

June 2023 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232
<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>

"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." –John 14:9

I have a question for you Fathers...what did you want your children to see in you when you were raising them? Did you want them to see diligence? Did you want them to see responsibility? Did you want them to see the blessings of creativity? Did you want them to see that humor and fun need not die with childhood? Did you want them to see your attentiveness and affection? Did you want them to see the need for discipline? The list I just offered came from my observations of my father throughout the course of his life; these are the qualities he wanted us to "see" in him—as our father. And I think these qualities are what many fathers want their children to see in them as well, in the hope that they will learn from their father's example and come to value and emulate these qualities.

This month, on June 18, we will observe Father's Day, which is a good day to reflect on our fathers, the importance of fathering, and if you are a father, what you hope-- or hoped-- to instill in your kids. As I age I realize that so much of who I am today is because of my father's example which still lives in me. Yet I am aware that the notion our fathers live on in us is a double-edged sword. Fathers who are absent from their children's lives due to death, or abandonment, or neglect...those fathers live on in their children often as a longing, a wound, a fantasy, or a bitter memory. And a father who was present in the household but indifferent, preoccupied, or abusive...that father also lives on in his children much like a scar lives on as a reminder of a painful past. That a father has so much power to penetrate the minds and hearts of his children is an awesome responsibility! It makes you wonder if it isn't too much responsibility for us very *human* fathers.

That is why it is important to receive as Good News the gift that Jesus came to bring to us. Now as far as we know Jesus was never a father, but he had both an earthly father and a heavenly Father. And while we don't know much about his earthly father Joseph, we do know much about Jesus' heavenly Father, for the Christian faith teaches that what is most clearly known about God the Father has been revealed to us in his Son, Jesus. And so when the Son chose to heal the afflicted and hearten the disheartened we see the will of the Father in him that all should be healed, and that all should experience wholeness and well-being. When the Son reached to the sinners, the outcasts, the lowly and the forgotten we see the heart of the Father in him yearning for his lost sheep and reaching out to raise up the despairing and isolated who also are God's children. When the Son spoke words of wisdom and life to the crowds, and when the Son admonished the foolish and the wayward to choose a better way of life, we hear the wisdom of the Father speaking through him and reminding his children that they were created for far more than fleeting fame or fickle pleasures. When the Son rebuked the powerful and the hypocrites, when he turned the tables of the oppressors and their collaborators, when he preached a kingdom where the first would be last, and the least would have a home at last, then we see the discipline of the Father alive in him using hard words to convict the self-righteous and the callous so that they would repent. And when the Son spoke words of hope to his disciples as he was about to be betrayed; when he washed their feet and told them they should do the same to one another; when he told them to love each other as he had loved them...then we have heard and seen the Father in the Son, beseeching us that we too should follow the way of Jesus and give ourselves over to God, and to Love.

Friends, Father's Day can be a day of celebration and happy memories! Yet it can also be a day of grief and self-doubt and guilt on the part of fathers, and a day of grief, pain, anger and heartbreak for children whose fathers did not live into the role and responsibilities of being a "good" father. And so as we approach Father's Day and think about our fathers, we all need to clearly hear the message of Jesus:

There is one Father who is above every earthly father, and this Father claims us with a perfect love which joins every human being into one family born not of human love, but of divine love! And this Father wants to live in us as every good father wants to live in his children: filling our hearts, opening our minds, teaching us all things, and showing us the way, the truth, and the life, so we will know who we are, and what we can and should do as children of the living God who lives in us. May this Good News bless every human father, and every father's child! Happy Father's Day! --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
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Michele Omvig: Admin. Assist. 269-7210
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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



JUNE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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
30 - Katie Holdgrafer

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

14 - Duane & Mary Vavroch

Parish Nurse News

Advice from a Garden

- Cultivate lasting friendships
- Sow seeds of kindness
- Listen to sage advice
- Don't let the little things bug you
- Be outstanding in your field
- Take thyme for yourself
- No Vining!

Scholarships

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

Graduation Sunday June 18

Graduation Sunday, the day we honor our graduates, will be held on Sunday, June 18. This year we will honor High School graduates **Chesney Fuller** and **Shelby Brim**. Following worship, the Christian Ed Board will serve refreshments in honor of our graduates.

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.

Indoor Picnic Potluck, June 24

The Worship Board invites you to an "indoor picnic" to follow our first 5 p.m. Saturday evening worship service of the summer, to be held on June 24. This will be a potluck picnic, so everyone is encouraged to bring a dish to share! There will be a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall; please list what dish you will bring so we can enjoy a variety of offerings. The

Worship Board will provide coffee, lemonade, and water. Please bring your picnic baskets with your table service for the meal!

Drive-Through “Brownie Sundae”

You are invited to our annual drive-through “Brownie Sundae” on Friday, June 23, 6:30-8 p.m. Simply pull up in your vehicle to the West Entrance of the church. Tell the attendant how many Brownie Sundaes you would like, and the attendant will bring your prepared Brownie Sundaes to your vehicle. The bowls, spoons, napkins – all are made of compostable material. A large jar will be used to receive your free-will donation. To keep things simple, all sundaes will be alike: a large brownie topped with a generous amount of store-bought vanilla ice-cream, then topped with chocolate syrup. For those who are gluten intolerant or don’t like chocolate, you can enjoy a bowl of vanilla ice cream without the brownie or topping. Proceeds from the event will be sent to the Enhance Hamilton County Foundation’s Food Pantry Challenge.

Strengthen the Church

The yearly offering of the United Church of Christ known as Strengthen the Church will be taken on Sunday, June 18. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.

Clean Up

The parks dept. has 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. There is a sign-up sheet for volunteers to help check and empty these, taking the full bags to the dumpster at the church.

May Dinner

The Women's Fellowship held their annual May dinner on Thursday, May 25. After a delicious meal of walking taco salads and bars, they disbursed the proceeds from the thrift sales and circle donations. Those receiving donations are Kathy Theobold from ACE, \$250; Kathy Josten from Meals on Wheels, \$500; President Patty

Gescheidler; Sharon Perry from Ecumenical Human Needs, \$500; Deb Peterson from Backpack Program, \$250; and Pastor Craig Blaufuss for OCWM, \$1000. Those not present were UDMO, \$250 and WC School Nurse, \$250. They voted to approve an updated Constitution and By-Laws. Joyce Gelhaus presented a program on her trip to Egypt in the sanctuary.

Thank you to the members of Women's Fellowship and entire church family for your help throughout the year.



Thank You!

Vicki and I want to thank everyone for making our May 7 40th wedding anniversary celebration so special! We were blessed to have been able to share our joy with you all, and we are so appreciative of the many cards and expressions of love we have received. Thank you so much! --Pastor Craig and Vicki

KLAB

Our KLAB program ended for the summer with our annual trip to the Dairy Queen followed by fun at East Twin Park. Once again we thank Vicki Blaufuss, Glenda Wehrhan, Susan Meinders and Ginnie Veach (and Pastor Craig) for leading this program. A special thank you to Wil Groves for his many years of service to KLAB and the youth of our congregation.



On April 28 the KLAB kids went on a nature walk/scavenger hunt and made a display of all the natural treasures and human trash they found. On May 4 they toured the Trash Man recycling facility with manager Chris Kehoe and learned about our local recycling efforts and what we can do to help recycle.



Treasurer's Report

INCOME	April	YEAR TO DATE
Pledges and Offerings	\$22,583.00	\$72,493.33
Other Income	0.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$22,583.00	\$72,493.33
EXPENSES		
Outreach and Mission	1,416.67	\$6,065.64
Pastoral Services	6,644.02	33,670.53

Maintenance and Repairs	2,670.53	15,794.14
Church Office	3,027.48	12,127.26
Music Ministry	483.33	1,783.32
Christian Education	0.00	119.10
Local Ministry	16.26	16.26
Misc. Expenses	294.42	770.47
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$14,552.71	\$70,346.72

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting held on May 9, 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:	Gretchen McGlynn
Christian Ed:	Patty 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. Tracy Wehrhan moved and Cindy Henning seconded a motion to approve the April minutes as printed. The motion passed.

Board and Committee Summaries:

Treasurer's Report: The April offerings were \$22,383.00 and expenses were \$12,980.71; all income and expenses are in line with the budget. Tracy Wehrhan moved and Dale Olson seconded a motion that the report be put to audit. The motion passed. **Pastor's Report:** The choir will sing for Mother's Day service and the sacrament of communion will be served. KLAB kids created the "Believe" banner above the north entryway to the sanctuary. KLAB classes will end on May 11 and the following week the annual Dairy Queen trip will be held. Adult education will also conclude May 21. Marjorie Groves and Joyce Gelhaus attended the in-person Northwest Association Annual meeting on April 29 in Humboldt. Marjorie's report is in the Pastor's Report. The WCMA will hold another summer lunch program this year at East Twin Park on Mondays and Fridays, June 5 through August 18; from 11:30am to 1pm. The American Tap is organizing an Angel Tree Ride on August 26 to raise funds for our Angel Tree Program. While comparing the work done by food banks in Webster City, Chris Anderson of Trinity Lutheran found that the VA has a new program where veterans can receive food baskets from the Food Bank. **Finance Board:**

Applications for Scholarships have been distributed and will be evaluated when the Board meets in June.

Trustees: Chris McNeil is searching for the cause of the flickering lights in the office and kitchen. The electrical panel "guts" have still not arrived for the breaker box. Items blocking the approach to electrical panels in some areas is a problem which may necessitate a work day. Kitchen panels need replaced and the vent leaks. The light over the entrance on the west side has been replaced. **Mission:** The sign-up sheet is out for people to empty two garbage cans: one at the canoe ramp on the Boone River and the other at the fishing spot just south of the bridge on White Fox Road. The special offering for "Strengthen the Church" will be June 18. **Women's Fellowship:** The Thrift Sale raised \$1,475.00 with \$43.15 in expenses. The May Dinner will be May 25 from 5:30 – 6:30 and all are invited. Joyce Gelhaus will have a program on her trip to Egypt. The funds, \$3,000, will be divided among various worthy groups. **Worship:** No report. **Christian Education:** May 4 KLAB took a field trip to the Trashman Recycling Center to learn about recycling. Also, this group went on a nature walk to collect what was and was not supposed to be in nature. **Staff/Parish:** Nothing to report.

New Business:

Trustees: Orkin Pest Control did an inspection of the building for bats. They found that bats and squirrels had access to parts of the building and the mess they left needed attention. Several church

members with the Trustees met with the Orkin team to hear the report. The Trustees will provide a written report of the process.

Endowment Committee: The Committee met in April to decide how to distribute the available funds.

The next Cabinet meeting is June 13, 2023 at 7:00pm in Fellowship Hall.

Respectfully submitted, Stephanie Hill, Church Clerk

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP THRIFT Sale was Friday, April 21, 10am-6pm in Fellowship Hall. We raised \$1,475.00 with expenses of \$43.15. Cindy will purchase bags for the Fall Sale.

Cindy will bring copies of Constitution and By-Laws to be voted on at May 25 meeting.

May dinner will be Thursday, May 25 at 5:30 – 6:30. Providence Circle will set tables. Cindy will get food and prepare taco bar. Exec. Board will bring bars for dessert. Patty will do Welcome. Mabel will say prayer. After dinner, Cindy will pass out program year proceeds at 6:45. We will vote on Constitution and By-Laws. Then those who want to stay can hear Joyce Gelhaus program on Egypt in sanctuary. We have \$3000 to give for 2023 program year. Exec. Board discussed and chose the recipients. OCWM \$1000; Ecumenical Human Needs - \$500; Meals on Wheels - \$500; Backpacks - \$250; ACE - \$250; UDMO - \$250; School Nurse - \$250 unless Gayle finds UCC Period Pack info, we may change recipient.

Submitted by Cindy Henning.

PASTOR'S CABINET REPORT Worship: We are now in Eastertide, continuing to celebrate the good news of Jesus' resurrection and looking forward to Pentecost. Kolleen Taylor graciously subbed for Melissa as our accompanist the week after Easter. On May 7 we shared the sacrament of communion during worship, and we will again share the sacrament on Pentecost Sunday, which is May 28. There will be no communion served on the first Sunday of June. The choir will sing for our Mother's Day service, which is May 14.

CE Programming: KLAB created the "Believe!" banner in honor of Easter, which is displayed over the sanctuary doors. As part of our Earth Day studies we went on a nature hike/scavenger hunt and found large amounts of trash that we collected and displayed. We also made bird feeders to help feed our winged friends. On May 4 we went on a field trip to Trash Man's recycling center to learn more about how we recycle locally. We will hold our last regular KLAB session on May 11, and on May 18 we will conclude our program year with our annual trek to the Dairy Queen and then East Twin Park. Adult Education has finished our multi-week study of LGBTQ basics have begun discussing "Christian Commitment." Our last class before summer recess is May 21.

Northwest Association Annual meeting: Marjorie Groves and Joyce Gelhaus represented our church at the Association annual meeting which was held in Humboldt on April 29. This was the first in-person Northwestern Association Annual Meeting since 2018. Twelve churches were represented, not enough for a quorum. Revised bylaws and the budget will be voted on by email to churches in the association. In the afternoon Shonda Deranleau was ordained as a UCC pastor.

Iowa Conference: This information comes from Marjorie Groves' report on the NW Association meeting: "Rev. Kendy Miller, Associate Tri-Conference Minister, reported that when Rev. Phil Hart began as Interim Executive Tri-Conference Minister, the Iowa Conference was \$1 million in debt. With cuts in overhead, property and staff, the Iowa Conference is now nearly in the black. The Iowa Conference is moving to Ames and will have its office in the church at 217 Sixth Street. 10 Conference Deacons have been hired, each working five hours a week and each responsible for communicating with 30 churches." The NW Association Committee on Ministry includes Chris Burtnett, Algona; Bill Howie, Manson; Rich Jensen, Larchwood; and Kristy May, Sioux City area. After several years off because of Covid, the COM plans to resume Support Consultations, meeting with congregations and pastors, starting this summer and visiting every four years. Joyce Gelhaus is on the Conference Committee on Authorized Ministry. Pilgrim Heights Camp and Retreat Center is now operating in the black, just barely, but still in the black. Elisabeth Black, executive director, is marketing Pilgrim Heights as a location for weddings, craft shows, quilting retreats, family reunions and Vrbo Vacation Rentals, with all weekends booked through the coming summer. Camps for kids and others run Sundays through Thursdays." Thank you for the update, Marjorie!

WCMA: We will hold another "Faith at the Fair" church service during the Hamilton County fair on Sunday, July 30, 9:30 a.m. The Worship Board has graciously changed our July Saturday service to the 29th so that I can be a part of this ecumenical service. The WCMA voted to implement another summer lunch program like the group did last year, but this year we are asking that kids and families pre-register for the meals so we have an idea how many are interested in eating. The meals will be held at East Twin Park, Mondays and Fridays, June 5-August 18, from 11:30am -1 p.m. The American Tap is organizing an Angel Tree ride on August 26 to raise funds for our Angel Tree program. Chris Anderson of Trinity Lutheran has met with the local food pantries, to compare notes about their work. He found out that the

VA now has a new program where veterans can receive food baskets. The meal packing event at Asbury will be Sept 16. This event will encourage community support (and funds).

Shalom Circle: we met less frequently in April, but will resume on Friday, May 12 in East Chapel, 7:30.

Funerals: We held a funeral service for Wilma Taylor in our sanctuary on Tuesday, April 11, beginning at 1 pm. On April 19 I officiated at the funeral of Donna Vinsant, held at Fosters.

Thank you: to everyone who stayed to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary reception after worship on May 7! We were so happy to share our special day with you all!

The breakdown of my ministry since April 9:

Worship services led:5; Christian Ed:8; Meetings:10; Visitation:14; Funerals: 2

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE The Committee met on April 23 with Kolleen Taylor, Wil Groves and Dale Olson in attendance. It Was moved by Wil, seconded by Dale, to have Shirley be the new Chairperson if she was willing. Motion passed.

It was moved by Wil, seconded by Dale, to give money to the organizations as follows:

Backpack	\$500
Lotus	\$500
Beacon of Hope	\$500
Earthquake victims	\$1000
Minister's discretion	\$500
Cleaning robes	\$500

If there is any money left over from the cleaning of choir robes, it is to go to the Agape fund. Motion passed. ~ Dale Olson

MISSION BOARD met Wednesday May 3 with 3 members present, Pastor Craig, Sherry, & Gayle.

Craig shared he had led the KLAB kids on a scavenger hunt for Earth Day. They had to find things that belonged in nature and things that don't. They discovered there was a lot on the river trail that was not nature!

A sign-up sheet has been made for people to check the garbage cans that have been placed on the river trail. 1 by the canoe access at City Park & 1 by the dam off the White Fox Rd.

Strengthen the Church offering will be collected on June 18.

Sherry has ordered compostable bowls and spoons for the brownie sundae drive-thru.

The ministerial association here in town has decided to try and offer a summer lunch program again. They are hoping to get pre-registrations and they will be looking for the churches to volunteer a week at a time with serving to take place on Monday and Friday at Twin Park.

Steve Mather, Stepping Forward founder, has stopped by and visited with Craig. He stated he is going to be in the states for the next 2 years or so and indicated he is willing to come and speak to us sometime. We will look at inviting him sometime this fall.

No new meeting date was set due to the small number in attendance. Hopefully a date can be found in early June where all can gather.

Secretary pro-tem, Gayle

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP EXECUTIVE BOARD Pastor's Report – Alva Hohl's Memorial is Tuesday May 9. Craig arranging for livestream of service. Graduation Sunday is June 18, Grads are Shelby Brim and Chesney Fuller. Last KLAB is May 18 at Dairy Queen. Last Adult Ed is May 21. Pentecost is Sunday May 28. Summer Saturday Worship will be June 24, July 29 and August 26. An indoor-outdoor picnic potluck will be June 24. Root Beer floats will be served August 26. Brownie Sundae Drive Thru is June 23. Orkin gave presentation to Trustees, Cabinet and Finance about the bat situation. Trustees are putting a proposal together for Cabinet. Craig and Vicki's 40th Wedding Anniversary will be celebrated at coffee Sunday, May 7.

WORSHIP BOARD Summer worship hours: 10:00 on Sunday morning. Saturday evening worship services will be held one Sunday per month during June-August. The June 24 service will be followed by a "picnic potluck", July 29, and August 26 with root beer floats served.

Carnations will be handed out after worship on Mother's Day and snack bags on Father's Day.

Graduation Sunday will also be celebrated on Father's Day.

We will not meet during the months of June and July. We will take care of necessary business through texts.

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:

