

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



February 2023

Volume 5, Issue 100

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Ash Wednesday services will be held jointly with Trinity Episcopal and First Presbyterian. Trinity will host on February 22 at 5:30 PM.



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



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

## Lent



**Dates:** Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which falls 40 days before Easter. Sundays aren't counted because Sundays are considered "little Easters", meaning we celebrate resurrection throughout the year.

**Ash Wednesday:** Is a special feast day that starts the Lent/Easter season. Wearing ashes is considered a sign of repentance, sorrow and mourning, an appropriate way to begin Lent.

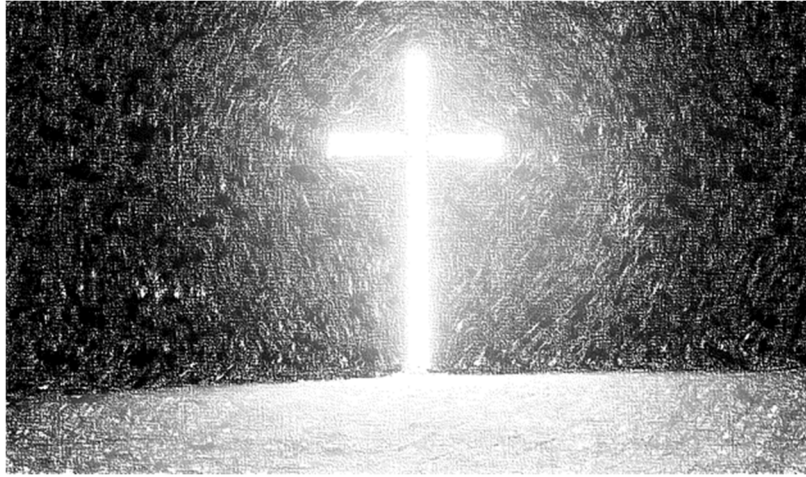
**Meaning:** The Lenten journey from the ashes of death to resurrected life begins on the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday. The start signifies a time to turn around, to change direction, to repent. The first day of Lent reminds us that unless we are willing to die to our old selves, we can't be raised to new life with Christ. The first step calls us to confession.

During the placing of ashes on one's forehead, these words are often spoken: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." The ashes remind us that we are finite creatures. Ashes also symbolize the broken debris of our lives, and a reminder that each of us will die.

Trusting in Christ's resurrection helps us listen for the word of God in the time-honored stories of the Church's Lenten journey. What sense does Christ's resurrection make if we don't acknowledge his death? What sense does our own resurrection make (or that of our loved one's) if we don't acknowledge the weight we feel around the topic of death. Living in a culture that would rather deny death gives more importance to our participating in this season.

**How to participate:** Ways to participate might include attending worship throughout the season. Ash Wednesday service is a good start. This year Trinity Episcopal Church will host an early 5:30 service where you may receive the ashes and share in communion. I also invite you to consider a daily meditation of some kind. Take a few minutes perhaps in the morning or evening for prayer. You may pick up a devotional booklet at the church either *These Days* or *The Upper Room*; or visit *The Upper Room Daily Devotions* online at: <https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>. I like the art on their website, too. Add something or remove something from your routine to help you remember that you journey with Jesus to the cross.

*Peace, Pastor Jackie*



## Lent: God's Light Shines Through the Cross

### Worship Schedule

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>2/22 Ash</b>    | 5:30 p.m. A joint service of Ashes & Communion |
| <b>Wed</b>         | at Trinity Episcopal Church, "What is Mercy?"  |
| <b>2/26 Lent 1</b> | "Grace in the Gaps"                            |
| <b>3/5 Lent 2</b>  | "Invitation to a New Start" / Communion Sunday |
| <b>3/12 Lent 3</b> | "The Saving Goodness of God"                   |
| <b>3/19 Lent 4</b> | "Darkness Cannot Overpower the Light"          |
| <b>3/26 Lent 5</b> | "God Works Newness"                            |

### Holy Week

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>4/2</b> | Palm/Passion Sunday                       |
| <b>4/6</b> | Maundy Thursday Service, to be announced. |
| <b>4/9</b> | Easter                                    |



**Note about the artwork:** I spotted this photograph by Bill Sloup from Seward posted on "Nebraska through the lens" on Facebook. The light coming from the cross on a cold dark winter's night is a fitting symbol for our Lenten journey. It is such a simple image that it lends itself to various versions

manipulated on the computer. You might click '*Like*' at Nebraska Through the Lens' if you are on Facebook as a devotional for Lent. There is always something inspirational there.

**Our Youth Community Outreach for February is collecting donations for the Animal Shelter of Northeast Nebraska. The needed items are listed below and all donations will be delivered to the Shelter after Sunday, February 26.**

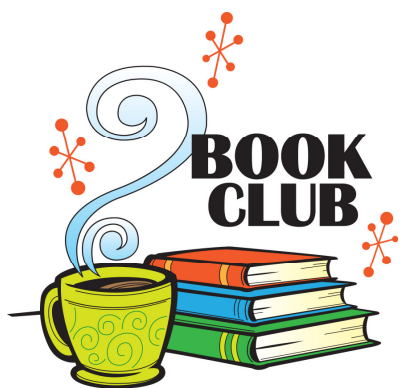
- **NON-CLUMPING cat litter**
- **Purina One dry dog food**
- **Purina One dry cat food**
- **Purina One dry kitten food**
- **Fancy Feast canned KITTEN food**
- **Paper towels**
- **Tri-fold paper towels**
- **Toilet paper**
- **Kleenex**
- **55 gallon (heavy duty) trash bags**
- **Dryer sheets**
- **Dawn dish soap**
- **Liquid laundry detergent**
- **Swiffer dusters (and refills)**
- **Pill Pockets (for administering medications)**
- **Squeezy Cheese**
- **Kong toys (large and extra large)**
- **Nyla-bones - medium/large size**
- **Copy paper**
- **Rubbermaid totes for storage**
- **Large vacuum bags for storage**



**ANIMAL SHELTER**  
of northeast nebraska

**All God's  
Creatures**





Book Club will meet February 8. *The Undefeated* by Kwame Alexander will be the second of past Caldecott winners. (Best picture book of the year) A 3 minute reading of "The Undefeated," is available on YouTube. Just type in the title and you, too, can listen to the book read aloud. The books can be found in Fellowship Hall or you can contact Jane Uzzell.

Beth Janelle Rhoades remembered our church with love. She left the church 10% of her estate after debts were settled. Jeff Rhoades visited on January 15 to share memories and give the church \$750 from her estate to be added to the scholarship fund.



Remember  
the Church  
in Your Will



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.



### Birthdays

|      |                      |
|------|----------------------|
| 4th  | Suzan Podliska       |
|      | Paige Uzzell         |
| 5th  | Tim Ernst            |
| 15th | Barb Koenig          |
| 17th | Garrett Korthals     |
|      | Mary (Whealy) Rhodes |
| 18th | Bonnie Dewell        |
| 27th | Mike Synovec         |
| 28th | McKenna Waterbury    |





#### **February 5**

**Communion:** Randy and Kay Neuharth  
**Ushers:** Charlene Fosdick and Jane Uzzell  
**Greeters:** Suzan Podliska and Mike Synovec  
**Reader:** Grace Uzzell  
**Leader:** Susan Allyn  
**Flowers:** Garry and Suzan Podliska

#### **February 12**

**Ushers:** Verletta Olson and Evonne Burkink  
**Greeters:** Scott and Lori Williams  
**Reader:** Ben Uzzell  
**Flowers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

#### **February 19**

**Ushers:** Bonnie Dewell and Rita Woodard  
**Greeters:** Verletta Olson and Jane Uzzell  
**Reader:** Lori Williams  
**Flowers:**

#### **February 26**

**Ushers:** Barb Koenig and Reese Uzzell  
**Greeters:** Rita Woodard and Grace Uzzell  
**Reader:** Scott Williams  
**Flowers:** Scott and Lori Williams



## March

#### **March 5**

**Communion:** Tom McConnell and Ben Uzzell  
**Ushers:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger  
**Greeters:** Randy and Kay Neuharth  
**Reader:** Jane Uzzell  
**Leader:** Chuck Balsiger  
**Flowers:**

