

First Congregational Messenger
 First Congregational United Church of Christ
 Norfolk, NE
Serving God with love and faith



Stewardship Sunday is March 19



The theme this year is “Go and do the same” from Luke 10:37, a powerful reminder to be a genuine follower of Christ. It is a call to discipleship to be like the Good Samaritan to be kind, compassionate, and consider others in need.

The world is broken and hurting and Christians are called to be a movement for wholeness.

Our fruitful faithful stewardship is one way we work against the power that would hurt and divide. Your generous funds allow us to do ministry, and witness to God’s love and Christian unity. We will celebrate stewardship on the first three Sundays in March, dedicating our pledges on March 19.

Look for your financial *pledge card*, as well as your *Time and Talent sheet* in the mail. Please take the time to prayerfully consider your pledge and how you might share your time and talent serving God in love and faith.

March 2017

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Church Secretary

Monday-Thursday 10-4
 Other times by appointment
 May be out of the office for meetings or visits



**Pastor’s
 Office Hours**

Office Hours
 Monday-Friday
 8-12
 Monday and Wednesday
 1-3

Lent: Returning to God



Ash Wednesday marks the start of the Lenten season—40 days of reflection (not counting Sundays) completed with Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. It is a time to look inward and think about our walk with God. One moment we feel close to God and can see signs our deepening faith. But all too suddenly, our faith becomes shaky, we experience sorrow and emptiness, we hurt those who are closest to us; and we are reminded that we are human. The season of Lent gives us a chance remember that human life is fragile and ways to stay close to God.

Through worship and prayer we become intentional about seeking God during this inward reflection. A spiritual practices that speak to us, can be a meaningful way to return to God each day. The first time that I observed Lent, I gave up sweets—I was 22. It was my habit in the morning to walk to class (or chase the bus) while eating a 'big cookie' and drinking a diet coke from Seven-Eleven. The practice deepened my faith, because each time I remembered not to eat a cookie for breakfast, I remembered the season.

Lenten observance is still meaningful to me. I am grateful that I can deepen my faith in the midst of others, starting by receiving the ashes, taking communion, and sharing a simple soup supper with others. I invite you to create a practice that expresses your desire to stay close to God, and remember Jesus' life in the weeks leading up to his death on a cross. For you, the practice may include removing something, or it might be about adding something. How will you walk with Jesus on the road to Jerusalem this season? *Peace, Pastor Jackie*



COUNCIL MEETING

Unity Council met Thursday, February 16, 2017 at 7 PM. Barb Koenig opened with prayer.

Katie Gamerl reported that: Scott Williams and Katie Gamerl met with Paul Pflueger on [Tuesday, February 7th](#). We advised Paula that the church approved the investment plan along with allowing a draw of up to 10% of the fund balance annually. We decided to have the 10% sent to us to deposit into our Madison County Bank account. The funds have been invested or distributed as follows:

\$21,924	Dodge County NE
School District 7.06% annual return	
\$50,000	American Funds
\$30,000	American Mutual A
\$20,000	Income Fund of America A
\$16,000	SPDR S&P Dividend ETF
\$ 9,971	Distributed to the Church

The American Funds mutual funds average 11.01% and 11.60% return over their lifespan. The SPDR EFT (Exchange Traded Fund)

averages 8.67%. The American Fund accounts have balance between stock holdings and bond holdings that meet our investment goal. The EFT is almost entirely stock holdings. The \$9,971 was deposited in Madison County Bank.

Youth group is visiting the animal shelter and collecting items for this month's mission work.

Ash Wednesday will be held in our church with Trinity Episcopal and First Presbyterian at 6 with a soup supper following.

A new directory has been printed and is available at the church in the office.

Skyline Apartments (high-rise on 12th and Norfolk) has asked if we would be involved in monthly activities with the tenants. Volunteers will be needed.

Annual meeting is planned for April 23.



Easter Egg Hunt

SATURDAY, April 8 at 11:00 AM

First Congregational United Church of Christ

1102 W. Norfolk Ave



AGES THRU 5TH GRADE

Please join us in the Easter Egg Hunt.

Eggs are filled and waiting to be found

Please bring a bag or basket to carry your eggs home

Sponsored by:

Trinity Episcopal Church

First Presbyterian Church

First Congregational

United Church of Christ

Funded by:

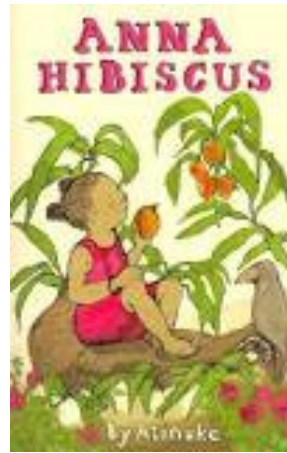
Thrivent Financial

Rain Date Saturday, April 15





Vicki made cheese bunuelos--Columbian cheese biscuits. We ate at La Macarena--tacos, tostados, gorditas, and a quesadilla--that were all grand!



March's book is from Africa and talks about family and ways to express joy. African lunch at the church will follow the discussion.

Around the World Bookclub

2ND Wednesday of each month

10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Learn about 12 Countries of our world thru children's books.

- January - China ... Year of the Panda, Miriam Schlein
- February - Columbia... Waiting for Biblioburro, Monica Brown
- March - Africa.... Anna Hibiscus, Atinuke
- April - Netherlands... Boxes for Katje, Candace Fleming
- May - Japan.... Peace Tree from Hiroshima, Sandra Moore
- June - India ... Sona & the Wedding Game, Kashmira Sheth
- July - Sweden ... Children of Neisy Village, Astrid Lindgren
- August - Haiti ... Hope for Haiti, Jesse Joshua Watson
- September - Australia... Pumpkin Runner, Australia
- October - Vietnam... Grandfather's Dream, Vietnam
- November - France... Family Under the Bridge, Natalie Savage Carlson
- December - Mexico... Too Many Tamales, Gary Soto



In February, the youth invited the congregation to donate items to the **Norfolk Animal Shelter**. From kitten chow, to laundry and office goods, to water for volunteers, the shelter always has a need for donations and volunteers. www.animalshelter.org
402.750.4665

“I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...”
Matthew 25:35



Paul’s letters remind us that as members of the church, we are so closely connected that we can think of ourselves as one body. The New Testament constantly refers to followers of Jesus, not as Christians, but as a family—brothers and sisters.

The Bible tells us that when one suffers, God declares “I am here.” When we see the latest tragedy on the news, we might ask, “Where are you, God” But we already know the answer—God is here, in the midst of those who suffer. Please give generously when we dedicate our gifts March 26. The next page of the newsletter is a giving calendar for One Great Hour of Sharing.



4th	Ron Barritt
14th	Nina Bahm
18th	Rita Woodard
19th	Steve Uzzell
28th	Erik Gamerl

"Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action." —1 John 3:18

For ideas on how to use this calendar, visit www.ucc.org/oghs/resources

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
I was hungry...	"...Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body'" (Matthew 26:26). Give 2 units in thanksgiving for Jesus' incarnation.	800 million people in the world approximately 1 in 9 do not regularly have enough to eat. Give 1 unit for every meal you eat today.	In 2016, droughts caused severe food shortages in Ethiopia, Central America, and elsewhere. Give 1 unit for every grocery store in your town or neighborhood.	Since 1990, the number of malnourished people in the developing world has fallen by almost half, thanks to food security and development projects. Give 1 unit in celebration of this progress and 1 unit to continue the work.	Being able to start a vegetable garden with seeds provided through OGHs, partners can provide food and economic security. Give 1 unit for each vegetable in your refrigerator.	The U.S. wastes 33 million tons of food, \$165 billion worth each year. Give 1 unit in repentance for each food item that has gone bad in your refrigerator or pantry this week.	"I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat." Give 3 units to provide food for someone who is hungry.
I was thirsty...	"A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'" (John 4:7). We remember that Jesus shared in the human experience of thirst. Give 1 unit for every drink you have today.	663 million people worldwide do not have regular access to clean water. Give 1 unit for every water bottle in your home.	Rain collection, cisterns, and irrigation systems help communities mitigate drought conditions. Give 1 unit if you have ever collected rain water, or 2 units if you have never collected rain water.	1.9 billion people have gained access to clean drinking water since 1990. Give 2 units in celebration.	Women and girls in Africa and Asia often spend more than 6 hours collecting water every day. Give 2 units if your commute was less than 6 hours today.	The water crisis in Flint, MI brought to public attention the severe effects of contaminants in water supplies and the importance of good infrastructure. Give 1 unit for every tap in your home.	"I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink." Give 3 units to increase access to clean water by helping communities build wells, small dams, cisterns, and filtration systems.
I was a stranger...	"You are no longer strangers...but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). Give 2 units in celebration of the full household of God.	More than 65 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes world-wide. Give 1 unit for every room in your home where you feel safe.	"Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me.'" (Mark 10:14) More than 2,000 children are being held in family detention centers in the US awaiting asylum hearings. Give 1 unit for every child in your family.	OGHS congregations help resettle refugees in the United States every year. This year the numbers of refugees will increase. Give 2 units in celebration.	Nearly 10 million displaced persons are categorized as stateless (not considered a national of any country). Give 1 unit for every US citizen in your household.	Poverty and hunger are key reasons people leave from Latin America to immigrate to the U.S. Give 2 units to help address these root causes.	"I was a stranger, and you welcomed me." Give 3 units to support relief and resettlement efforts for refugees and humanitarian responses for immigrants.
I was sick...	"But a Samaritan while traveling came near him... He went to him and bandaged his wounds...brought him to an inn, and took care of him" (Luke 10:33-34). Give 2 units in thankfulness for those who show mercy.	Waterborne illnesses kill more people than all forms of war and violence combined. Access to clean water and adequate sanitation can prevent the spread of these illnesses. Give 1 unit for every toilet in your home.	In 2015, more than 300,000 women died from maternal causes. Give 2 units if the women you know have access to reproductive care.	Since 2000, global rates of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and several other major diseases have seen decreases of 40% or more. Give 3 units in celebration of these efforts.	OGHS partners help provide basic medical supplies and psychological care to thousands of people living in refugee camps. Give 1 unit for every bottle of medicine in your home.	Environmental toxins, such as fertilizers and industrial waste, contribute to weakened immune responses, especially in children. Give 1 unit if anyone in your family has recovered from an illness this year.	"I was sick, and you took care of me." Give 3 units to help provide medical care and prevent illness around the world.

