

“THE CORNERSTONE”

APRIL 2024 – MAY 2024

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

As we navigate through the six Sundays following Easter, we are invited to dive deeper into the profound concept that belonging precedes belief in the realm of faith. This notion challenges the conventional order of entry into religious communities, emphasizing the inherent worth and value of every individual before they fully embrace their faith journey.

Imagine a garden blooming in the early days of spring, where tender shoots emerge from the earth with the promise of vibrant blossoms to come. In a similar fashion, the seeds of belonging are planted within us long before we fully comprehend or embrace the tenets of our faith. It is a subtle yet powerful recognition that we are welcomed, cherished, and valued simply for being.

In a world that often demands proof or unwavering conviction before acceptance, the message of belonging before belief offers a radical and refreshing perspective. It reminds us that we are not alone on our spiritual path, but rather held in a community that extends a hand of friendship and inclusion, regardless of our doubts or uncertainties.

This season of post-Easter reflection provides us with a unique opportunity to explore the depths of this truth. It calls us to set aside preconceived notions of what it means to belong or believe, and instead, to embrace the mystery and beauty of a faith that welcomes us as we are. It is a call to authenticity, vulnerability, and openness to the transformative power of grace.

First Presbyterian
Church
P O Box 444
Falls City, NE 68355

As we gather on each subsequent Sunday, let us feel the warmth of belonging enveloping us like a comforting embrace. Let us lean into the love that surrounds us, knowing that we are valued, cherished, and held in the arms of a greater presence that transcends human understanding. It is in this sacred space of belonging we begin to unravel the intricacies of our beliefs, allowing them to take root and bloom in their own time.

May these weeks following Easter be a time of deep introspection, revelation, and growth. May we embrace the paradox of belonging before belief with humility and gratitude, recognizing the gift of acceptance that is freely offered to us all. May this truth continue to resonate in our hearts and minds, guiding us on a journey of discovery, connection, and transformation.

Blessings,

Pastor Rick

RECOMMENDED READING

A Test of Faith by Karen Ball
White Picket Fences by Susan Meissner
There There by Tommy Orange
Searching for Savanna by Mona Gable
A Place Called Home by David Ambroz
Our Missing Hearts by Celeste Ng

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

All newsletter articles for the June-July newsletter will be due to the office by **May 13th**. Thank you for marking this *important* date on your calendar and submitting good news to be shared!

+++++++**CHURCH NEWS**+++++++

BLANKET SUNDAY

Blanket Sunday will be held on May 12th. 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, please use a pew envelope marked Blanket Sunday or mark your check as such, so it may be posted accordingly.

As we journey through these Sundays of Easter, let each pillar guide us closer to the heart of our faith. Let us “Belong” to one another in love, “Behave” as embodiments of Christ’s resurrection, and “Believe” with a faith that transforms. This Easter season, may we be renewed, reinvigorated, and reconnected with the essence of our Christian journey.

May this series enrich your faith and strengthen our community, as we walk together in the light of the Risen Lord.

IT's NOT TOO LATE FOR ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING!

The One Great Hour of Sharing campaign kicked off on February 25th. These gifts are a reminder that through the simple act of sharing, we are blessed, and we experience God's abundance in surprising ways. Whether it is offering relief from natural disasters or access to food, water and healthcare, our gifts are needed. If you wish to donate, please send your contributions to P. O. Box 444 or drop off at the church. Please designate your donation as OGHS.



MODERNIZATION DONE!

FINALLY, the women's restroom off the Nursery has been completed. Hallelujah!

The Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation graciously provided the grant funds to construct an **enclosure** over the existing outside steps, new metal double doors, lighting, a lift, a heater to keep temperatures above freezing (a lift requirement) and a new wider door at the bottom of the steps. In the restroom, the two stools and wood walls were removed with a single new stool, a new sink and counter installed. New lighting, a vent fan, and a new lever door knob and lock were installed. Also, railings and grab bars were installed. These many changes make the basement and restroom handicap accessible.

Those who have some difficulty with steps can use the lift which has call controllers (both at the top and bottom of the steps) to access the Westminster Hall activities.

DIAPER CLOSET

The number of families using the Diaper Closet is definitely on the rise. If you are at the church on a Monday between 4 and 6 pm, stop in to visit with the families. If you would enjoy volunteering, we will soon do the "big clothes swap" and many hands will be needed. We box up the winter clothes and put out the summer clothes. We also need volunteers to staff the Diaper Closet. When a month has five Mondays, getting staff for the third Monday is especially tough. Donations are always needed. We never seem to have enough boys' clothes in sizes 4T and 5T. We have a huge amount of cute tiny infant outfits and very little for bigger toddlers. For diapers, we have a large amount of sizes Newborn to 3, and not enough sizes 4 to 7.

EASTER SERMON SERIES

As we step into the season of Easter, a period marked by resurrection and renewal, our journey is themed around three profound pillars: *Belong, Behave, Believe*. These pillars guide us through the narratives of the five Sundays of Easter, encapsulating the essence of our faith, community, and individual journeys.

****Easter Morning: *Belong and Behave*****--The dawn of Easter Morning illuminates the essence of belonging. This day, we are reminded of the open invitation to all into the family of faith. The resurrection of Christ signifies a renewal, offering each of us a place in the eternal story of God's love. We belong here, amidst the songs of joy and the shared prayers of hope. Easter invites us to reflect on our behaviors – how we live out the resurrection in our daily actions. Inspired by the new life that Easter symbolizes, we are called to embody this renewal through acts of kindness, compassion, and love. Our behaviors are the truest expression of our faith, demonstrating to the world the transformative power of the resurrection. As we gather, let us cherish the sense of unity and belonging Easter Morning bestows upon us, welcoming everyone into the warm embrace of our community.

****Second Sunday of Easter: *Believe*****--On the Second Sunday, we delve deeper into the heart of our journey: belief. Our belief in the resurrection is not just an acknowledgement of an event but a living, breathing commitment. It's in this belief that we find the strength to face our trials, the courage to stand for justice, and the hope to see beyond our current circumstances. This Sunday calls us to reaffirm our belief, not as a passive state of mind, but as an active engagement with our faith.

****Third Sunday of Easter: *Behave and Believe*****--As the Easter season progresses, the intertwining of behavior and belief becomes increasingly evident. On this Third Sunday, we are encouraged to reflect on how our beliefs influence our actions and vice versa. This harmonious relationship between belief and behavior fosters a life of authenticity, where our actions are a true reflection of our faith. This synergy propels us forward, guiding us through our journey with purpose and conviction.

****Fourth Sunday of Easter: *Belong and Believe*****--Belonging and believing reach a beautiful confluence on the Fourth Sunday of Easter. This Sunday emphasizes that our belief strengthens our sense of belonging within the community and our personal relationship with God. It is a reminder that our faith journey is both personal and communal, and it's in the community that our beliefs are nurtured, challenged, and strengthened.

****Fifth Sunday of Easter: *Behave, Believe, and Belong – The Celebration of Unity*****--As we reach the final Sunday of the Easter season, we celebrate the unity of *Behave, Believe, and Belong*. This Sunday is a culmination of our journey, showcasing how these pillars intertwine to shape our faith, community, and personal