



# 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](mailto:firstcong@brainerd.net).

[uccbrainerd.org](http://uccbrainerd.org)

July 2015

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

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2015 Outstanding Senior Citizens Rewards



Gary Whiteman has been nominated for Crow Wing County Senior of the Year. Come and cheer for him and enjoy a nice picnic in the park! The Center's Picnic is Wednesday, July 15 at Lum Park. Serving lunch at 11:30 am, and awards presentation is 12:30 pm. Tickets are \$ 5.00 each and available at The Center, 803 Kingwood Street, Brainerd.

### Minnesota FoodShare Harvest Campaign

For many food shelves and those who use their services regularly, finding fresh produce can be a challenge. To make these healthy options more readily available, Minnesota FoodShare has launched the Harvest Campaign, focused on bringing fresh, locally grown produce into Minnesota food shelves. Please join us during August and September to collect fresh produce and get it to those who need it most – the hungry. To sign up or learn more, visit [gmcc.org/minnesotafoodshare/harvestcampaign](http://gmcc.org/minnesotafoodshare/harvestcampaign) or contact Courtney Zaato at 612-276-1556 or [czaato@gmcc.org](mailto:czaato@gmcc.org).

### Lakes Area Music Festival

The Lakes Area Music Festival will be holding one of its Prelude Concerts in Aitkin on July 12 at 7 p.m. Enjoy the sounds of Taylor Ward and a string quartet while they perform in the old Aitkin Opera House on the second floor of the Historic Butler Building. Admission is free, but donations are gladly accepted. Doors open at 6:30 and there will be a cash bar and light snacks. Experience the sound of Lakes Area Music Festival's fine musicians in these beautiful surroundings. The Historic Butler Building is located at 301 Minnesota Avenue North, in beautiful downtown Aitkin. The event is being sponsored by Lisa Wigand.

### Dan and Marcia are Getting Married

We're Getting Married and Everyone is Invited to Join Us! Sunday, July 12, 4:00 pm. SW Corner of Gregory Park, Brainerd. In case of rain we'll be across the street at First Congregational United Church of Christ, 415 Juniper St. Rev. Leslie Moughty officiating. Potluck Picnic - Dress is 'Picnic Casual'. Tie Dye or Rainbow would be appropriate. We'll be wearing tie dye. Bring a chair and dish to share We will provide beverages, plates etc. No RSVP Necessary - Please Join Us!

## Bridges of Hope

**Summer Time = Garage Sale Season!** Do you have great items just sitting around that you no longer have any use for? Have you recently had a garage sale or plan on having one in the near future? We may be able to help you out with some of your left over treasures. Under most circumstances we accept donations until 5:30pm daily. If you have items that you feel may be a good fit, we invite you to call Common Goods at 218-824-0923 or visit us at 16227 Hwy 371 N Brainerd, MN next to Dondelinger's. We suggest you call the store to verify that we are currently accepting items and to see what our greatest needs currently are.

## PASTOR'S PEN

For five days at the end of June, more than 3,000 people gathered in Cleveland, Ohio for the 30th General Synod of the United Church of Christ. Some of you may be wondering "what is a General Synod?" Every two years delegates and visitors from every corner of the country come together to do business of the wider church. There are also opportunities for worship, actions for social justice, workshops, and keynote speakers. While it would be difficult to recap five days' worth of activities in a newsletter, I thought I would share what I have gathered to be some of the key points of the event.

**Election of a new General Minister and President** - The Rev. Geoffrey Black retired from his position as the General Minister and President of the UCC. The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer (Conference Minister of the Southwest Conference) was elected as the new General Minister and President, with 85% of the vote. There was some discussion/debate about his election, since now the three top ministers in the denomination are all white males (which is a concern in a denomination that honors diversity). However, I did not read or hear any concerns about Dorhauer's abilities or qualifications and I have every confidence that he will be an effective leader for the UCC.

**Resolutions** - The Synod voted on 14 resolutions! I won't list them all here but I would like to highlight a few of them. Unfortunately the final amended versions are not yet available. Once they are posted by the UCC I will include a link to them in one of the weekly emails. .

1. Boycott and Divest from companies in Israeli-occupied Palestinian land - apparently this resolution does not mandate that the UCC Pension Boards completely divest and since the final versions of the resolutions are not available I am not clear on the details of the resolution. We voted on a similar resolution at the Minnesota Conference Annual meeting which focused encouraged education in local churches around this topic as well as divesting from and boycotting products made by companies in occupied Palestine.
2. Dismantling Discriminatory Systems of Mass Incarceration and Dismantling the New Jim Crow - Since the privatization of prisons, they have become a means of making money, and people of color are imprisoned at a far higher rate than whites (even for equal crimes). The UCC resolved to stand up with a prophetic witness against the corrupt system of imprisonment.
3. Resolution to Change the Racially Demeaning Name, Mascot and Imagery of the Washington National Football League Team - This resolution was intended to put pressure on the NFL team. During debate, one of seven Native American delegates from the Lakota Tribe passionately said, *"I am not a red skin, I am not a mascot... that is not an honor."*
4. Emergency Resolution to Lament the Shooting in Charleston - This is a resolution standing with our brothers and sisters in Christ in the wake of the shooting of 9 people from Emanuel AME in Charleston, SC.

Because of this resolution, the UCC will also petition the removal of the Confederate Flag from the Courthouse and local churches are challenged to address and overcome issues of racism.

### **Social Action**

On June 30, many of delegates from General Synod marched to the headquarters of the Cleveland Indians to deliver a petition with 3,000 signatures calling on the organization to change the team logo and name.

I realize that I dedicated a lot of space to talk about the goings-on of General Synod. This biennial gathering reminds us that we are one part of the greater body of Christ. We have brothers and sisters all across the country who are also discerning what God is speaking in their context. We are connected and covenanted to each other. I am inspired by our denomination's genuine desire to seek justice for all. I pray ceaselessly that our community will continue to discern how we might best seek justice in our own context. How might we respond to the Synod's challenge to address and overcome issues of racism here in the Brainerd Lakes area? Are there things we could do in our church to be better stewards of God's creation? Are there ways in which our church could widen our welcome and deepen our commitment to being an inclusive community for all?

In the words of the prophet Isaiah, may we “learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.” (Isaiah 1:17)

With Peace,

Pastor Leslie

## **Moderator’s Musings**

After many dedicated years as our treasurer, Lisa Wigand will be stepping down from this role at the end of August. After accepting her resignation, the Council thanked her for the vigilance with which she approached her responsibilities, as well as the grace she displayed every time she patiently explained financial reports to those of us not as adept and/or nimble at reading and interpreting financial reports. Lisa made it simple. Thank you, Lisa! And so when you cross paths with Lisa, please extend your thanks and express your appreciation to her for all she has contributed to our congregation through her years of service as our treasurer.

Moving forward, we will need to find an individual to fill Lisa’s shoes; someone with the willingness to serve the mission and ministry of this faith community in this capacity. The position has historically been filled by a member of our congregation. Are you interested? Do you know someone who might be interested? This might be an opportunity for you to be involved in the life of the church in a way that you have not yet explored.

We will be looking for someone who has an inclination and/or aptitude in the direction of money and numbers. It is true that identifying a person with gobs of experience and a background in accounting would be nice, but an accounting degree is not required. An organized mind with modest experience can learn the skills needed to be successful. And the Treasurer is not “Lone Ranger” position. In fact, the Treasurer works closely with the Office Manager, Bobbie Borg, who takes care of much of the bookkeeping duties.

Lisa has graciously offered to remain on as Treasurer through the month of August. This means that, if we are able to identify an appropriate candidate in the relatively near future, that individual could be trained in prior to Lisa’s end date, streamlining the subsequent transition. Please let me know if you are interested, or if you know of someone who should be approached about this opportunity. Give me a call

right away and let me know. I can be reached at: 218.821.9611. If I don't answer, please leave a message and I will return your call.

Peace!

Phil Kuehn, Moderator

## Friday Morning Book Group

The Friday Morning Book Group will begin a new book about July 10 (whenever we finish our current book). The new book is *Being Mortal*, a best-seller by Atul Gawande. Gawande, a surgeon and writer, tackles end-of-life issues by using examples, such as his own father's illness and death, to show how aging and the final days of life can be made more dignified and emotionally richer.

The book group meets in the second floor meeting room every Friday starting at 10:30 for conversation and at 11:00 for book reading and discussion. We purchase our own books and read the books aloud, so there is no homework. Everyone is welcome.

## Christian Ministry Department

### July 5

**Hosts:** Doris Anderson & Jan Morton

**Ushers:** Roger Best, Ellie Burkett,  
Greg Johnson & Gary Whiteman

**Greeters:** Jan Morton & Bobbie Borg

**Counters:** Jeff Behr & Marcia Mans

### July 12

**Hosts:** Maria Bertram & Betty Johnson

**Ushers/Greeters:** Maria Bertram, Lance James,  
Itty Newgord & Preston Newgord

**Counters:** Deb Griffith & Marcia Mans

### July 19

**Hosts:** Deb Griffith & Claire Steen

**Ushers:** Shirley Barten & Deb Lundberg

**Greeters:** Jim Flath & Duane Shatava

**Counters:** Coleen Carder & Vi Heiser

### July 26

**Hosts:** Sharon Carlson & Ann Turnbull

**Ushers/Greeters:** Sharon Carlson,  
Mike & Beth Schrader

**Counters:** Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

## Food Shelf Offering – June 28

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 June 28, we received \$420 and 37 pounds of food. Our next offering will be Sunday, July 26. **Thank you for helping to feed our hungry neighbors!**

## July Birthdays

7/2	Ron Owens	7/19	David Crum
7/3	Erin Twamley	7/20	Irene Whiteman
7/4	Gary Whiteman	7/23	Carol Crust
7/10	Bobbie Borg	7/24	Bonnie Crust
7/12	Chuck Widmark	7/26	Steve Crum
7/16	Betty Hopps	7/29	Samantha Bertram
7/18	Jeff Behr	7/30	Roger Grussing

# Church Council Minutes

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Call to Order and Opening prayer at 5:30. We are Christ's body.

Attending: Karen Ford, Bonnie Crum, Joey Halvorson, Marina Grabowski, Ann Turnbull, Coleen Carder, Marcia Mans, Dan Hegstad, Lisa Wigand, Moderator Phil Kuehn and Reverend Leslie Moughty

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Phil talked about his recent meeting at the Minnesota conference and how full and inspiring it was. He read from Luke 5: 1-11 "Do Not Be Afraid" as inspiration for our work together. Approval of the May minutes was tabled until next month as we didn't have a hard copy of the final minutes with us.

Karen Ford asked for the blessing of the council for the church team that will be gathering for the Walk for Alzheimer's on September 26<sup>th</sup> at Forestview school. Lisa Wigand moved that we support this effort with a second by Bonnie Crum. With unanimous approval, Marina agreed to be the point person to contact as she will be working with the youth to gain their support as well.

## PASTOR'S REPORT

Leslie was asked to attend the National Church Leadership Institute in August at the expense of the Minnesota Conference. The conference minister would like to have her work with him on a church vitality project for the coming year. This would involve about two hours a week and Leslie asked for the council's views on this matter. She will be gone from August 9<sup>th</sup> – August 13<sup>th</sup>.

CLERK'S REPORT - No report this month

TREASURER'S REPORT - Lisa said the insurance check refunding money sent erroneously has been received. The amount was \$5,350.00. We are still about \$3,500 in the red at this juncture. Lisa is very overworked with her new responsibilities at her job and would like to resign as Treasurer before the beginning of the new fiscal year. She will stay to work with her replacement and bring the Administrative Assistant as far along in the accounting procedures as she can. Dan moved to accept her resignation with regret and thanks for a job so well done for so many years. This was seconded by Coleen and regretfully approved by the full council.

TRUSTEES - The sign for the front of the church is being updated by Sign Spot. A work group is being established for Fellowship Hall renewal. The asbestos abated for that and for the columbarium room is scheduled for some time in August. The costs for the abatement for the two rooms is \$15,000 (\$5,000 for the columbarium room). Marcia asked that some time be allocated to inform the congregation about the new indoor columbarium to see if more money can be raised to complete this job. Jeff Behr is working on the acoustics for Fellowship Hall. An attorney needs to peruse the indemnity clause for the use of the building by non-profit organizations. Dave TenEyck will be asked if he could do this. A picture of the rain garden sign was passed among the council. It should be in place by this weekend.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY - Work needs to be done by all committees on the by-laws. Stewardship has agreed to handle the missions and special offerings which have been the responsibility of Christian Ministry. Joey brought the council up to date on the events planned by this committee for the next month. This will include pulpit fills for two Sundays in August.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY - There will be no involvement by our church in Vacation Bible school this summer. Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union donated \$200.00 toward church camp as 8 kids and 8 adults did a highway pickup on 371 last Sunday. Several intergenerational activities are being planned. We may offer parking for the July 4<sup>th</sup> events in the park.

AT LARGE - By Laws and Policies and Procedures are being worked on by various committees. Ann will turn the present book over to Phil so it can be kept in the office when it is completed. To be included is a policy about property use i.e.: tables, chairs, kitchen and sound equipment used by members of the congregation only. We are not able to offer this option to the general public.

OLD BUSINESS - Ann Turnbull moved that we return the \$1,650.00 Peace gift to the Minnesota Conference for their use in revitalizing of conference churches. This was seconded by Dan and passed unanimously. Pat Scott has approached Phil regarding our church's involvement in Peace and Justice issues: Honor the Earth, Goodbye Columbus, and the Enron pipeline issue in particular. There is a website for those interested <http://www.mnnuuf.org/>.

Dan Hegstad was asked to report on the marketing committee and he needs some direction for the council and also to find one or two new members. The council needs to identify ways to share information about our church. Ann and Phil will get information to Dan to facilitate his committee.

NEW BUSINESS - The committees will meet on the second Thursday of the month starting in July and the council will meet the third Wednesdays at 5:30 in the summer and 7:00 starting in the fall. The Music committee concerns will be discussed by the executive committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 with the Lord's Prayer. The next council meeting will be held Wednesday, July 15 at 5:30.

## Church Financials

### First Congregational UCC of Brainerd Financial Results - General Fund Year to Date Results as of 6/30/2015

	2015 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 6/30/15	% of Budget
<b>Income:</b>			
From Giving Units	\$ 143,220	\$ 81,778	57.10%
Other Giving	\$ 11,510	\$ 16,017	139.16%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 154,730</b>	<b>\$ 97,795</b>	<b>63.20%</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>			
Council	\$ 103,318	\$ 66,920	64.77%
Christian Ministry	\$ 10,400	\$ 6,106	58.71%
Christian Education	\$ 1,450	\$ 163	11.22%
Stewardship	\$ 300	\$ 393	130.85%
Trustees	\$ 60,816	\$ 23,060	37.92%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 176,284</b>	<b>\$ 96,640</b>	<b>54.82%</b>
<b>Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:</b>	<b>\$ (21,554)</b>	<b>\$ 1,155</b>	

## CHURCH CALENDAR — JULY 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	<b>2</b> 11:30 Clergy Cluster	<b>3</b> 10:30 Book Group *Office Closed in observation of Independence Day*	<b>4</b> Independence Day
<b>5</b> 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship Arts In the Park	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	<b>9</b> 5:30 Committee Meetings	<b>10</b> 10:30 Book Group	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Council Meeting	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 10:30 Book Group	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	<b>25</b>
<b>26 *Food Shelf Offering*</b> 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship <b>Newsletter Deadline</b> Youth leave for Pilgrim Point Camp	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	<b>30</b> 5:30 PPRC	<b>31</b> 10:30 Book Group	

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Brainerd, MN 56401**

[firstcong@brainerd.net](mailto:firstcong@brainerd.net)  
**218-829-2528**  
**uccbrainerd.org**

**Pastor  
Rev. Leslie Moughty**

**Administrative Assist.  
Bobbie Borg**