

October 2013 Newsletter

First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue
Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232

<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>



Pastor's Voice

"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete." --John 15:11

Do you take things too seriously?

I confess that I do-- far too often. When I look in the mirror while shaving each morning, I take the inevitable signs of aging staring back at me too seriously....

When I catch a newscast of the latest climate catastrophe or mass shooting, I take the grim news too seriously...

When family squabbles erupt, I take the raised voices and the harsh words spoken too seriously...

When I feel disrespected or slighted, I take my bruised ego too seriously...

When I "underperform" in my many roles as husband, parent, pastor, householder, pet owner, etc.... I take my failures too seriously...

When I think about the past, I take the missteps of yesterday—mine, and others'-- too seriously...

When I think about the future and its challenges, you guessed it-- I take tomorrow too seriously.

Does any of this sound familiar? To repeat my first question: Do you also take things too seriously?

Now I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't take life "seriously" in the sense of valuing our lives and being actively engaged in the world around us. But when we start taking ourselves, those around us, the state of the world, the shadows of yesterday and the unknowns of tomorrow too seriously, then we work against ourselves. We tense up and constrict our energies; we "hole up" and become defensive; we dote on all that is wrong and become blind to all that is good; we lose our power, our confidence, and our sense of hope. I needn't tell you that not much good can come when we take things in life "too seriously"—and yet it's so hard for so many of us not to do so!

There is a phrase that is apt for us to remember when we start taking things too seriously: "Lighten Up!" That's good advice on several levels. To "Lighten Up!" means to stop placing so many unnecessary burdens on ourselves, for we all make mistakes and we aren't able to solve all the world's woes. To "Lighten Up!" means to loosen the stranglehold we have on things we don't control—which is just about everything but ourselves. And most importantly, to "Lighten Up!" means literally to let more "Light" into our lives—which is a conscious choice AND an act of faith.

Jesus modeled a good balance of taking things seriously, yet not *too* seriously. He saw the plight of the poor, the sick and the lame, and he was moved to minister to them. He saw the injustices around him, and was moved to speak out and act up. He knew what it meant to experience trials, setbacks, conflict, even persecution....and yet he also experienced joy and empowerment. He held steadfastly onto hope—even to his last breath on the cross. How did he manage these miracles? Because above all else he had faith in the Light, and he consciously chose to make that Light—the Light of God—the center and grounding of his life. And hear this-- *his promise to us is that we can share in that grounding, that centering.* We can also choose the Light when we are taking things too seriously; we can "Lighten Up" as Jesus did—and journey through life filled with greater peace, hope, empowerment, and joy. Now that's what I call Good News!

Friends, if you are prone, as I am, to take things too seriously, then here's something to take with the utmost seriousness: the peace, empowerment, hope and joy that you seek doesn't reside in your ego, in your family, in the world, in yesterday, or even in tomorrow...it resides here and now in YOU-- as you abide in the Light of God. But don't take my word (or Jesus' word) for it—"Lighten Up" and find out for yourself! May your joy be complete in the Light, Pastor Craig



WISDOM

“A little more kindness and a little less creed,
A little more giving and a little less greed;
A little more smile and a little less frown,
A little less kicking a man when he’s down;
A little more “we” and a little less “I”,
A little more laugh and a little less cry;
A few more flowers on the pathway of life,
And fewer on graves at the end of the strife.”

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

Church Staff

- Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor**
Office: 832-2232 Cell 297-4316
Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net
- Michele Omgig: Admin. Assist.** 838-2989
Church's e-mail: fcuccwc@wmtel.net
- Sharon Perry: Stephen Ministry Ldr** 832-5435
- Nancy Shelton: Choir Director** 835-0208
- Myra Maxon: Organist** 832-3662
- Mary Van Diest: Pianist** 832-3754
- Curt/Lorraine McCoskey: Cust's.** 832-5341
- Myra Maxon: Financial Secretary** 832-3662
- Luverne Bierle: Church Treasurer** 832-4752

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

- 1 - Kay Harfst
- 3 - Clark Mowry
- 4 - Sierra Myers
- 4 - Karinne Tudor
- 5 - Jaylyn Marie Bahrenfuss
- 6 - Bill Shelton
- 7 - Alison McFadden
- 8 - Logan McCoskey
- 9 - Dawn Holdgrafer
- 10 - Gayle Olson
- 11 - Courtney Clum
- 12 - Marlin Abbott

- 12 - Nancy Shelton
- 13 - Kevin Brim
- 13 - Karen Weir
- 13 - Ashley Wood
- 14 - Larry Brim
- 15 - Richard Tudor
- 15 - Jim Henning
- 16 - Ethan Anderson
- 16 - Jack Thurman
- 16 - Emily Stockdale
- 17 - Missy Larson
- 20 - Charlene McKee
- 22 - Chase Wagoner
- 22 - Chelsey Wagoner
- 27 - Gabrielle May Larson
- 27 - Jesse Reinking
- 27 - Travis Stearns
- 28 - Karl Heimberger
- 28 - Tom McKee
- 29 - Joel Bruner
- 29 - Alex Wood



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

- 5 - Bud & Carol Crystal
- 5 - Rick & Mary Ruppel
- 9 - Nate & Linda Lahr
- 10 - Scott & Juli Jaycox
- 21 - Scott & Jessie Bailey

ATTENDANCE

September 1 65	September 8 55
September 15 67	September 22 78
September 29	

WEBSITE

Make sure to visit our website at <http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>
The more traffic we get the easier it will be for people to find it.
The website has our newsletters, pictures of events, information about our church and more.

CROP Walk 2013: It's Time to Walk

Let's go! Sunday, October 13, is the CROP Hunger Walk in Webster City, with our church in charge. Sign up in Fellowship Hall to be a member of the 1st Congregational United Church of Christ team. Nine churches have been invited to take part, along with the rest of the community.

We're inviting each walker to bring a jar of peanut butter (a good source of protein) for the Upper Des Moines Opportunity food pantry. We'll gather at the Brewer Creek shelter at 2 p.m. We'll sing a few songs and Rev. Craig Blaufuss will send us off with a blessing. Then, we'll walk the designated route of a couple of miles to remind ourselves how far many people in the world have to go to get water every day.

When we return, the Mission Board will provide coffee, cold drinks and bars.

When CROP began, under the wing of Church World Service, the name stood for Christian Rural Overseas Program. Now it means Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty. Of the money collected for CROP, 75 percent goes to the international program and 25 percent to UDMO locally.

You can donate in support of Team Congo at www.cropwalkonline.org or drop cash or checks into the pickle jars in Fellowship Hall. Myra Maxon is the treasurer. If you have questions, please check with Mabel Prescott, Kay Harfst or Pastor Craig. Many thanks!

RVTV Chili Cook-Off

According to Andy Fales, a WHO-TV sports broadcaster, Webster City was his all-time favorite RVTV city....and we were part of it! A thank-you goes out to Jim Henning for helping with the set-up of the "chili stand." Myra Maxon and Ginnie Veach made the chili...it was Myra's famous recipe. Mabel Prescott, Carol Crystal, Donna Ryherd and Greta Oberender manned the booth during the afternoon stirring the chili so it would be "just right" for the judging later that evening. Our serving crew was evenly divided between the Cyclones and the Hawkeyes with Gayle Olson, Cindy Henning, Joyce Gelhaus and Gretchen

McGlynn sporting their team colors. Our table was decorated in Cardinal red and gold along with Hawkeye black and gold. None of our workers made it on the broadcasts but if you watched the festivities on WHO-tv our table cloth stood out.

We received great comments on our chili, but we were not a winner that night. NO, I take that back...we were winners! We helped the town put its best foot forward, helped feed the huge crowd, made a presence for our church and had a great time doing it.

And last but not least, a thank you goes out to the clean-up crew. Thanks to Don Bruner, Luverne Bierle and Jim McGlynn for helping take down and delivering everything back where it belonged by 7:30 that night. And I just about forgot those who helped supply the makings for Myra's famous chili and of course those church members who came down and voted for our chili.

It was a team effort and we made a great showing! Thanks again.

The Public Relations Committee



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 3, 2013 immediately following worship to vote on the proposed 2014 budget.

MEALS N MORE

Join us for a very special Meals N More on October 2. The meal starts at 5:00 pm and we will have a guest speaker, Mark Gustafson, give a presentation on Haiti at 6:00 pm. Make sure you read the following article for more information.

A story about Haiti

While on assignment in Korea for the U.S. Army, I became a volunteer manager of an orphanage sponsored by the troops of our unit. I raised money for it and made certain that all expenses were met. I wrote to my parents at the First Congregational Church in Portland, Oregon and asked them to collect clothes for the children, who wore clothes that were practically rags. This assignment gave me a love for children and a desire to help children in orphanages. Now, in later years I have had a dream of building an orphanage as a lasting legacy. That dream went dormant for several years until I met Pam Plaiser, the Director of Mission Haiti, who has been ministering to the poor people of Haiti for eighteen years. She commented on the need for an orphanage in the mountains while we were at her orphanage in Haiti this past December. It will be a small one housing fourteen children and will have a minister and his wife living with them. The children will attend Christian school and learn about Jesus Christ and the basics of reading, writing and math. A foundation was laid in July, prior to the rainy season, because Connie and I donated over \$2,000 to make that happen. First Christian Church in Adel has donated over \$700 and Grace Lutheran in Fort Dodge has given \$1,100. Pam has found a donor who will meet the expenses, salaries etc. for the minister, his wife, and the orphanage through December 2017. The hope is that the members of First Congregational U.C.C. will want to make a donation toward the \$30,000 needed to complete the building of that orphanage in the mountains. On September 11th Connie and I will have a power point presentation and she will bring jewelry for sale made by the poor women of Haiti. We will enjoy meeting again with everyone at the church.

Mark Gustafson

HYGIENE KITS

The end of August found us being able to send 28 completed Hygiene kits off to Church World Service. This marks the third time we have sent kits to them since we have started collecting these items, for a total of close to 60 kits. This is also a good time to remind you

that the need is still great and with the flooding in Colorado I am sure their supply can use restocking, so the next time you are shopping maybe you can purchase an extra toothbrush or comb or nail clipper and we can send another box off by Christmas.

Thank you from the Mission Board.

THANKS

I would like to thank the church family once again for all the wonderful cards, phone calls, words of encouragement, visits and food after my surgery.

God Bless you all!

Verna Bierle

THANK YOU From the Finance Board

For the first time in several years, when we met to prepare the coming year's budget ALL of the boards had submitted their budget requests for 2014. This made our work extremely effortless. We appreciate everyone's timely response.

THANKS

I wish to thank you for awarding me the Bessie Lyon scholarship. I was thrilled and very appreciative to be a recipient.

I am currently at Iowa State University, majoring in journalism. I plan to pursue a career as a technical director or producer in the broadcast field.

Thanks to all of you for your support over the years. I have been very lucky to have two church families who support my activities and who are so encouraging. I again want to thank you for the financial assistance you have provided to help me pay for my education.

Thanks for your generosity.

Jan Ryherd

More Saturday evening services

Due to the positive responses, we will have Saturday evening services on October 12th and on November 9th. When we have Saturday services there will be no Sunday Worship Service, and Sunday School will be held Saturday night after the Children's Message. Also, there will be no Fellowship Coffee after the Saturday services.

From the Piecemakers' Corner



This is a "work in progress" by Holly Riemenschneider for Quilts of Valor. It will be given to a service man or woman or their family in recognition of their service to our country.



This heirloom quilt displayed by Mary Byrne was shared with us by Charles and Anne McMurray. It was pieced and then quilted in 1910 by a group of our church women including Charles' aunt, Jessie McMurray.

Shalom Circle Meets Oct 10

The Shalom Circle will gather on Thursday, October 10, 7:30 pm in the East Chapel for a time of meditation, prayer, and sharing. All are welcome to join us as we seek a deeper relationship with the Light that blesses, guides, and enlivens our lives. Please remember to dress comfortably and casually, and bring a mat or cushion if you wish to sit on the floor. If you have questions please contact Pastor Craig.

Snacks for KLAB

KLAB is off to a great start with 14 young people participating! That's a lot of energy and enthusiasm—and a lot of appetites. We have been serving snacks at KLAB, and we are looking for volunteers to help provide snacks for our weekly programming. It can be homemade or store-bought treats; we need enough for 14 children. If you would like to provide treats for a week, please contact the church office or Pastor Craig.

Neighbors in Need

The Neighbors in Need offering, which we will receive on October 6, supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries, giving support to the 20 UCC congregations on reservations, and one urban, multi-tribe congregation in Minneapolis, MN. Information about supported projects has been provided in several worship bulletins. The mission board invites you to consider contributing to this worthwhile cause which is one of our UCC national 5 for 5 offerings. Special offering envelopes will be available in bulletins or in the pew racks. Checks can be written to the church and indicate NIN on the subject line. Thank you in advance for your generous donations.

THANK YOU!

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, calls, visits, flowers, food and especially for your friendship while I am recovering from back surgery. I hope to get back to church soon!
Love, Vicki

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting-September 10, 2013

Member Present:

Moderator-----Dale Olson	Pastor-----Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice-Moderator----	Trustees-----
Treasurer-----Luverne Bierle	Women's Fellowship—Dalene Schlitter
Finance Sec-----Myra Maxon	Mission-----
Finance-----Duane Vavroch	Worship-----Holly Riemenschneider
Christian Ed-----Don Bruner	Evangelism-----Nancy Shelton
Staff/Parish-----	Clerk-----Mary Van Diest

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Moderator, Dale Olson. Pastor Craig Blaufuss opened with a meditation and prayer. Moved by Nancy Shelton and seconded by Dalene Schlitter to approve the current agenda. Luverne Bierle gave the treasurer's report. He reported the August income was \$10,390.12 and expenses were \$12,224.65. Luverne moved and a second by Nancy to put the report to audit. Motion carried. Discussed the debt collection problem with Division Imaging. Myra Maxon will contact Mary Vavroch for her input. All committee and boards are to turn their budgets for the coming year by Sept. 18, 2013 to Tracy Wehrhan. Discussed the chili cook-off contest for the upcoming RVTV contest. The congregational meeting to vote on the budget for 2014 will be held on Nov. 3 immediately following the church service.

Reports of Pastor and Boards

Pastor's Report: We again held a Saturday evening service on August 24. Since then several suggestions have been received to hold one Saturday service each month. If you have comments regarding the Saturday service, please give them to the Worship Board. There have been concerns about the church's website not appearing when "First Congregational UCC Webster City" is googled. Our site developer explained that it may take a few months for Google's search engines to recognize and list our site. To speed this process we need more people accessing the site and sharing it with others-----so please access the site routinely and often. Go to www.firstcongregationalwc.org Rev. Mark Eichler is the newly called pastor at St. Paul Lutheran and Rev. Michael Slininger at Faith UMC. At the Webster City Ministerium meeting a discussion was held on the summer lunch program. Their consensus was that the program served a legitimate need in our community, but were concerned about the amount of wasted food. Rev. Kroona will speak with the Hartnetts about strategies to reduce food waste, assuming the program continues next year. CROP materials were distributed to members in attendance. The Committee on Ministry will begin scheduling bimonthly Situational Support Consultations with churches and pastors in our Association. This should help us to be proactive in assisting congregations and their pastors in their ministry and to offer support for situations of conflict within a church. We plan to meet in September with Rev. Shai Wise and leaders of the Congregational church in Algona. Sunday School for all ages begins September 15. Adults will continue their study of World Religions. KLAB will begin September 18 and will include K-5. As no host home for missionary Bruce Van Voorhis from Global Ministries Missionary could be

arranged, he will not be speaking at our church at this time. Thanked Gretchen McGlynn of the PR committee for spearheading the church's entry into the Webster City RVTV chili cook-off. This is not a fundraiser, but an opportunity to support a fun community event while promoting our church in the process.

Trustees: The attendees discussed the amount of monies available for the Preservation and Renovation Project. There was also discussion on getting a church architect and getting bids for the project from contractors. A motion was made, seconded and carried to get a church architect. Tom Riemenschneider, Gretchen McGlynn and Joyce Gelhaus will meet to review possible architects. The attendees then grouped the renovation by areas. After discussion, two changes were made on the budget for 2014. They are to increase Maintenance Expense and decrease Gas Expense.

Women's Fellowship: Thanked all the circles for watering the flowers this summer. As the microwave in the kitchen is not heating properly, Dalene and Mabel Prescott will look into obtaining a replacement. Noted that the assignments for cleaning the kitchen are in the front of the program books. Do try and complete this project by September 20 if possible. Discussed that when serving after a funeral, whom and what amount should be paid back to Women's Fellowship. Dalene will take these ideas and talk to Amy Reid at Foster Funeral to get their input. Meals & More will be October 2nd. A date for a consignment Serve Sale will be selected soon. We are also exploring different styles of garbage cans for the kitchen. Gayle Olson, a member of the Mission Board and this summer's Mission Trip, told of the need of blankets for nap time for the children at Kinder Cottage in East St. Louis. She suggested that if the circles are looking for a project, that a great mission project would be to make a fleece tie quilt. This would really be appreciated. She would be happy to assist circles with instructions. Cindy Henning would be available to deliver the finished project. Thrift Sale is scheduled for September 27th and 28th.

Mission Board: We will be serving the Beacon of Hope meal on September 18th. The crop walk is set for October 13th. Lynn Leksell will be asked to be our photographer, Don Bruner is leading music and Kay Harfst is preparing publicity for the paper. We will need to provide cookies, coffee and cold drink. Two volunteers are needed to sit at the corner of Beach and Ohio and Ohio and Des Moines Streets to help with any walkers needing aid. Volunteers spent two hours packing food for the backpack program for the month of September. At the October Meals & More Mark Gustafson will tell about his work in Haiti and hopes to build an orphanage there. The Mission Board decided to present \$150 of their budget toward his project. Gayle Olson brought fleece and instructions for making a fleece blanket for the children at Kinder Cottage in St. Louis. We are hoping the circles and others will contribute to this mission. Twenty-eight Hygiene Kits have been mailed. The NIN offering will be taken on October 6. Requests for the budget for 2014 were submitted with \$300.00 for the Mission Board, \$248.00 for Mayflower and \$19,000.00 for OCWM. Kay Harsft suggested we contact other churches, service groups, City Council to a CHALLENGE for a cleanup of Webster City. We could hold it on October 26, which is MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY. They will discuss it further at their next meeting. A reminder was given **NOT** to donate food items to UDMO, **IF** it is past the date of usage. Throw it in the garbage. The next meeting will be September 29th after church.

Staff/ Parish: They have met with Myra Maxon, Nancy Shelton and Michele Omvig for their annual evaluations. Pastor Craig's and Curt McCoskey's evaluations will be held soon. Job descriptions have been reviewed and discussed. Staff benefits and salaries are in discussion; with

recommendations prepared so final numbers are nearly ready for the finance board. Communications with the State office on insurance rates and the Pension board have been completed. The next meeting is scheduled for September 22nd at 5:30 pm.

The next cabinet meeting will be October 8th at 7:00 pm.
 Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.
 Mary Van Diest, Church Clerk

10:30 A.M. WORSHIP
9:00 & 9:15 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL

Treasurer's Report

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>AUGUST</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Pledges and Offerings	\$10,225.83	\$105,086.24
Other Income	164.29	502.56
Memorial/Special Income/Interest	3.25	22,534.94
TOTAL INCOME	\$10,392.47	\$128,123.74
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,417.00	\$11,332.00
Pastoral Services	5,325.41	52,100.27
Maintenance and Repairs	2,117.35	21,824.76
Church Office	2,367.81	17,905.60
Music Ministry	659.58	4,856.64
Christian Education	0.00	19.48
Local Ministry	200.00	2,580.00
Mem. Funds Distribution	0.00	25,352.86
Misc. Expenses	157.50	2,286.84
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$12,244.65	\$138,897.41
Difference	(\$1,852.18)	(\$10,773.67)

Congratulations to Livia Oberender, who was crowned the 2013 Homecoming Queen of Webster City high school. Your church family is so proud of you!"



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:

