



FIRST CHURCH UNITED
 1100 North Calhoun Street, West Liberty, Iowa 52776
 Office—627-2989 Activity Area—627-2446
 Pastor, Marian Hart
 Secretary, Katie Thrasher
 December 2016



Dear Friends in Christ,

Here's an Advent exercise for you: read the account of Jesus' birth in Matt. 1, 2; Luke 1, 2 and John 1:1-18. Take your time. Let them speak to your heart. Take turns with them and repeat concentrating on what you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. Make it come alive for you and find your place in the story. Use your imagination fully.

Now try to recall as many Christmases as possible and recall Jesus' presence in them. Is he front and center? Has he moved out of the manger and into your life, your heart, your daily consciousness? Has he grown in stature and wisdom and become the Savior? Do you ever think of the Advent of his return?

You'll be hearing a lot about living in the between times of the Advent of Christ's birth and the Advent of his return on Sunday mornings. How is Jesus already present with you? As comforter, healer, wisdom, strength, peace, joy, light, hope, challenger, commissioner? Where is he leading you today? Will you follow?

Just a little something to ponder,
 Pastor Marian

CHURCH RECORD		
November 2016		
DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
November 6	\$2,409.00	64
November 13	\$3,948.00	84
November 20	\$2,353.43	78
November 27	\$1,212.25	72

LECTIONARY

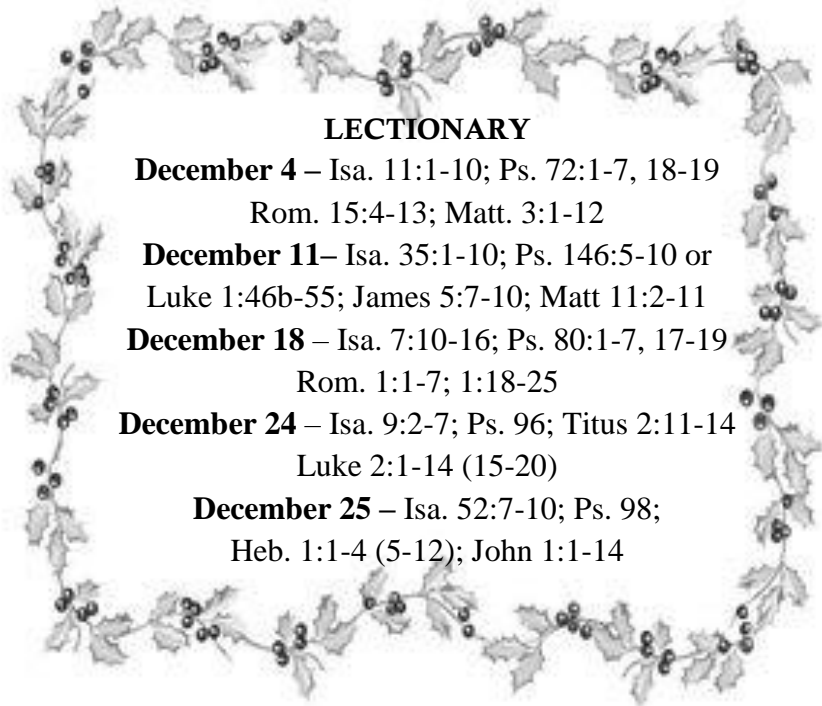
December 4 – Isa. 11:1-10; Ps. 72:1-7, 18-19
 Rom. 15:4-13; Matt. 3:1-12

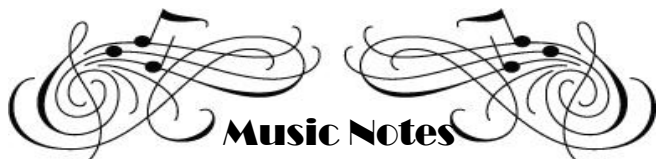
December 11– Isa. 35:1-10; Ps. 146:5-10 or
 Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matt 11:2-11

December 18 – Isa. 7:10-16; Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19
 Rom. 1:1-7; 1:18-25

December 24 – Isa. 9:2-7; Ps. 96; Titus 2:11-14
 Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

December 25 – Isa. 52:7-10; Ps. 98;
 Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14





Ah, December! Much like so many store decorations and t.v. commercials that jump the gun, our choirs have been practicing Advent and Christmas music for some time now. There is so much beautiful Christmas music and so little time to pack it all in! But we're taking several opportunities to do just that - Choir Sunday, Candlelight & Carols Sunday, Christmas Eve Service. Maybe one reason people start so early is because it's all so wonderful!

Sun., Dec. 4: CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Wed., Dec. 7: Chime Choir - 6:45 to 7:30

Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30

Sun., Dec. 11: CHANCEL CHOIR

Wed., Dec. 14: (same as Dec. 7)

Sun., Dec. 18: CHIME AND CHANCEL CHOIRS

Wed., Dec. 21: No Choir Rehearsals

Sat., Dec. 24: Christmas Eve, 9 p.m. service,

CHANCEL and CHIME CHOIRS

Sun., Dec. 25: SPECIAL MUSIC and

"Pick Your Favorite Carols" for Gathering Music

Wed., Dec. 28: No Choir Rehearsals

#40 in 17

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Yes, it's early, but please keep in mind our less fortunate neighbors this holiday season. We will be collecting hats, scarves, gloves, mittens, socks, and undies, as well as coats. Toys can be taken to St. Joseph's.

Christian Education

Hello, Church Family!

Here's wishing you a happy Advent season from the Christian Education Department. As we await Christmas, it is just glorious to behold the wonder with which our church children regard this season. I hope we can all relive some of the fresh appreciation for what Christ's birth means to us during this time of year!

We continue with success both the WOW and Sunday School programs, and have some special events coming up soon: I do hope you all will be able to attend our Christmas Play, on Wednesday December 21st at 6pm. We will be hosting a potluck dinner as well that evening, so do please come! Also, the attending children will be singing Joy to the World on this upcoming Sunday, December 4th. Hope you can make it!

Yours in Christ,

Jason Thrasher

OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY

November 3, 2016

The monthly Official Board Meeting was called to order by Joe Myers. In attendance were Brenda Miller, Ken Noble, Wayne Noring, Susan Lehman, Joe Myers, Treasurer Keith Barnhart, and Pastor Marian Hart. Those not in attendance were Bill Koellner, Darren Brooke, Deepak Giri, Margaret Barnhart, and Secretary Katie Thrasher.

Devotion - Luke 17

Open in Prayer

Approval of Docket - Add Memorial Fund and Voluntary Action Council. Move to approve: 1st Ken Noble, 2nd Brenda Miller, unanimously approved by the Board.

Approval of Minutes - Move to approve: 1st Ken Noble, 2nd Wayne Noring, unanimously approved by the Board.



SPIRIT of GENEROSITY-Leaving a Legacy
Prayerfully consider including First Church United in your will. A Charitable bequest is a way in which we can leave a legacy and express our faith and values to the church. The church benefits from gifts that provide for future generations. For questions, please contact Tom Brooke.

THE LENDING TREE

The Lending Tree's biggest need is people asking for beds. Last year we sold/gave away lots of blankets. We will be using the site to distribute coats from Operation Warm again, until the VAC distribution night. Coats will also be in the school counselors' offices for students.



Treasurer's Report - Keith Barnhart gave the Treasurer's Report. The Presbyterian and Christian Missions have now been paid for September. We discussed how to fund Christian Education expenses since there is no longer a line item for it. Bibles were recently purchased and money had to be borrowed from other funds. The Board agreed to rename line item 531 from "Classroom Teaching Materials" to "Christian Education" and to add \$500.00 to it, while eliminating line items 532, 533, and 536. Move to approve: 1st Ken Noble, 2nd Susan Lehman, unanimously approved by the Board.

Beginning Balance for October	\$1,686.28
Receipts	\$10,701.23
Subtotal	\$12,387.51
Disbursements	\$10,460.02
Ending Balance	\$1,927.49
Board Checking Balance	\$1,877.49

2017 Budget - The proposed budget amounts for 2017 were discussed and filled in. Most amounts will remain the same. Changes include:

- #503 "Sunday Help" from \$591 to \$720,
- #531 now "Christian Education" from \$200 to \$700, but
- eliminating the \$200 for the scratched #536 "Vacation Church School," and
- #702 "Church Utilities" from \$13,200 to \$14,000.

PASTOR'S REPORT: October 6 to November 3

Office hours kept as possible
 Worship planning and leading Oct. 9, 16, 23, 30
 Adult SS
 WOW on Wednesdays in Oct.
 CYG Sunday evenings, Board mtg. Oct. 23
 Oct. 8 Graveside service for non-member
 Lending Tree on Wednesdays and Saturdays
 Oct. 9 CROP Walk - total raised: \$691.00
 Women in Ministry study and lunch Oct. 11
 Simpson Bible Study Tuesdays in Oct.
 Stewardship Oct. 20
 Funeral for Ron Brown on Oct. 21; date of death Oct. 17
 Funeral for Dona Petsel on Oct. 22; date of death Oct. 19
 Pastoral visits - 13
 Mileage - 144

Community involvement: Rotary, TTT, Mama's Boy program
 Vacation days pre-approved by email - (3) Nov. 1, 4, 6 morning

LENDING TREE REPORT for October, 2016

Microwave	\$10
Pillow cases	\$1
Book	\$5
Chairs	\$50
Picture	\$5
Glasses	\$5
Towels	\$10
Misc. pile	\$10
Blanket, small misc.	\$5
Throw	\$1
Total	\$102

Two van loads of housewares, a dryer and small freezer were donated.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

Church Repair List from Church Wide Work Week
 September 18-24

Inside the Church

1. Ceiling tile in handicap restroom needs to be replaced - _____
2. Ceiling tiles in the Fellowship Hall need to be replaced - _____
3. Ceiling tiles in the lounge need to be replaced - _____
4. Drains in lounge need to be cleaned - Darrin Brooke
5. Immersion baptismal heater broken - Joe will call Kessler to inspect
6. Lighting for choir loft - Kessler was researching options - Joe will call
7. Check to see if computer in office replaced by Deepak will work for displaying announcements in the hallway - Katie

Outside the Church

1. Downspouts around the church - _____
2. Weeding of areas with bushes on N. side, trimming of bushes, add bark or rock in areas around bushes to prevent more weeds from growing - Bill Koellner
3. NE wall of new wing has water mark (possible roof work needed) - _____
4. Large evergreens in east yard need the extra foliage removed - Bill K. or Joe M.
5. Hole in caulking in E. stain glass window (on outside) - _____
6. Front of church under large cross needs landscape plan (something that is easily maintained) - _____
7. Outside entrance to narthex, concrete is cracking - _____
8. Crabapple trees need to be trimmed - _____

Long Range Planning Committee - Brenda mentioned the names posted under each of the four categories. We discussed ways to utilize them and how to get that started.

Leak in kitchen ceiling - Joe Myers will call Ken Morrison.

Nominating activation update - Brenda will contact Syd Harned and Lori Brooke.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Necrology: Ron Brown 10-17-16, Dona Petsel 10-19-16
- Follow up on Building Use Policy: Susie referred to an email that was sent to the congregation reminding everyone of the need to complete a form from the office and have building use approved by the Board, often involving a fee. In addition, a calendar to schedule all uses of the sanctuary and lounge is now on the bulletin board outside the lounge door.
- Update on Stewardship Program: Cottage Meetings have been set up for next week.
- Memorial Fund: Marian pointed out that there is a CD with plenty of money that needs to be put to good use in order to honor the church members in whose names these donations have been made.
- Voluntary Action Council: Marian suggested that a plea be made for donations to support this holiday's toy and food boxes. (For food, cash donations are best because the money goes farther at the Food Bank.)

MINISTRY AND PROGRAM REPORTS:

Christian Education - November, 2016

Hello, Church Family,

You'll be happy to know that things are going well in the Christian Education Department. We continue to progress through our Old Testament overview with the Sunday School kids leading up to the birth of Jesus in the upcoming Christmas season. The young Christians who were there this last Sunday were overjoyed to receive their new bibles.

The WOW program continues to sustain high numbers and high energy. We are nearly through with our blessing bag project and we will distribute them this next week. Our next big project is the Christmas play. We have chosen parts and are beginning rehearsals this week.

Thanks as usual for all of your support; it is a great joy to be part of such a wonderful family.

Yours in Christ, Jason Thrasher

MOTION TO ADJOURN 1st Ken Noble, 2nd Brenda Miller, unanimously approved by the Board

PRAYER CONCERNS: Prayers for Brenda's mother, Penny, who is in the Simpson Home; for the family of Darrel Sterner who passed away this morning, for the Petsel girls after the passing of their mother, and for the family of Ron Brown after his passing.

CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT MEETING: December 1, 2016, at 6:30 p.m.

Church Workers

December 4

Communion/Children Sing

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Tom & Mary Pat Brooke

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Gary Hahn, Butch Nortman, Karen Nortman,
Joe Myers, Dinette Myers, Syd Harned

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Children/Christian Education/Bakers

ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

POWER POINT: Katie Thrasher

CANDLE LIGHTER: Open

December 11

Narrative & Song/Chancel Choir

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

The Murphy Family

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Bill Koellner

CANDLE LIGHTER: Tenley Murphy

December 18

Communion/Candlelight & Carols

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Tom & Mary Pat Brooke

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Gary Hahn, Butch Nortman, Karen Nortman,
Joe Myers, Dinette Myers, Syd Harned

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Marilyn Ruegsegger & Norma Brooks

ORGANIST: Susie Lehman

POWER POINT: Carolyn Probst

CANDLE LIGHTER: Payton Murphy

December 24

USHER: Joe Myers

POWERPOINT: Arnie Hart

December 25

Christmas Day

Gathering Music

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Norma Brooks

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Keith Barnhart

CANDLE LIGHTER: Open

Communion Preparers for December are
Walt Lehman and Wayne Noring

www.merrychristmas-2013.com



Birthdays in December

- 1 Susan Lehman
- 2 Joshua Levai-Baird
- 3 Carolyn Bengé
- 4 Kelly Larson
- 4 Ron Jacobs
- 5 Brenda Miller
- 6 Ken Minor
- 6 Andy Moreland
- 7 Roger Bengé
- 9 Jessica Kelly Simon
- 10 Louise McCoy
- 11 Jackson Gingerich
- 11 Jan McCrabb
- 12 Margaret Barnhart
- 13 Kyle Jacobs
- 13 Gina Skubal
- 14 Roger Johnson
- 14 Dee Johnson
- 17 Payton Murphy
- 21 Zachary Newcomb
- 21 Mike Deahr
- 23 Dillon Brooke
- 25 Deepak Giri
- 30 Marianne Phelps
- 30 Mary Kay Morrison
- 31 Bruce Bengé
- 31 Dinette Myers
- 31 Roberta Baker

Anniversaries in December

- 7th Arnie & Marian Hart
13th Deepak & Amrita Giri

