

First Congregational Messenger  
 First Congregational United Church of Christ  
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*Serving God with love and faith*



August 2023  
 Volume 5, Issue 106



Celebrating the contributions of  
**G. Tom "Doc" Surber, MD**

*Please join us for a room dedication service in honor of  
 Doc Surber to celebrate his commitments to*

**Leadership** in establishing the emergency medicine program at Northeast.

**Generosity** in funding several scholarships and a student emergency fund.

**Service** as a member of the Northeast Foundation Board.

We will be forever grateful to **Doc Surber** for the impact he has made.

AUGUST 10, 2023 | 1:00 - 1:30 P.M.  
 LIFELONG LEARNING CENTER  
 NORTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
 REFRESHMENTS AND DESSERT PROVIDED

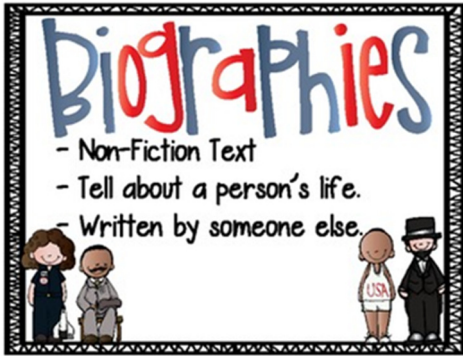
Pastor's pages	2-4
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Monday-Thursday 10-4  
 Other times by appointment  
 May be out of the office for  
 meetings or visits



**Office Hours**  
 Monday-Friday  
 8-12

# Biography



I entered Eden Theological Seminary twenty years ago this month. When I began my education, my mentor and former pastor, Rev. Galen Peckham, said, “Read biographies”. He told me how he loved reading stories about the lives of people; not only are they entertaining, but they help us reflect on our own lives.

This summer, I have had the pleasure of mentoring a new pastor in the area. Most basic to a pastor’s education is a class on healthy relationships. We have been using a curriculum designed for clergy from the Faith Trust Institute designed to foster accountable and responsible leadership and healthy communities. Recently, we completed the section on self-care. In it was a list of ways leaders might care for themselves in healthy ways. One of the suggestions included: “Read a book every month.”

The sentence prompted me to reflect on how often I read a book for pleasure; it was not once a month. I probably read three books a year for pleasure. But, as I began to list the books I have read in the past ten years, many of these were either biographies or autobiographies.

To my delight, many of the autobiographies were written by my friends. Some of the best included pastor and poet, Mary Avidano’s memoir about three generations of her family: *In the House of I Am*. Nicola Mendenhall, a friend from Des Moines, wrote a unique memoir centered on her years in psychoanalysis titled *Fear, Folly, and Freud: A Psychotherapist in Psychoanalysis*.

After realizing that I wanted to read more books, I recently visited the Biography section of our public library. Displayed on a shelf was the book *Speak, Okinawa* by Elizabeth Miki Brina. The book was not about a famous person, and I knew nothing about Okinawa, so I checked it out. The author is the child of a Vietnam veteran and his Okinawan war bride.

The heartbreaking histories of Okinawa and the author's family are shocking, yet the humanity of the characters shines through. In a 2015 CBS Sunday morning interview with Jerry Seinfeld, the comedian said, "I don't want to be spared the grime." Most biographies that I have enjoyed have been a combination of grime and purity. After all, isn't this part of the human condition?

It seems to me that *The Bible* has a combination of grime and purity. It holds stories of how people experienced God. Their testimonies (Old and New Testaments) reveal the character of God through God's work in creation, provision, judgment, deliverance, covenant, and God's promises.

*The Bible's* account of the whole course of Jesus life, death, and resurrection shows us how people experienced God in their time, in the light of God's nature, justice, faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Does your summer reading include any biographies? You might enjoy browsing the Biography section at the library!

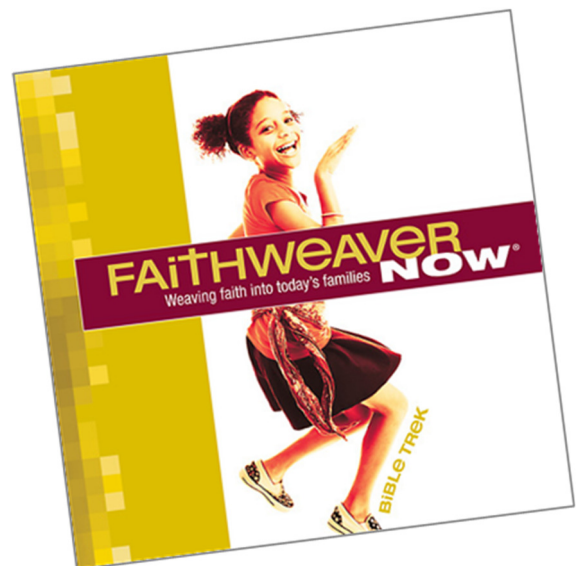
*Peace, Pastor Jackie*

### **New Curriculum for Sunday School**

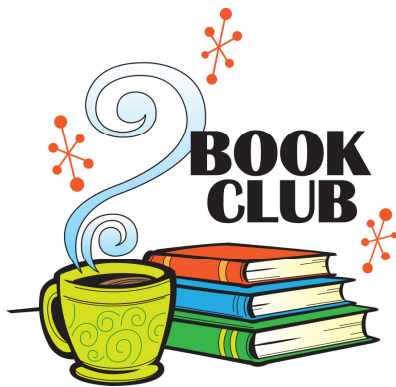
In July, the church ordered *Faithweaver NOW* lesson plans for Grades 5-6 and Middle/Jr. High age children. Since 2016, our teachers have been using *Whole People of God* curriculum created by the United Church of Canada. This summer the publishing house announced that they were discontinuing the series.

After a review of various curriculum, Darlene Korthals, Susan Allyn, and Pastor Jackie chose *Faithweaver NOW*.

Evaluations of materials reflect thoughts of theology, education, ease of use, and price.







Book Club will meet August 9 at 10 AM. *Locomotive* by Brian Floca. The books can be found in Fellowship Hall or you can contact Jane Uzzell.

Do you go grocery shopping? At Lou's? At HyVee? **We have an easy way to bump up your donation to the church budget**--use a Lou's or HyVee gift card when you go shopping or get gas. You can buy them **Sundays** in Fellowship Hall. We currently get \$25, \$50 and \$100 gift cards.

See you at the table in Fellowship Hall! Please help out. The gift cards fit right in your billfold by your dollar bills, so it's even easy to remember to use them when you go to pay for your groceries. Questions? Leave a message for Jane Uzzell at (402)640-6623.



## AUGUST Birthdays & Anniversaries

2nd Garry Podliska

6th Ginge Dudley

### Anniversaries

2nd Randy and Kay Neuharth

10th Ben and Stacie Uzzell

15th Stan and Vicki Staab

16th Tom and Susan Surber

29th Chuck and Kathy Balsiger



### **August 6**

**Communion:** Brian Seier and Ben Uzzell

**Ushers:** Stacie and Reese Uzzell

**Greeters:** Grace Uzzell and Charlene Fosdick

**Reader:** Kay Neuharth

**Leader:** Randy Neuharth

**Flowers:** Garry and Suzan Podliska

### **August 13**

**Ushers:** Barb Koenig and Verletta Olson

**Greeters:** Evonne Burkink and Bonnie Dewell

**Reader:** Lori Williams

**Flowers:** Susan Surber

### **August 20**

**Ushers:** Ben and Grace Uzzell

**Greeters:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**Reader:** Reese Uzzell

**Flowers:**

### **August 27**

**Ushers:** Charlene Fosdick and Rita Woodard

**Greeters:** Ben and Stacie Uzzell

**Reader:** Verletta Olson

**Flowers:** Karen Allyn



### **September 3**

**Communion:** Charlene Fosdick and Evonne Burkink

**Ushers:** Suzan Podliska and Brian Seier

**Greeters:** Randy and Kay Neuharth

**Reader:** Randy Neuharth

**Leader:** Ben Uzzell

**Flowers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

### **September 10 Rally Day**

**Ushers:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**Greeters:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Reader:** Ben Uzzell

**Flowers:** Erik and Katie Gamerl

### **September 17**

**Ushers:** Jane Uzzell and Mike Synovec

**Greeters:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Reader:** Brian Seier

**Flowers:** Scott and Lori Williams

### **September 24**

**Ushers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Greeters:** Tom McConnell and Suzan Podliska

**Reader:** Scott Williams

**Flowers:**

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

# July

From 7/1/23 through 7/31/23

Does not include the deposit for 7-30

## Checking account information

Beginning balance	\$ 1,553.51
<u>Weekly deposits</u>	<u>\$ 8,639.81</u>
Subtotal	\$ 10,193.32
Salary	--\$ 8,318.62
Church Maintenance	—\$ 1,177.89
Office Expenses	—\$ 469.29
Insurance	—\$ 1042.20
Substitute Organist	—\$ 70.00
Worship Ministry	—\$ 178.00
Scholarship	—\$ 500.00
Continuing Education	—\$ 70.00
<u>Renner's</u>	<u>—\$ 500.00</u>
<b>Final Balance</b>	<b>—\$ 2,132.68</b>



# ▶ August 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
10:15 Worship Renewed Hope 4-7 FH		5:30 PM Girl Scouts	10 Book club			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
10:15 Worship		NPS begins				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
10:15 Worship		5:30 PM Girl Scouts				
27	28	29	30	31		
10:15 Worship						

# ► September 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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					1	2
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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10:15 Worship  
Renewed Hope  
4-7 FH

10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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Rally Day  
9 Sunday  
School  
10:15 Worship

5:30 PM Girl  
Scouts 10 Book club

17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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9 Sunday  
School  
10:15 Worship

24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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5:30 PM Girl  
Scouts