



Friendship News

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

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

Our Pastor, Leslie Moughty's drop-in hours are Wednesday's 2-4pm and Thursday's 10am-12:00pm. Other times available by appointment.

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uccbrainerd.org

January 2018

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

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Pastor's Pen

Joy to the world! Christ is born! Hallelujah! The moment we had been waiting for throughout the 4 weeks of Advent finally arrived. All the shopping, the cooking, cleaning, and preparing for guests, or packing for travel, the decorating, the giving and receiving of presents, the anticipation and the celebration it's all behind us. So now what? If you're like me, you might be feeling a bit of a let down after all the excitement. Or maybe a sense of relief and the ability to relax. I wonder if that's part of the reason that this is the time that we start contemplating our New Year's Resolutions. Life has slowed down a little, and we have some space to contemplate.

According to History.com, New Year's resolutions have been part of people's lives for more than 4,000 years! And yet, how many of us actually keep our resolutions? There must be some folks who do follow through on the commitments they make to themselves at the beginning of the year, but most people I know have really good intentions for a few days and then forget about them as life moves on. The concept of New Year's resolutions is enticing, I think, because they invite us to imagine a new way. They tell us that there is hope that things can be different this time. They also invite us into a time of reflection about what is going well and what we might want to improve. I think these concepts are extremely important and worth our effort. But I think maybe there is a better way to approach them.

A colleague of mine, the Rev. Liz Garrigan-Byerly, suggested that New Year's resolutions give us a false sense of control. They allow us to set our own agenda, to focus on the things we want to focus on. But they can act as blinders to God's Spirit and the way it is moving among us, the way it is calling us in a new direction or to a new perspective. It seems appropriate then that our secular New Year is very close to the celebration of Epiphany. Celebrated on January 6, Epiphany marks the arrival of the Magi after their long journey of following a star to find the Christ child. I recently became aware of the poem "Song on the Feast of the Epiphany" by Christine Rogers. It reminds us to pay attention to the way God might be calling us. Instead of relying on our own sense of direction in our lives, what if we actively searched for God's guiding light? And then, what if we were bold enough to follow it?

Instead of a long list of resolutions this year, I think I will make only one: to seek to follow the star of God's guidance to the place where I am most needed. To open my heart, my eyes, my mind, my spirit, to the leading of the Divine in my life. Imagine how the world might be different if each one of us put our own agendas aside and instead made space for the ways God is calling us as individuals and communities. What a transformation that could be! So let us remember to look up from our daily tasks, our phones, our worries, our fears, to search the sky for God's guiding star. And once we see it, may we be bold enough to follow.

With blessings for the New Year,

Pastor Jessie

Poem source:

www.americamagazine.org/issue/682/poem/song-feast-epiphany

Song on the Feast of the Epiphany

Be bold
like the
Magi.

Do not
tarry,
settling

Into
your comfort,
but rather

Set out
keeping
the star

in your
vision.

It will lead

You
to the place
you are

Most
in need of,
the place

Where
God is.
And if

An angel
warns you
in a dream

Not
to return
by the old

Way, please
listen.

~Christine Rogers

Moderator's Notes

Attending church this past December has been a joyful learning experience for me. I have had quite the revelation. "There are angels among us." For years, I have placed a large angel on our piano at Christmas time. I have also hung my two favorite angel ornaments on our beautiful Christmas tree. Until this year, I have never thought about the significance of angels.

My father was a "strict Lutheran" and I attended Our Savior's Lutheran Church across the street from my home in my teen years. In saying that, I didn't grow up in a very churched home as my father's family lived two hundred miles away from us. I went through confirmation and was president of our Luther League. During the holidays, I am sure I sang Hark! The Herald Angels Sing and Angels We Have Heard on High. However, I don't think I paid attention to the words as well as I should have.

The white feathers in church have been beautiful symbols of an angel's presence. Each Sunday sermon has been thought provoking, inspiring, and provided some wonder in my life. I have started asking friends about how they define the significance of angels in their lives. One friend told me that they believe there are guardian angels. Another told me that being raised in the Catholic church, she had many angels in her life. She thinks angels are messengers. My college roommate told me that she doesn't know if angels are real or make believe. So many different interpretations of a beautiful Christmas decoration that I never thought about before.

Now that I will be making my New Year's resolutions, I will look at the ones I made in the past years. I always keep them tucked away in my drawer. One resolution that is always on my list is to worry less. The wonderful quote on one Sunday's bulletin by Leo Buscaglia was "Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy." Pastor Leslie said that "living in fear robs us of our joy". After church, I thought that I do not need to be afraid. Even though my family has always joked that worrying is genetic, I will decide that there are some things that I have no control over. This January when I watch the stunning sunrises and sunsets with the lovely array of purples, peaches and pinks, I will resolve to worry less. I have hope that an angel will appear who will remind me of joy, love, and everlasting peace. #DoNotBeAfraid

Claire Steen
Church Moderator

HUGS

January 7

Hosts: Carla Benjamin & Jan Morton
Ushers/Greeters: Roger Best, Greg Johnson,
Ken Nelson & Gary Whiteman
Counters: Jeff Behr & Jerry Kuehn

January 14

Hosts: Maria Bertram & Itty Newgord,
Ushers/Greeters: Mary Harder, Lois McBroom,
Austin & Preston Newgord
Counters: Deb Griffith & Judy Whiteman

January 21

Hosts: Brian & Becky Twamley
Ushers: Austin & Itty Newgord
Greeters: Deb Griffith & Claire Steen
Counters: Tracy Lyons & Mabel Schultz

January 28

Hosts: Joey Halvorson & Tracy Lyons
Ushers/Greeters: Ellie Burkett, Tracy Lyons,
Karen Ogdahl & Mike Schrader
Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

Food Shelf Offering – December

In December, we donated \$105 to the Food Shelf! Our next offering will be January 28. **Thank you!**

Confirmation News

After re-assessing the schedules of our youth, Confirmation is moving to Wednesday evenings. We will begin at 5:30 with a light supper and then class time from 6:00 – 7:00. Our first session will be January 24, 2018. Mentors will begin on Wednesday February 7.

A detailed schedule was sent to parents, confirmands, and mentors. If you did not receive one, please contact Pastor Leslie.

Un-greening the Church

January 8 - Un-greening the church at 1:00pm. Many hands make light work! If you enjoyed the beautiful greens and candles during the Advent and Christmas season, we hope you will join us in "un-greening" the church.

January Birthdays

1/1	Lilja Behr	1/13	Marcia Ferris	1/16	Karen Widmark
1/5	Linda Downs	1/14	James Madland	1/22	Pam Patrick
1/7	Macyn Harder McBroom	1/16	Betty Alderman	1/26	Beverly Madland
1/8	Deb Lundberg				

From the Arts Committee

After the gallery wall in Fellowship Hall was completed, we immediately had artists who volunteered to exhibit. The Arts Committee worked together to gather, hang and take down the exhibits. Since the walls have been bare for a couple of months, we need to rethink our strategy. We have lists of artists and willing hands to help in the hanging and taking down the exhibits but we do not have a leader who can do the preliminary work of contacting the artists and making the arrangements to have the artist's work on display. If you are interested in assuming the role of curator (that is a big word, but not a big job!), please contact Nancy Gould or Karen Ford.

We hope the room can be made warmer and more meaningful to those who have meetings and coffee while surrounded by beautiful art!

15th Annual Twelfth Night of Christmas Concert



First Congregational UCC of Brainerd extends a warm welcome to all of you to join us for our 15th Annual 12th Night of Christmas Concert on Sunday, Jan. 7, 2018, at 7 p.m. A free will offering will go to benefit one of our fine school music programs. Hope to see you there, refreshments to follow. For more information:

www.tinyurl.com/12nightconcert

Lakes Area Music Festival

The Lakes Area Music Festival returns on Sunday, January 7 with a concert titled *Virtuoso Baroque*. The Minnesota Orchestra's Roma Duncan will be featured playing flute and piccolo, leading an ensemble of strings in music by Antonio Vivaldi and Johann Sebastian Bach. The concert will take place beginning at 2pm at Trinity Lutheran Church in [Brainerd \(1420 South Sixth Street\)](#). This concert is free of charge and open to the public. For more information, visit lakesareamusic.org.

Confidence Learning Center Volunteer Opportunities

Happy Holidays to you and yours from all the campers and staff at Confidence Learning Center. Thank you for all the heart felt donations you have given throughout 2017! Let's build a volunteer bridge together, invite a friend to join "Team Confidence"! Confidence Learning Center NEEDS YOU! Please reserve your volunteer dates with Mary Harder, Volunteer Director: Main: 218-828-2344, Direct: 218-828-5069, mary@camconfidence.com.

January 6 & 13 – 9-3 pm – Cabin Cleaning – Let's continue to Holiday giving by helping to deep clean camp cabins. We are looking for up to 30 people. Please RSVP at least a week prior to the date.

January 11 – 5-7:30 pm – Rendezvous: Minute-to-Win-it activities – Assist our campers with Minute-to-Win-it activities.

January 25, 26 & 27 – Jaycee Ice Fishing Extravaganza – organizational meeting and sell tickets/raffles at designated off-ice sites.

Chalberg Theater, Central Lakes College

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) 101 - January 18, 2018, 12-2 pm

The ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experience), which was conducted in the 1990s, confirmed with scientific evidence that childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on lifelong health, mental and emotional wellbeing, and behavioral problems. The ACE study and other research using the study's framework have taught us that ACEs are the leading cause of health and social problems in our nation and the most powerful determinant of the public's health. Through understanding historical and family contexts of how ACEs cycles get perpetuated, and focusing on our own personal wellbeing and resilience building, we can change the trajectory of our own lives, as well as those of our future children, grandchildren, and those with whom we share our lives.

Presenter - Susan Beaulieu is an enrolled member of the Red Lake Nation and mother of three. She has worked with tribal communities over 12 years in a variety of roles including youth development and community organizing. Susan is the Director of Tribal N.E.A.R. Sciences and Community Wisdom Project for Minnesota Communities Caring for Children (MCCC). Her educational background includes Social Sciences, Public Policy, Education and Health. She holds a Master's degree from the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and is currently working on her Ph.D. in the Social and Administrative Pharmacy program at the University of Minnesota. Susan is also a 2016 Bush Fellow focusing on building resilience and wellbeing at the individual, family and community levels. She resides in Baxter, Minnesota with her family.

Resilience: The Biology of Trauma and the Science of Hope - February 1, 2018 at 7:00 pm

Join us for a viewing of this award winning documentary featuring national experts on the effects of trauma on individual and public health. Creative solutions to the problems of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) will be offered. Q&A to follow the movie. Free and open to the public.

Church Council Minutes – December 13, 2017

Moderator – Claire Steen	Assistant Moderator – Mike North
Clerk – Barb Stokke	Treasurer – Deb Lundberg
Christian Ministry – Karen Ford	Trustees – Deb Griffith
Christian Education – Barb McColgan	Stewardship – Judy Whiteman
Council at Large – Bonnie Crum, Gary Whiteman, Bob Jones	

Present: Claire Steen, Mike North, Barb Stokke, Deb Lundberg, Karen Ford, Deb Griffith, Barb McColgan, Judy Whiteman, Bonnie Crum, Gary Whiteman, Bob Jones, and Rev. Leslie Moughty.

Claire Steen called the meeting to order. Deb Griffith shared December's *Food for Thought*. Bonnie Crum will provide January's.

CLERK'S REPORT – Grace Forbord moved to the Cities and requests her membership be cancelled.

PASTOR'S REPORT – Highlights: Attended UCC Clergy Cluster, completed Administrative Assistant's Annual Review with Executive Committee, met with the Care Team, held the 3rd Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance Service, and completed White Privilege Curriculum Training, attended WeARE meeting, participated in the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service at Park United Methodist Church, and began work on Trauma Informed Congregations project. Pastoral Care contacts include 2 home visits with 4 people, 1 formal office visit, multiple ad-hoc contacts at church, and accompanied a parishioner to an appointment. Council discussed ways for Pastor Leslie, the Care Team, and other parishioners to meet the needs of the congregation through home and hospital visits.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Council discussed the makeup of the budget packets for the Annual Budget Meeting December 17.

TRUSTEES' REPORT – Council heard details of a second appraisal for stained-glass window repairs and discussed ways to finance them.

STEWARDSHIP – Stewardship continues work on legacy presentations to be given during adult forums.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY – CM is preparing upcoming Sunday services and Taizé services to be held monthly beginning in January.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – CE completed preparations for the Christmas program and the Make and Take activity.

MEMBERS AT LARGE – Bonnie Crum will check on the progress of the directory and the updating of addresses. Hard copies and computer copies of directory will be available.

OLD BUSINESS:

*The Administrative Assistant Evaluation was completed; the Pastor Evaluation will be completed in January.

*Pathways Staffing for UCC's week is complete, except for two overnight hosts. Work continues on staffing the week prior to ours. *The new announcement policy is going well.

*The bylaws committee held their first meeting. Pastor Leslie noted the contributions of Michael Kuehn, youth representative.

NEW BUSINESS:

*Deb Lundberg and the Council completed a line-by-line review of the 2018 budget, reducing expenditures as much as possible before presenting the budget to the congregation. It is a deficit budget, but as Pastor Leslie reminded us, this is a plan – a goal we feel confident we can achieve. Mike North made a motion that we take to the church congregation the budget as presented here with the exception that we're going to reduce the church utilities from \$21,000 to \$17,000, and we are going to add a line for miscellaneous income and receipts of \$1,165. Barb McColgan seconded the motion. The motion passed.

*The Council recommended that contributions to special projects be tracked and reported; that money raised in the church this year stays in the church; and that in the future, special projects or recipients of fundraising efforts be determined in advance of the events.

* In January, the Council will discuss the focus for 2018.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

The next committee meetings will be January 11, 2018; the next Council meeting will be January 17 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stokke, Clerk of Council

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd				
Financial Results - General Fund				
Year to Date Results as of 11/30/2017				
	2017 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 11/30/17	% of Budget	Actuals Through 11/30/16
Income:				
From Giving Units	\$ 117,365	\$ 149,527	127.40%	\$ 146,389
Other Giving	\$ 32,146	\$ 16,116	50.13%	\$ 16,731
Total Income	\$ 149,511	\$ 165,643	110.79%	\$ 163,120
Expenses:				
Council	\$ 102,901	\$ 107,186	104.16%	\$ 97,203
Christian Ministry	\$ 3,120	\$ 4,109	131.71%	\$ 4,067
Music Committee	\$ 9,700	\$ 7,058	72.77%	\$ 6,899
Christian Education	\$ 650	\$ 289	44.53%	\$ 712
Stewardship	\$ 600	\$ 900	149.98%	\$ 641
Trustees	\$ 55,110	\$ 45,648	82.83%	\$ 47,754
Total Expenses	\$ 172,081	\$ 165,191	96.00%	\$ 157,276
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (22,570)	\$ 452		\$ 5,844

Church Calendar – January 2018

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