



## Prayers

*Mary Solberg*, recovering from knee replacement; *Mary Guin Knoll*, now at Brookestone Meadows for rehab; *Leigh Gustafson*, recovering from knee surgery; *Dorothy Rydberg*, who broke her leg; *Linda Meigs*, whose father-in-law died recently; the *Lamberty family*, on the sudden death of *Lou's* brother, *Larry Lamberty*; *Judy Blazek*, recovering from eye surgery.

## Joys:

*Daniel & Meryl Hoyt*, celebrating the birth of *Ira Scott Hoyt* – proud grandmother is *Kathy Hoyt*.

## Eves

Life changing. A rebirth. Ever had an experience like that? We will be sharing our stories together (yet apart, on Zoom) on Monday, **April 12<sup>th</sup>** at 7 p.m. Please join us.

## The Super Sale is On!

First Central's Annual Super Sale will be back this spring, so save the date for **Saturday, May 8**, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

With guidance from the Regathering Task Force, we'll be able to host this event safely by making a few adjustments like *holding the plant sale in Memorial Hall* and limiting capacity in that room and the Thrift Shop.

There are lots of opportunities to get involved:

- If you have extra 4"-12" pots, please bring them to church and leave them under the

seedling tables by the courtyard windows. If you need pots, get them here.

- Dig up perennials in your yard or houseplants, place them in pots and bring them to the church office **April 24-May 5**, prior to the sale. Please label your plants, including the color of the blooms, and if you have a picture of your plant – all the better!
- If you have plants in your yard you'd like to contribute but need help with digging and potting, OR you'd like to volunteer to dig/pot plants from members' gardens, email or call *Cherie Ferber* or *Barb Switzer*, or call the church office.
- Volunteers are needed on Friday, **May 7**, to prepare Memorial Hall and move plants, during the sale on **May 8**, and clean up afterward. We'll give public-facing tasks to those who are vaccinated, and those who aren't can help with other jobs.

There's plenty to do and lots of help is needed to make this fundraiser for our church a success! Contact Barb, Cherie or the church office to learn more.

## Parking Info

If you've not been to the church to worship in person for a while, you might be surprised to see that the parking lot to the west of the church is quite full on Sunday mornings. Since it is now a public parking lot, guests at the Cottonwood Hotel now use it. Hotel check-out is at 11 a.m., so things do open up as the morning passes.

## Just My Thoughts

*Kerrie Kleppin Winn*

Sometime last April, one of those Facebook memes floated by my distracted attention span, but really spoke to me. It read: *Welcome to 2020. If you do not yet have an anxiety disorder, one will be assigned to you.*

At the time, we were in the throes of it; trying to make our own hand sanitizer and figuring out if we were skilled enough to sew our own face masks. And although I remember laughing when I read it, I also remember thinking that the only reason it was comical is because it was 100% true. Because I also remember standing in our garage about the same time trying to decide if I should wipe down every item I just purchased at the grocery store, and then freaking myself out at the thought of using up all of those (then) coveted disinfecting wipes!

Panic.

Stress.

Insomnia.

Call it by many names, but its title is Anxiety. And in the past 12 or 13 months, we've all experienced it. But let's be honest, we've also experienced some other things; sadness, helplessness, depression, hopelessness...

Raise your hand if some morning amidst this pandemic, you rolled over in your snuggly bed to see the sun glowing out the window and smiled internally at the thought of a lovely day ahead to enjoy, only to be gobsmacked by the reality slowly sinking into your sleepy brain that you'd only be enjoying that sunshine from the safety of your own porch or patio.

Pandemics are hard.

Life – in general – is often times really hard.

Life IN a pandemic...well, it's downright ...um ... uh ... I don't even KNOW the appropriate word.

And yet, here we all still are. Trying to keep putting one day after the next, in spite of the fact that human beings are not meant to live and function like this.

Here is what I DO KNOW though:

- If you're reading this you're still here too – albeit in some varied state of general OK-ness.

- Some of us are more OK than others. And some of us started out in this pandemic less OK than others.
- And this is the big one – your church family cares about your OK-ness!

