



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

4600 Hamilton Boulevard • Sioux City, Iowa 51104 • (712) 239-3385
www.1stcongregationalucc.org • office@firstcongregational.net

Straight to the Point

May 12, 2020

Reflection for the Week

A journey into the second half of our own lives awaits us all. Not everybody goes there, even though all of us get older . . . [The] first-half-of-life task [establishing our personal identity and security] is no more than finding the starting gate. It is merely the warm-up act, not the full journey. . . . Our soul's discovery is utterly crucial, momentous, and of pressing importance for each of us and for the world. We do not "make" or "create" our souls; we just "grow" them up. . . . All we can give back and all God wants from any of us is to humbly and proudly return the product that we have been given – which is ourselves! . . . We are here to give back fully and freely what was first given to us – but now writ personally – by us! It is probably the most courageous and free act we will ever perform – and it takes both halves of our life to do it fully. The first half is discovering the script, and the second half is actually writing it and owning it.

-- Richard Rohr in *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*

Prayer Concerns

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

Larry Shaver
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 (attached). 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 when we are not meeting in person.

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.

Prayer for Our Way Forward

The spiritual discipline for our Church Council for April to May 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 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*

Congratulations, Graduates!

Our church family has 4 graduates this May and we would like you to help celebrate their accomplishments! Please consider participating in a card shower for Maddie Schwerin (graduating from Morningside College), Austin Johnson (North High), Eli Miller (North High) and Phoebe Schwerin (West High).

You may drop-off or send cards to their attention at the church address, 4600 Hamilton Blvd, Sioux City, IA 51104. Please have these cards to the church by May 14th.

Thanks for helping to make their accomplishments acknowledged!

Waller Scholarship

Calling all High School Graduating Seniors!

Ev and Virginia Waller, long time cherished members of FCUCC, established a scholarship fund available to persons who have participated in any part of our Church's life and plan to go on to higher education. This scholarship is available to all our graduating high school seniors. Please contact Lois Darrow for details of the application process. (712) 490-5969 or lkd1027@gmail.com

We will award the Scholarships with a special recognition ceremony this spring.

Please call Lois if you have questions.

Committee Meetings and May 17th Council Meeting

The Church Council meets this Sunday, May 17. Please ensure that your committee meets and sends their minutes to Tiffany in the office by Thursday, May 14th, so that they are available to the Council.

UCC Churches to Stay Closed Through May and Possibly June

Dear Friends of the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ. I am the Reverend Brigit Stevens, your Conference Minister. I love you. You are in my fervent and constant prayers.

Thank you. Thank you for all of the ways you are being church in these unprecedented days. Thank you for NOT gathering together. Thank you for finding ways to connect with each other, with our friends, and with our communities and neighbors, WITHOUT BEING TOGETHER IN PERSON.

A year ago, the Boards of Directors of our three conferences met together to pray and discern together WHY we are the United Church of Christ, in this time and in this place. Collectively we heard the Holy Spirit say:

We are called to live into God's extravagant welcome and to advocate for justice. So that, ALL know love, safety, belonging, and dignity.

Now, I am not an epidemiologist. I am not a physician. I am not a scientist nor economist. I am a Conference Minister with a pastor's heart.

I am firmly convinced that now is the time to CONTINUE connecting and BEING the church WITHOUT being physically together. We need to remain steadfast in our commitment to safety of our neighbors. This is how we love them, and us, best. It is important that at least through the month of May, and maybe also through the month of June, that we CONTINUE to protect and care for one another by NOT GATHERING TOGETHER.

I am so proud of you. You are doing this! You are working hard, being creative, stepping into new roles, trying new things. THANK YOU.

This COVID-19 global pandemic is teaching us how truly connected we all are to each other. Big cities in densely populated states may have been the first to experience the devastation and grief of the losses of this virus. But, we are not immune here in the Midwest. And we are not isolated or disconnected. The virus knows no geographic boundaries. It pays no attention to state or county or country lines.

When those of us who have the option to stay home, do so, we protect and care for not only ourselves, but also those who do not have the same choices. Putting others' wellbeing ahead of our own conveniences is the way we follow Jesus best today.

Please continue to be the church, from home. Let this be our act of solidarity and love for God and our neighbors. God bless you. Thank you.

Rev. Brigit Stevens
Executive Conference Minister
IA, NE, and SD Conferences of the UCC
April 28, 2020

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

ZOOM Meetings: As we continue to use ZOOM meetings, it is important for you to know that ZOOM is updating their software application. By May 30, all systems will be using a fully encrypted format to better protect the confidentiality of information being shared in meetings. There should be little impact for you when you have received an email invite to the meeting. By clicking on the link in the invite, you should gain access to the meeting. However, if you use the ZOOM icon to join the meeting, you will be required to provide both the meeting ID and the Password for the meeting.

Thanks everyone for learning about the electronic video system called ZOOM. We have been having 24+ families accessing the meetings and lots of committee work and planning groups are using the application, too. ZOOM is a familiar part of our vocabulary, now.

On Sundays, we will start a meeting at 9:30 a.m. that will be scheduled to last until 11:30 a.m. Todd Seifker will initiate the Admiration Series and discussion at that time. At 10:30 a.m., Todd will relinquish the meeting to the Worship Service led by Pastor Anne. For those who wish to stay involved through the worship service, you will just stay in the meeting. Others who wish to join at the beginning of worship time may access at the 10:30 a.m. time frame and become a part of the meeting.

A Note from Building and Grounds Committee

To those who are planning to come by the church, please be aware that the parking lots are to be striped and may not be as easily accessible. This was set to be done last week but because of the inclement weather we have had to push it out further. A tentative date of this Friday is when they will be done, weather permitting.

New Moving-On Box Needs

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

Moving on Boxes Challenge: a note from Michelle Sherwin

Mother's Day 2020 will be unlike any other years we have experienced! Many of us are trying to figure out a way to give a heartfelt gift to one of the most important people in our lives. Just a card seems like all we can physically provide this year, due to our social distancing and COVID precautions.

Here is an idea to fill your card with love and honor for your mother and give needed help to other mothers who are ready to "move on" to a better life for themselves and their children. Give a gift of a donation to FCUCC "Moving On Boxes" ministry in honor of your mother, your grandmother, your aunt.... and that person who has been like a mother to you. It is a beautiful way to honor a mother who has given you love and nurturing, to now allow another mother to provide a better home for her family.

Send your contribution to the church and we will be able to fill those Moving On Boxes to their brims!

While Mother's Day has come and gone we are keeping this challenge up, as needs have not diminished and our community can use all the help that we can provide.

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.

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!

We have lost about \$2,500 with the cancellation of Children's Closet for the Spring. We usually make about \$6,800 in the Fall (which includes Rummage and Bake Sales). Even if we do host the Fall Sale, we will need to make up the loss of the Spring income.

You can help us 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](http://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> to sign up online, or download the app on any iPhone/Apple or Android device.

PPP Loan

The PPP loan went through last week and the money is available for Pam to use for payroll for the next eight weeks.

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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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!