

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

September 1, 2021

Hello First Congregational Faithful,

Some of you may have noticed that office hours have been curtailed during this last surge of the Covid-19 virus. This is for the safety of our church staff, as there has been Covid-19 present in the building. While there are times in which we must be in the building, I have encouraged the staff to do so only at their level of comfort in staying safe. Some necessary routines may be done during off hours when no one else is in the building, and there may be times in which we meet as safely as possible with small groups of others in meetings and such. If you need to contact and/or meet with any staff person, we can make ourselves available to you in ways that will care for you as well as our safety. You may email, text, or call us on our personal devices if you cannot reach us at the church. Thank you for keeping us in your prayers, and helping us to keep you and ourselves and loved ones safe.

As a reminder, I'm still keeping myself available for Monday afternoon walks and talks in the great outdoors. Let me know if you would like to get together to take in the beauty of God's creation.

Blessings,
Pastor Bret



~ We are saddened to announce that **Dick Grimm** died Tuesday morning at Allen Hospital in Waterloo. Prayers for Joan Grimm and the entire Grimm family as they grieve this loss are appreciated.

~ **Lois Pittman**, the mother of former member, Mark Pittman, died Saturday from multiple myeloma. Mark sang in the choir and was active in our congregation for several years, then moved to Minnesota. He has been his mother's caretaker for the past 5 years. Here is a link to Lois' obituary: <https://www.hauserfh.com/obituaries/Lois-Pittman?obId=22174128#/obituaryInfo>

Upcoming Events:

~ **Youth Group** on Wednesday, September 1st at 6pm! We will be decorating cookies.



Retirement Party for Lynne Ensworth **CHANGE IN PLANS (Due to COVID)**

We are throwing a party to celebrate Lynne's retirement from the University of Northern Iowa and you are invited! You means YOU, all the dear folks of our church family. Children are welcome. Lynne's retirement celebration will now be held on Tuesday evening, September 7, from 5:00-8:00 pm at the Gateway Park Celebration Shelter in Cedar Falls. Come for Starbucks barbecue and cake and to congratulate Lynne. We hope to see you there!

~ *Lynne and Tim Ensworth*

~ **What: Kayaking**

When: Sunday, September 19, 3:00-5:00

Where: Big Woods Lake

You are invited! Please let Michelle know if you will need a kayak.



~ CROP Walk 2021 will be held on Sept 26, 2021 at 1:30pm, at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, 1605 Lafayette Street in Waterloo. This year is the 50th anniversary of the CROP Walk, so let's gather 50 of our friends and family together for this wonderful outdoor event to relieve hunger globally and locally! There will be a sign-up sheet and more information at our church Rally Day celebration on Sept 12th. Donation envelopes will be provided, so the walkers can collect donations prior to the walk. Call or text Diane Highnam (319-240-2849) if you have questions or want to be added to the group of walkers. Help end hunger ONE STEP AT A TIME!!!

MOMENT FOR MISSIONS

From Habitat for Humanity...

We're touring Irving Square, Walnut, and Church Row neighborhoods and we want YOU along for the ride!

You'll see beautiful house designs that blend into existing neighborhoods
We'll share our community's affordable housing needs
You'll hear our collaborative community vision for the future
And of course, there will be free refreshments!

September 9th: 10-11am, 12-1pm, 2-3pm, or 4:30-5:30pm

OR

September 15th: 10-11am, 12-1pm, or 2-3pm

~ *Laurie Allbaugh*



If you're up for a compelling ride, register online on the Habitat website or Call 319-235-9946.

PASTOR'S CORNER

Greetings all!

I wanted to let you know some things that are upcoming in our church life. The pandemic has changed the way we do some things, but we still hope to have opportunities for you to safely interact with one another during this time. Church family is so important to us, and it is good to be able to see each other again in events that will rekindle our spirits in togetherness. Here are some events we have lined up:

September 12th will be our Rally Day to kick off the Church School and Music programs of our church for the 2021-22 year. There will be lunch served after the service. Look for details elsewhere in Tidings.

Tuesday September 14th at 4 p.m. will begin our start of our weekly Fall Bible Study. Look for upcoming details on that. If you plan on attending, your suggestion for a book to study is welcome.

A church kayak/canoe gathering will be held at Big Woods Lake on Sunday, the 19th at 3 p.m. I'm looking forward to getting out on the water with you!

Sunday, September 26th during our regular morning worship, we will plan on having our 2nd Annual Blessing of the Animals Service! This is an opportunity to bring your pets to have them blessed, and to be a part of our sacred fellowship. More details will be forthcoming. October 10th will be the rain date in case of inclement weather.

CROP Walk will be held Sunday, September 26th at 1:30 p.m, starting at the Northeast Food Bank, 1605 Lafayette Street in Waterloo. We hope to get 50 walkers from our church for this 50th Anniversary of the CROP Walk. Hope to see you there! Contact Diane Highnam for more info.

World Communion Sunday will be celebrated October 3rd during our regular worship. If you are a bread maker, we'd like to have some breads made from recipes around the world for our service. Please let me know if you would like to contribute!

We are always looking for ways to bless each other and our community. Feel free to let me know if you have an idea we might wish to try.

Blessings,

Pastor Bret

FROM THE REOPENING COMMITTEE . . .

The reopening committee continues to meet. The numbers are looking a little better. The hospitals are weathering the storm. We are hoping that the Black Hawk county status will go to moderate and allow us to go back into the church before we have to shovel off the entryway. We pray that the schools are as fortunate this year as they were last year in keeping the number of cases to a minimum. Wear your mask, get vaccinated, get a booster when you can, and pray for good weather while we are still outside.

