

Congregational Tidings

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*



A weekly newsletter



www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalUCCWaterlooIowa

March 3, 2021

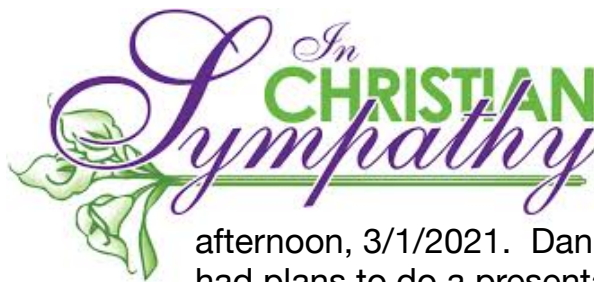
Join the UCC JAM 2021 Virtual Adult Choir

Join the Joint Annual Meeting 2021 (JAM 2021) virtual choir! All congregants and leaders in the IA, NE, SD Conferences are invited to participate. Fill out the form at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfxJKZrmelIoQ7aXZBIFavXJSygSBUrtuHe9CEKvqq0cH6K8g/viewform>



The JAM choir will be singing a three part arrangement of "Like A Tree" by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan: Listen to the original: <https://psalmimmersion.bandcamp.com/album/psalm-1-cycle>

The last day to sign-up is Sunday, March 14th. You will receive instructions via email the following Monday and have until April 18th to send in your video. You will get sheet music, practice tracks, score markings, detailed filming instructions, and more to help you learn your part and make the recording. There will also be a few optional Zoom rehearsals where you can ask questions about the piece or process (dates TBD). Haven't seen or participated in a virtual choir before? When it's done it might look something like this!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpBZeEoC2io>
Questions? Email Aidan Spencer at aidan@ucctcm.org



Hello Church Family:

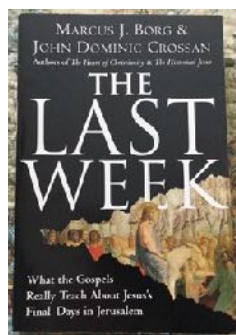
It is with sorrow that I let you know of the passing of **Danny Steiber**, Monday

afternoon, 3/1/2021. Danny loved his church family, and had plans to do a presentation on a Sunday in February on his dual passion with barn quilts and the underground railroad in Iowa. Unfortunately, his health took a turn for the worse given his diagnosis with leukemia. Please keep his family, Anna Kendall, and other loved ones and friends in your prayers. We celebrate his life, and his return to his Creator into life immortal.

Blessings,
Pastor Bret

Sunday Mornings During Lent

During Lent, starting Sunday, February 21, the Sunday morning Zoom gathering will read and discuss the book *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem*, by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan.



"Using the gospel of Mark as their guide, Borg and Crossan present a day-by-day account of Jesus's final week of life. They begin their story on Palm Sunday with two triumphal entries into Jerusalem. The first entry, that of Roman governor Pontius Pilate leading Roman soldiers into the city, symbolized military strength. The second heralded a new kind of moral hero who was praised by the people as he rode in on a humble donkey..."

Topic: FCUCC Sunday Morning Book Study at 9:20 AM
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83998402038?pwd=b1YRnZjMFRhWUEvNm5MMTJ2bk5aUT09>

Meeting ID: 839 9840 2038

Passcode: 246810

Dial in: 312 626 6799 US

Contact Evie Waack with any questions.

Lenten discussions

During Lent we will take a half an hour after the worship service, starting at approximately 11:35 a.m. to talk about the theme of the day and/or our own Lenten reflections and thoughts. This is an opportunity to have some intentional fellowship after the worship service to deepen and broaden our spiritual connection with one another, and to edify our own faith journeys. A zoom link will be available on our church website and our church Facebook page. We hope to see you there!

Upcoming NAMI educational speaker:

Tuesday, March 9: Floyd Bumpers, Jr., LISW (Licensed Independent Social Worker) will present about "Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health." He has over 15 years of experience working with children, couples, and families. He is the founder of Hope Connection Counseling and Therapy LLC.; a Christian- focused, strength-based agency in Waterloo.

To register for the March 9th event and receive the Zoom link to participate please use this Eventbrite Link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nami-presentation-on-religion-spirituality-and-mental-health-tickets-141451791115>

A Dinner, Movie & Conversation!

This Saturday, March 6th, at 5:30 PM

we will have the opportunity to watch "Amistad" together followed by a discussion. As you know, the Congregational Church was instrumental in the abolition of slavery and the underground railroad.

See history come to life in this compelling movie. Because of the graphic nature of the film, and its "R" rating, you may not wish to have your children to watch.

However, the issues illuminated may shed light on our own issues in 2021. The movie will set the context for Sunday worship on March 7th at 10:30 a.m., i.e., the next day, in which a narrative of the African who became the leader of the group, Sengbe Pieh, will be given by our own Shuaib Meacham. There will be African drumming and other special music for this worship experience you won't want to miss played by our own congregants.

