

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

May 25, 2022

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS--THINKING AHEAD. . .

Summer is just around the corner. Students and teachers alike are counting down the days until summer vacation begins. Many church activities tend to wind down for a summer break, and folks gather in less formal ways. Even though the lazy days of summer are on our mind, let's think ahead to fall. What activities, programs, classes, are you interested in—reviving something we've done before, starting something new?

Our Search and Call committee are busy exploring with finding a new pastor, but it may be months before we are able to call a new pastor. Meanwhile, we KEEP DOING CHURCH! We carry on, because the work of the church is done by us, the congregation.

We are a very fortunate congregation to have so many skilled people with a variety of talents and gifts. I'm talking about YOU! What would you like to share with your fellow congregants? What kind of classes, Bible and book studies, craft groups, intergenerational activities, mission projects, social activities, music groups, and discussion groups would interest you, either as a leader or participant?

Let me know what ideas you have, even those that are still in the formation stage. One of the gifts of being "a congregation in transition" is that we have the freedom to be creative. No congregation remains the same—and this is the perfect opportunity for trying something NEW! I look forward to hearing from you!

~ Anne Hoekstra

PREACHERS WANTED!

We have been blessed with many inspiring speakers who have faithfully filled our pulpit these past months. We will continue to have both retired clergy and lay speakers serve as pulpit supply in the weeks ahead. A peak preview of upcoming speakers includes Rev. Leonard Harmon, retired pastor from our neighbor, First Baptist Church, who will be preaching on May 29. For our Pentecost Sunday and outdoor worship/picnic on June 5, we will be welcoming Rev. Clark Kilgard, a retired Lutheran pastor who has also served in UCC churches. June 12, we welcome our own Cliff Highnam to the pulpit. And on June 19, Celeste Bembry will be leading our worship. Rev. Jim Altenbaumer, retired pastor of the Cedar Falls UCC, will be back in our pulpit on June 26. Our former director of youth, Kathleen Marsh, will be leading worship on July 3. As you can see, we have a great line-up of folks.

We still need some folks in the months ahead. Both July 17 and August 21 are currently open! Please let Michelle Wolfe or Anne Hoekstra know if you would be interested and available to serve in the pulpit either of those 2 days.

TAKING CARE OF FAMILY...

- ~ Prayers for Diana Blankenfeld Paige, who had another surgery on Monday due to a blood clot and bleed following brain surgery 3 ½ weeks ago. To send cards and notes, Diana's address is 239 Parkview Blvd, Waterloo, 50702.
- ~ Prayers for Michelle Holt, who continues to convalesce from heart surgery. Her address is 1203 W. 12th St., Cedar Falls, IA 50613.



GRADUATES



It's that time of year again! Now is the time to let the church office know if you have someone in your family graduating from high school or college. Please submit their names to the church office for publication in next week's Tidings. Feel free to include the school they are graduating from and any future plans they may have in mind such as colleges they will be attending.

MEALS ON WHEELS

If anyone would like to try delivering meals on wheels, we have an opening for this Thursday from 10:00 to 12:00! Please call/text 319-504-3212 for more info. A new goal for our church is to offer a mission opportunity each month. We already have this commitment with 6 dedicated individuals serving others every 2nd & 4th weeks! One previous participant believes everyone should have this experience at least once as it is quite rewarding and very eye-opening.

~ Laurie

CONSENSUS BUILDING IN THE CHURCH

A Webinar Opportunity from the UCC on **June 2, 6:00-8:00 p.m.**--come to the church at 5:50 to participate, Root beer floats and interesting conversations for all who come! If interested or for more information, contact Abbie Chronister, Anne Hoekstra, or Michelle Wolfe.

We are surrounded by a larger culture where issues continually divide us and the majority rules. While we may have come to accept this reality as the best option for governing a democracy, many of our churches have been crippled by divisive winner-take-all votes on sensitive issues like ONA, racism, and how to spend the endowment. This leaves many members of the Body of Christ feeling unheard, hurting, and in some cases so angry they leave altogether. Surely we can do better than that. Surely we are called to do better than that. As followers of Jesus' gospel we are called to make decisions together in ways that build up our communities of faith instead of blowing them apart.

Welcome to Consensus Building 101 - an introduction to a more cooperative model of decision making centered around respect, equality, sharing power and sharing responsibility. The conversations are hard and those hard conversations can create more community instead of a divided one. Join Rev. Becky David and ACM Rev. Kendy Miller to learn about healthier ways to make decisions, what is consensus, and why it's important. Consensus Building 101 is part of a series of four webinars focused on congregational well-being. The next two will happen in September and November (more details coming later!).

Youth Sunday: THANK YOU ALL for helping make Youth Sunday (and Youth Ministry all year round!) happen! What a blessing it is to be surrounded by youth, their families, and the congregation as we gather, collaborate, grow, and have fun together 😊



YOUTH GROUP
May 25, 2022 | 6pm-7pm

ICE CREAM PARTY!

Come make ice cream with us (and eat it too!)
See you there!

Youth Group End-of-Year Party, Wednesday, May 25th 6pm-7pm: Let's MAKE ice cream! Come for fun, friends, and delicious ice cream sundaes, which YOU get to make!

Youth Director Office Hours: Starting after Memorial Day through the summer, Abbie will host office hours Mondays and Tuesdays from 1pm-5pm. Come stop by! She has treats!

Childcare During Sunday Services: As we transition into summer, we wanted to communicate that *starting this weekend, childcare will be provided during Sunday Services (still following the Children's Message*

through the end of service) ONLY for kids Preschool to 3rd grade. We do this so that we can better provide a safe and meaningful environment for our youth that is more-so tailored to their developmental needs.

If your child is on the border one way or the other, or if you have any comments, suggestions, questions, or ideas, Youth Director Abbie is welcoming to a conversation to discuss how we can best provide support for your family :)

Summer Youth and Family Programming: Keep an eye out for summer youth and family programming info coming after Memorial Day!

VBS Registration is LIVE! Click [HERE](#) to register your student and click [HERE](#) to sign up to volunteer! If you would like a paper copy, please email abbie.youthdirector@gmail.com. Thanks!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JULY 11-14, 2022
5:00PM-7:30PM
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
608 W. 4TH ST. WATERLOO, IA

BROUGHT TO YOU IN PARTNERSHIP BY...
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH · FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC · KIMBALL AVE. UMC · ST. TIMOTHY'S UMC · TRINITY AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH · WATERLOO FIRST UMC · ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

MOMENT FOR MISSIONS:

by Teresa Hughes-Martin | published on May 20, 2022

UCC pastor: In ministry to military veterans and their families, listen

Memorial Day will be observed in the United States this year on Monday, May 30. In this commentary, a Pennsylvania pastor reflects on ministry to military veterans and whether Memorial Day has a place in a congregation's worship.

'Tis the season once again when everyone has an opinion on what they deem "patriotic music" during worship services. Does it make us seem pro-war? Does it have a place in worship? And what about the American flag? I submit the following as a reflection to ponder.

In my first church, 20-some years ago, I listened to all the discussion at a clergy breakfast on how or what to do with Memorial Day and the church. Thinking "safe" was the best route, I chose to plan a lectionary service and ignore the holiday. It is a secular holiday and has no place in worship, or so I reasoned.

I just about made it through that Sunday service, when Gene shouted to me, "Pastor Teresa, it is Memorial Day tomorrow and we have to sing 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic.'" Before I could reply, the organist started an introduction.

A little back story: Gene was a mostly cantankerous, elderly man in the congregation who let his opinion be known, very loudly. (I know I am the only pastor to ever experience this kind of parishioner.) Gene had served in the Navy on some of the first submarines created. His health suffered greatly because of the lack of clean oxygen in those early machines, or tin cans, as Gene called them.

Gene's nemesis in the congregation was Fred, who had served in the Army. The two of them sat four pews apart and traded military barbs every Sunday.

