



FIRST CHURCH COMMUNITY NEWS

December 2021

Mark your Calendar

December

5th Children's Christmas Program during worship

12th Christmas Cantata & readings

12th CYG Live Nativity & service

19th Candlelight and Carols service

24th Christmas Eve Service
8:00p.m.

Reminder

CYG Sunday Nights at FCU 5-7p.m. CYG will meet Dec. 5 and 12 then take a break till Jan. 9.

Children's WOW will meet Dec. 1, and 8 then take a break. WOW will resume Jan. 5

From the heart of Pastor Deb

Nothing brings greater joy to my heart (for the church) than to hear the words 'it feels like family', 'it feels like I belong'. In the past month, I have had several families tell me what a wonderful church family we have here at First Church United and how all of you make it so welcoming. Individuals and families feel this is a place of warmth and hospitality, but I know it to be so much more than that. I know it to be a church filled with generous hearts and talents and finances. I know it to be a church where worship is authentic and the love of Christ is carried out in the day to day living. I know it to be a faithful body of Christ where we truly care about the joys and concerns of one another and our greatest desire is to be faithful and in community. That is the church that I have come to know and love. Thank you church for giving so freely of yourselves. Because of it, this church has blossomed over the past year and the Spirit of God's love has been felt by ourselves and others. Lee Ann and I can attest to not only feeling welcomed, but embraced. Your continued support and encouragement have filled our hearts to overflowing. I pray, during this season of Advent, that our loving Savior will place on our hearts, the names of those still in need of a church 'home', a church 'family' so that together we may continue to extend welcoming invitations. We are on the right path, moving forward in God's glorious grace and goodness. Blessings of Peace to you and yours this holy season - Pastor Deb

"Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so, some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:1-2

MUSIC NOTES

(To the tune of "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year"): It's the most musical season of all. And isn't THAT the truth?!

As always, it is a big part of our mission to be what our church family needs. And we, too, benefit from sharing the good news and offering the music and lyrics that inspire and remind us of the true blessing of Christmas! What a joy for all of us!!

Wed., Dec. 1:

Chime Choir - 7:00 to 7:45
Chancel Choir - 7:45 to 8:30

Sun., Dec. 5: **YOUTH
CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

Wed., Dec. 8: (same as Dec. 1)

Sun., Dec. 12: **CHANCEL CHOIR**
Cantata The Winter Rose,
a duet prelude & a solo

Wed., Dec. 15: (same as Dec. 1)

Sun., Dec. 19: **CHIME AND
CHANCEL CHOIRS** Candlelight-
Communion-Carols

Wed., Dec. 22: No Rehearsals

Fri., Dec. 24: **CHIME CHOIR**
prelude for Christmas Eve service,
and a duet

Sun., Dec. 26: No Choirs

Wed., Dec. 29: No Rehearsals

Lunch Ladies

We have decided that gathering to share fellowship and lunch is so much fun that we will meet monthly on the 4th Tuesday. Our next gathering is December 28 at 11:00 am. Bring your lunch and a friend.

CYG

We will be hosting a community worship service and live nativity on Sunday, Dec 12th at First Church United. The live nativity will be offered 4:30-5:00 pm and 6:30-7:00 pm. Community worship will be 5:00 – 6:00 pm. Bring friends and gather together in worship to support the CYG community and enjoy light refreshments.

CYG will not meet Dec. 12-January 9.

Thank you

Dear Friends, Thank you so much for your generous gift to the Conference Center.

Your support truly makes a difference in our service and stewardship of God's Holy Ground and is vital to our support and encouragement for our campers and guests' spiritual growth.

Sincerely, the Christian Conference Center Staff

Dear Members of First Church United,

Thank you very much for thinking of Camp Wyoming with your gift of \$2,000.00. Your contribution makes Camp Wyoming a fantastic place for people of all ages to experience fellowship, outdoor recreation, and spiritual renewal.

Thank you for your generous support,

Kevin Cullum, Executive Director

News from the Nobles

We are finally 'existing' near Muscatine. Living amongst the boxes and stuff. Jo is doing well, finding a spot for most items. Several items have found a new home.

