



**First Central
Congregational**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Congregationalist

Volume 26, Issue 3

www.firstcentral.org

September 28, 2021

Prayers

For the family of *Margaret Frum*, who died last month; for *Janet Acker*, recovering from knee replacement surgery; *Richard Bouma, Jr.*, recovering from a heart attack; *Barb Dietrich* and family, on the death of niece *Beth Jakubowski*; *Colleen Syster*, recently hospitalized; *Barb MacNaughton* and family, on the death of *Luther MacNaughton*. Services will be held **October 16th** at 11; *Nancy Dugan*, injured in a fall and now at Brookestone Meadows for rehab; for the family of *Rudy Kunkle*, who died last week; the *Beernink* family, on the death of *Ron's* father; *Trudy & Marissa Knapp-Rhodes*, on the death of their dog, *Duncan*.

Joys

Rebecca Crosby, in remission!

Thank You

To my beloved church family,
It is time for me to send a BIG warmhearted shout out of thankful appreciation and gratitude to those of you who offered to help me during my hip surgery recovery and to the multitude of people who brought me wonderful meals/visits and provided emotional support! My anxious worry of being alone without family during recovery changed to blessed thankfulness when my church family circled the wagons around me and helped me get through. I am so glad to have surgery behind me, the new hip feels great but most of all, my heart is happy and I feel loved thanks to all of you! With blessings, gratitude and love –
Carolyn Baldwin.

New Address:

Joe & Karen Wheeler, 6248 Rockwell Dr. N.E. #103,
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402.
Jwheeler0531@gmail.com
Kwheeler0531@gmail.com

Eves

Time for Oktoberfest! Well, a Covid version, anyway. We will be meeting in the Parlor on Monday, **October 4th** at 7 p.m. so we can spread out, and maybe open a few windows. Bring your favorite brew, or a beer you've been wanting to try. And snacks. Always snacks :)
See you there!

Save the Date!

The Semi-Annual Meeting will be held immediately after worship on Sunday, **October 31st**. Come and hear the plans for next year, and into the future.

Welcome!

Our new Office Administrator/Communications Coordinator, *Cheryl Morehouse*, will be in the office beginning September 28th. Cheryl comes to us from Northwest Hills UCC, where she has been the office administrator there for the last 3 years. Please be patient with her as she learns all the ins and outs of First Central!

Just My Thoughts: Out of the Darkness

Kerrie Kleppin Winn

I had plenty of things to do last Saturday – projects, laundry, you know the normal weekend stuff. Instead, I put on my sneakers and drove across town and joined several thousand others at Stinson Park in Aksarben Village.

First, let me just say that this crowd of people is, by far, the largest I've been a part of in at least 18 months. Let me also follow up by saying, it made me uncomfortable. It made me anxious. It legitimately made me a little tachycardic.

I had purposely arrived early. So while I struggled with my own comfort and safety levels, the irony of my own angst was not lost on me as the crowd continued to grow. The friend I was meeting reminded me, "Breathe. Just breathe."

Then I saw the giant sign on the lawn across the way: It Is OK To Not Be OK.

The group gathered to walk the streets of mid-town Omaha, walking in solidarity to shed light – literally – on the darkness

of the topic we all easily avoid: Mental Health, and more

specifically, Suicide. Omaha's 2021 Out of the Darkness Walk to End Suicide was eye opening and overwhelming all at the same time. Let me try to break this down for you. . .



Amid that colorful quilt of humans were hundreds of messages of loss. And sadness. These color-coded groups were all assembled because their lives have been impacted by suicide. Friends, relatives, spouses, children, co-workers...the words on the team shirts memorialized their personal losses.

And there were SO MANY of them.

I know for a fact, that not all of the losses were memorialized in writing on Saturday. Because my little "team" didn't have fancy shirts. We didn't have photos on poster boards. We were just three women standing together to support a greater cause fueled by one who was brave and courageous enough to say, "My life is different because of Suicide and I'm going to be strong enough this year to acknowledge that."

See, that's the thing. There's a lot, and I mean A LOT of stigma – and shame and fear and guilt and

embarrassment and, and, and – wrapped around the mere word "suicide." It's almost always a mental health-fueled issue and, Lord have mercy upon us, we cannot possibly talk about THAT either. It takes an insurmountable amount of courage for someone affected by suicide to talk about it. The rest of us, well, it's just easier not to. And so, we don't. And so, no one does.

That's where the trouble festers and boils.

Suicide prevention/intervention events are often tagged with the "out of the darkness" phrase quite simply because being in a place of contemplating ending your own life is a dark, dark place. Living life after someone you love has ended their own life also leaves you in an equally dark place as well.

I cannot pretend to know or understand what it feels like to lose someone I love in this tragic way. Any more than I can pretend to understand how mental health issues drive someone to the point of taking their own life. I suppose that makes me lucky.

But I can tell you that I have stood by not one, but two of my besties as they've walked that journey. You don't wish that on anyone. I can also tell you that my own pandemic-related anxiety issues (circling back to them) give me only a TINY taste of what living with mental health issues must be like. And that is all the perspective I need.

The darkness doesn't have to stay dark. Not for anyone – on either side of the issue. There is always light on the way. But not if we all aren't brave enough to offer it.

I stress this: the stigma that surrounds suicide will never be gone until we are all courageous enough to address it. Be curious, and compassionate, and just ask the hard questions without judging. Be brave enough to find someone – anyone – and say, "I think I might not be ok right now," knowing that the right person is going to help you shine some daylight into your darkest place.

It is OK to not be OK.

It is OK to be compassionately curious.

It is CERTAINLY OK to not understand, but also not be judgmental.

As a WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) congregation, it is what we are called to do.

If you, or someone you love, is living in darkness, please call 800-273-8255 at anytime to reach someone who can help. If you are interested in expanding your curiosity about how life after suicide impacts your life, I encourage you to read <https://lifelosslovelaughter.blogspot.com/> from my friend Nancy Bachmann.



FIRSTKids SUNDAY MORNINGS

Beginning Sunday, October 10th, we will be resuming weekly Sunday school!

Children will be dismissed to class right after the Children's Conversation. All ages will meet in the 3rd Floor Parlor, 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!

Fall 2021 Classic Family Movie Night:

Bedknobs & Broomsticks

Sunday, October 10 @ 5:30 pm

Church Courtyard (weather permitting)

Bring lawn chairs and snacks and join us for a time of fall fun, fellowship, and a beloved classic!

Fall 2021 Hiking Day

Saturday, October 9th, 9:30 am

Meet @ the Neale Woods Parking Lot

TRUNK~or~TREAT

Wednesday, October 27th

5:30 - 7:00 pm

Pumpkin Painting and cotton candy!

If you'd like to provide a trunk, please contact

Pastor Katie - katie@firstcentral.org

Wednesday Night Family Night

Wednesdays @ 6:00-7:00 pm

Programming for all ages!

Due to covid rates, we will not be providing a potluck at this time. HOWEVER all who wish to bring a sack/indoor picnic supper for themselves (to eat while distancing) at 5:30 pm are welcome to do so!



Join other youth from all across Nebraska at Youth and Outdoor Ministry Fall Gathering!

October 15-17, 2021

@ Kamp Kaleo in Burwell Nebraska

Contact Pastor Katie for more info!



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 soon!!!

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

THE UPPER ROOM

Sundays @ 9:00 AM

Led by Rev. Jeannie Bates

Tentatively scheduled to return on October 10th.

Contact the church for more information

Week of October 3

Sunday, October 3

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

Monday, October 4

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

Tuesday, October 5

Matching Members to Ministries, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 6

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Family Night, 5:30 p.m.
Sanctuary Choir, 7 p.m.
Vespers, 8 p.m.

Thursday, October 7

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

Friday October 8

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

Saturday, October 9

Hike at Neale Woods, 9:30 a.m.
Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Week of October 10

Sunday, October 10

Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., third floor parlor
Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
FirstKids, Memorial Hall following the Conver -
sation with the Children. Masks required.
Movie Night, 5:30 p.m., Courtyard

Monday, October 11

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

Tuesday, October 12

Council, 7 p.m., Zoom

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

Wednesday, October 13

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Family Night, 5:30 p.m.
Sanctuary Choir, 7 p.m.
Vespers, 8 p.m.

Thursday, October 14

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

Friday, October 15

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

Saturday, October 16

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Luther MacNaughton memorial service, 11 a.m.

Week of October 17

Sunday, October 17

Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., third floor parlor
Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
FirstKids, Memorial Hall following the Conver -
sation with the Children. Masks required.

Monday, October 18

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

Wednesday, October 20

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Family Night, 5:30 p.m.
Sanctuary Choir, 7 p.m.
Vespers, 8 p.m.

Thursday, October 21

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

Friday, October 22

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

Saturday, October 23

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

Week of October 24

Sunday, October 24

Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., third floor parlor
Online or in-person worship, 10:30 a.m.
FirstKids, Memorial Hall following the Conver -
sation with the Children. Masks required.

Monday, October 25

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

Wednesday, October 27

Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Trunk-or-Treat, 5:30 p.m.
Sanctuary Choir, 7 p.m.
Vespers, 8 p.m.

Friday, October 29

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

Saturday, October 30

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