



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Reflection for the Week

Caldecott-winning artist Kadir Nelson is creating a wonderful painting titled "After the Storm." He wanted to create an image that would give people hope. Sunday morning he said: "I think one of the things that we're probably missing, a lot of people are missing now, is human touch, because we have to stay so far away from one another. So, I wanted to make sure to emphasize that that is part of being a human being, is human touch." You can watch an interview with him at:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/artist-kadir-nelson-after-the-storm/>

And here is the prayer we prayed Sunday morning in our Zoom worship:

When this is over,
may we never again
take for granted
A handshake with a stranger
Full shelves at the store
Conversations with neighbors
A crowded theatre
Friday night out
The taste of communion
A routine checkup
The school rush each morning
Coffee with a friend
The stadium roaring
Each deep breath
A boring Tuesday
Life itself.
When this ends,
may we find
that we have become
more like the people
we wanted to be
we were called to be
we hoped to be
and may we stay
that way – better
for each other
because of the worst.

-- by Laura Kelly Fanucci

Prayer Concerns

Marly Van Berkum's sister	Larry Shaver
Bob and Leone Eidsmoe	Katherine Trautman
Mike and Deb Timblin	Chris Schwerin
Tia Iddings	Mark Schmedinghoff
Greg Johnson	Greg Gregerson's Dad
Roberta Pendleton's family	All "Essential Workers"
Avi Noreen	

Prayer for Our Way Forward

The spiritual discipline for our Church Council for April to May is Discernment. Everyone can join the Council in prayer – here's how:

The question to lay before God each day is:

"Why did God call together — here and now, in 2020 — this group of elders who are engaged in the arts, the community, and personal and spiritual growth?"

Then become silent and listen for the still, small voice of God –
the voice that says "do not be afraid" to leave the known ways behind
and speaks of the new life and opportunity we are being led into.

For your daily prayer time (30-60 minutes), you may want to:

Sit – dropping down below your opinions and your known experience — and listen for the revelation that is coming to you

Walk – engaging your natural breath and rhythm – and observe the revelation that is coming to you

Attend to the invitation you are beginning to hear in the stillness.
It should be larger than anything you can control or direct.
You will not know the way . . .

What you bring to the next meeting will be something brand new.
It will not be something you have shared at Council before.
It will not be something you know how to do.

As one colleague reminded me 9 years ago when I left California, after living there 31 years, to move to a new life in North, and then South, Dakota:

"The proof of God's leading is that we shall end up where we never intended to go."

-- *Pastor Anne*

Keep the Connection -- Join us on "Zoom"

Todd Siefker will be sending out an invitation link right before each event.

6:30 pm Wednesday – Weekly Reflection Time

9:30 am Sunday – The Admiration Series

This week: Chapter 5 of *The Heart of Prayer*

10:30 am Sunday – Sermon, Discussion & Prayer



We Welcome Our New Office Administrator

Hello all! My name is Tiffany Watts. I am excited to join the church as your new Office Administrator. I have been a military spouse for nine years and am excited to have settled here in Iowa. I have been an Office Manager in the past, as well as having experience with numerous other administrative duties and plan to use my knowledge and experience to help your church office. I will be starting in the office, Monday through Friday, as of May 1st and will send an update with my hours. I look forward to getting to know the congregation, and to help however I can. Please feel free to come get to know me in the office once able and to let me know of any tasks you would like assistance with.

ZOOM Meetings

Here is a bit of information you may find useful when signing on to church meetings and services.

1. Use your laptop or tablet. Either PCs, Macs, or iPad's will work to access a ZOOM meeting.
2. You do not need to get the ZOOM app, you will be able to access a meeting using the link in an email message that you will receive prior to the meeting.
3. The Host of the ZOOM meeting will send an email prior to when the meeting is being planned. That email could come just prior to the meeting or a day or two prior to the meeting. The email is an invite to participate in a ZOOM meeting with information on date and time of meeting. Open the email and check the details carefully.
4. In the email invite will be a "link." When clicking on that link, it will automatically take you to the meeting. About 5 minutes prior to when the meeting is to begin, click on the link and access the meeting.
5. The initial screen confirms you are at the specified meeting. Look carefully at the screen as there is a question, asking "allow video?" Make sure that question is active or click your approval to allow video. This is what is necessary for you to enter the meeting, being able to see the other meeting participants and they will also see you.
6. If the meeting has already started before you have an opportunity to access the meeting, go ahead and click the link when you are available. Individuals can come into the meeting or leave the meeting while it is in progress.

This is important because on Sundays, we will start a meeting at 9:30 that will be scheduled to last until 11:30. Todd Seifker will initiate the Admiration Series and discussion at that time. At 10:30, Todd will relinquish the meeting to the Worship Service led by Pastor Anne. For those who wish to stay involved through the worship service, you will just stay in the meeting. Others who wish to join at the beginning of worship time may access at the 10:30 time frame and become a part of the meeting.

Rummage Sale

For those of you doing your spring house cleaning during this time, there is plenty of room to store things you wish to get rid of. Just bring them to church when Maddie is in the office and she will open the doors for you.

Soup Kitchen

April 27 was to have been our next scheduled work time at the soup kitchen due to current conditions no volunteers can enter the building. Please keep the staff at the soup kitchen and all those who ate there in your prayers.

Remember to Support FCUCC Financially During this Time!



During this time, our bills continue to come in. You can help us by mailing in your check or setting up an automatic payment from your bank. **You can also contribute through a simple app called [Tithe.ly](https://www.tithe.ly).**

Tithe.ly is our online, app and web-based giving system. Tithe.ly is convenient because it:

- Accepts debit, credit or bank account info
- Can be set up for a one-time payment, or automatic regular payments
- Can be changed at any time (there are no contracts or commitments)

Go to <https://get.tithe.ly> to sign up online, or download the app on any iPhone/Apple or Android device.

A Message from the Church Treasurer

During this COVID-19 event, having no in person services has impacted our normal income. That said, I've made members aware via personal contact (text, emails, phone calls) as well as announcements in STTP. Since encouraging mail in checks and online payments, we have received \$6,200 in mail in checks so far in April. That is very encouraging and shows that our congregation continues to support FCC throughout this trying time.

Of note; Children's Closet closing this Spring will impact our giving in November, and this needs to be kept in mind for additional fundraisers once we re-open to make up for this loss of income. (in 2019, we posted a profit of \$2,531.57 in the Spring, along with \$6,773.56 in the Fall (which includes Rummage and Bake Sales). So, assuming 2020 would have been roughly equal to 2019, we have lost about \$2,500 with the cancellation of Children's Closet for the Spring. While I expect an uptick in sales in the Fall, I don't see it going up by \$2,500, so we will need to make this up somewhere.

Jeff Stellich

Missions Committee Announcements:

- 1) Collection of HyVee receipts at church is over for this school year. Thank you for all the receipts and Boxtops for Education turned in. We will put an announcement in STTP in the fall when the program begins again. Summertime receipts are not accepted in the fall, so no need to save at this time.
- 2) It is anticipated that the **Sanford Center** will need **cereal and snacks** for their summer program. It is hoped that regular church services will be held by then and we will be able to bring cereal and snack items to church. More information will be shared as it becomes available.
- 3) Moving-on-Box Needs
Thank you to Anne Cleghorn for providing several can openers for our MOBox needs.

We do not expect anyone to be shopping during the covid restrictions, but if you're doing some extra spring cleaning, please remember MOB. We can use these items in good condition:

- bath towels/washcloths
- frypans/saucepans
- cake pans
- toasters
- silverware
- plates/bowls/glasses
- kitchen utensils

Thank you for your continued support of this important ministry.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Update as of April 20, 2020 from the CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

1. There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
2. **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
3. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - a. Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - b. Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - c. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - d. Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.
4. Everyone should **CLEAN YOUR HANDS OFTEN**
 - a. **Wash your hands often with soap and water** for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - b. If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
 - c. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.
5. Avoid close contact
 - a. **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
 - b. **Stay home as much as possible.**
 - c. Put **distance between yourself and other people.**
 - d. Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
 - e. Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
6. You are at higher risk if you are:
 - a. Over 65
 - b. Living in a nursing home or a long-term care facilityOr:
 - c. People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - d. People who have serious heart conditions
 - e. People who are immunocompromised
 - f. Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
 - g. People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)

- h. People with diabetes
- i. People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- j. People with liver disease
- 7. Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others
 - a. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
 - b. **Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public**, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
 - c. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
 - d. The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
 - e. Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
 - f. **Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.**
- 8. Cover coughs and sneezes
 - a. **If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
 - b. **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
 - c. Immediately **wash your hands with soap and water** for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- 9. Clean and disinfect
 - a. Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. **This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.**
 - b. If surfaces are dirty, clean them. **Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.**
 - c. **Then, use a household disinfectant.** Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work

Church Directory Update

If you have not completed the Church Directory Update form, now is the time! Help us keep in touch with you during this time when we are not meeting in person.

The form for the directory is attached to this week's email and on the church website at www.1stcongregationalucc.org. Please fill out the form and email it to Maddie, the church administrator, at office@firstcongregational.net.

Church Office Hours

Mon-Fri 1pm-5pm

Church Contact Information

712-239-3385

office@firstcongregational.net

www.1stcongregationalucc.org

Church Staff:

Rev. Dr. Anne Dilenschneider, Interim Pastor

605-906-5404 (cell)

leadwithsoul@mac.com

Maddie Schwerin, Church Administrator

office@firstcongregational.net

Todd Siefker, Intergenerational Coordinator

tsiefker@gmail.com

Rick Darrow, Organist

darrowpipe@aol.com

Nate Hettinger, Choir Director

hettingern@morningside.edu

The "Straight to the Point" Deadline is Monday at Noon!