

January 2017
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ABOUTFIRST

First United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa



May God Bless You
in the New Year

Thoughts from Steve

I am writing this letter in December as I look forward to 2017. A new year with new hopes and new dreams. A new year full of opportunities to be Christ for others. A new year to grow deeper in our faith.

I want to tell you about some of my dreams for the coming year. I feel our church has a great future as I feel the power of God's Spirit working in and through our church. I believe we are powered by God's love by the many ways we are taking steps forward as a church.

Prayer has been an area of growth for many persons in our church during the past year. Did you know there was a group who meets early every Sunday morning in the chapel to pray for our worship, worshippers, greeters, ushers, support team, musicians, singers and pastors. Their prayer support has helped me as I prepare those "last minute" details in getting ready for worship. Their prayers help calm my "Sunday morning butterflies". I sense a growing hunger in others to discover a more fulfilling prayer life. I have a dream of several new prayer groups in our life together.

Young adults have been participating in greater numbers recently. I believe it is the spirit of our new Associate Pastor Matt German's preaching and ministry that is making the difference. I have a dream of several ways our church can help these young families cope with the pressures and stress of life. Our church can provide support, encouragement, and training from a Christian perspective on marriage and parenting, as well as tools such as prayer and scripture that help bring meaning and purpose to one's life.

Worship is the core of our church life together. I have a dream that we can make our services more vital and meaningful. My hope is that our services are filled with heartfelt prayers, inspirational music, meaningful messages and the scriptures are opened-up so that we help people draw closer to God and find strength to gather together each week. The worship committee and the pastors are working on better ways to focus our services so there are fewer distractions such as chatter, and more time for the essential parts of worship.

In recent years we have taken significant steps to meet the needs of our community and the world. From caring for the little ones through WeCare to helping furnish medical equipment for the Clinic in Banyam we are not stepping back from our need to be Christ for others around the world. I have a dream of more of our members are directly relating to hands-on opportunities we offer through Community Meals, WeeCare, Change a Child's Story and Women at the Well.

I would be interested in hearing your dreams. Please contact me through steve.williams@aboutfirst.com to share your dreams and visions for our church. In 2017, we will commit our dreams to God. We can work together to see those dreams become real ministry. We will make a difference in the name of Christ. Time and money are needed. They are expressions of what is important in our lives.

I invite you to dream, to give, to share, to witness, and to work that God's love may be experienced more fully in our lives, in our church, in our community, and in our world.

Have a blessed new year!
Pastor Steve

Janet and I would like to share our appreciation for your thoughtful and generous gifts during this wonderful season of celebrating Christ's birth. You make us feel so warmly appreciated as we serve Christ together. We wish you happiness and many blessings in this New Year.

May blessings be yours in 2017!

Steve and Janet

New Year's Day Sunday – One Combined Service at 10:00 a.m.

New Year's Day falls on Sunday. We will have one combined service at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary. We will be using the Wesley Covenant Service and serving Communion. Our founder John Wesley established this service on December 25, 1747, and strongly urged Methodists to renew their Covenant with God. It is traditionally used on the first Sunday of the year. The Covenant Service will be a very meaningful way to begin the New Year.



Pulpit Swap – Sunday, January 29

We are having our fourth annual Pulpit Swap on Sunday, January 29. This is really a test of faith as the pastors exchange pulpits. We will be welcoming Rev. Nate Nims from Waterloo First at the Transformation Service, and Rev. Carolyn Bowers from Trinity in Waverly at the Traditional Services. Pastor Matt will be preaching at Waterloo First, and Pastor Steve at Independence. It is an opportunity for us to celebrate being “United” Methodists in the Metro Area. Let’s celebrate we are one in Christ!

Glimpses of Grace

In moments of our greatest trials, we often get a peek at the grace that God has for us. The worst and the best often arrive simultaneously: when we’re asked to put a band-aid on a broken leg, when we face our own end, when the flood waters come. Don’t miss three authentic stories of God’s presence in adversity from our own members in *Glimpses of Grace*, a powerful three-week Fusion mini-series.



Jan 4: **Janet Williams** Nursing in Rural Nigeria
 Jan 11: **Brock Knoll** Entering Hospice Care
 Jan 18: **Matt Porter** Losing Everything in 2008

Fusion Tonight is our worship talk show hosted by Jon Cooper. It’s fun and it’s serious. Each week we’ll give you something to laugh about and something to challenge your intellect. All ages are welcome, Wednesday nights at 7:15, upstairs in the theater.

For Fusion Tonight booking information, contact Lesley Toma at lesleytoma@aboutfirst.com.

If I Could Just Get Started...

Do you find it hard to begin to pray? Find a quiet time and place and begin reading.

If you could sit, right now, in the comforting embrace of Jesus’ arms and look into His eyes, what would you say? What hurts and worries and questions would you spill out to Him? Jesus came to offer you love, acceptance, belonging, and peace. He will never reject you. Take some time now to rest in Him and let Him hear from you heart?

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” Mark 12:30

From: “God is Near”, Max Lucado

Washington Chapel

Both of our churches have been blessed since we began our sister-church relationship with Washington Chapel UMC. We hope you find a Sunday to make the short drive north - there’s plenty of time to come to an 8:30 service at First, then head up to Washington for their 10:30 time. Join the congregation at this white church on the hill in a beautiful rural setting. It’s lovely, peaceful, and the members are always happy with guests.

Washington Chapel is just north of Cedar Falls at the intersection of Ford and W Bennington Roads.

Here are the speakers for this month:
 January 1 – David Glenn-Burns – with communion
 January 8 – Karl Dance
 January 15 – Pat Cole
 January 22 – Shawna Brimm
 January 29 – Lisa Congdon

Showdown Throwdown Chowdown

So you think you make a good pot of chili? You think your soup is off the hook? Prove it. It is "throw down time" for all Chili and Soup Masters!

Our Fun and Fellowship Committee is sponsoring this year's **Soup & Chili Cookoff on Sunday, January 29**. We want to give everyone plenty of time to begin perfecting their recipes!

Each contestant will need to bring a Crock Pot of Chili or Soup. The Committee will provide little cups and



spoons for people to sample your soup. Each person attending will be given two tickets to vote on their favorite. We will have one winner for soup, and another winner for chili. Entries are expected to have recipes available to share.

The event will be held in the Gathering Place. Please bring desserts to share on our dessert table. The Fun and Fellowship Committee will supply drinks and dinnerware. Competition and lunch will begin at 11:00 a.m. and voting will end at 12:30 p.m.

Make your plans to enter or just come and enjoy the great food and good fun! Registration will begin Sunday, January 15.

New Years Resolutions.....BLAH!!!

Happy New Year! New Year's Eve is a wonderful time of celebration in the midst of the Christmas season. Many of us have had our gift exchanges, family get togethers, and festive meals. Christmas day comes and then it is off to the next party. The New Year's Eve party to be exact.

I have always enjoyed celebrating New Year's Eve. For us, it usually consists of late night appetizers, champagne at midnight, and of course kissing the one you love after shouting happy new year. It is one of my favorite holidays.

However, I have always found myself plagued with New Year's resolutions. I'm sure many of you have as well. In fact, University of Scranton psychologist Dr. John Norcross blogged in a recent study that 40% of us make New Year's resolutions. I always vow to read my bible more, or lose 5 pounds, or take on another way to serve. I'm sure you have many of your own that you have made over the years. However, the study also showed that less than half of the people that make New Year's resolutions keep them after six months.

This year, I want to encourage you to keep it simple. Instead of taking on a new workout routine, vowing to quit smoking, or save more money, I want to suggest something a bit different. Not that these popular new year's resolutions are bad, but they are not fully inclusive of the good news of the bible.

Here is my challenge to all of us that comes from John Wesley's (Founder of the Methodist Movement) covenant service. Commit yourselves to Christ as his servants. Give yourselves to him, that you may belong to him. Christ has many services to be done. Some are more easy and honorable, others are more difficult and disgraceful. Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests, others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves. But then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. It is necessary, therefore, that we consider what it means to be a servant of Christ.

Let us therefore go to Christ, and pray:
Let me be your servant, under your command.
I will no longer be my own.
I will give up myself to your will in all things.

Let us ring in this New Year vowing to be servants under the authority of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the midst of that covenant, I promise your weight loss, kicking of bad habits, saving more money, and every other resolution you can make will be covered and then some. Under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, you will not become a statistic after six months.

Be Bold, Be Strong,
Rev. Matt German



Kid's Christmas Program

Thank You to everyone that helped with the Christmas Program. It was a wonderful snowy morning to hear the story of Christ birth. I would also like to say Thank You to all of the kids that were able participate. Everyone did a great job!



Youth Group is Starting!

It's a new semester which means Youth group is starting back up! Join us January 11th as our regular school year ministry programming gears back up. Eat at the Filling Station 5:15-6:00pm, then come upstairs to Youth Group for ALL 7th-12th grade students 6:00-7:15pm. Our Wednesday nights will always be fun, will always allow for digging into the stuff that's heavy on our minds!

Youth Afternoon of Service:

On January 16th- NO SCHOOL! Take the morning to sleep in, then come hang out with your friends here at FUMC as we have an afternoon of service and winter fun. Join us at 12:30pm for lunch, service, and ice skating at Young Arena. Cost is \$5.00 for admission and \$3.00 for skate rental. RSVP to Becca Nims by January 13th.



The fall semester was one of service for our youth group: Feed My Starving Children, Northeast Iowa Food Bank, Ingathering & Rake 'n' Run.

New Doors, New Life . . . No Debt!

Our Building Capital Campaign "Open Our Doors" is coming to an end. Many of us made three year commitments with the hope of paying off our mortgage. Everyone needs to be congratulated that we have passed the half-way point, and paid off more than \$725,000 on our mortgage! We still have a ways to go, but your generosity has made the difference in moving us closer to paying off the debt.

The Capital Campaign Team has selected Sunday, March 19 as our kick-off for our new campaign "New Doors, New Life . . . No Debt! We will conclude with a celebration on Palm Sunday, April 9. You will be hearing more about our campaign in the coming months. The Team is asking that everyone continue to pull together by contributing what you have been paying the past three years through the next three months until we begin the new campaign. Our goal is to retire the debt. We need your financial support to meet this goal.

Get Some Younger Friends

Our youth group has grown crowded with young men – that's a great thing! Each week after our whole-group gathering, we break into small discussion groups, and we need some adult men who can sit in with the young guys to help facilitate discussions and keep them on-track. So what are you doing on Wednesday nights this spring semester – do you have about an hour to invest in our next generation? It's a win-win for everyone: your wisdom and experience might rub off on them, and their coolness might rub off on you. Can you help? Talk to our youth ministries coordinator, Becca Nims. rebecca.nims@aboutfirst.com.

Financial Update–

2016 Budget	\$881,581
YTD Receipts	\$736,230
YTD Expenses	\$746,568
November Receipts	\$56,894
November Expenses	\$66,622
Mortgage Balance Dec 29	\$678,591

Consider Automatic Giving

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

events

January 3 - Food Bank Work Crew

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

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, January 3 to help at the Food Bank at 1605 Lafayette Street in Waterloo. Often we fill grocery bags with kid friendly food for the Backpack program. Sometimes we get selected for other much needed jobs. It's always a good time and a great bunch of people. You can carpool with Lisa or get yourself to the Food Bank Volunteer Entrance. The Methodists and friends will be there from 6:00 to no later than 8:00pm.

January 3 - Grief Support Session

It is not only okay to talk about a loved one who has died, it is essential for healing to occur. Telling your story and sharing memories helps keep your loved one's memory alive and helps you heal. This time after the holiday season is over can be especially difficult. Monthly support sessions are sponsored by the FUMC Grief Support Team and provide a safe, confidential setting. Our first meeting for 2017 will be held on Tuesday, January 3rd from 2:00 to 3:30 pm in the church parlor. If you have questions, please call the church office at 266-1713.

January 10 - Cardmaking Party

Beat the January blahs! Come in from the cold to the Gathering Place on Tuesday, January 10th anytime between 1:00 and 5:00 pm for a card making session sponsored by the CCT ministries. This is a come-and-go event with no experience necessary. Bring a snack to share if you'd like and then stay for Community Meals. Cards will be used to send to members of the congregation or for the card rack just across from the office. More information will be coming next month with amounts we have given from sales during the past year. This quarter money from the sale of cards will be donated to Lincoln School for books for the "Change a Child's Story" program.

January 19 - First Friends Potluck

Everyone is welcome! Spend some time enjoying good food, card games, dominos, cribbage, etc. Fellowship is an important part of the gathering. Check us out! Come and get better acquainted with others in the church. Couples and singles are welcome. Bring a dish to share and your own table service. We meet on the third Thursday of every month from noon until 2 pm in the Gathering Place. Need more information? Phone Arlene Fleming at 266-3322.

January 23 - LifeServe Blood Drive

We are hosting the next blood drive on Monday, January 23 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.

Wednesday Night is Your Church Night!

5:15 - 6:00 **The Filling Station**

- a meal for everyone. Eat & go on to

5:15 - 6:00 **Children's Choir**

- musical fun for kids who like to sing

6:00 - 7:10 **Jr / Sr High Youth**

- fun & connections for 7th - 12th graders

6:00 - 7:15 **BLAST! (for kids)**

- Bible Learning And Service Together

6:00 - 7:15 **More Than Moms**

- helps for the real life of womanhood

6:00 - 7:15 **Love to Stay**

- Christian marriage study

6:00 - 7:15 **Men's Group**

- hangin' with the fellas

6:00 - 7:30 **Tower Bells**

- weekly bell choir rehearsal. Want to play?

7:15 - 8:00 **FUSION Tonight**

- live talk show / worship

7:30 - 8:30 **Chancel Choir**

- for adults who love to sing

Our CrazyFunBusy Wednesday Nights begin January 11. Don't miss a week!

Every Thursday

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!

Winter Weather Policies

Worship

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 rest of the day and evening.

Cancellations will be broadcast on both KWWL Channel 7 and KCRG Television Channel 9 and posted online at aboutfirst.com. We'll also try to get the word out on facebook and twitter. We also ask that you use your best judgement and do not venture out into dangerous weather.

