

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

*Grandfather, Great Mysterious One,
You have been always and before You nothing has been.
There is nothing to pray to but You.
The star nations all over the universe are Yours,
And Yours are the grasses of the earth.
Day in and day out You are the life of things.
You are older than all need,
Older than all pain and prayer.
Grandfather, all over the world the faces of the living ones are alike.
In tenderness they have come up out of the ground.
Look upon Your children with children in their arms,
That they may face the winds,
And walk the good road to the day of quiet.
Teach me to walk the soft earth,
A relative to all that live.
Sweeten my heart and fill me with light,
And give me the strength to understand and the eyes to see.
Help me, for without You I am nothing.*

What a beautiful prayer! Did you know it was written in 1931 by Black Elk, a Lakota Holy Man and seer of the Oglala Nation who, in our vernacular, would be known as a "Sioux Indian?" Black Elk was never a Christian, yet in his prayer are profound words that speak deeply and beautifully of a living God who is "the life of things," a God who is older than all "need, pain, and prayer." Whenever I read this prayer I sense a spiritual kinship with Black Elk. Through his words my heart speaks as if I too were Lakota, even though I am a German American from another time and place, born and raised in the Christian faith. How amazing it is that two souls so separated by culture and circumstances could find much common ground in prayers to the Great Mysterious One whom Black Elk called "Grandfather" and the Christian scriptures call "Father!"

And yet...why should it be so amazing to us? We who believe that all humankind is made in the image of God should expect such moments of shared vision and profound insight with our brothers and sisters of different faiths and cultures. Beneath all our differences lie hearts that stir with wonder at the world around us; hearts that yearn for the gifts of sweetness and light; hearts that yearn to experience tenderness in our relationships; hearts that yearn to "face the winds" with courage and strength. What a gift from God that we should find so much common ground *in the holy ground of our hearts!* And what a gift from God that we, irrespective of culture, language, and understanding can turn to God for blessing, for illumination, and for instruction in how to walk the soft earth as a relative to all who live! In the Christian faith this is known as *Providence*: the grace of God poured out in endless ways to help, uplift, encourage, and direct us on our walks to the "day of quiet." In the Christian tradition Providence is spoken of eloquently in the hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness":

*"Great is thy faithfulness!"
"Great is thy faithfulness!"
Morning by morning new mercies I see!
All I have needed thy hand hath provided
"Great is thy faithfulness!" Lord, unto me!*

Surely Black Elk himself would have joined in this rousing hymn to the Great Mysterious One—and found much joy in proclaiming this good news with his Christian brothers and sisters!

Friends, wouldn't it be wonderful if we would put aside all that divides us and instead embrace this core commonality: our need for God...and God's desire for us?

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could replace hatred suspicion, envy, threat, and mistrust with good will, cooperation, empathy and LOVE as we join our hearts in a common doxology to the greatness of God and in praise of God's faithfulness to all people? This is what the world needs now more than ever, and as Black Elk reminds us, it is in the power of all living to proclaim with word and deed THIS Good News! My prayer is that we as Christians join our voices and hearts with all people of every tradition and culture and offer the world this great gift, as did Black Elk...so that all people can hear again and reclaim this wonderful, life-changing Good News! --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

April 7 56 April 14 111
April 21 112 April 28 61

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor
Office: 832-2232 Cell 297-4316
Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net
Michele Omvig: Admin. Assist. 209-9177
Church's e-mail: 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

Women's Fellowship May Dessert Event

Everyone Welcome!

Women's Fellowship will host a Dessert Event on Wednesday, May 15 at 7 pm. We will announce disbursements of the year's proceeds. Everyone is welcome to join us for this evening.

Scholarships

The Finance Board will be receiving scholarship applications until June 15th. Applications are available from the church office.



Dealing with allergies -

Delay early morning outdoor activities; pollen is usually released between 5 & 10 a.m. If possible, use air conditioning instead of opening windows. Stay indoors on hot, dry, and windy days when the allergens get stirred up. Wash bedding weekly in hot water. Shower and wash your hair every night. When mowing the lawn or raking leaves, wear a filter mask. When traveling in a car, keep windows up and the air conditioning on. Don't hang your laundry out; allergens can collect on it. Know your local pollen count.

9 - Connie Gustafson
11 - Lauren Leman
11 - Mabel Prescott
11 - Eli Imhoff
16 - Neil Oberender
19 - Gretchen Bruner
22 - Ed Mosbach
26 - Carol Crystal
27 - Isabelle McNiel
29 - Linda Lahr





7 - Craig & Vicki Blaufuss
16 - David & Liz Weieneth
17 - Tracy & Glenda Wehrhan
28 - Diana & Nick Oberender
29 - Dan & Donna Ryherd

Lock-In

Hold on to your flashlights—it's another KLAB summer lock-in at the church! We will meet at church on Friday, May 24, beginning at 7 pm, for 13 hours of games, snacks, movies, hide and seek in the dark! We will dismiss at 8 am on Saturday May 25. A note about the event and a permission slip will be sent home in early May.

Summer Music

Worship Board would like a special musical offering at each of our summer services. Instrumental, vocal, solo, duet, etc. Please contact Donna for dates and to sign-up. *"Music acts like a magic key, to which the most tightly closed heart opens". - Maria Augusta von Trapp*

Thanks

We would like to say a BIG heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make the Lenten luncheons a success. From those who provided food, fixed the meal, served the meal, set the tables, cleaned the tables, washed the dishes, wherever you helped -thank you, thank you, thank you! So many of you in our giving and sharing church family contributed to making the lunches a delicious success. Many positive comments were shared by those attending the lunches and each and everyone should feel a sense of accomplishment over what we were able to do. ~ Holly & Gayle

Agape Means Love

What makes you happy? The sun shines, you get a call from a friend, your grandchild makes the honor roll, you celebrate a birthday, your favorite team wins, and the list goes on. WE have started Happy Dollars for the Agape Fund, encouraging folks to put a dollar in the bucket in honor of anything that makes them happy. (We

borrowed the idea from Kiwanis.) To keep the Agape Fund healthy, we plan to pass the "Happy Dollars Bucket" the last Sunday of every month, during coffee fellowship time, encouraging folks to put a dollar in the bucket in honor of anything that makes them happy "Agape" is a Greek word meaning love - a divine, all-encompassing love. The Agape Fund at our church was established many years ago to assist persons who face an unusual or unexpected financial crisis. We'd like to keep the Agape Fund big enough to help. Thank you! You make us happy. – **The Mission Board**

DSAOC and Karin Yungclas Are Winners

Thanks to you, the Pickle Jar set out for the Domestic Sexual Assault Outreach Center yielded a whopping \$906. We are full of gratitude – and so is DSAOC. To encourage you to be generous, we had a drawing for a nifty large blue backpack – suitable for carrying supplies for a picnic or potluck. The backpack went to Karin Yungclas, whose name was drawn at the April 7 coffee fellowship time. –**The Mission Board**

Senior Recognition and Christian Education Sunday, May 5

The Christian Education Board invites you to a special worship service on May 5! During this service we will honor our high school graduates Dylan McCoskey, Jackson Leman and Kayla Nelson, and our college graduate Katie Short. On this day we will also recognize our Sunday School and KLAB students, teachers, and helpers. Following worship the Christian Ed Board will serve refreshments. This will be the last Sunday of Christian Education classes before summer recess.

Let's Come Together!

Iowa-Nebraska-South Dakota United Church of Christ Joint Annual Meeting June 14-16 Tri-Faith Initiative, Omaha, NE

Cost: \$135 Registration: coming soon!

Friday, June 14 — Registration takes place from 3-5 p.m. followed by a Welcoming Cocktail Reception at 5 p.m. and Dinner and Keynote with Rev. Chris Davies, United Church of Christ Coordinator for Congregational Assessment, Support and Advancement (CASA) from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 15 — Our gathering opens with worship featuring Davies preaching. Following worship our entire gathering will engage in an “open space” meeting for the morning — a facilitated opportunity to lift up what YOU want to discuss and find the people in the room with interests, gifts, and resources to offer on that topic. After a joint Awards Luncheon, each conference will go to a separate meeting space for their annual business meeting. (NOTE: Iowa participants, this will be your ONLY annual meeting in 2019. There will be no fall meeting.) The evening will conclude with a Banquet with special entertainment!

Sunday, June 16 — We will conclude our gathering with a joint worship service with Countryside Community Church that features Rev. Brigit Stevens, Executive Conference Minister of the Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences UCC, preaching and the service of installation for our new Associate Conference Ministers.

Our Host: The Tri-Faith Initiative in Omaha, Nebraska. The Tri-Faith Initiative is one in which three faith institutions – Temple Israel, Countryside Community Church UCC, and the American Muslim Institute — committed to build three houses of worship and a shared Tri-Faith Center together on one parcel of land. We are so grateful for their hospitality!

Several blocks of rooms are already reserved under the name “Tri-Conference UCC.” Book your hotel rooms early because several other large events are scheduled at the same time in Omaha!

Our Thanks

Mission Board discussed at our last meeting that we would like to take our thank you to public employees to others besides our public school staff, so this past month bars were delivered to the city street department along with our thank you banner. We wanted to let them know that the work they put in this past winter moving snow and doing their best to keep our streets navigable was appreciated. We hope to say thank you to others, so we may be requesting your help to do that, and we also want you to let us know if you have a group that you think needs a “thank you” please let a Mission Board member know about them.

Our Easter celebration included an Easter breakfast and a scripture Easter egg hunt, both sponsored by the Christian Education board.



On Good Friday a group from the church showed their love of creation by cleaning up the Brewer Creek trail area. Missing from the photo: Chesney Fuller and Alec Tudor. Thank you all!



THRIFT SALE

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



On Palm Sunday April 14th we confirmed Madison Babington, Shelby Brim, Chesney Fuller and Brandon Lahr into the Christian faith. Congratulations to you all!



First Congregational finished hosting the Women's Lenten luncheons on April 9th. Well done, ladies!



A great big thank you to the group of 17 volunteers from our church who worked for about 30 minutes one Tuesday evening and packed the food bags for all of the May backpacks. Bags were packed for 83 students for the 5 weeks in May for a total of 415 weekend meals for the kids. It really is true 'many hands make light work'. Thank you!!



Treasurer's Report

INCOME	March	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$24,283.00	\$43,039.68
Other Income	.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$24,283.00	\$43,039.68
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	1,583.34	\$3,166.60
Pastoral Services	7,762.94	23,442.73
Maintenance and Repairs	3,864.98	8,357.89
Church Office	2,836.21	8,703.29
Music Ministry	839.68	2,471.35
Christian Education	.00	23.80
Local Ministry	.00	.00
Misc. Expenses	369.00	825.71
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$17,256.15	\$46,991.37

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa
Cabinet Meeting held on April 11, 2019

Members Present:

Moderator:	Nate Lahr	Pastor:	Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice Moderator:	Gretchen McGlynn	Trustees:	Joyce Gelhaus
Finance Sec.:		Women's Fellowship:	Holly Riemenschneider
Finance:	Tracy Wehrhan	Mission:	Audrey Burtnett
Staff/Parish:	Stephanie Hill	Worship:	Gretchen McGlynn
Christian Ed:	Karinne Tudor	Evangelism:	
Treasurer:	Tracy Wehrhan	Clerk:	Stephanie Hill

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by the Moderator, Nate Lahr. Pastor Craig opened the meeting with a prayer. The minutes of the March cabinet meeting were read. Joyce Gelhaus moved the minutes be approved as read. Holly Riemenschneider seconded. The motion passed.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS: **Worship Board:** Saturday services will be held in June, July and August and Sunday services will begin at 9:30 beginning June 2nd. **Trustees:** A thank you to Laurie Epps who put out bids for lawn care. Lawn Rangers was the selected business. **Christian Education:** Easter plans were discussed. Baskets for confirmands cards will be provided and an Easter skit will be presented on March 31st. **Evangelism:** No report. **Mission:** 'Happy Dollars' will be collected on April 28 to boost the Agape Fund. The pickle jar is out for D/SAOC. The clean-up of the Brewer Creek Trail around the hospital will be April 19th. Meet at the church at 1:00pm. Backpack packing is scheduled for April 23rd at 6:30 at Trinity. The Summer Lunch Program will begin June 17, 2019. The Story City Library and Kendal Young Library will be donating books. Relay for Life is set for June 19th in Stanhope from 6 to 9pm. A thank-you event is planned for the snow removal crew for their great efforts. **Staff/Parish:** No report. **Finance:** Had no report due to members traveling. **Women's Fellowship:** Representatives from each of the participating churches decided that for Lenten Lunches next year, each church would be responsible for 1 week. That church would provide a meal and do the program. The order will be Asbury, Faith, St. Thomas, Trinity and Church of Christ. Next year UCC will not have responsibilities. The 10 Commandments study group has concluded. Care center birthdays will be celebrated on May 2nd. **Pastor's Report:** Confirmation will be held on Palm Sunday with 4 confirmands. Maundy Thursday service will be held

on April 18 at 7:00pm in the east chapel. Adult education wraps up soon. Two Stephen Ministers are matched. The Tyler Mosbach wedding will be held in May 2020 at UCC. **Treasurer:** Offerings were very good in March and expenses were down. A motion to put the report to audit was made and seconded. The report was put to audit.

PENDING BUSINESS: Evangelism Board

As of this meeting the Evangelism members have not selected officers. And the duties assigned to them are not being done as far as can be determined. This will be discussed again next month.

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

Next meeting is May 14 at 7:00pm.

Adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Hill, church clerk.

Board of Trustees Donna Ryherd has delivered the Orff Instruments to Eastern Iowa Arts Academy. Donna brought back the check for them. We received \$2500 for the Orff Instruments which Tracy put in the Doty Fund. Tom has repaired the vinyl base board by the quilting room. We received three bids for lawn care. They were from North Central Turf \$169.23/ application, All American Turf Beauty \$197/ application, and Lawn Ranger \$150/ application. Discussion was held. Tom made a motion that we use Lawn Ranger for lawn care. Seconded by Alan. Motion approved. We will prepay for the full year to receive the discount, total \$372.00. A concern was brought up about ice on sidewalks from the gutters. We will look at how we can run the gutter water underneath the sidewalks when the weather is nicer. Discussion was held on the Lots for sale. Tracy has been asked about them but nothing concrete. Joyce checked on the contact with the realtor. The contact was for 11/20/17 to 5/20/18, then we lowered the price July 2018.

Worship Board We will be serving Fellowship on May 19. We will hold Saturday service during June, July and August and it will be the 3rd Saturday of the month. Dates will then be June 15, July 20 and August 17 at 5:00pm. Sunday summer worship will be at 9:30am and will start on Sunday June 2 through Sunday September 1. Maundy Thursday, April 18 service will be held in the East Chapel at 7:00pm.

Mission Board We extended the final day for the Domestic/Sexual Assault Outreach Center Pickle Jar to Sunday, April 7, and will have the drawing for the backpack that day during coffee fellowship time. The Cake Auction is April 13. Pastor Craig reported that he, several confirmands and parents served around 40 men March 20 at the Beacon of Hope Fort Dodge shelter. Karin and Audrey will shepherd the May 28 meal at Beacon. On March 31, coffee fellowship time participants found \$134 (plus a \$10 IOU) in reasons to be happy for our first Happy Dollars collection to support the Agape Fund. Wil Groves worked the crowd, collecting money in a bucket. Our next Agape Fund collection is April 28. One Great Hour of Sharing was collected March 31, totaling \$1,109. It will be divided between OGHS and UCC disaster relief to the flooded areas of the Tri-Conference states of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota. The church is invited to pick up trash along the Brewer Creek Trail and around Hospital Hill as our April 19 – Good Friday – service project. Our church packs backpacks April 23, 6:30 p.m., Trinity. The Free Summer Lunch Program at the Middle School begins June 17, with our church again volunteering to take the first week. Kendall Young Library and the Story City library agreed to donate books to give to children who come for the lunches. We received word from Lori Hartnett, school food service, that there will be only one paid school lunch staff during the summer, so churches and groups volunteering will need to provide two helpers. Joyce Gelhaus will again be our church Relay for Life team captain. We will host coffee time and Pickle Jar for the Relay. The Relay is June 19 in Stanhope. All Church Read: Gayle said she will share a copy or two of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond, who will speak at National Synod this summer. Marjorie has ordered a copy and is willing to share, as well. Who should we thank next? Our ice cream gratitude to the teachers last fall inspired us to talk about who to thank next with a sweet treat. We'll check with the heads of the city and county road crews to thank workers for clearing snow. The next Mission Board meeting will be Wednesday, May 1, 1 p.m.

Women's Fellowship Lenten Lunches have been very successful. The last meal will be served by the Executive Board. Women's Study completed their study of the Ten Commandments. They will explore ideas for the fall. We have an anonymous donor purchasing a new roaster oven. Thrift Sale is April 26 & 27th. Sign-up on poster in Fellowship Hall or in your circle to work. Care Center May Birthday Parties May 2nd. Southfield will be at 1:30 and Crestview will be at 2:15. Each circle needs to provide 2 doz., cookies. We still need a short program. A singer will be asked, but also ask in your circles. May Dessert Buffet will be May 15th at 7 pm. Each circle needs to provide 2 desserts. This is in place of a dinner. We will announce disbursements of funds.

Pastor's Report Lent is nearly over for another year. We had several volunteers help with our Care Center worship services on March 31—thank you! March 31 in Worship we were treated to a fine Easter skit presented by our KLAB kids, with Wil Groves and Karinne Tudor producing and directing the effort. Palm Sunday (April 14) we will confirm our Confirmands during worship. Maundy Thursday service (April 18) will be held in the East Chapel at 7 pm, and Easter Sunday (April 21) be a busy morning with a light breakfast beginning at 9 am, a children's activity at 9:30 am, and a traditional worship service with pew communion beginning at 10:30. There will be no coffee following Easter Sunday worship. May 5th will be Senior Recognition Sunday and Christian Education Sunday. While the Women's Fellowship report lines out the details, let me just say how gratifying it has been so see the turnout for this year's Women's Lenten lunches! There has been quite a bit of work involved for our Women's Fellowship to host the lunches this year, but the turnout has been tremendous, the food great, and the programming inspirational! Well done, Ladies!

We have been working through the video series "What Wondrous Love: Holy Week in Word and Art." WE will finish Sunday, April 14th. There will be no Sunday school classes on Easter Sunday.

On March 20 the class organized, prepared and served a meal for 40 + men of Beacon of Hope. We are concluding the class with topics discussing the Holy Spirit and the Church, and the students are preparing their faith statements for Palm Sunday.

We currently have 2 Stephen Ministers matched with care receivers. We will meet April 11 for our next monthly meeting.

Lori Hartnett announced that the school system is again hosting another summer lunch program, beginning June 17th and ending July 26th. The Mission Board directed me to claim the first week for our church (done). New this year: we will need to provide 1 volunteer to help serve the food, as the school system is only going to hire one staff person to cook/serve for the program. In other news, the Backpack program just received a huge check for \$1181 from St. Paul Lutheran church! We did not meet in March due to absences.

On March 28th we held a Celebration of Life for LaVonne Osmundson. Thank you, Women's Fellowship, for helping organize this and hosting the refreshments following the service! There was a private burial for Verie Hollinghead at Graceland on April 5, and her celebration of life was held in our sanctuary April 6, 11 a.m. with a meal following.

Megan Johnson and Tyler Mosbach will be married Saturday, May 2, 2020 in our sanctuary.

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:



May 2019