

# April 2021

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA  
FAIRMONT, MN 56031-1776

Nonprofit  
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Fairmont, MN 56031



First Congregational UCC  
319 Downtown Plaza  
Fairmont, MN 56031



WHEELCHAIR  
ACCESSIBLE



*First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Fairmont, Minnesota*

Rev. Cory Germain  
Minister

Ann Osborn  
Administrative Assist

Joyce Jorgenson  
Choir Director

How to reach us....

Church Office  
507-235-5382

Hours: Tuesday—Friday  
9:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m.

E-mail  
uccsecretary319@gmail.com

Web Site Address  
www.fairmontucc.org

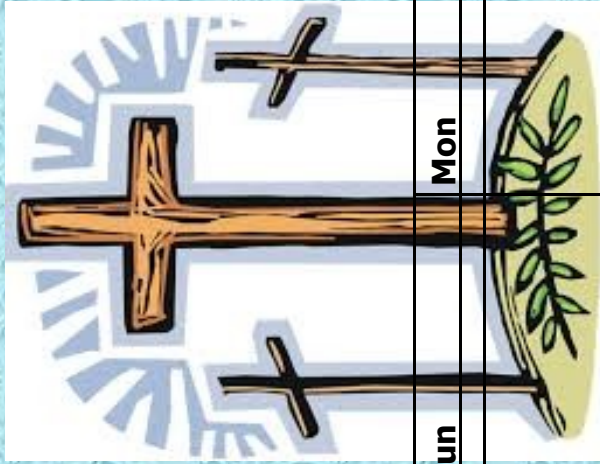
**Rev. Cory Germain**

**Office Hours:**

Tuesday 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Wednesday 12:30 p.m. through  
evening meetings & activities  
Thursday 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Friday 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.  
Rev. Cory's phone: 507-399-8282

**Worship Hours**

Sunday School 9:15  
Worship 10:30  
Communion the first Sunday



# April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>4</b> <i>Easter Sunday</i> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Diaconate 5:30 Worship Board	<b>8</b> 5:15 Hospitality 7:00 Facilities 6:00 T.O.P.S.	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	<b>12</b> 5:00 FCH Foundation	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 4:00 Confirmation 5:15 Mission Board 6:30 CE Board	<b>15</b> 6:00 T.O.P.S.	<b>16</b> 9:00 am Council Agenda Items Deadline	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 1:00 Goldfinch Communion	<b>21</b> 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Church Council	<b>22</b> 6:00 T.O.P.S.	<b>23</b> 9:00 am May Newsletter Submission Deadline	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Blessing Box Collection MN Food Drive	<b>26</b> 4:30 Parent To Parent	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 5:30 Free Community Meal Drive-thru	<b>29</b> 9:30 Women's Bible Study 6:00 T.O.P.S.	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

## *The Reverend's Ruminations - April 2021*

On a recent Zoom meeting with the Fairmont Area Ministerial Association, talk turned to Holy Week and Easter plans, as well as the subject of recently-loosened COVID restrictions for churches. I'll go ahead and summarize: practices and policies do vary a fair amount in the community, but among our sister mainline Protestant congregations, mask use and social distancing are still very much observed. I have not fielded any questions or complaints regarding dropping such measures, and I think that is mostly because we have taken a fairly careful approach to in-person worship services for several months already. The average age of our membership makes this a particularly wise decision, and I thank you for being mindful of one another's health and safety. We've been able to worship together in a hybrid format for seven months while avoiding being a source of infection in our community. Keep up the good work, and get your vaccination when it's available to you!

I presume I'm not the only one, however, who has heard commentary from friends or even casual acquaintances about how "their church" or "the \_\_\_\_\_ church in \_\_\_\_\_" has been meeting "normally" for months—or even throughout the pandemic. Just yesterday I again heard, "we/they don't require masks, and have been singing and having communion the whole time." All I can do in those moments is shake my head and pray that the person relating the information is not currently carrying the virus. On the other end of the spectrum, St. Martin's Episcopal Church (just two blocks away from us) was only authorized by their diocese to resume limited in-person indoor worship beginning last week (March 21)! Amid those extremes, I feel comfortable saying that our existing protocols will remain in effect for the foreseeable future. Council and Board meetings are small enough groups that each has made choices about virtual or in-person options based on the comfort and health situation of their members, and I encourage that to continue as well.