We have been blessed this year with our church family. Thank you for your concerns, best wishes, prayers, flowers during Jo's knee surgery, Ken's heart issues, Morrie's passing, our brother-in-law passing, and our move.

We were very pleased to have been visited by Evelyn and Walt.

We are in a ground level apartment of Deb and Steve's acreage at 1880 Hwy 38, Muscatine, IA 52761, immediately north of Muscatine. Cell phone is 563-506-7421.

Ken & Jo

Community Outreach

Voluntary Action Council is accepting donations of hats, gloves, socks, and underwear to help people in our community. These donations will be distributed to the schools and Christmas Box program. There is a basket in the church narthex for collection. All items must be brought in by Friday, Dec. 10.

Sunday School

Sunday School at First Church United has been back in the swing of things; learning more about the giving of the children's talents and being thankful for the many gifts they have in their lives. The children are learning what Advent means. On Nov.28, 2021 we handed out Advent booklets for the children to do at home until Christmas, with help from their parents. If your child was not there that Sunday, you can still pick up an Advent booklet in the church office. Sunday School starts every Sunday after the children's sermon in the adult service; and then the children depart to their classroom for about 20min. to learn a lesson and then return for communion in the adult service.

Hymnal Markers

Looking for a craft to do this winter? We are in need of some more hymnal markers for the Sanctuary. Let us know if you'd like to take on this craft.

Birthdays in December

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

Anniversaries in December

- 7 Arnie & Marian Hart
- 13 Deepak & Amrita Giri

WOW

WOW would like to thank everyone that donated money in support of our mission for Heifer International. The children collected over \$600.00 and decided to spend the money to purchase one Water Buffalo, one Goat, one Sheep, one Rabbit, one Chicken, and one set of Bees. These animals will help many people around the world achieve self-reliance. The animals will also help to provide entire communities with milk, eggs, honey, and wool, which will boost both nutrition and income. Way to go Everyone!

WOW (Worship On Wednesdays) -kids from Preschool to 5th grade come together to participate in games, crafts, a lesson, music and a meal from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. We have FUN, FUN, FUN learning about God.

Upcoming Schedule for WOW:

Dec. 5, 2021 – Children's Christmas Program

Dec. 8, 2021 - will be the WOW FUN Night plus the adult choir will be having a Cantata (The Winter Rose on Sunday, Dec 12th) and have asked the children to present the silk roses during it. We will have a quick practice, meal and movie with popcorn beginning at our regular time of 5:30 pm.

Dec. 15, 2021- No WOW-Break

Dec. 22, 2021- No WOW-Break

Dec. 29, 2021- No WOW-Break

Jan. 5, 2021-WOW returns 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

Recycle

We will have a recycle box placed by the double doors leading out of the Sanctuary now for you to place your bulletins in after each service. Thank you for your help in this effort.

CHURCH RECORD		
November 2021		
DATE	OFFERING	ATTEND
November 7	\$1,820	59
November 14	\$5,199	57
November 21	\$2,286	66
November 28	\$2,814	57

OFFICIAL BOARD MINUTES

November 4, 2021 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER by Board Chair Dean Phelps. Those in attendance were Lori Brooke, Letha Ottaway, Karen Nortman, Margaret Barnhart, Blaine Kelly, Susan Deahr, Treasurer Keith Barnhart, Secretary Katie Thrasher

OPEN IN PRAYER by Dean Phelps

APPROVAL OF DOCKET move to approve 1st Margaret, 2nd Karen, motion is carried

APPROVAL OF MINUTES move to approve 1st Blaine, 2nd Margaret, motion is carried

TREASURER'S REPORT Keith reports that receipts were not great in October. We have received 83% of pledges for the year, 52% of the non-pledged receipts have been received. 79% of expenditures for the year has been distributed. Bills are all paid.

Keith suggests the Board looks at the budget for 2022 and see if there are any adjustments needed to be made. Personnel Committee and Pastoral Committee should talk about any changes to be made to the staff or pastor's wages. We will revisit this in the December meeting. The large refrigerator needed repaired. That money will come out of the Kitchen Expansion fund. A new copier was purchased, and that money will come out of line #708 Maintenance of Office Equipment.

Start of October balance	\$5,213.62
Receipts	\$7,952.97
Sub Total	\$13,166.59
Disbursements	\$10,938.76
Ending Balance	\$2,227.83
Board checking balance	(\$26,464.67)

Motion to approve the Treasurer's report 1st Letha, 2nd Susan, motion is carried.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Motion to approve Pastor's report 1st Lori, 2nd Karen, motion carried

ONGOING BUSINESS:

1. Manse
 - a. Manse front step railing - done
 - b. Manse retaining wall – **Lori report both sides of the retaining wall need to be fixed. Possibly pouring a concrete wall. Lori also suggests the whole deck be replaced. It would be good to do the two at the same time. Board would like it to be done by next spring. Dillon will take a look at it. Lori will get more information.**
 - c. Trim around the garage and some other areas
 - d. Flooring bids – **Randy's bid \$13,662.07 and Pine Tree Interiors bid \$12,733.60. Board would like to wait till Pastor Deb can attend to see which bid she would like.**
2. Light replacements in hallway, classrooms, food pantry, family restroom, lounge, test outlets – **PJ has been working this week in various part of the church.**
3. Roof/Carport Update - **Blaine received the drawing yesterday. Ken Wright will also show us what he can do compared to the other drawing.**
4. Bathroom plumbing – **Darren has an appointment tomorrow for Lynch's Plumbing to come to the church to look where the pipes go and see what might need to happen to fix the problem.**
5. Craft room sink – **people have expressed that they would like the sink to be functional now that the room is being used as a craft room. Lori will look into it.**
6. Christian Education Director position - **It has been advertised for a couple weeks now on Facebook and in our e-news. Jodi will reach outside the church now as well.**
7. Coffee Hour – **Dean suggests we begin having coffee hour, greeters, passing communion, passing the offering plates. Board suggests Katie sends out a survey to the congregation to hear what others have to say, motion to approve 1st Blaine, 2nd Letha, motion is passed.**
 - a. **Do you feel it is time to begin having coffee hour after the worship service again?**

- b. Are you comfortable beginning to have communion like we used to? Communion elements would be passed around by servers.
- c. Are you comfortable beginning to have Ushers pass around the offering plates during the offering part of the worship service now?

Katie will mail out surveys to those who do not have email.

8. Needs Assessment

Mission/Ministry

- A. Consider offering classes to those in the community to help with budgeting and other life skills. Offer support to families and those in need in our community. – Salvation Army is searching for someone to fill the position and will be in contact when they have hired someone.

Future Maintenance.

- B. Consider needs the manse may have such as floors, carpet, windows. – review bids from Pine Tree Interiors and Randy's Carpets.

Will be brought up at a later date

- C. Improve parking lot
- D. Bury outside downspouts.
- E. Replace pew seat cushions. Board agrees to table this till January/February.

Trustee Work to be done

- 1. Church soffits need to be refilled with foam - Lori is working on it
- 2. Birds nest in bricks by raised bed area. – Lori is working on it
- 3. Dirt around front of the church along the sidewalk – done. Letha and Vince will put grass seed down before the ground freezes.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business

ADJOURNMENT

PRAYER CONCERNS SHARED

CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT MEETING December 2, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. by Zoom and in person

FIRST CHURCH UNITED
1100 N. Calhoun St., West Liberty, IA 52776

Phone: Church Office 319-627-2989
Email: firstchurchunited@gmail.com

Church Office Hours: Mon. - Fri. 4:00-6:00p.m.
Pastor's Office Hours: Mon. - Fri. 9 :00-



