

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

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." –Matthew 7:24

When we lived in Burlington, there was a house in an upscale development that continually had a "For Sale" sign in the yard. Apparently whoever had excavated the foundation had over dug it at one end, and then the excavator had attempted to hastily backfill it before the basement was poured. This shoddy foundation caused the basement to develop cracks, and the house itself would heave and twist, causing the siding to buckle. You could always tell when the house was being prepared to be sold: the back siding was removed and straightened, and sure enough—shortly after that, the "For Sale" sign would go up in the front yard again as the current owner hoped to lure someone into buying this questionable piece of property that sat atop a poor foundation.

This story certainly illustrates Jesus' words from "the Sermon On the Mount" when he spoke about the kind of foundation on which we should build our lives. Yet how seriously do we heed the words of Jesus? Do we let them convict us, and compel us to engage in the hard work of laying—or the even more difficult work of *re-laying*-- the foundations of our lives? Or is it easier to dismiss his words as too lofty, too poetic, too impractical, or just too difficult for us to follow—and thereby delude ourselves by thinking that we can build our Christian lives on what Jesus would call a foundation of "sand?"

When we hear Jesus say "Blessed are the meek, the humble, for they shall inherit the earth" ...do we take those words to heart, or dismiss them as "impractical" in a world that is driven by the powerful; a world in which the shrill get all the attention; a world in which the arrogant and overbearing seem to come out on top while "nice guys" finish last?

When we hear Jesus say "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 God" ... do we take responsibility to live out our beliefs in the eye of the public, or do we become just another face in the crowd, private Christians who do not publicly act in ways that honor Jesus' life and teachings?

When we hear Jesus say "be reconciled with your brother or sister before you approach the altar of God" ...do we make a good faith effort to heal our broken relationships with family members, friends, church members, and our fellow citizens who share this republic with us... or do we allow our pride-- or our hurt --to sabotage the possibility of reconciliation?

When we hear Jesus say "love your enemies" and "turn the other cheek" ...do we struggle with the difficult demands such words ask of us? Or are we convinced that retaliation is the only foundation that will give us true peace and security—whether it is at a personal level, or at the international level?

When we hear Jesus say "do not lay up treasures for yourselves where moth and rust consume" and "you cannot serve God and wealth" ... do we seek to live lives less obsessed with the accumulation and enjoyment of more "stuff", and more devoted to serving and caring for others?

When we hear Jesus say "spend less time worrying, and more time trusting" ...do we work at trusting God by praying, studying, and listening for God's word to us? Or do we only rely on *our* resources and *our* wisdom --either because we have too little faith, or because we don't want to open ourselves to a God who has a claim on our lives that may not be in line with our plans?

When we hear Jesus say "Judge not, lest you be judged" and "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" ... do we hear these words and let them guide our actions in our dealings with every soul we will encounter in life...or do these words only apply to those we are closest to—and then only when we are having a good day?

Friends, we can't sugarcoat the truth: the Sermon on the Mount lays out a difficult and demanding foundation for our Christian living. But if we dismiss the Sermon on the Mount's claims on our lives, and instead opt for a more familiar and less demanding way of living, then we are guilty, like those unscrupulous owners of the heaving house in Burlington, of pretending that a foundation of sand is really a foundation of rock!

May we all hear the call of the Sermon on the Mount, and become builders wise enough to build on the true rock of Jesus' wisdom...so that we may build something truly worthwhile on that foundation: a life well lived; a Christ-like life!

—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

September 1 42 September 8 75
September 15 58 September 22 57
September 29

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



5 - Bud & Carol Crystal
9 - Nate & Linda Lahr



Make it about activity, not exercise!
5 ways to get kids moving -

- Send them out to play
- Make one hour of movement part of "homework"
- Help them find their own "thing"
- Get the family together for a physical activity at least once a week
- Limit "screen time" to no more than two hours a day.



