



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.

Office phone 218-829-2528

E-mail firstcong@brainerd.net

Website uccbrainerd.org

uccbrainerd.org

July 2017

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

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Directory

It’s time to update the church directory! Please let Bobbie know if there are any changes to your contact information. If you are not in the directory and would like to be added, please let Bobbie know. Thank you!

Last Call for Register for Youth Camp!

Youth camp is open to all youth who will have completed sixth grade through seniors in high school. Youth Camp Week 2 – July 23-28. Register on the Conference website <http://uccmn.org/pilgrimpoint>.

Pastor's Pen

Summer is here! School is out, flowers are in full bloom, and our summer friends the mosquitos are back. For many people, summer means traveling. This seems to be true for me as well, although most of my traveling this summer is church-related. So, what am I up to this summer?

At the end of June, I traveled to Saint Joseph and the College of Saint Benedict to attend the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the UCC. This meeting is a gathering of clergy and lay-people from UCC churches across the state of Minnesota. (More than 300 people from 89 churches attended.) From Friday afternoon to Sunday morning, we come together for worship, to hear keynote speakers, attend workshops, to do the business of the wider church, and to get to know one another better. This year Claire Steen and Tracy Lyons attended with me as voting delegates from First Congregational.

This year's meeting featured two keynote speakers – Rev. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi and Rev. Julian deShazier. (You can read Rev. Lizardy-Hajbi's full keynote address and view the slides from both her keynote and her workshop by going to this website: <http://uccmn.org/events/am/>). I spoke about her presentation in my sermon on June 18, and I encourage everyone to read it as it is more in-depth than what I can get into in a newsletter article: http://www.uccbainerd.org/?page_id=2035.

The focus of her message was that the best measures of church vitality aren't what many people assume. Instead of focusing on size, growth and worship attendance as the most important way to measure if a church is vital, the UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) discovered that a church was vital if the following five statements were true...

1. There is excitement about the future here.
2. The Congregation is always ready to try something new.
3. This place seeks out and uses the gifts of members of all ages.
4. The Congregation is a positive force in the community.
5. This place helps people live out their faith in daily life.

A vital church is not necessarily a big church or a church that is adding lots of new members. Of course, there are certainly big and growing churches that are vital but focusing primarily on numbers is missing the most important part of the picture – the church and its members have strong connections to God, to one another and to the world. Is the church accomplishing the real outcome of ministry – deepening faith and changing the world? Whether or not the church has 50 members or 5,000 members, a church that is deepening the faith of its people and changing the world for the better, is a vital church.

As I write this article I am also preparing to travel to Baltimore for the 31st UCC General Synod. I leave bright and early on Thursday, June 29 and come home on July 5. (I will be taking July 6th off as a comp day.) This is a biennial event and takes place in different parts of the country each time. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people from churches and other UCC settings across the country for five days to do the business of the wider church. The days are packed full with meetings, hearings, keynote speakers, worship experiences, workshops and more. This year, the General Synod will be considering more than 20 resolutions. You can see a list of the resolutions and read each of them by going here: <http://synod.uccpages.org/resolutions/index.html>.

My participation at General Synod is part of my commitment to the Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI) to which I was accepted last year. Our assignment for the week of Synod is to participate in each plenary, worship and business event and to pick a resolution and follow it through all the stages of the process before it comes to the floor for a vote. I have decided to follow the resolution titled "On Establishing Procedures for Cultural Diversity Training for Authorized Ministers."

I will have much more to say about Synod when I return. I will do my best to post public updates about Synod to the church Facebook page (which you can read without having a Facebook account. You can also watch streaming video of many of the Synod events such as worship and keynote speakers by going here: <http://synod.uccpages.org/live.html> . All of the plenary sessions will be streamed live and you can check the agenda by going to the main Synod website (<http://www.generalsynod.org/>) and click on agenda. I would definitely recommend tuning in to hear President and General Minister, Rev. John Dorhauer give the sermon during worship on Sunday at 1:30pm CST. I have also posted a detailed schedule of what I will be doing at Synod on my office door.

There's a lot going on this summer in the life of the greater church. I didn't even mention that I will be taking our youth to camp at Pilgrim Point at the end of July! Thank you for supporting my engagement with the wider church. Christian Ministry has put together some wonderful worship experiences for the Sundays that I am away! I ask for your prayers for my stamina as well as the discernment to know when I need some down time during this trip to Baltimore. I look forward to coming back home and to sharing with you some of the things I experienced on the road.

With peace and many blessings,



Pastor Leslie will be out of the office June 29 – July 6 attending General Synod in Baltimore. Rev. Joh Stiles from First Lutheran Church will be on call for pastoral care emergencies and can be reached at 612-418-1406.

Moderator's Notes

In the beginning of June, I had the privilege of attending the annual meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ at the College of St. Benedict. It was an inspiring and uplifting experience. I wish that we could have loaded up a bus and taken our entire congregation to hear the speakers. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to attend the event.

Last Sunday, Pastor Leslie shared ideas from the first keynote speaker, Reverend Kristina Lizardy. As you heard, her main message was that "good things come in small packages". We were reminded that vitality is even possible in small congregations like First Congregational. I believe that each one of us is vital to our congregation. We have a vibrant church filled with compassion, action and giving individuals. Our congregation has many members who do good deeds in the community and for others in the church.

The Saturday morning keynote address was given by Reverend Julian Deshazier from the south side of Chicago. He led us in an energizing and fun hip-hop worship. Rev. Deshazier's message was very powerful! He believes that "privilege is the ability to walk away. We have decided to stay. We let fear prevent us from finishing a job." Rev. Deshazier said that we express anger at 110% but action at 90% which irks him. He says we need to get off our high horse and get on the donkey.

Rev. Deshazier believes in action. On the south side of Chicago, there were no Level One Trauma hospitals. Given the violence and the number of gunshot victims, this fact is appalling. His church rallied against this disparity. Together with local community organizations, they led the effort to get a Level One Trauma center, which they will now have in the year 2018. He says that we have turned our churches into think tanks, not action centers. According to him, we are not churches if we abide in silence.

Rev. Deshazier challenged us to be the moral voice. According to him, we should speak and create a conversation. We are to organize and be the organizer. We are to let our insecurities lead us and tolerate our insecurities. We are to go where we are called. Finally, he believes we cannot let our fears prevent us from finishing a job.

In response to Rev. Deshazier, I am asking you: What do you think we need to do as a congregation? At this time, do you have the resources to do more as an individual? I know that each member of our congregation can make a difference in our church and community.

Claire Steen
Church Moderator

July Birthdays

7/2	Ron Owens	7/23	Carol Crust
7/4	Gary Whiteman	7/23	Vi Heiser
7/10	Bobbie Borg	7/26	Steve Crum
7/12	Chuck Widmark	7/29	Samantha Bertram
7/18	Jeff Behr	7/30	Roger Grussing
7/19	David Crum		

HUGS

July 2

Host: Jan Morton

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

Counters: Jeff Behr & Jerry Kuehn

July 9

Hosts: Maria Bertram & Itty Newgord

Ushers/Greeters: Mary Harder, Jack & Kay Kraywinkle & Lois McBroom

Counters: Deb Griffith & Judy Whiteman

July 16

Hosts: Charlotte Goedsche & Cynthia Janes

Ushers/Greeters: Deb Griffith, Austin & Preston Newgord & Barb Stokke

Counters: Mabel Schultz & Tracy Lyons

July 23

Hosts: Joey Halvorson & Karen Ogdahl

Ushers/Greeters: Caroline & Rebekah Bender, Jean Gustafson

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

July 30

Hosts: Sue Hadland & Lisa Wigand

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

Counters: Sharon Carlson & Judy Whiteman

Food Shelf Offering – June

Each month we bring groceries, necessities and financial donations to help feed hungry neighbors in our community. The Salvation Army Food Shelf serves 400 families each month. In June, we received \$115. Our next offering will be Sunday, July 23. **Thank you for helping to feed our hungry neighbors!**

New Pathways Week at First Congregational

Sunday, July 9 – Sunday, July 16, 2017

There are still openings for dinner, overnights, set up and tear down.

If you wish to volunteer, you may contact:

Staying overnight: Sue Hadland – 829-2381 – dghrose@charter.net

Kathi Hefti – 839-1578 – hefti3@gmail.com

Dinners: Sharon Carlson – 828-1581 – sharoncarlson62@charter.net

Set up and take down (2 Sundays): Deb Griffith – 828-4841 – debrange@brainerd.net

Transportation: Scott Gutierrez – 838-7066 – sljtgutierrez@gmail.com

Activities: Deb Griffith – 828-4841 – debrange@brainerd.net

Also, there will be a white board located in the church sanctuary lobby each Sunday starting on June 25th for sign up or you may go to www.supergenious.com online, set up an account and pick your dates for any of the above five activity opportunities. We hope you will consider joining us!!!

Thank you from The New Pathways Team!!!

THE REWARDS ARE MANY, AS A VOLUNTEER, AND AS OUR GUEST

Sounds of Hope Concert

Join your neighbors at the “Sounds of Hope” concert on Friday, July 14th at 7:00 pm at First Congregational Church.

Each summer, a select group of no more than 60 children and young adults venture to Minnesota from Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and the U.S. They arrive as strangers but soon find themselves embraced in a closely-knit, supportive community as they learn popular songs and dances from each other’s cultures. Then, they take these songs of peace, love and respect into neighboring communities in a joyous celebration of cultural unity, delighting their audiences along the way.



First Congregational is hosting the meal and performance. We would enjoy having more volunteers to help with the pizza dinner and during the performance. Please see Kathy Ogden 2012ourhouse@gmail.com or Deb Griffith debrange@brainerd.net for more details.

Church Council Minutes

June 21, 2017

Moderator – Claire Steen	Assistant Moderator – Mike North
Clerk – Barb Stokke	Treasurer – Cheri Maxwell
Christian Ministry – Karen Ford	Trustees – Deb Griffith
Christian Education – tbd	Stewardship – Judy Whiteman
Council at Large – Bonnie Crum, Bob Jones, Gary Whiteman	

Present: Mike North, Barb Stokke, Deb Griffith, Judy Whiteman, Bonnie Crum, Gary Whiteman, Bob Jones, Rev. Leslie Moughty, and Ann Turnbull representing Christian Ministry.

Mike North called the meeting to order and shared Food for Thought. Judy Whiteman will provide July's Food for Thought.

CLERK'S REPORT – no report

PASTOR'S REPORT –Highlights: Attended UCCMN Annual Meeting; officiated in the after-service Blessing of the Bikes June 4; participated in Brainerd High School's Baccalaureate service; attended Brainerd School District Listening Session; wrote "Clergy View" published Friday, May 19 in the Brainerd Dispatch; attended Habitat for Humanity fundraiser; volunteered at the Soup Kitchen; and represented the church at the Brainerd Pride picnic in Lum Park June 17. Pastoral Care Contacts include three hospital visits, two home visits, three office visits, two Pride Picnic blessings, and three conversations and prayer.

Upcoming events include participating in the fundraiser for a Splash Pad in Gregory Park; joining the Board of Directors of WeARE; continuing to develop the Visitation Team; planning New Member Sunday to be held in July; chaperoning the youth, along with Lance and Phil, at Pilgrim Point in July; giving the Invocation at the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure July 8; and attending the UCC General Synod in Baltimore as part of the Next Generation Leadership Initiative. NGLI participants at the General Synod are required to follow one resolution or business item through the process. Leslie asked the Council for input on which topics might be of most interest to the church at large.

Leslie announced that Linda and Randy Crowe will attend services with us July 16. Linda was our Interim Pastor 2013 - 2015.

TREASURER'S REPORT – no report

TRUSTEES' REPORT – *Columbarium walls are painted, trim is primed, and Hy-Tec will begin work on the ceiling. Volunteers are needed to paint the trim's final coat. *The new dishwasher has been installed and plumbed and is ready for wiring. *The new FH chairs have arrived, and chairs with arms will be ordered. *Wi-Fi is now available throughout the building. For access, please inquire in the office. *Work continues on door lock safeguards and repairs. *The skylight leak has been fixed, but missing shingles and a gap (think bats!) between trim work and shingles need attention. *Summer church cleaning is going well. *A snow-removal provider with timely billing practices is needed. *Pavers have been removed, and broken Keystone blocks will be removed. *Help is needed to maintain the gardens throughout the summer. Volunteers will remove rocks in the squares flanking the main entrance and Juniper shrubs will be planted. *Quakers have offered their help with anything needed for their meeting room. *Trustees will look into the concern that bathrooms on the lower level are not wheelchair accessible.

STEWARDSHIP – Stewardship is focused on two major events: the October pledge drive and Planned Giving presentations. Council discussed the purposes of each, and information sources and possible presenters for the Planned Giving presentations.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY – Ann Turnbull, sitting in for Karen Ford, reviewed the Taizé service and its feedback. Council agreed that it was a meaningful service that should be continued.

Ministry is finalizing details with Chris Fogderud, musician and high school band director, for the Outdoor Jazz Service to be held on the church lawn July 2 (Arts in the Park day).

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – Pastor Leslie, representing CE, briefly outlined up-coming events, including housing a Wisconsin UCC group in the church overnight in July and starting a Confirmation Class in the fall.

OLD BUSINESS – Bonnie Crum passed on pastor evaluation materials to Mike North and recommended a yearly scheduled evaluation. She also recommended determining if the results are to be private or public.

Leslie stated she is cautiously optimistic about the budget shortfall. At the beginning of June, the budget deficit was approximately half as large as projected.

NEW BUSINESS – Leslie introduced the new UCC logo. An explanation of the new logo can be found at this website:

http://www.ucc.org/news_new_ucc_logo_reflects_complements_denominations_purpose_vision_mission_statements_06062017

Deb Griffith reported on the July 14 **Songs of Hope Concert**, co-hosted by First Congregational and Trinity Lutheran Church. Volunteers will be needed to serve dinner to the performers before the concert. Information about Sounds of Hope can be found at their website: www.soundsofhope.org

Gary Whiteman moved to adjourn; Deb Griffith seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting will be July 19 at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stokke, Clerk of Council

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd			
Financial Results - General Fund			
Year to Date Results as of 5/31/2017			
	2017 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 5/31/17	% of Budget
Income:			
From Giving Units	\$ 117,365	\$ 67,350	57.39%
Other Giving	\$ 32,146	\$ 6,582	20.47%
Total Income	\$ 149,511	\$ 73,932	49.45%
Expenses:			
Council	\$ 102,901	\$ 51,384	49.94%
Christian Ministry	\$ 3,120	\$ 1,747	55.98%
Music Committee	\$ 12,220	\$ 3,714	30.39%
Christian Education	\$ 650	\$ 35	5.31%
Stewardship	\$ 600	\$ 344	57.35%
Trustees	\$ 55,110	\$ 22,166	40.22%
Total Expenses	\$ 174,601	\$ 79,389	45.47%
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (25,090)	\$ (5,457)	

Church Calendar – July 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 10:00 Jazz Service 11:00 Fellowship	3	4 Independence Day Office Closed	5 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 11:30 Clergy Cluster	6	7 10:30 Book Group	8
9 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship New Pathways	10 New Pathways	11 New Pathways	12 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn New Pathways	13 5:30 Committee Meetings New Pathways	14 10:30 Book Group New Pathways	15 New Pathways
16 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	17	18	19 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:00 Council Meeting	20	21 10:30 Book Group	22
23 10:00 Worship & Food Shelf Offering 11:00 Fellowship NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	24	25	26 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	27 5:30 PPRC	28 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	29
30 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	31					