

**February 2019 Newsletter**  
**First Congregational United Church of Christ**  
**1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595**  
**515-832-2232**  
**<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>**

***“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” --1 Cor. 13:13***



By now you may have heard the news of a Valentine's Day catastrophe: there will be no "Sweethearts" candy to buy this year! The small pepto-bismol tasting candy hearts emblazoned with epic lovers' poems like "Be Mine" and "You and Me" have been produced by NECCO since the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the New England Candy Confectionary Company's recent bankruptcy and subsequent sale of the "Sweethearts" brand to Ohio's Spangler Candy Company has interrupted production, so this year store shelves will be barren of these iconic Valentine treats. (For die-hard fans: Amazon is selling boxes starting at \$9, and on eBay, an eight-pack box of candies is going for \$12). Spangler Candy Company promises that they will relaunch the candy in time for Valentine's Day 2020, which is good news for heart-shaped candy lovers everywhere—and also good news for Spangler, *who can expect to manufacture and sell 8 billion of the sweet love tokens next year.*

As we wait for the relaunch of "Sweethearts" candy we Christians could step into the gap to message and share our own ideal of love, which isn't so much an exaltation of erotic love as it is of *agape*, or Godly love. While I am certainly not against erotic or romantic love, what the world surely needs is more of the kind of love spoken of by Paul in his great tribute to love in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians. This love, *agape love*, writes Paul, is the one gift we humans can receive and share that brings our human lives to fulfillment, and without it we have "nothing"-- and we are "nothing." This love, Paul writes, isn't fevered, but patient; not lustful, but kind. Its presence speaks of a peace that isn't fearful, irritable, or resentful; this love is so reassuring that boasting and arrogance are set aside as needless clanging noises. This divine love grounds us in a power that is as ancient as God, and as eternal. When we know this kind of love we have known what is greatest not only in human life, but also in the very life of God! When we know this kind of love we have yoked ourselves to a divine way of being that makes it possible for us to "bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things."

Of course this lengthy love poem Paul composed to *agape* is too wordy to inscribe on a Sweetheart candy—but it isn't too lengthy to inscribe on our human hearts. But for this to happen we need to first experience this kind of divine love, and for that to happen we have to bring ourselves into alignment with God and open ourselves to this mighty and joyous power that is at the very heart of God's eternal life. *Paul's poem to love is an invitation to be seduced by God's Godly love...to surrender to it...so that we can surrender to its call to live out our lives as extensions of this kind of love in the world.* To say it short and sweet:

***“Before you can love others,  
You must surrender to LOVE!”***

This terse message is at the core of Paul's story, and it is at the heart of the Good News he preached - which he learned from a savior named Jesus, whose divine love for Paul changed Paul's life and Paul's love. This message of Good News is still true today!

So I'm thinking this year it would be wonderful to make some candy hearts with this message on it to give away! But since I don't have a candy heart-making machine, instead I will strive to live out this message and share with others the Divine Love I have received. I hope you will as well!

Happy Valentine's Day! Love, Pastor Craig

## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

M 8 am - 1 pm  
T 9 am - 1 pm  
W 8 am - 12:30, 1 pm to 4:30  
Th 8 am - 12:30, 1 pm to 4:30  
F 9 am - 1 pm

## ATTENDANCE

January 6 49    January 13 44  
January 20 36    January 27 54

### Church Staff

**Rev. Craig Blaufuss**, Pastor  
Office: 832-2232    Cell 297-4316  
Pastor's email: [revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net](mailto:revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net)  
**Michele Omvig**: Admin. Assist. 209-9177  
Church's e-mail: [administrative.office@fcuccwc.org](mailto:administrative.office@fcuccwc.org)  
**Dale Olson**: Stephen Ministry Ldr 839-5619  
**Sunshine Garth**: Choir Director 835-7626  
**Melissa Hindt**: Organist 712-351-1074  
**Curt/Lorraine McCoskey**: Cust's. 832-5341  
**Tracy Wehrhan**: Church Treasurer 297-0370  
**Dale Olson**: Financial Secretary 839-5619

### Church Family

During our Alternative Giving Fair back in December we as a church supported Stepping Forward in Romania by helping to give 32 children in their care a special Christmas. Steve and Cami Mather, SF organizers, are going to be in Iowa in February and would like to come and share with our church family the things they are doing in Romania.

The Mission Board has invited them to come on Wed. Feb. 27 and do this.

We would invite all of our church family to come and share in a potluck meal. We would like to gather at 5:00 and eat at 5:15 on the 27th. After the meal Steve and Cami will share stories with us and we will have the opportunity ask any questions you might have.

So please mark your calendars and plan to join us as we hear about all that is happening in Romania.

Mission Board



Health myths that may surprise you -

MYTH: Milk creates phlegm.

**FACT: Studies among people infected with cold viruses found that drinking milk does not increase nasal secretions.**

MYTH: Cold weather causes colds and flu.

**FACT: Cold temperatures may keep you indoors where germs spread more easily, but people who get chilled are not more likely to get sick.**

MYTH: Green mucous means you need antibiotics

**FACT: Unless symptoms have persisted for more than 2 weeks, you probably don't have a sinus infection that needs antibiotics.**

MYTH: Sugar makes kids hyper.

**FACT: Too many sweets can cause cavities and put children at risk for overweight and obesity, but sugar does not affect behavior.**

MYTH: You need to drink at least 8 glasses of water every day.

**FACT: Fluid intake can be made through juice, milk, and other beverages. There's no scientific evidence that healthy people need as much as 8 glasses of water per day. Need varies with factors such as climate and activity level.**



- 1 - Chris McNeil
- 4 - Leanna Ploeger
- 5 - Jane Klaver
- 6 - Sharon Perry
- 7 - Gene Royster
- 8 - Michele Omvig
- 9 - Les Ploeger
- 11 - Greta Oberender
- 12 - Blakely Ploeger
- 14 - Curt McCoskey
- 15 - Everett (Bud) Crystal
- 17 - Robert Stidolph Jr
- 17 - Piper Williams

19 - Gretchen McGlynn  
 19 - Jenna Short  
 22 - Curtis Alan (PJ) Swanson  
 22 - Colby Butz  
 23 - Stephanie Hill  
 25 - David Weieneth  
 26 - Wilma Taylor  
 27 - Luverne Bierle  
 27 - Diana Oberender  
 27 - Adelyn Oberender  
 28 - Midge Tudor



13 - Dick & Midge Tudor  
 17 - Jose Burgos & Dilia Franco

### **AGAPE**

The AGAPE fund was established to assist persons who face unusual and/or an unexpected financial crisis. The fund relies totally on donations for its existence. It has received a total of \$ 800.00 in three separate donations in the past six years. We have recently used this fund for two individuals in need. The fund is running low on money and is in need of donations to remain a part of our Mission endeavors. Please prayerfully consider donating to the AGAPE fund so our church can continue to help people in financial crisis.

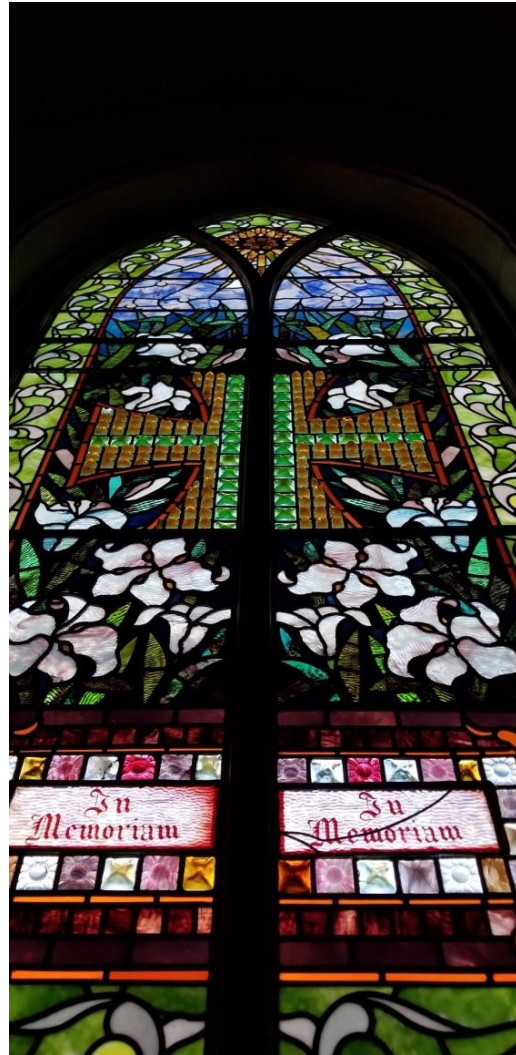
### **Funding Future Leaders**

The Funding future Leaders offering was created to help Iowa UCC students who are pursuing a career in ministry. We are calling this the "love offering" because it falls close to Valentine's Day. Our Endowment Committee has donated \$500 from its funds, can WE, the congregation, match that gift? The Mission Board will be serving the coffee after worship February 10 and the pickle jar will be out to receive your gifts. You may also place a donation in the offering plate, note FFL on your check.

### **Lenten Lunches**

First Congregational is hosting the lunches this year. They start on March 12 and run through April 9.

**On January 20th we held a special service of worship rededicating our stained glass windows. We have included the bulletin insert regarding the windows.**



### **Adult Ed**

The Biblical prophets are considered unique among world religions for their role in bringing a challenging word from God to the people and the rulers of ancient Israel. Join us Sunday mornings at 9:15am as we explore the Biblical Prophets, their times and contexts, their vocation and calling, and their messages of judgment and hope!

### **Women's Fellowship Bible Study**

Join us on Friday, February 1 for a Bible Study focused on the 10 commandments. We will take a look at a DVD by Joan Chittister



**Guests in the sanctuary attic in January:  
squirrels and the confirmation class.**



**Souper Bowl**

On January 27th a quorum of 41 braved the winter cold to attend our annual meeting. Following the meeting the Mission Board hosted a Souper Bowl luncheon featuring soups made by members of the board. The congregation also collected soups to be distributed to local food pantries.



**Treasurer's Report**

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b><u>December</u></b>	<b><u>YEAR TO DATE</u></b>
Pledges and Offerings	\$14,824.00	\$173,269.32
Other Income	.00	13.94
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$14,824.00</b>	<b>\$173,283.26</b>
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>		
Outreach and Mission	1,831.34	\$19,683.00
Pastoral Services	7,674.94	87,983.57
Maintenance and Repairs	4,312.14	37,189.16
Church Office	5,580.80	39,223.73
Music Ministry	1,025.49	8,810.53
Christian Education	18.19	313.78
Local Ministry	2,000.00	2,048.20
Misc. Expenses	0.00	1,303.48
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$22,442.90</b>	<b>\$196,555.45</b>

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting held on January 8, 2019

## Members Present:

Moderator:	Donna Ryherd	Pastor:	Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice Moderator:	Nate Lahr	Trustees:	Joyce Gelhaus
Finance Sec.:	Dale Olson	Women's Fellowship:	Holly Riemenschneider
Finance :	Tracy Wehrhan	Mission:	Gayle Olson
Staff/Parish:	Stephanie Hill	Worship:	
Christian Ed:		Evangelism:	Laurie Epps
Treasurer:	Tracy Wehrhan	Clerk:	Stephanie Hill

The meeting was called to order at 6:58pm by the Moderator, Donna Ryherd. Pastor Craig opened the meeting with a devotional titled 'You May Come Away Hungry' and offered a prayer. A correction was made to the December minutes. It was reported that according to the constitution, the next vice moderator had to be female. This is not required by the church constitution. It was moved by Tracy Wehrhan and seconded by Dale Olson to approve the December cabinet meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS: Worship Board:** No report. Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, the 10<sup>th</sup>. **Trustees:** The underwriters are still assessing the Church's insurance. Jeremy has not contacted us yet. **Christian Education:** Curt McCoskey sent a hand-written report as follows: Thought the Xmas program went pretty well and seemed to be well received. Don't know what to do about the senior high Sunday school class. Only 1 or 2 attends fairly regularly. Don seems to think it's kind of a waste of his time and the kids' also. We'll take another look at that at the next meeting hopefully. Open to suggestions about what can be done. I believe Leah, Mary, and myself are going off the board. Respectfully, Curt McCoskey.

**Evangelism:** Has not met. **Mission:** The Alternative Giving events have been outstanding. **Finance:** Had no report. **Women's Fellowship:** Met last week; no new business. The Lenten Luncheons are being planned. Also they are looking for a new topic for a faith journey. **Nominating Committee:** The vice moderator position still needs to be filled. **Pastor's Report:** Adult Education on Sunday mornings will cover biblical prophets. Confirmation classes will begin again on Wednesday. The cabinet expressed its thanks for the interview Rev. Craig gave about the stained-glass windows that received pretty good coverage. **Treasurer:** A motion to put the report to audit was made and seconded. The report was put to audit.

**PENDING BUSINESS: The Windows:** A special rededication of the windows will be the 20<sup>th</sup> of January instead of the 27<sup>th</sup>.

The full report of the boards and the pastor's report are at the end of the cabinet minutes.

Next meeting is February 12 at 7:00pm.

Adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Hill, church clerk.

**Board of Trustees** Jeremy Butler, Church Insurance Representative reviewed our church insurance policy with us. Following are items Jeremy explained: Blanket Limit, Business Income, Property, Flood, Water, and earthquake, Crimes, Liabilities, Umbrella, Automobiles

Jeremy is going to send the church information to an underwriter and have it reevaluated. We are to pay our billing that is due 1-1-19, and if the cost is adjusted down it will show up on the next quarterly payment. If we have an issue to report for insurance be sure to call Jeremy as soon as possible.

Next meeting: January 17, 2019

**Pastor's Report** I want to again thank everyone who showered Vicki and me with cards, goodies, gifts, and many well wishes during the Holiday Season. I want to especially thank the Women's Fellowship for your gifts to us—and to our "fur babies." We thank you for blessing us in so many ways! **Worship:** We are now finished with Christmas! Dec 9 we observed the second Sunday of Advent, enjoyed the annual Women's Fellowship Christmas Luncheon, and then led services at our 3 care centers! Dec 16 was our children's Christmas program—the "Random Christmas Program." On Dec 24 we held our traditional 5 pm Christmas Eve service in our sanctuary with pew communion, and then on December 30 folks gathered for worship service with a sermon video while I was away on vacation. On January 6 we observed Epiphany Sunday, and following the service we packed away

the Christmas decorations for another year. **Stained Glass Window Open House:** we had approximately 75 people come through to admire our renovated windows on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>. The event was well publicized and well attended, and it was a very enjoyable afternoon. **Stained Glass Article Goes Viral:** Hans from the Ft. Dodge Messenger met with me Nov 29 to photograph our windows and get information for an article in the DFJ and the Hometown magazine. Little did we know that the article would go viral! It has now been in the Fort Dodge Messenger, the Waterloo Courier, the Mason City Globe Gazette, the LaCrosse Tribune, the Des Moines Register, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader....and US News and World Report! **Adult Education:** We have finished our discussions of Advent and Christmas, and the group will decide what topic to study next. **Confirmation:** We broke for Christmas vacation for 2 weeks-- and then cancelled class Jan 2 due to absences. We will resume with a study of Jesus. **Stephen Ministry:** We currently have 2 Stephen Ministers matched with care receivers. Our Stephen Ministers organized a caroling/chili supper on Saturday, December 15, to carol the Care Centers. 17 carolers shared their talents, and then enjoyed a great supper! We will meet next on January 10. **WCMA:** We marked the season with another Salvation Army Bellringing Campaign during Advent: First Congo rang Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and Dec. 21 at Fareway (First Congo brought in about \$1124.01—almost double the amount we raised last year!). Asbury UMC rang on Dec 7 at HyVee, Faith UMC rang at Fareway on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and Trinity rang on Dec 8 at Fareway and Dec 14 at HyVee, and Southfield rang Dec 14 at Fareway. We raised a total of \$3553.58, and subtracting \$505 in checks for the Salvation Army, we netted \$3048.58! I want to thank all of our Congo volunteers—especially those who signed up on short notice or piggybacked onto other church's ringing schedule. **Mission Board** We met January 3. \$3,553.58 was the 2018 Salvation Army bell ringing grand total for Webster City. Of that amount, \$505 was sent to the Salvation Army and the rest goes to aid folks in need locally. Pastor Craig chaired the community-wide effort. The four Alternative Giving Fair opportunities brought in \$320 for Stepping Forward – Romania; \$230 for Share the Weight; 37 servings Pop Tarts, 84 oatmeal, 28 NutriGrain bars, 54 Fruit for the Backpack program; 20 bags containing toothbrush, body wash or shampoo, toothpaste and book for Head Start Bedtime Bags. \$1,616 was donated for the Christmas Fund, gathered at the Christmas Eve service. The menu for the January 22 Beacon of Hope meal will be Cheesy Potatoes and Ham, Jell-O salads, butter/peanut butter sandwiches and bars. Lorraine and Audrey shepherd the planning. The Mission Board serves a Souper Bowl lunch after the Annual Meeting January 27. We will put out the large metal pot for collection of powdered and canned soups for the Trinity and St. Paul food pantries and Pickle Jar for Upper Des Moines Opportunity food pantry Food Bank purchases. Mission Board will host coffee and set out the Pickle Jar on February 10 to collect for Funding Future Leaders scholarships. Endowment Committee plans to make a \$500 donation. Can the Pickle Jar collect a matching amount? The scholarships for lowans in discernment are given March 8. Steve and Cami Mathers of Stepping Forward – Romanian will be in Iowa soon. We'll try to organize a time for them to talk with our church. Our March hosting of the meal at Beacon of Hope would fall amid Lenten lunches. Pastor Craig will explore having the confirmands plan and serve the Beacon meal. Is it time to donate money rather than put together a Domestic/Sexual Assault Outreach Center Cake Auction basket? If we stay with the basket, Lorraine requests someone else take over organizing it; she's done it for 7 years. The next Mission Board meeting will be Friday, February 1, 5 p.m.



*"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 your Father in heaven."—Matt. 5:14-16*

In a local news article dated November 14, 1890, a reporter noted that "The art glass windows for the new Congregational church arrived last Monday and are now all in place. They are certainly a handsome lot of windows, nearly all being manufactured from opalescent and vanecial glass....they would be hard to excel for neatness, beauty and perfect blending of colors, anywhere."

Since 1890 our beautiful stained glass windows have inspired the worshippers who have gathered in our sanctuary. They have also served as a beacon of faith to the wider community, letting the light of this church shine to all passersby travelling on Willson Ave and Bank Street.

Decade after decade these windows shared their beauty both inside and outside of this church, but over time they began to show signs of aging. The leading began to weaken, causing the windows to bow and ripple under their own weight. Storm windows were added to protect them from the elements, and additional support brackets were added over the years in an attempt to strengthen and straighten the glass curtains. Last year it became apparent that a complete renovation was needed in order to safeguard the windows and to restore their majesty.

First Congregational took on the challenge of restoring this precious legacy in May of 2018. Cathedral Crafts Inc. of Winona, Minnesota was entrusted with the restoration, and their craftsmen arrived here June 18<sup>th</sup> to begin the 2 day process of removing the windows. 38 windows were removed and transported to Winona, where an etching was made of each window before they were disassembled. Each piece of art glass was cleaned and then each window was reconstructed with new lead came. After each window was reassembled the glass was mudded with a special compound to make a weathertight seal between the glass and the leading. The windows were then remounted into the repaired and repainted original wood frames.

On October 24<sup>th</sup> the restored windows were returned to the church for a 2 day process of reinstallation, and the results have been amazing! A century of grime was removed and the windows now glow with a depth and clarity of color which has not been seen since the 1890's. The windows stand straightened and erect in their wood frames, and the removal of the additional support pieces applied over the years has left the planes of art glass unobscured. These restored windows are ready to inspire and bless new generations of worshippers as they continue to bear witness to our ancient story of faith and the good works of this church, so that all may see and give glory to God.



*"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 your Father in heaven."—Matt. 5:14-16*



*We give thanks to God for the gift of our stained glass windows which have inspired generations of worshippers and borne witness to our faith for over 120 years!*

*First Congregational United Church of Christ wishes to acknowledge and thank these donors who have contributed to the restoration of our 38 Stained Glass Windows:*

Duane & Mary Vavroch  
Bob & Mary Van Diest  
Dan & Donna Ryherd  
Greta Oberender  
Virginia Veach  
Wilma Reinsel  
Kay Harfst  
Shirley Yungclas  
Alan & Karin Yungclas  
Craig & Vicki Blaufuss  
Tom & Holly Riemenschneider  
Pat Kesler  
Jane Klaver

Margy Wood  
Joyce Gelhaus  
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Bud & Carol Crystal  
Howard & Barb Stearns  
Bob & Leah Maass  
Dale & Gayle Olson

Mabel Prescott  
Alan Maxon Memorial  
Teresa Treat Stearns Trust  
Stephanie Hill  
Jim & Cindy Henning  
Luveme & Vema Bierle  
Les & Leanna Ploeger  
Arden & Dalene Schlitter  
Audrey Burtnett  
Charlene McKee Memorial  
Rachel Hollingshead  
Caryl Hollingshead



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1000 Willson Avenue  
Webster City, IA 50595

**Address Service Requested**

God is still speaking  
to everyone in the home of:

