

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

*“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”*—Revelation 3:20

I have a confession: I have begun to dread the sound of our doorbell. I rarely know who is on the other side of our front door, and when I hear the familiar “ding-dong” I inevitably sigh, mutter, and slouch to the door while I put on my psychological armor. I like to believe that I have good reasons for my attitude:

answering my door has brought more than its share of uncomfortable moments—even moments I have greatly regretted. Once a vacuum cleaner salesman talked his way into our home and stole some blank checks, requiring us to close our bank account and open a new one. Most recently a man was at the door wanting to sell me books and magazines, and with a curt “NO!” (not “no thank you”) I slammed the door shut rather rudely, leaving me frustrated not only with the salesman but with myself for my bad manners. At least twice a year someone will show up on my doorstep wanting to clean my living room carpet for FREE—and again I must awkwardly beg off such loss leaders. For a while we had monthly visitors who wanted to leave tracts with us and start a religious debate, until I finally told them not to come back. Now there are political activists making their rounds, trying to convince me that their candidate is best for America. And of course there are the neighborhood children who seem to endlessly peddle pizzas and other yummys for Spanish Club or Show Choir, Cub Scouts selling popcorn, and Girls Scouts selling Girl Scout Cookies (like I need more empty calories). No wonder I dread the doorbell! I remember the Spiritual which goes “Somebody’s knockin’ at your door....oh-h sin-ner why don’t you answer...” and I want to scream “I don’t want to answer because it’s annoying and exasperating and I don’t like surprises and I don’t want to be bothered!”

I need an attitude adjustment.

Because when opportunity knocks, it rarely calls, texts, or emails first to get me prepared, and when significant opportunities knock they never announce themselves by hollering “SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY HERE!” through a locked door. Like Jesus, they stand at the door, knocking; waiting for a brave soul to open the door, invite them in, and welcome the gifts they bring. And make no mistake: every opportunity is significant, for every opportunity brings gifts. The magazine salesman knocking at my door was a significant opportunity to learn to say “no” in a way that was respectful to another human being trying to make a living. The carpet cleaner knocking at my door was a significant opportunity to ask questions about her offer and learn more about what she had to sell, rather than dismiss her outright without the facts. The proselytizers knocking at my door who were so eager to debate about faith were a significant opportunity to offer them hospitality and hold an honest discussion which could well enrich us all. The political activists now knocking at my door are a significant opportunity to make me a more informed citizen, whose vote helps keep our democracy on track.

And the little ones who come so often selling goodies for their schools are significant opportunities for me to take to heart the teaching of another door knocker, who once said: “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them—for to such as these belongs the Kingdom of God.”

Life is filled with amazing, significant opportunities that come knocking at our door, and yet time and time again we balk at answering the door-- and miss receiving the gifts which only come when we have the courage and patience and OPENNESS to answer it. I wonder how different—how much richer—our lives would be if we would instead open the door with confidence and humility, and greet opportunity not as an unwelcome stranger, but as a guest, a friend...a dear friend who offers a bit of New Life to us in the spirit of the Dearest Friend, who endlessly offers New Life as he eternally stands, and knocks at our doors.

—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

## ATTENDANCE

October 4	64	October 11	93
October 17	93	October 25	75

### Church Staff

**Rev. Craig Blaufuss**, Pastor  
Office: **832-2232** Cell **297-4316**  
Pastor's email: [revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net](mailto:revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net)  
**Michele Omvig**: Admin. Assist. **838-2989**  
Church's e-mail: [fcuccwc@wmtel.net](mailto:fcuccwc@wmtel.net)  
**Sharon Perry**: Stephen Ministry Ldr **832-5435**  
**Dale Olson**: Stephen Ministry Ldr **839-5619**  
Choir Director  
**Melissa Hindt**: Organist **209-8087**  
**Mary Van Diest**: Pianist **832-3754**  
**Curt/Lorraine McCoskey**: Cust's. **832-5341**  
**Tracy Wehrhan**: Financial Secretary **297-0370**  
**Luverne Bierle**: Church Treasurer **832-4752**



### PARISH NURSE NEWS

Are you at risk for repetitive strain injury? (RDI)

- Practice good posture but don't stand or sit rigidly.
- Take frequent breaks, stretch and move around.
- Use the right tools for the job.
- Keep your hands and body warm and relaxed.
- Give your body enough "time off" to rest or heal.
- Warm up and stretch before you start an activity.
- Strengthen your muscles with exercise.
- Eat well; your body needs nutrients to stay healthy.
- Manage stress.



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

3 - Bob Maass  
4 - Chase Berhow  
5 - Kathy Theobald  
5 - Christie Halliday  
5 - Joely Gilbert  
5 - Dominic Stark  
6 - Brennan Myers  
6 - Amanda Kalkwarf  
9 - Kristy Fortune  
9 - Keith Holdgrafer  
12 - Marc Reinsel  
13 - Holly Riemenschneider  
13 - Katie Sonsalla  
13 - Oliver Sonsalla  
14 - Emily Maass  
17 - Kylee King  
18 - Donna Ryherd  
20 - Jon Follett  
20 - Laurie Smith  
24 - Maggie Kennedy  
24 - Tyler Nelson  
25 - Diane Vasquez  
26 - Zachary Thomas Midtling  
26 - Andrew Wehrhan  
27 - Susan Leman  
27 - Glenda Wehrhan  
28 - Jake Van Diest  
29 - Mark Ryherd



### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

21 - Mark & Deb Carlson  
22 - Tom & Holly Riemenschneider  
25 - Arden & Dalene Schlitter  
29 - Ray & Diane Vasquez

### **CROP Walk**

Thanks to your generous donations we were able to donate \$338.50 to the CROP walk.

### **Meals'N More**

Join us November 4 at 5:00 pm for our next Meals'N More. Cindy Henning is hosting this event.

### **Beacon of Hope**

We are once again preparing and serving a meal at Beacon of Hope. The meal will be on November 17, sign-up sheets will soon be in Fellowship Hall.

### **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 22, 2015 immediately following worship to vote on the proposed 2016 budget.

### **Grief Support Group**

#### **“How Will I Get Through The Holidays?”**

November 1, 8, and 15<sup>th</sup> 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Grief Support Group is open to anyone who has suffered the loss of a loved one.

*Pre-Enrollment Preferred, but not required*

Call to enroll: 515-832-2232

### **All Saints Sunday—November 22**

All Saints Day is a time to remember those departed “saints” who have shaped and blessed our lives in so many ways. On Sunday, November 22, we will observe All Saints Sunday during worship by inviting individuals and families to come to the front of the sanctuary to light candles in memory of loved ones and friends who have departed. This is a meaningful way to honor their lives and legacies as we transition to the first Sunday of Advent—the season of birth and new life.

### **Advent Begins—November 29**

Advent is just around the corner! Sunday, November 29 is our first Sunday in the season of Advent, and we are again asking for volunteers (families or groups of friends) to lead the Advent Candle Liturgy. If you are willing to help with this important part of our Advent worship please sign the sheet that will

be posted by the church office. **We will mark the beginning of Advent by sharing the sacrament of Holy Communion by intinction on November 29.**

### **Decorate the Church for Christmas—November 29**

Following worship on Sunday, November 29, we will again bring out the Christmas decorations and spend some time beautifying our church in preparation for the birth of Jesus. Please plan to stay and help with one of the most enjoyable activities of the year! There will be no coffee after worship but following the decorating we will enjoy a pizza lunch.

### **Alternative Gift Giving Fair**

Christmas is coming....and so is the Alternative Gift-giving Fair! The Mission Board is again organizing this event; if you have a special mission project or benevolence you would like to incorporate into this fair, then please contact the Mission Board by November 15th.

### **Neighbors in Need**

The Neighbors in Need offering, which we will receive November 1, supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries, giving support to the 20 UCC congregations on reservations, and one urban, multi-tribe congregation in Minneapolis, MN. Information about supported projects has been provided in several worship bulletins. The mission board invites you to consider contributing to this worthwhile cause which is one of our UCC national 5 for 5 offerings. Checks can be written to the church and indicate NIN on the subject line. Thank you in advance for your generous donations.

### **Thanksgiving**

The Webster City Ministerial Association invites you to a community Thanksgiving service to be held Sunday, November 22 at

Faith United Methodist Church, 2020 Superior St., beginning at 7 p.m. Pastor Craig will preach the message, and other clergy of the WCMA will help lead this special worship event. The Webster City Ministerial Association has planned this year's community Thanksgiving service to be an inspiring ecumenical event, and everyone who wishes to give thanks to God is encouraged to attend!

**Thanks**

◆ Dear Church Family,  
 Thank you so much for the beautiful cards and good wishes on my birthday. I feel truly blessed to be part of such a caring group.  
 Charlene McKee

*Women's  
 Fellowship  
 Fall Thrift Sale*

Another successful sale in the books. Thank you to each of you who helped donate, sort or unbox items, clean-up and haul the leftovers, bring food for workers, or work during the sale. This project could not be done if not for each of you. As a result, we have again raised **\$1,200.00+** to help fund the gifts we give in May to deserving organizations in this community and around the world. You are this church in action. Thank you all so much!!!  
 Cindy Henning  
 Chairperson, Thrift Sale



14 Congo walkers (and 3 four-legged ones) gathered Sunday at the Brewer Creek shelter house for the annual CROP walk. A beautiful day to walk for hunger!



16 KLAB kids enjoyed our annual Halloween Party on Wednesday, October 28.



Sister Act entertained us on October 17.

**Next Sale**  
**April**  
**22 & 23**

### Treasurer's Report

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>SEPTEMBER</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Pledges and Offerings	\$5,460.00	\$117,643.57
Other Income	.37	571.82
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$5,460.37</b>	<b>\$118,215.39</b>
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,831.33	\$14,367.02
Pastoral Services	10,305.13	63,260.79
Maintenance and Repairs	44,354.47	129,695.71
Church Office	3,398.37	24,913.76
Music Ministry	300.00	4,412.50
Christian Education	52.80	480.22
Local Ministry	1,046.85	1,639.30
Misc. Expenses	19.92	1,397.55
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$61,308.87</b>	<b>\$240,166.85</b>

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

**Cabinet Meeting – October 13, 2015**

Members Present:

Moderator-----Luverne Bierle	Pastor-----Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice-Moderator----Sherry Leksell	Trustees-----Joyce Gelhaus
Finance Sec.-----Tracy Wehrhan	Women's Fellowship—Joyce Gelhaus
Finance-----Tracy Wehrhan	Mission-----Ginnie Veach
Staff/Parish-----	Worship-----
Treasurer-----Luverne Bierle	Evangelism-----Laurie Epps
Christian Ed-----Vicki Blaufuss	Clerk-----Mary Van Diest

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by the Moderator, Luverne Bierle. Pastor Craig Blaufuss opened with a meditation and prayer. Vicki Blaufuss moved and Joyce Gelhaus seconded to accept the minutes of the September Cabinet meeting. The board and committee reports were open for review and discussion. Ginnie Veach reported from Mission that the Crop Walk will be held at 2:00 pm on Sunday, Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>, the NIN offering will be taken on Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> and the Warm Hearts, Warm Home work day will be Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>. Luverne Bierle gave the treasurer's report for Sept., 2015—Offering was \$5,460 and expenses were \$20,493.37. Luverne moved and Tracy seconded to approve the report and put it to audit.

### Reports of Pastor, Boards and Committees:

**Pastor's Report:** The first "Blessing of the Animals" service was held on Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> with the blessing of 10 dogs and 3 cats. The last Saturday service for this year will be held on Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> with "Sister Act" as our special guests. We still do not have a choir director. Karin Yungclas continues to graciously lead the choir on Sundays and is now

