

A circular graphic featuring a water splash with bubbles rising from it, set against a light blue background.

The Good *News*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
RUNNELLS CHRISTIAN CHURCH
JULY 2022 | VOLUME 264

A stylized blue water splash graphic that flows from the top left towards the center of the page.

July 24-27, 2022 - 6-7:30 pm

SPLASH!

Runnells Christian Church
Vacation Bible School

Register at:

www.runnellscc.org/vbs

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COMMUNITY WIDE VBS—REGISTER YOUR KIDS, GRANDKIDS, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS

Pastor Katie's Notes

Dear RCC,

Whenever I talk with other pastors these days, one question always gets asked: “Has attendance bounced back at your church?” And almost everyone reports the same response: attendance on Sunday mornings is somewhere between 50-75% what it was pre-Covid.

That is about what we have experienced at Runnells Christian Church. When we first returned to in-person worship over a year ago, our average worship attendance was about 50% of pre-Covid levels. It has slowly and steadily increased, now to about 65% of pre-Covid levels. That breaks down to anywhere between 20-30 fewer people in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

But when I think about it, I'm not sure those numbers tell the whole story. They don't take into account folks who have moved, whose work schedules have changed, or whose health has declined to the point that in-person attendance is difficult or impossible. They don't take into account those who worship faithfully online. And they don't explain the gut feeling I have had that I'm seeing much more than 65% of our congregation in the sanctuary seats. So I decided to take a closer look at our attendance records to see if I could identify a more helpful trend.

Looking at attendance for January and February 2020—the two months before the outbreak of Covid-19 in central Iowa—I counted 96 different members or regular participants who worshiped with us at least once in those eight weeks. Doing the same for the last two months (April-May 2022), I counted 87 different members or regular participants who worshiped in-person with us at least once in eight weeks. Including those who I know participate in worship online each week (an option not available at RCC in early 2020), those numbers are nearly identical. We are engaging the same number of people in worship at RCC now as we were pre-Covid...we're just not engaging them all at once!

What this suggests to me is that most of our congregation *has* returned to worship, but most people have returned with different patterns and are engaging at a different level than they were two years ago. For instance, someone who once attended every Sunday may now be attending twice a month. And someone who attended twice a month may now worship once every six or seven weeks.

I shared this with our church elders, who asked me to share it with all of you. I believe it's useful information for a few reasons:

First, I think this is something to celebrate! We navigated (and in many ways are still navigating) a very difficult experience and remained intact. Runnells Christian Church is still here, with faithful members, striving to do ministry in our community and beyond. Thanks be to God!

Second, we ought to be thinking about how we do ministry and share what is happening at RCC when patterns of attendance are changing. These numbers reaffirm for me the importance of offering online worship, so that those who are unable to be in the sanctuary can still connect with us online. It also suggests to me that tools like the weekly email and virtual sign-ups may become better ways to share information and encourage participation than verbal announcements in worship or clipboards in the narthex.

Finally, it is worth noting that Covid changed so much about our world—from remote work to telehealth appointments, from The Great Resignation to supply chain breakdowns, from the acceleration of streaming services to the decline of the traditional movie theater. The church is no different. Churches that do well in the next 5-10 years will likely be those who understand that the way forward is not to “get people back,” but to meet people where they are. Let's be thinking, dreaming, and praying together about how our ministries should be changing to meet people in the sanctuary, on the screens, and everywhere in between.

Blessings,
Pastor Katie



RCC recognized graduate Makenna Phillips on
Graduation Sunday, May 15, 2022.
Congratulations Makenna!



2022 RCC Campers

Campers *love* to receive mail while they are at camp.

Send mail to:

Campers name

The camp name and #

Christian Conference Center

5064 Lincoln St.,

Newton, Iowa 50208

Or email them at:

christianconferencecenter@gmail.com

July 16-17 - Grand Camp #2

Carol Elam with Mia Rutherford

International Missions Mountain Top Ministries

A medical mission trip will be going to Mountain Top Ministries, in Haiti, September 24-October 2. There is much to do, even for non-medical folks! Volunteers are needed to do intake weights, temperatures and automatic blood pressures. Or perhaps you could help in the lab or pharmacy, maybe be a scribe for a care provider. If you are a mechanic or a construction person, there is work for you as well. Yes, there is a need for doctors, nurses and a variety of medical providers, too. The team stays in a gated guest house and funds are available to help with the costs. Please prayerfully consider this trip. Contact me, Katie Temple, if you are interested.



NEW THIS YEAR @ RCC - GARDEN FOR GOOD

If you have an abundance of produce from your garden this summer, consider participating in Garden for Good at RCC. Simply bring your excess produce to church on Sunday and we will get it to local organizations helping to feed our neighbors. Participating organizations include: 3G Food Pantry, Caring Hands, and the Food Bank of Iowa. If you'd like to help by being a delivery driver, contact Pastor Katie.

Prayer Concerns

All Military Personnel and Veterans
Residents of Ukraine
Aislinn, Jane Charls' daughter
Dave, friend of Sue Howard
Joan DeGroot
Connie Dunn
John & Norma Grinstead
Marcie Huffman, friend of Jill Simonsen
Jan, friend of Pam Jordan
Sharon Lawson
Jeri Sanburn
Jennifer Sieck
Jaque Tate
Clay York
Friends and family of Brian Chittenden

To keep our prayer concerns current, names will remain on the list for four weeks. At that time names will be removed unless you have asked that a name remain on the list and give an update on the person's well-being. If a name is removed and you'd like it on the list again, contact the church office. Thank you!

With Sympathy

With Prayers and Heartfelt Sympathy

Our prayers & Christian sympathy go out to the families & friends of:

Rosie Gaudette,
Jon Gaudette's mother,
who passed away June 7, 2022

May God's love comfort you in the time of your loss.

HOME COMMUNION

Contact the church office at 515-669-8739 or elder chair Deb Bracewell at 515-669-8739 if you or someone you know would like to receive communion at home.



RCC BOOK GROUP

Wed, July 28 at 7 pm, the RCC Book Group will meet to discuss *The Summer Girls* by Mary Alice Monroe .

From Amazon: **From *New York Times* bestselling author Mary Alice Monroe, the heartwarming first installment in the Lowcountry Summer trilogy, a poignant series following three half-sisters and their grandmother.**

Three granddaughters. Three months. One summer house.

In this enchanting trilogy set on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, *New York Times* bestselling author Mary Alice Monroe captures the complex relationships between Dora, Carson, and Harper, three half-sisters scattered across the country—and a grandmother determined to help them rediscover their family bonds.

For years, Carson Muir has drifted, never really settling, certain only that a life without the ocean is a life half lived. Adrift and penniless in California, Carson is the first to return to Sea Breeze, wondering where things went wrong...until the sea she loves brings her a minor miracle. Her astonishing bond with a dolphin helps Carson renew her relationships with her sisters and face the haunting memories of her ill-fated father. As the rhythms of the island open her heart, Carson begins to imagine the next steps toward her future.

In this heartwarming novel, three sisters discover the true treasures Sea Breeze offers as surprising truths are revealed, mistakes forgiven, and precious connections made that will endure long beyond one summer.



Upcoming selections for 2022

August 2022 - *The Rosie Project* by Graeme Simsion
September 2022 - *Fifty Words for Rain* by Asha Lemmie
October 2022 - *The Silent Patient* by Alex Michaelides
November 2022 - *The Noel Diary* by Richard Paul Evans

Welcome Our Newest Members



Sunday, June 5, **Bailey Kain, Olivia Kennedy and Mylie Leo** made their confession of faith and were baptized at Runnells Christian Church.

We are so happy to welcome **Bailey, Olivia and Mylie** as members of our church family!



Sunday, June 26, **John and Alice Bolen** made their confession of faith and transferred their membership to Runnells Christian Church.

We are so happy to welcome **John and Alice** as members of our church family!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

Deb Bracewell

The range of volunteer positions Deb Bracewell has held over the years has followed her path as a parent of three kids. She's served the congregation as a Sunday School teacher and youth group leader, Council vice chair and chair, education committee chair, an elder and chair of elders, chair of search and call committee, and Vacation Bible School chair.

Considering she grew up at Runnells Christian Church, Deb recalls helping out as a youth at the church, but has been volunteering in some way ever since moving back to her hometown area in 2001.



“I started attending here as a baby and attended here until we moved to West Des Moines in 1991. Then we started attending again when we moved back to the area in 2001. So I’ve attended here roughly 45 years,” Deb said. “I love being a part of something and the sense of community it brings being involved in the church. For me, I like to keep learning and trying new things so I like volunteering in different areas of the church. The great thing about volunteering in our church is that if you have an idea that you want to try, (like the outdoor Christmas Tree Lighting and market) you just run with it and make it happen.”

Volunteering means the world to Deb, who couldn't imagine not volunteering, “I love that feeling of bringing something new to the community and bringing the community to RCC. RCC has been such an important part of my life for so many years, that I can't imagine not volunteering to help keep it going and thriving for years to come,” she said.

Deb's family members of course volunteer right alongside her, including husband Mike and adult kids Tristan, Rosie and Evan. They also have a four-legged kid, Thea.

Her favorite scripture happens to be Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” “I use this verse in prayer with God nearly every day, as a mantra and a plea, in many different ways. When I need strength, I pray for the strength I know Christ provides. When I need confidence, I pray this scripture, knowing that God gives me the strength I need, that it is already there inside me. And sometime when life is too crazy and I have too much going on I have a little discussion with God about him thinking I am stronger than I feel,” Deb shared.

The Good Friday cross raising happens to be Deb's favorite church activity. “For me I can't celebrate Easter without first taking the time to mourn Jesus' death on the cross. And Lent in general gives me that feeling of starting again, renewed,” she said.

If anyone is on the fence about volunteering, Deb has some sage advice: “Do it. You will feel a much stronger connection to the church and your church family when you are serving. There are many small ways you can volunteer or big projects you can lead—it's up to you. But immerse yourself in the feeling of sharing your gifts and talents with the church and you will enrich your own life,” she said.

In her free time, Deb enjoys reading, walking, running, boating, traveling and attending Iowa State University events.



On Pentecost Sunday, we celebrated the gift of baptism...



the gift of the Holy Spirit...

the gifts of our
volunteers...



and the beginning of summer at the
Sundae Summer Bash.



Runnells Christian Church

The Body of Christ:



Building



Growing



Serving

Place
Stamp
Here

Runnells Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

P.O. Box 30
309 Brown Street
Runnells, Iowa 50237

*(Please use P.O. Box 30 when
addressing all mail to Church)*

Phone: 515-966-2587
E-mail: runnellsc@gmail.com
pastor.krussell@gmail.com
Website: www.runnellsc.org

Church Staff:

Ministers: The Congregation
Pastor: Rev. Katie Russell Hainline
Church Admin/Bookkeeper: Deb Bracewell
Nursery Attendant/Custodian: Ann Hammen
Board Moderator: Bill Ingle
Pianist: Tammy Feeley
Choir Director: Mike Miller
Bell Choir Director: Sheila Aukes
Children's Choir Director: Tammy Feeley

Address Service Requested



Has your address
changed?



Keep us
posted!

(U. S. Post Office requires P.O. Box 30 on all church mail.)

Runnells Christian Church
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
June 26, 2022

1. Bill Ingle opened the meeting with prayer.
2. Voting ballots and copies of the Annual Report were distributed to those in attendance.
3. Budget and Financial Review by Jon Gaudette
 - Proposed 2022-23 budget is same as 2021-22
 - New budget format styled with each of the three committees grouped together for ease
 - Katie Temple made a motion to approve the final 2021-22 financial report. Lori Clark 2nd the motion. Motion approved by all.
 - Tammy Gaudette made a motion to approve the 2022-23 budget. Ilene Hays 2nd the motion. Motion approved by all.
4. Voting and ballots were collected.
5. Ballots were counted and approved in favor.
6. Sue Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Looking ahead...

- ♦ August 7—Congregational Life Mtg 10:30 am
- ♦ August 28—Board & Elders retreat at Christian Conference Center 11:30am
- ♦ August 31—Book Group, 7 pm
- ♦ September 11—RCC Fall Kickoff

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL NEEDS:

- Clean, empty water bottles with lids
- Empty cardboard paper towel rolls



There is a collection container in the narthex.