



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



Dear Friends in Christ,

Chances are by the time you read this, we will have observed the unofficial end of summer in our Labor Day weekend festivities. I'm going to ask you what I asked folks at our recent CYG leadership retreat. It is somewhat a carryover from VBS. It is somewhat a take from my old school days when we were always asked to write a report on "What I Did On My Summer Vacation." So I ask you to think about your summer and look for God's presence. Where did you see, experience, encounter God? What lesson did God teach you? We'll be coming back together soon in worship and should be sharing our God sightings and stories with each other.

I'll go first: this past week God's timing put me in Dr. Leon's office at just the moment when a woman grieving her pet needed a sympathetic word. I witnessed parents' pride and love demonstrate a taste of the Heavenly Father's love for us. A song from our morning worship brought tears to someone's eyes. CYG leadership is an amazing group of folks with a love for Jesus and youth ministry, willing to serve and be used by God. My milkweed patch participates in the cycle of life for the Monarch butterfly.

It is so possible to live holy, ordinary days. What about you? Share a God sighting today with someone who might really need to hear it.

Pastor Marian

## CHURCH RECORD

August 2018

DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
August 5	\$1,473.98	40
August 12	\$644.00	74
August 19	\$1,705.00	38
August 26	\$1,976.01	58



### Music Notes

Happy Fall, One and All. We're sure you'll be excited to know that choir music has been selected & planned for the 2018-2019 choir year. "New & Old" should be the theme for this year. It could apply to the music we sing & play, the traditions we will continue & begin anew, and even the musicians as we bring our Youth Bell Choir to a new level and at the same time savor our seasoned veterans!

There is even a new blue music calendar to distribute at our first rehearsals. But until then, here is the first month's schedule.

#### Sun., Sept. 2: SPECIAL MUSIC

Wed., Sept. 5: Chime Choir - 6:45 to 7:30

Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30

#### Sun., Sept. 9: CHANCEL CHOIR

Wed., Sept. 12: (same as Sept. 5)

#### Sun., Sept. 16: CHIME CHOIR with YOUTH BELL CHOIR

Wed., Sept. 19: (same as Sept. 5)

#### Sun., Sept. 23: SPECIAL MUSIC

Wed., Sept. 26: (same as Sept. 5)

#### Sun., Sept. 30: CHANCEL CHOIR

## **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WIDE GATHERING**

Did you know that many of our city planners deliberately created 'red lines' separating black from white and rich from poor citizens? Such lines could be a set of railroad tracks, hence the cliché of being born on the 'wrong side of the tracks'; or as is the case in Louisville, an interstate highway. Such engineering obstacles prohibit growth of neighborhoods and small businesses, and were intended to perpetuate poverty and segregation. I had the honor of marching to promote awareness and protest the continuation of such injustice while at the PW Church Wide Gathering. We heard from city officials the plans to end and correct such obstacles to equity.

Every time I walked down a certain hallway I was reminded of the call to fight violence against women. A clothesline of red T-shirt artwork was displayed, created by victims or family members of women who had been abused, raped, or even murdered. It was a sobering and powerful way to again encourage us to stand on the side of justice and equity.

I attended a workshop called "Beyond Diversity." The speaker was a young woman who helped us determine ways we unknowingly discriminate. It was very enlightening. She was one of our evening preachers and her message brought me to tears as she described her personal story, her conviction to work for immigration fairness, and the local law enforcement having a celebration after assisting ICE harassment in her town. Risking her own safety she showed up to crash their celebration.

All of the historical videos about our PW history were fun to watch. I'm proud to be part of such a strong group of women truly making a difference in the world.

Another preacher whose message impacted me spoke of Jesus putting on flesh, as we put on a garment, and wearing it. Every Advent I meditate on re-fleshing Jesus and what it means for me to do so. Just hearing this in a way that stressed Jesus' intention and choice gave the Incarnation an additional umph.

There were many other little things that will be in my mind and heart as precious memories and lessons learned. Not the least being the conversations in the car rides there and back. Thank you PWEIA for helping me make the trip through providing scholarship monies. I've been blessed.

Pastor Marian

**THANK YOU** to my church family for all the prayers, cards, visits, kind thoughts & everything you did for me to get me back on the road to recovery. It meant so much to me & I appreciate each & every kindness. I'm still on the road to recovery but getting home & being able to get out some is wonderful. All of you are very special to me. You are the best friends anyone could have.