Recurring Weekly:

Sunday

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

Tuesday

7:00 Men's Breakfast
 9:30-1:00 Quilters/Stitchers, O59
 4:30-6:00 Community Meal, Fellowship Hall
 6:30 Transformation Band, Fellowship Hall
 6:30-8:00 men's group
 7:00-9:00 AA, O55

Wednesday

9:00 Women Connected by Prayer, parlor
 5:15 AA, O55
 5:15-6:00 Filling Station, Gathering Place**
 5:15-5:45 children's choir, choir room**
 6:00-7:15 More than Moms, parlor**
 6:00-7:15 Marriage Class, library**
 6:00-7:15 BLAST**
 6:00 Youth Group, 3rd floor**
 6:00-7:15 Men's group, O59**
 6:15-7:30 Tower Bell rehearsal, sanctuary
 6:30 WOW AA, O55
 7:15 Fusion Tonight**
 ** Wednesdays beginning Jan 11

6:00 Tower Bells
 6:30 WOW AA, O55
 7:30 Chancel Choir

Thursday

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

Also Scheduled....

SUNDAY January 1

New Year's Day
 10:00 one combined worship service
 10:30 Washing ton Chapel, David Glenn-Burns

MONDAY January 2

church office closed

TUESDAY January 3

2:00-3:30 Grief Support, parlor
 6:00-8:00 Food Bank Work Crew
 6:30-7:30 Junior Girl Scouts, library

WEDNESDAY January 4

8:45-11:15 Stephen Ministry Training, O58
 6:30 Christmas decoration tear down

THURSDAY January 5

No UMW today
 1:00 Interfaith Council, library
 4:00 Girl Scouts, library
 6:30 Trustees, library

SUNDAY January 8

9:45 3rd grade family Bible class, parlor
 10:30 Washington Chapel - Karl Dance
 Confirmation class does climbing wall at UNI

MONDAY January 9

3:45-5:00 Girl Scouts 6741, O55
 5:30-6:30 First Kids Board, O56
 6:30 HOME Team, library
 6:30-8:30 Cub Scouts, Fellowship Hall
 7:00-9:00 Met Chorale, sanctuary

TUESDAY January 10

1:00-5:00 Cardmaking, Gathering Place
 1:30 Miriam Circle, library
 6:30-7:30 Daisy Girl Scouts, Gathering Place
 6:30 Prayer Team, chapel

WEDNESDAY January 11

**Wednesday Night Activities Begin
 8:45-11:15 Stephen Ministry Training, O58
 2:00 Stanard Care communion service
 6:30 Finance Committee, O57

THURSDAY January 12

4:00 Girl Scouts, library

FRIDAY January 13

3:30-5:30 Girl Scouts, library

SUNDAY January 15

10:30 Washington Chapel - Pat Cole
 4:00 Girl Scout lock-in, upstairs
 5:00-6:30 Confirmation class, library

MONDAY January 16

MLKing Day
 9:00-1:00 Brownies join Girl Scouts
 5:45 Met Chorale Board
 6:30 Worship Committee, library
 7:00 Endowment comm, chapel
 7:00-9:00 Met Chorale, sanctuary

TUESDAY January 17

5:30 Capital Campaign meeting, library

WEDNESDAY January 18

8:45-11:15 Stephen Ministry Training, O58
 11:00 Windsor Care Chapel Service

THURSDAY January 19

12:00 1st Friends Potluck, Gathering Place
 4:00 Girl Scouts, library
 6:00 Education Work Area, parlor
 6:30 SPRC, room O57

FRIDAY January 20

Newsletter deadline
 6:30pm Girl Scout lock-in

SUNDAY January 22

9:45 3rd grade family Bible class, parlor
 10:30 Washington Chapel - Shawna Brimm
 2:00-3:30 Confirmation

MONDAY January 23

12:30-6:00 Blood Drive, Gathering Place
 3:45-5:00 Lincoln Girl Scouts
 7:00-9:00 Met Chorale, sanctuary

TUESDAY January 24

9:00-3:00 UMW district mtg, parlor

WEDNESDAY January 25

8:45-11:15 Stephen Ministry Training, O58
 2:00 Windermere Communion Service

THURSDAY January 26

4:00 Girl Scouts (7+2 leaders), library

FRIDAY January 27

3:30-5:30 Girl Scouts, library

SUNDAY January 29

Souper Bowl cook-off is today
 Pulpit Exchange is today
 10:30 Washington Chapel - Lisa Congdon

MONDAY January 30

7:00-9:00 Met Chorale, sanctuary

TUESDAY January 31

Noon newsletter labeling, Gather place

Learn & Grow

Adult Sunday School

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

Living Word

Will spend time each week sharing and caring for each other then move on to study different books of the Bible. Room 057 Contact: Terri Grover

CCF (Christ Centered Families)

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

Growing Christians

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

Open Door

Our discussions are based on videos that help us better understand the Bible and its influence on our lives. 061 Contact: Sue Mutchler & Pauline Harding

Kaleidoscope

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

Seekers

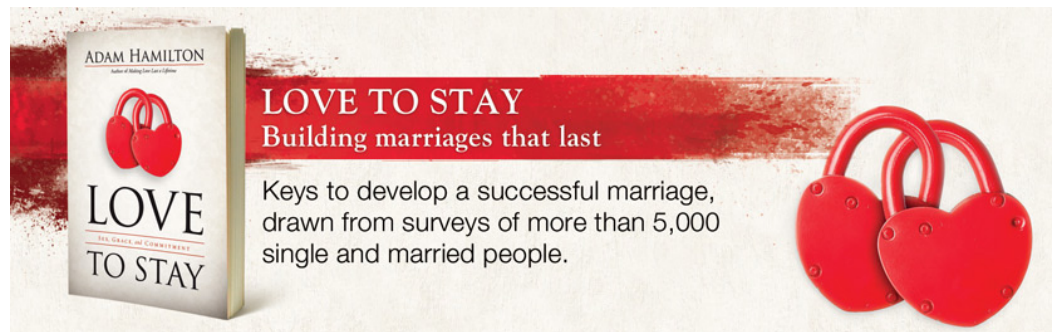
The Seekers present several small studies/discussions each year (no homework) to help grow our faith in Jesus Christ. Room: 060 Contact: Debbie Dance.

The Flock

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

F.R.O.G.

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



Love to Stay:

Pastor Matt is teaching a marriage class on Wednesday nights!

Love. It is a word that is thrown around a lot in our culture. When I think about love from a biblical perspective, there is one word that comes to mind from the New Testament that was originally written in Greek. If you could only hold onto one Greek word from the New Testament it should be this: Agape

Agape is a selfless love. It is a sacrificial love. It is a love that ultimately wishes the best for the other, and it is completely independent of our feelings. In other words, love is not something we feel, rather, love is something we do. It is an action verb. This leaves us with the conclusion that love is a choice. It is time to leave love behind as a feeling, and step forward into a love that “does”.

This is why I am so excited for our marriage series that I will be teaching on Wednesday nights beginning January 11th. The series is called Love to Stay, based on the book by Rev. Adam Hamilton.

In this series, we will explore how, with God's help, we can make love last. Drawing upon a survey of thousands of couples and singles, interviews with relationship and marriage therapists, the latest research in the field, and wisdom from the Bible, we will look at what it takes to create and sustain healthy, meaningful romantic relationships across the course of a lifetime. The class schedule is listed below.

Jan 11- More Than a Piece of Paper

Jan 18- What She Wants, What He Wants

Jan 25- The Significance of Sexual Intimacy

Feb 1- Habits That hurt, Habits That Heal

Feb 8- Clothe, Bear With, Forgive

Feb 15- A Love That Lasts A Lifetime-----SWEETHEART DINNER

We will conclude on the Wednesday evening after Valentine's Day with a “Sweetheart Dinner”. The Sweetheart Dinner will be a formal meal intended to be a date night for married couples. At the conclusion of the evening, couples will get a chance to renew their vows in Christian marriage.

Whether you are married, contemplating marriage, single, or divorced, this series is for you. Please stop by the welcome center, call the church office, or talk to me so we can get you registered by Sunday Jan 8th. I look forward to what is sure to not only be a fun class, but one that will help make love last a lifetime.

Be Bold, Be Strong,
Rev. Matt German

Holy Land Trip – Walk Where Jesus Walked

- Spring Break 2018

Janet and I are planning a trip to the Holy Lands during Spring Break in 2018. This is a trip of a lifetime. We will visit significant sites of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho, Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem. We will be walking where Jesus walked! Our trips to the Holy Land will make a dramatic difference in your faith.

Janet and I would love to share this trip with our friends at First Church. A trip to the Holy Land is a wonderful opportunity to grow in your faith and see the places you have read about in the Bible. The cost is approximately \$3,500 includes roundtrip airfare from Cedar Rapids, Deluxe Motor Coaches, First Class Hotels, Guided Sightseeing, Entrance Fees to sites visited, Breakfast and Dinner daily. The trip is 10 days including travel days.

Of course it all will depend on the political climate before we commit to taking a trip to the Middle East. It takes time to plan such a trip, and we make a commitment to make sure everyone going is well prepared to fully experience the Holy Land. If you are interested in learning more about this trip, please contact me at steve.williams@aboutfirst.com. We have travel brochures available, and can talk with you about safety and security concerns in traveling to Israel. We will be scheduling an informational meeting in the spring.

- Pastor Steve



You Could Ask, Why Bother?

Does Jesus' Great Commission apply to you? What is accomplished when Christians share the Gospel around the world? This fascinating class will change your view of Christian missions and it might change your life.

Dive into God's word and the story of his work on the earth. Learn to live your life with eternal significance and purpose. See the world as Jesus does. Register for Perspectives on the World Christian Movement. This is an inter-denominational educational experience which will be hosted by Immanuel Lutheran Church, Monday evenings, Jan 16-May 1, 6:00-8:45 pm. First UMC and Threehouse students qualify for scholarship help, too (see Lisa in the church office). Register at perspectives.org. For more information, email cfperspectives@gmail.com

Do you have questions?

