



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



Dear Friends in Christ,

I'm noticing some green appearing, feeling the warmth of the sun strengthening, and listening to lots of birdsong. My thoughts are meandering through garden planning, visiting the cabin, walking the trail, and most anything but sitting indoors typing on a computer. Spring fever? You bet!

The lesson from last week's adult Sunday school was centered around 'sowing and reaping.' One particular verse has grabbed my attention. Hosea 10:12—Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, *and break up your unplowed ground*; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you. Do you see that italicized phrase? That is what has been brewing in my brain. I have to ask myself what that is in my life. What is the unplowed ground? Has God put in me a seed of an idea that I am not nurturing? A talent I am not using? A resource I am ignoring? A vision I am not focusing on?

This is to be my holy week pondering, becoming aware of what is lying fallow that God wants to see brought to fruition. What about you? Are you receiving any God pokes, prods, urges, or seedlings? Perhaps some fertilizer for stimulating growth? Or some spring pruning in your life?

As we pause each day to consider what Jesus chose to do and say the last days of his life, how he showed his unfailing love and broke unplowed ground, may we be intentional in what we sow. May the fruit we bear, and in turn reap, be the fruit of the spirit. (See Galatians 5:22-23 and Ephesians 5:9 if you need a refresher course.

In love, joy, peace, and Easter blessing,
 Pastor Marian

CHURCH RECORD

March 2015

DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
March 1	\$1,065.00	77
March 8	\$3,820.00	63
March 15	\$1,329.00	59
March 22	\$1,048.00	98
March 29	\$963.00	79

LECTIONARY

April 5 – Acts 10:34-43 or Isa. 25:6-9;
 Ps. 118:1-2. 14-24; 1 Cor. 15:1-11
 or Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8
April 12- Acts 4:32-35; Ps 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2;
 John 20:19-31
April 19 – Acts 3:12-19; Ps. 4:1 John 3:1-7;
 Luke 24:36b-48
April 26- Acts 4:5-12; Ps. 23; 1 John 3:16-24;
 John 10:11-18

April Meals on Wheels

Jan & Bill Koellner – April 1
 Vince & Letha Ottaway – April 8
 Norma Brooks/George Barber-April 15, 22, 24
 Gary Hahn - April 10, 17, 27, 29
 Tom and Mary Pat Brooke - April 6, 13, 20



Don't you love it when April starts out with such a triumphant celebration as Easter?! Talk about a breath of fresh air! It really gives the "new life" of spring a double meaning. Our choirs have been focusing on this throughout Lent, into Palm Sunday, and culminating with the joy that is Easter morning. Our anthem, alone, spans the whole life of Christ. And there is so much more music in April to celebrate all of creation's new life.

Wed., April 1: Chime Choir - 6:50 to 7:30

Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30

**Sun., April 5: EASTER - 1st service:
WORSHIP TEAM**

2nd service: CHANCEL CHOIR

Wed., April 8: (same as Apr. 1)

Sun., April 12: CHIME CHOIR

Wed., April 15: (same as April 1)

Sun., April 19: WORSHIP TEAM

Wed., April 22: (same as April 1)

Sun., April 26: CHANCEL CHOIR

Wed., April 29: (same as April 1)

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 April visit to Oaknoll will be on Thursday the 9th. Meet at the church at 11:00 to carpool. We will share lunch, a short bible study, and lots of fellowship.



April 29th 5:00-6:20p.m.

Christian Education Director's Report

Hello, Church Family!

The good Lord continues to bless our mission. We are fortunate to have a great group of young Christians to bring into the fold. We are learning good things about Jesus, Holy Week, the yearly church calendar, and each other! Which is important of course, because the sweet faces you see below represent the next generation of First Church United. They will carry on our traditions, grow in faith together through the years, support each other, and achieve remarkable things in the name of Christ that we can only dream of.



Here are some of the highlights of our recent past & future faith-filled exploration:

We have started growing some plants for the church garden already in Sunday school! It was a neat lesson about the faith that it takes to plant a seed, and what it takes to nurture that seed into fruition. There's a season-long plan we'll be following, which Scott Koepke of New Pi's 'Soilmates' helped me develop. Our darling young gardeners have planted seeds that will be transplanted to our church garden, cared for throughout the growing season, harvested with care, then both eaten fresh AND canned for enjoyment throughout the 2016 winter season. Should be a good experience for them!

Special thanks to Jodi Kelly for filling in on an impromptu basis while we Thrashers weren't quite 'Springing Ahead' yet. ☺ A humbling, good reminder that only Jesus is perfect. And, an equally good reminder that we have deep reserves of caring, wonderful people in our church!

