



First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Congregationalist

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July 29, 2021

Prayers

Carol Ahlgren, who died in Minneapolis recently after a brief illness; *Barb O'Dell*, who died recently; *Ben Little* and family, mourning the deaths of stepfather *Dave Paladino* and cousin *Bear Nichols*, killed in a plane crash; family of *Leo Smith*, *Elizabeth Wearin's* brother in law, who died unexpectedly; past member *Stella Gardner*, who died this week.

Joys:

Charlene & Jim Wozny, celebrating the birth of great granddaughter *Lula Ann Bergan!* *Charlene & Jim Wozny*, celebrating the birth of yet another great grandchild - *Reese Avery Nohl!*

Church Chat

On Sunday, **August 15th**, in the Pastor's Study following worship, we will hold a Church Chat. No white gloves or scary church ladies, just conversation, coffee, and answers to your questions about First Central. *Pastor Scott Jones* and *Sara Sharpe* will do their best to answer any questions you may have. If you have been thinking about joining our church family, or are just curious about First Central, please plan on attending. Bring your coffee and donuts – we look forward to talking with you.

Parrish School

"Backpack" to School Supply Project

It's once again time for one of our favorite activities - Back to School shopping! I'm really kidding, but for the students and families at Parrish School, our "Backpack to School" outreach has an important role in the education of these young people. These students take their backpacks home and often share supplies with brothers and sisters – so this project reaches more than just the students at Parrish School.

Parrish School is an alternative school program for students who may have been expelled from their home schools, or who have trouble working in a regular school environment. They get extra attention and direction at Parrish, and First Central has supported their efforts for several years.

Our annual school supply project helps students and their teachers achieve the educational goals so necessary for success in life. The principal at Parrish also said they have need of single-subject spiral notebooks, so if you don't want to search for the entire list, just notebooks will be most welcome. You may also make a monetary donation (write the check to First Central, with Parrish school in the memo line) to help fund special calculators.

There are supply lists available in the Parlor starting **August 1st**, and supplies need to be returned by **August 15th**. The "Parrish Backpack to School" will load the supplies in the backpacks for the students. Parrish school starts on August 17th, so we want to deliver these before classes begin.

Contact *Barb Switzer* if you have any questions.

Homecoming!

After over a year of being apart, come and join your church family for a potluck lunch after church on **August 29th**! Friends and Family will grill burgers and hotdogs, and we look forward to see what favorites all of you will bring. We will celebrate on the patio, weather permitting.

Eves

Weather too hot for you? Come join the Eves for a cool, indoor activity on Monday, **August 9th**, at 7 p.m. We'll be indoor golfing at Prehistoric Putt, 11134 Q Street in Papillion. Yes, we'll be golfing among the dinosaurs. The cost is \$9 for 18 holes, and \$13 for 36 holes. No need to RSVP, just be there by 7 so you can be part of a group.

Scott's Column: Recentering

During 2020 I realized that when we could travel more easily again that I wanted to visit people I care about because I was missing them so. I assume I wasn't alone in this decision during the worst of the pandemic isolation. Then, add my divorce to the mix, and my need to reconnect and recenter became even more important.

In mid-June I made a quick trip to my hometown of Miami, Oklahoma because they were hosting their first ever Pride Festival. Miami's population is around 12,000 and there are no local LGBT organizations, but a few folk decided they needed to host a Pride, and in a few months they organized a superb event. It was powerful for me to be in my hometown park—site of so many family reunions, church picnics, and Independence Day fireworks shows—watching drag queens perform and trans kids march.

That day I also was able to have a long talk with one of my high school teachers with whom I've been very close for decades. She's also an ordained Episcopal deacon, so she gets my spirituality and ministry. She was able to provide perspective for me that encompassed my entire life. I realized that when she said at one point, "What you just said sounds like something you told me while you were in college."

That week I also stayed with my dear lifelong friend Jason Huffman, and we had many rich conversations.

Only a week after this quick trip Sebastian and I left on our summer vacation of two weeks. This was the trip I had been imagining since last year. We traveled to Fayetteville, Arkansas; Dallas, Texas; and Oklahoma City, visiting family and friends. All of these are places where I've lived and worked and maintain close connections with people. The folks in Dallas were particularly wanting to see us, as Sebastian had never been there before.

We did some sight-seeing on the trip, but most of it was spent hanging out with people. Many of the days were deeply relaxing.

By mid-way through the trip, I realized it was working. I felt re-centered, reconnected to my past and sense of self, and renewed.

I hope after the losses of the last year and a half, that you are able to have a similar experience. All of us have been reminded of what and who are important to us. Let's give our attention to what strengthens us.

Peace,
Scott

Siena-Francis House Update

Good news! First Central members have resumed serving dinner at Siena-Francis House.

Unsurprisingly, volunteer operations at S-F H were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to make things work with a reduced number of volunteers, the serving process is now very different. Tables are no longer set, and volunteers no longer take trays out to the guests. Instead, the guests line up to get their trays. And there now just two "seatings," one for the women and then a big long one for the men with about 4 or 5 large groups allowed in sequentially. Tables are sanitized between groups. All volunteers now wear masks, and quite a few of the guests too.

Please consider visiting the Siena-Francis House website, clicking on their VolunteerHub link, and signing up for our traditional Third Friday dinner service. While the number of volunteers required for any given dinner has decreased compared to before the pandemic, there are 8 volunteer slots available for each dinner on VolunteerHub. And, as of this writing, there are plenty of open slots for future third Fridays.

If you have any questions re: serving or signing up on the VolunteerHub page, contact **Curt Cannon**.

Sanctuary Choir

Make a joyful noise! Sanctuary Choir will begin meeting again on Wednesday, **August 25th**, at 7 p.m. Vaccinated singers only at this time, please.

We will kick off the season with a choir potluck on Friday, **August 27th** at 6 p.m. Location to be announced.

Save the Date!

Regather at the All-Church Intergenerational Retreat on Saturday, **September 25th, 2021**. Yes, one day only. We'll be regathering, rejoicing, and *talking* at Mallet Lodge in Platte River State Park between 9:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. A relaxed schedule of optional activities is planned, with only lunch, dinner and the egg drop having precise-ish start times. We expect to release all our reserved cabins, but any group/family wishing to rent an entire cabin for the weekend should contact **Judy Bouma** by the end of July. More information and registration forms will be appearing soon.

**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 have 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 in the Parlor.

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

Thank you to *Susan Dolezal* and *Sandy Lee* for all their hard work and energy for Vacation Bible School. It was amazing!

The logo for FIRST YOUTH features a blue cross icon to the left of the words "FIRST YOUTH" in bold black letters.

FIRST YOUTH

Stay tuned for fall activities!



Summer Bible Study in the Gospel of Mark

Sunday Mornings from 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. for seven weeks beginning July 18, 2021. Third Floor Parlor

The Word of God is Alive and Active, sharper than any two-edged sword...! Come and see how alive, active and sharp, contemplating God's Word together can make us.

What to Expect...

- Come as you are!
- Bring or plan to borrow a Bible
- Weekly Focus (see schedule) in class – “What jumps out at you?”
- No lectures!
- Bring:
 - What you know
 - What you want to know
 - An open heart about what you may need to know (what God may be revealing)
 - An open mind to envision how God is guiding (What will I do differently tomorrow, having heard God's word today?)

Week of August 1

Sunday, August 1

Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., Third Floor Parlor
 Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
 Food Pantry Sunday
 Backpack drive begins

Monday, August 2

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

Wednesday, August 4

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

Thursday, August 5

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
 Mind Matters, 7 p.m., Zoom

Friday August 6

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

Saturday, August 7

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

Week of August 8

Sunday, August 8

Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., Third Floor Parlor
 Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
 FirstKids, Memorial Hall following the Con-
 sation with the Children. Masks required.

Monday, August 9

Staff meeting, 11 a.m., Pastor's Study
 Eves, 7 p.m., Dino Golf

Tuesday, August 10

Council, 7 p.m., Zoom

Wednesday, August 11

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

Thursday, August 12

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

Friday, August 13

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

Saturday, August 14

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

Week of August 15

Sunday, August 15

Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., Third Floor Parlor
 Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
 Church Chat, 11:30 a.m. Pastor's Study
 Backpack drive ends

Monday, August 16

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

Wednesday, August 18

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

Thursday, August 19

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

Friday August 20

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

Saturday, August 21

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

Week of August 22

Sunday, August 22

Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., Third Floor Parlor
 Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
 FirstKids, Memorial Hall following the Con-
 sation with the Children. Masks required.

Monday, August 23

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

Wednesday, August 25

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
 Sanctuary Choir begins! 7 p.m.

Thursday, August 26

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

Friday August 27

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
 Choir Party, 6 p.m. potluck. Location TBD

Saturday, August 28

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

Week of August 29

Sunday, August 29

Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., Third Floor Parlor
 Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
 Homecoming! Potluck on the patio after worship.

Monday, August 30

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

Wednesday, September 1

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
 Sanctuary Choir, 7 p.m.

Thursday, September 2

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

Friday September 3

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

Saturday, September 4

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.



**First Central gratefully acknowledges
memorials and gifts given from
September 2020 – July 2021**

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