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Straight to the Point

March 10th, 2020

This is a Two-Week Edition of Straight to the Point.
Our next STTP will be published on March 24th

Reflection for the Week:

Lent is a new beginning,
a path leading to the certain goal of Easter,
Christ's victory over death.
This season urgently calls us to conversion.
Christians are asked to return to God "with all their hearts" (Joel 2:12),
to refuse to settle for mediocrity
and to grow in friendship with the Lord.
Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us.

- From Pope Francis, Lent Message 2020

We are grateful for those who served us last Sunday morning:

Worship Leader: Ginger France
Usher: Ellen Shaner
Scripture Reader: Nan Cord
Fellowship: The McCarthy Family
Adult Sunday School: Todd Siefker

Prayer Concerns

Marly Van Berkum's sister	Larry Shaver
Bob and Leone Eidsmoe	Katherine Trautman
Mike and Deb Timblin	Chris Schwerin
John Dilenschneider	Mark Schmedinghoff
Tia Iddings	Greg Gregerson's Dad
Mike Rozembajgier	Greg Johnson

Bible Study @ Pierce Street Coffee Works **Fridays, 1:30 to 3:00 pm**

From 1:30 to 3:00 pm we will meet to reflect on the week's Scriptures. This season art is our springboard into the text.

This Week's Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:19-34

March Committee and Council Meeting:

Committees and Council will meet again directly after church on Sunday, March 15, 2020. If you have anything you would like to add to the council agenda, please send it to Lois Darrow by Friday.

Committee Secretaries please send your February minutes to the church office. Thank you.

One Great Hour of Sharing **Sunday, March 22nd**

Through One Great Hour of Sharing, lives are literally changed daily.

One Great Hour of Sharing (part of Our Church's Wider Mission) is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis.

60% of the UCC's offering supports our work with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation.

The rest of the offering funds disaster preparedness and response, and disaster-related volunteer initiatives in the United States.

In 2018, the OGHS offering was just under \$2 million. An additional \$1.5 million was given to the United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries in support of specific disaster relief efforts. Almost 65% of UCC congregations participate annually.

Envelopes will be available in the Sunday bulletin, or you can donate online.

This Week at FCUCC

Tuesday, 3/10	9:00 am – Stretch and Flex
Wednesday, 3/11	10:00 am – Prayer and Reflection Group 10:00am – Backpack Program @ Siouxland Food Bank 5:30 pm – Search Committee Meeting 6:00 pm – Women's AA Group Meeting 6:30 pm – Lenten Service (Followed by Soup and Fellowship)
Thursday, 3/12	9:00 am – Stretch and Flex 9:30am – Church Book Club
Friday, 3/13	1:30 pm – Study at Pierce Street Coffee Works
Saturday, 3/14	7:00 pm – AA Group Meeting
Sunday, 3/15	9:00 am – Admiration Series Adult Class 9:30 am – Choir Rehearsal 10:30 am – Worship Service followed by refreshments 11:30 am – All Committees Meeting 1:00 pm – Church Council meeting 4:00 pm – Beer & Theology @ Jackson Street Brewing
Monday, 3/16	12:00 pm – Straight to the Point deadline 6:30 pm – Zen Meditation Group

Lenten Worship Services

Lenten Services are held Wednesday evenings. There will be a brief and interactive Lenten Service at **6:30**. This informal service will involve a few thoughts on Lent, and some small group discussions, and followed up with some soup and fellowship. **Hope to see you there!**

Church Book Club!

Calling all readers! Please plan to attend the Church Book Club meeting on Thursday, March 12 at 9:30 am. The book that will be discussed is *The Bar Harbor Retirement Home for Famous Writers (And Their Muses)*: A Novel by Terri-Lynne DeFino. We would love for all to come and join in some great discussion!

Admiration Series Update:

The Admiration Series will be doing a Lenten Study on prayer based on our former Pastor, Al Hohl's book--Heart of Prayer.

Every Sunday at 9am we will be discussing what Pastor Hohl's book means to us. Pastor Hohl will be joining us on April 19 to facilitate a question and answer session on the topic of prayer and the book. **Hope you can join us!**

Sermons are Available on the FCUCC Website

www.1stcongregationalucc.org

Children's Closet Announcement!

Spring 2020 Children's Closet and Bake Sale is coming soon! Children's Closet is one of our missions that happens twice yearly, spring and fall. The fall CC also includes the Bake Sale and the Rummage Sale. The money the church receives is donated equally to each of these agencies: Women Aware, Welcome home, CSADV Shelter, Food Bank, Warming Shelter and Mary Treglia.

Please take time to view the signup sheets on the Children's Closet table in the Narthex. There are three different jobs to choose from: cashier, bagger and/or floor walker. The job shifts are each two hours. Please consider volunteering for a shift during one of our church's missions, the Children's Closet and Bake Sale. Thank you!

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

1. This virus is contagious but, so far, it's not as deadly as other world outbreaks (MERS, SARS, etc.). 80% of people will only have mild cases, if they get it.
2. To stay healthy, follow flu prevention tips (below)
3. Don't panic — start to prepare, instead
4. Be smart about travel
5. **PLEASE stay home if you are sick or have any of these symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, headache, stuffy/runny nose, fatigue, muscle aches. This is very important so you don't spread the flu or Covid-19 throughout the congregation.**

When it comes to taking care of ourselves, there are some things we can all think and do:

- Practice basic hygiene. That includes:
 - 20-second hand washing, and wash often. That's a long time and It's as long as singing "Happy Birthday" 2 times through, or "Baby Shark" up through the Daddy Shark verse. Regular soap and water are fine; you do not need to use anti-bacterial soap.
 - Sneeze or cough into your elbow or tissue (then throw the tissue away).
 - Do not touch your face (eyes, nose, mouth).
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and frequently touched objects – for example, remember to wipe your counters with soap and water.
 - Sanitize your doorknobs at home daily.

- Avoid contact with people who are ill.
- **Stay home if you are feeling in any way ill.**
- Have a supply of easy-to-cook foods and cleaning supplies.
- Have a supply of any prescribed medications.
- You can watch this 15-minute video about how to prepare for and prevent this virus: https://www.npr.org/2020/02/27/810016611/coronavirus-101-what-you-need-to-know-to-prepare-and-prevent?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20200301&utm_term=4432890&utm_campaign=best-of-npr&utm_id=4996822&orgid=309
- Here are some facts about how the virus does and does not spread: “Surfaces? Sneezes? Sex? How the Coronavirus Can and Cannot Spread” <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/health/coronavirus-how-it-spreads.html?referringSource=articleShare>
- There is a non-threatening video about the virus for children at: https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20200301&utm_term=4432890&utm_campaign=best-of-npr&utm_id=4996822&orgid=309
- At church, we will be:
 - Sanitizing doorknobs daily (that includes bathroom stall latches and faucet handles).
 - Coming up with options for Passing the Peace. We may omit it for now, or use other ways to communicate (touching elbows, bowing, etc.).
 - Planning ways to respond to affected families, and individuals who live alone.
 - Considering how to broadcast worship so people can watch from home if they are ill.
 - Posting CDC posters.
- For Communion, we will be:
 - Making hand sanitizer use visible before serving Communion
 - Having servers give out the Communion bread, so only their hands touch the plate.
 - We may consider only giving out bread for Communion.

Search Committee:

The Search Committee continues to complete the necessary research and writing to prepare the Church Profile. This becomes the central document that is used to announce the opening of the position of Pastor for First Congregational Church. An important part of that work is to provide quality information to candidates about “who we are” as a congregation, and “what characteristics we desire” in a Pastor. Last Sunday we started a process of surveying the congregation and were pleased that everyone in worship spent time providing information that we will tabulate, then use in the profile. Thank you for your willingness to share candidly and in confidence, your perceptions and opinions.

Surveys are a powerful measurement and communication tool. The more people from our congregation that participate, the better the information that comes from the survey. Additional parts of the survey will be a part of our service for several weeks. Because we know that not everyone is available to attend church every Sunday, we are also making the survey available for your completion at home. We ask that you:

- go to the church website: www.1stcongregationalucc.org/
- find the survey,
- complete and submit.

The information from your survey will be sent to the church and added to the information provided by many other congregants for use in preparing the church profile.

It is the intent of the committee to have this document near completion by the end of March, so we need to be diligent in completing surveys. Please participate in this important step of the search process.

Church Directory Update

Our leadership team would like to make sure we have to correct contact information about everyone so that you receive church communications, especially during this time of the pastoral search. And we would like to have an emergency contact as well (in the unlikely event that something happens to you while you are at church).

We would also appreciate knowing your favorite Scripture and hymns so we can be sure to use them in Sunday Worship

The form for the directory is attached to this week's email. Please fill out the form and email it to Maddie, the church secretary, at office@firstcongregational.net. Or, drop it off at the church office.

-There are also physical directory forms you can pick up located outside the church office.

Thank you!

