

April 2020

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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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

# HELLO April 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
In accordance with CDC and MN Department of Health guidelines, all in-person worship services and meetings are suspended until it is safe to resume. *Worship services will be available via Facebook Live on the First Congregational UCC Fairmont page, posted by Monday morning on the church website and RightNow Media pages, and broadcast on Fairmont cable channel 12 (Thursdays at 2:00 pm). Board meetings may be conducted via Zoom by scheduling in advance with Pastor Cory, who will send out the meeting link information.						
<b>5</b> *10:30 Worship	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 5:00 Mission Board *6:00 Lenten Svc 6:30 CE Board	<b>9</b> 5:15 Hospitality Board *6:00 Maundy Thurs Svc 7:00 Facilities Board	<b>10</b> *6:00 Good Friday Svc	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> <i>Happy Easter!</i> 10:30 Worship	<b>13</b> 5:00-6:00 FCH Foundation	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 5:30 Church Council w/Finance Board	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 9:00 a.m. May Newsletter Submission Deadline	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Blessing Box Collection	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 9:30 Women's Bible Study	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Blessing Box Collection	<b>27</b> 4:30-7:00 Parent To Parent	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 5:30 Free Comm Meal	<b>30</b>	*Scheduled services and meetings will resume after April 10 if state/national guidance changes, or will continue by alternate means as long as necessary.	



# The Rev's Ruminations

Volume 1, Issue 1

Rev. Cory Germain



**First Congregational United Church of Christ**

Oh what a difference a month makes!?! Usually I'd be making that comment about the ever-changing Minnesota weather, yet despite enjoying some milder days in March, we all know it's not what I'm referring to this time around. A month has seen the exponential worldwide and national spread of COVID-19 and brought massive, unprecedented changes to our world—changes that most of us never could have imagined while scanning last month's church newsletter!

As I write this, we have just been informed of Governor Walz's "Shelter in Place" order that codifies specific restrictions which until now have been a broad collection of recommendations and suggestions. These may feel overly restrictive to some, but the truth of the matter is that IF we want to get back to "business as usual" anytime relatively soon, then we all need to take the order seriously and limit physical contact to slow the potential spread of the virus between individuals.

Such a change to our routine will make everything feel different, but people everywhere are learning that there are new and different ways to accomplish tasks and maintain connections in what may seem like an alternate reality. Children and teachers will soon be starting online learning utilizing a variety of technologies that wouldn't ordinarily be part of a classroom. Business and church meetings have similarly begun utilizing websites like *Zoom* to include multiple participants via audio and video conference calls. Worship services from nearly every denomination are suddenly streaming live on *Facebook* and being made available on various websites. *[You'll find more about that elsewhere in this newsletter, as well as via email]*

If there's one thing people (and maybe more specifically *church people*?) don't like, it's CHANGE. I've joked plenty of times that the six most dangerous words in the life of a congregation are, "we've always done it that way." But if changes were never implemented in the life of a church, then where would we be today? In case you don't remember UCC history, the *United Church of Christ* is a direct result of change. It only came into being in 1957 with the union of two Protestant denominations: the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches (each of which was, in turn, the result of a union of two earlier denominations). You can bet that before 1957, none of these churches had thought about changing the way they'd "always done it," but evolving regional and national demographics, as well as post-world war economies, made the union a logical choice that would ensure the continuation of Christ's mission in the world.

Fast forward to today, and it may feel as though that metaphorical fast forward button is stuck!?! Watching a church service online or participating in a video teleconference with a church board may feel like something out of a futuristic novel or sci-fi movie, but without such "newfangled" options church life could easily grind to a halt. In fact, I've been encouraged to see that even more people are (at least superficially) tuning in to our online services than would actually show up in the sanctuary on Sunday morning or Wednesday evening! We are continuing to record the service for broadcast on Thursday afternoons at 2:00 pm through Fairmont's cable access TV channel 12, so even though some options are new, others do remain the same.

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# The Rev's Ruminations

Continued

Volume 1, Issue 1

Rev. Cory Germain



**First Congregational United Church of Christ**

Changes to our national pandemic response posture also seem to be coming out daily, if not hourly. To some, the continual volume of COVID-19 news—and worse, rumors—feels almost overwhelming. Such oversaturation can cause not only mental or physical stress, but spiritual distress as well. We may be monitoring our loved ones and ourselves for physical signs of the dreaded virus (as we must), but if you are in generally good health and are staying isolated to thwart person-to-person spread, then perhaps it's time to examine the mental and spiritual wellness of yourself and those around you.

