



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

April 2015

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

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Announcements

God’s Garden

God’s Garden needs volunteers to start seeds, condition bales, plant, monitor for disease, harvest and deliver produce to the Food Shelf. If you want to help in any way or learn more about straw bale gardening, please contact Coleen Carder (651-216-9821) ASAP so a meeting can be scheduled. We want to get more people involved in this ministry to the community, if there is interest.

21st Annual Frokost

Sons of Norway Sagatun Lodge will hold their 21st Annual Frokost on Saturday, April 11, at Bethlehem Lutheran church. For Reservations please call 218-764-3336.

Upcoming Youth Event

Sunday, April 19 - Nursing Home Visit with music

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!

Consensus Vocal Ensemble

Consensus Vocal Ensemble to perform Friday, April 10th at Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Baxter at 7:00 pm.



Letter From Pastor Linda and Randy Crowe

Dear Church Family

Thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you for an incredible farewell and retirement celebration, filled with laughter and touching our hearts! Thank you for songs, stories, tributes, the special appearance of Lena and Hilda, and of course good food and fellowship! Thank you for unbelievable generosity! Your gifts will be appreciated so much as we travel to Hawaii for our retirement trip. Thank you for beautifully and thoughtfully written legacy letters and cards. Again and again, we have been moved to tears as we have read your words. We will treasure your letters always!

Thank you for welcoming us into your lives and your hearts when I was called to serve as your interim pastor two years ago. We did not expect to fall in love with Minnesota, and we certainly did not expect to come to love a new church family so deeply. What a wonderful blessing to serve in your midst for the interim season! Our time with you was life-changing and absolutely rich with blessings. For the remainder of our lives, we will remember and celebrate our time with you, the community of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Brainerd, Minnesota.

In the years to come, we look forward to having many of you come for visits in Spokane Valley as you come to explore the wonders of the West!

For all the rich blessings of our time in Minnesota, we thank God. For all the blessings of our time with you and for the love, friendship, and experiences we have shared, we will be forever grateful. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Pastor Linda and Randy Crowe

Letter to the Congregation

It is with deep regret and sadness that inform you I will be ending my position here as Administrative Assistant effective April 30. I have come to love you all and this community. However, I have found the need to go back to Billings for family support in raising my grandsons. I truly wish that Brainerd MN and Billings MT were closer together so that I wouldn't have to leave. My life will be forever changed for the better because of my experiences here. You all have been so kind to me and I thank you for that!

Grief and Loss Support Group

You are invited to share in an opportunity to seek healing as we walk together through the wilderness of loss and grief. A loving, caring space will be provided for support, where we will be able to share our stories in an atmosphere of God's love and compassionate heart. We will see how our stories connect and that we are not alone.

This opportunity will be offered Tuesday evenings, May 5, 12, 19 and 26 from 6:30 - 8:30 PM. You may come to one or all of the sessions. No sign up is required. Facilitated by Pastors Kari Williamson and Ray Arveson.

THE PASTOR'S PEN

Rev. Leslie Moughty, Pastor

It was lunchtime on Wednesday and I was heading home from church to get something to eat. As I approached the back steps of the parsonage I noticed something peculiar. Bright green leaves of what I think might be crocus plants pushing their way up through the ground! In this midst of Holy Week, this reminder that new life is right around the corner was a welcome sight. I said a little prayer of gratitude to

God for the wondrous nature of the planet and the cosmos and all they contain. Depending on when you are reading this, Easter is either almost here or has just arrived! After forty days and six Sundays of journeying through Lent, after waving our palms and shouting "hosanna!" as Jesus entered Jerusalem, after Jesus is betrayed, arrested, and crucified, after all seemed hopeless, Easter has come! Whether you believe that the stories of the resurrection are historical fact and happened exactly as described, or if you believe the stories are legend, myth, or metaphor, or if you don't know quite what to believe, the story of Easter holds powerful truths - the truth that God's presence and love remains with us even beyond the death of Jesus, the truth that the cross could not kill the message of Christ, the truth that endings are also beginnings, and the truth that God is full of surprises. What truth does Easter hold for you?

Blessings on each of you during this Easter season.

With Peace,

Pastor Leslie

Pastor Leslie will be away on vacation from Tuesday April 21 - Tuesday April 28. David Crum will be on-call for critical pastoral care needs. Please contact David at 218-330-3168 if you have an urgent pastoral care need during this time.

Moderator's Musings

Friends in Christ,

The promise of spring brings relief and joy as we anticipate warmth replacing the chill of winter. We plan our gardens, start seeds and look forward to the time of year when the world around us is green with new life and we can spend extended time out in the midst of it!

