Friendship News, October 2024

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First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd

An Open and Affirming Congregation

The Church Office Hours: Wednesdays – Fridays from 10:00am – 2:00pm

Office phone 218-829-2528 Office E-mail [*uccbrainerd@gmail.com*](mailto:uccbrainerd@gmail.com)

Pastor Leslie’s E-mail: [*pastorleslieucc@gmail.com*](mailto:pastorleslieucc@gmail.com)Website: [*www.uccbrainerdmn.org*](http://www.uccbrainerdmn.org)

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.*

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**Pastor’s Pen**

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***Our Faith, Our Vote***

The following writing comes from <https://www.ucc.org/our-faith-our-vote> which is a program of the National UCC:

“The United Church of Christ’s Our Faith Our Vote Campaign is our ongoing commitment to equip you with the tools for nonpartisan faithful engagement in our democratic process. The campaign is made up of three main components: **voter registration, issue education, and voter empowerment.**

The 2024 Our Faith Our Vote campaign asks the church to answer the call of 1 John 3:18 to *“let us not love with words or speech, but in action and in truth,”* by “voting with love.” Vote with love for creation, for our neighbors both here and abroad, for a just peace, for repair and reconciliation of the brokenness of our nation. And encourage your family, friends, and community to do the same.

The 2024 election season is well underway, so please check the website for updates to learn how you can “vote with love” this year.

Politics is often taken to be a dirty word, but political processes are simply the way communities organize their common life. For people of faith, public policy is never merely politics. It is a way of living out the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is fitting for local congregations and church structures across the country to develop nonpartisan programs to help the faith community reflect upon the political order.”

Many clergy are hesitant to talk about politics with their congregation. There is a fear that even neutral speech will be perceived as skewed toward one political party or another. But it is appropriate, and even necessary as people of faith, to engage in the political process in order to work toward a world in which the values of God’s kin-dom are reflected in our public lives. A world in which people in positions power are actively working to dismantle systems of oppression and marginalization. A world in which injustice, racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia are replaced with compassion, hope, and speaking the truth in love.

To learn more about what it means to vote with Love, check out this link put together by the Voting with Love task force: <https://www.ucc.org/vote-with-love/>.

**A person wearing glasses and a black sweater

Description automatically generated**With Peace,

Text, whiteboard

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***Purpose Statement of First Congregational United Church of Christ***

*“First Congregational UCC is a welcoming, inclusive, and progressive community committed to promoting social justice, spiritual growth, and love for all people.*

*We reject discrimination and advocate for equality and dignity for marginalized communities. Through worship, education, and service, we work to make a positive impact on the world and invite all individuals to join us in this journey of faith and service.”*

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**First Congregational UCC News & Updates**

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**Pastor Leslie’s Workday Schedule**

**>> Sunday through Thursday (Days off are Friday and Saturday) <<**

**Drop-in Hours\***

**Wednesdays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm Thursdays 2:00 – 4:00 pm**

*\*Drop-in hours are times set aside for “drop-in” conversations, much like a professor’s office hours. Pastor Leslie is typically working at the church the rest of the week, but it is possible that she may be in meetings, at a community event, or working off-site.*

Everyone is encouraged to make an appointment if the above times are not convenient.

You can go to [*www.calendly.com/pastorleslieucc*](http://www.calendly.com/pastorleslieucc/) and select a day and time that works for you, or you can email Pastor Leslie at [*pastorleslieucc@gmail.com*](mailto:pastorleslieucc@gmail.com) or call/text at 218-656-0096.

