

Words of Service April and May  
Algona First Congregational United Church of Christ  
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Sunday Worship 10 am  
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### FROM THE FRONT PORCH

In the latest edition of *The Christian Century* magazine, publisher Peter Marty shared something in his article that caught my attention. It's the story of Ruby Bridges. Here's a paraphrase of that story.

Fifty-six years ago, six-year-old Ruby walked into William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans. There's nothing unusual or unique about that except that Ruby was surrounded by federal marshals, and.....Ruby is black.....all the other students at the school were white. Before her first day had ended, parents had pulled all of their children out of the school in a massive boycott. She learned alone that year, taught by the only teacher willing to remain.

Large crowds of protesters gathered each day at the school to shout slurs and death threats at her. Angry whites waved Confederate flags, and some even shoved an open child's casket with a black doll inside in front of her.

A psychiatrist, Robert Coles, was studying children in the desegregating south at the time and he took a personal interest in Ruby. Her show of strength, indifference to what was happening around her, and bright cheer in the midst of all the ugliness caught his attention, so he began to meet with her every week.

During one visit, Ruby's teacher told him that she had noticed Ruby's lips moving as she walked into the school building, so he asked her who she was talking to. "I was talking to God and praying for the people in the street," she replied. "Why were you doing that?" he inquired. "Well? because I wanted to pray for them. Don't you think they need praying for?" she asked. Coles said he did, but wanted to know where she had learned to do this. "From my mommy and daddy and my minister," was her reply. "But Ruby, those people are so mean to you. You must have some other feelings besides just

wanting to pray for them." "No," she said, "I just keep praying for them and hoping God will be good to them.....I always pray the same thing. "Please, dear God, forgive them, because they don't know what they are doing." Ruby may have learned to pray from her parents and her minister, but I believe she learned what to pray from Jesus.

Holy Week is almost upon us and once again, we will recall these words of Jesus from the cross as he prayed for those who, out of fear, hatred, and ignorance demanded that he be crucified.

There has been an increase in the number of reports in the past several months of verbal, physical and material violence against people whom some of our brothers and sisters in our human family deem different. They do it out of the same reasons that have plagued humankind for hundreds of thousands of years, fear, hatred and ignorance. That is not (and never has been) the way of Jesus, not even from the cross. It was always (and still is) love and forgiveness.

Like Ruby, may this be our way in the face of the fear, hate and ignorance in these times. May we make it our practice to pray for those who spew fear and hate, confronting them in love, forgiving them, and dispelling the ignorance among us. May we pray also for forgiveness when we, in our own moments of weakness, discover ourselves thinking and acting this way too. As we move from Lent into the season of Easter, the season of resurrection and new life, may we work to bring about a new way of life for all God's children. The way of peace, love and harmony for all of humanity. Just as God intended for it to be.

*Pastor Chris*

## FEBRUARY/MARCH BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### February

- Several Members served a meal for the Strengthening Families program.
- The rain gutter on the chapel roof needs to be replaced.
- We are hosting the World Day of Prayer on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Discussed RAGBRAI. No final decisions.
- Talked about the possibility of becoming a member of the Chamber of Commerce. Further research will be done to decide if it is worthwhile for the church.
- Discussed obtaining a larger projection screen for use with our LCD projector. The screen we have is very old and very small.
- Discussed ways to help water drain off of the sidewalk on the west side of the church after a thaw or rain. Property team will take care of this.

### March

- Final carpet bill has been paid.
- Year to date expenses are running almost exactly the same as last year.
- Pastor Chris will take some continuing education and vacation time the week following Easter. He will be in St. Louis for continuing ed April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The remainder of the week on vacation.
- Pastor Chris is the new chairperson of the Northwestern Association Committee on Ministry
- A revised Manual on Ministry is being published for release sometime the end of this year. Pastor will be attending an orientation meeting for the new manual April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> in Chicago.
- The Mission and Memorial team has established the mission projects for the year.

The are-5 for 5 special offerings, Food Pantry, Meals on Wheels, Christmas Family, and Senior Center.

- Evangelism and Outreach team has ordered a new supply of bookmarks for placement at the Chamber office and local hotels. They are looking into ways to landscape around the Peace Pole.
- Decided not to do a meal for RAGBRAI. Will explore doing something simple.
- We host the Community Good Friday service. It will be at 7:00 p.m.
- Pastor Chris is looking into purchasing some new banners for the sanctuary. Memorial money will be used for this project.

**\*Complete minutes of the Board meetings are available in the church office.**

### TREASURER'S REPORT

As of Feb 28th  
Checking \$5,579.03  
Savings \$15,573.43

### FELLOWSHIP NEWS

We will be hosting a Palm Sunday BRUNCH POTLUCK following the worship service on April 9th. This will take the place of the regular April Fellowship Night and Potluck. In May, FELLOWSHIP NIGHT will be on May 10th. We plan to have a picnic and plant flowers along the sidewalk that evening, weather permitting. The May potluck following worship will be cancelled due to the holiday. Mark your calendars for these fun spring events, and join us.

## **MISSIONARY VISIT IS CANCELLED**

Some of you were aware that we were scheduled to host Global Ministries missionaries John and Karen Campbell-Nelson this Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> here at our church at 6:00 p.m. Due to illness they have had to cancel their visit. Karen has been diagnosed with pneumonia. They deeply regretted having to cancel. We were looking forward to their visit. . Though this is a disappointing turn of events, please keep them in your prayers as Karen recovers and John cares for her.

If you would like to know more about John, Karen, and their work, go to the Global Ministries website [www.globalministries.org](http://www.globalministries.org) and click on the People in Mission tab.

# April 2017



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Communion and Food Pantry	3	4 Pastor at the Perky Parrot in the morning	5	6	7	8
9 Palm Sunday Pot luck break- fast brunch	10	11 At the Parrot	12	13 6:30 pm Maundy Thur. at Methodist church	14 7 pm we host the ecumenical Good Friday service	15
16 Easter	17	18 Pastor in St. Louis	19 Pastor in St. Louis	20 Pastor on vacation	21 Pastor on vacation	22 Pastor on vacation
23 Pastor on vacation	24 Pastor in Chicago	25 Pastor in Chicago	26 7 pm Adult discussion at Chuck West's	27 Pastor in Eagle Grove 5 pm walk a mile	28 Trash, Treasure and Bake Sale from 5 pm to 7 pm	29 Trash, Treasure and Bake Sale from 8 am noon
30						

# May 2017

First Congregational United Church of  
Christ

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Pastor at the Perky Parrot in the morning	3 7 pm Board meeting	4 6:30 am Mayor's prayer service	5	6
7 Communion and Food pantry. Also a 4:30 pm movie	8	9 Pastor in Calumet am. 6:30 pm Food Pantry board	10	11 RSVP Pen Pals	12	13
14	15	16 Pastor at the Perky Parrot in the morning	17 7 pm baccalaureate at St. Cecilia	18 Ministerial Meeting in the morning	19	20
21	22	23 Pastor at the Perky Parrot in the morning	24	25 Pastor in Eagle Grove for a Clergy Cluster meeting	26 Care Center Services in the morning	27
28	29	30 Pastor at the Perky Parrot in the morning	31			