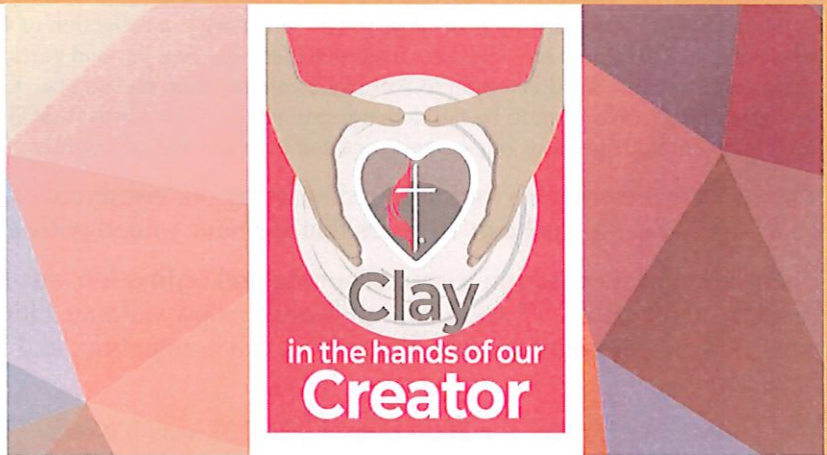


July 2023 Newsletter

Great Plains United Methodist Conference Report 2023

By Keitha Thomson

It is with gratitude and a humble heart that I thank you for letting me represent all of you again this year at Annual Conference. It was three days filled with inspiration, joy, song, worship, reflection, reports after reports and yes, some sadness.



The theme for the conference was “clay in the hand of our potter”. A potter sat front and center every day and spun the wheel and made beautiful pottery. Our bishop reminded us that pottery can be both decorative and functional. God doesn’t throw people away but sometimes He finds repurpose for our lives. We are the United Methodist Church; we are clay still waiting to be reformed.

There were many broken relationships and much sadness that went along with the approval of the disaffiliation of 155 churches across the Great Plains (59 of these in Nebraska). Since 2019, 232 churches have disaffiliated from the United Methodist Church. Most disaffiliated churches are staying independent. There are now 750 churches across the Great plains. Nineteen churches also closed (7 in Nebraska) due to a decrease in membership. Most of this was completed with grace and prayers. While we like to think that our District Superintendents don’t work very fast or hard, we must remember this has been a very trying year. Each church that went through disaffiliation met at least 3 times with their DS plus the days of voting. Sometimes they attended 6 of these meetings in one day. This was a painful process. Debates about people harm people. We were shown a picture of a church that removed their outside red flame from the cross leaving a scorched spot on the building. It looked like the Flint Hills of Kansas after their spring control burning. But we were reminded of what happened next. The new growth is lush and rich. Our conference will too see this renewal. Many congregations were broken but not destroyed as new congregations are springing up. Most United Methodists want to be United Methodists! They are gathering in the most unlikely places – in restaurants, neighboring churches, in homes, in store fronts, wherever there is a space. Across the conference 16-20% of our congregations are small and declining in membership. The church is referred to as grape vines. The vines support the plant, the fruit growth is up off the ground, the churches are the branches, the guide wires are laity and pastors, the posts are the Bible and traditions. All is needed for the fruit to be produced. We need each other. Traditionally United Methodist stand for justice.

This conference was led by Bishop David Wilson. He is the first worldwide native American to be elected as bishop. He is a member of the Choctaw nation. Before becoming a bishop, he spent 27 years as the leader of all Native American United Methodist churches which included 80 churches across OK, KS and TX. Adam Hamilton reported from the Jurisdictional conference. He said normally it can take 30-35 rounds of voting over 3-4 days to elect 3 bishops from the South Central Jurisdiction. This year 3 bishops were elected on the first ballot! Two of those have Nebraska/Kansas ties – Rev. Dee Williamston from Nebraska and Rev. David Wilson now in Nebraska. There has been so much conflict since 1968 when the gay marriage/pastor issue was included in our discipline. This year the conflict seemed to be gone. We are now a mission driven church. This was true at the Great Plains Conference also. Pastor Hamilton believes the 1968 words added from the discipline will be deleted. This will bring the wording back to John Wesley that was in the Disciple from 1784 to 1968. We don’t all think and believe alike, but we respect and welcome all to our church. A resolution was passed that supports the creation of a regional conference that would encompass the US separate from the rest of the denomination.

The laity (you and I) are the heart of the church. We are faithful and strong and by faith we are exactly where we are called to be. We are called to plant a garden that we may never see the harvest. The church is its people gathering together. The conference voted to look into redistricting our conference. The districts we have today were set up 10 years ago. Yes, it has been 10 years that we have joined with Kansas in the Great Plains Conference.

Continued on page 2.

Imagine what our church will look like in 2050. This is a season of learning, we were told the church is what is left when the building burns down and the pastor skips town. Diversity is a reflection of God, and we will face those issues with a smile and not accusations. Key words are hear, see, inspire leadership. Say yes and participate or we will have nothing to pass on to our children and grandchildren. We don't want to feel like a congregation on hospice. God is not finished with us yet and by the grace of God we are still here. We want to be builders not care takers. The youth want God to love them, and they want to love God and they want us to continue to focus on social justice and activism and on community engagement.

The conference voted to look into redistricting our conference. The districts we have today were set up 10 years ago. Yes, it has been 10 years that we have joined with Kansas in the Great Plains Conference.

The service of recognition, commissioning and ordination was bigger than ever. 15 were recognized as licensed local pastors, 15 were commissioned as provisional Elders, 3 were commissioned as provisional Deacons, 7 were commissioned as Deacons in full connection, and 14 were commissioned as Elders in full connection.

The conference budget for 2024 of \$15,124,101 was passed. This is a decrease of about 4% of the 2023 budget. In 2022 the overall apportionment payment reached 92.2%. Not knowing what the exact impact of disaffiliations would be, we had budgeted conservatively, and the high payout meant there was a small surplus at the end of the year. It was used to pay in full the requests to our mission agencies and the rest is put in reserves. We can live within our means at least for a couple years. Our new reality will be felt in 2025. The clergy compensation is increased 3%. The Boy Scout fund of \$1million has been released (this was being held). Half of the mission shares from disaffiliating churches will be included in the 2024 budget. There is \$500,000 approved as grants to provide support for churches and individuals whose congregations had been split by disaffiliation votes.

Like the potter, God is always reshaping and remaking us to be the church and people He has planned us to be.

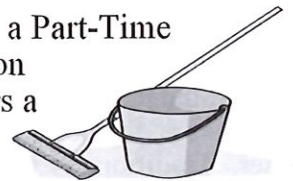
Once again thank you for allowing me to represent you at Conference. This will be my last report as next year one of you will be asked to be the lay delegate to Annual Conference. Please say YES, you will be glad you did.

Methodist Prayer warriors who would like to be added to the prayer chain are welcome and needed. You would be called to pray and then asked to call another member. Telephone contact is more personal than email. Let's stay in contact with as many members as possible. Call Phyllis Royer at 402-317-0258 to be added to the telephone calling tree. OR email Ann Haverty at ahavert@gmail.com if you would like to be added (or removed from email.) Requests for prayer can be given to the church office, called to Phyllis or emailed to Ann. Requests will include only the information provided in the prayer request. God knows what is needed in our prayers.

~Thank you, Ann Haverty and Phyllis Royer~

Employment Opportunity

FUMC is looking for a Part-Time Custodian. This person will work 10-20 hours a week and come in as needed for special groups. Duties will include vacuum and mop floors, clean windows and doors, clean all bathrooms, emptying trash, and keep track of custodial supplies. Please contact the office for more information and an application.



Lincoln Food Bank

The Lincoln Food Bank that visits Nebraska City at the Bethel Church has changed the day they come to town. Instead of the 3rd Friday of the month it will change to the 2nd Thursday of the month. Please update your calendars. It has also changed since the last newsletter which stated a different day.





United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith Happenings –July 2023

Summer is definitely here but we continue to gather together in God's name and fellowship with one another.

Esther's circle will meet on Thursday, July 6 at 11:30 at The Keeping Room for a no-host lunch. Mary-Martha circle will meet on Tuesday, July 11 at Porter's (Arbor Day Farms) for their no-host lunch at 11:30am. Mary-Martha is meeting a week later as the first Tuesday is July 4th. There may be a small group, but they are mighty. Please join either luncheon.

Thank you to those who helped clean the church kitchen in June. Every little bit keeps the kitchen sparkling.

There are a couple other events happening in July. First, we have the OK to help with bingo at the Ambassador on Mondays. They ask us to arrive around 1:30pm with bingo starting at 2pm. We will be divided into 2 separate areas. Mary Gomez has retired (what will they do without her!) and their new person is Chris Carlson. We need 4 people each Monday. Please let me (Keitha) know as soon as you can if you can help. July is a 5 Monday month (July 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31). I will be gone July 10 but will be there the other Mondays. Please help with this mission. It is always good to see members from our church and they love seeing us.

The other event in July we need to prepare for is our Guest Day on Thursday, July 20. Invitations have been sent. Our guest is Jeff Barnes and he will talk about plaques and stones across Otoe County and the state of Nebraska. It will be a history lesson. Even in the Bible the use of standing stones was used to show and remember important events or places. The event will start with lunch at 11:30am. All are invited to attend.

A special thank you for the Personal Dignity Kits we put together at our last unit meeting. The Midwest Mission Distribution Center was grateful for the donation. Every little bit makes a difference in someone's life.

Like the potter, God is always reshaping and remaking us to be the church and people He has planned us to be.

Submitted by Keitha Thomson



Operation Christmas Child—2023

Our church will be participating in Operation Christmas Child again this fall. The collection date will be mid-November. School supplies will be going on sale in July and August. That would be an ideal time to buy those items if you plan to include them in your shoebox or if you plan to donate them to the church for the United Women in Faith monthly red tub collection.

If you don't want to store the items until November, you may drop them off on the open front porch at my home at 105 Apple Circle (Be aware of crayons melting because of the sun.) or take them to the church and have them labeled for Operation Christmas Child. Your gift to a child will show them God's love thru you.

Mary Stevenson
Operation Christmas Child Chairman

Our Church is 170!!!

June 4th we kicked off our 170th Anniversary Celebration. Notecards featuring a water color picture of the church (done by former member Elaine Rowe Eberling) over a copy of the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy", are available to purchase from the office. (while supplies last) Ten notecards and envelopes for \$15. Proceeds help fund other church anniversary activities. Announcements of other activities to come at a later time.

Daily Devotions

Join the Great Plains United Method-ists as we read scripture, reflect on its relevance to our modern lives and pray for a rotation of conference clergy, staff and delegates to our general and jurisdictional conferences in our daily devotional emails. You will also find links to the Upper Room devotional guide, prayer requests shared through our website and the opportunity to submit your own prayer request. Read, pray, and meditate with us.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/>

A SIMPLE WAY TO CONTRIBUTE

Thinking about a church contribution of grain in lieu of cash? All you need to provide to your local grain storage facility is the name and mailing address of the church you wish to contribute to and the dollar amount or number of bushels you wish to contribute. Contact your local grain storage facility for details.



Midwest Mission Distribution Center Mission Trip

June 11-16, 2023

**First United Methodist Church
Nebraska City, NE**



Our team of 10 left Nebraska City on Sunday, June 11, 2023, to travel to Chatham, Ill, to work at the Midwest Mission Distribution Center. We were greeted by 2 more members from our church who were volunteering as team coordinators and had already been serving a couple weeks. It was a great week doing whatever needed to be done at the center. The biggest job was to unload and sort truckloads of donations that came from 7 or 8 annual conferences. It is amazing what God's people will share and donate. One of the other things we did was to verify personal dignity kits, school kits and layette kits. Each kit was opened and inspected by us to be sure there were no used

items, and all the kits were complete. Some of us even made 7 school desks out of bleacher wood. (Ask us about this). Then a couple other team members spent the week polyurethaning desks to complete a pallet for shipment. We held devotions each morning to start the day and we ate very well all week! We are signed up to return June 16-21, 2024, and June 8-13, 2025. Let us add your name to the list to go next year. It is very gratifying work, and you will be glad you joined us. The goal of the Midwest Mission is to send hope and empowerment around the world and around the corner with disaster relief, education, health, and micro business.

THE QR CODE is a wonderful way to support our church giving. You simply scan the code with your smart device and say yes to the browser. You will automatically be prompted to the church's online giving page on the church website where you can proceed with where and how you want to give. In keeping with our ever changing world amidst our busy lives, this opportunity makes your vital support to your church more convenient than ever before. For those of us who prefer the "old-fashioned" ways, those opportunities are always still available. As always, thank you for supporting your church.



**FUMC
QR
Giving
Code**



COME TO Camp Fontanelle

Grade for camp is based on finished '22-'23 school year!

SUMMER 2023 RESIDENT CAMP PROGRAMS:

Mini-Camp: Grades 2 - 3: July 5th (2pm) - July 7th (2pm) Cost: \$190
This camp is designed for campers who have attended Guardian Angel and/or Sonshine and are now ready to experience camp on their own, just not for a whole week yet. Swimming, crafts, jumping pillows, pedal carts, campfires, and more!
NOTE: This program runs from Wednesday through Friday

Campolodeon: Grades 3 - 8: July 10th (2pm) - July 14th (2pm) Cost: \$395
Let's get slimed, eat ice cream for breakfast, and enjoy an inflatables carnival! This week is full of messy, exciting FUN and surprises.

Rocks and Ropes: Grades 3 - 6: July 10th (2pm) - July 14th (2pm) Cost: \$375
Get ready to experience a bird's eye view of various places around camp! There will be opportunities to tree climb, ride the zipline, and scale the rock-climbing wall. You'll be feeling on top of world! Also enjoy swimming, crafts, games, and growing in your faith!

Last Campers on Earth: Grades 3 - 6: July 24th (2pm) - July 27th (2pm) Cost: \$300
Based on a popular book series (minus any zombies of course!) you'll spend the week learning how to make your own tree house, learning basic survival skills, and cooking over the fire.
Note: This camp will stay in the caves to add to the experience and theme.
NOTE: This program runs from Monday through Thursday.

Fontanelle Finale: Grades 3-6 and 7-12 - July 31st (2pm) - August 4th (2pm) Cost: \$400
All the best of the summer packed into one final week! Whether its your first stay or you've come back for more fun, this week will not disappoint. Slime time, glow dance party, ice cream for breakfast, a surprise holiday, inflatables carnival, "dive in" movie, and more favorites from throughout the summer. Plus (growing season dependent) be the first through this season's corn maze.

Adult/Child Programs:

Guardian Angel: Adult with preK - 2nd grader - July 2nd (2pm) - July 3rd (2pm) Cost: \$94
Bring a child in your life to camp for a fun-filled 24 hours. There will be a mixture of staff led activities for campers while guardians fellowship and encourage one another and times for you to spend with your camper doing activities together. Swimming, crafts, hayrack ride to the petting barn, and an evening campfire.

Sonshine: Adult with 1st or 2nd grader: July 7th (3pm) - 9th (3pm) Cost: \$187
Bring a special kiddo in your life for 48 hours of fun and memory making! This is a great next step from Guardian Angel or a first-time experience for campers not quite ready to stay by themselves at camp. The schedule will include time to spend with your camper working on crafts, swimming, taking a hayrack ride to the barn and more. There will also be staff led activities for campers while parents and guardians have a chance to enjoy a time of fellowship and encouragement together.



Camp Fontanelle, 9677 County Rd 3, Fontanelle, NE 68044
More information: campfontanelle.com, email: fontanelle@greatplainsumc.org, (P) 402-478-4296
Register at campfontanelle.campbrainregistration.com



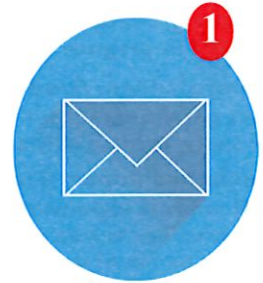
ATTENTION

First United Methodist Church will be transitioning the Monthly Newsletter to email delivery only. Paper copies can be picked up in Gage Hall or mailed copies can be requested by contacting the Church Office. If you have not been receiving an email copy please contact the office to update the email we have on file. The September Newsletter will be the first to follow this new delivery method.

Church office

phone: 402-873-3281

email: fumc1023@gmail.com



Heritage Sunday

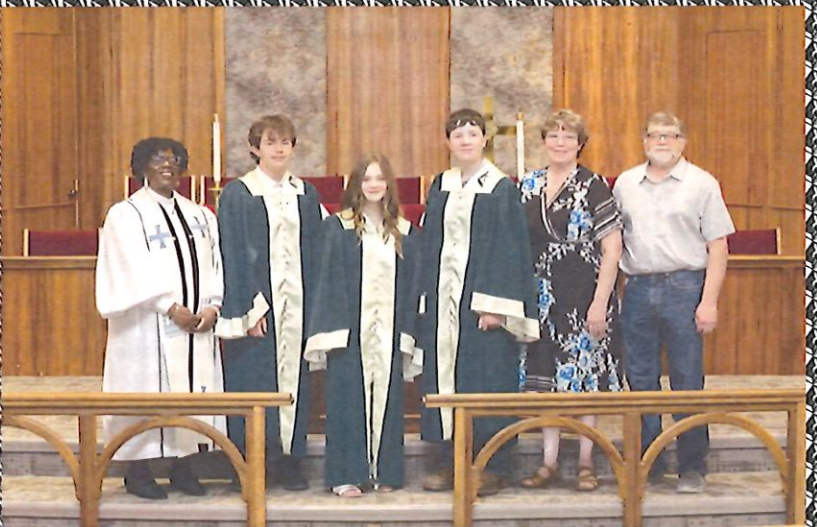
Our church recognized long-time church members on Heritage Sunday, May 28, 2023. The church members who received heritage pins and heritage certificates were:



50 years	Marsha Biaggi Ruby Vollman
60 years	Alice Clark John Crook Dean Thomson Keitha Thomson

We give thanks for these people who shaped our past and who will lead us into a future with hope and inspiration.

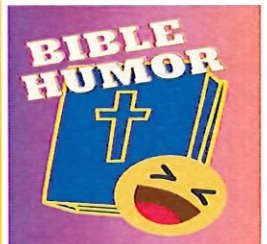
~Mary Stevenson,
Membership Chairman




The 2023 Confirmands
Camryn Alonso, Chole Hodges, Hunter Cook
Pictured with Rev. Ever, Deb and Howard Orndorff

How are toddlers and those who attempted to build a tower to Heaven similar?

Answer: They all babble.



July 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Sondra Sellers graduation
2 Worship in the Park 10:00 no building Church service	3 Food Pantry 3:00 UWF Bingo at Ambassador 2:00	4 Independence Day office closed	5 See regular Schedule	6 Ester Circle- No Host Lunch 11:30 Trustees 7:00	7	8
9 See regular Schedule	10 UWF Bingo at Ambassador 2:00 Worship Committee 7:00	11 Mary-Martha No Host Lunch 11:30 See regular Schedule	12 Finance 7:30 See regular Schedule	13 Lincoln Food Bank 10:00 @ Bethel	14 Office Closed	15
16 See regular Schedule	17 Food Pantry 3:00 UWF Bingo at Ambassador 2:00	18 See regular Schedule	19 Administrative Council 7:30 Se regular Schedule	20 Women in Faith Guest Day	21	22
23 See regular Schedule	24 See regular Schedule UWF Bingo at Ambassador 2:00	25 See regular Schedule	26 9:00 Newsletter Assembly See regular Schedule	27	28	29
30 See regular Schedule	31 See regular Schedule UWF Bingo at Ambassador 2:00					

Regular Sunday Schedule

9:00 Breakfast 9:45 Worship Team
10:00 Worship

Regular Tuesday Schedule

7:30 am Coffee Fellowship 7:00 pm Apple Corps
5:30 pm Belles 7:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous

Regular Monday Schedule

7:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous

Regular Wednesday Schedule

8:30 Gentleman's Coffee

Website

For a list of events, newsletters, give online, or to watch our Sunday Worship services, go to
"http://nebraskacityfirstunitedmethodistchurch.org"

For the latest information go to our Facebook page "First United Methodist Church—Nebraska City"

Great Plains Conference Contact Information

Missouri River District Superintendent:
Administrative Assistant: 402-207-4502
Great Plains Area Bishop: 800-745-2350

Stephanie Ahlschwede
Sarah Couillard
Rev. David Wilson

Website: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org>

 Great Plains
UNITED METHODISTS

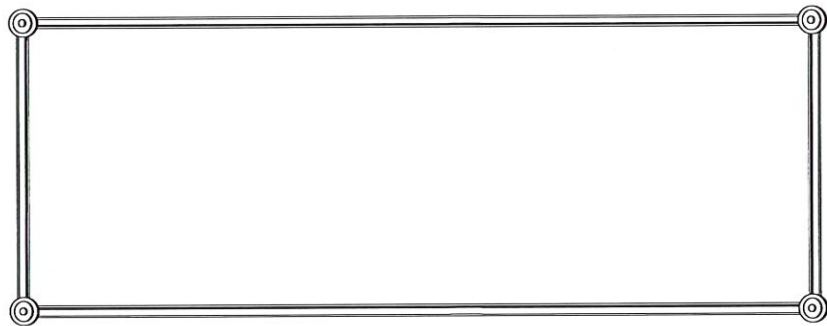
Missouri River District

Like us on Facebook!
Nebraskacityfirstunitedmethodistchurch-
www.nebraskacityfirstunitedmethodistchurch.org

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1023 First Avenue
Nebraska City, NE 68410
402-873-3821
Return Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
NEBRASKA CITY, NE
PERMIT NO. 88

July 2023 *Flame*



Celebrating 170 Years!



Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:7

Pastor - Welcoming Pastor Michael Brown

Lay Leader - Dean Thomson
Finance Secretary - Cindy Varley
Assistant Finance Secretary - Angi Dixon
Education - Katey Hodges
Pianists - Tammy Partsch, Luke Partsch
Adult Sunday School - Dean Thomson
Office email: fumc1023@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant - Kelli Brandt
Treasurer - Carol Crook, Melissa Turner
Media Staff - Howard Orndorff, Lou Varley,
Wes Hunzeker
Choir Director - Emily Roth
Ministers - Everyone
Custodian - Trisha Adams