

# 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: [unionucc401@gmail.com](mailto:unionucc401@gmail.com)



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## APRIL 2023

Notes from *Koda the Church Dog*

### What does it mean to be human?

Hi, my name is Koda (the Church Dog). My human is on vacation and forgot to write her newsletter article, so I have the honor of making the front page!



This month has been really busy at the church! People are constantly going in and out. I have been smelling good food cooking in the kitchen and beautiful music playing in the big room they call the sanctuary. My human says that it is all because of Easter!

For the past two years, my human has been telling me about Easter. She told me about Lent, Jesus, the cross and Jesus' resurrection. She also told me about the eggs and bunnies. I like eggs and bunnies better to be honest... I like bunnies the most! But my human really likes Jesus. She tells me stories about His life and how He treated other humans. He was protective of His friends, gentle with children and loyal to the end.

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	Don Hoppe
Treasurer	Sheryl Kaubisch
Bell Choir Director	Heidi Hoppe
Musicians	Sheryl Kaubisch
	Kathleen Millberg
	Barb Nish
	Dick Kimmel

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderators	Marilyn McKnight & Steve Erickson
Clerk	Karen Holle
Board of Financial Stewardship	Don Hoppe
<b>Ministry Teams:</b>	
Congregational Life	Joni Kumpula
Facilities	Mike Bohanon & Kerry Swenson
Personnel	Marilyn McKnight
Worship	Heidi Hoppe
Men's Fellowship	Stan Kumpula
Women's Fellowship	Joni Kumpula
Adult Learning	Linnea Dietrich
Tech Team	Mike Schmitt
Treasure Sale	Cindy Gulbrandson
Justice Ministry Team	Sue Kimmel



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 1	Tom Forrest Gene Hensel
April 3	Randy Johnson Burton Woock
April 4	Terry Tripp
April 5	Ron Merritt
April 7	James McGill Jane Watson
April 9	Maddie McGill
April 17	Kevin Kundert
April 18	Susan Rubitschung
April 21	Ryan Danielson
April 26	Marissa VanVickle
April 29	Karen Holle Brian Wicker

*Happy Birthday*



Karen Holle, Linda Ottman, and Sabbastian Wilson-Webb, Editors

Continued from Page 1

He sounds like a really good human. He would make a really good dog!

I have a secret to tell you. About 2 and a half years ago, I was out on the streets. Not many humans were nice to me. I was scared most of the time just trying to figure out how to get my next meal. The day I got caught was one of the scariest days of my life! But you know, it was actually one of the best days of my life too because it led me to meet my human and led me to be the church dog.

Over the past two years that I have been here, I have really grown to like God more. I used to think God was rather mean because of my past. I felt like God did not take very good care of me and that God did not like me. Then I met some really nice people who reminded me of Jesus. They paid attention to me, comforted me, took care of me, and even gave me treats! They spoke kindly to me and told me I was good. Every dog needs those things. And every human needs those things too.

So this Easter, I want to tell you all that I think you are good too! God likes you and cares about you! You may come from a pretty rough past like I did, but that does not matter because God pays attention to you. God knows when you need comforting... and God knows when you need treats! So this Easter, let God speak kindly to you and tell you that you are good.

That's how I see it through my eyes!

Have a barky day!

Koda (The Church Dog)



## COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP

Please mark your calendars for Hackensack's Neighbor Helping Neighbor Community Clean-Up May 19 and May 20, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.

The Justice Ministry Team will be gathering a team from Union to do non-professional community clean-up such as raking leaves, washing windows, small painting projects, cleaning debris from backyards and around houses.

We are also looking for people to assist with lunch.

If you live within the Hackensack city limits and have projects to complete or would like to be added to the Neighbor Helping Neighbor Union Clean-up Team, please contact Sue Kimmel [suejkimmel@gmail.com](mailto:suejkimmel@gmail.com).

This project is in partnership with the Game Changers Beautification Team.



# COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

## March 16, 2023

PRESENT: Pastor Torri, Karen Holle, Marilyn McKnight, Joni Kumpula, Stan Kumpula, Heidi Hoppe, Don Hoppe, Linnea Dietrich, Gary Dietrich (part of meeting), Mike Schmitt, Mike Bohanon, Steve Erickson (this was a zoom meeting)

Marilyn called the meeting to order. The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Heidi/Joni. The agenda was approved as written. Linnea/Heidi.

