

May 2023 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
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“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” –Acts 1:8

“Lest we forget—lest we forget!” –Rudyard Kipling

As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, on May 7th Vicki and I will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary! Whether you are married or not I'm sure you can appreciate what a milestone that is in the life of a married couple. We are already preparing for the day by looking over old pictures and reminiscing over the chapters in our married life that we hold in common with many married couples: the addition of new members to the family, and the sad goodbyes to members of the family who have died; the holiday celebrations; the home improvements; the vacations; the big-ticket items purchased; the job and career changes; the moves; the many friends acquired over the years. Add to those memories the uncountable moments just living life day by day...and those 40 years of life together seem amazingly long and full!

Also in the month of May we will be observing 2 other anniversaries. One is the anniversary of General John Logan's 1868 proclamation of an observance to honor our civil war dead (which we now observe as Memorial Day), and the other is the anniversary of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost which is credited with giving birth to the “church.” Needless to say, these two great anniversaries make a 40th wedding anniversary seem like a small matter indeed!

And yet there is a commonality to them all that makes anniversaries so important for us to mark. Every anniversary calls for the remembrance of the many monumental moments that have shaped our lives in profound ways, and each anniversary also calls for the remembrance of the many, many small moments that have sustained great commitments on a day-to-day basis. In our married life we celebrate the monumental moments of our wedding day, the birth of our grandchildren, our move to St Louis and my call to ministry, our subsequent moves and pastorates, and Vicki's retirement from nursing. These are huge events in our married life! And yet we both know that what has really sustained our marriage for 40 years are the countless moments of daily communication, shared work, rest, forgiveness, thoughtfulness, and the small expressions of love that keep a marriage alive.

As we approach Memorial Day, we remember the great battles and the great sacrifices of our citizen soldiers who fought at Gettysburg, Antietam, the Somme, Normandy, Korea, Viet Nam, Iraq, and Afghanistan...and yet we know that what has sustained democracy has not been the great battles of land and sea alone but also the countless small acts of service undertaken by our military personnel and their civilian support systems, the support of family and other citizens at home, and our collective resolve to not only to go to war but to also rebuild for peace.

And as we approach Pentecost, we remember the amazing power of the Holy Spirit to enable the early disciples to speak in tongues, preach fearlessly, and be faithful unto death, and we remember the great moments and great figures of church history who have shaped the story of the church: Augustine, Aquinas, Teresa of Avila, Luther, Calvin, Wesley (to name just a few!). And yet we know that the Christian faith would be celebrating no anniversary this month were it not for the untold millions of Christians throughout history who lived out the Spirit's calling in their day to day lives, supporting the church, contributing to its ministries, and sharing the Gospel through their humble words and deeds.

All of this leads me to conclude that anniversaries are wonderful days to mark and celebrate, and they are great opportunities to focus our gratitude and intentionally remember the significant (and yes, the not-so-seemingly significant) events that have shaped families, countries, even religions. And

anniversaries are also good days to remind ourselves that we all have a part to play in the ongoing stories of our families, our nation, our religion, and our world! For while our contributions may seem small and inconsequential to the great events of our histories, our daily labors for the sake of great causes and life-giving movements *that are still unfolding* are the bricks and mortar of the greatest aspirations of our species. In this we can take pride, and peace, as we resolve to commit our best selves and energies to the great callings of our lives, as the Spirit and our own consciences reveal them to us.

I will conclude with words from one of my favorite hymns “We Would Be Building,” which speaks so eloquently of our calling, our labors, and our dreams as we set about building anything that is truly worthy of our deepest love and highest aspirations—be it a marriage, a country, or a faith.
*“Teach us to build, upon the solid rock, we set the dream that hardens into deed,
 ribbed with fine steel, both time and change to mock, the unfailing purpose of our noblest creed.
 Teach us to build; O Maker, lend us sight, to see the towers gleaming in the night.”* --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

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

7 - Craig & Vicki Blaufuss
 17 - Tracy & Glenda Wehrhan
 28 – Diana & Nick Oberender
 29 - Dan & Donna Ryherd

Parish Nurse News

Preventing risk of falls
 Every year, 3 million older adults are treated in the emergency department for fall injuries, and falls are a leading cause of injury among older adults. Risk factors include increased muscle weakness, balance and gait problems, slower reflexes, and foot and sensory problems. People can reduce risk by strengthening their lower body muscles; having vision, hearing, and blood pressure checked; choosing safer footwear, and more.

Scholarships

The Finance Board will be receiving scholarship applications until June 16. Applications are available from the church office.

KLAB concludes May 18

Our after-school program, Kids Learning About the Bible, will conclude the 2022-2023 program year on Thursday, May 18 with our annual trek to the Dairy Queen, followed by an afternoon at East Twin Park. Pick up time will be at 5 pm at the church.

Clean Up

Earth Day has come and gone, but that doesn't mean we get to stop caring for God's creation. Mission Board has often sponsored a trash pickup at this time, but in discussion this year, we thought maybe instead of a 1-time event we could see if the city would be willing to put some garbage cans on the trail that our church could be responsible for emptying. That is something they are willing to partner with us.

Church Staff	
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Curt/Lorraine McCoskey : Cust's.	832-5341
Tracy Wehrhan : Church Treasurer	297-0370
Dale Olson : Financial Secretary	839-5619



MAY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

11 - Lauren Leman
 11 - Mabel Prescott
 11 – Eli Imhoff
 11 – Thomas Arnold
 16 - Neil Oberender
 19 - Gretchen Bruner
 22 – Ed Mosbach
 26 - Carol Crystal
 27 – Isabelle McNiel
 28 – Kasyn Weig
 29 - Linda Lahr

The parks dept. is going to put 2 garbage cans on the Boone River trail, and we will check them and get them emptied on a weekly basis. The garbage cans will be located at the canoe access at City Park and by the dam off the White Fox Rd. We will be looking for volunteers to help check and empty these, taking the full bags to the dumpster at the church. This project will start on the first of May, so look for a sign up sheet to take your turn to help keep some garbage collected and out of the river and off the trail.

Adult Education Concludes May 21

Our Adult Education classes will conclude Sunday, May 21, for our annual summer recess. I want to thank all our participants for meeting and thoughtfully discussing the variety of topics we have studied this year! –Pastor Craig

Summer Worship Hours and Saturday Service Dates

Our summer worship hours will remain at 10:00 a.m., and during the summer months we will hold 3 Saturday evening services: June 24, July 29, and August 26. Saturday services will begin at 5 p.m., and as has been our past practice, following our Saturday services there will be no Sunday morning worship service that weekend. We will hold these Saturday services indoors; please look for more details in the coming months.

Come Share our Joy!

On Sunday, May 7, Vicki and I will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary, and since the date falls on a Sunday, we are hosting the coffee and fellowship time after worship. Please stay after worship, have some cake and punch, and share the joy of 40 years of marriage with us! Pastor Craig

Graduation Sunday June 18

This year we will observe Graduation Sunday on June 18, which is the earliest date that will work for the schedules of our busy graduates! Join us in church that Sunday as we honor Chesney Fuller and Shelby Brim for achieving the milestone of their High School graduation.

Mother's Day May 14

We will honor motherhood and our mothers during worship on Sunday, May 14. The Worship Board will again present flowers to all

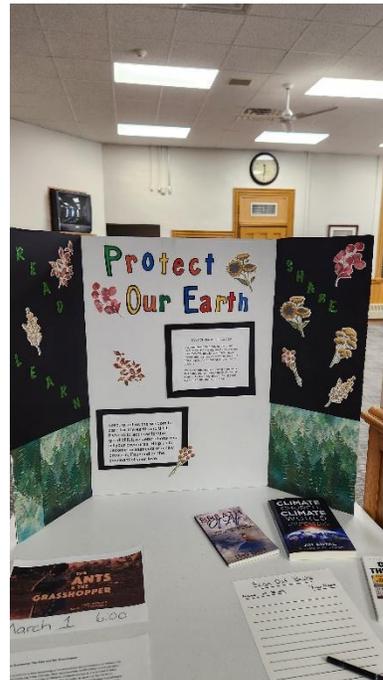
mothers to say "thank you!" for all that our mothers have done for us. Join us in celebrating the gift of our mothers!

Care Center Worship Services May 21

First Congregational will lead care center worship services on Sunday, May 21, beginning at 1:15 pm at Windsor Manor, 2 pm at Southfield Wellness Community, and 2:45 at Crestview Nursing and Rehab Center.

Care For Our Earth

An education/informational display has been set up in the Fellowship Hall by the mission board with books and information about environmental justice. Please feel free to peruse - or even check out a book! Also, if you have informational items that you'd like to share with the congregation, please add it to our resources.



Our KLAB Kids created this banner to remind us of the Good News of Easter!



Our KLAB Kids made Easter snack bags with the story of Easter inside, and they were given to everyone who attended Easter Sunday worship.



The next sale will be Sept 29. Hope to see many more of you join the fun. Thank you all so much!!! And start collecting, September is just around the corner! Cindy Henning, Chairperson, Thrift Sale



We had a good turn out and great food at our Easter breakfast, sponsored by the Christian Education Board.



Women's Fellowship Spring Thrift Sale

Our Thrift Sale was a huge success again! We raised approx. \$1475 before expenses. The proceeds from the sale will help us give monies to many deserving organizations in this community and around the world, "Thanks" to each of you. Whether you helped donate, sort, clean-up, haul away, provide food or worked, the Thrift Sale could not get done without YOU. It is a lot of work, but also a lot of fun and fellowship.

Brownie Thanks

Mission Board made brownies to give to city street workers and county road workers to say thank you for all they do and especially for the work they did this past winter. Brownies were delivered Monday April 24 and were received with smiles and heartfelt thanks. Both groups said they don't receive many thanks for the work they do so receiving these brownies let

them know they are appreciated. The photos show Zach Williams and Riley Sherman receiving the brownies for the city workers and Cory Zorn for the county road workers.



Treasurer's Report

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Pledges and Offerings	\$14,120.00	\$48,910.33
Other Income	0.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$14,120.00	\$48,910.33
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	1,416.67	\$4,648.97
Pastoral Services	10,450.89	27,026.51
Maintenance and Repairs	4,899.33	11,551.61
Church Office	2,781.99	9,099.78
Music Ministry	483.33	1,299.99
Christian Education	0.00	119.10
Local Ministry	0.00	0.00
Misc. Expenses	183.33	476.05
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$20,215.54	\$54,222.01

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting held on April 11, 2023

Members Present:

Moderator:	Wil Groves	Pastor: Craig Blaufuss
Vice Moderator:	Gayle Olson	Trustees: Nick Oberender
Finance Sec.:	Dale Olson	Women's Fellowship: Patti Gescheidler
Treasurer:	Tracy Wehrhan	Mission:
Staff/Parish:	Cindy Henning	Worship:
Christian Ed:	Patti Gescheidler	Clerk: Stephanie Hill

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by the Moderator, Wil Groves in Fellowship Hall. Pastor Craig opened the meeting with a prayer. The March minutes were approved with corrections.

Board and Committee Summaries:

Treasurer's Report: The March offerings were \$14,120.00 and expenses were \$14,443.53; offerings and expenses are nearly equal. Tracy Wehrhan moved and Dale Olson seconded a motion that the report be put to audit. The motion passed. The funds

from the Easter Breakfast will be used by Christian Ed. **Pastor's Report:** The Easter Breakfast was attended by about 50 people and an Easter Egg hunt was held for the youngsters. The Tri-Conference UCC is experiencing more personnel changes. Both a full-time and a part-time conference minister have been called – 18-month designated positions. A representative of the Red Cross spoke at the last Ministerium meeting and explained what the Red Cross does in terms of short-term relief following a disaster. Tony Streigle of the WC United Church of Christ is a Red Cross volunteer. Backpack fundraising will take place in the fall through the churches with information provided by Sarah Ostlund. Chris Anderson volunteered to coordinate with all the Food Banks in WC. The Ministerium feels it would be beneficial to have reports from the food banks and for the food banks to collaborate with each other. **Finance Board:** Applications for Scholarships will go out May 1st and are due June 13. **Trustees:** Orkin Pest Control will do an inspection for bats. Christ McNeil provided stove and oven cleaning as a gift. About 10 light fixtures need replaced in the kitchen. Also, some drop panels may need changed. Discussion continues about the front light that is not working. The wiring (guts) for the electrical panel (which is here) are now not expected until fall. **Mission:** We have not received an estimate for the pet themed basket sent for the DSAOC auction. It sold but not for as much as we anticipated. Brownie Sundae will be held again this year; the date to be set. We will again recognize the city and county workers because of the difficult snow season. Information on climate change and composting are on a table in Fellowship Hall. **Women's Fellowship:** There were 92 attendees at the Lenten Lunch on March 28 at Faith United Methodist. The Thrift Sale is April 21st from 10am to 6pm. The sign-up sheet is in Fellowship Hall. The Constitution and By-Laws for Women's Fellowship are being reviewed and possibly revised. Circles will review it and vote on it during the May Dinner which will be Thursday, May 25 at 5:30 to 6:30. A taco bar with root beer floats for dessert will be served. Proceeds from the year will be distributed at the May Dinner. Suggestions from the Circle members are encouraged. **Worship:** No report. **Christian Education:** Easter Breakfast was served with a nice variety of foods including quiche, egg dishes, pastries, and fruit cups. **Staff/Parish:** The committee is meeting with their assigned employee. No issues have been found.

New Business:

The question of whether to become a member of the Chamber of Commerce was discussed. The benefits do not outweigh the costs currently. The matter was dropped. The next meeting is May 9, 2023 at 7:00pm in Fellowship Hall.

Respectfully submitted, Stephanie Hill - Church Clerk

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP Lenten Lunch Recap – 92 attended at Faith United Methodist. Looking for volunteers to organize and represent churches for next year. Thrift Sale will be Friday, April 21, 10 am – 6 pm in Fellowship Hall. A sign-up is in Fellowship Hall or you can sign-up in circle meeting or call Cindy. Constitution and By-Laws were reviewed. Please review with your circle members and let Cindy know of changes before end of April. The new Constitution and by-laws will be voted on at May meeting.

May dinner will be Thursday, May 25 at 5:30 – 6:30. We will have a taco bar with Root Beer floats for dessert. Program year proceeds will be handed out at 6:45. Ask for suggestions in circle. Cindy will send invites to recipients. Joyce Gelhaus offered to present her program on Egypt at meeting. Patty is making a poster for dinner and sending a copy to Michele for Newsletter and bulletins.

Next meeting May 3rd.

WORSHIP BOARD Met April 4, 2023, 3:30 p.m. at the church. The Maundy Thursday service is April 6, 6 p.m., East Chapel. The Easter service is 10:30 a.m., rather than 10. Communion will be received at the front of the sanctuary, rather than in the pew. Don and Marjorie are stewards. This summer we will continue church at 10 a.m. on Sundays. Every fourth Saturday we will have worship at 5 p.m. indoors. June 24 we plan a potluck/shared meal after the evening service. July 22 (now changed to July 29) and August 26 are the other Saturday services. No pet-blessing service this year. Melissa Hindt arranged for Clayton to tune our church's piano March 29 after he tuned St. Thomas's piano. Al Yungclas and Don continue to monitor the piano's humidifier, adding water when needed. Pastor Craig said there is not a charge for the videos he sets up for worship services when he is absent. Next Meeting: May 2, 3:30 p.m., at the church. Jane will preside.

PASTOR'S CABINET REPORT Worship: March 19 we baptized Ragen Rae McCarville. On March 26 we utilized a video sermon in my absence, and Marjorie Groves was our worship leader. Palm Sunday was April 2, and we led care center services that Sunday afternoon at Windsor Manor and Southfield (Crestview was shut down for covid.). We observed Maundy Thursday on April 6 in the East Chapel with communion. Easter Sunday we had a good crowd who came to share in the Good News of the Resurrection! We moved our service time to 10:30 to accommodate our organist Josi Greenley who was subbing for Melissa. We shared the sacrament of Holy Communion by coming forward, rather than by serving in the pews.

Easter Breakfast: The Christian Ed Board put on a great Easter Breakfast for 50 people beginning at 9 am Easter morning. There was even an Easter Egg hunt in the lower level of the church for the youngest! The Free will offering grossed over \$400, which after meal expenses will go toward Christian Ed's budget.

CE Programming: KLAB has been studying Holy Week, and they made the Palm Sunday banner that was over our doors leading to the sanctuary. KLAB also made up the Easter Story snack bags that were given out on Easter day. Adult Ed took time to have a meaningful discussion of Easter and the unconditional love of God. We will resume our multi-week study of LGBTQ basics and complete that in 3 more class sessions.

Tri-Conference UCC: The Tri-Conference Ministries Board voted to call Rev. Kendy Miller as a Designated full-time Associate Conference Minister. The Board also voted to call Rev. Jonna Jensen as a part-time Associate Conference Minister. These are both 18-month designated positions as discernment and planning around the Tri-Conference Ministries continues. Also, Aiden Spencer, the communications specialist of the Tri-Conference, has resigned.

WCMA: The women's annual Lenten Luncheon was held at Faith UMC on March 28, with over 100 ladies attending! At our last meeting we had a Red Cross rep discuss their disaster response protocols. The Red Cross only provides immediate and very short-term relief (like 3 days in a motel and a food voucher). The Red Cross works to connect disaster victims with other community resources for longer term recovery assistance. We were pleased to learn that WC Church of Christ pastor, Tony Streigle, is now a Red Cross volunteer rep! We will be utilizing his expertise over time. We will hold another "Faith at the Fair" church service during the Hamilton County fair on July 30, 9:30 a.m. The school system will not conduct a summer lunch program this year. We are discussing if the WCMA will provide our own program like last year. The EHNC subcommittee met and they are recommending that we stay at the \$700 maximum for yearly assistance. We have enough in the School Backpack account to get us through to the fall, but we will likely need to do some fundraising then. Sarah volunteered to

organize promotional materials for a back-to -school backpack blessing that local churches could use, and then tie that blessing to an offering for the School Backpack program. ACE finalized the sale of their building to Jordan church last week. ACE will continue to remain at their old building for now, leasing the space from Jordan Church. They continue to look at moving to the downtown area. We discussed how useful it would be to have reports from our local food pantries, and for the food pantries to collaborate and share information, problem-solving and best practices with each other. Chris Anderson of Trinity Lutheran has eagerly volunteered to spearhead that effort and open the lines of communication and collaboration with our local food pantries.

Shalom Circle: we have met regularly on Fridays at 6:30 pm in the East Chapel. We did suspend meeting on March 24 and April 7. We will resume on April 14, at a new time of 7:30 pm.

Wilma Taylor Funeral: we will hold a funeral service for Wilma Taylor on Tuesday, April 11, beginning at 1 pm. Visitation is from 11-1.

The breakdown of my ministry since March 9:

Worship services led:7; Christian Ed:5; Meetings:5; Visitation:14

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:

