

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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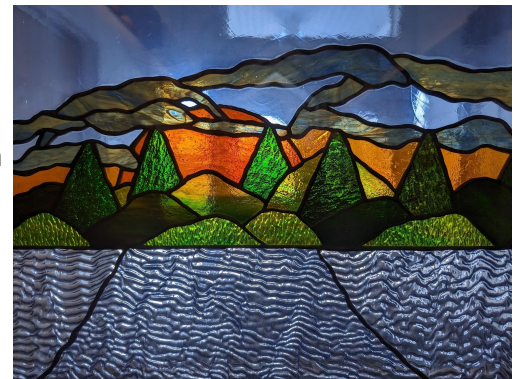
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SEPTEMBER 2023

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

What is a Healthy Church?

I have wrestled with this question for years. There have been a number of church denominations that I have been affiliated with who have done their best to answer this question. And over the years, I have predominantly learned what a healthy church is NOT.



Sadly, I have been part of too many churches who have imploded on themselves due to a number of reasons. As I have visited countless churches, attended as a regular to many, became a member of a few... I would like to share my insights with you of what I have learned over the years. So before I can answer the question, "What does a healthy church look like?" I need to ask, "What does an unhealthy church look like?" Here is what I came up with:

Continues on Page 3

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 Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

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 & 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

UNION 101

Union 101
September 10th, 17th, 24th
11:00 am — 12:00 pm
The Church Library

Wanting to know more about Union Congregational Church and our denomination (the United Church of Christ)?

- Join us as we answer questions and learn:
- ★ How did the United Church of Christ form?
 - ★ What foundational beliefs does the UCC have?
 - ★ How does the UCC and Union Church function when it comes to leadership and decision making?
 - ★ How did Union Church form? What is the history of this church?

Contact Pastor Torri at pastor.ucchackmn@gmail.com if you are interested!

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

September 1	Margaret Zieffler
September 2	John Lindberg
September 4	Phoebe Vosbeck
September 10	Mary Lou Bisbey
September 12	Stacy Hirschi 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

A Healthy Church is NOT:

- 1. Driven by numbers.** Some churches are so focused on how many people are in the pews that they lose sight of how to connect with them. Some churches are so focused on numbers of members in the church that they don't care if the potential members understand the mission and purpose of the church. They just want commitment so they can count them and boast about the "bigness" of their church.
- 2. Pastor centered.** The pastor does not call the shots or run the church. Some churches put so much trust in their pastor, they put them on a high pedestal. But, eventually they are bound to fall off because they could not live up to expectations placed on them. On the other hand, some pastors love the control and power that comes with leading a church. They could become manipulative, deceitful, or just plain evil. Too much power corrupts even the most spiritual of people.
- 3. Controlled by a small group of people.** A church is meant to be the body of Christ with Christ as the head. Having a small group of people control everything without a balance of accountability is dangerous. A church needs systems, checks and balances, and rules to which they are governed by. And more importantly, they need to follow those systems, checks and balances and rules in order to govern well.
- 4. Driven by money.** I have heard countless sermons given by pastors who try to manipulate money from people. My first experience was with TV evangelists claiming that if you give a certain amount of money, God will bless you (mostly with more money). I even heard a sermon one time from a pastor who said, "The color of growth is green. And do you know what else is green? Money! So if you want this church to grow, you gotta give." I walked out of that service and never went back. Yes, money is part of functioning as a church, but manipulation should not be part of it. People give because they believe in the mission and purpose of the church, not because they want to meet some type of "growth goal"... which leads us back to number 1. It can be a vicious cycle.

As we work our way through a series called "Healthy Church," my hope is that we begin conversations about what being healthy looks like on all levels.

- What does a healthy leader look like?
- What does a healthy team look like?
- What does healthy worship look like?
- How does a healthy church function?

I don't have all the answers, but my experiences have brought me to my own conclusions. What I am hoping is that you all will add your experiences, your views, your perspectives... and maybe we can figure out how to be a "healthy church" together.

Peace,
Pastor Torri



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 17, 2023

PRESENT: Sue Kimmel, Don Hoppe, Kerry Swenson, Pastor Torri, Mary Parrish, Joni Kumpula, Stan Kumpula, Heidi Hoppe, Steve Erickson, Marilyn McKnight, Karen Holle, Caryl Allan, Mike Bohanon, Linnea Dietrich, Cindy Gulbrandson, Judy Hoopman

Marilyn called the meeting to order. The agenda was approved as written, The minutes of the last meeting were approved. Mary/Heidi/passed.

Pastor's Monthly Report: Union 101 Class: Torri reported that she will be leading a class for anyone interested in learning more about our denomination (the UCC) and the history of our church. The class will be September 10th, 17th, and 24th from 11:00am - 12:00pm on Sundays. Many of the people coming to Union came from different backgrounds, so this is a good chance to learn more about us.

Pastor Support Training – On October 7 from 9:00 am - 12 pm, there will be a training at the First Congregational UCC in Brainerd called “Pastor’s Support Training.” Kelly Gallagher will be leading that session. All council members and potential pastor/parish committee members are invited to attend.

Facilities: Kerry talked about the need to fill out a work order if you have a project that needs attention. We discussed concerns about our weekly cleaning service. It was decided that a check-off list will be created by Linda and Torri for the cleaners to ensure that the cleaning gets done properly. Kerry mentioned that the cleaning company has just been sold effective September 15.

Bill Kennedy has told Kerry that in late September a new water line into the church will be created. Our cost of this project is \$12,000. Kerry is also expecting that the curb project we planned for last fall will be completed September 4. This project will cost \$1,450. The curb will keep water from running down our driveway during rain storms and into our basement.

Personnel: The Personnel Board is comprised of Marilyn McKnight, Connie Schmitt, and Chris Swenson. The board met recently to begin planning for Pastor Torri’s sabbatical. It was also noted that Cindy Gulbrandson is no longer an employee of the church as we don’t plan to have future Treasure Sales. Many thanks to Cindy for her wonderful management of Treasure Sales over the years!

Financial Stewardship: Don reported that income for July was \$13,234, and expenses for the month were \$15,791, leaving us with a negative balance of -\$2,558. We still have a positive balance for the year due to carryover money from 2022 and a large donation that the church received in the winter.

The Stewardship campaign is underway and will continue into September.

Solar Power Project: Don asked permission to approach Minnesota PACE, an organization that gives low interest loans for the construction of solar energy projects. The church has received one bid for a solar array from Real Solar. We are seriously looking into building a solar array partially due to the high cost of energy for the church. Permission to learn more about available options for loans, or grants, or subsidies was granted by Council.

Child Care Pod Update: Sue reported that progress is being made on renovations to our lower level to make space for a child care pod. So far there is no operator hired for this project. There are children who need childcare, and Sue is hopeful that someone will be interested in running the program.

Ministry Team Reports:

Congregational Life: Torri is working with Tammy to change our community meal time to 4:30 – 6:00. Activities are being planned for many Wednesday evenings that will begin at 6pm.

The new church directory will be completed by October 1, and will include information about the Birchview Garden Satellite Church members.

Joni reported on calls she has made this month to shut-ins.

Worship: Heidi reported that average attendance last month was 52 in the pews and 9 online. Usually 10 people attend the service being offered at Birchview Gardens.

Heidi has planned special music for 2 Sundays in September with Mimi Carlson and Kathleen Millberg, and with Kiki and Greg Webb.

In October special piano music will be offered.

Adult Learning: On September 13, 9-noon, we will have a chance to learn more about ourselves and our interactions with others through the Enneagram training. The Enneagram helps us understand how we are all hard-wired, and how that impacts our decision, relationships, and general engagement of life. To register for this program, see Linnea Dietrich.

Women's Fellowship: Joni reported that the women met last month to plan future events. She also reported that Bone Builders donated \$700 to the church for use of our space for their meetings. The September 14th monthly gathering will feature Bonnie Mitsch, who will talk to us about our dreams! It will be fun.

Men's Fellowship: Stan reported that the men will be visiting an open pit mine in September. They are very excited about this trip. They are also planning a fundraiser on October 21, a chili and pie meal. The proceeds from the meal will provide funds for the men's Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter food baskets.

Justice Ministry Team: Isaiah information meeting is Sept 11th at Union Church, 6:30 pm. Justice Ministry members received training on completing 1:1 interviews from Todd Lippert, Rural Organizing Project. Each person interviewed 8 people, gathering information on what led them to service work and what their hopes and concerns are for Hackensack. Information will be compiled on a spreadsheet and will be discussed on Sept 11th.

Sept 19th, 12-1 Zoom Community Approach to Suicide MN Dept of Health - National Suicide Prevention Week is Sept 10th-16th.

JMT members will be assisting with water testing at Hackensack's Chainsaw Event on September 23, 9-4. Water testing is FREE, and all are welcome to bring water samples (pint of water) from your home, cabin, and lake. Water will be tested for nitrates and chloride.

Unity Day Potluck and Celebration is at the Onigum Community Center on Saturday, Sept 23 beginning at 4:30. JMT will be assisting with promotion, set-up, greetings, and clean-up. Torri is the MC again this year. Unity Day includes dinner, drumming, singing, Spirit plate, and Round dance.

Justice Ministry Team members will be attending Pride events. Bemidji Pride is August 25-27th. Brainerd Pride is September 7-10th.

Outreach: In August and September our Outreach program is the Stewardship Drive.

Fundraising: Steve is putting together a team to work on our rental contract forms. This would include a list of responsibilities both for the renter and owner, development of new pricing, listing of a contact person, and creation of a clean-up list.

Treasure Sale: Cindy is not expecting to sell items at a big treasure sale, but is accepting items to be sold online. If you have something you would like to donate please coordinate with Cindy.

Moderator Moment: Marilyn discussed the need for a Vice Moderator who could help Marilyn and Steve with Moderator responsibilities. Marilyn talked about health issues she is dealing with and the need for a cancer support group in our area. Pastor Torri indicated that such a group is forming at the Lighthouse.

New Business: Update on Constitution, By-Law work. Karen and Torri will meet to see where we are on this project.

Hunting on Woock-Ness this fall. Joni will ask Linda to write up a permission form for people to hunt on our property.

NO LEAD SHOT IS ALLOWED

Old Business: Cleaning and organizing the lower level of the church. We will begin this project after the childcare pod has been finished.

Adjournment and Benediction

THROUGH KODA'S EYES

My Adventure!!!

Hi! I'm Koda and I am the Church Dog! I am very excited to tell you about an adventure I had with my human a few weeks ago! It started out as a normal day, I woke up, went potty, and ate my breakfast. Then, my human told me we were going for a ride! A RIDE! She put on my harness and I jumped in the car. I just thought we were going to the food store or maybe look for deer, or fox or turkeys... but we did not do either of those things. It was a longer ride than expected, so I snuggled down for a nap.



When I woke up, my human told me to look out the window. Wow!!! I could not believe what I was seeing. WATER! A LOT OF WATER! It was the most water I have ever seen in my life! She pulled the car over, and we got out. She guided me to the edge of this huge water puddle. She called it Lake Superior. She began looking for rocks... like she always does. Me, I was protecting her from the gigantic crashing waves that almost took her out to the middle of the gigantic puddle! Okay, to be honest... the waves were not big and there was no danger... I was just scared of the waves, so I barked at them a lot!

We got back in the car and drove for a little while longer. I had no idea where we were going, but then she stopped and we got out again. It was a park, with trails, and new smells! We started walking, then all of a sudden the trail opened up to this huge cliff with water coming down! It was amazing! It took me a while to get used to it, but I loved walking through the puddles!



