

May 2020

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID

First Congregational UCC  
319 Downtown Plaza  
Fairmont, MN 56031



Rev Cory Germain  
Pastor

Ann Osborn  
Administrative Assistant

Joyce Jorgenson

How to reach us....

Church Office  
507-235-5382

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

**E-mail**  
[ucc319@frontiernet.net](mailto:ucc319@frontiernet.net)

**Web Site Address**

## **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  
Opportunities for all ages through adult!  
Worship 10:30  
Communion the first Sunday of



# May



# 2020

							Fri	Sat
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	1	2		
3 10:30 Worship	4	5	6 5:00 Worship Board 5:30 Diaconate	7	8	9		
10 Happy Mother's Day! 10:30 Worship	11 5:00-6:00 FCH Foundation	12	13 5:00 Mission Board 6:30 CE Board 7:00 Choir Practice	14 5:15 Hospitality Board 7:00 Facilities Board	15	16		
17 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Food Drive	18 4:30-7:00 Parent To Parent	19 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	20 5:30 Church Council w/Finance Board 7:00 Choir Practice	21	22 900 a.m. June Newsletter Submission Deadline	23		
24 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Blessing Box Collection : Relay for Life	25  Memorial DAY	26	27 5:30 Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir Practice	28 9:30 Women's Bible Study	29	30		
31 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Noisy Sunday				*Scheduled services and meetings will resume if state/national guidance changes, or will continue by alternate means as long as necessary.				



# The Rev's Ruminations

Volume 1, Issue 2  
First Congregational United Church

Rev. Cory Germain

As I write this month's installment of my "Ruminations," we are still over three weeks from what many hope will be the end of the state's extended *Stay Home MN* order, but as with all things COVID-19 related, we will have to wait and see! Restrictions on group gatherings and our use of social distancing seem to be helping stem the tide of new infections in our state, so I applaud each of you for doing your part to keep both yourselves and your neighbors healthy by staying at home as much as possible. Online worship services and Zoom council / board meetings have in some strange way become a "new normal" for all of us!?! I know that some may feel things have been overly restricted, but the truth of the matter is that IF we want any chance of enjoying our Minnesota spring/summer together, then we all need to continue to abide under these restrictions until it is safe to loosen them.

In preparation for the April Church Council meeting (held over Zoom), I opened a popular daily devotional book that I've had for quite some time entitled *Jesus Calling*, by Sarah Young. As the title implies, each day's brief meditation is written in first-person voice as if the Savior himself is writing. The entry for April 15<sup>th</sup> was so timely amid our world situation that I chuckled out loud in my office:

*"TRUST ME, and don't be afraid. Many things feel out of control. Your routines are not running smoothly. You tend to feel more secure when your life is predictable. Let Me lead you to the rock that is higher than you and your circumstances. Take refuge in the shelter of My wings, where you are absolutely secure.*

*When you are shaken out of your comfortable routines, grip My hand tightly and look for growth opportunities. Instead of bemoaning the loss of your comfort, accept the challenge of something new. I lead you on from glory to glory, making you fit for My kingdom. Say yes to the ways I work in your life. Trust Me, and don't be afraid."*

On Good Friday, our epistle reading from Hebrews affirmed that Jesus has "been through the wringer" too, and therefore is precisely the one we need to guide us as he is imagined to be offering in *Jesus Calling*. Hebrews 4:15-16 says, *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* (NRSV)

Did Jesus have to live under a "stay at home" executive order, keep his gatherings under ten, or stay six feet away from others when he went to the marketplace? Not exactly, but these are very different times—and I don't think living under Roman occupation while also challenging the deeply-entrenched religious leaders of his day was any picnic!?! We need only recall the gospel narrative from that same Good Friday service (see John's 18–19<sup>th</sup> chapters) to understand that our great high priest has been through more than we can even imagine. But the glory of Jesus' Easter resurrection reminds us that even death is not the final word. Through God all things are possible! We will get through this temporary challenge as well.

Like I did last month, I want to encourage you to keep in touch with one another. I have heard several positive reports from our volunteers as they have been checking in with the congregation, so don't be surprised to get another phone call if you haven't already. Human interaction is one of the healthiest things you can do for your mental well-being, just do so safely by employing one of the new video technologies or just a good ol' fashioned phone call. Though we haven't been able to gather in person, I continue to hold each of you in my prayers. We are working our way through this together, and I am confident that we will emerge as an even stronger congregation than when we began!

