

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

September
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**

Wandering Wonderings from Pastor Erin

"...not all who wander are lost" ~J.R.R. Tolkien
"Think and wonder, wonder and think." ~Dr. Seuss

Profound insights from the Beatles

I used to roll my eyes when people talked about the Beatles. Maybe you rolled your eyes when you saw this article's headline. Thank you for bearing with me anyway. I'll try to make it worth your while.

Once upon a time, I had pictured the Beatles as a tired novelty from my parents' past. All I knew at that point was that they played lots of teenagey love songs in their early years, some weird drug songs in their later years, and that they seemed to have written virtually every famous song that I didn't want to listen to.

Gradually I came around and began to recognize that they really were something special. I harbored an understated respect for them for many years, but probably about six summers ago I spent a few incredible weeks devouring all twelve proper Beatles albums, in chronological order. It was magical. I was struck by how beautifully and organically their sound evolved, growing more sophisticated and mature every album.

By the final phrases of Abbey Road, I believe I had grown, too, and not insignificantly. I can't quite put my finger on exactly what moved me, but it definitely had something to do with the beautiful metamorphosis I witnessed in them.

It wasn't the music's development that so thoroughly affected me, though that was incredible too. It was the spiritual ripening of four young men from Liverpool, whose message to the world matured from "She loves you yeah, yeah, yeah" to "I'm taking the time for a number of things/ that weren't important yesterday."

As an incurable music fan, I've heard many bands evolve — and sometimes regress — album by album, over the course of their careers and lives. But never have I heard such thorough personal transformations reveal themselves through recorded music. As a friend once said, "They got deep, man."

The world watched these boys grow up, and even though I witnessed it a good fifty or so years late, I'm grateful for the opportunity. They were certainly not afraid to be absurd, (sitting on a corn flake, waiting for the van to come) but one should not underestimate the wisdom contained in many of their songs. Heck, they even grew beards.

For better or for worse, we will be spending 3-5 weeks this fall exploring some of the wisdom contained in their songs.

I want to let you know that I am grateful (!!) to have the opportunity to "practice what I preach" in regard to loving/serving others and blessed to be a blessing— starting in September, I'll also be preaching at Hermosa, UCC on Sundays at 8:00am. They are a congregation in our Black Hills UCC Association who are struggling to find a settled pastor.

Opportunities to love others such as this one reminds me of a passage from the book of 1 John which has been a longtime favorite of mine:

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But, if we love each other, God lives in us, and God's love is brought to full expression in us." ~1 John 4:10-11 (NLT)

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 Chuck Rounds

Although the church board had voted to not meet in July and August, a special meeting was held on Tuesday, August 15th at the request of the Pastoral Relations committee to consider a request from Pastor Erin Erickson. She requested that the board approve her support of the Hermosa United Church of Christ to provide church services every Sunday until they can call a new pastor. Their service is at 8:00am prior to our service at 9:30. After a lengthy discussion, the board voted to support her to provide temporary Sunday services for Hermosa United Church of Christ for six months with a monthly review. If you have questions or comments about this temporary arrangement, please contact a congregational representative (**Carol Boyles, Becky Fisher or Jenny Kozel**) or any board member.

For the next two months this message will be written by the Assistant Moderator, **Susan Kelts**, as Sybil and I will be in Australia for an overdue visit with our son and his family. A big "Thank You" to Susie for her help.

Dept. of Ministries

by Sheila Long

The Department of Ministries decided that 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.

Also, the collection of toiletry items for The Hope Center will continue, place those items in the Hope Center box located on a table in the Narthex.

The next Cornerstone Rescue Mission meal is **Friday, September 29, 2023**.

We would love cookie donations and help to prepare the meal. Please have cookie donations to the church by the morning of September 29th. If you can help cook, the chefs will be at the church at **3:30pm on September 29th**.

The *All Are Welcome* banner is done and was temporarily displayed on the church lawn during the rummage sale. It will be on permanent display in a location yet to be determined by Buildings and Grounds and the ONA Committee.

After much research and heartfelt discussion, it was decided to discontinue grocery card sales at the end of 2023. We feel there is a better way for our church to support Church Response and the community. More information to come.

Thank you all for your continued support of our church ministries.

Neighbors in Need Special Offering

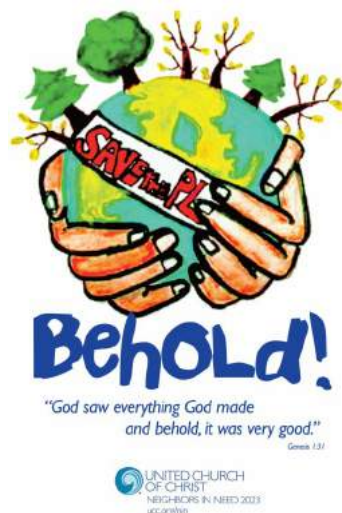
Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the

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.



Women's Fellowship Rummage Sale

Thank you to everyone who worked during the recent sale. We welcomed quite a few new workers, and we hope you enjoyed the fellowship offered in the midst of the chaos. Special thanks to **Bob Karlen** for lunch on Wednesday, and to **Peggy Eckholm and Vicki St. Pierre** for lunch on Thursday! It was an amazing week with fewer workers overall, but we got the job done and raised **\$6625.00** for Women's Fellowship programs.

The sale has been a long tradition at RCFirstUCC. The earliest written record that we have in the file is from 1996, but long time workers believe it started a few years earlier than that. Everything fit into Fellowship Hall and the men's roles were small.

Today it takes hundreds of hours to sort and display items, pick up and deliver things too heavy or large for ordinary vehicles, set up and take down, deliver unsold goods to whatever group will take them. None of the current organizers are getting any younger, and it is time to pass the baton to younger workers.

With this in mind, **Laura Boyd, Sybil and Chuck Rounds, and Sue Maynard** are turning in their retirement papers with the hope that someone will step up and chair the March 2024 sale. We will offer our assistance, but can no longer tolerate the long hours involved for a successful sale.

Please give this careful and prayerful consideration. The sale provides such a

big service to a wider community, and we pray that a new leadership team develops that will allow it to continue.

Good Morning Circle by Sybil Rounds

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, September 20 at 9:30am** for devotions, a sweet treat, and a program, followed by a short business meeting.

The women's circles are under the umbrella of Women's Fellowship, which is a longstanding tradition in Congregational churches. GM Circle members actively participate in the rummage sale, kitchen and sanctuary cleaning and craft sales. With funds from the sales, we have purchased many items for church use over the years, and have also provided support for our sister church in Los Guido, Costa Rica, for Placerville and for the budget here at First Church.

Communion Services

Pastor Erin is serving Communion in the **Aspen Room** at **Westhills Village** on the **first Wednesday of each month at 10:00am**. The next Communion service will be on **Wednesday, September 6**.

Pastor Erin also serves Communion at **St. Martin's Village** on the **fourth Wednesday of each month at 2:00pm**. The next Communion service will be at **Wednesday, September 27**.

All are welcome to join either service.

Music Notes by Alan Glover

We will be starting the fall session of First UCC choir on **Wednesday, September 6**. We encourage all who would like to participate in a unique choral experience to join us. We do have room for our younger members of our church to join us if they have an interest in learning choral music.

Thanks for your support and participation.

Memoir Writing Group

The Memoir Writing Group will meet on **Thursday, Sept. 28 at 1:30pm**. Anyone interested in sharing or hearing stories is welcome to join us. For more information, contact **Mary Keithahn**.

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!**

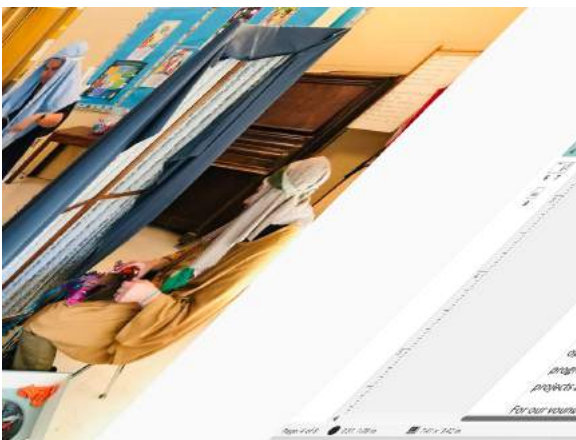
WE HOPE YOU NOTICE!

Pat Lebrun and Barb Knight are beginning a recreation of the Parlor and the Narthex, in honor of Gene Lebrun. As you look around, we've located new homes for some of our treasures, and more changes may be forthcoming. Embrace the change!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Greetings to our Church Family from the Dept. of Christian Education!

We kicked off August with a tremendous time at our summer Vacation Bible School, which ran August 1st through 3rd. It was a huge success, thanks to Patti and the team of incredible volunteer leaders. We had 19 volunteers who helped with everything from meals and set up to games and clean up. It became a beautiful community effort through which all 32 children (ages 3 through 13) learned about *The Life and Times of Jesus*. Some of the children even chose to eat dried locusts as part of their learning experience!



Our department continues to work toward developing a Sunday School program for kindergarten through fifth grade while crafting a Teens & Tweens program for those in middle school and beyond. Our hope is to have robust opportunities for Teens & Tweens such as movie nights, family meals, and music/arts performances, faith formation programs such as Bible study and prayer groups and engagement with the Rapid City community through service projects and collaboration with other organizations.

For our younger kiddos, we'll continue to build off of the Children's Lesson offered by Pastor Erin during the service through games, crafts, scripture and discussion during Sunday School. We look forward to sending parents home equipped with ideas and lessons for their younger kids to engage in spiritual formation throughout the week as well!

All of these beautiful dreams for this beautiful community of youth will take time, good energy and volunteers who feel called to engage with the next generation. If you have any questions, any ideas, or any desire to be involved, please contact **Mary Haan** at 605-389-1629! You can also connect with a Department of Education member to learn more.

We cannot wait to see what God creates through this open community dedicated to life-long learning for all ages!

Sunday School Kickoff, Potluck and Fun!

The Sunday School Kickoff Party is just around the corner!

Plan now to join us on **September 10th**.



Children and youth will start the morning in the worship service with their families. Following the *Message for the Young at Heart*, there will be activities including a bouncy castle, games, water balloons and more! A potluck will follow in the Fellowship Hall immediately after our service. Congregants are asked to bring a dessert or side to share. The main course, drinks and salads are generously provided by the Department of Hospitality and Department of Education.



Adult Christian Education

Adult Forum Changes to 4th Sunday of Each Month

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.

On **Sunday, September 24**, **Mary Haan** will speak about her plans and hopes for our Christian Education

programs. **Becky Fleming** will speak on the topic of *Caring Conversations* on **Sunday, October 22**. Questions? Contact **Kathleen Batchelder**.

Church Chat

Church Chat will resume on **Tuesday, September 19 from 11:30am to 12:30pm**. The group will meet the **first and third Tuesdays each month** starting in **October**.

Please bring suggestions for books to study to the **September** meeting.

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, September 5 at 12:45pm**.

For more information, contact Pastor Erin.



MEMBER NEWS AND NOTES

Wedding Anniversary

Chuck and Marilyn Lindly will celebrated their **71st** wedding anniversary on **August 10**. Our congratulations and blessings to Chuck and Marilyn.



Birth

Congratulations to **Rachel Nearhood Pemberton and Jeffrey Pemberton** on the birth of their daughter, **Daphne Nearhood Pemberton** on August 4 in Minneapolis. **Bruce and Kim Nearhood** are Rachel's first-time grandparents.



Directory Update

Vi Pietz
Edgewood Assisted Living
4001 Derby Ln #105
Rapid City SD 57701

Chuck Knowlton
Avantara Arrowhead
2500 Arrowhead Dr
Rapid City SD 57702

MEMBER NEWS AND NOTES

Prayer Concerns

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



Bob Ehrke and family following the death of **Mary Lou Ehrke** on July 29 in Rapid City. Her Celebration of Life will be held on **September 5** at **Arrowhead County Club** in the Arrowhead room from **3:00 - 5:00pm**. All are welcome to attend. No RSVP is needed.

Sharon and **Kevin Sandmeier** and family following the death of Sharon's mother, **Patricia Weber**, on August 16 in Rapid City. Services will be held at **10:00am on Saturday, August 26** at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Please hold the following members and friends in your prayers:

Lee Boyles has ongoing health concerns.

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

Kjersti Johnson, daughter of **Kathy Oulman-Johnson** and **Dave Johnson**, has lost almost everything in the Lahaina, Maui County, Hawaii fire. Prayers for all who are affected by the disastrous fire in Hawaii.

Chuck Knowlton has been transferred to Avantara Arrowhead on Hospice care.

The address is:
2500 Arrowhead Dr
Rapid City SD 57702

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

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

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

Marge Pitts continues to rehab, with the support of her family. If anyone would like updates, please consult her family. They request no visitors at this time. Marge loves cards which can be mailed to her address listed in the church directory.

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

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

Nadine Zeller had a successful surgery for back pain. She will be recovering at home for the next few weeks.

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

Elena Van Pelt

Birthdays

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

September 1: **Stephanie Tipton**

September 2: **Joan Koch**

September 3: **Bernie Lambert**

September 5: **Jenny Kozel**

September 7: **Karen Johnson**

Mary Linda McBride

September 8: **Jayce Angel**

Amelia Golden

September 11: **Kandee Snoozy**

September 14: **Jill Speck**

September 17: **Larry Snoozy**

September 20: **Kevin Sandmeier**

September 21: **Elsa Grauman**

September 22: **Evan Eckholm**

September 25: **Deb Tompkins**

September 26: **Karen Logue**

Lois Moore

Cody Ortega

September 28: **Gwyn Wathen**

September 29: **Eileen Rossow**

Jim Smith



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



Friday, September 1

9:30am: Watercolor Painting Group
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group
6:00pm: Wedding Rehearsal

Saturday, September 2

12:00pm: Wedding Setup
4:00pm: Wedding Ceremony

Sunday, September 3

9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
10:30am: Fellowship Hour
10:45am: Dept. of Education Meeting
Dept. of Hospitality Meeting

Tuesday, September 5

12:45pm: Spiritual Practices
1:00pm: Craft Day
3:00pm: Celebration of Life for Mary Lou Ehrke
Arrowhead Country Club

Wednesday, September 6

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

Friday, September 8

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

Sunday, September 10

9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
9:45am: Sunday School Kickoff
10:30am: Fellowship Hour/Potluck/Grocery Card Sales

Monday, September 11

4:15pm: Trust Board Meeting
4:30pm: PEO/BR Meeting

Tuesday, September 12

12:30pm: PEO/BF Meeting
1:00pm: Craft Day

Wednesday, September 13

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

Thursday, September 14

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

Friday, September 15

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

Sunday, September 17

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

Tuesday, September 19

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

Wednesday, September 20

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

Friday, September 22

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

Sunday, September 24

9:30am: Worship Service/Nursery available
9:45am: Sunday School after Children's Moment
10:30am: Fellowship Hour
10:45am: Adult Forum
19:45am: Dept. of Ministries Meeting

Tuesday, September 26

9:30am: WF Kitchen Cleanup
1:00pm: Craft Day

Wednesday, September 27

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

Thursday, September 28

1:30pm: Memoir Writing Group Meeting

Friday, September 29

9:30am: Watercolor Painting Group
1:00pm: Stained Glass Group
3:30pm: Mission Meal Preparation

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

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

Checks Written to the Church

by Eileen Rossow, Church Board Clerk

We have been in communication with our bank. We have been informed that in order to keep our deposits legal, all checks written to the church must be made out only to First Congregational Church.

This includes checks for Church Response grocery card sales, as well as checks for pledges, memorials and donations directed to the church.

*Please note that this does **not** include donations or payments to Women's Fellowship, Church Circles, Pilgrim Trust, or Altar Guild. Checks written to those entities should NOT be made out to First Congregational Church, but to the individual entity.

For questions, please contact Eileen Rossow.