Honestly, we care so much about your general OK-ness that we signed on to be a WISE congregation within the UCC a few years back. In case you missed it, a WISE congregation has joined the mission to being Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged in the Mental Health of the community and the wider world. The objective is to encourage our congregations to become more welcoming of those living with mental health challenges, to expand our inclusion of those who are living with mental health challenges, to be supportive of all who are affected by mental health conditions, and to engage in ways to live our commitment to be W.I.S.E. about mental health.

Funny thing is that back in the naïve days of 2018 when we became WISE, no one knew just how important this would be after the year that was 2020.

Next week we are launching a brand new program at First Central, called **Mind Matters**. Because, you know, there just isn't quite enough going on during Holy Week! But see...? That's just HOW IMPORTANT this really is.

On the first Thursday of each month, **Mind Matters: Safe Conversations About Mental Health** will be presented (for now) on ZOOM at 7 PM. Our goal is just as it states – to create a safe space for open discussions about mental health issues in the midst of our congregation and in the broader community. For our inaugural meeting (**April 1**), **Pastor Jim Harmon** and **Pastor Charlene Wozny** will lead our discussion about life during and after the pandemic and how our mental health may have been impacted. (Amongst other things...they are still working vociferously as I write.)

I invite you to consider joining in! Going forward, we might read and discuss books on various mental health topics. We might have guest speakers to enlighten us to various points of view on mental health issues. We might be inspired by the group discussion to tackle a tough topic of your own suggestion. We will FOR SURE be welcoming, inclusive, supportive and engaged into your well being while you are in attendance.



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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Twice-A-Month

### FIRSTKids IN PERSON

Assuming virus rates remain low/steady, we will return to in person (social distanced and masked!) Sunday school twice a month!

From now through the summer, we will meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month during worship: children will be dismissed to class right after the Children's Conversation. All ages will meet in Memorial Hall, with designated areas for the children to remain in, individual craft supplies, and other safety measures. Following the service, children will meet their adults on the patio.

Masks will be required for all children and adults involved at all times!

We recognize this still presents Covid risk, and encourage you to decide what is best for your family and your safety at this time. FIRSTKids Corner videos will be posted on the non-in person weeks, and we are investigating zoom options for families who do not feel safe coming to church but still wish to participate in the in person option.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact **Pastor Katie** at the church or via email: [Katie@firstcentral.org](mailto:Katie@firstcentral.org)



During social distancing, we are scheduling youth group events as we go, and are looking to plan summer outdoor gatherings. Please call/email **Pastor Katie** if you would be like to be put on the email list! [katie@firstcentral.org](mailto:katie@firstcentral.org)



April 10, 10 am on Zoom:

### New Life Family Alliance

**Aban Laa** will join us to discuss the New Life Family Alliance, an organization that offers programs for adults and youth, links to local resources, and works diligently to help South Sudanese individuals and families achieve stability and success.

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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.

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## KAMP KALEO

There are tentative plans for BUBBLE CAMP at Kamp Kaleo this summer, for kids and families, and we are looking into sending bubbles from our church. Contact **Katie** for more info.

## Week of April 4

### Sunday, April 4

Easter Sunrise Service, 6:20 a.m., Memorial Park  
Easter Celebration, 9 a.m., Sanctuary  
Easter Celebration, 10:30 a.m. in person or online  
Food Pantry Sunday

### Monday, April 5

Easter Monday. Office closed.

### Wednesday, April 7

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, April 8

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

### Friday, April 9

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

### Saturday, April 10

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

## Week of April 11

### Sunday, April 11

Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.  
FirstKids, Memorial Hall following the Conversation with the Children. Masks required.  
Education Ministry, 11:30 a.m., Zoom

### Monday, April 12

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

### Tuesday, April 13

Council, 7 p.m., Zoom

## Wednesday, April 14

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

## Thursday, April 15

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

## Friday, April 16

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

## Saturday, April 17

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

## Week of April 18

### Sunday, April 18

Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.

### Monday, April 19

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

### Wednesday, April 21

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, April 22

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

### Friday, April 23

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

### Saturday, April 24

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

## Week of April 25

### Sunday, April 25

Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.  
FirstKids, Memorial Hall following the Conversation with the Children. Masks required.

### Monday, April 26

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

### Wednesday, April 28

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
Vespers with Katie, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

### Thursday, April 29

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

### Friday, April 30

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

### Saturday, May 1

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

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