



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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SEPTEMBER 2022

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

The Shiny Gold Plates With the Red Velvet Inlay

It happens right around this time every year. We go to our mailbox and see a little letter from Union Congregational. I don’t need to open it to know what it is. I know. It is a letter asking for a financial pledge for the next year.



Then the next thing I think about is my own finances and if I can even afford to be as generous as I want to be. I have bills to pay, I have debt to pay back, and I have groceries to shop for. What can I really afford?

If you are like me, I have grown up giving money to the church. That is what I was taught to do. I watched my mom and dad open their top dresser drawer every Sunday morning and put money into a white envelope for the offering plate. I watched my dad tuck it into his shirt pocket or my mom would slide it into her purse. It was just something they routinely did.

Then when we got to church, I would ask if I could put the offering in the plate. They usually handed me the white envelope right before the pastor said, “Will the ushers come forward to receive this morning’s offering.” I held it tightly as I watched the ushers come closer to our row. Then, when the shiny golden plate with red velvet inlay crossed our row,

(Continued on page 3)

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
 Musicians.....Sheryl Kaubisch
 Kathleen Millberg, Barb Nish, Dick Kimmel
 Custodian.....Sue Johnson

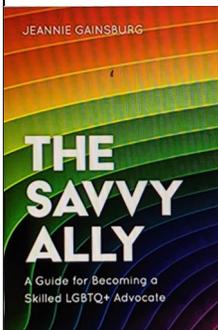
CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderators.....Marilyn McKnight & Steve Erickson
 Clerk.....Karen Holle
 Board of Financial Stewardship.....Don Hoppe
 Ministry Teams:
 Congregational Life.....Joni Kumpula
 Facilities.....Mike Bohanon and Kerry Swenson
 Personnel.....Marilyn McKnight
 Worship.....Heidi Hoppe
 Men's Fellowship.....Stan Kumpula
 Women's Fellowship.....Joni Kumpula
 Adult Learning.....Linnea Dietrich
 Tech Team.....Mike Schmitt
 Treasure Sale.....Cindy Gulbrandson
 Justice Ministry Team.....Sue Kimmel

ADULT LEARNING

"What's Next" Public Forum Rescheduled for September 25th After Church

Guest speaker, Vicki Wunsch will lead us in a presentation and discussion about how we can take our next steps to becoming open and affirming to the LGBTQ+ community in our area.



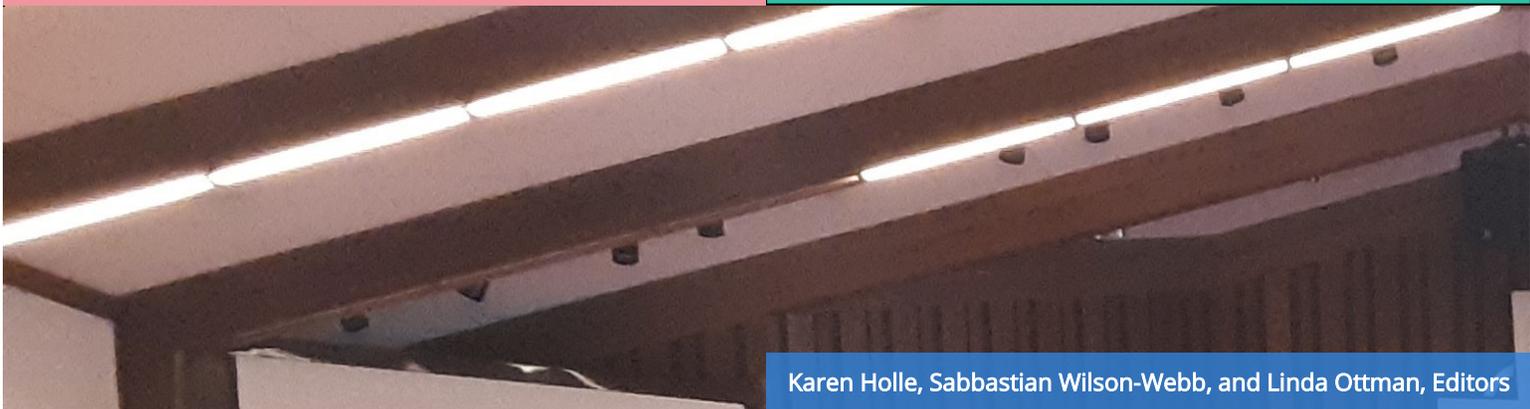
Due to the "What's Next" forum being rescheduled, we were forced to push back our discussion on The Savvy Ally by Jeannie Gainsburg.

So, Sunday, Oct. 9th and Sunday, Oct. 16th we'll be having a class in the library at 11:00 based on the book, The Savvy Ally. It will be a discussion based on her book and guide to becoming a skilled LGBTQ+ advocate. Attendees are encouraged to buy the book, but it is not necessary in order to be part of the group.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- September 1 Margaret Zieffler
- September 4 Phoebe Vosbeck
- September 10 Mary Lou Bisbey
- September 12 Kathy Jader
- September 13 Don Hoppe
- September 14 Ed Curo
- September 16 Mike Bohanon
Steve Merritt
- September 18 Lee Moren
Kathleen Millberg
- September 29 Anne McGill
- September 30 Benjamin Hoppe

Happy Birthday



(Continued from page 1)

I proudly put the white envelope in the plate and then grabbed the sides to pass it on. I remember feeling good about setting a simple white envelope in a shiny gold plate with red velvet inlay.

One Sunday during Sunday School, I was talking to my teacher about how my mom and dad let me put the white offering envelope in the shiny gold plate with the red velvet inlay. My teacher asked me if I knew what an offering was... I didn't. She began to explain, "An offering is something you give to God, but here is the twist. The offering we give, is already God's." I crinkled my nose at her and replied, "Na-ah! That is my mom and dad's money!" To which she replied, "And where did your mom and dad get their money from?" I didn't know. In my defense, I was only 7 years old.

My teacher began to teach the entire class that everything in the creation is God's. God made it, God takes care of it, God owns everything! God even owns the white envelopes put in the offering plates every Sunday. So whatever we have, whatever we "own," whatever we care for is God's.

She went on to say, "God also gives generously to human beings. God gives us the ability to create shelter, grow food, and have jobs so we can take care of ourselves and our families. And what you put in those white envelopes on Sunday, is a thank you to God. It is giving back a portion of what God has so generously given us in the first place."

Then of course, "Jimmy" who was always full of questions raised his hand, "Why does God need money?" To which my wise teacher replied, "Well, God doesn't, but people do. One of the ways God works is through the church. The church is full of people who have gifts and passions to help others who might be in need. The church is also a very important part of the community because the church is one of the major things that molds the community into what it is and what it will become. And the church needs money to function so that they can be the hands and feet of Jesus to others."

In unison, the entire class exclaimed, "OOOHHHHH!!!" But not Jimmy. Jimmy raised his hand again and said, "So how much do the shiny gold plates with the red velvet bottom cost?"

Thirty years later, Jimmy became the new Financial Treasurer of the church.

In Christ,

Pastor Torri

WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

The summer season is winding down, and fall will soon be upon us. It is a beautiful time of the year, and I hope it lasts a good long time. Seeing the colors change is always breathtaking - one of God's continuing miracles!

As we begin to say goodbye to our summer members, let me take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support and continued presence at Union. At a recent Council meeting we decided to maintain "physical distancing" because new strains of the COVID virus seem to crop up all the time. That being said, I am always pleased to see how many people "attend" church through our video links. Are they members? Friends? Strangers who happen upon our videos and stay to enjoy the wonderful sermons? There's no way to know, but it is heartening to see the numbers go up, day after day.

We look forward to staying in touch with our summer members and friends (and locals as well) through our website, Facebook, or YouTube links. If you cannot be with us on a Sunday morning, we are just a click away, and we'd love to have you join us.

Take care,

Heidi Hoppe, Sheryl Kaubisch, Gracee Rudkin, Caryl Allan, & Mary Parrish



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 18, 2022

PRESENT: Cindy Gulbrandson, Sue Kimmel, Mike Bohanon, Stan Kumpula, Pastor Torri, Don Hoppe, Karen Holle, Marilyn McKnight, Steve Erickson, Heidi Hoppe, Kerry Swenson

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

The minutes were accepted as written. Don/Heidi

Pastor's monthly report to Council: Pastor Torri's report mentions her focus on a new sermon series that will begin on Sunday. It is a six-week series on generosity with each week focusing on a different way we can be generous as Christ's followers.

Pastor Torri reviewed the people that intend to join the church in the next month and the baptisms she has been asked to perform. She also reviewed the personal visits she has been making for various reasons.

Pastor Torri has been very involved in planning the Trivia Night fundraiser scheduled for August 20 in the Friendship Hall.

Board of Financial Stewardship: Don reported that year-to-date total income is \$81,251, and total expenses are \$99,121 to date giving us a YTD balance of \$-17,870. When we add in reserve funds, carryover, prepaid pledges, and unrestricted funds that we can use in 2022, we have a YTD net income of \$13,997.

August and September are Stewardship months. For the long-term financial health of Union Church, we need completion of pledges in 2022 and strong giving in 2023. As of August 23 we have received 18 pledges with the total pledged equaling \$43,877. The Board of Financial Stewardship would love to see 50 pledges for a total of \$120,000!

Facilities Board: Mike and Kerry reported on the curb project meant to keep water during rainstorms from flowing into the church basement. Kerry will be getting an estimate for this work before Labor Day. We also talked about the need to replace two old furnaces that are heating our friendship hall. Gordy from Advantage Heating will redo his estimate for this project. The Council requested that Kerry obtain three estimates for this work before making a commitment to the project.

Karen has spoken to Bill Kennedy about the frozen water lines that have plagued the church for the past few years in the winter. Mike and Kerry will follow up with Bill by asking him to attend a meeting with them to discuss the options for correcting the problem. Last winter the church was closed on several occasions due to having no water.

The new lower level door was apparently keyed to a master key so very few church keys will open it. Facilities will look into fixing that. We also have not received the bill for the new door. Kerry will follow up on that.

Board of Personnel: Marilyn reported on the work this board has been doing in light of Sue Johnson's resignation as our custodian as of the end of August. At this time the job has not been advertised because we are going to have a cleaning company give us a bid for the job. In the meantime, we talked about posting jobs that need doing each week and asking church members to volunteer to do the work. It could be that we will have a combination of a weekly cleaning company and a person we can call on an "as-needed" basis to keep our church clean.

We also discussed who will supervise the cleaning people. No decision on that yet.

Ministry Team Reports: Congregational Life: Ellie Nelson is home and would appreciate visits from members of the congregation.

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Worship: Heidi reported that an average of 47 people attended worship each Sunday in July and August. Special music is being planned for our enjoyment and inspiration.

Council voted to keep the yellow ribbons up on pews in the sanctuary to keep people from sitting close to each other.

Youth and Families: Since Sue Johnson is moving out of the area, the Youth and Families Team discussed the Wednesday night meal program. After discussion we decided to offer a community meal once a month in the church beginning September 28. There will be no “door” service at this event, but people can walk into the church to request a take-out meal. A free will offering will be requested. If successful, we will consider offering this twice a month. Mike Bohanon will lead this up with help from Karen, Torri, and others.

Adult Learning: Linnea Dietrich will be coming on as leader of this team in November and will be offering contemplative prayer in a group setting.

Women’s Fellowship: Twenty-one women came to a salad luncheon last month. Next month there is a “ladies only” wine tasting meeting.

Men’s Fellowship: Stan reported that on September 13, the men will visit Hunt Utilities to learn about energy efficient housing. In October the men will see the new solar power array at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Hackensack.

Justice Ministry Team: Activities planned include:

September 14: 5:30 - Potluck and the movie, Neither Wolf nor Dog at church

September 25: 5:30 – 7:30 Leech Lake Culture Alliance potluck and round dance, at Onigum Community Center.

September 25, 10:30 a.m. - Forum with Vicki Wunsch, “Open and Affirming, What’s Next?” at church

September 30: 6:30 p.m. - Movie, Kiss the Ground will be shown in the Friendship Hall. This movie is about how to improve our soil and lower carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

The Justice Ministry Team zoom meeting will be Sept 1 at 6:30PM.

All are welcome to attend scheduled events of the Justice Ministry Team.

Fundraising: Trivia Night and Silent Auction is scheduled for Saturday August 20.

There will be food available for purchase.

Tech Team: Mike Schmitt wants to build an enclosure for the technical equipment that is used during worship services. More on this project as it develops. Mike has trained Linda and Sabbastian on using Google docs this week.

Moderator’s Moment: Marilyn talked about our need as a Council to address the ongoing financial needs of the church. The issue of income for the church needs to become a top priority for leadership to address.

New Business: There has been a request from Linnea Dietrich to put a sign up on church property to let people know where the dog park and community garden is. Council agreed to that request.

Sue Johnson has requested that she be allowed to use the church for overnight visits she might like to make to Hackensack after she has moved out of the area. Council did not approve that request, but several people at the meeting expressed that they would be happy to host Sue at their own homes when she needs or wants to visit.

Adjournment and Benediction. Next meeting is September 15.

Clerk, Karen Holle

THROUGH KODA'S EYES



Hi! My name is Koda! I am the "Church Dog"! This past week I had a long conversation with my human. She told me about a new talking series she is creating. She calls them sermons, but to me it is just a lot of talking. I have learned that when humans talk a lot to me and I am very patient, I usually get a treat at the end.

Anyway, my human told me that the church is doing a new sermon series on generosity. I did not know that word, so I asked my human what that meant. She said it means "open-handedness." THAT I could understand because every time someone gives me a treat, they open their hand. I like that!



My human said this series will take six weeks! That is a long time in dog time, but from my understanding it is not as long for humans. She said that these six weeks cover various ways humans can be generous. Here is what she came up with:

1. Generous with Acceptance
2. Generous with Words
3. Generous with Time
4. Generous with Finances
5. Generous with Forgiveness
6. Generous with Ourselves

As a dog, I can relate to many of these. First, acceptance is easy for me. I like humans, I like other dogs, and I even like cats!!! However, the bunny that hangs out in the front yard... I have a hard time accepting him. Hey! Even the best dogs need to work on acceptance. Second, generous words are important to dogs too. I like being called a "good boy," and I love the words, "outside," "walk," and "car ride"! Words are very important! I can also see how being generous with time is very important too. I like spending time with my human, and when I have to stay home with Bandit (the cat), I get sad because I miss my human. Being generous with finances has been a crucial part of my relationship with my human. Apparently there is something called money that helps my human care for me. She complains about the vet bills, but I told her we do not need to go there anymore. I do not like that place anyway! She strongly disagreed.

The last two are being generous with forgiveness and being generous with ourselves. These two are very important because the first 4 are more outward expressions. These last two... well, they are

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more about what is happening on the inside. I know that may not make sense right now, but just wait... you will see.

So now that I have listened to my human talk about her sermon series, I am going to go get my treat! Thank you for reading my words! I hope you have a barky day!

That is how I see it though my eyes!

Koda (The Church Dog)



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Greetings! Fall is coming quickly and Women's Fellowship has been having a great time of joy and laughter. Our luncheon last month was lively and delightful with great food, music, jokes and conversation. We thank Kathleen M for our lovely music and several gals for the food. The jokes were really bad and groaners....Thanks to all who came and participated with us.



On the second Thursday the eighth of September we will meet again at 1:00 FOR A WINE AND FOOD PAIRING event! I will be asking a few gals to bring a bottle of their favorite wine and small food pairing. We will taste and discuss each of them. If you don't drink wine that's fine we will have some neat things to try. It will be a special afternoon, please plan on joining us. All women are invited! Bad jokes are welcome!!!!

See you in church, Joni

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Fall is almost upon us and we are planning for two energy programs for Men's Fellowship. The first one is at Union church and will feature some short videos developed by the Hunt Utilities Group. This group is located in Pine River and has built demonstration houses and buildings to emphasize energy efficiency and heating methods. The date will be September 13th at 9 am, the second Tuesday to avoid the Labor Day weekend activities.



The second program will be on October 4th, the first Tuesday of the month as normal for our MF meetings. However, we will meet at St Paul's Lutheran Church 9 am to hear about their operation of the new Solar system put into operation in August. We will then gather for breakfast afterward at Viddles and Joe.

We are trying to come up with interesting programs of activities in our area. If you have any suggestions, please let me know.

Stan Kumpula

JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM

The Justice Ministry Team zoom meeting will be Sept 1 at 6:30PM.

All are welcome to attend scheduled events of the Justice Ministry Team.

September 14, 5:30PM: Potluck and movie, Neither Wolf nor Dog, at Union Congregational

September 22, 5:30PM: Onigum Potluck and Round Dance, Onigum Community Center, 8825 Onigum Road NW, Walker

September 25, 10:30AM: Forum with Vicki Wunsch, Open and Affirming, What's Next?, in the Friendship Hall at Union

September 30, 6:30 PM: Community movie, Kiss the Ground, Soil health solutions, Friendship Hall at Union



Remember...YOU are invited to
Leech Lake Culture Alliance's
3rd Annual Autumn Equinox
Unity Day Celebration

POTLUCK EVENING

At Onigum Community Center
8826 Onigum Road NW
Location provided by Onigum Local Indian Council

Thursday, Sept. 22, 5:30—7:30pm

All welcome! Feel free to bring a dish to share...For info click on lculturealliance.org



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TRIVIA NIGHT WINNERS!
WE RAISED \$2,083 AT THE SILENT AUCTION AND
TRIVIA NIGHT!!

BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Giving Income-July	\$11,544.00	Year to Date Giving	\$68,752.96
Other Income	\$ 327.00	YTD Other Income	\$12,498.36
Total Income	\$11,871.00	YTD Total Income	\$81,251.32
Expenses-July	\$14,955.41	Year to Date Expenses	\$99,121.75
Current Month Balance	\$-3,084.91	YTD Balance	\$-17,870.43
Unrestricted funds transfer	\$10,000.00	Unrestricted Funds	\$10,000.00
		Other Reserve Funds	\$ 6,008.24
		Carryover	\$14,709.51
		Prepaid	<u>\$1,150.00</u>
Monthly Net Income	\$6,915.09	YTD Net Income	\$ 13,997.32

Other income includes Treasure Sale, Community Meal, fundraisers, building use, 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: \$33,397.19

Total Assets \$278,899.32

Summary

July giving was about normal and a little more than 2021, but expenses were a little higher than normal. \$10,000 was transferred from non-designated reserve funds as proposed in the 2022 budget approved in January. Another \$6008.24 was moved from MRI to cover building expenses.

As stated at 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.

The new outside door to the lower level has been installed, but not yet paid for.

August and September are Stewardship months. We began promoting our 2023 Pledge Campaign 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.

As of August 23rd, we have received 18 pledges: 1 new person pledging and 17 previous pledging units. Total pledged at this point is \$43,877 which is a 4% increase in the pledged amount for the 17 returning pledging units. The Board of Financial Stewardship would love to see 50 pledges for a total of \$120,000!

If you have not yet made your pledge, please do so by the end of September. If you need a pledge card or wish for more information, please contact Don Hoppe, the Financial Secretary, at 218-839-4341 or by email to finsec.ucc@gmail.com

ONGOING EVENTS



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, September 8th at 1:00pm 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, September 13th 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

Bible Study has been put on hold for the summer so we can go outside and enjoy God's creation!

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



Exercise in Friendship Hall

Every Wednesday at 10:00am.

**Community Event hosted at Union*



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.



Game Night

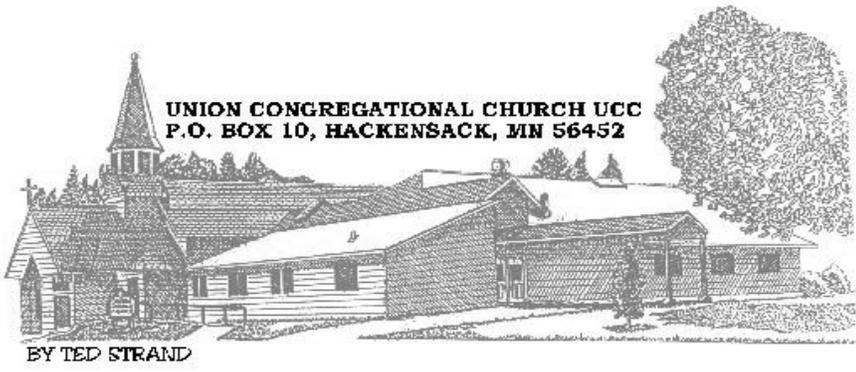
Every other Sunday at 5:30pm.
Bring a snack to share.

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

SEPTEMBER 2022

* = Community Event held at the church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 6:30pm Justice Ministry Team Meeting	2 1:30pm Bone Builders *	3
4 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 5:30pm Game Night	5 1:30pm Bone Builders * 6:00pm AA Meeting*	6	7 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall*	8 1:00pm Women's Fellowship	9 1:30pm Bone Builders *	10
11 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	12 1:30pm Bone Builders * 6:00pm AA Meeting*	9am Men's Fellowship Group 5:30pm Financial Board Meeting	14 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 5:30pm JMT Movie/Potluck	15 1:00pm Council Meeting	16 1:30pm Bone Builders *	17
18 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 5:30pm Game Night	19 1:30pm Bone Builders * 6:00pm AA Meeting*	20	21 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 6:00pm Dick's Acoustic Jam*	22 1:00pm Fiber Arts*	23 12:00pm Chainsaw Event* 1:30pm Bone Builders * 5:00pm FIA Booya Dinner *	24 8:30am Chainsaw Event*
25 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 10:45am "What's Next?" Public Forum	26 1:30pm Bone Builders * 6:00pm AA Meeting*	27	28 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall*	29	30 1:30pm Bone Builders * 6:30pm "Kiss the Ground" Movie Showing	



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2022

**“What’s Next?” Public Forum
September 25th—Don’t miss it!**

THE UNION NEWS