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## April 2021 First Connection

This month of April, my word of focus is **celebrate**. I am celebrating that we are in the season of Spring. I am celebrating that nature is making its way back into a life-cycle of growth, color, flowers (oh how I love and appreciate flowers) and more.

I am celebrating that this year Holy Week and Easter will be in the sanctuary and both in person and lives-stream! It just occurred to me the other day that I have never experienced either of these liturgical seasons in our beautiful sanctuary with people! How bizarre this time of this pandemic has been for I am sure a lot of us!

I am celebrating the new additions to our worship and music team! Over the next few weeks, you will see some new faces, familiar faces, but most importantly experience worship like never before. We are also collaborating with our NWU students on a regular basis; who will be a part of our worship services at least two Sundays a month.

I share all of this and more just to emphasize how the Spirit of Love is moving in a mighty way. In reflecting on my first sermon series that I have preached here at First, *The Power of Story*; it is amazing how First's Story is coming alive right before our very eyes. In a season that has been filled with many challenges, unknowns and uncertainties as it pertains to the pandemic and other global/social justice concerns; it is a good time to make space for celebration. Don't you think?

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**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.**

**Each month this ministry offers opportunities for us to respond to hunger and poverty issues in our community by donating our resources and volunteering our time. We will soon have a new ministry responding to hunger in our church neighborhood that will literally allow us to fulfill the scripture that begins this article each month. To maintain it we will need the generous, compassionate and kind response for which our Church is so well known. We will be installing a Blessing Box on church property. It is similar to the Little Libraries that you may have seen in neighborhoods around town. You may have also seen the Little Pantries that have been placed around town. A Blessing Box is larger so that more and different items, both food and non-food, can be placed in them.**

**I am very excited about starting this ministry because I know that it is needed. Last fall we installed a Little Library in our front yard. A friend put some cans of food in it and they were taken immediately. We removed one shelf of books and put food on it. The food disappeared and the books did not. So we removed all of the**



Back in the eighties I managed a country bank in Douglas, Nebraska. At the end of every day our cashier reconciled the deposits and cash in and out. Every once in awhile that became my task as well. Some days we struggled to get the job done. We had a little jar which was available to make it balance.

Saint Paul wrote about reconciliation five times: Romans 5 and Romans 11, and 3 times in 2 Corinthians Chapter 5. The summation is in verse 19, "...in Christ God was reconciling the world to God's self, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us."

As church treasurer I find it necessary to reconcile our accounts in a timely fashion.

I'm happy to report we are doing well. What a joy it is to be among faithful servants who give generously to the mission of God through the United Methodist Church connection.

books and used both shelves for food. The food is usually gone the first day we put it out. Recently we have discovered that other people have been placing food in our Little Pantry, thus becoming a neighborhood project and ministry. We live in the Woods Park area.

Volunteer opportunities to launch and maintain our Blessing Box will be many including the following:

- Serve on the committee for this ministry, (yet to me named).
- keeping the shelves in the pantry store room stocked. The store room will be located across from the gym, by the North door, beside the drinking fountain.
- Maintaining a list of needed items to purchase for restocking.
- Filling the Blessing Box each day. There will be a wagon available for transporting food from the pantry to the Blessing Box, so no one has to carry heavy items.
- Donating non-perishable food and non-food items.
- Helping with a "Stuff or Pound the Pantry Food Raiser" to be held in the parking lot on a Saturday in May.
- Donating money to purchase needed food. If writing a check, make it out to FUMC and write "pantry" on the notation line of the check. Electronic giving is being changed currently. Information for donating electronically will be posted in May's newsletter.
- Helping with other responsibilities we discover are necessary as we begin this new ministry.

We plan to begin the Blessing Box ministry with a Blessing led by

**Chuck Leypoldt**  
Church Treasurer



**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 early spring, our precious earth thaws; rain and mud foster new growth. First UMC Lincoln nourishes us during this time through visionary sermons, spiritual collaboration, listening to and valuing our stories, and heart-to-heart truth-telling. As we learn how to face holy disruptions, we mentor and support each other as we continue our work of understanding and dismantling oppressive systems. Lily and I lift up prayers for repair,

**Pastor Kirstie. Date is yet to be determined.**

**If you are interested in volunteering and helping with this new ministry, please contact me at:**

[smillerschoen@gmail.com](mailto:smillerschoen@gmail.com)

402-477-9113 (land line, does not receive texts)

I am also very happy to report that all of the books for the Lydia Patterson library were purchased by our generous church members, thus making it possible for Mike Stearns to send all of the books to Lydia Patterson. Many grateful thanks are extended to all of you for your support of this ministry.

**Suzie Miller Schoen**



**Holy Disruption: A sermon series looking at the ways that the scriptures disrupted the world back then and how it impacts our lives today for perhaps the better.**

March 28: Palm Sunday “Holy Disruption”

**8:30: Mark 14: 1-9**

**10:45: Isaiah 50: 4-9a**

**Mark 11: 1-11**

**Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel**

April 1: Maundy Thursday “Holy Disruption” @7pm

**7pm: Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19**

**possibilities, and continued awakenings during 2021. I am currently reading *Emergent Strategy* by Adrienne Maree Brown and *The Black Church* by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Lily and I hold sacred space for wonder, discovery, and journey. We miss you and we love you!**

**“RACIAL EQUITY & REPAIR” SMALL GROUP:**

First UMC Lincoln is inspired by our Spiritual Leader making room in her heart to learn about white culture. We want to learn about black experiences and how to understand and dismantle racism. **Suzie Miller-Schoen & Roy Schoen** have invited us to gather around this book:

- ***My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies.*** Therapist **Resmaa Menakem** examines the damage caused by racism in America from the perspective of trauma and body-centered psychology. The body is where our instincts reside and where we fight, flee, or freeze, and it endures the trauma inflicted by the ills that plague society. Menakem argues this destruction will continue until Americans learn to heal the generational anguish of white supremacy, which is

**John 13: 1-17, 31b-35**  
**Preacher: Terri Storer**

April 2: Good Friday“Holy Disruption”  
@7pm

**7pm: Psalm 22: 1-2**  
**John 18: 1-11; John 19: 16-25**  
**Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel**

April 4: Easter“Holy Disruption”  
**8:30a: Acts: 10: 34-43**  
**10:45a :Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24**  
**John 20: 1-18**

**Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel**

**Sermon Series: “Holy Sightings!” :**  
This sermon series will identify and name the holy sightings that may be literal, symbolic and/or abstract in the lectionary scriptures; that might inform our work together of reconciliation and repair.

**Sunday April 11, 2021 “Holy Sightings”**

**8:30am- Acts 4:32-35**  
**10:45 a- First Lesson: Psalm 133; Gospel: John 20: 19-31**  
**Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel**

**Sunday April 18, 2021 “Holy Sightings”**

**8:30am- Acts 3: 12-19**  
**10:45 a- First Lesson: Psalm 4;**  
**Gospel: Luke 24: 36b-48**  
**Preacher: Dr. Jonathan Redding**

**Sunday April 25, 2021 “Holy Sightings”**

**8:30am- Acts 4: 5-12**  
**10:45 a- First Lesson: Psalm 23,**  
**Gospel: John 10: 11-18**  
**Preacher: Terri Storer**

**Sunday May 2, 2021 “Holy Sightings”**

**8:30am- Acts 8: 26-40**  
**10:45 a- First Lesson: Psalm 22:**

deeply embedded in all our bodies. Our collective agony doesn't just affect African Americans. White Americans suffer their own secondary trauma as well.

- **If you'd like to join us, please email me:**  
[john@firstumclincoln.org](mailto:john@firstumclincoln.org)

**Schedule:** (6-7pm CDT via Zoom)

May 10: Intro sections, Ch. 1-4

May 24: Ch. 5-9

June 7: Ch. 10-15

June 21: Ch. 16-20

July 19: Ch. 21-24, ending sections

Aug 2: Reflective wrap-up: Q&A w/ Rev. Kirstie Engel

Morning First Church, a little bit about myself. I moved to Lincoln from New Jersey 11 years ago. I've been a member here for about 7 years. Currently I attend Nebraska Wesleyan as a Political Science & Global Studies double major. I took this semester off but will return in the fall.

When I'm not helping out at the church, I enjoy video games, reading, cooking, & working on the farm when I can.

I'm really grateful for having found FUMC. I've made lasting friendships, become motivated to return to school & been given the opportunity to share my vocal gifts.

**25-31; Gospel: John 15: 1-8**  
**Dialogue Sermon: Kirstie J. Engel**  
**and Matt Borland**

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Are you ready for some fun in the SON? Join our youth as we set out to summer camp! You can go to [campfontanelle.com](http://campfontanelle.com) and see all the options they have, or register for the week of August 2-6<sup>th</sup> as we will be taking youth from First Church!

**Elementary Camp** offers opportunities for experience many of the exciting activities at camp in the beautiful wood land at camp. Kids can bring a long a buddy and enjoy their week together. Mornings include rotations that have a bible study component. Afternoons provides choice time opportunities. Evenings are filled with themed gatherings, worship opportunities and special overnight options like sleeping in a tree boat in our fort under the stars, or staying in one of our Aframes or camping caves.

**Middle School Camp** provides opportunities to experience many of the exciting activities at camp in the beautiful woodland at camp. Kids can bring along a buddy and enjoy their

-lesha Finney.Clanton.  
**“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.

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week together. Mornings include rotations that have a Bible study component. Afternoons provide choice time opportunities. Evenings are filled with themed gatherings, worship opportunities and special overnight options like sleeping in a tree boat, in our fort under the stars, or staying in one of our A-Frame Cabins or Camping Caves. Lot's of amazing activities like Tree Climbing, Zipline, Laser Tag, Adventure Hikes, and River Trips

**Senior High Camp** provides opportunities to experience many of the exciting activities at camp, in the beautiful woodland at camp. Youth can bring along a friend and enjoy their week together. Mornings include rotations that have a Bible study component. Afternoons provide choice time opportunities. Evenings are filled with themed gatherings, worship opportunities and special overnight options like sleeping in a tree boat, in our fort under the stars, or staying in one of our A-Frame Cabins or Camping Caves. Lot's of amazing activities like Tree Climbing, Zipline, Laser Tag, Adventure Hikes, and River Trips

Confirmation Class is FINALLY HERE!!!!

Mark your calendars! Sunday April 25<sup>th</sup> we will begin our in person and virtual confirmation class.

This series will run Sundays from 12:00-1:30 for 4 weeks. Study book, bible and lunch will be provided to students attending. Please email [Charity@firstumclincoln.org](mailto:Charity@firstumclincoln.org) to sign up your student for either option.



Your copy should address 3 key questions:  
We are inviting you to a special worship service that is focused on New Hope. This worship experience is a week after Easter on Sunday April 11th, 2021 at First United Methodist Church in the sanctuary. This event will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

This worship experience will feature a handful of people participating in worship with the First Church worship team, Mike Coffey, Jael Pembrick, Rev. Eduardo Bousson (NWU Campus Minister), Pastor Jay Stewart (St. Marks UMC Youth Pastor) , Rev. Lyn Seiser (UNL Campus Minister), Caity Bentzinger, Catey Osborne (St. Marks Young Adult/College Ministry Director), and Youth Pastor Matt Borland.

This worship experience will be led by music from multiple musicians and artists, scripture on Hope and Love, and shared word from Rev. Eduardo Bousson, Pastor Jay Stewart, and Pastor Matt Borland. We hope you join us for this uplifting experience. During this time of worship we ask that your masks are on



the whole time you are in the building. Masks are required with social distancing. The pews will be marked off every other row, making sure we are being safe as we try to end this Covid-19 pandemic. Following the service, we are inviting anyone for food and drink downstairs in Fellowship Hall. We will continue to practice social distancing in time of fellowship. Tables will be spread out in Fellowship Hall, seating four to five people per table. If you have any questions regarding this worship experience please email Matt at

[matt@firstumclincoln.org](mailto:matt@firstumclincoln.org) or text him at 402-499-8839.

Blessings,

***Matt Borland—First United Methodist Church Youth Pastor***



**First Sunday of Lent**



## Sixth Sunday of Lent

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### Nature in Sacred Spaces

We have been on the Lenten Journey, as individuals and as a faith community, amidst the end of this year's dormant season and, hopefully, the ending phase of the pandemic. On the final Sunday of Lent, the altar held fallen branches which were lashed together to form a simple cross, an enduring symbol for Christians everywhere. Stones were mounded into cairns around dried seed heads of thistles, coneflowers, and brown-eyed Susans representing the crown of thorns at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. Cairns represent landmarks, memorials, respect, gratitude, grace, prayer, spiritual significance. The new growth of Spring and new life possibilities in our faith are about to be experienced in the liturgical Season of Easter. Lilies will grace the altar and chancel as we celebrate Easter Sunday on April 4th.

"The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come,  
and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land."  
Song of Solomon 2:12

Each season has its purpose. As we continue on our journey, the next season welcomes us and reminds us to be open to whatever is needed on our journey.

"Lift up your hearts. Each new hour holds new chances for new beginnings."  
Maya Angelou

"The horizon leans forward, offering you space to place new steps of change."  
Maya Angelou

**Simple. Joyful. Grateful. Grace.**

***The Flower Ministry***

## CELEBRATING FIRST MUSIC WORSHIP TEAM!!!!



I'm Mike Coffey and I am the Praise and Worship Minister for First UMC Lincoln. Music is a very important part of my life and a way I love to give back to the community. I have been blessed to be a part of several amazing groups from the UNL Drumline to Singing Barbershop Groups. Alongside of worshipping Sundays, I am the Percussion Instructor at North Star High School. I love the power that music brings to the aspect of community. There is nothing more gratifying than seeing somebody set out and accomplish goals that they have set for themselves. I look forward to the bright future of being a part of this amazing team and the many wonderful things that are to follow.

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### **John Spilker**

I was raised in the suburbs of Chicago, Indianapolis, and Dayton. Hobbies include lap swimming, coin collecting, and fish tanks. As a gay, divorced parent, First Church has welcomed me and Lily with open arms and supported us through the ups and downs of “doing life together.” I love conversations with First Church members because everyone shares their stories with me.

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Hello my name is **Jael Pembrick**. I am the Praise Leader for First UMC Lincoln. I love to sing songs of different genre that speak to the heart of God and our diverse community. My passion is singing, but you can also find me telling you the news early mornings on Channel 8. I've experienced so many blessings in this church community and love the way God is moving in my life.

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**-Ilesha Finney.Clanton.**

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## **KEERA GARNES**

I'm Sophomore at Lincoln High School. I like various different types music including R&B, Rap, and K-Pop. I like to do different arts & crafty things. I am also taking up the hobby of roller skating after getting them from my mom!

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My name is **Aderha Leypoldt**. I am a sophomore at Lincoln East High School. I am on the Varsity show choir there as well as on the speech team, track team, and in drama club. I am really passionate about music as well as helping people which is why I want to major in psychology and become a music therapist.

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I am **Nicholas von Rentzell**, and I am 22 years old. I am from Gretna,

NE, and I am a senior at I am Nicholas von Rentzell, and I am 22 years old. I am from Gretna, NE, and I am a senior at NWU. I major in Music Performance on the trombone, and minor in Computer Science. I was a music tutor on campus starting my junior year and I love playing games of all types. I have been working the sound for the team since September. NWU. I major in Music Performance on the trombone, and minor in Computer Science. I was a music tutor on campus starting my junior year and I love playing games of all types. I have been working the sound for the team since September.

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Hello! My name is **Matthew Severance** and I sing and play bass at First Church. I am thrilled to be with this team of awesome, Godly, talented people. I was originally brought on to play bass in the new praise band that Mike, who is my cousin, was putting together. Around the first of the year. The first rehearsal, he and John Spilker heard me singing and therefore asked me to be on mic the next week praise band was on. Since then, I have come on to the team full time instead of doing every other week.

My love of music has always existed but, I never really explored it until I was in 3rd grade when my school had a staff change. I immediately fell in love with Mr. Sutton, our new music teacher. That year I started playing guitar and by the next year I was playing percussion in band, singing in choir, and started teaching myself the bass guitar. Since then, I have come a long way and I now play tuba in concert band, bass in jazz band, and I sing in the school choir.

Speaking of school, I have attended Lincoln Christian School since the 6th grade after my family relocated to Lincoln from Colorado and am scheduled to graduate in the spring of 2022!

In addition to playing guitar, bass, tuba and singing, I can also play the euphonium, various types of percussion, a little piano, and am starting to learn to play organ at First Church!

Once again, I am blessed to be a part of the wonderful team and I am super thankful for Kirstie's heart for a reconciling ministry and for my fellow worship team members who have made me feel like a part of the First Church family. I can't wait to see what the future has in store for this church, and this church body.

*“Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter in, the one that remains faithful. The steadfast of mind you will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord, we have an everlasting rock.” Isaiah 26:2-4*

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My name is **Anna Freivogel**. I am a sophomore vocal performance major at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Music is my passion and I want to be a professional opera singer one day. Along with singing, I've been playing the piano since I was 7. I have felt so welcome at this church since I first started singing in the choir.

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My name is **Josh Halpine** and I play percussion for the First United Methodist Church praise band. I am a student of Nebraska Wesleyan University where I am currently studying programming and mathematics. I have played drums for the band Motel Citizens for about 5 years now, and have recently been teaching myself piano as a quarantine project student of Nebraska Wesleyan University where I am currently studying programming and mathematics. I have played drums for the band Motel Citizens for about 5 years now, and have recently been teaching myself piano as a quarantine project.

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**Peter Schmit** is a senior at Lincoln East High School. Outside of playing guitar at First Methodist, Peter plays in the band Motel Citizens, goes on runs and works at Gere Library. In the fall, he plans to major in Anthropology at UNL.

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I'm **Rachel Dolence**, I'm a freshman at Nebraska Wesleyan. I'm going into music education. I love music and performing, as well as reading and baking.

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My name is **Carlye Stoppkotte**, I am a vocal performance and Spanish double major at Nebraska Wesleyan University. I enjoy singing and playing many instruments, watching Netflix, and hanging out with friends. I am also in an opera, Hansel and Gretel, and I play the Sandman as well as a gingerbread man in that opera. After

college, I plan to get my masters degree in vocal performance.



### **Paraments displayed for Lent, Holy Week and Easter**

Purple is the color for the liturgical season of Lent. This season began on Ash Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. Purple suggests the mood of self-reflection and confession. The season is somber as the weight of the world's sin becomes obvious. It also becomes obvious to us that a Savior from sin is needed. The pointed red crosses flanking the thorns, behind the three blood-red panels added for Holy Week, are reminders of the costliness of our redemption. The panels are for Palm/Passion Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. Our observation of Jesus' final week before his crucifixion is full of reminders of our thoughtless praise, his self-giving in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and our tendency to despair rather than to trust and believe God's promise of resurrection.

Easter is the Queen of Feasts. Our faith finds its assurance in the events of Easter. The empty cross dominates the parament as it bursts from the tomb to proclaim Christ's victory over death. This burst of Light and Life spreads – through the rainbow colors of hope and promise – to each of us, and assures us that we too shall live.



**April Birthdays**  
1 Jacob Hansen



**Prayer Requests:**  
**For the family of Elaine**

Susan Hanneman  
2 Bonnie Forst  
Donna Chapin  
Vicki Cotton  
3 Lili Funderburg  
4 Hope Pesek  
Maddox Pesek  
Mackenzie Armstrong  
Sandra Dorn  
5 Joyce Ryan  
Les Lane  
Orla Blake  
6 Cassidy Healey  
Mary Howell  
Melinda Otto  
Zach Gannon  
7 Madison Payne  
8 Charli Leypoldt  
Kandy Eisenbarth  
Rebecca Cushman  
9 Patti Memming  
Rian Floyd  
Sarah Howell  
11 Hugh Bunton  
12 Jon Eslick  
13 Elliott Hanneman  
Lisa Edwards  
14 Charity Helter  
Mackenzie Healey  
15 Richard Delaney  
16 Alan Moore  
Jane Cutshall  
17 Joslyn Brokenicky  
18 Camden Edwards  
Harper Kloch  
Mike Loos  
20 Olivia Minert  
21 Adeline Persell  
Amy Francis  
Elaine Michaud  
Kimberly Gillam  
22 Boyd Hardy  
Eric Starks  
23 Deb Hauder  
Graham Bunton  
Rosemary Thornton  
24 Brad Glenn  
25 Jan Reed  
Peyton Starks

## **Johnson in the passing of her mother, LaRue Jacobsen**

Mark Daniels, Josh Daniels' father, home  
Bonnie Evans, Savanna Pines  
For the family of Phyllis Vculek in the passing of her brother, Jim Webster  
For Lenny Drescher, family friend of Kiley Taylor  
For Ebb Munden and Family in the passing of Ebbs wife, Lucy  
Jeremy Hickenbottom, home  
Sandy Conrad, home  
Jim Neumann, home  
Ron Gaddis, home  
Dixie Gannon, home  
Cindy Newsham, 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

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**Worship online or in person (socially distanced and wearing masks) with FIRST UMC LINCOLN Sundays at 8:30am and 10:45 am!**

Todd Karr  
26 Celia Faith  
27 Jennifer Louderback  
Linda Schmidt  
Martha Gadberry  
Nathaniel Sullivan  
Riley Shenk  
Shelly Blake  
28 Sierra Buchli  
Zita Schneider  
29 Braylan Martinez  
Liz Zeff  
Heather Hardy

**Sending a BIG Thank You for  
your Prayers, Presence, Gifts,  
Service and Witness during  
these difficult times.**



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