December 2019

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED PRESORTED STANDARD U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 178

First Congregational UCC 319 Downtown Plaza Fairmont, MN 56031





		Rev. Cory Germain Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Wednesday 12:30 p.m. through	
	How to reach us	evening meetings & activities Thursday 9:30 a.m12:30 p.m.	
	Church Office 507-235-5382	Friday 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. Rev. Cory's phone: 507-399-8282 <u>Worship Hours</u>	
	Hours: Tuesday—Friday	Sunday School 9:15 Opportunities for all ages through adult!	
Rev Cory Germain Pastor	9:30-12:30 p.m.	Worship 10:30 Communion the first Sunday of every month.	
Ann Osborn Administrative Assistant	E-mail ucc319@frontiernet.net		

700	Sat		41	21	28 Sector	Here Here Bank
	Fri	6 3:00-7:00	13	20	27	
	Thu	Ю	12 5:15 Hospitality Bd 7:00 Facilities Brd	19	26	
	Wed	 4 3:45 Confirmation 5:00 Worship Brd 5:30 Diaconate Brd 7:00 Choir Practice 	11 3:45 Confirmation 5:00 Mission Board 6:30 CE Board 7:00 Choir Practice	18 3:45 Confirmation 5:30 Church Council w/Finance Board 6:30 CE Board 7:00 Choir Practice	25	
	Tue	3 10:00 Lakeview Communion	10	17 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	24 5:30 Candlelight Service	31 YEARS GVE
	Mon	2 11:00 am- 7:00 pm Bell Ringing @ HyVee (Dec 2-7)	9 5:00-6:00 FCH Foundation	16	23 4:30-7:00 Parent To Parent	<u>8</u>
700	Sun	1 Communion Sunday 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	8 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Annual Election Mtg	15 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 6:30 Community Blue Christmas Svc @ Grace Lutheran	22 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Christmas Fund Collection	29 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Noisy Sunday Heifer International

The Reverend's Ruminations

The blessings and responsibilities of being a Christian have been on my mind recently. As I write this, we're in the midst of a busy week preparing for our annual Fall Festival Ham Loaf Dinner (at a new date and time). It takes a lot of work—and no small bit of organization—to bring together an event like this, but when I see Heritage Hall filled with church and community members enjoying a great meal and supporting our church financially, I am reminded of the blessing of leading an active and vibrant church. Members of our church, both young and old, diligently carry out the responsibilities of advertising, preparation, serving, and cleanup—and deserve our heartfelt thanks for making it a welcoming and delicious dinner. Their efforts help our church continue to put its best foot forward in our community. If you didn't have a chance to be involved this time around, please plan to volunteer next time! Blessings and responsibilities go hand in hand.

As I visited and shared communion with our members at Ingleside, Goldfinch Estates, Woodland Manor, and Lakeview Care Center (as well as a home visit) over the last few weeks, I was again reminded of the blessings of being a Christian (and specifically United Church of Christ). It was evident in the camaraderie we enjoyed, as well as our common belief in the importance of the sacraments.

In many of these locations, we sit together around a table or even a comfortable living room setting and share "communion" in two senses: we take part in the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but we also spend time catching up on ideas, opinions, and feelings about our own lives and the life of the church. Many times our members long to be able to visit the church building again, but more often they wish they could see their old friends from the congregation. Do you notice the implied responsibility that accompanies the blessing of our many devoted older church members?

At the beginning of last month (amidst the normal busy-ness of church and community activities) several of the ladies of our congregation volunteered to support the family of Bill Norman as both they and we grieved his passing. The funeral and reception were held at Lakeview Care Center in this case, but our members stepped forward to share the church's love by serving the coffee and bars and of course many hugs and kind words with Bev and the rest of the family. What more poignant illustration of the awesome blessing and important responsibility of being a Christian, than to gather around the loved ones of one of our own members as they encounter the reality of death?

Jesus spoke many times of both the blessing and the responsibility of being a Christian. In the Gospel of Mark he says: "...but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (10:43-44). Our dual responsibility is to serve both Christ and those who are in need; but the blessing we know as Christians is that our Savior Jesus died for us, rose in glory, and continues to serve at the right hand of God for all eternity.

As you reflect on the blessings and responsibilities of being a Christian, would you prayerfully consider serving in a more active role at First Congregational United Church of Christ for a time? We are in the process of seeking board and council members for a new term, but always need short-term help in the way of kitchen workers, singers, Christmas decorators, or scripture readers as well. It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes an entire congregation to keep a church functional and vibrant!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Cory Germaín

Have <u>you</u> set up a *FREE* **RightNow Media** account through our church and started checking out all the amazing Christian videos, studies, classes, and children's content available to you? You are invited to share this link with a friend as well—it's a great opportunity to talk about our church with them while you offer nourishment for their Christian walk!

If not, just type in the address below on your favorite internet browser: *https://www.rightnow.org/Account/Invite/FCONG*

Council Minutes For First Congregational Church UCC 11-20-2019

The meeting was called to order by Moderator, Catherine Johnson. Pastor Germain led in devotion and prayer.

Members present were MaryDon Kislingbury, Catherine Johnson, Dave Adams, Larry Thompson, Julie Elliott, Deb Thate Cory Hainey, Dave Meschke and Marilyn Forstrom. Ex-Officio Pastor Cory Germain and Finance Board representative, Joanne Eisenbarger

Not present were Ellen Germain and Robbin Celandar

Minutes of the September meeting were approved as printed.

Treasurer's Report: Dave Meschke reported. Being 92% of the way through 2019, we have received just 72% of pledges. A donation has been received to replace the furnace on

balcony floor. Thank you!!! Motion was m/s/c to receive the report.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Cory reported on his monthly activities including Starfish aid,

sermon prep, communion for shut ins, related meetings, and NG Drill days. Pastor will be participating in a community Blue Christmas service at Grace Lutheran.

Board Reports

CE – Christmas program will be held December 15.

Diaconate – The Board met in November and addressed usual activities Facilities – No meeting

Hospitality – Busy baking cookies, Sunday morning treats will be moved to the 2nd Sunday of the month to alleviate congestion in the copy room.

Mission – Requesting that board sign up for their community room date ASAP. Worship – Will be decorating for Christmas on Sunday, 12-1, following worship

Old Business:

Budget Committee: Dave Meschke presented the proposed budget arrived at by the Committee. After much thoughtful discussion of the proposed budget and some forward thinking/brainstorming, the motion was m/s/c to approve the budget. It will be offered to the congregation and voted on at the annual meeting. Thanks to the Budget Committee!

Nominating Committee: Julie shared the slate of officers so far with six remaining opens. The Committee will continue to recruit but the slate must be published and made available to the congregation on Sunday, November 24 and will be voted on Sunday, December 8. Thank you to the Committee!

New Business: Date for the 2020 Annual Meeting was set for January 19. It will be held following worship with a Potluck after.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 18 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted Marilyn Forstrom, Clerk



Election Meeting Notice

Our annual Election of Officers will take place at the start of our 10:30 Worship service on December 8, 2019. A tentative slate of officers will be available in the back of the church by November 24th. At the "congregational conversation" held after church on 11/10/19 we discussed reducing the number of people needed by combining the Finance Board with the Church Council, and making the remaining Board Liaison slots members of their respective boards. IE-Each board will have 6 members, one of whom will be chosen by the board to be the Council Liaison, rather than our current structure of 6 members plus an additional elected Liaison. We are going to try that this year and see how well it works.

With those changes, as of the date this is being written we still have 9 slots to fill: Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer, three spots on Christian Ed, one spot on Diaconate, one spot on Missions, and one spot on Worship. The Moderator, Vice Moderator and Treasurer are probably the most important, but will probably be the most difficult to fill. While they do take some time, none of them are really that difficult, and you have lots of good support. Duties include:

Vice Moderator: Three year commitment. Chairs Council meetings in the Moderators absence, Helps with various tasks in cooperation with the Moderator/Council, becomes Moderator in the 2nd year of their term, and Past Moderator the 3rd year.

Moderator: Since we have not had a Vice Moderator this year, this will become a 2 year commitment. Chairs Council Meetings and Congregational meetings, determines meeting agendas,

Coordinates with Pastor and Board Chairs to ensure communication and cooperation, Reports to the congregation as needed, including summary for the year in the Annual Report. Becomes Past Moderator.

Treasurer: Three year commitment. Attend council meetings and give a report on the church finances, Reports in the newsletter at least quarterly-preferably monthly, Recaps the year for the Annual report, Signs and mail checks (about 2 times per month), Meet with investment agent to review investments and renew CD"S (Maybe a phone call once per month), Helps prepare Church Budget, Gets money for the cash box for church fund raisers. The assistant Treasurer (Jodi Kuhlers) writes all the checks, does all or the "book keeping" tasks and actually runs the financial reports needed for the Council meetings.

Please prayerfully consider each of these opportunities to help serve our church and contact me if you have questions or would consider serving. Serving on a board is a great way to gain more knowledge of how the church actually works and how much we do to serve others. It's also a great way to make new friends.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Julie Elliott Past Moderator



What does Mission Mean (to you)?

mission

['miSHən] NOUN

- 1. an important assignment carried out for political, religious, or commercial purposes, typically involving travel.
- the vocation or calling of a religious organization, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith.
- 3. a strongly felt aim, ambition, or calling.

synonyms:

aim · goal · purpose · objective · object · grail · holy grail · target · intention · intent · design · motive · aspiration · wish · desire · ambition

The Mission Board would like to invite you to help **guide our Mission projects for 2020**. We've come up with a few themes and would like to hear from you on your thoughts. We will have a poster with these themes listed at church. We ask that you put a star by your favorite theme. Or, if you have another idea, add it to our list!

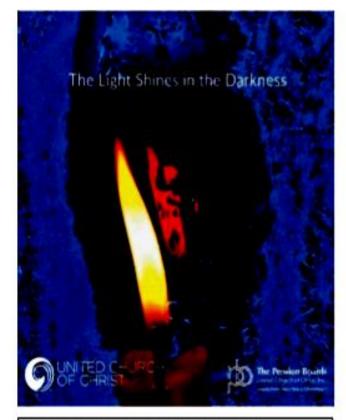
- Caring Reaches Around the World
- Cause Something to Happen
- From a Tiny Seed to a Great Harvest
- Giving is Living
- Go!
- God's Work Our Hands
- Into His Presence Out into the World

- Know, Share, Give, Care
- Light unto the World
- Love Lights the Way
- Make a Difference
- Mercy!
- Mission ImPossible
- Mission . . . the Heartbeat of God
- Nothing is Impossible
- oBEdient BE His Heart BE His Hands - BE His Voice
- Reach Your Arms Around the World
- Reaching Within Reaching Around – Reaching Beyond
- Sharing His Hands Extended
- The Power of Sharing
- Therefore . . . Go
- Unto the Least of These
- Yes!

We invite you think and pray about these themes and what Mission means to you. If you have ideas of how you'd like to see us live out our Mission at First Congregational UCC – Fairmont, there will be cards available where you can make suggestions for 2020 and beyond. Or you can contact any Mission Board member: Margo W, Deb A, Sherry L, Amanda F, Kay C, MaryDon K.

DECEMBER BLESSING BOX - THE CHRISTMAS FUND

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



"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." John 1:5

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 22, 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. For over 100 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a way to ensure that a light of love and hope will always shine for faithful servants of our church who find themselves facing unforeseen financial need.

One of the unique aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees—the funds do not support programs or institutions, but people. With your continued generosity, more individuals will receive the support of the Church in their time of need. Here's what was done in 2018:

MONTHLY PENSION SUPPLEMENTATION for 379 lower-income retirees. Our retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses rely on this income supplementation for basic needs such as food, utilities, and living and medical expenses. Funds to meet this need come from three sources: the Christmas Fund Offering, Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), and the Ministerial Assistance Fund.

HEALTH PREMIUM SUPPLEMENTATION for 174 lower-income retirees. These funds subsidize premiums for the UCC Medicare Supplement Plan so that retired individuals can afford and receive quality health care

CHRISTMAS "THANK YOU" GIFT CHECKS given to 401 retirees. This special gift at Christmas time reminds these Veterans of the Cross that they have not been forgotten and that the Church continues to be grateful for their service.

EMERGENCY GRANTS for 49 active/retired UCC clergy and lay employees in urgent need. Sometimes those who serve the Church need our help. Emergency funds are available to assist in covering costs that arise unexpectedly—for example, large medical expenses, or home damage resulting from natural disasters.

	Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
	27-Oct	Mildred Brodt Birthday		Jane Kotewa
	27-Oct	Thanks to Ruth Ann Jones		Jim Bock
	3-Nov	Memory of Bill Norman		James & Judy Barke
	3-Nov	John Holstine Birthday	Starfish	Ann Hartmann
	3-Nov	Donna & Dean Grotte Anniversary	Starfish	Ann Hartmann
	3-Nov	Memory of Bill Norman		Maynard Jagodzinske
	10-Nov	Memory of Joyce Stusse	Starfish	Cindy & Jon Anderson
	10-Nov	Memory of Bill Norman		David Meschke
	17-Nov	Memory of Keith Gieske	Starfish	Steve & Janine Draper

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 to the First Congregational UCC, Fairmont Starfish Fund. 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 "Starfish" on your check and we will

make sure to honor your wishes!



The Starfish Story

A young man is walking along the ocean and sees a beach on which thousands and thousands of starfish have washed ashore. Further along he sees an old man, walking slowly and stooping often, picking up one starfish after another and tossing each one gently into the ocean.

"Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?," he asks.

"Because the sun is up and the tide is going out and if I don't throw them further in they will die."

"But, old man, don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it! You can't possibly save them all, you can't even save one-tenth of them. In fact, even if you work all day, your efforts won't make any difference at all."

The old man listened calmly and then bent down to pick up another starfish and threw it into the sea. "It made a difference to that one."

December 1

Partners in Ministry

Diaconate: Eric B. Johnson Head Usher: Larry Thompson Acolytes: Tara Thedens **Reader: Abigail Roiger** Greeters: Abigail Roiger and Donna Grotte **December 8** Diaconate: Eric B. Johnson Head Usher: Brad Cone Acolytes: Sophia Brummond Reader: Alice Maday Greeters: George and Ruth Ann Jones **December 15** Diaconate: Eric B. Johnson Head Usher: Eric B. Johnson Acolytes: Tara Thedens Reader: Deb Adams Greeters: Don & Shelby Marks

December 22

Diaconate: Eric B. Johnson Head Usher: Cory Hainy Reader: Ellen Germain Greeters: Bill & Pat Cowing

December 24

Diaconate: Eric B. Johnson Head Usher: George Jones Reader: Cynthia Celander Greeters: Volunteers Appreciated

December 29

Diaconate: Eric B. Johnson Head Usher: Robbin Celander Reader: Joanne Eisenbarger Greeters: Tranna Urban and Dolores Gronewald

The Worship Board would like to thank Ann Hartmann for going above and beyond. Ann has washed, sanitized and restocked our "Busy Bags" for the enjoyment of children attending our worship services. Thank you Ann, much appreciated!

The annual UCC Choir Concert will be Sunday, December 22 during the worship service. Please come and support our choir--they work hard and appreciate your attendance. This year our title is "Give Us Peace, O Lord"

- Joyce Jorgenson



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC



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FRIDAY DECEMBER 6TH 3-7 PM NEW THIS YEAR -ONE DAY ONLY-

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

The 12 Days of Christmas — The Rest of the Story

When most people hear of "The 12 Days of Christmas", they think of the song. This song had its origins as a teaching tool to instruct young people in the meaning and content of the Christian faith.

Each of the items in the song represents something of religious significance. The hidden meaning of each gift was designed to help young Christians learn their faith. The song goes, "On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me..."

The "true love" represents God and the "me" who receives these presents is the Christian. Here you go:

The "partridge in a pear tree" was Jesus Christ who died on a tree as a gift from God.

The "two turtle doves" were the Old and New Testaments - another gift from God.

The "three French hens" were faith, hope and love - the three gifts of the Spirit that abide (I Corinthians 13). The "four calling birds" were the four Gospels which sing the song of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The "five golden rings" were the first five books of the Bible also called the "Books of Moses".

The "six geese a-laying" were the six days of creation.

The "seven swans a swimming" were the "seven gifts of the Holy Spirit". (I Corinthians 12:8-11; Romans 12, Ephesians 4; I Peter 4:10-11).

The "eight maids a milking" were the eight beatitudes.

The "nine ladies dancing" were nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:22 & 23)

The "ten lords a-leaping" were the Ten Commandments. The "eleven pipers piping" were the eleven faithful disciples.

The "twelve drummers drumming" were the twelve points of the Apostles' Creed.

So, the next time you hear "The 12 Days of Christmas", consider how this otherwise non-religious sounding song had its origins in the Christian faith.



Community Education and Recreation

714 Victoria Street Fairmont, MN 56031

(507) 235-3141



What's Happening at Fairmont Community Education and Recreation December 2019

"Lifelong Learning and Leisure Opportunities for All Ages"

Martin County Senior Voices invites you to learn about the many resources and services available to live a healthier lifestyle at the free "Healthy Living and Wellness Expo" on Monday, December 2, 4:00-7:00 pm, at the Five Lakes Shopping Centre, 400 South State Street, Fairmont. Special thanks to the Kiwanis Early Risers who graciously allowed this event to happen in conjunction with their annual Pancake Fundraiser! Pancake Tickets are available for presale @ \$7 or \$8 at the door from Kiwanis members.

Special thanks to the Fairmont Firefighters sponsoring CER Elementary Basketball, 3M for sponsoring Club Invention as part of LOFK Afterschool Enrichment, and Martin County Youth Foundation for funding Prairie Ecology Bus Center monthly science exploration sessions during LOFK Afterschool Enrichment. What You Do for Youth Really Does Matter!

Join a Winter Basketball or Volleyball League. The Co-Ed Winter Volleyball League informational meeting will be held on Thursday, December 5, 6:30 pm at the Fairmont Elementary School Cafeteria. The Winter Basketball League organizational meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 17, 6:00 pm in the Fairmont Elementary School Cafeteria.

All community string, brass, woodwind, and percussion players are invited to a Community Orchestra Holiday concert! Come to the Fairmont High School PAC at December 19, 5:00 pm for a rehearsal. The concert will be at 7:30. Pre-register through CER (235-3141) and music will be provided ahead of time for practice. Questions? Email <u>koenning.katie@apps.fairmont.k12.mn.us</u>

The CER Staff would like to wish you and yours a holiday season of Joy, Peace, Hope and Love. One of the most precious gifts you might give is to share your time and talent with others!

A Sampling of Upcoming Activities				
Lights on For Kids Daily Afterschool	December 2-20			
Zumba Flair	December 2			
Healthy Living & Wellness Expo	December 2			
Flexibility (Community Health Series)	December 4			
Acrylic Pour Painting-Christmas Ornaments	December 5			
Co-Rec Winter Volleyball Meeting	December 5			
Tower Gardening	December 10			
Building Bridges Casual Conversations	December 10			
Microsoft Publisher	December 14			
Men's Winter Basketball League Org. Meeting	December 17			
Microsoft Word	December 18			
Intro to Hydroponics (Master Gardener)	December 18			
Community Orchestra Holiday Concert	December 19			
Vacation Open Gyms	TBD			
New Year's Eve Roller Skating	December 31			
Martin County Automotive Academy	January 4			
Snowmobile Safety	January 4			
Saturday Elementary Boys Basketball	January 4	and much more!		

For an up-to date list of activities, see the CER Web Store located at <u>www.fairmontareaschools.com</u> (Register online with your MasterCard/Visa.) For more information, contact the CER Office located in the Fairmont Elementary School Door 15A, 714 Victoria Street, Fairmont. Call 507-235-3141 or email <u>rdauer@fairmont.k12.mn.us</u>

Birthdays

- 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 Olsonü Melva Tonne
- Dec 25 Gretchen Jorgensen
- Dec 26 Rev. Cory Germain Emma Germain
- Dec 28 Cathy Celander
- Dec 29 Eric B. Johnson Jesse Lasch Kora Kay Lasch
- Dec 30 Destiny Massey Ellen Germain
- Dec 31 Katelyn Draper



<u>Anniversaries</u>

Dec 4	Don & Shelby Marks	37 years
Dec 7	John & Donna Holstine	56 years
Dec 9	Brian & Julie Thate	19 years
Dec 10	Greg & Cheryl Ashland	25 years
Dec 18	Terry & Marcia Winegar	37 years
Dec 23	Robert & Diane Neusch	53 years
Dec 30	Lance & Jenny Willard	24 years





To view the full color version of the newsletter, you'll find it on the church website at: <u>http://www.fairmontucc.org/</u>



Fareway and Hy-Vee Receipts Report as of 17 November 2019

During the last four weeks, \$13,169.33 (8.78%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were turned in. After 36 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$139,586.64 (93.06%) toward the 11th \$150,000 goal. At the current rate, with the slips that I will pick up in the 8th of December should get us to the \$150,000 goal.

During the same four weeks, \$1,148.21 (1.43%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 63 weeks, Fareway is at \$67,595.35 (45.06%) toward our 3rd \$1,000 from Fareway Store. At the current rate it will still take another year and half to reach the \$150,000 goal

Thanks for bringing in all those slips and keep those slips coming.

Reported by Jim Bock



A special thank you goes out to the volunteers who assist with getting the newsletter out each month.

Due to the publication and distribution of the Annual Report, there will not be a January newsletter.

<--- cartoon submitted by Jim Bock