

# Congregational Tidings

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



A weekly newsletter



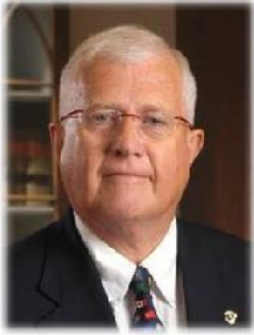
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April 7, 2021

## Easter Egg Hunt

Thank you to those who came to the egg hunt on Sunday and those who were cheering on our fierce hunters from home! Special thanks to the Spiritual Growth and Programs Board for buying candy, stuffing eggs, and helping hide them around the church grounds!





## VISITATION FOR STEVE THORPE

Our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Steve Thorpe who passed away Saturday morning at his home. A family graveside service will be held.

There will be a public visitation at Locke Funeral Home from **3:00-7:00 PM, this Thursday, April 8.**



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## PIPE ORGAN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE!!

There is good news and not-as-good news to share for the pipe organ capital campaign. The good news is that we have pledges to cover 2/3 of the \$90,000 goal of the capital campaign. Remember, we are asking the congregation to cover only about 1/4 of the \$340,000 project. Very generous donors are covering the rest. The not-so-good news is that we need \$30,000 in pledges to reach our goal. About half of our church family has not yet taken the opportunity to participate in this important project. IT'S NOT TOO LATE!! We need your generous support, also. The much needed maintenance and the enhancements to our organ will provide us and our community a beautiful instrument to enjoy for years to come.



**Please return your pledge card today or simply contact Michelle at 319-234-8927 or at her private email [fcuccoffice@gmail.com](mailto:fcuccoffice@gmail.com).** Thanks for keeping our church a community treasure!

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## Spiritual Life & Care

It was such a treat to receive the Easter card and packet of wildflower seeds from the thoughtful folks of the Board of Spiritual Life & Care. It brightened our season, especially when we can't be together. They also distributed, with the help of volunteers from the congregation, some flower bouquets to those of our congregation who are more confined. Here is a sampling of the thank-you's from them:

*"Goodness gracious - such a nice surprise to find the beautiful bouquet outside my door. It is so nice to be remembered in such a lovely way. Church seems so far away, however it is never far from my mind. Whatever normal is, I hope it returns soon."*

*"I just want to thank the church for the lovely Easter flowers and card. I went back to work yesterday for the first time in a year and when I arrived home, there were these lovely flowers outside my door. What a nice surprise!"*

## Taking Care of Our Family ... ..

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

\* Continued prayers to the family and friends of Steve Thorpe who passed away Saturday morning (Public visitation at Locke Funeral Home, 3:00-7:00 PM, this Thurs. April 8th).

\* Ruth Brower has been released from the hospital back to New Aldaya. Cards and letters can be sent to New Aldaya, Room 222, 7501 University Ave, Cedar Falls, IA 50613.

## Vaccine Update:

Good news! Vaccination is now open to all Iowans as of April 5, 2021. All Iowans age 16 and above are eligible to receive a Covid-19 vaccine. Those 16-17 can receive only the Pfizer vaccine. Iowans 18 and older can have the Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson vaccines. For more info visit <https://vaccinate.iowa.gov/providers/>. Since demand is greater than supply, it may take a few weeks for everyone who wants a vaccination to get one, but with the new variants of the virus circulating, it will be a crucial part of getting back to “normal”. Until then, we continue to mask and keep 6 feet apart.

## Outdoor Worship

Let's gather for worship! It is finally spring, and it's been such a long time since we have been able to see each other! On both April 18 and May 16, we will gather for worship at the Riverloop Amphitheatre at 10:30 am for worship, weather permitting. We ask folks to wear a mask and honor social distancing. Stay tuned for more details!



## Board Chair Meeting Next Tuesday

There will be a meeting of the chairs of the following boards, **Tuesday, April 13, 7:00 pm via Zoom:** Physical Resources, Spiritual Growth & Programs, Creative Ministries, Social Causes & Justice, and Spiritual Life & Care. Please make sure your board is represented—it is exciting to hear what each committee is doing.



## 2021 First Quarter Financial Status

At the end of March, our Church Operating Budget performance is good. We are 25 percent of the way through the year. Our total income is at 27 percent of budget, and our total expenses are at 20 percent. Current Pledge income is at 35 percent, so I want to thank all members for doing a very good job of keeping your pledge payments up to date, and in some cases ahead of schedule. Expenses are under budget because utility costs are low, and maintenance costs and all Board spending is under budget.

Our Organ Capital Campaign is underway, with a goal of \$90,000. Thirty-four pledges have been made totaling \$61,851, and we have received \$16,826 so far. If you haven't made a three-year pledge, I'd encourage you to consider doing so. Please contact Michelle if you have questions on the Operating Budget or the Capital Campaign, or if you would like to receive a Giving Statement for the first quarter.

