

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

*“Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.” –Ephesians 4:32*

*“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” –Matthew 5:5*

*“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.” –Colossians 3:15*

I have been thinking and praying about what topic to study as we begin our 2019-2020 Adult Sunday School class (we have done so many!), and Wednesday morning this answer came: “Study the qualities of Christian character.”

OK...my first reaction was to wonder about this suggestion, for it sounds rather dry, almost sanctimonious and not one that seems to fit our practice of studying highly relevant, provocative, and timely topics. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that it is a very timely topic in our day and age! Today we have role models and exemplars of character in abundance—they saturate our lives through the media and social media—and they showcase every conceivable quality of character. It seems obvious to most Christians that some of these qualities of character are decidedly “unchristian”: racism, a thirst for violence, hatred of strangers, base cruelty, unchecked greed, an obsession with lust, bullying and the oppression of the weak, disdain for the poor, the sick, the disabled....etc. These decidedly unchristian qualities are easy to spot, reject, and stand against as expressions of our “fallen nature” or of “unredeemed humanity”...to be countered and corrected by the virtues of “Christian character.”

And yet, what is a distinctly Christian character? I don’t have to tell you that even Christians cannot agree on the essential qualities of Christian character. The proponents of the prosperity Gospel claim that one essential quality of Christian character is to be faithful enough to “plant a seed”—so that God will bring them (not the world— just “them”) a “harvest.” Is this kind of quid pro quo relationship with God part of our Christian character? There are those who claim (Reinhold Niebuhr among others) that an essential part of Christian character is to protect the weak and the defenseless—even if that protection results in violence and killing as a necessary evil. Is the use of violence against others as a form of defense and self-defense a quality of Christian character? Western Christianity has decided that a quality of Christian character is charity—but it is a guarded charity that does not hold all things in common, as the Bible reports the earliest Christians indeed did as a community of believers. Is our form of economic capitalism, and the private ownership of property and wealth, a form of Christian character? And in an age when “love” can mean everything from loving pizza to loving my favorite sports team to loving my dog, my country, or my romantic partner du jour... in what sense is love, as Jesus practiced and taught love, an essential quality of Christian character?

As you can see, the more we delve into the topic of Christian character the murkier the waters seem...and yet it should seem obvious to us all that developing our Christian character is an essential part of our discipleship AND our mission in the world. It is perhaps the most effective outreach we as Christians have, for the people we meet may not study the bible, they may have no interest in church or church life, and they may have no use for Christian cosmology or our doctrines or our professed plan of salvation...

But they will read our character, they will respond (pro or con) to our distinct way of being in the world, and they will see in our ways of living and loving an offer of salvation—not in the sense of being saved from the hell of the afterlife, but in the sense of being saved from the hell of aimless and out of control lives; empty and meaningless lives; lives that live by the feud or the fix; lives that are

divorced from the ways that lead to real peace, abiding joy, a sense of cosmic belonging...and a life devoted to lovingkindness as the grandest expression of human character.

Friends, as you read this I would urge you to take the next step and actually compile your list of the essential qualities of Christian character. What would you choose? Meekness and humility? Peacefulness? Righteous anger? Fortitude? Generosity? Courage? Nonviolence? Self-control? Joy? Submission? Hope? Make the list of qualities that seems definitive of what you most admire about Christians. Then...ask yourself what you are doing to manifest these qualities in your life as the highest good that you are offering to the world, and ask yourself what needs to change in your life to bring these qualities to life...in you.

I hope you will join us in Adult Sunday School class starting September 15 for this important and useful study! --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

August 4 34	August 11 41
August 18 30	August 25 49

## 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. 269-7210  
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

20 - Mary Byrne  
20 - Amani McMurray  
24 - Will Weieneth  
26 - Kayla Nelson  
28 - Dena Rohmiller  
30 - Mark Brim



1 - Ron & Laurie Epps  
1 - Travis & Stacy Wearda  
18 - Les & Leanna Ploeger  
18 - Jim & Cindy Henning  
19 - Landen & Betty Ploeger



## Six ways to be more resilient

- Develop strong relationships with family and friends who will support you in a time of crisis.
- View problems as surmountable. you may not be able to change the things that happen to you, but you can change the way you think about them and react to them.
- Make decisions and take actions, even small ones, instead of hoping problems will go away.
- Take care of yourself with a healthy diet and regular exercise.
- Write in a personal journal or find another healthy outlet to explore your feelings.



