

Prayers

Gordon Thompson (past member), who died recently; *Charlene Wozny*, recovering from knee surgery; *Will Kennedy* recently hospitalized; all the doctors, nurses, health care professionals, and first responders, as well as medical researchers, who are all working hard to keep us healthy!

Joys

It's officially spring!

Update

Did you know that you no longer need a key to operate the church **elevator**? Now the call buttons at each floor work without a key!

Grocery-Getters

If you are unable to get the store right now for groceries, or other supplies, please call the church office. We have designated **WEDNESDAY** as **shopping day** and have staff and FirstYOUTH volunteers at the ready to do your shopping and deliver it to you. Please plan to have a reasonable list ready when you call or email. We will try to fill as many requests as possible, but your patience is appreciated as we try to implement this new service for you!

Other Little Projects

If you seem to find yourself with time on your hands, and are willing to work by yourself, there are several one-person projects at the church that could fill an afternoon or morning. Someone is always here to let you into the building, and safely give you guidance on what might need to be done. Call or email Sara!

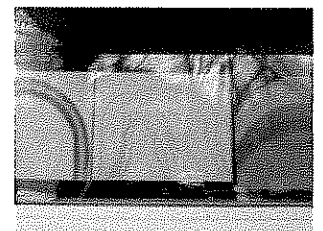
Build Relationships:

Congregational Care News

If you find yourself at home and feeling a little cooped up, grab your church directory or open the Fellowship One app on your phone (because, you totally downloaded that, right??) and pick a name and dial up their number! Staying connected with those you know - or those you want to know better - is good for both of you!

Online Devotionals

In our continued effort **To Be More...Connected** during this overwhelming time, the pastoral staff has started creating short video devotionals and meditations. If you have not joined our Facebook Group Page, please consider doing so. We will post these videos there several times a week. Please feel free to share them with others in your social network!



Thanks for showing us the rainbows you created last Sunday! Did you know there is a global movement right now to show off a rainbow in your window?

From the Health Team

Bonnie Harmon

As chair of our Health Team, I have been receiving many emails, from several great sources, about how to help people combat the stress of isolation related to Covid-19 response. There is so much information out there right now, it can almost be more overwhelming than the virus itself! As an RN and the former Supervisor of Epidemiology and Communicable Disease for Douglas County Health Department, I developed a special interest and a certain amount of expertise in epidemics, how they develop, and effective response.

We all know that we have a heightened awareness when we consider how to limit our contact with other people and groups. We are concerned not only about protecting ourselves, but we want to protect other more vulnerable people, as well. Even if we are not officially quarantined, using good judgement and following public health guidelines can increase our isolation and anxiety.

The United Church of Christ Mental Health Network has offered some excellent suggestions and guidelines. I'd like to share some of these suggestions with you, and hear back about what gives you comfort and solace at this time.

First, as a faith community, we know prayer can be one of the most comforting and empowering things we can do during a crisis. Praying for people that we know are hurting and for the world at large can give us a sense of doing more than we usually feel we can as one person.

Next, we do need to acknowledge our own feelings of anxiety, powerlessness and fear. All of those are natural when we feel so out of control. We are not alone in those feelings and can help others know they are not alone, simply by acknowledging them and sharing how we are working them through.

It can be very comforting to others just to know you are there for them, or you need them to be there for you simply by reaching out by phone, skype, or facetime. I've made some calls, thinking I was checking in on someone who is struggling and instead found support coming back for me. In some

cases, you might have technical skills to help someone to access these platforms. Or maybe they can help you! Either way, you'll be surprised how uplifting a simple phone connection can be right now.

If you've got a lot of time on your hands, call the church office and ask for a list of our most vulnerable members – those who were shut in before we all had to be! Sara is more than happy to give you a few names to call while you have time. Or, if you are at home with the kids, how about making some cards or pictures and dropping them in the mail to some of your First Central friends just to let them know you are thinking about them.

If you or someone in your house is suffering with anxiety and other mental health issues right now, please know that you are not alone. Let us know, we'll listen and help you find appropriate resources. We've compiled an extensive list of those available resources – of all types – and we suggest that you keep them handy during these ever-changing, chaotic time.

In the meantime, take care of one another, get outside and get some fresh air. Spring is still happening around us so don't lose site of the new life bursting out across the landscape. Take a walk, find the bike in the back of the garage, or pull a few weeds from that flower bed. You'll be amazed how Mother Nature helps calm you and give you fresh focus.

Stay well,
Bonnie





Like everything else, we've had to rethink the way we do ministry with kids in this current time of plague!

In addition to Children's time during the worship services, we will be meeting **every Sunday at 1 pm via Zoom** to read stories, make a craft, and talk about what is going on in their lives!



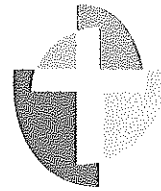
During social distancing, the youths will be meeting **Wednesday nights at 8 pm via Zoom**. We will still likely talk about defending against the dark arts, as we need that now more than ever!

We also hope to schedule some Netflix watch along parties, so that we can all watch a movie together from the comfort and safety of our own homes.

Wednesday Church Nights

We will now be meeting on **Zoom**. The Adult class is continuing looking at the Wisdom Books. The youth class is spending Lent discussing a very Lent-appropriate topic: GRIEF, as through the lens of Harry Potter and some of our other great fantasy fandom classics!

ADULTS: 3 pm
YOUTH: 7 pm
PreK/K: TBD



FIRST FORUM
Adult Education
Third Floor Parlor 9:15 - 10:15 AM
Childcare available in the 1st Floor Nursery

Due to the current restrictions on groups meeting, First Forum is temporarily suspended. Adults are encouraged to join the Wednesday afternoon zoom Bible Study. For more information on the zoom meetings, please contact the office.

SUMMER 2020

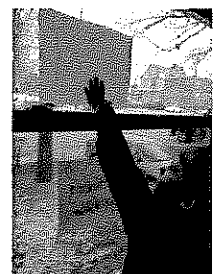
KAMP KALEO

- May 26-29** Adventures in Community
- June 7-11** Junior Kamp
- June 14-19** Middle School Kamp
- June 22-25** Kayak Quest
- July 10-12** Little Kampers
- July 12-17** Senior High - FAFA

As of right now (March 26th) the camping season is still on. That may change, however. If you are interested in attending or assisting with our Nebraska UCC/DOC summer camping program, please contact Katie at the church - katie@firstcentral.org

Pass the Peace!

As we think about gathering for worship "virtually" for the time being, Pastor Katie suggested last week that we all make a picture to hang in the window as a way of passing the peace. Then please post your photo to our FaceBook page!



Sunday Mornings

All on hold until further notice

- 9:00 Coffee in the Parlor
- 9:15 First Forum (Adult Education), 3rd floor
- 9:15 Nursery Care to 11:45 a.m.
- 10:30 Service of Worship
FIRSTKids (church
school for Pre-K – 5th grade)
unless otherwise stated
- 11:30 Coffee Hour, Parlor

next newsletter deadline

Thursday, April 26th

officeadministrator@firstcentral.org

Week of April 5

Palm Sunday, April 5

YouTube On-line worship, 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School for kids through 6th grade,
1 p.m. on Zoom

Monday, April 6

Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m., Pastor's Study
Stewardship and Capital Campaign Committees,
7 p.m. on Zoom

Tuesday, April 7

Eves, 7 p.m. on Zoom

Wednesday, April 8

Bible study on Zoom, 3 p.m.
FirstYouth on Zoom, 8 p.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 9

Good Friday, April 10

Week of April 12

Easter Sunday, April 12

YouTube On-line worship, 10:30 a.m.
Zoom Sunday School for kids through 6th grade,
1 p.m.

Monday, April 13

Easter Monday, office closed.

Tuesday, April 14

Council, 7 p.m. on Zoom

Wednesday, April 15

Bible study on Zoom, 3 p.m.
FirstYouth on Zoom, 8 p.m.

Week of April 19

Sunday, April 19

YouTube On-line worship, 10:30 a.m.
Zoom Sunday School for kids through 6th grade,
1 p.m.

Monday, April 20

Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m., Pastor's Study

Wednesday, April 22

Bible study on Zoom, 3 p.m.
FirstYouth on Zoom, 8 p.m.

Week of April 26

Sunday, April 26

YouTube On-line worship, 10:30 a.m.
Zoom Sunday School for kids through 6th grade,
1 p.m.

Monday, April 27

Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m., Pastor's Study

Wednesday, April 29

Bible study on Zoom, 3 p.m.
FirstYouth on Zoom, 8 p.m.

Please send address changes to:
First Central Congregational Church
421 S. 36th St
Omaha, NE 68131.