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# The Good News

*First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ*

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*A loving congregational family that celebrates God's presence among us*



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## ***Easter's Advent***

Lent has been called Easter's Advent. Does that make sense? I'm not sure that's totally accurate, but there are some parallels.

Both are seasons of anticipation and preparation for a major celebration in the life of the church. I'd argue that while Christmas is of lesser importance in our faith, it certainly is a larger event in our culture – a financial driver on which economic fortunes fall or rise. The Easter Bunny has less monetary pull than Santa Claus, but neither has immediate connection with Biblical sources, and are even banned in some traditions.

During Lent and Advent, we draw heavily on the voices of the prophets to make sense of the events in the Newer Testament on which we focus in our worship, devotion, and study.

Apart from the climactic events they each proceed, whatever themes they offer or practices they inspire are in and of themselves spiritually nurturing and worthwhile.

But there is also the realization that even amid the joy that comes at the end of the waiting, when each season ends with its respective celebration, there is always the shadow of death, the reality of fear and grief and loss which must be at least acknowledged if not fully engaged and entered. The story of Jesus' birth is haunted by the reality of the murderous response of the empire, which out of fear of the birth of this alleged 'king' finds it necessary to murder all newborn Hebrew males in order to protect its own power and privilege. And the glory of Easter requires the death of Jesus, a state execution, one among many, as mass public executions served to discourage those who would challenge the power of the emperor.

I don't believe we have finished Advent by celebrating Christmas if we haven't included the telling of Herod's murderous plot and attempt to trick the Magi into helping him pull it off. And I don't believe Easter is as rich an experience if we only talk about the how of Jesus' death on Good Friday and fail to deal with who and why.

Yes, we must deal with death and loss in both Advent/Christmas and Lent /Ester. And that is not a bad thing; in fact, I think it is essential. Even life-giving. And in a year like this has been, when we have gone without – without time with friends, without our community gathered together, without seeing family, without seeing even strangers smile, without hugs, without the human contact and social interaction necessary for physical, emotional, and spiritual health, we have all experienced loss in ways more profound than perhaps we realize.

This year we will be looking at the parable of the Prodigal Son on our Lenten journey together. The format is yet to be fully decided; I only need to confirm that our plan is acceptable and workable. But that story is truly a resurrection story, life to death to new life, and not only for the lost but for the whole family. And for each of us, with our moments of being lost, and the deaths, that have shaped our lives this last year, as we have felt, disconnected and cut off from so much that gives us life.

It will be good to spend time on this parable together, beginning on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17th.

*Pastor Glen*

If you would like to participate in Sunday Morning Adult Education and/or Tuesday Bible Study, both at 10 am on Zoom, let Pastor Glen know ([pastor.cannonfallsucc@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.cannonfallsucc@gmail.com)) and he will send you the Zoom meeting and the readings.

## ***Annual Meeting***

The Church Council – Special Meeting was held on January 24<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. The minutes are included in this newsletter mailing.

## ***Pastoral Care Needs***

Call Pastor Glen in the event of a pastoral care need. Either call his home 651-641-1832 or cell 651-757-0314.

## ***Prayer Chain***

**Morning** - Bonnie Hvistendahl 263-4120

**Evening** - Mavis Johnson 263-2857

When you are in need of prayer for yourself or others, your request will be passed along to the above prayer chains.

## ***Prayer Partners***

*Each week, we pick staff and members or families at random for us to lift in prayer that week, for no reason other than praying for one another is a good thing to do.*

Our *Prayer Partners* this Diane and Wayne Nelson, Jim and Bonnie Hvistendahl, and Roman and Jean Mercier.

## ***Joys and Concerns***

*(From Jim Gardner)*

Hi to all First Congregational United Church of Christ of Cannon Falls,

My Mother-In-Law, Janet Unger asked that I pass this information on to you and the UCC CF Prayer Chain. She has approved that it be included in the weekly email “Care Package”.

On Thursday January 21<sup>st</sup>, Lynn’s Mom, Janet Unger had a fall incident at her home in Tucson Meadows. This was the real deal fall this time. She actually pushed her alert button but it had already self-reported the fall through the sensor. Paramedics and Lynn and I all responded.

As of Saturday morning, she had spent over a day in the ER area waiting for a room but is now in a room of her own at the hospital. We are still getting spotty reporting on health conditions from her as she is drugged up and fuzzy. But her left pelvis is broken

and her left wrists is swollen but not broken.

We will keep everyone up to date as we get more information. But hospital and rehab will be our future life for some time going forward. Janet has her cell phone but is not very tech savvy, but a happy voice might help her through this time.

Love to all from Jim & Lynn Gardner. Please send prayers.

Her home address is:

Janet Unger

2121 S Pantano Rd. #238

Tucson, AZ 85710-6109

Cell 507.298.7351

Please send cards to her home address, we pick up her mail every day and then drop off what we need to at the hospital front door. The staff brings it up to her room.

UPDATE since this email, Jan has been moved to Sapphire Estates Rehab Center - the family would still like any cards or notes to her home.

## ***From the Mission Committee***

The mission for the month of February is **Friends of San Lucas**. Our church member Bill Peterson is the Executive Director of this mission. Friends of San Lucas supports development in San Luca Toliman, Guatemala.

Their seven programs impact the lives or more than 25,000 people each year. All of these programs are staffed and led by Guatemalans serving Guatemalans.

One of the programs is education. We would like to support that program by giving money that can be used for equipment and materials for the school. As before, all donations should be sent to Jon Sagers and on the memo line write “Friends of San Lucas.” Thank you for your consideration of this mission.



Thought for the month:  
***“Good people bring out the good in people.”***



## **Treasurers Note**

Please watch your mailbox for your 2020 year-end giving statement in late January.

When you receive your statement, please note that if you provided a 2021 pledge or estimate of giving, it will also be shown on the bottom of your 2020 statement.

Please continue to send your donations written to "First Congregational Church-UCC", by mail directly to: Jon Sagers, 4006 343<sup>rd</sup> St., Stanton, MN 55018, or to the church.

Thank you for your steadfast support!  
Jon

## **Outreach Ministry Team**

We plan on continuing to tape the sermon each week and have on cd available for pick up or to send to you. Contact the church office or Cindy Mae directly at 507-951-3117.

## **Known and Loved**

January 17, 2021 Bulletin back

*\*O Lord, you have searched me and known me.*

*My god, you see and understand all that I am. You know when I sit down and when I rise up;*

*you discern my thoughts from far away.*

*You know even my most hidden thoughts.*

*You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.*

*When I work, when I sleep, you are with me.*

*Even before a word is on my tongue,*

*O Lord, you know it completely.*

*When I speak, you know what I'm going to say before I do.*

*You lean me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.*

*You are everywhere, even right here with me!*

*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is so high that I cannot attain it.*

*I cannot imagine how you think or feel or create. You are so vast.*

*For it was you who formed my inward parts, you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*And yet, you are close by too. Always giving birth, always making new.*

*I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

*Wonderful are your works that I know very well.*

*You even made this sacred body that I call home.*

*My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,*

*Intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes behold my uniformed substance.*

*You know how I was made because you made me!*

*In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,*

*when none of them as yet existed.*

*You write the past, you sculpt the future.*

*How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!*

*I cannot weigh or measure you, God. I try to count them - they are more than the sand;*

*I come to the end - I am still with you.*

*I only know that wherever I am, you are too. And that is enough.*

*\*Italics from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18*

## **Stewardship Prayer**

**Creator God,**

Life is your gift to me

to share the gift of my life in service to others.

Be with me as I choose each day

to show your presence in our world.

May we bring the Good News to those in need.

Keep us close to you.

Open the minds and hearts of many others that they may accept your challenge to build the Kingdom

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**



# February, 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 10:00 am Zoom Bible Study	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 10:00 am Adult Study on Zoom	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 10:00 am Zoom Bible Study	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 10:00 am Adult Study on Zoom 	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 10:00 am Zoom Bible Study	<b>17</b>  6:30 Lenten Conversation via Zoom	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 10:00 am Adult Study on Zoom	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 10:00 am Zoom Bible Study	<b>24</b> 6:30 Lenten Conversation via Zoom	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 10:00 am Adult Study on Zoom	<p><i>Adult Study is meeting via Zoom at 10 am Sundays on the dates noted. We are reading short biographical sketches of persons who have lived out their faith in ways that have impacted the world. 2-3 short biographies are discussed each week. RSVP to Pastor Glen or Ki by Friday noon each week for a copy of the readings and a Zoom link to the weekly session.</i></p>					

**Our building is closed but the Church is always open when we are the Body of Christ in the World. Stay safe and healthy until we see you again**

**First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
507-263-2901**

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Kileen email: [cannonfallsucc@gmail.com](mailto:cannonfallsucc@gmail.com)*