On a different note, I recently received word that I am to attend the Air Force's Basic Chaplain Course at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama, from April 25 – May 21. *Yes, I was already a fully-qualified and experienced Army Chaplain, but this is a non-negotiable requirement of my transfer.* 😊 To limit the impact on my ministry here at First Congregational, I had hoped to be scheduled for a summer iteration of the course—although only half-heartedly, considering it's Alabama in the summer!?! But with all the pandemic restrictions that even the military has had to work under during the past year, slots were extremely limited, and this is the one I got. My absence does mean that confirmation classes will end a little earlier than planned, but Confirmation Sunday will take place immediately after I return on May 23. Worship services here will of course continue with pulpit supply and some very capable volunteers from our church family, so I pray that you'll make them welcome and even lend a hand where you can!

In the six Sundays between Easter and Pentecost (May 23), all the epistle readings prescribed by the Revised Common Lectionary are from the First Letter of John—not to be confused with the Gospel of John. The author of 1 John (as well as 2 & 3 John) is unknown, but scholars believe the writer probably belonged to the same community to which the Gospel of John was written. In the opening chapter, we hear this affirmation about the church community:

*"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1John 1:5-10, NRSV).*

In light of this understanding about our walk of faith and our role as members of Christ's family, I invite you to read the included reflection, "Church is Hard." May it challenge and comfort you in the weeks ahead!

Yours in Christ's service,

*Rev. Cory Germain*

As mentioned in my “Reverend’s Ruminations,” a recent post shared to a longtime friend’s Facebook page caught my eye. Maybe you’ve seen it too? It seems particularly poignant in this season of history when church as we’ve known it has been interrupted by COVID and at least partially replaced by virtual worship. Its authorship is credited to Jacob Waldron, who communicates simply yet truthfully:

### **Church is hard.**

Church is hard for the person walking through the doors, afraid of judgement.

Church is hard for the pastor’s family, under the microscope of an entire body.

Church is hard for the prodigal soul returning home, broken and battered by the world.

Church is hard for the girl who looks like she has it all together, but doesn’t.

Church is hard for the couple who fought the entire ride to service.

Church is hard for the single mom, surrounded by couples holding hands, and seemingly perfect families.

Church is hard for the widow and widower with no invitation to lunch after service.

Church is hard for the deacon with an estranged child.

Church is hard for the person singing worship songs, overwhelmed by the weight of the lyrics.

Church is hard for the man insecure in his role as a leader.

Church is hard for the wife who longs to be led by a righteous man.

Church is hard for the nursery volunteer who desperately longs for a baby to love.

Church is hard for the single woman and single man, praying God brings them a mate.

Church is hard for the teenage girl, wearing a scarlet letter, ashamed of her mistakes.

Church is hard for the sinners.

Church is hard for me.

It’s hard because on the outside it all looks shiny and perfect; Sunday best in behavior and dress.

However, underneath those layers, you find a body of imperfect people, carnal souls, selfish motives.

### **But, here is the beauty of church—**

Church isn’t a building, mentality, or expectation.

Church is a body.

Church is a group of sinners, saved by grace, living in fellowship as saints.

Church is a body of believers bound as brothers and sisters by an eternal love.

Church is a holy ground where sinners stand as equals before the Throne of Grace.

Church is a refuge for broken hearts and a training ground for mighty warriors.

Church is a converging of confrontation and invitation, where sin is confronted and hearts are invited to seek restoration.

Church is a lesson in faith and trust.

Church is a bearer of burdens and a giver of hope.

Church is a family. A family coming together, setting aside differences, forgetting past mistakes, rejoicing in the smallest of victories.

Church, the body, and the circle of sinners-turned-saints, is where He resides, and if we ask, He is faithful to come.

### **So even on the hard days at church—**

The days when I am at odds with a friend; when I’ve fought with my husband because we’re late once again; when I’ve walked in bearing burdens heavier than my heart can handle, yet masking the pain with a smile on my face; when I’ve worn a scarlet letter, under the microscope; when I’ve longed for a baby to hold, or fought tears as the lyrics were sung; when I’ve walked back in, afraid and broken, after walking away; I’ll remember: **God has never failed to meet me there.**

~ Jacob Waldron

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC  
FAIRMONT, MN  
COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 3-17-2021**

The Council met via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Moderator, Jane Kotewa. Reverend Germain led in prayer.

**Members Present:** Larry Thompson, Marilyn Forstrom, Abigail Roiger, Wendy Ziemer, Kay Campe, Catherine Johnson, Dave Adams, Jane Kotewa. **Ex-officio members:** Pastor Germain and Dara Bliesmer, Ass't Treas. **Members Absent:** Robbin and Cathy Celander.

Minutes of the February 17 meeting were approved as printed. Motion M/S/C (Abigail/Wendy)

**Treasurer's Report:** Catherine Johnsons reported the General Acc't has a balance end of Feb. of \$92,054.18 (\$60,484.71 in Operating Funds and \$28,808 in Capital Fund. Motion M/S/C to receive the report. (Larry/Wendy)

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Cory reported on his monthly activities. He will be gone for an Air Force Chaplain Basic Course from April 25 to May 22. Confirmation will be May 23 and Family vacation May 26-29.

**Board Reports:**

**Christian Education:** Wendy reported that the Board has made plans for Confirmation and Graduation Sundays.

**Hospitality:** No report

**Missions:** Kay reported that Free Community Meals are covered except Nov and Dec. A number of memorials were given for the meals in Memory of Greg Ashland. The church will be delivering Meals on Wheels May 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Facilities:** Larry reported that both Laraway Roofing and Krause Konstruktion have begun work on the tower roof and stone replacement projects respectively. Some rotting wood was discovered in the tower and replacement will add to the cost. KK discovered loose and missing brick behind some gutters which will mean additional replacement. Fortunately, Dean had extra brick to match. The Council would like to thank Dean Grotte on behalf of the entire congregation for his generosity in going above and beyond to help maintain our church facility in good working condition. Also for his extensive knowledge of the church building. You are a gift Dean!!!

**Diaconate:** Sue reported usual Diaconate work and Valentine's sent to shut-ins.

**Worship:** Dave reported that all is in order for all Easter services

**Committee Reports:**

**Nominating:** By General Consent, the Council agreed that Marilyn Forstrom will fill the Moderator position for the remainder of the year.

**Old Business:** The Council determined that though the wording in the Bylaws is a bit vague, the intent was that the make up of this committee would be the pastor, 4 members at large plus one member appointed by the pastor. Currently at large members are Abigail Roiger, Cindy Anderson and Jon Neitzel. Pastor's appointee is Lee Hanning. Abigail's term is over and Moderator will appoint David Meschke and Deb Thate to complete the members at large. Lee has one more year to serve as pastor's appointee at which time Pastor Cory will choose another. Bylaws will be reworded when next changes are proposed.

**New Business:** Treasurer, Catherine Johnson reported that a letter and check was received from the Warren and Mildred Brodt Trust in the amount of \$33,175 designated to capital improvements. There was discussion regarding conducting a Capital Campaign to cover capital expenses which are estimated to be approximately \$140,000. The Moderator appointed a committee of Catherine Johnson, David Meschke, Dave Adams, Larry Thompson, Robbin Celander, Eric Johnson and Pastor Cory Ex-officio to look into the best way to conduct the campaign. Motion was M/S/C (Kay/Larry) to authorize Treasurer Johnson to establish a line of credit for the purpose of paying construction bills as they may come in before the completion of a Capital Campaign.

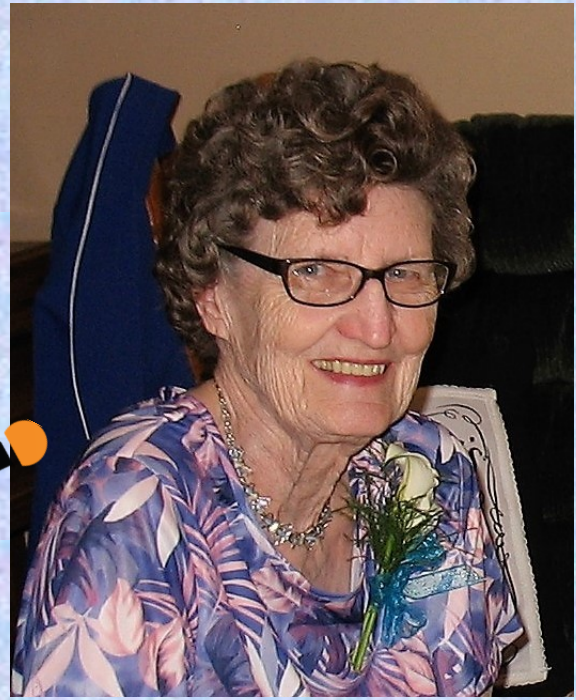
MRCI requested use of the church for occasional training sessions. Motion was M/S/C (Ace/Wendy) to allow at Pastor's discretion.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Marilyn Forstrom, Clerk



*Interview  
with Elaine (Thate) Zoeller  
February 8, 2021*



Elaine (Thate) Zoeller was born to Harry and Gladys Thate on her parent's farm in the Granada area.

She went to Country School District #104 for eight years. Then she went to Fairmont High School and was graduated in 1951. She went to work at First National Bank in Fairmont, then to Martin County National Bank in Fairmont, and then to First Farmers & Merchants National Bank in Fairmont.

Elaine worked full-time and part-time at these banks for a total of 66 years combined!!

During all those years in banking, she also worked on the farm and drove truck. She hauled sugar beets and peas for many years.

Robert Zoeller grew up in the St. Paul's Evangelical & Reformed Church, Granada, the same church that Elaine grew up in! (I believe Elaine said that Robert's mother suggested he should date Elaine even though she was dating someone else at the time!) They dated for a while and then in 1957 they were married in St. Paul's--which later became St. Paul's UCC. They both were very active in their church... Joining youth group, choir, and organist/pianist. During this time their family grew to include:

Conrad married to Lorie.  
They have 3 kids--Angie, Eric, & Allie (dec.)

Keith married to Lori.

Kay married to Tim Campe.  
They have 2 girls--Jenna & Kristen

Alan married to Tina with her three children. They have 3 children- Jennifer, Evanne, and Tanner

When their church closed, they joined our First Congregational UCC while Rev. Lyle Norris was still our pastor. Sadly, Robert passed away January 31, 2018. Elaine has remained very active in our church. She continues to make many beautiful cross-stitch items and shares them with our congregation. And...just last year she was the Sunday School teacher for grades 3-6!!

Oh my goodness! We have known each other for several years since our two churches from Granada did so many things together. We had such an enjoyable visit during the interview! Thanks Elaine--for your reminiscing during a very cold day! Keep warm and upbeat just like you are today!

*Submitted by Lee Hanning*





## Memorials

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
21-Feb	Memory of Jack Mackey		
21-Feb	Memory of Bonnie True	Starfish	Cynthia Celander
21-Feb	Memory of Jack Mackey		Wanda Johnson
21-Feb	Memory of Greg Ashland	Free Community Meal	Wanda Johnson
7-Mar	Memory of Jack Mackey	Capital	Wanda Johnson
14-Mar	Memory of Greg Ashland	Starfish	Jane Kotewa
14-Mar	Memory of Greg Ashland	Free Community Meal	Kathleen Ashland
14-Mar	Memory of Jack Mackey		James & Jane Gleason
14-Mar	Memory of Jack Mackey		Virginia Riedesel
14-Mar	Memory of Jack Mackey		Kenneth Scott

# rightnow MEDIA

**\*Worship services from First Congregational UCC are available (and searchable by date) alongside the other great content on the rightnow MEDIA website & app!**

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Easter Sunday is just around the corner on April 4, and **rightnow** MEDIA has several Easter shows and studies available. If you are looking for something short and impactful, here is a very accessible five-day devotional that you and your family can use to prepare for Easter. Free family and devotional guides are available to download, and each day includes a 12-minute video to watch and discuss. Here is the series synopsis of **Easter**:

*Jesus died for us so that he could be alive in us today. Easter changes everything. The resurrection is the most important moment in history, but it is more than an event we remember on Easter Sunday. Join pastor J.D. Greear as he takes a deeper look at Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew, revealing the ways we should see ourselves in Jesus' story.*

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Have you noticed that you and/or your children have been spending a lot more time in front of the television or computer during the pandemic (and winter)? Yes, this is another electronic interaction, but perhaps this one can prove to be helpful as you talk about how to journey through the "real world" around you and your family. Brett Ullman guides the six-part examination, **Media.Faith.Culture – the Disconnect**, for which a book or online course are also available (but not required):

*The concept and presence of media has become the modern-day parable that has forever altered how we interact with our world. What I have come to realize is a growing disconnect—both youth and parents are struggling with applying their Christian beliefs to the media that daily engages them.*

*When we interact with our culture, we take action and, when we think about what we are absorbing, we connect it to our self and our lives. As Christians, we need to actively be involved with our culture without blindly accepting it as true. Pascal said it wonderfully, "The greatest enemy of the spiritual life was inattention, complacency."*

*No more thoughtless watching.*

*No more thoughtless listening.*

*No more thoughtless online activity.*

*No more thoughtless anything...*

*Christianity is a strategic, intentional daily pursuit.*

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**\*Do you still need to sign up for a FREE rightnow MEDIA account?**

Go to **<https://www.rightnow.org/Account/Invite/FCONG>**

Once logged in to your **FREE** account, you can either scroll down the left side library list OR click on the **LIBRARIES** icon in the upper left corner of the screen and select "First Congregational UCC" to access the "Fairmont Worship Services" channel, or any of the other great resources on the site. "Pastor Cory's Picks" is where you'll find videos I've recommended here, as well as others that interest me. Stay tuned... the list changes as I discover new picks! If you've discovered a show or video on **rightnow** MEDIA that you think others would enjoy, email me and I'll promote it in next month's column.

*~ Pastor Cory*



## *Ushers, Readers & Greeters*

### April 4

Diaconate: Cory Hainy  
 Usher Trenton Jorgensen  
 Reader Carolyn Thompson  
 Greeter Kathy Jorgensen

### April 11

Diaconate: Cory Hainy  
 Usher Jake Shoen  
 Reader Abby Shoen  
 Greeter Amanda Forstrom

### April 18

Diaconate: Cory Hainy  
 Usher Jon Neitzel  
 Reader Kay Campe  
 Greeter Sue Kruse

### April 25

Diaconate: Cory Hainy  
 Usher Cory Hainy  
 Reader Paige Hainy  
 Greeter Christina Hainy

**Pastoral Relations Committee** welcomes two members Dave Meschke and Deb Thate and thanks outgoing member Abigail Roiger for her service. Dave and Deb join Cindy Anderson, Jon Neitzel, Lee Hanning and Pastor Cory Germain on the Committee. We meet quarterly each year to discuss joys and concerns regarding our pastoral leadership. If you have input for the committee, please contact any of our members.

### Missions

Our March Blessing Box offering has been the Minnesota Food Drive. We've had several bags of food dropped off at the church, but haven't hit 40 quite yet. The drive is extended into April a bit. You can drop off food or a monetary donation thru Wednesday April 7<sup>th</sup> which is when we'll be delivering the food to Heaven's Table food shelf. Thank you for what has been donated so far!

Our Blessing Box offering on April 25<sup>th</sup>, is for one of the 5 UCC special offerings: Strengthen the Church. This offering "supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations... by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults."

In April we'll also be needing people to sign up for delivering Hot Meals on Wheels in May. As in the past, we are responsible for delivering from May 1 through the 15<sup>th</sup>. The local Meals on Wheels organization has made adjustments to provide for a safer experience during the pandemic for both the volunteers and the recipients. If you'd like to participate, keep your eyes open for an e-mail sign-up coming in April.

