

aboutfirst news

December, 2018 First United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls



CONTENTS

- 2 - pastor's page
- 3 - worship
- 4 - home page
- 5 - news
- 6 - news
- 7 - how to help
- 8 - events
- 9 - calendar
- 10 - learn & grow
- 11 - monthly mission
- 12 - reaching out & in
- 13 - reaching out & in
- 14 - women
- 15 - short notes

issue 218, December, 2018

First United Methodist Church
718 Clay Street
Cedar Falls, Iowa, 50613
aboutfirst.com

Announcements and editorial content for publication may be submitted to the First UMC media office by the 20th of each preceding month. Email to: chris.congdon@aboutfirst.com

Christmas Through the Gospels

Have you ever been brave enough to go through old boxes in your basement? We moved to Cedar Falls two years ago and there are boxes downstairs that have not been touched since the movers dropped them. As I was rummaging through some of those this past week, I came across an envelope of old pictures. I was taken back to a time when I weighed less, had more hair, and far less responsibility in life! I found pictures of when I used to play baseball, my senior prom, and my faithful childhood dog, Buddy.

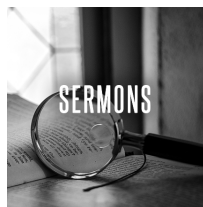


Some say that a picture is worth a thousand words. Perhaps that is true. Whenever I look at old photos, it invites me to journey back in time. When I gaze upon that moment captured in print, the picture retells the story.

Though the ancient world did not have flash photography, we have the gift of the scriptures. Just as a picture retells a story of a moment in time, the Gospel narratives contained in the bible give us a snapshot into the life of Jesus who lived 2,000 years ago.

This advent we will be examining the story of Jesus' birth through each of the Gospel writers. Each Gospel tells this story from a unique vantage point. We will study the nuances of each of these perspectives. As we look back, you will be invited to look forward. We will draw deep truths from these old stories that will have application and meaning for our lives today.

I invite you to join us on this advent journey as we view Christmas through the Gospels.
Be Bold, Be Strong,
Pastor Matt



Miss A Sermon?

If you miss a Sunday message from Pastor Scott or Pastor Matt, you'll find it on our youtube channel.

Go to our website at aboutfirst.com and scroll down to the "sermons" graphic, which will link you to all of our sermons and public videos.



Christmas Cantata December 9

The Chancel Choir will be performing, "Jesus! The Advent of the Messiah" by Mary McDonald and Rose Aspinall. The cantata reflects on the Holy Child, examining the impact of His arrival and what it meant for all who would receive this life-altering gift. Through original songs, carols, spirituals, and narration, the story of Jesus' birth will be told in a new and different way. The cantata will be presented at both the 8:30 and 11:00 traditional services in the sanctuary. We hope you will join us for this gift from the Chancel Choir.



Christmas Eve Candlelight 4, 7, & 11 pm, December 24

For many of us, it just isn't Christmas if we don't light a candle and sing the carols with our church family.

We encourage you to invite your family and friends as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Holy Communion will be served at the 11:00 candlelight celebration.

4:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary
11:00 p.m. in the sanctuary

(nursery staffed 4:00 & 7:00)



Covenant Service December 30

The last Sunday of 2018, we'll gather as one congregation, to praise God for the year that has passed, and reflect upon the events that have been significant in our lives.

We will look forward to the new year with a renewed commitment to live as God would have us live, through worship based upon John Wesley's Covenant Service.

December 30. One service only.
10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary



WELCOME, GUESTS!

We're excited to share this Advent and Christmas season with you. Our greeters, ushers, and Welcome Center hosts are at your service. Got a question? Ask 'em. In the United Methodist Church, you are always welcome to fully participate regardless of your membership status. May God bless our time together.

Hanging of the Greens

Everyone is invited to be part of First United Methodist Church's Annual Hanging of the Greens on Saturday, December 1 at 9 a.m. Bring your family and friends for church decorating fun. We will be done by noon or earlier. If you listen closely you might hear a Christmas song or two being sung.

World's Window is coming to us December 9

World's Window will be at our church on Sunday, December 9 with all kinds of fair trade items to sell. They will have lovely items for display and sale all morning in the chapel and the Gathering Place. Their mission is to market handcrafted items made by fair trade artisans from economically depressed countries around the world. By choosing fair trade products, you are not only accessing high quality products, but you are also making a difference in the lives of people who would otherwise be unemployed or underemployed. World's Window will bring many kinds of items to sell Sunday morning, December 9. There is sure to be something just right for your loved ones this Christmas.



Christmas Bell Concert

Mark your calendars and invite your friends and neighbors to the Christmas Bell Concert. Some people say it doesn't feel like Christmas until they hear the bells ring. You are welcome to join us Sunday, December 2 at 3:00pm (note the new afternoon time!). This annual holiday tradition is our bell ringers' gift to you.

Bus ride to the Bell Concert and Christmas Eve

Would you like to ride the bus to the bell concert or the 7:00 Christmas Eve service? We have a driver and a bus! The bus can make the rounds in Cedar Falls for those who need transportation. Contact Janet MacTaggart at 319-404-0077 if you would like to ride.

Children's Christmas Program

Children's Christmas Program is Sunday, Dec. 9th during the Sunday School Hour. Please join us. The children will be working really hard to share the story of the birth of Christ.

Christmas Caroling – Sunday, December 9

Join the mighty throng of carolers and well-wishers in brightening the lives of many of our homebound and nursing home residents on Sunday, December 9 from 2:00 to 4:00pm. It is one of the most heartwarming things we can do in helping spread the joy of Christmas. For some families, caroling has become a family tradition as a way to add more meaning to their celebration of Christmas. We are hoping for several carloads so we can split up and visit more people.

It's Christmas Tree Time!

It is that time of the year again to prepare your beautiful Christmas Trees for our annual Christmas Tree Walk. The display will be in our Gathering Space during the month of December. If you are interested in putting up a tree see the sign up sheet at the Welcome Center. For questions talk to Emily, one of our amazing church custodians.

Poinsettia Orders

Your purchase in memory or honor of someone will be acknowledged using the Poinsettia Order Envelope at the Welcome Center. Each poinsettia costs \$12. Our goal this year is to have 100 Poinsettias! We'd like for Christmas to be truly a season of beauty as we celebrate Christ's birth. Deadline to order is December 19 to get the information in the Sunday morning bulletin insert on December 23. Again this year, we would like to encourage you to leave your Poinsettias through Christmas Eve.

CAT Surveys Are Done . . . Now What?

As part of our visioning process, many of you completed the Congregation Assessment Tool survey. Ryan Christenson, Interim Associate for Congregational Excellence with the Iowa Conference, will present a summary of the results on Sunday, December 16 at 9:45 in the sanctuary. He will present insights into the church's current reality as well as possible next steps for the church.

Youth Coordinators Hired



We are pleased to announce that Jordan Derhammer (left) and Lorrin Schofield (right) have joined our church staff and will be splitting the youth ministry duties. Jordan will be working primarily with middle-school grades and Lorrin's emphasis will be with high school grades. Both have already been working with our youth in a volunteer capacity and have a good rapport with the youth. Bringing them on-staff will formalize their positions. Jordan and Lorrin expect to work collaboratively with each other and with Christian Ed Director Jenna Engel to keep our youth moving forward in their journeys of faith, and to remain plugged-in as important members of our church family.

Living Within Our Means, And Beyond Ourselves

Our Finance team is currently working on next year's budget. They're looking at how we fund our ongoing programs, building maintenance, and staffing, as well as how to achieve some new goals.

You can help by completing and returning an estimate of giving card for 2019. Note that an estimate of giving is not a firm commitment - it is simply your best guess of your giving for the next year. Also know that your estimate of giving is always kept confidential. Only you and our Finance Manager Debbie Dance know what you estimate or what you give.

If you do not have an estimate of giving card, you can pick one up in the office.



Preach It, Brothers and Sisters

The United Methodist Church is very clear in its doctrine that ministry is a partnership between ordained clergy and us, the laity. We all have skills and gifts that are useful in service to the cause of Christ. Among the laity, some of us can serve in ministries of music, the Congregational Care Team, and any of our First UMC missions.

We even have a crew of lay-speakers who help other churches with worship leadership. This group, known as the Circuit Riders, is currently supplying worship leadership to the United Methodists of Frederika and New Hope Parrish (Dumont & Aredale). On any given Sunday, at least two members of CF First UMC are on the road, leading prayers and delivering sermons in these churches.

Serving in this way is an exciting opportunity for us to meet other Iowa United Methodists and to assist them in maintaining their Sunday services in the absence of a regular pastor.

Many, but not all, of our Circuit Riders are graduates of the School For Lay Ministry. All have a heart for worship and for sharing stories of faith that others may find useful in their lives.

Chris Congdon in our First UMC media office says this, "A goal of most churches is to equip and encourage people in their own lives of ministry. I love that our church actually provides a pathway for those whose gifts are in the spoken ministries of telling the stories of the Gospel."

We can always use a few more Circuit Riders. If this ministry sounds interesting to you, talk to Chris Congdon about exploring further.

A Forever Gift

You can secure your legacy as a sustainer of our church when you support our Endowment Funds, which include:

- Bequests and gifts received outside of the regular Sunday offerings and general budget support
- Fund given for a specific purpose or ministry area
- Funds invested on a long-term basis to provide the church with ongoing income

Our Endowment Funds are managed by the Endowment Committee of the church with the assistance of the Iowa United Methodist Foundation. The committee's goal is to be great stewards of your gifts, honoring your intentions, and balancing the wants and needs of today's ministry with the "big picture" of our mission and purpose of making disciples for Jesus Christ.

Building our Endowment Funds will make our church less dependent upon the weekly offering collections to cover our expenses and our special one-time needs. Having a planned giving program not only strengthens the future of our church but is a way for you to say that you believe in the future of our church.

Contributions to our Endowment Funds can be made in any amount, at any time. You may specify that your contributions be used for a specific purpose, or invested long-term to provide income for years to come.

