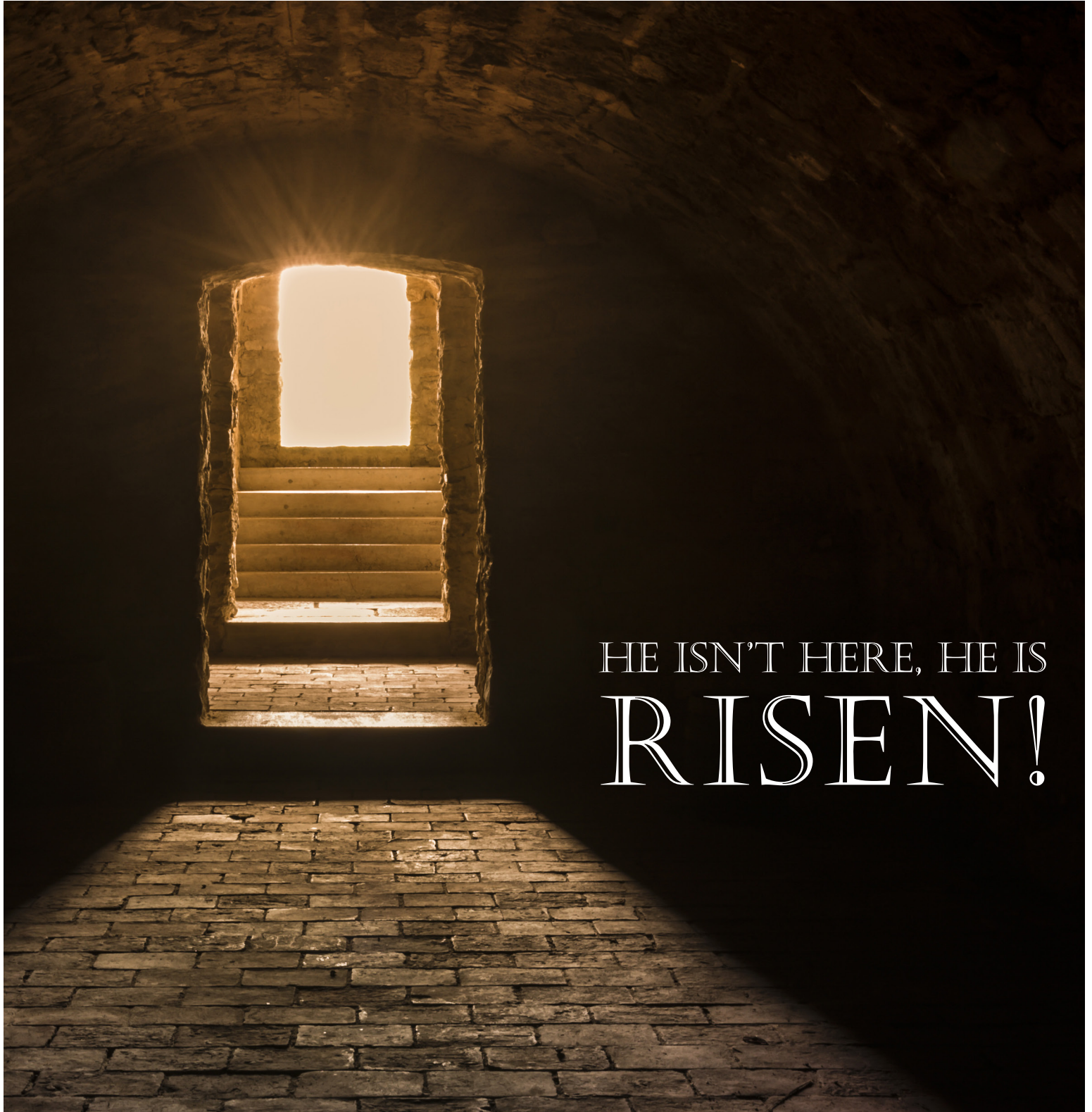




ABOUT FIRST

First United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa



HE ISN'T HERE, HE IS
RISEN!

Thoughts from Steve

Have you been watching the news recently? This was good news, and breath of fresh air from all that is going on in our world making news. On March 22 they unveiled the newly restored tomb of Jesus Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Just in time for Easter! Jesus Christ's tomb has been resurrected! A **restoration** team has completed the historic renovation of the Edicule, the shrine that traditionally houses the cave where Jesus was buried and rose from the dead. The word Edicule is from the Latin word aedicule meaning "little house". It is a good description of the shrine.

When visiting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre you are stepping into an ancient church first built around 325 AD by Constantine's mother Helena. Constantine was the first Roman Emperor who converted to Christianity. He sent his mother to Palestine to build churches over important sites in the life of Jesus. This gave Christians an opportunity to come to the Holy Land to worship at sacred places that brought the gospel to life. Remember that there was no Bible at this time.

This is the first time in over 200 years that the sacred Edicule has been **restored**. When we visited it a year ago the shrine was held together by a protective frame of steel beams and cables. The walls and roof of the "little house" were blackened by years of pigeon droppings, candle smoke and oil lamp soot. The whole structure was reinforced and given a facelift. The actual color of the Edicule's dome is blue, the color of hope. The most sacred site for all of Christianity had been neglected. It is now **restored**.

During Lent, Pastor Matt and I have been leading a Bible Study and preaching on a book written by Tom Berlin titled "**Restored**: Finding Redemption in Our Mess". As a pastor, I have devoted my life to helping people discover how faith in Christ can **restore** their broken lives. I have done this for nearly 40 years, and found that there is as many ways to come to know Jesus as there are people. Sometimes it has been at a closing campfire at Church Camp, and other times it has been helping someone pick up the pieces of their life. This Bible study has been especially meaningful during Lent.

The study points out how our lives can become a mess, and how the grace of God can help us **restore** our lives. It is in the cross of Christ that our lives are **restored** in a right relationship with God. It is in the cross that God demonstrates his love for each and every one of us. Jesus paid our debt with his death on the cross. It is in Christ's death and resurrection that **restores** our relationship with God. This is what our Lenten Journey is all about in **restoring** our faith and preparing us for a joyful celebration of Easter.

Six years ago we look a real leap of faith with **restoring** our church building. There were parts of this beautiful old building that had been neglected for years. We needed a new entrance and a place to gather for fellowship. God has blessed us with New Doors and New Life since we completed the project. We have begun a new Capital Campaign to retire our debt that occurred as we decided move forward and make a statement that we are alive in the heart of Cedar Falls. Our goal is to retire the debt. We have **restored** our church, renewed our faith, and now we have new life through Christ!

Have a blessed Easter!
Pastor Steve

Pastor Steve and Janet Going to Nigeria in June

Plans are being finalized for Pastor Steve and Janet to go to Nigeria from June 13 to 30. This will be part of a "Pulpit Swap" with Rev. Dr. John Pena and his wife Titi coming to Cedar Falls. John is the Provost at Banyam Theological Seminary and will be filling the pulpit in Pastor Steve's absence. Pastor Steve will be teaching some classes at the Seminary and leading a Pastor's Retreat for the Nigeria Conference. Janet will be working at the Banyam Medical Clinic that our church helped build. This will be an opportunity to strengthen our friendship with Banyam.

Holy Week Services:

Living Lord's Supper –Thursday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m.

The drama of Jesus and his disciples in the Upper Room will be brought to life during our Maundy Thursday Service on April 13 at 7:00 p.m. The service will include 13 of our men costumed as Jesus and the disciples as they gather for the Last Supper. Communion will be served by the disciples. The service is open to the public, so we encourage you to invite your friends.

The night is full of passion that includes the betrayal of Judas, denial of Peter and the scattering of the disciples into the darkness. The power of these events in Jesus' life helps us remember all he endured that led to the Cross. This year, a Roman Soldier who was at the arrest of Jesus comes to the Upper Room looking for the rest of the disciples. He meets Peter, and both of them are trying understand "Who is this man named Jesus?"

Good Friday, April 14

Procession of the Cross at noon

Again this year, we will be meeting at Overman Park at noon to begin our procession. We will start with worship and then process through downtown to our church. Along the route we will pause several times for prayer and scripture to remember what Jesus did for us on Golgotha. The event is sponsored by the Cedar Falls Ministerial Association. We invite you to join us.

Good Friday Evening Worship Service at 7:00 p.m.

We wil return to the Fellowship Hall where we began our Lenten Journey on Ash Wednesday. The Cross will be suspended over the altar in the center of the room. This will remind us that the Cross is the center of our Faith. All who come for worship will be seated around the cross. This will be a Tenebrae Service - the service of darkness. The Passion scriptures will be read with musical breaks as candles are extinguished remembering the darkness of that day on Golgotha.

Easter Sunday – April 16

Easter Celebrations at 8:30 and 11:00 – all our services will be joyful celebrations of Christ's Resurrection. Brass and Bells will lead us in the Traditional Services at 8:30 and 11:00. The Praise Band will lead us in the Contemporary Service at 8:30. Music will fill the services as we proclaim Christ has risen!

Washington Chapel

April 2 – David Glenn-Burns, communion
 April 9 – Shawna Brimm
 April 16 – Jordan Derhammer
 April 23 – Lisa Congdon
 April 30 – Emily Pearce

It's been over a year and a half since we began our relationship with Washington Chapel UMC, and both of our churches have been blessed. Join the congregation at this little white church on the hill in a beautiful rural setting. It's lovely, peaceful, and they're always happy to have guests. Washington Chapel is just north of Cedar Falls at 7035 W Bennington Rd (the corner of Ford and W Bennington Rd). Services begin at 10:30 every Sunday morning.



Law & Order 360 - a Must-See Series in April

April starts a powerful four-week finale to our spring Fusion season: *Law & Order 360*. There are people who see us at our worst in the court and justice systems, and yet, those people are often able to hold onto their faith in the face of daily exposure to sin and dysfunction. This Fusion series will feature first-person messages from an attorney, a journalist, an ex-offender who had been "inside", and a parole officer. Watch for the video trailer on the Fusion page at aboutfirst.com

Why Pray?

God wants a relationship with us. That alone should cause us to stop in astonishment. "God? Wants to talk to me?" He does. Every day, every moment, in any way you might need to talk at the time.

Come to God with everything you are and have. Share each victory, sadness, and fear with him. Don't hold back or pretend; live honestly in his presence. Call, cry, sing. It doesn't matter. Just communicate with your God. He wants to hear from you.

From, "Take My Heart Oh God", Cynthia Heald

If you have questions about our prayer team, please talk to Jim Larson, Genny Van Dorn, Debbie Dance or Jan Hoover.

Spring Cleaning

- Saturday, April 8 from 8:00 a.m. to Noon

Spring is JUST around the corner and not only do our souls need a bit of sprucing up after winter, but so does the outside of the church! On April 8th, (the weekend before Easter), come join us as we clean up around the church. We'll be raking, cleaning up flower beds, etc. from 9 am-12ish. There will be coffee and donuts provided as well! :) Remember: Many hands make light work! So bring your rakes, yard waste bins, tarps, and work gloves, and let's prepare to show off this beautiful church to our community and guests at Easter!

"New Doors, New Life, No Debt"

New Doors, New Life, No Debt: that describes the journey we're on and it functions as a checklist for our progress.

New Doors: On Sunday, March 19 we recalled the early 2000's as we recognized that our church facility wasn't working for us the way we wanted it to. Over time, it's been easy to forget all the talking and planning we did. On Sunday, March 26 we looked back at the construction process, remembering the enormous scope of the addition, the remodeling and the infrastructure improvements. And we relived the mess and the excitement of building something new.

New Doors? Check! - We got those.

New Life: it's what we hoped to accomplish. Did we? Look around. We're a different congregation than we were ten years ago. Yes, many of us are the same people, but we have a lot of new ones, too. On April 2 we'll look at how we're meeting and working with each other in new spaces and in new ways. We built a church where people can feel comfortable to be themselves the instant they come in the front door. All are welcome as we learn, share, worship and pray together as a community and family of faith.

New Life? Check! We got that.

No Debt is our commitment to continue to accelerate our payments and eliminate our mortgage debt once and for all. We have made remarkable progress: we began with a 30-year mortgage of \$1,461,000 in 2014, and we've already reduced our debt to \$617,708.

The sooner we retire this debt, the sooner we can tackle the next big ministry project!

Please pick up a **New Doors, New Life, No Debt** packet and pledge card and consider how you can help us retire our mortgage debt over the next 33 months. Packets are available in the church office or at the Welcome Center. You can view our **New Doors** video series at aboutfirst.com.

Every Dollar Counts in April

A First UMC family has very generously offered to cover our mortgage interest in the month of April. That means every additional dollar we pay toward our mortgage in the month of April will go directly to reducing our principle mortgage amount. This is a great opportunity to take another big bite out of our outstanding debt. If you can help with a special contribution to the building fund during the month of April, please bring drop your contribution in the Sunday offering plate, or bring to the church office before April 23.



Finance Manager Deb Bernard Retiring

With sadness we announce that Deb Bernard will be retiring as our Financial Manager on May 10. Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair Mary Schlicher or Pastor Steve will accept letters of application and resumes starting Monday, March 13 through Friday, April 7. Persons will need two letter of recommendation. If you are interested in the position, you are welcome to contact Deb about any questions you may have pertaining to the job. Deb has been such a vital part of our leadership team. We will miss her, but she has plans of volunteering around the church now that she will have more time.

Staff Position Open: Finance Manager

First United Methodist Church of Cedar Falls, Iowa is seeking a Finance Manager. We are looking for a person with a strong Christian faith with an understanding of stewardship. A background in book keeping is necessary. This person will be responsible for recording all contributions and payments of church including doing payroll. They will manage the Church Budget with the assistance of the Finance Committee. See the full job description at aboutfirst.com

Lesley Toma Accepts New Position in Waverly

Lesley Toma announced her resignation to accept a new position at Trinity United Methodist Church in Waverly. She will be serving full-time as the Minister of Discipleship. The Toma Family moved to Waverly 2 ½ years ago, and this was a major factor in accepting this position. Her last day will be Wednesday, April 26. We will truly miss Lesley and her family.

2017 Budget Approved by Administrative Council

Thank you for your financial support through 2016. Because of your year-end giving we were able to finish the year in the black! It was a push for us, as we were facing a \$12,000 deficit in the beginning of December, and weather did not cooperate with Sunday worship. Your gifts made the difference!

The finance committee has been challenged with making sure that our expected giving will match our 2017 budget expectations. To help us meet this challenge every work area, staff member and committee worked together to develop the 2017 budget which sets the financial plan for our church. It was adopted by the Church Council on February 20. The budget was adopted with a Supplemental Financial Plan in case we are faced with a shortfall. The Finance Committee appreciates everyone's efforts!

- The 2017 budgeted expenses total \$861,955. Pledges total \$733,085. This leaves us with a \$128,870 "faith gap" if all expenses are incurred in full. This "faith gap" compares to \$91,430, unpledged gifts which were received in 2016.
- 2017 pledges increased by \$6,804 over 2016 pledges.
- SPRC expects spending to increase \$28,799. This is greatly due to being without an Associate Pastor for two months in 2016. Staff members were given a 1% raise for 2017.
- Trustees expect spending to increase \$8,428.
- The 2017 budget includes a Supplemental Financial Plan which monitors the church's 2017 financial status and implements a plan should a shortage develop. The budget supplemental plan is important because the church does not have cash reserves to pay expenses totaling more than gifts received.

Finance Committee will continue to provide monthly financial updates in the bulletin. If questions, please contact Sue Fletcher, Finance Committee Chair at 319.290.4484.

Rummage Sale 2017 Update

We have a couple of Rummage Sale coordinators for this year! Donna Hoffman and Maxine Kehret will team up to organize the sale this year. The sale is scheduled for the first weekend in August, and Donna and Maxine will be working out the details soon. Look for opportunities to help.

Keep your quality, clean items until the first full week of June. Rooms will be ready June 5 for the first round of donations, and more rooms will open up in early July after Vacation Bible School.

Financial Update--

February Receipts	\$ 61,855
February Expenses	\$ 71,408
YTD Receipts	\$ 140,481
YTD Expenses	\$ 147,179
YTD shortfall for 2017	\$ 6,697
Mortgage balance Jan 31--	\$ 617,708

Consider Automatic Giving

You'll never need to remember to write a check again! It is quick and easy to set up. Contact our Financial Manager, Deb Bernard for details. 319-266-1713 or emailed deb.bernard@aboutfirst.com.

events

April 4 - Food Bank Work Crew

Here's a fun and easy way to help the food insecure in our community.....

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, April 4 to help at the Food Bank at 1605 Lafayette Street in Waterloo. Often we fill grocery bags with kid friendly food for the Backpack program. Sometimes we get selected for other much needed jobs. It's always a good time and a great bunch of people. You can carpool with Lisa or get yourself to the Food Bank and come into the Volunteer Entrance. The Methodists and friends will be there from 6:00 to no later than 8:00pm.

April 4 - Grief Support Session

If you have suffered a loss lately, you know the pain, loneliness, and stress this can bring. Sometimes it helps to meet with others during this difficult time. The First UMC Grief Support Team offers monthly support sessions. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 4th from 2:00 to 3:30 pm in the church parlor. New participants are always welcome. Please call Carol through the church office at 266-1713 with questions.

April 11 & 25 - Crafter's Corner, Join the Fun!

Attention crafters! The first Crafters' Corner was a great success, so we will continue to meet the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays from 6:00-8:00. On April 11 we will meet in a classroom under Fellowship Hall (room O58) but after that we will be in the parlor (April 25, etc). This is a laid back and hands-on group for all skill levels. Bring your own craft project to work on or give your time and talent to make sleep mats for the homeless, handmade gifts for those in need, or prayer shawls for those in need. Donations to get this group started would be greatly appreciated! We need clean used plastic grocery bags, yarn, and crochet hooks.. Please contact Crystal Wilken at crystalwilken@gmail.com with any questions.

April 20 - First Friends Potluck

Everyone is welcome! Spend some time enjoying good food, card games, dominos, cribbage, etc. Fellowship is an important part of the gathering. Check us out! Come and get better acquainted with others in the church. Couples and singles are welcome. Bring a dish to share and your own table service. We meet on the third Thursday of every month from noon until 2 pm in the Gathering Place

April 24 - LifeServe Blood Drive

We are hosting the next blood drive on Monday, April 24 from 12:30-6:00. Donors, cookie bakers, and hosts are needed. They have quite a few appointment slots to fill. Sign up to donate at www.lifeservebloodcenter.org. Use the sign-up sheet at the Welcome Center to let Lisa know if you can donate cookies or chat and serve cookies to the donors for an hour or so.



May 3 - GoKarts & Goofy Golf!

All incoming 7th-12th grade students (2017-2018 school year) are invited to join us at Palmer's family fun on May 3rd from 6:00-8:00pm. Join us as we close out the school year and say hello to summer! Please RSVP to Becca Nims by 30th.

May 7 - Spring Bell Choir

It's an annual rite of spring, our bell choirs' May concert. Before they take the summer off, the choirs will bless us with a variety of tunes, some of which you might be surprised to hear on bells. 7:00pm in the sanctuary

Wednesday Night is Your Church Night!

- 5:15 - 6:00 **The Filling Station**
- a meal for everyone. Eat & go on to
- 5:15 - 6:00 **Children's Choir**
- musical fun for kids who like to sing
- 6:00 - 7:10 **Jr / Sr High Youth**
- fun & connections for 7th - 12th graders
- 6:00 - 7:15 **BLAST! (for kids)**
- Bible Learning And Service Together
- 6:00 - 7:15 **More Than Moms**
- helps for the real life of womanhood
- 6:00 - 7:15 **Restored Study**
- April 5 & 12, only
- 6:00 - 7:30 **Tower Bells**
- weekly bell choir rehearsal. Want to play?
- 7:15 - 8:00 **FUSION Tonight**
- live talk show / worship
- 7:30 - 8:30 **Chancel Choir**
- for adults who love to sing

Every Thursday - Zumba

Zumba with us on Thursdays at 5:30 pm in our Fellowship Hall! A free-will contribution of a couple of bucks is appreciated. Contact mary.friedrich@cfu.net if you have questions. Come and dance...it's never too late to join us on this fun fitness adventure!

Recurring Weekly:

Sunday

8:00 prayer in the chapel
 8:30 Transformation Worship
 8:30 Traditional Service, sanctuary
 9:30 Fellowship time, Gathering Place
 9:45 Sunday School for all ages
 10:30 Washington Chapel Worship
 11:00 Traditional Service, sanctuary
 6:00 Les Cloches d'Or rehearsal, sanctuary
 7:30 Chapel Ringers rehearsal, sanctuary

Tuesday

7:00 Men's Breakfast
 9:30 Quilters/Stitchers, O59
 4:30-6:00 Community Meal, Fellowship Hall
 6:30 Transformation Band, Fellowship Hall
 6:30-8:00 men's group
 7:00-9:00 AA, O55

Wednesday

9:00 Women Connected by Prayer, parlor
 5:15 AA, O55
 5:15-6:00 Filling Station, Gathering Place
 5:15-5:45 children's choir, choir room
 6:00-7:15 More than Moms, parlor
 6:00-7:15 Restored Study, library (April 5 7 12)
 6:00-7:15 BLAST
 6:00 Youth Group, 3rd floor
 6:15-7:30 Tower Bell rehearsal, sanctuary
 6:30 WOW AA, O55
 7:15 Fusion Tonight
 6:00 Tower Bells
 6:30 WOW AA, O55
 7:30 Chancel Choir

Thursday

5:30-6:30 Zumba, Fellowship Hall
 7:00 Transformation Band, Fellowship Hall

Also Scheduled....

SUNDAY April 2

Flock sets up chairs for Transformation
 10:30 Washington Chapel - Dave G-B
 5:00-6:30 Confirmation, going to St.Pats
 7:00 Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall

MONDAY April 3

6:30 Living Last Supper rehearsal, sanctuary
 6:30 Stephen Ministry Supervision

TUESDAY April 4

10:00 Veda Rasmussen funeral
 2:00-3:30 Grief Support, parlor

WEDNESDAY April 5

7:15 FUSION - Mark Fransdal

THURSDAY April 6

6:00 Girl Scouts, library
 6:30 Trustees, O57

SATURDAY April 8

9-12 spring clean-up at church
 5:30 Fusion design team

SUNDAY April 9

Palm Sunday
 10:30 Washington Chapel - Shawna Brimm
 4:00-5:00 Webelos, Gathering Place

MONDAY April 10

9:30 UMW Board Meeting, library
 3:45-5:00 Lincoln Girl Scouts 6741, O55
 5:30-7:30 Love INC Board, parlor
 6:30 Living Last Supper rehearsal, sanctuary
 6:30 HOME Team, chapel

TUESDAY April 11

1:30 Miriam Circle, library
 5:00 Hearts & Hands, Parlor
 6:00 Farmer's Market mtg, Gathering Place
 6:00 Crafters' Corner, O58

WEDNESDAY April 12

2:00 Communion Service - Western Hm
 7:15 FUSION#12 - Jack Hovelson

THURSDAY April 13

1:00 UMW Unit meeting, Fellowship Hall
 6:00 Girl Scouts, library
 7:00 Living Last Supper, sanctuary

FRIDAY April 14

Noon Procession of the Cross
 3:30-5:30 Girl Scouts, library
 7:00pm Good Friday service, Fellowship Hall

SATURDAY April 15

FROG class sets up chairs

SUNDAY April 16

Easter Sunday
 8:30 Transformation Celebration
 8:30 Easter Celebration
 9:45 No Sunday School
 10:30 Washington Chpl - Jordan Derham
 11:00 Easter Celebration
 6:30 Boy Scouts

MONDAY April 17

10:00 Deborah Circle, parlor
 6:30 Worship Committee, library

TUESDAY April 18

5:30 Capital Campaign mtg, library
 6:30-7:30 Daisy Scouts, Gathering Place

WEDNESDAY April 19

9:30-11:30 MOMs group, library and gym
 11:00 Pinnacle Care Chapel service
 6:30 Finance Committee, lower level
 7:15 FUSION - Sheila Corsbie

THURSDAY April 20

May Newsletter Deadline
 12:00 1st Friends Potluck, Gathering Place
 1:00ish Pack 179 cooking in kitchen
 5:30-6:30 Zumba, Fellowship Hall
 6:00 Girl Scouts, library
 6:30 SPRC, O57

SUNDAY April 23

Communion at all services
 Youth can/bottle drive
 10:30 Washington Chapel - Lisa Congdon
 2:00 Holy Land info meeting, chapel
 5:00-6:30 Confirmation, library
 7:00 Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall

MONDAY April 24

12:30-6:00 Blood Drive, Gathering Place
 3:45-5:00 Girl Scouts 6741, O55
 6:30 -9:30 PEO meeting, library

TUESDAY April 25

1:30 Miriam Circle, library
 6:00 Crafters' Corner, library

WEDNESDAY April 26

2:00 Windermere communion service
 7:15 FUSION#14 - Laura Bruess

THURSDAY April 27

9:30-11:30 Mary Circle, parlor
 1:30 Joy Circle, parlor
 6:00 Girl Scouts, library

FRIDAY April 28

3:30-5:30 Girl Scouts, library
 7:00 Confirmation class to synagogue

SUNDAY April 30

Native American Ministries Day
 Stephen Ministries Commissioning
 10:30 Washington Chapel - Emily Pearce

Learn & Grow

Adult Sunday School

Everyone is welcome - you do not need to be a member of First UMC to attend.

CCF (Christ Centered Families)

This class will focus on strengthening our families and developing our young children into strong Christians.
Room: 055, Kevin & Lori Price

Growing Christians

Our studies generally vary during the year from Bible studies, applying Biblical principles and the gifts that God puts into our lives. Room 056, Kris Rash

Open Door

Where friends meet to study God's word and apply it's principles to on-going spiritual development. Contact Sue Mutchler or Margery Andrew

Kaleidoscope

This group is for anyone willing to tackle any topic! Room 058 Gil Hewett

Seekers

The Seekers present several small studies/discussions each year (no homework) to help grow our faith in Jesus Christ. Room: 060 Contact: Debbie Dance.

The Flock

The Flock welcomes all young adults (college & beyond) for fun, fellowship and study as we look at how the world around us influences our lives as Christians. Third Floor Café, contact Jon Cooper or Becca Nims

F.R.O.G.

This class studies biblical themes and seeks concrete ways to put those lessons into action. Library: Contact Mark Schlatter.

Tuesday Bible Study resumes April 18

The Tuesday morning Bible Study resumes April 18. This group meets in the chapel at 9:30 on Tuesday mornings. Bring your Bible - whichever one you prefer - and be prepared to read through and discuss the Bible. They are working their way through Deuteronomy and will continue on from there. No homework or study guide is required, just read along with this group of women and offer your insight. Shirley Bolin is the contact for this group.

Check Out The New Adult Sunday School Class

Are you an adult? Are you looking for a spot to join on Sunday morning during the Sunday School hour? Look no more! A new class has started this spring, the Pathfinders. Feel free to sit-in with them and find out what they're all about. 9:45 Sunday mornings in room 057, (the map room). All ideas and opinions are welcome. Hope to see you there!

UMC Camps - Your Summer Adventure!

There are three United Methodist camps in Iowa, all in beautiful natural surroundings. Methodist Camps have everything you need for your summer adventure: horses, climbing, swimming, hiking, great food, campfires, and we're pretty sure that God will show up, too. Check out all of the opportunities online at www.iaumc.org/camps. Summer will be here before we now it! If you would like a printed copy of the camp catalog, see Jenna Engel.

Camperships

First UMC encourages all kids to go to camp, but we understand it can be a financial burden for families. First UMC maintains a fund to assist families who would like to send their kids to a Methodist camp. A great gift that you can give to the kids of our church is to contribute to this campership fund. If you would like a campership to assist in sending your child to camp, contact Jenna Engel in the church office.



Daily Devotions are Easy To Get Started

Read "The Upper Room" every day - it takes just a minute or two. You'll find a verse of scripture and a real-life lesson to think about. "The Upper Room" is available in print form from the literature rack outside the church office, or online from our church website.

The Upper Room magazine's mission is to provide a model of practical Christianity, to help people feel invited and welcomed into God's presence to:

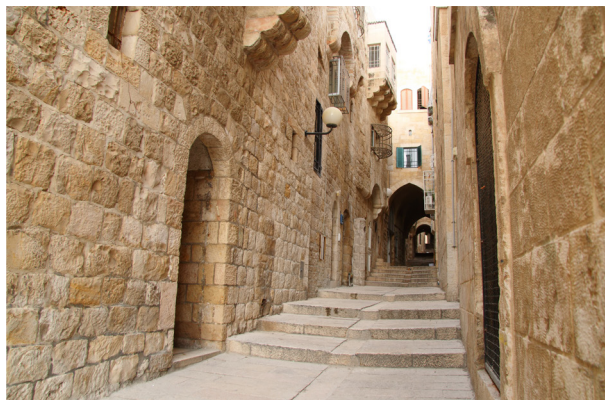
- listen to scripture as God's personal message, linking their stories to God's story;
- commune with God in prayer;
- see their daily choices and small acts of obedience as part of God's work;
- realize our connection through Christ as a universal family of believers;
- encounter the living Christ and be transformed into Christ's likeness.

Holy Land Trip – Walk Where Jesus Walked - Spring Break 2018

Janet and I are planning a trip to the Holy Lands during Spring Break in 2018 leaving March 6 and returning on March 15. This is a trip of a lifetime. We will visit significant sites such as Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho, Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem. We will be walking where Jesus walked! Our trips to the Holy Land have made a dramatic difference in our faith and reading the Bible.

We have scheduled an information meeting for Sunday, April 23 at 2:00 p.m. in the Chapel. We will have information about the trip that includes cost and schedule. We will also have a video showing many of the sites we will visit. If you are interested and unable to attend, please contact us.

- Pastor Steve



Save the Dates for VBS!

Mark your calendars for **June 18th-22nd** for Hero Central VBS! Discover Your Strength in God! We will take an adventure alongside a few favorite Bible heroes and discover the qualities that make us truly heroic in God! It's not too early to register your child for VBS - you'll find the form in this newsletter.

CrazyFunBusy Wednesday Nights Wrap-Up April 26

BLAST will wrap up April 26th. A HUGE thank you to everyone who helped with BLAST on Wednesday nights. Having you with us every Wednesday night made the nights a great experience.

Filling Station will wrap up on April 26th. Thank you to everyone who helped cook, serve, provided desserts and donated food. We would not be able to have this if it were not for all of your help!

More Than Moms

Attention Ladies: Do you need a break and one hour just to yourself? Please join us every Wednesday night from 6pm to 7pm in the Parlor for fun, fellowship, study and peace. This Spring, we will be making crafts, studying Scripture, going on a few field trips and just relaxing. All are welcome, and please bring a friend! (child care provided.)

“More than Moms” is a perfect description for the women of the group as individuals and as a collective body, since many come that don't have kids!

Invite a friend . . . all are welcome!

Any questions, please contact Lesley Toma at (319) 266-1713 or lesleytoma@aboutfirst.com



CrazyFunBusy Wednesday

Wednesday night is Church Night for everyone. We'll nourish your body beginning at 5:15 and we'll nourish your spirit with fellowship, learning and worship until Fusion concludes at 8:00. See the events page of this newsletter for the full schedule.

B.L.A.S.T (for kids!)

The Site Director of Pictured Rocks Camp, Gabe Dorrell, visited us on Wednesday, March 22nd. During his visits he showed the group a couple videos on camp. He also taught the group a very popular camp game.

Vacation Bible School

Sunday, June 18 - Thursday, June 22

6:30-8:15 pm

Pre-registration is suggested, Please return completed forms to the basket at the Welcome Center, or mail to Jenna Engel, First United Methodist Church, 718 Clay Street, Cedar Falls, Iowa, 50613. Cost: \$12.00 suggested contribution per participant; maximum \$24.00 per family. Contribution is voluntary, and is not a requirement to attend. Make checks payable to First United Methodist Church and mark "VBS". Please complete one registration form for each child.



Participating Child

Child's Name _____ Child's Date of Birth _____

Age _____ Grade in Fall 2016 _____ (must turn 3 years old by September 15 to attend this year)

Names of Parents and adults authorized to pick up children. _____

Child's Home Address _____ City/State _____

Contact Information

Primary _____ phone _____ relationship (circle): parent / trusted adult

Additional _____ phone _____ relationship (circle): parent / trusted adult

Additional _____ phone _____ relationship (circle): parent / trusted adult

Health information

Please indicate any information about your child that we should know, I.E. allergies, medication, special restrictions, special needs, special friendships we should encourage, etc. _____

In the event of emergency, I authorize the First United Methodists' VBS Staff consent to appropriate medical treatment for my child _____ (signed)

If you are helping and will be here during VBS you do not have to complete the physician information.

Child's doctor's name and phone are listed below:

Physician _____ Physician's Phone _____

media release

First United Methodist Church may use photographs and video of my child's participation in VBS activities. I understand that photo and video images will NOT be labeled with children's names. circle: yes / no initial: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ date _____

April Mission Focus Change a Child's Story

One million books and a million hours of reading with children – that's the goal of Iowa United Methodists in an initiative called, "Change a Child's Story." In June of 2015, Bishop Trimble challenged all the United Methodist Churches in Iowa to commit to making this goal by June 2017.

We responded to this challenge by partnering with Lincoln School to provide quality books and quality reading time for the children, in particular the new readers in Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade. Sixteen First UMC members donated over 525 hours of their time to be Reading Buddies with these students in the 2015-2016 school year. In addition, through your donations and matching funds, we were able to gift them over \$8000 to provide books for the kids. Principal Ralph Bryant tells us, "Last year we used the generous donations to provide a book for each Kinder, 1st and 2nd grade student. With the remaining money, teachers purchased books for their classroom libraries. This donation was timely for us as we started a new curriculum this year which helps our students spend a significant amount of time in text. These books have been well used!"



He has this update for the 2016-2017 school year: "We continue to be amazed by the support of our Reading Buddies! With your help, we continue to change the story for our children. Over the past year, we have increased the number of reading buddies serving students in grades Kinder through 3rd grade and now have 34 volunteer slots each week. In addition to the financial support, our students truly look forward to the chance to read with their buddies. The support of our neighbors has been a true blessing to our students and staff! Thank you!"

Do you want to help provide books for kids in our community? Use the "Change a Child's Story" offering envelopes from the display to help us purchase quality new books for kids. As an added incentive, your monetary donations will be matched 100% through the Lone Zach Endowment for Missions! We plan to provide end of the year books for the K-3rd grade students at Lincoln again this year, and the 2nd and 3rd grade students have already received theirs! Extra funds will be used to stock the book room.

Together we can change a child's story by giving books and giving time.

Youth Can Drive - April 23

We had a great turn out for our can drive on March 19th. Thank you to all who contributed, because of you we raised \$61 to help send students to Henderson, KY. This month we have another opportunity on April 23rd to drop off your rinsed out, redeemable cans and bottles. The church van will be located out front for you to drop off your cans. Thank you for your continued support!

Hospital reminder

Please call us, or have a family member or friend call us, if you are hospitalized. The hospitals are not able to contact us to give us this information. We want to support you and your family when illness or surgeries happen, but cannot do so if we are unaware.

Altar Flowers

The altar flower calendar for 2017 is at the Welcome Center. Sign up now to recognize a special date or to honor a loved one with flowers for the altar. Have the flowers delivered to the church on Friday, please.

Ongoing Wish Lists

For those who like to shop, we have an opportunity for you! There are several in-church groups that can always use supplies to support their ministries. For your convenience, we have compiled the wish lists for Wee Care, UMCOR School Kits, FirstKids Daycare & Preschool, and Sunday School all on one sheet. And, we have also compiled a list of items that you may have at home that could be repurposed for another use by Lincoln School, our Cardmakers, and River Hills School.

Pick up the Wish Lists sheet on the literature rack outside the church office, or at the donation collection site in the little hallway near the drinking fountain on the main level of the church.

email Prayer Chain

If you would like to be on the church "eprayer" list, please let the church office know by emailing Lisa at lisa.congdon@aboutfirst.com. We send out prayer requests by email as they come in, and also include prayer requests noted on the attendance slips. Remember, to ensure privacy, please make sure to get permission from the party that you feel needs prayers.

Got extra fabric? Bring it in!

Along with the supplies to fill the school kits, there is also a need for fabric to make the school bags and other stitching projects. The Quilters & Stitchers are looking for durable material for school bags, 3+ yards of cotton material for sewing kits, and flannel, fleece, and quilting materials for various other uses. There is a designated bin for your fabric donations in the church collection site on the main level in the little hall across from the drinking fountain.

