

April 2024

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

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First Congregational UCC
319 Downtown Plaza
Fairmont, MN 56031



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*First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Fairmont, Minnesota*

Rev. Cory Germain
Minister

Christina Hainy
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

Worship 10:00

Sunday school 10:00

Communion the second

Sunday of every month.



April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 April Fool's Day	2 10:00 Lakeview Communion	3 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Mission Bd 6:00 Worship Bd 7:00 Choir	4 11:30-2 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	5	6
7 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School	8	9 7:00 Facilities Board	10 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Diaconate Bd 5:45 CE Bd 7:00 Choir	11 11:30-2 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (Ch) 5:30 Hospitality Bd	12	13 6:00 Nomads (HH)
14 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School <i>Communion</i>	15 9:00 Council agenda items due	16 10:00 Goldfinch Communion 4:30 PEO (K/HH)	17 4:00 Confirmation 6:00 Church Council 7:00 Choir	18 11:30-2 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	19 9:00 May Newsletter items due	20
21 8:30 All-church breakfast (HH) 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School	22 Earth Day	23	24 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir	25 9:30 Bible Study 11:00 Newsletter assembly 11:30-2 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	26	27 2:00 Spring Highway Cleaning HH reserved for confirmation party set-up
28 Confirmation 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School <i>Blessing box</i> 11:30 Confirmation party for Blakely, Ella & Sophia (HH)	29	30				

The Reverend's Ruminations - April 2024

"In like a lion, out like a lamb" is the old saying, but it seems that we really got to experience the converse this year!?! Maybe I shouldn't have spent so much of last month's "ruminations" talking about the possibilities for March after what had been such a dry and warm February. And yet, as I began my Holy Week preparations and leaned (cautiously) into April, I did find myself reflecting on those very words I penned last month:

"Perhaps in a way, it would actually be helpful to have a cold and snowy [early] March... while I don't necessarily prefer the cold, snow, and ice of a "normal" Minnesota March, don't those conditions more readily invite you to spend time spend a bit more time by a crackling fire, praying or reading your Bible or a Lenten devotional?... Maybe being forced inside by biting windchills wouldn't automatically change your perspective, but then again, maybe it would inspire more reflection for some of us."

Likely many of you disagreed with that thought during most of March, but now that the joy and promise of the Easter season have once again arrived, wouldn't you agree that a bit of "suffering" — whether through a bit of nasty early spring snow or through your chosen form of Lenten reflection or sacrifice — made the miracle of Jesus' resurrection even more joyful and powerful?

But now that we've celebrated that most holy and blessed day of our faith, what are we to do? "Easter people" sounds like a clever nickname in the midst of the Easter Sunday celebration, so how do we live into that name in the days, weeks, and months ahead? Believe it or not, the Easter celebration is not just one big Sunday when we put on a new dress or tie, greet some of the folks that last came to church on Christmas Eve, and add an Easter egg hunt to entice the kids. In the seasons of the church, we are now in **Eastertide**, the fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. Let's live like it!

Over the last forty days, did you spend some time with our UCC Lenten devotional, *Bend*? Did you spend more time in prayer or Bible reading? Did you give up a favorite snack as a symbolic participation in Christ's suffering? Good! Maybe rather than celebrating that you can now eat chocolate, have a beer, or let up on your devotional studies, you should look at what you *gained* from such practices. I'm not necessarily suggesting that you continue in that sacrificial tone, but perhaps you did in fact learn some new things about your prayer life, your Biblical understanding, or even your diet!?! I encourage you to stick with those elements of Lent that proved beneficial to you, whether spiritually or physically.

One of the best ways we can continue the celebration throughout Eastertide is to learn more about what it means to be **Christians** — from the Greek **Χριστιανός** (transliterated as Christianos), meaning followers of [Jesus] Christ. Perhaps you're familiar with C.S. Lewis' explanation of the concept in his famous book, *Mere Christianity*: "Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else."

Well, here is a great first step toward Lewis' goal: spend some time learning about the early church. Maybe you're not a history buff, but take some time (as we will be during the Sundays of April and May) to read from the Acts of the Apostles. As the introduction to Acts says in our confirmation students' NRSV Student Bible, *The Guidebook*, says:

"Think of Acts as the collection of DVD extras, bonus materials, the continuing story of the Gospels. The stories of the apostles take us behind the scenes and give us a real-life look at what happened when the followers of Christ started living out their new beliefs. Jesus was gone from the earth. He had sent the Holy Spirit to help his followers proclaim the gospel, but they still had to work out the everyday realities of living in community and obedience as they worked to share the good news of Jesus with the world. Acts is full of compromise, conflict, love, community, greed, generosity, powerful living, and [even] violent death."

Not everything about being a Christian is glamorous, but when we begin to understand what Jesus was encouraging us to be and do in the world, we each become more faithful disciples in a world that desperately needs the grace and love that our Savior offers. May your continuing, life-long journey start with the blessing of Easter and move confidently forward toward becoming more and more like Christ each and every day!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Cory Germain



**FIRST CONGRGATIONAL UCC
FAIRMONT, MN
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 3-20-2024**

Members Present: Abigail Anderson, Amber Brummond, Kay Campe, Marilyn Forstrom, Christina Hainy, Catherine Johnson, Sherry Larson, Larry Lasch, Marcia Musser, and Abby Shoen. Members absent: Jane Kotewa, Sue Kruse. Ex-officio members present: Dara Bliesmer. Ex-officio members absent: Pastor Cory.

The Council met in Heritage Hall at 6:00 PM. Moderator Kay Campe called the meeting to order and led in prayer. A moment was taken to “celebrate generosity” for the generous giving at the “First Congo Kids’ Store” that will go toward camps and the donations of Easter egg-fillers.

Motion to approve the minutes from the February 21, 2024 meeting was M/S/C (Marcia Musser/Catherine Johnson).

Treasurer’s Report: Catherine Johnson estimated that the church requires \$14, 754/month to meet our obligations and goals. Giving in January and February was near that. However, some members donate their pledges at the beginning of the year. Volunteers are still needed for a short-term committee to review and make suggestions for our reserves at Edward Jones. Let Kay or Catherine know if you are interested. A motion to receive the treasurer’s report was M/S/C (Abigail/Larry).

Pastor’s Report: Pastor Cory was absent.

BOARD REPORTS:

Christian Education: Abby Shoen reported that the children will sing on Palm Sunday and have a “Last Supper.” On Easter Sunday, the youth will read the Scripture readings and have an Easter egg hunt.

Hospitality: Sherry Larson said that they met with the Facilities board and worked on editing the Facility and Property Use document. They are still revising it.

Facilities: Larry Lasch reported meeting with Hospitality. Council also discussed the Facilities board getting contracts from vendors. After discussion about the furnace/AC unit, a motion was made for Facilities to look into and order a furnace/AC unit. (Abigail Anderson/Sherry Larson)

Diaconate: No representative.

Mission: Marcia said the Spring Highway Cleaning is planned for Saturday, April 27 at 2 PM with a backup date of May 4. They also are looking into a church family help network.

Worship: Marilyn had nothing new to add from their minutes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: We are still looking for a Vice Moderator.

OLD BUSINESS: Discussed congregational work evaluations, board responsibilities lists needing to be submitted to the office, updated by-laws, free pianos, and board of the month.

NEW BUSINESS: If you are interested in attending the Minnesota Conference UCC Annual Meeting on June 7-8, please let someone on the church council know. Also, council discussed Interlaken Heritage Days, becoming an even more welcoming church and a concert featuring piano and organ at church.

Moderator Kay Campe adjourned the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Christina Hainy, Clerk

Mission Minute:

Blessing Box: Strengthen the Church offering which is a 5 for 5 special offering of the UCC. From the UCC website: “The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.”

Volunteer opportunities: We'll be having our **Spring Highway Clean Up** event on Saturday, April 27th. We meet at the church at 2:00 pm and carpool out to our section of Hwy 15 by Northrop. Anyone age 12 and up can participate. We do need signed permission slips for those between 12 and 17 years old. There will be a sign-up sheet in the back of the church very soon or contact either Amanda Forstrom, 507-279-1607, aforstrom1@gmail.com or the church office if you'd like to participate. Our back-up date is Saturday, May 4th.

Also, again this spring we'll be delivering **Meals on Wheels** the first two weeks of May. We deliver Monday thru Friday starting about 11:30 (more details coming). Be on the look out for the sign-up sheet for drivers. Thank you!

Fellowship Opportunities:

Saturday, April 13th: Nomads will meet in Heritage Hall at 6:00 Pm for games and food! Bring a dish to share!

Sunday, April 21st: All-Church Breakfast from 8:30–9:30 AM in Heritage Hall. Pancakes, eggs, sausage and fruit. Free will offering.



Our website is not up & running right now! Be assured that we are working on it!

Possible technical issue viewing worship services on local cable channel 12:

It has come to our attention that some Fairmont residents have recently been unable to watch the Thursday afternoon broadcast of our worship service on Fairmont's local cable access channel. This is apparently an issue specifically for Midco customers with a recently-upgraded Tivo cable/DVR box. Midcontinent Communications is aware of it and working on a solution to allow local connectivity in the near future. In the meantime, those with internet access can find our worship services on our Facebook page: First Congregational UCC Fairmont.

MEMORIALS

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
3-Mar	Memory of Mary Don Kislingbury		Donna Holstine
3-Mar	Honor Jim Bock		Virginia Riedesel
3-Mar	Honor of Janine Draper BD	Music	Margaret Weaver
10-Mar	Honor of Joy Rachuy	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel
10-Mar	Honor Janine Draper BD	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel
10-Mar	Memory of Jennifer Grefe	Starfish	Larry & Carolyn Thompson
10-Mar	Memory of Gin Mevisson	Starfish	Les Heinrich
10-Mar	Honor of Ann Hartmann	Starfish	Les Heinrich
17-Mar	Memory of Jennifer Grefe		Amber & Jason Brummond
17-Mar	Memory of Jennifer Grefe		Cynthia Celander
17-Mar	Memory of Jennifer Grefe		Jane Kotewa
17-Mar	Memory of Barb Martinson		Lyle & Charlene Norris
17-Mar	Honor of their 10th Anniversary		Angela & Vince Vaughn

Our deepest sympathy and prayers to:

- ◆ the family of Jennifer Grefe.
- ◆ the family of Linda Meschke.



Prayer Request Cards are now on the table in the Narthex. Please share your joys and concerns on the card and return it to the usher prior to the Pastoral Prayer if you would like your request included in our prayers during the worship service.

Altar Flower Signup: If there is a Sunday that has a special meaning to you and you would like to provide the flowers, please sign up on the calendar by the coat closet. Write your name and who the flowers are in memory/honor of. Please know that we appreciate you sharing your special memories/days with us! Contact Dolores Gronewald with questions at (651) 249-6236.

Pastor Cory is available for counseling, home visitation and hospital visitation. Please notify the church office (235-5382) or Pastor Cory (399-8282).

Celebrating Generosity

Here's what our congregation has been up to – there is so much going on – join us in Celebrating the Generosity shown to our Church Family and our community. Since last month, your generosity has been on full display . . .

- Sunday School
- Nomads
- Lenten Services
- Children's Last Supper
- Palm Sunday Service
- Maundy Thursday Service
- Good Friday Service
- EASTER – He is Risen, He is Risen Indeed!
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Bible Study
- All Church Breakfast
- Sunday School "Store" sellout!
- Raising Camp Funds
- Minnesota FoodShare Match
- Christian Education Free Community Meal
- Mission & Friends Free Community Meal
- Lakeview Communion
- Goldfinch Communion
- Newsletter & helpers
- Readers, Ushers, Greeters
- Church Service Broadcasts
- Altar Flowers – Special Easter Flowers
- Special Music – Bells – Children
- Prayer Chain
- HyVee & Fareway Receipts
- Free Little Pantry
- Serving our Church Family
- Chickens are Laying Again!
- Ducks!
- Noisy Sunday – Heifer Project



(Camp photos from last year)



These are just a few examples of the generosity we need to celebrate each and every day within our Church Family. Each of these items ignited a different passion in those who took part. We are so fortunate to have a Church Family with such diverse passions and generous souls!

Thank you all for sharing your time, talents, and treasures!

Looking forward to what's to come . . .

Meet our 2024 Confirmands



Ella Ziemer is a 9th grader at Fairmont High School. She plays saxophone in the school band and is a Girl Scout. Her parents are Kris and Wendy Ziemer. She has an older sister Gracie. Her grandmothers are Caroline Olson and Bernyce Ziemer. Ella chose to wait a year to start Confirmation rather than be a class of one person. The Bible verse she has chosen is: “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself” (Matthew 6:34).



Sophia Brummond is an 8th grader at Fairmont High School. Her parents are Jason and Amber Brummond. Henry Brummond and Mackenzie Freeman are her siblings. Her grandparents are Kenny Brummond and Brian and Julie Thate. Outside of school, Sophia is in basketball, FFA, 4-H, and shows her Corgi in dog shows. For her Bible verse, she has chosen: “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:25-26).



Blakely Weber is a 7th grader at Fairmont Junior/Senior High. She is active in FFA, plays basketball, and shows goats and cattle. Her parents are Jordan Wegner and Ciera Weiss. Blakely has three sisters: Andi Wegner, Presley Wegner, and Skyler Weber. Her grandparents are Dean and Kathy Weiss. The Bible verse she has chosen is 2 Kings 20:5: “Go back and tell Hezekiah, the ruler of my people, This is what the LORD, the God of your father David says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you, and three days from now you will get out of bed and go to the Temple of the LORD.”

Please join us for a Confirmation Reception for

Sophia Brummond

Blakely Weber

Ella Ziemer

Sunday April 28 , 2024 at 11:30 (following church) in Heritage Hall.

A meal will be provided by the families of the confirmands.

Thanks again to the Bible study ladies for assembling last month's newsletter!! Thank you, Church family, for the fun holiday surprises as well! -Christina

With the new addition of the baby grand piano, we are overflowing with pianos at the church. There are **two upright pianos in the basement that are FREE!** If you are interested, please speak to a council member.

April Diaconate: Sue Kruse
Usher: Dave Huset

May Diaconate: Sue Eisenbacher
Usher: David "Ace" Adams



Let Pastor Cory or a council member know if you are interested in attending the MN Conference UCC Annual Meeting Friday, June 7 – Saturday, June 8 at the College of St. Benedict.

Hy-Vee & Fareway Report as of 24 March 2024

During the last 4 weeks, \$13,077.19 (6.54%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were received. After 16 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$68,078.45 (32.54%) toward the 17th goal which is now \$200,000.

During the same time, \$1,806.36 (1.20%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 51 weeks, Fareway is at \$57,990.17 (38.66%) toward our 5th \$150,000 goal.

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-Vee Fast & Fresh (Gas), Coffee Shop, Food Service, and Pharmacy help us toward the goal. Delivery slips/sheets can also be used. Thanks to all who bring/mail the slips to the Church, or mailing them or dropping them off at my house.

Reported by;
Jim Bock

FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

Wednesday, April 24th

Serving from 5:30 PM until the food is gone

First Congregational UCC

319 Downtown Plaza, Fairmont, MN

ALL are Welcome!!

MENU:

Spaghetti with meat sauce

Lettuce Salad

Breadstick

Cupcakes

Served by the Hospitality Board

MEET OUR BOARD OF THE MONTH: DIACONATE BOARD



Board members are Sue Eisenbacher, Kris Fuller, David Huset, Eric Johnson, Kathy Jorgensen and Sue Kruse.

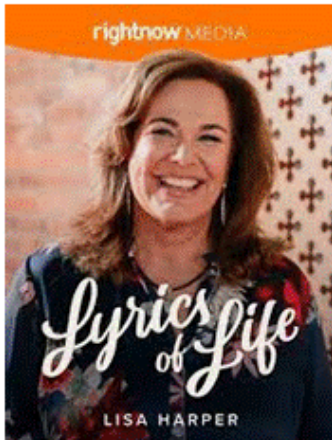
The Diaconate Board is composed of six members who work in conjunction with the pastor to support the spiritual life of the congregation. We value new members joining our board each year to provide fresh perspectives on assisting our members.



We are all about encouraging our church family, especially in times of need. We do visits and cards to members and make a special point to stay in contact with those who are unable to attend weekly services. It is always rewarding to reach out to friends who could use an encouraging word. We also serve communion each month and at special times. In addition, we are the October community meal "chili people". Do you like to visit with our church members and friends? If so, come join our board!

rightnow MEDIA

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



I hope you've noticed that almost every Sunday, we share responsively in a reading from the Psalms. This book of our Bible is filled with incredible emotion — praise, struggle, triumph, hardship, and hope — many of which may have been written to be sung. The psalmist appears to have encountered many of the same highs and lows that each of us go through as the seasons of our lives unfold. But have you spent much time examining the Psalms? Now that April is upon us, why not encounter them in a new way?

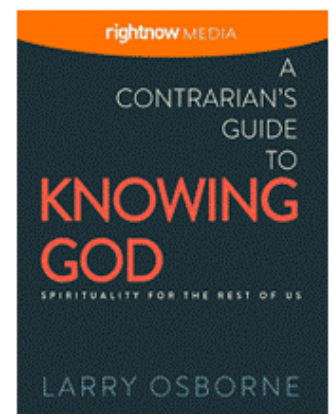
Lyrics of Life is an 8-session series of short videos unpacking several of the main themes in Psalms:

We sometimes feel like we need to curate our emotions when we talk to God. But God wants us to come to him honestly, no matter what we are feeling or going through. Join Bible teacher Lisa Harper as she teaches from the book of Psalms, looking at the variety of circumstances faced by followers of God. In this eight-session series, we learn how to find comfort in any situation based on this songbook of the people of God.

Do you sometimes get the feeling that being a Christian is exclusively about how well you follow the Ten Commandments — or some other rules and regulations that feel like they were decided on by a bunch of crusty old men a hundred years ago? Well, maybe there's more to it than you think! Take some time this month to check out **A Contrarian's Guide to Knowing God**:

Sometimes what we believe about the Christian life comes from a single but prominent point of view—an older Christian we look up to, a preacher, or a parent. But is there only one way of living the life of a Jesus follower?

*The Christian life—even one centered on grace—can still feel like a long list of dos and don'ts. But what if there's more (and less) to our faith than we typically believe? In this series based on his book *A Contrarian's Guide to Knowing God*, pastor Larry Osborne tackles popular assumptions about Christian living that create stress and failure rather than growth and joy.*



*Do you still need your own **FREE** rightnow MEDIA account, or would you like to share this great resource with a friend?

There are 3 convenient ways: Go to <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/FCONG>

Text **FCONG to 49775**, or scan this QR code with your smartphone camera or code reader—>



Once logged in to your **FREE** account, you can click directly on "First Congregational UCC" near the top of the page to access the "Fairmont Worship Services" channel, or "Pastor Cory's Picks"—which is where you'll find videos I've recommended here, as well as others that interest me. Stay tuned... the list grows 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

Recipes for April:

Mary Don's Quick Bread

Drive north on highway 15. Hang a right just past the water tower. Get in line and order a frosted cinnamon raisin. They'll know what you mean. Treat yourself. This recipe good only until 10:30 AM.

-from Feeding Our Flock



Lezlee's Taco Soup

- 2 16 oz. jars mild salsa
- 2 lb. hamburger, browned
- 2 cans refried beans
- 2 cans whole kernel corn, undrained
- 2 cans black beans, rinsed & drained
- 2 pkg. taco seasoning
- 4 cans water (use empty corn can)
- 16 oz. Velveeta, cubed or shredded



Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan & stir until heated through & cheese is melted.

Serve with tortilla chips, shredded cheese, salsa, sour cream, etc.

Makes about 8 quarts.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS:

April 4	Caleb Rachuy	April 16	Rev. Lyle Norris
April 5	Vonnie Cone		K.T. Magnussen
	Bill Cowing	April 18	Terry Riggs
	Dan Wenz	April 21	Cameron Hainy
April 6	James Marushin		Arianna Moller Smith
	Jan White		Jerry Norman
	Dave Meschke	April 22	Donna Grotte
April 7	Dan Thate		Rachel Tonneson
April 10	Marcia Musser	April 26	Lorin Pollock
April 12	Doug Guritz		Ken Schwieger
April 13	Joyce Knudson	April 28	Nola Thedens
	Jayden Garlick		Michael Neusch
	Kris Fuller		
April 15	Randy Rowan		
	Chris Draper		



APRIL ANNIVERSARIES:

April 5	Curt & Vicki Bicknase	27 years
April 10	Douglas & Kris Fuller	42 years
April 12	Amanda & Ryan Cain	16 years
April 16	Kirk & Gina Jorgensen	19 years
April 20	Jacob & Abby Shoen	11 years
April 20	Eugene & Polly Mosloski	20 years
April 23	Curt & Terri Luetgers	48 years
April 27	Tim & Kay Campe	39 years
April 30	Jim & Barb Bock	58 years

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or is incorrect, please notify the church office.