



first CHURCH



*the*  
**LIGHT**  
*newsletter*



February 2021

Volume 68, Issue 2

Page1

Worship Sundays at 10:30 AM Mabaan at 12:30 PM



"As members of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness?" "I will." Do you recognize those words? When you took your membership vows to become a United Methodist, the first thing you promised to do was to uphold the church with your prayers. As Christians prayer is an important part of our lives. It is so important that it is one of First Church's Pathways to Discipleship.



Prayer is not the process by which we get what we want from God, but rather the relationship in which God gets what God wants in and through us. Its purpose is to enable us to live in an intimate relationship with God so we can become agents of God's saving purpose in the world. So, how is your prayer life?

Former Iowa UM Bishop Rueben Job said "John Wesley knew that a life of prayer was not an accident or a natural consequence of just living. He was convinced that a life of prayer was the result of a determined and disciplined effort...without this disciplined effort, prayer would become secondary and our relationship with God left to suffocate under the cares and delights of this world." Is your relationship with God suffocating because you seldom go to God in prayer?

## A Twelve Week Journey

Because prayer is such an important part of our spiritual lives, Pastor Edgar and I are asking First Church members to take a 12 week journey with us as we seek to:

- develop our spiritual life.
- find God's direction in times of uncertainty.
- encounter God's will for our lives.
- prepare ourselves for the work to come of helping First Church find its purpose, mission and vision for the future.

Here are your opportunities to walk with us on this journey.

- Watch the sermon series on prayer (beginning February 14<sup>th</sup> on Facebook and YouTube).
- Use the prayer journal you will be receiving by mail. This journal has daily scriptures, a prayer for the week, a prayer practice and space to write your thoughts and insights.
- Monday – Friday you may join us on zoom or the phone as we share 15 minutes of prayer. You may join us at either 7:00 AM or 8:00 PM. Contact Lisa Karen at the church office if you would like to have the Zoom link. There will be a different link for the morning prayer time and the evening prayer time (so you may want to get both if you aren't sure when you can join) but each of those links will be the same for all 12 weeks.



If you will be joining us by phone at the **7:00 AM meeting**, here is the number to call: 1-312-626-6799. Here is the meeting ID to enter when prompted: 822 2438 7366.

If you will be joining us by phone at the **8:00 PM meeting**, here is the number to call: 1-312-626-6799. Here is the meeting ID to enter when prompted 813 6473 2779.

- Join a prayer group of three that will commit to gather on zoom or the telephone weekly to join in conversation and prayer for 30 minutes. To sign up to participate in a prayer group, you may send an email to Lisa Karen at [officemanager@dmfirstchurch.org](mailto:officemanager@dmfirstchurch.org) or call her at 244-6209 (between 8:00 AM and 12:00 PM). Please state your preference for zoom or phone. Each group will determine its own meeting time. **We are also looking for prayer group leaders. If you would like to lead a group, please contact Christine by February 8<sup>th</sup>. Information and resources will be provided.**
- The church sanctuary and chapel are not in use at this time. If you would like to come to the church to pray, the sanctuary and the chapel will be open from 8:00 AM to noon, Monday – Friday. Ring the “After Hours” buzzer to gain access.

**Important Note: The sermon series will be interrupted by Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. It will resume on Sunday, April 11. Also prayer groups and daily prayer time will not occur during Holy Week (March 29-April 2). Daily prayer time and groups will resume on April 5.**

John Wesley the founder of the Methodist movement once said to one of his lay preachers: “O begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises...Whether you like it or no, read and **pray daily**. It is for your life; there is no other way: else you will be a trifler all your days.”

Won't you join us on this journey? It will change your life!

*Christine*



### **Congratulations to Anthony Chouangmala**

Recently Anthony was made a member of the National Society of High School Scholars. He will be graduating from East High School this spring.

Way to go Anthony!



## **AMOS 2020 Organizing Successes**

As we all know, 2020 has been a trying year for many. While we look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead in 2021, we must first reflect upon the momentous wins that AMOS has achieved throughout 2020!

In the midst of a global pandemic and economic depression, AMOS has continued to develop leaders, strengthen community organizations, and advocate for the common good in Central Iowa.

### **Workforce**

- Within the first month of the pandemic, organized a virtual action and secured Iowa Workforce Development's commitment to hire 100 additional staff members to handle claim volume, improve their phone system, and expand resources in multiple languages for non-English speakers.
- Won \$5 million from CARES Act funding for job training to retrain un- and under-employed Iowans for high demand jobs.

### **Mental Health**

- Within a status-quo state budget, AMOS helped secure \$5 million in additional funding for Polk County mental health services. Hundreds of AMOS leaders contacted their legislators to share why mental health funding was important and met with legislators during two days at the Capitol in early 2020.

### **Food Insecurity and Emergency Housing**

- Helped raise over \$179,000 in emergency funds for Story County immigrants left out of federal stimulus and unemployment benefits.
- Secured 5 additional school meal sites at apartment complexes in the Des Moines metro area where many refugee families live.
- Pushed Story County Board of Health to create a plan to provide medical care for persons experiencing homelessness who contract COVID-19. Supported additional federal funding to ensure the county's homeless shelter and AMOS member The Bridge Home could continue to operate at full capacity.

### **Voter Engagement**

- In a virtual action with more than 200 AMOS leaders, secured commitments from 3 federal candidates to work with AMOS on the economic stability of families, childcare, and mental healthcare access.
- Reached 3,000 voters in a historically low-turnout precinct in Des Moines through literatures drops and phone banking. Registered 70 refugee community members with EMBARC to vote.

### Strengthening Institutions

- Organized thousands of relational phone calls to increase social connection and understand the pressures facing members of AMOS organizations.
- Engaged over 350 Central Iowans in small group conversations about the pressures impacting our families and communities through a virtual "Consider, Connect, and Create" listening campaign.

### Building Relational Power

- Welcomed 4 new dues-paying AMOS organizations: EMBARC, Project Iowa, Des Moines Mennonite Church, and Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance.
- Raised \$19,147 (11% of the budget) from 129 donors to support AMOS in addition to institutional dues.

What a year to be proud of! Thank you for all of your hard work and commitment to create a better life for those in Central Iowa.

[www.amosiowa.org](http://www.amosiowa.org)

[www.facebook.com/amosIAF/](https://www.facebook.com/amosIAF/)

<https://twitter.com/amosiowa>

*If you have questions or want more information regarding AMOS, please contact any member of the AMOS Core team at First Church:*

*Eloise Cranke (515-262-5974)      Jacque Coulson (515-279-2473)*

*Cyndi Grosing (515-480-6207)      Wanda Wendt (515-229-6399).*



### The Lone, Wild Bird (*The Faith We Sing*, No.2052)

The text of this American folk hymn was written by Henry Richard McFadyen (1877-1964), an ordained minister from North Carolina. In 1925, while McFadyen was serving the Nashville Presbytery, he wrote "The lone, wild fowl" for a national hymn-writing contest at

*The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*. He was awarded the third prize. That poem was set to the tune PROSPECT from William Walker's *The Southern Harmony* (1835) later with a few changes.

*The lone, wild bird in lofty flight is still with thee, nor leaves thy sight.*

*And I am thine! I rest in thee, Great Spirit, come, and rest in me.*

*The ends of earth are in thy hand, the sea's dark deep and far-off land.*

*And I am thine! I rest in thee, Great Spirit, come, and rest in me.*

The imagery in this hymn reminds one of Psalm 139:9-10. "If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, and your right hand will hold me fast."

"The Lone, Wild Bird", a gentle song to hum along in times of need. When life is challenging or difficult, God is with us.

Watch the First Church Chamber Singers sing a rendition of this hymn at the worship service on January 17, 2021 - <https://www.facebook.com/DSMFirstChurch/videos/400245304407886/>

Article submitted by Tin-Shi Tam, Director of Music Ministry



**First United Methodist Church**  
1001 Pleasant Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
(515) 244-6209  
DMFirstChurch.org

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
DES MOINES, IA  
PERMIT NO. 4308

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**DEADLINE FOR FUTURE LIGHT ISSUES IS THE 20<sup>TH</sup> OF EACH MONTH**

### **February 14 is CWS Blanket Sunday**



Everything seems better when you are wrapped up snug in a blanket . . . just like a big hug!! That is why it is hard for us to imagine that a blanket may be all that someone has. To victims of disaster, refugees, and the homeless, a blanket will not only keep you warm, it may also provide shelter, a place to sleep, a pillow to rest on, and a way to collect and carry your belongings. Church World Service provides thousands of blankets each year all around the world and we can help make this possible. A blanket is only **\$10** but the love it shows is priceless! Our annual Blanket Sunday is February 14 but donations will be collected throughout the month of February through on-line giving ([www.DMFirstChurch.org](http://www.DMFirstChurch.org)) or designate 'blankets' on your check. Why not give several and help blanket the world with love!