



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
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AUGUST 2022

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

While I was on vacation last month, I took some time (not a lot, because I was on vacation) to think about the purpose and mission of Union Church. I thought about how unique we are in this little community... and well, the larger community as well. I would like to take a moment and share with you some reasons why I believe Union is unique.

- We don’t have to believe the same things. We are a diverse group of believers. We all have different backgrounds, different faith experiences, and different beliefs. And we come together every Sunday to worship the same God.
- We share our lives with one another. In good times and in hard times, we pray and support one another through life, through death, through hardships and pain. We also rejoice and celebrate with one another, through births, new beginnings, anniversaries, and triumphs. We are a special group of people who have learned to laugh and cry with one another.
- We practice extravagant hospitality. We welcome everyone and believe EVERYONE is a beloved child of God with value and purpose. Therefore, they deserve to be



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Sunday Worship at 9:30 AM

Communion: First Sunday each month

(Continued from page 1)

treated with dignity, respect, and mostly, they are worthy of being loved.

- We are an open and affirming congregation to the LGBTQ+ community. We are the smallest church, in the smallest community within the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ who have chosen to take on that title (“Open and Affirming to the LGBTQ+”). And I realize we were welcoming to everyone long ago and just received that label in 2017, but by having that title (or label), we have committed to being an advocate and ally to those who have been hurt or rejected by their family and/or faith community.
- God has given Union an amazing tool... the building. The building is a tool. The building is not the Church. I will say that again. The building we do ministry out of is not the Church, people are the Church. On a Sunday morning, the church building is not the Church until the Church shows up! Our building is a tool we use to do ministry. Sunday worship services, funerals, fundraisers, exercise groups, AA meetings, music gatherings, forums, and festivals have all functioned out of our building. And this building is not only used by the Church, but by the entire community.
- We focus on serving our community. We do not exist to serve ourselves. We do not exist to just serve one another. We are called to serve our wider community. Our members and friends are highly active in the Hackensack area. We care about the people in our community, we look for ways to participate to make this place better, and we become active in making change happen.

Union Church is unique not because of one of these bullet points, but because of the combination of all of these. I believe Union Church was put in this little town in the middle of the Northwoods for a reason. We are a beacon of hope and light of Jesus Christ to those around us. As summer winds down and things become a little less hectic, we will begin to think about the finances of the church and planning for the church’s ministries next year. As we contemplate our capacity to give, my hope is that we are reminded about the uniqueness of Union Church. It is an honor to serve as the pastor here. And I am looking forward to continuing our extraordinary journey together.

Pastor Torri

YOUTH AND FAMILY

The Hackensack Cafe’ Adventure Scavenger Hunt was an event the Youth and Family Ministry Team put together this fall. Author Norrie Thomas read her book, the kids went on a mission to find the missing donut recipes by figuring out puzzles and clues, and then we all had a delicious meal! There were 9 children at the event along with their families and friends. Here are a few wonderful outcomes from this experience:

- We had 20 volunteers who applied, had background checks, were trained and ready to go that day!
- Our kitchen crew was organized and prepared to serve 100 people. In the end we served about 50, but we were ready for 100.
- The parents and grandparents joined their children on the scavenger hunt and had this experience with them! It was so great to see the kids asking their parents/grandparents to help them with clues. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who helped pull this event off! Thank you to Norrie Thomas who read her story to us and allowed us to base this entire event off of her book. Thank you to the Youth and Family Team who worked hard on putting this event together (Caryl Allan, Heidi Hoppe, Sue Kimmel, Gary Kwong, and Pastor Torri).





COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

JULY 21, 2022

PRESENT: Joni Kumpula, Stan Kumpula, Don Hoppe, Marilyn McKnight Erickson, Karen Holle, Heidi Hoppe, Sue Kimmel, Mary Parrish, Mike Bohanon, Kerry Swenson, Steve Erickson

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as written. Joni/Heidi

Pastor's Monthly Report: Pastor Torri is on vacation today. We reviewed her monthly report which focused on the activities of the past month, including a youth event, several memorial services, and a forum, "Union Beyond Covid." Several people are interested in becoming members of the church in August.

Financial Stewardship Board: Don reviewed both his monthly report and the report he created for the semi-annual meeting. June giving and income from the Treasure Sale made for a strong income stream this month. However, expenses were higher than usual because we had to purchase a new water heater. There is also a new door to the lower level of the church that must be paid for.

August and September are stewardship months. The 2023 Pledge Campaign will begin with the August newsletter and a congregation mailing. For the long-term financial health of Union Church we need strong giving and completion of pledges in 2022 and strong pledging and giving in 2023.

We discussed asking permission from the congregation to take money out of Memorials or Bequests and Special Gifts to help with cash flow issues this year.

Facilities Board: Kerry and Mike reported today on work they are doing on the church building. Mike has ordered a battery-run weed whacker and blower for our yard maintenance person so that she can more easily handle her work. The cost for this is \$245. They also feel that now is the time to address the problem we have been having with frozen water pipes in the winter. Last year several services and events had to be canceled because we had no water at church. When the water pipes freeze up there is not only no water to the church, there is no water to the fire hydrants near the church. Karen will get this item added to the next Hackensack City Council meeting agenda.

Mike and Kerry also reported that the two furnaces that heat the Friendship Hall are 20 years old and need replacing. The space that needs to be heated is over 3,000 square feet which is why we have two furnaces to do the job. Gordy Nelson at Advantage Heating is helping determine how to best address that issue.

There is also water leaking into the storage room in the basement which Kerry and Mike feel could affect the foundation of the church. **Motion: Kerry will look into the cost of a curb or French drain to help direct water during storms away from the church building. Joni/Heidi/passed.**

Siding – Mike feels some of the church siding will need to be replaced in 2 to 3 years.

Roof – The church roof is 22 years old but looks good at this time.

Steeple – needs cleaning.

Weeds in the rocks that surround the church – Joni, Cindy, and Heidi have been working on removing the weeds from the rocks – a very big job each year. We talked about using Round-Up several times a year to deal with this. Mike indicated that he uses a small torch to kill weeds at his home.

Charging small groups of people who come into the church for exercise class or other gatherings. We decided that we would charge \$2 per person per event to help defray the cost of utilities. Exercise classes and Fiber Arts are two groups effected.

Board of Personnel: Marilyn reported that her first big project – obtaining background checks for people involved in the youth event – went well. She is currently working on job description for the

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custodian position in case Sue moves and we need to advertise the job.

Ministry Team Reports: Congregational Life: Visiting is going well, and our memorial services and luncheons have been very special.

Worship: Heidi reported that this summer the average attendance has been in the forties with 49 people attending last week. People sitting in the back of the church complain that the sound is not good. Don has been trying to adjust that.

Youth and Family: The Hackensack Cafe Adventures last week attracted 9 children and many parents and volunteers. Several people at Council reported that the kids had a wonderful time and the station leaders felt well prepared. The Women's Fellowship prepared a lunch with Mike Bohanon's help for about 50 people.

Women's Fellowship: The August 9 meeting will be a salad luncheon and will begin at noon.

Men's Fellowship: Stan reported that last month the men met to "just talk" and had a nice time. The August meeting is in the planning stage.

Justice Ministry Team: This summary of the team's work was provided by Sue Kimmel. The JMT met via Zoom on July 7. Small group planning took place according to our mission and task priorities.

The community action group discussed attendance at the Hackensack Community Summit which will take place in late August. We also discussed the possibility of using the basement of our church for office space or day care possibilities.

The group striving to be allies with our Anishinaabe neighbors discussed attendance at the powwow which is July 23-24. As a group we plan to participate in a gathering at Onigum with Juliet Rudie, Director of the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Relatives on August 11. Partnership with the Leech Lake Culture Alliance has been very positive.

The group working on creating a welcoming place for our LGBTQ+ neighbors met with Vicki Wunsch on July 13 by Zoom to plan for a forum on August 14 at Union Church. Topics: What are the next steps in becoming a more Open and Affirming congregation? They also discussed a fall book study, The Savvy Ally.

The group working on regenerative care of the environment is planning a showing of Netflix documentary, Kiss the Ground. Renewal of license for showing movies will be needed. The group discussed attendance at Climate Change in Northern MN forum on October 8 at Deep Portage.

The JMT met with Joe Day, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe elder on July 17. Joe shared his life story and discussed the history of the Leech Lake area. Joe shared his heart reminding us to be a friend to all living things and to give thanks each day for what we are given by the Creator.

Fundraising: Steve provided flyers for our Trivia Night fundraiser that we could post around town. Mike Bohanon talked about making sloppy joes for sale at the event. Other people volunteered to help out. We will plug this event at our semi-annual meeting next week.

Tech team: Mike Schmitt has obtained a 30-day trial for 8 wireless mikes that we tested out last Sunday when Dick Kimmel played and sang for us. Everyone felt the mikes really helped with the sound of the music. **Motion to go ahead and purchase the 8 wireless mikes and stand at a cost of \$340. Memorial funds will be used for this purchase. Kerry/Mike/passed.**

Moderator's Moment: Marilyn talked about how much she has enjoyed her work in the church and her involvement in the "Sermon on the Mount" series in worship. Thank you, Marilyn, for all you do for us!

Old Business: Semi-Annual Meeting, July 31. The Semi-Annual Report has been prepared for the meeting and will be given out on Sunday so people can look it over. Karen has been working on an agenda for this meeting. The congregation will need to vote to accept the officers of the church for another year.

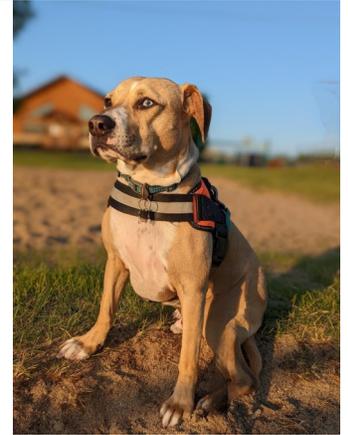
Meeting adjourned. Next meeting August 18, 2022. Clerk, Karen Holle

THROUGH KODA'S EYES



Hi! My name is Koda, and I am the Church Dog! Today I want to talk to you about Bandit (the cat)! I have been having some problems with him lately. As many of you know, Bandit (the cat) and I do not get along sometimes. Most of the time we are okay, but sometimes we have what humans call, "conflict." I have overheard some discussion about the talks that have been happening in the big room where all the humans howl to their God. I believe you call them "sermons." I am usually in my human's office during that time, so my sensitive ears have picked up on some good suggestions that I have been trying out lately.

In the first weeks I heard that humility is power. The first thing Jesus did before saying anything is sit down. I am very good at sitting!!! So I walked up to Bandit (the cat) and sat! It did nothing for our relationship. He was not impressed.



Then I heard that giving something in order to receive something might be a good idea in conflict. So I gave Bandit (the cat) one of my new toys, my spot on the bed, and even gave him some of my food. He took everything I gave, and it worked! The next morning he gave me a hairball and left it in my bed! Granted it was a yucky hairball, but he gave it to me. That is a step in the right direction!

The next steps recommended that I try to preserve the relationship and not attack Bandit (the cat) but attack the problem. Well, I have to honestly say, I do want to have a relationship with Bandit (the cat), but the problem is that he keeps attacking me!



Then the sermon said to focus on the needs and interests of the other one because finding who is right and wrong does not work. So, I studied Bandit (the cat) very carefully trying to figure out what he needed. I could not figure it out, so I decided to just ask him. Do you know what he told me? He was jealous that I get to go outside!

So I did my best to communicate to my human that life between Bandit (the cat) and I would be much more pleasant if Bandit (the cat) could go outside every time I went outside. And my human listened and we are trying it. So far, Bandit (the cat) and I have preserved our relationship, not blaming one another for our mistakes, and are looking to the future and not dwelling on the past. We are also working together to catch the chipmunk that lives under the deck. I will tell you about that next month.

And that is how I see it through my eyes! Have a barky day!

Koda the Church Dog



TRIVIA NIGHT AND SILENT AUCTION AUGUST 20th, 5:30 PM START

Get ready for August 20th, Trivia Night and Silent Auction (5:30 PM start so you can eat something while playing). Mike Bohanon is cooking up a meal for those who wish to purchase supper. Soft drinks, coffee, chips, and other treats will also be available.

Get your teams of 8 together now as we would like to fill up all the tables. You can recruit neighbors, house guests, and others, although we would appreciate your filling out a reservation slip available after church next Sunday to know how many to plan for. You can also just show up and you will be assigned to a team, but it would be helpful if you would still fill out a reservation slip so we can create teams of 8.

Don't worry if you don't know much about 80's song titles or Civil War history, neither does anyone else! That combined lack of knowledge is what makes it fun. There always seems to be someone who knows something offbeat, like what is a "futhark"? Don't look it up, but I found out what it was when I signed up for the wrong language class in college. Living in Minnesota you may have seen one.

Because this is a fundraiser for the church, the cost will be \$10 per person. There will also be a silent auction, and you will have time to bid on the items between trivia rounds. We are still accepting donations for the silent auction. Remember, this is a fundraiser (fundraiser has the word "fun" in it), so if you still have something to donate that is likely worth something to someone else, please call Steve Erickson at 612-741-3394 to arrange to donate an item or to volunteer as a score keeper, answer slip collector, or helping project the score on the screen. (This is indeed a big production, and we need help putting it on.)

See you there, August 20th



PUBLIC FORUM - "What's Next?"

August 14th

10:45am (After Church)

In the Friendship Hall

Union has been an Open and Affirming Church to the LGBTQ+ community since 2017.

- What are our next steps forward?
- What does open and affirming mean to a small rural church?
- How can we be advocates to our friends in the LGBTQ+ community?

Come join our conversation.

Led by Vicki Wunsch

JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM

The Justice Ministry Team will be meeting by Zoom on Thursday, August 4, at 6:30PM. We have been meeting in small groups working on our mission priorities associated with being a good neighbor to all and taking regenerative care of our environment.

The Justice Ministry Team will gather with the Leech Lake Culture Alliance at the Onigum Community Center on August 11 at 5:30PM. We will share a potluck meal and hear a presentation by Juliet Rudie, Director of the MN taskforce for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives.

On August 14, at 10:45 AM, Vicki Wunsch will present a forum entitled, "What's Next?" Union Congregational Church is an open and affirming church. In Vicki's presentation she will lead us through the next steps in continuing our desire to be welcoming to our LGBTQ+ neighbors. The forum will be in the Union Church Fellowship Hall.

At the end of August, the Region 5 Development Commission will facilitate a Hackensack Community Summit. Hackensack's Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed through small group breakout sessions. If you are interested in supporting the wellbeing of our diverse community, please join the summit. It will be held at the Hackensack Community Center with a date determined soon.

The Justice Ministry Team welcomes all to our monthly meeting and programs. Please join us!!

KOKORO CORNER

Poetry Safari is coming up on August 13th, from 9AM - 3PM. Poetry Safari is a fun new addition to the annual Northwoods Art and Book Festival. The inspired poems in the Safari were contributed by regional poets from the Minnesota Northwoods.

Safari Headquarters will be at the corner of Lake Avenue and 3rd Street, just in front of the Hackensack Community Center. Look for the bright blue canopy with hibiscus on the top. Poetry Safari is for all ages from children to adults and is free to play.

How it works:

When you arrive at the booth, you'll see a self-service station with pencils, poem trackers, and a selection of buttons to wear. Safari Guides will be on site to help you.

There are eleven poems on bright display stands, hidden throughout the festival. As you find the poems, record them in your poetry tracker. When you find all eleven, return your completed tracker to Safari Headquarters where a new, blank journal is waiting for you.

We've had a lot of fun making the game for you. We hope you enjoy reading the poems and playing the game! Maybe you'll even be inspired to write a poem or two yourself!

Poetry Safari is a joint project of Northwoods Arts Council and Kokoro Center for Music and Performing Arts. This project is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Five Wings Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, a generous donation from the Hackensack Lakes Area Community Foundation, and project support from Union Congregational Church.



BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Giving Income-June	\$14,141.00	Year to Date Giving	\$57,208.95
Other Income	\$ 7,341.84	YTD Other Income	\$12,292.34
Total Income	\$21,482.08	YTD Total Income	\$69,501.29
Expenses-June	\$19,715.24	Year to Date Expenses	\$78,265.84
Current Month Balance	\$1,766.84	YTD Balance	-\$8,764.55
		Carryover	\$14,709.51
		Prepaid	<u>\$1.150.00</u>
Monthly Net Income	\$1,766.84	YTD Net Income	\$ 7,094.96

Other income includes Treasure Sale, Community Meal, fundraisers, and all other income sources, except interest and dividends generated from restricted funds and specified donations or grants not going into operating funds

Checking available: \$19,910.30

Total Assets: \$280,928.87

Summary

June giving and other income from the Treasure Sale made for a strong income stream this month. However, expenses were very high this month. The higher expenses were partially because of payment for the new water heater that shows in operating budget. This cost will be covered by the MRI Reserve funds. Also, the church received a \$5,000 donation to help defray this expense.

The Treasure Sale was very successful and showed up in the June totals in other income.

Please see the BFS report for the semi-annual meeting. Our giving continues to be lower than projected, and we expect that our income in 2022 will not meet our expenses. We may need to request restricted Bequest and Special Gift funds be used to cover expenses later this year.

The new outside door to the lower level have been installed, but not yet paid for. Current operating and MRI Reserve Funds are not sufficient to cover this expense.

August and September are Stewardship months. We will be promoting our 2023 Pledge Campaign beginning with the August newsletter and a congregation mailing. For the long-term financial health of Union Church we need strong giving and completion of pledges for the rest of 2022 and strong pledging and giving for 2023.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Thursday, August 11 @ 12:00PM

August is here, and we have a wonderful time planned. We will meet at 12 noon for a lovely and fun salad luncheon. We hope you will be joining us. We will be eating delightful salads and dessert. Specific people will be bringing the food. It is not potluck. If you would like to bring a salad please let me know. We will be having some music, and bring your favorite dumb joke to share, one to bring groans and giggles. The more the merrier, so put it on your calendar.

In September we will be doing another wine tasting with food pairing. This time we will be sharing our favorite wine. If you would like to bring one please see me. We can only use about 5, maybe 6. Last time was a hoot! This will be fun and full of fellowship!

If all this sounds like fun, please come join in.

See you in church, Joni





UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH – 2023 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

This year's stewardship theme is "**Journey to Generosity: The Way of Jesus.**" It takes shape from the passage in Matthew when Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Matthew 9:37-38.

In this passage, the plentiful harvest is God's blessing, and we, as members of this faith community, are the laborers. God expects and equips us to give our time, talent, and treasure to help gather the bounty and share it with the church, community and world. This year, as you prayerfully consider making a pledge for 2023, be reminded of the generosity God has bestowed on you, and let it inspire you to be generous in return.

Please be as generous as possible, as the expenses for our ministry and missions, and the maintenance and operating expense of our wonderful church facility continue to increase.

We respectfully request you return your pledge to our Financial Secretary, Don Hoppe, either by mail or in the offering plate by Sunday, September 25th. All pledges are strictly confidential. You may change your pledge at any time by contacting the Financial Secretary.

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

For more information or a pledge card, please contact Don Hoppe at 218-839-4341, or by email to finsec.ucchackmn@gmail.com

Your Stewardship Ministry Team: Don Hoppe, Sheryl Kaubisch, and Caryl Allan

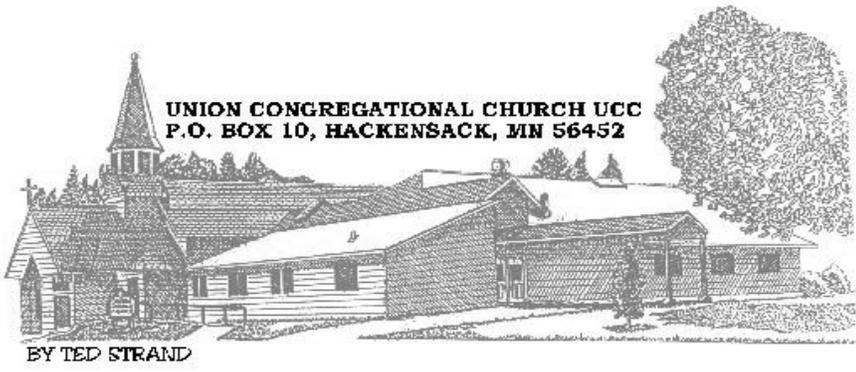


Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

AUGUST 2022

* = 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 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall*	4 6:30pm Justice Ministry Team Meeting	5 1:30- Bone Builders * 5:00pm Setup for TMLA Meeting*	6 8:00am TMLA Meeting*
7 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 5:30pm Game Night	8 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	9 5:30pm Financial Board Meeting	10 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall*	11 12:00pm Women's Fellowship Luncheon	12	13 9:00am NAC Art & Book Festival
14 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 10:40am "What's Next?" Public Forum	15 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	16	17 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 6:00pm Dick's Acoustic Jam*	18 1:00pm Council Meeting 5:00pm Countryside Coop Annual Meeting*	19 1:30 Bone Builders *	20 11:00am Sarah Cox Memorial Service 5:30pm Trivia & Silent Auction
21 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 5:30pm Game Night	22 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	23	24 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall*	25 1:00pm Fiber Arts*	26 1:30 Bone Builders *	27
28 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	29 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	30	31 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall*			



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FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



2022

Get ready for Trivia night!
(Did we mention there's ALSO a
silent auction?)

THE UNION NEWS