



**FIRST CHURCH UNITED**  
 1100 North Calhoun Street, West Liberty, Iowa 52776  
 Office—627-2989 Activity Area—627-2446  
 Pastor, Marian Hart  
 Secretary, Katie Thrasher  
 February 2017



Dear Friends in Christ,

What's a good thing to do in the middle of winter? Read. So, read any Good Book lately? I attended the Ministers' Institute at Christian Conference Center for two days last week. Our guest speaker was a Rabbi speaking on Midrash. She has written quite a few children's books after study of scripture and the desire to bring understanding to a child's level. Rabbi Susan stressed the importance of using your imagination when studying. It is important to ask the questions you have and explore possible answers for them. That is what Rabbis have done for centuries. The result is midrashim—the writings/musings/debates/imaginings surrounding the questions. Rabbi Susan reminded us that this is a way to give the unnamed people in the bible a name and tell their story.

Another comment I found quite striking was that her brand of Jews doesn't care how you find your way to God as long as you do! They find it through Torah, what we call the OT. We find it through Jesus. Others find it through other paths.

So think of a character in the bible. Let's say the woman at the well (John 4). No name. What do you imagine her back story to be? Has she been happy with those five husbands or miserable? Is she terribly lonely, with no other women wanting to associate with her due to her present circumstances? Do you envy her sassiness with Jesus or are you offended by it? What fascinates me is that it is said she hurried off leaving her vessel behind. I imagine that to mean she left her old self behind and every yearning she thirsted for was quenched due to her 'chance meeting' with Jesus. So, how does her story align with mine or yours? How does it contrast? Can you give her a name that you identify with? I'm calling her Hope.

Curl up with the Good Book today. You may not have a fire to be in front of, but beware, you could catch a spark of inspiration inside!

Happy imagining,  
 Pastor Marian

<b>CHURCH RECORD</b>		
January 2017		
<b>DATE</b>	<b>OFFERING</b>	<b>ATTEND</b>
January 1	\$1,775.00	45
January 8	\$2,377.00	55
January 15	\$865.50	70
January 22	\$879.44	54
January 29	\$1,395.00	65

**LECTIONARY**

**February 5** – Isaiah 58:1-9a, [9b-12],  
 1 Corinthians 2:1-12, [13-16], Matthew 5:13-20  
 Psalm 112:1-9, (10)

**February 12**– Deuteronomy 30:15-20,  
*or* Sirach 15:15-20, 1 Corinthians 3:1-9,  
 Matthew 5:21-37, Psalm 119:1-8

**February 19** – Leviticus 19:1-2,9-18  
 1 Corinthians 3:10-11,16-23

Matthew 5:38-48, Psalm 119:33-40  
**February 26** – Exodus 24:12-18, 2 Peter 1:16-21  
 Matthew 17:1-9, Psalm 2, *or* Psalm 99



**Seeking someone to assume treasurer positions for Memorial Committee, Congregational Life and Lending Tree. You have your choice.**



Tired of winter? No hibernating! We're going to keep you awake this February by providing a variety of music in our services - everything from a Canon of Grace to A Joyful Alleluia! Come and be inspired!

- Wed., Feb. 1: Chime Choir - 6:45 to 7:30**
- Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30**
- Sun., Feb. 5: CHIME CHOIR**
- Wed., Feb. 8: (same as Feb. 1)**
- Sun., Feb. 12: CHANCEL CHOIR**
- Wed., Feb. 15: (same as Feb. 1)**
- Sun., Feb. 19: CHIME CHOIR**
- Wed., Feb. 22: (same as Feb. 1)**
- Sun., Feb. 26: WORSHIP TEAM**

**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**

is open Wednesday's from 11:30-1:30 and Saturday's 9-12.



**#40 in 17**

**Long Range Planning** after church brainstorming sessions-February 19, March 19, April 23 and May 21. More details will be coming later. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**Christian Education**

Hello, Church Family!

It is with great joy that I can report on the successes we continue to have in the realm of children's religious education at First Church United. We are learning about the life, teachings, and parables of Jesus these next few months. It is a blessing to be able to follow the lectionary as we utilize the same bibles in church as the kids are able to read at home. Our spring semester will culminate with a worship-leading extravaganza around Easter, so stay tuned!