HyVee grocery receipts and General Mills box tops

There's a collection box for these items in the narthex (the church entry) –
The box is wrapped in balloon paper.
We will donate these to a local school!

New Moving-On Box Needs

Bath Towels/Hand Towels
Children's plastic drinking glasses
Pot Holders
Toilet Bowl cleaner/brushes
Can Openers

Emergency & Hospital Visits

When you or a family member are sick, in the hospital, or recovering -- or if you have an emergency -- here's who to call for care:

Jan Nowlen – 712-490-5328

Rev. Anne Dilenschneider is available on Friday and Sunday – 605-906-5404

Rev. Elaine Miller is available on Wednesday and Thursday – 712-258-8278

Donna Popp is available on Monday, Tuesday, & Saturday – 712-251-5535

Christian Education Opportunities for All Ages

CHILDREN (3 years – 3rd Grade)

NURSERY:

Sundays, 10:00 to 11:30 am

A well-appointed, happy space is staffed and available for young ones as an alternative to the staying in the sanctuary on Sundays, if that's helpful. Care is also available at other times, as needed.

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP ACTIVITY BOXES

Pick one up on the way into the sanctuary for some quiet, in-the-pew activities.

SUNDAY SCHOOL STORY-TIME

Offered during worship.

Children are welcome for Bible-based stories and guided play and crafts in the Nursery.

YOUTH (Ages 8th Grade – College)

THE ADULTING SERIES

Meeting monthly after worship on Sundays.

Monthly sessions will include meal and social time, and education, with topics ranging from: “Basic Car Care” (changing a tire, filling low tires, wiper replacement, using a map), “Sewing and Hemming,” “Understanding Finances,” “Preparing a Fine Meal,” “What to Do When You Feel Sick,” and “Traveling.” Youth will also be working to plan a mission trip.

Date to be Set: Our focus will be on simple repairs (sewing buttons, etc.)

ADULTS

ADMIRATION SERIES

Meeting before worship at 9:00 am on Sundays in the Parlor.

This is an interactive series for adults and older youth led by our Intergenerational Education Coordinator, Todd Seifker. Each week we will be introduced to ancient and modern examples of Christ-like, faithful living.

PIERCE STREET SERMON STUDY

Fridays, 1:30-3:00 pm at Pierce Street Coffee Works

We meet to reflect on the week’s Scriptures. This season we will allow art to be our springboard into the text. The art pieces for each week’s discussion are attached to this newsletter and available on our website at: www.1stcongregationalucc.org

BEER & THEOLOGY

Sundays, 4:00 pm to 6:00ish pm at Jackson Street Brewing

Gather for a discussion of current theology, philosophy, and life. Led by Chris Schwerin.

JOY (Just Older Youth) CLUB – Aging Gracefully for Everyone

Meeting in the early evening, every 1-2 months

Social time, education on topics relevant to aging–up gracefully, healthily, and happily. Each session will include dinner, social time, entertainment/education and devotion.

Although the topics are focused on some age groups, everyone is invited! Bring friends and neighbors! If it interests you, or you have some expertise, please join us in providing lessons and learning. Contact the CE Crew if you have questions, suggestions or time to help!

On Those Sunday Snow Days



If you’re unable to come (or worship is canceled) our bills continue to come in. You can help us by mailing in your check, dropping off a payment during the week, or set up an automatic payment from your bank. **You can also contribute through a simple app called [Tithe.ly](https://www.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> to sign up online, or download the app on any iPhone/Apple or Android device.

Church Office Hours

Mon, Tues & Thurs 4pm-8:30pm

Weds and Friday 10am-1:00pm

Church Contact Information

712-239-3385

office@firstcongregational.net

www.1stcongregationalucc.org

Church Staff:

Rev. Dr. Anne Dilenschneider, Interim Pastor

605-906-5404 (cell)

leadwithsoul@mac.com

Pastor Anne will return calls, texts, and emails as soon as she can. She is available in the office on Friday mornings (10:00 am - 12:30 pm); she leads Bible Study and visits Friday & Sunday afternoons.

Maddie Schwerin, Church Administrator

office@firstcongregational.net

Todd Siefker, Intergenerational Coordinator

tsiefker@gmail.com

Rick Darrow, Organist

darrowpipe@aol.com

Nate Hettinger, Choir Director

hettingern@morningside.edu

Offering a Warm Welcome

A message on behalf of the FCUCC Communication Team

Remember to welcome our visitors – before and after worship.

The warm welcome and care we give our visitors is a sign
of our own belief that we are loved by God.

The “Straight to the Point” Deadline is Monday at Noon!