



# ***Northwestern Star***

Northwestern Association

Iowa Conference

United Church of Christ

## ***May 2008***

### ***NEEDED: A New Editor***

We are moving the end of June. Please stop newsletters via snail or e-mail to me. There isn't a new editor to send them to at this time. If you are interested in being the editor, please contact Kelly Volk [captainbiology@hotmail.com](mailto:captainbiology@hotmail.com)

### ***Moderator Kelly's Musings:***

This spring we celebrated Confirmation Sunday in our church, as I imagine many of our Northwestern Association churches did. Confirmation always prompts me to think more and more about what it means to be a church member. It is my experience that Confirmation students each have quite an amazing understanding of what it means to be church members, and this is not because I have taught them something special. They know what it means to be church members by watching and listening to the members of the congregation. Many times as adults we slip into the misconception that we are separated from children and youth by more than just years—we think we are irrelevant and that they pay no attention to us because we are old and out-of-date, but that is simply not true. When I teach Confirmation and ask the students why they believe something or how they know something, their response usually includes wisdom or experience from their parents, grandparents, or even something that happened at church. Whether we know it or not, or even whether or not we want to admit it, we have taught our young people what it means to be church members by our words and most importantly our actions. Let's give ourselves a pat on the back!

We often refer to our church as a family—and that is a good way to describe our relationship with each other. As a family member you cannot ever be kicked-out. You may let your relationship fall away at times, but you are always welcomed home with loving arms. But families come with responsibilities as well. We pray for each other, we worship together, we study together, we work together, we share our joys and sorrows, we offer our talents, we offer our time, we offer our money, all for the good of the church and to further God's mission in the world. God's mission is something that is impossible for one person to accomplish alone, but when a group of people work together then it becomes possible. The Apostle Paul often wrote about the body of Christ using the metaphor of the human body—the eyes are for seeing, the ears for hearing and so on. We are each a different part of the body of Christ and alone we can only do one thing well, but together we are a complete body that can do anything. This metaphor works well for the local church, but also for the Association. When this Association works together we can do far more than what one local church can accomplish on its own. This summer, the Northwestern Association is sending 12 youth from 6 different churches, and four adult chaperones to the National Youth Event. This event is expensive, but worth every penny. Because our Association works together as a whole body, we are able to pay 1/3 of the cost for each participant to attend this fabulous and fun and enriching youth event. Let's give ourselves another pat on the back!

While we are all giving ourselves a pat on the back, let's give a little push as well. This Association is only as active and successful as our churches and our leadership. If you are already involved in Association leadership, then thank you! If you are not involved and you have gifts to share then I encourage you to become involved and see what else this Association can do! We are all a part of the body of Christ, but our churches and our Association can only function completely with all parts working together. If you are inspired to participate in any way in the Northwestern Association, please contact me and I will help you find the best way to share your gifts. My phone number is 712-477-2568 or you may email me: captainbiology@hotmail.com  
God's peace and blessings be with you—  
Kelly Volk

### ***Dates for Your Calendar!***

**June 13 & 14** is the Conference Annual Meeting in Grinnell.

**June 13** Tony Stoik will be installed as Associate Conference Minister for the Western part of the State.

**July 24-28** National Youth Event, Knoxville TN

**October 15 Deadline for NW Star News** It is not known at this time who the new editor will be. Please watch for announcements.

### ***Gleanings around the Association***

#### ***Transitions***

**Castana** has dissolved the yoke with St. Peters in Mapleton.

**Dennis Secrease** is serving as substitute interim at **Clarion**.

**Jim Cunningham** has been installed as pastor at **Eagle Grove**.

**Belmond** and **Klemme** have entered into shared ministry with each other. **Donna Buckman** was installed as pastor at Belmond.

**Howard Hunt** is leaving **Webster City** June 30.

#### ***Caring and Sharing***

**Fort Dodge** Membership Committee compiles a membership package that is taken to the local Chamber of Commerce to be distributed to newcomers to Fort Dodge. Included is a letter from the pastor and information about the church. They have set up a set of guidelines about bragging up the church to others without a home church.

The last one is: But mostly, tell them about our church family as a while – a wonderful group of people diverse in their backgrounds but with a commonality that makes us bond together in times of joy and sorrow, in times of prayer and uplifting. Tell them that we are a small congregation with lots of heart and arms long enough to embrace any and all who enter into our sanctuary.

