

February 2026

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



WHEELCHAIR
ACCESSIBLE



*First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Fairmont, Minnesota*

Rev. Cory Germain
Minister

Christina Hainy
Administrative Assist.

Joyce Jorgenson
Choir Director

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
Office Hours:

Monday 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

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.

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

Worship Hours

Worship 10:00 AM

Sunday school 10:00 AM.

**Communion the second
Sunday of every month.**



February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00 Worship Communion Sunday school	2	3 10:00 Lakeview Communion	4 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Mission Bd 6:00 Worship Bd 7:00 Choir	5 11:30 MRCI (FS/ HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	6	7 Kids Against Hunger food pack (Fairmont Armory)
8 10:00 Worship with Blake Potthoff Sunday school	9 5:30 Hospital Fdn.	10 6:00 Facilities Bd	11 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Diaconate Bd Hospitality Bd 5:45 CE Bd 7:00 Choir	12 11:30 MRCI (FS/ HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	13	14 
15 10:00 Worship Sunday school 4:00 Game Time/Nomads at Germain home	16 Presidents' Day 9:00 Council agenda items due	17 10:00 Goldfinch Communion 4:45 PEO	18 Ash Wednesday Noon Community Lenten service 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Lenten service 6:00 Church Council meeting 7:00 Choir	19 11:30 MRCI (FS/ HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	20 9:00 March newsletter items due	21
22 10:00 Worship Sunday school Blessing Box collection	23	24	25 4:00 NO Confirmation 5:30 Lenten Service & Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir	26 9:30 Bible study 11:00 Newsletter assembly 11:30 MRCI (FS/ HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	27	28

The Reverend's Ruminations - February 2026

How are your New Year's resolutions holding up as we enter February? Have they been successful and even beneficial, or are they already long forgotten? I haven't regularly made "official" resolutions, but as January began, I did at least speak out loud a goal of being outdoors at least 30 minutes each day. It seemed like such a good idea that could prove beneficial to both my physical and mental health — as well as likely that of our dog if I used more regular walks to help fulfill the goal! But January's extreme cold (in addition to the normal busyness of my life) has prevented me from implementing the plan as well as I'd hoped. I am still trying to be outdoors more regularly, but I've had to scale back my goal just a bit, allowing myself some grace in either time or a lesser number of days per week. But with any such resolution, regular application is the only thing that will really ingrain the practice and unlock the benefits that made me think of it in the first place.

Of course, the same is true of other less active pursuits — and perhaps we'd prefer to think of them as plans or ideas rather than formalizing them with the title of "resolution." Maybe they take the form of a change in diet, an earlier bedtime (or more naps, for some!), more communication with family and friends, more regular church attendance, or an attempt to read through (or at least, more of) the Bible? If January seemingly defeated your best intentions, don't give up! Give yourself some grace, but then make a small adjustment and try again. Share your plan/idea/resolution with a spouse, a friend, a doctor or personal trainer, or even your pastor. It's amazing how expressing something in words can help both solidify it for you, and perhaps even net an accountability partner in the process!

An elephant has also stepped obnoxiously into the room: January brought with it a plethora of emotionally-charged news, actions, and rumors that seem to dominate our network news cycles, social media feeds, and opinions both public and private. Whether it's international relations, accusations of fraud, immigration enforcement, protests, or the seemingly ever-present differences of political opinion, our nation seems stuck near a dangerous boiling point. But recently my email inbox brought a small dose of civility — something that seems to have become all too rare from too many of our politicians! **While I do not know his stance on all the myriad issues facing our state and nation, and I do not endorse him or any other politician present or future**, State Senator Rich Draheim shared these observations in a brief essay entitled, "What's missing from the ICE conversation? Dialogue."

Right now, Minnesota is in the national spotlight, and not for good reasons. First, because our state government failed to stop massive fraud. Then because federal immigration enforcement drew national attention, protests, and tragedy. These operations removed dangerous criminals from our streets, including people convicted of violent crimes who were in the country illegally. They also resulted in the death of Renée Good [as well as Alex Pretti, whose death occurred the day after this email was sent].

