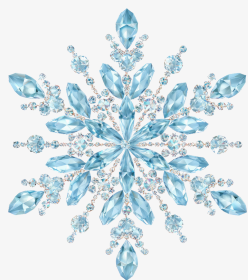


FIRST CONGREGATIONAL



# TIDINGS



*"You are welcome here!"*

## THIS SUNDAY:



**(No Service Here on 12/14)**

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Saturday, December 13**

9:00am - Women's Breakfast @ Perkins

**Sunday, December 14**

10:15am - Worship Service @ First Baptist

3:00pm - Christmas Caroling

**Tuesday, December 16**

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

6:00pm - Common Meeting

7:00pm - Trustee Meeting

**Wednesday, December 17**

5:30pm - Bells Practice

6:30pm - Choir Practice

### December 7 Sermon Recap:

Today we heard again the story of the shepherds who were the first to receive the good news of Jesus' birth. In their fear, God met them with joy. In their ordinary work, God revealed divine glory. And in their humble obedience, they became the first witnesses of Christ's arrival. Their response teaches us that worship is not just something we attend but something we are sent to do. Worship begins with seeing what God has done and continues as we share that joy and peace with the world around us.

### Reflection Question:

Where is God inviting you to pause, notice God's presence, and respond with worship in the week ahead?

**THE RETURN OF CHRISTMAS CAROLING**

Join us for an afternoon of joyful singing and holiday cheer for all ages as we visit some of our homebound members to share the sounds of the season. We'll gather at the church on **Sunday, December 14 at 3:00 PM**, go make some joyful noises, then return for cookies and cocoa to warm up afterward. If you'd like to join in, please contact the church office to sign up so we know how many to expect.



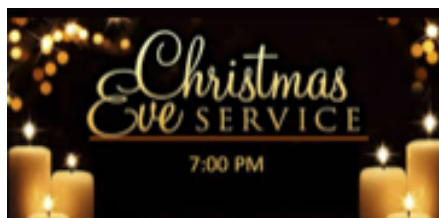
Mark your calendar and don't miss the Youth Nativity Pageant during the 10:30 service, Sunday, December 21. Youth participating in the program should arrive at 9:30.

## MITTEN TREE

There is still time to bring donations of mittens, gloves, scarves, hats and place them on our tree in the Crossroads!

## THE CHRISTMAS FUND

The Christmas Fund (previously called Veterans of the Cross) has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. If you would like to give to this fund, please place a check marked "UCC Christmas Fund" in the offering plate on Sunday, December 21st.



Please bring your family and friends to our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on December 24 at 7:00 p.m. Touch of Brass Bells will begin their lovely prelude at 6:30, so come early and grab a seat.

## PLEDGE STATUS

At the start of December, 17 pledge units had a final payment due on their 2025 pledge, amounting to \$7,500. Please make an effort to complete your pledge payments so we can finish this year on budget. Contact Michelle in the church office, 234-8927, if you have questions about your pledge status.

## PANTRY DONATIONS

Advent is a Time of preparation and hope. Prepare your gift for the pantry and drop it off in the Crossroads. Bring the gift of food and hope to someone who is hungry. Keep in mind ease of preparation and the cold weather.

## ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual church meeting will be January 25, 2026. If you are a chair of a board or committee, please turn your respective report in to Michelle in the office no later than Monday, January 12. Thank you in advance!

The nominating Committee would love to hear from you! If you've been wanting to join a church board or committee and have been waiting to find the perfect time...you're in luck! Contact the church office today and let Michelle know how you'd like to serve in the upcoming year!



### **Around the Table – December 28 at 10:30am**

Join us for our special end-of-year **Breakfast Table Worship** as we gather *around the table* to celebrate God’s faithfulness and look with hope toward the year ahead. This informal service includes breakfast, scripture shared at each table, a brief reflection, and time for conversation with those seated around you.

We invite everyone to **bring a breakfast dish to share**. A sign-up sheet is posted on the Information Wall so we can make sure the table is full and varied!

After we eat, we’ll join together in a joyful Christmas Hymn Sing—featuring all the Christmas songs we didn’t get to sing earlier this season. Just shout out your favorite, and we’ll sing a verse together!

Come hungry, come comfortable, and come ready to give thanks for all God has carried us through this year. All are welcome at the table.

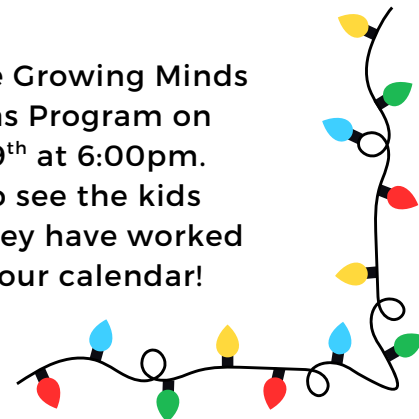
## **THE WEDNESDAY NIGHT GATHERING IS ON A BREAK**

The Gathering on Wednesday nights will return in 2026. We look forward to learning and fellowship with each other again in the New Year.

## **GROWING MINDS CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

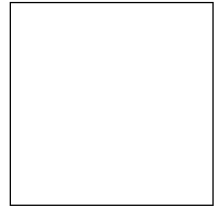
You are invited to the Growing Minds Childcare Christmas Program on Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm.

It is always a joy to see the kids perform the songs they have worked so hard on. Mark your calendar!



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC  
608 WEST FOURTH STREET  
WATERLOO, IOWA 50702

# TIDINGS



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



## Last Call to order your Poinsettias!!!

Please 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 Wednesday, December 17. (\$15.00 per plant)

We will be ordering live poinsettias and you may take your poinsettia(s) home with you after the Christmas Eve service. Let's fill the sanctuary with beautiful poinsettias this year! Order yours today!

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

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

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

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