



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

First Congregational Church  
**APRIL 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 APRIL**

Facebook & Online at [www.bfsoucc.org](http://www.bfsoucc.org)

»» Read all  
**ABOUT** ««  
»» it!

Birthday Celebrations

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Thank You Volunteers

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## BELLE FOURCHE

Lorene Goodwin	7
Margy Kokesh	9
Brian Aspen	9
Rosemary McMahon	16
Brooklyn Moser	19
Delores West	23
Joyce Drabek	23
Jim Kokesh	27
Rhonda Fuhrer	29
Amanda Moser	30

## ST. ONGE

Joslyn Russell	19
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## ATTENTION GRADUATES!

UCC Scholarship Applications  
Due by May 15, 2026

The South Dakota Conference of the UCC values education and wants to support young people who have answered the call to pursue a profession in ministry.

Scholarships are available and the deadline to apply is May 15, 2026. Contact Jane Estrada at [info@ucctcm.org](mailto:info@ucctcm.org) for more information.

Whether you are choosing to pursue programs within the state of South Dakota – or abroad, please know that there are special funds earmarked for high school seniors, undergraduates or those students already enrolled in graduate studies.

Scholarships are also available to those entering into ministry as a second career.



*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](mailto:ucc.bfso@gmail.com).

## APRIL SCRIPTURES



<b>April 5</b>	John 20:1-18	Easter Sunday
<b>April 12</b>	John 20:19-31	Holy Language
<b>April 19</b>	Luke 24:13-35	Breaking Bread
<b>April 26</b>	Psalms 23	Powerful Witness

## FINANCIALS

BELLE FOURCHE | MARCH 2026

Beginning Balance	\$51,806.13
Deposits	\$7,910.89
Expenses	\$7,227.36
End of Month	\$52,678.12

# Thank you VOLUNTEERS!

## *Ushers*

Marilyn Johnson  
Kristin Durr  
Steven Kappes  
OPEN

## *Greeters*

April 5 Harlene Hill  
April 12 Dick Holdhusen  
April 19 OPEN  
April 26 OPEN

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## ‘FEEDING THE SHEEP’ IN ACTION



As part of our mission to give back to the community, our congregation has played an integral role in supporting the Compassion Cupboard through our donations and volunteer work. Pictured are Maxine Mosbrucker, Diane Kappes, Melanie Anderson and Marilyn Johnson – all of whom helped stock shelves at the pantry on March 10. Our next “workday” at the Compassion Cupboard is scheduled from 2pm to 6pm on May 21. Please consider helping to alleviate food insecurity in our community. In the meantime, our “Feed the Sheep” campaign is still underway and some of the more immediate needs for our local food pantry include frozen fruits and vegetables, flour, sugar, instant potatoes, baby formula and hygiene products.

## NEWS & NOTES ‘AT A GLANCE’

- We are looking for volunteers to assist with lawncare throughout the spring and summer months. To volunteer, please use the signup sheet, which is available in the back of the sanctuary.
- We’d like to thank everyone for the remarkable turnout for our Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper on Feb. 18. We yielded around 25 guests, and the event raised \$65 after expenses.
- The final session of our Lenten Study will be at 7 p.m. on April 1. Pastor Chuck Aurand is leading the six-week series that focuses on Adam Hamilton’s book, “Why Did Jesus Have to Die.” A group of around six members have been regularly attending the sessions to explore how the role of Jesus’ crucifixion represents a supreme act of love and atonement.
- The South Dakota UCC Conference is holding a special budget meeting on April 21, 2026. You are invited to participate. See page 5 for the QR code to register. For more information, please call (515) 809-7775 or email [kim@ucctcm.org](mailto:kim@ucctcm.org).

# I WILL GIVE YOU REST: COME

## World Day of Prayer Gathering Highlights God's Grace & Power of Prayer



St. James Lutheran Church hosted World Day of Prayer in Belle Fourche on March 6. Organizers said around 75 women throughout the community gathered to promote justice and equality through prayer. This year's theme mirrored the lessons from the scripture of Matthew 11:28-30 – which reads, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Accompanying this material was an inspirational expose by women of Nigeria focused on finding spiritual and physical rest in God amidst burdens like poverty, trauma, and systemic oppression. *Courtesy photos*

The Earth Summit will be remotely broadcasted beginning at 11 a.m. on April 25, 2026. Anyone interested in viewing the lineup of speakers can register in advance at [www.ucc.org/event/2026-earth-summit](http://www.ucc.org/event/2026-earth-summit). Rev. Dr. Kenneth Samuel, pastor of Victory for the World Church in Decatur, Ga., is the keynote speaker and he will focus on the scripture from Jeremiah 29:11 “A Future with Hope.”

# EARTH SUMMIT



*A Future with Hope*

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**  
**REV. DR. KENNETH SAMUEL**

**CELEBRATIONS**

- Climate Hope Art Contest Winner
- Dollie Burwell Prophetic Action Award
- New Creation Justice Churches
- & Climate Hope Affiliates

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



**SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING**  
**APRIL 21, 2026**  
**ONLINE 7PM CDT/6PM MDT**

Your voice & vote matter!

The zoom link will be provided in the registration link.

For questions regarding the meeting, please contact, **Deb Kraft, SD BOD Pres. at [debrakkraft@gmail.com](mailto:debrakkraft@gmail.com)**

For Registration questions or issues please contact **Kim Springer, Exec Admin at [kim@ucctcm.org](mailto:kim@ucctcm.org) or via cell (515) 809-7775**



Scan the code to register

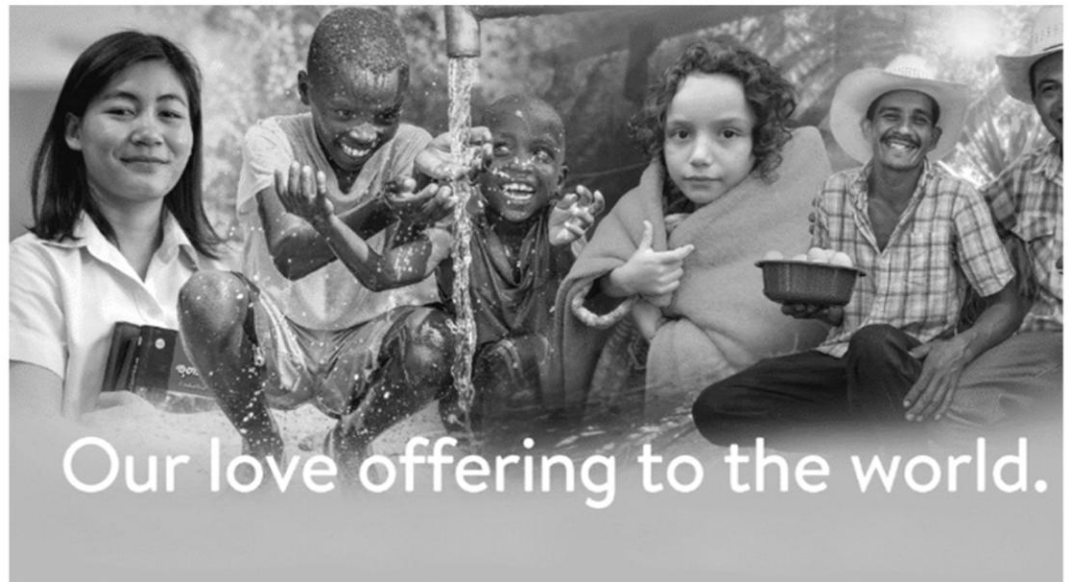
OR COPY THE FOLLOWING INTO YOUR BROWSER  
[https://triconf.my.salesforce-sites.com/default/CnP\\_PaaS\\_EVT\\_ExternalRegistrationPage?event\\_id=a2CPH000007Wken2AC](https://triconf.my.salesforce-sites.com/default/CnP_PaaS_EVT_ExternalRegistrationPage?event_id=a2CPH000007Wken2AC)



**CHURCH LIBRARY**  
*News*

Members of the Board of Deacons initiated a library rejuvenation project in January and are now asking members to provide book recommendations so they can begin to replenish the shelves. Several volunteers sifted through our collection and donated “outdated” books to our local community in order to make room for a new collection that will entice readers of all ages. If you have a recommendation for a book you’d like to see us purchase as a church, a sign-up sheet has been placed in the library, or you can email [ucc.bfso@gmail.com](mailto:ucc.bfso@gmail.com).

On March 22, our congregation received its annual “One Great Hour of Sharing” – a special offering of the United Church of Christ that supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education, and agricultural development. We truly appreciate the generosity of both our Belle Fourche and St. Onge congregation this year. According to UCC Financial Secretary Devin Stephens, a total of \$433 was raised in Belle Fourche and \$40 was raised in St. Onge.



# UCC BOARD MEETING MINUTES | MARCH 2026

## First Congregational UCC Trustees Meeting

March 17, 2026

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

Chairperson Carol called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m. and Pastor Chuck gave the opening prayer.

The group reviewed the minutes of the February 10, 2026, meeting. Steve moved to accept the minutes as presented. Passed

The February Financial Reports were then reviewed by the group. Scott moved that we accept the financial reports as presented, pending audit. Passed.

### Old Business:

Carol presented the status of the current projects: Kevin and Keith are working on the installation of the new outdoor sign.

The new hi-rise toilet in the ladies' bathroom will need to be a Saturday project, so that the water can be turned off during the installation.

Steve and Pastor Chuck are trying to coordinate schedules to install a few more new EXIT lights.

Mark is working on handrail options by the side alley door, and Scott will contact the city engineer about the possibility of adding a cover over that door.

We are looking into purchasing a new tablecloth for the large table in the Comfort Room. Steve and Diane Kappes are going to research options.

### New Business:

We discussed the hiring of a musician (pianist or organist) to accompany the Sunday services. Pastor Chuck has advertised the position on social media and at BHSU. Steve moved to designate Pastor Chuck and representative(s) from the Diaconate, Trustees and/or Music to interview applicants. The salary will be \$150 for 3 hours per Sunday. Passed.

Pastor Chuck presented his report and reimbursements for February. Scott moved to accept the report to reimburse Pastor. Passed.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 14, 5:30 p.m.

Pastor closed the meeting with prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Submitted by Sandra Baker, Secretary.

## Diaconate Meeting March 4, 2026

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

- Pastor Chuck began the meeting with an opening prayer.
- The minutes from the February meeting were read and approved.
- Marilyn stated the rental/reserve charge of \$27.50 for the Herrmann Park band shell and shelter for the September 2026 service in the park has been paid.
- “Pastor’s Report” was read by Pastor Chuck: Cards were written for birthdays and anniversaries reported in the Newsletter. February home, health facility and phone visits were noted. Church Meetings attended were both the Deacons and Trustees meetings. Group Meetings included Grief Group and Lenten Study. Special Services included home communion, Ash Wednesday (and two nursing homes), and a funeral at the request of the Cadwallader family. The Deacon’s Pancake Supper was also attended. Maundy Thursday services with communion will be held on April 2, 2026, at 7 p.m. Good Friday service will be held on April 3, 2026, at noon. Easter Service is on April 5, 2026<sup>at</sup> the usual worship time. Pastor Chuck also reported the Spearfish UCC has called the Rev. Todd Jones to serve as pastor beginning on April 5.
- Attendance for February was 181.
- The “Shut-In Report” was read by Margaret, as reported to her from contacts made by Phyllis Simmons. Phyllis related to Margaret to inform the Diaconate she would like to continue being the primary contact to any shut-ins as they are familiar with her, and she enjoys the visits.
- **Old Business:** Dick was in contact with Marilyn regarding music copyright and public domain laws. He will continue to research the subject, as it is very involved. There were approximately 25 people (including the diaconate members) in attendance at the Ash Wednesday pancake supper. Thanks to everyone who attended and helped! After expenses, the profit was approximately \$65.00. A note was placed in the newsletter regarding the library books, of which a few have been taken to date. Once the old books have been removed, the congregation may be asked for ideas regarding new books for the library. Marilyn has ordered the palms for Palm Sunday on March 29. Pastor Chuck will offer communion by intinction at the Maundy Thursday service on April 2. He will need one diaconate member to assist him. Pastor Chuck has been in contact with the director of Placerville Camp regarding a date for a church picnic. We have tentatively reserved the site for Saturday, August 22. The dark blue choir robes Marilyn had been looking for were found in a storeroom. Pastor Chuck would like anyone to add ideas to his “Easter Boot Camp Journey” theme.
- **New Business:** An Easter Egg Hunt will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Easter Sunday, April 5 before worship. Sammi Hunter will provide the plastic eggs to fill. The congregation will be asked to donate candy by March 24. Pastor Chuck will add the announcement to the bulletin. There are two seniors this year: Gavin Pearson and Nevada McMahon. Marilyn will check with their parents regarding a date for honoring them at coffee hour. Pastor Chuck has gifts for the seniors and will also obtain the fifth-grade bibles for presentation. Sammi will let Marilyn know the names of any fifth-grade students. Gifts for the Sunday School teachers were discussed and will be presented at the spring kids’ program. The “Procedures for the Board of Deacons” was briefly discussed and will be tabled until future meetings. We will start reviewing the “active/inactive” members of the church at the next meeting. Earth Day is April 22; we may discuss at the next meeting some type of recognition during worship. Pastor Chuck contacted the BHSU music department to possibly find a student interested in providing music for our worship services. Rhonda will post an ad on Facebook also. Updating the Memorial Board was discussed; Marilyn will contact Diane Kappes, Clerk, regarding this.
- The meeting was concluded, and Pastor Chuck closed with a prayer.
- The next Diaconate meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Teresa Aspen, Secretary

