



# Friendship News

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd  
An Open and Affirming Church

The church office hours are 8am-12pm, Monday – Friday.

Our Pastor, Leslie Moughty is also available at other times by appointment.

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August 2016

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

<i>Thank You Ann Turnbull.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Pastor’s Pen.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Moderator’s Notes .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Next Generation Leadership Initiative.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>August Birthdays.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>HUGS .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Food Shelf Offering – July 24.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Photography of Michael Duval .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Cooking Group.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Church Financials .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>July 20, 2016 Church Council Minutes.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Thank You.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>The End of Alzheimer’s Starts with You.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Church Calendar – August 2016.....</i>	<i>8</i>

## Thank You Ann Turnbull

I would like to thank Ann Turnbull for all of your help while Leslie was away. You truly made my job as stress-free as possible! You are very much appreciated!! - Bobbi

## Pastor's Pen

Where do I even begin? The last month feels like a surreal blur. Most of you know that my dad was in terminal liver failure and has been on hospice since October 2013. Typically people are placed on hospice when their doctor believes that their illness may result in the end of their life within 6 months. When I decided to accept the call as your pastor here in Brainerd, my dad had already been on hospice for over a year. But he had been sick for much longer. His original diagnosis came in the summer of 2006 and by 2007 he was on supplemental oxygen 24 hours a day. When I left for seminary in the fall of 2009, we were sure he would not live long enough to see me graduate. But he did. He saw my brother get married in 2010, he saw me graduate in 2013 and he saw me become ordained in 2014.

You can see why it was hard to believe that he might actually be nearing the end of his life when I spoke to my mom at the end of June. But I got the sense that something was different this time. So on July 3 I flew to Seattle with only a few days' notice in order to visit my dad, assess his current condition and give my mom some support. I flew out Sunday evening and my plan was to return to Brainerd on Friday evening with plenty of time to lead worship that week. In the 4 days that I was with my dad, I witnessed his condition worsen. All morning on the day of my departure, he was sleeping so sound that I couldn't wake him up. I wasn't sure I would be able to say goodbye. He finally woke up about 30 minutes before I had to leave, long enough to ask me to take a photo of us, give lots of hugs and say goodbye.

When I arrived at the airport, a voice kept saying "What are you doing? Turn around!" But I tuned it out and went through security. Once I arrived at my gate, I couldn't ignore that voice any longer. Tears took over and a phone call to Ken helped convince me that what I needed to do in that moment was to be with my parents. My suitcase continued on to Brainerd, and I returned to Bothell.

The next three weeks were a blessing. An exhausting, difficult, heartbreaking blessing. Each day (and sometimes each hour) presented a new reality. During this time my dad completely stopped eating. Then he became unable to swallow pills. Then, even small amounts of water left him choking and gasping for air. I won't go into all the details but I am absolutely amazed that my mom has been doing so much for so long.

The last night of my dad's life was beyond difficult. There in the living room where he and my mom put their Christmas tree, I was holding my dad's hand, praying for his struggle to end. Then something incredible happened. Just after 7:00 in the morning on July 22, my dad's eyes popped wide open and he seemed to be looking at something 1,000 miles away. His breathing became easy, his body seemed to relax, and the whole energy in the room changed. I knew in that moment that he was being called home.

That night was quite possibly the most difficult night of my life and that morning was one of the most sacred and holy. It was truly a gift to me, to my mom, and to my dad for me to be by their side during this last chapter of my dad's journey. I honestly don't know how my mom is still standing with everything she has gone through over the years and especially the last few weeks and months.

I am blessed and grateful to be serving a church of people who recognized (sometimes before I did) that I needed to spend this time with my family. I am so thankful for all the prayers, notes of encouragement and letters of condolences I have received. I am deeply thankful to everyone who had a part in planning and leading worship and tying up loose ends and volunteering for the Songs of Hope Concert. Thank you to Lilja Behr for being on call for pastoral care in my absence. Thank you to Bobbie who I am sure picked up lots of slack while I was gone. We are so lucky to have her! I particularly want to thank Ann Turnbull who, in addition to generally making sure that all the details of upcoming events and Sunday worship were covered, stepped up as a substitute chaperon for our youth and their trip to the National Youth Event at Disneyworld!

I am truly honored to be your pastor. With Peace, Pastor Leslie

## Moderator's Notes

### Intentional Family

Dan Hegstad, Council Moderator

Recently, I heard someone describe themselves as a 'friendly introvert.' I get it. I have a very public job and I am part of several committees and boards, including our Church Council. I'm on TV and a public speaker. I may seem like an extrovert, but I'm more of an introvert. I'm a member of the bike club, but I'd rather ride alone or with a small group of close friends. I'm in a kayak club but I don't mind kayaking alone. I like quiet and I'm very happy with my own company. Sometimes introverts are perceived as cold and unfriendly and friendly people as extroverts. Not so.

Introverts like quiet time. But I'm not one to substitute 'quiet time in the woods' for attending church. Yes, one can commune with God while alone in creation, but, as I see it, that's not what a 'church' experience is about.

Yes, come on Sunday morning to connect with God, but it's so much more than that. I see us as an intentional family. I may be good company for myself, but I need people. I get reenergized when I am alone, but I need more. We all need more than a singular relationship with God or our 'self.'

We're a family. We party, we talk, we squabble, we share, we support. We love and aggravate each other at the same time. We grow together, we celebrate together; we grieve together. It's wonderful and messy.

Now is a time of grieving and support. Our pastor, Leslie, whom we look to when we need help and support, needs our support. Now is a time when we leave the work of budgets, foundations and bills for another day. It will wait. Sorrow and support are the priority.

We have so much 'stuff' which demands our attention. Politics, money, that leaky faucet, which toothpaste is best, the nature of God, my jerk boss and on and on to infinity and beyond. It demands our attention, but we can say no. What matters now is family. I'm reminded that, in the end, what really matters is our relationships. Love and forgiveness. Forgiving ourselves and others for being human is sometimes our biggest challenge and maybe our highest calling. Love is a verb and love is a choice.

Intentional. Intentional family. Intentional community. I choose to be part of this family.

## Next Generation Leadership Initiative

Pastor Leslie begins Next Generation Leadership Initiative. On August 1, Pastor Leslie will travel to the UCC national headquarters (known as Church House) in Cleveland, Ohio for the first meeting of the Next Generation Leadership Initiative class of 2027. The Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI) is a ten-year leadership program that is offered to a small cohort of young clergy each year. Being accepted into this program is an honor and a huge opportunity not only for Leslie, but for our church as well.

Some information from the NGLI website: "NGLI: Target 2030 seeks to honor and challenge young clergy who demonstrate significant potential, who have accepted the high calling to parish ministry, who view parish ministry as a career path, and who are willing to make a long-term commitment to service in congregational settings of the United Church of Christ.

Those selected for NGLI: Target 2030 will be provided with advanced training to hone their skills and gifts in order to serve as transformational leaders. They will also have the opportunity to create a cohort of colleagues in which they can encourage and challenge one another, as well as reflect together on the life of a local church pastor in the twenty-first century. For more information about this incredible program, visit <http://tinyurl.com/uccngli>

While Pastor Leslie is in Cleveland from August 1-4, please contact Rev. Lilja Behr for pastoral care.

## August Birthdays

8/2	Nicole Grabowski	8/16	Emma Widmark	8/27	Kathy Hegstad
8/8	Diane Hauan	8/17	Jill Carlson	8/28	Arlene Jones
8/10	Bodie Brooks	8/21	Maria Bertram	8/28	Robert Bock
8/12	Brian Twamley	8/23	Jean Schaeffer	8/30	Samuel Stadem
8/13	Joe Stattine	8/27	Terry Boman	8/31	Michael Kuehn
8/15	Addison Ferrie	8/27	Dana Watson		

## HUGS

### August 7

**Hosts:** Doris Anderson & Jan Morton

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

**Greeters:** ?

**Counters:** Jeff Behr & Jerry Kuehn

### August 14

**Hosts:** Mary Harder & Lois McBroom

**Ushers/Greeters:** Maria Bertram, Kay Kraywinkle,  
Itty & Preston Newgord

**Counters:** Deb Griffith & Judy Whiteman

### August 21

**Hosts:** Marcia Mans & Barb Stokke

**Ushers:** Austin & Preston Newgord

**Greeter:** Claire Steen

**Counters:** Coleen Carder & Vi Heiser

### August 28

**Hosts:** Joey Halvorson & Karen Ogdahl

**Ushers/Greeters:** Kyd Lukanen, Tracy Lyons,  
Mike Schrader & Ann Turnbull

**Counters:** Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

## Food Shelf Offering – July 24

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. On July 24 we received \$160. Our next offering will be Sunday, August 28. **Thank you for helping to feed our hungry neighbors!**

## Photography of Michael Duval

The photography exhibit by Michael Duval currently is on display in Fellowship Hall. It features the musicians, their instruments and the artistic movements of people at the annual Nisswa Stamman Scandinavian Music Festival, photographed between 2011 and 2015.

Photographer Duval states that there is a certain vulnerability in performing artists and believes that vulnerability is openly displayed on the faces of the artists. Those familiar emotions are focus, intensity, joy, satisfaction, appreciation. These displays of emotion are partly why Duval is drawn to the faces of the artists in the photographs.

Capturing the essence of the festival as unobtrusively as possible is challenging – harsh natural and artificial lighting, distracting backgrounds, dynamic and sometimes unpredictable movement of performers and, of course a paying audience uninterested in a photographer disrupting their view. Yet these challenges present opportunities to create interesting images that artistically celebrate this local early-summer tradition.

This event is truly pleasing to the ear, eye and soul.

## Cooking Group

Cooking Group Update:

A few weeks ago members of our cooking group helped prepare and serve an Italian Dinner to the winners of the Heartland Symphony Orchestra fund raiser in November (Yes, Nov.!) But I think it was worth the wait. Here is a thank you note we received from one of the bidders –

"The most wonderful people!  
The most delectable time!  
This calls for Big Thank yous!  
It calls for a rhyme!!!

Thank you, dear cooks!  
And Bakers et al!  
I'm sure you know  
We all had a ball!!!!

Thank you, Sharon, and your UCC friends for just a superb evening!!!!!"

Thanks go to Jim Newgord for two loaves of tasty Italian bread, fresh from the oven; to Jan Morton for a mighty fine Minestrone soup (recipe requested by guests); Lowell Johnson for the appetizers and salad; Sharon for appetizers and dessert; the Schaeffers for two bottles of FINE Italian wine and Costco for the Butternut Squash and Apple Ravioli we topped with Browned Butter and Toasted Pecans.

The six women laughed, talked up a storm, sang and ate. It was so delightful to observe people having SO MUCH FUN! Thanks to Jan and Lowell for their help in serving and Rod for his help with clean-up.

## Church Financials

Financial Results – General Fund Year to Date Results as of 6/30/16	2016 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 6/30/16	% of Budget
<b>Income:</b>			
From Giving Units	\$ 150,481	\$ 64,146	42.63%
Other Giving	\$ 5,500	\$ 9,844	178.97%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 155,981</b>	<b>\$ 73,990</b>	<b>47.43%</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>			
Council	\$ 97,324	\$ 41,198	42.33%
Christian Ministry	\$ 13,150	\$ 5,308	40.36%
Christian Education	\$ 2,950	\$ 265	9.00%
Stewardship	\$ 570	\$ 241	42.35%
Trustees	\$ 60,170	\$ 21,486	35.71%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 174,164</b>	<b>\$ 68,498</b>	<b>39.33%</b>
<b>Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:</b>	<b>\$ (18,183)</b>	<b>\$ 5,491</b>	

## July 20, 2016 Church Council Minutes

Moderator – Dan Hegstad

Assistant Moderator – Claire Steen

Clerk – Barb Stokke

Treasurer – Mike Schrader

Christian Ministry – Ann Turnbull

Trustees – Coleen Carder

Christian Education – Marina Grabowski

Stewardship – Judy Whiteman

Council at Large – Bonnie Crum, Mike North

Present: Dan Hegstad, Barb Stokke, Ann Turnbull, Marina Grabowski, Mike Schrader, Coleen Carder, Judy Whiteman, Bonnie Crum

Dan Hegstad called the meeting to order and shared Mary Oliver's poem "When Death Come." Judy will provide August's Food for Thought.

CLERK'S REPORT – Barb will email a request for committee minutes to Jan Kurtz, Maria Bertram, Mike Schrader, Nancy Gould, and Marcia Mans soon after the second Thursday of the month. As the minutes come in, she will send them to council members.

PASTOR'S REPORT – No report. Our thoughts and prayers are with Leslie and her family as her father is nearing the end of his life.

TREASURER'S REPORT – The council looked at the financial report. Committees need to start preparing budgets for 2017.

TRUSTEES' REPORT – Although the Trustees' budget is okay, Coleen explained the need for increased money to cover unforeseen repairs or unpredictable utility cost jumps. Two other needs were noted: re-sloping grounds close to part of the foundation and keeping the carpets clean and stain free. The Tuesday work-day response was great, and many projects were completed.

STEWARDSHIP'S REPORT – Work continues on the fall pledge drive and the time and talent surveys. The committee is also considering a presentation on planned giving.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY'S REPORT – Plans are complete for the overnight stay and concert of Sounds of Hope, and church service plans have been made for July 24 and 31. It was determined that Forums are the responsibility of the Christian Ed committee and that more discussion is needed about the composition of a by-laws committee.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION'S REPORT – Jolene Hojem and Sharon Carlson will teach Sunday School. CE will be selling brats August 5 and 6 at the Baxter Cub Foods Store and bagging groceries Thursday, September 1, at the Brainerd Cub Foods. CE is also planning a future ice cream social for the congregation during Fellowship time after church.

AT-LARGE MEMBERS'S REPORT –The council agreed that wording on the ONA plaque should be revised, making it more inclusive, and that another plaque by the Ivy Street door should be considered. Another concern is the lack of hymnals. Do we need to buy more? Are there hymnals that should be returned to the church? From what fund would they be purchased? **(Note from Bobbie: Lisa Wigand donated money to purchased 4 new Hymnals and we have 1 extra in the counting room. We also have about 5 large print hymnals available.)** Lilja Behr has not received calls for visitations while Pastor Leslie is gone. She asks if there are people she should be visiting.

OLD BUSINESS – The Safe Church Policy, By-Laws task force, Justice Committee, and the Visioning retreat will remain on the agenda and be discussed at a later date.

NEW BUSINESS – Ann clarified the Name Tag process: If anyone in the congregation notices a new person who has been with us more than a week and is still wearing a temporary name tag, please ask if

he/she would like a permanent one. Please put the temporary one on Bobbie's desk, and she'll make a new one.

We are an Accessible Church but aren't listed as such with MN Conference. *Handicap Accessible* should be noted on all event notices and posters, and MN Conference will be notified of our status.

While Pastor Leslie is with her family, Ann Turnbull has agreed to join Lowell Johnson chaperoning our youth while they attend the National Youth Event in Florida. We thank you, Ann, for supporting our youth and for supporting Pastor Leslie during these difficult days.

Stewardship will host the August Committee Meetings.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 17, at **5:30.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Stokke, Clerk of Council

## Thank You

Dear members and friends of First Congregational,

Thank you for giving Leslie and me the support and care during this last very difficult month of my husband's life. She was here to help me care for Bob's medical, spiritual and emotional needs, a gift that will carry me through the tough days, weeks and months ahead.

I know it has been difficult to have her gone for this extended period of time, but I couldn't imagine going through this alone or with anyone else. Leslie was truly my angel while she was here.

I could sense that she was wrestling with the decision to stay and her responsibilities there, but it became clear that God called her to be with her dad and me for this sacred last journey. I will be forever grateful that she trusted her congregation would support her in this difficult choice.

I am deeply touched by your generosity and loving spirit.

God's Peace,  
Chris Yager (Leslie's mom)

## The End of Alzheimer's Starts with You



Brainerd Area Walk

Saturday, September 24, 2016 8:30 am  
Forestview Middle School, Baxter

Join our team: First Congregational UCC  
or Donate to a FCUCC Walker

Go to the website [WWW.ALZ.ORG/WALK](http://WWW.ALZ.ORG/WALK)  
to join a team or make a donation.

*Alzheimer's is relentless. So are we! Alzheimer's is an epidemic devastating our families, our finances and our future. The disease is all around us – but the power to stop it is within us.*

Need assistance to register or donate? Contact:

Karen Ford: [karenford42@gmail.com](mailto:karenford42@gmail.com) (651)492-3600 or Brenda Conley: [bconley@alz.org](mailto:bconley@alz.org) (218)763-2560

## Church Calendar – August 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @Sawmill Inn	4	5 10:30 Book Group  Youth brat sale @ Baxter Cub Foods	6 Youth brat sale @ Baxter Cub Foods
7 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	8	9	10 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 11:30 Clergy Cluster	11 5:30 Committee Meetings	12 10:30 Book Group	13
14 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	15	16	17 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 5:30 Council Meeting	18	19 10:30 Book Group	20
21 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	22	23	24 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn Cooking Group Garden Party	25 5:30 PPRC	26 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen	27
28 10:00 Worship & Food Shelf Offering 11:00 Fellowship <b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b>	29	30 12:00 Lunch Bunch	31 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn			