



**First Central
Congregational**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Congregationalist

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June 28, 2021

Prayers

Tracy Zaiss, whose mother in law, *Virginia Zaiss*, died recently; *Allison Hardy*, on the death of her grandfather; *Mike Kratville*, recovering from surgery; *Carolyn Baldwin*, recovering from hip replacement surgery; *Kerrie Kleppin Winn* and family, on the death of her father, *Bud Kleppin*; *Barb O'Dell*, who died recently; *Carol Ahlgren*, who died recently.

Joys:

Jake Sharpe, celebrating 5 years cancer free!
Charlene & Jim Wozny, celebrating the birth of great granddaughter *Lula Ann Bergen* (parents are *Kathryn & Spencer Bergan!*). *Jenny & Sam Pfeifer*, celebrating the birth of great granddaughter *Quinn Kately Pfeifer* (parents are *Nicholas & Ashley Pfeifer!*). *Bonnie & John Austin*, celebrating the birth of great grandson *Max Sands Sweeney* (parents are *Amanda & Nat Sweeney!*).

Parking

A reminder: the parking lot is now a pay lot, but you DO NOT have to pay on Sunday mornings.

Fireworks!

You are invited to watch the Field Club fireworks on Monday, **July 5th**. We can gather in the *Switzer's* front yard – right across the street – around 8:30 p.m. Bring your own lawn chairs and bug spray, as well as any snacks you may need. **1333 S. 36th St.**

Book Club

The July book is *The Nightingale* by *Kristin Hannah*. The date for our next meeting is **July 8** at 7 p.m., at *Marilyn Hammond's*, 12228 Ida Plaza. Come join us!

Celebration of Life

A celebration of life service for *Norma Nelson* will be held **July 13th** at 11 a.m. at First Central. Donations of cookies/bars are requested.

Ice Cream Social

The annual Ice Cream Social is back! Bring your best homemade (or store bought!) ice cream to church on Sunday, **July 25th**. I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!

New Members

We have four new members who have transferred to First Central from other UCC churches. Please welcome *Rev. Janet Davis*, *Evan Davis*, *Kathy Ramirez*, and *Anthony Portero Paff* when you see them in worship!

Parlor Update

The parlor repairs are ALMOST done! If not this Sunday, then for sure by the next, the parlor will be put back together again. Fingers crossed.

D.C.-area couple delivers olive oil, which supports Palestinian fair trade farmers, to Cleveland

by *Connie Larkman*

A silver Prius pulled up in front of the United Church of Christ Church House on Monday, June 14, carrying precious cargo. Thirteen liters of Palestinian olive oil was hand delivered by **Leon & Maryn Goodson** to a small contingent of the national staff for use during the upcoming General Synod.

The Goodsons are involved in Westmoreland UCC's Middle East Committee and passionate about



its Olive Oil Ministry (OOM), which they help lead. So passionate, they drove 6-1/2 hours from Bethesda, Md., to drop off hundreds of dollars in oil. Leon said the couple likes to travel. Maryn said they drive a lot.

"We were happy to drive to Cleveland to make the delivery," Leon said. "It was easier than figuring out the best way to ship it."

The Goodsons have long been instrumental to the work of the Middle East Committee. It got its start in the 1970s.

"Several church members had ties to the Middle East as USAID and State Department personnel and through connections to the American University Beirut and to the historical Congregational mission work with Armenians, in Turkey, and elsewhere in the region," said Westmoreland Senior Minister Tim Tutt. "They were inspired by the Camp David accords to see how their faith could play a role in bringing peace and justice to that region of the world."

One way they try to do that is through importing and selling olive oil. Twelve years ago, OOM began selling fair trade Palestinian olive oil as a way to raise funds. The profits go back to the region to support hospitals, schools and other vital services.

The Goodsons hand-delivered the first support check during a trip to the Middle East in 2009. Maryn said they also hand-picked olives on the West Bank during that trip.