Thanks for your support,  
 Jason Thrasher



**OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY**

**January 5, 2016, 6:30 p.m.**

The monthly Official Board meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Bill Koellner. In attendance were Joe Myers, Joel Murphy, Brenda Miller, Wayne Noring, Ken Noble, Deepak Giri, Pastor Marian Hart, Treasurer Keith Barnhart, and Secretary Katie Thrasher. Those not in attendance were Syd Harned, Susie Lehman, Margaret Barnhart, Darren Brooke, Jim Kiwala.

**DEVOTION** - Isaiah 49:6, 1 Cor. 29:7 Discussion on the wins we've had as a church.

**APPROVAL OF DOCKET** - add Building Use Request, Necrology Report, Correspondence. Move to approve 1st Joe Myers, 2nd Ken Noble, unanimously approved by the Board.

**CORRESPONDENCE** - 1)Kevin Cullum - Director of Camp Wyoming Thanks the church for the \$1000 donation. 2) Matt Kelly - Thank you to the Endowment Fund and Board for help with funds to travel to India for a mission trip. 3) WL Ministerial Association - Thank you to the Board for its continued support.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**CHAIR FOR 2017-** Board nominates Joe Myers. Move to approve 1st Ken Noble, 2nd Wayne Noring. unanimously approved by the Board. Joe M. thanks Bill K. for his leadership this last year. Bill K. thanks Board for a good year.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** - Keith Barnhart reports on the financials for December. Giving was good. Bills are all paid. Lines 704 and 705 were funded. Board checking is \$4, 098.32. Only large expense expected in January is the approximate \$1,300.00 for FICA payment. Motion to approve financial report 1st Bill K., 2nd Ken Noble unanimously approved by the Board.

Beginning Balance for November	\$2,468.10
Receipts	\$19,892.31
Subtotal	\$22,360.41
Disbursements	\$17,212.09
Ending Balance	\$5,148.32
Board Checking Balance	\$4,098.32

Keith B. handed out a list of all accounts that use FCU's federal ID# at South Ottumwa Bank (previously West Liberty State Bank). Discussion on who has authority to have access to the accounts. Bill K. recommends the chairman is on each account. Motion to approve there are at least 2 names who can sign on each account that use the FCU federal ID#. Joe Myers will sign to be the 2nd name on all bank accounts. 1st Ken N., 2nd Deepak G. unanimously approved by the Board.

Keith's Annual Housekeeping Items

1. Select person to be second name on Checking and Money Market accounts at South Ottumwa Bank (formerly West Liberty State Bank). Will continue to be Joe Myers and William Koellner.
2. Send list of Board Members who will have access to Lock Box (#119) to South Ottumwa Bank. Current listed are: Mary Larson, Joe Myers, Butch Nortman, Vince Ottoway, Rob Miller, Keith Barnhart. Two people are required to be present to enter lock box. Board suggests adding Wayne Noring. Joe Myers will continue to be on the list. Motion to approve 1st Ken N, 2nd Brenda M. unanimously approved by the Board.
3. Recommend Annual inventory of Lock Box (#119). Joe Myers and Wayne Noring will do this.
4. Request Motion to let Treasurer transfer funds between Checking and Money Market accounts as needed to keep a positive balance in the checking account. Motion to approve 1st Bill K., 2nd Ken N., unanimously approved by the Board.
5. Request Motion to authorize payment of routine and budgeted bills at discretion of Treasurer. (Let's Treasurer oat routine bills, OR delay payment for a short time if funds in account are low.) Motion to approve 1st Bill K., 2<sup>nd</sup> Wayne N., unanimously approved by the Board.
6. Request the Board select two people to audit Treasurer's books. Suggest Joe Myers (professional accountant) and one Official Board member. Board suggests Wayne N. and Joe M.

7. Request Motion to designate Dollar Amount of Pastor's Salary as Housing Allowance. (Recommended by both denominations for Tax purposes). Has been \$2,000.00. Motion to approve 1st Bill K., 2nd Ken N. unanimously approved by the Board.

8. Board needs to vote on Presbyterian "Shared Mission Support- Percentage Formula". Recommended division is: General Assembly \$7.50, Synod \$5.30, Presbytery \$23.20. Per Capita Apportionment: 75 members, Total per member \$36.00 Grand Total \$2,700.00. Motion to approve Presbyterian Mission Support 1st Wayne N., 2nd Ken N., unanimously approved by the Board.

