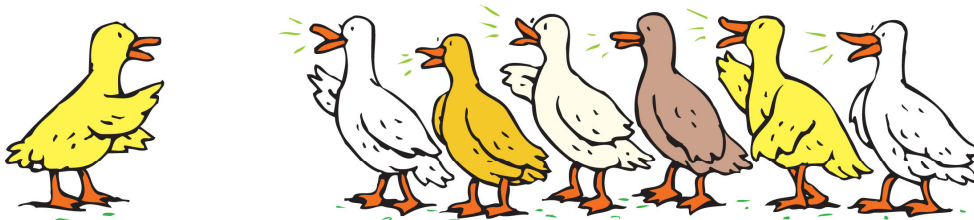


First Congregational Messenger  
First Congregational United Church of Christ  
1102 W. Norfolk Ave.  
Norfolk, NE 68701  
402-371-0701

firstcongoucc@fastmail.com  
*Serving God with love and faith*



# ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of First Congregational UCC will be held on Sunday, April 18 following the worship service. All members are encouraged to attend. Masks are still encouraged as not everyone has been vaccinated yet.

April 2021

Volume 5, Issue 78

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## Pastor's Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 10-4

Other times by appointment

May be out of the office for  
meetings or visits



## Office Hours

### Office Hours

Mon- Fri

8-12

## New Life

*“Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” -John 12:24*

Jesus’ followers were not pleased to hear predictions of doom. Who would want to hear that Jesus’ death was about to happen? In the midst of this distressing news, Jesus also gives them words of hope by comparing his death to planting a seed of wheat.

In her book, *Quaker Queries for All Seasons*, Charity Kemper Sandstrom offers this question to ponder:

“Am I willing to let go of seeds, allow them to be planted, and grow to produce a harvest?”

To consider what in our lives must die in order for us to grow and allow God to plant a fresh new spirit in us is not easy. It involves a tough wrestling with our priorities and making hard choices. Knowing that Jesus was fully human, allows us to imagine that he wrestled in his last days. About his approaching death, Jesus said to his disciples, “Now I am deeply troubled. What should I say? ‘Father, save me from this time’? No, for this is the reason I have come to this time.’... (John 12:27)

Strength comes from knowing that resurrection, new life, is the assured outcome of this painful process. About our lives, one friend of mine is fond of repeating, “Dying and rising, dying and rising”.

In this part of the country, seasons change--thank God for that! Our spiritual lives go through seasons, too. As the church enters the Easter season, we are reminded, that death is not the end of the story. We can trust God’s promises of resurrection, new life, every day.

*Peace, Pastor Jackie*



### Holy Week 2021

**April 1 Maundy Thursday with Communion**, 5:30pm FCUCC  
(not a joint service due to Covid-19)

**April 4 Easter Worship with Communion**, 10:15am (no Sunday School)

## What I learned at the Covid-19 Event



The recent March 24<sup>th</sup> *Covid-19 Information and Registration Event* was a timely opportunity to gather information.

City of Norfolk Communications Manager, Candace Schmidt, reported on Facebook that the event shared information about the COVID vaccines with over fifty people (in-person and online). They had nearly 100 individuals throughout the day come sign up and helped register hundreds more on the state database.

The event involved many community partners and volunteers including: Norfolk Area Community Foundation, Northeast Community College, Elkhorn Logan Valley Health Department (ELVHD), Mayor's Diversity Council Members, Norfolk Library and local media partners helped to get the word out.

Presenter Melanie Thompson of the Elkhorn Logan Valley Health District gave an open and honest talk about the vaccine and raised concerns that people may have. I appreciated the tone of the event and amount of information. The health department marked two major points:

- If you live or work in the Norfolk Area, we want you to get vaccinated.
- As part of your decision as whether to get vaccinated, you need to do your research by going to CDC and other trusted medical websites, and to talk with your doctor if you have concerns.

The speaker went into some depth about *variants* (what causes them and how widespread they are). She spoke about the percentages of people that may get sick after they have been fully vaccinated. No vaccine claims 100% efficacy, but all three vaccines are effective at preventing hospitalization and death. They still don't know much about how the disease is spread by those vaccinated.

As the vaccine works, it will often make people sick for a day or two after. It usually takes several hours for symptoms to appear. A person must weigh the effects of the vaccine versus the disease of Covid-19.

Emergency Response Coordinator Thompson explained the differences between the three approved vaccines made with mRNA (Moderna and Pfizer),

and the one using a Vector design (Johnson & Johnson) and the issues around both.

Right now, you don't have a choice of vaccine (perhaps one day we may), she said. The only way you may find out in advance, is to call the pharmacy to ask what brand they are currently using.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, pharmacies will have to use the State of Nebraska Registration System accessed through [vaccinate.ne.gov](https://vaccinate.ne.gov) This is how everyone who wants a vaccine in Nebraska will register.

At the event, we learned how to use the registration portal, which allowed us to help register folk at the library. I had volunteered through the Mayor's Diversity Council. Both NECC and the library donated laptops and notebooks for the event. Melanie recommended people register even if they are on the fence; they can always decline the shot when they are offered time slots to receive one. Register and do your homework, she advised.

You don't need insurance or an ID to register. There are no out of pocket costs to get the vaccine. The State determines the priorities about who gets the shot. The health department will email you when they have openings. If you don't have email, you work with the State and someone will call you.

What if a person has allergies? Melanie's advice is to talk with your doctor, or pharmacy. Every nurse will talk with you before they give the shot. There are meds you don't want to be taking before receiving an injection, so talk with your doctor or pharmacy.

I was surprised to learn that children (even babies) can be registered. When there is an opening in their age group, the family will be notified.

Locally, ELVHD is aiming for 65% herd immunity; higher is better. They still don't know how long the vaccine is good for before they recommend boosters.

More takeaways: In Nebraska, all people have access to a vaccine. The sooner there is widespread vaccination, the faster we will reach herd immunity. If you would like help in registering for the vaccine, Susan Allyn or I will be glad to help you register.

*Peace, Pastor Jackie*



## Youth Outreach

Thanks to those who helped make (50) "St. Patties" treat bags for the residents at Countryside Home in Madison!

**Let Love Flow!** Thanks to those who donated to OGHS, one of five special offerings for the United Church of Christ. We raised \$267. This year, the UCC is promoting and assisting access to clean water.



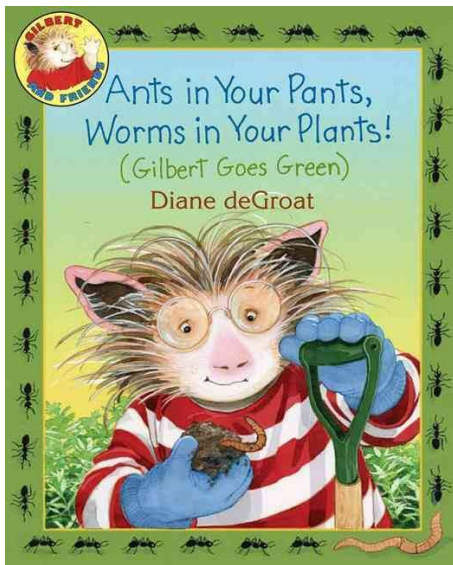
## Blessings for Graduates

Adam Gamerl and Taylor Rossman will graduate from Norfolk Senior High this spring! This year, the congregation is invited to bless them by praying for them every day in April and drop notes of blessing, well wishes, and cards into their 'blessing boxes' at the church. We will present their boxes to them on the

church's celebration of Graduation Sunday, May 9 (Mother's Day).

Please pick up a date (or 2) on which you will personally pray throughout the day for Taylor and Adam. There will be index cards on the table in the Narthex this month – just pick one or two up next time you are in church. OR, call Sue in the office and she will give you a date.

Since we can't gather for cake this year, Covid-19 season invites us to find new ways to celebrate important milestones.



Book Club will continue on April 14 with *Ants in Your Pants, Worms in Your Plants!* by D. deGroat. Jane Uzzell will have the book if you are interested.

The Synovec family would like to thank you for the cards, kind words, and messages of sympathy given to us during the illness and death of our nephew, Derrick. It was all greatly appreciated. He will be missed by his family and all who knew him.

Thanks for Caring



# APRIL



## Birthdays

- 4th Adam Gamerl
- 5th Jane Uzzell
- 18th Henry Gamerl
- 21st Katie Gamerl

## Anniversaries

- 16th Rick and Jill Waterbury



**April 4**

**Easter**

**Communion:** Tom McConnell and Evonne Burkink

**Ushers:** Suzan Podliska and Barb Koenig

**Greeters:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**Reader:** Kay Neuharth

**Leader:** Chuck Balsiger

**Flowers:** Lilies

**April 11**

**Ushers:** Terry Hamilton and Verletta Olson

**Greeters:** Karen Allyn and Barb Koenig

**Reader:** Kay Neuharth

**Flowers:**

**April 18      Annual Meeting**

**Ushers:** Bonnie Dewell and Rita Woodard

**Greeters:** Tom McConnell and Mike Synovec

**Reader:** Randy Neuharth

**Flowers:** Erik and Katie Gamerl

**April 25**

**Ushers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Greeters:** Ed Lindsay and Chuck Balsiger

**Reader:** Tom McConnell

**Flowers:**

**May 2**

**Communion:** Ben Uzzell and Susan Surber

**Ushers:** Tom McConnel and Ed Lindsay

**Greeters:** Jane and Cole Uzzell

**Reader:** Ben Uzzell

**Leader:** Susan Allyn

**Flowers:**

**May 9**

**Ushers:** Ben and Stacie Uzzell

**Greeters:** Bonnie Dewell and Susan Surber

**Reader:** Verletta Olson

**Flowers:**

**May 16**

**Ushers:** Jane Uzzell and Cole Uzzell

**Greeters:** Ben and Stacie Uzzell

**Reader:** Chuck Balsiger

**Flowers:**

**May 23**

**Ushers:** Susan Surber and Mike Synovec

**Greeters:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Reader:** Karen Allyn

**Flowers:** Jane Uzzell

**May 30**

**Ushers:** Rita Woodard and Evonne Burkink

**Greeters:** Mike Synovec and Ed Lindsay

**Reader:** Kay Neuharth

**Flowers:** Scott and Lori Williams

Please notify the office if you are not able to attend a service.

# March

From 3/1/21 through 3/31/21

## Checking account information

Beginning balance	\$ 430.61
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$ 267.00
Lilies	\$ 42.00
<u>Weekly deposits</u>	<u>\$ 10,071.00</u>
Subtotal	\$ 10,800.97
Salary	--\$ 6,678.42
Church Maintenance	—\$ 2,616.62
Office Expenses	—\$ 479.13
Renner's	—\$ 755.00
<u>OCWM</u>	<u>—\$ 149.00</u>
Final Balance	\$ 122.80



Linaje Escogido \$900.00 was deposited in Madison County Bank.



# ▶ April 2021

**Sun**      **Mon**      **Tue**      **Wed**      **Thu**      **Fri**      **Sat**

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				1	2	3
				Maundy Thursday service 5:30 PM		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Easter 10:15 Worship		5:30 Girl Scouts	10 Worship Ministry		1-3 FH Delphians	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	7 PM Fellowship Hall Girl Scouts	5:30 Girl Scouts	10 Book Club			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Annual Meeting		5:30 Girl Scouts 7 Unity Council				
25	26	27	28	29	30	
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Youth 2-3:30 at Northeast Animal Shelter		5:30 Girl Scouts				

# ▶ May 2021

**Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat**

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1

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2                  3                  4                  5                  6                  7                  8

9 Sunday  
School  
10:15 Worship

5:30 Girl  
Scouts  
7 Girl Scouts  
Fellowship  
Hall

10 Worship  
Ministry

9                  10                  11                  12                  13                  14                  15

9 Sunday  
School  
10:15 Worship

5:30 Girl  
Scouts

10 Book Club

16                  17                  18                  19                  20                  21                  22

10:15 Worship

5:30 Girl  
Scouts

23                  24                  25                  26                  27                  28                  29

10:15 Worship

5:30 Girl  
Scouts

30                  31

10:15 Worship