



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

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JUNE 2021

Why Church?

Notes from
Rev. Torri Vande Zande

March 2020... I stood in the front of church and announced that we will not be having Sunday services for several WEEKS due to a little virus called Coronavirus 19. Only weeks I thought. What did I know? What did ANYONE know? No one thought this virus would consume over a year of our lives.

So, we went home, we closed the church building, cancelled Men's Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, Game Night, basically all church activities until further notice. I did church services from my living room. I picked up my guitar again and taught myself a few songs, and I learned how to talk to a camera.

Church leaders were concerned about finances. Will the church make it through this? How do we minister to people? How do we stay connected? How do we know if anyone needs anything? What will church look like during Covid-19? How are we to be the Church, during a pandemic?!

Most of all over this past year we have stayed home. Some of us picked up a new hobby or maybe an old hobby. We learned to pass the time. We learned to slow life down a bit, and we learned that some things that we thought were so important, maybe aren't as important as we thought they were.

People became more important than projects. Talking with someone became more important than, well pretty much anything! Connection, relationships, belonging. Oh, how we have learned the hard way over this past year how much we need one another.

It has been 449 days since I gave that sermon in March of 2020 and the church closed its building, but we never stopped being the Church. We have been slowly planning and preparing to begin gathering in person again. We are still socially distancing, we give grace and space for those who choose to wear or not wear masks, and we blocked off certain pews.

We just started having coffee hour again. We have tables set up with 3 at a table, although we have been pulling chairs around and adding a 4th or 5th so we can chat more easily. Men's and Women's Fellowship have been meeting again, VBS is being planned, and the Treasure Sale is about to take over the entire basement.



CONTINUES ON PAGE 3

Sunday Worship at 9:30 AM

Communion: First Sunday each 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
 Organists.....Sheryl Kaubisch
 Pianist.....Kathleen Millberg, Barb Nish
 Custodian.....Sue Johnson

Church Council

Moderator.....Joni Kumpula
 Vice-Moderator.....Tom Cox
 Clerk.....Karen Holle
 Board of Financial Stewardship.....Don Hoppe

Ministry Teams:
 Christian Learning.....Jo Horak
 Congregational Life.....Margaret Zieffler
 Facilities.....Mike Bohanon and Ron Merritt
 Personnel.....Church Council
 Worship.....Heidi Hoppe
 Men’s Fellowship.....Ron Merritt
 Women’s Fellowship.....Linda Merritt
 Treasure Sale.....Cindy Gulbrandson

MODERATOR’S NOTES

Hi and June greetings! I hope you all are listening to the science and have gotten your vaccine. That’s when we can all gather safely and get back to Union’s work and play. Sundays are now open for worship and coffee. Our boards and ministry teams are all functioning quite well, and our members who flew south for the winter are back. It is sooo good to see you all!

I was delighted when Union was able to participate in the Loaves and Fishes free food distribution. It was not difficult and worked out beautifully. I hope we can do it again. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped.

Our sparkling new gas kitchen stove has arrived, and it is beautiful! It should make cooking more pleasurable. If you can think of any business or church who could use the old one, which is in good working order, please inform them that it is for sale and a great bargain!

It is great to see live people in our pews again. Do know that we are open, social distancing and wearing masks if you prefer. We are trying to still keep everyone safe, and it is great to be together again. Union is such a special place for both our spiritual and social lives. I say let the summer begin!

See you at church, Joni

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- June 1 Bert Wiersma
- June 3 Vernon Peterson
- June 10 Sheila Hunter
Candace Strawn
- June 16 Luise Forseth
Joni Kumpula
- June 17 Del Towne
- June 19 Pat Pomeroy
- June 20 Sue Johnson
- June 22 Natalie Holle
- June 25 Stan Johnson
- June 27 Cindy Gulbrandson
- June 28 Don Olsen



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We developed new ways of doing things. A small group of us have fumbled our way through learning new technology. We have come up with new ideas like having the bell choir record or have a performance area in the choir loft. We have been in contact with people all over the country through book discussion on white privilege, and how to be an anti-racist. We have read and discussed books that challenged us to look within ourselves first if we really want to change the world.

We have adapted. We have survived. And in many ways, we have thrived through this pandemic. Now spring is here, summer residents are coming back, and businesses are opening. We can come out of our homes and begin interacting in person again.

And I hear the words, “When will we get back to normal?” Well, I hate to tell you this, but we will never get back to normal. We are creating a new normal. This past year has changed us. It has changed me. It has changed everyone.

We need to ask ourselves a question. Knowing relationships, connection, and conversation are central to our humanity, what does Church look like now?

Somewhere along the line in this Covid thing, I lost my ability to relate to people in the way that I used to. And I (and maybe you, maybe we) need to relearn some things; relearn why and how to connect with others again.

In this new normal we are creating. I think we need to ask the question: Why Church?

Why do we get up on Sunday, get dressed, drive in and go to church? Why do we help with meals, or join a book discussion, go to bible study, attend fellowship groups, or bring treats for fellowship after church? Why do we do all this stuff?

Over the next few weeks, we are going to try to relearn that. We are doing a sermon series called, “Why Church?” We will explore questions such as: What does community look like now? Why do we worship together? What is communion? How do I tell my faith story? How can I best serve? Why does social justice matter? What IS our new normal? I hope you can join us in person. If you can’t join us in person, I hope you will watch us online through Facebook, YouTube, or our website.

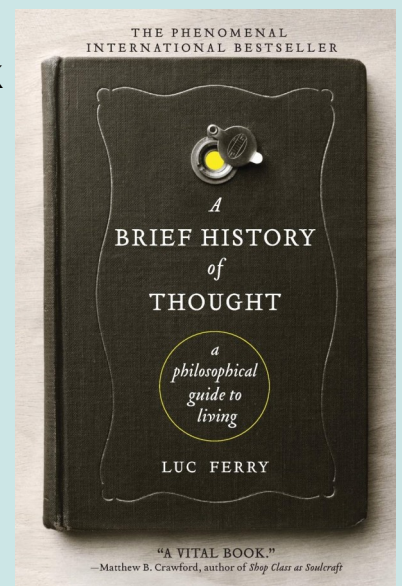
We need to remember who we are and who God is creating us to be. We are the Church. And it is time to come together, move forward into this new normal, be the hands and feet of Christ to each other and to our community. It is time to be together again, and I invite you to come, join us... here (if you can), and we will walk through this series called “Why Church?” together.

NEW BOOK STUDY JULY 14TH

Coming later this summer, we’re planning a new Zoom book study on *A Brief History of Thought* by Luc Ferry. George Strawn will be leading the discussion.

The series starts Wednesday, July 14th at 7:00pm, and will run for six weeks.

Call the church at 218-675-6300 to sign up.



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – May 20, 2021



PRESENT: Cindy Gulbrandson, Tom Cox, Mike Bohannon, Heidi Hoppe, Don Hoppe, Joni Kumpula, Ron Merritt, Pastor Torri

Joni called the meeting to order. Pastor Torri offered a convening prayer. The agenda was approved with one addition. Don/Cindy Minutes were approved as written. Heidi/Ron

Pastor's Monthly Report: Pastor Torri highlighted several items on her monthly report. Regarding Sunday church services: hymnals have been returned to the pews. More people are attending in-person worship services but we still are not near to our capacity of 50 family units. The Governor has dropped the requirement for people to be masked indoors, which means that people can wear masks at our services or chose not to wear masks, depending on what is more comfortable for the individual. We are asking people to not approach people wearing masks if you do not have a mask on. We want to respect the needs of our friends at church.

Torri is receiving calls from people who would like to have funeral or memorial services for loved ones that have passed away. After discussion, Council decided that **we will not have a limit to the number of people who can attend a funeral or a funeral luncheon. If church members are uncomfortable with helping at a funeral or attending a funeral, they can excuse themselves.**

Several lake associations have asked to use the Friendship Hall for their annual meetings. Council again decided that we will not impose a limit to the number of people attending these meetings. We will also not restrict the number of people in the Friendship Hall during the Northwoods Arts Council event in August.

Financial Stewardship Board: Don reported that despite income being down for April, the Year to Date Income is over \$2,000 more than the Year to Date Expenses. As more people attend weekly services, Don is hopeful that plate cash will increase.

Updating video streaming: Don would like to see the church purchase one more camera at a cost of about \$1600 to improve the quality of our video streaming. Joni feels that we need to do more to be competitive with other churches whose quality of streaming is superior to ours. She asked that the tech team talk this issue over again before deciding what equipment is needed.

Facilities: Ron reported that the new gas stove will be arriving tomorrow between 1:00 and 4:00. The stove weighs 1000 pounds! Ron also reported that the electrician is here today installing new ballasts in the library. It was noted that our defibrillator is not usable now because the batteries have expired. Joni will research the best way to obtain replacement batteries.

Personnel: Joni reported that at our semi-annual meeting at the end of July, we will install a new Moderator and a new Vice Moderator team. All other people at the Council meeting will continue to do their current jobs. Ron Merritt does not want to lead Men's Fellowship in the future but is willing to continue with Facilities.

Outreach: Don reported that donations for the April mission of the month, One Great Hour of Sharing, were \$265. May donations for Strengthen the Church are still being collected.

In June, our mission of the month is Faith in Action. Karen will be writing an article about that outreach project for the newsletter.

Worship: About 20 – 25 people have been attending the worship service in person. The energy of being together is really wonderful. It is time to have greeters at each entrance to the sanctuary, and we also need people to make treats for coffee hour.

Women's Fellowship: Ten women came to the last meeting where Mary Parrish spoke about gardening and answered questions people had. A plant sale will be happening on Sunday to make a little money for the group.

Men's Fellowship: Gary Dietrich will be attending the next meeting to talk about the Hackensack Game Changers.

Christian Learning: Jo Horak was not present but Heidi read her report: The Bible Study is now meeting at member's homes for the summer. Please call Jo for details of each week's gathering site; 651-274-2145. The Community Meal has ended for the summer and was considered a great success. It will resume in September. VBS planning is ongoing. Forms for the program are on-line or can be picked up at the church. The summer forum schedule is progressing and will be available soon.

Justice Ministry Team: Tom mentioned that the Justice Ministry Team is working on several forum possibilities. More information to follow.

Treasure Sale: Cindy reported that she has made \$1693.00 selling items for the church on-line. The items she has sold include a legal filing cabinet, a lawn mower, a stroller, and many other items. The Treasure Sale set-up has begun. Volunteers (men and women) are needed over the next two weeks to get the sale organized. Remember if you volunteer to help, you might be the first to find a great treasure.

Moderator: Northwoods Arts Council has asked Joni to coordinate an all church pie sale like the one that occurred two years ago. Joni has made some calls and finds that none of the churches want to participate this year.

Newsletter: Deadline is May 24.

New Business: A local book club is asking for permission to use the library for their monthly meetings. Several church members are part of the group, and Council agreed to the request.

Highway 40 road clean-up: Our church has been cleaning a 2-mile section of this highway just outside of town for many years. We voted today to return the parcel to the Highway Department so another group can maintain it.

Meeting adjourned: Next meeting: June 17, 2021 Clerk: Karen Holle

News from the Worship Ministry Team

Summer is here! The leaves are out, the birds are singing, gardens are growing, and the sun is shining. It's a wonderful time of year.

Our numbers on a Sunday morning are increasing as our summer residents return to the area. By now most of our congregation have been vaccinated. With that in mind, in May the Council voted to relax mask restrictions and to increase the sanctuary capacity to 75 family units. Therefore, if you feel more comfortable wearing a mask, that's fine; if you wish to show your smiling face, that's fine, too. We ask that everyone respect their neighbor's comfort level as we proceed through the pandemic. We will continue to maintain social distancing, to refrain from shaking hands during the passing of peace, and to avoid passing the offering plates for the present.

Happily, both the bell and vocal choirs are getting back together. It's a pleasure to have them share their gifts with us again! Should you be interested in participating in either choir, please contact Sheryl (vocal choir) or Heidi (bell choir) for information.

It's a busy month at Union, with both the Treasure Sale and Vacation Bible School taking place, as well as our regular Sunday worship. We hope to see you soon!

Bible Study

Monday mornings

10:00 Coffee and conversation

10:30 to 11:30 Education and Inquiry. Site will vary.



WHY CHURCH? SERMON SERIES TOPICS

Worship
Communion
Being a Witness
Service
Social Justice
Interdependence

May 30th
June 6th
June 13th
June 20th
June 27th
July 4th



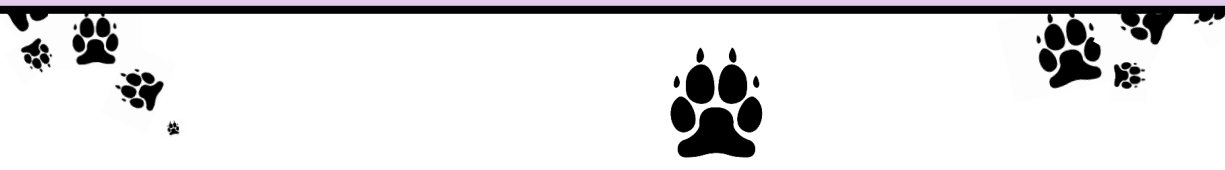
KODA'S COMMENTARY

Hi! My name is Koda, and I am the "Church Dog in Training"! I have passed my basic training and hope to become "THE Church Dog" soon. I know how to sit, shake, lay down, stay, come, and wait! I have also learned to stay out of the church kitchen! But just between you and me, I like to put my toes over the line... just to let everyone know I am a bit of a stinker.



Everyone tells me I am doing great, but I know sometimes I can be too hyper. I am only one and a half years old. I get the wiggles and I cannot help but run sometimes. Please be patient with me as I am still learning to control myself when I get excited.

I have a challenge for everyone! My human said that my brother "Caesar" had a title for his article called, "Caesar's Tales." I was wondering if you could help me name my article. My human came up with "Koda's Commentary," but I don't like that name. I would like something that will reflect my personality more. Do you have any ideas? If so, please email my human at torrivz@gmail.com. We will pick a winner next month!



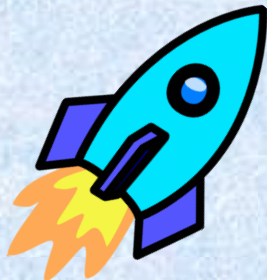
Vacation Bible School (VBS)

June 23-25



"Space Explorers: To Mars and Beyond"

Registration forms are available online at www.unioncchackensack.com or you can pick one up at the church.



Age groups are:

4yrs. old - Kindergarten

1st - 2nd grades

3rd and 4h grades

5th grade

6th-8th grades



Join us in a space adventure as we travel to Mars and beyond!
Older students will spend an afternoon at Deep Portage.
Please use the west entrance on the upper level to enter!

Questions call Jo at 651-274-2145

Women's Fellowship

The June 10th monthly meeting is being canceled due to the Treasure Sale going on.

It has been a while since everyone felt safe to come. Please do come in the future! We social distance, and do wear a mask if you prefer. We have lots of business to take care of, and conversation and treats too. We need YOU!

If you have any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300 or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



Men's Fellowship

Tuesday, June 1st at 9:00am, in-person in the Friendship Hall and over Zoom. A Zoom link will be sent out the morning of the gathering.

Gary Dietrich will be attending the June 1st meeting to talk about the Hackensack Game Changers.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300 or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



TREASURE SALE

The Treasure Sale is fast approaching. The lower level of the church is packed with many treasures. Sale dates are June 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th from 9 AM to 6 PM. The three dollar bag sale will start on Saturday at noon. Bring your friends and relatives and see what treasures you can find!

Blessings, Cindy



JUNE MISSION OF THE MONTH – FAITH IN ACTION

by Karen Holle

This year marks the 20th Anniversary for Faith in Action. Some of us were around when Faith in Action got started and know that the first office for the organization was located in the church. Through Faith in Action for Cass County, people of all ages and walks of life benefit from an assessment of their needs, referral to a broad range of resources, trained volunteers and the security of volunteer background checks. People could receive volunteer services such as: transportation to medical appointments and errands or friendly visiting and caregiver respite. Or people could get help with household chores and minor home repair, accessibility ramps, and more. The Calling Tree provides chats or check-ins by phone for people feeling isolated and alone. The wheelchair accessible van can provide transportation for people who have difficulty transferring in and out of a car. There are no income or age restrictions and no fees – everyone qualifies!



I met with Theresa Eclov from Faith in Action a few days ago to prepare this article. I had asked Theresa to think about how the Covid epidemic has affected her business of helping people in the community. Here is what she said:

Before the Covid epidemic, the Faith in Action office was a small office space attached to the Hackensack Laundromat. The small space limited the services that the organization could provide. Jim Tuller called Theresa and suggested she look at space he owned on First Street and indicated that he was willing to remodel to her specifications. She finally did take a look and was blown away by the possibilities of the new location. (When you get a chance, take a look at the space).

The larger space has allowed Theresa to hire another person who works for the organization on data management and finance. She helps prepare information that the organization can use for grant writing. Theresa also had the room for an intern last year who helped with the organization's website and worked on "techy" projects. Theresa said that through zoom meetings, quite a few new volunteers were trained and the pool of available volunteers increased. A new conference room allows groups to meet when they need space, and a private intake room allows for privacy when interviewing people who ask for help.

Theresa also mentioned that Minnesota Legal Aid has set up a kiosk with a computer which allows for people to ask questions of lawyers without traveling to Bemidji or Brainerd. All sorts of legal information is available to people who need help with setting up trusts, estates, powers of attorney, etc.

Volunteers for the organization can do as much or as little as they want to do. It is a fun place to volunteer and a great place to meet people. **Please consider making a donation to Faith in Action during the month of June. You can write a check to the church and note in the memo line that the money is for Faith in Action. Thank you!**

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Some days it is still spring, but next day it is mid-summer here. Our rain has been very sporadic, with the area east of Hackensack having better precipitation than the area west. But the whole area could have more rain.

One Great Hour of Sharing was the Mission of the Month in April. This is one of the five missions of the United Church of Christ. Our giving for this appeal was \$265. The May mission is Strengthen the Church, also one of the offerings/missions of the UCC.

April revenue was significantly lower than last year, but Union Church was still in a good position at the end of April. May giving is running lower than last year, but we hope that at the end of May we will still be in a good position.

A new gas stove was purchased for the Friendship Hall kitchen. This expenditure was approved by the Church Council and paid for from available interest and dividend monies from our Bequests and Special Gifts Fund.

We are beginning to see more of our members and friends in worship on Sunday mornings at Union Church as our seasonal members and friends return and COVID seems less scary as we are vaccinated..

Christ's Love and Peace to You,

Don Hoppe, Sheryl Kaubisch, and Caryl Allan - Board of Financial Stewardship

CELEBRATING THE PAST – Myra Damm, Historian

Additions to UCC

Plans for a new addition to the church were discussed, plans drawn and redrawn in the mid seventies until it was decided to go ahead and build.

An article from the Walker paper dated 1978, shows a picture of Jesse Green and Rev. Arden Johnson at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new addition. A portion of the article is as follows:

“The church addition which will be roughed in this Fall and completed in Spring, was necessitated by the steadily increasing membership and attendance of recent years which regularly, especially in summer months, exceeded the 222 total Hackensack village population. For the past several years double church services have been held from May to October.

The new addition will nearly triple the main floor sanctuary space of the church. It will increase the pew seating space from 110 to 285. We can easily seat 300 in the new building, whereas our capacity in the old church was severely strained by attending crowds of 150 or more at many individual services.

This addition will include extending the church basement facilities. The three new classrooms will provide privacy and quiet for Sunday School classes and their teachers, who formerly had to meet in one big room. Serving facilities will be greatly enhanced for various fellowship meetings, dinners, and bazaars.”

This is the first addition that was added to the church. Another addition followed later which will be covered in later reports. A motto I read in one of the reports was: “We continue to move forward into the future as a welcoming and friendly place to worship.”

kokoro CORNER

MONTHLY POET GATHERINGS

The Gathering of Poets monthly meeting is a joy. An outgrowth of our first Zoom poetry meeting last fall, poets gather on the first Monday of every month to share their poetry and encourage one another. Grace Steward is the moderator. If you or a poet you know would like to join the monthly gathering, please contact Grace at kokoropets@gmail.com.

POETRY EVENTS

On May 15th we had our second public poetry reading. Sue Ready, Evan J, Sara Chaffee-Bates, Sabbastian Wilson-Webb, Greg Webb, and Stephen Erickson shared verse, rhyme and rhythm. We look forward to the next one!

SONGWRITER CIRCLE

This month we had our first songwriting circle over Zoom. We workshopped our songs: tweaking lyrics, discussing song form, melody and harmony. If songwriting is your thing and you would like to join us, please reach out to kokoroperformingarts@gmail.com.



E-NEWSLETTER

Kokoro Center for Music and the Performing Arts sends out an email newsletter of upcoming opportunities and events. If you would like to receive our newsletter, let us know and we'll add you to the group.

Hope you and your loved ones are doing well. At this time we will continue to create online opportunities for connection in the arts!

Peace to all, Kiki



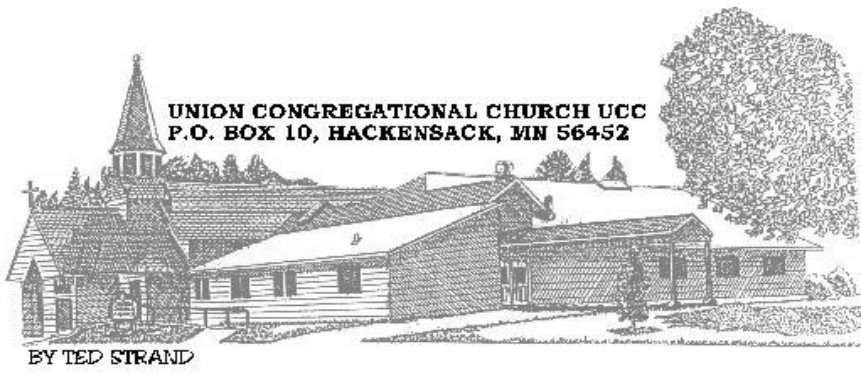
Bone Builders* 1:30 pm -2:30 pm
Every Monday and Friday

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

JUNE 2021

* = Community Event held at the church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 9:00am to 3 PM Treasure Sale Set Up 9:00am Men's Fellowship	2 7:00pm-8:00pm Book Study (Zoom)	3 1:30 Bone Builders *	4 1:30 Bone Builders *	5
6 9:30am Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour	7 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	8 5:30pm Financial Team Meeting (Zoom)	9 9:00am-6:00pm Treasure Sale 7:00am-2:00pm Community Flea Market*	10 9:00am-6:00pm Treasure Sale	11 9:00am-6:00pm Treasure Sale 1:30- Bone Builders *	12 9:00am-6:00pm Treasure Sale
13 9:30am Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour	14 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	15	16	17 1:00pm Church Council (Zoom) 5:30pm VBS Teacher Training 7:00pm-8:00pm Book Study (Zoom)	18 1:30 Bone Builders *	19
20 9:30am Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour	21 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	22	23 Vacation Bible School	24 Vacation Bible School 1:00pm Fiber Arts*	25 Vacation Bible School 1:30 Bone Builders *	26
27 9:30am Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour	28 10:30am—12:00pm Bible Study 1:30 Bone Builders* 6:00pm AA Meeting*	29	30			



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FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



Treasure Sale info inside!

Vacation Bible School registration info

2021

