



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 2018



Dear Friends in Christ,

I recently walked through the timber at Camp Wyoming with a forester and three other lay people. We were being educated on the health of the trees.

I love trees. They are a piece of creation that speak to me in times of contemplation. They give off good energy. I frequently compliment God on trees I spot as I'm driving along or walking.

So it grieves my heart that the forest is sick at Camp. We are figuring out a plan to tend to the disease and age of the trees. It will involve clear cutting. It made me want to weep. Until I started to catch the excitement of the forester who took us to a plot that had been cut 22 years ago. He pointed out the healthy, straight walnut trees. He showed us the variety. He explained the wildlife being sheltered with a different level of canopy and ground cover. I can now bear the thought of clear cutting. But I realize I am not as patient as the forester. I want good things to happen now, not in 22+ years!

And so it is with church and life in general. It is in fact the circle of life. Death is part of the cycle as surely as birth. And what happens in between is our glorious gift from God. Make it each day count for God's glory. Appreciate the trees, the birds, and all of us pesky humans as we keep on trudging the road to our happy destiny together.

Pastor Marian

CHURCH RECORD

January 2018

DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
January 7	\$1,964.00	42
January 14	\$2,425.96	62
January 21	\$713.98	54
January 28.	\$1,263.58	46



Music Notes

Brrrrrrace yourselves, folks. The shortest month of the year has a lot packed into it! Valentine's Day, Presidents' Weekend, Ash Wed., and the first Sunday of Lent - February is an over-achiever! Here is the Music Ministry schedule.

- Sun., Feb. 4:** SPECIAL MUSIC
- Wed., Feb. 7:** Chime Choir - 6:45 to 7:30
Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30
- Sun., Feb. 11:** CHANCEL CHOIR
- Wed., Feb. 14:** ASH WEDNESDAY - No Chime Choir
Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30
- Sun., Feb. 18:** [First Sunday of Lent]
WORSHIP TEAM
- Wed., Feb. 21:** (same as Feb. 7)
- Sun., Feb. 25:** CHANCEL CHOIR
- Wed., Feb. 28:** (same as Feb. 7)

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.

CYG NEWS

There is no regular CYG this Sunday due to Super Bowl. Regular CYG will meet on Feb. 11 & 18 with Home Cubes on the 25th. We continue to study the Great and Beautiful God and the Great and Beautiful Life with Living Without Greed and God is Love as our themes. Mark your calendar for March 11. There will be a special speaker here from Braking Traffik. This is an important topic in today's world and something our youth need to be aware for safety's sake. Parents and others are welcome to attend.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Hello Church family.

Christian education is alive and thriving at our wonderful church. In Sunday school, we continue to follow the lectionary. The primary attendees are a group of young women who are becoming accustomed to Bible reading. They are becoming familiar with the books of the Bible, where to locate our scripture passages, and how to ask and answer questions relevant to our interpretation of those passages.

Brooklyn Harned continues to be a valuable resource that the children lean on and are familiar with during nursery time for those children unable to pay attention during Sunday school and for craft time where we all get together to express an active understanding of the lesson.

Likewise, the Wednesday program is thriving. We are blessed to have a team of helpers included, but not limited to: Emily Reed, Joel and Lisa Murphy, Marilyn Ruegsegger, Gary Hahn, Wayne Noring, and Sarah Barten. Attendance is strong and growing, the children learn and laugh and come to know that our church is a safe and caring place where they will be fed, educated, and loved. The multi-dimensional method of teaching the story involving crafts, active play, reading, and sharing does continue to be effective. Sincere thanks to all parents to bring their children, and everyone who helps make the program so successful!

Yours in Christ, Jason Thrasher

FAT SUNDAY

We will celebrate Fat Sunday with a pancake and sausage breakfast on Feb. 11th. Bob Dewar and maybe Arnie will be cooking and the Congregational Life Committee will help set up and clean up for this fellowship event. This is a great opportunity to make and stay connected to our church family. Please plan to stay and join us. Children's Bell Choir will also be playing that day in worship.

ASH WEDNESDAY

We will have an Ash Wednesday worship service on Feb. 14 at 7:00 with the imposition of ashes. This is a tradition of remembrance from whence we come and to where we go as God's created. We do this at the beginning of the Lenten service to start us on our 7 week journey of contemplation approaching Easter.

COMMUNITY PRAYER

The West Liberty Ministerial Association has begun gathering monthly to pray together for the world, our nation, community, schools, and churches. You are invited to join us at the West Liberty Library on Feb. 26 at 6:30.

WORSHIP TEAM

Our worship team gathers every few weeks to help Pastor Marian plan for a given Sunday. The next planning meeting will be Monday, Feb. 5 at 6:30. We will be planning for worship on Feb. 18, the first Sunday of Lent. Anyone interested in helping or sharing ideas is encouraged to join us. The more folks contributing, the more meaningful worship is for all.

Members of Voluntary Action Council: January Report

FOOD PANTRY January Report

I am pleased to report that we had another record breaking month at the food pantry. In November we added a sheet that told the food pantry hours and days open to the applications for a Christmas box. I have always been concerned that we have between 95 and 110 families apply for a Christmas box. I understand that there are 79 Children involved in the back pack program and we were only seeing 20-25 families at The food pantry. This month we saw a total of 37 families representing 106 people visit the food pantry and get food help. We continue to need all food items and any donations large or small are greatly appreciated.

January saw the first time members of the other churches in town were scheduled to help man the food pantry. This sharing of the workload has a two prong benefit. David and Bertie Baker do not have to be at the food pantry every hour it is open. We also hope the volunteers will return to their respective church and share what they have observed like the number of families that visit and the amount of food that goes out the door. Encouraging their member to remember the food pantry when they are looking for a place to volunteer or a place to donate nonperishable food products or money too. Bertie and David both enjoyed meeting the other volunteers and working with them.

We have had some volunteers go to Davenport to the River Bend Food Bank and pick up or food order and bring it to First Church United. This is a lot of work. You handle the order to take it off the pallet on the loading dock, put it in the vehicle, then drive to West Liberty and unload it First Church United. There is a large area where donations are received at the Food Bank and we are allowed to check out the donations and take what we think we can use. Many perishables are available, and we sort through the fresh fruits and vegetables available which are Free, and that is a price I am willing to pay! We also sort through the baked goods because they are free also. There are boxes of donated food and scratch and dent cases which we can purchase for 18 cents a pound. I try to fill my car to the brim when I go there.

I have sent out a revised schedule of churches that are scheduled to work at the food pantry and I have assigned someone from each church to be in charge of seeing this information in the bulletins, the newsletters, and creating signup sheets. I will try to send an email to remind members of each church they are scheduled to help out one month in advance. I dropped the ball this month and did not give the church scheduled for February notice in January.

Thanks for all you do.

Dave Baker, Facilitator of the Voluntary Action Council



**OFFICIAL BOARD SUMMARY
FIRST CHURCH UNITED OFFICAL BOARD MEETING**

January 4, 2018 6:30 p.m.

Official Board meeting called to order by 2017 Board Chair Joe Myers. Those in attendance were: Jim Kiwala, Joel Murphy, Deepak Giri, Bill Koellner, Syd Harned, Vince Ottaway, Pastor Marian, Keith Barnhart, and Katie Thrasher. Those not in attendance were Brenda Miller, Wayne Noring, Susie Lehman.

DEVOTION TIME What could our congregation theme or action be this year? And Installation questions from the Presbyterian Book of Order.

OPEN IN PRAYER by Pastor Marian

APPROVAL OF DOCKET Invoice from Pat Barton, Chair and Vice Chair for 2018, List of names on bank accounts to

Ottumwa Savings Bank. Approve as amended 1) Vince O., 2) Syd H. unanimously approved by the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES motion to approve 1) Syd H., 2) Deepak G., unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION FOR 2018 BOARD CHAIR Board nominates Deepak Giri. Motion to approve 1) Syd H., 2) Vince O., unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION FOR 2018 BOARD VICE CHAIR Syd H. nominates Joel M. Motion to approve 1) Syd H., 2nd Vince O., unanimously approved by the Board.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Keith Barnhart reports that December was good month for receipts. He paid all bills and paid the \$8,000 back to savings that we had borrowed earlier in 2017. Future maintenance of the church was not paid. Keith showed that the Budget of expenses for 2017 was \$106,554.37 and the YTD expenses for 2017 totaled \$107,140.83.

December start of month balance	\$8,015.87
Receipts	\$15,651.33
Sub Total	\$23,667.20
Disbursements	\$20,104.84
Ending Balance	\$3,562.36
Board Balance	(\$3,461.86)

ANNUAL TREASURER HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS

1. Select person to be second name on Checking and Money Market Accounts at WLSB (normally Chairman or Vice Chairman). (Currently Joe Myers and William Koellner). Move to approve William Koellner is removed, Gerald Myers stays on, and Deepak Giri is added 1st Syd H., 2nd Joel M., unanimously approved by the Board. SEE page 2.
2. Send list of Board Members who will have access to Lock Box (#119) to WLSB. Current listed are: Mary Larson, Joe Myers, Butch Nortman, Vince Ottaway, Rob Miller, Wayne Noring, Keith Barnhart. Two people are required to be present to enter lock box.
3. Recommend Annual inventory of Lock Box (#119).
4. Request Motion to let Treasurer transfer funds between Checking and Money Market accounts as needed to keep positive balance in checking account. Move to approve 1st Syd H., 2nd Joel M., unanimously approved by the Board.
5. Request Motion to authorize payment of routine and budgeted bills at discretion of Treasurer. (Lets Treasurer pay routine bills, OR delay payment for a

short time if funds in account are low.) Move to approve 1st Vince O., 2nd Syd H., 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.
7. Request Motion to designate Dollar Amount of Pastor's Salary as Housing Allowance. (Recommended by both denominations for Tax purposes) Has been \$2000.00. Move to approve 1st Vince O., 2nd Syd H., unanimously approved by the Board.
8. Board needs to vote on Presbyterian "Shared Mission Support - Percentage Formula". Recommended division is: General Assembly \$7.73, Synod \$5.40, Presbytery \$23.87. Per Capita Apportionment: 75 Members, Total per member \$37.00 Grand total \$2775.00. Move to accept the recommendation for the shared mission support 1st Syd H., 2nd Vince O.
9. **PLEASE**, use the "PAYMENT REQUEST OR BILL SUBMITTED" sheet when asking for payment from Treasurer. **THANKS!**

This was voted and approved by the Official Board on Thursday evening, January 4, 2018.

- Ministerial Association** *****391 - no changes
Lending *****283 –
 prime responsibility Shannon McNaul, secondary Deepak Giri. Remove Gerald Myers
Voluntary Action *****875 - Prime Dave Baker, secondary Deepak Giri. Remove Gerald Myers
Special Account *****771 - Prime Tom Brooke, secondary Deepak Giri. Remove Gerald Myers
Memorial Committee *****019 - Prime Melissa Johnson, secondary Deepak Giri. Remove Gerald Myers
Congregational Life *****043 - Prime Amrita Giri, secondary Deepak Giri. Remove Gerald Myers
CYG *****890 – Prime Jodi Kelly, secondary Mario Padillo Remove Gerald Myers
CYG *****523 - Prime Jodi Kelly, secondary Mario Padillo Remove Gerald Myers
Endowment Fund *****775 - Prime Gerald Myers, secondary Deepak Giri
Board checking *****534 - Prime Keith Barnhart, secondary Gerald Myers & Deepak Giri. Remove Bill Koellner
Board savings *****181 - Prime Keith Barnhart, secondary Gerald Myers & Deepak Giri. Remove Bill Koellner

2018 Budget

Keith B. reported on the changes made and agreed upon by the Board. The Pastor's salary has increased 4% and the church will pay Pastor Marian's health insurance of \$3288/year. The CE Director, Secretary and Choir director budget lines have also increased to reflect hourly wage increases and the added position of Children's Bell Choir Director. This is a total of 3.44% increase for the 2018 budget year.

PASTOR'S REPORT DEC. 7, 2017-JAN. 4, 2018

Plan And Lead Worship Dec. 10, 17, 24, 24 Eve, 31
 Adult Sunday School
 Lending Tree Wednesdays
 Christmas Food Box Packing Dec. 12
 Display Clothes Dec. 14
 Distribution Christmas Boxes Dec. 15, 16
 Cluster Meeting Iowa City Dec. 14
 Simpson Home Worship Dec. 15
 Advent Study Dec. 11, 18
 Everything Belongs Book Study Dec. 20
 Wow And Chirstmas Program Dec. 13, 20
 Graveside Service Marilyn Irey, Date Of Death 12/10/17
 Remembrance Service At Heath Marilyn Irey Dec. 21
 Min. Assoc. Jan. 3
 Pastoral Visits 3
 Mileage 131
 Move to approve Pastor's report 1st Syd H., 2nd Jim K., unanimously approved by the Board.

LENDING TREE DECEMBER, 2017

Can opener	1.00
Hat	5.00
Grater	3.00
Dresser	50.00
Table	2.00
TV stand	20.00
Pictures	5.00
Book	1.00
Dolls, dust pan	5.00
Blankets	2.00
Donation	2.45
Measuring cups	5.00
Lights	5.00
Rug	3.00
Kitchen misc.	2.00
“	6.00
Lamp	4.00
Total sales	121.45

ONGOING BUSINESS:

1. Nominating committee update-

The Board thanked Vince for agreeing to sit on the Board. Syd H. discussed the troubles the Nominating Committee had in finding people to fill the committees and the Board. Syd said a few people mentioned that they weren't comfortable with a 3 year term. Possible ways to increase the likelihood of finding people to serve could be to combine a couple of the committees, cut out another meeting per year, meet on a different day of the week or move up the time of the Board meeting to 6:00p.m. Board will discuss this more at a future meeting.

Those that have agreed to serve include:

Official Board – Vince Ottaway

Board of Deacon's – Bill and Jan Koellner

Speaking Elders – Tom & Mary Pat Brooke

Endowment Committee – Jan Koellner

Pastoral Relations Committee – Harold & Evelyn Wilkerson

Congregational Life Committee – Letha Ottaway and Dinette Myers

Christian Ed. Committee – Breona Boorn-Maurer

Memorial Committee – Jan McCrabb & Syd Harned

Trustee Committee – Darren Brooke

Community Center Board – Mary Larson

Nominating does not have a full slate to present to the congregation at the January 14th Annual Meeting.

Church Cleaning List -

1. Clean out/up the Fellowship Hall closet - Syd H. and Susie L. – done.
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 leak – no update
2. Sanctuary Carpet- Syd H. explained that this is on hold till a meeting occurs to decide if the dais needs to be moved. Deepak G. has tried many times to contact him but has not been successful. Deepak has contacted the corporate office now and asked this gentleman come to the next Board meeting to discuss possibilities of how the dais could be arranged. Board discussed going to other churches to see their Sanctuary's and how they are set up. Agreed it would be a good idea to talk to other churches who have gone through Sanctuary remodels.
3. Window in south classroom – Jim K. reported that he and Ken Wright have a plan to look at the window in the next few days to fix it.

Outside the Church

1. NE wall of new wing has water mark - Jim K. reports that Ruesch looked at it last year but waiting for it to rain again. This will have to wait for the spring/summer.
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.
3. Volunteer Trees in east lawn removed - Joe Myers will take care of this in the spring
4. Door overhangs on NE wing near kitchen to prevent rain entering - Joe M. will talk to Mark Johnson.
5. The light in the parking lot is out. Jim K. will call Kessler to fix it.
6. The tulip tree and others need trimming.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Community Garden – Pastor Marian reports that Ed Moreno has applied for a grant to include 5 fruit trees and a pop-up greenhouse. He needs Board approval to plant these trees. Motion to approve Ed Moreno's recommendations 1st Syd H., 2nd Joel M., unanimously approved by the Board.
2. Necrology report – Marilyn Irely Dec. 10, 2017
3. Manse Dishwasher, disposal and basement ceiling tile – the manse dishwasher is not draining and is rusting, which then breaks off into it. The basement ceiling tile is drooping in the basement due to the water leaking. Board recommends calling Dane Lovell. Pastor Marian will call him. Pastor Marian also wanted the Board to know that Blaine Kelly has ordered a water softener pump and furnace filter for the manse and will install those soon.
4. Move to put in the January minutes the names of the various bank account treasurer's and Amrita Giri is accepted as Congregational Life Committee Treasurer 1st Joel M., 2nd Syd H., unanimously approved by the Board.

MINISTRY & PROGRAM REPORTS:

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

Pleased to report again that the children are well taken care of and educated in our wonderful church.

We continue to follow the lectionary in Sunday school. With good results... The regular attendees recognize the lessons from previous weeks and apply them to current teachings. Brooklyn Harned helped with a wonderful craft and lesson about M&M's, connecting the letters to the Christmas story. The kids really enjoyed the lesson and appreciated the gift!

The Christmas play was a success, and attendance was very high. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the program and potluck. It was a fun night. It is safe to say that there is a good recognition of the story and meaningfulness of Christ's birth amongst our young ones.

As the new year dawns, we begin planning for next semester. The Christian Education Committee will meet on January 7 following the service. If you have any input about anything you would like to see covered: any lessons, games, crafts or songs that would be of value to our next year, please let me know.

It truly takes a village to raise a good child and we are successful at that effort. Thank you for your continued support, and input.

Humbly at your service and in service to Christ's mission, Jason

ADJOURNMENT- move to adjourn 1st Syd H., 2nd Jim K., unanimously approved by the Board.

PRAYER CONCERNS

CLOSING PRAYER

MEETING February 1, 2017 at 6:30p.m.

Church Workers

February 4

Communion

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Dean Phelps & Dave Baker

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Joel Murphy, Jim Kiwala, Butch Nortman,

Karen Nortman, Katie Thrasher

USHER: Joe Myers

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Dave & Bertie Baker

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Jim Kiwala

February 11

Chancel Choir/Fat Sunday Pancake Breakfast

USHER: Walt Lehman

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Betty Burton & Evelyn Evans

ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

POWER POINT: Open

February 18

Communion/Special Music

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Dean Phelps & Dave Baker

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Joel Murphy, Jim Kiwala, Butch Nortman,

Karen Nortman, Katie Thrasher

USHER: Open

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Pat Brooke & Shirley Sterner

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Open

February 25

Chancel Choir

USHER: Dave Baker

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR: Thrasher Family

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Open

Communion preparers for February are

Ken & Jo Noble



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

23 Joe Lehman

25 Norma Brooks

25 Doug Phelps

25 BJ Newcomb

25 Aniston Murphy

27 Tom Lehman

27 Jacob Henderson



Anniversaries in February

14th Roger & Dee Johnson