

Congregational Tidings

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



A weekly newsletter



November 6, 2019



Caretakers of the Way

Humans leave traces of connection. The British naturalist Robert MacFarlane has written *“that once you begin to notice them, you see that the landscape is still webbed with paths and footpaths Pilgrim paths, green roads, drove roads, corpse roads, trods, leys, dikes, drongs, sarns, snickets –say the names of paths out loud and at speed and they become a poem or rite – holloways, bostles, shutes, driftways, lichways, ridings, halterpaths, cartways, carneys, causeways, and herepaths.”* I’m sure that if you took a day trip anywhere in the Cedar Valley or looked in your own

neighborhood you would find similar examples of human connections. **We are a social species that desires community.**

The Christian faith is also a path of connection but unless the way is practiced it disappears. **Stewardship is the practice that generates and regenerates the path of faith.**

Stewardship is less about sharpening our pencils and more about sharpening our tools for trail maintenance, equipping ourselves to be caretakers of the path connecting us to our Creator and guiding our steps.

MacFarlane reports that in the 19th century small sickles were hung on stiles or posts where paths connecting communities began. Walkers would pick up the sickle or hook to lop off branches as they walked. They would then leave the ‘hook’ on the stile or post at the end of the path so a walker going in the opposite direction could do the same. **This shared caretaking of the path benefited each individual walker but also the larger community.**

Reading in The Book of Acts, we find that the early Christian movement was known internally as well as to its persecutors as the way. **The life of faith is a way of being human, a way of interpreting, a way of practicing, a way of living.**

As we journey towards the reign of God, we are following in the tracks of others, ways walked by Jesus himself, paths as ancient as Abraham and Sarah, Ruth and Moses, and those who have come into our doors since 1856. Today we are not just signposts pointing the way but the caretakers, the stewards of that way. Come and join in the way.

November 10th is Stewardship Sunday at First Congregational UCC. You are invited to deliver your 2020 Pledge Card in one of three ways:

- *You can drop it off at the Church Office this week**
- *You can call or email our Office Manager Michelle Wolfe**
- *Or you can bring the card to worship this Sunday.**

No matter the method of delivery your participation is critical. In the past year your contributions to “*The Way*” have enabled FCUCC to deepen our faith in worship, Youth and Christian Education, Mission and Outreach, and Growth and Evangelism. Your continued support is critical in helping us continue to take care of the path that God has laid out for us.

As always my door is open if you would like to talk. God bless.

~ Pastor Scott

Stewardship Sunday
November 10, 2019
10:30 am

Pastor Scott Spence
will present the
message:

A People of the Way

Scripture Reading
John 14:1-14

Worship Leader
Meach Meacham

Deacon-In-Charge
Evie Waack

Acolytes
Roger & Joanne Lane

*If you would like to acolyte
on an upcoming Sunday,
please let Michelle in the
office know.*

November Ushers
Bruce Jensen
Jim Stevenson
Bob Tefft
Rich Thuesen



Why? Visioning Event

The event will be held this weekend, Friday, November 8th at 6:00pm and Saturday, November 9th at 9:00am. If you would still like to RSVP, please contact Michelle in the office today!

Public Office Hours

Join Pastor Scott at Sidecar (*Downtown, W'loo*) today and Sidecar (*Ridgeway, W'loo*) next Wednesday from 3-5pm. There will be no office hours on the 27th.

Special Veterans Lunch

Hello Church family! The youth group is putting on a lunch after service this Sunday, November 10th. We will be honoring Veterans and the people who have served our country. We will be serving many different foods such as pasta, fruits, and dessert. Come help support and bring a friend too!

~ Katie Thomas



Acolytes Needed

If you would be willing to acolyte once per quarter, please contact Michelle in the office.

We currently have a very short list of acolytes which is making it difficult to fill each Sunday. Thank you in advance for your help with this!

Contribution Statements

Due to several requests for a pledge balance, I am mailing out contribution statements through October 31st. Please watch for them in the mail this week and if you have any questions, please contact me by phone or email. Thank you!

~ Michelle

Sunday School

Gathering (9:00 - 9:15 am)

Youth and adults initially will meet in the chapel.

Classes (9:15 - 10:15 am)

Students 6th grade and up will gather upstairs in the Murphy Youth Room with Diana Paige.

Students 3rd - 5th grade will gather in the chapel with Katie Thomas.

Children ages pre-K - 2nd grade will meet with Jayne Slaughter in the downstairs children's nursery / classroom.

Pastor Scott's Adult class has merged with the **Women's class** and meets in the Friendship Room.

Weekly Events

Wed., November 6

3-5pm - Public Office Hours
at Sidecar (*Downtown, W'loo*)
6:00 pm - Potluck
6:30 pm - Choir Practice
7:00 pm - Pastor's Class
Youth Group

Thurs., November 7

6:00 Bells Practice

Fri., November 8

6:00pm Why? Visioning Event

Sat., November 9

9:00am Why? Visioning Event

Sun., November 10

9:00 am - Sunday School
10:30 am - Worship
Stewardship Sunday

Special Guest Speaker

On Sunday, December 1st, our supply pastor will be poet, minister, activist, and teacher Joe Davis of Minneapolis, MN. If you would like more information about Joe, you can speak with Cliff Highnam, Evie Waack, Beth Lauterbach, or Anne Hoekstra, or visit Joe's website joedavispoetry.com. *Testimonial from Evie Waack: "I am so excited to have Joe Davis here as guest preacher on Sunday, December 1. He will also lead our Sunday School that morning for adults and teens. Joe received a masters in Theology of the Arts and served as Artist-in-Residence at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. For a week in June 2018 he served as Artist-in-Residence at Holden Village, the week about twelve of us also traveled to Holden Village in the Cascade Mountains. How would I describe Joe? Warm-Hearted, Sincere, Engaging, Caring. Here is how another pastor described his experience with Joe: Joe blessed our congregation by preaching in worship and leading the weekly forum. What a gift! Joe jumps in smoothly and with a contagious spirit... I anticipate an engaging Sunday morning. Come and join me on Sunday, December 1 starting with Sunday School and then continuing with worship."*

Partners in Education

15 Students from Bunger Middle School are interested in becoming journal buddies this year. Please see Tim Ahrens to sign up to be a buddy!

Blessing Bags

For the next few weeks, we will collect travel-size toiletries and personal care items from the following list:

Soap, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes,
Floss, Mouthwash, Hair brushes,
Warm socks, Gloves, Warm hats,
Hand/feet warmers, Wet wipes,
Bottled water, Chapstick, Lotion,
Deodorant, Band-aids,
1 gallon-size zip-top bags, and
Individual snacks like granola bars

You can bring donations to the church office. Once we have collected the items, we will need volunteers to help pack the bags with these items and a flyer with information about Love Inc.

'Tis The Season -- For Scam Phone Calls

There have been several scam calls circulating lately. One in particular comes from an 800 number with a computer-created woman's voice. It states that your Social Security account has been "suspended" until you call their number. **DO NOT DO THIS!!** It is a scam! They are trying to get your information and/or money. Please pass along to other family members especially the elderly who can tend to be easier targets.



Church Door Access

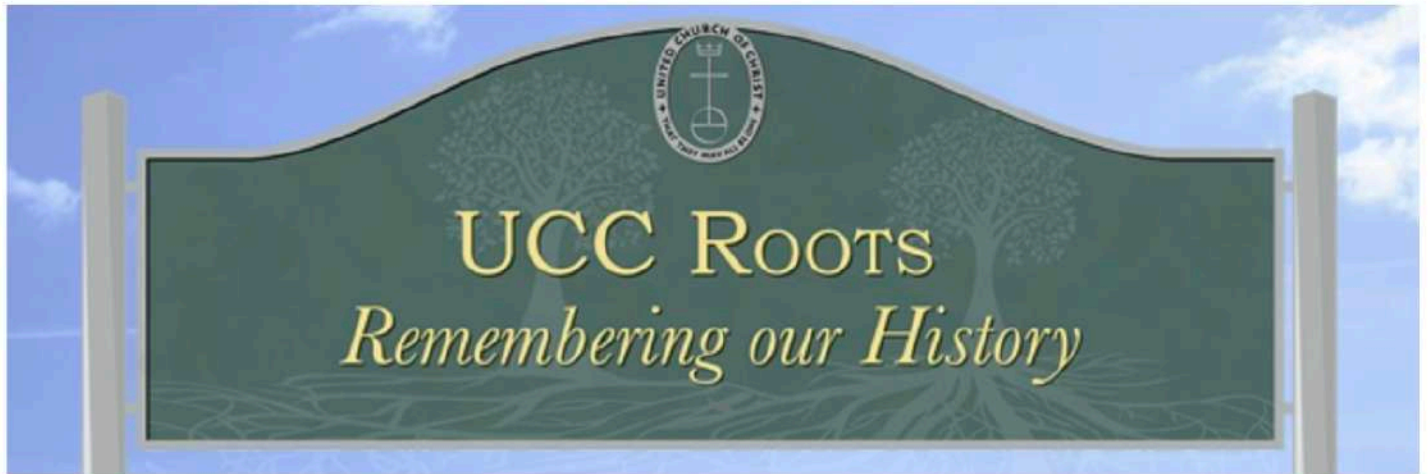
Our new security system has been installed. The church doors will be locked during the week. If you need to get into the building, please come up the ramp to the single accessible door which is to the left of the main double doors and press the intercom button for Michelle to buzz you in.

Choir and Bells members have been given a code by Luke to get into the building during choir and bells practices. Please contact Luke if you still need that code.

If you need regular access to the building, please contact Michelle and she can get you set up with your own personal code.

**** Please note, if you have a key, It Still Works! Just make sure to lock the door behind you.****

As with anything new, it takes a little time to learn the process. Thank you for your patience!

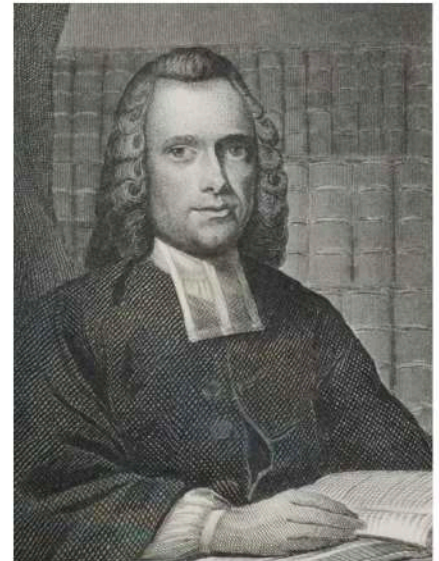


“Michael Schlatter: Organized Churches and Cultivated Relationships”

On August 6, 1746, an adventurous Swiss pastor arrived in Pennsylvania, eager to serve as a pastor to new German Reformed emigrants. He was born in 1716 in St. Gall, Switzerland, and attended the University of Leyden. Although his youthful *wanderlust* involved travel and teaching for some years, he eventually focused on ministry. His name was Michael Schlatter (1716-1790).

Initially Reformed church leaders in Holland sponsored Schlatter's mission, charging him to establish needed patterns of “polity” (church organization) for North American Reformed churches. Although Schlatter was called to be a local pastor, his mission was also to help new churches cultivate wider relationships and patterns of accountability

Schlatter saw that many Christian groups were establishing districts, presbyteries and conventions during the colonial period. Survival depended on collaboration. Schlatter established the “*Coetus*” – a German word for synod or an assembly of pastors and lay people in a geographic region. Within a year after Schlatter's arrival, the “*Coetus*” of German Reformed churches in Pennsylvania was established on September 24, 1747 in Philadelphia.



Schlatter expanded his vision. He met Lutheran missionaries and together they were able to heal long-standing theological disagreements between the Reformed and Lutheran groups. Schlatter supported the establishment of “union churches” –whereby Reformed and Lutheran churches shared buildings. Some “union churches” are still in existence.

After German Reformed churches united with German Evangelical churches in 1934, and in 1957 became part of the United Church of Christ, collaboration expanded. In 1997, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and three Reformed denominations -- the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Reformed Church in America formed a four-way relationship of “full communion” known as the “Formula of Agreement.” These denominations continue to honor common sacramental traditions and recognize each other's clergy.

Michael Schlatter set the stage for ongoing ecumenical relationships 250 years ago.

Contributor: Caroline Dunleavy

BAZAAR BUZZ

Christmas Bazaar
Sat., November 23rd
(9am - 1pm)

Bazaar preparations are in full swing!

Fun and Fellowship

Looking for an easy way to contribute to the bizarre this year? Then come join your friends and other craft enthusiasts in creating beautiful Christmas cookie mix jars; a new item up for sale at the bizarre this year! We will meet at the church to fill the jars with dry ingredients, label, and decorate them for the holidays! It won't be too time consuming and all materials are provided. If you would like to be part of this fun group, contact Beth Hurley at 319-234-6223 or hurleyb52@yahoo.com.

Festival of Trees

Following worship this Sunday, you can purchase raffle tickets for The Festival of Trees from Connie Jo Peirce and Jill Jensen in the Friendship room.

Yard Signs

This Sunday you will find Jayne Slaughter passing out signs to place in your yards. (The signs are brand new this year and very attractive! We just ask that you please return when the bazaar is over, we hope to reuse them each year.)

Silent Auction

Here comes the SILENT AUCTION: Put on your thinking caps and share a clever donation for the Silent Auction. Can you offer a service such as shoveling or baking? What about a unique piece of art or photography? A basket for a snowy day with friends, a garden, the great outdoors, or Fido? Tickets to a play or game? Gather some thoughts and please contact Gina Greene so we can save you a place at the table. Thank you for all you do.

Calling All Bakers!!!!

It's time to get out your favorite recipe and be a part of of this year's bake sale at the bizarre! We are in need of cookies, bars, breads, and pies. Containers for your baked goods will be handed out this Sunday after church along with sticky labels in the Crossroads. We ask that you do label your goods and add whether it contains nuts, etc. as well as if it is gluten-free, sugar-free, whole grain, etc. to be part of our "Healthy Choice" table.

Bazaar Chairs: Connie Jo, Jayne and Jill



Next Sunday:

Last year at the Bazaar, the Hurley's won the Silent Auction for Pick a Sermon Sunday. On November 17th the text will be Matthew 6:1-21.

Sunday, November 24th:

Christ the King Sunday

The text will be Colossians 1:11-20.



**Hanging
of the
Greens**

Please stay after worship on the 24th for the "Hanging of the Greens" where we will decorate the church for Advent. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to the church office.

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.

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

News from the Wider Church

Saturday, November 2nd was the Fall Meeting of the Northeast Association of the Iowa Conference. In the United Church of Christ, Associations are regional gatherings of congregations that come together for the vital work of the church. They help shepherd believers through the ministry discernment process, support member congregations, celebrate important milestones, and build collaboration through fellowship and covenantal connection.

The Northeast Association is more or less comprised of those churches east of I 35 and north of US 20. Our members are both rural and urban, large and small, and can claim Congregational as well as Evangelical & Reformed Heritage. Our theologies range from conservative to progressive and all points in-between-but we are bound together as a *United and Uniting Church*.

Cedar Falls United Church of Christ were our gracious hosts for this meeting. Business included electing new Advisory Council Officers and members of the Committee on Ministry (Pastor Scott is now the Vice President of the former and serving on the latter). Productive workshops were focused on the following areas:

- **What Does It Mean to be an Open and Affirming Congregation?*
- **Being Community-Even With People We Disagree With*
- **Attracting the 20s and 30s Generation to Your Church*
- **Telling our Stories-What Does it Mean to be UCC in NE Iowa?*

Many thanks to Jim Stevenson for being our delegate for the meeting. The date for the Spring Meeting is TBD but most likely will take place in Tripoli. Stay tuned for more updates on Association and Iowa Conference news and feel free to let me know if you have any questions. Thanks!

Pastor Scott