



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC
717 Jackson Street
Belle Fourche, SD 57717

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

First Congregational Church
MARCH 2026

JOIN US EVERY SUNDAY

St Onge UCC 8:30 a.m.

Belle Fourche UCC 10:00 a.m.

COMMUNION ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF MARCH

Facebook & Online at www.bfsoucc.org

»» Read all
ABOUT ««
»» it!

Birthday Celebrations

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Thank You Volunteers

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BELLE FOURCHE

Dorothy Kirksey	1
Lydell Koerner	6
Dixie Garr	6
Joann Stephens	8
Clay Anderson	10
Daxton Keegan	15
Becky Bishop	15
Don Schuchhardt	21
Kace Kolb	21
Sue Kokesh	25
Gary Helmer	29
Jaimie Jo Hunter	30

ST. ONGE

Delilah Johnston	19
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Daylight Savings

MARCH 8, 2026



Spring forward in faith!
 CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS and
 join us on time for worship.



In our thoughts - In our Prayers

- Cheri Miller, Edgewood Vista
- Betty Schnaible, Sundance Long Term Care & Rehab
- Lydell Koerner, Rolling Hills
- De Johnson, Belle Estates

To submit a prayer request, please call (605) 892-3402, or e-mail ucc.bfso@gmail.com.

MARCH SCRIPTURES



March 1	John 3:1-17	Bold Blessing
March 8	John 4:5-42	Thirsty Voices
March 15	John 9:1-41	Restored
March 22	John 11:1-45	Breath of Hope
March 29	Matt 26:14-27:66	Palm Sunday

FINANCIALS

BELLE FOURCHE | JANUARY 2025

Beginning Balance	\$49,734.70
Deposits	\$10,299.72
Expenses	\$8,228.29
End of month	\$51,806.13

Thank you VOLUNTEERS!

Ushers

Dennis and Phyllis Simmons

Greeters

March 1 Barb and Gene Embrey
March 8 Jan Stinton
March 15 Kristin Durr
March 22 John and Kay Cooper
March 29 Gordon and Margaret Shoemaker

Snow Removal Crew

March 1-7 Fuhrer
March 8-14 OPEN
March 15-21 OPEN
March 22-28 OPEN



COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP

Coffee & Fellowship will be held immediately following services in Belle Fourche on March 1 and in St. Onge on March 8. We'd like to thank Dan and Sue Kokesh, Samantha and Blake Hunter, and Megan Vetter for hosting and providing the cookies for this month's event in order to raise funds for Sunday School.

MONTHLY EVENTS 'AT A GLANCE'

- Youth Sunday School will be held at 9:30 a.m. on March 1. Following regular services, we encourage you to support the school's annual Cookie Sale, which will take place our fellowship hall alongside our coffee and fellowship event. A variety of desserts will be available for a "free will" donation. All proceeds go toward continued Sunday School activities. Special thanks to our youth Sunday School volunteers for coordinating this event!
- "Coffee and Conversation" Fellowship will be held following services in Belle Fourche on March 1 and in St. Onge on March 8.
- The BF UCC Compassion Cupboard "workday" is from 9 a.m. to Noon on March 10. We still need four volunteers. Sign up at the church office.
- The SDUCC Board of Directors Meeting will be held at 9 a.m. on March 14.
- The UCC "One Great Hour of Sharing" offering will be held during services on March 15. Donation envelopes will be available starting March 8.
- Our Lenten Study Series continues this month. Join us at 7 p.m. every Wednesday in the BF Comfort Room.



CHURCH LIBRARY *News*

It is time to purge and refresh the selection of books in our library in hopes that more of our members find it to be useful. Their goal is to purchase a few new books once or twice a year, but to move forward – they are asking for the congregation’s help in finding a new home for the books in our current library.

In February, members of the Diaconate Board discussed how the selection of books in our library seem out of date and would like to take steps to revitalize our collection -which includes a vast selection for both children and adults.

To date, a large collection of children’s books has been boxed up and will remain available for anyone in our congregation to sift through and take home through the end of March.

Our collection of adult books is also outdated, and some have been on the shelves for more than 50 years and continue to remain unused. But members of the board understand that some of these books were donated in memory of a family member and want to take into consideration the “sentimental value” and ask anyone who would like to go through this collection and take them home are welcome to do so.

In the end, board members say that this project will be ongoing and they welcome the input from all members of the congregation on any specific books they’d like to see on the shelves soon – as well as any suggestions on where to donate the existing books.



World Day of Prayer is a worldwide, ecumenical movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year. More than 170 countries recognize the day, bringing together women of different races, cultures and traditions – inevitably affirming that prayer and action have immeasurable influence in the world. We encourage all our members to join in on “World Day of Prayer” at the local level this year by attending the event at 1 p.m. on Friday, March 6, at St. James Lutheran. *Courtesy photo*

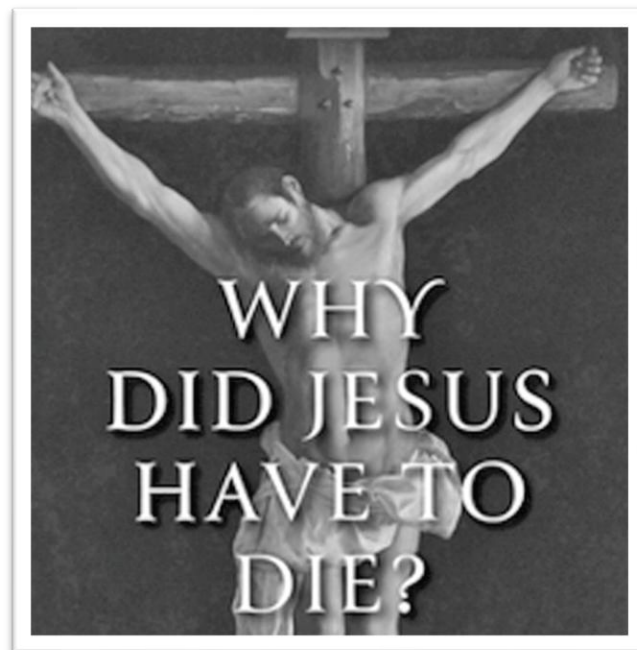
One Great HOUR OF SHARING

For over 75 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) has been helping Christians bring God’s hope and healing to hurting people both in the US and around the world. Both the Belle Fourche and St. Onge congregations will be receiving offerings during services on Sunday, March 15. You can learn more about OGHS by visiting www.ucc.org/global-hope. *Courtesy image*

“WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE – THE MEANING OF THE CRUCIFIXION”

By Adam Hamilton

The New Testament authors didn't settle on one meaning of the crucifixion but instead offered a dozen or more metaphors to explain how it saves. “Why Did Jesus Have to Die?” is a six-week Lenten Study that focuses on the struggle many of us feel when it comes to explaining the death of Jesus, either to yourself or your children. This is truly a Lenten Study you've been waiting for! Join us beginning on Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. in the Belle Fourche Comfort Room.



“Why Did Jesus Have to Die,” written by Adam Hamilton. *Courtesy image*

Lent is upon us – and we hope you are taking this time of reflection, confession, and service to others to nourish your relationship with God. Beginning on Ash Wednesday and lasting 40 days – Christians utilize this time to deepen their faith and prepare their hearts for Easter.

It is a time to solidify your connection with God and reflect on ways you can begin to forgive yourself and others.

Many choose to “give something up” such as luxuries or habits and focus on the practice of self-discipline – as well as participate on acts of service and dedicate more time to prayer.

All we ask is that you take time every day to reflect on

your communication with God to truly understand the significance of his life, death and resurrection.

Below are some of the most significant Bible verses known to enhance daily devotionals throughout this significant time.

“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.”

- Isaiah 55:2-3

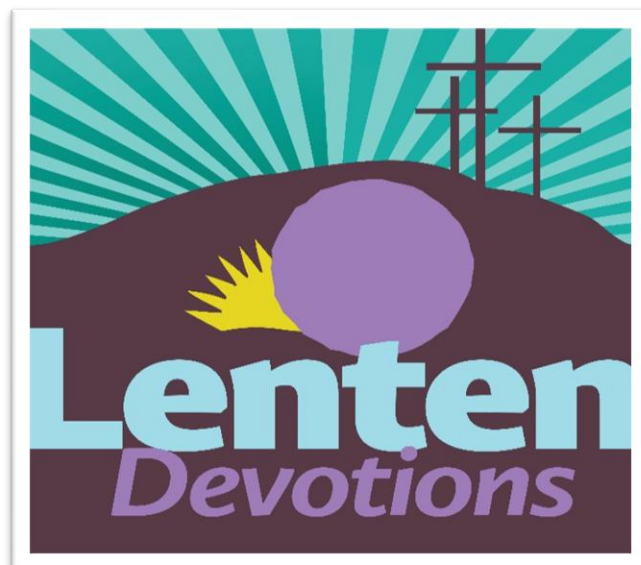
“Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your

eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children.”

-Deuteronomy 4:9

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit.”

-Psalm 51:10-12



1st Congregational UCC Trustees Meeting – February 10, 2026

Present: Scott Schuft, Mark Hespe, Steve Kappes, Carol Umenthum, Sandra Baker and Pastor Chuck Aurand.

Chairperson Carol called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM and asked Pastor Chuck to give the opening prayer.

We welcomed new members, Scott Schuft and Mark Hespe.

The group reviewed the January minutes and Steve moved to approve the minutes as presented. Passed.

Election of officers was then held:

- Chairperson: Carol Umenthum
- Vice-Chairperson: Steve Kappes
- Secretary: Sandra Baker

Mark Hespe moved to cast a unanimous ballot. Passed.

The January financial reports were then reviewed and Carol explained the accounting system to the newest members. Steve moved to accept the financial reports as presented, pending audit. Passed.

Old business:

Two new exits lights have been purchased, and Steve and his grandson will install them. Keith Umenthum will install a new hi-rise toilet and grab bars in one of the stalls in the upstairs ladies' bathroom this spring.

Kevin Fuhrer and Keith Umenthum will be installing the new sign once the frame is ready to put in place.

New Business:

Safety improvements by the alley door: Mark Hespe will look into adding a handrail outside this door.

Pastor Chuck suggested replacing the plastic tablecloth on the big table in the comfort room with a smoother material. Steve will check into this.

Pastor presented a reimbursement report for December and January. Scott moved to reimburse Pastor for professional expenses. Passed.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 10, 5:30 PM in the Comfort Room.

Pastor Chuck closed the meeting with prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.

Submitted by: Sandra Baker, Secretary.

Diaconate Meeting 02/04/2026 Minutes

Members in attendance: Pastor Chuck, Marilyn Hespe, Joann Stephens, Teresa Aspen, Dick Holdhusen, Rhonda Fuhrer, Kristin Durr, Margaret Shoemaker, and Aurora Voyles.

- Pastor Chuck led the meeting with an opening prayer.
- The minutes from the January meeting were read and approved.
- Bills were presented and approved from Sower's Laundry for the cleaning of the Advent cloths, and also from Pastor Chuck ordering ashes for Lent, and communion cups.
- Pastor Chuck read the "Pastor's Report". Meetings attended included the Deacons, Trustees, Nominating Committee, Church Council, Annual UCC Meeting, MESA Training, SD Conference Meeting, Advent Study and Grief Group. He attended community events such as The Living Nativity, the BFED meeting and visited with the director of the Adult Daycare at Belle Estates. A week of Study Leave was completed in January. Special services included Lanelle Cundall's funeral, Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve services.
- Communications received were notes of thanks and appreciation for the Christmas baskets delivered in December.
- Attendance in January was 168.
- Margaret read the "Shut-In Report". Members who were contacted were very appreciative of the calls.
- Membership: There were no members to be added, nor any requesting removal.
- Congregational concerns: Kristin related a member had contacted her regarding the newer hymns on video that have been added at the end of worship, as they preferred our traditional hymns. Pastor Chuck stated that at this time, we will continue to have the one "newer" hymn at the end of worship, as several members had previously requested adding more contemporary music.
- The election of officers was held: Chairwoman-Marilyn Hespe; Vice Chairwoman-Joann Stephens; Secretary-Teresa Aspen.
- **Old Business:** Due to the cost of shipping, it was discussed we may send a donation of money instead of collecting and sending items to Yankton. The Pulpit Supply budget was increased to \$1500 from the previous \$1200. The new amount reflects \$250 per Sunday for six Sundays. Ash Wednesday services will be February 18th at 7:00 p.m. A freewill offering pancake/sausage supper will be held from 5:30-6:45 pm prior to services. Set up for the supper will be at 4:45. Rhonda will shop for supplies needed. The future of the church library was discussed, with plans to have the congregation also being involved in the decisions. Further discussion will be held at upcoming meetings. Melanie had organized and removed many old children's books, which are free to the congregation. Any left over will be donated. There are no confirmation-age youth and/or any interest at this time, therefore no confirmation classes are planned. Marilyn provided information she had received from Blake regarding copyright laws and licenses for church music use. Dick will do further investigation regarding this. Aurora and Dick will also explore new music for congregational hymns. Teresa will set up for March 1st communion. Kristin and Marilyn will set up for April 5th, which is Easter Sunday. Communion will also be served during Maundy Thursday services.
- **New Business:** We were presented with a copy of the "Board of Deacons Duties and Procedures" that will be added to the bylaws. This will be reviewed at future Diaconate meetings in March and April to discuss any possible changes. Margaret will continue to represent the Diaconate at the Church Council Meetings. "Worship in the Park" will be on September 13th. Pastor Chuck will reserve the band shell and Unit C for the picnic. A Placerville lunch was discussed for either a Saturday or Sunday in August or September. The congregation will be asked as to interest in attending. Pastor Chuck will contact Placerville to inquire as to dates available. Chairpersons volunteering for events are: Ice Cream in the Park—Rhonda; Communion--Margaret; Palm Sunday--Marilyn; Harvest /Fall Dinner--Teresa; Christmas Baskets—Aurora. Volunteers are needed for the Food Pantry for March 10th and May 21st. Marilyn asked for help in locating the blue kid's robes that are stored somewhere in the church. Pastor Chuck asked for ideas and/or themes for the Easter season and service. Dick stated he will be gone for the next two months, but will attend meetings via phone, if possible.
- The meeting was concluded, and Pastor Chuck closed with a prayer.
- The next Diaconate Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 4th at 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Aspen, Secretary

MARCH 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 BF Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship BF 11 a.m.	2 Communion is held the first Sunday of every Month	3	4 BF Deacons Meeting 5:30 p.m. Lenten Study 7 p.m.	5 Grief Group at Spearfish UCC 5 p.m.	6 World Day of Prayer St. James Lutheran 1 p.m.	7
8 Coffee & Fellowship St. Onge 9:30 a.m. DAYLIGHT SAVINGS	9	10 Compassion Cupboard Volunteer Day 9 a.m. to Noon	11 Lenten Study 7 p.m.	12 Grief Group at Spearfish UCC 5 p.m.	13	14 SDUCC Board of Directors Meeting 9 a.m.
15 One Great Hour of Sharing Offering	16	17  BF Church Council Meeting 5 p.m.	18 Lenten Study 7 p.m.	19 Grief Group at Spearfish UCC 5 p.m.	20 First Day of Spring 	21
22	23	24	25 Lenten Study 7 p.m.	26 Grief Group at Spearfish UCC 5 p.m.	27	28
29 Palm Sunday	30	31				

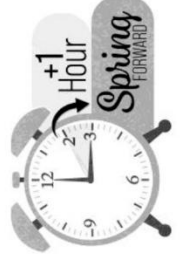
EVENTS

One Great Hour of Sharing

We will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on March 15 and support partners in Christ worldwide as we provide ministry and aid to those in need.

Lenten Study Series

"Why Did Jesus Have to Die?" Find the meaning of the crucifixion during our ongoing Lenten Study held at 7 p.m. every Wednesday in March in the BF Comfort Room.



Don't forget to set your clocks one hour ahead on March 8!