

December 2018

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA
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WHEELCHAIR



How to reach us....

Church Office
507-235-5382

Hours:
Tuesday—Friday
9:30-12:30 p.m.

E-mail

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Rev Cory Germain
Pastor

Ann Osborn
Administrative Assistant

Rev. Cory Germain

Office Hours:

Tuesday 9 :00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday 1:00 p.m.– 5:30 p.m.

Friday 9:00 am—12:30 p.m.

Rev. Cory's phone: 507-848-7305

Worship Hours

Worship 10:30

Communion the first Sunday of
every month.

The Reverend's Ruminations



Here it comes, that season we all seem to anticipate—and with which many of us mark the passage of years. It's not just winter, or even hunting season, it's Christmas! The delicious meals (and leftovers) of Thanksgiving already seem a distant memory, and now the Christian season of Advent begins on Sunday, December 2. Maybe it was ingrained in us as children as we waited impatiently to open the gifts under the tree, but there is great anticipation among all ages once Christmas appears on the near horizon. Some view it with joy, some with sadness, some with a bit of trepidation, and many with a mix of emotions and memories. We all anticipate it in some way, but what are we "looking forward to" as Advent guides us ever closer to that blessed day?

In our Christian tradition, we tend to speak with some certainty about the birth of Christ, but according to many modern historians, the year is actually somewhat unsure. It is believed to have been between 7 and 2 BC, but even the exact month and day of his birth are unknown. In our Bible, his birth is mentioned in Matthew and Luke, but not the other two gospels. After much debate, by the early-to-mid 4th century the western Christian church had settled on December 25 as the official observation of Christ's birth, a date which was later adopted in most of the east as well.

In following the calculations and teachings of several well-known theologians of the early second century, the observation of Christmas may have initially been chosen to correspond with the day exactly nine months after early Christians believed Jesus to have been conceived. However, one of the things that has made December 25 a controversial date among Eastern Christians in particular is that its placement on the calendar by the early Roman Catholic Church coincided with one or more ancient pagan or polytheistic festivals that occurred near the date of the southern solstice (i.e., the Roman winter solstice).

Many in recent years have also lamented the intertwining of non-religious traditions with the commemoration of Christ's birth. Things like mistletoe, Santa Claus, and even Christmas trees and light displays have taken on a life and tradition all their own. To some, such trappings seem to threaten the deeper meaning Christians observe in Christmas. Certainly gift-giving, and the accompanying shopping blitz perpetuated by major retailers, has lost much of its original association with the celebration of the birth of our Savior!?!

But before we fall into a holiday funk analyzing the state of our world today, let us reclaim the joy of Advent as it points expectantly, even triumphantly, toward Christmas. Advent is a time of anticipation, a season in the Christian year in which we recall the prophecies, promises, and events leading up to the birth of a baby in a stable in the town of Bethlehem. The prophet Isaiah is one of the most-often cited heralds of what was to come. In Isaiah 7:14 he proclaimed, *"Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel (God with us)."*

This of course would be no ordinary birth, but then again it was no ordinary baby. As the angel joyfully proclaimed in Luke 2:10-11, soon after the blessed event, *"I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."*

Between those familiar passages, there are just over three weeks of anticipation. And while some of us may think we've outgrown the excitement of staring wistfully for hours at the brightly-wrapped gifts under the tree, there is something even more exciting in our future than ripping cheap wrapping paper. It is the joy, peace, and promise that we recall as we celebrate the greatest gift ever given: God's one and only son Jesus Christ, who from humble beginnings in a manger would rise to be King of all.

Blessings to you throughout the busyness of your Advent season, and may we all find time to pause and worship God together!

Yours in Christ's service,

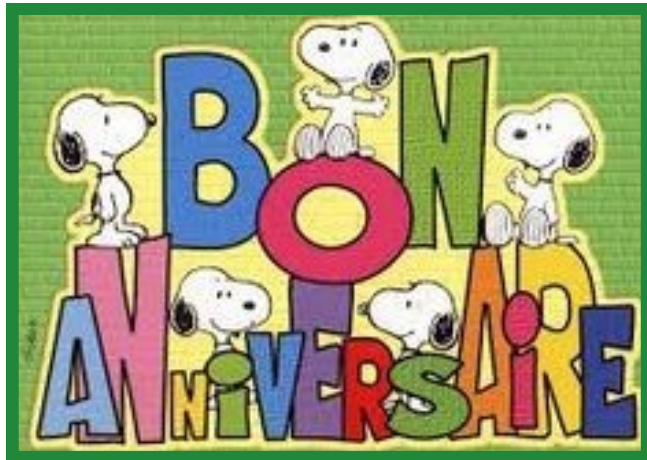
Rev. Cory Germain



December

2018

| | | Sat | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| | | 1 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | |
| 2 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship & | 3 | 4 10:00 Lakeview Communion | 5 5:15 Worship Board 5:45 Diaconate 7:00 Choir Practice | 6 | 7 Cookie Walk 4:00-6:00 | 8 Cookie Walk 10:00-12:00  | |
| 9 Communion 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Choir Cantata: "Christmas Carol Celebration" | 10 | 11 | 12 5:00 Mission Board 6:30 CE Board 7:00 Choir Practice | 13 7:00 Hospitality Brd 7:00 Facilities Board | 14 | 15 | |
| 16 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship & Christmas Program in Heritage Hall 6:30 Blue Christmas Srvs @ Grace Lutheran | 17 4:30-7:00 Parent To Parent | 18 10:00 Goldfinch Communion | 19 5:00 Finance Board 5:30 Church Council 7:00 Choir Practice | 20 | 21 | 22 | |
| 23 10:30 Worship Blessing Box Collection | 24 5:30 Service  | 25  | 26 5:30 Free Community Meal | 27 9:30 Bible Study | 28 | 29 |  |
| 30 Noisy Sunday 10:30 Worship | 31 | | | | | | |



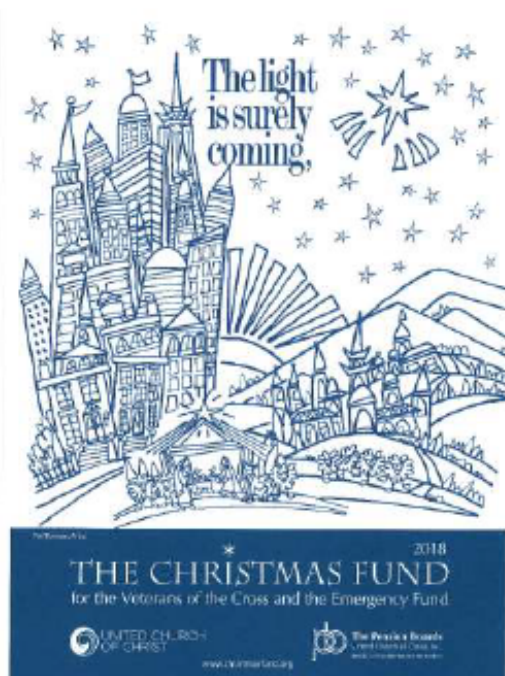
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|--------------|------------------------|----------|
| Dec 4, 1982 | Don & Shelby Marks | 36 years |
| Dec 7, 1963 | John & Donna Holstine | 55 years |
| Dec 9, 2000 | Brian & Julie Thate | 18 years |
| Dec 10, 1994 | Greg & Cheryl Ashland | 24 years |
| Dec 18, 1982 | Terry & Marcia Winegar | 36 years |
| Dec 23, 1966 | Robert & Diane Neusch | 52 years |
| Dec 30, 1995 | Lance & Jenny Willard | 23 years |

| | |
|--------|---|
| Dec 2 | Antonio Johnson Betty Jones |
| Dec 3 | Julie Thate |
| Dec 4 | Harold Stepanek |
| Dec 5 | Jim Hough |
| Dec 6 | Mackenzie Brummond |
| Dec 7 | Cynthia Celander Mary Beth Snyder |
| Dec 10 | Jenna McAlister |
| Dec 11 | Jonathon Meschke |
| Dec 14 | Jan Shaffer Kay Campe Christina Hainy |
| Dec 15 | Jacob Shoen Braden Grefe Tabitha Wayman |
| Dec 17 | Kim Shaffer Tim Huset |
| Dec 20 | Craig Nelson Trenton Jorgensen |
| Dec 23 | Caroline Olson Melva Tonne |
| Dec 25 | Gretchen Jorgensen |
| Dec 26 | Rev. Cory Germain Emma Germain |
| Dec 28 | Cathy Celander |
| Dec 29 | Eric B. Johnson Jessie Lasch |
| Dec 30 | Destiny Massey Ellen Germain |
| Dec 31 | Katelyn Draper |



DECEMBER BLESSING BOX – THE CHRISTMAS FUND

Remember . . . don't just
count your blessings,
share them!



Each week during Advent, you will receive an insert in your bulletin. Each week will bring a different story of a special person touched by the **The Christmas Fund**. As you read the stories, remember to count your own blessings and consider how you can share those blessings. We will receive our blessing box offering for **The Christmas Fund** on Sunday, December 23, but you can give your blessing box gift anytime during the month of December. Please note "The Christmas Fund" on your gift. Thank you for your generosity and caring.

Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other.

John 13:34

Grace to you and peace in the name of God, who is Love!

For over a century, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world. Year after year, United Church of Christ (UCC) members and congregations have reached out in kindness, compassion, and gratitude to those who have faithfully shepherded our Church in the past and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs.

In 2017, UCC congregations and members generously contributed over \$1,500,000 to the Christmas Fund. This enabled the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA), the charitable arm of the Pension Boards, to provide, on behalf of the whole Church, Supplementation of Small Annuities, Retiree Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to individuals in need.

The theme of this year's Christmas Fund Offering is **The Light Is Surely Coming**. Our goal is to raise \$1.7 million to help support these ministries of light and love. The recipients of your gifts are persons who have faithfully served the church for many years. And now, in their time of need, you can be the church to them. We invite and encourage you to join thousands of UCC members and congregations who will support this year's appeal and trust the light is surely coming.

On behalf of the hundreds of clergy and lay employees and their families whose lives were touched by your support of last year's Christmas Fund Offering, we offer our sincere thanks to you for your generosity!

Christmas Gift Idea!!

Are there people on your Christmas list who have *everything*? Don't know what to get them? The Mission Board has an idea for you! You can give money in their name to buy a Church World Services blanket. The blanket will in turn be given to someone in need in this country or another. Or, you can give to the First Congregational UCC, Fairmont Starfish Fund in their name. We have cards in the back of the sanctuary you can pass on to let your special person know what a nice thing you did in their name! There are also Starfish magnets you can give to your honoree! Simply note "Blanket Fund" or "Starfish" on your check and we will make sure to honor your wishes!





| Date | Memory/Honor of | Designation | | From |
|--------|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------|--|
| 21-Oct | Memory of Marabelle Lindell | Starfish | | Cindy & Jon Anderson |
| 21-Oct | Memory of LeRoy Poulson | | | David Bishop & Nancy Rostvold |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Marabelle Lindell | | | Doug & Marilyn Forstrom |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Mildred Hanlon | | Starfish | Doug & Marilyn Forstrom |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Peggy Heinrich | Starfish | | Leslie Heinrich |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Marabelle Lindell | | | Gloria Kiester |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Mildred Hanlon | | Organ | Mary Jo & Gary Manzey |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Laura Jaqua | Starfish | | Paula & Mike Otteson, Todd & Michael Sahr |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Dolores Kingery | | | Ken & Joy Rachuy |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Bernice Germain | Starfish | | Larry & Carolyn Thompson |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Dolores Kingery | | | Margaret Weaver |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Marabelle Lindell | Music | | First Congregational UCC Choir |
| 21-Oct | Memory of Marabelle Lindell | | | Memorials |
| 28-Oct | Memory of Bernice Germain | Starfish | | Cindy & Jon Anderson |
| 28-Oct | Memory of Bernice Germain | | | Cynthia Celander |
| 28-Oct | Memory of Ardis Droegemueller | Starfish | | Janine & Steve Draper |
| 28-Oct | Memory of Bernice Germain | Starfish | | Linda Meschke |
| 28-Oct | Memory of Bernice Germain | | | Pat & Randy Rowan |
| 28-Oct | Memory of Bernice Germain | | | Margaret Weaver |
| 28-Oct | Steve & Janine Draper Anniversary | | | Margaret Weaver |
| 28-Oct | Jane Kotewa Birthday | Starfish | | Margaret Weaver |
| 4-Nov | Wanda Johnson Birthday | Starfish | | Ann Hartmann |
| 4-Nov | Dean & Donna Grotte Anniversary | Starfish | | Ann Hartmann |
| 4-Nov | Dean & Donna Grotte Anniversary | | | Margaret Weaver |
| 4-Nov | Memory of Mike & Evelyn Graham | | | Minnesota Community Foundation - Mark A Hamre Fund |
| 5-Nov | Memory of Jerry Voyles | Starfish | | Jane Kotewa |
| 5-Nov | Memory of Mildred Hanlon | Starfish | | Jane Kotewa |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | Capital | | Cathy & Robbin Celander |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | | | Cynthia Celander |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | | | Judith Fallat |



| Date | Memory/Honor of | Designation | | From |
|--------|---------------------------|-------------|-------|-------------------------|
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | | | Doug & Marilyn Forstrom |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | | | Wanda Johnson |
| 18-Nov | Memory of Bernice Germain | Starfish | | Joyce Jorgenson |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | | | MaryDon Kislingbury |
| 18-Nov | Memory of Lois Nienkerk | | | Jane Kotewa |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | | | John & Sherry Larson |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | | | Kevin & Kelly Moller |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | Starfish | | Joy & Lorin Pollock |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | Music | | Virginia Riedesel |
| 18-Nov | Memory of Bernice Germain | | | Joseph & Jolene Rosol |
| 18-Nov | Memory of Lois Nienkerk | | | Pat & Randy Rowan |
| 18-Nov | Memory of Pam Askeland | | Music | Margaret Weaver |
| 18-Nov | Mildred Brodt Birthday | | | Jodie Whitmore |

Partners in Ministry

Dec. 2

Diaconate: Amanda Jaskulke
 Head Usher: Brad Cone
 Reader: Abigail Roiger
 Greeters: Abigail Roiger & Hailey

Dec. 9

Diaconate: Amanda Jaskulke
 Head Usher: Bill Cowing
 Reader: Joanne Eisenbarger
 Greeters: Wanda Johnson and Mary Don Kislingbury

Dec. 16

Diaconate: Amanda Jaskulke
 Head Usher: Cory Hainy
 Reader: Joy Pollock
 Greeters: Shelby & Don Marks

Dec. 23

Diaconate: Amanda Jaskulke
 Head Usher: Robbin Celander
 Reader: Cynthia Celander
 Greeters: Lorin & Joy Pollock

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

Diaconate: Amanda Jaskulke
 Head Usher: Eric B. Johnson
 Reader: Kay Campe
 Greeters: Tranna Urban and Dolores Gronewald

Dec. 30

Diaconate: Amanda Jaskulke
 Head Usher: George Jones
 Reader: Margo Weaver
 Greeters: Don and Shelby Marks

HYVEE & FAREWAY RECEIPTS

Report as of 18 November 2018

During the last five weeks, \$22,694.39 (15.13%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were turned in. We are now at \$85,484.41 (56.99%) toward the 10th \$150,000 goal. It has taken 19 weeks to reach that amount or an average of \$4,686.41 per week.

During the same four weeks, \$5,219.30 (3.48%) worth of Fareway slips were received. We are now at \$9,398.43 (6.27%) toward our 3rd \$1,000 from Fareway Store. It has taken 10 weeks to reach that amount or an average of \$939.84 per week.

Keep those slips coming. Even older slips can still be used as well as those where the gas was only \$0.18, yes, free gas except for the 9-tenths of a cents per gallon.

~ submitted by Jim Bock



Sunday, Dec. 2, will be the choir cantata. They will be doing the "Christmas Carol Celebration". You will enjoy all your favorite Christmas Carols sung by the choir accompanied by a brass quartet.

Please show your appreciation to the choir who adds so much to our Sunday services. See you there!

**Thanks,
Joyce**



Christmas Program

December 16th

Heritage Hall Stage

Dear Church Folk,

Thank you so much for all the cards and prayers during my forced hiatus these last six weeks. My surgeries went well and I'm healing but still don't like taking long walks yet.

I plan on being in church and the choir soon. Thanks again for thinking of me. **Jon Riggs**



FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

(With apologies for lack of inclusive language!)

As interviews were done with members of the church who are part of multi generational families with ties to First Congregational UCC, it was very clear that tradition, family faithfulness, and honor were big pieces in the hearts and minds of these families, as well as many others in our congregation.

The hymn from the 1958 Pilgrim Hymnal "Faith of Our Fathers" plays true to the strength of enduring faithfulness of our members and our church friends. With changing "Father" to "Parent" or "Mother", this hymn reminds one of the struggles and perseverance our foreparents at First Congregational endured over the last 150 years. (Add Faith of Our Fathers from separate copy attached.)

We celebrated with joy the anniversary of those 150 years with the theme of another old hymn "Rock of Ages". Music has played a very important role for our members over all those years. As members were asked about what was most influential in their worship experience over the years, many responded that the choir and church music were often the things that were best remembered. "How Great Thou Art" seemed to rank high, along with the wonderful Christmas music and hymns we enjoy and sing with vigor each Advent season.

Our faith is demonstrated daily in many ways with and for one another. At times of sadness and of joy, we stand together to support one another and offer prayers of supplication and thanksgiving. The power of that prayer is evidenced in the lives of many, and is a source of comfort both in celebration and trial.

We are truly grateful for the heritage we celebrate, and the faithfulness through the ages of those who came before us, those who shared their lives and faith, and those still standing beside us in worship, in the kitchen, on our campus, in the choir loft, the Sunday School classroom and in spirit. We thank our kind and loving God for the faith we have learned from those who came before us, and those who continue to live the "faith of their fathers (and mothers)"!

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS HYMN

Faith of our fathers, living still. In spite of dungeons, fire and sword. O how our hearts beat high with joy whenever we hear that glorious word!

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS HOLY FAITH, WE WILL BE TRUE TO THEE TIL DEATH.

Our fathers chained in prisons dark were still in heart and conscience free, and that would be their children's fate if they, like them should die for thee.

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS HOLD FAITH, WE WILL BE TRUE TO THEE TILL DEATH.

Faith of our fathers, God's great power shall win all nations unto thee, and through the truth that comes from God, mankind shall then indeed be free.

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS HOLY FAITH, WE WILL BE TRUE TO THEE TILL DEATH.

Faith of our fathers, we will love, both friend and foe in all of our strife, and preach thee truth as love knows how, by kindly words and virtuous life.

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS HOLY FAITH, WE WILL BE TRUE TO THEE TILL DEATH.

From Pilgrim Hymnal 1958



FAVORITE CAKE RECIPES

Bernice Dvorak was well known for her Coconut Cake. That recipe follows:

COCONUT CAKE

1 pkg. yellow cake mix, mixed per box directions

1 can sweetened condensed milk

8 oz. can cream of coconut

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. coconut

8 oz. Cool Whip

Pecans

Prepare cake as directed. Bake in 9 x 13 pan. When done, poke holes in the cake (about 50). Heat sweetened condensed milk and cream of coconut to lukewarm and pour over the cake. When cool, mix Cool Whip with coconut and spread on cake. Top with pecans. Refrigerate.

Charlene Norris often contributed Rhubarb Cake for special events.

RHUBARB CAKE

$\frac{1}{2}$ c. margarine

2 c. brown sugar

2 eggs

2 c. flour

1 t. soda

$\frac{1}{2}$ t. salt

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. sour milk

2 c. finely chopped rhubarb

Cream together margarine and sugar. Add eggs, beat until light and fluffy. Add dry ingredients alternately with milk. Stir in rhubarb. Put in greased 9 x 13 pan and sprinkle with topping before baking. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes.

Topping: $\frac{1}{2}$ c. white sugar and 1 t. cinnamon



*May the peace and hope of
Christ's birth
be with you now and in the days ahead...*

BLUE CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Grace Lutheran Church

December 16 – 6:30 pm

All are Welcome!

For the last several years, Grace has offered a Blue Christmas worship on a Sunday evening during Advent, as another way to prepare for, and observe God's gift of salvation given to us at Christmas. Our culture advertises that the approaching Christmas holiday should be celebrated with joy and happiness, and that certainly can be part of a faithful observance of the season. Many of us, however, are recovering from a loss of some kind, a personal setback or simply troubled by the news and direction of the world. Trying to 'put on a happy face' while struggling emotionally, physically or spiritually can lead to feeling pressured and overwhelmed. The Blue Christmas service is intended to reach out to people who feel such burdens. This worship will have a more quiet, somber feel than a traditional Christmas worship service. Scripture, music, quiet reflection, candle lighting and a message will help to focus on the comfort God offers during dark times. This experience has been described as very powerful and helpful by those who attended in the past. It will be held in the Chapel and is a wonderful time to invite others to Grace for worship.

Scheduled during these days when we are literally experiencing the longest nights of the year. Blue Christmas is for anyone who wants to sit in God's presence, acknowledge the darkness in their lives (and around them) and hear the promise that the One who is the Light of the World has come to bring us hope.

Dear Friends:

Although it's been several weeks since my daughter, Laura Jaqua, passed away; I want to thank all of you who sent a card, memorial, or made a phone call to let me know you were thinking and praying for me and my family.

My heart will forever have a hole in it, but your love and prayers have helped fill the emptiness. God bless you.

***Warm Regards,
Georgia Malo***



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

4th Annual Cookie Walk

FRIDAY DECEMBER 7TH 4 PM - 6 PM
SATURDAY DECEMBER 8TH 10 AM - 12 PM

JOIN US FOR DOZENS OF HAND
BAKED GOODIES INCLUDING
COOKIES, CANDIES,
SNACK MIX, AND LEFSE

GOODS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR
SALE BY THE POUND. PRE-MADE
COOKIE TRAYS WILL ALSO BE
AVAILABLE FOR SALE.

319 Downtown Plaza Fairmont, MN