The church Endowment Funds are also a wonderful way to include First UMC in your estate planning, and allow you to leave a legacy of continuing support to your family of faith.

Questions regarding Endowment giving may be directed to Mike Butler, Endowment Committee chair.



The Way Forward

The United Methodist Church is at a defining point in its history and for its future. In February, a special General Conference will be held to address our church's position on issues of gender identity.

While the outcomes of that General Conference are unknown at this time, we want all United Methodists to be fully informed of the issues and the importance surrounding the proposed Way Forward. On November 18, Bishop Laurie Haller was here in Cedar Falls to share information with our Northeast District. If you were unable to attend that event, a video is available of a similar event recorded in Knoxville, Iowa. Also below are links to other resources on the issue.

Knoxville event video

<https://www.iaumc.org/commissiononawayforward>

Three Ways Forward Compared

<https://www.iaumc.org/commissiononawayforwardthreeplans>

One Church Model video

<https://www.iaumc.org/councilofbishopsonechurchmodelvideo>

Bishop Laurie's news page

<https://www.iaumc.org/commissiononawayforwardnews>

News From "The Connection"

If you'd like to know more about how the United Methodist Church is working around our state, our nation and the world, check the news updates on the following websites. We think you'll be encouraged and inspired to know that you're a member of an organization that promotes the Gospel, justice and works for the peace of Christ worldwide.

For Iowa UMC news:

iaumc.org

For global UMC news:

umc.org

Worship:

Drive the Bus

Would anyone be interested in driving the bus for the 8:30 services? If we have drivers we can offer this service time for our congregation members who prefer to come earlier. If you are interested, call the church office. Steve and Janet MacTaggart will be happy to give you a lesson on the bus features

Transformation Chair Setup - 1st Sundays

Jim Larson has been setting up chairs at 7:15am on the first Sunday of each month, and he doesn't even attend that service! A couple more people to join him would be awesome, and it would be especially swell if they were Transformation folks. This is a once a month commitment for about 20 minutes. If you can help please contact Jenna Engel.

Altar Flowers

The altar flower calendar for 2019 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.

Outreach & Missions:

Community Meal - Resumes in January

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 Stephanie Buchs. 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 Work Night - Every Month

A crew from our church helps at the Food Bank the first Tuesday of each month. Expect to be there from 6:00 to no later than 8:00pm. 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

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.

Some people might think of these ministry opportunities as the “little things”, but little isn't the right word.

These are the needs of the church that are on-going in our weekly and monthly cycles of ministry.

These are the support roles that need to be filled and the easy contributions that we all can make to enhance the worship experience for others and to ensure that our ministries are well-equipped and well-staffed.

How can you help?

8 Events

Dec 4 - Food Bank Work Crew

Join us at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank on Tuesday, December 4. A crew from our church helps at the Food Bank the first Tuesday of each month. Expect to be there from 6:00 to no later than 8:00pm. They love to see the Methodists come to work. Would you like to be on the reminder email? Contact Lisa in the church office. lisa.congdon@aboutfirst.com

Dec 4 - Grief Support Session

Where: church parlor

When: 2:00-3:30pm

The holidays are especially difficult if you are grieving a loss. Our First UMC Grief Support Team wants you to know that you are in our thoughts and prayers this holiday season, and you are welcome at our next group grief support session. Please call Carol through the church office for more information. If you would like some individual support, please call at anytime. Also, look for the holiday care notes on the counter behind the Welcome Center for free brochures to help you during this Christmas season.

Dec 8 - Homes of Hope Tour

Holiday Homes of Hope Tour. Five fabulous homes in the Cedar Valley are being professionally decorated for viewing on December 8th from 10 a.m.-4:00 p.m. This event is proudly sponsored by Re/Max Home Group with the proceeds of this event (\$10/ticket) with all proceeds supporting the mission of the American Cancer Society. Please contact Cindi Knox for tickets or more information.

Dec 20 - First Friends Potluck

Where: Gathering Place

When: noon - 2:00pm

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.

Dec 18 - LifeServe Blood Drive

Where: Gathering Place

When: 12:30-6:00

We are hosting the next blood drive on Tuesday, December 18 from 12:30-6:00. Donors, cookie bakers, and hosts are needed. They have quite a few appointments 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.

M T **W** T F

Your CrazyFunBusy Church Night! Wednesday, December 5

- 5:15 - 6:00 **The Filling Station**
- a meal for everyone. Eat & go on to
- 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
- 6:00-7:00 **Men's Study - 33**
- developing as authentic Christian men
- 6:15 - 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

Zumba Every Thursday!

You can always 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
 11:00 Traditional Service, sanctuary
 6:30 Les Cloches d'Or rehearsal, sanctuary
 7:00 Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday

9:30 Quilters/Stitchers, O59
 4:30-6:00 Community Meal, Fellowship Hall
 6:30-8:00 Tuesday Night Fellas
 7:00-9:00 AA, O55

Wednesday

9:00 Women Connected by Prayer, parlor
 5:15 AA, O55
 5:15 - 6:00 **The Filling Station** *
 6:00 - 7:10 **Jr / Sr High Youth** *
 6:00 - 7:15 **BLAST! (for kids)** *
 6:00 - 7:15 **More Than Moms** *
 6:00-7:00 **Men's Study group** *
 6:15 - 7:30 **Tower Bells**
 6:30 WOW AA, O55
 7:15 - 8:00 **FUSION Tonight** *
 7:30 - 8:30 **Chancel Choir**

* Dec. 5 only

Thursday

5:30-6:30 Zumba, Fellowship Hall

Also Scheduled....

SUNDAY December 2

1st Sunday of Advent -
 Communion at all services
 Padma Templeton at Frederika
 Mark Fransdal at New Hope Parish
 9:45 Advent Study, Fellowship Hall
 3:00 Bell Concert, sanctuary

MONDAY December 3

5:30 Stephen Ministry Christmas Party
 6:00 Fusion Design meeting, theater

TUESDAY December 4

2:00-3:30 Grief support, parlor
 6:00-8:00 Food Bank Work Crew
 6:30-8:30 Ad Council /CAT results meeting

WEDNESDAY December 5

LAST CrazyFunBusyWednesday of semester
 7:15 FUSION Tonight - Nate Nims

THURSDAY December 6

2:00 Clergy Cluster, library
 6:00-7:00 Christmas program rehearsal
 6:15-8:00 Cadette Girl Scouts, parlor
 6:30 Trustees, O57

SATURDAY December 8

10:30-12:00 Cantata rehearsal

SUNDAY December 9

2nd Sunday of Advent
 Chris Werling at New Hope Parish
 World's Window is here 8-12:30
 Christmas Cantata at 8:30 & 11
 9:45 Children's Christmas Program
 Advent Study (after Kids' program)
 2-4 Caroling
 6:00-7:30 Girl Scout Troop1874, chapel

MONDAY December 10

9:30 UMW Board meeting, library
 5:30-7:30 Girl Scouts, Gathering Place
 6:30 HOME Team ,chapel

TUESDAY December 11

6:30 Finance Committee, library

WEDNESDAY December 12

2:00 communion at Stanard chapel
 4:00 UMW in kitchen
 6:00-7:30 Youth group

THURSDAY December 13

11:30 UMW Christmas lunch, Fellowship Hall
 6:30 SPRC, O57

FRIDAY December 14

9:30-11:30 MOMS group, library/nursery

SUNDAY December 16

3rd Sunday of Advent
 Lisa Congdon at Frederika
 Padma Templeton at New Hope Parish
 Neighbor Helping Neighbor offering
 Deadline to return family angel tree gifts
 9:45 Advent Study - Fellowship Hall
 9:45 CAT survey presentation, sanctuary
 7:00 Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall

MONDAY December 17

5:30-8:00 Cub Scouts, Fellowship Hall
 6:30 Worship Committee, library

TUESDAY December 18

12:30-6:00 Blood Drive, Gathering Place

WEDNESDAY December 19

9:00 Women Connected by Prayer, parlor
 11:00 worship service at Pinnacle Care

THURSDAY December 20

Newsletter deadline
 Noon-3:00 1st Friends potluck, Gather place

SUNDAY December 23

4th Sunday of Advent
 Padma Templeton at Frederika
 9:45 Advent Study - Fellowship Hall

MONDAY December 24

Christmas Eve services
 4:00 nursery is staffed
 7:00 nursery is staffed
 11:00 nursery not staffed

TUESDAY December 25

Christmas Day, church office closed
 7:00-8:00 AA, O55

SUNDAY December 30

Padma Templeton at Frederika
 Chris Congdon at New Hope Parish
 Lisa Congdon at Washington Chapel
 Coffee fellowship 9:30-10:00
 One service today at 10:00

Winter Weather Policies Worship

It is our goal and our intention to provide at least one worship opportunity every week, but this is Iowa, and it is winter, and weather happens. When winter weather gets bad, the pastors will decide if changes should be made to the worship schedule.

Weekly Activities

Cedar Falls Schools will be our guide. If Cedar Falls Schools have cancelled classes or dismissed early then church activities will also be cancelled for the evening.

Cancellations will be broadcast on both KWWL Channel 7 and KCRG Television Channel 9 and posted online at www.aboutfirst.com. We also ask that you use your best judgement and do not venture out into dangerous weather.

Sunday School Dates & Notes

Dec 9 - Kids' Christmas Program

Our younger children will be performing classic Christmas songs, while, our 5th-6th graders will be taking us through the story of Jesus' birth.

Dec 23 - No Sunday School

Dec 30 - No Sunday School

Jan 6 - Sunday School resumes

Third Grade Bible Class:

We are so excited to start the Family Bible class, which will be a five week course that will meet from 9:45 a.m. - 10:45. This will be held in the Parlor. In the class you and your child will learn how to use the Bible together. The letters have gone out. If you and your child will be taking this class please let Jenna Engel know.

Sunday School Classes for Everyone

Preschool through 6th grade rooms are down stairs. 7th-12th room is on the 3rd floor. If you are new to the church or have a three year old and would like to get them involved with Sunday School please contact Jenna Engel.

Adults are also encouraged to sit in with any of our six adult Sunday study groups. You'll find a variety of topics and perspectives. A list of adult Sunday School classes is available at the Welcome Center.

Advent Study Sunday Mornings

Join Pastor Scott for an Advent Study the first four Sundays of December as he looks at the Christmas story through each of the gospels (and a smidge of Paul). There is no need to read beforehand, just come as you are any of the Sundays and Pastor Scott will offer the discussion topics and lead the group in prayer, reflection and study. If you would like a reading resource you can pick up the companion to his study "Awaiting the Already" by Magrey deVega for \$10 at the Welcome Center. It's helpful, but not required, to sign up in advance. We just want to be sure we have enough room for everyone. He plans to lead the study during the Sunday School hour (9:45-10:45). Due to the high interest in this study, the class will take place in Fellowship Hall.



A few notes on Sunday school:

Children Christmas Program is on Dec. 9th. Our younger children will be performing classic Christmas songs. Our 5th-6th graders will be taking us through the story of Jesus' birth.

We will not be having Children's Sunday school on Dec. 23rd or Dec. 30th. Sunday school will start back up on Jan. 6th.

Nursery:

The Nursery will be open and staffed for the 4:00pm & 7:00pm Christmas Eve services

Change Your Vision of the World!

See the world like Jesus does. Dive into God's word and the story of his work on the earth. Learn to live your life with eternal significance and purpose.

This course is an in-depth look into the Christian Commission to go into the world with the Gospel message, until the whole world hears.

Register for Perspectives on the World Christian Movement. This year the class will be hosted at Cedar Valley Church in Waterloo on Monday evenings, Jan 14-April 29, 6:00-9:00pm. Register by December 15 for a discounted cost of \$225. First UMC is also offering \$100 scholarships. Register at www.perspectives.org. For more information, email us at cfperspectives@gmail.com





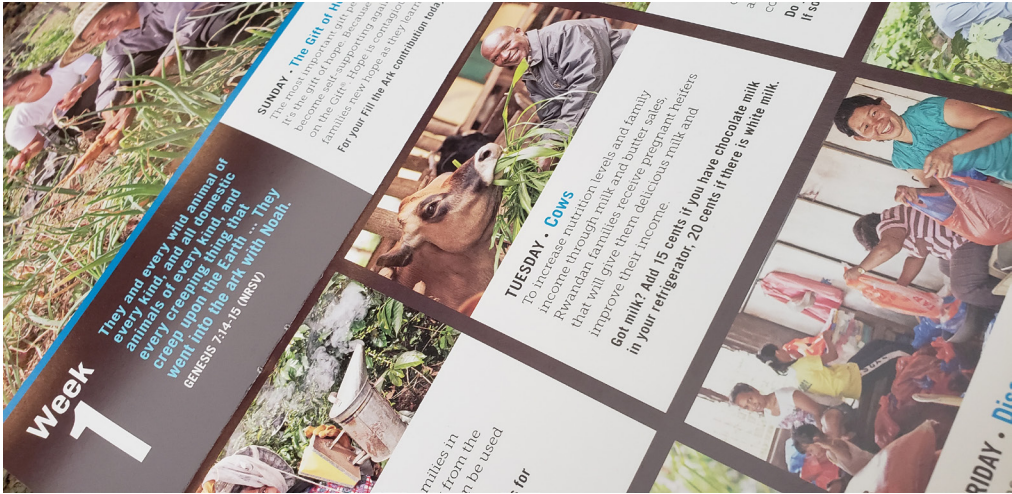
Mission of the Month: Heifer International

- Fill the Ark With Animals
- Giving Calendar Family Activity

Check out the Heifer International display in the Gathering Place for opportunities to give a gift that keeps on giving for generations to come. We'll be taking orders for chicks, goats, cows, pigs, water buffalo, and other animals until the New Year. And, best of all, you don't have to take them home, feed them, clean up after them, or even wrap them! Get a llama for your mama, a chick for your chick, a kid for your kid, a bunny for your honey, or a goat for your old goat.



The Fill the Ark Giving Calendar is perfect for the four weeks of Advent. Fill the Ark is a daily missions-giving program that spans four weeks. It offers real-life solutions to world hunger and shows that one person, one family or one congregation can make a difference in today's world. As you or your family fills a Giving Bank with money you've saved, you'll learn how your gifts can share God's love and end hunger and poverty around the world. And maybe you'll have some fun, too. What a great way to count down the days until Christmas. Pick up a Giving Calendar and a bank at the Heifer display in the Gathering Place.



12 Reaching Out & In

Hospital Reminder

Government regulations prohibit health care facilities (this includes hospitals, assisted living and nursing homes) from sharing information about their patients and residents, so if you want your church family to know you need our love and prayers, please call the church office.

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.

Christmas offering

It is our tradition to take a special Christmas offering to support a mission. Your special gift will be shared among these overseas mission opportunities to help them give their best to help others: Banyam Theological Seminary in Nigeria and the Africa University Retreat Center. These are both projects that are lifted up by the Iowa Annual Conference. Look for more details in the Christmas letter in your mailbox in mid-December, and use the special offering envelope to support these ministries. You may place your gift in the Sunday offering plate or send it to the church office at any time.

