

Congregational Tidings

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



A weekly newsletter



www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalUCCWaterlooIowa

December 12, 2018

Third Sunday of Advent

December 16, 2018
10:30 am

**Pastor Scott Spence will
present the message:**

Here is My Servant

Using the text:
Isaiah 42:1-9

Worship Leader
Gina Greene

Children's Lesson
Dale Waack

Special Music
Awaken Us, O Lord
Chancel Choir

Deacon-In-Charge
Joanne Lane

Acolytes
Greg and Anne Hoekstra

Greeters
Jayne Slaughter,
Eva & Demi
(Sanctuary)

Kerri Mennenga
(Crossroads)

December Ushers
Craig Driver
Todd Ellison
Steve Peters

See! I am Doing a New Thing!

I hope this note finds you well in the midst of this Advent season—a time when believers remember the birth of the Christ child and look forward to his eventual return. It's a season that I feel also describes where we are as a congregation. This year alone First Congregational UCC has called a new Pastor and Teacher (Thank you!), a new Music Director, a new Custodian, and begun seriously discerning where our talents and resources and the needs of the Cedar Valley meet. **I believe that we are leaving 2018 in a great position to do some truly amazing Gospel-filled work.**

I can also understand that can also leave you a little tired and nervous about what's next. Uncertainty can be frightening. It can make one hesitant about what's around the corner. Change is risky.

Just know that we are not the first group of faith-filled people to feel this way. My Advent devotional reading this morning led me to Isaiah 43. In this chapter the prophet speaks to a people who *are going somewhere but just haven't arrived there yet* and have expressed doubt about the whole journey. God reminds them that **"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"** The Lord will get them to where they need to be, all they have to do is put one foot in front of the other.

What does this have to do with FCUCC? A critical part of us making the journey and seeing where God is leading us is having adequate financial resources. Our church has a history of generosity that can be seen in our talented staff, beautiful building, outreach to the community, and religious education. We can *Be The Church* because of that history of support. We are a generous community.

We have enjoyed a balanced budget for the past several years. Unfortunately, we are projected to have a serious shortfall as we enter 2019. This shortfall, if left unaltered, makes our ministry efforts harder to carry out in the next year. **I invite you to take time this week to faithfully discern if you wish to change your pledge amount. Please contact the Office Manager by phone or email if that is the case.**

I cannot wait to see where God is taking us in the New Year. As always I am honored to be your Pastor and Teacher. See you Sunday!

Pastor Scott



Advent Study Series

Join us for an Advent Study Series led by Pastor Scott. Each Thursday evening we will be looking at UCC scholar Walter Bruggeman's "Names for the Messiah." We will start with a potluck dinner at 6:00 pm with discussion beginning around 6:30.



Don't forget to bring in your hats, scarves, and mittens to decorate the Mitten Tree in the Crossroads area of the church.

Dinner Class

We will begin a new Thursday night dinner class beginning on January 10th. You can purchase the book, "Tribal Church - Ministering to the Missing Generation" from Amazon or from us. Please r.s.v.p. with a check for \$15 (if purchasing the book through us) to Michelle in the office by Wednesday, January 2nd. All are welcome!

Sanctuary at Christmas

You are invited to a Jazz Christmas Concert featuring Hands of Time Quartet this Sunday, December 16th from 12:30 to 1:30pm. The concert will be held at United Church of Christ in Cedar Falls. (9204 University Ave. - CF)



Join us for caroling at 5:00 pm at the church this Sunday, December 16th!

Bring some goodies to share when we meet back at the church after caroling is done. Drinks will be provided.

Upcoming Historic Church Row Opportunity

We are again partnering with Blessed Sacrament to package meals for the NE Iowa Food Bank on March 13, 2019. Right now they are raising funds to purchase the ingredients so a new goal of 50,000 units serving 4-6 people at a price of \$0.25/ serving can be reached. If you would like to contribute financially to this very worthwhile local, ecumenical project, please just mark your donation "Blessed Sacrament Food". Thanks for your support!

UCC Christmas Offering

This fund helps to provide pension and health premium supplementation to lower-income retired church workers, emergency assistance to clergy and lay church employees in need, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to hundreds of annuitants, administered by the pension board. The offering will be collected at our December 23rd morning worship service.



Cooper Anderson Mejia was born on November 12, 2018. He weighed 9 lbs, 8oz, and was 21 3/4 inches. Proud parents are Robert and Jill Mejia, brothers Teddy and Charlie, grandparents Craig and Karen Jensen, and great-grandparents Charles and Catherine Jensen. Congratulations!

Festival of Trees

Our first Festival of Trees was such a huge success at the Bazaar! Weren't they all just beautiful? We are planning to purchase the trees for next year's Bazaar, during the after Christmas sales, so if you are interested in decorating a tree, please let Connie Jo, Jayne or Jill know and we will sign you up! It doesn't have to be just you- you can partner up with someone and decorate together or a family can sign up to decorate a tree, etc We will provide the trees and you get to show off your creative decorating skills and decorate the tree from head to toe. We don't need to know your theme right now, just if you want to decorate one so we can be sure to get it during the clearance sales. Thank you in advance!!

Sunday School

Gathering (9:00 - 9:15am)

Youth and adults meet for singing, praying, and mission news in the chapel

Classes (9:15 - 10:15 am)

CHILDREN

Students 6th grade and up will gather upstairs in the Murphy Youth Room with Paul & Hannah Prescott.

Children ages pre-K - 5th grade meet with Jayne Slaughter in the upstairs Sunday School Room.

ADULTS

Adults will meet in the chapel.

Women's Book Study meets in the Friendship Room

Upcoming Events

Thurs., December 13

6:00 pm - Advent Study Series and Potluck

Sun., December 16

9:00 am - Sunday School
9:00 am - Women's Book Study
10:30 am - Worship Service
5:00 pm Christmas Caroling

Tues., December 18

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

Wed., December 19

5:30 pm - Bells
7:00 pm - Choir

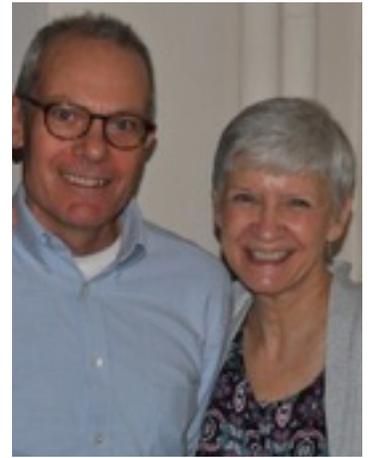
Thurs., December 20

6:00 pm Advent Study with Potluck

Sun., December 23

9:00 am - Sunday School
9:00 am - Women's Book Study
10:30 am - Worship Service

Our Church Family



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

Last Chance to order your Poinsettias!!!



It's that time of year! With Christmas coming, it is time to place your order for Poinsettias to decorate our church sanctuary. 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 **this Sunday, December 16th**. (\$12.00 per plant)

We will be ordering live poinsettias 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...": _____