



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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firstcong@brainerd.net.

uccbrainerd.org

March 2015

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

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Announcements

Friday Morning's Quantum Questions

Friday Morning Book Group will venture into challenging territory with a new book starting April 3. The book is Quantum Questions: Mystical Writings of the World's Greatest Physicists by Ken Wilber. Wilber bridges the perceived chasm between religion and science by letting the world's greatest physicists speak for themselves. This collection features the writings of such scientists as Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg and Max Planck. The selections are written in nontechnical language and will be of interest to scientists and nonscientists alike.

This book was published in 2001 and is not easily accessible in most book stores. That's why we're giving you plenty of time to get your copy! It is available on Amazon in both book and Kindle format.

Friday Morning Book Group meets every Friday (what else?) in the second floor conference room. We start with conversation at 10:30, during which we solve the world's problems, great and small, and begin our reading and discussion at 11:00. We read the books

aloud, which we have found gives us a deeper insight into our reading and doesn't require homework. Everyone is welcome!

Hans Blix Benefit Concert
First Congregational United Church of Christ
March 22, 3:00 PM

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. Leslie Moughty, Pastor

As I am writing this, my first article for the church newsletter, I can't believe that it has only been three weeks since I began as the Pastor here at First Congregational UCC. You all have made me feel right at home here and I am so excited for our future together! This is a time of new beginnings for me and for this church. However, I want to assure you that my intention is not to come in and change everything. I want to honor the traditions that this community cherishes and balance the time-treasured practices with my own style and influences. Change for the sake of change is not usually healthy and holding onto "old ways" simply because it's the way things have always been done isn't healthy either. As we walk on this journey of faith together, I hope you will share with me those traditions, hymns, prayers, events, etc. that hold special significance for you. I won't know what matters to you unless you share it with me. This isn't like requesting a song to be played on the radio, but rather a way for me to learn about what is truly important to you. Send me an email at revleslie@uccbrainerd.org, make an appointment for a face to face visit, or even drop me a note in the offering plate!

This brings me to an important aspect of communication. Effective communication in any relationship is important. Many people don't realize that Sunday mornings are quite possibly the worst time to talk to their pastor about anything important. Before worship, pastors are working hard to stay grounded and centered and fully present for worship. After worship, we often feel drained and it can be difficult to remember what people tell us. Some Sundays are better than others of course! If you want me to remember something, write it down, send it to me in an email, call me, or make an appointment to tell me in person. You are all important to me and I want to make sure I am giving you the attention and focus you deserve!

I am excited to get to know each and every one of you - to learn about your lives, your faith, your hopes, your questions, and your struggles. I am looking forward to walking with you on this journey of faith!

With peace,
 Pastor Leslie

Christian Ministry Department

March 1

Host: Jan Morton

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

Counters: Jeff Behr & Marcia Ferris

March 8

Hosts: Maria Bertram

Greeter/Ushers: Lance James, Mary Harder, Lois McBroom & Preston Newgord

Counters: Deb Griffith & Marcia Mans

March 15

Hosts: Marcia Mans & Barb Stokke

Greeters/Ushers: Pat Scott, Dan Hegstad,

Counters: Coleen Carder & Vi Heiser

March 22

Hosts: Joey Halvorson & Ann Turnbull

Greeters/Ushers: Ellie Burkett, Sharon Carlson, Mike and Beth Schrader

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

March 29

Hosts: Sue Hadland & Lisa Wigand

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

Counters: Judy Whiteman & Steve Crum

Adult Forum Schedule for March

03/01 – Faith Talk led by Ellie Burkett

Faith Talk - Group Discussion led by Ellie Burkett. Faith Talk is designed to provide meaningful sharing of memories, activities, specific events and value-forming experiences of faith for small groups of people. Teen youth are invited to attend this Adult Forum.

03/08 – Paul Mans Memorial Build with Marcia Mans and Ellie Burkett.

Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity is going to be building their 100th home this summer and is going to name it the "Paul Mans Memorial Build" honoring Paul's legacy. He was one of the founders of the Brainerd area affiliate.

03/15 – Mindfulness: Why and How Presented by Pat Scott

Research shows that mindfulness has a variety of benefits for the mind and body. But how can we find time for mindfulness in our busy lives?

03/22 – Putting Faith in Water Ethics video with Cynthia Barnett and discussion led by Ellie Burkett

March 22 is International Water Day! Cynthia Barnett is a long-time journalist who has reported on freshwater issues from the Suwannee River to Singapore. Her book *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis* calls for a water ethic for the nation. Using the ethical framework for water, Cynthia has worked to reach what she calls America's "caring middle," including religious communities. *Blue Revolution* was named by the Boston Globe as one of the top 10 science books of 2011.

03/29 - Transforming Christian Theology led by David Crum

"Transforming Christian Theology" by Philip Clayton. It is a logical continuation of our study of Progressive Christianity.

Food Shelf Offering – March 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 February 22, we collected 30 pounds of groceries and \$520. Our next offering will be on Sunday, March 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 – March 27

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



March Birthdays.....

03/04	Mary Johnson	03/21	Deb Griffith
03/04	Sharon Carlson	03/24	Brian Gustafson
03/06	Michael Imsdahl	03/25	Shirley McConnell Utzman
03/08	Jan Nelson	03/27	Dorothy Lundberg
03/10	Kali bible	03/28	Karen Ogdahl
03/13	Erik Steen	03/29	Patricia Scott
03/13	Doris Anderson	03/29	Erik Speer
03/16	Marina Grabowski		

Church Council Minutes

February 19, 2015

Moderator – Ann Turnbull

Assistant Moderator – Phil Kuehn

Clerk – Karen Ogdahl

Treasurer – Lisa Wigand

Christian Ministry – Beth Schrader

Trustees – Deb Griffith

Christian Education – Itty Newgord

Stewardship – Marcia Mans

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

Present: Itty Newgord, Grace Johnson, Rev. Leslie Moughty, Gary Whiteman, Ann Turnbull, Beth Schrader, Karen Ogdahl, Lisa Wigand, Deb Griffith, Marcia Mans

Moderator Ann Turnbull called the meeting to order with a prayer from Pastor Leslie Moughty.

The January minutes were approved. Thank you to Marcia Mans who recorded the January minutes.

CLERK'S REPORT – New Members (January 25, 2015): Barb McColgan, Mike North, Thomas North, Kay Kraywinkle, Jerry Kuehn

Death: Bette Smith, February 17, 2015; service at Woodland Good Samaritan Village on February 22

TREASURER'S REPORT – See attached report.

Lisa shared the end-of-year statement for 2014. Giving units donated \$154,000, a higher sum than was budgeted. The general fund shows \$7,000 in the black. The mortgage stands at \$50,788. In Lisa's words regarding our financial situation, "It's all good!" Many thanks to all those who generously donated in 2014.

Note: Members who purchase items and wish to be reimbursed must now fill out a reimbursement form. Forms can be accessed by emailing the church office or by picking one up from Colleen Todd in the office. Also, those who borrow the church credit card for church purposes should promptly return it.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The new insurance company has suggested we do background checks on all adults working with children in the church. Trustees will research this. Thanks to the Trustees who worked to diligently to see that the parsonage was ready for its new occupants.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Family Fun Events: March 13 – 15 – Conference Youth Event; March 28 – Easter baking for the bake sale (proceeds to camp scholarship fund); April – youth visit nursing home to entertain the residents. All are invited to attend Family Fun Events, no matter what your age.

Sunday School is going well. Youth are picking their confirmation mentors.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

CM conducted the February 8 service. They also helped organize and participated in the Ash Wednesday service. The Lenten series begins on February 25 at 5:30 with a soup and bread supper followed by a discussion of the scripture for the upcoming Sunday. March 22 our church will again host a concert to benefit the Food Shelf.

OLD BUSINESS

Dan Hegstad is heading up the newly-formed marketing committee. So far there are three members with room for more.

The Deborah Celley Memorial Garden will be dedicated in the spring or summer.

The Environmental Learning Network will visit our rain gardens on June 18 to recognize our environmental efforts.

The church by-laws need updating to better reflect the duties of the committees. It was suggested that they be more general to allow for flexibility. Each committee is asked to write up a list of their duties and turn it in to Ann Turnbull.

The Council discussed meeting days and times.

NEW BUSINESS

People who have jobs for Colleen Todd are asked to email or call the office and ask about convenient times.

The Council discussed a four-way covenant that was created several years ago. It may no longer be serving the purpose for which it was intended. Leslie will check with the conference for advice.

The Council discussed the current practice of holding separate budget and election meetings. Could the two be combined? Several possibilities were discussed. The by-laws would need to be amended to make any changes. For this year, the election meeting will be held on May 3 after the church service. Each committee's reports will be due in the office by April 13 so that the annual report can be available to congregation members on Sunday, April 26.

There are leadership openings on the Christian Education Committee. See Itty if you are interested.

The Council discussed holding an educational session on pastor/congregation boundaries. The Pastor Parish Relations Committee should play a role in this. Leslie will research resource materials

The funeral policy and wedding policy need to be revisited to see if any changes need to be made.

Leslie's installation service will be held in a few months.

It was noted that the microphones behind the pulpits are sometimes too low for tall people. Research has been gathered about new microphones and will be passed on to the Memorial Committee for discussion.

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Ogdahl, Clerk of Council

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd
 Financial Results - General Fund
 As of January 31, 2015

	Annual Budget	Results Through January 31, 2015	% of Budget
Income:			
From Giving Units	\$ 143,220	\$ 12,022	8.39%
Other Giving	\$ 11,510	\$ 2,677	23.26%
Total Income	\$ 154,730	\$ 14,699	
Expenses:			
Council	\$ 103,318	\$ 12,512	12.11%
Christian Ministry	\$ 10,400	\$ 627	6.03%
Christian Education	\$ 1,450	\$ 25	1.72%
Stewardship	\$ 300	\$ 184	61.33%
Trustees	\$ 60,816	\$ 4,401	7.24%
Total Expenses	\$ 176,284	\$ 17,749	
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (21,554)	\$ (3,050)	

CHURCH CALENDAR — March 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 – Faith Talk With Ellie Burkett			9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Lenten Gathering in Fellowship Hall		10:30 Book Group	
8 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Paul Mans Memorial Build with Marcia Mans & Ellie Burkett	9	10	11 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 3:00 Christian Ministry 5:30 Lenten Gathering in Fellowship Hall	12	13 10:30 Book Group	14
15 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Mindfulness: Why & How presented by Pat Scott	16	17 	18 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Lenten Gathering in Fellowship Hall	19	20 10:30 Book Group 6:00 Process & Film	21
22 *FOOD SHELF OFFERING* 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:30 Putting Faith in Water Ethics video w/Ellie Burkett 3:00 PM Hans Blix Concert	23	24	25 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Lenten Gathering in Fellowship Hall	26 5:30 PPRC	27 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	28 Conference Youth Easter baking for the bake sale (proceeds to camp scholarship fund)
29 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum – Transforming Christian Theology w/David Crum	30	31 12:00 noon – lunch bunch				

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