

February 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

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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 9:30

Sunday school 9:30

Communion the first Sunday of
every month.

FEBRUARY 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Worship Bd 7:00 Choir	2 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)	3	4
5 Communion 9:30 Worship/ Sunday School	6	7 10:00 Lakeview Communion	8 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Mission Bd Diaconate Bd 5:45 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 9:30 Worship/ Sunday School Children sing during Worship	13	14 Valentine's Day 7:00 Facilities Board	15 4:00 Confirmation 5:45 Church council 7:00 Choir	16 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)	17 9:00 March newsletter items due	18
19 9:30 Worship/ Sunday School	20 Presidents' Day	21 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	22 Ash Wed. 12:00-1:00 <i>Ashes to Go</i> -St. Martin's 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Lenten Serv. 5:30 Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir	23 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 MRCI (HH/FS) 1:00 TOPS (CH)	24	25
26 9:30 Worship/ Sunday School One Great Hour of Sharing Collection	27	28				

The Reverend's Ruminations - February 2023

Slip-sliding our way into the month of February across near-record amounts of snow and a good ol' Minnesota cold snap, can it even be possible that we're already rapidly approaching the church season of Lent? That would mean that we're little more than forty days from Easter, which carries such connotations of springtime... could it really be?

Well OK, we do have three weeks of February before LENT arrives. That's probably plenty of time for another snowstorm or two! But as we begin to lean cautiously toward it, I encourage you to make a plan to participate in one of the special observances that sets this church season apart: a mid-week Lenten service each Wednesday at 5:30. These will begin on February 22nd with our traditional Ash Wednesday service, which includes the imposition of ashes—a mark on the forehead meant to recall the symbolic role of ashes in the Bible. Ashes are present in several biblical stories, such as when Job repented his questioning of God's judgement, declaring, "...therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). In Old Testament times, the grief-stricken would often exchange their normal robes for rough burlap sackcloth and cover themselves in ashes for a period of isolation and mourning after the loss of a loved one. Jesus later connected repentance and the mourning of loss as he called new believers to repent and believe the Good News of the Gospel.

If you're unable to make it to our Ash Wednesday evening worship service, or would welcome the solemnity of receiving ashes earlier in the day, several ecumenical pastors and I will also be offering a drive-thru "Ashes to Go" event from noon to 1:00 on February 22 under the portico at St. Martin's Episcopal Church (next to the Martin County Library). See the full announcement for this event elsewhere in the newsletter!



Besides the visible smudge of Ash Wednesday, what comes to your mind when you think about the church season of Lent? Perhaps a period self-examination, where you take stock of habits and beliefs (whether good or bad)? Maybe a challenge to pray more regularly or read a larger portion of the Bible? Or does Lent for you imply a season of self-denial, during which you gaze longingly into the cupboard or fridge at snacks or drinks you swore off until Easter? Don't you wonder how Jesus could survive 40 days without chocolate or potato chips?

No matter your individual practices during the season, Lent is a time in which all of us as Christians are called to draw ourselves into the story of Jesus' expanding ministry and the controversy it caused with the religious authorities of his day. It is observed as a season of soul-searching and repentance—a season for reflection and taking stock in preparation for Easter. Many do 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. By observing the forty days of Lent in this way, we seek in some small way to imitate Jesus' withdrawal into the temptation of the wilderness. Lent is a journey without which we would not be prepared to experience the joyous event of the Easter resurrection. Sure, it may feel easier to skip the darkness of the Lenten journey, and plan instead on the warmth of an Easter morning sunrise, but encountering the trials and challenging yourself to find a stronger connection with our living Savior is what makes Easter the holiest of days in the Christian year. Embrace the journey alongside your church family in the weeks ahead!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Cory Germain



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
FAIRMONT, MN
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 1-18-2023**

Members Present: Abigail Anderson, Marilyn Forstrom, Dave Adams, Catherine Johnson, Kay Campe, Sue Kruse, Erica Jorgensen, Larry Lasch, Amanda Forstrom, Wendy Ziemer and Christina Hainy. Ex-officio members present: Pastor Cory, Dara Bliesmer, Ass't Treasurer.

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 Dec. 21st meeting was M/S/C (Larry /Marilyn).

Treasurer's Report: Catherine Johnson reported that with the giving at the end of 2022, 100% of the budgeted giving was achieved. After discussion, we tabled changing the parsonage fund. A motion to receive the treasurer's report was M/S/C (Wendy/Amanda).

Pastor's Report: Pastor Cory reported on his activities from December 21-January 17.

BOARD REPORTS:

Christian Education: Wendy Ziemer reminded Council that CE had discussed revisiting the 9:30 AM start time after a few months of trying the earlier time. The consensus of the CE board is that 9:30 AM is working okay, but moving to 10 AM service may work better, allowing for adult Sunday school as well as providing more time before church for practice and preparations of plays and special music. Having Sunday school during the worship service has its positives and negatives.

Hospitality: We welcomed Erica Jorgensen to Council.