**Webster City** held a “Bowl Event” to donate food and money to the local food bank. Bowls were set out around the social hall and members were challenged to donate more than previously. 343 items were gathered in as well as \$215.

#### ***Stewardship/Fundraising***

**First Congregational Sioux City** has an ongoing fundraiser selling donated books, CDs and movies on the Internet. Almost \$1000 was raised in 2007, with the money going to missions. Recycled packaging is used to ship the books.

**Humboldt** sold 15 cases (360 packages!) of pecans, netting a profit of \$869.07.

**Klemme** held a Specken Dicken Pancake Supper following the Annual Meeting with 3 different kinds of Specken Dicken pancakes, waffles, sausages and applesauce. 125 people were served and a profit of \$611 was realized for church ministry. (*Editor Note: What a delicious way to get people to come to the Annual Meeting!* )

**Sioux Rapids** made a Tree of Love to raise money for new carpeting for the church. Each heart on the tree represented a gift of one yard of carpeting (\$25.00.) Two \$1,000 challenge gifts were offered – if \$9,000 was raised by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Five for Five Churches!***

The following churches gave 5 for 5 in 2007, having contributed to OCWM, Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, Christmas Fund and Strengthen the Church Special Mission offerings:

**Akron, New Horizon**

**Belmond, UCC**

**Eagle Grove UCC**

**Hartley, Trinity UCC**

**Klemme, Immanuel Reformed UCC**

**Rock Rapids, Congregational**

**Sioux City, First Congregational**

**Sioux City, Mayflower Congregational**

### ***Ideas***

**Mayflower Sioux City** Wanda Meyer has begun a ministry of teaching crochet in the hour prior to church.

**Jewell** The Worship Committee would like to invite people who would be interested in visiting five different churches in Des Moines over a period of about five months. We would attend a different church each month. The Jewish service is on a Friday night, a couple of services are on Saturdays, and two are on Sundays. A specific schedule has not yet been worked out. We will car pool.

### ***Celebrate***

**Akron** held a “Leap Day Celebration” as they “Leapt” (not literally) into their new space – the other rental space in the Opera House.

**Mayflower Sioux City** Two members have their work published in the Tirabassi's BEFORE THE AMEN. Ken Wells (lay pastor at Onawa & Blencoe) has some poetic liturgy around the Transfiguration (pp. 46-47) and Roena Wamberg has a stewardship skit that has gone over very well at Mayflower (pp. 197-198).

### ***Prayer Request***

Please pray for *Jess Thomason*, as his wife *Darla* passed away the middle of May. Please continue to hold First Congregational **Lakeview** in your thoughts as they minister to Jess. Cards can be sent to Jess in care of the church:

Jess Thomason  
Lakeview UCC  
PO Box 17  
Lake View IA 51450

### ***Safe Church***

**First Congregational Sioux City** follows the Sioux City Schools safety measures of locking their doors during the day (except for meetings and controlled events.) People desiring entrance to the church can ring the doorbell to gain entrance. This policy not only protects the children, but also the staff. There have not been any incidents, but they are following safety concerns for everyone.

### ***Gems***

**Westside** I'm Glad this Church needs Money!

**I'M GLAD THIS CHURCH NEEDS MONEY!**

If it didn't, it would mean it wasn't supporting missionary and preaching the Gospel in other places.

**I'M GLAD THIS CHURCH NEEDS MONEY!**

If it didn't, it would mean it wasn't doing anything to support the homeless and needy.

**I'M GLAD THIS CHURCH NEEDS MONEY!**

If it didn't, it would mean it wasn't interested in providing wholesome activities for our teenagers.

**I'M GLAD THIS CHURCH NEEDS MONEY!**

The fact that it does means it had not forfeited its enthusiasm, compassion, evangelism, vision, expansion, concern and future. This church needs my gifts and I'm glad of it! I wouldn't want to be a member of any other kind. Anonymous

**Jewell** Why Go To Church? A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.(or Saturday) 'I've gone for 30 years now,' he wrote, 'and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think

I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all.'

This started a real controversy in the 'Letters to the Editor' column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

'I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals But I do know this.. They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!' When you are DOWN to nothing... God is UP to something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible! Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual nourishment!

**Newsletter Editor Needed:**

Please contact Kelly Volk: [captainbiology@hotmail.com](mailto:captainbiology@hotmail.com) if you are interested.

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