So, back to The Battle Hymn: I buried my head in my hymnal during the first verse, thinking I had failed. Then I peered around my hymnal to look out at the congregation. There were Gene and Fred standing side by side in the aisle, singing loudly, with tears running down their faces.

Now I was really confused.

As they were leaving, Fred said to me, "We needed a moment to remember and grieve our friends that never came home. That American flag reminds me of them every week I come into worship. Knowing they are with Jesus is the only peace I get from war and gives me hope there will be no more war."

Since that experience, I realized that my interpretations of "patriotic music" and the flag were very different from those of the veterans in my congregation. I now ask them, and families of those who served, what they need. Within my current church family, they need to sing the songs as prayers, not as political statements or warmongers, but as nontraditional songs of remembrance, honor and grief. We talk about this history of the hymns and why they are important, and these songs truly become sacred music.

Other veterans may feel uncomfortable, and we talk about their needs too. Some veterans feel betrayed and alienated through their time in the military.

I encourage you to have those conversations with veterans, and families of veterans, about what they need as part of their grief and faith journey. There is no right answer, but asking the question shows we truly care.

If you truly want to honor Memorial Day, I encourage you to have the dialogue and be ready to listen. I now sing The Battle Hymn with tears in my own eyes, remembering Gene and Fred. I pray they found the peace they so longed for.

The Rev. Teresa Hughes-Martin is pastor of St. John's UCC in Coopersburg, Pa. The church hosts a veterans' support group, and this year will add to its Memorial Day service a recognition of those who have died in the current war in Ukraine.



June 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 (Webinar) 6pm Consensus Building 101	3 5:30pm Grin & Grow Graduation	4
5 10:30 Worship <i>Church Picnic</i>	6	7	8	9 Meals on Wheels	10	11
12 10:30 Worship	13	14 4:30 - Job Foundation 7:00 - Common Meeting	15	16 5:30pm NAMI	17	18
19 10:30 Worship	20	21	22	23 Meals on Wheels	24	25
26 10:30 Worship	27	28	29	30		

Birthdays

Anniversaries

3
Todd Ellison
Phil Martens
Jennifer Wells

4
Nancy Mahood

5
Becky Ellison

8
Cliff Highnam
Anne Hoekstra
Shirley Kappel
Callie Ann Holdiman

9
Zailey Lynne
Sheridan Casteel

10
Andrew Akin

11
Kay Thuesen

15
Jane Young

17
Susan Peters

19
Danielle Conrad

25
Natalie Lindaman

28
Cindy Wells

29
Andrew Thoreen
Michelle Wolfe

1
Jeff & Peggy Essmann

4
Phil & Becky Martens

5
Craig & Sharon Holdiman
Andrew & Julie Thoreen

8
Steve & Kay Leary

11
Tom & Courtney (Rickert) McCaffrey

19
Brad & Jodi Casteel
Jim & Nancy Stevenson
Rudy & Jan Bernhard

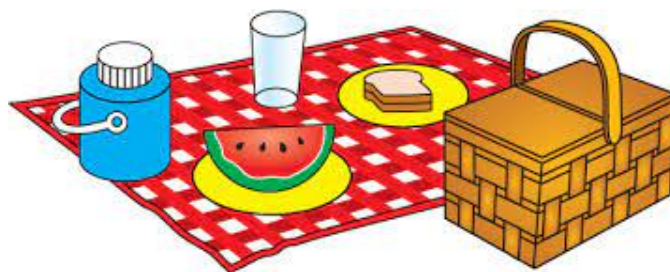
26
Brian & Molly (Greene) Bishop
Greg & Anne Hoekstra
Bruce & Jill Jensen

PENTECOST DAY PICNIC - JUNE 5, 2022

June 5 is Pentecost Sunday AND the first Sunday of June--our traditional day for our church picnic. We are resuming our outside worship service and picnic this year, and will hold it at the church.



Worship will begin at 10:30am followed by the picnic. The church will provide the chicken and drinks and everyone who is able is asked to bring a side or dessert to share. We always enjoy a great day of worship and fellowship...come join us!



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