OOM works to bring about a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians, raise awareness about realities on the ground in the Holy Land, and support Palestinians in their struggle for justice, human rights and economic viability.

The ministry's net proceeds primarily benefit Tent of Nations, an organic farm near Bethlehem. The Nassar family, Palestinian Christians, has owned the land since 1916. They use the donations to replant trees and care for their olive groves. They also support a women's education center and summer youth camps. As the OOM brochure states, "They seek to build bridges between people, including neighboring Jewish and Muslim communities, between the people and the land."

OOM broadened its support to Gaza in 2020, funding a greenhouse and hydroponics rooftop garden through Anera's (American Near East Refugee Aid) food security program. It also sends donations to the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, a Global Ministries partner run by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

"The Middle East Committee may be one of the best evangelism arms of our congregation," Tutt said. "Guests regularly come to Middle East Committee forums who don't come to any other church events. The committee has good relationships with Jews, Muslims, 'nones' and others who get a window into progressive, engaged UCC life through the committee."

"Israel and Palestine are 'thin places,' as the Irish say — places where the holy and the mystical happen," Tutt said. "As Christians, our founding narratives are rooted in the soil there. So it's important for us to pay attention to the land and to the people who live on the land. As global citizens and neighbors we must pay attention and work for justice. Our Middle East Committee helps our church community do that."

During Summer 2021, Pastor Katie will be on Sabbatical!

In the meantime, there will still be plenty of goings on in the education ministries of First Central. For more info or to suggest/request an event, please contact the church office!



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!

SUMMER 2021 VBS

COMPASSION CAMP:

LOVINGKINDNESS

July 19-23 >>> 9:30-11:30 AM

Memorial Hall/Patio

Masks required.

For more information or to register your child, contact Sandy Lee, srlee99@cox.net, or Susan Dolezal sdolezal1119@gmail.com

FIRST YOUTH

JULY

Swimming/Pizza Party at Rudd/Becker's Cabin
Contact Lamar Jones for Directions
Sunday, July 11, 2 pm - 7 pm

AUGUST

Okoboji Retreat ... MAYBE! TENTATIVELY!
As this will be a multi-night function, vaccinations will be required for all participants

Tentative dates:
July 29 - August 2

Contact Lamar Jones for any more information:
ljones7660@gmail.com

FIRST FORUM

Adult Education

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

Contact the office for info on upcoming Adult Ed opportunities or to suggest a session! We are hoping to resume First Forum in the Fall!!!

Week of July 4

Sunday, July 4

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

Monday, July 5

Independence Day observed. Office closed.

Wednesday, July 7

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

Thursday, July 8

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Book Club, 7 p.m., 12228 Ida Plaza

Friday July 10

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

Saturday, June 12

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

Week of July 11

Sunday, July 11

Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
FirstKids, Memorial Hall following the Conver -
sation with the Children. Masks required.
FirstYouth, 2-7 p.m., Rudd's cabin.

Monday, July 12

Staff meeting, 11 a.m., Pastor's Study

Tuesday, July 13

Norma Nelson celebration of life, 11 a.m.
Council, 7 p.m., Zoom

Wednesday, July 14

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

Thursday, July 15

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Congregational Care, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, June 11

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

Saturday, June 12

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

Week of July 18

Sunday, July 18

Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
Pastoral Relations, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, July 19

Vacation Bible School, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., M-F
Staff meeting, 11 a.m., Pastor's Study

Wednesday, July 21

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

Thursday, July 22

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

Friday July 23

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

Saturday, July 24

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

Week of July 25

Sunday, July 25

Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
FirstKids, Memorial Hall following the Conver -
sation with the Children. Masks required.
Ice Cream Social, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, July 26

Staff meeting, 11 a.m., Pastor's Study

Wednesday, July 28

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

Thursday, July 29

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

Friday July 30

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

Saturday, July 31

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

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