



MISSION STATEMENT

Union Congregational Church, is a community of diverse believers, sharing with one another and accepting of all. With God's unconditional love, we come together to worship, to nurture each other and to reach out with love to all persons.

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 29, 2020

Union Congregational Church

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020
Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Hackensack, Minnesota

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(Justice Ministry))*

REGARDING THE SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

This year, due to the coronavirus, we did not have an in-person semi-annual meeting. Instead, each team chair prepared a report individually.

Officers and ministry team chairs agreed to continue their positions for another year, as we were not able to have an election to consider new officers.

To promote future leadership of the church, we discussed inviting several people to future Council meetings who are not currently involved in the leadership of the church. The invitation would be: "come and see what we do and see if you want to be part of this."

PASTOR'S REPORT

It has been one and a half years since I began ministering here at Union Congregational. I continue to be amazed at the love, acceptance and generosity of this congregation. This year has been very different for all of us, but I am grateful for the patience and the perseverance of our leadership as we do our best to find new ways to connect with one another.

This past Advent and Christmas was a special time to join together with St. Paul's Lutheran and celebrate the birth of Christ. I am humbled and thankful for the relationship we have built with St. Paul's and look forward to continuing that partnership in the future.

The Lent and Easter season started normally, but we encountered a huge hiccup when COVID-19 hit and we needed to take precautions by closing the church building. Church, community and life changed from that moment on. Over the past four months we had to adjust our worship services, our Congregational Life Team, and our Council to adapt to the changes the world has been going through.

I was encouraged to find out that the Minnesota Conference recorded sermons from the conference ministers to help pastors who have struggled to find pulpit supply during this time, but also to just give local pastors a break when they need it. They have come in handy at least once so far and I am sure we will be using more of them in the future.

Our worship services have gone from in-person to streaming online. We are using social media connections such as Facebook and YouTube, but have also learned to connect live to our webpage. Sabbastian has been a huge help during this time. I don't know if we would have been able to figure out all of this without him. We needed to get a few audio and visual items to create a quality broadcast. We purchased a microphone, camera and a new church computer and plan to continue streaming live even after we are back together in our sanctuary.

The church has put together a plan to slowly reopen to in-person services and ministry. It is our hope to create a space not only for in-person activities, but also having an option to virtually join us through Zoom. I am sure some people will be uncomfortable and a little hesitant to return to church, so we want to have ways they can join us without putting their health at risk.

Overall, life is changing... But Christ remains the same. Union Congregational will continue to minister and reach out to those who need to see a glimpse of God. May the grace of God, the love of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of us.

In Christ Alone,

Pastor Torri Vande Zande

MODERATOR'S REPORT

Wow, this is a really different year in the life of Union Church! It all started rather normally. The fall with our new Pastor was fun and moved along quickly. Seems like such a long time ago. The holidays were lovely. Our big tree in the Friendship Hall was fun with dried hydrangeas and our annual Christmas thank you dinner was lovely. Then came the New Year! First we finally got our new sign up on highway 371. It is great and now friends can really find us more easily.

Giving some space to the new Kokoro music school was a real attribute to the community. They are moving along smoothly.



When March came lots changed. Pastor Torri and helpers had to really scurry to get our worship services on line and we all found Zoom. If only we would have known sooner we could have invested in the stock! It is not a new thing anymore and it truly helps with our meetings. The church building closed and we all knew that Union is the people and not the building! Every week our worship got better and things are all working in new and exciting ways. I so hope that you are all calling and social distancing with your church friends. I also hope you are all getting used to your new masks. Guess they will be around and extremely important for a while.

At the July council meeting we discussed the issue of our election of officers. Because of the fact that we cannot have an actual in person Annual Meeting, the officers will continue for the following year. It was

approved so we are continuing.

We will all remember 2020 and we pray that it will be better in 21. We must be vigilant! Then amongst the COVID-19 came the George Floyd tragedy. We at Union and the UCC will all work together to make the world a fair and just place for all people, it is the least we can do. At this time the church is open only for meetings of ten or less with social distancing, masks and disinfecting as you leave. We have a plan that I hope you have all read, the council thinks it's a good one. We thank all of the workers who put their lives on the line to keep us healthy, safe, and keep the world working. Be safe and let's make the world a better place together!



Your Moderator, Joni

CLERK'S REPORT

CLERK'S REPORT – JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

JULY SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES – July 29, 2019

Moderator Tom Cox called the meeting to order. Pastor Torri offered a convening prayer.

The minutes of the January, 2019 semi-annual meeting were reviewed and approved. Don/Burton/passed

Stan Kumpula reviewed the Board of Financial Stewardship Report: Stan thanked the congregation for their generosity so far this year. Stan hopes for a balanced budget in 2019. Stewardship letters will be sent out shortly from the Board asking for pledges for 2020.

A motion to receive the financial report was offered. Stan/Burton/passed.

Stan announced that he is retiring as the chairman of the Board of Financial Stewardship. The new board members are:

Don Hoppe – Chair of the Board of Financial Stewardship

Don Hoppe – Financial Secretary

Ron Merritt – Assistant Financial Secretary

Sheryl Kaubisch – Treasurer

Caryl Allan – Board member

Pastor Torri announced an event on August 24 from 9:00 – noon called Reminiscing and Dreaming with the Pastor. All are invited to attend this event. We will discuss where we are as a church today and where we would like to be in the future.

Election of Officers: The following officers were voted in at the meeting by unanimous ballot: Tom/Mary/passed.

Joni Kumpula – Moderator

Tom Cox – Vice Moderator

Treasurer – Sheryl Kaubisch

Clerk – Karen Holle

Fred Smith noted at this time that as a church we need to address the limited number of people on the leadership team at the church.

Joni Kumpula took over the meeting and invited people to attend Council meetings to ask questions. She is “honored to serve” as Moderator of the church.

Motion to adjourn. Tom/Mary/passed. Clerk: Karen Holle

Semi-Annual Meeting Minutes – 1-26-2020

Moderator Joni Kumpula called the meeting to order. Pastor Torri offered a convening prayer. Don Hoppe, chair of Financial Stewardship, discussed the financial report for the church for the 2019 calendar year. Because some of the

pledged funds for the year were not received, the carryover for 2020 is only \$1,757 compared to a \$12,000 carryover for the previous year.

Looking forward to 2020, Don noted several things. Pledges were significantly less than anticipated. All Fetzer funds will go to the Operating Budget this year to help with possible revenue shortfall. Don is hopeful that "other giving" which includes Sunday plate cash will also help make up for a possible budget shortfall. With that being said, we reviewed the proposed 2020 budget. **The budget for a total of \$165,586 was approved as written. Don/Ron/passed by congregation**

Meeting adjourned. Clerk: Karen Holle

DEATHS OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:

Dick Olsen
Bud Lienes
Sarah Schmidt
Vi Whalen

MEMBERS REMOVED BY REQUEST:

Michael Small
Gary and MaryAnn Anderson
Vern and Bev Patterson
Bob and Cathy Iverson
Carole and Al Griggs

MARRIAGES PERFORMED BY PASTOR TORRI:

Joe Mullen and Bonnie Kundert
Jen Gigliardi and Rick Johnson

CURRENT MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH:

Current members: 128 (active= 80)
Current friends: 90 (60 active)
Wednesday night active participants: 20-30 outside of church members and friends.

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE: 51 (up from 49)

Data submitted by Karen Holle, Clerk, for 2019-2020 Annual Report

FACILITIES MINISTRY REPORT

Ice Damage

In February, Facilities had an extraordinary expenses for ice removal from the roof area above the Sanctuary. The heavy ice removal was performed by Northland Septic with high pressure water spray thereby eliminating a heavy weight load and extensive roof damage. A cost of approximately \$4,400 was charged to Facilities: MRI.

Ice Dams

Due to ice dams on the roof, we incurred water run-down damage to several walls. Upon inspection it was determined that more insulation needs to be installed over the north entrance room and sanctuary. Approximately \$4,500 will need to be funded to accomplish this work in September.

New Furnaces

This spring we replaced two, 20 year old, furnaces. These furnaces serve the upstairs Library and the downstairs music room. This non-operating expense of about \$19,000 was covered by funds from the Facilities Reserve account.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Merritt

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Traditionally, the Worship Ministry Team performs the following tasks:

- Pulpit supply when the pastor is away
- Special Music
- Special offerings (Food Shelf, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, CUE, One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors in Need, and Christmas Fund)
- Record Attendance (assisting Congregational Life)
- Communion preparation
- Ushers
- Assist pastor with Sunday service (Announcements and Prayer concerns)

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have assisted Pastor Torri with the broadcasting of the Sunday services.

Members: Heidi Hoppe, Chair, Joni Kumpula, Gracee Rudkin, Bonnie Mullen, Caryl Allan, Sheryl Kaubisch, and Elsa McNelis.

CHRISTIAN LEARNING MINISTRY REPORT

Looking back over the last year, here are some of our highlights:

Late last summer we co-hosted a Water Forum with several guest speakers arranged by Mike Tauber and his team. It was well attended and informative.

Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge Choir brought a group of 60 dedicated men to share their gift of music and give testimony to overcoming addiction. It was a very powerful Sunday Service with a delicious brunch later. We had hoped to repeat their visit in August 2020 but COVID-19 has prevented this event from taking place.

Christian Learning had a table at National Night Out in Hackensack with youth program information of Union Church in August.

September was an active month with a Community Meal kick-off held in the Community Center. This was a picnic meal for all ages with over a hundred present. Many youth were present to enjoy games and food. Thanks to Sue, Mike, Scott, Andy, Tommi, and all who participated. Special thanks to Dave and the STS crew for their assistance. Our 5:30 PM Community Meal at Union Church started the next Wednesday in our Lower Level and continued until mid-March when Church was closed due to COVID.

The need for hot, healthy meals was so great the Christian Learning Team approached Council with a plan to serve meals from our Commercial Kitchen for curbside pick-up or delivery. Hot meals were served to 60-80 adults and youth weekly for six more weeks. Many thanks to those generous people who supported this important program. The Team of Sue, Mike, Jo, Don, and Caryl deserve extra recognition for their service. Wendy, Mary, and Pastor Torri - well done too.

For our mission trip in October 2019, a group of twelve youth and five adults traveled to the Twin Cities for the 3M Visiting Wizards Trip - a science exhibition. While there we interacted with a group of Somali youth. We assisted a UCC Church with a special event. Plans were to do an exchange again but COVID cancelled it. We hope for a future trip!

This was our third year for our youth program, Heart of Christmas, and maybe our most challenging. The flu bug hit some kids just before the program so last minute change happened. Prayers were answered as kind people stepped in to do extra work. As one kid said - "We can't forget Jesus!"

In January 2020 we held an awards ceremony for the Union Church Memorial Scholarship candidates - Sara Artley and Sophia Larsen. Each received a \$1,000 award for 2019. Congratulations to both students and their families'.

Another educational and fun project was entering the Hackensack Snow Carving Contest. We won First Prize two years ago (our first year) but this year weather and kids schedules presented a challenge. Still a very worthwhile activity and teamwork important - get inside out of cold quickly!

The Monday Morning Bible Study Group continues to meet in a creative manner. We have moved from the Church Library to outdoor settings on decks, patios, and such outdoor spaces. Social distance, sanitizers, and

masks are used. Love of God's word and prayers for all keep us going. Our times and dates may change but our purpose does not. Please check with Bonnie for details.

Two major events of the Christian Learning Team have been sidelined by the COVID-19 crisis.

First, the VBS Program scheduled for June 2020 was moved to June 2021. Space Explorers for God will combine science, Bible studies, and cultures in new ways. Great program!

Second, the Treasure Sale usually held in June was cancelled but some other summer months had been considered. However, the July Council meeting vote supported cancelling the Treasure Sale event for this year. However, some related activity may still happen so please watch Church Newsletters for details.

Finally, as we continue in this age of uncertainty we ask our Creator for strong faith and courage to move forward fearlessly. John 3:16.

The Christian Learning Team

BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Treasurer's Report

A. Income:

1. Income for the first 6 months is \$85,975 (including prepaid and carryover from 2019 and other income), which is \$6,772 less than the previous year as shown on the Treasurer's report in last year's report.
2. For the rest of 2020, estimated income is about \$50,000. (This estimate is very tentative, and difficult to estimate) which makes our expected total for the year about \$135,975. There will hopefully be a full forgiveness of our CARES Act, PPP Loan of \$11,100. That would put us at revenue/receipts of \$147,075

B. Expenses

1. Expenses for the first 6 months of 2020 were \$71,518.89, about \$2,160 less than 2019 as shown on the Treasurer's report.
2. For the rest of 2020, we are projecting expenses less than last year, due to the coronavirus and reduced utility and program costs. Thus, projected Expenses for the year are estimated at \$145,000.

The end result will be that the 2020 budget will likely end up with a small positive balance. This is very tentative at this point, and will depend on giving and expenses for the next 6 months. We know right now that July giving is down about \$7000 from last year.

2020 Reserve & Non Budget Funds:

We have used these funds to pay some Christian Learning, Congregational Life, and Worship expenses. But, conservative investments have increased the dividend income for Bequests & Special Gifts and the Memorial Scholarship funds versus the previous CD's. Expenses for replacement furnaces and building expenses have utilized our MRI reserves that were bolstered by the funds gained from the insurance payment received from the damaged portico. Overall, the Reserve and Non Budget Funds have declined, and will be significantly reduced by the end of the year, especially in the Reserve MRI Account (Maintenance, Replacement, Improvement).

Financial Secretary's Report

Comparison of Fiscal Year	<u>2019</u>	to	<u>2020</u>
Units Pledging	49		49
Amount Pledges	\$105,136		\$98,588
Amount Prepaid	\$ 5,500		\$ 4,000

Pledges received as of 6/30	\$ 55,949	\$ 49,120
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Other income received:

Plate Cash	\$ 1,481	\$ 176
Bldg use & Misc	\$ 200	\$ 312
Fetzer Institute	\$ 6,000	\$ 12,000
Other giving	\$12,141	\$ 12,301
Previous year pledges	<u>\$ 1,200</u>	<u>\$ 235</u>
Total received as of 6/30	\$76,971	\$74,984

Pledges yet to received	\$43,687	\$45,768
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Notes: Monies shown in the totals above only include revenue received in the calendar year and do not show prepaid pledges, carryover funds, or other donations restricted for the budget year. These funds are shown in the Treasurer's Report.

Analysis:

We are currently a little below our 2019 income. This includes the fact that we allocated \$12,000, instead of the normal \$6000 from the Fetzer Institute to our 2020 Operating budget.

A strong income stream traditionally occurs in the last 6 months of the year. This is not expected this year because of the pandemic and not having in-church worship services. Seasonal members and friends, guests, and visitors generally greatly help during the summer/fall months. Special year-end gifts have also been extremely important in past years in meeting our budget and having some next year carryover.

Strong giving by non-pledging units and completion of pledges by pledging units during the period of July to December, 2020 will be essential to our ability to meet our revenue projections for this year.

The Paycheck Protection Program Loan (PPP) that Union Church received, if forgiven as expected, will greatly assist in having a balanced budget in 2020.

Pledges and sustained giving is extremely important for the financial health and future of Union Church, and for improved budgeting and planning. Please consider making a generous pledge during the upcoming 2021 Stewardship campaign!

Financial Board Summary:

We have continued to manage our budget by small margins over the last several years and because of the pandemic and special expenses for our building and for providing on-line worship, it is only by continued, strong support from our members and friends that we can meet the financial needs of Union Church.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please feel free to talk to any of the Financial Stewardship Board members.

Don Hope, Chair & Financial Secretary Sheryl Kaubisch, Treasurer
Ron Merritt, Assistant Financial Secretary Caryl Allan, Assistant Treasurer