

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>
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JUNE 2023

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

Asking for Help

Several weeks ago, I opened my mailbox to find a letter from the community asking if I needed help with any projects around my property. I knew where this letter came from, I knew Union Church was one of the organizers of this Community Clean-Up event, but I also felt like I didn't qualify because I didn't really need the help. I had the means to do the projects I needed to do. So, I dismissed the letter and thought, "There are others who need this more than me."

A few more weeks went by and the letter sat on my kitchen counter. I had started cleaning up my yard, filling the bird feeders, and dusting off my lawn chairs. As I looked around, I realized I had more to do than I realized. My little "rock garden" that sat at the back of my property had been taken over by weeds. My pine tree branches hung so low that mowing the lawn would be challenging. I didn't have the time or energy to tackle either project, and I did not have the tools needed, like a chainsaw or trailer to haul the branches away. I realized, maybe I do need help?

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
	Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderators	Marilyn McKnight & Steve Erickson
Clerk	Karen Holle
Board of Financial Stewardship	Don Hoppe
Ministry Teams:	
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

BIRCHVIEW CHURCH

Every Sunday at 1:00 pm, a group gathers in the TV room of Birchview Gardens Assisted Living Center to play our morning worship service. This is not only a time to watch a worship service, but it IS A TIME TO WORSHIP.

A small group of individuals from Union go over to meet, interact, and worship with the residents of Birchview. It is a special and sacred time for everyone!

If you would like to volunteer to participate and help on Sundays, please sign up on the Birchview Church poster located in the hallway leading into the Friendship Hall.

A good number of people would be anywhere between 2-5 people per week. It is a fun time filled with rewarding conversations and new friendships.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

June 1	Bert Wiersma
June 10	Candace Strawn
June 16	Luise Forseth
	Joni Kumpula
June 18	Kirin Christianson
June 19	Pat Pomeroy
June 20	Sue Johnson
June 27	Cindy Gulbrandson
June 28	Don Olsen

Happy Birthday



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

Continued from Page 1

So, I took the form and filled it out, only to realize that the deadline had passed. Good thing I know the event organizer! I called Sue, and I was put on the list.

The day came and three women came over to rake out my “rock garden.” I had to leave for an appointment, but they reassured me that they had it handled. I returned to a beautiful little “rock garden” ready to be thinned out and add other plants that would attract butterflies and bees.

The next day, I showed up to volunteer. I was sent back to my house with one other volunteer to trim my trees. Well, that little project turned into way more than I thought! It took about 5 hours, 2 handsaws, 2 chainsaws, 4 trailers making multiple trips to the “pond” to dump the branches, and a professional arborist (tree trimmer) to clean up my tree line.

Later that day, I was sitting at the brewery with some friends who I worked with that day and realized something pretty amazing. If I had not asked for help and given others the opportunity to serve, I would have missed out on great conversations, good bonding time with friends, and seeing others at their best. I would have also missed out on the opportunity to be part of a community that loves their neighbors by serving them.

I know it is hard to ask for help sometimes, but maybe asking for help isn't the point. Maybe building supportive relationships is the point? Maybe giving the opportunity to allow others to serve is the point? Maybe allowing God to develop ALL OF US into the image of Jesus is the point?



Pastor Torri

Through the Eyes and Mind of a Three-Quarters of a Century Gay Man

by Richard Vanden-Eykel

First, a little background information about my life:

For way over half of a century, I lived my life trying to fit into what society expected of me, which included 2 marriages to women. The first one gave me 2 daughters and lasted for almost 21 years, when I filed for divorce. The second one only lasted 1-1/2 years, and also ended with me filing for a divorce.

I'm a believer in “what is meant to happen will happen.” On 9/01/2006, I was introduced to a person, who was Gunder. From 11/2006 to 8/2013, we lived together as what looked like roommates to the outside world, but in fact we were a couple. One month after the law for same sex marriage was legalized in the state of Minnesota, we were married on 9/1/2013.

I've always been a spiritual person, but I never felt that I fit into any organized religion. Gunder and I were sort of looking for a church to call home. One time when we were in Hackensack, Gunder saw the sign for Union Church. We talked about attending for many months. I guess you could say we were dragging our feet. We did finally attend a service, and we both felt comfortable with everyone and how they received and interacted with us. The rest is history! Yes, we found our new church and family that we love being a part of. Every service I wait with anticipation for the following statement to be said, “No matter who you are or where you are in your life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!” That is how we feel.



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MAY 18, 2023

PRESENT: Mike Schmitt, Stan Kumpula, Joni Kumpula, Heidi Hoppe, Pastor Torri, Karen Holle, Don Hoppe, Steve Erickson, Marilyn McKnight, Sue Kimmel, Kerry Swenson

Steve called the meeting to order. The minutes of the last meeting were approved as written. The agenda of this meeting was approved.

Pastor's Monthly Report: Pastor Torri highlighted several items from her report. She will be attending the Minnesota Conference June 9 and 10 and will also be attending a mandatory "anti-racism" training. She has been asked to be part of the annual conference planning team. She expects to be attending meetings by zoom and is excited about this opportunity.

Torri is excited about the Sunday afternoon services at Birchview Gardens which have been going very well.

Board of Facilities: Kerry reported that an energy audit was just completed for the church. We are still waiting for the report from the power company.

The City of Hackensack is ready to move forward with insulating the water line that runs from the road into the church. Our portion of the project will cost about \$13,000. **Motion: To approve \$13,000 to pay for our share of the water line improvements. Kerry/Joni/passed.**

Kerry is working with the project manager of the childcare pod to make sure that we know about any work that might be coming up and how that will affect the church.

Kerry also reported that our AED has been serviced and is ready to use.

A solar project is underway for the church that will entail losing two parking spaces in the parking lot. Bids are being obtained for this project. If financially feasible and approved by Council, the project is expected to be completed in 2023 because there is considerable rebate money available this year.

Kerry has been investigating the roof leaking problems we had this winter and has concluded that we could put heat tapes up before fall to eliminate the buildup of ice dams.

Board of Personnel: Marilyn's team consists of herself, Chris Swenson, and Connie Schmitt. The team will begin to plan for Pastor Torri's 2024 sabbatical and will also consider establishing a pastor – parish team for the church. The Conference has sent out guidelines - A Sure Foundation- to help with these issues.

Board of Financial Stewardship - Don's monthly report indicates that for April total income was \$8,229, and expenses were \$17,808. Expenses were high due to a propane bill and a quarterly insurance bill. YTD balance in our operating fund is \$21,000. **Motion to approve the financial report: Marilyn/Stan/passed.** Don also asked permission to pay a bill for new lighting for the sanctuary that totaled \$1,200. **Motion: approval for payment of a bill totaling \$1,200 for new church lighting. Heidi/Joni/passed.**

Ministry Team Reports:

Congregational Life: Community meals are going well with donations offsetting the cost of the food each week. Approximately 20-25 people are attending the weekly meals. Last week Dick Kimmel and his "jam session friends" played music after the Wednesday meal which was a lot of fun. This week there will be a movie after the meal.

An updated directory is being worked on. Heidi is taking pictures on Sunday for the new directory.

Worship: Heidi reported that the average attendance at worship over the past month is 37 with 9 households online. At Birchview Gardens, 9 people on average are attending the service. Heidi will remove masks and signs about masking. Please make sure doors are locked if you are the last person to leave the church.

Women's Fellowship: Joni reported that 16 women came for the luncheon this month. We enjoyed a nice meal and great conversation. On June 8, we will be having a style show and are encouraged to invite our friends.

Men's Fellowship: Stan reported that on May 9, breakfast was made by Mike Bohanon and was served to 8 men who really enjoyed it. On May 15, the men will clean up around the church. Weeds that are growing in the gravel will be sprayed, and the tool room will be reorganized.

Justice Ministry Team: Sue reported on the Community Clean-up that is planned for May 19 and 20. Fourteen projects will be completed by a group of 30 volunteers.

A JMT meeting is being planned at Marilyn and Steve's house to discuss the issue of water being affected by the run-off from potato farms. Mike and Jenny Tauber will be guests at that meeting.

The Leech Lake Culture Alliance has a new project to put the pictures of missing indigenous women in gas stations, in an attempt to make people more aware of this problem.

Outreach: Don reported that enough money has come in for the scholarship fund to provide two \$500 scholarships to graduating Walker High School seniors. The scholarship fund will continue to be our mission for the month of June.

Fundraising: An informational talk is scheduled for after church on June 4 to explain to people the work that is happening on the lower level of the church for a childcare pod. We expect rent from the center will help to raise funds for our church.

Other fundraising projects: Fall Harvest Meal September 21 with music by Dick Kimmel. Trunk or Treat – October 25 (the last Wednesday in October before Halloween). Community meal and trick or treating from the trunks of our cars in the parking lot.

Tech Team: Mike Schmitt reported that streaming our services is going well. There have been no bites yet from people interested in our organ which we are retiring this summer. Items are rolling in for the Tech Treasure Sale. Mike also mentioned that our thermostats at church will be upgraded and the last of our incandescent light bulbs will be upgraded to LED.

Moderator Moment: Steve feels his life has been enriched by being a member of Union Church. He is thankful that we all help each other out and are also involved in helping our community.

Old Business: Joni reported that the conservation easement is in place for the Woock-Ness property after two years of work. There will be a celebration in June when the Minnesota Land Grant people can attend. They will help us understand why it is so important to be protecting land with land grants.

Koda moved that we adjourn. Heidi seconded. Next meeting is June 22. Clerk, Karen Holle

JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM

Union Congregational Church sponsored Hackensack's 2nd annual Neighbor Helping Neighbor Community Clean-up on May 19th and May 20th.

Over 50 volunteers from service clubs, churches, schools, and community organizations completed 18 clean-up projects for Hackensack residents.

The work was physically challenging but brought joy to all volunteers who received endless gratitude from Hackensack's residents. Our team at Union got to know our Hackensack neighbors in a deeper way. Thank you, Union Church volunteers, and a special thank you to Karen and her team for providing delicious lunches.

THROUGH KODA'S EYES

Hi! I am Koda, the Church Dog! Today I am interviewing my friend, Knight! Knight is a professional service dog! He helps Richard with many things. You may have seen him sitting in church or at one of our activities. He is a big black German Shepherd who is smart, kind, and gentle. He is a good boy... like me! So, here is my interview with Knight!

Koda: Hi, Knight! Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed again!

Knight: You are welcome, Koda. It is nice to sit and talk with you for a while.

Koda: Knight, I have some more questions I would like to ask you.

Knight: That is great! I am all ears!

Koda: I am a trained church dog. I have been specifically trained to greet people, let people pet me, and to be calm in a meeting. You are a highly trained service dog. What is your training?

Knight: Well Koda, I have been trained by an organization called Patriot Assistance Dogs (PAD). They are located in Detroit Lakes. They train rescue dogs as service dogs for veterans living with PTSD and other conditions. They provide highly trained, certified psychiatric service dogs (like me) to US Military veterans.

Koda: Wow! That's incredible! So you were a rescue dog like me?

Knight: Yep! I was a rescue dog. I don't need to talk about my past, but I do want to talk about my time at PAD. Right now they have two trainers and are hoping to hire a third. The organization is growing, and there is a big need for dogs like me. Koda, do you know the significance of the number 22?

Koda: 22? Umm... Is it that I get to have 22 treats today? Or 22 walks?

Knight: No, Koda. 22 is the number of veterans that take their lives every day because they cannot navigate life anymore and they do not get the emotional, physical, or psychological support they need. This is where Patriot Assistance Dogs fill a vital role. We literally save lives.

Koda: That is amazing, Knight!!! Can I get trained? Where do I sign up?

Knight: No, Koda... you already have a job. You are the Church Dog!

Koda: Oh yeah! And I love my job! Thank you, Knight, for talking with me again.

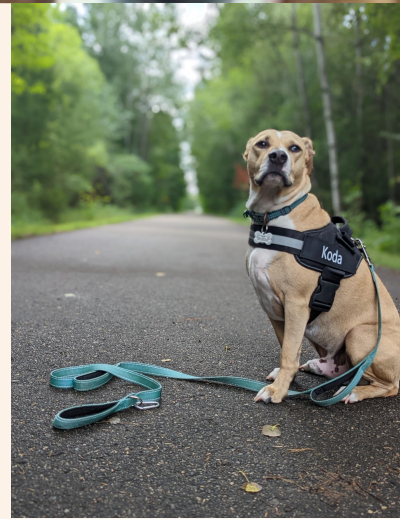
Knight: Yes, my pleasure. And speaking of jobs, I need to get back to Richard. Have a good day. Oh, and thank you for letting me play with your squeaky toys when I visit.

Koda: Oh you are welcome! Wait, are YOU the one who put a hole in my squeaky toy?

Knight, wait! Knight!

Knight: I have to go now, Koda! Bye!

For more information on PAD, go to www.patriotassistancedogs.com



BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Operating Income and Expenses

Giving Income - April	\$ 7,267.00	Year to Date Giving	\$ 42,271.00
Other Income *	\$ 961.59	YTD Other Income *	\$ 34,771.50
Total Income	\$ 8,228.59	YTD Total Income	\$ 77,042.50
Expenses - April	\$ 17,808.40	Year to Date Expenses	\$ 56,041.28
Current Month Balance	\$- 9,579.81	YTD Balance	\$ 21,001.22

* 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: \$ 59,620.55

Total Assets \$ 303,963.18

Summary

April giving was better than April, 2022 but was a little low for April in general. Expenses were quite high, especially utilities, insurance, and the final snow removal bill. Other income was about normal for this time of the year.

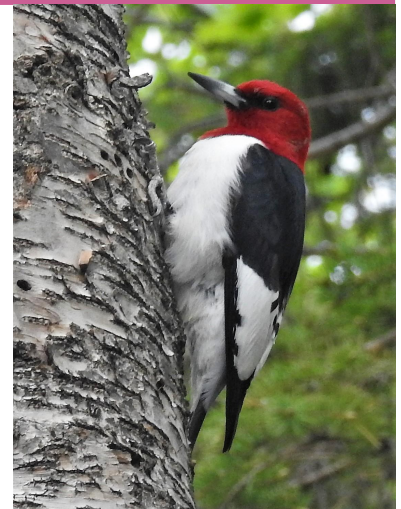
At this point our position of revenue vs. expenses continues to be good, especially if looked at on an annual basis and compared to our approved budget.

NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

Welcome home to all our returning members and friends. Summer is here, and you know what that means. Activities abound at Union and in the surrounding communities, as well as the normal swimming, boating, and fishing. So much to do, and only so many hours in the day!

We continue our practice of having lay readers each Sunday to assist Pastor Torri. If you would like to be a reader, please let her know, and we will add your name to the rotation list. By the same token, if you would like to take a break from reading, we can put your name on hold.

New this year is Birchview Church. 2 or 3 people gather with Pastor Torri at the assisted living facility next door to the church at 1:00 each Sunday to watch a replay of that morning's service. The residents look forward to it each week and are so thankful we can provide this opportunity. It is a wonderful and rewarding experience, and I hope you will consider signing up to help. The sign-up sheet is located in the hallway to the Friendship Hall. Enjoy your summer! See you at church and around town.



CELEBRATING THE PAST: More Bell Choir History

Myra Damm, Historian

Jo Majors was a leading person to get the bells and the choir for UCC. When they first started practicing, there were many expressions on the faces of the ringers ranging from joy to sheer terror. Jo continued working with the choir, and with many practices and rehearsals, the playing improved to the point that they took their show "on the road." They performed at various churches, nursing homes, and did the Deep Portage Christmas party open house. This was quite a chore as each ringer needed a bell table, pad, lights, and all the octaves for the bells each time they left the church to perform.

White gloves were worn to protect the bells from the oils on the hands. Different techniques were used when playing the bells. They are called marletto lift, thumb dampers, and plunks to make the different sounds. Some members learned to play two or more bells at one time, adding more sound to the music.

In winter the snowbirds would leave, so a smaller number of people had to learn to play with less octaves. When spring came, the ringers would be back and join in. Currently the bell choir is not active, but with those beautiful bells on hand, they will be heard again!

SUMMER COMMUNITY MEALS & ACTIVITIES

Summer Community Meals are every Wednesday from 4:00 to 5:30 pm in the Friendship Hall.

Every 2nd Wednesday there is a Game Night at 5:30 pm, and every 4th Wednesday there is a Movie Night at 5:30 pm following the meal!

June 7th Taco Bar, salad, and dessert

June 14th Spaghetti, salad, and dessert - Game Night to follow!

June 21th Teriyaki Bowl with rice, salad, and dessert

June 28th Pulled pork Sloppy Joes, baked beans, salad, and dessert - Movie Night to follow!

TECH TEAM COMMUNICATIONS

We want, need, and can use your old technology!

We all have them – sitting on a shelf in a closet, basement, or garage - a laptop or computer that was running slow, the old small monitor, keyboard, mouse, printer, or flat screen TV. You haven't touched them since you bought a new one, and you're just not sure what to do with the old one.

It's time to clear out the old technology and put it to good use. We want your old laptops, desktop computers, iPads, tablets, monitors, keyboards, mice, printers, stereos, and flat screen TVs. We will clean them and erase all data while we bring them back to life and find them new homes and purpose.

Please drop off your working, no longer used technology, before June 30th.

Union Congregational Church: 401 Lake Ave E, Hackensack

Office hours: 9 am to Noon, Mon - Thur, or 9 am to 11 am on Sunday

If your electronic items are broken, it's easy to drop them off at the Walker\Hackensack Transfer Site just north of Hackensack, or the Pine River Station north of Pine River on Highway 371. There is no charge to Cass County residents to drop off electronic equipment.

For questions please contact:

Email: TechTeam.UCCHackMN@gmail.com

Call the UCC office during office hours at 218-675-6300



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Greetings and happy June! Wow, time flies! Extra hellos to all who have returned for the fabulous summer ahead. Remember the second Thursday at 1:00 every month is Women's Fellowship. Hope it's on your calendar.

June 8th is our next event and is a dessert and style show by Boutique by the Beach in Hack. We have models from all the local churches and extra prizes and fun. No reservations needed, just come!!!! Guaranteed fun.

On July 13th we will be enjoying a talk about Stacy and Linnea's walk across Spain. We will meet in the park right outside of church so we can tour the park. If the weather is bad we will be inside the church. All the men are all invited also. It will be enlightening and fun.

We are a busy group. Our luncheon and the plant sale in May were great. Many thanks to the luncheon committee, chairs Stacy, Tammy, and Caryl. Our goals are knowing each other better, having a good time, and service to the church. Please join us!

See you in church, Joni and Caryl



BRUCE CARLSON BOOK PRESENTATION

After the Community Meal on June 7th (4:00 - 5:30 pm), Bruce Carlson will give a talk (6:00 pm) based on his new book, "A North Country Lake throughout the Seasons." The talk will feature many underwater videos taken in Ten Mile Lake over the past 25 years. The book itself contains 180 color photographs, as well as about 75 videos, which can be accessed through the free eBook that accompanies the printed copy. Following the talk, Bruce will be available to sign books.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our get-togethers are now the second Tuesday of the month except for special events.

On May 9, we met in the Fellowship Hall and had breakfast consisting of Eggs Albuquerque, sausage, Finnish Pulla bread, fruit, and juice. Mike Bohanon provided the egg bake, and Joni K made the bread. We discussed the church spring cleanup with the Facilities Board and set the date for May 15th from 9 am to noon. **Several of us did help** with applying weed killer to the gravel around the church, gathered branches and hauled them away, and spent time in the tool room area cleaning up a bit.

We proposed a trip for June! We are going to visit the Forest History Center in Grand Rapids, to experience the stories of the northwoods and learn about the lumberjacks who called these forests home. The cost is \$8 for seniors, \$10 for others. This includes the Visitor Center and a Logging Camp. We will gather at the church at 9 am and carpool to Grand Rapids. The date will be June 14th as the center is not open on Tuesday. We will plan on RSVPs for the trip. We will have a buffet lunch at the Chinese restaurant on Highway 2 in Grand Rapids. Hope to see many of you coming along!

Stan Kumpula

ONGOING EVENTS



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, June 8th at 1:00 pm

Style Show! All are welcome!

Any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300
or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



Men's Fellowship

Wednesday, June 14th at 9:00 am

Trip to Forest History Center
in Grand Rapids!

Please RSVP at 218-675-6300
or email the church at unionucc401@gmail.com.



Lectio Divina

Every Wednesday at 3:30 pm
Library

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



Exercise Group

Every Wednesday at 10:00 am
Friendship Hall

Community Event



Movie Night

June 28th at 5:30 pm
Friendship Hall

Showing: "A Man Called Otto"



Game Night

June 14th at 5:30 pm
Friendship Hall

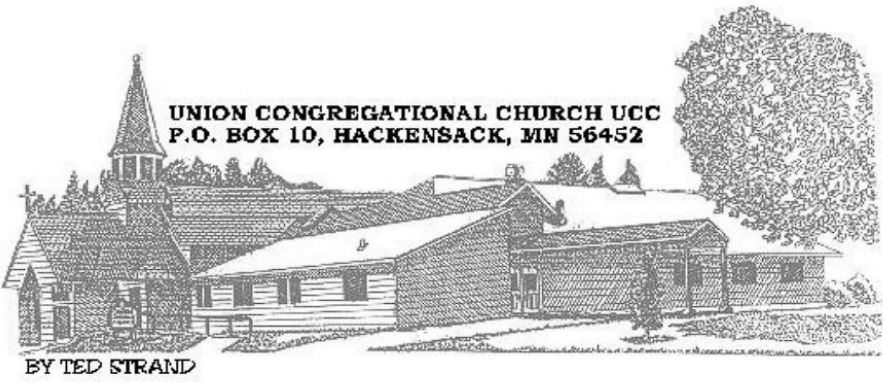
Bring a snack to share.

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

June 2023

* Community event

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour, with Childcare Center (Pod) Presentation by Steve Erickson 1:00 pm Birchview Gardens Service	5 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	6	7 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 10:00 am Fellowship Time at Ellie's 3:30 pm Lectio Divina 4:00 pm Community Meal 6:00 pm Bruce Carlson's Book Presentation	8 1:00 pm Women's Fellowship Style Show and Dessert - Boutique by the Beach	9 Office Closed 1:30pm Bone Builders*	10
11 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Gardens Service	12 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	13 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	14 9:00 am Men's Fellowship Trip to Forest History Center, Grand Rapids with lunchtime Burger Tent 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 3:30 pm Lectio Divina 4:00 pm Community Meal 5:30 pm Game Night	15 9:00 am-6:00 pm TREASURE SALE	16 Office Closed 9:00 am-6:00 pm TREASURE SALE 1:30pm Bone Builders*	17 9:00 am-6:00 pm TREASURE SALE
18 Father's Day 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Gardens Service	19 <i>Juneleenth</i> 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	20 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	21 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 10:00 am Fellowship Time at Ellie's 3:30 pm Lectio Divina 4:00 pm Community Meal 6:00 pm Dick's Acoustic Jame	22 9:00am Congregational Life Meeting 1:00 pm Council Meeting 1:00 Fiber Arts*	23 Office Closed 1:30pm Bone Builders*	24 12:00 pm Memorial service for Beverly Patterson
25 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00pm Birchview Gardens Service	26 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	27 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	28 10:00am Exercise in Friendship Hall* 3:30 pm Lectio Divina 4:00 pm Community Meal 5:30 pm Movie Night "A Man Called Otto"	29	30 Office Closed 1:30pm Bone Builders*	



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FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



2023

Treasure Sale June 14-17!



THE UNION NEWS

