

Friendship News, August 2024

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 <u>uccbrainerd@gmail.com</u>

Pastor Leslie's E-mail: <u>pastorleslieucc@gmail.com</u> Website: <u>www.uccbrainerdmn.org</u>

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

Pastor's Pen

We are a people of Extravagant Welcome!

For many, if not most people, visiting a church for the first time can feel overwhelming and even a little scary. Most of you reading this have been part of this church for quite some time and it can be easy to forget how uncomfortable it can feel to



be the visitor. Take a minute and imagine being in that person's shoes. Let's imagine someone who has never been to a United Church of Christ church for worship.

Imagine yourself walking into a house of worship that belongs to a tradition you've never experienced before. Before you even leave for worship, you might worry about what to wear, or how early you should get there, or if you are expected to bring a Bible with you. This church that you're visiting says they are Open and Affirming, but will you get weird looks if you and your same-gender partner hold hands?

Imagine yourself arriving...where should you park? Which door should you enter through? As you walk in, are you able to locate the sanctuary? What about the bathrooms? Are you supposed to wear a nametag? Is there a handout for the worship service and where do you pick one up? As you walk into the sanctuary, it seems like everyone already knows each other, so it's obvious that you are new here. You meet dozens of people for the first time. How on earth are you going to remember their names? Where do you sit? (What if you accidentally sit in someone's "regular" seat?) Will you be expected to stand or kneel at certain times and how will you know? Are you expected to donate money as a visitor and how much? How long is the service going to last? How do you get to the fellowship hour everyone is talking about?

Now imagine instead, a friend or a neighbor invited you to come to their church. They tell you about an upcoming event called "Extravagant Welcome Sunday" where there will be lots of visitors (so don't worry about being the only newbie!) and the service is going to be really easy to navigate even for people who have never been to any church. And bonus - there's going to be delicious treats afterward! You've heard good things about this church before and you've been thinking about visiting, but maybe this is the Sunday to finally go.

Beloveds, we strive to be a church of Extravagant Welcome! A church where everyone can feel like they belong. But sometimes, we forget what it's like to be brand new. Sometimes we hesitate to invite others to experience for themselves a church community without creeds, where their questions are welcomed, where one's faith journey is encouraged to evolve in a way that is unique to them, and where we value each person as a unique expression of God's beloved creation. Let this Extravagant Welcome Sunday be a catalyst to invite that person you keep meaning to reach out to as well as a Sunday where we make an extra effort to welcome the stranger (without smothering them!)

So put Sunday September 8th on your calendars and start thinking about who you want to invite to join you for Extravagant Welcome Sunday!





With Extravagant Blessings,

"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."

First Congregational UCC News & Updates

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 and select a day and time that works for you, or you can email Pastor Leslie at pastorleslieucc@gmail.com or call/text at 218-656-0096.



Pastor Leslie Out of the Office

Pastor Leslie will be out of the office from Monday 8/19 through Sunday 8/25 for personal leave.



Church Office Hours

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Please call Admin. Asst. Terri at the office 218-829-2528 or 218-537-1636 (cell) for further assistance.

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

**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.

<u>Financial Help Available</u> 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.

<u>Donate to the church online!</u> 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

Announcements & Reminders



Welcome to our Facility

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



Visit Our Memorial Garden

The Memorial Garden is located on the south lawn of the church. Regular maintenance this summer has created a welcome retreat to enoy the serenity of the water fountain, perennial and season plantings and benches for meditation.

Should We Change the Name of Our Church?

Dan Hegstad

I submitted a number of ideas to our church Council for reorganizing our church. I said we might even consider changing our name. I didn't expect that would get any interest, but some people began to discuss it. There were even a few suggestions. I approached the church Council January 18th asking for permission to officially explore this idea. At that



meeting the Council voted yes and charged me with gathering information and exploring the idea of possibly changing our name.

No, we don't have to.

Some churches change their name as they merge with another congregation. In the case of Mayflower UCC in Minneapolis, that name is now associated with slavery and genocide. Plymouth Congregational in Minneapolis is Congregational (but it is not UCC.)

Why should we consider a change?

A conversation with Rev. Kelly Gallagher (our state UCC Conference Associate minister) noted that the denomination has not been "Congregational" since 1957 when we became the United Church of Christ. Other churches have renamed (New Journey – Hutchinson UCC and New Spirit – Savage UCC) and she said we should talk to them about the process. I did that. They were most helpful.

People are leaving churches that do not fulfill their needs or where they don't feel welcome. I believe some of those people are looking for us! When they search for an open, progressive church our name will be one of the first things they see. A name that reflects who we are will entice them to open the door to see what's inside!

Are we leaving the United Church of Christ?

No. Let's be clear that we will always be United Church of Christ (UCC.) We are not changing our affiliation. We are proposing changing the *First Congregational* part of our name. Our neighbor church Park United Methodist (PUMC) is now going by "Park Church." They had the option to shorten and simplify.

But I like our name!

Keeping our current name is an option. "No Change" will be an option after our exploration.. There's nothing wrong with our name. We don't have to change our name. But I think this is an opportunity to reflect who we are now.

The Process

This is the first step; simply marking this as a starting point and proceeding to take in all viewpoints. We will take time to reach a conclusion. Now is a time for taking suggestions and ideas, discussing the pro's and con's and hearing everyone's voice. Adult Forums and small groups could serve as discussions for this topic.

What's in a Name?

I learned years ago that naming is remarkably important. It is part of a first impression. It can work for you or against you.

We want your ideas!

There are no bad ideas. Frequently, one person's idea will spark a great idea! We will want to make sure we choose a name that is easy to say and reflects who we are. We will be careful to choose a name that isn't trendy. It needs to be memorable. There's nothing wrong with having the same name as another church that isn't too close by. (There are 3 Peace UCC's in Minnesota.)

What's next?

Put the question in your brain and let it percolate. You may be surprised at how many ideas come to you. Then send them to me. I think sharing ideas and insights as they come in may spark other ideas. I assume submissions will ebb and flow but after a while we'll have a number of great choices. But remember, you are welcome to vote "none of the above. Keep it First Congregational." I don't think I/we will share who submitted which suggestion. I will, however, note duplicate suggestions.

Do you have questions?

Send questions and name ideas to <u>dan@danhegstad.com</u>. Please do not call me or give me your idea in person. I may not remember, and I want a "written" record.

Thank You!

August Birthdays

Diane Hauan August 8 Maria Bertram
Brian Twamley August 12 Terry Boman
Joe Stattine August 13 Dana Watson
Deb Muzzy August 19



August 21

August 27

August 27

UCC Women's Coffee



Marcia Ferris is hosting

Everyone is welcome - no reservations are required for either gathering.

UCC Women's Luncheon

Thursday, August 29th @ 11:30 am

Location: Baxter Bar & Grill in Arrowwood Lodge

Kay Cox is hosting





UCC Men's Lunch

Each Wednesday of the Month

@ 11:45 am

Not Organized - No Agenda - Join us!



New Art Exhibit

A new display will be available for viewing on August 11th in the Fellowship Hall.

<u>Little Falls Artist Judy Uebenecker</u>

Judy grew up on a dairy farm in Central Minnesota and attended a one room schoolhouse where her interest in art began. Traveling, raising a family and working outside the home didn't change the desire to be an artist and she discovered face painting, and caricatures could pay the bills. Next



came an opportunity to be a textile designer in Dallas and time to pursue fine art. She now lives in Little Falls. Judy enjoys vibrant colors when working in watercolor and acrylics and has had several exhibits of her colorful artwork. The love for travel and recording her travels made photography the next artistic endeavor.

The current exhibit is from a recent trip to Italy.

Special Offering

Sunday Worship - August 25th

BRAINERD LAKES PRIDE

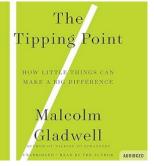
Brainerd Lakes Pride supports ALL members of the LGBTQIA+ community, including friends and allies. **Advocacy and Awareness** -Through continued engagement, BLP strives to offer support to the LGBTQIA+ community through resources, education and social connections.

To donate, send a check with "Brainerd Lakes Pride" in the memo line to: First Congregational UCC, 415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401 or donate online using PayPal https://www.paypal.me/uccbrainerd and indicate "Brainerd Lakes Pride" in the Note.

Usher & Greeter Training

Sunday, August 25th after worship – Cristian Ministry invites you to join a training with new and updated procedures for Ushers and Greeters. If you have been volunteering it would be a great refresher and for those who are interested in volunteering in the future, you are most welcome to attend! Sign-up sheet in the Narthex.





Friday Book Group

We meet each Friday morning at 10:30 am via zoom. Church Zoom link: https://tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom

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

Contact Pat Scott for more information.

UCC Care Team

For anyone who wishes to join in on 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, Carla Benjamin and Pastor Leslie.





Garden Gleaning

A Biblical (and environmentally) inspired activity

This is how it works: Gardeners and plant people bring in their "gleanings" to share. This ranges from rhubarb and vegetable plants in the spring to daffodil bulbs in the fall. A table, poster and donation basket are in Narthex entrance. Enjoy the fruits of our labors! It's RHUBARB time! All are welcome to help themselves - no charge! All monetary donations are given to the Food Shelf.

H.U.G.S. 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



First Congregatinal Food Shelf Collection

DOING THE MOST GOOD 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. Brian Twamley picks up and delivers the food. Thank you!

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 Make sure to write in memo "Food Shelf".

The Columbarium & Memorial Garden 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.

W.I.S.E



Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged in the Mental Health of the community and the wider world.

Send suggestions to Lowell for Forums starting up in September.

Church Leadership

<u>Get Involved, Give Back, Grow Connections – Volunteer at Church!</u>

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

Minutes from the Council Meeting, July 18, 2024

Thursday, 4:30 pm (In-person and Zoom)

Present: Pastor Leslie Moughty, Cynthia Janes/Treasurer, Steve Newcom/Justice Ministries, Mary Readon/Moderator, Deb Griffith/Trustees, Marcia Ferris/Stewardship, Kay Cox/Member-at-large, Lowell Johnson/Christian Education, Dan Hegstad/Marketing, and visitor Tracy Lyons.

Zoom: Joy Persall/Member-at-large, Terri Chidester/Admin. Asst.

Opening prayer by Pastor Leslie.

Approval of June's council meeting minutes was tabled until next month. (Minutes needs to be sent to council members).

Financial report/discussion was given by Cynthia.

After discussion, it was moved and seconded to include Dan's letter regarding the possibility of renaming the church in the newsletter.

Tracy was given money by a friend to buy a tree in honor of the LBGTQ community. She proposed to the council that the money be used to buy a plaque as Nancy Gould had offered to donate an existing tree that will be planted on church grounds. Council unanimously approved.

Discussion regarding necessary maintenance and repair of certain areas of the parsonage was introduced by Deb.

Justice Sunday will be every fourth (4th) Sunday starting in September.

Respectively Submitted;

Georgia Harris, Clerk

Next Regular Council Meeting: *Thursday, August 15th 2024, 4:30 pm* in-person and via Zoom *tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom*

Brainerd Lakes Area Information ~ Opportunities to Know and Share God's Love ~

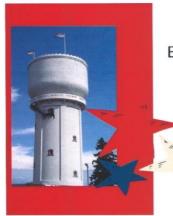
<u>Update! Senior Pride Picnic is September 14th 11:30am - 1:00pm</u> <u>Same day as Pride in the Park!</u>



Facebook.com/BrainerdLakesPride

First Congregational UCC Brainerd will have an information table at Brainerd Lakes Pride event.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the church office to sign-up. 218-829-2528 or uccbrainerd@gmail.com



BRAINERD NIGHT OUT

THURSDAY AUGUST 15, 2024 5-8 P.M. Gregory Park, Juniper Street

Free Hotdogs, Pop, Games & Music!

Northside Neighborhood Event!

THE LATEST PELEASE FROM

THE JUMPIN' JEHOSAFATS



"BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS"

"This is a hard driving group with a strong front line and solid rhythm section!" — Coda Minneapolis, MN

NOW APPEARING AT:

The Motley United Methodist Church Thursday, August 29, at 6:30 pm

847 3RD AVE S. Motley, MN

Enjoy an evening of lighthearted Dixieland, Gospel and all that Jazz music. A free will offering will be received to benefit the projects of the Haiti Partnership of Central Minnesota. Lite refreshments will be served following the concert. Before and after the concert Haitian coffee, metal :



Equal Pay for Men & Women

Unequal pay exists now in the U.S. and Minnesota

Does your employer provide equal pay for men and women?

Pay equity can impact student loan repayment and retirement income.

\$.81



versus



Which are you receiving for equal work?

Find out more about Gender Pay Equity
Attend a free community information session

Saturday, September 7, 2024 Northland Arboretum

10:00 a.m. registration, light refreshments
10:30 am speaker – Kelsey Waits,
AAUW MN President 2024 -2026
AAUW MN Public Policy Chair 2022 – 2024
PhD Student in Public Policy
at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs

Question and Answer session with presenter.

Dialogue on community concerns related to pay equity and to form a Community Action plan to affirm Pay Equity in the Brainerd Lakes Area.



Sponsored by the Brainerd Lakes Area AAUW branch www.Brainerdlakes-mn.aauw.net / FB AAUW Brainerd Lakes Area Branch Call Julie at 218-829-6338 for more information.

Parenting Class at Crow Wing County Jail



The Ostara Initiative/Minnesota Prison Doula Project is excited to be establishing a Parenting Inside Class (PIO) for men at the Crow Wing County Jail. This would build on the work we have been doing for women in Crow Wing County since 2016 with our contractor team of Elaine Lamon, Shari Olson, and Kathy Gaalswyk. https://www.ostarainitiative.org/

We are looking for several men and women who would be interested in contracting as Peer Parenting Educators. Folks would participate in an online PIO training program and begin co-facilitating weekly classes in the jail on a rotation basis in September.

Please note that the Group Based Education will be rolled out first, and the Individual Parent Support and Supervised Visit components will be explored at a later date. We will be working together on training and developing the needed qualifications for this important work.

If you are interested in applying for a contracted position, please submit a resume or biographical summary, along with full contact information to Autumn Mason at amason @mnprisondoulaproject.org.

Please feel free to pass this on if you know of somebody that might be interested. Please contact either of us if you have questions.

Thank you,

Kathy Gaalswyk, Ostara Initiative Contractor, Crow Wing County 218.820.2138

kathygaalswyk@gmail.com

Shari Olson, Ostara Initiative Contractor, Crow Wing County 218.232.0806 shariolson0902 @gmail.com



<u>Upcoming Conference Retreats</u>

Below is a brief highlight of each event; you can find full details on the Conference's website.

To 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!*



Women's Retreat: "You Are a Story"

Friday, September 13 – Sunday, September 15 | Camp Onomia, Onamia,

MN

Martha Brunell, Facilator

Fall 2024 Conference Youth Event

October 11–13 | Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

August 2024 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Y- Yes Meeting in person FB -Facebook Stream Online Z- our 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	Office Hours 10am – 2pm Pastor Drop-in Hours 2:00 – 4:00 pm w/Daisy	1
Pastor Leslie out of the office 8/19 thru 8/25.				1 10am Care Team MtgY	2 10:30am Bk Grp- Z	3
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y 4 10am Wrship & Communion-Y&FB 11am Fellowship-Y	7pm BACP/ BLUE church backup	6 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	11:45pm Men's 7 Grp @Wings Café-Y 1:30pm PRC MtgY 5:30pm Trustees-Y 7pm AA Common-Y	8:30am Christian Ministry-Y 4:30pm Exec. Team MtgY&Z	9 10:30am Bk Grp- Z	9:30am Women's Fellowship- Y
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y 10am Wrship -Y&FB 11:45am Fellowship-Y New Art Exhibit open in Fellowship Hall	12	13 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	11:45pm Men's 14 Grp @Wings Café-Y 7pm AA Common-Y	4:30pm Council Mtg-Y&Z 5-8pm Northside Neighborhood Brainerd Night Out Gregory Prk-Y 6:30pm Dist.7AA-Y	16 10:30am Bk Grp- Z	17
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y 10am Wrship -Y&FB 11am Fellowship-Y 1pm Girl Scout MtgY	12:30- 4:30pm.AAUW Mtg.Fellowship Hall- Y	20 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	11:45pm Men's 21 Grp @Wings Café- Y 7pm AA Common-Y	22	23 10:30am Bk Grp- Z	24
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y 25 10am Sunday Wrship-Y&FB Supply Pastor TBD 11am Fellowship-Y 11am Usher/Greeter Training ** Newsletter Deadline **Special Offering Brainerd Lakes Pride		27 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	28 11:45pm Men's Grp @Wings Café- Y 7pm AA Common-Y	11:30am Women's Luncheon @ Baxter Bar & Grill in Arrowwood Lodge-Y	30 10:30am Bk Grp- Z	31