

August 2016 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232
<http://www.firstcongregationalwcc.org/>

I've come to the conclusion that we are not very "sexy" here at First Congregational! Now I'm not using that term in the general sense of being physically sensual or seductive, but in the idiomatic sense of "attracting attention," "catching the eye," and being drawn to something because it is "intriguing and appealing." I say this because we are immersed in a culture that is increasingly obsessed with what is "sexy" in all of its forms—and one form that obsession takes is our collective desire to chase after sexy news, topics, and personalities that capture our attention and titillate us. All you have to do is turn on the TV or scroll through any number of media feeds on your smartphone to realize the truth of this statement, for it seems that the more bizarre, enraging, or fear-inducing a news story or social media post is, the more likely we are to stay tuned or click through to read more. Today's headlines and news feeds make my point-- already this morning my phone has offered me stories about a woman denied parole because she once put her baby in the oven and turned on the broiler, 2 dogs rescued from a penthouse roof so hot that the tar was bubbling and severely burning their paws, an 84 year old priest in France who had his throat cut by terrorists while he was saying mass, a dismembered 22 year old's body found in Kentucky...and now the breaking news of another 44 dead in Syria after a terrorist car bomb detonated in Qamishli. And this is in addition to the sexy news stories about RNC and DNC conventions, Bill O'Reilly's remarks about well-fed slaves, and a Noodles and Company restaurant refusing to serve a police officer!

Now I realize our penchant to be drawn to the "sexy" is nothing new in the human story, but what I fear is that our collective obsession with such material, along with its pervasiveness, is dramatically altering our outlook, our sense of wellbeing, and our trust in God and in Life itself. A steady diet of such material is creating a sense of collective anxiety, a sense of distrust and isolation from one another, a malaise born of a loss of confidence in the goodness and beauty of life, and an erosion of hope and faith as God and Spirit are replaced with the gods of the 24 hours news cycle and the spirits of fear, helplessness, and rage. And even as we experience this poisoning of our minds and hearts firsthand, we are still addictively drawn to all that is sexy...we still obsessively grab our phones and scroll...we still make sure we get our "news-fix" when we get up in the morning, and before we go to bed.

In contrast, our church and our Christian lives of faith and service aren't nearly as sexy as the daily news. What we do here at First Congregational certainly doesn't make national headlines! Instead, what we do here is the day to day work in which Christ's disciples have been involved since the beginning of the faith. We gather to worship, sing hymns and songs of praise, and pray together for the world. We fellowship with one another, and share our lives together as Christians. We pool our resources not only to keep our church open, but also to help feed the hungry, assist the needy, and support worthy causes. We remember and visit one another when we are sick or disabled. We listen to one another and offer encouragement and support in hard times. We gather to learn more about God, our faith, and Life, and we seek to teach our children what we have learned in order to help them create authentic lives of faith. In short, we continue the work of Christ--and Christ's church--in the world! And while it is true that this work isn't often very sexy or glamorous, it is *life-giving, not life-negating; it is harmonious, not acrimonious; it is benevolent, not self-serving or self-obsessive; and it ties us to eternity and the purposes of heaven, rather than the purposes of CNN, or FOX news, or Gawker, or Buzzfeed - and all the dysfunction, misery, hatred and injustice they market that is both so repellent and so attractive to us.*

Friends, I hope you will continue to remember the good news of the gospel and the hope we share together in these difficult and confusing times. I hope you will continue to make your church and your faith a priority in your life, which can be a challenge in the midst of so many competing priorities. Most of all, I hope that you do not give in to the spirits of fear, rage, helplessness, isolation, mistrust and hopelessness which seem to be infecting our world! For our good news is that God has not abandoned us or the world, and this good news can empower our hearts, hands, and voices as we minister in Christ's name...offering the world something beautiful, rather than just "sexy"--something positive, healing, and holy. —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

July 3 53 July 10 Picnic July 16 52
July 24 50 July 31

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor
Office: **832-2232** Cell **297-4316**
Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net
Michele Omgig: Admin. Assist. **227-8358**
Church's e-mail: fcuccwc@gmail.com
Sharon Perry: Stephen Ministry Ldr **835-7902**
Dale Olson: Stephen Ministry Ldr **839-5619**
Sunshine Yoders: Choir Director **835-7626**
Melissa Hindt: Organist **209-8087**
Mary Van Diest: Pianist **832-3754**
Curt/Lorraine McCoskey: Cust's. **832-5341**
Tracy Wehrhan: Church Treasurer **297-0370**
Luverne Bierle: Financial Secretary **832-4752**



PARISH NURSE NEWS

Stress reducers

- Go to bed and get up on time.
- Say NO to projects you don't have time for.
- 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.
- Think of five things that you're grateful for every day.
- Allow extra time to do things and get to places.
- Talk less and listen more.



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 - 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



AUGUST
ANNIVERSARIES

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

Beacon of Hope

Mission Board would like to thank our church family for the wonderful support you give every other month as we prepare, deliver and serve a meal at Beacon of Hope. Tues. July 26 was the last time we participated in this mission and I want to say the willingness of you to sign up for items needed for the meal, helping prepare it and going over to serve it is just amazing. A special thanks to Ginnie Veach for being willing to serve as captain for this meal.

There were a larger number of men at the shelter this visit than what is usual for this time of year and Annette shared because of this their needs are still great. She said they are now serving lunch and could really use paper plates, napkins, and cutlery products. Also appreciated would be lunch meat and cheese for these meals and cereal for breakfasts. Gift cards for grocery stores are also greatly appreciated! We do have the cart in Fellowship Hall for collecting items for Beacon and also have a willing volunteer to deliver these items if our cart fills up before our next meal.

Our next meal for Beacon has been scheduled for Tues. Sept. 20.

Thanks again for your spirit of giving and service.

Mission Board

Pecans

Pecans are still available from Haystack Circle. Contact Dalene 835-0636 or Pat Kesler 712-540-0750.

New email address for church

We have a new email address:

fcuccwc@gmail.com.

We will still check the old address to make sure we do not miss anything.

Thrift Sale

Sept. 23 & 24

Fall Cleaning and Sorting

Friday & Saturday, Sept.

23 & 24 - Women's

Fellowship will be conducting their semi-annual Thrift Sale.

Wed. Sept. 21 - We will be accepting those items cluttering up your lives.

If you need assistance transporting your items, call Cindy Henning – 297-0422 or email jbhfam@mchsi.com.

Please note - Bring items that **are clean, complete, and in good repair**. We will **no longer accept older TVs** because there isn't anywhere to take them after the sale.

Thank you for your donations and help making this fundraiser a success.



Thanks

A big thanks to the anonymous person who left a gift for me. It is greatly appreciated.

Michele Omvig

KLAB Nature Day—Wednesday, August 17

KLAB kids—you are invited to a Nature Day, which will be held Wednesday, August 17, from 10 a.m. until 4 pm. We will meet at the church, have a lesson, build birdhouses, and then caravan out to Briggs Woods for a nature scavenger hunt, litter cleanup service project, a picnic lunch—and then swimming at the beach! A note will be sent out to all parents with the schedule of events and a list of things to bring—be watching for it! –From your KLAB Leadership Team

The Mission Board designated the month of July as "fill the choir loft" with breakfast items that will go to the UDMO food pantry. Thanks to everyone who has helped support this summer mission project!



Treasurer's Report

INCOME	JUNE	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$10,953.00	\$90,085.45
Other Income	.13	.91
TOTAL INCOME	\$10,953.13	\$90,086.36
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,583.34	\$9,925.96
Pastoral Services	10,570.71	42,747.57
Maintenance and Repairs	3,818.78	72,748.63*
Church Office	2,578.12	16,134.07
Music Ministry	300.00	4,950.00
Christian Education	0.00	305.88
Local Ministry	0.00	0.00
Misc. Expenses	0.00	1,266.37
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$18,850.95	\$148,078.48

*Majority of Maintenance and Repairs expenses are due to the renovation.

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Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

