

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



March 2025

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Rather than a fifth Sunday potluck, we will have a potluck on Sunday, March 16. Pastor Brian is fixing corned beef and cabbage and invites you to bring other foods for the potluck.

Lenten lunches begin this month. Read inside for more information.



Pastor's Office Hours

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9-12
 Afternoons by appointment



Church Secretary

Office Hours
 Monday-Friday
 8-12

May be gone to the doctor with Mom

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Brian's Beacon

March 9 will be the first Sunday in Lent, and the first day of spring is March 20th, but that doesn't mean that it can't snow. I hope you are looking forward to Lent and Spring. The time change will be March 9th, spring forward. Ash Wednesday will be March 5th with the Presbyterian Church. We will hold Lenten lunches here on March 19 and 26, April 2 and 9. Each lunch will start at noon and with soup and Sandwich or salad. Each lunch will have a short devotion. I enjoy this time of year because of the focus on the Gospels and what Jesus has done for each one of us.

On March 16th we will have an Irish potluck to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. St. Patrick's Day is a holiday known for parades, shamrocks and all things Irish. "From leprechauns to green, one can learn about symbols we now associate with St. Patrick's Day. The Shamrock, which was also called the "seamroy" by the Celts, was a sacred plant in ancient Ireland because it symbolized the rebirth of spring. By the seventeenth century, the shamrock had become a symbol of emerging Irish nationalism. As the English began to seize Irish land and make laws against the use of the Irish language and the practice of Catholicism, many Irish began to wear the shamrock as a symbol of their pride in their heritage and their displeasure with English rule."

Irish Music

Music is often associated with St. Patrick's Day. Always part of the Irish life and oral culture, where religion, legend and history were passed on from one generation to the next.

The English conquered the Irish and they were forbidden to speak their own language, thus the Irish used music to help them remember important events and hold on to their history. Even music was outlawed by the English. Queen Elizabeth I even decreed that all pipers were to be arrested and hanged on the spot.

Today, Irish bands like the Chieftains, the Clancy Brothers are gaining worldwide popularity. Using instruments like the fiddle, the uilleann pipes which are an elaborate bagpipe, and the tin whistle.

Corned Beef and St. Patrick's Day Foods

Each year, thousands of Irish Americans gather with their loved ones on St. Patrick's Day to share a traditional meal of corned beef and cabbage.

Irish immigrants living on New York City's Lower East Side substituted corned beef for their traditional dish of Irish bacon to save money, which they learned about the cheaper alternative from their Jewish neighbors.

St. Patrick and His History

Early in the 5th century, an Irish ship beat against the waves along the western coast of [Great Britain](#). On the far edge of the crumbling [Roman Empire](#), a band of Irish marauders crept into a secluded cove and raided the village of Banaue Taurine.

Among the plunder captured by the band of warriors dispatched by Ireland's King Niall of the Nine Hostages was a 16-year-old boy named Succot. Although brought to Ireland against his will, the teenager would go on to become Ireland's patron saint. [St. Patrick](#)

Ripped from his home, Patrick herded sheep for a local chieftain on the slopes of Mount Slemish in County Antrim in the north of [Ireland](#). Deprived of food and clothes, Patrick lived in virtual isolation. His only companions were his flock and his newfound faith. Amid the desolation, Patrick's [Christianity](#) blossomed. He prayed as many as 100 times during the day—and matched that total at night.

Patrick wrote in the *Confessio* that six years into his captivity, an angel appeared in a dream and told him, "You have fasted well. Very soon you will return to your native country." The angel told him of a ship leaving Ireland, and the young man walked across 200 miles of peat bogs and forests before arriving at a port, possibly Wexford, where he found a cargo ship bound for the [European continent](#).

Patrick eventually returned to his family in Great Britain. His parents begged him to never leave them again, but the religious visions returned and presented Patrick with a different plan. He heard the voice of the Irish call out, "We beg you, holy boy, to come and walk again among us." After a period of religious training, he was ordained a deacon around 418 A.D. and in 432 A.D. consecrated as a bishop and given the name Patricius.

There is much to learn about Patrick who did serve and help bring salvation to Ireland. He taught them much like the Trinity using the 3-leaf clover as a tool.

I am looking forward to celebrating St. Patrick's with you one day early at our Irish Potluck on March 16.

Pastor Brian High



LENT

You are invited to Lenten lunches here at First Congregational on March 19 and 26, April 2 and 9. Each lunch will have a short devotion and prayer time to draw us closer to Christ during Lent. A freewill offering will be taken to help with the cost of the lunch. Each lunch starts at NOON!

