

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

FEBRUARY
2024

First Congregational United Church of Christ
1200 Clark Street
Rapid City South Dakota 57701
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Seeking, practicing and sharing
Christ's ministry of inclusive love,
justice and compassion

Wandering Wonderings from Pastor Erin

"...not all who wander are lost" ~J.R.R. Tolkien

"Think and wonder, wonder and think." ~Dr. Seuss

Again and Again, God invites us into fuller ways of being.

I encourage you to spend some intentional time this month
thinking about what it means and how it feels to be
invited in by God.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday (February 14th), and we're invited in—to community, to this season, to our own spiritual journey, to true transformation. We will be on this journey together, but we're invited *to turn inward*. In this Lenten season, we will need rituals—both old and new—to remember and to be transformed. Embodied practice builds muscle memory. Repetition helps retrain our neural pathways. We need the 46 days of Lent because I believe this season holds the potential to shape us into ever more faithful and loving humans. May it be so!

Join us this Lent as **again and again**, we bring all of who we are to God and trust that God will meet us, time and again, along the way.

♥ happy ♥
Valentine's
♥ day ♥

HELP SPREAD THE LOVE this Valentine's Day!

Gather in the Parlor Monday, February 12th at
10AM to create hand-made Valentine's together.



*I wish you health and peace and healing. I wish you freedom
and joy. I wish you grace and beauty and hope. I wish you
kindness and ease. I wish you love and warm embrace.*

Prayers and Light, ♥ Pastor Erin



Ash Wednesday is THIS coming Wednesday, **February 14th** (along with Valentine's Day). We will be offering worship, including the ritual of ashes, at **7:00pm**.



BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS

Moderator's Moment

by Susan Kelts

The Church Board met on January 16. There were reports and discussion on the following items:

- Lighting for the front of the church
- Proposed budget for 2024
- Vacation of properties which was approved and gives the church two right of ways. There will be an informational meeting at a later date to discuss plans for the property behind the church.
- Request for a new church directory with pictures.
- Planned event for Super Bowl Sunday. (Go Chiefs!)
- Approval of new summer hours for office staff. In June, July and August office hours will be 9:00am to 1:00pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- Updated lease agreement and liability insurance document with Cinnamon Hill Preschool.

The 145th Annual Meeting was held on January 28 with approval of annual reports and the 2024 Budget.

Pat Lebrun gave an update on the Pilgrim Charitable Trust.

Installation of Board officers and Department members was done.

Last, but certainly not least...

Congratulations to Pastor Erin! She has been approved for Ordination. We are so proud of her and the work she has done to attain this goal. The Ordination will take place in our church sometime in the near future.

Department of Hospitality

by Robin Franson

It's time for Souper Bowl Sunday! On **Sunday, February 11**, pick out one of your lucky jerseys to wear to church to show your favorite team.

Come to the Fellowship Hall after worship. The Department of Hospitality will provide soups, crackers and drinks. Everyone is invited to bring their favorite chips with dips, veggies or your favorite snacks or desserts.

Join us for a good time and some good fellowship. Would anyone like to lead a few cheers? Join us and find out!



Department of Ministries

by Sybil Rounds

The Department would like to thank Sheila Long for her dedicated leadership during her tenure on the committee, and welcomes new members Deb Erickson and Laura Switzer.

We served the Cornerstone Mission meal on Dec. 29. Our next Mission meal is scheduled for March 29. We are exploring the possibility of providing a noon meal once a month at the Woyatan Lutheran Church. We continue to support Church Response but are no longer offering grocery card sales. In place of that, we will have a special fund offering in April a week after a forum presentation by the new Church Response director, Tina Newman. The food request for the grocery cart this month is **canned meats**.

ONA Committee

by Sybil Rounds

The Open and Affirming Committee has agreed to a name change to better reflect its mission. It will now be called the **Diversity and Inclusion Committee**. The committee is looking for more members who want to help broaden our welcome to all in our community.

Department of Education

by Mary Haan

Chili Food Drive

Celebrate the Superbowl with the gift of CHILI! Bring your canned food items (tomatoes, beans, corn, etc.) on **Sunday, February 11** to drop in the Chili Bin in the Narthex!

Donations go to Woyatan Shelter which currently provides over 350 warm meals to unsheltered families each day.

Coffee in the Parlor

Join us at **8:45am** for Coffee in the Parlor before church! Have a latte or a fancy coffee, socialize with friends, and make your way into the sanctuary to enjoy the Gathering Music!

Stained Glass Group

Come learn how to create beautiful stained glass works of art. The group meets on **Fridays from 1:00pm to 4:00pm** in the kitchen. For more information, contact **Dave Ledford**.

Communion Services

Pastor Erin is now serving Communion at **Westhills Village** on the **third Wednesday** of each month at **2:00pm**.

Pastor Erin also serves Communion at **St. Martin's Village** on the **fourth Wednesday** of each month at **2:00pm**.

Good Morning Circle

The Good Morning Circle will meet on **Wednesday, February 21 at 9:30am** in the church parlor. A short business meeting will follow the program and morning treats. Women's circles are a long standing tradition in Congregational congregations, and we enjoy this connection to our history. Please join us this month!

Memoir Writing Group

The Memoir Writing Group will meet on **Thursday, February 22 at 1:30pm**. Anyone interested in sharing or hearing stories is welcome to join us. For more information, contact Mary Keithahn.

South Dakota Honors Orchestra Concert

The J. Laiten Weed South Dakota Honors Orchestra is comprised of the top high school students from across South Dakota under the direction of Maestro, Dr. Steve Amundson. This bonus Black Hills Chamber Music Society concert celebrates the top string students in an exciting program designed to be thrilling and informative. The concert will be held at **7:00pm on Saturday, February 24** at First Congregational Church.

Woodchuck Society News

Woodchucks had a request for a delivery from Louie Blue Coat in Eagle Butte and we were happy to oblige. Trucks and trailers were loaded and the delivery made on Saturday, February 3. We welcomed a new Woodchuck for this work, so give John Wrede a high five when you see him. Others who helped with this loading and delivery include Jim Books, Rob Burton, Ron Hill, Dave Ledford, Michael Myers, Chuck and Sybil Rounds. There has been some splitting work going on. A group (Dave Ledford, Michael Myers, Chuck and Sybil Rounds) worked on a very cold January day and decided to return to hibernation until nicer weather returned. Michael Myers has been taking advantage of those nicer days and has split a mountain of logs. Jim Webster has been locating wood

donations and has brought in several loads of ash from the city golf course. Some of this needs to be cut into stove lengths, so watch your emails for work days as the weather warms.



One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering

The One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special offering will be taken on **Sunday, March 10**. If you write a check, please make it out to **First Congregational Church** with **OGHS** on the memo line. Thank you for your generous support.

Jesus teaches that faith calls for action. Sharing our light, as the diverse and colorful expression of God's love here on earth, leads to making blankets, staffing food pantries, cooking meals, building houses and schools, signing petitions for worthy causes, and protesting injustices. A simple song with a simple message—our light is on a light stand, for all to see—shine and share. On any given day, light is shining because we are there through our gifts to OGHS. Your contributions make a difference. Your dollars count.

Share the light.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

The Department of Education is happy to welcome our new committee members - **Mark Ortega and Kaylee Kruse!**

We are hosting a Chili Drive for canned food items on **Super Bowl Sunday (February 11th)** so look for the collection bin in the Narthex. For more information, see our report on page 2.



Adult Christian Education

Midday Meditation

Calling all contemplatives! Each **Monday-Thursday at 11:00am**, a midday meditation (20-minute-sit) will be offered in the hallway near the Sacristy. Please feel free to invite a friend and pop-in whenever your schedule permits. For more information, contact Pastor Erin.



The **Wellness Wheel** course continues through February as we explore Environmental Wellness, Artistic Wellness, Emotional Wellness, and more!



Our **Board Game Night for Young Folks** will continue on **February 13** and **February 27** from **6:00pm to 8:00pm**. We will meet in the Fireside Room.

Church Chat

In **February**, the group will meet on the **first and third Tuesdays at 11:30am...BUT starting in March we will shift to the second and fourth Mondays at 9:45am!** Contact **Becky Fisher** or **Kathleen Batchelder** to find out information about the book the group will be reading and discussing.



Spiritual Practices

Spiritual Practices is a group of delightful souls who meet to read scripture together and to engage in practices of prayer and meditation.

We are hard at work planning our yearly summer **Vacation Bible School** program.

We are looking forward to a **Springtime Family Day at Placerville** (details to come!).



We always welcome ideas, involvement and volunteers for events in education. Thanks to our wonderful church family for supporting the Department's work!

The group is open to all who are interested.

Spiritual disciplines require practice and having a group with whom to practice can strengthen the discipline and the faith it gives.

Spiritual Practices meets on **Tuesday each week at 12:30-1:30pm** (come as often as you'd like). Please consider joining the group in the church library.

For more information, contact Pastor Erin.