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1. 10:00 Ministerial Assoc. meeting WOW 5:30-7:00 Choir Practice Chime Choir, 7:00 Chancel Choir, 7:45	2. 6:00p.m. Food Pantry Board Meeting 6:30pm	3. Christmas Box packing in Fellowship Hall 10:00 a.m. Simpson Home service	4. 9:00 Food Pantry Christmas Box packing in Fellowship Hall 7 th Day Adventists 9-12, 5-7pm
5. 10:00 Worship, Children's Christmas Program 5:00 CYG at FCU 7:15 CYG Board Meeting	6.	7.	8. WOW 5:30-7:00 Fun Night! Choir Practice Chime Choir, 7:00 Chancel Choir, 7:45	9. 12:00 Cluster Meeting 6:00p.m. Food Pantry 7:00 p.m. Aquarius meeting	10.	11. 9:00 Food Pantry 7 th Day Adventists 9-12, 5-7pm
12. 10:00 Worship, Chancel Choir, Cantata 4:00-7:00 CYG at FCU Live Nativity – 4:30 & 6:30, Worship 5:00	13.	14.	15. Choir Practice Chime Choir, 7:00 Chancel Choir, 7:45 No WOW	16. 6:00p.m. Food Pantry	17. 10:00 a.m. Simpson Service Voluntary Action Council Christmas Box pick up 4:30- 7:00p.m. at FCU	18. Voluntary Action Council Christmas Box pick up 9:00- 11:00 a.m. at FCU 7 th Day Adventists 9-12, 5-7pm
19. 10:00 Worship, Chancel and Chime Choirs, Candlelight & Carols service	20. No school	21. No school	22. No school No WOW or Choir Practice	23. No school	24. No school 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service Chime Choir	25. Christmas Day 7 th Day Adventists 9-12, 5-7pm
27. 10:00 Worship 10:15 Children's Sunday School	28. No school	29. No school 11:00 Lunch Ladies	30. No school No WOW or Choir Practice	31. No school 6:00 p.m. Food Pantry		



ACTIVITY PAGE



Make a “Not-to-Do” List

From *Faithful Families for Advent & Christmas*

Often, we busy ourselves with endless “to-do” lists, especially during a busy season such as Advent. One fun way to turn off worry and the tendency to achieve and to do, is to make a “not-to-do” list.

What are the things you and your family want to be intentional about not doing this Advent season? Maybe your not-to-do list will include “spend too much time shopping,” or “worry,” or “schedule.”

Consider what takes away from your spiritual health and well-being and put it on the list. The not-to-do list could be done individually or as a family. If you decide to do it as a family, you could do one collaborative list or have each person make their own list and then compare when you’re done. Approach this exercise with levity and fun. Sometimes the best way to figure out what we want to do is to define what we don’t want to do. The not-to-do list need not be long. Perhaps it is simply one or two things you vow to let go of this season. End your not-to-do list session with a quick reminder that God is with us throughout the season, no matter what we do (or don’t do!).

Pray: God, thank you for all of the possibilities this season of Advent and Christmas brings. Help us to let go of the things that aren’t important and focus on your Spirit. Amen.

Acts of Kindness Advent Tree

This Advent calendar is created by adding acts of kindness on a tree as they are completed. Here’s how to make it:

Step 1: Find a branch from outside and put it in a vase.

Step 2: Write down acts of kindness (see below for examples) on paper ornaments and place them in a basket.

Step 3: As you complete each act of kindness throughout the Advent season, punch a hole in the ornament and tie it to your acts of kindness tree.

Variations:

- Put the acts of kindness ornaments on your Christmas tree instead of a separate branch.
- Write acts of kindness on a sheet of paper and put a star next to them as they are completed.

Ten Acts of Kindness for an Acts of Kindness Advent Tree

1. Hold the door open for someone at the store.
2. Return grocery carts in a parking lot.
3. Bake sweet treats and take them to a neighbor.
4. Help a family member or friend put up Christmas lights or decorate their house.
5. Leave a kind note on someone’s windshield.
6. Write a thank-you note to someone who serves you.
7. Collect mittens and hats for a local charity.
8. Pick up trash in your neighborhood or local park.
9. Bring dog or cat food to a pet shelter.
10. Color paper placemats and take them to a senior center.

FIRST CHURCH UNITED
1100 North Calhoun Street
West Liberty, Iowa 52776

MISSION STATEMENT

OF

FIRST CHURCH UNITED

God has called First Church United into being as a family, with close and personal relationships, dedicated to God's work and Christ's teachings. We are committed to sharing the good news of the gospel with the local and world communities by reaching out in service to everyone's needs.