
The Good News

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

220 West Main Street, Cannon Falls, MN 55009 (507) 263-2901

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A loving congregational family that celebrates God's presence among us



I never gave up this much for Lent

We never really gave up anything up for Lent when we were kids. Mom had us think about what we might start doing instead, something that might make us better people. But we used to joke about giving up church for Lent. I never thought we actually would have to.

The whole purpose behind giving something up is to learn about sacrifice, giving up the things that we love, good or bad, get in the way of a deeper relationship with God. Give up an hour of TV each day and instead spend that time reading the Bible or a biography of a person's faith journey. Rather than spend money on coffee or snacks, donate the same to a charity making a difference in the world. Time on the computer or with Facebook could be spent volunteering. There are things we that maybe replace deeper relationships, or become habits, and use resources we could spend with or on others, or for developing deeper relationships.

Well, this year, we've been asked to give up a lot. The loneliest Lent we've ever lented. We've even given up our faith community - worship, for most of us, Bible study for some. Time with friends with whom we've sung, prayed, cried, laughed, even argued, people who have helped make us better people, with whom we share a faith that encourages us to be the kind of people the world needs more of - compassionate, merciful, kind, hopeful, generous, forgiving, justice-seeking and truth-telling. Sometimes we help each other make sense of our losses, and even when we can't do that, we are willing to sit with each other in our confusion and anger and grief, and make that stuff okay too.

So it's not just being together on Sundays we've given up - it's the cumulative effect of what happens, what can happen, when we are together, over time. And that's what I miss. That's what I grieve. Even after my short time with you, there's a history that's been built up, that is suddenly gone. It's like a death that way. One minute we are there, and then we're not.

So if you're feeling sad or confused, a bit depressed or overwhelmed, maybe angry and a bit lost, that's all to be expected. That's grief, and that's totally normal right now. And it's only been, what, 2 Sundays that we haven't been in worship together? And this isn't just about church, it's about everything else in our lives too. So much has changed so fast, and we don't know what's next, or how long this will be.

So what do you do? Change your scenery, your routine. Get outside; take a walk, or go for a drive, everyday if you can. Walk your dog; walk your neighbor's dog. Call a friend - get out your church directory and call someone you usually see at church, and then call someone you haven't seen in a long time; they are probably eager for someone to talk to as well. Read a book you've been waiting to start; try something in a genre you normally don't read. Write a check to church, keeping up with your pledge or regular offering (not a big time-filler, but important.)

Check out the church's website: you'll find a new meditation every few days. We've been asked to add some daily readings for your own reflection. Go to ucc.org and subscribe to the daily meditation our denomination puts out, short thoughts on a verse or two written by a variety of writers and pastors. There will be a modified worship service posted on Easter morning, and if it goes well, we can do that more often. If you're not online, we'll be doing at least a weekly mailing with as many of these same resources as we can, in different formats.

This strange new world has been here all along. We just have lived in it differently. The same God who was in our lives pre-COVID is the same God here and now, as present as ever, now that we have time to look and see. That's always the gift of Lent, even this especially lenty one.

Pr. Glen

Pastoral Care Needs

Call Pastor Glen in the event of a pastoral care need. Either call his home 651-641-1832 or cell 651-757-0314. Email pastor.cannonfallsucc@gmail.com.

Special Note

It has been difficult putting together April's newsletter as many things remain unclear and we are uncertain of our schedule moving forward. Until our social distancing orders have been lifted, we will have frequent messages from Pastor Glen. You can find them on Facebook and the Website. If you do not participate in Facebook, please let Kileen know in the office and we can accommodate another way. Beyond that we will not gather or hold in-person meetings. As soon as this newsletter is printed it will be out-of-date, however we will do our best to keep you up to date on the latest information around our life together. Our website address is <https://cannonfallsucc.org> Peace to you all in this ever changing time.

Prayer Chain

Morning - Bonnie Hvistendahl 263-4120

Evening - Mavis Johnson 263-2857

When you are in need of prayer for yourself or others, your request will be passed along to the above prayer chains.



Choir Schedule

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

Practice & *Performance Dates

April: No Practice in April

May: To Be Determined

Director: Dawn Husmann

Phone: 507-298-0267

Email: dmhusmann@gmail.com

CCIC Monthly Supper

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

There will be no April supper.

From Jon Sagers, Treasurer

It is important that we keep our church operational throughout the Corona virus "exile". Payroll, utilities, and most operational expenses continue, so we need your on-going gifts to support our church through this temporary set-back.

Therefore, please continue to send your regular offering to my home address (checks only, no cash, please) preferably, or to the church office at 220 West Main Street, if it is more convenient for you: If you drop it off at church, please mark the envelope "offering" or "check enclosed"

Jon Sagers
4006 343rd St.
Stanton, MN 55018

From the Mission Committee

The largest grassroots food and fund drive in the state, the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign brought together various community organizations, businesses, and faith communities to help stock nearly 300 food shelves statewide.



Either donate to the address below or you can drop it off at the church - call 507-263-2901 before coming to make sure we are here.

Cannon Falls Food Shelf Hours:

10:00am - 12:00pm, 1st Saturday, 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month 4:30pm - 6:30 pm, 3rd Thursday of the month

11 Belle St W, First English Lutheran Church
507-263- 3257

Items Needed for Cannon Falls Food Shelf

- **Canned fruit**
- **Canned tuna**
- **Progresso or Chunky soup**
- **Pancake mix**
- **Syrup**
- **Vegetable oil**
- **Hamburger Helper**
- **Laundry detergent**
- **Dish soap**
- **Shampoo**
- **Toothpaste**

Sad Note

Jacqui Broin's father died on the last weekend of March, within days of a diagnosis of stage 4 pancreatic cancer.

A memorial service will be scheduled for late summer in Hinckley MN. Our prayers go with Jacqui and Al, as well as Jacqui's sister and mother.

I am a Christian

I saw this on Facebook and thought I would share.

When I say that "I am a Christian," I am not shouting that "I am clean living." I am whispering "I was lost, but now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say "I am a Christian," I don't speak of this with pride. I'm confessing that I stumble and need Christ to be my guide.

When I say "I am a Christian," I'm not trying to be strong. I'm professing that I'm weak and need His strength to carry on.

When I say that "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging of success. I'm admitting I have failed and need God to clean my mess.

When I say that "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect. My flaws are far too visible, but God believes I am worth it.

When I say that "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain. I have my share of heartaches, so I call upon His name.

When I say that "I am a Christian," I'm not holier than thou. I'm just a simple sinner who received God's good grace, somehow!
Anonymous

Bold Blessing

At one time, it was fairly common to see signs at football games and other sporting events that read "John 3:16." If you have been a part of a community that emphasizes memorizing verses, this might be one that you memorized. The words have a familiar cadence even to those who don't attend church much:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3:16 became a creed, a manifesto and most of all a test for many Christians. Becoming a John 3:16 Christian means that Christ envisions for all people one of two extreme outcomes - perish or have eternal life.

But John 3:16 does not stand on its own. In fact, it's just one phrase in a much longer conversation that Jesus is having with his disciples. Continue just one more verse and John 3:17 reads,

Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Taken by itself, John 3:16 can seem like the map to a pretty narrow road. But together with John 3:17, it is a promise that Christ did not come to us to blame or shame. Christ did not come to earth to test if you are worthy enough, holy enough or even faithful enough. Christ came to love, feed, heal and embrace.

Christ came to save the world. Not just some of the world - all of the world.

And Christ came to do those things using the tools he left his followers - those who heard his words for the first time, and you and me today - prayer, healing, conversation, and breaking bread together.

We don't need to carry a sign that says "John 3:16." By our words, actions and the prayers of our hearts, we can be John 3:17 people today and every day.

Bulletin insert March 8, 2020



April 2020

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

			1	2	3	4
<p>Our building is closed but the Church is always open when we are the Body of Christ in the World. Stay safe and healthy until we see you again</p>						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

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*Pastor email: pastor.cannonfallsucc@gmail.com
Kileen email: cannonfallsucc@gmail.com*