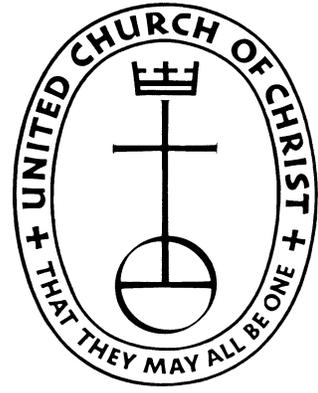


**First Christian
United Church of Christ
Newsletter
March 2019**



Lent IS A TIME TO
GROW CLOSER TO
Christ

The Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (March 6th) and runs for 40 days, ending on April 21st, Easter Sunday. The 40 days do not include Sundays, as each Sunday is its own a day of celebrating the Resurrection. Lent is a season where Christians focus on simple living, prayer, and service in order that we may grow closer to God.

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PASTOR'S COLUMN

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

What do you mean when you say "I Love You?"

Do you mean, "I appreciate and honor you!"?

Do you mean, "I want to use you for my pleasure."?

Do you mean, "I need you to shelter and care for me."?

Do you mean, "I give of myself for you as I desire your good."?

What do you mean when you say, "I love You"?

Does love mean getting or giving, having or sharing, working for or being waited upon, pleasure or suffering, satiety or sacrifice?

What do you mean by "I love you."?

Love is defined best by actions, rather than by words. Nouns are cheap.

It's the verbs that are expensive!

Words are easy. The deeds are costly!

Actions cost us of our very lives.

Christmas is when we should remember God showed what it means to say "I love you."

God's actions spoke louder than words.

We remember a baby was born and named Jesus. God was in Jesus living out the meaning of love.

Jesus showed compassion, hope, mercy, joy, forgiveness, righteousness, justice, and peace.

God used Jesus to teach by God's actions, as well as by God's words, that God is love.

In the joys of Jesus' life, and also in his pain, there was God in action through that special man.

That man lived out love.

But he was misunderstood, and crucified.

God did not rescue him from heartache and pain. God let him die, for through that action of dying God revealed the depth of God's love.

Through Jesus, God lived out "I love you."

God sent Jesus!

We celebrate the baby's birth!

God went with Jesus to a cross.

Jesus died.

We celebrate Jesus' resurrection!

Both show us God's love in action.

God has been giving, sharing, working, suffering, sacrificing, to show us what it means to be loved by the God of all creation.

God was lovingly at work in Jesus, making him to be our Christ, our Messiah, our Savior - hoping to save us from sin, and from ourselves, and from death. God was lovingly at work in Jesus, striving to draw us into fellowship with God, hoping to save us for the wonder of eternal life.

Christmas, Lent and Easter are reminders - Actions speak louder than words.

Christmas, Lent and Easter are reminders - God does love you. God loves me.

Even when we are the most unloving, even when we deliberately do wrong, God still loves us.

God's love for us is active, seeking us, so that it may mold us to become more loving also. God seeks to mold us for the wonder of life eternal.

Jesus is the gift of love in action for me and for you,

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The gift of Jesus we may receive anew.

What do you mean when you say -
"I love you!"?

God means I am willing to give, share,
work, suffer, sacrifice, and die as I seek to
save you.

May the Gift carry meaning for us and work
to remold you and me for the wonder of life
eternal!

May the season of Lent, that begins on
Ash Wednesday, March 6, be a time of
thoughtful reflection on the meaning of
being loved by God, which we will
especially celebrate on Easter!

May the assurance of God's love shared
through Jesus give us hope, comfort and
guidance into the future.

Jamie Fonville, Pastor

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME RETURNS

It seems like it was just a few weeks
ago that we went off Daylight Savings
Time, but on March 10th it will return.
Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday,
March 10, 2019. Do not forget to **SPRING
FORWARD ONE HOUR** on Saturday
night, March 9th so you do not miss the
Official Board Meeting at 8:30 am (If you
are a part of the Official Board!), Sunday
School at 9:30 am, and Worship at 10:30
am.



MARGARET LIGHTBOURNE CIRCLE MEETING

The next meeting of the Margaret Lightbourne Circle will take place on March 4th at
10:30 am in the church conference room. All are invited to attend.

