

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL



TIDINGS



"You are welcome here!"

THIS SUNDAY:

August 31, 2025 10:30 AM

Worship Service

Sermon Title:

Kindness at the Table

Scripture Text:

Luke 14:1, 7-14

[Click Here to watch last Sunday's service](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, August 27

5:30pm - Bells

6:30pm - Choir

Thursday, August 28

9:00am - Crop Walk Meeting

Sunday, August 31

9:30am - ONA Discussion (Chapel)

Tuesday, September 2

7:30am - Men's Breakfast at
Village Inn (W'loo)

**August 24 Sermon Recap: God's kindness is not shallow politeness
- it is courageous compassion.**

In Jeremiah's call, kindness shows up as God equips a reluctant prophet with presence and purpose. In Luke's Gospel, kindness looks like Jesus healing a woman bent over for 18 years, restoring her dignity even when it disrupts Sabbath rules.

God's kindness empowers, heals, and restores. And we are called to reflect that same kindness in our lives.

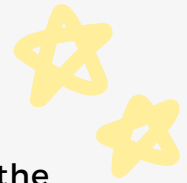
Reflection Question:

What "rules" or comforts sometimes hold you back from extending compassion?



ONA STATEMENT

Join us Sunday, September 7th as we prayerfully vote on whether to become an Open and Affirming (ONA) church.



REMEMBER YOUR NEIGHBORS

Here's an important way to feed the community. Bring food for the pantry and support to your neighbors. Pantries were filled last week and the pantry is ready to be replenished.

Some ideas for foods to bring- peanut butter, canned beans, cereal, oatmeal, granola bars, canned meats, meals, soups, fruits, vegetables (pop-top cans preferred), etc. Thank you.

CHOIR & BELLS...



The musical ministries at First Congregational are excited to begin a new year of worship! We would like to encourage anyone who has an interest in helping with our chancel or bell choir to attend our practices this Wednesday, 8/27. Touch of Brass handbell choir will meet at 5:30pm and, until The Gathering resumes, Chancel Choir will meet at 6:30pm. Stop in and let us find a spot for you in our music ministry!



Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screenings. We are sponsoring these Screenings on Thursday, September 18. [Click Here](#) or call 1-800-324-9458 to schedule your appointment.. Use the promo code **HABC001** to receive all 4 screenings for \$129.

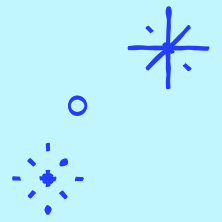
Habitat for Humanity News:

Would you be interested in coming to the Habitat Circle Up Breakfast? It will be held October 15 at 7:30 am. This is an informational event and a fundraiser for those who share a passion for the mission of Habitat. Please let Gina Greene know if you might be interested or have any questions.
ggreene1124@gmail.com

From September 1st through December 23rd join Habitat for a Hammers & Harvest Build Challenge. This is a hands-on volunteer experience for businesses in the community. Rally your coworkers, form a volunteer crew, and help Habitat build affordable homes for families across the Cedar Valley. Your time on site directly fuels their mission and keeps their builds on track through the colder months. Individual volunteers are always needed as well. [Click Here](#) for more info.



SEPTEMBER 2025



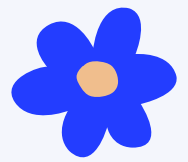
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 LABOR DAY (Office Closed)	2 7:30am Men's Breakfast	3 3pm Job Found. 5:30pm Bells 6:15pm Dinner 6:45pm Adult Study 7:30pm Choir	4	5	6
7 2025-2026 KICKOFF SUNDAY 10:30 Worship	8	9 NAMI - 5:30pm Board Mtg. 7pm Presentation	10 3:00pm Job Found. 5:30pm Bells 6:15pm Dinner 6:45pm Adult Study 7:30pm Choir	11	12	13 9:00am Women's Breakfast
14 10:30 Worship	15	16 7:30am Men's Breakfast 6:00 Common Mtg 7:00 Trustee Mtg	17 3:00pm Job Found. 5:30pm Bells 6:15pm Dinner 6:45pm Adult Study 7:30pm Choir	18 Lifeline Screenings (Downstairs)	19	20
21 10:30 Worship	22	23 NAMI - 7pm Presentation	24 3pm Job Found. 5:30pm Bells 6:15pm Dinner 6:45pm Adult Study 7:30pm Choir	25 NAMI - 6:00pm Family to Family Class	26 Fill Neighborhood Pantries	27
28 10:30 Worship	29	30 (Office Closed)				

Anniversaries:

- 1 - Tom & Jane Wells
- 2 - Greg & Michelle Holt
- 5 - Gordon & Beth Lauterbach
Paul & Hannah Prescott
- 7 - Jeff & Abbey Athey
- 16 - Craig & Nancy Mahood
- 20 - Ed & Eileen Dams
- 22 - Rich & Janice Akin
- 29 - Bob & Joanne Tefft

Birthdays:

- 1 - Craig Driver
- 4 - Barbara Hatinger
- 6 - Liz Thorpe
- 8 - Jennifer Thompson
- 9 - Abbey Athey
Ruth Brower
- 12 - Japhy Holt
Hannah Prescott
Kaden McConnell
- 13 - Paul Greene
- 15 - Stephanie Peters
Kate Thuesen
- 21 - Craig Wells
- 22 - Stewart Rickert
- 23 - Zoe Panicucci
- 25 - Shelli Panicucci
- 27 - Zoie Lynne Casteel
- 28 - Jaquelyn Eden
Dave Vandeventer



Greeting friends!

Many of you heard me share this in service on 8/10, but for those who weren't there, or would just like a refresher, here's an update on our building refresh and some of the work happening behind the scenes. What began as a vision for revitalizing The Crossroads has grown into a broader effort of thoughtful renewal, made possible through the support and input of many across the congregation.

The Crossroads project is now entering its final phase. Finishing touches in the entryway were added with the hope of creating a space that welcomes everyone, whether a first-time guest or long-time member, from the moment they walk through the doors. Clear directional signage and a rotating calendar of upcoming events in the elevator were also put in place so folks can stay in the loop.

In the Friendship Room, a walk-through experience of our church's history has taken shape. Connected to that historical project, a "Past Pastors" wall has also been created and is now nearly complete. This wall is located in the hallway across from the bathrooms near Brandyn's office. This project has taken hundreds of hours of digging through church records, combing through old files, cross-referencing details with online archives, and even spending time at the library going through old newspaper films. I've read more obituaries than I can count, tracked down scattered pieces of information, and followed every lead I could find.

When I first started, aside from a few recent pastors, we only had three historical photographs. I've worked diligently and persistently to locate photos of all but three, and the stories I've uncovered along the way have truly felt like a God-given joy—and, in some cases, nothing short of miraculous. What I thought would be a simple project turned into something much deeper and more meaningful than I ever imagined, and I'm so excited to finally be able to share it.

That said, help is still needed with the final two pieces: I'm currently gathering short informational blurbs about Pastor Ensworth and Pastor Scott's time in ministry here. Please spread the word: if you have any memories, stories, or context to offer, I would love to hear from you. Please email anything you're willing to share to mackenzie@fccwaterloo.org. The more voices included, the better and richer this tribute will be.

Looking ahead, conversations have begun about refreshing other spaces, including the library and main floor bathrooms. A careful and respectful culling of the book collection was completed by Barb, Brandyn, and myself, with attention given to materials that are outdated, duplicated, or no longer serving current needs. Many of these resources are being replaced with updated versions, while others have been made available for members of the congregation to take home. Those books are currently laid out in the Friendship Room.

The long-term vision for the library refresh is to shape it into a space that supports meaningful activity and connection any day of the week, whether that's hosting a monthly Silent Book Club or art night, providing a welcoming space for meetings, ministry gatherings, and Bible studies, creating a casual hangout spot for youth, or simply offering space for informal community use throughout the week.

Although the last remodel was in 2011, and for some it can feel like just yesterday, so much has changed since then. Technology shapes how we connect, post-pandemic life has shifted our routines, and the rhythms of church, ministry, and community have evolved. Generational needs are different, spaces are used in new ways, and the ways we gather together have grown and diversified. This refresh isn't about erasing the past, it's about creating spaces that reflect who we are now, supports how we live out our faith today, and serves our congregation for years to come. With the school using a significant portion of the building during the week, opportunities for shared gathering space are limited. We don't need to "build a bigger barn" but we do want to steward the space we already have as wisely and creatively as possible.

It's understood that change can be uncomfortable, but with prayer, humility, and a shared desire to serve God's kingdom, these updates will help foster deeper community and a stronger sense of belonging. This refresh isn't about making things new just for the sake of it, it's about creating environments that serve our calling. After all, this building doesn't belong to us: it belongs to God. And our goal is to use every corner of it to reflect His heart and His work.

For those who would like to contribute in a tangible way, plans are being made for a furniture auction/sale in the near future so you have an opportunity to take home your very own piece of church history! I've also had some folks ask how they can support these projects, so if you feel called or led by the Spirit, any monetary donations can be turned in to Michelle in the office during the week or given to me on Sundays.

Thank you for your continued support, encouragement, and prayers throughout this process. I'm so deeply grateful for your patience, flexibility, and understanding as these updates unfold. Change, especially in a place that means so much to so many, can take time, and sometimes feel unsettling. As I told Jim Stevenson a few months ago, change is a lot like vegetables. Nobody really wants to eat them, but they're good for us, they help us grow, and deep down we all know we need them. Please know these efforts are rooted in care, intention, and prayerful discernment, and that they will help us better reflect who we are and how we live out God's call together in this space.

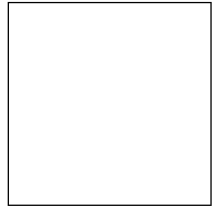
Peas and blessings,

Mackenzie Miller



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
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WATERLOO, IOWA 50702

TIDINGS



CREATE AN ENDOWMENT OF LOVE. PLEASE CONSIDER INCLUDING OUR CHURCH IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING.

2025 - 2026
KICKOFF
SUNDAY

September 7, 2025

It's time to get off the bench and back in the game! Join us as we celebrate **Kickoff Sunday** with the return of choir, Sunday School, and fellowship together. Worship will be filled with energy as we lean into the theme: *"Building the body of Christ is not a spectator sport!"*

After worship, stick around for food, fun, and community connection. This will also be an important Sunday as we prayerfully vote on whether to become an Open and Affirming (ONA) church.

Come ready to celebrate, reconnect, and step onto the field together. God has called each of us into the game – and there's a place for you on the team!