

March 2020

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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First Congregational UCC  
319 Downtown Plaza  
Fairmont, MN 56031



WHEELCHAIR



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)

Rev Cory Germain  
Pastor

Ann Osborn  
Administrative Assistant

## **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

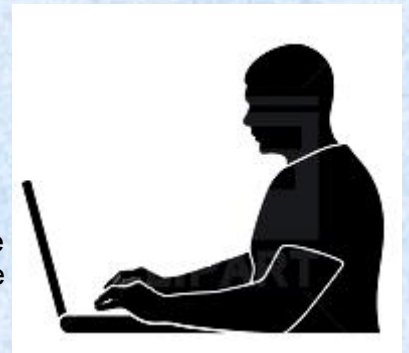
Communion the first Sunday of  
every month.

# 20 March 20

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> Communion Sunday	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 10:00 Lakeview Communion	<b>4</b> 3:45 Confirmation 5:00 Worship Board 5:30 Diaconate Board 6:00 Lenten Svc 7:00 Choir Practice	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> <i>Daylight Savings Time Starts</i> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	<b>9</b> 5:00-6:00 FCH Foundation	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 3:45 Confirmation 5:00 Mission Board 6:00 Lenten Svc 6:30 CE Board 7:00 Choir Practice	<b>12</b> 5:15 Hospitality Board 7:00 Facilities Board	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <i>St Patrick's Day</i> 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	<b>18</b> 3:45 Confirmation 5:30 Church Council w/Finance Board 6:00 Lenten Svc 7:00 Choir Practice	<b>19</b> 	<b>20</b> 9:00 a.m. April Newsletter Submission Deadline	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Blessing Box Collection Food Drive	<b>23</b> 4:30-7:00 Parent To Parent	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 3:45 Confirmation 5:30 Free Comm Meal 6:00 Lenten Svc 7:00 Choir Practice	<b>26</b> 9:30 Women's Bible Study	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Noisy Sunday Heifer International	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

## *The Reverend's Ruminations*

As we “March” onward toward spring, I hope that you made productive use of the extra day you were given in February this “leap year”!?! Did you give it a second thought? I’m not sure I even noticed!



As we lean *hope*-fully toward spring, we find ourselves in the midst of forty solemn days known in the church as Lent (which began on February 26<sup>th</sup> with Ash Wednesday and will continue to Easter, 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? I came across a helpful article by Sarah Phillips on [crosswalk.com](http://crosswalk.com), and thought I’d highlight a few of the concepts she shared:

*“...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). As Sarah points out, Lent doesn’t elicit the excitement that Advent does, but 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!?!

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 Ms. 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. Keep in mind the idea here is not to be overly scrupulous or to deceive yourself into thinking you can earn heaven through your own goodness. 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 (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.

I pray 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. Please remember to join us each Wednesday at 6:00 pm in the chapel for our 30-minute mid-week Lenten services. New this year are professionally published daily Lenten devotionals from the resource office of our 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.

Yours in Christ,

**Rev. Cory Germain**



**Council Minutes  
For  
First Congregational UCC  
2-19-2020**

The meeting was called to order by Moderator, Jane Kotewa. Rev. Germain led in prayer.

**Members Present:** Jane Kotewa, Wendy Ziemer, Joanne Eisenbarger, Dave Adams, David Meschke, Cory Hainy, Catherine Johnson, Robbin Celander, Larry Thompson, Marilyn Forstrom, Pastor Cory

**Members absent:** Dolores Gronewald

**Minutes** from the January meet were approved as printed.

**Treasurer's Report:** David Meschke presented a brief report indicating that pledges are coming in on time. Motion was M/S/C to receive the report.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Cory shared the list of his activities for the past month which included the usual pastoral and Air Nat'l Guard duties.

**Board Reports:**

Finance/Council: Financial resolutions and updated signature cards will be completed.

CE: The Board would like the Council to consider transferring the responsibility for training and recruiting acolytes to the Worship Board. Council agreed it would be a more appropriate pairing. They are also wondering who is responsible for care of the Nursery as Cheryl had taken care of it but CE has not taken that on. Council felt it was still in line with responsibilities of the CE Board.

Diaconate: The Board delivered flowers to shut ins for Valentine's Day and are considering doing a fundraiser in conjunction with Interlaken Heritage Days and our Pie and Ice Cream Social.

Facilities: No report

Hospitality: No report

Mission: There are still 4 months open for hosting the Community Meal. March is MN Food Share month and we will be have our annual food drive.

Worship: Board is preparing for Lent/Easter season

**Old Business:** Color printer is installed and working well. Safe Church Policy is still being worked on.

**New Business:** After discussion, Moderator Kotewa appointed a Memorial Committee consisting of a representative from Facilities, Hospitality, Robbin and Pastor Cory to provide a list of possible memorial projects that families may wish to contribute to. Jane will be in charge of writing thank you notes to these families.

Ongoing Old Business was reviewed, most was found to be irrelevant at this time. Jane will check with Ann and Julie Elliott about what might be needed for the website. Cory will review an old pamphlet we have and what we might want to provide going forward.

