

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

For our Children's Message on October 23rd, I began by telling the children that I had been receiving "love letters." You should have seen their faces! (mostly disbelief tinged with disgust.) Then I produced some beautiful fall leaves, and I told them that the leaves were love letters from God. I explained that each beautiful fall leaf showed that God loves us enough to send such beautiful things into the world for our wonder and enjoyment.

Well, the leaves *were* beautiful... but I'm not sure if the kids actually bought that line of thinking. Like most of us, they too have been trained to see nature primarily as a product of impersonal natural forces that do not carry supernatural intent. Fall leaves may be beautiful, but that doesn't make them a miracle or a love letter from anyone, let alone God. They are simply a product of natural decay processes as the seasons change and deciduous trees shed leaves for the long winter. So much for that object lesson!

Yet later that day, as I was walking my dogs in Graceland cemetery, I was again aware of being surrounded by a beauty that spoke to me of a divine love that delights in bestowing beauty on anyone who has eyes to see. Now I certainly can't prove in a scientific way that fall colors are an act of supernatural intent. And honestly, I could be wrong in my thinking—I readily admit that I *could* be engaged in wishing thinking about events and processes that carry no supernatural intent other than to fulfill the laws of nature. And yet...as I was walking, observing the variety and magnificence of the fall foliage, breathing the fresh fall air and enjoying the sunshine...there was again a sense that all of this beauty and wonder is an intentional gift: a material expression of the joy and the creative exuberance of GOD, offered to us as an act of love—a "love letter" written in autumn leaves and azure-blue skies--a love letter reminding us that this world and this life are DEEPLY PERSONAL and filled with meaning and purpose.

This month we will observe Thanksgiving, All Saints Sunday, and the first Sunday of Advent as part of our worship life together. What these observances have in common is the profound sense of gratitude we can experience as we take stock of life, and realize that all of THIS exists as an expression of God's divine love. The blessings of the good land; the blessings of loved ones—both living and dead— who have blessed our lives with love; the blessings of a Son given to us for the sake of love...all of these gifts, like autumn leaves dancing in the wind, are signs of the eternal love of God. That divine love is the very heart and foundation of our lives, and to experience this kind of "knowing" is the fruit of faith—a knowing that is less like a testable truth and more like a revelation glimpsed in a golden leaf floating to the ground...before nature completes her processes, and turns this love letter into compost.

After our worship service on October 23rd many of us stayed to enjoy the Rotary turkey dinner, and as we were eating, one of our young ladies, Izzy, was walking around fellowship hall with fall leaves in her hands. She had been outside collecting, in her own words, "love letters from God." Perhaps it wasn't such a bad object lesson after all! Perhaps it's a lesson we all should take to heart this month as we gather at our thanksgiving tables, light candles for our departed Saints, and prepare to hang the greens in anticipation of the birth of God's great love letter to the world! —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 2 76 October 9 64
October 15 66 October 23 55 October 30

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**
Luverne Bierle: Financial Secretary **832-4752**



PARISH NURSE NEWS

Kids' Safety Tips

- Never put fingers, toys or other objects in an electrical outlet.
- Keep metal objects out of toasters.
- Never use anything with a cord or plug around water.
- Stay away from substations or power lines.
- Never fly kites or climb trees near power lines.
- Never place your drinks on top of electronics.
- Stay away from broken or fallen power lines.
- Never touch big, green metal transformer boxes.
- Obey warning signs on power poles, substations, and transformer boxes.



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

Choir & KLAB

Neither KLAB nor choir will meet on Wednesday, November 23 due to Thanksgiving. Choir will still perform on Sunday, November 27.

Annual Reports

It is that time of year again, annual reports from boards and committees need to be turned in to the office by December 17.

Daylight Savings

Daylight savings ends on Sunday, November 6. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, November 5.

Amazon Smile

We are now 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 and a portion of your purchase will be returned to First Congregational to be used towards the Clifford Doty memorial fund.