**Annual Budget for 2017** - still waiting for Pastor's Salary suggestion.

**PASTOR'S REPORT DEC. 2016**

- Office hours kept as possible.
- Plan and lead worship Dec. 4, 11, 18 (church canceled, much to my regret), 24, 25, Jan. 1
- Adult Sunday school
- Advent study Wednesdays
- Blue Christmas Dec. 4
- 'Weird Church' book study Dec. 6
- Lending Tree Wednesdays
- Welcome Table Saturdays
- CYG Dec. 4, concert Dec. 11
- Camp Wyoming Board meeting Dec. 12
- WOW/choir meals Dec. 7
- Women in Ministry lunch and study Dec. 13
- Children's program Dec. 21
- Packing, sorting, distributing Christmas boxes Dec. 14, 15, 16
- Heath Manor worship Dec. 21
- Simpson worship Dec. 16
- Hope Pierce funeral January 4th
- Grant workshop for Art Grant. Will be working on a grant to help acquire affordable housing, workspace for artists.
- Pastoral visits-10
- Mileage-382
- Community involvement-Rotary, grant workshop at WELEAD, VAC, TTT

Request to attend Minister's Institute at Christian Conference Center noon Jan. 23-noon Jan. 25. Motion to approve 1st Bill K., 2nd Brenda M., unanimously approved by the Board.

## LENDING TREE REPORT DEC. 2016

Blanket, dishes	\$5.00
Pans	2.00
Radio, clock	3.00
Humidifier	3.00
Dishwasher	50.00
Purse	3.00
Dishes	7.00
Pot	1.00
CDs	1.00
Music box	5.00
Coffee pot	2.00
Pots	2.00
Table	5.00
Misc.	4.00
Total sales	93.00

### ONGOING BUSINESS:

- January and February Elder on Call- January Elder is Wayne Noring. February 1st half Ken Noble, 2nd half Bill K.

-Personnel Committee report - Brenda M. reports that she and Susie L. met with Jason Thrasher and Bret Akers in person and with Katie by email. Discussion on each person's review. FCU Board moves to approve that Jason use the old CE Director office as an office again 1st Bill K., 2nd Wayne N. unanimously approved by the Board. Katie Thrasher will have a 5% increase in hourly pay, Jason Thrasher will have a 5% increase in hourly pay, the budget will reflect the increase in hours Jason is working. Bret Akers hourly pay stays the same at \$20/hour. Board approved.

- Long Range Planning update -Brenda reports the brainstorming sessions will begin January 22nd. Other sessions will be on February 19th, March 19th, April 23rd, and May 21st. Meetings will be gatherings to share ideas.

- Nominating Committee - Brenda listed the class of 2019. There are still a few names to be filled in. Board nominates Deepak Giri to be Vice Chair for 2017. Motion to approve 1st Ken N., 2nd Brenda M., unanimously approved by the Board.

- Fair Stand - suggests a meeting be set for those who are interested in talking about updating the fair stand. Board suggests February 5th following the worship service. Katie will send out an email announcing the meeting and add it to the bulletin, enews, and newsletter.

- Stewardship update - 2016 pledges-25 for \$61130.00  
2017 pledges-28 for \$54340.00

-Congregational Life and Lending Tree treasurer. - will be brought up at the Annual Meeting.

### Chore List

#### 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 - Darren Brooke
5. Immersion baptismal heater broken - Kessler has been called to inspect
6. Leak in Kitchen ceiling-

#### Outside the Church

1. Downspouts around the church - Ken Wright
2. NE wall of new wing has water mark (possible roof work needed) - \_\_\_\_\_
3. Hole in caulking in E. stain glass window (on outside) - \_\_\_\_\_
4. Front of church under large cross needs landscape plan (something that is easily maintained) - Marilyn Ruegsegger, Bill & Jan Koellner
5. Outside entrance to narthex, concrete is cracking - \_\_\_\_\_
6. Crabapple trees need to be trimmed - Bill Koellner
7. Volunteer Trees in east lawn removed – Joe Myers

#### Manse

1. Windows- Tabled
2. Downspouts- Jim Kiwala

#### NEW BUSINESS:

-Welcome new Board Members – orientation, claim committees. Need a Board Liaison for Congregational Life Committee and Christian Education Committee. Tabled till February meeting.

