Friendship News, May 2021

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Church Office is currently closed due to Covid.

Office phone 218-829-2528 Office E-mail uccbrainerd@gmail.com Pastor’s E-mail: pastorleslieucc@gmail.com Website: [www.uccbrainerdmn.org](http://www.uccbrainerdmn.org)

**Schedule a 1 to 1 (in-person or by Zoom or Phone) with Pastor Leslie:**

[www.calendly.com/pastorleslieucc/1to1](http://www.calendly.com/pastorleslieucc/1to1)

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.*

**Pastor’s Pen**

I recently came across this photo of a family from Dublin, California during the 1918 Flu Epidemic. At first, I couldn’t stop wondering if they actually put a mask on the cat, or if it was just white fur that happens to look like a mask. (I think it’s an actual mask!!!) Then I noticed myself feeling hopeful because we \*know\* that eventually things went back to normal and they didn’t have to wear masks everywhere forever.

But it also made me wonder - what they did do forever as a result of that season? I wonder what they learned? Did they hold their loved ones closer? Did they learn to slow down? Did they get better at washing their hands? Did they appreciate the smiles of strangers for the rest of their lives?

A friend of mine asked on social media this week what her friends would take away from this pandemic and what they were ready to leave behind. Most everyone talked about a re-aligning of priorities: the importance of family and close friends, the value of self-care practices, the enjoyment of a slower and more contained way of life, a commitment to treasuring moments of joy.

As those around us start getting back to “normal” (though some more cautiously than others) I wonder what we’ll take with us and what we’ll leave behind. I wonder how we might use this time to realign ourselves and our priorities to better match our values. I don’t have answers to these wonderings but I do have hopes.

I hope that whatever we leave behind brings us closer to one another. And I hope whatever we take with us brings us closer to God. I hope that as we navigate the months ahead, we are moved first and always by a love that calls us consider our neighbors. And I do hope that in all of it we will be attuned to moments of joy and gratitude.



**How to watch Sunday worship**
The worship service is **broadcasted on the church Facebook page and the church's YouTube channel every Sunday at 10:00 am.**
To watch worship on Facebook, go to <https://www.facebook.com/uccbrainerd/live>
To watch on YouTube, go to <https://www.youtube.com/firstcongregationaluccbrainerd>
Live stream videos are saved and can be viewed at any time.

**Worship Bulletins are available for download each week at** <http://tinyurl.com/UCCBrainerdBulletins>**.**The bulletins will be ready for download first thing Sunday morning. They are available in both Word and PDF formats and are labeled by date. You can download the document and print it at home or follow along on your screen.
We can also send a copy of the bulletin in the mail each week as we have been doing for some of our home-bound members. Just contact Terri in the office.

**Financial Help Available**
Your Church Council voted last year to allow the Pastor's Discretionary Fund to be used to assist church members and others in the Brainerd area who are experiencing financial distress during this time. We received many generous donations! If you need assistance, please email, call, or text Pastor Leslie. Let her know what your situation is and how the church might be of help.

**You can now donate to the church online!**We are now accepting your offerings and donations using **PayPal.** You do not need to have a PayPal account to make an online donation with a credit card. To use PayPal, go to: <https://www.paypal.me/uccbrainerd>

**May Birthday**

Ellen Pishko May 3

Terri Chidester May 5

Lance James May 5

Sue Hadland May 9

Emily Jones May 10

Kai Lukanen May 14

Laura Raedeke May 16

Morgan Twamley May 16

Carla Benjamin May 17

Shon Bowman May 22

Janice Morton May 22

Max Ferrie May 23

Jean Widmark May 24

Nancy Waller May 25

Preston Newgord May 26

Anthony Newgord May 29

Charlotte Goedsche May 30

Kathy Ogden May 30

**Reminder from the Church Covid Response Team**

As Covid vaccines are becoming more and more accessible and the restrictions for worshiping communities are relaxing, your Covid Response Team (CRT) met and determined the parameters we will be utilizing to determine when to resume in-person worship indoors. These parameters are not a checklist, but more like guideposts. The vaccination rate currently seems to be the most important number to monitor.
We are planning to resume in-person, indoor worship when...

* 50% of Crow Wing County Residents are fully vaccinated
* 7-day rolling average of new cases is less than 10/100,000 population
* Positive test rate is <5%

Once these parameters are met, the CRT will quickly evaluate the situation and determine if worship indoors will resume. A minimum of one week's notice will be provided.
When in-person, indoor worship resumes, everyone will be welcome to come. Masks will be required and households (or fewer than 6 fully vaccinated singles) must maintain 6 feet of distance.

It is very likely that we will gather for worship outdoors before these parameters are met. So stay tuned.

We thank you all for your patience during this uncertain time and your commitment to loving your neighbor by wearing a mask, staying home, and getting vaccinated!

If you would like to view the Covid statistics for Crow Wing County (or other parts of the US) visit [www.covidactnow.org](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=8a675967a3&e=5e2c6f93e6)

Your Covid Response Team:Tracy Lyons, Deb Griffith, Sue Hadland, Dan Hegstad and Pastor Leslie

**Church Leadership**

**Get Involved, Give Back, Grow Connections – Volunteer at Church!**

Friends, We are starting to see some real signs of spring.  I hope that the old rhyme “April showers bring May flowers” holds true for us this year.  Another sign of the change in seasons, will be the change in our church leadership.  I am looking forward to this year with hopeful anticipation. The Brainerd Congregational UCC members will meet on June 6th for the annual meeting, hopefully in person.  At that time will certify new committee members and a new assistant moderator. There are still important roles to be filled.  If you would like be a part of this next year’s journey, give me or Pastor Leslie a call, text or email.

This past year of the pandemic has been unprecedented. None of us have been here before. A year of anxiety, isolation, and stepping back from our normal activities. It has also been a time of reflection for many of us. Looking to the future with fresh eyes, I can envision many positive changes in our church, and in First Congregational’s role in our community.

Thank you to the steadfast sailors in our church, who have served on the council and on committees, piloting us through this pandemic year. With spring upon us, looking ahead to light at the end of the tunnel, please consider volunteering for a new role or committee in our church.

There are many opportunities for you to share your talents:

--**Assistant Moderator,** serves a 1-year term, then assumes moderator role when current moderator steps down.  Primary role is to assist the moderator, participate in Executive Committee discussions, attend monthly church council meetings, coordinate nominations and other tasks as needed. We maintain gender equity for this role, so the candidate should not be male in this next term.

--**Treasurer,** serves a 1 year term (may renew for 6 terms). The primary role is oversight of bookkeeping, church finances and Executive Committee discussions. This candidate should have a strong background or interest in finance or banking.

--**Council Member-At-Large:**  Attend council meetings, act as a liaison for church members and council, help with nominations, spokesperson for historically underrepresented groups (HUGS).

**Committees needing fresh faces:**

-Christian Education -Trustees -Stewardship -Memorial

-Music -Arts -The Foundation Board

Peace, Joe Stattine - Assistant Moderator, 218-838-1311

Call or text me with your nominations.

*“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.” ~Elizabeth Andrew*

**Highlights from the Council Meeting, April 21st, 2021 - 7:00 pm (via Zoom)**

~ These are highlights. If you would like a copy of the full minutes, please contact the church office ~

**Present:** Tracy Lyons, Joe Stattine, Barb Stokke, Deb Griffith, Gale Landem, Mabel Schultz, Lowell Johnson, Kelly Keller-Heikkila, Admin Terri Chidester, and Rev. Leslie Moughty.

**Committee Highlights**

**Almost all committees are searching for new members to start in June.**

**Memorial Committee**: In the future, the maintenance of the Memorial Garden will come under the purview of the trustees committee and budget funding will need to be determined.

**Pastor**: •Completed Lent Adult Formation Series “The Ridiculous Journey: Following a Nobody from Nowhere” At the request of the group, we will continue with a new series called “Uppity Women of the Bible” beginning on May 6 at 6:00pm. •Attended Pequot Lakes School Board working session in response to community concerns about the District’s SEED program and a video created by Superintendent. •Officiated memorial and interment service for Chuck Watson.

**Christian Ministry:** new pew cushions have been ordered from Waggoners Pew Cushions

**Christian Education:** CE held another story circle on spirituality, bringing the total number of participants to 26 out of a goal of 30.

**COVID-19 Response Team:** The CRT will be meeting in early May to review the updated COVID numbers

**WISE:** If UCC WISE wants to host a booth at Arts in the Park this year, we need someone to organize it. The deadline to submit the application form and the $100 fee is Monday, May 31.

**Motions**

1. The Annual Congregational Election Meeting will be held **June 6** after the service. All reports are due in the church office May 10 so the Annual Report can be sent to members by May 27.

2. Council approved the motion to allow a church-wide rummage sale to be held on church grounds with the date to be determined. (Update: the date is Saturday June 27)

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Stokke, Clerk of Council

**Next Regular Council Meeting:** May 21, 2021 7:00 pm via Zoom

**Uppity Women of the Bible Study Series**

**Thursday, May 6th at 6:00 pm via Zoom.**

**Pastor Leslie leads “Uppity Women of the Bible” which is a DVD-based series featuring Hebrew Bible professor Dr. Lisa Wolfe. Combining careful scholarship with humor and fresh insights, Dr. Wolfe presents information for a lively, thoughtful discussion of Ruth, The Song of Songs, Esther and Judith. Study continues for 4 weeks through May.**

**Calling all singers and musicians!**

**We want to include your voice and instruments during the worship services. If you are able to record yourself using a smartphone or other device, you don’t even have to leave the comfort of your home to add your talents to the services!**

**Please contact Diane Hauan if interested.**

**The Columbarium at First Congregational UCC, Brainerd**

 The Columbarium is located in the historic space that once was our church’s front entry way. How appropriate it is that our Columbarium now marks another entry way into a new life — where the Spirits of Love and Truth are always present!

 Our Columbarium is now complete. Should you wish to learn more about the purchase of a niche for your own cremains or for the ashes of a loved one, please call the church office at (218) 829-2528. Terri Chidester, Administrative Assistant, can send you a packet of materials via email or regular mail. The Memorial Committee has prepared the information packet, and it contains all the details you will need as you consider inurnment here at First Congregational UCC. Have any other questions? Contact Dawn Stattine at dawnstattine@gmail.com

**Special Offering UCC Missions Strengthen the Church**

**Sunday May 23rd**

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations.  **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.** As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

To donate, send a check with "STC" in the memo line to:
First Congregational UCC,  415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401
Or donate online using PayPal and indicate "STC" in the Note.
[payl.me/uccbrainerd](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/uccbrainerd)

**Church Annual Meeting - Sunday June 6th**

**After Sunday Worship**

**Depending on weather and Covid numbers, we will either be outdoors, or on Zoom. Please stay tuned for details.**

**ATTENTION!!! Church-Hosted Rummage SALE**

**Saturday, June 26th at 9:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**Use the church lawn to set up your own table and sell your stuff! (Donations to the church from the proceeds will be greatly appreciated)**

**All church members, friends and families are invited to join in our rummage sale at the church outside in the parking and front lawn.**

**This weekend is also the Arts in the Park and foot traffic from that event could be expected.**

**Look for more details next month!**

**Information for Groups who meet at First Congregational**

**Please** [**click here**](https://mcusercontent.com/7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0/files/5169e6ed-6815-4cf1-9bf1-0a337c193cbf/2021_Update_Bldg_Use_to_groups_Letter.docx) **to read our expectations for groups meeting in our building at this time. (No changes have been made since last month.**

**Online Gathering Opportunities!**

***\*All church Zoom Gatherings use this link:***
[**tinyurl.com/UCCBrainerdZoom**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6452350419?pwd=YkxGc3NhYjlraUJ6RHJod0J2LzZRdz09)**or**[**us02web.zoom.us/j/6452350419**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6452350419?pwd=YkxGc3NhYjlraUJ6RHJod0J2LzZRdz09)

By phone:  +1 312 626 6799, Meeting ID: 645 235 0419, password: 56401

**Process Film Group – 3rd Friday of each month from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.** **via Zoom.** **May 21st**
Please watch the 2020 documentary “**My Octopus Teacher”.** Watch the film at your own convenience then come for some interesting discussion and fellowship. To join the discussion use this link: [tinyurl.com/UCCBrainerdZoom](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=a3b782702e&e=5e287cb69c).  My Octopus Teacher is available on Netflix. You may view the trailer at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3s0LTDhqe5A>.

**Join us for a Poetry Happy Hour – 4th Friday of each month at 4:30 pm via Zoom. May 28th**  Bring a few of your favorite poems to share or just come and listen and enjoy catching up with your church friends!

**The Friday Book Group** – **Each Friday morning at 10:30 am via Zoom.** We continue to read the book ***Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind****,* by Yuval Noah Harari.

**Sunday Morning Book Study Group – Each Sunday morning at 8:30 am via Zoom**. On May 2nd we will start reading **"Eternal Life: A New Vision” Beyond Religion, Beyond Theism, Beyond Heaven and Hell** by John Shelby Spong. **ZOOM Info:**
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6452350419](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6452350419?pwd=YkxGc3NhYjlraUJ6RHJod0J2LzZRdz09) or [https://tinyurl.com/UCCBrainerdZoom](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6452350419?pwd=YkxGc3NhYjlraUJ6RHJod0J2LzZRdz09)
Meeting ID: 645 235 0419  Password: 56401
Or join by phone:  +1 312 626 6799, Meeting ID: 645 235 0419, password: 56401

**"Wednesday Word" with Pastor Leslie on Facebook Live**: Tune in at **Noon on Wednesdays** for a short time of prayer, pause, and reflection via Live stream on Pastor Leslie's Facebook page. Click here to participate live or to view recorded videos at any time: <https://www.facebook.com/revleslieucc>

**Fellowship Hour via Zoom:** Our Fellowship Hour starts immediately after worship, hop on to Zoom and say hello! Stay as long or as briefly as you like.

**UCC General Synod Online This Year**

The UCC General Synod (the big meeting of the entire denomination) will be online-only this year. A Special Virtual General Synod 33 July 11-18, 2021. Registration opens on February 1st, 2021. One of the blessings of an online Synod is that more people will be able to attend! No travel or hotel costs, no need to be away from home for multiple days. Consider participating this year. Updates will continue to be made on the General Synod Website here: <http://www.generalsynod.org>

**Brainerd Lakes Area Information**

**~ Opportunities to Know and Share God’s Love ~**



**Volunteer at Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen**

Share God’s love on the fourth Friday of each month…

 volunteer to feed the children of God

Next opportunity: **May 28**

Meet at the Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen at **4:00pm**

Help create the meal, package it for pick up, and distribute to those seeking a meal.

Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/BrainerdSoup>

Contact Jolene Hojem with any questions.

**Weaving Community Needs Your Help**

The Lakes Area Guys Network (LAGN), under its Weaving Community grant, will be back to work this spring building looms to donate to various sites in the community.

***How you can help***: Donate fabric to go with the looms for kids and adults to use in their weaving projects. Examples are old neckties, strips of colorful cloth, yarn, ribbon, or any interesting material that is flexible enough to be woven into the vertical strands of the loom. Also, spread the word to community organizations that the looms are available for use at their gatherings. If you have materials to donate or know of community groups who may be interested in hosting a loom, contact Lowell Johnson at johnsonlowells@gmail.com or 218-820-5290.

**Crappie Tournament**
Memorial Fundraiser
**May 8th at the Green Lantern**
**Corey Borg-Massanari Foundation**

\*Fishing begins 1:00 AM \*Fish Fry Dinner 6:15 PM
 \*Silent Auction 4:00-8:00 PM
\*Cash Prizes Awarded to Tournament Winners 8:00 PM
\*Big Fish Raffle & $5 Booze Barrow Raffle 9:00 PM
*$20 Tournament Tickets includes Fishing and Fish Fry Dinner
$15 for just Dinner $10 Big Fish Raffle by Garrison Fire Department
$1 Little Fish Raffle $5 Booze Barrow Raffle*
**Tournament Tickets Sold At: Tutt's Bait and Tackle & The Green Lantern**

**Growing Connections - Tuesday, May 18, 2021**
**11:15 am Virtual Reception - 12:00 pm Livestream
RSVP online at: LSSMN.ORG/BFY21**

Children grow and flourish when they are rooted in a caring, nurturing community. This spring, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) invites you to join us in cultivating such a community at our **2021 Benefit for Youth**.
At this virtual gathering, you'll hear how LSS Youth & Family Services offers thousands of young people the support they need to thrive. You'll also have an opportunity to give generously to sustain these critical services. Please register today. Questions? For registration help or more information, please contact LSS Development Events at 651-969-2309 or [events@lssmn.org](http://events@lssmn.org)

**Crisis Services** - All are available 24-hours (unless noted), FREE and confidential

**Crisis Line & Referral Service:** 218-828-4357, 218-828-HELP or 1-800-462-5525

**CRISIS:** from cell phone call CRISIS (274747)

**Crisis Nursery-Crow Wing County:** 218-692-2859

**Crisis Text Line:** Text “MN” or HopeLine” to 741741

**Bridges of Hope:** 218-825-4357 or 1-800-462-7682

**Minnesota 1st Call for Help:** 211

**Minnesota Farm & Rural Helpline:** 833-600-2670

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255

**Suicide & Mental Illness:** 1-800-462-5525

**Teen Crisis Line***:* 310-855-4673

**The Trevor Project (LGBTQ Crisis & Suicide Hotline – Youth under 25):** 866-488-7386

**Trans Lifeline:** 877-565-8860

**Veteran’s Crisis Line:** 1-800-273-8255 – press 1

**WARMLINE:** Speak with peers who are there to listen and support adults experiencing emotional distress. 1-844-739-6369 from 5:00pm -7:00am.

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| Church Calendar May 2021 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| All Sunday Choir Practice-**C** | Office Closed  | Office Closed  | Office Closed  |  Office Closed  |  Office Closed  | **1** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  **2**8:30 Book Study- **V (start new book)** 9am Brainerd Friends-**Y**10am Worship-**V Online**11am Fellowship Hour-**V** | **3**6pm Tai Chi-Park/**Y** 7pm BACP-Park/**V** |  **4**2pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y** |  **5** 10am Prayer Circle- **Y** 12pm Wed. Word-**V** 12pm Memorial-**V**6pm Special Council Mtg Financials- **V** 7pm AA Common- **Y**  |  **6**6pm Uppity Women of the Bible Study Series- **V**6:30 BLUE-**V**  |  **7**10:30am Book Grp-**V** |  **8** |
| 8:30 Book Study-**V**  **9**  9am Brainerd Friends-**Y** 10am Worship & Communion-**V Online**11am Fellowship Hour-**V**  |   **10****Annual Reports from Committees due to Terri**4pm Girl Scouts-#373- **Y** |  **11**2pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y**  |   **12** 10am Prayer Circle- **Y**12pm Wed. Word-**V** 12pm Memorial-**V**5:30pm Stewardshp-**V**7pm AA Common-**Y** |  **13** 3pm Trustees-**V**6pm Uppity Women of the Bible Study Series- **V**7pm AA Dist.-**V** |  **14**10:30am Book Grp-**V** |   **15** |
| 8:30 Book Study**-V**  **16** 9am Brainerd Friends-**Y** 10am Worship -**V Online**11am Fellowship Hour-**V** |  **17** |  **18**2pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y**  |  **19**10am Prayer Circle- **Y**12pm Wed. Word-**V** 7pm Council Mtg-**V** 7pm AA Common- **Y** |  **20**6pm Uppity Women of the Bible Study Series- **V**  |  **21**10:30am Book Grp-**V**7pm Process Film Group-**V (Final one till Fall)** |  **22** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8:30 Book Study**-V** **23** 9am Brainerd Friends-**Y** 10am Sunday Worship -**V Online*****UCC Missions Special Offering - STC***11am Fellowship Hour-**V*****Newsletter Deadline***  |   **24**4pm Girl Scouts-#373- **Y**5:30 AAUW - **V** |  **25**Dan Hegstad Retirement2pm Emotions Anon-**Y**5pm Le Mesa- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y**  |  **26**10am Prayer Circle- **Y**12pm Wed. Word-**V** 2pm Wed. Word-**V** 7pm AA Common-**Y****Annual Pkts sent out** |  **27**6pm Uppity Women of the Bible Study Series- **V** |  **28**10:30am Book Grp-**V**4pm Soup Kitchen- **Y**4:30pm Poetry Happy Hour-**V** |  **29** |
| 8:30 Book Study**-V** **30** 9am Brainerd Friends-**Y** 10am Sunday Worship -**V Online** |  **31**Memorial Day |    |  |   | **Announcement:****Annual Meeting Sunday June 6th via Zoom after Worship** | **V** – Zoom or Specified Online**C** – Cancelled**Y** – Meeting held? – Unknown/no updates |

 **\*\*\*\* Pastor Leslie on vacation from 4/26 thru 5/4\*\*\***