



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



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FEBRUARY 2021

What is Going On?

Notes from
Rev. Torri Vande Zande

This past year of isolating and social distancing has been hard in many ways. One of those ways is the disconnect many feel with church. We don't get to talk, hug, or get the latest news on what the church as a whole is doing during this time. With that said, I decided to do my best to update you on what is happening at Union Congregational at this time.

LEADERSHIP

The Executive Council has started meeting on a regular basis over the past few months. I have appreciated their willingness to help guide the church and me through this difficult time. We are revisiting our by-laws, going through our Policy and Procedure Manual, and making sure they are up to date and match our mission, our beliefs, and ministry style. This is only the first step in a series of steps, so I am excited to work with leadership teams and ministries on this later in the year.

One of the major items we will be working on this year is new leadership. We are looking for individuals who have leadership skills that will help lead our congregation into the future. The leaders we have now are amazing, however they cannot do this forever. We are actively looking for ways to have Union Congregational here for the long haul. The word we are using is "sustainability". It has come to the point that if new leadership does not form, the church will not exist. Sustainability in leadership is foundational for Union to continue to be a light in this community.



BOOK STUDIES:

In Person/Zoom Book Discussions have, surprisingly, been engaging many people. We did a few book discussions on white privilege, and it has led to other topics. From January 20th through March 3rd we will be discussing a book called "The Great Spiritual Migration" by Brian McLaren. March 10th through April 21st we will be going through the book "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz. I am looking forward to seeing where God will lead these groups.

CHURCH:

The Christmas Eve service was very different. Advent season exhausted our worship team (and me), so we were very grateful the National Office put together a Christmas pageant for all churches to use. It was a variety of music videos from churches all over the country. It showed the diversity and unity of the United Church of Christ, and it was very fun to watch.

We are continuing to stream through Facebook, YouTube, and our website. We have modified and updated our technology the best we can at this time. We are looking into getting a new camera that can be mounted, and also a mixer and Bluetooth connection so the sound quality will be much clearer and have a better mix.

Sunday Worship at 9:30 A.M. **Communion: First Sunday each Month**

Church Staff

Pastor.....	Rev. Torri Vande Zande
Secretary/Tech.....	Sabbastian Wilson-Webb
Financial Secretary.....	Don Hoppe
Treasurer.....	Sheryl Kaubisch
Bell Choir Director.....	Heidi Hoppe
Organists.....	Sheryl Kaubisch
Pianist.....	Kathleen Millberg, Barb Nish
Custodian.....	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

We can still have 25 family units that can join us (with masks and social distancing), however not many people are showing up to church on a Sunday morning. It is my hope that people will begin to return when they feel comfortable. We are prepared and look forward to the time when we can all be together again.

COMMUNITY:**ADVENT SEASON AND CHRISTMAS**

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. Pastor Bob (who is the interim) is very easy going and wise. I have enjoyed getting to know him and partnering with him in these services.

OFFICE TIME:

Sabbastian was hired as our office administrator in the early fall of 2019. Since COVID has altered all of our lives, it has also altered Sabbastian's life. To protect his family, he has been working from home. Because of this, the church decided to lower his hours and hire a very part-time secretary to be in the church office a few mornings a week, to help with printing the newsletter and managing the office. Sabbastian's title is now "Secretary/Tech" and the new person we hire for the office will be considered the "Office Administrator". Sabbastian has great skills with technology and social media platforms. He is (and will be) a huge asset to us as we continue to learn how to adapt to the post-COVID world. The person we are hoping to hire will be skilled in printing material needed and assisting me with communicating to the congregation more.

It will be a bit of an adjustment, but I think it will better meet the needs of the church.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

February 1	Fritz Zieffler
	Terrance Larkin
February 10	Dave Bauer
February 12	Helen Howe
February 14	Tim Clover
February 15	Sarah Cox
	Bob Crom
	Bruce Kaiser
	Beverly Patterson
February 18	Mary Martin
February 24	Jane Odell
February 25	Elsa McNelis
February 26	Jim Allan
February 28	Stan Kumpula



MODERATOR'S NOTES

Greetings everyone out there! All of my friends and neighbors that I haven't seen face to face in what seems like forever! Light is at the end of the tunnel. We are getting our COVID shots and soon can gather again. I can't wait!

Meanwhile, everything at Union is progressing even though not quite as normal. The Council is still meeting both in person and on zoom. We had our semi-annual budget meeting and voted to accept the financial board's budget. I thank the board for the mountain of work and time that was involved in making a balanced budget. Whew, that was hard. Other boards are all working. The treasure sale is now a ministry team as a separate entity under the Council. This gives the Congregational Learning board more time for its main purpose.

Lent is very close already and the Wednesday 5:30 services are happily again with St. Paul's. Pastor Torri and Pastor Bob have been at work planning and they will be great and fun. Be sure and watch either in person or on zoom.

As I write this Stan and I have been fortunate to be (old) and get our COVID vaccine. I hope you all are getting yours so we can be again together in person as the spring and summer progress. Now is not the time to be lazy with masks and social distancing. Well, must run along and meet this deadline. See you on the screen! Stay healthy, happy and be kind and extra loving! If you are feeling alone or have church question, call me!

Love and blessings,

Joni

Adult Learning Opportunities

Over the past 6 months, we have had several book discussion groups. We have had wonderful conversations and discussions about current events, spiritual practices, and life skills. Starting in March, we will have another book discussion. Below are some details. All are welcome to join in. **It will be both an in-person and Zoom group.** We will be meeting the in the Friendship Hall starting March 10th. Contact Pastor Torri if you have any questions (563) 320-5360.

"The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz

March 10th – April 21st (Every other week) at 2:00pm

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 10 th | Domestication and the Dream of the Planet and The First Agreement
Be prepared to discuss: Introduction and chapters 1 and 2 (pg. 1-46) |
| March 24 th | The Second and Third Agreement
Be prepared to discuss: Chapters 3 and 4 (pg. 47-74) |
| April 7 th | The Fourth Agreement and the Toltec Path to Freedom
Be prepared to discuss: Chapters 5 and 6 (pg. 75 – 122) |
| April 21 st | The New Dream
Be prepared to discuss: Chapter 7 (pg. 123-129) and have a closing discussion |



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – 21-1-21

PRESENT: by Zoom: Ron and Linda Merritt, Karen Holle, Tom Cox, Heidi. By social distancing in Friendship Hall: Pastor Torri, Don Hoppe, Jo Horak, Mike Bohannon, Caryl Allan, Joni Kumpula

Joni called the meeting to order. Pastor Torri offered a convening prayer.

The agenda was accepted as written. The November 2020 minutes did not get emailed and will be approved at our next meeting.

Pastor's Monthly Report to Council: Pastor Torri is interviewing a person who could work in the office 6 hours a week to handle some of the tasks that Sabbastian cannot handle from home. Torri will be interviewing the candidate by zoom next week.

Pastor Torri has working with Pastor Bob from the Lutheran Church to plan services for the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is February 17 this year. On that day ashes will be offered from 10:00am until noon at Union. People will be able to drive up to the church to receive ashes without getting out of their cars. The service will be at 5:30 that evening at Union. Ashes will also be available at that service.

Financial Stewardship Board: Don Hoppe reviewed the 2021 budget and several recommendations from the Board of Financial Stewardship. Because of generous donations to the church and forgiveness of the PPP loan there is a carryover of \$28,000 from 2020 to 2021. With pledges of just under \$100,000, estimated non-pledge donations, money from the Fetzer Institute, and a transfer of money from Christian Learning and Communications, we have projected income of \$173,000. Actual budget total for 2021 is just under \$170,000. The 2021 budget includes a \$2,500 raise to Pastor Torri's total package. Money for conferences and mileage was reduced in the Pastor's budget by \$3,000. The budget includes additional money for church insurance which went up 25% this year. The budget removes money for the Morning Out program. All Boards and Ministry Teams have tightened their budgets as much as seems reasonable.

Recommendations from the Board of Financial Stewardship that were addressed and voted on at this meeting:

Remove funds in the budget for Morning Out – Council discussion focused on the fact that the program costs about \$3,000 a year when it runs and has not had good attendance for the year before Covid stopped it completely. Jo mentioned that she has a benefactor in the community who is interested in financing Morning Out if it re-starts in the future. Council discussed this at length and requested that a program description and a plan be presented. Jo will create a proposal for youth programs that Council can review at our next meeting.

Motion: At this time funds for the Morning Out Program will not be included in the 2021 church budget. Don/Caryl/passed

Motion: Remove the Treasure Sale from Christian Learning and make this a separate income producing Ministry Team under Council - Caryl/Heidi/passed

Motion: Remove all Non-OPs funds and accounts designated by board or ministry team and place those funds in an unrestricted account for use by the church as needed. This would not include money for outreach and missions for which the church is a conduit to an outside organization, ie, Faith in Action, Food Shelves, etc. Council agreed with this decision of the Board of Financial Stewardship. Mike/Karen/passed

All expenses that are not budgeted or would be over budget need approval from the Board of Financial Stewardship or Council before the expenditure is made.

Motion from the Executive Committee that Pastor Torri receive a \$2,500 addition to her total salary package for 2021. Don/Ron/passed

The budget presented by the Board for 2021 was approved by Council and will be presented to the Congregation by zoom on January 24.

Facilities: Ron discussed the \$7,000 that was spent last year on roof repair and this year we have had no ice issues on the roof. He also discussed the increase in church insurance costs and is willing to make calls to look for a policy that is less expensive.

Replacement of church stove and oven: Mike Bohannon has found a gas stove and oven that he wants to purchase to replace the existing electric stove in the upstairs kitchen. Don will check to see if we have memorial or available B&SG income that could be used for this purpose. Council voted to replace the old stove. Jo/Ron/passed

Personnel Board: Joni asked us to please be thinking of people that could serve on Council in the future.

Men's Fellowship: The men's group will meet in-person in the Friendship Hall and by Zoom in February. More information to follow.

Justice Ministry Team: Tom mentioned that a group called ISAIAH located in the Twin Cities will be presenting a workshop by Zoom this Sunday that discusses issues of equality for all persons in the state of Minnesota.. Tom will send the information concerning the workshop to Council members.

Newsletter: The deadline for the February newsletter is Tuesday, January 26. Sabbastian will put the newsletter together and Torri will ask Julie Rono to help with the printing and mailing of the newsletter.

New Business: Semi-Annual Meeting: The meeting is scheduled for 10:45 on Sunday Jan. 24 after the worship service. People can attend in person and by Zoom.

Meeting Adjourned: Ron/Caryl/passed. Scribe, Karen Holle

Lenten Season Services 5:30pm

Once again Union and St. Paul's Lutheran will partner together to create Lenten services for our community. All services will be at Union Congregational. Below are some more details of the services.

Theme: "Our Hearts through Jesus's Eyes?"

Each of the six Wednesday evening services will have a dramatic presentation by Pastor Torri or Pastor Bob. The drama will reveal the heart of a biblical character having experienced Jesus' love.

Ash Wednesday – February 17th, 2021

We will begin Lent with our Ash Wednesday service streaming live at 5:30pm. It will be online, so you can see it live on St. Paul's Facebook page, Union's Facebook page and Union's website. **If you do not have access to the internet, you are welcome to join us in the sanctuary. Please wear a mask and practice social distancing.**

Ashes will be given Wednesday morning from 10:00am to 12:00pm at Union's West end doors. It will be a drive thru, so there is no need to even get out of your cars. Pastor Torri and Pastor Bob will be administering the ashes during that time and receiving prayer requests. Ashes will also be given at the evening service.

Lent Services Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.

Feb. 17 th	(Ash Wed.)	"The Tax Collector" (The Repentant Heart)
Feb. 24 th		"The Woman at the Well" (The Quenched Heart)
March 3 rd		"Simon, the Pharisee" (The Judging Heart)
March 10 th		"The Little Child" (The Humble Heart)
March 17 th		"The Desperate Canaanite Mother" (The Faithful Heart)
March 24 th		"The Disciple/Apostle Peter, the Rock" (The Emboldened Heart)

CAESAR'S OBITUARY

Caesar Sky Vande Zande born Oct. 30th, 2013 passed away January 14th at 2:30 p.m. at the Cross Lake Hospital due to an aggressive cancer in his stomach. He was 7 years old. Caesar was born in Washington, Iowa to a good owner who did not know how to train Caesar. He was dropped off and left at a friend's house. The new owner's dog attacked Caesar multiple times and caused injuries to Caesar's ear, tooth and neck. Caesar was dropped off at Paws and More in Washington, Iowa and told that no one wanted him.

Staff at Paws and More healed Caesar's wounds and trained him so he could be adoptable. The director saw his personality and began using him as a therapy dog to local assisted living centers, dementia facilities and as a general ambassador to the community.

June 26th, 2017, Caesar was adopted by his human, Torri Vande Zande. Caesar was socialized more with other animals and younger children through Torri's dog walking service and connections she had with family and friends. He was Torri's constant companion.

October 19, 2018 Caesar and his human moved to Hackensack, MN. He was installed as the official "Church Dog" of Union Congregational UCC May 19th, 2019.

Caesar's duties at church included greeting visitors, visiting residents at Birchview Assisted Living, Morning Out and VBS special guest, body-guard to the pastor, ambassador to the community and all-around calming presence during council meetings.

Caesar is survived by his human Pastor Torri, Bandit (the cat) and numerous members of Union Congregational UCC in Hackensack, MN who he claimed as his pack.



Thank you to all those who came to say good-bye to Caesar a few weeks ago. Thank you also for all the cards, words of comfort, and donations made to Paws and Claws in his name. Union was truly Caesar's "pack" and he loved everyone here.

Pastor Torri



Social Justice Opportunities

March 13th (Saturday) 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

“Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples”

An Interactive Workshop on Zoom

To register, go to: <https://friendspeaceteams.org/trr-2021-03-13-workshop/>

CREATIVE JUSTICE SERIES – MINNESOTA CONFERENCE

Sponsored by OUTDOOR MINISTRIES of the UCC

How Then Shall We Live? Putting Faith Values into Earth Practice

February 18 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

The Second in the Creation Justice Series

Register at uccmn.org under events

Christian faith like other religions calls us to live in harmony with the planet and peace with one another. But how exactly do we do that in our daily lives in the society in which we live? How do we choose our next steps amid the myriad of “green” options? What makes the most impact? What practice can we sustain? What deepens our growth and relationships? Whether you have been responding to the climate crisis for years or are just beginning, this session will help you take the next step.

What Is Permaculture?

March 11 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

The Third in the Creation Justice Series

Register at uccmn.org under events

Heidi Morlock and Hans Peterson will relate stories of experimenting for 20 years with permaculture principles and sustainable agriculture at both the garden and farm scale. Get ideas to support a transition to a more just food and farming system. The workshop will cover theory related to sustainable farming/gardening as well as practical examples to consider in your own garden design or advocacy work.

Planetary Health- Co-Creating a Better Future for All

April 22 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

The fourth in the Creation Justice Series

Register at uccmn.org under events

What do COVID-19, structural racism, and the devastating wildfires in the western United States have in common? They are all symptoms of a planet in multi-system failure. In this presentation you will learn about the human health consequences of the human caused disruptions of Earth’s natural systems. You will also learn that it is not too late for all of us to work together to co-create a healthier future.

COMMUNITY MEAL SPOTLIGHT

About twenty years ago the church began *Mother's Morning Out* and *Gifts of the Heart* programs for children and their families in the Hackensack area. The *Gifts of the Heart* program started at 4:00PM and at 5:30PM the kids went on home. At some point, about 15 years ago, we decided that it would be a good idea to invite the parents in at 5:30 for dinner so we could get to know them. People in the Congregation took turns making the meals for these events and the food was always good.

At some point Sue Johnson became the "chief cook" for the *Family Table Program*. Before the COVID-19 virus hit us, Sue Johnson would often make and serve food for 40 adults and children. She cooked the meals in the small kitchen downstairs and people gathered in the Lower Level to eat and talk. Often people who came to the meals brought cookies or other offerings for the meal. Community members came for the meal as did church members. Sue always watched the weekly sales and purchased food at a very good price.

In March 2020, when COVID-19 became a reality, people could not meet safely and the program changed to a 'take-out' format. Sue, Mike, and the rest of the Meal Team moved their culinary operation to the larger Commercial Kitchen on the Upper Level. We practice recommended COVID-19 guidelines with hand washing, sanitizers, masks, gloves, and general kitchen safety. A program designed for kitchen 'best practices' was completed by our main staff earlier. Meals are packed in eco-friendly containers in line with the 'Stay Green' policy of Union Church. Both take-out and delivery meals use social distancing practices. We are so glad to see all of you, but we can only wave!

We are currently serving 70-80 people weekly with a blend of kids and adults coming on Wednesday between 4:00-5:30 PM. Some of them know us from Family Table, and we are glad to see them. There are church members who are happy to have a hot home cooked meal made by Sue and Mike. Others who come for a meal have no connection to the church, but have heard about this program through word of mouth, or have seen the orange sign near the church or on the highway.

When people drive up to get their meal or receive a delivery, they are happy to reconnect with friends and acquaintances. Many folks may be starved for human contact, and this program offers a bit of that too. Perhaps we're serving body and soul? We do know we are thrilled to see everyone who comes or gets a delivery!

Meal menus vary weekly but always include a hot entree, a healthy side dish, and a tasty dessert. Please contact Sue or Jo for info or special dietary needs. You can reach Jo at (651) 274-2145.

Upcoming meal options may be given at time of pick-up and delivery.

Community Meal has always been a Mission Project of Union Church so meals are available at no cost to all who attend. Donations are gratefully accepted.

Community Meals are served each Wednesday between 4:00-5:30 PM at Union Church. Address is 401 East Lake Avenue, Hackensack, MN. Look for the orange signs on the highway and near the church.

Wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. See you soon!



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

We hope you had a joyous and blessed Christmas and holiday season. We are now well into 2021, and our winter is about one-half over. We have been lucky not to have been too cold or snowy.

We first want to say a big **THANK YOU!** This is for all our members and friends who supported Union Congregational Church so generously during 2020. The Board of Financial Stewardship and the Church Council were anxious and concerned about how the church would weather the pandemic and continue to be the church. With your financial support and understanding, we feel that we “weathered the storm” exceedingly well.

Worship, communication, and ministry has been very different and challenging, and unfortunately these challenges still exist. We are doing things differently, things are constantly improving, and there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel.

Late November to early January we were working with the church boards and ministry teams in planning for 2021 and formulating a budget. Working together, we were able to balance our budget requests with our projected revenue. On Thursday, January 21 the budget was presented to the Church Council, and with a few adjustments, was approved to be presented to the congregation at the Semi-annual meeting. On Sunday, January 24 at this meeting, the budget of \$169,883 was approved.

A packet was emailed to members and friends before the semi-annual meeting with the budget, a report from the Board of Financial Stewardship, and reports of finances for 2020. If you did not receive this information and would like this packet sent to you by mail or email, please contact Don Hoppe at 218-839-4341 or email to finsec.ucc@gmail.com.

We look forward to 2021. Financially we are OK at this time, but we continue to be concerned about the future and long-term sustainability of Union Church. We must all work together to continue supporting and expanding our ministry to our church and our community.

We look forward to the time when we can return to being closer together.

Christ’s Love and Peace to You,

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

CELEBRATING THE PAST – Myra Damm, Historian

Growth of the Church

I have been following along with the Hackensack history book about the growth of the town in relation to the churches. Our church was located on what is now Highway 371. St. Paul’s church was located where the old bakery was. (Stained glass windows were still visible in the back room.) The original Catholic Church was also located on the corner of Lake Ave. (That building was moved to its present location in the parking lot of Scared Heart and is still used for flea markets and rummage sales.)

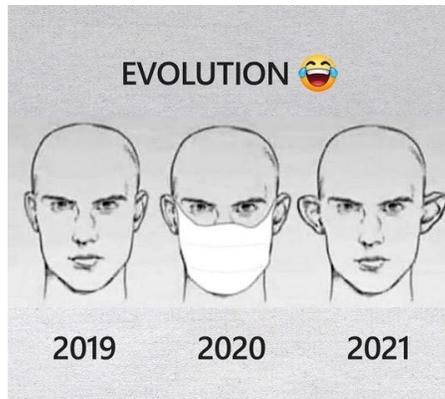
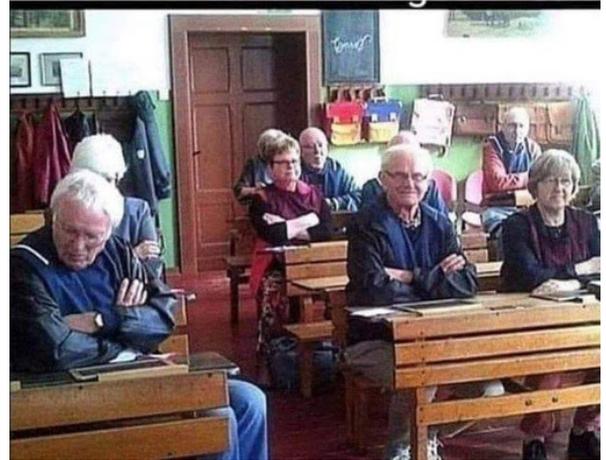
Our church location is listed as being next to the old bakery building which would put us where the Conoco station would have been. It had to have been congested on Sundays having these churches so close together.

As some of you know our “old” church was moved to its present location in 1958. (The old lot was sold for \$525.00). The property for the new space was given to the church by Mrs. Rose Lathrop. She had given this land to the church in 1951. The plot of land was not used, and in 1954 there was talk of selling it, but it was decided to move the church building to this location and by 1958 this was accomplished.

During this time Hackensack was thriving because of the railroad, logging, farming, and tourism was bringing people to the North Country. They were settling in, having families, and the church was a big part of the community.

COVID HUMOR

First day back at school after lockdown 🤔😞👤🤡



Kinda starting to understand why pets try to run out of the house when the front door opens



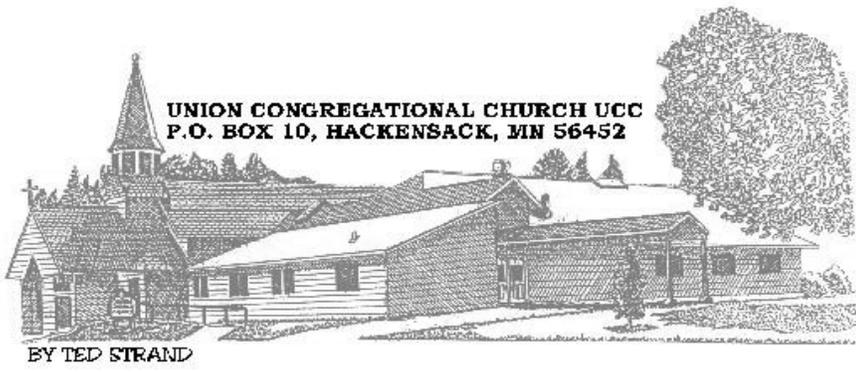
87% of gym members don't even know their gym is closed

Did a load of pajamas so I would have clean work clothes this week.

FOR THE SECOND PART OF THIS QUARANTINE DO WE HAVE TO STAY WITH THE SAME FAMILY OR THEY'RE GOING TO RELOCATE US? ASKING FOR A FRIEND

FEBRUARY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:00pm Executive Council Meeting (Zoom) 6:00pm AA Meeting*	2 9:00am Men's Group	3 2:00pm The Great Spiritual Migration Book Study (Zoom) 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal 5:30pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm The Great Spiritual Migration Book Study (Zoom)	4	5	6
7 9:30am Worship 11:00am Worship Ministry Team Meeting	8 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm AA Meeting*	9 5:30pm Financial Team Meeting (Zoom)	10 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal 5:30pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	11 1:00pm Women's Fellowship	12	13
14 9:30am Worship 10:45am VBS Meeting	15 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm AA Meeting*	16	17 10:00am Drive Thru—Ashes (West Door) 2:00pm The Great Spiritual Migration Book Study (Zoom) 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal 5:30pm Ash Wednesday Service (Online Only) 7:00pm The Great Spiritual Migration Book Study (Zoom)	18 1:00pm Church Council (Zoom)	19	20
21 9:30am Worship	22 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm AA Meeting*	23	24 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal 5:30pm Lent Service (Online Only)	25 1:00pm Fiber Arts*	26	27
28 9:30am Worship						



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Lenten info inside!

2020



FEBRUARY