

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



November 2022

Volume 5, Issue 97

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**November 23** Thanksgiving Eve  
Service @ 5:30 pm at FCUCC  
(A joint service with First Presbyterian,  
Trinity, and FCUCC)

Monday-Thursday 10-4  
Other times by appointment  
May be out of the office for  
meetings or visits



Pastor's  
Office Hours



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

**Loving Is Who We Are  
Joint Annual Meeting 2022,  
October 9-11, Sioux City, IA**

Five years ago, our three conferences voted to join as a “Tri-Conference” to share work and resources. This was a new experiment within the United Church of Christ. Shortly after, in Nebraska, Rev. Roddy Dunkerson retired leaving a big gap of about a year plus before Rev. Darrell Goodwin served Nebraska churches for a couple years before moving to SE New England.

Meanwhile, Covid-19 happened which restricted travel of the Conference staff, and we and other local churches didn’t have much of a chance to meet the new staff in person. Over that period, I began to feel more disconnected from the wider church. I continued giving to Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM), but I wondered:

*How will the covenant between local churches and the wider church last,  
if we don’t see faces or get to know those serving the wider church?*

These recent changes have helped me to reconnect and have given me hope for our IA, NE, SD Conferences:

- Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones (Omaha) September visit to our church;
- The Conference inviting our church to share a video at the meeting (created by Sara Putters with help from FCUCC and Linaje Escogido);
- The hiring of Rev. Phil Hart as Executive Minister (He did a good job as Interim to the Illinois Conference when I served in Moline);
- Reconnecting with friends and meeting new ones at the in-person meeting in Sioux City in October;
- A well-organized meeting with good speakers and worship.

At opening ceremonies, we were asked, “What is your hope for the joint gathering?” Mine was to feel reconnected to my wider church. God answered my prayer, and I’m grateful for the clergy and lay-leaders who also participated in the annual gathering.

In addition, the Conferences of IA, NE, and SD are suffering financially. As the treasurer was out sick, Phil Hart was asked to report on the financial state of the Conferences. He has only been serving for 2 ½ months, but he was clear that if the Conferences continued to draw \$40,000/year from savings, we would be bankrupt in 2 ½ years. Hard news. The Conferences were growing, giving from churches was going down, and for several years, this has been the practice.

*(continued next page...)*

No more. The problem is now in the light of day. Phil and the Board recommended that we vote on the budget for 3 months, and then return to the 2018 budget. This will mean changes in conference staff and restructuring. The good news is that the Associate Conference Ministers will go back to the previous model of serving the state where they reside.

Please pray for Phil, Sarah and all our IA, NE and SD staff that God guide us as we move through a tough challenge. I thank God, for the new staff we have, and will do what I can to support them, and I ask the church to do the same, because “love is who we are”. –Peace, Pastor Jackie



**Iowa, Nebraska & South Dakota Conferences staff – (Left to right)**

Back row:

Rev. Kendi Miller Associate Conference Minister (ACM-Iowa); Rev. Phil Hart-Interim Executive Minister; Rev. Samantha Houser (ACM-South Dakota); Aidan Spencer, Communications Specialist.

Front row:

Jane Estrada, Search & Call Admin. Specialist; Kim Springer, Executive Assistant; Kelsey Plummer, Admin. Specialist for Ministerial Authorization and Congregational Well-Being; Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones (ACM-Nebraska).



## **What going on in worship in November?**

- 11/6** Remembrance Sunday (All Saints)
- 11/13** National Donor Sabbath
- 11/20** Reign of Christ
- 11/23** Thanksgiving Eve Service @ 5:30 pm at FCUCC  
(A joint service with First Presbyterian, Trinity, and FCUCC)
- 11/27** Hanging of the Greens immediately after worship



**Register to be an organ donor** when you get your driver's license or at <https://liveonnebraska.org/register/>

More than 90% of individuals surveyed across the country stated that they registered their donation decision through their local DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles). DMV and Driver License Partner staff are the people on the front lines of service who have helped 165 million people across the country to register their decision to be a deceased organ, eye and tissue donor.





## Living Waters Association ▪

Greetings in the name of Christ!

The Council of The Living Waters Association Nebraska Conference United Church of Christ invites you to gather together for our annual fall gathering. Pierce United Church of Christ will host an in-person fall gathering **Saturday, November 12, 2022**. Coffee and rolls will be offered beginning at 9:30 am with events beginning by 10:00. The day will end with communion

around the fellowship tables after lunch. **Virtual attendance will also be offered.** Associate Conference Minister Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones will join us that day.

Everyone is welcome. This is a great way to learn more of the ministries of the UCC and get to know people in our area. Please spread the word and urge all clergy and church representatives to attend either in person or through Zoom. Each church in the Living Waters Association is allowed the following number of voting representatives. **Please register by November 7, 2022** by sending an email or text to the address/number below.

### By-Laws VII.D.1.

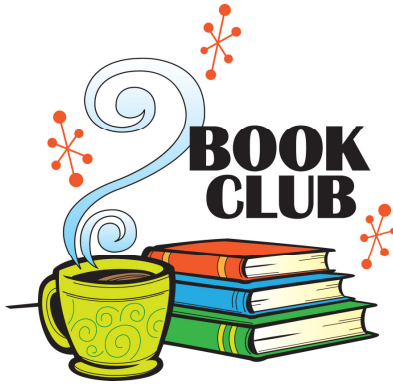
Delegates of member churches. Each church shall be entitled to the following number of delegates based on church membership submitted to the Conference at the end of the previous calendar year:

- Under 100 members: Two delegates
- 101 to 200 members: Three delegates
- 201 to 400 members: Four delegates
- 401 to 1000 members: Five delegates
- 1001 to 2000 members: Six delegates

This link is an invitation that you can easily share with others or print out to post at your church.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Y8\\_MW18TSUFj8BakMgYuC7PbIVkyQmgW/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=107992021687882180259&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Y8_MW18TSUFj8BakMgYuC7PbIVkyQmgW/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=107992021687882180259&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Janet Davis, Registrar  
21406 Amber Drive  
Gretna, NE 68028-3723  
Cell: 402-368-8086



Book Club will meet November 9. *Saturday at the Food Pantry* by Diane O'Neill. The books can be found in Fellowship Hall or you can contact Jane Uzzell.

## Mercy Meals Outreach



Thanks to all who helped *Pack Away Hunger* on Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>: Reese, Grace, Rita, Verletta, Jeff, Evonne, Charlene, Susan, and Pastor Jackie. The congregation donated financially toward the cost of food and shipping. Table 2 packed meals in plastic bags of rice, dried veggies, soy, chicken flavoring & nutrients.

## NOVEMBER Birthdays & Anniversaries

### Birthdays

4th Susan Surber  
19th Kay Neuharth  
22nd Ed Lindsay

### Anniversaries

14th Ron and Virginia Barritt  
25th Merle and Jeanne Rix



# NOVEMBER

## November 6

**Communion:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**Ushers:** Ben and Stacie Uzzell

**Greeters:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Reader:** Randy Neuharth

**Leader:** Jane Uzzell

**Flowers:**

## November 13

**Ushers:** Charlene Fosdick and Verletta Olson

**Greeters:** Rita Woodard and Suzan Podliska

**Reader:** Grace Uzzell

**Flowers:**

## November 20

**Ushers:** Evonne Burkink and Jane Uzzell

**Greeters:** Mike Synovec and Reese Uzzell

**Reader:** Scott Williams

**Flowers:** Scott and Lori Williams

## November 27 First Advent Sunday

**Ushers:** Barb Koenig and Rita Woodard

**Greeters:** Ben and Stacie Uzzell

**Reader:** Lori Williams

**Flowers:**

# December



## December 4

**Communion:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Ushers:** Bonnie Dewell and Reese Uzzell

**Greeters:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Reader:** Verletta Olson

**Leader:** Ben Uzzell

**Flowers:** Poinsettias

## December 11

**Ushers:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Greeters:** Randy and Kay Neuharth

**Reader:** Ben Uzzell

**Flowers:** Poinsettias

## December 18

**Ushers:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**Greeters:** Verletta Olson and Jane Uzzell

**Reader:** Chuck Balsiger

**Flowers:** Poinsettias

## December 24 Christmas Eve

**Ushers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Greeters:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**Reader:** Scott Williams

**Flowers:** Poinsettias

## December 25

**Ushers:** Ben and Reese Uzzell

**Greeters:** Stacie and Grace Uzzell

**Reader:** Jane Uzzell

**Flowers:** Poinsettias

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

# October

From 10/1/22 through 10/31/22

Deposit for 10/30/22 is not included this month



## Checking account information

Beginning balance	\$ 729.03
Poinsettias	\$ 162.50
<u>Weekly deposits</u>	<u>\$ 10,170.28</u>
Subtotal	\$ 11,061.81
Salary	--\$ 7,356.73
Church Maintenance	—\$ 1,270.68
Office Expenses	—\$ 542.71
Insurance	—\$ 963.00
Faith Development	—\$ 40.64
Pastor's Continuing Ed	—\$ 70.00
<u>Renner's</u>	<u>—\$ 500.00</u>
Final Balance	\$ 318.05



## Hanging of the Greens

# ▶ December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship <a href="#">Unity Council</a>  Renewed Hope 4-7 FH		5:30 PM Girl Scouts	<a href="#">10 Worship Ministry</a>			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	6 PM Girl Scouts	5:30 PM Girl Scouts	<a href="#">10 Book club</a>			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship		5:30 PM Girl Scouts				
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
10:15 Worship	OFFICE CLOSED					