



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 2016



Dear Friends in Christ,

I just can't get that dang rooster crow out of my head! On Good Friday our confirmation students helped bring the passion story alive with visual and sound enhancement. We had a live rooster brought in and he crowed and crowed, not only when Peter denied Jesus but over and over again. The most disturbing was when we were singing "Were You There," a song that always places me 'there.' As I sang, the raucously proud voice of accusation crowed, jolting my emotions considerably. It felt as if a guilty verdict had been pronounced on us. It is good to know from scripture that Jesus does not consult with the crowing scorekeepers of guilt. He has already mediated our forgiveness through prayer and sacrifice. He rose victorious over death, the wage of sin, and his first greeting to the apostles was "Peace be with you."

I've already shared this thought, but will again, in case you missed it: Holy Saturday is the day one of my colleagues identifies with most above all of Lent and Holy Week. We usually don't really do anything special for it at our church. It is the day between the horror of the crucifixion and the glory of the resurrection. He says it is a good reminder that **EVEN WHEN GOD IS SILENT, THAT DOES NOT MEAN GOD IS ABSENT.** Please remember that next time you are in a dark, empty kind of day. The invisible, yet powerful breath of life is there breathing "Peace be with you."

Easter morning brought quite a mix of celebration. A few early birds got up before dawn to gather around a bonfire and read together an abbreviated Easter vigil. It was too cloudy to witness the sunrise, too chilly to get completely comfortable, too dark to read well. But, the message of God's saving grace throughout the history of God's people was proclaimed anyway. A few more dozen of us gathered at 8:00 to celebrate the sacrament of baptism, the resurrection, the hope of new life in the midst of death, dying, sorrow, and fear as we joined together in communion and symbolically as the broken pieces of Christ's body, renewed in the light of Christ. Many huge smiles of excitement followed worship as the children hunted for eggs, those remaining after the squirrels' looting, that is. A time of fellowship followed around our brunch tables.

The morning ended with a second worship service culminating with an anthem from our choir that sent chills up my spine. It was the perfect end to wipe out the echoes of that nasty rooster. A cry of triumph over all that is death; an invitation to us to live an abundant life in Christ Jesus.

Thus began the Easter season. We continue to celebrate the risen Lord in the coming weeks leading us up to Pentecost Sunday, the 'birthday' of the Church. This Sunday we'll hear Jesus' greeting "Peace be with you." Hopefully, we will grow to know it is not a peace of tranquility but of energetic assurance that God reigns!

The peace of Christ be with you!

Pastor Marian

| CHURCH RECORD | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| March 2016 | | |
| DATE | OFFERING | ATTEND |
| March 6 | \$3,651.00 | 70 |
| March 13 | \$500.00 | 60 |
| March 20 | \$1,667.11 | 77 |
| March 25 | NA | 23 |
| March 27 8:00 | | 63 |
| March 27 10:00 | \$1,754.50 | 84 |

LECTIONARY

- April 3** – Acts 5:27-31; Ps. 118:14-29 or Ps. 150
 Rev. 1:4-8; John 20:19-31
- April 10-** Acts 9:1-6 (7-20); Ps. 30; Rev. 5:11-14
 John 21:1-19
- April 17** – Acts 9:36-43; Ps. 23; Rev. 7:9-17
 John 10:22-30
- April 24-** Acts 11:1-18; Ps. 148; Rev. 21:1-6
 John 13:31-35



Music Notes

In spite of the fact that April immediately follows Easter this year, we must say that some of our most uplifting, positive and joyous music of the year has been selected for April. We hope it inspires everyone with the messages and the beauty of sounds. *We will ring and sing into spring!*

Sun., April 3: CHIME CHOIR

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

Sun., April 10: CHANCEL CHOIR

Wed., April 13: (same as April 6)

Sun., April 17: CHANCEL CHOIR

Wed., April 20: (same as April 6)

Sun., April 24: WORSHIP TEAM

Wed., April 27: (same as April 6)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION –April 2016

Hello church family! Here are a couple of pictures from March 30th at our weekly WOW activity. We were able to enjoy the outdoors, our friends, look at and care for our seedlings we started the previous Wednesday that will eventually go in children’s garden, and even hunt for leftover Easter eggs. What a great bunch of kids!



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.

THE LENDING TREE

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



Our Sympathy and prayers to the families of
Ken Ruessegger
Chuck Ponce
Robert Gaunt



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

We need to think about what has been entrusted to us by God. The following is a parable from Jesus on what has been entrusted to us.

Stewardship (Matthew 25:14-30)

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

¹⁴ “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,^[a] each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹ “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

²¹ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²² “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

²³ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²⁴ “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

²⁶ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

²⁸ ““So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does

not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The three different sums of money entrusted to the servants in this parable represent the differing wealth and abilities God has entrusted to us.

The first two servants invested the money that had been entrusted to them wisely and earned a return for their master. The master praised them greatly.

However, the third servant simply kept the money and did not put it to good use. The master was very angry with this servant for his laziness.

Like the money entrusted to the servants, the gifts we have received are not ours alone. God gave them to us for the purpose of serving Him and serving other people.

Like the master in the parable, Jesus has departed from earth and entrusted His work to us. But also like the master in the parable, Jesus will return someday to judge how well we have performed our duties.

The lesson is that Christ will judge us for what we have done or not done with the abilities and wealth we have been given. It is not sufficient for us to merely live without sinning. We must actively use the gifts we have been given to serve God and to serve other people. Each of us must honestly evaluate our gifts and prayerfully decide how they can be put to the best use. Some of us have been given small gifts and some great gifts, but we must all do our best with what we have:

From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded. (Luke 12:48)

Each of us has something to give. We can give our money and our time to charity, be a friend to someone who is sick or lonely, do volunteer work, or be a peacemaker, teacher or minister. We may give unselfishly of our time to our spouse, children or parents. We may choose a service-oriented occupation, or we may just do our everyday jobs with integrity and respect for others.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The window for church assessment was over April 1, no foolin'. After the consulting firm has had time to evaluate the information, they will send it to Diane McClanahan, our consultant. There will be a meeting with Diane and us on April 26th at 6 p.m. She will help us understand ourselves better as a church. We will be able to see how we view ourselves compares to how we really are. Then it is up to us to make any changes. This is an exciting opportunity for all those who are interested in taking an active role in the future of First Church United. All members are invited and encouraged to attend.

The next step will be the formation of a Long Range Planning committee led by Brenda Miller. If you are interested in serving with her, please let her know.

We will provide pizza and child care. Please sign up if you can attend so we have enough.

OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY



March 3, 2016

The monthly Official Board meeting was called to order by Board Chair Bill Koellner. In attendance were: Ken Noble, Joe Myers, Brenda Miller, Margaret Barnhart, Pastor Marian Hart, Treasurer Keith Barnhart and Clerk of Session Katie Thrasher. Those not in attendance were: Susie Lehman, Deepak Giri, Ken Ruegsegger
Devotion –Seven last words of Jesus

Open in Prayer

Approval of Docket: approve as amended (added Endowment and correspondence to new business) 1st Joe M, 2nd Brenda M. unanimously approved by the Board.

Approval of the Minutes: motion to approve 1st Ken N., 2nd Joe M., unanimously approved by the Board.

Treasurer’s Report:

Keith Barnhart gave the Treasurer’s Report. Bills are all paid. Missions has been paid. Utilities are as to be expected for this time of year. The extra water meter has not been taken off the church’s account yet. Move to approve Treasurer’s Report 1st Ken N., 2nd Joe M., unanimously approved by the Board.

Bill K. explained he has written stewardship articles for each newsletter through July/August.

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Starting of February balance | \$5,735.44 |
| Receipts | \$14,186.77 |
| Subtotal | \$19,922.21 |
| Disbursements | \$14,616.35 |
| Ending Balance | \$5,305.86 |
| Board checking balance | \$4,005.80 |

Pastor’s Report: 4-MARCH 3. 2016

- Office hours kept
- Plan and lead worship Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28
- CYG co-lead lessons, plan and shop for meals, Board meeting Feb. 28
- Adult Sunday school
- WOW meals and activities
- Lending Tree on Wednesdays
- Welcome Table, plan, prepare meals
- Pick up food at River Bend Food Bank Feb. 5
- Presbytery meeting, IC 1st Pres. Feb. 6
- Funeral for Lourena Beaver Feb. 8
- Women in Ministry lunch and bible study Feb. 9
- Ash Wednesday service followed by cards at Heath Feb. 10
- Ash Wednesday service here Feb. 10
- Worship team meeting Feb. 16
- Cluster meeting Feb. 18
- Camp Wyoming conference call Feb. 18 evening
- Simpson worship Feb. 19
- Camp Wyoming Board meeting and 2 committee meetings at CW Feb. 22
- Pastoral Relations Committee meeting Feb. 26
- Book study at Presbytery office Mar. 1
- Ministerial Association mtg. Mar. 2

Pastoral visits-9
Mileage-272

Reminder- I’ll be gone for 2 days of vacation Mar. 10-11

Community involvement-volunteer at Early Learning Center, active Rotarian, on West Liberty Farmer’s Market planning committee

LENDING TREE REPORT FEBRUARY 2016-a disappointingly slow month. More volunteers are needed.

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| FEB. 3, 6, 10, 20-no sales | |
| FEB. 13 | |
| Sauce pans, measuring cups | \$10 |
| FEB. 17 | |
| Coat, pans, toy | \$ 8 |
| FEB. 24 | |
| Picnic covers | \$ 2 |
| FEB. 27 | |
| Table | \$ 5 |
| TOTAL SALES | \$25 |

We received donations of goods from 3 people.

Advertising had not been started at theatre yet as of Feb. 27. I'll emailed Deb L. to get it started.

Move to approve report 1st Joe M., 2nd Margaret B., unanimously approved by the Board.

ONGOING BUSINESS -

-List of items for repair- Discussed list and who would complete each task.

Church Repair List Spring 2016

1. Food Pantry - clean & paint room & shelving in preparation for inspector.- Needs further evaluation.
2. Plumbing in kitchen - three basin sink leak - repair- Pastor Marian will test.
3. Windows in kitchen - blinds.- Brenda will look into this, possibly order blinds.
4. Caulking PVC pipe running to coffee hour sink.- Ken Noble will inspect.
5. Handicap restroom - stool plunger needs to have plastic holder - cannot just sit on floor. - Joe Myers will inspect.
6. Ceiling tile needs replaced - handicap restroom.- will complete on a church wide work day.
7. Ceiling tiles in Fellowship hall needs replaced. - will complete on a church wide work day.
8. Baptismal heater broken. (Immersion)- Board asks Butch Nortman to inspect.
- 9.. Cover for lights in choir loft missing (back row). - Choir members will be asked their opinion and Brenda M. will talk with Blaine about options.
10. Replace emergency defibulator pads & battery - beyond expiration date (call Roger Johnson)- replaced by Roger Johnson on 3/3/16. Good now till March 2018.
11. Lounge - ceiling tiles need replaced. Blinds on both south and west windows need to be replaced.- Brenda M. will look into this.
12. Drain in lounge needs cleaned - slow draining.- Darren B. will look into this.
13. Changing table in nursery needs repaired. - remove left over door on table. Bill and Jan K. will fix.
14. Nursery door - remove top of door to prevent finger pinching. - Joe M. will fix.
15. Purple wall in classroom needs painted (light blue to match other blue in room).- will complete on a church wide work day.
16. Wooden chairs in classroom - move to fellowship closet - chairs not used. - Bill K. will take care of this. Pastor Marian suggests daycares, grandparents and parents of children in the church are

contacted or asked if they would like to have these chairs.

17. North East Adult room - replace blinds. - Brenda M. will look into this.

18. Replace computer in office that displays announcements in hallway. – Board asks Richard Hart to look into this job.

19. Downspout back splash areas around the building need to be filled in with dirt and leveled. Bill K. will take care of this.

