

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

When I wrote this type of thank-you in June's newsletter, I didn't know how soon I would be writing another like it--and yet here I am recovering from another thoracic surgery. But I can't complain as my healing outcomes have been fortunate so far, and I anticipate a full recovery from this lobectomy as well as my bypass.

Undergoing major surgery or receiving diagnoses of serious diseases are experiences no one wants, yet our congregation has many members who have faced or are facing serious health concerns of every kind. As so many of us face these crises, what helps make them bearable is the support we receive from one another as a caring community of faith. It really helps when we know that we do not carry our burdens alone, and so again I want to thank you all for the many prayers, words of kindness and concern, cards and other expressions of care as I continue to heal. Vicki and I are encouraged by your support more than you know, and I am looking forward to again resuming my duties and continuing our shared missions as a church. Meanwhile, please take care of yourselves and hold fast to the hope we all share in the good News of Jesus Christ. God bless you all! –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

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor
Office: **832-2232** Cell **297-4316**
Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@gmail.com
Michele Omvig: Admin. Assist. **269-7210**
Church's e-mail: administrative.office@fcuccwc.org
Dale Olson: Stephen Ministry Ldr **839-5619**
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:

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

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

5 - Bud & Carol Crystal
9 - Nate & Linda Lahr
29 – Russ & Michele Omvig

Parish Nurse News

Best ways to boost your immune system -
Get a flu shot.
Eat at least 5 servings a day of fruits and vegetables.
Keep your sugar intake down.
Restrict alcohol consumption.
Wash your hands frequently.
Get At least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week.
Get enough restful sleep.
Learn how to control stress.

THRIFT SALE

Friday, Sept. 30, 2022

Thank you for your donations and help making this fundraiser a success.
Cindy Henning

From T-Shirts to Food Totes

Do you have a sewing machine? Do you have a bunch of perfectly good t-shirts that you/your family don't wear? We are ready to renew a service project.

The Mission Board is once again asking for folks to donate old t-shirts (adult sizes - but not overly thin) and are looking for a group of volunteers to make shopping bags from t-shirts. We will be running this project through Thanksgiving.

Basically, you cut off the sleeves, trim the neckband and run your sewing machine across the bottom a time or two. The tote will need to hold up to 30 pounds of cans, bags of rice or beans, potatoes, etc., so don't use worn out tees with holes, kiddie tees or thin/gauzy ones. If you have questions, email Sherry Leksell at mrsleksell@gmail.com. If you can sew but don't have t-shirts or have t-shirts but can't sew, email her and she'll see if she can match you up.

Totes are going to be used at the church for a used clothing closet and at ACE for groceries. <https://www.thebalanceeveryday.com/how-to-make-a-t-shirt-tote-bag-1388075>

PECANS ARE COMING!

You can start planning that holiday baking and include pecan recipes as Haystack Circle decided to order a reduced number of pecans this year. We have 72 bags of pecan halves and 24 bags of pieces on their way and should be arriving Oct. 5-6. They will sell for \$12.00/bag. So be it for gifts or your baking, you can stop by the church and pick up your pecans!

ANGEL TREE

The angel tree will be part of the WC community

this year under new leadership, which is bringing some changes. What is not changing is that we will have a tree in our church to make it easy for you to take a name and shop for that child. The tree will be up Sunday Nov. 6 so you will have the opportunity to get a name early and shop for those early bargains! So look for the tree starting in November!

Thanks!

► I want to thank you all for awarding me a scholarship. It will help me in funding my education at ISU. My senior year is off to a great start and I am looking forward to planning my future. Riley Nelson

► Thank you all so much for supporting me in my academics with your gracious scholarship! I am extremely grateful for this and I know this will help me so much with college finances. Isabella Nelson

► Thank you so much for awarding me the 2022 Helen Poole and Helen Johnson scholarships. I am incredibly grateful for the generosity the church has shown me during my college career and throughout my entire life. Lauren Leman

UCC Annual Meeting

This year's meeting will take place in Sioux City, Iowa on October 9-11. Contact Joyce if you are interested in being a delegate.

Treasurer's Report

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Pledges and Offerings	\$11,069.07	\$122,374.59
Other Income	0.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$11,069.07	\$122,374.59
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	.00	\$9,916.65
Pastoral Services	8,386.70	65,575.60
Maintenance and Repairs	2,662.16	28,133.14
Church Office	3,425.12	23,784.06
Music Ministry	265.05	2,820.40
Christian Education	30.00	68.79
Local Ministry	0.00	539.98
Misc. Expenses	73.38	977.35
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$14,842.41	\$131,815.97

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting held on September 13, 2022

Members Present:

Moderator:	Joyce Gelhaus	Pastor:	Craig Blaufuss
Vice Moderator:		Trustees:	Nick Oberender
Finance Sec.:	Dale Olson	Women's Fellowship:	Joyce Gelhaus
Finance :	Tracy Wehrhan	Mission:	Gayle Olson
Staff/Parish:	Holly Riemenschneider	Worship:	Curt McCoskey
Christian Ed:	Vicki Blaufuss	Evangelism:	
Treasurer:	Tracy Wehrhan	Clerk:	Stephanie Hill

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by the Moderator, Joyce Gelhaus in Fellowship Hall. Pastor Craig opened the meeting with a prayer. Tracy Wehrhan moved and Vicki Blaufuss seconded a motion that the minutes be approved as printed in the church newsletter. The motion passed.

Board and Committee Summaries:

Treasurer's Report: July expenses exceeded offerings by about \$3,000.00. To date expenses exceed offerings by about \$8,500.00. Presently there is \$300.00 in checking, but funds are available from the General Fund. Discussed whether to send reminders to members or see what happens in October with offerings. Tracy Wehrhan moved and Dale Olson seconded a motion that the report be put to audit. The motion passed. **Finance Board:** Another bond will come due at the end of the month. All board budgets are in. The Finance Board members will meet to compile the 2023 budget. **Christian Education:** Rally Day was held September 11th. Ten children participated in activities in the vacant lot. That along with the potluck made it a successful event. KLAB begins Thursday, September 15. So far 2 children have signed up, but more are expected. **Evangelism:** No report. **Mission:** A Beacon of Hope meal is planned for September 27th. The sign-up sheets are on the table in Fellowship Hall. The board members are working on getting T-shirt totes going again, helping with the Angel Tree as needed; the upcoming Neighbors in Need special collection in October; and an Alternative Giving Fair. There will be no Crop Walk this year. Relay for Life will be retired at the end of the year. **Staff/Parish:** The budget was completed and the annual staff check-ins are being done. **Trustees:** The budget was done. Platinum Connect is to be installed later in September. The replacement of an electric panel to be installed will cost \$3,000. Sean Moran will repair various doors at the church for an estimated cost of \$2,700.00. **Women's Fellowship:** The next Thrift Sale will be Friday, September 30th from 10am to 6pm. The need for volunteers to take bags to cars was discussed because most of the previous volunteers are no longer able to lift. The kitchen cleaning is normally divided among the circles. But some circles members are no longer able to help with this. A cleaning service may be needed. **Worship:** There will be no more outdoor services due to mobility issues and distractions. Since Pastor Craig will be recovering from surgery in early October, there will be no communion in October. There are videos available for service while Pastor Craig is gone. **Pastor's Report:** Pastor Craig was able to preach on September 19th, the last Saturday service, which was followed by root beer floats provided by the Worship Board. Rally Day on September 11 was enjoyable with games for the children and a pot-luck for all. Also people could 'vote' for their favorite Iowa football team. Donations collected (\$132) benefitted the Agape Fund. The traditional Sunday school will not happen this year. Adult Education begins September 18. WCMA meets September 14th to discuss Ecumenical Human Needs guidelines, Care Center worship services and the Angel Tree Christmas Gift Program.

Old Business:

Constitution Committee: Cabinet members reviewed the updates suggested by the Constitution Committee. Patti Gescheidler moved and Tracy Wehrhan seconded a motion to accept the updates to the constitution. The motion passed. Copies of the amended document will be available to all either by email or hard copy. Voting by the congregation on the constitution will take place at the annual budget meeting in November.

Pastor Craig Update: Pastor Craig will be hospitalized for a lumpectomy on September 19th and will recover during the following weeks. He has prepared several video sermons to be used in his absence. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Next meeting is October 11, 2022 at 7:00pm in Fellowship Hall.

Respectfully submitted, Stephanie Hill - Church Clerk

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

WORSHIP BOARD We met August 11 by phone. Organ: Gretchen reported that Dobson Organ, Lake City, has examined the organ. It is in good shape for now but eventually will need the leathers replaced. Gretchen will take the Worship Board on a tour to show where the leathers are and how they work. It would cost \$60,000-\$80,000 to replace them all but wouldn't be needed for, perhaps, 10 years. Dobson recommended a sophisticated humidity reader or a system of two buckets, dowels and towels. Gretchen has acquired the buckets, dowels and towels. Root Beer Floats: Jane will get the supplies for the floats to be served after the Saturday, August 27, 5 p.m., service. Covid: Pastor Craig has been exposed to Covid so cancelled his trip to his home church in Burlington where he had been invited to preach August 14 in celebration of their 150th anniversary. He had planned a video-based service in his absence. We will go ahead with that plan. Don will "host" the service. Surgery: Pastor Craig's lung surgery is August 26. He will have four video-based services prepared and will confer with organist Melissa Hindt on her availability, so he'll know whether to splice in recorded music. Craig hopes to be back in the pulpit September 11, Rally and Potluck Day. We will forego communion in September. Music: Mark Andrew is willing to supply special vocal music but will need an accompanist. Concert: The Fort Dodge Choral Society has contacted the church about a concert October 29 but has not gotten back with firm plans. If the organ needs to be tuned ahead of that, Gretchen will need to contact Dobson soon. Pulpit Supply: A recently retired Methodist minister from Eldora has expressed willingness to fill in if needed, Gretchen says. What is the going rate for pulpit supply? It had been \$175. Funerals: At a recent funeral visitation, children ran through the lower level and raced wheelchairs. Should the Worship Board have a role in monitoring/assisting during visitations and funeral services? An out-of-town funeral home was in charge of plans for that particular service. Next Meeting: Thursday, September 1, 3:30 p.m.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES We received and approved two requests for the use of the building (kitchen). One from Stephanie Hill and the other from Sherry Leksell (didn't use).

A thorough review of our current phone and internet providers was completed. The current setup involved 4 phone / internet billing invoices with a plethora of miscellaneous charges. And very slow internet service. The decision was made to switch all service to Platinum Connect. This change is scheduled for September 21st and should result in a savings of approximately \$45 per month, one billing invoice to manage and pay, and much faster internet service. This change will not affect our email address but anyone that currently has the internet passcode will need to update their device settings once it is installed.

Received our annual pest control billing invoice which prompted a review of our services to ensure the service and charges are appropriate and in-line with our needs. Our pest control is provided by Plunkett's Pest Control, they have done a good job for a number of years, they have excellent customer service, and their charges are in line with what a local service provider is offering.

Pending: Trustee's approved work order for Peterson Construction to replace an electrical panel which is located in the ladies' room on the main level but affects the lighting throughout the office and choir room. Parts were ordered the first week of July. Estimated cost of \$3,000

Pending: We contacted Shawn Moran concerning previous repairs and pending repairs to entry doors. Laurie met with Shawn at the church on Aug 3rd to look at everything together. Shawn will 1) order the new steel entry door for the west entrance, 2) repair the northeast door frame, similar to the northwest door frame he repaired last year, and 3) repair the trim on the northwest door at no charge. Estimated cost of \$2,700

Still on our radar for 2022:

Deep cleaning to be done to the nursery and Sunday School rooms.

Consideration of the need for new projector equipment in the sanctuary as we anticipate additional breakdowns and most like mandatory replacement in the next year or two.

Respectfully submitted, Laurie Epps, Chair

STAFF PARISH COMMITTEE The committee met on Thursday, Sept. 1, 2022 at 1:00 pm at the church. After discussion, Cindy moved to accept the proposed budget and send it to cabinet. Mary Vavroch seconded. Motion carried.

The following assignments were made for contacting the staff to discuss their concerns: Holly will meet with Melissa Hindt, organist; Mary Vavroch with Michele Omvig, administrative assistant; Lorraine with Curt McCoskey, custodian and Cindy with Pastor Craig.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Van Diest. Secretary

WORSHIP BOARD OLD BUSINESS Gretchen led us on a tour of the organ pipes, specifically explaining the "leathers" that Dobson Organ suggests may need replacing.

We discussed feedback concerning this past summer's services and activities such as carnations for Mother's Day, snack bags for Father's Day, root beer floats after the last Saturday service, outdoor Saturday services, and the Dog Blessing service. The only negative was the amount of traffic and dog noise for the 5:00 outdoor services as well as the inconvenience for some of our less mobile members when meeting outdoors. Next year's Saturday services will be held in the sanctuary. It was suggested that next year we might want to invite "The Quartet" to one of our Saturday services as they were thoroughly enjoyed when last here.

NEW BUSINESS Starting next month our meetings will be held on Tuesdays at 3:30. The change was needed as KLAB now meets on Thursdays.

Pastor Craig's surgery is still tentatively scheduled for September 19. He has already set up video services to be used during his recovery as needed.

The Worship Board budget for 2023 was discussed and our total asking will remain the same as this year, \$1500.

It was decided to "Hang The Greens" on November 20, the week before Advent again this year, and offer pizza, chili, and cookies after completion. It was also decided to take the decorations down on January 8 after church

We will not meet in October unless something unexpected comes up.

Don Bruner, substitute secretary

PASTOR'S CABINET REPORT Worship: I did not preach at my home church on August 14 after all, but due to covid exposure I did not preach here either, so that Sunday we used a video sermon. My surgery, originally scheduled for August 26, was postponed until September 19, so I did lead our last Saturday service on August 27, which included root beer floats following the service provided by the Worship Board. September 4 was our Labor Day Service with Communion, and September 11 was our Rally Day worship service. Looking ahead, our September 25 and Oct. 2 worship services will utilize video sermons since I will be recovering from surgery.

Rally Day: We had 10 children participate in the games held outdoors on September 11, and following our worship service we enjoyed a pot-luck meal. An added bonus was a contest encouraging people to "vote" for their favorite Iowa football team by making a donation that would benefit the Agape fund. The final totals: Hawkeyes--\$21, Drake--\$5, UNI--\$50, Cyclones--\$30, Lynx--\$7, Church--\$19. UNI won—and the Agape Fund netted \$132!

Resuming CE Programming: Because of the large amount of early-out school dismissals on Wednesdays this year, parents of KLAB members were polled about using a different day of the week to hold KLAB, and Thursday was the choice. KLAB and KLAB+ will begin Thursday, September 15 with a back-to KLAB party! Adult Ed will resume Sunday, September 18. We will not have a traditional Sunday school this year.

WCMA: The WCMA will meet Wednesday, Sept. 14 and we will be discussing revising our Ecumenical Human Needs guidelines, Care Center worship services (there have been 2 complaints from Southfield about how these services are being conducted), a "Back to School" prayer service, and the Angel Tree Christmas Gift Program. I will suggest that we use one central location for the public to pick up the angels, and Avila Bank has graciously consented to allowing the use of their lobby for this purpose.

Tri-Conference UCC: Rev. Phil Hart is now acting as our Interim Executive Conference Minister until we have concluded a search for a permanent ECM.

The breakdown of my ministry since August 8:

Worship services led:7; Christian Ed: 0; Meetings:7; Visitation: 11

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:

