



# Friendship News, September 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 [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.*

## Pastor's Pen

### **Do Unto Others**

*This is a familiar phrase, right? "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." It seems simple and common sense. So why do we get this wrong so often? We gossip about each other, we fail to give people the benefit of doubt, we reduce people to stereotypes, we hold grudges, raise our voices, we dig in our heels and insist that our way is the best way. Our world seems to be consumed with division—often typified in the colors red and blue.*

*Rather than stay in our monochromatic silos, the Golden Rule in scripture challenges us to engage in conversation and seek to create whatever common good we can with our relatives, friends, and neighbors who we might consider to be on the "other side" politically and ideologically. As we attempt to come together, the idea is not that we are obliterating either one or trying to change each other, but rather we discover the beauty that can be created when we work together to make the world a better place. The "purple space" is where we cultivate kindness, compassion, humility, respect, and love for one another and for the good of all the world, no matter what.*

*This is easier said than done sometimes. So, we will be exploring this theme in worship and outside of worship for five weeks starting in mid-September. Stay tuned to the This Week emails for specific details. I hope you will join me and your church community as we work toward a more loving, more compassionate world.*



With Peace,



*Rev. Jessie Moughtin*

***“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.



**Need some fur-therapy?  
Daisy is on duty!**



Daisy will be joining Pastor Leslie during office hours on most THURSDAYS from 2:00 – 4:00pm.

If you have allergies or other concerns, please contact Pastor Leslie to arrange for a dog-free meeting.



### **Church Office Hours**

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

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

## Terri Admin. Asst. days off

Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup> & Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>

**The Office will be closed on September 20<sup>th</sup>**

## 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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>.

**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>

## Announcements & Reminders

Please Join Us For:

# EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME SUNDAY!

 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST | Sunday, Sept. 8th at 10am | 415 Juniper St., Brainerd

- All are welcome (for real)!
- Experience a joyful community
- Delicious treats!
- Relaxed, casual, come as you are
- Faithful, justice-seeking worship
- A place to belong

*If you have been wondering if there's a church for you - where questions are encouraged and doubts are welcomed, where all of who you are is embraced and celebrated, join us on Sunday, September 8 for an extravagant welcome! - Pastor Leslie Moughty*

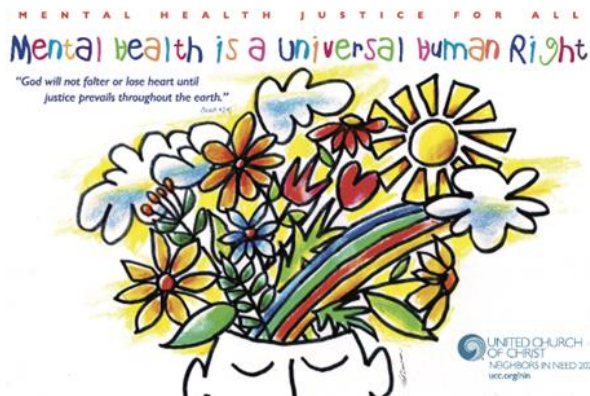


## September Adult Forum 11:30 after worship



**September 15<sup>th</sup> - Changing the Narrative:** WISE team members who attended this community training will lead a discussion about how to have conversations that empower us to change perceptions around mental health towards hope and resilience.

**September 22<sup>nd</sup>** - 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.



## Special Offering - UCC Missions Neighbors In Need

### Sunday Worship – September 22<sup>nd</sup>

Neighbors in Need theme is **“Mental Health Justice For All!”** This year’s focus is on Mental Health Justice. In 2015, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health.

A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life’s mental health journey.

To donate, send a check with "Neighbors In Need (NIN)" 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 "NIN" in the Note.



### Sunday September 29<sup>th</sup>

***Furry, feathery, scaly – all God’s critters are welcome!*** Bring your pets (stuffed animals are also welcome) to be blessed by Pastor Leslie during our annual Blessing of the Animals. Is your pet a little shy or doesn’t play well with others? Bring a collar or a photo or some other representation of your beloved companion. The fun and casual service will be held indoors during our normal Sunday worship time. Tell your friends and neighbors! The more the merrier!



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## September Birthdays

Duane Shatava	Sept. 1	Kaylo Brooks	Sept. 25
Mark Utzinger	Sept. 8	Mark Stults	Sept. 26
Thomas Nelson	Sept. 9	Kyd Lukanen	Sept. 27
Lois McBroom	Sept. 14	Judy Whiteman	Sept. 28
Rod Carlson	Sept. 14	Leslie Moughty	Sept. 29
Kay Kraywinkle	Sept. 15	Mark Stadem	Sept. 30



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## **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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 [dan@danhegstad.com](mailto:dan@danhegstad.com). Please do not call me or give me your idea in person. I may not remember, and I want a "written" record.

Thank You!

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## September UCC Fellowship



**Women's Coffee**

**Saturday, September 14h**

**CANCELLED**

**Women's Luncheon**

**Thursday, September 26th  
@ 11:30 am**

**Location: Baxter Bar & Grill in  
Arrowwood Lodge**



**Kay Cox is hosting**

*"Tell us about your favorite book or movie."*

**Men's Lunch**

**Each Wednesday of the Month  
@ 11:45 am**

**Location: Wings Airport Café**

*No Agenda - Join us!*



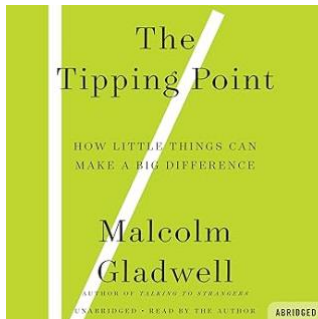


## Welcome to our Facility

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](mailto: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)



## 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 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, Joey Halvorson (text or email) and Pastor Leslie.*



## Last Month for 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.

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

Note: Using our resources, recycling, re-purposing, and not wasting our food are all acts of Creation Care and Justice. Garden Gleaning is an Easy-Peasy way to put words into action.





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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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*Minutes are available upon request for the*

**Council Meeting, August 15, 2024**

**Next Regular Council Meeting:**

**Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup> 2024, 4:30 pm**  
in-person and via Zoom [tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom](https://tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom)



### Little Falls Artist Judy Uebenecker

#### Art Exhibit in Fellowship Hall

*UCC First Congregational*

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.



### Volunteers for the Warming Shelter Bridge on 7th

The Warming Shelter opens on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Deb Griffith for more information at 218-851-2949.



### Save the Date - Drumming Circle

***Celebration of the Solar Eclipse – hosted by Stephanie Lee***  
**Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:00 – 8:00 pm**  
*First Congregational UCC Sanctuary*

**Focus & Reflection will be on shifting awareness of connecting with community**  
*No experience required ~Watch or Participate ~Bring your own drum or use what is available at church*

## Upcoming Conference Retreats

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"

September 13 – 15: Camp Onomia, Onamia, MN

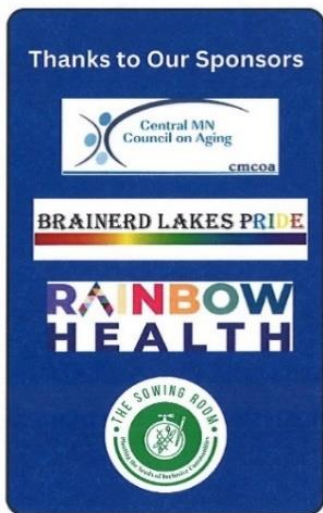
### Fall 2024 Conference Youth Event

October 11–13: Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL**  
BRAINERDLAKESPRIDE@GMAIL.COM

**Saturday, September 7, 2024**  
2-5pm  
Door prizes! Gaymes!  
Ribs, salads and MORE!  
Live entertainment with  
Skarlett Woods (2-3pm)  
Gregory Park Pavilion,  
Brainerd  
**FREE!**  
*BRING YOUR OWN CHAIR*



*PLUS: Save the Date*  
**5th Annual**  
**Pride in the Park**  
Saturday, September 14th  
10am-4pm Gregory Park

## Brainerd Lakes Area Information

~ Opportunities to Know and Share God's Love ~

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

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the church office at 218-829-2528 or [uccbrainerd@gmail.com](mailto:uccbrainerd@gmail.com)

**First Congregational UCC is hosting the September 14<sup>th</sup>  
Listening Session !**



Central Minnesota Council on Aging is conducting listening sessions with members of the LGBTQ 55+ community. Join us for an interactive discussion focusing on social connections, wellness, and accessibility.

**Choose from one of the in-person sessions or the virtual session below.**  
Registration is required for the virtual session only.

September 12, 2024 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Cambridge Public Library - Opportunity Room 111 N Dellwood Street, Cambridge, MN 55008
September 14, 2024 11:30 am - 12:30 pm	First Congregational United Church of Christ 415 Juniper Street, Brainerd, MN 56401 (During the Brainerd Lakes Pride in the Park.)
September 18, 2024 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm	Great River Regional Library - Bremer Room 1300 W St. Germain Street, St. Cloud, MN 56301
September 26, 2024 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Virtual Session Registration by September 25: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/msat7jfp">https://tinyurl.com/msat7jfp</a>

Questions:  
[meredith.rosenbaum@cmcoa.org](mailto:meredith.rosenbaum@cmcoa.org)  
320.202.6945

**In partnership with:**



# September 2024 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Y- Yes Meeting in person</b> <b>FB -Facebook Stream Online</b> <b>Z-our church Zoom</b>	<b>C- Cancelled</b> <b>N - No Meeting</b> <b>? - No update</b> <b>TBD - To be determined</b>		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	
8.30am Bnrd Frnds-Y <b>1</b> 10am Wrship & Communion- <b>Y&amp;FB</b> 11am Fellowship-Y	<b>Labor Day 2</b> <b>Pastor Leslie OFF</b>  7pm BACP/ BLUE	<b>3</b> 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	<b>4</b> 4pm Christian Ministry-Y  7pm AA Common-Y	<b>5</b>  10am Care Team Mtg.-Y	<b>6</b>  10:30am Bk Grp-Z	<b>7</b> 2-5pm Senior Pride Picnic Gregory Park Pavillion-Y
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y <b>8</b>  10am Wrship-Y&FB 11am Fellowship-Y	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	<b>11</b> 10:30 am Trustees- <b>Y&amp;Z</b> 11:45pm Men's Grp @Wings Café-Y  7pm AA Common-Y	<b>12</b>  4:30pm Exec. Team Mtg.-Y&Z	<b>13</b>  10:30am Bk Grp- Z	<b>14</b> <i>Women's                      Fellowship-C</i> 10am-4pm Pride in the Park-Gregory Park-Y 11:30am-2:30pm LGBTQ Listening Sessions@1st Cong UCC Brainerd-Y
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y <b>15</b>  10am Wrship -Y&FB 11:45am Fellowship-Y	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	<b>18</b> 11:45pm Men's Grp @Wings Café-Y  7pm AA Common-Y	<b>19</b> <b>Terri Admin Asst                      Day Off</b>  4:30pm Council Mtg- <b>Y&amp;Z</b> 6:30pm Dist.7AA-Y	<b>20</b> <b>Terri Admin                      Asst Day Off</b> <b>*Office Closed</b> 10:30am Bk Grp- Z	<b>21</b>
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y <b>22</b> 10am Wrship -Y&FB <b>**Justice Sunday</b> 11am Fellowship-Y ** Newsletter Deadline **Special Offering NIN 1pm Girl Scout Mtg.-Y	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	<b>25</b> 11:45pm Men's Grp @Wings Café- Y  7pm AA Common-Y	<b>26</b>  11:30am Women's Luncheon @ Baxter Bar & Grill in Arrowwood Lodge-Y	<b>27</b>  10:30am Bk Grp- Z	<b>28</b> 9am Leadership Retreat- Y venue TBD -?
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y <b>29</b> 10am Sunday Wrship-Y&FB <b>**Animal Blessing</b> <b>**Stewardship Kick-off</b> *Hand out Pledge Envelopes 11am Fellowship-Y  <b>**Pastor Leslie's Birthday</b>	<b>30</b>		<b>Terri Admin Asst.                      days off 8/19 &amp; 8/20</b>	Pastor Relations Committee (PRC) Mtg.-No Meeting		