20. Fire Extinguishers need to be checked. Katie T will call inspectors.

- Food Pantry - West Liberty Volunteer Action Committee each has a representative from each church wanting to help.
- April Elder on Call - Margaret B. will contact Wayne Noring to ask if he is willing to serve.
- Follow up to kitchen licensing – Pastor Marian is talking with Shannon McNaul and has asked Dave B. and Arnie H. to be on the kitchen safety group needed to be certified.
- Manse Windows- Bill K. will have Tom Seydel come out to the Manse and give estimates on windows.
- Church Assessment - We are about ready to go. We will invite our regular attenders to participate. We want to make sure at least 30 people participate. We will inform people when the invitations to participate will come out by paper forms or email. All answers are anonymous. Time to respond will be three weeks. Diane McClanahan will then meet with the Board and any other leaders who would like to hear the results somewhere after the second week in April.
- Long range planning for First Church United- will be able to meet after May. One of the big events to be discussed will be the 40th Anniversary of the church for the summer of 2017.
- Cradle Roll- Margaret B. has spoken with Missy and Lisa.
- Communion Bread - Margaret B. is looking into a recipe Patty Web used in the past. Pastor Marian reported that Mary Larson's recipe that we have been eating is unleavened bread.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Endowment requests:

- 1) Fund B for \$500 for Brittany and Brooklyn Harned to go on CYG Mission Trip.
- Motion to approve 1st Ken N., 2nd Joe M.
- Correspondence- email from Darren B.- "I did get a quote from ProLine Striping for \$333.00 and a donation

to pay for having the parking lot professionally repainted. They will repaint the parking lot and the parking areas around the church the same as what it has been. They are going to do it the first week of April. Darren Brooke” Board approves and thanks Darren B. for setting this up.

-Correspondence from Cornerstone Christian School in Wilton, IA.

-Correspondence from Veenstra & Kimm, Inc. regarding Maxson Street Improvements.

Project will begin in the fall of 2016 or the spring of 2017 and will take about one year to complete.

MINISTRY & PROGRAM REPORTS:

Hello church family!

You will be pleased to know that all is well and thriving in the Christian education department. Our programming during this Lenten season continues to follow Jesus as he comes closer to Jerusalem. During Sunday school and the Wednesday programming, we celebrate Jesus's teachings with song, worship, and games. Attendance continues to grow, and I have faith that the children are observing the relevant material, while forming bonds with their peers.

We look forward to leading worship on February 28. The kids have worked hard to learn this song. And, thankfully, this is just a small taste of what's to come when we lead the entire worship service soon! What better way to make sure the children understand the parts of a worship service than having them create their own? Thanks very much to all the support of this wonderful Ministry!

At your service, Jason Thrasher

Necrology Report – Lourena Beaver- February 3, 2016.

ADJOURN

PRAYER CONCERNS SHARED

CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT MEETING April 7, 2016 at 6:30p.m.



Birthdays in April

- 1st Dustin Brooks
- 4th Emily Morrison
- 5th Brad Sterner
- 8th Grayson Levai-Baird
- 8th Blakley Deahr
- 13th Kyle Miller
- 15th Lucas Williams
- 19th Cailyn Williams
- 19th Nathaniel Williams
- 19th Brady Laughlin
- 21st Pat Webb
- 22nd Tenley Murphy
- 22nd Gabriel Gardenier
- 28th Mike Morrison
- 29th Jo Noble



Anniversaries in April

- 22nd Dean & Marianne Phelps
- 26th Ken & Jo Noble
- 28th Kurt & Lisa Newcomb

Church Workers

April 3

Communion/Chime Choir

SPEAKING ELDERS:

No Speaking Elders Needed

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Vince Ottaway, Letha Ottaway, Gary Hahn,
Jim Kiwala, Susie Lehman, Blaine Kelly

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Dave & Bertie Baker

ORGANIST: Susie Lehman

POWER POINT: Jim Kiwala

CANDLE LIGHTER: Open

April 10

Chancel Choir

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

The Kelly Family

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Katie Thrasher

CANDLE LIGHTER: Alice Thrasher

April 17

Communion/Chancel Choir

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Norma Brooks & Dave Baker

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Vince Ottaway, Letha Ottaway, Gary Hahn,
Jim Kiwala, Susie Lehman, Blaine Kelly

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Bud Barber & Norma Brooks

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Open

CANDLE LIGHTER: Open

April 24

Worship Team

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Maggie Christy & Norma Brooks

ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

POWER POINT: Bill Koellner

CANDLE LIGHTER: Open

Communion Preparer's for April will be
Tom & Mary Pat Brooke