

# April 2023

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

**Nonprofit**  
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**Fairmont, MN 56031**



First Congregational UCC  
319 Downtown Plaza  
Fairmont, MN 56031



WHEELCHAIR  
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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](mailto:uccsecretary319@gmail.com)

**Web Site Address**

[www.fairmontucc.org](http://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.



# APRIL 2023



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1
<b>2</b> <b>Palm Sunday</b> 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School	3	<b>4</b> 10:00 Lakeview Communion	<b>5</b> 4:00 Confirmation 7:00 Choir	<b>6</b> <b>Maundy Thursday</b> 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)  5:30 Service	<b>7</b> <b>Good Friday</b>  5:30 Service	8
<b>9</b> Communion <b>Easter</b> 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School <i>Easter egg hunt            after Worship</i>	10	<b>11</b>  7:00 Facilities Bd	<b>12</b> 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Diaconate Bd, Mission Bd 5:45 CE Bd 7:00 Choir	<b>13</b> 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)  5:15 Hospitality Board	<b>14</b> 9:00 Council Agenda Items Due	15
<b>16</b> 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School  <i>Scottie Celander            baptism</i>	17	<b>18</b> 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	<b>19</b> 4:00 Confirmation 5:45 Church Council 7:00 Choir	<b>20</b> 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)	<b>21</b> 9:00 Newsletter items Due	22
<b>23</b> 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School <b>30</b> <i>Blessing Box            Collection/            Noisy Sunday/            Contemporary Sun-            day</i> 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School	24	25	<b>26</b> 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir	<b>27</b> 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)	28	<b>29</b>  K/HH reserved  <i>Spring Highway            Cleanup</i>

## *The Reverend's Ruminations - April 2023*

Now that we've "sprung forward" into spring (both meteorologically and astronomically), hope "springs eternal" that real springlike weather will soon follow. Easter is on April 9 this year, and aren't we supposed to be able to wear seersucker suits and frilly easter dresses with sandals to church that day?!? We'll see... it's still only early April in Minnesota!

We have recently been relishing some warming temps and decreasing snowpack in southern Minnesota, but I also had the opportunity to escape to (mostly) even warmer climates March 13–24 while attending the "Deputy Wing Chaplain Course" at the Air Force Chaplain Corps College at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama. DWCC is another step toward more responsibility within the chaplain section, preparing us to help manage people, programs, planning, and even budgets for the work we do to support the spiritual resiliency of all the hard-working Airmen at our Wing. I thank you for your continuing flexibility and support of my military ministry, which I hope you also recognize as a form of our church's mission outreach to the military members of our great state. I enjoy sharing about the ministries of First Congregational UCC with the Airmen I support, as "civilian jobs" and hometowns are a frequent conversation icebreaker among military members, helping us create personal connections during drill weekends away from our families.

Since Easter is the second Sunday in April, we are still in the contemplative church season of LENT. Have you been challenging yourself to abstain from anything like chocolate, fried foods, or alcohol? Have you been attending our weekly Wednesday evening Lenten services? Have you checked out one of the Lenten series available to stream for free on **rightnow MEDIA** (two of which are reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter)? Have you centered yourself with some daily scripture readings, guided by the UCC's *Running From Empty* daily devotional? I have enjoyed (and been challenged by) several of the writings from ministers across the wider United Church of Christ in this year's resource.

Martha Spong, a UCC pastor, clergy coach, and editor of *The Words of Her Mouth: Psalms for the Struggle*, shared a reflection in the latter part of the devotional about the challenges some of us encounter in our personal Lenten practices. Maybe you can relate as I did:

*"The further we get into Lent, the harder it is to keep up with the practices I set for myself. I forget why I chose the particular thing; not the practice itself, but the motivation..."*

*Why did this particular practice seem like a good idea five weeks ago?*

*I remember my failures. If I seek some inner change, some private growth attempt, why did I think giving up caffe mochas would bring me closer to God? It only made me cranky... But since then I've learned, whether we're giving something up or taking something on, the reckoning will always come.*

*...What are we thirsty for? Maybe the point of the practice is not to win Lent, but to reach this moment of feeling stretched and parched and uneasy, and to keep practicing anyway."*

As we turn the calendar page to April, we're greeted almost immediately by Palm/Passion Sunday—and continue into Holy Week as we near the celebration of Easter Sunday. This year I challenge you to re-devote yourself to the Lenten journey. Even if "the reckoning" that Rev. Spong referred to has caused you to give up on a practice you thought you could manage for forty days, take the opportunity of Holy Week to pick it up again, be blessed by the solemnity of our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship services, and spiritually prepare yourself to experience again the joy of Christ's resurrection.

Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Cory Germain*



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC  
FAIRMONT, MN  
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 3-15-2023**

**Members Present:** Abigail Anderson, Catherine Johnson, Kay Campe, Sue Kruse, Cathy Celander, Larry Lasch, Renae Vetter, Wendy Ziemer, Robbin Celander, Joanne Eisenbarger, Erica Jorgensen, Jon Neitzel and Christina Hainy. Ex-officio members present: Dara Bliesmer, Ass't Treasurer.

The Council met in Heritage Hall at 6 PM. The meeting was called to order and led in prayer by Moderator Abigail Anderson. Motion to approve the minutes from the February 15th meeting was M/S/C (Larry/Kay).

**Treasurer's Report:** Catherine Johnson reported that 21% of pledged giving has been received by the end of February. She attended a workshop for Treasurers and learned that our church is in very good financial accounting order thanks to previous Finance boards and Church Treasurers.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Cory was not able to attend.

**BOARD REPORTS:**

**Christian Education:** Wendy Ziemer reported about members filling eggs for the Easter egg hunt and camp signup.

**Hospitality:** Cathy Celander reported that Hospitality will be working on editing the Church Facility & Property Use document and making a checklist for kitchen use.

**Facilities:** Larry Lasch reported about carpet cleaning and replacement. A motion was M/S/C (Robbin/Wendy) to replace carpet in the Sanctuary and up the stairs to the choir loft. Cleaning of other carpet will be after the snow is gone. A wireless mic has been ordered.

**Diaconate:** Sue Kruse reported they have been discussing the rummage sale and prayer blankets for shut-ins.

**Mission:** Renae Vetter said the spring highway cleanup is coming up on April 29, and Meals on Wheels delivery is in May. They are working on gathering food for the food drive this month.

**Worship:** Cindy Huset was unable to attend.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Discussion about a carnival on the front lawn during IHD/pie social and about the rummage sale. Please **do not** drop anything off until a drop-off date is determined!

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- A paper for questions for Rev. Kelly Gallagher about OCWM and the MN Conference will be in the March 19<sup>th</sup> bulletin. Questions will be answered after the service.
- Starfish reporting should be included in the Mission report-what is donated.
- In kind donations reporting will remain as we have done in past.
- Prairie Star Quilt Guild 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary quilt show will be held in the Narthex and Sanctuary the same day as the pie social.
- Recycling church items-boards should mark anything they want disposed of.
- A freezer in the basement is broken, and a motion was M/S/C (Larry/Cathy) to replace it for \$900-\$1200.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 19 at 5:45 PM.

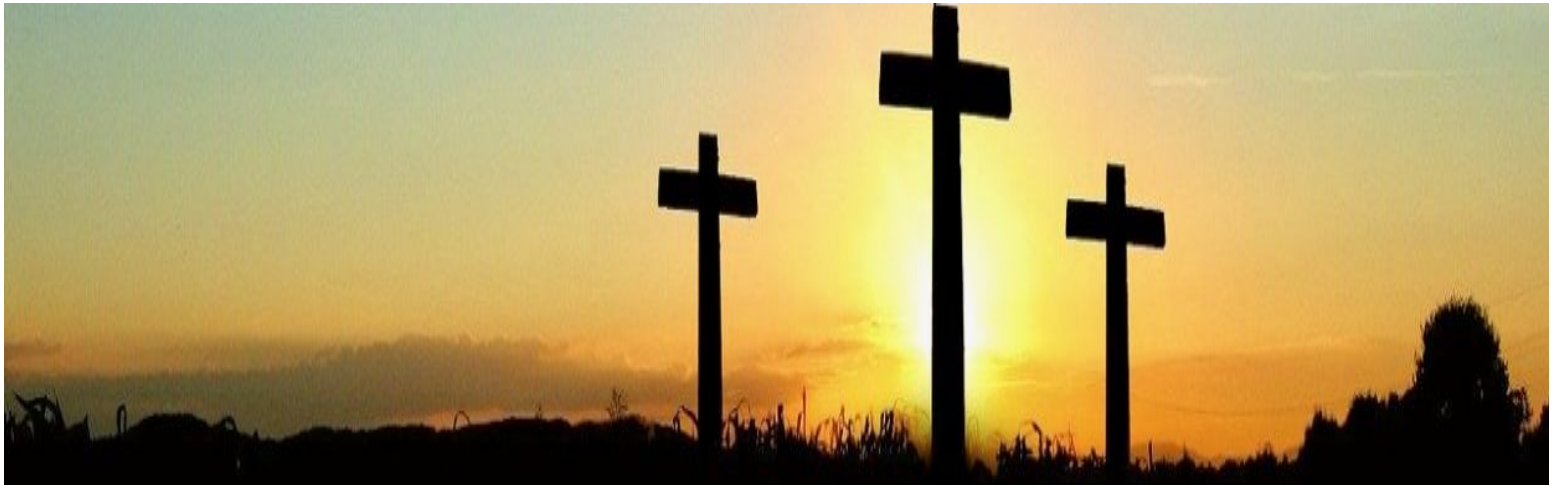
Moderator Abigail Anderson adjourned the meeting and closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Christina Hainy, Clerk



# MEMORIALS

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
19-Feb	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson	Starfish	Larry & Carolyn Thompson
26-Feb	Memory of Nancy Skog		Jane Kotewa
5-Mar	Jon & Cindy Anderson Anniversary	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel
5-Mar	Jon & Cindy Anderson Anniversary	Starfish	Margaret Weaver
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Wireless Mic	Patricia Ehlert
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Wireless Mic	Marilyn Forstrom
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Wireless Mic	Donna & Dean Grotte
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Wireless Mic	Eric & Catherine Johnson
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Wireless Mic	Wanda Johnson
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Wireless Mic	Kelly & Kevin Moller
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Wireless Mic	Lyle & Charlene Norris
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Wireless Mic	Memorials
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Music	Virginia Riedesel
12-Mar	Memory of Kenneth Rachuy	Wireless Mic	Margaret Weaver



Our prayers and sympathies to the family of Verna Lunz. Verna's funeral was held on March 21st.

**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.

## Christian Education News:

The children will be singing during **Palm Sunday** worship service.

On **Easter Sunday**, we will be having fun activities for the children during Sunday School, followed by an **egg hunt** immediately after church. Children who are not attending Sunday School can participate too!! If the weather is poor, we will have the hunt inside.

Time to register for **Summer Camps!** The CE Board will be helping each child with up to \$100 toward the cost of a Bible Camp. Once your child is signed up, submit a reimbursement form found by the CE office in the Sunday School area. You can contact Abby Shoen (507-230-3234) if you have any questions about camps.



The **Adventure Group** is planning a canoe trip to the **Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness** within the dates of **July 19-26** (participants will determine the exact dates). A total of about five days is expected. It is **open to all ages but those under 12 should bring a parent/guardian**. Any needed equipment can be provided. The BWCA is an amazing wild area perfect for canoeing, swimming, fishing and watching nature. A signup sheet at the back of the sanctuary is available for those interested in more information (no commitment required) or you can call/text Jon Neitzel 236-3317 or Eric B. Johnson 236-1456. We are planning to have both male and female leaders. Participants will help design the trip so we will want your input. Happy paddling!



# *Fun Time for all youth*

*Parents also welcomed*

**SATURDAYS IN 2023**

**Dates: June 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**July 8<sup>th</sup>**

**August 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Time: 9:00 till 1:00**

**Place: St. John's UCC**

**301 North Main  
Fairmont, MN**

**Free Events:**

- *Crafts*
- *Bounce House*
- *Water Slide*
- *Ring Toss*
- *Games*
- *Large Bubbles*
- *Noon Meal*



# RUMMAGE SALE



## **SAVE YOUR STUFF!!!**

**Spring is coming and it is a great time to clean your house, garage, storage shed . . . wherever, and set aside some *good stuff* to sell on the **ALL-CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE!****

**More information will be *coming soon*. We'll let you know the date and when you can start bringing your STUFF to church. We will also have pickups available for those who can't make the deliveries themselves!**  
*(no clothing, please)*

**If you'd like to help with the sale,  
let the church office know - we'd love the help!!**

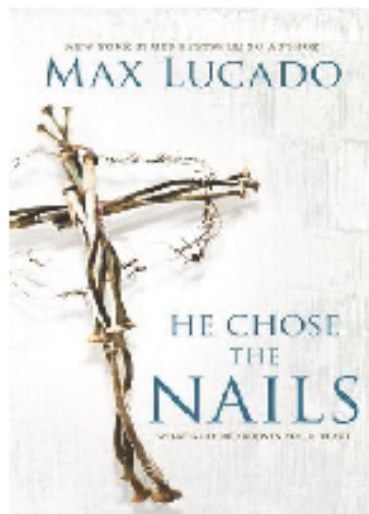
**LADIES & GENTS,  
START YOUR CLEANING!!!!!!**





# rightnow MEDIA

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



Did you give up something for Lent? Have you been faithful to the choice you made back on that snowy Ash Wednesday? How are you feeling without it after about 33 of the 40 days of the Lenten season? Have you ever thought of Lent instead as a season of gifts? Maybe they're not the same as the brightly-wrapped gifts under your Christmas tree, but have you ever stopped to think about the gifts Jesus gave us during his journey toward Jerusalem and the hill known as Golgatha? I encourage you to take a different look at what we've received during *our* Lenten journey through the words of well-known Christian author Max Lucado:

**In *He Chose the Nails*, a five-session video Bible study (15-19 minutes each), Max examines the gifts that Christ gave at his crucifixion. These include not only the gift of the cross, but also the gift of the nails, and the empty tomb. The cross is rich with God's gifts of grace, and as we unwrap them, we will hear him whisper, "I did it just for you."**

If you have young children at home (or visiting during spring break), then maybe you're wondering how to encourage a different understanding of Holy Week and Easter than what they're seeing on television commercials featuring fanciful bunnies, chocolate, and cheap trinkets passed off as the "celebration" of Easter. Sure, many of us don't need much excuse to enjoy some egg-shaped candies this time of year, but how about spending five minutes together each day—from Palm Sunday until Easter Sunday—learning more about this blessed holiday season:

**Wondering how to make the most of Easter with your family? Check out the 5-Minute Family Devotional from JellyTelly! Eight days of short video devotionals will help your family celebrate the importance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection this Easter.**



\*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—>

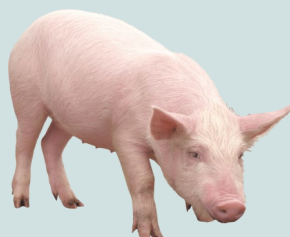


Once logged in to your **FREE** account, you can click directly on "First Congregational UCC" near the top of the page to access the "Fairmont Worship Services" channel, or "Pastor Cory's Picks"—which is where you'll find videos I've recommended here, as well as others that interest me. Stay tuned... 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



The next **Noisy Sunday** is on **Sunday, April 30th**. Heifer International will match our contributions **at 100%** until June 30, 2023.



## Mission Minute:

♥ **April Blessing Box: Strengthen the Church (one of 5 UCC special offerings).** Conferences and the national setting equally share the funds raised to support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. "As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults." -[www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

♥ **Spring Highway Clean-up:** mark your calendar for **Saturday, April 29th at 2pm**. We'll meet at the church and carpool to our section by Northrop. We need a minimum of 8 people, but would love to have more join us! Anyone age 12 and up are welcome! Look for a sign-up sheet in the back of the church or contact Amanda Forstrom at [amandaforstrom@hotmail.com](mailto:amandaforstrom@hotmail.com)

♥ **Meals on Wheels:** we have another volunteer opportunity this spring. We'll be delivering Meals on Wheels (MOW) again! We deliver Monday thru Friday from Monday, May 1st through Monday, May 15 (11 days total). There are three routes, but one is already covered by a MOW volunteer, so we need two drivers each day. We'd encourage you to sign up even if you can only do 1 or 2 days. All help is great! Be looking for the sign-up coming soon.



A big **thank you** to Ellen Germain, Dave Adams and Eric Johnson for leading worship during Pastor Cory's drills and Chaplain Course in March!



**Congratulations** to the Draper family on the birth of Chris and Claire Draper's baby boy, Carson Thomas! Carson was born on Saturday, March 11 at 6 lb. 2 oz. and 19 inches in length. He has a proud older brother, Christian, who is 5 years old.



*Thank you to Sherry Voyles, Kathy Jorgensen, Marilyn Forstrom, Jane Kotewa and Margo Weaver for folding and sealing the March newsletter!*

### **HyVee and Fareway Receipts Report as of 19 March 2023**

Since the first of the year, \$46,784.59 (31.196) worth of Hy-Vee slips were received. After 12 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$53,888.46 (35.93%) toward the 16<sup>th</sup> \$150,000 goal.

During the same time, \$13,410.88 (8.94%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 115 weeks, Fareway is at \$148,238.24 (98.83%) toward our 4<sup>th</sup> \$150,000 goal. It could take 1 to 6 weeks to reach the fourth \$150,000 goal.

This program started the first of March 2011, so any slips from then until now can be used. Slips from 2020 were received during this period of time. Any Fairmont Fareway and Hy-Vee food store register slip can be used. Even slips from Hy-Vee Gas, Coffee Shop, Food Service, and Pharmacy help us toward the goal. Thanks to all who bring/mail the slips to the Church, or mailing them or dropping them off at my house. Even the very small amounts help.

Reported by;  
Jim Bock

# APRIL FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

**WEDNESDAY  
APRIL 26TH  
5:30 PM UNTIL  
FOOD IS GONE**

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC  
319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA  
FAIRMONT MN**

**ALL ARE  
WELCOME!**

**PLEASE  
JOIN US!**

*Spaghetti  
Garlic Bread  
Lettuce Salad  
Cookie  
Water*



**SPONSORED BY THE HOSPITALITY BOARD**



**April's recipe is fun to make with children of all ages!**



## *Easter Bunny Nests*

### *Ingredients:*

*12 ounces milk chocolate chips (I recommend using Ghirardelli chocolate chips) OR semisweet chocolate chips*

*12 ounces butterscotch chips*

*12 ounces Chow Mein noodles*

*36 candy eggs (jellybeans, Cadbury mini eggs, etc.)*

*Place the chocolate chips and the butterscotch chips in a large bowl. Microwave in 30 second increments until melted. Stir until smooth.*

*Add the Chow Mein noodles to the bowl and toss until coated in the chocolate mixture.*

*Spoon 2 tablespoons of the mixture onto a piece of parchment and shape into a nest; top with 3 candy eggs. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Let nests set until firm, then serve.*

## April Birthdays

April 4	Caleb Rachuy	April 15	Randy Rowan
April 5	Vonnie Cone		Chris Draper
	Bill Cowing	April 16	Lyle Norris
	Dan Wenz		K.T. Magnussen
April 6	James Marushin	April 18	Terry Riggs
	Jan White	April 21	Cameron Hainy
	Dave Meschke		Arianna Moller Smith
April 7	Dan Thate		Jerry Norman
April 8	Khloe Zabel	April 22	Donna Grotte
April 10	Marcia Musser		Rachael Tonnegson
April 12	Doug Guritz	April 26	Lorin Pollock
	Will Hawkins		Ken Schwieger
April 13	Joyce Knudson	April 28	Nola Thedens
	Jayden Garlick		Michael Neusch
	Kris Fuller		

## April Anniversaries

April 5	Curt & Vicki Bicknase	26 years
April 10	Douglas & Kris Fuller	38 years
April 12	Amanda & Ryan Cain	15 years
April 16	Kirk & Gina Jorgensen	18 years
April 20	Jacob & Abby Shoen	10 years
April 20	Eugene & Polly Mosloski	19 years
April 23	Curt & Terri Luetgers	47 years
April 27	Tim & Kay Campe	38 years
April 30	Jim & Barb Bock	57 years