

# THE CONGREGATIONALIST

FIRST CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ

Established 1856

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[www.firstcentral.org](http://www.firstcentral.org)

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**Please remember in your thoughts and prayers:** : family and friends of *Carrie Osborn*, who died last week; *Peg Peterson's* mother, who has been ill; *Martin Richard's* brother-in-law, *Bob Lyda*, who died last week; *Wilber Dolezal*, *Steve's* father, diagnosed with cancer, who had surgery in Chicago last week; *Nancy McEachen*, hospitalized at UNMC (no visitors, please); the *Gross-Kreuzenstein* family, on the loss of grandmother *Mary Tharp*; *Edna Kruse*, now recuperating at home.

## Feast of Light and Meditation

An alternative worship service is being offered in Memorial Hall, Wednesday evening, June 1<sup>st</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. This service centers on acts of contemplation, prayer, and song. The order and style of worship is an adaptation of the Taize worship tradition that comes from the ecumenical Community of Reconciliation at Taize in Burgundy, France. Established by Brother Roger Schutz in the closing years of the Second World War, this famous monastic community exists to work and pray for reconciliation amongst peoples of all nations and cultures. The Brothers include Protestants, Roman Catholics and Anglicans from countries all over the world.

An optional gathering for food and continued fellowship will follow at Village Inn on Dodge and Saddle Creek following the service.

## Congregational Outreach Ministry

### CrossOver Prison Ministries

It's time again for CrossOver's annual fundraiser! Bouncin' Blues and BBQ will be held Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, from 4-8 p.m. at Benson Park. Advance tickets are available for \$50 at [www.CrossOverPrisonMinistries.org](http://www.CrossOverPrisonMinistries.org). Tickets will also be available the day of the event for \$7. Come enjoy the Bounce House, live jazz, and fabulous

barbeque in the park. Keep your fingers crossed for good weather!

### Amnesty International Freedom Writers

#### *Bob Vassell*

Syria's army has been using tanks and guns to put down non-violent demonstrations since mid-March. By going to [alerts@takeaction.amnestyusa.org](mailto:alerts@takeaction.amnestyusa.org), you can sign a petition calling for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to stop the bloodshed. Thank you!

### Strengthen the Church

#### *Lou Lamberty*

On Pentecost Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, we will be taking an offering for "Strengthen the Church." Your gift builds the UCC's future now by funding the Stillspeaking Ministry, new & renewing churches, youth & young adult ministries, and lay & pastoral leadership formation.

The God is Stillspeaking Ministry spreads the message of God's extravagant welcome, reaching out especially to those who have felt there is no room for them within Christianity and the church—the excluded and alienated, the spiritually homeless, the questioning.

Please give generously to "Strengthen our Church" on June 12.

### Habitat for Humanity

#### *Fred Felger*

The Neighbor's South Coalition, of which First Central is a participant, will begin work on June 10<sup>th</sup> at 1519 S. 27<sup>th</sup> Street. Volunteers may work on Fridays and/or Saturday mornings 8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., afternoons 12:30 p.m. – 5 p.m., or both. You may indicate your preferred times on the Volunteer Form. Volunteer Forms and the Habitat and Wells Fargo Waiver Forms must be turned in asap. Volunteers between the ages of 16 and 18 will need a Parental Form, as well. These forms are available now in the Parlor. If you bring personal items to use at the build site, please make sure your name is on them. All volunteers must have their own insurance. Habitat does not carry insurance on volunteers.

Any questions? Contact *Fred Felger*, 4042-451-1105.

## Opportunities To Do Extraordinary Things

While on retreat this last weekend with our conference's lay ministry students (I'm mentoring one of them), I was finally able to finish *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World* by Jane McGonigal. I read the book not only to better understand the gaming culture that includes over 160 million Americans, but because she contends that some of the things game designers have learned should be used to organize and inspire people for global problem-solving. Was there something we could learn about organizing for ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century from these insights?

In 1975, psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi proposed a "science of happiness," a key component of which is the concept of *flow*, defined as "the satisfying, exhilarating feeling of creative accomplishment and heightened functioning." Csikszentmihalyi had concluded that the failure of most real-life institutions to provide flow was an urgent moral issue.

People desire opportunities for being deeply immersed in hard work that produces results, particularly if those results contribute to "epic wins." She writes, "What the world needs now are more epic wins: opportunities for ordinary people to do extraordinary things." Some characteristics of epic wins are that we discover we have abilities that we didn't know we had, we get better and do more, and "our possibility space expands."

Because of the complex global problems humanity currently faces, McGonigal believes that what is required is collaboration on a global scale, with a long-term vision, aimed at innovative approaches never tried before. Collaboration, she writes, "requires three distinct kinds of concerted effort: cooperating (acting purposefully toward a common goal), coordinating (synchronizing efforts and sharing resources), and co-creating (producing a novel outcome together)." The most skilled collaborators "practice possibility scanning: always remaining open and alert to unplanned opportunities and surprising insights."

Reading the book, I kept thinking that the church is an ideal institution for these new models of organization and problem-solving. The local church is a collaborative organization in that it brings together people from various backgrounds, with various skills and interests, and they work together on

common problems. The church is also a global collaborative in that local churches exist within covenant relations with denominational structures on regional, national, and international levels. Plus, we participate in ecumenical and interfaith partnerships that connect us across cultural and national boundaries. As an already collaborative organization, then, how can we best utilize the skills we learn in church to begin problem-solving in our neighborhood and globally?

As we attempt to "match members to ministry," surely these are the sorts of ideas that can help to guide us. Not just placing people on committees and boards, but finding ways that they can maximize their skills, engage their creativity, network with others, and expand their possibilities within the service and ministry of the reign of God, the most "epic win" I know of.

Peace,  
**Scott**

## Music

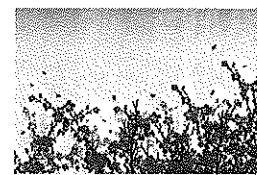
**Stephen Bouma**

The Bell Choir will be rehearsing through the month of June. My hope is that we can perform during the Sunday morning service on June 25<sup>th</sup>. I am planning to find a piece which will make it easy for beginning and completely inexperienced ringers to learn to ring. NOW is a great time for new people to try it out. We get together at 12 noon on Sundays for 30 minutes. You are definitely welcome. The only necessary thing is a relaxed and positive attitude.

## Eves

**Carolyn Baldwin**

All Eve's or interested women, start your Saturday off with a breakfast brunch in **Carolyn's Garden**. Bring a dish or breakfast item to share. Coffee and Juice will be provided. It if rains, we will dine inside. Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m., 5019 Dav-enport.



## Super Sale!

Over \$2700 of books, plants, art, and other goodies was sold at this year's sale. Many thanks for all of the hard work of so many people who made this giant effort possible! It couldn't be done without you.

## Christian Education

May 29<sup>th</sup> - Memorial Day Weekend

- No Grand Central Stations
- 11:45a.m. Youth Support Team Meeting – Resource Room – to plan for summer youth group events

## Grand Central Stations

### Summer 2011: “We are the Church together”

Do you know who makes the coffee on Sunday morning? Who sharpens the pencils in the pew pads? Who picks the music we sing? If you answered no to any of these questions, you may want to join the children in learning more about your church this summer. All of the classes (beginning around 10:45 a.m.) are open to parents, YOUth, new members, or anyone who would like to learn about the church.

**June 12, 19, 26** – Where we came from: Learn all about First Central Congregational Church – its history, the building, and the people who work here.

**July 10, 17, 24** – What we do: See how the church cares for members, our neighborhood, and supports missions worldwide.

**August 14, 21, 28** – Why we love our traditions: Learn about how the church does baptisms, communion, weddings and worship planning. We’ll conclude by planning and doing a Children’s Worship of our own.

### Coming Soon:

#### New Digs for the Elevated Track

The 4-5-6<sup>th</sup> graders will be moving to a new classroom this summer, formerly known as the Music Station, so they can have a dedicated room to display their work and leave their projects out on the tables during the week.

