



The Call to Conversion

Suddenly a light from heaven flashed about [Paul]. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
—Acts 9:3-4

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Dear Fourth Avenue UMC Friends,



Jesus Christ turns people around. He transforms those who repent of their sins and turn to him in faith. His grace is always at work among his beloved children and it rushes in as a soul reaches out for his saving help. When the Spirit moves, the spiritually blind see the light and suddenly they can see.

Consider the Apostle Paul, the long-standing enemy of the Church turned into a dynamic preacher and church planter. Because of Paul's missionary journeys and writings, we have the Church and much of the New Testament. Remember his remarkable conversion on the Damascus Road. It was truly an extraordinary turn of events! In Jerusalem, Saul (his name before his conversion) had a murderous heart toward followers of the Way. Yet, as he arrived in Damascus, he was ready to become one of the boldest and enthusiastic Christians the world has known.

What turned Paul around and caused such a transformation? It was nothing less than a dramatic encounter with the risen Lord Jesus. As Saul was on the road toward Damascus, the glory of the Lord flashed about him like a blinding light and struck him to the ground. Then Jesus personally spoke to Saul in such a way that he would never be the same again. This experience was so powerful that Saul was temporarily blinded and needed the prophetic ministry of a Christian named Ananias to restore his sight.

If Jesus can so radically change an enemy and persecutor of the Church as vehement as Saul, think of what he can do in us—people who are already members of his body and washed clean in the waters of baptism! The Lord wants to bring us to deep conversion. God wants to make us fully alive in his Spirit. He wants to so fill us with his life that we would naturally show forth the joy of knowing Jesus personally and validate the vitality of his life to others. The Lord wants each one of us to know Jesus just as deeply as Paul did and experiencing his life and his power. This same Jesus who personally touched Saul is ready and able to transform each of us, setting us on fire with his love and giving us a divine purpose that fuels are actions and gives meaning to our living.

If we want to receive more of the Lord, the keys are in our hands. If we desire to know the power of his risen life, we must simply hunger for him in our spirits. And strive with God's help to obey his revealed word in scripture and simply ask for more and more of God. Throughout the history of the Church, innumerable Christians can testify to having encountered Jesus in a new and powerful way, such that their lives changed dramatically.





Prayer Chain

If you need prayer for any reason, there is an active group in our congregation committed to praying for you.

Contact **Carole Evans** at

507-210-6971 or

e-mail her at

caroleannjean@gmail.com

You are welcome to join the prayer chain. Just call

Carole.

Many, like Saul, have been so radically transformed and empowered for service in Christ's body. For all who diligently seek the Lord in prayer, the grace of transformation is poured out liberally in great measure.

This power of the risen Lord is available to each of us. As Lent approaches, let's ask him, even beg him, to touch us afresh so that we will be greatly changed. Jesus can do it! And he is so willing. As a first step toward this new life, declare in your prayer your conviction that Jesus wants to give you more of his grace and power. Bring your fears and doubts before him and invite him to help you overcome them. Such prayers of humility borne out of hunger for the Lord will touch the Father's heart and bring forth a divine answer and abundant grace.

From the moment of Paul's conversion, he became a man of prayer (Acts 9:11). In one of his letters, Paul urged his Christian brothers and sisters to "pray constantly" (1 Thess 5:17). If we want to live a transformed life, we need to make daily prayer a high priority! Begin to look for ways you can improve your prayer life. Some simple actions could be to become more consistent about praying by setting aside a regular time each day for prayer. Find a comfortable place to pray that is out of the busy areas of your home. Turn off phones or other devices connected to the internet (or leave them in another room), keep a Bible and notebook at hand so that you can look up or read Scriptures and jot down thoughts that occur to you as you pray. Commit to become a person of prayer.

As you enter into prayer, offer praise to God for his goodness and greatness. Sing a hymn of praise. Then, invite God to examine your conscience and repent of anything the Holy Spirit might show you. When Jesus asked Paul, "Why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4), he was convicting this well-intentioned man of his rebellion against God and his neighbor. Unknown and unconfessed sin can harm our spiritual progress, offend others, and sully our witness for God. Receive God's mercy and forgiveness and resolve to avoid sin going forward.

And then, ask the Lord Jesus for a deeper touch of his power and glory as you pray. He will never fail you. But he might just change you radically, so that you may love and serve him all the days of your life.

As Lent quickly approaches, let's respond wholeheartedly to the call to conversion.

For a transformed life and a vibrant faith for the glory of God, I am sincerely yours,

Pastor Greg

In this article, I am indebted to the writings on the Word Among Us website (www.wau.org). You will find very inspiring articles about the Christian spiritual life there.

**Did you know
we're on
Twitter now!**

FOLLOW US @FOURTHAVEUMC

Just one more way to spread the word
of the Lord

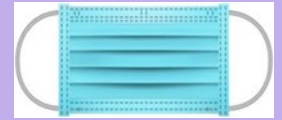


Worship, Committees, and Events

February Worship Sunday 9:00 AM

February 7— In Person
Communion
February 14—In Person
February 21—In Person
February 28—In Person

February 4—Trustees
February 5—Girl Scouts FH
February 7—Re-opening
February 9—SPRC
February 16—Finance
February 17—**Ash Wednesday**
February 18— Piecemakers FH
February 19—Girl Scouts FH



February Ushers

Jack and Jackie Luedke



Upcoming Event

The Faribault Rotary Club is sponsoring a spring Red Cross Blood Drive on Monday, March 8, 2020.

To register, call 1-800-733-2767 or go to www.redcross.org.



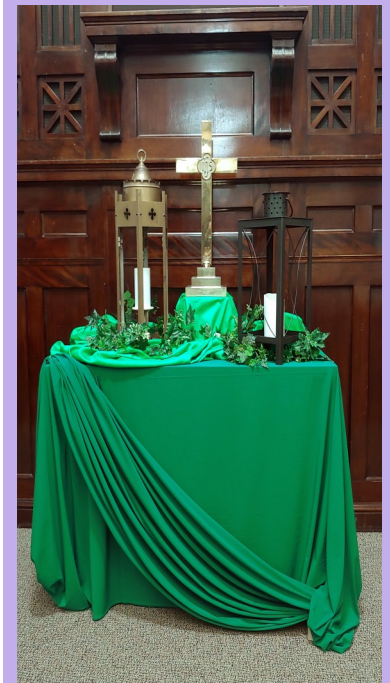
MEMORIALS



Our Sympathy to Charlotte Glarner and Family on the death of her brother in law **Kerry Kyle Glarner**. Kerry was born December 26, 1933 in West Concord, MN and died January 1, 2021 in West Concord, MN at the age of 87. He served in the US Army for 2 years in Oklahoma and returned home to West Concord to take over the family farm. Kerry retired from farming in 1997. He then enjoyed working in General Services as a van driver from the Mayo Clinic until April, 2020. He loved spending time with his family and friends.



Our Sympathy to Charlotte Glarner and Family on the death of her sister in law **LaVonne "Bonnie" Glarner**. Bonnie was born in Austin, MN on July 6, 1939 and passed away on January 17, 2021 in West Concord, MN at the age of 81. She passed due to complications of COPD and "Broken Heart Syndrome." Bonnie loved taking care of her children and was known for her delicious meals, much provided by her abundant garden.



Worship services online!

- www.fourthaveumc.org
- click on the "VIDEO" menu—
- OR on HOME page
- Scroll down right side - see options for the worship service.

OR go to

YouTube and search for 4th Avenue UMC to find several videos—choir, special music, and entire worship services.

February Memory Verse

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

-Romans 1:16



It's Time To **Register** For Camp!

Registration has started for the 2021 camping season! Check out the camp sessions at **Camp Minnesota** website and pick your favorite camp location: Northern Pines, Koronis Ministries, or Kowakan Adventures.

Registration and all information for the 2021 camping season will be digital and available on **camp@campminnesota.org**. With the potential for changes to schedules and events leading up to summer due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Dakotas and Minnesota Camp & Retreat Ministry team chose to forgo the traditional printed camp brochure this year. Instead, all camp listings and registration information are on the Camp Minnesota website where details will be updated quickly, and changes made in real-time. This ensures you will always have the most up-to-date information.

The early bird incentive, bring-a-friend discount, and camperships are all still available.

Space may be limited this season, so sign up soon!

There will be more information at the church office. Call Sue, or come in for further information. There will also be a flyer on the bulletin board at church.

Early bird
deadline
is April 30!

Register by April 30th to receive the Early Bird Camp Store Credit of \$25 to be used during the time at camp. Bring-A-Friend Incentive is back in 2021! Each new camper you bring to camp you can earn a discount of \$25 off the price of your camp.

Scholarship money IS available through Fourth Avenue's Memorial Fund.

Website: camp@campminnesota.org



Upper Room
January/
February



The Upper Room devotional booklet includes daily reading of the scriptures & a brief life story. Call the church office and we will mail one out to you.

Donation - \$1.00

February Birthdays

Thomas Hartman	01
Julie Schiffer	03
Wanda Weber	03
Gerald Hildebrandt	05
Phyllis Ford	07
Andrew Ciesluk	07
Tamara Kern	09
Kenneth Geary	14
Kevin Vrieze	18
Kenneth Dubbels	19
Landon Hatfield	21
Sandra Jandro	22
Williams Sonpon	22
Dustin Hale	25
Elaine Dibble	28
Dwayne Weber	28



February Anniversaries

John & Carole Evans	05
Jacob & Verus Kandakai	11
Kevin & Kathie Vrieze	14
Nathan & Kari Rosett	16
Raymond & JoAnn Schulz	23
Sid & Kate Spurgeon	23



STUDENTS IN THE NEWS

FARIBAUT SENIOR HIGH

A Honor Roll

9th Grade
Landon Hatfield

10th Grade
Ella Prange

B Honor Roll
10th Grade
Comfort Sonpon

11th Grade
Aubrey Hatfield

FARIBAUT MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Honor Roll

8th Grade
Annabel Schiffer

B Honor Roll

8th Grade
Brody Hatfield
Jaxon Hilley

A NOTE FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Please note the 2021 offering envelopes have been prepared and are ready for pickup. The boxes are located in the coat room off the main hallway near the church office.

CHRISTMAS THANKS



Dear Members of Fourth Avenue United Church

Thank you so much for your generous gift during Heaven's Remedy for Covid-19 Christmas '20.

I feel so loved and so blessed to be thought of during this challenging time. One thing I never question is God's love for me and this just reiterates his love through your love and generosity.

Bless you all

To the congregation and Pastor Greg Ciesluk

I want to give my sincere thanks for the gift card to the Signature. One of my favorite places to dine out. Maybe 2021 will afford me that pleasure.

My Christmas Gift Cards were received very joyously. I gave two to my neighbors who have 4 children and the Mom does daycare at home. I called her to let her know what I was doing and to ask her to send one of her kids over to get the cards.

She was just overjoyed and so thankful and gracious about it. And when her little boys came they were extremely well coached to say thank you several times. It was really cute with such adorable young people. Made me feel really good to spread the joy of Christmas.

-Carole Evans



Thank you so much for the gift certificate to Cancun Grill. What a nice Christmas surprise in this crazy year of 2020!

I would like to thank you for the generous gift certificate from Mizuki Fusion given to me from Deb Jindra-Pope it was very thoughtful. Deb is a very caring person. It brought some happiness to a rough year. Thank you—Thank you—Thank you.



When thinking about the gift cards our church asked us to distribute—it struck us that we have 3 police officers in our neighborhood. Those officers are our frontline heroes — so we decided to honor them. The families were very surprised and appreciative that our church thought of them.

-Sharon Nelson





More Community Christmas Dinner Stories

I felt God calling me to reach out to a well-known community servant and his wife with one of our gift card/greetings. The person had suffered much with his health along with the grief of losing a parent. I wrote how much he was appreciated and admired for the way he serves people in the community and assured him of our continued prayers. The man was deeply touched by the surprising gift and expressed his gratitude for being remembered.

I shared my gift cards and greetings with a grandma with several grandchildren. I admire her so much for her generosity of spirit and time with others and the way she exudes kindness. She responded enthusiastically, “How do we merit such generosity and kindness? Thank you so much. I am overwhelmed and so blessed by this gesture. It came at just the right time! God’s time is right on! Thank your church from us.” – Kim Bossmann

Unforeseen circumstances brought one of my children with whom I experience some emotional distance to my home for Christmas Eve at the last minute. I had made no plans to prepare a meal and just about every restaurant in town was closed. One exception was Mizuki Fusion. Would you believe that I had a gift card from there sitting on my counter and my child loves Japanese cuisine? What a beautiful smile came over my child when I suggested we get takeout from there! We had a glorious Christmas Eve feast and the wall between us crumbled a little.

In Person Worship Resumes on Sunday, February 7 at 9 am

Good News! We will resume in-person Sunday worship celebrations on **Sunday, February 7 at 9 am**. With the Covid-19 infection rate in Minnesota decreasing and the vaccine soon to begin distribution, our church’s Task Force on Reopening has decided to reopen the church for Sunday worship and the church office for public engagement on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 9 am – 1 pm.

We will resume our procedures and protocols to protect all who attend worship and enter our building. Worshippers will enter and leave the church by the East parking lot (ramp) door. The main floor bathrooms will be available. We will continue to practice social distancing in our sanctuary seating and mask wearing. For the foreseeable future, we will feature live piano music and recorded sung music in our services. We will check temperatures at the door and ask people to sign an attendance sheet.

We sincerely hope the work of the Task Force will inspire your confidence, yet we certainly encourage everyone to decide when and under what conditions you feel ready to return. No one should feel compelled to return to in person worship before being completely ready. We will continue to provide YouTube worship links on our church’s website and through email on Mondays and our worship celebrations will be broadcast on Faribault Community Public Television on Sundays and Wednesdays at 9 am.

Members of the Task Force on Reopening are **Brad Prange, Jim Heyer, Jack Luedke, Shari VanDerVeen, Kathy DuChene, Marcia Grundman, and Pastor Greg Ciesluk**

Fourth Avenue United
Methodist Church
219 4th Ave NW
Faribault, MN
55021



“RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED”

◆ Sunday Worship on YouTube 9:00 AM

Website:

www.fourthaveumc.org

Like us on Facebook

Join us at 2:42 PM daily as we pray our church's Breakthrough Prayer.

February 2021 Fourth Teller

Pastor Greg Ciesluk

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gmail.com

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Tuesday thru Thursday

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Kelly Landsverk

Accompanist:
Doug Madow

Nursery Attendant:
Kim Luedke

Custodian:
Ken Harren

Administrative Assistant:
Sue Allen

Ash Wednesday

Our Lenten Journey Begins in Ashes

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

12:00 noon in Sanctuary

6:30 p.m. Worship on Zoom

Zoom link will be sent via email.

