
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



One of the ways to define death is that the organism has ceased to change.

Communities are no different. If the community is alive, it changes, if it ceases to change, it dies.

But not all change is equal and certainly, we can all agree that change often brings anxiety and discomfort.

First Congregational is in the midst of one of those challenging changes as Pastor Glen retires and we decide, as a congregation, what our next steps will be.

And while some of us might feel overwhelmed by the change and anxiety may overcome us, we can rest assured that the fundamental strength of First Congregational is its people and their collective faith. Please know that if you are feeling vulnerable and afraid for the future, there is someone else who is feeling confident and strong and they will help carry your burden.

Sunday, May 2nd, the Rev. Grace Anderson will lead our worship and after the service we will convene a congregational meeting to consider issuing a call to Pastor Grace to serve a 2-year term as a designated pastor.

A designated pastorate is when a congregation calls someone for a specific period of time to serve as pastor with a particular focus. In this case, we would be asking Rev. Anderson to lead the First Congregational through a period of discernment about what our future might hold. A designated pastor tends to serve longer than an interim and also is eligible to move to a permanent call, if that is desired.

Please make every effort to attend the service and meeting afterwards. All necessary protocols involving masks, singing and social distancing will be in effect. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call or email me at 612-325-3667 or bill.peterson@sanlucasmision.org.

Thanks,

Bill Peterson

Moderator

Embracing
Change



Pastoral Care Needs

Call Bill Peterson (612-325-3667) or bill.peterson@sanlucasmision.org in the event of a pastoral care need.

Pastor Update

On **Sunday, May 2**, our service will be led by Rev. Grace Anderson. The service will be followed by a congregational meeting called to consider the question of calling Rev. Grace to a $\frac{3}{4}$ time, two-year designated pastorate, focused on helping us discern our future. *We hope you will be able to attend.*

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.

Prayer Partners

Each week, we pick staff and members or families at random for us to lift in prayer that week, for no reason other than praying for one another is a good thing to do.

Our *Prayer Partners* this week we pray for Chase and Hannah LaPan, Charles and Dorothy Samuelson, and Dave and Linda Nelson.

Treasurers Note

Please continue to send your donations written to "First Congregational Church-UCC", by mail directly to: Jon Sagers, 4006 343rd St., Stanton, MN 55018, or to the church. Thank you for your steadfast support!

Jon

Outreach Ministry Team

We are continuing to tape the sermon each week and have on cd available for pick up or to send to you. Contact the church office or Cindy Mae directly at 507-951-3117. April's services will be recorded after the 25th and will be available around May 2nd.

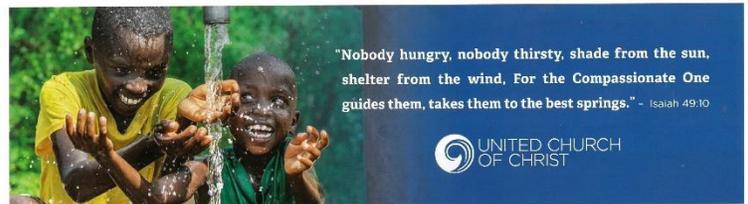
From the Mission Committee

In May we will be sponsoring our next mission which is ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING. The theme for this year is "Let Love Flow." As the month progresses we will share stories during the mission moment at church to inform you of the many ways our donations are used to help people in need in the U.S. and abroad. Thank you for your generous giving to Friends of San Lucas (\$870) and C.F. food shelf (\$450).

Sincerely,
Mission Committee

Thought for the month:

"Contributions start when you see beyond self."



Water is life. Water is love. Let love flow.

Access to clean fresh water is vital for all of humanity, but for women in particular, water access means the difference between life and death for them and their families. The United Nations international Observance of **World Water Day** reflects on the importance of water in our daily lives and remembers those who lack access to adequate drinking water supplies.

For women and girls around the world, it can be a 12 hour week to the nearest water source to collect water to maintain basic needs and crucial hygiene practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With your support, 100 families will benefit from the Water Well project, sponsored by the United Church of Christ in Mozambique (UCCM). When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you invest in the hopeful future of women and girls around the world and serve as co-workers with God to build **a just world for all.**



Christ Among Us

(April 18 bulletin)

Earth Day [was] Thursday April 22nd. Has your church explored what it might mean to be a Creation Justice Church?



You can find out more at the website www.ucc.org/creation_justice_chrches.

As we learn in the opening pages of Genesis, our first calling as people of faith is to care for God's creation. Whether it is taking on the climate crises or addressing the lead poisoning of children, environmental justice ministries could not have a higher purpose or calling than they do now.

If the followers of Jesus today care about the air we breathe, the water we drink, or the world in which we live then environmental justice ministry should undoubtedly be an integral strand in any church's DNA. The UCC's Creation Justice Church program aims to help you do just that. Here are some of the tremendous features and benefits of doing the program:

- Congregations collectively discern their high calling to care for creation and seek justice for the oppressed.
- Congregations make a commitment so serious and so sacred that it necessitates talking about God's covenant with us and with all of creation.
- Congregations not only become recognized as "green." They become part of a larger network of churches and a larger movement to change the world.
- Congregations engage in critical thinking about the socioeconomic dimensions of environmental justice such as race, class, and global inequality.
- Congregations foster a deeper sense of connection: connection: connection to God, to each other, and to the world in which we live.
- Congregations unleash their imagination and creativity as a sense of purpose propels them to make a difference.

Showers of Blessings

(Stewardship May issue)

I pulled into the parking lot and began to search for the closest parking place. I was surprised when one was available close to the front door of the grocery store. "Well, at least one thing is going right for a change." I thought as I released my seatbelt.

My heart was as overcast as the day. A friend had treated me unfairly earlier that morning. I was also depressed over some family health issues. Sheets of rain were pounding down. I didn't have an umbrella with me. Since it didn't look like the storm would ease any time soon, I would make a run for it. I was very close to the store, so I didn't think I would get very wet.

I glanced about two lanes over just before I opened my door. I spotted an elderly lady walking slowly through the rain. She was pushing a buggy [cart] with one hand while trying to maneuver a worn-out umbrella with the other. The spokes of the umbrella were turned upward, accumulating water by the bucketfuls. My heart went out to her. Without thinking, I ran through the rain toward her. "Get in your car," I shouted. "Give me your buggy. If you will unlock the passenger door, I will put your groceries inside for you. You don't need to get wet. You might get sick." I shouted.

She did exactly as I asked and then got into her car. I am certain I looked like a drenched rat standing there in the rain holding onto her buggy filled with groceries. Once she got the door opened. I placed the bags of groceries on the passenger seat.

"Have a great day!" I exclaimed to her, just before I shut the door. She stared at me with amazement in her eyes. "Hold on for a minute. I have never had anyone do anything like this for me before. May God bless you abundantly." She uttered. I smiled and slowly walked off. Since I was already soaking wet, I didn't see much need to run to the store.

I went up to the service desk after entering the front door. Rainwater was dripping off my nose and my once-styled hair was limp in my face. The manager handed me a couple of paper towels. "It's a horrible day,

isn't it?" he proclaimed. "Well actually, it has turned out to be a pretty good one." I announced. He looked at me rather strangely. I knew that he had no idea why I made that remark. He didn't respond to my positive comment, but simply went back to his work.

When I made my purchase and returned to my car, I thought about how much better I felt after helping the lady with her groceries. The act of serving brought a ray of light to my once downcast and dreary day. I made a promise to myself, as I drove the almost seventy miles home through the heavy rainfall that day.

I decided that from that day forward, when I face storms in my life, I would look for someone else that had a need which I could fill. I have found that it is through serving others that I have received tremendous blessings. That day, I received a much greater blessing than the elderly lady. I was given the opportunity to be of service to someone else.

Grateful and Blessed



My last two Sundays with all of you carried a particular weight for me. As always, I felt the need to be faithful to my call as preacher and teacher and keep the gospel front and center. That is always a matter of keeping my ego in check. You know, "Less of

me, more of You."

But my last Sundays with you were also the last Sundays I will be the pastor of any local church, so they were especially precious. That was in the back of my mind, certainly, but I really haven't given that much thought or attention. I'm sure that will hit me at some point, but my attention has been on you, the members of First Congo in Cannon Falls, our time together and ending well after four too-short years with you.

A conversation with Roman after worship on April 25 made me realize that, no, I'm not leaving too soon. But maybe I should have started with you earlier in my career.

I am **grateful** for the kind words and appreciation we shared during my last service and afterwards. Your generous, thoughtful gifts will be well used as Barb and I travel to as many national parks and monuments as we can, as long as our time, money, and health allow us. We've been dreaming of this time together, prioritizing our shared and individual interests, and imagining routes. Because of your gifts, you will be with us.

I don't use this word too often; it gets overused, and used thoughtlessly. But I have been **blessed** to serve among you. First Congo was a great place to be a pastor. You accepted my leadership at the end of my ministry; maybe we needed each other, and were brought together because of that. Barb and I walked into a body of Christ that we immediately experienced as generous, caring, welcoming, forgiving, and faithful with each other. We were able to stop into your life together. You accepted us. You were willing to accept the challenge of the gospel as I preached it, and open to thinking and re-thinking about who our God is and is calling us to become in a changing world. Not everything worked as I'd hoped or planned, but you kept showing up. Because it was never about me; it was always about the community of care you have built with each other. What a gift to have shared in that.

Thank you.

If you continue to be as open and welcoming, as attentive and thoughtful, as generous and caring, as Barb and I have witnessed, your future is as open and vital as you will let it be. You are able to be such a blessing because you are blessed; your generosity is possible because of the generosity of our God toward you. So continue to be a blessing, to be generous, and your future will find you.

No longer your pastor, I am your friend,
Glen



May, 2021

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

							1
2 9:30 am Worship	3	4	5	6	7		8
9 9:30 am Worship 	10	11	12	13	14		15
16 9:30 am Worship	17	18	19	20	21		22
23 9:30 am Worship	24	25	26	27	28		29
30 9:30 am Worship	31	27	28	29	30 7:00 pm Outreach Zoom meeting		

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

**First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
507-263-2901**

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