- replace lock on door that enters into church from parking lot to fellowship Hall- Board will leave as is.  
-Thermostat in sound room moved to Fellowship Hall - Mike Kessler will be asked to move the thermostat.

-Building Use request from Jason Thrasher/Jung's Tae Kwon Do of West Liberty- motion to allow Jung's Tae Kwon Do to use the Fellowship Hall every Tuesday and Thursday from 5:45-7:15 for class. Jason Thrasher or Rick Janney will be in charge.

- Necrology Report - Carmen Hope Pierce - date of death 12/31/16

- Board agrees that all members of the church who die should have a name plate placed on Memorial plaques. We need to update the plaques hanging in the Narthex.

- Cindy Mays of MidWestOne Bank has offered to set up automatic payments to the church for tithes/offering for those who bank at MWO.

**MINISTRY & PROGRAM REPORTS:**

CHRISTIAN ED. January 2017

Hello, Church Family!

Hope this finds you all well and warm this mid-winter day. Blessings abound in and around our church, it seems. The Christmas Play and Potluck was enthusiastically received by the children, their families, and friends who came to watch this year. I believe, through the repeated telling of the message in our multiple practices that our young Christians have come to further understand that Jesus is our Savior. Thanks very much to Tasha Wiele, Breona Maurer, Lisa Murphy, and all others who helped to make it such a success.

In 2017 our hope is to incorporate more key bible lessons to augment the lectionary-based Godly Play series we have been following. Additionally, there are plans to have the children share more music with the congregation this year. Should be a wonderful time!

Thanks again for your support. It is an ongoing blessing to be part of such a fine community of fellow believers, sincerely.

Yours in Christ, Jason Thrasher

**ADJOURNMENT**

**PRAYER CONCERNS**

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**NEXT MEETING** February 2, 2017 at 6:30p.m.

## **Church Workers**

**February 5th**

Communion/Chime Choir

**SPEAKING ELDERS:**

Norma Brooks & Dave Baker

**COMMUNION SERVERS:**

Joe Myers, Dinette Myers, Joel Murphy,

Jo Noble, Katie Thrasher, Bob Dewar

**USHER:** Joe Myers

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Walt Lehman & Wayne Noring

**ORGANIST:** Brenda Miller

**POWER POINT:** Jim Kiwala

**CANDLE LIGHTER:** Open

**February 12<sup>th</sup>**

Gathering Music/Chancel Choir

**USHER:** Walt Lehman

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Marilyn Ruegsegger

**ORGANIST:** Marianne Phelps

**POWER POINT:** Katie Thrasher

**CANDLE LIGHTER:** Alice Thrasher

**February 19<sup>th</sup>**

Communion/Chime Choir

**SPEAKING ELDERS:**

Norma Brooks & Dave Baker

**COMMUNION SERVERS:**

Joe Myers, Dinette Myers, Joel Murphy,

Jo Noble, Katie Thrasher, Bob Dewar

**USHER:** Dean Phelps

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Norma Brooks

**ORGANIST:** Lori Brooke

**POWER POINT:** Keith Barnhart

**CANDLE LIGHTER:** Open

**February 26th**

Worship Team

**USHER:** Dave Baker

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Bill & Jan Koellner

**ORGANIST:** Lori Brooke

**POWER POINT:** Bill Koellner

**CANDLE LIGHTER:** Open

**Communion Preparers for February are  
Tom & Janet Woody**



## **Birthdays in February**

4 Jeni Laughlin

9 Lindsey Laughlin

12 Marjory Melick

12 Melissa Barnhart

13 Randy Henderson

13 Tana Deahr

14 Joe Myers

17 Jessica Kober

19 Pat Gingerich

20 Chance Thrasher

21 Barb Bothell

23 Joe Lehman

25 Norma Brooks

25 Doug Phelps

25 BJ Newcomb

25 Aniston Murphy

27 Tom Lehman

27 Jacob Henderson

28 Jessica Brown



## **Anniversaries in February**

14<sup>th</sup> Roger & Dee Johnson