1 - Sunshine Garth  
2 - Ayla Jackson  
6 - Debra Carlson  
7 - Brandon Lahr  
8 - Vada Rae Williams  
9 - Robbie Maass  
15 - Mark Vance  
16 - Morgan Struchen

## Step Out with the 2019 CROP Walk

Lace up those walking shoes and join the First Congregational UCC team on Sunday, September 29, as we participate in the CROP Hunger Walk in Webster City. The Mission Board will put out the pickle jar for your donations when the CROP crew hosts coffeetime after the worship service on September 15. CROP fights hunger at home and around the world. Twenty-five percent of the money collected will be donated to Upper Des Moines Opportunity in Webster City. The other 75 percent goes to international programs through Church World Service. On September 29, come to the Brewer Creek Shelter on Des Moines Street at 2 p.m. The walk is two miles. You are invited to bring a jar of peanut butter for a local food pantry and bars of bath soap for Lutheran World Relief. If you have any questions or want to join our church's CROP walkers, contact Marjorie Groves (515-297-2352). Marvin and Deb Christopherson are coordinating this year's Webster City CROP Hunger Walk (515-543-8332). Thank you! – ***The Mission Board***



## **THRIFT SALE**

**October 25 & 26**

**Fall** cleaning time and de-cluttering.

**Friday & Saturday, October 25 & 26 -**

Women's Fellowship will be conducting their semi-annual Thrift Sale.

**Wed. October 23 -** We will be accepting those items cluttering up your lives.

**Contact** Cindy Henning at 297-0422 or [jbhfam@mchsi.com](mailto:jbhfam@mchsi.com)

- **If you have Large items**
- **Need assistance transporting items**
- **or have Questions**

***Remember items should be clean, complete, and in good repair.***

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

Cindy Henning

## Teacher Appreciation

As a part of The Three Great Loves initiative in our church the Mission Board decided to show "love of neighbor" by hosting an appreciation break for the teaching staff in the Webster City school district. We are planning to have a snack for the staff during one of their breaks during their Staff Development days in August/September. Plans are still being finalized so we are unable to share details, but know we will need volunteers to help say thank you to our teachers and help start their year on the right foot. Please be watching for more information on this event in your email. Thank you! Mission Board

## Thank You

♦Dear Finance Board,

I want to thank you for selecting me as one of the recipients of the Helen Johnson and Bess Lyon scholarships. The scholarships will be a great help to me this year at Iowa State. I appreciate your generosity.

Sincerely,

Jackson Leman

♦Dear UCC

On behalf of the volunteers, staff, and Historical Committee, I would like to sincerely thank all of you for the donation made from your Ice Cream Social. ... Thank you again for your kindness,

Sincerely,

Kent Harfst

♦Dear First Congregational Family

Thank you very much for awarding me with the Bess Lyon Scholarship. I will use the money towards my education at NIACC in Mason City. It has been fun growing up in this church with the amazing people. I will miss everyone dearly, but will be back soon.

God Bless,

Riley Nelson

♦Dear Finance Board

Thank you so much for awarding me the Poole and Helen Johnson scholarships. These scholarships will be extremely helpful in my senior year at UNI. I am so grateful for your generosity.

Lauren Leman

### **Rally Day!—September 8!**

Save the date! Rally day is Sunday, September 8, beginning at 9:15 with games for all ages in the vacant lot. Following worship we will enjoy a hotdog picnic. The Evangelism Board will provide the meat and buns; please bring a dessert or salad to share along with your table service.

### **Sunday School begins September 15**

We are looking forward to another year of Christian education for all ages. Our children and youth will be participating in a “one room schoolhouse” class where all age groups will be together to learn and grow! See you September 15 beginning at 9:15 a.m.!

### **Adult Education Resumes September 15**

We will meet again in the multipurpose room in the lower level of the church beginning at 9:15 and ending at 10 a.m.—sharp! Our first study will be focused on the qualities of Christian Character.

### **KLAB Begins Sept 18**

Another year of Kids Learning About the Bible is about to begin! We will meet Wednesdays after school for free time, snacks, Bible lessons and other activities. KLAB is open to students grades 1-6. Registration forms are available in fellowship hall. We are also looking for volunteers to provide snacks. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in fellowship hall if you would like to donate.

### **Choir**

Choir will start practices on Wednesday, September 4 and perform on Sunday, September 8.

### **Budget Time Approaching**

Each board has a worksheet upon which they can prepare their budget for 2020. The Finance Board has asked that we hold the line on expenses; if necessary to increase an item, look for another place to reduce. We need to make a conscious effort to be good stewards. These worksheets should be given to the Finance Board (turn in to the church office) by September 15.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

Crestview Nursing and Rehabilitation has opportunities available for volunteers. Assist with bingo, visit, play piano, sing-a-long leader, pet visits and any other talent you are willing to share. For more info contact Sunshine Garth, 832-2727.

### **Canned Food**

On August 28th members of First Congregational responded to a plea for help to move 8 pallets of canned goods out of a damaged semi trailer and into smaller trailers for distribution to local food pantries. The free canned goods were the result of an accident which damaged them so they could not be resold.





## Treasurer's Report

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE</b>
Pledges and Offerings	\$8,728.00	\$101,532.68
Other Income	0.00	.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$8,728.00</b>	<b>\$101,532.68</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Outreach and Mission	14.41	\$9,925.37
Pastoral Services	7,579.94	54,012.49
Maintenance and Repairs	2,267.48	18,867.43
Church Office	2,872.77	19,600.34
Music Ministry	402.72	4,869.60
Christian Education	0.00	269.51
Local Ministry	0.00	.00
Misc. Expenses	109.64	1,215.23
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$13,246.96</b>	<b>\$108,759.97</b>

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting held on August 13, 2019

### Members Present:

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by the Moderator, Nate Lahr. Pastor Craig opened the meeting with a devotional and a prayer. The minutes of the July cabinet meeting were read. Donna Ryherd moved and Dale Olson seconded that the minutes be approved as read. The motion passed.

**Christian Education:** Their meeting is scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup> or the 28<sup>th</sup> of August so they have not met yet. An informational letter will be going out this fall. **Evangelism:** Presently they are updating the children's bags as well as the Welcome Bags. The Jello cookoff went very well and many thanks to Marilyn Middleton for her expertise. Compensation for stamps needs to be made to Wilma Reinsel. **Finance:** July offerings were \$8,078.00 and expenses were \$12,098.68. The budget meeting is scheduled for the end of September. Scholarships have been awarded. **Mission:** Board members want to thank all for volunteering food for the Beacon of Hope meals. Also 24 electric fans or enough money for 24 fans was donated to UDMO. A plan to feed the staff of the community school is in the works. A \$1,000 gift was received (anonymously) for the Migrant shelters. Mission Board members are also exploring alternatives to foam and plastic in compliance with a Resolution adopted by the General Synod this summer. **Staff/Parish:** We have had no issues so far this year therefore nothing to report. **Trustees:** A new sign was purchased for the sale of the lots. A change in the fees schedule for use of the church facilities was instituted. Sharing the church with Iglesias de Dios Pentecostal MI is still going well. **Worship Board:** Next meeting is September 12<sup>th</sup>. The 17<sup>th</sup> of August is the last Saturday service for 2019 and root beer floats will be served following the service. **Women's Fellowship:** The Circle Booklets have been completed. The next meeting is scheduled for the end of August. **Pastor's Report:** Pastor Craig will speak to the representative of the Iglesias church regarding their continued use of the church and fees. The Ministeriam will elect Rev Mike Kroona's replacement. **Treasurer:** The July offerings are well short of the expenses. The fees charged to the Iglesias church need transferred to the General Fund. Tracy Wehrhan moved to put the report to audit. Dale Olson seconded. The motion passed and the report was put to audit.

Complete Board reports are attached. **Pending:** All cabinet members are asked to take part in the Periodic Support Consult with Chris Burtnett from the Northwest Association Committee on Ministry. He will meet with Pastor Craig and then the cabinet members on August 27<sup>th</sup>. **Comments:** Holly Riemenschneider commented on the good experience she had as a server at the Beacon of Hope meal. Donna Ryherd mentioned that Anna, who escaped trafficking in Romania, is getting married this summer. Women's Fellowship assisted her with getting her documents. Next meeting is September 10 at 7:00pm.

Donna Ryherd moved and Stephanie Hill seconded the motion that we adjourn. The motion passed. Adjourned at 7:41pm.

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Hill, church clerk.

**Board of Trustees** Tom brought a metal sign to post on the lots for sale. Joyce took it to Cindy, to customize it with "FOR SALE BY OWNER 515-832 2232." Our contract with Neighbors has run out. Tom put up the new paper towel and soap dispenser in the kitchen. They meet the handicap requirements. The Pentecostal church remodel is nearing completion. They pay every two weeks. No problems have been reported. Some issues with the Women's restroom had come to our attention. Tom discussed them with Curt. The Bride's restroom toilet was clogged. The plunger was used on it.. Mark Trueblood came and checked it. Mark said that if it did clog again to call Rotor Rooter because he does not do that work anymore. Church Usage request approve for PEO September 12 6PM. Tom will clean the little trees out of the gutters, on the garage. Discussion was held on the fees for Use of the Church Facilities. We changed the following charges for Non-Members: Dining Room and Kitchen \$25 to \$50. Use of dishes and table service \$10 to \$25. (If use paper please take out the trash) Custodial fee for Fellowship Hall \$25 to \$35/ first hour and \$15 to \$35 for each additional hour. Classroom or East Chapel \$10 to \$25. Sanctuary \$50 to \$100.

2020 Trustee Budget was done. Joyce will check with Pastor Craig on cost of a new computer for him. Tom checked with Trash Man to see what the change would be in cost if we changed from pick up of 4 times a month to 2 times a month. It was \$25 dollars a month difference. No change was made. We went outside to look at the drain for the sump pump on the south side of the church. It clogs with leaves and grass, then floods the sidewalk. Bring ideas next month on how to fix this.

**Mission Board** We met July 31 for our August meeting. Even during the summer, our church continues to be active in mission work. We collected \$39 in Happy Dollars for the Agape Fund Sunday July 28. On July 30, the 35-40 men of Beacon of Hope enjoyed the dinner we prepared. The menu of hot ham sandwiches, watermelon and more was popular. Servers were Andrea and Ed Mosbach, Jill Coons, Madison Babington, Jane Klaver, Jan Maxon and Holly Riemenschneider. 24 electric fans were delivered to UDMO, for our July Upper Des Moines Opportunity collection. Planning for our Teacher Appreciation ice cream is in the works. The Mission Board has been given \$1,000 by an anonymous donor to be used as we choose. After much discussion over several meetings, we voted to give the money to the Monastery Migrant Shelter of Tucson. The money will be used for clothing and toiletries needed by new arrivals into the U.S. This group has been supported by the United Church of Christ One Great Hour of Sharing. Gayle is investigating coffee mugs in place of Styrofoam or plastic served at coffee gathering places, such as McDonald's, or at coffee fellowship time. A resolution passed at the recent General Synod, stated: "Be it . . . resolved that Thirty Second General Synod encourages Conferences, Associations and Congregations to educate their members about plastic foam and that they encourage the use of alternatives such as paper products or, better yet, ceramic or other dishwasher-safe products." The Mission Board discussed encouraging church members to use reusable mugs, as a test, before we take the concept to the wider community. Marjorie will find out when the CROP Walk is planned for this year. September 15's coffee fellowship time will feature the Pickle Jar for CROP donations. April 28 is our church's tentative date for Backpack packing. Would there be interest in taking a carload of folks from our church to help the rebuilding of Pacific Junction (Mills County, between Glenwood and the Nebraska border), after flooding damage? The Glenwood UCC and nearby churches are helping.

**Worship Board** Our board business was taken care of through e-mail. August 17<sup>th</sup> will be our last Saturday evening worship service. Root beer floats will be served after the service. Video sermons

are going over well. Our budget for the Worship Board has been turned in, as well as the budget for the Chancel Committee and Music Committees.

**Pastor's Report** Worship: Summer worship continues with diminished attendance but thoughtful services nonetheless. Our Saturday Service on July 20<sup>th</sup> had several scholarship recipients in attendance, and then we FEASTED on a fabulous pot luck and some marvelous Jello creations! Thanks to Marilyn Middleton who judged the Jello cooking entries; I was blessed to sit at the table where all 3 contest winners were seated! Our next Saturday service will be August 17, and following the service the worship Board will serve root beer floats. A nice way to end our summer worship series! Church Building Sharing with Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal MI: I have not yet received word when our space sharing with Iglesia will be concluded. Stephen Ministry: We currently have 2 Stephen Ministers matched with care receivers. Sharon Perry led our last class session using a lesson from the book "Caring Evangelism: How to Live and Share Christ's Love". We will use this book and supplemental materials for our next series of lessons. Ecumenical Human Needs Committee: A meeting was held by pastors and other people committed to EHNC on Thursday, August 1. The consensus was that the EHN work should continue on, and Sharon Perry was appointed as the interim replacement for Rhonda Masser. Sharon will receive applications and interview applicants once a week on Wednesdays at First Congregational, from 9-11 a.m. UDMO is aware that EHN is now resuming taking applications, so we expect applications to start coming in again shortly. A follow up meeting is scheduled for August 22, 10 a.m. at Asbury UMC, to go over the current guidelines for the fund and evaluate if there needs to be changes. Periodic Support Consultation: Christ Burtnett contacted me and the Northwest Association Committee on Ministry wants to set up a Periodic Support Consult with myself and the church leadership on either Tuesday, August 27 or Thursday, August 29. A PSC is a set of questions offered by CoM facilitators that allow pastors and church leaders to reflect on their shared ministry, explore new possibilities, consider what could be done differently in ministry, celebrate successes and joys, and name hopes and concerns for the future.

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:



September 2019