Wee Care

Grateful parents of wee ones come to our church every Tuesday afternoon to pick up a supply of much needed baby goods. This gap ministry through LoveINC helps struggling families stretch their dollars. Diapers of all sizes are always appreciated, along with wipes, baby wash, baby lotion, 8 oz bottles and sippy cups. If you see a good deal on end-of-season baby clothes feel free to bring them in. We have a place to store them until the appropriate season.

FirstKids Giving Tree

Here's a fun way to help out our FirstKids Preschool and Childcare this spring. This month we invite you to check out the tree near our front entrance. It's full of leaves and blossoms and critters marked with assorted items that FirstKids can use in their classrooms. Grab a leaf or a flower or a critter or two from the tree, take them shopping with you, and return the items the next time you are in the neighborhood. FirstKids has been a part of our church community since 1998. It's a joy to have the youngsters in the building throughout the week.

Native American Ministries Sunday- April 30

The people of The United Methodist Church, Native and non-Native, are creating a new history. Through Native American Ministries Sunday, we're able to equip and empower Native American pastors, congregations and seminary students to do what only they can do: authentically worship and serve Jesus.

When you support Native American Ministries Sunday, you equip seminary students who will honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries. And you empower congregations that are finding fresh new ways to minister to their communities with the love of Christ.

This work, and hundreds of other ministries, are possible because you give. Use the special offering envelope in the April 30 bulletin to give to this ministry.

Stephen Ministry Class Graduates

Six people have just completed 50 hours of training in Stephen Ministry here at First UMC. They will be commissioned during a worship service later this month. Those in the class are Jordan Derhammer, Jenna Engel, Pastor Matt German, Dean Hoover, Padma Templeton, and Lesley Toma. Facilitating the class have been Stephen Leaders Dee Behr, Tim and Fely Houts, and Sandy Noelting.

These six people have taken the training for their own benefit, to assist them in their work at the church, or to now take part in our Stephen Ministry program as they come along side and give help to: those hospitalized, terminally ill, bereaved, in a job crisis, disabled, home bound, lonely, in a spiritual crisis, and many other specific circumstances. They will join our current Stephen Ministers to provide care to people of all ages.

If you would like to talk with someone about the possibility of a Stephen Minister walking through some difficult time with you, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.



Heifer rabbits & chicks

During the season of Lent you have an opportunity to donate to Heifer International by providing chicks and rabbits to impoverished families from Armenia to Zambia. Use the offering envelopes by the hopping animal display in the church office to give the gift of hope and opportunity for an entire community.

\$10 will add a chick to the display

\$20 will add a rabbit to the display

\$50 adds a rabbit and three chicks to the display



Crafter's Corner - Make Stuff - Have Fun

A new group, Crafter's Corner met for the first time on March 29 and had enough fun that they've scheduled their next meetings. Crafter's Corner is an informal group where you're free to bring your own craft project to work on in the company of other crafty people, share crafting advice and ideas, or work on our group project, which is making sleeping mats for local homeless. Crafter's Corner will meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. See the announcement on the Events page.

FirstUMC TV

First UMC is on TV. We can't promise beautiful videography like a BBC nature documentary, but we can promise a great message of faith. Our weekly TV broadcasts contain the sermons from the traditional and Transformation services, and reruns are rare!

Cedar Falls (CFU) Channel 95.5, Friday @ 8:00 pm, and Sunday @ 9:00 am

Waterloo (MediaCom) Channel 17, Sundays @ 11:00am and Sundays at 9:00 pm

Miss a broadcast? Let us know in the FirstUMC media office, and we'll get a recording into your hands. Chris.congdon@aboutfirst.com

Find FirstUMC on youtube

Your church has a youtube channel. You can find sermons, Fusion shows, some of our stewardship videos and more. Go to youtube.com, and search for "cedar falls first united methodist church".



Community Meal

This is a great ministry of feeding and fellowship and you can be a part of it. Once a month - the fourth Tuesday - we plan, prepare, and serve the meal. Meals are served from 4:30-6:00, and the prep work begins early afternoon. If you would like to help with meal preparation or serving, contact Jan Benson. We can use donations of desserts, too. We welcome new faces. There are opportunities for everyone.

Remember, while our team only serves on the fourth Tuesday, other churches are here cooking and serving every other Tuesday of the month. You're always welcome to come and eat - the community meal is completely free and open to everyone.

Food Bank-every month

Our crew helps at the Food Bank the first Tuesday of each month, from 6:00 to 8:00pm. We're their "A" Team - they love to see the Methodists come to work. Would you like to be on the reminder email or do you want to know more? Contact Lisa in the church office. lisa.congdon@aboutfirst.com

Go

Do you have an idea for a church mission for work, learning or evangelism?

Contact Lisa Congdon in the church office and share your ideas. There may be ways that the church can help you realize your mission vision.

Question, Answer, Study, Lead

One way to challenge yourself and explore new areas of faith is to lead a short-term study group. We would love to fill our calendar with six to eight week bible studies and small groups. Short-term studies offer a chance to dig into issues without a long-term obligation. It's not as hard as you might think to be a leader. We have resources available for book and/or video-based studies on all kinds of Christian topics. If you have interest in pursuing a study, contact Jan Hoover. We'll help you get the materials, reserve meeting space, get your group on the church calendar, and we'll even publicize your study.

Fellas @ First

Men's Tuesday Breakfast

Men's Breakfast Fellowship meets at the Cedar Falls Family Restaurant in North Cedar, Tuesday mornings at 7:00. The devotional is rotated among attendees. We usually finish before eight o'clock. Start your Tuesdays with us. Contact: Tim Houts and Steve Williams.

Tuesday Night Fellas

Informal. Friendly. Our studies are intended to help us figure out how to bring out the best in ourselves and draw us closer to God and each other. Hang out with us in the man-cave (room 059) on Tuesday nights from 6:30 - 8:00. All men of any age are welcome and invited. We usually have a video study going. Don't worry - we don't assign homework.

United Methodist Women News

VISION STATEMENT OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN: We are "turning faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world."

How the War on Drugs Harms Women

On March 9 the United Methodist Women gathered for their unit meeting. The guest speaker was Pam Hays, a member of the Board of Directors of the Iowa Justice Action Network. Her topic was "How the War on Drugs Harms Women." After Pam identified the problems drugs create in women's lives; for example, a husband in prison, the woman herself in prison, the needs of the children in the family, etc., we asked, "How can we help?"

She suggested:

1. Ask our state legislators to increase funds for needed services in prison. Promote services concerning health issues, mental health issues, education, etc. These services should be ongoing, not just offered shortly before release.
2. Assist and empower the children of people in prison. Volunteer in our local schools.
3. Support the Women's Center for Change located in Waterloo. This center is a facility where women are helped in transition following release from prison. Their capacity of 45 women is normally full.
4. Offer ReEntry Teams for women leaving prison. Help them with resettlement issues, such as housing and jobs. We are proud to know that teams such as these are available right here at First UMC.

Our next UMW meeting will be held on April 13, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. Our speaker at this meeting will be Salma Akbar from the Islamic Community Center who will come in place of Dema Kazkaz. Anyone who is interested is invited to attend.

UMW Calendar

Apr. 8 - NE District Day Apart, UMC, Waverly
Apr. 10 - Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Library
Apr. 11 - Miriam Circle, 1:30 p.m., Library
Apr. 11 - hearts & Hands, 5:30 p.m., Parlor
Apr. 13 - Unit Meeting, 1:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Apr. 17 - Deborah Circle, 10:00 a.m., Parlor
Apr. 25 - Miriam Circle, 1:30 p.m., Library
Apr. 27 - Mary Circle, 9:30 a.m., Parlor
Apr. 27 - Joy Circle, 1:30 p.m., Parlor

Hearts and Hands

Hearts and Hands group will meet on Tuesday, April 11, in the parlor. Anyone interested in joining the group is welcome and should come around 5:30.

Our goal is to use our "hands" to help others wherever our "hearts" lead us. At this meeting we will be filling 30 Easter baskets to distribute to those members of our church who are unable to get out and about. If you wish, bring 30 items to add to the bunnies, candies, notes, etc. that are already promised for the baskets.

Thank yous

I would like to thank everyone for their thoughts, prayers, cards and visits during my recent illness. Pastor Steve's visits while I was in the hospital very greatly appreciated. A special thank you to the Kaleidoscope Class for thier concern, cards and flowers. I'm looking forward to getting back to SundaySchool and church soon.

Gil Hewett

Thanks to the staff and Jane Wycoff for the nice red rose and birthday card. I always enjoy visiting with her and Flo.

Clarence "Casey" Tucker

Thank you for the beautiful yellow rose for my 80th birthday. It was nice seeing Jane and having a hug from her. Thanks to the staff for the birthday card.

Carl Ellison

Thank you for letting us use the Gathering Place for our cookie book. It helped us with our sales a lot. Thanks,

Elise, Myah, Sydney, Emily, Audrienne, and McKenzie

Thanks so much for Clyde Berger's rose for his 88th - beautiful and lasted so nice, too. He likes flowers. The kids even noticed it!

Dee Berger

Thank you! Thank you, Jane! The beautiful red rose was a great addition to my birthday celebration!

Marilyn Pape

Thank you for the beautiful rose! Sorry we missed Jane. Thank you to the church staff for the birthday greeting.

Pat Powell

Jane, I am sorry that I wasn't able to visit when you brought my birthday rose. Thank you for delivering it. It was beautiful!

Lillian Shoemaker

Sympathy to:

- Dennis and Nancy Miller on the loss of their sister-in-law, Phyllis Miller, on February 24.
- Lillian Shoemaker and her family on the loss of her son, Steven, on February 27.
- Dotty Rokes and her family on the loss of her great-niece.
- Friends of Veda Rasmussen. Veda passed away March 4. Her memorial service will be held in our church at 10:00 April 4.
-

Welcome to our church!

- Crystal Riggs and her three children (Jamie, Breanna, and Anastasiya) were baptized, and Crystal joined our church on February 26.
- We also welcomed Barbara Cooper as a newly baptized member on February 26
- Tony John, a long-time Methodist, joined our church as well on February 26.
- Craig Michelson and Hilary Northup joined the church on March 12.
- Amelia Ann Wilken, daughter of Heath and Crystal Wilken, was baptized on February 26.
- Blake Colten McAndrews, son of Amy Knoebel and Zach McAndrews, was baptized on March 12. Blake is the great-grandson of Dennis & Charlene Waller.
- Nolan Michael Keenan, son of Drew & Katy Keenan, was baptized on March 19.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Ben and Nikki (Jones) Dirks. They were married in our church on February 17.

House of Hope thanks us

Thank you so much for your generous donation to the House of Hope! As we have been focusing so much on the future expansion of the House of Hope, I can't help but reflect on our past. For the past 21 years, starting with the vision of Cedar Valley church leaders, continued with prayers and support from congregations such as yourselves; hundreds of lives have been changed. Those who were once considered the last, the lost, and the least, through love and support are now our neighbors, and several our leaders. So thank you for this act of love and please continue praying for our present families and future families, young ladies, and programming.

Camperships Thank You

Thank you to everyone who has donated to Help Send a Kid to Camp. We have raised \$1,500 and more is coming in. If you would still like to help send kids to camp please Jenna Engel know at jenna.engel@aboutfirst.com.

Easter Lilies

Orders are being taken for the Easter lilies that will decorate the church on Easter weekend. If you would like to purchase a lily in honor or in memory of a loved one, please use the special envelope available at the Welcome Center or in the church office. Cost for each lily is \$10. Checks can be made out to FUMC. The deadline is Wednesday, April 12.

Attendance- week ending

	3/5	3/12	3/19	3/26
Ash Wednesday	98			
FUSION (Wed)	x	24	x	14
Transformation	96	57	120	84
Traditional 8:30	119	110	158	169
Traditional 11:00	129	96	106	141

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Sunday, 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Traditional services

Sunday, 8:30 a.m. Transformation Worship

Van rides are available for the 10:00 Sunday service.

Child care is provided in the nursery for infants and babies for Sunday Services.

Spreading the Word

If you miss a Sunday, or want to hear a message again, find us on the local Public Access cable television channels. If you are unable to receive the television broadcast, weekly dvds are also available, or find the video links for sermons at www.aboutfirst.com

Cedar Falls (CFU) Channel 95.5, Friday @ 8:00 pm, Sunday @ 9:00 am

Waterloo (MediaCom) Channel 17, Sundays @ 11:00am & 9:00 pm

Our Pastors

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Matt German, Associate Pastor, matt.german@aboutfirst.com

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May newsletter deadline is April 20.

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