

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

December 14, 2022



PULPIT SUPPLY

Thank you to Rev. Cathy Young for her service last Sunday and Kay Thuesen for serving as worship leader, and to Lucy Prescott for her mini-message.

Thank you to Lucy, Arlo, and Crosby Prescott for their lighting of the Advent Candle and also to our section leads, Lauren Leman and Joley Seitz for the special music.. We are very blessed with our talented folks!

This Sunday we welcome Rev. Jim Altenbaumer back to our pulpit, with

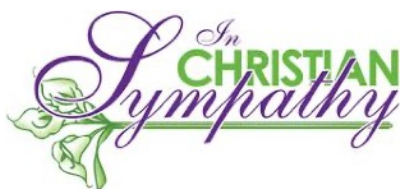
Barb Mardis as worship leader. The youth, under the direction of Abbie Chronister, will be providing a skit for our mini-message this week. We look forward to this fourth Sunday of Advent as we prepare for the Christmas Season.

There will be a service on Christmas morning—casual, with lots of singing, led by John Mardis. Come as you are, and enjoy this special day as we celebrate Christmas morning together.



Taking Care of Family...

- ~ Prayers for Roger and Joanne Lane and family on the passing of his sister, Ann Schoenoff, last week.
- ~ Prayers for Jane's family (Gina Greene's friend), who lost her battle with cancer.
- ~ Prayers for Ruth Linderman, who is in the Wellspring Care Center at Friendship Village.
- ~ Prayers for Hildegard Larsen, who is also in the Wellspring Care Center at Friendship Village.
- ~ Prayers for Diana Blankenfeld Paige, who had an ER visit earlier this week for treatment of an infection. She is scheduled for brain surgery at the University of Iowa hospitals on December 29, and is hopeful that this recent infection will not deter this planned surgery.
- ~ Prayers for Teri Graham, who is meeting with a neurosurgeon for possible back surgery to address her pain.



Please keep the family of *Nancy Showers* in your prayers. Nancy passed away on Sunday, Dec. 11th. We offer our condolences to the family. Family graveside services will be held at a later date at Memorial Park Cemetery in Waterloo.



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

SAVE the DATE!
Sunday Dec 18th 5:30 pm

We are still trying to get final approval from our local retirement villages for caroling this year, but we are planning on it! So, please save the date and plan to join us for a special way to share the Christmas love with our church family. You'll be glad you did!

THANKING ABBIE

We will be celebrating our Director of Youth, Abbie Chronister, during a reception for her in the library following worship this coming Sunday. She will be leaving her position as our youth director on December 31, but she and Seth plan to remain part of our congregation. We appreciate all she has brought our congregation and wish her well as she continues her studies at United Theological Seminary.

YOUTH & SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Sunday School/Faith Formation are now on pause for the holiday. Stay tuned!

Youth Activities:

- Dec. 14th 6pm-7pm:** Christmas Skit and Christmas Eve Special Music REHEARSAL
- Dec. 18th 9:15-10:15am:** Christmas Skit REHEARSAL
- Dec. 18th during Sunday Service:** Christmas Skit PERFORMANCE
- Dec. 23rd 4pm-5pm:** Christmas Eve Special Music REHEARSAL
- Dec. 24th 6:30pm:** Christmas Eve Special Music PERFORMANCE



CHRISTMAS MITTEN TREE

Our mittens, scarves, hats tree is up in the Crossroads! If you'd like to help keep someone warm this winter please consider donating a warm item to the tree.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Please bring your family and friends to our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Saturday evening, December 24 at 7:00 p.m. for a Service of Lessons and Carols. Touch of Brass Bells will begin their lovely prelude at 6:35, so come early and grab a seat. Our children and youth will be providing their music as well as our Chancel Choir. Rev. Cathy Young will be presiding and sharing her message. Christmas Eve is always a very special time for gathering together. See you then!

