

3-26-2024



the Spirit

*Act justly.
Love kindness.
Walk humbly with God.*

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 1302 West 11th Street, Cedar Falls, IA 50613



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Easter Offering

Your gift to the Easter Offering is part of God's enduring love...

Love that creates...

- Bible studies that challenge and inspire
- Opportunities for clergy to gather in prayer
- Spiritual care for those in prison
- Resources for mental health and trauma care

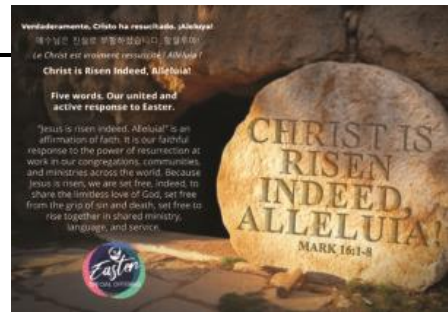
Love that inspires...

- Visionary leadership that calls us to imagine new ways of being church.
- New congregations that worship in a variety of languages and worship styles
- Ministries of compassion and care

Love that makes a difference...

- Global ministry partners who work for justice, reconciliation, and peace
- Colleges, universities, and theological institutions that nurture Christian leaders who are transforming the church, society, and the world
- Collaborative response in the wake of disaster
- Support for congregational service ministries that serve hungry neighbors

Your gift to the Easter special offering benefits general ministries, allowing us to do more together than we can alone. More ministry. More impact. More of God's love in the world.



Blanket Sunday

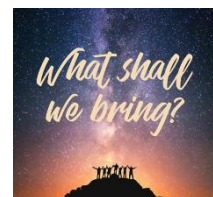


On Sunday, April 21, the Lydia Circle will be asking on behalf of Church World Services for your financial support for "Blanketing the World in Love."

This year, we can help others in need with a simple gift of a blanket and we can help someone in need with this tangible reminder that they are not alone. Each blanket costs only \$10, but these blankets can be a vital resource for someone needing a little support, warmth, and encouragement.

Stewardship Campaign

It's that time of year for the annual Stewardship Campaign. Please be on the lookout during April for your Stewardship packet. After receiving it we hope that you will return your Commitment Card by May 5. We will then celebrate our faithfulness on Stewardship Sunday, April 28.



In the Church Family

Please keep in your prayers...

Sympathies to—

Karla Buchholz for the death of her cousin, Damian, who passed away on Friday, February 23, 2024

Vern Sund
Karla Buchholz

Kim Carbiener
Patty Hool

Carlynn Harrum's brother, Larry
Kim Carbiener's uncle, Dick
Linda Smith's friend, Julianne

Prayers for peace and safety in our world

Please pray for family and friends in care facilities:

Sandy Turner
Scott Turner

Leonard Myszka

Family & friends serving in the military:

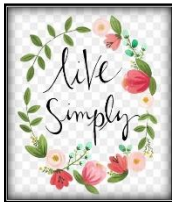
Linda Smith's cousin, Arielle Turnage
Juhl's granddaughter, Gwen Juhl

Dorothy Fisher's grandson, Kyle Anderson

First Readers Book Club



The First Readers Book Club will meet on Tuesday, March 12 at 10:00 AM in the church library. The book for this month is Fifty Words for Rain by Asha Lemmie. Anyone is welcome to join us at our monthly book club gathering at 10 AM on the second Tuesday of each month.



Circle Information

The Lydia Circle will be meeting at 1:00 PM in the library on the fourth Monday of each month. Join them as they meet on Monday, April 22, and Monday, May 20 (*note this is the third Monday) in the church library.

Summer Camp 2024

NOW is the time to register for the summer camping ministry of the Christian Church in the Upper Midwest. Registration deadline (to the church office) is **May 6** (after May 6 the prices go up).

Check the bulletin board in the narthex for more information as well as the website

<https://www.uppermidwestcc.org/summer-camp> for more information.

Please let the office know if someone in your family will be attending camp.



Grand Camp (Jun. 22-23 or Jul. 13-14)

Family Camp (May 31- June 6)

Beginner Camp (Grade 2-3) Jul. 1-3

Junior Camp (Grades 3-5)

(Jun. 10-15, Jul. 8-13, Jul. 29-Aug. 3)

Sunday Servants

Sunday, April 7

Lay Leader: CJ Latham
Accompanist: Linda Morgan
Elder: Kathy Redding
Counters: Gery Deaver/ Jill Hulse
Greeters: Rob Letz
Flowers: Kim Carbiener
Communion Prep: Gary Chambers

Sunday, April 14

Lay Leader: Jim Taylor
Accompanist: Mary Jo Woody
Elder: Sandy Donath
Counters: Jill Hulse/Pam Taylor
Greeters: Young Disciples
Flowers: OPEN
Communion Prep: Young Disciples

Sunday, April 21

Lay Leader: Gary Chambers
Accompanist: Linda Morgan
Elder: Linda Morgan
Counters: Pam Taylor/Sandy Goodwin
Greeters: Gery & Connie Deaver
Flowers: Paul Grandon & Kim Carbiener
Communion Prep: Gary Chambers

Sunday, April 28

Lay Leader: Mary Jones
Accompanist: Jill Hulse
Elder: Tim Jones
Counters: Sandy Goodwin/Tim Jones
Greeters: The Lavenz Family
Flowers: OPEN
Communion Prep: Alexis Turner

APRIL

Birthdays

2. Cora Letz
5. Brian Brummel
9. Larry Vanderwerf
10. Bob Fread
14. Kermit Allard
16. Evelyn Wohlwend
24. Jeanne Brummel
25. Matt Lavenz
26. Dakota Hulse
28. Phyllis Oberhauser
CJ Latham

Anniversaries

17. Gary & Carolyn Chambers - 1965

Emergency Pantry

The Pantry is open each Thursday, 4 – 6 PM in the fellowship hall of First Christian Church.

**Help keep the
Pantry stocked**
Look for bargains



Financial contributions are also welcomed!

A P R I L

Sunday Servants

Sunday, May 5

Lay Leader: Pam Taylor
Accompanist: Mary Jo Woody
Elder: Gary Chambers
Counters: Tim Jones/Naila Graper
Greeters: CJ Latham
Flowers: Norm Calhoun
Communion Prep: Gary Chambers

Sunday, May 12

Lay Leader: Matt Lavenz
Accompanist: Linda Morgan
Elder: Kathy Redding
Counters: Naila Graper/Jill Hulse
Greeters: Dave & Phyllis Siefken
Flowers: OPEN
Communion Prep: OPEN

Sunday, May 19

Lay Leader: Gery Deaver
Accompanist: Jill Hulse
Elder: Sandy Donath
Counters: Gery Deaver/Pam Taylor
Greeters: Jim & Pam Taylor
Flowers: OPEN
Communion Prep: OPEN

Sunday, May 26

Lay Leader: Linda Morgan
Accompanist: Mary Jo Woody
Elder: Linda Morgan
Counters: Jill Hulse/Sandy Goodwin
Greeters: Paul Grandon & Kim Carbiener
Flowers: OPEN
Communion Prep: OPEN

MAY

Birthdays

6. Jim McCann
Jim Taylor
7. Mary Ann Calhoun
10. Vern Sund
Linda Myszka
11. Jim Boileau
12. Larry Donath
14. Jessica McCann
15. Jim Newcomb
24. Marilyn Miller
26. Kim Casey

Anniversaries

19. Tim & Mary Jones - 1979
25. Greg & Traci Hahn

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From the Pastor's Desk

April was a tough month for me last year. April always contained what my family called "Birthday Week". In just 7 days each April, my grandmother, mom, dad, and me all had birthdays. You can imagine a week of birthday meals and cakes! But slowly over the last decade the number of birthdays in the week began decreasing because of deaths. Last year was the first year that all the others were gone, and it was just my lone birthday.

As it so happened last year, Easter Sunday fell during that "Birthday Week". My grandmother's and parent's birthdays fell in the days prior to Easter in Holy Week, but my birthday happened to fall on the day after Easter in the Easter Season. For someone like me and the way I think, that was strangely theological. The "Great Fifty Days" of the Easter Season is about new creation, new life, and new opportunities to experience and share faith. My first birthday without the three of them was an Easter birthday!!! This was my chance after doing something for 58 years to now create something new and to look forward in life to new experiences.

This is true for all of us. The Easter Season (not just Easter Sunday) is the church's way of reminding all to live into the new life and new creation seen in the Risen Christ! Christ calls us all into new ways of thinking, living, and transforming society and all creation into the realm of God's justice and peace. Easter is not just to be celebrated but lived!

Pastor Bob



First Family Night/ KFC / Young Disciples

It's hard to believe the 2023-24 school year is about over and we are into our final few weeks of Wednesday evening First Family Night Supper and our KFC & Young Disciples gatherings.

Wednesdays, April 3, 10 & 17 will be our last First Family Night Suppers at 5:30 PM. Our KFC (Kids Following Christ) and Young Disciples will meet at 6 PM on all those evenings.

Our FFN Supper menus will be:

April 3: Hot dogs and chips

April 10: Tator Tot casserole & green beans

April 17: Clean-up or Lasagna & Tossed Salad



On Wednesday, April 24, both our KFC and Young Disciples will be going on end-of-the-year outings. Both groups will meet at the church at **5 PM** (*note the earlier time). The KFCs will be going to supper at McDonalds and then to the GetAir trampoline park. The Young Disciples will be going to Arby's and Escapology. The evening will end at about 7 PM.

On Wednesday, May 1 will be our Season Finale Picnic for both groups at Lookout Park (*note the change from Gateway Park because of river construction) from 5:30 to 7 PM. We will have pizza, drinks, and dessert, with time to play games.

The church would like to THANK all those who have made First Family Supper and our two education groups happen each Wednesday:

Cooks & Kitchen Help: Gary & Carolyn Chambers, Jim Taylor & Sandy Donath

Menu Planning: Linda Smith

Music: Linda Morgan

KFC Leaders: Sara Dib & Emily Conn

Young Disciples Leaders: Pam Taylor & Pastor Bob



Celebrate

Celebrating Paul & Kim

Join the entire church family for a little party to celebrate their big day on Sunday, April 7 at 1:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Please sign up in the narthex if you plan to attend.

College Goodie Boxes

College study boxes will be filled on Sunday, April 28 following worship. Please bring the goodies that fill the boxes by that morning! Students appreciate everything from drink mixes to granola bars to cookies and candy.



The boxes give our students courage through finals week. Students appreciate having a snack at hand while studying for final exams or that final paper. Let's fill the boxes to the very top!

Let the office know if you have a college student who would appreciate a goodie box.

Community Meal



The Community Meal will be on Tuesday, April 30, 2024. We will be looking for two people to provide 24 cupcakes, plus people to cook starting at 1 PM, to help serve at 4 PM, and to help clean up at 5:30 PM. See the signup sheet in the narthex during the month of April.

Elders Fund

The Elders will continue to collect on the second Sunday of each month through June. This fund helps support our families in times of need. We appreciate your generosity and caring for our members.

**Elders
Fund**



Scout Can Drive

Troop 500 will be doing a can drive on Saturday, May 11, 2024, from 9 – 11 AM. Cans can be placed in the back hallway starting on Wednesday, May 8.

Pentecost Special Offering

The Pentecost Special Offering will be received on Sunday, May 19. This offering supports the specialized ministry of new church development through both regional and general programs. Gifts for this offering are divided equally between the region in which they were given and the New Church Ministry.



A Conversation with Colby Martin

What does it mean to be affirming and welcoming as Christians and a church? ThreeHouse Collaborative Campus Ministries invites you to a presentation by Colby Martin on Sunday, April 7 from 6:30 - 8:00 PM at Lang Hall on the UNI campus. A former pastor-now author and speaker, Colby will share his story of being fired from his church for welcoming LGBTQ+ persons into the church. His experience led him to research how the life and teachings of Jesus lead us to be affirming, inclusive, and welcoming of all God's people. The event is free and open to everyone. Come as you are, questions and all.



ThreeHouse Sunday



What is ThreeHouse Sunday? ThreeHouse Sunday is a day when a few of the staff and students from ThreeHouse Collaborative Ministries on the UNI campus come to a church for Sunday worship to share about the various ministries of ThreeHouse. We will be having a ThreeHouse Sunday on April 14 with refreshments following worship. Come, bring your questions, and let's celebrate our relationship with ThreeHouse.

FCC is one of several churches in the Cedar Valley that are a collaborative partner in the ThreeHouse campus ministry. Among the things that our church does with ThreeHouse is offer one Wednesday evening supper per semester, assist with semester finals week breakfast items, assist with the annual back-to-school Block Party, and Pastor Bob leads worship once a semester. ThreeHouse also assisted our church with TGIF for several years.

Considering Matthew Shepherd

The UNI School of Music, with the sponsorship of ThreeHouse and the Tyler Green Foundation, is presenting "*Considering Matthew Shepherd*" on Saturday, April 20 at 7:00 PM at the Gallagher-Bluedorn. Tickets are available through UNItix. In October of 1998, Matthew Shepard, a young, gay student at the University of Wyoming was kidnapped, severely beaten, tied to a fence, and left to die in a lonely field under a blanket of stars. His death sparked a worldwide and ongoing conversation about the costs of hate and the importance of acceptance. This three-part fusion oratorio speaks with a fresh and bold voice, incorporating a variety of musical styles seamlessly woven into a unified whole.



Reaching the Pastor Outside of Office Hours



Occasionally, members of the congregation need to contact the pastor outside of normal business hours, for emergencies, over the weekend, or before worship on Sundays. The best way to contact Pastor Bob outside of church office hours is to call or text him. Pastor Bob may be reached on his cell phone at (319) 830-2150 by calling, leaving a message, or texting him. Also, his email is, bob.fread@cedarfallsdisciples.org.

Caring for God's World

Edited by Carl Jenkins



In one of the introductory essays for *The Green Bible*, Dr. J. Michael Sleeth, author of the book *Serve God, Save the Planet*, observes that: "In the first chapters of Genesis we see a relationship that will continue throughout the pages of history: God, humans, and trees. Trees are beautiful – it is a biblical truth. Trees are also a source of oxygen. No trees means no oxygen, and no life for humans. The Tree of Life in Genesis is indeed aptly named. We show our love for the Lord by loving our neighbors. Every time our family buys anything or takes any action, we now ask two questions: Will this help me love God? Will this help me love my neighbor? The answer always leads us to the right action. If we take shorter showers, carpool, or plant a tree, no one will necessarily notice or thank us. But if these things are done as an act to protect our neighbors, then we will have grown in Spirit."

Every year, the last Friday of April is Arbor Day. The National Arbor Day Foundation is currently making a historically ambitious effort to replant trees. Their goal is to plant 500 million new trees! Here is some information about this challenging plan:

"The world is facing mounting challenges that are threatening our very survival. The easiest and most efficient place to begin to course-correct is with trees — lots and lots of trees.

Taken at face value it seems like an overly simple notion that trees and forests can help us solve some of the biggest problems we're currently up against. What most people don't realize is that trees perform a multitude of tasks that benefit every single living thing on our planet. From standing tall on the frontlines of climate change pulling carbon from the air, to cooling our cities, to providing a home for 80 percent of all land-based animals, plants and insects, people and the planet need trees and forests now more than ever. As the world alarmingly edges its way closer to the climate ledge, trees and forests remain the most affordable, scalable, nature-based solution available today."

"We've set a goal to help us — all of us — meet the moment, by planting 500 million trees, with a focus on forests and neighborhoods of greatest need, by 2027. Our goal has always been about planting the right tree in the right place in the right soil at the right time. Never has that practice been more urgent than at this very moment. 90 percent of our reforestation work will be in forests of greatest need around the world. We will also inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees in underserved and low-canopy neighborhoods. Each dollar contributed to this effort will plant a tree. Let's plant 500 million trees together."

Full article available at: <https://www.arborday.org/stories/focus-500-overview.cfm>

This April, celebrate new life and new beginnings by planting several trees to observe Earth Day on April 22nd, and/or Arbor Day on April 26th. You can donate online at: <https://shop.arborday.org/campaign/general-donation-stories?>; by mail at: Arbor Day Foundation, 211 North 12th Street, Lincoln, NE, 68508, or call 1-888-448-7337.

"Between every two pine trees, there is a door leading to a new way of life."

John Muir (1838 – 1914), Naturalist, Writer, Philosopher, and Sierra Club Co-Founder

Souper Bowl Sunday