alternating leading Wednesday rehearsals with Ann Sherve-Ose. Choir practice is now being held at 5:30 pm every week. Ann Sherve-Ose has resumed teaching ORFF every other week, or as her schedule allows. Currently 14-16 children are attending KLAB this year and presently studying Jonah. In addition to our adult volunteers, two teen assistants, Kayla Nelson and Dylan McCoskey, have been assisting. Thanks to all who have so generously supported KLAB with treats. Our Adult Education class on "Racism in America" has been well attended. They have been sharing stories about their own personal encounters with racism. The Safe Church Policy Task force has completed a draft proposal for our "Safe Church Policy", which will be submitted to Cabinet for evaluation. Following Cabinet's evaluation we will make copies available for members to peruse and offer feedback. The plan is to bring the policy to a congregational vote at the annual meeting in January. Currently we have 8 Stephen ministers; 4 are matched with care receivers. A Stephen Ministry Retreat will be held at the church on Saturday Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> from 8:00-12:00 noon. First Congo packed Backpacks against Hunger on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>, which is our only scheduled time to pack this year. CROP Walk will be Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>, at Brewer Creek Shelter House. Washington Lutheran of Duncombe is hosting the event. Pastor Michael and Faith UMC are working on the Salvation Army Bell ringing campaign-there are no details at this time. We plan to meet with Lori Hartnett regarding the Summer Lunch program to discuss how we can improve outreach to the needy in the community. A Community Thanksgiving Service will be held on Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> at Faith UMC with Pastor Craig delivering the message. The Ecumenical Human Needs Committee met to discuss new procedures for applying for assistance, and to revise our current assistance guidelines. UDMO is no longer screening applicants for us, so Rhonda Masser is working on a new application which will be available in all churches in WC, plus UDMO and Social Services. The group voted to increase assistance levels up to \$800 per family per year (was \$400/yr.). A subcommittee will review the assistance guidelines and report back to the group. Rhonda Masser will continue to be the lead intake specialist for EHN. There is currently over \$15,000 in the fund, and Asbury UMC will be folding its benevolence fund balance into this fund as well and start referring applicants' applications to EHN. The NW Association CoM recently met with the Congregational UCC church in Clarion and Pastor Bill Kem for a periodic support consultation. Boundary training will be held at Trinity UCC in Hartley on Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>. The Iowa Conference Annual business meeting will be Sat., Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> in Des Moines. Vicki Blaufuss and Gayle Olson will be our lay reps.

**Trustees:** Joyce Gelhaus reported on the renovation project. She stated that most of the painting has been done and are waiting for the stair treads which should arrive in November. Work continues on the ceiling in Fellowship Hall.

**Christian Ed:** Vicki Blaufuss reported that the board has not met since Rally Day. She has not been able to find a meeting time when at least the majority could attend.

**Evangelism:** Met on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> with Pastor Craig, Carol Crystal, Laurie Epps, Marjorie Groves, Kay Harfst, Mabel Prescott, Wilma Reinsel in attendance. It was noted that on Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> there was no coffee following church service as no one had signed up. Marjorie Groves noted that according to the church constitution (as revised in 2012), recruiting coffee hosts is part of Evangelism/Hospitality Committee responsibility. However, with the start of the regular board and circle meetings in Sept., most Sundays are filling up on the coffee host list. Diane Vasquez is in the hospital with pneumonia.



Verna Bierle is feeling much better as is Dorothy Englehart. Vicki Blaufuss is scheduled for Mayo on Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>. Dorothy Stearns has moved to Southfield apartments. Wilma has sent nine get-well, one birthday and one sympathy card. Pastor Craig did not think anyone came for the grief support group on Sunday but will check with Al Fiala. Mabel Prescott reported that she's visited church members at Southfield. Carol Crystal reported that nursery attendants aren't always showing up on their assigned Sundays. Pastor Craig said that we likely will need two people in the nursery after the first of the year when the Safe Church Policy goes into effect, according to guidelines from the Iowa Conference. If getting one attendant is a challenge, we might need to shut down nursery if two are required. An alternative might be to have a play area where parents could take children if needed. Carol has new supplies for the children's activity bags and will put them in the closet at the back of the sanctuary. The board reviewed their part of the budget for the coming year. Our CUE (Central, United and Eden seminaries) allocation needs to be sent; Laurie will ask Michele to do that. The picnic shelter rental for outdoor worship is part of Evangelism Board's budget. Wilma will need stamps for cards. Last year inTandem Marketing updated the church website but Michele has been doing it so this item can be removed from the budget. Laurie will ask for \$1,000 for Evangelism's budget. Stephen Ministry will need money because of new class next year. Mabel said that \$100 would cover Parish Nurse Materials. The board will host fellowship time on Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>. The stuffed toys will be removed from the children's activity bags because of sanitation concerns, on recommendation of the Parish Nurse. The next meeting is Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 pm.

