



## Prayers

*Renee Jizba* and *Renee Crosby*, on the death of their mother, *Vida Crosby*; the family of *Becky Aschinger*, who died last week; the family of *Linda Livingston*, who died last week; the family of *John Rexilius*, past member, who died recently.

## Joys

Sharon Heater, celebrating the birth of her first grandchild, Amelia Grace! The tulips in front of the church are blooming, thanks to *Creighton Novacek*!

## Love in Action

In spite of having only a few weeks together during Lent, the Food Drive organized by our FirstKids resulted in 72 items being delivered to our friends at First Lutheran Food Pantry. Special thanks to *Justin Lowndes*, along with *Virgil* and *Dorothy*, for making the delivery last week! Don't forget that now more than ever, food pantry donations are needed. Donations can always be dropped by the church during office hours, or checks can be mailed anytime (just designate "food pantry" on the memo line).

## Your Gifts Matter

We recently received news that *Jon Baade's* estate left First Central a very lovely, and somewhat substantial monetary gift. It was decided at the Council meeting this month to move those dollars into the reserve fund in case we need it later this year.

Again, we did finish the first financial quarter of 2020 with most pledges up-to-date, but here's a friendly reminder of ways you can continue to give to First Central:

- You can use the DONATE button in ANY Sunday emails you receive each week;
- You can go to the website and use the giving link there;
- You can use the new FellowshipOne GO app on your phone; (bet you didn't know that!)

- You can set up a direct deposit to First Central with your bank or financial institution;
- And of course, you can still mail a check to the church at anytime!

If you would like to speak to someone about including First Central in your planned giving arrangements, just let us know. Thank you for your continued generosity!

## Special Offering Request

The COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis has made personal finances precarious for many, including UCC clergy. The *UCC Christmas Fund for Veterans of the Cross* provides direct financial assistance to both retired ministers and ministers experiencing financial difficulties. Please consider sending in an offering for this fund if your situation allows.

## Plant Sale!

The Annual Plant Sale is coming up soon! Watch for details as we work out the social-distancing logistics of bringing you beautiful seedlings for your gardens!

## Refugee Team Update

*Pat Lamberty*

I delivered a check for \$1000.00 this morning to the family for their rent and utilities. Mobark started a new job this week at a plastics firm that makes dishes as well as builds cupboards and outdoor. Thanks to all of you that helped with this.

## Opening Up

The Council met this week to discuss a timeline for opening up the church again. After reviewing recommendations from our resident epidemiologist, *Bonnie Harmon*, it was decided to continue to hold worship online through May. All educational activities will continue on Zoom for the time being.

### Dragging Main

Recently I watched my Facebook feed fill up with pictures and posts from high school friends who still live in my hometown of Miami, Oklahoma who were dragging Main Street. Back when we were in high school in the early 1990's we participated in what at that point was a decades-old tradition in our small town of 15,000 but which soon came to an end. We dragged Main Street on Fridays and Saturdays. Because we were one of the last towns to still do this, people would drive from throughout the region and there would often be so many cars lined up that it was almost impossible to cross main going east or west.

I remember the routine vividly and fondly. At the south end you'd turn around just past the main business district. On the north end you turned around at the Civic Center where at least once in the evening you had to stop in the parking lot to chat. Also at least once in the evening you had to turn around at the Sonic, where you grabbed Route 44 pops, of course. Talking through open windows to passing cars was required. As was moving from one car to another at some point in the evening.

At the time I drove a baby blue 1978 Pontiac Bonneville. I think eight people is the highest number I ever got in the car (road safety rules were much more relaxed and ignored in those days).

Well, due to quarantine, a bunch of middle-aged Miamians decided it was a good time to restart and old tradition because it could afford a chance to socialize with everyone staying in their own cars. The pictures were fun to watch and made me wish I could be there with old friends.

I've since seen reports that this tradition is re-emerging in other small towns.

For all the depredations and losses and griefs of the current crisis, there are these fun little things that help to maintain our dignity and our humanity.

Peace,  
**Scott**

### Ministry Support News

"While you were away..." Even though many of you haven't been by the church these days, there ARE still lots of things going on! Bids are being secured to have some more tuck-pointing done this summer. Several companies have been by to give us ideas and bids on how to repair (at least part of) the patio. And last week new heaters were being installed in the glass (36th Street) entry! Progress!

### United Church News

For the safety and well-being of our congregations and communities in the midst of this ever-changing pandemic, **all three of our conferences** - Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota - have decided to **postpone annual meetings** until the Fall.

### From the Office

*Sara Sharpe*

I will be working from home beginning **April 30<sup>th</sup>** until at least **May 18<sup>th</sup>**. Lizzie will be induced on May 14<sup>th</sup>, and we will need to help care for Kate. For us to be able to help my daughter and her family, Dave and I need to be in isolation for 2 weeks before we can be with them. Please continue to call (my cell is best) or email, and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

### FCC Finance Update

During these uncertain times, the Finance Committee and Council have reviewed and discussed our financial position and are making sure we can weather the storm economically.

- While our income has declined for plate contributions and building use rentals, members have maintained their pledge support, which is on track with budget through the first quarter of the year. Thank you for your continued support!
- We were alerted by the Nebraska Conference that churches are eligible under the Payroll Preservation Program (PPP) offering loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA) to help cover payroll and utility costs. We have applied for and received a PPP loan from the SBA for \$52,000, which we anticipate will be forgivable since we plan to maintain our current staffing.
- We have strong reserves! A gift of \$34,000 was recently received from the **Jon Baade** estate. Council allocated \$2,000 to the FCC Foundation for the columbarium and the balance to the Reserve Fund bringing its total to \$107,000. The Capital Fund balance is \$127,000 and we are continuing projects budgeted for the glass entrance on 36<sup>th</sup> Street and tuckpointing to prevent leaks.

Through your support we continue to carry out the various programs and ministries of the church!

If you have financial questions or suggestions, please contact **Lamar Jones**, Treasurer, at **LJones7660@gmail.com** or 402.201.1158.



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 other activities, and possibly some social distance hiking so that we can have some time together.

## 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: 8 pm  
PreK/K: TBD



## FIRST FORUM Adult Education

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

\*\*FIRSTForum has moved ONLINE!  
Sundays at 3 pm via Zoom!

Sundays 3 pm:

### THE WORLD OF BIBLICAL ISRAEL

Have you ever thought of coming to First Central's adult ed program, First Forum, but didn't want to get up so early on a Sunday morning? Well, now is your chance! We're starting a new series on The World of Biblical Israel. We'll be holding it over Zoom, so you can attend from the comfort of your home, and we've scheduled it for the civilized hour of 3:00 pm on Sunday afternoon. We'll watch videos by biblical studies professor *Cynthia Chapman*, and we'll talk with one another about our reactions to the information she presents—all through the magic of Zoom. (If you haven't used Zoom before, call *Deb Kirwan* (402-556-0811) before the first class, and she'll help you get set up.)

Here's the link to join the class at 3:00 pm, Sunday, April 26:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83878875290?pwd=ZW9OdU0yekVZOGVUWkxGa2VBbUNndz09>

SUMMER 2020

## KAMP KALEO

June 7-11 Junior Kamp

June 14-19 Middle School Kamp

July 10-12 Little Kampers

July 12-17 Senior High - FAFA

At the March Nebraska Youth and Outdoor Ministry Committee (YOMC) meeting, it was decided that moving forward with the camping season at Kaleo was too risky, so there will be no in person camp this summer. However the YOMC board is working on plans for summer online camp, potentially to follow the same schedule as above. If you have questions or are interested, please contact Katie at the church.

## Sunday Mornings

*All on hold until further notice*

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

next newsletter deadline

Thursday, April 26th

[officeadministrator@firstcentral.org](mailto:officeadministrator@firstcentral.org)

*Please keep in mind that there may be additions  
or deletions to any activities. At this time,  
we are unsure of what health directives may be as  
we enter May.*

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

## Week of May 3

### Sunday, May 3

YouTube On-line worship, 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday School for kids through 6<sup>th</sup> grade,  
1 p.m. on Zoom  
First Forum, 3 p.m. on Zoom

### Monday, May 4

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

### Wednesday, May 6

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

### Saturday, May 9

Plant Sale? Time TBD.

## Week of May 10

### Sunday, May 10

YouTube On-line worship, 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday School for kids through 6<sup>th</sup> grade,  
1 p.m. on Zoom  
First Forum, 3 p.m. on Zoom

### Monday, May 11

Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m., Pastor's Study  
Eves, 7 p.m., Zoom

### Tuesday, May 12

Council, 7 p.m. on Zoom

### Wednesday, April 15

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

### Thursday, May 14

Book Club, 7 p.m., Zoom

## Week of May 17

### Sunday, May 17

YouTube On-line worship, 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday School for kids through 6<sup>th</sup> grade,  
1 p.m. on Zoom  
First Forum, 3 p.m. on Zoom

### Monday, May 18

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

### Wednesday, May 20

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

### Thursday, May 21

Ministry Support, 7 p.m., Zoom

## Week of May 24

### Sunday, April 26

YouTube On-line worship, 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday School for kids through 6<sup>th</sup> grade,  
1 p.m. on Zoom  
First Forum, 3 p.m. on Zoom

### Monday, May 25

Memorial Day, office closed.