



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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JULY 2021

Why Church?

Notes from
Rev. Torri Vande Zande

Over the past several weeks we have been doing a series called “Why Church?” Why do we go? Why do we get involved? What is the point?

We have covered several topics so far, and we have a few more weeks before we wrap it up, but I wanted to share (or remind you of) what we have covered so far. Below are the major points of all the themes we have discussed so far:

Why Community? Three building blocks for community:

- Have no judgement on those we meet.
- Have curiosity about who we are speaking with.
- Find connection points to build on (common ground).

Why Worship? What is it?

- A unified acknowledgement of God interacting with creation and us.
- A chance to bring everything before God.
- An opportunity to walk out of the doors a little bit different than when we walked in.

Why Communion? Why do we do it?

- Reflect on our relationship with God and people.
- Repent from aspects of our lives that do not reflect Christ.
- We get to have a chance to change our ways (we get a do-over).

Why Share Our Faith? Why do we do it?

- We become aware of God’s presence in our everyday lives.
- We give language to our faith by telling stories.
- We encourage others to tell their God stories.

Why Serve? Why is it important to serve?

- Serving is essential to community.
- Serving helps leaders carry the load/burden.
- Serving helps develop our God-given gifts.

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

We have two more topics to cover:

Why Social Justice?

Why Interdependence?

Come join us on Sunday morning worship as we finish this series.

In Christ Alone,
 Pastor Torri

MODERATOR'S NOTES

Greetings for July! Gosh the season is rushing along. Our Covid is better, but we are not all vaccinated yet, and it isn't over. We need to do better. Cass County is lagging behind, still having cases and deaths. This is my last article before elections, and I will be done as moderator. It has truly been a pleasure to serve the council and congregation. It has been about 13 years since Bob Crom convinced me to do the job, and I alternated some time with Tom Cox. I must say that the Union Council has always been a joy, with never a big argument or problem like some churches have. We truly have a great membership and friends list. Union Church is very special to me and wonderful. It is truly a little slice of heaven in a difficult and divided world. It is great to have so many good friends in one great place. I truly love this place!!! So for the last time I will sign off but I will still

See you in church, Joni

JULY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|---------|---|
| July 1 | Erin Fischbach |
| July 4 | Gus Kaubisch
Joanne Morén |
| July 5 | Marian Wald |
| July 8 | Bonnie Hiniker
Fred Smith |
| July 9 | Marissa Kaubisch |
| July 11 | Bruce Carlson
Rev. Torri Vande Zande |
| July 13 | Barb Waldron |
| July 15 | James Hoppe |
| July 16 | Katherine Knutson |
| July 19 | Bonnie Kundert Mullen
Gracee Rudkin |
| July 21 | Linda Ottman |
| July 23 | Gary Dietrich |
| July 25 | George Strawn |
| July 26 | Chris Hoppe |
| July 30 | Gary Kwong |



Justice Ministry Team to Present “Hackensack Happenings,” a Public Forum, on July 11

Immediately following worship on Sunday, July 11, in the Fellowship Hall, Union’s Justice Ministry Team will present a public forum, “Hackensack Happenings.” We cordially invite and encourage all Union members and friends, as well as the general public, especially those who want to be “in the know” about what’s currently happening in the greater Hackensack-Backus community, to join us for this special event.

The forum will feature presentations by three prominent community leaders.

Bill Kennedy, Hackensack’s Mayor, will describe recent developments in the City and discuss the Council’s vision for the City’s immediate and long-term future. Lisa Tuller, Treasurer of the Hackensack Game Changers, will review the origins of the Game Changers and describe the game-changing effects the group’s efforts have had and continue to have in the commercial and civic life of the Hackensack community. Denny Ganz, Chair of the Advisory Board of the recently formed Hackensack Lakes Area Community Foundation (HLACF), will introduce the Foundation, describe its partnership with the Central Minnesota Initiative Foundation and provide an update on the foundation’s purposes and current projects. HLACF serves the greater Hackensack and Backus communities.

Gary Dietrich, who was instrumental in the recent creation of the HLACF, and who served as the first chair of its advisory board, will be the forum moderator.

Union’s Justice Ministry Team members will serve refreshments. Again, all are invited. Please plan to come on the 11th, and bring your neighbors!



TREASURE SALE

THANK YOU - THANK YOU - THANK YOU!!!

To everyone who helped make the Treasure Sale a huge success.

To all of you who donated items, and volunteered your time and labor to set up the sale, run the sale, and take down the sale. We could not have done it without you!

The total sales for the Treasure Sale were \$8,161.65. When added to the online sales, that brings the total for the year to \$9,854.65.

Blessings, Cindy



Council Meeting Minutes – June 17, 2021

PRESENT: Stan Kumpula, Ron Merritt, Caryl Allan, Mary Parrish, Pastor Torri Vande Zande, Heidi Hoppe, Don Hoppe, Karen Holle, Joni Kumpula, Mike Bohanon, Tom Cox, Jo Horak

Joni called the meeting to order. The agenda was approved; Tom/Don. Minutes of the last meeting were approved. Torri offered a convening prayer.

Pastor’s Monthly Report: Pastor Torri submitted her monthly report to Council. Torri spoke about the new people who are calling for help with personal crises who may also be coming to church on Sundays. We are also seeing new people at church who are coming with friends who are members of the church. As a church of extravagant hospitality, we will all try to be very welcoming and friendly when we see new faces.

Pastor Torri feels that we need to have a more comprehensive policy for working with children and vulnerable adults. She has recently spoken with UCC Associate Conference Minister Kevin Brown regarding this and has learned that the Conference has a great deal of information to share with us on the topic. Council will learn more about this information and will decide what we want to include in our own Policy and Procedures manual.

Regarding changes to church services and activities, we decided that we could begin to have someone pass the offering plate each Sunday. We agreed that we are not ready to “Pass the Peace” in the old manner with handshakes. We also agreed that Game Night can start again in July.

Financial Stewardship: When we look at the Financial Report that Don presented, it looks as though our income for May and June is quite a bit lower than our expenses for the same period. Don feels that we are on target for the most part, but does expect a shortfall for the year due to the deaths of several of our parishioners this spring. He mentioned that the Treasure Sale income would help meet the possible shortfall.

Facilities: Ron mentioned that there is a piece of siding missing from the south side of our building. Ron is having trouble finding someone willing to fix this because of the height of the building and difficulty reaching the spot by ladder. We also need bulbs replaced in lights at the front of the sanctuary. This is also a difficult place to reach. Ron watched the Sunday service from his home last week. He felt that the sound was awful. Don will meet with the tech team to discuss the best way to correct this problem.

Women’s Fellowship: Women’s Fellowship will be hosting a housewarming party for Torri on August 1 from 1:00 to 3:00. Punch and finger treats will be served. Several people commented that they feel the church should be advertising more aggressively. This topic was tabled for today.

Men’s Fellowship: Stan reported that Gary Dietrich spoke at the last meeting about the Hackensack Lakes Area Community Foundation. Soon, Stan will have Jesse, a new Hackensack business owner, come to speak about his business which sells free-trade coffee, and rents paddle boards and bikes.

Christian Learning: Jo talked about the ways she and her crew have advertised for Vacation Bible School so folks know that the program is happening this year. The Space Explorers Mission to Mars VBS program will run June 23-25. A few more people are needed to help with the program.

The subject of obtaining background checks for volunteers was introduced. **Motion to waive background checks for this year; Mike/Mary. Passed with 6 for and 5 opposed.** Council plans to include background checks in the future for all volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults.

Justice Ministry Team: Tom reported that immediately following worship on Sunday, July 11, in the Fellowship Hall, Union’s Justice Ministry Team will present a public forum, “Hackensack Happenings.” We cordially invite and encourage all Union members and friends, as well as the general public, especially those who want to be “in the know” about what’s currently happening in the greater Hackensack-Backus community, to join us for this special event.

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Treasure sale: Cindy reported that the Treasure Sale this year brought in \$8,161! With online sales added, the total earned this year was \$9,854. **Motion to order 10 tables that can be used at the next sale (when the price is good); Mike/Heidi/passed.**

Moderator Moment: Joni has obtained a new battery for the defibrillator at the cost of \$170. Her next project will be to improve the coffee coming out of the coffee machine.

Semi-annual reports are due to the church by July 6 so Sabbastian can compile the Annual Report. The semi-annual meeting will be held right after church on July 25.

Meeting was adjourned. Next meeting is July 15 at Joni’s house, 4168 Interlachen Drive NW. Clerk: Karen Holle

Women's Fellowship

Thursday, July 8th at 1:00pm at Joni’s house, 4168

Interlachen Drive NW, and over Zoom.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300 or email the church



Men's Fellowship

Tuesday, July 6th at 9:00am, in-person in the Friendship Hall and over Zoom.

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. Site will vary.



THROUGH KODA'S EYES



Hi! My name is Koda, and I am the “Church Dog in Training”! I want to tell you about my new house! It has a lot of room for me to run and play! I can hide my toys from Bandit (the cat), I have my choice of many windows to look out from, and I have a huge backyard! My human tells me it needs to be fenced in before she sets me free to run outside, but I am so excited!

My human bought what she calls a lava lamp. It is a funny looking thing that bubbles. She doesn't let me sniff it because she says it's hot! I don't know about that, I may sniff it while she is in another room sometime. I will check it out for myself. If I have a burnt nose next time you see me, you will know why.

My human says she bought the lava lamp to communicate with other humans. She told me that we live in town now, so we are more accessible to people stopping over. My first thought was, “I WOULD LOVE THAT!” And then she went on to say that sometimes people do not know if it is okay to stop. Sometimes they do not want to just drop in without knowing if it is okay to do so. So, my human said she will put the lava lamp in the window. If the lava lamp is on, people can stop by, visit, and chat for a bit. I also want to add they can feed me treats too.

Anyway, she also said that when the lava lamp is off, that means she wants some private time. Private time means many things in our home. Sometimes we have invited company, sometimes we watch the TV, or sometimes we just play. I tried protesting and told her that we need to keep the lava light on ALL THE TIME, but my human reminded me that sometimes we need to rest and have time to ourselves. Bandit (the cat) then joined our conversation and said that he wanted the lava lamp OFF ALL THE TIME! But my human explained that our new home is going to be a place where people are welcome to come over. Bandit then mumbled something about knocking it down when we were not looking. But I have to tell you, I am always aware of where Bandit is at all times. He will never get away with it.

So that is what I see through my eyes this month. Look for the lava lamp! I am looking forward to showing you my new house!

Wiggles and Giggles,

Koda (The Church Dog in Training)

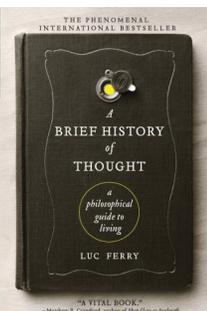


LUC FERRY BOOK STUDY STARTS JULY 14TH

A new Zoom book study on *A Brief History of Thought* by Luc Ferry starts July 14! George Strawn will be leading the discussion. We'd love to see you there!

The series starts Wednesday, July 14th at 7:00pm, and will run for six weeks.

Call the church at 218-675-6300 to sign up.



CHRISTIAN LEARNING REPORT

Summer has officially arrived! Looking forward to new activities like the 4th of July, Kids Fishing Contest, Sweet-heart Days, Northwoods Arts Council gatherings, and many other special events in our area that give joy to so many people. We especially value the opportunity to spend time with family and friends we may have not seen in person during the winter due to weather and Covid-19 restrictions. The sound of cheery bird song, sight of new fawns, smell of blooming flowers, and feel of water and sand between our toes magnifies our love of God's World and each other. Rejoice!

Monday Morning Bible Study Summer Schedule. We are gathering at various locations during summer to better experience the outdoors in homes, parks, cafes, etc. We did this last year and enjoyed it very much. Please contact Bonnie or Jo to confirm location and time. As of now we still meet on Monday between 10:00-10:30 AM for coffee/conversation with 10:30-11:30 AM devoted to study and reflection. All are welcome to join us and share support and smiles.

VBS—Space Explorers—Mission To Mars and Beyond !

By the time you read this newsletter our event will be over. We pray all goes well.

As with many other church activities last year, our program was put on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions. When we began to open up with in-person worship, it was decided to attempt VBS again. Planning has changed from month to month as we shifted from everyone wearing masks, strict social distancing, and self-contained classrooms.

At this printing masks are optional, gathering in larger groups is OK, and we can even sing! VBS will look different however. For the first time we will be using the Community Building as headquarters for our older students. Pastor Torri and Caryl will lead this group. Younger students will still meet in Union Church lower level but in larger classrooms to maintain social distancing. New this year, they will enter on the west upper level each day for Opening Assembly in Church. This space has become a spaceship to Mars and beyond decorated by Pastor Torri, Caryl, and others. It looks wonderful! The lower level classroom decor reflects planets, stars, and other space-related themes.

Thanks to Jo, Heidi, Sue, Gary, and others for their efforts.

Bible themes this year are Daniel in the Lions Den, Queen Esther's Story, and the Good Samaritan Parable. All age groups will study age-appropriate variations of these themes. A drama will be presented on Friday afternoon for family and friends at about 4:00 PM.

All participants, family, and friends will enjoy a delicious sandwich bar with salads and dessert prepared by Mike, Jim, Sue, and the Kitchen Team. Their efforts are also greatly appreciated in preparing daily lunch for campers and staff. The Snack Team is very important as well. Our VBS Outdoor Activity Team hopes for good weather but you know what spring weather has been like this year. Last time we did VBS a group actually fished in the rain and caught some nice ones. However, we do practice "catch and release." Thanks to Don, Mike, and Terry for those fishy memories!

VBS will be the first larger meal event prepared using our new commercial stove. It looks like a gleaming beautiful 'Kitchen Spaceship'! It will take us into the future. All those who generously gave of their time, talent, and resources to make this stove a reality deserve a round of thanks. Many of our service and mission work projects like Community Meals, Faith In Action, and other groups benefit from a commercial kitchen. Fall Kick-off for Youth and Families is in the works!

Summer Forums schedule is coming soon.

A separate listing will be posted elsewhere. Please know we do have some great options coming including Hackensack Happenings, Balsam Moon, Adult/Teen Challenge, and others. Deadline demands define decisions. In order to meet publishing deadlines we must submit before certain events have happened or been finalized. For this we apologize, but in this time of changing climates of weather, social, health and technical factors, life has become more complicated. Remember -

"With wings as eagles" - Peace.

JULY MISSION OF THE MONTH – PAWS + CLAWS ANIMAL RESCUE AND RESORT

by Karen Holle

This article is a compilation of information from Kaitlyn Yutrzenka, Marketing Specialist at Paws + Claws, and from Misty Hoopman, Director of Operations for Paws + Claws. The process of building an animal rescue and pet boarding facility began in 2010. In 2017, Paws + Claws, a state-of-the-art animal shelter and boarding facility, opened for business. In the first four years of operation the business placed over 1100 pets! I wondered how this could be possible in a small town area like Hackensack. Misty told me that people come to Paws + Claws from a multi-state area to adopt pets. She also told me that 95% of adoptions succeed partly due to the background work that goes into every adoption. I think that is a terrific success rate.

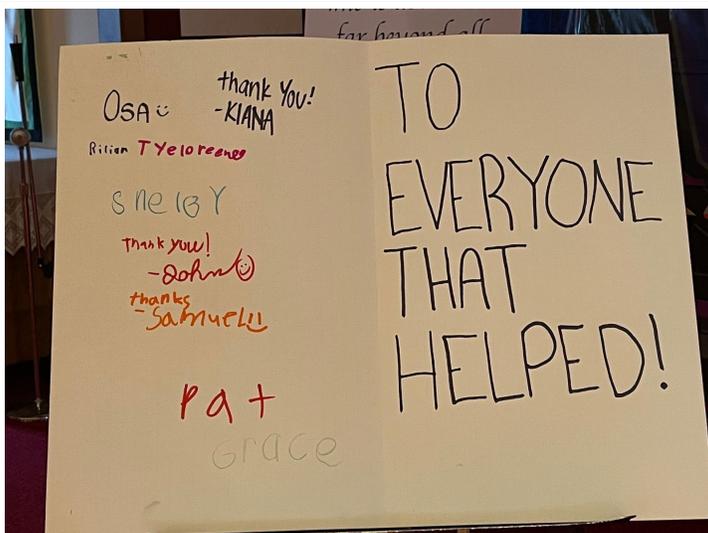
Paws + Claws is a “no kill” shelter. I asked Misty if that causes problems when pets who are not adoptable take up space for an unlimited time. She told me that if a dog or cat is not adopted in a certain length of time at the shelter, that animal will go to another shelter that would have a better chance of finding a home for the pet. Some animals, for example, go to Duluth where there are more people looking for pets. It was good to hear that every animal will ultimately find a home.

Without volunteers and the financial support that the community has provided, Paws + Claws would not be successful.

We all know that Pastor Torri loves animals. This month she is challenging us to support this organization by doing one of the things listed below:

- 1. Give a financial donation to Paws + Claws. Donations can be made in person, or online, or over the phone directly to Paws + Claws. Or send your check to Union Congregational Church with Paws + Claws written in the memo line.**
- 2. Pick up one of the items on the “wish list” for the shelter. Bring your item into the church, and we will take everything to Paws + Claws at the end of the month.**

Wish List: Dog food, cat food, kitten milk re-placer, puppy food, wet canned kitten food, wood pellets for cat litter (can be found at Fleet Farm and is sold as horse bedding material or as heating material and comes in 40-pound bags). Also needed are dog toys, raw hides, and Cheese Whiz for giving medicine. Thank you!



Photos of the Thank-You card made by the VBS kids

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Summer has arrived in the north woods. Like the rest of the nation, we have had some very warm weather. We had a few days of cooler weather, but the forecast until July is highs in the high 70's to mid 80's with cool nights. But the whole area is dry, and we need more rain.

Strengthen the Church was the Mission of the Month in May. This is one of the five missions of the United Church of Christ. The June Mission of the month is Faith in Action, and July will be Paws + Claws. August will be Stewardship Month for Union Church.

May revenue was significantly lower than last year, but Union Church is still in a good position at the end of May. June giving is running a little lower than last year, but we hope that at the end of June we will still be in a good position. It appears that we will have received a little less than 50% of giving/donations that were projected for our 2021 budget.

The Church had a very successful Treasure Sale this year. We thank everyone who organized and helped on this sale.

We are beginning to see more of our members and friends in worship on Sunday mornings at Union Church as our seasonal members and friends return. We have held the Treasure Sale and Vacation Bible School and are having coffee hour and other activities. COVID is still a concern, but seems less scary as more of us are vaccinated..

Christ's Love and Peace to You,

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

Thoughts from the Worship Ministry Team

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the beautiful summer. The weather here in Hackensack has been a bit warm for the most part but VERY dry. However, with care (frequent watering) the gardens are growing well.

I'm happy to report that June is over. The Treasure Sale was a great success, and Vacation Bible School, while small in numbers, was a lot of fun. Pastor Torri and Pastor Bob from St. Paul's did an excellent job with the opening assembly each morning, and the teaching staff provided lots of learning and exciting activities for the kids. I sincerely hope we NEVER have these two activities in the same month again, but that is a topic for another day.

As we continue to find comfort in the "new normal" in the midst of the pandemic, our sanctuary is open for 75 family units, masks are optional for those who have been vaccinated (if you have not, however, please wear a mask for your safety and the safety of others), we're passing the offering plates once again, and we continue to stream our services each week.

Please join us in the sanctuary or online. We long to see our friends return.

Heidi Hoppe, Chair, Worship Ministry Team



VBS Students and Staff

kokoro CORNER

MONTHLY SONGWRITERS CIRCLE

A monthly songwriter's meetup for area songwriters starts this fall over Zoom. We'll share our songs and support one another on the journey. To join the group, call or email Kiki at (218) 270-5648 or kokoroperformingarts@gmail.com.

"I just tried to come up with some honest songs. What I was writing about was real plain stuff that I wasn't sure was going to be interesting to other people. But I guess it was...I've never had any discipline whatsoever. I just wait on a song like I was waiting for lightning to strike. And eventually—usually sometime around 3 in the morning—I'll have a good idea. By the time the sun comes up, hopefully, I'll have a decent song."

-John Prine

POETRY IN PUBLIC PLACES

Volunteers are needed for the Poetry in Public Places Project. Sign up to help with site selection, installation, or the kickoff event! Call (218) 270-5648 or email kokoroperformingarts@gmail.com for more info.

Poetry in Public Places is a community project with a focus of sharing art in public spaces.



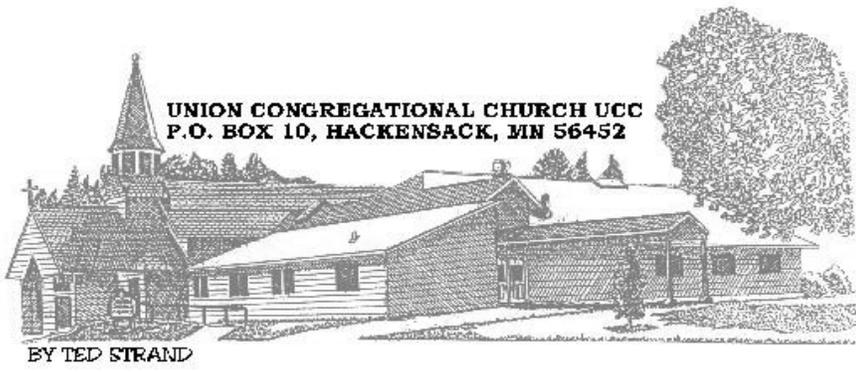
Bone Builders* 1:30 pm -2:30 pm
Every Monday and Friday

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

JULY 2021

* = Community Event held at the church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	5 6:00pm AA Meeting*	6 9:00am Men's Fellowship	7	8 1:00pm Women's Fellowship	9 1:30- Bone Builders *	10
11 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 10:30am Justice Team Forum - Hackensack Happenings* 5:30 Game Night	12 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	13 5:30pm Financial Team Meeting	14 8:00am-2:00pm Community Flea Market* 7:00pm Zoom Book Study	15 1:00pm Church Council (Zoom)	16 1:30 Bone Builders *	17
18 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	19 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	20	21 7:00pm Zoom Book Study	22 1:00pm Fiber Arts	23 1:30 Bone Builders *	24 9:30-11:00am Balsam Moon Event
25 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 11:00am Semi-Annual Meeting	26 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	27	28 7:00pm Zoom Book Study	29	30 1:30 Bone Builders *	31 10:30am Dick Olsen Memorial Service



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VBS and Treasure Sale Recap
Info on the Hackensack Happenings
Forum Inside

