

Congregational Tidings

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



A weekly newsletter



April 8, 2020

A Easter Letter from Pastor Scott

Dear FCUCC Community,

This is an Easter letter unlike any I have ever written. And I am guessing this is unlike any that you have ever read before either.

Ordinarily I would start by saying that *I hope this letter finds you well*. And I do. **Know that while we are separated physically for our own safety, each and every one of you are in the Spence family's prayers.** We miss seeing you, hearing your stories, sharing joys and concerns, and just simply being a Christian community on 608 West Fourth Street. We eagerly anticipate the time that we can meet again at church.

My next line would usually be something about the weather and probably a description of what our Grin and Grow friends were doing. Well the weather outside is showing the arrival of Spring and Grin and Grow is performing a vital public service by taking care of children...but I'm not in the Church Office.

In fact I'm writing this from our reading room with my computer perched on my lap. Like many caregivers Tara and I are trying to balance schooling, work, and being there for the girls. For all of you that are also in that situation know that you are indeed doing your best and it will all work out fine. **You got this!**

So yes this is a different setting. And yes it is a different Holy Week which we are embarking on as a church. **But know that even though we may not be together, FCUCC is still committed to *Being the Church...* just in different ways.** Please read on in this issue of *The Tidings* for our Virtual Holy Week Schedule. If you have not done so, please sign up for our Church emails. Subscribe to our Youtube Channel. And like us on Facebook.

One final note- **Christians are a people of Resurrection.** It's at the very core of our faith. We know that death does not have the final word, that chaos is not in control, that though weeping may come at night joy is there in the morning. **Because we are a Resurrection people we are also a people of renewal...change...and adaption.**

This week I was struck by a *NY Times* piece written by Rev. Beth Waltemath. Rev. Waltemah is a Presbyterian minister in Georgia. She wrote of losing a friend to cancer and the time they spent creating new ways of honoring life and celebrating community. This experience reminded her of how all of us are living in the time of COVID-19:

"This Holy Week of the pandemic year, a year when memorials for the dead are indefinitely postponed and in-person Easter rituals are canceled across Christendom, we will mourn the pomp and circumstance of the sacred rites, but we can still linger in the intimacy of our bodies. We can savor the dampness of our tears and the coolness of the water when we wash them away. We can care for those with whom we are quarantined, if not in the bathing of little feet and anointing of brows, then by taking the time to practice silence together, to offer a long, loving look into the eyes of someone seated a safe distance away or on the other side of a teleconferencing camera. There's so much glory to be experienced even on this side of the resurrection."

Different times and circumstances require different rituals. Different celebrations. **Different ways of being church. But the meaning behind them remain the same.**

Our community endures. Our faith endures. We will get through this-for as the old hymn says Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, How can I keep from singing?

Stay safe. Know that you are loved. And know that we will meet again.

Pastor Scott



FCUCC Virtual Holy Week Schedule

***All services will be on the FCUCC
Facebook Page and Youtube Channel***

April 8th - ***Wednesday Night Facebook Live Prayer Service*** 7:00pm

April 9th - ***Maundy Thursday with Virtual Communion*** 7:00pm

*(You are invited to use any type of bread or juice
that you may have at home for Communion)*

April 10th - ***Good Friday Service of Tenebrae*** 7:00pm

April 12th - ***Easter Sunday Service*** 10:30am



**Thanks to Cindy and
Jeff Thompson for the
#Palm Picture!**



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:

Questions?

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

(Messages will be checked periodically)

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

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 our office manager, Michelle.

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

*The FCUCC website: www.firstcongucc.org

*Our new Youtube Channel: FCUCC Waterloo

*Wednesday Night Prayer Service via FB Live 7:00pm

*Community Coffee Talk via Zoom 3-5 Fridays

*And of course by reading *The Tidings!*



‘Read a Good Book Lately?? Have you read a good book lately that touched you in a special way? Or made you laugh out loud? Or gave you one of those “aha” moments? Or was maybe just a good distraction that took you somewhere wonderful? ... Well, have you?

If so, we want to know about it! Many of us have a little extra time to read a good book, or two, or so. So, let us know about that good book (without spoiling the ending, of course) and what you liked about it ... how it tickled your funny bone or how it spoke to you. Write a “book report” of 250 words or less and send it in the US

Mail or email (fcuccoffice@gmail.com) to the church office. We’ll get it into Tidings so everyone else knows where to find a good book. **Whether you’re 6 or 96 we would like to know about your good reads. :)**

Do you know how long it’s been since we did a First Church Cookbook? Too long!! We think it’s time to put together a new, updated cook book. Do you have time to try out and tune up your favorite recipe? Well, let’s get going! It can a marvelous main dish ... or a delectable dessert ... or a scrumptious salad ... or something that’s simply quick to put together in a very busy world. So, write down the recipe, or better yet, just scan the coffee-stained, yellowed back of the envelope where you originally jotted it down and send it in to the church office by US Mail or email (fcuccoffice@gmail.com). **But wait, there’s more ...** Also include a paragraph as to why this recipe is special to you. Most favorite recipes have a story. What’s yours? Did you used to make it with your grandmother? Was it a Christmas dinner favorite? We need to include that in the cook book, too. Recipes with stories ... not just your everyday cookbook! **Get yours in today!!**



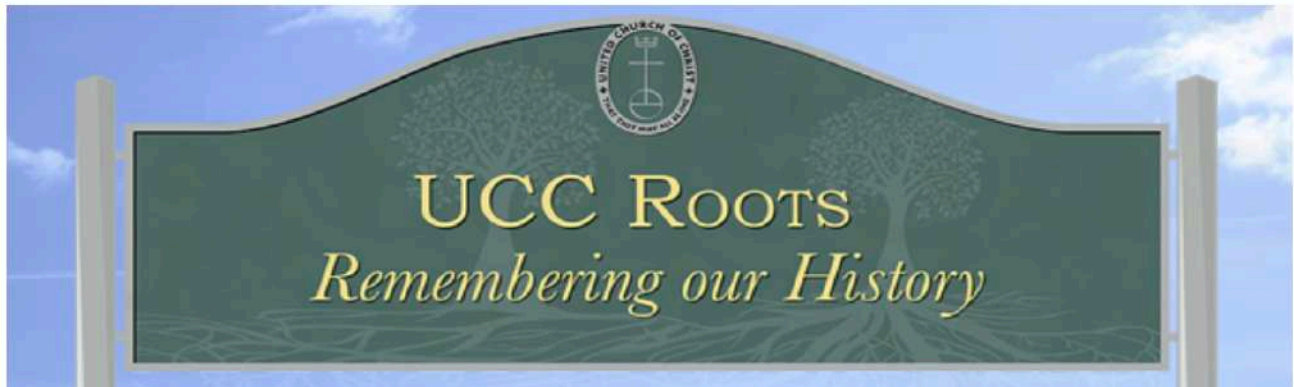


ATTENTION SEWERS...

Lack of proper safety equipment is a grave concern for all. Volunteer sewers are needed to make masks for MercyOne. These masks would supplement the supply of N95 masks that the hospitals have on hand. Dave and Shelli Panicucci are happy to pick these up from the volunteer's house and deliver. Their daughter and son are among the many brave health care workers providing care to COVID-19 patients. Just contact Shelli if you are able to help - s.panicucci325@gmail.com. Thank you in advance!

Here is a link for instructions for the MercyOne masks - <https://www.mercyone.org/northeastiowa/about-us/news-releases/help-sew-masks-for-mercyone?fbclid=IwAR2uZYHID03L8YEG7HjHb9MTbfWJ4yQCkHJQxtFBWpoo1PmUksPbpvdzapA>

From the UCC Historical Council



“Elise Kettler Longed to Tell the Story of Christ’s Love”

Zenana missions were an important part of missionary work in India in the 19th and early 20th centuries. “Zenana” refers to the private areas in high caste Indian homes reserved for women. Male missionaries were unable to serve women in those settings. As a consequence, female missionaries were needed in many denominations to minister to Indian women.

Elise Kettler (1873-1957) was a missionary commissioned by the German Evangelical Synod to serve in India. She was born in Washington, DC, the daughter of German immigrants. Her father was a bodyguard to President Lincoln at his inauguration, and a guard at Lincoln’s funeral.

Initially Kettler made maps for the U. S. Forestry Service. One day, however, while drawing a map in 1907, she felt called to missionary service. In 1909 she graduated from the Union Missionary Training Institute in Brooklyn, NY. She explained that

“A great longing awoke in my heart at that time, a longing to help...my sisters in India and to tell them the story of Christ’s love...I could not have peace of mind and heart, until I made a complete surrender, offering my life for the mission field if it was the Lord’s will to use me there.”



It was the “Lord’s will.” Kettler served for 22 years in “zenana” settings. She trained Indian Christian women to teach the Bible in Raipur. Later she served as principal of a Bible Training School for Women in Baitalpur. In 1916, she reported that she and the teachers she trained, gave 1900 messages to over 10,000 people.

In retirement Kettler returned to her home in Washington, DC and, until her death at age 83 she continued to teach the Bible and lecture on missions in India.

Contributor: James Semmelroth Darnell

A Holy Week Reflection



This Holy Week will be rich in unfamiliarity. We will not gather in our sanctuaries to wave palms and sing hosannas. We will not gather with our dear congregations to share bread and cup. We will not gather to extinguish light. We will not gather on Resurrection Day in sanctuaries filled with lilies and Easter hymns. And, this week will be utterly holy.

These holiest days in the Christian year may be even more precious for us as we worship through them in exceptional ways. No matter if we worship with our internet connections, or listening on a phone, or reading printed services, or in our cars. The power of these days abides. The week is still holy.

The shout for Palm Sunday is “hosanna”. The whisper for Palm Sunday is “hosanna”. Hosanna is a prayer for rescue. Oh, help. Oh, save. The word also gives honor to one who does help, one who does save. We have so many hosannas to raise this year. In our shouts and whispers, the day is still holy.

On Maundy Thursday, we might be in cars rather than pews. For most of us, whatever of bread and cup we have will be sitting on our table. We’ll hear the words of sacrament. Or, we’ll read them. Or, we’ll say them ourselves, in the full assurance that our own pastors and countless pastors around the world are offering them alongside us. As we take, eat, and remember, the night is still holy.

On this Good Friday, fasting may feel as real as it has ever felt for us. Even too real. It’s not such a far journey to a space of darkness and death. We are mindful of small and middle-sized inconveniences in some of our households. And of the bleak fasts in others. More of us each day are losing the work that provides for our needs. We weep over the brutal fasts of those who have no safe space for sheltering. We weep over the perilous fasts of so many helpers. We mourn for those who have died. This is a time to embrace the fast. To walk as we can in the valley of darkness. Linger in the Gospel passion chapters. Keep vigil at a cross where you are. The day is still holy.

Holy Saturday is a day for silence. A traditional prayer for worship preparation begins, “Silence in us every voice but Your own.” Maybe the whole day can be silent for you. With space for a single, sacred Voice. Maybe an hour. Maybe ten holy minutes. As we can, let us be still. Embrace the silence of Saturday. The mourning. The emptiness. The waiting for a God word not yet heard. The day is still holy.

And on the Day of Resurrection, even if we are yet in darkness, we will sing! We sing in the spirit of traditional words offered at graveside services: “Even at the grave, we make our song: alleluia!” Sing loudly. Sing off key if that’s your key. Sing the song you yearned to hear this Easter. Read the Easter Gospels. Right out loud. Add your voice to many in Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ, raising a prayerful affirmation of The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu: “Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate; light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death; victory is ours through [God] who loves us.” The day is entirely holy.

Rev. Jonna Jensen
Associate Conference Minister

**On April 19th all UCC churches in the Tri-Conference
(Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota) are invited to a special
Virtual Worship Service led by our Conference Ministers and Staff.
Stay tuned for more details!**

CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!
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IllustratedChildrensMinistry.com



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

As you may know FCUCC's sanctuary is decorated with beautiful lilies on Easter Sunday. Lilies are traditionally associated with Christ because he mentioned them in his Sermon on the Mount.

This year, you are encouraged to use the funds you would have spent on lilies and share them with a local charity. Two possible destinations for these "virtual lilies" can be our mission partners at Love INC and the folks at Northeast Iowa Food Bank. Share Christ's love by helping them help others through these difficult times.

Thank you!

-Pastor Scott