The children enjoyed Skylar's baptism two week ago quite a bit, it seemed. Having a front row seat to such a momentous occasion really lit up their faces with joy and wonder. What a blessing to be surrounded by two such loving and supportive families!

All ages will be in the main sanctuary for to celebrate Palm Sunday, and then Easter. I have a feeling that the children have a much better understanding of Holy Week after our lesson March 25th in WOW. Speaking of which, gratitude goes to Shawna Laughlin, who provided

the meal this month. Katie Thrasher, Gina Skubal & Lisa Murphy all deserve praise, as well, for helping with the crafts. We had such great range of ages that we were able to divide the group into 3 age-appropriate hands-on experiences! There will be updated activity bags in the sanctuary available for those children who would appreciate some distraction, fyi...

Key dates to save:

- March 29th (Palm Sunday): all ages are in the sanctuary, to take part as a church family in the beginning of Holy Week traditions.
- April 1st (mini-WOW): 5:30-7pm Children are invited to a special craft night, to prepare some fun Spring specialties for the Easter early service. Dinner will be served.
- April 5th (Easter): the children will have a role in the early service, please attend if possible! The traditional egg-hunt will occur between the early & middle services. Everyone is welcome to attend the 10am service, as well.
- April 12th: weather permitting; we will be outside for Sunday school. We will work in the garden, and have our lesson outside. Dress appropriately please. Gloves will be provided & I will make sure the children don't get *too* messy. However, please don't have your darlings wear their finest shoes or clothes that day! Should be fun!
- April 19th: all ages will be in the main sanctuary, to witness the 'Anchors of Praise' Christian music band lead worship.
- April 26th: We're back outside, with more garden work & an Earth Day-themed 'Stewardship' lesson.
- April WOW is on Wednesday the 29th, 5-7pm. We're looking for volunteers for dinner service that night. Check the sign-up sheet in the Fellowship hall, if you're interested, please!

Thanks again for your support!
Jason Thrasher

CALLING ALL LEADERS

Board members, committees, deacons, elders, teachers, students (anyone interested) are all invited to consider attending The Christian Church in the Upper Midwest's Congregational Gathering to be held May 2 at Christian Conference Center near Newton. This is an annual event held with the intention to have representatives from all congregations gather to share ideas, problems, dreams, successes, failures, and stories. Plus there will be a chance to see the progress of all the new construction, including the new cabins, gymnasium, and chapel; to worship together; and to eat great food.

On May 30, Camp Wyoming will hold May Madness, a day designed for all ages to come and help ready the camp for its summer season, play games, explore, and fellowship together.

On Oct. 9-10 our church is invited to join Presbyterian churches from Independence and Bettendorf again for a leadership retreat at the Owl's Nest at Camp Wyoming.

Pastor Marian plans to go to all three of these events and would LOVE to have a few of you join her.

Board Co-Chair Report

Christ Has Risen! From these words there is hope for our eternal salvation. Spring always brings to us both faith and hope for the future. We are entrusted with the responsibility of keeping those in our community and the world that do not have faith and hope. Let this spring be our time to help those in need of faith and hope.

From Board Co-Chair Ken Ruegsegger

OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY

March 5, 2015



The monthly Official Board meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Joe Myers. In attendance were:

Ken Noble, Ken Ruegsegger, Jan McCrabb, Margaret Barnhart, Susie Lehman, Bill Koellner, Pastor Marian Hart, Treasurer Keith Barnhart and Clerk of Session Katie Thrasher. Those not in attendance were: Darren Brooke, Karen Nortman.

Devotion – Psalm 23

Open in Prayer

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

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

Treasurer's Report:

Keith Barnhart gave the Treasurer's report. Keith reported the actual pledged total is 57,611.00 with 25 pledges for 2015. He has paid \$2000 to each of the missions. He will wait to pay the rest till Board says to pay it. All bills are paid. He paid KAH \$504 to catch up. \$1,091 is still in KAH budget. Keith has talked to Arnie H. about streamlining ribfest expenses and proceeds so Arnie is not "eating" the expenses. Move to approve Treasurer's report 1st Ken N., 2nd Ken R. unanimously approved by the Board.

Starting of February balance	\$10,131.76
Receipts	\$8,739.57
Subtotal	\$18,871.33
Disbursements	\$14,581.37
Ending Balance	\$4,289.96
Board checking balance	\$3,198.96

Joe M. is going to talk to Joanne Koenig about auditing the FCU books and see what her fees are.

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

Office hours kept
Adult Sunday school
CYG food shopping, lessons
Confirmation classes
Wednesday meals with choirs
Women in ministry lunch and study
Oaknoll road trip lunch and study
Welcome table planning, shopping, cooking, serving, clean up
Trip to Riverbend Food Bank for pantry
Mondays book study "Kneeling With Giants"
Simpson Bible study Feb. 17
Heath manor Ash Wednesday worship
Ash Wednesday worship here
Cluster meeting
Rib Fest help
Simpson worship Feb. 20
CYG Board meeting
Worship team meeting Feb. 24
Deliver Meals on Wheels
PRC lunch meeting
World Day of Prayer planning meeting
Trip to Food Bank for pantry
March 2-first Soil to Soul day in Norwalk-did group building exercises; toured the acreage; did some chores; one hour silence for prayer, meditation, writing, hiking,

napping, or art; more group sharing; Jason and I both enjoyed ourselves immensely although getting up at four and spending 5 hours on the road made for a loooooong day

Honoring Your Wishes online modules March 4

Pastoral visits-9

Counseling-2

Mileage 165 normal plus receipt for going to Norwalk (not claiming miles, too far)

Ongoing business -

-Painting the Sanctuary – Old Kitchen, Entryway and Narthex still needs to be painted. Nortman's are on vacation right now so painting is on hold.

- Ceiling Leak in the Fellowship Hall – Need to wait to see what happens when the snow melts.

- Joe M. will talk to Dillon B. about finishing the handicap restroom (mirror and towel dispenser).

- Marian spoke about needing to follow up on items said we need to complete from past meeting.

New Business -

-Elder on Call April – Bill Koellner, Elder on Call for May – Jan Koellner.

-Need to change outside main door light sensitive bulb.

- Board Representatives on Committees

Endowment – Joe Myers

Congregational Life – Ken Noble

Christian Education – Susie Lehman

Stewardship – Board At Large

Trustees – Ken Ruegsegger

Memorial – Jan McCrabb

Nominating – Margaret Barnhart

-Restoring the Cradle Roll- Margaret B. spoke that Lisa Murphy said she would chair a committee to update the cradle roll. Katie Thrasher will help provide names/dates.

-Have someone look at the connections to lights in the church – Ken R. will talk to Tom P.

-Ken R. brought up the need to sign the DOT papers for the Hwy Cleanup. He will sign again. Board thanks Ken R. for his work and leadership in the Hwy Cleanup over the last 20 years.

Ministry Reports - accepted.

CHRISTIAN ED. REPORT: March Board 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 invite 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

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE:

The PRC met with Marian Hart on Wednesday, February 25, 2015. All members were present. No issues were brought to the committee's attention.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE –

will meet this Sunday after church to talk about 2015. Brief discussion on Village Community for those who hadn't been at the last meeting.

Move to adjourn 1st Susie L. 2nd Ken R. unanimously approved by the Board.

Prayer concerns shared

Closing Prayer

Meeting ended at 8:30p.m.

Next meeting is on Thursday, April 9th at 6:30 p.m.

MINISTRY PARTNERSHIP

First Church United has been invited to partner with First Christian Church in Coralville in a ministry called The Village Community. Members of the Village Community's Board visited our Board to tell us about the project. Our Board was impressed with the passion and goals and wishes us to support The Village Community (\$2000 has been approved from Endowment Committee) Pastor John McKinstry has written a grant request for \$1000 from the Upper Midwest Region. A work week has been scheduled for June 21-26. People may sign up for a day or to stay all week. Registrations are on the buffet in Fellowship Hall. Friday, June 26 has a celebration planned to finish out the week. This includes a barn dance and cookout. Arnie Hart has been invited to do the cooking. Three other churches in the Iowa City area have been invited to participate in this project as well. The following is a description of The Village Community vision and mission statement:

The Village Community

Our mission at The Village Community is to provide a place where people with intellectual disabilities from our community are nurtured and valued, a place where they will be engaged in all aspects of their lives, learning and working alongside their lifelong friends and family members. As parents of children with intellectual disabilities, it is our commitment to their well-being, as well as the well-being of others in our community that has led us to create this organization.

In recent history, there has been a movement of bringing people with intellectual disabilities out of institutional residences and into neighborhood housing. This began as a very successful model, with focus on the best interest of each individual client. As there was great need for this model, it has grown tremendously. Over the years, the organizations who manage these homes have also grown tremendously. There is increasing concern among parents that these organizations may no longer be able to maintain individual focus, when there are so many individuals to manage now. Space is limited and as demand is high, these organizations may be in a position of having to serve the greatest need, rather than focusing on individual needs.

We plan to create a dynamic community with a residential option for adults with intellectual disabilities that emphasizes opportunities for integration with the larger community. Our intent is to foster quality of life and wellbeing, while providing safety, security, and continuity of care for those who will reside at The Village throughout their lives.

