

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



Pentecost Sunday is May 31. If we are worshipping together then, please wear red that Sunday.



**NORFOLK FOOD PANTRIES FUND-DRIVE Thru May 4**



Orphan Grain Train (OGT) is no stranger to crisis situations, and the delivery of foodstuffs. Instead of people purchasing items and hauling them to the food bank (increasing contact), churches and individuals are asked to send monetary donations to Orphan Grain Train. In turn, OGT has several contacts with food distributors (Affiliated and more) where they can purchase exactly what is needed at lower cost, and get it to the food pantries as needed.

Norfolk food pantries include: NENCAP, Norfolk Community Food Pantry, Norfolk Rescue Mission, and The Salvation Army

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Get the word out.

Let churches and organizations know they have giving options:

- Donate online at <https://www.ogt.org/donate/> then click 'Donate Online', under 'My donation is for\*', select 'Norfolk Food Pantries'.
- Write a check to your own church with the note, 'OGT/ Norfolk Food Pantries', and your church would then write one check to Orphan Grain Train.
- Donate directly to Orphan Grain Train by check with a note 'Norfolk Food Pantries'. MAIL TO: Orphan Grain Train, PO Box 1466, Norfolk, NE 68702-1466.

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



May 2020

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**Office Hours**

Mon-Fri

8-12

Mon-Thurs

1-3

## Hang Loose

Doris Markland was born in Iowa, and lives in Norfolk, Nebraska and Honolulu, Hawaii. Her poetry has been published in Hallmark cards and books, her stories and poems in Saturday Evening Post, and other magazines. Doris's two most recent books: *Playing Life by Ear* and *My Half of the Conversation* are available through The Abby Bookstore and Amazon.

Of her books, Doris writes, "they appeal to those who are religious, those who consider themselves spiritual and those who profess neither but have an interest in pursuing the meaning of life." When I spoke with Doris by phone this week, she was sheltering in her apartment overlooking Waikiki Beach. She gave us permission to publish her poem 'Hang Loose' from *Playing Life by Ear*.

### **Hang Loose**

The tour guide had us laughing  
From the time he met our flight.  
In the bus and in the lobbies,  
On the moonlit beach at night,  
He cast a spell.  
"Hang loose," he said.  
And island magic  
Helped us do it well.

"Hang loose," he said,  
"For life is short,  
And while you are away,  
Relearn the art,  
A time for work  
And now a time for play."



"Hang loose", he said,  
And taught us how  
To sign it with our thumbs,  
And, laughing, no one saw when he  
Took twenty seconds privately  
To ask me for a Tums.

According to Wikipedia, residents of Hawaii use the 'shaka sign' to convey the "Aloha Spirit", a concept of friendship, understanding, compassion, and solidarity among the various ethnic cultures that reside in Hawaii. Drivers will often use it on the road to communicate distant greetings and gratitude.

Doris invites readers to meet life's challenges with understanding and enthusiasm. My former pastor, Rev. Faith Ferre, used to say, "If you can't get out of it, get into it." None of us may avert the ache of Covid-19, but we can catch Christ's compassion and communicate our greetings and gratitude even from a distance.

*-Christ's peace to you, Pastor Jackie*



## When and How to Reopen Church

It is good news to hear that parts of the U.S. and Nebraska are opening up over the next few days, however, due to the rise of cases of COVID-19 in Madison County, it seems that we will be continuing to maintain our social distancing skills.

According to one report on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, from a CRUX article, 'Nebraska churches cautious about resuming worship services', Nebraska health officials said the

number of coronavirus cases in the state is still on the rise.

As of this writing, our Elkhorn Logan Valley Department of Health has not published updated guidance for houses of worship. The information (below) was the most recent information from the Governor's website dated April 24<sup>th</sup>:

### “Gov. Ricketts: Statewide DHM Changes

*Places of worship* (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, etc.)

- Places of worship will have relaxed DHM requirements statewide beginning on May 4<sup>th</sup>.
- They will need to ensure six feet of separation between different household units.
- It will not be permissible to pass items among worshippers.
- A guidance document will be provided with the new DHMs to give instructions to faith communities on how to comply with the updated health measures.”

I and other Norfolk Area Ministerial Association (NAMA) members have been sharing weekly ZOOM calls with Mike Moreno of the Mayor's Task Force. Mike is a Lutheran Minister, social worker, and former military chaplain with Lutheran Family Service. These Tuesday morning calls have helped us be a part of organizing a Food Drive fund-raiser for Norfolk food pantries, and to share information about how and when to reopen our churches. As Secretary of NAMA, I have been sending out reports and announcements about these calls and events.

