Friendship News, September 2020

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Church office hours: 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.uccbrainerd.org](http://www.uccbrainerd.org)

**Schedule a virtual 1 to 1 or an outdoor 1 to 1 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 – Unraveled and Woven Together**

*Weave, weave, weave us together, weave us together, in unity and love.*

*Weave, weave, weave us together, weave us together, together in love.*

- Lyrics from “Weave, Weave, Weave Us Together by Rosemary Crow

For the last few weeks, our worship has been centered around the theme “Unraveled: Seeking God When Our Plans Fall Apart”. The series was created by a group called A Sanctified Art and was published long before anyone had a clue that a global pandemic would unravel so many aspects of our lives. It’s not surprising that many pastors like myself felt drawn to this series for our congregations in the midst of the unraveling happening all around us. This Sunday, August 30, will be our 9th week of the 12-week series.

Starting September 27, we will shift to a new theme, “Weave Us Together.” This is also the theme of this year’s Commitment Campaign (aka Stewardship season). Sometimes we need to be reminded of our connection to one another and to God. When I think of weaving, I think of my experience in Taiwan for a seminary class. Weaving is a cultural practice for indigenous Taiwanese people. The skill is passed down from each generation to the next. The sacred art was almost lost when the occupying force of Japan banned multiple indigenous practices including weaving, and facial tattoos. Each tribe we visited had unique languages and dress and each tribe had pride in their weaving. When I think of weaving, I think about how the practice brings together individual threads or different colors, sometimes different textures and weights, and brings them together to create something beautiful. Each thread retains it’s individuality but is made stronger by the threads that surround it.

We are both unraveling and being woven together at the same time. Some of the unraveling is good and necessary. Unraveling our fears, our biases, our unhealthy behaviors and attitudes. And some unraveling needs to be re-woven: our trust in ourselves, in each other, in God; our faith in the ever-present and steadfast love of the Divine, our interdependence with one another, our gratitude for creation and all things life-giving. As we weave ourselves together, may we find that we are stronger, more faithful, more loving, more at peace.

With Many Blessings,



**Information about weaving in Taiwan was sourced from this article:** <https://english.cw.com.tw/article/article.action?id=2243>

**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 will be 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 the manuscript of the sermon and 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. We will also continue to upload sermon manuscripts to the church website <http://www.uccbrainerd.org/?page_id=2035>.

**Helping the community**
Your Church Council voted at the March Council Meeting 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. If you would like to make a donation to this fund, you can mail a check to the church and write "Discretionary Fund" in the memo line. Decisions about disbursement of funds will be handled by the Executive Committee.
If you need assistance, please email, call, or text me. Let me know what your situation is and how the church might be of help.

I also encourage you to continue to support the church financially if you are able. Many of our overhead costs continue even if we don't gather in the building. Your gift to the church allows me to continue to minister to each of you and to the wider community. I am grateful that I can continue to give my gift to the general fund of the church each month through e-giving and I hope you will consider making your own gift however you are able.

Peace be with you,
Pastor Leslie

**What about Giving to the Church during the Coronavirus?**

A significant portion of the church's financial support is received during worship on Sunday mornings. When we don't gather in person, our income takes a hit. We realize that for many of you, this is a time of financial uncertainty. If you are able to continue supporting the church with your financial gifts, we encourage you to do so. We may not be gathering in person right now, but we are continuing to Be the Church in new ways!
We also understand if you need to reduce your giving right now. If you are signed up for electronic giving and need to reduce the amount you contribute, please contact Terri in the office. If you are able to increase your giving to help cover the decrease we are likely to see, please also contact Terri in the office to make that adjustment.
**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 contribute using PayPal, click here: <https://www.paypal.me/uccbrainerd>

**First Congregational UCC News & Updates**

**September Birthdays**

Mark Utzinger Sept. 8

Thomas Nelson Sept. 9

Hanna Moscho Sept. 11

Robert Ogdahl Sept. 12

Joyce Libra Sept. 12

Wayne Mayer Sept. 13

Bob Spear Sept. 14

Lois McBroom Sept. 14

Rod Carlson Sept. 14

Kay Kraywinkle Sept. 15

Allison Crum Sept. 19 Lynn Fox Sept. 24 Kaylo Brooks Sept. 25

Kyd Lukanen Sept. 27

Judy Whiteman Sept. 28

Leslie Moughty Sept. 29

**Sunday Worship, September 27th Special Offering: Neighbors in Need UCC Offering**

The Neighbors in Need offering supports the UCC’s ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

Through ucc.org/justice, our national Justice and Witness Ministries office offers resources, news updates, and action alerts on a broad spectrum of justice issues. Working with members of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network (a network of thousands of UCC justice and peace advocates), Justice and Witness continues its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice. Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. One-third of the offering supports the UCC’s Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM).

**Neighbors in Need** helps make A Just World for All possible. For this to occur, it needs your support.

Please give generously by mailing a check to the church or making an offering by PayPal. Please indicate Neighbors in Need in the memo/comments. And remember, contributions to Neighbors in Need can be made online at any time at <https://www.ucc.org/nin>.

**Second Outdoor Worship Service planned for September 6th!**

Stay tuned for more information as another worship service is being planned for the September 6th. More information will be coming via “This Week” email. Please contact the church if you do not have email and would like a phone call update. To sign up for “This Week” go to <https://tinyurl.com/uccweeklynews>

**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 -** Join in each month on the 3rd Friday from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. **via Zoom.** Watch the movie on your own in advance and then join the discussion. **September 18th movie will be announced soon.** Email Ellie Burkett at if you want to be added to the email list.

**Poetry Happy Hour via Zoom, Fourth Friday of each month at 4:30 pm -** We will take turns reading aloud (it is completely fine and wonderful if you simply wish to listen and enjoy). We will be reading the collection:**Stone Gathering: A reader. Volume II, Issue I Sumer 2020**. Published locally in Brainerd.

Copies are available at Crow Wing Co-op or The Crossing Arts Alliance or at <https://danielledufy.com/> (subscriptions only on the website). Stone Gathering: A Reader is a collection of poems, small fictions, and short essays–5 times each year: there are four quarterly issues and an annual special issue.

**The Friday Book Group** – Join in **Friday Sept. 4th at 11:00 am** at Gregory Park picnic shelter (on the West side of the park), one last time in person and **Sept. 11th at 11:00 am gather via zoom online**. If there's a thunderstorm or pouring rain at that time, we'll cancel (an email or a text will be sent out that morning).  We will observe appropriate social distancing. We will begin the book Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, by Yuval Noah Harari.

**Sunday Morning Book Study Group –** Join us on Zoom as we explore *How God Changes Your Brain by Andrew Newberg.* Next up: *Einstein’s God* by Krista Tippett. Connect with the church zoom link

**"Daily Bread" with Pastor Leslie on Facebook Live**: Tune in at Noon Wednesday - Friday for a short time of prayer, pause, and reflection via Live stream on Pastor Leslie's Facebook page. Click here at noon each day to participate live or to view recorded videos at any time:

<https://www.facebook.com/revleslieucc>

**"Story Time" with Pastor Leslie on Facebook Live has ended: Due to low participation and the start of the school year, Story Time has been discontinued. If there is renewed interest this could start again.**

**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.

**Wednesday Devotional at 9:30am:** Join us for a short devotional time from 9:30-9:55 each Wednesday morning as we study the scripture for the upcoming Sunday.

**Prayer Circle via Zoom**: Join our prayer circle for a time of fellowship, conversation, and prayer from 10:00 am - 11:30 am every Wednesday.

**Highlights from the Council Meeting, August 19th, 2020 - 7:00 pm (via Zoom)**

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

Moderator Tracy Lyons Trustees Deb Griffith At Large Claire Steen

Asst. Moderator Joe Stattine Stewardship Judy Whiteman At Large Cassie Lyons

Clerk Barb Stokke Ministry Sue Hadland At Large Kelly Keller-Heikkila

Treasurer Open Education Lowell Johnson WISE Alvin Velsvaag

Present: Tracy Lyons, Joe Stattine, Barb Stokke, Deb Griffith, Judy Whiteman, Sue Hadland, Lowell Johnson, Cassie Lyons, Kelly Keller-Heikkila, Terri Chidester, and Rev. Leslie Moughty.

**Report Highlights**

**Clerk:** Ramona Gorham died on July 25, 2020. A celebration of her life led by Pastor Leslie took place August 1 at the Memorial Garden in the Brainerd Arboretum.

**Pastor:**

•People who usually receive “This Week at First Congregational” by Gmail but haven’t seen it lately, should check the Promotions tab.

• BLA ARC (Brainerd Lakes Area Anti-Racism Conversations) will soon be launching reading groups for the community-wide read and discussion of the book *So You Want to Talk About Race*. Starting September 10, Leslie will be hosting a reading group for the church and anyone else interested in participating. BLA ARC is looking for individuals and groups to host a book group.

**Treasurer:**

•With regret, Treasurer Bobbie Gorron submitted her resignation as Treasurer due to unforeseen family circumstances that require her to be out of state frequently. The council offers deep gratitude for Bobbie’s service in this role.

•Pastor Leslie noted that this is the first month since the start of the pandemic that we experienced a dip in giving compared to last year. Terri is looking into the details of last year’s July giving.

**Trustees:**

•The Heating/Cooling Systems Project is nearing completion with the installation of the HVAC system.

•Gaytee-Palmer Stained Glass has removed the reparable parts of the east-facing stained-glass window in the sanctuary and have received a down payment from the Memorial fund. A final payment from the Memorial Fund will be made when the repaired parts have been replaced and the exterior window vented.

**Stewardship:**

Stewardship announced that Mabel Schultz and Gale Landem are the 2020-21 co-chairs; Marcia Ferris, the reporter.

**Christian Ministry:**

•Sue Hadland is the CM chairperson for 2020-21.

•CM received Waggoner’s bids for new pew cushions of $8,300 to $9,100 depending upon the type of fabric and foam selected. Local upholsters were contacted for bids but indicated they would not be able to handle that volume of work. Council discussed whether or not this is the time to pursue this project but decided to wait on making a decision.

**Christian Education:**

•Adult education activities Process Film Night and Poetry Slams continue over the summer months.

•The Alano fence-building project of the Lakes Area Guys’ Network is underway.

**Members at Large:** No report.

**Motions:**

1. Council approved Building Use applications of La Mesa and Lakes Area Restorative Justice Project.
2. Council approved adoption of C0VID-19 Funeral/Memorial Policy for First Congregational UCC of Brainerd during COVID-19.
3. Motion passed to approve Signers for church bank accounts
	1. Council approved Tracy Lyons, Joe Stattine, and Barb Stokke as signers of the following accounts: General Checking, Columbarium, Equity Savings, Memorial, and Raymond James.
	2. Council approved Terri Chidester to continue with same permissions as a non-signer with access

**Other Updates:**

1. Council discussed the need to amend the bylaws to create WISE as a department in order to officially add a WISE representative as a member of council with voting privileges. The Exec. Committee will present this as a motion to Council at the September meeting.
2. Members of the Council will begin a search for a new treasurer.
3. Pastor Leslie and Tracy will work with Terri to complete the Application for U.S. Cares Act Loan Forgiveness.
4. Council tabled discussion of a new savings account for the Building Fund.
5. Cassie Lyons, Terri, and Pastor Leslie continue work rebuilding the church’s website.

**The next Council meeting via Zoom will be September 16th at 7:00 pm.**

**Brainerd Lakes Area Information**

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

**The Walk to End Alzheimer’s** - Walkers Needed...You heard me right! Alzheimer's didn't stop and neither can we! Funds are needed more than ever to keep valuable programs in place and to continue to help families in crisis. The Walk to End Alzheimer's will be different this year, but individual teams are still encouraged to gather on **September 26th** on their own, picking a safe route while maintaining social distancing on their route. We need walkers to register to walk and we need people to donate to the cause. Please visit [act.alz.org/brainerd](http://act.alz.org/brainerd) and search for the First Congregational UCC team to help. Will you join me and my family as we walk around Gregory Park a few times? Thank you!

Friends through Christ, Lois McBroom

**Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen -** We have teamed up with **Operation Sandwich** to put together bags of food for the guests at the Soup Kitchen. We continue to hand out bags of food, on a weekly basis. Our weekly grocery bag distribution is Wednesday nights from 5:30-6:00 at the soup kitchen.

If you can't make it during that time, contact Operation Sandwich 218-829-2619 or Bridges of Hope at 218-297-4223 to make other arrangements.

**Want to help?** We would love for you to partner with us in helping get food out to the people in our community. We are welcoming any non-perishable (non-expired) food items. These items can be dropped off at the soup kitchen (218-829-4203), Operation Sandwich (Bethlehem Lutheran) or Bridges of Hope. If you would like to make a monetary donation, to help cover the cost for these bags of food, you can go to these places to make a donation:
[www.sharingbread.com](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=63df5b7723&e=5e2c6f93e6) or [www.bridgesofhopemn.org/donate](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=008c32cb3f&e=5e2c6f93e6)  (Please indicate that you would like your donation to go to Operation Sandwich)

Habitat for Humanity Thrivent Faith Build Update 8-24-2020

**We need your help!!**

I am happy to share that the Johnson’s home is finished!  A team from EXIT realty rolled out the sod last week, and the house passed inspection on Friday.

**The virtual dedication is planned for Tuesday, September 8th, at 6:30 p.m.**  We will send out information with a link to join us once we have more details, but we need your help**now**.  Although COVID will prevent us from gathering at the home to celebrate with the Johnson family, we would still like to surround them with your words of support.  Please mail or email any messages you want us to share with Dale, Katie and Anthony.  We hope to read some at the dedication and perhaps post some throughout the home along with pictures of those who volunteered either virtually or on-site over the past months.

If email works best for you, please send messages to:

cathy.wells@lakesareahabitat.org.  If you prefer to send a note or card by mail, use this address:  **LAHFH, P.O. Box 234, Brainerd, MN  56401**.  We need these as soon as possible, no later than next Tuesday, September 1st.

Thank you for supporting our Thrivent Faith Build and helping bring Dale, Katie and Anthony home to Baxter!

God bless, **Cathy Wells**, Lakes Area Habitat For Humanity

[www.lakesareahabitat.org](http://www.lakesareahabitat.org/)
Phone: 218.828.8517

**Join CLC for a Special Cultural Thursdays Event**
**Thursday Sept. 3, 2020 12:00 PM Central Time**
The program's founder, J**an Kurtz**, will share enlightened reflections on her experiences and profound insights in becoming a "bilingual optimist". She will share short vignettes from her recently published book "Northern Shores, Southern Borders".
Purchase the book from the Central Lakes College bookstore by clicking [HERE](http://clcbookstore.com/brainerd/merchlist?searchtype=all&txtSearch=kurtz).

Or go to <http://clcbookstore.com> and search for “Kurtz”

Proceeds are being donated by the author to the Kurtz Spanish Scholarship Fund at CLC.

\*\***Register in advance** for this webinar; <https://minnstate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qfyxlwNLTzyiaRtAennC_A>
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

**Coping During COVID-19 Support Group**

**Daily at 9am and 8pm Via Zoom ID: 449 846 8853.**

We are all having stress reactions to varying degrees – irritability, forgetfulness, worry, difficulty getting things done, poor sleep…Gain valuable insight from the safety of your own home that you may find helpful from seasoned mental health professionals. We are building a sense of community where we share our experience, strength, hope and needs. Please join us and invite others to log on

Additional FREE ONLINE RESOURCES:

Tools 2 Thrive <https://www/mhanational.org/mental-health-month>

Coping with COVID <https://mn.gov/dhs>

**Crisis Services**

All are available 24-hours, FREE and confidential

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

**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

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

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

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

**Poison Control Center:** 1-800-222-1222

**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 September 2020 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|  | Office Closed | Office Closed  | Office Closed  | Office Closed  | Office Closed  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |  12:00 Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30 Overeaters Anon- **Y** |  2 9:30 Devotional & 10:00 Prayer Circle-**V**  11:30 Memorial Mtg – Outside church lawn12:00 Men’s Group-**C**  7:00 AA Common-**?** | 32:00 LARJP- **Y**4:00 Girl Scouts #43 -**?** |  411:00 Book Group/ Gregory Park-**Y** 3:00 LARJP- **Y** |  5 |
| 8:30 Book Study-**V**  6 9:00 Brainerd Friends- **Y**10:00 Worship Outside & Communion- & **V online**11:00 Fellowship Hour-**V**  |  74:00 Girl Scouts-#373-**?**5:30 BACP- **Y**6:00 Tai Chi - **Y**  |  82:00 Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30 Overeaters Anon- **Y** |  9:30 Devotional & 9 10:00 Prayer Circle**-V** 12:00 Men’s Group-**C**  7:00 AA Common-**?** |  103:00 Trustees- **V**6:30 BLUE (Brnd Lakers United for Envrnt.)- **Y** |  1111:00 Book Group- **V**  |  12 |
|  13 8:30 Book Study-**V**  9:00 Brainerd Friends- **Y**10:00 Worship-**V Online**11:00 Fellowship Hour-**V**  | 14 |  152:00 Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30 Overeaters Anon- **Y** | 9:30 Devotional & 16 10:00 Prayer Circle-**V**12:00 Men’s Group-**C** 7:00 Council-V7:00 AA Common-**?**  |  173:00 The Shop-C 4:00 Girl Scouts #43-**?**5:30 Stewardship- **V**7:00 AA Dist. 7- **Y** |  1811:00 Book Group- **V** 7:00 Process Film Group-**V**  |  19 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8:30 Book Study-**V**  20 9:00 Brainerd Friends- **Y** 10:00 Worship-**V Online**11:00 Fellowship Hour-**V** Pastor Leslie - off |  214:00 Girl Scouts- #373-**?** | 222:00 Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30 Overeaters Anon- **Y** | 9:30 Devotional & 2310:00 Prayer Circle- **V**12:00 Men’s Group-**C** 7:00 AA Common-**?** |  24  | 2511:00 Book Group- **V** 4:00 Soup Kitchen-**C**4:30 Poetry Happy Hour-**V** |  26 |
| 8:30 Book Study**-V** 27 9:00 Brainerd Friends- **Y** 10:00 Worship & Special Offering-**V Online**11:00 Fellowship Hour-**V**  |  285:00 Le Mesa Group-**Y** | 292:00 Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30 Overeaters Anon- **Y** | 9:30 Devotional & 3010:00 Prayer Circle- **V**12:00 Men’s Group-**C** 7:00 AA Common-**?** |   | **V** – Zoom or Specified for Online**C** – Cancelled**Y** – Meeting held? – Unknown/no updates |  |