 - 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
- 26 - Nick Nelson

- 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

ATTENDANCE

January 4	0	January 11	62
January 18	78	January 25	76

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
Dale Olson: Stephen Ministry Ldr 839-5619
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



Being a good friend:

- Be self-sufficient and independent
- Be upbeat, positive, and warm
- Talk about others positively
- Be honest and dependable
- Both talk and listen
- Respect your friend's feelings
- Accept your differences and don't judge
- Give your friend "space"
- Create opportunities for humor

1st Congregational United Church of Christ Valentine Pot Luck (Meals'N More)—

February 4, 2015

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall
Wilma Reinsel and Bruce and Sharon Perry
are hosting the Valentine Pot Luck. We will
provide the ham, and the drinks. Please bring
your favorite “Valentine” dish to share. (Yum!
We are looking forward to those Valentine
treats!) Special prizes awarded for the longest
married couple and the newest “newlyweds!”
(Who do you think they are?) Bring your
families! Come and enjoy this fabulous pot luck
and help us celebrate Valentine’s Day!

Lent Begins--Ash Wednesday

The season of Lent begins with our Ash
Wednesday service, held this year on
Wednesday, February 18, beginning at 7 p.m.
in the East Chapel. The service will focus on
our need for spiritual renewal as we begin our
observance of Lent, and it will include the
sacrament of Holy Communion. **For those
wishing to receive the mark of ashes,
please gather by 6:45 p.m. in the East
Chapel, where Pastor Craig will administer
the Imposition of Ashes.**

Valentines for our Kids

We at First Congregational are blessed to have
a great group of kids in our Sunday School and
KLAB programs! And now that its
February...what better way to show how much
we care about them than to give them
VALENTINES! Our kids have made their own
personalized valentine mailbags, which will be
out in Fellowship Hall until Wednesday,
February 11. Everyone is encouraged to fill
them with valentines or any other treat or token
that shows how much you care. To help you
make out your valentines, there will be a list of
names by the mailbag display that you can
take home.

First Congo’s Kids to Sing in Church Feb. 22

Join our children in worship on Sunday,
February 22 as they sing and “Make a Joyful
Noise” under the leadership of Katie Sonsalla.
You won’t want to miss it!

Shoeman Water Project

Mission Board has decided to keep this project
going for the year and we are encouraging
each of you to consider learning more about it
and using the bin we have in Fellowship Hall to
drop off a pair or two of gently used shoes you
might have in your closet. These shoes will
then be taken to St. Louis and dropped off at a
drop off site where they will then be exported to
third world countries where they become
valuable commodities creating micro-
businesses for street vendors. The shoes are
then sold at affordable prices or bartered for by
those who do not have shoes and are unable
to afford new ones. The new owners now have
their feet protected from cuts helping to prevent
parasites and mites and other foot borne
illnesses. The funds generated from exporting
these shoes help underwrite projects that
ultimately provide clean water for those who do
not have that necessary commodity. If you
want to know more please grab a brochure by
the shoe bin or look on-line at the Shoeman
Water Project.

New Study

The adult Sunday education class has begun a
new study series! Each week we will explore a
topic selected by the class as a group, and to
help with the discussion class members are
encouraged to bring in materials that pertain to
the topic, such as Bible verses, quotes, news
articles, books, video clips, etc. The topic for
today was “FAITH.” Join us each Sunday at
9:15 a.m. for a lively discussion!

Baptism

Join the family of Christie and Jim Halliday as
they have their daughter, Presley Rose
Halliday, baptized during worship on Sunday,
February 15th. Presley’s grandparents are
Ron and Laurie Epps, and Bob Halliday and
Rex and Maggy Utech; Presley’s Godparents
are Marshal Halliday and Kayleigh Weig.

Lenten Luncheons

Tuesdays February 24 through March 31,
lunch will be held at First Baptist Church at
Noon. Cost is \$6, call the office by Monday
noon to reserve a spot.

Thanks

●Upper Des Moines would like to THANK YOU for your donations. Your support in our community is greatly appreciated.

●Dear Friends:

Your generous donation to the Church World Service Blankets+ program tells people in crisis, "You're not alone. Someone cares." On behalf of all the people who feel more hopeful and less alone because of your generosity, we thank you.

May God bless you for your support,
Rev. John L. McCullough
President and CEO
Church World Service

Lent Devotional



Do

you enjoy daily devotionals? Here is an opportunity to observe Lent using a daily devotional booklet created by the UCC StillSpeaking Writers' group! "Re-Lent" is a UCC devotional resource that will help you refocus and rekindle your faith during the 40 days of Lent. Beginning in early February there will be a sample copy on the table by the church office; if you would like a copy please sign up for one by Feb. 11 so that we can order them in bulk. The cost will be approximately \$4 per booklet.

Teen/Parent Event in Webster City

A partnership with ISU Extension and Outreach, Hamilton County and local leaders and community members have formed a

Prosper Team. The vision of Prosper is to support community partnerships that sustain the most effective programs for promoting positive youth development and strong families, and to facilitate translation of prevention science into widespread community practice. Prosper stands for PROmoting School-community –university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience. One part of Prosper is the community program of Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth 10-14. It is specifically for sixth grade youth to attend with a parent or caregiver. Youth that attended the Strengthening Families for parents and youth 10-14 with their parent or caregiver twelve years ago are still reporting that they have better communication skills, stronger-more positive relationships and have been involved in less risky behavior than their peers. Contact the Hamilton County Extension Office/Susan Schmitz; at 515-832-9597 for more information or to pre-register with your youth. Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth 10-14 will start March 24, 2015.

Sonshine Singers

The Sonshine Singers will perform February 19 and 20 at 7:00 pm and February 21 at 2:00 pm at First UMC, 127 N 10th St, Fort Dodge. Admission is free, a free-will offering will be taken.

Backpacks

On Jan 22nd, 19 members gathered at Trinity ELCA to pack a month's worth of "backpacks" for the Webster City Schools' Backpacks Against Hunger program.



9:15 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL
10:30 A.M. WORSHIP

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Webster City, Iowa
Cabinet Meeting – January 14, 2015

Members Present:

Moderator-----Verna Bierle
Vice-Moderator-----Luverne Bierle
Finance Sec.-----Myra Maxon
Finance-----Dale Olson
Staff/Parish-----Dalene Schlitter
Christian Ed-----Vicki Blaufuss
Clerk-----Mary Van Diest

Pastor-----Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Trustees-----Tom Riemenschneider
Women's Fellowship---Joyce Gelhaus
Mission-----Ginnie Veach
Worship-----Holly Riemenschneider
Evangelism-----Wilma Reinsel
Treasurer-----Luverne Bierle

The meeting was called to order at 5:17 pm by the Moderator, Verna Bierle. Pastor Craig Blaufuss opened with a meditation and prayer. Committee and board reports were open for review and discussion. Ginnie Veach reported for Mission that backpacks would be packed on January 22, 2015 at Trinity Lutheran Church. In depth reports of the pastor, boards and committees will be found later in the minutes. Dalene moved and seconded by Luverne to adopt the reports of the boards and committees and pastor. Luverne presented the Treasurer's report: December offering of \$15,959.18 and expenses of \$20,718.90. Luverne moved and Holly seconded that the report be put to audit.

The annual meeting will be held January 25, 2015, immediately following the Sunday morning worship service. Holly Riemenschneider, Verna Bierle, Dalene Schlitter and Mary Van Diest will be investigating the possibility of replacing the Christmas tree in the sanctuary now while they are on sale.

REPORTS OF PASTOR, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Pastor's Report: All Saints Sunday was observed on November 23. Communion was served on November 30, the first Sunday of Advent. On December 21 we enjoyed the children's Christmas pageant "Listen to Christmas": which had 23 children participating in it. The Christmas Eve candlelight service was well attended. John Lint filled the pulpit in my absence on December 28. Due to the weather, Sunday School and church were cancelled on Epiphany Sunday January 4. For Advent the church had a full page ad in Webster City Living magazine promoting the "Heart of Christmas." Also ran 60 radio spots based on that theme, which aired on three local radio stations the week before Christmas. KLAB made snowman jars filled with hand-dipped pretzels to sell at the alternative gift-giving fair with proceeds going to Almost Home in Fort Dodge. KLAB will resume their ORFF music program on January 21, with the help of Ann Sherve-Ose, who will work with the kids every other week.

The confirmation class had a field trip to Des Moines to attend a Friday Shabbat service at the Temple B'nai Jeshurun, as part of their Old Testament studies. For a service project the class frosted pretzels and made gifts and cards to deliver to care center resident and others. Now they are studying the prophets which will be followed by a study of the life and ministry of Jesus. The adult education class will begin weekly conversations based on pre-selected topics of interest to the class, with class members bringing in materials to share. Our choir participated in the Community Thanksgiving service held on Sunday, November 23. Pastor Craig helped with Asbury UMC's Blue Christmas Service.