Neighbor Helping Neighbor

On December 16 we will be taking a "Neighbor Helping Neighbor" offering. Funds collected are used in Iowa to help other lowans who have unmet needs due to economic hardship.

Get Into the Spirit of Christmas



For many years in the Lee's Summit, Missouri area, an anonymous benefactor doled out \$100 bills to the needy each Christmas. After he found out that a tabloid newspaper was going to reveal his name, Larry Stewart, a successful businessman, revealed his identity and told how the practice began.

In the winter of 1971, Stewart was working as a door-to-door salesman. The company he was working for went out of business, and he quickly ran out of money. Stewart hadn't eaten in two days when he went to the Dixie Diner and ordered a breakfast he eventually admitted he couldn't pay for. Ted Horn, the restaurant owner, sympathized with Stewart. Horn acted as though he found a \$20 bill on the floor underneath Stewart's chair. "Son, you must have dropped this," Horn said.

"It was like a fortune to me," Stewart reflected. "I said to myself, 'Thank you, Lord.' Right then I made a promise. I said, Lord, if you ever put me in a position to help other people, I will do it."

Over the years, Stewart estimates that he has given away around \$1.3 million. He says he has been amply rewarded in return. "I see the smiles and looks of hopelessness turn to looks of hope in an instant," he says. "After all, isn't that what we're put here on earth for-to help one another?"

Stephen Ministers aren't handing out \$100 bills to people at Christmas, or any other time of the year. But they are committed to helping other people through difficult times in other ways. If you would like someone to come alongside to listen and care for you during this holiday season and beyond, this group is ready to help. Please call the church office at 266-1713, and you will be directed in confidence.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund

Our Pastor's Discretionary Fund is in place for helping the poor and needy. These funds are to be used at the discretion of the pastors to help with requests for emergency help. Typical requests are to put gas in a car for a transient passing through town or someone needing to get to a doctor's appointment, paying a portion of a utility bill, or perhaps a night in a hotel for a person in crisis. We refer many requests for financial help to Love INC, but the discretionary fund is helpful for immediate needs.

The Pastor's Discretionary Fund is supported solely by your donations. If you would like to contribute, please write your check to First UMC with "Discretionary Fund" on the memo. Thank you for partnering with the pastors to be the hands and feet of Christ for our neighbors in crisis.

Blessed to Be a Blessing Tree

Since so many of the tags for our Angel Tree have been claimed already, we have more opportunities for you to help this Christmas. We are calling this our “Blessed to Be a Blessing” Tree. This tree is decorated with colored envelopes. You may choose an envelope to donate funds to one or more of the ministries First UMC supports such as WeeCare, Bibles for our sisters in Mitchellville, books for Lincoln Elementary kids through Change a Child’s Story, Hospitality House, the NE Iowa Food Bank, or House of Hope.

There are ongoing needs throughout the year with these ministries, and your generosity helps immeasurably. Christmas is a time to take note of all of our blessings. Please consider how you may be called to bless others around you.

Read about some of these ongoing ministries here:

Bibles for our Sisters

A very tangible way we can help our sisters behind the razor wire is to provide Bibles for them. We have an opportunity to order new Bibles to be sent to the women’s prison directly from Cokesbury. They are given to the ladies in Bible Studies and to keep for their own use. The Navigation Bible is an easy to read Bible and includes guidelines for effective Bible study. We have sent many Bibles to prison and they are treasured by those who receive them. Each Bible costs \$10.

Wee Care

Grateful parents of wee ones come to our church every Tuesday afternoon to pick up a supply of much needed baby goods, such as diapers, bottles and sippy cups, lotions and baby wash and wipes. This gap ministry through LoveINC helps struggling families stretch their dollars.

Change a Child’s Story

Research indicates that a quarter of kids who are behind in reading by the 4th grade will eventually drop out of school, making them more likely to experience other hardships. To address this, we have partnered with our neighbor, Lincoln Elementary School, to provide Reading Buddies for K-3rd grade and have purchased books for every student at Lincoln School. Your donation to this cause will buy books for our young friends at Lincoln School.

Hospitality House

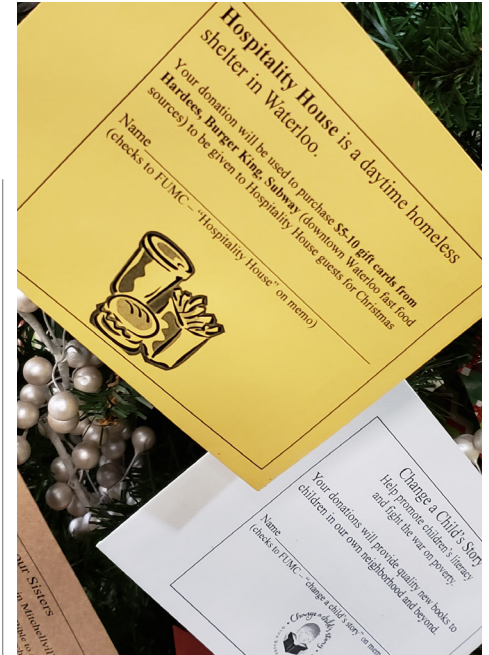
The Cedar Valley Hospitality House is an inter-faith volunteer organization which provides day-time shelter, support and encouragement to the homeless and those in need. They offer a broad spectrum of services including breakfast, hot lunch, clothing, shoes, work essential items like work boots, personal care products, backpacks, bus tickets, laundry facilities for those living unsheltered, and social service advocacy to other agencies in an effort to get their guests sustainable again. Your donations to this agency will provide fast food gift cards to be given to homeless guests.

NE Iowa Food Bank

The mission of the NE Iowa Food Bank is to provide nutritious food and grocery products to nonprofit organizations and individuals in Northeast Iowa, while offering hunger education programs to the community and those in need. Every dollar donated can help provide a meal for four hungry people.

House of Hope

House of Hope in Waterloo provides homeless mothers with individualized support and transitional housing to achieve secure families and permanent homes. Their vision is to end the cycle of homelessness for mothers and children in the Cedar Valley with respect, empowerment, stewardship and accountability as their core values.



Angel Trees- WOW! Tags are almost gone

This year we partnered with Lincoln School and North Cedar School to share a little Christmas love to some families in our own community. The school guidance counselors provided us with a wish list for almost 20 families. The tags were placed on the tree in mid November and were quickly selected by church members. The Angel Tree and wish list tags are on the tree outside the church office.

Here’s how it works: select a tag, purchase the gift, and return the gift to the church by Sunday, December 16. You may wrap it if you like, or bring it back unwrapped. Just be sure the tag is securely attached.

Lisa Congdon is the contact for the Angel Tree ministries this year.

Tuesday Bible Study

The Tuesday Morning Bible Study is taking the winter off. We'll see you again when the weather warms up.

December UMW Calendar

Dec. 10 - Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Library

Dec. 13 - Unit Meeting, Christmas Luncheon, 11:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall

fellas @ first

Tuesday Men's Breakfast

This group is taking a break until springtime. They will still be meeting at the church at 9:00am on the 4th Tuesday of each month to help set up tables and chairs for Community Meals. You are invited to join them for this service project.

Tuesday Night Fellas

All men of all ages are welcome - punks to geezers. We're relaxed and informal, but not afraid to tackle tough questions and deep topics. This is a no-homework group and it's easy for new fellas to jump right in, just show up and say, "Hi, I'm new here", and we'll take it from there. Meet downstairs in room O59, Tuesday nights from 6:30 - 8:00.

Our Hearts and Hands Have Been Busy!

Hearts and Hands group has had a very busy past two months. We met at the end of summer and made over 60 jars of pepper jelly. Thanks to Dee Behr and Harriett McMahill for supplying the green peppers and jalapenos. Much of the jelly was sold at the Ingathering "bake sale" with the proceeds going to UMCOR for postage. Thank you as well to many who gave us small glass jars and purchased the pepper jelly and apple butter.

On November 6, the H&H group provided a meal of lasagna, bread, salad and cookies and bars for the "Begin Now" classes held at First Presbyterian in Waterloo. We contributed enough to serve 75 persons as they celebrated their final class.



Our December project is to bake 8 dozen cut-out cookies for the youth group to decorate on December 12. An on-going project is to help with making items for the DAYS4GIRLS project. A current task is to cut out fabric and PUL liners using a pattern to make shields as part of the kits. The kits also include pads made of dark flannel (without any light colors). Donations of flannel are welcome - bring the flannel to the quilter's room downstairs. The flannel must be NEW and a dark color with no animals or patriotic themes in prints. Our goal is to make 80 kits with 8 pads for each kit. DO THE MATH!!!

Also in December we will be selling the rest of the pepper jelly and apple butter - just in time for Christmas gifts. Look for us in the gathering place on Sunday, December 16. Hearts and Hands contact is Karen Page kp224@cfu.net

UMW - Independent, Responsive, and Methodist for 150 Years

As United Methodist Women prepares to celebrate its 150th anniversary, many of us are connecting to stories of our predecessors and the impact of their work. We find many powerful themes that relate directly to our work today. Today as in decades past United Methodist Women members are responding to God's call to advocate and serve, responding in faith, sometimes in the face of great obstacles. And just as the members, leaders, missionaries and deaconesses who came before us, we are building relationships with women and children across all kinds of differences and committing to the work of the fundraising and administration that makes mission possible.

United Methodist Women does not receive appropriations from the general church. The funds we raise are for our own work, and the disposition of those funds is directed by our members themselves through processes we have established. Our organization elects its own leaders at every level through our own processes. And all of our work—from spiritual growth to leadership development to mission education to fundraising to service and advocacy—is guided by the Purpose, to undergird and energize our commitment to mission.

Reviewing our history and stating these principles in community with United Methodist women from around the world has been a powerful reminder of the importance of who we are and what we do together. Thanks be to God for this call to put our faith into action!

