Friendship News, October 2021

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd

An Open and Affirming Congregation

The Church Office is open Wednesdays – Fridays from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Pastor Leslie’s Drop-in Hours: Wed. 1:00pm – 3:00pm, Friday 10:00am – 12:00pm

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– Giving with Love**

I think we can officially say that autumn has arrived. The month of October bring many things to mind for me – changing leaves, a crisp coolness to the air, Halloween, and of course pumpkin-flavored everything! As a pastor and a “church nerd” October for me is also synonymous with Stewardship season. For those of you who are new to being involved in church, you may have no idea what I am talking about. Whether the term is new or familiar, I encourage you to keep reading with a heart of curiosity.

In church lingo, the word stewardship has come to mean giving money to the church. But it is so much more than that. The definition of stewardship is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care. In church life, each of us is entrusted with the care of many things – the building and grounds of the church, the financial resources of the congregation, but also the faith development of our children, youth, and adults, the spiritual care of those in need, doing what we can to comfort and advocate for the most vulnerable in our community, and more.

The truth is, the church relies on the financial support as well as time and energy of people who are part of the church community, to be good stewards of all of the different ways we minister. Without the generosity of each of you reading this, our church would not be able to provide a affirming space and pastor for same-gender couples to get married. We would not be able to partner with The Shop to teach youth how to prepare a meal and feed the other youth. If not for your generosity, we would not have a place to explore questions together like we did during Ask the Pastor last Sunday. We would not have been able to host dozens of people walking to the state capitol to demand the protection of our precious water.

We are in an in-between time, a liminal time right now, when the future feels uncertain. But that also means the future is full of new possibilities! I hope you join me in a time of prayer and discernment over the next few weeks as you consider your support the mission and life of our congregation. I encourage all of us to resist writing “same as last year” on our commitment forms, but to take some time and look at our budgets, pray, reflect, and make an intentional commitment. Your contribution may end up being the same as last year, it may be less, or it may be more. Maybe you decide to make a commitment for the first time! Whatever you come up with, all of our gifts are made greater by bringing them together in community. I am so grateful for the generosity and ministry of each and every one of you and excited about what the future holds!

See you in church!

**First Congregational UCC News & Updates**

**UPDATES about In-Person, Indoor Worship**

Join us for worship this Sunday in the sanctuary!
What to expect…

* Due to increased spread of the **Delta variant**, everyone must **wear a mask** regardless of vaccination status.
* Fellowship Hour after worship will be downstairs.
* No one will be asked to show proof of vaccination.
* Physical distancing will be observed by closing off every other pew.
* Children and youth will stay seated for the Time with Young Disciples.
* Prayers will be done with written prayer cards, read by Pastor Leslie (no passing the mic).

The Covid Response Team will continue to monitor the situation locally and may decide to make further changes as the need arises.

**How to watch Sunday worship**
The worship service is **broadcasted on the church Facebook page every Sunday at 10:00 am.**
To watch worship on Facebook, go to <https://www.facebook.com/uccbrainerd/live>
We are working with a new system for streaming are still working out the kinks for streaming to YouTube.

**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>

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**October Birthdays**

Robert Jones Oct. 7

Jolene Hojem Oct. 7

Kamery Hauan Hahn Oct. 25

Cynthia Janes Oct. 25

Jerry Kuehn Oct. 11

Eileen Kurpiers Oct. 11

Robert Morgan Oct. 14

Andrea Bertram Oct. 15

James Newgord Oct. 15

Megan Kath Oct. 16

Louis Grabowski Oct. 20

Ellimae Kalinoski Oct. 26 Elissa Hartwig Oct. 28 Tracy Lyons Oct. 28

Andrew Pucko Oct. 29

Elizabeth Paulson Oct. 30

Paxie Imsdahl Oct. 31

Luann Rice Oct. 31

**Church Office Hours**

 **Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays
9:00 am to 1:00 pm.**

Please call Terri at the office for further assistance.

218-829-2528

**Pastor Leslie’s drop-in hours\* are as follows:**

**Wednesdays 1:00pm – 3:00pm**

**Fridays 10:00am – 12:00pm**

*\*These are hours that, barring an emergency, Pastor Leslie will be in the office and available for drop-in conversations or meetings. Appointments are preferred to best manage her schedule, but don’t hesitate to drop in during the above times.*

*Pastor Leslie will be in the office at other times but may not always be available due to other obligations. To make an appointment outside of the drop-in hours, go to* ***calendly.com/pastorleslieucc/1to1*** *to schedule an appointment, or call or email Pastor Leslie directly.*

**Church Leadership**

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

There are many opportunities for you to share your talents:

--**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.

**Committees needing fresh faces:**

 -Christian Education -Trustees -Memorial -Christian Ministry

 -Music -Arts -The Foundation Board

Call or text Joe Stattine - Moderator, with your nominations: 218-838-1311

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

**Highlights from the Council Meeting, September 16th, 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**: Joe Stattine, Colleen LeBlanc, Barb Stokke, Deb Griffith, Gale Landem, Lowell Johnson, Alvin Velsvaag, Admin Terri Chidester, and Pastor Leslie.

**Report Highlights**

**Clerk:** Shirley McConnell Utzman died Monday, August 23, 2021, in Lakeland, Florida. A memorial service will be held at First Congregational UCC in Brainerd, Minnesota, Saturday, September 18, 2021.

**Pastor: Highlights:** Led “Teach Us to Pray,” a worship series on the Lord’s Prayer; met with PPRC to begin discussion of a 2023 Sabbatical. **Community engagements**: Participated in the hiring of Rev. Kelly Gallagher, the new Associate Conference Minister; will be discussing the hosting of the ecumenical Thanksgiving worship service with Rev. Mark Skinner; will resume advising the Brainerd High School Gender and Sexuality Alliance. **Pastoral Care Contacts**: Continued pre-marital sessions with three couples; officiated the memorial service for Bob Hoeft on September 11, at Star Lake Wilderness Camp; spoke with family of Shirley McConnell Utzman and planned her memorial service for September 18. **Observations, Concerns, and Updates:** For Continuing Ed,will participate in Church of the Resurrection’s Leadership Institute September 29-October 1; a second Continuing Ed will need to be determined due to a cancellation.

**Financials:** Council determined that the monies received from the insurance company for damages created by the June power surge should be added to the trustees’ budget in the general fund with a footnote indicating it is an insurance claim payment for damage repairs.

**Trustees**: Trustees continue to oversee repairs and payments for the power surge damages.Fall Trustee projects include reseeding parsonage lawn after sidewalk and stair repairs, preparing flower beds for winter, winterizing and storing the Columbarium fountain, and removing and selling unneeded pews.

**Stewardship:** *Rooted in Love*, the fall stewardship drive, will begin October 10 and end on the 31st with a thank-you celebration.

**Christian Ministry:** CM will be focusing on creating lists/schedules for those interesting in being Hosts, Ushers, and Greeters (HUGs).

**Christian Education:** After the service on September 19, CE has invited the youth to join them for pizza, root beer floats, and a discussion on what they would like to see happening with youth programing. CE also reminded Council of two upcoming adult forums: QPR Suicide Prevention Training presented by Destiny Brown on September 19, and Safe Families presented by Tanya Brusewitz on September 26.

**Memorial:** New Columbarium brochures are now available.

**Members at Large:** A discussion was introduced about the celebration of First Congregational 150th anniversary in 2022.

**COVID-19 Task Force**: ICUs in the area are at capacity and in crises mode. First Congregational will continue to require wearing masks and distancing.

**Unfinished Business**

1. Council discussed details of First Congregational’s information table and the banner display the Pride Picnic, September 18 at Gregory Park from 10 am-3 pm. Volunteers are needed to set up and break down the display, and to visit with picnickers. The church’s canopy is missing. Anyone knowing of its whereabouts, please contact the church office.
2. CM will continue working on the Sunday service routine tasks list and training sessions.
3. A request of $2,000 was made to the Foundation for the purchase and installation of the T-Coil Hearing Assistance.
4. First Congregational received a check from the insurance company, covering all claims of damages created by the June power surge.
5. Work to recruit a finance advisor to review the church’s finances continues.
6. Council continued the discussion of purchasing a backup computer that would also be used for streaming the services.
7. The Safe Church Policy committee who suspended work last year due to COVID will restart their work within the next month.

**New Business:**

1. Colleen LeBlanc has started the process of reviewing the bylaws of First Congregational. Members who are interested in reviewing and updating the bylaws should contact Joe Stattine.
2. Leadership Roster spreadsheet has been created and will be distributed to Council to aide in recruiting members to fill committee vacancies in 2022-2023.
3. The Executive Committee will schedule a meeting to discuss short- and long-term Investments with Bremer bank
4. Admin Terri Chidester reported that the present QuickBooks software is sufficient and that the on-line version is not needed.
5. Council determined that blueprints should be stored in the vault; Deb Griffith and Barb Stokke will move them.
6. Following a discussion of COVID-19 and precautions necessary for the prevention of spreading the virus, including wearing masks and leaving every other pew vacant, Council tabled a motion to approve a building use request by Legacy Chorale (motion: Colleen LeBlanc; second: Gale Lamden). Joe Stattine will contact them to discuss their COVID prevention protocol.

**Next Regular Council Meeting: October 21st, 2021 3:00 pm in-person and via Zoom**

**From Your Trustee Team – Need Help with October Projects!**

**Disassembling of the Columbarium Fountain**

The trustee team is looking for any person that would be willing to help with the fall disassembling and spring bring out of the water fountain that is located in the outdoor Columbarium. Landsburg Nursery has taken care of this service for several years and done a great job but the cost over the last two years has increased with the last billing increase of over $100. Chris, from Landsburg has been contacted and it appears this is something that our church can do. The job would include taking care of de-watering and cleaning of the fountain and the pump, blowing out the lines, turning off the outside water spigots and storing the fountain. Chris form Landsburg will come and work with anyone this fall in disassembling the fountain.

**Painting of church wall from back door, along hallway by office & Pastor Leslie’s office**

To be ready for the holidays. the Trustees and Christian Ministry are teaming up to re-paint part of the church hallway and the Pastor’s office. A color similar to what is on the wall will be furnished along with all materials needed to do the job. So, what we need is people who are available in October, (date and time to be determined) Maybe you are good at cutting in with a brush or taping or painting. Your help will be so appreciated, and our walls will have a fresh new look!

**Weekly cleaning of the church**

Now that in house worship is happening, the church is resuming weekly cleaning. In past years roughly 6 church members have volunteered to do this but currently only 3 are available and 3 more are needed, (weekday and time are to be determined, although currently people are cleaning on Tuesdays and Fridays).

Please let any trustee member know if you are interested: Cynthia Janes, Jim Newgord, Reed Campbell, Ryan Kelly. You can also call and leave your name with Terri at the church office, 218-829-2528. Thank you for considering to volunteer.

 **October Adult Forum**

**October 17th, 11:30 am - Belonging**

The WISE Outreach Ministry for Mental Health will be exploring the importance of belonging and its relationship to our physical, mental, and spiritual health. Using a story circle process, participants will share their experiences being an insider, outsider, or in betweener on their journeys of belonging.

**October 24th, 11:30 am - Native American Spirituality**

Dani Richter, staff member at the Four Winds Treatment Center and member of the Red Lake Nation, will be leading a presentation on Native American Spirituality.



**Stewardship Commitment Season is Here**

**Rooted With Love**

Dear Church Family,

Each fall we begin the process of planning the church budget for the coming year.

Brainerd UCC has roots in service to this community, growing us all together and providing a space of welcome for all.

The fiscal well-being of the church relies greatly upon the ability to set and adhere to a budget. Your financial commitment; lovingly and joyfully contributed is needed.

Our Stewardship theme this year ‘Rooted with Love’ draws inspiration from Psalm 1. “They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season.” The Psalmist invited us to imagine all the good things we can bear when well planted. What might we give away when we are rooted with love?

We need to make a move from a mindset of scarcity to a mindset of abundance. A scarcity mindset makes us think there will never be enough to go around. Scarcity thinking names all the things we cannot do, all the things we cannot share. A mindset of abundance sees the fullness of God’s love. Martin Luther King Jr. saw the world abundantly, despite all the injustice he confronted. King knew God’s spirit moved through history creating and renewing community.

After prayerful consideration, please complete the 2022 Annual Pledge Form and return it by October 31 in the enclosed envelope or bring it to service that day for a blessing ceremony as we gather pledges for 2022.

Thank you, Your Stewardship Committee Gale, Judy, Marcia, Carla, Georgia, Sarah Jo



**Cooking For Everyone**

This group is OPEN FOR EVERYONE!  Email Lowell  johnsonlowells@gmail.com and he will add you to the member list so that you will know when and where we will next meet.

**TheShop Meals**
We started working with the young people from TheShop (Brainerd/Baxter's Youth Empowerment Center) on September 15th preparing the meal at the church kitchen and serving it at TheShop for the participants in the program. We will continue once a month on the third Wednesday, meeting at the church kitchen at 3:30 pm. Thanks to all who have expressed an interest in helping out. If you are interested in helping out, please call Sharon Carlson at 828-1581.

**Choir Practice**
**First three Sundays of each month at 8:30 am.**

We will be meeting in the sanctuary. Come one come all!
You are all welcome to join we would love to have you!
Please contact Diane Hauan for more information:
218-839-0669 or [diane.hauan5@gmail.com](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=7bae397a8f&e=5e2c6f93e6)

**Calling all singers and musicians!**

**We want to include your voice and instruments during the worship services. If you can 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

**The Crisis Line - Special Offering Sunday Worship October 24th**
The Crisis Line provides confidential and anonymous telephone support to people in distress and crisis, and to serve as a lifeline for positive change by connecting our clients to area resources and to give support and encouragement.
Serving friends and neighbors in Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena Counties it is a service that helps people when they are in crisis, or before their problems become a crisis. You can also call for a referral to resources in the area and surrounding counties. Your donation can help the Crisis Line & Referral Service provide services to improve the quality of life and improve the mental health of the community you live in.

Please send your donation to First Congregational UCC, 415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401. Make sure to note on your offering: “Crisis Line Special Offering”. Thank you! Or for your convenience use our Paypal account at: [paypal.me/uccbrainerd](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/uccbrainerd)

Be sure to note on your offering “Crisis Line Special Offering” in comments.

**Habitat for Humanity Faith Build**

**Our church, First Congregational and other area churches (16 total) have partnered with Faith Build and** raised over $28,000 toward a goal of $62,500, so we are making good progress! (Remember that Thrivent has committed the other $62,500.) Thank you for your fundraising efforts so far.

Please continue to pray for the Svoboda family, for Thrivent, and for Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity.

Please send your donation to First Congregational UCC, 415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401. Make sure to note on your offering: “Faith Build Offering”. Thank you! Or for your convenience use our Paypal account at: [paypal.me/uccbrainerd](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/uccbrainerd)

Be sure to note on your offering “Faith Build Offering” in comments.

Contact **Cathy Wells** to volunteer!

Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity

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

**Update on Fall Retreats and Outdoor Ministry Programs Cancellations and Postponements**

Due to the severe status of the Covid pandemic in Minnesota, all future in-person events for the fall have been canceled.

Conference staff is working to create alternative opportunities for connecting during fall 2021 and winter 2022. Plans for 2022 Outdoor Ministry opportunities will be available in early January 2022.

**Brainerd Lakes Area Information ~ Opportunities to Know and Share God’s Love ~**

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**Kinship Partners Seeking Board Members**

 **Kinship Partners is re-evaluating how to best serve ALL kids in the community and are working to make Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) part of the culture of Kinship. We are looking for new board members and would love to find folks also looking to advance our core value of acceptance and the DEI work we are doing. If interested or for more information, please contact Amy J Gray (She/Her/Hers) Executive Director, at amyg@kinshippartners.org or by phone 218-454-8013 (office) / 218-838-0368 (mobile)**

**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 October 2021 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|  | Office Closed Open by Appt.  | Office ClosedOpen by Appt.  |  Office Hours9am – 1pmPastor Drop-in 1pm-3pm  |  Office Hours  9am – 1pm  | Office Hours  9am – 1pm Pastor Drop-in 10am-12pm  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |  |  |  |  **1**10:30am Book Grp-**Z** |  **2** |
| 8:30am Choir **3**Practice**-Y** 8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y** 10am Wrship & Communion-**Y&V**11am Fellowship-**Y** | 12pm  **4** Vets Bk Grp- **Our Zoom**4pm Grl Scts #373-**Y** 7pm BACP-**Y** |  **5**2pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y**  | 10am Pray  **6** Circle-**Y**12pm Men’s Grp-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y** |  **7**12pm Uppity Women Stdy-**Y&Z**  |  **8**  10:30am Book Grp-**Z** |  **9**Stewardship Theme Decorating |
| 8:30am Choir  **10** Practice**-Y**   8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y** 10am Wrship-**Y&V**\*Hand-out Pledges11am Fellowship-**Y** |  **11**  12pm Vets Book Grp- **Our Zoom**7pm BACP-in church-**Y** |  **12**  2pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y**  | 10am **13**  Pray Circle-**Y**12pm Memorial-**Y**12pm Men’s Grp-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y** | 8:30am  **14**  Foundation-**Y**12pm Uppity Women Stdy- **Y&Z**6:30 BLUE park /chrch bckup7pm Trustees-**Y** |  **15**   10:30am Book Grp-**Z**3:30pm Stewardship-**Y** |  **16**  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8:30am Choir  **17**Practice**-Y**   8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y** 10am Wrship-**Y&V**11am Fellowship-**Y**11:30am Adult Forum-/WISE Host: Belonging-**Y** |  **18**12pm Vets Book Grp- **Our Zoom**5:30-9pm AAUW-**Y**  |  **19**  2pm Emotions Anon-**Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y**  | 10am Pray  **20**  Circle- **Y**12pm Men’s Grp-**Y**3:30 TheShop Meal Prep-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y** | 12pm Uppity **21**  Women Stdy- **Y&Z** 3pm Council Mtg-**Y&Z** 7pm AA Dist.-**Y**  |  **22**  10:30am Book Grp-**Z** |  **23**   |
| 8:30am Bnrd **24**   Frnds-**Y** 10am Wrship-**Y&V**10:15 NUUF Mtg- **Y** 11am Fellowship-**Y**11:30am Adult Forum: Native Amrican Spiritual-**Y*****Special Offering:******Crisis Line******\*\*Newsletr Dedline\*\**** |  **25**  12pm Vets Book Grp- **Our Zoom** |  **26** 2pm Emotions Anon-**Y**5pm LeMesa-**V**5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y**  |  **27** 10am Pray Circle- **Y**12pm Men’s Grp-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y** |  **28**Uppity Women Stdy**-Y&Z**   |   **29**10:30am Book Grp-**Z** |  **30** |
| 8:30am Bnrd **31**   Frnds-**Y** 10am Wrship-**Y&V**\*Special Music\*Hand-in Pledges11am Stewardship hosts Fellowship-**Y****\*\*Halloween\*\*** |  |  |  |  | **Cancelled til Fall**\*Sun. Bk Stdy\*Poetry Happy Hour\*Process Film Group | **V** or **Z** –**Virtual** Online (FB/ YouTube) or **Zoom****C**- Cancelled**Y**- Mtg. in person?- no updatesN-None |

 \*\*\*Pastor Leslie will be out of the office for Continuing Ed 9/29 to 10/6/21\*\*\*