

## SEPTEMBER 2021 First Connection



We are in the month of September and the personal word that I am reflecting on is “focus.” In the midst of the raging storm of Hurricane Ida; the devastating impact of the delta variant; war and violence persisting in Afghanistan and basic resources such as water, being a real concern for states such as California and Las Vegas; it would be an understatement for me to say that it is difficult to focus.

There have been times in my prayer time, I have gone to God in a state of panic. However, the guidance that I have received from the Holy Spirit has informed me, “it is not time to panic, it is time to focus.”

Such a bizarre instruction I know, but nevertheless this is what I have been striving to do....focus. I have found myself focusing on some of the catastrophic events that have occurred throughout the Bible; the flood, famine, war and more. I realized in the Bible, it has been those who focused their prayer and purpose on communing with God and seeking God’s guidance, that made all of the difference. For this crucial time with God through prayer and conversation did not erase the catastrophe, but it did help the people through it.

Perhaps this is why the major portion of the Bible is all about preparation. For scriptures that instruct us to “put on the whole armor of God,” I am now seeing as an invitation to help the people to prepare for the coming days ahead. For yes, life has amazing moments of joy, humor, peace and more. However, we also know that life is filled with many challenges, setbacks, disappointments, grief and more.

So what do we do? We focus! We focus our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness on our mission of equipping people to live out their purpose in God and to know that they are loved while doing so. We focus these five efforts on doing what we can to help our churches, communities, families and beyond. We must focus on what we can do and trust that through this process, we are making progress through Christ who gives us strength. We must focus on how we can do our parts and not put wasted energy on what we do not have the answers to. For I believe that in time more things will be evident.

All of this is not easy to do, but I have been pleasantly surprised at the little gifts that have come from this focus. On a personal note, I feel more confident and assured. My anxiety has decreased. I am able to enjoy meaningful time with my family and friends. I suppose the greatest gift of focus has been living into the scripture; "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself."  
(Matthew 6:34)

So now is not the time to panic... the time is to focus.

Peace and Love,  
Kirstie J. Engel  
Spiritual Leader



## Hunger and Poverty Response Ministry

**On Sunday Oct 10 9:30-12:30 at First UMC.**

Systemic change in government treatment of the hungry is possible. Annually we write Bread for the World letters to our state and local representatives, pleading the case of the hungry. These letters have changed policy, according to Bread for the World.

Alan Guebert in Sunday's LJS wrote, "...between 60 and 70% of recipients of SNAP (food stamps) are employed." Their income is too small to buy enough healthy food to sustain themselves and their families. Mostly they are working for Walmart, McDonalds, Dollar Tree, and Dollar General, whose profits were huge last year. While we (you and I and the gov'mint) are footing the bill to keep them from being hungry. It just



As part of the Trustees beautification project, the exterior elevator doors, the southeast basement door that leads to the UPCO office and the door leading down to CrossTalk classroom have all been replaced.



**First United Methodist Church, Fall, 2021**

makes me mad, that they are neglecting their employees. We need to step up. Bring your laptops, we have wi-fi now. We'll have pens, paper, post cards and packets with addresses and ideas, organized by Alan Eighme, a teacher at Huntington. For questions contact [aekhme@yahoo.com](mailto:aekhme@yahoo.com)

### **Every Day**

\* The Blessing Box on the Madison Avenue side of the church is being heavily used. Suzie and Roy Miller-Shane supervise it and provide lists of what to bring. Try to bring a whole meal. If the blessing box is full, bring in your sack and leave it by the door across from the gym. Give a check to First UMC or donate online for it. We live in an area with no grocery store and our neighbors need food. We can provide it.

\* Food Bank Barrels. Just inside the church's East doors are barrels for the Food Bank, which is also being heavily used.

\*Pray and act for change.

Sincerely  
Martha Gadberry for the Hunger and Poverty Response Committee



**Sermon Series: Holy Momentum**  
**Exploring how to keep the movement towards justice, peace, love and inclusion fresh, alive and not stagnant and developing**

We welcome you to join us on Wednesday evenings starting on September 15, 2021.

Meal at 5:30 – 6:20

Communal Prayer at 6:20 – 6:30

Book Study at 6:30 – 7:15

Choir at 7:15 – 8:00

Co-Leaders: Dr. John Spilker and Terri Storer

[john@firstumclincoln.org](mailto:john@firstumclincoln.org) /

[tstorer@neb.rr.com](mailto:tstorer@neb.rr.com)

We open to the movement of the Holy Spirit as we are invited to love with our whole BODY and HEART (Compassionate Conversations), MIND (*Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown), and SPIRIT (*Invitations of Jesus* by Trevor Hudson).

### **Compassionate**

**Conversations: Pause and Prayer** will continue through

the fall on Zoom. 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.

Tuesday evenings, 6:30 - 7:30. Contact Terri Storer for the Zoom link.

The following two book studies will alternate each Wednesday, so you can participate in one or both. All are welcome to join anytime. You don't have to start a group from the beginning. These books are designed to come as you are. Books are available from Amazon.

***Emergent Strategy*** – We will

**spiritual practices, disciplines that will help us to do so.**

**Holy Momentum: Sunday**  
**September 5, 2021 8:30**

Scripture Lesson: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

Preacher: Pastor Caity

**Holy Momentum: Sunday**  
**September 5 10:45**

First Lesson: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

Gospel Lesson: Mark 7:24-37

Preacher: Pastor Caity

**Holy Momentum: Sunday**  
**September 12, 2021 8:30**

Scripture Lesson: Proverbs 1:20-33

Sermon Dialogue: Dr. Spilker & Pastor Caity

**Holy Momentum: Sunday**  
**September 12 10:45**

First Lesson: Proverbs 1:20-33

Gospel Lesson: Mark 8:27-38

Preacher: Dr. Spilker & Pastor Caity



**Nature in Sacred Spaces**

During the past two months, the following flowers have been part of Sanctuary worship services:

Purple Prairie Coneflowers, Yarrow, Coreopsis, Mexican Hat Coneflowers, Zinnias, Hollyhocks, Daisies, Gay feathers, Roses, Snapdragons, Mums, Lilies, Hydrangeas, Hostas, Brown-eyed

slowly engage in the content of this book through next April as adrienne maree brown invites us to consider what we know, and don't know, to align our visions of social justice as we co-create the future working together. She gives us many tools for emergent strategy facilitation. (09/15/2021 – 04/27/2022)

***Invitations of Jesus*** – Trevor Hudson leads us to see where Christ is touching our lives and calling us to deeper relationships with God, self, and neighbor. (6 sessions – 09/22/2021 – 12/08/2021)

Together we are building capacity to thrive as self and community deepening our relationship with the divine and humanity. We create a safer space around Parker Palmer's Circle of Trust Touchstones to broaden our understanding of doing God's work on earth as it is in heaven . . . beyond the four walls of our church. (See separately in this newsletter.)

**Sept 15:** *Emergent*

*Strategy* pp. 1-23 Intro

**Sept 22:** *Invitations of Jesus*  
Chapter 1

**Sept 29:** *Emergent*

*Strategy* pp. 23-40 Intro

**Oct 6:** *Invitations of Jesus*  
Chapter 2

**Oct 13:** *Emergent*

*Strategy* pp. 41-50 principles & elements

**Oct 20:** *Invitations of Jesus*  
Chapter 3

**Oct 27:** *Emergent*

Susans, Tansies, Gladiolas, Russian Sage, Alliums, Cosmos, Japanese Asters, Queen Anne's Lace

Greenery has come from: Fountain Grass, Geraniums, Coleus, Hostas, Ferns, Cosmos, and probably more! The variety and beauty of nature is endless. We hope you have enjoyed it as much as we do each week.

On July 11th, Zita Schneider and family generously provided the floral arrangement that they gave for the Celebration of Ed Schneider's Life. On August 8th, Jo Anne Bair and family shared the arrangement for the Celebration of Life of Howard Wieggers, Jo Anne's father. Gratitude to these two families for sharing the floral beauty given to honor the lives of their loved ones.

Flowers on other Sundays in July and August were shared by Lynda Schnirl, Bill and Margrethe Ahlschwede, Elaine and Glenn Johnson, Shirley and Tom James, Peggy and Mike Loos, and Zita Schneider. Thanks to all of these people for offering flowers and foliage to the church community.

Additionally, we cut a few blooms and greenery from the plantings outside the church!

On August 29th, the Flower Ministry tried something different with flowers for Sunday worship. Church family and friends were invited to bring one bloom or one stem of greenery from their gardens. The plan was to create a bouquet "on the spot" for both 8:30 and 10:45 worship services. The bouquets reflected the beauty and diversity of the First UMC church community. Gratefulness to all who were able to participate in this floral venture.

*Strategy* pp. 51-66: fractals

**Nov 3:** *Invitations of Jesus*

Chapter 4

**Nov 10:** *Emergent*

*Strategy* pp. 67-82: intentional adaptation & 236-243 (tools)

**Nov 17:** *Invitations of Jesus*

Chapter 5

**Nov 24:** pause for

Thanksgiving

**Dec 1:** *Emergent Strategy* pp.

83-102: interdependence & decentralization

**Dec 8:** *Invitations of Jesus*

Chapter 6

**Dec 15:** *Emergent*

*Strategy* pp. 103-122:

nonlinear & iterative

Pausing for Christmas and

resuming on January 5, 2022



Dear First Church Family and Friends,

We persist and persevere in these uncertain times, often living in the tension of polarization that has bubbled to the surface within ourselves, families, church, and community as it relates to the topics of politics, religion, pandemic, vaccinations, and more. Yet, God and the Universal Christ call us to embrace and honor all of humanity on common ground.

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

## **The Flower Ministry**

---



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

Greetings UMW, First Church Family and Friends,

Our Unit would like to extend a warm invitation for you to become a member of United Methodist Women. Our purpose is to know God, develop supportive fellowship and participate in global missions. We provide resources to grow spiritually, equip women and girls to become leaders, advocate to change unfair policies, and provide educational experiences that lead to personal change. Our youngest member is a recent teen and our oldest members are part of the greatest generation. You may join even if you are not a member of the United Methodist Church. How do you join? Come to the Unit meeting on September 2, at 1:30 in Black Fellowship Hall. We will welcome you with a light dessert and great program given by Audrey Back who is a staff member at Fresh Start. Audrey shares passionately about her work at this non-profit where a diverse group of women are given support and opportunities to make a 'fresh start.' Bring a new children's

There are many conversation guides, principles of dialogue, and other covenantal agreements that can help create a safer space for difficult explorations. We pray the following touchstones (or similar) will help guide your mind and heart as you interact with others as well as self-reflect in our own truth and experiences during this transformation time. Amen.

### **Circle of Trust Touchstones for Safe and Trustworthy Space**

- ***Give and receive welcome.*** People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this circle we support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.
- ***Be present as fully as possible.*** Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, and listening as well as speaking.
- ***What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.*** This is not a "share or die" event! Do whatever your soul calls for and know that you do it with our support. Your soul knows your needs better than we do.
- ***Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.*** Our views of reality may differ but speaking one's truth in a circle of trust does not mean interpreting, correcting, or debating what others say. Speak from your center to the center of the circle, using "I" statements, trusting people to do their

board book along as a gift for Audrey to take back to Fresh Start, so when children visit their mothers, new books will be on hand for them to enjoy together. If you would like to join UMW but are unable to attend that day, call the church office or contact [peggysintek.hall@gmail.com](mailto:peggysintek.hall@gmail.com).

UMW Sunday is scheduled for October 3rd. Certainly we look forward to this special day and all those little corsage ribbons being shared once again. Please know that with each corsage given there will be a dollar sent to mission. Circle Chairs will soon be sharing how you may help make this day a meaningful worship experience.

We are hopeful that Mission Christmas, Saturday, December 4th, will be a happening event this year! This festive fundraiser for mission is definitely on the calendar and Black Fellowship Hall and the kitchen have been reserved. Chair Bev Vogel is busy making plans and will need all our church family and friends to help. Perhaps you would like to be a craft fair vendor or know of someone else who would like a space. Maybe you will stay home and bake more cookies than ever, or volunteer to help in the kitchen or cashier. Are you strong? Join the youth a couple of days earlier and help arrange tables. However, one of the most important ways you may help at Mission Christmas is to simply attend. We need church family, friends, and the greater community to come buy cookies, crafts, baked goods, and nuts. We need lots of hungry people buying lunch and a slice of homemade pie, then stopping by the used books, puzzles and games. The success of our UMW fundraiser depends on the number of

own sifting and winnowing.

- **No fixing, saving, advising, or correcting each other.** This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to “help.” But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

- **Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions.** Do not respond with counsel or corrections. Using honest, open questions helps us “hear each other into deeper speech.”

- **When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.** Turn from reaction and judgment to wonder and compassionate inquiry. Ask yourself, “I wonder why they feel/think this way?” or “I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?” Set aside judgment to listen to others—and to yourself—more deeply.

- **Attend to your own inner teacher.** We learn from others, of course. But as we explore poems, stories, questions, and silence in a circle of trust, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, to your most important teacher.