Trustees: November 13 meeting: As the janitor, Curt McCoskey, will be gone December 7-13, Don Bruner volunteered to fill in for him. At cabinet it was verified that a church member who requests the usage of the church, is responsible for opening and closing the building. If there is a nonmember asking for church usage, then we make sure we have someone available for the date needed, when approving the request. Joyce Gelhaus will prepare the report for the annual report. Wayne Schlotfeldt brought the updated specifications for the upcoming renovation project. The items reviewed were: the bidding process-would at least like to get 5 contractors to compare the bid; the entry way door width, exterior finish, letter drop, flooring and windows; media room door to match rest of hallway; also get a new office door to match the women's restroom; the stairway wainscoting, handrails, tread on steps and flooring; fellowship hall doorway and stained glass; bid contingency was explained; reviewed lighting fixtures, bathroom fixtures. December 18 meeting: Al Yungclas hopes to have for coat rack for Fellowship Hall done by Wednesday, December 24. Tom Riemenschneider talked to Wayne Schlotfeldt to make certain that the walls in the men's bathroom and moving the cabinets in the office are part of the renovation bid and they are. The heat upstairs

was temporarily fixed by Trueblood. We will run it until it quits. Reported that the toilet on the west side in the women's bathroom is leaking. Will contact Matt Byrne to repair it. Due to the fact that there had been misuse of the office equipment, from now on Pastor Craig, Michele, Curt, Myra and Nancy Shelton will have keys for the office in the future. If you need copies for a meeting just e-mail the information to Michele and she will make the copies and lay them out in time for the meetings. This motion was approved.

Women's Fellowship: Pastor Craig lifted up Nancy Shelton, Mary Worthington, Donna Jaycox, Ray Vasquez and Chris Swanson's father. Verna Bierle gave the treasurer's report as follows: old balance-\$2532.31; new balance-\$2316.13 and Alverson Trust-\$1735.10. Shirley Yungclas continues to send cards. The Christmas Luncheon was held at noon on December 13 with Gayle Olson doing devotions, Cindy, Joyce and Ginnie will help serve the meal. All circles are in favor of supporting a young Romanian girl. A motion was passed to send \$300 now to help with schooling and then another \$300 in the spring when Steve Mather is here in the US. The funds will come from the Women's Fellowship Treasury. The executive board will furnish the coffee following church service on December 28. Ideas on how to remember our honorary members were presented as small poinsettias, lotions, cookies, snacks, stamps, etc.

Worship Board: Pew communion will be served on Christmas Eve. The communion servers will also be lighting the candles of the congregation right after communion. Gretchen and Cindy are responsible for communion on January 4 and Cindy and Holly on February 1. On December 2, Gretchen will introduce John Lint, our pulpit supply minister; do announcements and concerns and joys. Pastor Craig believes a license for videos will cost approximately \$220. This applied to videos used for confirmation and worship service. The next meeting will be on Thursday, February 12 at 7:00 pm.

Mission Board: At their January meeting they wrapped up the Alternative Giving Fair; adopted 18 kids for Stepping Forward; reported that \$1,552 compared to \$1,907.50 last year was collected for the Christmas Fund; will continue with the Shoeman Water Project with Gayle putting information in the bulletin and newsletter; the mission trip is still on the table; Ginnie is in charge of the Beacon of Hope meal to be served on Tuesday, January 20; pack local backpacks will be on Thursday, January 22 at 6:30 pm; Steve Mather and his wife will visit on Friday, February 22, Souper Bowl for UDMO will be held on January 25th, following the annual meeting; Sherri, Ginnie, Stephanie, Gayle, Lorraine and Pastor Craig will provide a variety of soups with Karin providing crackers and cabinet the relishes and desserts; discussion was held about attending the movie "Selma" as a church family and returning to the church following the movie for discussion.

Christian Ed: Will be starting to plan for Easter.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 10th, at 7:00 pm. Meeting adjourned at 6:04 pm.
Clerk, Mary Van Diest

Treasurer's Report

INCOME	December	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$15,534.18	\$160,557.47
Other Income	6.51	1,051.48
Memorial/Special Income/Interest	<u>3,560.32</u>	<u>36,970.83</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$19,101.01	\$216,712.46
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,583.33	\$20,004.00
Pastoral Services	10,386.96	84,590.05
Maintenance and Repairs	4,465.15	68,394.89
Church Office	3,166.65	30,612.50
Music Ministry	604.00	7,248.00
Christian Education	103.95	1,172.00
Local Ministry	175.00	2,684.03
Misc. Expenses	<u>234.86</u>	<u>3,660.21</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$20,719.90	\$218,365.68

First Congregational United Church of Christ
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Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

