



**FIRST CHURCH UNITED**  
 1100 North Calhoun Street, West Liberty, Iowa 52776  
 Office—627-2989 Activity Area—627-2446  
 Pastor, Marian Hart  
 Secretary, Katie Thrasher  
 January 2015



Dear Friends in Christ,

The third big thing on my to-do list today is to fill out my ‘standing’ forms for the Upper Midwest Region of the Christian (Disciples of Christ) Church. This is so that I can remain your pastor with a license from them to continue ministering here. They ask me things like what I did for my continuing education hours, with 16 being required and I usually can claim around 60. They want to know what books I’ve read, what my biggest joys are here as well as my biggest challenges. They ask how I’ve served ecumenically and in the community, about any new and exciting things happening in our congregation. They ask about my dreams/visions/goals.

If you were here to worship on Dec. 28, you know that I invited you all to consider similar things in your own individual lives as well as amongst us as a part of the body of Christ. You notice I always address you as friends in Christ. The first of the year is a traditional time for ‘resolutions’ and self-improvement. Join me in thinking over the past year and your ‘standing’ as a disciple of Christ, as a **friend in Christ**. What still excites you? What dreams/visions/goals do you have for First Church United? For yourself? What have you studied/pondered/learned about Christ that changed you? Do you have any time wasters you can purge? Any unhealthy habits you can break? Any healthy ones you can begin? I created a generic chart to help track your wholistic wellness if you’d like. There are boxes to keep a brief record of ways you’ve spent being good to your mind, body, and/or spirit. (If you don’t already have one, they will be available at church on the buffet.) Jason and

I are working on a way to hold us accountable to this overall wellness. We invite you to join us at 6:30 on Wednesdays for a few brief body, mind, and spirit exercises.

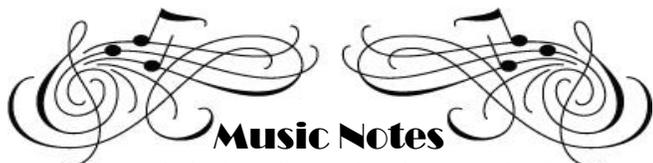
I received a gift for Christmas that has printed on it: PASTOR I Corinthians 15:58-stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. Good affirmation for all of us, so **FRIENDS IN CHRIST**, always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. Amen? Amen!

Blessings in the New Year,  
 Pastor Marian

<b>CHURCH RECORD</b>		
December 2014		
<b>DATE</b>	<b>OFFERING</b>	<b>ATTEND</b>
December 7	\$3,068.27	91
December 14	\$4,793.00	70
December 21	\$965.00	92
December 28	\$11,057.00	45

**LECTIONARY**

- Jan. 4** – Jer. 31:7-14; Ps. 147: 12-20; Eph. 1:3-14; John 1(1-9) 10-18
- Jan. 11-** Gen. 1:1-5; Ps. 29; Acts 19:1-7  
 Mark 1:4-11
- Jan. 18** – 1 Sam. 3:1-10 (11-20); Ps. 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
- Jan. 25-** Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Ps. 62:5-12; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20



Here we go again! Another calendar year is dawning with much to look forward to and much to discover. Our Chime and Chancel Choirs, our Worship Team, and our organists and pianists will continue their traditions of excellence and commitment to worship through music. Perhaps we will even hear more music from our youth as this year unfolds!

We look forward to sharing spiritual messages through music with everyone in our church family!

- Sun., Jan. 4: SPECIAL MUSIC
- Wed., Jan. 7: Chime Choir - 6:50 to 7:30  
Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30
- Sun., Jan. 11: WORSHIP TEAM**
- Wed., Jan. 14: (same as Jan. 7)
- Sun., Jan. 18: CHANCEL CHOIR**
- Wed., Jan. 21: (same as Jan. 7)
- Sun., Jan. 25: CHANCEL CHOIR**
- Wed., Jan. 28: (same as Jan. 7)

**SPIRIT of GENEROSITY-Leaving a Legacy**  
**Prayerfully consider including First Church United in your will. A Charitable bequest is a way in which we can leave a legacy and express our faith and values to the church. The church benefits from gifts that provide for future generations. For questions, please contact Tom Brooke.**



## ROAD TRIP

The January visit to Oaknoll will be on Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup>. Meet at the church at 11:00 to carpool. We will share lunch, a short bible study, and lots of fellowship.

## Christian Education Director's Report

Hello from the Christian Education Department.

We are blessed to have a New Year, and a new season of Christian Education ahead of us. In Sunday school, we will continue to learn about Jesus, and how his teachings can be used in our lives to help us be better Christians. I have found that following the lessons of the main Worship Service, and scaling the themes to be better

understood by the children is very effective. We always make sure to do something active and fun during our time together as well, so the children enjoy themselves and look forward to returning!

I am blessed, as well, by the wonderful opportunities available for my own further education as a Christian, and an upcoming Leader in our Church. Pastor Marian and I will be traveling to Camp Wyoming next weekend, January 9th-10th, to participate in a Presbyterian Leadership Retreat. Additionally, we will participate in the Cultivating Soil & Soul workshops on a monthly basis, beginning in February, through next January. And, I will attend the Ignite You youth leadership conference in Des Moines on March 13th & 14th. I have faith that each of these will bear good fruit that I can bring home to our Church, to help nurture our young Christians.

Important January Dates to remember:

- Sunday School:  
1/4, 1/11, 1/18, 1/25
- Kids WOW:  
1/28

Sincere thanks for your ongoing support.  
Jason Thrasher

## LEADER'S RETREAT

Please prayerfully consider attending a leadership retreat with Pastor Marian, Jason Thrasher, and a couple of our Board members. We need to work together in the vision for our church and in discerning where God is leading us. We will join some leaders from the Presbyterian churches of Independence and Bettendorf at Camp Wyoming's Owl's Nest on Friday evening Jan. 9 any time after 5. Bring a snack to share that evening. Pamela Mumm will be our guest speaker. Camp will provide breakfast and lunch on Saturday. The leaders of all three churches and their pastors will have a chance to dream/envision/listen to God together. We will share what's working well and fulfilling, as well as some things we'd like to change or improve. The retreat will end at 2 on Saturday. You may come for some or all of the events. All expenses will be paid by the Board's Endowment Discretionary Fund. Please contact Pastor Marian asap if you'd like to go. Reservations need to be in by Jan. 4.

## CONFIRMATION CLASS MEETING

Calling all parents of and students grade six or older: There will be a planning meeting on Jan. 18 at 3 pm here at First Church United. Pastor Marian will be offering Confirmation classes this winter. Parents and students will receive information on expectations from the class and we will set a time for classes to begin. These classes will not be limited to youth. Anyone interested in exploring what it means to be a Christian in today's world, what it means to 'be church', who God is, what God is doing, what the bible is, and how we fit into the ongoing story of God's people is invited to attend.



January 28<sup>th</sup> 5:00-6:20.  
Dinner at 6:00

## OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY

December 4, 2014



The monthly Official Board meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Bill Koellner. In attendance were: Co-Chair Tom Probst, Syd Harned, Karen Nortman, Margaret Barnhart, Ken Noble, Joe Myers, Susie Lehman, Pastor Marian Hart, Treasurer Keith Barnhart and Clerk of session Katie Thrasher. Those not in attendance were: Darren Brooke, Jan McCrabb.

**Devotion** – Pastor Marian read from the Gospel of John  
**Open in Prayer**

**Approval of Docket:** move to approve docket as amended 1st Ken N. 2nd Joe M. unanimously approved by the Board.

**Approval of Nov. Minutes:** move to approve minutes 1st Ken N. 2nd Karen N. unanimously approved by the Board.

### Treasurer's Report:

Keith Barnhart gave the Treasurer's report. All bills paid in November. Gave Joe M a check for Welcome Table from a previous year. MidWestOne Bank gave Susie L. a \$100 check for playing at the Holiday Open House that will go into line #502. Bill K. reports that all of the pledges for the kitchen will be into the church by mid-December. That will mean 100% of kitchen pledges will be turned in. Personnel salaries were discussed giving Keith all the information he needs to complete the 2015 budget.

Move to approve Treasurer's report 1<sup>st</sup> Tom P., 2<sup>nd</sup> Ken N. unanimously approved by the Board.

Starting of November balance	\$667.88
Receipts	\$11,712.40
Subtotal	\$12,380.28
Disbursements	\$12,372.44
Ending Balance	\$7.84
Board checking balance (\$87.16)	

**Co-Chair's Report:** The new kitchen has proved to work very well, as not only has it been used for Sunday coffee hours, but the Johnson Family friends used it extensively for meat preparation for Emily & Jesse's wedding. As of this writing (12/1), we plan on 30 at FCU and 54 at ELC for the 12/6 start of Welcome Table. Beginning the last quarter of 2014, \$5600 in pledges remained to be paid. As of December 1, only \$1600 remained to be paid. Those families plan on all gifting for the kitchen project by mid-December. The board was able to pay for all the concrete work with funds transferred from Board endowment funds.

The remodeled single restroom has been made into a handicap restroom by the end of the first week of December thanks to Darren and Dillon Brooke.

Food items are beginning to fill the hallway by the food pantry in preparation for the Christmas Box food and toy program. The sorting and filling of the boxes will be done on December 17 at 6:00 PM, and pickups will be on December 19 and 20. If you want to help, it is a great program to serve others.

The start of the 2014 church year was financially difficult as income was far less than expenses. I looked at the last 4 years of weather, and this is what I found: The winter of 2011/12 we were 1000 degree days warmer than normal and had only 4 snows that required snow removal; winter of 2012/13 we had a normal temperature winter with only 4 snows that required snow removal; but last winter we were 1100 degree days colder than normal and we had 17 snows that required snow removal. The tremendous expense for heat and snow removal used most of our checking account cash. In addition, we had insurance and per capita mission to the Presbyterian Church in January, taking much of our savings. November 2014, we were 226 degree days below normal, but we had only 1 snow removal. This is the coldest November in over a decade. Depending on the December through March, we have started into another very cold winter.

I want to thank all committees for your helping our church become a wonderful place to worship our God and His Son Jesus Christ. I also want to thank all the

church committees for their service in 2014. Please come to the Annual Meeting in January to learn more about what occurred in 2014.

Board Co-chair, Bill Koellner

Personnel Committee Report-Salary recommendations for 2015 were discussed. Jason Thrasher, as CE Director, will have an increase in pay for a total of \$15/hour, \$250/mileage, \$100/Continuing Ed., no change for any other staff. Move to approve Personnel Committee recommendations for 2015 salaries 1<sup>st</sup> Joe M., 2<sup>nd</sup> Ken N., unanimously approved by the Board.

Vote to approve budget to be presented to Congregation at the Annual Meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Syd H., 2<sup>nd</sup> Tom P. unanimously approved by the Board.

Bill K. asked if the Presbytery Per Capita needed to be paid in early 2015 or if it could wait till the bills for the cold/snowy months had been paid. Keith B. and Pastor Marian say it can be paid anytime during the year.

#### **PASTOR'S REPORT NOV. 6-DEC.**

The usual office hours kept when possible.

Sunday morning worship planning and leading Nov. 9, 16, 23, and 30. Baptism of Wyatt Axline.

CYG co-lead lessons, coordinate meals Nov. 9, 16, 23.

Adult Sunday school facilitator.

Simpson Home bible study Nov. 4, 11, 25

Advent bible study at Methodist church Nov. 12, 19

Wedding rehearsal Nov. 7.

Wedding of Emily Johnson and Jesse Reed Nov. 8

Congregation Life meeting Nov. 9

Worship team meeting Nov. 10

Women in Ministry lunch and bible study Nov. 11

Cards at Heath Nov. 12, 26

Oaknoll visit, lunch, and bible study Nov. 13

Commissioned Ruling Elders retreat at Camp Wyoming Nov. 14-15

Planning meeting with Jason Thrasher Nov. 16

Pastoral Relations Committee meeting-discussion of pastor evals Nov. 19

Kids WOW meal Nov. 19

Choir meals on Wednesdays

DoC Cluster meeting Nov. 20

Simpson worship Nov. 21

Church Thanksgiving potluck Nov. 23

Hanging of the Greens Nov. 24

Community Thanksgiving meal and worship Nov. 26

Children's program rehearsal Nov 29

Endowment meeting Dec. 1

Camp Wyoming Board meeting Nov. 2 all evening

Host Ministerial Assoc. meeting Dec. 3

Pre-planning for food, toys, and clothing Christmas boxes

Pre-planning for Welcome Table

Mileage turned in and paid-304

Pastoral visits-6

#### **Ongoing business -**

**Painting the Sanctuary** – Syd spoke with Rich Hambright and he says he can do that over the winter break.

**Annual Reports** – due Dec. 12th

**Welcome Table** – 63 signed up for the ELC meal site for Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>. Margaret B. suggests who is helping each week is put in the e-news.

**Replacement for Tom Brooke on Community Center Board** – Bill K. has volunteered to finish his 1 year term. Move to approve 1<sup>st</sup> Joe M., 2<sup>nd</sup> Ken N. unanimously approved by the Board.

**Stewardship** – To date there are 20 pledges equaling \$47,471. Will ask in E-News for those who haven't turned in their pledges do so this Sunday in the offering plate or mail into church.

#### **New Business -**

**Elder on call** – Pastor Marian will ask Ken R. to be Elder on Call for January.

**Motion to approve Mural be painted in Sunday school wing 1<sup>st</sup> Ken N., 2<sup>nd</sup> Tom P. unanimously approved by the Board. Board will ask Carolyn P. to talk to the muralist.**

Endowment Requests and Report from Joe M.

- 1) Scholarship's For Pastor Marian and Jason Thrasher to attend Soil for Soul. \$775 x 2. Out of funds B & C. Motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> Karen N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ken N. unanimously approved by the Board.
- 2) Camp Scholarship's for Conner and Katlyn Skubal to attend Camp Wyoming's Wintertainment- \$100 each from fund B. Motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> Syd H., 2<sup>nd</sup> Margaret B. unanimously approved by the Board.

**Endowment Report** – Joe M. reports that New Covenant Fund has shown no movement at all for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Joe has called twice with no results or answered questions. Joe has now written a letter that he asks Bill K. to cosign with Joe asking for an answer to lack of information communicated.

**Leadership Retreat** – Pastor Marian explained there will be a leadership retreat January 9, 10 at Camp Wyoming's Owl Nest. Speaker will be Pam Mumm on Saturday. We will share the cost with two other churches for the speaker (ours is \$220) and each person will be about \$44 per person for meals and lodging. Pastor Marian suggests we use discretionary funds from Fund A to cover costs. The Board is invited as well as anyone interested in being more of a leader in the church.

**Ministry Reports** - accepted.

**PASTORAL RELATIONS NOV. 2014**

The Pastoral Relations Committee met with Marian Hart on Wednesday, November 19 in order to discuss the results of her performance review. The committee had gathered input from 10 active church and Board members using the tool provided by previous committees. The committee as well as Marian felt that the ratings from the congregation were an accurate reflection of Marian's practice.

Some strengths indicated in the evaluation:

1. Marian has a deep dedication to the church and it's members. She is good at calling on those that are ill, shut-in or those that just need a visit.
2. Marian models mission. She has a deep desire to give to others. This is modeled on a regular basis.

Some indicators for growth:

1. Marian has a very laid back leadership style. It was noted that she could be a bit more assertive in getting committees up and running and to check on their progress.
2. Marian has been working to refine her sermon delivery. She could improve on making eye contact, voice inflection and smiling.

Marian and the committee will investigate ways to bring about changes in leadership style.

**CHRISTIAN ED. REPORT:**

Hello from the Christian Education Department, We are truly blessed at First Church United to have a wonderful group of children. They are learning the Scriptures at their own level and applying it to become people of faith. Each day we are together we celebrate God's glory through education, practice of being good, and song.

Our big project currently, of course, is learning to be worship leaders by practicing for the Christmas play. The children are working very hard at learning their

lines, memorizing the songs and understanding what the play is about.

It is a traditional Christmas play celebrating the birth of Jesus. It has been a great joy seeing the light of revelation on the faces of the children as they come to understand the history of Jesus' birth through the rehearsal of this story. The children will lead worship this upcoming Sunday, December 7 via this play. We hope you can all attend!

Yours in faith, Jason thrasher

Move to adjourn

Prayer concerns shared

Closing Prayer

Meeting ended at 8:30p.m.

Next meeting is asked to be on Mon. January 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. instead of the first Thursday of the month which would be January 1<sup>st</sup>.



*The poinsettias that decorated our Sanctuary this Advent season were given in loving memory*

*or in honor of:*

Clare Brooke, Gladys Brooke, Charles Miller, Iona Miller, Beryl Brooke,  
Dora Lee Hawthorne, Reed Hawthorne,  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brooke, Marion Barnhart,  
Georgia Kiwala, Ellen & Earl Hitching,  
Gerald & Vera Ruegsegger  
Friends and Family of Dave & Roberta Baker,  
Annette Martinez, Sterner and Hanson families,  
Donald & Kate McCrabb, Jim McCrabb  
Harold Brooks, Marie Barber, Pam Westra Hillyer,  
Loletta Mackey, Luke Heck,  
Virgil & Venita Harned, Annabelle Kempf,  
Waldo & Angela Myers,  
The Evelyn Evans Family, Sisters and Parents of Jan McCrabb, Bill & Jo Webb,  
Ed & Lois Schermerhorn, The Markham & Pierce Families.



## **Church Workers**

**January 4**

Communion/Epiphany

### **SPEAKING ELDERS:**

None needed; Presbyterian tradition

### **COMMUNION SERVERS:**

Gary Hahn, Mark Johnson, Joe Myers,  
Hannah Miller, Jeanine Williams, Dinette Myers

**USHER:** Dean Phelps

### **GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Joe & Dinette Myers

**ORGANIST:** Lori Brooke

**POWER POINT:** Blaine Kelly

**January 11**

Worship Team/Annual Meeting & Potluck

**USHER:** Walt Lehman

### **GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Bud Barber & Norma Brooks

**ORGANIST:** Lori Brooks

**POWER POINT:** Marcy Dewar

**January 18**

Communion/Chancel Choir

### **SPEAKING ELDERS:**

Jan Koellner & Ken Noble

### **COMMUNION SERVERS:**

Gary Hahn, Mark Johnson, Joe Myers,  
Hannah Miller, Jeanine Williams, Dinette Myers

**USHER:** Bob Dewar

### **GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Bill & Jan Koellner

**ORGANIST:** Brenda Miller

**POWER POINT:** Bill Koellner

**January 25**

Chancel Choir

**USHER:** Ken Ruegsegger

### **GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Ken & Marilyn Ruegsegger

**ORGANIST:** Marianne Phelps

**POWER POINT:** Jim Kiwala

Communion Preparer's for January are  
Norma Brooks & Bud Barber



## **January**

- 1 Marvin Erwin, Mary Wendt
- 3 Tom Brooke, Sandy Henderson, Karen Nortman
- 4 Bud Barber
- 5 Barb Irwin, Susan Deahr
- 7 Joseph Akers, Katherine Brooks
- 9 Tom Brown, Mark Irwin, Josh Gingerich
- 10 Evelyn Wilkerson
- 11 Diana Brown, Ken Harned
- 12 Lori Brooke
- 17 Tiffany Schieffer
- 23 John Bothell
- 24 Syd Harned
- 26 Gary Hahn
- 27 Scott Barnhart, Ryan Noble
- 29 Bob Dewar

## **Happy Anniversary!**

- 2nd Tom & Carolyn Probst
- 3rd Ken & Syd Harned
- 28th David & Roberta Baker