Their former classroom (aka the Resource Room) will become a combined music and drama station and the main meeting room for Grand Central Stations. Consolidating classrooms allows CE to centralize the church school rooms into one designated area behind the hallway fire doors, thus increasing the safety and visibility of our children. The change also frees up space in the former Drama Station for other church uses.

If you have any questions about the changes, please speak with *Peg Peterson, Nancy Schalles, or Barb Switzer.*

## First Forums: Adult Education

### May 29 -Focusing on Mission

Members of the 2010 Mission Trip will make a special presentation about Native American Life on the Pine Ridge Reservation to help our congregation understand their needs and how to best support the workers going to the Pine Ridge Reservation on July 9 to 16, 2011.

### June 5 – Gardening with Native Plants

There are good reasons our native plants got to be natives. Garden writer and First Central member *Jan Riggerbach* will explain why they are also a natural for your garden. Come and learn about some of those great plants you got from the Plant Sale!

### June 12 – Signs of the Spirit

Since the beginning of time, the Spirit has continued to be experienced in many ways in the life of individuals and communities. As Pentecost approaches, come hear *Rev. Donald Wester*, Minister of Spiritual Formation, present some introductory understandings of the creative work of the spirit in our post-modern life.

## FirstYOUth

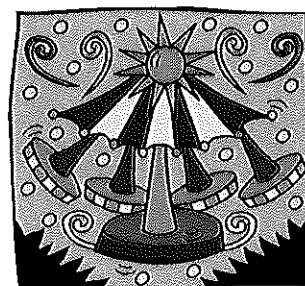
Sunday morning discussion classes are finished for the summer. FirstYOUth are invited to attend or help with any of the “We Are the Church” workshops this summer.

### Mission Trip Fundraising

**May 22 – Car Wash** netted \$153 which went towards the Mission Fund. Thanks to the **12** teens that showed and shined up those cars.

**May 29 – First Forum 9:15** – Join *Maddie Ferber* for a presentation to the Adult Education class about the 2010 Trip to the Pine Ridge.

**June 18<sup>th</sup>** – Save the date! The YOUth will be hosting a Carnival on the Patio that evening.



## Sunday Mornings

*Regularly scheduled events*

- 9:00 Coffee in the Parlor  
9:15 First Forums, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
9:15 Nursery Care to 11:45 a.m.  
10:30 Service of Worship  
10:45 Grand Central Stations (church school for Pre-K – 6<sup>th</sup> grade)  
*unless otherwise stated*  
11:30 Coffee Hour, Parlor

**next newsletter deadline**

**Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>**

email articles to [sara@firstcentral.org](mailto:sara@firstcentral.org)

## Week of Sunday, May 29

### Sunday, May 29

First Forum, First YOUth, 9:15 a.m.

### Monday, May 30

Office closed in honor of Memorial Day

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

### Tuesday, May 31

Tai Chi, 11:30 a.m., third floor parlor

Council, 7 p.m., Fireside Room

### Wednesday, June 1

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

Feast of Light, 5:45 p.m., Memorial Hall

Sanctuary Choir, 7 p.m.

### Thursday, June 2

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

### Friday, June 3

Nebraska Conference Annual Meeting, Crete, NE

(through Sunday)

### Saturday, June 4

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

Eves, brunch at Carolyn's, 10 a.m.

Yoga, 10 a.m., third floor parlor

## Week of Sunday, June 5

### Sunday, June 5

First Forum, 9:15 a.m.

No Grand Central Stations of YOUth classes

Food Pantry Sunday

Bell Choir, noon, back balcony

### Monday, June 6

Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m.

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

### Tuesday, June 7

Sewing Team, 9 a.m., Art Station

Tai Chi, 11:30 a.m., third floor parlor

### Wednesday, June 8

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

Sanctuary Choir, 7 p.m.

### Thursday, June 8

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

### Saturday, June 11

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

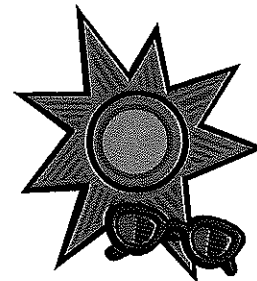
Yoga, 10 a.m., third floor parlor

CrossOver Prison Ministries fundraiser, 1-8 p.m.

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