



### 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 2019



Dear Friends in Christ,

I think we short-change the season of Epiphany. It begins (and in most people's minds, ends) on Jan. 6, the traditional day of celebrating when the Magi arrive at Jesus' home and recognize him as God, fall to their knees in worship, gift him with extravagant gifts, and ride off into the sunset, or maybe the sunrise since they were from the East, to return home and never be mentioned again.

In a church where the Revised Lectionary is preached on a regular basis, Epiphany passages are the focus for the next seven or eight weeks, with other sightings and recognitions and supernatural signs that Jesus is God. WE should have set aside a time within our worship each week to have people share their God sightings.

Following on the heels of Epiphany is the season of Lent. Another chance to concentrate on drawing closer to God in preparation for the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.

I've been struck by how Epiphany is bookended with two passages where the Voice from heaven identifies Jesus as Son of God and we are commanded to listen to him. And how often the gospel of Luke tells us that the crowds came to HEAR Jesus and BE HEALED BY HIM. It may not be coincidental that the first two articles I read in studying for Transfiguration Sunday, the last of the Epiphanies, were about silence.

We must quiet ourselves to hear Jesus rather than the hubbub of the world. We must quiet ourselves to be receptive to healing. We must quiet ourselves to be agents of healing for others. It is in the silence when we are most able to hear (see) what God is doing and where we are being invited or summoned to join in God's work.

So, peace, be still. But then come, worship corporately to celebrate and share what you have seen and heard God doing in your life. A good way to begin your Lenten journey would be to attend Ash Wednesday worship. This year will be a little different so that children can participate and better understand the disciplines of praying, fasting, and alms giving.

On the journey,  
Pastor Marian

### CHURCH RECORD

February 2019

DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
February 3	\$1,718.67	65
February 10	\$3,075.00	42
February 17	\$375.00	25
February 24	\$1,623.36	49



### Music Notes

Darkness and Light. The season of Lent begins in March - a time of somber reflection, some might say "dark." But we are inspired in many ways by that reflection in our worship services. So don't miss the 1st Sunday of Lent just because it is also the 1st Sunday of Daylight Savings Time! ;-) [You didn't know where we were headed with "Darkness and Light," did you?] Musically, you will get some of everything our church has to offer this month!

**Sun., March 3 - CHIME CHOIR**

**Wed., March 6 - [Beginning of Lent] ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE (no Choir rehearsal)**

**Sun., March 10 - [First Sun. of Lent] WORSHIP TEAM**

**Wed., March 13 - Chime Choir - 6:45 to 7:30  
Chancel Choir - 7:30 to 8:30**

**Sun., March 17 - Gathering Music and CHANCEL CHOIR**

**Wed., March 20 - (same as March 13)**

**Sun., March 24 - CHIME CHOIR and YOUTH BELL CHOIR**

**Wed., March 27 - (same as March 13)**

**Sun., March 31 - CHANCEL CHOIR**

**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.



Synod School 2019

*"Synod School is well organized, with inspiring worship leaders, talented instructors, and a great children's program."*

July 21-26, 2019  
Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa  
www.lakesandprairies.org/SynodSchool  
800-328-1880, ext. 207

**Cultivating  
Civil Community**

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Hello Church Family.

It is with hope for warmer weather and gratitude for the faith to persevere through a seemingly endless winter that I greet you today. It has been a rough February for church activities! Due to wind, snow, cold and icy conditions, we have had to cancel WOW 3 times. When we were able to make it on Wednesdays, we focused on how Jesus is the true, lasting source of our happiness, and the beatitudes.

Sunday School attendees have been learning the books of the Bible, and how to navigate through it. We also have found the group study questions in the Serendipity Bible to be good, thought-provoking conversation starters for deeper scripture understanding. I am very impressed at the depth, complexity and inquisitiveness of our youth in these discussions. Also, since both classes (WOW & Sunday School) focus on the same lessons, the additional days on Sundays allowed us to also learn how to love our enemies, and

how giving away God's love is good for everyone, and doesn't leave you empty.

As we are approaching the Lent, we will focus on what the season means to us as Christians, and how we can prepare our hearts for Easter.

Children AND parents are encouraged to attend next Wednesday, March 6th, for a light meal beginning at 5:45 followed by a presentation from Kevin, the Director of Camp Wyoming who will present an exciting review of what program opportunities wait our kids this summer and then our Ash Wednesday service at 7:00.

Blessings to you and yours and may the peace of Christ be with you this season.

Jason Thrasher

## CYG NEWS

CYG will have a special lesson on resilience Mar. 3, teaching youth how to peacefully combat bullying and grow assurance and love for themselves. Mar. 10 and 17 will be regular CYG. Mar. 24 will be our annual Scavenger Hunt for food for the pantry. Mar. 31 will be regular CYG. The public is invited to the annual Pancake Breakfast on March 16, serving from 7-11. Lots of good food and you can meet the terrific young people that have been active in CYG this year.

## LENTEN STUDY

The adult Sunday School class is beginning a series of Lenten study, concentrating on spending more time in prayer through fasting, examen, holy attention, centering prayer, Lectio Divina, and holy silence. We meet to share our experience each week and discuss some bible verses. Sunday mornings at 9. You are invited. If you'd like a copy of the lessons, see Pastor Marian.

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING/WEEK OF COMPASSION OFFERING

We will begin a series of minute for mission moments to educate us on what the OGHS and Week of Compassion offering are used for. You can give any time, but the main offering will be collected on Easter Sunday. Extra mile giving opportunities will be a freewill offering for the Fat Sunday pancake breakfast and Easter brunch, and possibly a Spaghetti dinner.

## CAMP

Early registration is fast approaching for summer camp at Camp Wyoming! Please know that it is March 15. Kevin Cullum will give a presentation on March 6 at 6:15. Anyone interested in a camp update is invited to attend. Our church offers camp scholarships through our

endowment fund (families pay the first \$50). You must register early or pay the extra \$25 after March 15. Anyone wanting a scholarship can fill out a request, found in the church office. Those who do not have camper-aged youth in your house any more: camp is a vital ministry to Christian education and they are always in need of financial gifts.

We are blessed to have two camps to choose from. Both are excellent facilities with great staff and volunteers. Christian Conference Center near Newton is a less rustic camp. Information on both camps and registration is on the buffet in the Fellowship Hall.

### **FOOD PANTRY**

The newly formed team of food pantry volunteers has been busy cleaning, reorganizing, stocking, inventorying, and updating our facility. Check out the new refrigerator and freezer, shelving, and volunteer to help or donate today. We have been serving a record number of families. We have expanded quantity and availability of our non-food items. This is an ecumenical ministry at its best!

### **FAT SUNDAY PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

Sunday, March 3 we will celebrate Fat Sunday with a pancake breakfast.

### **LENT**

IN MANY CULTURES there is an ancient custom of giving a tenth of each year's income to some holy use. For Christians, to observe the forty days of Lent is to do the same thing with roughly a tenth of each year's days. After being baptized by John in the river Jordan, Jesus went off alone into the wilderness where he spent forty days asking himself the question what it meant to be Jesus. During Lent, Christians are supposed to ask one way or another what it means to be themselves.

If you had to bet everything you have on whether there is a God or whether there isn't, which side would get your money and why?

When you look at your face in the mirror, what do you see in it that you most like and what do you see in it that you most deplore?

If you had only one last message to leave to the handful of people who are most important to you, what would it be in twenty-five words or less?

Of all the things you have done in your life, which is the one you would most like to undo? Which is the one that makes you happiest to remember?

Is there any person in the world, or any cause, that, if circumstances called for it, you would be willing to die for?

If this were the last day of your life, what would you do with it?

To hear yourself try to answer questions like these is to begin to hear something not only of who you are but of both what you are becoming and what you are failing to become. It can be a pretty depressing business all in all, but if sack-cloth and ashes are at the start of it, something like Easter may be at the end.

Buechners, Frederick "Wishful Thinking"

## **Church Workers**

**March 3**

**Communion**

**SPEAKING ELDERS:**

Tom & Mary Pat Brooke

**COMMUNION SERVERS:**

Rob Miller, Lisa Murphy, Jim Kiwala  
Blaine Kelly, Emily Reed, Joe Myers

**USHER:** Tom Brooke

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Bill & Jan Koellner

**ORGANIST:** Brenda Miller

**POWER POINT:** Bill Koellner

**March 10**

**USHER:** Tom Brooke

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Evelyn Evans

**ORGANIST:** Lori Brooke

**POWER POINT:** Jim Kiwala

**March 17**

**Communion/Chancel Choir**

**SPEAKING ELDERS:**

Tom & Mary Pat Brooke

**COMMUNION SERVERS:**

Rob Miller, Lisa Murphy, Jim Kiwala  
Blaine Kelly, Emily Reed, Joe Myers

**USHER:** Tom Brooke

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Roberta Baker

**ORGANIST:** Marianne Phelps

**POWER POINT:** Keith Barnhart

**March 24**

Chime and Bell Choir

**USHER:** Wayne Noring

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Marilyn Ruegsegger

**ORGANIST:** Brenda Miller

**POWER POINT:** Bill Koellner

**March 24**

Chancel Choir

**USHER:** Tom Brooke

**GREETERS & COFFEE HOUR:**

Keith & Margaret Barnhart

**ORGANIST:** Marianne Phelps

**POWER POINT:** Katie Thrasher

**Communion preparers for March are  
Norma Brooks & Pat Brooke**



4th Rich Hambright

7th Chris Kruse

9th Jarod Williams

9th Kinsley Dean Probst

10th Butch Nortman

31st Yvonne Gardenier



**Happy Anniversary!**

3rd Travis & Breona Maurer