

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 21, 2022



PULPIT SUPPLY

Thank you to Rev. James Altenbaumer for his message last Sunday, and to Barb Mardis for serving as worship leader. A BIG thank you to Abbie Chronister and our youth for their skit, "How the Grinch Found the Christ in Christmas" which featured Zach Steva, Prince and Princess Yarngo, Eli Lennox, Eva Sapp and Demi & Ila Daniels.



It was great having our youth be a part of worship--thank you everyone, for their part!
It was also great having Hudson back at the organ after his trip to Brazil to be with his family.



CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be this Saturday evening, beginning at 6:35pm with a mini concert by Touch of Brass Bell Choir, Hudson on organ, and a youth choir directed by Abbie. Please enter the sanctuary quietly, as the musicians are sharing their melodies with you. Rev. Cathy Young will lead us in a Service of Lessons and Carols at 7:00 p.m., assisted by Craig Mahood. Our Christmas Eve Service is always a special time for folks to gather, sing carols, and celebrate the "reason for the season". We look forward to being together on this holiest of nights!

We will worship together on Sunday morning, Christmas Day at 10:30 a.m. for readings and music, led by John Mardis. Come as you are for this informal service.

Please watch KWWL for any service cancellations due to weather.

*Abbie
Luke
Hudson*

Merry Christmas
from your
First Congregational
United Church of Christ staff!

*Michelle
Kyle*

GRIN & GROW CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Grin & Grow will be having a Christmas Program in our sanctuary tonight, December 21st at 6pm.



THANK YOU ABBIE!

Thank you to Abbie Chronister, who we celebrated this past Sunday. We appreciate all she has brought to our youth and church since the beginning of her job in August of 2020. We

wish her the very best as she continues her studies at the United Theological Seminary. We are very grateful that she and Seth will continue as part of our congregation!

YOUTH NEWS

Dec. 23rd 4pm-5pm: Christmas Eve Special Music REHEARSAL

Dec. 24th 6:30pm: Christmas Eve Special Music PERFORMANCE

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Adult Sunday School will resume on January 8 at 9:15am with chapter 4 of Holy Disruption.

OFFICE CLOSINGS

The church office will be closed December 23rd and 30th. Also no office hours will be held by any staff on December 26th or January 2nd.

PLEASE NOTE:

There will be **No** Tidings next week.



SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE AND REQUEST:

With our Director of Youth, Abbie Chronister, leaving her position on December 31, we will be making some changes in our Sunday School schedule. Sunday school for youth will run concurrent with worship. Children will attend worship through the mini-message, then proceed to their class for Sunday School. Sunday School will resume on January 8.

We are grateful for our volunteers —Gina Greene, Karen Jensen, Laurie Allbaugh, and Jayne Slaughter who have served as teachers since September, and have graciously agreed to continue. However, **we would like 2 more volunteers** who can also take a Sunday every 4-6 Sundays. There will be an easy-to-follow curriculum for our teachers. Please let Anne Hoekstra or any of these folks listed above know if you are willing to help. It's a great way to get to know our young people, the future of our church!

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.

“HELP WANTED”

If you've been wanting to join a church board or committee but have waited to find the perfect time...you're in luck! Contact the church office today and let Michelle know how you'd like to serve in the upcoming year! We've got plenty of ways you can keep our church moving forward!!

Taking Care of Family...



- ~ Prayers for Hildegard Larsen, who is in the Wellspring Care Center at Friendship Village.
- ~ Prayers for Ruth Linderman, who is also in the Wellspring Care Center at Friendship Village.
- ~ Prayers for Diana Blankenfeld Paige, who is scheduled for brain surgery at the University of Iowa hospitals on December 29. This will be her 6th brain surgery since April, when she first had surgery for a grade 1 benign meningioma brain tumor. The subsequent surgeries were to remedy complications.
- ~ Prayers for Teri Graham as she seeks treatment for chronic pain.
- ~ Prayers for Gina Greene and family as she mourns the passing of her aunt, and a good friend.
- ~ Prayers for Robert Dew who needs hip surgery.



Congratulations to *Dan & Amy Allbaugh* on the birth of their daughter, *Natalie Grace Allbaugh*. She was born on December 15th (7lb., 21 inches long). She joins brothers, Elliot (7) and Andrew (5). Proud grandparents are David and Jeanne Allbaugh.

BRAVO TO THE "HOW THE GRINCH FOUND THE CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS" CAST!

HEARTFELT GRATITUDE -

I am so honored to have served as First Congregational's Director of Youth Ministries for the last two-and-a-third years! Thank you all for being encouraging and understanding as I step down from this role in order to put more energy into my theological studies. I am quite thankful that I will still be a part of this lovely congregation, but it is very bittersweet that I will not be so active in our youth ministries. Cheesy--I know--but our youth are SO special and bright and one of the joyous reasons why I am pursuing a career in ministry and why I have so much hope in God's Church!

See you around, folks! ♥

~ *Abbie Chronister*



MOMENT FOR MISSIONS...

THE CHRISTMAS FUND INVITES JOY IN SHARING COMMUNITY ABUNDANCE

by Kayla Berkey | published on Dec 6, 2022

The Rev. Christopher Gilmore has long contributed to the Christmas Fund. He never expected that it would end up helping meet some of his family's needs. When his wife Christine was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, they encountered unexpected and long-term increases in medical needs and caregiving costs. "The same Christmas Fund that I've contributed to my entire life is now helping us to manage through these challenging times," said Gilmore, who pastors Sixth Avenue United Church of Christ in Denver, Colo. The assistance has also lifted their spirits. "I still feel an overwhelming sense of joy thanks to the kindness of others to know that we all look out for each other," Christine Gilmore said.

"Overwhelmed with joy!" is this year's theme from Matthew 2:10. It connects with the way that many people donate, said the Rev. Paul Ramsey, philanthropy officer for The Pension Boards – United Church of Christ, Inc. They "give because of the joy that they have in serving the church, and they want other people who have less than them to experience that joy and to not experience scarcity," he said. "There's joy in abundance, and our church community wants to share that abundance. There's not a lot of joy in scarcity."

Gifts to the Christmas Fund have been used to meet needs of active and retired clergy who encounter emergency expenses and significant health needs, as well as providing "Thank You" gift checks to lower-income retirees. "Our gifts are like seeds of hope. When we offer them, we are trusting God to bless them and to use them. We are saying that we believe in God's vision of restoration and justice."

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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