Depending on who you ask, you'll hear two very different stories. Some say Good [and Pretti] acted on a moral obligation to oppose federal actions. Others say an ICE officer acted in self-defense during a legal law enforcement operation. Most of the time, these views are shouted, either in the street or online. What's missing is dialogue. And more importantly, an honest conversation about the root issue: immigration.

The U.S. is a nation of immigrants, yet we've argued about immigration since the beginning... [and] history shows cycles of enforcement, backlash, and reform.

... As a state senator, I typically don't like to focus on federal law, but I do talk to people. Business owners, trades workers, teachers, pastors, parents. What I hear is far more reasonable than what goes viral online.

They want fraud stopped and violent criminals off the street. They support law enforcement doing their jobs safely and legally. At the same time, they want a transparent, realistic path to legal

status for people who are hardworking, raising families, contributing to their communities, and filling critical jobs. They want ICE to exercise restraint at schools, and they want protesters to respect houses of worship.

That middle ground exists, but it rarely gets airtime. Instead, career politicians at the federal level spend decades in office arguing over politics and fundraising for reelection, all while ignoring the broken system beneath it. Until they have a serious conversation about modernizing immigration law and creating a workable path to legal status, these confrontations will continue.

We can enforce the law and still expect a system that works. We can back law enforcement while asking for restraint. And we can acknowledge loss and grief without turning every tragedy into a political weapon. If we want less shouting, fewer confrontations, and fewer lives lost, the answer isn't louder rhetoric. It's dialogue, and it's long overdue. (1/23/2026 Capitol Update email)

As I have sought to do throughout my tenure here at First Congregational UCC, I will continue to avoid making political stances or opinions a part of my preaching or leadership. Contrary to what some members of our community may know (or assume) of particular churches or denominations, the United Church of Christ does not dictate policy or political affiliation to its congregations, pastors, or members.

However, the church also must NOT stand idly by when faced with struggle or oppression writ large upon society.

If there was ever a Christian who practiced what he preached, it was the German theologian **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**. After Hitler rose to power, Bonhoeffer left his studies as a postgraduate fellow at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and his new fiancée, to return to Nazi Germany. He would soon be accused of joining the plot to assassinate the Führer, and spend two years in prison. He was executed by the Nazi regime at Flossenbürg concentration camp on April 9, 1945 — just two weeks before the United States liberated the camp.

Two of Bonhoeffer's many powerful statements have been showing up prominently on social media in recent days, and I think they bear repeating so that we might contemplate them. The first is from a sermon he gave on 2 Corinthians 12:9:

Christianity stands or falls with its revolutionary protest against violence, arbitrariness, and pride of power, and with its plea for the weak. Christians are doing too little to make these points clear... Christendom adjusts itself far too easily to the worship of power. Christians should give more offense, shock the world far more, than they are doing now.

And separately from the first quote, speaking on silent theology:

We must finally stop appealing to theology to justify our reserved silence about what the state [Hitler's Germany, as well as government in the larger sense] is doing — for that is nothing but fear. 'Open your mouth for the one who is voiceless' — for who in the church today still remembers that that is the least of the Bible's demands in times such as these?

In just a few short weeks, the Christian season of contemplation known as **Lent** will begin with the observation of **Ash Wednesday on February 18th**. I encourage you to make it — and our other brief mid-week Lenten services — a part of your schedule at 5:30 pm each Wednesday during February and March. First Congregational will also be hosting this year's noon Ash Wednesday service with our ecumenical partners in ministry (Grace Lutheran, Fairmont United Methodist, St. Martin's Episcopal, and St. John's UCC) and on April 3rd, a noon **Good Friday** service will be hosted by Grace.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Cory Germain



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
FAIRMONT, MN
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 1-25-2026**

Members Present: Kay Campe, Cynthia Celander, Amanda Forstrom, Christina Hainy, Catherine Johnson, Larry Lasch, Sue Kruse, and Terri Luetgers. Guest: Michael Rowan.

The Council met for a special church council meeting in Heritage Hall before the Annual Meeting as the scheduled meeting on January 21, 2026, was cancelled due to the weather. Moderator Kay Campe called the meeting to order.

New business: A motion was made/seconded/carried to appoint Cynthia Celander as Church Treasurer. (Amanda Forstrom/Terri Luetgers) A motion was made/seconded/carried to appoint Kay Campe, Amanda Forstrom and Cynthia Celander as signers on the Corporate Resolution. (Amanda Forstrom/Sue Kruse)

Moderator Kay Campe adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Christina Hainy, Church Clerk



Lenten Worship Schedule

Wed Feb 18: Ash Wednesday

Noon: Community/Ecumenical Service at First Congregational UCC
5:30 PM Lenten Service

Wed Feb 25 and every Wednesday in March (4th, 11th, 18th, 25th):

5:30 PM Lenten Service

Holy Week

Sun Mar 29: Palm/Passion Sunday

10:00 AM Worship

Thu Apr 2: Maundy Thursday

5:30 PM Worship

Fri Apr 3: Good Friday

Noon: Community/Ecumenical Service at Grace Lutheran
5:30 PM Worship

Sun Apr 5: Easter

10:00 AM Easter Worship

MISSION MINUTE:

One Great Hour of Sharing is received on the fourth Sunday of Lent. It supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response.

For over 75 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) has been helping Christians bring God's hope and healing to hurting people both in the US and around the world. OGHS's mission is to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by national disaster, provide advocacy and resettlement assistance for refugees and displaced persons, and combat injustice in its many forms. OGHS provides funding and hands-on assistance in collaboration with local and



international partners. Each year, OGHS is gathered by several denominations and Church World Service (CWS) under a single theme developed by the ecumenical OGHS Committee.

In the United Church of Christ, the Global H.O.P.E. team oversees the distribution of the offering. You can learn more about this team at www.ucc.org/global-hope.

Thank you for supporting One Great Hour of Sharing for over 75 years. You continue to embody a love offering to the world.

The Blessing Box for February is designated to OGHS as we are participating in the Minnesota Food Share in March. Stop by the table in the Narthex to learn more about the current month's Blessing Box Ministry.



February Partners in Ministry:

Diaconate: Abigail Anderson

Usher: Jon Neitzel

Readers:

1st: Marilyn Forstrom

8th: Dolores Gronewald

15th: Carolyn Thompson

22nd: Dave "Ace" Adams

March Partners in Ministry:

Diaconate: Abigail Anderson

Usher: OPEN

Readers:

1st: Cynthia Celandier

8th: Ellen Germain

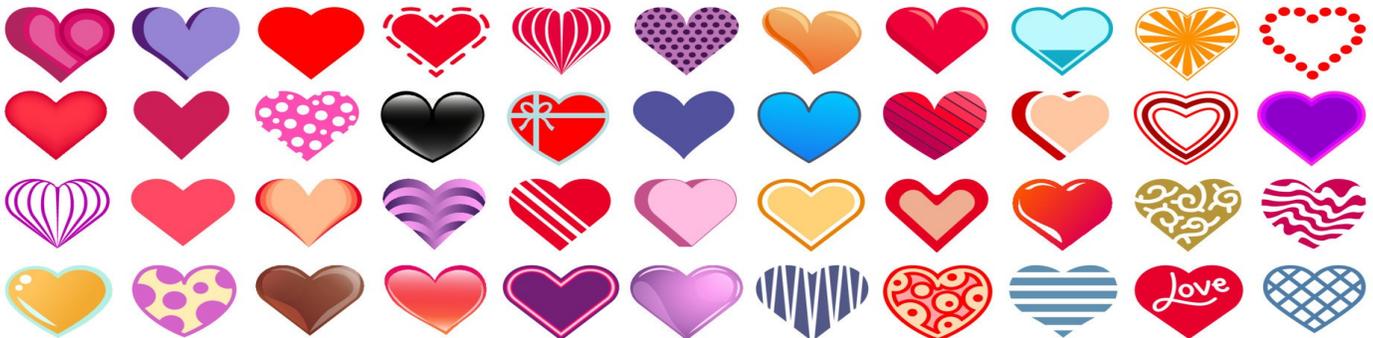
15th: Margo Weaver

22nd: Abigail Anderson

29th: Kay Campe

MEMORIALS

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
10-Nov	Memory of Bonnie True	Starfish	Bobby True
10-Nov	Memory of June True	Starfish	Bobby True
10-Nov	Memory of Robert G True	Starfish	Bobby True
16-Nov	Memory of Ginny Riedesel		Deb & Ace Adams
16-Nov	Memory of Woody Woodward		Deb & Ace Adams
16-Nov	Memory of Woody Woodward	Starfish	Cindy Anderson
16-Nov	Memory of Woody Woodward		Cynthia Celander
16-Nov	Memory of Woody Woodward		Joyce Jorgenson
16-Nov	Memory of Woody Woodward		Pat Rowan
16-Nov	Memory of Woody Woodward		Margo Weaver
23-Nov	Honor of Randy & Pat Rowan's Anniversary		Margo Weaver
23-Nov	Honor of Bill & Pat Cowing's Anniversary		Margo Weaver
8-Dec	Memory of Woody Woodward	Capital Funds	Carolyn & Larry Thompson
21-Dec	Memory of Peggy Heinrich	Starfish	Don & Arlene Fancher
8-Dec	Memory of Sue Barnes	Capital Funds	Carolyn & Larry Thompson
8-Dec	Memory of Bryan Brockmann	Capital Funds	Carolyn & Larry Thompson
8-Dec	Memory of Tranna Urban	Capital Funds	Steve Urban
8-Dec	Memory of Charles Draper		Jon & Cheryl Rippe
31-Dec	Memory of Byron & Becky Phillips		Rae Ann Phillips



Hy-Vee & Fareway Report as of Report as of 25 January 2026

During the last 4 weeks, \$11,617.14 (5.81%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were received. After 8 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$31,974.51 (15.99%) toward the 19th goal of \$200,000.

During the same time, \$2,363.12 (1.58%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 7 weeks, Fareway is at \$4,063.28 (2.71%) toward our 6th \$150,000 goal.

Any Fairmont Fareway and Hy-Vee food store register slip or deliver pages can be used. Hy-Vee slips from Fast & Fresh (Gas), Caribou Coffee, Food Service, and Pharmacy can be used toward the goal. Even those with small dollar amount help. During this time one pharmacy slip was for only \$0.01. Thanks to all who are turning in their slips at church, mailing them to me or bring them to my house.

Reported by;
Jim Bock



Easter is Sunday, April 5th this year.

If you wish to order flowers to grace the altar for Easter, the **last day to order will be Sunday, March 22, 2026.**

Price list for a 6" blooming plant with wrap & a bow:



- Easter Lily \$18
- Cyclamen \$18
- Kalanchoe \$18
- Hydrangea \$40

*The sign up sheet is in the back of the church, or call the church office, (507) 235-5382.

**Setting up online giving to
First Congregational UCC,
Fairmont**

See the links on our church
website, fairmontucc.org,
or
Scan the QR code



Or use this web address:

<https://firstcongoucc.churchtrac.com/give>

You will be taken to our ChurchTrac
page where you will be asked to
sign in or create an account.
ChurchTrac will link you to Stripe,
the secure payment system.

Giving can be done through your
checking account or by credit card.

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD,
THAT HE GAVE
HIS ONLY
BEGOTTEN
SON,
THAT WHOSOEVER
BELIEVES IN HIM
SHOULD NOT PERISH,
BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

JOHN : 2:16



Promo Video:

Please send **10 second video clips of church events** to Abby Shoen, abby.shoen43@gmail.com. Abby is graciously planning to compile them into a promotional video for our church!

*The church newsletter is available on the church website!
Upcoming events, birthdays & anniversaries and the church calendar are updated there as well.
Check it out at:
fairmontucc.org*



Thank you, Lorie, BonnieSue, Margo, & Kathy, for assembling the Dec/Jan newsletter! Thanks, Marilyn, for watching the office for me for a day! Thank you, Marilyn, Joanne, Lorie, Margo & Dolores for assembling the Annual Report! I appreciate your help SOOO MUCH!!

-Christina



 Looking for a member who would like to be the **Prayer Chain leader** for the church. You would be the contact for prayer requests and would email or call members of the prayer chain. Please call the office, (507) 235-5382, if interest-



Truman 3rd graders are collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Pop tabs are great, but we can also use tabs off of soup cans, fruit lids, and adult beverages. We will be collecting until the end of March. The students have a pail in the back of the church to drop off any contributions. Last year our church contributed to the 158 pounds we delivered to Rochester!



If you would like to provide treats and coffee after a church service, please sign up in the binder on the back table of the sanctuary. Please ask a hospitality board member (Terri Luetgers, Rebecca Lunz, Sherry Larson, Donna Grotte, Pat Cowing or Deb Adams) if you have any questions.

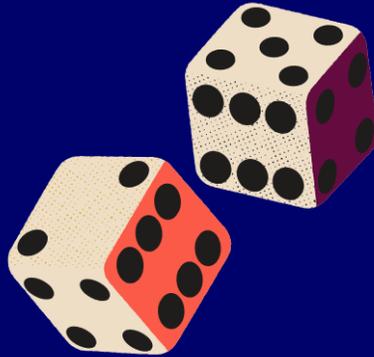


- February Treats:**
- 1: Marilyn Forstrom
 - 8: BonnieSue Bennett
 - 15: Donna Grotte (Hospitality Bd)
 - 22: OPEN (as of printing newsletter)

- March Treats:**
- 1: OPEN (as of printing newsletter)
 - 8: OPEN (as of printing newsletter)
 - 15: Becky Lunz (Hospitality Bd)
 - 22: OPEN (as of printing newsletter)
 - 29: OPEN (as of printing newsletter)

GAME TIME/ NOMADS INVITATION

GAME



READY

SUNDAY

FEB

15

2026

AT 4:00 PM

AT THE GERMAIN HOUSE:

202 W. BELLE VUE RD.

BRING A SNACK OR APPETIZER TO SHARE!

FAIRMONTUCC.ORG

First Congregational UCC
Free Community

MEAL



All
are
Welcome!

Wednesday, February 25th
Starting at 5:30 PM
319 Downtown Plaza, Fairmont, MN

Served by the
Hospitality Board

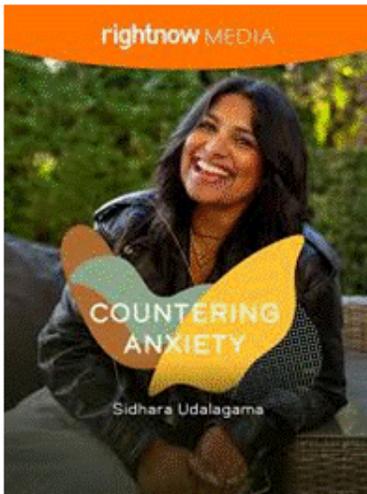
MENU:
Spaghetti with meat sauce
Lettuce salad
Garlic bread
Cupcake
Beverages

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rightnow MEDIA

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



Whether it's a new year, a job change, an unexpected health situation, or the onslaught of troubling world events, **anxiety** has a way of creeping into our lives at the most inopportune times. Well-meaning friends may share various platitudes designed to encourage us, but they are rarely as helpful as intended. As a Christian, you have a resource at your fingertips that can provide lasting help and encouragement. Take some time during February to learn about the ways God can help you in a four-session series called **Countering Anxiety**:

'What if something bad happens?' 'I'm scared.' 'What will they think?' 'I'm not enough.' In this powerful four-part series, Sidhara Udalagama explores how we can counter these anxious thoughts with the power of God's Word, which cuts through the lies of culture and our own disordered desires, so we can live in the peace God always intended for us.

*As with many RNM series, there is a free downloadable study guide that can help you follow along and explore this subject more fully.

As we move through the "bleak midwinter," do you find yourself wanting to just stay home on a Sunday morning? Well, there is a reason that First Congregational UCC exists, and it's not just to make downtown Fairmont look pretty! God wants us to read the scriptures, be in communion with other believers, and take an active role in worship. Explore the reasons for the existence of the local church through five short episodes of **Why Do We Go to Church?**

We know that church is important, but why do we need to go to church? With online access to any sermon anywhere in the world with a click of a button, why does it matter that we are connected to a local body of believers? In this five-session series, author and pastor Ben Stuart explores what the church is, the significance of reading the Bible together, the value and purpose of the sacraments, and what genuine and faithful community looks like.



*Do you still need your own **FREE rightnow** MEDIA account, OR would you like to share this great resource with a friend?

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 grows as I discover new picks! If you've found 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



Lasagna “Cupcakes”

From emilybites.com

Ingredients:

- **½ lb.** 95% lean ground beef
- **1 ½ teaspoons** Italian seasoning
- **5 oz** mushrooms, chopped
- **16** wonton wrappers, check the produce department!
- **4 oz** fat free Ricotta cheese
- **1 ½ oz** Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- **1 cup** pasta sauce, I used Wegmans brand Tomato & Basil
- **4 oz** reduced fat 2% shredded Mozzarella cheese

Instructions:

Pre-heat the oven to 375. Lightly mist 8 cups in a muffin tin with cooking spray and set aside.

In a sauté pan or large skillet over medium-high heat, add the ground beef and Italian seasoning and brown beef, breaking it up with a spoon. Add mushrooms and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, for a few minutes until mushrooms are browned as well.

Push a wonton wrapper into the bottom of each of the eight sprayed cups in the muffin tin. Using about half of the ricotta, spoon evenly into the wonton wrappers. Follow by spooning some of the meat/mushroom mixture into each cup (using about half the total mixture) and then splitting ½ cup of the sauce between each cup. Sprinkle about half the mozzarella and half the Parmesan evenly over the top of each cup. Press another wonton wrapper on top and repeat the layering steps with the remaining ingredients.

Bake for 18-20 minutes until golden brown. Let cool 5 minutes before removing from muffin tin.

Nutrition Information: 165 calories, 13 g carbs, 3 g sugars, 6 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 15 g protein, 1 g fiber (*from myfitnesspal.com*)

FEBRUARY

Birthdays



Feb 1	Mark Craven
Feb 3	Faith Kotewa
Feb 4	Jim Bock Joyce Jorgenson
Feb 6	April Rachuy
Feb 7	BonnieSue Bennett
Feb 10	Jenna Smith
Feb 13	Janine Draper Remi Shoen
Feb 16	Jim Marushin Sr.
Feb 17	Vicki Bicknase Carter Rowan Colby Whitmore
Feb 18	Kirk Jorgensen
Feb 19	Joe Craven
Feb 21	Larry Lasch
Feb 25	Cindy Anderson
Feb 27	Larry Christensen
Feb 28	Henry Brummond Matt Guritz

Anniversaries



Feb 14	Jon & Cindy Anderson	28 years
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fairmontucc.org

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or is incorrect, please notify the church office.

fairmontucc.org