Fellowship Work Committee

March

Rita Woodard

Bonnie Dewell

April

Evonne Burkink

Katie Gamerl

Lori Williams



March 1 Ash Wednesday

Ushers: Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

Greeters: Gene and Darlene Korthals

Reader: Kay Neuharth

March 5

Communion: Stan and Vicki Staab, Ed Lindsay, Susan Allyn

Ushers: Scott and Lori Williams

Greeters: Garrett Korthals and Mike Synovec

Reader: Vicki Staab

Leader: Stan Staab

Flowers: Scott and Lori Williams

March 12

Ushers: Rita Woodard and Barb Koenig

Greeters: Ed Lindsay and Verletta Olson

Reader: Stan Staab

Flowers:

March 19

Ushers: Randy and Kay Neuharth

Greeters: Suzan Podliska and Rita Woodard

Reader: Randy Neuharth

Flowers:

March 26

Ushers: Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

Greeters: Verletta Olson and Rita Woodard

Reader: Lori Williams

Flowers:

April 2

Communion: Scott and Lori Williams, Sue Surber and Barb Koenig

Ushers: Gene and Darlene Korthals

Greeters: Stan and Vicki Staab

Reader: Scott Williams

Leader: Susan Allyn

Flowers:

April 9 Palm Sunday

Ushers: Randy and Kay Neuharth

Greeters: Scott and Lori Williams

Reader: Karen Allyn

Flowers: Palms

April 13 Maundy Thursday

Ushers: Verletta Olson and Sue Surber

Greeters: Barb Koenig and Bonnie Dewell

Reader: Verletta Olson

Flowers:

April 16 Easter

Ushers: Sue Podliska and Rita Woodard

Greeters: Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

Reader: Stan Staab

Flowers: Lilies

April 23 Annual Meeting

Ushers: Bonnie Dewell and Ed Lindsay

Greeters: Mike Synovec and Garrett Korthals

Reader: Kay Neuharth

Flowers:

April 30 Confirmation

Ushers: Stan Staab and Mike Synovec

Greeters: Verletta Olson and Rita Woodard

Reader: Scott Williams

Flowers:



TREASURER'S REPORT

From 2/1/17 through 2/28/17

This does not include the deposit for 2-26-17

Checking account information

Beginning balance	\$ 6,170.29
Youth Mission	\$ 1,000.00
<u>Weekly deposits</u>	<u>\$ 16,916.26</u>
Subtotal	\$ 24,086.55
Salary	--\$ 5,5595.69
Church Maintenance	—\$ 2,130.47
Office Expenses	—\$ 871.21
Youth Mission	—\$ 1,498.05
Substitute Organist	—\$ 195.00
<u>OCWM,</u>	<u>—\$ 301.73</u>
Final Balance	\$ 13,494.40

March 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6 PM Ash Wednesday Service GS 7-8	2 GS 6-7:15	3 7 Card Group	4
5 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Stewardship	6 GS 5:30-6:30 GS 7 PM FH	7 GS 6:30-7:30	8 Book Club 10- 11 6 Confirmation GS 5-6	9	10 7 Card Group	11 12-5 Girl Scouts
12 Daylight Savings Time 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Stewardship	13 GS 6:30-7:30	14 GS 6:30-7:30	15 GS 7-8	16 7 PM Unity Council GS 6-7:15	17	18
19 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Stewardship Dedication	20 GS 5:30-6:30	21 GS 6:30-7:30	22 6 Confirmation GS 5-6	23	24	25
26 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship OGHS 1-5 Avidano	27 GS 6:30-7:30	28 GS 6:30-7:30	29	30	31	

April 2017

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9:00 Sunday School
10:15 Worship

GS 5:30-6:30

GS 6:30-7:30

GS 7-8

GS 6-7:15

7 Card Group

11 Easter Egg hunt

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

9:00 Sunday School
10:15 Worship

GS 6:30-7:30

GS 6:30-7:30

GS 5-6

Maundy Thursday

7 Card Group

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

10:15 Worship

GS 5:30-6:30

GS 6:30-7:30

GS 7-8

GS 6-7:15

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

9:00 Sunday School
10:15 Worship
11:15 Annual Meeting

GS 6:30-7:30

GS 6:30-7:30

GS 5-6

6-7:30 Confirmation dinner

30

9:00 Sunday School
10:15 Worship



First Congregational United Church of Christ
1102 W. Norfolk Ave
Norfolk, NE 68701

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Return Service Requested

With love and faith



First Congregational United Church of Christ

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Norfolk, NE 68701

402-371-0701

firstconguccc@cableone.net

www.firstconguccc.org

9:00 AM Sunday School Sept-May

10:15 AM Worship Service