

# Congregational Tidings

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



A weekly newsletter



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August 15, 2018

**Thirteenth Sunday  
after Pentecost  
August 19, 2018  
10:30 am**

**Paul Greene will present  
the message:  
*Dirty Windows***

**Using the texts:**  
Matthew 7:1-5  
Galatians 3:26-28

**Worship Leader**  
Leah Reisinger

**Children's Lesson**  
Paul Greene

**Special Music**  
*Hear O Israel*  
John Mardis

**Deacons-In-Charge**  
Henry and Lynette Doepke

**Acolytes**  
Tim Ahrens  
Leah Reisinger

**Greeters**  
Janice Akin  
(Sanctuary)  
Nancy Heinick  
(Crossroads)

## From Our New Music Director, Luke Overton:

I have had the opportunity this summer, for the first time in many years, to sit and reflect on where life has brought my wife and I over the past few years. Each of the summers I have had since 2014 has been spent preparing for an unexpected journey to our next position and new stage of life; a move to Missouri to teach, back to Chicago for a teaching opportunity, to Macomb, Illinois to complete a degree, and most recently, to Waterloo to a new opportunity. Each of these steps has involved packing all our belonging, selling a home, finding an apartment, returned to student life, and other challenges along the way. Sometime in the midst of these stresses, we have found ourselves wondering if we are making the right decision and whether or not we should be going through with our latest plan. But through all of these moves and uncertainty, we have relied on the belief that God has a plan greater than that which we understand, and often times it unfolds in ways that we are unaware of. Deuteronomy 31:6 reminds us that, even in the midst of these uncertain changes and new directions, we should "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." This has been a comfort for me and my wife to remember that even when the path seems uncertain, with faith and trust the way will be made clear in time. We are grateful to have followed this path to a new home and career in Waterloo which has led us both to exactly where we need to be.

On the subject of change, new directions, and fearlessness, I would like to take a moment and invite anyone interested to participate in the chancel choir or Touch of Brass bell choir this year! What better time to try something new and experience worship from a different perspective each Sunday morning. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings (Bell Choir from 5:30 - 7:00 and Chancel Choir from 7:00 - 8:30). Everyone is welcome regardless of experience or musical background. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me anytime [luke@firstcongucc.org](mailto:luke@firstcongucc.org). **Rehearsals will begin Wednesday, August 22nd.** Hope to see you there!

## The Chinese Bamboo Tree



I tend to be an impatient person. Even before we were married, that was clear to John and he repeatedly urged me to develop a "tolerance for uncertainty." Easier said than done!

A few years ago, I learned about the Chinese bamboo tree and this led me to some insights about my impatience - it often indicates a lack of faith. I really didn't like that implication very much but what a revelation!

When a bamboo tree is planted, the ground is nurtured and watered.... and nothing happens. The diligent farmer keeps caring for his "tree" but does not see any evidence of growth for **four years!** I'm sure I would have given up on my tree long before then.

But during those four years, a lot was going on below the surface, where it was not obvious. A large, dense root structure, necessary to support the huge tree, was forming. And then, in the fifth year, the tiny stalk suddenly sprouts and the tree grows up to 80 feet tall! Who knew? God did. And apparently the wise Chinese farmer did - what amazing patience and faith he had to keep tending his trees all those years with no evidence of any success.

Now when I get frustrated with the uncertainties of our world today, I try to remember the lesson of the Chinese bamboo tree. Even if I don't see change happening right now, and I don't have any guarantees about the future, I still shouldn't give up. If we keep on nurturing and contributing where we can, following Christ as best we can, there may be growth happening that we just can't see yet. Patience means having faith in God's plan. I'm still working on it.

~ Barb Mardis

## Electronic Tidings

Thank you to the many who have contacted me to receive an electronic version of Tidings. If you would prefer to receive Tidings as an email attachment in the future rather than hard copy in the mail but haven't let me know, please contact me today at [michelle@firstcongucc.org](mailto:michelle@firstcongucc.org) or call 319-234-8927.

I will need to know:

- Your email address (please double-check to make sure it's correct)
- If it's okay to use your email for other church-related communication
- If it's okay to add your email address to the next printing of the church directory

## Nicaragua Shoe Boxes

If you aren't able to shop or don't like to shop but would like to help with the Nicaragua Shoe Boxes, you're in luck!! Connie Jo and Jayne will shop for you. Make a donation and write Nicaragua in the memo line. \$35 is the average price per box and in the past we have filled as many as 65 boxes with your generous donations!! Look forward to shopping for you!

## Food Pantry

Our food pantry is doing great! We have helped many people. Our hours are Tuesday's 1-3 and Fridays 9-11. We could use some help during these times. If you are able to help please contact Michelle in the office or sign up on the sheet in the library. Thank you!

## Planting Seeds will Never Be Easier than this . . . are you in?

The more people who know what's going on at First Congregational UCC, the better ... right? We want to *plant as many seeds* as we can in our community and world. To that end, we invite you to add people to receive an electronic email version of Tidings each week. This could be anyone who you believe would like to know what has happened or all the good things that are going to happen at First Church. Our Tidings will be full of good information that should be shared with more than just our church family. Interested others could be family members, neighbors, friends, co-workers ... anyone. It doesn't matter where they live or if they already have a church home.

Help us *Plant More Seeds*, won't you? If you know anyone who may like weekly information through our Tidings, please contact Michelle in the church office at 319-234-8927 or at [michelle@firstcongucc.org](mailto:michelle@firstcongucc.org) with the information below. (Of course, anyone preferring *not* to receive Tidings for any reason will be taken off the list immediately.) It doesn't cost us a nickel and it may just make someone's day a little brighter!

Michelle will want to know:

- The email address of the person you think would like to receive Tidings
- Whether they are a friend, family member, neighbor, or co-worker, or other

Thanks for Helping Us Grow Our Garden!! Plant More Seeds!!

## "they're not our children"

a mother stands alone  
helpless, covered with despair,  
holds the little boy close in her arms,  
eyes flood from wells of agony!  
will they rip her child from her life?

the baby from a hidden strength!  
sees his mom drowning in tears,  
reaches tenderly over to the wet face,  
little hands touch her eyes, a final caress,  
child's love a light for our blindness!

is this "the land of the free, home of the brave,"  
when the least among us receive no mercy?  
compassion thrown on the ground!  
decency to families discarded,  
kindness, care deleted from conscience?

david walters  
June 2018



\*The title and quote, "they're not our children," is a quote by a public official decrying how America's resources were being misused for children that were not American, "not our children!" He fully supported separating children from their families.

First Congregational UCC  
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# Congregational Tidings

Place  
Stamp  
Here

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

F I R S T C O N G R E G A T I O N A L U C C

## Church Row National Night Out ... Another Success!!!

In spite of being indoors due to a damp park, we all had an excellent ecumenical gathering in Trinity Lutheran's basement with a surprise visitor who came all the way from Texas! We have some new kids in the neighborhood who are fierce competitors with games.

Many thanks to all who helped and participated, including Bob Brock, for his best chocolate chip cookies ever, Beth Lauterbach, for a Keifer watermelon, Diane Highnam, for taking pictures & helping with activities, the Prescott Family, for face painting & clean up, Ed Dams for the extensive planning and Rocky Petersen, for being available to wrangle tables. A good time was had by all, so put the first Tuesday in August on your calendar, and we'll make it bigger & better next year!"

