



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.

Office phone 829-2528, Pastor's residence 656-0096, E-mail
firstcong@brainerd.net.

uccbrainerd.org

May 2015

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

<i>Announcements</i>	2
Church Grounds Clean-Up	2
Jean Widmark's 90th Birthday	2
Rev. Deborah G. Celley Memorial Garden	2
God's Garden	2
Letter to the Congregation from Colleen Todd	2
Updated Email Address	2
Crow Wing County Historical Society	2
Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity	3
Grief and Loss Support Group	3
Brainerd History Week	3
Peace in the Park	3
Big Soup Kitchen News	4
<i>THE PASTOR'S PEN</i>	4
<i>Moderator's Musings</i>	5
<i>Church Officers & Committee Members Needed</i>	6
<i>Leadership Roster</i>	7
<i>143rd Annual Congregational Meeting</i>	10
<i>New Pathways</i>	10
<i>Christian Ministry Department</i>	10
Adult Forum Schedule for May	11
Food Shelf Offering – April 26	11
Soup Kitchen – May 24	11
<i>All in the Church Family</i>	11
May Birthdays	11
<i>Church Council Minutes</i>	12
<i>Church Financials</i>	14
<i>CHURCH CALENDAR — May 2015</i>	15

Announcements

Church Grounds Clean-Up

Our annual spring cleanup will be on Thursday, May 21st beginning at 4:00 pm. Bring a rake, wheel barrel, broom or any other yard gadget and join in the fun! Thank you for your help!

Jean Widmark's 90th Birthday

Jean Widmark will be celebrating her 90th birthday on May 24th! Please join Jean for cake and coffee in fellowship hall after worship on Sunday, May 24th. You can also send a card to Jean at: 8182 Excelsior Road, #220, Baxter, MN 56425. No gifts please!

Rev. Deborah G. Celley Memorial Garden

I am so pleased to inform you that Richard Celley, Julia and Jennifer will be coming for the dedication of the plaque and benches in Rev. Deb Celley's honor on Sunday, June 21. We will have a simple dedication following our regular church service that day. Rev. Leslie has offered to help with the planning and I welcome input from everyone. Please be thinking about this so we can gather after church in early May to make plans. I'm hoping the rain gardens will be thriving by then as well as the lovely surrounding garden that Deb planted. Steve Crum, Jeff Behr and Gary Whiteman have offered to finish the pavers, mount the plaque and secure the benches. If anyone would like to help, please contact them.

Thanks to all,

Nancy

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.

Letter to the Congregation from Colleen Todd

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!

Updated Email Address

Marcia Mans has a new email address. You can send emails to mansmarcia@gmail.com.

Crow Wing County Historical Society

We have renewed our membership with the Crow Wing County Historical Society. They have given us 4 free adult admission passes. If you would like to visit the Historical Society, please call the church office (218-829-2528) to reserve a pass.

Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity

After 25 years as an affiliate and ninety-nine homes built, the hundredth house will be built in memory of Paul Mans this August. 19th Annual Dinner and Auction, June 11th at Breezy Point Resort. 6:00 Social and Silent Auction, 7:00 Dinner and Live Auction. Tickets \$60 per person with \$40 tax deductible. To reserve a table, call 218-828-8517.

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.

Brainerd History Week

Brainerd History Week: June 16 – 21 Volunteers needed.

Last year was the first annual Brainerd History week. Doris Anderson and Karen Ogdahl researched some vignettes from our church history for a service. Others worked as 'tour guides' for the Open House, in which Gregory Park churches participated. Rev. Linda presided over an ecumenical service in the park followed by refreshments at church. One focus was reconciliation with the White Earth Band, including their honor guard. Anyone with information from last year's event would be helpful to our direction this year. Christian Ministry has been contacted to set up participation again this year. If you are interested in our church's history, making pies, digitizing some period pictures for the walls, being the 'go-to' person for taking questions by Brainerd planning committees, hosting or something you would like to add, please contact us. (Jan Kurtz rmjkurtz@brainerd.net, Beth Schrader bjs12911@hotmail.com or Rev. Leslie at revleslie@uccbrainerd.org) May 8th is our next meeting. We hope to have some good leads by then 😊.

Peace in the Park

4th Annual Central Minnesota Peace Fair

Saturday, June 20th, 11am—5pm

Ramada #2, Lum Park, Brainerd

Speakers:

Coleen Rawley, Peace Activist, 9-11 FBI Whistleblower

Ken Pentel, Militarism and the Environment

Vigil, Food, Music & More!

Details at brainerdpeace.org. Brainerd Area Coalition for Peace

Big Soup Kitchen News

In case you hadn't heard, Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen is now the proud owner of the property (both buildings) on Oak Street. We are so happy to be able to say that the Soup Kitchen has a home!

Our first order of business will be to demolish the old church building and expand the parking lot. We'll need lots of help this summer getting all of the work done and we will need to raise some funds in order to get everything paid for! Please pray for us that the Lord will provide everything needed for this project.

As always, please leave a note or give me a shout out at pastorbob@sharingbread.com with any concerns or questions that may arise while serving at the Soup Kitchen.

Sincerely,

Pastor Bob Evans

THE PASTOR'S PEN Rev. Leslie Moughty, Pastor

"Doubt isn't the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith." Paul Tillich

A few Sundays ago, we read about the disciple Thomas and his refusal to believe that Christ had been resurrected unless he could see Jesus with his own eyes and touch Jesus' wounds with his own fingers. I shared that Thomas often gets a bad rap for being a "doubter" but in fact he wasn't asking for anything that the other disciples hadn't already had the opportunity to experience. Additionally, Jesus does not condemn Thomas for his requests but instead offers him the opportunity to touch and see for himself. I shared that I admire Thomas for his authenticity – for his refusal to just go with the crowd and pretend to believe something that he didn't.

After the sermon I invited everyone to honor our own questions and doubts by writing them down and sharing them with me. I did not have a plan for what I would do with those questions but I knew that at the minimum, the process would help me to know you better and help me understand what concepts of faith you are wrestling with. I explained that my intention was not necessarily to answer them directly, although some of the questions might lend themselves to a direct answer, but that they may end up being topics for sermons, newsletter articles, adult forums, and prayers. I read through all the questions and discovered some common themes among quite a few of the questions. Some of the questions are unanswerable (why is there suffering in the world?) but are topics on which I can offer my own perspective and the perspective of theologians whom I respect, as well as invite discussion within our church.

I want to thank you all for trusting me with your questions, doubts and wonderings. I truly believe that our faith is most alive when we engage with it, ask questions of it, challenge it, pray about it, and discuss it within a community. If you asked a question and you would like to have a conversation with me about it and do not want to wait to see if it comes up in the newsletter or a sermon, please don't hesitate to call or email me for an appointment. Notice that I said have a conversation and not find out the answer. Most questions of faith are for you to answer for yourself, but I am honored to be a travel guide on your journey in whatever

way I can. I also encourage you to attend the current adult forum series based on the book *Transforming Theology* as a way of engaging how we think about and evolve our own theologies.

If you did not have the opportunity to write a question or couldn't think of one at the time, but now you would like to submit a question, please feel free to write "Question" on the top of a prayer card and put it in the offering plate. May we all keep open minds and open hearts as we explore our faith together and may we come to know the grace and abundant love of our "still-speaking" God.

With Peace,

Pastor Leslie

Moderator's Musings

Dear First Congregational Church family,

Thank you for the privilege of serving as Council Moderator for the past year. It has been a busy time due to the transition period and I have learned much.

I'm most thankful for the way our church community pitches in to do ministry together. As my favorite boss used to say, "everyone should be able to come to work, do work that s/he enjoys and is good at, which feeds rather than is emptying and all the work gets done!" That is my vision of the church. When we come together, everyone should be able to engage in ministry they are passionate about, ministry that builds them up not wears them down.

I am excited to participate with you in re-envisioning church now that we have a settled pastor. As Pastor Leslie settles into this new culture and job, I am reminded that she is here to encourage us in our ministry, to make us aware of things we may not see ourselves, to help us face the challenges ahead, not to do our church's ministry for us. Please ensure that you are signed up to participate in one of the small groups that are meeting now to get acquainted with Leslie. You will find the sign-up sheets in the fellowship hall following the church service. Please speak to me if there isn't a time you can attend so we can offer another gathering that is more convenient.

One of the year's fondest memories for me is working with the Pastoral Search Committee. A group who worked hard but brought wisdom, humor, forgiveness, treats and offered their varied skills and talents generously to the process.

I'm thankful to Phil Kuehn, who agreed to be assistant moderator and will be serving as moderator the next twelve months. He has a full-time job and is a full time father. He is wise, kind and thoughtful. Let's support him as he works closely with Leslie to lead our church into the future.

May we all find meaningful ways to serve God in the year ahead.

Blessings,

Ann Turnbull

Church Officers & Committee Members Needed

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

Leadership Roster

Please see roster on the following pages.

143rd Annual Congregational Meeting

The 143rd Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on May 3 following the Sunday worship service. All members and friends are encouraged to attend.

Copies of this year's Annual Report will be available for your reading pleasure in the church office during office hours.

New Pathways

New Pathways: Sunday, May 31 – Sunday, June 7, 2015. Our church will once again be hosts to New Pathways guests and help is needed for those who wish to volunteer for set up and take down of beds, providing dinners, evening activities, staying overnight and transporting our guests with the new Pathways van. You can volunteer with a group of people or by yourself. If you are interested in helping in any of the above ways, you are welcome to contact the following people for more information: (Set Up/Take Down), Deb Griffith, 828-4841, (Dinners), Sharon Carlson, 828-1581, (Activities), Lance James, 330-6329, (Evening Host/Overnight), Sue Hadland, 829-2381 and (Transportation), Scott Gutierrez, 838-7066. Thank you always for your generous support of this important church project.

Christian Ministry Department

May 3

Hosts: Dorothy Blau & Jan Morton

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

Counters: Jeff Behr & Marcia Ferris

May 10

Hosts: Karen Ford & Tom Nelson

Ushers/Greeters: Maria Bertram, Itty Newgord, Lance James & Wayne Mayer

Counters: Deb Griffith & Marcia Mans

May 17

Hosts: Marcia Mans & Barb Stokke

Ushers: Pat Scott & Dan Hegstad

Greeters: Deb Griffith & Claire Steen

Counters: Coleen Carder & Vi Heiser

May 24

Hosts: Colleen Todd & Ann Turnbull

Ushers/Greeters: Sharon Carlson, Karen Ogdahl, Mike & Beth Schrader

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

May 31

Hosts: Sue Hadland & Lisa Wigand

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

Counters: Steve Crum & Judy Whiteman

Adult Forum Schedule for May

May 3 – Annual Meeting, No Adult Forum

May 10 – No Adult Forum

May 17 – "Transforming Christian Theology" by Philip Clayton. Continuation of our study of Progressive Christianity. Led by David Crum

May 24 – "Transforming Christian Theology" by Philip Clayton. Continuation of our study of Progressive Christianity. Led by David Crum

May 31 – 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 April 26, we received \$365 and 53 lbs of food. Our next offering will be Sunday, May 24.

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 – May 24

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



May Birthdays.....

5/02	Joseph Freeman	5/22	Jan Morton
5/03	Ellen Pishko	5/22	Shon Boman
5/05	Lance James	5/23	Max Ferrie
5/09	Sue Hadland	5/24	Jean Widmark
5/10	Emily Jones	5/25	Carol Spear
5/15	Scott Ferrie	5/25	Nancy Waller
5/16	Laura Raedeke	5/26	Preston Newgord
5/16	Morgan Twamley	5/28	Colleen Todd
5/17	Heidi Hahn	5/29	Tony Newgord
5/19	Rev. Ron Hunt	5/31	Grace Forbord

Church Council Minutes

April 15, 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

Present: Coleen Carder, Ann Turnbull, Karen Ogdahl, Dan Hegstad, Gary Whiteman, Lisa Wigand, Marcia Mans, Itty Newgord

Moderator Ann Turnbull called the meeting to order with a prayer.

The March minutes were approved as corrected.

TREASURER'S REPORT – See attached report.

We inadvertently paid a bill to our former insurance company. Lisa is working on getting that money refunded. Giving is up, but expenses are also up. We need to make up for lost ground and be prudent in our spending.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Marcia reported that Stewardship is helping CM with the April 26 service and hosting the volunteer brunch. Stewardship has been discussing their duties and decided on possible changes.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The rain garden will have a sign which explains rain gardens and which also includes the logos of the organizations that funded the garden. The dedication of the Deb Celley memorial garden will be June 21. Her family will attend.

The estimate for improving the acoustics in the fellowship hall came in at about \$50,000, which includes asbestos abatement. Trustees will continue to explore sources of funding. A gift of \$25,000 has already been received.

Council discussed installing a columbarium in the chapel, which needs repairs. Ann will ask someone from the columbarium committee to write an article for the newsletter.

Trustees are contacting the front sidewalk contractor to request repairs to the patching.

Church Grounds Clean Up – May 21.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

CM is working on the church music license, the reimbursement form, defining the committee's duties, Brainerd History Week, and a calendar of yearly events.

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Gary reported on the progress of the nominating committee. There are still a few posts open.

OLD BUSINESS

Bobbie Borg has been hired to replace our office manager, Colleen Todd, who will be leaving the end of April.

The Annual Meeting is May 3 after the worship service. Annual Reports from committees were due April 13. There was a discussion of whether other groups in the church should create annual reports. Several groups are working on revising church policies

NEW BUSINESS

The Council discussed the value of all committees meeting on the same night.

The Conference is offering a workshop called "Church on the Move." It might be valuable for some representatives to attend.

HUGS greeters need to be at both doors to welcome people. If you would be willing to be part of a HUGS team (Host, Usher, Greet, Serve Communion), contact Jan Morton.

Colleen Todd will be recognized for her service to the church on April 26.

Council discussed the possibility of including pulpit supply money in the budget. Council is not in favor now but entertained the possibility of a larger discussion later.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting will be May 20. Time to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Ogdahl, Clerk of Council, with assistance from Coleen Carder

Church Financials

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

	Annual Budget	Results Through March 31, 2015	% of Budget
<u>Income:</u>			
	\$	\$	
From Giving Units	143,220	42,583	29.73%
	\$	\$	
Other Giving	11,510	7,859	68.28%
	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	
Total Income	<u>154,730</u>	<u>50,442</u>	
 <u>Expenses:</u>			
	\$	\$	
Council	103,318	34,710	33.60%
	\$	\$	
Christian Ministry	10,400	2,539	24.41%
	\$	\$	
Christian Education	1,450	163	11.24%
	\$	\$	
Stewardship	300	191	63.67%
	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	
Trustees	<u>60,816</u>	<u>17,438</u>	28.67%
	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	
Total Expenses	<u>176,284</u>	<u>55,041</u>	
 Net Income (Loss) Year to			
Date:	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	
	<u>(21,554)</u>	<u>(4,599)</u>	

CHURCH CALENDAR — May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	1 Friday 10:30 Book Group	2 Saturday
3 *BIBLE SUNDAY* 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship w/Communion 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 ANNUAL MEETING 5:30 Foundation Board Meeting	4 5:30 Columbarium/ Memorial Committee	5	6 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	7	8 10:30 Book Group 11:00 Christian Ministry	9 Fishing Opener
10 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School No Adult Forum	11	12	13 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Trustees	14 5:00 Stewardship	15 10:30 Book Group 6:00 Process & Film	16
17 *CAMP SUNDAY* 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum	18	19	20 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 7:00 Council	21 4:00 Spring Cleanup 5:30 Christian Ed	22 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	23
24 *FOOD SHELF OFFERING* 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School No Adult Forum	25	26	27 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	28 5:30 PPRC	29 10:30 Book Group	30
31 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Sunday School No Adult Forum NEW PATHWAYS						

Friendship News
is a publication of
[First Congregational
United Church of Christ](#)
**415 Juniper Street
Brainerd, MN 56401**

firstcong@brainerd.net
218-829-2528
uccbrainerd.org

**Pastor
Rev. Leslie Moughty**

**Administrative Assist.
Bobbie Bora**