

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

I have in my office a Willow Tree figurine, the “Angel of Caring.” This particular figurine has a history: it belonged to Jan Nail, who in her later years struggled with a neurological disease which increasingly rendered her immobile and dependent on others for even her most basic care. The figurine was on display at her memorial service, and following the service it was given to me by the family as a reminder of her. When I see the angel I often smile, for I see the angel as a sign that Jan is now healed and whole, and past the struggles and the indignities of her illness. I am glad for that sign—even though I am aware that others might believe that I am engaged in some highly wishful thinking.

I also have a large picture of the resurrected Christ in my office, which is a photographic reproduction of the Christ window in the sanctuary of my home church, St Luke UCC in Burlington. When I was in Burlington last week attending the memorial service of my uncle, I was again in the presence of that window, and once again I saw that window as a sign that Jesus is now healed and whole, and past the struggles and indignities of his human life—especially the final suffering and horrific torture of his crucifixion. As with the Angel of Caring, I am glad for that sign, even though I am aware that others might believe that I am engaged (again) in some highly wishful thinking.

There have been times in my life that I have wrestled with the truth of Easter and the story of the resurrection; I can even remember waking up one Easter morning in my second year of seminary with a sigh of relief that I didn’t have to preach on the resurrection that day, since I was no longer sure that it really happened. These days I don’t concern myself much with the facticity of the truth claim that Jesus rose bodily from the dead—he either did, or he didn’t--and neither of those outcomes is now a stumbling block to my faith.

But the central truth of the resurrection as I understand it IS of great concern to me, for it speaks a word of truth to the greatest questions I have about life; questions like:

Is it true that life is more than matter; that existence is more than the body’s existence; that our destiny is greater than the span of life we live on earth?

Is it true that there is greater power than human power; greater wisdom than human wisdom; greater love than human love?

Is it true that the pain and suffering we undergo in this life, and the pain and suffering that we inflict on others in this life, is not the last word in Life?

Is it true that what is incomplete will be completed; what cannot be cured will be healed; what is heartbreaking, unjust, and an affront to goodness will be redeemed, reclaimed, and transformed?

Is it true that there is a power which will make all things “new?”

To these questions the Good News of the resurrection resounding replies: “Yes—it is true!” And THIS reply to the deepest questions I have about Life is the bedrock of my faith...

a faith that opens me to the Good News that Jan is now healed from her afflictions, whole again, and rejoicing in her new, healed life;

a faith that opens me to the Good News that Jesus is also healed from his afflictions, triumphant over every evil, and continues his ministry of reconciliation and grace in the world;

and yes, a faith that opens me to the Good News that I, like countless other Christians, can draw strength from these truths, live life more fearlessly and hopefully, and share in the peace that passes all human understanding: a peace that comes from Easter’s answer to our deepest questions—and hopes-- about Life, “Yes—it is true!”

Friends, I know that someday Jan’s Willow Tree angel will crack, break, fade, and be discarded by me or someone else. I know that someday my home church may well close its doors, and its beautiful Christ window sold, dismantled, or destroyed. And I know that someday I, like Jan, Jesus, my uncle, and all the other humans who have ever lived and will ever live, will no longer enjoy --or endure-- the miracle of life lived on planet Earth.

But these truths aren’t the limits of my knowing, for the deepest truths of Life are not delimited by plastic resin, stained glass, and flesh and blood. My faith shows me deeper truths; life-giving truths; truths that reveal the cosmic good intent-- and the power to make all things new—of the mysterious Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer whom we address as “God.” May the Good News of the resurrection keep these deepest truths close to our hearts, so that we can celebrate the deep meaning-- and the great joy—of Easter! --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

March 5 91 March 12 62
March 19 53 March 26 54

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor
Office: **832-2232** Cell **297-4316**
Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net
Michele Omgvig: 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

Lifestyle changes to reduce headaches,

- Drink plenty of water.
- Eat regular meals.
- Get regular sleep.
- Limit alcohol, caffeine, and other drugs.
- Reduce stress.
- Keep a food diary to learn which foods and activities cause headaches.
- If you have frequent headaches that limit your activities, talk to your doctor about the possibility of migraines.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

2 - Rolf Yungclas
2 - Karin Yungclas
2 - Scott Sjoberg
3 - Dorothy Stearns
4 - Sherry Leksell
5 - Jessica Paterson
9 - Wil Groves
9 - Lynn Leksell
15 - Jonah Alan Fiala
15 - Lorraine McCoskey
15 - Becky Barrett
16 - Jacob Lahr
17 - Alaina Imhoff
18 - Shelby Brim
19 - Christy Fiala
19 - Arden Schlitter
20 - Gen Carroll
22 - Lauren Christine Stirling
25 - Hailey Marie Brim
26 - Patty Yungclas



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

4 - Alan & Karin Yungclas
17 - Bob & Leah Maass
28 - James & Gretchen McGlynn

Maundy Thursday Evening Service April 13, 7 pm.

We will observe Maundy Thursday with a service of worship beginning at 7 pm. We will remember Jesus' final hours leading to the cross, and share the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Easter Activities Sunday, April 16

Easter is the pinnacle of the Christian faith, the day of our greatest celebration as Jesus "conquers sin and death, and reconciles the world to himself." Join us as we begin our Easter celebration at First Congregational with a light Easter Breakfast, starting at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall, provided by the Christian Education board. During breakfast there will be an activity in the lower level of the church for

children of all ages, led by Mary Van Diest. At 10:30 a.m. we will gather in the sanctuary for our Easter Worship service, which will include the sacrament of Holy Communion served in the pews. There will be no coffee after worship that day.

Lilies

Easter Lilies are once again available through the church. Lilies are \$12.00, orders must be placed by Monday, April 10. You may take your lily home following the Easter service.

Guest Speaker

On Sunday, April 2, Dr. Rich Pleva will be our special guest at our morning worship service. Rev. Pleva will be retiring in 2018, and he wants to express his thanks to us for our generous support of Our Churches' Wider Mission (OCWM) and the Iowa Conference over the years. Following worship, members will have an opportunity to visit with him during our coffee hour.

Northwest Association Meeting Saturday, April 29

The Annual Meeting of the Northwest Association of the Iowa Conference will be held here at First Congregational UCC on Saturday, April 29. We as an Association will gather to worship together, enjoy a program, conduct the business of the Association, share a meal, and adopt a budget for the coming year. This year we are excited to announce that UCC songwriter/performer Bryan Sirchio will be with us to share his gifts! You can learn more about Bryan here: <http://sirchio.com/>. Lunch will be lasagna, salad, garlic toast, and dessert catered by Leons, and the cost per attendee will be \$10. And because we are the host church, we will need to provide snacks and drinks for our guests, so look for a sign- up sheet in the near future asking for bars and other snacks to serve throughout the day. A timeline of the day's events will be posted as soon as it is received from the Association.

Spring clean-up 2017

After taking a look around this spring it has been decided we will again sponsor a time for our church family to help clean-up a space in our community. We are going to take on the Boone River Trail this year. Weather permitting

we will gather at the canoe access at old City Park on Tues. April 11, rain date April 18. Come when you can between 4:30-5:00 and we will get the trail cleaned for walkers and bikers.

Funding Future Leadership

A big thank you to our church family for your support of this special offering this past Feb. With the money from our Endowment Committee included we were able to send a check to the Iowa conference for \$2,375. Again thank you for your support.

Mission Board

Backpacks

Can you believe the school year is winding down?? Along with the school year coming to an end the backpack program is also winding down. We have 1 packing date left and it is our turn to do this last packing of the year. The date for this is set for Tues. April 25 at 6:30 in the basement of Trinity Lutheran Church. 12-15 people can get items unpackaged and bags packed for the schools for the whole month of May in 30-40 minutes of time. So please mark your calendar and give some of your time on April 25th to pack food bags for the last month of school.

Mission Board



THRIFT SALE April 21 & 22

Spring Cleaning and Sorting

Friday & Saturday, April 21 & 22 - Women's Fellowship will be conducting their semi-annual Thrift Sale.

Wed. April 19 - 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 your help making this fundraiser a success.

Projection training opportunity

We are blessed to have several capable projection technicians keeping our Powerpoints running smoothly during our Sunday worship services, but we would welcome more volunteers to help with this task. If you would like to learn how to operate our projection equipment, please speak with Cindy Henning our Worship Board chairwoman, or with Pastor Craig, so training can be arranged.

Meals on Wheels

Drivers are needed. Will you consider delivering meals for one hour, one day a week? To volunteer, or for more information, contact RSVP at 832-2525.

Thanks

◆Thank you for your generous donations to the Outreach meal packaging program through Webster City Kiwanis. It is so appreciated! Thank you for helping to provide meals to those in need in Tanzania and right here in our own communities. Floyd and I just returned from Tanzania where they are again having drought. We are so glad for all you have done to help the children there. They have centers where they can get food now so there isn't the devastation which we saw back in 2004. Thank you! Many blessings to everyone!

Sincerely,
Kathy & Floyd

◆Thank you for the donations of groceries for the church food pantry. We continue to be very busy with those in need of food. Trinity's Social Ministry Committee
Karen Hinderks

Treasurer's Report

INCOME	FEBRUARY	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$10,119.00	\$35,773.12
Other Income	.46	0.81
TOTAL INCOME	\$10,119.46	\$35,773.93
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	1,583.26	\$3,166.52
Pastoral Services	5,544.67	10,873.34
Maintenance and Repairs	2,619.14	4,879.84
Church Office	2,233.90	7,343.52
Music Ministry	695.25	1,539.75
Christian Education	31.97	116.90
Local Ministry	0.00	0.00
Misc. Expenses	156.10	389.05
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$12,864.29	\$28,308.92

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting – March 14, 2017

Members Present:

Moderator-----Al Yungclas
 Vice-Moderator----
 Finance Sec.-----Tracy Wehrhan
 Finance-----Tracy Wehrhan
 Staff/Parish----- Stephanie Hill
 Christian Ed----- Vicki Blaufuss
 Treasurer----- Tracy Wehrhan

Pastor-----Rev. Craig Blaufuss
 Trustees-----Joyce Gelhaus
 Women's Fellowship-
 Mission-----Gayle Olson
 Worship-----Linda Lahr
 Evangelism-----Laurie Epps
 Clerk-----Mary Van Diest

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Moderator, Al Yungclas. Pastor Craig gave a devotional entitled "Do You Want to Fast This Lent?". Tracy gave the Treasurer's report as follows: February offering-\$10,035.98—February Expenses-\$13,904.46. Tracy moved with a second by Vicki to put the report to audit. Motion carried. Highlights from the boards were given: **Christian Ed**-Vicki reported there will be no meeting in March. The next meeting is April 19th. The Board will serve a coffee/muffins/fruit breakfast at 9:30 am prior to the Easter morning worship service. **Mission Board**-Gayle reported there will be no basket for DSOAC this year. Instead, at the March 26th coffee following church, an offering will be taken for DSOAC. Janet Toering will talk to the board and then a decision will be made on having her talk to church. Alyssa Kenville will be in charge of Relay for Life on June 22nd. Stephanie reported that the **Staff/Parish Board** has not met. **Women's Fellowship**-Gayle reported that Karen Yungclas and Kay Harfst prepared an excellent program for the Women's Lenten Luncheon. **Worship Board**: Linda reported that Mabel Prescott has offered to pay for the cleaning of the choir robes, Cindy Henning and Greta Yungclas are in charge of contacting Susan Knapp on piano tuning. Linda will assist Pastor Craig and Rev. Pleva with communion in April and pew communion will be held on Easter Sunday. Starting June 11th Sunday morning worship will begin at 9:30 am and Saturday evening service will be held on the 3rd Saturday of the month beginning on June 17th. There will be an exception in September when it will be on the second Saturday. Flowers will be given to the women of the church on Mother's Day. This is also Promotion Sunday.

New Business: A request from Richard Tudor to move his church membership from Blairsburg United Church of Christ, Congregational to First Congregational United Church of Christ, Webster City. Tracy made a motion with a second by Stephanie to approve this request. Motion Carried.

Next Meeting Date: April 11, 2017 at 7:00 pm.

Reports of Boards and Committees:

Pastors: Ash Wednesday was observed on March 1st with 30+ worshippers gathering in the East Chapel. On March 5th, Katie Sonsalla led our young people in song during a well-attended worship. Thank you to Katie and kids. On April 2nd Rich Pleva will be worshipping with us. The Shalom Circle meets on Friday evening at 7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. The KLAB post-Valentines' Day party was held on Feb. 15th. On the 18th a swim party at the AmericInn pool was held with 8 children attending. On Ash Wednesday we explained the meaning of the day and offered ashes to the children. Due to Spring Break, there will be no KLAB on March 15th. On Saturday, Feb. 18th, the confirmation class toured the Hindu temple in Madrid. A member of the Temple gave us a good overview of Hinduism. The class did not meet on March 5th due to illness. We will meet on March 12 and again March 21st, after which the confirmands will help serve the meal at Beacon of Hope. The Adult Education Class continues with the topic of White Privilege. Currently there are 5 Stephen Ministers matched with care receivers. Stephen Ministry met in March for our monthly 2 hour session, hearing check-ins and studying the topic of boundaries. The NW Committee on Ministry met March 4th at Trinity UCC in Harley for the annual relicensing of clergy who serve churches in our association, and relicensed 6 pastors. First Congregational will host the NW Association Annual meeting on April 29th. Leon's will cater the noon meal for \$10 per plate, with our church serving bars as snacks for the meeting. Pastor Craig will be attending a training event in Chicago on April 24th and 25th. This is part of his training for the CoM and to familiarize CoM members with the new Manual on Ministry for the UCC. He will also be attending a 24 hour retreat in Ames beginning at noon on Friday, March 31st. This retreat is sponsored by the Iowa Conference and attendees will have the opportunity to visit with the UCC General Minister and President, Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer. On April 2nd when Rich Pleva will be with us, bars will be served at the coffee following worship. On April 9th, the baptism of Matt Byrne's baby will be held.

Finance Board: Met on March 12th with Nate Lahr, Dale Olson, Tracy Wehrhan, Duane Vavroch (via telephone) present. A new general checking account has been set up at First State Bank. The two accounts at First American bank will be closed by March 17th. The money in the checking account will be transferred to the new FSB account and the money in the money market account will be transferred to the General Fund bond interest account at First State Bank. We will be updating who can sign checks for the church. A new resolution will be drafted for the accounts at First State Bank and Tracy will check with WCF Finance what needs to be

done to make the change at this bank. The people who will be able to sign checks will be Tracy, Nate and Dalene Schlitter. There was an error in the annual report on the term length printed for the Finance board. The new constitution calls for 3 year terms and this was not reflected in the annual report. The terms are as follows; Nate-3 year, DonBruner-2 years and Duane-1 year. The tax statements for the Cetera Bond accounts have been received. These statements show the amount of interest received and also the bond offset payment for each bond (the amount of payment for bonds purchased at a premium). The offset amounts will be transferred from the bond interest checking accounts to the bond brokerage accounts. This money will be used to purchase additional investments when the balance is large enough for a purchase. The offset and interest amounts are as follows: General Fund: Interest - \$10,925.04---Offset-\$1,519.79; Building Fund: Interest - \$13,722.26---Offset - \$1,663.93; Scholarship Fund: Interest - \$10,116.28 --- Offset - \$1,765.38.