#### **March 12**

**Ushers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals  
**Greeters:** Tom McConnell and Sue Surber  
**Reader:** Chuck Balsiger  
**Flowers:**

#### **March 19**

**Ushers:** Ben and Stacie Uzzell  
**Greeters:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger  
**Reader:** Kay Neuharth  
**Flowers:**

#### **March 26**

**Ushers:** Sue Surber and Mike Synovec  
**Greeters:** Bonnie Dewell and Chuck Balsiger  
**Reader:** Tom McConnell  
**Flowers:** Scott and Lori Williams

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

# January

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

Does not include deposit for 1-29.



## Checking account information

|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Beginning balance      | \$ 4,102.64         |
| Scholarship Donation   | \$ 750.00           |
| <u>Weekly deposits</u> | <u>\$ 13,537.36</u> |
| Subtotal               | \$ 18,390.00        |
| Salary                 | --\$ 6,852.43       |
| Church Maintenance     | —\$ 5,604.45        |
| Office Expenses        | —\$ 506.74          |
| OCWM, Christmas Fund   | —\$ 1,048.00        |
| Worship Ministry       | —\$ 70.62           |
| Pastor's Discretionary | —\$ 83.00           |
| <u>Renner's</u>        | <u>—\$ 500.00</u>   |
| Final Balance          | \$ 3,724.76         |

# ► February 2023

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

|  |  |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|

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|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|

|   |                                     |   |   |  |  |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| 9 Sunday<br>School<br>10:15 Worship<br>Renewed Hope<br>4-7 FH | Winter<br>Convocation<br>for Jackie | 5:30 PM Girl<br>Scouts<br><br>Winter<br>Convocation<br>for Jackie | 10 Book club<br><br>Winter<br>Convocation<br>for Jackie |  |  |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|

|                                     |                     |                        |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 9 Sunday<br>School<br>10:15 Worship | 6 PM Girl<br>Scouts | 5:30 PM Girl<br>Scouts |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--|--|--|--|

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|

|                                     |  |                        |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 9 Sunday<br>School<br>10:15 Worship |  | 5:30 PM Girl<br>Scouts | Ash<br>Wednesday at<br>Trinity<br>Episcopal<br>5:30 PM |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|--|--|--|--|

|    |    |    |  |  |  |  |
|----|----|----|--|--|--|--|
| 26 | 27 | 28 |  |  |  |  |
|----|----|----|--|--|--|--|

|                                     |                     |                        |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 9 Sunday<br>School<br>10:15 Worship | 6 PM Girl<br>Scouts | 5:30 PM Girl<br>Scouts |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--|--|--|--|



# ▶ March 2023

| Sun   | Mon                       | Tue                          | Wed  | Thu | Fri                         | Sat  |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|-----|-----------------------------|--|
|   |                           |                              | 1<br>10 Worship<br>Ministry                      | 2   | 3                           | 4  |
| 5<br>9 Sunday<br>School<br>10:15 Worship<br>Renewed Hope<br>4-7 FH    | 6                         | 7<br>5:30 PM Girl<br>Scouts  | 8<br>10 Book club<br><br>Confirmation<br>6 PM FH | 9   | 10                          | 11   |
| 12<br>Daylight<br>Savings Time<br>9 Sunday<br>School<br>10:15 Worship | 13<br>6 PM Girl<br>Scouts | 14<br>5:30 PM Girl<br>Scouts | 15   | 16  | 17                          | 18   |
| 19<br>9 Sunday<br>School<br>10:15 Worship                             | 20                        | 21<br>5:30 PM Girl<br>Scouts | 22<br>Confirmation<br>6 PM FH                    | 23  | 24<br>Jackie on<br>vacation | 25<br>Girl Scouts<br>8-5 FH<br>Jackie on<br>vacation |
| 26<br>9 Sunday<br>School<br>10:15 Worship<br>Jackie on<br>vacation    | 27<br>6 PM Girl<br>Scouts | 28<br>5:30 PM Girl<br>Scouts | 29   | 30  | 31                          |  |