



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.

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uccbrainerd.org

February 2015

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

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PRAYER FOR EACH DAY

Lord God, You have called us to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us, and your love supporting us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Announcements

The In Between Time

The Christian Ministry Committee will lead worship on the Sunday in between Pastor Linda's last Sunday, February 1, and Pastor Leslie's first Sunday, February 15. David Crum will be on call for pastoral responsibilities during that period. For any pastoral care needs, David may be reached at 218-330-3168.

POETRY SLAM AT UCC

February 22!

From ancient times and the Psalms, to the recent renaissance of local writing, poetry has been an effective and enjoyable means of expression. Join us as we do the third annual UCC poetry slam! Come just to listen, OR bring some short poems that you would like to share. If you would rather not read the poem(s) you bring, we will find an extravert somewhere to read them. Poems can be original, or selected from your favorite source.

This is going to be a poetic experience!

Planning Ahead: Hans Blix Returns

March 22

Hans Blix and the Weapons Inspectors, a popular local bluegrass band, will offer a benefit concert here on Sunday, March 22 at 3 p.m. in our sanctuary. As part of the Minnesota Food Share March Campaign, this concert will benefit the Brainerd Food Shelf. Let's "Pack the Pews" to benefit an essential outreach ministry in our community!

THE PASTOR'S PEN

Rev. Linda K. Crowe, Interim Pastor

As this season of interim ministry concludes, it is with deep gratitude and sincere appreciation that I write this final letter as your interim pastor. The past two years have been absolutely rich with blessings!

Thank you for welcoming Randy and me to Brainerd in February of 2013. Thank you for your investment of work, energy and "elbow grease" at the parsonage. You transformed the parsonage into a beautiful and comfortable home. Thank you for your gracious hospitality in so many ways. Thank you for inviting us into your homes and your lives.

This church family is characterized by many positive attributes. I am grateful for your wonderful spirit, your incredible energy, and your faithful participation in worship and church activities. I am so grateful for your progressive perspective and your "can do" attitude. It is a blessing that you are a forward-thinking congregation with a commitment to working on justice issues. I am grateful the young people of this church family are being shaped in significant ways by caring adults. I am grateful for adults committed to life-long learning. During the past two years, it has been a privilege to accompany all of you on your journeys of faith. My own faith has grown as well!

Your hospitality with homeless families served by New Pathways and with clients of the Soup Kitchen is generous as well as genuinely caring. I am grateful that many of you are now making a regular monthly commitment to the Food Shelf. I am thankful you are blessing Food Shelf clients with fresh, delicious produce from God's Garden. I am grateful for all the ways you love your neighbors in this

community, including volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and teaching literacy at the Crow Wing County Jail. In so many ways, as you serve God in this community, you are blessing others with your presence and your gifts.

I am grateful for your work to make marriage equality a reality in Minnesota. You wrote letters and you knocked on doors to visit with neighbors. You helped make sure that important legislation was passed in this state. I am also grateful for your support for anti-bullying legislation. You have helped to make Minnesota schools safer for all students. I am thankful for your support for environmental work. You recognize the relationship between the actions of humankind and the ways God's creation is affected. Your commitment to justice work reflects your commitment to God.

I am grateful that so many of you participated in small group gatherings last winter, in spite of the weather. In our conversations, we celebrated the strengths and gifts of this congregation and we looked at the needs of this community and of the world. We did some creative thinking about where and what God might be calling this congregation to in the time to come. The following issues were chosen as a focus for the time ahead: intentional hospitality, environmental issues, social justice issues, and promotion in the wider community. Your participation in small group gatherings will help to shape and guide this family of faith.

I am deeply grateful you made it possible for seven young people from this congregation to attend church camp together. That experience was transformative! It is so important for our youth to be able to gather with youth and adults from other UCC churches. It is important for them to be with other people from our progressive denomination. Youth need time with other UCC people who recognize that Open and Affirming is not an oddity—it is just an ordinary and important part of our UCC identity.

I am so grateful this congregation did not simply go into a “holding pattern” for the interim season. You moved forward with mission and ministry and you served God with energy and enthusiasm. You are such blessings!

Thank you for calling me to serve as your interim pastor. Thank you for opening your hearts to Randy and to me. We had no idea that we would fall in love with this church family, with the Brainerd lakes region, and with the great state of Minnesota!

Thank you for enabling us to experience the love of God in this place, with all of you. For all the blessings of this time of service as your interim pastor, thank you, thank you, thank you!

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Moderator's Musings

By Ann Turnbull

Coleen and I had the pleasure of representing First Congregational United Church of Christ of Brainerd, Minnesota at the ordination of the Rev. Leslie Moughty on Sunday, January 18th. It was an honor for us to represent our church family on this important day in Leslie's life!

An ordination service celebrates God and the completion of a period in which a person seeks to discern if God is indeed calling her/him to have a vocation in Christian ministry. S/he attends seminary, studying, reflecting and gaining experience in various aspects of ministry. During this time Leslie has been under the care of Northshore United Church of Christ Church in Woodinville, Washington, her home church. She has found direction, wisdom and support from

a number of people in the Pacific Northwest Conference and at the Pacific School of Religion, where she attended seminary. She says her pastor, the Rev. Cynthia Riggan has been particularly helpful in guiding and encouraging her as she has processed the idea of changing careers. The ordination service is a gathering of family, friends, mentors and colleagues to recognize and celebrate Leslie's response to God's call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. A number of people from the conference, mentors and friends participated in the service. I was asked to read the Exhortation prior to the examination in which Leslie confirmed that she is persuaded that God has called her to be an ordained minister of the church of Jesus Christ.

The service took place at Kirkland United Church of Christ with the fellowship team from Northshore United Church of Christ providing a Lasagna Dinner after the service. It was a privilege to meet Leslie's mom, dad, brother and his wife. Coleen was happy to meet Ken, Leslie's husband, since the search committee members were the only ones to have had that opportunity.

It is customary to give the ordinand gifts. Her parents gave her a white robe. She received a Bible from the Northwest Conference and a number of stoles, one of which was a lovely depiction of the church camp where she has provided leadership on one side and the signature of all the campers on the other. It was obvious to me that Leslie will be greatly missed in Washington state.

The accompanying picture shows Leslie wearing the stole we presented on behalf of our congregation. As Coleen explained at church on Sunday, this stole is two sided with one side depicting water, the symbol of life and baptism with the reverse side being purple with golden threads which can be worn during the seasons of Lent and Advent. It was made by the Rev. Sandy Johnson from the Minnesota Conference. Interestingly enough, Sandy was in the Pacific Northwest Conference before coming to Minnesota.



Incidentally, a memorable moment in the service was when a group of young Seahawks fans came down the sidewalk beside the church cheering and celebrating that the Seahawks had pulled off a win in overtime. It was during a serious part of the service, the examination, but the congregation cheered and waved to fans before continuing!

Many people made a special effort to introduce themselves and tell us how lucky we are to have Leslie for our pastor. We assured them that we feel privileged that she has chosen to lead our congregation and that she will be loved and supported by our church family.

It is a small world. Kirkland United Church of Christ is Randy and Linda's home church. Randy grew up in that church family and he and Linda were members there when they lived in Seattle and first started working with junior high youth. We even checked out the alter where Randy has hidden while playing sardines, cramming 6 people in there!

Leslie and Ken will arrive in Brainerd on Friday, February 6th and she will begin work the following Thursday. Our congregation is publicizing the beginning of her ministry here by placing posters around the community inviting folks to come to our church. As Phil reminded us on Sunday, we need to be especially ready to welcome community members who may respond to our invitation!

Linda's last Sunday is February 1st. Please join us in giving Linda and Randy a warm send off. A brunch will follow the service. Plan to stay and celebrate the Crowe's ministry with us during this interim season. What a blessing they have been to our church family!

Ann Turnbull

Christian Ministry Department

H.U.G.S.

February 1

Host: Eric Steen

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

Counters: Jeff Behr & Marcia Ferris

February 8

Hosts: Tom Nelson & Karen Ford

Greeter/Ushers: Maria Bertram, Itty Newgord, Nicole Grabowski & Preston Newgord

Counters: Deb Griffith & Marcia Mans

February 15

Hosts: Deb Griffith & Claire Steen

Greeters/Ushers: Deb Lundberg, Shirley Barten, Duane Shatava & Jim Flath

Counters: Coleen Carder & Vi Heiser

February 22

Hosts: Ellie Burkett & Colleen Todd

Greeters/Ushers: Beth & Mike Schrader, Itty Newgord & Karen Ogdahl

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

Adult Forum Schedule for February

02/01 – Farewell Brunch for Randy & Linda

02/08 – Zoom with Ellie Burkett

02/15 – Transforming Christian Theology with David Crum

02/22 – Poetry Slam with Lowell Johnson & Joey Halvorson

Food Shelf Offering – February 22

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. On January 25, we collected 151 pounds of groceries and \$125. Our next offering will be on Sunday, February 22

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!

Soup Kitchen – February 27

Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve an evening meal at the Soup Kitchen on February 27. 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.

All in the Church Family

In Our Prayers

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

Pray for healing for: Doug, Aaron, Fran, Eric, Adam, Sue, Joey, Lars, Suzanne, Karmie, Ray, Katherine, Eli, Jan, Kay, Deb, Margie, Martha, Dorothy, JoAnne, Kelly, Terri, Michael, Warren, Tim, and Cheri. Pray also for: Hannah, Jen, Doris, Ethan, Kaitlin, Stefanie, Nancy, Natalie, Jim, Aubrey, Tony, Marcia, Jacob, Fred, Andrew, Ricky, Faith and Andy. Pray for all who are grieving, suffering, or struggling. Pray for victory over Ebola. Pray for creation and its blessings. Pray for those seeking employment. Pray for caregivers; give thanks for those who give so much love and care to those whose lives are made better each day because of their kindness and dedication. Pray for those working to overcome addictions. Pray for guidance for young people. Give thanks for the incredible young people of our congregation! Pray for those who experience oppression. Give us the courage to change this world for the better. Pray for those who are incarcerated. Pray for an end to racial violence. Pray for those in the midst of significant transitions. Pray for peace and justice in our nation and in our world. Pray for the people we serve at the Soup Kitchen. O God, thank you for the spirit and blessings of this church family! Thanks for the grace of forgiveness, for renewing trust, and for the immense bounty of Life. O God, give me courage to witness and be the person you would want me to be, to speak up, to stand up to injustice, to power and to ignorance. God, thank you for a home and family. I am so thankful for a place to sleep and I wish I could help the people that don't have a family or a home or a nice place to sleep. Loving God, be with all those who are struggling and suffering today. May they know they are your beloved children. May each one of us recognize your love. May we share your love with those in need. Thank you. Amen.



February Birthdays.....

02/07	Annie Grabowski	02/18	Ann Turnbull
02/10	Roger Best	02/23	Barbara Watson
02/11	Dorothy Blau	02/24	Colleen LeBlanc
02/11	Roger Maas	02/29	Grace Johnson
02/16	Edmond Hopps		

Church Council Minutes

Church Council Minutes

January 21, 2015

Moderator – Ann Turnbull

Assistant Moderator – Phil Kuehn

Clerk – Karen Ogdahl

Treasurer – Lisa Wigand

Christian Ministry – Beth Schrader

Trustees – Coleen Carder

Christian Education – Itty Newgord

Stewardship – Marcia Mans

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

Present: Rev. Linda Crowe, Beth Schrader, Phil Kuehn, Grace Johnson, Dan Hegstad, Gary Whiteman, Marcia Mans

Assistant Moderator Phil Kuehn called the meeting to order with a prayer from Pastor Linda.

The November and December minutes were approved.

CLERK'S REPORT – No report

TREASURER'S REPORT – No report

PASTOR'S REPORT

Linda has been finishing her duties as interim minister. She has visited all shut-ins and prepared a partial end of the year statement for the annual meeting to be left with Colleen Todd. She expressed gratitude for all that this congregation has meant to Randy and her. The council reiterated how lucky we have been to have them these past two years.

STEWARDSHIP'S REPORT

Marcia explained that this committee will not meet in January or February, instead handling the small amount of business by email. A letter was included in the annual statements recently sent and some on the committee helped Colleen get these statements prepared for mailing.

TRUSTEE'S REPORT

The meeting minutes of the 14th were reviewed. All people who have keys to the church will be reminded to check all outside doors before leaving at night. There have been incidents of the front door being left unlocked. There may be a change in the cleaning crew this next semester. Itty will notify the council if more help is needed by the congregation. The new insurance agency, Grinnell Mutual from Iowa, will save the church around \$3,000.00. We will need to do background checks on all members working with children. Transition within the parsonage was discussed. Linda and Randy will be leaving on February 2nd. Leslie

and Ken will arrive on February 6. There are people volunteering to prepare the parsonage for this transition. Marcia will ask Sue Hadland if she needs help in preparing a farewell reception for the Crowe family. The council voted by consensus to accept the formal agreement of Guidelines and Responsibilities at the parsonage for the new occupants.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Their meeting was about filling the worship responsibilities for Feb. 8. Jan Kurtz will officiate with help from others in the congregation. Leslie's first Sunday will be Feb. 15. Beth will contact Leslie about her needs for Ash Wednesday Feb. 18th, and if she will be planning a Lenten series. March 22 at 3:00 will be the Food Share Concert. Hans Blix will be performing.

NEW BUSINESS

Phil presented a poster that he had composed to advertise Leslie's arrival to the community. Phil will get Leslie's approval and her picture printed and these posters will be ready to give to those in the congregation for distribution to the public if she approves. Dan Hegstad asked if we could reinstate the marketing committee that used to work for the publicity of our church. Beth moved that such a committee be established and Gary seconded the motion. After discussion the motion was approved with Dan being asked to spearhead this committee.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. Because of Lent, we will discuss with Leslie and Ann when and at what time the council will meet during this period. It should be noted that the 5:30 time makes it very difficult for several members to get to the meeting promptly.

Marcia Mans

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd Financial Results - General Fund As of December 31, 2014

	Annual Budget	<i>PRELIMINARY</i> Results Through December 31, 2014	% of Budget
Income:			
From Giving Units	\$ 131,090	\$ 167,057	127.44%
Other Giving	\$ 26,820	\$ 24,882	92.77%
Total Income	\$ 157,910	\$ 191,939	
Expenses:			
Council	\$ 106,261	\$ 114,283	107.55%
Christian Ministry	\$ 10,800	\$ 14,717	136.27%
Christian Education	\$ 1,300	\$ 3,377	259.77%
Stewardship	\$ 440	\$ 353	80.23%
Trustees	\$ 47,900	\$ 52,152	108.88%
Total Expenses	\$ 166,701	\$ 184,882	
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (8,791)	\$ 7,057	

These are the preliminary results for 2014, but we have not yet made all year-end adjustments. The church received a very generous \$25,000 contribution in late 2014 from the estate of Betty Turnquist Lee. The family has requested that we designate the funds to improvements in the lighting and sound systems in the Fellowship Hall. We are grateful for their generosity.

CHURCH CALENDAR — February 2015

1 Sunday	2 Monday	3 Tuesday	4 Wednesday	5 Thursday	6 Friday	7 Saturday
8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship/Communion 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum – LtQ			9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn		10:30 Book Group	
8 Communion 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Zoom – Ellie Burkett	9	10	9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 3:00 Christian Ministry 5:30 Trustees	12	13 10:30 Book Group	14
Host New Pathways Week	New Pathways	New Pathways	New Pathways	New Pathways	New Pathways	New Pathways
15 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Transforming Christian Theology – David Crum New Pathways Last Day	16	17	18 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Church Council	19	20 10:30 Book Group 6:00 Process & Film	21
22 *FOOD SHELF OFFERING* 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:30 Poetry Slam	23	24	25 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	26	27 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	28

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**Interim Pastor
Linda K. Crowe**

**Admin. Assist.
Colleen Todd**