



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.

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uccbrainerd.org

December 2015

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

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Pastor Leslie will be on vacation from Friday, December 25 through Friday, January 1 to visit her family in Washington.

Pastor's Pen

We join a journey already in progress...

a journey of faithful ancestors answering God's call to love, to light, to hope, to justice.

These are the words with which we will begin our worship each week during this Advent season. We make a journey through advent each year, as we await the birth of Jesus. We make this journey with millions of Christians around the world, journey that has been taken by Christians for thousands of years and a journey that faithful people have been making since the prophets first spoke of a savior, a child, a bringer of peace, who would be born and change the world.

Each year when I make this journey, I often feel like I am walking on two paths at once. One is the path of seeking peace, justice and love, waiting with anticipation and hope. The other is a path of buying and wrapping presents, looking at sales flyers, driving in holiday traffic, and looking forward to my family's tradition of cinnamon rolls on Christmas morning. Advent is a time of patience, waiting, preparation, expectation. Expectancy: the pregnancy of possibility. Yet we often fill it with busy-ness, shopping, capitalism, and even panic.

Advent lures us slow down, to reprioritize, to reclaim the awe and wonder of God incarnating into the world. That which is beyond imagination, beyond language, who created the universe is now in the universe, in our circle of existence, one of us with a holy imagination. Jesus' imagination, his dreams of a kingdom of God where the last are first and the first are last is a vision we have yet to truly embody. This is our call as a church.

Let us be mindful of the paths we walk this season. May our journeys through doorbuster sales, credit card debt, and stress, cross over as much as possible to the journey toward the in-breaking of God's compassion for humanity, the birth of new hope, and the Love that is in time, through time, and beyond time.

With Peace, Pastor Leslie

Thanksgiving in Washington

I had a wonderful visit with my parents, my brother and his wife over the Thanksgiving holiday. This was an important trip for me and I thought I would share a little about why. My dad was diagnosed with liver failure quite a few years ago and about two years ago, his doctor believed he had fewer than 6 months to live. His health continues to worsen but at a much slower rate than anyone expected. It was wonderful to see him but he spent much of the time sleeping. My brother and his wife also made the trip from Los Angeles. My sister in law is 7 months pregnant with the first grandchild in our family. I am so excited to meet my niece I can hardly stand it! Since my sister in law is due at the end of January, they didn't feel comfortable planning to be in Washington for Christmas, so we all gathered for a very mellow but meaningful Thanksgiving.

I will be traveling back to Bothell, Washington again on Christmas day. I don't think we will have another Christmas with my Dad. It's difficult to know really, since I didn't expect to have as many Christmases as we've had with him. Our time together over Christmas will likely be pretty low-key since he isn't able to get out of the house much or for very long. But we will be together and for that, I am grateful.

-Pastor Leslie

Moderator's Musings

The book and movie, "The Right Stuff" is about the beginning of the US space program. I recommend it. The space program is driven by the scientists and they are not at all interested in sending people into space. They think animals will do just fine. They are ordered to send a human and are sent seven test pilots. They treat the seven just like the chimp and dog the humans are replacing.

The astronauts want a window in the capsule. "Out of the question!" shriek the scientists. "It serves no purpose."

One of the astronauts goes to the group of scientists and asks, "Do you know what makes that rocket go up?" The scientists are insulted by such a foolish question. Their attitude is 'you wouldn't understand it anyway.' Fuel and oxygen are mixed and ignited. The escaping gasses are directed down and the rocket goes up.

But that's not the right answer. The answer to 'what makes the rocket go up' is 'money.'

The scientists realize that without hero astronauts there is no money and no rocket. It's a pivotal scene.

That concept comes to mind as we work on our 2016 budget. We have such a wonderful church family and we do a lot of good work. Sometimes I feel like it's a bad thing that we have to deal with money and budgets, but we do. It's part of how things work.

If you haven't already, you will soon see a proposed budget for 2016. It shows a deficit, but it's not huge. We cut it from nearly \$40 thousand to just under \$20. We're OK. You'll get a chance to ask questions and vote on it on December 6th.

I look at the budget and I look at our church community and I'm amazed that our relatively small church does so much. Good for us!

One thing that would help is if everyone would turn in their pledge form. Further, electronic giving really helps to plan and even out the cash flow.

We hear a lot about 'planned giving' these days. Every charitable organization wants you to remember them in your will. It's a good idea. As you plan your finances, short and long term, I hope you'll remember our church. Our needs are deeper than our pockets and we have some issues with infrastructure we'll be dealing with sooner and later.

Do you know what opens the doors? Do you know what makes the lights come on? Do you know how we heat the church? The answers aren't 'a key,' 'electricity,' 'the furnace.'

Dan Hegstad

Adult Forum

Sunday, December 6th: No Adult Forum, Make 'n Take

Sunday, December 13th: Conversations That Matter

Sunday, December 20th: Living the Question

Sunday, December 27th: No Adult Forum

Youth Activities

December:

Make 'n Take will be on Sunday, December 6 – an intergenerational event!

Sunday School Christmas Program will be Sunday, December 20, followed by a turkey dinner.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch will meet on Tuesday, December 29th at noon. Location is yet to be determined.

HUGS

December 6

Hosts: Jan Morton

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

Greeters: Bobbie Borg & Karlee Micek

Counters: Jeff Behr & Jerry Kuehn

December 13

Hosts: Maria Bertram & Betty Johnson

Ushers/Greeters: Mary Harder, Lois McBroom, Itty Newgord & Preston Newgord

Counters: Deb Griffith & Judy Whiteman

December 20

Hosts: Deb Griffith & Claire Steen

Ushers: Deb Barton & Shirley Lundberg

Greeters: Marcia Mans & Claire Steen

Counters: Coleen Carder & Vi Heiser

December 27

Hosts: Sharon Carlson & Ann Turnbull

Ushers/Greeters: Ellie Burkett, Sharon Carlson, Mike & Beth Schrader

Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

December Birthdays

12/1	Mary Harder	12/11	Ben Froemming
12/5	Karen Ford	12/12	Betty Johnson
12/6	Austin Froemming	12/22	Paige Gustafson
12/8	Virginia MacArthur	12/29	Laurie Chamberlain
12/9	Lisa Wigand	12/29	Marcia Mans
12/10	Kiernan McFadden	12/29	Dave Ten Eyck
12/11	Lisa Hunt	12/29	Carol Phelps
12/11	Jack Kraywinkle	12/30	Bonita Wunderlich
12/11	Chris Larson	12/31	Greg Johnson

Food Shelf Offering – November 22

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 November 22 we received \$230 and 27 pounds of food. Our next offering will be Sunday, December 27. **Thank you for helping to feed our hungry neighbors!**

Fellowship Hall Renovation Project

So far, it is so grand! The comments from folks is they can hear and they can see!

As you may remember, the main goal was to improve the acoustics and this was started with a \$25,000 gift from Betty Turnquist Lee's will. The work started on Sept. 25, 2015 with the removal of the asbestos including the ceiling, the lights and anything else that was attached to the ceiling. After that came the installation of new lights, sprinkler pipes moved up above the grid ceiling and new soffits and wall chases. As of this first week of December, the walls are being prepped for painting by a wonderful group of volunteers. The "color committee" will be selecting a carpet design so the other colors of the walls and acoustic wall panels will look coordinated.

What remains to be done includes the painting of some of the walls & soffits, the installation of trim that will surround the acoustical wall panels on the north and west walls and then install the wall hanging system for art work. There is a wish for new carpet and new chairs but the funds are not available for now. If any more contributions are obtained, new carpet and chairs would finish off the Fellowship Hall beautifully.

We were back in Fellowship Hall for Sunday fellowship and coffee starting on Nov. 8th, 2015 and are so pleased with the project and improvement in the acoustics and lighting.

Thank you to all who have contributed funds, elbow grease and the encouragement as the projects have progressed.

Thank you!
From the Trustees

Church Council Minutes

November 18, 2015

Moderator – Dan Hegstad	Assistant Moderator –
Clerk – Karen Ogdahl	Treasurer –
Christian Ministry – Joey Halvorson	Trustees – Coleen Carder
Christian Education – Marina Grabowski	Stewardship – Marcia Mans

Council at Large – Ann Turnbull, Nicole Grabowski, Bonnie Crum

Present: Coleen Carder, Ann Turnbull, Bonnie Crum, Dan Hegstad, Karen Ogdahl, Marina Grabowski, Nicole Grabowski, Joey Halvorson, Rev. Leslie Moughty, Bobbie Borg, Marcia Mans

CLERK'S REPORT - Death: Donald Crust, November 5, 2015; Funeral: November 14

TREASURER'S REPORT – See balance sheet.

PASTOR'S REPORT

In addition to regular duties, Rev. Leslie began confirmation classes, presided at one funeral, brought in OutFront Minnesota to lead Trans Ally Training, wrote an article for Clergy View in the Brainerd Dispatch,

agreed to mentor a new Member in Discernment who is working toward ordination, attended Bridges of Hope information luncheon with area faith leaders, accompanied children and youth to Woodland for singing and socializing, and continues to meet online with Pastoral Excellence Group once a month.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Stewardship has reviewed a list of people who have not yet pledged. Bobbie will contact electronic givers who did not fill out pledge cards. The Christmas Offering for retired pastors will be collected on December 20.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Fellowship hall work continues. Council thanked the trustees for all their dedicated work. The trustees are currently accepting bids for insulation and electrical work in the columbarium chapel. Upcoming needs: the old boilers will need to be replaced by new and more efficient ones within the next five years. Also, the gables need inspection and repair soon. The church needs to find a new snowplow service. The trustees requested that unspent money from current projects be transferred to the building fund at the end of the year. Council approved this request.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Christmas Program will be December 20 followed by a turkey potluck. Each committee will provide a baked, sliced turkey.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

November 20: Trans Day of Remembrance Service. November 22: Dan Hegstad will preach. Also the Greening of the Church will take place after the November 22 service. December 1: AIDS Day of Prayer. The sanctuary will be open from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. for prayer and meditation.

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

At-Large members will continue to work on finding a treasurer and an assistant moderator.

OLD BUSINESS

Budget: Council examined the proposed budget for 2016. After discussion and some modifications, Council approved presenting the budget proposal to the church on December 6. Copies will be available to church members from November 29 – December 6.

Bobbie will send financial statements to committees each month so they know how much they are spending.

Safe Church Policy Task Force will begin meeting soon.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting will be December 16 at 7:00.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Ogdahl, Clerk of Council

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd
Financial Results - General Fund
Year to Date Results as of 10/31/2015

	2015 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 10/31/15	% of Budget
Income:			
From Giving Units	\$ 143,220	\$ 134,585	93.97%
Other Giving	\$ 11,510	\$ 23,261	202.09%
Total Income	<u>\$ 154,730</u>	<u>\$ 157,846</u>	102.01%
Expenses:			
Council	\$ 103,318	\$ 102,570	99.28%
Christian Ministry	\$ 10,400	\$ 10,551	101.45%
Christian Education	\$ 1,450	\$ 2,710	186.90%
Stewardship	\$ 300	\$ 530	176.69%
Trustees	\$ 60,816	\$ 37,580	61.79%
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 176,284</u>	<u>\$ 153,941</u>	87.33%
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	<u>\$ (21,554)</u>	<u>\$ 3,905</u>	

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Crossing Arts Alliance

The Crossing Arts Alliance (1001 Kingwood St - the old Franklin School) will be featuring **Carla Benjamin's** artwork in the sales gallery through December. Come and join Carla and other artists on Saturday, December 12th from 10:00am – 2:00pm.

Community Christmas at Camp Shamineau

You are invited to the 12th Annual Community Christmas Celebration on Saturday, December 12th from 1:00 – 4:00 pm. This is a free event, compliments of Camp Shaminueau.

Join us for...Hayrides * Wreathmaking * Pony Rides * Trail Rides * Zip Line * State Park * Photos with Santa * Open Gym * Climbing Wall * Specials at the Gift Shop * Snacks in the Dining Hall * Campfire Donuts * Riflery * Build Your Own Living Nativity...outdoor activities weather dependent.

Camp Shamineau – 2345 Ridge Rd, Motley – 218-575-2240 – www.shamineau.org.
4 miles south of Motley on Hwy 10, then 1 ½ miles east on Ridge Rd.

Church Calendar – December 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 10:00 Aids Prayer Vigil	2 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	3 11:30 Clergy Cluster 5:30 PPRC	4 10:30 Book Group	5
6 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Meeting to accept 2016 budget 11:30 Make 'n Take	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 8:30 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:00 Sunday School 11:30 Living the Question	14	15	16 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 7:00 Council Meeting	17	18 10:30 Book Group 6:00 Process & Film	19
20 8:30 Choir 10:00 Christmas Pageant 11:00 Turkey Dinner 11:30 Living the Question	21	22	23 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	24 5:00 Christmas Eve Service	25 Have a very Merry Christmas Office Closed	26
27 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship/Food Shelf Offering 11:00 Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum *Newsletter Deadline*	28	29 12:00 Lunch Bunch	30 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	31 New Year's Eve		

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