

June 2024 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
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<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>

“I have called you friends, for I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.”—John 15:15

Do you have many friends? Just about everyone knows Vicki and I have several canine friends at home, and there is a reason they are called a human’s best friend! Whenever I leave they seem sorry to see me go, and when I come home they ALWAYS greet me at the door with wagging tails and big dog smiles. When Vicki or I are feeling down they sense our mood and try to comfort us, or at least stay with us in solidarity. Next to food, the single biggest pleasure of their lives is our company. Now that’s a friend!

Did you have a best friend when you were young? Bob and Steve Green were my best friends growing up. We rode bikes together, played ball together, built models together and listened to KISS albums together, detasseled together, and camped out in the back yard together. We were inseparable—the original band of brothers.

Do you have a lifelong friend? A resident of Southfield once shared with me that he had such a friend. They grew up on neighboring farms, and all through their adult lives they coffeed together, dined out and socialized together...and when Bill had a stroke and had to go to Southfield because of his disability, his friend was there to regularly visit him and keep their friendship alive. Now that’s a friend!

Dr. Tim Keller once said the marks of a true friend are the 4 C’s: Constancy, Carefulness, Candor, and Counsel. Do you have a friend like that? Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we all did?

I have such a friend...let me tell you about him.

My friend was brought up in a poor household, and yet he has always been rich in spirit.

He has an instinct about how to be a good friend, for it comes naturally to him.

He has always helped those in need, and he always seeks out the lonely ones, the ones who are left out, in order to befriend them. He always welcomes everyone into his circle--even those “unwelcomed” by others.

He has always been willing to share what he has with his friends.

He has a reputation for sometimes being blunt (candor), and sometimes he can be uncomfortably honest in his advice (counsel), but even when he’s being candid and honest you know he is doing it because he cares about you and wants to help you (carefulness).

But it is his constancy that is the most remarkable thing about his friendship! For although he knows you warts and all, he still loves you and wants to be your friend! And even toward those who have betrayed him he holds no malice, for he stands constant in his offer of forgiveness and friendship. Now that’s a friend!

And he wants me to follow his lead and extend my circle of friendship as he does: beyond my circle of birth, beyond my circle of like-mindedness, beyond my circle of proximity, beyond my circle of comfort, beyond my circle of “mutuality.” For my friend knows what makes my life—and every human life-- a heaven or a hell is *how far we are willing to extend our gift of friendship to others.*

I don’t have to tell you that in this polarized, mistrustful and frightened world we stand more and more isolated and alienated from one another, causing our friendships and our peace to suffer because of this. But when I become too withdrawn and forlorn my friend reminds me that we were created for one another, and much strength and peace are to be found in our forged bonds of friendship that are grounded in the fruits of love.

As the summer months begin there will be plenty of opportunities for each of us to meet new people and make new friends! And so my prayer is simple:

**May we all take to heart the importance and the blessings of having a friend like Jesus,
And may we all strive to be such a friend to others! –Pastor Craig**

Church Staff

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Tracy Wehrhan: Church Treasurer 297-0370
Dale Olson: Financial Secretary 839-5619

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

**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE
AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH.**



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 McCarville

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!

Summer Lunch Program The Mission Board has agreed to help with the summer lunch program. We have signed up to serve on June 24 and June 28. Please look for upcoming announcements and sign-ups.

Summer Worship Schedule

Summer is upon us and the Worship Board would like to let everyone know the summer worship time will remain at 10:00. We will also have 3 Saturday services June 29, July 27, and August 24. These services will start at 5:00 pm and will be held indoors. There will be no Sunday services those weekends.

On June 29 we will have a picnic potluck after worship. Bring food to share along with your own utensils, silverware and glasses. There will be a sign up sheet, Worship Board will provide drinks. We hope to see everyone there.

On July 27 we have nothing planned. However, the Hamilton County Fair is that week and there will be a community ecumenical service on July 28 at the fairgrounds.

On August 24 we will serve root beer floats after worship. We hope you will stay and enjoy this treat and fellowship.

Watch for information on these Saturday services in the newsletters and bulletins.

Ice Cream Social

The annual Ice Cream Social will be happening a little later in the summer this year. Mission Board will host the annual event on July 19th from 6:30-8 p.m. We will be doing a drive-up event again. With warm weather, it'll be good to have some refreshing ice cream and brownies. Be on the lookout in Fellowship Hall for sign-ups for ice cream and brownies. Thank you all for your continued support.

Adult Education Class Continues

The Adult Education Class voted to continue meeting through the summer months! We continue to meet downstairs in the multipurpose room every Sunday morning, beginning at 9 a.m. The coffee pot will be going all summer as well, so what not join us for thoughtful conversations and good fellowship? (Note: when Pastor Craig is on vacation we will not meet.)

Volunteers Needed for Summer Cooking Class

In conjunction with the summer lunch program this year there will also be a community-wide young person's cooking class hosted at the Webster City Church of Christ on Wednesdays, beginning June 4. We would like to recruit volunteers to help with this class on the Wednesday of the week we host our summer lunches. The date of the class will be Wednesday, June 26, from 11:30-1 pm. We would like to recruit 4-5 cooking helpers for that day. Would you volunteer? If so, please look for a signup sheet coming in June, or speak with Pastor Craig.

Christmas in (almost) July Bellingring for EHN

The WC Ministerial Association would like to raise funds for our Ecumenical Human Needs benevolence program, and to do that we hope to hold a "Christmas in (almost) July" Bellingring at Bomgaars and HyVee on June 27, 28, 29. If you would like to participate in this bellingring drive, please speak with Pastor Craig.

Thanks

Thank you for honoring us graduates during church! No matter where life takes me, I know my church family will always be there. Thank you for supporting me on my journey!!
Madison Babington

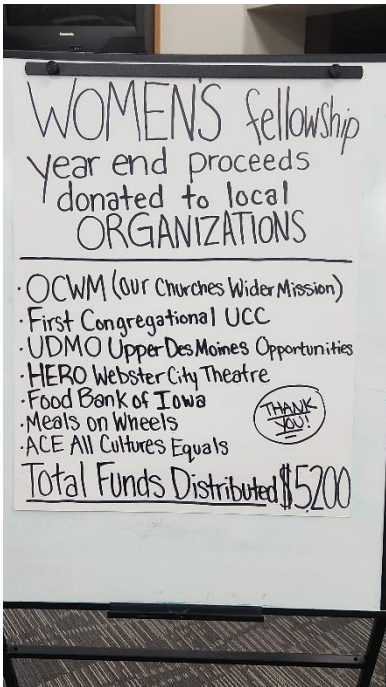
Dear First Congregational UCC,
Thank you so much for your generosity, prayers, and support. It is so amazing to be able to serve the Lord together as the body of Christ. Through your support I will be able to travel to the Philippines for 6 weeks, where I will be going on to college campuses and sharing the truth of the gospel and love of Jesus Christ with those that I meet! I am so grateful for the ways that God has grown my heart for Him and grown my heart for the world. I am so excited to be used by God to reach the nations and live out Acts 1:8 and Matthew 9:36-38. Thank you for reaching the nations alongside of me. I will send and update when I get back from my trip.
Things to keep praying for: Safety in travel and when I am there. Boldness and diligence to share the word of God. For my own personal walk with God to grow.
Thank you so much! Hannah Stirling

Our KLAB classes concluded for the spring with a trip to the DQ and East Twin Park on May 8. We had good treats and a good time!



The Women's Fellowship May Dinner held on May 22 celebrated the work of our women, and awarded \$5200 for a variety of benevolences! Thank you, Ladies, for your tireless work!





Treasurer's Report

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Pledges and Offerings	\$15,755.00	\$76,484.00
Other Income	0.00	.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$15,755.00	\$76,484.00
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	1,250.00	\$5,000.00
Pastoral Services	8,545.86	33,773.54
Maintenance and Repairs	1,260.24	14,025.61
Church Office	2,841.11	12,861.53
Music Ministry	642.25	1,969.00
Christian Education	43.98	143.91
Local Ministry	0.00	0.00
Misc. Expenses	328.47	858.63
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$14,911.91	\$68,632.22

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CABINET MEETING
Tuesday, May 21, 2024**

Members attending:

Moderator: Gayle Olson	Vice Moderator/Worship: Curt McCoskey
Pastor: Craig Blaufuss	Treasurer:
Financial Secretary: Dale Olson	Clerk: Kolleen Taylor
Trustees: Nick Oberender	Women's Fellowship: Patti Gescheidler
Mission: Stephanie Hill	Christian Education: Cindy Henning
Staff/Parish Relations:	

The May meeting of the cabinet was called to order at 7:01 by G. Olson. Pastor Blaufuss led us in prayer, and then Taylor read the minutes from the last meeting. Minutes were approved as read.

Pastors Report: Mary Worthington's memorial service was April 6, and we lead Care Center worship services on May 26. Ministerial Association wants to raise money for summer bus passes, and will have bellringing fundraisers at Bomgaars, HyVee and Fareway on June 27, 28 and 29. Summer Lunch programs start June 3 and we will host on June 24 and June 28. We need 4 to 5 helpers for a citywide kids cooking class to be held at the WC Church of Christ June 26. A new Facebook page for the ministerial association was announced, and the Ministerial Association is planning to establish itself as a 501C3 organization. All churches are being asked to develop a list of their resources that could be tapped in an emergency for the Countywide Emergency Management Coalition. This list will be presented at the July meeting. The next meeting is June 13 at 11 a.m. at our church. The Shalom Circle continues to meet most Fridays. The website is being updated.

Finance: Dale Olson summarized the financial reports. He reported that the finances look good, but that is usual for this time of year. Offerings to date are \$54,364, with expenses of \$51,648.31. He noted that summer giving often is often much lower and reminded us all to continue giving to the church during the summer. D. Olson made a motion to accept the report, McCoskey seconded, all voted in favor.

Trustees: Oberender reported they would make repairs of the louvers in the front entrance area and will be holding off any other major repairs in the belltower. They recommend opening the front doors to the church. D. Olson made a motion to give Trustees the authority to re-open the church, seconded by Hill, and all voted to approve.

Mission Board: Hill reported that four members toured the Food Bank of Iowa in Des Moines. They noted that it was extremely well organized and that the equipment and furnishings were donated. The annual church Brownie Ice Cream Sundaes drive-through will be Friday, July 19.

Women's Fellowship: The thrift sale resulted in \$3200 before expenses. The next sale will be Sept. 27 & 28. There is \$5,200.00 to donate this year. These presentations will be made at the May dinner:

\$1,000	OCWM (Our Churches Wider Mission)
\$1,000	First Congregational UCC
\$1,000	UDMO Upper Des Moines Opportunities-
	\$500 designated for Swim Passes
	\$500 undesignated
\$ 700	HERO Webster City Theatre
\$ 500	Food Bank of Iowa
\$ 500	Meals on Wheels
\$ 500	ACE All Cultures Equals

The program books are being updated for Women's fellowship. The next meeting is tentatively set for Sept. 4th.

Worship Board: Around 20 attended the Maundy Thursday service held in East Chapel. Pastor Craig wrote the beautiful devotion. The Easter Breakfast served by Christian Education Board served about 50.. We liked the variety of flowering plants and colors people brought to decorate the pulpit area for Easter. "DeepL" a translation app allowed Michele to make Spanish

translations of the bulletin, and the church website will be updated with cabinet approval. Mother's Day and Father's Day Sundays will recognize the men and women of our church with carnations for ladies, and snacks for the men. Maintenance work on the organ was done on May 2 by the Dobson Pipe Organ Builders. Sunday worship services in the summer will remain at 10 a.m., with Saturday 5 p.m. services on June 29 (with potluck after), July 27, and August 24 (with root beer floats after). The Saturday services would be indoors unless other plans are announced. There will be no June, July, or August Worship Board meeting. All business will be conducted by email. The next regular meeting is Thursday, September 5 at 3:30 in the church. **Christian Education Board:** Henning reported that KLAB is over, Graduation Sunday on May 12 recognized Madison Babington and Brandon Lahr and that Adult Education will continue through the summer.

New Business:

Backup for Administrative Assistant: Need members willing to learn Michele Omgig's job in case of emergency to handle the finances and office. Taylor volunteered to train with Omgig for finances, with some familiarity of Church Windows software. Henning and Hill also volunteered to assist with office operations. Others willing to help are encouraged to let Omgig know.

Leadership Team: Worship board suggested we establish a leadership team to be prepared to cover the roles of the Pastor and our church in the future. A list of roles will be established so our members can see where they may serve. Taylor will meet with pastor and begin this process.

Hamilton County Emergency Preparedness Coalition: Cabinet members were given a list of questions that would allow the Coalition to have quick access to resources in an emergency. Time was spent going through the questions, but members will continue working on this list to present at the next meeting.

Next meeting will be June 11 at 7 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm

Respectfully submitted, Kolleen Taylor, Church Clerk

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

