

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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OCTOBER 2024

Pastoral Letter by Steve Erickson

The Reason Union Exists, the Reason We Need It and Why We Can't Live Without It

Thanks to the entire tech team for the high quality work they do which allowed Marilyn and me to view the entire Sunday service online the last Sunday of September. Without it, we would not have been able to write this message, but most importantly, we would have missed the important benefit of the community we drove to be with that morning. We almost missed Gary and Waldo's reminders about the whole purpose of why we donate our time, our talents and our treasures to Union Congregational Church, and what we receive back from that effort.

We started out that morning with great intentions and made it to the church parking lot just in time to hear Lynn Van Allen ringing the bell. As we found a pew in the back, we heard Waldo Eisinger start with a stewardship message focusing on the pain of Covid isolation, followed by Gary Kwong's impromptu stewardship moment that focused on the death of one of his most important relationships; his child. We had to leave just before the passing of the peace (Marilyn, unfortunately, started feeling sick again, as has been the case

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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

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



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

October 1	Waldo Eisinger
October 2	Jan Batman
	Dawn Helscher
October 4	Lynn Smith
October 6	Jean Carlson
October 9	Kerry Swenson
October 10	Sabbastian Wilson-Webb
October 17	Gary Turnquist
October 18	Rodney Damm
October 23	Don Smith
October 31	Paul Courneya
	Miho Adkins

Happy Birthday!



Karen Holle, Linda Ottman, and Sabbastian Wilson-Webb, Editors

Continued from Page 1

with her medical struggles off and on during the past year). But, as I drove us both back home, I thought about how both Gary and Waldo provided reasons that deeply resonated with us, and perhaps for many others who experience life's hardships, in whatever form they are dealt to us.

Waldo talked about the isolation he and his family experienced with Covid, and then his cancer diagnosis and treatment created a further year of isolation. Gary talked about the death of his son. Both messages were not just about pain, but more so about the importance of the supporting and loving community our UCC congregation provides.

Waldo told a story about his daughter and her grandfather going to the hardware store to buy important items. As his daughter brought to the checkout some Chicklets gum, (which she claimed she would even share with Grandpa), Grandpa asked her three questions: Do you need it, can you afford it, and can you live without it? As to the gum, she responded, "I could probably live without it," and then added, "but I wouldn't be happy!"

Applying these three questions about sharing our time, our talents and our treasure (code for money) with our church community, Waldo gave the same answer as his daughter. However, I would take it a step further and say that not only would Marilyn and I be unhappy, our lives would be dramatically different. We would likely not know any of the people who now rate as dear friends who make up our important community support system. We would not experience the happiness and love of those who have reached out to us during our cancer journey. Like Jimmy Stewart's character in the movie "It's a Wonderful Life," without the UCC community, we would probably be able to live without Union Church, but the journey would be quite lonely and quite different.

Gary read our community prayer which speaks to the "Reason we exist and why we cannot live without Union, let alone not be happy:

May our harmonies extend beyond our songs. May our distinctiveness be welcomed, our identities be celebrated, and our differences be a source of delight.

This life of faith is lived in community where many gifts support the body of Christ. We help others, we are transformed in love. May our church serve as a beacon for belonging and demonstrate the beloved community of the kingdom in your name this day and every day. Transform our hearts and stir our souls. Foster a spirit of curiosity, hospitality, and reconciliation to make things right with our neighbors, foes and friends. Lead us on the path of belonging. Amen.

When we feel overwhelmed, afraid, when we stumble and fail, even when we realize that some of us hold differing political views, or have ideas or beliefs that are radically different than our own, we continue to support each other because as a community of faith, we have a greater purpose than in our isolation from each other. And as Gary Kwong urged in his impromptu stewardship moment, this Community of Care and Service is the here and now, and as Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, the kingdom of heaven is now.

Let's commit to going forward in love and community, remembering that we might be unhappy without Union, but we would also be missing the experience of living in the new community of faith as expressed by Jesus in the Gospels.



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2024 DRAFT *(Not yet approved by council)*

PRESENT: Karen Holle, Heidi and Don Hoppe, Mike Bohanon, Marilyn and Steve Erickson, Caryl Allan, Pastor Sheila Hunter, Sue Kimmel, Joni and Stan Kumpula, Linnea Dietrich, Mike Schmitt, Connie Schmitt and Gunder Austin by Zoom.

Marilyn called the meeting to order. Pastor Sheila offered a devotional.

The agenda was approved as written. The minutes were approved as written. Heidi/Joni

Sabbatical Update: The general feeling of the group is that the church is doing well regarding the quality of the worship service and administration in general thus far in Pastor Torri's sabbatical.

Board of Facilities: Most of the painting on the outside of the church has been completed by Mark Johnson. Mike reported that Superior Fuel is now our propane company, offering quite a discount compared to Ferrellgas.

Discussion of moving from a cleaning company back to having a custodian cleaning the church – We have had our current cleaning company for about two years. The annual cost is about \$7,200, and there are concerns that much of the church is not being cleaned at all (downstairs) or that some areas of the upstairs are not being cleaned well. Tammy Lindberg is interested in having a job at the church as custodian and is preparing a list of jobs she would perform and what she would want to be paid. **Motion: Council authorizes Connie to meet with Tammy to discuss her interest in having a job at the church keeping the building clean. Mike/Caryl**

Board of Financial Stewardship: Don presented his report for the month of August to Council. Total income for the month was \$8,664, and expenses were \$11,953. We currently have a positive balance of \$14,428 for the year. The 2025 Stewardship campaign continues. Please prayerfully consider what Union Church means to you and our community and make your pledge soon. Thank you.

Congregational Life: Caryl is happy with the job the team is doing to contact church members that are unable to come to a church service.

Worship: Heidi reported that in-person average attendance for the month was 50, with 10 online participants. There are also 10 or more participants regularly at the Birchview Church. We discussed the quality of the services, especially this past week's service with the Camino participants taking part. Linnea spoke a bit about the wonderful experience people had who participated in the Hackensack Camino. She would like to offer another Camino opportunity next summer.

Women's Fellowship: Last month Women's Fellowship met at Cindy's house to make gift bags and cards. The October meeting will focus on wine tasting.

Men's Fellowship: Stan reported that the chili and pie event planned for October has been canceled since money for the annual food baskets has already been raised. He is working hard to plan events for this next year.

Justice Ministry: Sue reported on the many events her group is involved in. (see her report in the newsletter). In October the team will sponsor an informational forum for the two candidates competing for the County Commissioner job for our district. On October 8, there will be a forum at WHA school on the opioid epidemic in Cass County.

Fundraising: Suggestions were made today for possible fundraising activities for the church. Steve will bring his team together for a meeting that will include Pastor Sheila who offered to be part of a discussion.

Tech Team: Mike Schmitt reported that the grand piano sounds better with the new microphone. New LED lights have been ordered for the cross. People are needed to help with slides during the Sunday services.

Outreach: The most recent fundraiser meal served dinner to 90 people. After covering costs, \$600 was given to the Hackensack Lending Library Restoration project. Discussion was held regarding the need to get more publicity for this outreach work. Also discussed the need to coordinate volunteers for these meals in a more efficient manner.x

Moderator's Moment: Marilyn shared her concerns about the divisiveness we are experiencing in our country right now and shared a handout entitled, "50 questions you can ask friends and relatives in political arguments," by Kenneth Cloke. The questions can help make political conversations more productive if we find ourselves talking with friends and relatives we may disagree with.

Old business: Carpet cleaning will start soon in the Friendship Hall now that the Camino is over.

Gunder reported that the new pastor-parish team will be meeting very soon.

New Business: Pastor Sheila spoke about World Communion Sunday which is celebrated on October 6. This is an important day because it helps us understand that we are connected to all Christians around the world. Pastor Sheila will be worshipping with us on that day.

Meeting adjourned. Next meeting is October 17. Clerk, Karen Holle

BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Operating Income and Expenses

Giving Income - August	\$ 7,554.00	Year to Date 2024 Giving	\$ 92,439.00
Other Income* - August	\$ 1,110.00	YTD Other Income*	\$ 11,606.36
Total Income	\$ 8,664.00	YTD Total Income	\$ 104,045.36
Expenses - August	\$ 11,953.43	Year to Date Expenses	\$ 122,829.12
Balance - August	-\$ 3,289.43	Balance - Year to Date	\$ -18,783.76
		FY 2024 Prepaid Pledges	\$ 8,100.00
		Previous FY Carryover	\$ 25,111.57
		Final Balance	\$ 14,427.81

* 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

August income was again low, but our expenses were also lower than normal. At this point, our income balance for the year and our ability to meet our operating budget remains questionable. We are looking more closely at our expenses, especially regarding 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 critical to have a balanced 2024 budget.

The 2025 Stewardship campaign continues. We had Stewardship Moments the last two Sundays of September and will possibly have one the second Sunday of October. Please prayerfully consider what Union Church means to you and our community and make your pledge if you haven't yet done so. At this time, we are below last year in both number of pledges received and the amount pledged.

We expect that the 2025 budget will be challenging. We request pledges in August and September when more people are present, and at our October Council meeting the Board of Financial Stewardship will begin working on the 2025 budget as we have a more accurate idea of our proposed income and expenses for 2025.

FROM THE DESK OF KNIGHT THE SERVICE DOG

Richard has been asked by a few people about this sign on a pew in the sanctuary of the church, and he wants me to this month's article in the newsletter.

"No, it's not because I'm special that I have pew reserved for me. When Richard, Gunder and I became members of the congregation, it was discussed with Torri about me shedding continuously and we wanted to make it as easy as possible for the cleaning staff, so it was decided that this would be the best solution for all involved.

I'm sure that if Patriot Assistance Dogs (P.A.D.) staff would see this picture, Richard would probably be reminded that when a Service Dog is working in a public place that they aren't allowed on the furniture, but it was decided by the powers that be, as a member of Union Congregational Church it was my right to sit in my pew.



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 meetings 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 Bahrt, 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 in April of 1917 the building was started. When the walls were erected, it was estimated that to finish \$1650.00 was needed. 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.

NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

The fall flowers are beginning to show their lovely blooms to us. What a wonderful fall this has been so far! The leaves are just beginning to turn as I write this message to you, the temperatures have been warm and inviting, and the sky has been soooo blue! Thank you, God, for this beautiful world You have given us. Help us care for it as good stewards so future generations will also be able to give thanks.

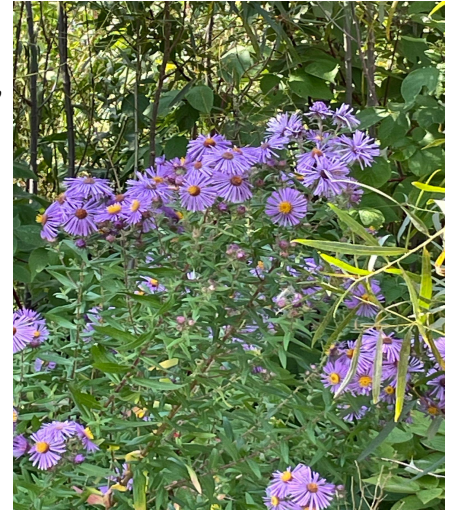
Torri's sabbatical is well underway, and I think the worship services have been meaningful and uplifting. Many thanks to those who have given the message so far! Sheila Hunter, our interim pastor, has done a great job, and if you have any cares or concerns and need someone to talk to, please feel free to give her a call. Sheila has office hours but is available for us whenever the need arises. (218) 464-7072

I want to alert you to the fact that on November 3 we will celebrate All Saints Day. This is a very meaningful service of remembrance where we will read the names and toll the bell for all the souls who have left us in the past year. If there is anyone you would like to be remembered at that time, please contact Linda at the church office.

Another item to bring to your attention is the fact that Torri's anniversary of ordination is coming up this month. She was ordained at the end of October shortly before beginning work at Union on November 1. To me, the date she became our pastor is the day of great significance; however, for Torri, it is the date of her ordination. Be that as it may, let's shower her with cards in celebration. She may not be present in our sanctuary right now, but she is certainly present in our hearts! (PO Box 35, Hackensack)

Peace be with you in all you do,

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



MODERATOR'S MOMENT

Where is God in these nail-biting days before November 5th? It seems that we avoid conversations with family and friends about the upcoming election, even at coffee on Sunday mornings – or at other church gatherings – it seems we sit with those whom we believe may share our political views. We don't discuss the "breaking news" that invades our TV shows and print media daily. Are we worried about creating conflict? Yet we know and love each other with great respect and care. A colleague in mediation has written a list of questions to open conversations with each other during this politically charged time – conversations that may help us understand each other's points of view without conflict or judgment. If you're interested, please ask for a copy, and see if they help with the difficult conversations ahead.

Let's get out those old bumper stickers – "What would Jesus do?" when confronting political rhetoric? Let's continue to love each other as God's children in these difficult days and weeks ahead and pass the peace widely. As we asked in our community prayer this past Sunday:

"Let's foster a spirit of curiosity, hospitality, and reconciliation to make things right with our neighbors, foes and friends. Lead us on the path of belonging."

Peace be with us all,

Marilyn McKnight, Moderator




WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



Greetings and happy October! What beautiful weather we've been having. Great for more gardening and doing outside chores. Fellowship is still charging ahead with fun, entertaining, and inspirational meetings. We had fun making cards, decorating bags and just plain fellowship. Thank you, Cindy, for opening your home and offering a huge number of supplies to work with. It was so neat that the Book and Thimble Club is now going to do it too.

On the second Thursday, October 10th we will meet at Union at 1:00 to taste and pair wine. The men are invited also. It will be a great afternoon; we hope to see you all there!

Women's Fellowship has made prayer bears for many, many years. Many newer members and friends aren't familiar with them. They are to be given to anyone who is ill, facing a difficult problem, or in any way needs our love and prayers. They are in the Friendship Hall. Do give one to anyone you feel is in need. They do come with a card.




MEN'S FELLOWSHIP



The September meeting has not occurred as of this writing, but the October meeting will be on Wednesday, October 23rd, at 9:30 am. We will meet for breakfast at Viddles and Joe in Hackensack.

Please try to make this meeting as fellowship with everyone is always fun.

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

Yours, Stan Kumpula



JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM

Greetings from the Justice Ministry Team.


There are two events in October that align with our mission of pursuing justice and healing for all of us.

A free public community forum **"The Opioid Epidemic- What everyone needs to know"** will be held on October 8th, 2024, Tuesday from 6:00 pm -8:00 pm at the Walker-Hackensack-Akeley School Auditorium located at 301 4th St, Walker MN. (Enter in the Northeast Door #4)

The public is invited to join the panel discussion about the awareness of opioids and other drugs in our communities from Law Enforcement, a Medical Professional, those with Shared lived experience, and Public Health. Topics will include drug prevention, treatment and recovery, harm reduction, and how the public can help our communities. The lifesaving Naloxone (Narcan) will be available with training provided at no cost to those in attendance. Intended audience is for adults and older youth, no registration or RSVP is necessary.

Indigenous Peoples Celebration is October 14th, Monday, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Crow Wing County Courthouse, Laurel Street in Brainerd. This is an invitation to connect with why history and story matters. There will be tours, personal stories, drumming, land acknowledgement, and more.

The Justice Ministry Team is also planning a fall/winter book study and occasional film/movie nights. We meet via Zoom the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome!



ADULT LEARNING

Thank you, UCC Hackensack for welcoming Hackensack Camino pilgrims and retreat leaders to live, eat and sleep in the church for five days in September. It was a blessed event with many pilgrims stating it was an opportunity of a lifetime. Love grew easily among the group, many insights were gained, pilgrims walked alone and together and said they felt very cared for - from the delicious food provided, hilarious games played, and having their needs met. If you want to catch the Spirit of Camino Hackensack I invite you to watch the worship service on Sunday, September 15, where several pilgrims shared what was on their hearts. The leadership team has decided to do Camino Hackensack #2 September 17-21, 2025.

Lectio Divina continues on Wednesdays at 4 pm. If you are interested in going deeper in your spiritual life, this may be for you. Please reach out to Linnea Dietrich if interested, and she will give you more details.

Women's Bible Study will be starting again in October. Watch the bulletin for date and time.



ONGOING EVENTS



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, October 10th, 1:00 pm
Tasting and pairing wine.

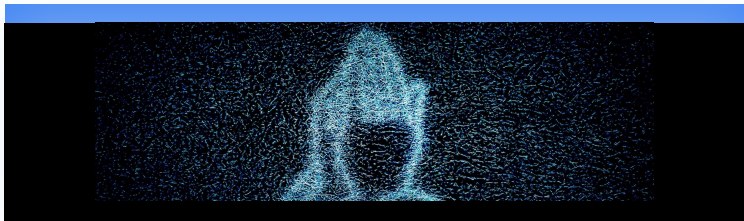
Any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300
or email the church at media.ucchackmn@gmail.com.



Northwoods Acoustic Jam

Wednesday, October 16th at 5:30 pm
In the Friendship Hall

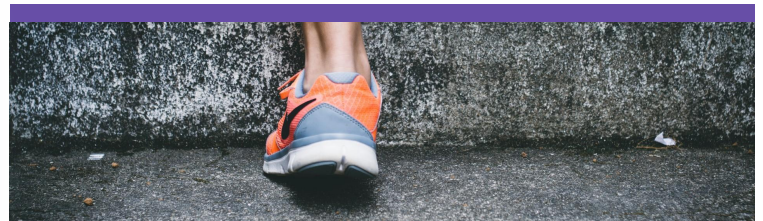
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Lectio Divina

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.

OCTOBER FUNDRAISING MEAL



Wednesday, October 16th, 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.

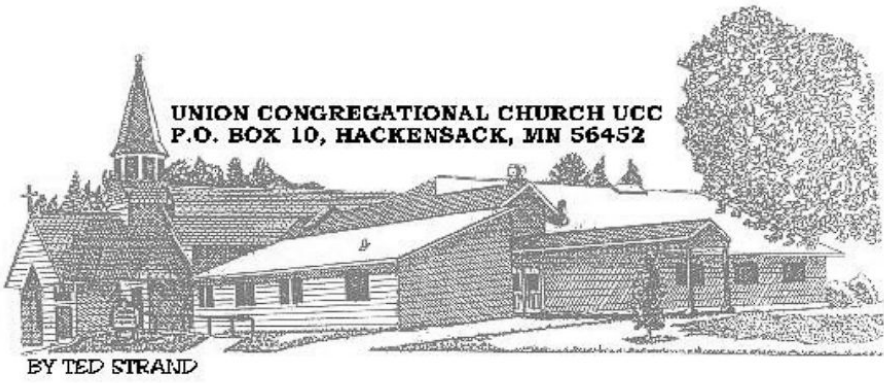
Menu: Sloppy Joes, salad, dessert
to benefit the Hackensack Food Shelf

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

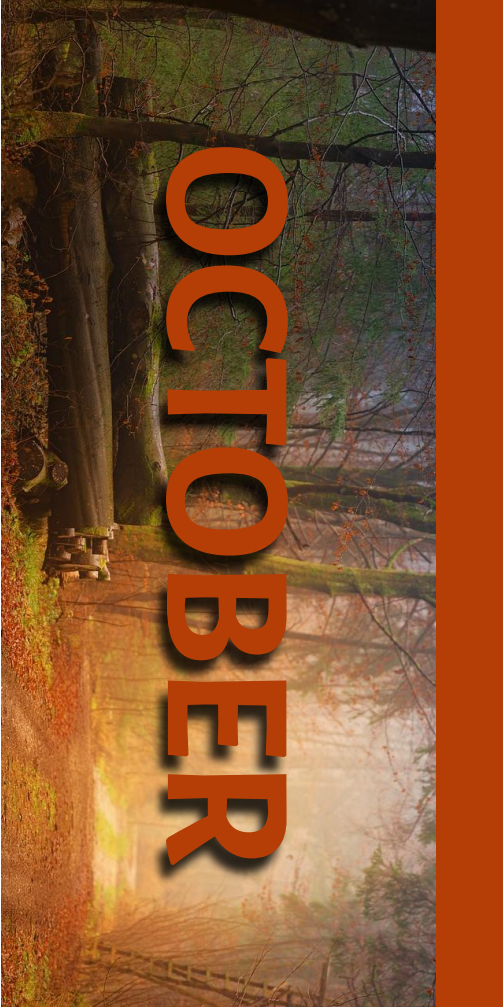
October 2024

* Community event

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	7 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	8 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	9 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina	10 1:00 pm Women's Fellowship	11 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	12
13 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 11:00 am Worship Ministry Team Meeting 1:00 pm Birchview Church	14 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	15 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	16 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:00 pm Fundraiser Meal 5:30-7:00 pm Northwoods Acoustic Jam	17 10:00 am Dream Group 1:00-3:00 pm Council Meeting	18 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	19
20 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	21 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	22 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	23 9:30 am Men's Fellowship 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:30 pm Women's Bible Study	24 9:00 am Congregational Life Meeting 1:00-3:00 pm Fiber Arts*	25 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	26
27 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	28 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	29 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	30 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina	31		



FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



2024

Happy Autumn!



THE UNION NEWS