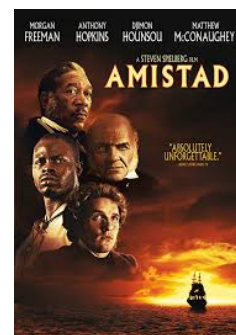
If you have seen the movie or choose to watch it at a different time, please join in the discussion at 8:10 PM using the same Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3192348927?pwd=SzIyY1NWRUVZKzF4MzRsbnHNkSnFSUT09>

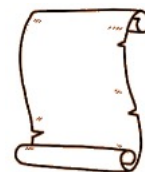
Meeting ID: 3192348927

Passcode: 246810

Dial in: 312 626 6799



First Congregational UCC Reopening Protocol



The First Congregational UCC Board of Trustees approved a set of documents explaining the protocol we will follow to allow small groups to begin using the church building & grounds for meetings and events, when appropriate. Our Reopening Committee also recommended these documents. The documents are available for your review and download from our website at www.firstcongucc.org.

If you have a group of six or less who are interested in using the church for a meeting or event, please review the documents, fill out the request form, and submit it per instructions for review and approval. The decision to allow the gathering will depend on many variables including the current status of COVID in Black Hawk County.

Please submit your completed request form to Anne Hoekstra or Michelle Wolfe for approval.



Taking Care of Our Family

Please let Pastor Bret, Michelle, or Anne know of those we should be keeping close ...

* Prayers for Steve Thorpe, who has been at Mayo Hospital for treatment of blood clots and assessment of malignancies. He was expecting to be released on Tuesday, March 2 with follow up care in the Cedar Valley. Please keep Steve and Liz and their families and loved ones in your prayers.

* Prayers for the family and loved ones of Danny Steiber who passed away on Monday afternoon. We will all miss Danny's energy, spirit, intelligence, and warmth, but know that Anna Kendall will especially miss him and their special friendship. Please keep Anna in your hearts and prayers.

* Prayers for Ruth Brower who fell and broke her pelvis. She is continuing rehab at New Aldaya.

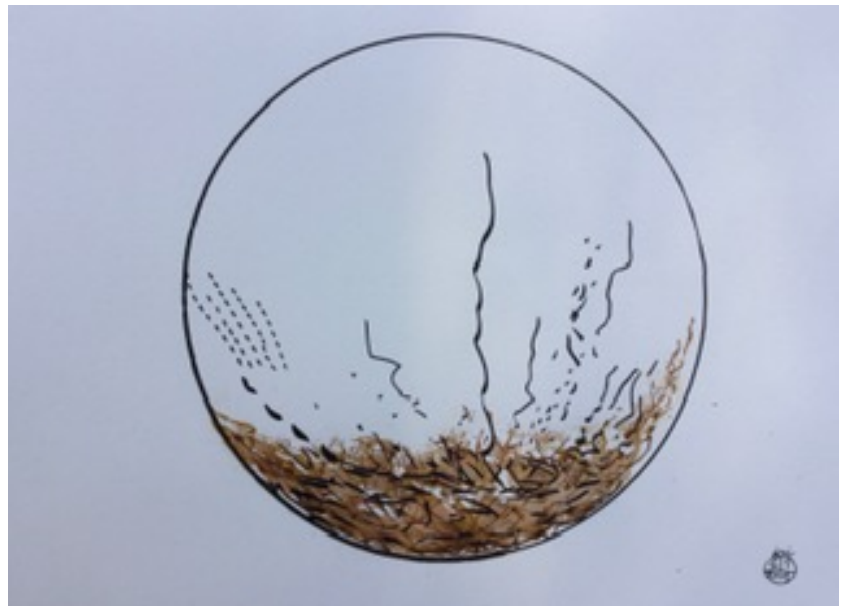
CREATIVE CORNER

Our fourth entry of 2021 for the Creative Corner is from Evie Waack. She is sharing her mandala drawing which is also a spiritual practice:

Mindful Mandalas

Mandala is a Sanskrit work for a sacred circle. Being mindful means to pay attention, without judgement, to what is happening around you in the present moment. In June 2019 I created this mandala while sitting in my backyard. Hearing the birds calling back and forth to each other, I started making marks within a circle. After a while the marks started taking the form of a nest.

I invite you to pause in your reading. Take a moment to slow down and then take three slow breaths... in... and out... in... and out... in... and out... Gently gaze upon this image. What do you notice? What do you see? How do you feel?



Many mornings I start my day with creating a mindful mandala. The lines, colors and movements usually have something to reveal to me. If nothing else, they help create a sense of calmness, connection and well-being.

