

April 2024 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232
<http://www.firstcongregationalwlc.org/>

“For in Him we live and move and have our being...” –Acts 17:28

Lately before we meet for our Shalom Circle I have been going into East Chapel to put on some meditation music and open myself to journaling. Now if you journal you are doubtless aware that one method is to remain still and be open to the thoughts that seem to come to you, letting them flow into your mind, and then onto paper. At times it can be a barren exercise with little “inspiration” coming through; however, at other times it can be a surprising exercise with words and wisdom coming from a seemingly different source than the journaler’s mind. I was surprised by what came into my mind a few weeks ago, and I thought the message was relevant enough in light of our culture’s current obsession with entertainment that I would share it with you all. Here it is:

“Existence doesn’t want to entertain you”

Existence doesn’t want to entertain you.

It wants to draw you deeper into a mystery.

This mystery summons you at your mysterious depths to go out of yourself, to shed your skin, to let go of your frazzled junkie mind that needs its little box of endless stimulation to live, to pretend to live, which is really just the charged existence of a fool clamoring after charms...entertainment for a monkey mind that begs for treats and distractions because life is so hard when it is not easy and entertaining.

Hear this good news...life isn’t hard. Life is a mystery that is so far beyond the smallness of a small mind.

This mystery knows you, and wants you to come to it...to dwell in its LIFE, which is also your life...

To feel a visceral vitality which is total...so you can at last be total, and totally connected.

For the mystery has Presence, and in that Presence is your belonging, your deep need met, and in this Presence your alienation and isolation disappear.

And to rest not in surface certainty or distraction, but to rest in the peace that comes when primal estrangement is overcome...

That is a gift beyond compare.

That is what you seek, even if you have covered up that need ages ago.

Entertainments are on the surface, designed so you don’t face your lack and your need to dive deep into reality, and into yourself.

Put down the phone. Stop jumping through man-made hoops.

Turn to what is, what is outside you that is also within you...

And dive deep, to find what you are really seeking-- and your peace.

Friends, we have just celebrated Easter, the resurrection of the one willing to die that we might know something of Life Abundant (John 10:10). Jesus came to show us the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), which is the life of focused purpose, unfolding compassion, and an ever-deepening connection to the mystery’s Presence that we call God. Meanwhile, our culture endlessly tries to ensnare our minds and hearts with distractions and entertainments without end, and then we wonder why there is so much aimlessness, so much shallowness, and so much mental illness and despondency! If Christianity is right—that we are created in the image of God, and our fulfillment comes from living lives that seek and connect to God—then we as Christians are blessed to find our

happiness and peace through Christ-like and Christ-inspired living, not glued to phones and laptops and TVs. As we enter the season of Eastertide, may we all seek the life that is life, letting Jesus Christ show us the way! –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
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:

2 - Karin Yungclas
4 - Sherry Leksell
9 - Wil Groves
9 - Lynn Leksell
12 - Mya MacRunnel
13 - Karla Krebs
15 - Lorraine McCoskey
16 - Jacob Lahr
17 - Alaina Imhoff
18 - Shelby Brim
19 - Christy Fiala
25 - Hailey Marie Brim



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

4 - Alan & Karin Yungclas
28 - James & Gretchen McGlynn

Parish Nurse News

How to Keep Healthy as the Weather Keeps Changing

Changes in body temperature and exposure to seasonal viruses make you more susceptible to catching illnesses such as the common cold and flu. Upper respiratory infections are characterized by runny nose, postnasal drip, fever greater than 100.4 F., shortness of breath, and persistent productive cough.

Strategies to Stay Healthy in Changing Weather include -

- consume enough Vitamin C from fruits or supplements to boost your immune system.
- exercise regularly, at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, to improve your blood circulation and cellular function.
- seek medical attention for a fever above 100.4 F. or any severe or persistent symptoms.

Flowers

We love to see flowers decorating our altar. Please check out the sign-up sheet and consider signing up to provide flowers. Let Michele know if they are in honor or memory of someone.

Circle The Plymouth Circle will hold their April meeting on Thursday, April 11, 10 a.m., at Southfield Assisted Living.

Task Force

Task force met Thursday, March 21. Here's a summary:

Part of the challenge in the coming years is the upkeep and maintenance of the church building. Concern is the financial drain it could cause on church resources if an aging boiler system were to fail and if the condition of the bell tower requires extensive repairs. Kolleen Taylor is looking into grants available for maintenance and repair of buildings of historical interest. She has submitted a letter of intent to apply for a cost share grant. We will know in June if we are accepted to submit the application. It will then be a few more months until we would find out if our grant application would be approved. Board of Trustees had the RMH architectural firm from Ames assess the bell tower

deterioration to determine what had to be done. The report suggested that repairs could be made without removing the brickwork from the outside of the building, good news from the probable cost standpoint. Tracy and one of our Trustees met with Peterson Construction and the RMH architect firm to discuss getting an estimate for the project. We will report on those findings when they are available.

We are working to update our membership information. This will be important as we seek new leadership following Craig's retirement in two years. It is important to know our demographics as we look to the future. A membership letter is in final stages of preparation and will be sent out the first part of April.

We continue to explore possible relationships with other nearby UCC churches that might lead to cooperative efforts to secure a shared ministry. We added Hampton to the list of those contacted. We are not making further contacts with any of those churches at this time, but may as we continue to address our future needs. Please contact us with comments, questions, or suggestions.

Wil Groves Gayle Olson Chris McNeil
Tracy Wehrhan Curt McCoskey Rev. Craig
Blaufuss Patty Gescheidler Kolleen Taylor

Pecans

Haystack Circle still has pecans for sale. They are in the chest freezer in the kitchen. \$12 a bag.

D/SAOC Online Auction

Mission Board members thank everyone who donated to the making of this DSAOC auction basket of gourmet coffees, teas, and brewing equipment. The online auction will be held in April.



THRIFT SALE

Friday, April 26, 2024

Women's Fellowship will be conducting their semi-annual Thrift Sale.

Wed. April 24 & Thurs. April 25 - Drop Off Donations & Set-Up.

NO - large items or furniture, but you can send a picture of the item and your name, phone #, and price. It will be posted on a board for people to see and call you.

Remember items should be clean, complete, and in good repair.

Workers can sign-up in Fellowship Hall or at your circle meeting. All church members are encouraged to sign-up.

Contact Cindy Henning at 297-0422 or bestgrandmacindy@gmail.com with questions.

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

Christmas Tree Search Committee

The Worship board has been tasked with purchasing new Christmas trees for the sanctuary. Cindy Henning, Worship Board; Greta Oberender and Kolleen Taylor, Chancel Committee; are looking for your help. If you would like to be on the committee, we would welcome you. BUT, most importantly, we want to gather suggestions, comments, wishes, and

opinions about choosing a tree. Please talk to one of us, email bestgrandmacindy@gmail.com, or leave a note in the suggestion box at church.

Treasurer's Report

| <u>INCOME</u> | February | YEAR TO DATE |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Pledges and Offerings | \$18,877.00 | \$34,717.00 |
| Other Income | 0.00 | .00 |
| TOTAL INCOME | \$18,877.00 | \$34,717.00 |
| <u>EXPENSES</u> | | |
| Outreach and Mission | 2,500.00 | \$2,500.00 |
| Pastoral Services | 8,720.56 | 17,380.62 |
| Maintenance and Repairs | 1,977.18 | 5,445.71 |
| Church Office | 3,973.68 | 7,005.69 |
| Music Ministry | 417.25 | 909.50 |
| Christian Education | 16.53 | 16.53 |
| Local Ministry | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Misc. Expenses | 68.24 | 365.74 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$17,673.44 | \$33,623.79 |

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

