

The Union News

Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
401 Lake Avenue East, PO Box 10, Hackensack, MN 56452-0010

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey—you are welcome here"

An "Open and Affirming" Congregation

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Inside this issue:

Notes from Steve Erickson	1, 3
Birthdays	2
Worship Ministry	3
Council Minutes	4, 5
Knight's Corner	6
Celebrating the Past	6
Financial Stewardship	7
Moderator's Moment	7
Women's Fellowship	8
Men's Fellowship	8
Justice Ministry Team	8
Camino Hackensack	9
Kitchen Fund	9
Events	10
Calendar	11

SEPTEMBER 2024

Pastoral Letter by Steve Erickson

On August 18th, I learned something new from Sheila's sermon. I have always had a difficult time with parts of the Gospel of John, particularly where Jesus is quoted as telling people they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. As she noted in her sermon, it does seem a bit gory. Sheila's observation about this passage was that it can be at first glance "disturbing."

But as Sheila pointed out, this is all symbolic of something else. This is first century ancient Israel language, and Jesus often used food to make his point. Food sustains life and without it, we get famished and die.

When we are hungry and thirsty, the bread and wine satisfy us. But as mortals, we also hunger for a spiritual food that is satisfied by embracing and feasting on a way of life that centers on the message of love as exemplified by Jesus. When we feast on this message, we are on a journey toward spiritual maturity, and spiritual wisdom. But, it takes time. It is like baking bread and making wine, both need the yeast to do its job raising the dough and converting the grape to wine.

This process of making bread and wine also requires constant attention, as is the case in our own spiritual journey.

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

BOARDS

Financial Board	Don Hoppe, Sheryl Kaubisch, Caryl Allan
Facilities Board	Mike Bohanon, Kerry Swenson
Personnel	Connie Schmitt, Chris Swenson

LEADERSHIP

Moderators	Marilyn McKnight & Steve Erickson
Vice Moderator	Gunder Austin
Clerk	Karen Holle
Board of Financial Stewardship	Don Hoppe

MINISTRY TEAMS

Adult Learning	Linnea Dietrich
Congregational Life	Caryl Allan
Justice Ministry Team	Sue Kimmel
Worship	Heidi Hoppe
Women’s Fellowship	Joni Kumpula
Men’s Fellowship	Stan Kumpula
Online Sales	Cindy Gulbrandson
Tech Team	Mike Schmitt



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

September 1	Margaret Zieffler
September 2	John Lindberg
September 4	Phoebe Vosbeck
September 5	Nada Fisher
September 12	Stacy Hirschi
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

But, our spiritual journey also requires interaction with each other, because one of the core messages of the gospel is a new way of interacting in community.

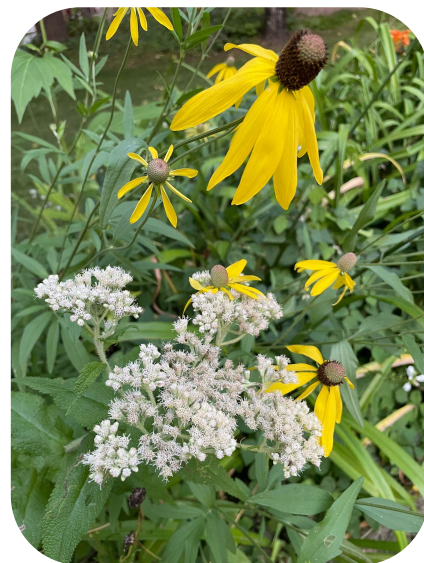
I am a type of person who could never have a bolt of lightning type private spiritual awakening, but instead I am the slow, time-consuming spiritual growth person, much akin to bread making and wine making. Like wine and bread making, I cannot do my journey alone. I need community.

That is why I appreciate Union Church. The unconditional non-judgmental acceptance of each one of us by the others at Union, regardless of our differences, provides fertile soil for our spiritual growth. From the passing of the peace to the time spent volunteering for kitchen duty, to hearing the word explained, to simply standing in the parking lot talking to someone on a Sunday morning, all of this enriches us deeply, providing a regular growth spurt, if we can continue to be open and accepting of where it might be directing each of us.

Our Pastors, Torri and Sheila, are the yeast that makes the whole concoction rise. Thank you for your presence. And, thanks to all at Union who also provide wisdom, direction, help when needed, and above all, unbounded and unconditional love.

NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

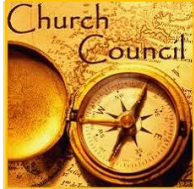
Our glorious Earth is slowly entering into its time of rest and renewal. Fall will soon be returning to the North Woods. The warblers have begun migrating through on their way south, a few of the maples and sumac have begun turning red, and the asters and other fall flowers are starting to bloom. I just wish we humans could take a hint from Mother Earth. Life remains busy and exciting at Union – besides the normal Ministry Team meetings there is Birchview Church, Men's and Women's Fellowship, monthly meal fundraisers (this month's meal will benefit the Hackensack Lending Library), the Hackensack Camino, Lectio Divina contemplative prayer, and other activities sponsored by Adult Learning, and other activities using our space - Northwoods Acoustic Jam, Bone Builders, and Fit2Move exercise groups, AA meetings, Fiber Arts, and Dream Group are a few of the things going on this month. Additionally, our summer friends are heading to their winter homes. We wish you well and look forward to your safe return next Spring.



We are beginning our Sabbatical as well, and our prayers go with Pastor Torri. During the next few months we will be hearing from several members and friends on Sunday morning. Sheila Hunter, of course, who is our part-time interim pastor during the Sabbatical. Others include Fred Smith, the Camino Pilgrims, Kerry Swenson, Steve Erickson, Laura Baum-Parr, and Linnea Dietrich. I hope you have the opportunity to hear these generous volunteers, whether in person or online.

Take care and God Bless,

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



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 15, 2024 DRAFT *(Not yet approved by council)*

PRESENT: Don & Heidi Hoppe, Gunder Austin, Steve & Marilyn Erickson, Caryl Allan, Stan Kumpula, Mike Bohanon, Mary Parrish, Sheila Hunter, Judy Hoopman and Mike Schmitt by phone.

Marilyn called the meeting to order. The July minutes were approved as written. The August agenda was approved as written. Heidi/Steve

Sabbatical Update: Sheila Hunter introduced herself as acting interim pastor and the Council members introduced themselves and described their role with the Council. Sheila led the Council through a discussion about its role in helping the Church while Pastor Torri is on sabbatical. Sheila also talked about her availability to meet with any Council members or teams during the next three months. She will attend the September Council meeting, not the October meeting, and is uncertain about November as Torri will be back.

Facilities: Mike reported the following update: Mark Johnson has been contacted about painting the church, and he will submit a bid. Mike has had contact with the structural engineer through Widseth, and they are sending the blueprints regarding the wall in the Friendship Hall but they haven't been received yet. Regarding the sign that Greg Webb was contacted about painting, there has not been any response so the Facilities team will look for other options for getting the work done. If anyone knows of a local sign painter, please contact Mike. There was discussion about the passcode for the lock box, who has keys for the church and which people have master keys. The passcode has been reset and Don will talk to Linda about contacting the people that have keys and to make a list of who has which kind of key. Building security is of concern as this past week several people have found doors unlocked and open. Mike Schmitt was asked if the security cameras showed anything and he commented they did not. Mike also reminded everyone that no master key should be handed out to anyone from other organizations that may be using space in the church for events. Gunder set the lock box code and if someone needs it, please contact Gunder.

Personnel: No report, Connie was not available.

Board of Financial Stewardship: Don reported July income was low and expenses were also lower in July. Don plans to speak with the Facilities team about increases in some maintenance costs. Summer giving has been lower than in the past and Don will look at the current pledges, what is coming in, etc. The 2025 Stewardship campaign has started and 7 pledges have been received so far. Caryl Allan is handling this. Next year's budget is predicted to be tighter as there probably will not be some of the generous contributions received in 2024. Discussion of use of solar panels as a cost savings, although saving would not be realized in the first few years due to installation expenses. Kerry may have information on this and this should be looked at again. Don also brought up that it is the time of year to make decisions on prepayment plans for winter fuel consumption. Don will check into this with the propane company.

Congregational Life: Caryl reported the Cline funeral luncheon went well, and a card was received from Jay Cline and is on the bulletin board. The team will be meeting to make a list of tasks to do in Torri's absence so people will not be forgotten.

Worship: Numbers have been averaging around 65 each Sunday, 7 online, and 9 at Birchview. Heidi reports the committee has worked on the Sunday announcements and basic organization for the worship services through September. Volunteers are always needed to help at Birchview and those interested can contact Caryl.

Adult Learning: Linnea provided a written report and the current focus is on the upcoming Hackensack Camino. Weekly meeting with the pilgrims is in process, T-shirts are being made for participants, and the food menu has been prepared by Stacy. The group plans to walk into the Ethnic Fest in Walker on Saturday September 14, and then on September 15 the pilgrims will talk about their insights and experiences at our service. Lectio continues to meet weekly with 4-8 steady participants.

Women's Fellowship: Heidi and Caryl provided a brief summary of the group's trip to the Munsinger Gardens last month. Fourteen people carpooled in 3 vehicles.

Men's Fellowship: Stan organized a meeting with Bruce Carlson as speaker hoping to encourage stronger participation. Six people participated. Stan plans to meet for Men's Fellowship the second Wednesday in September at 9:30. He is working to expand the email list to invite men to discuss the Men's Fellowship, and he is putting a call out for new leadership.

Justice Ministry: Sue submitted a brief report for today's meeting. Don suggested organizing a county commissioner forum at a neutral location such as the Hub or Community Building. A motion to organize and hold this forum was made with brief discussion. Gunder/Stan Motion passed with one opposing member.

Fundraising: Steve is planning a fall meeting for discussion of fundraising strategies. Some discussion of reviewing the rate structure for the Child Care Center when it reaches its one year mark. October 19th will be the chili & pie dinner for a fundraiser for the holiday food boxes. More volunteers are needed for the August community meal. Steve also commented that renting out space in the church's basement could be an option to increase funding.

Tech Team: Mike, by phone, stated the two rooms in the basement are being updated and fixed up (technology).

Outreach: Monthly community meals:

- September – Hackensack Lending Library – Build your own burger
- October – Hackensack Food Shelf – Sloppy Joes
- November – Paws and Claws – Spaghetti

The Lending Library thanks the church for this event and will be sending several volunteers to help at the September meal. We are not storing any boxes for the Lending Library as they were able to take care of that issue. Lynn Van Allen is doing the write-ups for the local papers about the community meal in September.

Moderator Moment: Marilyn mentioned Torri's farewell at service last Sunday and gave a warm welcome to Sheila.

Newsletter Deadline is August 20th for the September newsletter.

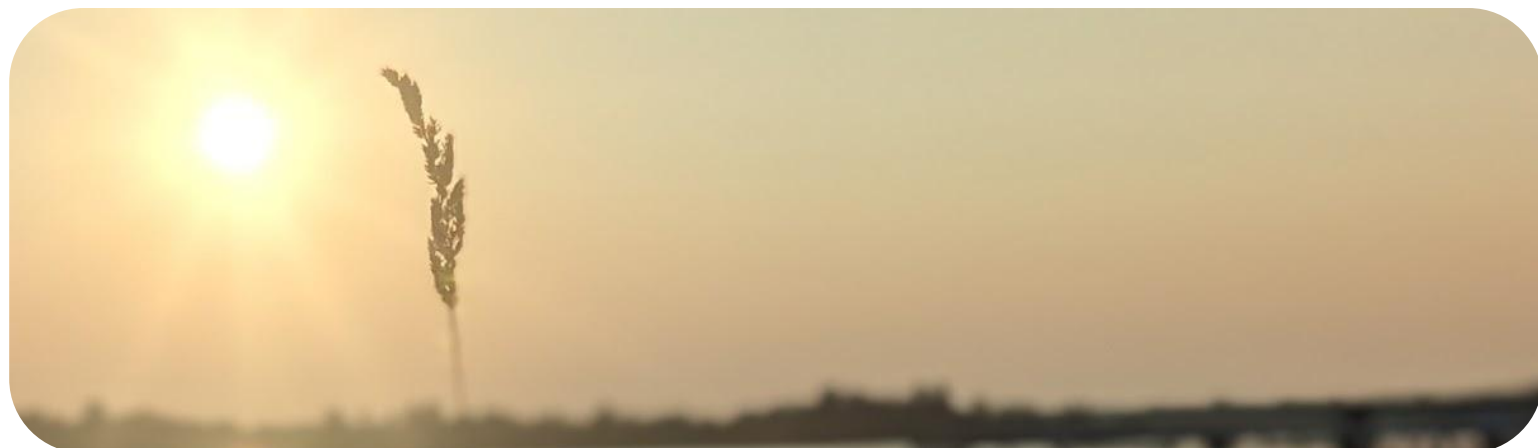
New Business: The two arm chairs given to Birchview were returned as Birchview is doing some internal remodeling.

Pastor/Parish team is formed with Gunder, Alan Christianson, and Connie. Gunder requested time to meet with Sheila to discuss this newly formed team.

Heidi brought up that if people want information to be put on slides for Sunday service, the information needs to be given to Linda or Sabbastian a week in advance.

Motion to adjourn – Heidi/Don Sheila provided the Benediction.

Next Council meeting will be September 19th. Notes submitted by Judy Hoopman



KNIGHT'S CORNER

Koda is on sabbatical and has asked me, Knight, to write the monthly articles for the church's monthly newsletter while he is gone... SO HERE WE GO!!!!

Patriot Assistance Dogs had a class from July 25 thru July 29, 2016, in which Richard was scheduled at the last minute to attend—and boy was I glad he was! He didn't pick me, I picked him by the way I worked with him. On September 26, 2016 we took and passed the Public Access Test which meant we were a TEAM at last.

This is the first picture of me taken with my Veteran "RICHARD" on July 28, 2016, which is also used as my ID, and this plaque.



Celebrating the Past: Early Years

Myra Damm, Historian

As more members were joining the church there was a need for a building to house the new congregation. Up to this point gatherings were held at the Otterson Hotel and various other places. On June 16, 1914 plans were finalized to build a church on Lot 9 Block 3 in Hackensack. The building was to be 24 X 40 with an 8 foot entry. A committee of three was set up to work out the plan. Henry Barht, Pete Linnenberg, and Frank Wagner served on the committee. On September 2, 1914 the committee hired Guy Beardsley to oversee the work. The foundation was finished in 1915, and on April 1917 the building was started. When the walls were erected it was estimated that \$1650.00 was needed to finish. The congregation raised \$900.00. A letter was sent to the Congregational Society of New York City requesting \$750.00. The grant was allowed and the building was completed on September 2, 1917.

BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Operating Income and Expenses

Giving Income - July	\$ 8,503.00	Year to Date 2024 Giving	\$ 84,885.00
Other Income* - July	\$ 775.00	YTD Other Income*	\$ 10,437.36
Total Income	\$ 9,278.00	YTD Total Income	\$ 95,322.36
Expenses - July	\$ 10,037.99	Year to Date Expenses	\$110,781.40
Balance - July	-\$ 759.99	Balance - Year to Date	\$ -15,459.04
		FY 2024 Prepaid Pledges	\$ 8,100.00
		Previous FY Carryover	\$ 25,111.57
		Final Balance	\$17,752.53

* Other income includes online sales, 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.

Summary

July income was low, but our expenses were also low. At this point, our income balance for the year and our ability to meet our operating budget is questionable. We are looking more closely at our expenses, especially in regard to facilities, which are greater than expected and budgeted. Also, giving during the summer months has been less than expected. Good giving and completion of pledges is necessary to have a balanced 2024 budget.

The 2025 Stewardship campaign has begun. We will have Stewardship moments during August and September. Please, prayerfully consider what Union Church means to you and our community and make your pledge as generous as possible.

We expect that the 2025 budget will be very challenging. There will be little or no carryover from 2024, and we have made our budget because Union has received some significant and unexpected donations the last two years.

MODERATOR'S MOMENT

8/15/24

Last Sunday we bid Torri farewell for three months, and today we welcome Sheila Hunter to help us navigate Torri's absence. This will be a new venture for Torri, Sheila, and our church community. Today let's ask for God's direction in our new ventures.

We are so thankful for our leaders, this council, and our members for giving their time, talents, and prayers for our journey ahead. Today we welcome the next step in that journey, the season of building our finances for the next year. This is a time of celebration that we have a dedicated finance committee who keeps us informed of our financial needs and budget, and make sure we are good stewards of our finances. It is a time of planning for the needs of the church for the next year and encouraging the financial support of our members to meet those needs.

Let's support our church and the wider community to welcome this new season with planning, prayers, and programs that fulfill the needs and budget this coming year. Let's pray for God's guidance in all our efforts to raise the funds to carry out our plans.

By Marilyn McKnight

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Greetings. Wow - September! Time is flying, and I hope you are enjoying every fleeting moment. Our time at the lake and in Hack is so precious. Our adventure to the Munsinger Clemens Gardens in August was wonderful! These are stunning, colorful gardens, and if you get the chance to visit them, you will not be disappointed. This month, at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 12th, we are going out to Cindy Gulbrandson's home to make cards! All kinds of cards. Lots of fun, whether you like intricate or plain. All supplies will be provided. Treats, coffee, conversations, and giggles to be had. Please join us!

Cindy's home is off of Interlachen Drive on Evergreen, on the west side of Baby Lake. If you need a ride, please call Joni for help.

See you in church, Joni



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The August meeting had 7 in attendance including Bruce Carlson who gave a presentation on AIS. He gave a complete description of 3 invasive species from his new book, Understanding Midwestern Aquatic Invasives. The book includes several species and indicates the impact of these species.

The next meeting will be on the second Thursday in September, the 12th at 9:30 am. I will let you know where, when we get closer to the date. Please try to make this meeting as fellowship with everyone is always interesting.

One of the church's needs is cleanup help at the monthly Wednesday suppers. I hope some of you are willing to pitch in.

Yours, Stan Kumpula

JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM

The Justice Ministry Team is between projects right now, but we do want to let everyone know about these 2 special events coming up in September. Senior (55+) Pride will be happening on Saturday, September 7th at the Gregory Park Pavilion in Brainerd from 2 to 5 p.m. The Leech Lake Culture Alliance Fifth Annual Autumn Equinox "Unity Day Potluck Celebration" will be at the Onigum Community Center, 8826 Onigum Road NW, on Sunday, September 22, 2024 from 4 to 6 p.m. Along with the Justice Ministry Team, the Leech Lake Culture Alliance supports causes and promotes events that celebrate both the cultural differences and the human commonalities among people of the native and non-native communities in order to build and become bridges with our neighbors. Watch for more information which will be forthcoming! Contact sjimmel@gmail.com with questions.

CAMINO HACKENSACK

As most of you know, we at Union are sponsoring Camino Hackensack, where we are doing our own version of Camino de Santiago, the famous pilgrimage across northern Spain. The dates are September 11-15. Union will be our headquarters where we will eat and sleep. In four days, we will walk 50 miles. At the Sunday Service, September 15, many of the 16 pilgrims will be sharing insights into God, themselves, nature, and relationships that they have gained through walking, and pondering the spiritual prompts we will be providing. This will be a Sunday service not to miss!

One of the pilgrims, Angela Fritze from Hackensack, wrote this beautiful essay on walking.

"It always pays to dwell slowly on the beautiful things -- the more beautiful the more slowly."
—Atticus

Walking is teaching me this truth, the value of slow.

I began in April walking 4-5 days a week in preparation for September's Camino Hackensack when I will walk 50 miles in 4 days. I knew walking is supposed to be healthy and that my body needed the the long slow training, and so I expected the resulting improvements in strength and endurance. What I did not expect was the shift in perspective.

It started with noticing the changes in nature: the dewberries covered in snowy blossoms, giving way to daisies, then golden black-eyed susans; the beauty of hidden forests, the pileated woodpeckers swooping through, squirrels rustling, and fawns staring quiet. Then I began to love my little town: the mail carriers loading their cars for deliveries, crafters chatting at the farmers market, bleary-eyed young parents chasing toddlers in the park, business owners cleaning storefronts. Something about walking made it all so beautiful.

One day, I had to drive down to Edina for an appointment. Seven hours driving down and back, plus various stops left no time for slow that day. I noticed that people stop being people when they are just machines speeding by. On the trail I see faces; on the road I see reflections in glass and metal. Trees and flowers are just background blur. The view necessarily narrows to the road, the directions, the destination; all the rest becomes unreal clutter.

That's when I realized the best gift I receive from walking. It makes what is real, beautiful, and it makes what is truly beautiful, real.

Submitted by Linnea Dietrich

THE NEW UNION KITCHEN FUND

A little over a month ago a list of items and supplies that could be used in the church kitchen was distributed. These were things that the Outreach Ministry Team felt that members and friends could purchase and donate to the church. Outreach wants to thank everyone that has contributed up to this time, but after further consideration it has been decided that there is a better and easier method for everyone. Instead of updating and distributing revised lists, having duplicates of items, or the bother of individual purchasing and delivering items to the church, a Kitchen Fund has been established. Donations to this fund can be made by writing Kitchen Fund on the memo line of a check or by placing the donation in an offering envelope with notation that it is for the Kitchen Fund. These funds will be used to keep our fabulous kitchen supplied with the utensils and supplies needed. Thank you!

ONGOING EVENTS



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, September 12, 1:00 pm
At Cindy Gulbrandson's Home

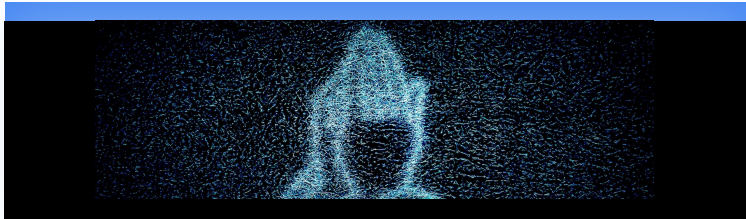
Any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300
or email the church at media.ucchackmn@gmail.com.



Northwoods Acoustic Jam

Wednesday, September 18th at 5:30 pm
In the Friendship Hall

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



Lectio Divina

Every Wednesday at 4:00 pm
In the Church 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

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

SEPTEMBER FUNDRAISING MEAL



Wednesday, September 18th, 5:00 - 6:00 pm Friendship Hall
Monthly Fundraising Meals continue into the fall season! Each 3rd Wednesday come enjoy a yummy fresh-made meal in support of a local nonprofit. Free-will donations help support a different local area nonprofit each month.

Free-will donation.

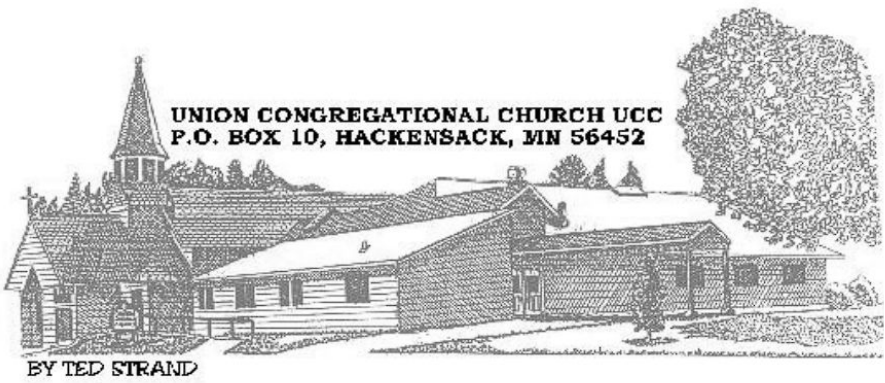
**Menu: Build Your Own Burger,
to benefit the Hackensack Lending Library**

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

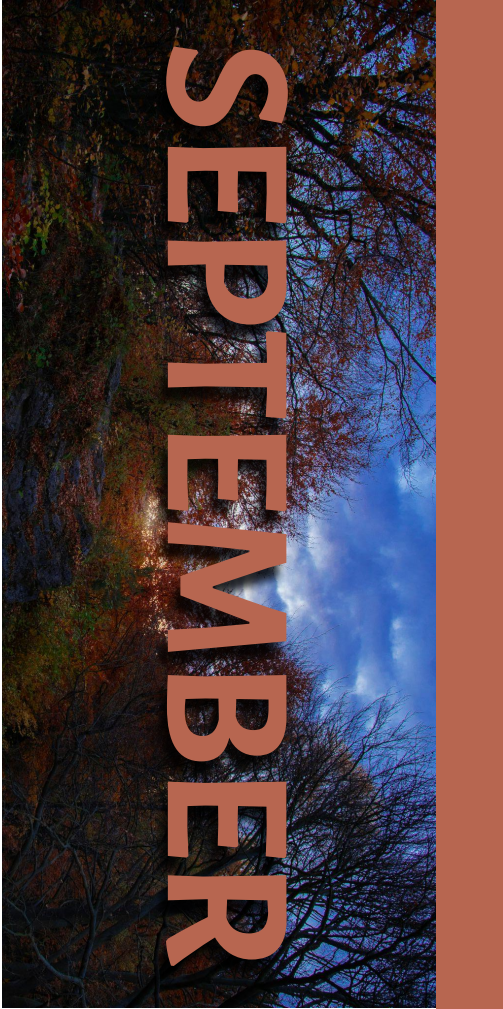
September 2024

* Community event

1	SUNDAY	2	MONDAY	3	TUESDAY	4	WEDNESDAY	5	THURSDAY	6	FRIDAY	7	SATURDAY
	9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina	7:30 pm Justice Ministry Team Zoom Meeting	Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	9am-12pm TMLA Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm Margaret Zieffler Celebration at Birchview Gardens						
8	9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 11:00 am Worship Ministry Team Meeting 1:00 pm Birchview Church	9 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	10 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	11 10:00 am Fit2Move 10:45 am Hackensack Camino Begins	12 9:30 am Men's Fellowship 9:00 am Hackensack Camino 1:00 pm Women's Fellowship	13 Office Closed 9:00 am Hackensack Camino 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	14 9:00 am Hackensack Camino						
15	9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	16 9:30-11:00 am Camino Hackensack Meeting 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	17 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	18 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:00 pm Fundraiser Meal 5:30-7:00 pm Northwoods Acoustic Jam	19 10:00 am Dream Group 1:00-3:00 pm Council Meeting	20 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	21						
22	9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	23 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	24 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	25 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina	26 9:30 am Congregational Life Meeting 1:00-3:00 pm Fiber Arts*	27 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	28						
29	9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	30 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina									



FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



2024

Have a great sabbatical,
Pastor Torri!



THE UNION NEWS