We spent the day wandering the trails. I loved it! And my human loved it too! On the way home she told me that we will do more trips like this. It was good for her to get away for a bit... and good for me too. After our adventure, I noticed my human was more relaxed, rested, and more focused. I like that!

So, from a Church Dog's perspective, sometimes having a day that has nothing to do with your job is a good thing. Sometimes it is good to have an adventure and smell new things. I look forward to our next trip. I wonder where we will go?

Have a Barky Day!
Koda "The Church Dog"



BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Operating Income and Expenses

Giving Income — July	\$11,926.00	Year to Date Giving	\$77,738.00
Other Income* — July	\$1,307.80	YTD Other Income *	\$45,735.84
Total Income	\$13,233.80	YTD Total Income	\$123,473.84
Expenses — July	\$15,791.32	Year to Date Expenses	\$98,983.97
Balance — July	\$-2,557.52	Balance — Year to Date	\$24,489.87
		Prepaid & Carryover	\$6,941.24
		Final Balance	\$31,431.11

* Other income includes Treasure Sale, Community Meal, fundraisers, building use, donations, 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: \$ 64,923.97
 Total Assets \$ 310,487.31

Summary

July giving was about normal, and expenses were a little higher than normal.

At this point our position of revenue vs. expenses continues to be fine, especially if looked at on an annual basis and compared to our approved budget.

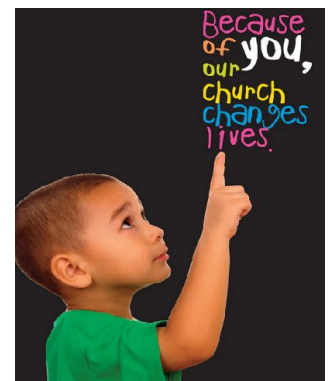
The 2024 Stewardship campaign began in August. This campaign will be more challenging and important for various reasons.

1. 2023 is the last year that the Fetzer money was received. In 2023, the Operating budget received \$7000, and \$7000 went into the MRI reserve funds
2. Our 2023 budget was balanced because of a very substantial donation received at the beginning of the year.
3. Costs are increasing, and we will need substantial additional pledges and donations from our members and friends to have a balanced 2024 budget.
4. We must plan for Pastor Torri's sabbatical in 2024.
5. There will be some significant facilities costs in the future.

We are having Stewardship moments in August and September. If you are willing to give a short Stewardship message as to why Union Church is important to you and the community, please let the Board of Financial Stewardship know.

The theme for the campaign is **“Because of You, our church changes lives.”**

As of August 21 we have received 19 pledges for 2024, 18 are current pledging units (with a 3.5% increase) and one is new. Total amount pledged is \$55,940 or about 45% of our goal of \$125,000. Please prayerfully consider what Union Church means to you and make a pledge. We would appreciate if pledges are received by the end of September.



JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM

Justice Ministry team members joined the Leech Lake Culture Alliance for a potluck and meeting on Monday, Aug 21. We are preparing for the Unity Day Celebration and Potluck which will be on Saturday, Sept 23 beginning at 4:30. All are welcome to join the Unity Day Celebration at the Onigum Community Center. Torri is the MC again this year. Unity Day includes dinner, drumming, singing, Spirit plate, and Round dance.

There is a Rural Organizing Project meeting Sept 11th at Union Church, 6:30 pm. Justice Ministry members received training on completing 1:1 interviews from Todd Lippert, Isaiah Rural Organizing Project leader. Each person interviewed 8 people gathering information on what led them to service work and what their hopes and concerns are for Hackensack. Information received will be discussed on Sept 11th.

JMT members will be assisting Jen and Mike Tauber and Toxic Taters with water testing at Hackensack's Chainsaw Event on September 23, 9-4

Water testing is FREE, and all are welcome to bring water samples (pint of water) from your home, cabin, and lake. Water will be tested for nitrates and chloride.

Justice Ministry Team members will be attending Pride Events. Bemidji Pride is August 25-27th. Brainerd Pride is September 7-10th.

NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

As the summer winds down and we look forward to cooler fall weather, let me take this opportunity to thank everyone for your support and continued presence at Union. Thank you for making it such a joy to join you for worship each Sunday. We are a wonderful and vibrant presence in Hackensack, a group of diverse and loving friends, making a difference.

September will be a musical month for us because we're having 2 special music Sundays. On September 10th, Mimi Carlson and Kathleen Millberg will perform during the service, and on the 24th Kiki and Greg Webb will join us. I'm looking forward to hearing both groups!

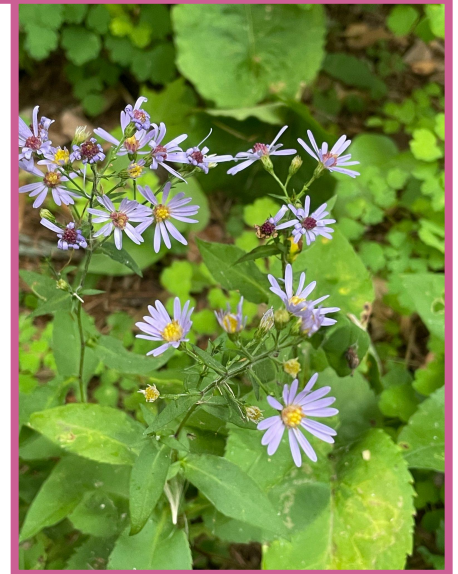
We're beginning to plan for Torri's absence next year as she takes her well-earned sabbatical. If you would like to have the opportunity to speak on a Sunday morning while she's gone, please see me.

And if you would like to join the team, contact any member of our group!

Blessings,

Heidi Hoppe, Chair

Team: Gracee Rudkin, Mary Parrish, Caryl Allan, and Sheryl Kaubisch



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

It's Official! A number of you expressed an interest in seeing the Hull-Rust-Mahoning Mine, Hibbing MN. We will gather at the church on September 12th at 9:00 am to determine car pools. It's about a 2-hour drive to this enormous open pit mine. It has a viewing area with some of the equipment used in the mining operations. We would be there for about an hour, then travel to Hibbing for lunch. There may be another opportunity to see something else in the area.

We also will have a quick meeting in late September to organize the Chili and Pie Dinner we will do for a fundraiser on October 21st. WF will also participate. Those willing to help should attend.



Yours for Union Church, Stan Kumpula

Woock-Ness Conservation Easement

Myra Damm, Historian

A few weeks ago we had a celebration that is a historical event for our church. In 2006, the church was given a piece of land (104) acres that was dear to the heart of Burton and Lorraine Woock. I am quoting from the last paragraph of an article that was written back in 2006. "It was our shared opinion that this property was so special that it should never be sold or used for commercial purpose. We further agreed it should be deeded to Union Congregational Church of Hackensack, MN with the stipulation it not be sold, but remain as a church asset with the understanding/hope that it become a true place of use by the whole of the Hackensack community. We have lately seen the possibilities for use are "tremendous!!"

There are photos that were taken of various places at the property. These photos are hanging in the hallway of the church for all to enjoy.

After the COVID pandemic, there were concerns that if something happened to the church, this piece of property could possibly be sold. To ensure the long-term non-development aspect, church member Bruce Carlson proposed the property be converted into a Conservation Easement. Burton Woock approved of this concept. After two and a half years, in a project being led by the Minnesota Land Trust, the idea came to fruition to become a conservation easement in July of 2023. A sign has now been placed on the property stating this land is protected forever in the Minnesota Land Trust. The celebration was held in the Friendship Hall at Union on July 26, 2023. This is a wonderful gift to our church, and we thank Burton and Lorraine Woock for giving it to UCC!

ONGOING EVENTS



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, September 14th at 1:00 pm
In the Friendship Hall
Bonnie Mitsch will be talking to us about
dreams!

Any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300
or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



Men's Fellowship

Tuesday, September 12th at 9:00 am
Trip to Hull-Rust-Mahoning Mine
in Hibbing!

Please RSVP at 218-675-6300
or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



Lectio Divina

Every Wednesday at 3:30 pm
Library

Meaning "divine reading," Lectio Divina is a meditation and prayer practice intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word.



Fit2Move Exercise Group

Every Wednesday at 10:00 am
In the Friendship Hall

Community Event

COMMUNITY MEALS RETURN



Every Wednesday 5:00 - 6:30 pm Friendship Hall
All meals will have a veggie side, salad and a dessert



Community Meal Menu

September 6th — Chicken Chow Mein
September 13th — Tater Tot Hotdish
September 20th — Crack Chicken Casserole
September 27th — Beef Stroganoff

Wednesday Night Events in September

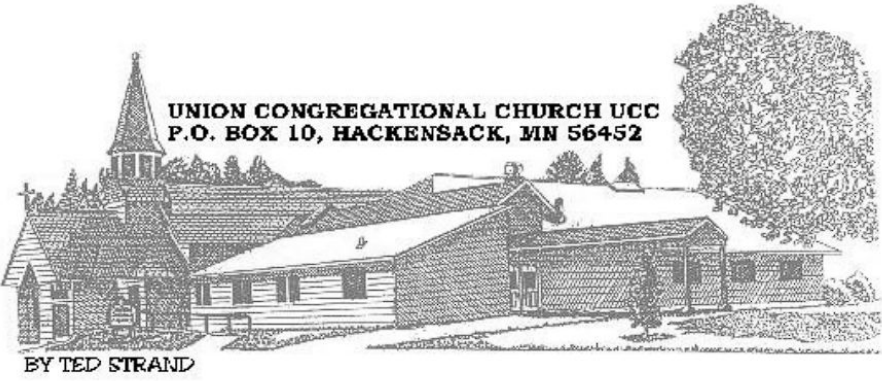
Game Night — September 13th
6:00pm in the Friendship Hall
Movie Night — September 27th
Showing: Bohemian Rhapsody
6:00pm in the Friendship Hall

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

September 2023

* Community event

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	4 <i>Labor Day</i> 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	5 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	6 10:00 am Fit2Move in Friendship Hall* 3:30 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:30 pm Community Meal	7 6:30 pm Justice Ministry Team Zoom Meeting	8 <i>Office Closed</i> 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	9
10 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 11:15 am Union UCC 101 1:00 pm Birchview Church	11 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	12 9:00 am Men's Fellowship trip to open pit mine near Hibbing	13 9:00 am Enneagram Presentation 5:00-6:30 pm Community Meal 6:00-8:00 pm Board Game Night	14 1:00 pm Women's Fellowship in Friendship Hall, featuring Bonnie Mitsch to speak on dreams.	15 <i>First Day of Hispanic Heritage Month</i> <i>Office Closed</i> 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	16
17 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 11:15 am Union UCC 101 1:00 pm Birchview Church	18 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	19 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	20 10:00 am Fit2Move in Friendship Hall* 3:30 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:30 pm Community Meal 6:00 pm Dick's Acoustic Jam*	21 1:00 pm Council Meeting	22 <i>Office Closed</i> 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 4:00 pm FIA Booyah Dinner*	23 Chainsaw Event - Water Testing booth from 9 am to 4 pm
24 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 11:15 am Union UCC 101 1:00 pm Birchview Church	25 12:30 pm NAC Author Presentation* 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	26 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	27 10:00 am Fit2Move in Friendship Hall* 3:30 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:30 pm Community Meal 6:00-8:30 pm Movie Night - Bohemian Rhapsody	28 9:00 am Congregational Life Meeting 1:00 pm Fiber Arts*	29 <i>Office Closed</i> 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	30



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FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



2023

Community Meals are Back!



THE UNION NEWS

