

Congregational Tidings

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*



A weekly newsletter



March 25, 2020

**IMPORTANT
NOTICE**

Due to COVID-19 health concerns, the Church Office and Building is closed. You can keep in touch with the church staff during this time:

Pastor Scott: (919) 265-8902 or scott@firstcongucc.org

Youth Director Katie: katie@firstcongucc.org

Music Director Luke: luke@firstcongucc.org

Organist Hudson: organist@firstcongucc.org

Office Manager Michelle: fcuccoffice@gmail.com

Custodian Kyle: k.lindaman79@gmail.com

Questions?

Call 319-234-8927 or email us
at fcuccoffice@gmail.com

*(Michelle will check phone messages
periodically)*

Here are ways you can stay in touch:

*Check your personal email for regular updates from Church Staff. Not signed up to the church email? Please contact Michelle.

*Facebook: First Congregational UCC Waterloo, Iowa (@FirstCongregationalUCCWaterlooIowa)

*The FCUCC website: www.firstcongucc.org

*Our new Youtube Channel: FCUCC Waterloo

*And of course by reading *The Tidings!*

Weekly Events

Wed., March 25

7:00 pm - Prayer Service

Sun., March 29

10:30 am - Worship

Sermon: *Fasting From...Power*

Scripture Reading: **Mark 13:1-8, 24-37**

*Join us live via our Facebook
page and Youtube channel.*

Wed., April 1

7:00 pm - Prayer Service

A Note from Pastor Scott . . .

I hope that all is well.

***Thank you to Luke Overton!** In addition to helping FB livestream last Sunday's worship service Luke has recorded and edited it to our new church Youtube page: FCUCC Waterloo.

The current plan to have this page and the Facebook Live Stream/Video feed as hosts for our Sunday services and other videos from staff. I do ask for your forbearance as we are learning this on the fly. As one of my pastoral colleagues mentioned yesterday "churches are trying to do ten years of technological advancement at the same time-bless our hearts." **I will keep you posted when new videos and information are available. I'm learning just like you are.**

***In addition to being invited to mail your pledges and offerings to FCUCC, this Sunday (March 29th) we will "collect" for the One Great Hour of Sharing.** OGHS is one of the 5 for 5 national offerings of the UCC. Please mark on the memo line if you wish your funds to be donated for OGHS. You can visit the UCC OGHS resource page for more information: https://www.ucc.org/oghs_resources

***Our Youth Director Katie Thomas and I "met" via phone yesterday to talk about how FCUCC can support our Children and Youth at this time.** Be on the lookout for information and updates on Children's Activity Packs & Goodie Bags, Video Children's Lessons from Ms. Katie, Virtual Scavenger Hunts, and more.

***If you have a prayer joy or concern for our Wednesday Night Prayer Service on FB Live, please email me by 5PM Wednesday.** You also have the option of including it in the FB comments section. **Feel free to invite your family and friends!**

***Finally I wanted to share this word from Rev. Melissa Florer-Bixler.** She is a Mennonite pastor from North Carolina and like me is a strong extrovert. She is finding this period to be spiritually difficult because she can't be with her faith community (same here).

She writes "I've thought that maybe now is the time I could reactivate personal spiritual disciplines with intense rigor and focus, attending to my "interior castle" with new zeal. But I've decided instead that I want to allow the longing for the physical world, for people, to grow. However long this strange season lasts, I am going to nurture my yearning for human life, for the rituals of food, water, and fire that require other humans to ignite. Coronavirus snuck into our lives during the liturgical season of Lent, when Christians around the world spend 40 days in waiting, preparation, and expectation for Easter. On Easter Sunday the church enacts a yearly ritual of life being birthed from death. If we were to meet together, in the flesh of being the church we would celebrate Communion. There would be hugs and a shared lunch. We would proclaim a body risen from the dead with our bodies side by side. This year my Lent may last longer. I anticipate that the absence of my spiritual practice of loving people in their bodies, just as they are, will continue to widen a space that cannot be filled with virtual access. Giving attention to the curve and shape of that empty place, being drawn back to longing for the lives that will fulfill it—this will be enough."

This will be enough. This will be enough. May it be so for each and every one of us. God bless you all.

Pastor Scott



"Even when everything seems rather chaotic and gloomy, there is always a light...one light came to the Greene family March 16th in the form of *Ellison Maye Bishop*, daughter of *Molly and Brian Bishop*. Share our light!"

-Paul and Gina Greene.



Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus

Kids worry more when they're kept in the dark

Rachel Ehmke

News of the coronavirus COVID-19 is everywhere, from the front page of all the papers to the playground at school. Many parents are wondering how to bring up the epidemic in a way that will be reassuring and not make kids more worried than they already may be. Here is some advice from the experts at the Child Mind Institute.

- Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus. Most children will have already heard about the virus or seen people wearing face masks, so parents shouldn't avoid talking about it. Not talking about something can actually make kids worry more. Look at the conversation as an opportunity to convey the facts and set the emotional tone. "You take on the news and you're the person who filters the news to your kid," explains Janine Domingues, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. Your goal is to help your children feel informed and get fact-based information that is likely more reassuring than whatever they're hearing from their friends or on the news.
- Be developmentally appropriate. Don't volunteer too much information, as this may be overwhelming. Instead, try to answer your child's questions. Do your best to answer honestly and clearly. It's okay if you can't answer everything; being available to your child is what matters.
- Take your cues from your child. Invite your child to tell you anything they may have heard about the coronavirus, and how they feel. Give them ample opportunity to ask questions. You want to be prepared to answer (but not prompt) questions. Your goal is to **avoid encouraging frightening fantasies**.
- Deal with your own anxiety. "When you're feeling most anxious or panicked, that isn't the time to talk to your kids about what's happening with the coronavirus," warns Dr. Domingues. If you notice that **you are feeling anxious**, take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.
- Be reassuring. Children are very egocentric, so hearing about the coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they'll catch it. It's helpful to reassure your child about how rare the coronavirus actually is (the flu is much more common) and that kids actually seem to have milder symptoms.
- Focus on what you're doing to stay safe. An important way to reassure kids is to emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking. Jamie Howard, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute, notes, "Kids feel empowered when they know what to do to keep themselves safe." We know that the coronavirus is transmitted mostly by coughing and touching surfaces. The **CDC recommends** thoroughly washing your hands as the primary means of staying healthy. So remind kids that they are taking care of themselves by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or the length of two "Happy Birthday" songs) when they come in from outside, before they eat, and after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom. If kids ask about face masks, explain that the experts at the CDC say they aren't necessary for most people. If kids see people wearing face masks, explain that those people are being extra cautious.
- Stick to routine. "We don't like uncertainty, so staying rooted in routines and predictability is going to be helpful right now," advises Dr. Domingues. This is particularly important if your child's school or daycare shuts down. Make sure you are taking care of the basics just like you would during a spring break or summer vacation. Structured days with regular mealtimes and bedtimes are an essential part of keeping kids happy and healthy.
- Keep talking. Tell kids that you will continue to keep them updated as you learn more. "Let them know that the lines of communication are going to be open," says Dr. Domingues. "You can say, 'Even though we don't have the answers to everything right now, know that once we know more, mom or dad will let you know, too.'"



A message from General Minister & President John C. Dorhauer

Leading Through a Rapidly Changing Environment While Responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic

As you may know, the National Offices are now functioning from a work-from-home environment. The building is closed for now, and will remain so until the Governor of Ohio dismisses the stay-at-home order.

We have been preparing for such a move, anticipating that this was a possible, if not inevitable, scenario. While there will surely be some glitches in our normal operating procedures, we want to state with full confidence that the work of the National Setting will continue. With our laptops, in-home wifi or personal hotspots, and most of the files and information stored in the cloud with password access, we feel that what we need is accessible to us.

We know that many of you reading this are working under similar conditions, and that many churches have converted their services to online spaces. We are all making timely and well-advised decisions about how to do the work we were called to do and protect the health of our families, faith communities, colleagues, and ourselves.

If you are looking for resources to assist your church in this challenging time, the staff at the National Setting has created a page to help. Along with the advice and communications being shared by your conference, the resources gathered at this page are proving to be invaluable for our churches as they struggle with what to do and how to do it.

We are maintaining our schedule of special mission offerings, including One Great Hour of Sharing. The offering was scheduled to be taken on March 22, 2020. Given the rapidly changing environment, perhaps the One Great Hour of Sharing offering was not taken on the suggested date. Please know it is not too late. You can participate in the offering at any time.

Our concerns regarding the security of mail delivery has forced us to make the decision to have our mail held for the time being. That way it will not be returned as undeliverable or left sitting somewhere in an empty building where it has a danger of being lost or stolen. Any checks sent to the United Church of Christ National Offices will be held by our branch of the United States Postal Service until we can physically enter the offices again.

We also understand that many churches are unable to meet at this time and that this may mean fewer funds are collected. We know that is a possibility, but we also know that people who can will continue to be generous, especially when the call is to reach out to the vulnerable that subsist in the margins with few resources.

We ask for your prayers, as we daily hold you in our prayers. We will continue every day to give our best effort on your behalf. We thank you for your patience, understanding, and ongoing support for the work of the National Setting.

Faithfully,

The Rev. John C. Dorhauer

General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ

WORSHIP WHILE YOU WASH!

Here are some ways you can
praise God in 20-30 seconds
while you wash your hands!



SING A VERSE OF A HYMN!
THE DOXOLOGY
MORNING HAS BROKEN
BE THOU MY VISION

SING THE CHORUS OF
HERE I AM LORD
HOW GREAT THOU ART
GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

SAY THE LORD'S PRAYER



First Congregational UCC
608 WEST FOURTH STREET
WATERLOO, IOWA 50702

Congregational Tidings

Place
Stamp
Here

Create an endowment of love. Please consider including our church in your estate planning.

C O N G R E G A T I O N A L



Through the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering, we are planting seeds of new life. Together, we are investing in communities worldwide: providing education to girls and boys, empowering communities through vocational training, supporting microcredit lending and seeing people through to self-sufficiency, empowering families with skills to support themselves and their neighbors, and participating in sustainable solutions that offer dignity to all. These are just a few ways the OGHS offering touches God's children, in addition to disaster relief and refugee initiatives.

Through your generosity, the world is a better place. But more is needed. You have an opportunity to plant seeds into the lives of others. Be a co-worker with God. Building, planting, watering...and trusting that God gives growth to all good gifts shared in faith. Thank you for your partnership. Thank you for your generosity! We will touch more on this offering during our worship service this Sunday.

You can mail in this special offering to the office along with your pledge. Thank you!