



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.

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uccbrainerd.org

August 2017

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

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Pastor's Pen

I really can't believe we are nearing the end of Summer already! It is just me or does it feel like June and July flew by at a record pace? As I write this I am packing up for a week of Youth Camp at Pilgrim Point in Alexandria. Phil and Lance will be joining me as chaperons as we accompany Michael, Rebekah, Macyn, and Kyd to camp – all for their first time! The first time I attended a full week of youth camp was only a few years ago. A friend of mine recruited me to serve as chaplain and a camp counselor at Pilgrim Firs in Port Orchard, WA. I never understood the big deal about church camp until I experienced it for myself. Being unplugged from the world and enjoying nature were just the beginning. The sense of camaraderie that is built over only a few days, the connection to the Holy that is made throughout the week and the acceptance of strangers as friends you haven't met yet – these things are only part of what makes church camp special in my experience.

As an adult leader, camp is both rewarding and exhausting. Being on duty and responsible for other people's children, especially teens, as well as participating in activities and walking back and forth between camp locations can wipe a person out! There's a reason I usually sleep for almost an entire day when I get back from camp! But I love our youth and accompanying them on the spiritual journey, including at camp, is one of pieces of ministry that makes my heart sing.

Love of Children is one of the "3 Great Loves" that were introduced at General Synod in Baltimore a few weeks ago. The 3 Great Loves is the denomination's opportunity to express how our Love of Neighbor, Love of Children and Love of Creation work together to address the inequities in our current world. Over the next two years, every setting of the United Church of Christ is invited to make two commitments:

First, discover ways in which our faith community can engage in mission that serves the needs of children, responds to the suffering of your neighbor and/or honors the call to be good stewards of God's creation. Second, find a way to narrate the impact of our commitment and tell the story to the rest of the denomination. The UCC is creating a web presence that archives and details not just the stories of our shared mission in this collective effort, but the details about the difference these commitments make. (Learn more about the 3 Great Loves initiative at <http://3greatloves.uccpages.org/>)

Supporting our youth's participation in church events like camp through financial contributions, prayer and volunteering, is one way we embody our Love of Children. I invite you to consider other ways we might engage in the 3 Great Loves both within our church community and reaching out to the wider community. I look forward to seeing where your passions lie and what creative ideas you all might have for this new initiative.

With peace and many blessings,

Pastor Jestic

Moderator's Notes

July has been a hectic and fun month! We had several 4th of July celebrations and festive activities at our lake. My granddaughters stayed at the "new cabin" for nineteen days. They enjoyed swimming, 4th of July picnics, and fireworks. After 19 days, I was sad to see them go.

One of the best parts of being at the "new cabin" at Hay Lake Lodge is that we have new neighbors. Despite living near them for 13 years, I never really knew these neighbors until this summer. Their sons will be a junior in high school and in eighth grade. These boys took my granddaughters tubing several

times, which was the highlight of their stay. The impressive part of this experience was how kind and generous these young men were to the grand girls who are only four and a half and nearly seven. I was extremely grateful to them for including our girls in fun activities.

On July 16, I was fortunate to hear Pastor Leslie's sermon giving information from the national conference and the importance of youth in our church. She shared some ideas with our youth that morning. One of her ideas was that perhaps we don't want to wait until our youth are confirmed to consider them as "official members".

After the service, I visited with a church member and he said that the idea that youth are the "future of the church" is disenfranchising. He said that we need to consider ways of legitimizing youth as an integral part of our faith journey. In our church, we are fortunate to have youth who are passionate and full of ideas. We need to treat them as equals in our small community. I believe that there are places in our society where children should be treated as children and allowed to be children. However, there are also places where youth should be given the space and opportunity to be treated as an adult. Our church is a safe place for youth. Moving forward, we should consider treating them as equals and an essential part of First Congregational.

Claire Steen
Church Moderator

Come, be Inspired!

At both the Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting and the UCC General Synod, the keynote speakers and preachers delivered powerful and important messages. One of the most frustrating parts of attending these events is figuring out how to bring the messages back to church. Pastor Leslie will be hosting a series of "**viewing parties**" **after church the first three Sundays in August**. We will be inspired by Glennon Doyle, Rev. Kim Kendrick and Rev. Traci Blackmon (the UCC's new Executive Minister of Justice and Witness). More viewing parties featuring speakers from the Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting may follow in September so stay tuned!

HUGS

August 6

Hosts: Georgia Harris & Jan Morton
Ushers/Greeters: Roger Best, Greg Johnson,
Ken Nelson & Gary Whiteman
Counters: Jeff Behr & Jerry Kuehn

August 20

Hosts: Brian & Becky Twamley
Ushers/Greeters: Marina Grabowski, Charlotte
Goedsche, Cynthia Janes & Barb Stokke
Counters: Mabel Schultz & Tracy Lyons

August 13

Hosts: Karen Ford & Tom Nelson
Ushers/Greeters: Maria Betram, Lois
McBroom, Itty & Preston Newgord
Counters: Deb Griffith & Judy Whiteman

August 27

Hosts: Ellie Burkett & Sharon Carlson
Ushers/Greeters: Caroline & Rebekah Bender
& Jean Gustafson
Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

August Birthdays

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

Food Shelf Offering – July

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 July, we received 40 pounds of food and \$490. Our next offering will be Sunday, August 27. **Thank you for helping to feed our hungry neighbors!**

Walk to End Alzheimer's

The Brainerd Walk to End Alzheimer's is being held on Saturday, September 23, 2017 at Forestview Middle School, located at 12149 Knollwood Drive. Registration begins at 8:30 am with the walk at 10:00 am.

First Congregational and St. Mathias Farm have combined their teams, now named Guardians of the Earth and Spirit.

Co-Captains, Karen Ford and Arlene Jones invite you to join our team by following this link:

http://act.alz.org/site/TR/Walk2015/General?team_id=396296&pg=team&fr_id=10521.

Having been deeply impacted by this disease, Karen and Arlene are dedicated to raising funds for research and eventually, a cure. Alzheimer's Association is one of the top nonprofit organizations who dedicate funds raised locally to remain in our community for local impact. The national Alzheimer's Association organization continues to meet and exceed standards with 78 percent of total annual expenses going to care, support, research, awareness and advocacy activities.

Please consider joining this AWESOME team! If you are not able to walk, please consider making a tax-deductible donation by following the link above. If you have questions or ideas for fundraising, please feel free to reach out directly to Karen or Arlene. Thank you!

Lakes Area Music Festival

The ninth annual season kicks off this weekend with a Community Concert on Sunday, July 30 at 2 pm featuring talented local musicians from the Lakes Area. Then on Wednesday, August 2 at 7 pm LAMF Associate Artistic Director John Taylor Ward will perform a vocal recital with piano, guitar, and percussion titled 'In a Distant Land'. Next weekend is an orchestra concert for families and audiences of all ages titled 'Latin Rhythms', including selections from *West Side Story* on Sunday, August 6 at 2 pm. All concerts are presented at Tornstrom Auditorium (804 Oak Street, Brainerd) without tickets or fees in order to make live classical music accessible to everyone. More at lakesareamusic.org.

Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen

I Got a Call from our Inspector!

It seems one or more of the guests have made complaints to Social Services re: General Hygiene and Food safety at the Soup Kitchen. Of course, I have total confidence that all of our groups have provided the very best service and are completely mindful of our food safety guidelines and policies!

We can be very proud of the quality of the food and hospitality offered at our facility 7 days per week! Nevertheless, in an abundance of caution and in an effort to allay concerns that may arise from the Department of Health I am sending you this note as a friendly reminder and have added a page on our website called "Kitchen Guidelines" where you can find 4 documents from the Department of Health for your viewing. Please click [here](#) to review them. One more issue came up.

Dogs are not allowed in our dining room.

This is a can of worms as you can imagine, however, our Inspector has encouraged us to simply refuse entrance to dogs as a general policy. I will defer to the discretion of "Person in Charge" to navigate possible exceptions for service dogs etc. where credible claims of this sort arise. This is a contested area in law with competing jurisdiction claims etc. My counsel is to stick to the advice of the local Department of Health Inspector.

Thank you for your amazing service!

Church Council Minutes

July 19, 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: Claire Steen, Mike North, Karen Ford, Nancy Gould, Judy Whiteman, Bob Jones and Rev. Leslie Moughty.

Claire Steen called the meeting to order and shared Food for Thought. Barb will share the Food for Thought in August.

CLERK'S REPORT: Four members joined the Church on 7/16/17 – Cheri Maxwell, Kathy Ogden, Stephanie (Star) Rodriguez-Moser and Pat Scott.

PASTOR'S REPORT: A summary of General Synod is available on line and hard copy. Several highlights were lifted up from that event. The theme and vision for the next two years for churches to consider are: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, Love of Creation. How can our church make a difference in these areas? The youth program was promoted and informed the delegates that the youth are to be active now and not just in the future. Pastor Leslie would like to do viewing parties for church members to see videos of the keynote speakers – perhaps during the week.

Highlights of the month: Dunk tank shift for Brainerd Splash Pad in Gregory Park, invocation for Brainerd Race for the Cure, board member WeAre, welcomed Songs of Hope, two hospital visits, four home visits, one office visit.

Pastor Leslie will be at Pilgrim Point July 23-28. After returning she will plan Confirmation for next year and calling a meeting of the visitation/congregational care team.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The subject of the budget shortfall was reviewed. At this time, the shortfall was about \$3500. Earlier reports showed a much higher gap because some of the one time expenses that had been paid. The report showed that the loose offerings have increased.

A balloon mortgage payment will be due in January 2018. It may be possible to refinance this bill of about \$40,000. A suggestion is to ask Lisa Wigand to help with this subject.

TRUSTEES REPORT: Committee minutes were reviewed.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY REPORT: The Jazz Service was a rousing success. A report for next year was discussed. A few details will have to be improved – set up and publicity.

There has been a question of where some of the items are included in the budget of the several committees. These are things such as flowers and fair trade items that are money in and direct money out. Should they be in another folder?

The committee would like to have the other committees RSVP how many will be attending the 5:30 dinner each time. This month not many came and a lot of food was left over.

Rev. Lilja Behr will preach on July 30. This committee has been meeting by teleconference with good participation.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Confirmation will begin in the fall. Sunday School teachers will be Jolene Hojem and Sharon Carlson. Those present toured the education areas to learn needs to be more welcoming for families. It was noted that the nursery has no changing table as an example.

For several months, the topic of a safe church policy has been on hold. Kathy Ogden volunteered to begin the process of setting this up especially for children.

The council discussed this topic at length. It could be call a Critical Instance Review that would report to the Moderator and the Pastor. Does our insurance company have any policy template for this? Bob Jones volunteered research about background checks – who fills in forms and where are they sent, etc.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT: The committee did not meet this month.

OLD BUSINESS: A discussion was held concerning all of the committees meeting on the same night. Is this the best or is there another choice: **Each committee chair**, please ask your members these items; best night? with a meal? without a meal? different time? by themselves? or with other group? Try to reply by August so the fall meetings can be determined.

FYI Thursday night was used because the bell choir practice on Wed from 5:45 to 6:45. Judy and Barb are members of that. Wed at 7:00 could be a possibility.

The Minister Job Description has been completed and the next project is to develop the Minister Evaluation. The executive committee has this responsibility and should be done by the Minister's employment anniversary. There should also be an evaluation for the secretary periodically. Bob Jones will report on continuous feed evaluation information.

The Sounds of Hope was an inspiration to all that attended. Unfortunately, the attendance was disappointing. Does the organization have poster, etc. for us to use? If we want to schedule the group next year, try for a week day evening. Was the 7:00 time a problem or would 7:30 be better. The overnight at Trinity Lutheran worked well.

By-Laws Task Force: Dan Hegstad, Phil Kuehn and Michael Kuehn (active youth).

NEW BUSINESS: Moderator Claire introduced a State Conference topic. Vitality is very important to a church no matter what the size of the congregation. What is our church known for? What could it be known for? Pastor Leslie described the difference between justice and charity. These could be the subjects for a fall retreat.

Bob Jones suggested that maybe a 4-part music series could be advertised, such as a Jazz Service, Sounds of Hope, 12th Night and Hans Blix and the Weapons Inspectors.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting will be August 16 at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Whiteman (sub)

Church Financials

| First Congregational UCC of Brainerd | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Financial Results - General Fund | | | | |
| Year to Date Results as of 6/30/2017 | | | | |
| | 2017 Annual Budget | Actuals Through 6/30/17 | % of Budget | Actuals Through 6/30/16 |
| Income: | | | | |
| From Giving Units | \$117,365 | \$81,821 | 69.72% | \$79,229 |
| Other Giving | <u>\$32,146</u> | <u>\$8,135</u> | 25.31% | <u>\$10,671</u> |
| Total Income | <u>\$149,511</u> | <u>\$89,956</u> | 60.17% | <u>\$89,900</u> |
| Expenses: | | | | |
| Council | \$102,901 | \$60,748 | 59.04% | \$55,927 |
| Christian Ministry | \$3,120 | \$2,005 | 64.27% | \$5,797 |
| Music Committee | \$12,220 | \$4,459 | 36.49% | \$- |
| Christian Education | \$650 | \$35 | 5.31% | \$284 |
| Stewardship | \$600 | \$393 | 65.52% | \$348 |
| Trustees | \$55,110 | \$26,173 | 47.49% | \$24,615 |
| Total Expenses | <u>\$174,601</u> | <u>\$93,814</u> | 53.73% | <u>\$86,972</u> |
| Net Income (Loss) Year to Date: | <u>\$(25,090)</u> | <u>\$(3,858)</u> | | <u>\$2,928</u> |

Church Calendar – August 2017

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