Harriett Jane Olson
General Secretary
United Methodist Women

Thank You's

Thank you to all for the cards. It meant a lot and made my day. A special thank you to Jane for the rose and the visit.

Elaine Logue

Thanks to Jane for the beautiful red rose she brought for the 81st birthday. And also the card the First UMC staff sent. I also appreciated the folks who raked our yard and ran. Our church and church family are really special.

Lu Tiller

Thank you for the beautiful rose and card. It was another great visit from Jane.

Winnie Clayton

It's a dark, dreary, cool, rainy day. A knock on the door...it's Jane with my 3rd rose and a hug. Wow! My day is warmer, brighter, and lasting. Thank you Jane, so very much.

Bud Stock

Thank you, Jane, for delivering the beautiful rose. I love your visits. I dried the one Bill got on his 90th birthday, and I'll try to do the same with mine. As always, thanks to the church staff for their greeting.

Donna Mincks

Thank you to the First UM Church for all your cards, concerns, well wishes, prayers and offers of transportation on the notice of my emergency surgery two weeks ago. I am feeling better each day and will be back at my full speed soon. You have always with my family in our hours of need.

Ruth Tucker

Thank you to all who made my retirement celebration so special. God bless this warm and loving church.

Jim Buchs

Welcome to:

- Karen Keel Kober and Ethan Kober joined the church on October 21.
- Casey McIntyre also joined the church on October 21.
- Tracey Potter joined the church at Fusion Tonight on November 7
- We also welcome Tracey's son, Jack Potter, to our family of faith. He was baptized on November 7.
- Kizer Lee Spurlin was baptized on November 11. He is the grandson of Dan & Lisa Jacobsen, and the great-grandson of Larry & Janell Jacobsen.
- Emmett Alan Wellington and Macklin Jay Wellington were baptized on November 11. They are the sons of Wilmot and Jakayla Wellington.

Sympathy to:

- Family and friends of Theresa Buchheit, who died October 29.
- Family and friends of Senora Cohenour, who died October 31.
- Bryan and Jan Benson and their family on the death of Bryan's mother, Janet, on October 31.
- Family and friends of Shirley Kirkle, who died November 1. Her service was held November 6.

Thanks from the Wee Care Crew

On behalf of our "little people" the Wee Care staff thanks everyone who has donated money or supplies to our cause! Special thanks goes to one wee one who donated a whole lot of diapers that he outgrew and a talented friend who has made beautiful afghans we are pleased to add to the requested items. We aim to keep the little ones clean, warm and huggable!

Congregational Care Team Thanks

We want to take this opportunity to thank all those in our church family who have been caring for others in one way or another during the past year. We have individuals in the areas of grief support, Stephen Ministry, affirmation, nursing home visitation, and 80+ birthday roses. We thank all the volunteers who have so lovingly given many hours for these ministries. We also thank all members who quietly care for others in their own ways. You are showing the face of Christ each time you send a card, say a prayer, provide transportation, visit and listen to someone. May God bless you this Christmas season!

Financial Update as of November 18

YTD Budget Received:	\$ 772,905
YTD Budget Needs:	\$ 773,484
YTD Deficit	\$ 580
Mortgage Balance	\$ 310,717

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, Debbie Dance for details. 319-266-1713 or email debbie.dance@aboutfirst.com.

Attendance- week ending

	11/04	11/11	11/18	11/25
Transformation	87	104	100	72
Traditional 8:30	151	122	177	113
Traditional 11:00	86	131	105	115
FUSION	x	35	23	x

First United Methodist Church

718 Clay Street

Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613

Phone: 319.266.1713

Fax: 319.266.1715

Email: churchoffice@aboutfirst.com

www.aboutfirst.com

aboutFirst (USPS 671-710)
is published monthly by
First United Methodist Church
718 Clay Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613.
Periodical postage paid at
Cedar Falls, IA. **POSTMASTER**
Send changes to:
aboutFirst
718 Clay Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

aboutfirst news

First United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls



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

Van rides are available for the 11:00 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

Scott Kober, Lead Pastor, scott.kober@aboutfirst.com

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

Staff (in alphabetical order)

Sam Barr, Transformation Music Coordinator

Dee Behr, Parish Visitor
dee.behr@aboutfirst.com

John Bentley, Head Custodian

Ted Bonebrake, Chancel Choir director
tbonebrake@hotmail.com

Chris Congdon, Media Coordinator
chris.congdon@aboutfirst.com

Lisa Congdon, Office Ministry Coordinator
lisa.congdon@aboutfirst.com

Debbie Dance, Financial Manager
debbie.dance@aboutfirst.com

Jordan Derhammer, Youth Co-Coordinator
pastorjordan.washingtonchapel@gmail.com

Carol Dick, Parish/Grief Support Coordinator
carol.dick@aboutfirst.com

Jenna Engel, Christian Education Coordinator
jenna.engel@aboutfirst.com

Lorin Schofield, Youth Co-Coordinator

Doug Shaffer, Organist
musicman52151@gmail.com

Emily Terpstra, Custodian