Love Remains Giving Calendar

For use with the OGHS coin banks that can be ordered at www.UCCResources.com.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	<p>"I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart." Give 1 unit as an act of gratitude today.</p>	<p>In 2020, disasters in the U.S. hit a record with 22 "billion dollar" disasters. Give 2 units to support disaster preparedness.</p>	<p>At least 2 billion people worldwide use contaminated water sources. Give 1 unit for every faucet in your home.</p>	<p>COVID-19 led to a dramatic rise in hunger worldwide. Give 2 units if you had enough food to eat today.</p>	<p>The U.S. cap on refugee entries in 2021 was 62,500. Give 2 units to support a higher ceiling in 2022.</p>	<p>1 in every 95 people in the world has fled their home due to conflict or persecution. Give 1 unit if you feel safe at home.</p>	<p>UN Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDG) 1 is to End poverty in all its forms everywhere. Give 1 unit if you live in a stable home.</p>
Week 2	<p>Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor." Give 1 unit to support the 1 in 6 children who live in poverty worldwide.</p>	<p>More than 5,000 families were separated at the U.S. southern border between 2017 and 2020. Give 1 unit to help keep families together.</p>	<p>More than 80 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced. Give 2 units to support resettlement programs.</p>	<p>Human trafficking affect more than 40 million people worldwide--75% of whom are women and girls. Give 2 units in honor of the women and girls in your life.</p>	<p>Air pollution kills an estimated 7 million people each year. Give 1 unit to support alternative energy projects that improve air quality.</p>	<p>OGHS partners work for equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine worldwide. Give 2 units if you have been vaccinated.</p>	<p>UN SDG 2 is to End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Give 1 unit if you have a garden, 2 if you do not.</p>
Week 3	<p>"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." Give 1 unit for faith, 1 unit for hope, and 1 unit for love!</p>	<p>More than 600 million children worldwide lack minimum proficiency in math and reading. Give 2 units to support education.</p>	<p>More than 2 billion people worldwide lack access to basic sanitation. Give 1 unit for every bathroom in your home.</p>	<p>In 2020, more than 400 natural disasters occurred worldwide. Give 2 units to support survivors still trying to rebuild.</p>	<p>Homes built by OGHS Partners in Haiti after Hurricane Michael survived the 2021 earthquake because they were structurally sound. Give 2 units to support quality construction.</p>	<p>By 2025, half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas. Give 2 units to support water-related development programs.</p>	<p>UN SDG 3 is to Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages. Give 2 units if you are involved in a physical activity program.</p>
Week 4	<p>Love Remains. Give 1 unit for every Bible verse you can think of that is about loving your neighbor!</p>	<p>Psychosocial support is one of the most critical needs following a disaster. Give 1 unit to support survivors dealing with PTSD.</p>	<p>More than 800 million people in the world live with hunger. Give 1 unit to support food security programs.</p>	<p>OGHS Partners help provide shelter following disasters. Give 1 unit if there is a roof over your head right now.</p>	<p>Climate change is causing more frequent and more severe natural disasters. Give 2 units to help those impacted by these storms.</p>	<p>Women's empowerment programs reduce the rate of gender-based violence. Give 1 unit to support economic opportunities for women.</p>	<p>UN SDG 4 is to Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities. Give 1 unit if you have access to education.</p>

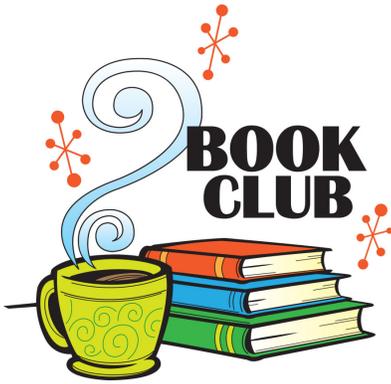
Sources: UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform; UN High Commissioner for Refugees; CDC; World Health Organization; FEMA

Order Additional OGHS Materials at www.uccresources.com

Bible Reading for the Month

March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Deuteronomy 5-7
2 Deuteronomy 8-10	3 Deuteronomy 11-13	4 Deuteronomy 14-16	5 Deuteronomy 17-20	6 Deuteronomy 21-23	7 Deuteronomy 24-27	8 Deuteronomy 28-29
9 Deuteronomy 30-31	10 Deuteronomy 32-34	11 Joshua 1-4	12 Joshua 5-8	13 Joshua 9-11	14 Joshua 12-15	15 Joshua 16-18
16 Joshua 19-21	17 Joshua 22-24	18 Judges 1-2	19 Judges 3-5	20 Judges 6-7	21 Judges 8-9	22 Judges 10-12
23 Judges 13-15	24 Judges 16-18	25 Judges 19-21	26 Ruth	27 1 Samuel 1-3	28 1 Samuel 4-8	29 1 Samuel 9-12
30 1 Samuel 13-14	31 1 Samuel 15-17					



Book Club will meet March 12 at 10 AM. The books can be found in Fellowship Hall or you can contact Jane Uzzell. This month is the Mathical Award.

Thank you so much for praying & caring for us, especially as we walked the valley of these last few months. You all are a blessing to us!
Love, Ben and family, and Jane Uzzell



Do you go grocery shopping? At Lou's? At HyVee? **We have an easy way to bump up your donation to the church budget--use a Lou's or HyVee gift card** when you go shopping or get gas. You can buy them **Sundays** in Fellowship Hall. We currently get \$25, \$50 and \$100 gift cards.

See you at the table in Fellowship Hall! Questions? Leave a message for Jane Uzzell at (402) 640-6623.



MARCH Birthdays

- 3rd Charlene Fosdick
- 4th Ron Barritt
- 5th Glenn Williams
- 18th Rita Woodard
- 28th Erik Gamerl



March 2

Communion: Tom McConnell and Susan Surber

Ushers: Scott and Lori Williams

Greeters: Darlene Korthals and Jane Uzzell

Reader: Randy Neuharth

Leader: Ben Uzzell

Flowers:

March 9

Ushers: Barb Koenig and Tom McConnell

Greeters: Randy and Kay Neuharth

Reader: Grace Uzzell

Flowers:

March 16

Ushers: Jane Uzzell and Susan Surber

Greeters: Mike Synovec and Tom McConnell

Reader: Ben Uzzell

Flowers: Rita Woodard

March 23

Ushers: Ben and Stacie Uzzell

Greeters: Scott and Lori Williams

Reader: Reese Uzzell

Flowers:

March 30

Ushers: Randy and Kay Neuharth

Greeters: Barb Koenig and Evonne Burkink

Reader: Lori Williams

Flowers:

April 6

Communion: Randy and Kay Neuharth

Ushers: Evonne Burkink and Pat Jenny

Greeters: Rita Woodard and Sue Surber

Reader: Tom McConnell

Leader: Jane Uzzell

Flowers:

April 13 Palm Sunday

Ushers: Mike Synovec and Rita Woodard

Greeters: Bonnie Dewell and Pat Jenny

Reader: Scott Williams, Verletta Olson, Kay Neuharth

Flowers: Palms

April 17 Maundy Thursday

Ushers: Darlene Korthals and Bonnie Dewell

Greeters: Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

Reader: Randy Neuharth

April 20 Easter

Ushers: Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

Greeters: Verletta Olson and Mike Synovec

Reader: Jane Uzzell

Flowers: Lilies

April 27 Annual Meeting

Ushers: Tom McConnell and Barb Koenig

Greeters: Scott and Lori Williams

Reader: Grace Uzzell

Flowers:

Please notify the office if you are not able to attend a service.

February

From 2/1/25 through 2/28/25

Checking account information

Beginning balance	\$	7,440.61
<u>Weekly deposits</u>	\$	<u>7,779.98</u>
Subtotal	\$	15,220.59
Salary	--\$	6,247.22
Church Maintenance	—\$	3,138.69
Office Expenses	—\$	730.44
Faith Development	—\$	23.49
Insurance	—\$	1,031.08
Conference	—\$	40.00
<u>Renner's</u>	—\$	<u>500.00</u>
Final Balance	\$	3,509.67



▶ March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	GS 6-7:30		Ash Wednesday 5:30 PM First Presbyterian Church	GS 6-7		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Daylight Savings begins 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Faith Develop- ment	GS 5:30-7		10 Book club Youth Group 6:30 PM		Delphians 12-3	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Irish Potluck	GS 6-7:30		Lenten Lunch Noon	GS 6-7		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	GS 5:30-7		Lenten Lunch Noon Youth Group 6:30 PM			
30	31					
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship OGHS offering						

▶ April 2025

Sun **Mon** **Tue** **Wed** **Thu** **Fri** **Sat**

1 2 3 4 5

Lenten Lunch
Noon GS 6-7

6 7 8 9 10 11 12

9 Sunday
School
10:15 Worship

GS 6-7:30

10 Book club
Lenten Lunch
Noon
Youth Group
6:30 PM

11 Egg Hunt

13 14 15 16 17 18 19

9 Sunday
School
10:15 Worship

GS 5:30-7

Maundy
Thursday
GS 6-7

20 21 22 23 24 25 26

10:15 Worship

GS 6-7:30

Youth Group
6:30 PM

27 28 29 30

9 Sunday
School
10:15 Worship

GS 5:30-7

Annual Meet-
ing