

aboutfirst

LOVE FIRST. LET'S GATHER, GROW, GO TOGETHER



DECEMBER 2023, FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, CEDAR FALLS

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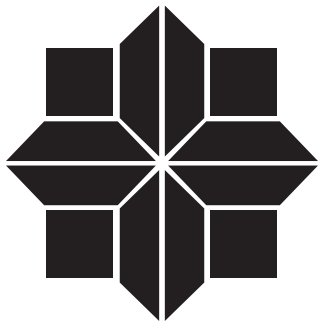
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Issue 278,
December 2023

First United Methodist Church
718 Clay Street
Cedar Falls, Iowa, 50613
aboutfirst.com

Announcements and editorial content for publication may be submitted to the First UMC media office by the 20th of each preceding month.

Email to:
katie.greuel@aboutfirst.com



aboutfirst.com

news

Hear it and See it

You may have noticed that we now have the ability to display live captions on the projection screen while the pastors are preaching in the sanctuary. This is an attempt to give our hearing-impaired worshipers another mechanism to understand the message of the day. The words you see on-screen are generated in real time by an application of artificial intelligence – they are not pre-loaded into the projection system and they are not typed by a human being. You will notice a high degree of accuracy in the text, but also occasional mistakes as the application misunderstands our pronunciation or Biblical references. At present, we are only offering live captions in the sanctuary and only during the sermon portion of the service. We are very interested in receiving your opinion on this new use of technology. Talk to Chris in the Tech & Media office.
Chris.congdon@aboutfirst.com

Annual Ladies Christmas Dinner

Mark your calendars for Thursday December 14th, 2023. It is the Annual Christmas Dinner hosted by the United Women in Faith. The meal will be served in the Fellowship Hall by a great bunch of sophisticated men of the church! They come dressed for the festive occasion! The meal serving time is dependent on the traditional Lincoln School 5th and 6th grade chorus of holiday music. The start time of this ½ hour festive treat has not been determined yet. Please come at 12 noon and we either listen to music or enjoy our meal. A holiday treat you won't want to miss! We will be serving:

- Ham Balls
- Ranch Flavored Mashed Potatoes
- Creamy Sweet Corn
- Cranberry Gelatin Salad
- Dinner Roll / Butter
- Christmas Poke Cake
- Coffee, Tea, or Ice Water

The cost of the meal is \$12.00 and can be paid at the door!

(There will be extra Ham Ball Dinners "to go" available for sale after the event!)



The Gift of Hope

In this Advent season we as Christians and as the church are called to be witnesses to hope, peace, love and joy. Witnesses to the wonder of a child born in a manger and the blessings of life.

Witnessing doesn't take a lot of words. If you don't believe me throw the word "hello" into the room of a nursing home. It will have the effect of opening the currents and fluffing the pillow for that person who needs it desperately.

Author Jean Houston tells a story about herself as a youth, going to hear a presentation by the great American author Helen Keller who was blind and deaf, the first such person to be college educated. Houston said that after Helen Keller finished speaking she knew that she had to talk with her. She got up and presented her face to Helen Keller. Houston described the experience this way: "She read my whole face and I blurted out: 'Miss Keller, why are you so happy?' and she laughed and laughed, saying: 'My child, it is be-

cause I live each day as if it were my last and life, with all its moments, is so full of glory."

Helen Keller journeyed through life with hope.

It is amazing, isn't it, how we can miss so much of life? The key to journeying with hope is first being aware and having a sense of gratitude. When we lose our sensitivity to wonder and awe, when we simply trudge or zoom through the days, we can so easily miss the daily gifts of life.

When we awaken to what is within us and around us, when we savor, relish, and taste life fresh each day, we begin to have a conviction that life is more than luck. We gain a conviction of spirit and are able to witness to hope.

This Advent let's prepare our hearts for the coming of Christmas with hope, peace, love and joy!

Pastor Scott



monthly mission

Angel Tree for Area Families

The Angel Tree is up and ready! This year we are again partnering with North Cedar and Lincoln Schools to share a little Christmas love to some families in our own community. The school guidance counselors have provided us with a wish list for families from each school. Each child will have two tags on the tree, one for clothing and the other for toys, books and other small items. Here's how it works:

- Select a tag.
- Purchase the gift
- Return the gift to the church by Sunday, December 10 with the tag securely attached. We'd appreciate it if you would wrap it, but we can wrap it for you, just make sure we have the tag.

If you'd prefer not to shop feel free to make a donation and we'll shop for you! (If you write a check please make it out to FUMC with Angel Tree in the memo.) We are also in need of \$25.00 gift cards from Walmart to give to the families. Julie Fee is the contact for the Angel Tree ministries this year. Feel free to direct your questions to her at bjfee@cfu.net or 296-8963.

Christmas Eve Offering

Traditionally, our church has shared in receiving a special Christmas offering as a way of showing our gratitude for God's gift of Jesus to us. These gifts are not for us, but will be used to spread healing, hospitality and hope to others who need to hear of the miracle of Christ.

Cedar Falls First UMC has done a great job all year of supporting ministries and missions locally, nationally and internationally. Our Christmas Eve mission focus will be UMCOR's Disaster Relief Program.

UMCOR Disaster Relief Program

We've all read about the disasters in Maui, Mexico, Turkey, Syria and the Holy Lands just to name a few. UMCOR comes alongside those who suffer from natural or human-caused disasters – be it famine, hurricane, war, flood, fire or other events—to alleviate suffering and to be a source of help and hope for those left most vulnerable. They provide relief, response and long-term recovery grants when these events overwhelm a community's ability to recover on their own. UMCOR also provides technical support and training for partners to address emerging and ongoing issues related to disaster relief, recovery, and long-term health and development.

You may place your gift in the offering plate on Sunday morning, Christmas Eve, or send it to the church office at any time. Use the special offering envelope at the Welcome Center or mailed to you. Be sure to write Christmas mission or UMCOR on your check made out to FUMC.



One Day Missions

GATHER, GROW, GO

Midwest Missions

We had our last Midwest Mission trip for the year on November 14th. Thanks to the 11 people who made the journey. We will not be going again as a mission sponsored group until the spring but do feel free to venture to Jefferson on your own. <https://www.midwestmission.org/iowa>



Salvation Army

On Saturday, November 18th eight groups from FUMC rang the bell at Greenhill Fareway for 8 hours. We had beautiful weather and raised \$521.05

for the Salvation Army. If you'd like to ring the bell, you can also sign up for other days, times and locations by signing in at Register to Ring. <https://www.registertoring.com/>

North East Iowa Food Bank

We will continue to send two crews to the NEIFB. The first group will go Thursday, December 14 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and the second group will go on Tuesday, December 19 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Look for the sign up sheets at the Welcome Center Desk. Rides are available.



Help the Wee Ones

Donate to our Wee Care closet. Grateful parents of wee ones come to our church every Tuesday afternoon to pick up a supply of much needed baby goods. This gap ministry

through LoveINC helps struggling families in our own community stretch their dollars. Diapers of all sizes are always appreciated, along with wipes, baby wash, baby lotion, 8 oz bottles and sippy cups. If you see a good deal on end-of-season baby clothes feel free to bring them in. We have a place to store them until the appropriate season. Your donations make a difference.

Community Meal

A free meal is served every Tuesday from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. It is open to anyone in the community as an opportunity to meet with friends, or to stretch their



food budget a bit. We host the meal every week, and other area churches take turns providing the meal and the workers. Our church's commitment is the 4th Tuesday of each month, EXCEPT December. **So many of our volunteers are traveling or hosting family for Christmas that we will take December 26 off.**

Thank you to all who have volunteered to be a part of this. At this point our biggest need is dessert – cookies or bars are preferred. If you are willing to bake for the meal the 4th Tuesdays of each month, or any month, please contact Maxine Kehret at 319-610-4191.



Got extra fabric? Bring it in!

There is always a need for durable/sturdy fabric to make school bags and other stitching projects. The Stitchers & Quilters also could use

decent sized lengths of cotton quilting fabric for comfort quilts, baptism quilts, and quilts for foster kids, as well as school bags and quilts for Midwest Mission. There is a designated bin for your quality fabric donation in the church collection site on the main level of the church in the little hall across from the drinking fountain.



Dec. 3 - Christmas Bell Concert

Where: Sanctuary

When: 7:00 pm

Make your plans to come and join the bell choirs at FUMC for their annual Holiday Handbell Concert! This has been a tradition here at First for many years and is the bell program's gift to you. The concert is free of charge and open to the public.

Dec. 5 - Grief Support

Where: Parlor

When: 2:00 pm

The Grief Support group will meet on December 5 at 2:00 in the church parlor. The holidays can often be a challenging time and this group can provide a time of sharing and conversation and caring for one another. Come and join the group in an atmosphere of Christian love.

Dec. 6 - Advent Ornament Workshop

Where: Gathering Place

When: 6:15-7:15 pm

Gather your family for a special Advent Ornament Workshop. Create five distinct ornaments and collaborate on a collective art piece, fostering creativity and togetherness during this holiday season.

Dec. 10 - Kids Christmas Program

Where: Sanctuary

When: 10:00 am

Join us for a heartwarming children's Christmas program for the timeless story of Jesus' birth through music, drama, and holiday cheer.

Dec. 10 - Festival Of Carols

Where: Sanctuary

When: 8:30 & 11:15 am

The holidays are a special time of year to gather with loved ones and remember the birth of Christ. The anticipation of the coming of the Lord is often expressed in the music of Advent. Experience the joy and wonder of the season with our festival of Carols during the traditional services at 8:30am or 11:15am in the sanctuary.

Dec. 10 - Service of Memories

Where: Sanctuary

When: 4:00 pm

You are invited to a special service of memories to honor those from our families and friends we have lost during the past year. Please join others in this service as we remember through prayer, song, scripture, message, litany of remembrance, fellowship and conversation. You are encouraged to attend and perhaps find some comfort with the presence of God and the reassurance and comfort He can provide.

Dec. 12 - Card Making

Where: Gathering Place

When: 1:00 to 4:00 pm (Come-and-go)

Come and join us as we make some cards for the

Western Home Communities this month. Since May of 2022 the sale of our cards has brought in a little over \$761.00 for use to improve the lives of their residents. That means that over 1500 cards have been sold in their buildings! We have some fun and let our creativity shine. See you on the 12th!

Dec. 14 - UWF Annual Christmas Dinner

Where: Fellowship Hall

Save the date for the Annual Christmas Dinner hosted by United Women in Faith on Thursday, December 14th, featuring a festive meal in the Fellowship Hall, with the Lincoln School 5th and 6th grade chorus of holiday music at noon followed by lunch at 12:30.

Dec. 14 & 19 - Food Bank

Where: Food Bank

We will continue to send two crews to the NEIFB. The first group will go Thursday, December 14 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and the second group will go on Tuesday, December 19 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Look for the sign up sheets at the Welcome Center Desk. Rides are available.

Dec. 26 - LifeServe Blood Drive

Where: Gathering Place

When: 12:30-6:00 pm

Our monthly Blood Drive will be Tuesday, December 26 from 12:30-6:00. They have quite a few appointments slots to fill, and the need is great. Appointments are encouraged, but not required. Sign up to donate at www.lifeservebloodcenter.org

Crafters Corner - See you in January

Crafter's Corner is taking a break for Christmas but will resume in January. Get your crafting project lined up and join the group on Monday, January 22 at 6:00 in the church parlor. Please contact Crystal Wilken at crystalwilken@gmail.com with any questions.

1st Friends Potluck on Break

You've got time to peruse your cookbooks and come up with something to share. 1stFriends Potluck is on break until March. Mark your calendar for March 21 and come and join us for good food, fellowship and fun. This is a great opportunity to get acquainted with others in the church and have lunch with the church staff. Couples and singles are welcome. All you have to do is bring a dish to share and your own table service. We will have the coffee pot on and ready to serve at 12:00. Dominoes, cribbage, and card games follow the meal until 2:00.

Facebook Fridays

On Fridays about noon one of our pastors will give a preview of next Sunday's message.

Candlelight Services - Dec. 24

5:00 in the Fellowship Hall

7:00pm in the Sanctuary

For many of us, Christmas really become Christmas when they are holding a light candle and singing, "Silent Night". Both services will include familiar carols and the wonderful scriptures telling of Christ's birth. We encourage you to invite your family and friends as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Dec. 24 & Dec. 31 - One Combined Service at 10:00am

On December 24 & 31 we invite you to join your church family for one combined service at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary. There will be no Sunday School.



Find your Place in God's Great Story

Help Needed!

TECH VOLUNTEERS

Tech volunteers get to use the same cool equipment and do the same important job as our paid staff, but they have more flexibility to pick and choose the Sundays and services they work. We can't do this without volunteers. No experience necessary – we can teach you what you need to know. Email chris.congdon@aboutfirst.com for more info.

GREETING

As a greeter you are our guest first encounter. You will be responsible for welcoming all who enter our doors. We need greeters at the First and Second Services. Greeters will be placed at the main doors to Welcome our guests. Email Jenna.engel@aboutfirst.com for more info.

EDUCATION

Explore various opportunities to join our ministry teams, including becoming a lead teacher for 1st-2nd graders in Sunday

school, engaging with kids from Kindergarten to 5th grade on Wednesday nights, or working with 6th-12th graders in the Youth program. Additionally, there's an opening in our Wednesday afternoon cook team. If your availability is limited you can still contribute by donating food for our Wednesday night meals. Reach out to Jenna Engel at jenna.engel@aboutfirst.com to learn more or get involved.

Reminders:

ALTAR FLOWERS

The altar flower calendar is at the Welcome Center. Sign up now to recognize a special date or to honor a loved one with flowers for the altar. Have the flowers delivered to the church on Friday, please.

HOSPITAL INFO

Governmental regulations prohibit health care facilities (this includes hospitals, assisted living and nursing homes) from sharing information about their patients and residents, so if you want your church family to know you need our love and prayers, please call

the church office.

JOIN THE FACEBOOK GROUP

We have created a Facebook group called First Friends and Family to allow everyone to interact and share the ways they are finding to Love First. Head over to our church Facebook page, select 'visit group'. You should find the button under the banner. Want to join? Click the member request button and we will be sure to add you.

DO YOU WANT TO RIDE THE BUS?

Winter is coming and with it the dicey roads. If you like the idea of door to door service and live in Cedar Falls, consider riding the bus to church as an option. The bus picks up riders for the 11:15 worship service. Please contact the bus coordinators Janet & Steve MacTaggart at 319-404-0077. They can answer your questions get you on the schedule for rides.

education news

Advent Ornament Workshop

Dec. 6, 6:15-7:15 pm

Gather your family for a special Advent Ornament Workshop,. Create five distinct ornaments and collaborate on a collective art piece, fostering creativity and togetherness during this holiday season.

Kids Christmas Program

Dec. 10, Sunday school hour

Join us for a heartwarming children's Christmas program for the timeless story of Jesus' birth through music, drama, and holiday cheer!

Nursery Update

Starting in January the Nursery Wednesday night schedule will be changing. The nursery will be open to RSVP only. If you need a staffed nursery on Wednesday night please let Jenna Engel a week in advance. You can reach her at jenna.engel@aboutfirst.com

NOTE: THE NURSERY IS STILL OPEN ON SUNDAY



Thank you!

Over the course of a few Sundays in November, the youth sold homemade cookie mixes as a mission trip fundraiser. Thanks to your support, we've raised over \$400 from this fundraiser so far! All funds go directly to our youth mission trip fund to help pay for our Summer 2024 mission trip to Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Kentucky. Congregational support is a major part in helping us afford mission trips like this for our 7-12th grade students. Thank you for supporting

our ministry in this way! We will continue selling our mixes in the Gathering Space on Sunday mornings until all mixes are gone.

Dec. Youth Activities

As the fall semester winds down, here are some important dates to remember:

Friday, December 1: Game night, 6:00-7:30. Pizza will be provided.

Bring your friends!

Wednesday, December 6: Last Wednesday night of 2023, G3 Youth Christmas Party

Sunday, December 10: Last Sunday School of 2023

We hope you can join us as we close out 2023. Thank you for another great year of G3 Youth Ministry!

Join us for Sunday School

Sunday mornings at 10:00! Youth in grades 7-12 meet in the cafe on the third floor. Each Sunday, we will explore our faith through a Bible lesson, fellowship, and serving others. Bring your friends! We can't wait to see you on Sunday mornings!

Be a part of our crazyfunbusy Wednesday night fun!

Join us on Wednesday nights for food, fun, and fellowship for youth in grades 6-12! Grab dinner at the Filling Station starting at 5:30, then join us on the third floor at 6:00 for Fusion, followed by games and small groups for youth in grades 6-12. Our nights wrap up at 7:30. All are welcome—bring your friends!



Send a Card or Note

Send a card or a letter to our friends in care facilities and unable to attend church. Phone calls and cards are also much appreciated for those who are staying home.

Think of who sits around you in worship or in a group, and give them a call or a card.

Judy Focht (rm36), Geri Gilbert (rm 39)
 Martin Suites
 420 E. 11th St
 Cedar Falls IA 50613

Wanda Chase, Tony Lake (rm 9), Homer Leymaster (rm 13), Emogene Marty, Marcia Simpson
 Windhaven Assisted Living
 5500 S. Main St
 Cedar Falls IA 50613

Barb Spates
 Thalman Square
 5500 S. Main St
 Cedar Falls IA 50613

Sue DeBower (201), Harold Kreb,
 Deery Suites
 5301 Caraway Lane
 Cedar Falls IA 50613

Betty Goettsch (104)
 Stanard Assisted Living at Deery Suites
 5301 Caraway Lane
 Cedar Falls IA 50613

Faye Rohwedder
 Nation Cottage
 5111 Caraway Lane
 Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Vivian Hill, Donna Hoffman (D109), Dorothy Schwab (MC4), Mary Shepherd (AL104)
 New Aldaya Lifescapes
 7511 University Ave
 Cedar Falls IA 50613

Joy Sires, Donna Tiller (1304)
 CedarStone Senior Living
 4715 Algonquin Dr
 Cedar Falls IA 50613

Betty Fanning, Chet Starr
 Bickford Cottage
 5101 University Ave
 Cedar Falls IA 50613

Betty O'Brien
 Friendship Village Lakeview Lodge
 312 Southbrooke Drive #39
 Waterloo IA 50701

Kathy Gill
 LaPorte City Specialty Care
 1100 US-218
 La Porte City IA 50651

Charlene "Chuck" Gratten
 Denver Sunset Home
 235 North Mill Street
 P.O. Box 383
 Denver IA 50622

Dixie Messerschmidt
 Boysen Heights Senior Living
 765 Boysen Rd NE #115
 Cedar Rapids IA 52402

Darlene Prashak
 Heritage Care & Rehab Center
 501 S. Kentucky Ave
 Mason City IA 50401

Delores Berger
 613 W. North St Apt 7
 Madrid IA 50156

Jack Hovelson
 14581 W Parkwood Dr #101
 Surprise AZ 85374

Give Through Our Website or Your Phone

Online giving is great for you, because you can do it any time, any place, and you don't need to carry cash to church. Recurring (automatic) giving is great for you, because you won't have to try to remember to write the check. Recurring giving is also great for the church because it provides a predictable income stream for budgeting and planning purposes.

Our secure online giving portal allows you to make one-time offerings, or to set up a recurring gift. Check it out today.

<http://aboutfirst.com/giving>

or, download the GivePlus app to your mobile device and give directly from your phone. Available for androids and i-people. Or use our handy QR Code below!



