



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 2017



Dear Friends in Christ,

We usually hear the words ‘the people walking in darkness have seen a great light’ during Advent. I’ve mostly thought of this darkness to be that of ignorance of God’s Presence or rejection of it. Yesterday, though, a few other pastors and I gathered to study “Everything Belong” by Richard Rohr, a contemplative writer and teacher.

We all had reasons why the Christmas season (and other holidays) have not always been joy filled for us. It is a challenge to walk in darkness and try to lead others in light. I am so appreciative of the scripture passages that come to mind in a timely manner to lend strength and comfort.

As we prepare our hearts to receive Christ again, really listen to the words of our carols. Most of them are inspired by scripture and tell the story of the Advent of Christ. May they bring us true tidings of comfort and joy.

A song I find meaningful is Mercy Me’s “Even If.” I recommend you give it a listen if you find yourself walking in darkness of any kind this Advent.

The Peace of the Coming Christ be with you all,
 Pastor Marian



CHURCH RECORD

November 2017

DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
November 5	\$2,596.00	71
November 12	\$1,778.00	68
November 19	\$8,880.00	71
November 26	\$1,539.00	64

UPCOMING DATES YOU DON’T WANT TO MISS

Dec. 3 - Somewhat non-traditional service, Worship Team leads

Dec. 10 - Chancel choir/pastor lead with Anthems and narrative. A very moving service.

Dec. 17 - Lessons and Carols. Come sing your favorites. Candlelight communion.

Dec. 20 - Children’s Christmas Program and Potluck. 6:00 Program with Potluck to follow.

Dec. 24 - 10 am-Come celebrate the Advent of the Birth of Christ!

Dec. 24 - 9 pm-Candlelight Christmas Eve with lessons, Carols, and Communion

Wintertainment/Teen Bash at Camp Wyoming December 27-29, 3pm-3pm

Kids in grades 2-6, Youth in grades 7-12 Stay in heated cabins. Regular rate is \$125/person. It’s Camp Wyoming’s annual winter retreat! Compete in the Winter Olympics, sled down the tubing hill, participate in worship and Bible studies, and have lots of fun with all of your friends here at camp!

To register, download the [registration form](#) and mail it and your retreat fee to the Camp Office at Camp Wyoming, 9106 42nd Ave., Wyoming, IA 52362 or click the button below to register online.



Music Notes

The blend of music and message is such a beautiful, almost magical combination! During December, we will see that happen through narrative, scripture, and all *three* of our choirs. There are traditions for you to enjoy (Chime Choir preludes in the narthex, Chancel Choir anthems and messages, and the quiet joy of candlelight & communion). There are more recent traditions, like the organ and piano duets of seasonal favorites. And there are brand new joys, including the enthusiastic faces and sounds of our Children's Bell Choir! All for our FCU family and friends. In fact, invite someone to join us for our meaningful and musical services this Advent and Christmas!

Sun., Dec. 3: WORSHIP TEAM / CHILDREN'S BELL CHOIR

Wed., Dec. 6: Chime Choir - 6:45 to 7:30
Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30

Sun., Dec. 10: CHANCEL CHOIR, Advent Service of Narrative and Song

Wed., Dec. 13: (same as Dec. 6)

Sun., Dec. 17: CHIME AND CHANCEL CHOIRS, Candlelight & Carols Service

Wed., Dec. 20: Youth Christmas Program (no choir rehearsals)

Sun., Dec. 24: (A carol or song - Chancel Choir members)

Sun., Dec. 24, 9 p.m. Christmas Eve Service: CHIME AND CHANCEL CHOIRS

Wed., Dec. 27: (no choir rehearsals)

Sun., Dec. 31: SPECIAL MUSIC

CHRISTMAS BOX COLLECTIONS Area churches are asked to collect coats, gloves, hats, underwear, socks, boots for distribution to those in need. Items can be placed under the Christmas tree in the Narthex. Please bring by Wed. Dec. 13.

CHRISTMAS BOX packing will be Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 6:00p.m. at FCU. The toys will be sorted and packed at St. Joseph's Tuesday, Dec. 12 beginning at 6:00p.m. Distribution is Friday, Dec. 15 from 5:30-8:00 and Saturday from 8-10a.m. at FCU. Your help is needed and appreciated at any of those times.

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.

W.O.W. activities – Please join us for our Children's Christmas Program and Potluck on December 20th beginning at 6:00p.m. No WOW December 27th, No Children's Sunday school December 31st

POINSETTIA'S AT JAN'S FLOWER YARD – Each Poinsettia is in a 6 ½ pot, of florist quality, beautiful, wrapped and comes with a handmade bow for \$15.50 plus tax. Call 627-2616 to order.

CYG News

Regular CYG will meet at First Church United on Dec. 3 & 17. We will leave at 3:15 on Dec. 10 to go to a concert. No CYG on Dec. 24 or 31. New Year Kick Off/Fun Night will be Jan. 7 at West Liberty Christian Fellowship.



OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY

FIRST CHURCH UNITED OFFICAL BOARD MEETING

November 2, 2017 6:30 p.m.

The official Board Meeting was called to order by Chair Joe Myers. Those in attendance were Joel Murphy, Syd Harned, Bill Koellner, Deepak Giri, Wayne Noring, Brenda Miller, Susie Lehman, Pastor Marian Hart, and Treasurer Keith Barnhart. Not in attendance was Jim Kiwala.

DEVOTION TIME - Pastor Marian had asked four Board members to be prepared to share favorite scripture verses. Syd H., Joe M., Bill K., and Susie L. shared at this meeting, including the 23rd Psalm, Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8, I Corinthians 10:18, and Jeremiah 11:13.

GUEST PRESENTER: GARDEN REPORT - Ed Moreno, representing the Master Gardeners and Dream Catchers, reported on the "Growing Together" community garden for the 2017 season. Master Gardeners received a grant of \$1,000 for seeds, plants, and tools. He documented a total of 679.55 lbs. of produce raised. He has a short video of this year's

project and workers, and he agreed to let us use it for MADCAP during a Sunday worship service. Ed requested approval to use our certified kitchen to prepare the Dream Catchers' Taco Dinner on Nov. 17. He also asked if we would continue to support the garden project, as they are preparing to apply for another grant. Syd H. made a motion to approve both of these requests, Deepak G. seconded, and the favorable vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET - The following items were added: Boy Scouts' use of the building / grounds; Nominating Committee discussion; and inquiry regarding our vacuum sweeper. Syd H. moved & Susie L. seconded to approve the docket as amended, the vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Wayne N. moved and Brenda M. seconded to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, the vote was unanimous.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Keith B. explained that, while all bills have been paid and we have money in the checking account, we still owe the savings account \$8,817.47. An estate sum of \$135,801.08 has been received and will be discussed later in the meeting.

Start of October Balance	\$1,961.27
Receipts	\$154,827.90
Sub Total	\$156,789.17
Disbursements	\$152,886.92
Ending Balance	\$3,902.25
Board Checking (\$4,769.15)	

PASTOR'S REPORT OCT. 5 - NOV. 2

Plan and lead worship Oct. 8, 15, 22 (pulpit exchange with Col. Jct.), 29
Adult Sunday School
WOW Kids Oct. 18 & 25
Lending Tree Wednesdays and Saturdays, excluding Oct. 28
Presbyterian Women Fall Gathering in Cedar Rapids, I represented and gave report for Camp Wyoming
Simpson Home disaster preparedness drill Oct. 9
Bed rest due to pickleball injury Oct. 10-14
CYG Oct. 8, 15, 22, 29; Board meeting Oct. 1; lesson 22nd; meal planning & shopping 22 & 29
Table of Good meeting Oct. 16
People in Ministry lunch and Bible study Oct. 17
Simpson worship Oct. 20
CRE (Commission Ruling Elder) retreat Oct. 27-28, led Friday evening worship, studied a book on family systems as applied to church congregations

Host Presbytery book study "Everything Belongs" Oct. 31
Trick or Treat on the Trail table staffed and funded Oct. 31 on behalf of FCU (gave handouts regarding WOW and Sunday School)
Nov. 1 and 2 - vacation
Pastoral visits - 3
Mileage - 224

ONGOING BUSINESS:

1. Stewardship Program for 2018 - Joe M., Brenda M., Wayne N., and Joel M. reported on the stewardship program. They have designed new pledge cards that follow the pie chart visual this year (one on the mailing and a large one for a wall at the church), hoping our church business will make more sense as people see and study it. Nov. 12 kicks off the stewardship program and Nov. 19 is Commitment Sunday with pledge cards being turned in. Pizza was also planned for after church, tying in with the pie chart, but Congregational Life has planned a potluck that day (see committee report at end). So we may use dessert pies to tie in, instead.

Church Cleaning List

1. Clean up/out the Fellowship Hall closet - Syd H. and Susie L. This may be done after Christmas decorations have been removed.
2. Dust wood in sanctuary (wood beams, woodwork in front of the sanctuary) - will wait to do this until after the carpet/flooring has been finished.

Inside the Church

1. Immersion baptismal heater broken - update: Blain Kelly fixed the heater, but he discovered a leak that he will fix later.
2. Sanctuary carpet - update: Syd H. and Susie L. displayed two choices of samples in the sanctuary. Bill K. moved and Joel M. seconded to select the Board members' favorite carpet design, and the vote was unanimous. But nothing will be ordered until final decisions are made regarding the arrangement of the dais (various levels and the steps) and the sound system (which will involve conduit beneath the flooring).
3. Window in south classroom - update: Jim K. will report when he returns.

Outside the Church

1. NE wall of new wing has water mark - update: Jim K. will report when he returns.
2. Door near sanctuary entrance, sidewalk cracks, and spalled concrete in handicap area - not yet done but will be looked at after Maxson Ave. project is complete (spring).

3. Removal of volunteer trees, east lawn - Joe M. will take care of it in the spring.

4. Door overhangs on NE wing near kitchen to prevent rain entering - Joe Myers will talk to Mark Johnson.

5. Mower needs repairs - update: Syd H. reported that the Dixon we have was purchased new in 1999. The spindle shaft is broken. Dixon no longer makes mowers, so parts are difficult to find. Syd H. looked into costs and features of new mowers, and Deepak G. also offered to research that. We can't exceed a 50-inch deck so it will fit in the current shed. We should be able to use Endowment interest or the Watters Fund for this purchase.

6. Doors on the shed were off-center and wouldn't latch. Wayne N. has fixed them.

Manse

1. Windows - The one that needed attention before winter has been repaired, but the screens are still being repaired.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Lawrence Roth gift of \$135,801.80 - Joe M. read the letter naming First Church United to receive the remainder of the residuary trust of Lawrence Roth's estate. Bill K. made a recommendation to put a percentage of that money into a general fund to use as needed (ex.: carpet, etc.). No motion was made, as the Board agreed to table any decision until plans are finalized for flooring in the sanctuary.

2. Snow removal planning for winter - Bill K. has a bid from Snider Services for \$300. Bill will ask him to include sand and salt, and will meet with him to solidify the bid.

3. Memorial Committee plans - Joe M. shared a report from Marianne Phelps and Missy Johnson, explaining their plans to use some additional memorial gifts for planters by the entrances. These will be heavy/weighted for stability and will hold attractive, artificial greenery to avoid watering and weeding maintenance.

4. Boy Scouts - Pastor Marian reported that Arnie will meet with the leaders to inform them of our licensed kitchen and what that involves regarding their use of it, and he will emphasize the respectful use of all facilities here, inside and out, including the need for adequate adult supervision.

5. Nominating Committee - Brenda M. and Syd H. will contact the names they listed for each area. Pastor Marian wants to be sure church members understand that some positions can be filled with a sign up sheet while others require the members to be called.

6. Vacuum sweeper - Brenda M. reported that Bret requested a new sweeper. But there is a much newer one than the one he was using. So this will be discussed with him before any action is taken.

MINISTRY & PROGRAM REPORTS: MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

The Music Ministry of First Church United is enjoying a fun fall! As a result of preparing a music history report for the 40th anniversary celebration, we were reminded of our old tradition of Funday Sundays when several spirituals were shared with the congregation. We renewed that tradition with a Funday Sunday on Oct. 8, 2017, when five spirituals and a narrative were shared. In a similar format, we are currently preparing a set of anthems to be coupled with Pastor Marian's narrative and scripture for the Advent / Christmas season. A joyous addition to our Music Ministry has been the new Youth Bell Choir under the direction of Emily Reed. It has been a thrill to watch and listen to these children play with such enthusiasm and skill! Other youth have done an excellent job singing for our worship services. This is where our Christian Ed. and Music Ministry departments overlap, and how appropriate that they do!

With a copy of "The Church Musician's Prayer" in our Chancel folders and Chime notebooks, we focus on our true purpose in the music we prepare and share. We are not only blessed with talented and devoted musicians, we are also grateful for a delightfully appreciative congregation! They make us feel as though our music really does enhance their worship experience. Mission accomplished, yet always a work-in-progress.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE

We have not been very active lately as an official committee but, individually, each person on the CL Committee has been very active working within and for the church.

November 19, following the service, there will be a Church Family Thanksgiving Potluck. I am waiting to see if anyone in the group will help with providing meat. The committee will then help set up and clean up for the potluck. On November 22, FCU will host a Community Thanksgiving meal and time for worship. Those that are present from the CL Committee have been asked to help set up and clean up for this event as well.

ADJOURNMENT/PRAYER CONCERNS CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT MEETING - Thursday, December 7, 2017, at 6:30 p.m.

Church Workers

December 3

First Sunday in Advent/Communion/Worship Team/

Children's Bell Choir

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Norma Brooks & Dave Baker

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Joel Murphy, Jim Kiwala, Syd Harned,

Mark Johnson, Katie Thrasher

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

The Murphy Family

ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

POWER POINT: Jim Kiwala

CANDLE LIGHTER: Porter Maurer

December 10

Narrative and Song Choir Sunday

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Harold & Evelyn Wilkerson

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Katie Thrasher

CANDLE LIGHTER: Tenley Murphy

December 17

Communion/Candlelight & Carols

Chancel & Chime Choirs

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Norma Brooks & Dave Baker

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Joel Murphy, Jim Kiwala, Syd Harned,

Mark Johnson, Katie Thrasher

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Norma Brooks & Family

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Bill Koellner

CANDLE LIGHTER: Payton Murphy

December 24

Christmas Eve Day

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Norma Brooks & Dave Baker

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Joel Murphy, Jim Kiwala, Syd Harned,

Mark Johnson, Katie Thrasher

USHER: Bill Koellner

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR: Marilyn Ruegsegger

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Bill Koellner

CANDLE LIGHTER: Alice Thrasher

December 24

Christmas Eve Service/Communion

USHER: Tom Brooke

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Open

December 31

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Keith & Margaret Barnhart

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Keith Barnhart

Communion preparers for December are
Margaret Barnhart & Wayne Noring



Birthdays in December

1 Susan Lehman	13 Kyle Jacobs
2 Joshua Levai-Baird	13 Gina Skubal
3 Carolyn Bengé	14 Roger Johnson
4 Kelly Waters	14 Dee Johnson
4 Ron Jacobs	17 Payton Murphy
5 Brenda Miller	20 Wade Deahr
6 Ken Minor	21 Zachary Newcomb
6 Andy Moreland	21 Mike Deahr
7 Roger Bengé	23 Dillon Brooke
7 Breona Maurer	25 Deepak Giri
9 Jessica Kelly Simon	30 Marianne Phelps
10 Louise McCoy	30 Mary Kay Morrison
11 Jackson Gingerich	31 Bruce Bengé
11 Jan McCrabb	31 Dinette Myers
12 Margaret Barnhart	31 Roberta Baker



Anniversaries in December

7 Arnie & Marian Hart

13 Deepak & Amrita Giri