**Staff/Parish:** Met on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> with Verna Bierle, Pastor Craig, Stephanie Hill, Greta Oberender, Dalene Schlitter, Mark Vance and Shirley Yungclas present. Pastor Craig had done some checking with other churches on funeral policy. They concluded that the services of a funeral director are needed. An active church member should sponsor a non-member family and food can be served at the discretion of the Funeral Committee or a Circle. This information will be shared with the Cabinet for their input. A committee to form a policy could consist of a member of staff/parish, women's fellowship, cabinet and the pastor and then be approved by the trustees. Figures were adjusted from last year's budget. Pastor will be reimbursed for mileage recorded rather than receiving a budgeted amount. A simple contract will be made for the church organist. Also, the organist will keep a record of when she accompanies choir rehearsal and when she plays for Sunday services. At the end of the month, she will give this schedule to the Administrative Assistant who makes out the payroll. The search for a choir director continues. Notice will be posted with Iowa Work Force about the position; will find out the price for a radio advertisement; no new newspaper ad will be purchased at this time. The following assignments were made for the annual staff meetings on job satisfaction and any issue they may have with their jobs: Verna and Shirley will interview Michele Omgig, Mark and Dalene will interview Pastor Craig and Stephanie and Greta will interview Curt McCoskey. The next meeting will be Oct. 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm.

**Women's Fellowship:** Pastor Craig lifted up Patty Yungclas, Dick Burtnett, Dorothy Stearns, Diane Vasquez, Donna Jaycox and Vicki Blaufuss. Three 6 ft. tables that were ordered have arrived. Kitchen cleaning is mostly complete. Cindy Henning reported approximated \$1200+ received from the Thrift Sale. She thanked everyone who helped make this a success. The next sale is Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>. Discussion of ideas from the circles about Christmas Luncheon and May dinner was held. It was decided to

schedule the Christmas luncheon on a Sunday after worship, either Dec 6<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup>. Providence can decide on menu, but soup and sandwich was suggested. Pastor Craig suggested the men cook for the May dinner. We will continue that discussion later in the year. Dalene Schlitter has ordered the pecans for the Haystack circle to sell. Silverware for East Chapel was discussed. A motion was made to purchase the high quality party silverware (plastic) for those tables. We will need 32 place settings. Blood Drive organizers do not want to continue using our church for the blood drives because of the stairs and thought our elevator was too slow. Shirley Yungclas will inform Faye Klein not to include us on the list for next year. The next meeting will be on Mon. Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Worship Board:** Met on Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> with Audrey Burtnett, Holly Riemenschneider, Gretchen McGlynn, Linda Lahr and Pastor Craig in attendance. Thought the Pet Blessing Service was well received. Will do some thinking on how often we would like to have it...annually, every two years....Gretchen will help the Sister Act with their set-up for their performance at the Saturday evening service on Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>. Steve Roe, from Beacon of Home, will be kept in mind for a possible pulpit supply minister for next summer. In Nov. communion will take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> and on the 24<sup>th</sup> in Dec. In Jan. it will be on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Christmas Eve service will be at 5:00 pm. A brief discussion concerning the Sat. evening church services was held. Liked the June through Oct. timeline. As there will be five Sundays in July in 2016, discussion on whether we might like to have two Sat evening services in that month. Will look into serving a Fellowship Coffee sometime in Jan. A brief discussion was held on next year's budget. Might want to consider having the Music and Chancel committees meet with us sometime during the year. The next meeting will be at 7:00 pm on Thur. Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Mission Board:** Met on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>. Ginnie Veach gave the Cabinet's report on these topics: renovation progress, Safe Church Policy, Warm Hearts Warm Homes on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>, Christmas program on Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>, no VBS with Asbury next summer. A discussion was held on the possible reasons that only 6 volunteers showed up for Backpack packing. Gayle Olson organized the Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> meal for Beacon of Hope, Karin Yungclas will be in charge for the Nov 17<sup>th</sup> meal. Charlie will promote the CROP Walk on Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>. Flyers will be in the bulletins to promote the NIN offering to be collected on Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have signed up to volunteer for Warm Hearts Warm Homes, report for breakfast at 8:30 on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>. Mike Slinger from Faith Methodist will lead the Salvation Army Bell Ringing during the weekends in Advent. Cindy Henning will deliver the shoes from the Thrift Sale to Waterman Shoe Project on her next trip to St. Louis. Anyone interested in a Mission Trip in 2016 should give their names to Karin Yungclas. We discussed if there was any way the church could help the refugee crisis in Europe. Charlie Kenville has a friend in Germany who he will get in contact with to see if there is anything we could do. If an individual or group wishes to sponsor a charity at the Alternative Giving Fair during December, let the Mission Board know by Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, so they can organize the space. Karin will publicize this event.

**Pending Business:** Tracy Wehrhan moved to accept the church budget for 2016 with a second by Vicki. Vicki and Gayle will be our lay delegates at the annual meeting.

**Next Meeting: November 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Van Diest, Church Clerk



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:

