



**First Central
Congregational**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Congregationalist

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June 29, 2020

Prayers

Kendra DelaCadena, whose grandmother died last week; **Jim Harmon**, recovering from a broken wrist; **Daryl** and **Sarah Malena**, on the death of **Audrey Malena**.

We have developed a survey of congregants that explores your thoughts and opinions. This will be primarily an online survey, but there is a hard copy version within this newsletter. Please fill it out as soon as you are able, and mail it to the church.

Joys

John Hill, celebrating his 100th birthday on July 19th – cards appreciated (4227 E. Palo Brea Ln. Cave Creek, AZ 85331)! A task force is being formed to guide reopening the church. **Aby (Gross) & Nik Bauer**, celebrating the birth of **Huxton Nikolaus Bauer** – proud grandparents are **Rita & Tina Grossenstein**, and **Uncle Alex Gross**!

Zoom Surprise!

Deb Kirwan will host us on Zoom on Monday, **July 6th**, at 7 p.m. She is looking for some Zoom entertainment – like a game or a scavenger hunt, and will surprise us with what she comes up with. Pressure's on, Deb!

Meet the Re-Opening Task Force

Our reopening task force met for the first time on Wednesday, June 17. The members are **Lyn Bouma, Stephen Bouma, Michael Cich-Jones, Laura Grams, Bonnie Harmon, Scott Jones, Laura Mitchell, Phil Smith, and Scott Sumpter**. We began with each person talking about what professional resources and expertise they bring to the conversation. The main task before the group is to develop what the protocols for reopening will look like, particularly for worship, though we do not yet have a date for when that will be. The health professionals in the group believe it is possible to carry out worship with relatively low risk, not zero risk, if we follow safety protocols well and take our time.

Re-Creation: Summer Worship Series

"What is given at the beginning challenges man to the self-transformations that will allow him, in spite of everything, to stand in the presence of God."—
Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg

This summer at First Central our worship will draw from the stories of the Book of Genesis. These familiar stories of Adam & Eve, Noah's Ark, Abraham & Sarah invite us to focus on issues of creation and the environment, the effects of sin, violence, and division on humanity, living faithfully in catastrophe, and seeking a blessed life. Together we will explore how we are invited to participate in God's acts of re-creation.

Our new series began on **Sunday, June 7** with the account of Creation in Genesis chapter 1.

Join us online.

Katie's Musings: Covid Time

I think the weirdest thing about COVID life is the passage of time. June is almost gone. But May was only yesterday. Remember the Australian wildfires?

No?

Don't blame you, that was 5 years... no, I mean, 5ish months ago.

I'm pretty sure the summer is going to swoosh by, fleeting and unfulfilling.

But it's also going to slog on, blistering and relentless.

Pandemic time is weird.

And yet, all around us things are returning to normal.

Stores are opening. People are seeing friends and getting hugs again.

I did a wedding last week. Normal. ... you know, except for the fact that everything, every action, every movement is a game of risk-mitigation. Of calculating how much time to spend in a place to avoid the COVID. Of finding the place to sit at the oil change place that will present the least amount of risk due to airflow. Of reconfiguring special awareness for the 6 foot rule, moving through the world in a dance. Shopping now reminds me of an acting exercise, where you can go anywhere in the space you want as long as you stay 6 feet from everyone.

Pandemic everything is weird.

I can't shake the feeling that literally everything has changed. Is changing. The way we move in the world, sure. But also the way we interact, the way we relate to one another, the way we view ourselves and others within the world. And I don't know that much of this change is actually avoidable. Or should be avoidable. Or reversible, really, whenever it is that we reach that hallowed, mythical moment of "all clear!"

Pandemic everything is weird, and it's also laid bare all the systems that don't work. Systems that have never worked. Systems that have benefited some but been to the detriment of others. Systems built out of convenience and comfort for the privileged and not out of compassion or equity. And now we are being forced to look at them and rethink how they work and change... and change is never easy. It is, however, necessary.

So.

Would all this change be better if we hadn't been forced? Would all this change be easier to digest if it had come gradually?

Would all this change even be happening if it hadn't been forced and abrupt?

I don't know. Maybe. Maybe not.

I do know... pandemic time is weird.

Connect With Others:

Community News and Events

Save The Date: For the safety of all of our congregations and communities, the Iowa and Nebraska Conferences of the UCC will be meeting jointly on **October 17th, 2020** for the first time ever on a completely digital platform. Stay tuned for details!

In spite of the loosening of restrictions during the pandemic, the **Food Bank of the Heartland** is still in urgent need of VOLUNTEERS to help with food distribution. If you can help, sign up to work a few shifts with your friends or family.

Wednesday Night Vespers

Join **Pastor Katie Miller** and her guitar on Wednesdays at 8:00 for her weekly fireside vesper service! It will be streaming live to our Facebook Group page (that's the private/closed page), as well as on Katie's personal FB page. It will still be posted in the coming days so you can catch it later if you miss the live version!



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

Please check out our FIRSTKids YouTube Channel for our Quarantine series...

SUNDAY SUMMER CAMP

FAMILY HIKING DAY

July 11, 9 am

Hitchcock Nature Preserve

Bring bug spray, water, sunscreen, hat, masks, and a snack/lunch for afterwards. We will meet at the Lodge in the preserve!

VIRTUAL VBS

COMING SOON!

Tentatively July 20-24, 10 am
A Zoom/YouTube combo experience!



During social distancing, the youths will be meeting every other Sunday via Zoom for games and fellowship and discussion, and are looking to add some more outdoor in-person gatherings.

Sunday night Zooms:

July 12 & 26

August 9 & 23



FIRSTForum will be taking a summertime hiatus for the month of July, to resume (likely online via Zoom) at the beginning of August. If you have questions or Forum suggestions, please forward them to the church or education@firstcentral.org.

KAMP KALEO UPDATE

In lieu of in-person summer camp, the Youth and Outdoor Ministry Committee of the UCC and DOC in Nebraska are working on

FREE VIRTUAL SUMMER CAMP!

It won't be the same, but it will hopefully bring a little bit of camp into your homes, using a combination of YouTube videos and a written curriculum/daily schedule to follow.

As soon as the program is available, we will send out the information and registration. For more info, please contact Katie at the church: katie@firstcentral.org.

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

*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 July.*

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

Week of July 5

Sunday, July 5

Parking Lot in car/YouTube On-line worship, 9a.m.

Monday, July 6

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

Wednesday, July 8

Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

Thursday, July 9

Book Club on Zoom

Saturday, July 11

Family Hike, 9 a.m., Hitchcock

Week of July 12

Sunday, July 12

YouTube online worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, July 13

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

Tuesday, July 14

Council, 7 p.m., Zoom

Wednesday, July 15

Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

Week of July 19

Sunday, July 19

YouTube online worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, July 20

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

Wednesday, July 22

Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

Week of July 26

Sunday, July 26

YouTube online worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, July 27

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

Wednesday, July 29

Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live