

# THE CALL TO WORSHIP

March  
2023

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
1200 Clark Street  
Rapid City South Dakota 57701  
605-342-5787 office@rcfirstucc.com www.rcfirstucc.com

**Seeking, practicing and sharing  
Christ's ministry of inclusive love,  
justice and compassion**

## ***Greetings, beloved ones!***

Every year we enter Lent as on a journey that begins with Jesus' own sojourn in the wilderness. Neither the journey nor the wilderness comes naturally anymore to Americans, who long ago completed their journey and tamed their wilderness. To be sure, we are a highly mobile people, but truth be told—we don't seem to be going anyplace special. We move from town to town, job to job and marriage to marriage, but the telos of our wanderings and the satisfaction of our longings often remain elusive.



Each week in the Lenten Gospel readings, we will explore what it might mean to live a life which is "Leaning Towards the Light" as the church makes its progress by means of a series of dialogues--on temptation (with the devil), on perplexity (Nicodemus), on longing for what is real (the Samaritan woman), and on the true identity of Jesus (the man formerly blind). We will conclude with a couple of conversations about death and resurrection held in Jewish cemeteries. Along the way, we will discover that the journey does not follow the familiar route from a lower-paying to a higher-paying job, from illness to health, or from misery to happiness. The Temptation, where we started the final Sunday of February, re-narrated Israel's experience as a pattern of the church's struggle in an alien environment called the wilderness.

Flannery O'Connor has a story about a little girl who loves to visit the convent and the sisters. But every time the nun gives her a hug, the crucifix on Sister's belt gets mashed into the child's face. The gesture of love always leaves a mark.

On our journey toward the resurrection, we discover our true identity or, better, it is imprinted upon us. For some it is a fearful experience of testing, but one that is moderated by a special grace; we make this journey together, with the whole Christian church on earth, and we follow the One who has already completed the course.

"As Lent is the time for greater love, listen to Jesus' thirst ... He knows your weakness.  
He wants only your love, wants only the chance to love you."

— St. Teresa of Calcutta



**Blessings to you,**

*Pastor Erin*

*As a brief addition, I also wanted to say **thank-you** (!!!) for the call of Designated Term Pastor. It is both an honor and privilege to serve here at First Congregational United Church of Christ! I look forward to what Spirit has for us as a church family over the coming year.*

# BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS

## Moderator's Message

by **Chuck Rounds**

The most important news for this issue of the Call is the result of the congregational vote taken during the special church meeting on the 26th. 97% of the members present voted in favor of issuing a call to **Erin Erickson** to be our Designated Term Pastor for one year. The number of members present for the meeting was very impressive. It would sure be nice to have that number in attendance every Sunday. Maybe we should have an important meeting every Sunday after church. Search Committee Chairperson, **Eileen Rossow**, will have more information in the article in this issue of the Call.

Our church held our annual meeting on January 29th. The congregation approved the annual reports as printed and also accepted The First Congregational Pilgrim Charitable Trust report. The proposed budget of \$294,794.00 was approved and the nominees for departments and church officers were elected. Again, a big Thank You to the folks who agreed to serve.

The February board meeting was postponed due to the snow storm on the 21st, so we have no update of what was accomplished. One item to be discussed is the requirement in the church constitution for all congregational votes be done in person. There are some who would like to be able to attend annual meetings and vote on Zoom or some other way on line. There was also the

mention of voting by mail. I anticipate that a task force will be appointed to investigate the different possibilities available that will ensure the confidentiality and the identity of the votes. There are many who believe that church is an in-person experience and would prefer to leave the constitution as is. It will undoubtedly be an interesting discussion.

As we make our way through Lent toward Palm Sunday and finally to the celebration of Easter, let us remember and pray for those less fortunate in the world - the innocent folks in Ukraine or those who lost family and all possessions in Turkey - and also those in our country, state and town who suffer. We need to let them know "that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

## Pastoral Search Committee

by **Eileen Rossow**

February 25th and 26th were the dates for the Candidating Weekend for **Erin Erickson**. On Saturday, we hosted a reception for Erin and her family and served coffee and cake.

There were approximately sixty-five members in attendance.

On Sunday after the worship service, members gathered in the Fellowship Hall for cake and coffee and a formal meeting for the election and vote of



confirming an invitation to Erin to be our Designated Term Pastor. There were over 100 people in attendance at church and at the special meeting.

Eileen Rossow nominated Erin Erickson and Willis Sutliff seconded the nomination. There was a period of short discussion after which printed ballots were distributed to all members in attendance. Susan Kelts and Eileen Rossow counted the votes. Eighty-nine (89) votes were cast. Eighty-seven (87) votes were "Yes" (97.7%) and two (2) votes were "No" (2.3%). A formal invitation will be extended to Erin at the next Pastoral Relations Meeting. If she accepts the invitation, she will begin her duties as Designated Term Pastor on April 1, 2023.

The current Pastoral Search Committee is now disbanded. A special thank you goes out to **Kathleen Batcheler, Mike Crutcher, Todd Eddy, Alan Glover, Jenny Kozel, Lisa Lyons, Kim Nearhood, Chuck Rounds** and **Alicia Sutliff-Benusis** for their dedication and extra-special effort on this committee!

## Department of Ministries

by **Sheila Long**

We welcomed two new members in February, **Becky Tilghman** and **Melanie Palm**. Officers were decided at our February meeting. Chair will remain **Sheila Long**, Secretary is **Sybil Rounds** and Church Board Representative is **Cindy Ledford**.

Our **Church Response grocery cart** item for March is **cereal**. We will

# Boards and Departments

continue to sell cards the first Sunday of each month. Walmart now has \$50 card amounts available. Sheila Long is the Church Response Board secretary. If anyone is interested in supporting this board, they are in dire need of help. Contact Sheila if you have any questions or are interested.

The next **Cornerstone Rescue Mission meal** is **Friday, March 31, 2023**. We would love cookie donations and if you are interested in helping prepare the meal, the chefs will be at the church at **3:30pm on March 31st**.

## ONA Committee by Susan Kelts

The **Open and Affirming (ONA) Committee** is part of the Department of Ministries. We meet each month with the goal of solidifying our church as one that welcomes everyone

regardless of gender identification/ expression, race nationality, culture or ability.

At our last monthly ONA meeting, , we discussed a variety of ideas/issues:

- We will be ordering rainbow comma pins for our committee members. If there is an interest from other congregational members, we will be able to order more.
- Our church website has been updated with a beautiful rainbow comma added to our logo.
- We discussed changing the sign on our family bathroom door to one with more inclusive icons instead of just a male and female.
- We plan to reach out to the LGBTQ group (Spectrum) at the School of Mines.

**Dates of significance:**

**March 1:** Zero Discrimination Day

**March 8:** International Women's Day

**March 21:** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**March 25:** International Day of Remembrance of the Victims

Two bills related to equality were voted on in the State Legislature:

- \* House Bill 1080—this bill would take away the right of parents to make medical treatment decisions for their minor transgender child. The bill was passed by both houses and signed into law by Governor Kristi Noem.
- \* House Bill 1092—this bill would revise the definition of marriage. It was heard in Committee and deferred to the 41st day.

# NEWS FROM THE CHURCH

## March Rummage Sale

**Sale week schedule is as follows:**

### SUNDAY, MARCH 12

Items can be brought into the building after worship; tables and room set up starts after coffee hour.

**\*ALL HANDS ON DECK!\***

### MONDAY, MARCH 13

**9:00am-3:00pm:** set up continues - donations accepted

### TUESDAY, MARCH 14

**9:00am - 3:00pm:** set up continues - donations accepted

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

**9:00am - 3:00pm:** set up continues - last day for donations

### THURSDAY, MARCH 16

**9:00am - 3:00pm:** pricing all day -

**\*NO DONATIONS ACCEPTED\***

### FRIDAY, MARCH 17

**8:00am:** doors open - sale closes at **3:00pm**

**\*BAKE SALE Friday ONLY\***

### SATURDAY, MARCH 18

**8:00am:** doors open - sale over at **noon**, clean up and room restoration until done

Leftovers will be delivered to local thrift stores. There may be a need for **pickup trucks to help with deliveries on Saturday after the sale.**

If you are bringing items for the **bake sale**, please have them packaged and

ready for sale. Donations can be left at the church on **Thursday**, or brought in before **8:00am on Friday**. Due to the increased cost of baking supplies, we are suggesting that cookies/bars be priced at \$2.00 for 6. Other suggested prices are cupcakes 50¢; cinnamon/ caramel rolls \$1.50 each, breads from \$1.50 - \$3.00 depending on size and variety.

This is the biggest all-church effort in our congregation. Young and old, men and women, experts and novices all pitch in to make this sale the best in town. If you have questions, please speak with **Laura Boyd, Sue Maynard, or Sybil Rounds**.

# NEWS FROM THE CHURCH

## Hopeful Crafters

There has been a large amount of stamping items donated for people to use. If interested, please join us in the craft room on **Tuesdays at 1:00pm** to make cards, or if you prefer, bring scrapbooks you'd like to work on. We currently have stamps, paper ribbons, stickers, some ink, lots of ideas and a huge welcome. You don't need anything at all except a cheery outlook and an open mind!

## Good Morning Circle

Due to the timing of the semi-annual rummage sale, Good Morning Circle will not meet in March. If you have set aside that time, please consider joining us as we sift and sort for the sale.

## Music Notes by Alan Glover

This year, in observance of Lent, we will suspend gathering music before the start of the Sunday morning worship service. The choir will prepare to open the service with a choral introit. In order to prepare for the start of the service, we would ask that silence be observed upon entering the sanctuary to reflect on the message provided by the choir. Thank you for your participation in this form of preparation for our Lenten services.

The choir will also be preparing new music for Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday service and Easter Sunday. My thanks to the choir members for their continued dedication to preparation of our choral music, and to **Audrey and John Fenner**

for their dedication to provide quality music for our services.

## ONA Calendar

The Open and Affirming (ONA) committee has prepared a **calendar** with important days of remembrance or recognition printed on the calendar. You can find it on the bulletin board with church news located in the Fellowship Hall by the world map. Check it out each week and see what's being celebrated locally, nationally and internationally. No Matter Who You Are or Where You Are On Life's Journey You Are Welcome Here.

## Inclement Weather

Church services and activities will be cancelled whenever a **no travel advisory** or a **school cancellation** has been issued for Rapid City. When possible, the church staff will send a cancellation alert to church email subscribers. If you would like to be added as a subscriber to the church emails, please notify the church office.

## Woodchuck Society

A second delivery to Gus Craven at Wanblee was made on February 18th. We had 4 pickup



trucks and 3 trailers on the trip, and it didn't take long to empty the loads. Gus and Terry's son and daughter-in-law and assorted grandchildren helped unload, and it was great to watch the young ones work alongside us. We have enough wood left for one

more delivery, so there is still time to join the fun! Contact Chuck Rounds at **605-519-9368** if you'd like more information, have wood to donate, or have questions.

## Family Fare Receipts

Family Fare is discontinuing its receipt program on **March 15**. We have not collected enough receipts to earn a monetary reward from the program. South Canyon Elementary School is close to earning the monetary reward. If you have any receipts, please bring them to the office and we will take them to the school.

## Los Guido News

The most recent news from **Pastor Dorotea** thanks the congregation for the help for families in Los Guido. School started on February 6th, and church funds have provided school help for one university student, three girls in high school, and two boys in elementary school. Please continue to pray for Pastor Dorotea's eldest daughter, **Sarvia**. Her latest tests indicate that her cancer is not retreating, so more chemotherapy has been ordered. This round will have more severe side effects, and Sarvia is already quite debilitated from her previous treatments. In spite of this emotional burden, Dorotea continues her prayer services and reaches out to the community. She is a pillar in Los Guido and has always given words of encouragement and wisdom and continues to quietly work behind the lines.

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

## Patti Arneson, chair

We are all so excited to see the increase of joyous faces of children during our Church service and Sunday School each week. Laughter and learning abound!



Our Teen and Tween group had a very successful fundraiser for Feeding SD, and the Women's and Children's Shelter. They creatively raised **\$393.00** dollars and helped bring in **491** cans of soup, while tying this fundraiser drive with the season of "SOUP-er" BOWL. This was far exceeded their initial GOAL, so this was a real TOUCHDOWN for our UCC Teen and Tweens Team!



On **March 5th**, our department will be hosting a **Lenten Devotional and Meditation** time in the Parlor after the church service. Included will be music by **Justin Speck**, devotionals recited by **Kathleen Batchelder**, and choices of various quiet artwork ideas, to spark one's own spiritual and contemplative thoughts. This is geared more for an adult group, but all are welcome to join.

The **confirmation class** members are helping with the Communion Service on **Sunday, March 5**, as part of their class requirements. These requirements include helping prepare the communion elements, serving the elements during worship and helping with cleanup after worship.

Please join us on **Sunday, March 19**, as the confirmation class will be sharing a bit of themselves with the congregation during worship. Then, on the following week, **Sunday, March 26**, they will be confirmed.

Please include this event on your calendars! **Palm Sunday is on April 2nd**. This is also a Communion Sunday. We typically do not have Sunday School on this day, but **we WILL be having Sunday School on April 2nd**. The children



will be waving and sharing palms with the congregation during part of that morning's service. Following the Children's Moment, a memorable day is planned for the children, filled with Easter stories, crafts, and goodies. Please plan on attending for this special day!

Please note that the kids created bags of non-perishable, consumable food and drink items during VBS. These bags were put together to share with folks who may need some sustenance. Please feel free to take as many bags as you wish, to keep in your car or home, and share with others who might like some food or water. You will find them located on a table in the Narthex.

An **Adult Forum** is presented the **third Sunday** of each month at **10:45am** in the Fellowship Hall.

**Bridget Marshall** and **Laura Boyd** will present the history, activities, and information of the **Front Porch Coalition** on **March 19**. The Front Porch Coalition is a local organization dedicated to the support of suicide survivors and their loved ones, as well as to the promotion of suicide prevention information.

On **April 16**, **Kenny Putnam** and **Justin Speck** will lead a presentation about the arts scene in Rapid City. We look forward to hearing these two talented members of our congregation speak about the musical and theatrical offerings in our community.

**Church Chat** and **Spiritual Practices** continue the first and third Tuesdays each month.

The **Church Chat** group's current book for discussion is *Driving Jesus to Little Rock* (by Roland Merullo). We will discuss chapters 1-14 on **March 7**. Join us at **11:30am-12:30pm** in the church parlor.

**Spiritual Practices** is a small group of church members and friends who meet at **12:30-1:30pm** in the church library to read scriptures together and to engage in practices of prayer and meditation. 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. Please consider joining the group. For more information, contact **Pastor Erin**.

# MEMBER NEWS AND NOTES

## Prayer Concerns

Please hold the following members and friends in your prayers:

**Shirley Baumgartner** is at Westhills Rehab, **Rev. Jill Kundtz** is doing better following her spinal cord procedure, **Clair Maynard** as he recovers from his health intervention, is facing serious health issues, **Michael Myers** now is cancer free and continues periodic checks, and **Pastor Dorotea Yucra's** daughter, **Sarvia**, whose health struggles continue.

**Harold Miller** continues to receive cancer treatments, which are going well. Harold and Cam are having their mail forwarded from their home address as listed in the church directory.

Those we continue to pray for in our congregation include **Lee Boyles** and **Deb Tompkins**.

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

**Evelyn Bradshaw, Dona Cheney, Maralee Dennis, Vivian Dittmer, Wes Humke, Bob Jonas, Eunice Johnson, Chuck Knowlton, Merrie Miller, Marrelyce Seaman, Lorraine Slocum, Helen Snyder and Elena Van Pelt.**



## Congregational Representatives

Did you know that we have three church members who represent the members of our congregation and are fittingly called Congregational Representatives? It is their job to be active listeners, help answer questions, problem solve and take concerns to the church board meetings. Our current representatives are **Carol Boyles, Becky Fisher** and **Jenny Kozel**. Their phone numbers are listed in the church directory. Contact the church office if you would prefer to email the representatives.



Carol Boyles



Becky Fisher



Jenny Kozel

## Church Directories

Church directories are available in the Narthex. Directory Update:

**Craig Chapman**

4203 Elm Ave #309  
Rapid City SD 57701  
605-545-2264



The following members and friends have birthdays in **March**.

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>March 9</b>  | <b>Coen Grauman</b><br><b>Bob Moore</b>  |
| <b>March 10</b> | <b>Eunice Johnson</b><br><b>Mindy Nickel</b>   |
| <b>March 12</b> | <b>Chloe Benusis</b><br><b>Dwight Schnabel</b>   |
| <b>March 19</b> | <b>Terry Brouillette</b><br><b>Christopher Golden</b><br><b>Jim Wosepka</b>              |
| <b>March 22</b> | <b>Scott Nielsen</b>   |
| <b>March 23</b> | <b>Del Maynard</b>   |
| <b>March 25</b> | <b>Amy Richards</b>  |
| <b>March 29</b> | <b>Anna Benusis</b>  |
| <b>March 30</b> | <b>Helen Snyder</b>  |
| <b>March 31</b> | <b>Kain Cruz</b><br><b>Sue Maynard</b><br><b>Dorothy Slingsby</b><br><b>Brady Tipton</b> |



# CALENDAR

The calendar changes often, so please check the weekly email and/or online calendar on our church website. [rcfirstucc.com](http://rcfirstucc.com)



## **Wednesday, March 1**

10:00am: Communion at Westhills  
7:00pm: Choir Practice

## **Friday, March 3**

10:00am: Water Color Painting Group  
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group

## **Sunday, March 5**

9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available  
10:30am: Fellowship Hour/Lent Event in Parlor

## **Tuesday, March 7**

11:30am: Church Chat  
12:30pm: Spiritual Practices  
1:00pm: Craft Day

## **Wednesday, March 8**

10:00am: Women's Fellowship Meeting  
7:00pm: Choir Practice

## **Thursday, March 9**

10:00am: Altar Guild Meeting  
4:30pm: Dept. of Worship Meeting  
6:30pm: Stewardship and Budget

## **Friday, March 10**

10:00am: Water Color Painting Group  
1:00pm: Community Conversations  
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group  
5:00pm: Overnight Lock-in for Confirmands

## **Sunday, March 12**

9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available  
9:45am: Sunday School after Children's Moment  
10:30am: Fellowship Hour  
10:45am: Dept. of Education Meeting  
11:00am: Rummage Sale Setup

## **Monday, March 13**

9:00am: Rummage Sale Setup

## **Tuesday, March 14**

9:00am: Rummage Sale Setup  
4:15pm: Trust Board Meeting

## **Wednesday, March 15**

9:00am: Rummage Sale Setup  
7:00pm: Choir Practice

## **Thursday, March 16**

9:00am: Rummage Sale Setup

## **Friday, March 17**

8:00am: Rummage and Bake Sale

## **Saturday, March 18**

8:00am: Rummage Sale  
12:00pm: Rummage Sale Cleanup

## **Sunday, March 19**

### **One Great Hour of Sharing Offering**

9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available  
9:45am: Sunday School after Children's Moment  
10:30am: Fellowship Hour  
10:45am: Adult Forum

## **Tuesday, March 21**

11:30am: Church Chat  
2:30pm: Spiritual Practices  
1:00pm: Craft Day  
7:00pm: Church Board Meeting

## **Wednesday, March 22**

7:00pm: Choir Practice

## **Thursday, March 23**

1:30pm: Memoir Writing Group Meeting

## **Friday, March 24**

10:00am: Water Color Painting Group  
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group

## **Sunday, March 26**

### **Confirmation Sunday**

9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available  
9:45am: Sunday School after Children's Moment  
10:30am: Fellowship Hour

## **Tuesday, March 28**

9:30am: Women's Fellowship Kitchen Cleaning  
1:00pm: Craft Day  
7:00pm: Pastoral and Personnel Committee

## **Wednesday, March 29**

7:00pm: Choir Practice

## **Friday, March 31**

10:00am: Water Color Painting Group  
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group  
3:30pm: Mission Meal

First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
1200 Clark Street  
Rapid City SD 57701

## One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), part of Our Church's Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. For over 70 years, the OGHS has been helping Christians bring God's hope and healing to hurting people both in the U.S. and around the world. Since the closing years of World War II, OGHS has raised funds to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences and bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by natural disaster.

**Our church will be collecting this offering on Sunday, March 19, 2023.**