1 - Kay Harfst
8 - Logan McCoskey
9 - Dawn Holdgrafer
10 - Gayle Olson
13 - Karen Weir
14 - Larry Brim
15 - Richard Tudor
15 - Jim Henning
16 - Emily Stockdale
16 - Brayden Babington
20 - Malachi Tewald
30 - Luna Lahr



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

- **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

Rally Day Success!

Once again Rally Day was a success! Thank you to all who made it so by helping with the activities, participating, cheering us on, or providing food. The weather held out and we had about two dozen kids plus Vicki to participate in Musical Chairs, Minute to Win It games, and the Sawdust Scramble for candy. A special thanks to the Evangelism Board for organizing the pot luck that followed worship, it was all delicious!

See you Sunday – Your Christian Ed Board



3 Great Loves - Love of Creation

Did you know that at the UCC General Synod last summer a resolution was passed that encourages all local churches to work to cut their use of plastic - especially single use plastic?

In light of that we have a few plastic facts for you:

according to an article in the July issue of The Guardian the US produces 234 pounds of plastic per person each year.

8.3 billion tons have been produced since 1950. Of that 9% is recycled (which we export to countries in Africa and Asia, basically offloading our problem onto them); 12% is burned; and the remaining 79% is in landfills or the environment.

the average time a plastic bag is used is 12 minutes.... it takes 1,000 years for it to decompose!

With these things in mind what can you do to reduce your part in this threat to our creation?

Can you:

Make sure you have reusable bags with you when shopping - grocery or otherwise

Use a metal straw instead of plastic or don't use a straw at all

Take your own glass or coffee mug with you when traveling or going to the coffee shop

Keep reusable silverware (bamboo) in your car so when you make that stop for that ice cream you don't have to use a plastic spoon.

What other ways can you think of to decrease your use of plastic?

When we all work together we can decrease our dependence on plastic and show our Love of Creation.

Mission Board

Fisher Theatre

Fisher Theatre in Ames is presenting some short plays that address climate change issues and present a call to community action the weekend of Oct. 4-6. Show times on Friday and Saturday are 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Admission is FREE, seats are general admission with doors opening 1 hour prior to curtain. There are a few of us planning to attend the Friday performance. If you would like to attend please let Gayle Olson or Donna Ryherd know, and we could carpool to Ames.

Ice Cream

Monday Sept. 23 Dale Olson, Chesney Fuller, Audrey Burtnett, Karin Yungclas, Lorraine McCoskey, and Gayle Olson scooped ice cream and poured chocolate, butterscotch, or caramel toppings on about 80 dishes of ice cream that were served to the paraprofessional staff of the WC schools. The consumers of the ice cream enjoyed it during their break on their Staff Development Day. Thanks to all who helped!!

Thanks

Thank you for hearing the plight of migrant families and responding with your donation for our Alita program.

Since October 6, 2018 when we learned that several hundred migrants were being released into our community that weekend, Catholic Community Services has reached out in a

loving spirit with humanitarian aid to the over 20,000 migrants who have been our guests. The number of people in our care at any given time has gone from a few dozen to more than five hundred, and numerous locations have been used to provide shelter.

Wherever our work with migrant families may lead, you have our promise that we will give respectful and compassionate care with the best interests of our guests guiding our actions. Thank you for the faith you have placed in us, and on behalf of the families we are privileged to serve, please accept my heartfelt appreciation.

Liz McMahon

Director of Development

Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona, Inc.

Treasurer's Report

INCOME	August	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$15,024.46	\$116,557.14
Other Income	0.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$15,024.46	\$116,557.14
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	1,613.63	\$11,539.00
Pastoral Services	7,579.94	61,592.43
Maintenance and Repairs	2,103.89	20,971.32
Church Office	3,144.57	22,744.91
Music Ministry	313.86	5,183.46
Christian Education	0.00	269.51
Local Ministry	18.09	18.09
Misc. Expenses	62.64	1,277.87
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$14,836.62	\$123,596.59

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting held on September 10, 2019

Members Present:

Moderator: Nate Lahr
Vice Moderator:
Finance Sec.: Dale Olson
Finance : Dale Olson
Staff/Parish:
Christian Ed: Laurie Epps
Treasurer: Tracy Wehrhan

Pastor: Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Trustees: Joyce Gelhaus
Women's Fellowship: Holly Riemenschneider
Mission: Audrey Burtnett
Worship: Donna Ryherd
Evangelism: Carol Crystal
Clerk:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by the Moderator, Nate Lahr. Pastor Craig opened the meeting with a devotional and a prayer. The minutes of the August cabinet meeting were read. A correction to the minutes was made. Dale Olson moved and Donna Ryherd seconded that the minutes be approved with the correction. The motion passed. **Christian Education:** Rally Day went well. Sunday School will be held, but attendance is forecast to be small. **Evangelism:** It is still difficult to get people to usher. A Thank You will be sent to all for Rally Day participation; including food preparers. **Finance:** August offerings were \$13,974.46 and expenses were \$13,691.27. Budgets from the committees and boards are due September 15th. **Mission:** The Agape Fund was increased by \$104 collected August 25th. Ice Cream with toppings will be served at the High School for the para professionals on September 26th. Another appreciation day will be held in the spring. Mission Board members will provide treats following service on September 15th. Crop Walk will be held September 29th. More events listed in the full report below. **Staff/Parish:** Will meet on Sunday, 15th after church to work on their budget. **Trustees:** Tree have been trimmed by garage. Additional work may be done on trees. Checking into LED lights for Fellowship Hall. **Worship Board:** Taking care of communion and summer music is completed. **Women's Fellowship:** Met last week. Thrift sale is October 23rd through 26th this year due to Cindy's absence in September. Most circles meet this week for the first time. **Pastor's Report:** Good Rally Day. Sunday School begins as a 'one room school house'. KLAB begins on the 18th. Confirmands will be invited to participate in discussions and possibly go on mission trips. Stephen Ministers continue to be available for matches. Trying to get the Shalom Circle started again. Adult Education begins this week. The theme is Christian Character. Working on new guidelines for Ecumenical Human Needs. Applications for Ronda Masser's position are being reviewed. Pastor Craig is now the leader of the Ministeriam. April is the month for UCC to do the Backpack program. The Periodic Support Consultation went well. The wedding for Susan Lehman and Mark Andrew will be Saturday, the 14th. The funeral for Ed Latham will be September 24th. Burial will be in Des Moines at the Veterans Cemetery. **Treasurer:** The August offerings close to August expenses, but year-to-date we are still behind. Donna Ryherd suggested that more information about both the monthly income/expense and annual budget be put in the newsletter. Tracy Wehrhan will talk to Finance Board. 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:** Iglesias de Dios Pentecostal MI has paid through July, and they continue to be good guests.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Christian Education Laurie has agreed to be our Cabinet Representative with Karinne as an alternate. A Thank You note from Ginnie Veach was read by Laurie. Old business was a discussion of the lock-in held since the last meeting and future use of a list of pen pals' names. It is difficult to do summer activities with a lack of a core of participating youth. New business included a discussion of Rally Day to be held on September 8 for approximately 45 minutes before Sunday service. Evangelism Board has asked to take over the organization of the meal that has followed church service the same day. Wil is responsible for contacting them. Rally Day will begin at 9:15-10:00 with games on the lawn beside the church. Activities will include: 1. Cupcake Walk with Jane, Karinne and Laurie furnishing the cupcakes. Don will contact Katie and Todd Sonsalla to see if they will supervise this game as they have in the past. 2. Candy Scramble, which will be organized by Pastor Craig. 3. Corn Hole, furnished by Karinne and 4. Minute To Win It, prizes and activities organized by Laurie. Further new business was a discussion of Klab with Karinne taking leadership again this year. There is a possibility that Pastor Craig may have occasional meetings with former confirmands on those Wednesdays about a possible mission trip and/or attending the National Youth Event in Indiana on July 22-25, 2020. Vicki has offered to help also. Sunday School starts September 15 and Klab starts on September 18. Youth will be receiving a letter from Pastor Craig with details about Klab, urging them to bring a friend to Klab. Michele will provide a signup sheet for the snacks needed during Klab so that church members may volunteer. A later discussion will be held about Klab

possibly offering a Christmas program. The last part of new business was the future of Sunday School. Laurie wrote and presented a letter for consideration by the Christian Education Board. This letter was agreed upon by committee members and will be mailed to all church members. Members discussed the 2020 budget that Wil is going to turn in by the end of August.

Board of Trustees Old Business Cindy did a nice job on the For Sale by Owner sign. It can easily be read. Bill has been paid. The Pentecostal Church will be using the church building at least until September 21. They have paid through July. Pastor Craig will let them know what needs to be paid. There is a lot of creeping charlie on the lots and in the lawn east of the church. Joyce called Lawn Ranger and they will spray in October. It is too early to spray for creeping charlie in August. Tom will call Mark Trueblood and talk to him about the boiler maintenance. Chris McNiel will hook up the women's bathroom fan to the vent that goes outside. This should help with the smell in the restroom. Sump Pump drain on south side of church is getting plugged with leaves. Al will work on a cover with hinges for it. Need something to prevent the leaves collecting in the drain. New Business Tom and Joyce cleaned up a large limb that broke off in last Sunday morning storm. Joyce called the city about the lines in the trees by the garage and to find out which trees we needed to take care of. City took care of the branches in the lines that were hanging over the garage and will take down the rotten tree on the south side this winter. The tree just west of the garage had a big limb with a crack in it. An estimate was received from Jim's Tree Service, to take care of the limb and other dead limbs. A motion was made by Al to accept the estimate of \$722.25. Tom seconded the motion. Motion approved. Joyce will be gone September 17-29. The repairs are finished in the basement so the ceiling tile can be put back. A discussion was held on making all the lights in fellowship hall LED. Al made a motion that we make all the fixtures LED. Sherry seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Tracy will have an electrician come at look at the lights and figured out what is the best way to get the lights switched over to LED. Bats have been getting into the church again. Pastor Craig will look at a solution.

Evangelism Board At this meeting Dawn was surprised with a pile of note pads for the children's bags and was planning on updating those bags following our meeting. We had a visitor last Sunday and we didn't think to offer him a visitor bag-we need to remember to do that!! Pastor Craig showed us the new visitor sign-in cards we will print up to place in the pews and do away with the pew pads now. Finding ushers continues to be a challenge and we are so thankful for those members who show up and see the need and fill it!! CUE is listed under our board for budgeting as is EHN so Pastor Craig will suggest to the cabinet that CUE should be under Christian Ed Board, and EHN should be the responsibility of Mission Board. We will request \$100 budgeted to Evangelism for 2020. Rally Sunday is fast approaching and we discovered that Wilma, Carol, and Dawn have other obligations that day so Leah and Kay will fix the hot dogs and set out the potluck foods and make coffee. Kay will supply hot dogs, Dawn and Wilma will donate buns and ketchup. Dawn will mix up the lemonade on Saturday and we'll be set to go!!

Mission Board Thanks to the congregation's generosity, we collected \$104 in Happy Dollars Sunday, August 25, for the Agape Fund. As a thank-you to the Webster City schools' teachers and para-educators, we will offer to serve the 80-plus para-educators ice cream and toppings September 23 at the high school and to provide a treat for the teachers when they meet in February. CROP Walk will be September 29; a Pickle Jar is on the Fellowship Hall table (along with a team sign-up sheet), and a coffeetime will be hosted by the Mission Board on September 15. To promote going plastic free, Gayle will order reusable shopping bags (e.g., ChicoBags) for us to sell at the Advent Alternative Giving Fair; we're seeking a clever slogan to print on the bags. We are researching the possibility of helping flood victims in southwest Iowa's Mills County with a short mission trip and/or financial donation. Our board's budget will be the same as last year's (Our Church's Wider Mission \$19,000, Mayflower Community/Homes \$250, Mission Board \$150). Andrea Mosbach heads the September 24 Beacon of Hope meal, and Marjorie heads the November meal. The Neighbors in Need offering will be collected on October 6; the NIN theme this year is "Love of Children." Our commitment to Warm Hearts, Warm Homes is on hold until we can be assured that residents to be assisted are elderly or

disabled. The full Peace Pipe of quarters yielded \$133 for the Heifer Project; because of the Amazon fires, we will suggest the money be used for trees.

Pastor's Report Rally Day: I am writing this report in the afterglow of our 2019 Rally Day event! We had 13? Children and youth enjoyed the games spearheaded by the Christian Ed board, then a meaningful Rally Day worship service with the choir singing and Holy Communion, and then another great potluck hosted by the Evangelism Board. It was a good start to our fall programming! Thank you to all the many volunteers who helped make this a fun and meaningful day. KLAB: KLAB begins Wednesday, Sept 18! We have a sign-up sheet for snacks, and we have the necessary volunteers lined up: Karinne Tudor, Vicki Blaufuss, Wil Groves, myself, Ginnie Veach and Leah Maass. What we need now are more children and youth! A letter will be sent out this week to all prospective KLAB students. Sunday School: begins Sept 15. We are trying a one room schoolhouse approach this year: Laurie Epps will take the lead as teacher, with assistance and substitute teaching by Karinne Tudor and Jill Coons. Adult Education: We will begin a study of "Christian Character" beginning September 15th. Please see my lead article in the September Newsletter for more details. Stephen Ministry: We met Sept. 5 in the East Chapel to continue with the topic of "Caring Evangelism", and shared Holy Communion together. We currently have 2 Stephen Ministers matched with care receivers. Post- Confirmation Youth Group: at our last Confirmation class in April 2019 I asked the students if they would be receptive to returning in the Fall on Wednesdays to plan service activities and possibly a mission trip in the Summer of 2020. I am sending out a letter this week to remind them of this opportunity and gauge their interest. Shalom Circle: I am wanting to try to restart the Shalom Circle this Fall. It is a prayer and meditation Circle which would meet in the evening, participants would schedule the sessions. If anyone is interested, please contact me. EHNC: We will meet again this Thursday to continue revising the Ecumenical Human Needs Committee guidelines. I hope to have this completed in this session, or possibly one more. Sharon Perry continues to be the interim coordinator, and under her leadership the Committee has received and processed 6 applications in the last 3 weeks. WCMA: I am now the Chairman of the Webster City Ministerial association, replacing Mike Kroona. My treasurer responsibilities were taken on by Rev. Mark Eichler. After much weeping and gnashing of teeth the bank signature cards were changed so that Mark can write checks. We will meet at Asbury UMC this Thursday. I continue to offer emergency coverage to other members of the WCMA as needed when they are out of town. Backpacks Against Hunger: The dates for filling Backpacks for the WC school children are quickly being filled. The Slettens of Trinity ELCA are in charge of the schedule; we will finish completing the schedule at our next WCMA meeting. PSC: I met with members of the NW CoM on August 27th for my Periodic Support Consultation. The conversation was enjoyable! I will be taking my required Boundary Training on October 19. Wedding: I will be the officiant at Mark Andrew and Susan Leman's wedding in Mason City this Saturday. Funeral: I will be the officiant at the memorial service of Ed Latham, to be held on September 24 here at First Congregational.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Hill
Church 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:

