



Friendship News

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

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

Our Pastor, Leslie Moughty is also available at other times by appointment.

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uccbrainerd.org

January 2017

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

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January Birthdays

1/1	Lilja Behr	1/16	Betty Alderman
1/5	Linda Downs	1/16	Karen Widmark
1/7	Macyn McBroom	1/22	Alexandra Jones
1/8	Spencer Hegstad	1/22	Pam Patrick
1/13	Marcia Ferris	1/24	Martha Kessler
1/14	James Madland	1/26	Bev Madland

Pastor's Pen

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea, during the time when Herod was king. Soon afterward, some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1-2, Good News Translation)

The presents have all been opened, the guests have gone home, and we begin to wonder if the Christmas tree is too much of a fire hazard to leave up just a little bit longer. In this first week of January the world seems to move quickly away from Christmas and on to the next thing: Bowl games, after-Christmas sales, the Presidential Inauguration, and generally going back to "normal" life. I have noticed many people, including myself, looking at the new year, with both hope and excitement but also with trepidation. Given the past year, it is no wonder that we are a bit skeptical of what 2017 might bring. For many of us, 2016 has been complicated. In my own life, for example, I experienced the joy of welcoming my baby niece Lucienne into the world and the delight in seeing my only brother become a loving and caring dad. But I also experienced a deep loss in the death of my dad. I know many of you also experienced the extremes of joy and pain as well this year.

In the wider world, 2016 also brought us a combination of joy and pain. The "good" things of the past year seemed to be overshadowed by the "bad". The Syrian war and resulting refugee crisis, a presidential campaign that was steeped in racism and vitriol, the numerous deaths of beloved artists like Prince and David Bowie... It is important for us to seek out and remember the positives of the year as well: scientists believe the hole in the ozone is starting to heal, multiple species, including Giant pandas, humpback whales were downgraded from endangered to vulnerable, a small group of Native American youth inspired thousands to join the fight against corporate greed by reminding us that "water is life," just to name a few.

As we begin a new year, I invite us to contemplate the journey of the Magi. They looked up and saw a star which they interpreted as a sign of the birth of the messiah. But the act of seeing the star was just the beginning. Seeing that star, they set out on a journey to find the baby and worship him. In the year to come, may we also look for that star. When we notice the star, possibly far off in the distance, may we have the courage and determination to embark on a journey to seek out the continued birthing of God's presence into the world – even when the "Herods" of our day may try to extinguish that light. In the midst of war and violence, loss and grief, fear and doubt, may we remember to look up once in a while and notice the handiwork of God quietly taking place in a dirty stable. And may we remember that our journey too is guided by that star – by the light and love of God that shines in the darkness and the darkness shall not overcome it.

With Peace and New Year Blessings to you,



Moderator's Notes/Visioning Update

Dan Hegstad - Council Moderator

On October 15th about 30 of our Church Family gathered to talk and share our visions for our future. We filled a dozen giant 'Post-It' pages with ideas, hopes and dreams! The results have been transcribed into a usable format and it is ready to be shared with all. It will be emailed in January and a paper version will also be available. We will gather again at the Adult Forum on January 29th to look at the results and talk about next steps.

Food Shelf Offering – December

Each month we bring groceries, necessities and financial donations to help feed hungry neighbors in our community. The Salvation Army Food Shelf serves 400 families each month. In December we received \$50. Our next offering will be Sunday, January 22. **Thank you for helping to feed our hungry neighbors!**

HUGS

January 1

Hosts: Marcia Ferris & Dan Hegstad

Ushers: Roger Best, Greg Johnson

Ken Nelson & Gary Whiteman

Greeter:

Counters: Jeff Behr & Jerry Kuehn

January 8

Hosts: Maria Bertram & Itty Newgord

Ushers/Greeters: Maria Bertram, Mary Harder

Lois McBroom & Preston Newgord

Counters: Deb Griffith

January 15

Coordinator Needed!

Counters: Coleen Carder & Vi Heiser

January 22

Hosts: Sharon Carlson & Mike Schrader

Ushers/Greeters: Ellie Burkett, Tracy Lyons,

Karen Ogdahl & Ann Turnbull

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

January 29

Hosts: Sue Hadland & Lisa Wigand

Ushers: Roger Best, Greg Johnson

Ken Nelson & Gary Whiteman

Greeters: Jan Morton

Counters: Sharon Carlson & Judy Whiteman

December 14, 2016 Church Council Minutes

Moderator – Dan Hegstad

Clerk – Barb Stokke

Christian Ministry – Ann Turnbull

Christian Education – Marina Grabowski

Council at Large –Mike North and Bonnie Crum

Assistant Moderator – Claire Steen

Treasurer –

Trustees – Coleen Carder

Stewardship – Judy Whiteman

Present: Dan Hegstad, Barb Stokke, Ann Turnbull, Judy Whiteman, Mike North, Bonnie Crum, and Pastor Leslie.

Dan Hegstad called the meeting to order. Ann Turnbull shared “A Christmas Commitment to Peace” the 2016 Christmas message by UCC General Minister and President Rev. John C. Dorhauer. Dan will provide January’s Food for Thought.

CLERK’S REPORT – No report.

TREASURER’S REPORT – No report.

PASTOR’S REPORT – Highlights: Held second session of new member class; consulted with members of MN Conference ONA Task Force regarding transgender issues; attended Ordination service for Tony Romaine, Staples UCC pastor; held Transgender Day of Remembrance Service; met with Salvation Army Divisional Strategy Director Bent Voight as part of their needs assessment process (The Brainerd Dispatch’s November article by Pastor Leslie has been circulated at the regional Salvation Army offices); co-led Ecumenical Thanksgiving service at First Presbyterian; met with Executive Committee to begin Job

Description.; traveled to Standing Rock Reservation and visited Oceti Sakowin camp; supported our members and friends during two hospital visits, a home visit, and three office visits. Leslie will be on vacation December 28 – January 2 and attending NGLI continuing ed classes January 3 – 9. Lilja Behr will provide pastoral care coverage during these times. The question “How can we build connectedness between rural churches and urban churches?” was raised by a ministerial group working with Rick Wagner, UCC associate conference minister, who then brought it to Leslie’s attention. Council discussed the needs for building connections between rural and urban churches and possible ways to accomplish this.

STEWARDSHIP – •Fall pledge work has been completed, and the Generosity Team will now focus on planned giving presentations and the sharing gifts survey. Council agreed that the topics - planned giving and end of life decision making - would pair well and would need to be presented over a period of time. Possible activities include listening to sermons and presentations, participating in book discussions and forums, and watching movies. Council also discussed making this a community event. Stewardship would be the base of this project, but people with needed knowledge or experience could become part of the project team. •Vi Heiser will send out thank-you notes to people who have turned in their pledges and reminders to those who haven’t. •Judy asked if someone could speak about the Christmas offering to be taken this Sunday.

TRUSTEES’ REPORT – Update to Trustees’ Dec. minutes: The snowplowing bill from 2015 until now is \$1530.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – Marina ask the council for feedback on possible dates for Sledding Day at Camp Confidence. Council recommended February 5 or Feb 26. March dates were not recommended because of the unpredictability of March weather.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY – Council was referred to the Christian Ministry December minutes.

OLD BUSINESS – •A request was made to check for any obligations the church may have with the Fargo company that presently tunes the organ. If no obligations, it was recommended we contact the Wadena company for possible organ tuning. •The pastoral job description will be done by February 12, Leslie’s anniversary date. It was noted that the congregation should know what is included in the description. •The visioning report will be presented at Adult Forum in January. Stress reduction is another January Forum topic.

NEW BUSINESS – •Leslie reminded Council to establish an equity account before the end of the year with Marina Grabowski and Ann Turnbull designated signers • Mike Schrader has resigned as treasurer. As treasurer, Mike worked hard to explain the budget and to provide accurate, up-to-date information. He sought input, offered ideas, and encouraged living within the budget. Mike put in lot of time and effort, and we appreciated his efforts. *We thank you, Mike, for your support of our church.* •Judy described a short-term volunteer program that gives people who cannot commit to long-term responsibilities an opportunity to volunteer for short periods of time. This could increase interest in volunteering and help alleviate volunteer burn out. •It was noted that list of people’s time and talents would have been helpful for the nominating committee. •Council discussed the purpose of the treasurer’s job and ways to make it more enticing. Dan will send out the treasurer job description.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord’s Prayer. The next meeting will be January 18, 2017 at 7:00 .

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stokke, Clerk of Council

Our Church is in need of a Treasurer. Is that you?

This volunteer position isn't nearly as difficult as many people seem to think. I'm told that if you can balance a checkbook you can do this. Our past treasurer, Lisa, wrote a job description (below) and you'll see that it's mostly checking and oversight. The treasurer attends the Church Council meetings and is part of the Executive Committee.

Talk to Leslie or Bobbie if you have questions.

Thank you!

Dan Hegstad - Moderator

The Church Treasurer is a volunteer position. The Treasurer reports to the Church Council. This individual's primary responsibilities are to oversee the work of the Church's Administrative Assistant on those duties that involve the Church's finances.

The Treasurer's primary duties are:

- Prepare or observe the preparation of the bank reconciliations on all bank accounts to ensure there are dual controls on the church's banks accounts. As part of this review, the Treasurer should:
 - Review disbursements for proper documentation and approval.
 - Review the quarterly reconciliation of receipts as prepared by the Administrative Assistant.
- Sign checks as needed.
- Ensure that the Administrative Assistant:
 - Prepares all quarterly payroll tax filings.
 - Prepares all year end payroll tax forms and reports.
 - Prepares all annual (or more frequent) giving statements for donors.
- Review Financial Statements as prepared by the Church's Administrative Assistant.
 - Present statements to the Church Council at its monthly meetings.
 - Research any questions that are presented, with the assistance of the Church's Administrative Assistant.
 - Work with the Administrative Assistant to provide financial reports to other committees or to the Pastor as requested.
 - Assist the Administrative Assistant with questions on the preparation of financial reports.
- Assist other church leaders with the preparation of the Annual Budget.

Church Financials

Financial Results – General Fund Year to Date Results as of 11/30/16	2016 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 11/30/16	% of Budget
Income:			
From Giving Units	\$ 150,481	\$ 144,874	96.27%
Other Giving	\$ 5,500	\$ 18,246	331.74%
Total Income	\$ 155,981	\$ 163,120	104.58%
Expenses:			
Council	\$ 97,324	\$ 97,203	99.88%
Christian Ministry	\$ 13,150	\$ 11,120	84.56%
Christian Education	\$ 2,950	\$ 712	24.13%
Stewardship	\$ 570	\$ 641	112.41%
Trustees	\$ 60,170	\$ 47,754	79.37%
Total Expenses	\$ 174,164	\$ 157,430	90.39%
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (18,183)	\$ 5,690	

14th Annual 12th Night of Christmas Concert

First Congregational United Church of Christ
January 8, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Hello fans,

First, a big thank you to all of our musicians, all others who have donated time and energy toward the event, and to all of our local congregations who come together each year for a last hurrah of Christmas merry making!

Come hear some of the Lakes Area's finest musicians perform your favorite Christmas music. Hans Blix and the Weapons Inspectors will be performing an original composition, BHS's Windfall, a flute trio with BHS's Minnesota Varsity's award winning Claire Gunsbury, the vocal ensemble Consensus, a small group from The Legacy Chorale, vocalist and pianist Phil Kuehn with an original Christmas song, Laura Raedeke and Grace Forbord on an organ/piano duet, among others. Join us!

With Peace~

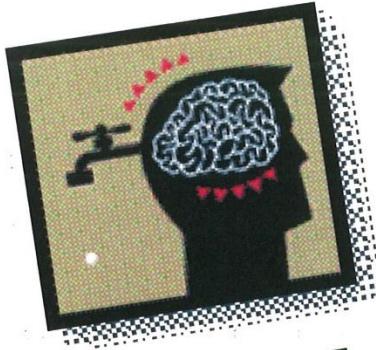
Lori Howe on Behalf of the 12th Night Committee

LAKES AREA MUSIC FESTIVAL

On Thursday, January 19th, the Lakes Area Music Festival is organizing an orchestral journey to Minneapolis for a [Coffee Concert](#) at Orchestral Hall. And you're invited! The daylong tour will include: round-trip bus transportation with your musical tour guide, LAMF director Scott Lykins, a ticket to the 11:00 a.m. performance of the Minnesota Orchestra including complimentary pre-concert donuts and coffee, and lunch at the News Room with conductor Roderick Cox and other LAMF friends of the Minnesota Orchestra! Cost of the trip is \$80. The bus will depart Brainerd around 8:00 a.m. and return at around 5:30 p.m. Please contact Bethany at bethany@lakesareamusic.org or [218-820-6193](tel:218-820-6193) to reserve your spot. **Space is limited to 50 participants and the bus is filling up fast**, so secure your spot today!

Brain Buster Trivia Challenge

Brain Buster Trivia Challenge



Saturday, January 21 2017

First Lutheran Church

424 S 8th St., Brainerd

Check-in 1:00 to 1:45

Play begins at 2:00

\$60.00 per team, up to 6 people per team

Fundraiser for CLC Scholarships

Winning team gets
cheap trophy (that you
have to give back next
year) and bragging
rights!

It's all about:
FUN, FUN, FUN and
Raising \$ for Scholarships

Free Coffee & Treats!
Fun Prizes!

Visit the website for photos,
registration and more!
brainbustertrivia.org

Prize for Best Team Costume!

Register online and pay at the event
More details and contact information at:



brainbustertrivia.org

Church Calendar – January 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship/Communion 11:00 Fellowship/Brunch	2 Office Closed	3	4 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	5	6 10:30 Book Group	7
8 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum 7:00 12 th Night of Christmas Concert	9	10 12:30 Un-greening the church	11 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 11:30 Clergy Cluster	12 5:30 Committee Meetings	13 10:30 Book Group	14
15 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum	16	17	18 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 7:00 Council Meeting	19	20 10:30 Book Group	21
22 10:00 Worship & Food Shelf Offering 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Painting the Stars NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	23	24	25 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	26 5:30 PPRC	27 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	28
29 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum	30	31				