

BE ENCOURAGED.

March 2024

Sunday, March 24, 11 a.m - 1 p.m.
An egg-citing time of games, food and fun!
And an Easter Egg Hunt for 0-11 years old!

Lastly, **we need your prayers** that God will use this event in a miraculous way that only he can accomplish. Thank you so much for any way you are willing to help.

We have **Family Night on the third Wednesday** of each month. We invite the children of Kids Connect to invite their friends and families to join us for an hour of friendship, music, bible lessons and an activity of service. This month we will be making a special gift to give to the youth going on a summer mission trip. We want to encourage them and let them know we will be praying for them both now, as they prepare for the trip and while they are gone. (I'm not going to write what we are making as we want it to be a surprise for them!) If you have a child or several children 4 years - the 5th grade, YOUR family is invited to join us! We meet in the MPR at 5:45 right after the freewill meal provided by First Church.

Families@First ↳ First Steps ↳

I want to give you an update on our first month of **First Steps for Families@First**. We've been meeting in the Nursery at 9:10 each Sunday. It has been a blast! Families with children ages 0 – 3 are getting to know other young families in the church and Stacy and I are getting to know the cutest and most precious friends of our church! The adults spend time visiting about topics of interest to families and praying for the children. The children spend time getting to know their new church friends and, well, just being adorable! We would love to have you join us! If you have older children, great! One of the children's ministry leaders will be in the library to read stories and play games with them while you and your toddler enjoy the class. *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth."* 3 John 1:4

For more information about this opportunity contact LuAnn Berkhof @ (605) 336-3652 or berkhof@sfumc.org

EASTER EGG-STRAVAGANZA!

by **LuAnn Berkhof, Children's Ministry Director**

"Is this what heaven smells like?" What a pensive question! It was the question I was asked by one of the children the night we celebrated Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday at Kids Connect. We were talking about the act of receiving the cross symbol with ashes. As Stacy and I had been planning for this night we were carefully contemplating the best way to combine the festivities of Valentine's Day with the reverence of Ash Wednesday. It turned out, the two complemented each other well. What could be a more beautiful valentine than the love of Jesus and the sacrifice he made for us. The child's question was a beautiful introduction to the conversation we then had about heaven. Does the chocolate candy of Valentine's Day even compare to the scent of heaven? Nope. How about roses? Don't think so. Perfumes? Not even the most expensive compares with the scent God has prepared for us in heaven! Yes, Ash Wednesday and Lent are solemn times, but they prepare us for the celebration of Easter, eternal life, and the incredible scent of heaven!

Just in case you haven't already heard, we are planning an **Easter Egg-stravaganza, 11a.m to 1p.m. on Palm Sunday, March 24**. We plan to have an assortment of fun activities including games, snacks, surprises, and an Easter egg hunt for children 0-11 years old! This is a perfect opportunity for you to load up a bunch of people in your car and introduce them to the community at First. Our prayer is they will have fun and feel welcomed by our friendship, and Christ's love. There is no cost, just invite your family, your friends, and that neighbor down the street and get ready to celebrate!

Are you thinking to yourself right now I wonder if I could help with this event? YES, YOU CAN! **We need volunteers to help with each station**. Call the church and I will share with you the list of possible areas we will need helpers. I know you will feel blessed for giving up a few hours of your time! **We also need the dozen sized egg cartons**. Please bring as many as you have to Lori in the church office. We will take them right up until Palm Sunday.

Easter Is Nearly Here! with Pastor Sara Nelson

There are many unique ways that people celebrate Easter all around the world!

Did you know... in some Latin American countries, particularly Mexico, there is a tradition of making "cascarones", which are hollowed-out eggs filled with confetti or small toys. These eggs are cracked over the heads of friends and family during Easter celebrations.

Did you know... Pysanky is a traditional Ukrainian art of decorating eggs using wax and dyes to create intricate designs. These decorated eggs hold symbolic meaning and are often exchanged as gifts during Easter.

Did you know... that the largest Easter egg hunt according to the Guinness World Records took place in Winter Haven, Florida on April 1, 2007. It involved 9,753 participants searching for 501,000 eggs!

For Christians, the egg symbolizes the resurrection. While appearing to be dormant, the egg contains a new life hidden within it.

This is the joy of Easter: Christ's resurrection. *"Remember how Jesus told you... that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again."* (Luke 24:7)

Even Jesus' disciples couldn't quite get their minds around the idea of Jesus rising again. When the disciples

received the

news that Jesus was alive, Peter ran to the tomb to see it for himself.

There are times that I wish that I could run to the tomb

like Peter did and go to the empty tomb to see it for myself. This is why symbols like Easter eggs are important. They are reminders for us of Jesus' resurrection and the new life that God offers to us in Christ.



Pastor Sara Nelson

So the next time you go to an Easter Egg Hunt or enjoy a delicious chocolate egg, may you be reminded that these eggs are symbols of an amazing event that changes our lives: the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Happy Easter!

Pastor Sara M. Nelson

Pastor Sara

- Please join us for our Easter Egg-Stravaganza on Sunday, March 24, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., with games, crafts, food, and a fabulous Easter Egg Hunt! Invite your friends!
- Please join us for Easter Worship Services on Sunday, March 31 at 6:30 a.m. at Falls Park, 8:30 a.m., 9:45am, and the 11:01 a.m. on Easter Sunday! Invite your friends!

Easter Week Schedule

Easter Sunday
 6:30 a.m. - Sunrise Service at Falls Park
 8:30 a.m. - Traditional Worship
 9:45 a.m. - Unity Worship
 11:01 a.m. - Modern Worship

Good Friday Service
 6 p.m. - Sanctuary

Mandy Thursday Service
 6 p.m. - Sanctuary

Palm Sunday Services
 8:30 a.m. - Traditional Worship
 9:45 a.m. - Unity Worship
 11:01 a.m. - Modern Worship

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Youth@First

by Eric Fjerestad, Youth/Young Adults Director

Exciting Youth Room Updates

It's an exciting time for our youth here at First. We're gearing up to head to Memphis, TN in early June for our summer mission trip, and we are less than one month away from our Easter Egg-stravaganza in late March, and our first UMC Youth Night in late April. With all of those exciting things happening in the lives of our youth, we often forget about our week-to-week programming which lies at the heart of our Youth@First Ministry. A big part of that is our youth room which we have called home since 1990, and have an amazing history in that beautiful space.

Throughout the last few months, we have added little amenities and furniture to help our space feel like a second home and help add a cool aspect to our programming. We recently finished adding a new snack bar to our youth room along with some high-top and subway-style tables to our snack bar area to give our students a place to enjoy a snack and fellowship around the table. Followed up by adding a couple of fun games with a new foosball table along with a new mini basketball game. This is in combination with a new sitting area that doubles as a Life Group area for our students to hang out and relax after a long day of classes and activities.

Our favorite addition has to be the addition of a worship area. Every Wednesday night we have our youth praise team, led by one of our amazing leaders, Cody, lead us in worship and play a game. We focused on creating a worship atmosphere that turns off the main lights and creates a relaxing environment that allows our students to slow down from the busy week and worship our Lord and Savior. We are so excited to see what God does in the lives of our students in this beautiful new space. Check out the picture below to see the cool new space!



For more information about these opportunities contact Eric @ (605) 336-3652 or fjerestade@sfumc.org

Christmas Tea UWF Annual

Thank you to those attending the 15th annual Christmas Tea on December 2. Over 150 women enjoyed beautiful music by the Sound Cascade, delicious desserts, and mental health information by Michelle Thie from Live Inspired 365. **United Women in Faith donated \$1,407 to "Live Inspired 365" from the ticket sales and private donations given to the Christmas Tea.** Our donation was used by Live Inspired 365 to purchase items for patients at Avera Behavioral Health Center and the Avera Addiction Center in Sioux Falls.

Watch for future information about United Women in Faith's spring celebration.



Happy 90th Birthday
Ginny Stadum

OPEN HOUSE!
March 17, 11-1:30, MPR
or send a card to
724 E. El Dorado Drive,
Sioux Falls, SD 57108

Happy
Easter

Calling All Bakers!

We serve about 100 people each week at Wednesday night supper. The meal is catered by Tony's but we serve cookies/bars for dessert. We need cookies/bars to be donated. If you are interested in providing cookies/bars, please bring them to the church during office hours and mark them for Wednesday night supper.

Thank you for helping with this project.

Always in need of
homemade cookies!

March "Gather, Grow, Go!"

