

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Annual Report January 29, 2012



520 East 11th Street
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Pastor: Jeff Wartgow

DRE: Holle Maricle

Secretary: Pam Schau

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ANNUAL MEETING

JANUARY 29, 2012
10:45 am - Fellowship Hall

| | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|
| I. | Call to Order | Chris Maricle, Moderator |
| II. | Opening Prayer | Pastor Jeff Wartgow |
| III. | Minutes - 2011 Annual Meeting | Jen Claeys |
| IV. | Treasurer's Report | Michael Wildes |
| V. | Proposed 2012 Budget | Mark Ohnemus |
| VI. | Annual Reports | Chris Maricle |
| | Pastor | |
| | Director of Religious Education | |
| | Boards & Committees | |
| | Organizations | |
| VII. | Nominating Committee Report & Elections | Eli Voss, Chair |
| VIII. | Old Business | Chris Maricle |
| IX. | New Business | Chris Maricle |
| | Safe Church Policy | Holle Maricle |
| X. | Unison Lord's Prayer | |
| XI. | Adjournment | Chris Maricle |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|------------|--|
| Page 3 | Membership Statistics |
| Page 4 | Annual Meeting (January 2011) Minutes |
| Page 5-6 | Treasurer's Report ~and~ 2012 Proposed Budget |
| Page 7 | Minister's Annual Report |
| Page 8 | Director of Religious Education |
| Page 9 | Board of Trustees |
| Page 10 | Diaconate |
| Page 11-12 | Christian Education ~with~ FINK |
| Page 13 | Endowment |
| Page 14 | Pastor-Parish Committee; Memorials and Gifts; United Manor |
| Page 15 | Outreach and Evangelism |
| Page 16 | Mission Trips ~ Jamaica and Kentucky |
| Page 17 | CandleLight Fellowship |
| Page 18 | EIW (Everyone is Welcome) |
| Page 19 | Beef Dinner Committee; Lions Ladies; |
| Page 20 | Prayer Ministry; Crafty Stitchers |
| Page 21 | 2012 Committees and Members |
| Page 22 | Conference Minister's Annual Report |

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS - 2011 - Pam Schau

Dropped membership - 1

Shelley Titterington

Moved with no forwarding address - 5

Abe Fischer
Jason Kunz

Deanna Franks
Doug & Terri Pratt

Transfers - IN from Other Churches - 1

Kathy Donahue

Affirmation of Faith - 13

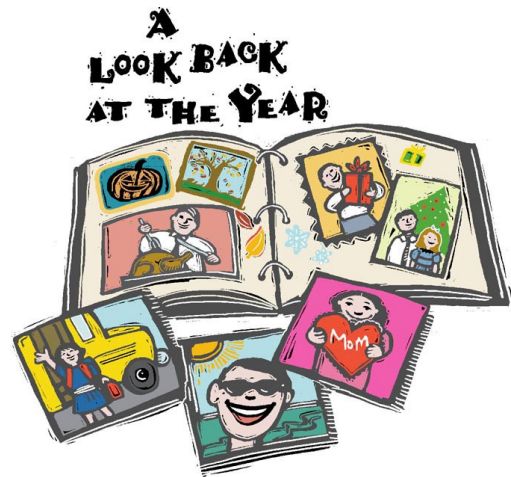
| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Eli Voss | Samantha Anderson |
| Craig & Pam Anderson | Kevin Berner |
| Mike & Kari Bossom | Becky Kirby |
| Jeff & Leta Fuller | Mitchell Kirby |
| Duane & Sharon Petsche | |

Confirmation 2011 - 6

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| Lucas Block | Allison Hughes |
| Sydney Kerr | Bailey Peters |
| Alexa Zastrow | Brittany Zastrow |

Baptisms - 5

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Clara Ileen Walker | 02/06/11 |
| Breanna Sue Campbell | 03/27/11 |
| Addison Lynae Andersen | 04/03/11 |
| Alexander Dylan Andersen | 04/03/11 |
| Hadley Mae Fuller | 06/05/11 |
| Alexander Nicholas Fuller | 06/05/11 |
| Jeff Patrick Fuller, Jr | 06/05/11 |



Weddings - 2

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Ashley Showens & Rory Paulsen | 09/24/11 |
| Jenna Gluesing & Derek Block | 11/05/11 |

Deaths, Funerals & Memorial Services

Members - 5

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Virgil Meyer | Ralph Jansen |
| Paul Nielsen | Dorothy Clapp |
| H. Dean Smith | |

Non Members - 2

Rebecca Rittmer
Bruce Anderson

Numbers that we traditionally count.

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Membership: | 374 in 2011 | |
| compared to: | 365 in 2010 | 377 in 2006 |
| | 362 in 2009 | 385 in 2005 |
| | 375 in 2008 | 389 in 2004 |
| | 379 in 2007 | 377 in 2003 |

Attendance average: 119 in 2011

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| compared to: | 122 in 2010 | 121 in 2007 | 137 in 2004 |
| | 116 in 2009 | 116 in 2006 | 143 in 2003 |
| | 126 in 2008 | 118 in 2005 | 159 in 2002 |

CHURCH COUNCIL, Annual Meeting - Ruth Wilson

January 30, 2011 minutes

The annual meeting of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, DeWitt, was opened with a prayer by Pastor Jeff Wartgow at 10:45 a.m. and called to order by Vice Moderator, Chris Maricle.

The minutes and committee reports from the previous year were available early for reading. Orda Stankee moved to approve the minutes, second by Becca Schroeder, motion passed. Mike Wildes gave the treasurer's report, stating that more money was taken in than paid out in 2010, which drew a round of applause. Discussion was then held on the proposed 2011 budget. Trustee Mark Ohnemus stated the trustees took an honest look at how the money has been spent, and rearranged and pulled together some of the expense areas as the housing allowance for the pastor. Jan Rittmer moved and Mark Ohnemus seconded to approve the treasurer's report and 2011 budget. All approved.

Pastor Jeff gave an overview of his annual report, noting his three basic points: 1.) Basic belief - "God is truly with us"; 2.) Core values - all are welcome here; and 3.) Mission focus - a strong identity here at this church with trips to Jamaica in 2010 and one planned for April 2011, as well as a trip to Kentucky in the summer of 2011, and local to fire victims, members of our congregation Matt, Sandy and Mallory McLaughlin who have recently lost their home. He credited the church's new mission focus for being ready to respond when the need arises. Pastor Jeff also thanked everyone who volunteers for any aspect of church service.

Holle Maricle, as the new Director of Religious Education, reported all is going well with coordinating the activities of the WOW Kids, JOY Singers and Sunday School, as well as Vacation Bible School and the Christmas program. She thanked Sunday school coordinator, Jen Froeschle for making her job easier and hopes to "bridge the gap between the sanctuary and what goes on down the hallway" (in the Sunday school rooms.)

Along with the church officers and committees, Nancy Aiken stated there is also a prayer chain committee consisting of Phyllis Jansen, Kim VanDeWalle, Leann Walker, Jan Black, Marie Hoffmann and herself who can be contacted for prayer requests.

Mary Malcom moved and Marty Murrell seconded the motion to accept the committee reports. Chris Maricle presented the nominating committee report. Mary Malcom nominated Derek Fox as a diaconate member. He will be contacted. Mary Malcom moved to accept the nominating committee report, and Lynn Wartgow seconded, passed.

Old business- the labyrinth has not yet been sold.

New business- Pastor Jeff presented the "Behavioral Covenant: How we address conflict". He would like to see this policy adopted by the congregation and followed should the need arise. After some discussion on how the policy would be handled, Orda Stankee moved and Nancy Aiken seconded the congregation would adopt the policy as presented. All voted in favor.

Bob Hansen mentioned EIW is having a Sweetheart Dinner, Sunday, Feb. 20. All women of the congregation are invited to attend; the men will plan and serve the meal.

Meeting adjourned will all saying the Lord's Prayer, standing in a circle holding hands with eyes open to our fellow family members of First Congregational United Church of Christ, DeWitt.

PROPOSED BUDGET 2012

| | 2010 | 2011 | ACTUAL | 2012 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Category | SPENT | BUDGET | 2011 SPENT | BUDGET |
| 100 Ministry to others (Outreach & Evangelism) | | | | |
| 110 OCWM | 18,450.00 | 12,300.00 | 12,300.00 | 12,300.00 |
| 120 Eastern IA | 718.00 | 760.00 | 748.00 | 760.00 |
| 130 Advertising | 235.75 | 500.00 | 410.75 | 400.00 |
| 100 TOTAL | 19,403.75 | 13,560.00 | 13,458.75 | 13,460.00 |
| 200 Ministry of Worship (Diaconate) | | | | |
| 220 Comm. Elem | 73.80 | 75.00 | 116.46 | 75.00 |
| 240 Pulpit Supply | 600.00 | 600.00 | 420.00 | 600.00 |
| 250 Worship Sup | - | 50.00 | 219.24 | 50.00 |
| 260 Misc Exp | 1,175.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,363.57 | 1,200.00 |
| 271 Music | 322.44 | 300.00 | 352.15 | 400.00 |
| 272 Instrum Tuning | 225.00 | 350.00 | 192.00 | 350.00 |
| 280 Social Hour | 943.45 | 1,100.00 | 900.48 | 1,200.00 |
| 285 Faith Café | 2,614.35 | 2,650.00 | 2,816.28 | 2,700.00 |
| 200 TOTAL | 5,954.04 | 6,125.00 | 6,380.18 | 6,575.00 |
| 300 Ministry of Education (Christian Education) | | | | |
| 310 Curriculum | - | 1,000.00 | 966.81 | 1,400.00 |
| 320 Supplies | 457.82 | 1,100.00 | 927.36 | 1,100.00 |
| 360 Confirmation | 323.95 | 400.00 | 336.07 | 400.00 |
| 361 Teacher Appr | - | 50.00 | - | 50.00 |
| 365 Graduation | - | 100.00 | 70.00 | 100.00 |
| 300 TOTAL | 781.77 | 2,650.00 | 2,300.24 | 3,050.00 |
| 500 Pastoral Ministry (Church Council) | | | | |
| 510 Minister salary | 40,000.08 | 42,000.00 | 42,000.00 | 44,180.00 |
| 520 S School offset | 4,398.96 | 4,551.00 | 4,551.00 | 4,718.52 |
| 525 Housing Allowance | 17,499.96 | 17,500.00 | 17,500.00 | 17,500.00 |
| 531 Health Ins | 14,914.50 | 17,328.00 | 15,884.00 | 17,727.00 |
| 532 Dental/Vision Ins | 1,113.60 | 1,197.00 | 1,199.00 | 1,197.00 |
| 533 Pension | 8,050.00 | 8,330.00 | 8,330.00 | 8,635.20 |
| 540 Disability | 862.52 | 863.00 | 892.48 | 863.00 |
| 500 TOTAL | 86,839.62 | 91,769.00 | 90,356.48 | 94,820.72 |
| 600 Ministry of Personnel (Trustees & Diaconate) | | | | |
| 605 Rel Ed Director | 3,684.59 | 10,000.00 | 5,831.91 | 6,000.00 |
| 610 Secretary | 14,391.54 | 13,225.00 | 13,722.65 | 13,500.00 |
| 620 Custodians | 14,928.00 | 15,225.00 | 15,225.00 | 15,600.00 |
| 631 Organist | 3,340.10 | 3,010.00 | 2,843.97 | 3,075.00 |
| 632 Sr. Choir Dir | 759.00 | 815.00 | 329.52 | 850.00 |
| 634 Jr. Choir Dir | - | 290.70 | 183.84 | 300.00 |
| 640 Nursery | 884.91 | 900.00 | 753.28 | 900.00 |
| 651 Treasurer | 3,019.92 | 3,080.00 | 3,080.00 | 3,150.00 |
| 652 Finan. Sec. | 1,397.90 | 1,425.00 | 1,425.00 | 1,450.00 |
| 660 FICA | 2,890.54 | 3,200.00 | 3,339.70 | 3,600.00 |
| 600 TOTAL | 45,296.50 | 51,170.70 | 46,734.87 | 48,425.00 |
| 700 Ministry of Administration (Pastor & Trustees) | | | | |
| 710 Office Supplies | 3,528.32 | 3,300.00 | 3,692.68 | 4,000.00 |
| 720 Expense Acct | 2,804.02 | 2,500.00 | 2,473.14 | 2,500.00 |
| 731 Offering Env | 98.27 | 250.00 | 231.63 | 250.00 |
| 733 Stewardship Ed | 610.00 | 610.00 | 661.50 | 650.00 |
| 740 Office Equip | 2,906.26 | 2,900.00 | 3,168.14 | 3,100.00 |
| 700 TOTAL | 9,946.87 | 9,560.00 | 10,227.09 | 10,500.00 |

| 800 Miscellaneous | 2010 SPENT | 2011 BUDGET | 2011 SPENT | 2012 BUDGET |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 810 Church Mainten. | 10,652.94 | 11,000.00 | 12,045.59 | 15,000.00 |
| 821 Property Ins. | 4,593.27 | 4,650.00 | 5,355.59 | 5,500.00 |
| 822 Work Comp | 1,399.00 | 1,425.00 | 1,710.43 | 1,770.00 |
| 830 Church Utility | 11,090.81 | 12,000.00 | 11,908.18 | 12,500.00 |
| 800 TOTAL | 27,736.02 | 29,075.00 | 31,019.79 | 34,770.00 |
| Total Expense | 195,958.57 | 203,909.70 | 200,477.40 | 211,600.72 |
| PROJECTED AVAILABLE INCOME | Estimated 2011 | Actual 2011 | Estimated 2012 | |
| Pledge | 131,634.00 | 132,217.90 | 140,000.00 | |
| Non-Pledge | 20,000.00 | 36,395.00 | 41,000.00 | |
| Plate | - | 2,740.45 | 2,675.00 | |
| Giving 2010 | 4,600.00 | 640.00 | 750.00 | |
| Giving 2012 | 875.00 | 1,525.00 | 750.00 | |
| CD Interest | 5,100.00 | 5,141.09 | 5,141.09 | |
| Sunday School | 125.00 | 83.26 | 100.00 | |
| Social Hour | 1,500.00 | 1,587.84 | 1,750.00 | |
| Wednesday Offering | 1,115.00 | 284.77 | 300.00 | |
| Faith Café | 3,900.00 | 3,628.10 | 3,200.00 | |
| WOW Kids | 600.00 | 900.23 | 650.00 | |
| Lions Ladies | 5,000.00 | 6,450.00 | 5,000.00 | |
| Special Service | 250.00 | 700.29 | 500.00 | |
| Easter | 900.00 | 483.00 | 500.00 | |
| Christmas | 2,200.00 | 2,134.00 | 2,200.00 | |
| Misc | 7,500.00 | 4,058.05 | 4,000.00 | |
| Interest Income | - | 62.34 | 50.00 | |
| Endow-OCWM | 12,300.00 | 12,300.00 | 12,300.00 | |
| Endow-Rel Ed Dir | 6,315.41 | 5,821.97 | - | |
| <i>subtotal</i> | 203,914.41 | 217,153.29 | 220,866.09 | |
| Non Budget Giving | | | | |
| 161 OGHS | | 3,180.09 | | |
| 163 Christmas Fund | | 589.75 | | |
| Mission Trip | | 18,815.15 | | |
| Return Mission Trip | | 3,380.00 | | |
| Discretionary Fund | | 831.12 | | |
| Endowment Grant | | 3,700.00 | | |
| Special Donation | | 860.03 | | |
| O&E | | 212.75 | | |
| Bank Loan | | 3,000.00 | | |
| Candlelight | | 700.18 | | |
| <i>subtotal Non Budget</i> | | 35,269.07 | | |
| Special projects fund | | 5,863.49 | | |
| TOTAL GIVING | | 258,285.85 | | |
| BANK FUNDS | 12/31/2009 | 12/31/2010 | 12/31/2011 | |
| O/E Savings | 815.02 | 818.29 | 1,033.77 | |
| Checkbook - general | (3051.25) | (5625.25) | 10,186.12 | |
| Checkbook - endow | 1,275.00 | 8,112.68 | 2,313.56 | |
| Checkbook - spec pr | 8,648.54 | 8,648.54 | 2,785.05 | |
| WOW Kids | 579.82 | 690.13 | 1,080.71 | |
| Checkbk - Multime | 964.03 | 964.03 | 964.03 | |
| Jamaica Trips | | 7,762.50 | 8,272.11 | |
| Invested Money | 172,519.70 | 172,519.70 | 172,519.70 | |
| Ch Ed Spec | - | - | 649.53 | |
| TOTALS | 181,750.86 | 193,890.62 | 199,804.58 | |

MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT (2011)

Dear Friends in Faith,

WE'RE MORE THAN WORDS

I admit how much I struggle each year with my annual report because so much of what happens in a church isn't adequately communicated with simple words. The same can be true of a worship service. I often find that words alone limit us and just don't have the power to convey the deeper spiritual reality of what might be occurring. As you read through the words contained in this report, read not just the comments but their implied intent as well. Try to look behind the statements and ask: Where is God present in this and how is ministry being accomplished here?

Our church is filled with a marvelous sense of "connectedness." A **core value** of what it means for us to be church has emerged – **growing strong relationships**. As I witness the growth and development of our many church ministries I'm often reminded of how challenging it is to keep avenues of healthy communication open and flowing smoothly. I'm suggesting here that we critically evaluate the ways we communicate. After all, a **basic belief** within the United Church of Christ is that "**God is still speaking**." Remember, "Our faith is 2000 years old; our thinking is not." And because our **missional focus** is about changing lives we must "**never place a period where God has placed a comma**."

As we move into 2012 you will begin to see more ways of communicating about church. I recognize that most members and friends communicate electronically. Believe it or not, email is "old" technology today. It's still vital, but quickly aging. Messaging and social media such as Facebook and Twitter are no longer simply fun, they're preferred by many. Aligning with the church Facebook group page as a means of sharing information or asking questions is a great way to stay in touch. If, for example, you don't have a Facebook account I'd encourage you to get one. The fact of the matter is that if we don't continue to accept our ever growing technology based culture we'll find ourselves standing on the outside of people's lives instead of being inside sharing in ongoing, meaningful relationship.

In a nuts and bolts way, let me say that we finished 2011 with a strong financial base, a welcoming and growing relational congregation, and a vibrant identity as God's people in DeWitt, IA. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your pastor. I'm grateful for the relationships we've formed and for the strong commitment I recognize from so many people to serve Jesus Christ through their church. We're so much more than words; we're a grand part of "the Living Word."

May God bless us with peace, goodwill, and strong relationships throughout 2012.

Your Pastor,

Pastor Jeff

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Holle Maricle

It is my pleasure to share my report with you on another successful and uplifting year working with the children and families in our church. With the support of the Christian Education committee, numerous volunteers and the entire congregation, the programs I oversee have continued to grow. These programs include Sunday School, WOW Kids, Joy Singers, the Christmas program, Vacation Bible School, and adult education.

My primary responsibilities continue to be maintaining records for each program; ordering, purchasing and organizing curriculum and supplies; and, recruiting and training program volunteers and leaders. I continue to provide a weekly E-newsletter to communicate with families about what their children are learning each week in Sunday School. Other communication occurs through emails and notes home about special events and opportunities as they arise.

In the past year, I have coordinated several activities to involve the congregation's children and families in community outreach (e.g., providing Halloween treat bags at United Manor, Christmas caroling at West Wing and Claddagh Towers, etc.). These activities provided an opportunity for parents and children to enjoy an outing together, as well as helped our children learn the joy of giving back to the community. During WOW Kids, I have coordinated and developed periodic lessons and activities to provide a caring perspective for our children. These lessons have focused on some needs that other people in our area, our nation and our world may have (e.g., not enough food to eat, no clean drinking water, etc.). These lessons provide an opportunity for the children to build awareness of their own blessings, as well as consider ways that they might make a difference for someone else.

Overall, I assist our volunteer teachers and leaders to serve over 60 different children, ages 3 years through 6th grade. This does not include many of the 55-60 children served during Vacation Bible School, in conjunction with the United Methodist Church. As was the case last year, many children participate in one activity, but many more participate in two or three different activities on a weekly basis. Average weekly attendance since January 2011 in Sunday School is 26 children; in WOW Kids is 31 children; and Joy Singers is 14 children. In the coming months I will continue to work with the ongoing education programs of the church, as well as with the Central Community School District to offer a Love and Logic Parenting class here at church in February-March 2012. I look forward to continued interactions with all members of the congregation, as well as developing new education opportunities for other age groups.



CHURCH COMMITTEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES - Luanne Smith

2011 Members: Mark Ohnemus (Chairman), Luanne Smith (Secretary), Roger VanDeWalle, Buck Mills, Scott Siegel, Rick Mangan, Dennis Schnoor, Gaylene Mangan and Paul Nielsen (whom we mess greatly). Also participating are Pastor Wartgow and treasurer, Mike Wildes.

The church lawn was mowed and maintained with volunteer help again this year.

White Roofing performed repairs to the sanctuary roof which involved using a crane to lift the steeple.

To help address the ice accumulation problems near the north door, the gutters were repaired and heat tape was installed in the gutters. Caulk was placed in the front apron area to prevent water from going down the cracks, which we hope will prevent the concrete from heaving up in the winter.

The City of DeWitt completed the 11th Street road project in front of the church. The City was very conscientious in making sure there was access to the church during the project. In conjunction with the road project, sidewalks were installed along the front of the church property.

We continued with "The Living Stewardship" program. This year's program was entitled *Believe in Tomorrow* and ran for several weeks in October and November. We appreciate the congregation's contributions toward the life of our church, materially and by sharing their time and talents.

Tile was installed near the back parking lot to help alleviate the water drainage problem.

We again sustained a lightning strike which damaged the security system control panel and the garage door opener.

Other activities/accomplishments in 2011 included:

- Spring clean-up day was held to spruce up the grounds.
- Maintenance was performed on the heating and air condition units.
- A new color copier was leased and the existing copier was placed in the Christian Education office. Later moved to the new Christian Education work room.
- A concrete window sill was reset.
- Carpeting in Fellowship Hall, the Narthex, and the sanctuary was cleaned.

We were pleased to end the year without an outstanding bank loan for monthly expenses.

May 2012 be a year of great spiritual growth for each of us, our church, and our wider community.

DIACONATE COMMITTEE - Kim VanDeWalle

Members, Year 2011: Kim VanDeWalle (Chairman), Jen Claeys (Sec.), Mary Malcom, Rebecca Kerr, Carol Beck, Denise Block, Becca Schroeder, Sheila Busch, Lynne Bisson and Ken McMain.

Responsibility of Diaconate: Coordinate worship activities including: providing communion, ushers, nursery, acolytes, liturgists, special music, seasonal flowers and decorations and refreshment to follow service. Members are assigned to a subcommittee for these responsibilities.

2011 Meeting Summaries:

January– Voted to keep the Christmas Eve service at 5 and 7 because it was well attended despite inclement weather. Candles are dripping was on the carpet. Will look into other alternatives this fall.

February– Need new candles for the advent wreath. Our combined service with the Methodist church on Ash Wednesday will be here. We will serve a soup supper with rolls and desserts. New subcommittees appointed.

March– Easter services discussed and finalized.

April– We will once again sell Easter flowers. Confirmation discussed. We will provide gifts and a reception for the confirmands. We will continue to use the real candles for Christmas Eve. Alternative are too expensive. We will spruce up the patio for the Easter Sunrise service.

May– Easter service were well attended. Confirmation reception plans finalized.

June– It was reported that some people did not get the flowers that they ordered from Easter. We will check the order and possibly put names on the plants so that won't happen again.

July– No meeting in July.

August– Seems like there is a bottleneck in the narthex before church. We will try to come up with solutions for this. Possibly someone from Diaconate serving as a "Head Usher" to help coordinate pre-service duties. Outdoor service will be Sept. 11 with a potluck to follow. Diaconate will provide meat, table service and drinks.

September– Outdoor service went well. Members of Diaconate will evaluate our worship using a guide given to us from Jeff.

October– Discussed moving communion to the first Sunday of the month beginning in February 2012 and will use grape juice only. Thanksgiving Eve service will be at the Methodist Church this year. Advent and Christmas service discussed.

November– We will sell poinsettias on Nov. 27 and Dec. 4. Plants will be delivered on Dec. 14 and set the same night after WOW. Lynne Bisson will fill in for Jeff for Christmas morning service. Jeff's attire discussed and motion made to let him decide on which occasions he will wear his robe.

December– We decorated the church on November 30 and will take the decorations down on January 11 at 6:30. Due to near perfect weather, we enjoyed good attendance for both Christmas Eve services. We may look into forming a small committee to look into updating Christmas decorations and looking for funds.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - Amanda Greubel

2011 members: Amanda Greubel (Chairman), Jen Froeschle (Secretary), Angie Hofer, Tricia Nichols, Michelle King, Will Froeschle, Melissa Cook, and Shannon Edwards.

Two new members were welcomed to the committee in February, Shannon Edwards and Melissa Cook. Amanda Greubel continued as committee chair. Jen Froeschle volunteered to be secretary.

CE requested and was granted increased funding due to the program growth we saw in 2010. This funding increase was primarily needed to purchase additional supplies and curriculum for Sunday School, WOW Kids, and VBS.

Sunday School: Jen Froeschle continued as Sunday School Superintendent. In the spring we continued with the Rotation Model with curriculum borrowed from Jen's parents' church in Dubuque. This fall we began using SPARK curriculum, which is still a rotation model but includes more detailed teacher instructions and ideas. Sunday School start time was moved back to 8:30 am to allow for more class time. The Christmas Program was held during worship on December 11 with Cheri Mills, Jen Froeschle, and Holle Maricle directing. CE received some extra donated funds that were used to purchase costumes for the program.

WOW Kids: DRE Holle Maricle continues to act as Superintendent. New curriculum being used in Hands-On Bible. In the spring CE discussed a behavior plan to be used during WOW Kids in response to some issues that were occurring. In the fall, WOW Kids started a Compassion series to help them learn about the needs of children around the world and what they can do to help.

JOY Singers: Cheri Mills continued as director this year. Marilyn Ahrens filled in while Cheri was on vacation. JOY Singers are performing monthly during Sunday morning services and have performed on Wednesday evenings, as well. CE was able to purchase T-shirts for the children to wear for performances using memorial funds.

Vacation Bible School: Shannon Edwards was our VBS Coordinator and worked in conjunction with Ann Green of DeWitt United Methodist Church. VBS was held June 20-24 at UMC due to the 11th Street road construction. The theme was "Shake It Up!" The week concluded with a pool party for participants. 58 children participated.

Senior Sunday: Senior Sunday was held on May 22 with six seniors from our congregation recognized. A cake and punch reception was held after the service.

Teacher Appreciation: Teacher appreciation was held on May 8 and included all teachers and assistants from Sunday School and WOW Kids. Each volunteer was presented with a card from the committee. A donation to the mission fund was made in lieu of gifts.

Third grade Bible presentation: Five of our 3rd graders received Bibles on September 18.

Adult Education: A "Marriage Check-Up" course was scheduled in the spring, but was canceled due to low participation. A parenting class title "Becoming a Love & Logic Parent" is scheduled to begin February 21, 2012. The cost is \$10 for the workbook and childcare will be provided.

Safe Churches: EC will be implementing a program of background checks and training for all volunteers involved with our children's programming. Safe Churches is an initiative through the UCC to meet this need. In spring 2012 a CE sub-committee will meet to determine how the program will be implemented and write up the policy for our church.

FINK - (Faith Inkubators) - Jen Claeys

The FINK year runs September to May and is our “confirmation curriculum” for 7th and 8th grade students. Each year the Faith Inkubators program is presented by Pastor Jeff using a large screen TV. It is a two-year, DVD driven program that discusses everything from chapters of the Bible to Hot Topics, *which are special meetings that Jeff discusses the church’s view of pressing issues currently effecting middle school youth.*

In Spring of 2011, the kids had additional activities guided by Nancy Hughes and Kelly Siegel which included a letter writing campaign to a nursing home resident, Bingo at United Manor, visiting with a mission speaker, assisting WOW Kids with May baskets and preparing T-shirt for the Jamaican mission trip.

Six members were confirmed in May of 2011.

During the Fall of 2011, Jen Claeys and Nancy Hughes helped the kids with 2 sessions of leaf raking for members of our church, decorating the church for Christmas with Diaconate and a movie night at the Operahouse in lieu of a Halloween party. There are currently 14 members actively attending FINKS.



ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE - Annette Mohr

The Endowment Fund was established in order to further the mission of the United Church of Christ – First Congregational DeWitt, Iowa a portion of whose mission is to be good stewards of our time, talent and treasure. It is understood that the special gifts and bequests made to this endowment fund will be invested for the purpose of perpetuity rather than short-term immediacy. This Fund is made available to provide monies over and above the annual operating budget for purposes that will expand, strengthen and assure the orderly continuation of this congregation's ministries to our community and wider church missions. The income from this fund is not to take the place of individual stewardship of current member income.

Income from the Fund will provide for various categories of ministry that the congregation supports that is not underwritten by the annual giving and will serve as a means of extending and enhancing the church's program beyond the regular budget. The income will be distributed as follows:

1. 10% of the income will be reinvested in the existing investments with the United Church Foundation to assure the continued growth of the Fund.
2. OCWM dues determined by Trustees, paid semi-annually.
3. Grants as approved by the Committee from applications to be filed by June 1st and December 1st and at such other times as deemed necessary or feasible to accomplish the following purposes:
 - For capital improvements, debt reduction, or a building program of the United Church of Christ-First Congregational, DeWitt, Iowa.
 - Grants and scholarships for members of the United Church of Christ – First Congregational, DeWitt, Iowa for higher education as defined by adopted guidelines (available in the church office). Scholarships and/or grants for the purpose of attending college and seminary to prepare for a church-related *or any* vocation will be considered. *Note: 2007 was the first year that higher education scholarships were available to students studying any vocation, not just seminary students.*
 - For the people and programs of the United Church of Christ – First Congregational, DeWitt, Iowa including but not limited to Christian Education, camping and retreats, music ministry, youth ministry, missions, evangelism.
 - Community Service and Outreach – programs and services through social service agencies, community action groups and ecumenical agencies relating to spiritual, social and economic needs of persons in the community the church serves.
 - For the goals of the Trustees for the annual operating budget – not to exceed 10% of the annual budget for any given fiscal year.
 - Capital Improvement Fund for the United Church of Christ-First Congregational, DeWitt, Iowa. For this fund, \$5,000 is set aside annually to be saved for building maintenance – high priced items such a roof repair, new furnace, etc.

The Endowment Committee met three times during 2011. At the beginning of 2011, the total amount available for disbursement from the Endowment Fund was \$28,840.

The following is a breakdown as to how the money was disbursed in 2011:

- 10% Reinvestment - \$2,500
- \$5,000 Building Fund
- \$12,300 OCWM
- \$1,000 College Scholarship
- \$6,000 Mission Trip Scholarships to Jamaica
- \$500 for Central High School Band Drum Corp.
- \$100 Crafty Stitches

PASTOR PARISH COMMITTEE - No Activity / No Report

Members for 2011 were: Joe Nichols, Julie Dierks, Dan Smicker, Nancy Hughes, Tom Casad and Leann Walker.

MEMORIALS & GIFTS - Jean Schmidt

Members for 2011 were: Jean Schmidt; Jody Smicker, Dianne Ehrler, Andrea Zastrow, Carol Hansen, Randy Hall and Tammy Hall. Andrea moved in August, 2011 with Leann Walker taking her position.

Our end of the year balance is \$9,682.00. During the year we received memorials in memory of Edith Eden, Dorothy Clapp, Paul Nielsen, Ralph Jansen, David Block, Becky Rittmer, Bruce Anderson, and Kenneth Randolph.

Memorial monies were used to purchase insulated window kits for our patio door in Fellowship Hall and installation of the windows, blinds with valance for the door, 4 Bistro Sets with 2 extra chairs, new microwave for the kitchen, small mixer, 24 Bibles, lap top, TV, wireless mic systems, 2 more artificial arrangements for the altar, transplanting of 2 trees in front of the church that had to be moved to the garage area, music for Rebecca and choir, and name plaques for the Memorial board.

UNITED MANOR - Orda Stankee & Carolyn Eggleston

The United Manor Board of directors met bi-monthly this past year.

All of the building received new insulation, paid for by Alliant Energy. All of the building have now had the roofs replaced.

United Manor satisfactorily passed all inspections.

As the original mortgage of the property will be paid off in 2013, the board is suggesting the tree churches sign a continuing contract of 20 years so the facility may continue operating as it has for the past 40 years. In July, Kenneth Ruggeberg and Ellis Barber who were original board members, met with the board to explain the inception and consequent building of United Manor. Information has been distributed to the individual churches for their discussion and decision concerning this matter.

Vacancies do occur at the Manor, but most of the time all of the units are rented. People needing financial assistance in housing are encourage to apply for an apartment. There is a continuing waiting list for residences. Anyone interested in information concerning living at United Manor should make contact with them at 659-9452.

The present members of the board are: Bob Allen and Chuck Havener from *United Methodist Church*, Bill Andresen and Bob Lee from *St. Joseph's Catholic Church* and Orda Stankee and Carolyn Eggleston from *First Congregational UCC Church*.

OUTREACH / EVANGELISM - Amanda Voss

2011 Members: Christi Fulwider and Joyce Erling (Co-Chairs), Amanda Voss (Secretary), Angie Ahrens, Dottie Burcher, Jan Rittmer, Roger Rittmer, Eli Voss, and Ellen Schau.

Purpose of O&E: Emphasis on specific projects and fundraising and our responsibility to include more of the congregation. Retaining previous projects while adding new, more focused mission and outreach efforts. Projects: Mobile Meals every other month, food drives for the DeWitt Referral Center in April, May, October and December, annual Blood Drive, CROP Walk. Outreach efforts: Mission trips to Jamaica and Kentucky with fundraising thru brunches, garage sale, brat stand and selling bracelets.

2011 Monthly Summaries:

January– Discussed what the committee does as a group and the mission trips to Jamaica and Kentucky. The Mission trip dates have been set. Discussed different ways we could raise money for the trips. Had the annual Blood Drive on January 11.

February– Finalizing Jamaica trip. Kentucky trip leaving on June 4. Had fundraising brunch on February 13 and Happy Joe's fundraiser on February 27.

March– *Jamaica trip* is ready to go, but still unaware of situation there. Will know more after the last meeting with Mel on March 26. *Kentucky trip:* letters have been sent to our children, ages 15-college, to invite them to come on the trip. Next Kentucky meeting is March 16. Lions Ladies provided a mission trip fundraising brunch on March 20. On daylight savings weekend Eli Voss donated batteries to anyone needing them for smoke alarms.

April– Easter Brunch casseroles will be made by the committee on the Saturday before. Will also serve baked goods and fruit. The Jamaica Mission trip left April 12-19.

May– Jamaica group gave their report and will plan to go again in the future.

June– The Kentucky mission trip left June 5-12. They will give a report on June 19. Jan Rittmer developed a criteria list for future trips. Christi Fulwider delivered meals-on-wheels.

August– Christi Fulwider will represent our church for the CROP walk meeting. Kay Maynard is in charge of scheduling fundraising brunches beginning again in Sept. A Habitat Home will be built in DeWitt next year. Looking at how we can help.

September– Getting ready for the city-wide garage sale on Oct. 8. Worked the Barnes Brat Stand on September 9. Mission fundraising brunch held Sept. 18. Next Jamaica meeting on Sept. 27.

October– Discussed the *Mission 1 project* thru the Conference and if we would have time to do it before 11-11-11. Amanda and Eli Voss delivered meals-on-wheels. CROP Walk was Oct. 2 and discussed when and where to do this next year. We raised \$1148.60 at the city-wide garage sale for the mission trips. Jamaica meeting was Oct. 11. Mission fundraising brunch was held on Oct. 23.

November– Kentucky trip meeting in Nov. 9 with next trip planned for June 3-10, 2012. Jamaica meeting in Nov. 29. Mission fundraising brunch was held on Nov. 20.

December– Sponsored a "Local Mission Tree" for the Referral Center to collect monetary donations in conjunction with the food collection. We collected 588 items and \$726.70 from the tree. Jamaica trip will go sometime the end of June, 2012. Looking into doing church pictures in 2012 and planning the annual blood drive for Jan. 16, 2012.

Several of our O&E group did the CERT (*Community Emergency Response Team*) training offered thru the community. In an emergency, CERT members can give critical support to first responders, assist victims and organize volunteers at a disaster site.

MISSION TRIPS

JAMAICA - Eli Voss

“Mission Possible 2011” was round number two to Jamaica. With big shoes to fill from the previous trip to our new home away from home, 4 returning and 6 new members embarked on a journey to “change lives.”

Upon arriving in Jamaica, we found ourselves overwhelmed with an emotional task of assisting with every aspect of 31 boys’ individual lives. We hit the ground running though, and each member “did their thing.” We assisted with school work, mended clothing, worked on the farm, built shelving, painted, cooked, performed first aid, devotionals, went to church, took the kids on a trip to the zoo, played and enjoyed crafts, and cooked over a campfire, but most of all we gave a whole bunch of much needed love, affection, and attention to the boy’s. This was the area for the 31 kids that seemed to have the greatest need.

Our time with the boy’s gave us all a greater understanding of what the word love means. First hand, we witnessed the power of love, and we got to see just how easy it is to give. This trip was spiritually rewarding and it truly changed lives!

KENTUCKY - Roger and Jan Rittmer

2011 brought the church’s first *in-country* mission trip. Our “Road Trip With a Mission” took 14 of our congregation, ages 12 to 74 to Harlan, Kentucky, where we helped rehabilitate housing in one of the poorest areas of the United States. *Christian Outreach to Appalachian People (COAP)*, well-established coordinators of funding and volunteer workers for housing in Harlan County was our on-site connection.

Our team left the church parking lot very early in three vans and pulling a well-loaded trailer. The 650-mile trip was sleepy, but fun. Our multi-generation group began to get acquainted. We got to Harlan in the evening and organized for sleeping and eating in our (very) “rustic” accommodations.

The week’s routine began early each morning with light breakfast, and packing a lunch before taking off for the work site. Two local carpenters were our bosses for the week. We came to genuinely like and respect them, and we know those feelings were mutual. Our team did shingling, dry wall, landscaping, and *much* more. Our homeowner and her granddaughter appreciated our work, and we learned the local culture. Homeowners take out low interest loans to fund needed materials.

Each night, the team waited for turns to shower then ate a good meal prepared by that night’s food committee. We talked about our day, had devotions, and then shared guitar music provided by several team members. We were all really tired!

The trip home seemed long, but satisfying, as we were traveling with close friends rather than just church acquaintances. Our next “Road Trip With a Mission” to Harlan will be from June 3rd through the 10th, 2012.

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

CANDLELIGHT FELLOWSHIP - Ruth Wilson

Candlelight Fellowship met the first Tuesday of each month (*excluding January, February, July and August*) at 7:00 pm in the church hall or members' homes for a time of fellowship and fun.

Regretfully, we disbanded as of December 2011, but members will continue to serve funeral luncheons, deliver Mobile Meals the second Saturday of every other month alternating *with the Outreach and Evangelism Committee*, and update the children's worship activity bags occasionally.

Lolly Lindstrom will continue to coordinate the funeral luncheons which are held in our church. Several luncheons were served in 2011. The donations for serving will now go to the Memorial and Gifts committee.

The group supplied special bouquets for the altar for Mother's Day and Father's Day.

The annual Salad Luncheon was held in April with a profit of approximately \$1,100. The group also served the Clinton County Retired School Personnel luncheon in our church fellowship hall on May 14 with a profit of approximately \$130.

Candlelight made donations during the year to:

- \$750 - Church pledge
- \$500 - Kentucky Mission Trip
- \$ 50 - DeWitt Referral Center

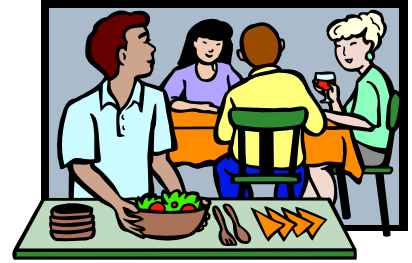
The final amount of money left in the treasury in excess of \$700 was donated to the Sunday school program and for kitchen towels and utensils.

We wish to thank all who have supported our activities by donating food and working at funeral luncheons and also donating salads and working at the salad luncheon. We will continue to help with mission fundraising activities in any way we can.



EVERYONE IS WELCOME (EIW) - Anna Rice

EIW meets the third Sunday of each month for a potluck supper at 5:30 pm. Business meetings and activities are informal and provide fun as well as good fellowship.



January Our first meeting was held and date set for the Sweetheart Dinner for the ladies of the church.

February the men prepared and served the annual Sweetheart Dinner on February 20 at 5:30 pm for any women of the church who wished to attend. No meeting.

March the Soup/Sandwich/Dessert Luncheon, our annual fund-raiser, was held on March 2nd from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, taking in \$1000. A potluck and program by Carey Arndt and Luanne Smith on their Jamaica experience was held March 20. EIW voted to donate \$25 to the DeWitt Central After Prom committee and \$300 each to the Jamaica and Kentucky mission trips. *No April meeting.*

May we had potluck meeting with a program by Dianne Ehler about her nephew, Austin, who was critically injured in an auto accident.

No June meeting due to Father's Day.

July Potluck held with program by Ken Rugeberg showing his carvings and Ellis Barber explaining his trips taking children to Shriners Hospital in Chicago for treatment.

August and **September** *meetings were cancelled due to schedule conflicts.*

October was the annual Fish Fry courtesy of Rick Ehlers, Don Clapp and Bob Hansen. A \$10 donation was given to each of our CROP walk participants. *No meeting in November.*

December 21 plates of Christmas cookies were packaged and delivered to shut-in's from our church on December 18. The group then went out for pizza at Happy Joe's.



BEEF DINNER COMMITTEE - Bim Prichard

2011 Committee members:

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Don Clapp | Amanda Greubel | Bill Petsche | Janelle Schnoor |
| Rick Ehrler | Josh Greubel | Tami Petsche | Dennis Schnoor |
| George Elwood | Bob Hansen | Bim Prichard | Harold Wilson |
| Jen Froeschle | Carol Hansen | Dianne Prichard | Ruth Wilson |
| Will Froeschle | | | |

The annual Church Beef Dinner was held on Sunday, May 1st. We served 862 people which was down slightly from the year before (885). The committee wishes to thank the 178 people who worked in any capacity to make this event run so smoothly.

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Financial: | Income | \$ 7,096.00 |
| | <u>Expenses</u> | <u>\$ 4,163.51</u> |
| | Profit | \$ 2,932.49 |



Current Balance - \$ 8,338.08

LIONS LADIES - Jean Schmidt

Since 1972, the ladies of the First Congregational United Church of Christ have been serving noon lunch once a week to the Noon Lions organization. We have 4 separate groups that prepare these meals each week. From the beginning, the proceeds from the project were designated as funds to repair or replace the kitchen equipment. Through the years, we have also supported many of the other church projects. Janis Black and Jean Schmidt (co-chairmen).

The projects we supported in 2011 were:

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Annual pledge..... | \$ 5000.00 |
| LP grill, 100-cup coffee maker, supplies..... | \$ 1239.74 |
| <i>(coffee, paper products, soap, cleaners, etc)</i> | |
| Kentucky Mission trip..... | \$ 300.00 |
| Habitat Meal..... | \$ 30.00 |
| Dec.2010 Alliant Energy bill..... | <u>\$ 1450.00</u> |
| Total for year..... | \$ 3,019.74 |

During the year, 2098 meals were served. (84 less than 2010)



UCC PRAYER MINISTRY - Jan Black

The prayer chain committee continues to receive requests for prayers. If you have a prayer request you may contact any of the following committee members:

Janis Black 659-2879

Phyllis Jansen 659-5835

Kim VanDeWalle 659-9004

Nancy Aiken 659-5554

Joyce Erling 285-7691

Pastor Jeff at 659-3166

Leann Walker 659-9755

Marie Hoffmann 659-3828

The committee members contact each other as soon as possible so that the prayer requests begin that day. Your prayers will be kept confidential unless you tell us otherwise. Also, please tell us how long you would like us to continue the prayers for the person. Prayers may be requested for anyone: family, friends or acquaintances.



CRAFTY STITCHERS - Marilyn Nielsen

The Crafty Stitchers met on Wednesday mornings for devotions, fellowship and to make lap blankets. We were able to give 46 lap blankets to various nursing homes, including West Wing in DeWitt, Wheatland Manor, Eagle Point in Clinton and to Ridgecrest Health Wing. Two full size comforters were made and given to Winnie's Place in Davenport. Materials and money were donated from our congregation, estate sales and St Joseph's church. Thank you for keeping the six of us busy this past year. Come join us anytime.

Marilyn Nielsen, Phyllis Jansen, Becca Schroeder, Marilyn Hair, Madonna Sagers and Dianne Prichard.

CHURCH OFFICERS & COMMITTEES – 2012 (February 1 - January 31)

CHURCH COUNCIL – Meets 3rd Monday of January, March, May, July, Sept. and Nov. at 7:00 pm

MODERATOR – Chris Maricle- 2013 (2-yr terms)

VICE MODERATOR – Eli Voss- 2013 (2-yr terms)

CLERK – Jen Claeys- 2014 (3-yr terms)

ASSISTANT CLERK – Ruth Wilson- 2013 (1-yr terms)

FINANCIAL SECRETARY – Opal Fox- 2013 (1-yr terms)

TREASURER – Michael Wildes- 2014 (2-yr terms)

MEMBERS AT LARGE – Phyllis Jansen- 2013; Kevin Fox- 2013; Bob Hansen- 2014; Randy Hunt- 2014

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - Meets 1st Sunday of the month at 10:45 am

Michelle King- 2013; **Jen Froeschle (SEC)**- 2013; Will Froeschle- 2013;

Melissa Cook- 2014; Shannon Edwards- 2014; Doug Peters- 2014;

Kari Bossom- 2015; Lisa Christoffersen- 2015; Rebecca Kerr- 2015

Coordinator: Jen Froeschle- 6/2010 - 6/2012; *Asst. Coordinator:* Melissa Cook- 6/2011 - 6/2012

DIACONATE - Meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm

Kim VanDeWalle (CHAIR)- 2013; Denise Block- 2013; Becca Schroeder- 2013; Sheila Busch- 2013;

Lynne Bisson- 2014; Ken McMain- 2014; Carol Beck- 2014; Jen Claeys- 2014;

Lynn Goodall- 2015; Sheryl Souhrada- 2015; Mary Malcolm- 2015; _____ - 2015

TRUSTEES – Meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm

_____ - 2013; Scott Siegel- 2013; Rick Mangan- 2013;

Dennis Schnoor- 2014; **Luanne Smith (SEC)**- 2014; Gaylene Mangan- 2014;

Buck Mills- 2015; Mark Ohnemus- 2015; _____ - 2015; Mike Wildes- *Treasurer*

OUTREACH-EVANGELISM – Meets 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm

Roger Rittmer- 2013; **Christi Fulwider (Co-CHAIR)**- 2013; **Joyce Erling (Co-CHAIR)**- 2013;

Amanda Voss (SEC)- 2014; Eli Voss- 2014; Ellen Schau- 2014;

Pam Anderson- 2015; Craig Anderson- 2015; Jan Rittmer- 2015

MEMORIALS AND GIFTS – Meets on an as needed basis

Jean Schmidt (CHAIR); Leann Walker- 2013; Carol Hansen- 2013;

Randy Hall- 2014; Tammy Hall- 2014; Deb Fox- 2015; Carolyn Eggleston- 2015

NOMINATING COMMITTEE – Meets in December

(Chair) *Vice Moderator*– **Eli Voss**- 2013; Laurie Wildes- 2013; Carolyn Wiese- 2013;

Alice Carber- 2014; Nancy Hughes- 2014; Amanda Voss- 2015; Dottie Burrichter- 2015

PASTOR PARISH – Meets quarterly

Dan Smicker- 2013; Nancy Hughes- 2013; Tom Casad- 2014;

Leann Walker- 2014; _____ - 2015; _____ - 2015

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE – Meets 2nd Sunday of Mar, June, Sept, Dec.

Holle Maricle- 2013; Bim Prichard- 2013; Linda Casad- 2014; Kelly Siegel- 2014;

Josh Greubel- 2015; Heidi Barber- 2015

(Trustees Chair, Treasurer and Pastor are advisory members)

UNITED MANOR – Carolyn Eggleston- 2013; Orda Stankee- 2014

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Personnel)- Meets as needed

Mod.- Chris Maricle-2013, *V-Mod.*- Eli Voss-2013; Jody Smicker-2014; Bill Petsche-2014

CONFERENCE DELEGATE– Asst Mod – Eli Voss **ASSOCIATION DELEGATE**– Roger Datisman

AUDITORS – Roger VanDeWalle; Jack Wiese

Report to the Churches of the Iowa Conference, January 2012

Early in December I attended the installation of a bright, young pastor here in the Iowa Conference (by God's grace we now have several of this most rare of species here in Iowa!). The preacher (our own Associate Conference Minister Jonna Jensen) powerfully and persuasively made the case that ministry is not about the minister.

Certainly she is right, and by simple analogy most of us would affirm that conference ministry isn't about the conference staff. Many would knowingly nod and think (or say right out loud), "It's about time those people in the conference office got clear about this." In fact, I think we ARE clear about this: Conference ministry – just like local church ministry – isn't about us. But getting clear about what ministry isn't is never quite the same as being clear about what it IS!

When I say (as I have, from time to time), "This ministry is about the churches!" – I may inadvertently leave the door open to a different distortion of the truth. Truth be known, the ministry to which my staff and I have been called isn't fundamentally about either the clergy OR the churches. The ministry to which we've (and you've!) been called is about Jesus and those he's called us to serve on his behalf. At times, of course, those we're called to serve on behalf of Jesus are people in our churches, but far too often, I fear, we focus inordinately on the church itself and miss certain clear and unmistakable aspects of our Lord's teaching. For example, we miss the assertion that he (and therefore those of us doing his bidding) hasn't been called to the healthy, but to the sick. Obviously this includes the physically sick, but more generally it includes all who are life-weary and discouraged and maybe cynical – who wonder if life has any real meaning and purpose – who are tempted to give up – or just give in to the cultural temptations to make life all about material and pleasure and self.

Most of you know the traditional work of the conference staff – we support search and call when a church needs a pastor. We provide support and growth opportunities so those pastors can be leaders of transformation. We attend to the formation of new leaders so that the church will continue to have access to leaders firmly grounded in faith and sufficiently skilled to function in a day of dizzying change. We provide resources and training for those who work with young people. But none of this work represents an end in itself. So far as I can tell, God doesn't much care if every church has a pastor – what God seems to care about is whether churches are tending to the lost and dispossessed and marginalized in every part of our society. If having a good pastor helps us be better at that work, then bring on a good pastor, but just because every church had a pastor wouldn't mean we were necessarily doing the work of God as God would like to see it done.

You – and your church – have a calling from God to share the Good News in ways meaningful and relevant to your places of life and work. We are entrusted by God with a message that resonates with challenge to the status quo and dares to embrace many who are otherwise excluded. The staff of the Iowa Conference aims to be your servant in helping you to be servants to those looking for hope and meaning and life.

Your church's generous financial support of the Iowa Conference through OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) or through your own individual generosity makes this work of ministry empowerment possible. Thank you for your partnership! Should you have questions or ideas for our common work, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

God bless you and may God empower the work of your church – not just for yourselves – but for those who've yet to experience the hope of the Gospel.



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Rev. Dr. Rich Pleva
Iowa Conference Minister

"God is Still Speaking"