



FIRST CHURCH UNITED
 1100 North Calhoun Street, West Liberty, Iowa 52776
 Office—627-2989 Activity Area—627-2446
 Pastor, Marian Hart
 Secretary, Katie Thrasher
 March 2018



Dear Friends in Christ,

I recently asked a group to describe Jesus for me. Silence. Followed by, “I think he was a medium sized person, with light skin.” I was actually looking for character traits, not a physical description, but a great point was made: we like to think Jesus ‘looks’ (acts) like us. And we are so mistaken.

Jesus tells Peter that he has limited thinking and understanding of God’s ways. Peter is rebuked for wanting to change the plan and definition of God’s Messiah. Jesus led a revolt of another kind than Peter imagined, preaching and teaching of God’s kingdom. One where love, healing, grace, forgiveness, inclusiveness reigns; not one where more fighting and oppression divided people even further.

Scripture tells us we are made in the image of God. That we are to be Christ-like. Lent is traditionally a season to ponder such things. How are you doing? How have you reflected back the characteristics of our Lord? Traditionally we re-discover ways through prayer-listening, as well as talking to God; fasting-doing without something sacrificially or to change a bad habit, and sometimes taking up a new, healthier habit; and alms giving-giving to the needy. These are called disciplines because they require work, time and effort to fulfill.

We are half-way to Easter on our Lenten journey. How will we grow into the Divine Image in these remaining weeks? Take the opportunities God puts in front of you to be agents of love. Don’t let yourself be limited. The same power that rose Jesus from the grave lives in us!

Live as Easter people,
 Pastor Marian

CHURCH RECORD

February 2018

DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
February 4	\$1,883.00	37
February 11	\$1,777.86	67
February 18	\$902.58	50
February 25	\$2,720.00	60



Music Notes

During the month of March, we will be sharing Lenten music selections to help you prepare your heart and mind for the meaning of this season, culminating with our Palm Sunday service. Are you prepared? Join us and feel the spirit.

Sun., March 4: CHIME CHOIR

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

Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30

Sun., March 11: SPECIAL MUSIC

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

Sun., March 18: SPECIAL MUSIC

Wed., March 21: (same as March 7)

Sun., March 25: [Palm Sunday] CHANCEL CHOIR and YOUTH

Wed., March 28: (same as March 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.

BRAKING TRAFFIK

CYG is sponsoring a Braking Traffik presentation on March 11 at 5 pm. Public is invited. Important information will be shared on how to prevent human trafficking. This has become an atrocity of epidemic proportion in today's world. It is big business. We must work together to fight it.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Hello Church Leaders,

I am pleased to report once again that all is going well with our youth programming.

Attendance at WOW continues to grow. An already strong program is being promoted by the kids within it, who invite their friends. We are deep into our Lenten lessons, trying to give the kids a sense of what this season of reflection and purification means to us as Christians. Our multi-faceted format keeps the lessons fresh. We have done yoga, bell choir, singing, crafts, games, service, and study. We are fortunate to have the help of many adults in the church and parents who volunteer their time.

Sunday school also is succeeding at ushering in this new age of young Christians who will take the helm soon. We learn to study the Bible and reflect on what is in the lectionary. There are also games and crafts, and the kids enjoy coming into the sanctuary for communion.

Special thanks go to all those who help when I am required by my full-time employment to be absent from church. It is a challenge, to say the least, to not be present for my CE duties, but I know that the kids are in good hands.

We look forward to the upcoming Easter season, and our near – future lessons will be focusing on what that means to us. I expect good things. :-)

At your service, Jason Thrasher

CYG PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The annual CYG Pancake Breakfast will be held at FCU on March 10 from 7-11 am. Youth are asked to come at 6:30 to help set up, serve, and stay for clean up. Menu includes pancakes, sausage, biscuits and sausage gravy, eggs, juice, and milk. Free will donations accepted.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

There will be an ecumenical Good Friday service at Our Redeemer Church on March 30 at 7 pm.

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Bob Dewar and Arnie Hart will prepare a spaghetti dinner to be served after church on March 11. All are invited to stay and fellowship with us. A free will donation will be accepted, with proceeds added to the annual One Great Hour of Sharing/Week of Compassion Offering on Easter. This offering helps those in disaster torn, poverty, and war stricken areas to become safe and self-sustaining again. Both organizations have trained teams and resources ready to roll at a moment's notice. Their experience with emergency situations is invaluable to those who need help. Please give generously.

EASTER

We will celebrate a short version of Easter vigil pondside at Ken and Jo Noble's again this year, beginning at 6:15. (Dress casually and according to the weather) Scripture readings around a bonfire, ending with the resurrection of Christ as the sun rises, is a special way to start our Resurrection Sunday. We will have an 8:00 worship service at the church followed by Easter brunch and egg hunt at 9. Our 10:00 worship service will complete our church family's celebration together.

Food Pantry report for February 2018

We had an interesting month. The weather was typical for Iowa in February. We had some extreme cold and then deep snow that slowed us down again. The last few days of the month when the weather cooperated we saw an uptick in guests. They came when Marian and or Katie was there and were served at that time.

The number of visitors was down this month. We did see a few new faces so maybe we are reaching more people. This month we only had 23 families come to the food pantry representing 56 people. We did have 34 total visits and a total of 86 people were served. Donations received from the community totaled 693 pounds, with the majority coming from the food drive held by the West Liberty High School Stars on Stage competition bring in over 293 jars of peanut butter weighing 299 pounds. The total weight of the donation by the Stars on Stage food drive was 531 pounds of food collected. If you see students, school personnel, or community members involved with this program please stop them and say Thank You for your contribution to the food pantry!

I copied a couple of recipe for Venison Meatloaf and included a spice packet along with it, and a recipe for a Venison Burrito bowl. I hope to have a Venison Chili recipe with a spice packet this week.

We had the pleasure of working with some volunteers from St. Joseph's Catholic Church this month. Our Redeemer Lutheran Church will be sending some volunteers in the month of March. First Church United will be asked to send volunteers the month of April.

I have a list of the food pantries in Muscatine County and have posted it at our pantry. I hope to find a list of the food pantries in Cedar and Johnson Counties so we can direct guests to the food pantries in the area where they live. Bertie and I stopped at the food pantry in North Liberty to see their operation and visit with the volunteer director a couple weeks ago and it was an enlightening visit.

I have been putting together a power point presentation to show to give potential volunteers an idea of what we do and how we serve the guest our guests. I am also showing why we go to the River Bend Food Bank in Davenport and get as much as we can with the price breaks they offer. I am very interested in having a number of people representing as many organizations so they can spread the word that there is a food pantry here in West Liberty that they can not only support the food pantry but guide people they feel could use some help to come in for a visit.

Bertie and I would like to be able to take a week or at least a weekend off now and then to travel and know the food pantry will operate without a hitch.

Dave Baker, Community Food Bank director



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

February 1, 2018

Official Board meeting called to order by Board Chair Deepak Giri. Those in attendance were: Joel Murphy, Holly Gingerich, Joe Myers, Pastor Marian, Keith Barnhart, and Katie Thrasher. Those not in attendance were Brenda Miller, Syd Harned, Vince Ottaway, Jim Kiwala. Not a quorum.

CALL TO ORDER by Deepak Giri

DEVOTION TIME Pastor Marian asks what do you want Jesus to remember about you.

OPEN IN PRAYER

APPROVAL OF DOCKET add correspondence

APPROVAL OF MINUTES No additions or corrections

TREASURER'S REPORT

Keith Barnhart reports that he moved \$5000 from savings to checking to cover bills in January. The larger expenses in January were grounds maintenance (snow removal), quarterly insurance expense, and the quarterly Presbytery and Disciples mission pledge.

Board discussed how we might be able to streamline contributions. Holly offered to talk to JJ at West Liberty State Bank about automatic monthly or weekly contributions.

We received \$1176.50 from Watters Estate Fund. It was deposited into the Board checking account. The \$90,000 from the Roth Estate went to Endowment Fund.

January start of month balance	\$3,564.36
Receipts	\$102,715.56
Sub Total	\$106,277.92
Disbursements	\$103,616.63
Ending Balance	\$2,661.29
Board Balance	(\$3,381.25)

PASTOR'S REPORT JAN. 4-FEB. 1, 2018

Office hours kept as possible

Plan and lead worship Jan. 7,14, 21, 28, pulpit exchange to UMWL on Jan. 21

CYG meal planning, shopping, and co-leading lessons Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 +Board meeting

Lending Tree on Wednesdays excluding Jan. 24

WOW on Wednesdays excluding Jan. 24

Lending Tree Jan. 20

People in Ministry lunch and study Jan. 9

Camp Wyoming Timber Mgt. conf. call Jan. 9

Synod School Planning conf. call Jan. 11

Presbytery meeting Jan. 13

Simpson Home worship Jan. 19

Timber Mgt meeting at Camp Wyoming Jan. 21

Minister's Institute Jan. 22-24- Attended workshops on Engaging Worship, Being a Presence in the Community (social justice), and Civility (crossing political, religious, etc. lines with open minds and hearts), keynote was centered around knowing who you are as an individual, exploring how we bump into each other's cores and how we need to be flexible on a lot of things, a lot of talk about cultural intelligence, being aware of what matters to those around us and why, and how all of this fits and works as we are church together

Community prayer gathering Jan. 29

Visitation for Harold (Jr.) Wilkerson Feb. 1, Date of death Jan. 29, 2018-Necrology report

Mileage-567

Pastoral visits-13

ONGOING BUSINESS:

1. Nominating committee update – Official Board- Holly Gingerich. Board welcomes Holly and thanks her for serving.

Church Cleaning List -

1. 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- Meeting with Joel Skinner was canceled due to visitation tonight. Deepak does not believe we need to reschedule now as we have pin pointed the three areas we want to concentrate on fixing or redesigning. These are 1) Flooring. New carpet installed. 2) widen the steps in the choir loft and dias. 3) make the stage wider. Deepak suggests we have some ideas drawn up by Pat Barten, make multiple copies and discuss with the congregation for input and ideas before anything is decided.
3. Hallway Lights – Lights have been replaced. There is now a light in the lounge that needs to be replaced. Katie will ask Ken Wright about doing this.
4. Mouse problem – Deepak will talk to Lamar with Boch Pest to come back and either set more traps or set up different traps.

Outside the Church- All tabled till March meeting.

1. NE wall of new wing has water mark – will look again this spring/summer.
2. Door near sanctuary entrance, sidewalk cracks, and spalled concrete in handicap area - not yet done but will be looked in the spring.
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. - update
6. The tulip tree and others need trimming.

Manse

1. Manse Dishwasher, disposal and basement ceiling tile. - Pastor Marian called Dane Lovell but he has not called back. Deepak will call Dane to see if he can help with this project. Pastor Marian said that Blaine Kelly has ordered the water softener filter and just needs to install it.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Necrology report – Harold Wilkerson January 29, 2018

2. Organ/Piano breaker keeps flipping off- Joel M. explained this has happened a few times now. The breakers are marked incorrectly and either Joel or Arnie will label them correctly. Joel recommends the 7th Day Adventists use a different plug when they use the Sanctuary on Saturday mornings. He thinks this might be a possibility of why the breakers are getting tripped. It is also possible that with so much plugged into the organ/clavinova area, the breaker, which is 40 years old, may just not be able to handle everything.
3. Endowment final report for 2017 and updated 2018 with new investments- Joe Myers reports that we ended the 2017 year with a total investment amount of \$941,183.19. Then with the recently invested \$90,000. from the Roth Estate the total amount investment has reached \$1,031,153.19. Discussion on Camp scholarships. Pastor Marian will write up a sort of direction sheet for those families wishing to ask Endowment for a camp scholarship. Katie will then see that those families get the flyer.
4. Cub Scouts monthly update? – Koren Kober, cub scout leader, approached Katie to see if the Board would like a periodic update on what the Cub scouts are doing. Board agrees this is a good idea. Katie will contact Koren to let her know.
5. Narthex outside door won't latch, is stuck. – Deepak will look into this.
6. Katie out of the office Feb. 12-16. Marilyn R. and Bill K. handling some of the office tasks. Also, Joel Murphy will sub for Jason T. during Children's Sunday School on Feb. 11. Pastor Marian explained that Feb. 18 is the First Sunday of Lent and will be a healing service. Kids will be included in the service so there is no Sunday School that morning.

MINISTRY & PROGRAM REPORTS:

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

ADJOURNMENT

PRAYER CONCERNS

CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT MEETING March 1 , 2018 at 6:30p.m.

Church Workers

March 4

Communion/Chime Choir

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Tom & Mary Pat Brooke

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Mark Johnson, Lisa Murphy, Syd Harned,

Rob Miller, Shirley Sterner

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Keith & Margaret Barnhart

ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

POWER POINT: Todd Woodburn

CANDLE LIGHTER: Jude Woodburn

March 11

Daylight Savings begins/Special Music

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Marilyn Ruegsegger

ORGANIST: Lori Brooke

POWER POINT: Nicolette Woodburn

CANDLE LIGHTER: Tenley Murphy

March 18

Communion/Special Music

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Tom & Mary Pat Brooke

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Mark Johnson, Lisa Murphy, Syd Harned,

Rob Miller, Shirley Sterner

USHER: Keith Barnhart

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Susan Deahr & Jay Steen

ORGANIST: Brenda Miller

POWER POINT: Keith Barnhart

March 25

Palm Sunday/Chancel Choir with kids/Communion

SPEAKING ELDERS:

Tom & Mary Pat Brooke

COMMUNION SERVERS:

Mark Johnson, Lisa Murphy, Syd Harned,

Rob Miller, Shirley Sterner

USHER: Tom Brooke

GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:

Keith & Margaret Barnhart

ORGANIST: Marianne Phelps

POWER POINT: Bill Koellner

CANDLE LIGHTER: Alice Thrasher



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

4th Rich Hambright

7th Chris Kruse

9th Jarod Williams

9th Kinsley Dean Probst

10th Butch Nortman

31st Yvonne Gardenier



MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

3rd Travis & Breona Maurer

15th Marvin & Carol Irwin

**Communion preparers for March are
Ken & Jo Noble**