



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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MAY 2021

Carry the Load

Notes from
Rev. Torri Vande Zande

The summer of 2018 was a challenge. I started my Clinical Pastoral Education (also known as CPE) part of my ordination process in May. This is a fancy way of saying I was a chaplain in a hospital for the summer. It was a job where I needed to be there Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, do class time twice a week, write papers, and also do clinical time visiting patients. Oh, and did I mention...it was an unpaid position? Yeah, you read that right... unpaid.

Earlier that year I made a tough decision to sell my house and live off of the profit I made from selling it so I could do CPE. The money would only last 6 months, but I hoped God had a plan in mind. So, I jumped off the cliff of faith and eventually landed in Hackensack, Minnesota.

Many of you know this part of my story, but I would like to tell you a different part of it.

I needed a place to live after selling my house. I thought the hospital administration would frown upon me pitching a tent in the parking lot, so I looked for other options. I not only needed a place to live, but my dog (Caesar) and my two cats (Bandit and Tirzah) needed a place to live also. A friend said her family could foster Bandit over the summer with a potential agreement to adopt him if everything worked out. It broke my heart to give him up, but that is what I needed to do.

Two of my friends, Christine and Kristin, took me in and allowed me to become their roommate. They also took in Caesar and Tirzah which was a huge commitment because they already had 2 dogs and a cat. So, in their house we had 3 people, 3 dogs, and 2 cats...and it was crazy!

Christine and Kristin are both ordained ministers and both were working in the chaplaincy field. Kristin was a hospice chaplain, and Christine was entering her 4th year of CPE and training to become an advisor for the program.

The summer went really well despite some emotional roller-coaster moments. Both of these women became pillars of hope and faith to me as I struggled to navigate my way through this transition. They held me up when I was weak and oftentimes told me to get back up when I felt like I was kicked to the ground.

In their home, on their fireplace mantel stood a sculpture with three women holding up a candle. It spoke to me and reminded me how we need to have people in our lives that hold us up. When life gets hard to navigate through, we need people to come alongside of us to help us carry the load. I really liked that sculpture.



Sunday Worship at 9:30 AM

Communion: First Sunday each Month

Church Staff

Pastor.....Rev. Torri Vande Zande
 Office Administrator.....Linda Ottman
 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
 Treasure Sale.....Cindy Gulbrandson

My first day at Union Congregational Church I was looking for things to decorate my office with because most of my belongings were in storage. I walked into the library to see if there were any decorative items I could steal (not steal...borrow) so my office would look more pastor-like.

Then I saw it! It was a sculpture of 3 women holding up a candle. It was exactly like the one Christine and Kristin had on their mantel! I immediately grabbed it off the shelf and put it in my office. It now sits displayed as a reminder of my time with them. It also reminds me that there may be others in my life who are having a hard time navigating life and I need to come alongside of them to help them carry the load.

This is not only true of me, but it is true for everyone. My challenge is for you to look for those who need help carrying a load. And if you are someone who needs help, don't be afraid to ask a friend to help you navigate.

P.S. I ended up getting Bandit (my cat) back. But that is a different story for another time. You can ask me when you see me. I will be glad to tell it.



ROAD CLEAN-UP DAY
MAY 18TH
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- May 6 Mary Parrish
- May 12 Lisa VanVickle
- May 16 Dolly Olsen
- May 18 Randy Vosbeck
- May 19 Al Griggs
Barbara Lyall
Megan McGill Shaner
- May 20 Sarah Hoppe
- May 21 Joel Jader
- May 22 Mary Hertzman
- May 24 Louise Brandt
Marty Mann
- May 25 Rick Adams
- May 26 Bill Brandt
Wendy Cline



MODERATOR'S NOTES

Greetings! Here it is May and the gardens are growing and the deer are sweetly nibbling away, darn! The bear has been here, and the bird feeder is a thing of the past; my good neighbor and the garbage man have picked up the tipped over and spread garbage. Yes, it must be spring. I do love it all, and our dear Lord is smiling at us. The lake looks like diamonds, and the sun is warm on our faces. The days are longer, and we can get more stuff done. However, we are still in masks and social distancing. A good number of us have had our vaccine and gather in small groups together. That's progress too. Someone told me the 1918 flu took three years to recoup. Gosh we're doin' great! Our science is certainly way ahead of that... We have vaccine in ten months! Things are looking up.

Union is looking up too. All of our summer activities are being well planned. Church is open to fifty units and coffee is back this month. Yea! I truly hope that our smart and trusty members are on their way to coming in for some activities. We certainly are trying to do so safely and with smiles under our masks. Our meetings are both in person and on Zoom. I do hope you are either coming in or watching. Hope to see you all soon with smiles in our eyes!

Joni

NEW BOOK STUDY MAY 6

New Book Study Begins May 6th!

*Braiding Sweetgrass:
Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and
the Teachings of Plants*

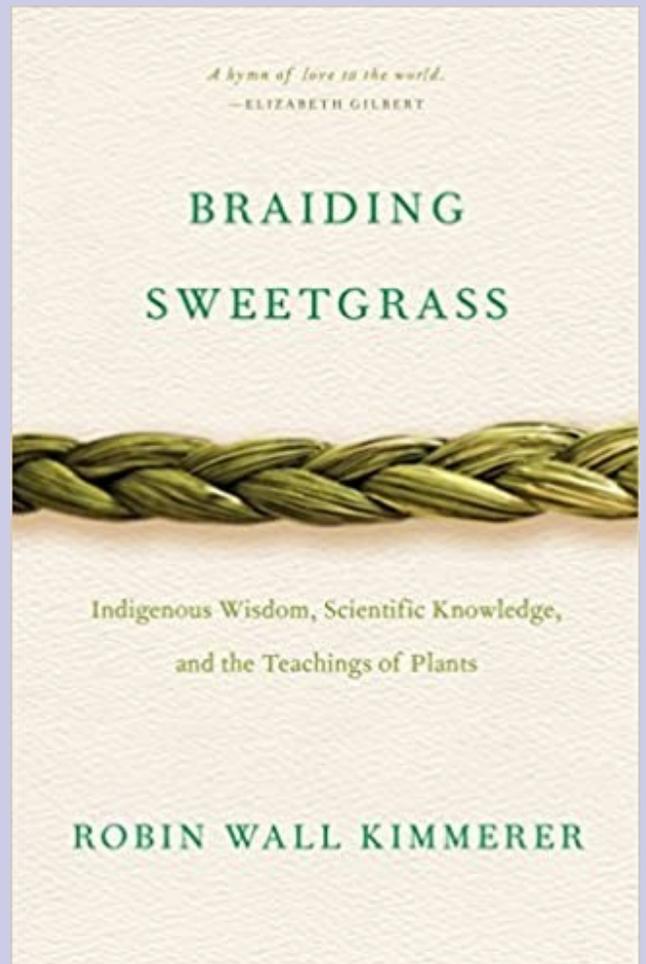
Starts Thursday, May 6th at 7:00pm over Zoom.

It will be a 4 week discussion that meets every other week.

In the first session we will discuss the first two sections: "Planting Sweetgrass" and "Tending Sweetgrass."

You can order the book from Amazon.com or from Bookshop.org.

Please contact Fred Smith if you would like to join (612-212-1906).



In Memoriam

On Memorial Day, May 30th we will read the names of our members and friends who have passed away during the last year. Please contact the church if you know of someone we should mention. A message can be left at 218-675-6300 or unionucc401@gmail.com.



COUNCIL MINUTES – APRIL 15, 2021

PRESENT: Don Hoppe, Karen Holle, Joni Kumpula, Tom Cox, Jo Horak, Mary Parrish, Heidi Hoppe, Ron and Linda Merritt, Caryl Allan, Mike Bohanon (Pastor Torri is on vacation this week)

Joni called the meeting to order and offered a convening prayer. The agenda was passed as written and the minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

Pastor's Monthly Report: Torri is not present today but she submitted her monthly report.

Coffee after Worship?: There is a small group of people coming to church in person on Sunday, and some would like to be able to move into the Friendship Hall for coffee and conversation after the service. After discussion there was a motion: **Beginning May 2 we will offer the opportunity for people to come into the Friendship Hall after worship for coffee and a treat. Because our tables are large it is possible to socially distance and still have a conversation. Mike/Mary/passed with two people abstaining.** Caryl Allan volunteered to bring a treat for May 2, which will be individually wrapped.

Financial Stewardship Board: Don reported that our income for March was very high partly because the Fetzer money was received, and also several people paid their annual pledges in full in March. Don expects our April income to be lower.

The Food Shelf Campaign in March was very successful! The total amount of money donated was almost \$12,000!! Thank you all for your support of our March mission. The mission for April is One Great Hour of Sharing.

Facilities: A new gas stove has been ordered for the upstairs kitchen. The stove will be on wheels so it can be moved for cleaning. Mike Bohanon is hoping that we can sell the old stove on E-Bay.

A group from church went to look at the Community Church streaming and sound system. We are interested in upgrading our system and plan to take the money out of Memorial Funds to do so. **Motion: To take a maximum of \$7,000 out of our church Memorial Funds to upgrade the streaming system. Don/Ron/passed.**

Just a reminder!! Be sure to lock church doors when you leave the premises!!

Outreach: Karen has been writing outreach articles for a couple of months. We talked about the UCC projects we will take offerings for and also discussed community projects we want to support.

Congregational Life: This group will be meeting next week to talk about plans for the summer.

Worship: Heidi reported that Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services were held this year for both in-person and virtual viewing. Easter Sunday service was attended by close to 30 people and was wonderful.

Women's Fellowship: About five women attended the April meeting to catch up on news with each other. Linda will plan a meeting for May and June, but will not have a meeting in July.

Men's Fellowship: At the May meeting (May 4), Mike Schmidt will speak about the computer system at Union and his suggestions for re-vamping it. Stan Kumpula will be planning speakers each month for the Men's Fellowship. The men packed 36 boxes of food for Easter this year.

Christian Learning: Jo talked about the summer forums that are being planned. She also mentioned VBS which will be held June 23, 24, and 25. There will be a meeting this Sunday for VBS after the church service. Community meals will continue until May 12. At the meal yesterday, 82 people were served.

Other fun events: We talked about having an ice-cream social with perhaps a barbeque lunch after church on July 18. Torri's birthday is close to that date and would provide a good excuse for a party!

The Northwoods Arts Council planning is getting underway. Two years ago there was a booth run by the pastors of all the churches which sold pie by the slice. Joni will see if the pastors are interested in having this booth in 2021.

Treasure Sale – Planning is underway for the sale which starts June 9.

Next meeting is May 20. Clerk, Karen Holle



News from the Worship Ministry Team

Happy Spring! I'm writing this on Earth Day, and I've chosen to believe that winter is over. It's bright and sunny today with warmer temps; a welcome change. Area lakes have opened up, and spring migration has begun. Even if we get more snow, it won't last.

Things are gearing up for summer at Union. The sanctuary capacity was increased to 50 family units in time for Easter, and Council voted to begin coffee hour starting May 2nd. In this way, we hope to battle the isolation and loneliness which has plagued us this past year.

Please note, however, that we are not rushing to open our doors and embrace everyone just yet. We are still in a pandemic, and the last thing anyone in our church community wants is to be responsible for transmitting the virus to someone else. Therefore, we still recommend masks be worn at all times within the building, we encourage social distancing even for the vaccinated and recommend it for those who are not, and we urge you to love your neighbors from a distance. Thank you for doing your part to help our community stay safe and healthy!

Take care, and stay healthy!

Heidi Hoppe, Team Leader



TREASURE SALE

Setup for the Treasure Sale begins this month. Please join us as often and as long as you can as we prepare the lower level for this major church fundraiser. Both men and women are needed for this endeavor, and lunch has been provided by Sue Johnson (delicious leftovers from this years' Community Meals). Setup dates are:

May 25 - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

May 27 - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

June 1 - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Should you have items to donate, please contact Cindy Gulbrandson or Heidi Hoppe for delivery options. **Remember we do not accept any exercise equipment (stationary bikes, treadmills, etc.), computer equipment (towers, monitors, keyboards, etc.), nor TVs. These items do not sell.**

KODA'S COMMENTARY ON LIFE

Hi, my name is Koda! I am a dog! I am learning that my human is a pastor! A pastor means "shepherd" and a shepherd is in charge of sheep, but I have not seen any sheep around here. I have seen deer, squirrels, a few other dogs, and Bandit (the cat), but no sheep. And I, am definitely NOT a sheep! So, my human is not in charge of me! Nope! She is not the boss of me! I am the boss of me and I can do what I want.



Not only is she NOT the boss of me, I am the boss of her! For example, I have trained her to give me a treat every time I sit, shake, or lie down. Can you believe that? I have also learned that if I walk on the end of a rope that connects to my neck, I get to go sniff stuff in the woods! So far, my training with her is going well!

Umm... maybe not well all the time. Yesterday was not a good day. I do not get left by myself a lot, so when I do, I want to make sure my human knows I do not like it. So, I howl and bark and cry... I think in this church they call it protesting. Anyway, she left me alone with Bandit (the cat). I was in my jail cell called a kennel and Bandit (the cat) got to roam all over the house! It was so unfair! So, you know what I did? I broke out!

No jail can hold me! Well, actually my human forgot to lock the other door on the kennel... so I just walked out. But if you talk to my friend Noel, I broke out!

I wanted to show Bandit (the cat) that I am the boss of this house, so you know what I did? I went to the cat box and ate all his poop! I did! Then I knocked down the gate that blocks me from his food and I ate that too! I ate all of it!

I was feeling pretty good about myself... and then my human came home. I was so happy! I met her at the door with my tail wagging! When she walked in the door, she began howling and barking at me! I do not know how to speak human but I was pretty sure she missed me too!



I found out fairly quickly, she was upset with me. She put me in my sleep room and shut the door. While I was in there, I figured out that I did something wrong. Maybe I was not supposed to eat the cat poop or cat food. Maybe I wasn't supposed to jump on top of the table to celebrate my victory over Bandit (the cat) while my human was howling and barking at me. Maybe I am NOT the boss.... Maybe I am a sheep?

Barks and Wiggles!

Koda



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, May 13th at 1:00 pm, 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, May 4th at 9:00 am, 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.



Bible Study

Monday mornings

10:00 Coffee and conversation

10:30 to 11:30 Education and Inquiry in the Lower Level.



FIBER ARTS GROUP

Fiber Arts meets on the fourth Thursday at 1:00-3:00 pm each month for knitting, crocheting, quilting, tatting, or whatever else you enjoy. Lots of help, treats, and giggling included!



Union Funnies



Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?

Because Noah was always standing on the deck.

If Mary had Jesus, and Jesus was a little lamb...

Does that mean Mary had a little lamb?

The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose...

Mosquitoes come close, though.

Which servant of God was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?

Moses. He broke all 10 commandments at once.

How do you make Holy Water?

You take some regular water and boil the devil out of it.

Why did Noah have to discipline the chickens on the Ark?

They were using fowl language.

Which Bible character had no parents?

Joshua, son of Nun (Joshua 1:1).

Why couldn't Jonah trust the ocean?

He just knew there was something fishy about it.



Keep & Till

The Strengthen the Church Offering supports grants which make a difference in the lives of people across the United Church of Christ. The Keep & Till Congregation in the Central Atlantic Conference honor's rural life and faith by focusing on agrarian rhythms, ecological concerns, and creation care. Keep & Till received a grant to stabilize and improve their community garden during the pandemic.

Pastor Samuel Chamelin explains the impact of the grant: "The quarantine made in-person activities more difficult, but it also helped us to understand the value of gathering together. While Keep & Till elected not to worship in-person in any capacity, we did continue to meet in the garden, masked and socially distanced, to continue our ag work (which is spiritual work also). This exposed us to new friends and neighbors in a way that we did not expect."

The grant literally funded the renewal of the garden. Mulch enriched the soil. A 250-gallon trough increased the water capacity. Organic pest control improved the overall yield of the garden.

But most significantly, people in the neighborhood came out to spend time in the garden. Pastor Samuel saw a renewal in people. "When a tornado destroyed the tool shed, one of those new families stepped

forward to offer their old shed, in good shape. We had community members come out to hang with us and assist, and they brought real help to the garden project. Then, they noticed that we had issues with weeds and poison ivy. The family used their flame thrower to eliminate the problems. Later, we discovered that others were mowing some particularly weedy areas. And then, finally, we realized neighbors were helping each other harvest food for their tables. In this way, Keep & Till truly became a member of the community. Though our interactions were not how we might hope them to be, we saw growth in our community, integration with the surrounding neighborhood, and stories of generosity and sharing."



If you would like to make a donation to the UCC project, *Our Churches Wider Mission*, you can write a check to the church sometime in May and note on the memo line what it is for.

Thanks, Karen Holle

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Spring is still trying to make it back. Hopefully by the time you get your newsletter it will have arrived! The good news is the lakes are open and the grass is greening up.

The Hackensack and Walker Food Shelves was the Mission of the Month in March. The gifts were very generous, and Hackensack Food Shelf received \$9,113.25 and Walker Food Shelf received \$2,851.75. Both food shelves are doing a wonderful service to their communities. Thanks to all who gave so generously this year.

March had very good giving and revenue, and the expenses were down. April revenue will be lower than last year, but Union Church will still be in a very good position at the end of April.

We hope to begin to see more of our members and friends in worship on Sunday mornings 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

Building the first addition

In 1957, the Congregational Christian Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church merged to become the United Church of Christ. That same year Union Church voted to be yoked with Walker Community Church. In 1958, the Rev. Harold Mercier was called to serve the yoked parish.

The church had purchased a “Holmberg House” to serve as a parsonage. After the church was moved to its new location, it decided to sell the parsonage, and a first mortgage was taken to add a basement to the church.

Between 1978 and 1979, the present sanctuary was built and enlarged at a cost of \$153,948.45. The mortgage was paid off in two years, three months and ten days. This addition gave much needed space for a social hall, Sunday school rooms, a kitchen, and a music/all purpose room.

The Union Church has more worshippers in summer than the other three seasons. They are called Associate members, coming mostly in the three months of summer, from May to September. By winter, attendance of Sunday services will drop by half from the summer peak.

In these years it seemed like the town would continue to grow and we were growing right along with the town. More next time.

CHRISTIAN LEARNING

Looking back over the past year it is amazing how our lives have changed - new health issues, new safety issues, new communication issues, new ways of learning, and more. Things that remain constant are Faith, Hope, and Love - especially in the case of God in our lives. Help us to open our hearts and minds to all that is good, just, and true as we support others as well as ourselves.

The Community Meal Program Takes A Break

This wonderful program was expanded from a smaller gathering in our Lower Level hosting a shared, in-person meal and cozy conversation. It was a good time! However, Covid-19 came along and change was needed. A call was made for more food options for our larger community, and Union Church and our friends answered. Now we offer hot, healthy meals on a drive-up/delivery basis to between 70-90 people weekly from our Upper Level commercial kitchen! Thank God we have the kitchen stoves, donated resources, and dedicated people to fill this need for area adults and hungry kids. It is a true mission work project! With more vaccines and unemployment dropping, we will take a break (we usually did) for Summer, so May 12th will be our last drive-up/ delivery meal. We WILL continue in the Fall but at this time dates and method have not been confirmed. You may be sure of three things - good food, good support, and good people to share it all!

Monday Morning Bible Study Has New Materials

This group meets weekly in our Lower Level for Bible Study, conversation, and supportive prayers. Coffee and conversation available at 10:00 AM. Bible Study begins at 10:30 AM -11:30 AM. Each Bible lesson stands alone so please drop in for a lesson whenever you can. All materials are provided for your use. This group is lively, supportive, and has a strong history of answered prayers. We learn new things about the power of Faith in our lives each day. Please join us when you can - all are welcome!

VBS Space Explorers Are Coming Soon! Blast Off Counting Down!

Union Church, UCC will host *Space Explorers - A Mission To Mars and Beyond* on Wednesday, June 23, Thursday, June 24, and Friday, June 25. This VBS Program was originally scheduled for last year but Covid-19 concerns changed plans. However, with the actual NASA landing on Mars this year and activity of the Mars Rover and the Mars helicopter in the news, we are glad it is working out this year. We have three days of new 'space' activities around this theme interlinked with traditional Bible lessons. Kids will have opportunities to experience robots, space conversations, building projects, and much more. Outdoor activities will include swimming, fishing, and special outdoor trips.

Parents, kids, other adults may be reassured that all safety considerations have been taken with social distancing, sanitizers, and masks as necessary. We will be using some of our larger rooms at the church so 'space camps' will have lots of room. We even have an off-site campus location for use. We do recommend early registration so Mission Control can develop the best schedule possible! Forms for VBS 2021 will be available on the Union Church site (check under VBS), by mail request, or pick up in the church office. Again, early registration is encouraged. If your plans are flexible, we are able to accept some walk-in registrations. There is no cost for this amazing Space Explorer Program so don't miss it! Questions about the Launch may be directed to Jo (651-274-2145) and Heidi (218)-831-3927) at Mission Control. Adults who wish to join the Mission may use the same contacts. Want Space Explorer behind your name? Get it on our Launch List!

Many Excellent Forums Are In The Works For Summer

Details for some are still being worked out. A complete list will be given soon. We will host the Adult/Teen Challenge Choir on Sunday, August 29th. This 30 member choir will gift us with songs and stories of redemption from addiction. A light brunch will follow in Friendship Hall for all guests after the service.

Another wonderful group is ISAIAH, sponsored by Tom Cox and Team. We are still finalizing details but they should join us earlier in Summer. Please watch our newsletter, website, and Facebook page for more details.

Hope you and yours have a wonderful Spring, and enjoy warmer weather blessed with beautiful green plants, gentle breezes, and glorious songs of birds. God's Love, Faith, and Hope to all!

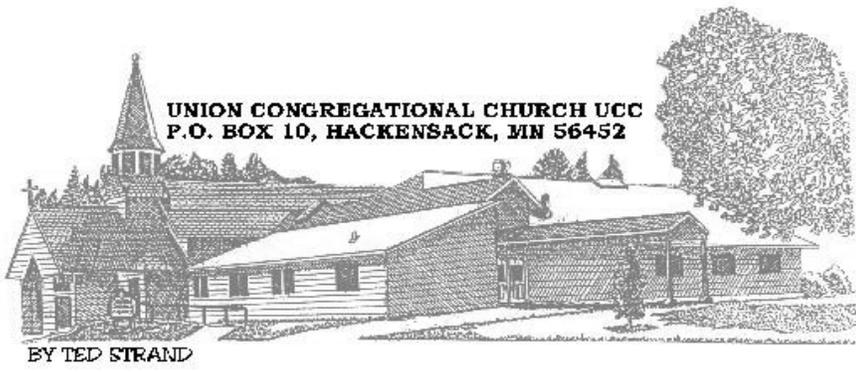
Bone Builders* 1:30 pm -2:30 pm
Every Monday and Friday

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

MAY 2021

* = Community Event held at the church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 9:30am Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 11:30 VBS mtg	3 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	4 9:00am Men's Fellowship	5 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal	6 7:00pm-8:00pm Book Study (Zoom)	7 1:30 Bone Builders *	8 SATURDAY
9 9:30am Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 11:30 Worship Ministry Team	10 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	11 5:30pm Financial Team Meeting (Zoom)	12 4:00pm-5:30pm Community Meal	13 1:00pm Women's Fellowship	14 1:30- Bone Builders *	15
16 9:30am Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour	17 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting* 7:00pm Justice Team Meeting	18 9:00am Road Cleanup Day	19 1:00pm-2:30pm Book & Thimble*	20 1:00pm Church Council (Zoom) 7:00pm-8:00pm Book Study (Zoom)	21 1:30 Bone Builders *	22
23 9:30am Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour	24 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	25 9:00am-3:00 pm Treasure Sale Setup	26	27 9:00am-1pm Treasure Sale Setup 1:00pm Fiber Arts*	28 1:30 Bone Builders *	29
30 9:30am Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour	31 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm AA Meeting*					



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FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



2021

Coffee hour has returned on Sundays!

New Book Study Info!

