

The Union News Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ



401 Lake Avenue East, PO Box 10, Hackensack, MN 56452-0010 "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey—you are welcome here" An "Open and Affirming" Congregation

Church Office: (218) 675-6300 Pastor: Rev. Torri Vande Zande http://www.unioncchackensack.com Email: unionucc401@gmail.com Toll Free: (888) 887-4820 Emergency Phone: (218) 507-1905



Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

APRIL 2021

Easter

I find myself struggling to write this article. It has been a year of Covid. A year of isolation, masking, social distancing, and loneliness. Holy Week has been very special this year. I can recognize Christ in those around me and myself. I can see Christ in the suffering, the abandoned, the betrayed, the violated, the mourning. Covid has done a number on us all. Part of me is sad, but there is another part of me that is grateful.

I am different because of it. I am not talking about a superficial change. Something deep within me changed, but I don't know how to describe it. More awareness maybe? More awareness of myself as a human being rather than a pastor, or daughter, or sister, or friend. It is an awareness of who I am as a created being rather than a role I play.

I read more, painted more, and saw my need for community. I missed things, missed events, missed connection. This time of Covid made me realize who I was, who I am, and who I am becoming. It made me see myself not as a pastor, but as a child of God.

In a way it is like a restoration. Maybe that is the best way to describe it. I looked up the meaning of "restoration," and one of the definitions says, "it is a bringing back to a former position or condition." And isn't that what Easter is all about? Restoration.

In Mark we have been learning one of the major themes is how Jesus continuously called, healed, and restored people. Jesus went out of His way to make sure those who were marginalized in society could find value in simply being human. In many of the stories we read, we only get a glimpse of the lives Jesus touched. But I can imagine the paralyzed man who was lowered down on a mat through the roof is no longer on that mat relying on his friends to take him everywhere. I can imagine the man in the temple with the shriveled hand is no longer hugging someone with just one arm. And I can imagine the man healed from leprosy is no longer living at the edge of town so he won't contaminate his family. All of these people in the stories we have read were healed and restored. Jesus restored a part of them they thought was lost. And I can identify with that... and maybe you can too.

Christ came out of the grave very different than when He went into it. This Covid craziness has been much like a burial for me, and I am coming out of it very different as well.

This Easter is special. I understand restoration a little bit better now. By no means is God done in this restoration process. It is a life-long journey. And I am grateful. Happy Easter!

Pastor Torri

Pastor Torri will be on vacation April 9-15

Communion: First Sunday each Month

Church Staff

Pastor	Rev. Torri Vande Zande
Office Administrator	Linda Ottman
Secretary/Tech	Sabbastian Wilson-Webb
Financial Secretary	
Treasurer	
Bell Choir Director	
Organists	Sheryl Kaubisch
Pianist	
Custodian	

Church Council

Moderator	Joni Kumpula
Vice-Moderator	
Clerk	
Board of Financial Stewardship	Don Hoppe
Ministry Teams:	
Christian Learning	
Congregational Life	Margaret Zieffler
Facilities	
Personnel	
Worship	Heidi Hoppe
Men's Fellowship	
Women's Fellowship	
Treasure Sale	
	,

MODERATOR'S NOTES

Hi, everybody out there! Happy Easter! The Lord has risen! Happy springtime, whew, we made it through another year. I can hardly wait to be out cleaning up my gardens and seeing green things popping up. There is some light shining through Covid. Many of us have had our vaccine and can meet in small groups but still with masks and distancing. Whoopee! That's some great progress. Women's prayer group, Bones, Fiber Arts, and AA are all meeting carefully at Union. A small group is coming in for Sunday worship.

However, we must still stay vigilant and careful so that progress continues. Our meetings are a combination of a few persons attending and the rest Zooming, and this will continue. Anyone who feels safer at home must do so. In the spring lots of planning for summer starts, and all of our boards and ministry teams are working. Please watch your e-mail for the week's events. Do call your church friends and stay close.

We all hope to be together soon. See you soon, either by zoom or in person! Call me if there is anything I can do for you.

Joni



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 1	Tom Forrest
	Gene Hensel
April 3	Randy Johnson
	Burton Woock
April 4	Dan Kayser
	Carl Larson
April 5	Ron Merritt
April 7	Jim McGill
April 9	Madeline McGill
April 17	Kevin Kundert
April 25	Jerry Wignall
April 26	Marissa VanVickle
April 29	Karen Holle



Karen Holle, Sabbastian Wilson-Webb, and Linda Ottman, Editors

PRAYER REQUESTS

At Union, we email and print out a new prayer list every couple of weeks, filled with the concerns and praises of our congregation. How exactly do you get your prayer request on the prayer list?

- Email us—Email your prayer request to us at <u>unionucc401@gmail.com</u> with "Prayer Request" in the subject line.
- Go to the prayer request page on our website—Visit our prayer request page at <u>www.unioncchackensack.com/prayer-requests/</u> and fill out the easy-to-use form.
- Call the church—Office hours are 9:00am-2:00pm Monday-Thursday, and we will be happy to take your prayer request over the phone.

ALL CHURCH SPRING CLEAN-UP DAY

APRIL 29TH – 9:00AM

ROAD CLEAN-UP DAY

MAY 18TH MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

MISSION OF THE MONTH – ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING LET LOVE FLOW!

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many things about what it means to be a global community. One of the most basic things we've been constantly reminded of is the importance of washing our hands in the battle to prevent disease. In many ways our world was not prepared for the weight of the pandemic. But because of past generosity through One Great Hour of Sharing, many communities were better prepared to meet the challenges of Covid-19. Through the projects that have been supported in the past, more people were equipped for the crisis with improved sanitation; access to clean, safe water for hand washing; and were empowered to prevent the spread of disease among their family and neighbors.

When you continue to give generously, you continue to give life - in the form of water and so much more - to people in need around the world. You continue to build on the dream of a world in which there is no thirst, no hunger, no suffering...just the abundance of life in a living stream.

But you aren't just sharing water...when you share what God has given, you "let love flow." That love crosses all sorts of spaces and dividing lines, knitting together a better human story, and bringing the Kingdom of God about in our time.

When you give to **One Great Hour of Sharing**, you support water and other sustainable development projects all over the world. When you "let love flow", lives are not just saved – they are transformed.

If you would like to make a donation to One Great Hour of Sharing, send a check to the church and designate in the memo line that it is for this mission. Together we can make a difference. Thank you.

USE CONTRACT HOUR





COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 18, 2021

PRESENT: Tom Cox, Pastor Torri, Heidi Hoppe, Cindy Gulbrandson, Joni Kumpula, Don Hoppe, Mary Parrish, Ron Merritt, Jo Horak, Karen Holle

Joni called the meeting to order. Pastor Torri offered a convening prayer. The agenda was approved.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written.

Pastor's Report: Torri has become involved in four community groups that she feels are important: She is part of **The Comprehensive Planning Committee for Hackensack**. She has learned a lot about our little town of Hackensack and the challenges the town faces. Torri is excited to see such a caring group of people who want to see the town succeed and grow. As part of **Faith in Action's Caregivers Group**, Torri participates in a monthly support group for people who are caregivers of someone in their family. She also participates in **The Leech Lake Cultural Alliance** which strives to create more unity and communication between Native Americans and white people in the small towns in our area. And finally, Torri is the chair of **The Dog Park Committee** which is part of the Game Changers Group. If enough money can be raised, a dog park will be built in the Bonna Paulson Memorial Park near the Community Garden.

As more people get their COVID vaccines, more people are attending church. A Bluetooth element will be installed to the sound system to improve the quality of the music each week. Lenten services went well but were tiring. Torri will be on vacation for a few days to recuperate.

Torri has a new dog named Koda, which means "friend" or "companion". Koda is not proficient yet as a "church dog," but he will be writing for the newsletter.

Financial Stewardship: Don reported that income and expenses for 2021 are within a few hundred dollars of each other, and March income looks good so far. A bequest has been given to the church by Barb Payne. The total amount of the bequest is \$28,766. Donations to the Food Shelf Mission of the Month are very good. The final distribution of money donated will be made the week after Easter.

Board of Facilities: Ron Merritt has been looking for a new company to provide insurance for the church. Church Mutual has submitted a better proposal than we currently have. The Council voted to accept the new policy which will begin April 1. Ron/Don/passed.

Other items mentioned: The telephone in the elevator has been fixed. There is water on the floor in the nurse's office. The Spring Clean-up at church will be on April 29, starting at 9:00.

Congregational Life: Joni, Tom, Torri, and others talked about people they have recently called and people they intend to check on.

Worship: Heidi reported that worship is going well with several tech team people being trained to help with services. As more people get their COVID shots a few more people are attending the church service in person. We are still masked and social distancing and think that is how most of the summer will go.

Christian Learning: Jo reported that 91 meals were served Wednesday! In February over \$1,162 was donated for Community meals. Some comes from those that pick up food, and some comes from other sources. Community meals will continue until the second week in May except for Holy Week when we will take a break.

Bible Study meets weekly downstairs and hosts 5 - 10 people.

VBS is being planned for June 23, 24, and 25. Meetings are underway for the project.

Summer forums are being planned. We discussed having Adult Teen Challenge come in August or September when we hope to have a good system to stream their music and dialogue.

Justice Ministry Team: A new four-pronged focus for the Justice Ministry Team has come out of the book study, The Great Spiritual Migration:

1. Get connected to ISAIAH, a vehicle for congregations, clergy, and people of faith to act collectively and powerfully toward racial and economic equity in the state of Minnesota. By uniting local congregations in a large regional organization, ISAIAH strengthens the ability of people of faith to address both local and regional community issues,

including mass incarceration, immigration, healthcare, and racial inequity.

2. Hackensack Community Foundation: Learn more about community development issues in the Hackensack area.

3. Learn more about PFLAGG – an organization that supports parents and friends of lesbian and gay people.

4. Support the Leech Lake Cultural Alliance in their work to create more unity and communication between Native Americans and white people in the small towns in our area.

Treasure Sale: Cindy reported that the Treasure Sale is scheduled for June 9 - 12.

Old Business: Changes to the Policy and Procedures Manual are underway. Any changes to the Constitution will need to be approved at the July semi-annual meeting.

Meeting Adjourned. Next meeting April 15. Clerk, Karen Holle

News from the Worship Ministry Team

Happy Easter! Christ is risen, risen indeed. He lives in our hearts, and we are His hands, feet, and voice. He serves the world through us; we serve the world for Him.

I'm happy to report a few more people are attending church on Sunday mornings, although we've never been close to the 25 unit maximum. It's so good to see familiar faces at worship! **Great news! Now that people are being vaccinated, the Council voted at their March meeting to open the church for 50 family units to attend in person.** We will continue to wear masks and physically distance ourselves, and if, miraculously, more than 50 units attend a service, it will be projected into the Friendship Hall for the overflow. Please don't hesitate to attend a service!

Holy Week activities are scheduled for Maundy Thursday (April 1 at 5:30 p.m.), Good Friday (April 2 at 5:30 p.m.), and Easter Sunday (April 4 at 9:30 a.m.). The services will be held in our Sanctuary, and I hope you have had your vaccine and feel comfortable enough to experience the wonder of this Holy Season in person. We continue to wear masks and practice social distancing. Of course, streaming will be available as well.

On April 11, Pastor Torri will be away, and Sarah Cox (with help from Tom) will be giving our message. We look forward to another interesting morning with Sarah and Tom.

Stay well. Get outside if you can. The days are getting longer, and the weather is warming up. Spring will be here before you know it!

Shalom,

Heidi Hoppe, Team Chair

TREASURE SALE

The Treasure Sale will take place this June. The dates are June 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th. The time each day will be 8 AM until 5 PM. We will have a three-dollars-a-bag sale on Saturday starting at noon. We will need a lot of help this year setting up the sale and running the sale and cleaning up afterward.

If you would like to help please give me a call at 218-682-2760. You may continue to bring your items into the church. Thank you.

MEET KODA!



Hi! My name is Koda! I am... I am not sure. So much has happened!! So much has changed! I have a very different life now than I did just a few months ago. I will tell you what I know.

I was born somewhere in Texas. For as long as I can remember, I had been on the streets. Somewhere along the line, I met my girlfriend and I got her pregnant. She and I would wander around the city scavenging for food and any scraps we could find to survive. One day, we were both caught by the dogcatcher and taken to the pound... doggy jail I call it!

We were told that we had three days to be adopted or we would be euthanized. I do not know what adopted or euthanized means, but neither of those words sounded good to me! I just wanted out! We were given shots, given baths, and dewormed (sounds awful doesn't it?)

Well, my girlfriend and I were not adopted after three days, so we were scheduled to be euthanized. But then, a great group of people from Northern Lakes Rescue came and got us out of doggy jail! They took us to Minnesota (which is very cold!) and got us ready to be put in foster homes.

My foster human was great! He taught me many things like, where to go to the bathroom, where NOT to go to the bathroom, how to sit, and how to shake! I love to shake!

I also had a foster brother. He was a big pit bull named Rabbit! I did not like him at first, but after a while I got used to him and he became my buddy! He taught me a lot of things too. He taught me how to wrestle, how to beg for food, and what the word "treat" means.

I was only with them for a month before I met my forever human. When she first picked me up and I had to leave my fosters, I was sad. I did not understand what was happening. I cried, howled, and barked in the car after leaving them. But once I got out of the car and saw the backyard, my tail started wagging and it hasn't stopped! I love my new home! I love my human, and I even love Bandit (the cat)! I think he likes me too sometimes!

My human tells me I am training to be a "church dog." I have no idea what that means! All I know is that I have been meeting a lot of people lately, and they are not as scary as I thought. I used to get scared easily by people because they did not treat me well on the street. They are tall and hover over me, but I am learning to be calmer when they hold out their hand to me and let me approach in my own way to sniff them.

So, that is me! Koda! It is nice to meet you!

Barks and Wiggles!

Koda

P.S. My girlfriend went to the hospital to deliver our puppies. She had 13 little ones, and 9 of them survived. She is taking care of them now, and all of them will be put in foster homes like I was. All (including my girlfriend) will find amazing forever homes just like I did.



FIBER ARTS GROUP

Did you know that there is an offshoot of Women's Fellowship called Fiber Arts? There is, and on the fourth Thursday at 1:00 - 3:00 each month we meet to do our knitting, crocheting, quilting, tatting, or whatever else you enjoy with lots of help, treats, and giggling! We have loads of fun and friendship. If you are interested, please join us! We know there are more interested gals out there.



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, April 8th at 1:00pm, in-person in the Friendship Hall and over Zoom. A Zoom link will be sent out on the morning of the gathering.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300 or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



Men's Fellowship

Tuesday, April 6th at 9:00am, in-person in the Friendship Hall and over Zoom. A Zoom link will be sent out the morning of the gathering.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300 or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



Union Funnies 🤣



A Sunday school teacher asked her class about the meaning of Easter. A little boy raised his hand and said: "That's when we shoot off firecrackers and celebrate our freedoms."

A little girl said, "No, that's when we eat the turkey and give thanks."

"I know!" a third youngster exclaimed. "That's when Jesus comes out of the tomb—but if he sees his shadow, he goes back in."

----via Fr. Harry Winter, OMI, Director Oblate Center for Mission Studies, Washington, D.C. A small boy ran home and excitedly told his parents: "School will be dismissed for good on Friday, March 28!"

"I just don't believe that," his mother said.

"It's true," the boys said. "I just got this note from the teacher."

The teacher's note said: "School will be dismissed at 11 A.M. for Good Friday, March 28."

—George Goldtrap



The Head that Once was Crowned with Thorns

The Head that once was crowned with thorns Is crowned with glory now; A royal diadem adorns The mighty Victor's brow.

The highest place that heaven affords Is His, is His by right, The King of kings and Lord of lords, And heaven's eternal Light;

The Joy of all who dwell above, The Joy of all below To whom He manifests His love And grants His name to know.

To them the cross, with all its shame, With all its grace, is given; Their name an everlasting name, Their joy the joy of heaven.

They suffer with their Lord below, They reign with Him above, Their profit and their joy to know The mystery of His love.

The cross He bore is life and health, Though shame and death to Him: His people's hope, His people's wealth, Their everlasting theme.

Christian Poetry by Thomas Kelly





FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Notes from the Board of Financial Stewardship

We hope you have a blessed Easter. Spring feels like it is arriving – temperatures are rising, the snow is disappearing, things are greening up, and more birds are coming back every day.

The Hackensack and Walker Food Shelves were the Mission of the Month in March. The gifts were very generous, and more information will be included in the May newsletter. Both food shelves are doing a wonderful service to their communities. Thanks to all who gave so generously this year.

Union Church has received a very generous bequest from Barb Payne. She was a dear friend to us and is sorely missed. Barb left Union a gift of over \$28,000 by adding the church as a partial beneficiary of an IRA account.

February had good revenue, and the expenses were down. March looks fairly good at this point.

We hope to begin to see more of our members and friends back in worship at Union Church

Christ's Love and Peace to You,

Don Hoppe, Sheryl Kaubisch, and Caryl Allan - Board of Financial Stewardship

CELEBRATING THE PAST – Myra Damm, Historian

Moving the Church

It was in 1942 that the church celebrated its 25th anniversary. Rev. Erickson was the pastor at that time. A picnic dinner was enjoyed after which some folks were baptized in Birch Lake.

In 1946, the church membership was about 45 to 50, and from that time on the church seemed to progress slowly at times.

In February of 1951, Rev. Fuqua came from Montana. Thirty-five members were taken in during his stay, choir robes were acquired, flowers were placed on the altar every Sunday, and candles were lit for each Sunday Service. Communion was on the 1st Sunday of the month, and bulletins were beginning to be used.

The church was always open for funerals, whether members or not. As there was no place for the mourners on their return from the cemetery often the pot was on at the Greens' house.

In 1957, the Congregational Christian Church and Reformed Church merged to become the United Church of Christ. That same year Union Church voted to be yoked with Walker Community Church. The Rev. Harold Mercier was called to serve the yoked parish.

In 1958, the church was moved to its present location. It was 3.59 acres of land that gave the church more room to grow. More next time...

CHRISTIAN LEARNING

Ready or not - here comes Spring! Trees are budding, grasses are turning green, and we have had a Spring Equinox celebration. Of course, Lent may be completed by the time this reaches you, with Holy Week offering a renewal of faith and hope to all.

Thanks to the many wonderful people who follow our Creator's Commandant to "Love Your Neighbor As Yourself." We can make it work!

The Community Meal Program

Since last March (has it been a year!), a dedicated team has been providing hot, healthy meals to anyone who wishes one on Wednesday evening between 4:00-5:30 PM. Meals are available for pick-up at the West Entrance of Union Church, or we have delivery options. Reservations are recommended to adapt for dietary needs upon request. Please contact Jo at (651) 274-2145 or text Sue for details. To date we have been serving meals to over 280 individuals a month on average. We served 91 at a recent meal! Just as other helping organizations, we have seen numbers increase over time.

There is no cost for meals, but donations are gratefully accepted. All funds contribute to this needed Mission Work project. Please note Community Meals will not serve a meal during Holy Week (March 31st) but will resume Wednesday, April 7th. Our April menu will be available soon. God smiles on your sharing of time, talent, and tokens for this essential work. Blessings to you and yours!

Monday Morning Bible Study Has New Materials

We have begun our Spring/Summer schedule with meetings in the Lower Level Room opposite the kitchen. We call it the Inspiration Room as meetings offer study and sharing to help us through the week and more. Time changes have been made to accommodate members. We will now meet for coffee and conversation at 9:30 AM. Bible Study will begin at 10:00 AM -11:00 AM. At times discussion may continue a bit longer but always done by 11:30 AM. Our new text is called The Disciples. Please check with Bonnie for details. This Bible-based study does not require a progression of learning - each reading stands alone. We welcome all who wish to attend - come a few times or every time as your schedule permits. Prayers are always shared by this supportive group.

Vacation Bible School Coming Soon

Space Explorers is blasting off! We will be launching June 23, 24, and 25 on a journey to explore God's Creation of Mars and Beyond. Kids and adults will share exciting activities involving Bible Studies, Art, Music, Outdoor Activities, and Science. We have an excellent team started but can always use more members. With all the news of the Mars Rover landing this Spring it should be a great session! We really missed our kids and families last year and look forward to seeing as many as possible again. Of course, special consideration to health factors will be given. Contact cards have been sent to previous campers, but if you know someone who would like to attend please notify Jo or Heidi. Registration forms will soon be online and/or hard copies available. Make plans now to spend three days in June as a Space Explorer! Mission Control needs you!

New Forums Returning This Summer

At the March Council meeting approval was given to host a variety of Forums. Some dates are still being confirmed. Sunday, August 8th, a group called ISAIAH will share information. More details will be shared later.

Minnesota Adult/Teen Challenge will join us with their message of support for those in addiction recovery. They bring a wonderful choir of 30+ men to share beautiful music and testimony during the service and small group discussion afterward. A brunch follows this group gathering. Date is not finalized at this time.

An Environmental Forum hosted by Mike Tauber and/or Barb Mann has been invited to share a perspective on protecting and utilizing our Up North environment and beyond. Dates also being coordinated.

A request has been made for Bruce Carlson to share his extensive experiences related to A Lake For All Seasons. Again, we look forward to this Forum, and date is still pending.

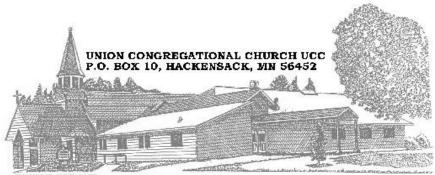
These Forums listings are just 'teasers' as many dates are still pending. However, it is exciting to have Summer Forums once again on our church calendar. If changes occur please let us know so activities may be confirmed.

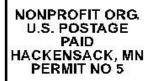
Union Memorial Scholarship Team

This past January we awarded our financial scholarships by mail to Gabe Lohr and Rachael Pitt. In the summer of 2021, we hope to have an in-person ceremony to acknowledge their achievement and hear how their first year of college has been. Meanwhile, we will soon be accepting new applications for the upcoming 2021 year. These scholarships are available to high school seniors graduating this spring (2021) with a completed application and three letters of recommendation. All submissions will be read by the Scholarship Team. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, some variations in procedure may occur. Please check with Jo or any member of the Scholarship Team.

As with the Up North weather and news, items may change from day to day but one constant is God's Love and Care for us and each other. May Spring offer hope and joy with Easter and beyond. Be a blessing to someone every day you can. Amen.

Bone Builders* 1:00pm-2:30pm Every Monday and Friday		on Congregatio AP	Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN $\operatorname{APRIL}2021$, Hackensack M 2 1		* = Community Event held at the church
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY 1 5:30pm Maundy Thursday 5 Service	FRIDAY 2 5:30pm Good Friday Service	SATURDAY 3
4 Easter Sunday 9:30am Worship	5 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm AA Meeting*	6 9:00am Men's Group	7 2:00pm The Four Agreements Book Study (Zoom) 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal 7:00pm The Four Agreements Book Study (Zoom)	8 1:00pm Women's Fellowship	6	10
11 9:30am Worship	12 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm AA Meeting*	13 5:30pm Financial Team Meeting (Zoom)	14 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal	15 1:00pm Church Council (Zoom)	9	17
18 9:30am Worship 10:45am VBS Meeting	19 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm AA Meeting*	20	21 2:00pm The Four Agreements Book Study (Zoom) 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal 7:00pm The Four Agreements Book Study (Zoom)	22 1:00pm Fiber Arts*	23	24
9:30am Worship	26 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm AA Meeting*	5:00pm FIA Spaghetti Dinner	28 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal	29	8	





BY TED STRAND

FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



Meet Koda: Our church dog in-training!

Happy Easter!



