

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

October
2023

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

Greetings, bright ones!

October happens to be one of my most favorite months of the year—perhaps because Autumn is usually in the air (unless something like storm Atlas hits, that is). For me this means cozy sweaters and warm socks, yummy smelling candles, hot pumpkin (or spiced chai) flavored drinks and of course the leaves performing their annual magic trick ritual of transforming from shades of green to vivid oranges, yellows and reds... and then releasing from their respective trees. Perhaps my affinity for October is also linked to it being my birthday month, it's hard to tell with so much to enjoy!

"Life teaches you the art of letting go in every event. When you have learned to let go, you will be joyful, and as you start being joyful more will be given to you."

- Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Sometimes growth and healing isn't about adding something new to your life. Sometimes it's about letting go. But letting go is often a difficult and even painful process - it requires us to honestly and humbly evaluate our lives and identify the places where we're hurting, the places where we're holding on too tightly, the ways in which we might be making excuses for ourselves for the sake of comfort and stability.

Think of yourself as a tree, longing to reach your branches to the sky, to dig your roots more deeply into the earth, and to bring fragrant flowers and nourishing, delicious fruit into the world. A healthy tree is able to do all of this with ease and grace. Arborists know that pruning shriveled branches and freeing the tree of dead weight encourages it to thrive in the way that nature intended. Although that branch might have once been leafy and strong, although it

might have once been of beautiful service to the tree, it's no longer useful, and being free of it helps the tree grow. We're no different.

Autumn is a perfect time to release leaves and shake down those dead branches. Here are a couple things to begin to let go of to bring forth all the growth just waiting to happen.

Let go of control.

Control is one of the biggest myths of the modern age. It's tempting to believe that if we do a, b, and c, the outcome will be x, y, and z. But the only thing that is truly under your control is you.

Let go of guilt and regrets.

Guilt does serve a purpose - to keep us from repeating the mistakes of the past. The most powerful way to move on from guilt is to take these lessons to heart. Otherwise, guilt won't actually serve you, and can completely take over your life.

Let go of caring what other people think of you.

Others' thoughts about you are not truths. You are completely in control of the narrative of your own life and personality. You are uniquely you, and fitting in just might not be your destiny! There will be people who dislike you and misinterpret you - let them! What someone else thinks about you is none of your business. Instead of focusing on changing their opinion, just be authentically yourself.

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

BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS

Moderator's Moment

by Susan Kelts, Assistant Moderator

Thanks to our department leaders and our wonderful office staff, the work of the church continues. Susan Kelts, Assistant Moderator is fulfilling the Moderator's duties while he takes time to visit family in Australia.

The Church Board met on September 19 and the following items were discussed:

- A. The Department of Buildings and Grounds has been dealing with air conditioning, water softener and water pressure issues.
- B. Financials are stable and within budgeted parameters.
- C. We had a very successful Fall Kickoff for Christian Education and the department is working to create a "Teens and Tweens" group to meet weekly.
- D. Hospitality is planning more potluck events for our congregation.
- E. The sale of Church Response cards will be discontinued at the end of the year. There may be a special offering in February to support Church Response.
- F. Pastor Erickson will be hosting an interfaith roundtable to discuss support for the Hope Center. In addition, she will have her review with the Committee on Ministry on October 8. The Church Board will provide a letter of support to the COM with a request that she be considered for examination of ordination.
- G. Lighting for the sanctuary was discussed.
- H. Our custodian, Sydney, has resigned effective Oct. 1. Mary Haan will try the job for the month of October to see if it will work with her schedule.
- I. Pat Lebrun will be working with a committee to update and refurbish parts of the church. This will be funded by the Gene Lebrun memorial monies.
- J. The carpets in the building need to be cleaned. The cost for this will be investigated.
- K. A committee was formed to set up a more formal system for visitation of our church members.

Department of Stewardship and Budget

The financial condition of the church is sound at this time. Now that we have our desired staff on board, it will be important for all of us to continue being dedicated to our pledged giving goals. We have had the luxury of having some latitude in our budget the last couple years, but now that all of our line items have expenses being paid from them, we have less room for error and will continue to count on the unfailing generosity of our congregation.

Harlan Stephens on behalf of Stewardship and Budget, **Randy Daughenbaugh, Barb Knight, Pat Lebrun, Kevin Sandmeier and Scott Schuft**

Department of Ministries

Our Church Response grocery cart item for the fall is canned soup and vegetables, but of course we will take anything and everything, just place it in the grocery cart located in the Narthex.



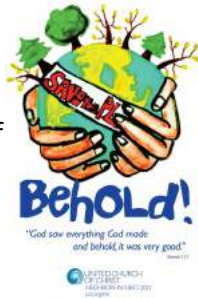
Church Department Information Series

Have you ever considered serving on one of the departments of the church, but hesitated because you felt you didn't have enough information about that department? Perhaps you wondered about the purpose or function of the department. Perhaps you wondered what would be required of you as a department member.

Sunday, October 1, will be the first of a seven week series when a member from one of the seven departments of the church will share information during worship about their department. We hope this series will help everyone make informed decisions about serving as a church department member.

Neighbors in Need Special Offering

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund



projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice.

In 2023, the Neighbors in Need "BEHOLD!" theme continues. This year's focus is on environmental justice. Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these egregious acts are sinful and unholy. We must be better stewards of our planet!

Our church will collect this special offering during the worship service on **Sunday, October 1st**. Please make checks out to **First Congregational Church with NIN** on the memo line. Thank you.

Grocery Card Sales

The Department of Ministries will be selling grocery cards on **Sunday, October 1** in the Fellowship Hall following worship.

Proceeds from the sales go to Church Response and help fund our Cornerstone Mission meals.

Communion Services

Pastor Erin is serving Communion in at **Westhills Village** on the **first Wednesday of each month at 10:00am**. The next service will be on **Wednesday, October 4**.

Pastor Erin also serves Communion at **St. Martin's Village** on the **fourth Wednesday of each month at 2:00pm**. The next service will be at **Wednesday, October 25**.

All are welcome to join either service.

Trunk or Treat

We are excited to host another Trunk or Treat event this year in the parking lot at First Congregational Church from 4:00 to 7:00pm on Sunday, October 29th!

We are asking church members who wish to participate to hand out candy and treats from the trunks of their cars starting at **4:00pm**. We encourage participants to come a bit early (around **3:30pm**) to allow enough time decorate their vehicles and enjoy some time in fellowship and fun. We will be offering apple cider and hot cocoa as well! This will be an exciting event for our UCC kids and for families throughout the community!

If you are unable to attend but would still like to support, we welcome donations of candy, hot chocolate powder, paper cups and individually-wrapped treats, such as cookies. Please plan to join us and spread the word to the kids and families in your life!



Stained Glass Group

Come learn how to create beautiful stained glass works of art. The group will meet on **Fridays from 1:00pm to 4:00pm** in the kitchen. Their next

meeting will be on **Friday, October 6 at 1:00pm**. For more information, contact **Dave Ledford**.



B. H. Assoc. Meeting

The Black Hills Association Fall Meeting will be held at and hosted by First Congregational Church on **Sunday, October 15 from 3:00 to 5:00pm**. This meeting is open to the members of all churches in the Black Hills Association. If you plan to attend, please notify the church office.

Good Morning Circle

Good Morning Circle meets on the **3rd Wednesday** of most months in the fall, winter and spring. We welcome all women of the church to join us in the parlor on **Wednesday, October 18 at 9:30am** for devotions, a sweet treat, and a program, followed by a short business meeting.

Bell Choir

The Bell Choir started meeting and practicing in September. They will provide the anthem during worship on **October 22, November 12 and December 3** with future dates to be determined.

Watercolor Exhibit

From **August 25 through October 22**, the Northern Plains Watercolor Society annual show is on exhibit at the Dahl Arts Center, 713 7th Street (across from the Rapid City Public Library).

First Congregational Church is a haven every Friday morning for many of the artists who are exhibiting. Stop by and see our work! **Nora Wosepka** and **Jordan Barnes** are two of our church members who are participating.

Memoir Writing Group

The Memoir Writing Group will meet on **Thursday, October 26 at 1:30pm**. Anyone interested in sharing or hearing stories is welcome to join us. For more information, contact **Mary Keithahn**.

Craft Sale Bazaar

The Craft Sale Bazaar will be held on from **9:00am to 1:00pm on Saturday, November 5** in the **Fellowship Hall**. We have many items made for this sale, and would love to see you participate with us!

This year there will be a bake sale, as well. If you are so inclined, please bring some baked goods to the church kitchen to sell on Thursday, Nov. 3 from 9:00am to 3:00pm or Friday, Nov. 4 from 2:00 to 4:00pm. PLEASE package and price your items, ready to sell. Cookies, muffins and cupcakes are .50 each, so if you have a package of 6 items, it would be priced at \$3.00. Caramel rolls are \$2.00 to \$3.00 each, depending on the

size. Candies are a variety of prices. Whatever items are left over will be offered for sale after Sunday service on **November 5**.

Thank you so much for considering this opportunity to help fund our church activities. *The Craft Gang*

Nursery Nannies Needed

Nice, non-paid, nimble nannies needed for neat-o kids in the nursery. Nods of thanks to "nanas" and/or "newbies" for nurturing, ONE Sunday a month for an hour. Naturally, navigate your nomination for this newfound and neighborly necessity to the N-OFFICE.

Fellowship Hour Help

Coffee hosts and dishwashers are needed for the coffee hour following worship. Easy instructions are posted for each volunteer opportunity. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall on the sheets located next to the cookies if you can help. If you need assistance, indicate it on the sheet and someone will help you. **Thank you!**

Hope Center Box

The collection of toiletry items for The Hope Center continues. There is a donation box located on a table in the Narthex. The HOPE Center is a day center for our homeless population and is located in downtown Rapid City. A list of needs is posted on top of the donation box. Thank you!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

What a start to another amazing school year for our First UCC Kids! We enjoyed a beautiful Blessing of the Backpacks from Pastor Erin during our service on September 10th. Each student received a devotional guide and a gift from the Church as another year of learning begins. We celebrated our Kickoff Party with a bouncy castle, face painting, games, and a potluck with the whole church family! Thank you to the Department of Education, the Department of Hospitality, and all those who contributed to the success of this fun event!

We will continue our Sunday School opportunities for our K-5th students. We'll engage with kiddos through songs, scripture reading, crafts, games, and discussion opportunities every Sunday after the *Message For The Young At Heart*. We will be making plans (with input from

the kids) for service projects and activities to benefit the greater community as we move into a Season of Gratitude leading up to Advent.

We are excited to invite the whole congregation to help us make another memorable Trunk or Treat event from **4:00 to 7:00pm on Sunday, October 29** for the Rapid City community! More details can be found on page 3 of this issue of The Call to Worship newsletter.

As always, the Department of Education is blessed to participate in the church through our engagement with each one of you and all of the kids. Please continue to keep our young congregants in your prayers as they study, play, and grow this season.

Mary Haan, Christian Education Coordinator



Adult Christian Education

Plan to join us in the fellowship hall after worship on the fourth Sunday each month for our Adult Forum. Informative presentations and lively discussions explore community organizations, social issues, and church activities. Your suggestions for programs are always welcome.

Becky Fleming will speak on the topic of *Caring Conversations* on **Sunday, October 22**. For more information, contact **Kathleen Batchelder**.

Church Chat

Church Chat continues on **Tuesday, October 3** from **11:30am to 12:30pm**. The group meets the first and third Tuesdays each month starting in October. Please join us!

Spiritual Practices

Spiritual Practices is a small group of church members and friends who meet 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 on the first and third Tuesdays each month at 12:45-1:45pm in the church library. The next meeting is on **Tuesday, October 3** at **12:45pm**. For more information, contact Pastor Erin

MEMBER NEWS AND NOTES

Prayer Concerns

Our sympathy and prayers to those who recently have lost loved ones:

Karen and Greg Logue, Roger Knowlton, Lynnell and Linda Parrott and their families following the death of **Chuck Knowlton** on September 7 in Rapid City. Services were held on September 14 at First Congregational Church. He will be greatly missed by our church family.

The family of **Marge Pitts** following her death on September 25 in Rapid City. Services were held on September at Osheim & Schmidt Funeral Home. She will be greatly missed by our church family.

Please hold the following members and friends in your prayers:

Reuben Bareis is healing at Westhills Village following a recent hospitalization. Cards and letters are encouraged.

Lee Boyles has ongoing health concerns.

Kay Daugherty's sister, **Evie Reeves**, is facing health issues.

Jill Kundtz received cluneal nerve ablation on August 18. She is hoping to see positive results.

Anders Grauman broke two bones in his arm as the result of a fall. He thankfully will not require surgery.

Ron Laughlin, husband of **Becky Fisher's** cousin, Linda, is receiving treatment for cancer.

Sid Michaels has started cancer treatments. Radiation treatments begin August 28. He is doing well.

Cam Miller's brother, **Scot Cheney**, is facing a serious battle with prostate cancer.

Jodie Thuringer's father is facing a recurrence of health issues.

Deb Tompkins' sister, Sherry Buffington, and brother, **George Hills**, are facing serious health issues.

Pastor Dorotea Yucra's daughter, **Sarvia**, is receiving no treatment for terminal cancer at this time. She is being cared for at home by her mother and sister.

Nadine Zeller had a successful surgery for back pain. She is recovering at home.

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, Wes Humke, Eunice Johnson, Merrie Miller, Vi Pietz, Marrelyce Seaman, Helen Snyder and Elena Van Pelt.

Thank You

I would like to thank our church family for coming to my retirement party and making it so very special. Blessings to everyone. Please continue to pray for our families and their health issues! The prayers continue to be heard and our faith is as strong as always!

Deb and Bruce Tompkins

Many thanks for the coffee, cake and birthday wishes last Sunday. (Sept. 3)

Bernie Lambert

The Ehrke family would like to thank the church congregation for their

condolences, friendship and support after the passing of Mary Lou. Your kindness and generosity has been greatly appreciated.

October Birthdays

The following members and friends have birthdays in **October**:

October 2: Audrey Fenner

October 3: Erin Erickson

Denise Webster

October 5: Jeri Behringer

October 6: Willy Grigg

October 8: Becky Fisher

October 9: Randy Fisher

October 11: Kylie Steever

October 12: Steel Cruz

October 13: Jim Fleming

Joyce Oster

October 14: Lucas Haan

October 15: Lee Boyles

October 16: Laura Switzer

October 19: Peggy Eckholm

October 20: Ginny Ens

October 22: Greg Logue

Ryan Webster

October 25: Susan Kelts

October 27: Kenny Putnam



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



Sunday, October 1

Neighbors in Need Special Offering

- 9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
- 9:45am: Sunday School after Children's Moment
- 10:30am: Fellowship Hour/Grocery Card Sales
- 10:45am: Dept. of Hospitality Meeting

Tuesday, October 3

- 11:30am: Church Chat
- 12:45pm: Spiritual Practices
- 1:00pm: Craft Day

Wednesday, October 4

- 10:00am: Communion at Westhills
- 6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00pm: Choir Practice

Friday, October 6

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

Sunday, October 8

- 9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
- 9:45am: Sunday School after Children's Moment
- 10:30am: Fellowship Hour
- 10:45am: Dept. of Education Meeting
- 3:00pm: Black Hills Chamber Music Concert

Tuesday, October 10

- 12:30pm: PEO/BF Meeting
- 1:00pm: Craft Day
- 4:15pm: Trust Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 11

- 10:00am: Women's Fellowship Board Meeting
- 6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00pm: Choir Practice

Thursday, October 12

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

Friday, October 13

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

Sunday, October 15

- 9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
- 9:45am: Sunday School after Children's Moment
- 10:30am: Fellowship Hour
- 10:45am: Pastoral Relations/Personnel Committee
- 3:00pm: BH Association Fall Meeting

Tuesday, October 17

- 11:30am: Church Chat
- 12:45pm: Spiritual Practices
- 1:00pm: Craft Day
- 7:00pm: Church Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 18

- 9:30am: Good Morning Circle
- 6:00pm: Bell Choir
- 7:00pm: Choir Practice

Friday, October 20

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

Sunday, October 22

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

Tuesday, October 24

- 9:30am: WF Sanctuary Cleaning
- 1:00pm: Craft Day

Wednesday, October 25

- 2:00pm: Communion at St. Martin's Village
- 6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00pm: Choir Practice

Thursday, October 26

- 1:30pm: Memoir Writing Group Meeting

Friday, October 27

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

Sunday, October 29

- 9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
- 9:45am: Sunday School after Children's Moment
- 10:30am: Fellowship Hour
- 4:00pm: Trunk or Treat Event

Tuesday, October 31

- Happy Halloween!**
- 1:00pm: Craft Day



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