Sue’s Musings – Gratitude and Relationships

Over the season of Lent about 50 of us read and discussed Diane Butler Bass’ book, *Gratitude: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks*. It was a wonderful time of exploring what gratitude means to us, the truly transformative power of it in our own lives when we make it a way of life (even if we don’t feel grateful!), and sharing what we are grateful for in our lives and in our church. What was the best part of these small groups? THE RELATIONSHIPS that developed or deepened! That is what I am the most grateful for. I know our group ended with not wanting the group to end. THAT says something!

As our church focuses more intentionally on church growth, let’s hang on to the importance of developing and deepening relationships. Did you know that if a new member doesn’t develop at least six new friends (friendships that go beyond Sunday morning) in the first six months, they are unlikely to stay? One of the strengths of our size church is that we can easily reach out to new members, and to guests, and build those relationships. Have you considered inviting a guest out to lunch? A new member to dinner? Attending their child’s sports event with them? Inviting them to our book group? At the very least invite a new member or guest to join you for fellowship time after church – and then STAY WITH THEM! (There’s nothing worse than someone inviting you to an event and then abandoning you as they go to be with their long-time friends.) Introduce them to others who may share similar interests.

Treasure the relationship you have in our church community – and expand your circle to include those who are newer to our community. It is one of the greatest gifts you can give.

*Grace and Peace,*
*Pastor Sue*

~ Rooted in God ~ Open to Grace ~ Filled with Joy ~
150th Anniversary Service & Picnic!

Come join us Sunday June 9th as we celebrate our 150th anniversary with a worship service & picnic lunch. This will be a combined service and lunch with First Christian Church as they too celebrate their 150th anniversary.

To be held at Antelope Park (Approximately 27th and A Street)
Worship beginning at 10:30 outside in the Antelope Band Shell. There is parking to the east and the south of the band shelter. The worship service to include a combined choir and communion. You may sit on the bench seating or bring a lawn chair.

Pot luck lunch is to be held following the service in the Auld Pavilion (right by the band shelter). Our two church’s will provide the fried chicken and dessert so we ask you to bring something to go with that. We will also provide the paper products.

This will be a rain or shine event. If it’s raining we will hold everything inside the Auld Pavilion

New Young Adult Opportunity!

Last month we had a gathering of young adults in our church (College age thru about their 20’s)
At the time I write this it hasn’t actually happened yet, so I can’t tell you what they did – but for our young adults in our congregation and their friends, we want to get this on your radar. This group will be whatever YOU want it to be. Fellowship & Fun? Conversation about things that matter? Service opportunities? Something else? Look for news of what’s next, and join us!
Holy Waggers & Homestead Meeting

Holy Waggers Therapy Dog Ministry

May 5 After the 11 am service (about noonish), the Holy Waggers Therapy Dog Ministry Team will meet again in room 106. Planning is progressing, a possible partnership with a local group is being explored, training and certification requirements are being looked at, visiting requirements at homes and centers where our own members live are being explored.

If anyone is interested in being a part of this ministry, you are more than welcome to join us at our next meeting. Please let Linda Brodzik (Linda@InRelationWithDogs.com) know if you can attend, as lunch will be provided. You DON’T have to have a dog to participate!

Homestead Presbytery Meeting in North Bend
May 16, 9 am – 3 pm

North Bend was one of the communities that was hit hard by the floods this spring. Our church has “adopted” the North Bend Presbyterian Church as the focus of our relief efforts. There is a group exploring a work day in North Bend in conjunction with the Presbytery meeting. We’ll send out information about that as we learn more.

MEANWHILE, one of the needs is a ministry of presence. It is exhausting trying to recover from the kinds of floods that hit Nebraska. One of the ways you may want to consider exercising that ministry of presence is simply to attend the presbytery meeting that the North Bend church is hosting on May 16. The morning of the meeting is typically an education time and worship, we share lunch, and then have our business meeting after lunch. If anyone would like to join me at the meeting, let me know and depending on how many want to come, we can carpool. It is helpful to register (and you can pay for your lunch online). Register by going to homesteadpres.org and clicking on “Presbytery Assembly Sign-Up.”
Church Growth Focus

The session has made church growth a priority, not just in numbers but spiritually as well. We, like many churches, have great people and great programs, yet it seems like no matter what we do, we still are experiencing that steady decline in attendance, volunteer energy, and resources. This isn’t new – we’ve been tracking this for several decades. We want to change that. However change is not easy. One of the things the session talked about at our session annual retreat in February was that we need to start to think about and do things differently. But we don’t want to change just for change’s sake, we want a plan that can help us make strategic change that will give us a good chance of success.

Several members of our church have been reading Shift 2.0: Helping Congregations Back into the Game of Effective Ministry, by Phil Maynard. In it he talks about shifts that churches need to make if they want to grow:

- From Fellowship to Hospitality
- From Worship as an Event to Worship as a Lifestyle
- From Membership to Discipleship
- From “Serve Us” to Service
- From a “Survival Mentality” to Extravagant Generosity.

The feeling of those reading it is that this book is current, practical, and has the potential to provide us with the roadmap we are seeking.

Phil Maynard is leading a workshop on three of the “shifts” in St. Charles, Missouri, May 20-22. Pastor Sue and a few others will be attending. We know a few others have expressed interest in being on the team that will follow-up on what we learn at that event. Our plan is to come back from that event, evaluate what will be helpful for our church, and then make recommendations to the session about how we proceed to put in place those things that we believe will help us grow both spiritually and in participation.

Everyone is welcome to read the book that is the foundation for this workshop. It is available at www.smile.amazon.com for $10 for the kindle version or $19 for the paperback.
FPChristian Education

What’s Happening in May

The month of May marks the coming conclusion of the 2018-2019 Sunday School and Youth Fellowship year. But that doesn’t mean our faith formation takes a break, there are lots of ways to continue learning and practicing. During the summer months, beginning in June, we will have events, activities, and ideas for faith formation during the summer months. Some will be here at church like the First Church First Night series and some will be things you can do at home or as a family. So be on the lookout for these events and ideas in this space beginning next month. But don’t forget about all the awesome faith formation opportunities this month. To check them out just see below!

Children’s Ministry and Faith Formation:
- May 5th – No children’s Sunday School. Due to the difficulty of finding a route to the church during the Lincoln marathon, there will be no children’s Sunday School on May 5th.
- May 12th – Activity Time, Sunday School, and Music Sunday. The kids choir will also sing at the 11:00 am service.
- May 19th – Activity Time and Sunday School with a special celebration at the end of the Sunday School hour to close out the 2018-2019 year.
- May 26th – Memorial Day weekend – Sunday School on summer break

Youth Ministry and Faith Formation:
- The FPC youth fellowship is on its summer break. But there will be a few special activities and event during the summer such as serving at The Gathering Place (June 4th), Presbyterian Youth Triennium (July 15-20) and other activities. Be on the lookout for more info to come!

Adult Ministry and Faith Formation: (Sunday Morning Classes unless otherwise noted)
- Bible Discovery Class meets in Room 105. The Bible Discovery Class uses the Present Word curriculum which is a bible study exploring various themes.
- Faith and Theology Class meets in Room 107. This month they will be discussing current events as it relates to our faith.
General Announcements

Thank You!
Over the previous six weeks we had over 50 people participating in our Lenten Small Group series that explored the book *Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks*. I’d like to thank all those participating in the small groups and in individual study for making this such a successful series. I want to offer an extra helping of thanks to all our small group facilitators for their commitment and willingness to lead these groups. I am grateful to be in ministry with you all and with First Presbyterain. Thank you all!

Thank you to all those who donated candy, filled eggs, hid the eggs, and provided refreshments for our annual Easter Egg hunt. Thanks to your generosity, a good time was had by all and no one went home with an empty basket. Thank you!!

First Presbyterian Forum Series

The FPC FORUM series is on hiatus until October. During that time, we will be planning for the 2019-2020 series. If you have any ideas of topics that you’d be interested in learning more about, please email Kris Brammer (dce@fpclincoln.org)

Graduate Recognition Service -

On June 2nd we are recognizing all our FPC family members who are graduating, whether it is from high school, college, graduate school, or professional schooling. If you would please contact Kris Brammer at the church to let us know of your upcoming graduation, (or of your young person’s graduation) we would love to include you/them in our recognition service as well as in the June First Report. We are proud of you and we want to celebrate with you! There will be a reception in the East Entrance following the 10:00 am service to honor our graduates.
Arts for the Soul

April 7th brought our final concert for the 2018-2019 Arts for the Soul concert Season. We enjoyed a wonderful organ concert with renowned organist Ken Cowan. We are already making plans for the 2019-2020 season!
Music Sunday -

May 12th we will not only be celebrating Mother’s Day, but it will also be a celebration of Music here at First Presbyterian Church. Please join us at 8:30 and 11:00 am.
All the musical groups of the church will be at the 11:00 service: Children’s Choir and Children’s Instrumental Ensemble, Chancel Choir, Chancel Bells, Brass, Percussion and Organ.

Summer Bells & Choir -

Starting in June we will have summer choir and handbells. Both are for not only those who have sung or played before, but also for those who have never sung or rung bells but would like to give it a try.

The only rehearsals will be on the Sunday morning before we play. We will meet at 9:10 a.m. and take part in the 10:00 a.m. service (for the bell Sunday please be there 9:00 am to get setup).

No choir robes or bell black dress. The music will be easy to learn in the short rehearsal time before church. This would be a great way for new people to give it a try!

It would be helpful for both groups, but especially for the bell Sunday if you would let Brian Pfoltner know in advance if you plan to come.

*Please stay tuned for the upcoming schedule!*

Worship Time Changes for the Summer!

- May 27 (Memorial Day weekend): ONE service only at 10 am (Sanctuary)

- Every Sunday between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend: TWO services at 8:30 am (Great Hall) and 10 am (Sanctuary)

- September 2 (Labor Day weekend) ONE service only at 10 am (Sanctuary)

- September 9 and Sundays following: TWO services at 8:30 am (Great Hall) and 11 am (Sanctuary)

In addition, our Sudanese service will be at its regular time Sundays at 12:30 pm in Great Hall, every Sunday except the first Sundays of the month.
Travel Size Toiletries Needed

As you plan your summer travels, please remember to share any extra new, unused travel size toiletries with the church. We make Hygiene kits for those in need and share samples in our restroom. We give away 10-15 trial size items each week. Thank you for supporting this important ministry.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Saturday, April 13, found women from around Homestead Presbytery gathering at First Church for their annual Spring Gathering. Rev. Dr. Carl Eskridge spoke to them about our world today. Arta Smith gave a timely devotion and Dr. Jane Holtzclaw introduced us to the new bible study, Love Carved In Stone, a fresh look at the Ten Commandments. The offering is being given to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for Homestead and baby layettes were brought for the Native Americans at Pine Ridge, SD.

Watch for coming Women's events. Enjoy the great weather and blessings to all.

SAND DOLLARS will not meet in May but we are planning a fun evening at the Lincoln Children's Zoo on Wednesday evening July 17. All church members are invited to join us for supper in the food court and a guided tour with time to wander on your own. (Group rates for entry and meal.) More details later. Your Sand Dollars Steering Committee: Bill and Nancy Janike, Barbara Nieveen, Keith Larsen, Betty Tenhulzen, Ron Bump and Arta Smith

SCIENCE FAIR AT MCPHEE A SUCCESS

Twelve volunteers judged the Science Fair projects at McPhee on March. The students did a great job on their projects and enjoyed interacting with the adult judges. Thank you to all who volunteered.

The Flyleaf Book Club …

will meet on May 17 and discussing the book Miracle at St. Anna
GARDEN BOXES GET MOVED, FINALLY!!!!!

The garden boxes for Community Crops which we started moving last October finally were able to be installed on the new garden lot at 17th and F Streets over Easter weekend. Since October we have battled rain, snow, sleet, and frozen ground. Thanks to the perseverance of Lynn Bonge, Gary Hughes, Bill Janike and Ray Hill of the Garden/Parking Task Force and many volunteers the boxes were prepared for easy installation on the April 20th work day.

Thank you to all those who helped on April 20th and before and to all of you who brought food and served the workers. Hopefully the final touches will be completed and the gardeners can begin planting. We will be continuing with plans to install the fence around the gardens and install a gazebo. This was a big project for the church and all those who contributed funds and their time are appreciated.
PARKING LOT PLANS FOR 18TH STREET LOT PROCEEDING

With the completion of the move of the garden boxes from the 18th Street lot the Garden/Parking Task Force will now proceed with the plans for and construction of the parking lot at 18th Street. A General Contractor has been secured and it is anticipated that construction can begin later this summer.

Volunteers Needed for SPLASH May 9th

The Mission Outreach committee is sponsoring the SPLASH event again this year at McPhee School. It will be held on Thursday, May 9th from 4:30 to 7 p.m. We need to have about 20 church volunteers to help with the various activities with the kids. If you are available, please contact Pam Carrier at pamcarrier@gmail.com or Nancy Janike at njanike@hotmail.com. This is a fun event for the students and a great fellowship event for all the church members who participate.

Watch Us Grow!

As we celebrate 150 years of ministry in the heart of Lincoln, we reflect upon our commitment to humbly serve our God and our neighborhood as we grow where we are planted. Our growth together has been filled with faith and many blessings! We have identified a new home for our community garden while growing our parking capacity. We have also received a thoughtfully planned landscape architecture design that meets parking lot codes requested by the city, and helps unveil the splendor of our church.

As we continue to share God’s blessings with our neighborhood, we hope you’ll consider sponsoring a plant to honor our roots and celebrate continued growth in our faith and church. Look for the display in East Entrance to sponsor a plant that inspires you and perhaps a new church family member that might walk by it. Thanks for growing together, and for making a positive difference in the lives of many!

Plants can be gifted to the Church in memory of someone special! Please notate on the card who they are in memory or honor of.
Please notify the church office of any name, address, email, and/or telephone changes.

First Presbyterian Church
Where faith is nurtured, curiosity is encouraged, diversity is welcomed, and all are loved.

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For after hour calls to the church office, 402-477-6037, the staff voicemail extensions and e-mail addresses follow:

Pastor/Head of Staff: Rev. Dr. Sue Coller
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Parish Associate for Sudanese Ministry: Rev. Jock Tut Paleak
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Parish Associate of caring ministries: Jane Holtzclaw
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Music Director: Dr. Brian Pfoltner
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Organist: Dr. Charles W. Ore
charles.w.ore@gmail.com

Director of Christian Education: Kris Brammer
x 106 dce@fpclincoln.org

Church Administrator: Carrie Cross
x 101 churchadmin@fpclincoln.org

Financial Coordinator: Cheryl Rennick
X 102 Finance@fpclincoln.org

Maintenance: Matt Chvala
maintenance@fpclincoln.org

Outside Classes and Programs @ FPC:

- Men’s AA - Mondays
- Women’s AA - Tuesdays
- Big Book Bunch AA - Tuesdays and Thursdays
- El Centro Zumba Class - Tuesday and Friday
- Lincoln Literacy - Tuesday and Wednesday
- McPhee Family Literacy - Monday through Thursday
- SCC ESL - Monday through Thursday
- Flyleaf Book Club - 3rd Friday of the month

At FPC, we warmly welcome any sort of group or organization that provides needed services for members of our community.