

February 2017 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232
<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>

When the subject of black/white race relations and racial injustice comes up in discussion, occasionally someone will say something like: "I didn't do anything!"--meaning they have had nothing to do with the history of racial injustice in this country. "I didn't do anything!" means I wasn't a slaveholder; I wasn't in the KKK; I didn't create or take part in segregation; I didn't force anyone to live in a ghetto; I haven't discriminated against anyone in employment or housing or education; I haven't burned down a black church or marched with the Aryan Nation, etc. I will confess that for most of my life that has been my litany of protest against the perceived accusation of guilt by association based on the color of my skin (white)! When it comes to racial injustice, fair enough—"I didn't do anything."

But I have been reading and preparing for our new adult education series on "White Privilege," and what I am reading is causing my own words to come back to haunt me in ways I hadn't foreseen.

When I say "I didn't do anything!" that also means I haven't educated myself on the full story of racism in our country and learned the "hidden" histories of people of color and their struggles for justice and equality.

When I say "I didn't do anything!" that also means I haven't done a serious examination of my life story and made a full accounting of how my "lenses" regarding race were shaped by others around me, including people whom I would now consider to be racist.

When I say "I didn't do anything!" that also means I didn't reflect on the subtle message I was sending my young bi-racial granddaughter when I bought 2 black angels as Christmas decorations, which was "tokening" her blackness in my white Christmas world.

When I say "I didn't do anything!" that also means I didn't sit down with my family to watch "Malcolm X" (that movie came out in 1992 *and I just saw it last week!*) in order to discuss black power and black anger with them—or anyone.

When I say "I didn't do anything!" that also means I hadn't noticed and decried the "whiteness" of Jesus in my religious experiences—whether it was the beautiful stained glass window of white Jesus in the front of my home church, the blue eyes of my favorite Jesus in the movie "Jesus of Nazareth" (which casts Robert Powell, a Caucasian Brit, as Jesus), the white Jesus' we see in KLAB cartoons and videos...even the large picture of white Jesus we display in fellowship hall (sorry, but Sallman's tan Aryan Jesus is still ARYAN.)

When I say "I didn't do anything!" that also means until recently I didn't consider the need for reparations to repair the damage from our country's history of racial injustice without immediately dismissing the idea as an attempt to force me to pay for others' sins (remember—I didn't do anything), or another example of "race entitlement."

When I say "I didn't do anything!" that also means I didn't speak up about how the slogan "All Lives Matter!" is less a truth, and more a way of silencing the real and particular grievances of the Black Lives Matter movement.

I could go on and on. It's true--there is much that I haven't done to perpetuate racial injustice in this country...and yet there is much I haven't done to take part in redressing those wrongs. And friends, there is much work yet to be done!

One step we could all take to help dismantle racism in our culture would be to take part in the adult education series on "White Privilege," beginning Sunday morning, February 5. In a culture that continues to privilege whiteness of skin at the expense of people of color, this important study will help all participants see the many ways that "whiteness" as a social construct (attributing virtues, giving benefits, and assigning value to "whiteness" that have nothing inherent to do with skin color) continues to keep our society from full equality and full justice for all people. I hope you will join us! —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

January 1 23 January 8 61
January 15 55 January 22 70
January 29

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor
Office: 832-2232 Cell 297-4316
Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net
Michele Omvig: Admin. Assist. 227-8358
Church's e-mail: administrative.office@fcuccwc.org
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
Dale Olson: Financial Secretary 839-5619



PARISH NURSE NEWS

PARISH NURSE NEWS

Seeing the bright side -

- Put your goals and dreams down on paper.
- Try to find good out of every negative situation.
- Keep a gratitude journal.
- Take in those stop-and-smell the roses moments.
- Share good news.
- Write thank you notes.
- Be your own best friend.

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
12 - Blakely Ploeger
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 - 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

Islamic Center

Our Confirmands have rescheduled their trip to the Islamic Center of Des Moines to Friday, February 3—and again, you are invited! We will leave the church at 4:30 p.m. and travel to the ICDM, arriving at about 6 pm. We will tour the facility, hear a talk about Islam, and finish by observing the 7:15 pm prayers of the congregation. Following the prayers we will stop for a fast food supper, then return to the church by 9:30 pm. If you are interested in attending this trip and learning more about Islam, please sign up in fellowship hall or speak with Pastor Craig.

New Adult Education Study—"White Privilege: Let's Talk"

Our Sunday Morning Adult Education class will begin a new study on February 5, entitled "*White Privilege: Let's Talk—A Resource for Transformational Dialogue*." This multi-week study is an adult curriculum from the United Church of Christ that's designed to invite church members to engage in safe, meaningful, substantive, and bold conversations on race. Divided into four focused parts, each one introduces a different aspect of the dynamic of "white privilege:"

1. The Spiritual Autobiography Told Through the Lens of Race
2. Whiteness as the Norm: Five Loci of Insights on the Binary of Light/Dark and Black/White
3. The Cash Value of Whiteness or Whiteness as a Tax-Exempt Status
4. On Becoming an Ally

In all four parts, each author contributes a different view of the subject matter presented based on their unique personal experiences. The materials include questions for discussion and reflection. The study is a free resource that can be downloaded from the United Church of Christ at this link: <http://bit.ly/2eU7eT4>

You may download and print the material yourself, or it can be provided to you in class. The format of the class will be primarily a discussion of the curriculum materials, so there will be reading "assignments" involved. There will also be supplemental materials provided to aid the discussion.

KLAB POOL PARTY—SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18!

Get out your waterwings and snorkels! KLAB will host a swim party for our youth at the Americinn pool and meeting room on Saturday, February 18, from 2-5 pm. If your children plan to attend then it is necessary that they fill out a permission slip and return it to the church by Wednesday, February 15th. Permission slips are available in the church office.

Confirmation class trip to the Hindu Temple—February 18

Our confirmation class will tour the Hindu Temple and Cultural Center in Madrid on Saturday, February 18th. We will meet at the church at 9 a.m., drive to the temple, then tour

the facility and speak with the Hindu Priest about the beliefs of this remarkable world religion. Following the tour we will stop for lunch in Madrid before returning to the church.

The Numbers are In

The Mission Board certainly is impressed with 1st Congregational United Church of Christ in Webster City! During the Advent Season, we chose a different cause to promote each week, leading up to Christmas 2016. You were amazing in your support of all four needs.

Local: The first was warm recess wear for youngsters at Sunset and Pleasant View. You filled our tubs with 93 pairs of socks, 22 pairs of sweatpants, eight pairs of shoes, three sweatshirts and four pairs of boots.

International: A little Christmas tree was decorated with photos of orphans assisted by Stepping Forward Romania, the second project. You took all the photos from the tree, and each was matched with a \$20 donation. All told, 34 youth will receive gifts, thanks to your generosity.

National: We are grateful for the combs, nail clippers, soap, washcloths and more you brought for the hygiene kits that Church World Service will distribute in their disaster relief efforts. A few more items are needed to complete 19 kits. We'll add those, along with the \$2 per kit fee, and mail them off to CWS.

UCC: Thanks so much for helping us collect \$730 for a Global Ministries partner assisting in education for displaced Syrian children in Jordanian refugee camps, our fourth focus.

One more thing: For several years, we organized an Alternative Giving Fair with the needs of up to a dozen organizations displayed on tables around Fellowship Hall. This year we focused on one cause a week. Do you prefer many choices for alternative giving at Christmas – or a focus on one at a time? Please tell us what you think. – *The Mission Board*

Labels

You may not find Labels for Education points on all Campbell soups. They are in the process of removing the logo and expect there will be a limited number of products that contain these labels in stores through August 1, 2017. Once all logos have been removed from the products, UPCs will no longer be accepted. Only UPCs

with the *Labels For Education* logo will be accepted and redeemed for points into registered schools' bank accounts. Our church will continue to collect through 2017. Here are some of the products to check for the labels. Campbell's, Pepperidge Farms, Pace, V8, Spaghetti's, Swanson

Amazon Smile

We are registered with Amazon Smile and it works with Amazon Prime. You simply start shopping through smile.amazon.com and select First Congregational United Church of Christ, Webster City as your charity of choice. A portion of your purchase will be returned to First Congregational to be used towards the Clifford Doty memorial fund.

Pecans

Pecans are still for sale. Haystack Circle is offering 16 ounce bags of either halves or pieces for \$10.

Thanks

Thank you for your generous donation of snow boots, shoes, sweatpants, and socks to our school! There is always such a high demand for these items with our students! Thanks again.

Meredith~Pleasant View

Funding Future Leaders Offering

It is expensive to train ordained clergy. Sadly, as time has gone on the burden of paying for education has shifted from the denomination to the student, leaving many members in discernment and pastors deeply in debt. This isn't a sustainable trend that will lead to a healthy future for the United Church of Christ. I'd like to share with you something we're doing in Iowa to address this issue. This offering is called Funding Future Leadership: Scholarships for Ministry Preparation, and it will be taken on February 12, 2017. Aspiring leaders are taking big financial risks so they can serve the needs of the church, so we as a church should do more to help them in their time of need.

Think about this: There are 168 churches in the Iowa Conference. If every church donated \$100 to Funding Future Leadership, we would have \$16,800 in scholarship aid to give away. If every church donated \$250 we would have \$42,000, and if we had seven applicants and all were given the same award each student would get

\$6,000! When we all come together for the common goal of taking care of tomorrow's leaders today there are many great things we can do. I invite all churches to please do what they can to support this offering. Thank you.

The Annual Meeting was January 22



Souper Bowl

Sunday, January 22nd Mission Board sponsored our SOUPER Bowl to benefit food pantries here in Webster City. We raised \$317.00 for UDMO along with providing many food items for the pantries.



Treasurer's Report

INCOME	DECEMBER	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$7,391.00	\$173,596.22
Other Income	.00	3.68
TOTAL INCOME	\$7,391.00	\$173,599.90
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	1,831.34	\$19,774.00
Pastoral Services	12,130.91	87,869.39
Maintenance and Repairs	3,688.55	88,514.34
Church Office	2,958.98	33,090.44
Music Ministry	850.00	8,387.50
Christian Education	142.00	634.39
Local Ministry	1,024.60	1,681.25
Misc. Expenses	92.72	1,681.58
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$22,719.10	\$241,632.89

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Cabinet Meeting – January 17, 2017

Members Present:

Moderator-----	Pastor-----Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice-Moderator----Al Yungclas	Trustees-----
Finance Sec.-----Luverne Bierle	Women's Fellowship-Karin Yungclas
Finance-----	Mission-----Lorraine McCoskey
Staff/Parish-----Shirley Yungclas	Worship-----
Christian Ed-----Vicki Blaufuss	Evangelism-----
Treasurer-----	Clerk-----Mary Van Diest

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Vice-Moderator, Al Yungclas. Highlights of the boards were given: **Staff/Parish**-Shirley reported she will be the cabinet representative in 2017; **Christian Ed**-Vicki reported that our two confirmands, Jake Lahr and Kaelyn Butz, will be confirmed on June 4, 2017. She also reported that on Easter Sunday the Christian Ed Board will serve coffee and rolls at 9:30 am BEFORE worship service; **Mission**-Lorraine reminded us that a Soup Lunch will be served after the worship service and the annual meeting on Sunday, Jan. 22, 2017; **Women's Fellowship**-Karin reported that there are pecans waiting to be sold; **Treasurer's** –was given by Luverne Bierle. He reported that income for December, 2016 was \$7,391.00 and expenses were \$22,719.10. The income for 2016 was \$166,260.12 and expenses were \$299,911.34. Luverne announced that after 21 years of serving on Finance in some form or another, he is retiring.

New Business: Annual Meeting— cabinet is responsible for supplying desserts for the Soup Luncheon following the annual meeting. Vicki and Luverne will bring ice cream and Mary will furnish the toppings. At the annual meeting there will first be a special meeting to vote on the revised constitution. After that is adjourned the annual meeting will be held. **Nomination Committee**—Luverne moved and Lorraine seconded to approve the slate of nominations for 2017 Church officers. Motion carried. **Music Committee**—will no longer be a separate committee but will be under the Worship Board.

Next Cabinet Meeting Date: February 14, 2017, at 7:00 pm.

Reports of Boards and Committees

Pastor's: A memorial service for Sally McIntyre was held at Laufersweiler-Sievers Funeral home in Ft. Dodge on Dec. 17, 2016. Our youth treated us to a wonderful Christmas pageant "A Not-So-Silent Night" on Sunday morning, Dec. 18th. Thanks to Wil Groves for directing another Christmas Pageant. We observed Christmas Eve worship at 5:00 pm. On Christmas day (Sunday) 23 members gathered for a small but meaningful service in our sanctuary. The January 1, 2017 service was lay-led with reading and carols. The pastor wishes to thank those volunteers who led the service that day. Epiphany Sunday was observed on January 8th and following worship the Christmas decorations were put away for another year. Pastor led the Gospel hour at Southfield on the 9th of January. The last KLAB, before Christmas break, was spent rehearsing the Christmas pageant and crafting. KLAB will begin again on January 4th to study Epiphany. The Adult Education Class is working on weekly topics. Beginning in February the pastor will be leading the UCC curriculum on White Privilege. Confirmation class will meet twice in January. A field trip to the Islamic Cultural Center of Des Moines is planned for Friday, January 20th, from 4:30 pm-9:30 pm. This trip has been opened up to the congregation who wish to attend. Reporting for WCMA –the Salvation Army bell ringing campaign in Webster City collected over \$3300. Ten percent of that amount will be sent to the Salvation Army in Des Moines; the rest will stay in Webster City. The Backpack program in December received \$1500 in donations and so far in January \$3000 was received. Mike Kroona has scheduled the Care Center services for 2017. Our church is scheduled to lead services on January 29th. Six Stephen Ministers are matched with care receivers. Starting in 2017, our Stephen Ministry meetings will meet once a month on the first Thursday of the month for 2 hours. If any Stephen Ministers need additional support they may contact Dale Olson, our Stephen Leader, or the pastor.

Mission Board: The board met on January 3rd with all six members and Rev. Craig present. The Salvation Army Red Bucket collection at Fareway and Hy-Vee totaled \$3,308.26. Ten percent goes to the Salvation Army, with 90% distributed by the Webster City Ministerial Association. \$1,500 was donated to the Backpack Program in December, bringing the total to \$10,591 for 2016. \$1,800 was collected for the Christmas Fund at the Christmas Eve service. Leading to Christmas, the board featured a different Alternative Giving cause each week: Local-warm recess wear for youngsters at Sunset and Pleasant View; International-\$685 was given to buy gifts for orphans assisted by Stepping Forward Romania; National-will send 19 hygiene kits to Church World Service for their disaster relief efforts; United Church of Christ-\$730 was collected for a Global Ministries partner assisting in education for displaced Syrian children in Jordanian refugee camps. The board will serve a soup lunch after the Annual Meeting on January 22nd. The congregation is invited to bring canned or packaged soups, jars of peanut butter, crackers, etc. to help stock St. Paul Lutheran and Trinity Lutheran food pantries. A pickle jar will be set out for cash donations to go to Upper Des Moines Opportunity. Audrey Burtnekt and Karin Yungclas are captains for the meal to be served at the Beacon of Hope shelter on January 31st. Pastor Craig will be leading a discussion of "White Privilege" curriculum to the adult Sunday class in the spring before Easter. Funding Future Leadership is a new collection, proposed by the Iowa Conference of the UCC, to fund scholarships to Iowans going to seminary. We will collect this offering on February 12th. The next board meeting will be February 2nd, at 5:00 pm.

Christian Ed: Met on January 11th with Pastor Craig, Vicki Blaufuss, Wil Groves, Jane Klaver, Curt McCoskey, Leah Maass and Mary Van Diest present. Pastor Craig opened the meeting with a prayer. Confirmation will be on Pentecost Sunday, June 4, 2017 for our two confirmands, Jake Lahr and Kaelyn Butz. KLAB will be celebrating Valentine's Day with a party. Plans for Easter

Sunday, April 16th, were made. The board will hold an Easter Coffee with breakfast items, starting at 9:30 am before the worship service. The youth will be having an activity in the lower level at this time as well. Final plans will be discussed at the March meeting.

Promotion/Participation Sunday will be May 21, 2017. At that time certificates will be passed out and any youth who are scheduled to receive a new Bible will be presented one that day. Our teachers will also be recognized for all the work they have done. Next year there will be at least 2 youth moving on to the teen class. Vicki will discuss with Alyssa Kenville if she will continue to teach. A discussion was also held on starting a youth fellowship group. Curt McCoskey will talk with Lorraine to see if she would be willing to help assist him in this group. If they are willing to undertake this task, the program would start in the fall. The next meeting will be February 8th following choir.

Next Cabinet Meeting---February 14, 2017 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Van Diest, 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:

