



**FIRST
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH**

Worship on Sundays
8:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Church Office Hours
Mon.& Tues., 9 a.m.-noon.

Church Office phone:
402-466-1906
Church Office e-mail:
laura@firstumclincoln.org

**2723 North 50th Street Lincoln, NE
68504 www.Facebook.com**

- Kirstie Engel, Pastor—402-209-0330 call/text
kirstie@firstumclincoln.org
- Mike Coffey—Minister of Praise & Worship
- Dr. John Spilker—Minister of Music & Liturgy,
Social Justice and Leadership
- Jael Pembrick—Praise & Worship Leader
- Matt Borland—Youth Minister
matt@firstumclincoln.org
- Laura Sheldon—Office Assistant--402-499-8582 text
laura@firstumclincoln.org
- Charity Helter—Children’s Ministry
402-560-4251—charity@firstumclincoln.org
- Chuck Leypoldt—Church Treasurer
- Shirley Baum—Financial Secretary
- Tim Van Meveren—Sunday Custodian
- Steve Engel—Director of Hospitality and Food Services
- Amy Holland—Sunday Nursery
- Chloe Lyons, Olivia Gentert—Nursery

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FIRST CHURCH Statement of Inclusion *(Adopted 1985):*
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH membership
is inclusive of all persons regardless of education,
ability, economic status, gender, race, ethnic group, age,
or sexual orientation, or immigration status.

First Connection February 2021

COMMUNITY CENTERED
COMMUNITY FOCUSED
COMMUNITY MINDED



Dear First Family!
The verse that has been on my heart lately is Jeremiah 29:11; “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11 is a favorite verse

of many people. It is a verse that reminds us that God’s intentions toward us are for good. This should encourage us in any situation, and for that reason alone, it is an important word for us to hear and know.

As often is the case with scripture, there are other things we can learn from this verse. One overlooked truth from this verse is that God does indeed have plans. God is purposeful. Do not think that God only reacts to things and tries to do the best God can with whatever happens. God is intentional. God has specific plans and acts accordingly to those plans.

So my awakening is that if God does not approach life randomly, neither should we. A new year offers us a wonderful opportunity for a reset, and we should take advantage of that opportunity.

As we begin to settle into this new year a little more, I would encourage us all to take time to reflect on 2020. Don’t let the past year be wasted, instead, learn from all we have experienced.

Then my second hope is that we all strive to commit to live a purposeful life in the year ahead as it pertains to the Church. My hope is that we don’t live the entire year without purpose, only reacting to what happens from day to day.

What I am doing this month and in the days to come, is taking time to prayerfully decide on a word or phrase for 2021 as something that will direct my approach to life for the next 12 months. My word as you may have guessed is “purpose.” I am asking God from the leadership aspect, what our focus should be in the coming year. It has been exciting so far, to see the plan unfold in pieces here and there. I am learning in this process to just rest in knowing that God does have plans for this great church community, First UMC Lincoln! My prayer is to have an open heart, mind and ears to be aware for when the full picture reveals itself.

On a personal note, I pray that we each continue to strive for purpose in our day to day lives and interactions. Finding your purpose is empowering. Finding your purpose is life-giving. God is purposeful, and God has created us for a purpose. So let’s make 2021 a purposeful year together!

Peace and Love!
Kirstie J. Engel
Spiritual Leader

Dear Church Family and Friends,

Pastor Kirstie has invited us to consider deep questions in her thought-provoking Awakening sermon series. She has also been very gracious in explaining this is a process. Good for me . . . because I'm a slow processor and even slower learner. I'm actually discovering – with the help of some active listeners and wise souls that I have some unlearning to do as well. I have to start with an awareness and an attitude of being alert before I even get to awakening. Thank you, God, for being more patient with some of us!

For me, it starts with listening . . . a lot of listening. Reflective listening - listening to myself and looking in the mirror. This is tough stuff. Yet we are not alone in the process. Jesus invites us to "Follow him," to be "fisher of men," and to enter a place of discomfort. Let us walk together in our search for wholeness and interconnectedness.

Grateful for the journey and the wisdom of many on the path.

Peace and blessings,
Terri Storer
First Church Lay Leader

Dear First Church Family,

I am coming to you from 2021 and looking forward to new opportunities for our Youth Ministry. I am excited for youth group this spring semester. First Church Youth Ministry will be having youth group virtually to start the year on zoom, until COVID-19 gets better in our community. Youth Group will be on Wednesday nights starting January 20th, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. and it will last 45 minutes to one hour. Our youth group will include Junior High and High School students, so if your child would like to participate in the zoom call on Wednesday nights at 6:30 p.m., please email me at matt@firstumclincoln.org or call/text me at (402)-499-8839 for the zoom ID and password.



The curriculum we are using for youth group this spring semester is called "Sticky Faith Service Guide." These lesson plans provide ways our youth can make a difference in their community and how serving others is important. These discussions and hands-on experiences will help mold them into being leaders in their communities and change their lives for the better. This curriculum will help with their learning on mission work and how educating service work is life-changing for others around them. The Sticky Faith Service Guide will help our youth prepare for a possible Learn and Serve Trip to Oakland/San Francisco, California this summer, pending where we are with Covid-19.

Matt Borland, Youth Minister

Dear Church Family and Friends,

It truly is a breath of fresh air as we embrace a new year, new beginnings, and continued opportunities to open to new ways of thinking and feeling as we sense God's presence and the work of God in the world. Where are you sensing God's presence in your life? Where are you seeing evidence of God at work in the world? In our times of prayer, meditation, silence, or whatever speaks most to your soul, take some time to reflect on the movement of the Holy Spirit.

You are welcome to join us for **Compassionate Conversations: Pause and Prayer**. Our time together has become a safe space for sharing; learning and engaging in dialogue; and being present to God, to ourselves, and to others. We extend grace and compassion to ourselves and to each other. We are finding comfort, acceptance, belonging, honesty, and gratitude in our conversations. We gather on Tuesday evenings, 6:30 - 7:45. All are welcome to join anytime. If want to join in the Zoom conversation or have questions, please contact Terri Storer at tstorer@neb.rr.com

Be well in body, mind, and spirit,
Terri Storer
Certified Spiritual Director

February Birthdays

- 1 Jeremiah Blake
- 2 Marley Tonkinson
Ryan Marquis
- 3 Jeffrey Way
Lucy Vculek
Patty Steiner
Peyton Vculek
Raideen Shanahan
- 4 Amy Lehman
- 5 Cecilia Burda
Michelle Lyons
- 6 Jack Geist
Larry Salyer
- 7 Aaron Admire
Clara Raymond
Mesha Gardiner
- 8 Coleen Seng
Mike Million
- 9 Charley Armstrong
Kim Osmond
Millie Cooper Jurey
- 10 Larry Latas
Pamela Fawns
- 11 Eric Hall
- 12 Amber Cushman
Annie Shanahan
Toby Hauser
- 13 Logan Scherer
- 14 David McCreary
Dean Kissinger
Jennifer Bangert
Ron Gaddis
Sandi Conrad
- 15 Braden Forst
- 16 Grady Turner
Paige Hoff
- 17 Dustin Johnson
John Eischeid
Shirley Baum
- 18 Jalen Curry
Jim Mager
Riley Lanxon
- 19 Moxon Jurey
- 20 Emily Reed
Chloe Lyons
Karen McCreary
- 21 Dawn Gannon
Randy Leach
- 22 Donna Barnell
- 23 Joyce Page
Shannon Hickenbottom
- 24 Joel Mikkelsen
Sam Cutshall
- 25 Jacob Korell
Sheryl Wolfe
- 26 Carmen Germond
Kathy Bergstrom
- 27 Hanna Louderback
- 28 Jim Mayfield

February Daily Lectionary Bible Readings

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	EPISTLE	GOSPEL
Feb 1	am: 55 pm: 138, 139	Gen 18:1-16	Heb 10:26-39	John 6:16-27
Feb 2	am: 24, 29 pm: 8, 84	Gen 18:16-33	Gal 5:13-25	Mark 8:22-30
Feb 3	am: 56, 57, 58 pm: 64, 65	Gen 19:1-29	Heb 11:1-12	John 6:27-40
Feb 4	am: 61, 62 pm: 68	Gen 21:1-21	Heb 11:13-22	John 6:41-51
Feb 5	am: 72 pm: 119:73-96	Gen 22:1-18	Heb 11:23-31	John 6:52-59
Feb 6	am: 70, 71 pm: 74	Gen 23:1-20	Heb 11:32-12:2	John 6:60-71
Feb 7	am: 69 pm: 73	Gen 24:1-27	Heb 12:3-11	John 7:1-13
Feb 8	am: 75, 76 pm: 23, 27	Gen 24:28-38, 49-51	Heb 12:12-29	John 7:14-36
Feb 9	am: 93, 96 pm: 34	Gen 24:50-67	2 Tim 2:14-21	Mark 10:13-22
Feb 10	am: 80 pm: 77, 79	Gen 25:19-34	Heb 13:1-16	John 7:37-52
Feb 11	am: 78:1-39 pm: 78:40-72	Gen 26:1-6, 12-33	Heb 13:17-25	John 7:53-8:11
Feb 12	am: 119:97-120 pm: 81, 82	Gen 27:1-29	Rom 12:1-8	John 8:12-20
Feb 13	am: 146, 147 pm: 83, 85, 86	Gen 27:30-45	Rom 12:9-21	John 8:21-32
Feb 14	am: 88 pm: 91, 92	Gen 27:46-28:4, 10-22	Rom 13:1-14	John 8:33-47
Feb 15	am: 87, 90 pm: 136	Gen 29:1-20	Rom 14:1-23	John 8:47-59
Feb 16	am: 66, 67 pm: 19, 46	Gen 29:20-35	1 Tim 3:14-4:10	Mark 10:23-31
Feb 17	am: 89:1-18 pm: 89:19-52	Gen 30:1-24	1 John 1:1-10	John 9:1-17
Feb 18	am: 97, 99, 100 pm: 94, 95	Gen 31:1-24	1 John 2:1-11	John 9:18-41
Feb 19	am: 101, 109:1-30 pm: 119:121-144	Gen 31:15-50	1 John 2:12-17	John 10:1-18
Feb 20	am: 105:1-22 pm: 105:23-45	Gen 32:3-21	1 John 2:18-29	John 10:19-30
Feb 21	am: 102 pm: 107:1-32	Gen 32:22-33:171	John 3:1-10	John 10:31-42
Feb 22	am: 107:33-43, 108 pm: 33	Gen 35:1-20	1 John 3:11-18	John 11:1-16
Feb 23	am: 148, 149, 150 pm: 114, 115	Prov 26:1-23	2 Cor 3:7-18	Luke 9:18-27
Feb 24	am: 25 pm: 9, 15	Prov 27:1-6, 10-12	Phil 2:1-13	John 18:15-18, 25-27
Feb 25	am: 26, 28 pm: 36, 39	Prov 30:1-4, 24-33	Phil 3:1-11	John 18:28-38
Feb 26	am: 95, 32, 143 pm: 102, 130	Amos 5:6-15	Heb 12:1-14	Luke 18:9-14
Feb 27	am: 37:1-18 pm: 37:19-40	Hab 3:1-18	Phil 3:12-21	John 17:1-8
Feb 28	am: 95, 31 pm: 35	Eze 18:1-4, 25-32	Phil 4:1-9	John 17:9-19

In this season of Epiphany that holds light as its symbol, we see colors of white, gold, and green in the Sanctuary paraments. The dried floral arrangements for the altar reflect Epiphany colors with white Baby's Breath, yellow-gold Yarrow, light green Hydrangeas, and curling fountain grass. These colors and textures will take us to the beginning of Lent.

A remembrance on January 24th honored the life of Lucy Munden, whose husband, Ebb, was First UMC Senior Pastor from 1966-1991. Several years after retirement, they returned to First UMC until their move to Texas. The Epiphany altar bouquet became part of the remembrance. As has been the practice since July 2020, the 23rd Psalm was placed on the altar and read to live stream viewers by Pastor Kirstie. This version of the psalm was written by Bobby McFerrin as a tribute to his own mother. It uses much feminine language and imagery of God. Lucy was supportive of inclusive language about God and people and the work on the Status and Role of Women in the United Methodist Church.

Lucy was known for her kindness and deep spirituality. Lucy and Ebb offered a class in prayer and meditation in the early 1980s. This led to the formation of a Prayer and Meditation group that continues to meet after nearly 41 years.

The shells in the base of the altar vase recall Lucy's life-long love of the sea and sailing. Dried flowers and grass, several from the Prayer and Meditation group gardens, gently lift and float out of the vase. Origami birds are nestled in olive branches and there is a single gold origami butterfly that peeks out between the curling grasses that have been passed down from Lois Bowmaster, a longtime member of the Prayer and Meditation Group, who died in 2011.



Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17th. Altar and pedestal arrangements will reflect the Lenten season of personal reflection, preparation, simplicity, life-giving practices, and focus on the spiritual journey.

Excerpt from *The Hill We Climb* by Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate

"When day comes we step out of the shade,
 aflame and unafraid
 The new dawn blooms as we free it
 For there is always light,
 if only we're brave enough to see it
 If only we're brave enough to be it"

Joyful. Simple. Grateful. Grace.
 The Flower Ministry

DR. JOHN SPILKER—MINISTER OF MUSIC & LITURGY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, LEADERSHIP

As part of our reconciling ministry, I share with you my commitment to antiracist equity, which I continue to update with online learning resources: <https://bit.ly/2YsN3UQ>.

During winter, the natural world, in which we are embedded, invites pause, stillness, and reflection. Our vibrant First UMC Lincoln family continues to be a community of spiritual collaboration, holy wrestling, and awakenings. We mentor and support each other as we work together on behalf of our community. Lily and I lift up prayers for repair and possibilities in the new year. We hold sacred space for wonder, discovery, and journey. We miss you and we love you!

"I'M STILL HERE" SMALL GROUP: Elaine Johnson and I are hosting a small group to study race relations. We are inspired by our Pastor opening her heart and sharing her stories of living as a black woman in white culture. Kirstie has made room in her heart to learn about white culture, now we want to learn about black experiences. Elaine and I would like to propose this book:

I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness. From a leading voice on racial justice, Austin Channing Brown shares an eye-opening account of growing up Black, Christian, and female that exposes how white America's love affair with diversity so often falls short of its ideals.

If you'd like to join us, please email Elaine (ejanenej@gmail.com) or me (john@firstumclincoln.org).

Schedule: (6-7pm via Zoom)

Feb 1: Ch 1-3

Feb 15: Ch 4-6 (including interlude)

Mar 1: Ch 7-9, and interlude

Mar 15: Ch 10-12

Apr 5: Ch interlude, 13-14

Apr 19: guest Rev. Kirstie J. Engel

"COMPASSIONATE CONVERSATIONS: PAUSE & PRAYER" is a life-enriching soul-filled spiritual experience every Tuesday evening via Zoom. Would you like to try it out? We would love to have you join us. Email Terri Storer.

SMALL GROUP IDEAS: Terri Storer, Lea Ann Johnson-Kappes, and I continue to collaborate to reimagine possibilities for small groups during COVID-19 and beyond. What ideas do you have? Zoom? Small patio visits at home? Let us know what you need, what ideas you have, what's on your heart and mind right now.

PHONE TREE MINISTRY continues their work during social distancing. Many thanks to those of you who call to minister to our members who don't have email access. We are so blessed to have such a strong church community. I owe a debt of gratitude to Peggy Hall for co-coordinating this important ministry with me.

Prayer Requests:

For Lenny Drescher, family friend of Kiley Taylor
 For Ebb Munden and Family in the passing of
 Ebbs wife, Lucy
 Becky Prochnow, Laura's sister, hospice
 For the Family of Donna Barnell in the passing of
 her husband Dean.
 For the Family of Sarah Howell in the passing of
 her son Tommy.
 Jeremy Hickenbottom, home
 Sandy Conrad, home
 Jim Neumann, home

Ron Gaddis, home
 Dixie Gannon, home
 Cindy Newsham, home
 Maxine Case, home
 Elaine Brown, Bryan East
 Lauree Turner, home
 Richard Voeltz, Gateway Vista
 Lester Shaw, Kiley Taylor's dad.
 Roscoe Shields, Van Dorn Legacy
 Emajane Crossley, Lancaster Manor Rehab
 Jim Leypoldt, home

Sermon Series: "Awakening": Exploring the weekly scriptural texts to discover how we might be enlightened.

-January 31, 2021: "Awakening"
8:30am: Deut. 18: 15-20
Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel
10:45am: Ps 111; Mark 1: 21-28
Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

-February 7, 2021 : (No series)
8:30am:
Preacher: Dr. Redding
10:45am:
Preacher: Dr. Redding

-February 14, 2021 : (No series)
8:30am:
Preacher: Dr. Redding
10:45am:
Preacher: Dr. Redding

Sermon Series: "Heart to Heart"- A Lenten journey that will explore the lessons of Jesus and seeing how they apply to our lives today.

-February 17, 2021 : (Ash Wednesday)
7pm: Ps 51: 1-17; Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21
Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

-February 21, 2021: "Heart to Heart"
8:30am: Gen. 9: 8-17
Preacher: Kirstie. J. Engel

10:45am: Ps 25: 1-10; Mark 1: 9-15
Preacher: Kirstie. J. Engel

-February 28, 2021: "Heart to Heart"
8:30am: Gen. 17: 1-7, 15-16
Preacher: Kirstie. J. Engel
10:45am: Ps 22: 23-31; Mark 8: 31-38
Preacher: Kirstie. J. Engel

-March 7, 2021: "Heart to Heart"
8:30am: Ex. 20: 1-17
Preacher: Dr. Redding
10:45am: Ps 19; John 2: 13-22
Preacher: Dr. Redding

-March 14, 2021: "Heart to Heart"
8:30am: Eph. 2: 1-10
Preacher: Dr. Redding
10:45am: Ps 107: 1-3, 17-22; John 3: 14-21
Preacher: Dr. Redding

March 21, 2021: "Heart to Heart"
8:30am: Jer. 31: 31-34
Preacher: Kirstie. J. Engel
10:45am: Ps 51: 1-12, John 12: 20-33
Preacher: Kirstie. J. Engel

January 2021 Giving Report

Our budget for 2021 is \$500,000. I am pleased to report we have started the year right on target and have received \$49,247.89 during this month.

I came across this story by Wendy Mass in Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life: "A fight is going on inside me," said an old man to his son. "It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One wolf is evil. He is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other wolf is good. He is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. The same fight is going on inside you."

The son thought about it for a minute and then asked, "Which wolf will win?"

The old man replied simply, "The one you feed."

Your gifts enable others to be fed physically and spiritually.

Chuck Leypoldt
Treasurer

HUNGER AND POVERTY RESPONSE MINISTRY

"For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me in." Matthew 25:35

You know all that money you are saving by not traveling, eating out, or going to events? How about the IRS check you might have received? We have a recommendation. The Hunger and Poverty Response Ministry team is urging you to donate to several of the church's adopted priorities this month.

Huntington School needs warm, new clothing sizes 4T to Youth Large.

Items needed are non-gender related sweatpants, gloves and mittens.

Deliver them to the east entrance any Monday or Tuesday morning and place them in the basket or on the mitten tree.

First UMC has had to suspend our Saturday serving duties at Matt Talbot, but they are still providing meals and need funding. With Souper Bowl Sunday coming February 7th, you don't have to wait to provide support for this important non-profit. Make payment by going to firstumclincoln.org, Giving, or write a check to First UMC with Matt Talbot in the memo.

There are twenty books in Munden Parlor for us to purchase for the library for students at Lydia Patterson school. Stop by to make your selection. Mike Sterns will see that they are shipped.

February 5th is the deadline to register for Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day. Join us for this February 13th event by registering at www.nelegisbrief.org.

Advocate for hungry people during our virtual Bread for the World letter writing event February 21st. More to follow via email.

With gratitude toward our Giver, may our gifts be blessed.
Martha Gadberry

United Methodist Women

Turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

We wish to thank our Church family, friends and UMW members for generously supporting our UMW Nut Sale again this year. The proceeds support missions that impact the lives of women, children and youth locally and globally. Paula Latas has led this successful project for many years, and she invites anyone wishing to purchase more packages to check out the recent inventory. To order, email Paula at paula2@windstream.net, or leave a message at the church office 402-466-1906.

\$12 Items: 1 Pecan Pieces, 2 Giant Salted Cashews, 4 Honey Roasted Cashews, 5 Milk Chocolate Cashews; **\$11:** 1 Milk Chocolate Almonds, 6 Dark Chocolate Almonds; **\$10.50:** 3 Heart Healthy Nut Mix; **\$10:** 3 Tropical Blend; **\$9.50:** 3 Sweet & Salty Trail Mix, 2 Milk Chocolate Bridge Mix, 6 Dark Chocolate Cranberries, 2 Mixed Chocolate Cranberries; **\$8.50:** 5 Almond Cranberry Granola, 1 Milk Chocolate Peanuts, 4 Milk Chocolate Raisins, 6 Spicy Party Mix; **\$7.50:** 3 Honey Roasted Peanuts, 2 Gummy Bears

The UMW Yearbooks have been delivered or mailed to your homes, however, we are aware that some one may have been omitted. If you are a circle member, or a member at large still in need of a Yearbook, please call the church office and leave your name so one may be delivered to you.

COVID vaccine registration is underway! Perhaps you are already happily registered, but if not, you may call 402-441-8065, or go to COVID19.lincoln.ne.gov

We look forward to our first Unit meeting of the year on March 4th at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom. We hope you will join us for fellowship and to enjoy a great program!

Peggy Hall