



**First Central  
Congregational**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## The Congregationalist

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October 29, 2020

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### Prayers

*Pat Kessler*, recently hospitalized; *Bud Cassidy*, now at Madonna Rehab; *Jan Kensler*, recovering from a fractured disc; *Steve Dolezal*, recovering from surgery; *Karen Garver*, recovering from surgery; *Jim Barbour*, recently hospitalized; *Joyce Mullins*, who died last week; *Don Riggerbach*, who died last week; *Kathy McConnell*, recovering from cataract surgery; *Cheryl Heller*, who took a bad fall last week; *Scott Sumpter*, who tore the meniscus in his right knee; *Wendy Monbouquette*, recovering from surgery; *Lizzie Patterson*, recovering from surgery.

### Pledge Reminder

Have you turned in your pledge card? There is still time. Even though the month is winding down, you can still 1) mail your card to the church 2) email your pledge commitment to [finance@firstcentral.org](mailto:finance@firstcentral.org) or 3) you can use the Fellowship One App to make your financial commitment to First Central! The Finance team reports this week that we ARE on track with pledges for next year, but we still need YOU to think about the reasons you are part of First Central and how you plan to continue to support the work that we do.

### From the Task Force

Our Regathering Task Force continues to monitor the rising infection rates in Douglas County. We remind everyone to take seriously the public health guidelines – wear your mask, wash your hands, keep your physical distance from people, and avoid unnecessary exposures. If you are at high risk, please consider spending more time at home until numbers decline again.

### REMINDER!

Turn your clocks back one hour before bed Saturday night – Daylight Saving Time is ending.

### Advent Devotional

Advent approaches. Already.

In honor of the season (and what will likely be a weird season at that) and our upcoming Advent Series, “A New World,” we are putting together a collection of First Central Advent daily devotionals tentatively titled, “A New World: Musings on Advent from First Central Congregational Church”.

We are, therefore, seeking essays, poems, artwork, and general musings from First Central folks. Writings should be no more than 300 words (with some leeway, of course), and images of artwork should be shrinkable to be able fit into a printed booklet. The devotional (and images) will also be made available online.

Writings/poems/artwork should be submitted by **Monday, November 23rd**, and absolutely everyone in our wide church (online and in person) community is invited to participate. Kids and teens, too!

What’s the theme, you ask?

Advent. Advent in this very weird year.

Waiting. Struggling with waiting.

Waiting for Jesus.

Waiting on/for a New World.

A New World. (Particularly given that it’s the 400th Anniversary of the Mayflower)

Creating a new world. Emerging into a new world.

Hope. Peace. Joy. Love.

Advent.

If you or someone you know would be willing to participate in this project or if you have any questions, feel free to send me a Facebook message or email: [katie@firstcentral.org](mailto:katie@firstcentral.org).

### Eves

Time to get Christmas-crafty! We will be meeting on Zoom **November 9<sup>th</sup>** at 7 p.m. to share Christmas crafts. Show off what you’ve made, or plan to make. Share a quick how-to, if you’d like. Or just visit, if that’s more your speed. Advent is fast approaching!

## An Interview with Barb and Bonnie

Long time finance guru, **Lou Lamberty**, recently stepped down from keeping the books at First Central. He left it all in the very capable hands of **Barb Switzer** and **Bonnie Austin**. Here's a look into their background and the job that lies ahead for them!

**Kerrie:** How long have you been a member at First Central?

**Barb:** Bill and I came to First Central in 1984, so that makes 36 years we've been members. During that time I've been active in the church, as Moderator, Clerk, Cabinet member at large, chair of various Boards/Ministries, sang in the choir, ran the plant sale with Cherie, and participated in any number of church events. I've served on Search committees (both for Winston Baldwin and Scott Jones), worked on capital campaigns and followed Grant through Youth Group. You know, just your regular church member...

**Bonnie:** John and I have been members since March 2015, and in that time I have served on the Outreach committee for 3 years and chair the last two. The last few years I have prepared the Chancel on Sundays (pre Covid). On Thursdays I work in the Thrift shop.

**Kerrie:** Gosh, Bonnie – it seems longer! You two have become such integral parts of our church body. What life-experiences / work-history do you bring to this new position with the church?

**Bonnie:** I was a software developer who wrote, installed and supported financial software for over thirty years.

**Barb:** I was recruited to help count the offering a couple of years ago, when I went to part-time status from my career at UNMC. Since I've served on Cabinet and Ministries, I know how to read the church budget and have a general understanding of how the finances work. In my professional life, I was responsible for a laboratory budget and doing cost accounting, and I know how to pay attention to details. The idea of learning new software was interesting to me, although it's a little challenging. I believe in the idea that learning new things keeps your brain "young" so this should be good for me, right?

**Kerrie:** Can you please explain each of your separate roles moving forward with the finance team? And why you chose to tag-team the responsibilities?

