



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



Dear Friends in Christ,

Earlier this year I had my eyes examined and found it was time to get new glasses. I picked them out and went up to the counter to order them, only to be informed that my insurance would not approve until Jan. 2016. With Arnie retiring in June, that didn't matter, since we would no longer have eye care coverage, so I ordered the glasses. The cost, in my opinion, was outrageous, several hundred dollars. But we have a credit card and the means to pay it off each month.

This past month, two women rang my door bell. One had brought her friend whose insurance wouldn't cover meds for her children. I went to the pharmacy expecting the usual few dollars and was surprised by the total for some ointment-\$83! Opening the Ministerial checkbook I discovered I was out of checks. I had three choices—cash, personal check or credit card. Did you catch that? I had three choices! She, in humility, shame, and desperation had turned to me (us) as her choice. What a blessing and a privilege to be able to help. And what a 'taken for granted' gift my insurance coverage and steady income (living wage) has been.

This morning the church phone rang. The little Casey's that just closed had 'some food' to donate. Arnie and I ran down to discover they meant the contents of their walk-in freezer. We loaded his pickup to the gills, went to Simpson to share, called Jason to contact Table to Table, gleaned some for CYG, etc. A real food rescue adventure, hopefully helping dozens of people.

Do not let the media or advertising industry convince you that we live in a world of scarcity. Please do not practice a throw away attitude, find someone who can use your whatever. We have abundance and many opportunities to share with those who are in need. In my opinion, this is what it means to make room for Jesus in our hearts and lives, by noticing others around us and making room for them.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord!
 Pastor Marian

CHURCH RECORD		
November 2015		
DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
November 1	\$4,882.00	72
November 8	\$2,189.00	55
November 15	\$2,863.00	59
November 22	\$1,087.00	85
November 29	\$1,587.00	52

LECTIONARY

December 6 – Mal. 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79| Phil. 1:3-11
 Luke 3:1-6

December 13- Zeph. 3:14- 20; Isa. 12:2-6; Phil. 4:4-7
 Luke 3:7-18

December 20 – Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55 or
 Ps. 80:1-7; Heb. 10:5-10; Luk3 1:39-45 (46-55)

December 27- 1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26; Ps. 148;
 Col. 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

WELCOME TABLE

We will be starting up the Welcome Table Dec. 5 serving a meal here at noon and offering take outs to pre-reserved folks at the ELC. Volunteers or donations welcome. Sign up sheet is on the buffet.



In a way, we're fortunate to live where the month of December is cold, quiet, and has fewer daylight hours.

The cold keeps us inside to enjoy the aromas of baking and candles. The darkness makes the Christmas lights stand out, and helps us reflect on their meaning. And the quiet helps us focus on the familiar and comforting sounds of the season - bells, carols, and the way all of the music tells the story. We may find ourselves too busy at times. But the dark, cold, quiet brings our minds back to the significance of all of our customs - our ways to remember, honor, and be grateful.

The music shared in our services does all of that, starting with the delightful perspective of children, and culminating with the calming and sincere Christmas Eve worship.

Wed., Dec. 2: Chime Choir - 6:45 to 7:30
Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30

Sun., Dec. 6: YOUTH PAGEANT

Wed., Dec. 9: (same as Dec. 2)

Sun., Dec. 13: CHANCEL CHOIR service of anthems and narrative

Wed., Dec. 16: (same as Dec. 2)

Sun., Dec. 20: CHIME & CHANCEL CHOIRS candlelight & carols service

Wed., Dec. 23: No Choirs

Sun., Dec. 27: Special Music

Wed., Dec. 30: No Choirs (Rehearsals resume on Jan.6, 2016)

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 December visit will be on the 10th. Meet at the church at 11:00 to carpool. We will share lunch, a short bible study, and lots of fellowship.



THE LENDING TREE

The Lending Tree will now be open Wednesday's from 11:30-1:30 and Saturday's from 9am-12pm. Spread the word!



CHRISTMAS TREE

You may place hats, gloves, scarves, socks, undies beneath our Christmas tree in the Narthex for distribution with food and toys. Please have items here by Dec. 16. Toys should be taken to St. Joseph's by Dec. 14.

SAMARITAN'S PURSE

Our church contributed 22 shoeboxes full of goodies for children. Total number from our area was 1540.

CYG NEWS

Regular CYG on Dec.6, Christmas caroling at Simpson and Heath on the 13th, followed by live nativity. We recently collected several bags and boxes of non-perishables for the food pantry. The Jr. High boys volunteered to help with Welcome Table Dec. 5. There will be no CYG on Dec. 20 or 28. Kick off will be Jan. 3 at West Liberty Christian Fellowship.

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

Thank you so much to all those who pulled together to work as a team to host the Presbytery of East Iowa's stated meeting. We got many compliments on our facility, our hospitality, our food, etc. A couple days later I received an email showing receipt from the offering that day. We 'purchased' a mule and a chicken family through Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Also a big thank you to those who helped in any way with the annual community Thanksgiving meal. We had a good turn out and everyone compliments the chefs. ☺

Thank you everyone who sent Get Well Wishes and your many acts of kindness and support during the past months and during the stay in the hospital and at the Nursing home and since the return home. Your many gifts and thoughts shown to me helps give new strength and is much appreciated.

Joyce Hahn

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Hello from the Christian education department!

We are pleased to report that all is well. The weekly wow gatherings have transformed into something really special. Our young Christians are being educated while for making good connections with each other, and Christ. It is heartwarming to see their bright faces light up when they greet each other each week, and catch on to the meaning of the messages I am conveying. I think it's safe to say that our church has become a safe place for the kids to explore their own spirituality, a sanctuary where they can grow, question, learn, and form bonds that will help coalesce the next generation of good people. I am proud of that we are helping to develop confident, self-assured, faith filled individuals that can continue our mission.

Practice for the Christmas play is going well. The kids are enthralled with the script, which blends the traditional story with a modern twist. Special thanks to Jan Koellner, Lisa Murphy, and all the parents who have been making sure that their children show up for practice! We will lead worship Sunday, December 6th via this play. Don't miss it! :-)

We Look forward to Christmas cookie baking, delivering, and some Christmas caroling over these next few WOW's. All church members are encouraged to show up each Wednesday, remember. There is a meal, a short worship service, and lots of time for fellowship. We hope to grow this program so that it is a not to be missed regular occurrence!

Thanks for your support, JASON THRASHER

OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY

November 5, 2015



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

Devotion – Ezekiel Ch. 37.

Open in Prayer

Approval of Docket: move to approve 1st Joe M. 2nd Susie L. unanimously approved by the Board.

Approval of Minutes: move to approve 1st Joe M., 2nd Jan M. unanimously approved by the Board.

Treasurer's Report:

Keith Barnhart gave the Treasurer's report. All bills are paid to date. Keith reminded the Board that there is still \$1100 to be given to each mission before the end of the year.

Fourth payment for Insurance has been paid. Paid Renovations + for finishing the bathroom. Board Checking account is under at (1,974.08). Plus there are many onetime expenses that will have to be paid before the end of the year. Suggested a Board Chair address the congregation regarding budget needs. Motion to approach congregation and wait till after the December Board meeting to pay missions dues 1st Joe M 2nd Susie L. Unanimously approved by the Board.

Move to approve Treasurer's Report 1st Karen N., 2nd Darren B., unanimously approved by the Board.

Starting of October balance	\$6,725.98
Receipts	\$11,785.11
Subtotal	\$18,511.09
Disbursements	\$10,774.78
Ending Balance	\$7,736.31
Board checking balance (\$1,974.08)	

PASTOR'S REPORT OCT.1-NOV.5

OFFICE HOURS KEPT AS POSSIBLE

PREPARE AND LEAD WORSHIP OCT. 4, 11, 18, 25, NOV. 1

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

CYG-MEAL COORDINATION, CO-LEAD LESSONS OCT. 4, 11, 18, 25, NOV. 1

ECHO HILL CEDAR RAPIDS WORKSHOP OCT. 2

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN FALL GATHERING NEW LONDON OCT. 3

CROP WALK OCT. 4

SOIL TO SOUL CLASS OCT. 5

MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION OCT. 7

OAKNOLL ROAD TRIP OCT. 8

LAST WEDDING PLANNING MTG. OCT. 8

LEADER'S RETREAT AT CAMP WYOMONG OCT.

9-10-we explored what direction we're on, what path to get there, when to change paths, how to communicate with your team

WORSHIP TEAM MEETING OCT. 12

WOMEN IN MINISTRY LUNCH AND BIBLE STUDY OCT. 13

PRESBYTERY GATHERING MTG. OCT. 15

WEDDING REHEARSAL OCT. 16

WEDDING OCT. 17

CAMP WYOMING BOARD MTG. OCT. 19

POTLUCK WITH 7TH DAY ADVENTISTS OCT. 24- Great time of fellowship and sharing

SIMPSON WORSHIP OCT. 30
 SOIL TO SOUL CLASS NOV. 2
 SIMPSON BIBLE STUDY NOV. 3
 MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION MTG. NOV. 4
 WEDNESDAYS CHOIR MEALS
 WEDNESDAYS LENDING TREE
 FUNERAL
 PASTORAL VISITS-7
 MILEAGE-

LENDING TREE REPORT-October

OCT. 7-Sales to one individual of misc. dishes, belt, comforter, baby seat \$5.00
 OCT. 14-No sales
 OCT. 21-baby sleeper-free
 4 Operation Warm coats
 Comforter, sheets, Pedicure, end tables, lamps,
 radio \$40.00
 Little Tykes slide \$10.00
 TV stand \$5.00

 2 Operation Warm coats
 OCT. 28
 13 Operation Warm coats
 Total of eight households helped
 Total sales \$60.00
 WOW meals income Oct. 28 \$39.00

Motion to approve Board move to Budget part of the meeting to ongoing business, 1st Joe M., 2nd Margaret B., unanimously approved by the Board.

Ongoing business -

-Budget for 2016. Board discussed what will need to change and what can stay the same for next years budget. Nothing was finalized and will be discussed again at the December Board meeting.

-Status of repair of east bath room- Changing table needs to be fixed up and moved in.

-December Elder on Call- Ken R. will contact Missy J. to see if she would be willing to be the Elder on Call for December.

- Follow up to kitchen licensing – Mr. Morales is not working in West Liberty now so he won't need to use the kitchen. Discussed if we should still license the kitchen for a year? CYG would like to use a certified kitchen to prepare meals for the Ronald McDonald house. Suggested we fill out the paperwork to cover a year. Motion to approve pursuing a year license 1st Susie L., 2nd Margaret B., unanimously approved the Board.

*Motion that kitchen will not be used “for profit” business ventures 1st Joe M., 2nd Margaret B., unanimously approved by the Board.

-Nominating Committee- Margaret B. reported on who will be nominated at the Annual Meeting for committees, and groups.

-Furnaces need a checkup before the cold weather. Katie will contact Blaine K.

- Pastor Evaluation Report- PRC reports there were a few negative responses but overall about 90% positive for Pastor Marian’s annual evaluation.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Correspondence- Liability Insurance document from Mac Concrete Construction, Thank You note, MidWestOne Run for the Schools notice.

-Approve candidate for community center board- Letter to President Jan Koellner was signed by Board Co-Chairs detailing who will be nominated. Katie will mail it to WLCC. Motion to approve nominations for the WLCC Board 1st Jan M., 2nd Karen N., unanimously approved by the Board.

- Music Ministry Expenditures- Susie L. spoke that the music line in budget is for music and supplies. When outside funds are needed for folders, sound system, to supplement instruments and such the Beryl-Brooke memorial fund is used. Susie wants to let others know that the music ministry department is alive and well. They have the funds they need for their music and instruments.

-Paint parking lot stripes and curbs- Reported that the machine used in the past is broken. Darren B. suggested renting one. Butch N. will ask Bob Cline if FCU shares a machine with the WLCC.

- Pastor Marian asked for Board permission to ask the Memorial Committee to commission a stained glass table top centerpiece for Pentecost and other worship times. Board approves. It was mentioned there is an old stained glass window in the shed as well.

MINISTRY & PROGRAM REPORTS:

CHRISTIAN ED

Hello Church Family!

I’m pleased to report that things are going well at Sunday School and WOW. Since I’ve adopted the ‘Godly Play’ strategy for education that I learned in Synod School this past summer, lesson planning has been easy and effective. The kids really seem to grasp the content of the bible lesson better, it seems. The strategy is basically to act out the lesson using props and characters. It’s funny how much better this holds the kids attention, but it really works! ☺ I’ve been using Legos, but there are existing templates that some of our

enterprising church members may attempt to carve out of wood in the near future!

We have been engaged in all sorts of good activities, such as gardening, carving pumpkins, playing games, crafts & more. It's been heartwarming to see attendance continue to grow, as well. Great to see new faces, eager for fellowship, and a solid foundation of Christ-centered learning. Special thanks to Marian and Arnie, Gina Skubal, Joel & Lisa Murphy, Katie Thrasher, and all others who have helped make food, do dishes, assist with crafts, and more. It really does take a village to raise a child, and I'm honored to be part of such a caring community here at First Church United, sincerely.

Thanks, as always, for your support! Jason Thrasher

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE – The PRC met on Tuesday, November 2 at First Church United to review the evaluation survey and comments for Pastor Marian Hart. The group discussed some ideas for continued growth and development of our pastor and decided they would determine two or three things to put in place for the growth and development of the pastor at their next meeting. .

Marian did not request a raise at this time so the committee is recommending the salary and benefits remain the same as this year.

Respectfully submitted, Melissa Johnson

Ken R. told the Board that the stained glass windows will be worked on this week.

Darren B. asked if the bushes in the front of the church need to be removed. Board replied yes so he and Dillon will work on that.

ADJOURNMENT

PRAYER CONCERNS

CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT MEETING December 3, 2015 at 6:30p.m.



Birthdays in December

1 Susan Lehman	13 Kyle Jacobs
2 Joshua Levai-Baird	13 Gina Skubal
3 Carolyn Bengé	14 Roger Johnson
4 Kelly Larson	14 Dee Johnson
4 Ron Jacobs	17 Payton Murphy
5 Brenda Miller	21 Zachary Newcomb
6 Ken Minor	21 Mike Deahr
6 Andy Moreland	23 Dillon Brooke
7 Roger Bengé	25 Deepak Giri
9 Jessica Kelly Simon	30 Marianne Phelps
10 Louise McCoy	30 Mary Kay Morrison
11 Jackson Gingerich	31 Bruce Bengé
11 Jan McCrabb	31 Dinette Myers
12 Margaret Barnhart	31 Roberta Baker



Anniversaries in December

7th Arnie & Marian Hart
14th Deepak & Amrita Giri

Church Workers

December 6

Youth Program/Communion

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Leon Larson & Dean Phelps

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Gary Hahn, Shirley Sterner, Susie Lehman,
Rob Miller, Syd Harned, Blaine Kelly

USHERS: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Keith & Margaret Barnhart

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Bill Koellner

CANDLE LIGHTER: Payton Murphy

December 13

Narrative & Song/Chancel Choir

USHER: Bob Dewar

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Louise McCoy & Maggie Christy

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Katie Thrasher

CANDLE LIGHTER: Alice Thrasher

December 20

Communion/Candlelight & Carols

Chancel & Chime Choirs

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Leon Larson & Dean Phelps

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Gary Hahn, Shirley Sterner, Susie Lehman,
Rob Miller, Syd Harned, Blaine Kelly

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Vince & Letha Ottaway

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Carolyn Probst

CANDLE LIGHTER: Tenley Murphy

December 24

Christmas Eve/Communion by Intinction

ORGANIST: Susie Lehman

POWER POINT: Open

December 27

Special Music

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Deepak & Amrita Giri

ORGANIST: Susie Lehman

POWER POINT: Keith Barnhart

CANDLE LIGHTER: Open

Communion Preparer's for December will be
Wayne Noring & Walt Lehman