



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



Dear Friends in Christ,

I'm not a birdbrain, but I do have birds on my mind this morning. It started last week at the first sighting of robins. It always gives me a lift to see them return after weeks of winter dreariness. It is interesting that they seem to come back earlier than they used to and can be found feeding alongside snow birds. They are a good reminder of how the seasons (of our life as well) blend and overlap.

In addition to robins, I always love to see the bald eagles. There was one sitting along the roadside yesterday looking quite majestic. A few miles down the road a large bird flew down across the car in front of me. I watched it glide over and land in a tree. It had to be a red tailed hawk, because that tail stood out like a flag. On the trip home, I saw several cardinals, one of my favorites. And two large groups of geese on the backwaters.

I've been hearing the raucous call of blue jays and crows around our house. Soon spring and summer will bring many more sights and sounds of birds to delight us. It made me think of how great our Creator God is. In one species, there is more variety than we will ever grow tired of.

It also made me think of how we (I) tend to concentrate on the most beautiful, or rarest-sighted to exclaim over. We (I) pass over the sparrows and other common birds. Are we guilty of doing that with people too? Don't we sensationalize entertainers, sports figures, politicians, and others and overlook the older couple in the grocery store using their cart as half walker/half food carrier?

In Luke 12:6-7 Jesus tells his disciples, "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." And in Matthew 6 he says, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

My suggested Lenten practice today is for each of us to find a 'human sparrow' for whom to acknowledge worth by encouraging or helping them in some way.

In contemplation,
 Pastor Marian

CHURCH RECORD		
February 2015		
DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
February 1	NA	NA
February 8	\$3,789.00	62
February 15	\$1,336.75	48
February 22	\$1,239.25	50

LECTIONARY

March 1 – Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16; Ps. 22:23-31; Rom. 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

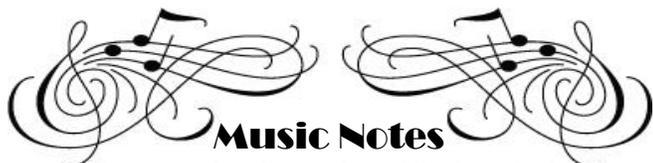
March 8- Exod. 20:1-17; Ps. 19; 1 Cor. 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

March 15 – Num. 21:4-9; Ps. 107:1-3, 17-22; Eph. 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

March 22- Jer. 31:31-34; Ps. 51:1-12 or Ps. 119:9-16; Heb. 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

March 29- Palms: Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16; Ps. 118:1-2, 19-29

Passion: Isa. 50:4-9a; Ps. 31:9-16; Phil. 2:5-11; Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39 (40-47)



As usual, the month of March is filled with the season of Lent. And this year, as often happens, Palm Sunday is in March. Such a range of emotions that carries with it! Our music will convey not only the historical events of the season of Lent, but that range of emotions linked to this period in the life of Christ. With the Music Ministry and the pastor working together, we are honored to share the messages in a way that brings to life those events in the past that are still so relevant and influential in our lives today.

Sun., March 1: CHIME CHOIR

Wed., March 4: Chime Choir - 6:50 to 7:30
Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30

Sun., March 8: CHANCEL CHOIR

Wed., March 11: (same as March 4)

Sun., March 15: CHIME CHOIR

Wed., March 18: (same as March 4)

Sun., March 22: WORSHIP TEAM

Wed., March 25: (same as March 4)

**Sun., March 29: (Palm Sunday):
CHANCEL AND CHIME CHOIRS**

**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 March visit to Oaknoll will be on Thursday the 12th. Meet at the church at 11:00 to carpool. We will share lunch, a short bible study, and lots of fellowship.



March 25th 5:00-6:20p.m.
Dinner at 6:00

Christian Education Director's Report

Greetings from the Christian Education Department!

I am happy to report once again that all is well. February was a good month for our children at church. Sincere thanks to Jo Noble, who aptly ran the Sunday School program while we Thrashers were on vacation. It is great that we have a such a deeply supportive church family!

Our focus in Sunday School this past week was on Lent, and how our children can participate at a level they can understand. The theme of the WOW programming this past Wednesday was going to be an extension of that theme, but the recent snowstorm caused us to cancel. So, we will extend that theme into the Sunday School program for the remainder of the Lent season.

We look forward to the March WOW, on the 25th. We will begin our Spring unit on that day, so bring all the children you can think of! It will be a fun celebration of God's glory through song, gardening, praise and fellowship.

Yours in service to Christ, Jason Thrasher

CYG NEWS

It's March already??? You know what that means..

CYG will be hosting its 3rd Annual Pancake Breakfast for the Community. The breakfast will be held on Saturday, March 21st at First Church United. The food will be prepared and served by current CYG members and is open to the public. So please, invite your friends, family and neighbors to come and join us!!! There will be a free will donation and the meal will include scrambled eggs, sausage links, biscuits and homemade gravy, pancakes and milk, coffee and orange juice. We will be serving from 7-11 am. We hope to see you all there! The following day, March 22 the CYG band will be playing during the worship service at First Church United. As always, everyone is welcome.

The CYG year is flying by and we only have six more weeks for our normal year. This Sunday (March 1st) we will be having a guest speaker. Rachel Owen, Executive Director of Informed Choices of Iowa will be speaking with the young people about sexual abstinence and the consequences of irresponsible sexual behavior. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. On March 22nd we will have our annual Scavenger Hunt where we will

be gathering food for our local food pantry. We will end our year on April 12th with Senior recognition and our No Talent Talent Show which is always a favorite of the kids.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the Pancake Breakfast on March 21st!

Jodi Kelly
CYG Board Member
CYG Cube Leader
CYG Parent

Easter Lilies – Contact Jan's Flower Yard to order. Price is \$12.50.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

First Church United is hosting World Day of Prayer this year. It will be held Friday, March 6 at 2 P.M. This year's service was written by women in the Bahamas. Everyone is welcome to join us in praying for needs around the world, and specifically for the Islands of the Bahamas. There will be refreshments afterward using recipes that might be served us if we were actually visiting the Bahamas. Pastor Marian could use some help in the kitchen if you're available.

LAYMAN PANCAKE BREAKFAST

This year's Layman's Pancake Breakfast will be March 14. The program will be the packaging of Kids Against Hunger. Contact Ken Ruegsegger for details.

CYG PANCAKE BREAKFAST FUND RAISER

CYG will hold a pancake breakfast on March 21, serving from 7-11. The menu will include biscuits and sausage gravy, pancakes, eggs, juice, and milk. Free will donations will be accepted. Following the fund raiser, the group will be staying to serve the Welcome Table with the same yummy food choices.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Pastor Marian will prepare a Seder Meal this year on Thursday, April 2 at 6 pm. All confirmation students and their families are strongly urged to attend as part of the class. Everyone is invited. There will be a sign up sheet to ensure proper place settings and food amounts. Anyone interested in helping with the food, please contact Marian. We will make soups and set up tables in the morning.

OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY



March 5, 2015

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

Pastor Marian opened meeting with asking for nominations for Board Chair. Ken Ruegsegger and Joe Myers were nominated to be Co-Board Chairs for the class of 2015. Unanimously approved by the Board. **Devotion** – Pastor Marian asked “Are you smarter than a confirmation student?” Asked the Board if they knew where the Lord's Prayer was in the bible. Discussion followed.

Open in Prayer

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

Approval of January Minutes: move to approve minutes 1st Margaret B. 2nd Ken R. unanimously approved by the Board.

Treasurer's Report:

Keith Barnhart gave the Treasurer's report. Keith reported the apportionment for per capita is \$2,638.70 not the \$4,000.00 we expected. Keith suggests to pay some it now and not wait as the Board had previously discussed. Karen N. moved we pay half of each mission now 2nd Margaret B. unanimously approved by the Board.

First quarterly insurance was paid in January.

Move to approve Treasurer's report 1st Ken N., 2nd Ken R. unanimously approved by the Board.

Joe M. asked about Ribfest funds. Keith will talk to Arnie H. and the West Liberty Meat Locker to streamline buying the ribs. Pastor Marian reports \$661 has been given to the Ministerial Help Fund from the Ribfest proceeds.

Starting of January balance	\$7,509.04
Receipts	\$19,550.06
Subtotal	\$27,059.10
Disbursements	\$16,927.34
Ending Balance	\$10,131.76
Board checking balance	\$6,914.04

PASTOR'S REPORT JAN. 5-FEB. 5, 2015

Office hours kept as possible

Plan and lead worship Jan. 11, 18, 25, plan and cancel Feb. 1

CYG Jan. 11, 18, 25, Board meeting 25th

Adult Sunday school

Confirmation class Jan. 18, 25, cancelled Feb. 1

Deacons meeting Jan. 25

Welcome table Jan. 3, 17, 24, 31

Shop for meals for CYG and Welcome Table

Leader's retreat at Camp Wyoming Jan. 9-10

Ministerial Assoc. meeting Jan. 7

Oaknoll road trip, lunch, and bible study Jan. 8

Women in Ministry lunch and study Jan. 13

Cluster meeting Jan. 15

Rib Fest Jan. 15

Pre-marital meeting with John Hambright and Sarah

Gaudet Jan. 22

Worship team meeting Jan. 22

Simpson worship Jan. 23

Pastoral Relations meeting Jan. 23

Minister's Institute at Christian Conference Center Jan. 26-28. Two days continued ed.

Camp Wyoming Trivia Night fund raiser Jan. 30

Note-Soil and Soul class postponed due to blizzard

Pastoral visits-11

Mileage-412

Pastor Marian reported some drywall damage in the basement of the Manse due to a mishap with putting away the Christmas tree.

Ongoing business -

-Painting the Sanctuary – Old Kitchen, Entryway and Narthex still needs to be painted.

-Welcome Table- still spaces available for volunteers.

New Business -

-Elder on Call for March- Ken Ruegsegger volunteered.

-Ann Brownsberger and Mary Roberts from the Village Community spoke to the Board. Invited us to join with them to partner with their church (First Christian Church in Iowa City) for a new ministry grant and invites us to join for a work camp in June.

- Snow Removal – Mac Construction has not been as thorough as we would like and has not followed our requests/directions as to where snow needs to be plowed to and certain areas that need special attention.

- Ceiling Leak in the Fellowship Hall – Trustees are aware.

-Karen N. asked if we have smoke alarms.

- Boy Scouts still are using the church without permission.

- Margaret B. and Karen N. spoke of hand towels needed for the Handicap Restroom off the Fellowship Hall. Motion for Dillon and Daren Brooke to buy paper towel dispenser and put up mirror. 1st Margaret B., 2nd Ken Noble. Unanimously approved by the Board.

Correspondence –

- From Community for a Better Atalissa asking for ideas to keep youth occupied and provide monetary support/donation.

- West Liberty Booster club asking for donations.

Ministry Reports - accepted.

CHRISTIAN ED. REPORT:

Hello from the Christian Education Department!

The Lord continues to bless our church, it seems! I am thankful for how the congregation supports our youth ministry programming. I know it's not always easy to arrange for bringing our children to church, and it takes considerable adult effort to do so. I appreciate how involved the children are becoming, and how many are attending with regularity! Our children are becoming educated about Christianity, learning about how to be good Christians, and enjoying being a part of our congregation.

The January WOW was a success. We played a game called 'Sheep and Goats', and had a church-wide scavenger hunt. The game helped us to understand Matthew 25: 31-46, and how to apply it to our daily lives. And, the scavenger hunt helped us to build familiarity with the physical building of the church, and how it functions to help the community. A good time was had by all- ask the kids about it! Special thanks to Erika & Joe Lehman, Gina Skubal, and Lisa Murphy who helped provide for the dinner that night.

Looking forward to February, the children will be in the sanctuary this upcoming Sunday, February 1, to experience the exciting, music-filled worship of Anchors of Praise. Then, on the 8th and 15th the Thrashers will be on vacation, so Jo Noble has kindly volunteered to operate the Sunday School program. And, WOW will again be on the last Wednesday of the month. I have faith that even more children will attend, and be able to experience the word of God, and great joy found within our loving congregation.

Thanks again for your support.

Yours in Christ, Jason Thrasher

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE:

The PRC met at El Patio on Friday, January 24. All members were present. (Margaret Barnhart, Wayne Noring, Missy Johnson, Marian Hart)The group reported that they had not heard any concerns or comments from the congregation. Discussion was held about the pot-luck, Welcome Table and prayer concerns within the congregation. Appreciation was expressed about having the annual report completed and distributed to members ahead of the annual meeting.

*Margaret B., from the Pastoral Relations Committee, brought up the topic that a meat dish should be provided by the church for the 2016 annual meeting. Move to adjourn 1st Ken N. 2nd Ken R. unanimously approved by the Board. Prayer concerns shared Closing Prayer Meeting ended at 8:30p.m. Next meeting is on Thursday, March 5th at 6:30 p.m.

The Muscatine County Fair Board is looking for old pictures of fair ground buildings and have asked us for any we might have of ours. If you have any old pictures of the First Church United Fair Stand please contact Arnie Hart or bring them to the office.

Church Workers

March 1

Communion/Chime Choir

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Mary Larson & Jan Koellner

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Joe Myers, Dinette Myers, Lisa Murphy, Hannah Miller, Kelly Larson, Rob Miller

USHER: Ken Ruegsegger

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Evelyn Evans & Betty Burton

ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

POWER POINT: Keith Barnhart

CANDLE LIGHTER: Payton Murphy

March 8

Chancel Choir/Daylight Saving Time Begins

USHER: David Baker

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Ken & Marilyn Ruegsegger

ORGANIST: Susie Lehman

POWER POINT: Carolyn Probst

CANDLE LIGHTER: Alice Thrasher

March 15

Communion/Chime Choir

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Mary Larson & Jan Koellner

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Joe Myers, Dinette Myers, Lisa Murphy, Hannah Miller, Kelly Larson, Rob Miller

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR: Open

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Open

CANDLE LIGHTER: Tenley Murphy

March 22

Worship Team

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

The Kelly Family

ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

CANDLE LIGHTER: Joseph Delgado

March 29

Palm Sunday/Chancel & Chime Choirs/Communion

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Mary Larson & Jan Koellner

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Joe Myers, Dinette Myers, Lisa Murphy, Hannah Miller, Kelly Larson, Rob Miller

USHER: Ken Ruegsegger

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Tom & Janet Woody

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Bill Koellner

CANDLE LIGHTER: Charlie Thrasher

Communion Preparer's for March are

Evelyn Evans and Betty Burton



15th Marvin & Carol Irwin
21st Harold & Evelyn Wilkerson
22nd Ken & Marilyn Ruegsegger



March
4th Rich Hambricht
7th Chris Kruse
9th Jarod Williams
10th Butch Nortman
31st Yvonne Gardenier