Pastor's Monthly Report to Council: Pastor Torri provided us with a summary of her focus for the past month. She and Pastor Leif have worked together on the Lenten services. The turnout for these services has been very good – the best since COVID.

On Easter Sunday Pastor Torri will offer a service at 1:00 at Birchview Gardens. This will become a regular Sunday offering for the people living there. Two volunteers are needed each week to assist with this project.

Torri also mentioned that a homeless man has been coming into the church for coffee and company. We were advised to make sure church doors are locked if we are in the church alone and to make sure the church is empty before locking up at the end of the day. This person is welcome to be in the church when others are present.

Fundraising: Report on Potential Use of Lower Level of the church for a Childcare Facility:

Gary Dietrich reported on work he has been involved in to create a childcare program in Hackensack. At one time there were several places where parents could find childcare in our town. These programs have closed, and there are currently no childcare programs in Hackensack.

A number of possible locations for a childcare facility have been looked at. The lower level of the church is currently the location that makes the most sense. (The entire lower level would not be needed, just a portion.)

The Cass County Commissioners and the County Administrator approved \$108,000 in funds for remodeling the space to meet licensing requirements.

After discussion, Council agreed that we should have a meeting of the congregation after church in the near future to explain the project and to answer questions that come up.

The following resolution offered by Steve Erickson was passed by Council: Resolution:

Resolved, that the UCC Church Council appoints Gary Dietrich to continue to take steps that would result in the creation of a childcare facility to be located in the lower level of the church.

a. As Childcare Team Lead on behalf of Game Changers, Gary will be responsible for seeing that the recently authorized \$108,000 grant from Cass County shall be properly received and disbursed. These funds are specifically designated to be used for remodeling and updating the lower level of the Union Congregational Church, Hackensack, in order to bring the physical space into compliance with all state and county regulations concerning licensing and operation of a childcare facility POD designed to initially accommodate up to 12 and possibly 14 children. As part of managing these funds, Gary shall be responsible for creating a separate nonprofit corporation specifically for the purpose of receiving and disbursing these funds, and the nonprofit corporation shall also be responsible for providing oversight and ongoing management and operation of the childcare facility.

b. The Church Council agrees to cooperate in the future with the new nonprofit in arriving at the terms and conditions of a suitable lease for a portion of the Lower Level of the UCC Church for use as a childcare facility.

c. UCC Church Council understands that it will accept and receive the benefit of certain improvements as a result of the remodeling grant, but that it will have no responsibility to pay for these improvements, nor will it operate the daycare center, and its only responsibility is to act as lessor of the space under a lease that will be cooperatively negotiated between UCC Church and the newly created nonprofit corporation which will manage and operate the childcare business. Don/Stan/passed.

This resolution will be taken to the congregation during coffee hour and by zoom so everyone knows what is happening and can ask questions.

Board of Financial Stewardship: Don reported that year to date giving is \$20,260 which he feels is quite good. Because of other income received recently our YTD total income is \$53,617, and after expenses our YTD balance is \$31,504. Motion to accept the financial report. Stan/Heidi/passed

**Board of Facilities:** Mike reported that the upstairs restrooms have new lockable door handles. New batteries for the emergency exits have been installed. In the main electrical panel in the basement we need fire retardant foam installed as per the recent Fire Marshal inspection. All rooms need to clearly state what is stored in the room in case of a fire so firefighters are able to work safely. The Fire Marshal also recommended that we install a fire alarm system that is tied directly to the Fire Department. Money from a grant we recently were awarded to create space for a daycare center will pay for some of these improvements.

**Ministry Team Reports:**

**Congregational Life:** Karen reported that the Community Meal will end March 22 with the last Lenten service scheduled at our church. Torri reported that Linda uses her extra office hour to call or write to a lot of people.

**Worship:** Heidi reported that we averaged 30 people in our Sanctuary each Sunday and there are 13 people on average who attend the service online during the past month.

**Adult Learning:** Linnea reviewed with us the Adult Learning Program, A Journey Within, that she has planned. Currently a group is practicing Lectio Divina, sacred reading. Other wonderful activities are planned for the summer. See Linnea's article in the newsletter for more information about what's coming.

**Women's Fellowship:** Joni has some interesting ideas for Women's Fellowship this summer. In April, the Women's Fellowship will tour the Paws and Claws Animal Shelter. In May we will present a plant sale to raise funds for Women's Fellowship. Also in May we will have a Mother's Day tea for ourselves. On June 8, we will have a style show featuring clothing from the boutique, "By the Lake." We are encouraged to invite a friend to that event. In July we will tour and learn the history of the Bonna Paulson Park and will hear about Linnea and Stacy's trip to Spain.

**Men's Fellowship:** The men have been meeting at the Corner Store in Backus for breakfast and conversation. Easter boxes are being packed April 3. Steve Erickson offered a joint meeting in June for men and women to hear about the trip he and Marilyn and Bruce and Jean Carlson recently took to New Zealand.

**Justice Ministry Team:** Sue was unable to be with us today. Her team is working on a number of projects. More information next month.

**Outreach:** We are currently collecting donations for the Hackensack Food Shelf. In May, Don would like to encourage people to make donations to the scholarship fund so that we can offer scholarships to high school seniors who will be attending college.

**Tech Team:** Mike Schmitt reported that the tech team meets each Tuesday to review any issues that have come up the week before. People watching services online are happy with the quality of the experience. Starting Easter Sunday, services will also be streamed to Birchview Gardens for the residents there to watch.

**Moderator Moment:** Steve Erickson spoke about his recent trip with his wife and friends to New Zealand. Steve remarked that the people there are wonderful, and the natural beauty of the country is breathtaking.

**New Business:**

**Hackensack Library fundraiser:** Maggie McGill has contacted the church to ask if the Hackensack Library could have a book sale July 8 in our Friendship Hall. After some discussion Council agreed to this – asking only that a \$50 fee be paid for janitorial services in order to use our space. (we have since learned that our space will not be needed).

**Ikes Spaghetti Dinner:** Heidi asked that July 7 the church co-sponsor the Ikes dinner to be held in our Friendship Hall. The proceeds from the dinner are used to sponsor children at Deep Portage this summer. Heidi/Linnea/passed

**Spring clean-up day for inside of church:** More work needs to be done to decide when we will have our spring clean-up and what the projects will be. Joni thought Women's Fellowship could help, and Stan thinks the men would like to help also.

**Meeting Adjourned.** Pastor Torri offered a benediction.

**Next meeting:** April 20, 2023

**Clerk,** Karen Holle

## BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Giving Income- February	\$ 8,006.00	Year to Date Giving	\$20,260.00
Other Income *	\$ 737.00	YTD Other Income *	\$33,357.25
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 8,743.00</b>	<b>YTD Total Income</b>	<b>\$53,617.25</b>
Expenses- February	\$14,405.89	Year to Date Expenses	\$22,113.13
<b>Current Month Balance</b>	<b>\$-5,662.89</b>	<b>YTD Balance</b>	<b>\$31,504.12</b>

\* Other income includes Treasure Sale, Community Meal, 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: \$ 62,893.94

Total Assets \$ 301,629.95

### Summary

February giving was better than February 2022 giving and was about normal for February. Expenses were quite high, especially utilities. Other income was about normal for this time of the year.

At this point our position of revenue vs. expenses looks good, especially if looked at on an annual basis and compared to our approved budget.

We have moved \$125,000 of dedicated Reserve Saving funds into CDs because of the improved interest rates we have been able to secure.

Remember that March was Food Shelf month. If you didn't get a donation in, there is still time!

## TREASURE SALE

The Treasure Sale dates and times for this year are Wednesday June 14<sup>th</sup> through Saturday June 17<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm.

We will need help with setting up the sale, running the sale, and cleanup.

Please contact Cindy at 612-232-2760 or Heidi at 218-831-3927 if you can help with any of these jobs. You may also contact Cindy or Heidi if you have anything to donate.

Blessings, Cindy





## NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

Happy Easter! Rejoice! He is Risen! He lives within our hearts!

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying spring wherever you are. I'd love to say spring has arrived in Hackensack, but we have had multiple snowstorms and icy road conditions in the last few weeks, to the point that we canceled church on March 12! Torri streamed from home, with Don Hoppe joining her as liturgist. This has been one of the snowiest winters in a long time!

We have had another great Lenten Season of services jointly with our friends from St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The soup and sandwich suppers have been delicious. New this year is the Lectio Divina prayer series which has been hosted by Linnea Dietrich, the leader of our

Adult Learning Ministry Team, and Laura Baum-Parr. It has been a wonderful experience for many people from our church and community.

We will soon begin gearing up for summer activities. Keep your eyes open for notices in the newsletter, the weekly email blast, and the website. As always, should you have any questions or comments about the worship service(s), please feel free to talk to one of us. We look forward to your comments and suggestions.

See you soon,

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





## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Greetings! Happy springtime, ladies. Hope you had a great month. We had a lovely March meeting in the Friendship Hall where we made some great plans for the next four months. Put the second Thursday of each month on your calendar for our 1:00 meeting. On April 13th we are meeting at Paws and Claws for a tour and treats in their meeting room. Please bring something on their (need) list such as food or treats, or old towels, etc. We haven't been there in several years so it will be fun. It is such a neat place to visit or volunteer.

On May 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 we are having a Mothers Day tea! We will honor ourselves as mothers!!! It will be an old fashioned tea so if you feel the urge, do the white gloves and hat; if not, that's fine too. Guaranteed to be fun, and we will invite all of our Hack friends so spread the word.

On June 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 we are having Boutique by the Beach do a style show! We will have dessert and our own lovely models. Again we will invite the other churches and all of Hack. The Boutique has great, reasonably priced clothes for all ages.

On July 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 we will be meeting in the Bonna Park next to Union. We will tour, have dessert, and have a travel experience of the walk in Spain that Stacy and Linnea did last year. We are inviting the Men's Fellowship also. If weather is inclement, we'll move inside.

Wow! What a fun and busy next few months. Get it all on your calendar! Yea!!

See you in church, Joni and Caryl




## PROGRESS ON POTENTIAL CHILDCARE FACILITY AT UNION

by Steve Erickson

As many of you know, a small group of members have been working on determining the feasibility of renting a portion of the lower level of our church for a childcare facility. This could produce needed income from space that is currently underutilized, while serving a pressing community need. At the March Church Council meeting, the Council approved a resolution that appoints church member, Gary Dietrich, to continue to work with the Hackensack Game Changers to coordinate the many steps that are needed to make this project a reality.

These steps include a comprehensive inspection by the State Fire Marshal (recently completed), as well as an architectural review to determine if the space is suitable and what modifications might be needed to comply with state and local regulations regarding operation of a childcare center.

The Church Council decided that the entire congregation will be given an opportunity to hear a progress report and ask questions about this project during coffee hour after a Sunday service soon.





## “A JOURNEY WITHIN” UPDATE

As you may know, we have termed this season of adult learning, “A Journey Within.” Our desire is to learn new ways to seek the God who is seeking us. We are finding that the best way to do this is to go back to the old ways of seeking and finding God, called spiritual disciplines or practices. These practices are ways to open “the ears of our heart” and hear from the Creator heart to heart, or even soul to soul. It has been said that God’s first language is silence. We will be learning how to prayerfully listen for what the Spirit has for each of us.

In January about ten of us started the practice of Lectio Divina, sacred reading. We meet weekly on Wednesday afternoons. This type of reading is “aimed more at growing a relationship with God than gathering information about God.”

A reflection on a recent session from Karen Holle:

“This past Wednesday our Lectio Divina reading was Psalm 51, a really beautiful psalm full of meaningful words and phrases. We read through the psalm two times and then meditated for a few minutes before choosing a word or phrase that seemed to have the most significance for us. We each took a turn saying what our word or phrase was. On Wednesday, the phrase that “popped” for me was, “teach me the wisdom of the heart.” What does this phrase mean to me? I feel that when we are born, God puts a part of his or her essence within each person’s heart. One of the most important things we can do in our lives is to be quiet enough to feel the love, peace, and joy that is in our hearts. We spend a lot of time in our heads being affected by thoughts or feelings. The heart is different. It is divine and comes from God. After meditating on this phrase for several more minutes I was able to share these thoughts and feelings with the rest of the group, and they shared their thoughts and feelings about their word or phrase. What a pleasure it is to listen to each other as we share our experiences of God!”

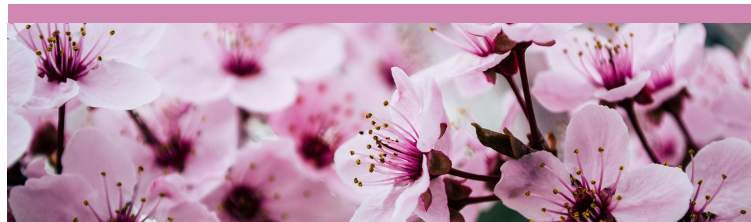
If you are interested in knowing more about Lectio or attending an introduction class, please contact Linnea Dietrich (contact information is at the end of this article).

We are very excited about our adult learning summer opportunities and will share them here so you can “Save the Dates” as we know summer gets busy.

- (1) Wednesday, May 31st at 2 pm in the library, there will be an Introduction to Lectio Divina. After a short explanation we will do the practice.
- (2) Lectio will continue through June. We will take a 7-week break starting again mid-August.
- (3) Wednesday, July 26 at 9:30 in Friendship Hall, Laura Baum-Parr will offer a morning retreat called “Nature’s Invitation” where Laura will help us to experience nature as a place of renewal, delight, and beauty.
- (4) Wednesday, August 2nd at 9:30 Linnea will offer an “Introduction to Walking the Labyrinth as a Way of Prayer.” Gary and Linnea built a 40’ labyrinth at their home, and we will meet there for the retreat.
- (5) Wednesday, August 9th and 16th there will be two open sessions for walking the Labyrinth followed by some reflection time.
- (6) Wednesday, September 13 at 9:30, we will learn about the Enneagram from a friend who is very knowledgeable and a gifted presenter on the Enneagram.

As summer gets closer we will provide more details about each program so you can decide if you would like to join us. The retreats are open to friends and family, not only members of our church. Questions? Call or text Linnea Dietrich at 612-810-3407 or email at [linneadietrich@tds.net](mailto:linneadietrich@tds.net). If you would like to meet and talk about any of this, please reach out to me!

# ONGOING EVENTS



## Women's Fellowship

Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm  
Tour and Treats at Paws and Claws

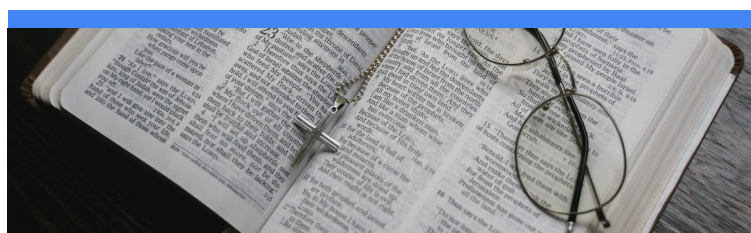
Any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300  
or email the church at [unionucc401@gmail.com](mailto:unionucc401@gmail.com).



## Men's Fellowship

Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am  
Friendship Hall

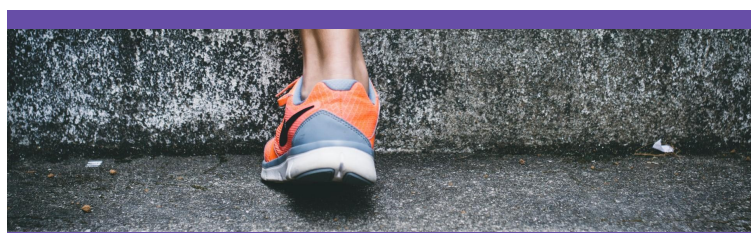
Any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300  
or email the church at [unionucc401@gmail.com](mailto:unionucc401@gmail.com).



## Lectio Divina

Every Wednesday at 3:30pm  
Library

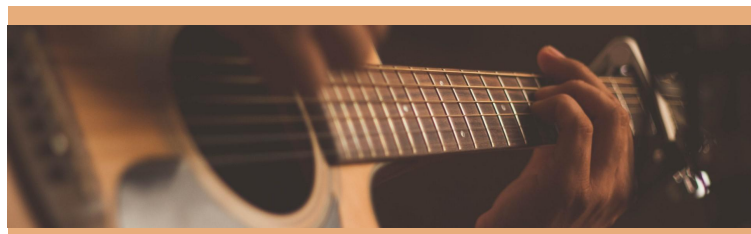
Meaning "divine reading", Lectio Divina is a meditation and prayer practiced intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word.



## Exercise Group

Every Wednesday at 10:00am  
Friendship Hall

*Community Event*



## Dick's Acoustic Jam

Wednesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm  
Friendship Hall

*Community Event*



## Game Night

Every Other Sunday at 5:30pm  
Friendship Hall

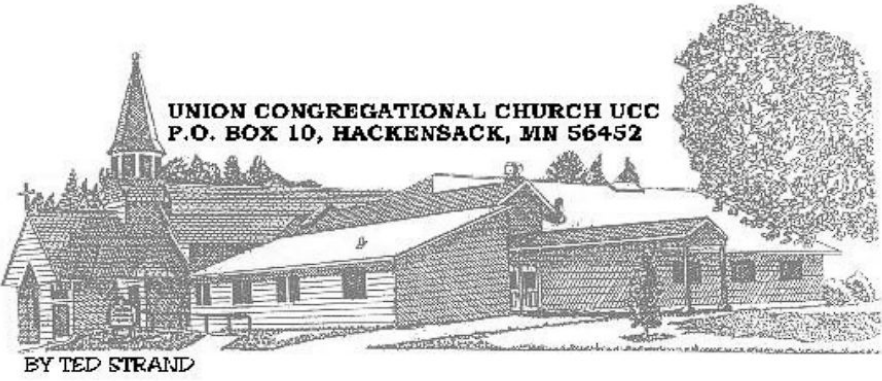
Bring a snack to share.

# Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

## April 2023

\* Community event

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	1 SATURDAY
<b>2</b> 9:30am Worship Service 10:30am Coffee Hour 5:30pm Game Night	<b>3</b> 1:30pm Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Open Meeting*	<b>4</b> 9:00am Men's Fellowship	<b>5</b> 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 10:00am Fellowship Time at Ellie's 3:30pm Lectio Divina	<b>6</b> Maundy Thursday 5:30pm Maundy Thursday Service at SPLC 6:30pm JMT Meeting (Zoom)	<b>7</b> Good Friday Office Closed	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> Easter 9:30am Easter Service 10:30am Coffee Hour 1:00pm Birchview Gardens Service	<b>10</b> 1:30pm Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Open Meeting*	<b>11</b> 9:00am Tech Team Meeting	<b>12</b> 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 3:30pm Lectio Divina	<b>13</b> 1:00pm Women's Fellowship Tour and treats at Paws and Claws!	<b>14</b> Office Closed 1:30pm Bone Builders*	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 9:30am Worship Service 10:30am Coffee Hour 1:00pm Birchview Gardens Service 5:30pm Game Night	<b>17</b> 1:30pm Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Open Meeting*	<b>18</b> Tax Day 9:00am Tech Team Meeting	<b>19</b> 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 10:00am Fellowship Time at Ellie's 3:30pm Lectio Divina 6:00pm Dick's Acoustic Jam*	<b>20</b> 1:00pm Council Meeting	<b>21</b> Office Closed 1:30pm Bone Builders*	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 9:30am Worship Service 10:30am Coffee Hour 1:00pm Birchview Gardens Service	<b>24</b> 1:30pm Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Open Meeting*	<b>25</b> 9:00am Tech Team Meeting 5:00pm FIA Spaghetti Dinner*	<b>26</b> 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall*	<b>27</b> 1:00pm Fiber Arts*	<b>28</b> Office Closed 1:30pm Bone Builders*	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 9:30am Worship Service 10:30am Coffee Hour 1:00pm Birchview Gardens Service 5:30pm Game Night						



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**FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED**

*April*

**2023**

Get ready for Easter!  
April 9th Service 9:30 am



**THE UNION NEWS**