SUPPER CLUB – MARCH 5TH

The Supper Club gathering will be held on March 6th. We (the Supper Club) will be
meeting at Valerio's Italian Restaurant, 120 East Front Street, Burlington. We will gather at
6:00 pm... which as the days start to lengthen... it will still be daylight! This is a "pay your
own way" event. Come join in on the fun and fellowship always experienced at these
gatherings. Please call Eleanor Lovgren (336-226-2671) by 8 pm on March 1st to make your
reservation.

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ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING – MARCH 31ST

We sometimes think that “imagination” means something escapist or illusory. Yet, imagination is not something unreal or fake. No, it is essential to God’s hope for creation. Hear how the Apostle Paul put it: “Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine....” (Ephesians 3:20-21). And God imagines a world where all are safe, all are loved, all are fed.

You see, when we use our imaginations in the way that God does, we can begin to envision – and work for! – a world where no child goes unfed, un-housed, or unloved; where no one ever fears abuse or violence; where clean water is not a dream but a reality for all; where small farmers do their work with dignity and are paid a fair wage for their labors; where agricultural practices enrich and renew the land rather than deplete it; where survivors of natural disasters have the resources they need, now and for years to come; where vulnerable immigrants are welcomed in Christ’s name.

Can YOU imagine these things? Through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing what we can imagine becomes ever more a reality for more and more people.

Our gifts become part of a loving legacy in ways we can’t foresee. Our gifts become blessings to people we don’t know and blesses in ways we can’t expect. We can make a difference beyond what we can imagine.

We will collect our One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on March 31st. Make checks payable to the church and

write OGHS on the memo line.

And, thank you. Your gifts make a difference beyond what we can imagine.



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WHAT MAKES A CHURCH GREAT?

NOT soft seats and subdued lights,
But strong, courageous, caring leadership.

NOT soft tones of an organ
But loving personalities that reflect Jesus.

NOT tall towers with chimes and bells,
But a lofty vision of its people.

NOT a big budget,
But a big heart in the people who love and serve.

NOT alone in the amount of receipts,
But in the service rendered.

NOT a big membership,
But God's presence, direction, and power.

NOT what has been done in the past,
But what is being done now and will be done in the future.

---- Copied from anonymous source ----

YESTERDAY IS GONE - FORGET IT.
TOMORROW MAY NEVER COME - DO NOT WORRY.

TODAY IS HERE - WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT???

WHO ARE THE WOMEN OF THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE?

The Women of the Southern Conference develop leadership among church women by providing resources and workshops. These events are planned throughout the year and open to all women. Dues are collected and are based on membership. The dues collected fund the following:

- Pay transportation expenses for officers when they go to Board Meetings.
- Pay for printing and mailing of the yearbooks.
- Contribute to the Emily Lester Fund.
- Contribute to the Lightbourne Scholarship Fund for deserving students who are members of UCC churches in the Southern Conference.
 - 9 scholarships per year
 - 3 scholarships per association.

Submitted by Bobby Mebane

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5TH SUNDAY GATHERING

The Board of Christian Education is making plans to have a Pot Luck Breakfast on Sunday, March 31 at 9:30 am in Bray Fellowship Hall. Bring your favorite breakfast dish to share and join in the good fellowship while also enjoying enticing breakfast foods!

WALK THROUGH TIME - JOIN IN THE HISTORICAL TOUR

On Thursday, March 21st at 1:30 PM, please join me (Peggy Johnson) for a tour and discussion about the history of our Church building. We will begin with the Company Shops meeting place and travel through time to our present historic structure. I have information from church records and our local library that I would like to share but believe you may have information that you can add to this history of the structures that have served our congregation. Mark your calendar and make plans to join us for a walk through time!

Peggy Johnson

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REQUESTS

The Carrie McLean Taylor Scholarship Committee is receiving applications for scholarships for 2019. They are also seeking donations to help fund our scholarships to others. Applications and donations to this fund are requested to be sent or turned in to the church by April 30, 2019. Donations for scholarships should put "Scholarship Funds" on the memo line of your check.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Year to Date through 01-31-19

	Actual	Budget
Income:	\$12,843.74	\$17,241.50
<u>Expense</u>	<u>\$16,925.59</u>	<u>\$17,158.33</u>
Net Balance:	<\$4,081.85>	\$83.17
Balance in Checking 01-31-19		\$18,605.93

As you can see, everyone's continued support is still greatly needed to carry on the ministry of the church. Please send in your giving today.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ken Little and Connie Collins
Treasurer and Accounting Manager