

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
100 First St. NE
Mason City, IA 50401



Return Service Requested

CONGREGATIONAL HI-LIGHTS

First Congregational United Church of Christ:
100 1st St. N.E., Mason City, IA 50401
www.FirstChurchinMC.com
(641) 423-0105 – firstchurchinmc@gmail.com



Sunday Worship & Sunday School
~ 10:00 am ~

Church Office Hours:

9:00 am - 1:00 pm – Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday
8:00 am - Noon - Wednesday

The Rev. Patricia Aurand, <i>Pastor</i>	Paula Halverson, <i>Church Secretary</i>
Mary R. Olson, <i>Custodian</i>	Teresa Janssen, <i>Treasurer</i>
LaDonna Hassenstab, <i>Church Musician</i>	

Volume 58/Issue 1

January 11, 2012

ANNUAL REPORT REMINDER:



In anticipation of First Congregational United Church of Christ's 154th Annual Meeting, slated for Sunday, January 29, 2012, we need your entity's annual report. **Annual Reports are now due.**

Copies of previous Annual Meeting Reports have been mailed out to those who have submitted reports in the past, and are also available in the Church Office.

THIS WEDNESDAY...

At **5:30 pm**, the Worship Board will meet in the Meeting Room.

From **5:30 pm – 7:00 pm**, Kids First (pre-school through 6th grade) will gather in the Dining Room. We will start with a blessing and a meal from 5:30 pm – 6:00 pm. From 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm, we will learn about Samuel, the boy who heard God, through a variety of activities.

At **7:00 pm**, the Choir will rehearse in the Music Room.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Are you in need of offering envelopes for 2012?

If so, please let the Church Office know, and a set will be made for you. Please specify weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.



PRAYERS OFFERED FOR:

Rich Hays, with health concerns

Cathy Gardziola (sister of Tom Ballmer), who is in the end stages of her battle with cancer

Jordan Beier (grandson of Mary and Maynard Olson), now receiving dialysis and urgently awaiting a kidney transplant

Julie Gardziola (niece of Tom Ballmer and Sally Pressly), receiving treatment for breast cancer

Individuals & Families in the midst of difficult times

Those serving in the military: **Kyle Chesnut** (grandson of Jim Chesnut); **Cory Hodnefield** (“grandson” of Gene Davis); and

Travis Mallo at West Point

Those who are in assisted-care facilities:

Apple Valley in Clear Lake: **Nita**

Good Shepherd: **Alice Anne, Fran, Lou, & Bernice**

Heritage: **Maxine**

Homestead: **Esther**

IIOF: **Gene P.**

Willow Pointe: **Lois**

PPRC TO MEET JANUARY 23rd

The next meeting of the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee will take place Friday, January 23rd at Noon.

The purpose of this confidential group is to keep the lines of communication open between the Pastor and the Parish and to address any concerns that may arise.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact any member of the PPRC. Current members are: Pastor Patti Aurand, Kathy Broman, Bob Ehlers, Bonnie Gemaehlich, and David Janssen.

TEXT MESSAGING OFFERED

If you want Church info via text message, text your name and “church info” to 641-424-6734.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Kendra Newton graduated from UNI with a BA in Languages, Spanish major. Her plans are to continue study in nursing.

WAYS TO HELP THE COMMUNITY KITCHEN



This month’s special offering will focus on the Community Kitchen.

You will have the opportunity to support the Community Kitchen through your financial gifts during Worship on Sunday, January 22nd.

On Wednesday, January 18th, you have the opportunity to help feed the hungry in North Iowa by helping to prepare and serve lunch at the Community Kitchen.

Workers are needed to help with food preparation at 9:00 am; and at 11:15 am, workers are needed to serve the food.

Please volunteer by either calling the Church Office at 423-0105 or by signing up on the Community Kitchen Volunteer Sheet posted in the Office Hallway.

HUMANE SOCIETY COLLECTION

On January 1st, we shared Worship with St. John’s Episcopal Church. That day, the loose offering was designated to help the Humane Society of North Iowa. \$90.71 was collected for the Humane Society. Thank you for helping.

WORK CONTINUES ON EAST ALLEY ENTRANCE

Work continues on the east Alley entrance. At this point, the entrance has been lengthened and the ceiling has been raised. New windows will be installed in the CE Room, the Library, and the Pastor’s Office in the next couple weeks. (The windows had to be raised, and thus replaced, due to the taller roof at the Alley entrance).

Wiring is being done to provide an intercom at the door, so people may be “buzzed” in if the doors are locked. A video camera is also being installed and wired into the Church Office and the Pastor’s Office, so as to identify people at the door.

The anticipated date of completion may have to be postponed due to issues at the factory where the special order handicap accessible door is being made.

While the Alley entrance is usable on weekends, please use the Office entrance during the week.

If you are in doubt as to whether or not the church is accessible on a given day, please call 423-0105 before venturing over.