*Dave Allbaugh*

# CREATIVE CORNER

For years, I have enjoyed taking pictures of our beautiful church. I especially enjoy taking pictures at church when it is filled with activities, people, games, food, music, face-painting, animals, pumpkins, celebrations, baptisms, and Christmas trees. I have missed all of those things this past year so much. I know I'm not alone in that because I hear others talk of missing their church family too. I took my camera on a walk through the church one Sunday afternoon recently, and took a few pictures of the quietness inside. It struck me that as much as I missed the church, perhaps the CHURCH missed us too. As I walked from room to room, I thought about what the church might be missing and tried to capture those thoughts in the poem, "The Quiet Church". When I shared the poem for our recent talent show, I paired several of my photographs with the verses of the poem, and I asked my daughter, Emily, to play some cello music in the background as the pictures were shown on the screen. So, for this Tidings rendition... find your favorite cello music, imagine the photos, and enjoy the poem.

~ *Diane Highnam*

## The Quiet Church

*By Diane Highnam*

The doors are closed, the halls are still  
The sanctuary waits quietly for all.  
The choir loft is ready, the bells are waiting  
The candles are standing tall.

The pews sit empty, wondering why  
They haven't seen us for so long.  
They recall those distant days  
When they were full and strong.

The hymnals long to hear our voices  
Singing loudly and with a smile  
The windows want to share their beauty  
As we sit and pray a while

Communion cups and plates of bread  
Are tucked safely on shelves above  
They wait to feel our grateful hands  
As we share the precious gifts of love

The library and the Friendship Room  
Are missing the hugs and sharing  
The tables are too neat and tidy  
Needing coffee, cookies, and caring.

We've known all along that church is not a place  
And it's everywhere we are.  
God lives within our hearts and souls  
Whether we are near or far.

Yet we miss this home and all its familiar spots  
And the family that we've become  
We trust that by being apart for now  
We are caring for all, each and every one.

This time of being apart  
Is like the winter months we've known  
But spring is coming soon we pray  
As the seeds of hope are sown.

God is watching over all of it and  
Waiting patiently and true  
We will be together again when it's safe,  
We hope and pray it's soon.

# Minister's Musings

Happy Eastertide!

What does resurrected life look like? As Christians, we believe that we are transformed by adopting and living by Christ's own values and virtues. When we let Christ's character and Spirit live in us, that is what it means to be resurrected. But that often sounds like something theoretical rather than actual...something we consider in a hypothesis rather than implement in real life. How might it look if we were actually to live this way?

Sometimes the best truths are found cross-culturally. There is an African term and way of living that may describe resurrected life as well as any. It is called ubuntu. And here is a story I have amended that reveals this way of thinking put into practice. We can learn from those who have lived together as community, and whose way of interacting with each other is neither competitive or self-interested, but collaborative and community-interested. May we learn from its telling!



## Ubuntu

A Western Anthropologist proposed a game to a group of African children that reflected his own culture's individualistic sense of competitiveness and success. He placed a basket of fruits near a tree, and then had the children stand 100 metres away.

They were to race to the basket, and whoever reached it first would get all the fruits in the basket. With the instructions given he said, "ready, set, go!"

But the children surprised him. Instead of individually racing off in hopes of being the "winner," they purposefully held each other's hands and ran towards the tree together, at the pace of the slowest among them. When they arrived all at the same time at the basket, they huddled in a circle, divided the fruits among themselves equitably, and then began to eat the fruits with smiles on their faces and laughs on their lips.

Later, the Anthropologist asked them why they all ran together and shared all the fruits?

They simply replied in unison, 'Ubuntu.'

Ubuntu in their language means: 'I am because, we are!' It is a conception that we are all interconnected, and that what is good for one is to be good for everyone, and what is good for everyone will be good for each one.

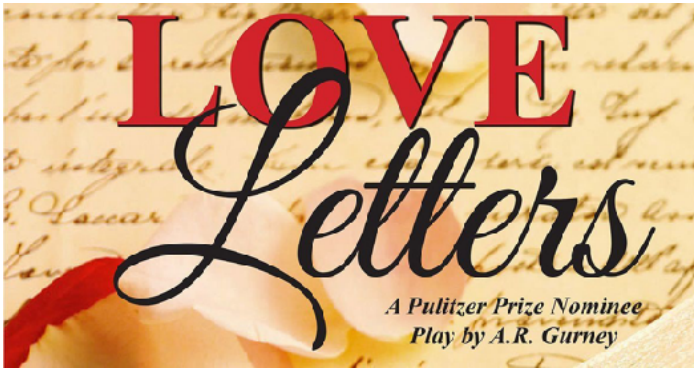
Already embracing this ethic of compassion for others, these young children tied their own happiness to one another. In effect they were saying, 'One of us cannot be happy when all the others are sad. We must share with one another, or none of us can be happy.'

This may perhaps best describe our own scripture, which tells us that 'a child will guide them' (Isaiah 11.6).

It also reveals what resurrected life looks like when practiced in our real lives.

Resurrection blessings to us all,

Pastor Bret  
4/6/2021



On stage at Hope Martin Theatre  
Waterloo Center for the Arts

Seats are still available - Come support our very own Greg and Michelle Holt. They will be performing on Saturday, April 10th at 7:00pm.

Andrew Makepeace Ladd III and Melissa Gardner, both born to wealth and position, are childhood friends whose lifelong correspondence begins with birthday party thank-you notes and summer camp postcards.

Eventually they become involved and it makes it eloquently clear how much they really meant, and gave to each other over the years - physically apart, perhaps, but spiritually as close as only true lovers can be.

Tickets can be purchased at: <https://www.wcpbhct.org>.



*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

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*Congregational Tidings*

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