

# 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](https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalUCCWaterlooIowa)

February 2, 2022

## FROM THE REOPENING COMMITTEE...

Our Reopening Committee continues to review the current Covid-19 Black Hawk County statistics, the transmission rates are still high but heading in a downward trend. Our congregation is not the overall general public of Black Hawk Co. of which these statistics are based. With knowing the overwhelming majority of our membership is fully vaccinated and boosted, we feel that by practicing our current mitigation policies of masking and distancing within our sanctuary we could safely resume in person worship which would be much safer than going to the grocery store, or attending a crowded sporting event or any other public venue. If the numbers continue to decline we are hopefully optimistic to resume worship as soon as we can.



Free Covid-19 tests can be ordered at [www.covidtests.gov](http://www.covidtests.gov). The website states "The tests will be completely free—there are no shipping costs and you don't need to enter a credit card number." Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

~ *Dave, Tim, Beth, and Greg*

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## COMMON MEETING FOR BOARD CHAIRS...

The chairs of the boards (Spiritual Life & Care, Spiritual Growth & Programs, Social Causes & Justice, Creative Ministries, and Physical Resources) will be meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, February 15 at 7:00 p.m. Please meet with your committees sometime in the next couple of weeks to plan for the upcoming year. This is the time of year that each board elects officers: a chair, vice chair, and secretary, and plans for the year ahead. Past and future chairs are invited to attend the meeting on February 15. A zoom link will follow. If you need help setting up a zoom link for your board, please let Michelle know.

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## TAKING CARE OF FAMILY...

~ Prayers for Nancy Stevenson who will be having kidney surgery on Tuesday, Feb. 8th. She welcomes any prayers that are sent her way.



# THE PASTOR'S CORNER

Our church will hopefully embark on an envisioning process soon to listen to who God is calling us to be in the years to come. This is important to who we are as a church, for in determining the values and principles we stand for, we not only enhance our own values to be made real through our worship, our programs and practices, and our mission and outreach (which is to be our focus), but also attract those of similar values and vision to join us in carrying out God's calling to a world in need.

Granted, we will also perhaps have others respond that they are not attracted by our values, but this is always the case for saying who we are and why we exist. Jesus did this, gaining followers as well as detractors. A church that does not assert and affirm its identity is likely to be awash on the tides of popular opinion rather than on the current of Christ's own vision. And it is important for us to be clear about what we believe God's vision is for us to be as a community of the faithful.

About a decade and a half ago, I created a Christ-like vision of what I think the church should be in this age of rapid change where people are not always sure what they and their church prioritize. I have included it in my pastoral profile ever since then so as to let congregations know where I personally stand and what I value in churches I serve. While it is not a list that can be held by every church given its local context, it is a list of things that I think most churches should strive for in order to be faithful to the way of Jesus himself.

I ask you to ponder this vision, and then ask what parts of it seem appropriate for First Congregational UCC of Waterloo, Iowa in the year 2022 and following. Consider what things mentioned are things we already have, those which we don't, where we hear God calling us to live out our faith, and where we will need God's own grace to make these things real. Perhaps this list will inspire you to think of other things not listed here. It is by no means an exhaustive list, and I would likely add some new elements to relate to changes in our culture in the past decade. Write down your thoughts. I am hoping we will have a chance to share these with one another in the coming months in an effort to build consensus around the direction of where God is calling this community of faith.

## **My Vision of What the Church Should Be**

Loving/Compassionate/Caring/Kind  
Inclusive/Open/Affirming/Encouraging  
Multiethnic, Multiracial, Multicultural, Multifaithful  
Socially/Environmentally Conscious & Active  
Justice creating, establishing, sustaining  
Mercy giving and forgiving  
Visionary/Forward Thinking/Progressive  
Faithful/Disciplined/Committed/Accountable  
Warm/Welcoming/Inviting/Friendly/Hospitable  
Intellectually stimulating & Imaginatively inspiring  
Creative/Artistic  
Mytho-poetic (i.e., non-literal) in its hermeneutics  
Outreach-oriented and mission-minded  
Dedicated to peace-making/keeping, nonviolence, & peace w/ justice for all  
Loyalty to God over country  
Healthy & whole  
Healing presence for all who enter in, and to the community & world  
Fun & invigorating

*(Continued on next page...)*

...*Pastor Corner (Continued from previous page)*

Energetic & enthusiastic  
Non-creedal (testimonies, not tests of faith)  
Non-controlling (trusting)  
Spiritually & emotionally safe haven for all  
Generous  
Grateful/thankful  
Good stewards of its assets & creation  
Purpose-gearred  
Meaning/Value-centered  
Virtue-driven  
Character-building  
Courageous/Prophetic  
Grounded in Integrity  
Authentic

I believe the church should be outreach-oriented, not maintenance-oriented...  
that stewardship is toward the whole earth, not just the church facilities...  
that spiritual growth requires discipleship within a community, not in isolation...  
that new attenders will become members when they feel they count...  
that children & youth will want to attend when they, and their input, are cherished...  
that inter-religious dialogues creates the understanding that leads to peace...  
that being a moral beacon to the community & world may well require standing opposed to them.

Blessings in Christ,  
Pastor Bret

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## MOMENT FOR MISSIONS...

Our congregation has been blessed over the years to have many members actively involved with Scouting. If you'd like to support their wonderful endeavors, please consider joining this Cedar Valley troop for a delicious fundraising dinner:

### Troop 55 Ground Hog Supper Fundraiser



Our Annual Troop fundraiser, the Ground Hog Supper will be held February 5th, from 4-7 pm.

It will be at Cedar Heights Community Presbyterian Church, 2015 Rainbow Drive, Cedar Falls (corner of Rainbow and Round Street).

Tickets are \$7 per person and available from any scout in Troop 55 or at the door. This includes a BBQ sandwich, baked beans, chips and dessert.

Once again we will have a large selection of items available in our silent auction.

Come, enjoy and support Troop 55!

Life Line Screening, the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings, will again offer affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings at the **First Congregational United Church of Christ** on **February 24, 2022**.



A package of five screenings to identify cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions will be offered:

- Carotid artery ultrasound that scans the carotid arteries that screens for buildup of fatty plaque-one of the leading causes of strokes.
- Abdominal aortic aneurysm ultrasound screening for an abdominal aneurysm that could lead to a ruptured aorta.
- Heart Rhythm Screening (AFIB) A quick and easy test using a 6-lead EKG placed on the arms and legs to identify the presence or absence of an irregular heartbeat.
- Peripheral Arterial Disease Screening-Evaluates for PAD in the lower extremities, which increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Osteoporosis Risk Assessment-Ultrasound screens the shin bone for bone mass density. Osteoporosis is painless and silent in the early stages.

Special Package Pricing all 5 screenings are offered for only \$139. Register by calling toll free 1-800-690-6495, text the word "circle" to 797979, or register on line at <https://lisa.social/HSC>.

*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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