Facilities: Larry Lasch reported that they are planning to buy more fire extinguishers and post signs so they are easily found. There was discussion about numbering the extinguishers and having a map of their location available. The next project of Facilities will be the old steam pipe coverings.

Diaconate: Sue Kruse stated that Diaconate would like to have a survey of members on the start time of church service.

Missions: Amanda Forstrom shared that the Kids Against Hunger food pack date is February 18, and there is a signup in the Narthex.

Worship: Marilyn Forstrom had nothing additional beyond what was already in the minutes.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Carpet cleaning update: tabled
- Church service time survey: Pastor Cory and administrative assistant Christina will create a paper survey about 9:30, 10, or 10:30 AM times and year-round time staying same or changing for summer. We will have these at the Annual Meeting with extra available upon request for members who cannot attend.
- Retention of individual board minutes: A motion was M/S/C to keep paper copies of board minutes for present year and two previous years. (Marilyn/Larry)

NEW BUSINESS:

- Copier Lease agreement: After discussion about the absence of parts for the current copier and the problems it has been having, a motion was M/S/C to go ahead with a black & white copier lease from River Bend Business Products.
- Approval of Officers/Board Members for 2023: Still looking for members to serve in a few positions.

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

Respectfully submitted, Christina Hainy, Clerk

Coming up...

Lent Begins with Ash Wednesday: The season of Lent is soon upon us as we take an in-depth look at our lives and turn back to God. **This time of repentance begins on Wednesday, February 22 with Ash Wednesday.** Pastor Cory and several ecumenical partners will be joining together to provide a unique and personalized experience called *Ashes to Go*. During the Noon–1pm lunch hour, St. Martin's Episcopal Church will host a drive thru experience. As you enter the covered drive, a pastor will share of time of confession and absolution, you will then move forward to receive ashes and a time of personal prayer, and finally, you will move forward to receive communion and blessing as we begin this forty-day journey to the cross. **Then, at 5:30PM, First Congregational UCC will be hosting our traditional Ash Wednesday service in the sanctuary.** Come for a time of confession, reflection, imposition of ashes, and communion as we hear once more the reality of our humanness: *"you are dust and to dust you shall return."* Let us together prepare ourselves to walk this Lenten journey as we witness Christ's journey to the cross for our redemption.

CE News:

The children will be singing during the Worship Service on Sunday, February 12th.



Kids Against Hunger: The January Blessing Box offering will fund our church team's participation in the Kids Against Hunger food pack on Saturday, February 18. If you would like to participate, sign up at the back of the church. We will pack from 11:30–1:30 PM.

February Blessing Box: The Blessing Box for this month will go to One Great Hour of Sharing, one of the five special offerings in the United Church of Christ.

Diaconate of the Month: Kathy Jorgensen

Sign Ups

Altar Flower Signup: Please sign up on the calendar on the main bulletin board by the coat closet for a Sunday. Put your name and who the flowers are in honor of. Contact Janine Draper with questions at (507) 236-3499.

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.

MEMORIALS

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
27-Nov	Memory of Pastor EvaLyn Carlson	Starfish	Janine Draper
28-Nov	Dean & Donna Grotte Anniversary	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel
29-Nov	Pastor Cory & Ellen Germain Anniversary	Starfish	Margaret Weaver
30-Nov	Bill & Pat Cowing Anniversary		Margaret Weaver
1-Dec	Memory of Aaron Wolford	Starfish	Tim & Kay Campe
2-Dec	Ken & Joy Rachuy Anniversary	Starfish	Les Heinrich
3-Dec	Memory of Peggy Heinrich	Starfish	Les Heinrich
4-Dec	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson	Starfish	Dolores Gronewald
5-Dec	Memory of Cal & Jean Christensen	Starfish	Michael & Dawn Parker
6-Dec	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson	Starfish	Byron & Becky Phillips
7-Dec	Byron & Becky Phillips Anniversary	Music	Virginia Riedesel
8-Dec	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson	Starfish	Margaret Weaver
9-Dec	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson	Starfish	Tim & Kay Campe
10-Dec	Ellen Germain Leadership in Services		David Meschke
11-Dec	Memory of Claire Lidke	Starfish	David Bishop & Nancy Rostvold
12-Dec	Memory of Maurice & Shirley Iliff	Starfish	Dolores Gronewald
13-Dec	Memory of Nanci Skog	Starfish	Larry & Carolyn Thompson
14-Dec	Memory of Nanci Skog	Starfish	Elizabeth Riegel
15-Dec	Memory of Nanci Skog	General	Pat & Randy Rowan
16-Dec	John & Dona Holstine Anniversary		Margaret Weaver
17-Dec	Memory of Charles F Draper		Jon & Cheryl Rippke
18-Dec	Memory of Peggy Heinrich	Starfish	HA & DA Fancher
19-Dec	Memory of Peggy Heinrich	Starfish	Ann Hartmann
20-Dec	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson	Starfish	Wanda Johnson
21-Dec	Bill & Barb Bittman Anniversary	Music	Virginia Riedesel
22-Dec	Memory of EvaLyn Carlson	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel


happy

Valentine's

day


rightnow MEDIA

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



How is it with your spouse as we move into 2023? Was one of your New Year's resolutions to be more intentional about building up your marriage relationship? Here's a chance to do just that, from the comfort of your living room! In just six 15-minute episodes Ted Lowe will help you begin to change your marriage mindset and strengthen your relationship. Even if you haven't logged into **rightnow MEDIA** for awhile, this is an opportunity for lasting impact on your life. Here's a more detailed description of *Us In Mind: How Changing Your Thoughts Can Change Your Marriage*:

Research shows happy couples think in a way unhappy couples don't. What if you could ensure your thoughts were setting you up to love well? You can.

Us In Mind: How Changing Your Thoughts Can Change Your Marriage will help you discover though Scripture, research, and neuroscience a simple way of rethinking your marriage.

In this six-session series with Ted Lowe, you will focus on just Five Thoughts which are design to help you love well, even when it is not easy. Be assured this series is not a bunch of stuffy lectures. It's full of humor, real-life examples, and practical application. You can change your marriage by changing your thoughts, and it's simpler than you think!

Maybe you're up for some adventure in 2023? Travel prices can be prohibitive for most of us, but wouldn't it be interesting to see where some of the Bible's most famous stories took place, and how these locations helped shape the teachings we know so well? Take the road less traveled with Dave Stotts as he explores the Gospel of Matthew in the first of his series that includes all four of the gospels, with more installments planned:

BIBLE BACKROADS is a new show from *Drive Thru History®*, which explores the people, places, and events of the New Testament. Hosted by Dave Stotts, each series is designed as a Bible teaching tool for churches, schools, and families. The home base for the show is "Dave's Garage," a state-of-the-art, extended reality lair where almost anything is possible. In addition to using maps, timelines, animations and artifacts in his garage, Dave goes on-location to Israel and the Mediterranean region for many of his adventures. **BIBLE BACKROADS** was created as a non-denominational resource, which focuses on Bible history, archaeology, geography, and apologetics, while encouraging viewers to dig deeper into the scriptures themselves.



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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

Many thanks to my church family for all the cards, calls, visits, and many offers of help during my recovery from surgery. I really appreciated every bit of the support you gave me. It all helped more than you can know, so once again THANK YOU.

Dolores Gronewald.

Congratulations to Dylan & Chelsea Celandor on the birth of their baby girl, Scottie Jean! She was born on November 30th at 7 lb. 3 oz. & 20 inches.

Thank you to Kathy J, Joanne E, Margo W and Marilyn F for watching the office while I was away on vacation! Also, a big thank you to Kathy J, Sherry V and Margo W for helping to prepare the Annual Report for mailing!

-Christina

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: Jon Neitzel, Deb Thate, Sherry Voyles, Dave Meschke and Pastor Cory Germain.

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

<http://www.fairmontucc.org>

February Recipes:

Wild Rice Hot dish

1#Hamburger Chopped Onions
1#Wild Rice. Chopped Celery
1#Bacon Chopped Mushrooms

Cook wild rice to texture you prefer. Brown hamburger, fry bacon, sauté onions, celery and mushrooms. Combine all ingredients. Add a can of cream soup (cream of celery, chicken, or mushroom). Bake one hour @350 degrees. Use lots of bacon, celery, and onions for flavor.

from Kathy Jorgensen

For dessert:

Slow Cooker Chocolate Pudding Cake Recipe

1 cup dry all-purpose baking mix (I used Bisquick Heart Smart)

1 cup sugar, divided

3 tablespoons , plus $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder, divided

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

$1 - \frac{2}{3}$ cups hot water

Spray the inside of your slow cooker (4 quart size best) with nonstick cooking spray.

In a bowl, mix together the baking mix, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder, milk and vanilla until well blended.

Pour the batter evenly into the slow cooker.

In a clean bowl, mix the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cocoa powder and hot water until well blended.

Pour over the batter in the slow cooker. DO NOT STIR!

Cover and cook on HIGH 2 to 3 hours, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake-y part comes out clean. (There will be a thick chocolate pudding-like sauce beneath the cake.)

Serve warm plain or with a little scoop of vanilla ice cream. Or squirt of whipped cream. Or a dusting of confectioners' sugar

From: simple-nourished-living.com

February Birthdays

Feb 1	Mark Craven	Feb 17	Vicki Bicknase
Feb 2	Sarah Zabel		Carter Rowan
Feb 3	Faith Kotewa		Colby Whitmore
Feb 4	Jim Bock	Feb 18	Kirk Jorgensen
	Joyce Jorgenson	Feb 19	Joe Craven
Feb 6	April Rachuy	Feb 21	Larry Lasch
Feb 10	Jenna Moller	Feb 23	Lee Trunkenbolz
Feb 13	Janine Draper	Feb 25	Cindy Anderson
	Remi Shoen	Feb 27	Larry Christensen
Feb 16	Jim Marushin Sr.		Henry Brummond
	Owen Becker	Feb 28	Matt Guritz



February Anniversaries

Feb 2	Bob & Jan Cone	60 years
Feb 14	Jon & Cindy Anderson	25 years