Birthday Celebrations



Ron Comely celebrated his **90th** birthday on **January 19!** Cake was served in the Fellowship Hall following worship on **January 14.**

Carol Boyles celebrated her **80th** birthday on **January 25!**

A reception was held on **January 27** in the Fellowship Hall.



Mary Keithahn will celebrate her **90th** birthday on **February 17!** Join us for cake in the Fellowship Hall following worship on **February 18.**

Art House Exhibit

Jordan Barnes has seven pieces of her artwork on display for the winter months at the Art House, 621 Main Street, Rapid City. Come check them out!

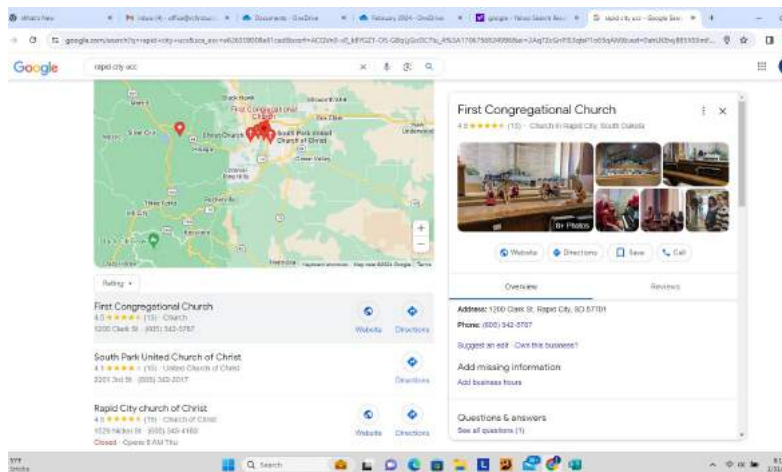
Knitting, crocheting, embroidering, quilting and card making are all available. We have supplies available at no cost for card making and quilting. We also have teachers available and would love to have people join us.

We also have some people who would like to learn chess, so if you would be willing to teach chess, let us know!



Craft Day

The craft people who meet every **Tuesday at 1:00pm** would like to invite everyone who crafts to join us.



Google Reviews for Church

The Social Media Subcommittee would like your help! We need more Google Reviews as a way to spotlight our church in the community.

Know how to leave a Google Review? Great! Need help?

Please follow these steps:

- Search Rapid City UCC and notice our church is the first choice. Touch or click on our church name.
- Once you've clicked, you'll see our Google listing. Below our church name, there is a horizontal menu: Overview/ Directory/ Reviews, etc.

- Touch or click on **Reviews.**

Under our Review Score, there will be five blank stars. Above the blank stars, it states, "Rate and Review. Rate Your Experience to help others."

- Touch or click the 5th star (furthest to the right)
- After clicking your star rating, you will be directed to a space to write your personal review. If you choose, write your great review of our fabulous church and church family!
- Touch or click "Post" and your review will be posted for the public to read.

We appreciate you and your review!

MEMBER NEWS AND NOTES

Prayer Concerns

Please hold the following members and friends in your prayers:



Karen Logue had a successful emergency surgery to have adjustment on her pacemaker. She is doing well.

Lee Boyles has ongoing health concerns.

Kay Daugherty is home and doing well following surgery to place a dual pacemaker. Cards may be mailed to her address listed in the church directory. Kay's brother-in-law, **Doug Reeves**, is currently undergoing surgery for an infection in the hardware that was placed in his neck last year.

Virginia Humke had hip replacement surgery on Jan. 24 and is doing well.

Jill Kundtz's back surgery on January 19 went well and she is doing better. Cards may be mailed to her address listed in the church directory.

Sheila Long's mother-in-law, **Ann Long**, is fighting cancer.

Sid Michaels is cancer free.

Reva Ortega's father, **Gerald Stapert**, will be having extensive back surgery.

Jodie Thuringer's dad is in Hospice care. Continued prayers for the family are appreciated.

Deb Tompkins fell and has a broken knee which is improving.

Nadine Zeller continues to battle a multitude of health issues. She begins Physical Therapy soon. Cards are

welcome and may be mailed to her address listed in the church directory.

We also pray for those members of our church family who are in care centers or isolated in their homes, including:

Evelyn Bradshaw, Vivian Dittmer, Eunice Johnson, Merrie Miller, Marrelyce Seaman, Dorothy Slingsby, Helen Snyder and Elena Van Pelt



Altar Flowers

The flowers on the Communion Table on January 28 were given by **Al Pitts'** daughters, Susan, Becky, Julie and Nancy in memory of his birthday.



Directory Update

Tish and Bruce Wilkinson
4825 Jericho Way #104
Rapid City, SD 57702

Birthdays

The following members and friends have **February** birthdays:

- February 1: **Stephanie Nielsen-Medek**
- February 3: **Robert Jonas**
- February 4: **Clara Crutcher**
- February 5: **Emilee Nickel**
- February 6: **Jack Edwards**
- February 8: **Sybil Rounds**
- February 10: **Randy Daughenbaugh**
Cedar Erickson-Deyo
- February 11: **Rob Burton**
Marrelyce Seaman
- February 12: **Jay Davis**
Chuck Lindly
- February 14: **Alicia Sutliff-Benusis**
- February 15: **Marla Maynard**
Jim Webster
- February 16: **Jay Benusis**
- February 17: **Mary Keithahn**
- February 18: **Laura Boyd**
Dave Ledford
- February 20: **Emily Eckholm**
Ashley Ferguson
- February 21: **Frances Cox**
- February 23: **Bruce Wilkinson**
Ron Wynia
- February 24: **Kalsy Dixon**
Alan Glover



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

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The calendar changes often, so please check the weekly email and/or online calendar on our church website. Rcfirstucc.com

Wednesday, February 7

11:00am: Midday Meditation
6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
7:00pm: Choir Practice

Thursday, February 8

10:00am: Altar Guild Meeting
11:00am: Midday Meditation
4:30pm: Dept. of Worship Meeting

Friday, February 9

9:30am: Watercolor Painting
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group
5:00pm: Pastor Erin's Ecclesiastical Council at South Park

Sunday, February 11

8:45am: Coffee in the Parlor
9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
9:45am: Sunday School
10:30am: Fellowship Hour/Souper Bowl Celebration
10:45am: Dept. of Educ. Meeting

Monday, February 12

11:00am: Midday Meditation

Tuesday, February 13

11:00am: Midday Meditation
11:30am: Church Chat
12:30pm: Spiritual Practices
PEO Meeting BF
1:00pm: Craft Day
4:15pm: Trust Board
6:00pm: Young Adult Board Game Night

Ash Wednesday, February 14

10:00am: Women's Fellowship Board Meeting
11:00am: Midday Meditation
6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
7:00pm: Ash Wednesday Service

Thursday, February 15

11:00am: Midday Meditation

Friday, February 16

9:30am: Watercolor Painting
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group
1:00pm: PEO Game Day/Barb Knight

Saturday, February 17

8:00am: Rotary Event

Sunday, February 18

8:45am: Coffee in the Parlor
9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
9:45am: Sunday School
10:30am: Fellowship Hour/Wellness Wheel
10:45am: Pastoral/Personnel Meeting

Monday, February 19

11:00am: Midday Meditation

Tuesday, February 20

11:00am: Midday Meditation
11:30am: Church Chat
12:30pm: Spiritual Practices
1:00pm: Craft Day
7:00pm: Church Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 21

9:30am: Good Morning Circle
11:00am: Midday Meditation
12:00pm: Interfaith Round Table/Pastor Erin
2:00pm: Communion at Westhills
6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
7:00pm: Choir Practice

Thursday, February 22

11:00am: Midday Meditation
1:30pm: Memoir Writing Group

Friday, February 23

9:30am: Watercolor Painting
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group

Saturday, February 24

7:00pm: BH Chamber Music Society SD Honors Concert

Sunday, February 25

8:45am: Coffee in the Parlor
9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
9:45am: Sunday School
10:30am: Fellowship Hour/Wellness Wheel
10:45am: Dept. of Ministries

Monday, February 26

11:00am: Midday Meditation

Tuesday, February 27

11:00am: Midday Meditation
12:30pm: Spiritual Practices
1:00pm: Craft Day
7:00pm: Young Adult Board Game Night

Wednesday, February 28

11:00am: Midday Meditation
2:00pm: Communion at St. Martin's Village
6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
7:00pm: Choir Practice

Thursday, February 29

11:00am: Midday Meditation

Friday, March 1

9:30am: Watercolor Painting
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group

Sunday, March 3

8:30am: Coffee in the Parlor
9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
9:45am: Sunday School
10:30am: Fellowship Hour/Wellness Wheel
10:45am: Dept. of Hospitality

Monday, March 4

11:00am: Midday Meditation

Tuesday, March 5

11:00am: Midday Meditation
12:30pm: Spiritual Practices
1:00pm: Craft Day

Wednesday, March 6

11:00am: Midday Meditation
6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
7:00pm: Choir Practice



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