



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

4600 Hamilton Boulevard • Sioux City, Iowa 51104 • (712) 239-3385
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Straight to the Point

May 26, 2020

Reflection for the Week

For the past few weeks, I've been contemplating resiliency. Resiliency is not the same as toughness. In engineering terms, toughness is the measure of the amount of energy a material can absorb before it reaches the point of fracturing. Resiliency is different. Resiliency is the ability of a material to absorb energy within its elastic limit and then bounce back.

The word resilience comes from Latin words meaning "to jump/leap back, to rebound, to recoil." There is a sense of buoyancy and liveliness to it.

Being tough right now will only lead us to our breaking points. The real art is in living within our "elastic limits" so we can "bounce back."

When I work with clients and their families in my counseling practice, we consider how they have these supports in place to maintain their spiritual, emotional, psychological and physical elasticity:

- Pray daily, practice relaxation and mindfulness
- Stay in touch with family and friends – and admit when you need help
- Attend to daily activities, such as making meals, laundry, cleaning
- Exercise – stretch, walk the dog, garden
- Keep a routine that ensures you get enough sleep
- Work if you can, or engage in a project.
- Listen to music. Read.
- Spend less than 2 hours on screens
- Limit watching the news to 1/2 hour/day
- Resist posting/texting bad news – read 2 positive things for each negative one you see
- Re-assure children – remind them they are loved, and the world is not ending
- Have a budget for expenses (Amazon is tempting!)
- Look to the future – take a "birds-eye view" (20 years out)
- Be grateful – each day write down 3 things you are thankful for in a Gratitude Journal

-- Pastor Anne

Prayer Concerns

Marly Van Berkum's sister
Bob and Leone Eidsmoe
Mike and Deb Timblin
Tia Iddings
Greg Johnson
Roberta Pendleton's family

Betty Schwerin
Katherine Trautman
Ginger France's sister
Mark Schmedinghoff
Greg Gregerson's father
The Bilka Family

Checking in With Each Other

Remember to “check in” with the person(s) before you and after you in the last church directory. We want to make sure everyone is connected. If you have not completed the Church Directory Update form for our new Directory, now is the time! Help us keep in touch with you during this time.

The form for the directory is also attached to this week's email and on the church website at www.1stcongregationalucc.org. Please fill out the form and email it to Tiffany, the church administrator, at office@firstcongregational.net. You may also print and mail it in, if necessary.

Communion on June 7, 2020

We will celebrate Communion on June 7th, the first Sunday of the month. For those who cannot join us on Zoom for Worship, we will make sure Communion comes to you. **Please contact Jan Nowlen or Tiffany in the Church Office if you would like Communion brought to your home!**

Prayer for Our Way Forward

The spiritual discipline for our Church Council for April to June is Discernment. Everyone can join the Council in prayer – here's how:

The question to lay before God each day is:

“Why did God call together — here and now, in 2020 — this group of elders who are engaged in the arts, the community, and personal and spiritual growth?”

Then become silent and listen for the still, small voice of God –
the voice that says “do not be afraid” to leave the known ways behind
and speaks of the new life and opportunity we are being led into.

For your daily prayer time (30-60 minutes), you may want to:

Sit – dropping down below your opinions and your known experience — and listen
for the revelation that is coming to you

Walk – engaging your natural breath and rhythm – and observe the revelation that is
coming to you

Attend to the invitation you are beginning to hear in the stillness.

It should be larger than anything you can control or direct.

You will not know the way . . .

What you bring to the next meeting will be something brand new.

It will not be something you have shared at Council before.

It will not be something you know how to do.

**It will be something you are willing to give yourself to wholeheartedly –
and it will necessitate your personal and full participation.**

As one colleague reminded me 9 years ago when I left California, after living there 31 years, to move to a new life in North, and then South, Dakota:

“The proof of God's leading is that we shall end up where we never intended to go.”

