



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 2016



Dear Friends in Christ,

We are in a string of gray days as I write this. Yesterday the sun shone for a few minutes and as it burst through the clouds my body had an energy boost. It makes me aware of how often I take sunshine or any kind of light for granted. This morning, while walking Tucker, about five cars in a row came down the street and the drivers smiled and waved at us, providing another kind of light to my day.

All week I've studied a gospel passage about a fig tree not producing fruit and the owner's threat to cut it down. Some commentaries lean toward the gloom and doom fear-inducing bent in their interpretation. I chose to concentrate on the gardener's grace in lending the tree a second chance. All of these thoughts jumble together and come out reassuring me the Light of the World really does make a difference in one's life.

In Matthew 5 Jesus tells us we are light to the world. What a huge responsibility! But it does not have to be overwhelming. Jesus is not asking us to do magnificent deeds and try to outshine the sun. He asks us to light candles by doing some ordinary task that brightens someone's day. It's those little caring things that make the big difference in our world. Those lights unite to give hope, foster peace, and lift spirits; that's powerful. It can also be contagious. We've all seen or heard the 'pass it on' or 'pay it forward' movements. Join or start one today. Let your light so shine.

Seeking the light,
 Pastor Marian

CHURCH RECORD		
February 2016		
DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
February 7	\$3,331.50	74
February 14	\$925.00	63
February 21	\$849.00	89
February 28	\$3,379.16	71

LECTIONARY

March 6 – Josh. 5:9-12; Ps. 32; 2 Cor. 5:16-21
 Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

March 13- Isa. 43:16-21; Ps. 126; Phil. 3:4b-14
 John 12:1-8

March 20 – **Palms:** Luke 19:28-40; Ps. 118:1-2, 19-29
Passion: Isa. 50:4-9a; Ps. 31:9-16; Phil. 2:5-11
 Luke 22:14-23:56 or Luke 23:1-49

March 27- Acts 10:34-43 or Isa. 65:17-25; Ps. 118:1-2,
 14-24; 1 Cor. 15:19-26 or Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18
 or Luke 24:1-12

Layman's Pancake Breakfast
When: April 2, 2016 at 8:30 a.m.
Where: First Church United
Program: Tools for Opportunity- Providing tools and training to woodworkers in Honduras and El Salvador – Craig Ruegsegger



This month takes us from the darkest to the brightest of Christian celebrations! We continue Lent, recognize all that Palm Sunday represents, and the rejoice in a glorious Easter! As we MARCH forward through these celebrations, our music will tell the stories and feed the souls.

Mar. 2: Chime Choir - 6:45 to 7:30

Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30

Mar. 6: CHANCEL CHOIR

Mar. 9: (same as Mar. 2)

Mar. 13: Duet

Mar. 16: (same as Mar. 2)

Mar. 20, PALM SUNDAY: CHANCEL CHOIR

Mar. 23: (same as Mar. 2)

Mar. 27, EASTER: CHANCEL CHOIR

Mar. 30: (same as Mar. 2)

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!



Holy Week Schedule

6:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Seder Meal at FCU

7:00 p.m. Good Friday Service at First Church United

Easter Sunday

6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service at Ken & Jo Noble's pond.

8:00 a.m. Early Easter Worship

9:00 a.m. Egg Hunt and Brunch

10:00 a.m. Easter Worship

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION –March 2016

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?

All children and their families are invited to the annual Easter Egg Hunt and brunch that starts at 9:00 Easter morning.

Thanks very much to all the support of this wonderful Ministry!

At your service, 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 12th 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.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

At the January Board meeting, committees were selected by Board members to serve on and Joe Myers and Bill Koellner volunteered for the Stewardship committee. Stewardship is something that is a daily part of our lives as we serve the Lord. Our committee will write an article highlighting stewardship for each newsletter. This article is on the principles of stewardship.

1. God owns everything. We often substitute the word "my" for "God is" both in our thinking and in our conversations. The Bible is very clear about who owns everything and we own nothing. The land is God's

(Leviticus 25:23), and the earth (Psalms 24:1), the animals of the field (Psalm 50:10), the silver and gold (Haggai 2:8), every soul (Ezekiel 18:4), and we ourselves (Romans 14:8).

2. We are God's Administrators. The Bible is clear that it is God who provides wealth to us. (James 1:17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from Him. (Deuteronomy 8:18) He is "self-made man", but nothing is farther from the truth as stated in Deuteronomy. Even our creativity and strength to work hard comes from the Lord. David stated that after building the first temple in Jerusalem, "For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You." (1 Chronicles 29:14). This is the essence of our understanding of stewardship, God gives to us; and from what He has given, we give back to Him. When we write a check to the church, we are not giving to God from our own, but from His own.

