

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

"When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught out of his being, and not as their teachers of the law." - Matthew 7:27-28

Mark Nepo tells the story of an Indian sage who went to the Ganges river to pray. One day, noticing a scorpion struggling in the water, he cupped it in his hands and carried it to the shore. As he placed the scorpion on the ground, it stung him. The next day when he was in the Ganges praying, he saw the scorpion again struggling in the water, and again he carried it to safety—and again he was stung. The third day he returned to the Ganges and AGAIN saw the scorpion flailing in the water, and as he went to lift it out the scorpion, it said in exasperation "Why do you keep lifting me? Can't you see that I will sting you every time, for that is what I do?" And as the sage cupped his hands around the scorpion, he replied: "Because this is what I do."

There is a lot of meaning in this story, for like the Indian sage we express who we are by what we do. When we are stung by scorpions or unkind words or hurtful acts, it is an opportunity, albeit a painful one, for us to choose *who we are* in our response. When we are treated unfairly by others or by Life, those painful moments are also opportunities to choose *who we are* in our response. *Even in situations that seem impossibly difficult, painful, and challenging... even in those moments (especially in those moments!) we are given the opportunity to give witness to who we are, by how we choose to respond.*

Jesus showed us the truth of his being as he consciously chose his responses to the world around him. His conscious choice to come into this world, to become flesh among us, certainly showed us that he was willing to undergo painful experiences for our sakes. When he renounced the "normal" life of a Jewish peasant in order to become a wandering teacher and healer; when he chose to share the pain of the sick, the poor, and the sinful rather than isolate himself from them; when he chose to share his light with those whom John the Evangelist claimed "hated the light"; even when he chose to forgive those who "stung" him with a Roman scourge and Roman nails...he revealed the mystery of who he was: a "revelation" who still continues to inspire and create wonder in us. And while we may not choose to respond to every person and situation as Jesus did, his example reminds us that how we will respond to all that happens in our lives is the gift of *ourselves* we give to others, and to the world.

November 28 is Thanksgiving Day, and on that day we will be given the opportunity to give thanks for all the blessings God has bestowed on our lives. Typically our "thanks" are reserved for all the blessings we can count, which loosely translates as the abundance of good things and good people in our lives. Perhaps this year we might try something different and offer our thanks for the *opportunities*—even the difficult and painful ones-- that give us the chance to know and express *who we are* through our conscious choices. That "food for thought" may be the only non-fattening item on the menu for Thanksgiving! It may also be the most profound blessing we have to celebrate.

May your Thanksgiving be blessed—and may you be a blessing to others through your choices! --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

October 6 70	October 13 64
October 20 61	October 27 55

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor

Office: **832-2232** Cell **297-4316**

Pastor's email: **revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net**

Michele Omvig: 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**



3 - Bob Maass
 4 - Chase Berhow
 5 - Joely Gilbert
 6 - Amanda Kalkwarf
 9 - Keith Holdgrafer
 11 - Dilcia Franco
 13 - Holly Riemenschneider
 13 - Katie Sonsalla
 13 - Oliver Sonsalla
 13 - Andrea Mosbach
 14 - Emily Maass
 18 - Donna Ryherd
 20 - Jon Follett
 20 - Jayleen Burgos
 20 - Laurie Smith
 24 - Maggie Kennedy
 24 - Tyler Nelson
 25 - Diane Vasquez
 26 - Andrew Wehrhan
 27 - Susan Leman
 27 - Glenda Wehrhan



21 - Mark & Deb Carlson
 22 - Tom & Holly Riemenschneider
 25 - Arden & Dalene Schlitter
 29 - Ray & Diane Vasquez



Five things every caregiver should know

- It's necessary - not selfish - to take care of yourself when you're caring for an aged parent or a chronically ill spouse. Overstressed caregivers increase their risk for health problems.
- Realize that asking for help is just as important as giving it. Negotiate with family members or friends to do specific tasks. If you can afford it, hire someone for housework or gardening.
- Get daily exercise and stick to a healthy diet. Activities that reduce stress can also keep your immune system strong.
- Avoid isolation. Stay in touch with family and friends, even by phone or e-mail. Share your feelings with a support group, or talk to a counselor or religious leader.
- Enjoy the time you do have with your loved one. Try to make your time together about more than the illness. Do things together like going through photo albums, listening to music, or just watching TV.

KLAB

Our KLAB students are pen pals with some of the residents of Crestview Care Center, and they would like to give a Christmas gift bag of personal hygiene items to each of their pen pals. To do this they are asking for your help! In early November KLAB will create a display of items they are asking you to donate to fill 10 Christmas gift bags. Thank you in advance for your help! --from your KLAB Leaders

SERRV Sale November 9&10

Saturday November 9, 9-noon, Sunday November 10, 11:30 am-12:30 pm at Fellowship Hall. Food, textile and household items from around the world will be sold to help artisans in 24 countries. Project of Women's Fellowship.

Alternative Giving Fair returns for the Advent season!

Mission Board is again sponsoring the Alternative Giving Fair this year. This is an opportunity for you to shop for loved ones and help others while doing this. We will have a different opportunity for you to check out for the 4 weeks starting Sun. Nov. 24, and going until Sun. Dec 15.

The first week, Nov. 24, there will be a variety of products that will allow you and those on your shopping list to live a more plastic free life. Come check out our table and maybe find something to help eliminate some single use plastic in your life!

Stay tuned to find out what opportunities will be available on Dec. 1, Dec. 8, and Dec. 15.

See you there!

Mission Board

Adult Education Study: The Bible Project

Do you find the Bible to be confusing, obscure, or even irrelevant to our modern culture? Would you like a fresh look at an ancient collection of sacred texts? Our next Adult Education study will be based on the work of Timothy Mackie and Jonathan Collins, the co-creators of "The Bible Project." The Bible Project is a non-profit animation studio that produces short-form, fully animated videos designed to make the biblical story accessible to everyone. Dr. Tim Mackie is a pastor and a professor of the Bible at Western Seminary in Oregon, and his deep love of the Bible as a beautiful and inspired collection of writings is evident in every video. The animations that compose the series are very creative and well done, visually complementing the themes of each video. Tim and Jonathan have blended history, theology, ancient thought and timeless truths into very engaging and accessible videos that bring the great themes of the Bible to life! Please join us at 9:15 Sunday mornings in the multi-purpose room as we spend several weeks exploring and discussing The Bible Project! For more information, please view this link: <https://youtu.be/8Tbcfs6l3o>

All Saints Sunday November 24

All Saints day is a time to remember those departed "saints" who have shaped and blessed our lives in so many ways. On Sunday, November 24, we will observe All Saints

Sunday during worship by reading the names of our departed congregation members who have died in the past year. Following their remembrance, individuals and families will be invited to come to the front of the sanctuary to light candles in memory of loved ones and friends who have departed. The departed saints of this congregation whom we will remember during this year's All Saint's Sunday are: Lavonne Osmundson, and Verie Hollingshead.

No KLAB --November 27

There will be no KLAB or post Confirmation class on November 27, as that is the day before Thanksgiving.

Advent Begins—December 1

Sunday, December 1 is our first Sunday in the season of Advent, and we are again asking for volunteers (families or groups of friends) to lead the Advent Candle Liturgy. If you are willing to help with this important part of our Advent worship please sign the sheet that will be posted by the church office.

Decorate the Church for Christmas—December 1

Mark your calendars! Following worship on Sunday, December 1, we will again bring out the Christmas decorations and spend some time beautifying our church in preparation for the birth of Jesus. Please plan to stay and help with one of the most enjoyable activities of the year!

Congregational Meeting

There will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, November 10 to vote on the proposed budget for 2019. Absentee ballots are available in the church office.

Recycle for a Good Cause

Caps for Love is a non-profit organization that turns plastic bottle caps in and uses the money to buy wheelchairs and repair wheelchairs for children. Any color plastic lid is accepted except black. Coffee, creamer, pop, water, laundry soap, salad dressing, peanut butter, shampoo, etc. The lids have to be clean and any paper, inside or out, needs to be removed. It's amazing how many things have plastic lids. If you would like to donate there is a container on a shelf near the women's bathroom in Fellowship Hall.

Women's Fellowship Autumn Thrift Sale

Our Thrift Sale was a huge success again! We raised approx. \$1800 before expenses. The profits from the sale will help us give funds to many deserving organizations in this community and around the world,

"Thanks" to each of you. Whether you helped donate, sort, clean-up, haul away, provide food or worked, the Thrift Sale could not get done without YOU. It's a lot of work, but also a lot of fun and fellowship.

Thank you all so much!!!

Cindy Henning

Chairperson, Thrift Sale



Medicare

Open enrollment is until December 7. Make sure you have coverage that meets your needs. SHIP can help you sort things out 832-7769.

Thanks

Let me take this opportunity the Lord has given me to Thank You for letting us borrow your church for our Sunday worship! May the Lord keep blessing you always! God bless you and thank you very much!

Iglesia "Casa de Restauracion"

Rev. Efrain Magdaleno

Quilts

On October 20th during worship we dedicated quilts made by the Piecemakers group at First

Congregational. These quilts will be donated to DSAOC and UDMO, to be given away to those in need.

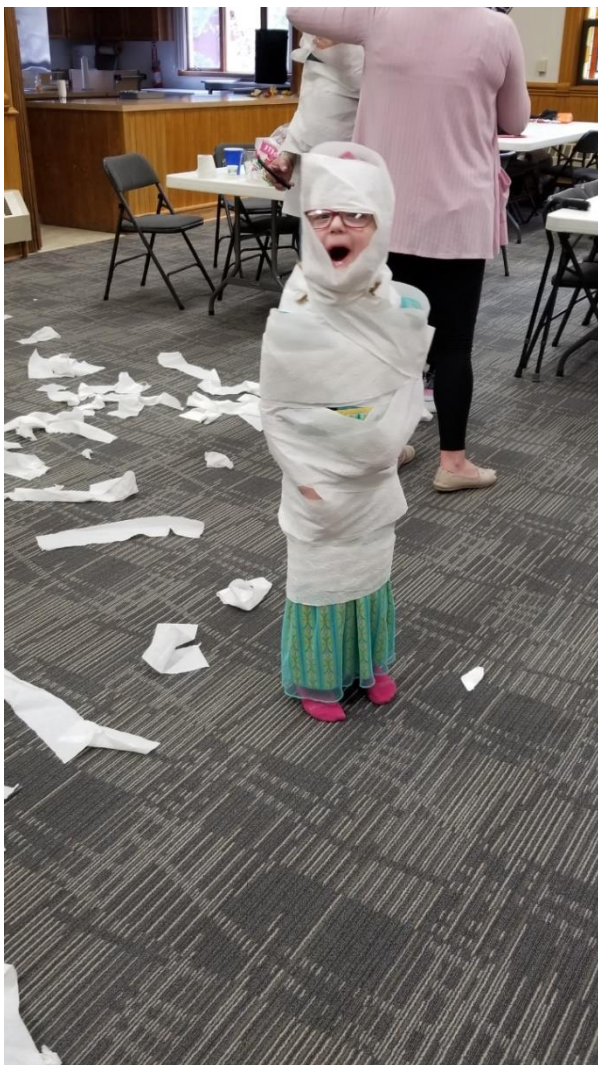


Pecans for sale

Halves or Pieces, \$10 per bag. Make checks out to Haystack Circle.

On October 30th our KLAB and post confirmation kids gathered to enjoy the annual Halloween party!





Treasurer's Report

INCOME	September	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$11,117.00	\$127,674.14
Other Income	0.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$11,117.00	\$127,674.14
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	0.00	\$11,539.00
Pastoral Services	7,829.94	69,422.37
Maintenance and Repairs	5,046.69	26,018.01
Church Office	2,599.24	25,344.15
Music Ministry	955.85	6,139.31
Christian Education	0.00	269.51
Local Ministry	55.00	73.09
Misc. Expenses	15.55	1,293.42
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$16,502.27	\$140,098.86

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting held on October 8, 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:	Lorraine McCoskey
Staff/Parish:	Stephanie Hill	Worship:	Donna Ryherd
Christian Ed:	Laurie Epps	Evangelism:	Carol Crystal
Treasurer:	Tracy Wehrhan	Clerk:	Stephanie Hill

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm by the Moderator, Nate Lahr. Pastor Craig opened the meeting with a devotional and a prayer. The minutes of the September cabinet meeting were read. Several corrections were made to the minutes. Donna Ryherd moved and Laurie Epps seconded that the minutes be approved with the corrections. The motion passed. **Christian Education:** Did not meet. **Evangelism:** Did not meet. **Finance:** September offerings were \$10,876.00 and expenses were \$16,969.06. Budgets from the committees and boards were compiled. **Mission:** No written report was submitted. FCUCC will not support Warm Hearts Warm Homes this year due to a lack of truly needful clients. A Giving Fair will be assembled in Fellowship Hall. **Staff/Parish:** Members met and completed their budget which was forwarded to the Finance Committee. **Trustees:** September 21st was the last day Iglesias de Dios Pentecostal MI church members used our facilities. **Worship Board:** Has not met, but Pastor Craig's vacation days have been covered. **Women's Fellowship:** Has not met due to the funeral. Donna Ryherd will be in charge of the SERRV sale which will take place before Thanksgiving. **Pastor's Report:** KLAB met on the 18th. Attendance is down from last year. The Ministerium will meet on October 31st. Past confirmands met on Wednesday the 9th for a planning meeting. Stephen Ministers continue to be available for matches. Adult Education has begun on Christian Character. Ecumenical Human Needs (EHN) is active, but reports on who received funds is lacking. The Shalom Circle is not going yet. **Treasurer:** Offerings are down as well as expenses. A transfer of \$4,000.00 of interest was done to cover expenses. Tree trimming expense came out of the Building Fund. The LED lights are paid for by a donation. An outside audit is needed. 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:** There is concern about the battery backups not working during power surges. This was the reason power was lost on Sunday's service. Modern Sound in Fort Dodge will be contacted to correct this. Dale Olson moved and Laurie Epps seconded the motion that the 2020 budget be approved. The motion passed unanimously. The budget is approved. November 10th is the Congregational Meeting. The Safe Church Policy is due to be reviewed and refresher courses offered for those who will work with children. Gretchen McGlynn is heading the nominating committee for 2020.

New Business: We received a letter of transfer for Kayleigh Epps from UCC in Eldora. Donna Ryherd moved and Dale Olson seconded the motion that Kayleigh be received in membership to UCC of Webster City. The motion passed unanimously.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Board of Trustees Old Business: Jim's Tree Service came and removed the bad limbs from the trees on the lots. Also trimmed out some branches out of the trees on the northeast corner of the church for another \$100. Paid for by the Building Fund. Nothing has been done with the bats. No bats have been seen recently. We are checking with Chris to get the women's bathroom vent fixed. Mark Trueblood will be checking the boilers and will be replacing a couple of valves. We have not received a final date from the Pentecostal Church. No issues have been noted. Tracy received a quote from K and H Corporation for new LED lights and fixtures. Total cost \$3570. We also received another estimate from Conner Schweibert that would remove ballast and put in LED lights. Since there was not a quorum the approval will be by email. Through email the all new fixtures and bulbs were approved. These will be paid by the Building Fund. New Business: Joyce had an inquiry on the lots. We are asking \$30,000 for the lots and are willing to negotiate. There was a report of a wet area in the downstairs bathroom. No leaks were found. There has not been any water seeping in.

Finance Board Discussion was held on the budgets submitted by each board. Minister's insurance account was not completed as we have not heard from the conference about the increase. \$200.00 was added to the Christian Education budget was use for the post confirmation students. This will be listed under the JYF/Yams account. Motion was made and seconded to approve the submitted budgets, with all members approving. Discussion was held about which accounts should be listed with each board. It was decided to have the cabinet review each boards budget sheet and make necessary changes.

Women's Fellowship Executive Board Shirley Yungclas shared those getting cards. Cindy shared we received many thank you notes from money recipients. Cabinet Meeting Report: Holly Riemenschneider reported they met with Chris Burnett for 4 year review. New Business Kitchen Cleaning and Inventories – circle assignments in program books. Program books have been distributed, Circles asked to look for any

changes needed. Hosting of fellowship coffee after church encouraged. The Exec. Board divided into 3 groups. Group 1 – Gayle Olson, Holly Riemenschneider, Cindy Henning, Verna Bierle Group 2 - Shirley Yungclas, Wilma Reinsel, Ginny Veach, Kay Harfst Group 3 – Greta Oberender, Mabel, Prescott, Carol Crystal, Joyce Gelhaus Thrift Sale Dates: Wednesday, October 23 --- Saturday, October 26; There is a sign-up sheet on the table. Cindy bought yard signs to put up around town. If you can put one in your yard the week of the sale that would be great. Circle meeting change – Shirley Yungclas will host at her house at 11:00. Circles to use any resource for their programs for the year. Gayle Olson has some books you can borrow – “Bad Girls of the Bible” and “Being Mary in a Martha World”. If you have a good program share with other circles. SERV— Ask in your circles if they want to have a consignment sale or catalog sale. Providence is considering doing consignment sale. Spiritual/Faith Journey for 2019-2020 – Gayle Olson will look for resources. Other: put roaster and ice cream maker somewhere other than on top of cabinets. Recycling – think about getting rid of plastic – use paper – be aware of what we are using – wash plastics to reuse. Verna Bierle is researching how to recycle bottle caps.

Pastor's Report KLAB: KLAB began Wednesday, Sept 18! We had 6 children ranging from K-6 attending, and after some games the group met to brainstorm some activities and service projects. KLAB was cancelled last week due to Kent Harfst's memorial service. Post-Confirmation Youth Group: 3 teens met to discuss and plan for the coming months. Possible projects: organize and serve a Beacon of Hope meal, Visit the Hindu Temple in Madrid, plan a summer mission trip or attend the National Youth Event in July. We will meet every other week, and in the off weeks the students may volunteer to help with KLAB. Adult Education: We continue our study of “Christian Character”. We have studied “judgmentalism”, “helping others”, and next we will study “obedience”. Stephen Ministry: We currently have 2 Stephen Ministers matched with care receivers. We will not meet in October, but will reconvene in November. EHNC: We will meet again this Thursday to continue revising the Ecumenical Human Needs Committee guidelines. (We cancelled our last meeting due to Kent Harfst's graveside service.) Sharon Perry continues to be the interim coordinator, and she is doing a great job! She is contacting local pastors to be a part of the decision –making a process for each applicant's request. WCMA: The WCMA has not yet met. We are having scheduling conflicts which are making meeting together difficult. Our next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 31 at noon. Boundary Training: I will be taking my required Boundary Training on Saturday, October 19. Wedding: I officiated at Mark Andrew and Susan Leman's wedding in Mason City Sept 14. Funerals: I officiated at the memorial service of Ed Latham, held on September 24 here at First Congregational. Ed's burial was Sept 25; I did not participate in his inurnment. I officiated at Kent Harfst' memorial service held at Prem Sahai Auditorium on Wednesday, Oct. 2. There was an estimated attendance of 850 people, which spoke volumes to Kent's character and his impact on this community. I will be the officiant at the memorial service for Chet McNelly, to be held at Fosters on Thursday Oct 10, 1 pm. Vacation: I will taking a week's vacation Oct 21-28, in part to celebrate my mother's 90th birthday. We will enjoy another video sermon on Oct. 27 during worship; Gina Sterk of Trinity ELCA will cover emergencies for me while I am away.

Cabinet Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Hill, 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:

