

June 2020 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232
<http://www.firstcongregationalwlc.org/>

Pastor's Report May 26, 2020

Can you believe it? It's been 2 months, a week and a day since our church was shut down due to the Governor's emergency proclamation! Needless to say we have been in uncharted waters since the shutdown in just about every sense, and it was been a challenge for all of us to imagine and engage in ministry because our current pandemic. And yet whether gathered or scattered we are still the church, and we are still called to ministry in our time and place!

This shutdown has changed my schedule in many ways! It has given me more time to think and write, which has been good for me to do. At the start of the pandemic I decided to compose daily epistles or reflections to share, and I managed to keep that commitment for 40 days. Since then my reflections have been more piecemeal as I simply could not sustain that level of productivity with my writing indefinitely. Altogether I have written 46 reflections thus far, and plan to continue adding to the corpus as the Spirit of Inspiration moves me.

During my office hours I have also fielded questions, made phone calls and answered the phone, corresponded by email, and planned, created, recorded, spliced, edited and then distributed 11 worship services. We did broadcast our Easter service over the KQWC on Easter Sunday in addition to sending out our weekly messages by email. I am thankful that the audio format has been successful, thereby allowing me to avoid trying to navigate Facebook Live or YouTube. We will continue this format indefinitely until the pandemic subsides and it is safe for all of us to return to corporate worship.

You probably are aware that Vicki and I have been in the fudge making business since the shutdown. I have "fudged" all active member households since the shutdown, which allowed me the opportunity to at least briefly visit with each of you. In addition I have fudged the essential workers at Dollar General and People's Credit Union, who appreciated being remembered with a treat during the pandemic.

Vicki and I have also kept in touch with our youth, so that they don't forget the church nor think the church has forgotten them. Since we could not have an Easter Breakfast or any Easter activities at the church we made Easter goodie bags and distributed them to our youth on Palm Sunday. And because we could not hold our regular Promotion Sunday which was scheduled for May 3, I created appreciation certificates for all of our KLAB Kids and we distributed them along with \$5 Dairy Queen gift cards. The Christian Ed board is now putting another round of goodie bags together to distribute to our youth this week—a sweet reminder to our kids of God's love and our love for them.

Phone calls, cards, texts, and emails are another way for us to stay connected and I am appreciative of the calls, cards, texts and emails that I have received from many of you! We are blessed that our technologies have helped us stay connected while we are away due to the outbreak.

Board and Committee meetings have been a challenge, as we all know. The Mission Board has met via Zoom, and we will actually meet in person (at a distance) today at Kendall Young Park. The Worship Board has been communicating by email to discern what we could do for worship experiences during the shutdown, and to determine what protocols we should adopt in order to safely worship together. The Evangelism Board has been emailing each other as well, and sending out cards. Women's Fellowship had been emailing as well.

The Cabinet has recently sent out a survey asking for your opinion about possibly reopening the church in June for Sunday worship. Please respond to their survey so they have your input to guide their decision making!

Friends, the future still seems quite murky for us as individuals, as well as a church! I cannot stress enough that we need to continue to prioritize safety and caution, and I plan to continue to observe every reasonable precaution into the foreseeable future. The Cabinet will determine our next course of action regarding in person worship in our church space; to my knowledge no consideration has yet been given to opening up the church to meetings and gatherings at this time. My fervent belief is that we will return as a congregation to this church to continue our ministries of love and service, fellowship and benevolence at some point in time! Until then we must be patient, continue to seek the wisdom of God, and look for opportunities to minister to one another and to the wider world in whatever ways we can! I look forward to seeing and hearing from you all in the days and weeks ahead! I am keeping you all in prayer! And as we sang at the conclusion of our last worship service together: "God be with you 'til we meet again!" –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

14 - Duane & Mary Vavroch
 19 – Joe & Jennifer Gilbert
 26 - Howard & Barb Stearns

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

4 - Virginia Veach
 8 – Connor Clements
 9 - Stacy Wearda
 9 – London Clements
 13 - Dalene Schlitter
 14 - Amanda Lahr
 14 - Zachary Lahr
 14 - Livia Oberender
 15 - Alexis Byrne
 18 -Chesney Fuller
 19 - Wilma Reinsel
 24 – Henry Elkin
 26 - Lynn Jaycox
 30 - Katie Holdgrafer

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

2 - Emily & Troy Stockdale



Everyday ideas -

- Pick up your things.. That means no littering ever. If you see litter from someone else, pick it up and throw it away.
- Use less water. Turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth. Take shorter showers. Use an automatic shut-off nozzle on a hose when washing your car..
- Don't leave lights or other electronics on when not is use.
- Donate/give away things you don't use rather than throwing the items away.
- Use fuel-efficient transportation.- walking, biking, public transit and vehicles with high gas mileages.

Lotus Community

Thanks to your generous donations we were able to purchase a push lawn mower for Lotus Community Project! We had an additional \$245 donated to purchase additional supplies to help their clientele. Thank you!

Bottle Caps

We have been notified that the charity we were gathering caps and lids for are no longer accepting items. Thanks for all you gathered and donated. We will notify you if and when they start collecting again.

Thanks

I have often jokingly advised the younger people at work to not get old. I guess I now have to add – and don't fall off ladders. Lorraine and I want to thank EVERYONE from the church for all the cards, calls, thoughts and prayers given to us since my accident. Thanks to Jose and Dilcia for taking over the custodian duties at the church. I don't know how long the recuperation time will be but I do know it's a lot easier with all your love and support. Thank you all,
Curt McCoskey

Updates

I miss not seeing all of you!! We will be together soon!
I can tell you what I have NOT been doing: my 1st cruise, the Thrift Sale, planning for grandkids summer visit, working, and visiting with family.
What I have enjoyed is: seeing what retirement will be like Jim full time, catching up and organizing paperwork, deep cleaning for Thrift Sale, meditating, binge watching new series on Netflix.
Sounds fun, huh. LOL
Blessings,
Cindy Henning

During this quarantine time, I have been baking lots of bread and experimenting with new recipes. That has helped me avoid the big cleaning-out projects that I should be doing! I have also worked as a Spanish interpreter a few times a month for Public Health...from my kitchen by Messenger video chat. Although the Free Clinic is closed, patients still contact us for their medicine refills. Please contact me if you are willing to take any experimental bread samples!!!
Jane Klaver

I have been keeping busy at home doing some deep cleaning, lots of crocheting and a ton of cooking. I know lots of people are making sourdough bread and I have sourdough starter living happily on the counter but I'm not making bread. Instead we have had waffles, crepes, pizza, pancakes.....basically anything sourdough EXCEPT bread. I also pulled down

the old painted over wallpaper in the dining room and put up fresh wallpaper. I have wanted to accomplish that since we purchased the house over 20 years ago. I now need a new project to tackle.
Michele Omvig

Greetings,

It seems so long ago when we would so comfortably gather at the church for our church services and fellowship. Hope you all have been well and able to escape this virus. Bob and I have been very fortunate to have escaped both the flu and this virus this winter/spring. We have been extremely blessed that all employees in the company are well. We have locked our front gate and every one entering has to use the truckers entrance on Estes Ave., have our temperature taken and answered the usual questions. I have kept busy first by cleaning all closets, cupboards, etc. Now I think I'm back to collecting again? When not COOKING, I'm working on a baby quilt-we are to become great grandparents for the first time! What could be better than making 250 half-square triangles (all quilters will understand), putting on Mormon Tabernacle and Andre Rieu CD's and sewing away.
Stay well until we gather again.
Mary Van Diest

Lynn & I are at home. I taught two college courses remotely through May 8th. The students in these classes were all seniors - so it allowed us all some time to process how their end of year was going. We celebrated as best we could and shed a few tears for moments that couldn't be. It and my coursework for the rest of the high school kept me busy enough to stay out of Lynn's hair. Lynn has been doing projects around the farm & playing cribbage via Zoom with Wil and friends.
Jenna was working in Ames when this started - she was laid off from her job. She managed to pick up a few hours at a part-time job, but is restless. Her boyfriend, Nate has been working full-time managing a Dominoes.
Katie came to Iowa for a 5 day trip on 3/7 and ended up being stuck here for 7 weeks. Frustrated with not being able to fly back to Seattle, she rented a car and drove herself back

in just two days. Amazon is on work-from-home until 10/4. She is going a little stir-crazy but is safe & healthy. We zoom several times a week with all of the kids.

The rest of our extended family is making due. My 91 year old grandmother is the hardest to keep in. She misses having quilt circle and coffee with her friends, attending church, and

going over to the neighbors. We've been writing and calling her more often to keep her in. God bless you all during this time
Sherry Leksell

Treasurer's Report

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Pledges and Offerings	\$6,985.00	\$49,145.72
Other Income	0.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$6,985.00	\$49,145.72
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	0.00	\$3,166.60
Pastoral Services	5,963.87	29,598.20
Maintenance and Repairs	1,940.69	10,571.31
Church Office	2,556.87	11,289.97
Music Ministry	981.75	3,786.50
Christian Education	0.00	0.00
Local Ministry	0.00	0.00
Misc. Expenses	139.42	892.24
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$11,582.60	\$59,304.82

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Webster City, Iowa
Cabinet Minutes

Mission Board March 31 meeting

One Great Hour of Sharing: We'll likely reschedule this. Had intended to collect it March 22. Last year OGHS brought in \$1,100 from our church.

Food Pantries: The local food pantries need food. Money is preferred so the pantries can obtain food economically and handle disinfecting. Marjorie will write request for checks sent to food pantries. (Pastor Craig emailed it out April 1.)

Endowment Committee: Guest appearance by Dale Olson, Endowment. An allocation for \$500 has been made to Funding Future Leaders.

Backpack Program: Our packing for April 28 is cancelled. Prepacked Backpacks from the Food Bank were distributed to elementary students at Hy-Vee. Trinity wants the Backpack program out of the church basement by fall. March 31 was last day of work for Karen Hinderks, longtime Trinity administrative assistant and food pantry facilitator.

Earth Day: Pastor Craig was notified that all county conservation activities – including trash pickup – were cancelled by the County Supervisors. The Mission Board encourages everyone to take a plastic grocery bag to pick up trash along your daily walk. The ditch by Bomgaar's needs help.

Beacon of Hope: Thanks to timely delivery of meal ingredients to the church pre-lockdown and post-lockdown (with special shoutouts to Michele and Pastor Craig for using approved pandemic guidelines), Marjorie and Wil were able to fix the recipe of Cheesy Potatoes and Ham and four loaves of peanut butter or margarine sandwiches in their home kitchen, and deliver them with lots of bars made by church folks and mounds

of lettuce salad and institutional size cans of green beans accompanied by sticks of butter to curbside at the Fort Dodge shelter for homeless men. Annette Howard said we served 50 on March 24.

Lotus: Ashley Vaala's presentation scheduled for March 26 was cancelled because of the virus. The local newspaper and radio station were good about repeatedly announcing the news.

May 7 meeting

Relay for Life: The June 17 fundraising event for the American Cancer Society has been postponed because of the coronavirus

Beacon of Hope: Pastor Craig invited church members to contribute casseroles, bars, bags of lettuce and peanut butter sandwiches. Pastor Craig will deliver these to the Fort Dodge shelter for homeless men May 27. (Annette Howard says Beacon now has 25 residents and all employees – except Steve Roe, Eric Howard, and Annette – have been furloughed.)

Lotus: Pastor Craig talked with Ashley Vaala about the shelter for homeless women and children's needs. Ashley listed lawnmower, weed trimmer, sweatpants, printer paper and kitchen trash bags. We focused on the push lawnmower. Craig has delivered the lawnmower. Church member donations more than covered the cost.

Strengthen the Church: This 5-for-5 collection is scheduled to be collected in May. (We have not yet gathered One Great Hour of Sharing.) Because our local church needs money, we will hold off on Strengthen the Church.

Addendum May 15

Endowment Funds: Endowment gave \$750 each to All Cultures Equal and Upper Des Moines Opportunity food pantries, along with \$250 each to Trinity and St. Paul's food pantries. Endowment also gave \$500 to the Lotus shelter for women and children and \$500 to Beacon of Hope for homeless men.

Christian Education

As with all other phases of our church life, CE has been in limbo since the shutdown in March. The program year sputtered to a halt without the usual spring activities—Palm Sunday and Easter breakfast and worship services, weekly KLAB activities, promotion Sunday, graduation, end of the year events (DQ run and Lock-in for Klabbbers). Thus we're left without that usual end-of-year closure as we head into the summer months. We feel incomplete and somehow unfulfilled; a feeling of emptiness rather than satisfaction and relief.

But there are still shells turning and things happening. Thanks to Craig and Vicki, who delivered 20 Easter baskets to the kids and fudge to their parents on Palm Sunday. For promotion Sunday they delivered promotion certificates and a DQ gift card to each KLAB kid.

We also need to make a special "shout out" to Ginnie Veach and Leah Maas for helping serve KLAB treats this past year. And many thanks to those who generously provided those treats. We're also happy to have had Patty Gescheidler and Susan Meinders as KLAB day helpers. Patty sent Easter cards with a crossword puzzle to all the kids. She and Vicki also called the kids to see how they were doing.

Vickie is heading an effort to collect items for "we care" packages for the KLAB participants. Each packet will contain some candy and note from a CE board member. We're hoping to have a KLAB get together later this summer if conditions warrant. Otherwise, we'll resume regularly scheduled programming this fall or when possible.

Board of Trustees Report for March - May

The trustees hired Jose Burgos to be the custodian, while Curt was off because of his work injury. We had Jose and Dilcia do extra cleaning while the church was closed. We appreciated all of Jose and Dilcia's work, while filling in for Curt. On April 28 we welcomed back Curt to his job as church custodian.

Joyce is keeping up with the flowers and landscaping.

Tony Jones is mowing again. Lawn Ranger is doing the yard care.

We had a couple of inquiries on the lots, but nothing further happened.

The elevator had routine maintenance done on May 20.

Joyce Gelhaus Trustees Chairperson

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

First Congregational U.C.C. of Webster City wishes to acknowledge those seeking higher education by awarding scholarships to those who are or have been active members of our church. We make 4 scholarships available. A brief description of each scholarship is below.

All applicants must indicate which scholarship they are applying for on this page and **COMPLETE** the application form on other side and **RETURN** to the business office of First Congregational U.C.C., 1000 Willson Avenue, Webster City, Iowa 50595 **by June 15th** for consideration by the Finance Board. You may qualify for more than one scholarship. **A separate form must be filled out for each scholarship.**

_____ **BESS LYON SCHOLARSHIP** – for students entering any year of college

_____ **POOLE HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP** – for graduates of Webster City High School entering their senior year of college or pursuing an advanced degree. Special consideration will be given to first time applicants and graduate students. Maximum of four recipients per year. Must be awarded to a member of our church.

_____ **PTACEK MEDICAL CAREERS SCHOLARSHIP** – for students pursuing a career in medicine who are members of the extended family of First Congregational Church. Preference will be given to students entering medical school (not pre-med or undergraduate work). If there are no such applicants, consideration may be given to those entering a school of nursing or pursuing other allied health careers.

_____ **HELEN JOHNSON SCHOLARSHIP** – for students who are active members, or were active prior to attending college, in the church life of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Webster City. The scholarship is also open to adults who are active members of the church to retrain for employment. The scholarship can be used at a trade school, community college, 4 year college or graduate school. Students are eligible for this scholarship more than one year.

All applicants must **COMPLETE** the application form below and indicate which scholarship they are applying for on the other side. You may qualify for more than one scholarship. **A separate form must be filled out for each scholarship.**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

YEARS OF SCHOOLING COMPLETED BY AUGUST OF THIS YEAR: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO FIRST CONGREGATIONAL U.C.C.

1. Brief description of your educational plans, specifically for the coming school year.
2. Brief description of education related expenses anticipated.
3. For students applying for the Helen Johnson Scholarship, please list the church activities in which you actively participate.

Please attach extra pages as needed.

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: