

April 2018 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232
<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>

"But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again."

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." —Luke 7: 27-36

Ever throw a boomerang? If you have, you probably learned something about boomerangs: they do NOT always come back to you. I had one once when I was younger, and whenever I threw the thing it would land 50 feet in front of me, 50 feet behind me, or 50 feet to the side of me. I could throw that boomerang a hundred times and never have it come back to me the way I wanted it to!

Have you noticed that love is very much like a boomerang? Have you noticed that when you throw love out into the world you are always hoping it will return to you-- and yet there's no telling where it will travel, or where it will land, or even if it will ever come back to you?

Now to be fair, sometimes boomerangs do return to the thrower, and most of us have thrown love out into the world and had it returned to us from our parents, our spouses, our children, our friends, and our pets. It is a blessing to be able to throw love out into the world and receive it back from those who are near and dear to us!

But Jesus wants us to take the art of throwing love out into the world beyond those we are closest to. As Jesus notes in the Sermon on the Plain, even "sinners" love those who love them, do good to those who do good to them, and lend to those who can repay the loan with interest. There is a strong sense of certainty in that; an expectation of a guaranteed return which is more like a game of catch than it is like throwing a boomerang.

And while I certainly believe Jesus doesn't despise the love of family, friends, and pets, he is asking us to take the love we have to give beyond the game of "catch." Jesus is asking us to throw our love out into the world knowing that there are those who cannot return our acts of love...those who WILL NOT return our acts of love...even those who will stomp on our acts of love and return anger, or even hatred, to us. Jesus teaches those with ears to hear that we are to join him in the work of throwing love out into the world in the hope that love may be seen, felt, and known where it has not been seen, felt, and known before. And Jesus teaches us that we are to do this without the expectation that our love will be returned to us!

As I think of benevolences we support as a congregation—UDMO, DSAOC, Ecumenical Human Needs, ACE, the Agape Fund, Beacon of Hope Men's Homeless Shelter, Backpacks against Hunger, Wings of Refuge, Head Start, our UCC special offerings, CROP, Church World Service, and Serrv (to name a few)—it occurs to me that we are sending our love out into the world like a boomerang, instead of playing a game of catch with it. We can't possibly meet everyone who is benefiting from our gifts; we can't see all the hidden healing work that our gifts make possible; we won't get "paid back" by all the souls whose lives are made a little better by our loving acts of generosity. Yet because we choose to send our love out in this way, a little more love has been shown and known...regardless of whether it ever comes back to us.

I don't remember what ever happened to my childhood boomerang—whether I lost it on a tree, or broke it in frustration because it wouldn't come back to me. Sometimes our love is like that, too—we

lose sight of it, or we give up on it in frustration. Yet it's good to remember that Jesus never gave up on love, and it's good to remember that as we throw our boomerangs of love out into the world we keep good company...

For the greatest boomerang of love was not thrown by humans but by God, when God sent Jesus into the world to offer a better way of life: an invitation to become part of God's endless outreach of love. That boomerang thrown by God 2000 years ago in a Roman-occupied province in the Middle East was a real risk with no guaranteed returns...but that act of love is still reaping blessings in the life of the world. May we all be blessed by the grace of that life-changing and world-changing love, and may we join God in throwing our boomerangs of love into the world--with open and full hearts!
—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 4	67	March 11	49
March 18	71	March 25	67

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
Dale Olson: Stephen Ministry Ldr 839-5619
Sunshine Yoders: Choir Director 835-7626
Melissa Hindt: Organist 209-8087
Curt/Lorraine McCoskey: Cust's. 832-5341
Tracy Wehrhan: Church Treasurer 297-0370
Dale Olson: Financial Secretary 839-5619



Avoiding Rush Hour

- Put yourself first.
- Make plans.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Run errands at the least busy time of the day.
- Keep an appointment calendar
- Schedule doctor or dentist visits for the first appointment in the morning.
- Arrange for your paycheck deposited automatically and pay bills electronically'
- Make the most of minutes.



2 - Karin Yungclas
3 - Dorothy Stearns
4 - Sherry Leksell
4 - Alyssa Kenville
9 - Wil Groves
9 - Lynn Leksell
15 - Lorraine McCoskey
16 - Jacob Lahr
16 - Karla Krebs
17 - Alaina Imhoff
18 - Shelby Brim
19 - Christy Fiala
19 - Arden Schlitter
20 - Gen Carroll
21 - Joe Gilbert
24 - Janey Putney
25 - Hailey Marie Brim
26 - Patty Yungclas



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

Easter Activities Sunday, April 1

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. 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.

Giving

As Financial Secretary, I feel that you need to know that the Cabinet and boards are doing an excellent job of controlling cost this year. Expenses are about the same as last year. Our giving is down about \$10,000 compared to last year. This amount isn't all that much but, quarterly bills will be due about the time you read this and summer is right around the corner. Why is summer important enough to mention? Giving is usually way down during summer. If we enter summer with a big deficit, we may be in too big of a financial hole to come all the way back by the end of the year. I feel this is something we all need to pray about and ask for God to move us in a good direction for our church. Dale

KLAB Students make Music in Worship

Under the leadership of Ann Sherve-Ose, our KLAB students have been singing and making music with our ORFF instruments. They will offer their musical gifts to brighten our worship service on Sunday, April 8th. Join us as our KLAB kinds make a joyful noise in church!

D/SAOC

Cake Auction April 14. This year we are going to do a Webster City basket. We have always been rated 1 of the top 10 baskets there. With your generous donations to the pickle jar we hope to make the top 5. Donations must be in by April 1. Thank you ~ The Mission Board

Trail Cleanup

April 18 Part of our UCC Three Great Loves initiative is the Love of Creation, and so on April 18, from 4-5 pm, our KLAB students will be cleaning up the trail along the Boone River (in the Riverview Park area). If you would like to join us, you are welcome to help! Either meet at the church by 4 pm, or park by the boat ramp near Riverview Park and join us as we work to take care of God's creation!

Pack the Backpacks—April 24

It's been about 7 years since the Webster City schools "Backpacks Against Hunger" program began—can you believe it? For about 7 years now children identified as living in food insecure households have been receiving backpacks

filled with snacks and easily prepared food items, which are intended to supplement their diet during weekends and holidays away from school. On Tuesday, April 24, at 6:30 p.m. in the basement area of Trinity Lutheran Church, volunteers from First Congregational will assemble these backpacks for distribution. Join us for an hour of packing that will make a difference in a child's life!

ACE Roof Leaks

ACE/All Cultures Equal Community Center needs a new roof, costing thousands of dollars. The stop-gap measure, however, is cleaning and a sealant, costing around \$5,000. If you would like to contribute, please send a check to ACE, 1440 Second St., noting "Roof Sealant" on the memo line.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Thanks to your generosity we raised \$923!

THRIFT SALE

April 20 & 21



Spring
Cleaning
before
Summer!!
**Friday &
Saturday**
**April 20
& 21 -**

Women's Fellowship will be conducting their semi-annual Thrift Sale.

Wed. April 19 - We will be accepting those items cluttering up your lives.

Contact Cindy Henning at 297-0422 or

jbhfam@mchsi.com

if you have Large items

Need assistance transporting items

or have Questions

Remember items should be clean, complete, and in good repair.

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

Labels for Education

The Labels for Education program is coming to an end May of 2018. If you have any Campbell company labels saved, please deposit them at church by April 15 so they can be sent to the schools for redemption in time for their use. We

will continue to collect Box Tops for Education from General Mills and aluminum tabs.

Fundraiser

A Fundraising Dinner will be held on Sunday April 22, 11 am-1 pm at the WC Middle School to benefit furnishing the Pentecostal Church (Iglesia de Dios Pentecosta MI) at 821 Seneca Street Webster City. Dinner includes: Oven Baked Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Corn, Dinner Roll, and Dessert. Donation of \$10. Tickets are available from Donna Ryherd and at the door.

Summer Camp 2018

Summer camp is going...beyond belief! That is the theme of the 2018 Our Sacred Space's offerings of summer camp, beginning on June 10th. This summer, camp participants will explore some BIG questions about God, hope, and changing the world. There is a summer camp for kids of all ages, and new this year is a Service Camp (grades 7-12), an Eco-Camp (grades 4-6) and an Eco-Camp Mini (grades 2-3.) If you are interested in registering or learning more, please see the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Ye Olde KLAB Gang making Valentines to mail out to care center residents



As part of the UCC 3 great loves campaign, KLAB students made bird feeders to show their love of creation.