GATHER with friends in fellowship:

- Every Sun. – **Worship** @ 8:30 & 9:45 & 11:01 a.m.
All ages, nursery provided @ 9:45 & 11:01 a.m.
- Every Sun. – **Kids Connect** @ 9:45 & 11:01 a.m.
Kids 4 years - 5th grade
- Every Wed. – **Family Meals** @ 5 p.m.
- Every Wed. – **Parent Walking Group** @ 7 p.m.
- Every Wed. – **Choir Rehearsal** @ 7 p.m. | All are invited
- 3rd Tue. – **Read @ First** @ 5:30 p.m.
- Sun. March 24 – **Palm Sunday** @ 8:30 & 9:45 & 11:01 a.m.
- Sun. March 24 – **Easter Egg-stravaganza** @ 11 a.m.
- Thu. March 28 – **Maundy Thursday** - 6 p.m.
- Fri. March 29 – **Good Friday** - 6 p.m.
- Sun., March 31 – **Easter Services** @ 6:30 (Sunrise Service at Falls Park), 8:30, 9:45 & 11:01 a.m.

GROW in your faith:

- 2 & 4 Sun. – **Grateful Table Young Adult Ministry** @ 6 p.m. 20 & 30-something years
- Every Tue. – **Tuesday Refresh Book Study** @ Noon
- 1 & 3 Tue. – **Amen's Book Study** @ Noon | All are invited
- 2 & 4 Tue. – **Higgins Bible Study** 8 a.m. | All men invited
- Every Wed. – **Women's Bible Study** @ 9:30 a.m.
All women invited
- Every Wed. – **Zoom Bible Study** @ 2:15 pm
Call the church office for the Zoom link.
- Every Wed. – Pastor Jordan's **Adult Bible Study** @ 6 p.m.
- Every Wed. – **Jans Bible Study** @ 6 p.m.
- 4th Mon. – **United Women of Faith @ 6:30 p.m.** |
Adult Women 70+ (email Cynthia for location details)
- Wed. March 13 – **S.A.G.E.S.** @ 11:30 a.m. | Senior Adults
Speaker will be Marie Remmers from Asera Care. Enjoy a Tony's catered meal of meatloaf, mashed potatoes, whipped fruit, and dessert. Call (605) 336-3652 to RSVP. Drawing for free meal in April!
- 3rd Thu. – **United Women of Faith @ 9:30 a.m.** |
Adult Women 70+
- 3rd Thu. – **United Women of Faith @ 7 p.m.** |
Adult Women 50 - 70
- Sun. March 17 – **Lunch-n-Learn** @ 12 p.m.
(pre-registration requested)

GO put your faith into action:

- Mon. March 4 – **Nightwatch** Serving hot meals at Hayward Elementary School @ 5 p.m.
- Wed. March 6 – **Feeding SD** Helping end food insecurities @ 5:15 p.m. Serving spots are limited; call the office to sign up.
- Sat. March 9 – **Habitat for Humanity** Building safe, affordable housing @ 8:30 a.m.
- Tue. March 12 – **The Banquet West** Funding, cooking & serving dinner / Preparing @ 2 p.m. / Serving @ 5:15 p.m.
- Tue. March 19 – **The Banquet Downtown** Funding, cooking & serving breakfast / Preparing @ 5:30 a.m. / Serving @ 6:30 p.m.

Don't Forget!
March 10



CHURCH FAMILY

BIRTH

- Luella Marie Kent (daughter of Rachel & Mike Kent, granddaughter of Jane Leonhardt)

BAPTISM

- Olivia Ann Barrett (daughter of Nathan & Mackenzie Barrett)

DEATH

- Joyce Rosenberg
- Sue Anderson (sister of Barb Shepardson)

- Karen Bunker (aunt of Don Jones)

- Gary Wolbrink (husband of Connie Wolbrink)
- Clifford Rindels (father of Vicki Wilbur)
- Bev Kriens
- Leo Spinar

PRAYER CONCERNS

- Jarred Nolte (son of Lisa Utech)

- Cort Schepeler (brother of Bill (Renita) Schepeler)
- Taylor & Kiersten Johnson
- Troy Baltzer (husband of Rhonda Baltzer, son in law of Larry & Sue Engeltjes, brother in law of Pam (Nate) Knuth)

- Family of Luke Reimers (requested by Dawn Hieb)

- Jerry Wadleigh (father of Dina (Jason) Vostad, grandfather of Jacob & Justin Vostad)

- Carli Steffes

ATTENDANCE

- Jan 07 In Person 278
Online 378
- Jan 14 In Person 10
Online 380
- Jan 21 In Person 316
Online 392
- Jan 28 In Person 301
Online 338
- Feb 04 In Person 271
Online 373