



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

March 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

No article.

Moderator's Notes

On Ash Wednesday (and Valentine's Day), 14 students and 3 teachers were killed along with 15 injured at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. It was the eighth shooting this year at a U.S. school or college resulting in injury or death. The term – school shooting – to me makes no sense at all. It is grotesque and horrifying. I spent the day numb, in disbelief. I was angry, sad, devastated and extremely frustrated. Words cannot describe the full range of emotions that I experienced. I poured over articles from Shari Prestemon, Douglas Wood, and many others trying to understand why. Why?

In the spring of 1999, I gave the commencement address to our seniors at Pequot Lakes High School. On April 20, 1999 that year, 13 students were killed and 20 others were wounded at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. I addressed the mass shooting with the seniors. It was the first event that, in retrospect, seemed to change the nature of us feeling safe at school. We began to have lock-down drills and had special code names for danger in the building. In March 2005, closer to home, 10 people died at Red Lake High School. A friend of mine from high school was a teacher at Red Lake during the shooting. Barb was never able to return to teaching in the classroom. It affected her profoundly for the rest of her life. Then we had the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut where 20 children between the ages of six and seven and 6 adult staff members were slaughtered. Former President Obama stated that it was the saddest day of his eight years in office. We still see pictures of Daniel posted on Facebook from that time.

Presently I am retired from teaching and am a grandmother. When my granddaughters were at my house over President's weekend, I chose to keep the television off because the news of the mass shooting was so horrific. We drove past the courthouse and my seven year old granddaughter asked why the flag was flying at half-mast. What does one say? This week I went to an elementary school in Minnetonka for a school visit. Upon entering the school, I had to provide my driver's license and submit my face to a camera for security. I understand why this is necessary. However, when I started my teaching career forty years ago, this would have been unheard of. Now it is suggested that teachers could be armed with a gun in the classroom for protection. I have never touched a gun and would not be able to comply with this request. How do we explain gun violence to our innocent children when it is being used against them? Isn't school supposed to be a happy and safe place for our children?

These are hard questions, questions that seem to defy being answered. And yet they cry out for answers, for action. Our government leaders are capable of action in the face of other threats, yet so far they seem incapable of acting to stop school shootings. Over 16 years after Richard Reid attempted to bomb American Airlines Flight 63 on December 22, 2011, we all dutifully remove our shoes for scanning before we board an airplane. Yet so far all we have been able to muster from our leaders in response to these continued tragedies is thoughts and prayers.

The students of Stoneman Douglas say they have an answer. They are demanding action. The students refuse to accept that thoughts and prayers are sufficient on their own. They refuse to accept that these horrific incidents must keep happening. They refuse to be ignored by those who won't listen. They choose a different path...a path that says #NeverAgain. They say "We are going to be the kids you read about in textbooks. We are going to be the last mass shooting." The students of Stoneman Douglas believe that together we have the power to change the world.

Claire Steen
Church Moderator

Thank You!

Thank you, thank you to all who volunteered for our New Pathways families last week. You are valued beyond words and I am so grateful for all of you.

Our church will once again have families in April and if you've never had the opportunity to volunteer, please consider doing so.

Deb Griffith

Kitchen Utensils Needed

Members of the Cooking For Everyone group have been checking on kitchen utensils. Below is a list of needed items:

1. Large colander
2. 2 cup liquid measuring cup, glass or plastic
3. 4 cup liquid measuring cup, glass or plastic
4. 2 sets of dry measuring cups

If you can supply any of these items – new or used – let Sharon Carlson 828-1581 or Jan Morton 829-5092 know.

Later we will have kitchen items we don't need available to members. What is not taken will be donated to a non-profit.

Food Shelf Offering – February

This month, we donated \$155 to the Food Shelf! Our next offering will be March 25. **Thank you!**

Confirmation Schedule – March

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

March 7 – Session 4: *Heretics R Us*

March 14 – No class, Brainerd Schools Spring Break

March 21 – No class, Council meeting

March 28 – No class, attend at least 1 Holy Week service:

March 29 – Maundy Thursday service, 6:00 pm

March 30 – Good Friday service, 12:00 pm

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!

Death Makes Life Possible

Transforming the fear of death into an inspiration for living and dying well.

Film, Discussion & Refreshment Potluck! Monday, March 19, 6-8:00 pm in the UCC Fellowship Hall.

Death is something that most people fear and don't want to think about. But is it possible that facing our mortality can inspire us to love our lives more fully?

Death Makes Life Possible follows cultural anthropologist and scientist Marilyn Schlitz, Ph.D., as she explores the mysteries of life and death from a variety of perspectives and world traditions. Sparked by her own near-death experience as a teenager, Schlitz has been delving into the nature of consciousness and death for the past three decades.

The film looks at how popular culture deals with the ever-present fear many have about our own mortality. Interviews with mental health experts, cultural leaders, and scientists explore the meaning of death and how we can learn to live without fear. The interviews and evidence presented are interwoven with personal stories of people facing their own death as well as those who report encounters beyond death. The narrative is illustrated with vivid imagery.

Death Makes Life Possible features some of the leading scientists, anthropologists, philosophers, spiritual teachers and thinkers of our time – including Yassir Chadley, Deepak Chopra, Mingtong Gu, Stuart Hameroff, Lauren Artress, Michael Bernard Beckwith, Dean Radin, Rupert Sheldrake, Rudy Tanzi, Luisah Teish, Dr. Jim Tucker and others.

Bring a drink and snack for yourself and to share!

March Birthdays

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

HUGS

March 4

Hosts: Shon Boman & Jan Morton

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

Counters: Jeff Behr & Jerry Kuehn

March 11

Hosts: Karen Ford & Tom Nelson,

Ushers/Greeters: Maria Bertram, Mary Harder,
Lois McBroom & Itty Newgord

Counters: Deb Griffith & Judy Whiteman

March 18

Hosts: Marina Grabowski & Deb Griffith

Ushers: Claire Steen & Barb Stokke

Greeters: Shirley Barten & Deb Lundberg

Counters: Tracy Lyons & Mabel Schultz

March 25

Hosts: Jean Gustafson & Ann Turnbull

Ushers/Greeters: Sharon Carlson,
Joey Halvorson, Tracy Lyons & Karen Ogdahl

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

Confidence Learning Center Volunteer Opportunities

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.

March 8 – 5 am-7:30 pm – Rendezvous: Crafting – Assist our campers with making crafts to take home with them.

March 19-20 – 9 am-3:00 pm – Cabin Cleaning – Let's start the Cabin Fever cleaning with Confidence Learning Center.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): A Faith Filled Response

March 1, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at First Lutheran Church, 424 S 8th Street, Brainerd.

The ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experience), which was conducted in the 1990's 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.

Cost: \$10, lunch included. For special dietary needs or other questions contact Lowell Johnson at johnsonlowells@gmail.com. Register online at: <https://squareup.com/store/pointway-church>.

Church Council Minutes – February 21, 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	

Present: Claire Steen, Mike North, Barb Stokke, Karen Ford, Judy Whiteman, Gary Whiteman, Bob Jones, and Pastor Leslie Moughty.

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Claire Steen. The January Council minutes were approved.

Clerk's Report: Lawrence D. Lookabill, a friend of First Congregational UCC, passed away January 19, 2018. Pastor Leslie officiated at his memorial service January 26 in Brainerd.

Pastor's Report: First Congregational - Held 3 confirmation classes and a session with mentors, attended bylaw committee meeting, partnered with Saint Paul's Episcopal Church for Ash Wednesday Service and for Wednesday Lenten Gatherings at St. Paul's at 6:00 until March 14 and a final gathering March 21 at First Congregational, attended UCC Clergy Cluster, and worked with Eleanor Burkett to plan Lenten Adult Forum.

Community - Hosted Clergy Open House at WeARE The Clinic, led staff devotional at Bridges of Hope, and participated in AAUW Trivia Fundraiser.

Pastoral Care - 2 home visits; 3 phone calls; 3 office visits; hospital visits for Larry Lookabill, Barb Watson and Beth Schrader; and 1 funeral.

Pastor Leslie extends "a huge thank you to Ann Turnbull for leading worship on Sunday, February 18," and a "thank you to Vi Heiser who has taken on the task of scheduling communion servers and to Barb Stokke for recruiting weekly liturgists."

Treasurer's Report: No report

Trustees' Report: Trustee Projects in progress include replacing light bulbs and looking at the possibility of replacing fixtures, researching entry lock systems for the outside doors, and designing cabinets for the Columbarium. Trustees also continue to review the church's insurance coverage.

Stewardship's Report: Last year Stewardship suggested offering presentation on end of life planning. Those presentations are now ready. The Lenten Adult Forums on "Preparing for the End of Life" will begin February 25. Topics include Advance Directives, Legacy Planning, Hospice Care, and Funeral Planning. Stewardship is also planning a Volunteer Luncheon on Holy Humor Sunday, April 8.

Christian Ministry's Report: Taizè services are held the third Thursday of each month. CM noted that community members as well as UCC members have been attending. CM members were also in charge of the Sunday service February 18 when Pastor Leslie was ill. Ann Turnbull conducted the service, Lois McBroom was the liturgist and led the children's time, and Karen Ogdahl hosted the coffee fellowship after the service.

Christian Education's Report: The skating party at Gregory Park February 18 was a success. Upcoming events for CE and our youth include serving dinner at the Soup Kitchen February 23, a tubing at Camp Confidence March 11.

Old Business: *Exec committee meets February 22 to review pastor evaluations.

*Progress continues on the church directory.

*The search for church committee nominations will start soon. In March, committees should determine how many nominations they will need to complete their rosters. To help members of the congregation determine which committee best fits their interests and skills, information about each committee and the work they do will be presented.

New Business: *Discussions about mission statements, the church's focus, and "Deep Purpose" are on the back burner for now.

*A suggestion was made to offer training to confirmands and congregants interested in serving Communion.

*Discussion continued in staffing the nursery and making worship time as inclusive as possible.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Stokke, Council Clerk

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd				
Financial Results - General Fund				
Year to Date Results as of 1/31/2018				
	2018 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 1/31/18	% of Budget	Actuals Through 1/31/17
Income:				
Giving Units	\$ 129,892	\$ 46,720	35.97%	\$ 13,496
Loose Offering (10% to OCWM)	\$ 3,278	\$ 233	7.11%	\$ 204
Other Giving	\$ 4,938	\$ 1,545	31.28%	\$ 162
Total Income	\$ 138,108	\$ 48,498	35.12%	\$ 13,862
Expenses:				
Council	\$ 101,821	\$ 7,020	15.36%	\$ 8,704
Christian Education	\$ 2,300	\$ -	9.09%	\$ -
Christian Ministry	\$ 1,900	\$ 62	12.04%	\$ 499
Music	\$ 8,990	\$ 1,160	20.82%	\$ 650
Stewardship	\$ 695	\$ 49	15.47%	\$ 49
Trustees	\$ 56,810	\$ 42,605	77.27%	\$ 5,975
Total Expenses	\$ 172,516	\$ 50,895	35.91%	\$ 15,878
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (34,408)	\$ (2,398)		\$ (2,016)

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd		
Financial Results - Revolving Accounts		
Year to Date Results as of 1/31/2018		
	2018 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 1/31/18
Income:		
Film License	\$ 225	\$ -
Flower Income	\$ -	\$ -
OCWM Income	\$ 8,398	\$ 706
Other Mission Income	\$ -	\$ 250
Special Offering Income	\$ -	\$ -
Special Worship Services	\$ 500	\$ 43
UCC Mission Income	\$ -	\$ 25
Total Income	\$ 8,898	\$ 1,024
Expenses:		
Film License	\$ 225	\$ -
Flowers	\$ -	\$ 367
OCWM Payments	\$ 8,398	\$ -
Other Mission Payments	\$ -	
Special Worship Services	\$ 500	
UCC Mission Payments	\$ -	\$ -
Total Expenses	\$ 9,123	\$ 367
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (225)	\$ 657

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd		
Financial Results - Designated Funds		
Year to Date Results as of 1/31/2018		
	2018 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 1/31/18
Income:		
Building Fund		\$ 23,740
Columbarium	\$ -	\$ 149
Camp/Youth	\$ -	\$ -
Total Income	\$ -	\$ 23,889
Expenses:		
Building Fund		\$ -
Columbarium	\$ -	\$ -
Camp/Youth	\$ -	\$ -
Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ -
Net Income (Loss)	\$ -	\$ 23,889

Church Calendar – March 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 Lent Service @ St. Paul's Episcopal 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 *Daylight Savings Time Begins*	12	13	14 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 6:00 Lent Service @ St. Paul's Episcopal	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 6:00 Movie Night "Death Makes Life Possible"	20	21 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 6:00 Lent Service 7:00 Council	22 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	29 6:00 Maundy Thursday Service	30 10:30 Book Group 12:00 Good Friday Service @ St. Paul's	31