

# LAMPLIGHTER

## Advent Credo

As we begin this season of Advent – a season of waiting and watching and preparing – I find myself more impatient than I would like to be. I also find myself filled with less hope than I should. The last few weeks have been heavy and filled with all kinds of emotions and questions for so many – what will come of this country? What kind of future will my children inherit? Is there any hope that the ideals upon which this nation was founded and the basic principles of our faith that have guided us will ever again be in sight?

I find it easy to despair these days. Our community, this nation, and the world seem to be moving in a direction that is more a harbinger of worse things yet to come than hopefulness for a brighter



tomorrow.

So I took comfort in this Advent poem that appeared as a daily devotion for me when I needed it most. I will let it speak for itself.

*Advent Credo*

It is not true that creation and the human family are

*(continued on page 4)*

## DECEMBER EVENTS

### Advent



On Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> the Young Adult Group will meet at Perry's at 5:00 pm for a Christmas Sock Gift Exchange. Everyone is invited to bring a snack to share.



On Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, our children will present their Christmas program during worship. Following the program, we will have an all-church potluck.



Also on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, there will be a "Sip and Knit" event at the church with the proceeds going to the Youth Group. See more details later in this Lamplighter.

### Christmas



We will hold one service this year. Our traditional candlelight service will begin at 5:00 pm and will feature both our Adult Handbell Choir and Senior Chancel Choir.

*"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6*

## The "Christmas in a Box" Christmas Program

What, you might ask, do a lamp shade, a frisbee, a dish towel, plastic grocery bags, a broom, a wooden spoon, and a few pieces of paper have to do with the Christmas Story? On Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, our young people will be happy to show you as they present their 2016 Christmas Program entitled, "Christmas in a Box." In both song and story, they will use these seemingly unrelated items that they find in a "prop box" and you will see how they fit into the Christmas story we all know so well.

Come join us as our kids share the good news once again through the re-telling of what happened 2,000 years ago and changed the world forever!



## WF Bake Sale

Women's Fellowship would like to thank everyone who brought goodies or purchased items at their annual bake sale.

They completely sold out this year! All moneys raised by the Women's Fellowship are returned to the church through the many projects they help to support throughout the year.

## Young Adult Group

The First Congregational UCC Young Adult Group will meet on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm at Steve and Connie Perry's home. This year we will be exchanging small gifts/treats stuffed inside the most garish Christmas socks you can find!

This time of fun and fellowship has become a great tradition and we invite all "young adults" in the congregation to join us. For more



information, please contact Pastor Corey or Steve and Connie Perry.

## Advent Pot Luck

The Congregational Life Board is sponsoring an All-Church Potluck on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> following the Children's Christmas Program.

Each family is invited to bring a main course and a side dish or dessert to share. Drinks and table service will be provided by the Board.

## Greenbelt Bank Holiday Open House

Each year, Greenbelt Bank & Trust holds a Holiday Open House and for every adult attending and registering, they contribute \$1.00 to the church of his or her choosing.

We encourage you to attend the open house in Eldora on December 9<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and provide our church's name as you register. We have typically put the proceeds toward our Christmas mission project.

Similar open houses will be held in Ackley, Belmond, and Grundy Center on the 9<sup>th</sup> and in Iowa Falls on Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>. You can attend any one you choose as long as you list our church as your home church. If you stop by in another town, be sure to list "Eldora" with UCC.

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## Mission Board Helping Hands Christmas Project

This year instead of buying items for individual TIGER Pack kids, what they have requested, and have a critical need for, is funding for individual circumstances that arise. For example, they notice a child with no boots. They would be able to go to a fund we have collected and have the money available there to buy this child boots. They will report to our Board every time they used money from this fund, the amount and purpose. If a child needs help with funding for a field trip, same scenario...they will go to the fund and then report to us what they used the money for and what amount was used. Accountability on their part, and helping us keep track of the level of the fund for our part.

We know it's fun to go buy a child a new winter coat, pj's, boots, etc. But this year, we are asking folks to just place that same \$10, \$15, \$25 or more

they would have spent on clothing in the little envelope from the tree. Last year, we exceeded our \$800 goal so this year we have set the goal at \$1,000!

The process is simple:

1. Pick a card or cards in the \$10, \$15 and \$25 amounts.
2. Place your contribution in the card provided (check or cash).
3. Put gift in the offering plate any Sunday December.



## Poinsettias for the Advent & Christmas Seasons



We will be decorating the sanctuary with poinsettias for the Advent and Christmas seasons. We welcome poinsettias of any color and size.

The church has purchased 30 poinsettias from the Tiger Pack fundraiser and these are available for sponsorship. The cost of the Tiger Pack poinsettias is \$10.00 per plant and the proceeds benefit their many programs. If you are interested in purchasing one of these poinsettias, we will have them for sale following worship on December

6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. You may choose either pink, white, or Monet and we will place a sticker on the bottom so you can identify it after Christmas and take it home, if you choose.

Poinsettias may also be purchased from a florist of your choice. Pink and white are our preferred colors. If you purchase them somewhere else and have them delivered, please make sure the card clearly indicates who the plant is being given by and who it is in memory or celebration of.

If you bring your own poinsettia to the church and it is sponsored in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special occasion, please make sure that information is conveyed to the church office. To be noted in the Christmas Eve bulletin, please have your poinsettia to the church by the Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.

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## Christmas Eve Worship

First Congregational UCC will celebrate Christmas Eve this year beginning with a 5:00 pm worship service.

Our traditional candlelight communion service will feature the Senior Choir and Handbell Choir as we tell anew the Christmas story. The service ends in darkness as we light our candles and sing "Silent Night."

Because Christmas Eve falls on a Saturday this year, the Worship Board decided to have just one service at 5:00 pm so that families are able to attend worship together but also enjoy dinner and time with loved ones without it getting so late.



*("Advent Credo" continued from page 1)*

doomed to destruction and loss –

This is true: For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life;

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction –

This is true: I have come that they may have life, and that abundantly.

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever –

This is true: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called wonderful councilor, mighty God, the Everlasting, the Prince of peace.

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world –

This is true: To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo I am with you, even until the end of the world.

It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers –

This is true: I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall

have dreams.

It is not true that our hopes for liberation of humankind, of justice, of human dignity of peace are not meant for this earth and for this history –

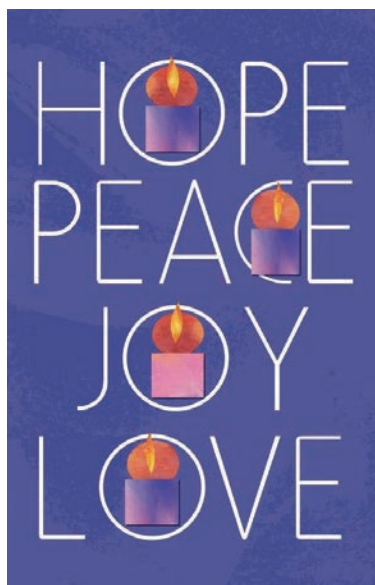
This is true: The hour comes, and it is now, that the true worshipers shall worship God in spirit and in truth.

So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ – the life of the world.

From *Walking on Thorns*, by Allan Boesak, Eerdmans, 2004.

Advent Blessings,

*Pastor Corey*



## COUNCIL CORNER



### Stewardship News

The Stewardship Board would like to thank all the family and friends of First Congregational United Church of Christ who have remained faithful and steadfast in their giving throughout 2016. We are running a little short for the year, but with the month of December remaining in the fiscal year we have the opportunity to end the year in a the black.

If you have fallen behind on your giving for the year, we encourage you to take this opportunity to "catch up" and help us meet all of our obligations.

Stewardship Sunday was November 20<sup>th</sup> and many of you completed your 2017 Estimate of Giving Cards during worship for which we are grateful. If you missed that Sunday, Estimate of Giving cards are available at the back of the sanctuary and may be turned in to the church office or left in the offering plate any time before the end of the year.

A special thank you to all who joined us for our Gratitude Meal, sponsored by the Stewardship Board as a way to show appreciation for the many ways this congregation shares its gifts and treasure.

# DECEMBER 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Choir Practice-8:30 Worship-10:00 am Bell Choir-11:20 am	5	6	7 Walking Wednesday-5:30 pm Confirmation Class-7:30 pm	8	9	10
11 Choir Practice-8:30 Worship-10:00 am Bell Choir-11:20 am Young Adult Group-5 pm	12	13 Pastor Corey at Clergy Cluster in Hubbard-9:30 am	14 Walking Wednesday-5:30 pm All Church Meeting Night-7:00 Church Council meets-7:45	15	16	17
18 Choir Practice-8:30 Worship-10:00 am (Program) Potluck Following Worship Sip and Knit Event-6:00 pm	19	20 Pastor Corey hosts Clergy Excellence Group-10 am	21 Walking Wednesday-5:30 pm	22	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> Christmas Eve Service - 5:00 pm
25 <i>Christmas Day</i> Choir Practice-8:30 Worship-10:00 am	26	27	28 <u>NO</u> Walking Wednesday	29	30	31

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

1<sup>st</sup>-Russ and Sonja Kinney-A

16<sup>th</sup>-Tom and Deb Donald-A

23<sup>rd</sup>-Arvin and Carolyn Haywood-A

2<sup>nd</sup>-Peggee Ellefson

23<sup>rd</sup>-Laura Isenhower

28<sup>th</sup>-Lauren Hohanshelt

3<sup>rd</sup>-Mike and Darla Crosser-A

23<sup>rd</sup>-Ben Steinfeldt

5<sup>th</sup>-Anna Grace Brady

## “Sip and Knit” Event

Join us for a Sip and Knit evening on December 18th from 6 to 8 pm and help support our youth group! If you need a last minute gift or have always wanted to learn to knit, this evening is for you. We will be making arm scarves, sipping some wine, munching on some goodies and enjoying some fellowship. Even if you have never knitted, this project is within your reach. We will have helpers on hand to help you make a very stylish scarf for either your self or a loved one.

Cost for the evening is \$30. Supplies, childcare and goodies to snack on will be provided. If you bring your own yarn, cost is \$25. If you have any questions, please see Kristin Brady or Sydney McDonald.



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## THE LAMPLIGHTER

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