



# 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

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## AUGUST 2020

Notes from  
Rev. Torri Vande Zande

### Longing for Community and Connection

March 15th, 2020 was the last time our Union Congregational family gathered in our sanctuary. I remember standing up in front, announcing that we must stop meeting on Sunday mornings for a little while, and gave some basic guidelines to help us all get through the next few weeks. We dismissed that day with sadness, frustration and anger. But we knew things would go back to normal in a few weeks.

A few weeks went by, then Easter came and went, spring exploded with beauty and we were still isolated and told that it is not safe to gather together. New ministry ideas were created and new technical aspects were introduced, but still our hearts ached to see one another face to face.

It is now 4 months later and we are still longing for community. We want to hug people, touch someone's hand, look into someone's eyes when we speak to them. We want to sit down for a cup of coffee and tell tales of our adventures and share memories of our loved ones. We miss each other.

I believe I can speak for everyone when I say, "I hate this." God did not create us to be separated. God created us to live in community. We need each other.

There are times when I feel like I am having a good day. I feel like I am being the best pastor I can be in a pandemic. I am connecting with leaders, connecting with people, still involved with the community. But then there are bad days when I feel helpless. I feel like a shepherd that has their sheep scattered all over the place. And I wonder how each of you are doing. Are you in need? Are you lonely or sad or angry? How can I or this church help you during this time?

For as much as I try to connect with everyone, I know I can't possibly do that during this time. But this is where we, as the church can function as the body of Christ. I do not need to reach every single person because we can reach out to one another.

I was reminded this past week about how everything is connected (thanks George). For example, when we look at a forest full of trees, they look like individual organisms that stand tall and strong. But those trees are only as strong as the root system below ground. Many times during storms, the root system acts as an anchor to hold the trees steady and keeps them from falling. It gives the tree support and strength to get through wind, rain and storms.

COVID-19 has turned into quite the storm. But our church, the body of Christ, is connected and woven together in



**Sunday Worship at 9:30 A.M.**

**Communion: First Sunday each Month**  
**Coffee and Fellowship Following Service at 10:30 A.M.**

**Church Staff**

|                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Pastor.....              | Rev. Torri Vande Zande       |
| Church Secretary.....    | Sabbastian Wilson-Webb       |
| Financial Secretary..... | Don Hoppe                    |
| Treasurer.....           | Sheryl Kaubisch              |
| Choir Director.....      | Sheryl Kaubisch              |
| Bell Choir Director..... | Heidi Hoppe                  |
| Organists.....           | Sheryl Kaubisch              |
| Pianist.....             | Kathleen Millberg, Barb Nish |
| Custodian.....           | Sue Johnson                  |
| "Morning Out".....       | Sue Johnson                  |

**Church Council**

|                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Moderator.....                      | Joni Kumpula                 |
| Vice-Moderator.....                 | Tom Cox                      |
| Clerk.....                          | Karen Holle                  |
| Board of Financial Stewardship..... | Don Hoppe                    |
| Ministry Teams:                     |                              |
| Christian Learning.....             | Jo Horak                     |
| Congregational Life.....            | Margaret Zieffler            |
| Facilities.....                     | Mike Bohanon and Ron Merritt |
| Personnel.....                      | Church Council               |
| Worship.....                        | Heidi Hoppe                  |
| Men's Fellowship.....               | Ron Merritt                  |
| Women's Fellowship.....             | Linda Merritt                |

a way that most people can not see. Our root system runs deep within our congregation. It is interwoven together to give strength and support through life's storms.

If you are in need, if you need support... Please let me know. We have access to an incredible group of people who have committed to do life together. It is called the Church! We may be physically separated at the moment, but we are woven together in spirit.

If you would like a visit or a phone call – please let me know. Or... I will do you one better... Please call me at (563) 320-5360 or (218) 507-1905. I will be happy to talk with you. Both of those numbers go directly to me. You can also write me by email at [torrivz@gmail.com](mailto:torrivz@gmail.com).

May God's light and love shine in you and through you during this time.

In Christ,  
Pastor Torri

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

|           |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|
| August 7  | Donna Foust       |
| August 8  | Cindy Cressy      |
|           | Shelly Knuths     |
|           | Hallie Pond       |
| August 9  | Helen Schaefer    |
| August 10 | Marlene Hensel    |
|           | Marcus Larson     |
|           | Jack Loftus       |
| August 12 | Barb Adams        |
|           | Tom Cox           |
| August 15 | Mary Lou Bauer    |
| August 16 | Rod Owre          |
| August 18 | Don Heinrich      |
|           | Linda Kaiser      |
| August 19 | Elinor Chase      |
|           | Joyce Rubitschung |
| August 24 | Beth Trout        |
| August 29 | Arlene Caterino   |
| August 30 | Sheryl Kaubisch   |
| August 31 | Linda Merritt     |



## MODERATOR'S NOTES

Greetings, hope this August finds everyone masked and staying healthy. Remember, you are being a kind and loving person by protecting everyone you encounter. Union is still operating quite well despite the building being closed to more than ten people. I thought you might enjoy seeing a picture of the Fiber Arts group meeting on the lawn under the crabapple tree. They meet the fourth Thursday at 1:00 if you are a sewer, knitter, crocheter, quilter or etc., join us.

As you have most likely heard, the council voted not to have the annual Treasure Sale this month. It was sad but they felt if anyone became ill because of Union it would not be worth it. Cindy will still be selling large items online. It's better to be safe than sorry.



I do hope that you are watching the Sunday worship service online. Torri cannot announce names on the prayer chain online so I hope you are catching them on your e-mail. Do keep in contact with your friends and members at this difficult time.

Well, I must run along. The gardens need tending, the grass trimming, the ducks feeding, the paddle boat emptying, and all the other stuff I do without so many meetings. I am learning to love the zoom stuff.

Stay healthy and safe, love ya all, Joni

### New Members!

Union Congregation welcomes four new members to our congregation:

- ♦ Gary Dietrich
- ♦ Linnea Dietrich
- ♦ Steve Erickson
- ♦ Marilyn McKnight

Since we are not meeting fully on Sunday mornings for a church service, they will be attending the August Council Meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> to go through a short commitment ceremony to become members.

Welcome to our congregation!

### Treasure Sale Donations

If you have donations for Union's Treasure sale, please call

Heidi Hoppe:  
(218)831-3927

Or

Cindy Gulbrandson:  
(612) 232-2760

to arrange for delivery. Hopefully, we'll have a sale in 2021!

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING IN PERSON WORSHIP!!

Currently small groups of 10 people or less can meet in the Friendship Hall for meetings and activities. Masks need to be worn and participants need to sit at least 6 feet apart unless they are part of the same family group. Council has decided that these same rules can now apply to Sunday morning worship. Instead of just "streaming" the service, a few people will be allowed to attend the service in person if they will wear masks and will socially distance. Many church members have been unable to watch the services for months because they do not have computers or iPhones. Some of these people have been invited to the August 2 service. Each week, a different group of people will be invited to attend.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ONE OF THE PEOPLE TO ATTEND  
A LIVE SERVICE YOU MUST GET ON A LIST.  
CALL: KAREN HOLLE AT (218) 675-6157 AND LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER.**

We look forward to seeing "YOU" in church!





## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – JULY 16, 2020

**PRESENT:** *By Zoom:* Karen Holle, Linda and Ron Merritt, Tom Cox, Pastor Torri and Cindy Gulbrandson. *In person in the Friendship Hall:* Mike Bohanon, Mary Parrish, Don Hoppe, Heidi Hoppe, Joni Kumpula, Jo Horak, Caryl Allan and Jo Horak.

Joni called the meeting to order. The minutes were approved as written. Don/Caryl/passed. The agenda was approved with one addition.

**Pastor's monthly report to Council:** Torri reported that Linnea and Gary Dietrich are interested in joining our church. Steve and Marilyn Erickson are also interested in becoming members. Pastor Torri will be working on a meaningful way they can join the church under current COVID-19 restrictions. Pastor Torri also reported that she has been asked to share confirmation material with Marie and Becca, Joni's granddaughters.

**Plan for re-opening the church:** Heidi and Torri discussed a possible plan for re-opening the church to in-person worshippers. Greeters would be stationed at the North and West doors of the church to monitor the flow of traffic into the Narthex. (2 at each entry) In good weather the outside doors of the church will be propped open to increase flow of outside air. Hand sanitizers will be available at each door to the church. Bathrooms would be for individual use only and we would ask people to wipe down the bathroom after using it. Attendees would be asked not to sing hymns, but to just mouth the words or hum the song which would reduce the risk of transferring the virus. Masks must be worn in the sanctuary.

Ten people are currently allowed to meet together at church as long as masks are worn and social distancing is followed. Currently at least 4 people help with the worship service each Sunday which allows six more people to attend if they would like. Council discussed the folks that do not have internet who really need to see people on a Sunday and enjoy the service. Karen will connect with these people in the next week to see how many would like to come to church to socially distance in the Sanctuary. We also discussed asking summer people who may only be here for a few more months if they would like to come to a Sunday worship service.

We are all concerned about the physical health of our congregation, and we are concerned about the mental health of isolated and elderly folks.

**Special Discussion regarding Treasure Sale in August:** Jo discussed her plan to have a Treasure Sale safely in August at the church. Cindy Gulbrandson connected by zoom to share her thoughts and concerns. After much discussion Council members each voted individually "yes" or "no" regarding having the sale. Two members voted "yes" and the rest of the members voted "no". Jo is concerned that without the sale she will not have the funds in her Christian Learning account to provide for the programs she hopes to continue. These include a possible fall mission trip for youth, the Family Table meals, and next year's VBS. Don Hoppe assured Jo that she would have the money she needs without the risk of having a large sale this summer. Cindy Gulbrandson will continue to sell larger items on line which will generate some income for Christian Learning.

**Woock-Ness:** Joni reported that the process is moving along.

**Financial Stewardship Board:** Don reported that by the end of September he expects income to be down about \$8,000 compared to last year. He hopes that the PPP loan we applied for of \$11,100 will eliminate that shortfall. Income and expenses will be very close for 2020. The 2021 Stewardship Campaign will be starting soon. In creating a plan for the campaign the team has to be conscious that next year will be much tougher financially for the church than this year because the church will not be getting money from the Telander estate and two large donors are dealing with health issues.

**Facilities:** Ron reported that two new furnaces downstairs have been installed and rewired. They provide heat to the music room and the upstairs library. Mike reported that water on the floor in the furnace and telephone room is likely from the water softener. This is being checked out.

Joni brought up the issue of the Kokoro contract. The business is not making enough income to consider paying the church rent for the space they are using. Joni and Karen will modify the old contract for a new year with the same provisions as the original contract. Joni also asked Council if Kokoro had an open mike event and needed more space would they be able to use the Friendship Hall to allow for social distancing. The Council agreed to this.

**Personnel:** July semi-annual meeting: Reports are being sent to the church from the boards and ministry teams for the annual report. The report will be available to read from our website.

**Ministry Team Reports: Worship:** Heidi indicated that there is still a need for more people to be trained to help with the Sunday service. If anyone is willing to learn how to do this, please contact Heidi.

**Christian Learning:** Jo reported that the presentation from Adult and Teen Challenge scheduled for August has been cancelled due to the pandemic. In August the youth will have a table at the Sacred Heart flea market to raise money for a possible mission trip. In September community meals may be provided again.

**Justice Ministry Team:** In August Pastor Torri and Karen will lead a virtual discussion on the book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. If you are interested in this discussion let Torri or Karen know and order yourself a book.

**Moderator Moment:** As work on a COVID-19 virus vaccine progresses, we can see an end to our current situation. In the meantime, stay safe and stay healthy! (From Joni)

Closing benediction. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting August 20. Clerk, Karen Holle

## Thoughts From the Worship Ministry Team

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying summer. In the last few weeks, we've experienced wind, rain, damaging thunder storms, heat, and humidity. Welcome to summer in Minnesota! The Worship Ministry Team met in July to discuss implementation of the plan for reopening the Sanctuary for Sunday worship. As we move into Step 3 of the reopening plan approved at the June Council meeting, following are some of the precautions and rules we will be implementing:

- Masks will be required by everyone in the building. There will be a supply on hand for those who need one.
- Services will continue to be streamed on Facebook, YouTube, and our website.
- Greeters will be stationed at the North and West doors to help control the bottleneck in the entry while people retrieve their nametags.
- Hand sanitizers will be placed at the sanctuary doors.
- Pews will be blocked off to maintain physical distancing.
- Should there be more people than the sanctuary can safely hold (25 units according to our reopening plan), overflow will be settled in the Friendship Hall and the service will be streamed there as well.
- No bulletins will be printed; instead, the order of worship will be projected in the sanctuary.
- Since the virus is spread by human breath, we request that congregants refrain from singing hymns. Rather, a recording or song leader will provide the hymn and congregants will be requested to listen to the inspiring lyrics.
- Offering baskets will be placed at the sanctuary entrances.
- The congregation will be encouraged to offer the Peace in sign language.
- Sealed communion sets will be used on appropriate Sundays.

As we move forward in the “new normal”, let's take time to thank God for all the blessings in our lives. Our world is experiencing a bump in the road, but God is with us still, leading us to compassion and service.

Feel free to discuss the reopening plan or any other topic on your mind with a member of the Worship Ministry Team or Council. We are truly in this together.

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



## CAESAR'S TALES

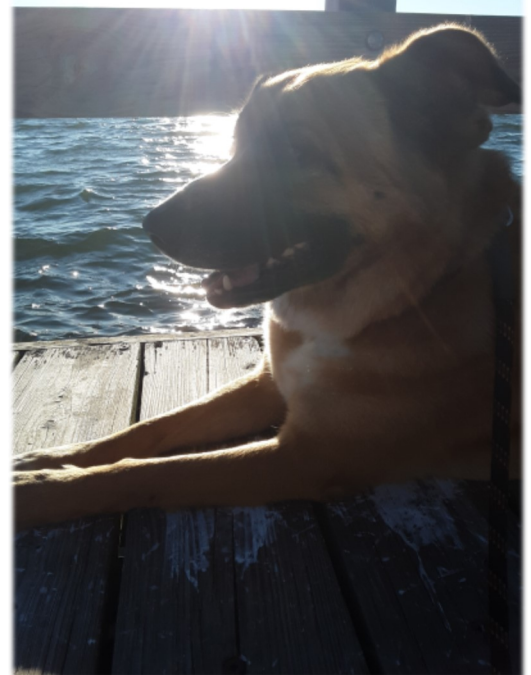
Hi, my name is Caesar and I am the church dog!

Normally I write about my adventures and stories about being a church dog at Union Congregational. This month I decided to take a break and relax in the yard. I think humans call this self-care. During this time it is important to care for yourself... and that is what I am doing. My human believes self-care includes a bath, but I highly disagree.

I hope you all are doing well. I am sorry I can not write more, but I put in some nice pictures of me and my human so at least you can see me!

Have a barky day!

Caesar the church dog





## Celebrating the Past – Myra Damm, historian

### The Building

When it was decided a building was needed to house this congregation, the town of Hackensack was growing and improving, bringing more people to the area. Both freight and passenger trains brought businessmen and salesmen, who would stay overnight at the hotels. Trips to Brainerd would take all day with an overnight stay before returning. There was a sawmill right in town on the Boy River by Birch Lake run by Jake Fleischer. ( Info taken from the Hackensack History Book)

The property for the church building was to be built on Lot 9, Block 3 in Hackensack, which at the time was Second Street, and later called #371. The church was going to be on the east side of 371, just south of the Conoco Station. A committee of three was set up to work out the plan. Henry Barht, Pete Linnenberg and Frank Wagner served on the committee.

A simple white frame building measuring 24 X 40 with an 8 foot entry. In September of 1914 the committee hired Guy Beardsley to oversee the work. The foundation was finished in 1915 and on April 10, 1917 the building was started.

When the walls were erected it was estimated that to finish \$1650.00 was needed. The congregation raised \$900.00. A letter was sent to the Congregational Society of New York City, NY, requesting \$750.00. The grant was allowed and the building was completed on September 2, 1917.

In 1917 a bell was presented to the church by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stuart. It was also used as a fire warning for the town's people as well as a call to worship. Pictures of the dedication of the new church shows a large number attending the dedication. This church building served the congregation well for many years.

### MEN'S GROUP MEETING 1ST AND 3RD TUESDAYS 9:00AM

**Men's group will get together the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays to visit face-to-face in the Friendship Hall or Zoom in on our conversation. Contact Don Hoppe if you would like to come.**

## CHRISTIAN LEARNING

Greetings to everyone and hope all is well with you and yours. As we move into late Summer things are still in a state of flux within our state, country, and world. There is a song called Day by Day that seems to cover our current situation. Good words!

In the Christian Learning Annual Report (shown elsewhere) the highlights of the past year are listed. We are proud of all work accomplished prior to the onset of COVID-19 in mid-March and even after that.

As we face various types of uncertainty in our future, our goal is to provide meaningful help for church and community members of all ages. It may take the form of more Community Meals, special youth activities, cultural explorations, preservation of natural resources, and new ways of sharing God's Goodness. At this point we are really living "Day By Day" - but then haven't we always? All we really have is today and that may be enough! The Christian Learning Team wants to work for the best program possible. Take a Leap of Faith and join us! Your ideas will be listened to carefully. Please watch the church Facebook site and weekly messages for the date of our next CE meeting.

Meanwhile, please say a prayer for those persons unknown so they may have strong hearts, minds, and a faith to become new instruments in God's Plan. They may be doing the same for you!

The Christian Learning Team

## FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

We hope that this report finds you well and safe and “weathering” the summer. We’ve had hot and humid, cool and dry, sunny, cloudy, rainy and stormy, calm and windy. Just about everything except snow.

Financially, Union Church is still “weathering” the pandemic. Pledges and donations are down, but continue to come in through the mail and electronic funds transfers. Funds received by Sunday, the 26<sup>th</sup> of July were down from last year by more than \$7000, but happily expenses were also somewhat lower

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan repayment documents will be filled in August and we anticipate payroll and some of the utilities expenses will be forgiven for the amount of the \$11,100 loan.

BFS continues to be concerned about donations by not having in-church worship. Many members and friends do not pledge, but donate at worship services. In summer and early fall, when we don’t have in-church worship, we especially miss our seasonal members and friends, guest and visitors. 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.

At the June Church Council meeting, BFS said that with full forgiveness of the PPP loan, we hope the church will finish the year with a balanced budget.

We broadcast our worship services on Facebook Live, YouTube, and on the Union Church website. We have a Donate or Give button on our website, but we are not seeing the amount of giving for our on-line worship services that we hoped for. The Church Council and the Worship Ministry Team will decide when and how in-church worship resumes.

How can you donate to Union Church, without being physically at Union Church? There are numerous of ways to do this.

1. Write a check and mail it to Union Congregational Church, UCC, Attn. Financial Secretary, PO Box 10, Hackensack MN 56452
2. Set up a scheduled electronic fund transfer payment of pledge or donation amount through you bank or credit union. Talk to them and fill out an ACH form and get it signed by the church.
3. Talk to your bank or credit union about Check Free or Bill Pay services that they may offer.
4. Make payment of pledge, donations, or gifts from your IRA, 401(K) or other retirement saving plans.
5. Think about establishing a legacy gift to Union Church.

We hope that you stay healthy and safe and look forward to the time when we can return to being closer together. But we also know that this pandemic will have a continuing effect and ramifications on how we will be the church in the future. Let us be open to and embrace these changes.

Love and Peace to You,

Don Hoppe, Chair of the Board of Financial Stewardship





### ***August is Stewardship Month at Union Church!***

Dear Members and Friends of Union Congregational Church, UCC

This year's stewardship theme is **"Beloved, Love...."** It takes shape from the passage in 1 John 4:7. Always, and especially at this time, Jesus call us to share God's love. When acting in love, the very spirit of God moves through us, as we embody God's love, as we love, help and cherish all people and this world.

The stewardship campaign for 2021, is not only about our treasure but also how we can support our church financially. It is about love and stewardship. God expects and equips us to give our time, talent, and treasure and share it with the church, community and world. As we reflect on how we love one another, you are invited to think about your priorities and how you and the church respond to that call. This year, as you prayerfully consider making your pledge for 2021, be reminded of the generosity God has bestowed on you, and let it inspire you to think of how you and this church can show and embody God's love in the world.

Please consider how very important a thriving Union Church community continues to be, and make your pledge as generous as you can. Your pledge, large or small, really does make a difference! Together, with God's help, we can continue Union's important place in our lives as our church commits to serving its congregation and the community by sharing and showing God's love to all!.

These are strange and different times for us, our church, our community, our nation, and our world. We are uncertain of our future, concerned for our health and safety, and miss the closeness of interpersonal relationship. But God and God's Love is what will sustain us.

Letters will be sent with pledge cards and return envelopes. If you misplace or do not receive a letter or have questions about the stewardship campaign, please contact Don Hoppe, Financial Secretary of Union Church at 218-839-4341 or 218-675-6265 or by email to [finsec.ucc@gmail.com](mailto:finsec.ucc@gmail.com).

May the love and peace of God surround and sustain you,

The Stewardship Ministry Team: Don Hoppe, Sheryl Kaubisch, Caryl Allan,  
Pastor Torri Vande Zande



### **Conservation Easement to be Placed on Woock-Ness Memorial Forest**

As many people in the church know, the church received a large piece of land from Burton Woock several years ago, which we have used for worship, picnics, youth and outdoor activities. This land has a fire pit, outhouse, and one trail at this time. Burton has expressed concern that if Union Church does not remain viable, the property he gave would become the property of the Minnesota UCC Conference. If that were to happen, the Minnesota Conference could make decisions regarding the property that Burton would not agree with. Because we are addressing this issue NOW does not mean that we think Union Congregational Church will not be a viable church anytime soon. We are just getting ahead of a possible issue that could occur sometime in the future.

It was suggested to Council that the church place a conservation easement on the property, which means that there are legal stipulations, in perpetuity, that the property cannot be developed, no matter who owns the property. The Church Council agreed and has begun the process to place a conservation easement on the Woock-Ness Memorial Forest property. The conservation easement would stipulate conditions regarding how the property could be used: hiking, snowshoeing, VBS, worship, picnics and any small structures that would be allowed. This will protect the land from development, even if the church folds or the property is sold. The conservation easement is being placed on the property at no cost to Union Church. A conservation easement is a slow process and will take some time. Union Congregational will still be the owner of the property, but the Minnesota Land Trust will hold and administer the conservation easement. This process is being undertaken to respect Burton Woock's wishes for this property.



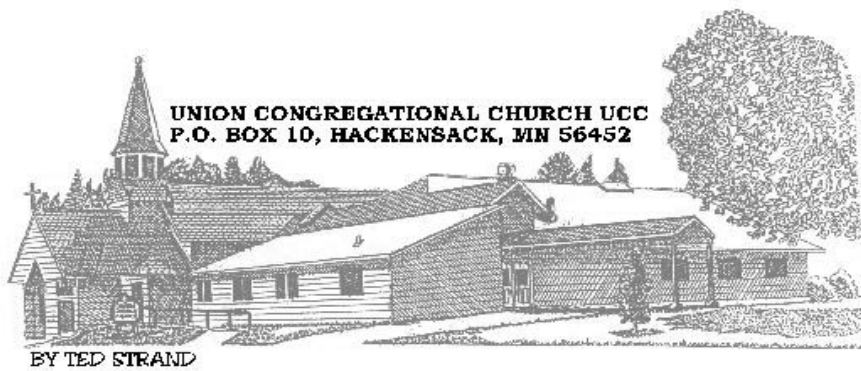
# Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

## AUGUST 2020

\* = Community Event held at the church

| SUNDAY                                      | MONDAY                            | TUESDAY                                       | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY                         | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------|----------|
|                                             |                                   |                                               |           |                                  |        | 1        |
| 2<br>Worship 9:30am (Website/<br>Facebook)  | 3<br>10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study  | 4<br>9:00am Men's Group                       | 5         | 6                                | 7      | 8        |
| 9<br>Worship 9:30am (Website/<br>Facebook)  | 10<br>10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study | 11<br>5:30pm Financial Team<br>Meeting (Zoom) | 12        | 13<br>1:00pm Congregational Life | 14     | 15       |
| 16<br>Worship 9:30am (Website/<br>Facebook) | 17<br>10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study | 18<br>9:00am Men's Group                      | 19        | 20<br>1:00pm Council (Zoom)      | 21     | 22       |
| 23<br>Worship 9:30am (Website/<br>Facebook) | 24<br>10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study | 25                                            | 26        | 27<br>1:00pm Fiber Arts*         | 28     | 29       |
| 30<br>Worship 9:30am (Website/<br>Facebook) | 31                                |                                               |           |                                  |        |          |





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FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



News about in-person worship inside!

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Stewardship Month!

2020