Thanks again, Shirley Sterner

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT**

W.O.W. will begin September 5<sup>th</sup> with dinner at 5:45 and end at 7:30p.m. Each week we will have dinner, lesson, craft, and a game time. The Children's Bell choir will also practice a couple times a month and play one Sunday a month. We have learned some valuable lessons from our recent VBS group/time structure, so we will continue to have at least two groups that will rotate for the craft and game time.

We encourage volunteers for preparing/serving dinner, craft time, and dinner clean-up as well. Those sign up sheets will be on the buffet.

We will not have W.O.W. on September 19 for Homecoming and October 31 for Halloween.

## **FROM THE C.E. DIRECTOR**

Hello, Church Family.

Welcome to another seasonal transition, as we turn from summer to fall. As we are about to embark on the mission of a new semester of Christian Education, we have much to be thankful for. This ritual Sabbath, the rite we impose by taking some time off from the usual Wednesday night & Sunday morning routine during the summer, has been restorative, and insightful. It's a real blessing to catch a breath and orient your descent before diving fully into another church year. Funny thing is, I maintained the habit of lectionary sermon prep, via the podcasts I listen to while commuting, Pulpit Fiction, and Working Preacher. This came in handy on the week of August 5<sup>th</sup>, when I had the joy of leading worship during Pastor Marian's absence, since I already had several sermons worth of ideas coalescing in my head.

There was some relative vacation, however, since being free from the cycle of planning and executing a twice-weekly children's program allowed me to focus on feeding my own faith. I read a funny and poignant book by Rob Bell called 'What is the Bible'. I used my new Harcourt's study Bible to add historical context & significance to the progressive march through the lectionary readings each week. And, true gratitude and respect goes to Emily Reed, who took the helm on

steering a fantastically successful VBS voyage this past summer. Also, I attended Synod School, which is like a week of Heaven on Earth.

This was the Thrasher family's fifth consecutive Synod School, this year on the week of July 25<sup>th</sup>. Each time I go, I am further convinced that a life of following and professing faith in Christ is my calling. The dutiful, faith-filled living examples of so many CE Directors, Pastors and dedicated laypeople all working together to create a temporary community for a week each summer in Storm Lake is inspirational and shows me what a viable life dedicated to the church can be like. Perhaps most poignant for me was our morning Convocation speaker, Jason Santos. He spoke of many insights relevant to our church structure, how we arrange the practices of worship, and the Church at large in relation to contemporary and historical humanity. And, what follows is a smattering of some of my notes that pertain to our CE program here at First Church United.

...*"do every aspect of the worship gathering with the intentionality of creating a Sabbath Community."*

...*"engage in practices that allow them to connect to God, to be the refuge from their storm, that harkens to the foretaste of Kingdom living."*

...*"invite them into a rhythm & a practice of life that will sustain them as Christians in the future."*

...*"what we win them with is what we win them to."*

...*"Habituation(to becoming regular church-goers as adults) requires intergenerationality. This necessitates stored memories, transferred patterns, and habits. Memories of what it means to be a worshiper are connected to communal environments, to places, routines, and habits."*

...*"set up routines for church recognizing that we engage in conscious bodily performance. Successful examples (ie, the Taize community), involve Acceptance, Work, and Deep Freedom"*

...*"Look a person in the eye when Passing the Peace, because you are engaging in not a perfunctory act, but engaging in a spiritual practice reminding one another that we can dwell in peace, and spread that peace if we remain still and give love without intention for personal gain or manipulation."*

...*"how do you take this peace, this mission, a sense of vocation with you back into the secular world? Now that you have allowed yourself to experience the rhythms of sabbath consciously applied, there is still stuff to do together. And, the joy and fellowship of learning is a beautiful portrait of the kingdom. The church will transform who you are. Now take the practices of this space, and turn them into acts of mercy and love and hope for the world you return to."*

This last piece was a common theme, which he referred to as a 'glad descent'. I could go on at length, so enraptured by wisdom of Jason's perspective. However, needing to make my own 'glad descent' into the world, and weave these seemingly disparate threads into a common garment applicable to my own ministry, I'll summarize how I will let these insights be applied in practice.