3. How We Administer Determines How God Distributes. Our stewardship of what God has given to us in the past determines what He will distribute to us in the future. Think of God as the owner and you have been blessed to be one of His managers or stewards. If we have been good and faithful stewards, he will again bless each of us, and give us more to manage. Matthew 25:21 states this beautifully - "Well done good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of the Lord."

4. We Shall all Give an Account Someday. We will be called to give an account to our stewardship. (Romans 14:12) "So each of us shall give account of himself to God." (2 Corinthians 5:10) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." It is not accounting of whether we will receive eternal life, but how faithful we have been as stewards of all God has given us in Christ.

Think about these stewardship principles this month. We will have further thoughts on stewardship next month.

Easter Lilies – Contact Jan's Flower Yard to order. Price is \$12.75

HOLY COW! (Consultants)

First Church United's Board has approved a church assessment with the help of Holy Cow Consultants and Diana McClanahan, Director of Leadership and Spiritual Life at the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center. This will involve regular church attendees going online and answering questions over a three week period. Holy Cow will then assess and compile results and get them to Diane. Diane will set up a face to face meeting with our church members to go over the results. The intention is to see where we think we are, where we really are, where we want to be, how to get there as a church, ministry, mission, faith community. For those who don't have computers we will be able to get a hard copy printed out for you to answer and someone else will then enter your answers on your behalf or we can set up appointments to go on the computer together and fill out answers. We need as many regular church attendees and active members as possible to answer for the best, most accurate and complete results. More information will be announced through bulletins, Sunday morning announcements, and e-news as we receive the dates and instructions soon. Thank you in advance for your faithful participation.

OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY

February 4, 2016



The monthly Official Board meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Joe M. In attendance were: Darren Brooke, Ken Noble, Deepak Giri, Margaret Barnhart, Pastor Marian Hart, Treasurer Keith Barnhart and Clerk of Session Katie Thrasher. Those not in attendance were: Susie Lehman, Ken Ruegsegger, Bill Koellner, Brenda Miller

Devotion – John 20 Jesus speaking to his Disciples after he rose from the dead.

Open in Prayer

Approval of Docket: approve as amended (added Endowment to new business) 1st Ken N. 2nd Margaret B. unanimously approved by the Board.

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

Treasurer's Report:

Keith Barnhart gave the Treasurer's Report. Bills are all paid. Insurance was paid. Lending Tree money has transferred to its own account. Received money from New Covenant and Christian Church in January. Move to approve Treasurer's report 1st Ken N., 2nd Darren B., unanimously approved by the Board. Move to approve Treasurer's Report 1st Karen N., 2nd Ken R., unanimously approved by the Board.

Keith asked from where he should pay the bill for the new church doorbell. Board agreed to pay from line #706 (church repairs, maint., supplies). Keith said he will pay a Christian Education bill in February that will deplete the CE account.

Jason requests funds to buy a ping-pong table. Board discussed the use of the Watter's Fund to pay for the ping-pong table. Motion to approve 1st Ken N., 2nd Darren B., unanimously approved by the Board.

Starting of January balance	\$17,177.98
Receipts	\$12,772.51
Subtotal	\$29,950.49
Disbursements	\$24,215.05
Ending Balance	\$5,735.44
Board checking balance	\$4,435.44

Pastor's Report: January 7-Feb. 4, 2016

Office hours kept
 Plan and lead worship Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31
 Adult Sunday school class
 CYG plan and shop for meals all Sundays, lead game, teach lesson
 CYG Board meeting
 Women in Ministry lunch and bible study Jan. 12
 Plan, shop for, prepare, clean up for WOW/choir meals each Wednesday
 Lending Tree most Wednesdays
 Simpson worship Jan. 15
 Confirmation class outing bowling and worship in Muscatine Jan. 16
 Pulpit exchange Jan. 17
 Deacons meeting Jan. 17
 Planning meeting for CRE retreat Jan. 22
 Camp Wyoming fund raiser Jan. 22
 Plan, shop for, prepare, clean up Welcome Table meals each Saturday
 Confirmation classes Jan. 24, 31
 Minister's Institute Jan. 25-27- two days Continued Ed. Key note speaker shared about what it means to be a relational pastor, and youth ministry, Region shared ministry and mission projects the churches are doing, would like to do, both alone and together
 Table of Good meeting Jan. 27
 Spoke at Masters Gardener Webinar at Muscatine Co. Extension office on behalf of our food pantry Jan. 28
 Camp Wyoming Board conference call Feb. 1
 Ministerial Association Feb. 3

Community activities: volunteering at ELC Tuesday mornings one hour, Rotary Gala planning committee, Rotary President-Elect Webinar, helped write grant

request for West Liberty Gun Club, writing class at library

Pastoral visits-6
 Mileage-280

Request vacation 2 days March 10, 11 to attend President-Elect Training for Rotary Club

Pastor Marian reports there are 7 confirmation students this year.