On behalf of the Board of Creative Arts, I would like to invite others to contribute your creations. We welcome photography, paintings, sculpture, poetry, stories, dance, music, acting, recipes, knitting, crocheting, sewing, needlework, woodworking, pottery--whatever you enjoy creating. Or maybe you have a favorite hobby that isn't necessarily your own creation, but an appreciation of the creativity of others. You can take a picture of your creation or something you appreciate. If you would like to present a video, we can link it to our website and/or Facebook page. We would like to know a little about what you are sharing, perhaps a story of how you created your work, and why it, or the experience, is important to you. We miss seeing each other and this is a way that we can share ourselves in a different way. We welcome artists of all ages and abilities. Please send your creation or questions to Anne Hoekstra at annelouisehoekstra@gmail.com. Thank you.

Moderator Musings

It has been nearly a year since our lives changed so dramatically with the coming of Covid 19 to Iowa. It has been a year of changed plans, illness for some, and for others--saying goodbye to loved ones.

Work settings and schools have made accommodations for safety. Social gatherings have been restricted, and we've found ourselves too many days in a row looking at the same four walls.

Although we have been very grateful to find ways to stay in touch with our church family through phone calls, cards and letters, emails, zoom calls and virtual worship, it's NOT the same as being together! We MISS each other, and eagerly anticipate the time we will be together again!

We have been cautious about reopening because we want our congregation to stay safe. Our reopening committee has been meeting weekly exploring the best possible way to proceed following this pandemic. They are considering issues for resuming indoor worship: 14 day positivity rates for Black Hawk County (3% or lower for 4 weeks), percentage of the population vaccinated (80-90%), family groupings for seating, and wearing masks. With the coming of spring and warmer weather, we are hoping to begin gathering outside for worship, as outdoor activities are considered less risky. We would still ask folks to wear masks and keep 6 feet distance from those not in their "bubble".

I look forward to seeing you soon! I'm not sure how soon "soon" is, but I am confident that it will be in the next few months. There is hope, and light at the end of this long tunnel of social isolation. I am thankful for your faithfulness and patience in these difficult times and the ways that we continue to come together for worship, fellowship, meetings, and care for each other. We are Church whether we are together in person or not. Grace and peace to you as we continue to do God's work.

See you "soon",

Anne Hoekstra

You Still Have Time



... to send in your three-year pledge for the pipe organ capital campaign. The work has begun! We can't wait until we have the opportunity to offer our beautiful instrument to the community again!!

There are so many ways we have shared our wonderful sanctuary and beautiful organ with the community in the past. Won't it be great when we can do that again? And we will!

We are finding more and more ways too to do just that when our organ is back. Please make your pledge now by emailing Michelle at fcuccoffice@gmail.com or by calling the church office at 319-234-8927. (Or just return your pledge card)

You Are Cordially Invited to Help Keep Up the Neighborhood:



Dear Friends,

As you know, the Russell & Snowden Homes are a major part of the story of Waterloo bearing a lot of history. The Friends of the Grout Historic Houses is a group of the Grout Museum District supporters devoted to the care and upkeep of the two historical homes owned by the Grout Museum. Our current goal is to raise funds for the much needed upkeep on painting of these two homes, Rensselaer Russell House & Snowden House.

With budgets so tight, and the cancellation of fundraising in 2020 due to Covid19 we need your support now more than ever.

We want to invite you to our annual St. Patrick's Lunch, this year it has been revised because of Covid, but hope to go back to the brunch in 2022. We have graciously been able to team up with Jameson's Public House at 310 E. Fourth St Waterloo for this year's event. It will take place on two different Saturday's March 13th & March 20th, from 12:00-6:00pm both days. The menu includes a Rubeen & fries for \$15.00. This event is a To-Go meal.

Tickets can be purchased online at gmdistrict.org/lunch2021 or by calling the Grout at 319-234-6357. Please think of our organization and treat yourself and your family to a special Saturday lunch and help us sustain these two special houses. Your support would be much appreciated.

Thank You,

Carrie Buschmann

Secretary, Friends of the Grout Historic Houses

Hey kids!

Are you tired of sitting around the house? Do you miss seeing your friends?
The Board of Spiritual Growth and Programs has just what you need!
Come join us for some fun and fellowship, and friends are welcome, too!

Sunday, March 7, from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Hartman Reserve Nature Center
(657 Reserve Drive, Cedar Falls)

Learn how to make maple syrup and tour the Sugar Shack! We'll provide a nature walk and S'Mores! It may be muddy there with the warm temps, just so you know. Parents, you can join us if you like. Or, you may drop off kids at the entrance of the Interpretive Center (from the parking lot, take the road next to the Ranger's house, that goes down the hill.) Please RSVP to Tim Ahrens or Abbie Green so we can get an idea of how many to expect. THANKS, and hope to see you there! (with a mask, of course.)

Create an endowment of love. Please consider including our church in your estate planning.

F I R S T C O N G R E G A T I O N A L U C C

First Congregational UCC
608 WEST FOURTH STREET
WATERLOO, IOWA 50702

Congregational Tidings

Place
Stamp
Here