



**First Central  
Congregational**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## The Congregationalist

Volume 25, Issue 2

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

September 28, 2020

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### Prayers

*John Schleicher*, who died recently; the *Lamberty Family*, on the death of *Dr. Leland Lamberty*; *Jenny Pfeifer*, continuing to recover from surgery; *Bud Cassidy*, out of ICU and now in rehab.

### Joys

*Mubarak & Hawa Khamis*, along with big sister *Jannat*, celebrating the birth of baby girl *Jihan*! *Mark & Lennie Jefferson*, celebrating their 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary! *Dave Shipley & Pat Miller*, celebrating their recent wedding; *Megan & Lee Holmstedt*, celebrating the birth of *Madeleine Grace Holmstedt* – proud grandparents are *Vic & Jan Kensler*! *Jeannie Bates*, celebrating the birth of twin great-nephews, *Nathan & Ian Olson*! *Nancy Dugan*, celebrating the birth of a great-nephew!

### Gospel Encounters: Fall Worship Theme

*"The encounter with people who are different from others, in whose lives you can see a new intelligence about reality, a fully awakened desire, a tireless initiative, a capacity for tenderness, an embrace full of intensity, and freedom normally impossible to find elsewhere, leaves no one indifferent."* –Julian Carron

This fall our worship will turn its attention to stories of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. *What happens when we encounter Jesus?* The encounter with Jesus should evoke wonder in us, leading to our own desire to live like that. And Christian life, then, isn't centrally about either belief or ethics but living in such a way that evokes wonder in those who encounter us.

*Gospel Encounters* await us this fall in worship, online or in person.

### Hymn Sing

Minister of Music *Stephen Bouma* has an old-fashioned hymn sing planned for Sunday evening **October 4<sup>th</sup>** at 7 p.m. (Virtually, online, of course.) Watch your email for the log-in details, but in the meantime, please start thinking about your favorite hymns and email your request to [Stephen@firstcentral.org](mailto:Stephen@firstcentral.org) by Friday morning, **October 2<sup>nd</sup>**.

### EverGreen ReOpens

With the slow but steady decline in active COVID-19 cases in the metro, representatives from the EverGreen Thrift Shop presented a reopening plan to the General Council last week. Plexiglass barriers will be put around the cash register, as well as a long list of other changes to keep both customers and volunteers safe. With the Council's approval work will now get underway with the hopes of reopening sometime in early October!

### Eves

Well, it won't be our usual Oktoberfest ... but we'll give it a try. Join us on Monday, **October 12** at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Come prepared to share a beer-related story, and tell us about your favorite beer (or least favorite). You'll have to play your own polka music!

### Semi-Annual Meeting

Immediately following worship on **October 25<sup>th</sup>** we will hold our Semi-Annual Meeting. It will also be held in our on-line Coffee Hour, hosted by *Deb Kirwan*, so those at home can participate. Come and hear about the plans for next year.

## **An Interview with: Lou Lamberty**

***Kerrie Kleppin Winn***

Lou, our acting financial aficionado for years, is hanging up his clipboard after nearly two decades on the job. Before he officially retires, we thought we'd ask him a few questions.

**Kerrie:** When did you join First Central?

**Lou:** Pat and I joined the church in 1967.

**Kerrie:** Other than Finance Guy, have you held other roles in the church's leadership?

**Lou:** I have chaired the Trustees and Music Committee at various times.

**Kerrie:** When did you start working with the finances? And why?

**Lou:** One sunny afternoon on Oct 18, 2004, (but who's keeping track?) I received a distress call from our pastor, Winston Baldwin. "June just died," he said, "what are we going to do?" He was referring to June Cook, our longtime financial secretary, who had fallen down some steps on the way back from lunch, hit her head and died. Winston was calling me because I was chair of the Trustees at the time. June was kind of secretive about her work, so no one really knew what she did, except that every month we got some financial reports. So, I called Gary McConnell who is an accountant and together we figured out how to count the money, pay the bills, operate the accounting software and produce reports. All was going well until Gary announced to me early in Dec that he and Kathy were leaving for their annual three months in Hawaii. Now I was stuck with the entire job myself and I've done it ever since.

**Kerrie:** That's what happens around here when you're good at something.

Can you tell me about a time when, as finance guy, that you thought the church was REALLY in trouble.... and how did it turn out?

**Lou:** The most recent that comes to mind was just a few years ago when you were moderator. We came very close to running out of cash and I went to the Church Council and urged them to quit spending. They complied, you wrote a masterful letter to the Congregation asking for year-end contributions, the congregation responded wonderfully and we actually ended the year in the black.

**Kerrie:** Wow, I remember that. But I had no idea that the situation was that dire.

**Lou:** Well, almost every year is a miracle. Our budget looks awful along about November, we send out a letter asking for year-end contributions and almost every year we end up in the black. But that year, for some reason, sticks in my mind as especially miraculous.

**Kerrie:** What are you most looking forward to now that you are transitioning out of this job?

**Lou:** I absolutely won't lose any more sleep about church finances!

**Kerrie:** And speaking of the transition, who is going to be replacing you? Are you passing on the checkbook?

**Lou:** Bonnie Austin and Barb Switzer are working together to learn the software and the processes we've been using. I'm confident I'm leaving everything in exceptionally capable hands.

## **Ministry Support News**

At the most recent meeting of the Ministry Support Team, a list of all of the completed projects around the church was reviewed. The projects include: the patio resurfacing and plumbing and drain repairs, new AC units in the glass entry, some tuck pointing, repairs to concrete and sidewalks, as well as repairs to several sections of plaster (and new paint) in the sanctuary! It takes a crew to keep our building beautiful!

## **Brave Spaces**

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Knowing that God is indeed still speaking, the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences' Boards of Directors have been reflecting on why we are Church in this time and place. After we listened to stories, engaged in prayer, held sacred the past, and looked to the future, the words became clear. We are Church to most fully express God's extravagant welcome and to advocate for justice, so that all people may know love, safety, belonging, and dignity.

We believe God is calling us to bold, prophetic, public, and invitational ministry that fosters Brave Spaces and transformation in our Conferences and congregations. We have discerned that God is calling our Conferences to two related commitments: first, to continue our efforts to affirm and celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people (LGBTQ+) in the full life and ministry of our Conferences; and, second, to deepen our collective and ongoing work of identifying, understanding, and dismantling racism in our society, our Church, and ourselves. We invite congregations to join us in this work as well.

With hope for our future together,

***The Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Boards of Directors***



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

## FIRSTKids at HOME: STORYTIME

Join Pastor Katie for YouTube Sunday school, in which we will be discussing some classic and not-so-classic Bible stories and how they relate to our pandemic lives!

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### First Central (socially distant) **TRUNK OR TREAT** Wednesday, October 28 5:30 pm, Church Parking Lot

Trick or Treating may be up in the air for folks but join us at church for some (masked, socially distant candy delivery) trunk-or-treat fun!

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**\*COMING SOON\***  
Once-A-Month

### FIRSTKids IN PERSON!

At the moment, we are working on a plan to have FIRSTKids during worship once a month, observing social distancing measures and traffic flow in Memorial Hall or on the Patio. Keep an eye on your email for the schedule and more information!

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*\*Note: As we begin to attempt some in-person activities, we are aware that different individual families are at different comfort levels with Covid exposure. We will do our best to include online participants in all in-person activities. If you and your family aren't ready for in-person activities yet, we absolutely understand and will do our best to make sure all are included!*

- Pastor Katie



During the fall and social distancing, the youths will be meeting on **Sundays @ 8 pm via Zoom** for games and fellowship and discussion, and are looking to add some more outdoor in-person gatherings.



In his book, *The Christian Imagination*, theologian Willie James Jennings argues that modern, Western Christianity has a "diseased social imagination," because of the way racism has poisoned Christianity for the last five centuries. If so, how do we liberate ourselves? How can contemporary black theology aid in the work of anti-racism?

For three weeks, beginning on **Wednesday, September 30 @ 5:30 PM on Zoom**, **Senior Minister Scott Jones** will lead an Adult Ed class exploring **Race & Liberation: Contemporary Black Theology**.

**September 30** - Breaking Ground: Black Liberation and Womanist Theology

**October 7** - Racism & Christian Theology

**October 14** - Making a Way: Recent Developments in Womanist Theology

## VESPERS

**Wednesdays, 8:00 pm**  
**On Facebook Live**

Join Rev. Katie for a simple midweek service of song, prayer, scripture, and reflection, hosted by church families and friends in the area.

## Week of October 4

### Sunday, October 4

In-person worship, 10:30 a.m.  
YouTube online worship, 10:30 a.m.  
Hymn Sing, 7 p.m., Zoom  
FirstYouth, 8 p.m., Zoom

### Monday, October 5

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

### Wednesday, October 7

Adult Education, 5:45 p.m., Zoom  
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, October 8

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

### Saturday, October 10

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

## Week of October 11

### Sunday, October 11

In-person worship, 10:30 a.m.  
YouTube online worship, 10:30 a.m.  
FirstYouth, 8 p.m., Zoom

### Monday, October 12

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

### Tuesday, October 13

Council, 7 p.m., Zoom

### Wednesday, October 14

Adult Education, 5:45 p.m., Zoom  
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, October 15

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

### Friday, October 16

Memorial Service for Becky Aschinger,  
11 a.m., Sanctuary

### Saturday, October 17

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

## Week of October 18

### Sunday, October 18

In-person worship, 10:30 a.m.  
YouTube online worship, 10:30 a.m.  
FirstYouth, 8 p.m., Zoom

### Monday, October 19

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

### Wednesday, October 21

Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, October 22

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

### Saturday, October 24

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

## Week of October 25

### Sunday, October 25

In-person worship, 10:30 a.m.  
YouTube online worship, 10:30 a.m.  
Semi-Annual Meeting, immediately following  
worship. Also on Zoom.

FirstYouth, 8 p.m., Zoom

### Monday, October 26

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

### Wednesday, October 28

Trunk-or-Treat, 5:30 p.m., back parking lot  
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, October 29

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

### Saturday, October 31

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

## Week of October 25

### Sunday, October 25

In-person worship, 10:30 a.m.  
YouTube online worship, 10:30 a.m.

### Monday, October 26

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

### Wednesday, October 28

Adult Education, 5:45 p.m., Zoom  
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, October 29

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

### Saturday, October 31

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



First Central gratefully acknowledges  
memorials and gifts given from  
February 2020 – August 2020

IN MEMORY OF HONOR OF

*Greta Jones*

*Joan Eddy*

*Becky Aschinger*

*Maralee Jensen (in honor of)*

*Stanley Jensen*

*William Bahnke*

*Becky Aschinger*

DONOR

Pete Peterson  
Chris & Adam Steffen

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Marcy Peterson  
Susie Westerholm

Mary & Pat Connolly and  
Family

Laura & Matt Lauer and  
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Larry & Connie Jensen and  
Family

Mary & Pat Connolly and  
Family

Laura & Matt Lauer and  
Family

Larry & Connie Jensen and  
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Irma Rosberg

Marlene Rybensky

Nancy Nystrom

Cloid & Faye Farley

Mr. & Mrs. Jim Barbee

Cynthia Steen

Diane Petersen

Family of Shirley Jensen

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Kathryn Lafayette

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Gary & Kathy McConnell

Matt Darling

Priscilla Wheeler

Melisa Sunde

C Langdon

Alicia Kroupa

Sam & Jenny Pfeifer

Irma Rosberg

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*Curt & Ruth Ralston*