

The Good News

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
220 West Main Street, Cannon Falls, MN 55009 (507) 263-2901
fccucc@citlink.net www.cannonfallsucc.org
A loving congregational family that celebrates God's presence among us



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Christmas Benediction

This is the benediction offered on the fourth Sunday in Advent, the day before we gathered for our Christmas Eve service. Throughout January (and February), we will be in the season of Epiphany, a season which answers the growing darkness of Advent with the spread of the light of Christ. An epiphany is a revelation or a new understanding. Beginning with the magi, the wise men, the identity of Jesus as the Messiah, the anointed one of God, is revealed in the gospels as being for all people. Even in his birth, this epiphany, evident in the covenant with Abraham and Sara, and the words of the prophets, was shown to be true.

The Risk of Birth

by Madeleine L'Engle

*This is no time for a child to be born,
With the earth betrayed by war & hate,
And a comet slashing the sky to warn
That time runs out & the sun burns late.*

*That was no time for a child to be born,
In a land in the crushing grip of Rome;
Honor & truth were trampled to scorn—
Yet here did the Savior make His home.*

*When is the time for love to be born?
The inn is full on the planet earth,
And by a comet the sky is torn—
Yet Love still takes the risk of birth.*

Brothers and sisters –

God comes in flesh and bone,
inviting us, welcoming us,
challenging us, in love.
Loving us, even us,
into the risk of birth,
for love, to be love.
Go into this day, and all your days,
Saying yes
to the love that God is,
the God calls us to be.
Thanks be to God.

Pastoral Care Needs

Please call Pastor Glen in the event of a pastoral care need or emergency at 651-641-1832. His email is pastor@citlink.net.

Volunteer Schedule

Sunday January 6th

Greeter: Lila Engstrom

Reader: Cassidy Maneval

Sound Technician: Jim Hvistendahl

Sunday January 13th

Greeter: Fred and Rhonda Foster

Reader: Rhonda Foster

Sound Technician: Cindy Mae Nelson

Sunday January 20th

Greeter: Steve and Jackie Sullivan

Reader: Jackie Sullivan

Sound Technician: Steve Sullivan

Sunday January 27rd

Greeter: Chuck and Carol Emery

Reader: Carol Emery

Sound Technician: Byron Nowariak

Serving Committee for January

The Serving Committee for January is Jim and Julie Woodman and Jeff and Sue LaPan.

Prayer Chain

Morning - Bonnie Hvistendahl 263-4120

Evening - Mavis Johnson 263-2857

When you are in need of prayer for yourself or others, please call the church office at 263-2901. Your request will be passed along to the above prayer chains.

Confirmation, Year 2

January's confirmation dates are the 2nd 16th and 31st.

Education/Fellowship Opportunities

Anyone is welcome to join us at any time!

Tuesday Bible Study meets weekly at 10 a.m. in the Memorial Room. We usually meet for just over an hour, as long as we manage to stay on task! Pastor Glen leads the study, focusing on the text(s) planned for the coming Sunday's sermon.

Sunday Morning Study meets every Sunday (except the last Sunday of each month) beginning 15 minutes after worship ends. We will begin a new series on Sunday January 15th which will be announced in the Sunday bulletin.

Choir Schedule January - May 2019

Practice Time: Sundays 8:30-9:30am

Practice Date & *Performance Date

January: 1/13 & *1/20

February: 2/10 & *2/17

March: **Ash Wednesday 3/6 @

6:15pm

3/10 & *3/17

April: 4/7 & *4/14

*4/18 Maundy Thursday @ 6:15pm &

4/21 Easter

May: 5/5 & *5/12

Director: Dawn Husmann - 507-298-0267

or dmhusmann@gmail.com,

Article from USA Today



The Episcopal cathedral of Indianapolis brought its Nativity statues of the baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, onto its lawn early this year. In early July, Christ Church Cathedral also put together a cage made of a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire and placed the holy family inside of it.

The downtown Indianapolis church, which is the seat of the diocese including 9,000 members across the southern two-thirds of Indiana, did it as a protest of the Trump administration's zero-tolerance policy, said Stephen Carlsen, dean and rector of Christ Church Cathedral. The policy has resulted in holding families arrested near the U.S.-Mexico border in detention centers. Lee Curtis, one of the clergy serving at the cathedral, came up with the



idea for the demonstration, citing Matt. 2:13–14 as the holy family being refugees seeking asylum in Egypt.

“This holy family is every family, and every family is holy,” he said.

Advocacy for immigrants springs from the church’s diverse congregation, Carlsen said. “This is an easy one for us,” said Carlsen, a member of the Faith in Indiana group that advocates for immigrants. It doesn’t feel like we’re out campaigning. This is about people I know and love, and I’m going to stand with them.”

Mark Reckart, a member of the congregation, said is proud of his church protesting families being detained after crossing the U.S. border. It’s a perfect way to show what’s happening: it’s families in cages,” Reckart said.

Fred Andrews, a sexton at Christ Church Cathedral, said he hopes the demonstration reminds people to vote in the next election. “Somewhere along the line,” Andrews said, the fact that people coming to the U.S. are “just hoping for a better life has been lost.”

People walking by said the display was a powerful way to bring awareness to the situation at the border. “I think it’s bold,” said Matthew Roberts of Indianapolis. “It just makes me think about those families that are separated and pray for them.”

Aija Evonen, a visitor from Finland, also appreciated the protest. “They were one of the first refugees,” she said of the holy family. [In late June, Parkside Community Church in Sacramento, California, constructed a similar display with chicken wire, zip ties, and wood, except with the statues of Mary and Joseph separated from the baby Jesus. The church said it would continue to have the display on its lawn until all immigrant children are reunited with their parents. Bonnie Rambob, co-pastor of the United Church of Christ congregation, told a local news station that the protest was also “a theological imagination exercise to help us imagine what it would be like for our own holy family to be in this situation.”

] —*USA Today*

Sponsoring Tom and Monica Liddle

The Global Partnership Team of the Minnesota Conference of the UCC has asked us to help support Tom and Monica Liddle’s ministry as Mission co-workers in East Timor by ‘sponsoring’ them in January and February. Our ‘sponsorship’ during this time will be keeping them in our prayers, lifting up their ministry, and inviting members to communicate with them via emails, text messages, and regular mail. This is a timely request for us, as our Mission Team has already scheduled a special offering for the Liddles at the end of February, an offering we have taken in previous years at this time. Tom served as Interim Minister here prior to their return to East Timor. There will be regular reminders each Sunday during worship about their mission work, as well reminders to contact Tom and Monica during these months. To begin, this is a link to a short video specifically about the work Monica does as the sole doctor and head of Clinic Immanuel in Lospalos.

www.globalministries.org/liddles Included also is a detailed article about their appointment and full ministry.

A Prayer for Veterans

Rabbi Dr. Laurence Miller, adapted

Compassionate God, Source of Mercy, on this day we pay tribute and offer our thanks to those who have served our country, expressing our gratitude for their courage and selflessness, both those among us today and those of generations past.

This nation, built by those born of this soil and those who have come here from all the corners of the earth, is on a continual journey to fulfill the promise of those who envisioned a homeland built on the promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all.

May we never let down those who have served in defense of this country. May we uphold the values of freedom, of the inherent dignity of every human being, by our own right conduct, and by the kindness and tolerance we show to one another. May

we lead by example, and become, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, a light to the nations.

Then will the labors and sacrifices of these veterans be honored not in words alone, but by our deeds, and the peace, for which any fought and too many died become not just a dream but a living reality. Amen.

First Congregational Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be on January 27th after worship

Thank You

A BIG thank you for your support of families at Christmas through the Goodhue County Christmas Project and the Christmas Fund benefitting retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

The Mission Committee

Community Meal



The Community Churches Interaction Council (CCIC) holds monthly suppers on the last Sunday of each month at FCC.

Each month's supper is hosted by various churches. January's supper will be on **Sunday January 27th** at 5:00 pm.

We Are On Facebook!

If you use Facebook, please look for us at First Congregational Church of Cannon Falls @fccucc. "Like" the page and share with others. We also have set up a group so that people can post directly to others - once you've "liked" the page, I'll invite you to the group as well.

Let me know if you have questions at mpkleven55@gmail.com. I especially need to know if you prefer not to have your photograph posted on Facebook. And, if you are not a Facebook user - no worries.

Thank you! Mary Pat Kleven

Women's Coffee



Join us every 3rd Thursday at 10:00 am for coffee at Hi-Quality Bakery.

The Greens and the Tree

The most striking and the most universal feature of Christmas is the use of evergreens in churches and homes. Among ancient Romans, evergreens were an emblem of peace, joy and victory. The early Christians placed them in their windows to indicate that Christ had entered the home. Holly and ivy, along with pine, and fir are called evergreens because they never change color. They are ever-green ever-alive, even in the midst of winter. The call to mind the steadfast presence of God, and the everlasting life that is ours through Christ Jesus.

Today, the Christmas tree is the center of our festivities. Glittering with lights and ornaments. It is a part of the beauty and meaning of Christmas. There are several legends and stories about the Christmas tree.

The first use of the Christmas tree was in the medieval German Paradise Plays held outdoors and portraying the creation of humankind. The Tree of Life was a fir tree decorated with apples. Later other ornaments were hung upon them, such as paper flowers and gilded nuts. In England, branches or whole trees were forced into bloom indoors for Christmas. From these beginnings the use of a tree at Christmas was established.

The legend is that Martin Luther was the first to use a lighted tree. The story is one Christmas Eve, he wandered outdoors and became enraptured with the beauty of the starry sky. Its brilliance and loveliness led him to reflect on the glory of the first Christmas Eve as seen in Bethlehem's radiant skies. Wishing to share with his wife and children the enchantment he had felt, Luther cut down an evergreen, glistening with snow, and took it home. He placed upon it candles to represent the glorious heavens he had seen. The use of a candle-lighted tree spread to all Europe, then to America, and we have come to regard it as the central ornament of Christmas.

Finance Tip of the Month (from your Trustees)



This is part 3 of a series shared by Bob Peterson, a retired Estate Planning Attorney and Planned Giving Officer, with

Trustees and few other members last April. Please see last month's newsletter for part 1 & 2 of this series. Our hope is that this information will help you plan your charitable giving and stretch your dollars so that you and charitable organizations you support such as our church, will benefit. If you have questions, please contact a Trustee, your treasurer (Jon Sagers, jonsagers12@gmail.com or (507) 649-1121) or Bob Peterson rlpeter4466@gmail.com or (651) 792-5262), or your personal tax accountant.

RULE #3: *Align your annual tax-deductible gifts to charitable organizations with your annual income.*

For example, in a year that you have a larger income event and you want to minimize the tax on that event, i.e., sale of stock, real estate, or rollover of an IRA into a ROTH IRA, you could donate to a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) and take the tax deduction that year. A donor donates to a DAF and he/she can then direct or advise which charity or charities to support, often with options to change which charities receive gifts and the amount of the gifts, later. Bob Peterson reported their DAF is with Vanguard, but there are also Foundations, such as In Faith Foundation, and other investment companies that you can select to hold your funds.

For example, John wants to roll \$100,000 from his IRA to a ROTH IRA. If John does nothing to offset this rollover he will owe taxes on the full \$100,000 taken from his IRA. However, John also is a very generous donor to his church and other charities, and he usually gives \$20,000 - \$30,000 per year. So, John rolls \$100,000 from his IRA to a

ROTH IRA. Then, he transfers \$100,000 of stock he owned to a Donor Advised Fund, and he receives a \$100,000 tax deduction that year which helps offset the income he must report from his IRA rollover to ROTH. Then, he can direct the DAF to make gifts to his church or other charities over the next few years when he wants to make gifts.

Another good use for a Donor Advised Fund exists under the new tax laws. With the higher standard deduction, many people will take the standard deduction, so they will not normally receive a deduction for their gifts to their church. For example, assume a donor gives \$10,000 per year to their church but will receive no deduction under the new law. Instead, if the donor transfers \$50,000 to a Donor Advised fund, for that year he/she may be able to deduct that gift and all other deductions because the \$50,000 to DAF puts the donor over the standard deduction. The DAF can then be setup to make gifts to the donor's church of \$10,000 per year and the donor will use the standard deduction for the next four years. The donor will thus receive additional tax deductions this way versus using the standard deduction every year.

And as repeated in the past newsletters...
RULE #2: *If you are over 70 ½, and you use the standard deduction, and you own an IRA, you should give from your IRA to the church rather than give cash.*

An IRA gift will help you avoid taxes on the IRA distribution, because it is transferred directly to the church and the church receives the income but does not pay tax on the income. This is even more important under the new tax law, because of the higher standard deduction.

He Came Down

*He came down that we may have love,
He came down that we may have light,
He came down that we may have peace,
He came down that we may have joy;
Hallelujah forevermore.*

(excerpt from "He Came Down")

January, 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 6:30 pm Confirmation	3	4	5
						
6 9:30 am Worship w/communion	7 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	8 10:00 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Trustees	9 6:00 pm Praise Band	10	11	12 1:30-3:00 pm visit at The Gardens
13 8:30 Choir Practice 9:30 am worship 10:45 Adult Education	14 10:30 am Grief Support 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	15 10:00 am Bible Study	16 6:00 pm Praise Band 6:30 pm Confirmation	17 10:00 am Women's Coffee	18	19
20 9:30 am Worship- Adult Choir to sing 10:45 am Adult Education	21 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	22 10:00 am Bible Study	23 6:00 pm Praise Band	24	25	26
27 9:30 am Worship Annual Meeting after worship 5:00 pm CCIC Dinner	29 10:30 am Grief Support 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	30 10:00 am Bible Study	31 6:00 pm Praise Band 6:30 pm Confirmation			

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