



February 2018
issue 209

ABOUT FIRST

First United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa



Thoughts From Steve

28 Days of Kindness

For five years we have declared February as "Kindness Month", after all, February has Valentine's Day! We are challenging our congregation to make a difference in Cedar Falls with "random acts of kindness" during the upcoming season of Lent. Spread some joy, and spread some grace! It is our way of remembering Christ's sacrifice of love on the cross for us. Instead of giving up something bad, do something good! It could be something as simple as holding the door open for someone!

Here's An Idea: February Surprises

If you want to make someone's day this month, pick a name from the prayer bookmark on Sunday and send a card, bring a flower, or make a phone call to anyone on that list. With the flu season upon us, please do not visit if you are ill in any way. Happy Valentine's Day!

We'd like to hear back from you - share your stories of kindness! Send them to Chris in the media office. We can all draw ideas and inspiration from each other.

Be kind to one another - Ephesians 4:32



Thoughts from Steve

Valentine's Day has always been an important holiday for both of us. I learned very quickly in our marriage that forgetting Valentine's Day was right up there with forgetting our anniversary and Janet's birthday. These are the "holy trinity" of keeping a marriage together, and staying out of the dog house. For the record, Valentine's Day is named after a third-century Roman Catholic martyr, St. Valentine.

I typically shower Janet with flowers, candy, a beautiful Hallmark card that reflects my love and dinner out on Valentine's Day. Humorous cards are out for this day, and dinner must be at a very special restaurant. It is not so much that Janet expects these things; she has never been challenging or difficult. She is very loving and understanding life partner. I do it because . . . I love her, and want to demonstrate it on a very important day. "To I do as other lovers do."

This year we begin Lent with Ash Wednesday falling on Valentine's Day. We also finish with Easter falling on April Fools' Day. Interesting, right? The last time this happened was in 1945. So Christian couples may celebrate their love on Ash Wednesday with smudges of ash on their foreheads, and pull a prank on each other on Easter. (Don't tell Janet, but the first thing on Easter morning I'm going to run to the window and shout, "Holy cow, it snowed 12 inches last night!" . . . "April fools!")

To start Lent on Valentine's Day is very appropriate. We will be celebrating Ash Wednesday, and receive ashes in the sign of a cross. The cross is a reminder of the death Jesus endured for us. Crucifixion was a horrible way to die, and yet the cross is one of the most prolific symbols of love. We journey through Lent recalling the events that led Jesus to be crucified. He came into the world to shed light on love and hope, but at every step there were those who willingly tried to put out that light. He brought grace and forgiveness, but his gifts were often rejected by those filled with hatred and fear.

It may seem quirky that Easter falls on April Fool's Day this year. God was not "fooling around" when he sent his son, Jesus to demonstrate his love, but he pulled the greatest joke of all time on the first Easter! Imagine what Satan and those who sought to kill Jesus thought when they discovered an empty tomb. It truly made them look "foolish" in thinking they won in silencing Jesus forever by crucifying him. Victory over death, hope burns brightly, and love wins! Maybe we should leave one of our Easter eggs empty this year on April Fool's Day to remind us of the empty tomb because "Jesus is not here, he has risen!"

Join us for the journey of Lent - a season that remembers the love of Jesus.

Pastor Steve

Come to the Cross - Lent 2018

Ash Wednesday Communion & Worship - Wednesday, February 14

7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

We invite you to "Come to the Cross" to renew your faith this Lent. Ash Wednesday, February 14 marks the beginning of Lent. Lent is the season we remember Jesus' sacrifice of love on the Cross. For the six weeks leading to Easter we will be focusing on the Cross of Christ.

Our Ash Wednesday Service will be held in the Fellowship Hall again this year. This will give us an opportunity to have the cross lifted high in the center of our room. This will remind us that the Cross is the center of our attention this Lent. All who come for worship will be seated around the cross. Music will be soft and solemn remembering the journey Jesus took to the Cross.

The service will include communion and the imposition of ashes. Communion reminds us what Christ endured out of love for us on the Cross. When we share in the cup and bread we are reminded of his body broken and the blood he shed for us. The imposition of ashes is an ancient ritual that dates back to the church's early beginnings. The sign of the cross with ashes will be offered on the forehead or hand to those attending. The ashes are made from the palms used from our last Palm Sunday service a year ago.

Ash Wednesday will be a meaningful way to begin your Lenten Journey of Faith. This journey passes through the Upper Room and Garden of Gethsemane, then leads to the cross and concludes with the celebration of our risen Lord on Easter.



Pastor Matt to Teach Lenten Study on Apostles' Creed

You are invited to go deeper into your faith during the season of Lent as we embark on a 6 week study of the Apostles' Creed. This 6 week study will be kick off Wednesday, February 21st in the library at 6:00pm. The sessions will be guided by video and insights from Pastor Matt as well as group discussion. Book cost is \$15. Make sure to register for the class at the welcome center of the church office by Feb 14th to reserve your spot in the class. Class space is limited so sign up early. *You'll find more information on the Learn & Grow pages of this newsletter.*

Share Your Musical Talent

We have openings for special music at several Sunday morning services. Contact Doug Shaffer if you would like to share your gift of music. 319-610-4249. musicman52151@gmail.com

Join the Usher Team

You're coming to church anyway, so why not greet people, hand them a bulletin, and help pass the offering plates? Ushers are an important part of the worship experience. We have two spots to fill, one in the January/May/September team and one in the March/July/November team. Please consider serving the church by joining one of these teams. Marilyn Teig is the contact for questions. You can get her contact information from the church office.

Altar Flowers

The altar flower calendar for 2018 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.

A Part of Something Big

The United Methodist Church is not just a Cedar Falls thing - it's a global organization. Learn more about this great big thing that you're a part of.



Beginning February 21, we'll launch a three-week series at Fusion Tonight that will welcome our Northeast District staff as well as our own pastors to bring their perspectives on this network of faith that we call "*The Connection*".

Fusion Tonight is our worship talk show hosted by Jon Cooper. It's fun and it's serious and you're invited, Wednesday nights at 7:15, upstairs in the theater. We'll have open mic prayer time, an offering to support our monthly mission, our featured speaker, and we'll have you on your way home by 8:00pm.



You Sound Good in Purple

Laboratory tests confirm that people who wear purple robes sound great when they sing together - even when only a few of them have good voices.

If you love to sing, we'd love to add your voice to the choir. We rehearse on Wednesday nights, and sing most Sunday mornings. You're welcome to come when you can, and we'll hook you up with a robe that's just your size.

Home Page

Thank you to the Audit Committee!

Every year we have a group of volunteers audit our Church Financial Records and insure all of our accounts are kept orderly. It is an important job that needs to be done. Thank you to Get names from Debbie: Nate Beving, Mark Farland, Stephanie Buchs, Mike Butler, and John Myers for preparing the reports. Special thanks to Mike Butler for organizing and preparing the books for audit. He has done this for a long time! The report is completed and passed with no discrepancies, and so we also thank Debbie Dance for her diligent work as our Church Financial Manager.

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.

Prayers for the Holy Land Travelers

Please keep our Holy Land travelers in your prayers as they journey together to walk where Jesus walked. They will be leaving March 6 and returning on the 15. They will be visiting many sites including Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho while staying in Jerusalem and Tiberius on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Pray for a safe and meaningful journey.

One of the sites we will be visiting is the Western Wall. The Western Wall had been called the Wailing Wall for many years. The Western Wall is actually a retaining wall built in 20 BC by Herod the Great to level the ground between two hills in Jerusalem: Moriah and Ophel. It created a plaza to build the second Temple. Ever since the second Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., Jews have gathered in prayer at the Western Wall, and is considered their most holy place. Its cracks are filled with hand written prayers from people all over the world.

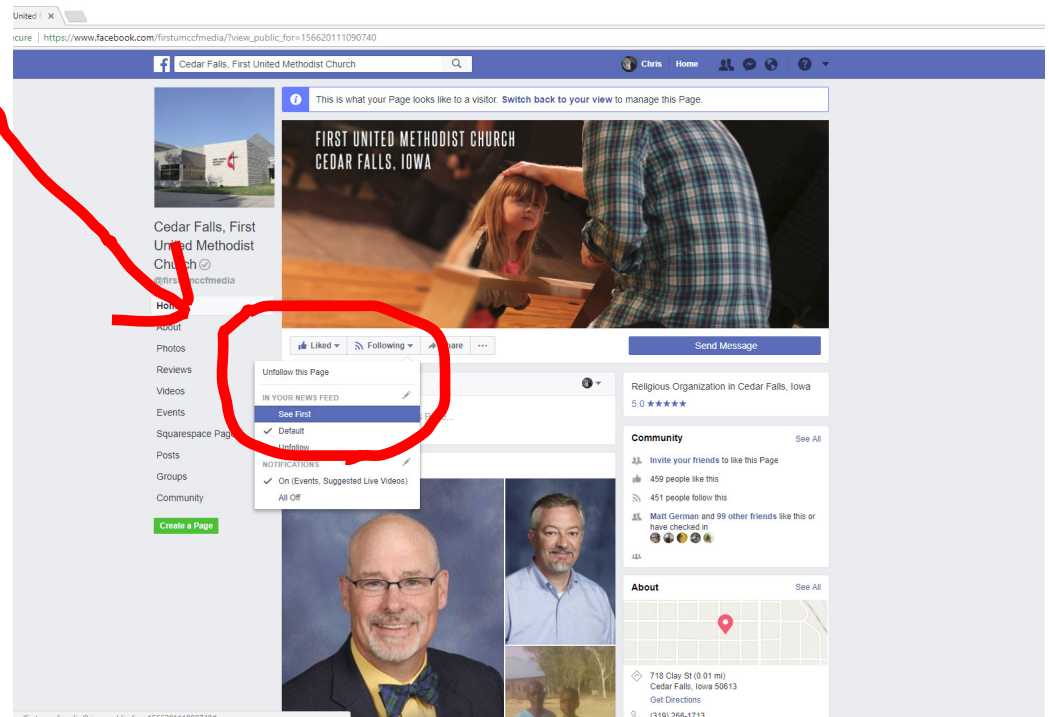
Our group of travelers will be taking prayers from our congregation to the Western Wall. We will pray over the prayer requests while standing at the base of the wall, and place them in the cracks. Beginning with Ash Wednesday there will be a table near the Welcome Center for you to place your prayers. All prayers will be held in confidence.

Don't Lose Us in Your Facebook Feed!

Facebook is changing the programming that populates your feed, and that may impact whether you see messages from First UMC, or not. It may not be enough to just like our church facebook page, you may have to take one more step to ensure that you see all of the information that we post. Here's what you do:

1. Go to the church's facebook page (Cedar Falls First United Methodist Church)
2. Open the drop-down menu under the "Following" button
3. Select "See First"

That's it. That's all you have to do to ensure that you'll continue to get weekly announcements, watch sermons, see pastor's messages, and participate in the online discussion topics.



Pastor Scott Kober Appointed

In consultation with our Staff Parish Relations Committee, Bishop Laurie Haller has appointed Rev. Scott Keele Kober to succeed Pastor Steve Williams as our senior pastor upon his retirement this summer. We'll have more transition information in the next couple of months. There will be opportunities to say "thank you" to Pastor Steve and Janet, and to say "welcome" to Pastor Scott, Karen and Ethan.



Rev. Kober is currently serving the United Methodist Church in Solon, Iowa. He will come to us with his wife, Karen, and 15 year-old son, Ethan. Karen is a musician and Ethan is a runner, who also likes writing and photography. We look forward to meeting them! All who know Pastor Scott are excited to have him coming to Cedar Falls First UMC. Please keep our church, our pastors, and our friends in Solon in your prayers during this time of transition.

A Letter From Our Finance Committee

January 2018

Dear Members and Friends of First United Methodist Church of Cedar Falls, We are glad to report that in 2017, we were able to finish the year in the black with a carryover of \$12,717. Thank you very much! The financial support you provide is an important demonstration of your gratitude for God's many blessings.

The budgeting process has become more challenging with each passing year. We are an active church and strive to remain that way, but the gap between our annual budget and what our congregation will realistically support has grown.

In 2018 we will be facing a financial challenge as our pledges are down nearly \$90,000 from 2017. A year ago at this time we had 254 pledges totaling \$718,985, and this year our total is 247 pledges for \$629,545. Much of the decline can be attributed to the deaths of some generous givers, and others moving from our community.

The budget for 2018 is \$860,955. This represents a \$5,000 reduction from last year, and a \$52,000 reduction over the past five years.

While the year is still early, we are calling together the leadership of our congregation to begin planning to face this financial challenge. It will require us to look seriously at making changes in our budget. We promise to stay in touch with the congregation. If you have any questions, please contact either our Finance Chair Sue Fletcher (sfletcher@cfu.net) or Financial Manager (debbie.dance@aboutfirst.com).

Once again, we thank you for your generosity. We are excited to report that our building loan balance is down to \$453,934. In 2017, we were able to accomplish so much in the name of Christ because of the generous support of people like you. Your gifts do make a difference in supporting our programs and ministries in our church, our community, and around the world. Together we are doing great things in serving Christ through our church.

Sincerely - The Finance Committee

New District Superintendent

Rev. Jackie Bradford has served two terms as our Northeast District Superintendent, and will be rotating back into local church ministry. Succeeding Pastor Jackie will be Rev. Paul Wilcox. If you're old enough, you may remember Paul as a teenager when his dad, Wilbur, was our senior pastor. We welcome Pastor Paul back to the Cedar Valley and look forward to his leadership in the Northeast District.



Weekly Budget Reporting

Our Finance Committee believes the 2018 budget to be an accurate picture of the financial needs of the church and wants you to have current information on our financial status. Income is fairly easy to report, as we know what we get when we get it. Expenses are another story, however, as billing sometimes lags behind the goods and services that we purchase. It can sometimes take a couple of weeks before we are able to "close the books" on a month of operations. We want your information to be more current than that.

You'll notice a new financial reporting format in your weekly Sunday bulletins. It will include income as of the previous week, as well as a pro-rated budget "needs" amount, and it will be very easy to see if we are running ahead or behind our projected financial needs. Here is an example from the January 28 Sunday bulletin:

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| YTD Budget received: | \$32,042 |
| YTD Budget needs: | \$49,182 |
| YTD Budget Deficit: | \$17,140 |
| mortgage balance: Jan 22 | \$423,442 |

Events

February 6 - Grief Support Session

Where: Church Parlor

When: 2:00 to 3:30 pm

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. Psalm 147:3
Our next group grief support session will be held in the church parlor on Tuesday, February 6th from 2:00 to 3:30 pm. This is offered for anyone who is experiencing a loss in life. There are many kinds of losses, each of which can carry with it many different emotions. In these sessions, participants will have an opportunity to share thoughts and feelings in a safe, non-threatening environment. No reservations are required.

February 6 - Food Bank Work Crew

Where: Northeast Iowa Food Bank

When: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Join the crew from our church that helps at the Food Bank the first Tuesday of each month. Often we fill grocery bags with kid friendly good 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 Congdon or get yourself to the Food Bank at 1605 Lafayette Street in Waterloo. 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

February 12 - Eat Pizza for Boy Scouts

Where: Pizza Ranch, Cedar Falls

When: 5:00-8:00 pm

Join us at Cedar Falls Pizza Ranch Monday, February 12, 5:00-8:00 p.m., and support Boy Scout Pack 44! The Scouts and leaders will help bus tables, and in exchange, all tips and a percentage of the night's sales will be donated to them. First UMC has a long history of supporting Pack 44, so fast for a day and come hungry to Pizza Ranch on February 12.

February 15 - 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.

February 26 - LifeServe Blood Drive

Where: Gathering Place

When: 12:30 - 6:00pm

We are hosting the next blood drive on Monday, February 26 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.

February 27 - Crafter's Corner

Where: Church Parlor

When: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

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 are always greatly appreciated! We need clean used plastic grocery bags, yarn, and crochet hooks. You may leave your crafting donations in the bin in the little hallway across from the drinking fountain on the main level of the church. Thank you to all who have donated craft items so far. Please contact Crystal Wilken at crystalwilken@gmail.com with any questions.

How's That New Year's Resolution Coming?

Are you staying active on these cold wintery days? 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!

M T **W** T F

Wednesday is Your CrazyFunBusy Church Night!

B.L.A.S.T.

Bible Learning And Service Together. BLAST is for students turning 5 this school year -6th grades. This semester we will be Studying "Made for a Miracle" by Mike Slaughter. We will find out that each of us have been given specific talents and abilities. We will look at biblical examples of how to use God -given gifts for God's glory.

Fusion Tonight has an exciting spring season with some guest speakers who may surprise you! End your night with worship at Fusion Tonight. We'll have you out by 8:00 pm.

- 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
- 6:15 - 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

February Calendar

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 some adults
10:00 Frederika UMC worship
10:30 Washington Chapel Worship
11:00 Traditional Service, sanctuary
6:00-7:30 Disciple Bible Study, library
6:00-7:30 FPU, Parlor
6:30 Les Cloches d'Or rehearsal, sanctuary
7:00 Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday

9:30 Quilters/Stitchers, 059
4:30-6:00 Community Meal, Fellowship Hall
6:30-8:00 men's group
7:00-9:00 AA, 055

Wednesday

9:00 Women Connected by Prayer, parlor
5:15 AA, 055
5:15-6:00 Filling Station, Gathering Place
6:00-7:15 More than Moms, parlor
6:00-7:15 BLAST
6:00 Youth Group, 3rd floor
6:15-7:30 Tower Bell rehearsal, sanctuary
6:30 WOW AA, 055
7:15 FUSION Tonight
7:30-8:30 Chancel Choir rehearsal, choir rm

Thursday

5:30-6:30 Zumba, Fellowship Hall

Also Scheduled....

THURSDAY February 1

6:30 Trustees, 057

SATURDAY February 3

Youth Ski Trip - Mt. Kato

SUNDAY February 4

Super Bowl is tonight - note evening changes
9:45 Third grade Bible class, parlor
10:00 Lisa Congdon at Frederika
11:00-12:30 FPU, Parlor
2:00-3:30 Disciple Bible Study, library
NO Bell Choir rehearsal
NO Boy Scouts

MONDAY February 5

9:30 UMW Board Meeting, library
10:00 FirstKids worship
6:30 Stephen Ministry Supervision

TUESDAY February 6

2:00-3:30 Grief support, parlor
6:00-7:30 Girl Scouts, Gathering Place
6:30-7:45 Girl Scouts 2610, chapel

WEDNESDAY February 7

6:30 Finance committee, 057

THURSDAY February 8

1:00 UMW unit meeting, Fellowship Hall
4:00 Girl Scouts, library
6:30 SPRC, 057

SUNDAY February 11

Boy Scout Sunday

MONDAY February 12

10:00 FirstKids worship
5:--8:00 Boy Scout fundraiser Pizza Ranch
6:00 HOME Team, chapel

TUESDAY February 13

1:30 Miriam Circle, library
5:30 Hearts & Hands, Gathering Place

WEDNESDAY February 14

Ash Wednesday
2:00 Stanard Care communion service
6:00-6:45 kid's Ash Wednesday service
6:00 NO Youth Group tonight - go to AW
6:15-7:30 Tower Bell rehearsal, sanctuary
7:00 Ash Wednesday service -communion
NO FUSION - go to Ash Wed service

THURSDAY February 15

12:00-2:00 First Friends Potluck, Gather Pla

SUNDAY February 18

Disabilities Awareness offering
9:45 Third grade Bible class, parlor
10:00 Chris Werling at Frederika
6:00-7:30 Disciple Bible Study, library
6:00-7:30 Girl Scouts 1871, chapel
NO Boy Scouts

MONDAY February 19

10:00 FirstKids worship
10:00 Deborah Circle, parlor
6:30 Ad Council, library

TUESDAY February 20

March Newsletter deadline

WEDNESDAY February 21

9:30-11:30 MOMs group, library and gym
11:00 Pinnacle Care Chapel Service
6:00-7:15 CREED study, library
7:15 FUSION - Pastor Matt / Pastor Steve

THURSDAY February 22

9:30 Mary Circle, parlor
1:30 Joy Circle, parlor
6:30-7:45 Girl Scouts, parlor

MONDAY February 26

10:00 FirstKids worship
12:30-6:00 Blood Drive, Gathering Place
6:00-8:00 CRUSH, 058
6:30 Pack 44, Fellowship Hall

TUESDAY February 27

1:30 Miriam Circle, library
6:00-8:00 Crafter's Corner, parlor

WEDNESDAY February 28

Noon newsletter mailing, Gathering Place
2:00 Windermere communion service
6:00-7:15 CREED study, library

Learn & Grow

Apostles' Creed

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

I believe in Jesus Christ,

*God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*

*On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand
of the Father,
and he will come to judge
the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.*

Miss A Sermon?

Teaching Christian truth is a cornerstone of our church. Our messages are designed to educate, equip and empower you to grow in your faith and pursue your life as a child of God.

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

Go to our website at aboutfirst.com and scroll until you see "sermons". You'll find a direct link to our youtube channel with all of our sermons and videos.

Creed—This I believe

Creed: noun \ ' kr-d \ a statement of the basic beliefs of a religion; an idea or set of beliefs that that guides the actions of a person or group.

Did you know that you are a theologian? You don't have to be a pastor to be one either! Theology is simply the study of God, our ultimate beliefs, and the relationship between the two. Everyone has an ultimate set of beliefs about God whether they believe in God or not. So I ask you as a fellow theologian, "What do you really believe?"

What does it mean when we say I believe? How do our ultimate beliefs shape our everyday life? What is the source of our beliefs? At the end of the day, why does it matter? I don't know about you but what I believe shapes every aspect of my life. It effects the way I see right and wrong, how I parent, how I view my spouse, and what I do with my time and money. My beliefs have impacted many of my decisions. Because of my beliefs I have said yes to some things and no to others.

For Christians, the beliefs expressed in the Apostles' Creed are foundational. This Lent we will begin a series from Pastor Adam Hamilton on the Apostles Creed. It will be the teaching series at Transformation Worship and I will be offering a discipleship class on Wednesday nights beginning February 21st. This is one of the Church's early statements that articulates the essentials of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. In this series we will consider those beliefs and begin holy conversation around what Christians believe, why they believe it, and why it matters. Join us for this powerful Lenten Series as we dive deeper into our theology on Wednesday's evenings and Sunday mornings!

Be Bold, Be Strong,
Pastor Matt

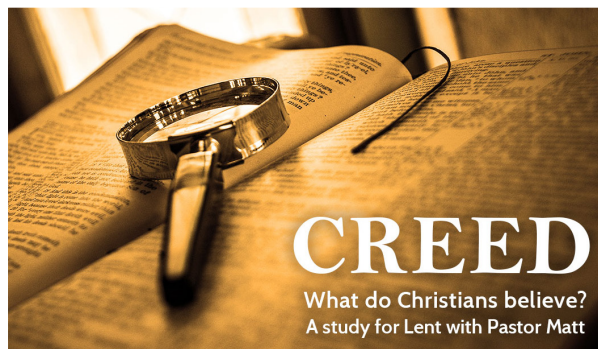
News From "The Connection"

Does First UMC give you a feeling that you're connected to something big? That's by design. "Connectional" is a word we use to describe the structure of the global United Methodist Church. Each local church is connected to every other local church through a network of districts, jurisdictions and conferences. It's a structure that allows churches to function locally, while still being "connected" to the ideas and resources of a global faith community. It is the connectional nature of our United Methodist Church that makes our relationship with Banyam Seminary possible, and has led to real friendships between congregations across town and around the world.

Check out the news from the church beyond Cedar Falls. 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



BLAST (Bible Learning And Service Together)

This semester we have been focusing on God- Given Talents. Each week a guest speaker has come in and presented to the group on their talent. They shared why they feel this is the God- Given Talent, how they use it and shared an example of a time this saw God at work. We have enjoyed finding out what our talents are and how we can use them to serve God, along with hearing from a few of our church members.



Start Thinking About Summer Camp

If you are interested in attending Camp this summer be on the lookout for more information during the month of February. We will be offering camp scholarship this year. If you have questions please contact Jenna Engel.

3rd Grade Bible Class

We are in the middle of our class. As a class we have enjoyed diving into the Bible, so far, we have gone over the books of the Bible, how to find Psalms and the story of Moses and the Burning Bush. Please be sure to join us on March 4th during the 11:00 O'clock service as we end with a celebration.

Easter Fun

The Education Committee wants to be sure that Easter Sunday is a big celebration, so mark your calendars for an Easter Egg Hunt here at the church during the Sunday School hour.

Bibles for Our Sisters in Mitchellville

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 Common English Bible for Daily Prayer is an easy to read Bible and includes guidelines for a healthy prayer life. This is the Bible that Lisa in the church office has been using, and it's sturdy and feels nice and is easy to use.

These Bibles normally sell for over \$20, but Cokesbury has made special arrangements for friends of the Women at the Well UMC to order them for only \$10. Use the special "Bibles for our Sisters" envelope at the display in the Gathering Place. You can take a look at the type of Bible that your \$10 will provide.



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.

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: 057

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. Meet in the Library. 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

Pathfinders

Our newest Sunday morning group for adults. We gather to share our lives and discuss God's presence in the world today. Room 055

Mission of the Month

Be a Blessing to Someone – Love INC

People in need will often approach a church for assistance. Unfortunately, many churches are not equipped to meet the variety of needs that are presented. That's not a failure of the churches – at their core, they are faith organizations, not relief agencies. But, the Christian imperative is to help. Love INC works like this: when someone approaches a member church for assistance, they are referred to Love INC. Love INC then conducts an interview to fully determine the need, and which church is best able to assist. Love In The Name of Christ (Love INC) pools the strengths of area churches to reach out to those in need – our church is one of 28 partners.

You can be a blessing to someone today by volunteering with Love INC as a Clearinghouse or Community volunteer. If you're interested in serving with Love INC, fill out a volunteer form found at loveincv.org or call 266-1264. They'll get back to you in the next couple of days.

Let's Fill the Barn This Year

Farm animals are a common sight in Iowa, and it seemed appropriate to fill a barnyard to support Heifer International. Donate as you wish throughout the year and we'll keep adding animals like cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, pigs, ducks, geese, chickens, rabbits, and beehives to the barn in the window of the church office. It'll be fun to see how much livestock we can collect by December of 2018. And remember, Heifer animals are the gift that keeps on giving, so don't be surprised if baby animals appear in the barn every so often.

So far we have a lonely sheep and a goat in the big red barn. They could use some friends to keep them company.

February Mission Focus Love INC Wee Care

Wee Care is First UMC's way of showing that we care about the little ones in our community. We've supported and hosted this ministry since July of 2011, and it is one of the most heavily used gap ministries with Love In the Name of Christ.

How does Wee Care work?

It begins with a call to the Love INC Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse volunteer assesses the need and sets up an appointment for the parent to come to our church to pick up the items. Most of the families who are helped by our Wee Care ministry are single parent households who are struggling to get by on their small income and keep up with their baby's needs. There is a cap on how many appointments they can have in a given year, and once the child reaches 24 months of age they are no longer eligible for Wee Care assistance.

The Love INC Clearinghouse has an easy-to-use online system for providing a list of requested baby items and for getting appointment and contact information to the Wee Care volunteers from First UMC. On Tuesday, the weekly volunteer retrieves the list of needs and packs up the items from the special storage area for our Wee Care items at the church. The appointments are set from noon until 2:00 on Tuesday afternoons, and the baby items are picked up at the Welcome Center. The Wee Care volunteer is welcome to offer a word of support or encouragement to the parent, and to pray for the wee ones. A struggling parent can always use a kind word.



So, how can you help?

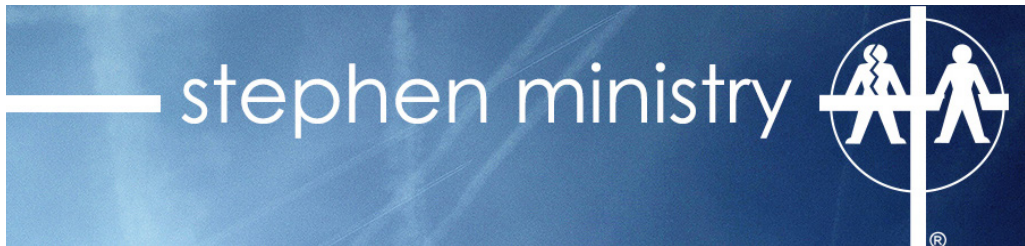
Pick up a shopping list at the display in the Gathering Place. Baby supplies for our Love INC Wee Care ministry are always appreciated. Baby wash, baby lotion, baby wipes, diapers in all sizes, burp cloths, receiving blankets, baby washcloths, bottles (4 and 8 oz) and sippy cups can always be used. Seasonal clothing is also helpful to have on hand, and parents are grateful for the cute new clothes or warm jackets. Of course, 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. We cannot accept baby powder or any baby foods (or formula or pedialyte).

You may bring baby supplies to the church anytime, but this month the best place to leave them is in the basket by the display in the Gathering Place. If you are not a shopper, you can make a monetary donation and we will purchase the supplies most needed. Checks can be made to FUMC, with "Wee Care" on the memo line. Thank you for your ongoing support of our WeeCare ministry to support mothers with small children who could use a little help.

Blankets+ Update (January Mission)

As of print time, we had collected enough funds to provide 105 warm blankets to those in crisis. These blankets are used for warmth, shelter, and comfort. In 2016 Church World Service sent 3,064 blankets to people in need in the US and beyond. Between July and October of 2017, over 2,750 blankets had been distributed.

The CWS Blankets program is one of the many ways CWS shares in a hope-filled tomorrow. Your support has enabled CWS to distribute blankets to support newly arrived refugees, victims of floods or fires, homeless shelter guests and migrant workers. Your support truly makes a difference in the lives of children and families the world over. Thank you for your generosity to our January mission focus.



Helping The Church be The Church

Dr. John Ortberg, Senior Pastor at Menlo Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, recently stated that their church has identified a primary difficulty in that area is isolated living. We are living in an era where our sense of connectedness with others through family, organizations, and community involvement is on the decline. Mother Theresa used to say, "Loneliness is the leprosy of the modern world." For a lot of people today, levels of care they might have once received through tight-knit communities are not available.

"Loneliness is the leprosy of the modern world." - Mother Theresa

This means that we all have a need to connect with someone, especially during times of stress or crisis. Dr. Ortberg, and we here at First UMC believe strongly that Stephen Ministry has been helpful for us in meeting that need. Stephen Ministers are attuned to those needs, stand in the gap, and provide quality care. Stephen Ministry also has in place the mechanism to identify when people need professional care and then helps them receive it.

Our Stephen Ministers are the quiet heroes who serve without fanfare and do an amazing job of walking with others through difficult times. If you are going through one of those difficult times right now, call the church office at 266-1713 or speak with a pastor, and you will be directed in confidence to one of our Stephen Leaders.



Disabilities Awareness offering – February 18

The Conference Commission on Ministry with Persons with Disabilities is thankful that our church supports Disabilities Awareness Sunday each year. This Sunday calls the churches of the Iowa Annual Conference to increase their understanding of the difficulties faced by people with mental and physical disabilities, to celebrate the gifts and graces of persons with disabilities, and to consider how we can better serve all people with Christ's love and care.

Your donations help the Commission to give grants to churches working on projects that enhance their accessibility, and to help fund training events. They receive no apportionment funding. Our donations are much appreciated and used to help provide what is needed to see that everyone can participate fully in church activities!

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 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.

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.

Prayer Team

Everyone is invited to join the prayer team any Sunday morning as we lift up worship in the chapel at 8:00 a.m. Contact one of the prayer team members if you have any questions: Jim Larson, Genny Van Dorn, Debbie Dance and Jan Hoover

Reaching Out

Christmas Mission Update

Thank you for your generous donations to our Christmas missions. Your gifts of \$3,541 were divided among these new-to-us mission opportunities to give good news and hope to the marginalized and the least of these in our own community, our state, and the world:

Eye of the Needle - Eye of the Needle provides services to the residents of the Cedar Valley and Northeast Iowa. Services include lunch, activities, and free tutoring for grades K-12. Eye of the Needle also helps provide school uniforms & supplies, clothing, basic household goods, and transportation vouchers for work and medical appointments. This is a ministry that is based in the heart of downtown Waterloo.

Iowa Justice for our Neighbors - Iowa JFON transforms the lives of families in need by providing expert, free immigration legal services, education and advocacy to low-income immigrants and refugees in Iowa. JFON is the premier non-profit in Iowa that provides immigration legal services to unaccompanied children.

Self-Help International -SHI devotes its efforts to alleviating world hunger and poverty by providing opportunities to rural citizens that ultimately lead to self-reliance. Since its inception, Self-Help has served as a vessel; training, education, and opportunities are provided to rural citizens and whole communities in developing countries so that they can have better lives.

Our collective gifts can spread the comfort, peace, and hope of Christ in the darkness of our broken world.

Another Great Year of Partnership With Banyam Seminary

2017 represented another step forward in our partnership with Banyam Theological Seminary in Nigeria. We moved from being simply project-focused to being relationship-focused as we traded pastors for two weeks last June. We were fortunate to be able to have BTS Provost Rev. Dr. John Pena and his wife, Titi here in Cedar Falls for two weeks. Many of you hosted Dr. Pena and Titi in your homes and now you have a friend - someone you know by name - in Africa, and that's pretty cool! We also continued to support the mission and ministry of BTS by sending nearly \$9,000. Early in January, we received this note from Freedom Oggah, BTS Treasurer, explaining how those funds were to be used:

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for God to protect and guide us in this new year 2018.

Below is the breakdown and how the \$8,923.04 will be used.

1.\$2,031.06 For two semester school fees of four students,they are Polina, Titus, Blessing and Anthony

2.\$2,060.42 Stipend for clinic staff for one year

3.\$2,000 for drug in clinic

4.\$2,831.02 for computer lab to purchase four new laptop

Thanks, Freedom Oggah, BTS Treasurer

A relational side-note: the week this newsletter was printed, we received another note informing us of some sadness on the BTS campus. Freedom and his wife Regina suffered an unexpected miscarriage and lost their first child. Regina is expected to recover. We first met Freedom and Regina on our first trip to BTS in 2012 - they weren't married yet! - and they've been a part of all of our BTS experiences. Please keep them in your prayers as they heal from this.



Here's How We Can and Do Change a Child's Story

Thank you for your continued support of "Change a Child's Story". We have about 25 faithful Reading Buddies who spend time each week reading with students. It's one-on-one time with some delightful young folk, and everyone benefits from it. Let Lisa know if you want to join in on the fun.

Remember, your generous donations are doubled through an endowment from Bill & Ione Zach, and funds are used to provide books for students and teachers at Lincoln Elementary School. If you wish to donate to provide books, write your check to First UMC with "Change a Child's Story" on the memo. We hope to gift a book to every Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade student at Lincoln Elementary.

Wacky Winterfest at Lincoln

Lincoln Elementary's Wacky Winterfest is coming up Saturday, February 17 from 11:00-2:00 .Winterfest is the largest Fundraiser for Lincoln School, our Partner in Education. With the funds raised they are able to approve many grant requests from school staff in addition to providing yearly stipends for all classroom teachers!

They are in need of many volunteers in order to make Winterfest a success! This is a great opportunity to give of an hour or two of your time to help our neighborhood school and Partner in Education.

Please take a moment to find a spot where you would enjoy serving! Sign up online at our website at www.aboutfirst.com or contact Jana Bailey at janabailey@gmail.com with questions. They look forward to seeing you at WACKY WINTERFEST!

Midwest Mission Distribution Center May 7-11

MMDC is a disaster relief facility located on an 8 acre campus, 4 miles south of Springfield, Illinois. MMDC is a cooperating depot in the UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) Relief Supply Network. MMDC's campus provides opportunities for individuals and groups of all walks of life, denominational backgrounds, abilities, and ages to help provide disaster relief kits and resources as well as educational and medical supplies to those in need both locally and internationally. MMDC provides that "hands on" mission experience without having to travel too far from home.

We have four spaces (2 rooms) reserved in the dorm at Midwest Mission Distribution Center for May 7-10 (returning home on May 11). Cost per person is about \$140 for dorm and material fees, plus travel, sightseeing, and food costs. It's a fun way to do a little good, meet some new people, and get to know fellow travelers from First UMC better. See Lisa in the church office for more details about this mission opportunity.

Puerto Rico Mission Trip

Volunteers are needed to participate in a Mission Trip to Puerto Rico from March 9 - 17, 2018--\$1600/person.

In response to the devastation that was caused when back to back hurricanes slammed Puerto Rico, a mission trip has been organized by Rev. Hugh Stone from March 9 - 17 that will help repair a church just outside of San Juan.

Travel, lodging and meals are all included. The volunteers will be staying in a Methodist church in San Juan. Please contact Rev. Stone at (641) 414-4876 or hugh8@uno.com immediately for details.



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.

Scholarships for Mission Trips

Bill & Lone Zach were faithful members of our church for decades, and when they died (Bill in 2005 and Lone in 2011) they left a generous legacy - including an endowment gift for mission use. Rainbow Task Force has determined that a portion of the Bill & Lone Zach Endowment Fund should be used to offset costs for those who want to participate in mission and work trips. If you have dreamed about mission work but are concerned about the cost of such a trip, please contact the church office for information. The foresight and generosity of Bill & Lone Zach could help your dream come true.

Women & Men

UMW notes:

There was no United Methodist Women unit meeting in January

February UMW Calendar -

- Feb. 05 - Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m.,
in the library
- Feb. 07 - More Than Moms, 6:00-7:15
in the parlor
- Feb. 08 - Unit Meeting, 1:00 p.m.,
Fellowship Hall
- Feb. 13 - Hearts & Hands Circle, 5:30
Gathering Place
- Feb. 13 - Miriam Circle Bible Study, 1:30
in the library
- Feb. 14 - More Than Moms, 6:00-7:15
in the parlor
- Feb. 19 - Deborah Circle, 10:00 a.m.,
in the parlor
- Feb. 21 - More Than Moms, 6:00-7:15
in the parlor
- Feb. 22 - Mary Circle - 9:30 a.m., parlor
- Feb. 22 - Joy Circle, 1:30 p.m., parlor
- Feb. 27 - Miriam Circle Bible Study, 1:30
in the library
- Feb. 28 - More Than Moms, 6:00-7:15
in the parlor

Got extra fabric? Bring it in!

