July 2020

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA FAIRMONT, MN 56031-1776 Nonprofit
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First Congregational UCC 319 Downtown Plaza Fairmont, MN 56031







First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Fairmont, Minnesota

Rev. Cory Germain Minister

Ann Osborn Administrative Assistant

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

ucc319@frontiernet.net

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 9:30

Communion the first Sunday of every month.

**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 5:00 Worship Board	2	8	
5 Communion Sunday 9:30 Worship	6 5:00 FCH Foundation	7	8 5:00 Mission Board	9 5:15 Hospitality Board 7:00 Facilities Board	10	11
12 9:30 Worship	13	14	15 5:30 Church Council w/Finance Board	16	17 9:00 a.m. August Newsletter Submission Deadline	18
19 9:30 Worship	20 4:30-7:00 Parent To Parent	21	22	23	24	\$ *
26 9:30 Worship Blessing Box Collection: Starfish Fund	27	28	29 5:30 Free Community Meal Drive-thru	30 9:30 Women's Bible Study	31	***



The Reverend's Ruminations

Volume 1, Issue 4
First Congregational United Church of Christ

The Reverend's Ruminations - July 2020

Is it possible that I'm already collecting thoughts for the JULY newsletter? I feel like I'm still trying to make family plans for the summer, and yet it's already well underway! I pray that you have taken advantage of the generally pleasant temperatures to be outside and feeling a little less confined, even if most of your time is still spent at (or near) home.

Unfortunately, weather and the coronavirus are not the only topic of conversation these days. Amid the "altered reality" of our response to a worldwide pandemic, we find ourselves with heavy hearts and souls as what may have seemed dormant racial divisions have once again come to the forefront of our nation in the wake of the horrific death of George Floyd right here in our own state. We have all seen the way emotions boiled over in the immediate aftermath of his death, and while extremes like looting, burning, and other vandalism do not help anyone's cause, widespread peaceful protests have opened up many new conversations that point to substantial changes on the horizon. As Christians, we must remain committed to Jesus' shining example of love and care for all persons—regardless of race, nationality, or social standing.

As you'll read in the Church Council minutes, after much conversation on the topic of what it would look like to resume in-person worship services, we agreed that in the interest of the health and safety of our congregation, we will continue with the current Facebook Live / RightNow Media / cable access channel worship format through July. We are very aware that several of the churches in our community have already resumed various forms of in-person worship with varying levels of public safety precautions. While this sounds to some like a bandwagon that we should already be on, we are not the only congregation in Fairmont exercising caution in the face of this ever-evolving disease. Each congregation has its own circumstances against which to base decisions, and we feel that currently our best option is to remain safely separated. A committee has been formed that will be assembling a plan in the coming weeks to be ready for special events like funerals, and the guidelines developed will be used to plan for our eventual return to worship in the church building.

Be prepared that when we do finally resume in-person worship services, they will look quite different from what you last experienced in mid-March. The important thing to remember is that no matter where or how we "do" worship, it is about just that: WORSHIP. Whether you press your back into a wooden pew, recline in your favorite easy chair, or tune in from the seat of your boat, the posture of your heart should be one of worshipping God. Several have commented to me that it must be hard to preach to an empty sanctuary, but while I'd much rather enjoy the interpersonal reaction of you and your family from the pews, once I begin leading the service I am at worship too: lifting praise, prayer, and song to God Almighty. Sure, some laughter at one of my jokes or a well-placed "Amen" during the sermon might encourage a more animated delivery of my message, but that's where I just have to envision each of you until we can be together again.

To again borrow words from our Conference Minister, Rev. Shari Prestemon:

"This particular season has taught us so much about ourselves, about our church life, and about our interconnectedness as communities, a nation, and a Conference. May we receive these lessons with grace and allow them to continue shaping our life together in this difficult season and in every season to follow. This is but one small season in God's grand story and we shall journey our way through it as God's people always have: faithfully, imperfectly, and with unshakable hope."

You may be getting out in public more than you have in recent weeks, but please continue to keep in touch with one another, as many are rightfully exercising caution about their public exposure for personal or medical reasons. Human interaction, whether face-to-face, through video technologies, or by phone, is important to everyone's mental and spiritual well-being. Be a blessing to one another as you heed the guidance of the Holy Spirit!

Yours in Christ, Rev. Cory Germaún



First Congregational UCC

6-17-2020

Council met in person by CDC standards. The meeting was called to order by Moderator, Jane Kotewa. Rev. Germain led in devotions and prayer.

Members Present: Dave Adams, David Meschke, Larry Thompson, Dolores Gronewald, Joanne Eisenbarger, Jane Kotewa, Catherine Johnson, Wendy Ziemer, Marilyn Forstrom. Rev. Germain and Jodi Kuhlers, ex officio

Member Absent: Robbin Celander

Motion was M/S/C (Larry/Dolores) to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2020 meeting as printed.

Treasurer's Report: David Meschke presented the report reflecting the PPP payment of \$12,300 and partial recovery of investments. Offerings received as of June 7 are at 40% of projections. Motion was M/S/C (Dave A/Larry) to receive the report.

Pastor's Report: Overall, activity was as usual since onset of Pandemic. Pastor Cory was activated for MN Nat'l Guard active duty in Mpls in response to George Floyd death protests. He was thanked by the Council for his service.

Board Reports

Christian Education – Wendy Z reported on Graduate and teacher Recognitions, issuing one camp scholarship and their discussions of possibilities of reopening Church School and how it might look.

Diaconate - No meeting/report

Hospitality – No meeting/report

Missions – There will be a drive thru Community Meal June 24.

Worship – Approximately 65 were served for the May Community Meal. The Board recommends continuing with Sunday Morning worship in digital form only to be reviewed again in August. Motion was made and carried to accept the recommendation.

Facilities – Motion was M/S/C to proceed with previously approved sidewalk repair by south entrance.

Old Business: Moderator will appoint Bylaw Revision Committee to make need changes to reflect our change in Board composition. Catherine Johnson has agreed to Chair. Motion was made and seconded to continue the deferral of payments to the Conference. Motion failed. Following further discussion, motion was M/S/C (Larry T/Joanne E) to reinstate Conference payments at a rate of 50%, paying for back months that were withheld and going forward. Vote was taken by raising of hands to ensure accuracy.

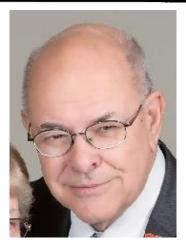
New Business: Motion was M/S/C to affirm the electronic vote to elect Jim Bock and Jane Kotewa as delegates the MN UCC Conference Annual Meeting. Jane gave a brief report to the Council.

Meeting was closed with prayer and adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Marilyn Forstrom, Clerk









I was happy to represent First Congregational United Church of Christ, Fairmont MN at the virtual 2020 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ held June 13th along with Jane Kotewa

There were 60 churches, 143 delegates in attendance. The number of visitors was not given.

The meeting started with about 10 minutes giving everyone information on how the meeting will go and use of ZOOM. Opening worship, a message from Reverend Prestemon, and a short break-out meeting took the next 40 minutes.

Rev. Jane McBride, Moderator, called the meeting to order and after a little housekeeping we were on to the Business of the Conference.

First was the Budget for the 2021 Fiscal year starting 1 October 2020. Don Fancher, Conference Treasurer, explained the major changes between 2019 and 2020. Because of COVID-19 it is expected that OCWM may go down, therefor Reserve funds will be used to balance the budget. Kim Shaffer asked how much of the reserve fund is being used and how much is left and will it be replaced. Don informed us about \$250,000 is being used, \$577,000 is left and the Board of Directors will be planning on getting the fund back up to 6 month of expenses. Don also stated that the Conference received about \$166,000 PPP. Question was raised about the separation of Church and State with the receipt of PPP. Rev. Prestemon stated that the Board has looked into it with other Conferences, Dominations and attorneys and did not see a problem. Voted to approve the Budget as presented.

Next was the Compensation Guidelines for 2021. Not much change from prior years. The Guidelines should be used by each church's Budget and/or Personal Committee to help set the Pastor's Total Compensation, for full time, shared, part-time, and pulpit supply. Voted to approve the Guidelines as presented.





Next came the change in the Conference Bylaws. This took a lot of time, with a few changes from what was sent out to the Churches back in January. There were lots of changes from the prior Bylaws, most caused by the sale of Pilgrim Point Camp. They also changed the make-up of some committees for flexibility, i.e. minimum/maximum membership.

The other major change was that the Mission Statement of the Minnesota Conference was eliminated and a Calling Statement was added. Discussion was held on the Calling Statement in that it did not fully state our covenantal relationships with other churches and collaborative organizations therefor the Mission Statement was added back. There were a few other very small changes/wording. It took about 45 minutes to take care of the amends and approve the Bylaws as amended.

The final item approved was the election of the Board of Directors, Work Groups & Committees as presented by the Nominating Work Group. Voted to accept the Work Groups list of personal.

The meeting was to be two hours and lasted 2 hours and 35 minutes.

Submitted by

James Bock



serve those whom a single fund could not serve, particularly for those who are not part of a church family but need short term assistance after all other avenues have been exhausted.

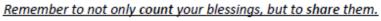
down to pick up another starfish and threw it into the sea. "It made a difference to that one."

Who is my neighbor and whom should I love . . . it's anyone who has a need.

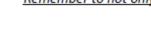
As you go through the month of July, prayerfully consider your ability to donate to the Starfish Fund. The fund is available for those who are down on their luck and need help getting through a tough time. If you need help or know of someone needing help, please contact the Church Office at ucc319@frontiernet.net or 235-5382 or Pastor Cory at firstcongouccpastor@gmail.com or 507-399-8282. Use of the fund is confidential. If you are able to help with a donation, you can leave it in the church office or put it in the offering plate with a designation of STARFISH on the donation, or you can put it in the Blessing Box Offering on July 26.

Many people like to give to the Starfish Fund in honor or memory of a loved one. There are cards and Starfish magnets available at the church you may give to those you are honoring to remind them of the gracious gift you gave in their name.

Your donation may not seem like it can do much, but if we work together, we CAN make a difference to our neighbor who needs it.













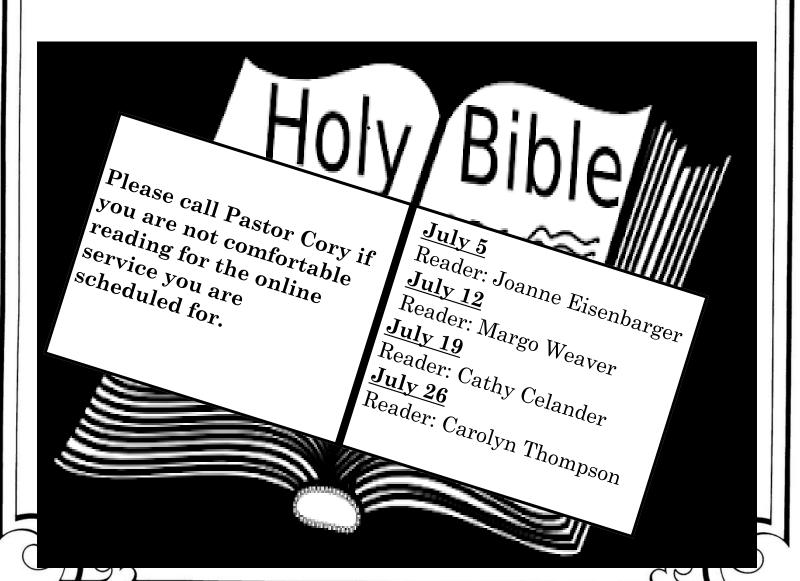






Memorials

Date	Memory/Honor of	Donor Designation	From
24-May	Memory of Jack Rooney	Starfish	Marilyn Forstrom
24-May	Memory of Laura Jaqua	Starfish	Georgia Male
	Larry & Carolyn Thompson's		
24-May	Anniversary		Margaret Weaver
7-Jun	Memory of Eloise Lidke	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel
7-Jun	Memory of Jim Harper	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel
7-Jun	Memory of Merlin Swanson	Starfish	Tim & Kay Campe
14-Jul	Memory of Marcella Peppard	Starfish	Larry & Carolyn Thomp-









Interview of Dolores Gronewald on April 17, 2020

Dolores (Eisenbarger) Gronewald was born in Hunt Hospital, Fairmont, Minnesota and lived in rural Granada with her parents Ora & Lucille Eisenbarger. She attended Sunday School and joined Congregational Church UCC in Granada. She was graduated in 1953 as Salutatorian of her class--the first graduating class to be held in the "new" gymnasium.

She was very active in Pilgrim Fellowship, 4-H, cheerleader, band, choir, and Girls' Choral Sextet. During her senior year, she worked at Hilda's Bridal Shop in Fairmont. After graduation, she worked for Dr. Lester Webb as his dental assistant.

Dolores & Don were married in 1954 and bought the Gronewald family home farm.

They were blessed with two children, Scott & Kimberly.

They were very active members in Granada where Dolores sang in the choir, served on the church board, and in Women's Fellowship.

In 2007, when the Congregational Church UCC of Granada closed, they joined First Congregational UCC of Fairmont. They moved to Fairmont in 2013. Dolores has served as Chair of Church Council, Chair of Southern Association UCC, served several years on Minnesota UCC Annual Meeting, and delegate to National UCC Synod twice. She is in the choir and serves on the Hospitality Board (twice).

It's very apparent that Dolores enjoys volunteering!

(Oh yes, she has a birthday coming in July!)

- Submitted by Lee Hanning





The PRC meets quarterly each year to discuss joys and concerns regarding our pastoral leadership. Our next meeting is Sunday, July 12th, at 10:30 a.m. If you have input for the committee, please contact any of the PRC members: Cindy Anderson, Pastor Cory Germain, Lee Hanning, Eric B. Johnson, Abigail Roiger, Jon Neitzel (Pastoral Relations Committee)

<u>Thank you</u> Joyce, Jenny and choir as we wrap up choir season. Enjoy your summer break!

Report as of 14 June 2020

During the last four weeks, \$13,350.06 (8.90%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were turned in. After only 29 weeks, **Hy-Vee** is at \$82,809.73 (55.21%) toward the 12th \$150,000 goal.

During the same four weeks, \$10,039.95 (6.69%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 89 weeks, Fareway is at \$100,097.73 (66.73) toward our 3rd \$1,000 from **Fareway** Store. Because of the current situation, can't estimate how many more weeks it will take to reach the goal.

During the last four weeks, the number and value of slips was about one-half the weekly average for Hy-Vee and twice the weekly average for Fareway that were being received prior to the Stay At Home directive. Thanks for bring in or even mailing them to me. I am looking for a large quantity when we are allowed us to get-to-gather again. Remember this program started March 1, 2011, so any slips from then until now can be used. For this report, slips from January 2019 were turned in. Keep them coming.

Reported by Jim Bock



When using the Hy Vee or Fareway cards for grocery items, please leave the RECEIPT and PURPOSE of charge either in the Treasurer 's cubical or Jodi's folder in the office. This includes flowers which we normally don't get a receipt for. Inform Jodi of the amount and purpose by leaving a note in treasurer file or by email or text since there is no actual receipt to turn in. Or, for your convenience, there are forms available outside the Administrative Assistant's office to easily fill in the information. You can leave them in the acrylic wall pocket with the receipt and we'll find them. THANK YOU!





is the synopsis:

There is a lot to be said about the sin of racism and how it affects not only our country, but the universal church. The tragic history of race relations in the United States has made it difficult for people today to have effective conversations without feeling uncomfortable, guilty, or traumatized. We might all agree about the fact that racism is wrong, and even sinful, but how do we respond when there seems to be so much division and so many opinions on what to do about it? In this short clip, Bible teacher Jada Edwards expounds on a few common questions and responses we see from people regarding racism, oppression, and the current state of our country.

For a more in-depth look at race relations, I suggest Oneness Embraced with Tony Evans. It is one I would be interested in watching and discussing through the "virtual watch group" format if there is interest in the congregation, so check it out and let me know. Here's the synopsis:

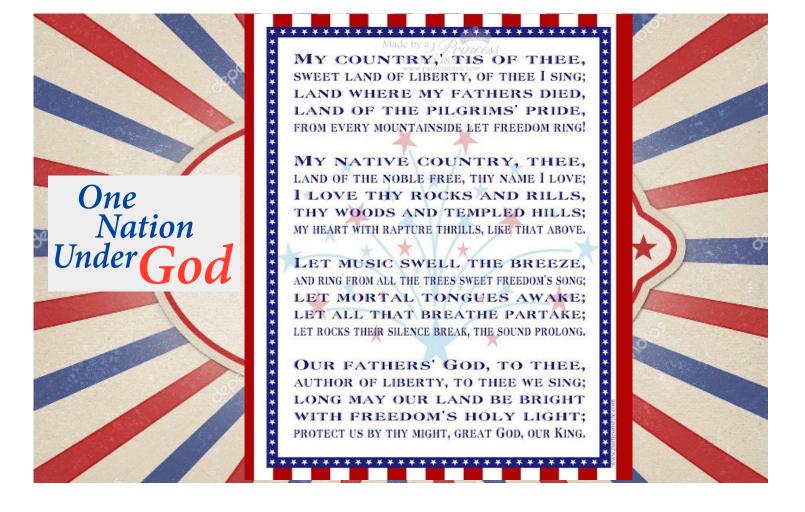
Black/white relations in the culture at large and in the church in particular continue to be a stain on America's respectable reputation. The church has clearly failed and must seek to function by God's kingdom perspective. In this legacy message, Tony Evans seeks to promote a biblical understanding of the kingdom foundation of oneness by detailing why we don't have it, what we need to do to get it, and what it will look like when we live it.

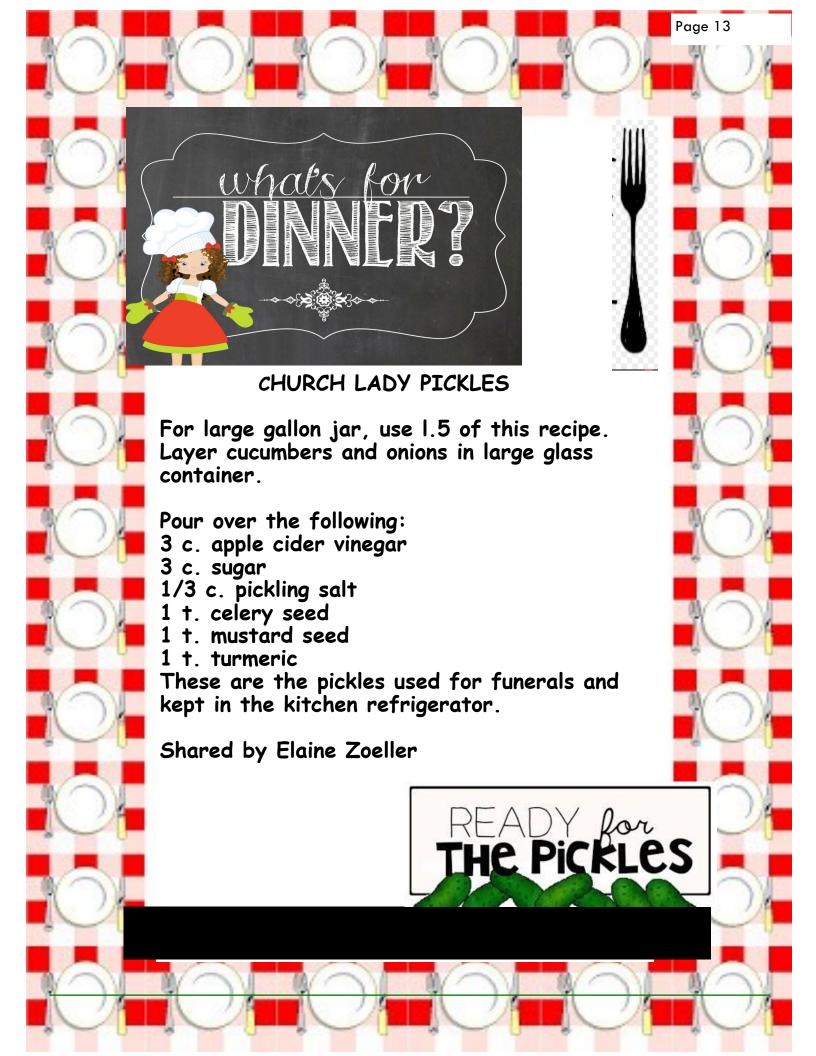
Fully encompassing areas of unity, history, culture, the church and social justice, Evans looks to the scriptures for the balance between righteousness and justice that is crucial for applying in this generation and in training the next. A full section on black church history provides a background and understanding that has often been neglected. Recalling experiences in his own evangelical journey, Evans shares kingdom minded approaches for biblical justice and social restoration.

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^{*} If you still need to sign up for a FREE account, go to https://www.rightnow.org/Account/Invite/FCONG







Newsletter

9:00 am, July 19th is the August Newsletter submission deadline.

CALLING ALL COOKS!

Would you like to submit a recipe to the church newsletter?

Feel free to do so! Email, mail, or drop off a recipe to the

church office. (UCC31920 frontiernet.net)

If you don't see yours published first, please know that I'll make a file of them and put them in as I'm able.

Perhaps, your first recipe could be one you made during the shelter-in-place.

If you have any info regarding the background of the recipe and there is room, I'll publish that too!



Thank you

M a r g o

Weaver for
being a
special star
by helping
prepare the
newsletter
for mailing
in recent
months!

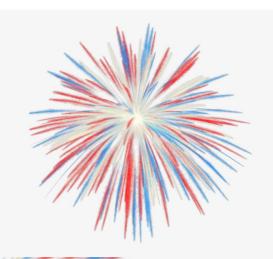


Volunteers needed to assist with folding and sealing the newsletters. It only takes 2-3 people. Please email Ann at the church office if you would like to help out: UCC319@frontiernet.net Thanks!

You'll find the full color version of the newsletter, on the church website at:

http://www.fairmontucc.org/

July Birthdays July 1 Roger Lindell Catherine Johnson July 3 July 4 Judie Orr July 9 Ken Howes July 10 Julie Elliott July 11 Sydney Hainy July 12 Pat Rowan July 14 Margo Weaver July 15 Marilyn Forstrom Kevin Moller Emily Rose Cain July 17 Haley Harder July 18 Shelby Marks July 19 Joy Rachuy July 19 Abby Shoen July 20 Kelly Moller July 21 Alex Neitzel Sarah Wannarka July 24 Nicholas Thate July 25 Robbin Celander July 26 Cheryl Ashland Dolores Gronewald July 28 Whytnie Goerndt July 30 Melissa Neitzel Asia Gilbertson July 31 Courtney Grefe



July Anniversaries

July 6	Lyle & Charlene	Norris
	57 years	

July 9 Jason & Amber Brummond 9 Years

July 13 Roger & Marian Buchan 63 years

July 14 Jon & Terry Riggs 30 years

July 17 Mark & Margo Becker

16 years July 20 Tracy & Jessi Kotewa

18 years

July 21 Brad & Vonnie Cone 19 years

July 22 Lorin & Joy Pollock 25 years

July 22 Jeff & Nanci Skog 35 years

July 25 Tony & Jenna Smith
5 years

July 26 Matt & Brittany Goerndt 6 years

July 27 Mark & Rita Craven
46 years

July 30 Dave & Cindy Martens 37 years