Warm Hearts Warm Homes is scheduled for Saturday, November 12. The goal this year is to weatherize 32 homes with 16 teams. We will gather for breakfast and instructions at 8:00, go to our assigned sites to work, and finish by noon.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING NOVEMBER 13

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 13, 2016 immediately following an abbreviated service of worship to vote on the proposed 2017 budget and the proposed changes to our church constitution. Please remember that the proposed constitution cannot be amended during the meeting, so your vote will either be to approve or reject the document in its entirety. There are absentee ballots in the church office if you will be gone that day.

Meeting

Christian Ed meeting will be on November 9th at 7:15pm. Please bring ideas for the rest of the year. Thank you, Vicki

Grief Support Group "How Will I Get Through the Holidays?"

Coping with the loss of loved ones during the holidays can be hard, and to help manage the stress and grief that often accompany the holiday season like a shadow, we are again offering the grief support series "How Will I Get Through The Holidays?" on Sundays, November 6, 13, and 20, from 4-5 pm. This grief support group is open to anyone in the church or the wider community who has suffered the loss of a loved one. Pre-enrollment in the class is preferred, but not required. To enroll, call the church office at 515-832-2232.

All Saints Sunday, November 20

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 20, 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. The departed Saints of the church who have died in the past year are: **Dona Jaycox, Dorothy Englehart, Richard Burnett, Helen Nessa, Marjorie "Pod" Gescheidler, and Dorothy Brim.**

Advent Begins—November 27

Advent is just around the corner! Sunday, November 27 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 during worship.

Decorate the Church for Christmas—November 27

Following worship on Sunday, November 27, we will again bring out the Christmas decorations and "hang the greens" in preparation for the birth of Jesus. Please plan to stay and help with one of the most enjoyable activities of the year! Following the decorating we will enjoy a pizza lunch sponsored by the Worship Board.

Thanksgiving Community Food Pack Nov. 20

The WCMA and the morning Kiwanis club will be sponsoring a Thanksgiving community food pack for Kids Against Hunger on Sunday, November 20, from 2-4 p.m. at Fuller Hall. This is an opportunity for community members to come together and give thanks to God by helping those who struggle with hunger both abroad, and in the U.S. Each church is being

asked to field at least one team of 12-15 members and friends, who will package Kids Against Hunger meals for 1 to 2 hours. We hope to form 6 packing lines at this event, and turn out 18,000 meals from our community! If you want to be a part of First Congregational's food packing team, please sign up in Fellowship hall.

Care Center Worship Services—November 13

First Congregational is scheduled to lead the Care Center worship services on Sunday, November 13. We will begin at Windsor Manor at 1:15 pm, hold services at Crestview beginning at 2:00 pm, and begin services at Southfield at 2:45 pm. As always, we appreciate having volunteers helping at all, or any one, of these services.

Open Enrollment

October 15 through December 7 is Open Enrollment time for Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage. Contact 832-7769 if you need assistance.

Confirmation

We asked our confirmation students to tell us about themselves. They were asked about their families, favorite things and what they hope to get out of confirmation class.

◆My name is Kaelyn Butz. My parents are Colby and Candy Butz and I have a little brother named Kaleb. I live in Webster City and have lived here my whole life. I go to Webster City Middle School. I just got done with cross country and I am in band and jazz band. I like to collect rocks and participate in rock hunting activities. I want to be a geologist. I hope to learn more about faith.

◆My name is Jake Lahr. My parents are Nate and Linda Lahr. I live out in the country about 3 miles from the outskirts of town. I lived there for just over a year. I go to Webster City Middle School. I am active in band, jazz band, marching band, chorus, basically anything that includes music. I like art and also math. I like playing piano in my free time. I currently don't know what I want to be when I grow up. Hopefully somewhere in the field of music. I

hope I learn more about other religions while going through this confirmation class.

Ushers We are in need of ushers for the months of November and December. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board outside of the church office. Or, you can contact Linda Lahr at 297-2407 or email lahr0575@hotmail.com if you are interested in volunteering. We appreciate your help!

Ameriprise Financial Did you know in the United States, nearly 16 million children face hunger? Not having enough nutritious food can seriously impact a child's physical and mental health, academic achievement and future economic prosperity. In an effort to meet the tremendous demand this season for food, personal care items, etc., Ameriprise Financial has placed a collection box for local Upper Des Moines Opportunity Hamilton County Food Pantry in our Webster City office. We plan on packing up what has been collected, and delivering the items to UDMO on Friday, November 11. Please consider bringing non-perishable food items and toiletries to our office, or feel free to bring the items to church, and I will be happy to pick them up. Ameriprise is committed to providing domestic hunger-relief through its partnership with Feeding America[®]. In 2015, with support from employees and advisors, Ameriprise provided more than 11 million meals and over 40,000 volunteer hours to hunger-relief organizations across the country. Please join us in working to end hunger in our community. If you have any questions, please let me know. ~~Linda Lahr

CROP Walk

A large group walked on Sunday Oct. 9 at Brewer Creek. Our church raised \$307.

KLAB



KLAB Halloween Party



Treasurer's Report

INCOME	SEPTEMBER	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$19,462.00	\$136,990.45
Other Income	.13	2.59
TOTAL INCOME	\$19,462.13	\$136,993.04
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	3,166.68	\$13,092.64
Pastoral Services	10,805.71	65,156.32
Maintenance and Repairs	3,590.33	80,815.87
Church Office	3,943.96	25,148.54
Music Ministry	475.00	6,025.00
Christian Education	61.41	443.23
Local Ministry	47.21	572.21
Misc. Expenses	48.24	1,365.31
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$22,138.54	\$170,480.58

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Webster City, Iowa
Cabinet Meeting – October 11, 2016

Members Present:

Moderator-----Sherry Leksell	Pastor-----Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice-Moderator----Al Yungclas	Trustees-----Joyce Gelhaus
Finance Sec.-----Luverne Bierle	Women's Fellowship-Karin Yungclas
Finance-----Tracy Wehrhan	Mission-----Lorraine McCoskey
Staff/Parish-----Dalene Schlitter	Worship-----Holly Riemenschneider
Christian Ed-----Vicki Blaufuss	Evangelism-----Laurie Epps
Treasurer-----Tracy Wehrhan	Clerk-----Mary Van Diest

The meeting was called to order by Moderator, Sherry Leksell. Pastor Craig offered a prayer. Highlights of the Board reports were given as follows: **Worship**-Holly reported that suggestions for substitute ministers have been received and the board will serve root beer floats after the Sister Act at the Sat. service; **Trustees**-Joyce reported that sheet rock has been installed in the elevator room, the code to the church will be changed; **Mission**-Lorraine reported that the Alternative Giving Fair will be emphasizing 4 different subjects/one a week; **Treasurer**-Tracy said the letter explaining the financial conditions of the church has produced some results-the income for September 2016 was \$17,772.00 and the September 2016 expenses were \$21,422.55. Tracy moved with a second by Dalene to put the treasurer's report to audit. Motion carried.

Old Business: Tracy moved and Al seconded to approve the revised constitution with two changes. Motion carried. Sherry reported that the new directory has been shipped from the producer.

New Business: Tracy moved and Al seconded to approve the 2017 proposed budget. Motion carried. There will be a congregational meeting immediately following the worship service on

Nov. 13, 2016 to vote on the proposed budget and revised constitution. Absentee ballots will be in church office for those not able to attend this meeting.

Reports of Boards and Committees

Pastor's: A Memorial service for Dorothy Brim, who passed away October 2, 2016, was held in our sanctuary on Friday, October 7, 2016. Thanks to the women's fellowship for hosting, serving, and providing the refreshments following the service. With Dorothy's death he has ended the Thursday afternoon Bible study at Southfield, which he has held twice a month for the last 5 years. Dorothy was a charter member, and one of the few still attending until she passed. On Saturday, October 15, we will conclude our Saturday evening services with Sister Act as our musical guests. Our next scheduled turn to conduct Care Center worship services will be November 13. November 20th will be Thanksgiving Sunday and All Saints Sunday. November 27th will be the first Sunday of Advent. Also on that date the baptism of Macklin Elkin will be held. There are 15 currently enrolled in KLAB, from pre-K through 6th grade. The study of Solomon and what it means to be "wise" continues. Jake Lahr has volunteered to work with the kids on the ORFF instruments. On Wednesday, October 12, the KLAB leadership team will meet to discuss ways to improve the behavior of the group. Thanks to Arden Schlitter and Luverne Bierle for helping with the program, Jake for being our teen assistant, and Ginnie Veach, Leah Maass and Donna Ryherd for helping with snacks—and of course thanks to all those who have or will provide snacks for the group. We look forward to Wil Groves returning after the harvest. The Adult Education class continues to study "Social Media". They have looked at the physiological effects and are now investigating the psychological effects of social media use. There are two students attending confirmation-Jake Lahr and Kaelyn Butz. They will meet twice monthly on Sundays at 1:00 pm. Pastor Craig will assign extra materials for study for the off weeks. They will travel to see the Hindu Temple in Madrid, a Synagogue in Des Moines, the Islamic Cultural Center in Des Moines. Special service projects will be added as the year progresses. Another successful Thrift Sale was held. This one was tempered by the death of Jim Henning's mother, but many willing workers made this sale a great fundraiser and an enjoyable event. Reporting from the WCMA that the CROP WALK was held on October 10th at 2:00 pm at the Brewer Creek Shelter House. Washington Lutheran church of Duncombe again hosted with 7 walkers from First Congregational participating. On Thanksgiving Sunday, November 20th, from 2:00-4:00 pm, the WCMA and the morning Kiwanis Club will team up to offer a community church Kids Against Hunger Pack. Our hope is to recruit enough teams from our local churches to staff 6 packaging lines, for a total of 18,000 meals packaged. Sunday, October 23rd, from noon to 6:00 pm there will be a vintage paddy wagon outside Hy-Vee taking donations of food for the Lutheran food pantries in town. We will again be organizing a Salvation Army bell-ringing campaign for Webster City, with the proceeds going toward our Ecumenical Human Needs Committee. We also need volunteers to assist with reviews for EHNC. The Stephen Ministers have nearly finished with the curriculum exploring our spiritual gifts. Currently there are 5 Stephen Ministers matched with care receivers. He reported from the Committee on Ministry that information reviews have been sent out to all clergy and churches in the NW Association. These are useful tools to help the CoM understand the challenges of ministry in our churches and among our clergy. On Saturday, October 8th, 17 clergy convened in our fellowship hall for annual Boundary training. This was conducted by Diane McLanahan of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling center, and it was the best training of its kind that he has yet attended. This is a requirement for clergy to attend every three years. We have enough volunteers to split into 2 teams for Warm Hearts Warm Homes. We will weatherize Saturday, November 12th, from 8:00 am until noon. Pastor Craig will attend the Iowa Conference continuing

education led by Dr. Jennifer Harvey on racial reconciliation and white privilege on October 21st. The Iowa Conference Annual Business Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 22nd; the most important business item to be voted on will be the Tri-Conference Cooperation proposal, which will consolidate the support staff and executive leadership of the Iowa, North Dakota and Nebraska conferences. Pastor Craig reported from the Safe Church Policy Committee that we have volunteer consent forms from all adult volunteers. A Safe church training session for teachers and volunteers was held on September 14th. Another training session will be scheduled for those volunteers who were not able to attend this meeting.

Mission Board: Met on October 6th with Gayle Olson, Karin Yungclas, Audrey Burnnett, Alyssa Kenville and Pastor Craig attending. A number of our people joined other participants to pack 3,700 lunches in 45 minutes for KAH. Approximately 40 men were served at Beacon of Hope on September 20th. As these men are hungry, we need to reevaluate the amounts of food we provide. The Terraycle will be dropped from the program. More walkers are needed for the CROP Walk on October 9th. The pickle jar has been set out for those who wish to contribute. The amount collected for NIN was \$780. We have not had a response to partner with Trinity Lutheran and Tiffany Larson on educational opportunities. A person is still needed on Ecumenical Human Needs. Warm Hearts Warm Homes will be held on November 12th. For the Alternate Giving Fair a project to furnish cold weather items for school children such as coats, mittens, scarves, socks, etc. This will be explained in church the Sunday before we start collecting. The first week, Sunday, November 27th, will be collecting boots. See the pastor's report for Kids Against Hunger, Beacon, Salvation Bell Ringers, and Pack the Paddy Wagon program. For the latter project the beneficiary of the food collected will go to the pantries at Trinity Lutheran and St Paul Lutheran. Next meeting will be on November 3rd at 5:00 pm.

Staff Parish: Met on September 16th with Verna Bierle, Greta Oberender and Shirley Yungclas present. The Funeral Policy plan has been finished and put into printed form. The Safe Church Policy Team has met but has not yet implemented the plan. For the budget the salaries and increase percentages were discussed. More details are needed before decisions can be made. Verna will meet with Pastor Craig and Greta will meet with Finance Chairman, Tracy Wehrhan, for more information. The staff reviews will be done later. Next meeting will be September 27th at 6:15 pm. Met on September 27th with Verna Bierle, Stephanie Hill, Greta Oberender, Dalene Schlitter and Shirley Yungclas present. The Safe Church Policy has been completed and several staff members have been trained. Background checks will soon be finished and the policy implemented. The budget percentages for salary increases were figured and put into place on the budget. The staff reviews will be held soon. The teaching of ORFF instruments will be included in staff parish budgeting for 2017. The next meeting will be October 18th at 6:15 pm.

Women's Fellowship: The Thrift Sale collected approximately \$1400. The cleanup went very well and only one truck load was taken to Goodwill. A discussion was held on the Thrift Sale. Its purpose is to raise funds which will be given to charitable organizations. Those who purchase our items are often the same people who receive these services or benefit from our donations. A win-win situation. Early buying concerns were raised about the workers getting first pick of the items at the sale and about making sure they pay. The workers do get first pick, but they also pay double for a bag or marked pieces. It is good to have those items gone so there is room for all the other donations. If there are items that can be used by the church such as in kitchen, Sunday School, KLAB, Piecemakers, etc. we keep them. The large furniture pieces have been sold from the garage. Some were posted on a Buy/Sell page to move them. We are asking the circles or a group of volunteers if they wish to host a Christmas dinner after worship. The suggested dates

would be December 11th, 18th or 25th. Dates to remember are October 9th-Listening Post @Constitution, Ex. Bd. Coffee-Group #1, Crop Walk; October 15th-Saturday Church Service/Sister Act; November 2nd-Executive Board meeting at 5:00 pm.

Evangelism Board: Met on September 13th with Pastor Craig, Kolleen Taylor, Wilma Reinsel and Laurie Epps present. Pastor Craig shared concerns for a few of our members in need of our prayer and support. He also shared good news of members who are doing much better in recent weeks. Do remember those amongst us that might have struggles and be in need. Wilma continues to send we care cards. She does a nice job of remembering people with a card, sometimes for the simplest of reason. Laurie reported from the Cabinet Meeting she attended the proposed changes on the recently revised Constitution. There is one new match pending in Stephen Ministries. Kolleen asked about the possibility of the blood pressure checks returning to those in need during fellowship following Sunday Services. There is a continuing need for volunteers for the role of Greeter/Usher for Sunday am worship service. As the Meals 'n' More dinners have been discontinued, it was decided to give the \$675 remaining in that account to the General Fund of the Church. Our part of the budget was discussed. With the disbandment of the Public Relations Committee, this item was cut from the budget. We also made the recommendation to Cabinet to forward the budgeted amounts of \$1000 (each) to Ecumenical Human Needs and CUE. The next meeting will be October 11th at 6:15 pm.

Next Cabinet Meeting—November 15, 2016 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.

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:

