



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 is also available at other times by appointment.

Office phone 218-829-2528

E-mail firstcong@brainerd.net

Website uccbrainerd.org

uccbrainerd.org

March 2017

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

<i>March Birthdays</i>	1
<i>Pastor's Pen</i>	2
<i>Pastor's Office Hours</i>	2
<i>New Office Hours</i>	3
<i>Moderator's Notes – There Is A Season</i>	3
<i>What's Happening for Lent?</i>	3
<i>Join Us for Lunch!</i>	4
<i>Get Ready for Camp!</i>	4
<i>Food Shelf Offering – February</i>	4
<i>HUGS</i>	4
<i>February 15, 2017 Church Council Minutes</i>	5
<i>Alzheimer's</i>	6
<i>Church Financials</i>	6
<i>Crow Wing Inside Out Connections</i>	7
<i>Church Calendar – March 2017</i>	8

March Birthdays

3/4	Sharon Carlson	3/13	Erik Steen	3/25	Shirley Utzman
3/4	Mary Johnson	3/15	Kim Graf	3/27	Dorothy Lundberg
3/6	Mike Imsdahl	3/16	Marina Grabowski	3/28	Karen Ogdahl
3/8	Jan Nelson	3/21	Deb Griffith	3/29	Pat Scott
3/13	Doris Anderson	3/24	Brian Gustafson		

Pastor's Pen

Since the fourth century, Christians have prepared for Easter with a season of spiritual examination and repentance. This season typically includes the willingness to take on some spiritual discipline, whether that be fasting or increased time for prayer or Scripture or acts of mercy. We have come to know this season as Lent, and it begins on Wednesday March 1 with Ash Wednesday. So, it seems a fitting time to invite you on this journey of Lent once more.

I recently came across a blog post called *Lent: Deconstructing into Wholeness*.¹ This understanding of Lent as a time to deconstruct ourselves so that we might be made whole in God really resonated for me. Lent calls us into a time when we let go of our pretenses and posturing, to take off the masks we wear and to get real with God. The author shared some observations about Lent some of which I will share with you here:

- Lent: It's time to get real with God, to Fast, Pray, Weep, Morn...to let go and let God be God in our lives.
- Lent is the season we die to our hopes, our dreams, and our agendas, to empty ourselves out that we might be filled with new life, see with new eyes, live with a whole heart, filled with God's strength to live an abundant life.
- Lent is the season where we might be laid bare to God's grace, mercy, and light. We are naked before God.
- Lent is the season for spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical detox.
- Lent is dying before we die, so that we might live.

So why take on a spiritual practice or give something up for Lent? I don't think the purpose is to see if we can live without chocolate for 40 days. It is an opportunity to make room for something new. To make room for a deeper connection to God. To quiet the noise so that we might perceive the invitations God extends to us - invitations to a life that is bigger than our own existence. If we truly take on this call of Lent, it can be a vulnerable time. It is in that vulnerability, that we can turn to God and rest in the trust that God will hold us and walk with us when our defenses are down. I hope you will join us on Sunday mornings for worship and on Wednesday evenings for "Watch and Pray." (More details in this newsletter.)

May this season of Lent be a blessing to each of you.

With Peace,



¹<http://contemplativemonk.com/lent-deconstructing-into-wholeness/>

Pastor's Office Hours

What are office hours? Similar to college professors, many pastors have what are called "office hours." These are set times when the pastor will be in the office if you would like to drop by for a conversation. Also like college professors, this is not the only time the pastor is in the office and certainly not the only time they are working, but office hours allow a designated time when Pastor Leslie is in the office and available for people to just stop by.

When should I come to office hours? There are a number of reasons you might want to visit with Pastor Leslie during her office hours. You might be dealing with a difficult situation in your life – illness, stress at work, difficulties in a relationship... You might have a spiritual concern or question or a question or concern about the church. Still aren't sure if you should come in? When in doubt, talk it out!

What if the set times don't work for me? Pastor Leslie would love to make an appointment for a time that works with your schedule. Appointments can take place in your home, in the park, at a coffee shop... Whatever works for you!

As of March 1, Pastor Leslie's drop-in office hours will be as follows (and other times by appointment): Wednesdays from 2:00pm – 4:00pm and Thursdays from 10:00am – 12:00pm.

New Office Hours

The office will now be open 8:00 am – 12:00 pm, Tuesday-Friday. The office will not be open on Monday's.

Moderator's Notes – There Is A Season

Dan Hegstad – Council Moderator

I like the thinking and teaching of Taoism, which, very generally calls on us to live in harmony with the Tao or 'The Way.' Things have a natural energy or flow and if we 'go with the flow' we will tend to be happier. I think of swimming in a river. If you swim against the current you will feel like you are accomplishing something because you're working so hard, but in reality you're just getting worn out and getting nowhere. Swimming with the current is not giving up. You can still swim from side to side or move faster or slower. That's a pretty simple definition but If you are intrigued I urge you to learn more.

But 'going with the flow' does not mean passive or submissive. Far from it. Further, it does not allow us to become what the poet called, 'comfortably numb.'

I look to the change of seasons as an example. Again, think of the river. The current moves faster in the spring, slower in the winter. Winter is a time for rest, contemplation, rejuvenation and planning. Not an excuse for inaction, however. Summer is the time for growth, autumn is when things may come to fruition, gathering and, again, preparation for the coming winter.

Now is it Spring! We've been patiently waiting for it and here it comes. Lent begins March 1st (Ash Wednesday) and Christians have used the six weeks before Easter to contemplate their life and to make changes. It is a season of renewal.

Spring is a time for action. We even have a specific date for action: March 4th . . . get it? "March Forth!" Spring is when we gather our tools, sharpen edges and prepare the soil. Soon we will plant - both literally and figuratively. What have you been thinking about? What have you been putting off? Now is the time to move. Go!

What's Happening for Lent?

In addition to Sunday worship services, during the six weeks of Lent we will gather on Wednesday evenings for a simple supper of soup and bread (look for the sign-up sheet in the Narthex on Sundays) followed by a time of exploring different spiritual practices. We will try different ways of praying, of engaging with scripture, and generally different ways of seeking a deeper connection to God and to ourselves.

Calendar for Lent:

Wed. March 1, 6:30pm: Ash Wednesday Service at First Congregational with St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Wednesdays March 8 – April 5, 5:30pm – 7:00pm: Soup supper followed by "Watch and Pray" a time of exploring different spiritual practices throughout Lent.

Thursday April 13, 6:00pm: Maundy Thursday service at First Congregational

Friday April 14, 6:00pm: Good Friday Service at St. Paul's Episcopal

Join Us for Lunch!

Tired of your daily peanut butter sandwich? C'mon down to the church for a homemade meal at "**Pat's Lunch.**" Yes, it's time for "food and fellowship" at First Congregational on **Thursday, March 9th at NOON.**

You don't have to prepare or bring a thing. No charge . . . No kidding. Just call into the church office (218-829-2528) or e-mail (firstcong@brainerd.net) to let us know how much food to prepare.

We're looking forward to seeing you and sharing some good conversation with you over lunch.
Sue & Dale Hadland and Jeff & Lilja Behr.

Pat's Lunch is served in memory Sue's niece, Pat, who loved to go to church because, as she defined it so well, "It's all about the fellowship . . ."

Get Ready for Camp!

Camp Sunday is Sunday, March 12th. There will be an egg-bake fundraiser along with a smores bar/tent during fellowship. Any kids interested in going to camp should get form from office, as early registration is April 1st. Save the dates for these upcoming youth camps at Pilgrim Point:

- >High School CYE – March 10-12 (at Camp Koinonia) [Click here](#) for more information and to register.
- >Spring Middle School CYE – May 12-14
- >Family Camp – July 16-21
- >Youth Camp Week 2 – July 23-28

Youth camp is open to all youth who will have completed sixth grade through seniors in high school. **If you are interested in serving as an adult leader (minimum age 23) for either of these camps, please contact Pastor Leslie.**

Additional youth and adult camps are open for registration on the Conference website <http://uccmn.org/pilgrimpoint> and include:

- >Taize Meditation Retreat: May 17-19
- >Deaf First Family Camp: June 18-23
- >Youth Mission Week: August 6-11

Food Shelf Offering – February

In February we received 38 pounds of food and \$65. Our next offering will be March 26. **Thank you!**

HUGS

March 5

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

March 12

Hosts: Maria Bertram & CE Committee
Ushers/Greeters: Jack & Kay Kraywinkle,
Itty & Preston Newgord
Counters: Deb Griffith & Judy Whiteman

March 19

Hosts: Shirley Barten & Deb Lundberg
Ushers/Greeters: Marina Grabowski, Deb Griffith,
Tom Nelson & Kathy Ogden
Counters: Coleen Carder & Tracy Lyons

March 26

Hosts: Joey Halvorson & Karen Ogdahl
Ushers/Greeters: Jolene Hojem, Erik,
Kyd & Kai Lukanen
Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

February 15, 2017 Church Council Minutes

Moderator – Dan Hegstad

Assistant Moderator – Claire Steen

Clerk – Barb Stokke

Treasurer – Open

Christian Ministry – Ann Turnbull

Trustees – Coleen Carder

Christian Education – Marina Grabowski

Stewardship – Judy Whiteman

Council at Large –Mike North and Bonnie Crum

Present: Dan Hegstad, Claire Steen, Barb Stokke, Marina Grabowski, Judy Whiteman, Bonnie Crum, and Rev. Leslie Moughty

Dan Hegstad called the meeting to order. Marina shared Langston Hughes' poem "I Dream a World." Barb will provide March's Food for Thought.

CLERK'S REPORT – One person transferred membership because of an out-of-state change in residency.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Rev. Leslie explained the deficit at this time is due, in part, to one-time yearly expenses occurring at the beginning of the year and to high utilities expenses.

PASTOR'S REPORT – Highlights: Met with Member in Discernment advisee, attended monthly UCC Clergy Cluster; began discussing partnership with Lynnhurst UCC for summer youth gatherings; worked with the Executive Committee to complete the Pastoral Job Description; met with Bill Dian, coordinator for Ruby's Pantry, a monthly food pantry*; held the third new member class; went sledding with the youth; volunteered for Courage Retreat with Forestview sixth graders; attended Women's March Brainerd Lakes Huddle, and made ten Pastoral Care consultations: four home visits, five office visits and one phone call.

Upcoming events include meeting with the Congregational Care Volunteers and the Justice and Witness Volunteers, helping plan the March 5 visit with a Composer in Residence, and preparing Lenten services.

*Ruby's Pantry is held at the Brainerd Armory and needs volunteers.

STEWARDSHIP – Judy described Stewardship as a conduit for other committee's volunteer needs, and she reported a good response to the Yellow Slips volunteer opportunities. Stewardship is planning the Volunteers Thank-You Luncheon to be held after services Sunday, April 23.

TRUSTEES' REPORT – Trustees did not meet.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – Marina announced that Camp Sunday is set for Sunday, March 12, and will include an egg-bake fundraiser during fellowship hour. Camps include Family Camp July 16-21 and Youth Camp (6th grade and up) July 23-28. Early registration is April 1.

Christian Ed, along with Lynnhurst UCC and New York Mills UCC, are working to coordinate youth service/work projects to take place in our churches or church areas.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY – Council was referred to the February CM minutes.

Council sends thoughts and prayers to Ann Turnbull as she recovers from surgery.

AT LARGE – Three members of First Congregational will be attending My Neighbor Is Muslim classes during March.

OLD BUSINESS – Council approved Cheri Maxwell as Treasurer of First Congregational pending official membership.

Copies of the Pastoral Job Description were distributed for Council perusal.

NEW BUSINESS – Council discussed needs and opportunities for parishioners in planning the Twelfth Night Concert, caring for our members through Care Team, serving on committees and Council and supporting special areas of interests in our church.

Dan announced a speaker has been set up on the right side of the sanctuary to better hear people hear the services.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 15, at 7:00.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stokke, Clerk of Council

Alzheimer's

Free Month Long Class / April 4–May 2 / 6–7:30 pm / First Congregational UCC / 415 Juniper St / Brainerd

Are you or is someone you love living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia? These free education classes will help you understand the disease, what you can expect and provide you with resources. You are not alone.

Meets every Tuesday from April 4 to May 2

- April 4: Living with Alzheimer's – Early Stage, Part 1
- April 11: Living with Alzheimer's – Early Stage, Part 2
- April 18: Living with Alzheimer's – Middle Stage, Part 1
- April 25: Living with Alzheimer's – Middle Stage, Part 2
- May 2: Living with Alzheimer's – Late Stage

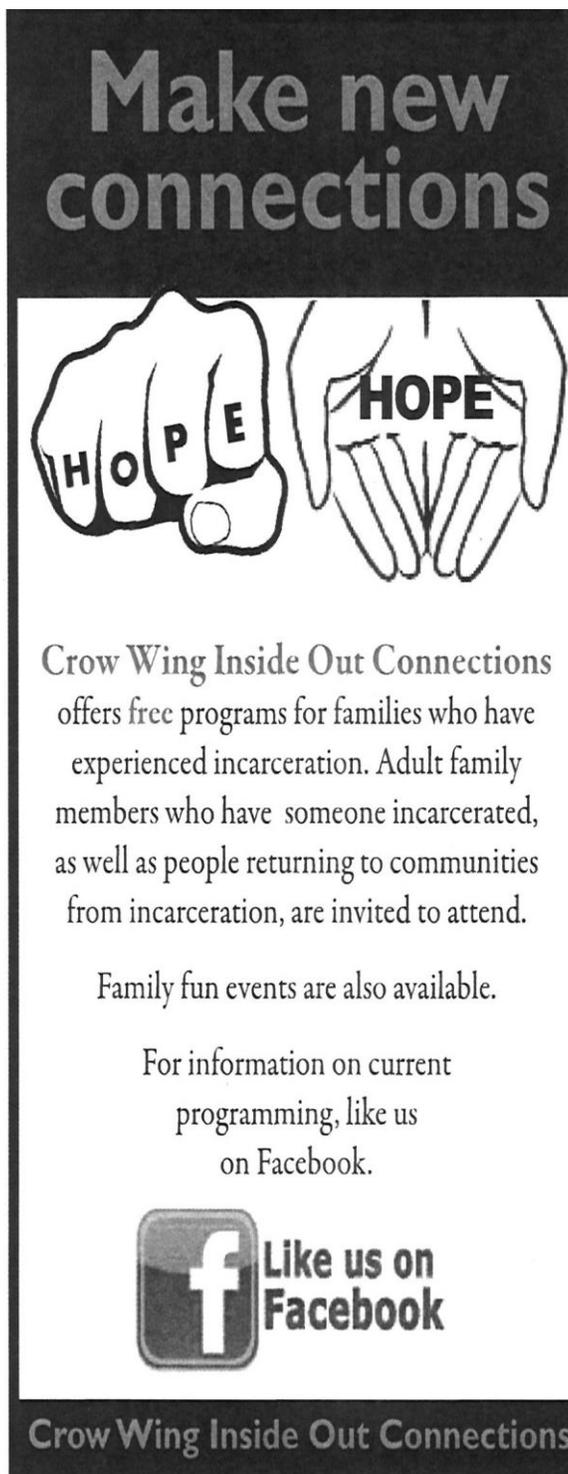
For more information, contact Jenna Herbig at jherbig@alz.org or 218-722-4335.

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd				
Financial Results - General Fund				
Year to Date Results as of 1/31/2017				
	2017 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 1/31/17	% of Budget	
Income:				
From Giving Units	\$ 117,365	\$ 12,012	10.23%	
Other Giving	\$ 32,146	\$ 1,052	3.27%	
Total Income	\$ 149,511	\$ 13,064	8.74%	
Expenses:				
Council	\$ 102,901	\$ 9,398	9.13%	
Christian Ministry	\$ 3,120	\$ 604	19.37%	
Music Committee	\$ 12,220	\$ 650	5.32%	
Christian Education	\$ 650	\$ -	0.00%	
Stewardship	\$ 600	\$ 49	8.22%	
Trustees	\$ 55,110	\$ 5,991	10.87%	
Total Expenses	\$ 174,601	\$ 16,692	9.56%	
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (25,090)	\$ (3,628)		

Crow Wing Inside Out Connections

For more information, please contact Lowell Johnson 218-828-6233 or johnsonlowells@gmail.com.



Make new connections



Crow Wing Inside Out Connections offers free programs for families who have experienced incarceration. Adult family members who have someone incarcerated, as well as people returning to communities from incarceration, are invited to attend.

Family fun events are also available.

For information on current programming, like us on Facebook.



Like us on Facebook

Crow Wing Inside Out Connections

Church Calendar – March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 11:30 Clergy Cluster 11:30 Ashes to Go 6:30 Ash Wed Svc New Pathways	2 New Pathways	3 10:30 Book Group 11:00 Sanctuary open for Prayer	4
5 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Painting the Stars	6	7	8 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	9 12:00 Pat's Lunch 5:30 Committee Meetings	10 10:30 Book Group	11
12 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship 11:00 Camp Egg Bake Fundraiser Daylight Savings Begins	13	14	15 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 7:00 Council Meeting	16	17 10:30 Book Group	18
19 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Painting the Stars	20	21	22 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	23 5:30 PPRC	24 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	25
26 10:00 Worship & Food Shelf Offering 11:00 Fellowship 11:00 Stewardship Meeting 11:15 Sunday School NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	27	28	29 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	30	31 10:30 Book Group	