Stay tuned. Unity Council in conversation with Worship Team will need to plan how and when to open worship based on wider community information and the congregation. They will also discern how and when to hold the Annual Meeting.

These are challenging times. We wish we had more to report. It is heartening that we have community within the church and outside the church to help guide our hearts and minds. God remains our source of guidance. – Pastor Jackie

## Letter from Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota, April 28, 2020

Hello pastors and church leaders,

I am delivering an important message from ECM Rev. Brigit Stevens to declare that all churches in our conferences should refrain from gathering in person through the month of May and possibly June. Please read or [watch her full message](#) included in this email. Although we are saddened not to be gathering sooner, this decision is indisputable and stems from our WHY statement: “Why are we called to be the United Church of Christ in this time and place? To live into God’s extravagant welcome and advocate for justice. So all may know love, safety, belonging, and dignity”. Thank you for your patience, kindness, and leadership in these uncertain times.

You should also know that you are invited to another online worship service, this time hosted by the Council of Conference Ministers. The service will be designed for **May 17th**, but can be used any time in Eastertide. The release date will be communicated soon, stay tuned!

**Full message video:** <https://vimeo.com/412817103>

**Full message text:**

Dear Friends of the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ. I am the Reverend Brigit Stevens, your Conference Minister. I love you. You are in my fervent and constant prayers.

Thank you. Thank you for all of the ways you are being church in these unprecedented days. Thank you for NOT gathering together. Thank you for finding ways to connect with each other, with our friends, and with our communities and neighbors, WITHOUT BEING TOGETHER IN PERSON.

A year ago, the Boards of Directors of our three conferences met together to pray and discern together WHY we are the United Church of Christ, in this time and in this place. Collectively we heard the Holy Spirit say:

**We are called to live into God’s extravagant welcome and to advocate for justice. So that, ALL know love, safety, belonging, and dignity.**

Now, I am not an epidemiologist. I am not a physician. I am not a scientist nor economist. I am a Conference Minister with a pastor’s heart.

I am firmly convinced that now is the time to CONTINUE connecting and BEING the church WITHOUT being physically together. We need to remain steadfast in our commitment to safety of our neighbors. This is how we love them, and us, best. It is important that at least through the month of May, and maybe also through the month of June, that we CONTINUE to protect and care for one another by NOT GATHERING TOGETHER.

I am so proud of you. You are doing this! You are working hard, being creative, stepping into new roles, trying new things. THANK YOU.

This COVID-19 global pandemic is teaching us how truly connected we all are to each other. Big cities in densely populated states may have been the first to experience the devastation and grief of the losses of this virus. But, we are not immune here in the Midwest. And we are not isolated or disconnected. The virus knows no geographic boundaries. It pays no attention to state or county or country lines.

When those of us who have the option to stay home, do so, we protect and care for not only ourselves, but also those who do not have the same choices. Putting others' wellbeing ahead of our own conveniences is the way we follow Jesus best today.

Please continue to be the church, from home. Let this be our act of solidarity and love for God and our neighbors. God bless you. Thank you.

-Rev. Brigit Stevens, Executive Conference Minister

Thank you for all of your work, have a good day, and be well!

Best,

Aidan Spencer

Communications Specialist

Pronouns: she, her, hers

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[ucctcm.org](http://ucctcm.org); [iowaucc.org](http://iowaucc.org); [nebraskaucc.org](http://nebraskaucc.org); [southdakotaucc.org](http://southdakotaucc.org)



*The Uzzell Family. Not pictured: Steve was there! and other Uzzell's joined by phone.*

**On April 5<sup>th</sup>, more than 30 cars participated in Drive-Through Palm Sunday.** Thanks to all who participated and thanks to Barb Koenig with her 'Easter baskets' to receive cards for Paige Uzzell, offerings, and gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing.

The church was able to bless Paige as one who will be deployed with the United States Army, and mostly family surrounding her. Stan Staab offered Paige a small flag from his father's collection as a symbol of love and protection. It was a small flag that Stan's father had carried with him during his service abroad.



**Congratulations, Adam Gamerl,** for being honored for Kiwanis Church Youth of the Year 2020. The honorees came from eight different churches. The Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> celebration had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 guidelines. Students, parents, pastors and Kiwanians were disappointed that we could not celebrate this year. From First Congregational UCC, Thank you, Adam!



**Aloha! as you head to Iowa, Dorothy!** Dorothy Hull moves to Iowa to be near family April 30<sup>th</sup>. For the past four plus years, Dorothy participated in and helped raise funds for the Pine Ridge Mission Trip. She reached out to help Skyline Apt neighbors after their fire. She shared her many gifts as Unity Council Clerk and on worship team. Her many years as a Scout Leader gave her oodles of ideas for Christmas games as we all waited for Santa. New Address: 406 South 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Newton, IA 50208.



**Confirmation Ritual has been postponed.** We look forward to Confirming Henry Gamerl in worship and celebrating with him and his family at a future date. With First Presbyterian Church, we had five confirmation students this year, and we look forward to getting them together for a celebration and picture later this year.



**The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Team designated Sunday, May 17, 2020** as a day to acknowledge our 150<sup>th</sup> year of ministry at First Congregational UCC. The actual anniversary date is May 15<sup>th</sup>. Later in early September, we will hold our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend with a catered beef dinner, a program, and honored guests. *We hope we might celebrate on May 17<sup>th</sup>, so stay tuned.*

### **150<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary 1870-2020 History Tidbits– Verletta Olson**

Before the first church was built English speaking, frontier people met for worship in a room at Colonel Mathewson's Mill. People attending had to bring their own chairs to sit in. Col. Mathewson was a Congregationalist from Connecticut. When it was decided to start a church, he wanted it to be a Congregational church so he sent for Rev. Kidder and a fellow Congregationalist from Connecticut to become pioneers and be Charter Members in starting the church. That church was located between 2nd and 3rd street on Norfolk Avenue. Membership grew to over 100 people in 15 years.

The church purchased the home of Darius Mathewson at 1110 Koenigstein Avenue in 1904 and that became the first parsonage. It was considered one of the best in the state.

In 1908, Rev. Booth Jr. writes, membership continues to increase and the outreach influence of the church to widen.

A larger church was built in 1915 at the corner of 9th Street and Norfolk Ave.

At Easter time 1920, 90 new members were received, this being the largest number ever received by the church at one time.

In May 1920, the Mission held a pledge drive for "The Congregational World Movement" securing over \$3000 in pledges.

From 1920 minutes it is noted that Dr. Andress secured a Pastors Assistant, Mrs. E. E. Kennard who will serve half time at a salary of \$50 a month.

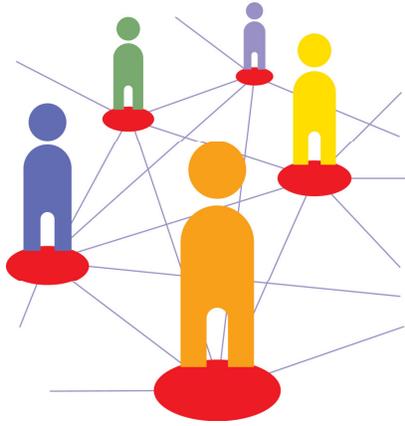
The Fiftieth Anniversary was celebrated May 12-16, 1920 with three former pastors in attendance and giving addresses.

Church membership January 1, 1921: 568 Members, Resident 477, Non-resident 92

Suggested goal for 1921: A larger emphasis on the social fellowship of the church until every member shall know at least three fourths of the church membership personally.

Subscriptions (pledges) for the General fund were for the salaries and maintenance of the church. The Sunday School, Ladies Society, Missions and any Clubs had to raise their own funds.

April 6, 1919, a daughter of the church, Bernice Mapes Alvord, was commissioned for missionary work in Mt. Silinda South Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). She along with her husband, Emory Alvord, an agriculturist, did missionary work and taught modern agriculture techniques to Africa. In 1920 he was asked to build a state-of-the-art agricultural school in Domboshawa. They lived their entire lives in Africa teaching and doing Missionary work. First Congregational supported them in this mission. Children would bring Christmas gifts in May to be shipped arriving in time for Christmas.



**Faith Development: Points of Connection** Though we aren't meeting, Darlene created 'Easter Resurrection Rolls' ingredients and recipes and dropped them off to kids and families to bake. Stan Staab and Pastor Jackie sent packets to Jr/Sr High students so they might complete their *Bible Holy Land Project*. Pastor Jackie sent materials out to confirmation students and parents so they might work on selecting Bible verses when we plan the Confirmation ritual later this year.

A grateful thank you for all the prayers and concerns for my brother Chuck Asher with his lymphatic cancer diagnosis and follow up chemo treatments. He has recently completed his treatments and we are blessed with the news that no cancer was detected on his last PET scan. The power of prayer and available medical treatments are amazing!

**Darlene Korthals & family**



**Thanks to all who donated to the Sixpence Diaper Drive** in April. Though we could not complete the drive, those who donated early filled a laundry basket full of diapers and we were able to give that to the Sixpence program. They appreciated it very much!



**Birthday**

- 15th Cole Williams
- 17th Deanna Alexander
- 23rd Reese Uzzell
- 25th Grace Uzzell
- 29th Lowell Jenny
- 30th Megan Williams
- 31st Darlene Korthals

**Anniversary**

- 26th Garry and Suzan Podliska



Steve has been in the hospital since April 6. He continues to gain strength and heal.

Celebrating Easter



Jackie and I continue to work at the church and we have been given masks by Jill Waterbury!

Enjoying spring and the possibility of being outside!



Continuing to heal and taking it one day at a time.

# Fellowship Work Committee

May

Mike Synovec

Ed Lindsay

June

Suzan Podliska

Barb Ebsen



**May 3**

**Communion:** Terry Hamilton, Vicki Staab, Suzan Podliska, Dorothy Hull

**Ushers:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Greeters:** Ben and Stacie Uzzell

**Reader:** Vicki Staab

**Leader:** Dorothy Hull

**Flowers:** Barb Koenig

**May 10 Mother's Day**

**Ushers:** Jane Uzzell and Terry Hamilton

**Greeters:** Ed Lindsay and Tom McConnell

**Reader:** Scott Williams

**Flowers:** Rita Woodard

**May 17 150th Celebration**

**Ushers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Greeters:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**Reader:** Randy Neuharth

**Flowers:** Scott and Lori Williams

**May 24 Memorial Weekend**

**Ushers:** Bonnie Dewell and Verletta Olson

**Greeters:** Suzan Podliska and Barb Koenig

**Reader:** Stan Staab

**Flowers:** Garry and Suzan Podliska

**May 31**

**Ushers:** Jeff and Evonne Burkink

**Greeters:** Randy and Kay Neuharth

**Reader:** Kay Neuharth

**Flowers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals



**June 7**

**Communion:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger, Jeff and Evonne Burkink

**Ushers:** Stan and Vicki Staab

**Greeters:** Jeff and Evonne Burkink

**Reader:** Verletta Olson

**Leader:** Stan Staab

**Flowers:** Bonnie Dewell

**June 14 Annual Gathering**

**Ushers:** Rita Woodard and Cole Uzzell

**Greeters:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Reader:** Cole Uzzell

**Flowers:**

**June 21**

**Ushers:** Randy and Kay Neuharth

**Greeters:** Jane Uzzell and Mike Synovec

**Reader:** Jane Uzzell

**Flowers:** Scott and Lori Williams

**June 28**

**Ushers:** Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

**Greeters:** Stan and Vicki Staab

**Reader:** Vicki Staab

**Flowers:**

# April

From 4/1/20 through 4/30/20



TREASURER'S REPORT

## Checking account information

Beginning balance	—\$ 1,921.63
Linaje Escogido	\$ 400.00
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$ 318.00
Orphan Grain Train	\$ 100.00
<u>Weekly deposits</u>	<u>\$ 10,596.00</u>
Subtotal	\$ 9,392.37
Salary	--\$ 8,286.91
Church Maintenance	—\$ 1,609.74
Office Expenses	—\$ 500.78
Worship Ministry	—\$ 40.00
Faith Development	—\$ 284.44
Cleaning service	—\$ 755.00
One Great Hour of Sharing	—\$ 318.00
<u>Conference</u>	<u>—\$ 575.00</u>
Final Balance	—\$ 2,977.50

Due to Covid-19, Palm Sunday was a drive-through Sunday and no services were held in the month of April.

# ▶ May 2020

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

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1      2

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3      4      5      6      7      8      9

9 Sunday  
School  
10:15 Worship  
2 Animal  
Shelter

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10      11      12      13      14      15      16

9 Sunday  
School  
10:15 Worship

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17      18      19      20      21      22      23

9 Sunday  
School  
10:15 Worship  
150th reception

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24      25      26      27      28      29      30

10:15 Worship      Fellowship Hall  
8 AM NAMA

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31

**Pentecost**  
10:15 Worship  
Strengthen the  
Church offering

# ▶ June 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	VBS?	VBS?	VBS?		7 Card Group	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10:15 Worship					5 Card Group	
Girl Scouts FH 1-3 PM						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10:15 Worship		9:30-11:30 Food Pantry	9:30-11:30 Food Pantry	9:30-11:30 Food Pantry	9:30-11:30 Food Pantry	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10:15 Worship	9:30-11:30 Food Pantry					
28	29	30				
10:15 Worship	9:30-11:30 Food Pantry	9:30-11:30 Food Pantry				