There is always a need for fabric to make the UMCOR school bags and other stitching projects. The Quilters & Stitchers are looking for durable material for school bags, flannel, 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.

Fellas @ First



UMC Sportsmen is a group of men who love to experience the majesty of God in the great outdoors. We're hunters, fishermen, golfers, mountain bikers, and, above all, eaters of anything cooked over a fire. Our activities change with the seasons so pay attention to this newsletter, your weekly bulletins and the church facebook page. Men, if you like to play outside, you're a UMC Sportsman.



UMC Sportsmen: Our trip to Bass Pro and Jethro's in DSM has been scheduled for February 24th. We'll leave from the church at 9 AM, and be back before supper (like you'll need to eat again!). We're planning on taking the bus, so please bring a few extra bucks to throw in for gas. This will be an event that's kid friendly, so feel free to bring them along. Sign up at the Welcome Center so we know how many are coming along!

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.

Thank You

Special Thanks for the beautiful red rose, that Jane Wyckoff delivered for my birthday, also thanks for the card from the staff. I appreciated both.
George Cable

Thank you to our church family for the beautiful roses for our birthdays. We enjoyed them so much.
Roger & Rosie Uhlenhopp

Now Jane Wyckoff has brought me my 5th birthday rose. Each one seems prettier than the ones before. Thanks Jane! Also, thank you for the cards.
Marilyn Geesaman

Thank you so very sincerely for the wonderful birthday cards that were sent to me! I appreciated them. I'm so grateful and thankful for those pretty cards. Thank you again, and God bless all of you. Have a beautiful and blessed year.
Ardie Conradi

Thank you to Pastor Steve and everyone at First UMC for all the birthday greetings and the card on my 80th birthday..A very special thank you to Jane Wyckoff for the beautiful red rose she delivered to me. God Bless you all!
Elden Aswegan

I want to thank the First United Methodist Congregational Care Team for the beautiful yellow rose for my 84th birthday. Thanks to Jane Wyckoff for delivering it to me.
Richard Fanning

These last four years have been a challenge, a challenge that would have crippled us without the support shown to us by everyone with cards, flowers, kind words, visits, and so much more. Thanks again to Steve, and also to the church ladies for the cards that Pat loved. Thanks to the UMW for all of their work during the Christmas season, no less. We truly appreciated everything.
Gale Bonsall and family

Sympathy to:

Dotty Rokes and her family on the loss of her son, Tracy, on January 3.

Welcome:

Eden Marie Yockey was baptized on January 14. She is the daughter of Chris and Kim Yockey.

Katherine June Zimmerman was baptized on January 21. She is the daughter of Kaleb & Linsey Zimmerman

Cookie Walk Thanks

On behalf of the participants from North Star and EPI CHOICE we send a grateful thank you to all the dedicated cookie bakers and decorators. This is the Arc's 28th year to sponsor the cookie walk, with funds going to both agencies to fund parties, our annual Halloween Dance, Easter and Christmas parties. The funds also pay for activities our people would not have their own funds to attend. We appreciate the Bernard family's continued support for our group. Jeff, Laurene and Lisa have been our tray washers for many years. It has become a contest to see who finds the frog cookie first (how many years have we been seeking that frog?) It has been so long our group cannot remember. Gives us all a good laugh. Thank you from the JV's Arc group, we could not continue without your support.

Thank You From Congregational Care Team

We want to thank you all for helping to donate, purchase, or make recycled cards for the card rack. Last quarter \$219.09 was donated to UMCOR for hurricane relief. Last year a total of \$716.81 was given to four worthy agencies just from the sale of our \$.50 cards! Keep watching the card rack outside the church office for our beautiful handmade cards.

Thanks From Wee Care

A big "Wee Care" thank you to all who have purchased baby items. The closet looks ample now, but will soon look sparse! Some quilting ladies deserve a hug for using donated flannel to make blankets, bibs, and burp clothes. Those of you who write a check are greatly appreciated also. We spend your money wisely! Many wee ones are clean and warm because of you.

Rose Vases Needed

Jane Wyckoff, the most popular person in the church, is getting a little low on vases for the birthday roses. If you have one or a few that you don't need anymore, bring them to the church office.

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.

Offering Envelopes Now Available

Offering envelopes for 2018 are now available for those who requested them when submitting your estimate of giving card for 2018. They are on the Welcome Center. If you forgot to request envelopes, just put your name on the clipboard and we'll get them to you by next Sunday.

Attendance- week ending

| | 1/7 | 1/14 | 1/21 | 1/28 |
|-------------------|-----|------|------|------|
| Transformation | 62 | 63 | 75 | 80 |
| Traditional 8:30 | 122 | 123 | 147 | 90 |
| Traditional 11:00 | 99 | 113 | 97 | 80 |
| FUSION | x | 28 | 23 | 33 |

First United Methodist Church

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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 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

Steve Williams, Senior Pastor, steve.williams@aboutfirst.com

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

Staff (in alphabetical order)

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Dee Behr, Parish Visitor
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John Bentley, Head Custodian

Ted Bonebrake, Chancel Choir director
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Emily Terpstra, Custodian

March newsletter deadline is February 20.

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