

# Congregational Tidings

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



A weekly newsletter



December 11, 2019

## Letter from Pastor

Growing up in Virginia, my experience of winter may have been a little different than most of you here in Iowa. I do remember the temperatures dropping and I do have distinct memories of getting off of the elementary school bus when it was just about dark. I remember the air being cold enough to see my breath and having to bundle up in my thickest jacket. Winter is not what one usually associates with the South-but it does happen in its own unique way.

I also remember with eagerness awaiting the first good snow of the season. School was cancelled and we were going to have a Snow Day! Snow Days meant bundling up and going out to build a snowman, throw snowballs, and make snow angels. It meant that we could get the sleds out of the garage and make our way down the fastest hill in all of Chesterfield County. **Winter equaled fun and excitement for me growing up.**

And then I grew up. I got married, went to seminary, had kids, and eventually made my way to the Cedar Valley. **My reaction to winter changed a bit in connection with my “grown up” responsibilities.** Winter can often now mean scraping the car, shoveling the driveway, and hoping schools stay open today because I don't want the academic year to end in July...

But I bring you good news! Winter isn't always the drag that we sometimes associate it with as grown-ups. As grown-ups we notice that the nights are increasingly long. We notice that we're getting up for work or our morning coffee in the dark. We're somewhat cranky about the cold temperatures-even in Iowa!

**But there's also something about the coziness of the season.** We can light the fire in our fireplace. We can see the gentle light twinkling from our Christmas trees. We can hold cups of warm beverages. In Denmark, this is called *hygge* (pronounced hoo-Ga) and is translated as the “art of coziness.” In Norway, they call it *koselig* and it means translated as the *sense of coziness*. Both of these countries have winters even deeper than ours, but they are on to something. They understand and appreciate being cozy and how the long nights of winter lend themselves to that feeling.

### Third Sunday of Advent

December 15, 2019  
10:30 am

Pastor Scott Spence  
will present the  
message:

*Tears and Joy*

### Scripture Reading

Ezra 1:1-4, 3:1-4, 10-13

### Worship Leader

Diana Paige

### Deacon-In-Charge

Jill Jensen

### Acolytes

Cliff and Diane  
Highnam

### December Ushers

Craig Driver  
Todd Ellison  
Steve Peters

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This liturgical season-the season of Advent-is focused on waiting. We wait for the birth of Jesus – not just counting down with a chocolate or a toy as we move through the Advent calendar. We wait for the birth of Jesus not just so we can open our presents on Christmas morning. We wait for Jesus’ birth as we know that he ushers in hope and peace and joy and love. **As we wait, we allow for increasing light to surround us** – lighting an additional Advent wreath candle each week. **And the candles we light will guide us as we wait for Christ’s eventual return.**

So, this Advent, I invite you to snuggle in. I invite you to practice your *hygge* and sharpen your *koselig*. **I invite you to be cozy.** To surround yourself in the coziness of the season over and above the chaos that can consume us. Come worship with us on Sunday and make plans to attend one of our Christmas Eve services. Contemplate ways that you can share that coziness with others in our community. And let me know what you find out by coming to Community Office Hours on Wednesdays or sending me an email.

Wishing you hope and peace and joy and love this season and always. God bless.

Pastor Scott

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 AT 5PM

**SERVICE OF  
PEACE &  
COMFORT**

For those who struggle to find the joy  
of the Advent and Christmas seasons

**TRINITY**

(4535 Kimball Avenue, W'loo 50701)

## Office Closed & Tidings/ Bulletin Deadlines

The office will be closed Tues., Dec. 24th through Wed., Jan. 1st for the Holidays. Any announcements you have are always welcome but please see the following special deadlines:

### *Christmas Eve Bulletins:*

Thurs., 12/19 by 9am;

### *Sunday, 12/22 Bulletin:*

Thurs., 12/19 by 1pm;

### *Wednesday, 12/25 Tidings and*

### *Sunday, 12/29 Bulletin:*

Mon., 12/23 by 9am;

**\*\*NO Tidings the week of New Years.**

## Adopt-A-Family

Thank you to all who donated to our Adopt-A-Family Drive. We raised over \$950 to help families at our Partners in Education School Bunker Middle.

## Christmas Caroling

Thank you to everyone who participated last Sunday. It was an enjoyable time.



## Mitten Tree

We have put up a Mitten Tree again this year. New hats, scarves, boots, gloves and mittens are appreciated

to decorate the Crossroads area of the church. Thank you!

## 2020 Offering Envelopes

2020 Offering Envelopes have been ordered and will be placed in the Crossroads as soon as they are available.

We apologize for the delay!

## Public Office Hours

Join Pastor Scott at Sidecar (*Ridgeway, W'loo*) today and Fat Cup (*Fletcher, W'loo*) next Wednesday from 3-5pm for the last POHs of 2019. We will resume on January 8th at Cup of Joe in Cedar Falls.

## Christmas Eve Pageant

Any youth interested in participating in the Christmas Eve Pageant, please contact Katie ([katie@firstcongucc.org](mailto:katie@firstcongucc.org)). Practices will continue during the Sunday School hour on December 15th & 22nd.

## Church Connections

Former choir section leader, *Kelly Hill*, will be performing in Cedar Rapids Opera Theater's "Madama Butterfly" on Friday, January 17 at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday, January 20 at 2:00 p.m. For more information and tickets, contact [www.cropera.org/madama-butterfly](http://www.cropera.org/madama-butterfly).

Also, Cedar Rapids Opera Theater has another church connection - - Their executive director is the daughter of Roger and Joanne Lane - - *Lori Lane!*

## Veterans of the Cross Offering

This offering will be taken during our 12/22 Worship Service. Envelopes will be in next week's Tidings or you can pick one up in the Library.

## Prayer for the Week

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

- St. Francis of Assisi

## 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.

**The Adult class** meets in the Friendship Room.

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## Weekly Events

### Wed., December 11

3-5pm - Public Office Hours

6:00 pm - Potluck

6:30 pm - Choir Practice

7:00 pm - Pastor's Class  
Youth Group

### Thurs., December 12

9:00 am - PPRC Meeting

6:00 pm - Bells Practice

### Sat., December 14

9:00 am - Women's Breakfast  
at Perkins

### Sun., December 15

9:00 am - Sunday School

10:30 am - Worship

### Tues., December 17

7:30 am - Men's Breakfast  
at Village Inn

# DECEMBER SCHEDULE



THIRD SUNDAY  
OF  
*Advent*

*Joy*

Text:

Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13

**December 15, 2019**



FOURTH SUNDAY  
OF  
*Advent*

*Love*

Text: Luke 1:5-13,  
14-25, 57-80

**December 22, 2019**



## **Christmas Eve Services:**

5:00 Handbells Concert

5:30 Family Service with Christmas Pageant

11:00 Service of Lessons and Carols with Communion

## **December 29th Service:**

Pick-A-Christmas Hymn

(Choose any Christmas Hymn from the Red or Black Hymnals)



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**Make plans to attend our Winter Wednesday Night Bible Study Series!  
We will be taking a look at the *Prophets of the Old Testament*.  
What were they saying to their communities-and how can their words mold our  
faith today? Class begins at 6:45 on January 8th in the Lounge. See you there!**

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

## It's time to order your Poinsettias!!!



It's that time of year! You may fill out this order form and place in the offering plate or call Michelle at the church office. Orders may be placed any time by Sunday, December 15th. (\$12.00 per plant)

We will be ordering live poinsettias again this year! You may take your poinsettia(s) home with you after the late Christmas Eve service.

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church (*write "poinsettia" in memo*).

Poinsettia(s) given by: \_\_\_\_\_

"In Memory of...": \_\_\_\_\_

"In Honor of...": \_\_\_\_\_