- Intergenerational worship is key to life-long church attendance, and sustaining church membership numbers. Adults, please come to WOW and interact, relate to, eat with, gain joy from, and mentor our youth. Likewise, children will spend more time learning the rhythms, and practices of our 'corporate' Sunday morning worship, rather than in a segregated, separate Sunday School.
- Establishing situational learning habits via consistent programming, key phrases, and 'job-related' expectations for how to translate the Word into practical action as Christians will form the structure of WOW and Sunday School.
- Our church will be a Sabbath community. We will gain strength to fight the good fight beyond its walls through the fellowship, faith we profess, and purpose we find here as Christ's disciples.

Here's hoping that you also found some rest and some peace this Summer. I'm looking forward to another wonder-filled year shepherding our youth, and any other Christians who wish to join me on this journey. Thanks again for all of your support. And, as usual, please let me know if you have any input that will help this ministry succeed.

Yours in Christ,  
Jason Thrasher

## CYG NEWS

CYG Kickoff will be Sept. 16. at WLCF from 5-7. Parents are invited to come for registration, information, and to sign up to help with meal preparation. Youth grades 6-12 will spend the evening with the old faithful trio of food, fellowship, and fun.

Regular CYG will begin Sept. 23 at FCU, 5-7 pm. The band still needs singers. And we could use a couple more cube leaders, especially a male for middle school boys. Please pray for CYG as we prepare for another awesome year.

## Food Pantry Report for July 2018

We had the pleasure of working with Sheryl Brown and Diane Beaver from the Atalissa Christian Church this month. We continue to see more people every month.

We served 38 families representing 120 people. There was a total of 56 families that came to the food pantry and we served 172 people total.

We had a gift of nonperishable food from West Liberty Foods this month that was gathered at their annual golf outing at Deer Run Golf Course in Coralville. The total from West Liberty Foods was 477 pounds of food. Atalissa Christian Church provided 36 pounds of cleaning supplies. Becky from the Cedar Rapids area provided 95 pounds of food this month also. From all the sources of gifts to the food pantry we received 820 pounds. I have not seen the total from the community garden but there were fresh vegetables to share the month of July.

We look forward to having help from the West Liberty United Methodist Church in the month of August and St. Joseph Catholic Church will be providing help in September.

### **Food Pantry Report for August 2018**

We had the pleasure of working with a number of volunteers from the West Liberty United Methodist Church this month. We served 30 families representing 101 people. Some families visited more than once this month the total number of families visiting the food pantry was 47 (over half the families visited a second time) and with the extra visits the number of people served was 149. (Again about half the number of people served)

Atalissa Christian Church provided 30 pounds of cleaning supplies. Our secret supporter “Becky” from Cedar Rapids provided 441 pounds of food this month. From all the sources of gifts to the food pantry we received 1,221 pounds. I have not seen the total from the community garden but there were fresh vegetables to share in the month of August. All these wonderful donations kept us busy sorting and stocking shelves, oh what a great way to spend our volunteer hours serving others.

Volunteers gave the food pantry 46 hours. Considering that we were only open 9 hours this month I think we did a great job of serving our guests and restocking the shelves to have the best variety of items on the shelves. This shows it takes about 5 volunteer hours for every hour the food pantry is open.

We look forward to having help from St. Joseph Catholic Church in September and Our Redeemer Lutheran Church will be providing help in October.

Here is the list for the rest of the year:

**November** –First Church United, Dave Baker is in charge

**December** – West Liberty Christian Fellowship, Julie McKillip is in charge

Sincerely, Dave Baker, Facilitator

### **A ‘Stewardship’ Poem to Ponder inspired by song from The Jungle Book, Bare Necessities**

We give for bare necessities, like gas and electricity, Office supplies and salaries, and cleaning products and the like.

We give beyond the bare necessities, to help support our ministries,

Like blood drives, and the food pantry, VBS and CYG and congregational life.

After we give to all of these we pray for generosity, to take a chance, trust God and see

The endless possibilities from gifts of talents, treasure and our time.

We’ve got the bare necessities, and simple generosity, forget about your worry and your strife,

God blesses us so we can be blessing beyond our wildest dreams....

Aaah yeah!



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

**August 2, 2018 6:30 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER** by Deepak Giri. Those in attendance were Brenda Miller, Jim Kiwala, Syd Harned, and Secretary Katie Thrasher

**DEVOTION TIME** – Brenda M. shared about a book she is reading written by musician Laura Story about her song “Blessings”. Board shared how our faith is reflected in how we react to tragedy.

**APPROVAL OF DOCKET** - Motion to approve the docket 1st Syd H., 2nd Jim K., unanimously approved by the Board.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - Motion to approve the minutes 1st Syd H., 2nd Brenda M., unanimously approved by the Board.

**TREASURER’S REPORT** – Keith Barnhart submitted a written report in his absence. It is as follows: Total paid for Sanctuary project: \$18,121.40

\$1,050.00 from Wilkerson memorial  
\$17,071.40 from Watters Funds

Watters funds show negative \$1,484.21. Two more deposits will be received in 2018. The total should be about \$2,400.00.

Borrowed \$4,000.00 from savings for operating. Total borrowed from savings is \$12,000.00.

Insurance bill of \$2,098.50 is due August 15.

City bill for July \$779.52. City had notified church about high water usage. Paid Lynch's Plumbing in June for fixing outside faucet that was broke.

Respectfully submitted, Keith E Barnhart, Treasurer.

Discussion on Watter's Fund. Move to approve Treasurer's report 1<sup>st</sup> Jim K., 2<sup>nd</sup> Brenda M., unanimously approved by the Board.

June start of the month balance	\$805.44
Receipts	\$12,639.87
Sub Total	\$13,445.31
Disbursements	\$12,357.83
Ending Balance	\$1,087.48
Board Balance	(\$8,437.02)

July start of the month balance	\$1,087.48
Receipts	\$24,372.35
Sub Total	\$25,459.83
Disbursements	\$23,510.44
Ending Balance	\$1,949.39
Board Balance	(\$10,870.11)

#### **PASTOR'S REPORT JUNE 7-AUG. 2, 2018**

Office hours kept as possible

Tending live flower beds/planters

Plan and lead worship June 10, 17, 24, July 1, 8, 15, 29

Simpson worship June 15, July 13

Christian Ed. meeting

Packed up Lending Tree for pick up from Salvation

Army on June 21

Loaded up remaining Lending Tree stuff, took to

Goodwill

Cleaned Lending Tree site

Annual music ministry planning meeting June 26

Pastor's group/lunch June 27

Presbytery meeting June 28, Goodwill drop, dry cleaning

communion table cloths

Cleaning fair stand July 1

Funeral Donald Wilson (non-member)

Pork prep July 14

Hamburger prep July 16

Clean/set up fair stand July 16

Shop fair stand, numerous times

Work fair July 18, 19

Pre-Synod School committee work July 20-22

Synod School July 22-27

Greeted RAGBRAI guests July 27

Cont. ED. -Presbyterian Women Worldwide Gathering

Aug. 1-5-will report later

Pastoral calls-17

Mileage-116

Move to approve Pastor's Report 1<sup>st</sup> Jim K., 2<sup>nd</sup> Brenda M., unanimously approved by the Board.

#### **ON-GOING BUSINESS:**

##### **Inside the Church**

1. Total expenses for the Sanctuary Carpet project.- Everyone has been paid for the Sanctuary project. The total cost was \$18,121.40.
2. Immersion Baptismal tub has been fixed by Blaine Kelly.

##### **Outside the Church**

1. Door near sanctuary entrance, sidewalk cracks, and spalled concrete in handicap area -Tabled till September meeting.
2. The tulip tree and others need trimming- Tabled till September meeting.
3. Cleanup last evergreen on east side of church. - Tabled till September meeting.
4. Two of the four outside water faucets have been capped off due to leaking - could cost \$2,000 to repair them. - Tabled till September meeting.
5. Spray weeds in parking lot, need more help to keep grounds cared for.- Deepak G. will talk to Tom Brooke about people helping. At the September meeting the Board will pick a date for an outside church clean up time.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Necrology report - Donald Wilson death 6/29/18 (non-member)
2. Start planning for stewardship program for fall. - Tabled till September meeting.
3. What is our arrangement with Lisa Murphy on her counseling sessions? Syd H., and Katie T. reports Lisa and a coworker meet at the church with students/families when there is not another place for them to meet in town and there are no other activities going on in the church. Board gave approval years ago for her and a coworker of Bethany Health Services counseling to use the church as needed. The Board continues to give approval for use of the church.
4. Update status of endowment fund.- Reports submitted by Joe Myers reviewed. Move to

