

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



I just returned from attending General Synod 32 in Milwaukee, and I bring you greetings from the UCC national body which convenes every 2 years to conduct business, approve resolutions that guide the course of the United Church of Christ, hear reports from the various agencies and ministries of the UCC, and strengthen connections throughout the diverse body of believers who constitute this particular body of Christ. Each day was lengthy with business, education, and debate; each day was an opportunity to see firsthand how the polity and diversity of the UCC come together at the national level to impact the decisions and direction of our denomination. It was an exhausting and fascinating 5 days—and in the midst of all the business there was still time for rest, and for getting reacquainted with old friends--and making new ones!

Here are some of the key elements of GS 32 that I want to share with you...please know that you can go the national website and facebook page and find more complete information about this gathering.

We elected Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson as the Associate General Minister, replacing Rev. Jim Moos who is retiring after 6 years in this position. After a fairly contentious debate, we narrowly re-elected Rev. John Dorhaur to continue as our General Minister and President for another 4 years. During the debate over his candidacy, he announced to the Synod that he would not seek re-election in 2023.

Over the course of 8 plenary sessions twenty-two resolutions concerning a wide range of topics were brought to the Synod floor for debate and vote. Some of the various resolutions that were brought to the floor included: advocate for the abolishing of private for-profit prisons; denounce religious bigotry; call for reduced consumption of single-use plastic; denounce white supremacist ideologies; afford more support to the Mental Health Network of the UCC; observe “Break the Silence Sunday” in support of survivors of sexual violence; reduce nuclear armaments and nuclear proliferation; create a “Manual on Church” to guide the local churches of the UCC; eliminate binary gender language in the UCC By-Laws; affirm support of the proposed “New Green Deal”; recognize opioid addiction as a health epidemic; create a new unified UCC conference in the New England states, and advocate for ending the process of separating immigrant children from their parents when they are apprehended and detained. A particularly emotional debate centered on the resolution to refuse exhibit space to the Faithful and Welcoming churches within the UCC, and after much debate the resolution was tabled-- to be acted on later by the UCC Board of Directors while General Synod is in recess. (Note--this is not an exhaustive list of the resolutions; please to UCC.org or the UCC Facebook page to learn more about GS32 resolutions.)

On Monday the Synod voted to delay the 5th Plenary in order to gather en masse at the ICE building in Milwaukee to protest the recently announced mass deportation raids of undocumented immigrants. While there were hundreds gathered at this protest, no violence broke out and no arrests were made.

Creativity and theological expressions of beauty abounded at the Synod, with impressive stage decorations, high quality video presentations and graphics, and live “theological reflectors” at work as Synod conducted business-- including an artist painting on stage, a poet, and a song composer who created a closing song for the gathered to sing at the end of the last plenary.

Sunday community worship saw 4000 attendees gather to worship together and share the Lord's Supper in the spirit of faith and solidarity. It was amazing to watch the logistics of sharing communion with 4000 people—50 communion stations were needed!

Building relationships has always been a key component of any General Synod gathering, and I was blessed to have been able to reconnect with several Eden Seminary classmates—many whom I have not seen since graduation in 2004! I was also deeply appreciative of a new initiative to offer a self-care suite for those exhausted or overwhelmed by Synod so they could retreat and recharge before returning to conduct Synod business. I was also appreciative of Synod offering a space for spiritual practice and quiet contemplation, including a daily 5 pm group spiritual practice.

On a personal note, I was happy to share GS 32 with Stephanie Hill, who also served as an Iowa delegate (our church had TWO delegates!). I was also blessed to have spent time with my brother Kurt, who was an Ohio delegate... and I was pleased to rejoice with my sister-in-law Mary Schaller Blaufuss, who announced that she was departing from her position with the UCC national staff to take a new position as the Vice President for Institutional Advancement for Eden Theological Seminary.

As you can imagine, there is much for all who gathered for GS 32 to mull over and reflect upon, and I will be doing that for quite some time! Please know that I will be happy to share more information-- and my experiences-- with any of you who want to know more about it! --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

June 2	38	June 9	44
June 15	47	June 23	49
June 30			

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor
 Office: 832-2232 Cell 297-4316
 Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net
Michele Omgig: Admin. Assist. 269-7210
 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



- 1 - Katie Short
- 1 - Chris Swanson
- 2 - Ava Stockdale
- 2 - Barb Stearns
- 5 - Dale Olson
- 6 - Jacob Dean Rohmiller
- 7 - Susie Brim
- 8 - Duane Vavroch
- 9 - Erica Oberender
- 11 - Dylan McCoskey
- 11 - Melissa Hindt
- 12 - Caryl Hollingshead
- 13 - Leah Maass
- 14 - Kaleb Sterler
- 18 - Cindy Henning
- 20 - Luke Rohmiller
- 21 - Candy Butz
- 23 - Mike McKee
- 23 - Nate Lahr
- 24 - Donald Royster
- 25 - Landen Ploeger
- 25 - Alex Swanson
- 27 - Troy Stockdale
- 28 - Brenden Ploeger



16 – Jennie & Zach Williams
19 - Al & Christy Fiala
22 - Clark & Jean Mowry
26 - Todd & Katie Sonsalla
29 - Colby & Candy Butz

3 Great Loves

As we continue to do our part to focus on the Three Great Loves, here are some ideas to help show our Love of Creation:

Recycle used materials
Compost food scraps

Install low flow shower heads to use less water
Make sure dishwasher is full before running it
Walk or bike or carpool whenever possible
Unplug small appliances when not being used
i.e. toaster, coffee maker, cell phone charger.

Olde Fashioned Ice Cream Social

This year the social was at First Congo. We raised \$590 which will be given to the Free Clinic and Willson Brewer Park Renovation. Each year your support of this event is great and we really appreciate your response.



Let's Blow Them Away!

July is a month we focus our giving and outreach to Upper Des Moines Opportunity here in town. This year we have decided to help them collect some portable electric fans for families in need of cooling. New or like-new fans are best. Stationary or oscillating. If you would rather donate cash to the cause the pickle jar will be out for the month of July and someone from Mission Board will purchase fans to then

be given to UDMO. Please have your breeze-producing device, or your cash donation, to the church by July 28, and we'll deliver the fans to UDMO. Thanks! - The Mission Board

Thank You

◆Dear UCC Family,
Thank you so much for your ongoing support while I continued my education. With all the warm wishes, prayers and scholarships, I always knew that my church family had my back at college. Thank you for honoring me at Senior Recognition Sunday and for the gift of the Iowa State wall hanging. It'll be nice to have in my new place in Seattle come August. I hope to be back again this summer to say "goodbye" before I move to Washington.
Thank you again,
Katie

◆Dear First Congregational Church Family,
I want to thank you all for the support that you have always shown me throughout my life. I am thankful for the graduation gifts and for your kindness.
Sincerely,
Jackson Leman

◆First Congregational Members,
UDMO would like to thank you for your generous monetary donation. Your continued support helping low-income families in need is greatly appreciated.
Sincerely,
UDMO Staff

◆Church Family,
Thank you for the picture frame. But most of all, thank you for your gift of love, support, and prayer for the last 17 years.
Sincerely,
Dylan McCoskey

Scholarship SATURDAY

Will be held during our next Saturday service on July 20th. Scholarship recipients for our FCUCC scholarships will be announced and checks given out. Come support our scholarship recipients and hear about their current and future plans!

Potluck

The Evangelism Board is sponsoring an all-church potluck to be held Saturday, July 20th following our next Saturday evening service. Please bring a dish to share. Dishware and table service; drinks will be provided. There will also be a Creative Jello Cooking Contest!

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*

Relay for Life

Between the quilted items up for auction and funds raised during coffee fellowship on June 9 we raised \$1,080 for the American Cancer Society, Thank you!

Summer Lunch

First Congregational UCC once again volunteered to lead the first week of the Webster City Summer lunch program, which was again held at the WC Middle School on the week of June 17-21. Attendance was good throughout the week, and we were pleased to see a greater number of walk-ins from the community attending the program this year! It was a joy to serve and share time with the children of our community. Thanks to all of our volunteers who helped with this project!



Agape Means Love

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. 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**

General Synod 32 - Milwaukee



Treasurer's Report

INCOME	May	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$28,032.00	\$80,769.68
Other Income	0.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$28,032.00	\$80,769.68
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	4,750.02	\$7,916.62
Pastoral Services	7,579.94	38,602.61
Maintenance and Repairs	2,077.82	12,418.63
Church Office	2,491.42	14,088.10
Music Ministry	591.58	4,146.09
Christian Education	0.00	269.51
Local Ministry	0.00	.00
Misc. Expenses	0.00	905.59
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$17,490.78	\$78,347.15

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Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