- **Trust and learn from the silence.** Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

- **Observe deep confidentiality.** Safety is built

guests attending. Outside vendors rent a space and share a percentage of their profit, but proceeds from all other areas go directly to mission. Join in the fun! Come!

Blessings,  
Peggy Hall



### September Birthdays

1 Lisa Witt  
2 Carolyn Mikkelsen  
Rich Schroeder  
4 Martha Schwindt  
5 Jayden Eilers  
6 Lance Hall  
7 Lara Eslick  
8 Cade Levering  
Rich Hubka  
Jaxson Bangert  
Kara Baxter  
Kinsey Honebrink  
9 Nathan Persell  
Sally Turner  
10 Catlyn Pfeiffer  
Dixie Gannon  
Elaine Johnson  
Greta Shanahan  
Jody McLeese  
11 Philomena Hogan  
12 Abi Beatty  
Maxim Hall  
William Wehrbein  
Jennifer Admire  
13 Jennifer Frye  
Molly Minert  
15 Avery Hardy  
Bev Vogel  
Cat Collier

when we can trust that our words and stories will remain with the people with whom we choose to share and are not repeated to others without our permission.

- ***Know that it's possible*** to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.

© *Center for Courage & Renewal, founded by Parker J. Palmer.*

Circle of Trust Touchstones •  
Center for Courage & Renewal  
([couragerenewal.org](http://couragerenewal.org))



### Family and Youth Ministry update

Greetings First Church Families! As we are now entering another higher level of spread of COVID, we will not be starting any in person children's or youth classes yet. It is my plan to schedule a zoom meeting on Thursday September 9<sup>th</sup> for all families to meet and decide what level of comfort and activities they would like to be a part of this fall at church.

We will be going forward with the creation of our meditation

Derek Williams  
Beth Leypoldt  
16 Pam Witham  
    Jim Leypoldt  
17 Anthony Glenn  
    Carolyn Mohr  
    Cassi Gottschall  
    Donna Noble  
18 Seth Shanahan  
Stephanie Caldwell  
19 Jennifer Luttgeharm  
Judd Hansen  
20 Ashley Jurey  
    Jerry Kirkland  
    Kyle Luttgeharm  
21 Anna Freivogel  
    Noah Kloch  
22 Deb Steidley  
Sarah Williams  
23 Blake Stephens  
    Darrel Baxter  
    Jenny Hatfield  
24 Aiden Hardy  
    Lori Sass  
    Jack Chapin  
    John Lee  
    Laura Wynn  
25 Sue Uland  
26 Alyia Whitehall  
    J.D. Westerholm  
    Shirley Ebers  
27 Brianna Williams  
    Duane Knight  
28 Van Tyler  
Imber Holland  
29 Carolyn Faines  
30 Diane Walkowiak

garden that the older youth girls are working on and our annual Trunk or Treat outdoors for families on Sunday October 31<sup>st</sup> from 12:00-1:00pm in the east parking lot across from the church.

If you would like to donate candy or be a part of the event and decorate your vehicle let me know! Please email [Charity@firststumclincoln.org](mailto:Charity@firststumclincoln.org) if you would like to be a part of that conversation on Thursday September 9<sup>th</sup> to plan for other ways we can provide bible study and youth activities to support our mission at First Church.

For toddlers and younger children, we will continue to provide coloring pages and activities located in the back of the sanctuary during services. Nursery at this time is not reopened, however should you want a quiet place to stream the service and be with your little ones, space is available in our nursery for you.

Charity Helter  
Children's Ministry





**Worship online or in person  
with FIRST UMC LINCOLN  
Sundays at 8:30am and 10:45  
am! Please wear a mask. We  
thank you in advance!**

**Sending a BIG Thank You for  
your Prayers, Presence, Gifts,  
Service and Witness**

---

**If you are interested in being  
baptized or becoming a new  
member of First United  
Methodist Church, then please  
contact the Church office. We  
are excited to be in Community  
with YOU!**

---

**Prayer Requests:**

*Susie Cook, home  
Wallace Gant, Brookside Rehab  
Center  
Dale Case, Maxine's son, home  
Mark Daniels, Josh Daniels'  
father, home  
Bonnie Evans, Savanna Pines  
Jeremy Hickenbottom, home  
Sandy Conrad, Firth  
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*



**COMMUNITY CENTERED...  
COMMUNITY FOCUSED...  
COMMUNITY MINDED!**