First Central Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Congregationalist

Volume 18, Issue 23 **www.firstcentral.org** **June 12, 2014**

Please remember in your thoughts and prayers:

Bill Switzer, celebrating the 35th anniversary of his ordination; ***Dr. Merle McAlevy***, retiring from UNMC after 42 years of practice; ***Scott & Kathy Hoyt*** as they celebrate the birth of granddaughter ***Isadora James Hoyt***, born May 13th to ***Victoria Hoyt & James Ahern; Pat MacKenzie***, now at home.

Celebrations

Your support of First Central's ministry is changing lives:

- On Wednesday, May 21 during Omaha Gives, First Central received 77 donations totaling $60,430. Also, many of our ministry partners—CrossOver, Together, Habitat, Siena/Francis House raised significant portions as well. Our theme, developed by ***Mark Winn***, was "When Omaha Gives, First Central Gives Back." Every hour, on social media, Mark posted a different way that we give back to the community. It was a fantastic way for more people to learn about our congregation and all the things we do.
- Thank you to ***Gary McConnell*** and Sam Pfeifer for working so hard to beautify our outdoor spaces.

Sustainability – How do we get involved?

Kerrie Kleppin-Winn

There's been a lot a talk these days about "sustainability." And maybe you are wondering, "Just what the heck does that even mean?" Well, plan to attend the First Forum on June 15th when the Rev. Kim Morrow will dive into this topic for us, so you can learn more.

In April three members of First Central attended the Creation Care for Congregations workshop in Lincoln, moderated by Rev. Morrow. We spent the entire day learning some of the in's and out's of how we, as a church and as individuals, can take better care of the planet, of our resources, and of each other, in the process. (It was an amazing day!)

If things like reducing waste, recycling, efficiently using electricity and other natural resources are of interest to you, after the First Forum we'll be looking for volunteers to start our own Sustainability Team. Hope to see you there!

From Your Parish Nurse

Sue Cassiday

Father's Day is on the 3rd Sunday this month, so there will not be a Caring for your Elders meeting. The next meeting will be **July 20th**.

NAMIWalks in Omaha is this weekend, Saturday **June 14th** at Elmwood Park. Check-in time is 9:00 a.m. For more information, please contact ***Mary Thunker***, 402-640-8196 or ***Jen Genzler***, 402-640-4582. I thought this would be a great follow-up to our focus this past Sunday on Mental Illness Awareness. Through NAMIWalks' public, active display of support for people affected by mental illness, they are changing how Americans view persons with a mental illness.

Upcoming plans include:

1)Two summer Forums - one a panel of Health Team members, on **July 27th**, sharing our experiences of caring for our elders and offering ideas and resources; the other Forum will be a speaker from Immanuel Pathways PACE program.

2) Hosting a Lifesaving Party which is a fun (and FREE) way for anyone 12-years-old or older to learn the skills needed to save a life. Certification is available but not required at the end of the class. Tentative date is Saturday morning, **July 26th**.

3) Hosting a Blood Drive with a tentative date of **September 14th**, the Sunday after Homecoming Sunday.

4) Providing Diabetic foot checks and foot care with toenail trimming. No specific plans yet on this.

A Confirmation

On Confirmation Sunday, May 18, we not only confirmed nine incredible young people, we confirmed a few other things—vision, hard work, generosity, and accessibility for all. What am I talking about? I'm talking about our newly remodeled chancel.

After the worship service, ***Sam Pfeifer*** said to me, "You could have never had all those people on the old chancel like that." He was right.

There was an amazing moment when all nine confirmands were lined up across the platform and behind them were family and mentors. We had removed most of the chancel furniture in order to have a wide open space where everyone could fit and the congregation could see. It made for a beautiful image. The wide open steps surrounding the platform also meant that all those folk got up and down easily.

And did you notice something else? The ramp was used. You may not know that ***Grant Switzer*** does not like steps, and never liked the height of the former chancel. Because of that, Grant was never on the platform before. Whenever we did something that included Grant, we accommodated his needs and did it on the floor in front of the chancel.

But on Confirmation Sunday Grant was on the chancel. Because it is lower, it is easier for him, plus he didn't have to take the steps. He used the ramp.

So, if there was still anyone out there wondering why we went to all the trouble the last few years to design these changes, raise the money to fund them, and then go through all the inconveniences of the construction, I hope Confirmation Sunday settled it for them. All our youth were able to participate fully in worship and commit themselves to be members of the church.

Once the railings are installed, we will have a big rededication of the space and a celebration of completing the project. You won't want to miss it.

Peace,
Scott

Lectionary Texts

Week of June 8: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20.
Week of June 15: Genesis 21:8-21; Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17; Psalm 69:7-10, 16-18; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 1-:24-39.

Community Meal *Rita Grossenstein*

Summer is here! We are going to have our next Community Meal at First Baptist on Harney and Park Ave on **June 22nd** . The meal is served at 11 a.m. We are going with a picnic theme this time. We are serving hamburgers, baked beans, potato salad, and we will get fresh fruit from Trader Joes. For dessert we are asking for *donations to get ice cream bars.* (Look for the jar during Coffee Hour) We are excited for this meal because we will serving this one outside as long as weather permits. We will need volunteers on Saturday to help get everything set up, and get the hamburgers going. I know we can get into the church at 9 a.m., and will need people (if you can't come early) to stay and help with the clean-up. Thanks to all of the help and donations for this wonderful outreach program.

Heartland Pride *Rita & Tina Grossenstein*

It is Pride celebration time! This year's theme is FREE To Be ME. We will start off the festivities with the parade in Council Bluffs at 9th Ave and South Main St. We will have a vehicle that we will walk beside or behind. The excitement continues as we go to Stinson Park at Aksarben Village for more fun and entertainment. We will have a booth at the park, where we can tell people about our amazing church and our OPEN DOOR mission. We will need volunteers for the parade and for the booth. Please call Rita or Tina for details at 402-960-8808 or 402-960-8809. Thank for your help.

Need a Ride?

If you need a ride to church, we'd love to help! Please call ***Allan Bucknam*** (402-393-7092) for the current schedule

CrossOver Prison Ministries

Rev. Jeannie Bates

Back Packs! were picked up this week to be available to people in prison, who are either changing facilities or about to be released, in need of start-up supplies for self-care. Thank you so much to so many who gave so generously.

UCC NE Conference - Shout Outs! are two minute opportunities to share with statewide participants at the end of each plenary session of the annual meeting. CrossOver was the focus of two shout outs Friday and Saturday night, sharing with churches across the state about how they can participate in this important outreach. The most interest shown was from outstate churches whose members can easily contribute as CrossOver Correspondents and agree to include prison ministry in their missions budgets.

Outreach in the Omaha Area - there are however, many opportunities available for those living in the greater Omaha area. At this time we are encouraging individuals or a team of friends, a family or small group willing to serve once a month (or twelve teams one time a year) or in some areas (worship) twice a year. Here is a sample of the most timely needs:

- Transporting people from the work release center to First Christian Church Mondays or Tuesdays; vans available.
- Preparing a simple meal for 20, Monday nights; reimbursement provided with receipts.
- Monday Night Meal Coordinator: keeping the calendar, receiving meals, helping with set up, serving and clean up (these could be two different teams).
- Bible Study or Worship Leader Inside and Outside groups: resources provided if needed; training for inside provided by DOC after first one time visit.
- CrossOver Correspondents: 45 people waiting for a correspondent; training and coordination makes it safe.
- Board of Directors: we envision at least half of our Board being administrative only (cp to 'working board' members wearing several hats).
- Treasurer: coordinate finances in conjunction with our wonderful bookkeeper ***Alice Love***.
- Media/Publishers: Card creators and publishers, Newsletter designers/mailers, Web site coordinator/editor - these would all be separate teams.
- Family and Friends of Inmates: our advocacy group is looking for people interested in helping with a statewide publication, Nebraska Criminal Justice Review, such as writers or researchers, educating the public for prison reform.

Thank you for you prayerful consideration of these wonderful opportunities. Then contact us for a CrossOver Volunteer Application so we can find a good fit for your interests, gifts and abilities! **jbates48@juno.com**, 402-556-6793.

Women's Fellowship

Joan Eddy

Women's Fellowship will have their annual Planning Meeting on Friday, **June 27th**, at 10 a.m. All women are welcome. Please come and bring ideas for programs for next year.

Conversational Dinners

The next Conversational Dinner, scheduled for Sunday, **June 22nd**, has been cancelled due to scheduling issues. The next Dinners will be held this fall.

If you've never been to a Dinner before, it is a wonderful way to get better acquainted with others in the congregation. After you RSVP, you'll be "assigned" to a host home. You will be asked to bring part of the meal, like a salad, a side dish, or a dessert. There are usually around 8-10 people at the meal (adults only, please). It really is a great way to build relationships with other members of the congregation.

Watch the newsletter or bulletin for the fall date. We hope to see you at dinner!

Grand Central Stations

Children ages 4 to 12 are escorted from worship after the Children's Conversation and returned to their parents during Coffee Hour in the parlor.

June 15, 22, 29 – During the summer, classes will continue in the Orange curriculum, adjusted for our multi-age group.

This past year, we've enjoyed taking kids through a contextual look at God's One Big Story. We've traveled through the Bible covering the familiar stories of Abraham and Joseph, Moses and King David. We made it all the way to Jesus, Paul, and the start of the early church.

The church school theme for June and July is Friendship. Friendship is treating others the way you want to be treated. Each week, we'll take a look at a "one another" principle that gives us a framework for loving others the way God loved us. Because these verses are short, we suggest that you take this summer to memorize each one. The first week's memory verse is: "*Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we should also love one another.*" 1 John 4:11, NirV.

From Godtime Card June, Week 1, Day 1:
Read 1 John 4:10-12

So many times when we think of love, we think of hearts—pink and red and kind of frilly. But that's not really love. In fact, the Bible teaches us that the biggest example of love was Jesus coming to earth to transform our hearts to be welcoming and accepting of all people. That's not exactly something you'd find on a heart- shaped card on Valentine's Day. In the list below, unscramble the words to find ways we can show others we love them, even without glitter.

EROIFGV MHET
PLEH TWHI OCSREH
ASY NATKH UOY
LPYA ACCHT
ESRAH
KEBA IKOCOSE
LTE MHTE OG FTRIS
RWEIT A KAHTN UOY ENTO

Thank God for showing us what love really looks like.

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If you would like to receive more of these ideas from our church school curriculum each week, let ***Elizabeth Wearin*** know: **elizabeth@firstcentral.org.**

First Youth

Saturday, June 15: In-house movie event at ***Malakhi's*** house, 12-4 p.m., 10913 Arlington PL #1630.

Sunday, June 22: Bible Study, 12-2 p.m. Youth Room.

Thursday, June 26-Sunday, June 29: Canoe Quest.

Young Children at Church

For your convenience, childcare is available in the Nursery from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. However, your child is always welcome to stay in worship with you. There is also a rocking chair in the Narthex (entry) in the south corner.

VBS – Vacation Bible School

We are having Vacation Bible School the **week of July 20th**, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. It will be a joint program with *Metropolitan Community Church*, and will be held at their church (they have a great yard!). Interested families and teachers should contact ***Elizabeth Wearin***. Remember how much fun you had at Bible School when you were little?

First Forum – Adult Education

9:15-10:15 a.m. in the Third Floor Parlor

June 15: Sustainability

Kim Morrow, Minister of Sustainability at First-Plymouth UCC, Lincoln, will speak about steps a church can take to improve our environmental response.

June 22 Civil Rights Act of 1964

Kent Kirwan, Member of First Central, Emeritus Professor of History UNO. Kent will describe the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1964, a landmark piece of legislation.

Movie Night

Join us on Tuesday, **June 17th** at 7 p.m. to watch *Groundhog Day* in the Third Floor Parlor. Afterwards, we'll discuss it from a theological point of view. Bring your snacks!

One More Graduate

Congratulations to ***Jared Dimon***, who graduated from Omaha North High School, and will be attending UNO.

Sunday Mornings

Regularly scheduled events

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

next newsletter deadline
Sunday, June 22nd
email articles to sara@firstcentral.org

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Week of June 15

Sunday, June 15
Congregational Outreach Ministry, 9 a.m., Family Room
First Forum, 9:15 a.m., Third Floor Parlor
Bells, 9:45 a.m., back balcony
Summer Choir, 10 a.m., Sanctuary
Omaha Chamber Music, 3 p.m., Sanctuary

Monday, June 16
Staff meeting, 11 a.m., Pastor's Study
CrossOver Prison Ministries, 6 p.m., First Christian Church

Tuesday, June 17
Movie Night, 7 p.m., Third Floor Parlor

Wednesday, June 18
Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Thursday, June 19
Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Friday, June 20
Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Siena/Francis House, 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 21
Community Meal, 9:30 a.m., First Baptist
Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Week of June 22

Sunday, June 22
First Forum, 9:15 a.m., Third Floor Parlor
Summer Choir, 10 a.m., Sanctuary
First Youth, 12 – 2 p.m., Youth Room
Omaha Chamber Music, 3 p.m., Sanctuary
Conversational Dinners, 6-8 p.m.

Monday, June 23
Staff meeting, 11 a.m., Pastor's Study
CrossOver Prison Ministries, 6 p.m., First Christian Church

Wednesday, June 25
Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Thursday, June 26
Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Youth to Canoe Quest (through Sunday)

Friday, June 27
Women's Fellowship, 10 a.m., Parlor
Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Saturday, June 28
Evergreen Thrift Shop, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Heartland Pride at Aksarben Village

MEMORIAL GIFTS

First Central gratefully acknowledges memorials and gifts given from November 2013 – May 2014

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