**Pastor Leslie Out of the Office**

**Wednesday, October 8th Through Monday, October 21st for hip replacement surgery.**

**Pastor Leslie will be back in the Office Tuesday, October 22nd**

***For pastoral care emergencies please contact the following Pastors:***

***10/8 - 10/15: Rev. Patty Bjorkland at 651-341-6982. Text (preferred) or call***

***10/16 - 10/21: Rev. Joyce Rush call 218-838-8287***

A dog with a collar and a note

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**A logo with a clock and a cross

Description automatically generatedChurch Office Hours**

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**Wednesday, Thursday, Friday**

**10:00 am - 2:00 pm**

Please call Admin. Asst. Terri at the office 218-829-2528

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**Stay Connected**

**How to watch Sunday worship:** The worship service is **broadcasted on the church Facebook page and the church's YouTube channel every Sunday at 10:00 am.**  
To watch worship on Facebook, go to [*https://www.facebook.com/uccbrainerd/live*](https://www.facebook.com/uccbrainerd/live)  
***\*\*Live stream videos are saved and can be viewed at any time. All memorials, weddings and 12th Night Concert are on our church Facebook page.***

**How to stay connected with First Congregational friends and members:** Join the private group for our Facebook Connections Page at [*https://www.facebook.com/groups/uccbrainerd*](https://www.facebook.com/groups/uccbrainerd)*.*

**Financial Help Available** Your Church Council voted last year to allow the Pastor's Discretionary Fund to be used to assist church members and others in the Brainerd area who are experiencing financial distress during this time. We received many generous donations! If you need assistance, please email, call, or text Pastor Leslie. Let her know what your situation is and how the church might be of help.

**Donate to the church online!**We are now accepting your offerings and donations using **PayPal.** You do not need to have a PayPal account to make an online donation with a credit card. To use PayPal, go to: [*https://www.paypal.me/uccbrainerd*](https://www.paypal.me/uccbrainerd)

**Announcements & Reminders**

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A bunch of colorful balloons

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Bob Jones Oct. 7 Kamery Hauan Hahn Oct. 25

Jolene Hojem Oct. 7 Elissa Hartwig Oct. 28

Thomas Highum Oct. 8 Tracy Lyons Oct. 28

Eileen Kurpiers Oct. 11 Andrew Pucko Oct. 29

Zachariah Johnson Oct. 11 Elizabeth Paulson Oct. 30

Robert Morgan Oct. 14 Paxie Imsdahl Oct. 31

Barb McColgan Oct. 20 Luann Rice Oct. 31

Cynthia Janes Oct. 25

A group of people's faces in the sky

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**Stewardship Commitment Season is Here**

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Greetings Members & Friends of First Congregational UCC, Brainerd,

Fall is the time of year when Stewardship reaches out to members and friends who are connected to our church to ask you to consider support for our church, now and in the future.

Conversations about money are often difficult. Money is a topic which creates discomfort for many. **We ask you to search your heart about what this church means to you and how you can help us** **continue**. We value volunteers’ gifts of time and talent that keeps our church alive; and we have a building, staff and vital outreach ministries that require funding.

Our theme this year is **IMAGINE TOGETHER**. God calls us into community. Faith is not a solitary life but one that brings us together. The spiritual practice of generosity arises from imagining all that God calls us to do as community. Financial support to our congregation makes it possible to turn what we imagine into reality. Through your annual commitments to this church, we imagine together all that we can do in our church, community and the world.

By mid-November we will set a budget for 2025 based on pledges and dedication. We ask you to consider supporting our church so it can thrive and make a difference. Our church is an open door to many in this community.

You can set up a monthly automatic donation (information is enclosed) or use an RMD (Required Minimum Distribution) that is tax free. Letting us know your intentions (weekly, monthly, quarterly or an annual donation) will help us set a realistic budget.

**Pledge Sunday is October 27th**. Please get your pledge to the church office by **November 1st.** We can then begin to plan for 2025. If you need assistance or have any questions, call the church office 218-829-2528 or talk to one of the Stewardship Committee members.

A close up of a logo

Description automatically generatedBecause of you, this church can **IMAGINE TOGETHER**.

Your UCC Stewardship Committee; Marcia Ferris, Judy Whiteman, Sarah Jo Armstrong, Maggie Anderson

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**A invitation to a celebration of the solar eclipse

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**A poster for a movie night

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**A person with glasses and a black vest

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**Mary Anne Bennett Memorial Service**

Two memorial celebrations are being planned. **One will be held at Brainerd UCC church on Saturday, October 5th at 1:45 pm with a reception following service in the Fellowship Hall.** The second will be held at Presbyterian Church of the Apostles in Burnsville.

Mary Anne Olivia Bennett was born September 27, 1937, in Leipzig, Germany. Mary Anne transitioned from her earthly home August 16, 2024, to her eternal abode surrounded by family, friends and a cloud of witnesses at her lake retreat on North Long Lake in Brainerd. Mary Anne is buried at Lakeview Cemetery, Palmers, MN - a green cemetery.[***https://www.cavallinfuneralhome.com/obituaries/mary-anne-bennett-kertzscher-birkey***](https://www.cavallinfuneralhome.com/obituaries/mary-anne-bennett-kertzscher-birkey)

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**Logo

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**October Adult Forum - 11:30 after worship**

**October 6th:** Co-sponsored by the Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Fellowship - Gayle Nielsen and Larry Fisk will give a presentation on their summer 2024 trip to Nicaragua to celebrate the ouster of Somoza, and their trip as part of a delegation to observe the Venezuelan Presidential election.

**A logo for a health network

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**October 27th: Understanding and Reacting to Depression**: A local subject matter expert and Congregational member will help participants understand the diverse cultural, familial and developmental origins of the common experience of depression. Guidelines for how to respond to this experience using discernment and being non-judgmental will be offered.

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***A menu of a business meeting

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A picture containing text

Description automatically generated**UCC & TheShop Meal!**

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**Meal cooking has been scheduled for the fourth Wednesday of each month and beginning October 23rd at 3:30-5:30 pm in the church kitchen and Fellowship Hall.**

*Save the dates: November 27, December-cancelled for Christmas, January 22,*

*February 26, March 26, April 23, May 2.*

For the last several years, UCC volunteers have helped prepare a meal with and for the youth at TheShop - Brainerd Baxter Youth Drop-in Center. A number of youth and the staff from TheShop come over to our kitchen and help prepare a delicious meal that is then brought back to TheShop for the hungry and appreciative teens there. Join us in connecting with local youth, offering them a unique opportunity to learn a new skill with friendly compassionate adults.

**A colorful graffiti on a green background

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**October Special Offering - TheShop**

**Sunday October 27th**

This month we have an opportunity to help as we give our Fourth Sunday Special Offering to TheShop Brainerd Baxter Youth Center (BBYC). TheShop is a non-profit organization committed to providing community support to all teenagers and young adults as they transition into independence and adulthood. We are a safe space where youthful energy is harnessed into creative energy by providing opportunities to explore potential, build lasting relationships, and establish personal connections. To donate, send a check with "TheShop” in the memo line to: First Congregational UCC, 415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401 or donate online using PayPal [*https://www.paypal.me/uccbrainerd*](https://www.paypal.me/uccbrainerd)and indicate "TheShop" in the Note.

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**7th Annual Halloween Extravaganza!**

**Thursday, October 31st 4:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

You can help the church connect with our neighbors!

* + - * **Donate Candy and/or non-candy item** - There is a box located outside the sanctuary for donations of candy and non-candy items.
* **Decorate** – **Wednesday, October 30th 5:00 – 7:00 pm**
* **Volunteer on Halloween Night** – **Thursday, October 31st** 
  + Make cider and final set up starting at 4:00 pm
  + Hand out candy, serve cider, general friendly help from 5:00 – 8:00 pm (or earlier if trick-or-treaters are scarce). Come for an hour or the entire night!
  + **Help with clean-up**. Take down and put away the decorations: 8:00-9:00 pm (or as soon as we’re done. More helpers = shorter clean up time!

**Costumes are strongly encouraged but not required. Please keep them kid-friendly.**

***Sign-up sheet in the Narthex starting Sunday, October 6th.***

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**A poster for a conference

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**Several doors in a row

Description automatically generatedWelcome to our Facility**

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It is the policy and privilege of the First Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC) Brainerd, to share its beautiful church facilities for purposes that match the values of the church and its mission which is “to know and share God’s love within us.” We are an open church valuing the diversity of age, culture, gender identity, opinions, physical and mental abilities, and sexual orientation.

To reserve a space for general use, ask for a “Request for Church Building Use” form and policy packet from the church office, administrative assistant Terri at 218-829-2528 or email *uccbrainerd@gmail.com.* Submit the request form to the administrative assistant.

For wedding or funeral use, contact the Pastor Leslie: [*pastorleslieucc@gmail.com*](mailto:pastorleslieucc@gmail.com)

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**A book cover of a book

Description automatically generatedFriday Book Group**

**We meet each Friday morning at 10:30 am via zoom**.

Church Zoom link: [*https://tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom*](https://tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom)

We are reading the book “Tipping Point” by Malcom Gladwell, about how trends start.

Contact Pat Scott for more information.

**A picture containing sketch, clipart, drawing, illustration

Description automatically generatedUCC Care Team**

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For anyone who wishes to join in making calls or visits, the Care Team meets every month on the first **Thursday at 10:00 am**. If you know of anyone who would enjoy a call from the care team, please contact one of our Care Team; *Barb Hoeft, Jack and Kay Kraywinkle, Pat Scott, Chris Yager, Deb Griffith, Joey Halvorson (text or email) and Pastor Leslie.*

**A wooden crate full of vegetables

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**Fall Garden Gleaning**

***A Biblical (and environmentally) inspired activity***

Gardeners and plant people bring in their “gleanings” to share. Fall is a great time to share apples, root crops, squash, pumpkins and daffodil bulbs, etc.

A table, poster and donation basket are in Narthex entrance. Enjoy the fruits of our labors!!  All are welcome to help themselves – no charge! All monetary donations are given to the Food Shelf.

*Historical note: Begun here circa 1988 when our church began Hunger Action outreach, Central America updates and global food connections.*

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**Text

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**Hosts, Ushers, Greeters,**

**Scripture-readers**

Sunday morning greeters/ushers and coffee hosts play an important part in making our church a warm and welcoming place for all. Signup below for your first Sunday as the face of the church! [*https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E48A9A823A5FFC07-hugs/16034811*](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E48A9A823A5FFC07-hugs/16034811)

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**A red and black logo

Description automatically generated with low confidenceFirst Congregational Food Shelf Collection**

**Our church continues to collect non-perishable food items for the Salvation Army Food Shelf. Please consider bringing items and donating.**

**There are two collection boxes: one in the parking lot entry hallway, the other in the Narthex. Thank you, Brian Twamley and Stephanie Lee, for picking up and delivering the food to the Salvation Army.**

**You may also send a money donation to the church;** First Congregational UCC

415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401. Or for your convenience use our Paypal account at: [*paypal.me/uccbrainerd*](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/uccbrainerd) **Make sure to write in memo “Food Shelf”.**

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**The Columbarium & Memorial Garden**

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**First Congregational UCC, Brainerd**

The Columbarium is in the historic space that once was our church’s front entry way.

How appropriate it is that our Columbarium now marks another entry way into a new life — where the Spirits of Love and Truth are always present!

The Memorial Garden is located on the south lawn of the church. The Garden provides a place for cremains of your loved one to be buried in the ground among natural plantings. The Garden fee includes the inscription of your loved one’s name on a granite plaque that is mounted on the outside wall of the church.

Should you wish to learn more about the purchase of a niche for your own cremains or for the ashes of a loved one, please call the church office at (218) 829-2528 and a packet of materials will be sent you via email or regular mail. The Memorial Committee has prepared the information packet, and it contains all the details you will need as you consider inurnment here at First Congregational UCC.

A purple bird house in front of a house

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**A garden with flowers and plants

Description automatically generatedPrayer Box in Memorial Garden**

The Memorial Garden is located on the south lawn of the church. There is a prayer box where you may leave a request for the Pastor.

Thank you, Jack Kraywinkle, for your craftsmanship!

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**Church Leadership**

**Get Involved, Give Back, Grow Connections – Volunteer at Church!**

***There are many other opportunities for you to share your talents!***

**Council & Committees needing fresh faces and leadership:**

\***Council Member-At-Large:** Attend council meetings, act as a liaison for church members and council, help with nominations, spokesperson for historically underrepresented groups (HUGS).

**\*Christian Education \*Music \*Arts \*Trustees**

*Contact Mary Reardon - Moderator with your nominations*

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**Council Meeting Minutes, September 19, 2024**

In attendance: Rev. Steve Newcom, Lowell Johnson, Deb Griffith, Mary Reardon, Joy Persall, Rev. Leslie Moughty and Cynthia Janes

Lowell gave the Food for Thought. Approval of the August Council meeting minutes was postponed until October’s meeting.

The Clerk’s report stated that MaryAnne Bennett passed on August 16, 2024.

The financials were reviewed and there is a CD that will come due at the end of the week. In the past 6 months there was a significant unexpected increase to the church's obligations, an assessment from Brainerd for the road repair approximately $17,500.  Cynthia suggested that we ask the Foundation for the Assessment amount. Lowell moved and Steve second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

During the reports section, Deb was concerned that due to deferred maintenance of the parsonage siding the trustees would be over budget. She was assured the repairs needed to be done or we would have further damage.

Steve arranged with fellow ministers to write articles for the “Clergy View” in Brainerd Dispatch. He also wondered if there could be a special offering for the “Brainerd Lakes Justice Table.” Steve also submitted a proposal for a Grant of up to $30,000 and that if received, 15% would go to FCUCC for administration.

Old business: we discussed that the Council’s Leadership/Visioning Retreat would be held at Camp Confidence and lunch would be provided.

New Business: The Shop needs cash, they lost a grant and are working on getting another. A motion was made by Deb and seconded by Cynthia that we remove the Crisis Line from donation and replace it with The Shop; the motion passed unanimously. It was also discussed that WISE could have time during worship to share information with the congregation.

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**Next Regular Council Meeting:**

***Thursday, October 17th 2024 @, 4:30 pm***

**in-person and via Zoom** [*tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom*](http://tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom)

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**A drawing of a house with a heart

Description automatically generatedVolunteer for the Overnight Shelter**

***First Congregational UCC members and friends volunteer at the Bridge on 7th overnight shelter.***

***Our week to volunteer is October 27th -November 2nd***

***Volunteers help during the morning shift (6 am - 8:30 AM). Duties include helping to make beds up for the next night, vacuuming, possibly making lunches and helping to get all people out the door and on their way.***

*Deb Griffith is our team organizer. If you did not receive an email from Deb to sign up, please contact her to volunteer.*

**A logo for a restaurant

Description automatically generated**The Bridge on 7th Overnight Shelter is open to adults 18+ who are experiencing homelessness, are welcome to check in from 7 PM - 11 PM each night for a safe, warm place to sleep. Our staff will be happy to offer guests a hot cup of coffee and some snacks, as well as toiletries and a change of clothes if needed. Check out time is 8 AM each day with no limit to how many nights you can stay.

This shelter is funded by individuals, churches, grant funders, and businesses in the community that see a need to help our neighbors who are unsheltered. We appreciate your support!

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**Upcoming Conference Retreats**

Below is a brief highlight of the Fall event; you can find full details on the [Conference's website.](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=c1c74424cc&e=5e2c6f93e6)

A logo for outdoor ministry

Description automatically generatedTo help facilitate a more comprehensive and secure registration process, the Conference has implanted a new registration system for overnight events in 2024. [*Check out CampDoc!*](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=a15633c55e&e=5e2c6f93e6)

**Fall 2024 Conference Youth Event**  
**October 11–13**: Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

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**Brainerd Lakes Area Information**

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**~ Opportunities to Know and Share God’s Love ~**

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**UCC Brainerd has a donation box in the Narthex**

**A poster for a coat drive

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**A poster with text and images

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| October 2024 Calendar |

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| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| **Y- Yes Meeting in person**  **FB -Facebook Stream Online**  **Z-our church Zoom** | **C- Cancelled**  **N - No Meeting**  **? - No update**  **TBD - To be determined** |  | Office Hours  10am – 2pm  Pastor Drop-in Hours  11:00 am – 1:00 pm | Office Hour  10am – 2pm  Pastor Drop-in Hours  2:00 – 4:00 pm  **w/Daisy** | Office Hours  10am – 2pm |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **1**  2pm EA-**Y**  5:30pm OA -**Y** | 11:45pm Men’s **2**  Grp @Wings Café-**Y**  1:30pm PRC Mtg-**Y**  4pm CM Mtg-**Y**  6-8pm Drum Circle-**Y**  7pm AA Common-**Y** | **3**  10am Care Team Mtg.-**Y** | **4**  10:30am Bk Grp-**Z**  6:30pm Movie Night-Y | **5**  1:45pm Mary Anne Bennett Memorial Service in Sanctuary &  Luncheon follows in Fellowship Hall-**Y** |
| 8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y 6**  10am Wrship & Communion-**Y**&**FB**  ***Testimony Sunday***  11am Fellowship-**Y**  11:30am Adult Forum-**Y** | **7**  7pm BACP/ BLUE-**Z** | **8**  10am Foundation Mtg**-Z**  2pm EA-**Y**  5:30pm OA -**Y** | **9**  10am Trustees-**Y**  11:45pm Men’s  Grp @Wings Café-**Y**  7pm AA Common-**Y** | **10**  4:30pm Exec. Team Mtg**.-Y**&**Z** | **11**  10:30am Bk Grp- **Z** | **12**  9:30am Women’s  Fellowship**-Y** |
| 8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y** **13**  10am Wrship -**Y**&**FB**  **Rev. Steve Newcome/Joy Persall preach/lead worship**  ***Testimony-Judy Whiteman***  11:45am Fellowship-**Y** | **14** | **15**  2pm EA-**Y**  5:30pm OA -**Y** | 11:45pm Men’s **16**  Grp @Wings Café-**Y**  7pm AA Common-**Y** | **17**  4:30pm Council Mtg-**Y**&**Z**  6:30pm Dist.7AA-**Y** | **18**  10:30am Bk Grp- **Z** | **19** |
| 8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y 20**  10am Wrship **-Y**&**FB**  **Rev. Emily Goldthwaite preach**  ***Testimony Sunday***  11am Fellowship-**Y**  1pm Girl Scout Mtg.-**Y** | **21**  **Dept. Budget Proposals due to Admin Asst** | **22**  2pm EA-**Y**  5:30pm OA -**Y** | 11:45pm Men’s **23**  Grp @Wings Café-**Y**  3:30-5:30pm TheShop Cooking-**Y**  7pm AA Common-**Y** | **24** | **25**  10:30am Bk Grp- **Z** | **26** |
| 8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y 27**  10am Sunday Wrship-**Y**&**FB**  **\*\*Stewardship Pledge Sunday**  11am Fellowship-**Y**  ***\*\*Special Offering TheShop***  \*\* Newsletter Deadline | **28**    6:30-8pm.Intro to Meditation-**Y** | **29**  2pm EA-**Y**  5:30pm OA -**Y** | **30**  11:45pm Men’s  Grp @Wings Café- **Y** | **Halloween 31**  11:30am Women’s Luncheon @ Baia Della-**Y**  **5pm Trick or Treat @ UCC Brainerd-Y**  6:00pm NAMI Mtg-To Be Confirmed |  | **Pastor Leslie out of the office from 10/8 through 10/21/24,** |