Get a brochure from the bulletin board at the back of the Welcome Center. Contact the local coordinators at cfperspectives@gmail.com or talk to alumni from this church (Jan Benson, Jerry Bernard, Lisa Congdon, Rus & Tony DeBonis, Jan Hoover, Janet Williams).

Come Check Out the Flock!

If you are looking for a place to "land" during the 9:45am hour on Sunday mornings, come to the 3rd floor café and check out The Flock! This ragtag bunch of millennials and beyond discuss current events and dive into the Word with various studies. We don't steer clear of controversial topics, but we always end the hour with great love and prayer. Questions: Lesley.toma@aboutfirst.com.

Third Grade Bible Class

Reminder, if you and your child will be participating in our 3rd grade bible class please let Jenna Engel know and which service you would like to receive your bible in. The first class will be held on January 8th.

CrazyFunBusy Wednesday

Wednesday night is Church Night for everyone and our jam-packed spring semester starts January 11. See the events page of this newsletter for the full schedule.

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

Bible Learning And Serving Together. Please join us Wednesday nights. BLAST is for students turning 5 this school year -6th grades. This semester we will dive into Mike Slaughter "First" study. This study will show how to reassess priorities. By creating a culture and lifestyle of faithful living, giving and how to make a meaningful contribution to the world by putting God first. If you would like to be involved with this Ministry please contact Jenna Engel at jenna.engel@aboutfirst.com

A Blessing to Someone Today

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 25. 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 staff then conducts an interview to fully determine the need, and which church is best able to assist. This allows churches to specialize in their area of expertise: food, infant supplies, transportation, moving assistance, rent and utility assistance, home maintenance and yard work and more.

You can be a blessing to someone today by volunteering with LoveINC.

Clearinghouse Intake Volunteers

Intake volunteers connect with our clients on the phone and set up appointments at our local churches. We have openings for volunteers on Monday afternoons 12-2 or Fridays 9-12. Love INC office is in Cedar Falls and is a safe place to work.

Clearinghouse Reception Volunteer

Receptionists answer the phone during Clearinghouse hours Mondays through Fridays from 9-12. Substitute receptionists are needed.

Delivery Volunteers

DVs deliver food, baby items or kitchen essentials to our clients who don't have transportation of their own. Opportunities are available on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon. Volunteers are expected to make deliveries on their scheduled day every other week.

If you're interested in volunteering with Love INC, check out their website at www.loveinccv.org or give them a call at 266-1264.



January Mission Focus Church World Service Blankets +

January is great month to appreciate a warm blanket, and Rainbow Task Force is promoting Church World Service Blankets+ that month. Contributions to CWS Blankets and CWS Tools mean Church World Service will be ready to help families around the world recover from disasters and displacement. What's more, they'll be there to help people gain the resources and develop the skills necessary to build - or rebuild - sustainable lives and communities.



Imagine the possibilities:

- \$250 can provide warm blankets for five families left homeless by a tornado.
- \$450 can provide refugees resettling far from their homelands the gardening tools and materials to build six small raised beds for vegetables.
- \$750 can provide sewing machines and training for three women, empowering them to earn an income and feed their families.
- \$1,100 can provide 10 displaced families with emergency food packages that will feed a family of five for one month.
- \$2,500 can provide 250 blankets to an agency serving homeless individuals and families in the U.S.

Check out the display of blankets in the Gathering Place to see just what kind of blanket your \$10 donation will provide. Use the offering envelopes at the display to contribute to this mission.

Human Relations Day is January 15

Turn on the news or drive around the outskirts of your town and you will find what Jesus called "the least of these." Those living in the margins of society, struggling to survive. People like:

- An immigrant teenager in Texas' poorest county, being recruited by a local gang
- A father struggling for sobriety in Little Rock, Arkansas
- An Oklahoma woman recently released from incarceration looking for work

Over and over Jesus served people like this, embracing them. And that's what we want to model as the people of The United Methodist Church. To continue the ministry of Jesus we established Human Relations Day as a Special Sunday that calls all of our churches to participate in helping all God's children to realize their potential. Special offering envelopes will be in the January 15 bulletins.



The Ark Has Sailed

Thank you for your support with the project in 2016. It was a lofty goal to raise \$5,000 to fill the ark by Christmas, and we did it with a couple of weeks to spare. Your gifts will be used to help others, who in turn will pass on the gift through the offspring of the animals that your funds provide. Give the gift that keeps on giving.

We will take a break from the ark for 2017, but will lift up other ways to support Heifer projects throughout the year.



Our Newest Stephen Ministry Class

We have 6 people taking the Stephen Ministry training class this winter. They are Jenna Engel, Lesley Toma, Jordan Derhammer, Padma Templeton, Dean Hoover and Pastor Matt. Please give them all a pat on the back when you see them for taking the time to train for this wonderful ministry. They will be commissioned sometime in March or April of 2017.

Hospital reminder

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

Altar Flowers

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

Ongoing Wish Lists

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

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

Wee Care

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

Grant Support!

