

December, 2018-January 2019 Newsletter
Algona First Congregational United Church of Christ
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Sunday Worship 10:00 AM

Pastor Chris Burtnett

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FROM THE FRONT PORCH

It's the beginning of another church year. Are you ready? There is a lot of stuff to get ready for in the time frame that this newsletter covers.

Dictionary.com defines "ready" as being "completely prepared or in fit condition for immediate action or use." Examples under this definition of ready, for example, might be; Dinner is ready, are you ready to go, for bed, for the test, etc. A second definition given is, "duly equipped, completed, adjusted, or arranged as for an occasion or purpose." One example of this is, "The mechanic called to say that the car is ready.

With both of these definitions in mind, here are a few things for us to get ready for in the church over the next two months. Are you ready for:

Advent – While it may be hard to remember, the season of Advent comes before Christmas. Once Thanksgiving day is past, we tend to fast forward through Advent and directly to Christmas. That's unfortunate, for Advent helps us to prepare for Christmas. It is our opportunity to contemplate all that God's promise of a savior to the world will mean for everyone, the good, the challenges, and the changes that will affect everyone in wonderful, unexpected, sometimes uncomfortable ways. During Advent, here at First Congregational United Church of Christ, we will receive our Christmas Family offering, (last day is December 9th), Christmas Fund offering on December 23rd, and anticipate Jesus' birth with our Christmas Eve service at 5:00 PM on the 24th

Christmas – This second season of the church year begins on Christmas Day and is only twelve days long. This short, joyous season is a

time for rejoicing at God's promise fulfilled and pondering what this might mean for us.

Epiphany – We often include the visit of the Magi (wise men, astrologers, etc.) in the Christmas story. That isn't quite accurate. The Magi's visit (found only in Matthew's version of Jesus' birth narrative) actually marks the beginning of this season. It's Matthew's way of communicating that Jesus' coming is for the entire world and all people. During this season we are invited to consider what that means for us and how we are to relate to all of our brothers and sisters who may not share our particular faith.

That's a lot for which to get ready. Throw in all the secular stuff we think we need to prepare for at this time of year, and it seems almost an impossibility to accomplish all of it. In truth, it may be. My suggestion is to let go of some of the secular stuff and spend a bit more time on the spiritual side of these seasons. My guess is that there will be less stress during this busy time and more peace, understanding, and growth in one's faith. Happy new church year!

Pastor Chris

WORSHIP CANCELLATION POLICY

Winter is not a season of the church year, but sometimes it does affect the church. When winter weather causes Sunday worship to be cancelled, please tune in to KLGA/KLGZ radio. The cancellation decision will be made no later than 8:00 AM and on the radio after that time. Notice will also be sent out as an email to those who have it.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

October/November Board Highlights

October

- Obtained a bid from Helleseth Construction for 30 feet of Moore street parking to make it more handicap accessible (\$51490) City of Algona would need to be involved. This is just exploratory at this time. Will continue to explore.
 - Discussed ways to improve our financial records. (i.e. back-up financial secretary and remembering to write how one would like their checks split in memo line on checks)
 - Some work was done to the secretary's computer to make more memory available.
 - Removal of the tree on the west side of the parsonage driveway is still pending.
 - Approved proposed 2019 budget. Congregational meeting to approve will be November 4th.
- Since Liz will not be able to play on Christmas Eve, Linea Holmer has agreed to fill in. Because she will be playing at St. Thomas Episcopal at 7:00 that evening, our Christmas Eve service will be at 5:00 PM.
 - Discussed the possibility of providing events pertaining to issues affecting us today. They would be open to the public. The Evangelism and Outreach Team is working on one for late winter or early spring. Discussion will continue. Suggestions are welcome.
 - Next Board Meeting will be January 9, 2019 following Fellowship Night.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT as of October 31st

Checking balance \$2,679.47

Savings balance \$9,144.46

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Women are again collecting mittens, scarves, hats, etc. for the Care Team. Children's mittens must be waterproof. The items should be attached to the tree in front of the church. They will be collected in December until the 20th. Start collecting Trash and Treasure items for our spring sale. Items should be put in the Fellowship hall southeast basement room.

FELLOWSHIP REPORT

We hope you will join us for CHRISTMAS CAROLING on Wednesday, December 12th, at 5:30 pm. We'll visit our friends in the care centers and

November

- The Fellowship/Ed wing boiler has passed inspection. Certificate of Inspection should arrive soon.
- Beginning January 1, pastor's pension and insurance will be paid monthly. Previously they were paid quarterly. The change was initiated by the UCC Pension Boards.
- Pianos will be tuned December 12th. Organ will be tuned December 17th.
- The new UCC Manual on Ministry (M.O.M.) is complete and ready for orders.
- Still having some Fellowship/Ed heating system air compressor issues. Will have them checked out.
- Pastor Chris still has one week of vacation left. He and Pam will be taking a few days here and there in December.
- The church roof continues to leak and has gotten worse. Will try to get someone here to take care of it soon.
- Our congregational Annual Meeting will be January 27, 2019.

return to the Fellowship Hall to warm up and have a little stew. There will not be an after-worship potluck in December.

In January, we will meet on Wednesday the 9th at 5:30 for FELLOWSHIP NIGHT. And we will have the ANNUAL MEETING POTLUCK after worship on Sunday, January 27th. Mark your calendars!

BLACKBERRY WINE CAKE

Mix together 1 white box cake and 2 small black cherry jello boxes. Add 1 cup of oil. Mix well. Add 4 eggs, one at a time and add 1 cup of blackberry wine. Mix for 3 minutes. Pour into a bundt pan and bake at 350 for 50 to 55 minutes.

Nancy Walker has brought this cake to potlucks and everyone loves it. Thank Nancy for the recipe.

CHURCH CHRISTMAS FAMILY 2018

The Mission's Committee is excited to once again invite our church family to sponsor the Saunsoci Indian family again this year. As many of you are aware, we have developed quite a relationship with this family over the years. In fact this will mark our 15th year in sponsoring this very deserving family.

The family consist of Grandmother Christine, Mother Teresa, Granddaughter Maria (age 23), Granddaughter Roslyn (age 20), Grandson Christopher (age 11), Grandson Xander (age 9), and Granddaughter Leah (age 8). Grandfather Frank passed away in 2016.

The Saunsoci's live in the Omaha Reservation and Frank and Christine are the spiritual leaders of Strongheart. They have dedicated their lives to the Indian people and their spiritual growth through traditional Indian ways. Phil has known this family for 24 years and participates in the Sundance Ceremony annually. The family frequently includes our church family in their ceremonial prayers. They also gave us the star quilt in the church parlor in appreciation for our relationship.

As has been the case the past few years, the Missions Committee would request "gifts" be made in the form of monetary contributions. This request is based on the family's extreme need for money to pay for utilities, food, rent, and other financial

needs. In order to have the gift available prior to Christmas, it is requested donations be placed in the offering plate and marked Christmas family or sent to the church no later than December 9th.

If you have any questions please ask Phil. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

CARING COOKIE BAKE

Plans are underway for Tuesday, December 11 for a Christmas Cookie Baking Event with clients of the Care Team. We will be making cookies with several young people and their parents. Volunteers are needed to help with this project. We have a Peanut butter stars maker, a spritz maker, cut out sugar cookies and are looking for one or two more individuals to be in charge of other types of cookies as well as general help to make sure we don't burn the cookies and assist with clean up. All cookies will be sent home with the clients. We will have soup and cheese and crackers for supper. We welcome all who would like to be a part of this event. We plan to start around 5:30 and hope to wrap it up between 7 or 7:30. Please contact Helen Scuffham at 295-200 if you would like to be a part of this fun event.

December 2018




Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 10 am Decorate for the season
2 9 am Seekers 10:00 am Worship, Communion and Food Pantry offering	3	4 Coalition meeting at noon 7 pm Adult discussion at Chuck West's	5	6	7	8
9 9 am Seekers 10:00 am Worship Cookie Sale X mas family	10	11 Pastor Burnett at the Chocolate Season DAR	12 Fellowship at 5:30 pm and caroling	13	14	15 Pastor Burnett at Pilgrim Heights board meeting
16 9 am Seekers 10:00 am Worship Last day of Sunday School and Seekers	17	18 Pastor Burnett at the Chocolate Season	19	20 Ministerial meeting 1:30 pm Women's Fellowship	21 Pastor Burnett at Care Centers in the morning	22
23 10:00 am Worship Christmas Fund collection	24 Christmas Eve service 5 pm	25 Christmas Day	26 Pastor Burnett at the Chocolate	27	28	29
30	31 New Year's Eve					

JANUARY



2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Pastor Burnett at the Chocolate Season	3	4	5
						
6 9 am Seekers 10:00 am Worship, Communion and Food Pantry	7	8 Pastor Burnett in Calumet	9 Pastor Burnett at the Chocolate Season Fellowship at 5:30 pm	10	11	12
13 9 am Seekers 10:00 am Worship	14	15 Pastor Burnett at the Chocolate Season	16	17	18	19
20 9 am Seekers 10:00 am Worship	21 Christian Unity Week- We host today	22 Pastor Burnett at the Chocolate Season 1 st Lutheran	23 Methodist	24 Ministerial meeting 1:30 pm Women's Fellowship Grace	25 St. Cecelia	26
27 9 am Seekers 10:00 am Worship Annual meeting and potluck	28	29	30	