The 154th Annual Meeting
of
**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**
will take place in the Sanctuary
immediately following
an abbreviated Worship Service
on Sunday, January 29, 2012
(at approximately 10:40 am)

Following the meeting, there will be a potluck lunch held in
the downstairs Dining Room

STEWARDS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Be still and know that I am God. – Psalm 46:10

In all our living we belong to God. Stewardship begins with our relationship with God. We've experienced it in the midst of a rush of celebrations and hope-filled worship during the Christmas season. Now experience a season of Sabbath rest in God to deepen that relationship. Sabbath is simply setting aside time to delight in God, a gift to God and oneself in the midst of our rushing, checklists, productivity, and burn-out. As the Rev. Rochelle Stackhouse said in *The Gifting God*, "God gives, in the midst of relationships, to create, to strengthen and honor, and with the intimacy of one desiring deep and fruitful relationships."

There are many ways of Sabbath keeping. Some people prefer to set aside a specific time daily or weekly to engage in particular spiritual practices. Others prefer to incorporate spiritual practices into the midst of daily life. Through spiritual practices, Christians through the ages have encountered God in life-renewing ways. Prayer is the most traditional but there are many others – fasting, hospitality, forgiveness, gratitude, meditation, Bible study, journaling, worship, listening, living simply, acts of compassion and justice, honoring the body, artistic expression... We become what we practice. As centers of hope and transformation, local churches help people live into a new way of life.

*A message from Stewards in the Household of God: a Resource for Holistic
Year-round Stewardship available from United Church of Christ Resources.*

LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS SUNDAY – JAN. 15th

This Sunday is going to be busy!

At **8:30 am**, the **Choir** will rehearse in the Music Room; and at **9:00 am** our Feasting on the Word **Bible Study** will continue. This week, participants will ponder the ways we discern God's call today. The scripture focus is 1 Samuel 3:1-10.

At our **10:00 am Worship Service**, our scripture focus will be on 1 Samuel 3:1-10 and John 1:43-51. Pastor Patti's message will be on "*Paying Attention to the Signs*". Following *Mystery Box Time*, children will be invited to participate in Sunday School.

Following Worship, there will be **refreshments** in the Stone Fellowship Room; and a **Christian Education Board** meeting in the Meeting Room.

At **11:30 am**, Choir members will make their way across the alley to a combined choir rehearsal at St. John's Episcopal Church.

At **4:00 pm**, there will be a **Shared Epiphany Lessons and Carols Service at St. John's Episcopal Church.**

When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,*

The work of Christmas begins:

*To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among all peoples,
To make music in the heart.*

From The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations by Howard Thurman. Friends
United Press, 2001 edition.

CARD CLUB

The next gathering of those playing the card game 500 will take place Saturday, January 28th at 7:00 pm at the home of Laura Lee Ewer.

NEXT WEDNESDAY (January 18th)...

As January 18th is the third Wednesday of the month, we will start the day helping at the Community Kitchen. Workers are needed at **9:00 am** and Servers at **11:15 am**.

At **10:00 am**, the Staff will meet in the Meeting Room.

From **5:30 pm – 7:00 pm**, Kids First (pre-school through 6th grade) will gather in the Dining Room. We will start with a blessing and a meal from 5:30 pm – 6:00 pm. From 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm, we will learn, through a variety of activities, about how the first disciples came to follow Jesus.

At **7:00 pm**, the Choir will rehearse in the Music Room.

LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT SUNDAY – JANUARY 22!

This Sunday, we'll be receiving our monthly special offering. This month's offering goes to support the Community Kitchen.

At **9:00 am**, the **Choir** will rehearse in the Music Room; and our Feasting on the Word **Bible Study** will continue. This week, participants will explore the call to discipleship as a response to the good news of God's reign drawing near. The scripture focus is Mark 1:14-20.

At our **10:00 am Worship Service**, our scripture focus will be on Jonah 3:1-15, 10 and Mark 1:14-20. Pastor Patti's message is called "*Stop, Drop, and Roll*". Following *Mystery Box Time*, children will be invited to participate in Sunday School.

Following Worship, there will be a **hearing** regarding the proposed 2012 budget and the Reserve Funds. This hearing will take place in the Dining Room.

This Sunday, you may also pick up a copy of the Annual Report in anticipation of next week's meeting.

FELLOWSHIP GROUP TO MEET

The next meeting of Church Fellowship will take place Friday, January 27th at 10:00 am at the Mason City Public Library's Commons.

This group is open to any and all (regardless of age, gender, or ability) who wish to enjoy the company of your First Church friends.



The concerns that Martin Luther King addressed back in the 1960s were not just issues of society and culture, they were issues of justice. The same is true for many of the challenges that face this country today.

The call to respect and care for each other as sisters and brothers isn't just a political or sociological statement. Remember the words of Jesus: "If you love me, feed my sheep." The greatest commandment is to love the Lord God with all our hearts and minds, but the second one is like it, to love our neighbor as ourselves. Concerns about racial equality, poverty and homelessness, war and health care, and the marginalization of the voiceless and powerless are more than moral issues; they are issues that people of faith must be engaged in. If this exciting moment in time is going to be anything other than a short-lived, feel-good moment, then all of us must be partners in bringing about the change we seek.

And that includes those of us who are people of faith. We don't have the luxury of sitting in church on Sundays and not taking our faith with us on Mondays. Our role as the church and as Christians is to continue to raise our voices for more just systems, for eradication of poverty, for policies that don't discriminate on the basis of race, gender, physical ability or sexual orientation, to encourage and support and pray for peace. And we are called to do this not because of a particular political perspective but because of our belief in a Stillspeaking God, who is a God of love and a God of justice.

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