- approve reports 1<sup>st</sup> Syd H., 2<sup>nd</sup> Jim K.  
unanimously approved by the Board.
5. Ongoing mouse situation in building. Brenda M. reports she continues to see evidence of mice in the Fellowship Hall closet. Discussion on how to control this issue. We need to have more information on the arrangement with La Mar Pest Control. Brenda M. will talk to Joe M. who knows the arrangement and Jim K. is going to put down sticky traps.
  6. Vacuum cleaner for church, Brenda talked with Brett. Brenda M. is going to research vacuums and bring information on possible vacuums to use at the church to the next Board meeting.
  7. Childcare/Sunday School assistance. Syd H. asks the Board what the options could be now that Brookelyn Harned is going to college. Board needs to discuss funding for this position and options for the future.
  8. Two of the four outside water faucets have been capped off due to leaking - could cost \$2,000 to repair them. Board needs to vote. - Tabled till September meeting
  9. FCU Website update – Deepak G. spoke with Ethan Anderson about some possibilities. Tabled till September meeting
  10. Creating Archive Tab. Deepak G. suggests we create an Archive tab on the website. We currently have archives at the library but have not added to it in many years. Tabled till September meeting.
  11. Syd H. suggests we highlight our church library books periodically.
  12. Balance of Lending Tree account. Should it go into the general fund? Tabled till September meeting.
  13. Mower outside of the shed. Deepak will ask Tom Brooke if anyone is having trouble getting it into the shed.
  14. Jim K. will replace ceiling tiles and lights in the lounge/hallway this Sunday.

**MINISTRY & PROGRAM REPORTS** - none reported

**ADJOURNMENT** - Motion 1st Jim K., 2nd Brenda M., unanimously approved by the Board.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**NEXT MEETING** – September 6, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.

## Church Workers

**September 2**

Communion

**SPEAKING ELDERS:**

Keith Barnhart & Mary Larson

**COMMUNION SERVERS:**

Joe Myers, Dinette Myers, Brenda Miller,  
Karen Nortman, Vince Ottaway, Letha Ottaway

**USHER:** Tom Brooke

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Norma Brooks

**ORGANIST:** Brenda Miller

**POWER POINT:** Bill Koellner

**September 9**

Chancel Choir

**USHER:** Tom Brooke

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Evelyn Wilkerson

**ORGANIST:** Marianne Phelps

**POWER POINT:** Katie Thrasher

**CANDLE LIGHTER:** Alice Thrasher

**September 16**

Communion/Chime Choir & Bell Choir

**SPEAKING ELDERS:**

Keith Barnhart & Mary Larson

**COMMUNION SERVERS:**

Joe Myers, Dinette Myers, Brenda Miller,  
Karen Nortman, Vince Ottaway, Letha Ottaway

**USHER:** Open

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:** Open

**ORGANIST:** Susie Lehman

**POWER POINT:** Open

**CANDLE LIGHTER:** Tenley Murphy

**September 23**

**USHER:** Tom Brooke

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Thrasher Family

**ORGANIST:** Lori Brooke

**POWER POINT:** Open

**September 30**

**USHER:** Tom Brooke

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:** Open

**ORGANIST:** Marianne Phelps

**POWER POINT:** Open



### Birthdays in September

2 Charlie Thrasher

4 Lewis Morrison

7 Marsha Jacobs

8 Jeanne Hale

9 Kyle Harned

11 Mary Larson

11 Jacob Johnson

14 Kurtis Minor

16 Dave Baker

16 Ken Noble

18 Kyle Barnhart

18 Marcy Dewar

20 Jason Thrasher

23 Rob Miller

24 Curt Newcomb

25 Jasmin Gardenier

26 Addyson Lehman

26 Jim Kiwala

29 Evelyn Evans

29 Scott Skubal

30 Brooklyn Harned

## Happy Anniversary

### Anniversaries in September

4 Bill & Jan Koellner

14 Bob & Terri Larson

25 Roger & Carolyn Benge

25 Ryan & Tana Deahr

30 Aaron & Hannah Campbell

Communion preparers for September will be  
**Bill and Jan Koellner**