



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

<https://www.unioncchackensack.com>
Email: unionucc401@gmail.com



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NOVEMBER 2022

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

Novemburrrrrr!

The trees are past their peak, the wind is getting chilly, and we have already seen our first snowflakes! This is nothing new to us. We know that we must prepare for winter, settle into our homes, and allow life to become a bit slower.... Well, maybe less fast.

When you look at the church calendar, there are a lot of activities happening this month. Winter is a good time to get together with people, have a good conversation and enjoy each other's company. At Union, we want to create opportunities for people to connect and build community. If there is something on the calendar that interests you, I encourage you to attend. If you have any questions, call the church office, and we will do our best to answer them.

As we all settle in for the winter months, remember to slow down long enough to greet a neighbor, help a friend, and be the hands and feet of Christ to someone in need.

In Christ,
Pastor Torri

You are Invited!

This Thanksgiving Day, Pastor Torri is having a "Thanksgiving get-together" at her home at 12:00 (noon) for anyone who would like to come.

Sometimes during this season we are unable to get together with loved ones, and Pastor Torri wants to extend an invitation to those who need a place to gather this Thanksgiving. It is a potluck. The meat and potatoes are covered. We will be eating dinner, watching football, playing games, and snacking all day!

Please let Pastor Torri know if you are coming. Either email her at torrivz@gmail.com or call/text at 563-320-5360.

Sunday Worship at 9:30 AM

Communion: First Sunday of Every 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

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

ADVENT SCHEDULE

We are partnering again this Advent season with St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Below is the schedule. I hope you can join us as we journey together.

Nov. 30 - At Union UCC
 4:30 - 5:30pm Community Meal
 4:30pm Devotional/Meditation "Lighted Windows"
led by Linnea Dietrich and Laura Baum-Parr
 5:30pm Advent Service

Dec. 7 - At St. Paul's Lutheran
 4:30pm Devotional/Meditation "Lighted Windows"
led by Linnea Dietrich and Laura Baum-Parr
 5:30pm Advent Service
 6:00pm Meal

Dec. 14 - At Union UCC
 4:30 - 5:30pm Community Meal
 4:30pm Devotional/Meditation "Lighted Windows"
led by Linnea Dietrich and Laura Baum-Parr
 5:30pm Advent Service

Dec. 21 - At St. Paul's Lutheran
 4:30pm Devotional/Meditation "Lighted Windows"
led by Linnea Dietrich and Laura Baum-Parr
 5:30pm Advent Service
 6:00pm Meal

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- November 5 Caryl Allan
- November 14 David Holle
- November 16 Debbie Hughes
- November 20 Marilyn McKnight Erickson
- November 23 Barb Mann
- November 30 Richard Vanden-Eykel

Happy Birthday





November 9th 5:30 p.m.
 Union Congregational Sanctuary
 Dick Kimmel in Concert
 Free Will Donation, Fundraising Event

All money raised will go towards providing hams and turkeys in all of the Thanksgiving and Holiday baskets. These baskets are distributed to families in our community and is a joint effort between Faith in Action, Share and Care and the Men's Fellowship of Union UCC.

ADULT LEARNING

Offering an Advent Meditation "Lighted Windows" by Margaret Silf

This Advent season, the Adult Learning Team is coordinating a meditation/reflection time before the Wednesday evening Advent services at 4:30pm.

The book *Lighted Windows* by Margaret Silf will be used. It is being led by Linnea Dietrich and Laura Baum-Parr. If you would like to purchase the book, you can purchase it on Amazon. Union also has a few extra copies for anyone to use.

Please see the Advent schedule in this newsletter for more details about the Wednesday night Advent events.

Budget Bootcamp is a free, financial literacy workshop to help women focus on day-to-day budgeting and debt management so they can get financially organized. It is a 5-hour workshop, with the final hour focusing on how to raise your credit score.

**REGISTER by November 8th,
 TO ATTEND.**

It really is free. If you can, please bring a small dish to share for the potluck lunch.

Nov. 12th: 10am-3:30pm Union UCC—Hackensack 401 Lake Ave.

RSVP to ckirin@gmail.com.



WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

What a lovely autumn we have had! The trees were exceptionally beautiful this year, and although we've had a few cool nights and days, we've also had a few gloriously warm days as well. Makes one glad to be alive!

Many of our summer members and friends have headed south for the winter. As a consequence, the back of the sanctuary has been roped off. I know Pastor Torri likes having us closer. It makes for a more intimate gathering. The Council recently approved the removal of a pew to accommodate those in wheelchairs and with walkers. Hopefully, this will make our sanctuary more welcoming in the future.

October was a busy month, and November is shaping up that way as well.

- November 6th - Daylight Savings ends. This is Communion Sunday, and hopefully the bells will be playing. They were scheduled to play in October, but COVID got in the way.
- On November 9th, Dick Kimmel will give a concert (5:30 pm) after the Community Meal (4:30 to 5:30). The proceeds of the concert (free will offering) will be used to buy meat for the food boxes distributed at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. If you're in the area, please join us for dinner and a concert on the 9th and give generously.
- On the 13th, Sheryl will be away, and Sabbastian Wilson-Webb will be at the piano. It will be wonderful to have him playing for us after a long hiatus.
- Pastor Torri has invited Sheri Nelson, Minnesota Conference Program Director for Outdoor Ministries, to preach on November 20th.
- November 27th is the first Sunday of Advent.
- Our joint Advent services with St. Paul's will begin on November 30th.

Speaking of Advent, for the first time in several years the 5:30 service will be accompanied by a soup supper. New this year, Linnea Dietrich will be leading a program on contemplative prayer called "Lighted Window" at 4:30 each Wednesday of Advent prior to the joint service.

Take care, and have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Worship Ministry Team: Heidi Hoppe, Caryl Allan, Sheryl Kaubisch, Gracee Rudkin, and Mary Parrish.





COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 20, 2022

PRESENT: Pastor Torri, Kerry Swenson, Marilyn McKnight, Steve Erickson, Heidi Hoppe, Don Hoppe, Joni Kumpula, Stan Kumpula, Cindy Gulbrandson, Sue Kimmel, Caryl Allan, Karen Holle on zoom

Marilyn called the meeting to order. The agenda was approved, and the minutes of the last meeting were approved as written. Steve/Stan

Pastor's Monthly Report: Torri presented a written report of her activities in the past month. Three people joined the church during this period, and one person will be confirmed and will join the church this Sunday. Torri had foot surgery two weeks ago and thanked everyone who has helped her with food or dog walks for Koda, or in any other way.

Board of Financial Stewardship: Don reported that expenses exceeded income in September. As of October 16th, the church has received 34 pledges, 6 new and 28 previous pledging units. Total pledged at this point is \$83,777 which is a 5.5% increase in the pledged amount from the 28 returning pledging units. Please make your pledge if you have not already done so. Don is hoping for \$110,000 in pledges for next year. The financial report was accepted as written. Stan/Heidi

Board of Facilities: Kerry reported that the curbing project he is trying to coordinate may not be completed this fall due to the cold weather. He also reported that the handicapped accessible door on the west side of the building does not always latch properly when closed. The company that maintains that door feels that the door needs to be replaced and can't be repaired. Kerry is willing to see if he can get the door to work more effectively before we make a decision to replace it.

The upstairs of our church is being cleaned on Thursdays between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. Council meetings will move downstairs to the Music Room. Other Thursday afternoon activities will find other places to meet. We will not rent out space upstairs on Thursdays after 1:00 p.m. so that the cleaning company can get their work done. The Friendship Hall and other upstairs spaces are available for use from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. If a meal is being prepared in the kitchen on a Thursday afternoon, the cleaning company will not be responsible for cleaning the kitchen that day.

Paper products and trash bags will continue to be provided by the church. We need to store those items upstairs where the cleaning people can find them easily, and we need to have a system for re-ordering them.

Kerry has received a list from Ron of companies we use to maintain our church. Kerry will type up the list and make it available. We discussed the elevator again: How much are we paying for monthly service, and whether we want to turn off power to it and stop maintaining it. The elevator needs expensive investment in order to meet current code. Kerry will follow up on elevator questions. **Motion: Our intention is to shut down the elevator instead of investing in it. Heidi/Caryl/passed**

Kokoro request for space in the church: We discussed having a month-to-month contract or a 6-month contract with Kokoro rather than a 12-month contract. This allows the church to assess for other rental possibilities for the lower level. Kokoro would like to use the music room and the room across from the downstairs kitchen.

Board of Personnel: Today we talked about staffing the office in January when Linda is on vacation. Church members will help out January 3,4,5, and 10,11,12 from 9-noon by answering the phones and helping visitors. Torri's contract needs updating and has become a priority for the Board of Personnel.

Ministry Team Reports: Congregational Life: The new directory has been handed out. It is a work in progress. New people are joining the church and are plugging in to projects and offering their talents. This is very exciting! Each week there is someone new to meet and greet and to get to know.

(Continued from page 4)

Worship: Heidi reported that the back of the church has been roped off as we are moving into winter. Our average attendance over the past 5 weeks is 33 people. Thanks to Caryl, Marilyn, and Steve for delivering the message the past two weeks during Torri's vacation and foot surgery. November 27 is the beginning of Advent which we will be coordinating with the Lutheran Church as in the past.

Youth and Families: The meal program has restarted and has been offered twice. At our last meal Dick Kimmel's band played music for attendees which was really wonderful. About 30 people attended the meal and managed to devour a very large pot of stew. Tammy Lindberg has been cooking for the program, and Karen Holle is coordinating the helpers. Council agreed to continue the program through the end of May. Karen will prepare a budget for the program.

Women's Fellowship: Joni asked if people in the church are interested in a Christmas lunch this year. Each participant would be asked to pay \$10 for the event which would be December 12. Joni will see if our local restaurant can cater for us on that day.

Men's Fellowship: Last month the men learned about the solar panels that St. Paul's Lutheran had installed this summer. In November the men will have Melissa Burch visit to talk about grants that are available for non-profits wanting to install solar panels. The men are collecting boxes for their Thanksgiving food program.

Justice Ministry Team: October has been a busy month for the Justice Ministry Team. The JMT assisted with the Opening and Affirming Forum with speaker Vicki Wunsch. Congregational comments on the forum were positive. Don and Sue will be writing articles for the November Union newsletter. Don will address the process Union took in becoming Open and Affirming, and Sue will write a review of Vicki's Forum. Don will also meet with the school counselor at WHA to find out how they support LGBTQ+ students.

JMT has as one of their focuses, "taking care of our environment." JMT is going to focus on taking regenerative care of our soil as part of this focus. JMT recently promoted the documentary, Kiss the Ground, which was shown at Union on Sept 30. Two books recommended in the documentary were "The Soil Will Save Us" by Kristin Ohlson and "Drawdown: by Paul Hawken. The books will be considered for winter book study.

JMT members attended the Unity Day Celebration at Onigum. We felt honored to be part of the opening celebration, smudging, observance of the pipe, singing, drumming, and round dance. Torri did an excellent job leading this gathering with her kind words and introduction of people and activities.

JMT and Leech Lake Culture Alliance are sponsoring Juliet Rudie presentation and potluck at Onigum on October 24 at 5:00PM. Juliet is the Director of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives office in St Paul. The next meeting of the Justice Ministry Team is Nov. 3 at 6:30 by zoom. All are welcome.

Fundraising: Steve spoke about the work of the fundraising team and mentioned that Kirin Christianson will be presenting Budget Bootcamp on Saturday November 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. There is no charge for this program but people must call in to reserve space.

Trivia will be held this Saturday as a fundraiser for the church.

The fundraising team is going to review our building rental fees to see if they need to be updated.

Tech Team: Mike Schmitt has found a portable, battery-operated, wireless mike that can be purchased for about \$60.00 and would enhance our church sound system. Mike Bohanon offered to pay for the device.

Moderator's Moment: Marilyn is feeling good about her health, her life, and her involvement in this church. Thank you Marilyn for being our Moderator!

Old Business: Clean-up Day. Our last clean-up day was very successful. We agreed to schedule our next effort for November 1 at 9:00 for inside work and 10:00 for outside work after Men's Fellowship. Anyone in the congregation can come in and help for an hour or two during this period.

New Business: Schedule for Advent. Torri reviewed the schedule and will get the information in the newsletter.

Hackensack Lending Library Request: We have been asked if the Hackensack Library can schedule a fundraiser on August 19, 2023 to be held in the church parking lot. We agreed that this could work for the church, as long as the City has no problem with the event.

Adjournment and Benediction. Next meeting is November 17. Clerk, Karen Holle

THROUGH KODA'S EYES

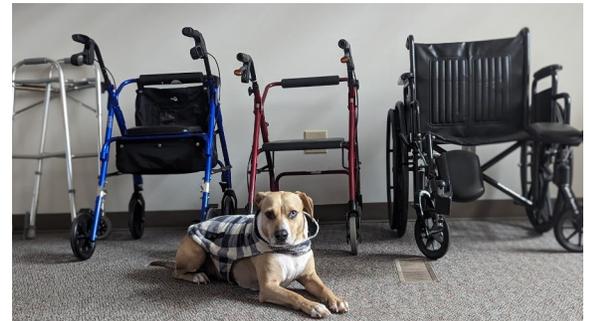


Hi! My name is Koda, and I am the Church Dog! I do not know if you know this or not, but I like to wander around the church building sometimes while my human is working. I stay out of trouble most of the time, but sometimes I find things that are just too tempting to ignore.

I noticed some items that I did not know their purpose. I needed to ask my human about them. They seem to go unnoticed by everyone, except me of course... because I am a very observant church dog!

So here is what I found: Did you know.....

- We have an entire collection of Native American books? It is called "The Waldron Native American Book Collection." It is located in our library! I can't read, but the pictures are fabulous!
- We have a sticker posted in the church office window saying, "Welcome, Aaniin, Biindigen" which is Ojibwe. Aaniin means "welcome" and "Biindigen" means welcome from the outside to the inside. If my human wants to welcome me from the outside, she just says "come!"
- We have multiple entrances in the church so people in chairs with wheels can have access to both levels of the church.
- We installed a wide door in the lower level so chairs with wheels can easily enter. And it has a button that you can push and it magically opens!
- We have an extra chair with wheels on it and a few walkers to lend out to people who need them.
- We have a rainbow in the background of our logo so our LGBTQ+ friends know they are safe at our church and no one will hurt them.
- We have hearing devices for people who have a hard time hearing during church. It is like a little radio you can put in your ear!
- We have community information posters for people who need help paying their electricity bills, finding a phone that works for them, and information about how to get a few more groceries each month.



Wow!!! I am so proud to be the Church Dog of Union Church! We do our best to welcome and accept EVERYONE! I know we will have other ideas we will do in the future to continue to make others welcome, but I think we have a pretty good start!

That is how I see it through my eyes! Have a barky day!
Koda, the Church Dog



CELEBRATING THE PAST

Myra Damm, Historian

Decorating Committee from annual report of 1991

The different seasons of the year are recognized by the decorating committee. At Christmas time, starting with Advent, wreaths and greens were hung, the Advent banner hung, and silhouette Christmas inserts were put on the windows of the sanctuary. This year, two fresh green wreaths adorned the front door for a cheerful welcoming to all who entered. There were 38 memorial poinsettias in red, pink, and white adding color and beauty to our altar and sanctuary.

At the request of Wilbur Bogue, this committee met with Rev. Arden Johnson to discuss the possibility of installing stained glass windows in the sanctuary as a memorial to Charlotte Bogue. The committee met several times with other churches in the area with stained glass windows to be familiar with the work and costs. Paul Hipsters studio in Longville had met with members of the committee, approved the designs and colors, and glass was selected. The windows are expected to be installed in the spring of 1991, followed with a dedication ceremony during a regular Sunday service. The stained glass windows are also part of our Decorating Committee. At this time in 1991, the committee was lone Strandberg, Chairman, Pat Coon, Bernadette Kilander, Betty Nye, and Jeanne Thomas.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Greetings! Happy November. Lots of you have left the Northland for warmer areas but it's still pretty nice up here. We are still raking and putting summer things and clothes away. Except for icky Covid here and there, all is good.



We had to cancel Fellowship last month for our coffee tasting so it is on to happen Thursday, November 10th [our usual day] at 1:00. I think it will be lots of fun. We'll start with cold and end with hot with a spritz of Irish Cream. Add a few jokes, lots of friends, fabulous dessert, and we'll have fun. Put it on your calendar. Due to our janitorial cleaning on Thursday afternoons, we will be meeting downstairs.

Fellowship is also planning a congregational Christmas luncheon in December. Come help us plan a spectacular event. We also need to decide if we are having a Christmas cookie sale this year. Oh so much to think about! Do come!

See you in church and on the 10th! Joni

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our October event was a trip to St Paul's Lutheran Church to look at and hear about their new solar panels which were just put into operation in August. The solar array by their parking area gives them a significant reduction in electrical power needs from MN Power. Some highlights presented by Russ Torkelson are:



- 34 panels (each 3'x5')
- Cost: \$43,000 including line from solar to church
- Electricity created by solar is transmitted directly to MN Power, and church gets credit at same rate they pay.
- Maximum capacity is about 12 megawatts
- Installed by Zenergy from Sebeka, MN
- Should last minimum of 25 years
- Even a sunny day at a temp below zero can produce significant electricity

We then went to the Backus Corner Store for a great breakfast.

Our next meeting on November 1st at 9am will be at Union Church in the Friendship Hall. Our program will be with **Melissa Birch**;

Rural Energy Development Manager & Central CERT Coordinator
Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs)

Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, University of Minnesota Extension

She will tell us about the solar at her home and also about the current financial situation for nonprofits like our Union Church.

Hope you can join us, Stan Kumpula

NOTES FROM PUBLIC FORUM WITH VICKI WUNSCH

Union Congregational welcomed Rev Vicki Wunsch to our church in September. Vicki was guest presenter at our forum entitled, Open and Affirming – What’s Next?

Here are some highlights of her discussion:

Vicki stated that our church mission, to be accepting of all and to reach out with love to all persons, requires us to focus on relationships first. We should ask ourselves, Why Does it matter that Union is open and affirming? Why Does it matter to me? Union Congregational is engaged in community service. We may be asked to explain our church. It is important to be ready with an answer. Union’s first step in “what’s next” is the ability to state why it matters to you that Union is Open and Affirming.

Vicki talked about extravagantly loving people back to church by staying in conversation through graceful engagement. She reminded us that no one is an expert in understanding the LGBTQ+ community. We can ask questions and have conversations, but try not to get stuck on polarizing issues by keeping grace in our conversations.

As we navigate the LGBTQ+ community, we will make mistakes. Vicki reminded us not to get hung up on language. We can ask LGBTQ+ people what they want to be called, and then we should use the same words they are using. Living out our mission through sacred sharing of stories is important. Engaging with people is personal. Educating ourselves is vital. Vicki challenged us to be a church of lifelong learners by examining our learning curves. As we take a look at our growing edges, what do we need to learn right now? Are we prepared to welcome transgender folks?

Vicki challenged all of us to work on our welcoming statements by writing out, why does being open and affirming matter to me?

Why does it matter to me that Union is open and affirming?

It is important to me to live out God’s welcome. I need to be part of a community of faith where unconditional love and acceptance for all is experienced through words, actions, and in what we see. I want people to know that I believe God’s love is for everyone and all are free to be their entire selves without judgment.

Sue Kimmel

TECH TEAM

Union Church is updating its communications tools!

During the summer, the Tech Team has been working to set up new and improved means of collaborating with church leaders, staff, and teams. In October, new email addresses were rolled out for all council, board, committee, and team leaders and administrative staff. Some of you may have already received an email from one of the new accounts.

Torri – Pastor	Pastor.UCCHackMN@gmail.com
Linda – Office Admin	Media.UCCHackMN@gmail.com
Sabbastian – Social Media	SocialMedia.UCCHackMN@gmail.com
Don - Financial Secretary	FinSec.UCCHackMN@gmail.com

The current email address will be forwarded to the new accounts for the next few months while they are phased out of use. The website has already been updated to display some of the new email addresses.

In addition to these new email addresses, the council and staff will be starting to utilize Google Apps and tools in a group effort to streamline and centralize all church planning, collaboration, and communication. For example:

Email using Google Gmail	Document Storage using Google Drive
Spreadsheets using Google Sheets	Documentation using Google Docs
Presentations using Google Slides	Internal Meetings using Google Meet

Watch for more communications from the Tech Team, staff and council using these new tools.

BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Giving Income-September	\$7,955.75	Year to Date Giving	\$88,399.70
Other Income	\$ 811.00	YTD Other Income	\$21,874.63
Total Income	\$8,766.75	YTD Total Income	\$110,274.33
Expenses-September	\$12,086.42	Year to Date Expenses	\$120,318.55
Current Month Balance	\$ -3,319.67	YTD Balance	\$ -10,044.22
Other Funds toward Budget			
		Unrestricted Funds	\$10,000.00
		Other Reserve Funds	\$ 6,008.24
		Carryover	\$14,709.51
		Prepaid from 2021	\$1,150.00
Monthly Net Income	\$- 3,319.67	YTD Net Income	\$ 21,823.53

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: \$ 34,282.16
 Total Assets \$ 277,371.15

Summary

September giving was a little below normal and less than 2021 giving, and expenses were about normal. Other Income sources had no significant events and was lower than normal.

As stated at the semi-annual meeting, our giving continues to be lower than projected, and we expect that our income in 2022 may not fully meet our expenses.

The new outside door to the lower level has been installed and paid for out of MRI Reserve funds, and is reflected in this report by a decline in the balance sheet total.

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 October 23rd we have received 36 pledges: 6 new pledging units and 30 previous pledging units. Total pledged at this point is \$89,827, which includes a 5.5% increase in the pledged amount from the 30 returning pledging units.

If you have not yet made your pledge, please do so as soon as possible. A reminder letter will be sent out this week or you can contact the Financial Secretary at finsec.ucchackmn@gmail.com or by phone at 218-839-4341 for a pledge card or more information.

JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM

- HOSTED BY CERTS -

Keeping Inside Warm When It's Cold Outside

Nov. 16 | 4-6:30 p.m.

Union Congregational Church, 401 Lake Avenue E., Hackensack MN 56452

Learn how to save on your home energy bills through efficiency, affordability and assistance programs, solar, and more!

Free giveaways, snacks, and refreshments!

Union's journey to becoming an Open and Affirming congregation

Open and Affirming (ONA) means that members and friends of a congregation will openly and publicly express their welcome and affirmation to the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBTQ+) community into the life, ministry, and leadership of the church.

In August of 2014, after much discussion, both for and against, the Church Council voted to form a ministry team to pursue the opportunity of obtaining the United Church of Christ designation as an Open and Affirming congregation.

The Inclusive Welcoming Ministry Team was formed and began the process that could lead to that designation. It was in no way a "done deal," but just the beginning of a process of information, understanding, education, discussion, and prayerful consideration. The committee sponsored forums, movies, videos, book studies, discussion groups, and bible study on how Union Church could become more welcoming to everyone, including the LGBTQ+ community.

The ONA process was put on hold when Union began the *New Beginnings program in late 2015. This program was undertaken to look at Union Church as it was entering into a period of change and transition. Pastor Michael Small was retiring, and we wanted to prepare for that event and our future.*

On September 11, 2016 a potluck supper was held to recap the *New Beginnings program and talk about the report from the program leadership team. Four priorities were identified, and the first priority of the report was for Union to complete the ONA process. On September 15, the Church Council requested that the Inclusive Welcoming Ministry Team complete its process of inviting our congregation to formally embrace an Open and Affirming Statement and vote on becoming an Open and Affirming church. The ONA statement is:*

We, the congregation of Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, proclaim ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ.

We affirm the good news proclaimed by Jesus Christ, that God's love is an inclusive love for all creation and all people.

With God's grace, we strive to be a congregation inclusive of all persons without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, race, class, gender, age, mental or physical ability, or marital status. We welcome everyone to share in the responsibilities and blessings of participation in our congregation: leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, and sacraments.

We commit to being a community of faith and spirit that seeks openness and understanding, offering justice, healing, and wholeness of life for all people. We believe that through diversity, we can grow and practice a unity of faith that transcends any differences.

Letters and ballots were sent to 199 members and friends of our congregation explaining the process and presenting Union's proposed Open and Affirming Statement. The envelopes were opened and the ballots were counted right before the council meeting on November 17th. The response regarding whether to become ONA was overwhelming, with 99 in favor of the action and 8 against.

At the Church Council meeting on November 17, 2016 the council made the decision to request Open and Affirming status within the United Church of Christ. This status was granted and confirmed on November 18th by the United Church of Christ.

With God's help, let us all continue to work together to show our extravagant hospitality and to live out Union Church's commitment to openness and affirmation to all of God's people!

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

It is that time!!! Christmas Greeting Videos!



For the past 2 years we have been collecting Christmas greetings from all friends and members of Union Church to put into a video project that will be shared at our Family Christmas Program on December 11th.

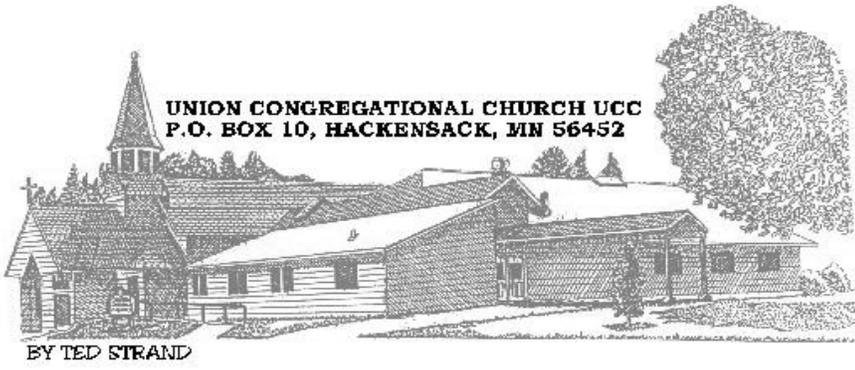
Please take a short 5-10 second holiday greeting video on your phone and send it to Sabbastian at socialmedia.ucchackmn@gmail.com. If you would prefer to have someone else take a video, please call the church office at 218-675-6300 and we will arrange a time to take the video.

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

NOVEMBER 2022

* = Community Event held at the church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 First Day of American Indian Heritage Month 9am Clean-Up Day 9am Men's Fellowship Group	2 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 7:00pm Book Discussion—Savvy Ally	3 6:30pm Justice Ministry Team Meeting via Zoom	4 1:30pm Bone Builders *	5 SATURDAY
6 Daylight Saving Time Ends 9:30am Worship—Communion; Bell Choir to Perform 10:30am Coffee Hour	7 Election Day 1:30pm Bone Builders * 6:00pm AA Meeting*	8 9:00am Tech Team Meeting 5:30pm Financial Board Meeting	9 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 4:30-5:30 pm Community Meal in Friendship Hall 6:00pm Dick Kimmel Concert	10 1:00pm Women's Fellowship	11 Veteran's Day 1:30pm Bone Builders *	12 10:00am Budgeting Bootcamp for Women
13 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 11:00am Worship Team Meeting 5:30pm Game Night	14 1:30pm Bone Builders * 6:00pm AA Meeting*	15 9:00am Tech Team Meeting	16 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 4:00-6:30pm Energy Efficiency Workshop 6:30pm Dick's Acoustic Jam*	17 1:00pm Council Meeting	18 1:30pm Bone Builders *	19
20 9:30am Worship—With Speaker, Sheri Nelson, UCC Conference 10:30am Coffee Hour	21 1:30pm Bone Builders * 6:00pm AA Meeting*	22 9:00am Tech Team Meeting	23 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall*	24 Thanksgiving Day 12:00pm Thanksgiving Potluck at Torri's home	25 Native American Heritage Day	26
27 First Day of Advent 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 5:30pm Game Night	28 1:30pm Bone Builders * 6:00pm AA Meeting*	29 9:00am Tech Team Meeting	30 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 4:30-5:30pm Community Meal in Friendship Hall 4:30-5:30pm Lighted Windows Reflection/Devotion 5:30-6:30pm Advent Service UCC			



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THE UNION NEWS