

“THE CORNERSTONE”

JUNE 2023 – JULY 2023

First Presbyterian Church PC (U.S.A.)

206 E. 20th Street P. O. Box 444

Falls City, Nebraska 68355

402-245-2650 – <http://www.fallscitypres.org>

Worship Time: 11:00 AM

Pastor's Reflection

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessings to all of you as we hopefully enjoy the moderate temperatures of June and the birthday celebrations for our Nation in July.

I remain grateful for my Presbyterian sisters and brothers who love and support me in our understanding of "togetherness" as a foundational block for everything good. I am most grateful to my children. My daughter Abigail Steele and her husband Rich and their two children Ruah and Shiloh Pine, reside in Boise, ID. My son, Philip, and his wife Megan with their three children, Chloe, Caeden, and Ember reside in Bozeman, MT. All love their respective communities and their careers, and everyone's health is very good. We are blessed, indeed.

As I mentioned to many of you, this entire process of “re-booting” my life at this stage is an incredible experience. The one thing which continues to surface more and more, is the understanding of God's divine grace. Grace has enabled me to see all my blessings with a renewed freshness where hope springs eternal.

Commencing Pentecost Sunday, we will start a six-week walkthrough (Sermon Series) where the creative agency of God's Spirit connects with new people. Even as God is doing a new thing, we know this same creative Spirit has been at work since the very beginning. The one thing about God is His desire for a relationship with each one of us and the reconnecting of what we have divided. God's vision of a world of persons connected to one another and to God will be realized, even if God has to use some very creative methods to do so. I am excited to share with you what I have learned and where I am being called with the above

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Series. I know, you will discover some new perspectives pertaining to Scripture. Please invite a friend to Church during this time and I will be honored to welcome them to the Church family.

I want to thank each and every one of you for your wonderful presence, my many experiences, and the opportunity to worship with you, to learn of the collective nature of joy, of happiness, and of the love which is uniquely given and binds this Body of Christ, together. As with you, I look forward and expect the unexpected. We watch and listen as God unfolds God's truth and mission to you and to me. Each of you continues to give me a living gift that I cherish and carry forward with me forever and a day.

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Rick

RECOMMENDED READING

All Together in One Place by Jan Kirkpatrick
Cherokee Rose by Al Lacy
American Omens by Travis Thrasher
Peace In the Valley by Ruth Logan Herne
The New Normal by Jill Briscoe
Newlywed Games by Mary Davis

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

All newsletter articles for the August-September newsletter will be due to the office by **JULY 10th**. Thank you for marking this *important* date on your calendar and submitting good news to be shared!

*Bless us, O God, with a reverent sense of your presence,
that we may be at peace and may worship you with all our mind and spirit.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN*

COMMUNITY NEWS

Falls City Nursing and Rehab, 1720 Burton Drive, provides care centered on the individual needs of each of their residents. They strive to create an interesting, fun and unique environment for the residents. There is nothing more that delights the residents than visitors! The nursing home welcomes volunteers of all ages and walks of life to take part whether for an hour or for an afternoon. As a volunteer, you may spend time in a group setting, playing cards, or Bingo, or other activities planned by the nursing home. For more information on how you can be a volunteer, contact Sally Fleskoski, Activity Director at 402-245-4466. She looks forward to hearing from you!

The Falls City Backpack program currently services 45 elementary children by providing them food to take home for weekend use. The backpacks are distributed by the local schools each week of the school year. There is a direct correlation between learning ability and hunger. During the week, children receive free breakfasts and lunches at school, but too often their nutritional needs are not met on the weekends. It costs approximately \$250 for one student to receive weekly backpacks for a year. Your support is needed. If you would like to contribute, please send or drop off your donation to the Southeast Nebraska Communications office, 110 W.17th Street or Frontier Bank, 1616 Harlan Street. All donations should be made payable to the Richardson Foundation. Every donation, large or small, makes a huge difference in a child's life.



AT-ONE-NESS

Jesus prays in the Gospel of John, “Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.” Luke, in the Book of Acts, writes that “All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer.” The Scriptures call us to be united as a community of faith. Yet, the Scriptures are clear on two points: (1) Our disunity springs from our seeking to do things our own way, and, (2) The key to unity and oneness is seeking to do things God’s way.

Whenever the people of God lose focus on God, trouble begins; not as a punishment for sin, but as a natural result of spiritual creatures forgetting to take care of spiritual things. It is therefore in our unity with God that we find our unity with one another. Rocket Science, I know.

The translators of the New Testament into English were trying to find a word for the new relationship to be found with God in Christ. They hit upon the middle English word “atone” which came from the two words “at one.” To us it seems a slight difference, doesn’t it, but in such small things, large and important things reside. For we have made a chore a task, a thing we must do to make up for, to pay for, for to right the wrong we ourselves have done. Which is not what at one means at all. “At one” means we are at peace with God so that we can be at peace with one another. At-one-ness is an act and gift of God; not an act or gift of us. Amid the difficult prose of the Gospel of John, we find the message Christ makes us one with God and with each other. Our calling is to remember we are one with God and with one another and to act toward each other in ways consistent and reflective of oneness. God has made peace with us and God has made peace between us.

Dr. Paul Tournier once observed, “There are two things we cannot do alone; one is to be married; the other is to be a Christian.” We need the church in order to be Christian; no matter how inconvenient and uncomfortable it might be to get along with the other Christians. Just remember, whatever troubles we are having with them, some of them are having the same troubles with us. Pope Francis once said, “The church needs the stranger to remind us who we are. We are not sellers of a product. We are bearers of Christ, who is the light of the world. We need the other to awaken us to our own existence.”

We need the church now more than ever in order to be Christian; if for no other reason than we cannot learn to love and be loved in isolation. It is within the daily bump and grind of living and working together as the people of God we find out what it means to be forgiven for our failures, praised for our efforts, appreciated for our virtues, prayed for in our sorrows, helped during our troubles and loved in spite of ourselves. It is within a community of faith we learn to be genuinely loving and praising and forgiving and helping others. We need each other to practice and learn to be Christian.

Jesus prayed we would find a home with one another, a place where our “at-one-ness” with God becomes a strong “at-one-ness” with each other. May our church be both a house and a home. A place where we are truly one people, one family of God, one community in Christ, one body living

and working together in pursuit of one thing; prayerfully seeking to know and do the will of God. Amen

-----PARISH NEWS-----

BLANKET SUNDAY

Blanket Sunday was held on May 14th. How fitting as Mothers wrap their arms around their children for comfort, we also will bring comfort to others with blankets. If you wish to donate to this cause there is still time. Please mark your contribution as “Blanket Sunday” so we post it correctly. Thank you!

DIAPER CLOSET

First Interstate Bank is very active in our community. Joleen Stoller and her employees had a diaper drive during the month of May. They also collected baby and toddler clothing for children up to five years old. Later in June we will receive the exciting results of their drive! Falls City is blessed to have such a philanthropic bank!

BLOODMOBILE

The Bloodmobile will be held at Prichard Auditorium on Thursday, July 20, Noon to 6 pm and Friday, July 21, 9 am to 3 pm. At this time, we do not know if we will be asked to help with the event. Please mark your calendars so we may be ready to volunteer should we be called upon. More information will be provided as we receive it. Thanks.

SPECIAL EVENT

A special event “Stalder Tribute” will be held on Friday, June 16th at the Seid's Event Center, 71085 651 Blvd (N. Hwy. 73) beginning with a Hors d'ouvres and Wine social hour at 6:30 pm followed by a musical performance at 7 pm by Terminally Hip. Merle and Marcia Stalder, long-time members of First Presbyterian Church supported the Arts in many ways and this will be a wonderful tribute to them. The event is being sponsored by the Richardson County Arts and Humanities Council. All are invited to attend. A free will offering will be taken at the door.