

The Union News

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

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

An "Open and Affirming" Congregation

Church Office: (218) 675-6300
Pastor: Rev. Torri Vande Zande

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



Inside this issue:

Notes from Rev. Torri	1, 3
Birthdays	2
Men's Fellowship	3
Council Minutes	4, 5
Celebrating the Past	5
Through Koda's Eyes	6
Sewing Machines	
for Sale	6
Moderator's Moment	7
Women's Fellowship	8
Worship Ministry	8
Adult Learning	9
Outreach Team	9
Justice Ministry Team	9
Financial Stewardship	10
Celebrating the Past	10

JULY 2025

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

We will know we have equipped a courageous church when....

A few weeks ago during a worship service, I asked people in the congregation to finish this sentence: **"We will know we have equipped a courageous church when...."** We all wrote down our answers and passed them to the front. I read them outloud. I was amazed at the insightfulness and wisdom of our people.

When I got home that Sunday afternoon, I looked through those responses again and realized there are several different themes; themes that express the values of Union Congregational Church UCC.

The values that were expressed are:

- Getting out of our comfort zone
- Being inclusive and welcoming to all
- Serving our community
- Interconnectedness
- Working for justice

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	Caryl Allan
Treasurer	Sheryl Kaubisch
Bell Choir Director	Heidi Hoppe
Musicians	Sheryl Kaubisch Kathleen Millberg

LEADERSHIP

Moderators	Marilyn McKnight & Steve Erickson
Vice Moderator	Gunder Austin
Clerk	Connie Johnson-Schmitt
Board of Financial Stewardship	Don Hoppe

MINISTRY TEAMS

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

BOARDS

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

Hoedown BBQ
Fundraiser

MONDAY, JULY 14TH

5:00-6:30PM = DINNER

6:30-8:00PM = SHOW

WITH SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMER

CHARLEY WAGNER

UNION UCC CHURCH

401 LAKE AVE, HACKENSACK

(Between the Dog Park and Community Center)

FAMILY FRIENDLY • FREE WILL OFFERING
FUNDS HELP SUPPORT UNION UCC

JULY BIRTHDAYS

July 4	Gus Kaubisch
July 8	Fred Smith Bonnie Hiniker
July 11	Bruce Carlson Torri Vande Zande
July 15	James Hoppe
July 16	Katie Knutson
July 19	Gracee Rudkin Charlie Helscher
July 20	Lynn VanAllen
July 21	Linda Ottman
July 23	Gary Dietrich
July 25	George Strawn
July 26	Chris Hoppe
July 30	Gary Kwong

Happy Birthday!



Linda Ottman and Sabbastian Wilson-Webb, Editors

Continued from Page 1

I would like to share below a sample of the responses that people shared:

- “Make it our mission of reaching out to all attendees in an effort to include all - be willing to get uncomfortable.”
- “When we are grounded in our faith, stand together for justice, humanity and welcome and accept and love all.”
- “We reaffirm our readiness to carry out the radical message of love, compassion and inclusive welcoming of all who come to our doorstep.”
- “Helping our community - not just UCC church but the greater whole.”
- “When I see a need and I say to another, ‘Will you work with me on doing something to meet this need?’ it hopefully encourages both of us to do something together.”
- “When we can have open and honest conversations and find love and respect for all.”
- “We stand up for our beliefs and work with others on our differences.”
- “When you are not afraid to fight for ALL those who are disadvantaged in our society, no matter how difficult it becomes.”
- “We continue the work of the Justice Ministry Committee for justice for all straight, gay, racial justice.”

I shared the full list with the Council at our last meeting and encouraged them to create ministry events around our common values. I am so grateful to be part of this church and serve as your pastor. May we move forward as a courageous church and continue to equip those who want to follow and serve Jesus Christ.

Peace,
Pastor Torri

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our Men's Fellowship meeting in June included a presentation from Bruce Carlson on his recent book, [Your Aging Body: and How to Care For It](#). We invited Women's Fellowship to join us and had a very good turnout. His presentation was very informative, and many of us bought his book, the proceeds of which Bruce generously donated to Union Church.

In a round table discussion after the presentation, the subject of how to understand various aspects of your iPhone came up, and Mike Schmitt agreed to do a presentation and answer some questions about using one at our next meeting. This will not include Android phones. It will be on July 15th at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall at Union Church.

As was the case with last month's presentation, the subject is of interest to Women's Fellowship, so everyone is invited to attend.

I am stepping down as Chair of Men's Fellowship. Leadership will rotate every three months, and Don Hoppe will fill the position for the next term.

Stan Kumpula



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

JUNE 19, 2025 (*Minutes are not yet approved by the council*)

Present: Pastor Torri, Steve and Marilyn Erickson, Gunder Austin, Caryl Allan, Joni and Stan Kumpula, Linnea Dietrich, Mike and Connie Schmitt, Kerry Swanson, Mike Bohanon, Heidi and Don Hoppe

Call to Order by Steve Erickson

Pastor Torri offered a brief prayer

Additions to agenda under Fundraising and New Business. Motion to accept agenda by Connie, seconded by Linnea, approved.

Motion to accept last month's minutes by Linnea, seconded by Marilyn, approved.

Pastor's Monthly Report: Pastor Torri submitted a written report of her activities over the past month. Highlights include a new member joining on June 22, Carol Brunzell. Joni to do a corsage.

Union 101 class will be offered August 4, 11, & 18 via Zoom at 6PM.

Pastor Torri shared answers to her question of June 8th sermon.

Report from Annual UCC Conference: Gunder shared his experience of his first time at annual conference. "It was an amazing experience with great people." Theme was "The need to go deep – deeper in faith, commitments. Music included a group called "Many", with a song "Love is greater than fear". Union – Hackensack was honored with a certificate of Thanks for contributions in 2024 of \$7,200.00 to the "Our Church's Wider Mission".

BOARD TEAM REPORTS:

Board of Financial Stewardship: Don presented a written financial report for May 2025. He highlighted that May had the first positive balance of the year. Advisement from the Investment Advisory group – a \$40,000 CD from Bequest & Special Gifts came due and these funds were used as a short-term loan to help cover some expenses from the solar array project. It will be repaid back when the rebates are received from MN Power and the Federal government.

We are still on track for the solar installation at the end of June.

Board of Facilities: 1) Kerry reported that the estimate for the doors was higher than originally submitted. Additional items were missed in the first estimate. The second estimate was still within the amount approved by the council. Council approved that the Board could move forward with the new doors.

2) Two estimates were reviewed for the new roof. Both were for similar amounts and provided a good base to set up the capital campaign. Additional funds could come from the Reserve MRI fund. The council approved moving forward with the capital campaign.

3) Pew removal – Heidi moved to remove the companion pew on the north side of the sanctuary that was removed on the south side of the sanctuary. This will provide a handicap area for wheelchairs. Second by Stan. Motion carried. Kerry will remove pew and place it at the back of the sanctuary on the south side.

Personnel Board: Connie had nothing to report.

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

Adult Learning: Rock retreat was a success. It was held at Pastor Torri's with 13 attending. All had a great time.

Lectio Divina and Bible study is going well.

Camino has been canceled this year due to several organizers having personal issues. They are making plans to continue this next year.

Congregational Life: Caryl stated we have had several new people attend church services. It is everyone's responsibility to make them feel welcome. Heidi encouraged all to wear name tags and make sure visitors do too.

Birchview Church is doing great – very well attended.

Fundraising: Steve advised that the group had met and were working on advertising the Sweetheart Event and Concert – article for newspaper and outdoor signage. Pastor cautioned that we should have consistent messaging in whichever method we used. (i.e. print, poster, flags)

Mike Schmitt offered a suggestion on curtains and framing to make the sanctuary into a theater. These would allow us to showcase sanctuary as a facility that can be rented. As a theater or performance venue. Pastor said that decorations were being considered as well. These would be used for any fundraising event held at UCC. Stan made a motion to provide \$1000.00 budget for curtains. He later amended to \$1250.00 to cover both curtains and decorations. Second by Don. Motion approved.

Steve presented rental terms for the new office downstairs, \$300 per month / \$30 for internet. Gunder moved to accept terms / second by Kerry. Motion approved. Steve will draft and add the same language regarding liability and termination clauses used for childcare. He will present a draft for the next council meeting.

Steve presented an email from Ashley with the daycare concerning some items she wished to discuss. A team of Steve, Mike B, Kerry, Cindy will meet with Ashley and folks from Game Changers to discuss.

Outreach: Pastor submitted a written report in the absence of a team leader. Highlights included – Wednesday night dinners will be called “Benefits” not to confused with functions held by the Fundraising team. Outreach’s primary goal is to build relationships with the community. Fundraising team raises funds for the church through fundraising meals, rental of room, and leases of space on the lower level.

June 18th Benefit for the Children’s Fishing Contest raised \$633.00 with 74 in attendance.

Calendar of events for the rest of the year.

Justice Ministry: Marilyn reported for Justice Ministry. She will send out email to folks asking if they are interested in participating and activities /topics to discuss and any possible leadership options. She will report back to the council.

Women’s Fellowship: Joni reported that the trip to the Munsinger Gardens was canceled due to weather. Judy and Heidi will hold a presentation on different birds in July.

Men’s Fellowship: Stan reported that Bruce Carlson presented his new book – The Aging Body to the group from Men’s & Women’s Fellowship.

They agreed that their leadership will rotate every 3 months. Don Hoppe will lead the 3rd quarter. Mike Schmitt will lead the 4th quarter and Mike Gulbranson will lead the first quarter of 2026.

Mike Schmitt will hold a question / answer session on iPhones functions on July 15, 2025, at 10:00am.

Tech Team: Mike Schmitt submitted a written report for the Tech Team. Highlights include Streaming update including new cameras working well.

Used tech stuff can be given to Mike and will be sold to support funds for ongoing church tech needs.

Worship: Average Sunday attendance is 42 with 8 on-line. The last Sunday in July, Pastor Torri will be on vacation and Kerry will present the Message. Heidi sent a note to all the volunteer musicians inviting them to play during the summer services.

Moderator’s Moment: Steve read a poem from Richard Rohr called Protest, Pain, and Joy.

Old business: Connie showed a new report format for teams & ministries to submit for monthly council meetings. She reminded each team and ministry that a written report from each is due Thursday July 17th so packets can be made for the annual meeting which will be held July 27, 2025

June newsletter deadline is Tuesday June 24, 2025

Pastor Torri is on vacation July 21 – 27, 2025

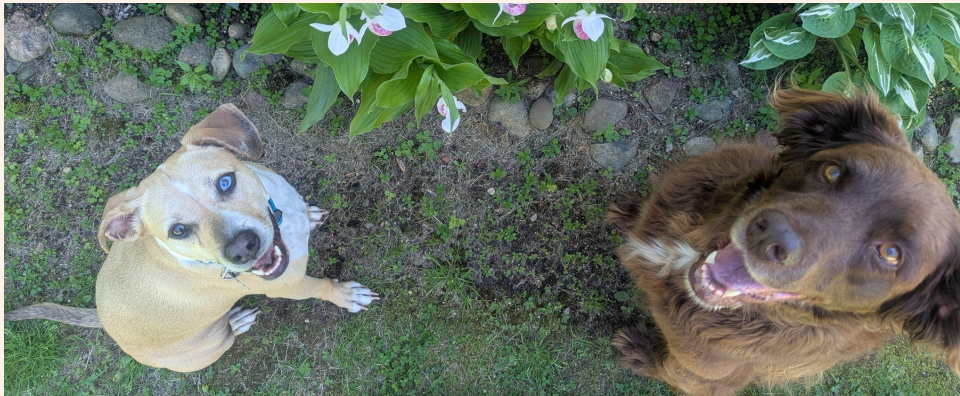
Items to be moved to July meeting – Policy for all teams / ministries regarding benefits / events. Capital campaign numbers and ideas.

Meeting was adjourned. Next meeting is July 17, 2025. Minutes written by Connie Schmitt.



THROUGH KODA'S EYES

Hi! My name is Koda, and I am the Church Dog! I told my human that I would like to do something different this month for the newsletter. I told her that I do not want to talk about how nice the summer is up here in the Northwoods, I want to show people! So instead of an article this month, my human and I took some pictures to remind you to enjoy the summer! Slow down, smell the flowers, enjoy the lakes, and play with friends!



Sewing Machines for Sale

We received three antique sewing machines in cabinets and are putting them up for sale! Currently, the congregation gets first dibs. In August, we will open the sale up to the public if they have not sold by then. They are a Minnesota treadle machine, a Singer electric machine, and a Singer treadle machine. If you would like to see the machines or more pictures, please contact Cindy at 612-232-2760 or Heidi at 218-831-3927.

Thank you
Blessings, Cindy



MODERATOR'S MOMENT 6-24-25

By Marilyn and Steve Erickson

As we wind down our term as co-moderators, we plan to continue our lifelong work in mediation by opening an Erickson Mediation Office in Hackensack. We will rent space in the lower level of the church to conduct mediations and also use the church community rooms to provide training, workshops and community learning opportunities for those interested in learning new cooperative living skills to move through the difficult conversations of personal conflict in a constructive manner.

During these last three years as moderators, most of you were aware of our medical struggles and subsequent recovery. We have experienced first-hand how medical challenges are another area of life where physical and emotional conflict interferes with not only quality living, but just plain survival. The medical treatments we faced have been arduous – both physically and emotionally, and more difficult than we ever expected. Many of you can certainly relate to this from your own health experiences and challenges, whether it be with a loved one experiencing serious medical issues, or your own pain and suffering. For us, and hopefully for all involved in the Union Congregational Community, what makes it all easier is the kindness, support and help that has been overwhelmingly offered and gratefully appreciated.

There have been bumps in the road, unanticipated interruptions in medical care, pain, emotional ups and downs, and wondering when things will get better. One lesson we have learned is that a loving support community is essential to one's recovery. Thank you all.

Another lesson we have learned in the midst of all of this major illness, is that understanding and patience is perhaps the greatest gift you can give whenever you encounter another person experiencing medical, physical, and/or emotional challenges. It is a gift and a privilege to be able to have a close, caring relationship with others in these difficult life situations. We cannot find enough words to express our gratitude to all of you who helped us in prayer, who delivered meals to our home, gave rides to chemo and radiation, and countless other forms of caring during the past three years.

Looking back, Union Church has been like a giant hydroelectric generating plant that organized the delivery of much needed power when our lights got dim and the storm and struggles of illness threatened to get the best of the two of us.

Hopefully, through our new central Minnesota mediation effort, we can give back to Union and the community some small bursts of peaceful energy and continued hope for constructive solutions.





WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



Greetings!

Here we are in the middle of summer already, and we are busy beavers. Our special trip to the Munsinger Gardens was cancelled due to rain, SOOO we met at church at 9:00, then went out for breakfast in town. Sad but still a little fun. This month on the second Thursday (the 10th), we are meeting at church to enjoy Heidi's exotic bird pictures along with fellowship and treats. Do get it on your calendar and come; 1:00 as usual.

I am delighted to announce that we earned almost \$300 from our plant sale! That's the best ever. Our next fundraiser isn't until December with our cookie-craft sale.

Next month August, we are excited to have Sue Cox teaching napkin folding. It will be fun I'm sure along with fellowship and treats, always treats!

Remember that we are putting together a happy hour recipe book, and your participation is needed. We can start collecting your favorites now. Just turn them in to Linda in the office or me. The book will be ready for the September meeting. We'll be talking about this a lot.

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



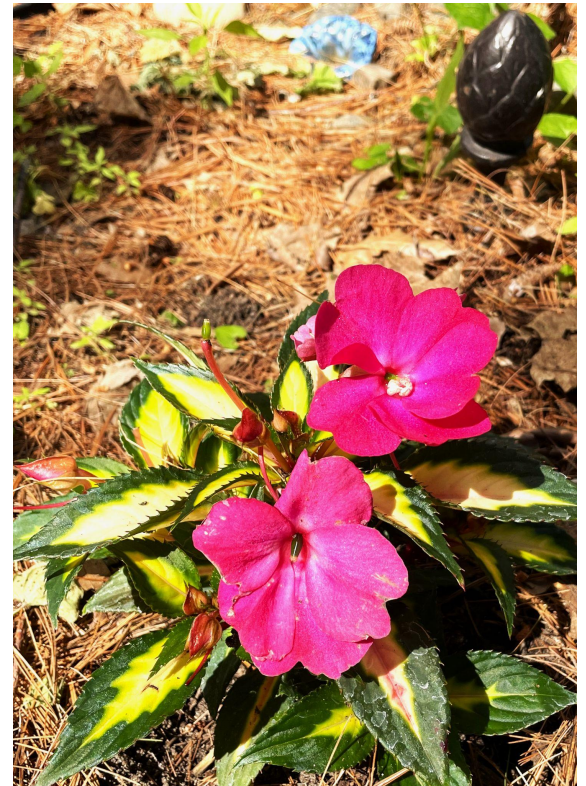
NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

Well, summer is in full swing in our beautiful corner of the world, and I hope you are enjoying the season, wherever you happen to be.

Our church is a busy place this time of year. There seems to be something going on all the time. This month we will host a Hoedown dinner and show fundraiser on the 14th as well as our regular benefit dinner on the 16th. I'm looking forward to our fundraiser - barbecued chicken dinner and a show featuring Charley Wagner and his mother (Mama Waggs). The funds raised at the benefit dinner this month will go toward the holiday food baskets given out by the UCC Men's Fellowship, the Lions, and the Hackensack Food Shelf at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. Both will be delicious dinners, so plan to come and bring your friends and neighbors!

We hope to see you in church, but if you cannot make it, be sure to watch the service online through YouTube, the church's website, or our Facebook page. Pastor Torri is an excellent preacher! She brings the scriptures to life every week, and her current series on the letter of James is enlightening and relevant to our lives today.

Take care, and may the Peace of Christ be with you always.



Heidi Hoppe, Chair; Sheryl Kaubisch, Gracee Rudkin, Mary Parrish, and Caryl Allan

ADULT LEARNING – by Linnea Dietrich

Adult Learning...short snippets!

- Rock N Retreat on May 31st was a wonderful time of personal sharing, creating beautiful rock paintings and sinking deeper into community for thirteen lovely women.
- Lectio continues weekly on Wednesdays from 4-5. All are welcome.
- Dream Group continues every other Thursday morning at 10 AM. Call Bonnie Mitsch at 763-213-4793 for upcoming dates.
- We have postponed Camino Hackensack 2025 to fall of 2026 due to “life circumstances” of the leaders. We will select the dates in February 2026.

The Outreach Team Update

The Outreach Ministry Team’s purpose is to engage our local community through events which highlight our church’s values, build positive relationships with them, and invite them to engage in a friendship with Union Church.

One of these avenues consists of having benefit meals for our local non-profit organizations. Last month we had a meal for the Children’s Fishing Contest that raised \$633 and gave a platform for the leaders to ask for more volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, just show up at 10:00 a.m., and Bill Kennedy will put you to work.

In July we have two exciting events that we will be doing. The first is building and having a float in the Sweetheart Days Parade, and the second is a Benefit Meal for Holiday Baskets. More details are below.

Tuesday, July 15th at 6:00 p.m. The Sweetheart Days Parade provides people with a way to celebrate what is important to them in this community. Over the last several years, Union has been the only church who has not participated by having a float in the parade, but this year will be different! We are looking for people to create a church float for the parade! No skills needed. Well, maybe a few skills are needed... but all skill levels are welcome!

Wednesday, July 16th from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Union Church will host a Benefit Meal for Holiday Baskets. Three times a year (Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas), the community comes together to create food boxes for families who may need a little extra help around the holiday seasons. This is a combined effort between the Hackensack Food Shelf, Hackensack Lions, and the Men’s Fellowship group from Union Congregational Church. Money raised will go for purchasing the meat that will go into the holiday baskets.

If you would like to help build the float or volunteer with the Benefit Meal, please call the office or contact Pastor Torri at pastor.ucchackmn@gmail.com.

JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM UPDATE

Justice Ministry Team will continue, but there will be no meeting on July 3rd. Stay tuned for more information about JMT Potluck and planning later this month.

BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Operating Income and Expenses

Income - May	\$ 17,274.32	Year to Date 2025 Giving	\$ 56,373.32
Other Income* - May	<u>\$ 806.12</u>	YTD Other Income*	\$ 4,858.78
Total Income	\$ 18,100.44	YTD Total Income	\$ 61,232.10
Expenses - May	\$ 12,769.15	Year to Date Expenses	\$ 68,647.01
Balance - May	\$ 5,331.29	Balance - Year to Date	\$ - 7,414.91
		Prepaid & Carryover	\$ 14,738.00
		Final Balance	\$ 7,323.09

* Other income includes Treasure Sale, 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:	\$ 98,178.07
Reserve Saving	\$ 34,744.50

Summary

Income for May was very good and expenses for May were a little low.

In consultation with the Investment Advisory group, \$40,000 from Bequest & Specials Gifts, from a CD that came due in May, is in checking and will be used as a short-term loan for the completion of the solar project and repaid with the receipt of the grants and refunds for the array.

The site prep for the Solar Array will be started at the end of June and the solar array will be completed in July.

New exterior doors on the west and north of the upper level will be replaced and paid for by money in the Reserve MRI fund.

The Board of Financial Stewardship and the Fundraising Ministry Team will be initiating a Capital Campaign to cover the cost of a new roof for Union Church.

CELEBRATING THE PAST: Summer Vacation Bible School

Myra Damm, Historian

Bible school was held in the summer to give religious instruction to the younger members of the church. This was usually held for a week with Bible stories and Bible themes as part of the program. The teachers were part of the congregation who volunteered to help. Classes were held by age groups from preschool to 8th grade. Craft classes, lessons, storytelling, and outdoor activities made this a week of fun and religious instruction.

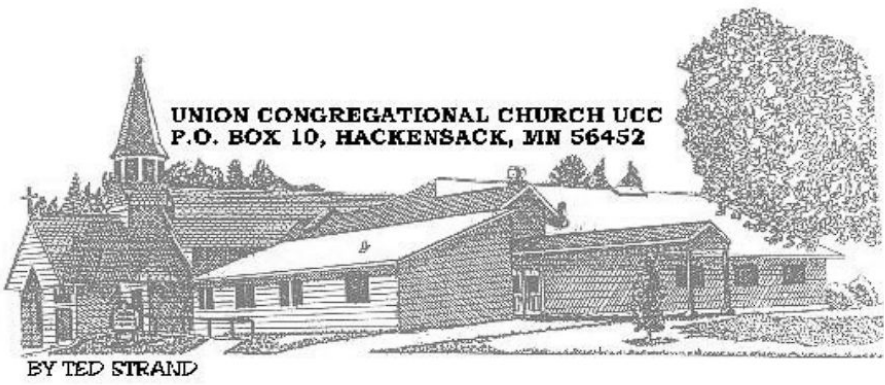
The first mention of Bible School in my records was in 1951, with an enrollment of 17. Vacation Bible School continued for many years in a joint effort with our church and St. Paul's, alternating the churches each year. Slowly the attendance became less, and it has not been held in the past few years, but it has left fond memories to all who attended in their youth.

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

JULY 2025

* Community event

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	2 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina	3 10:00am-12:00pm Dream Group	4 <i>Independence Day</i> <i>Office Closed</i>	5
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 - 2:30 pm Women's Fellowship	11 <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	12
13 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	14 9:30-10:30 am Men's Fellowship 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 5:00 pm Hoedown BBQ Fundraiser and Entertainment to follow by Charley Wagner 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	15 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting 10:00-11:00 am Men's Fellowship 6:00 pm Sweetheart Days Parade*	16 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:00 pm Benefit Meal 5:30 pm Northwoods Acoustic Jam	17 10:00am-12:00pm Dream Group 1:00-3:00 pm Council Meeting	18 <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 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* 6:00 pm Kinswomen Gathering*	22 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	23 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina	24 9:00 am Congregational Life Meeting 1:00-3:00 pm Fiber Arts*	25 <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	26 7:00 am Baby Lake Association Annual Meeting
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



2025

HAPPY SUMMER!



THE UNION NEWS