

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
Union 101	2
Birthdays	2
Sunday School	3
Moderator's Moment	3
Council Minutes	4, 5
Through Koda's Eyes	6
Financial Stewardship	7
Adult Learning	7
Women's Fellowship	8
Worship Ministry	8
Outreach Team	9
Justice Ministry Team	9
Celebrating the Past	10
Fishing Contest	10
Calendar	11

AUGUST 2025

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

Union 101

I became part of the United Church of Christ about 10 years ago. I resonated with the theology and way of doing justice, but I really didn't know much about the UCC. Where did they come from? What do they believe? How do they function?

I decided to become a MID (Member in Discernment), which meant I was seeking to figure out where I belonged in ministry. I knew I was called to ministry, but where did I fit in? Through the MID process I realized that God was leading me to become an ordained minister.

There were a number of things I needed to do for my ordination process including serving as a chaplain in a hospital, writing an ordination paper, being interviewed by The Committee on Ministry several times, and taking a course called "History and Polity of the UCC." The "History and Polity" class was my biggest challenge. I needed to learn how to function in a very different system than what I was used to in the Reformed and Assemblies of God denominations. I was a bit comforted by knowing that the form of governance was similar to an organization I worked with right out of college called



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

Moderator	Gunder Austin
Vice Moderator	John Lindberg
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	Rotating
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

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 1	Nancy Eisinger
August 5	Judy Hoopman
August 6	John Howland
August 8	Shelly Knuths
August 12	Barb Adams Tom Cox
August 14	David Batman
August 15	Steve Erickson Mary Lou Bauer
August 16	Rod Owre John Howland
August 18	Linda Kaiser
August 29	Arlene Caterino
August 30	Sheryl Kaubisch
August 31	Linda Merritt

Happy Birthday!

**UNION 101: Who is the
United Church of Christ and
How Do We Function?**

August 4th, 11th and 18th
at 6:00 PM over Zoom

Sign up by emailing Pastor Torri at
pastor.ucchackmn@gmail.com.



Linda Ottman and Sabbastian Wilson-Webb, Editors

Continued from Page 1

Youth for Christ, but having the structure of church was a whole new animal to me.

I studied, asked questions, and began understanding how the United Church of Christ functions on the local, conference, and the national levels. It was a big learning curve for me, but now I understand not only how the UCC functions, but why it functions like it does.

Many of us at Union come from all different types of backgrounds: Lutheran, Catholic, Reformed, Baptist, Pentecostal, United Methodist, Episcopalian.... We are one big bowl of soup! And it is beautiful!

Not many of us are from the United Church of Christ background, so some might have the same questions I did 10 years ago: Where did the UCC come from? What do they believe? How do they function?

Well, if those are some of the questions you have been asking, I am offering a class on Monday nights in August to walk people through the answers to those questions. It is called "Union 101." We will meet for 3 weeks (Aug. 4th, 11th and 18th) at 6:00 p.m. over Zoom. If that is something you are interested in, please sign up by emailing Pastor Torri at pastor.ucchackmn@gmail.com.

Sunday School is starting in September!!!

Starting September 14th children will be dismissed after the "Passing of the Peace" for Sunday School. It will meet on the Lower Level in the Children's Ministry Room twice a month (the 2nd and 4th weeks).

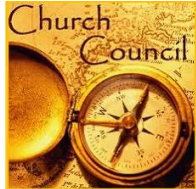
Sue Kimmel and Robin Wicker will be teaching along with a few assistant teachers. It will be a fun, interactive time for children to learn bible stories and songs.

MODERATOR'S MOMENT

It has been a privilege to complete three and a half years as moderators with our retirement at the annual meeting on July 27th. We look forward to opening our mediation office on the lower level of the church, so we are not leaving, just moving on to establish our mid-Minnesota Erickson Mediation Institute in Hackensack. This was delayed for almost three years while Marilyn went through extensive cancer treatment. We celebrate her "all clear" of cancer this spring! We are ever thankful to God and to all of you who have prayed for us and cared for us with making meals, through your loving cards, your rides to radiation appointments, and kindness during this immensely difficult time. We are receptive to any of your concerns about cancer, the treatment, coping with the unknown, and would welcome your questions and privacy if we can be of any assistance in your cancer journey. We are so thankful for all the excellent personal, professional medical expertise we have received from the Cuyuna Regional Medical Clinic in Crosby.

Our thanks for the generosity of you who continue to financially support the church and you who give of your talents by volunteering. Special thanks this month to Tammy and John Lindberg for cooking for two fundraisers in one week!!! We recognize the special artistic talents of John Lindberg for his building the float for the Sweetheart Parade that was a miniature of our church, steeple and all! John also built the "Chuck Wagon" for the Sweetheart Fundraiser! Tammy's creative culinary expertise continues to impress with every coffee hour and meal. We are also fortunate to have friends of our church, Kirin and Alan Christianson, and members Mike and Connie Schmitt transform our church sanctuary into a stage for the performance by Charley Wagner and Mamma Wags! It was certainly a night to remember!

Marilyn McKnight and Steve Erickson



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

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

Present: Gunder Austin, Don and Heidi Hoppe, Mike and Connie Schmitt, Caryl Allan, Marilyn Mcknight, Steve Erickson, Mike Bohanon, Linnea Dietrich, Pastor Torri, Joni Kumpula, and Mary Parrish. Guest: Lynn VanAllen.

The meeting was called to order by Co-Moderator Marilyn. Pastor Torri led us in prayer.

There were changes to the Agenda regarding Fundraising and Outreach. Connie/Don/passed unanimously

Minutes were approved as presented. Gunder/Mary/passed unanimously

Pastor's Monthly Report: Pastor Torri presented her monthly report. We are finishing up the series on James. Next will come a series on generosity, then we will be digging into the Gospel of Matthew.

- Children's Ministry - will begin in September.
 - Teachers will have training through our "Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adult" policy, will have a background check, and will sign a code of conduct.

BOARD TEAM REPORTS

Board of Facilities (Mike B.)

- Roof - must be done by next year for sure
- Pew Removal - Kerry will remove tomorrow, July 18th.
- Friendship Hall Foundation repair - no update. Waiting to hear from WSN
- Shelving in Storage Room: New shelving will be installed in the near future. Mike S volunteered to help
- New Doors - no update

Board of Financial Stewardship (Don)

- June figures are lower than expected: June Income \$11,764, Expenses \$13,140, and balance \$-1,375. Year-to-date balance \$-8,790. Year-to-date balance including prepaid & carryover +\$5,948
- The roof repair capital campaign will begin soon..
- Erickson Mediation lease will begin in August.
- Child Care Lease: Steve met with Ashley and Katy Chase (Child Care Board) regarding Child Care rent. The \$1,000 monthly rent originally suggested by the state non-profit organization may have been overly optimistic for out-state Minnesota. Ashley's suggestion of \$600/month is more realistic. Mike S recommended keeping rent and the cost of the internet separate. **Motion:** Charge \$600 (6 or less children) or \$700 (7+) per month. Connie/Gunder/approved with 1 nay vote. **Motion:** Ashley to supply washer and dryer, and we pay for installation (Lions have approximately \$500 from Pancake Breakfast donations). Steve will follow up with Ashley on the changes requested by the council. This will need to be confirmed once Ashley is in agreement with our comments. Linnea/Gunder Passed Unanimously.
- Mike S gave a presentation on the Solar Array update. It should be up and running and signed-off by Minnesota Power by August 3.

Board of Personnel (Connie)

- Children's Ministry background checks are in the works.

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

Adult Learning (Linnea)

- Lectio Divina and bible study are going strong
- Spirit and Spirituality retreat will be held on August 27th and is open to all

Congregational Life (Caryl)

- We have 4 new members this year but have lost 2 long time members.
- Worship service when Carol from Birchview Church joined went well and can easily be repeated if someone else from Birchview would like to join the church.

Justice Ministry Team

- Leadership will rotate - 1 person for 3 months and then pass to another.

- Goals for the year.
 - Water protection
 - Our native american neighbors
 - LGBTQ support
 - Book study
- Hackensack cleanup - postponed for a year

Men's Fellowship (Don)

- Leadership of this group will also rotate. Don is the leader for 3 months.
- Had a good presentation on iPhones by Mike S. It will be repeated, and Mike will do one for android users too.
- Will set up consistent meeting time

Outreach Team (Torri, until new Team Leader is found)

- Benefit for Food Boxes raised \$291.86.
- Sweetheart Days parade was successful despite a hiccup regarding candy purchase. Thanks to John Lindberg for building the float.
- Aug. 5th Children's Fishing Contest: We are the sponsoring organization that day and need volunteers to work the booth
- Thank you to Lynn for the exceptional newspaper articles she does for the benefit meals. Her article for the August meal to benefit the Hackensack Lending Library Historic Building Restoration Project was included in our packets and was wonderful.

Fundraising Team (Steve)

- Hoedown dinner and a show were a great success and raised over \$1,000.
- Steve is stepping down as leader of this team. The possibility of this team becoming a subgroup of the Board of Financial Stewardship was discussed. BoFS and the Fundraising Team will consider the idea.

Tech Team (Mike S.)

- The sanctuary stage setup for the show looked great and came in under budget. Setup (including moving altar furniture and removing banners) took an hour, breakdown and returning sanctuary to normal took a half hour.

Women's Fellowship (Joni)

- Having a good time. There were 10 at the July program; and the August program will be napkin folding. All women are invited to attend.
- Appetizer recipes for September are due at the program on August 14. The appetizer booklets will be distributed at the September program. Bring an appetizer to share and enjoy a glass of wine.

Worship (Heidi)

- All is going well. June stats: 47 in person and 7 households online.
- We are an active, outgoing, friendly, vibrant church. Remember to greet visitors and new people before, during, and after service.

Moderator's Moment (Steve Erickson and Marilyn McKnight)

- This is their last meeting as co-moderators. The Council expressed their gratitude.
- Steve & Marilyn invited the Council to a potluck Rib Fest at their house on Thursday, August 7, at 5:00. They will provide ribs and lemonade. Bring beverage(s) of your choice and a dish to share.

NEW BUSINESS

- Newsletter Deadline - July 22nd
- Semi-Annual Meeting - July 27th
 - Teams/ Boards / Committees - written reports for the Semi-Annual meeting need to be submitted to Linda by **Thursday, July 17th**

OLD BUSINESS

none

Benediction

Adjourn

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING is August 21st, 2025.

Heidi Hoppe, Scribe

THROUGH KODA'S EYES

My Great Adventure!

Hi! I'm Koda and I am the Church Dog!

It was early in the morning when my human put on my collar and told me to jump in the car! I had no idea where we were going, but I am always excited for a car ride, so I hopped right in! She packed snacks for both of us, a lunch for herself, and she took along a bottle of cold water. I knew right away... this was going to be a good day!

My human drove for a really long time, so I got bored and decided to take a nap in the back seat. When I woke up, I looked out the side window and guess what I saw? WATER! A LOT OF WATER! Now, some of you might know, I am not a big fan of water... and neither is my human. So, why we were so close to something neither of us likes very much was very confusing to me.

Our first stop was to a place my human called Gooseberry Falls. It had big rocks and waterfalls! We walked down paths, I sniffed new smells, and even saw some other dogs! Our second stop was to a place called Pebble Beach. We got out of the car, walked a path, and there it was!!! The WATER! THE PLACE OF A LOT OF WATER! My human called it Lake Superior. It was gigantic and a bit scary.



My human guided me to the shore and picked up a stick. I normally don't like sticks, but this one was different for some reason. I wanted that stick! My human looked at me, raised the stick and threw it into the water! Instinctively I ran after it. The water hit my face before I realized what I was doing. I was in the water! I grabbed the stick, ran to shore and dropped it in the sand. I sneezed the water out of my nose, looked at my human... and she had the stick again ready to throw it again! I thought to myself, "This is a good game! I will play this game for a while!"

We played for several minutes before I became very tired. It had been a full day of walking, smelling and exploring. I was ready to go home. I think my human was ready too.

Sometimes we need little adventures to break up our lives. God has created this whole big world for us to explore, and we don't have to go far to experience it. Sometimes adventure involves places, and other times adventure involves people. If you are lucky... a really good adventure involves BOTH!

I hope you have days filled with adventures (big and small). Don't be afraid to try new things like chasing a stick into a big pile of water. And never forget to bring friends along!

That's how I see it through my eyes!

Have a barky day!

Koda (The Church Dog)



BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Operating Income and Expenses

Income - June	\$ 10,329.00	Year to Date 2025 Giving	\$ 66,702.32
Other Income* - June	<u>\$ 1,435.41</u>	YTD Other Income*	\$ 6,294.19
Total Income	\$ 11,764.41	YTD Total Income	\$ 72,996.51
Expenses - June	\$ 13,139.78	Year to Date Expenses	\$ 81,786.79
Balance - June	\$ -1,375.37	Balance - Year to Date	\$ - 8,790.28
		Prepaid & Carryover	\$ 14,738.00
		Final Balance	\$ 5,947.72

* 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: \$ 124,508.16

Reserve Saving \$ 34,759.70

Summary

Income and expenses for June 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 was done in June and the solar array is nearly completed and will be functioning by the first week of August.

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.

A capital campaign to cover expenses for the re-shingling of the church will be started this year.

Our giving revenue for 2025 is low. Please complete your 2025 pledges or projected giving amounts before the end of year.

In August or early September, Union Church will begin it's 2026 Stewardship Campaign.

ADULT LEARNING – by Linnea Dietrich

Spirits and Spirituality: Collage Making for the Soul.

Join us for an evening of wine, cheese, and creativity August 27 from 4-6 in Friendship Hall. Participants will reflect upon God's presence in their lives and create a collage to reflect that which sustains them. This evening will focus on wisdom, inspiration, and hope as we create, reflect, and share our insights. No artistic skills are necessary for this retreat! There is a sign-up sheet in the hallway by Friendship Hall or call Linda in the office and sign up. Cost is \$5 payable at the retreat. We welcome men to this retreat also.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship is doing well and having a fun, interesting and informative time with the other women of the church, be it members or friends. This is something we all feel the need for. All women, both members and friends, are automatically members of our fellowship. This year we planned the year's events in January and have met every month.

Please join us on Thursday, August 14th, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. We will learn how to fold napkins, making entertaining more fun! We will also be doing some wine tasting. That day will also be the deadline for submitting your favorite hors d'oeuvres recipe for our Happy Hour Recipes booklet. Please choose your favorite appetizer recipe and submit to media.ucchackmn@gmail.com, prior to August 14th.

For the balance of 2025, we hope to take a short tour, make gingerbread houses, sell Christmas cookies and crafts, have the All-Congregational Luncheon, and also continue to have a lot of wonderful fellowship!



NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

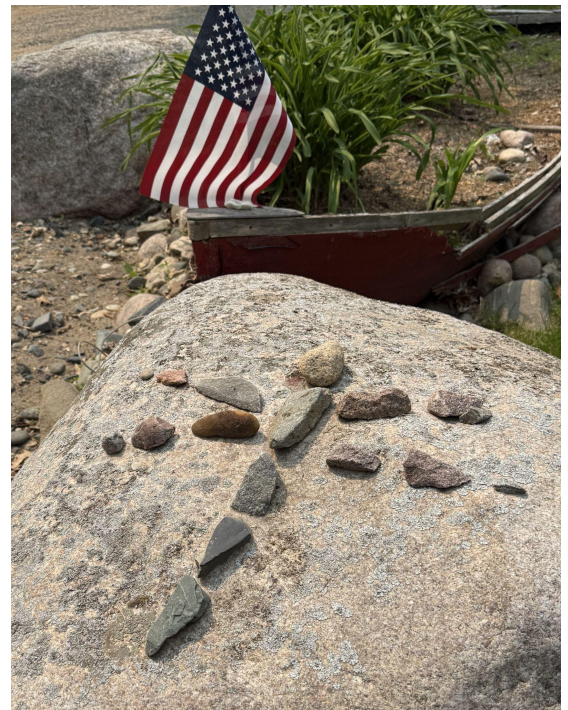
It's been a great summer in the North Woods so far. We've had lots of rain, and the temps have been very pleasant. The gardens, both vegetable and floral, have been growing by leaps and bounds. The only drawback has been the constant smoke in the air from the Canadian wildfires. Our thoughts and prayers go out to our northern neighbors.

The Worship Ministry Team invites you to participate in a hymn/sacred song service on August 31st. We will solicit your favorite hymns/songs and ask for volunteers to do short readings during the service. We're hoping to continue this practice on each month which has a 5th Sunday.

Last year at this time we were preparing for Pastor Torri's sabbatical. She returned to us refreshed and renewed and has been delighting us with very thought-provoking sermons. We are beginning a series on Gratitude this month.

Speaking of gratitude, we will soon be entering into not only our annual stewardship campaign for 2026, but also a capital campaign aimed at replacing our aging roof. We are a vital and vibrant church, expressing the love and faithfulness of God in our community. It is a wonderful gift for me to be a member of this faith community, and I pray each and every one of you feels the same. As we look to the future, let us count our blessings and support our joyous, enthusiastic, dynamic church to the best of our abilities.

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



The Outreach Team Update

The month of July was very eventful for the Outreach Team! **We participated in the "Sweetheart Days" parade by building a float!** It was a small replica of the church with a working bell, and there was enough room for 2-3 people to ride on it. It rolled its way down 1st Street on a rainy Tuesday afternoon, and we had a blast. The float was built to be dismantled and put into storage so we can use it again next year.

The Outreach Team also had their monthly (July) benefit meal which raised funds for a local nonprofit. This month we raised money for the purchase of the meat that goes into the Holiday Food Boxes. The Men's Fellowship of Union Church purchases the meat every year and helps the Food Shelf pack the boxes. Then the Lion's Club delivers them to families who need a little extra help during the Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas seasons. We raised \$291.86! We plan to have 2 more meals for this purpose in the months to come.



In the month of August, the Outreach Team is planning a benefit meal for the Hackensack Lending Library. This meal will be on Wednesday, August 20th from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. in the Friendship Hall. It will be a free-will donation event, and everyone is welcome! Members from the Lending Library will be on site to help serve and give us an update on how the renovation of the library is going. Come join us that evening for food, friends and fun!

The Outreach Team (Tammy Lindberg, John Lindberg, Mike Bohanon, Lynn VanAllen, Pastor Torri Vande Zande)



CELEBRATING THE PAST: The Lower Level of the Church

Myra Damm, Historian

In the past year the lower level of UCC has been remodeled, and is now going to be used for a daycare facility.

In the past this space has had many uses. When the first remodel of the church was done, there was a friendship hall with a kitchen, where people gathered after service for coffee and socializing. Dinners and fundraisers were also using this space, and Sunday School was also held there. There is an exit door at the lower level giving it easy access.

After the new remodel this space was used as a Moms Morning Out on Friday mornings. On Sundays this was used as a nursery. Youth Group, after school program met there on Wednesday evenings, along with Family Table. Bible school also used the rooms for crafts and classes.

When the Treasure Sale came to be, this space and all of the lower level was filled with goods, furniture, appliances and clothing. There is a large storeroom that was filled with items stored until time for sale.

The new daycare will make good use of this space, and we welcome this new group.



Children's Fishing Contest!

Union Church's Outreach Ministry Team is sponsoring the Children's Fishing Contest on Tuesday, August 5th. Thank you to the 5 people who have volunteered to grill, serve hotdogs, and pour drinks for families while they fish! This will be a lot of fun!!!

BENEFIT MEAL



Wednesday, August 20th, 5:00 - 6:00 pm
Friendship Hall

Join us for a dinner of scalloped potatoes with ham, green beans, buns, salad, and dessert.

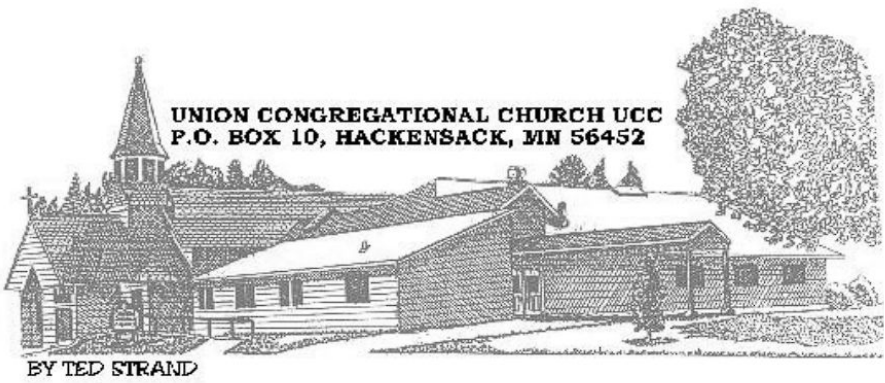
Free will offering to support the Hackensack Lending Library.

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

AUGUST 2025

* Community event

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	1 FRIDAY	2 SATURDAY
3 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	4 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting* 6:00 pm Union 101 Class	5 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	6 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina	7 10:00am-12:00pm Dream Group	8 <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00am Fit2Move in Friendship Hall 1:30pm Bone Builders 5:00pm Setup for TMLA Meeting*	9 9:00am-3:00pm NAC Art & Book Fair*
10 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	11 9:30-10:30 am Men's Fellowship 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting* 6:00 pm Union 101 Class	12 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting 10:00am Executive Board Meeting 5:30 pm Northwoods Acoustic Jam	13 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina	14 1:00 - 2:30 pm Women's Fellowship 3:30-7:30pm Countryside Coop Annual Meeting	15 <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	16
17 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	18 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting* 6:00 pm Union 101 Class 6:00 pm Kinswomen Gathering*	19 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	20 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:00 pm Benefit Meal	21 10:00am-12:00pm Dream Group 1:00-3:00 pm Council Meeting	22 <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	23
24 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	25 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	26 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	27 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00-6:00 pm Spirits & Spirituality Retreat	28 9:00 am Congregational Life Meeting 1:00-3:00 pm Fiber Arts*	29 <i>Office Closed</i> 10:00 am Fit2Move 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	30
31 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church						



FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



2025

**Join us for a yummy meal
August 20th @ 5:00 PM!**



THE UNION NEWS