

October 2015 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
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<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." –Matthew 7:24

When we lived in Burlington, there was a house in an upscale development that continually had a "For Sale" sign in the yard. Apparently whoever had excavated the foundation had overdug it at one end, and then the excavator had attempted to hastily backfill it before the basement was poured. This shoddy foundation caused the basement to develop cracks, and the house itself would heave and twist, causing the siding to buckle. You could always tell when the house was being prepared to be sold: the back siding was removed and straightened, and sure enough—shortly after that, the "For Sale" sign would go up in the front yard again as the current owner hoped to lure someone into buying this questionable piece of property that sat atop a poor foundation.

This story certainly illustrates Jesus' words from "the Sermon On the Mount" when he spoke about the kind of foundation on which we should build our lives. Yet how seriously do we heed the words of Jesus? Do we let them convict us, and compel us to engage in the hard work of laying—or the even more difficult work of *re-laying*-- the foundations of our lives? Or is it easier to dismiss his words as too lofty, too poetic, too impractical, or just too difficult for us to follow—and thereby delude ourselves by thinking that we can build our Christian lives on what Jesus would call a foundation of "sand?"

When we hear Jesus say "Blessed are the meek, the humble, for they shall inherit the earth" ...do we take those words to heart, or dismiss them as "impractical" in a world that is driven by the powerful; a world in which the shrill get all the attention; a world in which the arrogant and overbearing seem to come out on top while "nice guys" finish last?

When we hear Jesus say "You are the light of the world! Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God" ... do we take responsibility to live out our beliefs in the eye of the public, or do we become just another face in the crowd; private Christians who do not publicly act in ways that honor Jesus' life and teachings?

When we hear Jesus say "be reconciled with your brother or sister before you approach the altar of God" ...do we make a good faith effort to heal our broken relationships with family members, friends, church members, and our fellow citizens who share this republic with us... or do we allow our pride-- or our hurt --to sabotage the possibility of reconciliation?

When we hear Jesus say "love your enemies" and "turn the other cheek" ...do we struggle with the difficult demands such words ask of us? Or are we convinced that retaliation is the only foundation that will give us true peace and security—whether it is at a personal level, or at the international level?

When we hear Jesus say "do not lay up treasures for yourselves where moth and rust consume" and "you cannot serve God and wealth" ... do we seek to live lives less obsessed with the accumulation and enjoyment of more "stuff", and more devoted to serving and caring for others?

When we hear Jesus say "spend less time worrying, and more time trusting" ...do we work at trusting God by praying, studying, and listening for God's word to us? Or do we only rely on *our* resources and *our* wisdom --either because we have too little faith, or because we don't want to open ourselves to a God who has a claim on our lives that may not be in line with our plans?

When we hear Jesus say "Judge not, lest you be judged" and "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" ... do we hear these words and let them guide our actions in our dealings with every soul we will encounter in life...or do these words only apply to those we are closest to—and then only when we are having a good day?

Friends, we can't sugarcoat the truth: the Sermon on the Mount lays out a difficult and demanding foundation for our Christian living. But if we dismiss the Sermon on the Mount's claims on our lives, and instead opt for a more familiar and less demanding way of living, then we are guilty, like those unscrupulous owners of the heaving house in Burlington, of pretending that a foundation of sand is really a foundation of rock!

May we all hear the call of the Sermon on the Mount, and become builders wise enough to build on the true rock of Jesus' wisdom...so that we may build something truly worthwhile on that foundation: a life well lived; a Christ-like life!
—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

September 6	72	September 13	66
September 19	31	September 27	70

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor
Office: **832-2232** Cell **297-4316**
Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net
Michele Omvig: Admin. Assist. **838-2989**
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Sharon Perry: Stephen Ministry Ldr **832-5435**
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Choir Director
Melissa Hindt: Organist **209-8087**
Mary Van Diest: Pianist **832-3754**
Curt/Lorraine McCoskey: Cust's. **832-5341**
Tracy Wehrhan: Financial Secretary **297-0370**
Luverne Bierle: Church Treasurer **832-4752**



PARISH NURSE NEWS

Questions to ask when you get a new prescription –
What is the name of the medicine and what is it supposed to do? Is this the brand or generic name?
How, when, and for long do I need to take this medicine?
Are there any medicines, foods, drinks, dietary supplements, or activities I need to avoid while taking this medicine?
How and when will I know the medicine is working?
What are the possible side effects and what should I do if they occur?
Will any tests or monitoring be required while I'm taking this medicine?
Can I get a refill? If so, when?



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

1 - Kay Harfst
3 - Clark Mowry
4 - Sierra Myers
4 - Karinne Tudor
5 - Jaylyn Marie Bahrenfuss
6 - Bill Shelton
7 - Alison McFadden
8 - Logan McCoskey
9 - Dawn Holdgrafer
10 - Gayle Olson
11 - Courtney Clum
12 - Marlin Abbott
13 - Kevin Brim
13 - Karen Weir
13 - Ashley Wood
14 - Larry Brim
15 - Richard Tudor
15 - Jim Henning
16 - Ethan Anderson
16 - Jack Thurman
16 - Emily Stockdale
20 - Charlene McKee
22 - Chase Wagoner
22 - Chelsey Wagoner
27 - Gabrielle May Larson
27 - Jesse Reinking
27 - Travis Stearns
28 - Karl Heimberger
28 - Tom McKee
29 - Joel Bruner
29 - Alex Wood



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

5 - Bud & Carol Crystal
5 - Rick & Mary Ruppel
9 - Nate & Linda Lahr
10 - Scott & Juli Jaycox
21 - Scott & Jessie Bailey

Backpacks

The Mission Board would again like to say thank you to the people of our church. This time our gratitude goes out to all who helped pack backpacks for our local backpack program on Sept. 22. 8 people from our church worked 1½ hours and packed enough bags for every weekend in Oct - a total of 780 bags to send home with students so they will have food on the weekends.

Thank you church family!



Donations

The Finance committee would like to remind you of an auto pay option. Contact your bank and look into having your donation automatically transferred from your account to the church's main checking account.

Coats for Kids

UDMO is offering a program to supply coats for needy children, up to age 18. You can pick up a tag with info on what size coat to purchase at Mornin Glory. Monetary donations are also appreciated.

CROP Walk

Keep your calendar open for October 18 for the CROP walk at Brewer Creek Park Shelter. You may bring monetary donations that day or sign-up at www.crophungerwalk.org to donate early.

Neighbors in Need

The Neighbors in Need offering, which we will receive in October, supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries, giving support to the 20 UCC congregations on reservations, and one urban, multi-tribe congregation in Minneapolis, MN.

Information about supported projects has been provided in several worship bulletins. The mission board invites you to consider contributing to this worthwhile cause which is one of our UCC national 5 for 5 offerings. Special offering envelopes will be available in bulletins or in the pew racks. Checks can be written to the church and indicate NIN on the subject line. Thank you in advance for your generous donations.

Thanks

♦ Thank you to this wonderful congregation for all your kindness and care during Mom's last illness and after her death. There aren't enough ways to thank you for all you've done for us. You are all such a blessing!

Mary & Duane Vavroch

♦ UCC,

Thank you so, so much for selecting me as one of your scholarship recipients. I cannot tell you how grateful I am to have grown up in this church. They say it takes a village to raise a child and I could not have asked for a better village. Thank you a million times. I will carry the lessons I've learned from all of you, as well as my faith, as I journey on to my next adventure. Thank you.

Jenna Short

♦ Thank you Church Family,

The scholarship will help with my expenses this semester. And thank you for the continued support and prayers.

Katie Holdgrafer

♦ Thank you so much for granting me the Helen Johnson and Bess Lyon scholarships. The money received by these scholarships will help me succeed at the University of Iowa. I hope to see you all soon. Thanks again!

Alexis Tudor

Blessing of the Animals

On Saturday, September 15 we worshipped together outside with a "Blessing of the Animals." It was a time of celebration and praise for the love, comfort and companionship we receive from our animal companions.



Rally day

On Sunday, September 13 we enjoyed a special day of games, food, and fun as we marked the beginning of our fall programs and the start of Sunday School.

Treasurer's Report

INCOME	AUGUST	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$11,862.94	\$111,643.57
Other Income	.10	571.45
TOTAL INCOME	\$11,863.04	\$112,215.02
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,583.33	\$12,535.69
Pastoral Services	5,291.08	52,955.66
Maintenance and Repairs	42,423.36*	85,341.24
Church Office	3,100.58	21,515.39
Music Ministry	300.00	4,112.50
Christian Education	0.00	427.42
Local Ministry	350.00	592.45
Misc. Expenses	210.47	1,377.63
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$53,258.82	\$178,857.98

* \$40,172.85 of the Maintenance and Repairs expenses were part of the renovation costs and were paid from the Helen Johnson Building Fund.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting – September 8, 2015

Members Present:

Moderator-----Luverne Bierle	Pastor-----Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice-Moderator---Sherry Leksell	Trustees-----Tom Riemenschneider
Finance Sec.-----	Women's Fellowship---
Finance-----	Mission-----Ginnie Veach
Staff/Parish-----Dalene Schlitter	Worship-----Holly Riemenschneider
Treasurer-----Luverne Bierle	Evangelism---Wilma Reinsel
Christian Ed-----Vicki Blaufuss	Clerk-----Mary Van Diest

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by the Moderator, Luverne Bierle. Pastor Craig Blaufuss opened with a prayer. Holly Riemenschneider moved and Vicki Blaufuss seconded to approve the minutes of the previous Cabinet meeting as printed. Motion carried. The board and committee reports were open for review and discussion. Holly Riemenschneider reported that the Sat. service on Sept 19th will be a blessing of the pets and held at the vacant lot across from the church. In case of inclement weather the service will be moved to Twin Parks Shelter. The last Sat. service to be held this year will be on Oct. 17th with the Sister's Act from Jewell performing. Vicki Blaufuss reported from Christian Ed that volunteers are needed to organize the pot luck on Rally Day Sunday. Dalene Schlitter from Staff/Parish reported that a contract has been written for Melissa Hindt for piano/organ duties. Dalene also suggested that a funeral policy booklet be written. A committee to write this policy booklet shall consist of a member of

Staff/Parish, Women's Fellowship, Cabinet (Holly Riemenschneider volunteered to represent the Cabinet) and the Pastor. Wilma Reinsel reported from Evangelism that they worked on their share of the budget for the coming year and also reviewed their duties. Ginnie Veach reported from Mission that the Fill the Pig for UDMO collected a total of \$770. She also reported that the next Beacon of Hope meal will be served on Sept. 30th. In Oct. Neighbors in Need offering will be taken and Warm Hearts/Warm Homes will be held November 7. Luverne Bierle gave the Treasurer's Report with the August offering of \$11,862.94 and the August expenses were \$13,091.03. Dalene Schlitter made a motion to approve the report and put it to audit. Sherry Leksell seconded.

Reports of Pastor, Boards and Committees

Pastor's Report: Labor Day weekend will be the last of our 9:30 am. Worship services. Beginning on Rally Day (Sept 13th) we will return to our 10:30 hour. On Sat., Sept. 19th, we will hold our Third Saturday service outdoors for a "blessing of the animals" (bring your pets). On our last Sat. service of the year, Oct. 17th, "Sister Act" (a women's singing group) will lead our service in song. After a discussion with Diane Streib, we resumed including Crestview Care Center in our rotation of Care Center services. When we were there on Aug. 30th, 25-30 residents attended the service. KLAB resumes Wed., Sept. 16th. Letters and registration forms are being sent out to all age-appropriate children. Wil Groves, Arden Schlitter, Luverne Bierle and Verna Weieneth will again be our volunteers helping with KLAB this year. A sign-up sheet for snack donations has been placed on the bulletin board by the church office. Following the first KLAB class there will be a pizza and salad meal beginning at 5:00 pm. All KLAB children and their parents and all people from church are invited to attend. The Ch. Ed Board discussed our VBS partnership with Asbury and voted to end our participation in the program. Update on the renovation-women's restroom has been tiled, the stairwells have been replastered and the wainscoting is being installed. RSVP is again planning a Warm Hearts/ Warm Homes event. The weatherization date is set for Sat, Nov 7th. They are again asking churches and civic groups to form teams. The goal this year is to organize 16 teams to weatherize 32 homes. The schedule will be to gather for breakfast and instructions at 8:30, go to our assigned sites to work and finish by noon. Pastor Craig met with Mary Ohrtman, Ex. Director of UDMO and due to low staffing they are making cuts in services. They will no longer work with the Salvation Army bell ringing campaign at Christmas and have asked the Ministerial Association to organize the event and administer the funds. He will contact the other pastors about organizing this campaign and selecting uses for the donations; more information will be made available as decisions are made. UDMO is no longer screening applicants for the Ecumenical Human Needs Committee, so there will be changes coming in the way applicants are screened and dollars are disbursed. The adult Christian Ed class will begin the year exploring the topic of racism in America, using online resources, dvd's and selections from the book "The Warmth of Other Suns", by Isabel Wilkerson. Participants are encouraged to bring in materials to share that will help the group gain a wider perspective on the topic. The Safe Church Policy task force has met and are in the process of putting together a draft that will be submitted to the cabinet, then to the congregation for approval at a congregational meeting. The Shalom Circle reconvened Aug. 26th in East Chapel. Our hope is to periodically meet at least once a month. The Pastor will be out of town on Sept. 25th for an all-day continuing ed. event, "Taming the

Parables.” The annual business meeting of the Iowa Conference is Oct. 17th, and will be held at Plymouth UCC in Des Moines. A lay delegate will be needed to attend.

Board of Trustees: Aug. 15th meeting—Present were Tom Riemenschneider, Gretchen Bruner, Bruce Perry and Joyce Gelhaus. Old Business: as it would cost \$730 to change the color of the sinks and toilets from white to a different color they are going to be left white; the color of the paint for the stairway walls will be decided after the color of the stairway, landings and wood has been decided. Tom and Joyce painted the men’s restroom in the basement. Les Ploeger and Tom put up new wall paneling. The men’s bathroom is now ready for Bryan Gilbert to put in the new flooring. The floor tile in the women’s bathroom will remain the same. New Business; Tom spoke with Chris McNeil to put in a new light over the sink in the men’s restroom. He will also look at the fan that is not working in the sanctuary. Tom will attempt to set up a progress meeting for the following week with Wayne Schlotfeldt and Jensen Builders. Items to be discussed are progress, new finish date, Keystone, maple wood in the basement (was to be oak) and why not stain wood before the wood frames are installed. There was a question about the payment of the \$1,400 that was left from the elevator repair and clean up, if it should come from the building fund or repair and maintenance. August 20th meeting—Present were Tom Riemenschneider, Les Ploeger, Bruce Perry, Gretchen Bruner, Joyce Gelhaus and Pastor Craig. Guests were Tracy Wehrhan, Wayne Schlotfeldt, and Steve from Jensen Builders. The following items on the renovation project were discussed with Wayne and Steve; communication failures, the unisex bathroom did not get stained (will be done when they finish the rest of the wood), the maple wood at the hallway break will be painted, will be staying with the Mannington flooring for the stairway, canyon is the color that was chosen for the treads risers and landing in the stairway, as the Keystone is a cement block Wayne and Steve will take care of this, will stick with white toilets and sinks in the bathrooms, dark brown tile was picked for the wall and a light tile for the floor in the women’s restroom, parquet latte is the counter top for both the men’s and women’s restrooms, two keys were provided for the office doors, an electrical change order of \$800 for work that has already been done in the church office for plug ins and lights. A motion was made to approve the change order for \$3,100 to do the flooring in the entry way also with Mannington flooring. Finishing date of renovation project: Stairway Mannington materials will take 6-8 weeks to get in, the men’s flooring needs to be in so the fixtures can be set the first week in Sept., restroom are expected to be done the first week in Sept., stairway painting and wainscoting will be done around the end of Sept., by the time the stairway materials arrive and installed the project should be completed by the end of Nov., the contract will be renegotiated. New Business—the office will be painted white to match what is there, Joyce and Gretchen will choose the paint for the stairway (ceiling will be white) basement entry and women’s restroom, Jaycox will be working on the ceiling and lights the first week of Sept., budget was completed, Tom will look at getting new lights for the stairway.

Staff/Parish: Aug. 15th meeting--present were Stephanie Hill, Greta Oberender, Dalene Schlitter, Shirley Yungclas and Pastor Craig; Luverne Bierle has given the rough draft of a safe church policy to committee members for their study; there have been two responses to the newspaper advertisement for a choir director; in addition to Pastor Blaufuss, staff parish member Dalene Schlitter and volunteers Don Bruner and Karin Yungclas will conduct the separate interviews with the applicants. New Business- Reviewed the budget for the coming year and recommended to reduce by \$1000 the

minister's car allowance (reason being to reassess the record keeping and mileage computation) and since the organist and choir director figures have recently been discussed and some decisions made, no changes will be made at this time; held a discussion about the creation of a funeral manual comparable to the wedding manual now in use at the church. The next meeting date will be Sept. 8th at 5:00 in the church dining room.

Women's Fellowship: Old Business-Mabel Prescott purchased 12 new water pitchers for the kitchen; Cindy Henning donated an 8 place setting to match our current pattern; motion passed to move Alverson Trust CD to a savings account so it will be easier to access; Cindy will bring back patterns to choose from and the cost; Joyce Gelhaus will ask Memorial Committee to purchase three shorter tables; Morning Star is covering watering the flowers; Mabel Prescott spoke at the May Dinner and to a UCC Team that has a KIVA account and are sponsoring Margaret's group. The group is sponsoring a loan to her for \$1,150 for solar lights for kids to do homework and fertilizer and maze for her small farm. The UCC Team has loaned a total of \$70,275 in 2,150 loans since they started. New Business—changes in the program books are: pages 17 & 18—change Lavonne Osmundson's # to 7057, Sally McIntyre moving to 912 Bell Ave, Apt 1 and Dorothy Stearns moving to Southfield on Sept. 15th; Gayle Olson explained programs for the year are from "Thread of Hope" by Faye Hill Thompson and you are free to pick any devotion you wish to use; may also use any outside items that you find as well to present your program and can do two devotions if you wish; just need to write on each the date, who presented and where you were; the kitchen cleaning should be done during Sept. if possible; the areas each circle is responsible for is in the program book; Meals 'n' More will start on Oct. 7th; the Thrift Sale is Sept 24th 25th and 26th; the price will remain the same; fill out schedules at your circle meeting and return to box; bring suggestions from each circle for the Christmas Luncheon and May dinner; blood drive has been moved to St. Thomas Church on Sept 10th due to the renovation at our church; KLAB treats and coffee sign up sheets are posted—KLAB prefers NO red drinks.

Worship Board: Aug 13th meeting; present were Holly Riemenschneider, Cindy Henning, Audrey Burtnett, Gretchen McGlynn, and Pastor Craig. A discussion was held concerning pulpit supply ministers. Communion will be served by Holly and Linda Lahr on Aug. 15th; Gretchen will contact members who can serve communion on Sept. 6th; The Sister Act will be performing at the last Sat. evening service on Oct 17th; will select a Sunday to serve Fellowship Coffee at the next meeting; next meeting will be Sept 10th at 7:00 pm.

Christian Ed: Aug. 19th meeting-present were Leah Maass, Jane Klaver, Wil Groves, Vicki Blaufuss and Alyssa Kenville; kindergarten will meet with the 1st through 3rd grade with Laurie Epps as teacher; 4th through 6th will be taught by Leah Maass and 7th on up will be taught by Alyssa Kenville; each teacher will pick out her own curriculum; Vicki will make a list of candle lighters for 3 months at a time starting in October with a copy being sent to each parent and the office; Rally Day is Sept. 13th with games in the empty lot for youth at 9:00 am until 10:00, followed by worship; a potluck is being planned, drinks will be provided; help is needed for games, kitchen help and making cupcakes; Anne Sherve-Ose will do ORFF again this year for KLAB; there will be no confirmation class this year; Don Bruner will lead the youth in singing at 9:45 each

Sunday; Vicki will contact Katie Sonsalla to see if she will cover for Don when he is gone in the winter months; the Christmas program will be Dec. 20th with Wil Groves in charge; March 24th, 2016 will be the date of the Easter breakfast; Chase Berhow, Chase Wagoner, Chesley Wagoner and Lauren Leman will be our graduates this year; will not be participating with Asbury for VBS next year due to lack of youth and only three volunteers; completed the budget for the coming year to be submitted to Tracy Wehrhan; Youth Sunday will be addressed at a later date.

Pending Business: Vicki Blaufuss will be one of two delegates to the annual meeting to be held in Des Moines Oct 17th. Luverne will ask Gayle Olson to be the other delegate.

The next meeting of the Cabinet is Oct. 13th, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

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:

OCTOBER

