

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



October 2025

Volume 5, Issue 132



## Big Red Sunday

October 5 we will celebrate by wearing Husker red and having a potluck with red foods. Wear your favorite red clothes and enjoy lunch with red foods.



Pastor's  
Office Hours

### Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9-12

Afternoons by appointment



Church Secretary

### Office Hours

Monday-Friday

8-12

May be gone to the  
doctor with Mom

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## Brian's Beacon

As we move to the month of October, it is one of my favorite months of the year. Because of all the fall color, it is just so pretty, and one can't help but get inspired. The picture above is of a recent trip Andrea and I made to Smith Falls, the tallest falls in the state of Nebraska. Here we enjoyed a picnic and little hike. We were celebrating our 44<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I hope that you get inspired to get out this month as the color comes forth to show us how great God is. God reveals himself in many ways and through people.

For example, many times people will share answered prayer request, or what God did that day or week that help them. These things are God sightings. We have been known to play a game called just that. The gist of the game is telling of a God sighting each day. You should play it may surprise you how much God does each day.

Things to look forward to are our continued mission of Samaritan's Purse with Operation Christmas Child. We are collecting or putting together our shoe boxes at this time and will finish our project by November 2. So, if you don't have a box yet it is not too late to pick one up and fill it with special things for a child for Christmas. The shoe box also carries the gospel message in it. So, each child receives the most important gift as well.

Planning a Bible study for Oct 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM. I would love for anyone who is free to come. We will be studying the Book of Galatians. Books are free! It is a Study book that I have put together with questions straight from the text. Please let me know that you are coming so I know how many to prepare for.

Big Red Sunday is an October 5<sup>th</sup> and this is a great opportunity for you to bring a friend to Church. We will have a potluck meal after church. A great time to bring on the fall cooking! Go Big Red!

Looking forward to our time together.

Pastor Brian

# When Two Cultures Worship Bilingually in Nebraska...A Story of Hospitality.

by [Tami Spindler](#) | Sep 2, 2025 | [News](#)

A reflection by Rev. Roberto Ochoa, Conference Minister Iowa Nebraska South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ



Pastor Rev Dr Brian High, Interim Pastor First Congregational Norfolk, his wife Andrea, me, Pastors Abel and Araceli Garcia, Iglesia Linaje Escogido.

*Let mutual affection continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:1)*

My dear friends of Iowa Nebraska South Dakota Conferences of the UCC,  
For this week's reflection, I thought I'd tell a story:  
Hospitality blessings sometimes come unexpectedly, especially during our greatest needs and when we go to prayer. One story I heard made me smile and just say...Praise God!

As the story goes...there was this church...growing and serving the Spanish speaking community...in a small sheriff's office, however, the owners had sold the building and the church had to find another place to hold their worship services. They looked and looked and seem to have little success...especially as the time to leave was weeks away. They prayed for a miracle.

Meanwhile, in another part of the city, a pastor, looking at the photo of Jesus knocking on the door...wondered what the future of her Norfolk Nebraskan church was heading to, the congregation was in deep discernment...and deeply wanted to do outreach to the growing Latino community. She and the congregation prayed for a miracle.

Somehow, in a sauna of all places in the YMCA...the young men looking for a new home for their church were talking about their dilemma...and another man from the church seeking to connect with the Latino community overheard them and suggested they try his church for worship space.

So, the next day they did...and as they knocked on the door...the pastor opened the door and invited them in.

For five years, the congregations learned to adapt with sharing holy space in the midst of their cultural and lingual differences, able to overcome initial obstacles of misunderstandings with grace between them. And though they had enjoyed two meals together as churches, they had never attempted to have a joint worship.

Until, the Nebraska Conference called their first Mexican descendant Conference Minister and the pastors of both churches wondered if this new Conference Minister would be open to lead the two churches in a joint bilingual worship service.

Well, the new CM was delighted for the invitation, an opportunity for him to bring together the two worlds that mattered so much to him, his American and Latino identity.

The two congregations gathered...people of all ages filled the sanctuary of the church, feeling the excitement of worshipping together for the first time. And worship they did, with contemporary Christian songs sung bilingually and traditional church hymns, prayers and a message from the Conference Minister on the joys and blessings of hospitality, urging the two churches to forge a path forward working together of witness and action to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, offer refuge to the unhouse, visit the sick and incarcerated and to do justice for the oppressed and marginalized as Jesus' did. Then they sang and prayed some more. The presence of the Holy Spirit was truly among all the worshippers that morning.

Later they had a feast beyond belief, tamales, taquitos, pozole, lasagna, devil eggs, salads, and more. A separate table had a great assortment of desserts. The people served together, sat together, laughed together and got to know each other better and celebrated their first joint worship and looking forward to another one in the future. And praising God for the hospitality that made this happened in the first place and the conversation that sparked it at a sauna in YMCA.

I want to thank First Congregational Norfolk pastor Rev Dr Brian High and Igelisa Linaje Escogido pastors Abel and Araceli Garcia for the invitation to bring the message to their congregations on Sunday, August 31<sup>st</sup> in Norfolk, NE. My first bilingual worship service since my calling this January. I especially want to thank Ms. Susan Allyn, First Congregational office administrator that coordinated my visit.

And a BIG GRACIAS to the congregations of First Congregational and Linaje Escogido who welcomed me with wide arms, much affection, and lots of food. I was so blessed and humbled by their generosity. My prayers remain with them as they continue being the light of Christ, together in Norfolk.

Bendiciones y Paz, (Blessings and Peace)  
Rev Roberto

# Bible Reading for the Month

## October 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<i>1</i> Malachi 1-4	<i>2</i> Matthew 1-4	<i>3</i> Matthew 5-6	<i>4</i> Matthew 7-8
<i>5</i> Matthew 9-10	<i>6</i> Matthew 11-12	<i>7</i> Matthew 13-14	<i>8</i> Matthew 15-17	<i>9</i> Matthew 18-19	<i>10</i> Matthew 20-21	<i>11</i> Matthew 22-23
<i>12</i> Matthew 24-25	<i>13</i> Matthew 26	<i>14</i> Matthew 27-28	<i>15</i> Mark 1-3	<i>16</i> Mark 4-5	<i>17</i> Mark 6-7	<i>18</i> Mark 8-9
<i>19</i> Mark 10-11	<i>20</i> Mark 12-13	<i>21</i> Mark 14	<i>22</i> Mark 15-16	<i>23</i> Luke 1	<i>24</i> Luke 2-3	<i>25</i> Luke 4-5
<i>26</i> Luke 6-7	<i>27</i> Luke 8-9	<i>28</i> Luke 10-11	<i>29</i> Luke 12-13	<i>30</i> Luke 14-16	<i>31</i> Luke 17-18	

# *Poinsettias*

This year Shamrock Nursery will be offering poinsettias in a 7 1/2" pot for \$18. We are able to get them in red, white, jingle bell or ice crystal. Please indicate your color and if you would like a message in the bulletin for the season. Orders need to be in by **October 31.**

\_\_\_\_ red

\_\_\_\_ white

\_\_\_\_ jingle bell

\_\_\_\_ ice crystal

Order for: \_\_\_\_\_

Message:

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Jingle Bell



Ice Crystal







**Book Club** will meet October 8 at 10 AM. Our guest speaker is from the Animal Shelter. The books can be found in Fellowship Hall or you can contact Jane Uzzell.



Commissioning of teachers was held at the Sept 7 service. Commissioning officer was Kay Neuharth. Teachers are: Pastor Brian High, Darlene Korthals, Susan Allyn, Andrea High, and 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! Questions? Leave a message for Jane Uzzell at (402) 640-6623.



Anniversaries

2nd Gene and Darlene Korthals



### **October 5**

**Communion:** Bonnie and Gene Kroeger

**Ushers:** Pat Jenny and Susan Surber

**Greeters:** Bonnie and Gene Kroeger

**Reader:** Tom McConnell

**Leader:** Jane Uzzell

**Flowers:**

### **October 12**

**Ushers:** Ben and Stacie Uzzell

**Greeters:** Verletta Olson and Andrea High

**Reader:** Reese Uzzell

**Flowers:** Mark and Vicki Walker

### **October 19**

**Ushers:** Bonnie Dewell and Rita Woodard

**Greeters:** Karen Allyn and Susan Surber

**Reader:** Randy Neuharth

**Flowers:**

### **October 26**

**Ushers:** Verletta Olson and Mike Synovec

**Greeters:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Reader:** Scott Williams

**Flowers:**



### **November 2**

**Communion:** Tom McConnell and Verletta Olson

**Ushers:** Evonne Burkink and Andrea High

**Greeters:** Stacie and Reese Uzzell

**Reader:** Grace Uzzell

**Leader:** Ben Uzzell

**Flowers:**

### **November 9**

**Ushers:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Greeters:** Barb Koenig and Rita Woodard

**Reader:** Ben Uzzell

**Flowers:** Mark and Vicki Walker

### **November 16**

**Ushers:** Gene and Darlene Korthals

**Greeters:** Pat Jenny and Mike Synovec

**Reader:** Kay Neuharth

**Flowers:**

### **November 23**

**Ushers:** Jane Uzzell and Grace Uzzell

**Greeters:** Scott and Lori Williams

**Reader:** Lori Williams

**Flowers:**

### **November 30      First Advent**

**Ushers:** Randy and Kay Neuharth

**Greeters:** Evonne Burkink and Lynne Bichlmeier

**Reader:** Verletta Olson

**Flowers:** Poinsettias



# September

From 9/1/25 through 9/30/25

This does not include the deposit for 9/28



## Checking account information

Beginning balance	\$ 2,196.68
Transfer from Savings	\$ 2,000.00
<u>Weekly deposits</u>	<u>\$ 6,527.38</u>
Subtotal	\$ 10,724.06
Salary	--\$ 7,239.70
Church Maintenance	—\$ 6,146.60
Office Expenses	—\$ 534.09
Worship Ministry	—\$ 115.57
Youth Group	—\$ 14.93
Insurance	—\$ 1,031.08
Adult Study Books	—\$ 108.47
Nebraska Conference	—\$ 50.00
<u>Renner's</u>	<u>—\$ 500.00</u>
Final Balance	—\$ 5,016.38

The Maintenance total include \$4,000 for painting the sanctuary windows.

# ► October 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:30 Youth Group at First Baptist	2	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4
5 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Big Red Sunday and potluck	6	7	8 10 Book club	9	10	11
12 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Discernment Discussion	13 Girl Scouts 5:30-7	14	15 6:30 Youth Group	16	17	18
19 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	27 Girl Scouts 5:30-7	28	29	30	31	

# ▶ November 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 LWA Meeting
2 Daylight Savings Ends 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	3	4	5 6:30 Youth Group	6	7	8
9 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	10 Girl Scouts 5:30-7	11	12 10 Book club	13	14 Delphians 1 FH	15
16 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	17	18	19 6:30 Youth Group at First Baptist	20	21	22
23 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	24 Girl Scouts 5:30-7	25	26 Thanksgiving Eve at First Presbyterian	27 Thanksgiving Office Closed	28 Office Closed	29
30 9:00 Sunday School 10:15 Worship						