**Barb:** When I was first asked to do this, it was to do the entire Financial Secretary job – which was surprising, because I have NO accounting background, and even the best software in the world couldn't make me feel secure in doing something like this. I was SO happy when Lou told me that Bonnie Austin would be taking over his job! Bonnie has excellent skills and experience, and I think we make a good team.

**Barb:** So my part of the work is to record the money given to the First Central each week. I use the Fellowship One software to enter each person's gift, so we can track how much they've given the church. I also enter gifts for memorials, the Food Bank, and other categories. I understand that giving is something that requires a certain level of confidentiality, and I expect to honor that responsibility. As the Stewardship campaign started, I learned how to enter the amount each person pledges, and to keep track of who might need a follow-up contact. Lou used to do a lot of personal outreach to church members, to encourage people to give; this year more of that will be the responsibility of the entire Stewardship committee.

**Bonnie:** And I'm responsible for payroll and paying any bills and then producing the monthly/yearly financial statements.

**Kerrie:** So it's essentially an "Accounts Receivable" and "Accounts Payable" situation?

**Bonnie:** Yes, exactly.

**Barb:** We all became very dependent on Lou to just handle all of these different tasks. Although Bonnie and I are just getting used to doing this work, I think it would be a good idea to eventually train folks to "back us up" in case we were unavailable.

**Kerrie:** Do you have any goals or expectations for this new role? Or for the church as you accept this new role?

**Bonnie:** My goal right now is to determine all the ins and outs of the software and determine the best way to do everything.

**Barb:** Yes, agreed. The software is the most challenging piece of the puzzle right now. I'm trusting that eventually, I'll be more comfortable with the software and those routine tasks won't take so long, or seem so mysterious.

**Kerrie:** Have you discovered any fun surprises since you took the roles?

**Barb:** I'm starting to learn all those little jobs that Lou took on over the last 10-15 years, like doing all the calls for reminding people to send in pledges. I think we've gotten a little spoiled, and it's a good thing we are starting to share some of those responsibilities.

**Kerrie:** So it is good that Lou is still just a quick phone call away?

**Bonnie:** Oh, most definitely!

**Kerrie:** Ladies, thank you for taking on this very important role in our church!

**Bonnie:** It's my pleasure!

**Barb:** Mine too! And I'm hoping that once the pandemic is under control, we might be able to re-constitute the offering-counting team, just to be good and responsible stewards for the church, and because I also think those folks miss being part of the process.



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

## FIRSTKids CORNER

Join Pastor Katie every other Sunday 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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(At-home)

### ADVENT CRAFT WORKSHOP

Materials available from the church beginning November 29

Be on the lookout for a few sample crafts and activities with accompanying instructional videos. You will be able to register for the craft you are interested in and pick up divvied out materials from the church.

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Twice-A-Month

### FIRSTKids IN PERSON!

At the moment, we are working on a plan to hold FIRSTKids during worship twice a month, observing social distancing measures. 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.



November 7 @ 10 AM on Zoom:

### HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION with Sarah Egge

When the election is finally over it's possible that lots of things we count on may change. Health insurance could be one of those things. Grab your coffee and join Sarah Egge for a discussion on the ins and outs of healthcare legislation. What are the possibilities for expanding coverage and affordability? What does the future hold for the Affordable Care Act? How does the Supreme Court factor in? Who influences how legislation is written? Sarah has 20+ years of experience on Capitol Hill dealing with these and other issues. Bring your questions!

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## VESPERS

Wednesdays, 6:00 pm

On Facebook Live

Grab a cup of tea or hot chocolate and join Rev. Katie for a simple midweek service of song, prayer, scripture, and reflection.

## Week of November 1

### Sunday, November 1

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

### Monday, November 2

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

### Wednesday, November 4

Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 6 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, November 5

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

### Saturday, November 7

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
Adult Education, 10 a.m., Zoom

## Week of November 8

### Sunday, November 8

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

### Monday, November 9

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

### Tuesday, November 7

Council, 7 p.m., Zoom

### Wednesday, November 11

Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 6 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, November 12

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

### Saturday, November 14

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

## Week of November 15

### Sunday, November 15

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

### Monday, November 16

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

### Wednesday, November 18

Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 6 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, November 19

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

### Saturday, November 21

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

## Week of November 22

### Sunday, November 22

In-person worship, 10:30 a.m.  
YouTube online worship, 10:30 a.m.  
Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, 5 p.m.  
FirstYouth, 8 p.m., Zoom

### Monday, November 23

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

### Wednesday, November 25

Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 6 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, November 26

Thanksgiving Day. Office closed.

### Friday, November 27

Office closed.

### Saturday, November 28

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

## Week of November 29

### Sunday, November 29

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

### Monday, November 30

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

### Wednesday, December 2

Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 6 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, December 3

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

### Saturday, December 5

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

Please send address changes to:  
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Omaha, NE 68131.