Board of Trustees: Met Feb. 16 with Tom Riemenschneider, Tracy Wehrhan, Joyce Gelhaus and Pastor Craig present. Bruce Perry and Sherry Leksell were absent. Tom gave an update that the valves have been ordered for the boiler at a cost of \$480.00 with Mark Trueblood installing at the end of the month. As the Sunday School rooms, Quilt room and nursery rooms are cold, they checked the boiler and found two of the pumps were hot. Tom will talk with Mark Trueblood on this. Tom has ordered the outside fire box. After it has been mounted, we will notify the fire and police departments. Ray Kinnetz has suggested that we make two board signs that will fit in the outside sign. Michele changes it twice a year. Joyce called to get a bid but has not received one. The new office furniture has arrived. Dalene Schlitter's P.E.O. has asked to use the church on March 9th. This was approved. The church insurance was reviewed. It is for employee liability, property crime liability, umbrella and auto. It is through the national conference. When we have used it, it paid well. The cost is \$2,064.75 a quarter. The insurance policy was approved by the board. A discussion was held on the remodel of the Media Room. We will wait until we know the final cost the boiler repairs. There is \$20,000 in the building fund, but need to save some back for emergencies. At cabinet we had a question about moving some of the back pews to make room for wheelchairs and walkers. After looking at this in the sanctuary, we determined to leave the pews where they are for now. There is room for a wheelchair behind the pew on the southwest side. Curt McCoskey, the janitor, asked the trustees to look at the vacuum as its performance is less than desirable. Joyce had Home Appliance look at the vacuum and get a cost to fix it, or do we purchase a new one. Steve from Home Appliance suggested an upgrade of a new hose, commercial head (bigger), new attachments and replacing the inlet for \$616.23. He also glued the muffler. After discussion Tom moved with a second by Tracy to repair the vacuum for \$616.23. Joyce will let Steve know. Mark Trueblood has put in the new valves and fixed a pump that was not working on the boiler. There is now heat to the east basement rooms. On February 17th, Steve repaired the vacuum.

Women's Fellowship: Executive board met on March 1st with Karin Yungclas, Kay Harfst, Verna Bierle, Cindy Henning, Shirley Yungclas, Gayle Olson, Ginnie Veach, Wilma Reinsel and Stephanie Hill present. Verna gave the Treasurer's Report—Old Balance - \$2,618.57, Distributions - \$50.00, Income - \$.10, New Balance - \$2,568.67 and Savings Account – \$1,726.99. Cindy said the spring SERV catalog will be put on the table in fellowship hall, with the website, to order on your own. Karin shared topics discussed at the cabinet meeting. Lenten Luncheons are on Tuesday at Trinity Lutheran Church. Our time to share is March 14th with Karin and Kay presenting the program. The May birthday parties will be on Thursday, May 4th. Cindy will check with the school to see if anyone in choir would like to present a short program. The May Dinner will be May 24th. Kay will contact DSAOC about possibly presenting a short program. The circles responsible for salads for Relay for Life are: 3 vegetable salads – Morning Star; 3 fruit salads – Haystack; 3 potato salads – Providence; one of each kind of above salads – Mayflower. Circles will meet as follows: Haystack – hostess and program with Marjorie Groves at the church; Mayflower – hostess at church; Morning Star – program by Leah Maass at church; Providence – hostess and program by Dawn Holdgrafer at the church. The correct email for Stephanie Hill is: srhill1216@gmail.com. Next meeting is April 5, 2017.

Mission Board: The March 7th meeting was cancelled as many members were unable to attend. Janet Toering, the representative from All Cultures Equal had planned to attend this meeting. She will reschedule at a yet-to-be determined date. Lorraine McCoskey will plan our church's contribution to the April fundraising Cake for D/SAOC. This year our "basket: will include denim rugs made by Michele Omgvig's dad. The Mission Board

seeks workers and food for our church's meal at the Beacon of Hope Homeless shelter on March 21st. Marjorie Groves is the meal captain. Lorraine reported that One Great Hour of Sharing will be collected on March 26th. Gayle reminding us that our church is in charge of packing meals for the Backpack Program on Tuesday, April 25th at 6:30 pm, at Trinity Lutheran. Relay for Life is Friday, June 16th.

At 7:45 pm meeting adjourned. **Next Cabinet Meeting –April 11, 2017 at 7:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted, Mary Van Diest, Church Clerk

Our children, led by Katie Sonsalla, made a joyful noise in worship on Sunday, March 5.



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:

