

First Congregational Church UCC
Redfield, South Dakota
NEWSLETTER
AUGUST 2023

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³ He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. **Ezekiel 37:1-5**

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. **Romans 8:22-25**

Greetings from the pastor's desk,

The tree standing across the driveway from the cabin looks pretty tough. We planted it five years ago as a memorial tree for our son Ben. Unfortunately, shortly after we planted it the horses thought the tender leaves and supple young branches looked mighty tasty. We had the tree protected from the possibility of deer damage. We never even considered horse damage. The horses ate the leaves and damaged the branches from just above the deer fence to as high as they could reach.

As I have sat on the porch of the cabin for the past five years, I have looked at this damaged tree with its tuft of leaves at the top and undamaged branches and leaves below the deer fence line with bare dead branches in between. It has been depressing to say the least. Each year leaves grow back on the undamaged branches, but there seems to be little if any new growth. This year, however, there were no new leaves at the top of the tree. The top one third of the tree is completely dead.

I have to admit that I have been ready to give up on this tree for a couple of years now. And yet, there was and continues to be a part of me that does not want to give up on the tree. It is, after all, a special tree. It is Ben's memorial tree given to us by my siblings. Someone suggested that cutting the top dead part of the tree off would help the tree to start to regrow. The tree will put out a new leader which will help the tree begin to grow again. Deb and I decided to give it a try last month. The tree at least looks better without the dead stuff at the top of the tree. But more than that, there is some hope. Whether the tree will take off and grow now, only God knows, and time will tell.

There are times in our lives when the most precious thing that we can hold onto is hope. Hope can encourage us to look at life situations from different points of view. Maybe there are different ways of understanding that which brings us despair. Hope can move us to seek out different solutions to the challenges we are facing. Maybe there are some unproductive things in our lives that need pruning or giving up. Hope can breathe new life into us to give us strength and courage to move forward in life.

Whether our hope will come to fruition, only God knows, and time will tell. But when our hope is placed in God, we have a solid foundation in God's faithfulness. In our world today, we need less wishful thinking. We need a lot more hope. In hope, may we be inspired to be instruments of hope.

Blessings & Peace,
Pastor Keith



Moderator's Moment

"Change is inevitable during the seasons, but it can also bring about great new opportunities." – Anonymous

As I am writing this entry for the newsletter, I cannot but be amazed how quickly the summer season is/was and later this month, most children will be back in school and we will be starting a "new year". As a church family, let us look for new opportunities to support and serve others.

The following short story was taken from developgoodhabits.com

Cleaning Turtles

There was once a man who walked his dog every Sunday morning around a lake near his house. Week after week, he saw the same elderly woman sitting at the edge of the water with a small metal cage next to her.

The man's curiosity finally got the best of him and he approached the woman one day. He noticed that the cage was actually a small trap and she had three small turtles in it. In her lap, there was a fourth turtle that she was carefully wiping down with a sponge.

The man greeted her and said, "If you don't mind my asking, what do you do with these turtles every week?"

She smiled and explained to him that she was cleaning their shells because any algae or scum that builds up on a turtle's shell reduces its ability to absorb heat and slows down their swimming. It can also corrode their shell and weaken it over time.

The man was impressed as the woman continued, "I do this every Sunday morning to help the turtles."

"But don't most turtles live their entire lives with algae on their shells?" the man asked.

The woman agreed that was true.

He replied, "Well then, you're kind to do this, but are you really making a difference if most turtles don't have people around to clean their shells?"

The woman laughed as she looked down at the small turtle on her lap. "Young man, if this little turtle could talk, he would say I'm making all the difference in the world."

The Moral:

"To the world you may be one person; but to one person you may be the world." — Dr. Seuss

Just because you may not be able to change the world or help everyone, you can still make a huge difference in one person's life by offering them any help that you can. Don't choose to not do *anything* because you can't do *everything*.

The actions of one person can make a world of difference to someone else. When you see someone in need, you may never know how much of a difference your help can make in their life.

...God Bless - Deb

Financial & Attendance Reports

Avg. Attendance at in-person Sunday services: **42**
Avg. Weekly YouTube views in June & July: **17**
Avg. Weekly Facebook reach in June & July: **85**
Average Weekly offerings for June & July: **\$1,730**
Avg. budgeted expenses require a weekly
income of \$3,025.

Our Church's Wider Mission

Total OCWM "blessings" for June & July - **\$1,993**
Total OCWM "blessings in 2023- **\$7,049**
2023 goal is **\$10,000**

Live-Streamed Church Services are available each Sunday on YouTube and Facebook. Subscribe to the "First Congregational UCC Redfield, SD" YouTube channel or follow our Facebook page "Redfield First Congregational United Church of Christ" @RedfieldUCC to receive notices of when each service starts to stream. If you have trouble finding our service on-line or if you'd like to leave an e-mail address, please call Becky in the Church Office at #472-1590.

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Meeting Scheduled for

Monday, August 7:

Trustees will meet at 5:30 p.m.

Cabinet will meet at 6:30 p.m.



- ... to Jordanne & Kyle Arbach who are expecting their first child in December.
- ...to Dalton & Marie (Robbins) Howe on their wedding on June 8th in Brookings, SD.
- ... to Sarah Rozell & Max Moore on their engagement over the 4th of July.
- ... to Bob & Connie Tiff who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on July 13!



Baby Shower

You are invited to a baby shower celebrating mom-to-be Sarah Rozell on August 19th at 10:00 a.m. Please **RSVP** to Addie before August 7th to (605)460-1474. The shower will take place at Julie & Mark Rozell's new house at 1124 W 5th St. in Redfield. Sarah is registered at Target and Amazon.

Please Pray for our members & friends who reside in care facilities:

Eastern Star Home:

Susan Kayl, Paul Klebsch,
Asst. Living –Donna Bushong, Lois Groft, Duane Sanger, Marilyn Schmidt

Lakeside: Adrienne Versteeg, Jo Wood

Home: Les Wienbar



Please keep in your prayers:

Terry Houghtaling, Janet Swayze, Jo Wood, Peggy Ellis, Sally Nuhsbaumer, Larry Price, Kayla Farle, Terry Shantz, Pat, Sandy Thornburg, Shelbey Hershmen, Pat Issacson, Evelyn Holm, Phyllis Hardie, Karen Stephenson, Dr. Susan, Jacki Schaffer, and Monique Diz

Remember to pray for military service personnel.

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IN SYMPATHY

- ... to Julia & Kevin Johnsen at the passing of Julia's father, Bob Geuther, of Mt. Vernon, SD on Sunday, June 11th. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Friday, June 16th at St. John's Catholic Church in Plankinton, SD.
- ...to Marcie & Denny Robertson at the passing of Marcie's step-son, Patrick Youngwirth, on July 17, in Chancellor, SD. A Celebration of Life Memorial was held at the Lennox American Legion Hall on July 26th in Lennox, SD.

**Making
all things
New**
Isaiah 43:18-19



General Synod News



The General Synod of the United Church of Christ made history Monday, July 3, when it elected the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson as the first woman, and the first Black woman, to lead the

denomination as General Minister and President. More General Synod news is that the bylaw to change the frequency of Synod to every three years instead of two passed by a margin of one vote. The UCC's national body approved a resolution supporting public school educators, academic freedom and equity efforts in schools as well as a resolution aimed at reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and a resolution to investigate and make amends for the UCC's historical complicity in boarding schools for Native Hawaiians and Native American nations.

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Now is the time to start thinking about back-to-school and families that may need some help purchasing school supplies. All school supplies are welcome, but the Good Samaritan Center could specifically use more "Addition & Subtraction Flashcards" and "Multiplication & Division Flashcards." Donations may be placed in the grocery cart, and we will get them to the Good Samaritan Center. Thank you for your generosity.



Period Pack Mission Project

We are pleased to announce that \$405 was raised in our church for the "Period Packs" project. It was sent to the national setting for the service project that was completed at General Synod. The original goal of assembling and collecting 1,000 menstrual hygiene kits at General Synod was surpassed and 3,157 period packs were completed and will be distributed with the help of Church World Service.

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THANK YOU TO:

... All the ladies who came to clean the kitchen at the end of June.

...the Meals on Wheels volunteers: Nancy Carter, Denny & Marcie Robertson, Shari Harr, Becky Leonard, Onilee Siebrecht, Pat Payant and Donna Thomas Schmidt.

...the Kuehn family for removing the tree stump by the fellowship hall and moving the kitchen furniture before and after the new kitchen flooring was laid down.

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The **Grief & Loss Support Group** will meet on the third Wednesday of the Month. The next meeting will be on August 16 at 10:00 a.m. in the UCC chapel. The Support Group is open to all. If you have questions, please call First Congregational UCC at 605 472-1590 or Keith at 605 848-1822.

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Pastor Keith and Deb Kraft have started a **Suicide/Mental Illness Family Support group**. They will be meeting at 4:30 PM Sunday August 27 in the chapel area on the east side of First Congregational UCC at 125 E 7th Avenue of Redfield. These gatherings are open to any and all whose lives have been touched by suicide or mental illness within their families or friends. If you have questions, please call First Congregational UCC at 605 472-1590 or Keith at 605 848-1822.

More than a tree

Written by Keith C Kraft

The tree that stands across the way
Is more than just a tree
It represents things still to come
And things that used to be

In its short life, it has seen it all
The wind, rain, drought, and hail
Been battered, bruised, and damaged
Yet still it stands without fail

It stands as a stark reminder
This young tree that was planted
It is a memorial to a loved one lost
And sadly, things we take for granted

It stands as symbol of all that is precious
Our relationships, love, and life
It is a living reminder that in all three
There is fulfillment mixed with strife

Relationships are so very important
Requiring constant attention and care
They help us stand against strong winds
Of struggles, challenges, and despair

There is nothing more valuable in this
life
Than the love that we have to share
With those special people who grace our
days
Family, friends, those we hold dear

Life is such a fragile thing
It can be so easily swept away
When it comes to that of a loved one lost
This is more than just a cliché

So, like the tree that gets its nourishment
With its roots planted deep in the sod
We can find our comfort and our hope
Through trust planted deep in the faith of
God

The tree that stands across the way
Is more than just a tree
It represents things still to come
And things that used to be

It stands as a living symbol of things
Through life that help us cope
Relationships, love, and faith
Mostly...

It stands as a living symbol of hope



Memorial Tree for Ben Kraft