## UCC Church Council Meeting

March 17, 2026 | 5 p.m.

Members Present: Carol Umenthum, John King, Diane Kappes, Margaret Shoemaker, Pastor Aurand.

Opening Prayer by Pastor Aurand

Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Carol Umenthum made a motion to accept. Seconded. Motion approved.

Diaconate Report by Margaret Shoemaker. The Deacon's hosted an Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper which made \$60. There is a need for Easter candy to fill the easter eggs for Easter Sunday. The candy needs to be at the church by March 24, 2026. The shut-ins are all doing well. Upcoming Holy Week Services are Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. August 22, 2026 is the date set for Placerville Sunday. Worship in the park is set for September 13, 2026.

Trustee's Report by Carol Umenthum. Projects that are still being worked on are the exit signs, the upstairs women's bathroom, and the new outside sign. The request for a handrail for the back exit is being investigated. There is a table cover needed to replace the current tablecloth in the Comfort room.

Pastor's Report- There were no church services on March 15<sup>th</sup> due to snow, as decided by the chairs of the church committees and the Pastor. The Church Committees are all functioning well.

Old Business- The Bylaw's are now complete. Some new music selections have been identified, and the list is in the church office and is being referred to. The Christian Education Committee currently is not following a packaged curriculum and are developing the Sunday School program as needed for the season. Many thanks to the Christian Education Committee for all they do for the children of the church. The Church Council supports all the effort and time that they commit to the teaching of our youth.

New Business- Two individuals have expressed interest in the Musician position. One has been interviewed by Pastor and Carol Umenthum, with hopes to have the second individual interviewed soon.

Next meeting will be May 19<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

Closing prayer by Pastor Aurand. Meeting Adjourned @ 5:30.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Kappes, Clerk



Reprinted from the  
**UCC DAILY DEVOTIONAL**

Sign up at:  
<https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/>

## “Easter is for You”

by Cornershop Creative | published on Apr 16, 2017

*“Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.”*  
1 Corinthians 15:20

Mary Magdalene stumbled through the dawn until “Christ is risen” destroyed her faith in the grave. Mary heard it first, early in the morning. Death had been defeated. Not just Christ’s, but because of his, hers as well.

How long did it take the news to reach Pontius Pilate? You know he heard it. Whispered as a rumor or hollered by a preacher. “Easter is for you, Pontius Pilate!” History suggests he didn’t believe a word. Imagine if he had.

Pilate could have changed. Easter could have healed whatever demon drove him. Why keep a death grip on power when you’ve been handed eternity? Pilate could have been transformed.

He had his chance. And he kept his faith in the grave. It’s too late for him.

But not for you. Will Easter change you?

You could listen to wounded people tell their stories long after boredom has set in. You could let harried young parents go before you at the grocery store. Only a fool wants to rush through eternity. You could forgive. Forever is far too long to bear a grudge. You could call your loved ones from the office, pull your children out of school for a day at the zoo, stare at the sky for 45 minutes without moving, letting your soul become coordinated to the rhythm of spring breeze, blue sky, early daffodil.

You could go deeper, let down all of your defenses, take off all your armor. You don’t need it anymore. Death itself has been defeated. Breathe deep. Live easy. Take a step toward heaven. Not by dying, but by realizing that death has been destroyed. Eternity has just begun. Christ is risen! Not as an isolated miracle, but as the first of many.

Get ready. You might be next.

### Prayer

Thank you, God! We don’t understand Easter, but we grab ahold of it anyhow, rejoicing, unnerved and grateful as you lift us up with Jesus. Amen.



# EASTER

How many different words can you make using these letters?

\_\_\_\_\_

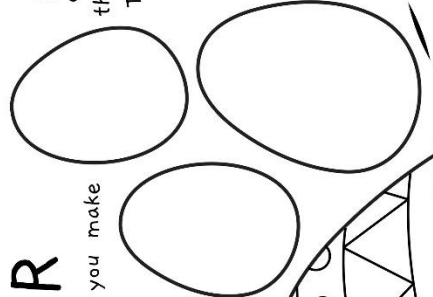
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

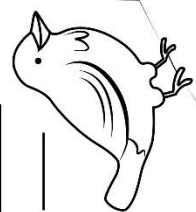
\_\_\_\_\_

Make your own design on these eggs. Then color them!



## DID YOU KNOW?

Eggs are a sign of new life, just like our new life in Christ!



You can have new life too! Use the alphabet code and your Bible to solve the puzzle and find out how.

"IF YOU C \_\_\_\_\_ WITH YOUR  
3 15 14 6 5 19 19  
MOUTH THAT \_\_\_\_\_ IS LORD AND BELIEVE IN  
10 5 19 21 19

YOUR \_\_\_\_\_ THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE  
8 5 1 18 20

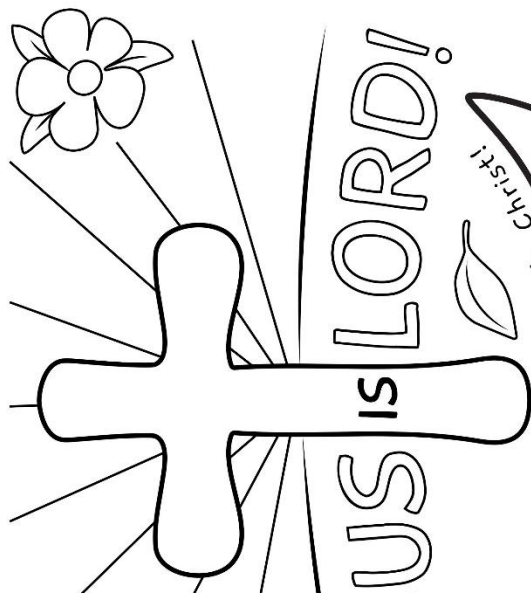
DEAD, YOU WILL BE \_\_\_\_\_."  
19 1 22 5 4

ROMANS 10:9, ESV

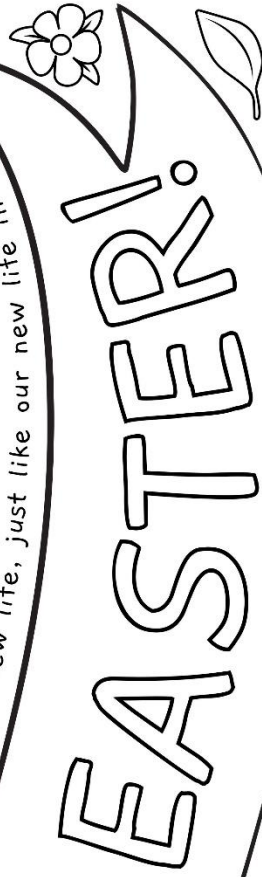
## HE IS RISEN!

He is not here, for...

Matthew 28:6

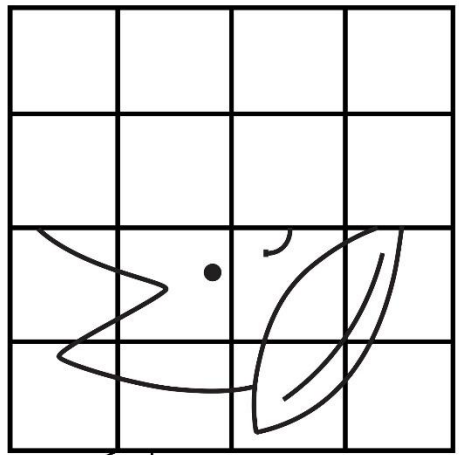


# IS LORD!



Can you find 9 other symbols of new life on this page? Circle each one, then color them!

Use the grid to draw the other side!



# WORD SCRAMBLE

- EJSSU .....
- SCOSR .....
- VELO .....
- ATEESR .....
- MOBT .....

JESUS, CROSS, LOVE, EASTER, TOMB

# JESUS IS ALIVE!

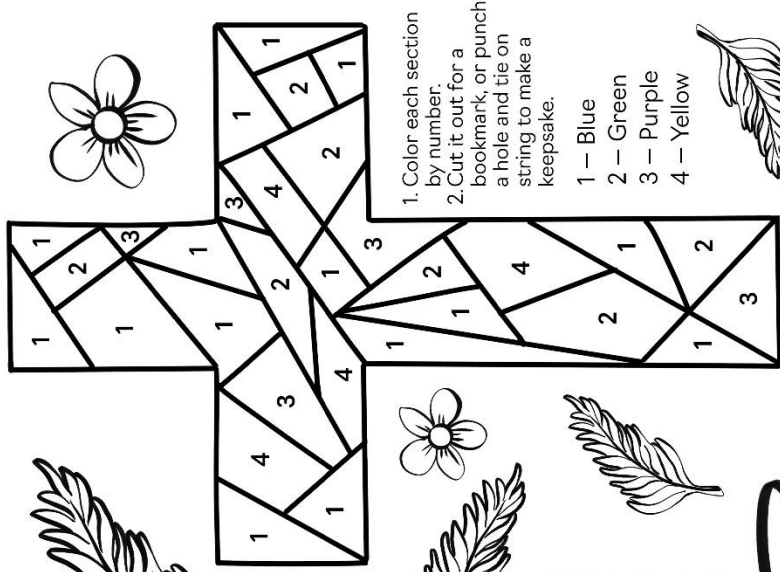
HE IS NOT HERE; HE HAS RISEN,  
**JUST AS HE SAID.** MATTHEW 28:6, NIV

Color the wings to  
 create a NEW butterfly.



FIND THE WORDS  
 EASTER LOVE  
 JESUS CROSS  
 RISEN  
 FORGIVENESS

F	O	R	G	I	V	E	N	E	S	S
X	L	O	V	E	Q	R	T	Y	U	I
P	J	E	S	U	S	O	P	A	R	D
C	R	O	S	S	I	F	G	H	I	K
R	T	Y	U	I	O	R	S	E	S	B
I	N	S	E	R	A	M	N	B	E	C
L	K	J	H	G	F	D	S	A	N	W
E	A	S	T	E	R	Z	X	C	V	B



1. Color each section by number.
2. Cut it out for a bookmark, or punch a hole and tie on string to make a keepsake.

- 1 - Blue
- 2 - Green
- 3 - Purple
- 4 - Yellow

How many palm leaves can you find?



# April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Deacons Meeting 5:30 p.m. Lenten Study   7 p.m.	2 <b>Maundy Thursday</b> BF Service   7 p.m.	3 <b>Good Friday</b> BF Service   Noon	4 <b>Holy Saturday</b>
5 <b>Easter Sunday</b> BF Egg Hunt   9:30 a.m. BF Coffee & Fellowship	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 St. Onge Coffee & Fellowship BH Association Meeting Hermosa   3 p.m.	13	14 Trustees Meeting 5:30 p.m.	15	16	17	18
19	20 SD Board of Directors Meeting   6-8 p.m.	21  Earth Day	22	23	24 Arbor Day	25
26	27	28	29	30		

# EVENTS

## Holy Week Schedule

Please note that **Maundy Thursday** and **Good Friday Services** will be held at BF UCC only. **Easter Services** will be held at 8:30 a.m. in St. Onge and at 10 a.m. in Belle Fourche.

## 'Your Voice & Vote Matter'

The SD Conference will be discussing the budget during a special meeting on April 21. See page 5 for how to register.

## Class of 2026

Mark your calendar for our Senior Recognition Sunday and Fifth Grade Bible Presentation on May 10 when we gather to celebrate our graduates' momentous occasion.