

THE CONGREGATIONALIST

FIRST CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ
1856-2009

421 South 36th Street Omaha NE 68131 Phone: 402-345-1533 Fax: 402-345-6212

www.firstcentral.org

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March 4, 2010



Please remember in your thoughts and prayers:

Emily Epperson, as she celebrates Academic Decathlon Honors in Language and Literature; *Relda Fortina*, *Dave's* mother, who had surgery last week.

Mission & Outreach

Nancy Northcutt

Many thanks to everyone who filled backpacks for the homeless over the past few weeks. We were able to take 40 backpacks filled with basic necessities and warm hats, gloves and scarves down to Siena/Francis House. *Kathy* at the shelter extends her gratitude on behalf of those whose lives will be a little better because of your generosity.

Need a Ride?

If you need a ride to church, see the upcoming driver schedule below. Please call the driver directly for the Sunday you'd like to attend:



March 7th, *Lamar Jones*, 592-7660

March 14th, *Sam Pfeifer*, 691-8776

March 21, *Allan Bucknam*, 393-7092

Thanks!

Thank you to all who helped with the 95th birthday celebration for *Margaret Engstrom*. Margaret celebrated in style ☺

Wedding Pictures

Sara Sharpe

Were you or a family member married in the sanctuary at First Central? We are looking for photographs to use on our church website, illustrating different parts of the building in use during weddings. Please send digital photographs to

sara@firstcentral.org, or mail photographs to the church – I will scan them and mail them back. I can't promise we'll use all of the pictures, but it will be helpful to have as many as possible to select from. Thanks!

Photo Directory

Sara Sharpe

We are still working on our own photo directory. *Dave Fortina* will continue to take pictures – just grab your family and smile for Dave anytime he has his camera. If you have a non-professional photograph that you'd like to use, please send it to sara@firstcentral.org, or give me a hard copy, which I will scan and return to you.

We will also be putting together “activity pages.” If you are involved in a church group, like First YOUTH, Eves or MARCOS, – take pictures the next time you meet. We can use as many photographs as we want, unlike the commercial companies.

When the directory is complete, we will have it printed, and will sell copies depending on how much the printer charges us. We are also hoping to have it available online at a password-protected site, which we will be able to add to as needed.

Church Cleaning Crew!

Jack Nielsen, our cleaning manager, continues to recover from surgery. We hope he will be back on his feet (literally) soon! But until he is ...

What a great group of volunteers we have here! We would like to thank the following volunteers for their fabulous cleaning abilities: *Sam & Jenny Pfeifer, George & Val Himes, Paul & Ronda Spence, Dave Fortina, Ken Friedman-Fitch, Korene Kanazoe, Karen Garver, Arlene Luther, James Askew, Elizabeth Wearin, Bud Cassiday, Joan Eddy, Ellie Bucknam, Barb Switzer, Al Jensen, Patrick Cole, and Rich Roberts*. If we have inadvertently missed someone – sorry! There are still a few miscellaneous tasks unclaimed – call Sara at 345-1533 to volunteer.

Pastor's Notes

Don Hammond

An account is told about the U.S Secretary of War in 1918, Newton D. Baker. Baker would often visit the most injured American soldiers in the hospitals. One day he came upon a man who was severely injured with war wounds. The soldier had lost his legs, one arm, both eyes and he had face mutilation. Baker noticed his up-beat sprit and found that unusual. Later, Baker asked about the soldier and was told that he married a nurse he met while in the hospital recovering.

Some years passed and Baker had become a trustee of Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. It was there that Baker learned that University was about to bestow the Doctor of Philosophy upon a young man who completed a brilliant piece of research and was severely handicapped. Baker recognized the name and it was the same soldier he visited in the hospital years earlier. That man had a perfect excuse to withdraw from life and to be eternally angry, but he refused to use it.

There are people who have some of the most wonderful reasons for giving-up on the Church and Christianity: the preacher, the people, the building, the hypocrisy, the worship hour, the demands...It is easy to read the Bible and find many opportunities that Jesus let get by him for giving-up. Some may even think him foolish for not taking one of them, but he refused to use them. Jesus seemed to grasp one big reason for not giving-up – because something was expected from him that no one else could accomplish - death on a cross and the beginning of a new world.

The Church and God need every single one of its people, for when one is missing, then the entire work and ministry of the Church is less effective. I hope you will use the Lenten season to reflect upon your reasons for being involved or, your reasons for being uninvolved.

Peace, Don

P.S. If you need a really good reason for not being involved, then talk to me for I can supply you with at least a dozen or two – they are easy!

Evergreen Thrift Shop

Sam Pfeifer

Business in the shop has been slow these first two months. The weather has been the primary problem. However, we did have \$1900 in sales, and have contributed \$1750 to the church. This is about the same as last year.

We are already thinking about our book sale and Super Sale, which will take place May 8 & 9. You will hear more about that in the weeks to come.

Our inventory remains good in volume and quality. Stop in, and tell your friends about us!

SCRIP

Pete Peterson

Support First Central SCRIP! To order your SCRIP cards call *Pete Peterson*, 490-7120 or 553-0386, or see Pete or *Chris Steffen* during coffee hour.

St. Benedict Center

A one day retreat studying *Dorothy Day*, an American journalist, and social activist, will be presented on Saturday, April 10th, beginning at 10 a.m. at the St. Benedict Center in Schuyler, Nebraska. In the 1930's, Dorothy Day created, with other activists, the Catholic Worker Movement, a nonviolent pacifist movement that continues to combine direct aid for the poor and homeless with nonviolent direct action on their behalf. The retreat will be followed by a one woman show at 7 p.m., giving a dramatic portrait of Dorothy Day. Reservations are required. Cost and further details are available at www.StBenedictCenter.com.



March Birthdays

George Himes, 1 st	Grace Palensky, 14 th
Ben Beranek, 1 st	Kent Kirwan, 16 th
Nitharee Chap, 5 th	Lucas Askew, 16 th
Scott Girvan, 5 th	Fred Felger, 17 th
Patti Clark, 6 th	Mildred Smock, 19 th
Jack Nielsen, 10 th	Nithara Chap, 19 th
Verla Hamer, 11 th	Isabel Kratville, 19 th
Terry Foster, 11 th	Olive Blazek, 21 st
Kathryn Heater, 12 th	Elisa Wiseman, 22 nd
Jackson Farho, 12 th	Susan Heater, 22 nd
James Ladwing, 13 th	Brooke Baca, 22 nd
Jim Druliner, 13 th	Robin Fey, 23 rd
Mary Beerling, 14 th	Melissa Robinson, 25 th
Jim Harmon, 14 th	Al Jensen, 31 st
John Schalles, 14 th	

Grand Central Stations

March 2010

Sermons on the Mount and Plain

Matthew 5:7-24; Luke 6:20-49

Blessed are You

Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place with a great crowd of the disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus looked up at the disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the realm of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh." *Luke 6:17, 20-21*

Jesus' message to the crowd was, and still is, a revolutionary way of looking at value systems. Wealth and all the privileges that go with it were not his measuring stick of success. Things and success are not as important as people. We are constantly bombarded with messages that we will be blessed when we have a big house, a new car or any of the countless things that promise to fulfill our ultimate yearning for happiness. He reminded us to have compassion and understanding rather than being critical and judgmental, to find ways to make peace rather than stirring up trouble, to admit that we don't have all the answers and open ourselves to a change in thinking. There is a lot to be said for the times in our lives when desperation causes us to remember that we need God and we need each other. Help us, when we are comfortable, to remember to reach out to those who need reminding that God cares for us all.

Teachers for this unit are *Marian Fey, Chris Steffen, Fred Felger, Lisa Schneider, and Dave Fortina.*

First Youth

March 7-Cultural Food Fest Bring a dish to share from another culture. Try something new.

March 14 – Movie Night Bring a favorite movie and some snacks to share with your buds. Dinner here. \$3.00

Safe-Church Policy Discussion

We will hold a round-table discussion for the entire congregation on our Safe-Church Policy on Sunday,

March 14. This will take place in the parlor, directly after worship. *Gaye McTate* of Family Enrichment, *Audrey Malena*, and *Nikki Zimmerman* will lead the discussion. We will be serving a light lunch, and childcare will be available.

UPDATE ON BFTP

The Big Fat Tacky Party, as of this printing, has raised \$919 toward the youth group's mission trip to Pine Ridge in August. Thanks to First YOUth and everyone who contributed toward making this event a success! We wish to say thanks to *Jennifer Forbes-Baily's* folk dancing group; who not only donated their services, but also gave a \$100 donation. We also wish to thank *Mike Godfrey* and his wonderful *Prairie Plaide Band* who also generously donated their time and talents.

FIRST FORUMS

Provocative, Inspiring, Educational

**Childcare is available during Faith Forums.*

March 7: inCOMMON presented by *Caitie Caughey*, a *Community Advocate at inCOMMON*. Recognizing that something in the war on poverty is amiss, inCOMMON Community Development purports that a new comprehensive strategy must be imagined – a strategy offering hope and renewal to the "least of these" who struggle for life outside our own front doors. Unfortunately, often social service workers from various agencies keep dealing with the same families over and over as new emergencies occur in clients' lives. No one is assigned to look at each family's circumstances holistically and design a package of assistance that would not only address their immediate problems more sensibly, but also build the foundation to prevent the recurring emergencies.

March 14, 21 & 28: The Historical Jesus presented by *Deb Kirwan*. Who was Jesus of Nazareth? We'll listen to (and discuss) three more lectures on DVD by *Professor Bart Ehrman* on *The Historical Jesus*, focusing on what we can learn about Jesus from the New Testament Gospels as well as some other Gospels that didn't make it into the Bible. Bart Ehrman (Professor of Religion at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) provides insight and always provokes lively discussion. Deb Kirwan will facilitate the discussion following the lectures.

Sunday Mornings

Regularly scheduled events

- 9:00 Coffee and Conversation, 3rd floor
9:00 Coffee in the Parlor
9:15 First Forums, 3rd floor
Bible Study, Reuben Gaylord Library
First YOUTH Forum, Pastor's Study
9:45 Nursery Care to 11:30
10:30 Service of Worship
10:45 Grand Central Stations (church
school for 3 year olds – 6th graders)
unless otherwise stated
11:30 Coffee Hour, Parlor

next newsletter deadline

Sunday, March 14th

email articles to sara@firstcentral.org

Week of Sunday, March 7

Sunday, March 7

Diaconate meeting, 9 a.m.
First Forums, 9:15 a.m., “inCommon,” Fireside Room
Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., Reuben Gaylord Library
Confirmation, noon
First YOUTH, 6 p.m.
PAALS, 6 p.m.

Monday, March 8

CrossOver Prison Ministries, 6 p.m., First Christian

Tuesday, March 9

Tai Ch'i, 11 a.m., third floor parlor
Board meetings, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 10

Computers, 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. in the Computer Station
Evergreen Thrift Shop open, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Choir, 7 p.m.

Thursday, March 11

Evergreen Thrift Shop open, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Yoga, 5:30 p.m., third floor parlor

Saturday, March 13

Evergreen Thrift Shop open, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Yoga, noon, third floor parlor
Nebraska Brass, 7:30 p.m., sanctuary

Week of Sunday, March 14

Sunday, March 14

First Forums, 9:15 a.m., “The Historical Jesus,” Fireside Room
Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., Reuben Gaylord Library
Choristers, 9:15 a.m.
Evergreen Thrift Shop, open after worship
Safe Church Policy presentation/discussion, 11:45 a.m.
First YOUTH, 6 p.m.

Monday, March 15

CrossOver Prison Ministries, 6 p.m., First Christian

Tuesday, March 16

Tai Ch'i, 11 a.m., third floor parlor

Wednesday, March 17

Computers, 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. in the Computer Station
Evergreen Thrift Shop open, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Choir, 7 p.m.

Thursday, March 18

Evergreen Thrift Shop open, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Yoga, 5:30 p.m., third floor parlor

Friday, March 19

Women's Fellowship, 12:30 p.m., Clancy's
Siena/Francis House, 4:30 p.m. – First YOUTH serving dinner

Saturday, March 20

Evergreen Thrift Shop open, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Yoga, noon, third floor parlor

Sunday, March 21

First Forums, 9:15 a.m., “The Historical Jesus,” Fireside Room
Bible Study, 9:15 a.m., Reuben Gaylord Library
Confirmation, noon
Conversational Dinners, 6-8 p.m.

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