Brandon Lahr and Chesney Fuller were our communion stewards at the care center worship services on March 4.



Webster City Iditarod, with Gretchen delivering salad and pies to the church.



The Ye Olde KLAB Gang showed their love of children by sewing fitted NICU sheets for the University of Iowa NICU



Food, fun and games were the order of the evening at First Congo game night, held on St. Patrick's day!



History Hunting

1/14/1891 Webster City Freeman

The dedication of the First Congregational church, of Webster City, will take place January 16th and 18th inclusive.

PROGRAM:

Friday, 10th 6:30 p. m.—Reception by the church to their friends, the citizens of Webster City and vicinity.

8:30 p. m.—Address, Pres. Geo. A. Gates, of Grinnell, Iowa.

Report and presentation of the keys, by the building committee, W. J. Covil, chairman.

Acceptance of the keys by the First Congregational church, L. A. McMurray, chairman of trustees.

Exercises to be interspersed with appropriate music.

Sunday, 18th, dedicatory services:

Morning, 10:30—Sermon, Pres. Gates, of Grinnell.

Evening, 7:30—Sermon, Rev. E. M. Vit-tum, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

8:30—Act of dedication.

Nothing of a business character will take place on Sunday. Everybody cordially invited.

Treasurer's Report

INCOME	February	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$14,085.00	\$25,973.00
Other Income	.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$14,085.00	\$25,973.00
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	1,583.34	\$3,166.60
Pastoral Services	5,700.00	11,298.16
Maintenance and Repairs	2,118.19	4,752.97
Church Office	2,793.69	8,054.54
Music Ministry	844.37	1,660.68
Christian Education	0.00	28.98
Local Ministry	.00	.00
Misc. Expenses	18.97	564.03
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$13,058.56	\$29,525.96

FIRST CONGEGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Webster City, Iowa Cabinet Meeting March 13, 2018

Members Present:

Moderator:		Pastor:	Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice Moderator: Nate Lahr		Trustees:	Joyce Gelhaus
Finance Sec.: Dale Olson		Women's Fellowship:	Karin Yungclas
Finance : Tracy Wehrhan		Mission:	Lorraine McCoskey
Staff/Parish: Stephanie Hill		Worship:	Linda Lahr
Christian Ed: Curt McCoskey		Evangelism:	Laurie Epps
Treasurer: Tracy Wehrhan		Clerk:	Stephanie Hill

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by the Vice Moderator, Nate Lahr. Pastor Craig gave a devotional entitled "Had to" by Mary Luti. The February cabinet minutes were approved with amendments. **Worship Board:** Linda Lahr reported no changes. Saturday services and summer hours will begin in June through October. Karin suggested ending Saturday services earlier than October. Laurie is in need of ushers. **Trustees:** There were no minutes. Joyce reported that the grant proposals for the stained-glass windows were discussed. Kolleen Taylor is assembling the information for the application letter which is due April 1st. New chairs were purchased for the children's table. The broken ones will be tossed and the unbroken ones will go to the Thrift Sale. Al Yungclas found out that the windows were repaired for bulges in 1974. The repairs did not include re-leading. Joyce opened the discussion of Relay for Life and wants to know if there is interest. It will be held Wednesday, June 20 at Stanhope Park. This should be discussed in board meetings. **Christian Ed Board:** Curt reported that this board will meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month beginning March 14th. On the agenda will be the request to borrow the Orff instruments and how to address the declining Sunday school attendance. Options include expanding KLAB. **Staff Parish:** Nothing to report at this time. **Evangelism:** Laurie spoke to the idea that with so much food being served at Fellowship people may be reluctant to volunteer. Larger groups could be divided up to serve less food and more than 1 Sunday. Laurie is looking for feedback about the Annual Picnic which has not occurred for 2 years. **Mission:** Lorraine reported that the Beacon of Hope meal would be served on the 20th of March. The pickle jar is out for D/SAOC. There will be a live and silent auction this year for D/SAOC. **Finance Board:** This board had not met. **Women's Fellowship:** Karin reported that changes in the leadership of the board are being explored because her and Kay's Co-Presidency is ending this year after 2 years. **Pastor's Report:** Vicki Blaufuss and Carol Crystal gave a well-received presentation at the Lenten Lunch on the NICU fitted sheets made by KLAB kids as part of promoting the 3 great loves. **Treasurer:** A bond has come due. The full report of the boards and the pastor's report are at the end of the cabinet minutes.

Worship Board Piano cover has been found and placed on piano. Linda will contact the Music Committee. We are responsible to find a replacement when Melissa is unable to play at a church function. Gretchen (secretary) responsible for Annual Report. We will be responsible for Fellowship Coffee on April 15th. Maundy Thursday will be at 7:00 p.m. in East Chapel. Linda and Gretchen will serve communion on March 4th. **Women's Fellowship** March 24th meal – gather workers for Preparation, Set-up, Serving and Clean-up. Dishwasher needed for March 24th – get volunteer. Sunday coffees – encouraged to pare down the food offerings. Does not need to be so elaborate. Circle meeting changes for March – Haystack is meeting on March 21st instead of the March 14th. Coffee – Verna Bierle does the ordering. Thank you Verna. Lenten Lunches at Asbury on Tuesdays – March 13, Carol Crystal and Vicki Blaufuss will talk about the KLAB kids making the crib blankets for the University of Iowa hospitals. Things to think about – May Birthday party program ideas May Dinner speakers. Executive board – how to proceed after this year?? Next Meeting – April 4th, 2018 **Mission Board** We met March 2. People are signing up for the March 20 meal at Beacon of Hope. Marjorie will recruit prep help and food if there are empty spaces on the sign-up sheets. Between pickle jar and Endowment Committee check, our church sent a check for \$1,094 to the Iowa Conference office for the Funding Future Leadership collection for seminary students from Iowa. More has come into the office – a total of \$1,169 as of 3/7. Domestic/Sexual Assault Outreach Center Auction: We will create a Webster City Basket, loaded with gifts and gift cards from Webster City. The number of cards and items will depend on the amount donated to the pickle jar. Lorraine will put out the pickle jar right away, along with notes in bulletins and April newsletter. A description of the basket must be to the auction organizers by April 1; the actual basket must be at auction location April 13; the auction is April 14. The auction is D/SAOC's only fundraiser. Marjorie posted the report about our church's work with the Beacon of Hope (Love of Neighbor) on the United Church of Christ's 3 Great Loves website on February 11. The link is <http://3greatloves.uccpages.org/stories.html>. One Great Hour of Sharing will be gathered March 18. Karin has publicity under control. Pastor Craig said that the ACE Community Center needs a new roof, with estimated cost of multi-thousands of dollars. The stop-gap measure, however, is cleaning and a sealant, costing around \$5,000. Because we already have the pickle jar out for the D/SAOC auction, Marjorie will write up an item for the bulletin and newsletter with the info church members can use to donate directly to ACE for the sealant. The Mission Board will join with KLAB to organize trash pick-up along the Boone River Recreational trail April 18, 4-5 p.m. Pastor Craig will talk with Kent Harfst, assistant city manager, for an ok, trash bags and gloves. Proposed rain date is April 25. Rally Against Gun Violence: March 24 is the day for rallies in Des Moines and Waterloo. The next Mission Board meeting is Tuesday, April 10, at 4 p.m.

Pastor's Report Worship: Lent began with an Ash Wednesday service in the East Chapel, which was well attended. Our young people, led by Katie Sonsalla, will make a "joyful noise" in worship on Palm Sunday, March 25. Our Maundy Thursday service will be held in the East Chapel on Thursday, March 29, beginning at 7 pm. Easter service will be at 10:30 am, and the Christian Ed board is making plans for an Easter continental breakfast beginning at 9:30 am. There will be a children's Easter activity that morning in the lower level of the church, also beginning at 9:30. There will be no coffee after Easter worship. On April 8 the KLAB kids will play the ORFF instruments in worship. KLAB: We currently have about 15 KLAB kids attending, with an occasional visiting child who is brought by a friend. Ann Sherve-Ose has been working with the kids preparing them for an ORFF musical offering on Sunday, April 8 during worship. As part of our caring for creation (3 great loves) we made large bird feeders for the kids to take home. There is no KLAB during spring break (March 14), but we will hold KLAB during Holy Week (March 28). Ye Olde KLAB Gang has been busy making and sending out Valentine's cards, making resurrection eggs, and watching Jesus Christ Superstar. Two members of YOKG, Chesney Fuller and Brandon Lahr, were communion stewards at our latest Care Center worship services and served communion at all 3 services! Adult Education: We continue with the Hidden Histories of the UCC, and have studied the story of the Amistad and the American Missionary Association, and the story of the UCC in Iowa. WCMA: The Backpack program continues to be blessed with donations and our current balance is about \$7700! We added a new member to the WCMA: Pastor Eddy is pastoring a new church start that is sharing Faith UMC's worship space. Pastor Eddy is from Missouri, and he was sent by his church to this area to minister to its Hispanic population. He is bi-vocational and works in Jewell. The WCMA in the process of trying to organize another Thanksgiving community food packaging event (Kids Against Hunger) in

partnership with the morning Kiwanis club, who will try to raise the funds to make this possible. A “Grandparents raising grandchildren” support group will begin at Trinity Lutheran in the near future; they will meet on Tuesdays at 7 pm. We voted to donate \$300 towards ACE’s roof coating needs, funds to come from the Salvation Army Bellringing proceeds. Stephen Ministry: We currently have 4 Stephen Ministers matched with care receivers. We met March 1 for our monthly 2 hour session, hearing check-ins and studying the topic of process verses results in caregiving. NW Committee on Ministry: we met Saturday, March 3 at Primghar for the annual relicensing of clergy who serve churches in our association. There were 6 attendees—down quite a bit from the 14 we were relicensing when I first started on the CoM. The date for the NW association Annual meeting will be May 5, to be held at Mayflower UCC in Sioux City. I have no other details to report as no details have been released. I will be unable to attend, as that is the date when Katie Holdgrafer is to be married in our sanctuary. I will be attending a CoM training event in Sioux Falls, South Dakota April 20-21. Our Sacred Space (Pilgrim Heights): at our relicensing meeting in Primghar we were updated on the status of the camp: it is essentially broke! It costs \$500 a day to keep the doors open, and income is not nearly meeting the expenses. The Board of Directors is really pushing camp this year, as all the revenue camp generates is needed—but it is very likely that the camp will be shuttered and sold within the next year. They are looking to hire summer camp staff—preferably college age students, and they are in need of male camp counselors. A.C.E.: Continues to struggle financially, and their latest need is to replace their leaking roof. Replacing the roof will be too costly at this time, so ACE is trying to raise funds to apply a roof coating that will fix the leaks and buy them some time. The cost of the sealant alone is about \$1500.

Evangelism Board Our meeting was called to order at 12:05 with Pastor Craig offering a prayer to center our hearts and minds. Pastor Report / Prayer Chain: Pastor Craig shared updates and concerns for our members in need of our prayer and support including Robert Stidolph, Vicki Blaufuss, Will Groves (who is doing very well following hip replacement) Charlene McKee (who is adjusting to her new home fairly well), Gen Carroll, Karen Weir, Ina Cormany and Dorothy. Please hold them close in thought and prayer. Greeters and Ushers: We have compiled a list of members we believe are willing and able to usher. We have attempted to create Usher Teams – 3 or 4 people who might normally sit together, are family, or perhaps they serve on a circle together. We hope we can fill the weeks ahead with these “teams” and they create a year-long schedule by rotating the teams. If it works we would be asking our congregation to step up to usher every 10 weeks or so. That said, we are always in need of volunteers to fill the role of Greeters and Ushers on Sunday mornings. Please volunteer early ... or late for that matter! If you arrive on Sunday morning and see the need we always welcome the offer to help! Welcome bags (adults) and Activity Bags (youth): Wilma continues to refill and refresh supply our Welcome Bags, sometimes using materials to fit the season, and always to ensure a sweet treat inside. Dawn maintains our Activity Bags for the youth, keeping them cleaned and well stocked. Misc: Reminded everyone we are hosting Fellowship Coffee on March 11th. Next meeting: April 5, 2018 at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Stephanie Hill
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:

