

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



April 2024

Volume 5, Issue 114

Congregational Meeting



Annual Meeting is April 21 following the worship service. Please plan to attend as we will elect officers and vote on the budget for the next year. The Annual Report will be available April 7.

PASTOR'S HOURS

Monday-Thursday 10-4
Other times by appointment
May be out of the office for meetings or visits



Office Hours
Monday-Friday
8-12

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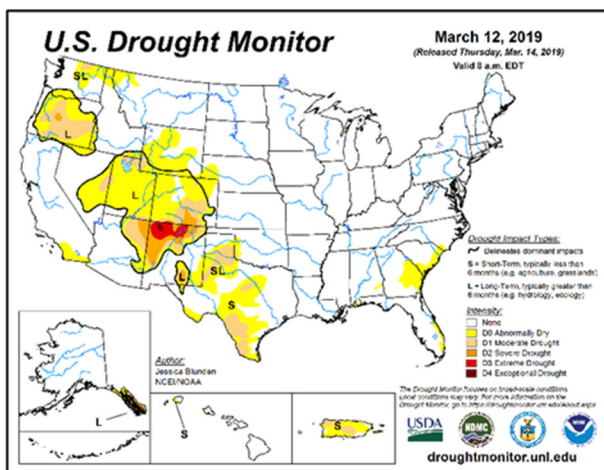
Rain



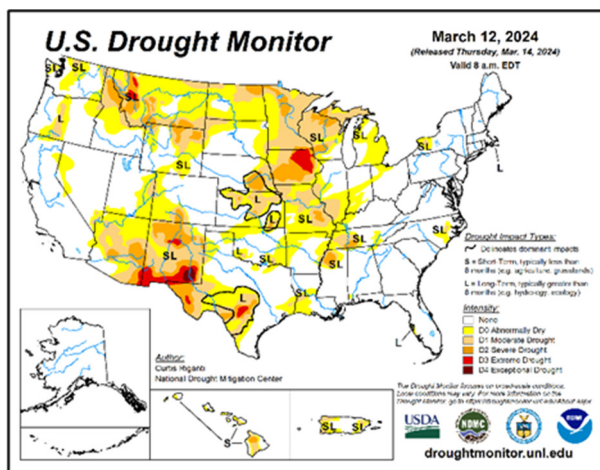
The word “rain” (rainbow, rained, rainy) appears 102 times in the Bible. According to Scripture, God rained down everything from fire to manna (bread). God makes the rainbow a symbol of a sacred promise (covenant) with Noah, all future generations, and every living creature, so that never again will life be cut off by floodwaters. Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.

As I am writing this, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor at UNL <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>, we are still in an abnormally dry to moderate drought. What a contrast from five years ago during the tragic state-wide floods of 2019. This February, Central Nebraska experienced the Betty’s Way wildfire that, thanks to the wind and dry conditions, burned 69,000 acres. We can agree that too much or too little rain can be a disaster.

March 2019



March 2024



Our ambivalent feelings about rain seem echoed in Jesus’ foundational teaching from his Sermon on the Mount, “The Beatitudes”. From Matthew 5:43-46a,48 we hear Jesus’ words:

“You have heard it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemies.” But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? ...Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

We can’t control the rain any more than we can control other people. So what are we to do? Jesus says continue to love people (even the hard to love) as God loves them. Holy wisdom no matter the weather. – *Peace, Pastor Jackie*

Blessings for Graduate



Henry Gamerl will graduate from Norfolk Senior High this spring! The congregation is invited to bless him by praying for him every day in April and dropping notes of blessing, well wishes, and cards into his “blessing box” at the church. We will present the box to Henry on Graduation Sunday, May 12.

Please pick up a date (or 2) on which you will personally pray throughout the day for Henry. There will be small, dated *prayer cards* on the table in the Narthex this month – just pick one or two up next time you are in church. OR, call Sue in the office and she will give you a date. Henry is the son of Erik and Katie Gamerl.



Thank you!

Thank you to all who donated in March to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). The church raised \$379.

On Easter Sunday in 1949, on nation-wide radio, Christians were challenged to donate one million dollars in one hour to help people devastated by the aftermath of World War II. Faithful Christians answered the challenge, and the goal was met. This year marks the 75th anniversary of this special offering. The themes and resources are developed each year by the ecumenical OGHS Committee.



The funds provide financial and hands-on assistance in collaboration with local and international partners to meet human needs: from bringing aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by national disaster; to advocacy and resettlement assistance for refugees; to fighting poverty.

Easter Egg Hunt 2024

Though it was very cold Saturday, we had a delightful egg hunt with children ages up through 5th grade. Sponsored by First Congregational, First Presbyterian, and Trinity Episcopal Churches. The children found over 1000 eggs. A good time was had by all! Thanks to Darlene Korthals, Jane Uzzell, Kay Neuharth, Bev Henkel, Reese Uzzell, Grace Uzzell, Pastor Jackie, and to the congregation for helping to fill the plastic eggs!





Book Club will meet April 10 at 10 AM. ***What's Cooking at 10 Garden Street? Recipes for Kids from Around the World*** by Felicita Sala. The books can be found in Fellowship Hall or you can contact 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.



4th Adam Gamerl
 5th Jane Uzzell
 18th Henry Gamerl
 20th Brian Seier
 21st Katie Gamerl

Anniversary

16th Rick and Jill Waterbury



April 7

Communion: Gene and Bonnie Kroeger

Ushers: Gene and Darlene Korthals

Greeters: Jane Uzzell and Grace Uzzell

Reader: Randy Neuharth

Leader: Ben Uzzell

Flowers:

April 14

Ushers: Reese Uzzell

Greeters: Susan Surber and Verletta Olson

Reader: Grace Uzzell

Flowers:

April 21 Annual Meeting

Ushers: Rita Woodard and Grace Uzzell

Greeters: Tom McConnell

Reader: Brian Seier

Flowers: Brian Seier

April 28

Ushers: Barb Koenig

Greeters: Ben and Stacie Uzzell

Reader: Kay Neuharth

Flowers: Erik and Katie Gamerl



May 5

Communion: Tom McConnell and Susan Allyn

Ushers: Ed Lindsay and Evonne Burkink

Greeters: Scott and Lori Williams

Reader: Verletta Olson

Leader: Brian Seier

Flowers:

May 12 Mother's Day

Ushers: Randy and Kay Neuharth

Greeters: Barb Koenig and Evonne Burkink

Reader: Tom McConnell

Flowers: Scott and Lori Williams

May 19

Ushers: Jane Uzzell and Bonnie Dewell

Greeters: Gene and Darlene Korthals

Reader: Scott Williams

Flowers: Bonnie Dewell

May 26 Memorial Weekend

Ushers: Ben and Stacie Uzzell

Greeters: Ed Lindsay and Brian Seier

Reader: Lori Williams

Flowers: Pat Jenny

Please notify the office if you are not able to attend a service.

March

From 3/1/24 through 3/31/24

This does not include the deposit for 3-31.

Checking account information

Beginning balance	\$	44.57
Lilies	\$	16.00
OGHS	\$	379.00
Transfer from savings	\$	3,200.00
<u>Weekly deposits</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>7,872.94</u>
Subtotal	\$	11,512.51
Salary	--\$	7,553.29
Church Maintenance	—\$	1,485.53
Office Expenses	—\$	1,130.15
Worship Ministry	—\$	33.75
Continuing Education	—\$	70.00
<u>Renner's</u>	<u>—\$</u>	<u>500.00</u>
Final Balance	\$	739.79



▶ April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6:30 PM Girl Scouts	2 6:15 PM Girl Scouts	3 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	4	5	6
7 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	8 6 PM Girl Scouts	9 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	10 10 Book club 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	11	12 Delphians 12 Girl Scouts Overnight 5 PM	13 Girl Scouts Overnight 9 AM
14 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Faith Develop- ment Unity Council	15 6:30 PM Girl Scouts	16 6:15 PM Girl Scouts	17 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	18	19	20
21 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship Annual Meeting	22 6 PM Girl Scouts	23 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	24 5:30 PM Girl Scouts	25	26	27
28 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	29	30				

► May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	6:30 PM Girl Scouts	6:15 PM Girl Scouts	10 Book club		OFFICE CLOSED Sue in Omaha	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	6 PM Girl Scouts	5:30 PM Girl Scouts				Graduation Party
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
10:15 Worship	6:30 PM Girl Scouts	6:15 PM Girl Scouts				
	Sue vacation	Sue vacation	Sue vacation	Sue vacation	Sue vacation	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
10:15 Worship	6 PM Girl Scouts OFFICE CLOSED Jackie vacation	5:30 PM Girl Scouts Jackie vacation	Jackie vacation	Jackie vacation	Jackie vacation	