

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: media@ucchackmn@gmail.com



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AUGUST 2024

Notes from Rev. Torri Vande Zande

As I prepare to begin my three month sabbatical, I am beginning to focus on my purpose and goals. Sabbaticals are more than just an extended vacation, it is a time to rest, refocus, and re-energize. But it is also a sabbatical for the church. Without having a pastor for a short period of time, the church gets to rest, refocus, and re-energize in its own way.

While I am gone, I will be focusing on 4 goals and asking myself some questions:

- 1. What is family?
- 2. What is home?
- 3. How do I connect with God through nature?
- 4. How do I do contemplative prayer?



I will be exploring these questions through short trips with

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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 | Caryl Allan |
| 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 |



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

Continued from Page 1

family and friends, doing some solo time in nature (with Koda of course), and working on doing some updates on my house. While I am gone, I am asking the congregation to explore these same questions. What is family to you? What is home? How do you connect with God? How do you pray?

My hope is that when I return, we can share our experiences and stories.

Remember to be kind to one another, celebrate with one another, and alway, always love each other well.

Peace, Pastor Torri



Torri's Siblings (above)

NEWS FROM THE WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

Summer in the North Woods has been glorious this year. We need a bit of rain, but the temps have been very pleasant. The gardens, both vegetable and floral, have been growing by leaps and bounds.

Torri's sabbatical is fast approaching. The Worship Team has been planning for Sunday services during her absence, and I believe we have set up a very good schedule of speakers. As you may have heard, Pastor Sheila Hunter has been hired as our part-time interim. She will preach 6 Sundays during the 3-month period of Torri's sabbatical and will also be available for any emergencies we might face, whether personally or as a congregation. Members of our congregation have been recruited to speak on other Sundays, and I'm sure we will enjoy the many varied thoughts they will share with us. August 11 will be Torri's last Sunday with us, and Kelly Gallagher, Associate Conference Minister, will be leading us in worship that day as



we send Torri off for a much-needed refresher where she will study and ponder the topics she has chosen to focus on: What is home? What is family? How to connect with God through nature? and Contemplative Prayer. Let's keep her in our prayers as she renews her spirit and returns to us strong, rested, and refreshed.

Looking ahead, we will soon be making our pledges for 2025. We are a vital and vibrant church, expressing the love and faithfulness of God in our community. It is a wonderful gift for me to be a member of this faith community, and I pray each and every one of you feels the same. As we look to the future, let us count our blessings and support our joyous, enthusiastic, dynamic church to the best of our abilities.

Team Members: Heidi Hoppe, Sheryl Kaubisch, Caryl Allan, Gracee Rudkin, and Mary Parrish



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

JULY 18, 2024 DRAFT (Not approved by council)

PRESENT: Pastor Torri, Joni Kumpula, Don & Heidi Hoppe, Mike Schmitt, Gunder Austin, Steve & Marilyn Erickson, Cindy Gulbranson, Caryl Allan, Kirin Christianson, Kerry Swenson, Karen Holle, Judy Hoopman, Connie Schmitt and Stan Kumpula via Zoom

Marilyn called the meeting to order. The June minutes were approved as written. Don/Gunder

Sabbatical Update: A final meeting is planned for 7/22/24 of the sabbatical committee to finalize preparations for Pastor Torri's sabbatical. Concerns were raised to clarify whether Sheila Hunter will be a temporary employee or a contractor. Connie will check with Sheila as to previous negotiations. Don stated that the expected pay for Sheila is within the \$5000 budgeted amount which can cover social security as employer/employee. Motion: To give the Personnel Committee the power to discuss and clarify with Sheila this item in the employee contract. Heidi/Gunder, approved.

Pastor's Monthly Report: Torri highlighted several items in her monthly report as follows:

- 1. There is a need for more volunteers at the Birchview services, especially Communion Sundays to assist with residents that have physical limitations. Torri also asks that the council/congregation continue to support the Sunday services at Birchview to spiritually care for the participants while she is on Sabbatical.
- 2. On August 5 and 6, Torri will be attending a planning meeting for the 2025 Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting.
- 3. Torri stated her conflict with her ability to help with the Hackensack Kids Fishing contest food booth on August 6. Don, Joni, Gunder, and Cindy agreed to help. Torri will check with Mayor Bill about the time.

Torri stated she has a person interested in removing the lumber and rocks in the back of the church to clean up the area, and she will follow up on this. Reminder to all committees about getting information submitted to Sabbastian for the monthly newsletter as well as any reports for the semi-annual meeting on the 28th.

Facilities: Kerry reported ongoing concerns about the wall that is bowing out in the Fellowship Hall, and the committee is working with the architect firm Widseth, who bought out the original provider of the church project to discuss if there were flaws in the original plan causing the current problem. Further work on the wall will not occur until after September 15, which will probably include opening a section of the wall to examine the problem further. Child Care requested new door knobs be installed in the two bathrooms and to lower towel dispensers for children to reach. Air conditioner coils in the church's air conditioning system need cleaning, and Kerry plans to take care of these improvements next week.

Personnel: Annual employee reviews have been completed.

Board of Financial Stewardship: Don reports June income was lower while expenses have increased (facilities and utilities). He is reviewing this. Stewardship campaign will begin in August for about 4-5 weeks, and we are looking for volunteers to speak.

Congregational Life: Reported that Linda is tracking numbers of members, newsletters going out, etc. Caryl is assisting with arrangements for the Cline funeral luncheon - this task is part of the duties of the Congregational Life team. A new family recently joined our church (the Lindbergs).

Worship: Numbers have been averaging around 60 each Sunday, 7 online, and 12 Birchview. Heidi reports the committee is working on the Sunday announcements and basic organization for the worship services in Torri's absence.

Adult Learning: The study course of <u>The Bible in 52 Weeks for Women</u> is on hold until October due to summer's busyness. Lectio continues to meet weekly with 5-8 participants. The Hackensack Camino project has 15 committed people, and the committee is continuing planning meetings for the event to work out details.

Women's Fellowship: Joni reports good participation regularly. Plans for Celebrate Margaret Zieffler Day on August 3rd at Birchview in the TV room from 2-4 are underway. Her family will be there. Margaret is a long-time member of UCC and has served the church in various ways throughout her time here. Women's Fellowship has about 15 participants signed up for the August 8 trip to Munsinger Gardens in St. Cloud.

Men's Fellowship: Stan voiced frustration about the lack of participation with Men's Fellowship, and there was some general discussion of how to support Stan and Men's Fellowship. There were 4 volunteers for cleanup at the July 17th community meal. About \$960.00 was generated for holiday food boxes, bringing the current balance to about \$1500. Discussion of how community meal offerings with a dedicated fundraising intention seems to be a successful strategy.

Justice Ministry: Sue submitted a brief report for today's meeting. The book study of William Ury's <u>Possible</u> has been completed with 6-8 regular participants, and the book was thought provoking and well received. Onigum Pow-Wow is July 27-28 with Grand Entry at 1:00. JMT raised about \$125 at the brunch/forum toward the Pow-Wow. Sue reports she has resigned from the Child Care board due to family matters.

Fundraising: Steve reports the committee is not working on anything concrete at this time but plans to reorganize as summer ends. The AA group, Child Care, and use of the church's kitchen and fellowship hall continue to provide income. Discussion about planning for some events similar to St. Paul's Country Fair may be a way to increase funding. Discussed that having a purpose for the funds raised has increased the amount donated by participants. Mike brought up looking into the number of viewers that stream as a potential untapped resource. Kirin added information about QR codes and other internet related ways to encourage donations.

Tech Team: The team continues to review each week how the streaming of Sunday Services is going. Mike brought up the need to replace 2 hard drives due to age (Quickbooks) at a cost of about \$1600. Motion: For \$1600 to be used to replace the hard drives as needed. Mike/Kerry, approved by all. Mike is also trying to sell old equipment we no longer need. Kokoro is up in the air as to whether they will rent space available at UCC. The team is working on cleaning up that space. Tracking how we get any finances from various events is important. PayPal option (which we are set up for) also needs promotion.

Outreach: Continued discussion of monthly community meals instead of weekly meals. This has been recommended by Outreach, and they have 3 meal dates planned with nonprofits they will sponsor.

- September Hackensack Lending Library Build your own burger
- October Hackensack Food Shelf Sloppy Joes
- November Paws and Claws Spaghetti

Outreach has also developed a plan for advertising and promotion with tasks assigned to team members. Tammy is willing to continue to meal prep and cooking. Outreach also has discussed training for volunteers who may help with the kitchen and meal duties. Further discussion ensued about making the monthly community meals an event dedicated to a fundraising activity possibly for community nonprofits and utilizing a similar strategy that is used by the Lions of dedicating one fundraiser to UCC each year.

Moderator Moment: Marilyn read a passage about "The truth will set you free," and shared her feelings about our current political climate and the need for open and honest information.

Newsletter Deadline is Tuesday July 23 for the August newsletter.

New Business: Two-arm chairs are needed for Sunday services as Birchview. Motion: For permission to approach Birchview about the need for 2 chairs and to offer two from UCC if necessary. Gunder/Heidi motion approved.

Hackensack Library asked to store several boxes of CD's from their recent sale for the winter. Council agreed.

Pastor/Parish team is formed with Gunder, Alan Christianson, and Connie.

Semi- annual meeting scheduled for July 28th after service, in the Friendship Hall. Eisingers will be serving cake for refreshments and celebration of their 50th anniversary prior to the meeting. She encouraged council members to reread the proposed part on Baptism in the constitution. Motion to recommend the revised constitution to the congregation. Joni/Marilyn. Approved.

Karen discussed resigning from the clerk position as soon as a replacement is found due to her life changes and other commitments.

Motion to adjourn meeting: Steve/Karen, Torri provided the Benediction.

Next Council meeting will be August 15th. Notes submitted by Judy Hoopman

THROUGH KODA'S EYES

Hi! My name is Koda and I am the church dog! I want to tell you about the adventure I am going on! My human says that we have something called a sabbatical for the next 3 months! Wow! A whole 3 months!

Now, I have no idea what a sabbatical is, but my human said it is a time to rest, play, and nap! I knew right then, I was created for sabbaticals! She also told me that it is a time to re-energize and focus on God outside of her church duties.

After hearing that, I went and laid out on the deck for a while to ponder that idea. I think it will be really hard for my human to detach from her work. The church is so interwoven into her life. It will be hard for me too.

While I was laying on the deck, I decided to ask Bandit (the cat) to help me come up with some rules to help my human make the most of her sabbatical. So here is what we came up with:

- 1. While on sabbatical, please do not contact our human. If she would like to connect with you, she will be the one to connect.
- 2. Please do not call or text to check on her. She will be okay. She is with us. We will protect her.
- 3. You may see our human at the grocery store (getting us treats) or taking me (Koda) for a walk. Please stop to say hi or wave, but please do not talk about church or anything that is related to her pastoral duties.



Bandit and I appreciate your cooperation. We will make sure she eats, goes for walks and rests. We love you all and I am looking forward to our adventure! That is how I see it through my eyes!

Have a barky day! Koda (The Church Dog)

Celebrating the Past: History of the UCC Church

Myra Damm, Historian

For the UCC church, our history started in 1907 with The Good Will Gospel Tent, furnished by the Minnesota Congregational Missionary Society, being set up in Hackensack. Rev. John Berry of Brainerd, assisted by Rev. Conrad, held ten days of afternoon and evening services.

At the close of these meetings, twenty-one people decided to perfect a church organization. As preliminary steps toward a church organization, a paper to this effect was signed by fifteen people. In 1905, business meetings were held to elect officers to act until completion of church organization.

In 1908 Rev. Sheets represented the church at a conference in Duluth and was instructed to make application for admission into the Congregational Conference. In 1908 the Council Manual was adopted as the church guide.

There was no church building, but meetings were held in the Otterson Hotel.

BOARD OF FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Operating Income and Expenses

| Giving Income - June Other Income* - June Total Income | \$ 11,634.00 \$ 835.00 \$ 12,369.00 | Year to Date 2024 Giving YTD Other Income* YTD Total Income | \$ 76,382.00 \$ 9,389.73 \$ 86,024.36 |
|---|--|--|--|
| Expenses - June | \$ 22,203.80 | Year to Date Expenses | \$104,169.71 |
| Balance - June | -\$ 9,834.80 | Balance - Year to Date | \$ -18,145.35 |
| | | FY 2024 Prepaid Pledges Previous FY Carryover | \$ 8,100.00 \$ 25,111.57 |
| | | Final Balance | \$15,066.22 |

^{*} Other income includes online sales, 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:
 \$ 144,736.16

 Reserve Savings
 \$ 32,123.83

 CD's
 \$ 175,826.69

 Investments
 \$ 156,778.63

 Total Assets
 \$ 509,465.31

Summary

June income was low, and our expenses were much higher than normal. Some of the expenses are attributed to quarterly payments that were paid in June, and some May expenses that only showed up in June. At this point, our income balance for the year and our ability to meet our operating budget is a little low. We are looking more closely at our expenses, which are greater than expected and budgeted. Good giving and completion of pledges is needed to have a balanced 2024 budget.

The 2025 Stewardship campaign will begin in August. Please, prayerfully consider what Union Church means to you and our community

MODERATOR'S MOMENT

The Truth Shall Set You Free

The phrase, "The Truth Shall Set You Free" was inscribed over a building entrance at Augsburg College when we attended there. At that time, it seemed to apply only to our educational experience and religious learning in college. It felt so inspirational, but interestingly, that phrase has guided our learning throughout life. However, today, it seems continually challenged as we hear so many political messages spoken as if the truth — yet, if fact-checked are found to be false! As Americans and as Christians, we must dedicate ourselves to learning the truth now more than ever. Whenever we hear a politician speak something as truth that we do not know about or find it hard to believe, our duty to ourselves, our country, and to God is to learn more from different sources and to find the truth. And when we learn the truth, we must share it so that others may learn it also, and it will set us free!

RECIPE FROM AN EDITOR

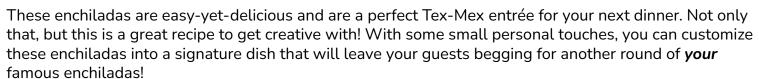
by Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

An easy-to-make crowd pleaser!

Beef Enchiladas

INGREDIENTS

- □ 1 15 oz can red enchilada sauce
- □ 1 small white onion, diced
- □ 4 cloves garlic, minced
- □ 1 ½ lbs lean ground beef
- □ 1 tsp cumin
- □ 1 15 oz can pinto or black beans
- □ 1 15 oz can sweet corn
- □ 1 4 oz can diced green chiles
- optional: 1-3 chopped adobo peppers depending on spice tolerance
- □ 8 8" flour tortillas
- □ 3 cups Mexican-blend shredded cheese
- uppings: cilantro, cotija cheese, diced avocado, sliced black olives, sour cream, and/or salsa



- 1. Sauté the beef. Heat oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté for about 3 minutes, until onion is translucent. Add the ground beef and cumin, sautéing for another 5 minutes or until completely browned, crumbling the beef as it cooks. Stir in beans, corn, green chiles, and optional adobo peppers until combined. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
- 2. Preheat oven and prep baking dish. Heat oven to 350° F. Spread ½ cup of the enchilada sauce along the bottom of a 9×13 casserole dish.
- 3. Assemble the enchiladas. Set up an assembly line on a clean counter or large cutting board of: tortillas, enchilada sauce, beef/bean filling, and cheese. Lay one tortilla flat and spread two tablespoons of sauce over the surface with a spoon. Add 1 or 2 heaping spoonfuls of beef/bean filling in a line down the middle of the tortilla. Sprinkle ½ cup of cheese over the filling, then roll into a wrap to finish (no need to tuck the ends in like a burrito.) Place widthwise into the casserole dish. Continue until all 8 tortillas are filled and placed in the dish. (You may have to push the enchiladas together to make them fit depending on how tightly you wrapped them this is A-OK!) Finally, spread the remaining enchilada sauce and cheese over top.
- 4. Bake. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes, or until the cheese is slightly brown and bubbling.
- **5. Serve.** Plate the enchiladas hot and garnish with your favorite toppings! A large dab of sour cream and salsa to the side is a great way to make this dish look restaurant-style.

IDEAS

- ★ Spice things up! Ground chipotle, cayenne, and jalapeños in the filling are all great ways to add heat to this dish.
- ★ Make it vegan! Replace the beef with a plant-based alternative, or extra veggies like zucchini, broccoli, or roasted cauliflower. Then, just remove the cheese or swap for a vegan-cheese.
- ★ Change the flavor! Corn tortillas are classic, just double the number of tortillas. Green enchilada sauce or chicken are both delightful subs. For a daring signature finish, cover the enchiladas with queso sauce, fresh pressed garlic, or even baker's chocolate shavings! (Maybe not all three at once... But I won't judge. *wink*)



MONTHLY FUNDRAISER MEALS!



For many years, Union Church has hosted "Community Meals." This ministry has been an intricate part of our church life, and we are grateful for the years we were able to offer these meals. The Outreach Team would like to thank all who have participated and helped throughout the years.

This fall we will be transitioning into a different kind of ministry that will encompass a larger part of our community. Community meals will still be served, but they will be on a monthly basis instead of weekly. There will still be a "free will donation" bucket at the entrance, and of course the

meals will still be amazing!

Here is the difference; all money raised will go to a local non-profit organization such as the Hackensack Lending Library, Paws and Claws, or one of the many "Game Changers" groups. We will partner with these local organizations in the monthly fundraisers to triple our community outreach efforts in both involvement and in fundraising.

Union Church has always been a church that supports the community, and we want to do this in a way that makes the greatest impact. So starting September 18th, from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. in the Friendship Hall, join us for a night of food, friends, music (Dick's Northwoods Jam), and fundraising for our local community.

We will need help with this effort, so if you would like to assist with serving or cleanup, there will be a sign-up sheet in the hallway leading to the Friendship Hall, or call the office at 218-675-6300.

2025 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN BEGINS

Dear Members and Friends.

Our congregation's annual Stewardship Appeal begins now.

In 2024, we have been blessed by your support! We should be able to balance the budget with your continued support for the remainder of the year and by our efforts to keep expenses under control.

It's now time to be mindful of helping Union Church achieve our 2025 stewardship goal. We want to grow our ministry, programs, and missions. To plan, we need to have an indication of what our members and friends will be contributing. We must prepare a budget which we feel confident will support our vibrant church life, maintain



our wonderful facilities, and provide outreach to the community. The campaign theme is "What Shall We Bring." A call to think about stewardship.

Union Congregational Church's members and friends will receive more information, together with a pledge card and a return envelope, by mail. Please consider how important a thriving Union community continues to be and make your pledge as generous as you can.

Your pledge really does make a difference. All pledges or donations of whatever size are needed and welcomed. Together, with God's help, we will fund our congregation's ministry and programs in 2025.

ONGOING EVENTS



Women's Fellowship

Thursday, August 8th

Leaving at 9:00 am from the Church Parking Lot

Trip to the Munsinger Gardens (Pre-registration is required)

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



Northwoods Acoustic Jam

Wednesday, August 21st at 5:30 pm In the Friendship Hall

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

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

Stan would like Men's Fellowship to meet on Tuesday, August 13 at 9:30 this month to discuss plans moving forward. He will personally contact the men about this via email.

AUGUST FUNDRAISING MEAL



Wednesday, August 21st, 5:00 - 6:00 pm Friendship Hall This is our last monthly fundraiser toward the Hackensack Food Shelf's holiday boxes this year!

Free-will donation.

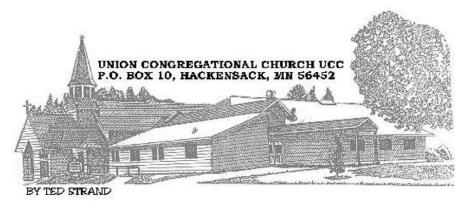
Menu: Beef Stroganoff, Green Beans, Salad, Buns, Dessert

Union Congregational Church, UCC, Hackensack MN

August 2024

* Community event

| FRIDAY 3 SATURDAY bed 9am-12pm TMLA Meeting one Builders* 2:00-4:00 pm Margaret Zieffler Celebration | 10 9:00 am - 3:00 pm Northwoods Arts Council Art & Book Fair uilders* | uilders* | uilders* | 31 uilders* |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| 2 FRIDAY Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders* | 9 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders* | 16 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders* | 23 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders* | 30 Office Closed 1:30 pm Bone Builders* |
| THURSDAY 10:00am Dream Group 7:30 pm Justice Ministry Team Zoom Meeting | 8 1:00 pm Women's Fellowship | 15 Pastor Torri's sabbatical begins 10:00 am Dream Group 1:00-3:00 pm Council Meeting | 22 9:00 am Congregational Life Meeting 1:00-3:00 pm Fiber Arts* 5:00-8:00 pm Countryside Coop Annual Meeting* | 29 |
| WEDNESDAY | 7 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina | 14 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina | 21 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina 5:00-6:00 pm Fundraiser Meal 5:30-7:00 pm Northwoods Acoustic Jam | 28 10:00 am Fit2Move 4:00 pm Lectio Divina |
| TUESDAY | 6 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting | 13 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting 9:30 am Men's Fellowship Meeting | 20 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting | 27 9:00 am Tech Team Meeting |
| MONDAY | 5 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting* | 12 9:30-11:00 am Camino Hackensack Meeting 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting* | 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting* | 26 1:30 pm Bone Builders* 6:00 pm AA Open Meeting* |
| SUNDAY | 4 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church | 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 11:00 am Worship Ministry Team Meeting 1:00 pm Birchview Church | 18 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church | 25 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour 1:00 pm Birchview Church |



FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED

2024
Have a great sabbatical,

Pastor Torri!

THE UNION NEWS