Our residential model is unique from that of a traditional group home. We will not have a residence where members will be dropped off and fully cared for without any parental involvement. Member' parents and/or other family members will be responsible for selecting and hiring staff to provide dedicated or shared care and supervision. Collaboration and involvement among Village families is essential to this model.

Initially, we've develop an enrichment program, open and accessible to others in the community who may or may not eventually reside at The Village. We will provide innovative, individualized and adaptive learning and work opportunities specifically addressing a variety of special needs. And when parts of our local community are inaccessible to our clients, we will bring the community to them, through a variety of local partnerships (e.g., music therapy, rec services, Special Olympics)."

"The Village Community has purchased 10 acres of land in rural Johnson County. The property was previously used as a vineyard and a winery. The upper level of the former winery building required minimal renovation in order to be immediately used for enrichment and day programming. The upper level is one large open room that provides space for the members to gather as a group for meals, group music therapy, drama club, and art classes. The space also has an area where members can relax and watch a movie to talk with each other.

The lower level is divided into two separate spaces. Our hope is to renovate the smaller room on the east side of building into a store front where the members can sell the flowers, herbs, and produce they grow in the gardens on the grounds. We also hope to sell some of their hand made arts and crafts. Eventually we hope to partner with other local artisans and/or farming/gardening groups to sell their products as well. Excess produce will be donated to local food pantries or distributed in some way to families in need. This will give the members the opportunity to have meaningful work but in an environment where they are comfortable and allows them the opportunity to take a break if one is needed and return just as soon as they are ready. Because of the complex needs of many of our members, employment in the larger community is difficult as the environment can't be as controlled or isn't as conducive to their success. We are currently in conversation with Backyard Abundance, whose mission is to create beautiful, environmentally-beneficial, landscapes that provide healthy food and habitat and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services whose job is to support the success of individuals with disabilities in employment to help us plan for this aspect of the program. It is also our hope that members of First Christian Church and First Church United will feel welcome and called to volunteer to help in the gardens and the store.

The larger room on the west side of the building will be finished into a large recreation room where members can play games and exercise. This space, when finished, will have exercise equipment such as a treadmill, yoga mats, and exercise balls and also games like air hockey, foosball, and skiball.

Because the needs of our members are multiple and complex, being in the larger community is often a challenge. That doesn't mean that they want to be isolated or left alone. Our vision is that we will create a haven on this 10 acres of land where they can feel comfortable and safe and where they can interact with

people from the larger community in a meaningful way because they are completely at ease. We hope that members of these two congregations will work in our gardens, attend our barn dances, volunteer in our store, meet in our community room and form relationships with our families and children."

Church Workers

April 5

Easter Sunday

6:00a.m. Sunrise Service at Noble's Pond

8:00a.m. Service: Communion done
by Intinction

9:00 a.m. Egg Hunt and Brunch

10:00 a.m. Service:

SPEAKING ELDERS:

None needed- Presbyterian Style

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Bob Dewar, Blaine Kelly, Karen Nortman,
Butch Nortman, Syd Harned, Vince Ottaway

USHER: Tom Brooke

CANDLE LIGHTER: Alice Thrasher

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Ken & Marilyn Ruegsegger

8 :00a.m. **ORGANIST:** Lori Brooke

10 :00a.m. **ORGANIST:** Susie Lehman

8 :00a.m. **POWERPOINT:** Brenda Miller

10 :00a.m. **POWER POINT:** Bill Koellner

April 12

Chime Choir/Holy Hilarity Sunday

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Vince & Letha Ottaway

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Keith Barnhart

CANDLE LIGHTER: Kaylor Johnson

April 19

Communion/Worship Leaders: Anchors of Praise

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Leon Larson & Dean Phelps

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Bob Dewar, Blaine Kelly, Karen Nortman,
Butch Nortman, Syd Harned, Vince Ottaway

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

The Miller Family

ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

POWER POINT: Jim Kiwala

CANDLE LIGHTER: Conner Skubal

April 26

Chancel Choir

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Norma Brooks & Bud Barber

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWERPOINT: Bill Koellner

CANDLE LIGHTER: Ryan Noble

Communion Preparer's for April are

Tom & Mary Pat Brooke



April

1st Dustin Brooks

4th Emily Morrison

5th Brad Sterner

13th Kyle Miller

15th Lucas Williams

19th Cailyn Williams

19th Nathaniel Williams

19th Brady Laughlin

22nd Tenley Murphy

22nd Gabriel Gardenier

21st Pat Webb

28th Mike Morrison

29th Jo Noble



22nd Dean & Marianne Phelps

26th Ken & Jo Noble

28th Curt & Lisa Newcomb