

March 2023

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

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First Congregational UCC
319 Downtown Plaza
Fairmont, MN 56031



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*First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Fairmont, Minnesota*

How to reach us....

Church Office
507-235-5382

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

E-mail

uccsecretary319@gmail.com

Web Site Address

www.fairmontucc.org

Rev. Cory Germain
Minister

Christina Hainy
Administrative Assist.

Joyce Jorgenson
Choir Director

Rev. Cory Germain

Office Hours:

Tuesday 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday 12:30 p.m. through
evening meetings & activities

Thursday 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Friday 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Rev. Cory's phone: 507-399-8282

Worship Hours

Worship 10:00

Sunday school 10:00

Communion the first Sunday of
every month.



MARCH 2023

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Lenten Svc 6:15 Worship Bd 7:00 Choir	2 9:30-11:30 K reserved 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)	3 10:00-2:00 K reserved	4
5 <i>Communion</i> <u>10:00</u> Worship/ Sunday School	6	7 10:00 Lakeview Communion 5:30 Diaconate Bd	8 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Lenten Svc 6:15 Mission Bd 6:15 CE Bd 7:00 Choir	9 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH) 5:15 Hospitality Board	10 9:00 Council Agenda Items Due	11
12 <i>Daylight Savings Time Begins</i> <u>10:00</u> Worship/ Sunday School	13	14 7:00 Facilities Bd	15 4:00 NO Confirm. 5:30 Lenten Svc 6:00 Church Council 7:00 Choir	16 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> 9:00 April newsletter items due	18
19 <u>10:00</u> Worship/ Sunday School	20	21 10:00 Goldfinch Communion 4:00-8:00 HH/K reserved	22 4:00 NO Confirm. 5:30 Lenten Svc 7:00 Choir	23 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)	24	25
26 <u>10:00</u> Worship/ Sunday School Blessing Box Collection	27	28	29 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Lenten Svc 5:30 Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir	30 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)	31	

The Reverend's Ruminations - March 2023

As I sit down to write this month's "ruminations," I am working from home in the aftermath of one more snowstorm in what already feels like a long winter — and it's only the end of February! Deep down we realize that the earth needs this cold and snow to rejuvenate itself for another growing season, but unless you enjoy outdoor winter activities, perhaps you're already over the magic of a snow-white blanket and bitter wind chills.

No matter your opinion of our winter wonderland, as good Minnesotans we usually find ourselves longing for the next season on the calendar. These days many are leaning *hope-fully* toward spring, and while the calendar season (and the warmer temperatures) are still a ways off, perhaps it's appropriate that we find ourselves in the midst of forty solemn days known in the church as Lent. It began rather unceremoniously on February 22nd with the cancellation of our traditional Ash Wednesday service due to a good ol' Minnesota blizzard — and will continue until the joyous resurrection celebration of Easter (forty days not counting Sundays).

Last month I made mention of the fact that many Christians choose to give up the comfort of a favorite food, drink, or habit in order to gain a better understanding of our Savior's suffering and temptation in the wilderness. But what else do you know about Lent? A few years ago, I shared snippets from an interesting article by Rev. Sarah Phillips on crosswalk.com, and thought they would be a good reminder again this year:

"...Unlike the childlike joy associated with the season of Advent, with its eager anticipation of the precious baby Jesus, Lent is an intensely penitential time as we examine our sinful natures and return to the God we have, through our own rebelliousness, hurt time and again. Lent is also an opportunity to contemplate what our Lord really did for us on the Cross – and it wasn't pretty. But ultimately, the purpose of Lent does not stop at sadness and despair – it points us to the hope of the Resurrection and the day when every tear will be dried" (Revelation 21:3).

Obviously, Lent doesn't elicit the excitement that Advent does; but then again, maybe the commercialization of Christmas has taken so much Christ out of *Christ-mas* that we've lost sight of Advent's significance in our church lives as well!?!

So how do we "do" Lent? One of the most important aspects of Lent is confession – although not in the foreboding sense that you may be picturing from some old movie. As Rev. Phillips says, "... [the forty days of Lent] are set aside to really examine areas of recurring sin in our lives that prevent us from being conformed to God's Will... The goal is to honestly examine your life in light of God's Word and to make a commitment to change in any areas you have not submitted to the Lord." None of us have yet managed to fully live up to Christ's example, so just be honest as you examine your Christian walk, and then look for ways to make improvements – incremental as they may be.

A good way to start your own examination of conscience is by praying the words of Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." After opening yourself to God with these words, then hold up your life to the Ten Commandments. Confess to God, to me as your pastor, or to an accountability partner (as suggested in James 5:16) the ways you may have sinned against God. But don't stop there, or you may really feel stuck! Thank God for the forgiveness offered through Christ's sacrifice, and then ask God for the grace to change. You may be pleasantly surprised where and when God chooses to respond in your life.

My prayer is that you will approach Lent with a renewed sense of purpose this year, and find yourself connecting more deeply to our Savior's temptation and sacrifice in the coming weeks. Throughout the season I invite you to pause at church each Wednesday at 5:30 pm for our 30-minute Lenten services, where we will sing, pray, and share in some additional thoughts on the gospel lessons leading us toward Easter. Also available again this year is a professionally-published daily Lenten devotional from the United Church of Christ. Those of you familiar with their Advent devotional will enjoy the variety of images offered by a broad spectrum of contributing writers. I hope that you will find it to be a helpful guide as you journey with Jesus toward the cross – and his glorious resurrection on Easter morn (celebrated this year on April 9). See you along the Lenten journey!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Cory Germain



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
FAIRMONT, MN
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 2-15-2023**

Members Present: Abigail Anderson, Catherine Johnson, Kay Campe, Sue Kruse, Cathy Celander, Larry Lasch, Amanda Forstrom, Amber Brummond, Robbin Celander, Cindy Huset, Joanne Eisenbarger and Christina Hainy. Ex-officio members present: Pastor Cory, Dara Bliesmer, Ass't Treasurer. Guest: Sophia Brummond.

The Council met in Heritage Hall at 5:45 PM. The meeting was called to order by Moderator Abigail Anderson. Pastor Cory led in prayer. Motion to approve the minutes from the January 18th meeting was M/S/C (Larry Lasch/Catherine Johnson).

Treasurer's Report: Catherine Johnson reported that 16% of pledged giving has been received. Please, use the reimbursement forms located outside the church office or on the kitchen's bulletin board to be reimbursed for church items. Put your name/brief description of items on the form and attach the receipt. Return to church office or Treasurer's mailbox. The items for church are exempt from sales tax. Forms to give to suppliers are in the Treasurer's folder in the church office.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Cory reported his ministry highlights for January 18-February 14. A highlight was singing the *National Anthem* at the Xcel Energy Center in February. In March, he has an Air Force Wing Chaplain Course that will require pulpit supply for the church.

BOARD REPORTS:

Christian Education: Amber Brummond discussed summer trip opportunities for the youth.

Hospitality: Cathy Celander reported that Hospitality was having a work night that night.

Facilities: Larry Lasch reported that Facilities rescheduled their meeting to Tuesday, February 21 so there were no minutes.

Diaconate: Sue Kruse stated that they have been delivering flowers and a reminder that services begin at 10 AM starting on Sunday, February 26.

Mission: Amanda Forstrom reported that there are twelve people signed up for the Kids Against Hunger food pack.

Worship: Cindy Huset reminded us to sign up for altar flowers. There is a signup calendar for the year on the main bulletin board.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Carpet cleaning update: discussed and tabled.
- Church service survey results: A vote was taken at the Annual Meeting to change Worship starting time to 10 AM year-round. (9 votes for 9:30 AM, 19 for 10 AM, & 2 for 10:30 AM)

NEW BUSINESS:

- OCWM vote on amount pledged/how often: After discussion, we decided to have a representative from the MN Conference visit to speak about what the Conference does.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 15 at 6 PM following the Lenten Service.

Pastor Cory closed the meeting with a prayer, and Moderator Abigail Anderson adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Christina Hainy, Clerk

the skitguys

7 PM
Friday
March 31st



45 Downtown Plaza, Fairmont, MN 56031

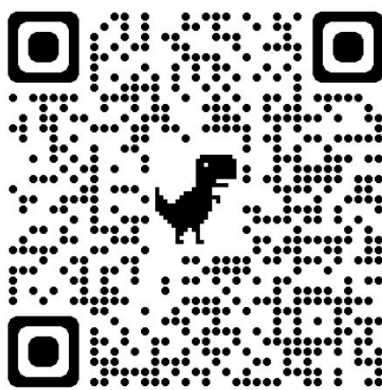
Fairmont Opera House

Tickets: \$5



Josh Edwards

Musician and leader of
CONNECT Ministries



Please scan QR code for
ticket information or call
(507) 238-4900



Tom Eggum

Founder of Hope 4 Kids
International

thrivent®

MEMORIALS

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
8-Jan	Memory of Maurice & Shirley Iliff	Starfish	Larry & Carolyn Thompson
15-Jan	Memory of Tranna Urban	Capital	Stephen Urban
22-Jan	Memory of Orel Barker	Starfish	Jane Kotewa
22-Jan	Memory of Orel Barker		Laurence Vogel
22-Jan	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson		Kim & Jan Shaffer Family Fund
5-Feb	Memory of Ken Rachuy	Starfish	Jon & Cindy Anderson
5-Feb	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson		John & Sherry Larson
5-Feb	Memory of Orel Barker		Lyle & Charlene Norris
5-Feb	Memory of Bev Norman		Lyle & Charlene Norris
5-Feb	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson		Lyle & Charlene Norris
5-Feb	Memory of Ken Rachuy	Capital	Larry & Carolyn Thompson
5-Feb	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson	General	Les Heinrich
5-Feb	Memory of Peggy Heinrich	Starfish	Les Heinrich
5-Feb	Memory of Gin Mevissen	Starfish	Les Heinrich
5-Feb	Memory of Ken Rachuy	Starfish	Les Heinrich
12-Feb	Memory of Nelly Masica	Starfish	Jon & Cindy Anderson
12-Feb	Memory of Ken Rachuy		Janine Draper
12-Feb	Memory of Ken Rachuy		Dolores Gronewald
12-Feb	Joyce Jorgenson Birthday	Music	Virginia Riedesel
12-Feb	Bob & Jan Cone Anniversary	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel
12-Feb	Memory of Ken Rachuy		Pat & Randy Rowan

Altar Flower Signup: If there is a Sunday that has a special meaning to you and you would like to provide the flowers, please sign up on the calendar by the coat closet. Write your name and who the flowers are in memory/honor of. Please know that we appreciate you sharing your special memories/days with us! Contact Janine Draper with questions at (507) 236-3499.

rightnow MEDIA

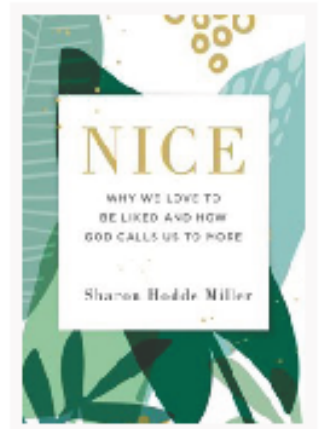
***Worship services from First Congregational UCC are available (& searchable by date) alongside the other great content on the rightnow MEDIA website & app!**

NICE... Minnesota Nice? What does that even mean? And is it really what Christian women are called to be *all the time*? If you are a woman who tries to be "nice" all the time, could it be getting in the way of your faith? During this season of Lent, maybe it's time to examine yourself more closely and see where Jesus challenges us toward something different! Check out the five sessions of *Nice*, either by yourself or better yet, together with a group of your friends:

God never called us to be nice.

We live in a culture that prizes niceness as one of its highest virtues. Niceness keeps the peace, wins friends, gains influence, and serves our reputations well, but it also takes the teeth out of our witness and the power out of our faith. When we choose to be nice instead of faithful, we bear fruits that are bland, bitter, empty, and rotten to the core.

In this 5-session series based on her book, Sharon Hodde Miller explores the seemingly innocent idol that has crept into our faith and quietly corrupted it, producing the bad fruits of cowardice, inauthenticity, shallowness, and more. She challenges readers to cultivate a better "tree," providing practical steps to reclaim our credibility as followers of Christ, and bear better, richer, more life-giving fruits.



Men, how many times have you started a conversation with the phrase, "if only..."? "If only I'd made that catch; if only I'd gotten that raise; if only I could do that better..." Far too often we wonder how much differently things could have turned out for us "if only." Are you ready to break out of that way of thinking? Then take the opportunity this month to check out four short sections of *IF* with Mark Batterson:



Trading Your If Only Regrets for God's What If Possibilities

If is a powerful little word. Some people are stuck in "if only," trudging through lives marked with regret. But God wants us to live lives marked with possibilities, with the "what if" attitude that looks forward to the future with confidence. Why? Because the answer to "If God is for us, who can be against us?" is "No one." God is always on our side. Every day, in every way.

With his trademark enthusiasm and contagious joy, Mark Batterson helps us overcome feelings of guilt, fear, and doubt because in Christ there is no condemnation. Unpacking the promises of Romans 8, he shows us that we are more than conquerors—right now and forever.

*Still need to sign up for a **FREE rightnow MEDIA** account? There are 3 convenient ways:
Go to <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/FCONG>

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



Once logged in to your **FREE** account, you can click directly on "First Congregational UCC" near the top of the page to access the "Fairmont Worship Services" channel, or "Pastor Cory's Picks"—which is where you'll find videos I've recommended here, as well as others that interest me. Stay tuned... the list changes as I discover new picks! If you've discovered a show or video on **rightnow MEDIA** that you think others would enjoy, email me and I'll promote it in next month's column.

~ Pastor Cory



Mission Moment

March Blessing Box is the MN Food Drive

This is a statewide food drive that partners with nearly 300 food shelves including our local Heaven's Table. It is the largest grassroots food and fund drive in MN that in 42 years has distributed over \$18.5 million via the Food Fund. There will be boxes at church to bring in your food donations, but consider giving financially if you are able as it can go further due to access to food banks and discount purchasing programs. This also allows local food shelves to purchase items most needed in their individual communities. If you give financially to the food drive blessing box, just indicate on your check or on an envelope (in church pews or back of church) that it's for the blessing box food drive.



CE News:

The CE Board will once again be helping with the cost of Bible Camp. Each kid will get up to \$100 towards a Bible camp of their choice. Once your child is signed up for camp, submit a reimbursement form. The forms can be found by the CE office up in the Sunday School area. You can contact Abby Shoen (507-230-3234) if you have any questions pertaining to camp.

Many of the kids are already signed up to go to Ingham Lake Bible Camp (younger kids are at Ingham Lake, just east of Estherville, while the older kids will be at the Okoboji campus).

Other local camps are:

Lakeshore, Okoboji, IA

Twin Lakes Bible Camp, Manson, IA

Camp Omega, Waterville, MN

Shetek Lutheran Ministries, Slayton, MN

Lake Beauty, Long Prairie, MN

Green Lake Bible Camp, Spicer, MN

"TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST AND TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN TO ALL"

SUMMER 2023 CAMP

INGHAM OKOBOJI LUTHERAN BIBLE CAMPS



K-6TH GRADE CAMPS

Camp-in-a-day # 1 (K-2nd) June 21
Camp-in-a-day # 2 (K-2nd) June 22
Camp-in-a-day # 3 (K-2nd) July 12
Camp-in-a-day # 4 (K-2nd) July 13
Camp-in-a-day # 5 (K-2nd) July 19
Camp-in-a-day # 6 (K-2nd) July 20
Pathfinders #1 (2-5th)..... June 18-20
Pathfinders #2 (2-5th)..... June 25-27
Pathfinders #3 (2-5th)..... July 9-11
Pathfinders #4 (2-5th)..... July 16-18
Trailblazers #1 (4-6th)..... June 18-23
Trailblazers #2 (4-6th)..... June 25-30
Trailblazers #3 (4-6th)..... July 9-14
Trailblazers #4 (4-6th)..... July 16-21

JUNIOR HIGH CAMPS

Confirmation/Jr. High (6-9th) . June 11-16
Confirmation/Jr. High (6-9th) July 9-14
Junior High Camp (6-9th)..... July 23-28

JR./SR. HIGH CAMPS

Senior High Encounter (9-12th) July 16-21
Outdoor Adv. Camp (7-12th) July 30-Aug. 4
LiveWire Music Camp (7-12th) July 30-Aug. 4

FAMILY CAMPS

Family Camp #1 June 18-23
Speaker: Rev. Dr. Steve Turnbull
Family Camp #2 June 25-30
Speaker: Rev. Scott Rains
Family Camp #3 July 2-7
Speaker: Rev. Amy Selby
Family Camp #4 July 23-28
Speaker: Craig "Swen" Swenson
Family Camp #5 July 30-Aug. 4
Speaker: Rev. Dr. Jerry Watts
Family Camp #6 August 6-11
Speaker: Rev. Brian Spahr

EVENTS

Beach House Dedication (Ok) Apr. 29
Ice Cream Social (Ingham) June 4
Scandinavian Feast (Okoboji) Aug. 4
Glenn Henriksen Concert (Ok) Aug. 4
5K Fun Run (Okoboji) Aug. 5
Quilt Auction (Okoboji) Aug. 5
Golf Classic Aug. 19
Hog Roast (Ingham) Aug. 27
Sunday Worship/Brunch (Ok) Memorial-Labor Day

REGISTER TODAY!
WWW.OKOBOJI.ORG

Our greatest sympathies to Joy Rachuy and family on the passing of her husband, Ken.

Thank you to Kathy Jorgensen, Sue Kruse and Margo Weaver for helping to prepare the February newsletter for mailing! I appreciate your help so much!
-Christina

Ushers, Readers, Greeters Signup: Please sign up for a Sunday or Sundays in 2023! The sign up sheet is on the table in the Narthex.



Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 12.

Found in the front entry: silver earring. Please claim it in the office if it belongs to you.

On March 10, from 5:00-7:30 PM, the Fairmont Knights of Columbus are having a Fish Dinner Boil at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 920 East 10th Street. A \$15 donation is suggested for an all-you-can-eat dinner of codfish, baby potatoes, pearl onions, coleslaw, French bread, dessert, juice and coffee. Donations will be given to Orphan Grain Train, Veterans Services & local organizations.

The newsletter is available (in color) on the church website.

<http://www.fairmontucc.org>

March's recipe is Hailie Stenzel's favorite:

Creamy Garlic Dream Chicken w/ Asparagus

Ingredients

6-8 chicken thighs
1/2 teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
2 tablespoons olive oil

For the SAUCE

12 ounces of heavy cream
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/4 cup butter melted
1 teaspoon olive oil
5 cloves of garlic minced
1 tablespoon of dried chives
1/2 tablespoon fresh parsley
1/2 cup of freshly grated parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 pound of fresh asparagus cut the ends off and cut them into 3 inch strips



Instructions

In a large non-stick skillet , heat the oil on medium.

Take your chicken thighs and season them with all the ingredients that are not 'sauce' ingredients.

Place them one by one into the hot skillet and cook for about 15 minutes, or until browned on both sides, flipping as needed, remove the chicken from the skillet and set aside while you make the sauce.

In a large mixing bowl, combine all sauce ingredients EXCEPT GARLIC & 1 teaspoon olive oil & mix until well combined.

In the same skillet you used for the chicken, add in the 1 teaspoon olive oil and the minced garlic and cook about 1-2 minutes on medium, then pour the sauce mixture in with the garlic & bring to a boil for about 3 minutes or so, mixing constantly.

Reduce heat and add in the asparagus and the chicken, simmer until asparagus is tender, about 5-7 min on LOW covered.

ENJOY!

From: myincrediblerecipes.com

Anniversaries

Mar 3	Robert & Alexis Thate	5 years
Mar 17	Vince & Angela Vaughn	9 years
Mar 29	Jim & Judie Orr	38 years



Birthdays

Mar 1	Greg Grotte	Mar 12	Jayden Huset
Mar 2	Barb Bock	Mar 14	Jim Grotte
	Dave Wallien		Tatum Garlick
	Sophia Brummond	Mar 15	Darwin Kuhlers
Mar 3	Jennifer Grefe	Mar 20	Brad Cone
	Bill Thompson	Mar 24	Michael Meschke
Mar 6	Ann Hartmann		Deb Thate
Mar 7	Becky Phillips		Clint Forstrom
Mar 8	Erin True	Mar 25	Presley Wegner
Mar 10	Tabb Meyer	Mar 27	Rorik Cain
	Koda Massey	Mar 28	Verna Lunz
	Kira Massey		Blakely Weber
		Mar 29	Jennifer Weaver Neist
		Mar 30	Amy Derrera