Friendship News, April 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 an ONLINE 1 to 1 (or phone if preferred) 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: *Resurrection of Hope***

This month’s message comes from Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer. This message was originally delivered in a video through the United Church of Christ a few days ago…

Hello, dear friends in Christ. My name is John Dorhauer, and I serve as the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ and I bring you Easter greetings. I do so with a set of mixed emotions. This will be the second Easter in a row that because of the pandemic, we are unable to gather and worship and celebrate what is our most joyful holiday. And in the year between, we have experienced tremendous loss and are feeling a profound grief. We are mourning.

And yet we approach this Easter season as we do any other. We do not grieve as those who have no hope because of the power of Christ's resurrection. I invite you to take just a quiet moment and think about the year having passed, about the losses that you have endured, the lives of loved ones that you have had to let go of, and in that moment of quiet, open yourselves up to experience the power of resurrection hope.

As this Easter season dawns, let us remember the joy of Christ's rising from the dead. The joy of believing beyond belief that death cannot claim us, has no victory over us and that for every life lost there is a place prepared for them in the eternal realm of God's Heavenly Kin-dom.

The sun is beginning to shine a little brighter, the days are growing a little longer, with each passing day more vaccines go into more arms, and the potency of the virus begins to diminish. And as resurrection people, we can experience once again the hope for coming of the risen Christ. Joy on the other side of our sorrow, daylight on the other side of our long night of mourning.

May this Easter season bring you new joy, new hope, new reasons to enter the world again in order that we may proclaim the love of God.

May each of you experience a resurrection of hope this season,

**\*\*\*\* Pastor Leslie will be on vacation 4/26 thru 5/4\*\*\***

**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>

**April Birthdays**

Izzy Armstrong April 1 Emma Ferrie April 23

Krystal Graf April 4 Coleen Carder April 24

Alice Widmark April 9 Austin Newgord April 24

Hans Stadem April 13 JoAnne Nelson April 24

Bonnie Crum April 14 Donald Utzman April 24

Dan Hegstad April 14 Mitch Crum April 26 Joey Halverson April 15 Lori Howe April 27 Cheri Maxwell April 28

**Update 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 <10/100K
* 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.
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 monitor 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 CRT:Tracy Lyons, Deb Griffith, Sue Hadland, Dan Hegstad and Pastor Leslie

**Announcement: Crums are Moving**

**It is with great sadness that Dave and I are leaving Brainerd. We are in need of smaller quarters and a bit of extra help, so we are moving to Cornerstone Assisted Living in Plymouth. It is a location that is closer to our family-at-large. We are moving April 22nd, which really leaves little time for goodbyes. Suffice it to say that we are going to miss our church and the wonderful friend we have there immensely. Our new address is Cornerstone AL, 3750 Lawndale Lane North, #214, Plymouth, MN 55446. Bonnie and Dave Crum**

 **Easter Flower Memorial**

*We are grateful to the following for their contribution to beautify our sanctuary in celebration of the lives of their loved ones.*

**In Memory of: Tom Morton and Suzanne Mogen Contributor: Jan Morton**

**In Memory of: Bonita Wunderlich, Mona Gorham, Contributor: Anonymous**

 **Dorothy Blau, Ken Nelson**

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

Friends,

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, March 17th, 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.

**Report Highlights**

**Pastor**: The Lent Series “The Ridiculous Journey: Following a Nobody from Nowhere” continues Thursday evenings from 6-7 via Zoom. Participating in 4-week book study of “Racial Healing Handbook” to meet the new UCCMN Conference Anti-racism requirement to maintain standing as authorized clergy. Attended UCCMN Board of Directors meeting, began working with an ADHD Clergy Coach.

**Financials:** A review of the first two months of 2021 show income is on target and giving units up slightly. Expenses are also in line with expenses at this time last year.

**Trustees:** Trustees are considering stained-glass window repairs, replacement of the alley steps of the parsonage and the church, and are reviewing tasks to do before in-person worship resumes.

**Stewardship:** A big thank-you was extended to Marcia Ferris for her video on One Great Hour of Sharing.

**Christian Education:** CE hosted a snowshoe hiking event in the arboretum and another story circle via Zoom, bringing the total number of story circle participants to 22.

**COVID-19 Task Force:** The COVID Task force determined specific parameters that must be met before in-person worship can resume indoors: 50% of Crow Wing County residents are fully vaccinated, the positive test rate is less than 5%, and the 7-day average of new cases is less than 10 per 100,000. Face masks and 6 feet social distancing between households will still be required.

**New Business:**

1. Council approved the motion to accept the following changes - additions and deletions - to First Congregational Bylaws (Amended 2001) as proposed by the Executive Committee (motion – Joe Stattine; second – Deb Griffith)
2. Assistant Moderator Joe Stattine will head the nominating committee that is charged with recruiting candidates to fill the open positions on church committees and Council. The elected nominees will be installed at the Annual Election Meeting in May. Joe invites all committee members and Council to help him identify and recruit candidates.

**Unfinished Business**

1. Financial Review – Yvonne Leiser and admin Terri have done a lot of work examining the church’s financial procedures and reports. The Executive Committee will meet with Yvonne Leiser next week via Zoom to review her corrections and proposed recommendations. Changes in financial procedures and reports will be reviewed at the April Council meeting.
2. Pastor Leslie reported the Application for U.S. Cares Act Loan Forgiveness was submitted, and First Congregational has received total loan forgiveness.
3. Council continues to consider options for oversight of First Congregational finances.
4. A reminder about the use of key codes: Do not give your key code to anyone. If access to the church is needed, call Terri and she can assign a code or provide a one-time use code.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Stokke, Clerk of Council

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

**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 Habitat for Humanity Faith Build – Sunday, April 25**

Habitat for Humanity is a global nonprofit housing organization working in local communities across all 50 states in the US and in more than 70 countries around the world. Habitat’s vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Habitat works toward our vision by building strength, stability and self-reliance in partnership with people and families in need of a decent and affordable home.

Please send your donation to First Congregational UCC, 415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401. Make sure to note on your offering: ***Habitat for Humanity Faith Build Special Offering***. Thank you!

**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.** **April 16th**
Please watch the movie ***“Uncle Frank”*** at your convenience prior to the discussion which will take place at **7 PM**. To join the discussion use this link: [tinyurl.com/UCCBrainerdZoom](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=a3b782702e&e=5e287cb69c).
In 1973, when Frank Bledsoe and his 18-year-old niece Beth take a road trip from Manhattan to Creekville, South Carolina, for the family patriarch's funeral, they are unexpectedly joined by Frank's lover. The movie is available on Prime Video. Watch the trailer at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsNgR-dguhQ.>

**Join us for a Poetry Happy Hour – 4th Friday of each month at 4:30 pm via Zoom. April 23rd.** 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**. We are reading, ***“Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time”***by Marco J. Borg.

**"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.

**Scripture Study *(was Devotional)* at 9:30am:** Join us from **9:30-9:55 am each Wednesday** morningas we reflect on 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** morning.

****Join in **The Outdoor Ministry Creation Justice** series of four events held via Zoom. Together we will consider our sacred connections to the lands, waters, and air, and how we might respond to the global environmental crisis. The events are free and open to all.

**Planetary Health- Co-Creating a Better Future for All**
April 22, 7:00-8:30 pm

What do COVID-19, structural racism, and the devastating wildfires in the western United States have in common? They are all symptoms of a planet in multi-system failure. In this presentation with Teddie M. Potter, PhD, RN, FAAN, you will learn about the human health consequences of the human caused disruptions of Earth’s natural systems. You will also learn that it is not too late for all of us to work together to co-create a healthier future.

[**REGISTER**](https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ehgshw18c3815a0a&oseq=&c=&ch=)

[**READ FULL DETAILS ABOUT THE SERIES**](https://www.uccmn.org/ministries/outdoor/)**: https://www.uccmn.org/ministries/outdoor/**

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**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 ~**

**Earth Day Recycle Event at the ReStore**

The ReStore in conjunction with Common Goods and GreenForest Recycling are working together in celebration of Earth Day. Our Earth Day Recycle Event is going to be held Saturday, April 24th at the Habitat Restore from 9:30am to 2:30pm. Sort your items to donate and/or recycle and join us at the ReStore for brats provided by Cub Foods.

For more information check out our website: <https://bit.ly/391PzGI>

For donation guidelines, visit the ReStore donations guidelines: https://www.lakesareahabitat.org/restore/donate/ or [commongoodsmn.org](http://commongoodsmn.org/)

**Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen**

We have teamed up with **Operation Sandwich** to put together bags of food for the guests at the Soup Kitchen. Each Saturday, anyone in need of meals can come to the soup kitchen from noon-12:30 and receive two to-go meals. We are doing this in addition to the Wednesday night food distribution.
**Wednesdays: 5:30-6:00 pm** Come get a warm meal and bags of food.
**Saturdays: Noon-12:30 pm** Come and get two to-go meals to help you through the weekend.
Please check out our website for more information: <https://www.sharingbread.com/mealtimes>

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.

**Habitat For Humanity Faith Build**

**Thank you** to our growing list of 2021 Thrivent Faith Build partner churches:

● First Baptist Church ● First Congregational UCC

● First Lutheran Church  ● Heritage Church

● Lakewood Evangelical Free Church ● Living Word North

● Lord of Life Lutheran Church ● Pointway Alliance Church

● St. Andrew's Catholic Church ● St. Mathias Catholic Church

We will include the names of all partner churches on a sign to be posted at the site when we begin work on Travis and Mary Svoboda's house.
**Thank you** also to those who have already made a financial contribution to this project. Since our kickoff meeting in January we have received almost $6,000 toward our goal of $62,500!
We have our permit in-hand, just waiting on weather to start the build. As we wait for the ground to thaw, let's continue to pray for Travis and Mary and their kids.
 God bless,
**Cathy Wells,** Lakes Area Habitat For Humanity [www.lakesareahabitat.org](http://www.lakesareahabitat.org/)
Main: 218.828.8517
For fundraising events please visit our website at [lakesareahabitat.org](http://lakesareahabitat.org/).
Donate to our cause at [lakesareahabitat.org/donate](http://www.lakesareahabitat.org/donate/ways-to-give/).
Don't forget to "like" and "share" their Facebook Page!
<https://www.facebook.com/LakesAreaHabitat>

**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.

***Here is how you can help***. We need donations of fabric to go out 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. We also need you to 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.

**The Shop Fundraising Event**

Saturday April 24th 2 to 4pm

\*\*Virtual Variety Show

\*\*Silent Auction

For information contact TheShop at:

218-454-0009 or [**www.theshopbrainerd.org**](http://www.theshopbrainerd.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

**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 April 2021 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|  | Office Closed  | Office Closed  | Office Closed  |  Office Closed  |  Office Closed  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |   |  | **Maundy Thursday** 15pm Prayer Service **V**  **Online** 6pm Lent Study-**V**  | **Good Friday** 2 10:30am Book Grp-**V**12pm Good Friday Worship Service of Lament- **V Online** |  3 |
| **Easter Sunday** 48:30 Book Study-**V**  9am Brainerd Friends- **Y**10am Worship & Communion-**V Online**11am Fellowship Hour-**V** |  56pm Tai Chi - **Y** 7pm BACP- Park or **V** |  62pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y** | 9:30am Script Stdy 7 10am Prayer Circle – **@Karen Fords Home**12pm Wed. Word - **V** 12pm Memorial-**V**7pm AA Common- **Y**  |  88:30 Foundation-**V** 3pm Trustees-**V**6pm Lent Study-**V** 6:30 BLUE-**V**  |  910:30am Book Grp-**V** |  10 |
| 8:30 Book Study-**V**  11 9am Brainerd Friends- **Y** 10am Worship-**V Online**11am Fellowship Hour-**V**  |  124pm Girl Scouts-#373- **Y** |  132pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y**  | 9:30am Script Stdy 14 10am Prayer Circle-**V**2pm Wed. Word-**V** 12pm Memorial-**V**5:30pm Stewardshp-**V**7pm AA Common-**Y** |  15 7pm AA Dist.-**V** |  1610:30am Book Grp-**V**7pm Process Film Group-**V** |  17 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8:30 Book Study**-V** 18 9am Brainerd Friends- **Y** 10am Worship -**V Online**11am Fellowship Hour-**V** |  19 |  202pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y**  | 9:30am Script Stdy 2110am Prayer Circle-**V**2pm Wed. Word-**V** 7pm Council Mtg-**V** 7pm AA Common- **Y** |  22  |  2310:30am Book Grp-**V**4pm Soup Kitchen4:30pm Poetry Happy Hour-**V** |  249:30am-2:30 pmRestore Earth Day Recycling 2-4pm The Shop Fundraiser |
| 8:30 Book Study**-V** 25 9am Brainerd Friends-**Y** 10am Sunday Worship -**V Online*****Special Offering-****Habitat Faith Build*11am Fellowship Hour-**V*****Newsletter Deadline***  |  264pm Girl Scouts-#373- **Y**5:30 AAUW - **V** |  272pm Emotions Anon-**Y**5pm Le Mesa-**V?**5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y**  |  289:30am Script Stdy/ 10am Prayer Circle-**V**2pm Wed. Word-**V** 7pm AA Common-**Y** |  29  |  3010:30am Book Grp-**V** | **V** – Zoom or Specified Online**C** – Cancelled**Y** – Meeting held? – Unknown/no updates |

 \*\*\*\* Pastor Leslie will be on vacation 4/26 thru 5/4\*\*\*