**April 2025 Newsletter**

**First Congregational United Church of Christ**

**1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595**

**515-832-2232**

[**http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/**](http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/)

*“For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin…so you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”* Romans 6: 5,6,11

 Has anyone seen the Risen Christ…in you?

 Ever been asked that question before? It’s provocative, isn’t it? It reminds us all that Easter is not the ending of the story of Jesus, but rather the beginning of a new chapter in his story…a new chapter that now includes us--his followers--who have received the joys and the responsibilities of sharing the gift of his, and our, New Life.

 So…has anyone seen the risen Christ in you? I confess it can be a difficult question to answer, for it asks if we, as the Apostle Paul suggests in Romans, have died and risen in Christ. That is an unsettling thought, because it suggests that there has to be a death before a resurrection--and death can be a fearful thing! To borrow words from Webber and Rice’s Jesus in “Jesus Christ Superstar”: “To conquer death you only have to die…you only have to die.” Yikes!

 Yet if we don’t “die” to what holds us captive, how can we be resurrected? Resurrection is God’s business, a gift of grace…but choosing to “die” to all that robs us of Life is our business; our decision! Like Jesus, we must choose in each of our moments of truth –our Gethsemane’s, if you will—whether we will confront our own fears, negativity, inertia, and lesser plans for ourselves and our world, and decide against them, and for God. The more fully we die to these things, the more fully we are reborn to a new and greater Life; a Christ-like Life in alignment with God’s will, which will always be our highest will!

 So as you prepare to celebrate the hope and promise of Jesus’ resurrection on Easter Sunday, perhaps the best way to honor this holy time is to earnestly ask yourself: what do I need to “die” to, in order to experience my own resurrection—a resurrection that will unite me with the Spirit of Christ?

* **Do I need to die to arrogance?** **To self-doubt?**
* **Do I need to die to the desire to control others?** **To the desire to allow others to control and manipulate me?**
* **Do I need to die to the things in my past that continue to cripple my life and relationships?**
* **Do I need to die to the endless distractions and cross-purposes which characterize modern life, so I can tend to what really matters in life?**
* **Do I need to die to timidity and choking fears? To impatient recklessness and self-destructive impulses?**
* **Do I need to die to the false gods that keep me from a deeper relationship with the Living God?**

 What else do you need to die to, so that you may rise with Christ? What do you need to let go of, so that you might take hold of a new and better life for yourself, and for the world? Let these questions be your prayer focus in final days leading to Easter, so that you may choose to “put to death” all that stands in the way of your resurrection to the life that God intends you to know and enjoy. Yes, the work may seem daunting and beyond our human capacity…but we are promised that we are not alone in this work. We are promised that **the grace which brings New Life to us through the power of resurrection will also assist us in the deaths we must undergo for the sake of that New Life.** Now that is Good News indeed…Good News that we all need!

 May your renewing work of dying and rising in Christ be blessed, so that those around you may give thanks to God that they have seen the Risen Christ—in you! Happy Easter! Pastor Craig

**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**

**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 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

**Please Join Us For Easter Morning Breakfast**

Christian Ed will serve breakfast Sunday, April 20 at 9 am.

Egg Bakes

French Toast Bake

Hashbrown

Variety of Fruit

Muffins/Bread

Juice, Milk, Coffee

A Free Will offering will be collected to cover cost and support Christian Education programs.

*Sign-up* on the table in Fellowship Hall or call the church office, 832-2232, so we know how many will attend.

**Easter Flowers**

Flowers are a symbol of new life in Christ. If you would like to celebrate our risen Lord with a floral offering, please bring your spring flowers to the church by 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 19. You may take your flowers with you following Easter service. Lovely options include Easter Lilies, Tulips, Hyacinths, Daffodils and more.

**Lenten Lunch**

The lunch will be Tuesday, April 8, noon to one at Trinity Lutheran Church Social Hall. The cost is $12 and must be prepaid to 1st Congo. A sign-up sheet will be in Fellowship Hall. Deadline to sign up is April 3.

**Maundy Thursday Evening Service April 17** We will observe Maundy Thursday with a service of worship beginning at 6 pm in the East Chapel. We will reflect together on the meaning of this night, and share the sacrament of Holy Communion.

**Shalom Circle Continues**

The Shalom Circle continues to gather weekly whenever possible, usually on Fridays beginning at 6:30 p.m. Join us in East Chapel as we experience Shalom through prayer, meditation and silence!

**April 15 Pick Up Trash with KLAB**

What a great way to take your mind off your taxes—picking up trash with our KLAB kids! On Tuesday, April 15, adult volunteers will work with KLAB to pick up trash along the KMart/Bomgaars parking lot. Please meet at the church at 3:25 and join KLAB for snacks! Then we will car-pool to the trash pick-up area, spend some time cleaning it up together, and return to the church in time for KLAB dismissal (5 pm). Trash bags will be provided; please bring gloves and a “grabber” if you have one. Bring extra grabbers if you have them!

**Adult Education topic: Intuition and Inspiration**

Our current topic for our Adult Education class is “Intuition and Inspiration.” Have you ever had a “hunch” about something that you couldn’t explain? Ever had a premonition? Do you have dreams that seem to hold special meaning about your present—or your future? Do walks in nature, listening to music, being creative, or sitting in prayer or meditation inspire you? Join us in the lower level of the church as we explore our experiences of intuition and inspiration.

**Beacon of Hope** meal is Tuesday, April 22. Sign-up sheet is in Fellowship Hall.

**Search Committee**

The Search Committee is in place. Members are Joyce Gelhaus, Lorraine McCoskey, Stephanie Hill, Patty Gescheidler, Les Ploeger, Curt McCoskey, and Wil Groves.

After a brief organizational meeting we contacted the conference office and found out we will be assisted by Rev. Jeff Hagaman, the conference Search and Call Minister. The information we need to get started has been sent. Our first formal meeting was held Tuesday, February 25 and Rev. Hagaman joined us via phone. He lives in Crete, Nebraska, so will probably not meet with us in person for any meetings.

This is an enthusiastic committee and all are ready to get started on this important next phase of the church life. We will most certainly be asking for the congregation’s help throughout this process, so when you are asked, please respond truthfully, honestly, and promptly.

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**THRIFT SALE**

Fri., April 25th & Sat., April 26th Women’s Fellowship will be conducting their semi-annual Thrift Sale.

 Wed. April 23rd & Thurs. April 24th -

* Drop Off Donations
* Set-Up items on tables

NO - large items or furniture, but donations to Beacon of Hope and Lotus are encouraged.

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. Cindy Henning

**Dear Church Family,**

The Thrift Sale has come around again.

Your churches Women’s Fellowship has hosted this event in the spring and fall for many years.

However, the membership of Women’s Fellowship has declined and we are not as young as we used to be. Heck, I am be one of the youngest at 65. Organizing this event is fun for me, I love it, and want to keep it going, but it needs to be a whole church event to make it happen. Not only does it give us a place to donate our excess, but we can then give the proceeds back to local and area agencies.

DID YOU KNOW??? We gave over $15,000 to area agencies over the last 5 years, like the Food Bank of Iowa, Upper Des Moines Opportunities UDMO, ACE, Eccumenical Human Needs, Meals on Wheels, Backpack Program, Riverview & Webster City Daycare, and so many more.

So, the Sign-UP sheet is on the table in Fellowship Hall. If you can help, call or text me.

I may be reaching out to the younger members – under 65---, especially if you have helped before.

CALL OR TEXT - 515-297-0422 to help

Monday 4/21 -5 PM -CARRY ITEMS FROM BASEMENT (takes about an hour)

Wed. 4/23 – ANYTIME -SORT AND SET OUT DONATIONS

Thurs. 4/24 – ANYTIME -SORT AND SET OUT DONATIONS

Friday 4/25 - 10 – 6 - oversee sale, carry-out, straighten-up

Sat. 4/26 - 8 – 12 - oversee, carryout, straighten-up

Sat. 4/26 - 1 PM - PACK-UP, MOVE CLOTHING DOWNSTAIRS, CLEAN-UP

(takes about 2 hrs)

Thank you so much. I appreciate your help in the past and hope it can continue.

Cindy Henning

Thrift Sale Chairperson

**Trustees Update**

1. Elevator - Mustang Disaster Cleanup  out of Story City cleaned the black mold out of the elevator pit. Next step is to waterproof the pit.

2. We are still getting bids for mowing and snow removal. Lawn service has been acquired.

3.The city is investigating the cistern which is causing a delay on the cement work at the west entry.

4. Tometich Engineering and Jim Vesey, a mason, are coming up with cost effective plans for the belltower, elevator, and roof ventilation.

**Thank You!**

Thanks to everyone who helped me celebrate my birthday (66!) on Sunday, March 16! I received so many wonderful cards, which was very gratifying and thoughtful. And I want to especially thank the Haystack Circle for putting together the “birthday” coffee after worship! It meant a great deal to me to be honored by you all on my birthday. Thank you again! Pastor Craig

**Texas Caviar** – provided by Gretchen McGlynn

1 can of black beans, rinsed and drained

1 can of black-eyed peas, drained

1 can shoepeg (or white) corn, drained

1 green pepper, chopped (Can reduce if not a fan of green pepper)

1 bunch of green onions, chopped

5 Roma tomatoes, seeded and chopped

1.5 C Italian dressing

Best if combined and all to sit in the refrigerator overnight. Use with Tostitos or Fritos scoops. Beside using as a dip it was suggest to use as a topping for baked potatoes.

**Treasurer’s Report**

**INCOME February YEAR TO DATE**

Pledges and Offerings $15,375.00 $31,506.78

Other Income 0.00 .00

**TOTAL INCOME $15,375.00 $31,506.78**

**EXPENSES**

Outreach and Mission 1,250.00 $2,500.00

Pastoral Services 8,791.23 16,842.46

Maintenance and Repairs 1,098.55 2,677.13

Church Office 3,911.03 7,437.82

Music Ministry 550.00 1,100.00

Christian Education 34.24 34.24

Local Ministry 0.00 4.27

Misc. Expenses 31.79 437.27

**TOTAL EXPENSES $15,666.84 $31,033.19**

**First Congregational United Church of Christ**

Cabinet Minutes March 11, 2025

Moderator Curt McCoskey called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the following members in attendance: Lorraine McCoskey, Dale Olson, Gayle Olson, Susan Meinders, Carol Crystal, Tracy Wehrhan, Patty Gescheidler, & Pastor Craig Blaufuss. Pastor Craig offered a prayer. Minutes from February were approved as written on a motion by Tracy and a second by Lorraine. Motion passed. Treasurer’s Report - Tracy reported the budget is doing ok. He reported expenses are down $2,500.00 from 2024 and offerings are down $800.00 from last year as well. Tracy moved to put the report to audit, Dale seconded. Motion passed. Pastor’s Report - Ash Wednesday service scheduled for Wednesday March 5 was cancelled due to weather. Pancake supper that was to be on Tuesday March 4 was rescheduled for March 11 prior to the Cabinet meeting. (pancakes were delicious) Ecumenical Human Needs committee has recruited a Spanish/English translator to help with their work. The EHN committee has clarified they do not pay for motel stays and they have also created a cover letter to go with the application making sure applicants know what they must complete. Ministerial Association has decided to lead the Summer Lunch Program this summer. Meals will be served 3 days instead of 2 with NO cooking class held this summer. Sponsors may be asked to help with expenses. Ministerium will also be holding Faith at the Fair again this summer. KLAB is working on 2025 Climate Hope Art project again this year. KLAB & Mission Board will team up this year to do a litter cleanup on April 15. Thanks to Susan for the great job of organizing the KLAB Valentine party. Pastor Craig will be meeting with the Leadership Team and Worship Board on April 10 to begin teaching how to create and implement a worship service. Trustees - no rep so Pastor Craig gave a report including: Mustang Disaster was here to remove the mold in the elevator pit with a discussion on what to put up to keep moisture out. Contract with Tony Jones for snow removal and lawn work is being cancelled. Quotes are being taken for alternatives. Mabel Prescott has offered to pay for complete west entrance cement work. The city has inspected the sidewalk on the north side of the church and will be in touch as to what more we need to do. Some shingles on the south side need to be replaced. Tometich Engineering will be at the church again on March 12 to have another look at the bell tower. Mission - Susan reported the following: Paper Products have been delivered to UDMO. D/SAOC fund raiser project is a gardening basket. April 22 - Beacon of Hope meal. Earth Day project - Litter pick up working with KLAB kids on April 15 3:30-5:00 Bomgaars’/ McDonald’s parking lot. Wildfire relief - Mission will host a coffee on April 27 with the pickle jar out for donations. OGHS offering March 30. Summer lunch program meals will be MWF this year. We will be signing up to take a week again this summer. Women’s Fellowship - Patty reported Executive Board did not meet in March due to weather. She did say we are gearing up for the Thrift Sale the week after Easter. Worship Board - Curt said they have been meeting via video calls. He reported they will be handing out carnations for Mother’s Day again this year. Christian Ed.- Lorraine reported they have not met. She did report that they have given approval for a new TV in the downstair adult ed. room. Memorial Committee is going to pay for this. Staff-Parish- Carol reported they have met and will be rotating Cabinet responsibilities. They do have someone checking in with each staff person. Ongoing Business Tometich Engineering here Wednesday March 12. There are some cracked bricks above the Northeast entrance. Jim Vesey from Huxley has looked at it and given us a bid. Trustees are looking to get another bid. New Business- The Search Committee consisting of Curt McCoskey, Lorraine McCoskey, Patty Gescheidler, Wil Groves, Les Ploeger, Joyce Gelhaus, and Steph Hill has met a couple of times. They will be meeting the 3rd Tuesday of each month. They have had a phone meeting with the Conference minister, Jeff Hagaman, he oversees helping congregations with search and call. The Search Committee is going to be looking at what they are going to need from the congregation and how best to get that info. They are feeling good about where they are and in moving forward. Next meeting for Cabinet will be Tuesday April 8 7pm Meeting adjourned at 7:34 Respectfully submitted Gayle Olson

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Address Service Requested**

God is still speaking

 to everyone in the home of:

