



Friendship News

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd
An Open and Affirming Church

The church office hours are 8am-12pm, Monday – Friday.

The Pastor is also available at other times by appointment.

Office phone 829-2528, Pastor's residence 454-0453, E-mail
firstcong@brainerd.net.

uccbrainerd.org

December 2014

**No matter who you are,
or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.**

<i>Announcements</i>	2
Candidating Weekend	2
Twelfth Night of Christmas	2
Membership Exploration Session	3
<i>THE PASTOR'S PEN</i>	3
<i>Moderator's Musings</i>	4
<i>Christian Ministry Department</i>	5
H.U.G.S.	5
Adult Forum Schedule for December	5
Soup Kitchen – January 23	5
Food Shelf Offering – January 25	5
<i>All in the Church Family</i>	6
In Our Prayers	6
January Birthdays	6
<i>Church Council Minutes</i>	7
<i>Church Financials</i>	8
<i>CHURCH CALENDAR — January 2015</i>	9

**God is our refuge
and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Psalm 46:1**

Announcements

Candidating Weekend January 3 - 4, 2015

Meet Leslie Moughty

Saturday, January 3

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Leslie will share her history at 3:00

Fellowship Hall

Worship Service and Vote

Sunday, January 4

10:00 a.m.

Church Sanctuary

We are coming up on an important weekend for our church. On January 3-4 our pastor candidate, Leslie Moughty (pronounced Moody), will be visiting Brainerd for the second time, and this time you'll be able to meet her. She's definitely excited about meeting you!

You are invited to attend an open house to visit with Leslie on Saturday, January 3, from 2:00-4:00 in the fellowship hall. At 3:00 she will share her story and her journey in becoming a pastor. The Search Committee members will also be there to answer any of your questions. We have enjoyed our time with Leslie immensely and hope that you'll be able to take advantage of this opportunity to get to know her.

On Sunday, January 4, Leslie will lead the worship service. Following worship, we will hold a congregational meeting in the sanctuary. We will hear a report from the Search Committee explaining their process and decision, we'll have a chance to examine and ask questions about the pastor compensation agreement and finally, we will vote on the pastor candidate. We hope every member can be part of this exciting day!

The Members of the Search Committee

Doris Anderson, David Crum, Emma Ferrie, Karen Ford, Sue Hadland, Phil Kuehn,

Lois McBroom, Preston Newgord, Karen Ogdahl, Erik Steen, Ann Turnbull

Twelfth Night of Christmas First Congregation United Church of Christ Sunday, January 4, 2014 7:00 p.m.

It's that time of the year again – time for our church's musical gift to the community, the Twelfth Night of Christmas concert. It will feature some of our area's finest musicians and a delightful variety of entertainment. You'll hear Central Standard Time, an up-and-coming jazz group; Windfall and Consensus, both talented vocal ensembles; a brass quartet, string quartet and multiple instrumentalists; the ever-popular Hans Blix and the Weapons Inspectors; and our own incomparable organists, Grace and Laura. You don't want to miss this wonderful, musical celebration of the holidays and your last chance until next year to sing your favorite Christmas carols.

Membership Exploration Session
Membership Exploration Session
Saturday, January 10th at 11 a.m.
Conversation and Lunch at the Parsonage

You are invited to consider membership in First Congregational United Church of Christ! This is a congregation seeking to serve God—in community—here in the Brainerd Lakes area and in the world. We are a church that recognizes that there are different understandings of God. We come together to learn from one another, to ask deep questions, and to encourage each other to live out our faith in our daily lives. We gather as God's people for worship, study, service and fellowship. Would you like to make this your church home? If the worship, ministry and fellowship you have experienced in this church help to meet your spiritual needs, please consider membership with us. Joining the church makes a public statement about your commitment to the life and ministry of this congregation. It also gives you the opportunity to have a voice and a vote at the church business meetings.

A Membership Exploration Session will take place on Saturday, January 10th at 11 a.m. at the Parsonage (411 Juniper Street). Lunch will be provided. We will visit about the United Church of Christ—it's history, theology and polity. Then we'll focus on this congregation and our ministry. New members will be received during our worship service Sunday, January 25th. If you are interested in membership, please contact Pastor Linda (revlindacrowe@gmail.com).

THE PASTOR'S PEN
Rev. Linda K. Crowe, Interim Pastor

What does a new pastor need to know about this church family? What essential information should be passed on to the next pastor of this congregation? What are the patterns, practices, traditions, idiosyncrasies, and expectations of this particular family of faith?

Right now I am doing my best to prepare a detailed list for the person who becomes your next called pastor. So far, the "FYI" list includes everything from Christian Education and Confirmation to communion bread and the clergy cluster, from prayer shawls and pastoral care to worship patterns and care of the parsonage, from IRS regulations regarding pastors to service and outreach projects and special offerings. Each day, another item or two is added to the list being prepared for the new pastor.

Such a list was not available when I began serving as your interim pastor. The day before my first worship service here, Grace Forbord, Karen Ford, and Bonnie Crum met with me to tell me about the feel and flow of worship in this church. I asked many questions. Dave Crum met with me regarding pastoral care issues of this church family. I asked many more questions.

Recognizing that there is so much you need to know when you begin work in a new place, I'm preparing that list for the next pastor. I trust it will be helpful as well as informative.

Leslie Moughty, the candidate for called pastor of this congregation, will be here with us on the first weekend of January. I will visit with Leslie to answer her questions and to go over the list. Leslie will lead worship and preach on January 4. Following the worship service, church members will vote on whether to call her as pastor. Expecting that the vote will be affirmative, my last Sunday as your interim pastor will be February 1st. Leslie will begin her service here, as called pastor, in mid-February.

What do you think Leslie needs to know about this church family? What should she know about you? I invite you to create your own list for Leslie, a list that will be helpful and important as she begins to serve here.

In this time of transition and change, may God guide and bless our remaining time together. Peace and blessings to all of you, beloved children of God! Pastor Linda

With every power for good to stay and guide me,
 Comforted and inspired beyond all fear,
 I'll live these days with you in thought beside me,
 And pass, with you, into the coming year.
 Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) from prison, New Year 1945.

Pastor Linda will be on vacation in Spokane from December 25-January 2. While she is away, David Crum will be on call for pastoral responsibilities. Please contact David regarding any pastoral care needs or pastoral responsibilities. David may be reached at 218-330-3168.

Moderator's Musings

By Ann Turnbull

Greetings and Happy New Year to the members and friends of First Congregational!

The Christmas Eve service was an amazing experience again this year. A meaningful remembrance of the Christmas story, beautiful Christmas Carols, participation of lay people in the service, meditation on the light of the world, thinking of the wonderful lights Linda and Randy have been to our congregation over the last two years and... wondering if baby Jesus would make it into the manger of the nativity set, as the two year-olds were encouraged by Pastor Linda!

As I think back over the past years of transition in our church, I am so thankful that Linda and Randy have been with us during this time. We have been richly blessed by Linda's leadership, her example of living a life of gratitude, her love and the emphasis she and Randy place on their ministry of hospitality. Randy's contributions to our church and community will be sorely missed. I suspect we will be surprised to learn the extent to which he has done things in the church, everything from staining and installing new pew racks to hold 3x5 cards and pencils, countless setup for worship and church events, keeping an eye on the comings and goings of people at the church, shoveling dirt and sand for the rain gardens, remodeling the small bathroom in the parsonage and working with Paul, Roger and Gary picking up donations to Habitat for Humanity, just to mention a few.

As we plan on sending them off with our thanks and love, we will celebrate their ministry among us on Linda's last Sunday, February 1st. You won't want to miss it. Linda will display her quilt project that has all our names on it as her sermon illustration.

Cynthia Janes has suggested a great idea to let Pastor Linda and Randy know what they mean to us. You may remember Linda's sermon on legacies when she wondered aloud about what their grandson, Randy, would remember about them when they are gone. Would he remember going to the zoo, Grandpa Randy teaching him woodworking etc.? Everyone is invited to write or draw legacy letters to Randy and Linda. We are placing two legacy boxes in the narthex, one for each of them. You may start your letter with something similar to "I will remember..." The more specific the remembrance, the better but no matter what you write, this will give all of us an opportunity to really let them know, in words and pictures they can refer to again and again, what they have meant to us.

I will just close with an update on the 2015 church budget. Your response to the letter explaining our situation is overwhelming. Last week's offering totaled \$7,000 and a number of people increased their pledges! Thank you for your love and support of this faith community.

Blessings, (something Linda has taught me!)
Ann

Christian Ministry Department H.U.G.S.

January 4

Host: Jan Morton & Eileen Kurpiers

Greeters/Ushers: Roger Best, Greg Johnson & Gary Whiteman

Counters: Jeff Behr & Marcia Ferris

January 11

Host: Maria Bertram

Greeter/Ushers: Itty Newgord, Preston Newgord, Mary Harder, Lance James

Counters: Deb Griffith & Marcia Mans

January 18

Hosts: Duane Shatava, Jim Flath, Shirley Barten & Deb Lundberg

Greeters/Ushers: Preston Newgord, Austin Newgord, Marcia Mans & Barb Stokke

Counters: Coleen Carder & Vi Heiser

January 25

Hosts: Karen Ogdahl & Sharon Carlson

Greeters/Ushers: Sharon Carlson, Ann Turnbull & Karen Ogdahl

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

Adult Forum Schedule for December

01/04 – Fellowship with Leslie Moughty
01/11 – “Living the Questions” with David Crum
01/18 – “Living the Questions” with David Crum
01/25 – Fellowship

Soup Kitchen – January 23

Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve an evening meal at the Soup Kitchen on January 23. Sharing food and fellowship is an important ministry to neighbors in our community. If you can help, please sign up on the red notebook placed in the church entry, or call the church office and we'll put your name on the list.

Food Shelf Offering – January 25

Each month we bring offerings of groceries, necessities and financial donations to help feed hungry neighbors in our community. The Salvation Army Food Shelf serves 400 families each month. Our next offering will be on Sunday, January 25

The following commodities are always needed and appreciated: canned beans (kidney, pinto, garbanzo, baked); chili, canned pasta meals, stews, soups; tuna, canned chicken, peanut butter; ramen noodles, pastas, macaroni and cheese; paper towels, toilet paper, disposable diapers, soap and shampoo. **Again, thank you for helping to feed our hungry neighbors!**

All in the Church Family In Our Prayers

These joys and concerns were shared on prayer cards during recent services.

Pray for all those who are grieving. Pray for healing for: Kay, Kelly, Dave, JoAnne, Sherri, Dana, Megan, Barb, Steve, Mike, Chuck, Carol, C.J., Marlee, Shelly, Gordon, Sue, Todd, Jack, Aaron, and Azalee. Pray for: Don and Carol, Les and Fran, Karen and Don, Martha and Arnie, Nancy, Lily, Evelyn, Jim, Lincoln Olander and his family, and for our leaders. Pray to make the best decisions in dealing with life's challenges. Pray for those who receive a difficult diagnosis, and for those going through change and transition. Pray for all in need and for all who suffer in any way. Pray for the poor in spirit. Pray for those giving birth and for those in the final season of life. Pray for peace and love in our world of unrest. Pray for an end to racial violence; pray for resolutions without violence. Pray for the families of those who have been executed in the Middle East. Pray for victims of Ebola and for those who treat and care for them. Pray for the children of our church and of the world. O God, may we always remember your many blessings. Let your light guide me and my family. May we all remember to pause each and every day to be filled with the "light". Prayers of thanks for laughter, for shared prayers, for answered prayers. Blessings, strength and love to all the New Pathways guests as they travel on their journey. Bless our UCC for our ministry to them. To all those in need...peace, hope, love, joy, compassion, empathy, encouragement, hugs...for God's extraordinary guidance and care for all.



January Birthdays.....

01/01	Lilja Behr	01/16	Betty Alderman
01/01	Gordon Lee	01/17	Francine Trtanj
01/05	Linda Downs	01/22	Pamela Patrick
01/07	Macyn Harder McBroom	01/22	Alexandra Jones
01/13	Marcia Ferris	01/28	Thomas Erickson
01/16	Karen Widmark		

Church Council Minutes

Church Council Minutes

December 11, 2014

Moderator – Ann Turnbull

Clerk – Karen Ogdahl

Christian Ministry – Beth Schrader

Christian Education – Itty Newgord

Council at Large – Gary Whiteman, Dan Hegstad, Grace Johnson

Assistant Moderator – Phil Kuehn

Treasurer – Lisa Wigand

Trustees – Coleen Carder

Stewardship –

Present: Rev. Linda Crowe, Beth Schrader, Coleen Carder, Ann Turnbull, Phil Kuehn, Grace Johnson, Karen Ogdahl, Dan Hegstad, Lisa Wigand, Gary Whiteman

Moderator Ann Turnbull called the meeting to order with a prayer from Pastor Linda Crowe.

The October minutes were approved. Grace Johnson was approved to replace Paul Mans' at-large position on the Council.

CLERK'S REPORT – Deaths: Lois Owens, Barbara Wells, Paul Mans

TREASURER'S REPORT – See attached report.

It is likely we will end the year close to being on budget. The bank will be renewing our loan at a lower rate. We are blessed to have received special donations from Donald Janes and Betty Lee's estate. The Lee money is to be used for acoustical improvements in the fellowship hall.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Linda has been organizing transition information for the new pastor. If the pastor candidate is accepted by a vote of the congregation, Linda's last Sunday will be February 1. Linda led the confirmation class on a field trip to St. John's University for worship and an information session on the St. John's Bible.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT – no report

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Trustees have written a contract for the new pastor regarding the upkeep of the parsonage. In addition to their regular church maintenance, Trustees will research acoustic and lighting improvements for the fellowship hall.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – no report

The children's program will be December 14 followed by a turkey potluck. Gary offered to provide the turkey for the Council.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

CM has been planning the worship services for the next few months. They are also considering forming a hospitality committee to organize food for special events. They will be organizing the March concert to benefit the food shelf.

OLD BUSINESS

Karen reported that the search committee has unanimously agreed on Leslie Moughty as its top candidate for the pastorship. They are organizing the candidating weekend for January 3 - 4 when Leslie will come to meet the congregation and conduct the Sunday service. After the service, a congregational meeting will be held in the sanctuary. During this meeting the search committee will give a report on their process, a Council representative will present the call agreement and the congregation will vote on the candidate. It is hope that all church members who are able will attend.

NEW BUSINESS

Lois McBroom was approved to replace Mark Erickson on the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

We are grateful that six new families have pledged this year. General pledge amounts, however, are about 10% lower than last year. Considerable time was devoted to examining the 2015 budget proposal and trimming where possible. After deliberation, it was decided to bring a deficit budget to the congregation and to invite those who are able to raise their pledges or donate to the general fund to reduce the deficit.

The meeting was adjourned with the prayer. The next meeting will be January 21 at 5:30.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Ogdahl, Clerk of Council

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd
Financial Results - General Fund
Year to Date Results as of 11/30/2014

	2014 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 11/30/14	% of Budget
Income:			
From Giving Units	\$ 145,210	\$ 144,022	99.18%
Other Giving	\$ 12,700	\$ 22,620	178.11%
Total Income	<u>\$ 157,910</u>	<u>\$ 166,642</u>	105.53%
Expenses:			
Council	\$ 106,261	\$ 99,414	93.56%
Christian Ministry	\$ 10,800	\$ 12,075	111.81%
Christian Education	\$ 1,300	\$ 3,256	250.46%
Stewardship	\$ 440	\$ 334	75.91%
Trustees	\$ 47,900	\$ 48,620	101.50%
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 166,701</u>	<u>\$ 163,699</u>	98.20%
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	<u>\$ (8,791)</u>	<u>\$ 2,943</u>	

***The best and most beautiful things in the world
cannot be seen or even touched.
They must be felt with the heart.***

Helen Keller (1880-1968)

CHURCH CALENDAR — January 2015

				1 Happy New Year!!	2 10:30 Book Group	3 2:00 – 4:00 Open House to meet Leslie Moughty - Fellowship Hall
4 Communion 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship - Leslie Moughty Will Preach 11:00 Fellowship w/Leslie Moughty Sunday School	5	6	7 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Trustees	8 5:30 Christian Ed - 5:30 Church Council	9 10:30 Book Group	10 11:00 Membership session @ Parsonage w/lunch
11 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Confirmation 11:30 Adult Forum – LTQ with David Crum	12	13	14 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 3:00 Christian Ministry 5:00 Stewardship	15	16 10:30 Book Group 6:00 Process & Film	17
18 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:30 Confirmation 11:30 Adult Forum – LTQ with David Crum	19	20	21 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Church Council	22	23 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	24
25 *FOOD SHELF OFFERING* 10:00 Worship – New members Received 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Confirmation	26	27	28 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	29	30 10:30 Book Group	31

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**Interim Pastor
Linda K. Crowe**

**Admin. Assist.
Colleen Todd**