



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.

Office phone 218-829-2528

E-mail firstcong@brainerd.net

Website uccbrainerd.org

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

"Look, I'll pour out my spirit on you. I'll reveal my words to you." (Proverbs 1:23)

Have you ever misplaced your phone—which is on vibrate of course—and then asked someone to call it? We get really still and really quiet. Our ears perk up in all directions in order to be ready to hear that little buzz. It is a quieting down and high alert all at the same time. The world around us seems more "noisy" than ever. There is so much happening in the news, with technology, even in our own circle of friends and family, it is impossible to keep up. With all of this noise, it can be easy to miss hearing the voice of God. This Lent we will quiet things down and heighten our attention to the "still, small voice" of God and of our own True Self. Listening through prayer as well as meditation on holy texts is an ancient Lenten practice.

The season of Lent is a wonderful opportunity to re-orient ourselves to what is truly important in our lives, to be intentional about taking time to listen for God. I hope you will join us for a season of centeredness and listening beginning with Ash Wednesday on February 14.

Come and rest, come and listen.

With peace,

Pastor Jessie

Moderator's Notes

In the beginning of January, I took a trip to Costco to pick up some medications. On my way into the store, I was greeted with twenty-six different products to help me with my New Year's resolutions. They ranged from Fiber Well to Adult Multi-Vitamin Gummies to Glucosamine Chondroitin and Tumeric. After all of the "health improvement" products, there were Fitbits and giant jars of Combat Protein Powder. Between the gym equipment and supplements, there are so many products targeted at improving our physical health and appearance this time of year.

After comparing all of these health products, I decided to check out what they had to improve the mind or spiritual being. I found on an end cap the "Deluxe" book set of Jesus Calling, Jesus Today, and Jesus Always. It was striking the lack of attention on improving our mental or spiritual health. Don't get me wrong. I love shopping at Costco. However, I feel that their focus on physical health is a reflection the present mindset in our society and our obsession with appearance.

The next day in the Friday edition of the Brainerd Dispatch, the headline in the religion section read "Does your New Year's resolution involve prayer? Ways to kick-start your prayer life." The article addressed Labyrinths, Lectio Divina (sacred reading), the prayer wheel and fixed-hour prayer. I feel fortunate that our church sponsored a Taize Prayer Service for our congregation and the community. The setting with the poinsettias and lighting was beautiful and the prayer service was very powerful. Thank you to everyone who planned and executed this meaningful event. Between the Taize Prayer Service and the 12th Night Concert at our church, I got a "kick-start" in my spiritual beginning to the year 2018. How lucky am I to worship in a community that values our spiritual and mental health as well as our physical?

Claire Steen
Church Moderator

Thank You!

We would like to thank Betty Johnson for a very generous gift to the church. Thanks to Betty's generosity, we were able to pay off the church mortgage and will be able to repair the stain glass windows in the sanctuary.

UCC Special Offerings

The United Church of Christ has four special offerings throughout the year. In December the First Congregational UCC held the offering for the Christmas Fund. \$767.00 was collected. The monies are used to help retired clergy with a supplement in case of emergencies. Thank you to everyone that helped support this cause.

15th Annual Twelfth Night Concert

What a wonderful evening this was on January 7th. Our church was full and brimming over with lovely, fun music along with some wonderful hymns, and the weather cooperated!

May I extend my sincere thanks to all who performed, all who helped with this event, and all who came to enjoy it. Much appreciation to performers: Grace Forbord, Laura Raedeke, Hans Blix, Scott Lykins, Izzy Armstrong, the CLC Chamber singers and Consensus, who unfortunately, were unable to perform due to illness.

Many thanks to all who helped in so many ways with this evening; Sue Hadland, Becky Twamley, Jan Morton, Greg and Judy Whiteman, Karen Ogdahl, Dan Hegstad, Joe Stattine, Erik Steen, Mary Reardon, Claire Steen, Karen Ford, Deb Griffith, Lance James, Pastor Leslie, Bobbie Borg, Laura Raedeke and Grace Forbord. Thank you to all who offered encouragement, support, wisdom and experience.

We raised \$700.00 !! This will go to help one of our fine school music programs.

Sincerely, Nancy Gould

Confirmation Schedule – February

All classes will meet on Wednesday's from 6:00 – 7:30.

February 7 – Session 3: Meet Your Mentor

February 14 – Ash Wednesday 6:00 pm (Participants must either attend this service or one service during Holy Week.)

February 21 – No class, Council meeting

February 28 – *Sexuality and Faith* at WeARE Clinic (424 James Street in Brainerd.) This class is optional.

Preparing for the End of Life – Adult Forum Series

Talking about death is often uncomfortable and awkward. As a result, too many of us don't plan well for the inevitable end of our lives. But avoiding the topic all together doesn't prevent death from happening and we may find ourselves ill-prepared or our family and friends wondering what our wishes might have been.

Beginning on February 25th, our adult forum sessions during Lent will focus on preparing for the end of life. Topics will include a conversation about death and the afterlife, advance directives, planning your funeral, leaving a legacy, and more.

We hope you will join us for this important conversation!

February Birthdays

2/7	Annie Grabowski	2/11	Roger Maas	2/24	Colleen LeBlanc
2/10	Roger Best	2/18	Ann Turnbull	2/28	Ken Moughty
2/11	Dorothy Blau	2/23	Barbara Watson	2/29	Grace Johnson

HUGS

February 4

Hosts: Marcia Ferris & Dan Hegstad

Ushers/Greeters: Reed Campbell,
Greg Johnson & Gary Whiteman

Counters: Jeff Behr & Jerry Kuehn

February 11

Hosts: Maria Bertram & Marina Grabowski,

Ushers/Greeters: Jack & Kay Kraywinkle,
Austin & Itty Newgord

Counters: Deb Griffith & Judy Whiteman

February 18

Hosts: Charlotte Goedsche & Cynthia Janes

Ushers: Marina Grabowski & Deb Griffith

Greeters: Cheri Maxwell & Kathy Ogden

Counters: Tracy Lyons & Mabel Schultz

February 25

Host: Karen Ogdahl

Ushers/Greeters: Ellie Burkett,
Erik, Kai & Kyd Lukanen

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

New Pathways

Our next New Pathways Week: Sunday, February 18 – 25, 2018

Please consider volunteering for dinner, overnights, set up, tear down or transportation by contacting

Staying overnight: Sue Hadland – 829-2381 – dghrose@charter.net,

Kathi Hefti – 839-1578 – hefti3@gmail.com

Dinners: Sharon Carlson – 828-1581 sharoncarlson62@charter.net

Set up and take down (2 Sundays): Deb Griffith – 828-4841 – debrange@brainerd.net

Transportation: Scott Gutierrez – 838-7066 – sljtgutierrez@gmail.com

Activities: Lance James – lancejames32@gmail.com

Basic food buying, (other than dinners): Jan Morton – jan56401@gmail.com

The white board used for signing up, is in the church sanctuary lobby each Sunday.

THANK YOU from The New Pathways Team!

THE REWARDS ARE MANY, AS A VOLUNTEER, AND AS OUR GUEST

Crow Wing County Historical Society

Did you know that the church is a member of the Crow Wing County Historical Society? There are many benefits to being a member, which all of you are able to use! Our membership benefits are:

- Free admission
- 10% discount in the gift shop and a discount on copies and scans
- Personal invitation to the annual meeting and voting privileges
- Membership in the Time Travelers Network which includes free or discounted admission or other benefits at over 250 historic sites in the United States

They are located at 320 Laurel Street. Go check it out!

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@campconfidence.com.

February 8 – 5 am-7:30 pm – Rendezvous: Science Exploration – Assist our campers with doing science projects.

February 15 – 8:30 am-2:00 pm – Region 2 Special Olympics Winter Carnival – Assist with facilitating inner tubing, snow shoeing, face painting, ice fishing, snow mobile rides, broom ball, on ice bowling, Olympic bean bag toss, participation certificate distribution.

February 23 – 5:30-7:00 pm – Frozen Flop on Gull Lake – Join the Confidence Learning Center "FROZEN FLOPPERS" and jump in the Gull Lake to support Confidence Learning Center and Kids Against Hunger. If you want to show your support but not jump in the frozen lake you can log onto Frozen Flop Brainerd, click on teams, click on Confidence Frozen Floppers and make a donation on our behalf.

February 24 – 10:00 am-2:00 pm OR 2-6:00 pm – Gull Lake Frozen Fore – Be an Ambassador for Confidence Learning Center by being a Bus Host and welcome participants onto the buses, check for participation wrist bands and share information about camp.

GLBTQ Sessions

The Northwoods UU Fellowship will be facilitating a discussion of books about the experience of GLBTQ persons on Sunday, February 11, as well as sponsoring a panel of GLBTQ high school students on Sunday, February 25, who are willing to talk about what school is like for them nowadays.

Meetings are held at 10:30 at the Tiny Sprouts Daycare, 28877 MN 371 (take the Patriot Ave. exit and go left, around the frontage road). Religious Education and snacks are provided.

Any questions, please contact Pat at patwak@charter.net.

Host an Exchange Student

In search of great families to host exchange students for the 2018-2019 school year! Families choose their student(s), provide 3 meals a day, a bed (can share a room with another child of the same sex) and reasonable amount of transportation to extra-curricular activities. The students bring money to pay for cell phone, toiletries, entertainment, medical co-pays (they are fully insured) and they are expected to help out with chores similar to your own kids. Families can be single parents, same sex couples, divorced families, families with kids/without kids and hold a desire to host, treat, and love the student as part of their family! Hosting is an unforgettable experience! Send me a message for more information! Suzanne Sevlie ssevlie@yfu.org

Church Council Minutes – January 17, 2018



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	

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Claire Steen. Members present were Karen Ford, Bob Jones, Gary Whiteman, Judy Whiteman, Barb McColgan, Bonnie Crum, Deb Griffith and Pastor Leslie Moughty.

Council – The minutes from the last Council meeting were approved.

Clerk – no report

Pastor – There will be an upcoming workshop, planned by a group of clergy and Lowell Johnson, called “Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): A Faith-Filled Response.” The event will be held Thursday, March 1, 10AM – 2PM and is open to everyone. More information to come.

Confirmation will take place on Wednesday evenings from 6 – 7:30pm, starting on Jan 24. This timing does not work with the mid-week Lenten gatherings on Feb 28 or Mar 7, unless someone fills in for Leslie on those dates. Or the Lenten gatherings could be moved to Thursdays where there would be a conflict on March 8 when committees meet. No decision made.

Trustees – Deb Griffith announced the receipt of \$60,000 from member Betty Johnson for the purposes of repairing the church’s stained glass windows and retiring the mortgage. The Council expressed the desire to celebrate this gift sometime in the spring with, perhaps, a cake during coffee hour and a burning of the mortgage, as well as an announcement from the pulpit for the next couple of Sundays.

The Trustees are in the process of reviewing the church’s insurance to be sure we are covered for everything necessary but not over insured.

Stewardship – There will be a volunteer breakfast one Sunday in April, which is Volunteer Month.

Ministry – There will be a Taizé service every third Thursday for an indefinite period of time. This is a meditative service with music and singing starting at 6pm and lasting 45 minutes.

There was also a worship service over breakfast with Taizé songs on Jan 1.

The greening and un-greening of the church was handled by this committee as well.

Christian Education – The CE committee hopes to take the children to participate in the Soup Kitchen and also go to Camp Confidence. Their plan is to publicize these dates and events in advance.

Members at Large – Occasionally items are needed for the church that are not in the budget, so Bonnie Crum volunteered to be the person in charge of a list, which will be put in the newsletter. It is important to stress that these donations are **in addition to** a pledge, not a designated gift taken from one’s pledge.

There has been an expressed need for a coat rack in or near Fellowship Hall. Bob Jones volunteered to take measurements, check out the rack that people like at the Methodist Church, and build one.

Old Business -

Questions were asked about the progress of the church directory. Now that Christmas is over, Bobbie will have more time to work on it. Bonnie Crum has also volunteered to do anything she can do to help move the project along.

The Executive Committee will meet on January 19 to work on the Pastor Evaluation.

An e-mail from Ellie Burkett expressed a reminder to let her know when forum ideas arise and when things are scheduled on a Sunday which would preclude a forum.

There was a discussion about mission statements and the focus of the church and the need for the congregation to have some ownership in them. Possibly it is time to have some conversations/meetings/sermons around these issues.

The Cooking Group met to decide where to use the money that was raised between the Russian Dinner and the Silent Auction, a total of \$2400. It was decided to keep \$600 for the Cooking Group fund, with the rest to go to the general fund of the church.

The sale of Third World coffee, chocolate and olive oil is being discontinued within the church. These products have not been selling probably because they are widely available now.

The meeting adjourned with the reciting of the Lord's Prayer.

Submitted by Bonnie Crum, substitute clerk

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd				
Financial Results - General Fund				
Year to Date Results as of 12/31/2017				
	2017 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 12/31/17	% of Budget	Actuals Through 12/31/16
Income:				
From Giving Units	\$ 117,365	\$ 162,218	138.22%	\$ 161,047
Other Giving	\$ 32,146	\$ 23,772	73.95%	\$ 20,363
Total Income	\$ 149,511	\$ 185,990	124.40%	\$ 181,410
Expenses:				
Council	\$ 102,901	\$ 116,963	113.67%	\$ 107,991
Christian Ministry	\$ 3,120	\$ 4,666	149.54%	\$ 4,548
Music Committee	\$ 9,700	\$ 8,570	88.35%	\$ 8,451
Christian Education	\$ 650	\$ 317	48.84%	\$ 712
Stewardship	\$ 600	\$ 949	158.12%	\$ 694
Trustees	\$ 55,110	\$ 50,292	91.26%	\$ 52,338
Total Expenses	\$ 172,081	\$ 181,756	105.62%	\$ 174,734
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (22,570)	\$ 4,234		\$ 6,675

Church Calendar – February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 10:30 Book Group	3
4 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship/Communion 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum	5	6	7 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 6:00 Confirmation Class	8 5:30 Committee Meetings	9 10:30 Book Group 11:30 Clergy Cluster	10
11 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum	12	13	14 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 6:00 Ash Wednesday Service	15 6:00 Taize Service	16 10:30 Book Group	17
18 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum	19	20	21 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Lent Service 7:00 Council	22 9:00 Executive Committee Meeting 5:30 PPRC	23 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	24
25 10:00 Worship & Food Shelf Offering 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum Newsletter Deadline	26	27	28 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group & Sawmill Inn 5:30 Lent Service 6:00 Confirmation Class @ WeARE the Clinic			