It is also the time when our church pauses to take a look at where we have been and where we are going. How do we live our lives within our community of faith to love one another and impact the world, making it a better place for all God's creatures and closer to the kingdom of God Jesus envisioned?

An Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, May 3rd. At this meeting the congregation accepts the annual report and elects new leadership. I hope each of us can be there. All annual reports are due in the church office by Monday, April 14th. If you serve on a church committee, please help by ensuring yours is submitted on time. Our goal is to have the written Annual Report ready for distribution on Sunday, April 26th.

We have openings for church officers and committee members. As church members generally serve three year terms on committees, two people per committee are replaced each year. Please consider whether God may be nudging you to volunteer.

The following lists our current Officers, Church Council, standing committees, other committees and a very brief description of their responsibilities. (Note that the current leadership roster is included in this newsletter.) This is a critical time for churches. While they used to be the center of community life in the 1950's, that is no longer true. More people are selecting none, when given a choice of describing their religious affiliation. While many people still seek spiritual experiences and growth they don't see the church as relevant. All over the country people are rethinking church and how to be relevant in this technology driven world. If you have interest in re-imagining our church's organization and effectiveness in this time of sea change, consider being part of its leadership.

Officers (Executive Committee)

Moderator- Legal representative of the church, who facilitates council and congregational meetings, is responsible to ensure that council resolutions and actions are carried out. (1 year term, not to exceed 3 consecutive terms)

Assistant Moderator- Serves as moderator in her/his absence, is a liaison between church council and small group ministries, generally becomes familiar with the church operations in order to serve as moderator the following year. (1 year term, not to exceed 3 consecutive terms)

Clerk- Council secretary and church record keeper. (1 year term, not to exceed 6 consecutive terms)

Treasurer- Responsible for church finances, keeping a confidential record of donations, ensures that church bills and salaries are paid and serves as an ex-officio member of the Stewardship committee. (1 year term, not to exceed 6 consecutive terms)

Standing Committees (Departments)

Christian Education (CE): Responsibility for Christian education for children, youth and adults. (6 members, 3 year terms with 2 people elected each year)

Christian Ministry (CM): The current bylaws assign this committee numerous responsibilities: Worship, Community Outreach / Mission, Fellowship and Membership (6 members, 3 year terms with 2 people elected each year)

Stewardship: Responsible for obtaining commitments of time, talent and money to support the operations and missions of the church, overseeing the financial affairs of the church and supporting volunteer service. (6 members, 3 year terms with 2 people elected each year)

Trustees: Responsibility for church property: ownership, management and maintenance. (6 members, 3 year terms with 2 people elected each year)

Other Committees

Memorial Committee: Solicits, accepts and acknowledges gifts or memorials to the church. (6 members, 3 year terms with 2 people elected each year)

Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) Advisory and support group for the pastor that strives to maintain an open and healthy relationship between the pastor and members of the congregation. (4 members, 2 year terms, two males and 2 females)

The Articles of Incorporation and the bylaws are the organizational documents by which we operate. They need updating, even to reflect how we are operating now. Looking ahead, the Church Council has had some discussions about how we might better organize ourselves for our ministry. Do we really need two annual meetings or is it better to elect leaders and approve the budget at the same meeting? Should our church year be January - December? How do we get broad participation from the congregation to envision our ministries and plan for the future? How can we best support church operations, the members and friends of our church as we navigate life's journey and our broader community?

We have much to be thankful for as Pastor Leslie settles into her new job with us. I feel so fortunate that we have found an exceptional leader. As we know from our experience working on the parsonage, when we work together we can accomplish great things and have fun doing it!

Ann Turnbull

Christian Ministry Department

April 5

Host: Mark & Becky Stadem

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

Counters: Jeff Behr & Marcia Ferris

April 12

Hosts: Maria Bertram

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

Counters: Deb Griffith & Marcia Mans

April 19

Hosts: Shirley Barten & Deb Lundberg

Greeters/Ushers: Preston Newgord, Austin Newgord, Marcia Mans & Claire Steen

Counters: Coleen Carder & Vi Heiser

April 26

Hosts: To Be Announced

Greeters/Ushers: To Be Announced

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

Adult Forum Schedule for March

04/05 – No Adult Forum

04/12 – "Transforming Christian Theology" by Philip Clayton. It is a logical continuation of our study of Progressive Christianity. Led by David Crum

04/19 – "Transforming Christian Theology" by Philip Clayton. It is a logical continuation of our study of Progressive Christianity. Led by David Crum

04/26 – No Adult Forum

Food Shelf Offering – April 26

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 March 22, we received over \$2400 and approximately 245 lbs of food. Our next offering will be Sunday, April 26.

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 – April 24

Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve an evening meal at the Soup Kitchen on April 24. 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



April Birthdays.....

04/09	Alice Widmark	04/24	Coleen Carder
04/14	Bonnie Crum	04/24	Austin Newgord
04/14	Dan Hegstad	04/26	Mitch Crum
04/15	Joey Halvorson	04/30	Mildred Gjertson
04/23	Emma Ferrie	04/30	Donna Palm
04/24	JoAnne Nelson		

Church Council Minutes

April 1, 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: Ann Turnbull, Phil Kuehn, Karen Ogdahl, Beth Schrader, Coleen Carder, Itty Newgord, Marcia Mans, Gary Whiteman, Dan Hegstad, Pastor Leslie Moughty.

Moderator Ann Turnbull called the meeting to order with a prayer from Pastor Leslie. The February minutes were approved.

CLERK'S REPORT - nothing to report

TREASURER'S REPORT – See attached report.

PASTOR'S REPORT

The Council approved Leslie's attendance at the National Church Leadership Institute in August. She reports that the Lenten gatherings were well attended and that she is exploring changes for next year. She is pleased that the church is reviewing its governance structure, bylaws and policies. She thanks church members for being very respectful of her days off.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Marcia reported that a volunteer recognition brunch will be held after church on April 26. She discussed the possibility of a volunteer list on-line. The church directory will be in print format and on-line.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Coleen reported that the Trustees are researching how to make the fellowship hall more acoustically friendly. Asbestos abatement will likely be needed. They will check on finding extra funds to add to the generous donation from the Betty Lee estate. The outdoor sign needs updating.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The youth made \$175 on their bake sale, which will go toward camp fees. The kids will visit a nursing home this month. Bible Sunday is May 3, and Camp Sunday is May 17. CE is looking ahead to send kids to the National Youth Event in 2016.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Beth reported that the March Food Share event took in \$2400 and 245 lb. of food. CM is looking for a representative to serve on the Brainerd History Week Committee. If you are interested, contact Beth. CM will coordinate the Sunday service on April 26.

OLD BUSINESS

The Council discussed the Food Share event – what worked and what could be improved. Everyone loved Hans Blix and the Weapons Inspectors. Attendance was lower than last year, and the group discussed ways to improve the advertising and organization.

Phil, Ann and Leslie presented an outline for the annual meeting, which will be held May 3 after church.

Gary, Dan, Leslie and one more person will work on finding volunteers to serve on church committees.

There is a need to revise documents dealing with use of the church, funeral receptions and weddings. The Trustees will work on the church use document, and Karen, Itty, Leslie and one more person will revise the funeral and wedding policies.

The Trustees have the information from the conference about background checks for people who work with children in the church and will get that process going.

Council tabled creating a Safe Church Policy until the Christian Education Committee is fully staffed.

Ann discussed the need for a Boundary Training session for the congregation.

Annual reports from all committees are due in the office by April 13.

NEW BUSINESS

It was with deep regret that the Council accepted the resignation of office manager Colleen Todd effective the end of April. She is moving back to Montana. The Executive Committee will meet to begin a search for a new manager.

Get Acquainted small group sessions will be held in May. This is an opportunity to meet with Leslie and discuss your feelings about what is important to you in a church. Sign-up sheets will be available soon.

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

Respectfully submitted, Karen Ogdahl, Clerk of Council

CHURCH CALENDAR — April 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	1 Wednesday	2 Thursday	3 Friday	4 Saturday
			9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 7:00 Council Mtg		10:30 Book Group 6:30 Good Friday Services @ Bethlehem Lutheran church	
5 Easter Sunday 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship/Communion 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 	6	7	8 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 3:00 Christian Ministry 5:30 Trustees	9 5:00 Stewardship 7:00 Special AA Meeting	10 10:30 Book Group	11
12 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum	13	14	15 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:00 Music Committee	16 11:30 Clergy Cluster 5:30 Christian Ed	17 10:30 Book Group 6:00 Process & Film	18
19 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum	20	21	22 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	23	24 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	25 1:00 Stewardship in kitchen to prep for Sunday
26 *FOOD SHELF OFFERING* 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School	27	28	29	30		

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Rev. Leslie Moughty**

**Admin. Assist.
Colleen Todd**