

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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Inside this issue:

Notes from Rev. Torri	1, 3
Union 101	2
Birthdays	2
Newsletter Update	3
Council Minutes	4, 5
Justice Ministry Team	5
Through Koda's Eyes	6
Recipe Time	7
Worship Ministry	8
Women's Fellowship	8
Moderator's Moment	9
Events	10
Calendar	11

MAY 2024

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

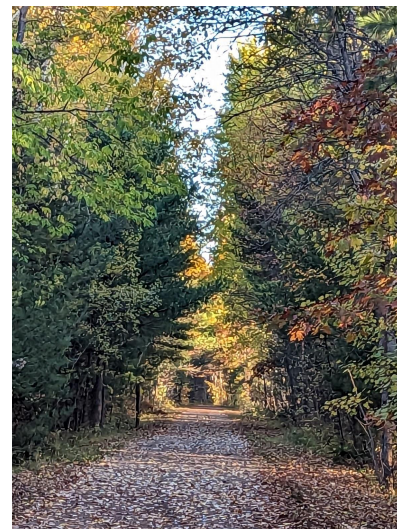
Is Loving One Another Even Possible?

Over the past year I have hated watching the news. Every time I turn the TV on, everytime I read a headline and every time I get in my car to listen to the radio, there is an anxiety that rises from the pit of my stomach. Another school shooting, more displaced families due to war(s), more innocent children killed by bombs and more children dying from hunger. It seems we are doing a lot of arguing but are not really finding solutions that will help people live better lives.

It seems like humanity has lost its humanity.

It seems like human beings forgot how to be human.

I believe at the heart of every person there is goodness and decency. But lately that belief has been challenged in numerous ways. Sometimes my beliefs in humanity have been proven wrong.



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
Vice Moderator	Gunder Austin
Clerk	Karen Holle
Board of Financial Stewardship	Don Hoppe
Ministry Teams:	
Congregational Life	Joni Kumpula
Facilities	Mike Bohanon & Kerry Swenson
Personnel	Connie Schmitt
Worship	Heidi Hoppe
Men's Fellowship	Stan Kumpula
Women's Fellowship	Joni Kumpula
Adult Learning	Linnea Dietrich
Tech Team	Mike Schmitt
Online Sales	Cindy Gulbrandson
Justice Ministry Team	Sue Kimmel

SUMMER CLASS: UNION 101

Get to Know Our Church Better

This summer Pastor Torri will be leading a class called "Union 101." This is a 3-week class that will be held on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the church library. In this class we will discuss the history of the United Church of Christ, the organization of the United Church of Christ, and the history of Union Church. This would be perfect for someone who is deciding if they would like to become a member.

This is open to everyone. You can be a long-time member or be someone who just recently started attending. If you would like to join us, please contact Pastor Torri at 563-320-5360 or email her at pastor.ucchackmn@gmail.com.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 2	Emily Howland
May 4	Robin Wicker
May 6	Mary Parrish
May 7	Tammy Lindberg
May 8	Lynnette Tripp
May 15	Jennifer Stenstrom
May 16	Dolly Olsen
May 18	Randy Vosbeck
May 19	Barbara Lyall
May 22	Mary Hertzman
May 24	Marty Mann
May 26	Wendy Cline

Happy Birthday!

Continued from Page 1

We (Christians) say God is love. We say that we must love one another. We even say that Jesus commands us to love one another and love our neighbor as ourselves. But what does that even mean? What does that look like when there is so much hate and fear in the world?

In a world where there is so much division, where do we even begin?

How do we love one another when the world is ripping us apart?

Is this even possible, or do we just accept the fact that our beliefs are meant to separate us?

“Father, may they be one as You and I are one.” - Jesus

How is this possible in 2024?

Let's start with “Elephants and Umwelts”.

Starting May 12th I will begin a new sermon series called: “Practical Love”. It is based on a book called “Love Matters More: How fighting to be right keeps us from loving like Jesus” by Jared Byas.

Let's start figuring this out together. I refuse to believe that we can't do better to foster unity and dignity in this world.

Pastor Torri



NEWS ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

Thank you to everyone who contacted Linda with information regarding receiving this monthly newsletter via email or the Postal Service! For upcoming issues, these requests will be honored. Those who have not responded to Linda will no longer be personally receiving "The Union News," but feel free to pick one up at church!





COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 18, 2024 *(Not approved by Council)*

PRESENT: Joni and Stan Kumpula, Sue Kimmel, Karen Holle, Cindy Gulbrandson, Pastor Torri, Mike Schmitt, Gunder Austin, Steve Erickson, Mike Bohanon, (Connie Schmitt by zoom), Caryl Allan

Steve called the meeting to order. Pastor Torri offered a convening prayer.

The agenda was approved as written. Minutes were approved with minor corrections. Stan/Caryl.

Discussion and Approval of Constitution Rewrite: Karen sent out the new church Constitution so everyone could read it before the meeting. The section of the document regarding “membership” mentions that a person “who has been baptized” may become a member of the church. There was much discussion about the words “who has been baptized” because there are people at Union who were raised in churches that did not believe in baptism. It was decided that this terminology could present a barrier to people wanting to join Union and that what is really important is that a prospective member acknowledge the importance of Jesus Christ in their own lives and in the life of our church community. **Motion to approve the new Constitution** with this change and a few other minor changes. The new Constitution will be voted on at the semi-annual meeting in July. Gunder/Sue

Pastor’s Report: Pastor Torri reviewed a report of many things she has been working on over the past month. She was very happy with the turnout for the Seder meal and the fact that it was attended by people from three churches. She would like to continue this tradition next year.

Board of Facilities: Mike Bohannon is waiting for a bid from a local person who is interested in taking care of the church lawn. He is waiting for Kerry to return from Texas and will then get a bid for painting a portion of the outside of the church. Jim Allan will install a lockbox at the east double doors of the church, making it easier for authorized people to get into the church for various events.

Board of Personnel: Connie Schmitt reported that the 2024 Letter of Call for Pastor Torri has been completed and signed and will be stored in a locked file cabinet. Staff evaluations have been completed.

Board of Financial Stewardship: Caryl Allan reported that March income was \$9,616 and expenses for the month were \$18,624. Expenses were high this month because quarterly payments were made for Pastor Torri’s insurance.

Ministry Team Reports:

Congregational Life: This team will be meeting next week. Nothing to report at this time.

Worship: Pastor Torri reported that the worship team has done well during Heidi’s absence. Team members are: Gunder, Gracee, Caryl and Torri. Several pottery pieces are being made for Communion sets that have been incomplete. The potters, Dick and Sandy Pullen, will be donating the pieces to the church. They are regular vendors at the Northwoods Arts Council and we are encouraged to check them out this August.

Women’s Fellowship: Joni reported that the April meeting was on gardening and was a lot of fun. Thanks to Mary Parrish for leading the discussion. The Women’s Fellowship has just donated \$1,000 to the church for new blinds for the Friendship Hall and for the Library. The Women’s Fellowship also donated \$500 to the Minnesota Conference for the mission, Our Church’s Wider Mission. Wine making will be the topic for June and chain saw carving is the topic for July.

Men's Fellowship: Stan reported that the men are thinking about interesting trips they might take together this summer. More info coming!

Justice Ministry Team: The latest book study resulted in conversations expressing differing political views that participants were able to listen to and discuss respectfully. A new book to study is being considered.

Neighbor helping neighbor takes place this year May 17 and 18. People are being asked to sign up at church if you are able to help with the work that weekend. People in the town of Hackensack have been sent letters asking if they have projects they need help with.

The Justice Ministry team assists with Sunday service at Birchview Church. John Parr will organize Saturday activities for Birchview several times each month.

On June 23 there will be a forum following the service. The speaker is Arnold Dahl-Wooley, a two spirited person who speaks on LGBTQ+ issues.

Fundraising: An attempt is being made to ready more space downstairs which can be rented to an outside business or organization. Steve also mentioned that an investment team is being formed to assist in better utilization of the church's financial resources.

Tech Team: Mike Schmitt reported that a soundbar has been installed at the Birchview church to improve the sound of the Sunday worship service.

In the Friendship Hall a new mixer and a set of microphones have been installed. Additionally two more screens are coming to the Friendship Hall for a total of four screens.

In the Sanctuary two new microphones will be installed over the Congregation to improve the sound of singing for those who are listening online.

TDS will be installing fiber optics which will improve our phone service and our streaming service.

Outreach: This team recently met to discuss offering a monthly community meal in the summer. Money earned on these meals will be used to purchase food for the Men's Fellowship's holiday food baskets.

This team is also working on a handbook for use of the Kitchen.

Moderator's Moment: Steve thanked everyone for providing rides for Marilyn to her radiation appointments. Marilyn has enjoyed getting to know church members better and Steve has enjoyed time at home to get other chores done.

New Business:

Pastor-Parish Team – It has been many years since we have had an active Pastor/Parish team. Karen presented a write-up of the tasks this team would undertake to improve communication between the Congregation and the Pastor. The goal is to get this team formed and working before the semi-annual meeting in July.

Child Care Pod – We have received rent for the month of March. A fence with a gate will be installed for the children's playground. Money will be requested from the Legion and the Lions for the fencing.

Meeting adjourned. Pastor Torri offered a benediction. Next meeting is May 16.
Clerk, Karen Holle

THROUGH KODA'S EYES

Sunspots!

Hi! My name is Koda and I am "The Church Dog"!

I want to tell you about one of my favorite things: SUNSPOTS! I LOVE SUNSPOTS! THEY ARE MAGICAL!

I have known many animals, including cats who love sunspots too! Bandit even loves sunspots!



I do not think humans understand the amazing and magical effects of sunspots on the body...so I would like to take some time and tell you about it.

1. **Sunspots are calming** - Sunspots are warm and calming to my body. Every time I am in a sunspot, nothing else matters. My eyes close, my muscles relax, and I become very mellow. Sunspots are calming!
2. **Sunspots keeps me positive** - For those who have not met me yet, I am a very upbeat pup! I love to meet new people (especially if they have treats). I love to explore new places and go on adventures! I am always up for something new! Sunspots keep me positive.
3. **Sunspots help me focus** - My human needs me at the top of my game! We never know when I need to be called into action as "The Church Dog." There are times you will find me in the church hallway taking a power nap in a sunspot so I can remain focused on my duties.
4. **Sunspots give me energy** - I love waking up from a sunspot nap! I am ready to go for a walk, chase after squirrels, or visit with a human who needs my attention.

So sunspots are a very important part of my life! And they are magical!

My human has a different view of sunspots. She does not believe sunspots are magic. She believes in something called "serotonin." I do not think that is even a real word! She says it is a chemical in the human brain that is released when you are exposed to the sun. Whatever, human! It is magic! Sunspots are magic! And you cannot change my mind on that! And that is how I see it through my eyes!



Have a barky day!
Koda "The Church Dog"

Important note from Koda: Sunspots do not have the same effect on cats. According to my experience, cats become more crabby, demanding, and lethargic when exposed to sunspots... however, their focus on food becomes more intense. Be careful when exposing cats to sunspots.



A decadent treat for springtime

Lemon Bars

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour 360g, divided 2 1/2 cups for crust and 1/2 cup for filling
- 2/3 cups powdered sugar 66g, for the shortbread, plus more for dusting
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 12 tbsp unsalted butter melted, 170g
- 3 tbsp lemon zest zest of three lemons
- 3 cups sugar 600g
- 8 eggs large, room temperature
- 1 cup lemon juice fresh, 240mL



These yummy lemon bars are perfect for an afternoon teatime, picnic, or just as a sweet treat because you deserve it!

1. Heat oven to 350F and line a 9x13 baking dish with parchment paper.
2. Whisk together 2 1/2 cups of flour (300g) with the powdered sugar and salt, then pour in the melted butter and mix until combined. Alternatively use a stand mixer with a paddle attachment. Optionally add dash of vanilla in with the butter.
3. Sprinkle the dough into your lined pan and press down into a flat layer. Bake at 350F for about 20 minutes or until a light golden color.
4. While the crust is baking, add the sugar to a food processor and add the zest of three lemons. Pulse until the zest is fully incorporated and sugar is a light yellow color. If you don't have a processor, mince the zest and mix with the sugar in a bag or bowl.
5. Add the sugar and remaining half cup of flour to a large bowl and mix well.
6. Pour in the lemon juice and add the eggs then mix very well until completely combined.
7. Pour the filling onto the warm crust then transfer to oven and bake for about 25 minutes, turning halfway through the bake. Remove from oven and allow to cool for an hour before chilling in the refrigerator for two hours.
8. Dust with powdered sugar and cut into bars using a clean, sharp, damp knife. Clean and re-wet the knife after each cut.

NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

Time to gear up for summer! Our “snowbird” friends and neighbors are beginning to return to the Northland, and soon our calendars will begin filling up. There’s so much going on this summer at Union and in the Hackensack area! As you know, Torri will be going on sabbatical from mid August to mid November. The Worship Ministry Team and the Sabbatical Planning Team are working on plans for a smooth transition into and out of the time when she will be away. We will keep you posted on decisions and activities as they are scheduled.



The Worship Ministry Team: Heidi Hoppe, Team Leader, Sheryl Kaubisch, Caryl Allan, Mary Parrish, Gunder Austin, and Gracee Rudkin

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Greetings, happy May!!!! Wow, time does fly. Spring has sprung, and the garden work has begun. It is a wonderful and beautiful time that the Lord gives us every year. But it does get busy. Our May meeting is at Stone Woman Herbals in Hack. This is a fun and interesting place owned by Julie, our past church secretary. She will give a talk on the store and its products. We will have our meeting and treat there also. Such fun! Our **annual plant sale will be May 19th** before and after church. Please get all of your splitting and potting done for the sale.

We have had one change in program since the last newsletter. June will be our wine making session, and July will be a program by Molly Wiste, Ellie Nelson's granddaughter, who is a terrific wood carver. The rest of the year is as follows:

August	Trip to Munsinger Gardens and Lunch in St. Cloud (bus trip)
September	Card Making at Cindy's Home (car pool)
October	Wine Tasting
November	Meeting and Election of Officers
December	Cookie Sale and Congregational Luncheon

Bonnie Mitsch did a wonderful lecture on dreams for us last year. She would like to know who might be interested in joining a small group to discuss the inner dreamer. If you are interested, please come to an informational meeting following the May 9th fellowship time, 2:45 to 3:15 at the church.

See you in church and on the second Thursday! Joni

MODERATOR'S MOMENT

We made it through the long winter darkness.

As Spring is upon us

Imagine how hollow things would be

Without our UCC

More than just a building with a cross

But a journey with a purpose

A space that surrounds us

And People with a love that is boundless

It's here for the taking

Just come and start partaking

Or jump for joy like our Joey

A sure cure for the lonely

No matter your stripe

We welcome you all

Expect no hype

Just come as you are, no need to call

But remember this

There's a good chance you'll change

For you cannot help but be touched

By the message of that cross up high in front

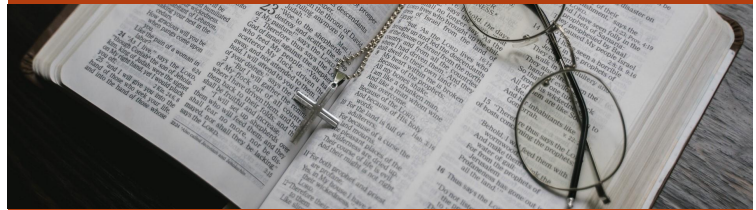
ONGOING EVENTS



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, May 9th at 1:00 pm

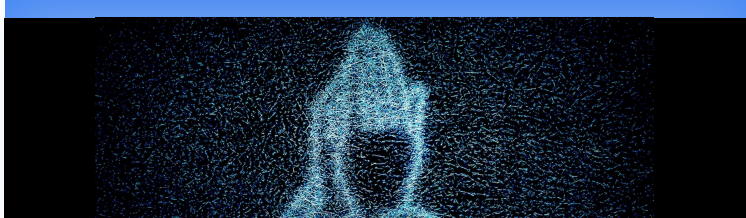
Any questions, please call the office at 218-675-6300
or email the church at media.ucchackmn@gmail.com.



Women's Bible Study

2nd & 4th Wednesdays from
11:15 am to 12:45 pm

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



Lectio Divina

Every Wednesday at 4:00 pm
In the Church 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.



Fit2Move Exercise Group

Every Wednesday at 10:00 am
In the Friendship Hall

COMMUNITY MEALS IN MAY



Every Wednesday 5:00 - 6:30 pm Friendship Hall
Most meals will have a veggie side, salad, and a dessert.



Community Meal Menu

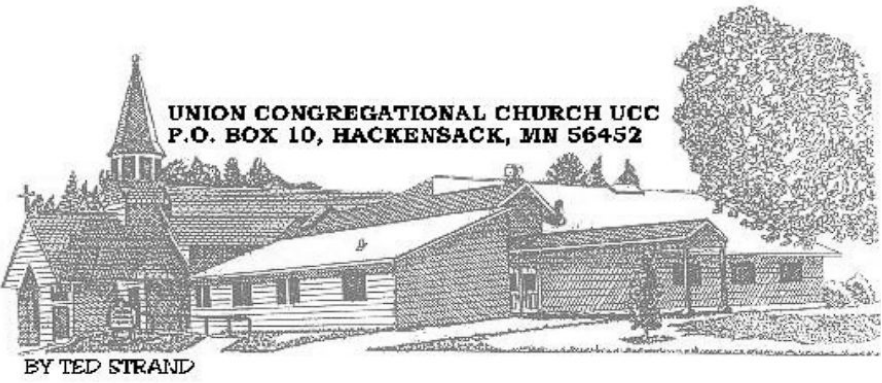
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| May 1 | — Hot Dog Bar |
| May 8 | — Sloppy Joes, Chips, Coleslaw |
| May 15 | — Taco Bar Fixings |
| May 22 | — BLT |
| May 29 | — Chicken Alfredo, Broccoli |

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

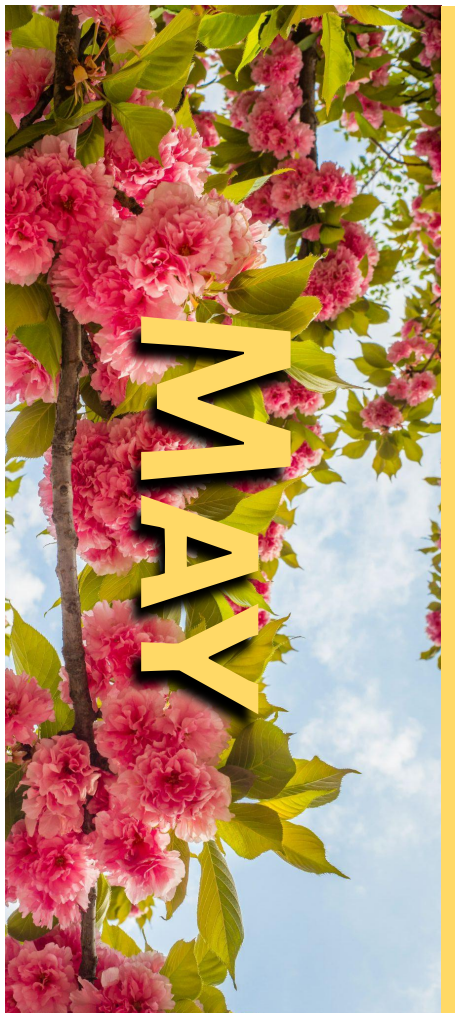
May 2024

* Community event

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	6 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	7 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	8 10:00 am Fit2Move 11:15 am Women's Bible Study 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:30 pm Community Meal	9 1:00 pm Women's Fellowship	10 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	11
12 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 11:00am Worship Ministry Team Meeting 1:00 pm Birchview Church	13 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	14 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	15 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:30 pm Community Meal 5:00-7:00 pm Northwoods Acoustic Jam	16 1:00-3:00 pm Council Meeting	17 Office Closed 9:00am-3:00pm Neighbor Helping Neighbor Community Cleanup 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	18 8:30 am TMLA Board Meeting* 9:00am-3:00pm Neighbor Helping Neighbor Community Cleanup
19 9:00-11:30 am Pant Sale 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church 6:00-7:30 pm UCC Coffeehouse Concert - CCOW*	20 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	21 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	22 10:00 am Fit2Move 11:15am-12:45pm Women's Bible Study 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:30 pm Community Meal	23 9:00-10:00 am Congregational Life Meeting 1:00-3:00 pm Fiber Arts*	24 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	25
26 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church	27 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting*	28 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting	29 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:30 pm Community Meal	30	31 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders*	



FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED



2024

HAPPY SPRING!!



THE UNION NEWS