Pastor Marian requests two vacation days in March. Motion to approve vacation days 1st Ken N., 2nd Margaret B., unanimously approved by the Board.

Lending Tree Report – January 2016

Refrigerator	\$30.00
Recliner	5.00
Shelf unit	5.00
Misc.	.60

1/6/16
 Box springs-free

1/9/16	
Iron	\$5.00
Donation	5.00
Misc.-free	
1/11/16	
CD shelf	\$1.00
Misc.	2.96

1/13/16	
Cake pans	\$5.00
Candleholders	5.00

1/16/16	
Silverware	\$5.00
Jacket	\$5.00

1/20/16-Merlyn Schmoll's estate brought in	
1/22/16	
Beds	\$21.32

1/27/16	
1/30/16	
Dresser	\$25.00
Chest of drawers	40.00
Recliner	10.00
Bedding	2.91
Fan	5.00

Total sales \$178.79

ONGOING BUSINESS -

-List of items for repair-

Church Repair List Spring 2016

1. Food Pantry - clean & paint room & shelving in preparation for inspector.
2. Plumbing in kitchen - three basin sink leak - repair
3. Windows in kitchen - blinds.
4. Caulking PVC pipe running to coffee hour sink.
5. Handicap restroom - stool plunger needs to have plastic holder - cannot just sit on floor.
6. Ceiling tile needs replaced - handicap restroom.
7. Ceiling tiles in Fellowship hall needs replaced.
8. Carpet torn where new wires for clavinova speakers run.
9. Baptismal heater broken. (Immersion)
10. Cover for lights in choir missing (back row).
11. Replace emergency defibrillator pads & battery - beyond expiration date (call Roger Johnson)
12. Lounge - ceiling tiles need replaced. Blinds on both south and west windows need to be replaced.
13. Drain in lounge needs cleaned - slow draining.
14. Changing table in nursery needs repaired.
15. Nursery door - remove top of door to prevent finger pinching.
16. Purple wall in classroom needs painted (light blue to match other blue in room).
17. Wooden chairs in classroom - move to fellowship closet - chairs not used.
18. North East Adult room - replace blinds.

-March Elder on Call- Bill Koellner

-Follow up to kitchen licensing – Pastor Marian is talking with Shannon McNaul about best way to go about doing this.

-Manse Windows- Spring project that Bill K. is handling.

-Welcome new Board Members –claim committees

-Long range planning for First Church United- Brenda M. asks for this to be discussed after church assessment it completed.

- Church assessment- should be able to do this online in March.

- Cradle Roll- Margaret B. spoke with Missy Johnson who needs names for Cradle Roll from Lisa M.

- Food Pantry/Voluntary Action Council- Pastor Marian now has names of members of the council from other churches and will work on this with Mary Pat now that she is home.

- Strengthening Families – Group is coming this Saturday to look at the church and see how the church would work for their needs.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Endowment requests:

1) Fund B for \$750. Holly Gingerich requests funds to help support traveling to Haiti as a physicians assistant with the Community Health Institute (a non-profit organization). Motion to approve 1st Darren B., 2nd Margaret B., unanimously approved by the Board

2) Fund B for \$250. Katie Myers (a past CYG student) requests funds to help her attend and do mission work for Next Step ministry motion to approve 1st Margaret B., 2nd Darren B., unanimously approved by the Board.

3) Fund D for \$1000. Pastor Marian requests funds to help the Christian Church in Flint, Michigan for water distribution to community. Motion to approve 1st Darren B., 2nd Margaret B., unanimously approved by the Board.

- Blinds and screens on windows in new kitchen- Katie has emailed Trustees and talked with Ken Wright about this.

- Communion bread and possible ideas Margaret has about using unleavened bread. Margaret brought recipes for unleavened bread. Pastor Marian suggests we use a Gluten Free loaf of bread. Margaret will look into the cost of purchasing Gluten free communion bread.

MINISTRY & PROGRAM REPORTS:

CHRISTIAN ED. February 2016

You will be pleased to know that life is good and all is well in our efforts to bring the light of Christ to the youth in our church. Our programming continues to be effective in educating our children, building fellowship, and encouraging the future leaders of our church to sustain our many worthy missions.

Sunday school lessons continue to follow the chronological life of Jesus this semester. We began with his birth during the Christmas season, and are now up to the point where he began his public ministry. The multi-dimensional format of storytelling still seems to really help comprehension. We combine story reading, with games, with Godly Play acting over a series of classes, so that the kids really know the stories well. We will delve into the lessons, parables and miracles of Jesus' ministry from now until Easter. And then at that point, of course, the great lesson of the Easter season will be our focus. We look forward to the renewing of the Children's Choir as well! Beginning the last Sunday of February, the kids will lead worship by singing for the congregation on a monthly basis. One of our ongoing lessons has been what it means to 'Worship'. So, the first

songs in this series will be 'Here I am to Worship'. Our youth are very excited about donning the robes, and praising God in this way!

Worship on Wednesday also continues to be a wonderful time for all who attend. The program is well-attended, and I know the kids look forward to it each week. We've come to know that some youth are only WOW attendees, and some only Sunday school attendees, and a small segment are able to come to both. We are blessed, then, to be able to offer similar programming on both days of the week.

There is enough variety of activities, yet consistency in curriculum, that regardless of when young people come to our church, they both have fun and learn at the same time. The Confirmation Class has now had 2 meetings. We are pleased to be ushering 8 young Christians toward their entrance into the Church. Pastor Marian has adopted some good programming that is being well received. We are learning about what Confirmation means, and starting to think about our personal statements as we build toward a deeper understanding of what it means to be a Member of the Church.

Thanks go to so many for supporting this programming. Pastor Marian, of course, for all of her guidance, cooking, and mad ping-pong skills. :) All of the parents for getting their kids to & from the church. Gary Hahn for consistent support and clean-up help. Jan Koellner, Joel Murphy & the CE Committee for their guidance, and assisting with teaching the WOW lessons when I am at the Table to Table meetings each 2nd Wednesday of the month. Dave Baker for crafting the characters we use in the Godly Play lessons. And, thanks to you, church members, all for your encouragement and support as well. It is truly a great blessing to be a part of such a kind, welcoming church.

At your service, Jason Thrasher

Move to adjourn 1st Joe M., 2nd Ken N. unanimously approved by the Board.

PRAYER CONCERNS SHARED

CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT MEETING March 3, 2016 at 6:30p.m.



Birthdays in March

3rd Marian Levai-Baird
4th Rich Hambright
7th Chris Kruse
9th Jarod Williams
10th Butch Nortman
31st Yvonne Gardenier



Anniversaries in March

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

Church Workers

March 6

Communion/Chancel Choir

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Tom Brooke & Mary Pat Brooke

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Mark Johnson, Lisa Murphy, Syd Harned,
Rob Miller, Jan Koellner, Shirley Sterner

USHER: Ken Noble

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Ken & Marilyn Ruesgsegger

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Bill Koellner

CANDLE LIGHTER: Payton Murphy

March 13

Daylight Savings Time Begins

USHER: Gary Hahn

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Open

ORGANIST: Susie Lehman

POWER POINT: Katie Thrasher

CANDLE LIGHTER: Alice Thrasher

March 20

Palm Sunday/Communion/Chancel Choir

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Tom Brooke & Mary Pat Brooke

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Mark Johnson, Lisa Murphy, Syd Harned,
Rob Miller, Jan Koellner, Shirley Sterner

USHER: Open

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Bud Barber & Norma Brooks

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Carolyn Probst

CANDLE LIGHTER: Tenley Murphy

March 27

Easter Sunday

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

8:00a.m. Service:

Communion done by Intinction

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Tom Brooke & Mary Pat Brooke

9:00 a.m. Egg Hunt and Brunch

10:00 a.m. Service:

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Tom Brooke & Mary Pat Brooke

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Mark Johnson, Lisa Murphy, Syd Harned,
Rob Miller, Jan Koellner, Shirley Sterner

USHER: Walt Lehman

8:00 a.m. CANDLE LIGHTER: Alice Thrasher

10:00a.m. CANDLE LIGHTER:

Heather Powers

GREETERS: Evelyn Evans & Betty Burton

8 :00a.m. ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

10 :00a.m. ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

8 :00a.m. POWERPOINT: Open

10 :00a.m. POWER POINT: Open

Communion Preparer's for March will be
Walt Lehman and Wayne Noring