**Thank you!**

Thank you to the March Newsletter Volunteers:  
Joanne, Marilyn, Kathy and Dolores.  
*Your helping hands and willing hearts are always  
appreciated!*



Going forward, the printed  
newsletters will be in  
black & white.



You can view them in color on the  
church website.

*KJLY presents our 12<sup>th</sup> Annual "A Day for Women"  
on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at Hosanna Lutheran  
Church in Mankato. This year's Special Guest is  
Alli Worthington, author of Fierce Faith:*

*A Women's Guide to Fighting Fear, a podcaster and  
blogger. The Looney Lutherans will also be joining  
us! This trio of wacky gals will use music and com-  
edy to share their wisdom for living a lively  
life. There will be music, ministry, lunch, and  
mini-sessions. Space is limited so call 507-526-3233  
or go online to [KinshipRadio.org](http://KinshipRadio.org) to register begin-  
ning Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 8AM.*

Recipes Please!

Please send Ann your recipes for the newslet-  
ter. You can mail, email, or drop them off at  
the church office.

We would love to share your faves!!

9:00 a.m.



April 23rd is the  
May Newsletter



submission deadline.



**HyVee and Fareway Receipts Report** as of 14 March 2021 \$11,668.11 (7.78%) toward our 4<sup>th</sup> \$150,000 goal.

During the last four weeks, \$8,974.41 (5.98%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were turned in. After 28 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$84,797.85 (56.53%) toward the 13<sup>th</sup> \$150,000 goal.

During the same four weeks, \$3,567.60 (2.38%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 10 weeks, Fareway is at

Thanks for bring into the Church, or mailing them to me. Even the very small amounts help. This program started the first of March 2011, so any slips from then until now can be used.

Any Fairmont Fareway and Hy-Vee food store register slip can be used. Even slips from Hy-



### ***Pecans Anyone????***



I still have almost 2 cases of pecans, whole and chopped at work. If anyone is interested, they can pick them up here.

1310 Adams Ave.

The Meadows, behind Bomgaars,  
(507) 238 -7102.

I can give them to Dolores, or I can

***Are you looking for an interesting and fun project?***

Do you like scrapbooking?

Do you enjoy working on the computer?

Would you like to add a little spice to your life?

If so, the church can use help with keeping up the facebook page and website.

Please call the office if this sounds appealing to you.

Also, anyone who has photos to share for updating the web page, please email or drop them off to the church office.

### **PEANUTS**





## Peeps & Houses



Hello  
Spring!



Graham Cracker Birdhouses, Cottontail Pancakes, Bunny Race Car Drivers

Fun Springtime Treat ideas to make! The photos show how to assemble. I've made them all for my Grandchildren - they do work! - Ann



## April Birthdays

**April 4** Caleb Rachuy

**April 5** Vonnie Cone  
Bill Cowing  
Dan Wenz

**April 6** James Marushin  
Jan White  
Dave Meschke

**April 7** Dan Thate

**April 8** Khloe Zabel

**April 10** Marcia Musser

**April 12** Doug Guritz  
Will Hawkins

**April 13** Joyce Knudson

**April 15** Randy Rowan  
Chris Draper

**April 16** Lyle Norris  
K.T. Magnussen

**April 18** Terry Riggs

**April 21** Cameron Hainy  
Arianna Moller Smith  
Jerry Norman

**April 22** Donna Grotte  
Rachael Tonneson

**April 26** Lorin Pollock  
Ken Schwieger

**April 28** Nola Thedens  
Michael Neusch

## April Anniversaries

**April 5** Curt & Vicki Bicknase 24 yrs

**April 12** Amanda & Ryan Cain 13 yrs

**April 16** Kirk & Gina Jorgensen 16 yrs

**April 20** Jacob & Abbey Shoen 8 yrs

**April 20** Eugene & Polly Mosloski 17 yrs

**April 27** Tim & Kay Campe 36 yrs

**April 30** Jim & Barb Bock 55 yrs