HOLIDAY GRIEF FORUM

Tuesday, December 20. 2:00pm.
Cabin Coffee, 2040 Kimball Ave., Waterloo

The holidays can be a difficult time for individuals who are grieving the loss of a loved one, whether the loss was recent or some time in the past. A grief specialist from Cedar Valley Hospice will discuss the nature of holiday grief and how to cope during the holiday season. The Catholic Parishes in Waterloo host this information forum for grieving individuals and friends or family who are supporting them. The forum is free and open to the public.

Learn more about holiday sadness and grief at: waterloocatholics.org/holiday-sadness

2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES

2023 Offering Envelopes are available on the table under the bulletin board next to the church office.

ANNUAL REPORTS REQUEST

The Annual church meeting will be January 22, 2023. If you are a chair of a board or committee, please turn your respective report in to Michelle in the office no later than Tuesday, January 10th.

Please Note:

There will be **No** Tidings the week of December 26th.



MODERATOR MUSINGS OF ADVENT

According to the church calendar, we are in the midst of the season of Advent, a season of waiting and anticipation. We wait and anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth, when "the Word became flesh and lived among us". As Christians, we are reminded of another coming of Christ, when he returns to make things right, when the world is transformed to be just, loving, and reordered—God's kingdom on earth. It's hard to imagine true peace on earth, but it is in this hope we wait. In our adult Sunday School book study of Holy Disruption, Tracy S. Daub states that Advent is a time for us to "wait and watch for Christ to redeem our lives and our world by doing the work Jesus gives us to do." We here at First C are waiting as well—for our next spiritual leader.

Waiting is difficult—ask any child (or parent) as Christmas Day approaches! Waiting is difficult for a patient awaiting the results of a medical test, or a parent wondering why her teen is not home yet, or the unemployed waiting for that necessary job and paycheck, or some of our neighbors waiting for decent housing and a good meal, or those in Ukraine waiting for peace to restore their people and land, or a congregation awaiting its next pastor! We want God to hear our cries, to intervene. Isaiah cried out to God, "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down". We desperately want God to hear us and intervene. We hate waiting!

What do we DO while we wait? At Christmas, we prepare by showing others love--through our gifts, spending time together, reaching out to less fortunate—by finding new meaning in this Advent season. What do we do while we wait for that time when "the world is made right with justice and peace for all"? We do the work that Jesus gives us to do. . . whatever that is. As a church, we try to discern what that is for this time and age. What do we do while we wait for a pastor? We pray for God's guidance, and we keep doing the work of the church—loving and supporting each other, finding ways to minister to others, and being the church Jesus calls us to be.

Each Advent we sing the carol, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" which reminds us to "Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!" In God's time, let it be so! We will celebrate Christmas once again, we wait in hope for "all things new", and we look forward to welcoming our new pastor. And for now, we carry on!

~ *Anne Hoekstra*

MOMENT FOR MISSIONS...

UCC CHRISTMAS FUND

The Christmas Fund (Veterans of the Cross Offering) has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

We will collect this offering on Sunday, December 18th or you may mail your check to the church. If you would like to give to this special offering, please mark "UCC Christmas Fund" in the memo of your check. Thank you in advance!

LOVEINC OPEN HOUSE

Join LoveINC of the Cedar Valley for a light lunch, beverages, and fellowship on Tuesday, December 20th from 11:30am to 1:30 pm. Ever wonder what Love INC really does? Where is it located? Can I volunteer there? How do our church funds impact the city?

This is a time to join their staff and volunteers and learn more about how our church partners to bless the Cedar Valley.



BUNGER ADOPT-A-FAMILY POTLUCK LAST SUNDAY - THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone for supporting, shopping and helping with the Bunger Adopt-a-Family initiative this year! Much fun was had with pizza and wrapping at the potluck last Sunday.

Thank you especially to Tim Ahrens, Sue Hummel, Gina Greene, Connie Jo Peirce, and Karen Jensen and their helpers, for shopping for our three families of 20 individuals.

Thank you to all those who helped wrap.
"Many hands make light work."




HOUSE OF HOPE AND LOST ISLAND KOA RESORT
PRESENT

Festival of Lights

Drive Thru

Friday, December 16
Saturday, December 17

Walk Thru

Sunday, December 18



THE DESTINATION
FOR
Recreation

\$20 per vehicle

6pm-8pm

4550 La Porte Rd., Waterloo



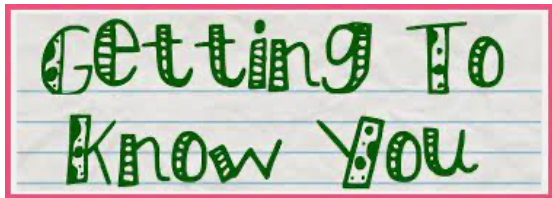
House
of Hope

Tickets at

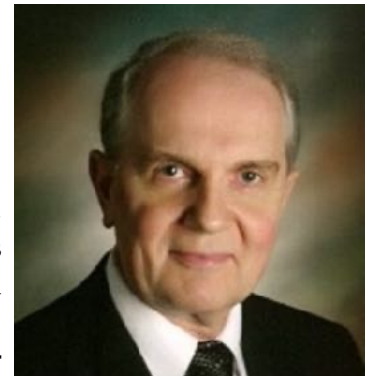
www.houseofhopeccd.org

REOPENING COMMITTEE NEWS...

Greetings from the Reopening Committee. The winter season is here and we are celebrating Advent and Christmas. I spoke with Blackhawk County Public Health and the hospitals are busier. We cannot get the exact numbers. I will tell you that the hospitals becoming busier is not a good thing. Staff, nurses, and doctors have limits. They will be stretched beyond their limits and find it more difficult to give the right care at the right time. The suggestions are simple. Get vaccinated. Wear a mask if you are having any respiratory symptoms or have had contact with covid. We will have masks available. Remember the most important use of the mask is to prevent you from giving Covid to others. Enjoy the holiday season. Get vaccinated and boosted. Wear a mask even if it is not comfortable. Especially if you have any symptoms or contact with a sick person. Remember that you are contagious a couple of days before the symptoms start.



GETTING TO KNOW: JIM STEVENSON



I have always enjoyed mathematics, especially statistics. There are patterns in data, and, when properly displayed graphically, information emerges from data. Figure 1 shows the growth of our Endowment Fund for the last two years.

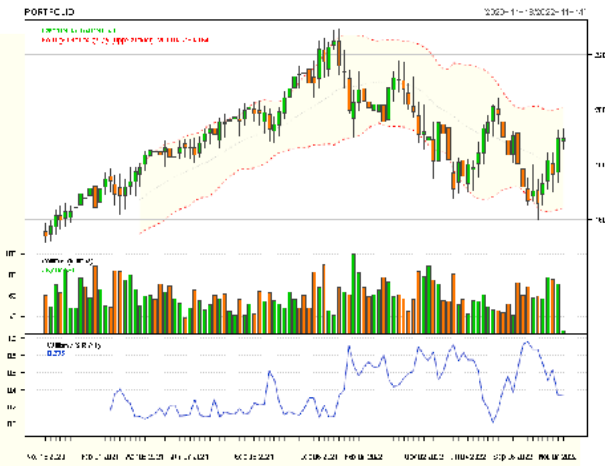


Figure 1. Portfolio performance for last two years. Dotted lines are 95% confidence limits on the average.

Your eye probably sees a pattern in these data. Compare that to the market performance through the business cycle shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Business cycle (1-10 years) showing the rise and fall of portfolio values. The arrow shows where brokerages feel we are in November 2022.



From these graphics of thousands of pieces of data we are informed that our economy is in a typical state of the business cycle. And as the cycle rises and falls our investments track with it. As Luke 12:2 tells us "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known."

Last Chance to order your Poinsettias!!!



You may fill out this order form and place in the offering plate or call Michelle at the church office. Orders may be placed any time by Friday, December 16th. (\$12.00 per plant)

We will be ordering live poinsettias this year so you may take your poinsettia(s) home with you after the Christmas Eve service.

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church (*write "poinsettia" in the memo*).

Poinsettia(s) given by: _____

"In Memory of...": _____

"In Honor of...": _____

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