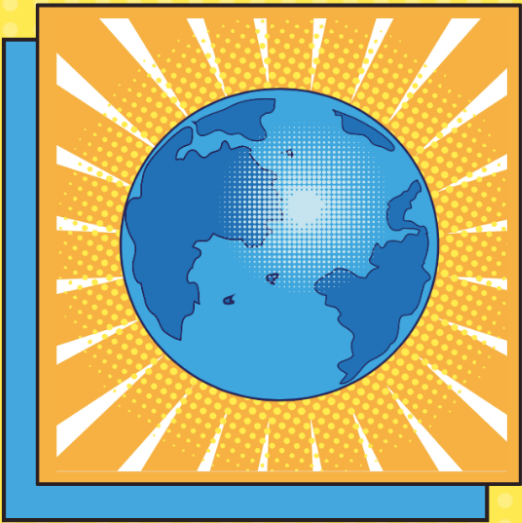
~ Beth, Tim, Greg, Anne, Dave

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JOIN US FOR A SUPER TIME ON SEPT. 12!

RALLY SUNDAY

Come celebrate the start of the school year with outside grill-out, games, fellowship, music, and more!



Come witness this year's premiere of **CHOIR!**

Sunday School kick-off! This year, we look at how...
CREATION SPEAKS



Sunday School at 9:15am
Worship Service 10:30am
Celebration directly following
Service





September 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:00 pm - Youth Group	2 Practices: 5:15 pm - Bells 7:00 pm - Choir	3	4
5 10:30 Worship	6 <i>(Office Closed for Labor Day)</i>	7 5:00 pm - Lynne Ensworth's Retirement Party	8 6:00 pm - Youth Group	9 Practices: 5:15 pm - Bells 7:00 pm - Choir	10	11
12 Rally Sunday 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship <i>Celebration following Worship</i>	13	14 4:00 pm - Adult Bible Study 7:00 pm - Common Meeting	15 6:00pm - Youth Group	16 Practices: 5:15 pm - Bells 7:00 pm - Choir	17	18
19 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship 3-5pm Kayaking	20	21 4:00 pm - Adult Bible Study	22 6:00 pm - Youth Group	23 Practices: 5:15 pm - Bells 7:00 pm - Choir	24	25
26 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship 1:30 - Crop Walk	27	28 4:00 pm - Adult Bible Study	29 6:00 pm - Youth Group	30 Practices: 5:15 pm - Bells 7:00 pm - Choir		

Birthdays

1 Craig Driver	15 Stephanie Peters	25 Shelli Panicucci
4 Barbara Hatinger	Kate Thuesen	Courtney (Rickert)
6 Charlotte Backens	18 Connie Paul	McCaffrey
Liz Thorpe	21 Craig Wells	26 Jackie (Dahlgren)
9 Abbey Athey	22 Stan Mingus	McAllister
Ruth Brower	23 Stewart Rickert	27 Zoie Lynne Casteel
12 Japhy Holt	23 Sara (Rickert) Faust	28 Jacquelyn Eden
Hannah Prescott	Zoe Panicucci	Edna Koch
13 Paul Greene	24 Liam Craig Backens	Dave Vandeventer

Anniversaries

1 Tom & Jane Wells
2 Greg & Michelle Holt
5 Gordon & Beth Lauterbach
Paul & Hannah Prescott
16 Craig & Nancy Mahood
20 Ed & Eileen Dams
22 Rich & Janice Akin
29 Bob & Joanne Tefft

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

If I had to pick one hymn that most Americans would recognize, I would pick “Amazing Grace”, which was actually written by a Brit, John Newton. The tiny print at the bottom of this hymn in our New Century Hymnal says this autobiographical hymn, written in 1772, reflects Newton’s gradual conversion as a slave trader. It’s his reflection a turbulent event on the high seas and his turbulent life that began his conversion. He eventually became a very powerful preacher and abolitionist, and the author of hundreds of hymns.

“Amazing Grace” has a long history, from its roots in England as part of *The Olney Hymns*, to its lasting popularity throughout English speaking countries. It has been used as revival song in the US during the early 19th century and was embraced by the folk song movement of the 60’s and sung extensively in secular as well as sacred settings. Many popular singers have recorded it—Mahalia Jackson, Arlo Guthrie, Judy Collins, and Aretha Franklin to name a few. It is often used at funerals and memorial services. Most of us know at least the first verse by heart, and many of us can sing all 5 verses without a prompt.

Why is this hymn so popular? The tune is actually fairly simple—only using 5 notes for the whole song (a pentatonic scale). And the text is nearly 250 years old. The Biblical roots of this hymn reflect King David’s reaction to God’s promises, from I Chronicles 17:16-17, “. . .O Lord, you have given me these wonderful promises just because you want to be kind to me, because of your own great heart. O Lord, there is no one like you“. The text speaks to us of love, forgiveness, hope, and yes, GRACE. Grace—a gift from God--generous, unexpected, and undeserved. To us! Maybe that’s why we find this hymn and these words so appealing. The text speaks to us of TRUTH, God’s truth of generosity, and it speaks it simply. It speaks it to our minds, our hearts, and our souls, and it makes us glad!

“My God has promised good to me, whose word my hope secures:
God will my shield and portion be as long as long as life endures.”

~ *Anne Hoekstra*

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

Place
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