Good news! We were approved for a grant through the NE District Office to supplement our WeeCare ministry in 2017. We can still use your support, but it's good to know that additional funds will be available to help next year.

email Prayer Chain

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

Got extra fabric? Bring it in!

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



Thanks From The CFPD

A big thank you to everyone who wrote cards for the Men and Women in Blue at the C.F.P.D. Staff members of First U.M.C. delivered cards in mid-December and were given a warm welcome and grand tour of the station. The C.F.P.D. are very thankful for our prayers and written words of gratitude. Please remember them throughout the year and look forward to "TAPing" another organization next Fall.



Dear members of First UMC,

We wanted to take the time to thank you for all of the kind letters that you brought to our department. They meant so much to us!

Cedar falls Police Department

Change a Child's Story

Thank you for your continued support of "Change a Child's Story". Remember, your generous donations are doubled, and funds are used to provide books for students and teachers at Lincoln Elementary School. 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.

You Can Be A Reading Buddy, Too

Our First UMC Reading Buddies are going to Lincoln School, and both the students and the grown-ups are having a good time. Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students are given opportunities to read with an adult volunteer from our church. About 35 times each week someone from our congregation is at our neighborhood school to support the students and teachers to promote literacy and learning.

If you are interested in being a Reading Buddy, sign up on the clipboard at the Change a Child Story display or talk to Lisa in the church office. It's not too late to join, and we promise that you will find it a blessing.

Midwest Mission Distribution Center May 29- June 3

We have four spaces (2 rooms) reserved in the dorm at Midwest Mission distribution Center in Chatham Illinois. Cost per person is about \$140 for dorm and material fees, plus travel, sightseeing, and food costs. See Lisa in the church office for more details about this mission opportunity.

Henderson Settlement- June 25-July 1

We have 10 spaces reserved for work campers at Henderson Settlement in the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky. Becca Nims and Lisa Congdon are working together for this multi-generational work trip opportunity. We will find out in mid to late February what sort of project our group will be working on. Cost for food and lodging while on site is \$230, plus some travel and sightseeing expenses. See Lisa in the church office for more details about this mission opportunity

The NE Iowa Food Bank is looking for Talent!

Talent? What kind of talent? We are glad you asked! All kind of talent is appreciated, and honestly, I think you can handle it. Chris Madigan (a talent recruiter with the Food Bank) says they can always use help with these tasks:

Driving – a Class D license is required for the big trucks, but your standard driver's license is good for a couple of their vehicles.

Riding – just ride along with the driver and help with the loading and unloading.

Office – mailings, design work, sometimes some help at reception up front.

Warehouse – pull orders and load and unload trucks

Sorting – sort through donations. This is a relaxed paced volunteer job, but crucial.

Pantry – help clients shop, restock the shelves, and weigh carts of food.

Onsite Kitchen – help cook and serve anywhere from 400-600 kids a day.

If you have questions about these opportunities, contact Chris Madigan at the Food Bank at 235-0507 ext 113 or cmadigan@feedingamerica.org.



A team of FirstUMC youth sorts onions at the food bank.

A Thank You from Threehouse

We have so many reasons to be thankful to Cedar Falls First. You have been so supportive in so many ways – from supplying food and funds for our Welcome Back to School Block Party, to garage sale donations for the GreenHouse, our new Christian Intentional Living Community, to allowing us to host a pancake supper, where we raised \$345 for our May mission trip to New York City. We also appreciate the staff's work in helping prepare the GreenHouse for fall occupancy. And for the wisdom of the good folks, including Pastor Steve Williams, Mary Schlicher, and Pat Van Hauen, who serve on our Board of Directors. We are truly blessed by your support.

On behalf of all the students and staff at Threehouse: A Wesley Foundation, we send you our heartfelt thanks.

Sincerely,

David Glenn-Burns
Director and Campus Minister



Community Meal

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

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

Food Bank-every month

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

Go

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

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



Now Hear This

Here's some help for those who find it difficult to hear in the sanctuary. We're equipped with a set of listening-assistance devices. They are little radios that pick up the pastor's microphones and amplify the signal for you. The radios plug into an earpiece, or you may bring your own headphones (standard mini-plug). Also, those with telephone-enabled hearing aids may request a wire "necklace" that transmits the signal directly into the hearing aid - no headphones necessary! If you'd like to try one of these devices, ask an usher and they will get one for you and show you how to use it.

Fellas @ First

Men's Tuesday Breakfast

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

Tuesday Night Fellas

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

Women @ First

PURPOSE: The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ, to develop a creative, supportive fellowship, and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

The United Methodist Women, along with their guests and the staff of the church, held their annual Christmas luncheon on Dec. 8, 2016.

After the luncheon we enjoyed listening to the 5th and 6th Grade Choir from Lincoln School. An invitation had been extended to families and friends of these children to join us in the sanctuary for the program. Many attended. Christmas music was enjoyed by all.

Chris Congdon was presented with the UMW Special Recognition Award. The United Methodist Women annually honor members/friends who have supported the work of our local unit in special ways. Thank you, Chris Congdon.

Pastor Steve installed the following 2017 United Methodist Women officers:

President	Pauline Harding
Vice President	Maxine Kehret
Secretary	Stephanie Buchs
Treasurer	Harriett McMahill
Program Resources	Marlys Simpson
Spiritual Growth	Marlys Pals
Social Action	Donna Hoffman
Local Church Responsibilities	Aileen Anderson, Bobbi Jo Smith, Marilyn Roudebush

UMW Schedule

- No UMW Board Meeting in January
- Jan. 10 - Miriam Circle Bible Study, 1:30, Library
- Jan. 24 - Miriam Circle Bible Study, 1:30, Julee Bernard's home
- Jan. 24 - NE District UMW Board Meeting, 9:00-2:00, Library

More Than Moms

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

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

Invite a friend . . . all are welcome!
Any questions, please contact Lesley Toma at (319) 266-1713 or lesleytoma@aboutfirst.com



Thank yous

Thank you for the beautiful pink rose. It is so nice to be remembered.

Rosalyn Uhlenhopp

We would like to thank everyone for your prayers and visits during Deb's surgery and recovery of her right eye. The macular hole has sealed, and the distortion in her vision is now gone. Deb will be having the left eye done as well on January 19.

Also remember Bob in your prayers as he had a pacemaker put in on December 6.

We feel your prayers and appreciated your support.

Bob and Deb Lee

Belated thanks to the Rake and Run bunch for cleaning our yard. It was so appreciated. Thanks to all who visited me in the hospital and rehab center. The many cards were fun to receive. A big thank you to Barb and Rex Pershing for giving me a comfort quilt made by the church quilters. It helped me get better.

Donna and Irv Tiller

Christmas Program: Thank You to everyone that helped with the Christmas Program. It was a wonderful snowy morning to hear the story of Christ birth. I would also like to say Thank You to all of the kids that were able participate. Everyone did a great job!

Jenna Engel

Thanks for the flowers and parish visitor visits. How we appreciate it all.

Clyde & Dolores Berger

My deep appreciation goes to my church family for the beautiful birthday flower. The most perfect yellow rose was hand delivered to my home. It's worth turning 80 to receive such a wonderful gift. Many thanks!

Joan Dvea

It was such a thoughtful gesture to have a beautiful rose delivered to me for my birthday. Jane delivered during the extreme cold and snow, out into the country. So great to be remembered.

Donna Hoffman

Thank you to the lovely lady and the congregation for the rose for my December birthday. The rose was beautiful and much appreciated.

Emogene Marty

I am so grateful for all of my blessings. What a blessing it is to see Jane with THE ROSE, visit, and hug. You made my day. Thank You Jane and thanks to the staff for the card.

Jo Ackman

Thank you for the beautiful roses we received for our recent birthdays. Jane was very brave to deliver Wayne's rose on that snowy Sunday. Thank you Jane. Thanks to the staff for the lovely cards.

Maxine and Wayne Fitkin

Thank you to our UMW for special recognition pin at the Christmas luncheon. I love UMW's focus on outreach and education, and it is an honor to serve you.

Chris Congdon

Thank you to everyone in this wonderful church for their cards and hugs after my mom passed away on Thanksgiving Day. You are the most remarkable church. I am very proud to call First United Methodist Church my church and my family.

Dee Behr

Sympathy to:

Libby Batterson and her family on the loss of her grandmother on December 11.

Welcome:

Quinn Kristina Dideridsen was baptized in our church on December 4. She is the daughter of Nick & Briley Dideriksen, who joined our church in November.

We also welcome Tim & Sami Steffensmeier, Briley's godparents, who joined our church on December 4.

Delanie Ray Lockhart was baptized in our church on December 11. She is the daughter of Ryan & Keisha Lockhart.

Attendance- week ending

	12/4	12/11	12/18	12/25
FUSION (Wed)	27	25	x	x
Transformation	105	82	60	x
Traditional 8:30	165	127	117	x
Traditional 11:00	98	87	100	x
5:00 Christmas Eve				175
7:00 Christmas Eve				417
11:00 Christmas Eve				85
10:00 Christmas Day				89

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 10:00 Sunday service.
Child care is provided in the nursery for infants and babies for Sunday Services.

Spreading the Word

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

Cedar Falls (CFU) Channel 95.5, Friday @ 8:00 pm, Sunday @ 9:00 am
Waterloo (MediaCom) Channel 17, Sundays @ 11:00am & 9:00 pm

Our Pastors

Steve Williams, Senior Pastor, steve.williams@aboutfirst.com
Matt German, Associate Pastor, matt.german@aboutfirst.com

February newsletter deadline is January 20.

Staff (in alphabetical order)

Sam Barr, Transformation Music Coordinator

Dee Behr, Parish Visitor
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John Bentley, Head Custodian

Deb Bernard, Financial Manager
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Chris Congdon, Media Coordinator
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