As I recently encouraged during a “live Wednesday evening Lenten meditation” from my church office, please take time to reach out to one another—whether utilizing some of the new technologies or with a good ol’ fashioned phone call. A few volunteers from our congregation have begun touching base with everyone, so don’t be surprised to get a phone call—maybe from an old friend, but maybe from a fellow church member that you barely know. Don’t be shy! Human interaction is important to our mental well-being, so when we can’t gather physically it becomes all too easy to isolate ourselves from ALL forms of interaction. Find new ways to engage with your children or grandchildren (or vice-versa, for you kids), whether just checking in with a quick call, reading a story online, playing an old board game with the kids, or learning a new craft from your mother.

Lent has also become an entirely different landscape this year, and Holy Week and Easter will undoubtedly be different than anything you’ve witnessed before. But that does not mean they are cancelled! Quite the contrary—even in an altered presentation, they may be one of the few “normal” touchpoints you get to experience in the coming weeks. If you’re blessed with extra hours or days at home, now is the time to open your Bible and rediscover the narrative that culminates in the joy of Easter. I’d suggest reading a bit of John’s gospel each day, perhaps starting in chapter 11 and continuing to reach Easter’s glorious resurrection story in chapter 20. I plan to continue focusing my sermons on the epistle lessons within the Revised Common Lectionary, but those will obviously tie into the gospel lessons as we approach the holiest of Christian holidays on April 12.

As we move forward in ways both old and new, know that each of you is in my prayers. We will get through this together, and if we keep our minds and hearts open to new possibilities, we can emerge even stronger congregation than when we began!

Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Cory Germain*

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**Council Minutes**  
**For**  
**First Congregational UCC**  
**3-18-2020**

In an effort to comply with directives of Social Distancing by the government and health experts, the Council met via conference call. The meeting was opened by Moderator, Jane Kotewa. Rev. Germain led in prayer.

**Members Present:** Cory Hainy, Robbin Celandier, David Meschke, Ace Adams, Joanne Eisenbarger, Jane Kotewa, Larry Thompson, Marilyn Forstrom and Pastor Cory.

**Members Absent:** Dolores Gronewald and Wendy Ziemer.

**Treasurer's Report:** David Meschke shared the current numbers. We are 25% through the year and have received 25% of pledges. Accounts are currently sufficient but we will need to be vigilant in the face of so many unknowns relating to the Covid-19 crisis. A motion was M/S/C to receive the report.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Cory shared his activities for the past month and upcoming MN Air Guard commitments. He has visited with several local minister and others to see how other groups are planning to move forward and to be "a congregation that does not congregate" (Pastor Tony Fink). He will research how he can "carry worship services to the congregation" and move forward with those efforts. He will also look into alternative ways of getting communion to all members who want it without "congregating".

**Board Reports:** Board minutes were emailed to council members earlier. No official action was taken.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** The Council discussed the need to be cautious financially as we move into a time of so many unknowns. Motion was M/S/C to put capital improvements and OCWM payments on hold until the Council's June meeting to be reviewed at that time.

Members will be reminded by newsletter that the Starfish Fund is first and foremost FOR our members when they need help, that Heaven's Table is available for any who need food and will most likely need more donations in the near future from those who are able to do so. We also want all members to know that we are all here to support each other in hard times and to please contact Pastor Cory if you need any kind of assistance. He will find help for you. A "Care Group" will be established to contact members by phone or email to keep in touch and help them be aware of how ministry and worship will be shared during this crisis.

The meeting was closed with prayer and adjourned.

Respectfully submitted  
Marilyn Forstrom  
Clerk

## Items to consider:

### A note from the Church Council

The Church Council and Pastor Cory are actively working on ways to help everyone "be the church" as we adapt to a new normal for the foreseeable future. In addition to alternate methods of delivery for worship services, several volunteers have begun reaching out all our members in the form of small support groups. During this time of social distancing and "shelter in place," we want to ensure that you and yours are well, both physically and spiritually. The volunteers &/or Pastor Cory plan to contact you on a semi-regular basis via phone to make sure you are doing OK. These conversations are not meant to be long or inconvenient to you, but offer everyone an opportunity to talk to a church friend AND let us know if you are having issues that you might need help with. We have many in our congregation who would be willing to run errands or lend an appropriate "hand" if you are unable, so don't be afraid to let us know. If you need to speak specifically to Pastor Cory, he can be reached via his contact info on the newsletter cover, or you can let a volunteer know that you'd like a call and he will reach out to you as soon as possible.

Heaven's Table continues to be a valuable ministry partner of our church, and will likely be experiencing increased usage as the COVID-19 response continues. Our March food shelf fundraising efforts were obviously cut short by the cancellation of in-person worship services, so any donations you can make will be appreciated. You are also encouraged to continue your regular tithes and offerings to the church by mail, as we will not be able to pass offering plates in person for quite some time.

### Church 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 listed:

Cindy Anderson  
Pastor Cory Germain  
Lee Hanning  
Eric B. Johnson  
Abigail Roiger



Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14:27



# rightnow MEDIA

I hope you have enjoyed the first couple editions highlighting the great variety of videos available to you FREE OF CHARGE as members or friends of First Congregational UCC through our subscription to **rightnow** MEDIA. The website has a great selection of Christian shows, Bible studies, conferences, and study resources for all ages, so I hope you'll either check out one I review here or dive in and find one that piques your interest. If you've found one that you think others would enjoy, contact me about including it in future issues of our newsletter! ~ Pastor Cory

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**NEW: In the wake of our current COVID-19 "stay at home" isolation, Sunday and Wednesday services from First Congregational UCC are now available alongside all the 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 videos mentioned here.

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Looking for something more meaningful than another binge-a-thon of old sitcoms or reality shows as you spend all this extra time at home with family? Now is the time to check out **rightnow** MEDIA! During this time of local and even global concern, the editors at **rightnow** MEDIA have curated a list of several worthwhile devotions and other resources addressing the role of faith in bolstering our resilience. There are libraries organized to help you find appropriate programming for kids, youth, college & young adults, women, men, couples, or even small groups. Maybe you'd like to gather a group of friends—over the phone or social media—to discuss a **rightnow** MEDIA series similar to a book club?

In our recently-reactivated "Easter Inspirations" channel are several great studies, including some short animated devotionals that would be great to share as a family as Holy Week approaches. I'd like to highlight a youth/adult Easter study called *The Words of Jesus From the Cross* by Joe Boyd. Some of you may be familiar with the choral classic, "The Seven Last Words of Christ" by Joseph Haydn, highlighting Christ's final statements while hanging on the cross. In this video study, Pastor Boyd explores those seven famous statements and unpacks their meaning for our lives. Here is the synopsis of ***The Words of Jesus From the Cross***:

*The Gospels record only seven statements of Jesus from the cross. In this devotional series Joe Boyd looks at each of these statements through the lens of suffering. While other religions address the problem of human suffering, Christianity is unique in that, through Jesus, God suffers with us. Jesus knew pain in a very real way, especially on the cross. Nobody wants to suffer, but it is often through pain that we learn, grow and experience our deepest levels of communion with God and each other.*

Joe Boyd's seven-part series of 3-to-5 minute episodes is available in the "Easter Inspirations" channel of our *First Congregational UCC* library on the **rightnow** MEDIA home page.

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\* 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!

## Partners in Ministry

### \*If services resume

#### April 12

Diaconate:

Head Usher: Brad Cone

Acolytes:

Reader: Cory Hainy

Greeters: George & Ruth Ann Jones

#### April 19

Diaconate:

Head Usher: George Jones

Acolytes: Blakely Weber

Reader: Carolyn Thompson

Greeters: Don & Shelby Marks

#### April 26

Diaconate:

Head Usher: Randy and Pat Rowan

Acolytes:

Reader: Kay Campe

Greeters: Joe and Morgan Christensen



## MEMORIALS



Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Bill & Jan Bremer
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Donna & Dean Grotte
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Ramona Harper
23-Feb	Lee Trunkenbolz Birthday		Ann Hartmann
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Ruth Ann & George Jones
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		MaryDon Kislingbury
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson	Starfish	Patty Cook
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson	Starfish	Dick & Kathy Sturm
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson	Starfish	Jim Lundahl
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Joyce Steenhard
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Ruth True
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Jeanne Miller
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Frank Moriarty
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Russ Rosenberg
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Lynee, Mary & Scott Erickson
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Dan & Fran Bebernes
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Lake Promenaders
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Sean Sturm
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Arnie Rosenberg
23-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Becky & Tony Wendler
23-Feb	Memory of Peggy Heinrich	Starfish	Les Heinrich
15-Mar	Memory of Peggy Heinrich	Starfish	Les Heinrich



## APRIL BLESSING BOX – STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

The Strengthen the Church Offering is one of the five special offerings of the United Church of Christ. Our congregation has a long history of being a “Five for Five” church, meaning we participate in all five of the UCC special offerings. In April, we will focus our blessing box on the Strengthen the Church offering. We will collect our offering the last Sunday of April, the 26<sup>th</sup>.



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

### Strengthen the Church Offering

The gifts He gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. – *Ephesians 4:11-12*

Please join us in planting the seeds needed to grow and sustain our denomination by making a gift to the Strengthen the Church offering.

The Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill on its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

**STRENGTHEN  
THE CHURCH**

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

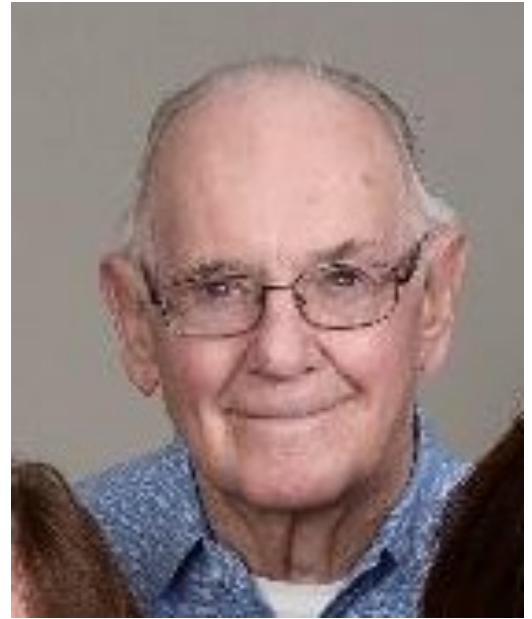
Bring any food donations to the church and we will see that they are taken to Heaven's Table. Now is the time to help our neighbor . . . who is our neighbor? Anyone who has a need!

### ***Get your wheels ready to move!***

Sign-up sheets will be in the back of the sanctuary to sign up for delivering Hot Meals on Wheels in Fairmont, May 1-15. We need four sets of wheels every Monday – Saturday, 11 am. It only takes about a ½ hour to complete this wonderful mission and the rewards are endless! Please consider taking part in this opportunity to serve our neighbors! Do it with a friend!!



**Hot Meals**  
on **WHEELS**



## **Interview of Lee Trunkenbolz on February 23, 2020**

Lee (Leland) was born in Eagle, Nebraska, moved with his parents to Lincoln, Nebraska, and graduated from high school in 1952. He met his future wife June in high school.

At 18, he joined the Navy serving from 1953-1956 having gone to Naval School in DC. He spent 2 years in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He attended Nebraska Wesleyan College from 1958 and graduated in 1959.

He and June were married in 1958 and were together 59 years when she passed away in 2017. During their marriage they were blessed with two daughters, Tracy and Tori. The family moved to Fairmont in 1968 where he worked at Central Telephone Co. until 1982.

When they came to Fairmont, (after trying another church) they joined the First Congregational Church UCC-Fairmont. Lee & June were very active in our church where Lee was in the Choir and Chimes Choir until recently. He celebrated his 85th birthday at church on February 23, 2020.

He's always got a smile on his face!

- Submitted by Lee Hanning

## Letter from EvaLyn Carlson Received in March

March 2020

My dear friends at First Congregational UCC, I send greetings of love.

The events of the day have forced me to cloister myself in my little abode in Grand Marais, and you can imagine how easy that is for me to do! Although as of today, the Ides of March, we have no discovered case of the pandemic virus in Cook County but are preparing for it in what seems to be some pretty healthy ways.

Speaking of health, I want you all to know that as of today I am still cancer free. I have found recovery to be a slow process that takes patience (you know how easy that is for me, too!). But I am grateful to be able to slide into retirement like a skater on the ice. Notice I did not say professional skater, so I have a few bumps and bruises from not anticipated falls, like the root canal that is waiting for me in the near future.

I have been re-reading the many cards and messages that you have sent over the last couple of years, especially during the time I wasn't sure what was happening. I have always felt that God speaks to us through others in a myriad of ways and that has been borne out in the many messages of encouragement, love and yes...humor...that arrived for me from so many of you. Your love, your thoughts, your prayers sustained me through what I consider one of the most difficult times of my living. You made a difference in so many ways. I could visualize myself at Edie's smart talking with the Edie's Women. I heard the choir sing their stories of God's love and mercy. I have listened to sermons and continue to be excited about the ministries that we began together and the ones that have called to you recently. I have shed tears with you over the losses of loved ones and reflect on our times together. I have prayed for you Pastor as I do know that shepherding you all at First Congo is more like herding cats than shepherding sheep and he needs all of the energy that I can send. I have missed you all but know in this changing world, that the one thing that remains is the connection that God has provided for each of us in the lives that we share. I cannot thank you enough for just being you.

I continue to pray for each of you as I follow you through community meals, choir practice (I really pray then!), harvest dinner, and each way you reach out and touch lives.

Who knows? Someday I may even show up in my clown outfit and surprise you. Only, I suppose that wouldn't be a surprise.

Blessings and love to you all. EvaLyn





## HyVee and Fareway Receipts Report as of 15 March 2020



During the last four weeks,

\$3,133.40 (2.09%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 80 weeks, Fareway is at \$85,279.71 (56.85%) toward our 3rd \$1,000 from Fareway Store. At the current rate it will still take about 63 more weeks to reach the \$150,000 goal

not seen such a low value in consecutive weeks in the past 2 years. Thanks for bring in all those slips and keep those slips coming. Let's hope the quantity picks up as Spring arrives.

\$8,458.80 (5.64%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were turned in. After only 16 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$49,957.89 (33.31%) toward the 12th \$150,000 goal.

During the same four weeks,

During the last four weeks, the number and value of slips was only about one-half of the average of what has been turned in per week the prior year. I have

**Reported by Jim Bock**

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Has your baby lost its extension cord yet?"

*He is not here,*  
FOR HE HAS  
**RISEN**  
*just as He said.*

Matthew 28:6



# Happy Anniversary

## Anniversaries

April 5	Curt & Vicki Bicknase	23 years
April 12	Amanda & Ryan Cain	12 years
April 16	Kirk & Gina Jorgensen	15 years
April 20	Jacob & Abbey Shoen	7 years
April 20	Eugene & Polly Mosloski	16 years
April 27	Tim & Kay Campe	35 years
April 30,	Jim & Barb Bock	54 years

# April

## *Birthdays & Anniversaries*

### Birthdays

April 4	Caleb Rachuy
April 5	Vonnie Cone Bill Cowing Dan Wenz
April 6	James Marushin Jan White Dave Meschke
April 7	Dan Thate
April 8	Khloe Zabel
April 10	Marcia Musser
April 12	Doug Guritz Will Hawkins
April 13	Joyce Knudson
April 15	Randy Rowan Chris Draper



# Happy Birthday!

April 16	Lyle Norris K.T. Magnussen
April 18	Terry Riggs
April 21	Cameron Hainy Arianna Moller Smith Jerry Norman
April 22	Donna Grotte Rachael Tonneson

April 26	Lorin Pollock Ken Schwieger
April 28	Nola Thedens Michael Neusch





**STRENGTHEN  
THE CHURCH**



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# SEEK & FIND



S	A	C	R	B	L
T	C	R	E	K	J
R	H	E	G	T	L
E	R	A	N	H	H
N	I	T	L	S	T
G	S	E	E	M	U
T	T	M	A	K	O
H	I	C	D	L	Y
R	A	S	E	N	L
C	H	U	R	C	H
O	X	J	S	N	N
N	G	P	L	F	P
E	O	G	I	V	E
I	Y	O	R	T	S
G	P	H	O	P	E
H	Z	A	B	L	D
B	R	E	N	E	W
O	H	I	G	T	O
R	W	L	O	V	E
T	S	A	F	W	Q

Strength  
Leaders  
Create

Hope  
Church  
Youth

Christ  
Love  
Renew

Neighbor  
Give