The meeting was adjourned by the Moderator.

Respectfully Submitted, Marilyn Forstrom, Clerk

# March Blessing Box – Minnesota FoodShare

**GIVE IT UP  
FOR  
HUNGER**  
Join us and  
Skip a meal!



## Hunger Facts

- Nearly one in eleven Minnesotans experience food insecurity.
- 12.5% of children in Minnesota are food insecure.
- 9.5% of Minnesotans live below the poverty level.
- Over 3,000,000 visits are made to Minnesota food shelves each year.
- More than 624,000 Minnesotans are served by SNAP. 45% of those served by SNAP are children.
- Minnesota's charitable food system (food shelves and food banks, meal programs, etc.) continues to run at capacity.
- Supporting government programs like SNAP ("food stamps") and creating a more just and equitable food system are necessary to meet the needs of food insecure households and work toward ending hunger in Minnesota communities.

Food insecurity means access to adequate food is inconsistent and limited by a lack of money and other resources throughout the year. Food insecure households report their diets to be of reduced quality, variety, or desirability and/or experience disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

During the Lenten season, many people observe the tradition of "giving something up". This year, we'd like to suggest that you **give up one meal per week**. Put the ingredients for that meal in the blue reusable grocery bag and **donate to our annual food drive**. Not only will you help someone who is hungry, but the hunger you feel will remind you what it is like to go without a meal, something many people in Martin County do on a regular basis.

Bags and grocery lists will be available beginning **February 26, Ash Wednesday, through the end of March**. If you are unable to shop, your generous monetary donations are also welcome.

**Come to church, HUNGRY to hear God's Word!**

### Helping Hunger in Martin County

Heaven's Table Food Shelf was opened in 2012 to help fill the gap in the hunger needs of Martin County. Heaven's Table Food Shelf relies upon monetary and food donations from individuals, churches, organizations, and businesses. All donations are tax deductible. Heaven's Table Food Shelf has two locations: Fairmont at 909 Winnebago Avenue (507-238-5424) and Sherburn at 212 North Prairie Street (507-848-3958).

**Purpose:** To provide and distribute food to eligible people in Martin County, to provide fresh, locally grown food when available, to serve all communities in Martin County, to provide assistance that helps people improve their situation, to receive donations for meeting the needs of the hungry, and to serve clients with respect and dignity.



### Matthew 25:35

For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat,  
I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink,  
I was a stranger and you took Me in

## Memorials

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	
26-Jan	In Memory of Glenn Kasten	Starfish	Tim & Kay Campe
26-Jan	In Memory of Peggy Heinrich	Starfish	Les Heinrich
2-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Arthur & Julie Elliott
2-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson	Starfish	Jane Kotewa
2-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson	Capital	Larry & Carolyn Thomson
16-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		Pat & Randy Rowan
16-Feb	Memory of Dorothy Simpson		William & Carin Simpson
16-Feb	Bob & Jan Cone Anniversary		Margaret Weaver
16-Feb	Jon & Cindy Anderson Anniversary	Starfish	Margaret Weaver

## Newsletter

*To view the full color version of the newsletter, you'll find it on the church website at:*  
<http://www.fairmontucc.org/>

9:00 am, March 20th, is the April Newsletter submission deadline.

**Thank you to those who assisted with preparing the newsletter for mailing.**



# rightnow MEDIA

Last month I offered the first in what I hope to be a continuing series 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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With all the cold weather lately, have you been cooped up binge-watching crime dramas like *Blue Bloods* or *Law & Order*? Maybe it's time you exercised your inner detective on something a little more meaningful!?! J. Warner Wallace is a former homicide detective and a founding member of the Torrance (CA) Police Department's Cold-Case Homicide Unit. He investigated a number of high-profile cold-case murders during his career, some of which were even featured on *Dateline* (NBC) and *North Mission Road* (truTV). He became a Christian at the age of 35, after applying his investigative skills to the gospels as potential eyewitness accounts to the life of Jesus. He went on to get a master's degree in theological studies, and now applies his law enforcement background to the field of Christian Apologetics (a branch of Christian theology that defends Christianity against objections). Here's the synopsis of his series called **Forensic Faith**:

*Many people are Christians in the same way they're a Californian or an American. They were born and raised in the church yet are unable to answer any pressing questions people might ask about Christianity. Today's culture is increasingly skeptical so we must have answers that stand up to aggressive challenges. In this series, Cold-Case Detective J. Warner Wallace discusses the importance of "testing" the truths of Christianity, asking why people say they're Christians, and understanding the difference between experience and evidence when explaining what we base our belief on.*

Detective Wallace's 8-session series of 11-to-13 minute episodes is available in the "Pastor Cory's Picks" channel of our *First Congregational UCC* library on the **rightnow** MEDIA home page.

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Our Administrative Assistant, Ann Osborn, recently recommended a fun children's cartoon series that she and her grandkids enjoyed, called **Micah's Super Vlog**. Each of these brief animated stories features catchy music and teaches valuable Christian lessons in a format that will keep your young viewer's attention. Downloadable activity packs are also available to help children engage the concepts, and are free (although donations are accepted to help fund further episodes):

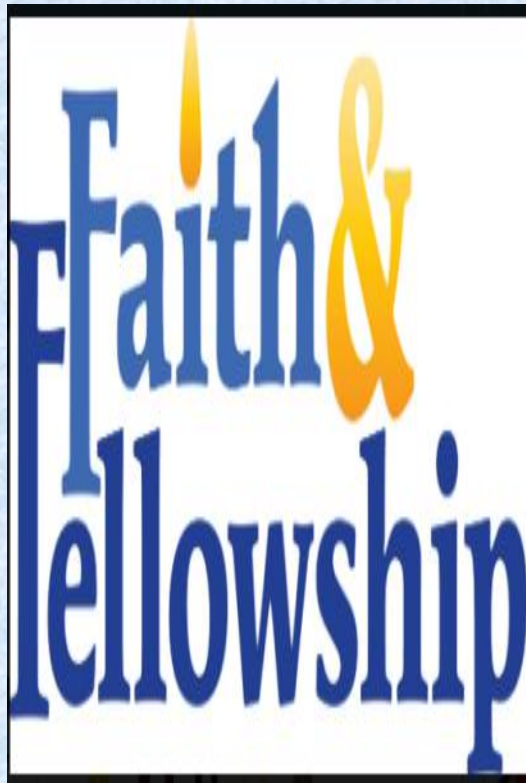
*Micah's Super Vlog is an animated Christian comedy about a boy named Micah, who learns (sometimes the hard way!) how to be a better follower of Jesus. Using his video log (vlog for short) he shares his thoughts on his friends, teachers, and scriptures.*

This and other children's programs can be found by clicking on the **Kids** link found between the **LIBRARIES** and **SEARCH** menus at the top left of 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>

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!



## **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 below:**

**Cindy Anderson**

**Pastor Cory Germain**

**Lee Hanning**

**Eric B. Johnson**

**Abigail Roiger**

## ***Partners in Ministry***

### **March 1**

Diaconate: Carolyn Thompson  
Head Usher: Everett Hanning  
Acolytes: Gretchen Jorgensen and  
Trenton Jorgensen  
Reader: Deb Adams  
Greeters: Wanda J. and Jane Kotewa

### **March 8**

Diaconate: Carolyn Thompson  
Head Usher: Larry Thompson  
Acolytes:  
Reader: Eric B. Johnson  
Greeters: John & Cindy Anderson

### **March 15**

Diaconate: Carolyn Thompson  
Head Usher: Curt Luetgers  
Acolytes: Blakely Weber  
Reader: Jim Marushin  
Greeters: Don & Shelby Marks

### **March 22**

Diaconate: Carolyn Thompson  
Head Usher: Cory Hainy  
Acolytes:  
Reader: Julie Elliott  
Greeters: Eloise Lidke and Melva Tonne

### **March 29**

Diaconate: Carolyn Thompson  
Head Usher: Everett Hanning  
Acolytes:  
Reader: Cameron Germain  
Greeters: Cathy and Robbin Celandier



## Report as of 16 February 2020



During the last nine weeks, \$31,235.97 (20.82%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were turned in. After only 12 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$41,499.09 (27.67%) toward the 12th \$150,000 goal.

Reported by Jim Bock

During the same nine weeks, \$9,312.95 (6.21%) worth of Fareway slips were received.

After 76 weeks, Fareway is at \$82,146.31 (54.76%) 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.

*Thanks for bringing in all those slips and keep those slips coming.*

*Sunday, March 8th*



*happy first day of spring!*

THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN  
CHRIST, THE NEW CREATION HAS  
COME: THE OLD HAS GONE,  
THE NEW IS HERE!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



4-15

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By  
and  
JEFF  
KEANE

"I don't think they'll allow \$12  
for the Tooth Fairy as a  
medical deduction."

## Birthdays

Mar 1 Greg Grotte

Mar 2 Barb Bock  
Dave Wallien  
Sophia Brummond

Mar 3 Jennifer Grefe  
Bill Thompson

Mar 4 Dimitrie Osmundson

Mar 5 Faye Draper

Mar 6 Ann Hartmann

Mar 7 Becky Phillips

Mar 8 Erin True  
Nanci Skog

Mar 10 Tabb Meyer  
Koda Massey  
Kira Massey

Mar 14 Jim Grotte  
Donna Mitchell

Mar 15 Darwin Kuhlert  
Mar 18 Kerstin Johnson

Mar 20 Brad Cone

Mar 23 Sandy Abraham

Mar 24 Michael Meschke  
Deb Thate  
Clint Forstrom

Mar 27 Rorik Cain

Mar 28 Verna Lunz  
Randy Kruse

Mar 29 Jennifer Neist

Mar 30 Amy Derrera  
Ken Rachuy

## Anniversaries

March 3 Robert & Alexis Thate 2 yrs

March 17 Vince & Angela Vaughn 6 yrs

March 29 Jim & Judie Orr 35 yrs

# THINK SPRING