



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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NOVEMBER 2021

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

I am preparing for winter! It is hard to believe everything that needs to be done up here in Northern Minnesota. I stored the lawn furniture, took down most of the birdfeeders, cleaned up the lawnmower, trimmed the bushes, turned off the water to the outdoor water spouts, did a furnace check, found my snow shovel, and insulated doors and windows. I am not done yet, but I hope to be finished by the time the first snow accumulates.

This week I am working on getting my winter clothes unpacked and closing off my spare room that I don't have to heat. I still have my winter jackets in totes from when I moved this past summer. I didn't realize I had never unpacked them until the first day the temperature dropped into the 40's.

I like the feeling of preparing for something. I like the planning and the list making. I like the anticipation of change.

I have been thinking about how much I have changed over the past several years. I have discovered new ideas and ways of thinking about faith. I have grown in my ability to adapt to difficult situations. I have nurtured new relationships with people who I didn't think I would have much in common with. I have discovered new hobbies that I want to explore. I have down-sized, packed my life up, moved 6 times in the past 4 years, and rebuilt my life in Hackensack, Minnesota. I now call this my home... and I am happy to be here.

(Continued on page 3)

Daylight saving time ends November 7th — make sure to set your clocks back 1 hour!

Sunday Worship at 9:30 AM

Communion: First Sunday each Month

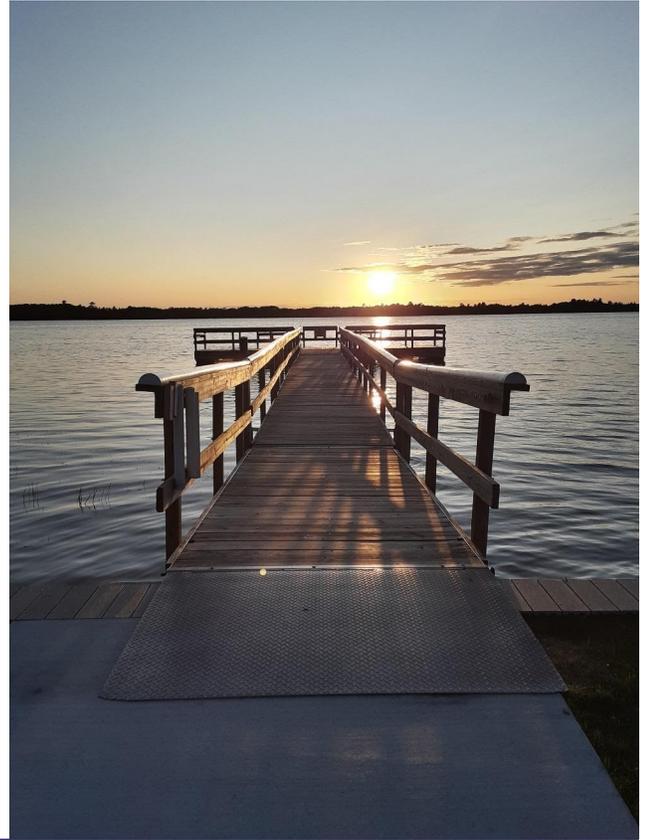
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As I look down the timeline of life, I often wonder what God has in store for me next. Of course. I have goals and dreams, but as many of you know... God sometimes has other plans. Life is not always predictable.

I have also been thinking about Union Church. We have come a long way in the last 3 years. Granted, half of it was spent in isolation, but we have come a long way. We have decluttered and cleaned out many corners of the church. We have dreamed of new ways of interacting with one another through book studies. We have created opportunities for people to get involved through technology. We have adapted, and we will continue to adapt and prepare for what God has next for us.

As we prepare for winter, I am very excited for the potential of what Union can do and what Union can be to this little community that is snuggled in the Northwoods of Minnesota. May we continue to get ready for what God has next for us.

In Christ Alone,
Pastor Torri



A Candle of Hope in a Divided World

By Brian Woodcock, England “50 New Prayers from the Iona Community”

Thank You, Jesus, for Your astonishing gifts to us:
Your multifaceted teaching, in parable and paradox;
Your all-embracing love that encompassed
Such an unlikely mix of people
And invited them to get along.

Thank You for Your great array of contradictory witnesses;
And for Your explosive Spirit
That pitched them out into the world
Before they had agreed upon a single version of the story.
Thank You, Jesus, for Your Church of many colors.

Give us the humility to welcome Your gifts,
And all the traditions that bring them to us.
Help us to delight in difference,
To listen and learn
And blur the boundaries
And work together for You..
Make us a broad church;
A broad and generous church;
A candle of hope in a divided world.





COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

October 21st, 2021

PRESENT: Mike Bohanon, Heidi Hoppe, Don Hoppe, Ron Merritt, Karen Holle, Cindy Gulbrandson, Joni Kumpula, Stan Kumpula, Caryl Allan, Mary Parrish, Gracee Rudkin, Barb Lyall, Tom Cox, Kerri Swenson, Jo Horak, Pastor Torri, (Steve Erickson, Marilyn Erickson by zoom)

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

The agenda was approved as written. Joni/Mary. The minutes were approved. Ron/Joni.

Old Business: Continue the discussion of requiring masks at indoor events at church: Mary read a note from Don and Dolly Olsen regarding the need for masks in church (the Olsens could not physically attend the meeting). They feel that vaccinated people should be able to attend church without wearing a mask if this is their preference.

Caryl Allan spoke for Sandy Tauber and Wendy Cline who also have been vaccinated and would like to attend church without wearing a mask.

Marilyn Erickson agreed that if people have had their shots, they should not need to wear masks. She feels that the real risk is unvaccinated people who come inside the church without masks.

Kerri Swenson commented that many groups require proof of vaccination for admittance to an event.

Steve Erickson felt that we want people to be honest about their vaccination status. We don't want to be checking vaccination cards.

Stan Kumpula believes in science and says the CDC is asking for people to wear masks indoors whether vaccinated or unvaccinated.

Ron Merritt agreed.

Tom Cox indicated that he wears a mask to protect others.

Don Hoppe agreed with this.

Next we moved to discussion about whether unmasked people need to sit in an area that is separate from the area where masked people sit.

Barb Lyall doesn't like the idea of dividing the congregation into groups within the Sanctuary. That seemed to be the general consensus of the group.

Motion: We recommend a mask for those persons who have been vaccinated when participating in activities within the church building.

We require a mask for persons who have not been vaccinated when participating in activities within the church building. Mary/Marilyn/passed unanimously

Pastor's Monthly Report: Torri reviewed her monthly report. She mentioned that there are several people who would like to join the church. She would like to have a service for new members in November.

Financial Stewardship Board: Don reviewed his report to Council. To date, 39 pledges have been received for a total of \$92,935. There are new pledges this year which is encouraging. Several pledges are still expected. Don is asking for budgets from all boards and ministry teams by November 16 so his team can prepare the 2022 church budget.

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Facilities: Mike reported that Kerry Swenson has been helping with projects around the church. Thank you, Kerry!! Clean-up day at church is scheduled for October 26 at 9:00.

Women's Fellowship: Joni reported that 8 women met last week for fellowship and dessert and had a really good time. Next time – Everyone bring a friend!! She also mentioned that the Bone Builders group donated \$310 to the church for the use of the building.

Men's Fellowship: This month the men listened to a presentation regarding the installation of solar energy at St. Paul's Church which everyone found very interesting.

Christian Learning: Jo reported that many of the Christian Learning programs are on hold due to the Covid-19 virus. Jo would like to develop some way to reach our youth and families in a safe way, perhaps by zoom. The Community Meal program is going well with 376 meals being picked up so far this fall.

Justice Ministry Team: Tom reported that the team recently had a very interesting meeting. Currently many people on the team are reading the book Neither Wolf Nor Dog.

Treasure Sale: Cindy has recently started listing items to sell on Facebook. She also mentioned that there is a party interested in the old stove that used to be in our kitchen.

New Business: The Game Changers have requested that we allow them to put signage on our property for the Bonna Paulson Memorial Park. A motion to that effect was passed by Council. Joni/Mary/ passed

Motion to adjourn. Mary/Stan

Minutes by Karen Holle, Clerk

MISSION OF THE MONTH—THE CHRISTMAS FUND

In the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, which administers the Christmas Fund, experienced a 400% increase in requests for emergency grants over the previous year. Thanks to the generosity of more than 275 donors to urgent appeals for gifts to the Christmas Fund, UCBMA was able to say "yes" to each of these requests. Most of the donors who responded to these special emergency appeals were older persons and nearly half were first-time contributors to the Christmas Fund. Many are also themselves recipients of Ministerial Assistance. Here are just a few of the notes of thanks received from some of the Emergency Grant recipients:

"I must tell you that before I opened the envelope with the check I prayed that whatever the contents, that somehow I would make the days to come work - and when I opened that envelope with a great amount of trepidation, I could not believe my eyes that you and your Committee granted me even more than I had requested! I am still in shock, and still feeling so very grateful as I sit down with that fear off my shoulders." "Wow, what can I say but a very humble thank you. This is tremendously generous and I never, ever expected it. The best I had hoped for was to cover my recent medical bill. I am surprised and tearfully grateful."

"The emergency grant money arrived in last night's mail. THANK YOU to all who approved this emergency grant. I will be able to pay back loans that were made to make rent. We will also be able to supplement our rent money for quite some time until greater income starts coming in. We are hopeful those days will come." "I'm speechless!"

If you would like to make a donation to The Christmas Fund, you may make it out to the Union Church with a memo that it is for this mission. Thank you!

- Karen Holle

THROUGH KODA'S EYES



Hi, my name is Koda, and I am "The Church Dog (In Training)"! As many of you know, my foster sister (Lassie) was adopted a few weeks ago and now has a wonderful forever family! Her new name is Hazel because of her eye color. I am very excited for her, but I do miss our playtimes together.

Even though I miss her, I now get more attention from my human! Lassie (Hazel) chewed up all my plushies, so my human has been surprising me with new plushies every few days! I love my new plushies! Ducky, Lamb Chop, and Monkey are my new friends! I keep Ducky at church just in case someone wants to throw him down the hall. I may or may not fetch him. It depends on my mood.

Bandit (the cat) is back in the house full-time. He thinks he is king of the house now. He seems very happy... for a cat.



Bandit (the cat) and I might not always get along, but Bandit (the cat) and I are brothers. And when you add our human, that makes us family. Sometimes families fight and disagree with each other. Sometimes families hurt each other with words or claws, but we figure out how to get along and live under the same roof.

I think humans do that too. Humans have blood families, but they also have church families. Church is more than a place where you go on a Sunday morning and howl at God for a while. Church is family.

My human told me that the church is bigger than that building where we go to work every day. Church is a way of life. Church is how humans live in community with God, each other, and with others who do not like to howl at God on Sunday mornings.

And Yes, sometimes people hurt each other with words and claws... but they figure out how to get along and live under the same roof. I do not think humans and animals are much different from one another. That's how I see it through my eyes anyway.

Have a barky day!

Koda "The Church Dog (In Training)"

CELEBRATING THE PAST

Myra Damm, Historian

Faith in Action - The Beginning

I was asked to write an article about Faith In Action, the beginning. I went straight to Marty Mann, our previous Parish Nurse, as she was instrumental in getting this wonderful program started.

In 1998, Marty and Pastor Michael Small attended an informational meeting set up by the Initiative Foundation regarding grant money available for the purpose of forming a faith-based organization to serve the people of Cass County.

As more information was presented, Marty became more and more excited at the possibility that this program could make a real difference to residents of Cass County. Cass is a county with no public transportation, no medical facility at that time, and a growing number of people planning to retire to our area.

This was then presented to the Union Church Council who agreed that the project sounded great and authorized Sheila Hunter and Marty to write a grant asking for funding. Awards for the grants were competitive in nature, and Union was not awarded a grant that first year. We reapplied the following year and were then awarded the grant! The next step was to connect with LuAnn Fransen (a member of our church) about becoming the first director of the program. LuAnn served as director of the program until 2005 and provided the strong leadership and spiritual strength the program needed to flourish.

So many dedicated, talented people have been instrumental in the growth of Faith In Action. The strong base of the organization is the many, many volunteers who care about others and donate their time, smiles, hugs, and love.

Faith is central to the work of FIA for many reasons. While we all experience faith in different ways, many of us share a common belief that community and the world in which we live can be loving and compassionate with the help of friends.



NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

Hasn't our fall been beautiful here in the northland! Even with the dry summer, the colors in the forest have been magnificent. The leaves are finally dropping, signaling the end of the season. However, if I remember correctly, last year we already had snow by this time. What a change!

If you experience our services online, I hope you have seen a vast improvement in camera and sound quality. The church has installed 2 new cameras, and the tech team has tweaked the settings from the sound board to improve the streamed audio feed. Many thanks to the team - Mike Schmitt, Stan Kumpula, and Don Hoppe.

We are now recommending masks for those who have been vaccinated, and requiring masks for those who have not been vaccinated. Masks, both disposable and reusable, are available at the doors to the sanctuary. Let's work together to stay safe!

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving. I hope you will be able to celebrate with family and friends.

Heidi Hoppe, Team Leader

NOTES FROM THE BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

November is almost here, and most areas have had a killing frost, but many leaves are still on the trees and they still are magnificent. I do not remember having this much fall color so late. Today is a fall workday at Union. The first date was rescheduled because so many leaves were still on the trees. I guess we just won't get them all picked up this year!

As I write this note, we have received 41 pledges for a total of \$95,335 for our Stewardship Campaign for 2022 with the theme **"The Journey from Gratitude to Generosity."** We are hoping for another 8 pledges. If you have not yet pledged, we hope that you will prayerfully consider what Union Church means to you and this community, and generously pledge. If you have misplaced your pledge card, please contact the church or Don Hoppe at 675-6265 or 218-839-4341 for another one.

The Board of Financial Stewardship in its report to the Church Council at their October meeting noted that September income was less than last year, and income continues to be behind the 2020 level. Our expenses continue to be consistent, and they were above our revenue for the month.

We are beginning to work on the 2022 budget, and all the boards and ministry teams have received information so preliminary figures can be presented to the November council meeting.

Donation/giving for the rest of 2021 may be low for meeting the budget, and less than projected non-pledge giving and the incompleteness of current pledges continue to be a concern. Please consider giving an extra gift to Union at the end of the year so we can enter 2022 with a balanced 2021 budget.

We hope you have a great November and Thanksgiving and stay healthy and safe.

Christ's Love and Peace to You,

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

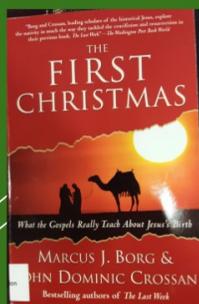
Book Study December 1st-15th

Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.
In the church library
(There will be a Zoom option)

"First Christmas by Marcus Borg and
John Dominic Crossan

December 1st - Chapters 1-3
December 8th - Chapters 4-6
December 15th - Chapters 7-9

If you would like to join us as we learn from one another, please email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



KOKORO CENTER FOR MUSIC & THE PERFORMING ARTS

POETRY READING

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18th 7-8 pm



artwork by Sara Chaffee-Bates

Featured poet

SARA CHAFFEE-BATES



**POETS OF THE
MINNESOTA NORTHWOODS**

To register for this free Zoom event, email
kokoroperformingarts@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN LEARNING REPORT

By the time you read this we will be in the Season of Thanksgiving. It can be a time of gratitude and joy as we bridge our seeming differences and come together for the greater good. Let us all ask for guidance to reach this goal.

Outdoor Bible Study Group Moves Indoors

We are a dedicated group of folks who have enjoyed meeting outside on decks, patios, and outbuildings for much of the spring and summer. We gather at 10:00-10:30 AM on Mondays for coffee and conversation. Bible Study meets from 10:30-11:30 AM. Study materials used include "The Upper Room" series with extra resources as well. Prayers, discussion, and supportive stories are shared at each meeting. It is not necessary to be a church member to attend. All are very welcome to share their journey with us.

Currently we are meeting at Ellie Nelson's home. Please contact Bonnie at (218) 675-5399 or Jo (651) 274-2145 to confirm date or location as it may vary. See you soon!

Community Meal Report

Since we began serving our meals after Labor Day we have served almost 400 meals to a variety of people each week. Some are 'regulars' each week, some are new folks just learning about our service, and others may just be in need of a hot meal after a long weary day. All are welcome to join us at the upper level west door between 4:00-5:30 PM and pick up a hot, healthy meal to go. Please contact Sue at (218) 820-3870 if you have special dietary needs. This is a mission work project so meals are offered at no cost. However, any donations are gratefully accepted.

CL Programs Revised

Due to ongoing Covid concerns many of our programs like Morning Out and others are on hold for now. We do hope to develop resources using Zoom and other forms to maintain contact with youth and families in the future. Suggestions are always welcome.

Meanwhile, blessings to you and yours during this Season of Gratitude.

The Christian Learning Team



ONGOING EVENTS



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, November 11th at 1:00 pm in the Friendship Hall.

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, November 2nd at 9:00 am in the Friendship Hall.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300 or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesdays at noon, in the library, or on Zoom.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300 or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



Book Study

Neither Wolf Nor Dog

Final session Wednesday, November 10th at 7:00pm, in the library or on Zoom.



Coffee Hour on Sunday Mornings

Did you know we have coffee hour after each and every service? Come and meet some new and old friends on Sunday mornings. Our treat.



Community Meal

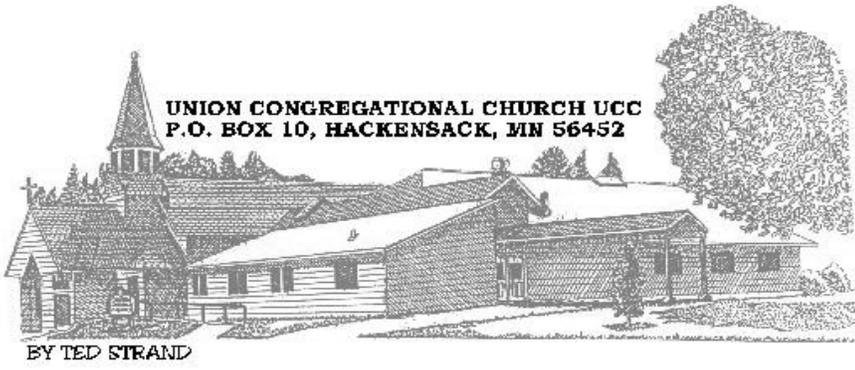
Every Wednesday at 4:00pm, drive-through only. Call Sue at (218) 820-3870 to reserve your meal.

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

NOVEMBER 2021

* = Community Event held at the church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	2 9:00am Men's Group	3 12:00pm Bible Study 4:00pm Community Meal	4	5 1:30– Bone Builders *	6
7 Daylight saving time ends (Clocks back 1 hour) 9:30am Worship & Communion 10:30am Coffee Hour	8 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	9 5:30pm Financial Board Meeting	10 12:00pm Bible Study 4:00pm Community Meal 7:00pm Book Study—Neither Wolf Nor Dog	11 1:00pm Women's Fellowship	12 1:30– Bone Builders *	13
14 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	18 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	16	17 12:00pm Bible Study 4:00pm Community Meal	18 1:00pm Church Council	19 1:30 Bone Builders *	20
21 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	22 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	23	24 12:00pm Bible Study	25	26 1:30 Bone Builders *	27
28 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	29 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	30				



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FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



2021

**Advent is coming up quick
-
More info inside!**

THE UNION NEWS