Thank You

Thank you for the beautiful birthday flower, also the birthday card sent by the church staff. Thanks to Jane for delivery and enjoyable visit. - Mary Maas

1st Kids Preschool & Child Care would like to thank everyone who purchased items off of our giving tree for the center, these items are very much appreciated at this time. We are very grateful and thankful to have members that are supportive of the daycare that the church started many years ago. We appreciate all the help over the years.

Thank you again-
Susan & Deana

Big thanks to Jane for bringing me a carnation for my 83rd. I was a little disappointed that she didn't help me rake but understand. Also thanks to the FUMC staff for the birthday card. It is always great to be remembered by our First United Methodist family.

- Jim Larson

Sympathy

Family and friends of Nick Teig. Nick died October 29.

Family and friends of Shirley Jean Huffman. Shirley died November 8.

Family and friends of Nancy Price. Nancy died November 20.

Church Directories

If your picture is in the church directory, you have a church directory waiting for you at the Welcome Center. Find the one

with your name on it and take it home with you today.

Poinsettias

Your purchase of a poinsettia in memory or honor of a loved one will brighten up the season. Each poinsettia costs \$15. Deadline to order is December 20. You will find an order form at the Welcome Center or in the office, or you can mail your check to the church and include a note clearly indicating who the poinsettia is in memory or honor of, and by whom. You may take your poinsettia home with you on or after the Christmas Eve service.

Let's Deliver Some Joy After Christmas!

Once again we are asking for some resident Santa helpers to deliver some poinsettias after Christmas. We will meet in the Gathering Place on Wednesday, December 27th anytime between 9:30 and 10:30. You may choose who you take plants to, or we can give you names. If you plan to deliver more than one, please bring a box along. Just call Carol at 319-277-0711 or e-mail her at cdick0711@gmail.com if you'd like to help.

A Note from Finance Committee

Revenues for October were below expectations. At October 31st our deficit for the year was \$20,215. On top of this we are \$15,987 behind in our apportionment payments.

In order finish 2023 on a positive note the Finance Committee encourages everyone to bring their pledges up to date and give any additional amounts you feel comfortable with.

Our Next Big Thing building campaign is coming to a close in December. If you have yet to complete your giving on your pledge to this campaign we would hope you can do so by December 31st.

What Gift Can You Bring?

We are grateful for the gifts you have entrusted to us. Your gift enables our Church to spread the word of Christ among us and throughout the World.

What gift can we bring, what present, what token?

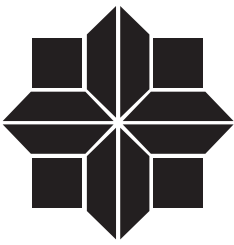
What words can convey it, the joy of this day?

When grateful we come, remembering, rejoicing, what song can we offer in honor and praise?

Jane Marshall's "What gift can we bring" is a hymn of pure gratitude. The hymn originally had three stanzas, but the author cleverly adapted the last stanza from the text of stanza one as an affirmation and summation. This hymn will guide us during our January stewardship and will be our guiding question, "What gift can we bring?"



**We are a
Dementia
Friendly
Organization!**



FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

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First United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls

Sunday Worship

8:30 am	Traditional Worship Service, Sanctuary
9:00-11:15	Fellowship, Gathering Place
9:15 am	Transformation Contemporary Worship, Fellowship Hall
10:00 am	Sunday School for all ages
11:15 am	Traditional Worship Service, Sanctuary

Television

Cedar Falls (CFU) Channels 18 or 95.5

Friday @ 8:00 pm, Sunday @ 9:00 am

Waterloo (MediaCom) Channel 1

Sundays @ 11:00am & 8:00 pm

Our Pastors

Scott Kober, Lead Pastor, scott.kober@aboutfirst.com

Karen Nelson, Associate Pastor, karen.nelson@aboutfirst.com

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(in alphabetical order)

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dee.behr@aboutfirst.com

John Bentley, Head Custodian

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