

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

December 2017

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

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December Birthdays

12/1	Mary Harder	12/11	Jack Kraywinkle	12/29	Marcia Mans
12/5	Karen Ford	12/11	Ben Froemming	12/29	Carol Russell-Phelps
12/6	Austin Froemming	12/12	Betty Johnson	12/29	Dave Ten Eyck
12/8	Virginia MacArthur	12/12	John Krueger	12/30	Bonita Wunderlich
12/9	Lisa Wigand	12/22	Paige Gustafson	12/31	Greg Johnson

Pastor's Pen – *"Do not be afraid."* – *The Angels*

The season of Advent is upon us! We will spend the next four weeks waiting and preparing once again for the birth of Jesus as Emmanuel, or "God with us." Each week we will hear the story of an angel messenger visiting someone who has a role in welcoming Jesus into the world. The angels that appear in the stories leading up to Jesus' birth would have been very comfortable in the social media world of tweets and hashtags. Their messages were often short and to the point—their favorite line being #DoNotBeAfraid. We are living in a time when the future may feel uncertain and even scary. In the stories we will hear this season, the message of the angels was consistently to not be afraid; trust that God is at work.

As we look at the stories of these winged messengers to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph and the Shepherds and their reactions to them, we will contemplate what messages we can offer that will counteract a culture of fear and bring #morehope, #morepeace, #morejoy, and #morelove to the world. If you are active on social media, there will be opportunities each week to share messages of #morehope, #morepeace, #morejoy, and #morelove on Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc. There will also be ways to use good old snail mail to share these messages as well as to remind our fellow children of God: "Do not be afraid." Your message may be like a visit from an angel for someone who reads it.

You are also invited bring in an angel. If you have an angel figurine, statue, ornament, artwork, etc. and are willing to share it with the church for a week or two, you are invited to bring it in by **December 8** to be displayed. If there is a story about your angel, please email a brief description to Lilja Behr. (Thanks to Lilja for this wonderful idea!) Watch the This Week email and the weekly bulletin for more details.

I hope you will join us this advent season as we fly in the face of fear, and seek to be like the angelic messengers as well as to pay attention to the other angels among us who remind us "Do not be afraid."

With many blessings,

Pastor Jessie

Moderator's Notes

As we head into the holiday season, I am reflecting on the many people and events that I am thankful for this time of year. The holidays bring back memories of baking with my mother. Along with cookies, she would make beautiful white divinity, peneuche, and creamy chocolate fudge. It was a "sweet heaven" living in my childhood home. This past Thanksgiving weekend, my grandchildren, daughter and I baked cookies together. The girls were so excited to make gingerbread cookies and managed to have frosting and sprinkles everywhere. It fills me with joy to know that baking is already a tradition that they insist on doing this time of year.

In our church, I am thankful for being able to be part of the Cooking Group. The Russian dinner was delicious and fun to prepare. This group has creative people who are willing to share ideas and help out whenever needed. I also have the privilege of participating in Prayer Circle. In Prayer Circle, I am thankful for the opportunity to gain wisdom from others. Wednesday morning is the time that I fill up my "spiritual jug" and am able to also reflect on the good fortune that I experience.

First Congregational has many members who have passion to make a difference, both in our church and in our community. It is a place where we can have civil conversations with those who may disagree with us. I am also grateful that I am able to come on Sunday and hear thought provoking sermons, and share time with other members.

I had a discussion with my grandchildren regarding their favorite part of the holidays. One of their favorite memories is going to our church on Christmas Eve. They shared that they love holding the candle on Christmas Eve as we sing Silent Night. I am thankful for the beautiful service and all of our precious

children. The innocence of the children and their awe of the birth of baby Jesus is special to observe. My wish is that we can keep this "Spirit of Christmas" alive throughout the year.

Claire Steen
Church Moderator

A History of Our Church

From the booklet "First Congregational Church 1872-1972," a history of our church.

It is a considerable journey in time from a gift 100 years ago, of a square block of city property and a church building in a newly established town in a wooded wilderness, to a plant worth several hundred thousand dollars, and half of that city block still the property of the original owners. A considerable journey, taken by hundreds of devoted men and women.

We salute them all with this anniversary booklet.

As a church we have conquered the first hundred years, and now face the second century with stout hearts, strong purpose and a huge debt.

This church has been in debt for most of its existence, in spite of that first generous gift of land and building. At first in a debt of gratitude to John Gregory Smith. As the years went by, in debt to banks who have held mortgages; to devoted members who loaned personal money when it was unobtainable any other place; in debt to struggling boards of Trustees; to various loan companies who reduced interest rates in depression years; to selfless ministers who month after month in the early years weren't fully paid their pittances of salaries; to many individuals who were called upon time after time, year after year, to make special donations... to buy a stove, pay a wood bill, paper the church, pay the janitor, the carpenter, the organist, after the Ladies Aid and the Sunday School had been unable to help further with finances.

GOD BLESS THEM ALL!

Now at the beginning of our second hundred years we remind ourselves that troubles are not insurmountable, debts DO get paid, and that the church somehow survives and lives on. We rejoice with pride in our past history and turn our faces to the future with the same kind of courage our predecessors had.

Change to Announcements During Worship

Your church council decided to try out a new format for the way we make announcements in worship. Beginning Sunday, December 3, spoken announcements will take place at the beginning of the service. So make sure you are on time so you don't miss the news! However, in an effort to shorten the announcement time, all announcements should be submitted in writing to the church office by the end of the day on Wednesday. These announcements will be printed as an insert in the bulletin. Last minute announcements that do not make it into the bulletin can be written down and given to Pastor Leslie on Sunday morning prior to worship. We have asked Pastor Leslie to use her discretion as to which announcements will be read or if she wants to invite you to make the announcement yourself. Youth and children will still be welcomed to make their own announcements as we encourage them to become comfortable with public speaking and using their own voices.

We will give this new structure a try through advent and see if we like it. We hope this will be a positive change and encourage you to approach this change with an open mind for the next few weeks. Thank you!

- The Church Council

Learn to Prepare Communion!

Jack and Kay Kraywinkle currently prepare the bread and juice for communion each month but they are looking for a few people to serve as “backup” for Sundays when they are out of town or otherwise unable to do the communion prep. If you are interested in learning how to prepare communion for worship and possibly serving as a substitute communion preparer, please join Jack and Kay on Sunday, December 3 at 9:15 am in the church kitchen for Communion Prep 101. This is an easy way to give back to the church and be part of bringing a meaningful worship experience to your church family.

HUGS

December 3

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

December 10

Hosts: Maria Bertram & Itty Newgord,
Ushers/Greeters: Mary Harder & Austin Newgord, Jack & Kay Kraywinkle
Counters: Deb Griffith & Judy Whiteman

December 17

Hosts: Cheri Maxwell & Kathy Ogden
Ushers: Charlotte Goedsche & Cynthia Janes
Greeters: Marina Grabowski & Barb Stokke
Counters: Tracy Lyons & Mabel Schultz

December 24

Hosts: Ellie Burkett & Sharon Carlson
Ushers/Greeters: Joey Halvorson, Jolene Hojem, Erik & Kyd Lukanen
Counters: Nancy Gould & Lowell Johnson

December 31

Hosts: Sue Hadland & Lisa Wigand
Ushers/Greeters: Roger Best, Greg Johnson, Ken Nelson & Gary Whiteman
Counters: Sharon Carlson & Judy Whiteman

New Pathway “Christmas” Week at First Congregational

Sunday, December 24 – 31, 2017

Consider joining us so our church can make our guest’s Christmas, their best ever!!

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

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: Lance James – 821-6667 lancejames32@gmail.com

Basic food buying: (other than dinners) Jan Morton – 829-5092 jan56401@gmail.com

The white board used for signing up, will be located in the church sanctuary lobby each Sunday starting December 3rd. You may also go online to www.supergenious.com, set up an account and pick your dates for any of the above five activity opportunities.

Thank you from The New Pathways Team!!!

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

Heartland Symphony Orchestra



Alexander Corbett
Conductor

HEARTLAND SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

41st Season
2017-2018

with
The Legacy Chorale of Greater Minnesota
presents

Holiday Voices

December 2 7:30 p.m.
**Little Falls Community
High School**

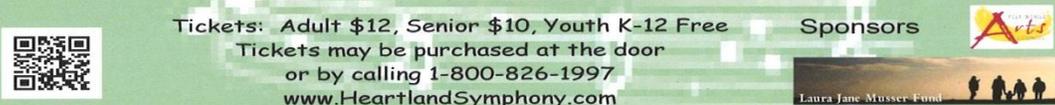
December 3 2:30 p.m.
**Tornstrom Auditorium
Brainerd**

**Conductor Chats 45 minutes
prior to each concert**

Sleigh Ride
by Leroy Anderson
Concert Suite from The Polar Express
by Alan Silvestri and Glen Ballard
with Brainerd High School Chamber Orchestra
The Holly and the Ivy
by Malcolm Arnold
Christmas Night
by John Rutter
Hallelujah from Messiah
by George Frideric Handel
Home Alone
by John Williams
with the Children's Chorus
of Garfield Elementary
Christmas Sing-A-Long

Tickets: Adult \$12, Senior \$10, Youth K-12 Free
Tickets may be purchased at the door
or by calling 1-800-826-1997
www.HeartlandSymphony.com

Sponsors



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Five Wings Arts Council thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and a generous grant from the Laura Jane Musser Fund.

Food Shelf/Soup Kitchen Offering – November

In November, we donated 44 lbs of food to the Food Shelf! Our next offering will be December 24.

As you may know, the Soup Kitchen is experiencing a financial crisis. Because of this, we chose to donate the November food shelf offering to the Soup Kitchen. We donated a total of \$455! **Thank you!**

Folk Dance

Wednesday, December 20th, 7-8:30 pm. Franklin Arts Center, yoga room #228.

Join us for Cultural Thursday

Thursday, December 7, 12:00 pm at the Chalberg Theatre.

Hudda Ibrahim, a St. Cloud Community Technical College instructor and author of the book *From Somalia to Snow*, will discuss Somali culture, their immigration stories, how Somali refugees/immigrants are adapting to their new home in Minnesota, whether or not they are assimilating or integrating, and obstacles and barriers Somali people face in America. Hudda will highlight new refugee community's contributions to the development and growth of Minnesota's economy. She will also pinpoint her work in the community, how she creates a cohort of low-income students and how she empowers youth. She will conclude with her current work that aims to build bridges between cultures.

Church Council Minutes – November 15, 2017

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

Present: Claire Steen, Mike North, Barb Stokke, Karen Ford, Deb Griffith, Bonnie Crum, Gary Whiteman, Bob Jones, Rev. Leslie Moughty, and Kathy Ogden representing Christian Education.

Claire Steen called the meeting to order. Barb shared November's *Food for Thought*. Deb G will provide December's.

CLERK'S REPORT – No changes to report

PASTOR'S REPORT – *Highlights*: Attended UCC Clergy Cluster, held Confirmation Information session, met with Exec Committee to update Pastoral Evaluation and complete Council budget, attended Cooking Group's Russian Dinner, completed required Clergy Boundary Training, helped serve over 500 trick-or-treaters and parents who visited our church on Halloween, conducted a funeral, and planned an Open Forum with Peter Murray from OutFront. *Community engagements* included participating in the WeARE Clinic Open House as a Board Member and attended Bridges of Hope Leader Luncheon. Pastoral Care contacts include 3 home visits, 2 hospital visits, 7 formal office visits, and an off-site trip with a parishioner to a community resource. *Upcoming Events*: Leslie and Eleanor Burkett will be attending White Privilege Curriculum Saturday, November 18, in Minneapolis. The church office will be closed November 20–24, but Leslie will be available by cell phone for emergencies.

TREASURER'S REPORT – See New Business

TRUSTEES' REPORT – Progress continues on the insurance company's list of recommended repairs. One bid for stained glass window repair was received and another is being sought. Council discussed possible ways to inform the congregation of the needed work and the options for paying for these costly repairs. Trustees also presented a timeline of future projects and their approximate costs.

STEWARDSHIP – This month Stewardship is focusing on collecting pledges needed to determine the 2018 budget.

MINISTRY – CM is working on a congregation picture-history project and a monthly mid-week Taizé service. Other upcoming events include Greening of the Church Saturday, December 2; taking down the greenery Monday, January 8; and a Breakfast Service December 31.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – CE outlined the December activities they are planning, including the December 10 Christmas Program and Potluck dinner and the December 17 Make & Take activity. Projects completed

by CE include the installation of a changing table and supplies in a main floor bathroom, the purchase of a button maker, and the completion of the proposed CE budget.

OLD BUSINESS:

- The Exec Committee distributed the revised Pastoral Job Description, the Pastoral Evaluation and the Pastor Self-evaluation. Council suggested the evaluation take place early next year.
- The Exec Committee and Leslie will meet 8:00 a.m. November 29 to review the administration assistant self-evaluation.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Council renewed the Covenant of Shared Responsibility required for Leslie's participation in Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI). Leslie was selected to participate in NGLI in 2016 and has started the second year of the program.
- It was the consensus of the Council to donate this month's 4th Sunday second offering to the struggling Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen.
- We are scheduled to host New Pathways from December 24–31. Last month Council passed a motion to provide space for the New Pathways families December 17–24, the week preceding our week, if IHN provides meals, transportation, activities, and overnight staff. Council agreed that it would be helpful to provide an orientation to our church facilities for those unfamiliar with them.
- Council reviewed a draft of the 2018 budget. The Exec Committee will make final adjustments to the budget December 6 before presenting it to Council December 13. The Annual Budget meeting will take place after the service December 17.
- A year and a half ago, Council heard concerns about the length of Sunday announcements and initiated new guidelines. Over time, we have reverted to our previous ways. Council discussed the previous ideas and new ones and agreed to try again. More information will be coming out in the next weeks. The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting will be **December 13 at 7:00 p.m., one week earlier than usual.**

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Stokke, Clerk of Council

Church Financials

First Congregational UCC of Brainerd				
Financial Results - General Fund				
Year to Date Results as of 10/31/2017	2017 Annual Budget	Actuals Through 10/31/17	% of Budget	Actuals Through 10/31/16
Income:				
From Giving Units	\$ 117,365	\$ 138,147	117.71%	\$ 133,473
Other Giving	\$ 32,146	\$ 14,989	46.63%	\$ 14,632
Total Income	\$ 149,511	\$ 153,136	102.42%	\$ 148,105
Expenses:				
Council	\$ 102,901	\$ 93,916	91.27%	\$ 84,836
Christian Ministry	\$ 3,120	\$ 3,696	118.46%	\$ 3,799
Music Committee	\$ 12,220	\$ 6,408	52.44%	\$ 5,979
Christian Education	\$ 650	\$ 289	44.53%	\$ 712
Stewardship	\$ 600	\$ 851	141.85%	\$ 582
Trustees	\$ 55,110	\$ 41,793	75.83%	\$ 40,242
Total Expenses	\$ 174,601	\$ 146,953	84.17%	\$ 136,150
Net Income (Loss) Year to Date:	\$ (25,090)	\$ 6,183		\$ 11,955

Church Calendar – December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 10:30 Book Group Care Team Meeting	2 9:00 Greening the Church
3 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship/Communion 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Sunday School 11:30 Adult Forum 11:30 Confirmation	4	5	6 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	7	8 10:30 Book Group 11:30 Clergy Cluster	9
10 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Christmas Program 11:00 Potluck	11	12	13 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn	14 5:30 Committee Meetings	15 10:30 Book Group	16
17 8:30 Choir Practice 10:00 Worship 11:00 Annual Budget Meeting 11:00 Fellowship 11:15 Make-N-Take New Pathways	18 New Pathways	19 New Pathways	20 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group @ Sawmill Inn 7:00 Council Meeting New Pathways	21 New Pathways	22 10:30 Book Group 4:00 Soup Kitchen Office Closed New Pathways	23 New Pathways
24 10:00 Worship & Food Shelf Offering 11:00 Fellowship 4:00 Christmas Eve Service Newsletter Deadline New Pathways	25 Christmas Day Office closed New Pathways	26 Office closed New Pathways	27 9:30 Prayer Circle 11:30 Men's Group & Sawmill Inn New Pathways	28 5:30 PPRC New Pathways	29 10:30 Book Group New Pathways	30 New Pathways
31 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship Have a safe and happy New Year!						