

March 2022 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232
<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” –1Cor. 12:27

Oh my gosh—March is here! Time to get to work on my summer “bod!”

After you have caught your breath from chortling at that remark, I will confess to you that my days of cultivating a summer bod are long over...and honestly I wasn't too big on that particular cultivation even when I had the raw materials (read that youthful bod) to cultivate! Yet we know there are those who do work on themselves in that way...in late winter they begin to prep themselves for the first great unveiling of summer by dieting, getting back to the gym, going to the tanning booth, shopping for a new summer wardrobe and preparing for a summer makeover. For some this is a great rite of spring, and I certainly am not disparaging anyone who is determined to get back in shape and work at presenting themselves in a seasonally attractive way! If you have ever done this you know it is part determination, part sacrifice and part pleasure...for who doesn't want to look their summery best and be appreciated for their efforts?

And yet March is not only a good month to work on a summer bod, this year March is also a good time to contemplate our bods in general as we begin the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is March 2nd, and unless you are a newbie to Christianity you are aware that the theme of that sobering day is the truth “from dust you came, and to dust you will return.” Frankly, I like the idea of working on my summer bod far more than I like contemplating that my bod will one day be a pile of dust again. That realization can be very hard to digest and accept, for even though we will gather on Ash Wednesday and get the mark of ashes as a reminder of our body's destiny...even though Lent is a time when we contemplate the brutal ending of Jesus' human body on a roman cross...to hear and accept that our mortal bodies will one day be no more can bring heartbreak, panic, even terror to us! For we have so much invested in our bodies, and while we are here on earth we tend to blur together who we are, with who we are *in the flesh*.

But Lent is a time when we can refocus our blurry vision of ourselves and begin to realize that we are much, much more than a solitary physical body. We have larger bodies as well; bodies that, even more than our physical bodies, are amalgams of biology, will, spirit, mind, and community! Not only do we have human bodies, we are also part of this church “body” here at 1000 Willson Avenue, and this body, like our physical bodies, is a cooperative venture of many parts (that's you and me) ideally working together to live as this type of body lives—offering compassion, goodness, wisdom, illumination, growth and peace both to each member of this body and to the wider world. This body is in turn a part of the wider church—the Body of Christ—which is the worldwide body that enfleshes the dreams and hopes and will of the once-earthly Messiah, whose physical body has now been subsumed into this great body of nearly 2 billion distinct bodies! And theologians speak of a *Cosmic Christ*: the great pre-existent Christ who contains within himself as his body the very Cosmos: a living and dynamic body of unfathomable magnitude, complexity and diversity, all united into one organic Life that is the life all beings share...the one “body” of All That Is that sees, cherishes and encourages even the smallest portions of this body so all may live fully into the miraculous purposes and brilliant creative intent each portion is granted to share as a vital part of this one, limitless body!

And just as Jesus the Christ knew himself to be so much more than a localized collection of cells fabricated by semitic DNA...his dream for us is that we also know ourselves to be so much more than a pile of dust temporarily collected into flesh and blood in our time and place. And while it can be fun to dream of the glories of our self-presentation when we have worked hard to achieve our dream summer bods, how much more glorious would it be for us to discover our deeper and wider identities which flow from the very mind and heart of the Cosmic Christ and eternally uphold us in our eternal

unfoldings as beings who “are born, not of blood or the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1: 12-13) This deep discovery of ourselves, like cultivating a summer bod, is also part determination, part sacrifice and part pleasure...and this is part of the work of Lent that we can choose to partake in-- each and every year.

I hope you will join me at 7 p.m. in our sanctuary on March 2 for our annual Ash Wednesday service! For while the hopes and dreams of a glorious summer bod may lose some of their charm during the season of Lent, that loss is more than offset by the call to discover and live into our greater identities: identities that transcend time and decay, smallness and superficiality; identities that are glorious parts of a glorious existence that is the alpha and omega of Christ... and *our* alpha and omega as well! –Pastor Craig

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

M 8 am - 1 pm
 T 9 am – 1 pm
 W 8 am – 4:30 pm
 Th 8 am – 4:30 pm
 F 9 am – 1 pm

Church Staff

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Dale Olson: Stephen Ministry Ldr **839-5619**
Sunshine Duffy: 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 - Vicki Blaufuss
 6 - Jennie Williams
 8 – Vada Williams
 13 - Shirley Yungclas
 14 - Talon Stockdale
 16 - Craig Blaufuss
 19 – Kaleb Butz
 20 - Verna Bierle
 20 - Jacob Meinders
 22 – Macklin Elkin
 22 – Jayden Burgos
 23 - Todd Sonsalla
 23 – Jose Burgos
 24 - Garrett Shelton
 25 – Jackson Elkin
 28 - Jackson Leman

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

7 - Robert & Mary Van Diest
 15 - Curt & Lorraine McCoskey
 21 – Alaina & Steve Imhoff



Why rice is nice - Enriched white rice and whole-grain brown rice

- Are low in calories
- Are sodium and cholesterol free
- Have only a trace of fat with no trans fat or saturated fat
- Are gluten-free and the least allergenic of all grains
- Have 15 important vitamins and minerals - including thiamin, niacin, phosphorus, iron, potassium, and folic acid
- Contain complex carbohydrates that supply energy to fuel the body and brain
- Are easy to digest

Lent Begins March 2

First Congregational will begin the observance of Lent with an Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday, March 2, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Ash Wednesday is a day of penitence and preparation which begins our Lenten season; it is a day which reminds us of our mortality, and our need for repentance and renewal. We will observe Ash Wednesday with the Imposition of Ashes, and share the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Lenten Lunch

There will be one Lenten Lunch this season. The Church of Christ is hosting a lunch on April 5, cost will be \$7. A sign-up sheet will be in Fellowship Hall, reservations must be made by March 31. Masks are optional but social distancing will be observed.

Souper Bowl For the Souper Bowl soup collection, 32 cans and 18 packages of soup were donated. These along with 4 large jars of navy beans were delivered to the ACE food pantry. Mission Board thanks all for helping with this project!

Shalom Circle Resumes March 3, 7pm

The Shalom Circle is a group of seekers who come together regularly for a time of meditation, prayer, and sharing, with the intention of cultivating Shalom in our individual and collective lives. At each gathering there will be time to “check in,” a group meditation, an opportunity for prayer, and time to process what participants have experienced. Our group meditations will vary and will include relaxation techniques, guided meditations, creative visualizations, and other techniques. Cultivating a sacred and safe space, confidentiality, spontaneity, and seeking the Spirit’s guidance are the essentials of this Circle that will allow each participant to experience the blessings of Shalom. Everyone is welcome to be a part of the Shalom Circle—no experience necessary!

Valentines Party

We had a great Valentine's Day party for our KLAB and Confirmation students, including 2 scavenger hunts and then balloon games. Lots of candy was consumed!



News from KLAB

Our Wednesday afternoon Christian Ed program KLAB (Kids Learning About The Bible) has been growing since the New Year! We now have 9 students attending (5 boys and 4 girls), and we have been studying the parables and miracles of Jesus. The students want to thank everyone who has graciously volunteered to bring snacks-- they are appreciated! Special thanks to Ginnie Veach who prepares and serves the snacks, and to Susan Meinders who is the classroom assistant!

Thanks

Thank you to UCC members for your donation of food to Trinity Lutheran's food pantry in 2021. It is people like you who keep our food pantry going. Special thanks to Marjorie Groves for

delivering them. In 2021 we served 471 family units, 1,341 individuals.

TLC Food Pantry,
Karen and crew

Ecumenical Human Needs Committee (EHNC)

The Ecumenical Human Needs Committee is a benevolence project of Webster City churches who are working cooperatively in order to assist people in meeting their basic human needs, while remaining accountable stewards of donated resources. EHNC relies on the support of local churches, individual donations, and selected grants in order to offer financial assistance and support to people who are experiencing a variety of economic hardships.

(January and February 2022 Report)

For January and February, 2022, we had 7 applications for assistance: Five applications were approved and 2 were referred to other agencies. The families needing assistance included 2 families who had lost loved ones from Covid, a homeless person sleeping in a car, 2 families needing help with rent payments

to keep them from being evicted, one family that needed electricity turned back on, and one family needed water restored to their home. EHNC paid out \$1988.03 to assist applicants needing emergency assistance for January and February. The EHNC team includes: Kelly and Sarah of Trinity Lutheran Church, who are responsible for intake and processing of applications, and Co-Coordinator: Sharon of 1st Congregational UCC, and Robin of Webster City Church of Christ. Judy from Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd is our treasurer and pays providers.

After the applicant has been interviewed, the situation is staffed with one of the 9 ministers/priests on the ministerial team. Ministers staffing cases this past two months include: Rev. Joe Pierson-St. Paul Lutheran, Rev. Kelli Glasgo- Trinity Lutheran, Rev. Craig Blaufuss - 1st Congregational United Church of Christ, Rev. Peggy Ellingson-Faith United Methodist Church, and Rev. Patrick Wiedemeier- Anchor Point Baptist.

Treasurer's Report

INCOME	January	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$14,352.00	\$14,352.00
Other Income	0.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$14,352.00	\$14,352.00
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	1,416.63	\$1,416.63
Pastoral Services	8,046.50	8,046.50
Maintenance and Repairs	1,015.39	1,015.39
Church Office	3,251.16	3,251.16
Music Ministry	265.05	265.05
Christian Education	0.00	0.00
Local Ministry	0.00	0.00
Misc. Expenses	265.09	265.09
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$14,259.82	\$14,259.82

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1000 Willson Avenue
Webster City, IA 50595
Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

