

# 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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## MAY 2025

### Moderator's Moment

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran Pastor and Theologian and author of many books including Ethics, Letters and Papers from Prison, The Cost of Discipleship, Life Together, and others. He was imprisoned by the Nazis during WWII for his outspoken opposition to the treatment of the Jews, and Hitler personally signed his death order after believing that Bonhoeffer had assisted the group that plotted his assassination, although there was no proof linking Bonhoeffer directly to the plot. Bonhoeffer was hanged in April of 1945, just 13 days before his concentration camp was liberated by the American Army.

I became interested in his writings when I was a student at Union Seminary in 1968-1970. Bonhoeffer felt that Christians have a duty to act as Christ would, to follow the Sermon on the Mount, and to act in the world as disciples of Christ, as well as to speak up against injustice and oppression, and to always show compassion for the poor.

Continued on page 3.



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Sunday Worship at 9:30 AM

Communion: First Sunday of Every Month





Continued from Page 1

I have been asked to speak on Bonhoeffer's relevance for today at Community Church of Walker UCC Adult Education Sunday class (after the worship service), sometime in May. We will let our members and friends at Union Church know of the date as soon as we have that information.

In the fall of 1932, as he was about to leave for America and study at Union Seminary, Bonhoeffer was appointed a lecturer in Theology at Berlin University. In one of his first lectures, a student recorded his words in his notebook: "He pointed out that nowadays we often ask ourselves whether we still need the Church, whether we still need God. But this question, Bonhoeffer said, is wrong. We are the ones who are questioned. The church exists and God exists, and we are asked whether we are willing to be of service, for God needs us."

Steve Erickson

## REMEMBERING OUR MISSIONS

**Did you know...** the United Church of Christ has five areas of mission work that our local churches can give to?

**Our Church's Wider Mission** - Gifts from congregations like ours to OCWM Basic Support make it possible for our Conferences and the National Ministries to strengthen local churches and leaders and engage in mission well beyond our little community.

Most of our OCWM Basic Support dollars remain in our Minnesota Conference to help local congregations thrive. Directly supporting our churches includes one-on-one mentoring, conflict transformation, resourcing leaders as they reimagine ministry, and grants to churches.

**One Great Hour of Sharing** - This mission connects us to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.

Through our support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, micro financing, and women's empowerment. An offering is typically taken on the last Sunday in March.

**Strengthen the Church** - Conferences in the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. An offering is typically taken on the first Sunday in June.

**Neighbors in Need** - This mission focuses on social justice issues. This year's focus is on Mental Health Justice. In 2015, the General Synod of the UCC passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health. A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life's mental health journey. An offering is taken on the first Sunday of October.

**The Christmas Fund** - This mission aids many small-church retirees, surviving spouses, or those who need financial assistance after a difficult diagnosis. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. An offering is taken each week through the month of December.





# COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

APRIL 17, 2025 (*Minutes are not yet approved by the council*)

**Present:** Pastor Torri, Steve and Marilyn Erickson, Cindy Gulbrandson, Caryl Allan, Joni and Stan Kumpula, Linnea Dietrich, Mike and Connie Johnson-Schmitt, Mike Bohanon, Sue Kimmel, Gunder Austin, and Judy Hoopman

Call to Order by Marilyn McKnight-Erickson

Pastor Torri offered a brief prayer

No changes to agenda, motion to accept agenda by Sue, seconded by Connie, approved.

Motion to accept last month's minutes by Gunder, seconded by Connie and approved.

**Pastor's Monthly Report:** Pastor Torri submitted a written report of her activities over the past month. She spoke about the prep for the Seder which has gone very well. Lent Services with St. Paul's are wrapping up this week, with Easter on Sunday. Two new members joined our church this past Sunday and were very warmly received. Pastor Torri talked about her involvement in the planning for the Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting on June 13 & 14 and is encouraging interested people to contact her about attending. The Bible Study will have a final session May 1, and there will be some planning for a "next study" in the future.

**New Business:** Sue nominated Connie Schmitt to fill the Clerk vacancy, seconded by Linnea and approved by all.

## BOARD TEAM REPORTS:

**Board of Financial Stewardship:** Don Hoppe was not present, Caryl Allan provided a short update. The month has gone well, and the system has good check-and-balance in place with Don, Sheryl, and Caryl's roles. March Food Shelf drive brought in about \$2,044.

**Board of Facilities:** Mike reported he has not yet gotten the bids for the roofing but expects to meet with the roofer on Monday and should have the bids by the May Council meeting. He has no update on the wall.

**Personnel Board:** Connie states the Call Letter has not yet been returned. Marilyn and Steve are updating language about resolution processes. This will be presented to the Executive Committee for review and approval to bring to Council.

## MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

**Adult Learning:** Lectio is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year and is going well. Bible Study has been well received. May 31<sup>st</sup> Laura Baum-Parr and Stacy Hirshi will host a partial-day retreat (rocks and prayer). Hackensack Camino is in the planning and recruiting phase. Laura Baum-Parr may offer a "Sacred Space" retreat later in the summer. Bonnie Mitsch will be resuming her Dream Group work in mid May.

**Congregational Life:** Caryl shared the gifts given to the new members of mugs as a welcoming. Sign has been repainted by Caryl's husband. Caryl made a plea for more participation to help with Sunday Birchview services. One more volunteer one time each month would greatly be appreciated.

**Fundraising/ Outreach:** Team meeting is planned for sometime in May, all are welcome.

**Justice Ministry:** Sue provided a written report. She highlighted information about the Leech Lake Culture Alliance and partnership with KinsWomen in strengthening relationships. The Rural Organization Project with McKenzie Folly and the work with childcare, affordable housing, and healthcare was described. On May 5<sup>th</sup> there will be an event in Walker by the lighthouse in City Park called "Turn the Light Red" regarding missing indigenous women. There is a bill in works going to the MN Senate regarding protection of wild rice from pesticides, boats, and other potential harms. Sue encouraged contacting the legislature. May 17<sup>th</sup> is Community Clean-Up from 9-12 with a light breakfast provided. May 1<sup>st</sup> will be the JMT zoom meeting with discussion of alternative leadership plans as Sue leaves her position.

**Women's Fellowship:** Women's Fellowship continues to meet at 1:00 every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. They have been assisting with prep for the Seder. May's meeting will highlight Cindy and Mike's presentation on their trip to Australia.

**Men's Fellowship:** Stan shared the meeting at the Corner Café was productive. Men's Fellowship is committed to assisting with church events as needed, helping with work projects for members in need, staying in contact with one another, and to have fun through activities and field trips. Stan proposes a rotating leadership from participants every three months.



**Tech Team:** Mike reported the recent priority has been replacing all cameras so they are all the same.

**Worship:** In Heidi's absence Torri shared that Brian Wicker has become involved in singing at Sunday services and with the Worship Team. Sherry Toenjes has expressed interest in assisting with Sunday communion.

**Moderator's Moment:** Steve shared his work and interest in learning about Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his view on Christianity as related to the events in Berlin in 1932 prior to the Navi takeover and WWII. Steve will be hosting a discussion at Walker's Community Church in May. He shared a quote from Bonhoeffer.

**Old business:** Childcare – a written report was submitted from Gary Dietrich. Mike B. has agreed to be the point person for Ashley Hunter if she has facility concerns that need to be addressed. Great Start Childcare has 10 children currently. Ashley will provide a proposal to the Council about rent at the May meeting.

**Solar Update:** Mike S. presented a summary of findings about the project, cost estimate, timeline for construction, location, and other details. He outlined the cost savings for the church as well as the expenses and a plan for using existing money the church has in reserve. Mike made a motion that \$122,000 be allocated to this project immediately which will allow the church to obtain a rebate from MN Power of about \$30,000. Don Hoppe has looked at the budget and how funding will be designated. Sue seconded the motion, and the Council approved. It was brought up that Ashley Hunter should be informed about the work plan in relation to the childcare exterior area.

May newsletter deadline is Tuesday April 22, 2025

Pastor Torri provided a benediction.

Meeting was adjourned. Next meeting is May 15, 2025. Minutes written by Judy Hoopman

## JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM UPDATE – by Sue Kimmel

The Justice Ministry Team met by Zoom on April 3. Thank you to Sabbastian and Mike for assisting with the zoom.

Mackenzie Foley, Rural Organizing Project Coordinator for Northern MN, discussed ROP priorities for 2025. The ROP would like to create communities where we all have the good things that people need. The top three priorities are Childcare, Accessible and Affordable Housing, and Healthcare.

JMT members will be attending events with the Leech Lake Culture Alliance and KinsWomen, which include:

Turn the Lighthouse Red for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Day on May 5th, 6:30 p.m. at the Lighthouse in Walker.

KinsWomen meetings – May 13th, June 16th, July 21st, Aug 18th at 6:00 p.m.

7th Annual Welcoming Babies Celebration - June in Cass Lake

Onigum Pow Wow - July 25-27th

6th Annual Unity Day - September 21st

The JMT is tracking MN Senate Bill SF 1247 - Revised protection of wild rice in MN waters from pesticides, watercraft, and maintenance of wild rice water maps

Community Clean-up - Saturday, May 17th. 9:00-noon. Meet at the HUB for waffle breakfast. Sign up on the church bulletin board.

Justice Ministry Team will be meeting via Zoom on Thursday, May 1st at 7:30 p.m. to discuss the next steps in leadership. Please join if you can! JMT has made a difference in our community, and we need a new leader for the team. If you have ideas on leadership or if you are interested in a leadership role in the JMT, please attend the Zoom on May 1st.

# THROUGH KODA'S EYES

Hi! My name is Koda and I am the "Church Dog." My human is on vacation, so she asked me to write extra good for both of us this month! I've got this!

First, I would like to say how grateful I am to be part of Union Church. I have made so many friends who have accepted me just the way I am. It does not matter if I run through the church, beg for treats, or hide under my human's desk. No matter what, I am always accepted and loved. I hope you feel that way too.

Second, I know that when my human leaves I have a safe place to be. There are several people in the church who have cared for me. They have given me a place to rest my weary head when I am worried about my human returning. They have given me food to eat, treats to snack on, and have gone for walks with me so I can let stress out of my little body. I have met and built great friendships here at this church. I hope you feel that way too.

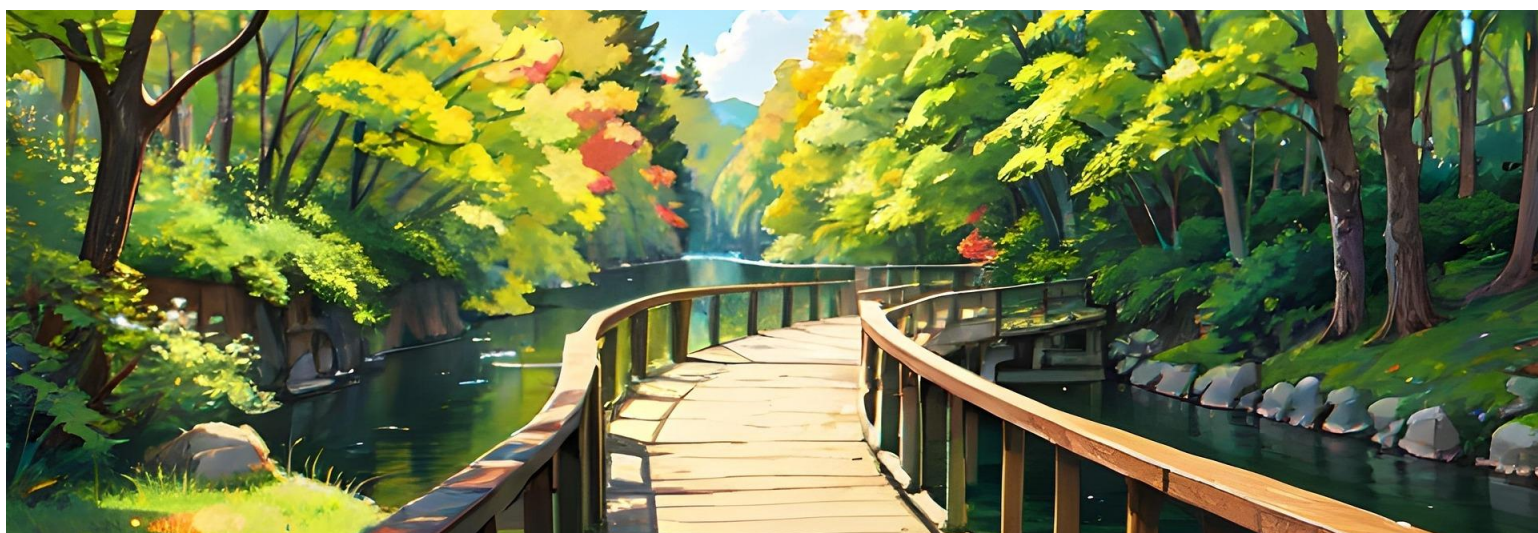
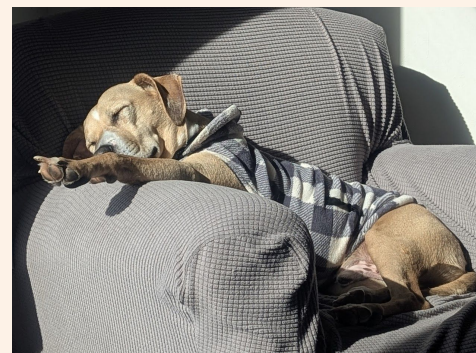
Third, I have gone through a lot in my short life as a dog. My life started kind of rough as a "street dog." I've been through some tough times. On the street, I was always hungry and fearing for my life. It was a time when I did not know I could be part of a family. I did not know that I could feel safe. I did not know I could have friends that would be kind to me, support me, and love me. But now I have that! And I am so happy to be here. I hope you feel that way too.

That is how I see it through my eyes!

Have a barky day!

Koda

("The Church Dog")





## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Happy Spring! Here we are in May, ready for another wonderful summer season. Hope everyone is excited to be in the northwoods. Wow, do we ever have a great meeting this month! Cindy and Mike cruised around Australia last winter and are providing us with a picture and dialog excursion of the trip. We will be having treats and a bit of wine while we watch and listen. We hope for a big group including the men. Remember the second Thursday, May 8th at 1:00 pm. We will also be having our annual plant sale in May, watch for the date.

We are including one of my favorite poems. A good share of us are grandmas and hopefully will enjoy this.

See you in church, Joni, Sarah, Sherry, Kay and Cindy

### 'Grandma's Poem'

#### Grandma's Poem

*by Judith Colleen O'Dier*

Whatever on earth  
Can a grandma be for  
She's older than dirt  
With one foot out the door?

And what can she know  
About living today  
When nothing is done  
In her old fashioned way?

Oh, sure she's real sweet  
And you love her a lot,  
But in terms of real life,  
What's an old grandma got?

Well listen my sweetie,

You might be surprised  
To find that your grandma's  
A youngster disguised.

She still has her dream  
And her values intact,  
She's just a bit wiser  
Yes Dear, that's a fact —  
Experience has put  
A few lines on her face  
And that's how she knows  
What it's like in your place.

I know this idea  
May seem baffling and new,  
But, Honey, your grandma's  
"Been there—done that," too.

So when your young life isn't going as planned,  
Talk to your grandma — she'll sure understand.  
She's got lots of love and good counsel to give,  
And she'll be on your side for as long as you live.





## MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

At our meeting on Apr 14th, the six attendees decided to add to the tasks that MF does by advertising to our **church members that we will assist members in doing tasks** that the members need assistance in such as moving heavy items, repairing or modifying stairs, removing brush, or any item you need help with. Just call the church office with the info, and we will try to help.

Our meetings at the Corner Store allow us to have a great breakfast while discussing our goals for the year. In addition to the above item, we discussed the following:

- Set up a grilling event for members to get tips on how to prepare a specific food by one of us that has the knowhow.
- Assist on May 17<sup>th</sup> City cleanup
- Inquire with Scamp Trailers in Backus for a tour of the facilities. (Unfortunately, Scamp is not doing tours for the next few months).
- Attend the WF meeting in May to hear about Gulbrandsons' Cruise around Australia.
- Antique Boat Show, August, in Cross Lake
- Antique Tractor Show in Avon, MN

Our next meeting will be on the second Monday, May 12, at 9:30am in the Friendship Hall. We will have some rolls or coffee cake and firm up any near term activities.

We also decided to rotate every three months the person in charge of MF, so my duties will end in June.

Yours, Stan Kumpula

## NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

Spring has come to the northland! It's wonderful to see the lakes opening up and the birds returning. Not so great is having the bears wake up from their winter nap. We recently chased a big black bear off in the evening after it bent all our feeding stations down and ate the seeds. Luckily, it only destroyed one feeder, and needless to say we'll be taking the feeders in every night for the foreseeable future!

Welcome back to our summer members and friends as they return to the area for another busy summer. This year will be different because of the construction on 371 in Hackensack. Although there will be no flea markets at Sacred Heart church this summer, and although it will be difficult to negotiate the streets during the busiest time of the year for our local businesses, the improvements to the traffic flow in the future will be much appreciated.

See you soon.

Worship Ministry Team - Heidi Hoppe, Sheryl Kaubisch, Gracee Rudkin, Caryl Alan, and Mary Parish





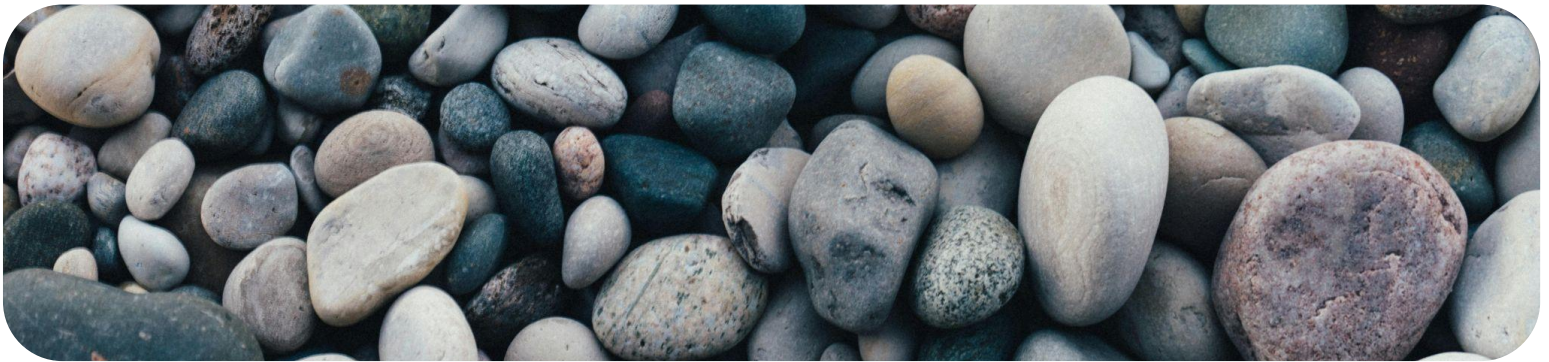
## ADULT LEARNING – by Linnea Dietrich

I am happy to report that we are doing **Camino Hackensack**, year two, September 17-21. Registration is open and invitation letters are being sent out. Camino Hackensack is a guided spiritual walking retreat where the pilgrims walk 40-45 miles in the style of the Camino Frances in Spain. From the evaluations from 2024: "I learned everyday about one step, let go and breathe." "The walks were so quiet and beautiful." "I loved reflection and unstructured time." "The food was delicious and incredibly nutritious." If you or someone you know may be interested in walking Camino Hackensack with us, please reach out for more information, a letter of invitation and a registration form. Looking for 15 pilgrims.

May 1st, 10 AM is our final session of the **overview of the Bible** taught by Pastor Torri. You can view the sessions online. We have had about five in our class and it has been fun, enlightening and interactive. One participant said, "I have learned so much about the structure of the Bible that I didn't know and how it came to be written." On May 1st the group will decide what we will study next. Please join us to be part of the discussion!

New opportunity: Bonnie Mitsch, who has been doing **dream work** for 30 years, is leading a group in an interesting study of our dreams, interpreting what the inner dreamer is conveying to us in symbolic language. We will be meeting in the library 10-noon on the first and third Thursdays of the month starting May 15th. Past participants have said the insights gained individually and through the group process are invaluable. For more information, contact Bonnie at [BonnieMitsch@gmail.com](mailto:BonnieMitsch@gmail.com) or call or text her at 763-213-4793.

"So we start with a stone, what might be large enough to hold up a forest or small enough to rest easily in the palm of an open hand." This is the introduction to our Saturday, May 31, 9-noon, **"Rock N Retreat."** Laura Baum-Parr will be leading us in reflections using the metaphor of rocks and what they might mean in our lives. Stacy Hirschi has gathered rocks from the shores of Lake Superior for us to paint beautiful Christian symbols on with her guidance. Please register for this retreat with Linda in the office. The cost is \$5 for supplies payable on May 31. All are welcome.



## Celebrating the Past: Summer Vacation Bible School

Myra Damm, Historian

Bible School was held in the summer to give religious instruction to the youth in the church. This was usually held for a week with Bible stories and Bible themes being a part of the program. The teachers were members of the congregation who volunteered to assist or teach. Classes were held by age groups from preschool to 8th grade. Craft projects, lessons, songs, storytelling, and outdoor activities made this a week of fun and religious instruction.

The first mention of Bible School in my records was in 1951, with an enrollment of 17. Vacation Bible School continued for many years with our church alternating with St. Paul's Lutheran Church each year. Slowly the attendance became less as there were less children, and unfortunately Vacation Bible School has not been done in the past few years, but it has provided fond memories to all who attended in their youth.

# ONGOING EVENTS



## Women's Fellowship

**Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 pm**

Gulbrandsons Presenting on their Australian Adventures! Men are invited too.

Any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300 or email the church at [media.ucchackmn@gmail.com](mailto:media.ucchackmn@gmail.com).

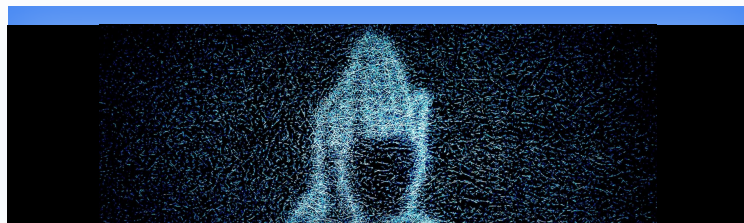


## Northwoods Acoustic Jam

**Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:media.ucchackmn@gmail.com).

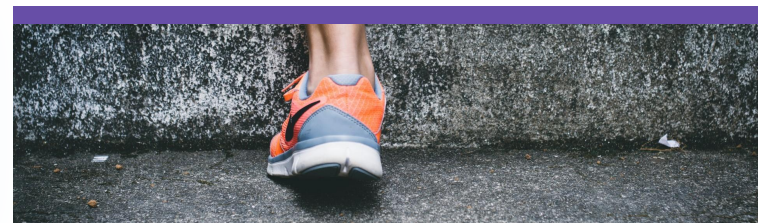


## Lectio Divina

**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 & Friday 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](mailto:media.ucchackmn@gmail.com).

## FUNDRAISING DINNER



**Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 5:00 - 6:00 pm**

**Friendship Hall**

Join us for a dinner of sloppy joes, cowboy beans, fresh salad, and homemade desserts!

Free will offering to support The Family Safety Network.

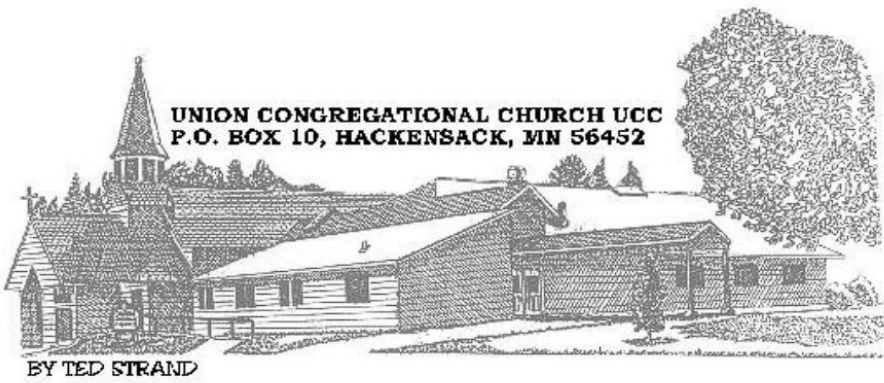


# Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

## MAY 2025

\* Community event

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>4</b> 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	<b>5</b> <i>Cinco de Mayo</i> 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting* 6:30 pm Turn the Lighthouse Red (at Walker Lighthouse)*	<b>6</b> 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	<b>7</b> 10:00 am Fit2Move 3:45 pm Lectio Divina	<b>8</b> 1:00 pm Women's Fellowship	<b>9</b> <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> <i>Mother's Day</i> 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	<b>12</b> 9:00 am Men's Fellowship 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	<b>13</b> 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting 6:00 pm KinsWomen Gathering*	<b>14</b> 10:00 am Fit2Move 3:45 pm Lectio Divina	<b>15</b> 10:00am-12:00pm Dream Group 1:00-3:00 pm Council Meeting	<b>16</b> <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	<b>17</b> 9:00am-12:00pm Neighbor Helping Neighbor Cleanup Event
<b>18</b> 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	<b>19</b> 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	<b>20</b> 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	<b>21</b> 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:00 pm Fundraising Meal 5:30 pm Northwoods Acoustic Jam	<b>22</b> 9:00 am Congregational Life Meeting 1:00-3:00 pm Fiber Arts*	<b>23</b> <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	<b>26</b> <i>Memorial Day</i> 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	<b>27</b> 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	<b>28</b> 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina	<b>29</b> 10:00am-12:00pm Dream Group	<b>30</b> <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	<b>31</b> 9:00am-12:00pm Rock Retreat



**FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED**



**2025**

**Mark your calendars!  
Fundraising Meal May 21st!**



**THE UNION NEWS**