Yours in Christ,  
*Rev. Cory Germain*

**Council Minutes  
For  
First Congregational UCC  
4-13-2020**

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

**Members Present:** Wendy Ziemer, Dolores Gronewald, Larry Thompson, Jane Kotewa, Catherine Johnson, Joanne Eisenbarger, Cory Hainey, David Meschke, David Adams, Robbin Celandier, Marilyn Forstrom, Pastor Cory

**Also present:** Jodi Kuhlers, Ass't Treasurer

**Minutes** of the March meeting were approved as printed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dave Meschke presented the report noting that at 25% of the way through the year, we have received 27% of estimated offerings. Our situation is currently sound. Motion was M/S/C (Larry/Joanne) to receive the report.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Cory shared his activities including a number of Zoom meetings as well as Facebook/Right Now Media services. There was some discussion of adding worship services to our website if possible and also possibly continuing some sort of internet services even when we are able to gather together again.

**Board Reports**

**Christian Education:** The Board is looking to put together info for summer camps/activities. Ellen would be willing to teach a younger class next year if a replacement can be found for the teen class.

**Diaconate:** The Pastor and Board continue to be in touch with the formal list of shut-ins as able and also continue plans for IHD Carnival fund raiser IF it can be held.

**Hospitality:** No Report

**Missions:** Joanne reported that the April Community Meal has been cancelled. The Board is hoping to be able to find volunteers to do Meals on Wheels in May.

**Worship:** No meeting. Thank you to Barb Bock for helping Pastor Cory with plants, palms and paraments for Easter season. Ace suggested that as we continue with online worship services, some members may like to pick up a hymnal to follow along at home. This can be done during normal church office hours.

**Facilities:** Larry shared that when down spouts were being repaired, the workers reported an area on the tower that has a number of very loose bricks. This will be looked into and may be a considerable expense in near future.

**Old Business:** The Thursday morning women's Bible Study has become the Congo Care Committee. They have been contacting ALL active members and will continue occasional contact until further notice. The calls seem to be well received.

**New Business:** Round up of all HyVee credit cards has been researched and verified by Jodi Kuhlers.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Pastor Cory and adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Marilyn Forstrom, Clerk

## MAY MISSIONS

### MAY BLESSING BOX – RELAY FOR LIFE

As with all public gatherings in the face of COVID-19 restrictions, Martin County Relay for Life is up in the air. It is scheduled for Saturday, June 27 but subject to change. Our church's team, the United Cancer Crushers, will let you know how you can help when plans for the annual event are known!

- Pastor Cory

### HOT MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERIES MAY 1-15

#### Cardboard/Boxboard Recycling Tips

##### Acceptable:

- Corrugated cardboard (the double-walled cardboard with the wiggly center) (Flatten boxes before putting in cart)
- Boxboard from chip, cereal and cracker boxes (as long as they are clean – no food residue)

##### Do Not put in recycling:

- NO Pizza boxes, egg cartons or ice cream cartons
- NO Fast food containers
- No waxed anything like milk cartons, drinking boxes, frozen food boxes





## Memorials

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
29-Mar	Memory of those who have passed in the last year	Starfish	Evalyn & Todd Carlson
5-Apr	Memory of Lyle Spitzack	Starfish	Jane Kotewa
12-Apr	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Cynthia Celander
12-Apr	Memory of Eloise Lidke		Cynthia Celander
12-Apr	Memory of Lyle Spitzack		Marilyn Forstrom

## Partners in Ministry

### May 3

**Diaconate:**

**Head Usher:** Cory Hainy

**Acolytes:**

**Reader:** Catherine Johnson

**Greeters:** Donna G. and Sherry V.

### May 10

**Diaconate:**

**Head Usher:** Robbin Celander

**Acolytes:**

**Reader:** Dolores Gronewald

**Greeters:** Cory and Christina Hainy

### May 17

**Diaconate:**

**Head Usher:** George Jones

**Acolytes:**

**Reader:** Julie Elloitt

**Greeters:** Don & Shelby Marks

### May 24

**Diaconate:**

**Head Usher:** Everett Hanning

**Acolytes:**

**Reader:** Abigail Roiger

**Greeters:** Abigail Roiger and Mary Don

### May 31

**Diaconate:**

**Head Usher:** Larry Thompson

**Acolytes:**

**Reader:** Kay Campe  
**Greeters:** Wanda and Donna G.



### **Interview with Verna Lunz on April 17, 2020**

Verna Lunz was born in St. James to Walter and Veryl Holm. She attended high school for 12 years and 1 year at Mankato State. She met her husband Verle at the Watonwan County Fair in 1951.

They married in May 1953 in the First Congregational UCC of Fairmont and Verle joined the church at that time. (Verna said their family reunions were very interesting because there were several Veryl/Verle relatives...uncles, cousins, aunts...with similar sounding names.)

While Verle was in the Navy, she went to San Diego where he was stationed. When they returned, they rented a farm on the Iowa border and later rented a Ward's property. They farmed for 61 years before retiring. They were blessed with two sons, Rick & Bob.

4-H and FFA were important to the family and Verna taught Sunday School at church. Verle was on the Board of Directors for Martin County Bank. He was also a Mason. Oh! and Verna was very active in politics! There must have been some mighty interesting conversations in their household!

Verna recently celebrated her birthday in March. Belated Greetings to You!

- Submitted by Lee Hanning

# rightnow MEDIA

**\*All worship services from First Congregational UCC (since March 22) are now available alongside the other great content on the rightnow MEDIA website & app!**

Once logged in to your *FREE* account on **rightnow** MEDIA, 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 great Christian shows, Bible studies, conferences, and study resources on the site. The "Pastor Cory's Picks" channel is where you'll find videos I've recommended here, as well as others that interest me. ~ *Pastor Cory*

---

First up this month, I've selected a timely study called **Overcoming Anxiety During COVID-19**, narrated by Jonathan Pokluda. All our extra time at home, away from many of the "normal" activities that define our lives, can be a source of anxiety to many who are used to a life on the go. Here is the synopsis of Jonathan's helpful study, each part of which is ten minutes or less:

*Anxiety can feel like a constricting snake slowly tightening around us until it is difficult to breathe. In recent weeks, the anxiety surrounding the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus has a hold on the whole world as people die, economies decline, and our lives change right before our eyes. In this four-part series, Jonathan Pokluda speaks words of comfort and wisdom, to help Christians navigate the areas of life COVID-19 is affecting. During this series you'll be encouraged in how to overcome anxiety in these troubling days and explore ways you can remain faithful to God and to others.*

---

I'm also recommending a slightly longer study called **Hope**, led by Louis & Hettie Brittz. "Hope" can feel like an elusive emotion during these uncertain days, but it is essential to our continued mental resiliency. The four videos in this study are each around 30 minutes, but no longer than the average sit-com you may have been watching! Additional resources are offered to go along with this study but are not necessary to enjoy it. Here's the synopsis:

*Hope can be hard to find and easy to lose. Living the Christian life without it is unthinkable, and yet, it isn't a fruit or a gift of the Holy Spirit. Nobody just 'gets' it. There is a road mapped out to Hope. It is one in which our perseverance and character can be stretched to a near breaking point...Through this four-part series, Louis and Hettie Brittz want to take every Christian on a journey to find personal Hope in the person of Christ. Through their powerful testimony, teaching and music, the South African born author/speaker and songwriter cut through the barriers to hope - our lack of identity in Christ, legalism, unforgiveness, and fear. Their approach is vulnerable, unique and practical with each of the sessions ending in a reflection and music ministry time.*

---

During these days of local and global concern, the editors at **rightnow** MEDIA have also curated several channels that you might find helpful as you seek to keep your heart and mind resilient amid sensationalized news reports and misleading social media influences. There are broader libraries organized to help you find appropriate programming for kids, youth, college & young adults, women, men, couples, or even small groups, but feel free to browse whatever peaks piques your interest! Maybe you'd even like to gather a group of friends—over the phone or social media—to discuss a **rightnow** MEDIA series similar to a book club?

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

As always, please feel free to share this link with your family and friends! It doesn't cost us anything extra to have more people access this great resource through our account!



## Annual Pie and Ice Cream Social during IHD

We are being cautiously optimistic at this point and making plans for the annual pie and ice cream social (plus pork chop on a stick!) during Interlaken Heritage Days on June 13th from 11-3 (or until we run out). We will once again be asking for our church family to donate ingredients for this wonderful fundraiser! Be watching the June newsletter or your email for an official word as the time gets closer. Below is a list of what we will need. Please contact Abby Namken @ 507-236-8500 with what you would like to donate-a portion of the quantity needed is just fine! For quality purposes, please purchase brands as noted and drop off at church prior to June 10th.

- 3-3 lb cans Crisco
- 2 lbs bananas
- 12 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 24 cups chopped rhubarb
- 18 cups apples (fresh/frozen)
- 10 lemons
- 8 lbs fresh strawberries
- 4 lbs butter
- 9-8 oz containers Cool Whip
- 6 pails of vanilla ice cream
- 6 cans cherry pie filling
- 3 small boxes strawberry Jello
- 2 boxes tapioca
- Pint + quart heavy whipping cream
- Pint half and half
- 2 cans coconut milk
- 1 Bag flaked, sweetened coconut
- 24 oz cream cheese
- 4 oz pkg Bakers Unsweetened Chocolate
- Half gallon whole milk
- Karo Corn Syrup
- 1 pkg dark brown sugar

Be watching for opportunities to sign up to help as well!

Pastor Cory says his occasional office coworker, Obi-Wan, is really on the ball sometimes!





## Read All About It

### HyVee and Fareway Receipts Report as of 11 April 2020

During the last four weeks, \$3,275.75 (2.18%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were turned in.

After only 20 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$53,233.64 (35.49%) toward the 12th \$150,000 goal.

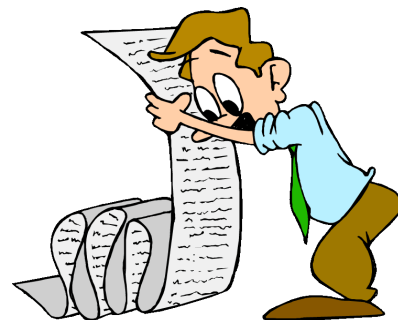
During the same four weeks, \$460.53 (0.31%) worth of Fareway slips were received.

After 84 weeks, Fareway is at \$85,740.24 (57.16) toward our 3rd \$1,000 from Fareway store. Because of the current situa-

tion, 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 only one week for Hy-Vee and one-half of a week for

Fareway about one-half of the average of what has been turned in per week the prior year. Thanks for bringing in all those slips and keep those slips coming. I am looking for a large quantity when we are allowed us to get-to-gather again.



Reported by  
Jim Bock

### Pastoral Relations Committee

The PRC meets quarterly each year to discuss joys and concerns regarding our pastoral leadership. 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. Church Pastoral Relations Committee

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!

#### CALLING ALL COOKS!

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

Feel free to do so!

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

Perhaps, your first recipe could be one you made during the quarantine.

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



### May Anniversaries

May 1	Kevin & Kelly Moller	38 years
May 3	Kris & Wendy Ziemer	23 years
May 3	Michael & Kara Rowan	6 years
May 6	Carolyn & Larry Thompson	54 years
May 6	Randy & Marcia Musser	43 years
May 9	Tom & Kathy Jorgensen	50 years
May 11	Jim & Lori Marushin	35 years
May 25	John & Sherry Larson	46 years
May 28	Dave & Sue Eisenbacher	9 years
May 30	Dave & Karen Cone	23 years

### May Birthdays

1 Kamara Cone	13 Sherry Larson	24 Lisa Meschke
2 George Jones	15 Larry Thompson	Paxton Rachuy
4 Louis Kenneth Goerndt	Carolyn Thompson	25 Lorie Zoeller
6 Jodi Kuhlers	Joel Thate	26 Shawn Elliott
9 Justin Thedens	Hanna Johnson	28 Hadley Becker
Grace Kotewa	16. Dylan Celandar	29 Marcia Winegar
10 John Douglas Roiger	Morgan Magnussen	31 Cory Hainy
12 Andrea Thate	17 Judy Olson	
Bennett Zabel	19 Alice Maday	
Ben Johnson	20 EvaLyn Carlson	
	Anne (Saxton) Wenz	
	21 Jim Chipman	
	23 Maia Goerndt	
	Reagan Shoen	