-- *Pastor Anne*

FCUCC is Closed Until at Least September 1st UCC Churches in IA, NE, SD to Stay Closed into the Fall

Recently, President Trump stated that churches should be open for in-person worship. However, his medical experts then recommended maintaining 6' (it's really 13') social distancing, no touching of hymnals or offering plates or communion, no singing (singing and loud talking spread COVID-19), and no one present of any age who has pre-existing health conditions. According to the CDC, among the pre-existing conditions that put persons at risk now are: being over age 65, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, COPD, chronic respiratory disease, BMI >40, kidney disease, liver disease, or an immunocompromised system (this can be caused by smoking, cancer treatment, rheumatoid arthritis, prolonged use of corticosteroids and other medications, etc.). Persons with neurological conditions such as MS and Parkinson's Disease are also at higher risk.

It is true that our faith lives and the church's ministries are "essential" for our health and spiritual well-being. It is also true that we can pray and serve wherever we are. Given the best medical information we have, it's not time to open the FCUCC building.

The reality is our church is not closed. Like the early church, FCUCC is more than a building – FCUCC is a community of faith. We are still worshipping. We are praying with each other. We are caring for one another and our wider community. We are studying God's Word together, and we are finding ways to be church with each other in new ways.

Here's a bit of local, contextual information that underscores the importance of keeping our building closed for the time being:

- In just 3 months, over 100,000 Americans have died of COVID-19.
- It was reported last week that — over the past 2 weeks — Sioux City has had the highest number of new cases of COVID-19 of any metropolitan area in the United States.
- That's more new cases than NYC. More than Gallup NM, in the heart of the horrific crisis in Navajoland. Siouxland has more new cases than anywhere else in our country.
- According to the *Sioux City Journal*, as of May 20, there have been 5,034 cases of COVID-19 in Siouxland (Woodbury, Dakota & Union Counties, pop. ~120,000) — significantly more than the 4,177 cases in the entire state of South Dakota (pop. ~884,000) as of that date.
- As of May 20th, there had been 39 deaths in Siouxland (Woodbury, Dakota, and Union Counties) — nearly the number of deaths in the entire state of South Dakota (46).
- The current rate of hospitalization in the Sioux City metro area is double the US average.

I know that the Council's decision to have our building remain closed until at least September was difficult. I know a number of people were disappointed. However, it is very important to remain closed for the sake of the precious lives of everyone in our community. One more death is one more too many. We are nowhere near being "out of the woods" yet.

Be assured that the decision to open FCUCC's church building will be made by the Church Council based on direction from our UCC Conference, following guidance from national, state, county and city health departments.

In the meantime, as our Unitarian sisters and brothers have noted: "Although our doors may be closed, our hearts are still open."

Keep encouraging, caring, and praying for others. Stay home. In order to protect others, wear a mask if you need to go out.

-- Pastor Anne

Keep the Connection -- Join us on "Zoom"

Todd Siefker will be sending out an invitation link right before each event.

6:30 pm Wednesday – Weekly Reflection Time

9:30 am Sunday – The Admiration Series

10:30 am Sunday – Worship, Sermon, & Prayer

ZOOM Meetings – Be Sure to Invite Others!

Invite your friends to attend the Wednesday night or Sunday morning sessions (and Fridays, once we get started). Each of us knows people who need connection during this time. You can send your friends the invitation link or send their emails to Todd so he can send them the invitation. This is a way to reach out and enlarge our caring community!

Before each Zoom session, you will receive an email invitation to the session. By clicking on the link in the invitation, you should gain access to the session.

On Wednesday evenings, at 6:30 pm Todd Siefker will lead a reflection time.

On Sundays, we will host a two-part session beginning at 9:30 a.m. and lasting until 11:30 a.m.

- Todd Siefker will begin with the Admiration Series and discussion at 9:30 am. This Sunday we will begin reading Richard Rohr's book, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*.
- At 10:30 a.m. Pastor Anne will lead a Worship Service.

You can join in at any time during the morning.

Friday Bible Study with Pastor Anne

We can't meet at Pierce Street Coffee Works, but we can gather at our own tables and meet on Zoom. If you – and your friends – are interested in a Friday study, contact Tiffany in the church office. Let her know if Friday morning or afternoon is better for you.

Remember to Support FCUCC Financially During this Time!



During this COVID-19 event, having no in-person services has impacted our normal income. Thank you to those who have mailed in checks!

FCUCC Finances for April 2020

April income from members	\$9,027.00
April ordinary expenses	<u>\$7,039.68</u>
Net Profit for April	+\$1,993.26

Expenses taken from the Endowment at Council's direction:

Missions (Special Gifts for COVID help)	\$4,000.00
Capital Expenditure for Sign	<u>\$11,157.06</u>
Total Money spent from Endowment	\$15,157.06

You can help us stay on track by mailing in your check or setting up an automatic payment from your bank. You can also contribute through a simple app called [Tithe.ly](https://get.tithe.ly).

Tithe.ly is our online, app and web-based giving system. Tithe.ly is convenient because it:

- Accepts debit, credit or bank account info
- Can be set up for a one-time payment, or automatic regular payments
- Can be changed at any time (there are no contracts or commitments)

Go to [http://get.tithe.ly](https://get.tithe.ly) to sign up online, or download the app on any iPhone/Apple or Android device.

New Moving-On Box Needs

Bath Towels/Hand Towels
Children's plastic drinking glasses
Potholders
Toilet Bowl cleaner/brushes
Fry Pans/Saucepans
Silverware

Sanford Center Summer Program

Sanford Center hopes to begin their summer programming on June 8 or 15.

As in past summers, FCUCC members are asked to provide cereal and individually wrapped snacks and juice boxes/water for these children. You may bring your items to church and place them in the shopping cart in the front narthex. The church office is open M-F 10-2. OR you may drop your purchases off at the Sanford Center at 1700 Geneva St. IF you would prefer to send a check to the Sanford Center for snack purchases, that would also be appreciated. Please make your check to the Sanford Center and write "FCUCC Summer Snacks" in the memo line.

The mailing address is:

SANFORD CENTER
1700 Geneva St
Sioux City, IA 51103

THANK YOU for your support of this important ministry to some of our community's most impacted children.

Missions Committee

Rummage Sale

For those of you doing your spring house cleaning during this time, there is plenty of room to store things you wish to get rid of. Just bring them to church when Tiffany is in the office (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) and she will open the doors for you.

Sharing Our Community Memories and God Moments

In the spirit of Pastor Al Hohl's book on Prayer we've been talking about the importance of Remembering. To Pastor Hohl, forgetting is not the opposite of remembering. He says that DISmembering is actually the opposite of REMembering. He writes, "...to not remember is to tear apart. What we tear apart runs the risk of being scattered in our imaginations" (Hohl 2020, 172). I believe we would rather not run this risk.

We are starting our own Story Corps Project. We would like your story about how this faith community has benefited your life in written, audio recorded, or video recorded format. Please send them to Todd at tsiefker@gmail.com or back to Tiffany at our church email at office@firstcongregational.net. In case you need some prompts from Pastor Anne to get started, here are a few that might help:

- I came to FCUCC because . . .
- The person or group here who has made the most difference in my life is ___ because . . .
- I learned something new here that deepened my faith when . . .
- I was able to make a difference in the community/wider world through FCUCC when . . .
- A time I met God through FCUCC was . . .
- A favorite memory I have of my time with FCUCC is . . .

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Church Contact Information

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www.1stcongregationalucc.org

Church Staff:

Rev. Dr. Anne Dilenschneider, Interim Pastor

Tiffany Watts, Church Administrator

Todd Siefker, Intergenerational Coordinator

Rick Darrow, Organist

Nate Hettinger, Choir Director

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The "Straight to the Point" Deadline is Monday at Noon!